



UNDERGROUND RAILROAD FREE PRESS®

Independent reporting on today's Underground Railroad

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PBS In New Underground Railroad Map and Abolitionist Program

See our editorial on page 4 related to this article



In February, the Public Broadcasting System's American Experience, American television's most watched history series, will premiere its 39th project, "The Abolitionists," being produced by WGBH, PBS's Boston affiliate.

To accompany the program, PBS is collaborating with Historypin to create a permanent interactive abolitionist map at the PBS website. PBS and Historypin are also developing a mobile app for the project.

PBS is partnering with *Free Press* and public contributors to generate initial map content.

WGBH's Casey Davis tells *Free Press*, "The focus of the map is on abolitionists and the abolitionist movement, with the Underground Railroad as one part of the movement. Contributors will upload the majority of content which will be

added to indefinitely."

The Historypin platform will enable PBS contributors to upload photographs, audio, video and text to the PBS/Historypin map. Contributors may add descriptive data, preferred citations and logos which will appear anytime a visitor views an item posted to the map by the contributor. As Historypin is a public history platform, anyone may use the abolition map and app free, and contributors will maintain all rights to their own content.

Davis says that the PBS map will welcome virtually any Underground Railroad entry with broader emphasis on abolitionism. At *Free Press*'s suggestion, PBS is considering having the map's Underground Railroad entries rated for authenticity by the Wellman Scale.

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NTF Recognizes Turner and Frederick Douglass Family Foundation

At its annual conference, the National Park Service's Network to Freedom Underground Railroad program recognized Illinois' Glennette Tilley Turner with NTF's 2012 Wilbur Siebert Award and the Frederick Douglass Family Foundation with its 2012 Frederick Douglass Legacy Award.

The Siebert Award, honoring Ohio State University Professor Wilbur Siebert who authored a landmark Underground Railroad book in 1898, recognizes "contributions to Underground Railroad research and advocacy." The Douglass Award honors "ongoing commitment to social justice in the spirit of the Underground Railroad and Frederick Douglass." Both are intended as annual awards.

The NTF has given the Siebert Award since 2009. The Douglass Award is new in 2012. Awardees are chosen by a group of NTF civil servants who specialize in the Underground Railroad.

After a 25-year teaching career, Glennette Tilley Turner turned to writing, becoming a leading authority on the Illinois Underground Railroad and effective Underground Railroad advocate on the national stage. She has testified before U.S. Senate and House committees and the Illinois Senate in support of Underground Railroad legislation, and has consulted to the National Underground Railroad Freedom Center and the National Park Service. Please see *Network to Freedom Awards*, page 5, column 1

Underground Railroad Alive and Thriving in Delmarva

Where?

The Delmarva Peninsula, its highest point only 102 feet above sea level, is the 200-mile sand spit between the Chesapeake Bay and the Atlantic Ocean containing Delaware, all of Maryland's Eastern Shore and a tail of Virginia. The peninsula's name is drawn from the first syllables of the three state names.

Wholly slave territory, the isolated Delmarva played as illustrious a role in the Underground Railroad as did any part of the nation.



Wilmington's "Unwavering Courage in the Pursuit of Freedom" statue

Harriet Tubman and Frederick Douglass were born within a few miles of each other in mid-peninsula Maryland. William Still's family was enslaved nearby. For more than 30 years, Thomas Garrett and his family operated their home as a safe-house in New Castle, Delaware

at the top of the peninsula. Tubman, Garrett and others blazed the peninsula's well-trod Underground Railroad routes.

Today the peninsula is alive with Underground Railroad memorials, programs, sites, restoration and rediscoveries.

Most notable of these is the ongoing work of the federal government honoring Tubman with a future national park in Maryland's Dorchester County where she grew up. In next-door Caroline County, a slave cabin telling the story of the Still family is being restored.

This year the town of Lewes, Delaware, began an annual observation of the August 21, 1789, birthday of Thomas Garrett.

On October 3, the city of Wilmington, Delaware, dedicated the statue of Garrett and Tubman shown here.

The state of Delaware is re-emphasizing the role of Quaker John Dickinson, chair of the Revolution-era committees which drafted both of the nation's government charters, the Articles of Confederation and the Constitution.

To explore it all, take the new 125-mile Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad Byway starting in Bucktown, Maryland, her birthplace, and ending on the waterfront in Wilmington, gateway to the north, near the Garrett home.



The Delmarva Peninsula

Slow Government, Active Government: Updates on Two Sites

Because the situation is emblematic of what too often is the fate of Underground Railroad sites, we continue to report on the seemingly interminable saga of the desecration of New York City's Hopper-Gibbons House by its owner.

This tale just might come to a good conclusion on November 20 when a City commission hears evidence and decides if the owner will be required to dismantle an illegal added story.



The Freedom Crossing Monument in Niagara Falls, New York

Preservationist neighbors and the Historic Districts Council appear to have convinced the City's Board of Standards and Appeals that restoration must be enforced. It has been a frustrating several years for the neighbors dealing with an unresponsive Building Department to get it to crack down and then winding their way through a labyrinthine maze of official entities to get action.

To help this cause reach a good finish, see the appeal on page 4.

In the meantime in the other end of the state at the town of Niagara Falls, energy prevails between local and state governments as the City of Niagara Falls moves past planning and begins to implement the town's new Niagara Falls Underground Railroad Heritage Area.

The state approved the local commission's plan which is now set to implement walking tours, an interpretive center and restoration projects to attract history enthusiasts and enhance experiences of tourists visiting the nearby Falls.

State Parks staffer Kevin Cottrell said that the plan needs to be put to work or it will become just another report sitting on a shelf. "What we have to do now is activate the plan," Cottrell said while sitting on the steps of the newly restored U.S. Customs House just yards from where Harriet Tubman stood gazing at the falls in 1856.

Roundup of New Underground Railroad Books and a DVD

With a novel, a Harriet Tubman biography from the Canadian perspective, a children's book, and a John Brown documentary, 2012 is proving to be a banner year in the rising tide of Underground Railroad publications.



Released in June, Judith Owens-Lalude's *The Long Walk: From Slavery to Freedom* (Anike Press, 2012, 193 pages, \$14.95 paperback) adds nicely to the Underground Railroad's growing but still-too-scant fiction bookshelf. Using the actual names of her enslaved great-grandparents, Owens-Lalude weaves a vivid tale from a family's being sold into a hellish existence, to flight, pursuit, aid and finally lasting freedom.

Owens-Lalude is a local historian and novelist who lives near Louisville, Kentucky, close to the farm where her great-grandparents were enslaved.



Rosemary Sadlier's *Harriet Tubman: Freedom Seeker, Freedom Leader* (Dundurn, 2012, 192 pages, \$19.99 paperback) provides a useful infill on Tubman's life in Canada after she settled at St. Catherine's in 1851, two years after her escape from Maryland's Eastern Shore. Sadlier informs us of Tubman's Canadian existence through an excellent chapter on and tabular chronology of African-Canadians, slavery, abolition, and the Canadian roles in the Underground Railroad. The book contains a long, detailed, interwoven timeline illuminating the African-Canadian experience beginning in 1604, with Tubman's life events interspersed as they occur.

Dr. Rosemary Sadlier, a leading authority on African-Canadian history, has served for nearly 20 years as president of the Ontario Black History Society and was instrumental in getting February designated as Black History Month in Canada.



In *Bound for the Future: Child Heroes of the Underground Railroad*, (Praeger, 2012, 215 pages, \$48 hardcover) Jonathon Sheckman sheds new light on the vital contributions of specific underappreciated child activists and the local circumstances of their daily work, and provides context to these young activists' actions within the broader social practice of resisting slavery. The book offers fresh insight into the complicated question of who was

responsible for ending slavery. Through a thorough examination of these subjects, Sheckman demonstrates his thesis that in specific cases, children were the actual essential lifeblood of the Underground Railroad's operating workforce.

Jonathan Sheckman is the former editor of a science education book series published by the Smithsonian Institution's National Science Resources Center. His published works include *Greenwood's Groundbreaking Scientific Experiments, Inventions, and Discoveries of the 18th Century*.



Gary Jenkins' documentary film *John Brown and the Last Train* (LifeDocumentaries.com, 2012, 7 minutes, free) on John Brown's Kansas war on slavery is drawing good reviews. Fergus Bordewich calls the film and accompanying DVD documentary, "Important, enlightening and inspiring, one of the best documentaries on the Underground Railroad."

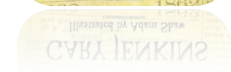
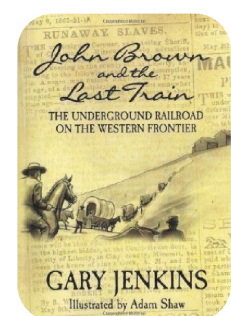
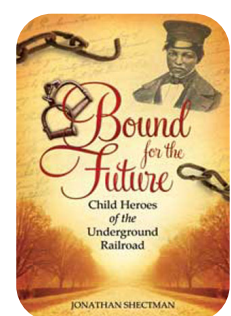
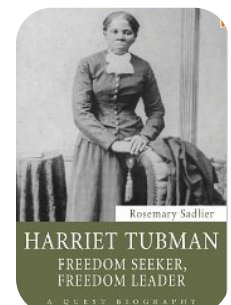
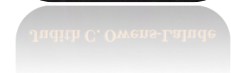
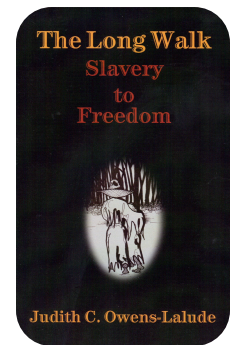
Narrated by and containing an interview of Sheckman, the seven-minute film/DVD is illustrated with graphics from Sheckman's accompanying book of the same name. The film may be viewed at LifeDocumentaries.com and streamed to audiences from there at no charge.

Says Brown scholar Louis DeCaro of the brief book, *John Brown and the Last Train*, (Life Documentaries, 2012, 74 pages, \$9.95) the only contemporary publication I know of relating to Brown's 1858-59 liberation effort, is most readable, and brings Brown's trek across Iowa alive." The heavily illustrated book may be purchased at LifeDocumentaries.com or from online booksellers.

Missouri attorney Gary Jenkins is a documentary film producer.



Examining how these four books were published shows Underground Railroad authors self-publishing when that is what it takes to get into print and still learning the process. *Bound for the Future* is going to have a hard time at \$48; at 215 pages, \$20 or \$25 ought to work for the book's hardcover price. For a time, *John Brown and the Last Train* was listed at Amazon as out of print when it wasn't, an avoidable glitch which the author has since corrected.



Editorial: Will There Ever Be an Unflawed List of Underground Railroad Sites?

Over the last decade, lists large and small, ambitious and not, of Underground Railroad sites, programs, and people have sprouted up, but there remains none which is widely acceptable as the comprehensive "go to" place for Underground Railroad listings.

Currently, the big three Underground Railroad lists are the MapMuse.com map of Underground Railroad sites, the National Park Service's list of Underground Railroad programs and purported sites, and *Free Press's* Lynx registry of others' Underground Railroad programs. But each of these listings is, by design, limited to a specialized role.

As in our lead article here, the Public Broadcasting System's forthcoming interactive Abolitionist Map is a major new entry in the attempt to catalogue Underground Railroad sites but, depending on how it is developed, could lack some desirable capabilities.

At the moment, the most useful Underground Railroad listing has been MapMuse's which operates virtually exclusively on the basis of its crowd-sourced map at the MapMuse.com website. But being open-sourced, the map is not vetted and MapMuse staff are hard to contact. MapMuse offers many interactive maps at its website, its Underground Railroad map just one of them. The MapMuse map's weakness is that it is a low-maintenance venture on autopilot.

If the MapMuse map is friendly but unsupervised, the National Park Service's listings of Underground Railroad sites, programs and collections err to the opposite extreme.

The Park Service's Network to Freedom site listings have long been criticized for mixing sites which were for and against the Underground Railroad, and for listing only the 3 to 4 percent of sites fortunate enough to be documented, barring the great majority whose claims rest on oral tradition, even sites with strong evidence.

Further, the Network to Freedom's new informative online map showing the program's listed sites is closed to public



Where do I look? *Free Press*? MapMuse? PBS? Park Service? None of the above?

interaction or listing. *Free Press* has editorialized on the need for the Park Service to correct these deficiencies.

Now numbering over 130, *Free Press's* Lynx listing operates as the international Underground Railroad community's inclusive central registry of contemporary Underground Railroad programs with no restrictions on listing. Though some Underground Railroad sites are listed at Lynx, *Free Press* has not built Lynx as a site registry because of *Please see Editorial, page 5, column 2*

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Peter H. Michael, Publisher
publisher@urrfreepress.com
301 | 874 | 0235

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Visit the archives at the *Free Press* website to read articles on the fight to preserve Hopper-Gibbons House.

PAID ADVERTISEMENT

Help stop illegal alterations to New York City's Hopper-Gibbons House Underground Railroad historic site.

The Friends of Lamartine Place needs your help to raise the last \$2,500 of our \$8,000 legal costs for the City's Board of Standards and Appeals hearing November 20 to require the Hopper-Gibbons House owner to restore the historic Underground Railroad site after he drastically altered it with illegal modifications.

To donate, call the Historic Districts Council at 212.614.9107, or search on Friends of Lamartine Place at hdc.org and use your credit card, or mail a check with Friends of Lamartine Place in the memo line to Historic Districts Council, 232 East Eleventh Street, New York, New York, 10003.

Donations made after November 20 are welcome, too, and will be used as above.

We very much appreciate your support.

Thank you!

PBS

PBS states that, "The Abolitionist Map will be a tool contributors can use to expand outreach and programming for their own communities. PBS will start promoting the site in November, and the app will be free at iTunes by December. Content that users upload to the site will also live on the app."

Map and app users will be able to engage contributors' materials on a public digital platform, scaling up contributors' audiences internationally. Users may engage with content, use the materials to plot their own Underground Railroad site tours, and "pin" their own comments and content to the map.

The PBS American Experience series has included Ken Burns' films on the Civil War, jazz, baseball, and national parks, and PBS's own 250 productions, most recently on the Hoover Dam, Panama Canal, the crash of 1929, Jesse Owens and Bill Clinton.

Founded in 1970 as a nonprofit corporation, PBS today has 354 member television stations and distributes such programs as American Experience, Masterpiece Theater, Antiques Roadshow, This Old House, History Detectives, Austin City Limits, Tavis Smiley and Charlie Rose. PBS is routinely ranked as one of the nation's most admired charitable organizations.

Network to Freedom Awards



Turner



Morris

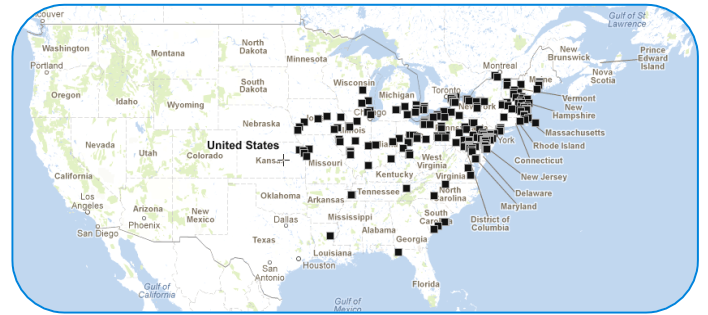
Service. For more than two decades she has published books and articles on the Underground Railroad, and been interviewed on cable and network television outlets including C-SPAN. She is the author of *The Underground Railroad in Illinois*.

Turner served as president of the Black Literary Umbrella and of the Children's Reading Roundtable of Chicago, and was named Outstanding Women Educator of DuPage County, Illinois, where she lives with her husband. She is the daughter of Rev. John Tilley, a leader of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference in the 1960s. Nearing 80, she continues her work.

Founded in 2009 by Frederick Douglass descendant Nettie Washington Douglass, the Frederick Douglass Family Foundation bills itself as a modern-day abolitionist organization honoring the legacy of Frederick Douglass which promotes awareness about modern-day slavery to hasten its demise worldwide and teaches young people how to take action against human trafficking using modern communications and social networking.

The Foundation is led by Nettie Washington Douglass' son, Kenneth B. Morris, Jr., who also descends from Booker T. Washington. Morris's extraordinary lineage flows through the marriage of his grandmother, Nettie Hancock Washington, Booker T. Washington's granddaughter, and his grandfather, Dr. Frederick Douglass III, great-grandson of Frederick Douglass. Before joining the Frederick Douglass Family Foundation, Morris operated C&A Marketing which develops customized marketing and incentive travel programs for cruise lines and resorts.

Editorial



MapMuse.com's Underground Railroad Site Listing Map

the volume of start-up work and upkeep that this would entail for a lean organization.

Until the PBS map is up and running, we have a large open useful but unvetted list with only remote attachment to the Underground Railroad community, a restrictive closed well-funded ivory-tower list which can afford to do better, and a program registry not intended as a site list. As in the comparison below, what PBS is saying its new entry will do seems to hold out good hope eventually of the best Underground Railroad site list yet, combining the best features of the other three: open, comprehensive, international, rated and cooperative. *Free Press* will continue to report on the PBS map as it goes live and grows.

PBS Abolitionist Map

Emphasis- Open-source map with public entries welcome

International- Yes

Lists sites- Yes

Lists programs- Yes

Rates site claims- To be determined

Public can list- Yes

Pros- Big player. Cooperative. Open. Good customer service.

Cons- Remains to be seen

MapMuse.com Underground Railroad Map

Emphasis- Open source map with public entries welcome

International- Barely

Lists sites- Yes

Lists programs- Some

Rates site claims- No

Public can list- Yes

Pros- Extensive. Open. Graphical.

Cons- Unvetted. Unhelpful owner. Public relations absent.

Free Press Lynx Registry of Underground Railroad Programs

Emphasis- Central program registry with public entries welcome

International- Yes and emphasized

Lists sites- Yes any, but not emphasized as a site listing *per se*

Lists programs- Yes as its purpose

Rates site claims- Yes, according to the Wellman Scale

Public can list- Yes

Pros- Program "Yellow Pages." Open. Quick customer service.

Cons- Not mainly a site registry. No map.

Network to Freedom Site, Program and Collection Listings

Emphasis- Restricted listings chosen by government

International- No

Lists sites- Prohibits the 96%-97% of sites lacking documentation

Lists programs- Yes

Rates site claims- No: only yes-or-no calls excluding most sites

Public can list- No

Pros- Extensive. Sites are documented. Useful descriptions.

Cons- Closed. Distorts by exclusivity. Public relations absent