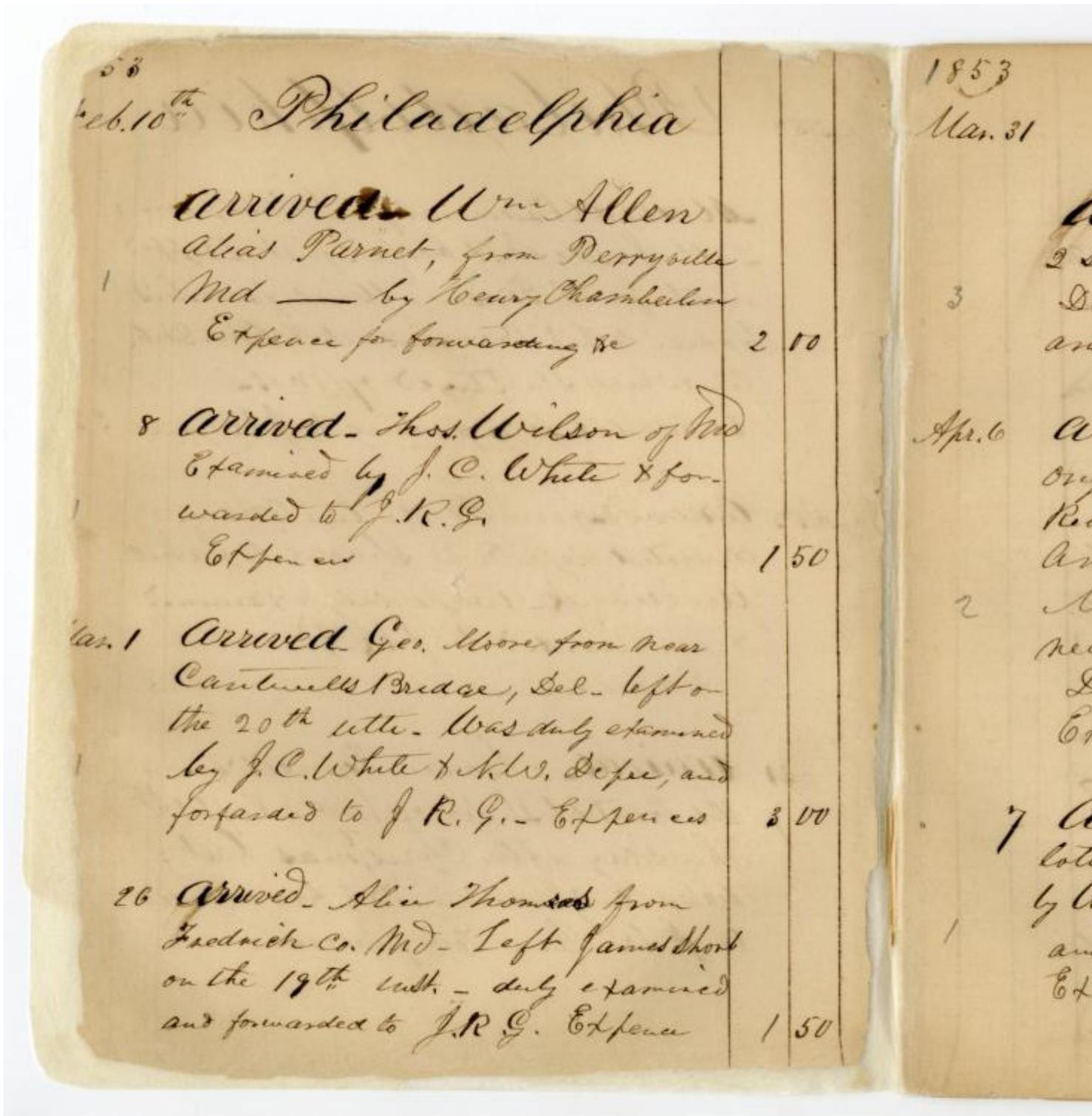


Uncovering William Still's Underground Railroad

The Historical Society of Pennsylvania has begun work on a new digital history project about the Underground Railroad. The project weaves new connections between the manuscript journal and published book of William Still, known as the "Father of the Underground Railroad." This effort provides extraordinary insight into the experiences of enslaved individuals and families who passed through Philadelphia between 1852 and 1857 and the covert networks that aided their escape.



As chairman of Philadelphia's Vigilance Committee, Still recorded the personal accounts of fugitives who arrived in Philadelphia, an essential hub of antislavery activity. The details recorded in Still's "Journal C"—held in trust by HSP on behalf of the Pennsylvania Abolition Society—provide rich content for discussion about slavery and escape. Twenty years after he began work for the Vigilance Committee, William Still published *The Underground Rail Road* (1872), the most extensive contemporary compendium of the Underground Railroad's workings in this region.

The first phase of this project, funded in part by the [National Endowment for the Humanities](#) [2], developed a prototype for an interactive website that presents transcripts and digital facsimiles of Still's manuscript journal and published book, carefully researched biographies, and other contextual annotation and materials. The prototype site, "Family Ties on the Underground Railroad," uses excerpts from Still's texts to explore the experiences of three enslaved families: the Shephards, the Taylors, and the Wanzers.

[Click here to view the prototype site](#) [3]

user name: hspguest
password: preview

With Still's resources interpreted and linked for the first time, scholars, educators, students, genealogists, and history enthusiasts will be able to make deep connections both geographically and chronologically as they are guided through his meticulous documentation.

HSP is currently seeking funding to expand the prototype web site into a fully functional interactive site about the Underground Railroad in Philadelphia and beyond.

[Follow our progress by reading our posts on HSP's blog "Fondly Pennsylvania"](#) [4]



Any views, findings, conclusions, or recommendations expressed in this project do not necessarily reflect those of the National Endowment for the Humanities.

Links

[1] <https://digitallibrary.hsp.org/index.php/Detail/objects/2030>

[2] <http://www.neh.gov>

[3] <http://still.hsp.org/still>

[4] <http://hsp.org/category/tags/william-still-digital-history-project>

[5] <http://www.neh.gov/>