



# Network to Freedom



February 2001

## *Network to Freedom Day*

On October 12, supporters of the National Network to Freedom gathered in Philadelphia to launch the network mandated under the 1998 legislation. The event was a joyous one, bringing together people from across the US -- for example, from Texas, Missouri, South Carolina, Kentucky, and Michigan. The event provided an opportunity to honor members of the Advisory Commission to the Underground Railroad Special Resource Study, many of whom were reunited for the first time since the mid-1990s. The day was made possible thanks to the combined efforts of the NPS team of regional coordinators (especially Tara Morrison and Diane Miller), and to help from Barbara Woods and Iantha Gantt-Wright of the National Parks Conservation Association.

Director Stanton spoke no fewer than three times to mark this auspicious occasion. The day began with a breakfast at which Melba Moore performed, and the role of religious groups in the Underground Railroad was highlighted. Self-guided tours were

available in the morning for those eager to explore Philadelphia, but most took the option of a bus tour to the Johnson House, a National Historic Landmark in



**Director Stanton and designer Shelley Harper unveil the logo**

Germantown owned by a Quaker family who made their home a stop on the route to freedom.

Much awaited, the network's official logo was unveiled during a press conference in the early afternoon. First, NPS director Robert Stanton, joined by National Parks Conservation Association Vice President William Chandler and by the great-great grandson of freedom seeker Addison White, announced the new Network program. Director Stanton reading from a proclamation from President

Clinton in honor of the special day, stated "The story of the Underground Railroad is one of both tragedy and triumph. It tells us not only about the brutality of slavery, but also about the extraordinary courage of seemingly ordinary men and women, whose thirst for freedom and justice helped to change the course of American history." Then the Network's logo, designed by Californian Shelly Harper of Harper Designs, was unveiled; the logo will be displayed by sites, programs, and facilities

which have applied to the Network and shown a verifiable association with the UGRR. A Network web site ([www.cr.nps.gov/ugrr/](http://www.cr.nps.gov/ugrr/)) was announced, and the new brochure introducing the Network to the public was distributed. After a final song from the US Postal Choir, participants marched to Mother Bethel AME Church, an important focal point for Underground Railroad activity.

There, amidst a sense of history, participants celebrated the UGRR. A descendant of Richard Allen, the church's founder, greeted the group, and Director Stanton

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## *NPS Follows the Seminole Story to Mexico*

The 1998 Network to Freedom Act calls for links to Mexico as well as Canada and the Caribbean. The Black Seminole story is the first link to Mexico pursued. Aaron Mahr, coordinator for the Intermountain Region, has been the lead.

Florida's Seminole Indian Tribe is an amalgamation of different Muskogean Indian bands -- including Creeks, Apalachees, Choctaws -- who were decimated by early European settlement in the Carolinas and Georgia and who sought refuge in Spanish Florida. They were joined by groups of African American freedom seekers who became known as the Black Seminole. These two groups built a strong union based on their opposition to expanded white settlement and fear of persecution.

The conflict between the United States Army and Seminole bands began in 1814 when the First Seminole War exploded. General Andrew Jackson illegally led troops into Spanish Florida to burn towns and capture freedom seekers. Jackson

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## *Seminoles in Mexico*

later withdrew to U.S. soil after months of inconclusive skirmishing. In 1821 Spanish Florida became US territory and the Seminole, intent on protecting Indian rights, entered into a series of agreements with the US. However, with the passage of the 1830 Indian Removal Act, President Andrew Jackson sought to move all Native American groups east of the Mississippi River into Oklahoma and Arkansas.

The Seminole refused to leave Florida and by 1835 the Second Seminole War had erupted. This conflict, skillfully waged by the Seminole groups, dragged on until 1842, when much of the Seminole Nation, including 500 Black Seminole were forcibly relocated to Indian Territory. The remaining Seminole melted deeper into Florida lowlands, only to face the United States Army once again in 1855. This Third Seminole War lasted for three years until the Americans withdrew without result.

In 1849 the US Attorney Gen-

eral ruled that the Black Seminole were legally enslaved, and demanded that the band surrender their arms. Under the leadership of John Horse and Wild Cat, the Black Seminole departed Florida for Nacimiento Mexico. After the Civil War, many Black Seminole returned to settle in west Texas, but many chose to remain in Mexico where their descendants live today.

In April 2000, NPS regional coordinators, joined by Dr. Shirley Mock of the Institute of Texan Cultures and Miss Alice Fay Lozano, a Black Seminole born in Nacimiento, traveled to Brackettville, Texas. There, the group was hosted by descendents of the Black Seminole Indian Scouts who held a barbecue for the group and town leaders. The NPS group also toured the county museum, the Black Seminole Indian Scout cemetery, and the Fort Clark Museum. At the cemetery, the group was serenaded with traditional songs by Miss Lozano and Miss Charles Emily Wilson, the last surviving Seminole born on the Fort

Clark Seminole Reservation before it was disbanded in 1914.

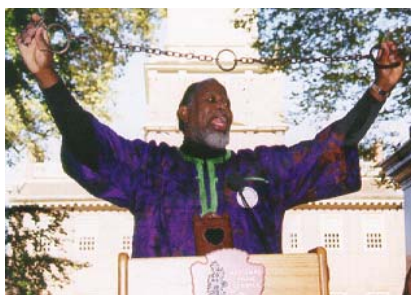
After spending the night at Fort Clark, the NPS group traveled to Muzquiz, Mexico. There, they met at the Casa de Cultura with local partners potentially interested in amassing data on the Black Seminoles. NPS already has a contract with Mexico's National Institute of Anthropology and History (INAH) to document Seminole and Underground Railroad-associated sites in the state of Coahuila. Also represented at the meeting were regional and local government-funded cultural organizations as well as the local historians' group and agricultural experts. The attendees all concurred that there was an urgent need to address this aspect of Mexican history and culture, especially because the

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***It is my fervent hope that the Network to Freedom will encourage all of us to reflect on how far America has come since the era of slavery." Bill Clinton "Network to Freedom" Day proclamation***

## *Network to Freedom Day Celebrates Underground Railroad*

addressed them. A performance called, "Seven Quilts for Seven Sisters," enthralled the audience



with a combination of spiritu-

als and a history of quilt designs. The day ended with a formal dinner, an appropriate celebration for all the hard work by people from all walks of life to bring the story of

the Underground Railroad to life. National Network to Freedom Day is not the end, but just the beginning of the National Park Service effort to commemorate the significance of the movement which furthered the realization of freedom for all Americans and served as a precursor to the civil rights movement.

## 1st Round of Network Applications

January 15, 2001 marked the deadline for the first round of applications to the Network to Freedom. NPS received 37 applications, including 17 sites, 15 programs, and 5 facilities. The lists of applications currently under consideration appear as tables in this newsletter. Abstracts describing these candidates for the Network to Freedom will be posted on the Program's web site at <<http://www.cr.nps.gov/ugrr>>, or may be obtained by calling 402-221-3749 or writing to National Coordinator, UGRR Program, NPS, 1709 Jackson Street, Omaha, Nebraska 68102.

NPS welcomes public comments on the sites, programs, and facilities under consideration for inclusion in the Network. In order to be considered during application review, comments must be submitted in writing by March 30, to the address above or sent via e-mail to <[diane\\_miller@nps.gov](mailto:diane_miller@nps.gov)>.

Applications will be presented in a review meeting of NPS regional coordinators on April 4 in Washington, DC. The meeting will be

open to the public. (Contact NPS for information on exact location.) In the review meet-

ing, 5 minutes will be allotted for the regional coordinator to  
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Program Candidates for the Network to Freedom		
State	Name	City
California	Meet Mary Pleasant (a dramatic Chautauqua), Oh Freedom (a musical Chautauqua)	San Francisco
	Reclaiming the Past: African Americans Along the American River	Folsom
District of Columbia	Menare Foundation, Inc.	Washington
	International Network to Freedom Association	Washington
Indiana	Geography Educator's Network of Indiana, Exploring and Teaching Summer Institute Series	Indianapolis
	"The History Lesson"	Indianapolis
Maryland	Lathrop E. Smith Environmental Education Center	Rockville
	Muncaster Challenge Program	Rockville
Mas-sachusetts	The Wayside	Lexington
New York	Murphy Orchards	Burt
Ohio	John P. Parker House	Ripley
	William Still Underground Railroad Foundation, Inc.	Cincinnati
	Underground Railroad Museum Foundation Inc.	Flushing
Texas	Talking Back Living History: Fugitives of Passion; "Blazing Trails to Freedom"; Porch Politics	Houston
Wisconsin	Milton House	Milton

## Seminole in Mexico

Seminole have been ignored relative to the nearby Kickapoo, who removed from the US at about the same time as the Seminole.

Joined by Yolanda Elizondo, Director of the Casa de Cultura, and Eduardo Enriquez, INAH Director for Coahuila, the group then visited Nacimiento. There, Miss Lozano was reunited with Mexican relatives and we met

Mrs. Gertrude Factor Vázquez, the venerable matron of the Seminole community in Nacimiento. The NPS group had an opportunity to visit with women of the community and explain our interest in their history.

A highlight of the trip to Mexico was the chance to visit the Kickapoo village at Nacimiento and meet with Chief Chocota. At this time,

the tribe had already constructed their summer housing, so the group had a rare chance to view this cultural practice.

This trip was an important step in demonstrating to our Mexican partners the significance that NPS attaches to the Underground Railroad and Black Seminole stories in Mexico. Since then, Mexico has continued documenting Black Seminole and other Underground



Site Candidates for the Network to Freedom		
State	Name	City
Georgia	Fort Pulaski National Monument	Savannah
Illinois	Kimzey Crossing (formerly Locust Hill)	Tamaroa
	Sheldon Peck Homestead	Lombard
Iowa	Mars Hill Church	Ottumwa
Kansas	Free State Capitol	Topeka
	Valentine Garth Home	Greeley
Massachusetts	Jackson Homestead	Newton
	William Ingersoll Bowditch House	Brookline
	Tappan-Philbrick House	Brookline
	The Wayside	Lexington
Mississippi	Forks of the Road Enslavement Market	Natchez
	Terminus/USCT Barracks	
Ohio	Free Labor Store-Benjamin Lundy House	Mt. Pleasant
	John P. Parker Historic Site	Ripley
Pennsylvania	William Goodridge House	York
Vermont	Rokeby Museum	Ferrisburg
Wisconsin	Milton House Museum	Milton
	Racine Heritage Museum	Racine

*37 Network Applications*

present an application, describe the significance and association to the Un-

note any public comments received. A discussion period of 5 minutes will be allowed. The committee will vote on whether or not to recommend inclusion in the Network.

standing of the Underground Railroad in American history and it meets the requirements for inclusion in the Network to Freedom.” Sites, programs, or facilities included in the Network will receive permission to use the Network to Freedom logo and guidelines for its use.

Facility Candidates for the Network to Freedom		
State	Name	City
District of Columbia	Menare Foundation, Inc.	Washington
Kansas	Clinton Lake Museum	Overbrook
	Watkins Community Museum of History	Lawrence
Maryland	Catoctin Center for Regional Studies	Frederick
	Maryland State Archives	Annapolis

Committee approved applications will be included in the Network. NPS will notify the applicant and the relevant congressional delegations. Notifications will bear the statement: “The National Park Service has evaluated this [site, facility, program] as making a significant contribution to the under-

Applicants for sites, programs, or facilities that are not approved may consult their regional coordinator about re-applying in future rounds. The deadline for the sec-

derground Railroad and