



Ending Slavery

The Antislavery Struggle in Perspective

Edited by / Édité par

Lawrence AJE

& Claudine RAYNAUD



Presses universitaires de la Méditerranée

Ending Slavery

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Collection « Horizons anglophones »
Série *PoCoPages*

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2022

PRESSES UNIVERSITAIRES DE LA MÉDITERRANÉE

Série PoCoPages

General Editor / Responsable de la série : Judith Misrahi-Barak

After turning a few pages, Les Carnets du Cerpac has become PoCoPages, edited by Judith Misrahi-Barak. Though the term Poco may stir up in the reader's mind images of some American country rock band, or again various possession rituals associated with Africa or the Caribbean, the reference here however is to the abbreviation of postcolonial. The term in its diversity is meant to reflect the interest of PoCoPages for postcolonial, diasporic cultures and literatures, steeped in métissage and crossed borders.

Quelques pages ayant été tournées, *Les Carnets du Cerpac* sont devenus *PoCoPages*, édité par Judith Misrahi-Barak. Le terme Poco fera peut-être penser à un groupe de rock country américain, ou à divers rituels de possession associés à l'Afrique et à la Caraïbe. C'est pourtant à l'abréviation de postcolonial que référence est faite ici. Le terme, dans sa diversité, reflètera l'intérêt de *PoCoPages* pour les cultures et les littératures postcoloniales, diasporiques, trempées de métissage et de frontières traversées.

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Mots-clés : abolitionnisme, anti-esclavagisme, colonisation, émigrationnisme, esclavage, États-Unis.

Keywords : Abolitionism, Antislavery, Colonization, Emigrationism, Slavery, United-States.

Illustration de couverture / Cover : Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, Manuscripts, Archives and Rare Books Division, The New York Public Library. "Twenty-eight fugitives escaping from the Eastern Shore of Maryland." New York Public Library Digital Collections. Accessed May 3, 2021. <https://digitalcollections.nypl.org/items/510d47db-bccb-a3d9-e040-e00a18064a99>

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ISBN 978-2-36781-448-3

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MONUMENT AND HERITAGE TOURISM:
MEMORIALIZING HARRIET TUBMAN AND THOMAS
GARRETT ON THE HISTORIC UNDERGROUND
RAILROAD IN DELAWARE

Renée ATER

One of the most well-known African Americans of the nineteenth century, Harriet Tubman (1822–1913) has been and is memorialized through popular culture such as television, film, and children’s books and through her name, which adorns numerous schools, roads, bridges, parks, and markers across the United States.¹ She is equally well represented in public sculpture. Nearly a dozen statues dedicated to Tubman dot the American landscape from Auburn, New York, to Mesa, Arizona.² Contemporary sculptors have modeled Tubman as a singular African American woman, superhuman in strength and determination, a self-liberator and community emancipator. In order to visualize Tubman, artists have relied overwhelmingly on the written details provided in Sarah Bradford’s biographies: *Scenes in the Life of Harriet Tubman* (1869) and *Harriet: The Moses of Her*

1. SERNETT, Milton C. *Harriet Tubman: Myth, Memory, and History*. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2007 and HOBSON, Janell. ‘Between History and Fantasy: Harriet Tubman in the Artistic and Popular Imaginary.’ *Meridians: feminism, race, transnationalism* 12, no. 2 (2014): 50–77.

2. See ATER, Renée. ‘Monuments to Harriet Tubman,’ TimelineJS, Knight-Lab, September 30, 2019, https://cdn.knightlab.com/libs/timeline3/latest/embed/index.html?source=15y_F2yBAyNm6grtxu5CohNANjweb-vtkL71d5O5lmxk&font=Default&lang=en&initial_zoom=2&height=650&fbclid=IwAR1o-th-cDZgCqbPrUA7HrvlEs-BQ3D8vSLhyeddp8y6f1Xbmw5ZcRBokoKc. Accessed on August 27, 2020.

People (1886).³ Based on interviews with Tubman, Bradford created an image of the freedom fighter as larger than life, the 'Moses' and savior of her people. As Celeste-Marie Bernier notes, 'Tubman's biography continues to function as a mythic embodiment of seemingly universal and timeless values of justice, spirituality, and resistance to oppression.'⁴ Many of the artists who have created monuments to Tubman attempt to imbue their statues with these 'universal' values, turning again and again to Bradford's text in their quest to capture Tubman's allusive spirit. In addition, most of these sculptors looked to nineteenth-century image makers to shape their contemporary visual understanding of Tubman. She was photographed almost exclusively when she was an older woman: tiny, severe, and unsmiling, allegorized as 'the old wise woman.'⁵ Many artists rely on this image of the elder Tubman—mature, wise, and visionary.⁶ In the various monuments dedicated to Tubman, her experience as a slave is elided in order to celebrate her as a heroic figure, a radical abolitionist and Underground Railroad conductor. Similar to representations of Sojourner Truth, Tubman's legacy is honored in three-dimensional form (Raynaud 2019: 260).

As the twenty-first century progresses, Tubman has become ever more visible in the American imagination and in public space. Several biographies with new archival information have broadened our understanding of Tubman: her role in assisting family and friends in Maryland to freedom; her position as a nurse and scout in South Carolina during the Civil War; and her advocacy for women rights and elder care in the early twentieth century from Auburn, New

3. BRADFORD, Sarah H. *Scenes in the Life of Harriet Tubman*. Auburn, NY: W. J. Moses, Printer, 1869, electronic edition, Documenting the American South, <http://docsouth.unc.edu/neh/bradford/bradford.html> and BRADFORD, Sarah H. *Harriet Tubman, The Moses of Her People*. New York: Geo. R. Lockwood & Son, 1886, electronic edition, Documenting the American South, <http://docsouth.unc.edu/neh/harriet/harriet.html>. Both accessed on August 27, 2020.

4. BERNIER, Celeste-Marie. *Characters of Blood: Black Heroism in the Transatlantic Imagination*. Charlottesville and London: University of Virginia Press, 2012; 300.

5. I borrow this idea from Claudine Raynaud, who has written about the ways in which Sojourner Truth was allegorized as the Black sage as a means to render her slave experience invisible. See RAYNAUD, Claudine. 'Breathing Statues, Stone Sermons, Pastoral Trails: Memorializing Truth,' in Lawrence AJE and Nicolas GACHON, eds. *Traces and Memory of Slavery in the Atlantic World*, London: Routledge, 2019; 251.

6. In actuality, Tubman was twenty-eight when she conducted her first mission on the Underground Railroad in 1850, not the often, aged figure presented in photographs and monuments.



Fig. 1—Mario CHIODO, *Unwavering Courage in the Pursuit of Freedom*, 2012, Tubman Garrett Riverfront Park, Wilmington, Delaware. Photograph by Renée Ater.

York.⁷ These biographies frame Tubman as fiercely dedicated to the abolitionist cause. A fighter for justice and equality, Tubman has long stood as a singular individual in American history, ‘America’s most malleable icon,’ suggests Milton C. Sernett, a remembered and mediated hero, steeped in myth that ‘draws on the factual core but is often in tension with it’ (2007: 3). In the narration of American slavery, Tubman often personifies courage, moral strength, and extraordinary resistance in the face of the violence and subjugation of slavery. She signifies as both a historic and iconic figure. Of the roughly dozen monuments dedicated to Tubman between 1994–2019, most show single figures of the abolitionist as hero; a few are multi-figure monuments

7. HUMEZ, Jean M. *Harriet Tubman: The Life and the Life Stories*. University of Wisconsin Press, 2003; CLINTON, Catherine. *Harriet Tubman: The Road to Freedom*. Boston: Little, Brown, 2004; LARSON, Kate Clifford. *Bound for the Promised Land: Harriet Tubman, Portrait of an American Hero*. New York: One World, Ballantine Books, 2004 and LOWRY, Beverly. *Harriet Tubman: Imagining a Life*. New York: Doubleday, 2007. In addition to these biographies, scholars have reconsidered Tubman’s role in the Civil War, see HORTON, Lois. *Harriet Tubman and the Fight for Freedom: A Brief History with Documents*. Boston and New York: Bedford/St. Martin’s, 2013. GRIGG, Jeff W. *The Combahee River Raid: Harriet Tubman & Lowcountry Liberation*. Charleston, SC: History Press, 2014; OERTEL, Kristen T. *Harriet Tubman: Slavery, the Civil War, and Civil Rights in the 19th Century*. New York and London: Routledge, 2015.



Fig. 2—Mario CHIODO, Detail of freedom seekers from *Unwavering Courage in the Pursuit of Freedom*, 2012, Tubman-Garrett Riverfront Park, Wilmington, Delaware. Photograph by Renée Ater.

that acknowledge her as an Underground Railroad conductor (Ater 2019).

This essay explores a monument dedicated to Harriet Tubman and the Underground Railroad in Wilmington, Delaware: Mario Chiodo's *Unwavering Courage in the Pursuit of Freedom* (2012). The multi figure statue of Tubman, the white station master Thomas Garrett (1789–1871), and two freedom seekers celebrates the cooperation between black and white abolitionists in Delaware. Chiodo has translated into bronze the trope of the Moses guided by an unseen spiritual power. The artist's use of nineteenth-century source materials as well as his reliance on a sculptural style rooted in realism and romantic drama points to the problems of visualizing ordinary humans engaged in extraordinary actions. They become mythic figures. Chiodo realized an aged, otherworldly Tubman, an image of a seer gazing out beyond the everyday world, a force of nature. The sculptor represented Garrett as the bringer of light, a determined white male guide in the physical realm. Modeled as the metaphorical embodiments of the physical struggles along the Underground Railroad, the two freedom seekers, a man and a woman who endeavor to navigate the symbolic snowy embankment of the river, are portrayed as anguished and distraught.

Unwavering Courage in the Pursuit of Freedom depicts a dramatic fictive moment based on historical relationships.

The bronze monument is significant for its location at the terminus of the Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad Byway, a heritage tour that follows Tubman's freedom routes from Cambridge, Maryland to Wilmington, Delaware. *Unwavering Courage in the Pursuit of Freedom* is part of a cultural heritage landscape that highlights through architecture, markers, interpretative signs, and the land itself, the heroic efforts of Blacks (free, self-liberated and enslaved persons) and whites on the Underground Railroad. The statue's commission and installation reveals the ways in which the City of Wilmington and the State of Delaware have used monumental form tied to heritage tourism to lay claim to the ideals of interracial cooperation along the historic Underground Railroad and to inspire visitors to think about freedom and social justice within the context of their lives in the present.

Unwavering Courage in the Pursuit of Freedom is located in the eponymous Tubman-Garrett Riverfront Park, along the banks of the Christina River in Wilmington. The city was an important stop on the Underground Railroad, linking those seeking refuge from Maryland to conductors and safe houses on their arduous journey through Pennsylvania and New York to Canada. Garrett provided Tubman invaluable assistance as she traveled with freedom seekers from Maryland to neighboring Delaware, both slave states. She used Garrett's home as a refuge numerous times, and he provided funds and goods for her missions.

Araminta 'Minty' Ross was born into slavery in March 1822 on a plantation on the water River in Dorchester County, Maryland. From the age of six until she was twenty-seven (1828–1849), Tubman's owner, Edward Brodess, hired her out as a weaver, domestic, field hand, dockworker, and lumberjack. In 1844, Araminta married freedman John Tubman, adopted the name Harriet and took her husband's last name. Her marriage to a free person was not unusual on the Eastern Shore. In Maryland, free Blacks and enslaved persons lived side by side in a complicated society 'divided against itself,' in the words of historian Barbara Jeanne Fields.⁸ By 1850, 4,282 enslaved and 3,848 free persons resided in Dorchester County alongside 10,747 whites,

8. FIELDS, Barbara. *Slavery and Freedom on the Middle Ground: Maryland During the Nineteenth Century*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1985; 6.

with African Americans making up 43% of the population. Kate Clifford Larson notes that a 'dense community of slave and free families, brought together by virtue of their work patterns and the social interactions of their white masters and employers formed Tubman's social world (Larson 2004: 58).

When Brodess died in 1849, Tubman feared being sold. Despite deep ties to her community, she planned and succeeded in her solo escape to Philadelphia in the same year. From 1850–1860, she guided family and friends from Maryland to freedom in New York and Canada. Bradford asserted that Tubman made nineteen trips and assisted 300 people to freedom; we now know this to be untrue (Bradford 1869: 21). Through careful research and documentation, Larson has established that Tubman made thirteen trips to the area near Cambridge, Maryland, and brought approximately seventy people to freedom. Larson also notes that Tubman gave instructions to another fifty or sixty who made their way north.⁹

Relying on her own deep knowledge of the terrain and waterways of the Eastern Shore of Maryland, Tubman assisted her family and friends to freedom. Her southern Underground Railroad routes included the Choptank River and the Chesapeake Bay. Sailing to Baltimore numerous times, she was never intercepted despite the busyness of the Bay and its inlets. Overland routes through Maryland included the small villages of Preston, Federalsburg, East New Market, Denton, and Greensboro. In Delaware, Tubman moved through Willow Grove, Camden, Dover, Smyrna, and New Castle. In these small towns, Tubman received shelter from ardent abolitionists and Underground Railroad stationmasters, including the Reverend Samuel Green in East New Market and Henry Cogwill in Willow Grove.

Tubman's main northern Underground Railroad route included stops in Wilmington, Delaware; Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; New York City; and small towns in upstate New York. She found allies in Albany, Syracuse, Auburn, Rochester, and Buffalo. Tubman relied on this network of individuals to provide safe houses, clothing, food, and money for the freedom seekers. Those who helped her were both everyday people whose names are lost to us and well-known abolitionists and conductors including Thomas Garrett (Wilmington, DE), Lucretia Coffin Mott (Philadelphia, PA), William Still (Philadelphia,

9. LARSON, Kate Clifford. 'Harriet Tubman and the Underground Railroad,' Harriet Tubman Biography, www.harriettubmanbiography.com/TubmansUGRR.html. Accessed on August 27, 2020.

PA), Sydney Howard Gay (New York City, NY), Stephen and Harriet Myers (Albany, NY), William and Frances Seward (Auburn, NY), and Frederick Douglass (Rochester, NY).¹⁰

One of the most active station masters on the Underground Railroad, Garrett is recorded to have helped over 2,000 men, women, and children to freedom. Born into a Quaker family, Garrett grew up in Upper Darby, Pennsylvania. His family's abolitionist stance shaped him: as a young man, he helped a family servant—a free woman—escape from men trying to sell her into slavery. His family also used their homestead as an Underground Railroad station. In 1822, he and his second wife, Rachel Mendenhall, the daughter of an abolitionist, settled in Wilmington. For the next forty years, Garrett served as a station master on the Underground Railroad in the city where he lived in the Quaker Hill neighborhood, not far from the Christina River. Offering freedom seekers sanctuary in his hardware store and home, Garrett also aided them in their onward trip to Philadelphia and New York City.¹¹

California-based artist Mario Chiodo¹² designed and executed *Unwavering Courage in the Pursuit of Freedom*. He describes the bronze multi figure statue as a '360-degree storytelling monument' rooted in the indomitable courage of Tubman, Garrett, and the two freedom seekers.¹³ Chiodo cites Italian Renaissance sculptor and painter Michelangelo (1475–1564) and French modern sculptor Auguste Rodin (1840–1917) as influential on his style. The artist admires

10. 'Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad Routes,' 1897, Wilbur H. Siebert Collection, Ohio History Connection, <https://www.ohiomemory.org/digital/collection/siebert/id/26,822/rec/2>. Accessed on August 27, 2020.

11. 'Thomas Garrett,' Quakers in the World, www.quakersintheworld.org/quakers-in-action/122/Thomas-Garrett. Accessed on August 27, 2020; PARKER, Mariah. 'Thomas Garrett,' Quakers and Slavery, Friends Historical Library at Swarthmore College and Haverford College Quaker & Special Collections, <http://web.tricolib.brynmawr.edu/speccoll/quakersandslavery/commentary/people/garrett.php>. Accessed on August 27, 2020; and McGOWEN, James A. *Station Master on the Underground Railroad: The Life and Letters of Thomas Garrett*, rev. ed. Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Co., 2005; 98–114.

12. Founder of *Illusioe Concepts*, Mario Chiodo began his career crafting Halloween masks and props including Star Wars movie collectibles. In 1997, he established Chiodo Art in order to focus on fine art production including memorial design and portraiture. See 'About,' Mario Chiodo Art, <https://www.chiodoart.com/about.html>. Accessed August 27, 2020.

13. 'Unwavering Courage in the Pursuit of Freedom,' CODA: Collaboration of Design + Art, <https://www.codaworx.com/project/unwavering-courage-in-the-pursuit-of-freedom-mayor-s-cultural-affairs-office>. Accessed on August 27, 2020.

the way in which Michelangelo conveyed gesture and emotion in three-dimensional form. Chiodo's rigorous handling of materials and his portrayal of the psychological states mirror Rodin's modernist, emphatic forms. At the time of the Wilmington commission, Chiodo was envisioning a series of monumental portraits for his *Remember Them: Champions of Humanity* monument. Located in the Henry J. Kaiser Memorial Park in Oakland, California, the 25 feet high by 52 feet long sculpture depicts twenty-five civil rights activists, including Frederick Douglass, Abraham Lincoln, Chief Joseph, Mother Teresa, Thich Nhat Hahn, Rosa Parks, and Nelson Mandela.¹⁴ An epic-sized memorial, *Remember Them* underscores Chiodo's interest in portraiture and representing a diverse group of social change agents in an idealistic monument language. With this idealism, Chiodo understands his creations as forms of pedagogy, whose purpose is to educate the general public about those who dedicated themselves to social justice and civil rights.

In *Unwavering Courage in the Pursuit of Freedom*, Chiodo deployed a visual language rooted in dynamic gesture, swirling forms, and emotional expression to convey the human drama of Tubman and Garrett's efforts on the Underground Railroad. For the discussion here, I focus on the representations of Tubman and Garrett.¹⁵ The artist created a monument that suggests a known historical relationship but one which portrays nonetheless a fictitious drama. Chiodo based his image of Tubman on nineteenth-century photographs and on Bradford's biographies. The artist embraced Bradford's biographies, a literal reading of Tubman as presented in the text as a religious visionary with physical and mystical strength. The multiplicity of personalities and performances that Celeste-Marie Bernier rightly attributes to Tubman are not realized in the Wilmington monument (Bernier 2012; 302). Instead, Chiodo allegorizes Tubman. Portraying

14. 'Remember Them: Champions of Humanity,' Remember Them, www.remember-them.org/monument-facts.html. Accessed on August 27, 2020.

15. Chiodo created his monument to be seasonally specific, representing the harsh winter conditions. Two freedom seekers, a man and woman, are below Tubman. With strained neck muscles and biceps flexed, the man, who is bare chested, reaches behind him to hold onto the arm of a young woman, who looks fatigued and stressed. Lying almost fully extended out, the young woman dressed in a head wrap and dress is barefoot, the sole of her vulnerable foot exposed to the viewer. The edge of Tubman's cloth (the flowing bronze) covers the back of the woman, suggesting that although the woman may be in agony, Tubman as a force of nature will ensure this young couple arrives to safety and freedom.



Fig. 3—Mario CHIDO, Detail of Harriet Tubman with baby from *Unwavering Courage in the Pursuit of Freedom*, 2012, Tubman-Garrett Riverfront Park, Wilmington, Delaware. Photograph by Renée Ater.

the iconic Tubman, the artist modeled an older, deeply experienced woman with brow furrowed, heavy jowls, eyes focused on a distant point, and strangely, barefoot. In her steady forward gaze, Tubman looks to something which we cannot see, represented as the visionary Moses of her people. She is rendered at the apex of the monument's pyramidal composition, holding a sleeping baby in her arms.¹⁶ Her importance is also underscored through Chiodo's use of an enormous undulating flow of bronze that envelopes the two freedom seekers and Garrett. In visualizing Tubman's labor on the Underground Railroad, Chiodo sculpted Tubman as a force of nature, embodied as the flow of the river and the wind, unstoppable in her radical, liberatory actions. She is an allegory of the protector and seer with supernatural powers.

The sculptor also chose to show Tubman armed with a half-cocked revolver tucked into the side of her dress, above the feet of the swaddled baby. In a passage from *Scenes in the Life of Harriet Tubman*, Bradford described that Tubman carried a revolver to protect freedom seekers from the 'perils from enemies, [and] "perils among false brethren"' (1869: 24). By showing Tubman with a revolver, Chiodo emphasized her fearlessness in moving freedom seekers through the landscape, and her willingness to protect those with her from both outside forces and internal fear. The revolver hints at the violence inherent in the escape from slavery along the Underground Railroad.

Although Chiodo prioritized the figure of Tubman, he created a monument that highlights the importance of Garrett to Tubman's mission. Compositionally, the white abolitionist is placed below Tubman. Dressed in a top hat, suit, and overcoat, Garrett's arms are wide open; he grasps a lantern in one hand, and with his other hand, points towards Quaker Hill. His visage is based on nineteenth-century photographs of Garrett and reveal an older white man with a hawk-like nose, puffiness under his eyes, and mouth open in speech, seemingly urging Tubman and the freedom seekers onward. The intensity of his gaze matches what we see on Tubman's countenance, but to a different end. Tubman sees beyond to some compelling higher force; Garrett sees in the present moment of action. Chiodo

16. Sarah Bradford recounted that Tubman gave babies paregoric, a tincture of opium, so they would fall asleep and not awaken on the journey. Paregoric was a household remedy in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries which was widely used to control diarrhea in adults and children, as an expectorant and cough medicine, and as an analgesic (Bradford 1886: 33).



Fig. 4—Mario CHIODO, Detail of Thomas Garrett from *Unwavering Courage in the Pursuit of Freedom*, 2012, Tubman-Garrett Riverfront Park, Wilmington, Delaware. Photograph by Renée Ater.

secured Garrett into the side of the monument by forming a wide triangle with his legs, the back leg straight and the forward leg bent at the knee, anchored to the embankment at the base. This crouching position suggests forward momentum and underscores the urgency of the scene. Garrett's physicality is further emphasized through the objects near and around his feet. A small barrel and crate from his store rest near him, and behind Garrett, a pile of shoes intended for the formerly enslaved.¹⁷ While Tubman navigates through interior vision, Garrett, with his lantern, lights the way, a metaphor for the enlightened white male.

Because of the historical importance of Tubman and Garrett to the City of Wilmington, city officials desired a visual marker of the interracial collaboration between the two that would anchor the Tubman-Garrett Riverfront Park and serve as the end point of the Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad Byway in Delaware. The byway in Delaware is a 95-mile route (153 kilometers) which 'includes sites

17. Garrett and William Still of Philadelphia organized much needed supplies for freedom seekers, who often lacked adequate clothing and footwear. See Larson 2004: 103.

and pathways associated with Harriet Tubman, as well as sites and pathways associated with other documented Underground Railroad travelers and conductors.¹⁸ The Delaware Byway begins where the Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad Byway in Maryland ends at the Willow Grove Road, nearing Sandtown, Kent County, and is also part of the National Park Service's National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom.

The commission of the monument tells us about the concerns and interests of city and state officials and the way in which they envisioned the potential of the monument to transform local residents' understanding of the city and signal to tourists the importance of Wilmington to the legacy of the Underground Railroad. In 2011, the City of Wilmington, in conjunction with the Riverfront Development Corporation of Delaware, and the Riverfront Wilmington Sculpture Selection Committee, announced their intentions for a monument in the park. In a well-thought out, albeit ambitious, request for proposals, the city argued for the power of public art 'to transform how we perceive the places where we live, work, and play; to enliven our public spaces; to awaken our thinking about our history; and to change our communities into environments that invite interaction.'¹⁹ The city envisioned that the public art project 'should also symbolize and recognize the importance and necessity of whites and Blacks working together on the Underground Railroad to aid fugitive slaves escaping the South in search of freedom in the North' (*Tubman-Garrett Riverfront Park* 2011: 5). Believing in the power of public art to catalyze conversations about history and interracial cooperation in the past and present, the city also understood monument building as having the potential to create 'a deeper understanding of place' (*Tubman-Garrett*

18. The Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad Byway in Delaware, nominated in 2009 and designated in 2010, is part of the larger Delaware Byway system. Byways are selected 'based on their scenic, historic, recreational, cultural, natural, and/or archeological intrinsic qualities.' Tourism is key to their development and promotion. 'Delaware Byways,' Delaware Department of Transportation, <https://deldot.gov/Programs/byways/index.shtml?dc=about> and 'Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad Byway,' Delaware Department of Transportation, <https://deldot.gov/Programs/byways/index.shtml?dc=railroad>. Accessed on August 27, 2020. See also 'Our History,' National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom, National Park Service, <https://www.nps.gov/orgs/1205/our-history.htm>. Accessed on August 27, 2020.

19. *Tubman-Garrett Riverfront Park, Wilmington, Delaware, Request for Qualifications (RFQ)/Request for Proposal (RFP), Public Sculpture for the TGRP, Requested by: Riverfront Wilmington Sculpture Committee, May 19, 2011; 5*, https://artist.callfor-entry.org/fair_plans/793.pdf. Accessed on August 27, 2020.

Riverfront Park 2011: 5). This hopeful language points to how local officials often view public art as a means to rectify problems of public space, access, exclusion, and tough history.

Several groups sponsored the public commission of the sculpture including the Mayor's Office of the City of Wilmington; the Mayor's Office of Cultural Affairs; the Wilmington Art Commission; and the Riverfront Development Corporation of Delaware. The City of Wilmington's Percent for Art Funds along with private funders provided the funds for the commission with a budget of approximately \$200,000, 'inclusive of all artist/designer expenses, insurance, research, design, travel, fabrication, construction, transportation, materials, fees, and installation costs' (*Tubman-Garrett Riverfront Park* 2011: 1). In the request for proposals, the city also outlined their objectives for the proposed monument. They hoped the new park and monument would 'attract cultural tourism to the city' and 'make the city more dynamic.' In addition, stakeholders saw the monument as a 'major component of the city's economic development strategy.' Lastly, the city articulated that the monument would 'provide a creative historical marker that celebrated the role that Harriet Tubman and Thomas Garrett played in the Underground Railroad movement' (*Tubman-Garrett Riverfront Park* 2011: 5). As outlined, three out of the four objectives were related to tourism and economic development. The fourth objective pointed to a larger effort by the State of Delaware to claim its abolitionist history despite its painful legacy of slavery.

Historically and geographically, Delaware was at the crossroads of slavery and freedom. Its close location to Maryland and Virginia and to the urban centers of Philadelphia and New York City made it significant to the Underground Railroad. Before European colonists arrived in the 1600s, Native Americans occupied the land including the Lenni Lenape, Susquehanna, and the Nanticoke. In 1631 the Dutch established a colony at Lewes on the Atlantic coast. Within a few years, the colony changed hands to the Swedish (1638), then back to the Dutch (1655), and finally transferred to the English (1664). Administered by the English as part of New York, Delaware was ceded to Pennsylvania in 1682. Only in 1787 did Delaware become a state. Along with white settlers, the first enslaved person arrived in the colony early on, in 1639. Similar to Maryland, Delaware's population of enslaved persons was relatively small with slave owners hiring out their work force. The colony/state also had a free African American population who actively engaged in abolitionist activities and the

struggle for equal rights. Throughout the nineteenth century and like other U.S. border states during the Civil War, citizens struggled over the issue of slavery and secession from the Union. Delaware never formally seceded from the Union, but it also did not emancipate its enslaved population until 1865.²⁰

This complicated history of slavery in Delaware was not the focus of the national design competition for the monument. Instead, the Riverfront Wilmington Sculpture Committee encouraged artists to consider the partnership between Tubman and Garrett and ‘the commitment and sacrifices they made for the cause of emancipation’ (*Tubman-Garrett Riverfront Park* 2011: 14). After reviewing the proposals and maquettes, the committee selected Chiodo to create the monument for the Tubman-Garrett Riverfront Park.²¹ In line with the committee’s demands, the artist notes that his dramatic design ‘embodies the perseverance and sacrifice of Harriet Tubman and those who assisted her in leading enslaved African Americans out of the South, a dangerous, clandestine operation known as the Underground Railroad’ (*Unwavering Courage in the Pursuit of Freedom*). At the dedication of the monument on October 3, 2012, then-Mayor James M. Baker underscored the importance of the monument to heritage tourism and history: ‘Wilmingtonians and visitors alike can enjoy a beautifully executed piece of art while at the same time learning about our City’s heritage—namely our important link to the Underground Railroad.’²²

The Underground Railroad in the United States was a covert network of people, routes, meeting places, transportation, and safe houses that stretched across the Midwestern, Northeastern and Southern United States during the nineteenth century. Enslaved people used this clandestine system to escape from bondage in the

20. MONROE, John A. *History of Delaware*. 5th ed. Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2006, 13–143 and NEWTON, James E. ‘Black Americans in Delaware: An Overview,’ in *A History of African Americans of Delaware and Maryland’s Eastern Shore*. Caroline MARKS, ed. <https://www1.udel.edu/BlackHistory/overview.html>. Accessed on September 14, 2020.

21. ‘Unwavering Courage in the Pursuit of Freedom,’ CODA: Collaboration of Design + Art, <https://www.codaworx.com/project/unwavering-courage-in-the-pursuit-of-freedom-mayor-s-cultural-affairs-office>. Accessed on August 27, 2020.

22. Wilmington Mayor James M. Baker quoted in Jim Weaver, ‘Underground Railroad Conductor Harriet Tubman and Her Friend Thomas Garrett,’ *New York Trend NYC*, April 22, 2013, <http://newyorktrendnyc.com/2013/04/22/underground-railroad-conductor-harriett-tubman-and-her-friend-thomas-garrett/>. Accessed on August 27, 2020.

South into free states in the North and to Canada.²³ 'The picture that emerges from recent studies is not of the highly organized system with tunnels, codes, and clearly defined routes and stations of popular lore,' states Eric Foner, 'but of an interlocking series of local networks, each of whose fortunes rose and fell over time' (2015: 15). This loose network helped thousands of enslaved persons to freedom. As Fergus M. Bordewich proposes, 'in practice, the underground was a model of democracy in action, operating in most areas with a minimum of central direction and a maximum of grassroots involvement, and with only one strategic goal: to provide aid to any fugitive slave who asked for it' (2006: 5). What is clear is that Tubman did not originate the Underground Railroad but stepped into an established system.

Historians believe the term 'Underground Railroad' first appeared in the 1830s. By the 1840s, David W. Blight writes that the phrase was in common usage to indicate 'a clandestine system for runaway slaves.'²⁴ The conductors, stationmasters, and operatives of the Underground Railroad were Black and white abolitionists, the formerly enslaved, and members of free communities. New histories of the Underground Railroad reveal the importance of involvement in this system. In her place-based study of Underground Railroad networks in Illinois, Indiana, and Ohio, Cheryl Janifer LaRoche explores 'the relationship between free communities, the church, and the Underground Railroad,' to argue that Blacks, enslaved and free,

23. See STILL, William. *The Underground Railroad: A Record of Facts, Authentic Narratives, Letters, &c.* Philadelphia: Porter & Coates, 1872. Project Gutenberg Ebook, www.gutenberg.org/files/15263/15263-h/15263-h.htm; SIEBERT, Wilbur H. *The Underground Railroad from Slavery to Freedom: A Comprehensive History.* New York: The Macmillan Company, 1898. Project Gutenberg Ebook, www.gutenberg.org/files/49038/49038-h/49038-h.htm; BLOCKSON, Charles L. *The Underground Railroad: First Person Narratives of Escapes to Freedom in the North.* New York: Prentice Hall Press, 1987; HAGEDORN, Ann. *Beyond the River: The Untold Heroes of the Underground Railroad.* New York: Simon and Schuster, 2002; BLIGHT, David W. ed. *Passages to Freedom: The Underground Railroad in History and Memory.* Washington, DC: Smithsonian Books in association with the National Underground Railroad Freedom Center, 2004; BORDEWICH, Fergus M. *Bound for Canaan: The Epic Story of the Underground Railroad, America's First Civil Rights Movement.* New York: Amistad, 2006; BLACKETT, Richard J. M. *Making Freedom: The Underground Railroad and the Politics of Slavery.* Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2013 and FONER, Eric. *Gateway to Freedom: The Hidden History of the Underground Railroad.* New York and London: W.W. Norton & Company, 2015.

24. BLIGHT, David W. 'Introduction: The Underground Railroad in History and Memory,' in Blight 2004: 3.

operated as main actors in the central drama of the Underground Railroad.²⁵ Foregrounding activism in the story of abolition, Manisha Sinha too notes: 'The history of abolition is an integrated story even though it is usually not told in that manner. Black abolitionists were integral to the broader, interracial milieu of the movement.'²⁶

Today, cities and local communities have embraced this history, reproducing it through heritage tourism and in the memorial landscape. In the United States, heritage tourism is tied to historic sites and places of historical importance, often defined and approved by federal, state, and local governments and agencies. Heritage tourism is institutionally complex and intricate, argues Hyung yu Park:

Heritage tourism is predominantly concerned with exploring both material (tangible) and immaterial (intangible) remnants of the past. Importantly, heritage is not a fixed or static outcome of the past, particularly when it is presented and represented in the context of tourism. Heritage is constantly reconstructed and reinterpreted in an attempt to meet the specific demands of tourists and reflect the socio-cultural changes of the contemporary world.²⁷

Maryland, Delaware, and New York have put significant resources behind heritage tourism related to Tubman and former Underground Railroad sites in their states. These contemporary routes follow the land and water ways that Tubman utilized and include the Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad Byway in Maryland and Delaware, and the New York State Network to Freedom—Underground Railroad across central New York. As Diane Miller argues, 'The Underground Railroad offers a primary example of cooperation across racial, ethnic, socioeconomic, gender, and religious lines in the pursuit of self-determination. Relevant now more than ever, this connection to our shared heritage is vital to forging a shared goal of self-identity, community, and national unity.'²⁸ These states lay claim to the Underground Railroad and Tubman and Garrett as central actors in the fight against slavery. They see this 'shared heritage'

25. LAROCHE, Cheryl Janifer. *Free Black Communities and the Underground Railroad: The Geography of Resistance*. Champaign, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2013; 1.

26. SINHA, Manisha. *The Slave's Cause: A History of Abolition*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2016; 2.

27. PARK, Hyung yu. *Heritage Tourism*. New York and London: Routledge, 2014; 1.

28. MILLER, Diane. 'The Places and Communities of the Underground Railroad: The National Park Service Network to Freedom,' in *Blight* 2004: 289.

as essential to making change in the present related to interracial cooperation, equity, civil rights, and social justice.

The representation of the visionary and the action-oriented white station master in *Unwavering Courage in the Pursuit of Freedom* plays a part in Wilmington's understanding of its place within the broader history of slavery and the Underground Railroad. The city's tourism office presents Tubman and her supporters' efforts as 'the most dramatic protest action against slavery in United States history'²⁹ Being part of this narrative allows the civic leaders of Wilmington to temper its history of segregation and racial violence: a violent race riot in November 1919; and another riot and military occupation of Wilmington in April 1968, following the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Both these events had long-term effects on the city with white flight to the suburbs and entrenched socioeconomic segregation in the city. The State of Delaware's recuperation of the Underground Railroad promotes the state's abolitionist roots while acknowledging that slavery formed the foundation of the economic, social, and legal life of the state. According to David L. Ames, the director of the Center for Historic Architecture and Design at the University of Delaware, 'a goal of the Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad Byway is to give today's traveler a sense of the experience of freedom seekers trying to find their way north through an unfamiliar Delaware landscape fraught with risks.'³⁰ Driving the byway and moving through the former landscape of slavery, the tourist traveler becomes part of a historic quest for freedom within the frame of the contemporary world.

Monuments carry significant meaning for those that build and encounter them. They visualize what we think is important about the past and who we deem significant to celebrate and recognize. 'Monuments establish events as both deserving of glorification and worth remembering,' writes Marita Sturken. 'They are built to demand that events and persons be perpetually, if not eternally, remembered, and they have been constructed throughout history to signify a sense of

29. 'Wilmington & the Brandywine Valley: Delaware's Underground Railroad,' Greater Wilmington Convention & Visitors Bureau, <https://www.visitwilmingtonde.com/plan/itineraries/underground-railroad/>. Accessed on August 27, 2020.

30. AMES David L. *et al.*, 'Delaware Scenic and Historic Highway Nomination Application: Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad Byway,' page 10, Center for Historic Architecture and Design, University of Delaware, June 2009, <http://udspace.udel.edu/handle/19,716/3411>. Accessed on August 27, 2020.

permanence.' She also proposes that monuments are 'a form of pedagogy; they instruct on historical values, persons, and events, designating those that should be passed on, returned to, and learned from.'³¹ Monuments are also 'a nexus of reclamation and invention significant to the making of history and identity,' avers Petrina Dacres.³² Following the Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad Byway allows engagement with the past through the demarcation of sites considered worthy of remembering. Arriving at the end of the byway in Wilmington, tourists/travelers encounter *Unwavering Courage in the Pursuit of Freedom*, a symbolic and mythic representation of the historic interracial cooperation of Tubman and Garrett on the Underground Railroad; a monument meant to provide heroic models for contemporary world problem-solving.

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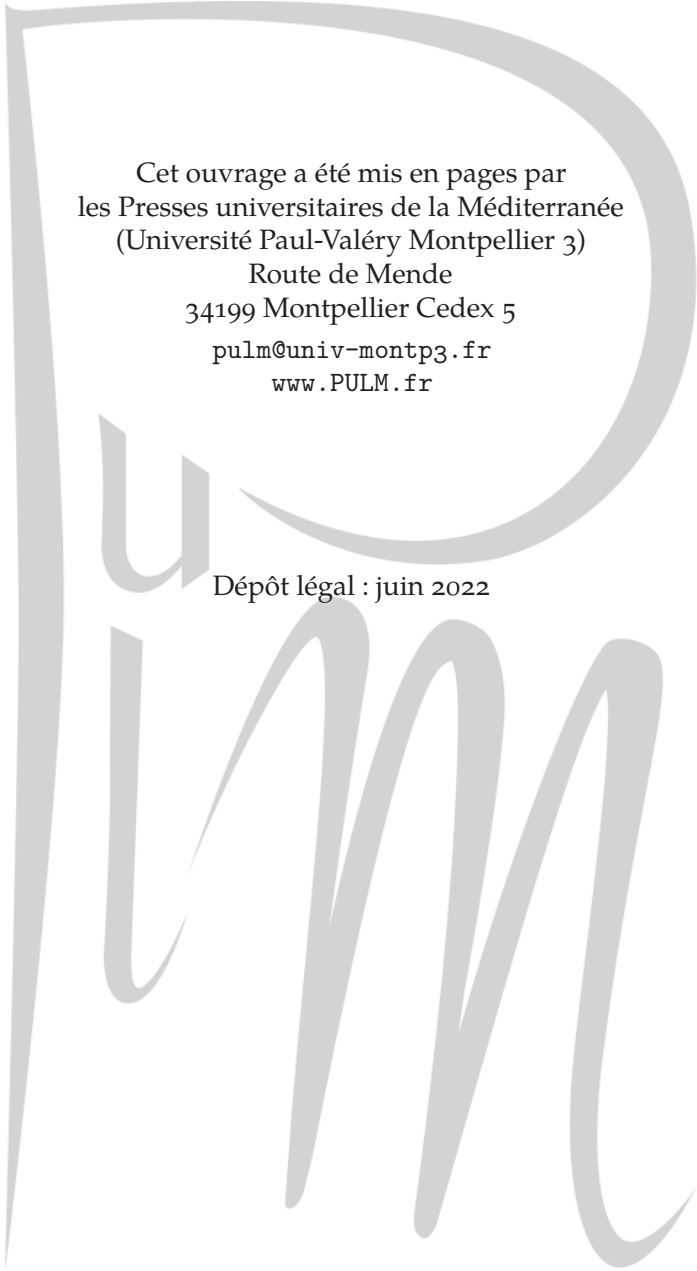
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Cet ouvrage a été mis en pages par
les Presses universitaires de la Méditerranée
(Université Paul-Valéry Montpellier 3)
Route de Mende
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Dépôt légal : juin 2022

