The Underground Railroad Bicycle Route honors the bravery of those that fled bondage and those that provided shelter. The route passes points of interest and historic sites along the 2,007-mile corridor. Beginning in Mobile, Alabama – a busy port for slavery during the pre-civil war era – the route goes north following rivers through Alabama, Mississippi, Tennessee, Kentucky and Indiana. Waterways, as well as the North Star, were often used by freedom seekers as a guide in their journeys to freedom. Upon crossing into Ohio, the route leaves the pre-civil war era – the route goes north following rivers through passes points of interest and historic sites along the 2,007-mile corridor.

PITTSBURGH SPUR: Pittsburgh, PA to Erie, PA

The Underground Railroad in Pennsylvania was a network of secret pathways that carried black fugitives to freedom. A key player in this network was Thomas Bingham, a member of the Bingham family that owned a large piece of property on Mt. Washington and Olympia Rd. was a safe house for freedom seekers and was part of one of America’s oldest planned communities called Chatham Village.

In 1838, the Underground Railroad was part of one of America's oldest planned communities called Chatham Village. The Church was reported to have a tunnel open to blacks in the mid-19th century. The Church was founded by Charles Avery as a vocational school which led to a canal on the Allegheny River to help escaping slaves. Avery College was part of one of America's oldest planned communities called Chatham Village.

John Peck’s House, 129 S. Pitt St. Site of Underground Railroad activity and the Underground Railroad Driving Tour was part of one of America’s oldest planned communities called Chatham Village.

Hanna and Small Houses NE corner of Pitt and Beaver Sts. A passageway was uncovered under the Hanna house that is believed to have hidden freedom seekers. The Hanna and Small families were ardent abolitionists and close friends.

The Mystery is part of one of America’s oldest planned communities called Chatham Village.

Freedom’s Call Standing Exhibit 724-658-4022 www.lawrenceehs.com Lawrence County Historical Society 408 N. Jefferson St., New Castle. Exhibit features history of the Underground Railroad in Lawrence Co. Also includes a civil war display.

John Brown Farm and Tannery Museum 814-333-2248, 961 Liberty St., Meadville. This church was organized in 1849 and many of its members and trustees were active in the Underground Railroad.

Pittsburgh is home to the Senator John Heinz History Center 412-454-6000 www.heinzhistorycenter.org 1215 Smallman St. It has an African American collection and an Underground Railroad exhibit. Martin Delany Plaque Third Ave. and Market St. Martin Delany founded Pittsburgh’s first African American newspaper the Moyer (1843-1847). He was the first black Major in the U.S. Army and among the first African Americans admitted to Harvard Medical School.

Magoffin House 129 S. Pitt St. Site of Underground Railroad activity and the Underground Railroad Driving Tour was part of one of America’s oldest planned communities called Chatham Village.

Hanna and Small Houses NE corner of Pitt and Beaver Sts. A passageway was uncovered under the Hanna house that is believed to have hidden freedom seekers. The Hanna and Small families were ardent abolitionists and close friends. Magoffin House 129 S. Pitt St. Site of Underground Railroad activity and during the Civil War, Magoffin was considered a “copperhead” or peace democrat; Old Mercer Presbyterian Church 124-688-0229, 1000 Bryan Mowr Rd. This church was ministered by Henry Highland Garnet, raphaellibraries.rsu.edu/gallman/bios/Garnet_Henry_Highland.html a well known abolitionist who spoke in New York after the passage of the Emancipation Proclamation.

Freedom Road Cemetery Historic Marker located across from the main gate at the former Free Fairgrounds on U.S. 62 is all that remains of Liberia, a fugitive slave town established by the Travis family, free African Americans.

Bethel AME Church 814-333-2248, 961 Liberty St., Meadville. This church was organized in 1849 and many of its members and trustees were active in the Underground Railroad.

Bethel AME Church 814-333-2248, 961 Liberty St., Meadville. This church was organized in 1849 and many of its members and trustees were active in the Underground Railroad.
NB: 0.0 km/Continue on SR 65. 4.0(R) Ride over US 422. Route becomes E. Washington St./SR 65. 6.5(11) New Castle. Turn right onto Mill St. which becomes Highland Ave. then unsigned Mercer-New Castle Rd. 13(21)SR 956. 15.5(25) SR 208. 21(34) Turn left onto US 19. Join PA Bike Route A. In 0.3 mi., ride under I-80. 23.5(38) Mercer. See Detail. Turn right onto E. Market St./SR 58. Matchline.

NS: 0.0 km/Continue on S. Erie St./US 19. 2.5(4) Ride under I-80. In 0.3 mi., bear right onto Mercer-New Castle Rd. Leave PA Bike Route A. 8(13)SR 208. 10(16) Meadville. Turn left onto Franklin St./Bus US 322. 28(45) Crossingville. Matchline.


NB: 0.0 km/Continue on Franklin St./Bus US 322. 0.5(0.8) Ride straight following E. Washington St. which becomes State Road 2014/unsigned Scrubgrass Rd. SR 58 leaves route. 6(10) Turn left onto State Road 2007/unsigned Springfield Church Rd. 9.5(15) Ride straight onto Mercer Rd./US 62. 14.5(24) Stoneboro. 15.5(25) Sandy Lake. Turn left onto S. Main St./SR 173/US 62. In 0.1 mi., US 62 leaves route. 20(32) New Lebanon. 24(39) Milledgeville. 28(45) Cochranton. Turn left onto Franklin St./Bus US 322. Matchline.
NB: 0(0 km)Continue on SR 98. 4(6)Lavery. 8(13)Franklin Center. 12.5(20)SR 832. Leave PA Bike Route A. 15(24)Fairview. 16.5(27)A 8(13)Franklin Center. 12.5(20)SR 832. Leave NB: Route Z. Turn right onto SR 5. Join unsigned PA Bike Route Z. 2.5(4)Bear right onto SR 5. 7.5(12)Turn left onto SR 98. 9(14)Fairview.

SB: 0(0 km)0(0 km)Pittsburgh Spur begins at corner of SR 5 Alt. and SR 832. Ride west on SR 5 Alt. In 0.3 mi., join unsigned PA Bike Route Z. 2.5(4)Bear right onto SR 5. 7.5(12)Turn left onto SR 98. 9(14)Fairview.

### SERVICE DIRECTORY

The services and emergency numbers for towns and cities are listed by map. There are listings for a few of the larger cities near, but not on, the Underground Railroad Bicycle Route Pittsburgh Spur. Services between towns are also listed. Libraries are noted for internet usage; access will vary depending on the library. Small town post offices often have limited hours of operation.

Within a town or city, call the number listed in an emergency. Outside towns or in small communities with no police, call the listed sheriff’s number. Law enforcement officers have proved repeatedly to be the cyclists’ best allies on our routes.

Campgrounds and hostels vary from basic services to modern facilities; prices vary accordingly. The motels, hotels, and bed and breakfasts that are listed are only representative of what is available, especially in larger towns. They are often located off route, call for directions.

### PENNSYLVANIA (Area Code 412)

#### Pittsburgh (15233): pop. 305,704; all services.
- Emergency: 911; Police 323-7800; Sheriff 350-4700.
- Bike Shop: Coraopolis Bike Shop, 938 5th Ave., 264-0982.
- Library: Coraopolis Memorial, 601 School St., 264-3502.
- Lodging: (1) Neville Motel, 5111 1/2 Neville Rd., 264-6463. (2) Marriott Pittsburgh Airport, 777 Aten Rd., 788-8800 or 800-800-228-9290; (3) Days Inn Pittsburgh Airport, 2500 Market Pl. Blvd., 859-4000.

#### Leetsdale (15056): pop. 1,218; G,R.
- Emergency: 911; Police 741-4119; Hospital 741-6600.
- Library: Sewickley Public, 500 Thorn St., 741-6920.
- Lodging: Sewickley Hotel, 509 Beaver St., 741-9457.

#### Edgeworth: pop. 1,680; all services.
- Emergency: 911; Sheriff 350-4700.

#### Ambridge (15011): pop. 7,050; all services.
- Emergency: 911; Police 266-3270; Sheriff 770-4600.
- Bike Shop: SweetWater Bicycle Shop, 518 Merchant St., 266-1111.
- Library: Laughlin Memorial Free, 99 11th St., 266-3857.
- Lodging: Cobblestone Inn & Suites, 1111 New Economy Dr., 266-7110.

#### Monaca (15061): pop. 5,737; G.R.
- Emergency: 911; Police 775-9614; Sheriff 770-4600.
- Library: Monaca Public, 609 Pennsylvania Ave., 775-9608.

#### Rochester (15074): pop. 3,657; G.R.
- Emergency: 911; Police 775-1100.
- Library: Rochester Public, closed Fri., 252 Adams St., 774-7783.
- Lodging: (5) B&Bs.

#### Beaver (15009): pop. 4,531; all services; off route 0.25 mi. W. across Beaver Rd. on Bridge St., then 1 block S. on Market St., then 0.7 mi. W. on 3rd St. to services.
- Emergency: 911; Police 775-1550; Hospital 728-7110.

### Bike Shops

- Bike Shop: Snitgers Bicycle Store, 399 3rd St., 774-5905.
- Library: Beaver Area Memorial, 100 College Ave., 775-1132.
- Lodging: (1) The Todd House B&B, 330 3rd St., 775-1424 or 866-905-1424; (2) Felicity Farms B&B, 2075 Dutch Ridge Rd., 775-0735.
- New Brighton (15066): pop. 6,025; G.R.
- Emergency: 911; Police 846-2270.
- Lodging: Beaver Falls Motel, 7257 Big Beaver Rd., 843-0630.

### Energy

- Energy: no services.
**KEY TO ABBREVIATIONS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>G...........</td>
<td>Grocery or Convenience Store</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R...............</td>
<td>Restaurant/Cafe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M..............</td>
<td>Lodging or Bed and Breakfast</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zip Code/Post Office</td>
<td>Zip Code/Post Office</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**All services** includes the above services.

**US.....** Federal Road  
**SR.........** State Road  
**CR.......** County Road  
**pvt...........................** Private/Commercial  
**B&B..........................** Bed and Breakfast

**USING THIS MAP**

This route was selected by experienced bicyclists. However, few of the roads chosen have special provisions for cyclists, and Adventure Cycling cannot guarantee your safety while riding on them. You must assume responsibility for your own safety. The route is designed to be ridden by adult bicyclists, defined as those 16 years of age or older, with a driver’s license and several years of bicycling experience.

The maps are not meant to be used for traveling off the designated route. Each map panel covers approximately 30-40 miles. The mileage to both ends of the route section is printed at the border of each map panel.

The maps are designed to be used for travel in either direction. Adjacent to each map panel you’ll find written narratives with directions for both northbound (NB) and southbound (SB) travel. Regardless of your direction of travel, the narrative leads you from matchline (solid pink line) to matchline. Once you “reach” the matchline, turn to the next panel and begin following its narrative, again proceeding from the matchline to the far matchline.

In the narrative, the number preceding each directive indicates the distance you’ve come since beginning at the matchline. (The number following in parentheses is the distance in kilometers.) Changes in road names and numbers are marked by lettered dots both in the narrative and on the map panel.

You’ll note that north is not necessarily “up” as it is on most maps, but rather it changes orientation from panel to panel. This allows as many miles of the route as possible to be depicted on each map panel.

Contour lines and elevation colors provide information concerning terrain. In addition, shaded relief shows the overall lay of the land, with the darkest shadows indicating steep mountain valleys down to subtle shades depicting rolling hills. This is a general guide; some hills on the route will fall between contour lines and won’t show. For an overview of elevation changes on the route refer to the profile.
The first African Americans to arrive in the Pittsburgh area were those searching for a place to live in freedom, and the city rapidly grew into an important stronghold for the abolitionist movement. In later times, hundreds of additional blacks would come looking for economic betterment in Pittsburgh. The city played an important role in a range of cultural phenomena tied to African Americans, including the evolution of jazz; the expansion of Negro League Baseball in the 1920s, ’30s and ’40s; and the civil-rights movement of the 1950s and ’60s.

As early as the mid-1700s, British and French settlers were housing free blacks as apprentices on the frontier. In the 1820s, the city’s first free black newspaper, the Pittsburgh Free Press, was published here. In 1830, black-owned businesses flourished throughout the city, with African Americans controlling much of the city’s economy. The black community was tightly knit and well organized, with a strong sense of community and a commitment to helping each other.

The Underground Railroad Bicycle Route

The Underground Railroad Bicycle Route, running from Mobile, Alabama, to Owen Sound, Ontario, is the third in a series of “heritage routes” Adventure Cycling Association is developing. To create this route, Adventure Cycling partnered with the Center for Minority Health at the University of Pittsburgh in Pennsylvania. The Center for Minority Health, which advocates innovative ways to encourage people to exercise, found the idea of tying together bicycling and the Underground Railroad to be an appealing one.

Additional partners in developing and promoting this new heritage route included Seattle-based Recreational Equipment, Inc. (REI) and Bikes Belong, the national coalition of bicycle suppliers and retailers working together to put more people on bicycles more often. Both of these organizations contributed major financial support for the project.

Unlike other routes—the Great Divide and Pacific Coast routes, for instance—the guiding principal for mapping this new route was more symbolic than geographical. That’s because enslaved blacks striving to reach freedom in the North followed scores of different corridors, providing a countless number of routing options. Consider that known routes to freedom crossed the forty-first parallel as far west as the Missouri River in southwestern Iowa and as far east as the New York City area, and you can imagine the nearly endless options we faced when choosing the route. (Ultimately, we decided to “follow the Drinking Gourd” as far north as the confluence of the Tennessee and Ohio rivers; see Field Notes, Section 1 for an explanation of what this means.)

Adventure Cycling and the Center for Minority Health share a twofold goal in creating and promoting the Underground Railroad Bicycle Route. First, we want to provide twenty-first century Americans with an opportunity to learn more about one of the most challenging cultural struggles in our nation’s history. And second, we wish to promote the joys and health benefits of traveling by bicycle. By its very nature, bicycle touring is an activity that can be enjoyed by individuals of all ages, walks of life, and cultural backgrounds. We believe this new heritage route—whether enjoyed for a day trip, a week’s adventure, or an even longer ride, will provide the spark to introduce ever more people to this wonderful mode of travel.

Note: Due to space constraints, the Field Notes on this map are not intended to be comprehensive. You can learn more about Underground Railroad sites along the route at Adventure Cycling’s website: www.adventurecycling.org/routes-and-maps/adventure-cycling-route-network/underground-railroad-ugr/. We recommend reading Bound for Canaan, The Underground Railroad and the War for the Soul of America by Fergus M. Bordewich.
FIELD NOTES (cont.)

Of the estimated 100,000-plus blacks who escaped the South between 1820 and 1860, it’s estimated that approximately 10 percent utilized safe houses in western Pennsylvania. Many of these havens of safety, which were typically established by farmers, plantation owners, and other white sympathizers, have been documented.

The tour most frequently followed by freedom seekers in Mercer County was a dirt path following today’s U.S. Route 19 corridor—that according to “The Underground Railroad in Mercer,” one chapter of a twenty-eight-page guidebook to a walking tour of Underground Railroad-related sites in the town of Mercer. The many sites highlighted in the guide include the Magoffin House, located on South Pitt Street; the Small House and the Hanna House, sitting next door to one another on South Pitt Street and both of which served as Underground Railroad stations; and the former residence of blacksmith James Kilgore.

The author of the guidebook, Gail Habbyshaw, writes: “A tap on a window at night, or a wrap on a door of a house that served as a station, galvanized the Underground Railroad conductor and his or her family into action. This signaled that runaway slaves were being delivered. [The late local resident] Elizabeth Kilgore Breckenridge recalled that ‘a certain number of knocks’ in a specific pattern on the cellar door of her childhood home, ‘would let my father [know] that a runaway slave was there. He would take them in, and feed them, and let them rest until the next night, when they would travel on to the next station, giving them minute instructions.’” Breckenridge recalled an occasion when her mother’s uncle brought in thirteen freedom seekers in a hay wagon, who off-loaded only after dark fell.

Also included in the walking tour is the Old Mercer Graveyard, situated at the corner of North Erie and East North streets. Among the deceased buried there are individuals who were active in the Underground Railroad, including James Kilgore. About six miles outside of Mercer was the White Chapel Church, formed after the congregation in New Wilmington split over the issue of slavery. Led by John Young, the area became known for its abolition activities. And near White Chapel at Indian Run was a community known as Padenbrunn. Dr. Charles Everett was a wealthy slave owner from Virginia, who, upon his death, freed his slaves and gave them a plot of land and money to settle here.

Across from the fairgrounds in Stoneboro, up the route a few miles from Mercer, is another graveyard of interest: the Freedom Road Cemetery. It’s all that remains of Liberia, a town of runaway slaves established early on by a family of African Americans named Travis. Liberia residents regularly offered harbor to other freedom seekers headed north; and, reportedly, the community was often paid visits by those searching for “their” runaway slaves. Most Liberia residents left town for enduring freedom in Canada after the enactment of the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850. And that freedom was not far away—fewer than a hundred miles north, on the far shore of Lake Erie.

Trail of Geology

The Pittsburgh Spur traverses two sub-sections of the Appalachians Plateau physiographic province known as the Northwestern Glaciated Plateau and the Pittsburgh Low Plateau. You’ll pass through the Northwestern Glaciated Plateau in part of Beaver County, as well as in Lawrence, Mercer, Crawford, and Erie counties. As explained at the website of the Pennsylvania Geologic Survey, the plateau is composed of numerous broad, rounded uplands that are interrupted by extended linear valleys with flat floors ranging from narrow to quite wide. The valleys are separated from adjacent uplands by often steep-sided slopes. Wetlands are common on the valley floors, which typically lie less than six hundred feet below the adjacent uplands.

The Pittsburgh Low Plateau is made up of a gently undulating upland surface dissected by many narrow, shallow valleys. The uplands have built up atop rocks holding the majority of the bituminous coal occurring in Pennsylvania, as evidenced by the presence of both operational mines and old strip-mined areas, many of which have been reclaimed. Elevations here range from just under 700 feet to 1,700 feet above sea level.

You can visit a pair of parks located within the Pittsburgh Low Plateau that are in close proximity to one another and share a similar geological background, but are surprisingly different in character. McConnell’s Mill State Park can be seen on map panel 3, east of New Castle, while Moraine State Park lies on the opposite, east side of Interstate 79 from McConnell’s Mill. Each of the parks contains several “Trail of Geology” signs with numbers keyed to interpretive information found in an associated guidebook. McConnell’s Mill encompasses more than 2,500 acres of the very scenic Slippery Rock Creek Gorge, with its whitewater stream and numerous waterfalls. The gorge was fashioned by the erosive action of glacial lakes that drained hundreds of centuries ago. In contrast, Moraine State Park—where, actually, little morainal topography exists—dishes up the gentle hills and verdant forests more characteristic of the Pittsburgh Low Plateau. Despite their disparate appearances, the two parks share a bedrock formation back some 300 million years, and the surfaces of both were sculpted by the advancing and retreating of glaciers over the span of the past two million years.

RIDING CONDITIONS

This spur begins in downtown Pittsburgh and becomes progressively more rural as the miles pass until you arrive in Erie.

If you are flying in or out of Pittsburgh International Airport, there is an online map that shows the Montour Trail Airport Connector. The Montour Trail will take you to the route in Coraopolis on map 1, linkup.shawweil.com/airport connector.htm.

After crossing the Ohio River in Pittsburgh, the route follows the North Shore Trail, an urban, sometimes busy path for cyclists and walkers that offers wide views of the city and it’s industry—old and new.

In places, this spur coincides with stretches of Bicycle Pennsylvania Routes A and Z. Both are marked on the map. In addition, Route A is well signed on the road.

When traveling southbound through Rochester toward Monaca and before crossing the Ohio River, be sure to study the ramp structure on Detail A on map 2. If you miss the ramp onto SR 18, you will ride onto SR 51/65 without an opportunity to rejoin the route until east of the bridge.

South of Ellwood City on map 2, River Rd. has some potholes and occasional errant golf balls from the nearby course. SR 65 from Ellwood City to Energy has a rumble strip installed on the white line and no shoulder—ride with caution.

SR 65 from Ellwood City to New Castle has good shoulders, moderate hills and a 45 mph speed limit. North of New Castle, River Rd. has some potholes and little to no shoulders in places.

On map 5 northwest of Meadville, SR 98 carries very little traffic and is rural in nature with few services. Between Meadville and Fairview, there are few services. Traffic volumes increase as you approach Erie, especially during commuting hours. Road signage the entire length of the Pittsburgh Spur route is sporadic and at times inconsistent.

CLIMATE

Though most of the state is influenced to some degree by the humid continental climate effect, the western third of Pennsylvania where this route is located is a distinct geographical region and experiences this effect in a fairly typical fashion.

Precipitation is greatest in spring and summer with the heaviest concentration responsible for the numerous, oftentimes brief, summertime rain showers. Daily temperature ranges can be wide.

While tornadoes are only an occasional event, the state experiences 5-6 a year, they occur most frequently in the far northwest corner and most often in June.

The Lake Erie Plain near the end of the route is influenced by Lake Erie with slightly less rain and smaller daily temperature ranges.

This profile is only intended to show you the general elevation of the route, allowing you to plan for major climbs and descents.