



# UNDERGROUND RAILROAD FREE PRESS®

Independent reporting on today's Underground Railroad

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## Frederick Douglass on the 4<sup>th</sup> of July

*Dr. David Anderson Recreates the Thought*



When the former slave Frederick Douglass was asked in 1852 to give a Fourth of July speech, he refused but delivered a powerful one the following day, asking the audience, "What to the Slave is the Fourth of July? What have I, or those I represent, to do with your national independence? Are the great principles of political freedom and of natural justice, embodied in that Declaration of Independence, extended to us? The blessings in which you, this day, rejoice are not enjoyed in common. The rich inheritance of justice, liberty, prosperity, and independence bequeathed by your fathers is shared by you, not me. The sunlight that brought light and healing to you has brought stripes

and death to me. The Fourth of July is yours, not mine."

For decades in venues around the country, Dr. David Anderson has reprised the Douglass speech in costume at Fourth of July celebrations, doing so again July 1 at the National Abolition Hall of Fame (to which Frederick Douglass was the first inductee) in Peterboro, New York. Anderson is Visiting Scholar at Nazareth College in Rochester, New York, and a living history interpreter through reenactments of Frederick Douglass, Underground Railroad freedom seekers, and African-American Civil War soldiers. Anderson chairs New York's

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## 2012 Free Press Survey: Community Expands, Programs Regrow

A report of the 2012 survey with full results may be read or downloaded at the Free Press website.

### Economic Recovery

The 2012 Free Press Survey of the International Underground Railroad Community reveals continued recovery of Underground Railroad organizations from the Great Recession. In 2012 more organizations have become involved in Underground Railroad work, most new ones without a budget yet. The median annual budget of responding organizations, while still modest, nearly doubled from 2011 to the highest recorded in four surveys. Five of every six Underground Railroad organizations report growth or stability in annual revenues.

### A More Dispersed, Unaffiliated, Higher-Ranking Community

The 2012 survey saw a jump in the professional seniority of respondents with many more CEOs participating in the survey, and a significant increase in the general public's participation. Year to year, the Free Press surveys have also been trending westward and southward in the makeup of respondents. All three of these changes are in large part attributable to the changing composition of *Free Press* subscribers and readers as readership grows, spreads geographically and goes beyond the core Underground Railroad

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## Two Program Executives Join Free Press Prize Panel of Judges

The Free Press Prize Panel of Judges has elected Elizabeth Campbell and Owen Muelder to the Panel which awards the annual Free Press Prizes for Leadership, Preservation, and the Advancement of Knowledge in the international Underground Railroad community. Campbell and Muelder will sit with the Panel this month as it chooses the three 2012 prize winners who will be announced in the September issue of *Free Press*.

Betty Campbell has long served on the boards of the John P. Parker Museum and Historical Society, Inc., and the Rankin House State Memorial, Inc., both important Underground Railroad safe-houses in Ripley, Ohio. She is the current president of both organizations. In large part due to her efforts, both sites have been restored, funded, opened to the public, and accorded National Historic Landmark status. Campbell received the National Underground Railroad Freedom Center's John P. Parker Award given for outstanding Underground Railroad work in Ohio, and guided Freedom Center staff in filming *Brothers of the Borderland* on routes

where John Parker and the Rev. John Rankin guided freedom seekers north.

Owen Muelder is an Underground Railroad program executive and author at Illinois' Knox College, a frequent Underground Railroad resting point. Since 2004 he has served as Director of the Galesburg Colony Underground Railroad Freedom Station at the college, and has been a faculty member and administrator at the college for 36 years.

Muelder has authored articles on 19th-century Illinois history, and two books, his 2008 *The Underground Railroad in Western Illinois* and 2011's *Theodore Dwight Weld and the American Anti-Slavery Society*. He has delivered over 200 lectures, keynote addresses and interviews to top-level national Underground Railroad organizations and numerous other groups across the country. He is a frequent radio and television commentator on the Underground Railroad. In February, Muelder made a presentation on abolitionist Congressman Owen Lovejoy to the U.S. Capitol Historical Society.



Campbell



Muelder

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## Stuart McMillin Tours Offers Underground Railroad Excursions In the Midwest and Canada . . .



. . . and to churches, Black history sites, celebrity homes, breweries and more

Detroit's McMillin Tours has gotten enthusiastically into the business of Underground Railroad tours with two excursions coming up in 2012 and more next year. In August, owner Stuart McMillin will lead a tour to Underground Railroad sites in Ohio and Kentucky. In October, it will be the Underground Railroad sites of Detroit, next year a tour to eastern Ontario, Canada, and in 2014, an extensive tour of upstate New York, Hudson Valley, and New York City Underground Railroad safe-houses and routes.

Last month saw a McMillin Tours excursion to Canadian Underground Railroad sites in Windsor, the significant Black Settlement of North Buxton, Chatham where Frederick Douglass met John Brown, and the Canadian Uncle Tom's Cabin where famed Underground Railroad freedom seeker Josiah Henson resided.

McMillin Tours even hosts Underground Railroad parties, mainly tour promotional events replete with appetizers and adult beverages.

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## A New Underground Railroad Cycling Route

In 2004 Adventure Cycling announced its first Underground Railroad cycling route, a 2,000-mile tour from Mobile, Alabama, to Owen Sound, Ontario. At the time, Adventure Cycling committed to developing more Underground Railroad routes, both alternates and spurs, to involve more communities and historic sites. The first Underground Railroad spur route, from Pittsburgh to Erie, Pennsylvania, was dedicated in 2007.

Adventure Cycling has now opened its 518-mile Detroit Alternate Route between Oberlin, Ohio and Owen Sound, Ontario. This latest route runs parallel to Adventure Cycling's original route and offers a host of new historic sites for cyclists. Passing through many small towns in northwestern Ohio, southern Michigan, and southern Ontario, the new route traverses a cultural heritage corridor offering education and recreational opportunities for people of all ages, and promises increased tourism to the communities along this new route.

Branching from the main Adventure Cycling route at Oberlin, the Detroit Alternate Route guides cyclists through Toledo, Ohio, and Detroit, Michigan, around Lake St. Clair, tracing the shoreline of Lake Huron before heading to Owen Sound. The route has a ferry option across Lake Erie from Sandusky, Ohio, to Windsor, Ontario. Maps of the new route are available from Cyclosource, Adventure Cycling's online store and catalog.

"Detroit is an important highlight on the new route for its historic relevance and its contemporary efforts to improve conditions for cyclists," says Adventure Cycling's Ginny Sullivan. "Increasingly [Detroit] has invested in bike lanes, greenways,

urban agriculture, and natural parks, making it an even more attractive stopover for touring cyclists on the new route."

Adventure Cycling provides a list of key historic and cultural landmarks on each map section of the Detroit Alternate; a more extensive listing of historic sites can be found in the organization's online route highlights at [AdventureCycling.org/ugrr](http://AdventureCycling.org/ugrr).

Important stops on the United States portion of the new route include Oberlin College, and the Oberlin Heritage Center which showcases the abolitionist and Underground Railroad history of the community. In Adrian, Michigan, cyclists may visit the Lenawee County Historical Museum which houses thousands of Underground Railroad documents. In Detroit, cyclists can explore the Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History which is the largest museum in the world dedicated to African Americans, the Historical First Congregational Church also known as the Living Museum which offers Underground Railroad Flight to Freedom Program tours, and the Gateway to Freedom Monument on the Detroit riverfront which marks the crossing of thousands of freedom seekers into Canada. A partner monument in Windsor, Ontario, is visible across the river. Known as the Tower of Freedom Underground Railroad Monument, this sculpture depicts refugees' arrival into Canada and their overwhelming emotion upon encountering freedom.

On the Canadian portion of the alternate route, cyclists may see the Buxton National Historic Site and Museum in North Buxton, the First Baptist Church of Chatham where abolitionist

*Please see Cycling, page 5, column 2*

## Review: *Lincoln's Gift from Homer, New York*

*Adapted from a review written by  
Jill Swenson for Amazon*

The release of Martin A. Sweeney's *Lincoln's Gift from Homer, New York: A Painter, an Editor and a Detective* is well-timed as the nation observes the Civil War sesquicentennial, yet will be worth reading next year and the next by history buffs and general readers alike. This mature scholarly work brings a compelling story to life in dramatic fashion.

Although Illinois enjoys the indisputable title of the Land of Lincoln, one small town in New York State played a significant role in the sixteenth president's history. Three native sons of Homer — a detective, a journalist, and a painter — helped to inscribe Abraham Lincoln's place in the nation's iconic imagery. Private investigator Eli DeVoe foiled an assassination plot against Lincoln, journalist William Osborn Stoddard became an influential secretary to the president, and artist Francis Bicknell Carpenter painted the most famous Lincoln portrait. Sweeney's exploration of these men and the town that produced them offers insights into the complexities of presidential image-making and reveals why a small New York town has become a choice destination for Lincoln historians.

Painter Francis Carpenter brushed *The First Reading of the Emancipation Proclamation before the Cabinet* shown here, the iconic image of Lincoln which hangs today in the United States Capitol.

Editor William Stoddard served as the president's personal secretary, penned the first copy of the Emancipation Proclamation from Lincoln's notes, and published the seminal *Life of Abraham Lincoln* which Lincoln historians and enthusiasts still consult today.

Detective Eli DeVoe unearthed a virulently anti-Lincoln cell in Baltimore and foiled its assassination plot by rerouting Lincoln en route to his first inauguration in February 1861 and having him arrive at night in Washington.

Intriguing scenes include Stoddard's sensitive handling of Mary Todd Lincoln, the unpopular first lady, along

with an endless parade of beseechers requesting hearings and favors from the president, the patronage system alive and well. Hate mail and death threats were commonplace as gatekeeper Stoddard protected his president.

Founded in 1791, Homer today has a population of roughly 3,200, not much more than the 2,000 souls who inhabited the town in the 1830s when Carpenter, Stoddard, and DeVoe were born. Homer also delivered Andrew White, Cornell University's first president, and Amelia Jenks Bloomer, inventor of women's "bloomers" popular in the 19th century.

Martin Sweeney, a retired teacher, is the town historian of Homer and serves on the town's school board.



*The First Reading of the Emancipation Proclamation before the Cabinet*

### DNA Needed

You read it right.

Our March issue told of the probable blood relationship between Underground Railroad figure Josiah Henson and John Hanson, first president of the United States under the Articles of Confederation. Before Henson's escape to Canada, he had been enslaved by Josias Hanson McPherson, the President's cousin.

Determining if Henson and Hanson are related is historically important and as intriguing as the relationship between Thomas Jefferson and Sally Hemings' descendants.

A Hanson descendant sympathetic to the possible relationship has offered a DNA sample and seeks a Henson descendant to do the same. DNA samples are easily done with a cheek swab.

Email [Editor@urFreePress.com](mailto:Editor@urFreePress.com) to help. Donor anonymity is assured.

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### Free Press Prize Nominations

Visit [urfreepress.com](http://urfreepress.com) to learn more about these annual prizes or download a nomination form.

### Rate an Underground Railroad Site

Go to [urfreepress.com/#Scale](http://urfreepress.com/#Scale) to use the Wellman Scale to rate authenticity of an Underground Railroad site claim.

### List an Underground Railroad Site

Go to [urfreepress.com/#Visit](http://urfreepress.com/#Visit) to visit the most comprehensive map of Underground Railroad sites and list yours.

*And beginning with this issue, enjoy our new look designed for easier reading and better graphics.*

## Anderson

ester-Monroe County Freedom Trail Commission.

David Anderson was the recipient of the 2008 Free Press Prize for Leadership in the Contemporary Underground Railroad Community. In June 2009, he was honored at the National Mall in Washington, DC, during "Giving Voice: The Power of Words in African-American Culture," an exploration of African-American oral traditions in shaping the United States.

Frederick Douglass often spoke at anti-slavery conventions and worked with Gerritt Smith in organizing the 1850 Anti-Fugitive Slave Law Convention in Cazenovia, New York. Smith made large donations to keep Douglass' anti-slavery efforts solvent through his newspapers *The North Star* and *Frederick Douglass's Paper*. Douglass would visit Smith often, bringing colleagues and family members for extended visits as early as 1835. Douglass dedicated the second edition of his autobiography to Smith to honor Smith's many human rights efforts.

## Survey

community to the general public. Constant since 2007 are the international Underground Railroad community's self-rating of Underground Railroad knowledge and its experience visiting Underground Railroad sites.

## Many Senior Organizations Slip in Recognition

Overall familiarity with the eleven most prominent Underground Railroad institutions is barely 4 on a one-to-ten scale, with no organization having a familiarity rating above 7.3. All mentioned Underground Railroad organizations but *Free Press*, the National Park Service Network to Freedom and York University's Tubman Center (new to the survey) fell in familiarity from 2011 to 2012. Most familiar to the community is *Free Press*.

Respondents evaluate the effectiveness of the same eleven institutions in promoting and building awareness of contemporary Underground Railroad matters as middling overall, with an average rating of 5.4 on the ten-point scale. The only two rated as above average in effectiveness were *Underground Railroad Free Press* and the Network to Freedom.

Lower ratings are due in part to heavy influx over the past year of new *Free Press* readers, many of whom are only now being introduced to the Underground Railroad and its community.

## Gains in Free Press Readership and Ratings

As *Free Press* readership has spread, the proportion reading all or most issues has dropped from 83 percent in 2010 to 67 percent in 2012. More than two in every five survey respondents forward *Free Press* to at least one other person, with some forwarding each issue to over a thousand others. This has boosted readership beyond 60,000 per issue.

We thank 2012 survey respondents for the highest ratings ever received by *Free Press* on all *Free Press* rating questions, and are gratified by respondents' future use of our recently launched Free Press Books subsidiary as measured by the survey.

## Tours

McMillin Tours is up to a lot more than just the Underground Railroad. This year it has run tours involving Polish and Greek culture tours of Detroit, a Detroit church tour, a tour of homes of Detroit celebrities, a wine tasting tour in Canada, and a brewery history and microbrewery tour.

Visit [mcmillintours.com](http://mcmillintours.com) for more.

## Cycling

John Brown held his last clandestine meetings to plan his slave rebellion, Dresden's Uncle Tom's Cabin Historic Site, Josiah Henson House, the historic British Methodist Episcopal Church in Owen Sound, and for many of these miles the beautiful Lake Huron strand. The route also features the Wilberforce Settlement Plaque at the Lucan Post Office commemorating establishment of the settlement in 1830 by a group of fugitive slaves with the assistance of Quakers from Oberlin.

Creation of the Detroit Alternate Route was supported by Adventure Cycling members and donors, and a \$20,000 grant from REI (Recreational Equipment, Inc.).

## Head Librarian: Patty Cannon Gets Her Due

*We thank an anonymous subscriber for a news article on this topic.*

Outlawing slave importation in 1808 shifted southern demand northward, creating a flow of slaves and kidnapped free Blacks "sold south." One of the most notorious of northern kidnappers was tavern owner Martha "Patty" Cannon who in the 1820s along the Maryland/Delaware border ran an abduction ring thought to have seized hundreds of African-Americans.

Kidnapping mostly people recently freed by local Methodists who were renouncing slavery, Cannon shipped her victims along an organized network as far south as Mississippi, a reverse Underground Railroad as it became known. When sheriffs from one state would pursue Cannon, she would step across the nearby state line out of their jurisdiction until the heat was off. Cannon met her fate after being arrested for murdering four people including her slave-trader customer in 1829. She died in jail a suicide at age 70 and was buried in the jail graveyard.

Then things got interesting for Patty.

When Cannon was exhumed by a sheriff's deputy in 1907, he gave her skull to her relative, Charles Joseph, who for decades hung it in his barn. His son Alfred inherited the skull in 1946 and in 1961 loaned it to the Dover, Delaware, library where it has since resided in a red hatbox in the office of library director Margery Cyr. Recently, Patty made it to the Smithsonian Institution where she is undergoing a physical exam and is then due to return home. Says Cyr, "Patty Cannon was not a nice person in life, but she's been quiet and respectful in my office."

## Underground Railroad Free Press®

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