

CONCORD VILLAGE

Incorporated 1635



No 1 | TOWN CENTER

- 1 Town Hall - Monument Square**
The first Europeans transported enslaved persons with them when they incorporated Concord in 1635. Bills of sale of Africans were also accessible in town records. These records are currently housed in Special Collections at the Concord Free Public Library.
- 2 Old Jail site**
Thoreau spent the night in jail for failure to pay a poll tax in protest against the war with Mexico and the potential spread of slavery. He later wrote the book *Civil Disobedience*.
- 3 Mary Rice House - 44 Bedford St. (ca. 1840)**
Mary Rice was a station master on the Underground Railroad who helped replace and regularly put flowers on John Jack's grave. Along with Mary Peabody Mann, Mary Rice gathered 195 school children's signatures on a petition to President Lincoln, asking him to free slave children. Copies of this petition and Lincoln's response now hang in Concord's 3 public elementary schools.
- 4 Sleepy Hollow Cemetery - Bedford St. (1823)**
Both Peter Hutchinson (descendent of former slaves) and Prudence Ward (abolitionist) are buried here. The Thoreaus, Emersons and Alcotts are buried on Author's Ridge.

- 5 John Jack's Grave - Old Burying Ground, Monument Square (1635)**
Born in Africa, John Jack was enslaved until his early forties, when his owner died. John Jack worked various jobs saving enough money to buy 8.5 acres of land. He was the first former enslaved person to purchase land in Concord (see #25). Before his death in 1773, John Jack bequeathed land to his female partner, who was forced to turn the land over to her white master. Daniel Bliss, Esq., a local Tory from a slaveholding family composed an epitaph for John Jack that castigated local Patriots for calling themselves Britain's slaves even as they, themselves, were slaveholders.
- 6 Concord Art Association/Owned by Jonas Lee, State Representative in early 19th C. - 37 Lexington Rd.**
Has been recognized as an official stop on the Underground Railroad. You can see a closet inside believed to have been used to hide enslaved people on their way to freedom, with a displayed fork and candle snuffer found in the closet. In the backyard, on the right, is the opening to a tunnel or hiding place also thought to have been used by escaped slaves.
- 7 First Parish Church - 20 Lexington Rd.**
Commonly used for public discourse on slavery in the 1800's. Many famous self-emancipated enslaved persons, such as Harriet Tubman and Frederick Douglass, gave speeches there. Many Middlesex County Antislavery Society meetings were held at the church.

No 3 | ABOLITIONISTS NEIGHBORHOOD

- 15 Concord Free Public Library - 129 Main St.**
Repository of the original documents telling of Concord's antislavery efforts and earliest African and African American residents. Original site of Mary Merrick Brook's House (see #17).
- 16 Bigelow/Shadrach Minkins House - 19 Sudbury Rd. (ca. 1840-50)**
An important haven on the Underground Railroad: one enslaved man the Bigelows assisted was Shadrach Minkins, an escaped slave working in Boston who was captured for return to Virginia after the 1850 Fugitive Slave Act. Vigilance Committee member Lewis Hayden led the crowd that rescued Minkins from his hearing in Boston, and brought him to the Bigelows at 3 am on February 16, 1851, on his way to Canada, where Minkins became a restaurant owner and barber.
- 17 Brooks House - 45 Hubbard St. (ca. 1740)**
A slave-owner's daughter, Mary Merrick Brooks was undoubtedly Concord's leading abolitionist, and sold her signature 'Brooks Cake' to raise money for the cause. Her house was moved from the Concord Free Public Library site to 45 Hubbard Street in 1872, and was originally the Black Horse Tavern.
- 18 Trinitarian Congregational Church - 54 Walden St.**
Reverend John Wilder regularly invited abolitionists to speak in his church. His wife, Mary Wilder, was the first President of the Concord Female Antislavery Society.
- 19 Franklin Sanborn House & Schoolroom - 49 Sudbury Rd. (1850)**
Franklin Sanborn was one of the 'Secret Six' who raised funds and support for John Brown's abolitionist activities, including

- the raid on Harper's Ferry. Sanborn ran a school with Mary Mann (also an abolitionist, see #3), and after Brown was hanged for the Harper's Ferry raid, Brown's daughters moved to Concord in 1860 and attended Sanborn's school.
- 20 Abiel Heywood Wheeler House - 387 Sudbury Rd. (ca. 1829-35)**
Abiel Heywood Wheeler transported escaping slaves to train connections.
 - 21 Thoreau House - 255 Main St. (ca. 1820)**
The entire Thoreau family was instrumental in the antislavery movement. It was here that Thoreau wrote about lodging self-emancipated slave Henry Williams and putting him on a train to Canada in his *Journal*, 10/1/1851.
 - 22 Col. William Whiting House - 169 Main St. (ca. 1800-10)**
Col. Whiting was vice president of the state Antislavery Society, and sheltered runaway enslaved people as an active participant in the Underground Railroad. Abolitionists William Lloyd Garrison (who published the antislavery newspaper *The Liberator*), Wendell Phillips and John Brown were all guests in this house.
 - 23 Samuel Hoar House - 158 Main St. (ca. 1810/1819)**
One of Concord's leading politicians and chair of the Free Soil Party (opposed to expansion of slavery into western territories), Samuel Hoar was a moderate senator sent to South Carolina to protest the arrest of Massachusetts African American seamen who were jailed when they disembarked their ships in South Carolina ports. He was run out of town in South Carolina, which aroused greater abolitionist support in Concord, and helped persuade Ralph Waldo Emerson to speak out against slavery.

No 2 | LEXINGTON ROAD

- 8 Wayside - 455 Lexington Rd. (ca. 1714)**
Home to Samuel Whitney, muster master of the Concord Minutemen in 1775. Samuel was a slaveholder, as were many of the residents whose large homes lined Lexington Road. Whitney's enslaved man Casey took advantage of Samuel's need to keep a low profile in the wake of his treasonous activities and attempted to run away. His attempt failed but when the Whitneys fled to Boston after the Battle of Bunker Hill, Samuel abandoned the rebellious Casey in Concord rather than attract the attention of officials. According to the plaque here, "The Wayside sheltered two self-emancipated slaves during the winter of 1846-1847 as they fled north to freedom in Canada. A young Louisa May Alcott learned first hand lessons about slavery here that would influence her life and writing..."
- 9 Casey's Plaque**
A few yards down from the Wayside, Casey's plaque is a reminder of one of Concord's courageous self-emancipated slaves. Casey lived in a small house on what had been Samuel Whitney's property. Casey spoke often of being stolen from his wife and children in Africa and insisted that he visited them every night. The plaque states: "In 1775, Casey was Samuel Whitney's enslaved person. When the Revolutionary war came, he ran away to war, fighting for the colonies, and returned to Concord a free man."
- 10 Alcott 'Orchard' House - 399 Lexington Rd.**
The Alcotts were dedicated abolitionists; Louisa wrote about hiding an escaped slave named John in their 'Hillside' home (later called The Wayside, see #8), and it's possible that they hid escaped enslaved people at the Orchard house, where they lived from 1857-77. They held antislavery meetings here, hosted a huge reception for John Brown and the "regular anti-slavery set", gave John Brown's 2 daughters a home after John was hanged for his raid on Harper's Ferry, and the Alcott girls organized a play to raise money for the Concord Antislavery Society.
- 11 Benjamin Barron House - 245/249 Lexington Rd.**
Here the enslaved person John Jack purchased his freedom as a shoemaker. His epitaph in the Old Hill Burying Ground is world famous (see #5).
- 12 Concord Museum - 200 Lexington Rd.**
Through original artifacts associated with Thoreau, Emerson and other antislavery activists, the Museum galleries examine the concept of liberty and the ability of individuals to affect change.
- 13 Emerson House - 28 Cambridge Turnpike**
Ralph Waldo Emerson was an abolitionist who was persuaded to speak out publicly by his wife Lydia, his Aunt Mary and his friend Mary Brooks. He supported the controversial abolitionist John Brown.
- 14 Reuben Brown House - 77 Lexington Rd.**
When Ralph Waldo Emerson had too many visitors to fit in his home, he put them up at the Reuben Brown House. In 1857, one such visitor was the fiery abolitionist John Brown. Two years later John Brown led the attack on the federal arsenal at Harper's Ferry.

37 Thomas and Jennie Dugan - Thomas Dugan was a self-emancipated slave from Virginia, and was the third former enslaved man to own land in Concord. He and his first wife Catherine had five children. When Catherine died, Thomas married Jennie Parker of Acton, Nut Meadow Brook was renamed Jennie Dugan's Brook, due to her and her husband's contributions to the community. Thomas and Jennie had three children. One of them, Elisha Dugan, lost his father's land and subsequently lived in the woods. He was memorialized by Thoreau in his poem "The Old Marlborough Road." Thomas Dugan introduced the rye cradle to Concord and taught local farmers to graft apple trees.

38 Damon Mill - 1700 Main St.
One of the earliest cotton mills in the nation opened here in 1808. Calvin Damon bought the mill in 1834, and developed a new cloth combining cotton and wool called "domet", eventually used for Civil War uniforms. With this Concord mill, which operated into the 20th century, employees and customers supported the slave economy of southern cotton plantations.

№ 6 | WEST CONCORD

35 Zilpah (or Zipha) White House Site - Formerly an enslaved woman, Zilpah White lived in a one-room house on the common land that bordered Walden Road. She made a living spinning flax into linen fibers. In Walden, Thoreau notes that, like other former enslaved persons, she too was harassed. He describes her living conditions as "somewhat inhumane." And yet her ability to provide for herself at a time when few if any other Concord women lived alone was a great accomplishment.

36 Rachel Le Grosse House Site - A poor white widow and neighbor of Brister, Rachel Le Grosse lived on land rented from Peter Wheeler. It seems likely that Brister and Rachel had a relationship after Brister's wife died. Brister sold his acre of land to Rachel for \$20 so that she would have property after he died, since it was illegal for them to marry.

33 Brister and Fenda Freeman House Site - After 25 years of enslavement, Brister Freeman became the second formerly named after the area where he and another formerly enslaved person purchased an acre of "old field." Brister and his wife Fenda, who told fortunes, had three children. Brister worked as a day laborer and endured frequent harassment from locals and local officials. Impressed by what Brister had been able to accomplish in such a hostile environment, Thoreau compares him in Walden to Scipio Afrtannus, the great Roman general.

34 Cato and Phyllis Ingraham House Site - When local square Duncan Ingraham moved to Medford in 1795, his man Cato asked if he could marry a local (currently or formerly) enslaved person named Phyllis and bring her along. Duncan replied that Cato could marry but only if he stayed behind in Concord, severed his ties with his master, and sought no further financial assistance from him. Cato chose Phyllis

№ 5 | WALDEN WOODS

29 Barrett House - 448 Barrett's Mill Rd.
present gable-end cottage.

30 John Cuning House - 998 Elm St. (ca. 1750)
John Cuning was a county doctor. Lt. Col. in the French and Indian War, and presided over 70 town meetings before and during the Revolution. He could not have done this without help to run his farm, which he found in his enslaved men Lem and Brister (Brister proclaimed his freedom after serving in the Revolutionary War alongside John Cuning). Concord's Brister's Hill and Spring were named after Brister (see Brister and Fenda Freeman under Walden Pond).

31 Thoreau Birthplace House - 341 Virginia Rd.
In 1880, Peter Hutchinson and his grandson, William Bisbee were boarders in Thoreau's birthplace house, where the owners moved it to 341 Virginia Rd. and took in poor tenants.

№ 4 | MONUMENT STREET, GREAT MEADOWS & BEYOND

26 The home was later purchased by Caesar's step-grandson, Peter Hutchinson, a pig butcher and laborer. In 1871-2, Bartholomew Barry bought and moved the house to 324 Bedford St., and it passed out of Caesar Robbins' family. In all, former enslaved persons and their descendants lived in this house for over 100 years. The Caesar Robbins house has been magnanimously donated to the Drinking Gourd Project, and will be moved closer to its original site, across from the Old North Bridge, to be restored as Concord's African American & Abolitionist History Educational Center. This project has been generously supported by the Town of Concord Community Preservation Fund.

27 Gartsons - Jack Gartson was a self-emancipated person from NJ. He married Caesar Robbins' daughter Susan and lived with Susan and their eight children in a second room added onto the Robbins' house. A photograph of Jack Gartson hangs prominently in the Concord Museum. Jack and Susan's son, John Gartson, was a gardener at the Old Mansse for 30 years.

28 Peter Hutchinson - The step-son of Caesar Robbins' son Peter Robbins, Peter Hutchinson and his wife Nancy Dager of Danvers raised five daughters here. It is believed that Peter Hutchinson was the first African resident to vote in Concord in 1881 and is buried in an unmarked grave in Sleepy Hollow Cemetery.

29 Peter's Spring Road & Path
Named after Peter Hutchinson

32 John Garrison House - 78 Monument St. (ca. 1850)
In the late 1700's and early 1800's, a small brick yard was located

24 Old Mansse - 269 Monument St. (1770)
The Old Mansse was built by Ralph Waldo Emerson's grandfather, the Reverend William Emerson, before the Revolution. Reverend Emerson married formerly enslaved persons Cate Bliss and Caesar Robbins in 1769. Caesar's grandson John Gartson put in the original garden at the Mansse with Henry David Thoreau as a wedding gift to Nathaniel and Sophia Hawthorne in 1842. John Brown spoke at the Mansse, in the large parlor, on his second visit to Concord in April 1857; Frank Sanborn lived at the old Mansse in 1863 (The Old Mansse has some of Sanborn's papers in their collection).

25 The Edge of the Great Field
Original site of the Caesar Robbins and John Jack homes. **Caesar Robbins House** - In the late 1770s, former enslaved person Caesar Robbins built or moved into a one-room house across from Dr. Ripley's gate (the Old Mansse) on the edge of the Great Field near or at the same location where John Jack had owned land. Caesar was not a landowner, however. He lived with the permission of wealthy landowner Humphrey Barrett. Caesar's son Peter would later raise a large family here and for a short period own the land. A second room was added to the house for Peter's sister Susan and her husband, former enslaved person Jack Gartson. Susan Gartson was a founding member of the Concord Female Anti-slavery Society (CFASS) and visiting members were served "her delicious cookies."

"FOLLOW THE DRINKING GOULD"

When the sun comes back
And the first quail calls
Follow the Drinking Gourd.
For the old man is a-waiting for to carry
you to freedom
If you follow the Drinking Gourd.

The riverbank makes a very good road.
The dead trees will show you the way.
Left foot, peg foot, traveling on,
Follow the Drinking Gourd.

The river ends between two hills
Follow the Drinking Gourd.
There's another river on the other side
Follow the Drinking Gourd.

When the great big river meets the
little river
Follow the Drinking Gourd.
For the old man is a-waiting for to carry
you to freedom
If you follow the Drinking Gourd.

Perhaps no song is more closely associated with the Underground Railroad than this one.

In this spiritual, escape instructions and a map are embedded as a code to enable enslaved persons to make their way North to freedom by following the points of the Big Dipper star formation, which points to Polaris, the Pole Star, and North.

The escape route traveled North to the headwaters of the Tombigbee River, through the divide, and then down the Tennessee River to the Ohio River. This journey to freedom took most refugees a full year.

The DGP Caesar Robbins House Educational Center for raising awareness around Concord's African and Abolitionist History has been generously supported by the Town of Concord Community Preservation Fund.

This map does not include all Underground Railroad stops in Concord. We are working to collect, verify, and add these in the future. Building orientation is representational.

The compilers of this map welcome your comments & corrections. Email us at www.drinkinggourdproject.org

Please contact the Concord Chamber of Commerce for tours; we thank them for supporting our mission.

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MISSION STATEMENT

The Drinking Gourd Project is a newly formed Concord-based nonprofit organization focused on raising awareness of Concord's African and Abolitionist history from the 17th through the 19th centuries. Our mission is to shine a light on this history and make it even more accessible to residents and visitors in a way that will add a new layer to our understanding of our past and a deeper appreciation for the complexity of Concord and its role in creating a diverse America.

- This is being accomplished through:
- educational programs
 - maps and tours of the early African and Abolitionist sites
 - the establishment of the Caesar Robbins Education Center, thanks to the generous support of Concord's Community Preservation Committee (see # 26)
 - framed copies of an 1864 petition to the president from Concord school children to free slave children together with Lincoln's response, which hang in Concord's three public elementary schools (see # 3)
 - commemorating early African and African American forgotten home sites with stone benches
 - providing engraved headstones for the unmarked graves of African Americans and Abolitionists
 - fundraising events to promote and inform audiences about this aspect of Concord's history
 - working closely with many entities in town, including the schools, museums, town agencies and organizations

We thank and recommend the following Authors and their books:

- Elise Lemire, *Black Walden: Slavery and Its Aftermath in Concord, Massachusetts*, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009.
- Sandra Petruionis, *To Set This World Right: The Antislavery Movement in Thoreau's Concord*, Cornell University Press, 2006.
- Barbara Elliott and Janet Jones, *Concord: Its Black History 1636-1860*, Concord Public Schools, 1976

Special Thank You to Leslie Wilson, Curator of Special Collections at the Concord Free Public Library.

Donations are gratefully accepted to expand our work on the African American and Abolitionist History of Concord, and help move and preserve the Caesar Robbins house to create a Civil Liberties museum.

Checks can be made out to Drinking Gourd Project, Inc., and sent to:
Drinking Gourd Project, Inc.
P.O. Box 506 Concord, MA 01742
Thank you!

Concord's African American & Abolitionist History

MAP

The Drinking Gourd is another name for the Big and Little Dippers. The North Star pointed out by these constellations was a guiding light for travelers heading North to freedom on the Underground Railroad.