



UNDERGROUND RAILROAD FREE PRESS®

Independent reporting on today's Underground Railroad

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Free Press Lobbying Helps to Put Tubman on the \$20 Bill



It had been talked about for several years before Treasury Secretary Jacob Lew announced on April 20 that Harriet Tubman will be honored by appearing on United States currency.

Said Lew regarding public comments he reviewed, "I said we were going to listen. We really did listen. The pattern became clear that Harriet Tubman struck a chord with people in all parts of the country, of all ages."

Tubman will take the place of Andrew Jackson, who had become controversial in recent years, on the front of the \$20 bill.

Free Press has editorialized for several years to replace Jackson with Harriet Tubman on the \$20 bill rather than Alexander Hamilton on the \$10 bill as the government had earlier proposed, and contacted Secretary Lew and President Obama urging the change.

Only in recent years has Jackson's notoriety been acknowledged for his having broken treaties with several major Indian tribes in the southeast-

ern United States and ordered their infamous Trail of Tears forced march to Oklahoma Territory during which the mortality rate was one third.

In a fit of unwarranted suspicion that his political foes were using it against him, Jackson also brought about the demise of the nation's central bank, leaving the United States as the only major economy without one until the Federal Reserve Bank was created in 1913.

Coming full circle, an enslaver will be replaced by the most famous freer of the enslaved. In an unneeded hedging, Secretary Lew also announced that Jackson would be moved to the back of the \$20 bill in a smaller image beside the White House.

Jackson has been on the \$20 bill since 1928, the 100th anniversary of his election as president. He replaced President Grover Cleveland on the bill.

Other Women to Be on Currency

Secretary Lew also announced that *Please go to Currency, page 3, column 3*

Be on the lookout in your email next month for our invitation to participate in the **annual Free Press survey of the international Underground Railroad community**. To view results of past surveys, click on Surveys at our website, urfreepress.com.

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Have change for a "Tubman"? We'll be hearing this soon.

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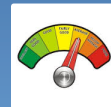
Don't wait. Nominate a deserving person or group for one of the 2016 Free Press Prizes.

1



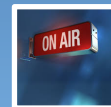
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Publicize your event at the *Free Press* Datebook. Get listed at Lynx. Submit an article or letter to the editor.

Email us at info@urfreepress.com.

Nominate a Person or an Organization for a 2016 Free Press Prize

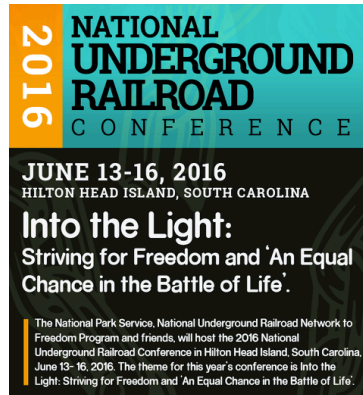
Since 2008, *Underground Railroad Free Press* has awarded annual prizes for contemporary Underground Railroad leadership, preservation and advancement of knowledge, the top honors in the international Underground Railroad community.

Past winners have been honored for discovering or preserving Underground Railroad sites and artifacts, founding or leading organizations, writing books, performing research, and promoting the Underground Railroad. Artistic accomplishment, official

interest, legislation, financial support and other accomplishments also are considered.

Individuals and organizations from any country are eligible for nomination. **Nominating is easy.** Just download a nomination form from our website, complete it, then email it to us at info@urfreepress.com. The 2016 nomination deadline is June 30. Visit urfreepress.com/#prizes for more information and to view past winners.

National Park Service Announces Annual Underground Railroad Conference



40 Acres and Mule, by Sonja Evans commemorates Mitchelville, Hilton Head Island, South Carolina. Mitchelville Freedom Park is an Underground Railroad site recognizing the community established in 1862 as the first self-governing town of formerly enslaved people.

The National Park Service's Underground Railroad Network to Freedom Program will host its 2016 annual conference at Hilton Head Island, South Carolina, from June 13 through 16. The theme for this year's conference is "Into the Light: Striving for Freedom and an Equal Chance in the Battle of Life." This year's conference is co-sponsored by the Hilton Head-Bluffton Chamber of Commerce and will be held at the Westin Resort.

"We are very excited about the opportunities presented in Hilton Head and the Low Country to explore the meaning of freedom and these profound social transformations" said Diane Miller, Program Manager of the Network to Freedom (NTF). "This conference will bring the stories of Mitchelville, Fort Howell, and the Heritage Library into the national conversation as we explore all aspects of the transition from slavery to freedom, both at the individual and societal scale."

The four-day conference will include pre-conference events, renowned keynote speakers, panel discussions, an exhibit hall, and tours of local museums and historic sites. The NTF was established by legislation passed in 1998 to promote the preservation and interpretation of resources associated with the Underground Railroad.

Says Shirley Peterson, Chairman of the Mitchelville Preservation Project, "We are humbled by the National Park Service decision to hold its annual Underground Railroad conference on Hilton Head Island, South Carolina, a community of unparalleled beauty and known as a tour-

ism destination, but also recognized for its historic and cultural tourism value. Furthermore, this year's conference honors and recognizes historic Mitchellville, a significant untold story of American History, at the 'dawn of freedom' for Americans born under the bondage of slavery. Mitchelville in many cases served as the final destination of the underground railroad where men and women experienced their first taste of freedom." Fort Howell and the Heritage Library, both Network to Freedom members, are joining the Mitchelville Preservation Project in local planning efforts.

Conference Highlights

Monday, June 13

Tour of Mitchelville and Penn Center
Evening reception

Tuesday, June 14

Address by Robert Stanton, former Director, National Park Service
The Legacy of Mitchelville Luncheon
Keynote Address: to be announced
Four panel discussions
Evening banquet

Wednesday, June 15

Four panel discussions
Luncheon
Informal Networking
Organizational Empowerment and Funding Strategies
Preservation: Bricks and Mortar
Telling the Story: Heritage Tourism
Telling the Story: Programs and Exhibits

Thursday, June 16

Tour of Savannah, Georgia

Conference Signup

<http://bit.ly/24GGEQX>

or

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Television Channel WGN Launches "Underground" Series



The following is adapted from Neda Ula-by's review on npr.org of the WGN channel's *Underground* series which debuted on March 9. *Underground* has been renewed for a ten-episode second season in 2017.

Underground is the first major scripted drama taking the Underground Railroad as a setting. Given the drama of the actual history, it's hard to believe the Underground Railroad hasn't been a setting for a TV show before.

Creators Misha Green and Joe Pokaski met while working as writers for the series *Heroes*, which ran for four seasons on NBC. It was Green's idea to draw on their shared love of action movies for a show that in some ways would be more 24 than *Roots*. They wanted to make it exciting and high-stakes, real and relevant.

Underground is a multilayered drama following different groups: slave catchers, abolitionists, a Georgia plantation family, enslaved people forced to work there, and those who try to escape. Actress Jurnee Smollett-Bell compares *Underground* to spy thrillers where characters rely on cryptic clues to make their way to freedom. "They could use a star or they could use a song, or they could use code words or glances or markings on a tree," she says. The song "Follow the Drinking Gourd," for example, is said to contain coded messages about navigating north by using the Big Dipper.

Other TV shows have dramatized American slavery — but not many. And such shows tend to be miniseries, not regularly scheduled dramas that could air for years. The great *Roots*, from 1977, was a miniseries. So was BET's critically acclaimed *The Book of Negroes* from 2015. The PBS series *Mercy Street*, which debuted this year, is set during the Civil War.

"But slavery is folded within it and not its

center," writes Lisa Woolfork, a professor at the University of Virginia who studies representations of American slavery.

Woolfork has heard complaints about "slavery fatigue" since the success of high-profile movies such as *12 Years a Slave* and *Django Unchained*. Woolfork says she wholeheartedly understands wanting to put a shameful past behind us.

"We want to have it safely away so it doesn't impede our everyday life," Woolfork says. "But one way to understand why our present is the way it is, is rooted in the past. As Faulkner said, 'The past is never dead. It isn't even past.'"

Aldis Hodge plays Noah, leader of the underground resistance. He says the show's impact stays with him even after the cameras are off: "There's no way that you can come from the set without taking a little piece of that with you," he says.

I hadn't yet talked to Woolfork when Hodge and production designer Meghan Rogers took me to *Underground*'s reconstructed slave quarters at Louisiana State University. Around a vegetable garden were arranged seven wooden shacks, all authentic slave cabins from the 1830s, moved from elsewhere. "This was creepy sometimes," Rogers admitted.

Nothing in *Underground* is sepia-toned. The music is contemporary, and so is much of the language. Green said she aimed to pull American history off the wall of the proverbial museum.

"The Underground Railroad was the first integrated civil rights movement," she said. "And it's a great example of when we work together, what we can go against, which was 600 miles of crazy terrain being chased by slave catchers to get people to be what they should be in the first case — which is free."

Currency

Alexander Hamilton and Abraham Lincoln will remain on the \$10 and \$5 bills, but that the backs of both will be reconfigured "to bring to life" the United States Treasury Building and the Lincoln Memorial shown there.

The back of the \$10 bill will have an image of the historic 1913 march for women's right to vote that ended at the Treasury Building, and images of suffragists Lucretia Mott, Sojourner Truth, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Alice Paul and Susan B. Anthony.

The obverse of the \$5 bill will continue showing the Lincoln Memorial and in the foreground add three Americans who famously appeared there: Martin Luther King, Jr., who delivered his "I have a dream" speech from its steps; African-American singer Marian Anderson, who was refused entry to sing in the segregated Constitution Hall; and Eleanor Roosevelt, who then made the Lincoln Memorial available to Anderson.

Secretary Lew has ordered the Treasury Department's Bureau of Engraving and Printing to accelerate redesigning the three bills, with the \$10 bill first in line. Mr. Lew said all three notes will be in circulation by 2030. Exact dates of official issuance are the purview of the Federal Reserve Board.

Though he and President Obama remain in their offices only until January 20, 2016, Mr. Lew is confident that succeeding Treasury Secretaries will not tamper with the new currency concepts. Said he, "I don't think somebody's going to want to do that, to take the image of Harriet Tubman off of our money, to take the image of the suffragists off."