

The Hugheses donated a portion of their land along Freedom Road as a cemetery for African Americans. Among those buried there are nine African-American veterans of the Civil War. A Pennsylvania Historical Marker stands at the site.

The account of Hughes and the other Lycoming Countians who participated in helping with the Underground Railroad is detailed in the documentary film "Follow the North Star to Freedom," made by area historian and documentary filmmaker Karen Frock. Assisting Frock in the film was the great-granddaughter of Daniel Hughes, Mamie Sweeting Diggs, who has spoken far and wide to preserve the legacy of her family's courageous contributions to the cause of liberty.

THE FRIENDS OF PENNSDALE

It is no accident that one of the main centers of the Underground Railroad in Lycoming County was the Pennsdale-Muncy area, where many members of the Society of Friends, or "Quakers," lived. In fact there still is a Quaker Meeting House there. Members of the Society of Friends were among the most ardent abolitionists and most active conductors of the Underground Railroad.

The Quakers of the Pennsdale-Muncy area probably were influenced in their abolitionist thinking by one of the Society of Friends's leading theologians, John Woolman (1710-1772). He abhorred slavery, preaching against its evils and urging fellow Quakers who were slaveholders to abandon the immoral practice. Woolman traveled extensively in the New Jersey-Pennsylvania region, and when he stayed with Quakers who held slaves, he made a practice of paying his host for slaves' services.

One of the most famous Underground Railroad stations in Lycoming County was in Pennsdale, and was known as the "House of Many Stairs." At the time of its service on the Underground Railroad, it was the Bulls Head Tavern owned by Edward Morris. It served as a stagecoach stop, offering food, drink, and lodging, so the busy comings and goings help to mask the sanctuary activities that the tavern offered for runaway slaves.

The House of Many Stairs was constructed of lime and fossil stone with a wooden roof, built on a hillside, resulting in an abundance of stairs that gave the house its nickname. The many steps helped to confuse any slave catchers who might be on the trail of runaway slaves. There were a number of hidden rooms that provided shelter, and a cubbyhole with a sliding panel at the head of one of the stairways also concealed the runaways.

Another Pennsdale sanctuary for escaped slaves was Wolf Run House owned by Quaker William Haines. Three generations of the Haines family were involved in Underground Railroad activities.

The Quaker Meeting House in Pennsdale served as an assembly point for the runaway slaves to continue their travels north along the Genesee Trail into New York and then into Canada. Conductors of the Underground Railroad encouraged a story that the area around the meeting house was haunted. Word circulated that