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Portland Freedom Trail : Part of the Network of Maine Freedom Trails - Self Guided Walking Tour.

Maine Freedom Trails, Inc.

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Portland Freedom Trail

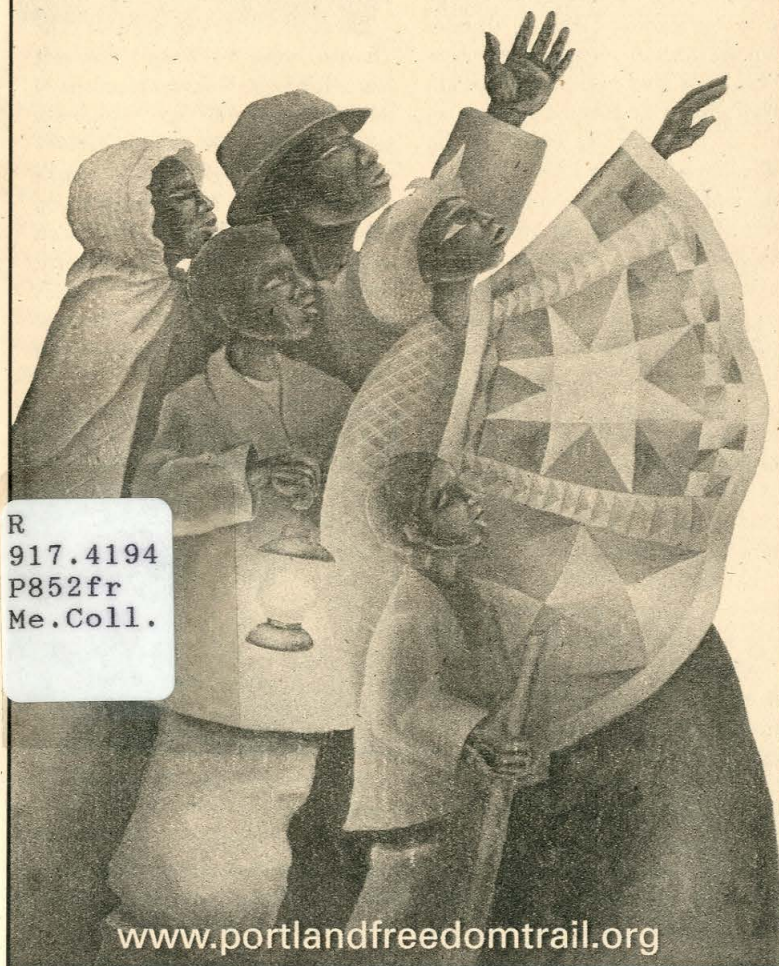
Part of the network of Maine Freedom Trails

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Self Guided Walking Tour

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Portland Freedom Trail :
part of the network of
Maine Freedom Trails

"Dedicated to the countless thousands of men and women who fled the bonds of slavery but were recaptured or died at the hands of their pursuers before they reached the safe embrace of the Underground Railroad.

They are not forgotten."



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www.portlandfreedomtrail.org



1. Franklin Street Wharf

It was fairly common for slaves to come to Maine traveling as stowaways on vessels from southern ports. Consequently, Portland became the center of several hidden routes to Canada. In the fall of 1857, Her Majesty's Brig "Albion Cooper" loaded with lumber from Savannah, Georgia docked in the stream opposite the Franklin Street Wharf. The vessel commanded by Captain Smith had stopped in Portland two days after leaving Savannah after discovering a runaway slave was concealed on the ship.

When he arrived in Portland, Captain Smith consulted Samuel Waterhouse, a clothing dealer on Fore Street. Samuel Waterhouse along with Daniel Fessenden, Edward P. Banks, Samuel A. Whittier, and Charles H.L. Pierre arranged for a small mob of anti-slavery supporters and African American men to board the ship under the cover of night to rescue the runaway.

They took him to the "head of Hancock Street" concealing him until the next morning when he could be sent to Canada.

The boats running between Portland and the Canadian provinces were made use of to help runaways to their freedom, especially as they were often provided with boat tickets. Sailing vessels were also able to furnish free passage and carried the majority of the passengers that went from Portland.

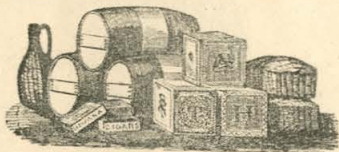
The shipping industry served as a primary employer of African

American men providing the best paying jobs available as stevedores, long-shore men, and sailors. Before 1860, up to 30% of the U.S. maritime forces were comprised of African American men. Compared to their white counterparts, black men were generally older, more reliable, stable family men who were the pillars of their communities and often deeply committed to the temperance movement.



2. Barber Shop of Jacob C. Dickson

Jacob C. Dickson worked as a barber in his own shop which once stood at 243 Fore Street. He was elected as secretary of the Portland Union Anti-Slavery Society on June 1, 1842. Barber shops were important centers for the exchange of information in the operation of the Underground Railroad. The wigs, beards and other facial coverings sold could change the appearance of a person. Cooperating with hack drivers, secondhand clothing dealers and mariners, barbers were essential in moving fugitives to freedom in Canada and England.



Triangular Trade and the Maine Connection

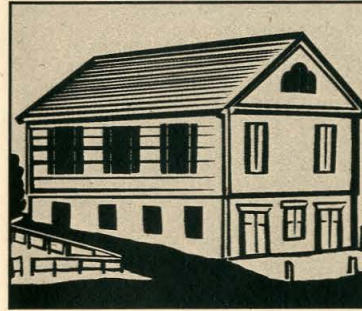
The economic forces that kept the institution of slavery alive were based on the triangular trade. Africans were captured, enslaved and transported through the Middle Passage, the route taken from Africa to the New World - North America, South America and the Caribbean. Slaves worked on plantations to refine sugar into molasses which was shipped to New England and distilled into rum. The rum was sent to Africa and traded for slaves. The hub for the triangular trade was Newport, Rhode Island. In the early 19th century, Americans consumed more rum than they do today. It was common to have rum with breakfast and to have open barrels of rum in stores as a way to entice customers. Many referred to rum as "New England tea."

Salted cod was a cheap food source that kept well in the warmer climates of Cuba, South America and the Caribbean. Maine ship owners supplied salted cod to feed the slaves in exchange for barrels of molasses. Ship captains would sell the molasses to one of Portland's seven rum distilleries.



3. Hack Stand of Charles H. L. Pierre

Charles H. L. Pierre's hack (carriage) stand stood at 29 Middle Street. In the mid-1800s, professional opportunities for freed blacks were limited. Most African Americans were hack drivers, barbers, mariners/stevedores, domestic workers or secondhand clothing dealers.



4. Abyssinian Church

The Abyssinian Meetinghouse/Church located at 73-75 Newbury Street served as the major hub of the Underground Railroad in Maine and became the social center for Portland's African American community. Reuben Ruby, the foremost African American anti-slavery activist and Underground Railroad conductor in Portland, purchased the land for the church and the funds for the building came from the black community. When it was built in 1829, it became the first black congregation in Maine. In 1841, the pace of the anti-slavery movement increased in Maine with the arrival of Reverend Amos N. Freeman who

became the first full-time minister of the church. He served for ten years and became the most well-known African American in the State. He was an inspirational leader who promoted education - serving as principal of the school sponsored by the Abyssinian - employment, temperance, and offered many fugitive slaves refuge at both the church and his home. The Abyssinian was one of the few buildings to survive the Great Fire of 1866 as a result of firefighter William Wilberforce Ruby, son of Reuben Ruby, wetting it down. The church is currently the third oldest African American church still standing in the United States and in the process of being restored.

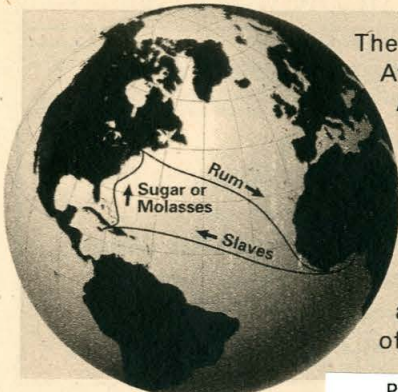


5. Home of Charles Frederick & Harriet Stephenson Eastman and Alexander Stephenson

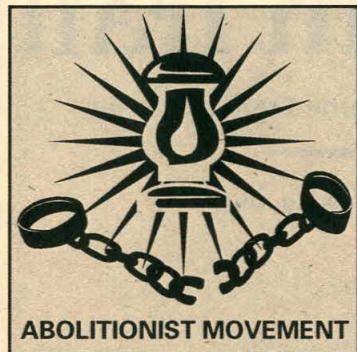
Alexander Stephenson and wife Louisa Jones Stephenson, originally from Maryland, were active members of the black community. Alexander worked as a hack man and a hotel porter. Louisa was a member of the Abyssinian Church. Their daughter Harriet was born in Portland and married Charles Frederick Eastman.

Unfortunately Louisa passed away and never lived in the house located on the corner of Mountfort and Newbury Streets.

According to his obituary, Charles Frederick Eastman (1821-1889) was a "conductor" on the Underground Railroad and "no man did more for the poor fugitive than he." He was a barber, secondhand clothing dealer,



mariner, hack driver and taxidermist, preserving rare animals at a museum in his home. As a self-educated man he also accumulated a considerable library. Taking his wife Harriet's advice, the Eastman's helped to sustain the Abyssinian Church through rough financial times. The Eastman's and the Stephenson's are buried in the Evergreen Cemetery in Portland.



6. Eastern Cemetery

This historic nine acre burial ground is the resting place of some of Portland's noted abolitionists who campaigned against slavery, provided safe-houses and assisted runaways on their journey to freedom.

Elizabeth Widgery Thomas (1779-1861), her husband Elias Thomas (1772-1872) and their daughter Charlotte Thomas (1822-1920) were among the most prominent members of the Portland Anti-Slavery Society thought to be formed as early as 1833. The society, based on the ideology of William Lloyd Garrison, not only worked to abolish slavery but also advanced the question of women's rights. Many of the local and national leaders in the women's rights movement got their start in political organizing and action through participation in the anti-slavery movement. The obituary of Mrs. Elias Thomas was prominently featured in the July 12, 1861 edition of the *Liberator*, William Lloyd Garrison's weekly abolition newspaper published in Boston.

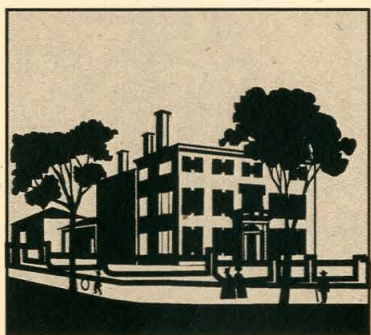
George Ropes (1809-1842) and his brothers David and Joseph were African American conductors on the Underground Railroad and activists in the anti-slavery movement. The three brothers ran a hardware and crockery store on Middle Street. George lived on the corner of Elm and Oxford Streets.

Margaret P. Driver (1769-1853) was born a slave in North Carolina. She was the wife of Blackstone Driver, the treasurer of the Portland Union Anti-Slavery Society. The

Driver's were active members of the Abyssinian Religious Society.

Christopher Christian Manuel (1781-1845), an immigrant from Cape Verde, Africa, was the first elected president of the Portland Union Anti-Slavery Society. Until November 2006, he lied buried in an unmarked grave next to his wife Sophia Ruby Manuel (1802-1875). Sophia was the sister of Reuben Ruby, one of the foremost African American anti-slavery leaders in Portland.

Jannett C. Pear Ruby (1805-1827) was the first wife of Reuben Ruby. She is buried next to their infant son William Ruby and Sophia Ruby Manuel. Reuben Ruby's final resting place is at the Forest City Cemetery in South Portland.



7. Home of Elias and Elizabeth Widgery Thomas

Located at 53 India Street, the Thomas home was known as a safe house for fugitive slaves. Members of the Thomas family were prominent in the Portland Anti-Slavery Society which also worked to advance women's rights. They also provided housing for notable abolitionists such as Lucy Stone, Susan B. Anthony, William Lloyd Garrison, Charles Lenox Remond and Parker Pillsbury. The home was destroyed by the Great Fire of 1866.

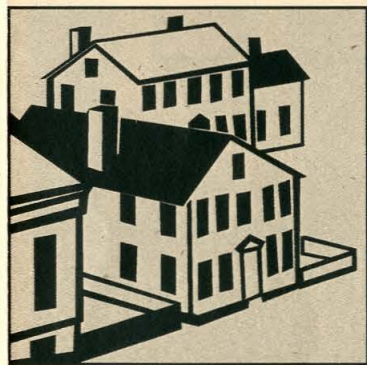


8. Home of General Samuel C. Fessenden

Samuel C. Fessenden (1784 - 1869) was an abolitionist, state legislator, lawyer and a passionate supporter of Portland's African American community. He studied law with

Daniel Webster, and served in both houses of the Massachusetts State Legislature. He acted as Major General of the Massachusetts (later Maine) militia, was a United States Liberty Party candidate for Congress, a candidate for governor of Maine on the anti-slavery ticket, and an early supporter of the United States Republican Party. Considered a leader of Maine's anti-slavery movement, General Fessenden moved to Portland in 1822, and in 1828 declined the presidency of Dartmouth College. For forty years he stood at the head of the bar in Maine. He was an active philanthropist.

In 1832 General Fessenden heard William Lloyd Garrison speak at the First Parish Church and immediately switched his alliance from the American Colonization Society to becoming a staunch supporter of the Anti-Slavery Society. He "gave escaped bondmen reaching Portland a hearty welcome at his house..." His three sons, Daniel, Rev. Samuel Clement and William Pitt, who served as a U.S. representative and senator from Maine and as the U.S. Treasury Secretary, followed his example and became anti-slavery and Underground Railroad activists.



9. Friends (Quaker) Meeting House

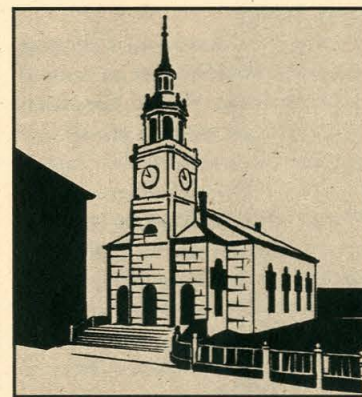
Famous abolitionist William Lloyd Garrison started the Maine anti-slavery movement in the Meeting House with a speech given in 1832. Garrison advocated for "immediate emancipation without compensation" instead of colonizing freed African Americans to Liberia. Two of the first pro-slavery riots occurred here - one in 1836 and another in 1847 - when abolitionists such as Henry Brewster Stanton, William Lloyd Garrison, Frederick Douglas and Charles Lenox Remond attempted to lecture. The Meeting House was not rebuilt after the Great Fire of 1866.

Hack Stand---at Elm Tavern.

REUBEN RUBY,
 Informs the public that he has two good Coaches, one or the other of which may generally be found at his old Stand, at the Elm Tavern, where he will be happy to attend to any calls which are made upon him. Every attention will be paid to accommodate those who wish to be conveyed to different parts of the City, or elsewhere. His residence is the second house on the east side of Preble Street, from the head, where he may be found at any time in the night.

10. Hack Stand of Reuben Ruby

Reuben Ruby (1798-1878) was the foremost African American anti-slavery activist and Underground Railroad conductor in Portland. He was one of the founders of the Abyssinian Church and funded its acquisition and construction. He was born in Gray, Maine. Reuben Ruby worked directly with William Lloyd Garrison and supported the start of *Freedom's Journal*, the first black newspaper in this country. His hack stand was located in front of the Elm Tavern where he maintained one coach. Another coach was maintained at his home "the second house on the east side of Preble Street from the head."



11. First Parish Unitarian Universalist Church

In 1832 abolitionist William Lloyd Garrison spoke in the church to 2,000 people on his first Maine anti-slavery tour. In 1842 First Parish was the site of a pro-slavery riot when radical abolitionist Stephen Symonds Foster was nearly murdered for criticizing New England's role in promoting, perpetuating and profiting from slavery. A plaque inside the church honors church member Prentiss Mellen who became the first president of the Maine Anti-Slavery Society in 1833.

Portland Freedom Trail
Self Guided Walking Tour



1. **Franklin Street Wharf**
Casco Bay Lines
2. **Barber Shop of Jacob C. Dickson**
243 Fore Street
3. **Hack Stand of Charles H. L. Pierre**
29 Middle Street
4. **Abyssinian Church**
73 Newbury Street
5. **Home of Charles Frederick, Harriet Stephenson Eastman, and Alexander Stephenson**
Corner of Mountfort and Newbury Streets
6. **Eastern Cemetery**
Corner of Congress and Mountfort Streets
7. **Home of Elias and Elizabeth Widgery Thomas**
Corner of India and Congress Streets
8. **Home of General Samuel C. Fessenden**
31 India Street
9. **Friends (Quaker) Meeting House**
Lincoln Park corner of Federal and Pearl Streets
10. **Hack Stand of Reuben Ruby**
Corner of Federal and Temple Streets
11. **First Parish Unitarian Universalist Church**
425 Congress Street
12. **Secondhand Clothing Store of Lloyd Scott**
44 Exchange Street
13. **Mariners' Church**
Corner of Fore and Moulton Streets



MAINE FREEDOM TRAILS

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12. Secondhand Clothing Store of Lloyd Scott

Lloyd Scott was named as the vice president of the Portland Union Anti-Slavery Society when it was formed in 1842 in the Abyssinian Church and provided one of the signatures on the constitution of the Garrisonian Portland Anti-Slavery Society. The Portland City Directory of 1847 list 44 Exchange Street as the location of the store. Secondhand clothing was considered a respectable and profitable profession during the time of the Underground Railroad. Many secondhand clothing dealers kept a supply of warm clothing for fugitives being assisted from the warm south to the cold of the north, Canada or Great Britain.

In 1829, a Boston used-clothing salesman, David Walker, an escaped captive from North Carolina, countered the growing pro-slavery sentiment by publishing his "Appeal to the Coloured Citizens of the World." He circulated the "Appeal" by stitching it into the clothing of African American sailors who patronized his business. The pamphlet soon found its way to the south, where it sparked a flurry of laws forbidding any African American from learning to read and made possession of abolitionist literature a crime punishable by fine, prison and death. By 1831, Walker's Appeal had inspired Nat Turner's Rebellion in Virginia and North Carolina.



13. Mariners' Church

The church congregation reached out and ministered to waterfront workers. The basement of Mariners' Church served as the location of an anti-slavery bookstore and print shop owned by Daniel Colesworthy. In 1836 he printed the book "Light and Truth from Ancient and Sacred History" written by Robert Benjamin Lewis, an African American. Lewis' book was the first Afro-centric history of the world giving brief biographical sketches of famous people of African descent and definitions of all terms used at that time to describe a black person.



Eastern Cemetery Marker

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