

# *Town of Odessa*

## PROCLAMATION

### IN OBSERVANCE OF THOMAS GARRETT AND HARRIET TUBMAN DAY

**WHEREAS**, slavery was practiced legally in the State of Delaware during the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries; and

**WHEREAS**, legislation at State and Federal levels recognized the right of individuals to own slaves as personal chattel, but also established penalties for stealing, aiding or abetting runaway slaves; and

**WHEREAS**, many Delawareans supported their right to own slaves while others reflected their dislike of slavery by signing legislative petitions to abolish this practice or wrote manumission documents freeing their slaves; and

**WHEREAS**, slavery continued in the United States until twenty-seven of the thirty-six states ratified the Thirteenth Amendment on December 18, 1865; and

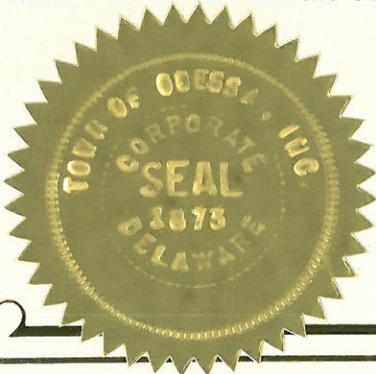
**WHEREAS**, today we acknowledge the persistence of individuals, such as Thomas Garrett and Harriet Tubman, who willingly helped runaway slaves find a path to freedom and accepted legal and personal consequences for aiding and abetting runaway slaves throughout their lives because they believed that man had a right to pursue life as freemen and women; and

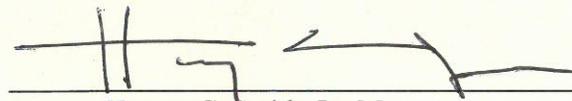
**WHEREAS**, we also honor the historical significance of events in Delaware known as the true and dramatic escape of the Dover Eight from Dover Jail, March 1857, and those eight are known to us as Henry Predaux, Thomas Elliott, Denard Hughes, James and Lavinia Woolfley, Bill and Emily Kiah, and one unidentified eighth person. Six of those eight did safely escape from slavery and descendant Syl Woolford and his family, are part of the Delaware community today.

**NOW, THEREFORE, WE**, Mayor and Council of the Town of Odessa, do hereby declare March 10, 2026.

### *Thomas Garrett and Harriet Tubman Day*

In the Town of Odessa and urge all Delawareans to honor the abolitionists and former slaves in this state and the courageous actions they each took to become truly free men and women of the State of Delaware and the United States of America.



  
Harvey C. Smith, Jr., Mayor

Proclaimed this 2<sup>nd</sup> day of March 2026