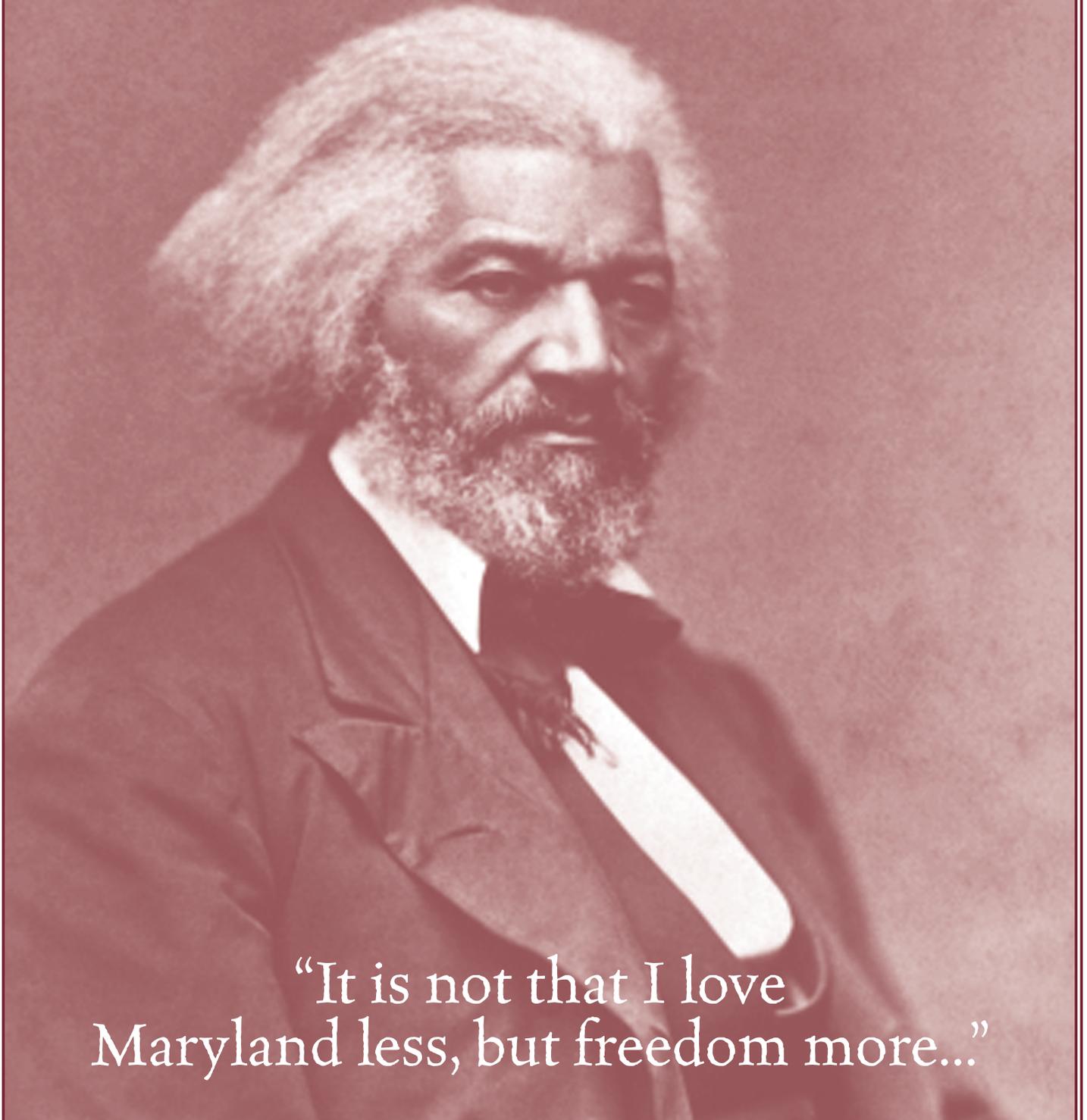


FREDERICK DOUGLASS

Driving Tour of
Talbot County, Maryland



“It is not that I love
Maryland less, but freedom more...”



Born a slave in Talbot County, Maryland, in 1818, Fred Bailey would escape his chains in 1838 and become Frederick Douglass, one of the most notable men of the nineteenth century and the ideal of an American self-made man.

Growing up on the Eastern Shore, where there was a significant population of free African Americans, young

Douglass' first hint of the idea of freedom came early in his life. It did not take long for this remarkable child to begin questioning his place in the social order and the existence of this evil thing called slavery. When he was sent to live with his owners' relatives in the Fells Point shipbuilding area of Baltimore, Sophia Auld, his kind mistress, gave him basic reading skills. His lessons were stopped, though, by her husband Hugh, who believed it was against the law (and the strict social codes) to teach a slave to read. Undaunted, Douglass finished teaching himself to read, using old school papers and *The Columbia Orator*, a

After Douglass' escape, he made Rochester, New York, his home, publishing an abolitionist newspaper and using his influence in the community to shelter and aid thousands of runaway slaves at the western terminus of the Underground Railroad. Like Harriet Tubman, a fellow Eastern Shore runaway and active abolitionist, Douglass used his own slave experiences to awaken white Americans to the evils of prejudice and discrimination. Throughout his life, memories of his own whippings, beatings, and basic denigration as a slave and as a free black man were included in his oratory and published works as tools to abolish slavery and encourage racial equality.

Against many odds, Douglass worked tirelessly for the equal treatment of all races and genders. He was one of the few men who attended the first Women's Rights Convention in Seneca Falls, New York, in 1848; he fought for the right for black men to serve in the Union Army in the Civil War; he served as a political delegate in the Reconstruction South to ensure black suffrage; he spoke out frequently in support of equal employment and social opportunities and against lynchings, discrimination and "Jim Crow."

"I am an Eastern Shoreman, with all that name implies. Eastern Shore corn and Eastern Shore pork gave me muscle. I love Maryland and the Eastern Shore."

"Frederick Douglass at His Old Home," Baltimore Sun, Baltimore: MD, June 19, 1877

textbook on public speaking. Through his education and his later conversion to religion, young Douglass galvanized his plan to escape the confines of slavery and live as a free man.

Fred Bailey boarded a train in Baltimore in 1838, escaped north to freedom, and became Frederick Douglass. He rose quickly to prominence as a favorite abolitionist and anti-slavery speaker, traveling throughout the country and the world to shed light on the horrors of America's "peculiar institution." He was a powerful orator and influential political figure, using his personal experiences to give a human face to the sufferings of slavery. His own memories and knowledge of the slave experience formed a forceful attack on America's racial problems: slavery in the South and racial prejudice in the North.

By the end of his life, Douglass could proudly claim to have served as adviser, political ally, and friend to six presidents; abolitionists Gerrit Smith and William Lloyd Garrison; womens' rights activists Susan B. Anthony, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, and Lucretia Mott; and authors Samuel Clemens (a.k.a. Mark Twain) and Ralph Waldo Emerson.

Rising from the harsh and bitter realities of his childhood as a Talbot County slave, Frederick Douglass went on to be a noted orator, writer, publisher, politician, entrepreneur, political activist, national celebrity, and historical figure. He left an indelible mark on the social, economic, and political landscape of the nineteenth century and will forever stand as one of Talbot County's most important native sons.

1800 FEBRUARY 1818 ~ BORN

1825

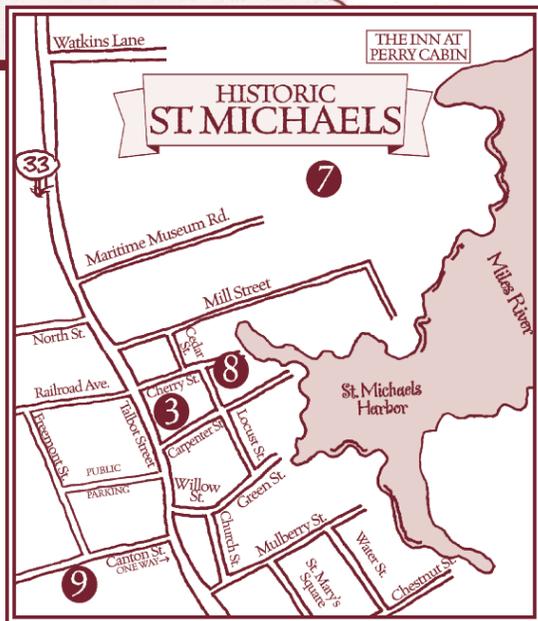
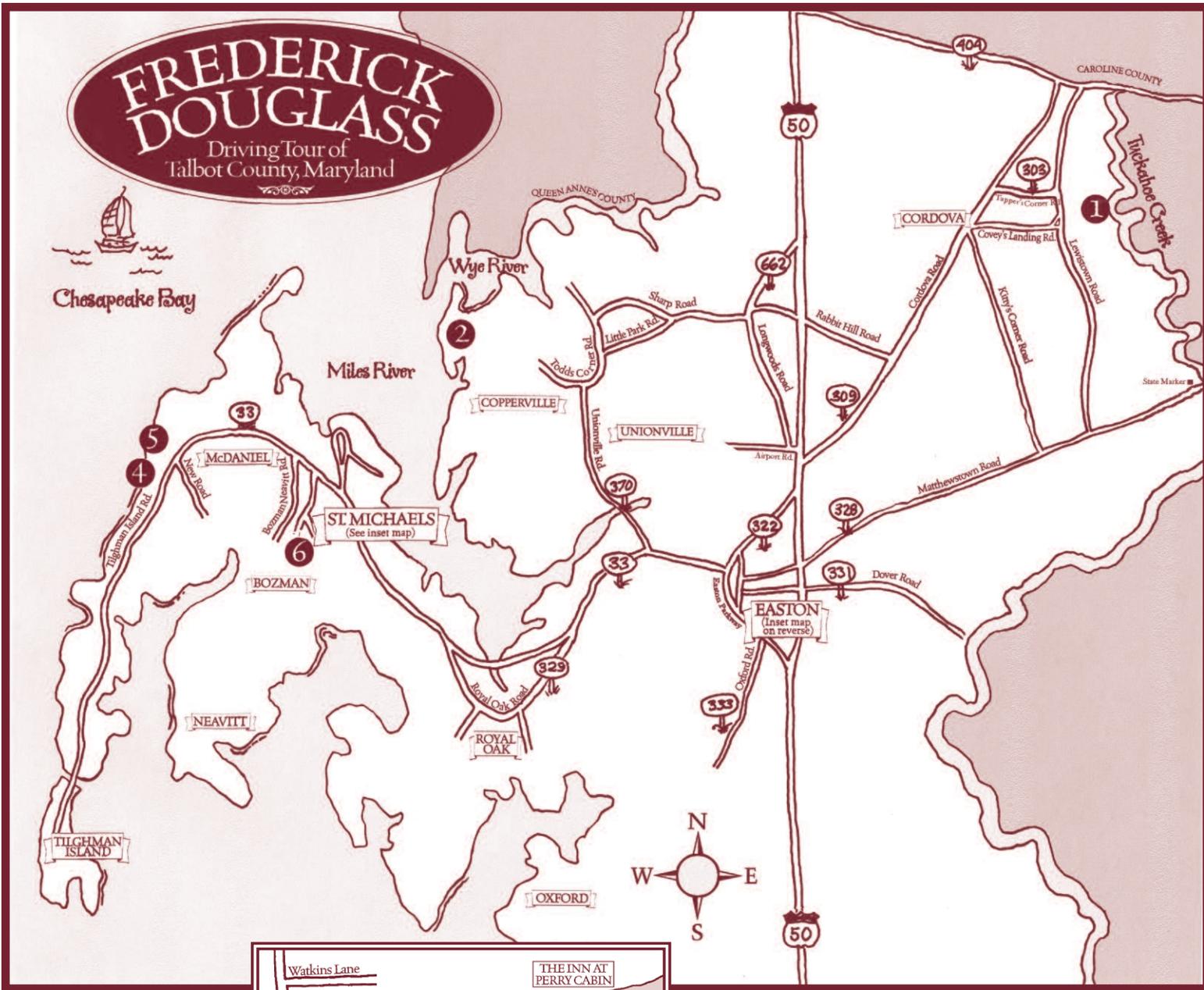
MARCH 1826 ~ SENT TO FELLS POINT, BALTIMORE
SUMMER 1827 ~ LUCRETIA ANTHONY AULD DIES
MARCH 1833 ~ RETURNED TO ST MICHAELS

AUGUST 1824 ~ SENT TO LIVE AT WYE HOUSE

JANUARY 1834 ~ "RENTED OUT" TO COVEY
AUGUST 1834 ~ FISTFIGHT WITH COVEY
JANUARY 1835 ~ SENT TO WORK FOR WILLIAM FREELAND
APRIL 1836 ~ ESCAPE ATTEMPT
LATE APRIL 1836 ~ SENT BACK TO FELL'S POINT

FREDERICK DOUGLASS

Driving Tour of
Talbot County, Maryland



1836 - 1838 ~ WORKS IN SHIPYARDS
 SUMMER 1838 ~ MEETS FUTURE WIFE, ANNA
 SEPTEMBER 3, 1838 ~ ESCAPES

NOVEMBER 1864 ~ FIRST RETURN TRIP TO MARYLAND

1875 JUNE 1877 ~ RETURN VISIT TO ST. MICHAELS
 NOVEMBER 1878 ~ VISITS BIRTH SITE AND EASTON
 JUNE 1881 ~ VISITS WYE HOUSE

SEPTEMBER 18, 1838 ~ BECOMES FREDERICK DOUGLASS
 MAY 1845 ~ PUBLISHES HIS FIRST AUTOBIOGRAPHY
 DECEMBER 1846 ~ FREEDOM BOUGHT BY BRITISH FRIENDS

MARCH 1893 ~ FINAL VISIT TO TALBOT COUNTY
 FEBRUARY 1895 ~ DIES

You are about to experience Talbot County, Maryland, through the eyes of a man named Frederick Augustus Washington Bailey, who was born a slave in Talbot County, escaped to freedom in 1838, and went on to become Frederick Douglass, one of the greatest abolitionists of all time and one of the most influential Americans of the nineteenth century. As you travel, try to imagine what this area would have looked like before the Chesapeake Bay Bridge, Route 50, the Civil War, emancipation, and the end of the plantation era...

Please Note: This guide will take you on busy roads as well as many rural back roads. Please use extreme 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, all of the sites included in this tour are private property. Please respect the privacy of the property owners and do not trespass. Approximate drive time is two hours.

Site #1 Holme Hill Farm, Birthplace of Frederick Douglass

Site Only—no buildings remain

GPS location: 38°46'24"N 76°4'35"E

Driving Notes: From Easton, take Rt. 50 W and follow the signs for the Historic Marker on Rt. 328 (Matthewstown Road). The marker is at the base of the bridge over the Tuckahoe Creek. But before you get there, turn left at Lewistown Rd (6 miles from Easton). Go 5 miles to Tappers Corner Rd and pull off the road. The probable location of the cabin is a bit south-east of this intersection (to your left).



In February of 1818, Frederick Douglass is believed to have been born in a cabin near here occupied by his grandmother, Betsy, and her free husband, Isaac. Betsy, Frederick and this farm were all owned at that time by Aaron Anthony, overseer for the Lloyd family. Grandma Betsy's cabin

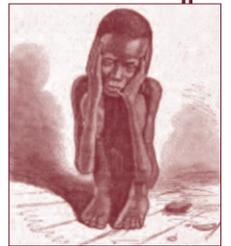
is long gone, and though research is currently underway, its exact location has not yet been found. We do know, however, that the cabin stood near a large cedar tree, in a clearing a short way from the eastern banks of the Tuckahoe Creek and separate from the farm's slave quarters. When Frederick returned to this site in November 1878, the cabin had already disappeared but he collected some soil from the site to take back to his new Washington home, Cedar Hill.

Site #2 Wye House

GPS location: 38°49'52"N 76°8'34"E

Driving Notes: From Lewistown Rd, turn left on Tappers Corner Rd; follow for 6 mi. to Cordova Rd (Route 309S); turn left; follow across Rt. 50 onto Airport Rd; immediately turn right onto Rt. 662N (Longwoods Rd); go 3 miles and turn left onto Sharp Rd; follow 3 mi. to end at Todd's Corner Rd; turn left; go 1.2 mi to junction with Unionville Rd; stop and park. Wye House is a private residence within 2 mi. of here.

When Frederick was six years old, he walked the 12 miles from Holme Hill to Wye House to live as a slave with Aaron Anthony in his small residence. Anthony's home was located between the great house and the slave quarters. For his 18-month residency at Wye House, Douglass lived in a storage closet in the Anthony kitchen that was ruled by a cruel slave woman named Aunt Katy, who inflicted much suffering on Douglass and the other Anthony slaves. While at Wye House, Douglass was selected from more than 80 slave children to be a servant and companion to the master's youngest son. Though his stay here was brief, it was significant for Douglass because it was at Wye House, through the kindness of Lucretia Auld (Anthony's daughter), that Douglass recognized that blacks and whites could have positive interactions, but more importantly, that he first realized that he could rise above his circumstances and could become free. In March 1826, Lucretia sent Douglass to work for her brother-in-law, Hugh Auld, in Fells Point, Baltimore.



When Douglass returned to visit Wye House in June 1881, he was entertained on the veranda by the then-master's son and given a tour of the grounds. The only disappointment of that visit for Douglass was finding that his kitchen closet, where he had lived for 18 months, had been torn down. Today a small plaque, marking the location of the slave graveyard at Wye House, where many of Douglass' contemporaries are buried, is all that remains of the slave community once there.

Passing through Unionville

Driving Notes: Turn left on Unionville Road (Rt. 370); continue through village of Unionville.

The village of Unionville was settled after the Civil War by emancipated slaves from the Lloyd plantations, including Wye House. In nearby Copperville, there is a Bailey Lane named for Douglass' family. Many of his descendants still reside in Copperville and Unionville today. A Historic Marker at St. Stevens A.M.E. Church (9467 Unionville Rd) honors Union Soldiers.

Site #3 Site of the Thomas Auld Home and Store, and Douglass Historic Marker

GPS location: 38°47'14"N 76°13'28"E

Driving Notes: Continue on Unionville Rd, cross the Miles River and continue until road ends at a "T"; turn right onto Rt. 33 (St. Michaels Road); go 7.6 miles to Mill Street in St. Michaels; turn right onto Mill and park in the town lot.

At the corner of Cherry and Talbot Streets, was the store and home of Thomas Auld. In 1833, Douglass, now a strong-willed teenager, was sent to live in St. Michaels with Thomas Auld and his second wife Rowena. Auld served as storekeeper and postmaster. The family home, where Douglass lived, was located behind the store. The exact site of the house and store is not known, as no clear record exists to determine which corner of the intersection these buildings stood. Thomas Auld had acquired ownership of Douglass through his first wife, Lucretia Anthony. Douglass had thrived in Baltimore where he learned to read, had white friends, found religion, and had the freedom to move around the city on his own. Life in St. Michaels was not so tolerable: it was a depressed, poor community with violent racism ingrained in local customs. In the fall of 1833, Douglass worked with several others in the community to start a Sabbath Day school for blacks. Not only was the school short-lived (it was broken up by a mob at its second meeting), but it was also the last straw for Auld, who shortly thereafter "rented out" Douglass to Edward Covey, infamous for his ability to break the spirit of rebellious slaves.

In front of the parking lot is the Maryland Historic Marker honoring Douglass.

Leaving St. Michaels—The Inn at Perry Cabin 308 Watkins Ln.

Driving Notes: continue west on Rt. 33 towards Tilghman Island for .3 mi.

Just outside of St. Michaels on the right is the Inn at Perry Cabin, once the ancestral home of the Hambleton family. Now a resort, the property once belonged to Samuel and John Hambleton – bachelors, United States Navy pursers, and strong Union supporters. Many years prior to the Civil War, these brothers freed all of their slaves, including Peter Mitchell, who later married Douglass' sister. On the Perry Cabin estate, the brothers offered free blacks in the area a chance to rent an acre of ground to build a home and garden. In 1893, Frederick Douglass made his last visit to the Eastern Shore. It was rumored in the county that Douglass was looking to buy property in the area. This estate was offered to him for purchase, along with two other properties, The Villa and The Rest.

Site #4 The Covey Farm

GPS location: 38°48'5"N 76°18'11"E

Driving Notes: Continue west on Rt. 33 for approx. 6mi.; past the village of McDaniel, you will see New St. John's Church on your left at 9123 Tilghman Island Rd. Pull over and look at the fields and the bay beyond. The field before you is the land Covey Farmed in 1834.

On New Year's Day, 1834, Douglass walked the seven miles from St. Michaels to Covey's farm. The walk filled him with dread as he recalled the stories he had heard about Covey's cruelty and frequent use of the whip. It wasn't long before Douglass found out for himself how terrible Covey could be. However, it was here that Douglass ceased to be a chattel and became a man when he fought back and defeated Covey in a much-celebrated fistfight. In Douglass' own words, "This battle with Mr. Covey...was the turning point in my life as a slave...I was NOTHING before: I WAS A MAN NOW!" (*My Bondage and My Freedom*, 1855, p.246.) Douglass' time with Covey ended on Christmas day in 1834. After a week's rest, he was rented out to William Freeland, who was an altogether different kind of master.

Site #5 The Hatton Farmhouse

GPS location: 38°48'57"N 76°17'45"E

Driving Notes: Turn around and return east on Rt. 33 for 1 mi; pull over at New Rd.

Visible in the fields to the west of Wade's Farm Lane is the Hatton Farm. The house, present in 1834, was used to house slaves from neighboring estates. Interestingly, both the Hatton Farm and Wade's Point once belonged to the Aulds (Thomas and Hugh were born here). Also of note, the Hatton farm is believed to be the first farm to be owned by an African-American in Talbot County, Charles Caldwell Sr., a friend of Douglass.

Site #6 The Freeland Farm

GPS location: 38°48'26"N 76°14'39"E

Driving Notes: Continue east on Rt. 33 for approx. 3 mi; watch for the Bozman-Neavitt Road (Rt. 579); and turn right at the next street - Broad Creek Road; stop at the left fork. You can see the house from the road, along the water. It is now known as Sherwood Forest.

Douglass considered William Freeland to be a "well-bred southern gentleman...the best master I ever had until I became my own master." During his time at the Freeland farm, Douglass learned that he was gaining a reputation among the whites as a trouble-maker and among the blacks as a hero and leader. He was quick to take advantage of his role as a leader by organizing another school for blacks, but this time the school was kept secret. On New Year's Day, 1836, Douglass resolved that this was the year he would become free, and began planning for his escape. By April, he and several others were ready, but their plan had been discovered. On the morning of their planned escape, they were arrested and forced to walk over 20 miles tied behind a mounted horse to the jail in Easton. Word had spread of their plot and, at every village along the way, the men were jeered and harassed.



Site #7 The Mitchell House

213 N. Talbot St.

Driving Notes: Return to Rt. 33E to St. Michaels and continue to 1.7 mi; turn left into the Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum; at the left side of the parking lot is a back entrance surrounded by a fence. The Mitchell House is the small white cabin on the museum grounds. The cabin is open daily to Museum visitors. Admission may be purchased at the front gate.

Eliza Bailey Mitchell was one of the only siblings with whom Douglass maintained a lifelong relationship. The two of them 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, in 1836 for \$100 (a debt which they both worked for almost five years to repay). Peter had to hold the family in technical slavery until 1844 because of a law that said that manumitted slaves had to leave the state. Eliza would go on to become the matriarch of the many generations of Mitchells who populated St. Michaels and the surrounding area. Her great-great-grandson became the first black elected to the Town Commissioners in St. Michaels and the first elected president of that body. The Mitchell home originally stood on the Hambleton estate at Perry Cabin but was moved to the museum to save it from demolition.

Site #8 Home of William and Louisa Bruff

200 Cherry St.

Driving Notes: Return to Rt. 33E and turn left on Cherry St. Site #8 is the Dr. Dodson House B&B on the corner of Cherry & Locust Sts.

In 1877 Louisa and William Bruff (Thomas Auld's daughter and son-in-law) greeted Frederick Douglass, who was surrounded by onlookers and reporters, at the front door of this brick home. They welcomed him as an honored guest, breaking yet another barrier that Douglass had faced throughout his life. Douglass had come seeking reconciliation with his old master, after a harsh published accusation towards Auld in 1848 and yet another unsympathetic portrayal in Douglass' first two autobiographies. The two men, according to numerous newspaper stories and personal accounts, had an agreeable visit in which amends were made by the two men. Two months after his visit, Louisa Bruff offered the house to Douglass for his purchase as a summer residence. Douglass would decline the offer and, instead, buy a home in a previously all-white neighborhood of Washington, D.C.

Site #9 The Olivet Cemetery

304 S. Talbot St.

Driving Notes: Return to Rt. 33E and turn right into the parking lot for St. Luke's Methodist Church.

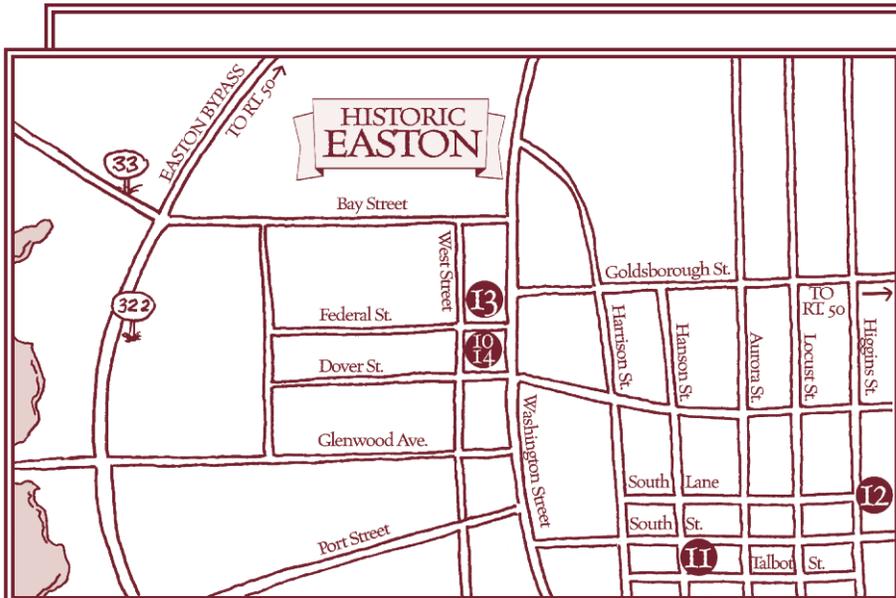
In this cemetery, part of the St. Luke's Parish in St. Michaels, are the graves of many of Douglass' contemporaries, including Thomas Auld and Lucretia Anthony Auld. Additionally, one can also find the graves of Garretson West, an oysterman who headed the posse organized to break up Douglass' teaching activities and that of the Reverend Daniel Weeden, a neighbor of Freeland's who believed, according to Frederick Douglass in *My Bondage and My Freedom*, that "the good slave must be whipped to be kept good, and the bad slave must be whipped, to be made good." As you drive to Easton for the last part of this tour, imagine what it would have been like for Douglass to make this walk to jail tied behind a horse wondering if he were heading for the gallows or worse—to be "sold south."

Site #10 Talbot County Jail

20 N. West St., Easton

Driving Notes: return to Rt. 33E towards Easton; cross Easton Parkway and turn right on West Street; jail is on the left at corner of West & Federal Sts.

Douglass' attempted escape in April 1836 ended here at the Talbot County Jail. (Note the building you see here was built in 1878 and replaced the building that held Douglass and his fellow slaves.) Every day, Douglass watched through the barred windows as people moved about at the hotel and tavern across Federal Street. There



were many slave traders who set up permanent offices in Easton in the buildings on nearby Federal, Market, and Washington Streets. Solomon Lowe's Tavern was the site of many business deals involving the sale of slaves, with holding pens supposedly next to the building, (exact location unknown). These traders came across the street from the hotel and tavern to examine Douglass and the others and waited "for chances to buy human flesh."



Surprisingly, Douglass was merely left for a week in jail and then retrieved by Thomas Auld who, rather than sell Douglass, sent him back to his brother in Fells Point, Baltimore. As Douglass and Auld parted,

Auld told Douglass that if he behaved himself, Auld would free him at age 24, but Douglass couldn't wait that long. This would be the last time that Frederick Douglass would see Talbot County as a slave. When he returned he was a great man and a national celebrity.

On September 3, 1838, at the age of 20, disguised as a sailor, Douglass boarded a train in Baltimore bound for New York and freedom. He arrived in New York on September 4 and began his career as an abolitionist, author, and statesman.

Site #11/12

Bethel A.M.E. & Asbury U.M. Churches
110 S. Hanson St. & 18 S. Higgins St.

Driving Notes: continue on West St. to Port St; follow inset map to churches.

In 1878 Douglass sailed from Baltimore to Talbot County aboard the steamboat *Highland Light*, becoming the first African American to have a stateroom aboard that vessel. During this visit Douglass visited various sites in African American communities in the area and was surprised to

find that little had changed since the time of slavery. On the morning of November 23, Douglass spoke to a crowd of assembled blacks at Bethel A.M.E., giving them his standard lecture on working hard and saving their money. Later that day he gave a similar talk to a congregation at Asbury U.M. Church. Between these two speeches, Douglass held court in his hotel suite, receiving callers, many of whom he had known in his early life.

Site #13 The Brick Hotel 5 Federal St.

Driving Notes: return to Courthouse Square to complete the tour at the corner of Federal & Washington Sts.

When Douglass visited Talbot County in 1878 he stayed here at the Brick Hotel, guest of the Talbot County Republicans. The Brick Hotel was one of the earliest buildings here in the town center and, when Douglass was imprisoned in Easton in 1836 for his attempted escape, the hotel was the main view from his cell window. This hotel was the favorite residence of visiting slave traders. When he visited after the Civil War, Douglass was the first African-American guest to ever stay here. It was on this visit to Talbot County that Douglass visited the site of Grandmother Betsy's cabin only to discover that it was gone.

Site #14 Talbot County Courthouse 11 N. Washington St.

On the evening of November 25, 1878, Frederick Douglass gave a paid lecture to a segregated audience in the main courtroom of this courthouse. Douglass delivered his "Self-Made Men" speech, one of his five popular speeches that he used frequently in his touring and which netted him almost \$6,000 a year in fees. The speech glorified those, black and white, who had risen from lowly birth to achieve great heights through courage and hard work. According to the local newspaper, the highlight of the evening was when Douglass strayed from his practiced speech in a burst of oratory exclaiming: When asked "What shall we do with the Negro?" my reply has always been "Give him fair play and let him alone! Let him have every chance that every other man has. No more, no less?" The statue of Douglass on the courthouse lawn, erected in 2011, honors this speech.

In 1881, Douglass made another visit to Talbot County. It was on this visit that he returned to Wye House where he drank the water and walked the soil of his youth. His last visit was in 1893. Douglass died at his Washington D.C. home, Cedar Hill, on February 20, 1895 He is buried in Mt. Hope Cemetery in his adopted city of Rochester, New York.

“When asked ‘What do we do with the Negro?’ My reply always has been ‘Give him fair play and let him alone! Let him have every chance that every other man has. No more, no less!’ ” *Frederick Douglass, Easton Gazette, November 30, 1878*

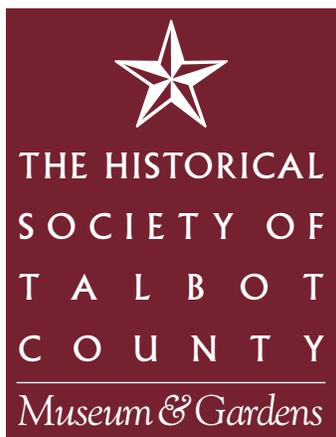
Recommended for further reading:

My Bondage and My Freedom, by Frederick Douglass, New York, 1855.

Frederick Douglass, by William S. McFeely, New York: Norton, 1990.

Young Frederick Douglass: The Maryland Years, Dickson J. Preston, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1980.

This driving tour guide was created by the Historical Society of Talbot County whose mission is to preserve, communicate and celebrate the heritage at Talbot County, MD. The Historical Society of Talbot County is a private not-for-profit organization that operates a museum, library, and archives.



25 S. Washington Street, Easton, MD 21601

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Call or check our website for current museum hours.



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