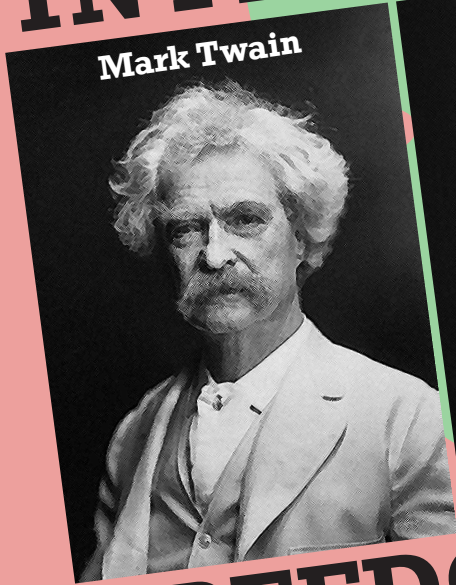


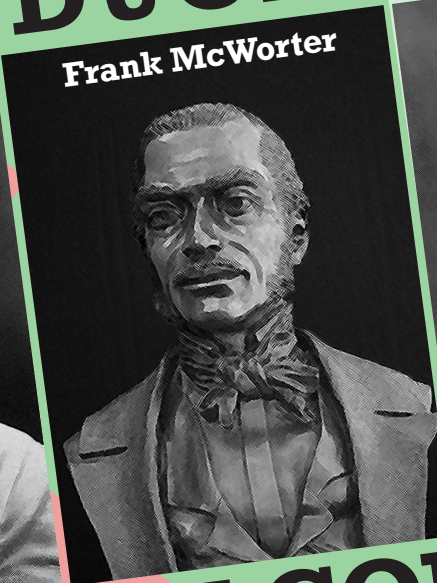
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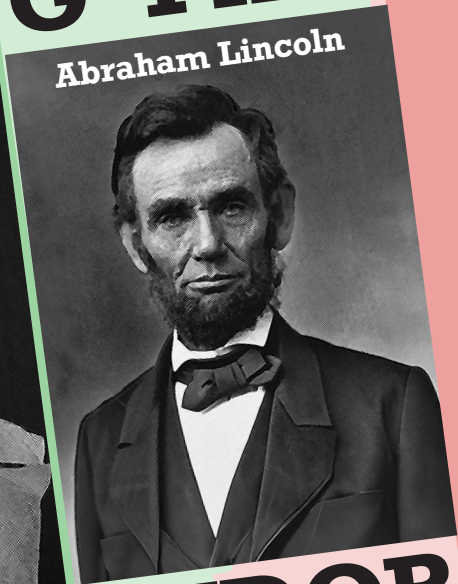
INTRODUCING THE



Mark Twain



Frank McWorter



Abraham Lincoln

FREEDOM CORRIDOR

Illinois College
Jacksonville
Illinois
February 2-3, 2024

A Native American Voice

For my part I am of the opinion, that so far as we have reason, we have a right to use it in determining what is right or wrong, and we should always pursue that path which we believe to be right, believing that “whatsoever is, is right.” If the Great and

Good Spirit wished us to believe and do as the whites, he could easily change our opinions, so that we could see, and think, and act as they do. We are nothing compared to his power, and we feel and know it....

Wherever the Great Spirit

places his people they ought to be satisfied to remain, and be thankful for what He has given them, and not drive others from the country He has given them because it happens to be better than theirs. This is contrary to our way of thinking, and from

my intercourse with the whites, I have learned that one great principle of their religion is “to do unto others as you wish them to do unto you.” Those people in the mountains seem to act upon this principle, but the settlers on our frontiers and on our lands seem never to think of it, if we are to judge by their actions.

—Black Hawk, from his 1834 book *Life of Ma-ka-tai-me-she-kia-kiak* or *Black Hawk*, pages 77 and 142.

Black Hawk, or Múk-a-tab-mish-o-káb-kaik, a prominent Sauk chief, 1832, by George Catlin





Why the Freedom Corridor?

The Freedom Corridor focuses on the 19th century struggle to free enslaved African peoples in the United States. But it is more than that, including the continuing struggles to end racism and all forms of oppression.

There are many key actors in this history. The Freedom Corridor is anchored by Abraham Lincoln, Mark Twain, and Frank and Lucy McWorter. Other remarkable people were here or nearby, including Emily Logan, Dred Scott, Elijah and Owen Lovejoy, John Jones, Edward Beecher, Richard Eells, Barryman Barnett, and Charley, and John and Mary Meachum.

New Philadelphia as a national park establishes the national significance of this 19th century abolitionist village established by Frank and Lucy McWorter. The congressional act in 2022 led to this effort to expand our focus to the diverse communities that make up the Freedom Corridor—Springfield, Jacksonville, Pittsfield, Barry, Hannibal, and Quincy—for starters. Our goal is to rethink American history, to include voices not heard and stories not fully told.

Slavery marks the early years of this country. In our time we continue to live with the legacy of the terror of racism. This includes Native Americans and Latinx people. None of us are free until all of us are free. Thank you for helping launch the Freedom Corridor.

Endorsers of the Freedom Corridor

Statewide

Illinois State Archive
Illinois State Historian
Knox College Underground Railroad Center
Landmarks Illinois
Looking for Lincoln
New Philadelphia Association

Springfield

Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum
Alpha Phi Alpha
Alpha Phi Alpha Foundation
The Ministerial Alliance of Springfield Illinois and Vicinity
Springfield and Central Illinois African American History Museum
University of Illinois at Springfield

Jacksonville

African American History Museum
Jacksonville Chamber of Commerce
Illinois College
Jacksonville Tourism Bureau

Pittsfield

Pike County Historical Society

Barry

Barry Baptist Church
Barry City Council
Barry Historical Museum

Quincy

Mayor of Quincy
Quincy Human Relations Commission

Hannibal

City of Hannibal
Descendants of Douglass School Students
Hannibal Chamber of Commerce
Hannibal Juneteenth Coalition
Helping Hand Baptist Church
Jim's Journey: The Huck Finn Freedom Center

Missouri Association of Museums and Archives
Missouri Humanities Council
Visit Hannibal Tourism Bureau

Individuals

James Perry, Fairbanks, AK
Rolando Cruz, Phoenix, AZ
Michael Thompson, Phoenix, AZ
Wilson Aguilar, San Diego, CA
Rosario Barón, Pacoima, CA
Jennifer Cisneros, Orange cove, CA
Marsha Cotton, Los Angeles, CA
Katarina Gamm, Thousand Oaks, CA
James Gregg, Stockton, CA
Izzy Kaminsky, San Jose, CA
Regina Lazarovich, Scotts Valley, CA
Vero Matias, Oakland, CA
Carolyn Meisser, Marina, CA
Yanel Munoz, Simi Valley, CA
Ronald Ramirez, Fresno, CA
Keith Rice, Chatsworth, CA
Elsie Sanchez, Costa Mesa, CA
Sonic Son, Oroville, CA
Kristy Sperry, oakland, CA
Ula Taylor, Oakland, CA
Josh Theo, San Diego, CA
Cindy Banegas, Aurora, CO
Joanne Belknap, Boulder, CO
Gilberto Masso, Denver, CO
Rafia Zafar, Orange, CT
Elisa Pérez, Washington, DC
Dayvin Reyes, Washington, DC
Mj Melvin Tobar, Manassas, DC
Donna Dolansky, Delray Beach, FL
Briant Elliot, Miami, FL
Charlene Farrington, Delray Beach, FL
Cindy Filella, Hialeah, FL
Joshua Fraser, Riverview, FL
Carmen Lainez, Miami, FL
Erika Rikhiram, Clermont, FL
Miguel rivera, Panama City, FL
S. Ama Wray, Miami, FL
Arlen Baez, Atlanta, GA
Fabio Bolanos, Norcross, GA

William Dorsey, East Point, GA
George Freinkel, Atlanta, GA
Maynor Mayorga, La grange GA, GA
Joseph Muya, Alpharetta, GA
Ronald Stephens, Atlanta, GA
Lakeysha Thomas, Decatur, GA
Zachary Tino, Macomb, GA
Rafaela Vargas, Clayton, GA
Marta Estrada, Denison, IA
Joseph A. Brown, Carbondale, IL
Quinn Adamowski, Joliet, IL
Imani Bazzell, Champaign, IL
Julia Brooke Biggs, Thompsonville, IL
Jackson Blansit, O Fallon, IL
Merle Bowen, Champaign, IL
Joyce Brody, Chicago, IL
Lenny Brody, Chicago, IL
Bridget Bush, Pittsfield, IL
James Campbell, Chicago Heights, IL
Peter Cole, Macomb, IL
Joe Conover, Quincy, IL
Barnetta Margo Crawford, Chicago, IL
Scott Dahl, Springfield, IL
Christopher Fennell, Champaign, IL
George Hunt, Belleville, IL
Jack Thomas Hutchison, Springfield, IL
Kaye Iftner, Pittsfield, IL
Joe Iosbaker, Chicago, IL
Sharon Irish, Urbana, IL
Bryan Jack, Edwardsville, IL
Claire Martin, Springfield, IL
Terrance Martin, Springfield, IL
Marco Mendoza, Blue Island, IL
Earl Pursley, Pittsfield, IL
Halimah Shabazz, Urbana, IL
Yesenia Zuniga, Carpentersville, IL
Jamie Flood, Indianapolis, IN
Maria León-Estrada, Indianapolis, IN
Adiel Saavedra salinas, Columbus, IN
Yusef Abdallah, Shrewsbury, MA
José Beltran, Brookline, MA
Jack MacDonald-Hilton, Worcester, MA
Jhon Ortiz, Lynn, MA
michele rule, Concord, MA
Katherine Benitez, Riverdale Park, MD

Ashaki Binta, Cambridge, MD
 Carlos Cepeda, Silver Spring, MD
 Victor Gonzalez, Lanham, MD
 Sylvea Hollis, Rockville, MD
 charlotte king, Rockville, MD
 Gustavo Melendez, Silver spring, MD
 Leah S, Westminster, MD
 Rachel Guthrie, South Portland, ME
 Mohammad Elgohary, Sterling Heights, MI
 Evaristo Ixcoy Ixcoy ramos, Grand Rapids, MI
 Paul Markillie, Grand Blanc Township, MI
 Kathryn Saliccioli, Farmington, MI
 Jane Yaeger, Menominee, MI
 Bonnie Lantz, New Ulm, MN
 Margie Siegel, Minneapolis, MN
 Bruce Ginsberg, St Louis, MO
 Marloneduardo Guerra Padilla, Independence, MO
 Shirl Johnson, St Louis, MO
 Ellen Thomasson, St Louis, MO
 Hannah Foster, Missoula, MT
 Jaiden Acker, Black Mountain, NC
 Ajamu Dillahunt, Raleigh, NC
 Wesley Hogan, Durham, NC
 Noah Lenstra, Greensboro, NC
 Alicia Marley, Rich Square, NC
 Camryn Radford, Clayton, NC
 Dulce Salas, Durham, NC
 Suzy Talucci, Wendell, NC
 Mayra Herrera, Lincoln, NE
 Nehemias Andrade, Newark, NJ
 Luis Axzalan, Irvington, NJ
 Luis Carlos Chic xirum, Maplewood, NJ
 Karl E. Johnson, New Brunswick, NJ
 Hannah Kleinstein, Paramus, NJ
 Angela Moscol, Elizabeth, NJ
 Rosemarie Pena, Medford, NJ
 Anonymous, Cherry Hill, NJ
 Jose Gaona, Las Vegas, NV
 Geneva Cobb Moore, Henderson, NV, NV
 Nazira Abbasova, Brooklyn, NY
 Adam Arenson, Bronx, NY
 Lynda Day, Merrick, NY
 Amelia H., Glens Falls, NY
 Katrina Irizarry, Brooklyn, NY

Deedra Larmond, Queens, NY
 Inez Pressman, Cedarhurst, NY
 Kosta Terrill, Sidney, NY
 Michael West, Vestal, NY
 Талыб Абасов, Brooklyn, NY
 Lidia Agustin, Columbus, OH
 Michael Graham, Bend, OR
 Maude Hines, Portland, OR
 Phyllis J. Jackson, PhD, Claremont, OR
 Austin Ward, Corvallis, OR
 Roen Donnelly, Lancaster, PA
 M. rice-maximin, swarthmore, PA
 Ganna Barkova, Inman, SC
 Gordon Poston, Kingstree, SC
 Marcelino Perez, Memphis, TN
 Alida Alonzo, Port Arthur, TX
 Barbara Coombs, Dallas, TX
 Claudia Diaz, McAllen, TX
 Ashley Farmer, Austin, TX
 Estefanie Flores, Pearland, TX
 Adam Kaluba, Burleson, TX
 Victor Lopez, Houston, TX
 Elizabet Lugo, Austin, TX
 Jorge Maravilla, Houston, TX
 Santos Menchu, Pearland, TX
 Katy Pena, Splendora, TX
 Erika Pichardo, Houston, TX
 Edwin Romero, Austin, TX
 Andrea Boyd, Alexandria, VA
 james pope, Virginia Beach, VA
 Mei Mei Sanford, West Point, VA
 Anibal Gutierrez, Seattle, WA
 Annie Hawkins, Lakewood, WA
 Dewey West, Republic, WA
 Christopher Lee, Madison, WI
 Chad Allen, US
 Katrina Banks, US
 Michael Battaglia, US
 Andrew Floyd, US
 Safoan Resat, US
 Patricio Reyes, US
 John Streamas, US
 Susanne Belovari, Austria
 Oboama Addy, Germany



Donald Griffith, Germany
 Anand Patwardhan, India
 Daryoush Navidi, Portugal
 Palmira Rios, Puerto Rico
 David Abdulah, Trinidad & Tobago
 Raviji Maharaj, Trinidad & Tobago
 isis amlak, UK
 Joshua Curphey, UK
 Augustine John, UK
 Linton Johnson, UK
 Nicole Moore, UK
 Lawrence Scott, UK
 Ruel White, UK

OVERVIEW

Friday

Sibert Theatre, McGaw Fine Arts Center

6:00 pm Reception

7:00 Opening Program: Why are we here?

Saturday

Dunham Auditorium, Crispin Hall

8:30 am Registration and coffee

9:00-9:15 Welcome

9:15-10:30 New Philadelphia and the Freedom Corridor

10:30-1:45 Break

10:45-12:00 Memory institutions: The museums of the Freedom Corridor

12:00-1:15 Lunch

12:15-1:00 **Emily Pursley**, Illinois College '23, presents her capstone project
"Telling a freedom story: The preservation and interpretation of New Philadelphia"
Crispin Hall 209-210

1:15-2:30 Education in the Freedom Corridor: How do we teach freedom?

2:30-2:45 Break

2:45-4:00 Freedom Corridor community support: Public and Private Policy

4:00-5:00 Reception

This conference is being streamed and recorded; if any audience member prefers not to be included, please tell the videographer.

Friday 7:00 pm

Introducing the Freedom Corridor: Why are we here?

Brittney Yancy Freedom Corridor Organizing Committee (chair)

WELCOMES

Barbara A. Farley President of Illinois College

Andy Ezard Mayor of Jacksonville

Carolyn Farrar Freedom Corridor Organizing Committee and outgoing president of the Springfield and Central Illinois African American History Museum

KEYNOTE ADDRESS

**Gerald McWorter/
Abdul Alkalimat** Freedom Corridor Organizing Committee and Professor Emeritus, University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign

PERFORMANCES

Solomon McWorter Leonard Oberlin Conservatory and College '26
Prelude to J.S. Bach's Suite for Cello No. 3

My'Kayla Brown Illinois College '23
"Freedom" spoken word

Jiech Bel Illinois College '26
"March up to Freedom" poem

**Solomon McWorter Leonard
and The Illinois College
Concert Choir** *"Lift Every Voice and Sing:
The Black National Anthem"*

Saturday 9-10:30

New Philadelphia and the Freedom Corridor

WELCOMES

Gerald McWorter/ Abdul Alkalimat Freedom Corridor Organizing Committee

Catharine O'Connell Provost, Illinois College

Philip E. Bradshaw New Philadelphia Association

Terrence Martin Illinois State Museum

Mike Ward National Park Service

Brian Mitchell Freedom Corridor Organizing Committee and
Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum

Jenny Barker-Devine Illinois College (chair)

New Philadelphia was an abolitionist village established in 1836 by Frank and Lucy McWorter. It was the first town in the U.S. founded, that is, platted and registered, by African Americans. In 2022 Congress and the president named it a national park. From its first days through to today, New Philadelphia has connected to the Freedom Corridor. This panel will explore its meaning and its connections. The New Philadelphia Association has been led by people from Freedom Corridor cities. The town's archaeology will be discussed and compared to the general area. Panelists representing state, regional, and national institutions will demonstrate that New Philadelphia is more than a town, it represents a freedom narrative shared by the entire nation.

1. Why is New Philadelphia an important part of American history?
2. What is the relationship of New Philadelphia with other sites in the Freedom Corridor?
3. How can scholars, state agencies, and the National Park Service promote New Philadelphia and the Freedom Corridor?

Saturday 10:45-12

Memory institutions: The museums of the Freedom Corridor

Nalo Michell Freedom Corridor Organizing Committee and
Springfield and Central Illinois African American History Museum

Art Wilson Freedom Corridor Organizing Committee and
Jacksonville African American History Museum

Earl Pursley Pittsfield County Historical Society/East School Museum

Marynel Corton Barry Historical Museum

Lynn Snyder History Museum on the Square (Quincy)

Faye Dant Freedom Corridor Organizing Committee and
Jim's Journey: The Huck Finn Freedom Center (Hannibal)

Alberta Robinson Freedom Corridor Organizing Committee (chair)

National parks, museums, libraries, archives, and county courthouses are the primary institutions hold and share the artifacts and representations of our history. The Freedom Corridor starts from the freedom narratives of six cities plus New Philadelphia: Springfield, Jacksonville, Pittsfield, Barry, Quincy, and Hannibal. Each of these has been a site of freedom activity, stories we know and more we have yet to discover. This panel will introduce more details of how the Freedom Corridor has been manifest in each town's experience. Key people and families need to be widely known. Each institution is important, but we are better together. Combining our efforts boosts the freedom narrative and helps us rethink the history of this country.

1. Do museums in the Freedom Corridor have exhibits on New Philadelphia?
2. What are the comparable stories in each museum about the freedom struggle in the local community?
3. How is the Freedom Corridor an important context for a museum?

Saturday 1:15-2:30

Education in the Freedom Corridor: How do we teach the freedom narrative?

Joe Brewer Cuba (IL) High School

Bryan Renfro John Wood
Community College

Brittney Yancy Freedom Corridor Organizing Committee
and Illinois College

Kemau Kemayó Freedom Corridor Organizing Committee
and University of Illinois at Springfield

Kate Williams-McWorter Freedom Corridor Organizing Committee (chair)

Education about history is the actualization of our memory. It is the transgenerational handoff of historical narratives and the lessons they contain. This curriculum runs through all levels of formal education, from K-12 to higher education, and even across disciplines. This panel will demonstrate the educational process in all these ways. What is possible at a high school? The community college? The liberal arts college? The university? The Freedom Corridor is education rich and has the potential to educate new generations so they can maintain the freedom narrative well into the future. We are all encouraged to be part of the education necessary to remember and rebuild the Freedom Corridor.

1. How does each program teach about the freedom narrative?
2. How can we institutionalize the freedom narrative in our educational programs?
3. How do you connect the New Philadelphia experience with your local history?

Saturday 2:45-4

Freedom Corridor community support: What is needed from public and private policy?

Tim Good National Park Service Lincoln Home Site

Larry A. McClellan Illinois Underground Railroad

Terrell Dempsey Quincy Underground Railroad Museum

Rev. Johnny L. Nichols, Jr. Mount Emory Baptist Church, Jacksonville

Doris Turner State Senator, 48th District

**Gerald McWorter/
Abdul Alkalimat** Freedom Corridor Organizing Committee (chair)

The Freedom Corridor needs support from the private and public sectors. This is about the official policy of society. One the one hand there is the structure of government: local, country, state and federal agencies, both elected and appointed. Then there are private institutions and organizations: business, media, and civic groups. The Freedom Corridor has benefited from all of this but needs much more as we are at the very beginning of our 21st century journey. How can we get stories from the Freedom Corridor into history curricula at all levels? How can we get tourism to legitimate the sites of the Freedom Corridor? How can we raise funds we need? This panel will sum up the conference and point us to the future.

1. How can public policy build support for the Freedom Corridor?
2. How can the Freedom Corridor become a tourist destination?
3. How can the African American community be activated to support the Freedom Corridor?

SPRINGFIELD

The Place

Springfield took on its name in 1832 out of a settlement that began in 1820. It grew to be a leading city in Illinois: 1850 – 4,533; 1900 – 34,159; and 2020 – 114,394. Springfield became the third state capital in 1839. The city was a leading center of activity for the Union army, training its first troops under the leadership of Ulysses S. Grant in 1861.

Frederick Douglass had three meetings at the White House with Lincoln. As the Civil War developed, he was able to convince Lincoln to bring Black men into the Union Army, and to provide equal treatment and pay for them. Douglass and other abolitionists helped Lincoln decide to issue the Emancipation Proclamation in 1863. This attempted to end slavery in the rebellious states but did not end slavery in the states within the Union. In the end, Lincoln led the fight to defeat slavery and reunite the country.

The Old State Capital was the site of many court cases involving the Underground Railroad. After the massacre called the Race Riot of 1908, the nation was so shocked that freedom loving people organized to establish the NAACP in 1909.

There are many memory institutions telling the historical narrative of freedom in Springfield: The Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum, the Lincoln Home National Park, The Illinois Natural History Museum, and the University of Illinois in Springfield. A major development was the founding of the Springfield and Central Illinois African American History Museum in 2012, led by historian Douglas King. They have permanent and changing exhibits as well as diverse educational programs.



*Springfield
and Central
Illinois African
American
History Museum*



The People

Jameson Jenkins was a freedman and abolitionist. Hempstead Thornton was a disabled man and a freedom seeker when the two met just north of Springfield.

Jameson earned his living in Springfield as a drayman, hauling goods and people. Hempstead was strong and skilled enough to use his crutch as a weapon.

With help from the Underground Railroad, Jameson had made his way from North Carolina to Springfield with his wife and daughter. In 1846 he established his free status with the county recorder of deeds. He purchased his sister-in-law's house just one block from Lincoln's home.

Jameson and Hempstead met in January 1850. Fourteen freedom seekers had crossed the Mississippi into Illinois. A \$2,400 reward was offered for their capture. Eight of them, including three women and two children, met up with bounty hunters. But Hempstead swung his crutch, knocking out three of them. All but Hempstead escaped in the night. And Jameson got them on a stagecoach heading north. The race and the chase made it into Springfield papers.

Hempstead took a different route to freedom: he went to court. The Illinois Supreme Court declared him free. His case also struck down the state's 1819 law providing for the recapture of freedom

seekers.

Jameson the abolitionist and Abraham Lincoln were not only neighbors. On April 1861 when Lincoln left to assume the presidency, Jameson Jenkins rode him to the station, where Lincoln said to the crowd in part, "To you, dear friends, I owe all that I have, all that I am."

The current presentation of Jameson Jenkins' lot showing a dray (wagon) typical of the time, at the Lincoln Home national park



JACKSONVILLE

The Place

Jacksonville was founded in 1825. It grew in the 19th century and since has maintained the same level of population: 1850 - 2,745; 1900 - 15,078; 2020 - 17,616. The major social institution is Illinois College founded in 1829. In Illinois College granted the first college degree in the state and created the first medical school (1843). Its great contribution was its moral and political support of anti-slavery abolitionism. Its first president, Rev. Edward Beecher, was a friend of abolitionist Elijah Lovejoy, with whom he helped create the Illinois Anti-Slavery Society in 1837.

African Americans first arrived here in 1824, before the town was founded. By 1860 the area they named Africa counted 156 residents. Currently the African American share of the population is 10.2%.

Jacksonville is part of the National Park Service National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom. There are nine known sites of the Underground Railroad in Jacksonville: The Former Congregational Church, Beecher Hall at Illinois College, Woodlawn Farm, Dr. Bazaleel Gillett House, Asa Talcott House, Henry Irving House, Africa in Jacksonville, General Grierson Mansion, and the Porter Clay House.

The Jacksonville African American History Museum opened in 2022. It is based in the Asa Talcott House, built in the 1830s. According to the local newspaper: "The museum features multiple exhibits showcasing local and national Black history from the Underground Railroad to today."



The Asa Talcott home built in 1833 that now houses the Jacksonville African American History Museum. Asa was an abolitionist and his home was one of 9 Underground Railroad sites in Jacksonville. / Ben Singson/ Jacksonville Journal-Courier

The People

Freedom seekers and siblings **Emily and Robert Logan** inspired supporters in Jacksonville soon after they arrived in 1836. The Clay family who owned them promised to free them after four years. But courts had established that enslaved people brought into Illinois were automatically free. And the pro-slavery “ruffian” Marcus Chinn was marrying into the family, talking about taking the Logans back to Kentucky. So one day in February 1838 when no one

else was at home, Emily and Robert left for good.

Supporters helped them hide in various houses. But Chinn found and kidnapped Robert, tying him up and dragging him into transport to Kentucky. Robert asserted his freedom in a Kentucky court, helped by people back in Jacksonville. He did the same in Illinois. The Illinois jury decided against him, but in Kentucky Robert Logan won his freedom.

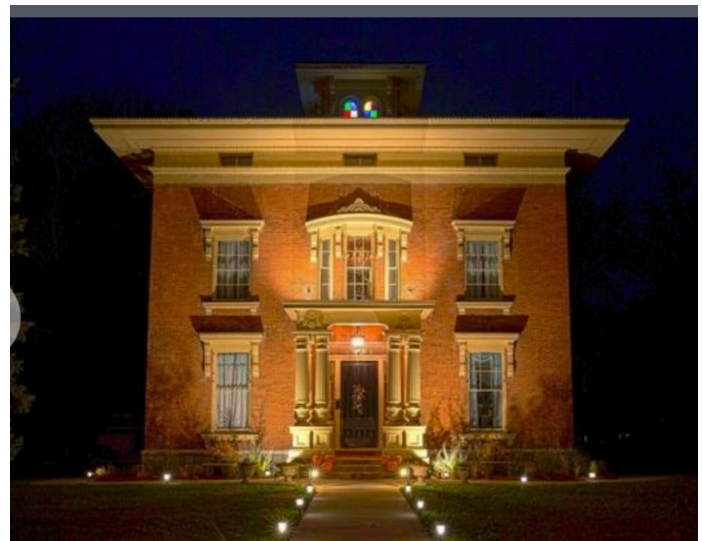
Emily wound up at the home of the lawyer who had advised her. She found work with several local families

and paid the lawyer for his advice and for room and board until she moved into her own place. She joined the Congregationalist Church.

Chinn proceeded now to kidnap Emily. The Morgan county clerk ruled that Chinn had to let her go. The church paid her bond. She went to court to prove her freedom. Robert and Emily’s stories had created a storm of debate in Jacksonville. Her case was moved to Springfield and on December 1, 1840, she won. By 1856 she was still a resident of Jacksonville, and we can guess, a heroine to many.



Woodlawn Farm UGRR site 3-miles East of Jacksonville. The original owner Michael Huffaker helped escaping slaves by mixing them with free blacks who lived and worked on the farm. The farm was established in 1824 and the brick home that stands there today was built in 1840.



Augustus Ayer’s Mansion. Wealthy Abolitionist who invited Frederick Douglas to stay in his home while speaking in Jacksonville because the Dunlap Hotel wouldn’t allow Douglas to stay in the Hotel.

PITTSFIELD

The Place

Pittsfield was settled in 1824 and became the county seat of Pike County in 1833. The population increased over the years, but modestly: 1850 - 637; 1900 - 2,293; and 2020 - 4,206. The Black population is less than 1%. The economy has been agricultural, especially known for pig farms.

As the county seat, the courthouse in Pittsfield was the center of legal activity in the county. Abraham Lincoln practiced law in Pittsfield, so he worked on 34 cases between 1839 and 1852. Lincoln was close friends of William Ross, a prominent politician, who helped him win the Republican nomination for his presidency. He also recruited three Pittsfield men to be his private secretary: John Hay John George Nicolay, and Charles Philbrick.

Pittsfield is the location of much legal dealings carried out by the residents of New Philadelphia.

The Pike County Historical Society Museum is in the former East School. The school, built between 1861 and 1866, was designed by the same architect who designed the Palmer House in Chicago and the Governor's Mansion in Springfield.

Research has yet to uncover enough documentation for the Network to Freedom of the National Park Service, but oral history links the underground railroad to the Presbyterian Church, other individual abolitionists, and several houses.



The East School Museum in Pittsfield, operated by the Pike County Historical Society

The People

The freedom narrative of Pittsfield includes the relatively modern-day **Grace Matteson** (1901-1978). She was a maker of history in that she was a teller of history. She left many records, which form the basis for an exhibit at the East School Museum operated by the Pike County Historical Society.

Grace worked as a journalist for the *Pike County Republican*. She also served as president of the Pike County Historical Society. Born Grace Fish in Baylis, a village five miles northeast of New Philadelphia, she very likely grew up with McWorters and others from the town. When she set out to write the story of New Philadelphia, she relied in part on interviews with residents and former



Grace Matteson

residents, including Thelma Wheaton and her McWorter family papers. Grace consulted funeral home and cemetery records, newspaper archives, and earlier books written about the wider area. She recruited locals and descendants for a tractor ride to the New Philadelphia

cemetery to identify who was buried there.

The resulting 1964 manuscript has been republished twice by the historical society: *“Free Frank” McWorter and the “Ghost Town” of New Philadelphia, Pike County, Illinois*. Just one excerpt demonstrates the legacy of Frank and Lucy and the decades of freedom seeking through the town:

There was no racial discrimination; the white and colored families lived side by side, worked and ate together, and attended school, church services and social functions as friendly neighbors. They visited in each other’s homes and were accepted for what they were and not on the basis of their racial ancestry and color of complexion.

NEW PHILADELPHIA

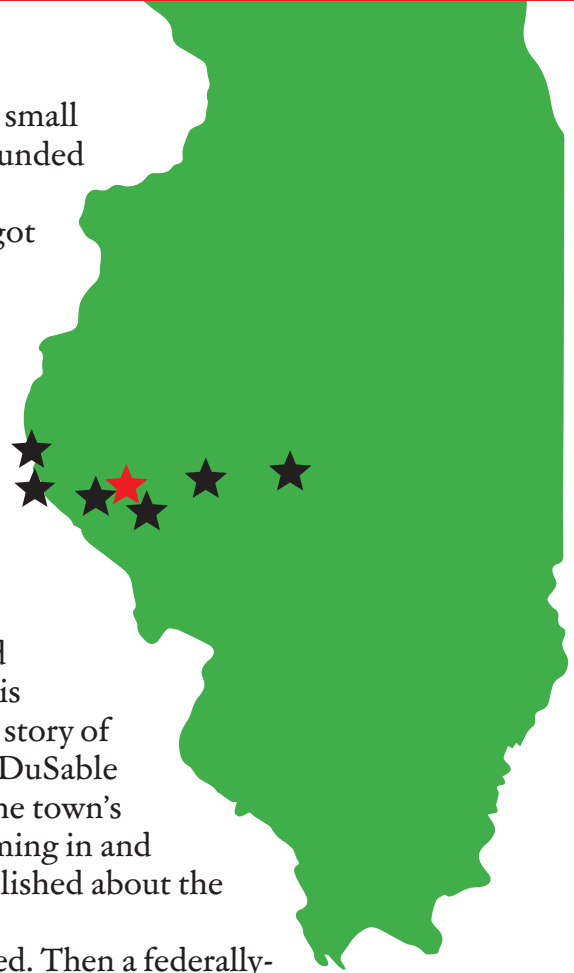
The Place

New Philadelphia was one of many early villages and small towns in Illinois, but it was also unique: the first town founded by a Black man and a center for help to freedom seekers. The founding family and the local community never forgot these remarkable facts.

New Philadelphia was laid out in 1837 and returned from town to farmland in the 1880s, although a handful of families and farms remained. At its peak it had 160 residents, and along the way two cemeteries, a school, a store, a post office, and other signs of commercial life. Apples, cattle, furniture, and the sorghum syrup favored by abolitionists were among the many items grown and produced there and sold nearby or up and down the Mississippi.

McWorters and probably other early settlers returned to visit even after they and so many people in rural Illinois migrated to the big cities for work and opportunity. The story of New Philadelphia was featured in the African American DuSable Museum in Chicago. There are published books about the town's history. Back in Pike County in the 1960s, those still farming in and near New Philadelphia made plans for a marker and published about the town as well.

By the 1990s the New Philadelphia Association formed. Then a federally-funded archaeology project got underway. Ten years and 150,000 artifacts later, the town was added to exhibits at the Smithsonian in Washington, D.C. Funds raised, mostly from local supporters, secured the land. The route to a national park was slow but sure, and today New Philadelphia is a site and a story reaching national and international audiences.



*Historical cabins,
reconstructed on site*

The People

Solomon and Sarah McWorter are two of Frank and Lucy's children, each remarkable in their own right. At age 19, Sarah, also known as Sally, was one of the older children who stayed enslaved in Kentucky when family members first came to Illinois. When she was 32, her father went back to purchase her freedom. It was 1843, and she herself had to leave five children still enslaved. Eleven years later, Frank was dead. But he had left instructions and funds to buy grandchildren. So Sarah

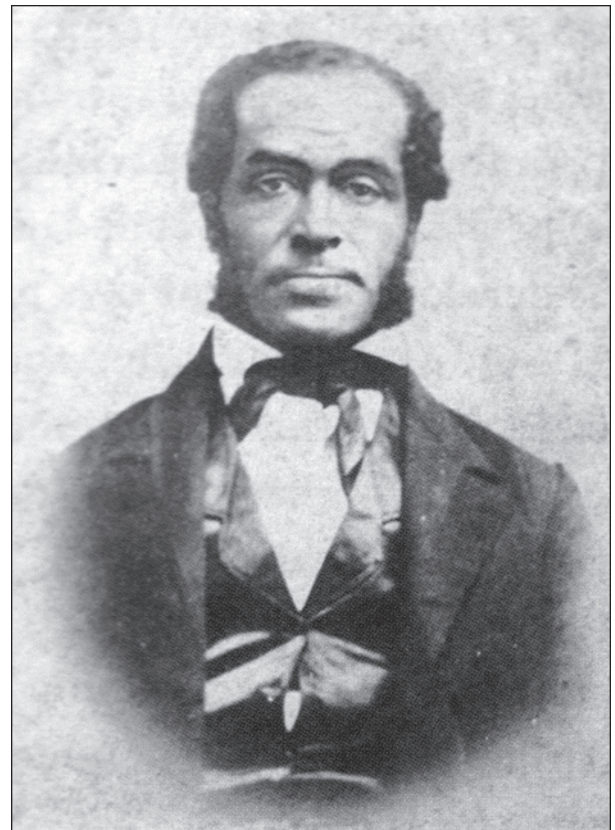
traveled back to Kentucky. In four days she was able to buy three of her children from three different men.

Solomon McWorter was the son who assumed responsibility for the farm and the community. His father returned to Kentucky to buy his freedom when Solomon was 20, and it is said that the years in slavery weighed heavily on him. He shipped cattle and apples off via the Mississippi, and he was particularly praised for his work with sorghum. Solomon began to grow this crop when it was new in the US. He

also made and sold sorghum syrup. Abolitionists prized this syrup as a substitute for sugar, because there was a national anti-slavery boycott of "blood-stained cane sugar." Solomon filed a patent on a new kind of evaporating pan to help prevent the syrup from burning. His patent was the fifth awarded to a Black man, and the first in Illinois.

Left: Sarah McWorter.

Right: Solomon McWorter.



BARRY

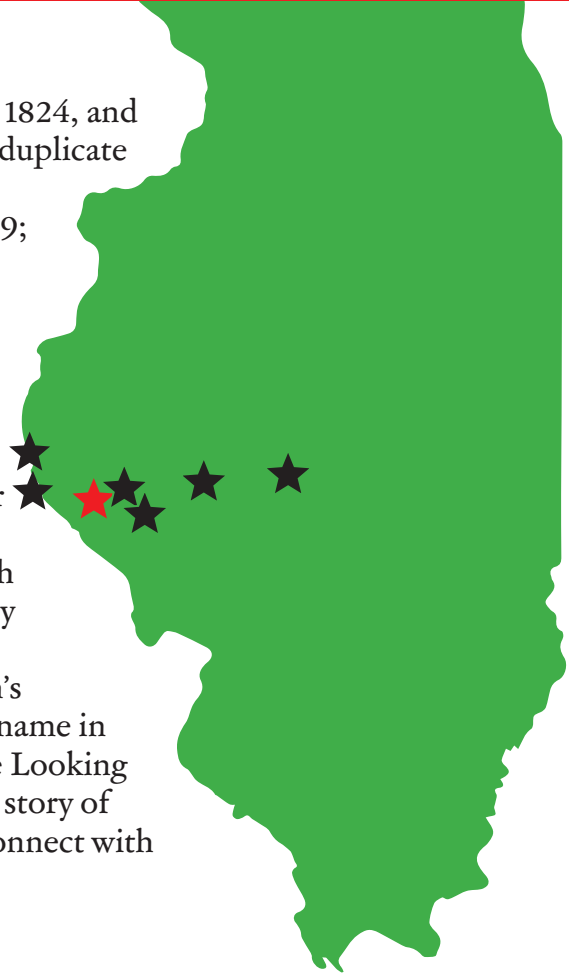
The Place

Barry is a small town in Pike County. It was settled in 1824, and formally platted in 1836. Its first name, Worcester, was a duplicate in Illinois so in 1839 it took the new name of Barry. Its population has remained small: 1880 - 1,392; 1950 - 1,529; and 2020 - 1,303.

It was historically known for its apple orchards. That persists in the annual Apple Festival. Today the largest employer in town is a cannabis grower.

Barry is the town that served the people of New Philadelphia, especially as a market for buying and selling goods. Descendants of Frank and Lucy McWorter studied at Barry High School in the 20th century. A prominent connection has been the Barry Baptist Church where Frank and Lucy McWorter, along with other family members, were active.

Frank and Lucy McWorter got William Ross, Lincoln's friend, to introduce legislation legalizing the McWorter name in 1837. Lincoln was on hand when this bill was passed. The Looking for Lincoln project has erected a sign in Barry telling the story of how Frank and Lucy McWorter and New Philadelphia connect with Abraham Lincoln.



*Barry Public Library and the
Barry Historical Museum*

The People

Janita Metcalf (1924-2014) was a descendant of an early Barry family and she played a key role in memory institutions about the entire community. Nathaniel Metcalf arrived in the US from Wales in 1728, and his descendant arrived in Barry when it was called Worcester in 1837.

Janita became the community historian for Barry. She served as the historian of the Barry Baptist Church, keeping the records books that contained information about Frank McWorter and his family. She always kept in mind that the church minutes documented the church early on sending Frank as a church representative to a conference of Free Will Baptists known for their abolitionism.

Janita was also the second curator of the Barry Historical Museum. During that time she compiled a reference book, *Barry Family Histories: Histories of Local Pioneers*. Janita served with her husband as director of the Barry Apple Festival and parade for 27 years.

Her leadership was mentioned in her obituary in



Janita Metcalf

the *Herald Whig*:

She was co-chairman of Barry's U.S. Bicentennial Committee in 1976 and the Barry Sesquicentennial Committee in 1986. She also served as secretary, then president of the Pike County Home Extension Board, and was a member of the Pike County Health Improvement Board for nine years. She was the only female chairman among the eight regional survey committees working during the 1960s to establish a junior college in western Illinois, which eventually became John Wood Community College.

QUINCY

The Place

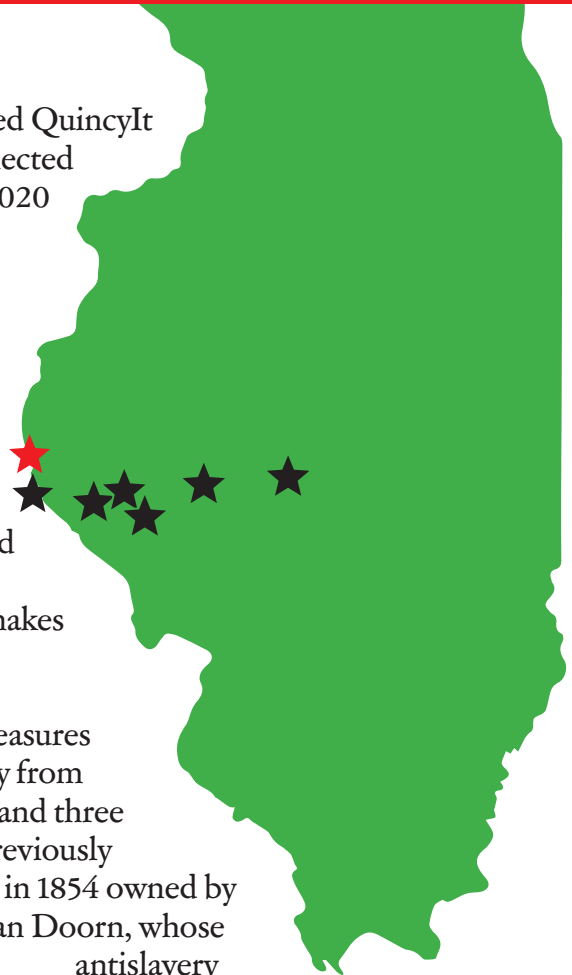
John Wood founded a community that in 1825 he named Quincy. It was incorporated as a city in 1840. It prospered early as reflected in these population figures: 1850 – 6,902; 1900 – 36,252; 2020 – 39,463. By 1870 it was the second largest city in Illinois. Today the Black population is 6.2% of the total.

It has a long history of abolitionism, notably as it was across the Mississippi River from the slave state of Missouri. The abolitionist David Nelson established the Mission Institute that was active from 1836 to 1844. It was a training program for missionary work and an active station on the Underground Railroad. Quincy also hosted the sixth debate over slavery between Abraham Lincoln and Stephen Douglas in 1858.

The Historical Society of Quincy and Adams County makes the connection between New Philadelphia and Quincy: New oppressive laws may have persuaded one New Philadelphia family, the Clarks, to take more drastic measures against slavery. By 1855 Keziah (Cassia) Clark, originally from Kentucky, moved to Quincy with her daughter Louisa and three sons, Simeon, Monroe and William Clark. They had previously purchased land in New Philadelphia, including one lot in 1854 owned by Free Frank. ... Simeon and Monroe worked for John Van Doorn, whose

antislavery work is documented. The brothers worked on the riverfront, laboring at Van Doorn's sawmill while secretly organizing a route to Canada for runaway slaves in their spare time.

History Museum on the Square, operated by the Historical Society of Quincy and Adams County



The People

Three people in Quincy came together one night to free one man, and in the process made their town known to the nation for freedom seeking. One was **Charley**, swimming across the Mississippi to freedom from Monticello, Missouri one summer night in 1842. The second was **Berryman Barnett**, a free African American who kept watch over the river for freedom seekers as part of his work on the Underground Railroad. He was one of the earliest known practical abolitionists in Quincy, in other words, he actively helped freedom

seekers despite the law. Barnett earned a living sealing walls and fences with lime paint, just like Tom Sawyer in Mark Twain’s novel. The third man, **Richard Eells**, was a doctor and known conductor on the freedom line.

Barnett spotted Charley and took him to Eells. Dr. Eells in turn rushed Charley into a buggy and headed for the Mission Institute. The Mission Institute was a strongly abolitionist college in Quincy.

With the slaveholder in hot pursuit, Eells told Charley to save himself by jumping out of the buggy into a cornfield. Unfortunately both Eells and Charley were caught. Charley

went back into slavery—at least for a while, as far as we know—and Eells was convicted of harboring a slave. He nevertheless continued his work, and we can assume Barnett did as well.

Eells and his allies fought the conviction all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court, even after Eells’ early death. In 1852 the highest court insisted on his guilt. But the case had become a national sensation that helped turn public opinion against slavery.

In 2014 lieutenant governor Sheila Simon said of the three, “Abolitionists were on the right side of history, and today we honor their foresight and heroism.”

*Quincy Underground
Railroad Museum:
Dr. Richard Eells House*



HANNIBAL

The Place

Hannibal was founded in 1819 on the Mississippi River. Its was named after a was a Carthaginian general and statesman from North Africa. Its history is connected to both the commerce of the river and slavery. The population of Hannibal has been consistent over the 20th century: 1850 – 2,020; 1900 – 12,780; and 2020 – 17,067. Its current population is 7% African American.

Mark Twain (1835 – 1910), the great American writer, memorialized his hometown by his novels about Tom Sawyer and Huckleberry Finn. And, importantly, his depiction of freedom seeking Jim, launched the first empathetic treatment of a Black person by a major American novelist. He made major contributions by advocating progressive views including an important book about the barbarity of colonialism in the Congo, *King Leopold's Soliloquy* (1905). He served as vice-president of the American Anti-Imperialist League (1901 – 1910).

The National Park Service describes an 1856 group escape from a Hannibal slave owner, using the 18th century description as a “stampede.”

Late on Sunday night, October 19, Reverend Isaac McDaniel, a free and widely traveled African American preacher, stole a horse and carriage, and then “stole” his family and friends from Hannibal slaveholder John Bush. With McDaniel at the helm, the wagon carrying an enslaved man, two enslaved women, and three young enslaved children bounded out of Missouri and into Illinois. Railing against this latest “stampede,” Missouri’s proslavery presses called not for heightened surveillance of the enslaved population, but rather for even stricter control over the state’s free African American residents. As slaveholding

authorities had long feared, McDaniel and other mobile free Black Missourians forged antislavery networks across state lines that helped facilitate group escapes.”



Jim's Journey: The Huck Finn Freedom Center

The People

Daniel Quarles is someone we know about mostly through the fiction of Mark Twain and the facts of his great-great-grandson Larry McCarty. Quarles found freedom when his owner manumitted him—not his wife or children, but him. Mark Twain wrote Quarles into nine different hugely popular novels, one of which (*Huck Finn*) was the story of two freedom seekers, one white and one Black: Jim, that is, Quarles. In 2005 Quarles even formed the basis for a more modern freedom story, *My Jim*, by Nancy Rawles.

Daniel Quarles was enslaved to Twain's favorite uncle, a farmer named John Quarles. Twain—whose father once sold a 9-year-old girl at public auction—spent several months each year at that farm listening to and learning from Daniel. But John proceeded to give

Daniel's oldest son Harve to his own son Ben, and Ben sold Harve downriver. Mark Twain took slavery and slave trading as normal and despised abolitionists.

Daniel gained his freedom at age 57, but stayed working on the farm where his blind wife and remaining children were still enslaved. His life and morality in the face of slavery drove Mark Twain to build stories around his character as Jim.

In real life, Daniel's oldest boy Harve managed to learn to read and write. He taught the first school for African Americans in his part of Texas. He made a fiddle and taught himself to play to earn money after emancipation.

In fiction, Harve's father Daniel/Jim did light out for freedom. He teamed up with Huck Finn and in the end they both got free and Huck became anti-slavery. So did Mark Twain, and Daniel/Jim is part of how that happened.



Daniel's daughter Mary Quarles, who looked after Mark Twain when she was enslaved and they were both children / courtesy of the Mark Twain Project at the University of California at Berkeley

Presenters and chairs

Dr. Jenny Barker-Devine, professor of history at Illinois College, is a historian of American agriculture and



rural life, with interests in archives and advocacy for the humanities. She is the author of many scholarly articles as well as *On Behalf of the Family Farm: Iowa Farm Women's Activism in Iowa Since 1945* (University of Iowa Press, 2013). Her current project *American Athena: Cultivating Victorian Womanhood on the Midwestern Frontier* considers how women created opportunities for education, activism, and community in the nineteenth century.

Jiech Bel is currently a sophomore at Illinois College majoring in Health Science and minoring in African American Studies. Jiech is

South Sudanese, born and raised in Omaha, NE. With a multifaceted vision for the future, Jiech aspires to make a mark in activism, poetry, business, and the medical field. At Illinois College, Jiech holds significant roles, serving as the African Student Union President, Resident Assistant, and mentor for the ACI program. She has gained



valuable experience through an internship with IC's Office of Diversity, Inclusion, and Belonging, showcasing a commitment to personal and professional development. Jiech is dedicated to leaving an indelible mark on Illinois College and beyond.

Philip Bradshaw grew up on a farm in Pike County where he still lives and farms with his son and grandson.

He is a graduate of Western Illinois University and has led or chaired several national agriculture organizations and has been appointed to more by six different U.S. Secretaries of Agriculture. Phil was president of the civic group (AMPS) that supported and worked to get Interstate 72 completed across central Illinois. Working with the Illinois department of transportation, he helped make sure the highway did not go through the historic town of New Philadelphia. When the bridge over the Mississippi at Hannibal and I-72 were completed, Philip helped found the New Philadelphia Association which has worked to tell the story of New Philadelphia and Free Frank McWorter. Philip has served as the New Philadelphia Association President ever since it was founded in 1996.



Joe Brewer is a dedicated educator with a 17-year tenure as a History & Social Science Teacher at Cuba Middle/High School in Cuba, IL. Joe is a strong advocate for the educational community, having mentored over 15 future history educators and



serving as the Union President of the Cuba Federation of Teachers, Local #3799. He has been interviewed on topics such as the creation of the Rural Advisory Council in Illinois, the challenges of being a rural teacher, and the importance of building public history projects with students and has presented at numerous conferences. Joe manages a public history podcast with his students, “The Forgottonia Project,” producing noteworthy episodes exploring the history of New Philadelphia. Mr. Brewer has a M.A. in Sociology from Western Illinois University—where he researched the social

forgetting of rural minorities in western Illinois—and a B.S. in Social Science Education from Olivet Nazarene University.

Hi, I’m My’Kayla Brown better known as Kayla Brown. I am a passionate individual who embarked on a journey of self-discovery through the realms of psychology. I am a proud graduate of Illinois College, having majored in Psychology and earning my degree in December 2023.



Beyond the academic world, my creativity knows no bounds. With a flair for poetry, I weave words into beautiful tapestries that resonate with emotions and thoughts. My artistic expression extends to the world of makeup and hair, where I transform everyday moments into works of art. Driven by a deep commitment to mental health, I am actively engaged in activities that contribute to the betterment

of well-being. Whether through my academic pursuits in psychology or my creative endeavors, I seek to make a positive impact on the mental health landscape. In addition to my love for poetry and mental health advocacy, I find joy in photography and content creation. Through the lens of my camera, I capture the beauty of the world around me, translating moments into everlasting memories. My passion for content creation allows me to share my unique perspective with the world, inspiring others along the way.

Marynel Corton grew up in Barry, IL as did her parents. Her ancestors grew up nearby with some of the family in the 1830 census.



After growing up in Barry, Marynel traveled to Iowa to earn her master’s degree and worked in Wisconsin as a clinical social worker. The Barry Baptist Church will be celebrating its 195th anniversary this year having

been established in 1829 with Frank McWorter and family being early and continuing members. Marynel is the church secretary and historian. She has been active on the New Philadelphia Association Board since 2016, being the past executive director there, and is the Curator of the Barry Historical Museum. This museum was started by Norton Walther in 1984. It has been instrumental in spreading the New Philadelphia story. Barry has had several interesting natives including Lottie Holman O'Neill, the first woman in Illinois to be elected to the Illinois State Legislature.

G. Faye Dant is the Founding Director of Jim's Journey: The Huck Finn Freedom Center, the only Black History museum in northeastern Missouri. She grew up in Douglasville, one of the oldest African American communities west of the Mississippi River and is a fifth-generation descendant



of enslaved Missourians and Civil War veterans. Faye received her bachelor's degree from Oakland University and a master's degree from the University of Michigan. She is now retired after a 25-year career in human resources. She lives with her husband of fifty years (Hannibalian Joel Dant) in Hannibal; they have three children and three grandchildren. "In my current role as Founding Director of Jim's Journey: The Huck Finn Freedom Center, I feel compelled to tell these stories of the ordinary and the extraordinary—they all get a place on the walls of Hannibal's newest museum."

Terrell Dempsey is Vice-President and Curator of the Quincy Underground Railroad Museum. He is the author of *Searching for Jim, Slavery in Sam Clemens's World*, (Columbia, Mo. University of



Missouri Press: 2003.) He is currently in the final stages of

co-authoring with Dr. Patrick Hotle, Director of the QURR Museum and Professor Emeritus of History at Culver Stockton College a book entitled, *Breaking America, The Radical Abolitionists of Quincy, Illinois and Missouri* which will be published by the University of Missouri Press in 2024 or 2025.

Andy Ezard has served as Jacksonville's Mayor since 2009. He is currently serving his fourth four-year term. Mayor Ezard also served as City Clerk of Jacksonville from 2005 to 2009. Prior to



his service with the City of Jacksonville, he worked in the Office of Governor Jim Edgar and the Illinois Department of Natural Resources. A lifelong resident of Jacksonville, the Mayor attended Franklin Elementary School, Turner Junior High School, and Jacksonville High School and earned a BA in political science from Eastern Illinois University. Along with serving

on several local and regional economic development boards, he is a member of the Jacksonville Kiwanis Club, Morgan County League of Women Voters, Jacksonville Chapter N.A.A.C.P., Morgan County Republican Club, Morgan County Republican Lincoln Club, I-Fund, the Eastern Illinois University Alumni Association and Central Christian Church. In 2012, Mayor Ezard was named a Paul Harris Fellow by the Rotary Foundation.

Barbara A. Farley joined Illinois College as its 14th president in 2013, bringing with her the deep-rooted belief that the world needs



more colleges like Illinois College. Since her first day on campus, President Farley has been making that case to the world and has defined a vision for the College to inspire achievement and empower students to make a difference.

In her journey to becoming

the first female president of Illinois College, Dr. Farley has had many professional experiences that have convinced her of the value of small, independent colleges. She has taught and provided leadership at five such institutions since 1985.

She brings wisdom to her role cultivated during her studies at Carlson School of Management at the University of Minnesota, where she earned her master's degree and Ph.D. in business administration. She is active nationally in higher education, currently serving as chair of the Board of Directors for the Council of Independent Colleges and chair of the Midwest Conference Presidents' Council.

Carolyn Farrar is the outgoing president of the Board of Directors, Springfield and Central Illinois African American



History Museum (AAHM). She has served on the AAHM Board for 5 years and 3 years as President. She worked in the field of education for 35 years as a classroom teacher, program consultant and Federal Programs Director at the Illinois State Board of Education. She was a program director and consultant to underachieving schools through work with the non-profit HOPE Foundation at Indiana University. She has written and received over a million dollars in state and federal grants for the AAHM. She is involved in the development of museum exhibits, activities and programs.

Timothy S. Good, a thirty-three-year National Park Service veteran, is currently the superintendent at Lincoln



Home National Historic Site. Good has served at over a dozen assignments across the NPS.

He has authored six published books: *The Allied Air Campaign against Hitler's U-Boats* (2022), *The American Eagle Squadrons of the Royal Air Force* (2020), *American Privateers in the War of 1812: The Vessels and Their Prizes as Recorded in Niles' Weekly Register* (2012), *Lincoln for President: An Underdog's Path to the 1860 Republican Nomination* (2009), *The Lincoln-Douglas Debates and the Making of a President* (2007) and *We Saw Lincoln Shot: One Hundred Eyewitness Accounts* (1996).

Good received a Bachelor of Arts from Valparaiso University, Master of Arts from the University of Durham, England, and earned a diploma from the United States Naval War College.

An Afrocentric Africana cultural studies scholar, **Kemau Kemayó** attended Stanford University (BA), University of California Los Angeles (MA) and St Louis University (PhD). He has taught at University



of California Santa Cruz, James Madison University and University of Illinois at Springfield. Research foci are Afrocentric theory, resistance, literature and popular culture. Also has long time teaching and activist interests in History, working with The HistoryMakers and AAHM. Moving toward retirement where he will have a voluntary history lecture series at the NAACP and continue mentoring Black male youths, promoting excellence and maturing into productive, responsible adulthood.

The viola and **Solomon McWorter Leonard** go hand in hand. His goal is to create and play timeless music that touches people worldwide. He is the 2023 1st Place Award winner of the National Association of

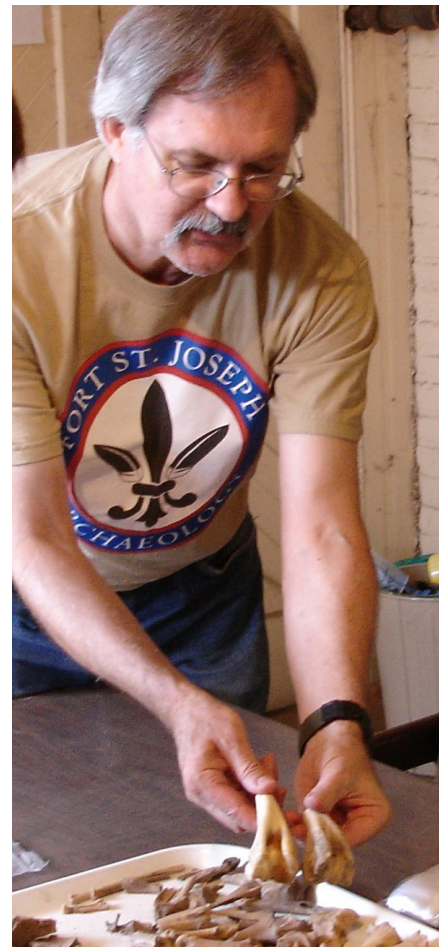


Negro Musicians (NAMN) Strings Competition. As a 21-year junior at Oberlin College

and Conservatory, he's a Viola Performance Major with a minor in African American Music. His breadth of study includes Black American Music, the djembe, and the piano in addition to European Classical Music.

Solomon is the Dorothy Jackson Hayes 1st Place Winner of the Georgia Laster Association of Musicians High School Competition, and the NAACP, National ACT-SO Gold Medal winner in Instrumental Music-Classical/Contemporary Division, both in July 2021.

Terrance J. Martin, (Ph.D., Michigan State University,



and Registered Professional Archaeologist) is Curator Emeritus of Anthropology at the Illinois State Museum in Springfield, Illinois. Specializing in zooarchaeology, he is the author or coauthor of numerous journal articles, book chapters, and technical reports concerning late Precontact, early Contact, and colonial period sites in the Midwest/Upper Great Lakes region. He was co-director of the New Philadelphia archaeological project (2004-2011) and was principal investigator for an archaeological investigation of the Jameson Jenkins Lot at the Lincoln Home National Historic Site (2013-2015). He received the Charles J. Bareis Distinguished Service Award from the Illinois Archaeological Survey in 2017 and an Award of Merit from the Society for Historical Archaeology in 2019.

After graduate work at the University of Chicago, in 1970 **Larry McClellan** helped create Governors State University south of Chicago and served with the University for 30 years. He is Emeritus Professor of Sociology and Community Studies. He was mayor of University Park (then Park Forest South), a senior consultant with the Northeastern Illinois Planning Commission, and throughout his career

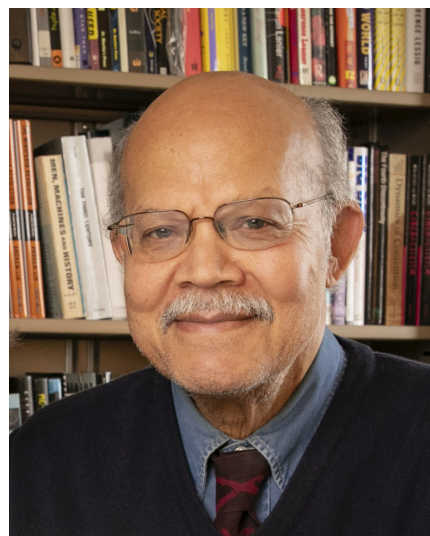


served as pastor with diverse congregations.

His consulting and research focus on freedom seekers and the Underground Railroad, and on African American and regional history south of Chicago has resulted in many publications, among them *The Underground Railroad South of Chicago* (2019), *To the River, The Remarkable Journey of Caroline Quarlls, a Freedom Seeker on the Underground Railroad* (2019, co-authored), and *Onward to Chicago: Freedom Seekers and the Underground Railroad in Northeastern Illinois* (2023). He is President of the Little Calumet River Underground Railroad Project.

Gerald McWorter/Abdul Alkalimat (PhD Chicago) is Emeritus Professor of African American Studies and Information Science at the University of Illinois and has served as board member or vice president of the New

Philadelphia Association for at least 15 years. His background reflects decades of work in the social justice movement in civil rights, electoral politics, and global struggles to end colonialism. He wrote the first textbook in the academic field of African American



Studies that is now on display at the Smithsonian Museum of African American History and Culture in Washington, DC. His recent books are *The History of Black Studies* (2021) and *The Future of Black Studies* (2022).

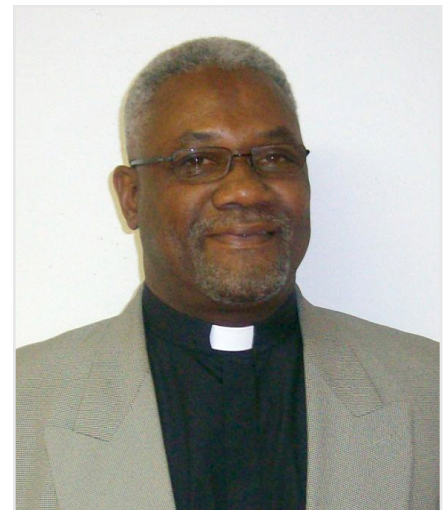
Dr. Brian K. Mitchell is the Director of Research and Interpretation for the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum. A noted scholar of “Difficult History,” Mitchell taught African American and Public History at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock for fifteen years. The author of several books, book chapters, and papers. Mitchell’s most recent book,



Nalo Mitchell is the first Executive Director of the Springfield And Central Illinois African-American History Museum, (AAHM) located in Springfield, Illinois. Mitchell is a community leader and connector with a Bachelor of Arts in Broadcasting from the Walter Cronkite School of Journalism at Arizona State University and a master’s degree in Organizational Leadership from Colorado Technical University. She is the proud wife of Pastor Darrell Mitchell for 13 years and together they have four beautiful children. Mitchell worked in education for 20 years serving as a classroom and school assistant and as a leading communications coordinator in the 12th largest school district in Illinois for more than 12 years. She is an ordained Pastor and a three-time national and international best-selling Amazon anthology author.

on by his dad to sing at church services, revivals, etc. Later he was in a gospel group called the Four Stars and traveled across Mississippi singing at churches and community events. He has continued to share his ministry and gifts to elevate the Kingdom of God and is always reaching out to absent members, visiting the sick and shut-in, and various other duties in and around the church. Rev. Nichols

Monumental: Oscar Dunn and his radical fight in Reconstruction Louisiana was the winner of several prestigious book awards including the Phillis Wheatley Book Award, The American Association of State and Local History’s (AASLH) Excellence Award, and was a finalist for the Organization of American Historians’ Best Civil War and Reconstruction Book Award.



Rev. Johnny L. Nichols, Jr., pastor of the historic Mt. Emory Baptist Church in Jacksonville, is the oldest of 11 children born to the late Rev. J. L. Nichols, Sr. and Zora Winters Nichols in Sunflower, MS. He accepted Christ at the age of 12 and was baptized at Bright Morning Star Missionary Baptist Church in Sunflower, MS. Little Johnny grew up in the church and was often called

has a favorite scripture; 2 Chronicles 7:14, “If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sins, and will heal the land,” and a favorite song, “By The Grace Of The Lord, I’ve Come A Long Way.”

Rev. Nichols is a recently retired employee of Reynolds Corporation after being employed for 35 years. He serves on the Board of the

Jacksonville NAACP. Provost and Dean **Dr. Catharine O’Connell** came to Illinois College from Mary Baldwin College in Staunton, Virginia, where she served as



Vice President for Academic Affairs and Student Life and Dean of the College.

O’Connell brings extensive experience with developing new academic programs grounded in the liberal arts, having worked with faculty to create a range of new majors at both Mary Baldwin and Defiance College, including, most recently, an interdisciplinary major in Health Sciences. She has experience with the expansion of online and graduate programs, with particular focus on mission integration and pedagogical excellence. She’s a staunch defender of students and has fostered a commitment to integrating all areas of the student experience in order to promote retention, degree

completion, and long-term personal and professional success.

O’Connell has her M.A. and Ph.D. from the University of Michigan and received her undergraduate degree from Amherst College

Earl Pursley is currently a volunteer and president of



the Pike County Historical Society and curator of the East School Museum in Pittsfield, which is one of three museums and one historic home operated by the society. My prior museum and archive experience was working as a work-study student and intern at the University of Wyoming Libraries and The American Heritage Center in Laramie, WY. I was also part of the construction crew that restored Lincoln’s Home in Springfield in 1987-1988.

Emily Pursley graduated from Illinois College in December 2023 with a bachelor’s degree



in history, a concentration in public history, and a minor in English writing and literature. Before she got to college, she served four years on the board of the New Philadelphia Association and started and led the Pittsfield High School History Club which raised money and held fun events to educate the community about New Philadelphia. Today she serves as Vice President of Pike County Historical Society is working at the Skinner House research library in Griggsville. Her capstone project on New Philadelphia has been accepted to be presented at the National Conference of Undergraduate Research.

Dr. Bryan Renfro became John Wood Community College’s seventh president in January of 2023. Prior to becoming president of the college, he was Vice President of Academic Instruction at Texas Paris



Junior College. Other higher education experience has included administrative and faculty positions at Tyler Junior College, Hawkeye Community College, Colorado Mountain College, Tarrant County College District, Easter Kentucky University, and NorthWest Arkansas Community College. Dr. Renfro earned a Ph.D. in Higher Education at Iowa State University, Master of Arts in Anthropology from the University of Arkansas, and a Bachelor of Arts in Anthropology from the University of Tennessee.

Alberta Robinson is President and Treasurer of the Jacksonville African American History Museum. She graduated from Jacksonville High School and went to Lincoln Land School of

Practical Nursing. She is a licensed nurse in the state of Illinois. Alberta worked in the cardiovascular department at Passavant Hospital for 20 years, then St. John's Hospital and Prairie Heart Institute, retiring in 2018. Her service



organizations include Rotary Club of Jacksonville (board member 2023-2024), NAACP (vice president), Jacksonville Promise board member), Prairie Council on Aging (board member), and Bethel AME Church in Jacksonville, Illinois (lay president).

Lynn Miller Snyder grew up as part of a 5th generation German immigrant farm family on the family grain farm in Fall Creek township, Adams County, Illinois. Upon graduating from Quincy College, she pursued graduate studies at the Universities of Wisconsin, Nebraska and Tennessee, receiving her

PhD in Anthropology/North American Archaeology from Tennessee in 1994. After a career in archaeology and museum research/exhibit preparation, she retired to her home neighborhood in Adams County, west-central Illinois.

She is currently on the Board of Directors of the Historical Society of Quincy and Adams County; chairing the board Exhibits Committee and acting as the Exhibits Coordinator for the Societies' Museum on the Square in historic downtown Quincy. Her research



interests include the complex relationships between the natural environment and human communities of west central Illinois, and all aspects of the development, operation and subsequent

historical consequences of the Underground Railroad Movement in West Central Illinois and Northeast Missouri.



State Senator Doris Turner, a lifelong resident of Springfield, was appointed to represent the 48th Senate District in February 2021 following a long and productive tenure on the Springfield City Council and Sangamon County Board. (Senate District 48 includes a large section of central Illinois, stretching from the east side of Springfield to Decatur then heading south to include Christian and Montgomery Counties and portions of Macoupin and northern Madison Counties.) Prior to serving in the Illinois Senate, Turner worked for the State of Illinois for 33 years, spending 22 of those years with the Illinois Department

of Public Health. As a devoted member of the community, Senator Turner has spent her life working to enhance the lives of those around her serving on a number of boards in the Springfield area. She and her husband, Cecil, have three children, ten grandchildren and five great grandchildren.

Mike Ward is currently one



of three Deputy Regional Directors serving the Midwest region of the National Park Service. He oversees all program areas of the Midwest Region, including Cultural and Natural resources, Facilities and Operations, and Administration. He also assists the seven largest parks in our region in Arkansas, Missouri, Ohio, Indiana, Michigan, and South Dakota working directly with Superintendents of those parks.

His NPS career started as a YCC hire and then historical

preservation maintenance at Lincoln Home Site in his hometown of Springfield. He has also served as superintendent of Gateway Arch National Park (St. Louis, MO), Voyageurs National Park (MN), and Ulysses S. Grant National Historic Site (MO).

Kate Williams-McWorter (PhD Michigan) is an associate professor emerita from the University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign and



the co-author with Gerald McWorter of *New Philadelphia* (2018). Written for the New Philadelphia Association, this book tells the 200 year history of the town and site. She is the author and editor of books and articles on community uses of technology, librarianship, and more generally on community in the digital age. She continues

to mentor doctoral students as well as to study the climate crisis from a community perspective.

Art Wilson was born in Jacksonville and graduated



from Jacksonville High School in 1975. He served in the U.S. Marine Corps from 1981-1992, and eventually retired from the Illinois Department of Corrections. From 1993 to 2011, he was a freelance writer for the Jacksonville Journal-Courier.

He continues today as a historical researcher/lecturer

on the Underground Railroad, civil rights, and race relations. Art was founding director (with Abbie Templin) of the Underground Railroad Committee of the Morgan County Historical Society, which opened and has since operated Woodlawn Farm. Since 1993 he has researched and promoted the Underground Railroad history of Jacksonville. He founded Underground Railroad Tours Jacksonville in 1994 and the Jacksonville African American History Museum in 2019. He was inducted into the Jacksonville Area Hall of Fame in June 2023.

Dr. Brittney Yancy is an Illinois College assistant professor of 20th-century U.S. History with a focus on social movements, urban radicalism, critical race theory, women's activism, and black women's political and intellectual history. Dr. Yancy has published with Oxford University Press and Greenwood Press and earned support from various leading funders of academic



work. Her recent work is a digital archive project, *The Work Must Be Done: Women of Color and Suffrage in Connecticut*, in partnership with the Connecticut Museum for History and Culture. This project, funded by the CT Humanities and the League of Women Voters, highlights women of color in Connecticut who advanced voting rights. Her honors include being selected as one of the 100 Women of Color in Hartford, the UConn Women of Color Award, and a host of awards from the National Council of Black Studies and the University of Connecticut.

“Seven Ways to Freedom”

Frank and Lucy McWorter moved to Pike County, Illinois from Kentucky in 1830. They were religious people with strong family values. They embraced freedom from slavery in seven ways as did others in New Philadelphia, thus the poem:

Seven Ways to Freedom

They ran, they helped others run
They bought, they fought
A town, a law, and they lived free.

—Gerald McWorter

Their son Frank Jr. became a freedom seeker, leaving Kentucky for Essex County, Canada. Frank and Lucy later

paid a high price to free him legally so he could return to join the family.

The McWorters became conductors on the Underground Railroad. Family oral history has it that “If you could get to New Philadelphia, you could get

a pair of shoes, a horse, and one of those McWorter boys would get you north.”

Over four decades, the family bought 16 members out

of slavery. First even before Frank was the pregnant Lucy, so their baby would be born free. This work involved

several dangerous trips back to Kentucky.

The grandsons of Frank and Lucy fought in the Civil War, using armed struggle to end slavery.

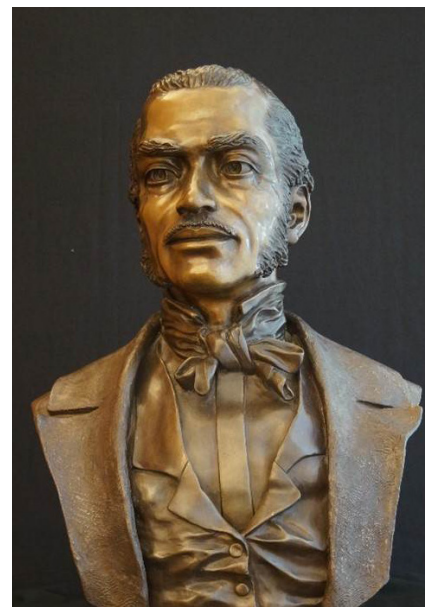
Frank was the first African American to plat and legally register a town in the U.S. in 1836. He made it a beacon by naming it Philadelphia, city of brotherly love.

Frank got a law passed by the Illinois state legislature in 1837 that legalized the name McWorter for the family and secured legal status in the court and more, making them an exception to the Illinois Black Codes.

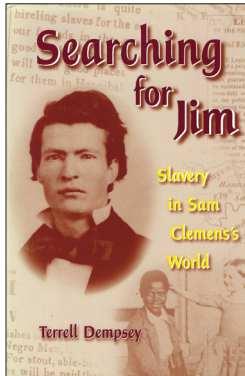
And the family lived free, on their own land, with guns.

Far left: Frank McWorter, founder of New Philadelphia.

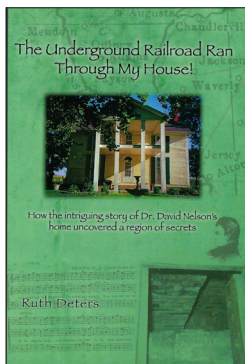
Left: Lucy McWorter, Frank’s partner in life and work.



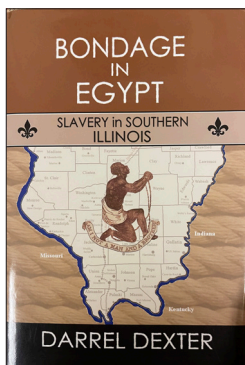
Further reading



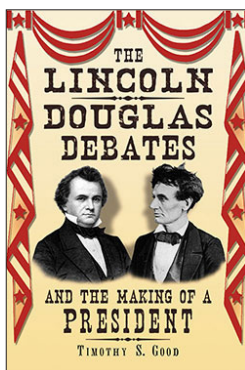
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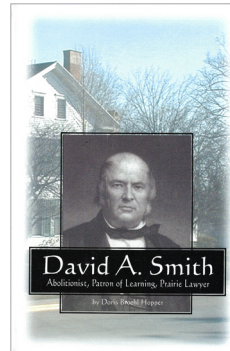
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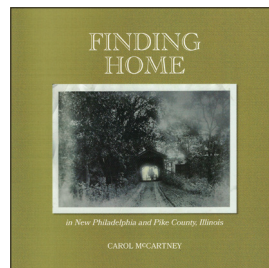
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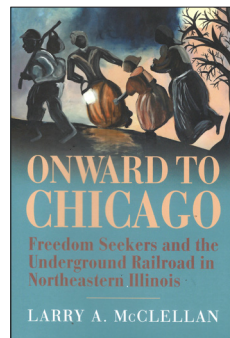
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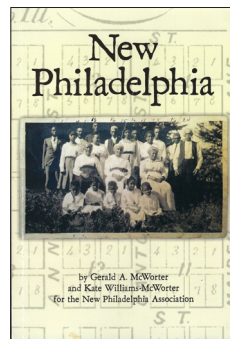
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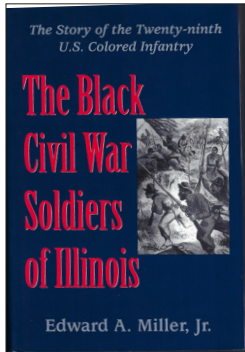
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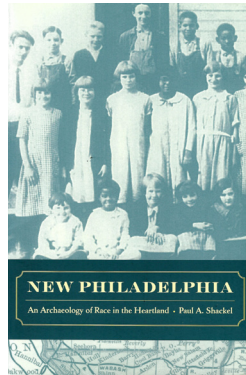
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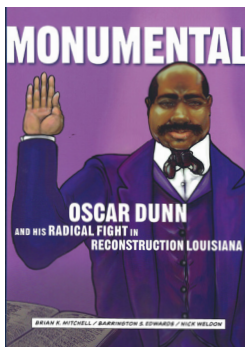
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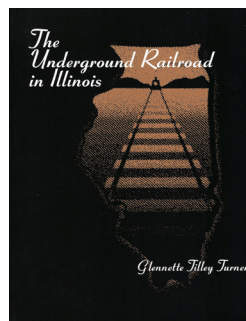
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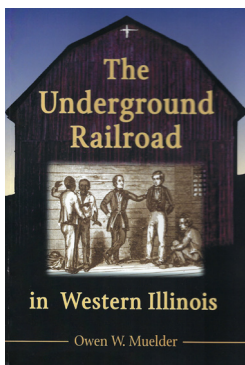
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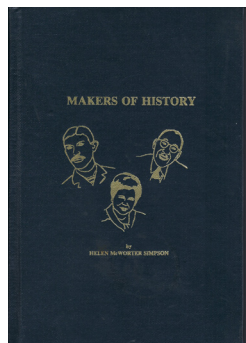
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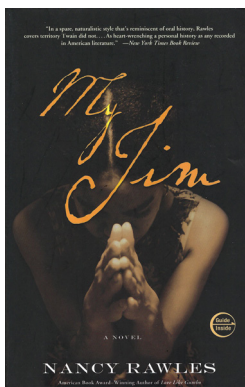
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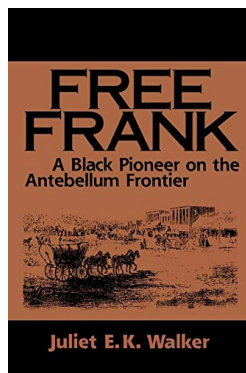
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The Freedom Corridor is a network of organizations and individuals dedicated to research, education, and celebratory activities that uplift the tradition of freedom seeking and those that advocate for the dismantling of racism and all forms of oppression. The Corridor is established to foster collaboration between historic sites, cultural institutions, and community stakeholders, with the hope of becoming a central voice in the preservation, advocacy, stewardship, and teaching of the region's African American and other diverse histories.

Organizing Committee

- Dr. Gerald McWorter/ Abdul Alkalimat** University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, and great-great-grandson of Frank and Lucy McWorter
- G. Faye Dant** Jim's Journey: The Huck Finn Freedom Center (Hannibal)
- Carolyn Farrar** Springfield and Central Illinois African American History Museum
- Dr. Kamau Kemayó** University of Illinois Springfield
- Dr. Brian Mitchell** Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum (Springfield)
- Nalo Mitchell** Springfield and Central Illinois African American History Museum
- Alberta Robinson** Jacksonville African American History Museum
- Dr. Kate Williams-McWorter** University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign
- Art Wilson** Jacksonville African American History Museum
- Dr. Brittney Yancy** Illinois College (Jacksonville)

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