



# UNDERGROUND RAILROAD FREE PRESS®

Independent reporting on today's Underground Railroad

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## Obama Designates Tubman National Monument Over Republican Objection

On March 25, President Obama designated a picturesque 25,000-acre swath of Maryland countryside as the new Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad National Monument. At the same time the President named as national monuments Washington state's San Juan Islands, New Mexico's Rio Grande del Norte and Delaware's First State National Monument.

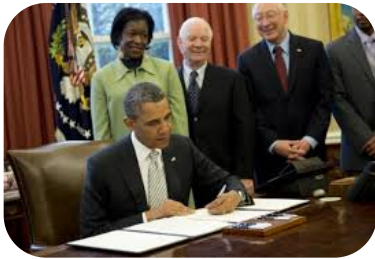
Under the 1906 Antiquities Act, presidents have unilateral executive authority to protect public lands from development through creation of national monuments. Formation of National Parks requires congressional legislation.

Some Congressional Republicans opposed the President's creation of the new monuments, with Senator

David Vitter (R- Louisiana) going as far as to attempt to tack on an amendment to a federal budget bill to altogether revoke presidential authority to create the monuments. Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid (D- Nevada) blocked a vote on the amendment, killing it. Vitter's amendment did not have significant support by either party.

Said the President, "These sites honor the pioneering heroes, spectacular landscapes and rich history that have shaped our extraordinary country. By designating these national monuments today, we will ensure they will continue to inspire and be enjoyed by generations of Americans to come."

Visit <http://1.usa.gov/13aZiBL> to Please see Obama, page 3, column 1



President Obama signing his executive order creating the Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad National Monument and four others, and a scene on Maryland's Eastern Shore within the new Tubman Monument.



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## Federal Budget Sequestration Wallops Network to Freedom



The Network to Freedom Logo

First, let's get a pet peeve of ours out there: sequester is not a noun. One can have a sequestration, the noun, but not a "sequester," the verb. One does not make a "co-pay" but a copayment. And that online order did not "ship" itself, but was shipped. These prime examples of creeping plundering of American English are how children are picking up rotten usage from such stupid corruptions, and how too many of their elders were passed along right through college without having been taught correct English usage in the first place. There!

The federal budget sequestration has hit the federal government's oldest Underground Railroad program hard. The National Park Service's Network to Freedom has experienced a fifty-percent cut in staffing and a

similar reduction in travel funding which will severely limit the program's ability to provide assistance to Underground Railroad site owners, program managers, members of the press and others around the nation.

The Network to Freedom website shows three of the Network to Freedom's six regional manager positions as vacant. A National Park Service spokesman tells *Free Press* that these positions will be left unfilled indefinitely, and that sequestration cuts scheduled for future years may impact for years to come whether the positions are filled, if ever. The vacant positions are for the Northeast, Intermountain, and Pacific West regions of the Network to Freedom program. Managers of the *Please see Sequestration*, page 3, column 2

## A Trip Back In Time to Buffalo Soldiers' Fort Davis, Texas

By Audrey Peterman

The author is president of Legacy on the Land which promotes tourism to America's public lands, especially the national parks. With her husband Frank, Ms. Peterman authored *Legacy on the Land: A Black Couple Discovers Our National Inheritance and Tells Why Every American Should Care*. Currently she is producing "365 Parks in 365 Days," a running blog at [legacyontheland.com](http://legacyontheland.com).



View of Hoodoos and an Abandoned Building at Fort Davis National Historic Site

President Obama's announcement in March of the elevation of Col. Charles Young's former home to the status of a national monument has loosed a wave of appreciation and many people are blogging about the subject, as well as sharing messages on Twitter and Facebook. [Young became the first African-American superintendent of a national park in 1903 when put in charge of California's Sequoia National Park.]

The accolades evoked a bittersweet response in me as I thought about how the United States Army treated this American son who served his country under the harshest conditions. In 1917 when Col. Young was in line to be promoted to Brigadier General - a position until then occupied only by white men - the Army leveled the spurious charge that high blood pressure made him unfit for duty. The West Point graduate (who said of that ordeal that he would not make his worst enemy a black man and send him to West Point) rode his horse almost 500 miles from his home in Wilberforce, Ohio, to Washington, DC, to demonstrate his fitness. This same son of America had ridden almost 300 miles from the Presidio of San

*See Soldiers, page 5, column 1*

It is that time of year to think about whom you would like to nominate for a Free Press Prize and what questions you would like to see answered in our annual survey.

### 2013 Free Press Prize Nominations

Each year since 2008, *Underground Railroad Free Press* has awarded prizes for contemporary Underground Railroad leadership, preservation and advancement of knowledge, the top honors in the international Underground Railroad community. Individuals and organizations from any country are eligible to be nominated. Visit our website for more information and nomination forms. The nomination deadline is June 30. You can view past winners at our website.

### The 2013 Free Press Survey

*Free Press* conducts annual surveys of the international Underground Railroad community. Survey results are posted permanently at our website each July and reports are provided to top Underground Railroad executives. If you have a question you would like to see answered in the 2013 survey, email us at [publisher@urfreepress.com](mailto:publisher@urfreepress.com) before May 1. You can view or download past survey reports at our website.

## National Endowment for the Arts and Yale University Launch Nationwide Emancipation Awareness Effort

The National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) and Yale University's Glider-Lehrman Institute have announced their "Created Equal: America's Civil Rights Struggle" initiative. Public Broadcasting System (PBS) affiliate WGBH-TV in Boston is helping in the promotion of the initiative. WGBH is the producer of the recently released PBS series *The Abolitionists* and its companion American Experience Abolitionist Map of America project, both reviewed in the November, 2012 and January, 2013 issues of *Underground Railroad Free Press*.

The initiative is accepting applications from nonprofit community organizations, humanities councils, libraries, museums and historical societies to participate. Since five hundred applicants will be selected to partner in the initiative, an individual appli-

cant's chances of being accepted are good. Selected organizations will receive a set of four civil rights-related films including *Slavery by Another Name*, *The Loving Story*, and American Experience's *The Abolitionists* and *Freedom Riders*, programming resources to guide public conversations about freedom and equality in United States history in their communities, and \$1,200 to support programming of the initiative in their communities.

**As the application deadline is May 15**, *Free Press* is releasing this issue of *Free Press* early to give those interested time to apply. Click on <http://bit.ly/1166Djx> to visit the application page of Yale University's Glider-Lehrman Institute which is administering the selection process.



# Video Simulation Fly-through of Future African-American Museum

In 2015, the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of African-American Culture and History will open on the National Mall in Washington, DC. Already staffed and developing its exhibits is the Museum's Underground Railroad pro-

gram, the federal government's third. (Others are hosted by the National Park Service and Department of Education.)

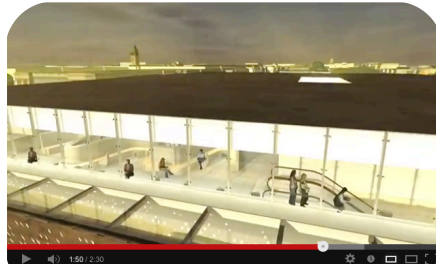
Museum Director Lonnie Bunch recently announced an architectural video animation of the Museum. The fly-through as

architects call it takes the viewer through a highly detailed conceptual rendering of the Museum in two and a half minutes.

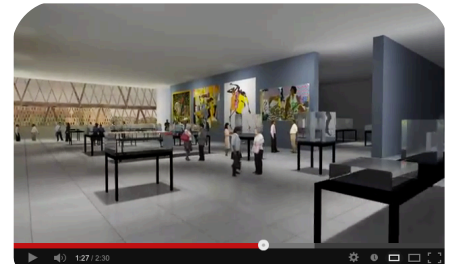
View the video at <http://bit.ly/11c31RJ> on YouTube.



NMAAHC Building Fly-through



NMAAHC Building Fly-through



NMAAHC Building Fly-through

Fly-through screen captures from the video of the museum computer simulation

## Obama

read the President's proclamation.

Maryland Governor Martin O'Malley observed that, "Today, President Obama made a long-held dream come true for countless Marylanders with his decision to forever commemorate the life and legacy of one of the Underground Railroad's most famed conductors, Harriet Tubman."

Nearly half of national parks began life as national monuments with later elevation to park status through legislation. Many national monuments and national parks have come into existence because of presidential, other executive branch or congressional recognition that a place deserves protection because of its unique beauty or to protect it from development, but as often the impetus comes from grass roots pressure in particular locales.

In creating the new national monuments, President Obama may have been acting in response to congressional laxity. The 2010-2012 Congress was the first in nearly a half century which failed to designate any new national parks or wilderness areas. With strong local bipartisan support building in constituencies around Idaho's Boulder-White Clouds Wilderness and Utah's Cedar Mesa Plateau for protection, observers are waiting to see if the president's recent designations of national monuments are a harbinger of more that he will create.

In the meantime, the nation and international Underground Railroad community have their first federally designated and protected Underground Railroad monument. Visit [nps.gov/hatu](http://nps.gov/hatu) for more.

## Sequestration

Midwest, Southeast and Nation's Capitol regions remain on the job. The Network to Freedom program is directed from the Midwest regional office in Omaha.

The sequestration resulted from a comedy of congressional errors which wasn't supposed to happen.

In August, 2011, Congress passed the Budget Control Act which cut \$917 billion in federal spending over ten years beginning in 2013, and established the Joint Select Committee on Deficit Reduction, the so-called "super committee," charged with drafting legislation before the end of 2011 to further reduce spending by \$1.5 trillion over ten years. Good so far.

But the Budget Control Act provided that if the super committee failed to propose legislation, \$1.2 trillion in *automatic* cuts would occur in national defense and domestic spending. This was meant as a poison pill to ensure that the committee would draft a plan. Anything but super, the committee failed even to submit a plan, and then a stalemated Congress couldn't agree on a plan either. This utter failure triggered the now well known \$85 billion in cuts – 2.2 percent of the federal spending budget – on March 1, 2013.

The Network to Freedom has avoided cancelling its annual conference this June 19 to 23 in Little Rock. This year's theme is the Underground Railroad during the Civil War. This is the actual Civil War, not the one currently underway in Congress between the two dithering parties.

See this issue's *Free Press* editorial on page four for more on the do-nothing Congress and common-sense budgeting.

## Here and There

Ball State Univ. Children's Game

Thanks to an immersive class at Indiana's Ball State University, fourth-grade students will grasp just how dangerous it was for runaway slaves to make their way north along the Underground Railroad. Produced by Ron Morris and Paul Gestwicki, Ball State historian and computer scientist, respectively, "The Underground Railroad in the Ohio River Valley" is a strategy game exposing school children to the realities faced by freedom seekers. Click <http://bit.ly/11c5rjk> to view the game at Google.

## New Niagara Falls Tour

Cultural Compass is offering a tour of Underground Railroad sites of Niagara Falls in New York and Canada September 21 to 23. The tour includes the famous Maid of the Mist boat tour beneath the falls and viewing from the Niagara Fall Observation Tower, the only place from which the American Falls and Horseshoe Falls may be seen at the same time. Visit [CulturalCompass.com](http://CulturalCompass.com) to reserve. **Rates rise on May 17.**

## Free Press Publisher Book Honor

*Underground Railroad Free Press* publisher Peter H. Michael's book *Remembering John Hanson: A Biography of the First President of the Original United States Government* was awarded the 2013 eLit Silver Prize in Biography for books published in 2012. The book has been nominated for four other prizes for biography to be announced later in 2013. *Remembering John Hanson* may be purchased at Amazon.com in hardcover, paperback or ebook, or ordered anywhere books are sold.

## Editorial: Do-Little Congress Meets Can't-See-Fat Administration

An Underground Railroad program with the props knocked out from under it. A mad scramble to reinstate laid off air traffic controllers. White House tours cancelled. School lunches for poor children withheld. Port of entry processing times for Americans returning home stretching to five hours. Uninspected meats headed to market anyway. Cuts at the Internal Revenue Service emboldening cheats, crimping revenues and deepening the problem. These sequestration debacles and more are already reality.

But why is a federal expense cut of only 2.2 percent of the budget, and less than a half percent of gross domestic product, GDP, allowed to wreak such havoc?

To put things into closer focus, the sequestration legislation went light on Social Security and Medicare, the two largest government expenditures, leaving all other programs to shoulder about a five percent cut. Still, how is it that the National Park Service, the Federal Aviation Administration, the school lunch program, the Customs and Immigration Service, the Food and Drug Administration and the White House visitors program have not looked for five percent of waste, surplus or inefficiency in their expenses and wrung out that much? Why don't presidential administrations of either party see fat?

I've been there. During college summers working as a researcher in an Army laboratory and then during the Viet Nam War working for a defense contractor in several Southeast Asian nations, the Defense Department waste which I saw every day was staggering. Cutting costs five-percent - or ten, or twenty - without reducing program quality would have been no problem

had there been anyone minding the store who actually wanted to do it.

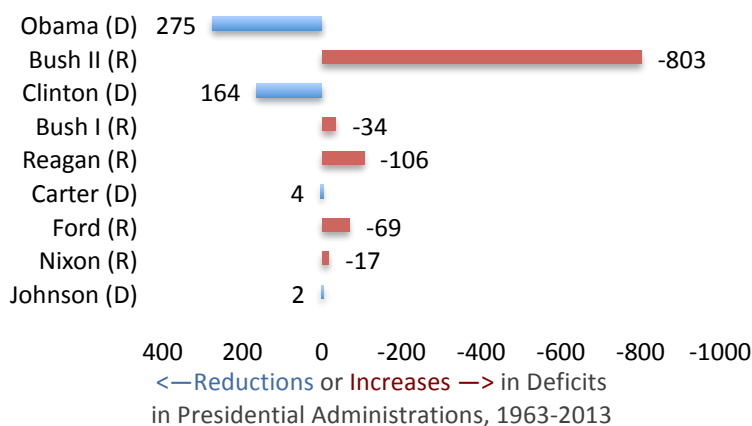
With the sole exception of deficit reduction wrought by the Truman administration after World War II, the Obama administration cut the federal budget deficit in a single term more than did any other administration in history. But the deficit is still out of balance to the tune of \$973 billion projected for the current fiscal year and \$744 billion next year. As a measure of progress, the latter figure represents barely more than half of the all-time record annual deficit of \$1.41 trillion inherited from Bush II by Obama as Obama took office.

Next year's projected deficit represents 4.4 percent of GDP, down from the 10.1 percent handed to Obama when he was inaugurated, but still higher than the 2.5 percent average annual federal budget deficit since the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. But the administration has deficits, in both dollar and percent-of-GDP terms, rapidly headed down toward that benchmark average.

There is plenty of blame to go around for both the annual deficits and the sequestration cuts, but it has become clear that Republicans get most of the blame for the former, and the administration for the latter. It seems quite counterintuitive, but, as in the chart here, it has been literally without exception Republican administrations over the last half century which have increased deficits and Democrat administrations which have reduced deficits.

Looked at another way, the 2013 sequestration boosted Obama in his drive to reduce deficits even if only by that 2.2 percent of the budget, one buck in every

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Peter H. Michael, Publisher  
[publisher@urfreepress.com](mailto:publisher@urfreepress.com)  
 301 | 874 | 0235

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## Soldiers

Francisco up through the rugged Sierra Nevada mountains to Sequoia National Park in 1903, at the head of the Buffalo Soldiers' regiments and distinguished himself protecting the park and helping build the roads that enabled other visitors to enjoy the park in comfort. But his efforts in 1917 were to no avail.

So I headed to Fort Davis National Historic Site in Texas, where the first African American to graduate from West Point, Lt. Henry Ossian Flipper, distinguished himself before he was brought up on charges of mismanaging money, which he vehemently denied. Here's how I describe our visit to this park in my book, *Legacy on the Land*.

As I've often said, the parks are my heritage, my therapy and my inspiration, and that was affirmed once more when we visited Fort Davis National Historic Site en route to Texas's Big Bend National Park. Since I'd learned about Fort Davis, it had taken on almost mythical proportions in my mind. I choked up when I saw the craggy rock formations close to the fort and realized that the Buffalo Soldiers had looked at exactly this same view more than 140 years ago when they were based at the fort from 1867 until 1885.

Fort Davis today contains the Buffalo Soldiers' barracks, beds, clothing and armory among other relics of their service, but for me, the most poignant thing was to observe the same views that they looked out on more than 140 years ago. Site Superintendent Chuck Hunt was graciously taking us on a tour of the fort, and then tried to show me into the hospital, which he said was the only one of its kind in the Park System.

I balked. I had just returned from Florida, keeping vigil at Brenda's bedside (our friend the marine archaeologist at Biscayne National Park) until she died. I'd had too much of hospitals that month, so I stepped off the back porch and into the outdoors to calm my feelings. My eyes went first to the large tree that was buzzing with warblers. But then I turned to the right, and I froze when I saw the rows of black hoodoos, on the mountains. The granite formations resembled a dignified people frozen in time as they looked implacably into the distance.

I thought about how many times the Buffalo Soldiers would have looked at this view which communicated the eternity of nature and emphasized the relatively short span of human life. I thought how, being so far away from home and their loved ones, often suffering the racial slights and disrespect of the men they served with, and fighting for a land that did not fully accept them as human beings, the soldiers might have taken comfort and assurance in their destiny from this view.

Then Supt. Hunt completely burst my bubble when he told us that the adjoining lands that I could see from that very spot were up for sale. If they were bought by a developer, which seemed likely, no one would ever again be able to have the experience that I had just had. The Park Service was working with the Conservation Fund to help secure the property, and my husband Frank and I resolved to do everything in our power to spread the word that this property was an invaluable asset of American history that was vital to preserve.

The National Park System gave me a true appreciation of the Buffalo Soldiers' invaluable contributions in the forefront of westward expansion, mapping the wilderness, building forts and roads, protecting settlers, and participating in every aspect of exploration and conquest accomplished in that time.

The most serious problem faced by the Army during the Indian War period was desertion. In 1868, the desertion rate for enlisted personnel was approximately 25 percent. Desertions among White regiments were roughly three times greater than those among Black units. Also, both African-American cavalry and infantry regiments had lower rates of alcoholism than their White counterparts. While in the field, both the troopers and their horses faced not only hostile Indians and outlaws, but also extended patrols of up to six months covering more than 1,000 miles. Adding to their ordeal were the scarcity of water and the extremes of weather common to the southwest. When not on patrol, the Buffalo Soldiers were engaged in endless drills, parades and inspections. At Fort Davis in 1877 a dress parade, complete with the post band, was held each evening except Saturdays. Regarding the African-American troopers, the Post Surgeon noted that the troops seemed especially proud of their uniform and of their profession as soldiers.

When we left that park, my equilibrium had been restored. I had made peace with Brenda's passing and shed my tears, mixing them into the ground where the Buffalo Soldiers' secret tears may have also fallen. I saw how the strivings of each human being create a bridge to the future, and I was just happy to be a link in that bridge.

Today I am happy to be able to report that the land that was in jeopardy has been acquired through the efforts of the Conservation Fund, the National Parks Conservation Association and others, and the threat has been averted.

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## Stalemate

fifty. Fine. But how were the decisions made to cut which programs, which elements in a program and by how much? Most important, why cut useful programs rather than fat? And for fat, start with the Defense Department.

Whether they like it or not, every year all fifty states navigate budgeting and cost exercises successfully, if sometimes painfully, because they are all required to balance their annual budgets. On a household level, most families balance their budgets out of prudent common-sense habit, especially poor families in sheer necessity since they aren't qualified to borrow.

Bankruptcies occur but since 2010 only 33 of the nation's 39,054 counties, cities and towns – less than one-tenth of one percent – filed for bankruptcy and some of those were denied. Even through the Great Recession, personal bankruptcy rates were less than one percent of households and individuals, and fewer than one in ten was for reasons other than job loss, medical event or divorce.

So, well more than 99 of every 100 US households, individuals, counties, cities and towns successfully balance their budgets and control spending, but not the federal government because it is not required to.

The debate for a long time has hinged on larger versus smaller government. Large, small. What kind of a choice is it if Americans are asked to choose between large incompetent government or small incompetent government? Is it too much to ask that we have a competent right-sized government in which Congress can regain enough comity to function, administrations – Democrat and Republican alike – can actually recognize and willingly excise fat, and balanced budgets are required?

*Peter H. Michael*