



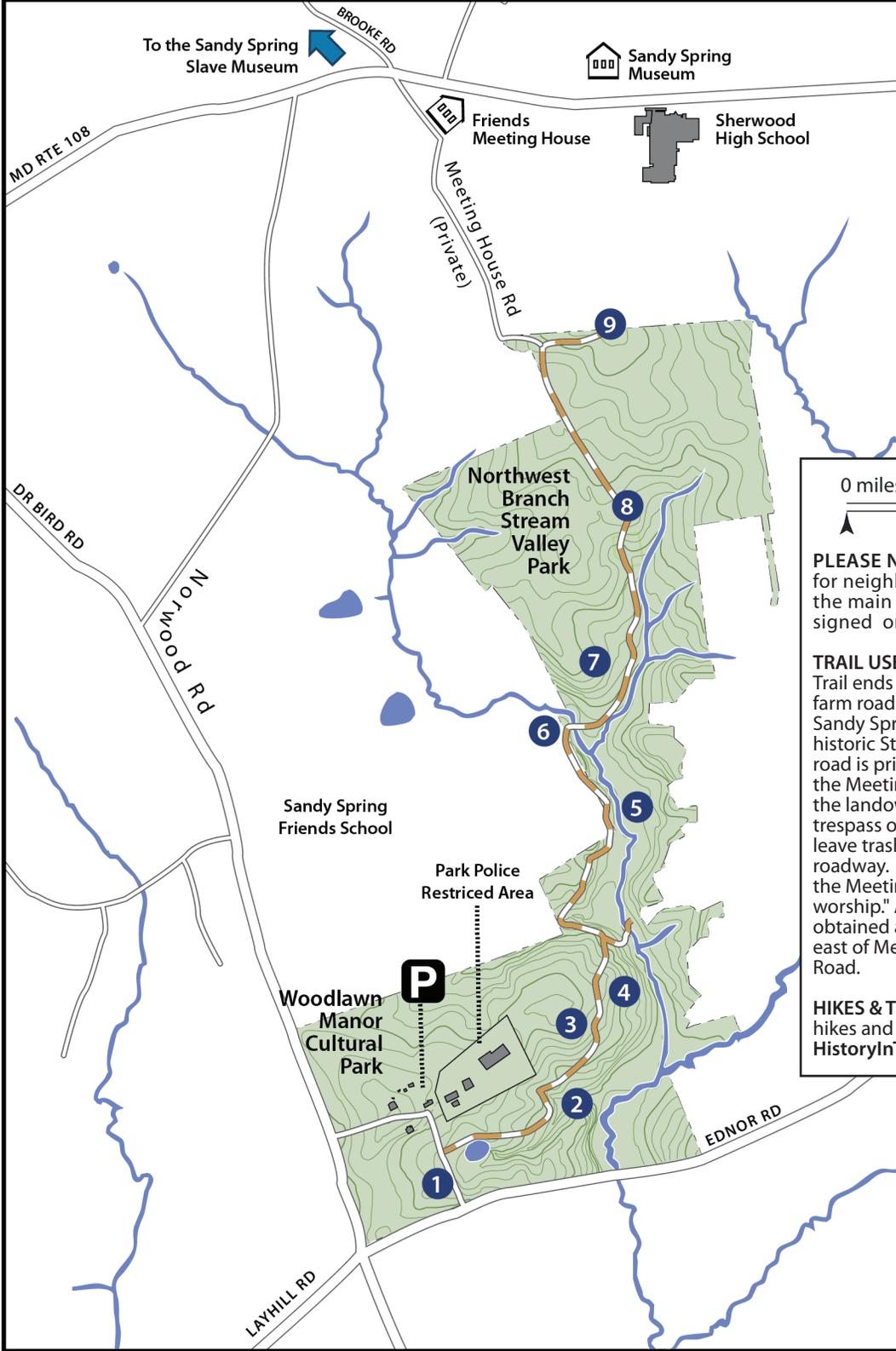
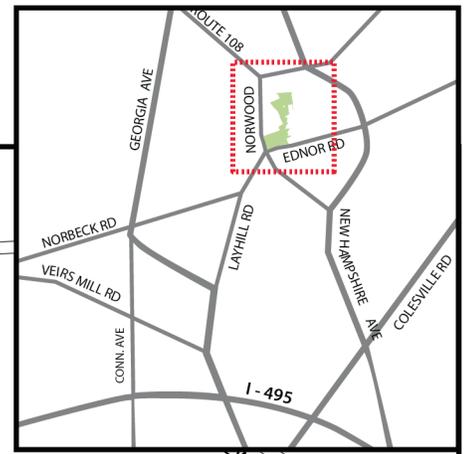
# UNDERGROUND RAILROAD EXPERIENCE TRAIL



Length: 2 mi. natural surface trails

MontgomeryTrails.org

Updated: MAY17



0 miles 1/2

**PLEASE NOTE:** Trail Connectors are shown solely for neighborhood access. They are not part of the main park trail system and may not be signed or maintained to park standards.

**TRAIL USERS:** The Underground Railroad Experience Trail ends at the Champion White Ash Tree. The farm road to the north of the spring leads to the Sandy Spring Meeting House and passes the historic Stabler homes Auburn and Harewood. This road is private. If you choose to walk this road to the Meeting House please respect the privacy of the landowners, stay on the roadway and do not trespass on the adjoining property. Please do not leave trash or damage any property along the roadway. Be extremely quiet when approaching the Meeting House on Sundays as they have "silent worship." A "Walking Tour of Sandy Spring" can be obtained at the Sandy Spring Museum, one block east of Meeting House Road on Rt. 108 and Bentley Road.

**HIKES & TOURS:** For information about guided trail hikes and Woodlawn Museum tours, visit [HistoryInTheParks.org](http://HistoryInTheParks.org) or call: 301-929-5989.



## Points of Interest Along the Trail

- 1 Trailhead Kiosk
- 2 The Woods
- 3 The Brambles
- 4 Crossing of Paths
- 5 Hollow Tree
- 6 Stream Crossing
- 7 Farm Fields
- 8 The Sandy Spring
- 9 Champion White Ash Tree

- HIKER/EQUESTRIAN ONLY TRAIL
- TRAIL CONNECTOR
- NATURAL SURFACE TRAIL
- TRAIL CONNECTOR
- HIKER ONLY TRAIL
- TRAIL CONNECTOR
- PARKLANDS & TOPO
- STREAMS & WATER

- USE CAUTION
- PICNIC
- ACCESSIBLE TRAILS
- PARKING
- PHONE
- STEEP SLOPES
- DRINKING WATER
- BATHROOMS

**Park Manager:** 301.774.6255 #3  
**Park Police:** 301.949.3010 (Emergency Only)

**Welcome.** *The Underground Railroad Experience Trail in Sandy Spring, MD celebrates the history of Sandy Spring and commemorates the involvement of Montgomery County residents in the Underground Railroad.*

**Imagine...** The time is the 1850s. The Religious Society of Friends, or Quakers, have helped make Sandy Spring a prosperous farming and commercial center. The Friends Meeting House, built in 1817, is the center of religious and community life. Even though slavery will not be abolished in Maryland until 1864, Maryland Quakers outlawed the owning of slaves by its members in 1777. In Sandy Spring, free blacks own their own homes and have organized churches, schools, and an array of social clubs although such public gatherings are extremely dangerous in this anti-abolitionist county. Local patrols and slave catchers stalk the fields and woods, enforcing the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850. Quakers and free blacks assist escaping slaves or fugitives via the secret "Underground Railroad"—a system of people and places organized to help slaves escape to freedom. Rumor has it that the fugitive slave, Dred Scott, is staying in the log cabin home of Enoch George Howard while the US Supreme Court deliberates whether or not Scott should be returned to his owner in Missouri. (A county attorney, Montgomery Blair, unsuccessfully defends him in 1857.)



You are escaping to freedom and have made it to Woodlawn (the start of the trail). Now you must travel through woods and skirt the edges of farm fields to safely reach the Sandy Spring itself. *Can you do it?*



**The Trail.** Begin your self-guided hike on the Underground Railroad Experience Trail at the kiosk by the Ednor Road park entrance.

- 1. Woodlawn Manor & Barn.** This ca. 1800-1815 Federal style brick house was built by the Thomas family, prominent Quakers of the area. From 1822 to 1919 it was owned by the Palmer family. Dr. William P. Palmer was a successful local physician and farmer. Although raised as a Quaker, Palmer's membership was eventually revoked because his family utilized slave labor at Woodlawn. The unique stone barn was constructed in 1832 by master stone mason, Isaac Holland. M-NCPPC Montgomery Parks converted the barn into a museum with exhibits focused on Quaker heritage, African American communities, the Underground Railroad, and 19th century agriculture.
- 2. The Woods.** Slaves seeking freedom would often escape at Christmas since they usually had from three days to a week of holiday when they would not be expected to work. They were often given a pass to visit relatives during this time. Another opportunity for escape would be under the cover of a rain storm. The rain washed away tracks and made it difficult for dogs to follow a scent. You will have to stay away from open spaces and heavily traveled roads, and head toward forested areas where you be less visible from a long distance.
- 3. The Brambles.** A good place to hide while resting on your journey would have been a large bramble patch. Dogs, horses, and men all shy away from brambles because they stick to fur and clothes and make traveling very uncomfortable. Burrowing a hole beneath a thorny bush would be a good way to take a short nap without being detected.
- 4. Crossing of Paths.** The danger here is that it is easy to get disoriented among the trees and to lose your way. If you were following an underground railroad route the path to take may have been marked with secret signs such as bent tree limbs or stones piled in a certain way. This portion of the trail was made possible through a donation of land from the nearby Sandy Spring Friends School. The path to the left goes to the school.
- 5. Hollow Tree and Boundary Stone.** Large hollow trees such as this one were often used by fugitives as hiding places. Sometimes a fire for warmth or cooking could be kindled inside the tree at night without being seen from a distance. A hollow tree could also be used as a cache for food and water provided by friends helping fugitives. The boundary stone marked the dividing line between "Snowden's Manor" and "Woodlawn Manor." Boundary stones were often used as markers for people trying to follow the trail north.
- 6. Stream Crossing.** Escaping slaves faced many obstacles. Since most did not know how to swim, creeks and rivers were formidable barricades. Creeks might be crossed with stepping stones but rivers and streams posed more of a challenge. A hidden boat or kindly ferryman sometimes provided a way across. A replica of a period bridge was built at this location by Winchester Homes, developer of nearby Ashton Preserve.
- 7. Farm Fields.** Open fields were dangerous since you could be seen from a far distance, so you would have kept to the wooded edges of the field. But if the field was grown tall with corn or tobacco it provided excellent cover and you could cross through the middle without fear.
- 8. The Sandy Spring.** The local community took its name from this spring which provides fresh water filtered through a sandy soil. Every farm and home nearby had a path leading to this spring so it would have been a natural meeting place and trail marker for fugitives on the Underground Railroad. The water feeds a creek which flows into the Northwest Branch of the Anacostia River. The concrete archway over the spring was constructed by Asa Stabler in 1914. The date over the spring, 1745, refers to the time that the local Quakers first formed the Sandy Spring Friends Meeting.
- 9. Champion White Ash Tree.** Dear to the hearts of many residents of Sandy Spring, this 300 year old giant of the forest has witnessed the founding of the Village of Sandy Spring in the 1720s, the clearing of the land for farming, and possibly the journey of many people seeking freedom from enslavement through the darkness.