

Historic rivertown where Underground Railroad began opens first ever overnight experience

For the first time in history, the rivertown where the term 'Underground Railroad' can be traced to in its origin allows guests to stay in FREEDOM HOME.

COLUMBIA, PA, USA, July 13, 2022 /EINPresswire.com/ -- WHERE HISTORY COMES BACK TO LIFE.

For the first time ever, the [historic rivertown](#) of Columbia located on the Susquehanna River - in Lancaster County PA - now allows people to stay overnight in a one of the oldest homes, built between 1850-1867.

The term 'underground railroad' actually originates from the rail yards in Columbia, PA as former slave Stephen Smith was the mastermind behind designing and building false bottom railcars and and false side train cars to hide slaves so they could board in Columbia, PA and go through Harrisburg and Philadelphia to crossings in upstate New York.

The rivertown was founded by evangelist and entrepreneur John Wright in 1726. His mansion along the river is still preserved and offers tours and fascinating local history. Although missing the vote for the nation's capital by one vote (when it became Columbia), the town continued to leave its mark in history. Full of homes with secret rooms and tunnels throughout the city, it was a freedom town for slaves, an active spot due to its railroads and canal systems during prohibition, famously turned back the confederate army just three days before the Battle of Gettysburg by burning the world's longest 1.5 mile covered bridge, and is emerging as a destination for outdoor enthusiasts, history buffs, microbrewery lovers, antique hunters, and artisan craft seekers.

The borough has approved the use of the c. 1867 Hougentogler home for use by [Discover](#)

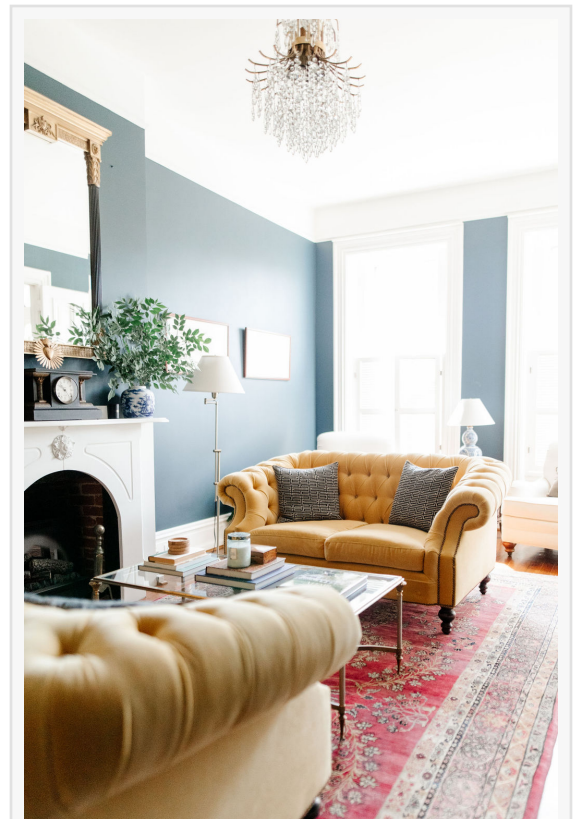


Slaves were hidden in secret rooms and tunnels all throughout Columbia's riverfront homes during their journey to freedom on the underground railroad.

[Columbia](#) to host guests overnight seeking to spread awareness of the town's pivotal role in history. For the first time ever, visitors can sleep in a historic home that may have been used to hide slaves with a secret room and possible partial tunnel, in the town where it all began! The home was designed and built by a civil war veteran, and home to Pennsylvania statesman and senators, plus a host of other local who's-who individuals. The 3,300SF home completely renovated includes original lights, immaculate restoration of floors with local artifacts, antiques, and is just a few walking blocks from the river and historic downtown attractions.

After William built an adjoining home for his in-laws, his only daughter was married away, and the home then became the home and medical practice of Dr. Gardiner P. Taylor – who practiced as a physician and for whom the Taylor School was named after in Columbia.

Other notable owners were the Columbia Postmaster and Columbia Phone Secretary (Charles Taylor – 1930), a State House of Representatives and PA State Senator (Cleon Berntheizel – 1935), and the Deitrich family (1940s). It was also previously the Jonal Gallery – a gallery home for practicing artists and live music/theatre.



Freedom Room living room with slate fireplace and original lighting from 1867 home built by civil war veteran.

The historic rivertown of Columbia, PA boasts some of the oldest architectural styles in America, gives direct access to trails, waterways, and river life, holds the secrets to the early days of our Nation's birth.

“

Visitors to the Freedom Home will leave educated, inspired, and excited about a small rivertown where the Underground Railroad began slaves literally boarded trains for freedom.”

Discover Columbia

[FREEDOM HOME](#) is named in honor of the historic crossroads of our rivertown and this region – from Columbia's founding, to being a city of refuge and freedom-advancement during slavery, to the inspiring beauty of nature all around.

The #FreedomHome is located directly across from the main gates of Mount Bethel Cemetery (1720) where guided

historic tours through winding walkways showcase the incredibly preserved tombs of those pre-dating Samuel Wright's establishing of the Columbia Borough (1788). It is one block from antique shops, artisans, museums, family attractions, and a few blocks to the beautiful Susquehanna River where the world's longest single arch concrete bridge spans 1.5 miles between York and

Lancaster County.

The Columbia Market House (1869) is open on Saturday's and features local goods, crafts, live music and entertainment, and plenty of food and fun. Don't forget to tour the jail house under the floor where famed goonies like Big John spent a few nights (and even Thomas Edison)!

Underground Railroad History

Visitors to the home can book a 90 min walking tour by request led by local historian and expert Chris Vera from the Historical Society – which starts in the Markethouse leads groups around town on a walking tour where the UG homes are!



The Susquehanna River was key crossing point for many historically significant events - during slavery, civil war, prohibition - and features the longest single arch concrete bridge in the world.

Visitors to the Freedom Home will leave educated, inspired, and excited about a small rivertown that is making waves again after they discover Columbia.

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