Underground Railroad Resources at the
Delaware Historical Society Research Library

This list contains major resources and suggestions for research, but it does not claim to be complete and comprehensive.

Basic sources on African American history in Delaware

- Peter T. Dalleo, “Selected Sources of African American History in Nineteenth Century Delaware” (typescript, 1998)

Published Sources on the Underground Railroad

- James H. Fairchild, *The Underground Railroad* (Cleveland: Western Reserve Historical Society, 1895)
- William C. Kashatus, *Just Over the Line: Chester County and the Underground Railroad* (West Chester, Pa.: Chester County Historical Society in cooperation with Penn State University Press, 2002)
- R.C. Smedley, *History of the Underground Railroad in Chester and the Neighboring Counties of Pennsylvania* (Lancaster, Pa., 1883); also a paperback reprint with an introduction by Christopher Densmore (Stackpole Books, 2005)

**Microfilm Resources**
- U.S. Census, 1800-1930. Delaware’s 1790 census was destroyed long ago; there are published reconstructions based on other documents. 1850 is the first year that lists everyone in a household by name; earlier, only the head of household was listed by name and everyone else was listed by gender and age range. There are slave schedules for 1850 and 1860, which are organized by the name of the slave owner. Slaves are listed by age and gender, and their names are not given.
- Conrad/Tubman. 2 reels with Earl Conrad’s research notes and correspondence, 1939-1940, for his works on Harriet Tubman. Inventory on first reel. From the Schomburg Collection.
- Siebert Collection. 8 reels of Wilbur Seibert’s (*The Underground Railroad from Slavery to Freedom*, 1902) research materials that include information on Tubman, or Delaware. Printed inventory available. From the Ohio Historical Society.
- Delaware Newspaper Project, Box 79 has 2 issues of the *Delaware Abolitionist* from 1848, published by the Delaware Antislavery Society. These are the only issues that survive.

**Other Resources**
- Wilmington City Directories. First one 1814, next one 1845, sporadically in 1850s, then become annual in 1860s. Last one 1986. 1814, 1845 have separate listing for black residents; 1857, 1859 have “col’d” by African Americans; otherwise, no racial designations.
- Newspapers. In this era, Wilmington papers were published twice a week, with each issue being 4 pages. They carried mainly national and international news with very little local news. Papers had definite political affiliations. The main papers were the *Delaware Gazette* (Democrat—more likely to have runaway ads), the *Delaware State Journal* (Whig/Republican—more sympathetic to ending slavery), and the *Blue Hen’s Chicken* (Aug. 1845-Aug. 1853; had more local news than the other papers and was more sympathetic to blacks). Relatively few papers were published in other towns, and they have not survived very well. One
exception is the *Delawarean (Dover)* for 1859, 1860, 1861, and 1865. See the catalog of the Historical Society of Delaware newspaper collection and the list of the Delaware Newspaper Project for other titles.

- **Manuscripts.** This collection includes original letters, diaries, business records, organizational records. Look in the catalog under the name or subject in which you are interested.

- **Maps.** The most detailed maps for the Underground Railroad period are Rea and Price (1848) for New Castle County, Byles (1857) for Kent County, and Beers Atlas (1868) for the entire state.

- **Photographs and other visual materials.** The catalog is arranged by topic. Begin by looking under People, Churches, etc. Within each topic, photos are arranged alphabetically by the name of the church, person, etc.

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