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# The Capital



THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 3, 2011

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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 Tupman, 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.

# Documenting history

## State archivists uncover stories of slavery



Chris Haley, director of the Study of the Legacy of Slavery in Maryland at the Maryland State Archives, and research archivist Maya Davis look over 150-year-old copies of the *Baltimore American and Commercial Advertiser*, where the news item about Harriet Tubman was discovered.

By Paul W. Gillespie — The Capital

By THERESA WINSLOW  
Staff Writer

Like someone mining for gold in a stream, Maya Davis slowly sifted through the yellowed pages of a 150-year-old newspaper at the Maryland State Archives.

She peered at the type crammed into the 2½-foot-wide *Baltimore American and Commercial Advertiser*, scanning line after line. "It was headache-inducing," said Davis, a research archivist.

But it's part of her job, and her persistence paid off.

Just above an announcement of a divorce settlement, there was a short paragraph describing "Mrs. Harriet Tupman's" appearance at a women's right convention in Boston. It identified "Tupman" as a "female conductor of the under-ground rail-road." Davis found the item in 2005, but because the newspaper was too big to be scanned at the time, it was filed away until recently.

When the announcement appeared June 5, 1860, Harriet Tubman could still have been arrested under the Fugitive Slave Act, and the item's writer could have also come under fire, said Chris Haley, director of the Study of the Legacy of Slavery in Maryland.

(See HISTORY, Page A14)

### ONLINE EXTRA

• See a slideshow of the slavery documents at [HometownAnnapolis.com](http://HometownAnnapolis.com)

