



THE NORTH COUNTRY LANTERN

Number 1

Summer 2005

North Country Underground Railroad Historical Association
P.O. Box 2413 - Plattsburgh, New York 12901 (518) 561-0277 -NCUGRHA@aol.com

Reflections

History for Sale

Three buildings where chapters of our anti-slavery history were written are for sale.

Two miles outside of Malone on the busy Ft. Covington Road, the home of UGRR station agent and conductor Major Dimick is available for \$185,000. It is believed he hid fugitives in a stone structure in the basement. For information on the Dimick home, call Sherrill L. Payant, All Seasons Realty, 518-563-9350.

In Keeseville, the old Baptist Church is for sale for its assessed value of \$25,000 or for \$10,000 to a not for profit. In 1838, the Clinton County Anti-Slavery Society held a meeting in the church. In 1843, the abolitionist newspaper publisher Wendell Lansing proposed that the congregation "not extend the hand of church fellowship to those who enslave their fellowman," and that no one who was "known to hold their fellowmen in slavery" or who advocated slavery "should be invited" to the communion table. Although Lansing's proposals were adopted, they seriously divided the congregation, and the minister was forced to resign. Marjorie Lansing Porter continued the legacy of her vigilant ancestor by compiling a history of Keeseville in which she stated that two of New York's most prominent abolitionists-- Gerrit Smith and John Brown-- spoke in the church.

Behind the Keeseville Baptist Church lies the neglected Old Burial Ground, which is sometimes called the "Negro Cemetery." It is believed that several fugitive slaves are buried there. Recently, a group of concerned residents of the village began to care for the cemetery.



The Major Dimick home

For the Keeseville Baptist Church building, call Don Loreman at 518-834-6060. To help care for the Old Burial Ground, call Constance Lacy at 518-834-1109.

The third UGRR site, sale pending, is the Stephen Keese Smith home on the Union Road in the village of Peru. The land was first owned by slaveholder John Haff who willed it to his son, Abram. Abram became a Methodist minister and the first President of the Clinton County Anti-Slavery Society. Rev. Haff sold the property to his friend, the Quaker Underground Railroad agent Stephen Keese Smith. One of the original barns with a stone walled hiding place still stands on the property. The Stephen Keese Smith home includes 13 acres and would make an ideal UGRR Inn. The price was reduced to \$159,900. Fessette Realty at 518-324-4500 handled the sale.

How will the next chapters in the lives of these three Anti-Slavery sites read?

Spotlight on Summer Events

Saturday, July 16th 7 PM. Keeseville Grange Hall. Fergus Bordewich, author of the highly acclaimed national UGRR history, *Bound for Canaan*. Free will offering. Refreshments. Ausable Valley Grange, 1749 Main Street, Keeseville. Contact Don at 518-561-0277.

Saturday, July 16th 11 AM -3 PM: Solomon Northup Day. Featured speakers: Christopher Raab and Tom Calarco. Saratoga Springs Visitor's Center on Congress Street. Contact: Founder Renee Moore at 518-587-8986.

Friday July 29th-31st- Fourth Annual Steal Away to Freedom Weekend in Greenwich "The Liberators: Rebels with a Cause; Those Who Dared". Workshops on New York abolitionists. Magpie concert. UGRR walking tour. Bus tour. Call Debi Craig 518-692-9740.

Honoring the Ancestors: An Interview with Addie Shields

by Vivian Papson

Addie Shields has no peer when it comes to North Country memories and history. She is Beekmantown Historian and has been Clinton County Historian since



Vivian Papson (l) with
historian Addie Shields

1973. To go to Addie is to go to the source. When

The Lantern asked her for the favor of an interview, we discovered just how remarkable she is, for she gave us the world of the ancestors instead.

“Accountable” was the word she used. “These people were strong, skilled, God fearing and of a character to face the truth and to stand for their convictions. How else could they have been? In Clinton County, they had to live with the unforgiving South wind which carved the bays of Lake Champlain to the northwest, and with limestone hardened water.” She explained that formative influences such as these grounded them in reality.

Addie stressed that our studies should be in depth, advising against shallow or superficial research, unworthy of its subjects. Her love of this land and its people is ever apparent. Her words about herself were few; about those who pioneered as historians of the region she had much to say.

She recalled the works of Alan Everest, and Emily McMasters and of her contemporaries to whom “history” was not an arcane subject, but what everyone knew about their forbears. She spoke of the works of Hugh McLellan, Marjorie Lansing Porter, Margaret Hayes, and others.

Addie Shields is listed in Who’s Who in American Women and is the recipient of the Franklin D. Roosevelt Local Government Historian’s Professional Achievement Award presented by the New York State Museum Association. An author, genealogist, administrator and consultant, Addie is true to her tradition: she lets her work speak for her.

In 1979, Addie Shields compiled *A Study of SLAVERY AND THE UNDERGROUND SLAVE RAILROAD AS IT PERTAINS TO CLINTON COUNTY, N.Y.*, the cornerstone of all subsequent research on the subject. However, she always reminds the researcher of those whose UGRR work inspired her.

“Accountable.” Yes, Addie, that is what we desire to be: like you and like those who came before. May we be accountable to the legacy of the North Country in its awesome and inspiring humanity.

Historians Honored for Superior Service

On May 2, two members of our Planning Committee, Beekmantown and Clinton County Historian **Addie Shields**, and Plattsburgh City Historian **James G. Bailey**, were named Registered Historians by the Association of Public Historians of New York State.

Only 38 of the association’s 1,4000 members have been so honored.

Addie and Jim, Congratulations!

Book Review

UNDERGROUND NO LONGER

Excerpts from a review by Cynthia Potts

The Underground Railroad in the Adirondack Region by Tom Calarco
(2004) McFarland, 303 pp.

Illustrated Case Binding, www.mcfarlandpub.com, 1-800-253-2187

“There was simply nothing of a significant nature published about this topic,” Tom Calarco said, discussing his newest work, The Underground Railroad in the Adirondack Region. “Yet there was a need for the book. A lot of information about the Underground Railroad in this region was dismissed as legend and hearsay. But by working with period documents, I was able to corroborate some of that hearsay – and turn legend into fact.”

Ten chapters cover Underground Railroad stops from New York City, through the heart of the Adirondacks, all the way to the cold edge of St. Lawrence County.

The Underground Railroad in the Adirondack Region should be applauded for offering up a wider picture of the anti-slavery movement. There is no question that it took tremendous courage for slaves armed with only a handful of rumors to strike out for freedom – but it also required immeasurable bravery from those who helped them along the way.

-Reprinted with the permission of the author and *Lake Champlain Weekly*.



Book Review

Abel Brown, Abolitionist

By Catharine S. Brown Edited by Tom Calarco
ISBN 0-7864-2378-1
illustrations, appendices, notes, index
238pp. softcover 2006 \$35

Tom Calarco's latest contribution to Abolitionist history provides a rare glimpse into how Black and White New Yorkers collaborated in the anti-slavery movement and assisted freedom seekers on the Underground Railroad. Based on the writings of the White Baptist abolitionist martyr, Rev. Abel Brown, this carefully edited version of his widow Catherine's original 1849 memoir clarifies and amplifies the original. An uncompromising and provocative voice against slavery, Brown was threatened by mobs more than once. He published letters and reports in *The Liberator* and other abolitionist periodicals, as well as in his own paper, *The Tocsin of Liberty* (later *The Albany Patriot*). As Corresponding Secretary and general agent of the Eastern New York Anti-Slavery Society, which he founded in Albany in 1842, he traveled widely, preaching the abolition message. He often shared the stage with his wife who lifted her voice in anti-slavery songs. Sometimes fugitive slave Lewis Washington accompanied him.

Rev. Brown is said to have helped 1,000 freedom seekers. Some were forwarded to him from New York City by Rev. Charles Ray. From Troy, the fugitives went on to Canada via Lake Ontario or Lake Champlain.

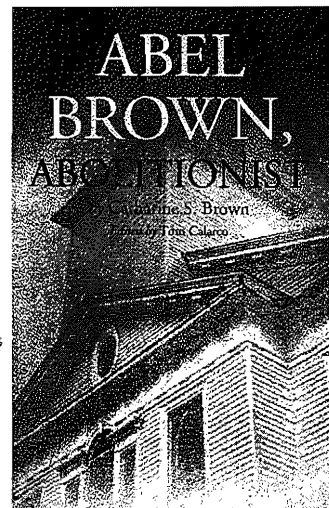
During a lecture tour in Western New York, Brown was caught in a snowstorm. He stopped at a home and asked to be put up for the night, but was turned away. By the time he reached Canandaigua, he was seriously ill. His death one day before his 34th birthday was a terrible blow. The "colored citizens of Canandaigua" expressed their "profound respect and love for him" and their "deep and pungent grief." In Troy, the Rev. Henry Highland Garnet gave an eloquent eulogy. Abel's death was devastating for Catherine, his young wife of eighteen months, who published this biography as a way of keeping his memory alive. The work draws heavily on his correspondence, journals, and newspaper articles, allowing him to tell the story in his own words. Appendices contain excerpts from additional correspondence and sermons.

Except for an etching which does not show his features, there is no known image of Rev. Brown. However, we do have a very determined looking image of Catherine. Ten years after Rev. Brown's death, Catherine married the "Prisoner's Friend," Rev. Charles Spear, and joined his fight to reform prisons and abolish capital punishment.

Tom Calarco, a professional writer and researcher from Schenectady, New York, currently resides in Cincinnati, Ohio. He previously published The Underground Railroad Conductor (2003) and The Underground Railroad in the Adirondack Region (2004).



Catherine S. Brown Spear



Grant Updates

The Essex County Historical Society has been awarded a \$25,000 Heritage New York grant for the creation of "Onward! Your Country to Save!" This special exhibit will highlight the call for immediate emancipation which divided our churches and caused separations among Quakers, Methodists and Presbyterians.

"Onward! Your Country to Save!" will be a featured display at the Estes House Underground Railroad Heritage Center.

The Town of Chesterfield, which has received a grant to renovate the Estes House, is seeking additional funds for the project.

The Northern New York Library Network has awarded NCUGRHA a copy of the Past Perfect Software for Museum Collections. Past Perfect is the most widely used museum software in the world. In his approval of this award, Executive Director John Hammond noted, "Your progress to date is admirable and we congratulate you on your accomplishments."

Teaching Materials Available

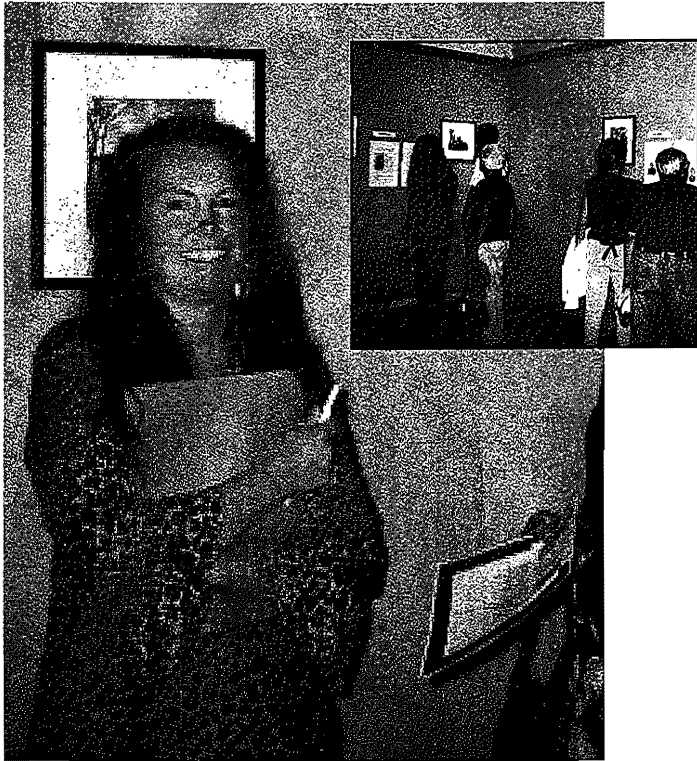
The Warren County Historical Society has developed two curriculum kits for distribution to local schools. The kits contain teacher aids and teaching materials designed to give students in middle schools a look at the Underground Railroad. They include songs, games, vocabulary, maps, photos, books, and dress up clothing for runaway portrayals.

Arrangements can be made for the society's Education Chair to visit a school in costume and conduct lessons with the materials. For further information, contact mail@warrencountyhistoricalsociety.org

Northward to Freedom DVD

Our moving 12 minute DVD "Northward to Freedom" is available for \$16.50 (tax included; \$1.50 for postage and handling). Mail your order to NCUGRHA P.O. Box 2413, Plattsburgh, New York 12901. Copies may be purchased for \$15 from the Cornerstone Bookstore and Borders in Plattsburgh. The DVD can also be rented from the Under One Roof Video Store. To arrange for broadcast rights, please visit the Agency for Instructional Technology's website at www.asit.net

Teachers may request a copy of our Document Based Questions on regional UGRR history.



One Story at a Time

This, our first museum exhibit, presents the North Country's Underground Railroad history told *One Story at a Time*. On view are photographs of 17 buildings in six North Country counties. Tales of abolitionists and fugitive slaves associated with each county are placed alongside the pictures to explain the "compelling significance of these simple, clean images."* Our DVD, *Northward to Freedom* provides the larger context for the exhibit. *One Story at a Time* is currently featured at the Adirondack History Museum in Elizabethtown.

Laura Sells-Doyles' beautiful photographs represent the beginning of a co-operative, regional effort to document North Country Underground Railroad activism. Enthusiastic residents from Washington, Saratoga, Warren, Essex, Clinton, and Franklin County helped Laura locate the buildings so she could showcase our regional Underground Railroad history. Her haunting images are of documented "safe houses" where freedom seekers were sheltered on their way to Canada; sites of anti-slavery meetings; homes of abolitionists. Stories in the exhibit speak for our silent ancestors who struggled for justice and freedom. When *One Story at a Time* is installed in the Estes House at Ausable Chasm, it will reveal our history to thousands of visitors. A compelling reminder of our past, it will inspire our future.

*From an article in the July 15th *Lake Placid News* by Lee Manchester.

State to Restore

Susan B. Anthony Childhood Home

The North Star Historical Project is pleased to announce that the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation has accepted the donation of the Battenville, New York childhood home of Susan B. Anthony from the Freddie Mac Mortgage Corporation. After a January foreclosure, the property was put on the market, but it did not sell. North Star President Debi Craig and members of her Washington County based organization initiated a campaign to save the house. With the bi-partisan support of State Assemblymen Steve Engelbright (D) from the 4th District and Roy McDonald (R) from the 112th District, they have succeeded.

The Daniel Anthony home could become an excellent museum or educational center. Circumstantial evidence suggests that Mr. Anthony may have been involved in the UGRR in Battenville as a space in the home appears to have been a hiding place. Mr. Anthony was a friend of one of the leading members of the Eastern New York Anti-Slavery Society: Dr. Hiram Corliss of Greenwich. Dr. Corliss hid many fugitive slaves in his home just four miles from the Anthony home. Freedom seekers could have easily made it their next stop. Mr. Anthony was a member of the North Easton Quaker Friends' Meeting as were Joe and Esther Wilbur who are known to have hidden runaways. Their Meeting House had a strong anti-slavery sentiment; Sojourner Truth visited many times.

Debi Craig envisions a Susan B. Anthony trail beginning at her birthplace in Adams, Massachusetts and continuing to several stops in New York: her childhood home in Battenville; Johnstown where her suffragist ally Elizabeth Cady Stanton was



Susan B. Anthony

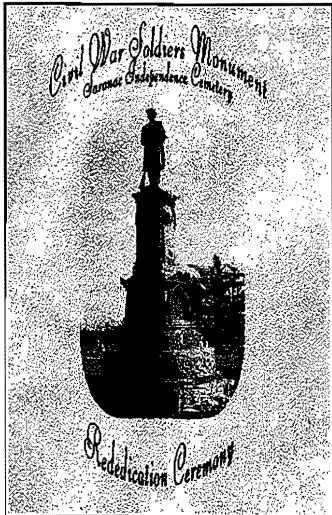
raised; Canajoharie where Ms. Anthony worked as a teacher; the Women's Rights National Historical Park in Seneca Falls, and finally, Ms. Anthony's Rochester home.

Susan B. Anthony returned to the Adirondacks many times to speak on temperance, abolition, and the right of women to vote. Saving her childhood home is a tremendous achievement.

Steering Committee Member Honored

City of Plattsburgh Historian and NCUGRHA Steering Committee member, Jim Bailey, received the Clinton County Bar Association's Liberty Bell Award at its Annual Law Day celebration on May 1st. Jim was honored for his many years of service to the community. Liberty is in Jim's blood: he hails from an old Essex County abolitionist family.

Saranac Civil War Monument Rededicated



Just as the citizens of the Town of Saranac came together on May 30, 1888 for a patriotic celebration to dedicate a Monument to honor its Civil War veterans, so did its citizens come together on May 28, 2006 to rededicate the restored monument. The American Soldier, as it came to be called, stood the test of time well, but over the years its weight (estimated at 600 to 1,000 pounds) caused the lower sections to bow out-

ward. Extreme winter temperatures caused the monument to expand and contract, and large cracks formed in the zinc (white bronze) base.

About six years ago, Town Historian Jan Couture initiated a restoration drive. The final estimate was \$60,000. The first donation of \$50 came from an eight year old boy who held a bake sale. T-Shirts and calendars were sold, but the project remained out of reach. Then, retired New York State Electric & Gas Corporation lineman John Rock came on board. Rock used an aluminum infrastructure to support the soldier; the entire monument was sand washed; a new granite base was carved. The final price tag: about \$15,000. Now, the Saranac Soldier stands as gloriously as he did in the spring of 1888.

The memorial is one of only two white zinc Civil War monuments in Clinton county.

The May rededication ceremony was a fitting tribute to the men the Saranac Soldier symbolizes. The town sent three and a half times its draft quota to the Union Army--416 men from a population of about 3,600--more soldiers per capita than any municipality in the entire state. Seventy-two died in battle, in prison or from disease.

The restored Saranac Soldier Monument is an impressive example of what a dedicated Town Historian can inspire a community to accomplish.

Lincoln Avengers From the Adirondacks

John Millington, a native of Chestertown, Warren County, New York, was on guard on the morning of April 15, 1865 when news came that the President had been shot at Ford's theatre. "We were ordered to form part of a cordon to prevent the assassin from escaping. Our company was deployed through the brush. It was a chilly day and a cold rain was falling. A few days later we were ordered to Washington, where we served as an escort at Lincoln's funeral."

Patrols were organized to search for the accused assassin, John Wilkes Booth. The one credited with his capture was formed from the Sixteenth New York Cavalry. Ten of its twenty-six enlisted men were from the Adirondacks. They represented four counties--Clinton, Essex, St. Lawrence and Warren. Six of the men were from Saranac Hollow, and three of

them--Martin Kelly, Abram Snay, and Phillip Hoyt-- attended the 1888 dedication of the Soldier's Memorial in the Saranac Independence Cemetery.

On April 24, 1865, Canadian born 1st Lt. Edward P. Doherty received orders to organize the patrol. At least two others had already been sent out, but Doherty's would be forever known as the "Lincoln's Avengers." Pvt. Millington was eating when "boots and saddles" was sounded. Clinton County native Pvt. David Baker would act as the Lieutenant's orderly. With the help of two detectives named Conger and Baker, Doherty tracked Booth to the Richard Henry Garrett farm in Caroline County, Virginia. Pvt. Hoyt guarded the Garretts. Pvt. Emory Parady of Elizabethtown heard suspicious noises in a barn. Pvt. Snay arrested the Garrett's son, Jack, and turned him over to Corp. Oliver Lonkey of St. Lawrence County. When Garrett was taken to Lt. Doherty, he admitted that Booth was in the barn. Doherty ordered Booth to "Come out at once." He refused. Sgt. Boston Corbett asked permission to go in after him, alone; Doherty denied the request. Booth was defiant. Doherty and his men threatened to burn him out. Booth said someone was with him who wanted to surrender "awful bad." This was David E. Herold.

Doherty ordered Garrett to unlock the barn door. Then Doherty opened it part way and ordered Herold to put his hands out. Just as he took hold of Herold's wrists, detective Conger ignited loose straw in a crack in the wall. Sgt. Corbett thought he saw Booth move toward the door, took aim with his carbine, and wounded Booth in the neck. Ironically, President Lincoln had also been shot in the neck. As Doherty pulled Herold out of the barn, he saw Booth lying on his back. Finding a rope, he tied Herold to a locust tree and ordered Pvt. Millington to guard him. Other men in the patrol helped the detectives pull Booth out of the blazing barn. According to Pvt. Millington, "Booth's body, wrapped in a government blanket, was placed in a wagon, which was driven by a Negro."

Within hours, Lincoln's assassin was dead....

Or was he? When Pvt. Millington questioned Herold, he replied, "Booth told me, when he asked me to help him, that he was going to kidnap Lincoln; he didn't tell me he was going to kill him." Sgt. Corbett testified before a Military Tribunal that he heard Booth tell Herold, "Oh, go out and save yourself, my boy, if you can. I declare before my Maker that this man here is innocent of any crime whatever."

Some believe an unidentified man was killed at the Garrett farm. They argue that anyone who harbored the President's assassin was to be punished with death, but the Garretts were never charged with any crime.

Although there are doubts about the fate of John Wilkes Booth, we are certain of one thing: the Saranac Soldier stands proudly in memory of the Town's Civil War veterans and its Lincoln Avengers.

This account is based on "Lincoln's Avengers The Men from the Adirondacks" by Steven G. Miller published in the Official Journal of the Northern New York American-Canadian Genealogical Society Volume 7, Number 2 Whole No. 13 Fall 1990 and EYEWITNESS TO HISTORY A Cavalryman's Account of the Chase and Capture of John Wilkes Booth <http://home.att.net/~rjnorton/Lincoln73.html>



From the left, Renee Moore, Pamela Green, Vivian Papson, Jim and Judy Stafford. Not shown, S. Booker and Don Papson

NCUGRHA Connects with Brooklyn

The NCUGRHA Steering Committee invited Weeksville Heritage Center's Executive Director Pamela Green to fly up from Brooklyn to Plattsburgh on April 8th for an informal afternoon discussion. Weeksville is a documented site on New York's Underground Railroad Heritage Trail. The Center's four restored historic houses were once part of a thriving free African American community.

Over four decades, Weeksville Heritage Center has offered tours and school programs. It now has plans to build a modern performance and education center.

Under Ms. Green's leadership, the Weeksville Heritage Center has garnered strong political and corporate support. In no uncertain terms, she shared her 3 step formula for success. Know: 1) What you are going to do. 2) How long it will take to do it. 3) How much it will cost. BUT, work within your means, and change plans if you need to. Ms. Green believes a successful organization has a clear vision, diversifies funding sources, and makes the past relevant to the present and future. Ask yourselves one question, she said, "How can you make a difference in the world?"

A firm believer in alliances, Pam Green's final admonition was to "Collaborate! Collaborate! Collaborate!"

After our discussion, Jim and Judy Stafford invited Pam to visit the Stephen Keese Smith farm in Peru where Jim was raised. Seeing the hiding place in the barn was a highlight of her trip. In fact, Pam enjoyed her first North Country visit so much she promised to return-- but not in the winter!

Pam, come back for the grand opening of the Estes House. We promise, it will be a warm occasion.



SUNY Plattsburgh EOP students enjoy our interactive reading "From Slavery to Freedom"

Letters to the Editor

I love getting your messages --you folks are going great guns! By the way, I saw the photo exhibit in Elizabethtown --very nice!

Jane Williams, Director, Rokeby Museum

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Thank you so very much for your very eye-opening & informative workshop... I heard very positive comments from many of the students who attended ... I hope we can work again together in the future.

Sincerely,

Jessica Antonucci , Events Co-ordinator
Upward Bound, State University of Plattsburgh

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Don,

On behalf of the entire Diversity Committee, I thank you for being a guest speaker at our regional meeting.

The dedication to your cause is evident in every well-prepared minute of your presentation. I, for one, was stunned to learn there were any slaves in New York, let alone 21,000 of them! I thought slavery was a Southern issue.

We sincerely appreciate the time and effort you gave to enlighten us all, and we look forward to the opening of your museum next year.

Lorene Fortrell,

Clinton Correctional Facility

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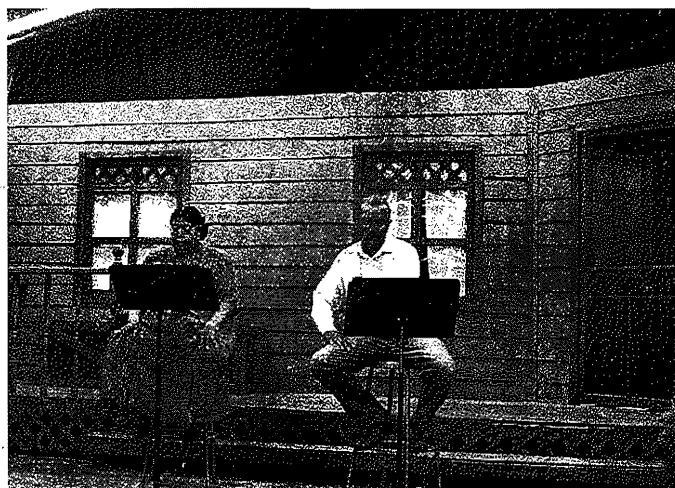
Dear Friend and Supporter,

The educational and historical information you shared made the 8th Solomon Northup Day-A Celebration of Freedom an event to remember....

Sincerely,

Renee Moore,

Founder



Wanda Webster and Clifford Oliver Mealy in a dramatic reading at Solomon Northup Day. Photo by Luke Bush

Igniting the Flame

The Timing is Right

Each day I am reminded of the expression, "It is all in the timing."

Since Essex County Historian Margaret Gibbs and I called the first monthly meeting of our planning committee of volunteers in January of 2004, we have been repeatedly reminded this is the right time to bring the North Country's Underground Railroad history to light.

Our Planning Committee has accomplished so much in a short time!

-Four North Country documented anti-slavery sites have been recognized by Heritage New York, and they will become part of the New York Underground Railroad Heritage Trail. The sites are: the First Presbyterian Church in Plattsburgh; the Congregational Church in Malone; the Essex County Courthouse in Elizabethtown; and the John Brown Farm in North Elba.

-State Senator Elizabeth Little provided our parent organization, the Red Hummingbird Foundation, with a \$10,000 grant with which we are producing a short orientation DVD for teachers, students and the general public. It will be completed this summer.

-The Essex Museum in Elizabethtown has been awarded a \$25,000 Heritage New York grant for the creation of an exhibit, "Onward! Your Country to Save!" The exhibit will focus on the conflicts that the anti-slavery movement brought about in our churches.

-Lakes to Locks passage Executive Director, Janet Kennedy guided us toward a cooperative venture with Ausable Chasm and the Town of Chesterfield. Ausable Chasm, one of the North Country's most popular tourist attractions, is near the villages of Keeseville and Peru where much of the Anti-Slavery history of Essex and Clinton Counties took place. Our UGRR exhibits will be installed in the Estes House, a vintage stone building just up the hill from the Chasm's entrance. Since we will be operating the Estes House as a Visitor's Center on a National Scenic By-Way, our exhibits will have national exposure.

-We have petitioned the State Education Department to be certified as a historical society. Once certified, we will file a federal 501 (c) (3) not for profit application.

-The response to our first membership appeal has been overwhelming. Nearly 60 individuals and organizations have become members. Donations have come in from as far away as Illinois and California.

While the new Freedom Center in Cincinnati is celebrating the Underground Railroad on a national level, we are "Lighting Freedom's Road" throughout the Adirondack, Lake Champlain, Hudson River corridor and celebrating a regional UGRR history, which had a national impact.

Join us as we preserve and interpret our Underground Railroad history.

The timing is right!

Don Papson,

President

Thank You!

The following individuals have contributed to the success of the NCUGRHA as volunteer members of our Board and/or Planning Committee: Jim Bailey, S. Booker, Robin Caudell (Secretary), Debi Craig, Steven Engelhardt, Marlene Fields, Margaret Gibbs (Vice-President), Peter Kivic, Kathy Lavoie, Marjorie Light, Jackie Madison, Jack Meyers, Brendan Mills, Renee Moore, Don Papson (President), Vivian Papson, Mitchell Ray, Addie Shields, Carol Thompson (Treasurer), Dick Ward, and Jane Williamson. A special thank you to Debra Kimok, Director of Plattsburgh State University's Feinberg Library Special Collections, for her research assistance.

The following individuals have contributed membership donations:

Addie Shields, Ann Hope Ruzow Holland, Arabella Trudeau R.N., Art & Norma Menard, Bob Levy & Cindy Rosenberg, Bruce D. & Sherrill Reeves, C Philip Volk, M.D. & Patsy Tassler, Ph.d, Carol Blakeslee Collin, Carol Thompson, Carrie Harris, Debi Craig, Don Papson, Dorothy Latta, Francesca C. Hartnett, Fred Gleave, Gail A. Borkowski, Helen Allen, Helen Kho, Jane Williamson, Jim Bailey, John Flanzer, John Myers, Kathy Lavoie, Lee Clark, Linda B. Berkowitz, Lois & Ron Wilson, Margaret Gibbs, Marjorie Light, Mark Shearman & Linda Boher, Marvin Connors & the Town of Schuyler Falls, Mrs. Janice D. Stanley, Kay Branagan & the African Studies PSUNY, Martha Swan, Nancy Leipold, Paul Ferrari & Lynn E. Schneider, Paul R. & Barbara Skogstrom, Pete & Jane Hubbell, Raymond & Lola Johnson, Robin Caudell, Roby A. Scott, Roger Aldridge, Ron & Carol Allen, Sergio & Brigitte Blanco Sunray Mediation Society, and Vivian Papson.

**North Country
Underground Railroad
Historical Association**
P.O. Box 2413
Plattsburgh, New York 12901

They Took Up the Gauntlet

During the summer of 1835, the stage was set for the formation of the New York Anti-Slavery Society: On August 12th, in the village of Keeseville, the *Herald* was alarmed. Income for the anti-slavery movement for the year would "double that of the American Bible society!" The *Herald* expressed its deepest concern: "More money raised to investigate the applying of the faggot [rods of heated iron] to the dwelling of our Southern brethren, and the knife to the throats of their women and children (for it resolves itself into this in the end) than to send the word of God to the heathen throughout the world!!"

On October 21, 1,000 delegates from throughout the state gathered in Utica, but an unruly mob prevented them from meeting in the courthouse. The night before, the delegates had learned of their opponents plans and moved their meeting to the Bleecker Street Presbyterian Church where they passed a constitution and declaration of sentiments. They reported in their published proceedings that one of their aims was "to elevate the character and condition of the people of color, by encouraging their intellectual, moral and religious improvement, and by correcting the prejudice of public opinion..."

However, approximately eighty men disrupted the convention with cries of "Open the way! Break down the doors! Damn the fanatics! Stop your damn stuff!" As the delegates scattered in confusion, the "resonant and persuasive voice" of the wealthy Presbyterian Gerrit Smith was heard above the uproar. Although he had declared himself "no abolitionist", he was for free speech, and Smith invited the delegates to reconvene at Peterboro where he had a large estate. In Peterboro, 400 men, including Rev. Ashbel Parmelee of Malone and T.B. Watson, of Peru, completed the work of forming the New York Anti-Slavery Society. Smith would go on to contribute much of his fortune to the cause.

The next 25 years would be the most active years of the Underground Railroad, and two of the North Country's most important Underground Railroad agents were delegates at the 1835 convention-- Hiram Corliss of Union Village (present day Greenwich), Washington County, and Samuel Keese of Peru in Clinton County. Corliss and Keese accepted Vice Presidential positions. Other North Country men who accepted Vice-Presidential posts were the Rev. Thomas Powell of Saratoga County and Oliver Wescott of Franklin County. Rev. Nathaniel Colver, a native of Champlain, served on the Resolutions Committee.

The Lake Champlain Corridor was well represented by these anti-slavery men who took up the gauntlet for freedom.