



## NATIONAL UNDERGROUND RAILROAD NETWORK TO FREEDOM APPLICATION

GENERAL INFORMATION				
<b>Date Submitted:</b> 1/15/2022	<b>Resubmission:</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <b>Round(s)</b> 27, 30, 39	<b>Type (Pick One):</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Facility <input type="checkbox"/> Program		
<b>Name (Of What You Are Nominating):</b> Huntoon and Van Rensalier Underground Railroad Historic Site		<b>Street Address:</b> 125 Broadway		
<b>City:</b> Paterson	<b>State:</b> NJ	<b>Zip Code:</b> 07505	<b>County:</b> Passaic	<b>Congressional District:</b> 9
<b>Physical Boundaries of Site/Facility</b> The site is located at the southeast corner of the intersection of Martin Luther King Drive (Broadway) and Mulberry Street.				<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Address Not for Publication?</b>
<b>Is there a website?</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No		<b>Web Address:</b>		
<b>Is there a visitor phone number?</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No		<b>Phone Number:</b>		
<b>Is the site open to the public?</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No		<b>Hours of Operation:</b> Dawn to Dusk		
<b>Summary: Tell us in 200 words or less what is being nominated and how it is connected to the Underground Railroad.</b>				
<p>The Huntoon and Van Rensalier Underground Railroad Historic Site at 125 Broadway in Paterson, New Jersey was the location of the house of Josiah Huntoon (1813-1891), his wife Sarah Doremus Huntoon, and their children. The Huntoon's home was a stop in the larger Paterson community Underground Railroad network and was the basis for beginning the work of understanding the Underground Railroad network in this community. Josiah Huntoon, an industrialist who specialized in spice and coffee milling, and his employee and partner in this work, William Van Rensalier (1834-1904), have strong oral traditions of assistance to freedom seekers that survived in their families and in the Paterson newspapers. Van Rensalier lived in the Huntoon household in 1860 and was part of the developing African American community in Paterson whose other connections to help freedom seekers still being uncovered in the Black community. John Kline, and his wife Harriet, were founders of the AME Zion Church in Paterson and were noted for their assistance to freedom seekers. More operatives from the white community were identified in local newspapers and histories over time, but more research will confirm and expand this history.</p> <p>By the 1930s, the Huntoon house was sold to the Neer family and remodeled into a drug store. The house was demolished in 1983. Articles in the local papers mourned the decline and ultimate loss of this property with its Underground Railroad association. In 1996, the work of Huntoon and Van Rensalier family descendants who formed a foundation to preserve and develop the site, was recognized by the City of Paterson. It was designated a Historic Site by the Paterson Historic Preservation Commission and the City Council. The property is now a memorial to these two men as well as the many other rediscovered Underground Railroad operatives that worked in this community. This space has developed over time. The</p>				

FOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE USE ONLY	
I certify that this <input type="checkbox"/> site <input type="checkbox"/> facility <input type="checkbox"/> program is included in the Network to Freedom.	
Signature of Certifying Official/Title	Date

first marker was placed on the site in 1999. The site, now paved and landscaped as part of the inner-city campus of Passaic County College, is also embellished with a monumental bronze by famed Black American sculptor, Ed Dwight, depicting the two men which was placed in 2014. A Freedom Bell was placed at the site in 2021.

Contact information for <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Owner/Manager <input type="checkbox"/> Application Preparer (Share Contact Information <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No)				
Name: Gianfranco Archimede	Phone: (973) 321-1356	Fax:	Email: garchimede@patersonnj.gov	
Street Address: 125 Ellison, 4th Floor	City Paterson		State: NJ	Zip Code 07505
Contact information for <input type="checkbox"/> Owner/Manager <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Application Preparer (Share Contact Information <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No)				
Name: Flavia Alaya	Phone: 856-221-3276	Fax:	Email: falaya@ramapo.edu	
Street Address: 55 W. Commerce Street	City Bridgeton		State: NJ	Zip Code 08302-1801
Contact information for <input type="checkbox"/> Owner/Manager <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Application Preparer (Share Contact Information <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No)				
Name: Jimmy Richardson	Phone: 908-964-8429	Fax:	Email: jrfbproject@aol.com	
Street Address: 552 Buchanan Street	City Hillside		State: NJ	Zip Code 07205-1725
Contact information for <input type="checkbox"/> Owner/Manager <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Application Preparer (Share Contact Information <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No)				
Name: Robin Krawitz, National Park Service	Phone: (404) 909-2702	Fax:	Email: robin_krawitz@nps.gov	
Street Address: Regional Office, Lowell National Historical Park	City Lowell		State: MA	Zip Code 01852
Contact information for <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Owner/Manager <input type="checkbox"/> Application Preparer (Share Contact Information <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No)				
Name: Dolores Van Rensalier, President; Huntoon-Van Rensalier Foundation	Phone:	Fax:	Email: 125ugrr@gmail.com	
Street Address: 125 Broadway, Suite 100	City Paterson		State: NJ	Zip Code 07505

## SITES

In addition to the responses to each question, applications must also include the following attachments:

- 1) Letters of consent from all property owners for inclusion in the Network to Freedom (see sample in instructions)
- 2) Text and photographs of all site markers
- 3) Original photographs illustrating the current appearance and condition of the site being nominated
- 4) Maps showing the location of the site

***All attachments supplement, but do not replace the text.***

S1. Type:

- Building                       Object                       District (Neighborhood)  
 Structure                       Landscape/Natural                       Archeological Site

Other (Describe): House site, now community space

S2. Is the site listed in the National Register of Historic Places?

Yes       No      If yes, what is the listing name?

S3. Ownership of site:

- Private                       Private, Non-profit (501c3)                       Public - Local Government  
 Public - State Government                       Public - Federal Government

S4. Type(s) of Underground Railroad Association (select the one(s) that fit best):

- Station       Kidnapping       Legal Challenge                       Association with Prominent Person  
 Escape       Rescue       Maroon Community                       Historic District/Neighborhood  
 Church       Destination       Transportation Route                       Commemorative Site/Monument  
 Cemetery       Military Site       Archeological Site                       Other (Describe):

S4a. Describe the site's association and significance to the Underground Railroad. Provide citations for sources used throughout the text. Timelines are encouraged.

### Summary

The Huntoon and Van Rensalier Underground Railroad Historic Site at 125 Broadway in Paterson, New Jersey was the location of the house of Josiah Huntoon (1813-1891), his wife Sarah Doremus Huntoon, and their children. The Huntoon's home was a stop in the larger Paterson community Underground Railroad network and was the basis for beginning the work of understanding the Underground Railroad network in this community. Josiah Huntoon, an industrialist who specialized in spice and coffee milling, and his employee and partner in this work, William Van Rensalier (1834-1904), have strong oral traditions of assistance to freedom seekers that survived in their families and in the Paterson newspapers. Van Rensalier lived in the Huntoon household in 1860 and was part of the developing African American community in Paterson whose other connections to help freedom seekers still being uncovered in the Black community. John Kline, and his wife Harriet, were founders of the AME Zion Church in Paterson and were noted for their assistance to freedom seekers. More operatives from the white community were identified in local newspapers and histories over time, but more research will confirm and expand this history.

By the 1930s, the Huntoon house was sold to the Neer family and remodeled into a drug store and the Underground Railroad association was continued by this family, allowing access to the basement and recounting the history. The house was demolished in 1983. Articles in the local papers mourned the decline and ultimate loss of this property with its Underground Railroad association. In 1996, the work of Huntoon and Van Rensalier family descendants who formed a foundation to preserve and develop the site, was recognized by the City of Paterson. It was designated a Historic Site by the Paterson Historic Preservation Commission and the City Council. The property is now a memorial to these two men as well as the many other rediscovered Underground Railroad operatives that worked in this community. This space has developed over time. The first

marker was placed on the site in 1999. The site, now paved and landscaped as part of the inner-city campus of Passaic County College, is also embellished with a monumental bronze by famed Black American sculptor, Ed Dwight, depicting the two men which was placed in 2014. A Liberty Bell was placed at the site in 2021.

## Background

### New Jersey's History As A Divided Landscape Relating to African American Rights and Freedom

New Jersey was divided politically and socially on the question of the status of African Americans and enslavement. The work of Howard University professor Marion M. Thompson Wright (1903-1963), a native of New Jersey and historian of African American history of her home state, stated: "New Jersey is a state in which are found, so far as Negroes are concerned, practices that many people believe to exist only in the southern area of the country."<sup>1</sup> Her articles published in the *Journal of Negro History* in the 1940s describe the conflict over progress for African Americans from the colonial period onward. Historian James Gigantino notes in his 2015 book, **The Ragged Road to Abolition: Slavery and Freedom in New Jersey, 1775-1865**, that two major groups of settlers influenced the history of enslavement in the state, members of the Society of Friends, called the Quakers and planters from the Caribbean who settled in New Jersey, bringing their enslaved property with them.<sup>2</sup> The tense reaction of the white population of New Jersey after a rebellion of enslaved people in nearby New York City in April 1712 illustrated the growing reliance on enslaved labor. A series of laws tightening restrictions on the Black population, restricting the enslaved, the free and the ability to transition to freedom were put in place. When the 1804 Gradual Manumission Act was enacted in New Jersey, a process was set in place to put the existing enslaved population in a status of bound laborer and children born after July 4, 1804 in a path to freedom that would take twenty-five years of service to the enslaver of their mother. There were sixteen people identified as enslaved in the New Jersey Census of 1860, out of a total black population of over 25,000. Abraham Lincoln did not win the popular vote in New Jersey in either 1860 or 1864. The 13th Amendment to the Constitution was ratified in 1865 but without New Jersey's support. New Jersey State Legislature passed the 13th Amendment in 1866.<sup>3</sup>

### Underground Railroad Evidence for Paterson

Despite the divided landscape, freedom seekers still found their way through northern New Jersey on their journeys and networks developed to assist them as needed. Connections between participants in the community were familial as well as through participation in causes like temperance and abolition, as well as in the development of the Republican Party in New Jersey.<sup>4</sup>

#### Newspaper Accounts, 1853-1859

Few incidents appear in the anti-slavery press about the Underground Railroad work in Paterson, New Jersey. The earliest reference was published on April 22, 1853, in the *Frederick Douglass Paper*, titled "Results of Slave Catching." This was a re-told account from *The Pennsylvania Freeman*. According to the article, told the narrow escape of freedom seeker Robert Thomas, who took his freedom twenty years before. According to

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<sup>1</sup> Marion M. Thompson Wright. "New Jersey Laws and the Negro." *Journal of Negro History*. V 28. 1943, p2.

<sup>2</sup> James G. Gigantino II. **The Ragged Road to Abolition: Slavery and Freedom in New Jersey, 1775-1865**. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press. 2015. Pp. 12-17.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid. pp. 92-94, 240-251.

<sup>4</sup> Dr. Flavia Alaya, "'They Secretly Helped Many a Fugitive . . .': Siting Paterson, New Jersey as a Station on the Underground Railroad." 2021. Unpublished manuscript in the collection of Dr. Alaya. This document was prepared to .

the article, “some ‘hunters of men’ from Virginia . . . came to Trenton, NJ to capture” him, but came without the required warrant. The news spread of what these men were up to, and the article reported “. . . at Paterson, and before they could return with their warrant, the winds had whispered their errand, and the destined prey and escaped.” While it is not clear whether the warrant had to be obtained at Paterson, or Mr. Thomas was at Paterson, a network was in place to get this information to help save this man from this fate of being taken back into enslavement.<sup>5</sup>

Two incidents also covered provide information about the network of assistance in place to assist freedom seekers. On May 11, 1855, *Frederick Douglass’ Paper* published an article submitted by the “Under-Ground Railroad Office, Paterson, New Jersey.” The letter was dated May 1<sup>st</sup> and was titled “Escape of Fugitive Slaves.” The text read:

Within the last forty-eight hours, a slave named S----, with his wife and children, who were proceeding from the “land of Legree and the home of the slave,” were helped forward in their journey by friends here, to “that borne whence no (colored) traveler returns.” It is to be presumed that by the time your readers have seen this, they will be where the servant is free from his master. He stated that his former master was Major H----, of Maryland near Baltimore.<sup>6</sup>

The author of the article wanted to promote this activity in the anti-slavery press but was concerned about providing a buffer of time for the family to get to Canada before describing where this family came from, their enslaver, and the destination. This person used the term “Under-Ground Railroad” to describe this network. Curious whether the names were redacted by the author of the submission or the editor of the paper.

Paterson was referenced in a story published in *The National Era* on April 15, 1858, that placed it on the road to safety in Canada. In a piece titled “Slaves and Souls”, the story of an unnamed freedom seeker placed Paterson as a place of safety after a harrowing near capture event over 300 miles west of this community in the western Pennsylvania town of Blairsville. The article begins with this unnamed person “arriving at Paterson, NJ on Sunday, and was fed, and forwarded towards British free soil.” Paterson was the destination after, “A Mr. Stump, from Virginia caught his runaway African at Blairsville, PA, a few days since, by the aid of the U.S. Marshal, and was about to ship him to Virginia, when an excited crowd surrounded the negro and his captors. Stump got frightened and discharged his pistol into the crowd, and then he and the marshal immediately took to their heels. A colored mob followed Stump to the dept, hooting and pelting him, and he returned to Virginia, while his negro was put on the underground railroad in an opposite direction.”<sup>7</sup>

In April 1859, *Douglass Monthly* reprinted an article from *Paterson (NJ) Guardian*, the account of freedom seeker Jack Black whose path brought him through Paterson on what seems from the article to be a well-worn path. Without the original text from the Paterson Guardian, it is hard to determine how much the article has been edited and which observations are by Frederick Douglass or which came from the author in Paterson. According to the article, Mr. Black was enslaved in an unidentified southern state and was engaged in hauling

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<sup>5</sup> The article stated that Robert Thomas had been living in Trenton, New Jersey for 20 years. He appeared in the 1840 Federal Census return for Trenton, New Jersey as head of a household of six people. The more specifically detailed 1850 census shows he was a property owner living in Trenton’s East Ward and had a family. He was married to Mary and their four children ranged in age from 8 to 18. [Federal Census, Trenton, New Jersey. 1840, 1850. Accessed on 1/15/2021 in [www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com).] The remainder of the article describes devastating effect of this event on this family torn apart as the result of the Fugitive Slave Law that was passed as a “peace measure.” “Results of Slave Catching,” *Frederick Douglass Paper*. [Rochester, NY] April 22, 1853. [[www.accessible.com](http://www.accessible.com). Accessed on 12/20/2021]

<sup>6</sup> “Escape of Fugitive Slaves.” *Frederick Douglass’ Paper* (Rochester, NY). May 11, 1855. P. 2 C. 3. [[www.accessible.com](http://www.accessible.com). Accessed on 12/30/2021]

<sup>7</sup> “Slaves and Souls.” *The National Era*. April 15, 1858. [[www.accessible.com](http://www.accessible.com). Accessed on 12/30/2021]

lumber to a beach and load it onto a vessel which was bound for a northern port. He stowed away on the ship which landed at Jersey City. For the rest, the account is quoted:

From Jersey City he made his way to Paterson in company with a friend. Here he was duly taken in charge; a ticket over the Underground was purchased, and after being duly labeled and delivered, Jack was entrusted to the Lightning Express which conveyed him safely to the region where- “The wicked cease from troubling, and the Weary are at rest. Where the servant is free from his master.”<sup>8</sup>

What is clear is that there was a system in place to guide Mr. Black from his arrival at the port at Jersey City to safety along the Underground Railroad, and that trail led through Paterson. What does not appear in the article are any names of the individuals who assisted Mr. Black. It wasn't until after the Civil War that attributions were made to this work in the obituaries of participants. Additionally, families transmitted their memories of this work through the generations through oral preservation of this history.

### **Underground Railroad Network in Paterson**

In the last quarter of the nineteenth century, information began to appear in the local press of individuals who participated in the networks of assistance for the freedom seekers whose journeys brought them through Paterson. These first hand accounts were published into the 1910s. Written by white men, these lists were predominately focusing on the activity of other white men. The attribution made it into a county history. In 1901, historian William Nelson included his observations. In a chapter about the treatment of the enslaved in New Jersey in the early 18<sup>th</sup> century, Nelson observed, “This town was a well-recognized “station” on the road by which runaway slaves from the South were helped on their way to Canada and freedom. John Avison, Darius Wells, Isaac Van Blarcom, Henry M. Low, Josiah P. Huntoon, Nathaniel Lane, and Alexander H. Freeman were among the anti-slavery men in Paterson early in the present century, who were ready to take great risks to aid the fugitives on their flight toward the North star.” It was repeated in the 1920 history by William Nelson and Charles A. Shriner, titled “History and Paterson and Its Environs (The Silk City).”<sup>9</sup> Two African American operatives were also identified. William Van Rensalier's descendants have stories of participation and John Kline, and his family, also were noted participants. The individuals whose history is described below are the ones with the most documentation uncovered to date. It is anticipated that the others in the lists of participants will be explored, and other names will surface.

#### Huntoon's Corner, The Huntoon-Van Rensalier Underground Railroad Historic Site

Josiah Huntoon (1813-1891) was born in Montpelier, Vermont and moved to New York City at age 15. By 1835 set up a business roasting and grinding coffee, which didn't survive a financial panic. While in New York, in 1836, he met and married Ariadne Bowsby and the couple moved to her family in Parsippany, Morris County, New Jersey. Josiah Huntoon became a teacher. The Bowsby family was involved in anti-slavery activism and Josiah likely built on earlier experience in his life to also support join in supporting this cause. In 1841 he moved his growing family to Paterson, New Jersey but Ariadne died soon after. In 1846 he married Sarah Doremus, a cousin of his first wife, and the family grew to eleven children by the end of the 1860s.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> “The UGRR- No road in the world is more ably managed than this...” *Douglass Monthly*. [Rochester, NY] April 1859. P. 55 C. 3 [www.accessible.com Accessed on 12/30/2021]

<sup>9</sup> William Nelson. *History of the City of Paterson and the County of Passaic New Jersey*. Paterson, NJ: The Press Printing and Publishing Co. 1901. Pp. 406-7. William Nelson and Charles A. Shriner. *History of Paterson and Its Environs (The Silk City)*. New York: Lewis Historical Publishing Company. 1920. P. 180.

<sup>10</sup> Dr. Flavia Alaya, “They Secretly Helped Many a Fugitive . . .”: Siting Paterson, New Jersey as a Station on the Underground Railroad.” 2021. Unpublished manuscript in the collection of Dr. Alaya.

In Paterson, Josiah Huntoon achieved prominence and success in the coffee/spice trade. Between 1849 and 1855 he built his home and steam-powered Excelsior Coffee/Spice Mill at Broadway and Bridge Street, a location that became known as “Huntoon’s Corner.” His technological advances were recognized by the publication *Scientific American* in 1859. The article states the annual output of the steam-driven mill was approximately 250,000 lbs of coffee and that 10-12 people were employed.<sup>11</sup> Huntoon was also an organizer and director of the First National Bank and Paterson Savings Institution. He was active politically at the local level, serving on the Passaic County Board of Chosen Freeholders and on the city’s Board of Education.<sup>12</sup>

Josiah Huntoon supported causes that brought him into connection with Underground Railroad activists. He was active in the abolitionist and temperance movements. Temperance, abolition, banking, and politics brought Huntoon into connection with others who also have Underground Railroad connection. His national political perspective evolved from Whig to Republican and he was prominent in the development of the Republican party in Paterson and Passaic County.<sup>13</sup> His obituary in *The Press*, published on June 11, 1891, stated: He was ever a friend of the colored man, and with the late Henry M. Low and others was engaged in running the “underground railroad,” by means of which escaping slaves from the South were succored in Paterson on their journey toward freedom.”<sup>14</sup>

Two of the Huntoon children told their descendants of the Underground Railroad experience in their family home at Huntoon’s Corner. The elder child, Ada Clark, (1849-1933) told her great-grandson Eric Lenander to have remembered “bringing blankets and food” to fugitives hiding in the house cellar.” The youngest Huntoon child, Louis (1869-1847), who was born after the events occurred, interviewed his mother and wrote down Josiah’s biography and his associations with Underground Railroad activity that she dictated at the time of Huntoon’s death in 1891. These recollections also include the use of the basement in the Huntoon home as a hiding place.<sup>15</sup>

### William Van Rensalier

William Van Rensalier (1834-1904) was age sixteen and the only child living with his parents Peter and Hannah Van Rensalier in Spring Valley, a community in the town of Ramapo, Rockland County, New York in the 1850 federal census. His race was Black and he was noted as a laborer.<sup>16</sup> Ten years later, at the time of the 1860 census, William was living in the home of Josiah Huntoon and his family in Paterson, New Jersey and listed with the profession of engineer. The 1861 Paterson City Directory places Van Rensalier living independently at 71 Division Street in Paterson, where he remained through most of the 1860s. His profession is listed as “engineer” but no employer is noted in those directory entries. He married Hester Van Wyck (1840-1934) on May 26, 1864, in St. Paul’s Anglican Episcopal Church. The extent and duration of the connection between Van Rensalier and Huntoon is the subject of detailed account by family descendant Dolores Van Rensalier whose research and family tradition confirms the wedding date for William and Hester, the deed of gift of the house at 71 Division Street to the newlyweds by Huntoon, as well as his work as a conductor on the

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<sup>11</sup> William Wright. “The Manufactures of Paterson, N.J.,” *Scientific American*, Vol. 1, no. 21 ((November 19, 1859), pp 315, 330-1. Cited in Alaya, 2021.

<sup>12</sup> Dr. Flavia Alaya, “They Secretly Helped Many a Fugitive . . .”: Siting Paterson, New Jersey as a Station on the Underground Railroad.” 2021. Unpublished manuscript in the collection of Dr. Alaya.

<sup>13</sup> “Josiah P Huntoon.” Obituary. *New York Daily Tribune*, June 12, 1891.

<sup>14</sup> *The Press [Paterson, NJ]*, June 11, 1891, p2.

<sup>15</sup> Louis Huntoon’s statement is reprinted in Appendix A of **Bridge Street to Freedom**, by William Van Rensalier’s descendant, Dolores Van Rensalier.

<sup>16</sup> Death date of William Van Rensalier was February 18, 1904. Taken from the obituary of William Van Rensalier published in *The News [Paterson, NJ]*, February 20, 1904, p. 8 c. 7. [www.newspapers.com](http://www.newspapers.com) Accessed on 1/17/2022. Federal Census 1850, Spring Valley, Town of Ramapo, Rockland County, New York. [www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com) Accessed 1/15/2022.

Underground Railroad. Huntoon may also have sent Van Rensalier to Canada to study engineering. William died in 1904 and Hester followed thirty years later in 1934. Her obituary told her story, including that she was born on March 30, 1840 and came to Paterson at age sixteen to work in the Cataract Silk Mill. It also lists two surviving children, John Van Rensalier, who was noted to be a famous musician and Ida May Huggs, who lived at 288 Governor Street in Paterson.<sup>17</sup>

Family descendant, Dolores Van Rensalier, became an important activist working to preserve this site. She discovered her family's connection to the Paterson Underground Railroad network through genealogical research on a journey to reconnect to her roots from her home in California. She is granddaughter of William and Hester's youngest child, John T. Van Rensalier, a noted pianist who served in WWI. A picture of John T. Van Rensalier was used as a basis for the image of the statue by sculptor Ed Dwight. Ms. Van Rensalier wrote a book about her journey and serves as president of the Huntoon-Van Rensalier Underground Railroad Foundation which was established to preserve and fundraise to develop this property.

### John and Harriet Kline

The family of John Kline (1817-1865) and his wife, Harriet (1819- c. 1896) were deeply connected to Patterson's AME Zion Church. Their Underground Railroad attribution came from self-declared Underground Railroad supporter, Orrin Vanderhoven, the editor of Paterson newspapers, who periodically published his recollections of the history of Paterson as he observed it. On July 15, 1886, his column focused on the development of Paterson's African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church. He included the biography of John Kline, a religious man with a fine singing voice who one of three founding trustees. According to Vanderhoven, John Kline was born enslaved in Hunterdon County, New Jersey and was able to work himself free under the apprentice law when he was 25 years old. John and Harriet Kline had already started their family before coming to Paterson in 1842. Also included was, "His house was for years one of the stations on the underground railroad and many a fugitive slave has been hidden and fed under his roof."<sup>18</sup> Public record documentation of the Kline family presence in Paterson can be confirmed. They appear in the 1850 and 1860 East Ward census returns and Harriet appears in the 1866 Paterson city directory as widowed and living on Lafayette Street.<sup>19</sup> In 1913 the AME Zion church installed a marble tablet honoring the founders of the church, including John Kline and Harriet Kline.<sup>20</sup>

### Henry M. Low

Born in Dutchess County, NY, Henry M. Low (1813-1865) made his fortune in the manufacture of cotton yarn, a product that relied on the southern slave labor economy to produce the raw materials. No writings of Henry Low have been uncovered to know what his thoughts were on this subject, but he does appear in post-Civil War remembrances of supporters and operators of the Underground Railroad network in Paterson. A prominent

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<sup>17</sup> "Mrs. Van Rensalier's Funeral Services Held." *The Paterson Morning Call*. May 18, 1934, p 3, c 6.

<sup>18</sup> Orrin Vanderhoven. "Old Times In Paterson, Vanderhoven's Reminiscences, Lo! The Poor Negro. History of the Second Colored Church in the State." *The Paterson Weekly Call*. July 15, 1886, page 1. This reminiscence is written in a paternalistic voice, by a white man and begins with a litany of tropes. The goal stated by Vanderhoven for the piece was to raise the untold story of the development of the Black church in Paterson, placing four columns of text on the front page of the issue. Vanderhoven acknowledged his personal participation in Underground Railroad activities in another of these columns 14 years later.

<sup>19</sup> According to the 1850 Federal Census for Paterson, John Kline was a laborer, and enumerated his family: his wife, Harriet Kline, and their four children, Anna Harriet, Jerimiah, Richard Henry, and Jane Maria, aged two to twelve. The family appeared in the 1860 census for East Paterson, with three small children, Annie, age 10, John, age 5 and Mary E., age 3. Four additional adults were also enumerated in their household, Rosanna Wycoff, age 50 and Polly Wycoff, age 45 and a young, white couple, John and Barbara Irish, ages 21 and 19. The 1866 city directory listed Harriet Kline as head of household and that she was a widow. The last time she was listed in the Paterson City Directory was 1895 when she was living independently at 16 Fulton Street in Paterson. Census returns and city directories for Paterson, NJ were accessed at [www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com).

<sup>20</sup> "Zion Congregation Dedicate Memorial." *The Morning Call*. April 14, 1913, p 9, c 3.



politician and given credit for helping to form the Republican Party in pre-Civil War Paterson and in the wider landscape of New Jersey, it is likely that his wife, Mary Beardsley Low (1820-1887) was also a reliable source of support when he was away from Paterson. The 1850 Census notes 36-year-old Henry Low as a cotton manufacturer with real estate valued at \$3200. His wife, Mary and two children, Mahitabell, age 7 and George, age 5 were in the house along with his mother, Charity Low and his mother-in-law, Mahitabell Beardsley. The 1860 census listed Henry M Low, age 47 as a cotton manufacturer with real estate valued at \$20,000 and personal estate valued at \$30,000. His wife, Mary is listed at age 36 and four children were in the household, Hetty age 17, George, age 15, William age 7 and Frank, age 2. There was a 13-year-old African American girl in the household, Jane Post, who was listed as a servant, along with 28-year-old Augusta Newman, an immigrant from Germany. Of the six Low children, three did not survive past childhood. The survivors included the eldest, Hetty, who stayed in Paterson, married and had a family, older son George was a state politician, and the younger surviving son, William, went west and became a wheat farmer in North Dakota.

Henry Low had other interests as well. He was active in local politics and held the political office of city treasurer in 1854-55 and was involved with the development of the Republican Party in New Jersey. He served as a delegate to the Republican National Convention in 1860.<sup>21</sup> He was active in the local abolitionist and temperance groups. Henry Low died in on July 11, 1865 at the age of 52. He wrote his will on June 30, 1865, leaving his entire estate to his wife, Mary. One of the three witnesses was Josiah Huntoon. His obituary was not detailed and was a notice of his death. His wife, Mary Beardsley Low, continued to be in charge of his business holdings.

Confirmation of his participation in the Underground Railroad were discussed in an article about his son, George Low's background<sup>22</sup>, and in obituaries of other participants and family members. The first of these to be published was the obituary of Mary Beardsley Low. The column-long story of her life was divided into two themes, her family, including the courtship with her husband and the deaths of young children, and participation in the Underground Railroad.

“... colored men and women escaping from cruel southern slavery ... arrived here in covered vehicles in the night, and were closely concealed till they were sent up country to the next station ... The houses to which they were taken here were the homes of Henry M. Low, Darius Wells, and ex-sheriff Lane. These houses were finally suspected, as was also the house of Isaac Van Blarcom in Marshall Street, and it was often necessary to hide the negroes away in garret or cellar for a week at a time. Mr. Low lived in Mulberry street, ... next in Broadway, ... and subsequently he moved to the house over the raceway where the Adams silk mill is now located, and where he died. In each of these houses the colored fugitive found safe refuge. ... Mrs. Low was true to her husband and his principles of philanthropy and helped to hide and feed the fugitives from slavery until it was no longer safe to keep them in the houses of suspected underground railroad agents.”<sup>23</sup>

Henry Low's son George followed his father into politics and newspaper articles about the son always mentioned the father and his connection to the Underground Railroad. George Low died on August 2, 1900 and in a long tribute in the *Paterson Evening News* the next day, included a description of the Paterson Underground Railroad network and Henry Low was a part:

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<sup>21</sup> “Low, Henry M.” Entry. Political Graveyard. [www.politicalgraveyard.com/bio/lovejoy-lowdermilk.html](http://www.politicalgraveyard.com/bio/lovejoy-lowdermilk.html) [Accessed 1/15/2022]

<sup>22</sup> “Our Senator, Hon. George H. Low.” *The Morning Call*. April 18, 1887. p.8 c.3. [www.newspapers.com.]

<sup>23</sup> “Mrs. Henry M. Low, Interesting reminiscences of the Low Family, and Mrs. Low's Aid to Her Husband in Helping Runaway Slaves Toward Freedom.” *The Morning Call [Paterson, NJ]*. January 30, 1887, p1c5.

“The father was . . . one of the anti-slavery men who made Paterson famous as one of the stations of the underground railroad for the safety and freedom of the black men and women who came this way on their runaway search for freedom. He and half a dozen others made up the crowd that in spite of courts and in spite of laws, formed themselves, formed themselves into an organization, which meant to help humanity- black humanity then. They used to meet in an old bank building in one of the rooms occupied by the town clerk, and there Nat Lane, Darius Wells, Peter V.H. Van Riper, the bobbin maker, Isaac Van Blarcom, the brick man who lived up in Marshal Street, next door to Phil Rafferty, Denny Miller, the candy man, John Avison, who was a Prospect street Justice of the Peace, and A. Gibbs Campbell, who was a bookkeeper for the Ivanhoe Paper Mill- were accustomed to gather twice a week and discuss what could be done to advance freedom and the rights of man.”<sup>24</sup>

### Orrin Vanderhoven

It wasn't until late in his career that Orrin Vanderhoven (1825-1906) provided testimony to the public of his observations and support of the Underground Railroad work in Paterson and as a newspaper editor, he is likely to have contributed to the obituaries of participants that outlined their participation in the Underground Railroad. Vanderhoven, a native of Perth Amboy, New Jersey, moved to Paterson in the early 1850s to work at, and own *The Guardian*, a local paper that supported the Union and “peace at any cost” in the years before the outbreak of Civil War. Vanderhoven held strong anti-slavery views personally, but publicly, in his writings for the paper included editorials “denouncing the abolitionists and foretelling the woes they would bring upon the country” to cover his tracks.<sup>25</sup>

On February 10, 1900, now the editor of *The Evening News*, he published a column call “Editor Van’s Stories.” He talked about the motivating forces for providing assistance to freedom seekers that not only included the demands of the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850 but also the impact of the Dred Scott Supreme Court decision, “Heretofore the liberty loving people of the free states believed that the moment a man stepped upon free soil he was free.” From his perspective, this decision contributed to the local perspective, in Paterson, that assisting was a more dangerous activity, both for the helpers and for the freedom seekers. The narrative of this article was framed around the stories associated a small ditch, Dublin spring creek, that was used as a town dump as a vehicle to discuss Underground Railroad work in Paterson. The stream course was fouled with all sorts of garbage but was used as a back path between Underground Railroad stations in this part of the city.

In the article, Vandenhoven described a meeting of Underground Railroad operatives in the tin shop of former sheriff, Nathaniel Lane that included an unnamed man, the freedom seeker. The activities at this tin shop, in Vanderhoven’s opinion included the regular bringing of food to the tin shop, must have been suspicious and noticed because after checking in to the Franklin House, three strangers, US Detectives, were seen outside the tin shop. A colleague interrupted the meeting in progress to notify the assembled group of their presence and the freedom seeker was immediately hustled out, taken along the creek bank to the rear of William Langwith’s “saloon” on Broadway and into the rear cellar and safety. This event, Vandenhoven noted was the first time that William Langwith helped a freedom seeker by sheltering on his premises. Vandenhoven then listed other Underground Railroad associates, and in addition to William Langwith, Darius Wells, and Henry M. Low who are described in known detail in this application, he included: former Sheriff Nathaniel Lane, L.R. Stelle,

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<sup>24</sup> “That Other Fellow”, *The Evening News [Paterson, NJ]*, August 3, 1900, p.4. c.2,

<sup>25</sup> “That Other Fellow”, *The Evening News, [Paterson, NJ]*, March 12, 1900, p 4. It appears that Orrin Vanerhoven retired as editor between February and March of 1900 of this paper and this unsigned column was a tribute that described his personality and career, including observations surrounding his Underground Railroad support.

William Pennington, Henry A. Williams, H.B. Crosby, John J. Brown, D.G. Scott, Charles Danforth, A.B. Woodruff, S. Tuttle, William Cooke, and Aaron Prall.”<sup>26</sup>

### William Langwith

A native of Paterson, William “Billy” Langwith (1830-1888), was the first child of Charles Langwith, an immigrant from Cheshire, England and New Jersey native Amanda Crowell. According to the 1850 federal census, he was living in a boarding house with his younger brother, Samuel. Billy was a machinist, and his brother was a molder. By 1860, he had married, lived in his own home and rented rooms to four single men. He had opened a restaurant that served oysters as a specialty. He was interested in the temperance movement and did not serve liquor there until the mid-1860s. He also expanded his business into a hotel and was very successful. His obituary described his failing health but success in business that provided support for his extended family.<sup>27</sup>

His business was faced on Broadway but also had a back entrance that opened on to the Dublin Spring Creek Ditch which was well used as a back route between stations along and near this corridor. Langwith’s obituary also described his participation. In this recounting it focuses on the rotation of places in this vicinity to support freedom seekers. His obituary states,

“Then under the hardware store now on the corner of Main and West Broadway, Mr. Langwith had a modest dining or oyster saloon. There was no liquor sold and it was no resort for loafers, and it was a safe place for an underground railroad station, as all these places of refuge for runaway slaves were termed then. The oyster shop entrance was on Broadway right near an alley which then went along the Dublin Spring Brook run, to Van Houten Street. It was easy in case of alarm to run the slaves through the alley from Van Houten Street or else through the then open space in front of the Industry Mills, as Low’s factory was called, out over the Flour Mill or Bently Bridge straight up to Langwith’s. No one ever suspected ... William Langwith in this was true and worked with Darius Wells, H.M. Low, Nathaniel Lane, Wm. Cook, and others.”<sup>28</sup>

### Darius Wells

Darius Wells (1800-1875) was born in Johnstown, New York and was apprenticed to a local printer. He moved to Amsterdam, NY and established a newspaper with a partner before moving to New York City to continue in his profession. Determined to find an alternative to expensive metal printer’s type for large font type. He invented a routing machine that could speedily remove excess material on this large type so it could be more cheaply produced. In 1840 he moved to Paterson, New Jersey and built a factory that created large wood type and other wooden material needed by printers and engravers. He retired from the business in 1856, and in 1861 became a postmaster in Paterson. He served in this position intermittently until 1872.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Orrin Vanderhoven. ““EDITOR VAN’S STORIES- SCENES AND INCIDENTS OF THE YEARS GONE BY. GLIMPSES OF THE PAST- ORRIN VANDERHOVEN TELLS THE PRESENT GENERATION INTERESTING STORIES ABOUT THE PEOPLE AND THINGS WHO MADE HISTORY IN PATERSON AND VICINITY DURING HIS LIFETIME”, *The Evening News*, February 10, 1900, p1 c6. He described the impact of the Dred Scott decision as the source of increased scrutiny of Underground Railroad work and hardship for the freedom seekers and a motivator in Paterson for white community participation.

<sup>27</sup> “Wm. Langwith [Obituary],” *Passaic Daily Herald*, September 13, 1888, p.2, c.4.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> James Grant Wilson and John Fisk, editors. “Darius Wells, Inventor.” *Appleton’s Cyclopaedia of American Biography*. Volume 4, p. 428. National Archives and Records Administration (NARA); Washington, D.C.; Record of Appointment of Postmasters, 1832-Sept. 30, 1971; Roll #: 83; Archive Publication #: M841. [www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com). Accessed on 1/22/2022.

Wells and his wife, Almira and children lived at 95 Water Street in Paterson, and he is named on most lists of remembered Underground Railroad operatives in Paterson. He died in 1875 and his obituary goes into great detail about the burial service but has no reference to Underground Railroad work.

S5. Provide a history of the site since its time of significance to the Underground Railroad, including physical changes, changes in boundaries over time, archeological work, or changes in ownership or use. Be sure to describe what is included in the present application and how that compares to what the site was historically.

The Huntoon and Van Rensalier Underground Railroad Historic Site is located on the property at the corner of Bridge Street and Broadway where Josiah P. Huntoon built his residence after purchasing the lot in 1848. Surviving illustrations and photographs show Huntoon built a two-story dwelling in the Italianate style embellished with a cupola at its peak. Following his death in 1891, the Huntoon family continued in ownership and made no significant changes to the property until Dr. David Neer purchased it and opened a drugstore in the same building in 1898. The building was passed on to Neer's partner Martin F. Becker who later passed it on to his son Alexander following his death in 1926. These men continued with Neer's tradition of showing the basement as a station on the Underground Railroad where enslaved people were kept hidden which kept the story in local memory. The building was acquired by the City of Paterson in 1977 and later demolished in 1983 (along with other adjacent buildings) for a proposed municipal parking garage that was ultimately not constructed at the time. At the same time, Bridge Street was formally vacated by the City for the proposed construction. The vacant site and its adjacent land remained vacant through 1994 when it was put on the market for redevelopment. Following much controversy over the next two years regarding the retail development proposed for the site, it was formally recognized by its designation as a historic landmark in the City of Paterson in November of 1996 and was set aside from future development. The retail development proposed for the site was modified to occupy the adjacent property, which to this day operates as a Wendy's chain restaurant.

"Huntoon's Corner" occupied approximately 6,000 square feet of land between 1848 and 1863. About 4,700 square feet of this is contained within the elongated parcel owned by the City of Paterson, which runs north between the Broadway frontage and the Loop Road [Memorial Boulevard]. A Paterson City Council resolution of December 1995 protects the 4700-square-foot Broadway/Bridge Street portion as an "exception," "reserving it" for possible use as a memorial site to the Underground Railroad. (Res. #28, dated 12 December 1995 and approved 19 December 1995). The remainder of the historical Huntoon land is contained within a driveway easement of the property currently owned by Wendy's restaurant, which stands on the corner of Broadway and the Loop Road [Memorial Boulevard]. All of the original property as defined by the County deed of April 9, 1848, including that portion that lies outside the exception, is potentially capable of containing archeological deposits.

In 2006, the City of Paterson Parking Authority purchased the vacant lands adjacent to the historic site to construct a multi-story parking garage affiliated with the Passaic County Community College, which is just across the street from the site. The parking garage was designed to be constructed "around" the Huntoon site such that two sides of the site are now defined by the concrete walls of the parking garage. A mitigative measure for the parking deck's encroachment on the site in this way was to set aside funding for the future construction of amenities (such as a monument and signage) on the site.

The mitigation funding was used for the creation of a unique bas-relief bronze sculpture for the site by renowned African American sculptor Ed Dwight, depicting the two men with lanterns symbolically guiding the way to the Huntoon home. Additionally, in 2015 public grant funding and private donations made possible the creation of a paved plaza complete with plantings and surrounded by a gated ornamental fence. Additional plaques are now included that describe the site and its story. The sculpture is the central element of the plaza,

but it is set back to allow for ample space for gatherings and commemorative annual events in the plaza. In 2021, the City of Paterson relocated and installed on a pedestal a historic bronze bell to the right side of the monument. The bell was designated as the City's "Freedom Bell" and its ringing will be part of commemorative events and ceremonies.

S6. Include a bibliography or list of citations for sources used through the document. Discuss the reliability of historical sources of information and briefly discuss how you used them.

The Underground Railroad history in the southern part of the state of New Jersey is more well-known and documented. The two sites already listed in the Network to Freedom are both in South Jersey, the Abigail and Elizabeth Godwin House in Salem, and the Stephen Smith House in Cape May.

Research for this project did not uncover connections to the New York City Underground Railroad community. It seemed to be an alternative route into New York State and on to Canada. All books consulted for the project are included in the bibliography, including those that did not include Paterson history or connections.

Documentation of people for further research in this project comes from obituaries of white individuals whose life stories included Underground Railroad associations. The recounted attributions of location or connection provide a baseline of individuals to continue to research. While those who died during the Civil War did not contain these attributions in their obituaries, their stories were recounted by their spouses and children, even appearing in their obituaries. The participation of the African American community is conspicuously absent from these testimonies. The attributions of African American participants in the Underground Railroad comes from Orrin Vanderhoven. Although noted in the 1886 newspaper article, "Old Times In Paterson, . . . History of the Second Colored Church in the State," AME Zion Church trustee John Kline had died in 1865. William Van Rensalier's obituary in 1904 did not mention participation in the Underground Railroad, but the brief piece focused on his devotion to his wife, Hester. Paterson had an African American population who founded churches and supported their community, in addition to John Kline and William Van Rensalier. Although the research methods used to uncover the information in this document have not revealed as much as desired to know, Underground Railroad research is ongoing and recognition of this history, as illustrated by the investment of this community in the Huntoon and Van Rensalier Underground Railroad Site demonstrates the community's connection and drive to continue this research and uncover all there is to know about this history in Paterson.

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S7. Describe current educational programs, tours, markers, signs, brochures, site bulletins, or plaques at the site. Include text and photographs of markers.

Original lecture roundtable of scholars 1995 preceded landmarking. Book: Bridge Street to Freedom (Alaya/Van Rensalier, Ramapo College 1998). 2007-2019 annual wreath-laying ceremony on Juneteenth. 2012 Black History lecture Passaic Co Superior Court. 2013 Passaic Co History Fair. 2014 African American Historic Tour. 2015-19 Annual Award/Scholarship dinner via Huntoon/ VanRensalier Memorial Foundation. UGRR Exhibit Paterson Public Library 2017. Kwanzaa Celebration 2017. William Paterson College lecture 2018. County College has had an NEH-funded program that has brought Alaya and Richardson as scholars in to discuss and interpret the site. The City’s Historic Preservation Commission’s ongoing annual tour program that includes a tour of African American sites with Huntoon’s Corner as a tour stop; students are encouraged to visit site as part of classwork. 2019 EOF Summer program lecture and tour. 2019 Kwanzaa celebration: 1619 and UGRR. Feb 2019 Walking tour UGRR. 2019 HPC African American site tour.

An historic marker (boulder) was placed at the site in 1999. It reads “Huntoon’s Corner. On this site, Josiah P. Huntoon (1813-1891), Spice Merchant, Abolitionist, and Passaic County Freeholder Director, and William Van Rensalier (1836-1904), Paterson’s first known African American engineer, helped fugitive slaves escape bondage by means of the Underground Railroad. This monument placed by the Board of Chosen Freeholders of the County of Passaic. July 1, 1999.”

S8. Describe any local, State, or Federal historic designation, records, signage, or plaques at the site.

Paterson HPC Local designation; NJ State Historic Preservation Award 1996. Statue commemorating Huntoon-Van Rensalier partnership by Ed Dwight; plaques narrating Huntoon/Van Rensalier partnership and other material commemorating Van Rensalier family and Memorial Foundation founding members.

S9a. If the site is open to the public, describe accessibility conditions under the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Accessible to wheelchairs. No accommodations for sight or hearing impaired.

S10. Describe the nature and objectives of any partnerships that have contributed to the documentation, preservation, commemoration, or interpretation of the site.

The site is an excellent example of widespread community involvement and activism to preserve, recognize and protect Paterson’s places of cultural significance. The involvement of the City of Paterson elected leadership, the City of Paterson Parking Authority, the Passaic County Board of Freeholders, the Passaic County Community College, the Historic Preservation Commission, the Underground Railroad Coalition, and the Huntoon – Van Rensalier UGRR Foundation are several of the many institutions and organizations that have been involved with the preservation and advocacy of this site since the 1990s.

Of specific note is a partnership developed between the Passaic County Community College, the Parking Authority, the City of Paterson and the Foundation to convene and decide about improvements to the site. As a result, The Huntoon-Van Rensalier UGRR Foundation and the PPA released plans for a monument and memorial plaza in June of 2013. As part of the PPA’s parking deck construction project abutting the Huntoon’s Corner historic site, \$200,000 was allocated for the creation of the memorial. With these funds, the Huntoon-Van Rensalier UGRR Foundation and the PPA commissioned Ed Dwight, the renowned UGRR artist, to design the monument.

Ed Dwight is a graduate engineer and former United States Air Force test pilot, who dedicated much of his later career to artistic endeavors. After completing bachelor and master’s degrees in Aeronautical Engineering, Dwight continued his higher education with a Master of Fine Art in Sculpture from the University of Denver. Dwight has a wealth of practice in the design and development of monuments that emulate the historical struggle and triumphal experience of slavery and African American heritage. His first major commissioned work was of the abolitionist Frederick Douglass in 1978. This life-sized monument was commissioned by the National Park Service and is on display at the Frederick Douglass National Historic Site in the District of Columbia. He later sculpted images of Dr. Martin Luther King, race riots, and cotton pickers. Dwight has also sculpted for previous Underground Railroad themed projects which include the Underground Railroad Memorial in Battle Creek, Michigan and a pair of Underground Railroad sculptures placed on the Detroit Riverfront, and near the waterfront across the river in Windsor, Canada. Dwight has completed 113 large scale installations throughout the United States and has created over 18,000 sculptures.

Ed Dwight approached the design of this monument to honor Josiah P. Huntoon (1813-1891) and William Van Rensalier (1831-1904) as well as the Underground Railroad movement. He noted that both of the men were

instrumental in the rescue of African American from the “yoke of slavery.” Huntoon and Van Rensalier are depicted with complete, front facing sculptures of each man standing side by side, each holding a lantern, on a bas relief panel. To elaborate on their Underground Railroad activities, Dwight created the sculpture to be an arched monolith with the central core being Huntoon and Van Rensalier with arched wings on either side, depicting images of enslaved people approaching both men. The artist named the sculpture “On the Wings of Freedom.” Additionally, the pedestal also has a bronze image of the Huntoon safe house and two etched granite panels that narrate the biographies of Huntoon and Van Rensalier.

The monument is positioned within an oval plaza, allowing the memorial to appear visible to all those who travel on Broadway. Formal landscaping, benches, and the paved plaza make the site feel like a walking, living opportunity.

The PPA and the Foundation held a fundraising campaign to support the monument plaza in October 2013. The organizations teamed up with [thatsmybrick.com](http://thatsmybrick.com) to create a legacy path around the monument. Donors are able to purchase personalized brick which will be placed on the pathways surrounding the monument. Public promotion and participation in this fundraiser convey the legacy of educating the public regarding the historical significance of the Underground Railroad in the eradication of slavery.

While the property will always be in ownership of the City of Paterson, on-going stewardship of the site is provided by the City of Paterson Parking Authority, Passaic County Community College, the Huntoon-Van Rensalier Underground Railroad Foundation, and the Paterson Historic Preservation Commission. The City of Paterson is working to continue this research and move to document other places in the city for association with the Underground Railroad, as well as developing a website to make the information uncovered to date available to the public.

S11. Additional data or comments. (Optional) These brochures and excerpts from sources do not replace the required narrative.

## NOTICES

### Privacy Act Statement

**General:** This information is provided pursuant to Public Law 93-579 (Privacy Act of 1974), December 21, 1984, for individuals completing this form.

**Authority:** National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom Act (P.L. 105-203).

**Purpose and Uses:** The Network to Freedom was established, in part, to facilitate sharing of information among those interested in the Underground Railroad. Putting people in contact with others who are researching related topics, historic events, or individuals or who may have technical expertise or resources to assist with projects is one of the most effective means of advancing Underground Railroad commemoration and preservation. Privacy laws designed to protect individual contact information (i.e., home or personal addresses, telephone numbers, fax numbers, or e-mail addresses), may prevent NPS from making these connections. If you are willing to be contacted by others working on Underground Railroad activities and to receive mailings about Underground Railroad-related events, please add a statement to your letter of consent indicating what information you are willing to share. The DOI and NPS may use the information to meet reporting requirements, to generate budget estimates and track performance, and to assist park staff with visitors' education, fee collection, resource management and protection, recreational use planning, law enforcement and public safety personnel for such purposes as emergency contact and search and rescue efforts; to provide permit holders and participants with information about parks and their partners; and to provide reports of activities conducted under an issued permit.

**Disclosure:** Voluntary. However, failure to provide the requested information may impede our ability to process your application. It is in your best interest to answer all of the questions. The U.S. Criminal Code, Title 18 U.S.C. 1001, provides that knowingly falsifying or concealing a material fact is a felony that may result in fines of up to \$10,000 or 5 years in prison, or both. Deliberately and materially making false or fraudulent statements on this form will be grounds for not approving your application.

### Paperwork Reduction Act Statement

The authority to collect this information is the National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom Act (P.L. 105-203). We will use this information to evaluate properties, facilities, and programs nominated for inclusion in the Network to Freedom. We may not conduct or sponsor and you are not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number. Your response is required to obtain or retain a benefit. OMB has approved this collection of information and assigned control number 1024-0232.

### Estimated Burden Statement

Public reporting for this collection of information is estimated to average 40 hours per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to the Information Collection Officer, National Park Service, 1201 Oakridge Drive, Fort Collins, CO 80525. Please do not send your completed application to this address.

CITY OF PATERSON  
HISTORIC PRESERVATION  
COMMISSION

125 ELLISON STREET, SUITE 408  
PATERSON, NEW JERSEY 07505-1305

Gianfranco Archimede, Executive Director

phone (973) 321-1220

fax (973) 321-1356

[garchimede@patersonnj.gov](mailto:garchimede@patersonnj.gov)



André Sayegh  
Mayor

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**ALTERNATES**

Maribel Garcia-Leon  
Joyce A. Corbo

**STAFF**

HPS & Secretary: Timothy Henderson  
Counsel: Romina M. Pascual, Esq.

December 17, 2019

Ms. Diane Miller, National Program Manager, NTF  
Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad Visitor Center  
4068 Golden Hill Road  
Church Creek, MD 21622

**In Support of Network to Freedom Application Huntoon-Van Rensalier UGRR Site, Paterson, NJ**

Dear Ms. Miller,

I do hope this communication finds you well. On behalf of the City of Paterson Historic Preservation Commission, I am writing in enthusiastic support of this application for the Huntoon-Van Rensalier UGRR Site, in Paterson, NJ to be added to the NPS's Network to Freedom program.

Paterson's decades-long legacy of grass roots historic preservation and cultural awareness is no better demonstrated than in the story of the designation of this site to the City of Paterson Register of Historic Places in 1996. The application documents the extensive involvement of the community, elected officials and the Commission in identifying the historic location of the site, and setting it aside as hallowed ground, even in the wake of the construction of a massive parking deck adjacent to it in 2007.

Further, through ongoing cooperative efforts between governments, institutions and the Huntoon-Van Rensalier UGRR Foundation since the parking deck was constructed, over \$300,000 have been raised and invested in improvements to the site, including a bronze figurative bas relief by esteemed sculptor Ed Dwight. This beautiful commemorative site is completed with annual flowers and beautification, and is open for public visitation and host to special events all year long - and is beautifully maintained. In addition, the Historic Preservation Commission hosts an annual African-American Heritage Sites bus tour lead by Mr. Jimmy Richardson, and our UGRR site is of course a focused stop on the tour.

Our community is fiercely proud of our African-American heritage and especially association with the UGRR and visits by African-American Civil Rights leaders Hon. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and Rosa Parks to our city. The status of recognition on the Network would be a great honor for us, allowing to share our UGRR site with visitors from across the nation. Since the designation of the Paterson Great Falls National Historical Park in 2009, hundreds of thousands of visitors have come to visit, and the designation to the Network would bring great synergy and representation to the visitor experience at these nationally-significant sites.

We are very much looking forward to hearing back from you that Paterson NJ will be part of the Network, and I do hope that you will reach out to me for any further questions you may have during your consideration of this application.

Respectfully, 

Gianfranco Archimede, MS, RPA Director

City Hall  
155 Market Street  
Paterson, New Jersey 07505  
Phone: (973) 321-1600  
Fax: (973)321-1555



**Paterson**  
Great Falls • Great Food • Great Future

**André Sayegh**  
**Mayor**

January 10, 2019

Ms. Diane Miller, National Program Manager, NTF  
Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad Visitor Center  
4068 Golden Hill Road  
Church Creek, MD 21622

Dear Ms. Miller,

As Mayor of the City of Paterson, I am confirming that I am in full support of the nomination of any and all historically relevant Underground Railroad (UGRR) sites within the City's jurisdiction. Specifically, I commend Jimmy Richardson and others working tirelessly to seek nomination for the Huntoon-Van Rensalier UGRR Site so that it may be added to the National Park Service's Network to Freedom program.

This site, while already listed on the City's Register of Historic Places as of 1996, deserves to be elevated to registers of higher standing so that it can seek additional support for its preservation long-term. This site has been well-supported by community contributions and has been beautifully maintained. I am confident that it will continue to be an asset and, with additional registration titles, continue contributing to Paterson's proud African-American heritage and its association with the UGRR.

Gaining this status will be a great honor to the site and the City as a whole. We thank you for your efforts and hope to hear that the City will be included as part of the Network.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'AS', written in a cursive style.

Mayor Andre Sayegh  
City of Paterson



Huntoon Van Rensalier  
UNDERGROUND RAILROAD FOUNDATION

Honorable Bill Pascrell Jr., Honorary Chairman

Dolores M. Van Rensalier, Founder & President

Ron Van Rensalier, Vice President (Treasurer)

Erik (Huntoon) Lenander, *Secretary*

Erma Gorham, *Trustee*

Dr. Steven Rose, *Trustee*

Latanya West, *Assoc. Member*

February 9, 2020

Mrs. Diane Miller

National Program Manager Underground Railroad Network to Freedom  
Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad Center  
4068 Golden Hill Road  
Church Creek, MD. 21622

Dear Ms. Miller:

It is such a pleasure to write this support letter for the Paterson, NJ Huntoon-Van Rensalier UGRR site and historians Dr. Flavia Alaya and Jimmy Richardson as they complete the Network to Freedom application.

As Founder (2004) and President of the Huntoon-Van Rensalier UGRR Foundation, I believe there will always be timeless lessons of “transcending race” at the Huntoon’s Corner UGRR site’s legacy. It will always be connected to the founding of the Paterson historic site. Both white and black abolitionist, Josiah Huntoon and William Van Rensalier, together risked their lives helping fugitive slaves seeking freedom and equality. Their 18<sup>th</sup> century lives, demonstrate their transcending of race conviction. In *this* generation lost black roots, my successful, pledged vow to publicly honor my discovered Van Rensalier black abolitionist great grandfather, demonstrates the timelessness of this legacy. Now, esteemed historians Dr. Flavia Alaya and Jimmy Richardson are co-authoring the nationally important Network to Freedom application. Their dedicated desire is to make this Paterson, NJ historic site recognized as a national UGRR site. If successful, all future generations that must also “travel its own dark journey out of oppression”, like me, will find their own timeless crossing of that same Bridge Street to Freedom: the legacy.

That 1984 fateful dawn morning, after eagerly expecting to walk through the historic UGRR house that to me symbolized living above race, brought me to my knees on this Paterson vacant lot. I deeply vowed to publicly honor this site and my hidden great grandfather, black abolitionist William Van Rensalier and lifelong white friend and site owner Josiah Huntoon.

It has been a long healing journey as I discovered and documented both my hidden black roots, and later the Huntoon-Van Rensalier UGRR site.

125 Broadway, Suite 100 Paterson, NJ 07505 619-632-3055 Non-Profit: 46-2323802



Huntoon Van Rensalier

## UNDERGROUND RAILROAD FOUNDATION

Like all abolitionists guiding fugitive slaves to freedom, God has guided me through the years (1984 -1996) persevering through enough of my copious documentation for the City of Paterson to fulfill my silent vow and officially preserve this historic UGRR vacant lot. Again, (2004 - 2014) He's led through me, the Huntoon-Van Rensalier UGRR Foundation to acquire large funding, turning the vacant lot into a prestigious sacred monument site. People across the nation, still donating personalized bricks, are being installed in the three separate "Let Freedom Ring" circles embedded on the site sacred grounds.

This year, thanks to the Paterson Historic Preservation Commission, the Foundation is adding to the site in June, an 1871 bell, its date and Jones Company manufacturer authenticated by historian Jimmy Richardson. The UGRR Let Freedom Ring bell will become an historic symbol restating the three Let Freedom Ring circles. The bell will also symbolize the fugitive slaves who took the struggling journey to this Historic UGRR site. On a hill overlooking Paterson is the Paterson National Great Falls where the bell was stored. In pre-civil war times, fugitive slaves waited at the Falls at night watching for a swaying lighted lantern from Huntoon's house tower in the distance. It was their signal telling them it was safe to take the short journey down to Huntoon's home and spice mill cellars where they would be safely sheltered overnight.

I am so deeply humbled and thankful to have these two esteemed historians, Dr. Alaya and Mr. Richardson, so capable of authoring the honored Network to Freedom application. If successful it will nationally preserve this site's timeless legacy. I have often said, "The Soul has no color. It's the Soul's character God will judge each of us by."

Most sincerely,

*D. Van Rensalier*

Dolores M. Van Rensalier, Founder & President  
Huntoon-Van Rensalier Underground Railroad Foundation



**Fw: [EXTERNAL] From NPS.gov: Huntoon-Van Rensalier Underground Railroad Site Memorial**

Pollock, Amanda S <Amanda\_Pollock@nps.gov>

on behalf of

Network to Freedom, NPS <network\_to\_freedom@nps.gov>

Mon 3/28/2022 10:52 AM

To: Krawitz, Robin L <robin\_krawitz@nps.gov>

FYSA

AP

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**From:** no-reply@nps.gov <no-reply@nps.gov>

**Sent:** Saturday, March 26, 2022 12:53 AM

**To:** Network to Freedom, NPS <network\_to\_freedom@nps.gov>

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] From NPS.gov: Huntoon-Van Rensalier Underground Railroad Site Memorial

**This email has been received from outside of DOI - Use caution before clicking on links, opening attachments, or responding.**

Email submitted from: 125ugrr@gmail.com at /orgs/1205/frequently-asked-questions.htm

Use 125ugrr@gmail.com to reply to this message

Category: Facilities

Mailing Address:

Dolores Van Rensalier

125 Broadway

Suite No 100

Paterson, New Jersey 07505

As the g granddaughter of UGRR Conductor, William P. Van Rensalier, after documenting and saving the once parking lot as historic, in 2004 I founded the non-profit Huntoon-Van Rensalier UGRR Monument at the UGRR Site and led the 5 Member Board to painstakingly build the \$277,000 Memorial site, completed in 2014. It has donated personalized bricks for across the nation, and an 1871 historic Bell My Foundation has manage the site since before it's completion during its construction, and after. We have yearly Scholarship and UGRR Legacy Awards fundraiser dinners, etc. Please take this into consideration should our site be approved for designation and have my Foundation as the first contact as Manager. The City Parking Authority owns the site, but we Manage the site to help preserve, interpret it and provide education programs across the street at the College (President is one of our 5-board members). Since the site was completed, several people other than us, have enthusiastically been in the forefront with the five applications, while we dedicated ourself to the Sites maintenance, goals and objectives. Thank you so much for your consideration. Stay well and

healthy. Dolores Van Rensalier, Foundation & President Huntoon-Van Rensalier Underground Railroad Foundation (2004) (4 different Marquis Who's Who in America 2019-20)

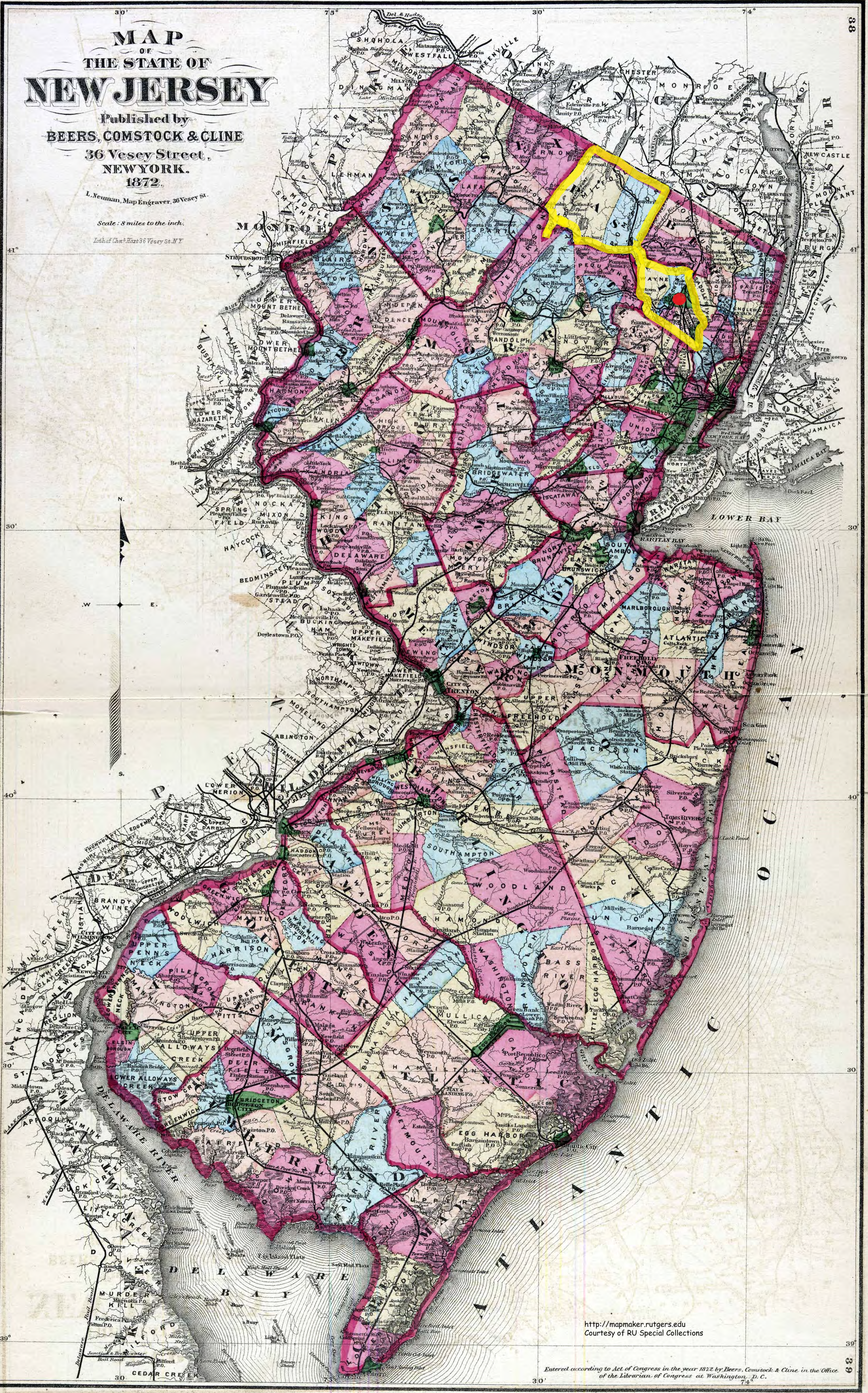
# MAP OF THE STATE OF NEW JERSEY

Published by  
**BEERS, COMSTOCK & CLINE**  
36 Vesey Street,  
NEW YORK.  
1872.

L. Neuman, Map Engraver, 36 Vesey St.

Scale: 8 miles to the inch.

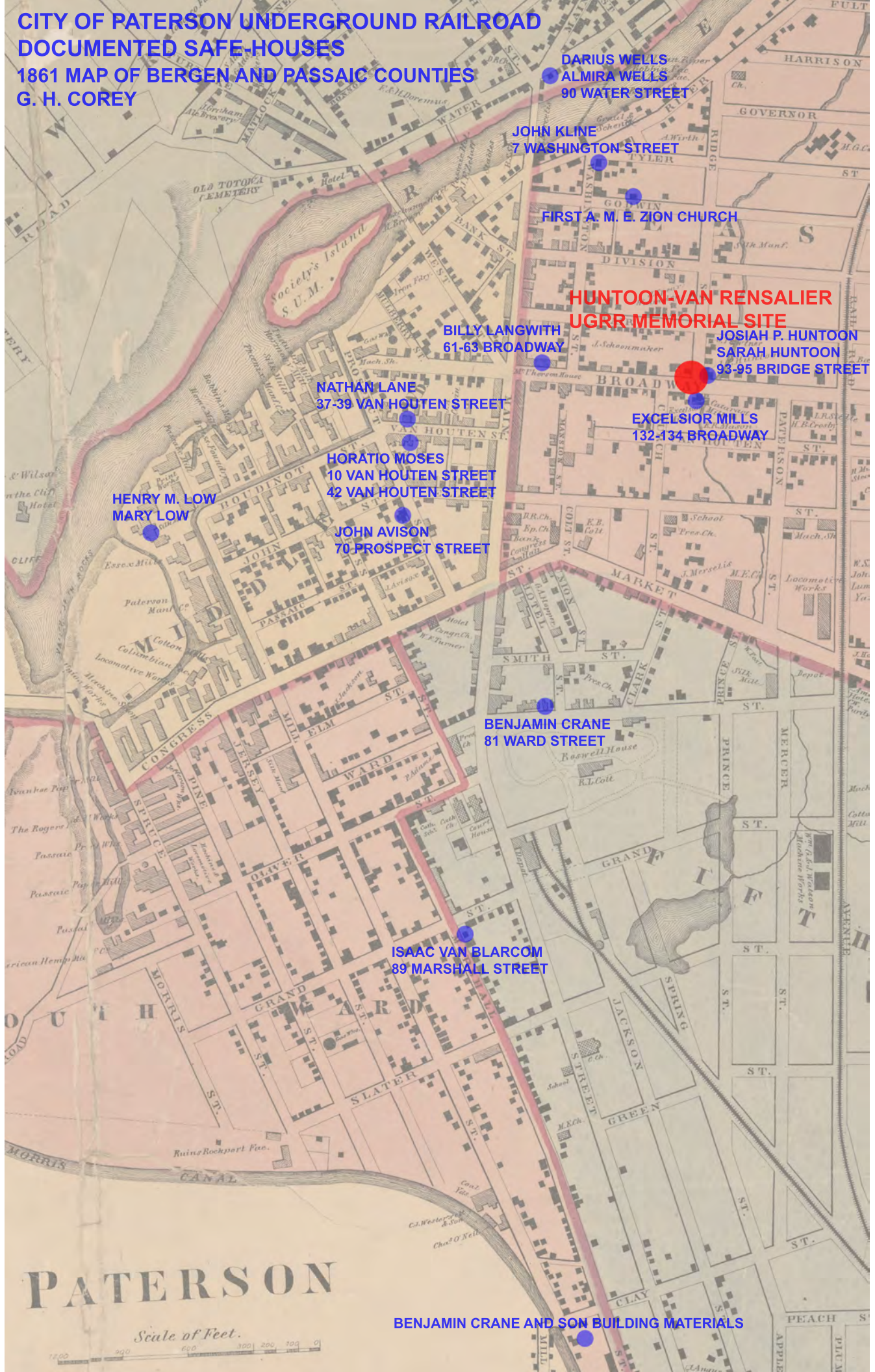
Ed. of Chart 36 Vesey St. N.Y.



<http://mapmaker.rutgers.edu>  
Courtesy of RU Special Collections

Entered according to Act of Congress in the year 1872 by Beers, Comstock & Cline in the Office of the Librarian of Congress at Washington, D. C.

**CITY OF PATERSON UNDERGROUND RAILROAD  
DOCUMENTED SAFE-HOUSES  
1861 MAP OF BERGEN AND PASSAIC COUNTIES  
G. H. COREY**



DARIUS WELLS  
ALMIRA WELLS  
90 WATER STREET

JOHN KLINE  
7 WASHINGTON STREET

FIRST A. M. E. ZION CHURCH

**HUNTOON-VAN RENSA依IER  
UGRR MEMORIAL SITE**

JOSIAH P. HUNTOON  
SARAH HUNTOON  
93-95 BRIDGE STREET

BILLY LANGWITH  
61-63 BROADWAY

NATHAN LANE  
37-39 VAN HOUTEN STREET

EXCELSIOR MILLS  
132-134 BROADWAY

HORATIO MOSES  
10 VAN HOUTEN STREET  
42 VAN HOUTEN STREET

HENRY M. LOW  
MARY LOW

JOHN AVISON  
70 PROSPECT STREET

BENJAMIN CRANE  
81 WARD STREET

ISAAC VAN BLARCOM  
89 MARSHALL STREET

BENJAMIN CRANE AND SON BUILDING MATERIALS

**PATERSON**

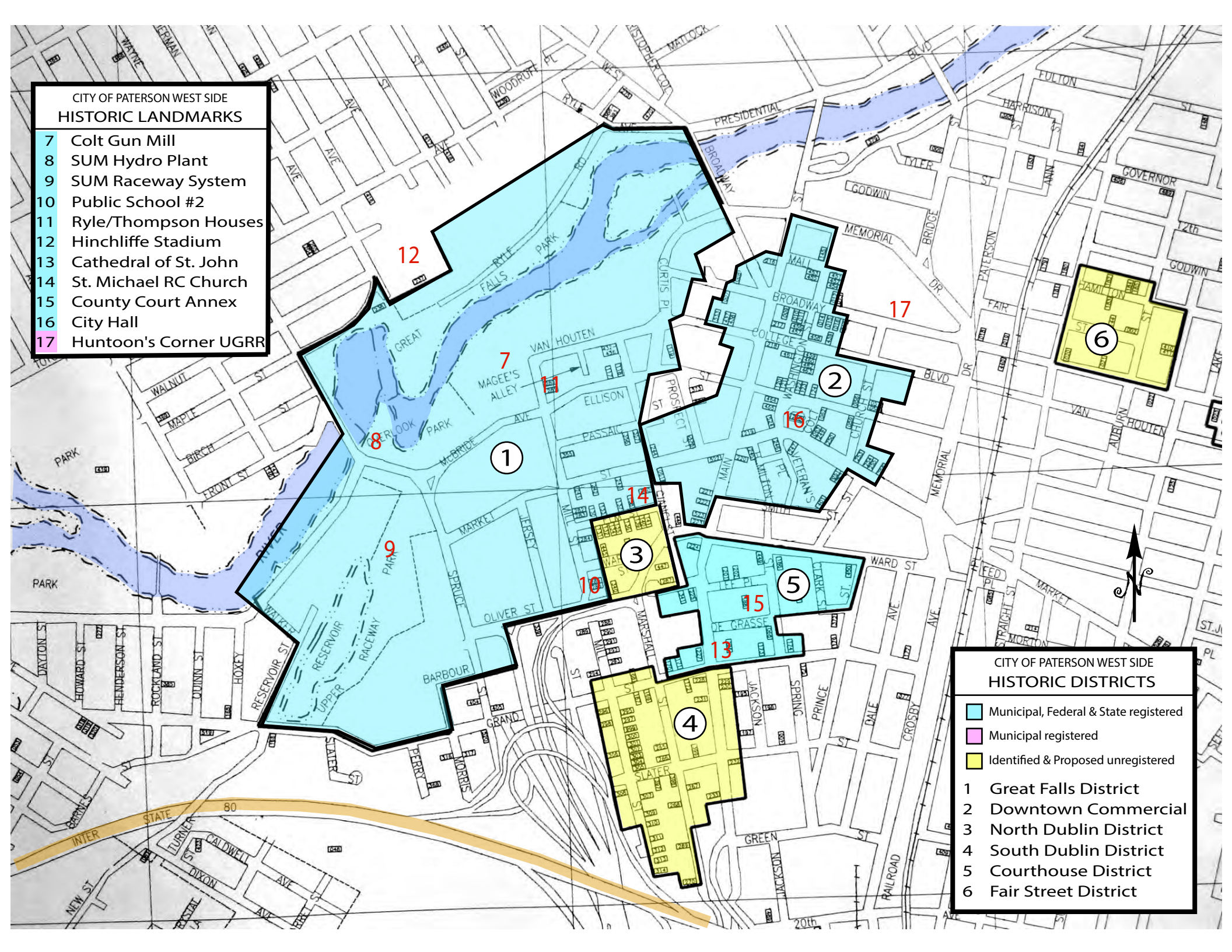
Scale of Feet.  
1800 900 600 300 200 100 0

CITY OF PATERSON WEST SIDE  
HISTORIC LANDMARKS

- 7 Colt Gun Mill
- 8 SUM Hydro Plant
- 9 SUM Raceway System
- 10 Public School #2
- 11 Ryle/Thompson Houses
- 12 Hinchliffe Stadium
- 13 Cathedral of St. John
- 14 St. Michael RC Church
- 15 County Court Annex
- 16 City Hall
- 17 Huntoon's Corner UGRR

CITY OF PATERSON WEST SIDE  
HISTORIC DISTRICTS

- Municipal, Federal & State registered
  - Municipal registered
  - Identified & Proposed unregistered
- 1 Great Falls District
  - 2 Downtown Commercial
  - 3 North Dublin District
  - 4 South Dublin District
  - 5 Courthouse District
  - 6 Fair Street District





This historic marker was placed on 'Huntoon's Corner,' site of the demolished Huntoon home, by the Passaic County Board of Chosen Freeholders in 1999. As detailed elsewhere in this application, the home itself had been demolished under fierce protest in 1983. The site was finally acknowledged and memorialized in 1995-96.

Photo by Jimmy Richardson



Left, top: Closeup of the site in 2013, with UGRR signage installed, before paving and installation of monument.

Below: The site paved, and the monument installed, pre-dedication (2014).

Photos by Jimmy Richardson



Near complete: Juneteenth, 2014.







Dedication Day Ceremony, Juneteenth 2015



Dedication Day Ceremony Juneteenth 2015 Left to

Right: Tony Perez (Paterson Parking Authority); Dolores Van Rensalier Warren (descendant and Memorial Committee chair), Ed Dwight, sculptor. Photos by Jimmy Richardson



# CITY OF PATERSON

André Sayegh  
Mayor

## Proclamation

WHEREAS, the City of Paterson takes great pride in joining the residents of the City of Paterson in recognizing October 19, 2021 as Freedom Day; and

WHEREAS, the Freedom Bell was cast by the Meneely Bell Company of Troy, New York in 1871. The Freedom Bell was a fixture on the Paterson landscape for 150 years; and

WHEREAS, the Freedom Bell remained at the Great Falls, since 1976 in dedication of the Great Falls listing as a National Historic Landmark; and

WHEREAS, the 1619 Project was launched in August 2019, the United States of America commemorated the 400<sup>th</sup> Anniversary with a National Bell ringing; and

WHEREAS, the Freedom Bell is an audible symbol of freedom, stemming the National Bell ringing at Appomattox, marking the end of the Civil War. In 1963, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., extolled in his speech, “Let Freedom Ring”; and

WHEREAS, the Freedom Bell was gifted to the Huntoon Van Rensalier Underground Railroad Memorial site. The Freedom Bell at Huntoon’s Corner symbolizes the Emancipation Proclamation 13<sup>th</sup> 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> amendments and the ending of reconstruction; and

WHEREAS, this event was hosted by **Jimmy Richardson** and today we honor him for leading and organizing this initiative.

NOW THEREFORE, I, André Sayegh as Mayor of the City of Paterson, do hereby proclaim October 19, 2021 as:

### “Freedom Day”

in the City of Paterson and I urge all citizens to join me in commemorating this day.

GIVEN, under my hand and the corporate seal of the City of Paterson this 19<sup>th</sup> day of October in the year of our Lord two thousand and twenty-one.



André Sayegh, Mayor