



Underground Railroad Free Press®

Independent reporting on today's Underground Railroad

urrfreepress.com

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Editorial

Free Press Enters Underground Railroad Publishing

With publication of *Guide to Freedom: Rediscovering the Underground Railroad in One United States County*, Underground Railroad Free Press has begun publication of selected books on the Underground Railroad.

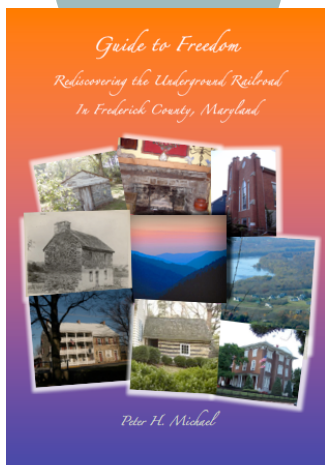
Guide to Freedom and future Free Press books will be published under the imprint of Underground Railroad Free Press Books. Free Press partners with AuthorHouse, an Indianapolis publisher, for book registration, printing, distribution and marketing.

Authors interested in having their Underground Railroad-related works published may contact publisher@urrfreepress.com.

Underground Railroad Free Press Books' first publication, *Guide to Freedom*, was authored by Free Press publisher Peter H. Michael and presents what has been uncovered over the past few years about the sites and personages of the Underground Railroad in Frederick County, Maryland, where Free Press is headquartered.

Guide to Freedom describes over 60 Underground Railroad safe-houses and routes in the county, and several of national importance nearby including the original Uncle Tom's Cabin and the site of the Christiana Uprising. The author's ancestors were safe-house operators at the Frederick County farm where he lives.

Guide to Freedom may be ordered at Amazon.com or at your favorite book store.



Network to Freedom, Freedom Center Plan Fall Conferences

The annual conferences of two key Underground Railroad organizations will be held in the Fall.

The National Underground Railroad Freedom Center will hold its biennial youth conference November 6-8 in Cincinnati. The conference theme is "Lincoln's Era: the Role of Religion." The Freedom Center holds its regular conferences and its youth conferences in alternating years. Visit FreedomCenter.org for more.

The National Park Service Network to Freedom and Friends of the Network to Freedom Association will co-host a September 15-21 conference in Philadelphia.

The conference theme is "On the Right Track: Celebrating Ten Years of Network to Freedom Initiatives" in observance of the tenth anniversary of the Network to Freedom program and 200th anniversary of the end of the Atlantic slave trade.

Friends of the Network to Freedom Association held its inaugural meeting in September, 2007, after which the group elected officers, began drafting bylaws for incorporation and received provisional tax exemption from the IRS. The group's work is coordinated by Georgetown College's Underground Railroad Research Institute. Visit ugrfriends.org for 2008 conference registration and an agenda.

Rate Your Site and List It Online at MapMuse

The main news from the 2008 Underground Railroad Survey (page two) is the emerging use of the Wellman Scale for rating Underground Railroad sites and increased site listing at MapMuse's on-line Underground Railroad map. As more site rating and listing occurs, the more rapidly the Underground Railroad community and general public will have a more extensive and accurate picture of the Underground Railroad.

First > Rate Your Underground Railroad Site

Use the Wellman Scale here to rate likelihood that a claimed site actually was an Underground Railroad site. Visit urrfreepress.com for fuller definitions of the five rating levels below.

Level 1: Story probably not true

Reason to doubt: local Underground Railroad oral tradition with reason to believe it probably untrue. Story assumed not true until proven otherwise.

Level 2: Story possibly true

No reason to doubt but no evidence so far. Rating for sites and people linked to local stories about Underground Railroad involvement that sound reasonable yet lack corroborating evidence.

Level 3: Good chance the story is true

Abolitionist sympathies, abolitionism or African-American background but no direct evidence of Underground Railroad activity. Potential Underground Railroad affiliation backed by oral tradition and/or some evidence of abolitionist activity, e.g., anti-slavery society membership, signatures on antislavery petitions or antislavery church membership.

Freedom Center, State of Ohio, AmEx In Passage to Freedom

Cincinnati's National Underground Railroad Freedom Center and the State of Ohio have launched Passage to Freedom, a ground-breaking program linking the state's Underground Railroad sites.

Ohio's Division of Travel and Tourism has hired the Freedom Center to operate the program on a \$250,000 contract, with American Express providing \$150,000 in additional support.

The program appears to be the most extensive of its kind by any state. Said Freedom Center chief executive Officer Donald W. Murphy, "Passage to

Level 4: Story almost certainly true. Considerable evidence of involvement.

Oral traditions related to specific sources or to groups known to be sympathetic to freedom seekers or evidence of direct involvement with the Underground Railroad. High probability of Underground Railroad involvement but lacking direct primary source evidence. Strong written evidence from others coupled with strong oral tradition make a compelling case.

Level 5: Story almost certainly true. Conclusive evidence of involvement.

Persons or sites identified through oral histories or written sources corroborated specifically by at least one reliable primary source. Strong primary source evidence of Underground Railroad activity: stories about the Underground Railroad that are supported by a primary source recorded by someone who was actually involved.

How Ratings Are Distributed

Application of the Wellman Scale to 625 sites by Dr. Wellman or *Underground Railroad Free Press* had more than 60 percent of sites at Level 2, about a quarter at Level 3 and very few at Levels 1, 4 or 5.

Then > List Your Underground Railroad Site

Preferably after you have assigned a Wellman Scale rating to a site, go to <http://mapmuse.com> and under "Choose an Interest", select Underground Railroad. Then just follow the easy on-screen prompts to list your site and provide information about the site you are listing.

Freedom is the first step in what we eventually hope will be a nationwide tourism promotion effort for Underground Railroad historic sites."

The Passage to Freedom website provides detailed information on Ohio's many Underground Railroad sites. Viewers may plan trips using downloadable maps listing attractions, restaurants, lodging and points of interest. The program also offers interactive kiosks around the state providing site histories, customized maps and local event information.

Visit passagetofreedomohio.com for more.

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2008 Underground Railroad Survey Results

Free Press thanks the many readers and others who participated in the 2008 Underground Railroad Survey, our second annual survey of the international Underground Railroad community. Visit our web site at urrfreepress.com to view or download full reports of the 2008 and 2007 surveys.

2008's Underground Railroad Community: Involved, Well-Educated and With Roots

Those in the Underground Railroad community have an average of 11.5 years' involvement, with more than three of every four having visited an Underground Railroad site and more than a third descended from an Underground Railroad figure. The most typical professional involvements are site owners and operators, researchers and writers, and civil servants. Nearly three-fourths continued education beyond the bachelor's degree. Professional titles run the gamut from clerks to CEOs with the bulk in middle management, associate and professional positions. Every sixth respondent is a CEO.

Familiarity Holds Steady

The Underground Railroad community's rating of its Underground Railroad knowledge remains above average but not high, the same as in 2007.

News Sources Shift In Readership

Main sources of Underground Railroad information continue to be the internet, books and articles. Among five news publications, *Underground Railroad Free Press* is again the leading source, having grown from a 49-percent market share in 2007 to 55 percent in 2008. The Network to Freedom *Conductor* and the Menare Foundation newsletter tied for second at 19 percent in the 2008 survey.

Public Perceptions of Major Underground Railroad Institutions Undergo a Realignment

Opinions on the seven major modern Underground Railroad organizations underwent a fairly substantial repositioning between 2007 and 2008. In the Underground Railroad community's opinion, there is now virtual parity regarding the importance of three Underground Railroad institutions with the federal government's Network to Freedom program, Cincinnati's Freedom Center and *Free Press* in a virtual tie at the top. Beyond these three, MapMuse's web map of Underground Railroad sites remained ahead of all other organizations.

New Federal Law Protects Major Underground Railroad Area

On May 8, 2008, the Journey Through Hallowed Ground National Heritage Area, — the 38th and most historic National Heritage Area — was signed into law. Cosponsored by all six Senators and many Representatives from Maryland, Pennsylvania and Virginia, the law passed the Senate April 10 on a 91 to 4 vote and the House April 29 by 291 to 117.

The Journey Through Hallowed Ground contains one of the heaviest concentrations of Underground Railroad routes and over 70 safe-houses just in the Maryland and Pennsylvania portions of the Journey.

While National Heritage Areas provide no automatic block to sprawl or unsightly development, they confer an effective buffer and argument against these. Journey Through Hallowed Ground's National Heritage Area designation joins a number of other scenic and historic protective designations of the area.

This newest National Historic Area recognizes the unparalleled cultural, historic and scenic resources

Wellman Scale, MapMuse, Site Tours Accelerate

The largest surprises from the 2008 survey are the degrees to which the Wellman Scale for evaluating Underground Railroad sites and the MapMuse Underground Railroad map have come into use. About a fifth of survey respondents are now using the Wellman Scale to rate the authenticity of Underground Railroad sites and a quarter have used the MapMuse site. More and more are beginning to list sites at MapMuse.

More than three-fourths of responding Underground Railroad site owners and operators offer tours and employ exhibits, signs, demonstrations or the like. About a third offer live, costumed interpretative presentations and evaluate their offerings.

Underground Railroad Free Press

Mean ratings of *Free Press*, its reporting and its Lynx, Datebook and *Free Press* Prize programs ranged from 7.3 to 8.7 on a one-to-ten rating scale, and all but one of the modal scores for these same matters were a full 10. We are very gratified by these ratings of *Free Press* by the international Underground Railroad community and thank you. After their introduction in Fall of 2007, use of Lynx and Datebook is still relatively low despite the submission of many listings of organizations on Lynx and of events on Datebook.

Though the new annual *Underground Railroad Free Press* Prizes for leadership, preservation and advancement of knowledge were not announced until January, 2008, familiarity with the prizes is about twice that of Lynx and Datebook.

Recommendations: Rate, List and Recruit

Based on 2008 survey results, our recommendations to the international Underground Railroad community are three:

- ✚ Given the graying of the Underground Railroad community, take steps to systematically involve more younger people.
- ✚ Rate as many Underground Railroad sites as possible according to the Wellman Scale
- ✚ List as many sites as possible at MapMuse

See our article on page one on how to rate and list Underground Railroad sites.



David McCullough

along the 125-mile Journey corridor running from Gettysburg, Pennsylvania to Underground Railroad-rich Frederick County, Maryland, to Monticello, Thomas Jefferson's Virginia home.

With nine Presidential homes, Camp David, 73 National Historic Districts, most Civil War

Battlefields, 15 historic Main Street towns, and many scenic landscapes, roads, and rivers, the Journey Through Hallowed Ground, "Where America Happened", holds more United States history than any region of similar size in the nation.

On May 1, historian David McCullough addressed the Journey Through Hallowed Ground annual meeting at James Madison's Montpelier home in Virginia. Visit hallowedground.org for his video talk.