



# Independence: The Best Park in History

## Independence Celebrates Independence!



Park-sponsored events for Freedom Week kicked off with the annual performance by the Philly Pops on Independence Mall. Thousands gathered for a free outdoor concert of American music. The weather held out for the Independence Day Ceremony hosted by INHP Superintendent Cynthia MacLeod and Philadelphia Mayor Michael Nutter on the morning of July 4th. This year's morning ceremony included musical performances, historical vignettes by costumed characters, and a salute to local military heroes. In a fun change from previous years, the annual Philadelphia Independence Day Parade kicked off in front of Independence Hall immediately following the ceremony.

That afternoon, the Let Freedom Ring Ceremony, organized and sponsored by the Pennsylvania Society of Sons of the Revolution and the Descendants of the Signers of the Declaration, concluded with the annual ceremonial tapping of the Liberty Bell. This annual bell ringing is a nationwide event,

*From our nation's birthday to Abraham Lincoln's birthday, INDE had it all this Fourth of July! All of the events held in Independence NHP during Freedom Week worked together to create an opportunity to think about the lasting legacy of all the men and women, free and enslaved, who laid the foundations and paved the way over the centuries to create this nation.*

and bells were heard around Philadelphia, around the region, and around the country.

INHP's commemoration of the 233rd anniversary of the Declaration of Independence would not be complete without our annual re-enactment of the first public reading on July 8th. INHP Interpretive



Photo by G. Widman for GPTMC

Ranger Tom Daniels played the role of Colonel John Nixon, who in 1776 read the document to the citizens of Philadelphia. This free event attracted park neighbors and tourists, who took on the roles of both Patriots and Loyalists cheering



or jeering as they followed along with their free copies of the Declaration of Independence. Col. Nixon's copy of the Declaration is on display in the West Wing of Independence Hall.

Along with the NPS co-sponsored events, a number of permitted activities added even more to the Freedom Week events. The Lincoln200 Festival opened on Independence Mall on July 2nd. Kiosks around the Mall provided visitors with an interpretation of "Lincoln: Then and Now." On the afternoon of July 3rd, INHP served as host for a gathering of the Avenging the Ancestors Coalition at the site of the President's House at 6th and Market Streets, who remembered the nine enslaved Africans who lived in the President's House. On the Fourth of July, revelers mingled with a variety of protestors, standing up for issues such as tax rates and religious freedom. This Freedom Week, we seized the opportunity to celebrate and realize the responsibility of independence and the work required to achieve a more perfect union.

## PREPARATORY WORK STARTS AT PRESIDENT'S HOUSE SITE

Kelly/Maiello Management and the Daniel J. Keating Company, the project team for the President's House at 6th and Market Streets in Independence National Historical Park, is preparing the site for its next phase of construction. Site preparation for construction has commenced, including set up of logistics trailer, removal of the current observation stand, erection of temporary fencing and minor excavation. Information about the site (including information about the archeological dig and the history of the house) will be available at the Independence Visitor Center and online at [www.nps.gov/inde](http://www.nps.gov/inde). The site will be fenced off during construction and the viewing platform that has been at the site since 2007 will be removed. Visitors will still be able to view the site from 6th Street or Independence Mall. An announcement with details on construction at the site is expected in mid-August.

*President's House – Freedom and Slavery in Making a New Nation* is an important historic project designed to commemorate the executive mansion of the first two U.S. presidents, George Washington and John Adams, and tell the long-observed story of at least nine enslaved Africans who toiled at the house during Washington's presidency through architecture, landscaping, imagery and interpretive text.

Upon its completion, the President's House project will result in a new permanent outdoor installation on the doorstep of the Liberty Bell Center at 6th & Market Streets. We are targeting July 2010 for project completion.



# The Germantown White House

*The newly refurbished Germantown White House, a unit of Independence NHP, officially reopened in a special event attended by over 200 people on July 10th.*

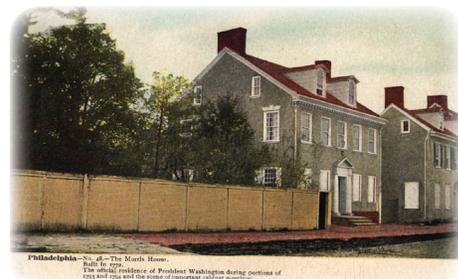


President Washington came to the Germantown White House in 1793 to escape the yellow fever epidemic and returned with the First Family and household in the summer of 1794. The house hosted important cabinet meetings and family gatherings.

Since closing in February, 2008, the site has undergone substantial renovation and the installation of new exhibits designed to interpret President Washington's household, including four enslaved Africans. The Germantown White House was donated to the National Park Service (NPS) by the Morris family and became part of Independence NHP in 1948. The well preserved historic building was initially restored to its 1790s appearance in the 1970s. The site was enhanced with the donation of the neighboring Brinhurst House to the NPS by the Germantown Savings Bank.

This \$4.8 million dollar 18 month project included the extensive

restoration of both historic houses, installation of a geothermal heating/cooling system, new public restrooms and interactive exhibits. Exhibit themes include three centuries of Germantown history, the 1777 Battle of Germantown, President Washington's residency, and the Morris family legacy. Interactive exhibits were designed by the park staff and the Harpers' Ferry Center to appeal to all ages and interests, and provide a glimpse into President Washington's private life while introducing his extended household. The renovation marks a significant investment in the future of historic Germantown. For more information visit: [www.nps.gov/demo](http://www.nps.gov/demo)



Philadelphia - No. 48 - The North House - Built in 1779 - The original residence of President Washington during portions of 1793 with 200 and the scene of important cabinet meetings.

# Seizing Freedom: New Exhibit on Underground Railroad

On July 4th, Independence National Historical Park opened a new exhibit called Seizing Freedom - the story of the Underground Railroad in Philadelphia. The city was a major hub of the Underground Railroad during the 18th and 19th centuries. This exhibit highlights the important role of Philadelphia's large free black community who along with other people and organizations aided the Underground Railroad.

In one panel, the exhibit points out that long after the Declaration of Independence was signed in Independence Hall, the building was used for fugitive slave trials, which freed or denied liberty to enslaved African Americans. One of the park stories is the promise and the paradox

of liberty in the United States. To highlight this paradox, Seizing Freedom opened on the 233rd anniversary of the Declaration of Independence, which includes the famous phrase "all men are created equal."

This exhibit will be on display at the Independence Visitor Center until fall 2010. Then Seizing Freedom will be permanently relocated to a classroom in the Independence Park Institute to help students learn about this important chapter of our history. The park currently offers ranger led and self guided walking tours along with educational programs on the Underground Railroad.

Seizing Freedom was funded by the National Underground Railroad



New Exhibit in the Independence Visitor Center

Network to Freedom and the William Penn Foundation. The exhibit was designed by Cornerstone Spatial Design and Production, Inc. and the project was managed by the Harper's Ferry Center. For more information about the Underground Railroad at the Network to Freedom visit; <http://home.nps.gov/ugrr>.



National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior

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

## Independence National Historical Park

143 South Third Street  
Philadelphia, PA 19106

The National Park Service cares for the special places saved by the American people so that all may experience our heritage.

## National Park Service

## U.S. Department of the Interior

NPS Photographers:  
Park Staff  
G. Widman/GPTMC

## Comments? Write to:

Jane Cowley, INHP  
143 S. Third Street  
Philadelphia, PA 19106  
Phone: (215) 597-0060  
Fax: (215) 597-0042  
Email: [Jane\\_Cowley@nps.gov](mailto:Jane_Cowley@nps.gov)

## Meet the INDE Staff

INDE is proud to welcome Debbie Douglas as our Acting Deputy Superintendent. Debbie joins INDE from the Northeast Regional Office.



Debbie has worked for the Park Service since 1982, serving in positions that have included the grants programs Land and Water Conservation Fund, Urban Parks and Recreation Recovery Programs. Since 1995, she has served as NPS Northeast Region Coordinator for the

Government Performance and Results Act of 1993. Debbie also serves as a Conflict Resolution Specialist. At INDE, Debbie will be helping manage the INDE team, with a focus on employee and labor relations issues.

Debbie is married and has two children. She has lived in Philly for over 30 years, and loves to walk around the city. She enjoys cooking, and in the summer especially enjoys shopping at the many outdoor markets that feature locally grown food.



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## Summer Programs

### Especially for Kids!

**Junior Ranger Induction Ceremony**-- For all children who have completed our Junior Ranger booklet. Pick up booklet at visitor center desk. Daily at 4pm at the Visitor Center.

**Hidden History** – At the Portrait Gallery of the Second Bank. Kids follow clues to uncover the special people in the exhibit then get a reward! Daily, 11 am to 4:30 pm.

### Ranger-Led Walking Tours

**Stories from the Past**- This walk highlights the diverse people and stories of the nation's founding years. Offered daily at 3:30- 4:15 pm. Meet at East Side of the Liberty Bell Center, 6th & Chestnut Streets. The tour on Saturdays will be on the Underground Railroad in Philadelphia.

**History Beneath our Feet** Explore what we learn about the past by digging into the ground. Offered daily from 4:00 – 4:45 pm. Meet in the Independence Visitor Center, near south door.

**Dr. Franklin's Philadelphia Walking Tour**, 45 minute tour. Meet the park ranger in Franklin Court to hear about the many contributions of Benjamin Franklin. Daily at 2:30 pm.

### True Stories of the Underground Railroad

This summer, hear the thrilling stories of those who dared to seize their freedom from slavery using the informal network of supporters called "The Underground Railroad." Actors at Independence National Historical Park bring to life three of the people William Still recorded in his book on the Underground Railroad, in three separate performances. On Friday August 7, meet "Charles Gilbert" who, while waiting to board a ship to Philadelphia, hid under a hotel, in a washhouse and under floorboards before his successful escape. On Friday, August 14, meet "Henry Box Brown" who dared to get nailed into a wooden box and shipped to Philadelphia. On Friday, August 21, meet "Ellen Craft" who traveled as an invalid white man attended by her husband in the role of her enslaved servant. Each program is offered at noon and 3:00 pm at the Independence Visitor Center. These free programs are sponsored by the National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom Program.