

Underground Railroad Educational and Cultural Program FY 2010 Project Abstracts

P345A105002 - Maryland State Archives

Title: Beneath the Underground and Beyond - The Flight to Freedom and Antebellum Communities in Maryland, 1830 – 1880: Resistance along the Eastern Shore

Using its collection of primary documents, The Maryland State Archives will explore the legacy of the Underground Railroad and uncover the unknown “heroes” of the slave flight and resistance. This project will research and disseminate information on the many now- unidentified Underground Railroad leaders and participants. In addition to Frederick Douglass and Harriet Tubman (both native born Marylanders), the best known icons of the Underground Railroad movement, there were thousands of others whose efforts yet remain hidden as the underground effort demanded their secrecy. Through prospective review of census records, laws, newspapers, maps and court records, the Archives staff members create and will create case studies of these individuals. The documents aid in the examination of: Maryland’s role as a border state, Maryland’s internal geographic regions, and of the circumstances that shaped anti-slavery efforts for enslaved and free labor communities. This project will focus on research into records specifically relating to five of Maryland’s Eastern Shore Counties, including Caroline, Dorchester, Queen Anne’s, Talbot, and Kent.

The research will yield a searchable database of stripped records, online scans of original documents, biographical case studies, and interactive mapping of Maryland’s Eastern Shore. These materials, essential to the understanding of the Underground Railroad and to the history of slavery in Maryland, will be freely available on the project’s dedicated Web site. All data will be perpetually maintained and preserved in the Electronic archives of the State of Maryland. Furthermore, this material will be made available to K-12 teachers, undergraduate and graduate faculty and students, museum professionals, historic site preservationists, and to the general public—both online and through guided presentations, lectures, special events hosted by Maryland State Archives’ staff.

FY 2010 Award (three years): \$738,935; cost-share: \$3,142,377

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P345A105006 - Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania

Title: From Slavery to Freedom: The Underground Railroad and the Legacy of Freedom in Western Pennsylvania

For more than a decade, the Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania (doing business as the Senator John Heinz History Center) has shared the story of the Underground Railroad and the journey to freedom through small exhibits and programming. The recent discovery of a collection of 57 manumission papers in the archives of Allegheny County, and the acquisition of those documents by the History Center, encouraged new research on the relationship between slaves and owners and the often overlooked history of slavery in Western Pennsylvania. In addition, these materials allowed an opportunity to directly connect the story of slavery to 57 individuals; providing the rare perspective of people experiencing historic events and managing the consequences of them in their lives. This collection, coupled with the popularity of previous programs on the Underground Railroad, led the History Center to develop a major long-term exhibition, *From Slavery to Freedom: The Underground Railroad and the Legacy of Freedom in Western Pennsylvania*.

This 3,000 square foot exhibition will open in 2012, as the region and the nation are immersed in the commemoration of the sesquicentennial of the Civil War. Developed in concert with Pennsylvania Civil War 150 (PACW150), a consortium of Pennsylvania institutions coordinating state wide efforts, the exhibit and accompanying programs will present new scholarship that positions Pittsburgh as a national center for anti-slavery activity, as well as examining the context in which slavery and the Underground Railroad occurred. The PACW150 partnership also positions History Center exhibits and programs as part of a larger effort and provides visibility and reach for delivering core content and messages.

FY 2010 Award (three years): \$414,417; cost-share: \$1,657,668

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