



Toward Freedom

Article 24. That hereafter, in this State, there shall be neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, except in punishment of crimes, whereof the party shall have been duly convicted; and all persons held to service or labor as slaves are hereby declared free.

All slaves in Maryland were freed by the state's Constitution of 1864, and a new chapter was opened in the lives of African Americans. The fate of many fugitives and former slaves is unknown. Some fugitives settled in the North, and others returned to Maryland to live near family members or find work. A few, like Harriet Tubman and Emily and Mary Edmonson, remain well-known today. The stories of fugitive slaves were featured in works such as *The Refugee: or Narratives of Fugitive Slaves in Canada* by Benjamin Drew and *The Underground Railroad* by William Still. These books give personal accounts of the experience of flight, and when combined with original records, reveal the very human stories that are the key to understanding the Underground Railroad.

A FEMALE CONDUCTOR OF THE UNDER-GROUND RAILROAD—At the late Woman's Rights Convention, at Melodeon Hall, Boston, the most interesting incident was the appearance on the platform of the colored woman, Mrs. Harriet Tubman, who has been eight times South, and brought into freedom no less than forty persons, including her aged father and mother, over seventy years old. She had a prolonged and enthusiastic reception.

Baltimore American and Commercial Advertiser
5 June 1860

Harriet Tubman escaped from Dorchester County in 1849, and returned many times to lead others to freedom. She later became an advocate for abolition and women's rights.



Mary and Emily Edmonson, c. 1850s
Library of Congress



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Know all men by these presents that I Thomas Lee of Ann Arundel County for divers causes and considerations have manifested and do set free negro Charles which said man I formerly sold to Charles Waters of said County for the Term of ten years said Term having fully expired I do hereby declare the said negro man Charles to be discharged from all manner of claim or demand from me or any other person or persons whatsoever from the date hereof, Given under my hand and seal this 21 day of April in the year eighteen hundred and twelve,

Signed sealed and delivered in presence of J. Montgomery, Chas. Waters

On the back of the foregoing was this inclosed to wit Ann Arundel County to wit On the 21 day of April in the year eighteen hundred and twelve personally appeared Thomas Lee party to the foregoing instrument of writing before me the subscriber

