

## Archaeological Dig Update

Andy Black and members of the Champlain Valley Metal Detecting Club teamed this summer at the Stephen Keese Smith Farm. Andy and two assistants unearthed a large quantity of household items including tea kettles, lanterns, shards of pottery and dishes, and an 1883 Canadian coin. For Robin Caudell's August 21, 2011 *Press Republican* report and video, Google Peru Couple Accidentally Uncover Load of History in Back Yard.

## Rouses Point Interpretive Panel Dedicated



Jim Brangan, Assistant Director Champlain Valley National Heritage Partnership/Lake Champlain Basin Program, and NCUGRHA Vice-President Jackie Madison.

A beautiful bi-lingual (English and French) wayside interpretive panel was dedicated in Rouses Point on April 10th, 2011. NCUGRHA President Don Papson and Vice-President Jackie Madison were two of the keynote speakers.

The new panel commemorates the pre-Civil War history of Rouses Point's old steamboat landing/train terminal as the Champlain Line's busiest Underground Railroad depot. NCUGRHA obtained National Park Service Network to Freedom site recognition for the landing in 2009. It is the Network's first international marker. It was at Rouses Point that Lavinia Bell boarded a train to Montreal. Other fugitives from slavery boarded trains for Ogdensburgh where they could reach Canada West on St. Lawrence River steamboats.

The Rouses Point panel was the first Champlain Valley marker to include a QR code. Smart phones can read the code and direct visitors to our website. Rouses Point-Champlain Historical Society President Geri Favreau and Rouses Point historian Donna Racine secured funding for the panel from the Champlain Valley National Heritage Partnership/Lake Champlain Basin Program and village Mayor George Rivers.

To view the presentations of NCUGRHA's Jackie Madison and Don Papson and the other speakers, Google <http://www.hometowncablenetwork.com> and click on Rouses Point Underground Railroad Wayside Exhibit Dedication 4-10-11.

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



# THE NORTH COUNTRY LANTERN

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

Number 14

Spring-Summer 2011

North Country Underground Railroad Historical Association  
1131 Mace Chasm Road, Ausable Chasm, N.Y. 12911-1704 - (518) 834-5180  
[ugr@frontier.com](mailto:ugr@frontier.com) - [www.northcountryundergroundrailroad.com](http://www.northcountryundergroundrailroad.com)

## North Star Underground Railroad Museum Has A Grand Opening



Photo courtesy of John Ryan, *Peru Gazette*

A ten year process culminated for the Town of Chesterfield on May 14, 2011 when Supervisor Gerald Morrow (right) and NCUGRHA President Don Papson (left) cut the ribbon for the Town's Heritage Center and North Star Underground Railroad Museum.

The day's festivities began with a private ceremony at the Ausable River to bless her waters. Mohawk Elder Ionataiewas (Kay Olan) shared the traditional Haudenosaune Thanksgiving Address. Prayers were then offered by Reverends Edie Poland (Keeseville United Methodist Church), Fred Shaw (United Church of Christ of Elizabethtown) and Arbey Arce (Universal Great Brotherhood, Solar Line). Each of the approximately thirty people present energized a small amount of the river's water with a positive word which arose from their hearts. At the conclusion of the ceremony, Ionataiewas and Vivian Papson returned the positively charged water to the stream so it could flow to Lake Champlain, the Richelieu and St. Lawrence Rivers, the Atlantic Ocean, and thence, around the world. The following day, the Venerable Dhondup Tsering offered Tibetan chants and a prayer shawl for the success and long life of the museum. These prayers consecrated the North Star Museum to the noble purpose of helping humanity heal from the wounds of slavery and the injustices of oppression.

**The North Star U.G.R.R.  
Museum  
at Ausable Chasm, NY**

**Open daily 9 a.m. - 4 p.m.  
Memorial Day - Columbus Day**

- **Fall and Winter by appointment.  
Call 518-834-5180 to arrange a tour.**
- **Our gift shop offers the widest  
selection of antislavery books for  
children and adults in the region.**
- **Sales directly support our work.**
- **Members receive a 10% discount.**
- **Check our website for program  
updates or call 518-834-5180**

**[www.northcountryundergroundrailroad.com](http://www.northcountryundergroundrailroad.com)**



During the second part of our dedication, music stirred our souls. Lynn Wilkie played taps to honor fugitives from slavery who escaped through the Champlain Valley, the people who assisted them, and all who fought and died in the Civil War. The joyous voices of the SUNY Plattsburgh Gospel Choir called in the spirits of our ancestors.

Margaret Gibbs introduced keynote speakers Antoinette Martignoni, Dr. Phil Estes and NCUGRHA Vice President Jackie Madison. Mrs. Martignoni is the 92 year old great-granddaughter of black abolitionist Dr. James McCune Smith. Dr. Estes is an Iraq War veteran and great-great grandson of the man who first resided in our building, Civil War veteran Herbert H. Estes. Lakes to Locks Passage Executive Director, Janet Kennedy, Ausable Chasm Company General Manager Tim Bresette, and New York State Assemblywoman Teresa Sayward offered words of praise and encouragement. NCUGRHA Vice-President Frank Kinnelly recognized all the volunteers who labored tirelessly to prepare the building and grounds for opening day. Pepsi Beverage Company of Keeseville donated beverages for the event; Clover Mead Farm, artisan cheeses. Refreshments were served by SUNY Plattsburgh Upward Bound students under the supervision of Program Director Elaine Leavitt and Assistant Director Biz Green. John Mitchell of Silver Lining Photography and Calvin Castine and Gordie Little of Home Town Cable captured the day on video. (Google, OLC - North Star Underground Railroad Museum Opens 5-14-11.)

Under a tent Adirondack Hardware generously donated for the occasion, guests were protected from a light rain as they sat on folding chairs on loan from Keeseville's Knights of Columbus. Our dedication day was a grand community-wide celebration.

Photos courtesy of John Ryan, *Peru Gazette*. Counterclockwise, SUNY Plattsburgh Gospel Choir, Lynn Wilkie, Antoinette Martignoni, Frank Kinnelly, Margaret Gibbs, Dr. Phil Estes.



2011 Lantern Light Awardees Arbey Arce and Helen Nerska.



New Board member Peter Slocum with his wife Ann.



New Board members Sue and Charlie Crowningshield.

## Annual Meeting Highlights

At our annual meeting on June 18<sup>th</sup>, we recognized outgoing Board members Ramatoulaye Djermakoye and Jim Bailey for their many years of service, reelected Mitchell Ray and Frank Perusse to our Board, and elected and installed new Board members, Charlie and Sue Crowningshield and Peter Slocum. Our Board currently has one vacancy.

If the Underground Railroad was about helping people get where they needed or wanted to go, then Charlie Crowningshield is the ideal board member for the North Country Underground Railroad Historical Association. His whole career was helping people get where they were going. Charlie, a Port Kent native, spent 44 years with the Lake Champlain Transportation Company, managing all of the ferry boat docks for much of that time. Now, he and his wife, Sue Crowningshield, who taught in the Ausable Valley school district for more than 30 years and managed a host of volunteer commitments at the same time, are devoting a lot of their time and talents to the Association and new museum. Sue served as treasurer, bookkeeper and fundraiser for many local programs, including helping to manage the \$350,000 campaign for the Catholic Community of Keeseville. Sue is our new Treasurer and is a member of our Finance Committee.

Charlie, who is a big local history enthusiast, is a long-time leader in the community where our new museum sits: he was a mainstay of the Keeseville Kiwanis for years, and of the Ausable Valley Masonic Lodge, and of the local Republican party, and of many other local organizations. Charlie is serving on our Development and Program Committees.

Peter Slocum, like the Crowningshields, came to our association as a volunteer docent at the new museum. He brings years of experience as an Albany-based journalist and public health advocate, as well as his interest in American history, especially as it relates to the struggle for freedom. He is co-author of the book, *From Rocky to Pataki, Characters and Caricatures in New York Politics*. Peter is Chair of our Public Relations Committee and a member of our Program Committee.

All three new board members are looking forward to helping people better understand and appreciate the courage and conflicts that gave life to the Underground Railroad story in the Adirondacks and the Champlain Valley.

2011 Lantern Light Awardee Arbey Arce and his wife Mindy visited the North Star Museum during its construction phase. Arbey was so impressed, he volunteered to be our "official graphic artist." Arbey designed our 2010 annual appeal card, our new stationery, a poster for our February event, and our promotional brochure. A professional graphic artist in Manhattan for 30 years, Arbey is currently a freelance designer for his own company, ARC Graphic Design, • 7 Ralph Avenue, Brentwood, New York, 11717 • 631-231-9155 • [arbeyarce@aol.com](mailto:arbeyarce@aol.com)

Helen Nerska was taken by surprise when she received her 2011 Lantern Light Award. She has been working with NCUGRHA since 2010 through the Senior Community Service Employment Program. She organized our dedication and grand opening events, manages our docents program and is responsible for the tremendous success of our gift shop which has already turned a profit. Helen is ready to tackle whatever needs to be done for our museum and, in her own right, as President of the Board of the Clinton County Historical Association.



Janet Kennedy, Executive Director, Lakes to Locks Passage.  
Photo courtesy of John Ryan, *Peru Gazette*.

One week after the dedication ceremonies, we held a grand opening for the public. Visitors were overwhelmed by the state-of-the-art “Lake Champlain: Gateway to Freedom” exhibits expertly designed by Mike Hanke of Design Divisions, Inc. and skillfully fabricated by Sean McElroy of McElroy Scenic Services. They were awed by Monadnock Media’s production, “The Forgotten Story of John Thomas.” Mr. Thomas escaped from bondage in Maryland and became an Adirondack pioneer. Two of his great-great grandsons, Oscar and Victor Morehouse, live in the Adirondacks today, but they had never heard of John Thomas until our research brought his story to light.

The North Star Museum is situated near a spectacular scenic wonder, Ausable Chasm. The Chasm’s employees began to encourage their patrons to visit our museum, and in only four months, our dedicated docents greeted well over 3,000 people. They did an incredible job welcoming eighty-two members of the Coloured Ladies Club of Montreal and the Negro Community Center/Charles H. Este Cultural Center. NCC President Shirley Gyles wrote in praise, “you all did a wonderful job...everyone enjoyed the museum immensely.”

It has been a rewarding inaugural season. Visitors are leaving generous donations which help the Town of Chesterfield pay for our utilities. And they are joining our association. Yolanda Kinnelly’s bed of cotton plants are fascinating people who have never seen cotton grow in the North Country. Everyone wonders if we will see bolls of fluffy cotton before the snow flies. Our gift shop, under the wise supervision of Helen Nerska, is an overwhelming success. Our books sold briskly at the John Brown Lives! “Dreaming of Timbuctoo” exhibit at the Whallonsburg Grange.

Our series of after hours presentations have been wide ranging. On Museum Day, Alis Headlam of Rutland, Vermont drew a large crowd eager to hear about her visit to Ghana, West Africa. Don Papson honored North Country native son Solomon Northup who was lured to Washington DC and sold into slavery for twelve years. One evening on our deck, Ingeborg Sapp shared her journey to freedom. She has lived under four flags — the banners of Nazi Germany, Communist East Germany, the Federal Republic of Germany and the United States. One day a visitor said our exhibits helped him appreciate what his father experienced when he escaped from communist Rumania.

Our Saturday morning bus tours have been popular, and our third annual Churches and Villages Divided tour was very well received. We have welcomed students from Plattsburgh’s Momot School and adults from the Willsboro Historical Society, the Lake Forest Retirement Community and clients of Malone and Plattsburgh’s Third Age programs.

Education Chair Linda Richardson has been busy. She teamed with the Essex County Historical Society on a program for the Keeseville Elementary School which culminated with a visit to the museum. She created a Scavenger Hunt to engage children in our exhibits. She supervised SUNY Plattsburgh intern Megan Berry who developed lessons for our summer children’s activities. During July and August, Linda and Megan worked with 94 children. Under Linda’s supervision, a team of teachers completed lesson plans for an educational trunk and readied it for the new school year. It was funded by grants from the Alice Moore Foundation and the United Way of the Adirondack Region, Inc.

We look forward to sending our educational trunk into schools and welcoming teachers and students to our museum. Our Benefit Dinner at the Knights of Columbus in Keeseville will be on November 20<sup>th</sup>. We are looking forward to a beautiful fall.



Megan Berry and children on our deck. Photo by Helen Nerska.

## Bulletin Boards

A pair of external bulletin boards has recently been set up on the porch of the Town of Chesterfield Heritage Center and North Star Underground Railroad Museum. They have acrylic window panes and aluminum backing and were obtained thanks to a \$500 donation from TD Bank. They were attached to the building’s stone wall, not a simple task, by members of the Town of Chesterfield road crew.

The first of these bulletin boards has been used to post notices of events of local interest as well as a listing of upcoming museum programs. The first posting included a talk by Stephen Engelhart, “Industrial Keeseville”, held at the Clinton County Historical Association.

During the summer months, the second bulletin board was dedicated to the museum’s popular summer children’s activities. It was filled with colorful drawings by the young participants in this program, which was held three times a week. Activities were matched with the age group, varying from three-year-olds to fifteen-year-olds. They included stories from the museum’s exhibits and dealt with the theme of freedom.



Past NCUGRHA Board members Ramatoulaye Djermaakoye and Vivian Papson (as Sarah Parker Remond) and Melissa Waddy-Thibodeaux on our opening day. Photo courtesy of Jack LaDuke.

## Sarah Parker Remond

On her first antislavery tour in late November 1856, Sarah Parker Remond of Salem, Massachusetts traveled with Susan B. Anthony to lecture in New York. Sarah’s brother, the eloquent colored lecturer, Charles Lennox Remond, and Aaron M. Powell accompanied them.

The Remonds and Powell arrived in Keeseville as representatives of the American Anti-Slavery Society whose motto was “No Union with Slaveholders.” They were labled “disunionists,” and no “suitable” meeting place could be found. Keeseville manufactured horse nails, and Powell reported that the village’s “religion, its politics, its heart, if it has any, all would seem to be very much of the nature of the hard substance which constitutes the bulk of their commercial interest.” The lecturers were forced to “abandon” Keeseville for Peru’s Quaker Meeting House. Susan B. Anthony joined them there.

The abolitionists lectured in Plattsburgh and stopped at the Cumberland House for evening tea. The proprietor refused to seat the Remonds in the public dining room. Miss Anthony and Mr. Powell refused to sit where their friends were not permitted “solely because of difference in complexion.” The next morning, they were all “respectfully invited to the public table.”

Miss Remond moved to England where she attended the Bedford College for Ladies. During the Civil War, she lectured extensively to dissuade the British from supporting the South. In 1866, she became a medical student at the Santa Maria Nuova Hospital in Florence, Italy. Sarah Parker Remond married an Italian and practiced medicine in Florence for more than twenty years.

### 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.

President, Don Papson  
First Vice President, Jackie Madison  
Second Vice-President, Frank Kinnelly  
Treasurer, Sue Crowningshield  
Secretary, Kathy Lavoie

**North Country Underground Railroad Historical Association**  
1131 Mace Chasm Road  
Ausable Chasm, NY 12911-1704  
518-834-5180 • ugr@frontier.com  
www.northcountryundergroundrailroad.com

## Praises for The North Star Museum

The museum...taught us so much about human suffering and the indomitable spirit of man to be free....  
God Bless you abundantly!

-Joann – Charles Mizutani  
Sacramento, CA.

... such a wonderful national treasure... truly a model for other parts of the state to emulate...

-Margaret Washington  
Professor of History Gender and American Studies,  
Cornell University

...wonderful...I’d never before been to a museum where my own flesh and blood was part of the exhibits, or seen my name (spelled right, thank you!) on the wall...we read every word in the place....Well done!

-Neal Burdick, Canton, New York  
A practicing Quaker, Neal is a great-great grandson of Peru, New York U.G.R.R. agent Stephen Keese Smith.



Melissa Waddy-Thibodeaux after her performance as Lavinia Bell for Montreal’s NCCC/Charles H. Este Community Center. Photo © Kevin Calixte A. Passionné.

Ms. Waddy-Thibodeaux visited the North Country and Montreal in February 2011 to present the world premier of her portrayal of Lavinia Bell who escaped from Texas to Montreal via Rouses Point, New York in January of 1861. The Lavinia Bell story is featured in our *Northward to Freedom* video at the North Star Museum.