

NEWS RELEASE



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February 25, 2021

For immediate release

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Note: Interviews are available with MPT Digital Studios Producer Amy Oden. In addition, photos from the segments are available [at this link](#).

MPT Digital Studios' web-exclusive series chronicles efforts of State Highway Administration archaeologists

“Maryland Underground” series looks at work being done to unearth the past of Black residents and answer centuries-old questions

OWINGS MILLS, MD – Maryland Public Television (MPT), in collaboration with the Maryland Department of Transportation State Highway Administration (MDOT SHA), has produced a four-part video series titled *Maryland Underground*. Created by MPT Digital Studios and award-winning producer Amy Oden, the series is now available for viewing at mpt.org/digitalstudios/mdunderground/.

MPT's web-exclusive content chronicles the work of archaeologists at the MDOT SHA, led by Chief Archaeologist [Dr. Julie Schablitsky](#), as she and her team digs for clues to Maryland's past at sites across the state.

The *Maryland Underground* series comprises more than 25-minutes of content and features the following segments:

- **Bayly Cabin (Dorchester County)**. This segment examines the search for artifacts from enslaved people in a small building behind a residential home in Dorchester County. When Catherine Morrison moved to Cambridge in 2014 there was a small building in the rear of the [Bayly House](#) property she purchased. The structure had always been colloquially referred to as a “slave cabin” but Morrison wanted to be sure. While there is more investigative work to be done, artifacts show that the cabin was likely a home to African American workers during the late 1800s.
- **Jonathan Street (Washington County)**. This story started with revelations uncovered after a car crash into one of the oldest buildings in a historic free Black community in Hagerstown. In 2020, Preservation Maryland purchased this condemned log cabin. Working with SHA archaeologists and the Western Maryland Community Development Corporation (WMCDC), efforts to excavate and rehabilitate the building began. The segment includes interviews with Reggie Turner, WMCDC co-founder and CEO, and Nicholas A. Redding, Preservation Maryland executive director.

● **Newtowne Neck (St. Mary's County).** Viewers get a look at the multi-team approach used to excavate a former St. Mary's County plantation. [Newtowne Neck](#), long owned by Jesuits, contains a 17th century house where early Marylanders lived. However, little is known about the people who were enslaved at the site. In 2008 the state of Maryland acquired the property to create a state park. Located four miles southwest of Leonardtown, it sits on a peninsula that is surrounded by Breton Bay, St. Clements Bay, and the Potomac River. St. Mary's College scientists and members of the local descendent community have joined forces with SHA archaeologists to find answers. Among those interviewed is Dante Eubanks, pastor, New Covenant Christian Worship Center, who hopes to learn more about his enslaved ancestors who lived on this land.

● **Ben's 10, Part 1 (Dorchester County).** This segment looks at the ongoing hunt for the 19th century home of Ben Ross, the father of Harriet Tubman, on a former farming and logging property in Dorchester County. The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (FWS) acquired this property in 2020 and incorporated it into the [Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge](#). The FWS soon reached out to MDOT SHA about trying to locate Ben Ross's cabin on the property. The search is focused along Harrisville Road, since it is known that Ross was given a 10-acre plot in this area. Dorchester tour guide and longtime resident Hershel Johnson is interviewed and explains the importance of this effort.

MPT Digital Studios has produced nearly 150 stories on a wide variety of topics since its creation in 2015. Its library of web-exclusive content is available for viewing at mpt.org/digitalstudios/.

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About Maryland Public Television

Maryland Public Television (MPT) is a statewide, public-supported TV network and Public Broadcasting Service member offering entertaining, educational, and inspiring content delivered by traditional broadcasting and streaming on TVs, computers, and mobile devices. A state agency, it operates under the auspices of the Maryland Public Broadcasting Commission. MPT creates local, regional, and national content and is a frequent winner of regional Emmy® awards. MPT's commitment to educators, parents, caregivers, and learners of all ages is delivered through instructional events and Thinkport.org. MPT's year-round community engagement activities connect viewers with resources on a wide range of topics. For more information visit mpt.org.