

PART I. DEVELOPMENTAL HISTORY

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Outlining Josiah Henson's Life in Montgomery County, Maryland

Isaac Riley, owner of the Riley Farm, is remembered today because of Josiah Henson, the man he once enslaved.¹ Henson memorialized slavery in Montgomery County and on the Riley Farm in a total of six editions of his narratives, four of which contained substantive changes or additions. Although Henson added much to the story of the latter half of his life, the inclusion of introductions written by notable and prominent Americans in the 1879 edition mark it as an important edition.² Within those six editions of the narrative, the essential facts connected with Henson's early life in Maryland remained unchanged by Henson and were not investigated by scholars until recently.

The spare details of Henson's early life have received minimal attention despite the fact that his autobiography stood as the third most popular slave narrative at the time it was published as well as the third most frequently studied slave narrative among scholars after Frederick Douglass's seminal work. Douglass's account of slavery on Maryland's Eastern Shore ranked first among all slave narratives; the narrative of Olaudah Equiano second, and Henson's third. In 1849, Henson's autobiography first appeared in the July edition of a periodical subscribed to by the family of Harriet Beecher Stowe. This is the narrative that caught Stowe's attention, and, coupled with an essay about slave narratives by Ephraim Peabody, helped shape the characters for her 1852 book *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (Starling 1988). The first two editions of Henson's narrative reportedly sold a total of 100,000 copies largely as a result of Stowe's publication of *A Key to Uncle Tom's Cabin* which identified Henson as Tom (Foster 1994). Sales exploded, reaching a quarter of a million copies after John Lobb took over as editor of subsequent versions of Henson's narrative in 1877 (Davis and Gates 1985).

Invariably an account of Henson's life begins with virtually identical phrases taken directly from Henson: "He was born in June, 1789, in Charles County, State of Maryland, on a farm belonging to a Mr. Francis Newman, situated about a mile from Port Tobacco. His mother was hired out to work on this farm, being the slave of a Dr. Josiah McPherson, and here it was that she met with and was married to the father of Josiah" (Bleby, 1873; Bordewich, 2005).³ Henson's earliest recollection was the appearance of his father with "his head bloody and his back lacerated." Henson vividly recalled his father as being "beside himself with mingled rage and suffering." The overseer had brutally assaulted his mother. The bloody head and

¹ This section of the report, "Outlining Josiah Henson's Life in Montgomery County, Maryland," was compiled by *Cheryl Janifer LaRoche, Ph. D.*, a specialist in African American history and member of the JMA team.

² The 1879 edition has introductory letters by Wendell Phillips and John G. Whittier, and a preface was written by Harriet Beecher Stowe. An appendix entitled "The Exodus" (the escape of enslaved people out of the slave states and onto free soil) was also included. The appendix was written by Bishop Gilbert Haven, a leader of the Methodist Episcopal Church and a strong supporter of efforts to build educational facilities for people who had formerly been enslaved.

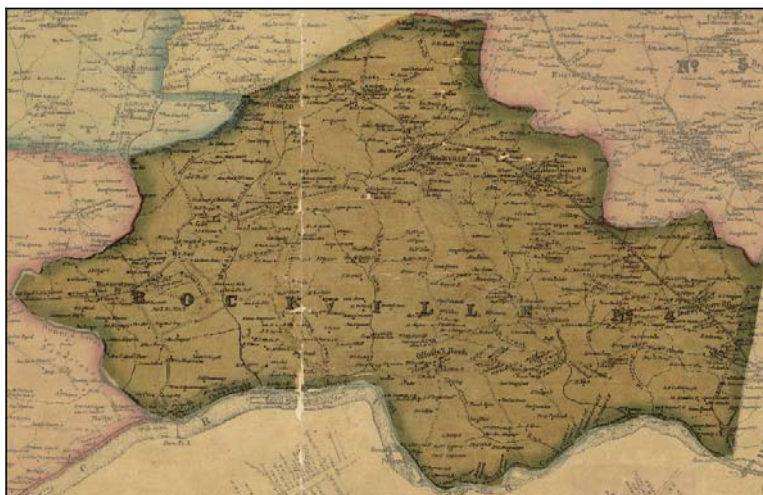
³ This exact quote is taken from the 1873 edition of *Josiah: The Maimed Fugitive. A True Tale*, by Henry Bleby. It can be retrieved online at <http://docsouth.unc.edu/neh/bleby/bleby.html>, an electronic copy of Bleby's book posted by the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill as part of the *Documenting the American South*, "a digital publishing initiative that provides Internet access to texts, images, and audio files related to southern history, literature, and culture." The same source has been used for a number of quotes in this report. The same passage appears, almost word-for-word, as the opening of either the first or second paragraph of the narrative in the 1849, 1858, 1876, and 1881 editions available through the *Documenting the American South* collection. The point here, however, is that it has been quoted almost word-for-word, many times in other books mentioning Henson. Similarly, the two quotes following it are carried word-for-word from the autobiography into many other accounts.

lacerated back were a result of his father's attempts to rescue his wife. As was true for so many enslaved children, Henson's earliest conscious memories were of the most dreadful and bloodiest moments of slavery. His memory of the brutal beating of his father would foreshadow his own brutal beating at the hands of Brice Letton more than a decade later.

Henson's father was subsequently sold south and the family was returned to McPherson for a period of relative stability. With the death of "kindly" McPherson, however, the family was divided and the mother sold away from her children. Henson recalled being five or six years old at the time. Although a more recent source indicates he was probably eight years old, the precise dates are unclear for this period of his life. After he was sold to Adam Robb, owner of a tavern in Rockville, young Henson's health deteriorated to such an extent that Robb feared for the child's life and traded him to Isaac Riley, the purchaser of Henson's mother.

When Josiah Henson was born into slavery in 1789 on the plantation in Charles County Maryland, he was delivered into a system marked by brutal coercion and benevolent concern. The attempt to emphasize benevolent concern has led to such statements as, "In Maryland...the slaves, as a rule, were well treated" (Channing 1904:121). Despite statements of this kind, examples of brutality were rampant throughout much of the state and, based on Henson's narrative, within Montgomery County as well.

Further research will be necessary to determine whether Henson's childhood circumstances were atypical. The 1804 Tax Assessment records are the earliest documents consulted in a preliminary attempt to gain an understanding of the numbers of children enslaved in District 4 in Montgomery County. The Tax Assessment indicates that thirty-two percent of the enslaved populations in District 4 consisted of children less than eight years of age. If children ranging from the ages of eight to fourteen are included, the percentage rises. Nearly half (forty-nine percent) of the people held in bondage in County District 4 in 1804



Martinet and Bond's 1865 *Map of Montgomery County*, with "Rockville No. 4" [District 4] highlighted. See appendix for enlarged section of the same map with the Riley House marked.

were children under fourteen years of age. District 4 slaveholders were taxed for a total of 1,202 people held in slavery in 1804 and for 1,179 held in slavery in 1820. A decade later, for example, between 1831 and 1833, children under the age of fourteen comprised more than half the number of slaves held by Jane N. Beall, widow of Upton Beall and the daughter of Adam Robb, the tavern owner who purchased Henson as a child (Broadhurst).

The Montgomery County population census for 1800 indicates that there were 6,288 people held in slavery and 262 free people of color. When the white population of 8,508 is added to these figures, the total population for the County in 1800 totals 15,058. By 1820, the number of enslaved residents rose slightly to 6,396 and the free black population tripled, rising to 922. By 1820, the proportion of enslaved children under eight appearing in the tax assessment rolls dropped to thirty-one percent. A total of eighteen percent of the people held in bondage in the County were held by slaveholders who lived within Montgomery County's District 4 (Carey 1845).

Isaac Riley does not appear on the 1804 tax rolls although he owned slaves during this time period. However, George Riley, his older brother, was assessed for 20 enslaved persons, six of whom were under the age of eight. Neither Isaac nor George appears on the 1820 Tax Assessment during the period when Josiah Henson would have toiled on the Riley Farm.⁴ The Riley family owned several farms of hundreds of acres each. The farm that the Collyar family sold to George Riley in 1797 (in other words the acreage associated with the current house) was known by deed as “Collyar’s Resurvey” because it had been re-surveyed in 1787 and found to contain 282½ acres. The Rileys owned other farms in the same vicinity and may have been farming adjoining land with the workforce housed at the “Collyar’s Resurvey” farm. The properties belonging to or managed by Isaac Riley appear to have been operated as one large plantation.⁵ Josiah Henson appears to be referring to a plantation consisting of several different farms. When he returned to the property, ca.1830, from Kentucky, he noticed that Riley’s “best farms had been taken away from him, and but a few tracts of poor land remained, which he cultivated with hired labour after I took his slaves [to Kentucky]” (Henson, 1881:53). Yet Riley continued to operate his holdings with some enslaved labor until the time of his death. The 1850 slave census listing for Isaac Riley shows five enslaved individuals, four of whom are children. Other sources will need to be consulted to gain a precise understanding of slavery on the Riley Farm.

Most slaveholders owned farms ranging from 50 to 500 acres, with most of the enslaved workforce working the farms. This was certainly true for Henson. He once hoed the land and reaped the crops and tended agricultural matters on the property. According to Henson’s autobiography, Isaac Riley trusted the day-to-day management of the plantation to Henson. As overseer of the property and Riley’s affairs, Henson was intimately familiar with the land and with the surrounding area. He had knowledge of the business dealings pertaining to Isaac Riley. As superintendent of the farming operation, Henson was entrusted with produce which he transported and sold in Georgetown and Washington (Henson 1881:41).

Henson identified George Riley, Isaac Riley’s brother, as the model for the character “George Shelby” in *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*. “The incident of young George Shelby taking horse to overtake Haley the trader really occurred. The young man was George Riley” (Henson 1877). In Stowe’s book, this character slowed down slave traders pursuing “Eliza” allowing her time to escape (Stowe 1858). Henson reported in John Lobb’s “Editorial Note” of the 1877 edition of the narrative, “While I was at Litton’s (Mrs. Stowe’s Simon Legree) young George Riley (Mrs. Stowe’s George Shelby) really did visit me.” In both the narrative and the fictionalized description, George Riley typified to Henson and in turn to Stowe the, “good, kind-hearted slave holder” (Cissel 1984: 5). Nevertheless, George Riley’s overseer, Brice Letton,⁶ Stowe’s model for Simon Legree did, in fact, administer the brutal beating that left Henson’s shoulders impaired for life (Henson 1877).

⁴ George Riley died in 1815. Based on other indications, Isaac Riley appears to have made George Riley’s farm his residence either shortly before or shortly after 1815.

⁵ The words “farm” and “plantation” are both used in this document, following the way Henson used the words. Henson sometimes used both words on the same page (see: Henson, 1849: 10). Although the two words occasionally have interchangeable meanings, most uses of the “plantation” are in reference to the systemic agricultural activities, especially incorporating enslaved workers to plant and harvest hundreds or even thousands of acres of land. In those places where the word “farm” is used in reference to events occurring prior to 1850 (when Isaac Riley died), the word refers to individual farm-size tracts of land that have been recorded individually in county land records. In most instances, “farm” is used specifically in reference to the “Collyar’s Resurvey” farm, the tract that included the Riley House. Isaac Riley owned several other farms, apparently operating them together as one system. While Henson may not have been aware of the legally defined property lines between adjoining farms that were in Riley’s possession, his writing carry the implication that he and Riley were overseeing and operating an agricultural system that was larger than any one legally defined farm. As noted, the word “farms” (in the plural) is used when Henson is speaking of the better quality land that Riley had lost after Henson left for the first time to go to Kentucky.

⁶ Spelled Litton by Henson, also apparently spelled Lyddane or Lyddan, as found in county records and maps. The first name “Brice” is also spelled Bryce in some documents.

At eighteen, Josiah Henson experienced his powerful, and what would become his life-defining religious conversion while he resided on the Riley plantation. At the urging of his pious mother and with surprisingly little objection from Isaac Riley, Henson attended a religious meeting at Newport Mill (on Rock Creek near today's Beach Drive) led by John McKenny. The fear of rebellion and escape of enslaved workers constantly plagued slave holders. Therefore, opportunities to leave or travel unassisted were controlled by the use of written passes to visit spouses, for example. Allowing Henson to attend such a religious meeting unassisted can be seen as a measure of Riley's trust in the man since slaveholders "considered religious camp meetings to be hotbeds of conspiracies to escape" (Fields 1985). This all-important introduction into Methodism culminated in Henson becoming a minister in the African Methodist Episcopal (AME) church. The AME church, formally organized in 1816, had separated from the Methodist Episcopal church over issues of racist treatment of Blacks by the denomination. Henson preached to both black and white audiences throughout his career. His widely recognized honorific title was "Father Henson," which he used only once in the title of the second edition of his narrative.

At twenty-two, Henson "married a very efficient, and...a very well-taught girl, belonging to a neighbouring family reputed to be pious and kind," presumably in Montgomery County. "I first met her at the religious meetings which I attended." In the 1877 edition of his narrative Henson identified her by name as Charlotte. According to Henson, she, too, became a character in *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. "Aunt Chloe was my first wife, whose real name was Charlotte. She was famed as a good cook. Her beautiful singing of spiritual songs first won my heart. She was a true Christian..." (Henson 1877:41, 8).

There were a number of defining moments in Henson's life, none more life transforming than his trek to Isaac Riley's brother, Amos Riley's plantation in Kentucky. At the inducement of Isaac Riley, who was facing bankruptcy, Henson faithfully escorted several Riley slaves through the free state of Ohio to Kentucky in 1825. Free blacks of Cincinnati urged Henson and the eighteen slaves under his charge all to seize the opportunity for freedom. Despite this insistence, Henson honored Riley's trust in him and delivered himself, his family, and the enslaved workers to Amos Riley, which later caused Henson intense moments of regret. With the exception of Henson and his family, Isaac Riley sold all those Henson had delivered into continuing bondage in Kentucky to the Deep South in the spring of 1828.

That same year, when Henson returned to Maryland from Kentucky intent upon purchasing his freedom from Isaac Riley who continued to hold him in slavery, he carried with him a pass from Amos Riley, Jr., that affirmed Henson's right to travel unmolested despite his enslavement and a letter of recommendation to a minister in Cincinnati. Henson attended the Ohio Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church where he received official permission to preach. In a quest to purchase his freedom, Henson preached throughout his return trip to Maryland and earned money he hoped would allow him to purchase his freedom from Isaac Riley.

Upon returning to Riley's Maryland property, Henson found that Riley had lost his best farms and that only "a few tracts of poor land remained," which Riley cultivated with hired labour since he had sent his enslaved workforce to Kentucky. Henson continued, "I rode up to the old house." After greeting Riley, whom Henson later characterized as "old Riley, grim oppressor," Henson quickly perceived Riley's vexation at Henson's apparent success for he was wearing finer clothes than Riley. Henson's narrative at this particular point was infused with familiarity. He put his horse in the stable and then "retired to the kitchen, where my master told me I was to sleep for the night." In reflecting on the use of this kitchen as sleeping quarters, Henson observes, "Oh, how different from my accommodations in the Free States for the last three months, was that crowded room, with its earth-floor, its filth and stench!" The only hint of change is Henson's observation that all the enslaved workers "were strangers to me," and with the death of his mother, he observed that "every tie which had ever connected me with the place was broken" (Henson 1877:26, 56).

After turning to Riley's wife's brother to help negotiate the terms of his self-purchase from Isaac Riley, Henson stated that he received his manumission papers on 9th March, 1829 (Henson 1969 reprint of 1881 edition:59). The County has a copy of Henson's manumission papers with that exact date. The document contains a detailed physical description of Henson which indicates that although he is "straight and well formed, both arms are stiff being occasioned by some injury in the elbow joints." Bruce Selby, the Clerk of the Court, was in all likelihood observing the after effects of the vicious beating Henson suffered at the hands of Brice Letton and three of his enslaved workers.

My sufferings after this cruel treatment were intense. Besides my broken arm and the wounds on my head, I could feel and hear the pieces of my shoulder-blades grate against each other with every breath...From that day to this I have been unable to raise my hands as high as my head...And so I have gone through life maimed and mutilated. Practice in time enabled me to perform many of the farm labours with considerable efficiency; but the free, vigorous play of the muscles of my arm was gone for ever (Henson 1858:40).

Indeed, a white Methodist Episcopal minister, Henry Bleby, who met Henson in Boston,

observed that both his arms were crippled, so that he could by no means use them freely...When I was first introduced to him, I observed that he could not lift his hand to his head; and that when he had to put on or take off his hat he brought his head down to his hand. Both his arms appeared to be shorter than they should have been in proportion to his size, and he was stiff and awkward in the use of them (Bleby 1873:8).

Henson carried the lasting effects of his beating here in the County for the remainder of his days.

Josiah Henson maintained a life-long connection to Montgomery County, returning twice. He also carried the memory of his dear mother and his brother who apparently continued to be held captive in the County. Henson's intention for the use of the proceeds from sales of the 1858 narrative motivated him to consult anti-slavery friends in Boston. He secured their agreement to publish the story of his life, "that I might be able, from its sale, to raise a sufficient sum of money to buy my brother's freedom" (Henson, 1876:154). Implying that he had been in frequent communication with his brother, Henson also indicated that he had by then "made several efforts to induce my brother to run away.... All my previous plans to rescue my brother had failed, but I was not at all disposed to relinquish the project. By the aid of friends, I learned that the mistress to whom my brother belonged would give him his freedom-papers for 400 dollars, and I concluded that I must raise 550 dollars, or about £110, so that I should be able to take him to my home in Canada." According to Montgomery County historian Diane Broadhurst, Josiah Henson purchased his brother from Jane N. Beall for \$250 in 1858 although the inconsistencies between Henson's autobiography and the circumstances of Jane Beall's life warrant further investigation (Henson 1877:152, 154).

In the winter of 1877, Henson explained nostalgically "a strange, inexpressible longing came over me to see again the home of my boyhood...So, on the 24th of December, 1877, we started for the South." After a visit to the White House with President and Mrs. Hayes, Henson:

went to my old home. Fifty years, lacking only a few months, had passed since I last saw the old place. Fifty long years! since the day when I left the master's house to return to my family in Kentucky, walking with a swinging step and a jubilant heart, because my great object in life was gained (as I thought in my credulity), my freedom papers being safely stowed away in my bag... I did almost unconsciously expect to see the old place somewhat as I had left it. Notwithstanding all I had heard of the great alterations which had taken place, since coming South, I still pictured to myself the great fertile plantation,

with its throngs of busy labourers sowing the seed, tilling the ground, and reaping the valuable harvests as of yore. I saw the "great house," well furnished and sheltering a happy, luxurious, and idle family; I saw the outdoor kitchen, where the coloured cook and her young maids prepared and carried the dinners into the house; I saw the barns and storehouses bursting with plenty; the great cellars filled with casks of cider, apple-brandy, and fruit; and plainer than all I saw the little village of huts called the niggers' quarters, which used to be so full of life, and alas! so full of sorrow... when we drove at last up the grass-grown road to the house, I saw it standing there all alone, without a single barn or stable or shed to bear it company, and it was in such a dilapidated condition that the windows rattled and the very door sprang ajar as we drove up and stopped before it (Henson 1881:220).

On this, his final visit to Maryland, Henson's mother was ever on his mind. "Then I spoke of the last thing which was on my mind, the desire to visit my mother's grave." Riley's widow said

...she knew where it was well, and directed her son-in-law to conduct me there. So we went out, and bent our steps toward a little collection of mounds, slightly raised above the surrounding level, but enough to show that they were the final resting-place of many who had passed away from this life and its sorrows. And there, a little removed from the others, was that of my poor, dear old slave-mother; of her who had first pointed me heaven-wards; whose early prayers were my salvation. I bowed myself to the ground, and hid my face in the grass that grows thickly over that beloved form. I wept, and prayed, and made new resolutions that in the days which may yet be before me, I may so live as to honour the memory of her who bore me (Henson 1881:224).

In conclusion, on both a national and international level, Maryland has the potential to make a tremendous historical contribution to Henson's life story, particularly the years before his escape to Canada. In consulting untapped County and State resources, researchers should be able to further develop Henson's narrative of his life in Maryland. So completely has Henson's image become entwined with that of Uncle Tom that somewhere along the way, Henson's powerful and dynamic life was reduced to an odious cliché of an Uncle Tom, "a black man who obsequiously seeks white approval or betrays his race." With the County's efforts to support emerging scholarship, this image may finally begin to change. As the County moves forward with this project, we see an opportunity to rescue Henson's reputation and refute 150 years of character assassination.

Historical Background of the Riley Property

The project site is now a one-acre property that was originally part of a 3,697 acre parcel of land patented with the name “Dan” (also spelled as “Dann” in some of the early deeds). As early as the 1760s, a small portion of Dan contributed to a larger plantation that deed records first associate with William Collyer (the name is also spelled Collier or Collyar in various records). According to deed records, the Colliers owned numerous tracts of land in this area in the 1700s.⁹ Sometime prior to 1797, the property was transferred from William Collyer to his son James Collyer.¹⁰

On October 26, 1797, ownership of the property was transferred from James Collyer (the son of William Collyer) to George Riley. The deed includes the following description,

all that part or parcel of land known by the name Dan, also all that party or parcel of land known by the name Elder’s Delight, also all that party or parcel of land known by the name Collyar’s Resurvey corrected adjoining the above-mentioned part of Dan... (Montgomery County Deed Records; October 26, 1797)

In 1792, prior to purchasing the property, George Riley married Sarah Wilson (See Appendix J for a summary of the Riley Family genealogy). At the time of their marriage, Sarah had inherited land from her father’s estate. Although historical documents identify George Riley as a planter, he also served as a Montgomery County Commissioner and as a member of the House of Delegates (*The Montgomery County Story*, Montgomery County Historical Society). Records also indicated that George and Sarah Riley were involved in numerous real estate transactions.

Following Sarah’s untimely death in October 1810, George married Mary Richards. George died five years later, leaving Mary with their three young girls. In 1818, she married Arnold Thomas Windsor. Windsor was to play a pivotal role in Josiah Henson’s story just a few years later.¹¹

By the time of George Riley’s death in 1815, Isaac Riley, a younger brother, is believed to have been residing on the property. Isaac was the executor of George Riley’s will, and apparently he continued to operate the farm in that capacity after his older brother’s passing. It is evident that Isaac Riley remained on the property until his death in 1850.

Even before he had any claim to the land, Isaac did have title to enslaved workers. Before 1818, while still a bachelor, Riley family documents and census records indicate that he resided with a sister and several slaves (Montgomery County Historical Society). Census records from the 1820s indicate that the plantation had at least twenty enslaved workers, plus additional enslaved children. The produce, which included wheat, oats, barley, potatoes, corn, tobacco, hay, fruit, and butter, was sold at the local markets in Washington and Georgetown. Animals on the plantation included sheep, pigs, and chickens. (Henson)

⁹ William Collyer and his wife Sarah signed a contract to lease this farm to a family named Lovelace in 1765. See: http://homepages.rootsweb.com/~lovelace/us/states/ky/Unknown_Counties/Published_Genealogies/harned.htm and Frederick County Deed Book J, p. 1203, 6-19-1765.

¹⁰ William Collyer’s will was written in January 4, 1792 and probated, two years later, in January 1794 (Montgomery County, Maryland Wills (Liber C. folio 36) from Ancestry.com, site accessed June 2007).

¹¹ This could be the same Arnold T. Windsor (also spelled Winsor and Winser) who was sheriff of Montgomery County in 1816. See list of sheriffs on Montgomery County web site: <http://www.mcsheriff.com/info/sheriffs.asp> . Sheriff Windsor was involved in the prosecution of an enslaved individual called “Negro Jacob” who was executed in 1817 for killing his master, John Oneale. See: <http://www.onealwebsite.com/RebelRose/JacobTrial.htm> .

The most recognized individual associated with Isaac Riley is Josiah Henson. Author of his own autobiography and an inspiration for Harriet B. Stowe's novel, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, Josiah Henson is the most identifiable slave from Montgomery County. He was separated from his mother at age five and was sold to tavern owner, Adam Robb, who lived approximately four miles from the Riley plantation. When he fell seriously ill, arrangements were made by the tavern owner to reunite the young Josiah with his mother. Henson was approximately six years old when he was reunited with his mother; for the next thirty years he was enslaved on the Riley plantation.¹²

As a young man, Josiah Henson was entrusted with the management of the plantation; he identifies himself as superintendent of farming operations (Henson, 1849:10). His responsibilities included oversight of the production and sale of produce, as well as the oversight of his owner's other slaves. At age 22, Josiah Henson married Charlotte, a slave from a neighboring plantation called Williamsburg.¹³

In 1818, at age 44, Isaac Riley married Matilda Middleton. Approximately eighteen years old at the time, both of Matilda's parents had passed away. At the time of their marriage, Isaac was appointed guardian of Matilda's younger brother, Francis, who also came to live at the Riley plantation. In his autobiography, Henson describes his new mistress as "a young woman of eighteen, who had some little property, and more thrift. Her economy was remarkable, and she added no comfort to the establishment" (Henson 1877:41).

As noted, Isaac Riley's sister-in-law Mary Richards Riley had a second husband, Arnold T. Windsor. Windsor claimed that Riley had been dishonest in the management of the George Riley property and filed a series of lawsuits on the basis that Isaac Riley was not managing the estate properly. The lawsuits dragged on for many years with at least four different equity suits filed by Windsor between January 1825 and March 1841. The suits were filed to allow for the sale of various tracts of land that had belonged to George Riley. In July 1825, Isaac Riley began to file counter suits against Windsor, "to stay proceedings on judgment."¹⁴ At one different point, a deed was recorded giving Arnold Windsor title to the present Riley House;¹⁵ however, it appears that Isaac Riley did not relinquish the house and land at that time, but

¹² Henson recalled being five or six years old at the time; precise dates for this period of this life are unclear.

¹³ It is not clear at what point Charlotte became enslaved by Isaac Riley, although it is assumed that she was in his possession when Riley sent her to Kentucky. In addition to Charlotte, Henson's children also accompanied him to Kentucky. (In total, over the span of their marriage, Henson and his wife had eight children.) After forty years of marriage, while Henson was visiting England, his wife became very ill. Henson rushed back to Canada to visit her, but it was only a matter of weeks before her death. Years later, Henson did remarry (Henson).

¹⁴ The records of these actions include: January 22, 1825, Arnold T. Windsor vs. Isaac Riley, No. 25 Equity 1828, for payment of money and conveyance of land, dismissed September 7, 1830; July 1825, Isaac Riley vs. Arnold T. Windsor, admin., No. 25 Equity 1828 for payment of money and conveyance of land, dismissed September 7, 1832; July 11, 1828, Arnold T. Windsor vs. Isaac Riley, No. 25 Equity 1841, to stay proceedings on judgment, dismissed March 16, 1841; October 1, 1830, Arnold T. Windsor vs. Isaac Riley, No. 36 Equity 1841, for the conveyance of land, dismissed March 16, 1841; October 1, 1830, Isaac Riley vs. Arnold T. Windsor, No. 36 Equity 1841, for the conveyance of land, owner of land: George Riley, dismissed March 16, 1841.

¹⁵ On August 24, 1825, a deed was drawn up and recorded with the Montgomery County indicating that "all the said Isaac Riley's right title claim, interest and demand" regarding a series of real estate tracts in the George Riley estate were to pass to Arnold T. Windsor. Among the numerous tracts of land described in the deed, the document states:

the said Isaac Riley doth hereby acknowledge [sic] hath given, granted, bargained, and sold and by these presents doth give, grant, bargain and sell unto him the said Arnold T. Winsor [sic] in trust for the purposes herein after particularly set forth...all the said Isaac Riley's right, title, claim, interest and demand to all the following tracts... All that part and parcel known as Dann, all that part or parcel of land known by the name of Elder's Delight, also all that tract of land known by the name of Collyar's Resurvey corrected adjoining the above mentioned part of Dann being the same land deeded by James Collyar to George Riley by deed bearing the date the twenty ninth day of October seventeen hundred and ninety seven... (Deed of Trust, Y:132)

This deed of trust appears to indicate that, in signing the document, Isaac Riley relinquished his rights to administer the George Riley estate to Windsor, whom the deed says is now the administrator of the estate, and that Isaac Riley relinquished any

rather filed a counter suit shortly after the deed was issued. By the time of his death, Isaac and Matilda Riley apparently had a clear enough title to the remaining land to leave (or in the case of one daughter, to sell) a tract of 49 or more acres each to six of their children.

The lawsuits filed by Winsor led to a declining financial situation for Isaac Riley. In 1825, fearing the loss of his entire estate, Isaac Riley instructed Josiah Henson to take his slaves to his brother, Amos Riley, in Kentucky. According to documents produced by extended members of the Riley family, Amos had established a large plantation in Daviess County, Kentucky. Under the leadership of Henson, the slaves traveled to the Riley plantation in Kentucky, passing through Ohio along the way. Residents of Ohio, a free state, tried to persuade Henson not to continue to Kentucky. Feeling committed to the journey, having given his word to Isaac Riley, Henson continued to lead the group to Kentucky. According to Henson's autobiography, the traveling group consisted of twenty-two people, including his own wife and their two children (Henson 1877:44).

Josiah Henson (and other Riley slaves) remained in Kentucky until 1828. Unable to relocate his family to Kentucky as initially intended, Isaac Riley had sent an agent to his brother's plantation to arrange for the sale of his slaves. Isaac gave the agent instructions not to include Henson and his family in the sale, hoping for their return to Maryland. While his slaves were in Kentucky, Isaac Riley had been struggling to recover from the ruinous lawsuit against him. "His best farms had been taken away from him, and but a few tracts of poor land remained, which he cultivated with hired labour... month by month he grew poorer and more desperate" (Henson 1877:53). In 1828, Isaac wrote to Amos requesting that Henson be returned. After sending his slaves to his brother's plantation in Kentucky, Isaac Riley had used hired labor to cultivate his remaining land.¹⁶ Eventually, Isaac had acquired additional slaves to work the land.¹⁷

As previously noted, Henson first found religion ca. 1807 at age 18, while listening to a sermon at the Newport Mill on the bank of Rock Creek, Montgomery County (Henson).¹⁸ While living in Kentucky, he became a minister and was admitted into the Ohio Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church. In March 1828, when he set out to return to Isaac Riley's plantation in Maryland, he stopped to preach along the way back to Maryland. By preaching, Henson was able to earn \$270, money he intended to use for the purchase of his freedom.

When recalling the events leading to the negotiation of his freedom, Henson states:

...he [Isaac Riley] agreed to give me my manumission-papers for four hundred and fifty dollars, of which three hundred and fifty dollars were to be in cash, and the remainder in my note. My

ownership rights he had to the property where the house is located. It further stipulates that some property is to be sold to settle a debt between Riley and Winsor. The property listed in the transaction also includes some people who were enslaved on the property, but in naming them, does not name Josiah Henson. A second deed of trust of a similar nature, but regarding enslaved individuals and land that had been inherited by the Letton family, was issued in 1828 transferring Riley's rights and those of several others to Winsor. Winsor was asking the court to confirm that he had previously purchased the land from the Lettons. It was recorded on November 21, 1828 (Deed of Trust, BS 2:76).

¹⁶ Isaac Riley's remaining land consisted of the property he was able to retain after the lawsuit.

¹⁷ References to Isaac Riley hiring labor and acquiring additional slaves are found in Josiah Henson's autobiographies; Henson does not specify the number of people involved.

¹⁸ Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission acquired property identified as the Newport Mill Park in 1955.

money and my horse enabled me to pay the case at once, and thus my great hope seemed in a fair way of being realized.

Some time was spent in the negotiation of this affair, and it was not until the 9th of March, 1829, that I received my manumission-papers in due form of law. (Henson 1877:59)

It was not until Henson returned to Kentucky that he came to the conclusion he had been deceived by Isaac Riley. Convincing Henson that the papers should be transported within a sealed document to his brother Amos, Isaac Riley forwarded what Henson believed to be his manumission papers to Amos. The papers reached Amos Riley before Henson arrived at the Kentucky plantation. Upon his arrival Henson learned that Amos Riley had communicated details of his manumission with his wife and children which differed from his recollection.¹⁹ In his autobiography Henson states:

Master Amos said I had paid three hundred and fifty dollars down, and when I had made up six hundred and fifty more I was to have my free papers. I now began to perceive the trick that had been played upon me, and to see the management by which Riley had contrived that the only evidence of my freedom should be kept from every eye but that of his brother Amos, who was requested [*sic*] to retain it until I had made up the balance I was reported to have agreed to pay. (Henson 1877:61)

Coupled with this news was the prospect of being sold by Amos to another, more southern owner and the potential division of his family. These thoughts led Henson to decide to escape with his wife and children. The threat of being sold into the Deep South was often one of the greatest fears of slaves. In addition to the prospect of being separated from one's family, living and work conditions on southern plantations were reportedly worse than what slaves of more northern locations experienced. Adding to the situation was Henson's final memories of his father before he was permanently separated from the family and taken south.

In 1830, Henson, his wife, and their four children, escaped from Kentucky to Canada via the Underground Railroad. Eleven years later, in 1841, he and his family moved to the outskirts of Dresden, Canada, where he established Dawn Settlement, a self-sufficient community which reached a population of 500 at its height. Dawn was primarily a rural agricultural settlement where lumber was produced. Many African Americans who escaped on the Underground Railroad settled there.²⁰

Isaac Riley continued to reside on the Old Georgetown Road property until his death in 1850, at which point the property was bequeathed to his wife Matilda. The property is located within a geographic area which experienced the Civil War first hand. At one point a 20th century property owner was informed by neighbors that the local legend identified the property as the "scene of many activities of the Southern army... they were camped on the grounds on their way to Washington" (Smith 1939).²¹ According to the legend, the Confederate troops of General Jubal Early could be seen through the window in the loft of the cabin (the log house). According to staff of the Montgomery County Department of Parks, Park Planning

¹⁹ A copy of the March 9, 1829, manumission document was in the possession of Henson's two surviving daughters in 1923. Daughters Matilda Henson Richey, then 81 years old, and Julia Ann Henson Wheeler, 72 years of age, were residing in Flint, Michigan, when interviewed for a newspaper article. It is not known how or when Henson (and/or his family) obtained a copy of the document. Considering that Henson was unable to read or write until later in his life, it is also unknown if he ever knew what the document actually said. (A Xerox copy of newspaper article filed in the Josiah Henson vertical file at Peerless Rockville; "*Uncle Tom's' Daughters are Still Living.*" February 9, 1923; the copy does not indicate the name of the newspaper or the author of the article.)

²⁰ Relocated three times (within the Dawn Settlement land) the cabin where Josiah and his family resided at Dawn was opened as a museum during the 1940s. The Henson family cemetery is also located near Dresden.

²¹ In addition to the stories portraying the use of the property during the Civil War, prior neighbors have reported legends indicating that the original house was constructed after the Revolutionary War by a young soldier (*Star* July 30, 1939).

and Stewardship Division, if true, this event would be one example of a pattern of Montgomery County's white slaveholders being southern sympathizers during the Civil War.

When Matilda died, June 26, 1890, the property passed to her daughter Frances [Fannie] Ruben Riley Mace. The Riley house and surrounding property remained in the family for three quarters of a century after Isaac Riley's death. In a pair of oral history interviews, Frances Mace Hansbrough, granddaughter of Francis Ruben Riley Mace, recalled visiting the property as a child, during the 1910s and 1920s. Although the property was still owned by descendants of Isaac Riley, the house was rented out during this time. While residing in Georgetown, Mrs. Hansbrough would travel with her family on weekends to Montgomery County in order to visit the family's "home-place." Her father, Samuel Viers Mace, continued to maintain a garden on the property (Hansbrough 2006).

A 1919 newspaper article describes the property as:

A quaint home, with mossy shingles, log kitchen, rough, stout chimneys and a very old-fashioned air... It sits far back from the west side of the road. Around it cling vines and above it tall walnut trees spread their strong and crooked arms. Late roses were blooming in the garden... In the garden of the old house is a spring, whose sweet water is famous over a wide range of country. (*Sunday Star* October 19, 1919)

According to the newspaper article, the property was identified as the "Mace Place" for many years because of its association with the Riley-Maces. The great-grandson of Isaac Riley, Charlie Mace was a veterinarian and the primary resident of the house during in 1910s. In addition to Charlie Mace, the Bracket family also lived in the house in 1919; this supports Mrs. Hansbrough's recollection that the house was rented out during this time.²²

The property was transferred in and out of the Riley family before being purchased by the Luchs family in 1926; the new owners, Morton and Ernestine Luchs, owned a farm nearby.²³ A real estate investor, Mr. Luchs established the Luxmanor Corporation in partnership with his wife. The corporation was the predecessor of the Washington, D.C. real estate company Shannon and Luchs.²⁴ Luxmanor Corporation subdivided the property adjacent to the Riley house; the subdivision became the Luxmanor neighborhood.²⁵ Although the subdivision was primarily a development of new construction, the Riley house and land immediately surrounding the house were retained.

In 1936, William and Levina Bolten purchased the house from Luxmanor Corporation.²⁶ The Boltens, who owned the property until 1950, were responsible for the extensive renovation of the house during the late 1930s. The couple retained the services of White House Architect, Lorenzo Winslow, to complete an extensive remodeling of the house. The project included a Colonial Revival style remodeling to the

²² The Bracket family included Mr. and Mrs. William Bracket, their five children, and a niece of Mrs. Bracket (*Sunday Star* October 19, 1919).

²³ The Luchs farm was located near the intersection of Old Georgetown Road and the Road currently identified as Tuckerman Lane (previously identified as Luchs Lane) (personal communications; Ken Luchs).

²⁴ Although the name of the company has been changed, third generation real estate broker, Ken Luchs is still involved in the Washington, D.C. real estate market. Mr. Luchs has retained the real estate papers of his father and grandfather. A preliminary review of the records, conducted by Mr. Luchs, did not produce information pertaining to the Riley property.

²⁵ The Luxmanor drawings within the Prints and Photographs Collection of the Library of Congress are associated with the Luch's personal property. ("Alterations to a farm house ("Luxmanor") for Morton J. Luchs, Rockville Road, Rockville, Maryland." Arthur B. Heaton, Architect; [Emerich H. Bauer, Landscape Architect. [1927-1928].)

²⁶ William Bolten immigrated to the United States in 1882. Born in approximately 1875, Bolten married Levina Woodworth, originally from Michigan, sometime prior to 1820. Levina's brother, Benjamin Woodworth, was a joint tenant for the Riley property from 1938 until the time of his death in 1947. No records were uncovered to indicate that William and Levina had any children. (The primary sources for Bolton information were Census Records and Montgomery County Deed Records).

interior of the house and the log wing, as well as the construction of a new rear kitchen-wing.²⁷ A newspaper article from the time of the remodeling refers to the “old log wing” as (both) the old slave quarters and prior log kitchen (Smith 1939). This 1939 article also makes one of the earliest documented references to the properties association with “Uncle Tom.” Entitled “Legendary Scene of Uncle Tom’s Cabin is Restored,” the article states that, “Material used by Harriet Beecher Stowe in *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* was based on life on an old plantation which is now the site of the remodeled home of Mrs. Levina W. Bolten... according to legend” (Smith 1939).

The remodeling project,²⁸ designed by Lorenzo Winslow, was undertaken at some point between 1936 and 1939. It was typical of “restoration” projects in the 1930s and 1940s, removing and replacing many historic surface materials with modern materials, changing configurations in the floor plan to accommodate modern living patterns, and adding amenities, such as a modern kitchen and bathroom. The living room stairs appear to have been rebuilt as part of the project, so that they begin at the center of the house and rise to the west (they apparently rose to the east originally, to conform to the roof shape). The exterior siding and interior plaster were entirely replaced in the project, as were the doors, windows, and almost all the trim. In replacing the plaster and siding, the original studs were left in place in the walls, but modern lumber was added to create a superimposed second system of studs in order to make the walls thicker and more plumb on both sides.

The 1936 design included the introduction of several elements that do not appear to have been based on the original design of the house, but instead may have been introduced because they were characteristic of other early houses in the region. The 1936 design is an example of a Colonial Revival “restoration,” meaning the changes were based on other built examples, rather than on any documentation of the Riley house. An example is the thin brackets at the corners of the roof. The log room appears to have been “restored” more completely than other parts of the house. The original floor was replaced with a floor at a higher elevation, resulting in a major alteration to the fireplace hearth. The loft floor that had served as the room’s original ceiling was removed, as was the stair or ladder that had accessed the loft. The east window was replaced, and the west exterior doorway was converted to a window. All the roof framing was replaced as well. Most of these changes were made to allow for the insertion of an internal connection between the current dining room and the log room. Changes appear to have been made to the design after the drawings were finished so that Lorenzo Winslow’s drawings do not correspond exactly with what was built. The drawings call for wood paneling, for instance, on the vertical portions of the second story walls, but the paneling was never installed. The log wing is shown as if it were taller than it actually is, possibly an indication that some logs had to be removed due to rotting.

Winslow served as an architect in the White House for twenty years, from 1933 until his retirement in 1953. During this time he assisted with numerous expansion projects. Appointed the official White House architect in 1941, Winslow was responsible for the design and construction of the East Wing (1942) and oversaw the Truman Balcony addition to the South Portico (1948).

Records with the Office of the White House Curator indicate that Winslow had a residential practice in Greensboro, North Carolina, prior to his position as a government architect in Washington, DC.²⁹ Winslow served as architect on other projects in and around the District of Columbia, including the restoration of Georgetown Presbyterian Church (1954) and interior restoration of the New York Avenue

²⁷ On the surviving set of architectural drawings, Lorenzo Winslow identified the project as “Restoration and Additions to the residence of Mr. and Mrs. Bolten.”

²⁸ Although Mrs. Bolten retained the property after the death of the husband, in 1938, several real estate transactions were recorded as she partnered first with her brother and later her sister-in-law.

²⁹ The Lorenzo Winslow papers are part of the collection of the Office of the Curator, The White House. The papers officially entered the collection in 1984 as a gift of Mrs. Lorenzo Winslow. The Office of the Curator researched the documents, which includes papers, photographs, and architectural drawings, in an attempt to find information on the Riley property. Unfortunately, no mention of the property [likely identified as the Bolten property during Winslow’s tenure] was found in the collection.

Presbyterian Church (1968).³⁰ The Lorenzo Winslow papers include designs for alterations to the Statue of Liberty and the Washington Monument, as well as designs for bridges in Rock Creek Park and approaches to the Memorial Bridge, both in Washington, D.C.

When the Boltens purchased the property in the 1930s, according to a newspaper report from the time, there were still “many old slave quarters and outbuildings” extant on the property (Smith 1939). In 1950, Mrs. Bolten and her sister-in-law (joint tenants) sold the property to William and Harriett Coburn.³¹ A newspaper article from 1955 indicates that, although “cabins” remained on the property at the time the Coburns purchased it, they had since been torn down (*Sentinel*, Sept. 29, 1955).

In 1963, the Riley property was purchased by Marcel and Hildegrande Mallet-Prevost. Apart from the transfer of title to the roadbed of Old Georgetown Road from the Mallet-Prevosts to the State Roads Commission of Maryland, the property remained in the Mallet-Prevost family until it was sold to Montgomery County Maryland in 2006.

³⁰ Lorenzo Winslow’s plans for the church included the replacement of the existing façade (described as “Victorian”) with a plain Georgian exterior.

³¹ Owners of the Riley property from 1950 to 1963, very little information is known about the Coburns. The son of William Coburn, of Lewistown, Montana, William married Harriette Harnett Coburn, daughter of Col. and Mrs. Eugene H. Harnett of Bethesda, Maryland, on June 22, 1940, in Washington, DC (*Washington Post*, June 23, 1940). It is believed that they purchased the property after Mr. Coburn retired from his position as Chief Clerk of the Senate Labor Committee. From the limited information it is known that Mrs. Coburn passed away in 1972, prior to her husband (*Washington Post, Times Herald*, February 18, 1972). There are no children listed in her obituary, and attempts to contact listed relatives were unrewarding.