



Network to Freedom



New Bedford, Massachusetts: The First Free Home of Frederick Douglass

By Dr. Laurie Robertson-Lorant, Education Department, UMass Dartmouth, and New Bedford Historical Society

On February 10, 2008 the New Bedford Historical Society celebrated the 9th Annual Frederick Douglass Community Read-a-thon. Over 300 members of the New Bedford, MA community including school children and elected officials turned out to celebrate New Bedford's role as the first free home of Frederick Douglass. The New Bedford Historical Society, whose mission is "to interpret, research and celebrate the legacy of African Americans, Cape Verdeans, American Indians, West Indians and other people of color in New Bedford, Massachusetts," organized the first Annual Frederick Douglass Community Read-a-Thon in 2000 to honor his life and work and provide educational learning experiences for youth.

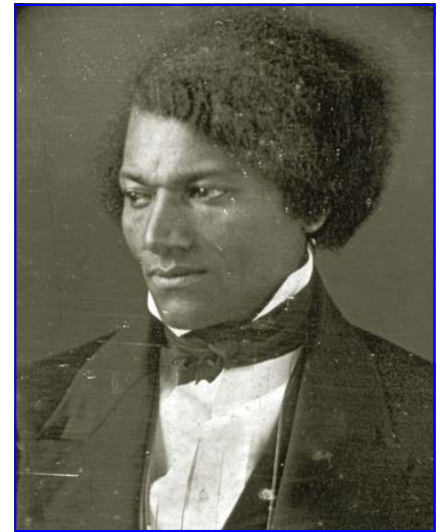
In the fall of 1838, 20-year old Frederick Augustus Washington Bailey--alias Johnson--escaped from a Maryland plantation and settled in New Bedford, Massachusetts, a city known to harbor fugitives from slavery. For a time, he stayed at the home of Nathan and Polly Johnson, who were active members of New Bedford's thriving Underground Railroad. Changing his last name to Douglass, he and his wife Anna began their married life in New Bedford. Douglass earned his first free wages shoveling coal for Ephraim Peabody, the minis-

ter of the First Unitarian Church and soon became a lay preacher.

Spearheaded by African-American abolitionists like the Johnsons and supported by many Quakers, New Bedford's Underground Railroad was so strong and active that the city was known as "the fugitive's Gibraltar." At the slightest hint the bounty-hunting slave catchers had arrived in the city, citizens would ring the bell outside Liberty Hall to warn members of the Black community to go into hiding until the all-clear was sounded.

A virtually self-taught reader and accomplished speaker, Frederick Douglass fought tirelessly for the abolition of slavery and equal rights for women and became one of America's greatest orators and writers. In 1845, he published his *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave*, the first of three autobiographical accounts of his life; he also wrote a novel called *The Heroic Slave* and gave hundreds of brilliant speeches against slavery and other human rights abuses.

Members of the community gather to read excerpts from Douglass' writings arranged chronologically, with short passages describing the historical context written by Melville biographer Laurie Robertson-Lorant, who teaches at UMass Dartmouth; others come just to listen to Douglass' eloquent and inspiring words. Readers include young people between the ages of 7



Frederick Douglass about the time that he lived in New Bedford. Photo courtesy of New Bedford Historical Society

and 17 from local schools and churches as well as adults from all walks of life. This year's young readers included the Young Friends of Frederick Douglass, West Side High School, Dartmouth Friends Sunday School, Nativity Preparatory School, Global Learning Charter Public School and New Bedford High School.

The New Bedford Historical Society is already planning for next year's 10th annual Read-a-Thon. Join us on Sunday, February 11, 2009.

2008 Network to Freedom Grant Awards

<i>NTF listing name</i>	<i>Proposed project name</i>	<i>Grant Amount \$\$</i>	<i>Total Project Amount \$\$</i>
Abyssinian Meeting House	Structural Repair & Stabilization-Abyssinian Meeting house	50,000	206,000
Levi Coffin House State Historic Site	Souls Seeking Safety Visitor Center Interpretive Pgm -Phase II	50,000	465,000
Illinois College--Beecher Hall	Restoration of Windows	15,000	30,000
Choptank River	Interpretive Signage Choptank River	10,000	20,000
John Rankin House	Rankin House Restoration	50,000	426,000
Gerrit Smith Estate National Historic Landmark	Preservation of the Barn on the Gerrit Smith Estate NHL	11,925	23,966
Nelson T. Gant Homestead	Historical Appearance Enhancement (Nelson T. Gant)	11,216	22,432
Maryland's Network to Freedom Map & Guide	Map Guide 2nd Edition	21,500	43,000
Finding a Way to Freedom Driving Tour	Tour Provider Training Program "Harriet Tubman UGRR byway"	21,300	71,300
Mount Clare Museum House	Mount Clare Museum house: A Revised Interpretation	6,670	13,568
1816 Farmington Quaker Meeting House	Restoration of 1816 Farmington Quaker Meetinghouse	50,000	100,750
Maryland State Archives	Beneath the UGRR Flight to Freedom: Montgomery County 1830-1860	50,000	125,352
Colonial Park Edenton, NC	Educational Website about Harriet Ann Jacobs Passage to Freedom Via the Maritime UGRR	5,547	13,122
Milton House	Goodrich Cabin Preservation and Restoration 2008	44,244	88,487
Camp Nelson Civil War Heritage Park	Seizing Freedom: Archaeology of Escaped Slaves at Camp Nelson, KY	22,073	47,369
Fort Donelson National Battlefield	Reflections of the Past: Using Theatre & Graphic Arts to tell the African-American Story at Fort Donelson	12,925	39,179
Forks of the Road Enslavement Market Terminus	Forks of the Roads Interpretive Brochure Full Color	10,000	21,350
William C. Goodridge House	Renovations to the Goodridge Freedom House	50,000	101,852
Fair Hill Burial Ground	Carriageway Restoration Project	15,300	65,600
Quest for Freedom: The UGRR in Philadelphia	The Roots of the UGRR in PA Exhibit	25,000	50,000
Park Church	Park Church Roof Replacement Project	50,000	776,270
Pennsylvania Quest for Freedom, Philadelphia	Philadelphia Quest for Freedom: Living History and Performance Based Programs	50,000	103,000
Downtown Norfolk Waterfront	Waterways of Freedom: Hampton Roads and the Underground Railroad Symposium	14,447	44,172
Constitution Hall--Topeka	"Our Free State Capitol"	3,700	7,400
Sandy Ground Historical Society	Faces of the UGRR	15,000	30,000
Clinton Lake Museum	Cataloging UGRR Collection	6,500	13,000
"Flight to Freedom" at 1st Congregational Church	The Station House--Phase 2 (Flight to Freedom and its Legacy)	27,653	120,000
		700,000	3,068,168

National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom Funding Reauthorization Act of 1997 Becomes Law

By Alan Spears, Legislative Representative,
National Parks Conservation Association

On May 8, 2008, President Bush approved S. 2739, the Consolidated Natural Resources Act of 2008, which includes as Title III, Subtitle G, Section 361, the text of H. R. 1239, a bill to amend the National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom Act of 1998 to authorize additional funding to carry out the Act. The National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom Funding Reauthorization Act of 2007 has become part of Public Law 110-229.

Introduced originally in the House in March 2007 as H.R. 1239, by Representatives Alcee Hastings (D-FL) and Michael Castle (R-DE), the bill passed in July. Senator Joe Biden (D-DE) then introduced a Senate companion bill, S. 1709. Mr. Biden's bill was rolled into a larger omnibus (package) of public lands bills that ultimately came to be known as S. 2739. This bill contained many important and needed provisions for the protection and interpretation of America's national parks. Among the critical national parks provisions in this bill was the National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom Funding Reauthorization Act, which enables the National Park Service (NPS) to preserve sites associated with the Underground Railroad and educate the public about this important part of our nation's history.

A Congressional Mandate to Honor Resistance to Slavery

The National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom program (NTF), was established by the National Park Service in July of 1998 (Public Law 105-203), to increase public knowledge and understanding of the Underground Railroad. The NTF matches NPS resources (time, people, and when available, grant money) with local expertise thus enabling com-

munities, institutions, and national park units all across the United States to more capably tell their part of the Underground Railroad story. The NTF program currently has 355 members (sites, programs, and facilities) active in 30 states and the District of Columbia.



Augustus St. Gaudens memorial
to the 54th Mass Infantry
© Alan Spears/NPCA

Unfortunately, the NTF, the only national program dedicated to the protection, interpretation, and dissemination of Underground Railroad history, has suffered in the past from a funding shortfall. Public Law 110-229 raises the funding authorization for the Network to Freedom program (NTF) from \$500,000 to \$2.5 million (which includes \$500,000 for grants), and its passage was the critical first step in the fight to erase the operational funding deficit that was threatening this vital program.

National Parks Conservation Association--Helping the National Park Service Save African American History

This year, the National Parks Conservation Association (NPCA) successfully lobbied to increase the authorized funding level for the Network to Freedom program. Passage of the National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom Funding Reauthorization Act does not, however, guarantee that Congress will support the Network at the necessary level via the annual appropriations process. As we celebrate this hard fought victory, the struggle to save this unique Park Service program continues, as does our commitment to help protect and preserve this important part of our national heritage. Now that the funding authorization level has been raised, NPCA is working with Congress to see that funds are appropriated.

For more information on how you can get involved, contact Alan Spears at 202-454-3384 or by email at aspears@npca.org.



National Parks Conservation Association®
Protecting Our National Parks for Future Generations®



On the Right Track: Celebrating Ten Years of Network to Freedom Initiatives

Ten years ago, the National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom Act became law. In recognition of this milestone, the Friends of the Network to Freedom Association has devoted this year's annual conference to the theme of "On the Right Track: Ten Years of the Network to Freedom". Philadelphia, the location of so much Underground Railroad activity and of the Network to Freedom launch event on October 12, 2000, was chosen as the site for this year's conference.

Taking advantage of the location, this year's conference will focus on Philadelphia and the mid-Atlantic region. Highlights of the conference include the opportunity to explore Philadelphia and regional Underground Railroad sites and archives through pre- and post-conference tours. There will be four distinguished keynote speakers at the conference:

- **Dr. Gary Nash, Professor of History, University of California, Los Angeles. Dr. Nash is also the Director of the National Center for History in Schools. His many publications include, *Forging Freedom: The Formation of Philadelphia's Black Community, 1720-1840* (Harvard University Press, 1988).**
- **Dr. Julie Roy Jeffrey, Professor of History, Goucher College, in Baltimore, Maryland. Her publications include, *The Great Silent Army of Abolitionism* (UNC Press, 1998), awarded the Choice Award for Academic**

Book of Excellence and honorable mention by the Gilder Lehrman Center at Yale University, Frederick Douglass Prize. Her most recent publication is *Abolitionists Remembered: Antislavery Autobiographies and the Unfinished Work of Emancipation* (UNC Press, 2008).

- **Dr. John R. McKivigan, the Mary O'Brien Gibson Professor of History and editor of the Frederick Douglass Papers, Indiana University-Purdue. Dr. McKivigan's publications include, *The War Against Proslavery Religion: Abolitionism and the Northern Churches* (Cornell University Press, 1984), and *Slavery, Racial, and Cultural Conflict in Antebellum America* (University of Tennessee Press, 2000).**
- **Lorene Cary, senior lecturer in creative writing at the University of Pennsylvania, is the author of four books, and she is currently at work on her fifth. Her most recent book, written for young adults, is *Free!* a collection of twelve true stories of men and women who escaped on the Underground Railroad. *The Price of A Child*, an adult novel of the UGRR, was selected the inaugural One Book One Philadelphia selection in 2003, and read by 40,000 Philadelphians. Cary's first book, published by Knopf in 1991, was *Black Ice*, a memoir of her years first as a black female student, and then teacher, at St. Paul's, an ex-**

clusive New England boarding school.

For more information and to register, check the conference website at www.ugrfriends.org

The Friends of the Network to Freedom Association, Inc. was formed on the campus of Georgetown College in July 2006 as a privately sponsored 501c3 in support of the work of the National Park Service National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom Program and the over 350 national Underground Railroad sites, programs, and facilities the program represents.

The Friends Association is an "inter-network" in advocacy and support of the National Park Service-National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom Program and our membership-at-large. It is our purpose to generate stewardship and financial support for the continued documentation, commemoration, education, preservation, and research connected to the national and international movement known as the Underground Railroad and its historic resistance to enslavement through flight and escape in the Western Hemisphere.

Candidates for Sixteenth Round

The following candidates are being considered for inclusion in the Network to Freedom in the sixteenth round of applications on August 26, 2008 at the Carlo M. DeFerrari Archive (Tuolumne County Archive), 490 Greenley Road, Sonora, California. The public is invited to attend. For further information, please contact Guy Washington at 510-817-1390 or at guy_washington@nps.gov. To comment on the applications, please contact Diane Miller at 402-661-1588 or diane_miller@nps.gov.

DC

- Site of the John Little Farm [site]

Florida

- Fort Mose [site]

Georgia

- National Archives Southeast Region [facility]

Indiana

- Oswell Wright Historic Marker [site]

Maryland

- Northampton Plantation [site]
- Riversdale [site]

Massachusetts

- National Archives and Records Administration, Northeast Region, Boston [facility]

Michigan

- Capt. John Lowry & Sylvia Lowry Gravesites, Lodi Cemetery [site]

New York

- Brooklyn Historical Society

[facility]

- Griffith and Elizabeth Cooper Home, [site]
- Haff-Smith Farm [site]
- New York Historical Society [facility]
- Underground Railroad Programs at the New York Historical Society [program]
- The Utica Rescue at Judge Hayden's Law Offices [site]
- The National Archives and Records Administration, Northeast Region, New York [facility]
- The Underground Railroad Heritage Trail [program]
- Woodlawn Cemetery [site]

North Carolina

- Pathway to Freedom [program]

Ohio

- Hudson Library and Historical Society [facility]

Pennsylvania

- Chambersburg Heritage Center [program]
- City Archives of the city of Philadelphia Department of Records [facility]
- Site of Old Lancaster County Jail [site]
- Mary Ritner Boarding House/John Brown House [site]
- Riverview [site]
- Thaddeus Stevens' Caledonia Iron Furnace Monument [site]

Virginia

- Burial Site of Rev. Leonard A. Black [site]
- Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church [site]
- Portsmouth Waterfront [site]

Wisconsin

- Site of the Samuel Brown Farm [site]

Congratulations to the New Network Listings

The spring 2008 public review meeting for Network to Freedom applications was held in Detroit, Michigan. The regional program manager committee accepted the following 27 listings into the Network, bringing the total to 355.

Arizona

- Passage on the Underground Railroad: A Photographic Journey [program]

California

- Harriet Tubman: Bound for the Promised Land Jazz Oratorio [program]

Delaware

- John Dickinson Plantation [site]

DC

- Site of Leonard Grimes Property [site]

Indiana

- Carnegie Center for Art and History [facility]
- Chapman Harris Home Site [site]

Kentucky

- Underground Railroad Research Institute [program]

Maryland

- Best Farm/L'Hermitage (NPS) [site]
- Carmichael Farm [site]
- Choptank River [site]
- Frederick Douglass Driving Tour of Talbot Co. [program]
- Maryland's Network to Freedom Map & Guide [program]
- Site of Arthur W. Leverton Farm [site]

Massachusetts

- Poets, Shoemakers and Freedom Seekers (NPS) [program]
- Samuel May, Jr., House [site]

New York

- Harriet Tubman Grave [site]
- Samuel & Elizabeth Cuyler [site]
- Waterloo Library & Historical Society [facility]

North Carolina

- Friends Historical Collection, Guilford College [facility]
- Neuse River [site]
- Roanoke River [site]

Pennsylvania

- Cliveden [site]
- Eden Cemetery [site]
- Frederick Douglass Institute [site]
- Freedom in Philadelphia (Philadelphia Doll Museum) [program]
- Underground Railroad Camps, [program]

Virginia

- Brentsville Courthouse and Jail [site]

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NATIONAL
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NETWORK TO FREEDOM

EXPERIENCE YOUR AMERICA



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

**National Underground Railroad Network
to Freedom Program Managers**

NOTE: New Address
National Park Service
601 Riverfront Drive
Omaha, Nebraska 68102
www.cr.nps.gov/ugrr

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FRIENDS OF THE NETWORK TO FREEDOM



THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD ASSOCIATION

Friends of the Network to Freedom Association, Inc.
Underground Railroad Conference

*On the Right Track:
Celebrating Ten Years of
Network to Freedom Initiatives*

**Contribute to the
Newsletter**

Please forward notices,
items of interest, articles, or
topic suggestions for consid-
eration to Diane Miller at
NPS, 601 Riverfront Dr.,
Omaha, Nebraska 68102 or
at diane_miller@nps.gov.

Comments on the newsletter
are also welcome.
Deadlines are January 15 and
July 15.