

STATE OF DELAWARE



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

POSTHUMOUS PARDON OF SAMUEL D. BURRIS (1813-1863)

Whereas, in 1847 Samuel D. Burris ("Mr. Burris"), a free man of color, was arrested as he attempted to assist an enslaved woman board a steamship; and

Whereas, as a result, Mr. Burris was arrested on the charge of "Enticing Away a Slave" and jailed in Dover and bail was set at \$1,600; and

Whereas, while in jail, Mr. Burris was also charged with crimes related to the escape of slaves from the Estate of Thomas Slaughter in the ownership of Robert McGonigle and a two-count indictment was filed for the escape of the property of John Clark, and bail was raised to \$5,000; and

Whereas, there were three cases in the 1847 October Term of the Kent County Court of General Sessions that were set as follows: and

Case 12: State vs. Burris – Indictment for Enticing Away Slaves
(Robert McGonigle's Property)

Case 13: State vs. Burris – Indictment for Enticing Away Slaves
(Jonathan S. Green's Property)

Case 23: State vs. Burris – Indictment for Enticing Away Slaves (2 counts)
(John Clark's Property)

The trials in Cases 13 and 23 were held on November 1, 1847 and the trial in Case 12 was held on November 2, 1847; and

Whereas, Mr. Burris was found guilty of the charge in Case 12 and was sentenced to six months of imprisonment, a fine in the amount of \$250, and to be sold as a servant to the highest and best bidder for a period of seven years; and

Whereas, Mr. Burris was found guilty on the second count in Case 23 and was sentenced to four months of imprisonment, a fine in the amount of \$250, and to be sold as a servant to the highest and best bidder for a period of seven years; and

Whereas, Mr. Burris was found not guilty in Case 13 and on the first count in Case 23; and

Whereas, in Case 12, Mr. Burris served six months in jail and was sold for \$500 to Isaac Flint, an abolitionist who raised funds from the abolitionist community; and

Whereas, Mr. Burris left Delaware never to return; and

Whereas, Mr. Burris' family sought a posthumous pardon from Governor Jack A. Markell and the Board of Pardons for the above referenced offenses; and

Whereas, after a full hearing, a majority of the Board of Pardons voted to recommend granting the posthumous pardon, based upon the tremendous contribution of Mr. Burris to the cause of freedom, and his steadfast courage in the face of great personal danger; and

Whereas, the Attorney General of Delaware, Matthew Denn, is in favor of the Board of Pardons' recommendation; and

Whereas, based upon the recommendation of the Board of Pardons and the support of Attorney General Matthew Denn, this posthumous pardon is justified; and

Whereas, this posthumous pardon is an extraordinary act in recognition of a historic wrong that cannot be corrected by a single stroke of a pen, but recognizes Mr. Burris' acts not as a criminal acts, but as acts of freedom and bravery in the face of injustice; and

Whereas, in remembrance of the renunciation of slavery and the slave trade that divided America, and remains the original sin of our great nation, as stated by Mr. Burris "... liberty is the word with me, and I ... consider the lowest condition in life, with freedom attending it, is better than the most exalted station under the restraints of slavery."

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Jack A. Markell, Governor of the State of Delaware, by the authority vested in me by the Constitution of said State, do grant **SAMUEL D. BURRIS** a posthumous pardon for the convictions of ENTICING AWAY SLAVES.



IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I, Jack A. Markell, Governor of the State of Delaware, have set my Hand and caused the Great Seal of said State to be affixed this 2 day of November in the year of Our Lord Two Thousand Fifteen, and of the Independence of the United States of America Two Hundred Forty

Jack A. Markell

Governor

ATTESTED:

[Signature]
Secretary of State