



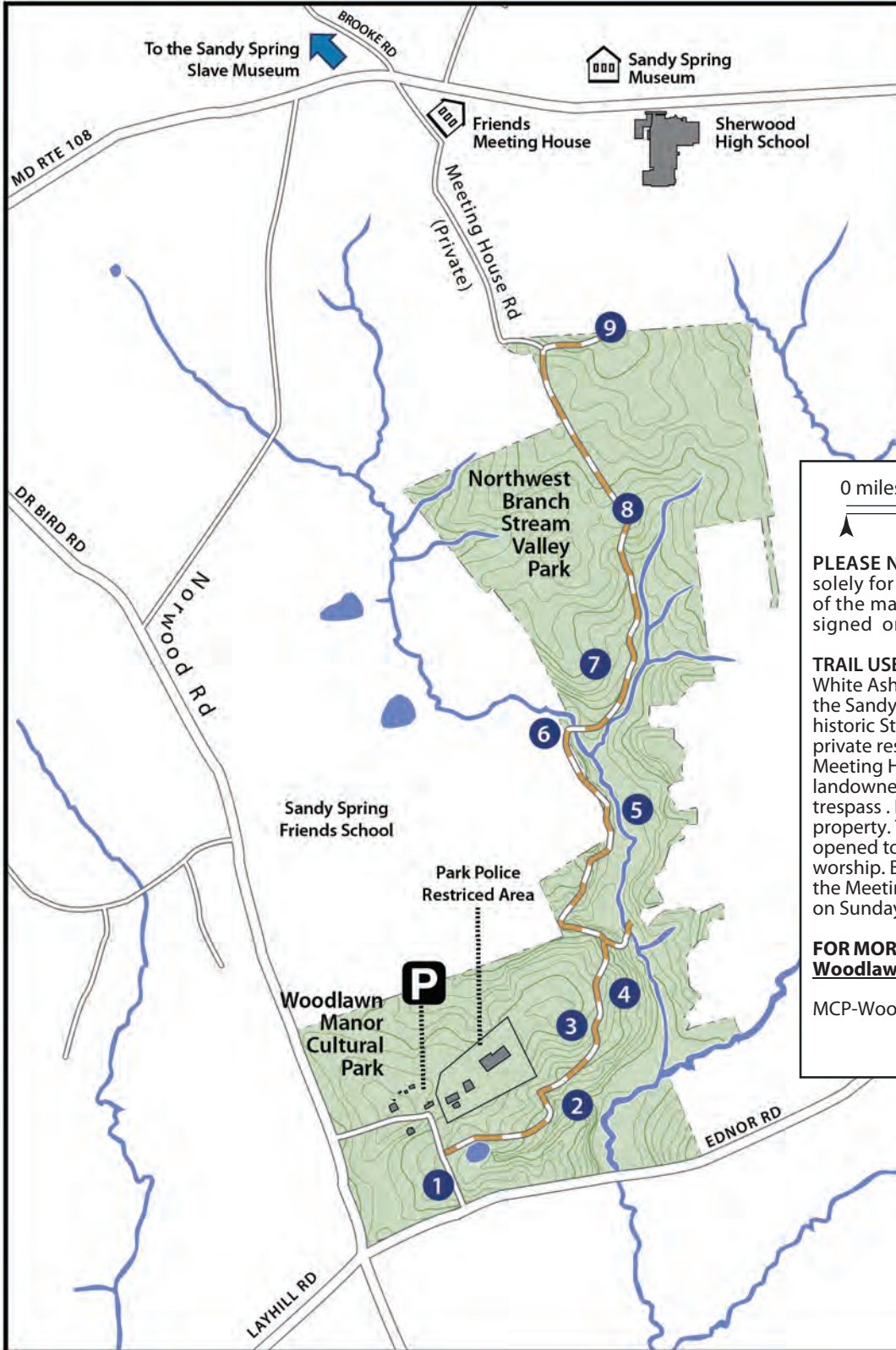
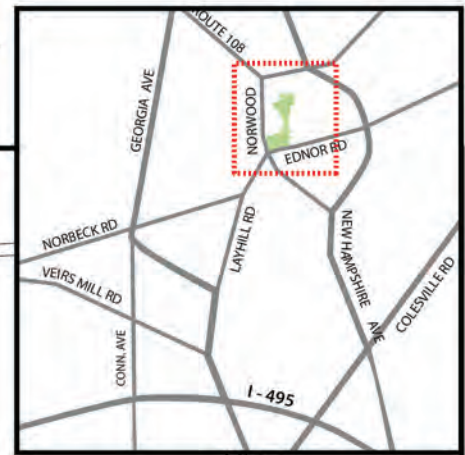
UNDERGROUND RAILROAD EXPERIENCE TRAIL



Length: 2 mi. (one-way) natural surface trails

MontgomeryParks.org

Updated: March 21



0 miles 1/2

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

TRAIL USERS: The trail ends at #9 (Champion White Ash Tree). The private farm road leading to the Sandy Spring Meeting House passes the historic Stabler homes Auburn and Harewood—private residences. If you choose to walk to the Meeting House, please respect the privacy of the landowners, stay on the roadway and do not trespass. Please do not leave trash or damage any property. The Meeting House is not regularly opened to the public. It is a functioning place of worship. Be extremely quiet when approaching the Meeting House as they have "silent worship" on Sundays.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:
WoodlawnManor.org 301-929-5989
MCP-WoodlawnPrograms@montgomeryparks.org



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: 301.929.5989
Park Police: 301.949.3010
 (Emergency Only)

Trail Background: Created in 1998, this simulated trail was established by Montgomery Parks to honor the 19th century history of Sandy Spring and Montgomery County. This trail did not exist before 1998. There is no documented evidence that Woodlawn Manor's owners or buildings were involved in the Underground Railroad. The trail is part of the Rachel Carson Greenway trail system and the National Park Service "Network to Freedom" program.

What was the Underground Railroad? This institution of slavery was legal in America until 1865 with adoption of the 13th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. The Underground Railroad was a secret loose network that helped enslaved people seek freedom in northern free states, Canada and elsewhere. It was never literally underground or an actual railroad- there are no railroad tracks or tunnels to visit. No single trail was used. Instead freedom seekers used a variety of routes and modes of transportation based upon their final destination and where they could find safety and shelter. It was dangerous for everyone involved and is an important part of American and Montgomery County's history.

IMAGINE... It's 1850 and the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) have helped make Sandy Spring a prosperous farming and commercial center. The Friends Meeting House (c.1817) is the center of religious and community life. Even though Maryland won't abolish slavery until 1864, Maryland Quakers outlawed members owning slaves in 1777. In Sandy Spring, free blacks own their own homes and have organized churches, schools and social clubs. Montgomery County is largely an anti-abolitionist county. After Congress passes the 1850 Fugitive Slave Act, local patrols and slave catchers stalk the fields and woods. It is now a federal offense to aid those seeking freedom. However, in the area some Quakers and free blacks are quietly aiding the "Underground Railroad".



Imagine you are escaping to freedom and have made it to Woodlawn- the start of this trail. Your goal is to safely reach the Sandy Spring. Can you do it?

The Trail

Begin at the trail kiosk- near 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 1832 stone barn was constructed by master stone mason, Isaac Holland. In 2016 the barn opened as the "Woodlawn Museum" with exhibits on Quaker heritage, African American communities, the Underground Railroad, and 19th century agriculture. (Limited hours; admission fee required)
- 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.** Finding your way was tough with navigation signs. It might be easy to get disoriented or lose your way. You may find the way 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. 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.

Visit WoodlawnManor.org for Educational Resources to compliment your visit