

A Journey Begins: Nature's Role in the Flight to Freedom

Adkins Arboretum, Ridgely, Maryland

Background



Adkins Arboretum is a 400-acre native garden and preserve in the heart of Maryland's Eastern Shore. Birthplace of both Harriet Tubman and Frederick Douglass, this region is often considered the "cradle of the Underground Railroad" and designated as a "Place to Visit" on the Harriet Tubman UGRR Byway. The tour, developed in concert with arboretum staff, volunteers, as well as historians Anthony Cohen and Dr. Kate Clifford Larson, reveals not only nature's obstacles and opportunities, but the human spirit as well.

Scope

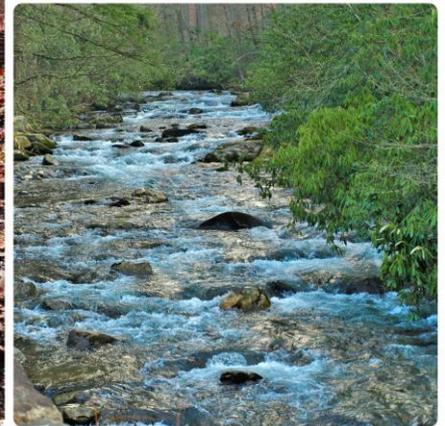


The tour reveals the story of human transformation ("deciding one's own destiny") by way of the Underground Railway—in intimate connection with nature. The landscape of the Arboretum serves as historic setting and witness to these events. As the listener follows the tour and explores the environment, he/she is exposed to characters and settings that represent "decision points" on the path to freedom.

Results



The 50-minute tour through the Arboretum's deep woods includes narration, music, sound effects, and character readings from the writing of freedom seekers. A rich and evocative "voice of nature" provides a timeless perspective of the arboretum itself.



Visitor Feedback

--Immersion ... with my ears ... with my skin ... with my imagination ... with my heart. The voices tell a story that first enchanted me in grade school. I thought I could imagine the courage it took to flee through a forest or up a river. I realize I could only grasp the edges of what it meant to "seek freedom."

--This tour changed the way I see and feel the forest at the Arboretum. I will always think of the runaway slaves when I am on the ridge overlooking the stream. Before this, I had a "flatter" experience when walking here. Never would I have imagined the bravery and hope that they possessed. I am so deeply touched. Thank you.

Visitor comments after experiencing the audio tour

Stories you take with you.