



THE CONDUCTOR

(Fall 2008 – No. 24)



UNDERGROUND
RAILROAD
NETWORK TO FREEDOM

New NCR Network to Freedom Members

The Site of John Little's Manor House (DC) in Kalorama Park was the residence of freedom seeker Hortense Prout who was found in a Union army camp.

The Northampton Slave Quarters and Archaeological Park (Prince George's County, Maryland) was the starting point for eight bondsmen escaping from the Sprigg family.

The Freedom Site for Emily Plummer (Prince George's County, Maryland) is now called Riversdale, and was where her husband brought her back from jail in Baltimore.

NATIONAL HARRIET TUBMAN PARKS APPROACHING REALITY



Tubman's House in Auburn

The momentum toward national commemoration of Harriet Tubman is growing. Along with Frederick Douglass, Harriet Tubman is a bigger-than-life figure identified with the Underground Railroad and known by school children across the United States.

Despite the fact that the Harriet Tubman Special Resource Study has not yet been presented by NPS to Congress, a bill to establish two NPS units has been introduced to Congress. On August 1, 2008, US Senators Benjamin L. Cardin and Barbara A. Mikulski from Maryland joined Senators Hilary Rodham Clinton and Charles Schumer from New York in sponsoring draft Senate legislation to honor Harriet Tubman. Comparable draft legislation has been introduced into the House of Representatives by Representative Michael Arcuri (New York). The Harriet Tubman National Historical Park and the Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad National Historical Park Act would establish two parks documenting Tubman's early life and the end of her life. The Harriet Tubman National Historical Park on the Eastern Shore of Maryland would include significant landscapes in Dorchester, Caroline and Talbot Counties evocative of the early life and years of conducting friends and relatives to freedom. All

acreage is within Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge or is private property adjoining the refuge. The Harriet Tubman National Historical Park in upper New York State would include Tubman's home, the Home for the Aged she founded, the local AME Zion Church, and the cemetery where she is buried.

The Senate bill authorizes \$11 million for the Maryland park for construction of the Harriet Tubman State Park Visitors Center to interpret the life of Harriet Tubman. Network to Freedom's SER Manager Barbara Tagger has been on detail to help interpretive planning. Some money will also go for purchase of land and easements. For New York the bill authorizes \$7.5 million for preservation and restoration of the structures in Auburn, New York. To stimulate new research on Harriet Tubman and her epoch, the bill includes a new \$200,000 grant program for research by Historically Black Colleges and Universities.



Mary Todd Lincoln Dress
Made by Elizabeth Keckley



Antislavery Medallion, Wedgewood, 1787

A SMITHSONIAN FAVORITE RE-OPENS

After two years, the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History will open its doors to the public on Friday, November 21, 2008, providing a new look at Mrs. Keckley's gown made for Mrs. Lincoln, and at the White House copy of President Lincoln's Gettysburg Address. The reopening will mark the completion of an \$85 million renovation of the building's central core, transforming the museum's architecture and reorganizing and renewing the presentation of its extensive collections. If you cannot wait for the reopening, you can search the collections by filling in the blank at the top right side of

<http://americanhistory.si.edu/exhibitions/>

Slave Shackle



TEN YEARS OF SUCCESS FOR THE NETWORK TO FREEDOM PROGRAM



The vibrant National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom (“Network to Freedom”) marked the tenth anniversary of its enabling legislation, signed by Congress in July 1998. The program has accomplished much in ten years, as demonstrated at the recent conference, “On the Right Track: Celebrating Ten Years of Network to Freedom Initiatives.” The most powerful result of the Network to Freedom has been the work of community partners, state and local governments, and Federal agencies to embrace and make better known the mosaic of the resistance to slavery through flight all over the United States.

The program’s partner, the Friends of the Network to Freedom Association, Inc., under the leadership of Alicestyne Adams of Kentucky, presented the conference on September 15-20, 2008. Philadelphia Mayor Michael Nutter and NPS Northeast Regional Director Dennis Reidenbach welcomed those attending. As the site of

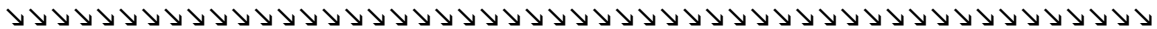
the Network to Freedom’s official launch in 2000, Philadelphia was a fitting locale to celebrate the tenth anniversary. To show continuing support, former NPS director Robert Stanton and two members of the Underground Railroad Special Resource Study Advisory Committee—Glennette Tilley Turner and Dr. Thomas Battle—joined the conference.

The conference highlighted the breadth of the Underground Railroad history represented by the over 370 sites, programs, and facilities of the Network to Freedom. Noted keynote speakers included Gary Nash, Lorene Carey, Julie Roy Jeffries, and John McKivigan. Stories of freedom seekers from parks were illustrated by rangers from Independence NHP, Hampton NHS and New Bedford NHS. Panels covered the Christiana [PA] Riot of 1851, the Maryland Office of Tourism’s initiative on freedom seekers from the Eastern Shore, and incidents of escape from slavery in the Tidewater Virginia area. The Saturday research tour in Philadelphia included premier Network to Freedom research facilities—the Mid-Atlantic branch of the National Archives and the Historical Society of Pennsylvania—and the Library Company and the Charles Blockson Collection at Temple University. Conference attendees praised the efforts of the Friends association and the Network to Freedom in organizing a stimulating and collegial event.

PLAN FOR COMMEMORATION OF THE ALEXANDRIA CONTRABANDS AND FREEDMEN’S CEMETERY



The City of Alexandria is pleased to announce the winner of the Contrabands and Freedmen’s Cemetery Memorial Design Competition for the memorial which will be dedicated in 2010. The project is funded by Save America’s Treasures, the state Department of Transportation, and the Federal Highway Administration. Alexandria architect C.J. Howard won first place. In addition to receiving a \$10,000 first place prize, Howard’s design will be developed into a detailed site design with a \$1.5 to \$2 million construction budget. C. J. Howard developed the winning design as a fitting tribute to those who escaped slavery, and as a lasting memorial for future generations. Over two hundred design submissions were collected from



HERITAGE AWARDS

The Maryland Heritage Areas Authority this year awarded 58 grants worth over \$3.1 million to nonprofit organizations, museums, and local governments. The authority was formed in 1996 as part of the Maryland Department of Planning to revitalize communities through heritage tourism and small business development. Maryland “Heritage areas” are geographic areas or regions with a distinctive sense of place embodied in their historic buildings, neighborhoods, traditions, and natural features. After a multi-step process of recognition to become a Maryland Certified Heritage Area, communities benefit from eligibility for special

architects, landscape architects, artists, students, and the general public. The memorial will honor 1800 individuals who escaped slavery by fleeing to Alexandria during the Civil War, and who were buried in Contrabands and Freedmen’s Cemetery between 1864-1869. The three-acre site is located at the southwest corner of Church and South Washington Streets in Alexandria. For more information on the top competing designs, visit <http://www.alexandriava.gov/freedmens>.

The process by which the cemetery, a Network to Freedom member, was re-discovered, documented, and preserved has been a joint and time-consuming effort. It is 139 years after the cemetery was abandoned. In 1955 a gasoline station was built on part of the site. It is 21 years since T. Michael Miller, Alexandria City Historian, rediscovered the cemetery in 1987, and 14 years since Wesley Pippenger published his transcription of the names of all the people buried in the cemetery. It was 11 years ago that Lillie Finklea read a newspaper article about the cemetery, and she and Louise Massaoud started the movement to create a memorial on public land. The newspaper notice appeared as a result of the Woodrow Wilson Bridge Project.

project grants and loan assistance for acquisition, development, and public interpretation, as well as tax incentives for the rehabilitation of historic buildings. The projects support economic development through heritage tourism, that is, travel to experience places and activities that authentically represent the people of the past and present. An example is Maryland State Tourism’s initiative to commemorate the Underground Railroad. This year’s grants went to projects in 11 Certified Heritage Areas. One of note was \$50,000 for the Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad Interpretative Plan.

HAVE YOUR OWN COPY OF THE FAMOUS ANTI-SLAVERY BROADSIDE



It was issued by the American Anti-slavery Society in 1836 to further the campaign to persuade Congress to abolish slavery in DC (which still included Alexandria). The broadside includes images of a coffle of bondsmen passing the Capitol and of the Franklin & Armfield Slave Pen on Duke Street in Alexandria. The sepia-toned reproduction (18 x 25 inches) is slightly smaller than the original. Contact Special Collections, Alexandria Library, Alexandria, VA 22314-2420 or 703-838-4577 x213. Cost is \$12.00 (retail) or \$7.20 (with a minimum purchase of 10).

PEOPLE.....

- Death of Dr. Walter B. Hill, Jr., premier Black history expert and senior archivist at the National Archives, College Park, Maryland.
- Retirement of Susan Soderberg, Department of Planning, Maryland-National Capital Park Planning Commission, Montgomery County. She nominated several members to the Network to Freedom, including the site where Josiah Henson lived.

BOOK REVIEW

Don't Carry Me Back! Narratives by Former Virginia Slaves, edited by Maurice Duke (Dietz Press, 1995), is a useful compendium of excerpts from the stories of a variety of people formerly enslaved in Virginia. The authors range from those well known – Henry “Box” Brown, Isaac Jefferson, and Austin Steward, to those little known, like Noah Davis, William Grimes, and James L. Smith. Their places of enslavement included Franklin, King George, Prince William, and Albermarle Counties, and the cities of Fredericksburg, Richmond, and Petersburg. Most sources were published as independent “slave narratives,” and most, though out of print and hard to find, are available on “First-Person Narratives,” part of “Documenting the American South” (see <http://docsouth.unc.edu/fpn/>).

INTERPRETATION CORNER

Oney Judge Staines was enslaved by Martha Washington, and served as her personal servant until she escaped to New Hampshire when she accompanied the Washingtons to live in Philadelphia. For those interested in more information, a short bibliography follows.

Blassingame, John W. *Slave Testimony*. (Louisiana, 1977). See interview with Mrs. Staines .

Decatur, Stephen, Jr. *Private Affairs of George Washington*. (Boston, 1933). See Household Account books kept by Tobias Lear, principal secretary for the President. April 1789-December 1792.

Fitzpatrick, John W. *Writings of George Washington 35* (1940). See correspondence of 1796.

Hirschfeld, Fritz. *George Washington and Slavery: A Documentary Portrayal*. (Columbia, Missouri, 1997). See 1796 letters with commentary and analysis.

Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography 29, 30, 31 (1905-07). See household Account Books 1793-1797.

Wienczek, Henry. *An Imperfect God: George Washington and His Slaves*. (New York, 2003).

<http://www.ushistory.org/presidentshouse/slaves/oneyinterview.htm>

OPPORTUNITIES

- Call for proposals for workshops, sessions, and tours for the Preservation and Revitalization Conference, May 28-29, 2009, Baltimore, MD. Proposals should showcase current issues and best practices in preservation within Maryland's diverse communities. Deadline is November 7. Contact Jessica Feldt, Preservation Maryland, at jfeldt@preservationmaryland.org.
- Call for Papers, "John Brown Remembered: 150th Anniversary of the Raid on Harpers Ferry," October 14-17, 2009, Harpers Ferry National Historical Park. Submit proposals to: Dr. Peggy A. Russo, 1 Campus Drive, Penn State University, Mont Alto, PA 17237, (717) 749-6231 or u7k@psu.edu.
- To reserve a table at the History Network (DC Historical Studies Conference), lunchtime on Friday, November 14, contact Matthew Gilmore (dchist@hotmail.com) or Leslie White (lwhite@historydc.org) by Friday, October 31, 2008.
- Call for presentations, "American Culture, American Democracy," Organization of American Historians meeting, April 7-10, 2010, Hilton Washington, Washington, DC. Proposals should be submitted electronically to the OAH Proposal System - <http://db.oah.org:8080/dbproject/login.jsp> - beginning October 1, 2008. Please download proposal system instructions before beginning your submission. (<http://www.oah.org/meetings/2009/instructions.rtf>). The deadline is February 15, 2009.
- Submit articles and notices to the National Network to Freedom newsletter at <http://www.nps.gov/history/ugrr/2008august.pdf>. Forward them to Diane_Miller@nps.gov. Deadlines are January 15 and July 15 of each year.

- PNC Foundation subsidizes the PNC Legacy Project. The goal is to fund projects that honor and preserve the history of local communities in Maryland. For more information, visit www.mdhc.org/grants or contact Lydia Woods, Grants and Community Outreach Coordinator, at 410-685-0303. Letters of Inquiry are due: **October 15, 2008**. Invited grant applications due: November 15, 2008.
- Electronic files are now available from the Network to Freedom for the National Junior Ranger Booklet (contact Jenny_Masur@nps.gov) and the Summer National Newsletter (<http://www.nps.gov/ugrr/2008augupdf>).
- *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* will accept articles from non-academic authors if the submissions conform to journal standards in use of documentation and narrative. See <http://www.vahistorical.org/publications/submissions.htm>.

NEW INFORMATION

- Virginia Center for Digital History announces the official launch of “Virginia Emigrants to Liberia Website” at <http://www.vcdh.virginia.edu/liberia>
- “Virginia Heritage” is a consolidated database of guides or finding aids to manuscript and archival collections in selected Virginia repositories. The full text of the finding aids is searchable by keyword and by individual institution. The database is hosted by the University of Virginia at <http://www.lib.virginia.edu/small/vhp/>
- The Burned Records Counties Collection consists of photocopies of court records for localities whose records are no longer extant. The photocopies are made from surviving records of the locality found in court records elsewhere as part of chancery and other locality records-processing projects. Locality, names, record type, and date of document are on the Burned Records Counties Database, made available through the Library of Virginia's website <http://www.lva.virginia.gov/whatwehave/local/lost/>.
- Visit the Gilder Lehrman Institute website www.yale.edu/glc/archive/index.html to see Gilder Lehrman On-line Documents and associated curriculum at <http://www.yale.edu/glc/classroom/index.htm>. One lesson plan is on freedom seeker Harriet Jacobs.



EVENTS

- “Out of Sight: Life and Work of Slaves and Servants in a Georgetown Home,” Wednesday, October 15 at 6:45 p.m., Tudor Place 1644 31st Street NW, Washington DC 20007.
- National Trust for Historic Preservation's National Preservation Conference, Tulsa, OK, October 21-26, 2008.
- “Color in Freedom: Journey Along the Underground Railroad,” David C. Driskell Center, University of Maryland, College Park. Saturday, November 1, 2008, 10. 6 p.m., and Sunday, November 2, 3-5 p.m., ICC Ballroom and lower-level gallery.
- The Mid-Atlantic Regional Archives Conference (MARAC), Crowne Plaza Washington DC–Silver Spring, Silver Spring, MD, November 6-8, 2008. See <http://www.lib.umd.edu/MARAC//conferences/2008/fall08/fall08.html>.
- The Washington, DC, Historical Studies Conference, Historical Society of Washington, DC at the historic Carnegie Library, November 13-15, 2008.

National Park Service website: www.nps.gov



National Park Service
US Department of the Interior

National Capital Region
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The National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom (NTF) was created by Congress in 1998 to honor those who resisted slavery through flight. *The Conductor* was established to inform readers about Underground Railroad history and resource within the National Capital Region. It describes the activities of NTF.

www.cr.nps.gov/ugrr



NPS readers can find past issues of *The Conductor* at “The Conductor Archives”

<http://www.ncr.nps.gov/>

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