



THE CONDUCTOR

The official newsletter of
The National Capital Region
Network to Freedom Program

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Americanists & Public Historians Gather in DC

From 19 - 22 April 2006, some 2,433 registrants including members of the Organization of American Historians (OAH) and the National Council on Public History (NCPH) met in Washington, D.C., to attend a joint annual meeting. Participants could select from some 200 sessions.

Gratifying is the increased interest in the Underground Railroad (UGRR), at least partly as a result of the National UGRR Network to Freedom (NTF). On Wednesday afternoon, the session, "Black Freedom on the Margins of American Slavery," looked at sailors and refugees to British lands. One of the panelists was from Australia. On Thursday morning, "'Called as a Slave, Died as a Free Man', Freedom - seeking Slaves West of the

Mississippi" included three researchers with whom the Midwest Manager of NTF has worked -- Lowell Soike of the State Historical Society of Iowa, Kristin Zapalac from the Missouri State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), and Charlie Bolton of University of Arkansas. James Hill, our Midwest Manager, presided over a fourth session, "Finding Freedom: Self-Determination, Emigration and Transnational Struggle Along the Underground Railroad," including Delores Walters from Northern Kentucky University, Keith Griffler from University of Cincinnati, Cheryl LaRoche, recently graduated from University of Maryland, and Prince Brown from Northern Kentucky University.

In addition to the sessions, there

were opportunities to meet with other UGRR researchers. Since one goal of NTF is to facilitate the interchange of resources and information, the NCR NTF program sponsored a public seminar on Wednesday, April 19, from 7-9 pm, at the Sumner School with a panel of 5 experts who were attending the meeting. Featured were Stan Harrold (author of a book on UGRR in DC), Charlie Bolton (who has received NTF grant for research in Arkansas), Kris Zapalac, Deborah Lee (researcher from Leesburg), and Carol Faulkner (who has worked on women helping contrabands). To follow up, on Thursday, 24 Underground Railroad experts from across the country gathered at dinner in order to get to know each other better.

DAR Investigates Minority Revolutionary War Soldiers

Since 1984, the National Society Daughters of the American Revolution (NSDAR) has been collecting and documenting the names of African American and American Indian individuals who participated in the Revolutionary War. In the 1980s and 1990s NSDAR published booklets with preliminary findings, and in 2001 published a revised and expanded compilation called, [African American and American Indian Patriots of the Revolutionary War](#). The DAR Museum featured an exhibit entitled "Forgotten Patriots" in 2002 and 2003, and NSDAR hosted a symposium on the subject in January 2003. Research continues. Papers from the 2003 symposium will be published in the near future.



Reinactment soldier.
Photo courtesy of
[American Revolution.org](#).

Visit the NSDAR website, by going to www.dar.org; click on DAR Library near the top right. In the menu on the left, click on Publications and Guides and then on Genealogical Research Brochures. The first one is: "Guide to Minority Service Research Files at the DAR Library." The NSDAR welcomes information on additional individuals of African or Native American ancestry who participated in the Revolution. Contact: Eric G. Grundset, Director, DAR Library, NSDAR, 1776 D St., N.W., Washington, DC 20006-5303, 202-879-3313 (phone), 202-879-3227 (fax), grundset@dar.org.

First Ever State Forum in Virginia

The Virginia Forum, April 7-8, 2006, was a conference on Virginia history and related fields held in Winchester, VA, and sponsored by Shenandoah University and the Library of Virginia. Participants proclaimed it a success and called for a repetition next year. Virginia has long lacked a regular forum for ongoing discussion of issues and initiatives pertinent to its history. The Virginia Forum was intended to address this deficiency. Warren R. Hofstra (Shenandoah University) and Brent Tarter (Library of Virginia) were conference chairs.

First Statewide UGRR Brochure is Launched in Maryland on Harriet Tubman's Birthday

Maryland Office of Tourism Development celebrated UGRR history with a new map-guide, launched on Harriet Tubman Day. During the 2-1/2 year partnership with NPS, the number of Maryland designees on the Network to Freedom has grown from 3 to 30 (and there're more expected). To date nearly 14,000 brochures have been distributed. Would you like to see "The Underground Railroad: Maryland's Network to Freedom" brochure?

To obtain a copy, contact mlake@choosemaryland.org or call 410-767-6278.

Chris Densmore Appears at Sandy Spring and Leesburg

Chris Densmore is the archivist at the Friends Historical Library of Swarthmore College, Swarthmore, PA. The collection includes records from historic Friends Meetings in Loudoun Co., VA, and Sandy Spring, MD. He has an informal listserve which keeps people across the Northeast up-to-date on UGRR events. On April 8 Chris spoke on UGRR to a group at the historic Sandy Spring Meetinghouse, as a follow-up to his meeting with UGRR scholars and with the public at the Balch Library in Leesburg on February 4. Anyone interested in being added to his list-serve can contact Chris Densmore directly at cdensmo1@swarthmore.edu.

Washington Post Lauds Emancipation Day Supporter

In his column on April 16, 2006, Washington Post columnist Courtland Milloy praised an unsung hero -- Washingtonian Loretta Carter Hanes. Through her persistence, DC Emancipation Day has been marked with an annual ceremony. The culmination of her efforts was the celebration of the day this year as a city holiday. DC was the only place in the US to have compensated emancipation, and bondsmen in the city received their freedom on April 16, 1862, months before the Emancipation Proclamation. Not surprisingly, for years after the Civil War (1866-1901), joyous parades and speeches marked the day.

MARAC Meets

The Mid- Atlantic Regional Archives Conference (MARAC) held its spring 2006 meeting in downtown Baltimore on April 21-23. MARAC is a volunteer regional consortium of archivists and manuscript curators living and working in MD, DC, and the surrounding states. MARAC's members are employed in a wide variety of settings, including public libraries, local historical societies, religious organizations, corporations, academic, and governmental repositories. The three-day conference included a session featuring three local UGRR experts -- David Terry (formerly at MD State Archives and now at the Reginald Lewis Museum), Don Wilson (RELIC, Bull Run Regional Library) and Karen James (PA SHPO).

U.S. Capitol Historical Society Holds Symposium on Slavery

Well worth attending was "Congress and Slavery in the 1840s and 1850s" on Friday, April 28, at the Russell Senate Office Building. There were six distinguished speakers for the all-day event that probed slavery, a central issue in American history. This symposium was the third installment of the nine-part series directed by constitutional historian Paul Finkelman. Speakers included David Brion Davis, David Blight, Susan Zaeske (on the role of antislavery women's petitions); David Zarefsky (on the annexation of Texas debate), Walter Hill, Jr. (on the riches of the National Archives collection), and Jonathan Earle (on Saturday evening soirees at the home of National Era editor Gamaliel Bailey).

Network To Freedom Nominations, Round 11

As a result of the latest public review of nominations to the NTF, held in Miami, Florida, in mid- March, there are two new members located in our region. One is a DC Heritage Trail marker on the Pearl Escape, marking the approximate spot at the DC Waterfront, at 7th & Water, SW., where the Pearl was tied up. Over 70 freedom seekers boarded the ship, which was unfortunately apprehended near Point Lookout, MD, and brought back to DC. Many of

the freedom seekers were punished by sale south. The other new member is the Jane Sween Library at the Montgomery Co. Historical Society, Rockville, MD. That library is a good place to start research on UGRR in Montgomery Co.

One of the most exciting developments of NTF is that as the number of members increase, NTF has more sites which connect stories. In this

latest round, Gorsuch Tavern (Baltimore Co.) became the fourth site related to the story of the Christiana Resistance, led by William Parker. Park was enslaved at Roedown (Anne Arundel Co.) and led the opposition to the recapture of 5 bondsmen at Christiana, PA; the resisters were tried and acquitted at Independence Hall at Independence NHP. The leaders fled to Canada, providing an international connection.



Uncle Tom's Cabin. Photo courtesy of Washington Post.com.

Montgomery Co., MD, recently pulled off a preservation coup by the purchase of what is being called "Uncle Tom's Cabin" at 11420 Old Georgetown Road. The price of acquisition by the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission was one million dollars, paid to the heirs of Hildegard Mallet-Prevost. The purchase consists of what is left of the Isaac Riley plantation -- a one-acre

plot with a two-story residence, including an attached cabin. It is thought that the cabin served as the kitchen where Josiah Henson sometimes slept.

This purchase was a rare opportunity to rescue an historic site from ever-increasing development. The Isaac Riley plantation was the home of Josiah Henson (1789-1883), a model for Harriet Beecher Stowe's "Uncle Tom" character in Uncle Tom's Cabin (1852). Josiah Henson became manager of the Riley's plantation. Despite popular

Uncle Tom's Cabin Purchased by Montgomery County, MD

opinion, Henson was more than a model for a literary character from which was derived a stereotype. He published several versions of his autobiography (the first, 1849), and became the leader of the black settlement, Dawn, in Canada. His views on seeking freedom changed over time - he chaperoned his fellow bondsmen to continued enslavement in Kentucky when his master was moving, resisting abolitionists. Later, however, he led his wife and others to Canada to escape slavery. Eventually the site will be open to the public to honor Josiah Henson.

Chestertown Maryland Celebrates Its 300th Anniversary

Chestertown, MD, in Kent Co., celebrated its 300th anniversary. Under Adam Goodheart's leadership, the Starr Center for the American Experience, Washington College, organized the Chestertown History Weekend on April 21-22. As part of the event, Professor Carol Wilson of the college chaired an UGRR panel at the downtown Prince Theater, "Escape from Kent County: Myths, Realities, and Local Heroes of the Underground Railroad." She is author of *Freedom at Risk: The Kidnapping of Free Blacks in America*. The panel consisted of: Kent County News editor Kevin Hemstock speaking on James Bowers; Lamar Wilson from Banneker- Douglass Museum on MD-born hero Henry Highland Garnet; and student Albin Kowalewski on free blacks in Kent Co. in the early national period. About 60 people attended. It is a good beginning to identification of UGRR history in the county. Let's hope researchers follow up!

Ask a Preservationist

Dear Preservationist,

How should I treat historic tombstones being used for documentation?

Jane Q. Public



Take A Gentle Approach.

Do not apply anything -- flour, shaving cream, etc. -- on a tombstone, as it may add to its deterioration. Never take a tombstone rubbing, because that, too, may cause damage. Take a photo of the stone, in black and white - that often brings out the subtleties of the writing on the stone. Use two people, one holding a camera, the other a mirror. The one with the mirror adjusts the reflection to create a light over the stone at an acute angle (a flashlight can be added to add light to the reflection). When you've gotten a good contrast between the stone's depth of carving and the reflective light, take your picture (without a flash).

Interpreter's Corner: *Do you agree?*

"The greatest 17th century Virginian was the first African slave who ran away from his owner. Obviously, this meant slavery was not going to be 100 percent effective."

Prof. Ervin L. Jordan Jr., University of Virginia, Chairman, Virginia Museum of Natural History Board of Trustees, 2004- 2006, VA Historical Society history listserv.

NCR UGRR PARK UPDATES & ACTIVITIES

People

Jackie Davis is on detail in the Director's Office.... Kathy Kupper is leaving the C&O Canal and her canal boat and mules for the Washington Office of Communication and Public Affairs. Good luck!

Help Commemorate The Niagara Movement

The UGRR is considered the precursor of the modern Civil Rights movement. Volunteer for the Centennial Commemoration of the Niagara Movement at Harpers Ferry, August 18-20, 2006. Contact: David Fox
Park Ranger & Volunteer Coordinator,
Division of Interpretation,
Harpers Ferry National Historical Park
P.O. Box 65
Harpers Ferry, WV 25425
(304) 535-6282
david_fox@nps.gov

MD Humanities Council

Have a great idea for a Humanities program to reach the general public? Opportunity Grants proposals (up to \$1,200) are accepted on a rolling basis. They must be submitted 6 weeks before any project activities begin. Don't hesitate to contact Stephen Hardy at 410-685-4182 or shardy@mdhc.org

NCR Network to Freedom Reunion

This past winter, as I looked out the window and saw the snow fall, I pondered how we could get NTF members in NCR to work together more effectively. How can I encourage you to share information and resources, co-propose grants, and jointly sponsor interpretation and celebration of local UGRR history? To recruit more applicants to NTF? I need some ideas from you all.

I propose a summer workshop or mini-conference for some face-to-face networking of all NCR NTF members and allies. We may also want to improvise an electronic newsletter. Please send suggestions to jenny_masur@nps.gov.

The NCR Manager, National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom Program.

Save Our History Grants

The deadline for submitting an application for the 2006-2007 cycle is Friday, June 2nd, 2006. For updated guidelines and criteria and to apply, please visit:

http://www.saveourhistory.com/pres_or_g/index.html.

ANNOUNCEMENTS & CALENDAR EVENTS

Websites

The Rockefeller Library at Colonial Williamsburg provides on-line access to the Virginia Gazette index AND digitized images of the pages indexed. Check out <http://research.history.org/JDRLibrary.cfm>

Finding aids for the first 2 volumes of the Dictionary of Virginia Biography are at: <http://www.lva.lib.va.us/whatwedo/pubs/dvb/classind/index.htm>
(Volume 3, containing 471 biographies and covering surnames "Caperton through Daniels," will appear later this year.)

Accessible Archives, Inc., a publisher of electronic full-text searchable historical databases, announces the release of: "**Maryland County Histories**" as a part of the "**American County Histories to 1900**" series. This on-line database contains over 6,500 pages of text and plates, from Maryland counties. Accessible Archives also has a useful database on 19th abolitionist and African American newspapers (including the National Era in DC).

MARIE TYLER MCGRAW's Underground Railroad study on Petersburg is posted at http://www.cr.nps.gov/history/online_books/pete/ugrr.pdf, thanks to NPS historian Harry Butowsky.

ALEXANDRIA LIBRARY, SPECIAL COLLECTIONS, has in its manuscript archive some 200+ collections totalling almost 900 boxes. Not only is there online access to the collection with a subject index, but now there's a web page linking finding aids to the subject index.

http://www.alexandria.lib.va.us/lhsc_online_collection_guides/archive/archives_index.html

Call For Papers & Articles

Papers: 2007 Conference, Consortium on the Revolutionary Era (CRE)

CRE is a venue for traditional revolutionary history and comparative efforts. Sessions will focus on Europe and elsewhere in the Atlantic world. The 2007 conference, during March 1-4, will be held at a Westin hotel in Arlington, VA, by the Metro. Proposals for complete sessions (three papers, plus a chair and a commentator) are preferred. The deadline is October 15, 2006.

See <http://revolutionaryeurope.org/>.
Send proposals to : Jennifer Lansbury
Dept History and Art History,
George Mason University,
MSN 3GI, 4400 University Blvd.,
Fairfax, VA 22030
jlansbur@gmu.edu.

Upcoming Conference

Crossroads of War: The Civil War and The Homefront in the Mid- Atlantic Border Region

The Catoctin Center for Regional Studies will host a conference, October 13-14, 2006, on "The Civil War and the Homefront in the Mid- Atlantic. Topics will include civilian life, community studies, the African-American experience, and post-war reconstruction and memory. Contact: Barbara Powell, Catoctin Center for Regional Studies, Frederick Community College, 7932 Opossumtown Pike, Frederick, MD, 21702 or bpowell@frederick.edu.

How do you deal with sensitive issues of slavery and UGRR? Direct your contributions to: Jenny_masur@nps.gov



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U.S. Department of the Interior

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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 Newsletter was established to inform readers about areas of interest as it relates to the NTF program within the National Capital Region.

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