



# The Quaker Hill Quill



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***Atoning for an Injustice of 168 Years Ago: Delaware Governor Jack Markell  
Pardons Underground Railroad Conductor Samuel D. Burris***  
*Robin L. Krawitz, Director, Graduate Program in Historic Preservation, Delaware State University and  
President, Underground Railroad Coalition of Delaware*



**Samuel D. Burris**

On November 2, 2015, in the Old State House in Dover, Governor Jack Markell granted a posthumous pardon to Samuel D. Burris, setting aside his two convictions for "Enticing Away Slaves." Language in the pardon includes the following:

**Whereas, in remembrance of the renunciation of slavery and the slave trade that divided America, and will forever be the original sin of our great state and nation, as stated by Mr. Burris "... liberty is the word with me, and I ... consider the lowest condition in life, with freedom attending it, is better than the most exalted station under the restraints of slavery."**

The quote used in the pardon came from a letter that Burris wrote to a friend in Nantucket who forwarded it on to William Lloyd Garrison to be published in *The Liberator*. Written during the period

of Burris's incarceration as punishment for the first of two convictions for the crime of "Enticing Away Slaves," the letter is a moving account of what he was facing as his true punishment, being sold as a servant for 14 years.

Here is a summary of his life: Samuel D. Burris (1813-1863) was born a free man of color in the Willow Grove area of western Kent County. His parents, George and Mary Burrows, were also free people and lived in the same area. He was married to Catherine, who was from Maryland, and they had five children. In 1845, Burris first surfaces in documentation working as a Underground Railroad "Conductor," that is, a person who would physically lead people from safe place to safe place through the state.

Delaware was a divided landscape, and in the mid-19th C. that meant slaveholding interests and freedom-promoting interests were present across the state. For example, the Camden area in Kent County was dominated by freedom-promoting interests because it was a center for the Quaker Community in southern Delaware and held an early Anti-Slavery Methodist population as well.

**Also in this issue:**

*The Quill* is pleased to have contributions from three of the areas's foremost scholars on the underground railroad and black history in the 19th C., Dr. Peter Dalleo, Robin Krawitz, and Dr. James E. Newton.

- "Two Letters to the *National Anti-Slavery Standard* from Wilmington, 1865," ed.

Peter Dalleo

- "Thomas Garrett's First Case," Robin Krawitz
- "A View from the Hill," editorial by new QHHPF Executive Director Ashley Cloud.
- "James Newton Recalls and Extols UGRR in Delaware," by Ashley Cloud



**The Old State House in Dover, where Burris was convicted --and where he was pardoned. [en.wikipedia.org](http://en.wikipedia.org)**

But that didn't mean everyone there was against slavery on principle or in practice. The Middletown area in New Castle County had very large farms that were run with slave labor, but there were still people who were anti-slavery on that landscape as well. Burris's job was to navigate those in his charge through the slave-holding areas to the pockets of assistance, the safe houses along the way. The first documented instance of his work came in 1845 when Burris guided a large party of those escaping to the north from Queen Anne's County in Maryland. It was early December, and they had traveled all night through a snow storm to a safe house between Middletown and Cantwell's Bridge, what is now Odessa. Burris had not been to the farm of Quaker John Hunn before, and this was the first time that John Hunn had participated in harboring those on their way north. The party being guided included four adult men and the family of Samuel and Emeline Hawkins with their 6 children. Emeline and her children were claimed as slaves of two individuals from Maryland, and the notices of their escape had already reached Middletown. The group was spotted and the ensuing activity resulted in the prosecution of John Hunn and Thomas Garrett for their roles in abetting the escape. Burris was not implicated in this prosecution, but he appears in the narrative that John Hunn recounts in the 1872 *The Underground Railroad...* by William Still.

The prosecution of Samuel D. Burris began in

1847 when he was caught assisting an enslaved woman named Maria Matthews trying to get on a steamship to gain her escape. The ship was coming to Isaac Short's Tavern near the mouth of Duck Creek. Warrants for his arrest were issued and he was put in jail in Dover in July 1847. Bail was set at \$1600 and raised through pledges of community members, both black and white. But then he was charged with additional crimes, the escape of two enslaved people from the estate of Thomas Slaughter in the ownership of Robert McGonigle. Another two-count indictment was filed for the escape of the property of John Clark. Some of the warrants for his arrest were issued to the Sheriff of Camden, New Jersey, indicating that was his residence. The bail was increased to \$5000, well beyond what could be raised. This meant that Burris had to stay in jail until his trial dates.

Three cases in the October Term of the Court of General Sessions were set: Case 12- State vs. Samuel D. Burris- Indictment for Enticing Away Slaves (Robert McGonigle's Property); Case 13- State vs. Samuel D. Burris- Indictment for Enticing Away Slaves (Jonathan S. Green's Property); and Case 23- State vs. Samuel D. Burris- Indictment for Enticing Away Slaves (John Clark's Property). Burris plead *non cul* (not guilty) in all three cases.

Burris's lawyer requested a change of venue from Kent County to the Court located in New Castle. The request was made, as the documents state, because of the general ill feeling toward him and the issue in Kent County and he felt he couldn't get a fair trial. The judge denied the request and the trials went on as scheduled in Dover. The trials are held as follows: Cases 13 & 23 were tried on November 1, 1847 and the case with the largest number of witnesses, Case 12 was tried on November 2nd. The verdicts were: Case 12- guilty; Case 13- not guilty; Case 23- first count not guilty, second count guilty.

The sentencing phase was carried out on November 5th. Sentencing for Case 12: "Therefore it is considered by the Court that the said defendant shall forfeit and pay to the State of Delaware of the sum of two hundred and fifty dollars: that he shall pay the costs of this prosecution; and that he shall be imprisoned for the term of six months commencing on this fifth day of November instant and ending on the fifth day of May, which will be in the year of our Lord One Thousand Eight Hundred and Forty Eight: and that at the expiration of the said term of imprisonment he

shall be disposed of as a servant to the highest and best bidder for the period of seven years. And he is now committed to the custody of the Sheriff of Kent County until this judgment of the Court be fully carried into execution.” Sentencing for Case 23: “Therefore it is considered by the Court here that the said defendant shall forfeit and pay to the State of Delaware the sum of two hundred and fifty dollars: that he shall pay the costs of this prosecution: and that he shall be imprisoned for the term of four months commencing on the sixth day of May which will be in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and forty eight and ending on the sixth day of September then next ensuing: and that at the expiration of the said term of imprisonment he shall be disposed of as a servant to the highest and best bidder for the period of seven years. And he is committed to the Custody of the Sheriff of Kent County until this judgment of the Court be fully carried into execution.”

During this period Burris wrote the following letter to an unknown recipient in Nantucket. Here is the transcription from *The Liberator*, June 30, 1848:

#### LETTER FROM ANOTHER MARTYR IN THE CAUSE OF FREEDOM

*The following letter is from Samuel D. Burris, a worthy colored citizen of Wilmington, Delaware, who was sentenced some time since to a cruel imprisonment in the Penitentiary of that State, on charge and conviction of having remembered those in bonds as bound with them, by giving aid and counsel to certain wretched slaves, who attempted to make their escape to Canada. Hear this martyr!*

Dover, (Delaware,), 3d mo 29th, 1848.

Dear Brother:

*I now write a few words to you from my loathsome prison. I beg to be excused for not writing to you before; but as things have come so near to an awful crisis, I deem it my duty to inform all of my Christian brethren of my present condition, which I suppose you may have long since heard, that I was arrested on the 10th day of July last, charged with being concerned in helping slaves to regain their freedom, which in the state of Delaware is a crime next to that of murder, if committed by a colored man. I was also committed to prison, and there I remained, handcuffed and leg-ironed, until near the middle of August, during which time I suffered, if possible, more than death. I then gave bail, in the sum of one thousand six hundred dollars, for my appearance at the Court of Quarter Sessions, which was to commence on the 25th of October, 1847; but my adversaries being informed of the same, came forward*

*and demanded special bail for damage in the sum of five thousand five hundred dollars more, which they knew I could not give, on account of which I was thrust back into prison—there to stay and suffer until court, and then go to trial, unprepared, as the slaveholders intended I should do. Court came on, and without sufficient preparation, I was forced in for trial; and as might have been expected, I was convicted on two indictments, and sentenced on both to pay five hundred dollars and costs, and prison charges, and be imprisoned ten months, and be sold as a slave for a period of fourteen years; to be exported, transferred or assigned over to slave-traders, or whatever else the inhuman purchaser may choose to do with me. Of course I have been here in prison ever since, looking forward, with an anxious mind, to the day in which the sale of my body in the first case will take place, which is the fifth of May next, 1849—after which I am to be brought back to prison, to suffer four months longer, and then be sold a second time, on the second case. Each case requires that I should be sold to the highest bidder or bidders, for a period of seven years—to serve as a slave to all intents and purposes. From this, you may imagine how much true Christianity exists in the State of Delaware, especially when we consider that the Church, which holds the balance of power in this State, is altogether responsible for the unjust punishments thus inflicted on us poor colored people. This day there was a slave trader from Baltimore to see me, and to find out when the sale of my body was to take place. He stated that I need not think hard of him for wishing to buy me, for he intended, if he was the purchaser, to sell me to no man who he thought would not use me well, if I behaved well, and that I ought not to have been convicted from the evidence that the slaveholders produced against me; but so it was. He also said that the evidence adduced me here would not have convicted me in Maryland, etc. This trader’s name was Mass Fountain, who has shipped 165 human beings from Slaughter’s great slave market of New Orleans. He visits the Courts of Delaware regularly twice a year, in order to buy all the convicts which the State holds for sale, to be exported.*

*Now you may say that this trader is an inhuman tyrant, because he buys and sells human beings; but you will recollect that this man is only doing a lawful business, encouraged and protected by the laws of the State of Delaware—laws which were enacted by men professing to be Christians—laws which are esteemed and held sacred by men, who say they are called by the Great Spirit to go forth and declare the word of truth and justice to a dying people—men who pretend to say that they are opposed to sin and unrighteousness of any and every kind; yet they uphold and applaud those slave traffickers, and those inhuman and unmerciful leeches, in their soul-damning conduct, by making the colored people legal subjects for their bloody*



*principles to feast upon; for whatever is lawful, of course ought to be right, and whatever right is justice, although ignorance of the law excuses no one. I have suffered enough to know, that the constructions of an unjust law ought to excuse any one. My dear brother, you will hear from me no more until after my first sale. I mean the sale of my body, the first time; and then you will hear through the Pennsylvania Freeman what my distresses are, and what has become of my body. I propose writing to all my friends and brethren before the day comes on which I am to be sold.*

*I hope you will not think hard of me for not writing to you before, as I did not wish to give my friends any uneasiness on account of my awful situation. I would be glad to hear from you, if you get this letter in time to mail one for me by the 15th of April; and if so, you will perhaps hear from me again by letter.*

*The notable slave-trader mentioned above was simple enough to try to persuade me to have at least four months of my imprisonment taken off, so that he could buy and take me immediately. He said it would be the best thing I could do—and if I would, he would buy me and sell me to some good man in Virginia, who would make an overseer of me, and give me a chance to get my wife and children, etc. And although I did not tell him what I thought, yet I intended that he might keep all of his happiness to himself—for liberty is the word with me, and I would not consent to be President upon any terms that he mentioned, for I consider the lowest condition of life, with freedom attending it, is better than the most exalted station under the restraints of slavery. I have felt the bitter effects of oppression, and although I have had one of the mildest men that ever was a slaveholder, for sheriff of the prison in which I am confined, and have had the good fortune to have one of the tenderest and most Christian-hearted women in charge of the jail, that ever was a mistress, yet I cannot forbear taking all opportunities to express great abhorrence of servitude, and my passion for liberty, upon any terms whatsoever. I deem a state of slavery, with whatever seeming grandeur and happiness it may be attended, is yet so contrary to common honesty, and is so precarious a thing, that he must want sense, courage, and every virtue, who can prefer it in his choice. A man who has so little sense of honor as to bear to be a slave, when it is in his power to prevent or redress it, would make no scruple to cut the throats of his fellow-creatures, or do any other wickedness that the wanton and unbridled will of a tyrannical master may suggest.*

*I have now given to you, dear brother, a short sketch or outline of my sentiments, concerning the institution of slavery; and now I beg to close my remarks without any expectation of ever seeing you again in this world; and let me further add, that my religion teaches me to believe, that as the condition of my heart is, when our mortal life*

*leaves us, so judgment will find our never-dying souls; and if so, what will be the condition of those who lived and died in neglect of that golden rule, do unto others as you would that others should do unto you? Is there a slave-dealer who would be willing to be made a slave himself? I say, no.*

*I have said this much, and leave comments for you; while I remain your affectionate brother in the Lord until death,*

*Samuel D. Burns [Burris]*

The first phase of his punishment ended in early May 1848 when he was to sold as a servant. In a dramatic turn of events, Burris was not sold to the slave trader Mass Fountain as he feared, but was purchased for the exorbitant amount of \$500 by Isaac Flint, an abolitionist from Wilmington. A relieved Burris was returned to jail to serve the next four months, but the stress of his situation had been hard on him. On June 16, 1847 Flint sent a letter with what he stated was a petition with 180 signatures of citizens of Wilmington who sought a pardon for the remainder of his sentence and subsequent sale, due to ill health of Burris in confinement. Flint promised to take Burris out of the state once free. But the request for a pardon was not acted upon, and Burris stayed in jail until the end of September, 1848. There is no indication in the records that he was sold a second time.

But that wasn't the end. On February 16, 1849, just a few months later, a petition was filed with the State Legislature that stated: Twenty-nine residents of the Camden area seek a special legislative act to punish the "notorious Samuel D. Burris, well known to a large portion of the community whose conduct is highly reprehensible ... being a notorious character, who is going about the county they believe persuading and enticing slaves Servants and apprentices to run away and leave their Homes, to the great disadvantage of the Community." They pointed out that Burris "was accused, apprehended, tried and found Guilty agreeable to Law, after which he was Sold as Servant, and bot [sic!] by some men who suffered him to go about amongst as and continue the same unjustifiable employment." The petitioners "request Your Honors to pass some Law to reach his Case and effectually stop such conduct." In 1849, the Delaware Legislature passed a law stating that anyone convicted of the crime of "Enticing Away Slaves" who was punished and then was caught doing it again was subject to 60 lashes, well laid on.

Burris had already relocated his family out of the State of Delaware by 1849. In fact they may have been living in Camden, NJ, by 1847 when the warrants for Burris's arrest were issued, placing him there. Burris and his family appear in the 1850 census in Philadelphia, and shortly thereafter they moved to San Francisco, California, where they show up in city directories and the 1860 census. Burris died there in 1863 at the age of 50.

Research continues into understanding more about the life and work of Samuel D. Burris, both in Delaware and in California. The pardon signed by Governor Markell in the photo below sums it up quite well: "... **this posthumous pardon is an extraordinary act in recognition of a historic wrong that will not be corrected by a single stroke of a pen, but corrects the legal precedent regarding Mr. Burris' acts not as a criminal but as acts of freedom and bravery in the face of injustice.**"



*Governor Jack Markel signing the Burris pardon with, among others, Atlanta resident Ocea Thomas, a descendant of Samuel D. Burris. Ms. Thomas is the person who actually applied for the Pardon, with significant support and historical documentation by the author Dr. Robin Krawitz. The photo was taken by Robert Seeley, a direct descendant of Burris's friend and UGRR colleague Thomas Garrett. Seeley, along with others, was instrumental in raising awareness and popular support for the pardon petition. He is a member of the Quaker Hill Historic Preservation Foundation Advisory Board.*

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The photograph from which the lithograph on page 1 was created was provided by George Burris, son of Samuel D. Burris. This lithograph is from Still, William. *The Underground Railroad: A Record of Facts, Authentic Narrative, Letters, &c.,...* Philadelphia: Porter & Coates, 1871. Electronic Edition published on line: <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/15263/15263-h/15263-h.htm#frontis>

## ***Two Letters--by and about Thomas Garrett*** *edited with commentary by Dr. Peter Dalleo*

*The following letters from Thomas Garrett and Rev. Calvin Fairbank, sent in 1865 to Oliver Johnson, editor of the **National Anti-Slavery Standard**, show how these activists promoted their goal of abolishing slavery and achieving equality. For example, reformers used the press, novels such as **Uncle Tom's Cabin**, and speakers such as Frederick Douglass to reach out directly to white supporters and free black church-goers. Both the Garrett and the Fairbank families were well aware of the risks and consequences of their participation in more covert actions.*

*Finally, these letters shed light on racial and gender tensions in Delaware, then a slave state but, in the view of their authors, nearing the end of slavery.*

*Peter Dalleo*



**Calvin Fairbank**

*engraving from ThePandorasociety.com*

Wilmington, De. 2 mo. 27<sup>th</sup> 1865

Anti-Slavery Lectures in Wilmington, Delaware

Dear Friend Oliver Johnson:

We had with us on the evening of the 17<sup>th</sup> ult. Frederick Douglass, who gave a lecture at the Institute

on "Equality before the law," to an appreciative audience about one-third was colored. This was the first time that colored people ever occupied the floor of the building, and to the credit of our people, there was no manifestation of dissatisfaction; all passed pleasantly.

The evening of the 23d, our friend the Rev. Calvin Fairbank, who has served so many long years in the Kentucky penitentiary for aiding a female slave to escape from the hell of slavery, gave a history of his sufferings for the cause of humanity during the twenty years and more that he was in prison. In several of the churches, in the First-Day at the close of service, notice was read of his lecture to be given at the time above, and I went to two of the churches of the colored people and gave a short history of his sufferings while in prison for their race, and invited all who felt a desire to do so to attend the meeting and occupy a body of the house. They responded nobly to the invitation, and the large Hall was half filled by our colored friends who appeared to help appreciate the privilege.

The speaker was introduced by Reverend Mr. Wiswell, a clergyman of the Presbyterian Church, in a neat and appropriate speech. The speaker was not well but nonetheless, he gave a thrilling account of the sufferings he had endured during his long incarceration. His noble wife occupied the platform with him, and so far as I know, she and the female who accompanied her were the first women I have known to occupy the platform in that Hall. Surely there is progress in the city of Wilmington, if the legislature in Dover does not stand still. Our friend Fairbank and his wife left this morning for Baltimore and Washington, where they expect to remain till the 4<sup>th</sup> of the month.

Thy Friend

THOS. GARRETT

Letter from Calvin Fairbank at Thomas Garrett's  
 Wilmington, Del. Feb. 24<sup>th</sup>  
 To the Editor of the *National Anti-Slavery Standard*

My heart has rejoiced for once upon an imminent disappointment. I am not disappointed in "Simeon Halliday," but in public sentiment here.



Narrow, bigoted, prejudiced, short-sighted as is the letter of the law and the present law-making power now in session in Dover, there is an upward tendency in this city and country. One month ago, the colored people had never occupied the same part of the public lecture hall with the whites. But through the constant labors of the old veteran, Thos. Garrett, last week the galleries were closed and both colors occupied the body of the house. Last night I held a meeting in the city, which was full and enthusiastic, the Institute being well filled. The colored people occupied one

side of the floor and the white people the other.

Delaware is even coming to the confessional,

and Thomas Garrett said this morning, "I have no more to do now. I can rest from my labors, and my work will follow me. Some of the proslavery people how suffer the throes of despair. They die hard. But they die. There is not a slave in the city and there are but few in the county. The next legislature will be favorable to the Prohibitory Amendment."

I am as ever

CALVIN FAIRBANK

*National Anti-Slavery Standard*, March 11, 1865

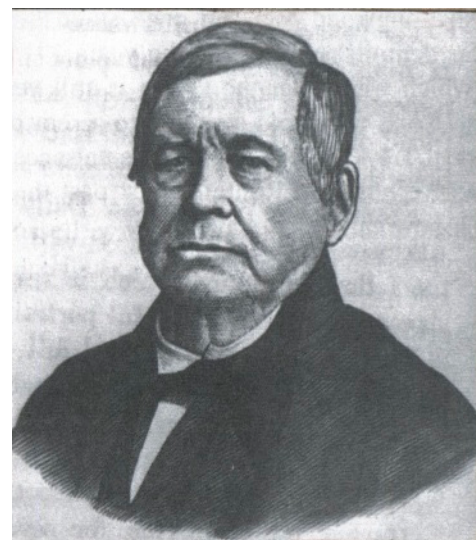
## ***Sharing Our Finds: Thomas Garrett's First Legal Case on Behalf of "God's Poor"***

*edited with commentary by Robin Krawitz*

Early in March 1870, Thomas Garrett hurt his knee getting out of his carriage. He was 81 years old and this painful injury had him hobbling around on crutches and staying close to home. It caused him to miss the two-pronged celebration honoring the closing of the American Anti-Slavery Society and the passage of the Fifteenth Amendment. The event was being held in New York City on April 9th. In a letter to Aaron M. Powell, publisher of the *National Anti-Slavery Standard*,<sup>1</sup> Garrett explained his injury. He went on to say that he very sorry to miss it because wanted to be there to see his colleagues in this long struggle and celebrate, stating, "I rejoice that I have lived to see this day, when the colored people of this favored land, by law, have equal privileges with the most favored." Writing about the celebration of the obsolescence of this cause then brought him to reminisce about his first effort to stop injustice as a member of the Acting Committee of the Delaware Abolition Society. He and colleague William Chandler helped with the prosecution of a perpetrator of a most heinous act, the sale of free Black children into slavery.

In 1823, William Kennedy was being brought before the Grand Jury of the New Castle County Court of General Sessions and Gaol Delivery by Attorney General James Rogers for selling two young African American girls, Maney Johnson and Mariah Peterson, to a slave trader in Maryland the previous year. These two girls, and a 14 year old boy whose name was not recorded, were free people of color bound to William

Kennedy. Kennedy said the children ran away, but the boy escaped the trap set for them at Waithman's Tavern in Port Penn. The Acting Committee of the Delaware Abolition Society was made aware of the case and appointed Thomas Garrett and William Chandler to look into it. From the list of questions the two men provided Attorney Rogers, it is clear that the men had interviewed witnesses and obtained detailed, pertinent information.



**Thomas Garrett**

*reprinted from William Still's The Underground Railroad*

The list of questions survives in the petitions file in the records of the June Term of the Court of General Sessions and Gaol Delivery. Here is a

transcript<sup>2</sup>:

*Wilmington, June 4<sup>th</sup> 1823*

*Mr. Rogers,*

*As the Grand Jury may not be acquainted with the transactions Relative to William Kennedy, two Black girls which was said to have runaway- the subscribers as two of the Acting Committee of the Abolition Society, Beg leave to offer to the grand jury such questions as may lead to the detection of the parties concerns---*

*The following questions may be put to*

*Waithman of Port Penn:*

*Was William Kennedy's two black girls, Maney Johnson and Maria Peterson at your house on or about the 18<sup>th</sup> of March last? Did you hire them of Mr. Kennedy or were they at your house without his knowledge? (ans. Don't know)*

*Did they leave your house with your permission?*

*Did you expect they had gone home or runaway when you missed them?*

*Did you or any of your family treat the girls with liquor the evening before they went away---*

*Were they not tied in your house on that evening and take away by John Connor and James McVaine---*

*Was W. Kennedy at your house on the evening the girls went missing---*

*Was John Conner there that evening?*

*Was there not a black boy of W. Kennedy's about 12 or 14 years of age- left at your house that evening at your request?*

*Did W. Kennedy inquire of you about the girls after they went missing----*

*Did he ever threaten to prosecute you on their account?*

*These questions may be put to James McVain*

*Were you at Waithman's Tavern in Port Penn on or about the evening of the 18<sup>th</sup> of March last---*

*Was John Conner there on that evening?*

*Was William Kennedy there the same evening?*

*Did you see two girls there, said to be W. Kennedys?*

*Did you not help tie them or see them tied at Waithman's that evening- while the hind girl held the door too-----*

*Was there not a black boy tied the same evening, who got loose and made his escape-*

*Did you not put one horse to the carriage with Conner and go with him and the girls down C[o]untry*

*Did you not leave Conner Sick Down country and return home.----*

*If McVain should deny the above he may be asked—*

*If he did not inform two persons who called on him one day where he was ploughing- that he had been at Port Penn on the evening the girls were taken away and that Conner put one horse to the carriage and him the other and took the girls down Country and that he left Conner Sick and Conner returned home without selling the girls-----*

*Did you not inform them that Conner had a bill of sale from W. Kennedy for the girls and that you believed he would show it to the [?] if they called on him.*

*If you think it proper you can lay this paper before the grand jury.*

*Yours with Respect,*

*William Chandler*

*Thomas Garrett, Jun.*

A note attached to the letter to Attorney Rogers states: *William Baily Connors mother in law says that Connor left his pocket book [illegible], that she opened it and saw a bill of sale executed by Kennedy to Connor for the boy & Girls. Esqr. Jefferson also says that McVain told him that he had saw the bill of sale executed by Kennedy to Connor. [End Transcript]*

According to the docket book for the Court of General Sessions, this case did not proceed. But that does not limit the use or important of this document in trying to understand the world that created ardent abolitionists like Thomas Garrett. The only individual mentioned in the case to appear in the court docket was James Waithman, who in 1824 is listed as having applied to the Court for a tavern license and that



recommendation was to be forwarded to the Governor for approval.<sup>3</sup>

Bringing perpetrators of the crime of kidnapping to justice through the Delaware Courts was very difficult and is an area worth of further study. For example, the same year that the case Thomas Garrett was involved in was brought before the Grand Jury, a Free Black woman named Ann Green left a \$100 bond with the court to insure she would testify on behalf of the State about Jacob Watson, a free black man from Red Lion Hundred who had joined a kidnapping gang who assaulted her in her home with the intent to kidnap her. The perpetrators were indicted by the grand jury, but the outcome of the prosecution is not recorded in the docket book.

When we think of the issue of kidnapping of free people of color in Delaware, the first person that usually comes to mind is Lucreatia "Patty" Cannon, whose life and times became fodder for several works of fiction. She was a real person who became a symbol the evil of a much larger epidemic faced by free people of color across the state of Delaware and elsewhere in this Country. Recent scholarship like Eric Foner's new book on the work of Sidney Howard Gay of the American Anti-Slavery Society, *Gateway to Freedom: The Hidden History of the Underground Railroad*<sup>4</sup> includes a history of kidnapping and the effect on the abolition community, both Black and White, in New York City. This issue is clearly a story of depth and breath, ripe for further study.

Hidden in Delaware Public Archives are many documents of important value, which, when put in context, help tell a much larger and more complicated story of life in Delaware for Free Blacks. It is important we share our finds with those also on our journey to understand this period in history and these important individuals.

1 *The National Anti-Slavery Standard*. April 17, 1870. Page 1. "Letter From Thomas Garrett." Final Issue.

2 The original document is found in the petitions folder of the court documents for June 1823 Term of the Court of General Sessions and Gaol Delivery. RG2805. Some spelling in the transcription has been edited by the author.

3 Docket Books, New Castle County Court of General Sessions and Gaol Delivery (microfilm) RG 2805.

4 Foner, Eric. *Gateway to Freedom: The Hidden History of the Underground Railroad*. W.W. Norton & Company: New York, NY. 2015.

## Upcoming Events:

- Film/ Educational programs (2015-6): film version of Colin Toomey's *Better Angels* trilogy.
- Multi-church tour (2015-6): We will hold a multi-church tour of the following: St. Peter's, Grace Church, Wilmington Friends Meeting, Tabernacle, and Temple United.
- UGRR workshops for children (2015-6): For 20 years we have been offering 3 or more Underground Railroad workshops for children in January and February
- Delaware Historical Society, "Parade and Story Time." Following the Wilmington Jaycee's 52nd annual Christmas Parade, local teachers, policeman, and fireman will read stories for children. Celebrate the coming winter with stories and crafts Delaware History Museum, Sat. Nov. 28, Noon.
- Delaware Historical Society film screening and program: "Voices of the Elders: Stories of African Americans in Delaware," by Dr. Lozelle J. DeLuz, at the DHS Center for African American Heritage, Thu., Dec. 10, 2015, 5:30 reception; 6:30 screening.
- Delaware Humanities Forum presentation, "Martin Luther King, Jr.," Dr. James Newton, at Claymont Library, Thu., Jan 14, 2016, 6:00 pm
- DHF presentation, "Unlocking the History of an Old House," Mike Dixon, at Claymont Library, Jan. 21, 2016, 6:00 pm.
- DHF presentation, "The Orphan Train Movement of 1854-1929," Donna Aviles, at Hockessin Public Library, Sun, Jan. 24, 2016, 1:30 pm.
- DHF presentation: "From Africa to the Americas via Music, Song, Dance, and Stories," at Claymont Library, Thu, Feb 4, 2016, 6:00 pm.
- DHF presentation: "Black Delaware Participation in the Civil War," Ron Whittington, at Newark Free Library, Sun, Feb 21, 2016, 3:30 pm.

## *A View from the Hill*--Ashley Cloud, Executive Director Quaker Hill Historic Preservation Foundation

Dear *Quill* Readers,

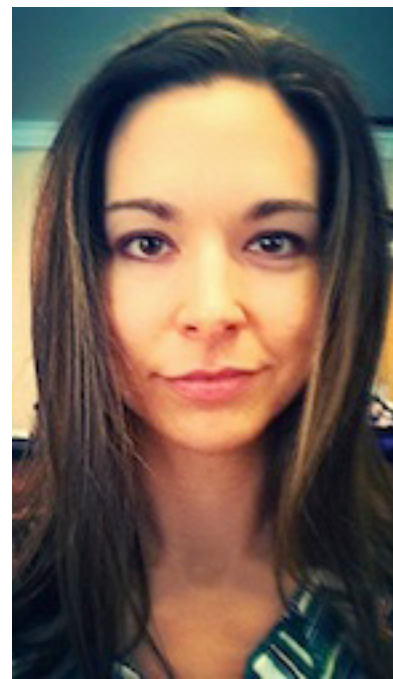
Welcome to the latest edition of our publication! Allow me to introduce myself as the new Executive Director for the Quaker Hill Historic Preservation Foundation. I follow in the respected footsteps of Mary Starkweather-White and am thankful for her many years of dedicated service and for her selflessness in sharing her wisdom with me as I take on the position. I cannot tell you how excited I am to be a part of the Foundation's tradition of historic preservation and education. As a resident of Wilmington for over ten years, I have found my love for our complex city to have grown exponentially, as I learn more about its storied past and find myself dedicated to ensuring that Quaker Hill remains a vibrant thread in its colorful tapestry.

2016 promises to be an exciting year for the Foundation, the neighborhood, and our city. Our friends at the Meeting House and St. Peter's Cathedral will be celebrating their respective Bicentennials, and the Foundation will be there promoting and celebrating with them. Next year also marks the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the National Historic Preservation Act [of 1966]. We are working with Kim Burdick and Preservation50 to commemorate this milestone by sponsoring a statewide Sacred Places Conference here in Wilmington. We hope that every historic church in the state will participate in the conference to learn more about how to tap into resources to maintain their magnificent structures and to raise awareness of the history they hold. The Foundation will also provide tours of the historic churches within our neighborhood.

The coming year will also see the Foundation strengthen existing relationships and build new ones to fulfill better our historic preservation mission and to gain a wider platform for our education efforts. We are partnering with the Harriet Tubman Byway initiative to provide tours of Quaker Hill to Byway participants arriving at the Meeting House leg of the trail. Hopefully this will encourage them to further explore our city and all it has to offer, whether it be lunch on Market Street, a visit with to the Delaware Historical Society, a Riverfront attraction, a show at the Grand or Queen, or taking advantage of our growing arts scene. The Creative District project continues to invest in our neighborhood by purchasing historic properties with the intention of attracting homeowners/artists who will make their residence here in Quaker Hill, contribute to the restoration of these beautiful buildings, and create a thriving business and arts scene. We hope to partner with them in engaging existing and future Quaker Hill residents by sharing the history of the neighborhood and their homes. The Foundation has also found an active supporter in the Downtown Visions organization, which has done much to promote our meetings and speakers via their various social media platforms. We look forward to continuing that relationship as our 2016 event calendar takes shape, enabling us to reach a wider audience for our tours, lectures, and Underground Railroad workshops.

All this being said, we cannot fulfill our goals without the support and participation of our past, present and future members and the neighborhood community. Come see what all the fuss is about. I hope you will feel the excitement that I do when I consider the future of the Foundation and of Quaker Hill. My sincerest wish is that you will join me to honor the past and to preserve it for the future. From where I stand, the view from the Hill is full of beauty and promise.

*Photos on this page and page 11 of Dr. Newton are by Ashley Cloud.*



## ***At 4th & West Meeting Talk, Dr. James Newton Recalls and Extols the Underground Railroad in Delaware***

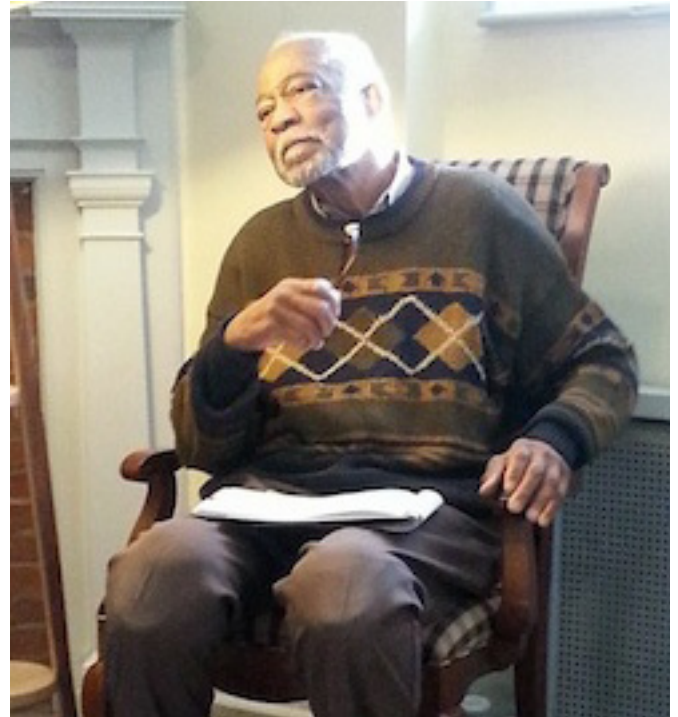
by Ashley Cloud

The Quaker Hill Historic Preservation Foundation had the privilege of hosting dynamic speaker Dr. James E. Newton Saturday November 14, 2015 at the Wilmington Friends Meeting House. Dr. Newton came to us from the Delaware Humanities Forum with an illustrious background as Professor Emeritus of the University of Delaware Black American Studies department. Dr. Newton is a respected authority on Delaware's and Thomas Garrett's crucial roles in the Underground Railroad, and he is a passionate advocate for shining a light on this history.

Dr. Newton is a New Jersey native with deep roots in Delaware. His mother is a native of Smyrna, DE. His wife brought him back to Wilmington in her career as an elementary school teacher. Upon their settlement here, Dr. Newton began teaching at the University of Delaware and remained for thirty-three years. During his tenure, he advocated the creation of the Underground Railroad Freedom Network Act and testified before Congress on its behalf. His other affiliations include the following: Chair for the Commission to Promote Racial and Cultural Diversity, member of the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, Delaware State Advisory Committee, and the boards of such local community organizations as the Walnut Street YMCA, Delaware State Arts Council, Delaware Art Museum, Tatnall School, YMCA of Delaware, and Public Allies. In 2012, Dr. Newton was given the James H. Gilliam, Sr., Chairman's Award by the Metropolitan Wilmington Urban League. The award recognizes pioneers for outstanding contributions and leadership in the fight for civil rights and a more equal and inclusive America.

Newton was the first African-American to earn a master's degree in fine arts from the University of North Carolina and received his doctorate from Illinois State University. He is the author of *The Principles of Diversity: a Handbook for a Diversity-Friendly America* and of *A Curriculum Evaluation on Student Knowledge of Afro-American Life and History*. He also co-edited *The Other Slaves: Mechanics, Artisans and Craftsmen*.

Those in attendance were regaled by Dr. Newton's fiery oratorical style, which brought history to life with depth, passion and humor. We were reminded of Delaware's nickname--the "Last Stop to Freedom," as



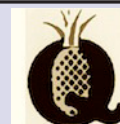
Harriet Tubman smuggled fugitive slaves to Thomas Garrett's home at 227 Shipley, knocking at all hours of the night, knowing and trusting that Garrett would provide whatever was needed to shepherd these fugitives to freedom via Chester County stationmasters and William Still in Philadelphia. Dr. Newton strongly underscored the trust maintained between the "first diversity team in U.S. history"-- of Tubman and Garrett. Their partnership allowed Garrett to defy the laws of man at the time to uphold the greater law of helping one's fellow man and assist Tubman as the "Moses of her people." Some 2,700 fugitives passed through Garrett's home in the heart of Wilmington, Delaware.

Dr. Newton reminds us of our duty to maintain the legacy of Harriet Tubman, Thomas Garrett, Samuel Burris, Isaac Flint, Ezekiel Jenkins, William Still and John Hunn: upholders of freedom with strong ties to Delaware. We must sustain that legacy through education, preservation and restoration. The Foundation is deeply appreciative of Dr. Newton for sharing his time and knowledge with us. We move forward invigorated and inspired by his words.





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Girls playing in the Meeting House yard across from Friends' School at  
Fourth and West, 1910.



Learn about Quaker Hill from  
*Images of America: Quaker Hill*

127 pages brimming with pictures and illustrations of the Quaker Hill area, (such as the one above) from its earliest days to the present. Assembled and written by QHHPF and published by Arcadia Publishing.

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