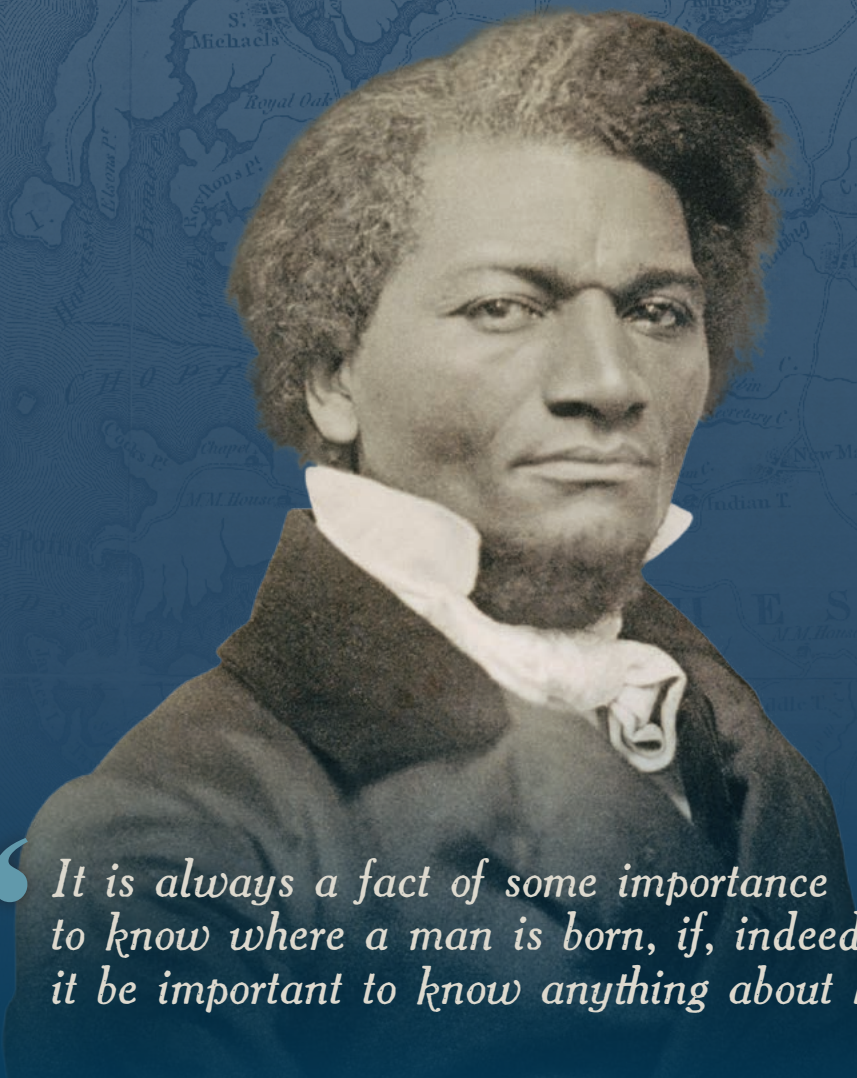


FREDERICK DOUGLASS

IN TALBOT COUNTY



“It is always a fact of some importance to know where a man is born, if, indeed, it be important to know anything about him.”

TO KNOW WHERE A MAN IS BORN

The celebration of the bicentennial of the birth of Frederick Douglass inspired a desire in Talbot County, Maryland, for deeper understanding of his formative years and the mark he left on this place. In his book *My Bondage and My Freedom*, Douglass remarks on how important it is to understand where a man is born and raised.

“
It is always a fact of some importance to know where a man is born, if, indeed, it be important to know anything about him.”

The “fact of some importance” about Frederick Douglass is his 1818 birth on Tuckahoe Creek in Talbot County (pronounced TALL-but). Born to an enslaved mother who named him Frederick Augustus Washington Bailey, he was part of the fifth generation of Baileys in Talbot County — a lineage that continues today. Of his father, he knew nothing, though he heard rumors that his father was a white man and probably his master.

In Talbot County, young Frederick Bailey endured the slave system’s many cruelties in breaking families and crushing the spirit.

PLEASE NOTE

These tours will take you on busy roads as well as many rural backroads. Use caution when pulling off the road to view a site or read from the guide. Many of the buildings associated with Frederick Douglass in Talbot County are no longer standing and their exact locations are unknown. This guide will be directing you to the approximate vicinity of the actual sites. In addition, most of the sites included are private property. Please respect property owners and do not trespass or use private lanes and driveways. In Talbot County, road names with **green signs** are public. Road names with **blue signs** are strictly private.

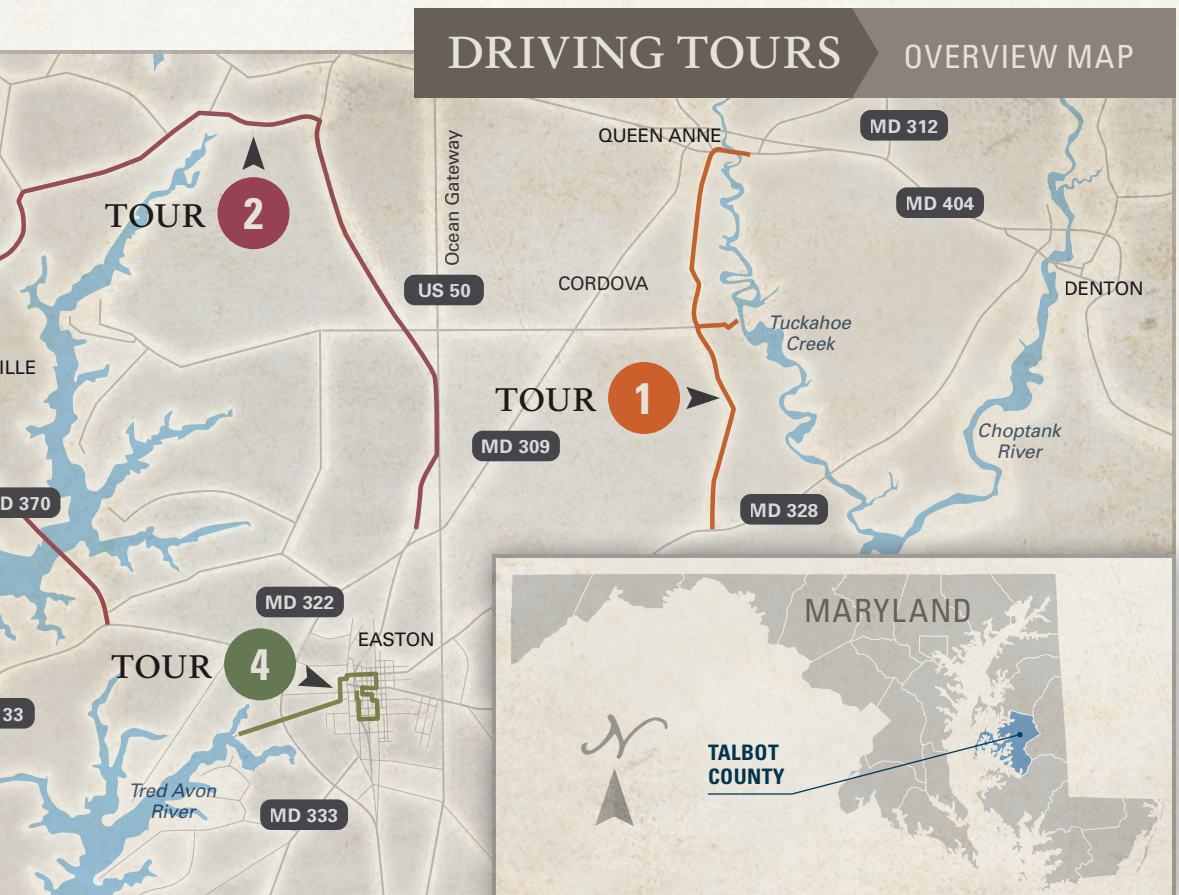


Still, he had deep roots here with lifelong family and friendship ties. He escaped from Maryland and claimed his new name in 1838 at age 20. His lifework involved retelling his story; central to his tale are the Talbot County years (1818–1826 and 1833–1836).

Talbot County's formative influence on Douglass lasted throughout his 77 years. His searing impact on the county began when he told of his bondage, self-emancipation, and transformation from slave to abolitionist orator in his 1845 autobiography, an immediate international bestseller. Using actual names and deeds of Talbot Countians, a first for the

slave narrative genre, he made shocking examples of Talbot County citizens, focusing the world's attention on the American chattel slavery system's inhumanity, immorality, and unconstitutionality.

Douglass's effect on Talbot County has been lasting. From slave to fugitive to agitator to local hero, Talbot County formed Douglass and Douglass's resistance and ideals changed Talbot County. His words continue to inspire his many local descendants and their fellow citizens.



TOUR 1

CHILDHOOD IN TUCKAHOE

Approximate drive time is one hour.



BEGIN HERE

FREDERICK DOUGLASS STATUE

**Talbot County Courthouse
11 North Washington Street,
Easton, MD**

The first courthouse was built on this site in 1712, but the central redbrick structure you see today was completed in 1794, and the wings were added in the 1950s. The Talbot County Courthouse today houses many administrative offices, as well as the District Court of Maryland for Talbot County and the County Council chambers.



A statue of Frederick Douglass by Jay Hall Carpenter, dedicated in 2011, stands on the courthouse lawn. Douglass is depicted as the fiery orator he became after leaving Talbot County. He spoke at this very courthouse during his 1878 visit, 42 years after he was jailed here for attempting to escape from slavery. Enslaved people were once bought and sold on the front steps of this building.

Douglass was jailed just west of this memorial in 1836 following an escape attempt intercepted by his master's father-in-law. In 1878, he returned to Easton for the first time since he was jailed in 1836. On that trip, he revisited the place of his birth — 12 miles east of here in the region called Tuckahoe.

“*The first experience of life with me that I now remember — and I remember it but hazily — began in the family of my grandmother and grandfather, Betsey and Isaac Baily... [M]y grandmother, especially, was held in high esteem, far higher than is the lot of most colored persons in the slave states.*”

FREDERICK DOUGLASS

MY BONDAGE AND MY FREEDOM

DRIVING NOTES

Take Goldsborough Street to U.S. Route 50. Proceed straight for six miles on Maryland Route 328 (Matthewstown Road). Turn left on Lewistown Road. The first stop is Covey's Landing. Turn right off Lewistown Road at Covey's Landing Road and drive to the parking lot at the landing.

1

COVEY'S LANDING & BOAT RAMP

32559 Covey's Landing Road, Cordova, MD

Dougllass's birthplace is less than a mile north of here on Tuckahoe Creek. In his books, he describes his first six years in great detail. The Tuckahoe and its surroundings were his first classroom. He roamed from here north to the town of Hillsborough (now the towns of Queen Anne and Hillsboro) and may have gone to Denton with his grandmother, who raised him, and who sold her fish and produce there. For a water view of Dougllass's childhood neighborhood, launch canoes or kayaks here at the public landing and head north to the Hillsboro Landing.

DRIVING NOTES

Pull to the side of the road at the Tappers Corner intersection. Look southeast towards the treeline on your right.

2

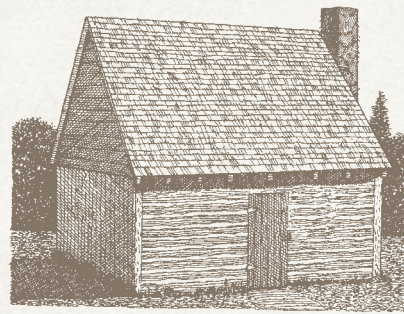
TAPPERS CORNER

Tappers Corner at Lewistown Road, Cordova, MD

Site of Aaron Anthony's Farm, Birthplace of Frederick Douglass Site Only — no buildings remain

In February 1818, Frederick Douglass was born in a cabin near here occupied by his grandmother, Betsey Bailey, and her free husband, Isaac Bailey. Betsey was enslaved by Aaron Anthony, who owned the farm and wooded ravine where their cabin was located. Slave status ran with the mother, so Betsey's children and grandchildren were also owned by Anthony.

When Douglass returned here in 1878, the cabin was gone. He knew it stood near a large cedar tree, in a clearing a short way from the "muddy shore" of the Tuckahoe where he had played and fished. Douglass collected soil to take back to Cedar Hill, his new Washington, D.C., home. The place of his beginning, this is also where his mother, Harriett Bailey, died.



“*She was a gardener as well as a fisherwoman, and remarkable for her success in keeping her seedling sweet potatoes through the months of winter... In planting-time Grandmother Betsey was sent for in all directions, simply to place the seedling potatoes in the hills or drills... [A] good crop...brought her a share of the harvest.*”

FREDERICK DOUGLASS

LIFE AND TIMES OF FREDERICK DOUGLASS

“*To me it has ever been a grief that I knew my mother so little, and have so few of her words treasured in my remembrance. I have since learned that she was the only one of all the colored people of Tuckahoe who could read... . That in any slave State a field-hand should learn to read is remarkable.*”

FREDERICK DOUGLASS

LIFE AND TIMES OF FREDERICK DOUGLASS

3

FREDERICK DOUGLASS PARK ON THE TUCKAHOE

13213 Lewistown Road, Queen Anne, MD

The park entrance is 1.7 miles north of Tappers Corner intersection.

Dedicated in 2018 to Talbot County's most famous native son, this park allows visitors to see the region's unspoiled natural condition that Douglass likely knew. The park spans more than 107 acres and encompasses a high ridge overlooking a wide bend in Tuckahoe Creek. In the coming months, interpretive panels, walking trails, and scenic overlooks will be added. Visitors can learn about the wildlife, nearby grist and saw mill, and local fishing with pin hooks and nets which fascinated him here.

“*Living thus with my grandmother, whose kindness and love stood in place of my mother's, it was some time before I knew myself to be a slave. I knew many other things before I knew that.*”

FREDERICK DOUGLASS

LIFE AND TIMES OF FREDERICK DOUGLASS

4

HILLSBORO BOAT RAMP

Main Street, Hillsboro, MD

Our Douglass tour intersects here with the Civil War Trail. You are now two-plus miles north of Frederick Douglass's birthplace as the crow flies and about four miles north as the river winds.

The view directly across the river is a 40-acre tract donated by the George C. and Naomi H. Moore family, which is now part of Frederick Douglass Park on the Tuckahoe.

An interpretive sign depicts Douglass and his wife Anna Murray Douglass, who was born free near Denton, Maryland. Though neighbors in youth, Douglass's three autobiographies relate that he met Anna in Baltimore. Shortly after his escape in 1838, which she helped to fund, they married in New York. Rev. J.W.C. Pennington, who was born enslaved in nearby Queen Anne's County, performed the ceremony.

Canoes and kayaks may be put in here for a river tour of Douglass's childhood neighborhood. Navigate south to Covey's Landing.

“*Upon receiving this [marriage] certificate ... I shouldered one part of our baggage, and Anna took up the other, and we set out forthwith to take passage on board of the steamboat John W. Richmond for Newport, on our way to New Bedford.*”

FREDERICK DOUGLASS

LIFE AND TIMES OF FREDERICK DOUGLASS

DRIVING NOTES

Tour #1 ends here. Proceed west on Maryland Route 404. Turn left on Maryland Route 309/ Cordova Road. Proceed 9.1 miles, bearing right at Black Dog Alley to U.S. Route 50. To return to Easton, take U.S. Route 50 East. For Tour # 2, cross U.S. Route 50 and turn right at the Maryland Route 622/Longwoods Road intersection with Airport Road

TOUR 2

BOYHOOD: MILES RIVER NECK PLANTATION LIFE

Approximate drive time is one hour.



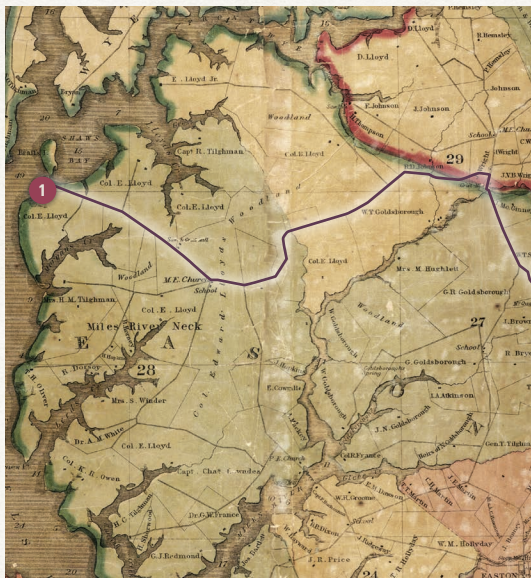
START AT THE INTERSECTION of Airport Road and Maryland Route 662 N/Longwoods Road. Proceed approximately 1.5 miles. Turn left on Sharp Road. Proceed approximately 1.4 miles to a bend in Sharp Road. Proceed straight ahead another 1.4 miles on Little Park Road. Turn left on Todds Corner Road. Continue 1.15 miles. The road becomes Bruffs Island Road. Follow Bruffs Island Road, keeping right at Gregory Road. Proceed 2.6 miles to a circular turnaround which is Site #1.



Driving through the vast landholdings of Edward Lloyd V (1779-1834), once one of the wealthiest men in Maryland, you see roads, fields, and woods largely unchanged from 1824 when Frederick Douglass (then Frederick Bailey) walked with his grandmother to Lloyd's home farm. On this route, he first experienced plantation enslavement.

LANDS OF EDWARD LLOYD V

Driving to Site #1, you have passed through many of the old Lloyd farms, encompassing thousands of acres. Note the 1858 farm map below. Most of the farms are labeled Lloyd or Tilghman (a family intermarried with the Lloyds). Douglass lived on Lloyd land from 1824 to 1826. You are at the nexus of Wye Town Farm and Great House Farm, a spot of great fascination for young Frederick Douglass.



The highlighted line shows the contemporary Site #1 route.

Edward Lloyd V was a statesman as well as an agriculturalist. He served in state and federal politics throughout his life and was governor of Maryland before Douglass's time. Lloyd was a United States Senator from 1819-1826. His property in land and enslaved people constituted a giant agribusiness operating under a plantation system, which he built from 12 to 20 farms, each with an overseer. Douglass's owner, Aaron Anthony, was Lloyd's farm superintendent — the "overseer of overseers."

Site #1 lies between Miles River and Shaw Bay on the Wye River, anchorage for the *Sally Lloyd*, a state-of-the-art, luxuriously appointed sailing sloop. It was commanded by Captain Thomas Auld, Aaron Anthony's son-in-law.

“ In the river... at a short distance from the shore, quietly lying at anchor, with her small row boat dancing at her stern, was a large sloop, the Sally Lloyd. ... These two objects, the sloop and mill, awakened as I remember, thoughts, ideas, and wondering. ”

FREDERICK DOUGLASS
MY BONDAGE AND MY FREEDOM

The sloop could also mean an ominous end for an enslaved person sold away.

“ If a slave was convicted of any high misdemeanor, became unmanageable, or evinced a determination to run away, he was brought immediately here, severely whipped, put on board the sloop, carried to Baltimore, and sold... as a warning to the slaves remaining. ”

FREDERICK DOUGLASS
LIFE AND TIMES OF FREDERICK DOUGLASS

On Wye Town Farm, facing Miles River, stood a great windmill. The symbols of freedom and self-power in the sails of the vessel and the sails of the windmill's wings recur throughout Douglass's autobiographies

“ Here, for the first time, I saw a large windmill, with its wide-sweeping white wings, a commanding object to a child's eye. This was situated on... a tract of land dividing Miles river from the Wye. I spent many hours here watching the wings of this wondrous mill. ”

FREDERICK DOUGLASS
MY BONDAGE AND MY FREEDOM

As you proceed toward Site #2, all the farmland and woods on both sides of the road are part of Wye Town, Great House, and New Design Farms. Observe the historic gates of the Great House Farm lane on your left as you pass.

PLEASE NOTE

Now known as Wye House, Great House Farm is a private residence. Do not enter the driveway, farm lanes, or private roads. The current owners will consider written requests for tours submitted by educational or charitable organizations. Requests may be submitted to the Talbot County Department of Economic Development and Tourism. Under no circumstances will requests from commercial tour operators be granted.

2

VILLAGE OF COPPERVILLE

Use caution here. Roads are narrow, and there are few places to pull over.

Copperville is a historically significant African American village near the Andrew Skinner Farm now known as Fairview. Frederick Douglass's Bailey family ancestors lived there since 1700. Ann Skinner married Aaron Anthony in 1797. Douglass's grandmother Betsey Bailey was among Ann's slaves later relocated to Anthony's farm at Tuckahoe.

After emancipation, freed slaves of the Lloyd and Skinner families purchased lots and settled Copperville. It was initially known as the village of Liberty. The first lots were purchased by Civil War veterans Solomon Deshields and John Copper in 1867.

DRIVING NOTES

Continue on Copperville Road and turn left at Tunis Mills Road. At the intersection, note Fairview Point Lane, location of the Skinner farm. Continue over Leeds Creek into Tunis Mills, a late 19th century mill town. At Leeds Landing Road, bear left to continue on Tunis Mills Road. The Oakland or Tunis Mill was located on land purchased from Lloyd. Local residents found employment at the mill after the Civil War. Tunis Mills had two stores that served Copperville residents.

3

UNIONVILLE AT ST. STEPHENS A.M.E. CHURCH

9462 Unionville Road, Easton, MD

From Tunis Mills Road, turn right on Unionville Road (Rt. 370); continue to the church on the left.

Our Douglass tour intersects here with the Civil War Trail. The village of Unionville was settled after the Civil War by formerly enslaved people from the Lloyd plantations and by free persons who had worked for Quaker abolitionist Ezekiel Cowgill, who moved to Miles River Neck from Delaware in 1856.

After the Civil War, 18 returning Union Army veterans of the United State Colored Troops (U.S.C.T.) purchased town-sized lots from Cowgill. He also sold them lots for a church and a school which formed the heart of Unionville's progressive community.

An historic marker at the church honors the soldiers and families who created their town on land worked by their ancestors for generations. U.S.C.T. markers designate their graves in the burial ground behind the church.

DRIVING NOTES

Tour #2 ends here. Follow Unionville Road South. On the south side of the bridge, a historical marker designates The Rest, home of Ann Catherine Lloyd, daughter of Edward Lloyd V and widow of confederate admiral Franklin Buchanan. Douglass visited her in 1881.

Proceed to Maryland Route 33/St. Michaels Road. Turn left to return to Easton. Turn right to continue to St. Michaels and begin Tour #3.

Dig Deeper:

To learn more about Edward Lloyd's plantation system and Douglass's observations of life here use the QR code at right.



TOUR 3

BAY HUNDRED: STRUGGLE & DETERMINATION

Approximate drive time is one hour.



On this tour, you can view farms where Douglass was rented out for hard field labor between 1834 and 1836. You will also see the open breadth of Chesapeake Bay that ultimately inspired his determination to be free. He had spent seven years in the Fells Point household of Hugh Auld, a Baltimore ship carpenter. Auld's brother Thomas owned Douglass and recalled him to St. Michaels when he was 15, a fast-growing teenager.

In urban Fells Point, Douglass could fraternize with Black and white friends, attend church, improve his reading, and move around the city. By contrast, St. Michaels in 1833 was a depressed, poor community where racial violence constrained self-improvement. Douglass helped start a Sabbath school for

Black students which was promptly broken up by a mob. Shortly afterwards, Thomas Auld sent him to the isolated area west of St. Michaels known then as the Bayside where he experienced the worst of chattel slavery. Here, Douglass became a man intent on freedom.



1

FREDERICK DOUGLASS HISTORICAL MARKER

Talbot Street at Mill Street, St. Michaels, MD

Use the Mill Street lot to park and read the historical marker located in the small roadside park. Walk one block south to the southeast corner of Talbot and Cherry Streets to begin your tour.

“*One of my greatest faults, or offenses, was that of letting [Auld’s] horse get away, and go down to the farm belonging to his father-in-law. ...the horse found there good pasturage, and I found there plenty of bread.*”

FREDERICK DOUGLASS
MY BONDAGE AND MY FREEDOM

2

SITE OF THOMAS AULD’S STORE & POST OFFICE

101 South Talbot Street, St. Michaels, MD

Thomas Auld leased a store on this corner and lived behind it, toward the harbor. Auld scrambled to make ends meet with the store. A contract to serve as postmaster helped maintain some year-round income. In 1833, Auld was married to his second wife, 22-year-old Rowena Hambleton, daughter of Bayside farmer William Hambleton. Rowena’s youth ill-suited her to manage a stepchild and four enslaved people. She attempted to run her household through meanness and stinginess while Thomas Auld deployed the lash with an inconsistency that bred disrespect in those he enslaved. Hunger was ever-present.

Unable to discipline Douglass, and always looking for money, Thomas Auld rented Frederick Douglass out for the year 1834 to Edward Covey, the cruelest “slave breaker” in the Bayside neighborhood.

3

NEW ST. JOHNS UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

9123 Tilghman Island Road, Wittman, MD

From the church parking lot, you can see the fields of the Covey Farm and the broad Chesapeake Bay beyond. The site is midway between the landmarks of Kent Point and Poplar Island.

Walking seven miles from St. Michaels to Covey’s farm, Douglass was filled with dread. He recalled stories heard about Covey’s cruelty and frequent use of the whip. On arrival, Douglass experienced for himself how terrible Covey could be. The young boy was sent into the woods (behind this church) for a load of wood behind a team of unbroken oxen, with disastrous results and vicious punishment to follow.

Following months of such abuses, in August 1834, Douglass came into his own when he defeated Covey in a much-celebrated fistfight.

“*This battle with Mr. Covey... was the turning point in my life as a slave...I was NOTHING before: I WAS A MAN NOW.*”

FREDERICK DOUGLASS
MY BONDAGE AND MY FREEDOM

DRIVING NOTES

Proceed on Route 33 to Site #3.

You are following the route Douglass walked on the cold morning of January 1, 1834, to the farm rented by Edward Covey.

On the way to the Covey farm, in approximately three miles on the right, you will pass Emerson Point Road, the former lane gate of William Hambleton’s farm.

In approximately five miles on the right, you will pass Wade’s Farm Lane, the former lane gate of Hatton Farm. Friends of Frederick Douglass, the Caldwell family, owned Hatton in the 1920s.

DRIVING NOTES

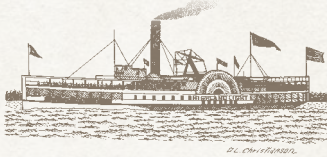
As you proceed to Site #4, note the intersection of Pot Pie Road in Wittman. The road leads to Pot Pie Neck, where Douglass’s friend Sandy Jenkins procured a root offered as a talisman. Douglass had the root in his pocket during his fight with Covey.

4

LOWE'S WHARF

21651 Lowe's Wharf Road, Sherwood, MD

Haddaway's Ferry ran from here to Annapolis and brought the mail for Talbot County and points north since Colonial days. You can park and look across the Chesapeake Bay as you contemplate Douglass's most important words from his time on the Bayside of Talbot County. From the waters before you he found his resolve to self-liberate and his resolve to see an end to slavery. Sails of the great shipping vessels, freighters of their day, gave expression to his "soul's complaint."



“I have often, in the deep stillness of a summer's Sabbath, stood all alone upon the lofty banks of that noble bay, and traced, with saddened heart and tearful eye, the countless number of sails moving off to the mighty ocean. The sight of these always affected me powerfully....”

FREDERICK DOUGLASS

LIFE AND TIMES OF FREDERICK DOUGLASS



5

FREELAND FARM & OLD MARTINGHAM

Pull to the roadside 0.15 mile past Broad Creek Road. Old Martingham, to your left on the Miles River, was the seat of the Hambleton family since 1663.

Look to the right and you can see Broad Creek, part of the Choptank River. The farmland on the Broad Creek side is the site of the Freeland Farm, where young Douglass was hired out from Jan. 1, 1835, to spring 1836.

"I found myself in congenial society, at Mr. Freeland's," Douglass wrote. "There were Henry Harris, John Harris, Handy Caldwell, and Sandy Jenkins." Douglass considered William Freeland to be a "well-bred southern gentleman ... the best master I ever had until I became my own master." At the Freeland farm, Douglass learned that he

was gaining a reputation among the whites as a troublemaker and among the Blacks as a hero and leader. He was quick to take advantage of his role as a leader by organizing a secret school for Blacks and enlisting his scholars in a plan to sail up Chesapeake Bay to freedom.

On Easter weekend, he and four others, including his uncle Henry Bailey, would take one of William Hambleton's sailing log canoes. Hambleton got wind of the plot. On the morning of their planned escape, they were arrested and forced to walk 15 miles tied behind a mounted horse to Easton jail, jeered and harassed at every village along the way. Tour #4 includes the site of the jail where Douglass spent a harrowing week, uncertain of his fate.

6

ELIZA BAILEY MITCHELL HOUSE

213 North Talbot Street, St. Michaels, MD

The Mitchell House is the small white cabin on the Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum grounds. The cabin is open daily to museum visitors. Admission may be purchased at the front gate.

Eliza Bailey Mitchell was the closest sibling to Douglass in age. They had shared experiences under Thomas and Rowena Auld and, as Douglass later claimed, it was Eliza who taught him the art of survival in the face of hunger and abuse. Eliza and her two children were sold by Thomas Auld to her free husband, Peter Mitchell, in 1836 for \$100, a debt which Eliza and Peter worked for almost five years to repay.

Eliza Mitchell's great-grandson James E. Thomas became the first African American elected to the town commission in St. Michaels and the first elected president of that body. Commissioner Thomas was a leading force to save the Eliza Mitchell house from demolition by relocation to the museum.

While at the museum, be sure to see the log canoe exhibit. *Glide* most closely resembles the log canoe Douglass contemplated using for his 1836 escape plan. **Tour #3 ends here.**

Dig Deeper:

For other Douglass sites in St. Michaels, follow the QR code at right to learn more.



TOUR 4

DOUGLASS RETURNS TO TALBOT COUNTY

Approximate drive time is one hour.



BEGIN HERE

BEGIN AT EASTON POINT. Once at the Courthouse, walking is the best way to tour.

After leaving Talbot County in 1836, Frederick Douglass returned only four times. His son Lewis was in Talbot County near Royal Oak at the close of the Civil War. Douglass kept in touch with the area through friends, relatives, and letters. He debated Talbot Countians with whom he disagreed through the press and letters. His influence on Talbot County was profoundly felt despite his absence of more than four decades.

This tour concentrates on two return trips: November 1878 and March 1893. Both times he arrived in Easton. His 1877 return to St. Michaels can be explored by taking the walking tour at St. Michaels Museum at Mary's Square. His 1881 return to both Lloyd's Great House Farm and St. Michaels is detailed in his third autobiography, *Life and Times of Frederick Douglass*.



1

PUBLIC LANDING AT EASTON POINT

Easton, MD

United States Marshal of the District of Columbia Frederick Douglass steamed into Easton Point from Baltimore on the *Highland Light* on November 23, 1878. Easton Point was then a small village. The steamboat was greeted by all ages. Douglass had enjoyed an overnight stateroom; he then stayed in the town's best hotel. In both cases, Marshal Douglass broke the color line for local public accommodations.

Between 1819 and 1847, notorious Baltimore slave traders sold enslaved people south from this port. During the Civil War enslaved and free volunteers departed from here to serve in the United States Colored Troops — service Douglass had convinced Lincoln was essential to preservation of the Union. Douglass strongly believed military service would lead to full citizenship for African Americans.

“Once let the black man get upon his person the brass letter, U.S., let him get an eagle on his button, and a musket on his shoulder and bullets in his pocket, there is no power on earth that can deny that he has earned the right to citizenship.

FREDERICK DOUGLASS
IN AN 1863 SPEECH



2

FORMER MOTON SCHOOL

106 Port Street, Easton, MD

Now apartments, this building is the former Moton High School. It is a rare example of a five-teacher school design built according to an early 20th-century Rosenwald Tuskegee school plan for rural African-American students with a separate teachers' house and shop.

An earlier school on this site was known as Easton Colored School, which dated to 1870. Frederick Douglass visited the school in March 1893. He told the assembled schoolchildren a story of a boy who lost his parents, was once a slave forced to sleep on a cold floor, but who taught himself to read and grew to speak, hold high public offices, and accumulate some wealth. He concluded, “That boy was Frederick Douglass. What was possible for me is possible for you.” Douglass's remarks to the Easton schoolchildren were included in his *New York Times* obituary two years later.

Douglass was feted near this site in 1878 at the conclusion of his trip. He was hosted by Head Teacher James E.G. Webb for a gala reception with music by the local African American band.

DRIVING NOTES

Turn left on West Street and proceed two blocks. Park near the Talbot County Free Library. Douglass enthusiasts will find many local history resources in the library's Maryland Room. A Frederick Douglass Meeting Room with a bust of Douglass is available for small gatherings.

3 + 4 + 5

TALBOT COUNTY COURTHOUSE, JAIL, & BRICK HOTEL

11 North Washington Street, Easton, MD

The Courthouse Square sits between Washington and West and Dover and Federal streets.

The granite "old jail" at the corner of Federal and West streets is the site of an earlier white wood-framed jail where Frederick Douglass was held for a week in 1836 (Tour 3). From jail, Douglass could see friends who worked at the Brick Hotel, which still stands at 9 Federal Street. He called across the street for any news of whether he would be sold south. Slave trader Austin Woolfolk had already sized him up in jail.

“The visit was made interesting to me, by the fact that forty-five years before I had, in company with Henry and John Harris, been dragged behind horses to Easton, with my hands tied, put in jail and offered for sale, for the offense of intending to run away from slavery.

FREDERICK DOUGLASS

LIFE AND TIMES OF FREDERICK DOUGLASS

”

The idea of being sold south by Woolfolk was terrifying. Eventually Thomas Auld released Douglass and sent him back to Fells Point in Baltimore. Within two years, disguised as a sailor, Douglass finally succeeded in claiming his freedom. Douglass did not set foot in Easton again until 1878, when he was an internationally acclaimed human rights activist.

Moving to the front of the Courthouse, visit the Frederick Douglass sculpture unveiled in 2011. Imagine Douglass's 1878 address in this very building. He spoke to a mixed but segregated audience. Old-timers, including the sheriff from 1836, remembered him as Frederick Bailey. By 1878, Douglass was 60.

His talk was sponsored by the county's Republican Party leaders who hoped to recruit more male voters from its African American citizens. Douglass delivered one of his mildest standard speeches, "Self-Made Men." The crowd was spellbound. News accounts afterwards followed partisan lines.

Douglass had other pressing business beyond his courthouse speech on his 1878 visit. The next stops will take you to important African American sites in Easton. Tour #1 takes you to his birthplace, where he returned to gather soil from the site of his grandmother's cabin.



HOME OF JOHN LEEDS KERR

24 North Aurora Street, Easton, MD

This house belonged to John Leeds Kerr, a United States Senator from 1841–1843. Kerr died suddenly in 1844 and his children were forced to raise funds from his estate to hold their land. To avoid being sold, Ruth Cox (1818–1900), a fully literate enslaved person in the household, sought freedom in West Chester, Pa., where she attended an antislavery meeting. The speaker was Frederick Douglass.

Douglass felt an immediate kinship tie to Ruth Cox. He invited her to live with his family in Lynn, Mass., farther from danger of recapture. She assumed the name Harriet Bailey and lived with the Douglass family as “sister,” household helpmate, and amanuensis from late 1844, when he was finishing his first book, until 1847. While Frederick Douglass was overseas on an extended book and lecture tour, she and his wife Anna became close friends. They served together in the Lynn Ladies Abolitionist Society.



“Your devotion to my little boys, your attention to Dear Anna, has made you doubly Dear to me. I will not forget you.”

FREDERICK DOUGLASS
IN A LETTER FROM ABROAD

ASBURY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

18 South Higgins Street, Easton, MD

Frederick Douglass dedicated this new brick Methodist Episcopal church building on his 1878 tour. The congregation had been active since 1836 and earlier as house or class meetings. Francis Asbury, the father of American Methodism, traveled in Talbot County in the late 1700s. Methodism was rooted here early, with a strong anti-slavery testimony.

Despite Douglass’s experience of Talbot County, Easton always had a large free Black population. Between the first U.S. census in 1790 and 1820, when Douglass was two-years-old and living in Tuckahoe, the thriving free Black community known as The Hill gave birth to two strong African American churches. By the time of Douglass’s visit, both churches were thriving and had expanded with handsome new brick structures. In the 20th century, Asbury joined the United Methodist Conference.

See the interpretive sign by the church to learn more about Asbury Church. The sign is part of The Hill Community Project self-guided walking tour available at the Talbot County Visitors Center.

8

BIRTH OF LOCAL AFRICAN METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH

Corner of South Lane & Hanson Street

The African Methodist Episcopal Church on the Eastern Shore was formed at this intersection. In 1818, the year of Frederick Douglass's birth, Rev. Shadrack Bassett preached from an oxcart. Bassett was charged by the Baltimore African Methodist Episcopal Church conference to plant religious roots on the Eastern Shore. The Bethel Society formed shortly thereafter, meeting in a blacksmith shop.

Bassett was hosted by the Wayman family of Tuckahoe Neck, prominent free African Americans who provided their oxcart. Their son, Alexander Walker Wayman (1821–1895) became the 7th bishop of the A.M.E. church in 1864. He was a friend of both Frederick Douglass and Anna Murray Douglass. As a young girl, Mrs. Douglass had cared for the Wayman children. Bishop Wayman delivered a eulogy at Douglass's funeral.



9

BETHEL A.M.E. CHURCH

110 South Hanson Street, Easton, MD

The oldest A.M.E. congregation on the Eastern Shore, Bethel celebrated 200 years in Easton in 2018. In 1878, both the Bethel A.M.E. Church and Douglass himself were celebrating 60 years. Douglass had come far, as had the church on Hanson Street, which grew from an oxcart sermon to hosting two annual A.M.E. Conferences under local son Bishop Wayman. In 1878, the 140-year-old brick structure you see today was brand new — the pride of a growing and active church community. Bethel still uses the original rostrum from which Douglass addressed the congregants to dedicate their new brick church.

See the interpretive sign by the building to learn more about Bethel Church. The sign is part of The Hill Community Project self-guided walking tour available at the Talbot County Visitors Center.

10

TIDEWATER INN

101 East Dover Street, Easton, MD

In 1893, Douglass made his last trip to Talbot County, arriving by train from Cape Charles. He had been on business in the Norfolk area and was preparing to attend the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago on behalf of the Haitian government's pavilion. Douglass settled into Easton's newest accommodations, the Hotel Avon, the site now occupied by the Tidewater Inn. Unknown to him, next door was the former home of James Parrott, Clerk of the Court, who had signed Douglass's freedom paper in 1847. Douglass received visitors in the posh hotel dining room. His moves about town that day were closely followed by Easton newspapermen. Leaving the hotel, he visited the schoolchildren on Port Street (Site #2) and then took the train to St. Michaels.

Dig Deeper:

To read more about Frederick Douglass in his own words, use the QR code at right.





Talbot

COUNTY

Economic Development
and Tourism

FrederickDouglassBirthplace.org

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