



# The Connecticut Freedom Trail

documents the struggle toward freedom. This trail designates sites that celebrate the struggle for justice and equality that continues in the 21st century. Sites depict the efforts, in all their forms, of the state's African American community and all the communities that championed the goals of universal freedom and human dignity.

## One Sentence Summary: Avon's Freedom Seeker – Pvt. Leverett Holden, CT 29th

### Site Information:

Name of site (if applicable): East Avon Cemetery

Address: Behind 6 West Main Street (The Avon Congregational Church)

City: Avon State: CT Zip: 06001

### Property owner:

Name: East Avon Cemetery Association

Address: c/o Otto Ruppert, 270 Nod Road

City: Avon State: CT Zip: 06001

Phone: Contact: Terri Wilson 860-798-0918 (has permission to speak for Otto Ruppert)

E-Mail: twilson6017@gmail.com

### General information:

Present use of property: Cemetery

Age of property: unknown, but oldest grave is dated 1782, most begin around 1810

Open to Public: Yes  No  Visible from the Public Road: Yes  No

### Type of site (check one):

Freedom Trail

Underground Railroad

Amistad

Concept of Freedom

### Contact information of the individual or organization presenting application:

Name: Terri Wilson

Address: 64 Mountain View Avenue

City: Avon State: CT Zip: 06001

Phone: 860-798-0918

E-Mail: twilson6017@gmail.com

Longitude and Latitude of building or site to be included on the Connecticut Freedom Trail for future GPS mapping: Located behind: 41° 48' 36" N 72° 49' 52" W

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## Documentation for inclusion (include sources):

Attached additional sheets if necessary.

Attached are the following documents to support the application:

1. Power Point about Pvt. Leverett Holden compiled through years of research by Terri Wilson, Avon. The presentation has been given at various local locations over the past decade. It is updated as new information is discovered. (Terri is also president of the Avon Historical Society)
2. Article from *TODAY Magazine* (Feb. 2020), a magazine for residents of the Farmington Valley towns, with article about Pvt. Holden's gravesite.
3. Flyer and photos from a ceremony in 2015 to bring the CT 29<sup>th</sup> regimental flag out of the cellar of the State Capitol and put on permanent display in the LOB. Descendants of the CT 29<sup>th</sup> were present for the event. Terri used Pvt. Holden's gravesite as an example of soldiers from the CT 29<sup>th</sup> who were Freedom seekers.
4. A CD with photos of the gravesite location showing location behind The Avon Congregational Church which is located in the center of Avon at Routes 10 and 44.

## Additional relevant information:

Realizing that Pvt. Holden is only one of over 900 Freedom seekers from CT who fought in the US Civil War, it is fitting that his grave should be recognized for just what the CT 29<sup>th</sup> represents during that time in America's history. Avon saw 10% of the male population participate in this struggle, but only one was a Freedom seeker, Pvt. Holden, who joined as soon as he could, to help others enjoy the freedom he had living in Connecticut.

Pvt. Holden has a few "firsts" which are outlined in the attached power point. Winning this nomination will give him another – the "first" person on the CFT from Avon!

The East Avon Cemetery (on the map called Avon Center Cemetery) has granted verbal permission for Terri Wilson to apply for this nomination and agrees to the plaque being placed next to his gravestone. Terri will work on a more descriptive plaque to be placed there and will raise the funds for its purchase and placement at a later date.



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### Photographs:

Color photographs (in the form of a CD) and map are a requirement. The photographs should include: a CONTEXT image (depicting the location of the site, such as, an aerial view, streetscape, neighborhood or city map); front, back, and side views, a 3/4 view, pertinent interior views, and any other views or details that are important to explaining the nature of the nomination.

### Historic Designations:

Is the project site recognized for its architectural/cultural/historical significance by any of the following designation program? (Check all that apply.)

	Yes	No
National Historic Landmark	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
National Register of Historic Places	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Individually listed - <i>The Aron Congregational Church next to East Aron Cemetery is on National Register as individually listed.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Contributing to a District	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
District Name: _____		
State Register of Historic Places	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Individually listed	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Contributing to a District	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
District Name: _____		
Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Historic American Engineering Record (HAER)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Other: (specify) _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Signature of Applicant: Tami Wilson

Date of Submission: 12-21-2022

## REFERENCES

- ☞ African American Civil War Museum, Washington, DC
- ☞ Avon Free Public Library, Marian Hunter History Room, especially Ann Emerson (now retired) reference librarian
- ☞ “Avon, Connecticut...an historical story,” by Francis MacKie, 1988
- ☞ “Out of the Briars” an autobiography and sketch of the 29<sup>th</sup> CT Volunteers, A. H. Newton, D.D., 1923
- ☞ “A Sketch of the 29<sup>th</sup> Regiment of Connecticut Colored Troops,” J.J. Hill, 1867
- ☞ “Connecticut in the American Civil War,” by Matthew Warshauer, 2011
- ☞ “American to the Backbone: The Life of James W.C. Pennington,” by Christopher L. Webber, 2011
- ☞ National Archives & Library of Congress, photos of civil war soldiers
- ☞ Hartford Preservation Alliance Magazine, Feb. 2009
- ☞ Connecticut State Library, especially staff member Kevin Johnson who portrays William Webb of the CT 29<sup>th</sup>, and is a scholar on this topic
- ☞ “Hartford Daily Courant” (Democrat Press) online
- ☞ “Hartford Times” (Republican Press) limited online
- ☞ Variety of U.S. Census data available on the internet
- ☞ National Park Service – information on Union graves