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For immediate release

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**NOTE:** Interviews may be available upon request. In addition, images and video are available to download from MPT's Dropbox [HERE](#).

## Maryland Public Television to premiere *Ben's Ten: Chattel Slavery on Maryland's Eastern Shore* on February 19

*One-hour MPT program sheds light on the lives of enslaved Marylanders – including a young Harriet Tubman*

*Documentary is among more than 20 titles in the statewide public TV network's Black History Month program lineup*

**OWINGS MILLS, MD** – [Maryland Public Television](#) (MPT) will premiere its one-hour documentary *Ben's Ten: Chattel Slavery on Maryland's Eastern Shore* on Tuesday, February 19. The program will air at 9 p.m. on MPT-HD and the [MPT live stream](#), and it will be available to view live and on demand using the free [PBS App](#) and MPT's [online video player](#).

*Ben's Ten* takes viewers on a journey with Maryland Department of Transportation Chief Archaeologist Dr. Julie Schablitsky as she leads a team of archaeologists and historians working to uncover artifacts that illuminate the history of slavery and the lives of the enslaved in Dorchester and Talbot counties during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. A preview is available at [youtu.be/foofh7Pyncq?](https://youtu.be/foofh7Pyncq?)



Among the team's discoveries are remnants of a dwelling believed to be the home of Ben Ross, the father of abolitionist hero Harriet Tubman. Joined by Tubman's descendants, the group examines the 10 acres surrounding the Ross homesite known as "Ben's 10." Now part of Blackwater National Wildlife refuge, the property once belonged to the enslaver Anthony Thompson. The excavation of Ross's home provides insight into Tubman's early years – and into the harsh realities faced by those in bondage.

Other sites featured in the program include another home on the Thompson property, where archaeologists uncover what is presumably an enslaved family's "spirit bundle"; the slave quarters at Talbot County's Wye Plantation; and the home of a doctor, his family, and their enslaved laborers in Cambridge. Artifacts excavated from these sites shed further light on the history of slavery in Maryland and the untold stories of the people who fought to free the enslaved.

*Ben's Ten: Chattel Slavery on Maryland's Eastern Shore* premieres in February among a slate of programs airing on MPT in recognition of Black History Month. MPT will feature more than 20 documentaries and specials that tell compelling, inspiring, and heart-wrenching stories about the Black experience in the United States. More information about MPT's Black History Month program lineup can be found at [mpt.org/dei/blackhistorymonth](http://mpt.org/dei/blackhistorymonth).

*Ben's Ten: Chattel Slavery on Maryland's Eastern Shore* is produced by Lynne Robinson of [Black Robin Media](#) for MPT in cooperation with the [Maryland Department of Transportation State Highway Administration](#).

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### **About Maryland Public Television**

Maryland Public Television (MPT) is a statewide, public-supported TV network and Public Broadcasting Service member offering entertaining, educational, and inspiring content delivered by traditional broadcasting and streaming on TVs, computers, and mobile devices. A state agency, it operates under the auspices of the Maryland Public Broadcasting Commission. MPT creates and distributes local, regional, and national content and is a frequent winner of regional Emmy® awards. MPT's commitment to educators, parents, caregivers, and learners of all ages is delivered through instructional events and [Thinkport.org](http://Thinkport.org). MPT's year-round community engagement activities connect viewers with resources on a wide range of topics. For more information visit [mpt.org](http://mpt.org).