

MEMORANDUM

TO: TOM FREEDMAN

FROM: JULIE MIKUTA

RE: UNDERGROUND RAILROAD

DATE: JUNE 23, 1997

*Can we
clear
this up.*

SUMMARY

The Underground Railroad (UR) spans 29 states, DC, Mexico, Canada and Caribbean. Since 1995, the National Park Service (NPS) has been working to implement a program to preserve UR sites, and develop them as educational resources for educational institutions, scholars, and vacationers. These efforts follow through on the results of a study completed in 1995 about the interest in and status of UR sites. Currently, there is a bill in both the House and Senate to give the NPS the ability to enter into public-private partnerships to preserve the UR.

NATIONAL UNDERGROUND RAILROAD PROGRAM

Based on the UR Special Resource Study (described below, under "Congressional Activity"), the NPS developed a Program of initiatives aimed at preserving and interpreting the sites of the UR. Initiatives that have been funded are:

1. UR Handbook-- a guide for the general public and for program development;
2. a document to assist in the nomination of properties to the National Register of Historic Places;
3. preparation for the nomination of properties already identified as significant to the UR program;
4. eight-day field study of UR sites in Ohio, Michigan and Canada in Sept, 1997;
5. creation of a pamphlet for the general public; and
6. organization and distribution of education packs that include the handbook, pamphlet and property guide described above.

Initiative that are unfunded are:

1. writing of lesson plans modeled on award-winning teaching program of NPS;
2. creation of a traveling exhibit by Harpers Ferry (the Public Programs Division of the National Endowment for the Humanities has indicated a willingness to assist in providing and scheduling venues);
3. development of travel itineraries and maps for car travel;
4. production of an educational film (the History Channel has agreed to produce a 15 minute introduction to the UR for NPS training and outreach purposes);
5. organization of a national conference of scholars;
6. documentation of UR properties by the Historic American Buildings Survey/ Historic Engineering Record;
7. assembling of archeological information about the UR (through a cooperative agreement with the Society for Historical Archeology);
8. preparation of additional sites for nomination as National Historic Landmarks;
9. 5-year ethnography initiative;

10. purchasing of special markers for all UR sites and structures listed in the National Register or designated National Historic Landmarks;
11. production and maintenance of a web site;
12. running of a series of short seminars (may be jointly sponsored by NPS and GWU);
13. selection and development of two sites as demonstration areas; and
14. development of relationships with educational institutions, especially black colleges.

RECENT CONGRESSIONAL ACTIVITY

Underground Railroad Special Resource Study

1990: Congress directed NPS to study how best to interpret and commemorate the UR. The study involved consultation with 34 states, two territories, hundreds of interested individuals and organizations across the country and in Canada and the Caribbean. It identified 13 sites as having the greatest potential for preservation and interpretation. Many sites are in danger of being lost or destroyed. The study team recommended 5 concepts for preserving and commemorating the UR:

1. create a new research/ visitor center
2. improve existing programs and develop new ones for visitors to the various sites
3. develop UR resources over a large geographic area, including historic landmarks and documented escape routes
4. build a single commemorative monument
5. establish a new trail that would enable visitors to travel the path of those who followed the UR

In the House

May 15, 1997: A bipartisan group of 71 legislators led by Congressman Louis Stokes introduced legislation to establish National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom. This would create a way to preserve and link UR sites nationwide for first time, through National Park Service. It would also allow Park Service to enter into public-private partnerships with local and privately held sites and interpretive centers. The bill has been referred to the House Committee on Resources and an Executive Comment has been requested from the Department of the Interior.

In the Senate

June 11, 1997: Sen Moseley-Braun introduced a bill, co-sponsored by Sen DeWine, to establish the National UR Network to Freedom Program as a part of the National Park Service. It has been referred to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

FUTURE EVENTS

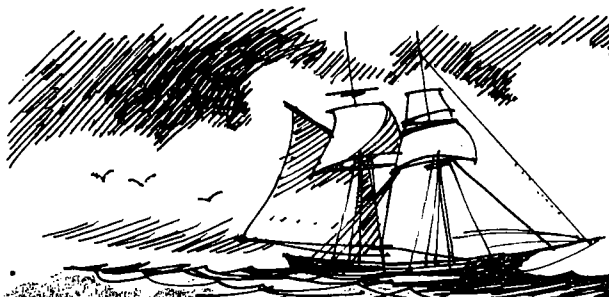
- September, 1997: eight-day field study of UR sites in Ohio, Michigan and Canada sponsored by the Office of International Affairs (NPS) [see National UR Program above];
- March, 1998: NPS will co-sponsor a symposium in Roanoke, VA on the history of African American Civil Rights and the NPS' role in education of public about minority themes and figures. NPS requested that the First Lady deliver the keynote. The UR Network will be a topic of discussion at the symposium.

Clinton Presidential Records Digital Records Marker

This is not a presidential record. This is used as an administrative marker by the William J. Clinton Presidential Library Staff.

This marker identifies the place of a publication.

Publications have not been scanned in their entirety for the purpose of digitization. To see the full publication please search online or visit the Clinton Presidential Library's Research Room.



slave running schooner



William Still



Harriet Tubman



Thomas Garrett

\$100 REWARD!
RANAWAY
RUMANN...
...
...
...

