



# UNDERGROUND RAILROAD FREE PRESS®

Independent reporting on today's Underground Railroad

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## 2014 Peace Nobel Awarded for Work Freeing Children from Slavery



Kailash Satyarthi and Malala Yousafzai

For their work speaking out against the slavery and exploitation of children, Indian social organizer Kailash Satyarthi and Pakistani schoolgirl Malala Yousafzai were named as the recipients of the 2014 Nobel Peace Prize. The Nobel Prizes for peace, economics, medicine, literature, physics and chemistry will be presented on December 10 in Oslo, Norway.

By naming the two, the Nobel Committee honors age and youth, Hindu and Muslim, Indian and Pakistani, and male and female, all taken together a stroke for peace in itself.

Mr. Satyarthi, 60, educated as an electrical engineer, left his college teaching post in 1980 to found the Save the Childhood Mission. Tirelessly arguing that child labor perpetuates poverty, unemployment, illiteracy, population growth and other social ills, he has done as much as anyone to show child labor as a human rights issue.

Says Satyarthi, "Everyone must acknowledge and see that child slavery still exists in the world in its ugliest face and form. And this crime against humanity is intolerable, unacceptable and must go."

By far the youngest Nobel prize ever, Malala Yousafzai, 17, has become a legend in her own time. As an eleven year old, she began speaking out against Taliban restrictions on education of girls in Pakistan's remote Swat Valley where she lived. By the next year when she became a regular blogger for the Urdu edition of the British Broadcasting Corporation, the Taliban had destroyed more than a hundred girls schools in the region.

On October 9, 2012, when she was fifteen, a Taliban gunman boarded the youngster's school bus and shot her in the head. After regaining consciousness in a hospital in Britain a

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## Tolson's Chapel

*One of an occasional series on Underground Railroad and related sites*

After its congregation disbanded in 1998, Tolson's Chapel sat deteriorating on a back street of rural Sharpsburg, Maryland, until local historian Edie Wallace did something about it.

Creating a nonprofit, mustering local interest and launching a fund drive worked. In 2002, the nearby Save Historic Antietam Foundation became the chapel's owner and in 2008 deeded it to Friends of Tolson Chapel which Wallace had founded. Renovation was com-

pleted by the Friends group in 2014.

Tolson's Chapel dates from 1866 and served as an African Methodist Episcopal church until 1998. It was also used as the American Union School for African American children from 1868 until 1899. The church is named for its founder and first pastor, John R. Tolson, a former slave from Virginia.

Visit [tolsonschapel.org](http://tolsonschapel.org) for more.



Tolson's Chapel

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Freedom from child labor and to an education are recognized by a Nobel Prize.

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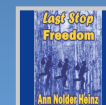
A small town saves an almost forgotten historic church.

1



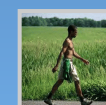
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## Oscar Winner Lupita Nyong'o and the National Trust for Historic Preservation Fight to Save Richmond's Historic Shockoe Bottom

Shockoe Bottom, the oldest neighborhood in Richmond, Virginia, was once a bustling center of the slave-trade. By some estimates, more 300,000 men, women and children were bought and sold in the Bottom and shipped throughout the Deep South. Solomon Northup whose life was depicted in the Oscar-winning film *12 Years a Slave* was held in a Shockoe Bottom jail before being sold south.

Today much of the historic neighborhood is being torn down and gentrified, its nineteenth century tobacco warehouses converted to townhouses, and many of its open areas now paved over into parking lots. The last straw came when the City of Richmond announced that a minor

league baseball stadium would be built in Shockoe Bottom, literally burying most of the remainder of the neighborhood's history.

Said National Trust for Historic Preservation president Stephanie Meeks in launching a campaign to save the neighborhood, "We see Shockoe Bottom as not just a state of Virginia treasure, but a national treasure. Much of what was there has been destroyed and what is there is buried. We'd like to have a comprehensive archaeological exploration of this site."

Meeks enlisted the assistance of Lupita Nyong'o whose portrayal of Patsey in *12 Years a Slave* won the 2014 Academy Award for Best Support-  
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Lupita Nyong'o

## Underground Railroad Novel Wins Prize

Ann Heinz's *Last Stop Freedom*, an Underground Railroad suspense thriller, has been awarded the Dragonfly E-book Award for Historical Fiction.

Amazon's review describes *Last Stop Freedom*'s story line as, "A desperate flight from brutal oppression—and everything to lose if it fails. Two women, one white, the other black, find themselves trapped in bondage on a South Carolina plantation in 1850s America. Their unique friendship gives each the strength to endure until circumstances threaten not only to rip them apart but to place their very lives in jeopardy. They undertake a harrowing flight with the aid of the Underground Railroad. Will slavery's powerful tentacles hold them? Or will they find the freedom they crave."

Writes reviewer Wendy Thomas, "Julia agrees to marry Nathaniel Hamilton, a plantation owner in South Carolina but this just moves her from one house of repression to another. Her only source of comfort becomes Fanny, the black slave in the house who listens to her and gives her emotional strength. When Nathaniel threatens to sell Fanny, Julia must step up and make some decisions in order to take back control over her life."

"What follows is an intriguing story of cultures and morals clashing—North vs. South, men vs. women, black vs. white, religion vs. free will. Heinz does wonderfully in weaving these points of view into a solid story filled with beautiful imagery and accurate history. Heinz deftly shows us the inner turmoil of her main character as Julia struggles with what is allowed,



Ann Heinz

what is expected of her, and with what she knows is the right thing to do. With a quick pace and nice use of credible dialogue, Heinz brings us along as Julia, who had only wanted to be out in the world to have adventure and escape her father's rule, matures into a young woman of strength who becomes committed to a cause that, although not popular and dangerous for all involved, is the absolute right thing to do.

"Heinz is an accomplished and prolific writer who does a wonderful job of bringing us along to watch Julia's awakening as she moves from being the child of her father to becoming the strong, independent woman she is capable of being."

Ann Heinz has also authored *Will Thou Be Mine*, *Final Victim*, *Free Fall*, and *Extreme Influence*.

## For Tony Cohen, Another Historic Trek



Anthony Cohen

As this issue of *Free Press* reaches you, Underground Railroad pioneer Anthony Cohen is beginning his historic walk from Atlanta to Savannah, Georgia, retracing the footsteps of his great-great grand uncle Patrick Sneed who had fled from slavery in Savannah along the Underground Railroad to freedom in Canada in 1849. During the Civil War, Sneed joined the Union Army cavalry and in 1864 rode with Union Army General William Sherman in his March to the Sea.

Cohen says that he will travel by foot, boat, rail, horseback and other nineteenth-century conveyances as he makes the 250-mile journey. He plans stops in key communities along the way that figure into his family story, and expects his journey to be complete by November 30.

His reprise of his relative's march is nothing-

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## Editorial: A National Disgrace Whitewashed

This article by *Free Press* publisher Peter H. Michael appears as a chapter in his forthcoming *Running on Empty: Along an Epic 12,000-Mile Road Trip, America Has Its Say on Economic Inequality*, due for publication in 2015.

*Day 64-* Between trips, our friend Fergus Bordewich happened to email me about his op-ed piece appearing in *The Wall Street Journal*. The subject was the 150th anniversary of the Civil War massacre at Fort Pillow, Tennessee, on April 12, 1864, when 1,500 Confederates overwhelmed 550 white and black Union soldiers in the Battle of Fort Pillow after which a heavy majority of black Union soldiers were massacred even though Union forces had surrendered. The laws of war recognized by both sides stated that shooting stops with surrender and that surrendered soldiers automatically become prisoners of war with recognized POW rights.

The massacre sprang from Southern infatuation that the North would use black soldiers to fight whites, and that black Union soldiers were having success in doing so. Under the command of General Nathan Forrest, Confederate forces, after the Union commander had surrendered, wasted no time systematically killing more than three hundred black troops, women and children, some shot, others bayoneted, clubbed to death, saber-hacked, burned alive or buried alive. Death rates tell the story: Confederates one percent, Union whites twenty-two percent, Union blacks sixty-three percent. All of the approximately one-third of black soldiers who survived escaped through thick woods or in a single skiff which made it across the nearby Mississippi River. Records show that the Confederates took no black prisoners, only the 296 white soldiers who had surrendered and been spared.

For the remainder of the Civil War, black soldiers going into battle shouted the rallying cry "Remember Fort Pillow!"

Among many racial incidents, the Fort Pillow Massacre has been reckoned the war's ugliest. Forrest and his Confederate troops immediately began denying that any massacre had taken place, but a Congressional investigating committee, relying on numerous escapee and civilian eye-witness accounts, verified that without doubt it had. Before the war

Nathan Forrest had been a plantation owner and slave trader, and afterward became a founder of the Ku Klux Klan. After Reconstruction ended, town after southern town erected statues of Forrest or memorialized him in other ways.

Bordewich's article and a later exchange of emails left the impression that the Tennessee Department of Parks which operates Fort Pillow State Park could do more in its portrayal of the Battle of Fort Pillow to recognize the historical fact that a massacre had taken place. Since our route took us near the park, my curiosity prompted me to visit to see just how the massacre is officially portrayed.

Driving west from Covington, Tennessee, one would not guess from the peaceful countryside that it once was inflicted with a racial massacre. Getting to Fort Pillow on the Chickasaw Bluffs overlooking the Mississippi River involves turns onto ever more rural roads way off any beaten track. The fifteen miles or so between US Route 51 and the river cover deep countryside with nothing more than a few sleepy cross-road stores and the occasional farm. The further one gets from the highway, the more forest takes over farm land until when reaching the park entrance one is well into solid forest.

Fort Pillow, named for Confederate General Gideon Pillow, did not consist of a single constructed walled fort but of a series of earthen breastworks some of which have been restored and may be visited. The fort and adjacent area where the Battle of Fort Pillow took place comprise about a half-mile square overlooking where the river used to run in 1864. The park map available at the visitor center locates and describes twenty-one places involved in the battle but makes no mention of the main massacre site for which Fort Pillow is most noted. The Tennessee State Parks color brochure listing all of the state's parks contains a one-paragraph description of Fort Pillow State Park which does not mention the massacre. The description mentions the battle, wildlife and archeology but, as far as the massacre is concerned, the brochure says only that the "Battle of Fort Pillow remains controversial" without saying why.

Visitor center displays begin to move closer to the truth but avoid getting all the way there. One display lists by name

those killed in the battle; from the lengths of the three lists—one hundred sixty-four Union blacks, sixty-four Union whites, fifteen Confederates—the visitor can begin to get an idea of what happened. Another display tip-toes toward candor by mentioning "the controversy" of the numbers killed by race and

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## News Squibs

### Hopper-Gibbons Safe-House

They are still at it. As *Free Press* has reported, neighbors of New York City's Hopper-Gibbons House, the only documented Underground Railroad safehouse in Manhattan, have tried for several years to get the home's owner to dismantle a recent illegal fifth story. Having lost with the City, its Historic Districts Council, and in a lower court, the owner has now taken the case to an appeals court.

### Richmond

ing Actress. Nyong'o began promoting the preservation of Shockoe Bottom among her four million social media followers and advocating against the stadium, raising the issue into a national discussion. Nyong'o appealed to Richmond Mayor Dwight Jones to withdraw support of the stadium, centerpiece of an economic development project. "Evidence of America's slave history must be preserved, as the legacy of slavery affects all American people," she wrote to Jones.

Nyong'o's intervention led to a rethinking by the City of Richmond. Jones invited Nyong'o to visit the former capital of the Confederacy to see Shockoe Bottom and the City's revised plan to preserve its slave-trading past including a newly proposed slavery museum. "Our plans show where we want to invest in that history and lift that history up for future generations to learn from," Jones wrote.

The National Trust for Historic Preservation lists Shockoe Bottom as one of America's Most Endangered Historic Places.

### Cover-up

goes as far as to say that "different historical interpretations" contend with one another as to the marked disparity in casualties by race. I did not see the word "massacre" in the visitor center or anywhere in the park, and, if I hadn't read up on it before arriving, would have had no way based on the displays and brochures of knowing the gravity of what had actually happened.

The only photograph on the park's trail guide is of Forrest, but a life-size photo cut-out of a group of United States Colored Troops is placed to face a wall in the visitor center. The few exhibits devoted to blacks and the euphemized massacre are much over-shadowed by what amounts to an official modern-day State paean to

### Maryland Emancipation Day

When Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation on New Year's Day, 1863, it only pertained to states which had seceded. Maryland, though a Union state, didn't abolish slavery until November 1, 1864, when it rewrote its constitution.

On November 1 of this year, Maryland celebrated the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the freeing of black Marylanders. Since 1864, Maryland has called itself the Free State.

General Forrest in the color brochure, the park map and a number of exhibits including an entire major display devoted to him. The reason Forrest was never prosecuted for war crimes and the Fort Pillow Massacre is that his fellow Tennessean Andrew Johnson succeeded to the presidency upon Lincoln's assassination and went easy on Forrest despite Congressional inquiry findings of Forrest being guilty of war crimes.

At the very least, Tennessee State Parks soft-pedals the Fort Pillow Massacre and unashamedly continues to idolize native son Nathan Forrest without mention that after the war the federal government found him to be a common war criminal because of the massacre. Given the imperative that parks have in presenting history faithfully to the public, the way that Forrest is portrayed and the massacre is white-washed amounts to a 150-year cover-up by the State of Tennessee.

In 1877, Nathan Forest died wealthy in Memphis which still has a city park named for him. Nearly a century and a half later, the nation's memory of Forrest was reawakened when late in 2013 students and parents at the Nathan B. Forrest High School in Jacksonville, Florida, used a worldwide Internet petition to successfully pressure the Duval County Board of Education to change the school's name. Parent Ty Richmond's Change.org petition drew 162,150 signatures. The school is sixty-two percent black.

Leaving the visitor center, I took a walk along a park path toward the area where the massacre had happened. There it was again: another place with the ghostly reverent hush of what should never have occurred, as if the place itself is traumatized by what it remembers. Even birds were quiet.

### Third Walk

ing new to Cohen who over two months in 1996 famously retraced another Underground Railroad ancestor's 1,200-mile journey from Sandy Spring, Maryland, to Amherstburg, Canada. He was followed on that trek by a writer and film crew resulting in a groundbreaking *Smithsonian* magazine article which proved to be the spark in rekindling the nation's waning memory of the Underground Railroad. Two years later, the federal government launched the first of its three Underground Railroad programs, the National Park Service's Network to Freedom.

In 1998, Cohen spent three months walking Underground Railroad routes from Mobile, Alabama, to Windsor, Canada.

Cohen's current walk is being recorded by a film crew and will be featured in the upcoming documentary *Patrick and Me* which will chronicle Cohen's search for his slavery-era ancestor. *Patrick & Me* is scheduled for nationwide release in 2016.

The film is being supported by a recently launched crowdfunding campaign. *Free Press* readers may follow Cohen's progress on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Tumblr and YouTube. Readers may donate to the documentary project and follow the walk to Savannah at [shermans-march2014.com](http://shermans-march2014.com).

### Nobel

week later, she vowed to devote her life to advancing universal education for children.

On July 12, 2013, nine months after she was nearly killed, Malala Yousafzai stunned the United Nations General Assembly and the world in one of the most moving addresses which the body had ever heard. The occasion was her first public outing since being shot and occurred on her sixteenth birthday. Here was one humanity's few truly wise people but this one only in her teens.

Today Malala Yousafzai lives with her family in exile in Birmingham, England, where she is a senior at Edgbaston High School. She is applying to universities.

Malala is Pakistan's second Nobel, the first, a physicist. Kailash Satyarthi is India's second Nobel peace laureate after Mother Teresa. Six other Indians as far back as 1913 have won in literature, economics, chemistry and physics.