

# THE CONDUCTOR

(Summer 2010 – No. 28)



## WORKSHOP AT GREENBELT PARK

There is an untold story related to the landscape at Greenbelt Park, a park known for its natural resources. “Celebrating Greenbelt Park and Underground Railroad Connections in Prince George’s County, Maryland” was held on April 22 and 23, 2010, in honor of National Park Week at Greenbelt Park. The program brought out the untold story of the 21 plantations which once existed within Greenbelt Park. The workshop was skillfully organized by Parkranger Dr. Joy Kinard, a recent graduate of Howard University.

There was a full day of speakers, followed the next day by a tour of Prince George’s County sites. The morning panel was called, “Hits and Misses in Researching/Teaching the Underground Railroad.” It included an overview of Underground Railroad history by Patsy Fletcher (DC SHPO), orientation to an important research tool, the Maryland State Archives website by Maya Davis (Maryland State Archives) and, for outreach to children, a video on science and the Underground Railroad (National Air and Space Administration). In the afternoon during “Re-examining Enslavement and Emancipation,” David Terry, director of the Reginald F. Lewis Museum in Baltimore, was passionate about the Underground Railroad. Other distinguished panelists included Dr. Elizabeth Clark-Lewis (Howard University), Dr. Joy Kinard and, from University of Maryland, Dr. Sharon Harley. Dr. Harley, head of the Afro- American Studies Department. Dr. Harley revealed the previously unresearched history of black labor’s role in building the University of Maryland which was recently uncovered by her students.

## EDMONSON SISTERS STATUE INSTALLED BY SLAVE PEN

On May 22, the new statue of Mary and Emily Edmonson was dedicated in Alexandria. The statue is located by the former Bruin Slave Pen, a site on the Network to Freedom, because of its association with the attempted escape on the *Pearl*. Two passengers, the Edmonson sisters, were held in the Bruin Pen until they were redeemed. Because of its location, the area near the road out of Alexandria the pen was convenient for the slave trade. Nearby

was another trading site, the Franklin and Armfield slave office.



## TRAIL OF FREEDOM



Between April and September 1862, as many as 10,000 enslaved African Americans passed through Stafford County en route to freedom, all prior to the Emancipation Proclamation. As part of the Sesquicentennial Civil War observance, a new heritage trail is being created for visitors to retrace the journeys of these freedom-seekers.

Titled the "Trail to Freedom", the trail was formally unveiled in a public ceremony at the Historic Port of Falmouth Park on Saturday, June 19, at 10:00 a.m. At this ceremony, the first wayside exhibits were dedicated at the location marking "The Crossing" of the Rappahannock River by a re-enactor representing Fredericksburg bondsman John Washington. "The Crossing" consists of two signs. One will be erected in Old Mill Park in Fredericksburg, and the other in the Historic Port of Falmouth Park in Stafford. Also on June 19, the trail's website went live:

[www.TrailToFreedom.com](http://www.TrailToFreedom.com).

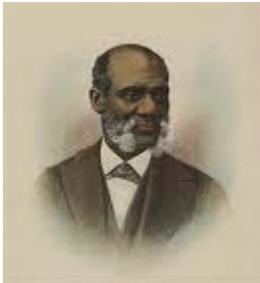
## COMMEMORATION OF THE BUILDERS OF THE CAPITOL

On June 16, 2010, plaques were formally introduced in the Capitol Visitor Center to remember the enslaved workers who built the Capitol. The plaques read:

This original exterior wall was constructed between 1793 and 1800 of sandstone quarried by laborers, including enslaved African Americans who were an important part of the work force that built the United States Capitol.

The ceremony featured moving words from members of Congress remembering those who were hired out to work in all kinds of weather and conditions to build a symbol of democracy. The Concurrent Resolution provided for the plaques in the Visitor Center and a study. Slave Labor Task Force Work Group Chair Rep. John Lewis (GA, Democrat) collaborated with fellow Task Force Member Sen. Blanche Lincoln (AR, Democrat) and other Members and experts to study and then introduced germane legislation in the Congress. Specifically remembered was Philip Reid who worked on the Capitol and the statue of Freedom crowning the Capitol. News articles were written by Jesse J. Holland, the author of [Black Men Built The Capitol: Discovering African American History In and Around Washington, D.C.](#)

## LET YOUR MOTTO BE RESISTANCE



Henry Highland Garnet

“Let Your Motto Be Resistance: African American Portraits” is the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture's inaugural exhibition, now traveling across the US. Guest curator Deborah Willis selected the images from the collection of the National Portrait Gallery ([www.npg.si.edu/exhibit/motto](http://www.npg.si.edu/exhibit/motto)). The exhibit's theme of African American resistance across 150 years of US history was inspired by the words of Henry Highland Garnet, a freedom seeker born on the Eastern Shore and a prominent Presbyterian clergyman. On August 16, 1843, Garnet spoke to a group of northern free blacks and in his frustration, he advocated:

Strike for your lives and liberties....Let your motto be Resistance! Resistance!  
RESISTANCE!...What kind of resistance you...make you must decide by the circumstances  
that surround you....

The exhibition was organized in collaboration with the National Portrait Gallery, and the International Center of Photography.

## LINCOLN'S ELECTION AND WAR COME TO WASHINGTON



On Friday, May 7, 2010, the U.S. Capitol Historical Society presented: "Secession and War Come to Washington." It was 2010's contribution to the series of annual scholarly symposiums directed by historian Paul Finkelman of the Albany Law School. The focus was on crucial moments in 1861, the year of Lincoln's election; the secession crisis; and Congress' response to both. Keynote Speaker James Oakes, (The Graduate Center, CUNY) spoke on the emancipation debate and its role in the secession crisis. Other speakers covered the fight over the 1860 House Speakership, the opinion of the conduct of the Zouaves in battle, war planning, and Lincoln's reaction to secession. One speaker came from as far away as Heidelberg, Germany.



Washington Post

## RECORDER OF DEEDS MOVES

This city doesn't generally treat its old records well or use technology to make them readily available. The Recorder of Deeds will move to a Waterfront location (1101 4th St SW) on June 25, 2010. Unfortunately, records there will be split up, making research difficult. The books will be moved to the DC Archives. The indices stay at the Recorder of Deeds Office, if it is still open. DC's copies of the Land Records have been sent up to the DC Archives. National Archives already has many DC Land Records.

Yet to be decided is the fate of the historic building and its mural. Part of the mural features Frederick Douglass asking Lincoln to let African Americans fight in the Civil War. Ironically, the same building that houses manumission deeds also chronicles a long history of black leadership. Of the dozen oil portraits of former deeds recorders hanging on the halls, only a couple are white officials. Most recorders have been black, starting with abolitionist Frederick Douglass, who was appointed by President

James A. Garfield in 1881. For decades, the title was the highest obtained by any African American in the Federal government.

#### EVENTS

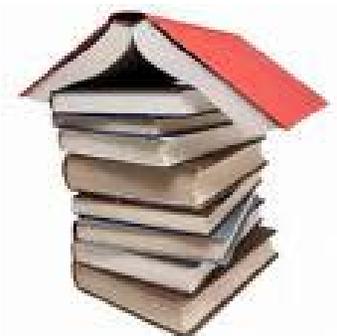
- The Maryland National Capital Park and Planning Commission is holding a free Cemetery Workshop in Prince George's County, on **Saturday, July 17, 2010**, 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m., Union United Methodist Church, 14418 Old Marlboro Pike, Upper Marlboro, MD 20772
- "Battleground for Freedom: The Underground Railroad on the Western Frontier," "2010 National Underground Railroad Conference," **July 28-31**, Capitol Plaza Hotel, Topeka, Kansas
- Conference," **November 4-6, 2010**, The McNeil Center for Early American Studies, Swarthmore and Haverford Colleges. Topics include Quaker abolitionists and roles in abolitionist societies. Visit the conference website at: <http://www.quakersandslavery.org> Fairfax County Cemetery Preservation and Restoration Seminar
- Frying Pan Farm Park, 2709 West Ox Road, Herndon, Virginia **Saturday, October 23 & Sunday, October 24, 2010**. See [www.honorfairfaxcemeteries.org](http://www.honorfairfaxcemeteries.org) for full seminar details. It is free, first come-first served. Reserve 703-437-9101
- "Race, Slavery and the Civil War: The Tough Stuff of American History and Memory," Norfolk State University, **September 24, 2010**. Registration required. If you have questions, please call (804) 786-3591 or email [info@virginiacivilwar.org](mailto:info@virginiacivilwar.org).

#### ELIZABETH KECKLEY'S GRAVE GIVEN TOMBSTONE

Elizabeth Hobbs Keckley was the modiste and confidante of Mary Todd Lincoln, the lonely wife of President Lincoln. Keckley had been enslaved in St. Louis, working as a seamstress to support the owners. She took the opportunity to redeem herself and her son when some clients were willing to loan her money. When she moved to Washington, DC, she obtained an introduction to the wife of Jefferson Davis for whom she began to sew and design clothes, and, ironically, through her to Mary Lincoln. After years of being designer, companion, and friend, Keckley made the mistake of writing a book to defend Lincoln. She lost favor with Mary Todd Lincoln and most of her customers who believed she had betrayed Mary Lincoln's trust. Instead of being hailed as a female author, Keckley had to scramble for a livelihood, and died at a National Home for Destitute Women and Children that she herself had helped to found.

Elizabeth's Keckley's grave at National Harmony Memorial Park remained unmarked until May 2010. The Surratt Society took the lead to place the stone after real estate agent Richard Smyth made public the location of the hitherto "lost" grave. There was a ceremony to celebrate the event.

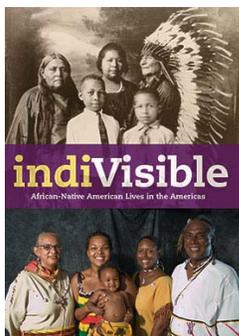
## BOOK CORNER



Just out: Second Edition of Washington at Home: An Illustrated History of Neighborhoods in the Nation's Capital. Editor Kathryn S. Smith has just been released. Book signings in honor of this release have taken place locally.

David Ruggles: A Radical Black Abolitionist and the Underground Railroad in New York City (Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina, 2010) by Graham Russell Gao Hodges, professor at Colgate University, is the first book-length biography of David Ruggles. This important figure, who served as secretary of the New York Vigilance Committee, began his crusade by protesting and documenting kidnapping of free blacks for sale south. For his health he moved to Massachusetts and continued his work.

IndiVisible: African-Native American Lives in the Americas is a book and on-line exhibit produced by the Smithsonian (<http://www.nmai.si.edu/exhibitions/indivisible>) which touch the relationship between African Americans and Indians, including an essay on the rights issue of the Cherokee freedmen, formerly enslaved by tribal members.



## DON'T FORGET THE OLD FAITHFULS

- Debra Newman Ham's African American Mosaic, a Library Congress guide
- Frederic Bancroft's Slave Trading in the Old South, a classic study
- Black Women in America (2 vol), a dictionary of women's biographies
- Dictionary of American Negro Biography, editor, Rayford Logan, an excellent set of profiles
- I Was Born a Slave (2 vol), editor, Yuval Taylor, a compilation of many important slave narratives
- John Blassingame, Slave Testimony, an indispensable, comprehensive compilation of sources

## FYI

- New grant opportunity in African American Heritage for acquisition, construction, and capital improvement of buildings, sites, or communities of historical and cultural importance to the African American experience in Maryland. The program will be administered as a joint partnership of the Maryland Commission on African American History and Culture (MCAAHC) and the Maryland Historical Trust (MHT). General information about the program is now available at [http://mht.maryland.gov/grants\\_africanamerican.html](http://mht.maryland.gov/grants_africanamerican.html). Please note that the application deadline (postmarked) is **July 15th, 2010**.
- Library of Congress Photographs-- this spectacular revamp can now be found at the easy-to-remember address of <http://www.loc.gov/pictures/> See the many images available for downloading. Our new "sharing tool" that can be found at the top of every page in the new catalog, which lets users easily post links to their favorite social media sites.
- To see the test site for the Quakers and Slavery project at Swarthmore, go to: <http://trilogy.brynmawr.edu/speccoll/qstest/>
- Trans-Atlantic Slave database can be found at: <http://www.slavevoyages.org/tast/index.faces>
- The Friends of the Press <<http://www.mdhs.org/support/FOP.html>> of the Maryland Historical Society funded the effort to digitize the 400 back issues of Maryland Historical Magazine (1906 on) and render them in a text-searchable format. Visit our website, <[www.mdhs.org](http://www.mdhs.org)> and click "Search 100 years of the "Maryland Historical Magazine Online" at the top of the homepage.
- National Archives features a new exhibit, "Discovering the Civil War," free; open 10:30-5:00, runs **till September 6, 2010**; the second part opens in November 2010.
- Compare Montgomery Co.'s Uncle Tom's Cabin to the Uncle Tom's Cabin Historic Site in Ontario, Canada <http://www.uncletomscabin.org/> & Rev. Josiah Henson National Historic Person, Canada; <http://www.pc.gc.ca/eng/culture/mhn-bhm/page2.aspx> with the Josiah Henson site in Montgomery County, MD [http://www.montgomeryparks.org/PPSD/Cultural\\_Resources\\_Stewardship/heritage/uncle\\_toms\\_cabin.shtm](http://www.montgomeryparks.org/PPSD/Cultural_Resources_Stewardship/heritage/uncle_toms_cabin.shtm)
- The records relating to the U.S. Penitentiary for the DC, 1829-1862, are part of the records of the Department of the Interior in the US National Archives, Record Group 48.
- University of North Carolina-Greensboro's new Digital Library on American Slavery <http://library.uncg.edu/slavery/> provides the names of more than 83,000 individual slaves from 15 states and the District of Columbia.
- The former plantation, Poplar Hill, in Laurel, is closed until further notice.
- The Library of Virginia and the state Sesquicentennial Commission are partnering to create a statewide online collection of original Civil War manuscripts created 1860-65 still in private hands.

## CALL FOR PAPERS

- Heritage Matters is available online. Submit articles, information on publications, projects, and other notices. Brian D. Joyner, Editor, Heritage Matters, DOI/NationalPark Service, 1849 C Street, NW, (2280), Washington, DC 20240, e-mail: [brian\\_joyner@nps.gov](mailto:brian_joyner@nps.gov), fax: 202.371.2229.
- The Afro-American Historical & Genealogical Society (AAHGS), 2010 Conference Call for Papers, for Annual Conference, 7-10 October 2010, Adelphia, MD. Deadline: **30 July 2010** Afro-American Historical and Genealogical Society, Inc., P. O. Box 73067, Washington, DC 20056-3067
- Virginia Forum, March 25/26, 2011, VA Military Institute and Washington and Lee University, Lexington, Virginia. Submit to [ashworthj@wlu.edu](mailto:ashworthj@wlu.edu) by **15 September 2010**. Inquiries to Theodore C. DeLaney, program chair: [delaneyt@wlu.edu](mailto:delaneyt@wlu.edu)
- The Maryland Historical Magazine Deadline **October 1, 2010** Contact Patricia Dockman Anderson, [panderson@mdhs.org](mailto:panderson@mdhs.org), or Matt Hetrick, [mhetrick@mdhs.org](mailto:mhetrick@mdhs.org)

National Park Service website: [www.nps.gov](http://www.nps.gov)

National Park Service  
US Department of the Interior  
National Capital Region  
1100 Ohio Drive , SW  
Washington, D.C. 20242



***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 (UGRR) history and resource within the National Capital Region. It describes the activities of NTF.***

[www.nps.gov/history/ugrr](http://www.nps.gov/history/ugrr)



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

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



NATIONAL  
UNDERGROUND RAILROAD  
NETWORK TO FREEDOM

Network to Freedom Manager,  
National Capital Region

Jenny Masur, Editor

Comments? Please send them to: [Jenny\\_Masur@nps.gov](mailto:Jenny_Masur@nps.gov)  
National Park Service website: [www.nps.gov](http://www.nps.gov)