

Underground Railroad Resources at the Delaware Historical Society Research Library

This list contains major resources and suggestions for research, but it does not claim to be complete and comprehensive.

Basic sources on African American history in Delaware

- Peter T. Dalleo, "Selected Sources of African American History in Nineteenth Century Delaware" (typescript, 1998)
- Patience Essah, *A House Divided: Slavery and Emancipation in Delaware, 1638-1865* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia, 1996)
- William H. Williams, *Slavery and Freedom in Delaware, 1639-1865* (Wilmington: Scholarly Resources, 1996)

Published Sources on the Underground Railroad

- Charles L. Blockson, "Escape from Slavery: the Underground Railroad," *National Geographic*, July 1984, pp. 3-39
- Charles L. Blockson, *The Underground Railroad* (New York: Prentice Hall Press, 1987)
- Catherine Clinton, *Harriet Tubman: The Road to Freedom* (New York: Little, Brown and Co., 2004)
- James F. Conlin and J. Cornelius Desmond, "Land of Boasted Freedom: The Life and Times of Thomas Garrett" (thesis—no publication information)
- Peter T. Dalleo, "'Persecuted but not forsaken; cut down but not destroyed': Solomon and Thamar Bayley, Delawarean Emigrants to Liberia," *Delaware History* 31 (2006-2007): 137-77
- James H. Fairchild, *The Underground Railroad* (Cleveland: Western Reserve Historical Society, 1895)
- Larry Gara, *The Liberty Line: The Legend of the Underground Railroad* (Lexington, Ky.: University of Kentucky Press, 1961)
- William C. Kashatus, *Just Over the Line: Chester County and the Underground Railroad* (West Chester, Pa.: Chester County Historical Society in cooperation with Penn State University Press, 2002)
- James A. McGowan, *Station Master on the Underground Railroad: The Life and Letters of Thomas Garrett* (McFarland Publishers, 2005)
- Pauli Murray, *Proud Shoes: the Story of an American Family* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1956). Part of the book involves Wilmington and the Underground Railroad
- National Park Service, *Underground Railroad: Special Resource Study, Management Concepts/Environmental Assessment* (U.S. Department of the Interior, 1995)

- R.C. Smedley, *History of the Underground Railroad in Chester and the Neighboring Counties of Pennsylvania* (Lancaster, Pa., 1883); also a paperback reprint with an introduction by Christopher Densmore (Stackpole Books, 2005)
- William Still, *The Underground Railroad* (Chicago: Johnson Publishing Co., Inc., 1970), reprint of original 1872 edition
- William J. Switala, *Underground Railroad in Delaware, Maryland, and West Virginia* (Mechanicsburg, Pa.: Stackpole Books, 2004)
- Priscilla Thompson, “Harriet Tubman, Thomas Garrett and the Underground Railroad,” *Delaware History* 22 (1986-1987): 1-21
- William P. Tilden, *Thomas Garrett (1789-1871): A Memorial Address* (Wilmington: 1889)
- John W. Tillman, *Biographical Sketch of the Life and Travels of John W. Tillman, Doe Run, Chester County, Penna.* (1986)

Microfilm Resources

- U.S. Census, 1800-1930. Delaware’s 1790 census was destroyed long ago; there are published reconstructions based on other documents. 1850 is the first year that lists everyone in a household by name; earlier, only the head of household was listed by name and everyone else was listed by gender and age range. There are slave schedules for 1850 and 1860, which are organized by the name of the slave owner. Slaves are listed by age and gender, and their names are not given.
- Conrad/Tubman. 2 reels with Earl Conrad’s research notes and correspondence, 1939-1940, for his works on Harriet Tubman. Inventory on first reel. From the Schomburg Collection.
- Siebert Collection. 8 reels of Wilbur Seibert’s (*The Underground Railroad from Slavery to Freedom*, 1902) research materials that include information on Tubman or Delaware. Printed inventory available. From the Ohio Historical Society.
- Delaware Newspaper Project, Box 79 has 2 issues of the *Delaware Abolitionist* from 1848, published by the Delaware Antislavery Society. These are the only issues that survive.

Other Resources

- Wilmington City Directories. First one 1814, next one 1845, sporadically in 1850s, then become annual in 1860s. Last one 1986. 1814, 1845 have separate listing for black residents; 1857, 1859 have “col’d” by African Americans; otherwise, no racial designations.
- Newspapers. In this era, Wilmington papers were published twice a week, with each issue being 4 pages. They carried mainly national and international news with very little local news. Papers had definite political affiliations. The main papers were the *Delaware Gazette* (Democrat—more likely to have runaway ads), the *Delaware State Journal* (Whig/Republican—more sympathetic to ending slavery), and the *Blue Hen’s Chicken* (Aug. 1845-Aug. 1853; had more local news than the other papers and was more sympathetic to blacks). Relatively few papers were published in other towns, and they have not survived very well. One

exception is the *Delawarean* (Dover) for 1859, 1860, 1861, and 1865. See the catalog of the Historical Society of Delaware newspaper collection and the list of the Delaware Newspaper Project for other titles.

- Manuscripts. This collection includes original letters, diaries, business records, organizational records. Look in the catalog under the name or subject in which you are interested.
- Maps. The most detailed maps for the Underground Railroad period are Rea and Price (1848) for New Castle County, Byles (1857) for Kent County, and Beers Atlas (1868) for the entire state.
- Photographs and other visual materials. The catalog is arranged by topic. Begin by looking under People, Churches, etc. Within each topic, photos are arranged alphabetically by the name of the church, person, etc.

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