

start

Pick up the freedom journey of the Underground Railroad through South Mountain just south of the Mason Dixon Line. Many escaping enslaved used the Potomac River to move closer to the safe houses of the north. Knoxville, MD, located along the Potomac River and adjacent to the Appalachian Trail, is a good point of access to the natural travel corridor of the South Mountain, passing from Maryland into Pennsylvania.



William Switala, researcher and author, chronicles a route from Boonsboro, MD to Waynesboro, PA in his series of Underground Railroad books. Escaping enslaved could depart the Potomac River near Knoxville and move into the shelter of the South Mountain heading toward Boonsboro, onto Smithsburg, and then the Waynesboro area. This route runs along the South Mountain range and passes from the southern corridor into the northern. Ringgold Pike in Maryland (MD 418) crosses the Mason Dixon Line and becomes Midvale Road (State Route 2007) and runs through Rouzerville. This is Shockey farmland. The Jacob Shockey farm was a key Underground Railroad station in the shadow of South Mountain, near Waynesboro in what is today Rouzerville. Many escaped enslaved slept their first night on free soil at the Jacob Shockey farm.

From the Shockey Farm, travelers headed north to the next stop, the farm of Hiram and Catherine Wertz in Quincy. Bear left on PA 16 W, make a quick right on Old Forge Road, Travel approximately 3 miles, and turn left onto Mentzer Gap Road. In 1.5 miles, bear right to stay on Mentzer Gap and turn right onto PA-997 N (Anthony Highway) in 1.6 miles. The Wertz Farm is on the left across from the sign for Knouse orchard land.



Crossing the Mason Dixon Line and touching the free soil of Pennsylvania did not mean that danger did not exist. Local residents also had southern sympathies and bounty hunters also recognized the value of the South Mountain land-scape. Daniel Logan, a known bounty hunter and slave catcher, lived on Slabtown Road in Mont Alto, about three miles from the Wertz Farm. Continue on 997 N and turn right on Slabtown Road. The Logan House is about two miles on the left; it is a red brick. Continue to the intersection of Route 233 and turn left to travel back to PA 997 N.

For those fleeing to freedom, Thaddeus Stevens Ironworks and Little Africa, a black settlement in the Greenwood area, lay ahead. Both freemen and escaped enslaved worked and lived near Caledonia Ironworks and newly incoming runaways could seek refuge and easily blend into the community. Turn right onto PA 997, and travel about 5 miles to US Route 30. The areas traditionally known as Greenwood and Brownsville are the locations of Little Africa. Stevens, an attorney and politician, was more than an abolitionist. He was a proponent of equality. Stevens used his ironworks and the construction of the Tapeworm railway to aid escaping enslaved. The only time the ironworks made a profit was two years into the Civil War. Shortly thereafter, Confederate General Jubal Early burned the ironworks. From PA 997, turn right onto US 30 E, and turn left at Route 233 to enter Caledonia State Park. Explore the remnants of Thaddeus Stevens' Ironworks, a National Park Service Network to Freedom site.

At this point, escapees could continue north or move east. If heading east, freedom seekers would travel to Cashtown Inn and follow the Tapeworm Railroad bed to the College of Gettysburg, where Jack Hopkins, a college custodian would meet them to conduct them to safe hiding places such as his home at the corner of Washington and High Streets in Gettysburg or possibly a stone home along Chambersburg Road, owned by Thaddeus Stevens.

To follow the route to Cashtown, turn left onto US 30 E. Go 3 miles and turn right on Old Route 30 to Cashtown Inn, about 4 miles ahead.

Freedom seekers also moved to the Yellow Hill settlement where Edward and Annie Mathews guided them to the Quaker family of Cyrus Greist, who would pass them to other Quakers in the York Springs area.

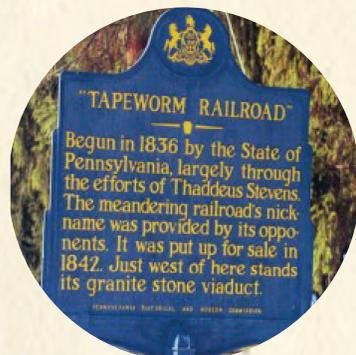
To visit Yellow Hill, continue on Old Route 30 to the first intersection after Cashtown Inn, and turn left onto High Street. At the flashing light, go straight, crossing US Route 30. Continue on Cashtown Road through Arendtsville, where the road becomes Arendtsville Road. Turn left onto Yellow Hill Road and travel about a mile to the cemetery.

Alternately, escaping enslaved could travel north to Pine Grove Furnace, using the natural landscape to conceal their movement. The Ironmaster's Mansion at Pine Grove is believed to have housed escaping runaways.

From Caledonia State Park, turn left onto PA 233 N. Continue straight, following Hunters Rd., when PA 233 bears to left (about 13 miles). Pine Grove is 3 miles ahead on the left. Take time to explore the park areas. From Pine Grove, freedom seekers could move to Mount Holly Springs, and onto Boiling Springs where Daniel Kaufman could hide them in the marshy areas of the Yellow Breeches Creek until he could guide them to Petersburg Road, which took them to Carlisle.

Turn right on Pine Grove Road. Travel about 5 miles and turn left onto PA 34 N, passing through Mount Holly Springs. At PA 174 E (Old York Road), turn right. In four miles, turn right on Front Street. Kaufman House is 301 Front.

The route from Boonsboro to Waynesboro, identified in the Underground Railroad books of William Switala, passes from Waynesboro through the Mont Alto area and onto Mechanicsburg. No route was safe all the time, so multiple routes converged and connected to keep people moving north. The natural protection of the South Mountain corridor ends between Boiling Springs and Mechanicsburg. Yet, only eight miles ahead lies the Susquehanna River, and more opportunities for secret passage on the journey to freedom.





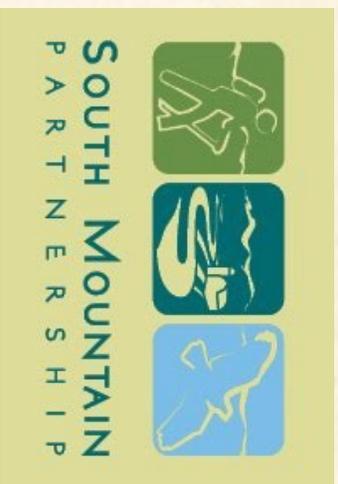
The Franklin County Visitors Bureau is a partner of the South Mountain Partnership, a unified group of private citizens, businesses, not for profit organizations and governmental organizations working to protect, reserve and enhance the cultural and natural assets of the South Mountain Landscape in Central Pennsylvania.

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▶ Drive or bike from the Mason Dixon Line to Boiling Springs

The South Mountain Landscape in Pennsylvania is at the northern end of the Blue Ridge Mountains, a narrow mountain range extending through Virginia and Maryland into Pennsylvania. South Mountain is an interstate greenway, a sort of natural thoroughfare. It is a large, linear corridor six to seven miles wide, linking Pennsylvania with southern natural areas. It extends about 40 miles in a northeast to southwest direction connecting Franklin, Cumberland, Adams, and York Counties. The Appalachian Trail extends through the South Mountain corridor.

Many of the trails of South Mountain link into the footpaths of the Native Americans and have long been thoroughfares. This natural route beckoned to escaping enslaved as they traveled along the secret passage known as the Underground Railroad. By following the landscape of South Mountain, escaping enslaved crossed the Mason Dixon Line and into Pennsylvania, remaining in local communities or moving further north and even into Canada.



South Mountain Partnership
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SouthMountainCI.Blogspot.com



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