



UNDERGROUND RAILROAD FREE PRESS®

Independent reporting on today's Underground Railroad

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2015 Free Press Survey of the Underground Railroad Community Shows More Sites, Organizations, Public Visits, Growing Budgets

Free Press thanks its subscribers and others who participated in the 2015 Free Press Survey of the International Underground Railroad Community, our ninth annual survey since 2007. To view or download full results of the 2015 or previous survey, go to our website's Surveys page. See pages 4 and 5 here for graphical depictions of some of the 2015 survey's results.

Community Knowledge and Status

Three-fourths of the community have visited an Underground Railroad site. On the one-to-ten rating scale used for many of the survey's questions, survey respondents rated their Underground Railroad knowledge at 7.8, high. In order, the community gets its information on the Underground Railroad from books, then articles, then a tie between *Free Press* and the Internet. Among the three major Underground Railroad news publications, *Free Press's* market share has risen to 76 percent.

Community Environment

The average length of Underground Railroad involvement dropped slightly to 15 years but this could be because of more newcomers to the community. Nearly half of the community are directly involved with an Underground Railroad site or program. Slightly more than half of sites

and programs operate with no revenues. Of those with revenues, the average budget is \$48,000, a slight drop from the previous survey, but this could be because of new sites and programs without revenues yet.

Opinions on *Free Press*

The community rates *Free Press's* Lynx community organization registry, the Datebook community event calendar, relevance of *Free Press* topics, quality of reporting, and the overall usefulness of *Free Press* all at 9 on the 10-point scale. The annually awarded *Free Press* Prizes at were rated at 8. By a fairly substantial margin, readers prefer shorter articles pointing the way to deeper information rather than longer or in-depth articles.

Free Press Readership

Nearly six of every ten subscribers forward *Free Press* or notifications of new issues to others. Those doing so notify an average of 7.8 nonsubscribers, resulting in more than 26,000 additional readers of each issue beyond the *Free Press* subscriber base.

Underground Railroad Institutions

Among 12 American or Canadian Underground Railroad institutions which operate programs either national or international in scope, the three leaders in both familiarity with—Please see Survey, page 3, column 3

IN THIS ISSUE



The annual Free Press survey shows the Underground Railroad community in good shape.

1, 4, 5



How many young people do you know? Wouldn't you like them all to know about the Underground Railroad? Of course you would.

1, 3



Writing her first book at 85, she chose the Underground Railroad as her subject and has produced a fine read.

2



An American road book on growing economic inequality? Yes, and it is winning national book prizes.

2



A Baltimorean reflects eloquently on what the Freddie Gray and Charleston murders mean to Black people.

3



This issue's editorial urges that Harriet Tubman replace Andrew Jackson on the \$20 bill.

3

Give a *Free Press* Subscription to a Young Person: Only a Quarter of the Underground Railroad Community Is Younger Than 60.

Since the first *Free Press* survey in 2007, the average age in the community has hovered around 60 and the proportion younger than that, only 25 percent. This won't work in the long term.

Help *Free Press* bring more younger people into the Underground Railroad community. Young in this case means 40 or under. Without them, the public memory of the Underground Railroad could die off as it did for most of the 20th century when by 1995 most adults were unaware of the Underground Railroad and what it stood for.

Here is how you can help: Give a *Free Press* subscription to every

young person you know, and in a brief email to each of them let them know the importance of the Underground Railroad and that their subscription is free, permanent and on the way.

Then email *Free Press* the email addresses to receive *Free Press*. As with you, *Free Press* will be delivered free bimonthly to whomever you have given a subscription. Just so you know, our only use of email addresses is to distribute *Free Press*.

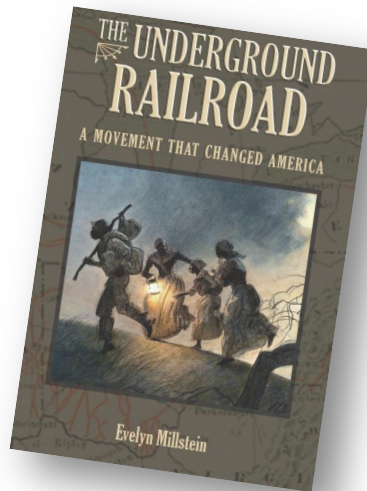
If you like, just copy and paste the **sample email** provided on page 3 here. The more young people you and we contact, the higher the chance of preserving a unique historical legacy.

An 85-Year-Old Has Her Underground Railroad History Published and It's Good

Seventy years ago, Detroit librarian Evelyn Millstein began studying African American history, and in 2012, after retiring at age 82, pursued a life-long goal to write a history of the Underground Railroad. The result is her fine new book, *The Underground Railroad: A Movement That Changed America*, published by St. Clair Press last month.

The Underground Railroad bookshelf's growing body of histories has few attempting an end-to-end accounting of the movement. Millstein's book joins Fergus Bordewich's landmark 2005 *Bound for Canaan* as a comprehensive history of "the war for soul of America."

Millstein gives special emphasis to putting down myths of writers who minimized the Underground Railroad as propaganda or claimed that the number of fugitives was so small as to make little difference. She also emphasizes the historical importance of the Underground



Railroad as the first black-led and multiracial movement.

Millstein's website is devoted to developing educational resources in African-American history and the Underground Railroad. Visit eveywrite.com for more.

Critics Praise *Running on Empty* Book visits an Underground Railroad site

Free Press publisher Peter H. Michael's *Running on Empty: Along an Epic 12,000-Mile Road Trip America Has Its Say on Economic Inequality* is a hit with reviewers.

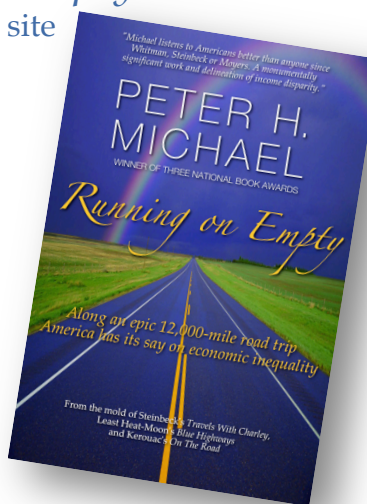
Literary critic Ronald Primeau: "Michael listens to Americans better than anyone since Whitman, Steinbeck or Moyers. A monumentally significant work and delineation of income disparity."

Kirkus Reviews: "Distills the exhilaration of the open road . . . charming blend of Whitman's maximalism, Kerouac's enthusiasm and Least Heat-Moon's earthy anthropology . . . an original voice in observing the great American 21st century problem, the daunting wealth gap."

Novelist Bill Van der Mei: *Running on Empty* "pulled me impulsively along, like a friend pulling alongside and shouting, 'Come on, let's go!'"

Michael set out not "in search of America" as Steinbeck, Kerouac and Least Heat-Moon had but to let America tell whatever it might. Tell it did: the poorest county, the wealthiest county, whites, blacks, Indians, Hispanics and Asians all sing verses of the same song: economic disparity.

Michael hears Americans finally awakening to the income and wealth gaps which for a generation have eroded the middle



class and hit the poor hardest of all. In clear punchy style, he demolishes plutocrat arguments in an exposé on economic inequality and how the super-rich purchase it by "campaign contributions."

The long American road offers uniquely American vignettes, personal stories, yesteryear small towns and local history as majestic geography unfolds each day—a mysterious desert in Great Plains grasslands, Yellowstone splendor, red rock Great Basin vistas, languid riverside campsites, hushed redwood groves, the High Sierra, ghost towns, the longest cave, Lincoln's chair, Faulkner's study and much more.

The 2015 Free Press Prizes

The September issue of *Free Press* will announce this year's winners of the Free Press Prizes for Leadership, Preservation and Advancement of Knowledge in the contemporary Underground Railroad community.

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Underground Railroad Free Press® Independent Reporting on Today's Underground Railroad

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Editorial

Replace Andrew Jackson with Harriet Tubman on the \$20 Bill



When United States Treasury Secretary Jacob Lew recently announced that his department is planning to replace Alexander Hamilton on the \$10 bill with a woman in 2020, it created a flurry of suggestions and interesting speculation as to which American woman might be honored. Harriet Tubman, Sacagawea, Martha Washington and Amelia Earhart have been prominently mentioned.

Secretary Lew's announcement also set off also an immediate debate as to why the replacement was not of Andrew Jackson on the \$20 bill. In 1928, to observe the 100th anniversary of his first election as president, Jackson was chosen to replace Grover Cleveland on the twenty. Ever since, many have wondered how the president who disbanded the nation's central bank and was such a determined opponent of paper money was chosen to be featured on any bill.

More pointedly, there is growing opposition to Jackson for breaking treaty after treaty with the Cherokees and other tribes of the Southeast, running them off their land without compensation, and force-marching them to Oklahoma. The Trail of Tears experienced a mortality rate of one-third, in effect a genocide of the old, children and feeble.

Growing recognition of his treatment of Indians and African Americans has prompted a recent chorus of calls to remove Jackson from the \$20 bill.

In our opinion, it would be hard to think of a better choice for a new face on currency of any denomination than Harriet Tubman. In a stroke, her selection would break the male and white monopoly on currency, and would honor an American woman who earned her place in national history as solidly as any ever has..

So, Secretary Lew, how about a minor course correction to leave Hamilton where he is, replace the reprehensible Jackson instead, and honor the most recognized woman icon the nation has ever produced. It's time.

Contributor Column

The following op-ed by Jonathon Gilmore came to our attention as part of an extraordinary email thread among a subscriber family and its friends after the Charleston, South Carolina church shootings on June 17. Amidst a torrent of poignant and eloquent commentary by the group, Gilmore's email plea here particularly stood out.

Jonathan Gilmore is a musician who performs solo, in musical theater, as background vocalist for national recording artists, and was a featured singer for the Pink Floyd tribute concert, *Mobtown Moon*. Mr. Gilmore teaches music and poetry, and volunteers with many community organizations and mentoring programs in Baltimore, Maryland, where he lives. He is the son of famed soul singer Leah Gilmore.

I wish I were not angry at this time. I wish I could find a way to forgive and move forward. I wish that words would roll eloquently from my mouth like Martin, Audre, Malcolm, or Marion. I wish I could express my profound grief and disappointment with this system that I never had faith in but deep down hoped would change. We Black Folk have known that racism was alive and well when they bombed Philly in the 80s, Rodney King, Cointelpro, the destruction of the Panthers, Cincinnati Riots, Amadou Diallo, the dragging death of a Texas man, etc.

While this moment in history is troubling, it is a systemic problem that has been building for years. I want America to understand this time that we are in an era that did not spring up all of a sudden. In the 150 years since the end of slavery, progress has been bloody and slow. Black people brought here as slaves did not have a common heritage; the equalizing injustices of the slave ship, seasoning camps, and slavery itself fostered a bond that will never break. There is a kinship that is felt among all Black people. When we Black folk see good or bad happen to one of us, it is happening to all of us. Now I am watching my people slip into despair. I am watching Black children die at the hands of a system that has corrupted the humanity of people never considered human in this country.

We Black folk have had gains and setbacks and, while we love to parade the

Please see Gilmore, page 5, column 1

Survey

in the community and effectiveness in promoting and building awareness of the Underground Railroad are, in one-two-three order, *Underground Railroad Free Press*, the National Park Service's Network to Freedom program, and Cincinnati's National Underground Railroad Freedom Center. Overall familiarity and effectiveness for the 12 institutions collectively were rated respectively at only 3.4 and 3.1, very low.

Community Demographics

With an average age in the community of 60, only a quarter are younger than this, and only four percent are younger than 40, a situation which does not bode well for the future of the community or retaining the memory and history of the Underground Railroad. In order, most frequent types of involvement are writers or researchers, private-sector site or program owners, operators or staff, university or college faculty, donors, Underground Railroad descendants, and public-sector employees. Most often-seen occupational title levels were, in order, tenure-track faculty, CEOs, and supervisors or coordinators. In this survey, women outnumbered men three to two.

Sample Email to Young People

I am giving you a free subscription to *Underground Railroad Free Press*, an e-newsletter which has launched a program to reach more young people. As you may know, the Underground Railroad was a North American network which helped freedom seekers flee north during the era of slavery, and was one of the most important historical moral accomplishments of any nation.

I'm including you in today's international Underground Railroad community which promotes the memory of the Underground Railroad, operates many sites which were active in the Underground Railroad, runs interesting programs, and writes books and articles.

Underground Railroad Free Press is the community's leading news publication. You will receive *Free Press* by email every other month beginning with the July, 2015 issue. I'm sure you will enjoy it and learning about the Underground Railroad communities of the past and today.

Be sure to have a look at the *Free Press* website and its international programs at <http://urrfreepress.com>.

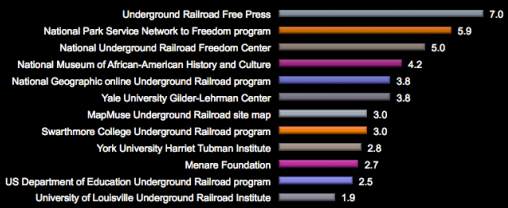
With best regards,

Selected Slides from the Report of the 2015 Free Press Survey of the International Underground Railroad Community

Press "+" on your keyboard for larger images. The full report includes 47 slides.

How familiar would you say you are with the following modern Underground Railroad institutions?

Mean Familiarity Ratings

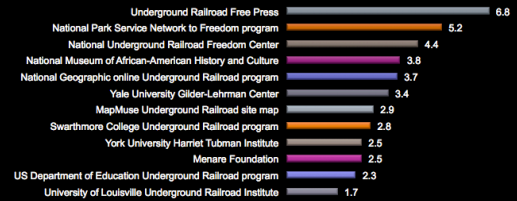


- Mean familiarity overall: 3.8, Low
- Median familiarity overall: 3.4, Low
- Year-to-year trend: ↔

Free Press, Network to Freedom and Underground Railroad Freedom Center most familiar in every Free Press survey.

How effective in promoting and building the awareness of the Underground Railroad would you say are these Underground Railroad institutions?

Mean Effectiveness Ratings



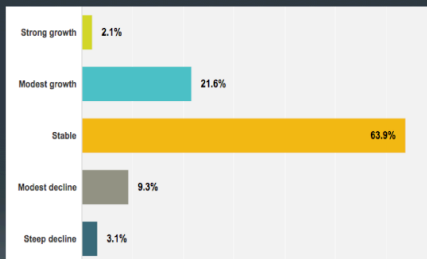
- Mean effectiveness overall: 3.5, Low
- Median effectiveness overall: 3.15, Low
- Year-to-year trend: ↓

Low average effectiveness of 12 national Underground Railroad programs is only 3.5 on a ten-point scale.

How did the revenues of your organization change from 2013 to last year?

Year-to-year trend: ↔ Twice as many now grow as decline, the opposite case during the Great Recession. However, this ratio slipped since its peak in 2013.

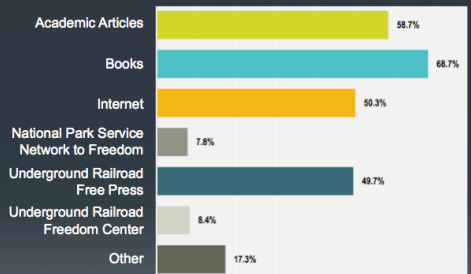
Growth: 23.7%
Decline: 12.4%
Growth/decline: 1.9 to 1
Previous growth/decline: 2.6 to 1



Reversing a tide: twice as many saw increases as declines.

Which are your primary sources of information on the Underground Railroad?

Year-to-year trend: ↔

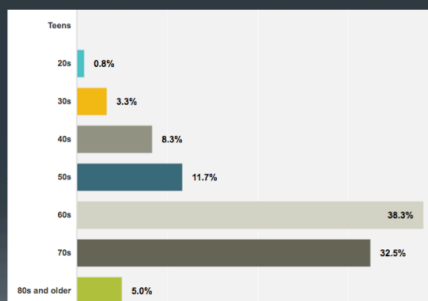


Free Press leads among the three news publications.

In which category is your age?

Mean age: 60.1
Median age: 60s
Year-to-year trend: ↔

75% of the international Underground Railroad community are 60 or older.
The community needs to attract younger people.

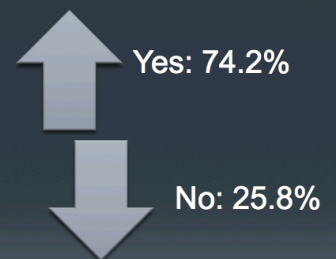


Young people needed: 75% of the community is 60 or older.

Continued on page 5

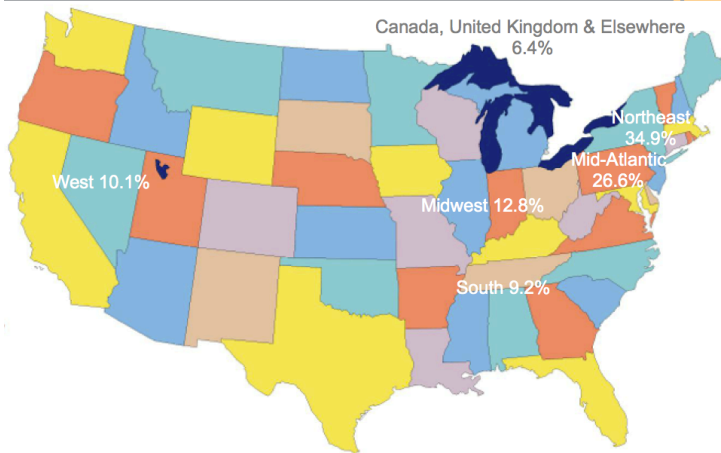
Have you ever visited an Underground Railroad safe-house or route?

Year-to-year trend: ↔



One-quarter still in for a treat.

Geographical Distribution of Survey Respondents



The international Underground Railroad community is spreading out with more in the western United States and in foreign countries in each annual survey.

How the Survey Measures




In the one-to-ten scale below, average appears twice since mean and median of a 10-point scale are 5.5.

Mean: the sum of observations divided by the number of observations
Median: the middle observation in a ranked series

Ratings

- | | |
|-------------------|---------------------|
| 1 Lowest possible | 6 Average |
| 2 Very low | 7 Above average |
| 3 Low | 8 High |
| 4 Below average | 9 Very high |
| 5 Average | 10 Highest possible |

Trends

Improved  No change  Declined 

Many survey questions rely on a ten-point Likert Scale to measure ratings. Trends from the 2014 survey to the 2015 survey are indicated in the 2015 report. Most trends were positive.

Gilmore

gains and we speak highly of the sixties and its movements, what does it mean if Black people are still being persecuted because of the color of our skin? What does it mean if Black culture is commodified while our existence is vilified? What did all the bloodshed mean if Black people can be hunted in the streets and killed without repercussions, if Black neighborhoods remain red-lined into economic deterioration, if children are black-balled into poor education and prison pipelines? For too long we have been loudly fighting for our humanity. We are constantly reminded that we were brought here as chattel and America is basically looking for a way to "deal" with us.

Not even a Black president is given respect. He is reminded every day by political demagogues that he is a nigger. When they remind him, disrespect him, belittle his accomplishments, make him work harder, it is reminder to all Black people that we are still seen as second class citizens.

For the past five years, I mentored a juvenile in Baltimore City. He was very recently killed by the violence that swelled after the Freddie Gray uprising, and was buried on his 17th birthday. One of our last discussions was about Michael Brown, Jr. [the teen murdered in Ferguson, Missouri, last year by a hot-head policeman who got away with it]. He asked

me about life and death. We talked about inequality and how he felt helpless and trapped by always needing to be one step ahead. Tall, stocky, and dark-skinned, he said he had been followed in stores since he was four. (I, too, understood this dilemma.) Before we parted he asked, "What do you see when you see me?" What went through my head were all the times I have asked that question, how many times I had to diminish who I am so others could feel comfortable, cross the street, or go out of my way to not seem "scary." I answered his question the only way I could: I told him I see me and all the ancestors. I told him that when I see him I see a child (he hated that) who is on the brink of greatness. He smiled and said "If you see all that, maybe I need to look in the mirror until I do."

[In Charleston], a sacred place was invaded and people were massacred. However, daily the sacred souls of Blacks in America and their dreams, innocence, etc. are massacred. I am tired. I am pissed. I am sad. Mia McKenzie said it best: "Our deaths are not lessons for others to learn. I'm tired of black people's blood being the catalyst for so-called 'progress' in this country."

Thank you for listening to my rant/ramble. Understand that this is real life. Understand that I have no choice but to respond. Understand the luxury of be-

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ing an ally. Understand that we, Black people, are not broken, just grieving.

From James Weldon Johnson,

"Stony the road we trod,
Bitter the chastening rod,
Felt in the days when hope unborn
had died;
Yet with a steady beat,
Have not our weary feet
Come to the place for which our
fathers sighed?
We have come over a way that with
tears has been watered,
We have come, treading our path
through the blood of the slaughtered,
Out from the gloomy past,
'Til now we stand at last
Where the white gleam of our bright
star is cast."