



Editorial

Take a Trip on the Underground Railroad This Summer

Still pondering about where to go on vacation this year? Or just looking for something more exciting? Or maybe a costless destination?

You couldn't do better than a tour of Underground Railroad sites.

Some states are now providing online maps of sites, Kansas's the best so far. The most complete is MapMUSE's Underground Railroad site map now boasting 280 sites from the Atlantic to Kansas and New England to Florida (find.mapmuse.com/map/underground-rr).

For three well defined tours along a beautiful route from Pennsylvania to Virginia, click on "Where to visit Underground Railroad sites" and then "Countryside Tour Guide" at the *Free Press* website. For an urban Underground Railroad experience, take the nearby tour by Baltimore Black Heritage Tours (mysite.verizon.net/vze1ta3t/bbhtour).

For the ultimate Underground Railroad destination, visit the National Underground Railroad Freedom Center in Cincinnati, then head upstream to Ripley, Ohio, or on down the Ohio River to Madison, Indiana.

The heaviest concentration of Underground Railroad sites is in upstate New York in and near Auburn where Harriet Tubman is buried. A good place to start is with the nearby Smithfield Community Association in Peterboro (sca-peterboro.org).

That far north, you might want to drive another hour or so to cross the river at Niagara Falls and visit its and Ontario, Canada's rich Underground Railroad history (pc.gc.ca/canada/proj/cfcugrr/index_e.asp).

In the South, visit the old slave cabins rediscovered by Joseph McGill. See the article on him in this issue.

Like bike hikes? Try Adventure Cycling's Gulf of Mexico to Canada Underground Railroad bicycle routes.

Even ten years ago, it wouldn't have

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McGill Rediscovered Southern Slave Dwellings

The National Trust for Historic Preservation's Joseph McGill, Jr. is doing more than identifying and cataloguing forgotten slave quarters in the South. He spends the night in the old cabins and soaks up the spirit of forgotten souls past.

McGill's nights have been spent in everything from so dilapidated as to be dangerous to beautifully restored into a music room.

McGill conceived of the project in 1999 when he slept in a slave cabin at Boone Hall Plantation near Charleston as a Civil War reenactor in the all-black 54th Massachusetts Volunteer Regiment. Since then, he has spent nights in 11 slave quarters in the Carolinas, Alabama, Louisiana, Maryland, Missouri and, most recently, Texas. He makes it a point to sleep on the ground as slaves would have.

Says McGill, "It is usually those iconic places — the big house, the house on the hill, the architecturally significant houses — that are saved, and very few of the places that tell the story of African-Americans. Slave dwellings certainly tell that story."



Joseph McGill at a South Carolina slave cabin

Your Input Needed In the 2011 Underground Railroad Survey

Each year *Underground Railroad Free Press* conducts a comprehensive survey of the international Underground Railroad community and publishes full survey results for the use of the community at the *Free Press* website.

Hard copies of survey reports are distributed to the chief executive officers and other top executives of the three federal Underground Railroad programs and major private-sector Underground Railroad organizations.

The annual *Free Press* surveys are the only surveys of the Underground Railroad community and since 2007 have provided invaluable information not available elsewhere on contemporary Underground Railroad knowledge,

attitudes, practices, economics and trends.

Last week the more than 3,000 *Underground Railroad Free Press* subscribers were emailed their invitations to participate in the 2011 survey and hundreds have done so.

If you haven't yet taken the survey, please do as the more who participate, the better the results for all. To take this anonymous survey, click the link below. If the pdf reader you are using to read this doesn't display the link live, copy the link and paste it into your browser's address bar to go to the survey.

Also, please help us boost the survey's sample size by inviting your colleagues, family and friends to take the survey. Thank you.

http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/2011_Free_Press_Survey

Equal Visibility Everywhere's Tubman Bill Amended

In our last issue, we reported on the proposal put forth by Equal Visibility Everywhere to provide for a statue of Harriet Tubman in National Statuary Hall of the United States Capitol by removing the statue of John Hanson, in the Hall since 1903. Each state may have two statues in the Hall.

Equal Visibility Everywhere's proposal, as bills in both houses of the Maryland General Assembly, immediately ran into stiff opposition from the Maryland Senate President, Speaker of the House of Delegates, other powerful Assembly members, the Senate Committee which heard the bill, and civic groups.

Senate Bill 351 was amended to remove all references to John Hanson and replacement of his statue, and instead requested the

United States Congress either to permit a special exception for a third Maryland statue honoring Harriet Tubman or that her statue be included among many others in the Capitol outside of the Statuary Hall collection.

The amended Senate bill passed the Senate unanimously, but ran into a deadline in the House of Delegates where it was not heard.

Maryland Senator Catherine Pugh and Delegate Susan Lee, sponsors of the 2011 bill, had not returned repeated *Free Press* inquiries by press time. Lee has said that she will reintroduce a bill in 2012 but not what approach it might take.

The 2011 Underground Railroad Survey (see above) asks several questions on this issue.

been possible to suggest these destinations since so many of them either hadn't been rediscovered or opened to the public. Just ask Mr. McGill.

Maybe the top benefit of an Underground Railroad trip is taking children or grandchildren along. A few summers ago, one Maryland Underground Railroad safe-house had three generations of the same family from Alabama visit as a stop on their vacation. There was no better way to teach the youngest generation of the family about the Underground Railroad than to visit an actual site.

So, All Aboard! We'd like to hear about your journey. Drop us a line after you get back home.

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Network to Freedom and Tubman Conferences Set for June

The National Park Service's Underground Railroad Network to Freedom program will hold its annual conference June 15 through 18 in Cincinnati. The 2011 conference theme is "Pathways to Freedom: Presenting the Underground Railroad through Education, Interpretation and Heritage Tourism."

Network to Freedom director Diane Miller says that all are invited to attend and display an exhibit at the conference. She has coordinated a visit of conference attendees to the National Underground Railroad Freedom Center located in Cincinnati.

Conference keynote speakers include Audrey Peterman and Rex Ellis. Peterman founded Earthwise Productions, a heritage tourism firm which publishes the travel newsletter *Pick Up and Go*, and her 2009 book, *Legacy on the Land: A Black Couple Discovers Our National Inheritance and Tells Why Every American Should Care*.

William Still Descendants to Hold 142nd Reunion

As it has done since 1870, the Still family will gather for its 142nd reunion this summer in its Lawnside, New Jersey, ancestral home, believed to be the nation's first all-black self-governing town.

Until 1901 when he died, one of the hosts of the reunions was famed Underground Railroad safe-house operator and conductor William Still, author in 1872 of *The Underground Railroad*, one of the most important books ever written on the Underground Railroad. Beginning in the 1850s, Still began recording the stories of freedom seekers passing through his Philadelphia home, compiling his book's 190 accounts dealing with over 900 fugitives.

According to the family's oral tradition, the first Still was a Guinean prince brought indentured to New Jersey in the 1600s. In the early 1800s, Levin Still bought his freedom from a Maryland enslaver, and shortly after his wife Charity and the couple's two daughters escaped and joined him in Lawnside. One of the couple's 18 children was William Still, born in 1821, by his thirties, a prominent coal and lumber dealer in Philadelphia.

As usual, the 2011 reunion is expected to draw hundreds of Stills from across the nation. The Stills' outlook as an American first family is proud and vivid in its present-day black, white and Native American bloodlines.

Over the generations, the high-achieving Still family has produced, in addition to an Underground Railroad icon, many abolitionists, preachers, doctors, scientists, professors, composers, Tuskegee Airmen and professional athletes.

Call family member and reunion coordinator Donna Young at 856.341.4881 for more.

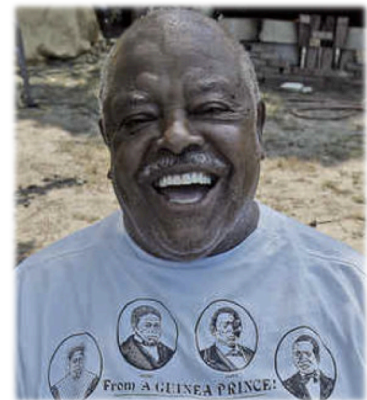
Ellis is Associate Director, Curatorial Affairs, at the National Museum of African American History and Culture in Washington, DC.

Visit ugrconference.com for more

On June 3 and 4, the Choptank Region History Network will host its 2011 Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad Conference at Chesapeake College, Cambridge, Maryland, near where Tubman was born.

Historian and archeologist Cheryl LaRoche will be keynote speaker at the conference's opening. She teaches at the University of Maryland and at Georgetown University, and is vice chair of the Maryland Commission on African-American History and Culture. **Free Press** Prize judge and author Fergus Bordewich will be the speaker at the conference's closing dinner on June 4.

Visit tubmanugrr.net for more.



Clarence Still, 82, host of the Still family reunions

The 2011 Free Press Prizes

Do you know someone or an organization deserving a prize?

Perhaps you know someone who has done good work of one kind or another in bringing back the memory of the Underground Railroad, building modern Underground Railroad institutions or offering excellent programs. Or, it might be an organization you know which has done this.

Each year, **Free Press** awards three prizes for leadership, preservation and advancement of knowledge in the modern Underground Railroad community. Last year's winners included a long-time Canadian preservationist, a National Underground Railroad Freedom Center executive, and an author.

Why not honor someone or an organization you know with a **Free Press** Prize nomination? Nominations for the 2011 prizes are open through June. Visit our website to see past years' winners and for nomination forms.