

Denton really takes off in 1791. And probably has about 500 people at the time, that Moses comes through. Moses' background. How do we know about Moses? Sort of two or three major things need to be recognized. In 1895, a guy from Union College named A.S. Wright, I don't know his full name, but Wright, W-R-A-I-G-T, he was class of '82 up there, um, wrote a long article about Moses' history. And everybody's drawn on that article. He apparently had first hand discussions. And it's probably perhaps one of the writers from the Eastern Shore, because he talks about a lot of things, seems to be familiar with the Eastern Shore as he discusses this.

In 2001 and 2002, a high school teacher up in Schenectady named Neil Yetwin wrote a series of articles, six articles about Moses Vining. They ended up on the internet and ended up being picked up in Google, is ultimately, you know, how we ran across him. Carl Sheffelt, who, built the steamboat wharf down there was the first one who pointed these articles out to me. And then we had a lady named Pat Guida, and we've done even last night and this morning, Pat and I were on the telephone. She's out in Idaho.

We were doing additional research on Moses Vining. Moses Vining, he is an enslaved person, that's the appropriate term to use. He's on, from the Murphy Plantation, the William Murphy Plantation over in Talbot County. William has actually died by the time that Moses escapes, and he's now a property of Richard Murphy. Personal information, Moses Vining, his father was

named, Horace Thomas, and we've just been doing some additional research on him.

So why wasn't Moses named Thomas? I, I think that he probably was when he was being, he's probably called Thomas when he was in Talbot County. The Vining, if I had to guess, there were several Vinings over the course of 300 years that were in the Talbot County area. But no reason to think that he was named for any of them. Vining or Vinny is also short in the land records you see for Lavinia. So, it may have been he was Moses, daughter of Lavinia. So we've got some more research to do on that. He was born, March 10th of 1817, and he was 23 years old, when, so when he escaped. He had, between his brothers, stepbrothers, sisters, stepsisters, he had 21 stepbrothers and sisters, and oh, we just ripped the watch.

The situation for him in 1840 was this. He was working in a household now. He'd been out in the fields, but he now was trusted, and was a butler in the house. If you'd asked Richard Murphy about Moses, he said, "Oh, he's got a great attitude. He's a great worker." And his treatment had never really been bad. So, why did he want to escape?

Frederick Douglass says it all for every one of these escapes. And he says, "They escaped because they wanted to be free." It's that simple. Doesn't even have to go beyond that. There was usually a precipitating event, however, that forced them, because this was an irrevocable decision. They were never gonna be able to get back where they were.

So, in his case, as in many other cases, there was an economic depression that was on at the time, and it looked like he was going to

be sold. So rather than stay, he had decided to go. However, he had been planning his freedom for years and years and years. We know that because of the money that he had. He had managed to save \$20, a penny at a time, for doing extra work. The date that he chose, again, other planning. He chose Easter weekend because he got an extra day off. They got Easter Sunday and Easter Monday. They departed on Easter Sunday. He had a pass that he'd been given to attend a party, so he had at least a piece of paper from his master that he could give to some individual, if they were caught before they got a certain distance away.

He knew the land. He had studied the land, and it looks like with his companions, some of his companions, he had two companions with him, and it may have been that they knew things about the roads, for instance, in Delaware and all that he didn't know. So he took them with him. They didn't seem to have much money. Seemed to, most of this trip seemed to be financed with the money that he had been saving as a young boy. And he also had contacts.

He ultimately runs, he ultimately goes to Alexander Wayman when they get up to Philadelphia. And Alexander Wayman is from Tuckahoe. Now, Alexander Wayman becomes a famous, very famous person, and I'll talk about him in a second. Okay, so, how did they escape?

So, they leave on Easter Sunday and they walk over to Denton. They come over to Denton. Again, he tells, um, these people, like, this Mr. Wraigt, 1895, they came over to Denton and they came up into the town of Denton. It was dark. They were feeling a

little bit uncomfortable, et cetera. They apparently went back down and crossed over the river and went back to the other side. Couple of explanations possible for this. Maybe their pass would have allowed them to pass further north up through Caroline County. We don't exactly know. Maybe they knew that the way up that better. But anyway, you can run up River Road and you could get to, Greensboro and the bridges up there just as easily.

And as they, as they are heading north, along the Choptank River, now remember, they're on the other side of the Choptank River, and as everybody knows from around here, you can't walk across, you can't wade across Choptank River, between here and Greensboro. It's, the water's too deep. And all of a sudden, they hear these bloodhounds.... Moses says, coming after them. So they began to run and the bloodhounds get closer and closer, and they run, and they run, and they run. The bloodhounds keep getting closer. And finally, they come to a clearing on the bank, they turn to face these bloodhounds. Bloodhounds come bursting into this opening that they're in, and lept up on them, he said, and started to lick his face.

It turns out that as part of his planning, he had been feeding and being friendly with bloodhounds from the Murphy Plantation for an extended period of time. And he said, "He went, 'Shoo, shoo, shoo,' like that." They turned around and headed back toward Talbot County. A very, very remarkable thing. And that's why it's memorialized with Moses and the hounds.

From once they're clear, they still have to get back. They wanna get to the east side of the Choptank River, so they find a boat and that doesn't have any oars. So they take fence posts and they use them for oars to get across to the east side of the river.

Ultimately, they get into Smyrna, they take a stage over to the boat landing on the Delaware Bay. They get up to Philadelphia. In Philadelphia, they are helped by this Alexander Wayman. He goes on, when he dies, he becomes a bishop in the AME Church, and he helps to spread the AME Church all over the United States. And when he dies, he's described, Alexander Wayman from Caroline County, as the most famous man in America after the death, Black man, excuse me, Black man in America, subsequent to the death of Frederick Douglass. From Philadelphia, they get up to Troy, they go over to Schenectady. And eventually they end up living in the woods, hiding in the woods behind Union College.