

## Sites of Memory, Sites of Sanctuary

Remembering Safehouses in the Hudson Valley, Past and Present

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"Van Bergen Overmantel" depicts the Marten Van Bergen farm in Leeds and visually represents Dutch life in America. Of note are the Africans, Native Americans, and Europeans in the painting. Fenimore Art Museum, Cooperstown, New York, Museum Purchase N02366. 1954. Photograph by Richard Walker

### Background

The Hudson Valley, having transitioned from fur to an economy based in agriculture under British rule, would feed Great Britain, its colonies in North America and much of the Caribbean and continues to depend on the production from its vineyards, orchards, and farms to sustain its economy. While in the eighteenth century most of the labor on the farmland was provided by enslaved Africans, today the workforce is dominated by immigrants, including temporary and undocumented workers. New York was one of the largest slave-holding northern states with its heaviest concentration on the plantations of the Hudson Valley. Enslaved Africans made up as much as one third of the population of some areas of Dutchess County. With an economy so dependent on forced labor, New York's anti-slavery society was least successful in the Hudson Valley. At the same time, Dutchess County had the largest concentration of Quakers outside of Philadelphia. The Quakers (the Religious Society of Friends) were the first organized group to actively help enslaved peoples to escape by providing sanctuary in their homes and meeting houses. In more recent history, with the increased crackdown on undocumented immigrants by the Immigration and Customs Enforcement Agency (ICE), several towns in the Hudson Valley have declared themselves 'sanctuary cities' and several churches have prepared to offer sanctuary (a safe space beyond the reach of ICE) within their buildings.

### Sites of Sanctuary

*Sanctuary (noun)*

*1: a consecrated place*

*2: a place of refuge and protection*

*Sanctuary (adjective)*

*: relating to or being a locality that provides limited cooperation to federal officials in the enforcement of immigration laws or policies*

*a sanctuary jurisdiction*

*sanctuary policies... the executive order ... designed to crack down on so-called "sanctuary cities," municipalities that do not comply with Immigration and Customs Enforcement ... requests for assistance with identifying and deporting undocumented immigrants. —*

*Euan McKirdy*

*Mariam-Webster.com*

## TEN DOLLARS REWARD.



RUN away from the following, living in Flat-bush, in the town of Kingston, and county of Ulster, on the night of the 22<sup>nd</sup> instant, a Negro Man Slave, named JACK, aged 21 years, a jolly smart fellow; had on when he went away a grey linsey woolsey great coat, a reddish coloured coat, much faded; he also took with him a linsey woolsey grey under coat, a pair of grey coating overalls, and a pair of very thick buckskin leather breeches: His right foot is remarkably turned out, being stiff in the joint, by reason of a wound in the ankle, and his track in the snow easily seen—he has a mark just above his nose.

Whoever will apprehend the said Negro, so that his master may get him again, shall be entitled to the above reward.

JAMES OOSTERHOUDT.

February 25, 1793.

34.



A 1793 notice announces a \$10 reward for a slave who went missing in Kingston, NY | Courtesy of In Defiance: Runaways From Slavery in New York's Hudson River Valley, 1735-1831

The Albany residence of Stephen and Harriet Myers is listed on the New York State Underground Railroad Heritage Trail and is a site on the National Park Service's National Network to Freedom. The Myerses, both freed slaves, assisted others to escape from slavery for nearly 30 years.

Since the first enslaved Africans were brought to the Americas, they have resisted bondage using varying means of flight, and, in the process, created informal networks of escape. "The Underground Railroad was a covert and sometimes informal network of routes, safehouses, and resources spread across the country that was used by enslaved African Americans to gain their freedom. This effort was often spontaneous, with enslaved people beginning their journey to freedom unaided." The Hudson Valley hosted fugitive enslaved Africans sent up from Philadelphia and New York City who went on to Central New York and Canada. The first fugitives, however, would have been from plantations within the Hudson Valley itself. With the development of the steamer, it was much faster to travel by boat up the Hudson River as a means of escape, however there was significant movement by land aided by the free Black communities within the Hudson Valley. African Methodist Episcopal churches played a critical role in providing resources and places of hiding along the route and so were dubbed "freedom churches" as they marked locations of safety within the network of the Underground Railroad. The National Park Service holds the documentation of the sites that provided sanctuary with a "verifiable" connection to the Underground Railroad.



## Sites of Memory

These "Sites of Freedom" are often difficult to verify given their foundation in secrecy. Fugitives were given hidden in cellars, pantries, and barns. These sites go unseen, unmarked, and un-remembered. Even the official sites of slavery in New York State go unrecognized. The dwellings of enslaved peoples and the sites of their burials are often happened upon accidentally as sites that ought to be sanctified are disturbed.

A key takeaway of the National Monument Audit done by The Monument Lab is that "the story of the United States as told by our current monument landscape misrepresents our history".

From National Monument Audit:

*Monuments offer interpretations of the past and play an outsize role in shaping historical narratives and shared memory. In the service of remembering the preferred narratives of their creators, they also can erase, deny, or belittle the historical experience of those who have not had the civic power or privilege to build them. Where inequalities and injustices exist, monuments often perpetuate them.*

How do we make visible sites of refuge that were meant to be hidden, sites of evidence of exploited labor both past and present, the sites of sanctuary where fugitives found protection, a community, and a place of sanctity?



National Memorial for Peace and Justice, Montgomery, Alabama

## Program

You will create a memorial to be sited within the environs of the New Guinea settlement, the site of an archaeological dig in Hyde Park, NY. Grounded in this site that holds the evidence of a prosperous community of freed enslaved people, you will design a collection of spaces that unearths the history of sites of refuge in the Hudson Valley. This will be a place of sanctuary, sanctifying the land on which it sits while naming the unspoken and providing a safe space for all who seek it.

## Methodology

Research + Mapping

During the first two weeks of the semester, you will work in groups of four to research and map:

- free Black communities
- Freedom churches
- Quaker settlements that provided resources and safehouses to fugitive enslaved peoples
- Abolitionist support
- Historic and present-day farming communities
- Present-day sanctuary cities
- Present-day churches that provided sanctuary to undocumented immigrants
- Present-day immigrant support

## Precedent Analysis

In groups of two, you will spend the next week of the semester analyzing precedents of memorial architecture, built structures created with the intent of gathering people to remember. You will draw them and analyze how people move about and engage with them.

## Memorial Design

You are encouraged, but not required, to work in groups of two for the rest of the semester to finalize your site location, potential community partners, the critical issues that you will incorporate into your memorial and the details of your final design.

## Schedule

Week	Date	Activity
Week 1	Monday 01.24	First Day of Studio – Intro <b>Guest Talk: Father Frank Alagna of Ulster Immigrant Defense Network</b>
	Wednesday 01.26	Model Tutorial
	Thursday 01.27	Studio – Reading Review 01 + Research review – desk crits
	Week 2	
Week 2	Monday 01.31	Studio – Research + Mapping review – desk crits
	Wednesday 02.02	Lecture: Dr. Erik Kiviat
	Thursday 02.03	Studio – Research + Mapping review – desk crits
	Week 3	
Week 3	Monday 02.07	Studio – Research + Mapping – final pin-up
	Wednesday 02.09	Lecture: Feifei Zhou – Feral Atlas
	Thursday 02.10	Studio – <b>Weeksville visit</b> – Precedent study selection
	Week 4	
Week 4	Monday 02.14	Studio – Precedent study – desk crits

	<b>Wednesday 02.16</b>	<b>Collective Reviews: Methods of Representation</b> Precedent study – final pin-up
	Thursday 02.17	<b>Guineatown site visit</b> <b>Guest talk: Bill Jeffway, Dutchess County Historical Society</b>
Week 5	Monday 02.21	Studio – Siting + Conceptualization – desk crits
	Wednesday 02.23	NO EVENT
	Thursday 02.24	Studio – Siting + Conceptualization – pin-up
Week 6	Monday 02.28	Studio – Siting + Conceptualization – desk crits
	Wednesday 03.02	NO EVENT
	<b>Thursday 03.03</b>	<b>MID-REVIEW</b>
Week 7	<b>03.07 – 03.11</b>	<b>KINNE WEEK</b>
Week 9	<b>03.14 –03.18</b>	<b>SPRING BREAK</b>
Week 10	Monday 03.21	Studio – Design Development – desk crits <b>Guest talk: Salamishah Tillet</b>
	Wednesday 03.23	Lecture: TBD
	Thursday 03.24	Studio – Design Development – desk crits
Week 11	Monday 03.28	Studio – Design Development – pin-up
	Wednesday 03.30	Lecture: Brigitte Shim
	Thursday 03.31	Studio – Design Development – desk crits
Week 12	Monday 04.04	Studio – Design Development – desk crits
	Wednesday 04.06	Lecture: TBD
	Thursday 04.07	Studio – Design Development – pin-up
Week 13	Monday 04.11	Studio – Design Development – desk crits
	<b>Wednesday 04.13</b>	<b>Collective Reviews: Constructing an Argument</b>
	Thursday 04.14	Studio – Design Development – desk crits
Week 14	Monday 04.18	Studio – Design Development – desk crits
	Wednesday 04.20	NO EVENT
	Thursday 04.21	Studio – Design Development – desk crits
Week 15	<b>Monday 04.25</b>	<b>FINAL REVIEW</b>

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