John Brown and Frederick Douglass: A Legacy of Freedom

Courtesy Nathan M. Richardson

National Park Service News Release
Date: May 14, 2026

Harpers Ferry National Historical Park (NHP) invites you to join **"John Brown and Frederick Douglass: A Legacy of Freedom" on Saturday, May 30, 2026, from 11:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.** Discover the powerful connection between Harpers Ferry and two influential abolitionists who shared a commitment to ending slavery, but pursued different paths in their fight for freedom in the United States.

Event Schedule

11:00 a.m. John Brown's Raid. Learn about John Brown's plan to seize the US Armory and Arsenal in Harpers Ferry and spark a slave uprising. Discover how the 1859 raid exposed deep national divisions over slavery in the years leading up to the Civil War. *Historic Lower Town.*

12:00 p.m. John Brown Monuments and Mythology. Explore how monuments influence the way we remember history. Harpers Ferry NHP is home to three monuments connected to John Brown's raid. Discover the stories they tell and the perspectives they represent. *Meet on the Green, Historic Lower Town.*

1:00-2:00, 3:00-5:00: Harpers Ferry Park Association book sales. Browse a selection of books and gifts related to Harpers Ferry, John Brown, Frederick Douglass, and African American history. *Anthony Hall, first floor.*

1:00-2:00, 3:00-5:00: Storer College Room Open House. Step inside the historic Storer College Room and explore exhibits highlighting student life at one of the nation's first schools for formerly enslaved people. View original library materials, historic photographs, and school memorabilia. Storer College Room, Anthony Hall.

2:00-3:00: Frederick Douglass' Speech reenactment. Experience Frederick Douglass' powerful 1881 speech about John Brown, brought to life by author and

performance poet Nathan M. Richardson. The reenactment will take place on the same grounds where Douglass delivered his original address. *Anthony Hall lawn.*

3:30-4:30: The Power of Place: Lockwood House. Join a ranger-led program exploring the history of Lockwood House, the first building in Harpers Ferry used to educate formerly enslaved people. Discover how this historic place became a symbol of education, opportunity, and freedom after the Civil War.

Throughout 2026, the park and its partners will offer programs that bring America's stories to life and highlight how past events in this small town continue to shape the nation. All programs are included with park admission unless otherwise noted. More details are available at nps.gov/hafe and harpersferryhistory.org. Sponsored by the Harpers Ferry Park Association and Harpers Ferry National Historical Park.

Celebrating Our Nation's 250th Anniversary

The National Park Service is playing a leading role in the celebration and commemoration of the 250th anniversary of American independence. These efforts support Executive Order 14189 -Celebrating America's 250th Birthday, which calls for "a grand celebration worthy of the momentous occasion of the 250th anniversary of American Independence on July 4, 2026." Throughout the country, national parks will host hundreds of 250th anniversary programs, events, and exhibits, including many sites with direct connections to the formation of the country.

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Summer Events at Appomattox Court House NHP

Brian Miller, NPS, May 12, 2026

May 25, 2026 – Memorial Day Event

On Monday May 25, 2026, special ranger-led programming will examine the history and traditions of Memorial Day. Families can make their own patriotic wreaths from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. The program concludes with the observance of the National Moment of Silence at 3 p.m. followed by the playing of "Taps."

June 13, 2026 - "Forging Independence: Oxford Iron Works and the American Revolution"

Join Ranger Keith Harvey on Saturday, June 13, 2026 for a special lecture about the Oxford Furnace. Located in present-day Campbell and Appomattox counties, Oxford Iron Works was one of the largest suppliers of iron for the Patriot cause during the American Revolution. Harvey will trace the experiences of Patriots, Loyalists, and enslaved African Americans in highlighting this forgotten industry and its contributions to American freedom.

July 4, 2026 – Play a Game of Civil War Base Ball

Step up to the plate for a day of 'base ball' (spelled with two words in the 1860s) at your local National Park on Saturday, July 4,

2026. All visitors are welcome to physically join in playing a game of 'base ball' following Civil War era rules. Games will be held, weather permitting, at 10 a.m. and 2 p.m.

There is no need to bring a mitt, as they were not used, but the Park will provide period correct bats and balls. Wear appropriate clothing and camp chairs are encouraged.

August 1, 2026 – "Musical Histories of Appomattox"

Enjoy an afternoon of music on the porch of the Clover Hill Tavern on Saturday, August 1, 2026 from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. Rangers will share how music connects to Appomattox Court House, and the experience of those who lived here. There will be historic tunes, singing, and maybe even some dancing. Bring your own instrument if you would like to join in!

See the full schedule for each event on the park's special event page (https://go.nps.gov/APCOevents). In addition to these special programs, regular ranger talks and living history programming are scheduled on most days from Memorial Day through Labor Day. All programs subject to change.

—NPS—

About Appomattox Court House National Historical Park: On April 9, 1865, the surrender of the Army of Northern Virginia in the McLean House in the village of Appomattox Court House, Virginia signaled the end of the nation's largest war. The stories of Appomattox Court House go far beyond the final significant battles of this nation's Civil War. Learn more at www.nps.gov/apco.

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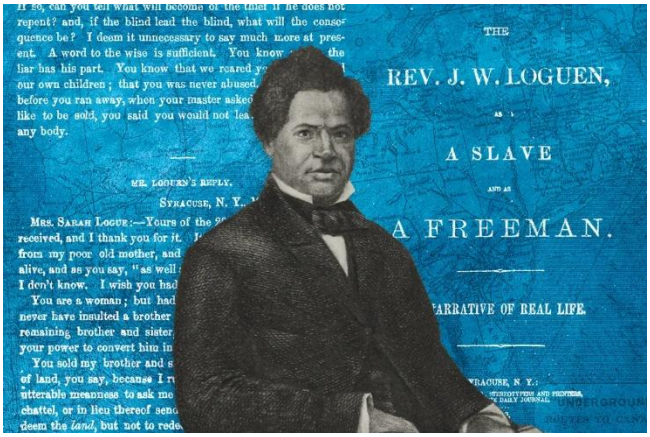
After the 'King of the Underground Railroad' Escaped From Slavery, He Led 1,500 Others to Freedom

Jermain Wesley Loguen opened his home to fugitives fleeing the South. He publicized this work openly, risking arrest or even re-enslavement

Kellie B. Gormly | Contributing Writer, Smithsonian Magazine, February 25, 2026



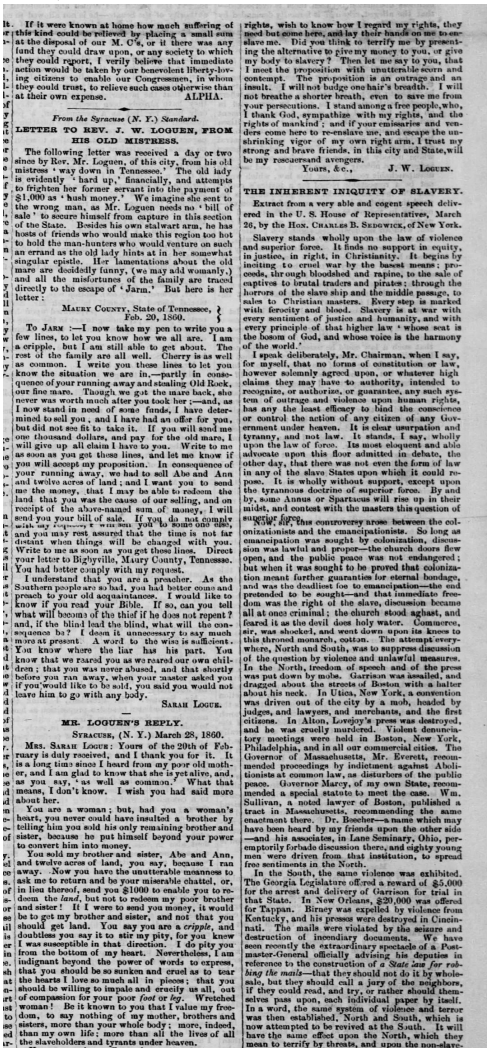
Jermain Wesley Loguen's former enslaver offered to relinquish her claim on him in exchange for $1,000. But Loguen refused as a matter of principle, even turning down others' offers to pay the fee. Illustration by Meilan Solly / Images via Internet Archive and Wikimedia Commons under public domain

Twenty-six years after he escaped from slavery in Tennessee and fled north, the Reverend Jermain Wesley Loguen received a letter at his home in Syracuse, New York, from the woman who still considered herself his owner. He had run away from Sarah

Logue's plantation in 1834, taking a mare named Old Rock with him. Now, Logue was in desperate need of money—and she planned to get it from Loguen.

In her February 1860 letter, Logue wrote that she "had determined to sell you." A potential buyer had already made an offer, but Logue believed she had a better idea: She wanted Loguen to send her $1,000 (nearly $40,000 today) as compensation for her losses. In return, she would release her claim on him. Because of Loguen's escape and horse theft, Logue claimed, she'd been forced to sell two of his siblings, Abe and Ann, as well as 12 acres of land. She hoped to buy back the land with the money sent by Loguen.

If Loguen refused, Logue warned that she would arrange for his sale to a different enslaver. "You may rest assured that the time is not far distant when things will be changed with you," Logue wrote, adding, "You had better comply with my request."



If it were known at home how much suffering of this kind could be relieved by placing a small sum at the disposal of our M. C's, or if there was any fund they could draw upon, or any society to which they could report, I verily believe that immediate action would be taken by our benevolent liberty-loving citizens to enable our Congressmen, in whom they could trust, to relieve such cases otherwise than at their own expense. ALPHA.

From the Syracuse (N. Y.) Standard.

LETTER TO REV. J. W. LOGUEN, FROM HIS OLD MISTRESS.

The following letter was received a day or two since by Rev. Mr. Loguen, of this city, from his old mistress 'way down in Tennessee.' The old lady is evidently 'hard up,' financially, and attempts to frighten her former servant into the payment of $1,000 as 'hush money.' We imagine she sent to the wrong man, as Mr. Loguen needs no 'bill of sale' to secure himself from capture in this section of the State. Besides his own stalwart arm, he has hosts of friends who would make this region too hot to hold the man-hunters who would venture on such an errand as the old lady hints at in her somewhat singular epistle. Her lamentations about the old mare are decidedly funny, (we may add womanly,) and all the misfortunes of the family are traced directly to the escape of 'Jarm.' But here is her letter:

MAURY COUNTY, State of Tennessee, }
Feb. 20, 1860. }

TO JARM :—I now take my pen to write you a few lines, to let you know how we all are. I am a cripple, but I am still able to get about. The rest of the family are all well. Cherry is as well as common. I write you these lines to let you know the situation we are in,—partly in consequence of your running away and stealing Old Rock, our fine mare. Though we got the mare back, she never was worth much after you took her;—and, as I now stand in need of some funds, I have determined to sell you, and I have had an offer for you, but did not see fit to take it. If you will send me one thousand dollars, and pay for the old mare, I will give up all claim I have to you. Write to me as soon as you get these lines, and let me know if you will accept my proposition. In consequence of your running away, we had to sell Abe and Ann and twelve acres of land; and I want you to send me the money, that I may be able to redeem the land that you was the cause of our selling, and on receipt of the above-named sum of money, I will send you your bill of sale. If you do not comply with my request, I will inform you where you can find me, and you may rest assured that the time is not far distant when things will be changed with you. Write to me as soon as you get these lines. Direct your letter to Highville, Maury County, Tennessee. You had better comply with my request.

I understand that you are a preacher. As the Southern people are so bad, you had better come and preach to your old acquaintance. I would like to know if you read your Bible. If so, can you tell what will become of the thief if he does not repent? and, if the blind lead the blind, what will the consequence be? I deem it unnecessary to say much more at present. A word to the wise is sufficient. You know where the liar has his part. You know that we reared you as we reared our own children; that you was never abused, and that shortly before you ran away, when your master asked you if you would like to be sold, you said you would not leave him to go with any body.

SARAH LOGUE.

MR. LOGUEN'S REPLY.

SYRACUSE, (N. Y.) March 28, 1860.

MRS. SARAH LOGUE: Yours of the 20th of February is duly received, and I thank you for it. It is a long time since I heard from my poor old mother, and I am glad to know that she is yet alive, and, as you say, 'as well as common.' What that means, I don't know. I wish you had said more about her.

You are a woman; but, had you a woman's heart, you never could have insulted a brother by telling him you sold his only remaining brother and sister, because he put himself beyond your power to convert him into money.

You sold my brother and sister, Abe and Ann, and twelve acres of land, you say, because I ran away. Now you have the unutterable meanness to ask me to return and be your miserable chattel, or, in lieu thereof, send you $1000 to enable you to redeem the *land*, but not to redeem my poor brother and sister! If I were to send you money, it would be to get my brother and sister, and not what you should get land. You say you are a *cripple*, and doubtless you say it to stir my pity, for you know I was susceptible in that direction. I do pity you from the bottom of my heart. Nevertheless, I am indignant beyond the power of words to express, that you should be so sunken and cruel as to tear the hearts I love so much all in pieces; that you should be willing to impale and cruelly us all, out of compassion for your poor *foot or leg*. Wretched woman! Be it known to you that I value my freedom, to say nothing of my mother, brothers and sisters, more than your whole body; more, indeed, than my own life; more than all the lives of all the slaveholders and tyrants under heaven.

If it were known at home how much suffering of this kind could be relieved by placing a small sum at the disposal of our M. C's, or if there was any fund they could draw upon, or any society to which they could report, I verily believe that immediate action would be taken by our benevolent liberty-loving citizens to enable our Congressmen, in whom they could trust, to relieve such cases otherwise than at their own expense. ALPHA.

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rights, wish to know how I regard my rights, they need but come here, and lay their hands on me to enslave me. Did you think to terrify me by presenting the alternative to give my money to you, or give my body to slavery? Then let me say to you, that I meet the proposition with unutterable scorn and contempt. The proposition is an outrage and an insult. I will not budge one hair's breadth. I will not breathe a shorter breath, even to save me from your persecutions. I stand among a free people, who, I thank God, sympathize with my rights, and the rights of mankind; and if your emissaries and vendors come here to re-enslave me, and escape the unshrinking vigor of my own right arm, I trust my strong and brave friends, in this city and State, will be my resistless avengers.

Yours, &c., J. W. LOGUEN.

THE INHERENT INIQUITY OF SLAVERY.

Extract from a very able and cogent speech delivered in the U. S. House of Representatives, March 26, by the HON. CHARLES B. SEDGWICK, of New York.

Slavery stands wholly upon the law of violence and superior force. It finds no support in equity, in justice, in right, in Christianity. It begins by inciting to cruel war by the basest means; proceeds, through bloodshed and rapine, to the sale of captives to brutal traders and pirates; through the horrors of the slave ship and the middle passage, to sales to Christian masters. Every step is marked with ferocity and blood. Slavery is at war with every sentiment of justice and humanity, and with every principle of that higher law "whose seat is the bosom of God, and whose voice is the harmony of the world."

I speak deliberately, Mr. Chairman, when I say, for myself, that no forms of constitution or law, however solemnly agreed upon, or whatever high claims they may have to authority, intended to recognize, or authorize, or guarantee, any such system of outrage and violence upon human rights, has any the least efficacy to bind the conscience or control the action of any citizen of any Government under heaven. It is clear usurpation and tyranny, and not law. It stands, I say, wholly upon the law of force. Its most eloquent and able advocate upon this floor admitted in debate, the other day, that there was not even the form of law in any of the slave States upon which it could repose. It is wholly without support, except upon the tyrannous doctrine of superior force. By and by, some Annas or Spartacus will rise up in their midst, and contest with the masters this question of superior force.

Now, sir, the controversy arose between the colonizationists and the emancipationists. So long as emancipation was sought by colonization, discussion was lawful and proper—the church doors flew open, and the public peace was not endangered; but when it was sought to be proved that colonization meant further guaranties for eternal bondage, and was the deadliest foe to emancipation—the end pretended to be sought—and that immediate freedom was the right of the slave, discussion became all at once criminal; the church stood aghast, and feared it as the devil does holy water. Commerce, sir, was shocked, and went down upon its knees to this throned monarch, cotton. The attempt everywhere, North and South, was to suppress discussion of the question by violence and unlawful measures. In the North, freedom of speech and of the press was put down by mobs. Garrison was assailed, and dragged about the streets of Boston with a halter about his neck. In Utica, New York, a convention was driven out of the city by a mob, headed by judges, and lawyers, and merchants, and the first citizens. In Alton, Lovejoy's press was destroyed, and he was cruelly murdered. Violent denunciatory meetings were held in Boston, New York, Philadelphia, and in all our commercial cities. The Governor of Massachusetts, Mr. Everett, recommended proceedings by indictment against Abolitionists at common law, as disturbers of the public peace. Governor Marcy, of my own State, recommended a special statute to meet the case. Wm. Sullivan, a noted lawyer of Boston, published a tract in Massachusetts, recommending the same enactment there. Dr. Beecher—a name which may have been heard by my friends upon the other side—and his associates, in Lane Seminary, Ohio, peremptorily forbade discussion there, and eighty young men were driven from that institution, to spread free sentiments in the North.

In the South, the same violence was exhibited. The Georgia Legislature offered a reward of $5,000 for the arrest and delivery of Garrison for trial in that State. In New Orleans, $20,000 was offered for Tappan. Birney was expelled by violence from Kentucky, and his presses were destroyed in Cincinnati. The mails were violated by the seizure and destruction of incendiary documents. We have seen recently the extraordinary spectacle of a Postmaster-General officially advising his deputies in reference to the construction of *a State law for robbing the mails*—that they should not do it by wholesale, but they should call a jury of the neighbors, if they could read, and try, or rather should themselves pass upon, each individual paper by itself. In a word, the same system of violence and terror was then established, North and South, which is now attempted to be revived at the South. It will have the same effect upon the North, which they mean to terrify by threats, and upon the non-slave-

Sarah Logue's letter and Jermain Wesley Loguen's response were widely reprinted in newspapers across the country. The Liberator via Newspapers.com

Loguen—who would come to be known as the "King of the Underground Railroad" in recognition of his efforts to help more than 1,500 people escape from slavery—was unimpressed. He sent his former enslaver a strongly worded reply, writing that he was "indignant beyond the power of words" at her demand.


"Did you think to terrify me by presenting the alternative to give my money to you or give my body to slavery?" Loguen asked. "Then let me say to you that I meet the proposition with unutterable scorn and contempt. … I will not budge one hair's breadth. I will not breathe a shorter breath, even to save me from your persecutions. I stand among a free people who, I thank God, sympathize with my rights and the rights of mankind."

Angela F. Murphy, a historian at Texas State University and the author of *Jermain Wesley Loguen: Defiant Fugitive*, says this letter, which was widely reprinted alongside Logue's initial missive, captures Loguen's outspoken, fierce personality. These traits drove him on his bold journey out of slavery and later in his life's mission to fight for others seeking freedom.

Loguen claimed that "he wasn't a good speaker or writer, but he was," Murphy says. "He was very eloquent and very good at getting his point across. … Almost any time the man spoke, he said something very profound."

Loguen was born around 1813 to Jane (later renamed Cherry), a Black woman who was born free in Ohio but kidnapped and sold into slavery in the South. His father was David Logue, Cherry's white enslaver and the brother-in-law of Sarah Logue. (Sexual exploitation of enslaved people was common, with enslavers taking advantage of the power imbalance in such relationships.)

When Loguen was still a boy, David sold him, his mother and his siblings to a different enslaver. The buyer was Manassah Logue, David's brother (Sarah's husband), who was known for his cruelty. On one occasion, Manassah tried to force his nephew to swallow a broken tool, driving it into his mouth until "the blood flowed down from his throat and profusely from his mouth," as Loguen later recalled.

In his early 20s, Loguen escaped from slavery with a fellow enslaved man named John Farney. The pair fled north to Kentucky, then across the Ohio River to the free state of Indiana before splitting up in Detroit. From there, Loguen made his way north to Canada.

During the journey, Loguen and Farney received help from Potawatomi villages, Quaker communities and assorted individuals. As Loguen wrote in an 1856 letter to Frederick Douglass, however, "No Underground Railroad took me to Hamilton. White men had not then learned to care for the far-off slave, and there were no thriving colored farmers, mechanics and laborers to welcome me."

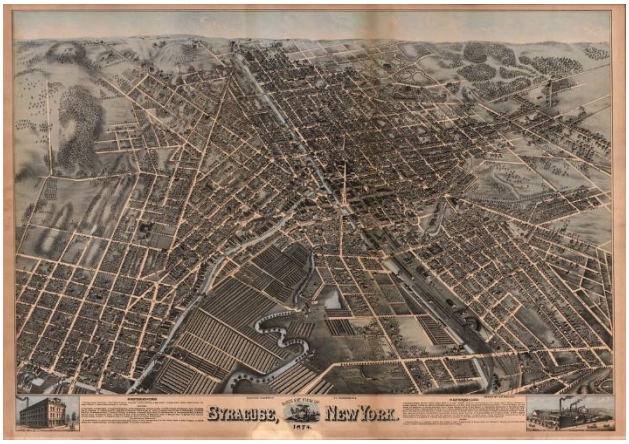
An undated photo of Loguen Onondaga Historical Association

Nicknamed “Jarm” in his youth, Loguen changed his name after securing his freedom, adopting the middle name “Wesley” to reflect his Wesleyan Methodist beliefs and adding the letter “n” to the Logue surname to differentiate himself from his enslavers. After spending a few years in Canada, Loguen returned to the United States in 1841 and settled in Syracuse, a city with strong antislavery sentiment. There, he became a licensed reverend of the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church.

Syracuse “was like Grand Central Depot during those times,” says Robert J. Searing of the Onondaga Historical Association. “It was a hotbed of agitation, and Loguen is really at the forefront, along with his compatriots.”

In New York, Loguen lived under constant risk of capture and return to slavery—a threat elevated by the passage of the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850, a controversial law that required Northern states to cooperate with slave states in returning self-emancipated people to their enslavers.

As far as Loguen was concerned, he was a free man living in a free state. But he was still considered property under the Fugitive Slave Act, says Stephanie M. Lampkin, the curator at the National Underground Railroad Freedom Center. The museum is in downtown Cincinnati, just across the Ohio River from Kentucky. Prior to the Civil War, Cincinnati’s proximity to Kentucky made it a prime spot for bounty hunters seeking fugitives who sought safety in the free state of Ohio.



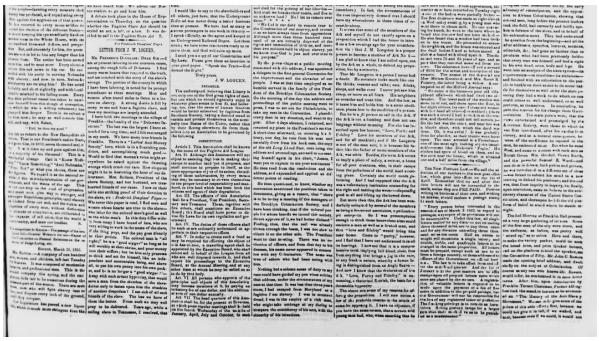
An aerial view of Syracuse, New York, in the 1870s *Public domain via Wikimedia Commons*

“You have enslavers who are using slave catchers and other people who are literally going out and hunting runaways and freedom seekers,” Lampkin says. “Legislation is also backing this idea that you either had to have documentation to prove your status or return to enslavement. You could also be punished for assisting someone.”

Loguen quickly emerged as an outspoken opponent of the Fugitive Slave Act. “I don’t respect this law. I don’t fear it. I won’t obey it!” he told a crowd gathered at the Syracuse City Hall in October 1850. “It outlaws me, and I outlaw it and the men who attempt to enforce it on me.” Following Loguen’s remarks, attendees overwhelmingly voted in favor of his proposal to establish Syracuse as a safe “open city” for fugitives.

Loguen’s actions matched his bold claims. He advertised his Syracuse home, which was demolished in the 20th century, as a stop on the Underground Railroad, reportedly building additional rooms to house escapees and stocking his basement with bunk beds. Loguen publicized his work openly, risking arrest or even re-enslavement.

“The Underground Railroad was never doing a better business than at present,” he wrote in *Frederick Douglass’ Paper* in 1855. “I speak officially, as the agent and keeper of an Underground Railroad depot.”



In a letter published in Frederick Douglass' Paper, Loguen wrote, “The Underground Railroad was never doing a better business than at present.” Library of Congress

Lampkin describes Loguen as a man of great courage. After all, Black abolitionists who defied the law risked harsher punishments than white abolitionists. “He’s very open and outspoken,” she says. “It’s a form of public resistance. It’s a form of civil disobedience.”

Although Logue’s letter technically offered Loguen the option of purchasing his freedom and guaranteeing his safety, he refused to do so as a matter of principle, even turning down others’ offers to pay the fee.

As Lampkin explains, Loguen believed “the whole idea that you have to fight for your freedom or purchase your freedom … is completely antithetical to the fact that you have a God-given right to be free.” Murphy says that Loguen’s refusal was very risky but principled.

“There were a lot of arguments against the freedom purchase, but when it came down to it, there [was] no other way to be safe,” she says. “But he felt safe in Syracuse, had a community around him.”

Loguen followed what he viewed as a “higher law than the Constitution—that is, God’s law,” Murphy says.

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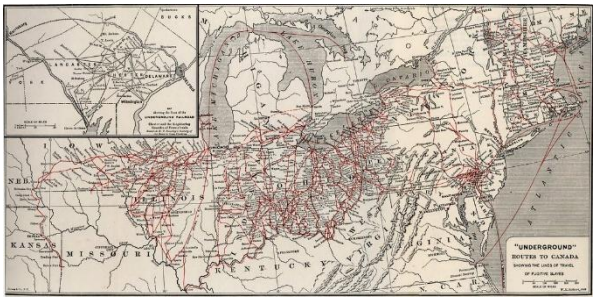

map of Underground Railroad routes into the Northern U.S. and Canada Public domain via Wikimedia Commons

According to Searing, Loguen advocated for violence when he deemed it necessary to further the antislavery cause. He was close to John Brown, describing the white abolitionist as his "dear friend and bro[ther]" in a letter written the year before Brown's raid on Harpers Ferry in 1859.

"He is a radical person on the forefront of this movement and was recognized as such by his contemporaries," says Searing, who compares Loguen's rhetoric to Malcolm X's more than a century later.

The event that perhaps best exemplified Loguen's approach to abolitionism was the so-called Jerry Rescue. On October 1, 1851, authorities seized William Henry, a self-emancipated man also known as Jerry, who arrived in Syracuse in the winter of 1849-50. Although the men who arrested Jerry told him that he was under suspicion for theft, he soon found out that he'd been detained as a suspected fugitive from slavery. Fearing a guilty verdict, Jerry tried to escape but was quickly recaptured.

Loguen and a white minister named Samuel Joseph May led the local vigilance committee in devising a plan to help Jerry. That night, an estimated 2,000 to 3,000 people gathered outside of the police station where Jerry was being held. Committee members hidden in the crowd started attacking the building with weapons, forcing their way in. "The parted mass of men were now fired up to the blood point and rushed to the rescue, determined to set Jerry free, come life or come death," wrote Loguen in his 1859 autobiography.

The committee hid Jerry in town before organizing his safe passage to Canada. Faced with potential repercussions for helping the fugitive, Loguen and several of his fellow abolitionists temporarily took refuge in Canada, too. Ultimately, only 1 of the 26 men indicted for taking part in the Jerry Rescue was found guilty; he died while an appeal was pending.

Loguen died of tuberculosis in 1872, around the age of 59. He lived to see the Civil War cleave the U.S. in two, as well as the abolition of slavery in 1865. Two years before his death, he'd been granted the right to vote by the 15th Amendment. (In practice, however, states restricted Black Americans' voting rights well into the 20th century

Loguen and his wife, Caroline, had six children, one of whom, Sarah Loguen Fraser, became the fourth Black woman to earn a medical degree in the U.S. He is buried in Syracuse's Oakwood Cemetery, and a park in the city bears his name.

The reverend's life is "not just a story about self-liberation and him becoming free," says Lampkin. "He would think beyond his own liberation to think what community liberation looks like."

She adds, "Loguen is a great story about an individual who took his fate in his own hands."

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Kellie B. Gormly | Read More
Kellie B. Gormly is an award-winning veteran journalist who freelances for national publications, including the Washington Post, History.com, Woman's World and First for Women. She is a former staff writer for the Pittsburgh Tribune-Review, the Associated Press and the Fort Worth Star-Telegram.

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Data Center Developer Appeals Digital Gateway Ruling, Trust Vows to Stay in the Fight

A statement from American Battlefield Trust President David Duncan

Jared Herr, ABT, May 1, 2026

In the wake of the unfortunate news that data center developer QTS has chosen not to stand down its defense of the illegal rezoning behind the Prince William Digital Gateway, unlike the Prince William County Board of Supervisors and fellow developer Compass, American Battlefield Trust President David Duncan issued the following statement:

Manassas Battlefield by Rob Shenk | Data center image courtesy of Tim Aubry / Greenpeace

"QTS is clearly fighting a losing battle. Judges throughout this Commonwealth, including a unanimous panel at the appellate level, have repeatedly ruled that the rezonings for this monstrosity are illegal. Not even their fellow defendants are willing to continue such a futile defense.

"But since QTS insists on seeking the opinion of the Supreme Court of Virginia, we will meet them with the same strong legal defense — and fundamental resolve — that we have shown throughout this yearslong battle to ensure this catastrophic complex will never see the light of day."

The Prince William Digital Gateway — with 37 proposed data center buildings, roughly the equivalent of 144 Walmart Supercenters — would have required 14 on-site electrical substations for operation and consumed enough energy enough to power over 2 million homes. Supplying electricity to such a behemoth complex would require vast webs of high voltage transmission lines across a region rich in historic and sensitive landscapes.

Manassas National Battlefield Park commemorates two critical battles of the American Civil War, the Battles of First and Second Manassas (also referred to as First and Second Bull Run). Together, the two battles resulted in nearly 27,000 casualties. While the presence of a national park demonstrates the significance of these battles, important historical events occurred beyond its modern boundaries, including on land that was slated to be the site of the Prince William Digital Gateway.

Additionally, the proposed complex threatened the remains of those who fell and were laid to rest in unknown, unmarked graves.

Sadly, Manassas is not the only instance of a large-scale data center being proposed within the footprint of a nationally significant battlefield. The Trust is also currently engaged in litigation regarding the Wilderness Crossing project in Orange County, which would sit at the gateway to the Wilderness Battlefield unit of Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park.

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A Win for Historic Manassas Battlefield and Nearby Residents as County Drops Defense of Digital Gateway

Prince William County Board of Supervisors unanimously decides not to pursue an appeal to Virginia Supreme Court in wake of Prince William Digital Gateway defeat in the Virginia Court of Appeals

Jared Herr, ABT, April 14, 2026

(Prince William County, Va.) — In a major blow to plans for a massive data center complex alongside Manassas National Battlefield Park, the Prince William County Board of Supervisors voted unanimously today to not appeal its de fense of the illegal rezonings for the Prince William Digital Gateway, which had sparked national attention and vocal public opposition.

The American Battlefield Trust, Oak Valley Homeowners Association and local landowners challenged the fast-tracked rezonings, urging that the Board and the data center developers violated state code and

local ordinances when they failed to properly advertise the proposal or make its text available to the public. Last month, the Virginia Court of Appeals unanimously agreed with these claims, invalidating the rezonings and leaving the Board and the data center developers with the unenviable choice of conceding defeat or seeking discretionary review from the Supreme Court of Virginia.

Manassas National Battlefield Park, Va. Buddy Secor

"Today, the Board listened to what their constituents, numerous judges, and we have said for years: the rezonings for the Prince William Digital Gateway mega-development were not only detrimental for Prince William County, but illegal," said David Duncan, president of the American Battlefield Trust. "We are incredibly grateful the Board arrived at this conclusion, and hope this signals the end for this nightmarish threat to the hallowed ground of Manassas."

The vote by the Board of Supervisors effectively halts the spending of taxpayer dollars to defend the rezonings, which has already cost county residents more than $1.7 million in legal fees. Going forward, county participation in the suit is expected to be minimal, as required by the court. It is unknown at this time whether the data center developers will pursue an appeal to the Supreme Court of Virginia, but defeats before the Court of Appeals and now the Board of Supervisors make such an appeal an increasingly uphill battle.

"From the very beginning, this project only benefited a handful of out-of-state developers and special interests, at the expense of local residents and the historic battlefield," added Duncan. "Should the developers choose to continue this fight without the County's support, they will be met with the grit and determination we and our partners have shown throughout this years-long legal battle."

The March 31 decision from the Virginia Court of Appeals addressed two parallel lawsuits challenging the December 2023 rezoning votes, which were hastily pushed through by a lame-duck Board of Supervisors as the term of the at-large Chairwoman was about to expire. The rezonings were approved with a 4-3 vote, and one abstention, amid public outcry and against recommendations from County planning staff. Since then, voters have elected Board members who expressed concerns about the impropriety of the process and the effect of the project on the County.

Manassas Battlefield by Rob Shenk | Data center image courtesy of Tim Aubry / Greenpeace

The Prince William Digital Gateway — with 37 proposed data center buildings, roughly the equivalent of 144 Walmart Supercenters — would require 14 on-site electrical substations for operation. These data centers are expected to consume up to 9 gigawatts of electricity, enough to power over 2 million homes, and to stretch miles of high voltage transmission lines over the hallowed grounds of the Manassas Battlefield, and as well as private homes of Prince William County.

Manassas National Battlefield Park commemorates two critical battles of the American Civil War, the Battles of First and Second Manassas (also referred to as First and Second Bull Run). Together, the two battles resulted in nearly 27,000 casualties. While the presence of a national park demonstrates the significance of these battles, important historical events occurred beyond its modern boundaries, on land slated to be the site of the Prince William Digital Gateway. Additionally, the proposed complex threatens the remains of those who fell and were laid to rest in unknown, unmarked graves.

The American Battlefield Trust is dedicated to preserving America's hallowed battlegrounds and educating the public about what happened there and why it matters today. The nonprofit, nonpartisan organization has protected more than 60,000 acres associated with the Revolutionary War, War of 1812 and Civil War across 160 sites in 25 states, including 387 acres at Manassas. Learn more at www.battlefields.org.

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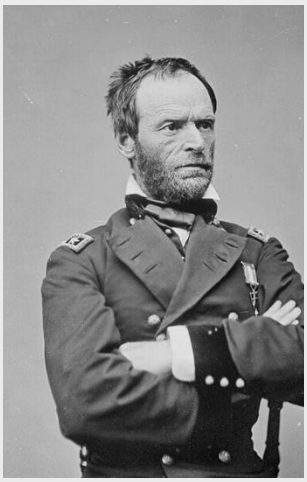
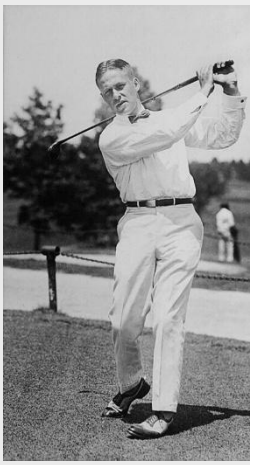
General Sherman Slept on This Golf Course

by Norman Dasinger, Jr., Blue and gray education.org, May 11, 2026,





What do General William Tecumseh Sherman and golfer Bobby Jones have in common? | public domain

On July 18, 1864, to quote renowned

Atlanta historian Franklin Garrett, " At noon, the family received a not-too-welcome guest in the person of General William T. Sherman, USA." On that day, the commander of the Union Armies campaigning to capture Atlanta arrived at the Samuel House plantation located in the Cross Keys District of DeKalb County, Georgia. Today, the site lies near the intersection of Peachtree Road and Ashford Dunwoody Road in north Atlanta and serves as the clubhouse for the Peachtree Golf Club.

Samuel House, originally from South Carolina, had settled in DeKalb County by 1830. By 1852, he had begun construction of the striking antebellum mansion that still stands today. Suzanne Sammons wrote in the February 2017 edition of UDC Magazine that "timber was cut from the trees growing there and bricks were made from Georgia clay dug on the property. … All the external and internal walls were made of brick and are approximately one foot thick."

In a letter to legendary golfer Bobby Jones, Garrett noted, "Up to the time of the Civil War, Mr. House was a prosperous planter but, in common with so many of our citizens of that day, his assets were engulfed in the war." In 1860, House's wealth in land, enslaved people, and agricultural production would equal more than one million dollars in today's currency. Samuel and his wife, Elizabeth, had seven sons; two died as Confederate soldiers, and another died in 1866 as a former Confederate.

On July 18 1864, the House plantation served as the headquarters of Union Major General John Schofield, commander of the XXIII Corps. Traveling with this corps was William Tecumseh Sherman himself. From the House plantation, Sherman dictated a letter noting that he would stay there tonight.

Later that evening, Sherman sent orders to James McPherson, commander of the Army of the Tennessee, outlining a tactic that would become famous. He instructed his men to tear up railroad tracks by "burning the ties and iron and twisting the bars when hot … pile the ties into shape for a bonfire, put the rails across, and when red hot in the middle let a man at each end twist the bar so that its surface becomes spiral."

Was this the first mention of the infamous "Sherman's Neckties"?

Samuel House is believed to have died in 1873. By the mid-1940s, Bobby Jones became interested in purchasing part of the former House acreage. Jones had already helped design what would become the legendary Augusta National Golf Club and was ready for another project closer to home. By 1947, construction had begun on what is now the Peachtree Golf Club, with Jones directing that the old Samuel House plantation mansion serve as the

official clubhouse.

The Peachtree Golf Club clubhouse, where golfer and course designer Bobby Jones incorporated the historic Samuel House plantation home into the club's design—and where Sherman is said to have slept. | *FindAGrave*

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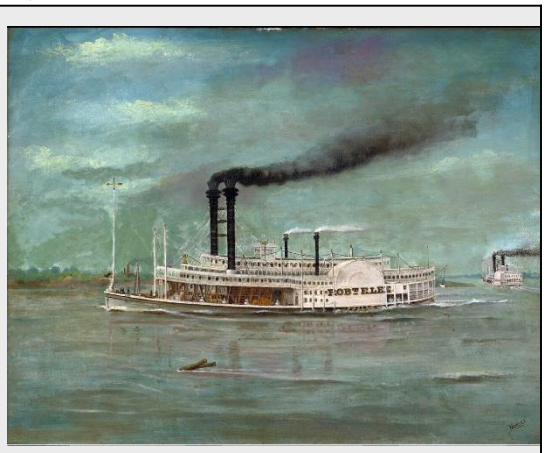
A Gilded Age Conman

by Robert S. Davis,

blueandgrayeducation.org, May 2026,



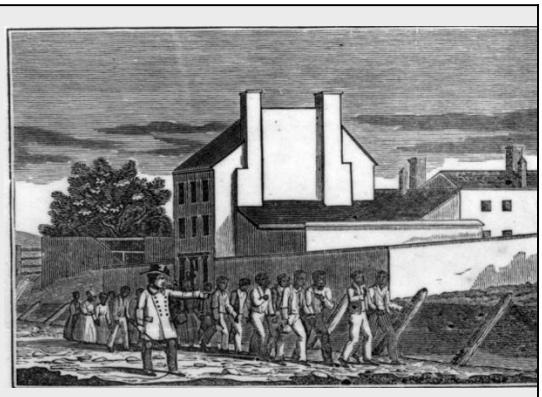
On the rivers of the American interior, steamboats carried more than cargo—they ferried fortunes, identities, and opportunity. It was along these shifting waterways that Crawford honed his craft, moving easily between towns, aliases, and schemes. | *Library of Congress*

The colorful story of Robert A. Crawford is now known in its entirety. He was a scoundrel who left a trail of dodgery as he moved through life. In other words, he contributed to the beginnings of modern fraud.

William Aduston Rogers Crawford was born in Gloucester County, Virginia, on February 11, 1812; his father was a bankrupt newspaper editor and merchant in Petersburg and Richmond, Virginia. The family was so impoverished they had to live in the open air.

Crawford claimed involvement in the slave trade since his youth, and a family story mentions the slave ship *Ajax*. He

was raised in Northern Virginia and would have known one of the greatest entities in that trade, Franklin & Armfield of Alexandria, and its ship, the *Ajax.* Franklin & Armfield was the largest and most powerful domestic slave trading company in the United States between 1828 and 1836. It regularly transported enslaved people to New Orleans.



In the decades before the Civil War, firms like Franklin & Armfield of Alexandria operated vast networks trafficking enslaved people to markets in the Deep South. Crawford came of age in this world—one shaped by commerce, coercion, and the normalization of human exploitation. | *NPS*

And as circumstance would have it, Crawford appeared in New Orleans in 1835 about the time when Franklin & Armfield dissolved.

Then, Crawford became a partner in Campbell and Crawford in New Orleans. The company invested in real estate and sold wholesale hardware. As a salesman, he swindled his partnership of $100,000 along the Mississippi and Ohio Rivers.

While on the ship, *Chief Justice Marshall,* he met Virginia Stanbery of Wheeling (now West Virginia). They married on March 2, 1836.
Crawford traveled to New York with his bride, spending his ill-gotten gains. Upon returning to Wheeling, he was arrested for his swindling schemes but escaped to St. Louis, Missouri.

On the way, Crawford robbed Mr. Van Zant of $500 worth of jewelry in Louisville, Kentucky. Also en route to Missouri, pretending to be A. C. Wilson of Nashville, Tennessee, he swindled Forsyth & Company of $3,200 in cash and $800 in groceries. Returning to Wheeling, Crawford planned to collect his wife and move to Alabama.

Again, the deceiver was arrested but again escaped, although he was soon back in custody. In December 1839, Crawford was convicted of fraud in Louisville and served five years in the Kentucky state prison. Crawford disappeared in 1846 and reappeared in Butts County, Georgia, by 1849 under the name Robert A. Crawford.

By then, he had learned how to commit fraud through bankruptcy and debt without technically breaking the law. He soon became connected to swindling

schemes involving a coach factory, a flour mill, a mercenary expedition to Mexico, failed newspapers, the first slave market in Atlanta, and various mining and railroad ventures. Drawing on past mistakes, this Gilded Age conman successfully hid his identity, presenting himself as a respectable entrepreneur while continuing a life of fraud and never letting his past catch up to him. He died on a business trip to Atlanta on April 12, 1892, a “respected” man with a secret past who left his wife and children impoverished.

By the mid-19th century, a growing web of rivers, roads, and rail lines stitched the country together. Crawford exploited this expanding network, slipping across state lines and into new identities before his past could catch up with him. | *LOC*