

## 2018 Exhibits Committee Report

Members: Jackie Madison, Don Papon (Chair and Curator), Mitchell Ray, Sally Reid.

We have had a good year.

1. The John Thomas Room was cooled for free, and we had no equipment problems. After Phil Vannortwick, owner of Phil's Heating and Air Conditioning, estimated that it would cost \$5,000 to correct the heating and cooling system in the Museum, he came up with a simple way to reduce the heat in JT's room, which was unbearable on hot days. Phil installed small fans in front of the two vents, and he donated his time and the fans.
2. A long standing problem was solved when Town of Chesterfield Supervisor Gerry Morrow had the Town pay for the installation of an electrical line toward Mace Chasm Road; our American flag is now well lit every night.
3. Hal Moore, owner of Adirondack Hardwoods, custom built and installed a beautiful three part, collapsible Kids' Counter in our bay window; it was an immediate hit.
4. Under the supervision of Keeseville Elementary teachers Julie Taylor and Christine Facteau, ten gifted fifth and sixth grade students have created three games based on the life of Cyrus Branch a.k.a John White, who escaped from Virginia to Manchester, Vermont, on the Underground Railroad. Branch's narrative was published after the Civil War, and one of his descendants, retired SUNY Stony Brook anthropology professor Dr. Delores Fish, visited the Museum with her husband Jefferson in 2012. The games will be unveiled in the Museum at 11 A.M. on November 16th. All are invited.
5. Tom Calarco's donation of an exact replica of the box that Henry "Box" Brown escaped in, gave us a unique display and a companion piece to one of our Gift Shop's top sellers, a children's version of Henry's story.

6. African American artist Sadikisha Sandra Collier's collage *Black Moses*, in honor of Harriet Tubman, was donated to us, and it fits perfectly in the Northward to Freedom Room.

7. We marked the 100th anniversary of Frederick Douglass' birth by hiring Dan Ferguson to design a banner inspired by Douglass' 1843 visit to Middlebury and Ferrisburg, Vermont, and Keeseville, NY. This display fulfills our need to recognize three icons of the UGRR — John Brown, Harriet Tubman, and Frederick Douglass. All are mentioned in the final frames of the *Northward to Freedom* video, but until this year, we had a panel for Brown, but nothing special for Tubman and Douglass.

8. The Chinese UGRR exhibit continues to astonish visitors. Lakes to Locks' Heritage Program Director, Margaret Gibbs, and Amy Chin, whose grandfather Bok Ying Chin is featured, arranged for Yue Ma, of the Museum of Chinese Americans and Fabiana Chiu-Rinaldi of the New York Council on the Arts, to have a team of interns visit the Museum and digitize Port Henry's two Chinese UGRR ledger books. Town of Moriah Historian Betty Lamoria has granted us indefinite use of the artifacts we have on loan. Margaret Gibbs has submitted a proposal for the ledger book digitization experience to be shared by key participants at the Museum Association of New York's April 2019 Conference in Cooperstown.

9. The Exhibits Committee and the Development Committee have discussed two possibilities for 2019: seeking corporate funding for a John Thomas Story French translation caption and KeyBank funding for an interactive "North Star Depot." The Depot will open our Museum's walls: It will be outside, and it will feature a stationary toy train engine, which has been donated to us. Children will be able to pretend they are conducting UGRR passengers.

10. Mr. and Mrs. Thom Loreman donated a donor's panel to recognize our most generous donors; It now enhances our front porch.