



North Country
Underground Railroad
Historical Association
1131 Mace Chasm Road
Ausable Chasm, NY 12911-1704

A NEW Destination



is Lighting Freedom's Road

NORTH STAR UNDERGROUND RAILROAD MUSEUM at Ausable Chasm, New York

Opens May 21, 2011

Free Admission
Donations welcome



Tuesday-Sunday 9 a.m.-4 p.m.
Through the second weekend in October.



Open at other times by appointment.

Group tours may be arranged
throughout the year.
518-834-5180 or ugr@frontier.com

Come, Celebrate The Champlain Line of the Underground!



THE NORTH COUNTRY LANTERN

Celebrating the Importance of Freedom to the Survival of the Human Spirit

Number 13

Summer 2010-Winter 2011

North Country Underground Railroad Historical Association
1131 Mace Chasm Road, Ausable Chasm, N.Y. 12911-1704 - (518) 834-5180
www.northcountryundergroundrailroad.com

The North Star Underground Railroad Museum Opens in May

On May 14th, the Town of Chesterfield and the North Country Underground Railroad Historical Association will hold a dedication and ribbon cutting ceremony to officially open the Town's Heritage Center and North Star Underground Railroad Museum. The Center and Museum will begin serving the public on May 21st.

NCUGRHA's motto, "Lighting Freedom's Road," will be the unifying theme for the exhibits on the first floor of the Center. Stories of the Champlain Line of the U.G.R.R will be highlighted, for Lake Champlain was a Gateway to Freedom. Hundreds of fugitives from slavery followed northeastern New York's waterways to freedom—the Upper Hudson River, the Champlain Canal and Lake Champlain. With state-of-the-art displays, we will tell their stories and the stories of the dedicated men and women who assisted them. The second floor of the Town of Chesterfield Heritage Center will provide NCUGRHA with office space and a collections room. Move in day is fast approaching.



The entrance room during our in-door September picnic. Frank Kinnelly, Mitch Ray, Susan Tehan and Linda Richardson. Photos by Frank Kinnelly and Helen Nerska.



Alan Aguglia dedicated many hours to the woodwork around our windows. Here he is at the top of the stairs on the second floor.



Linda Harwood and David Richardson working on the first floor entrance room.



Town of Chesterfield Supervisor Gerald “Jerry” Morrow received our 2010 Lantern Award at our Annual Meeting last June. Photo by Helen Nerska.

Thank You and *Merci*

We are grateful for the support of--

-All of our renewing and new members.

-**Vivian Papson** for the concept for our 2010 Annual Appeal card. And **Arbey Arce** of ARC Graphic Design for designing our Annual Appeal Card and our new logo.

-VP **Frank Kinnelly** for organizing a terrific team of volunteers to paint the interior of the Town of Chesterfield Heritage Center and North Star U.G.R.R. Museum. **David Richardson, Alan Aguglia, Keith Ford, Linda Harwood, Pete Lake, Mitchell Ray, and Bill Teeter** have done a tremendous job. Frank writes, “They have been working there for at least four hours a day, 4-5 days a week for four weeks. They have been very conscientious about doing the best job they can, as if they were working on their own homes. The finish that Bill has applied to the doors really stands out, but if you look closely you’ll see what a careful job Al has done on the windows. Linda, Dave, Pete and the others, all of them have put their hearts into it.”

-**Robin Caudell** for letting us know that the Peru Free Library had a new photocopier and wanted to give away its old one; Library Director **Becky Pace** for donating the photocopier. to us; Glenn Erb for moving the copier to Helen’s garage.

-**Helen Nerska** for sacrificing her garage during the coldest days of the winter so we could protect the copier and all of the donated furniture.

-**Marion Daniels** at United Way for helping us receive donated bookshelves and furniture for our offices.

-Esposito & Sons Freight Lines’ **Rich Esposito** and his men who will move everything from Helen’s garage into our offices.

-**United Way of the Adirondack Region, Inc.** for a \$1,500 “SEED MONEY GRANT” so we can develop anti-bullying educational materials for classrooms. And --**S. Booker, Vivian Papson and Lita Kelly** for their many contributions while serving on our Board of Trustees. You are missed.

-**Linda and Dave Richardson** and for making our September indoor “picnic” such a great event.

--**Andy Black** for a terrific Open House at the Stephen Keese Smith archaeological site.

Coming Home Events in Essex County, NY.

Heaven Hill Farm, Lake Placid, December 8, 2009

By Alice Keeseey Mecoy

In Saratoga, California, my father, Paul Meredith Keeseey, a great-great grandson of John Brown, and here in North Elba, New York, I, a great-great-great granddaughter of John Brown, participated in the ceremonies commingling the soil from John and Mary Brown’s graves. Today, though their bodies are buried on opposite coasts, John and Mary Brown have been reunited by the actions of their descendants.

The reenactment of the burial of John Brown and the commingling of soil between John and Mary Brown’s graves represent the culmination of 2009 - The Year of John Brown.

I have been both honored and proud to represent the Brown family as I have traveled to and spoken at many of the sites with John Brown historical significance: Red Bluff, Rohnerville and Saratoga, California; Hudson and Akron, Ohio; Charles Town and, of course, Harpers Ferry, West Virginia; and now, North Elba, New York.

Along the journey, I have had the opportunity to connect with many friends I have been corresponding with for years and have met many new friends. Like my ancestor, I do not see strangers, only friends I have not yet met.

The Year of John Brown has been an emotional year for me personally. I have experienced tears of joy and tears of sadness, moments of noise and longer moments of silence, examined the dark ugly side of humanity and celebrated the shining light of humanity’s greatest moments.

As I have traveled throughout this year, I have felt the presence of my great-great-great- grandfather, John Brown, close by my side— his hand on my shoulder when I needed comforting, his fingers brushing the tears gently from my cheeks when I wept, and laughing with me in my moments of joy, although I laugh much louder than he did.

Now we come to the end of The Year of John Brown - but it is not the end of the fight. John Brown gave the ultimate gift of his life to end slavery, but we are still surrounded by this most evil of institutions.

During my travels, I have often heard people say, “Slavery ended with the Emancipation Proclamation, or if it does exist, it is only in underdeveloped countries. America does not have slavery.” To this I answer, “No, you are wrong. Not only does slavery exist in the undeveloped countries, but in your own backyard. Slavery is not the public selling of another human, but rather the complete control of a person by the threat of violence for economic gain. A slave is a human being with no rights! This atrocity still exists today.”

“But what can I do,” you ask, “I am only one person. How much difference can I make?”

You must do everything you can to stop this evil:

Support the efforts of civil rights organizations such as C.O.R.E. (www.core-online.org) and the NAACP (www.naacp.org).

Become active in an Anti-Slavery organization like Free the Slaves (www.freetheslaves.net) or The Frederick Douglass Family Foundation (<http://fdff.org>).

Tell your friends, your neighbors, your family, your children, your teachers - stop strangers on the street and tell them about slavery and the need to end it.

There are so many things you can do, JUST DO SOMETHING!

As we come to the end of The Year of John Brown, we commemorate his death, celebrate his life and pledge to continue the good fight, remember, John Brown was only one man, and look at what he accomplished!”

Letters to the Editor

Lincoln and Anne Sunderland have graciously opened their home to us for our summer Keeseville/Peru tour for the last three years. They also opened their home this year for a tour sponsored by the Peru Community Church. The following letter refers to that tour.

Today I had lunch with a friend who went to the open house at Lincoln Sunderland’s. She said he told the group that there is no verification that this house was ever an Underground Railroad site. What can you tell me about this?

Phyllis [Wells] (Plattsburgh, New York)

Lincoln was correct. Although everyone believes that people were hidden at the Keese Homestead, we have not been able to document that they were. Even though we have not found proof that people were hidden on the property, there are places in the house like those in which people are known to have been hidden in other homes.

* * *

I received your newsletter today and really enjoyed reading it. It presented our (I say our because I’m an honorary member) mission very well— in a folksy style. I hope we can get down to your part of the US some day.

I have to renew my passport (what nonsense that is). I’ve been doing little in the way of black history investigation— but inspiration will appear soon, it always does.

The best to you, your wife and all of your (our) organization’s membership.

Larry Hall (Port Hope, Ontario, Canada)

Larry Hall is descended from Samuel Hall and Charles Williams, two fugitives from slavery who found refuge in Canada. (See Issue No. 11 of the North Country Lantern on our website.)

* * *

Talented photographer and NCUGRHA member Lee Clark, created a beautiful video from images he took at the 2009 memorial ceremony at the gravesite of John Brown. We sent a copy to John Brown’s great-great-great-granddaughter, Alice Keeseey McCoy. This is her response.

Thank you so much for the wonderful video of the burial that you gave me. I am amazed at the wonderful pictures and the moving music. Thank you so much for giving me a copy.

Yours in the fight
Alice Keeseey Mecoy

Readers may wish to visit Alice’s blog
<http://johnbrownkin.blogspot.com/>

*

Villages and Churches Divided Tour August 13, 2010



A basement room at the Keese Homestead. Was it a Hiding Place? (Left to right) Lincoln Sunderland, Don Papson, Linda Richardson, Frank Kinnelly, Barry Devins, Mary Beth McKinnon, Irene Francis, Kathleen Harris, Susan Tehon, Jim Bailey. Not shown, Yolanda Kinnelly and Millicent Hawkins. Photo by Helen Nerska.

Have you enjoyed reading this issue of the North Country Lantern?

If “yes” is your answer, then, now is a GOOD Time:

- to CONTRIBUTE to our Annual Appeal
- to RENEW an overdue membership
- to BECOME a new member
- to SHARE your skills with us

Join us NCUGHA

www.northcountryundergroundrailroad.com

North Country Lantern

Published by the North Country Underground Railroad Historical Association, a not for profit 501(c) 3 educational organization, dedicated to the preservation, interpretation and promotion of the history of the Champlain Line of the Underground Railroad. Our geographical corridor encompasses Northeastern New York’s

Waterways to Freedom—the Upper Hudson river, the Champlain Canal and Lake Champlain.

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Dr. Margaret Washington and NCUGRHA President Don Papson sharing thoughts on their research after the December 2019 John Brown Lives! “Slavery in *New York?* Slavery *Today?*” workshop. Photo by Naj Wikoff.

Sojourner Truth Connections

In 2009 and 2010, John Brown Lives!, a grassroots freedom education and human rights project directed by Martha Swan, organized a series of outstanding anti-slavery presentations and workshops. The keynote speaker for several of the events was Dr. Margaret Washington, a professor of history at Cornell University. Dr. Washington is the award winning author of *Sojourner Truth’s America* (University of Illinois Press, 2009). In her powerful study, she unravels Sojourner Truth’s world within the broader context of American history, slavery and the women’s rights movement. Dr. Washington admits that her interpretation of Truth is controversial. Some scholars have taken issue with her because she believes Sojourner Truth was active with the Underground Railroad. Dr. Washington is now searching for documents to prove her theory.

Sojourner Truth was born into bondage among the Hudson Valley Dutch in Ulster County, New York. Her name as a child was Isabella Baumfree. She was sold several times, married, and bore five children before she “walked off” with her infant daughter, Sophia. Her master, John Dumont, had reneged on a promise to free her.

Isabella moved to New York City, where she prayed in the sanctuary of the African Methodist Episcopal Church on Leonard Street. The church’s Bishop, the Reverend Christopher Rush, had once been enslaved in St. Lawrence County, New York. Isabella worked as a domestic, preached, and joined a religious commune. In 1843, she had an epiphany: “The Spirit “ called her and told her she must travel. Although she had no formal education, Sojourner became one of America’s most celebrated lecturers and champions of racial and gender equality.

In 1843, Sojourner joined a Florence, Massachusetts, abolitionist utopian cooperative, the Northampton Association of Education and Industry. She lived in Florence until 1857. During that time, she dictated the *Narrative of Sojourner Truth: A Northern Slave*. She died in 1883 in Battle Creek, Michigan, at the age of 86. Twenty-two years later, an elderly woman who had grown up in Vermont remembered when she was a young woman and heard Truth speak. She recalled, she “sat on the pulpit steps when not talking. I recall her strong face and strong, homely words while she pleaded for the gospel of human freedom.”

A memorial statue to honor Sojourner Truth and her work was unveiled in Florence, Massachusetts in 2002.

-*Sag Harbor Express*, 30 November 1905.



The Sojourner Truth Memorial Statue. Photo courtesy Steve Strimer.

A Disgraceful Riot

When Rev. Abel Brown tried to lecture against slavery in Northampton, Massachusetts, in 1843, he met with violent opposition. Brown was an Albany, New York, U.G.R.R. agent who sent runaways onto the Champlain Line.

From the Springfield (Mass.) Post.

ABOLITION.-A disgraceful riot occurred at Northampton last week. The occasion was a lecture by the Rev. Abel Brown and an African, once a slave, who accompanies him. The first evening the disturbance was great, but the second it was disgraceful. After Mr. Brown had read a chapter in the Bible and offered up a prayer to the throne of grace, the negro commenced to speak. He complained of the disturbance the night before, whereat, says the Democrat, “a villainous compound of rancorous smell as ever offended nostril,” ascended from the red hot stove in a fume of assafoetida and pepper.

At the same time the eyes were inflamed, as if King Alcohol had been burning them up for ten years, by the finest particles of snuff and pepper, wafted about the hall by letting fly a couple of doves, whose wings and feathers were saturated with those irritable powders. This caused a general scream among the woman, and a scuffle among the constables and rioters.

The passage way to the door was completely blocked up, and “confusion worse confounded” reigned triumphant, amid songs and shouts, and taunts at each other. The windows were finally opened and all breathed more freely again—the doves flew out—the children jumped out-and the lights were put out. The hall was cleared, and with much difficulty the Rev. M. Brown and the negro escaped with their lives, and thus ended the second night of the abolition lecture which we hope and trust will be the last.

-*New York Spectator*, 10 1843.

A Story of Champlain Line of the U.G.R.R. — Jeremiah C. Boggs

Jeremiah C. Boggs was from Richmond, Virginia. He was “about 30 years old,” five feet eight inches tall and “intelligent.” By “all appearances” he was a “disciple of Christ.” But Jeremiah was a slave. He had been sold six times. One of his masters, Joshua Green, treated him “very bad.” Mrs. Green treated him bad, too. One night Jeremiah was so worn out when he was watching meat cook by the fire, he fell asleep. Mrs. Green came and found that the meat had burnt, and took a broomstick and beat him. Then Mr. Green hit him with his cane. And then, swearing he would kill him, he took up a knife, and stabbed Jeremiah in the hand and thigh and under the ribs.

Joshua Green and his wife not only beat Jeremiah, they starved him. He was so hungry sometimes, he had no choice but to pick bits of food out of the swill barrel. Swill was rotting scraps of food the Greens collected for their pigs. Whenever they caught Jeremiah with any of the swill, they took it from him and whipped him.

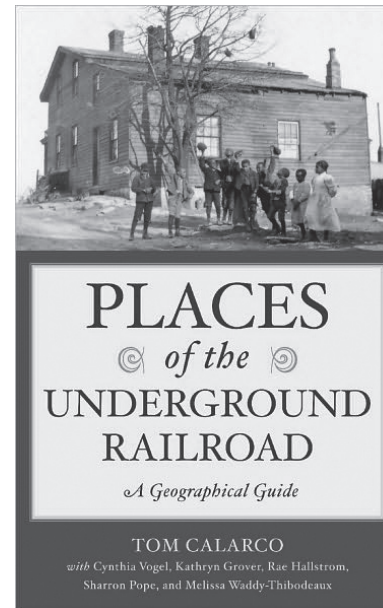
Boggs escaped from his tormentors in 1843. It took him three weeks to reach Albany, New York. A member of the Eastern New York Anti-Slavery Society (very likely Corresponding Secretary and Underground Railroad station master Rev. Abel Brown) “gave him some cash, a letter recommending him to the good, and sent him on.”

Because Jeremiah had a brother living in Montpelier, Vermont, he was forwarded to the Green Mountain State. He worked for Lawrence Brainerd in St. Albans until late 1844. Brainerd was involved in the steamboat business, but he had another business—the Underground Railroad. During his stay with the Brainerds, Jeremiah learned to read and write. He remained in St. Albans until he was recognized by A. G. Tarlton, a townsman who knew his master. Jeremiah “grew apprehensive and when an agent from Liberia came to St. Albans he followed him to Africa.” After he arrived safely, he sent Mr. Brainerd a grateful letter.

The Brainerd family remembered Jeremiah C. Boggs as a “giant in strength and a most trustworthy and faithful laborer.”

-Annual Report of the Committee,, Albany: Eastern NY A.S. Society & Fugitive Slaves, September 29, 1843. American Antiquarian Society.

-Brainerd, Aldis. Letter to Wilbur H. Siebert, 21 October 1895. Wilbur H. Siebert Collection Microfilm Edition, MIC 192, the Ohio Historical Society Archives/Library.



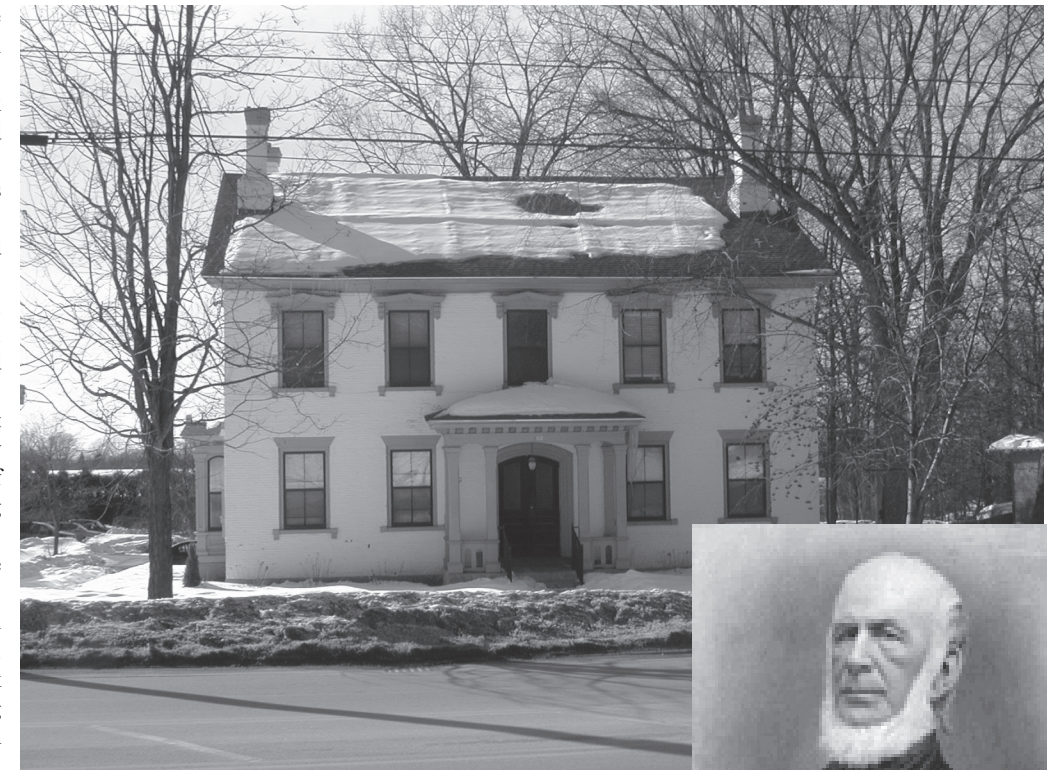
Places of the Underground Railroad

Tom Calarco, with Cynthia Vogel, Kathryn Grover, Rae Hallstrom, Sharron L Pope, and Melissa Waddy-Thibodeaux. Published in 2010 by ABC-CLIO/Greenwood

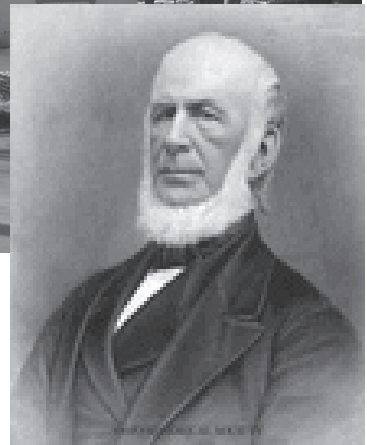
Places of the Underground Railroad: A Geographical Guide presents an overview of the various sites that comprised this unique road to freedom, with entries chosen to represent all regions of the United States and Canada. Where most works on the Underground Railroad focus on the people involved, this unique guide explores the intricacies of travel that allowed the “conductors” to carry out the tasks entrusted to them. It presents an accurate picture of just where the Underground Railroad was and how it operated, including routes and itineraries and connections between the various Railroad locations.

Through information about these locations, the book takes readers from the beginnings of organized aid to fugitive slaves during the period following the American Revolution up to the Civil War. It delineates the possible routes fugitive slaves may have taken by identifying the rivers, canals, and railroads that were sometimes used. And it shows that a network, though decentralized and variable over time and place, truly was established among Underground Railroad participants.

Places of the Underground Railroad is the fifth book on the Underground Railroad edited or written by Tom Calarco. His first was the Underground Railroad in the Adirondack Region (2004). In 2008, he received an Underground Railroad Free Press award.



Lawrence Brainerd and his home in St. Albans, Vermont. Photo of home courtesy Robert Pelletier.



Are you ready ~ To be a part of something wonderful? To meet and greet people at The North Star Underground Railroad Museum? If you would like to be one of our docents, please call Helen Nerska at 518-643-0938 or 518-834-5180