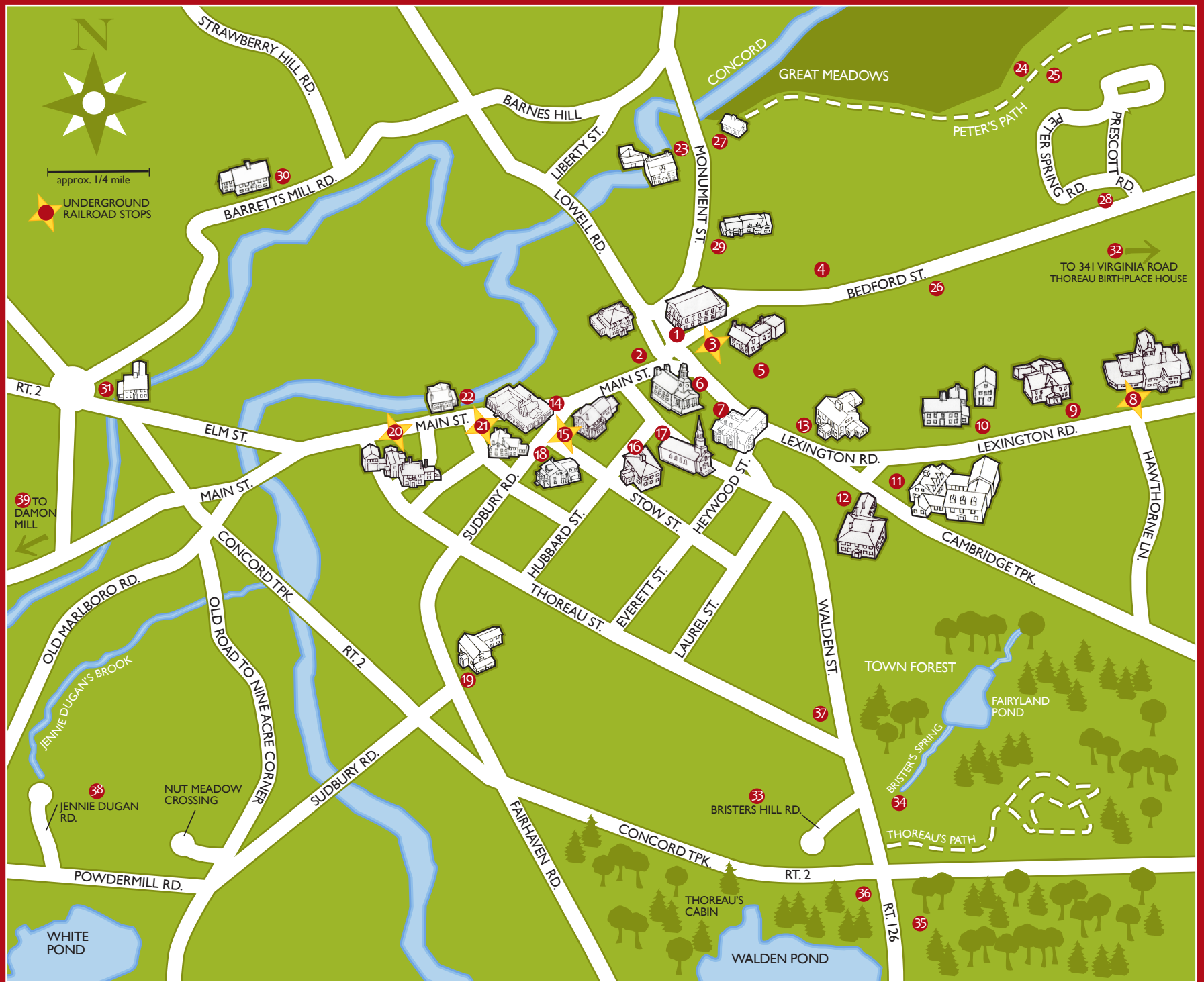


# CONCORD VILLAGE

Incorporated 1635



## No 1 | TOWN CENTER

- 1 Town Hall - Monument Square**  
Slavery existed in Concord from the earliest years of English settlement, with 6 slaves documented in the Town records of 1725. Bills of sale of Africans are accessible in town records, currently housed in the Special Collections of the Concord Free Public Library.
- 2 Old Jail site**  
In 1846, Thoreau spent a night in jail for his refusal to pay a poll tax as a protest against the war with Mexico and the spread of slavery. This event inspired his 1849 essay now known as *Civil Disobedience*.
- 3 Mary Rice House - 44 Bedford St. (ca. 1840)**  
Mary Rice assisted in the escape of fugitive slaves. She helped replace John Jack's gravestone and regularly put flowers beside it. In 1864, she gathered signatures of 195 school children on a petition to President Lincoln, asking him to free slave children. Copies of this petition and Lincoln's response now hang in Concord's three public elementary schools.

- 4 Sleepy Hollow Cemetery - Bedford St. (1823 and later)**  
Peter Hutchinson, called Concord's "dexterous pig butcher" by Thoreau, and his family were the last residents of color to live in the Robbins House (see #27). He and other family members were buried at Town expense; a gravestone was placed on Hutchinson's unmarked family gravesite in 2013.
- 5 John Jack's Grave - Old Burying Ground, Monument Square (1635)**  
Born in Africa, John Jack was enslaved until his early forties, when his owner died. John Jack worked various jobs saving enough money to buy 8.5 acres of land. He was the first former enslaved person to purchase land in Concord (see #24). Before his death in 1773, Jack bequeathed his land to the woman he had been enslaved with, who was legally ineligible to possess the inheritance because she remained enslaved. Daniel Bliss, Esq., a local Tory wrote an epitaph for John Jack that castigated Patriots for calling themselves Britain's slaves even as they, themselves, were slaveholders.
- 6 First Parish Church - 20 Lexington Rd.**  
Commonly used for public discourse on slavery in the 1800s. Many famous self-emancipated enslaved persons, such as Harriet Tubman and Frederick Douglass, gave speeches there. Many Middlesex County Antislavery Society meetings were held at the church.

## No 3 | ABOLITIONISTS NEIGHBORHOOD

- 14 Concord Free Public Library - 129 Main St.**  
Repository of the original documents telling of Concord's antislavery efforts and earliest African and African American residents. Original site of Mary Merrick Brook's House (see #16).
- 15 Bigelow House - 19 Sudbury Rd. (ca. 1840-50)**  
**Francis and Ann Bigelow/Shadrach Minkins House**  
An important haven on the Underground Railroad: Shadrach Minkins, the first self-emancipated enslaved man to be captured by bounty hunters in Boston after the 1850 Fugitive Slave Act was harbored here. The Bigelows assisted Minkins, who found freedom working in Boston until he was captured for return to Virginia. Vigilance Committee member Lewis Hayden led the crowd that rescued Minkins from the courthouse in Boston, and sent him to the Bigelows at 3 am on February 16, 1851. From here Minkins was put on a train to Canada, where he became a restaurant owner and barber.
- 16 Brooks House - 45 Hubbard St. (ca. 1740)**  
A slave-owner's daughter, Mary Merrick Brooks was undoubtedly Concord's leading abolitionist. She sold her signature 'Brooks Cake' to raise money for the cause. Her house was moved from the Concord Free Public Library site to 45 Hubbard Street in 1872, and was originally the Black Horse Tavern.
- 17 Trinitarian Congregational Church - 54 Walden St.**  
In the 1830s, Reverend John Wilder regularly invited abolitionists to speak at this church. His wife, Mary Wilder, was the first President of the Concord Female Antislavery Society in 1837.

- 18 Franklin Sanborn House & Schoolroom - 49 Sudbury Rd. (1850)**  
Franklin Sanborn was one of the 'Secret Six' who raised funds for John Brown's raid on Harper's Ferry. Sanborn ran a small private school, and after Brown was hanged for the Harper's Ferry raid, two of his daughters came to Concord and attended Sanborn's school. Federal marshals tried unsuccessfully to arrest Sanborn for aiding Brown.
- 19 Abiel Wheeler House - 387 Sudbury Rd. (ca. 1829-35)**  
Abiel Wheeler transported escaping slaves to train connections.
- 20 Thoreau-Alcott House - 255 Main St. (ca. 1820)**  
The entire Thoreau family was instrumental in the antislavery movement. They moved here in 1849-50, and Thoreau wrote in his Journal on 10/1/1851 about lodging self-emancipated slave Henry Williams and putting him on a train to Canada. The Alcott family moved here in 1877.
- 21 Col. William Whiting House - 169 Main St. (ca. 1800-10)**  
Col. Whiting was vice president of the state Antislavery Society, and sheltered runaway enslaved people as an active participant in the Underground Railroad. Abolitionists William Lloyd Garrison (who published the antislavery newspaper *The Liberator*), Wendell Phillips and John Brown were all guests in this house.
- 22 Samuel Hoar House - 158 Main St. (ca. 1810/1819)**  
One of Concord's leading politicians and a founder of the Free Soil Party (opposed to expansion of slavery into western territories), Samuel Hoar was sent to South Carolina to protest the arrest of Massachusetts African American seamen who were jailed when they disembarked their ships in South Carolina ports. He was run out of town in Charleston, which aroused greater antislavery support in Concord.

## No 2 | LEXINGTON ROAD

- 7 Robertson James House - 70 Lexington Rd.**  
In 1860, author Henry James' teenage brothers Garth Wilkinson and Robertson James were sent to Frank Sanborn's school, where they were influenced by Sanborn's ardent abolitionism. Two years later, Wilkinson served in the 54th regiment and Robertson enlisted in the 55th regiment - the two black Civil War regiments in Massachusetts. After the war Robertson briefly owned and operated a southern cotton plantation worked by free black laborers, an arrangement which proved to be a financial failure. In the 1890s he purchased this building for a studio, and died here in 1910.
- 8 Wayside - 455 Lexington Rd. (ca. 1714)**  
Home to Samuel Whitney, muster master of the Concord Minutemen in 1775, and his enslaved man Case Whitney. In the woods to the left of the Wayside, Casey's a plaque states, "In 1775, Casey was Samuel Whitney's enslaved person. When the Revolutionary war came, he ran away to war, fighting for the colonies, and returned to Concord a free man." When the Alcotts lived here from 1845-48, according to the plaque to the right of the house, "The Wayside sheltered two self-emancipated slaves during the winter of 1846-47 as they fled north to freedom in Canada. A young Louisa May Alcott learned first hand lessons about slavery here that would influence her life and writing."
- 9 Alcott 'Orchard' House - 399 Lexington Rd.**  
The Alcotts were dedicated abolitionists. It's possible that they hid escaped enslaved people at the Orchard house, where they lived from 1858-77. They held antislavery meetings here, hosted a huge reception for John Brown and the "regular antislavery set", and gave two of John Brown's daughters a home after he was hanged for his raid on Harper's Ferry. Anna and Louisa Alcott staged plays to raise money for the Concord Antislavery Society.
- 10 Benjamin Barron House - 245/249 Lexington Rd.**  
Here the enslaved man John Jack purchased his freedom with money he earned as a shoemaker and laborer. His epitaph in the Old Hill Burying Ground is world famous (see #5).
- 11 Concord Museum - 200 Lexington Rd.**  
Through original artifacts associated with Thoreau, Emerson and antislavery activists, the Museum galleries examine the concept of liberty and the ability of individuals to effect change.
- 12 Emerson House - 28 Cambridge Turnpike**  
Ralph Waldo Emerson was an abolitionist who was persuaded to speak out publicly by his wife Lydian, his Aunt Mary and his friend Mary Brooks. He supported the controversial abolitionist John Brown.
- 13 Reuben Brown House - 77 Lexington Rd.**  
When Ralph Waldo Emerson had too many visitors to fit in his home, he put them up at the Reuben Brown House. In 1857, one such visitor was the fiery abolitionist John Brown. Two years later John Brown led the attack on the federal arsenal at Harper's Ferry.



## No 6 | WEST CONCORD

- 38 Thomas and Jennie Dugan** - 212 Williams Rd. Thomas Dugan was a self-emancipated slave from Virginia, and was the third slavery survivor to own land in Concord. He and his first wife Catherine had five children. When Catherine died, Thomas married Jennie Parker of Acton, and after whom Nut Meadow Brook was renamed Jennie Dugan's Brook. Thomas and Jennie had three children. Elsieha Dugan lost his father's land and subsequently lived in the woods. He was memorialized by Thoreau in his poem *The Old Marborough Road*. Thomas Dugan introduced the rye cradle to Concord and taught local farmers to graft apple trees. George, their youngest son, enlisted in the MA 54th Black Regiment of the Civil War at the age of 44 in 1863.
- 39 Damon Mill** - 1700 Main St. As one of New England's earliest textile mills, founded by Ephraim Hartwell and John Brown, Jr. in 1808, the Damon Mill produced a popular lightweight flannel, made of cotton and wool, which depended for raw materials on the labor of plantation slaves in the South. In 1855 the Damon mill used some 40,000 pounds of cotton in its operations.

- 30 Barrett House** - 448 Barrett's Mill Rd. Col. James Barrett was like many other wealthy and titled Concord men in the 1700s in that he owned humans, including a young man named Phillip who is listed in a 1775 militia roll call. For a school assignment, one of James's sons drew up a mock bill of sale in which he imagined selling Phillip to a Cambridge resident.
- 31 John Cumming House** - 998 Elm St. (ca. 1750) John Cumming was a country doctor, Lt. Col. in the French and Indian War, and presided over 70 town meetings before and during the Revolution. He could not have done this without help to run his farm, which he found in his enslaved men Jem and Brister (Brister proclaimed his freedom after serving in the Revolutionary War alongside John Cumming). Concord's Brister's Hill and Spring were named after Brister (see Brister and Fenda Freeman under Walden Woods, #34).
- 32 Thoreau Birthplace House** - 341 Virginia Rd. Peter Hutchinson spent his final years as a boarder in the house where Thoreau was born. Thoreau's mother recalled Jack Garrison working on the Virginia Road farm at the beginning of the 19th century.
- 29 Garrison House** - 78 Monument St. (ca. 1860) In the late 1700s and early 1800s, a small brickyard was located

## No 4 | MONUMENT STREET, GREAT MEADOWS & BEYOND

### "FOLLOW THE DRINKING GOURD"

When the sun comes back  
And the first quail calls  
Follow the Drinking Gourd.  
For the old man is a-waiting for to carry  
you to freedom  
If you follow the Drinking Gourd.

The riverbank makes a very good road.  
The dead trees will show you the way.  
Left foot, peg foot, traveling on,  
Follow the Drinking Gourd.

The river ends between two hills  
Follow the Drinking Gourd.  
There's another river on the other side  
Follow the Drinking Gourd.

When the great big river meets the  
little river  
Follow the Drinking Gourd.  
For the old man is a-waiting for to carry  
you to freedom  
If you follow the Drinking Gourd.

Perhaps no song is more closely associated with the Underground Railroad than this one.

In this spiritual, escape instructions and a map are embedded as a code to enable enslaved persons to make their way North to freedom by following the points of the Big Dipper star formation, which points to Polaris, the Pole Star, and North.

The escape route traveled North to the headwaters of the Tombigbee River, through the divide, and then down the Tennessee River to the Ohio River. This journey to freedom took most refugees a full year.

The DGP Robbins House Interpretive Center for raising awareness around Concord's African and Abolitionist History has been generously supported by the Town of Concord Community Preservation Fund.

This map does not include all Underground Railroad stops in Concord. We are working to collect, verify, and add these in the future. Building orientation is representational.

Research and substantiation is ongoing.

The compilers of this map welcome your comments & corrections. Email us at [www.drinkinggourdproject.org](http://www.drinkinggourdproject.org)

**Please contact the Concord Chamber of Commerce for tours; we thank them for supporting our mission.**

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7.2013

### MISSION STATEMENT

The Drinking Gourd Project is a newly formed Concord-based nonprofit organization focused on raising awareness of Concord's African and Antislavery history from the 17th through the 19th centuries. Our mission is to highlight this history and make it even more accessible to residents and visitors in a way that will add a new layer to our understanding of our past and a deeper appreciation for the complexity of Concord and its role in creating a diverse America.

This is being accomplished through:

- educational programs
- maps and tours of the early African and Antislavery sites
- the establishment of the Robbins House Interpretive Center, thanks to the generous support of Concord's Community Preservation Committee (see#27)
- framed copies of an 1864 petition to the President from Concord school children to free slave children together with Lincoln's response, which hang in Concord's three public elementary schools (see # 3)
- commemorating early African and African American forgotten home sites with stone benches
- providing engraved headstones for the unmarked graves of African Americans and antislavery activists
- fundraising events to promote and inform audiences about this aspect of Concord's history
- working closely with many entities in town, including the schools, museums, town agencies and organizations

We thank and recommend the following  
Authors and their books:

Elise Lemire, *Black Walden: Slavery and Its Aftermath in Concord, Massachusetts*, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009.

Sandra Petrulionis, *To Set This World Right: The Antislavery Movement in Thoreau's Concord*, Cornell University Press, 2006.

Barbara Elliott and Janet Jones, *Concord: Its Black History 1636-1860*, Concord Public Schools, 1976

Special Thank You to Leslie Wilson, Curator of Special Collections at the Concord Free Public Library.

Donations are gratefully accepted to expand our work on the African American and Antislavery History of Concord, and preserve the Robbins house as an African and Antislavery Interpretive Center.

Donations can be made online at: [www.drinkinggourdproject.org](http://www.drinkinggourdproject.org)

Checks can be made out to Drinking Gourd Project, Inc., and sent to:

Drinking Gourd Project, Inc.  
P.O. Box 506 Concord, MA 01742

Thank you!

## No 5 | WALDEN WOODS

- 37 Rachel Le Grosse House Site** - A poor white widow and neighbor of Brister, Rachel Le Grosse lived on land rented from Peter Wheeler. It seems likely that Brister and Rachel had a relationship after Brister's wife died; Brister sold his acre of land to Rachel for \$20 so that she would have property after he died, since it was illegal for them to marry.
- 36 Zilpah (or Zilpha) White House Site** - Formerly an enslaved woman, Zilpah White lived in a one-room house on the common land that bordered Walden Road. She made a living spinning flax into linen fibers. In *Walden*, Thoreau notes that, like other formerly enslaved persons, she too was harassed. He describes her living conditions as "somewhat inhuman." And yet her ability to provide for herself at a time when few if any other Concord women lived alone was impressive.
- 35 Rachel Le Grosse House Site** - When local squire Duncan Ingraham moved to Medford in 1795, his enslaved man Cato asked if he could marry a local enslaved person named Phyllis Bliss and bring her along. Duncan replied that Cato could marry but only if he stayed behind in Concord, severed his ties with his master, and sought no further financial assistance from him. Cato chose Phyllis over a

- 33 Brister's Hill Rd.**  
Named after Brister Freeman
- 34 Brister and Fenda Freeman House Site** - After 25 years of enslavement, Brister Freeman became the second formerly enslaved person to own land in Concord. Brister's Hill is named after the area where he and another formerly enslaved person purchased an acre of "old field." Brister and his wife Fenda, who told fortunes, had three children. Brister worked as a day laborer and endured frequent harassment from locals and local officials. Impressed by what Brister had been able to accomplish in such a hostile environment, Thoreau compares him in *Walden* to Scipio Africanus, the great Roman general.
- 35 Cato and Phyllis Ingraham House Site** - When local squire Duncan Ingraham moved to Medford in 1795, his enslaved man Cato asked if he could marry a local enslaved person named Phyllis Bliss and bring her along. Duncan replied that Cato could marry but only if he stayed behind in Concord, severed his ties with his master, and sought no further financial assistance from him. Cato chose Phyllis over a
- 23 Old Manse** - 269 Monument St. (1770)  
The Old Manse was built by Ralph Waldo Emerson's grandfather, the Reverend William Emerson, in 1770. Four enslaved people lived here in the 1770s; Cate, Phyllis and her daughter Phyllis Bliss, and Frank Emerson. Caesar Robbins' grandson John Garrison helped Henry David Thoreau put in the original garden as a wedding gift to Nathaniel and Sophia Hawthorne in 1842. John Brown spoke in the large parlor of the Manse on his second visit to Concord in April 1857; Frank Sanborn, one of Brown's 'secret six' supporters, lived at the Manse in 1863. (The Old Manse has some of Sanborn's papers in their collection).
- 24 The Edge of the Great Field**  
Original site of the Robbins farm and John Jack's home.
- 25 The Robbins Farm** - In the late 1770s, Patriot and slavery survivor Caesar Robbins had a house on the edge of the Great Field near John Jack (see #5). Caesar lived here with the permission of wealthy landowner Humphrey Barrett. A second home was built here circa 1823 for Caesar's son Peter Robbins. Peter's sister Susan and her husband Jack Carson lived in the east half of the house with at least the 3 of their 8 children who survived infancy. Peter lived in the west half of the house with his wife Fatima Oliver, no children. After 7 years, Peter moved to a nearby house with Fatima's relative Almira and had 13 children, possibly returning around 1850 after Fatima left. In 1852 Peter Hutchinson, a



Concord's  
African American & Abolitionist  
History



The Drinking Gourd is another name for the Big and Little Dippers. The North Star pointed out by these constellations was a guiding light for travelers heading North to freedom on the Underground Railroad.