

New Philadelphia Association, Barry, Illinois

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National park status closer to reality

New Philadelphia, IL, is closer to becoming a unit of the National Park Service, thanks to the progress of two bills, one House and one Senate.

Congressman Darin LaHood's House Resolution 820 was approved unanimously by the full House Committee on Natural Resources, Forests and Public Lands this past July. The New Philadelphia National Historic Site Act now waits to be scheduled for a vote on the House floor.

And U.S. Senate Majority Whip Richard Durbin and Senator Tammy Duckworth introduced Senate Bill 3141 to designate the original town of New Philadelphia, Illinois, as a National Historical Park.

"The story of New Philadelphia should be preserved and shared with each generation to learn about Illinois and our nation's history," said Durbin. He underscored a desire "that Frank McWorter is recognized for his work and that the town's history is protected as the cultural asset it is."

"Honoring the legacy of New Philadelphia and celebrating the history of Black Americans is critically important," Duckworth said. "Making our national parks better reflect our nation's people and history is long overdue, and it's time we properly recognize Frank McWorter."

New Philadelphia in Pike County was the first town platted and legally registered by an African American and was a stop on the Underground Railroad to freedom. National recognition has included an archaeological dig (2002-2011), National Historic Landmark status (2009), National Park Service Underground Railroad Network to Freedom inclusion (2013), exhibits at the Smithsonian Institution (2017-present) and more, thanks to sustained efforts by local history activists.*

MORE FALL NEWS: Youth focused Illinois Freedom Project visits NP ... butterfly garden, prairie plot growing well... descendant Sonny Burdick joins board. Thanks!*

Lincoln, McWorter: A new sign in Barry

This fall Barry (IL) city workers laid concrete and signbuilders erected a sign by the New Philadelphia Association and Looking for Lincoln Heritage Coalition. Each Looking for Lincoln sign tells a story from Abraham Lincoln's life. There are several around Pike County. This is the first in Barry. Lincoln was present in 1837 when Frank got the McWorter Act passed protecting his rights. And Frank was a member of Barry Baptist Church, where the sign is. Visitors can read the stories and create two rubbings from the sign.*

Two Railroads

by Carol McCartney

Along with migration to the cities and job losses, many feel that New Philadelphia did not prosper permanently because the railroad went north of the little town in Hadley Township. This was a common belief because the 1836 settlement did have all the “makings” it needed to survive: stores, blacksmiths, cobblers, post office, schools, residents and cemeteries, and it was on a major road between the two rivers—the Mississippi and the Illinois.

I have stood on the hilltop where the village of New Philadelphia was located and watched the distant train rumble past wondering what would have happened if... The tracks of the railroad are visible and busy today. They are not hidden or forgotten.

Another railroad running through New Philadelphia was invisible; its passengers did not wait at a depot for a noisy engine. The Underground Railroad was not in tunnels but on top of the ground and as secret as the conductors could master the art. The train did not chug noisily through the open countryside emitting smoky clouds in the sky. It was silent, whispering, without even a campfire’s smoke to trace.

Why New Philadelphia?

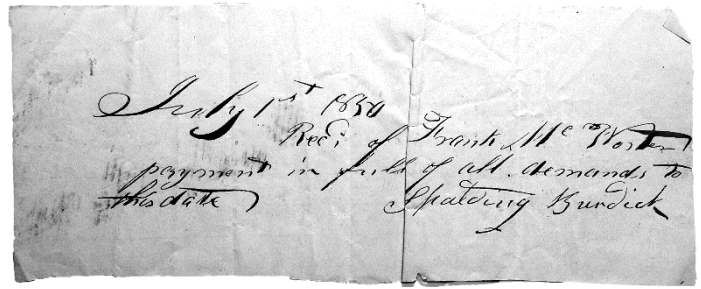
Free Frank McWorter was born enslaved. He and his family managed to free 16 family members. He first bought freedom for his pregnant wife Lucy, so that the baby would be free. He traded his saltpeter mine to free his oldest son. Frank, Lucy, Frank Jr. and their three free-born children left Kentucky for Hadley Township, Pike County, IL where Frank had bought military tract land.

The family began farming and saving to buy freedom for other family members. Frank established New Philadelphia, attracting African Americans and European Americans who lived and farmed together and helped others to freedom. Frank’s sculpted bust by Shirley McWorter Moss is in our masthead.*

What is the NPA?

NPA was founded in 1996 by local activists who wanted New Philadelphia marked by a new sign, Free Frank and his amazing story being an example for all peoples. We initiated archaeology, history, and preservation work that continues today. Visit New Philadelphia, see <http://newphiladelphiail.org> or Facebook, and read *New Philadelphia* (\$20+\$5 post).

Officers: Pres Philip Bradshaw; VP Gerald McWorter; Sec’y Carol McCartney; Treas Jerry Corton; Exec Dir Marynel Corton. Directors: Sonny Burdick, Rodger Hannel, Debbie Harshman, David Iftner, Kaye Iftner, Charlotte King, Sandra McWorter Marsh, Brenda Middendorf, Dale Phillips, Emily Pursley, Shawn Rennecker, Lonie Wilson, and Becky Winner.*



This document verifies that as of July 1, 1850, Frank McWorter had cleared all debts to shoemaker, farmer, and neighbor Spalding Burdick. See article for a discussion of shoemaking in the Underground Railroad. Image courtesy of the McWorter family.

In the *St. Louis Post Dispatch* (2/17/02) columnist Linda Jarrett wrote about experiencing the Underground Railroad in a program of the Conner Prairie Living History museum north of Indianapolis. The “Follow the North Star” program gives participants a chance to portray slaves attempting to escape to freedom.

“The program held after dark goes on regardless of weather; it starts with a brief orientation; then the group is led outside as though they were freedom-searching slaves running to Canada. ‘As we run through the woods, we don’t know which house is the safe house and which isn’t. A Quaker family gives us food. Another man forces us at gunpoint so he can sell us. We escape again, and a friendly farm woman gives us directions to a northern country where we might be safe. As we stumble along rocky paths, up hills, and through thick brush, I recall the Negro spiritual “Follow the Drinking Gourd” as we approach a cabin with a lantern in the window.”

“Follow the North Star” reproduces a small sketch of the real event. The Underground Railroad was dangerous; life and death, liberty and enslavement, mixed in with heroes and enemies.

Juliet E.K. Walker states in her book *Free Frank*, “The Free Frank family remained constantly prepared to aid the fugitives.” (p. 149) Solomon’s son John later recalled that before the war of 1860 that Solomon was connected with the so-called Underground Railway and assisted at the risk of his life and liberty in helping many slaves on their way to freedom that Canada offered. The McWorter family not only gave specific instructions on how to get to Canada but many times Free Frank’s sons accompanied the fugitives to Canada.

According to the family oral history by Ellen McWorter Yates, when Free Frank built his first cabin, he deliberately selected a site underlain with granite which he used as the walls for his cellar. One of the cellar walls opened to a room dug out to be used as a hiding place. When there was time, the fugitives were taken to Hadley Creek to prevent any trace of their flight. When they hid in the cellar room behind the stone door, they could not be detected by the dogs which slave catchers used.

...continued page 4

Connecting McWorters, other early African Americans to struggle for education

Remarkable document under study in Springfield's Old State Capital

At a time when Black children were excluded from public school and Black people still hounded and enslaved, 52 African American Illinoisans petitioned the state to allocate tax money that Black people had paid to educating their children.

*Legislation to secure the portion of School Tax
collected arising from the Property of Colored Citizens
for the education of Colored persons in the State*

Robert Crawford	C McWorter	A W Jackson
Flimmg Dugles	D W Anderson	Benj Henderson
Groves Hickman	C C Richardson	Adam Young
Nector Vandenburg	George Stewart	Henry Dorian
Thos Brodwaters	Fred Livers	J Smith
Henry Mahan	M Mitchel	Wm Broner
Samuel Lee	Wm H Johnson	Wm Butler
Isell Roberts	Wm Johnston	Wm Forevell
Samson Cowin	Nelson Mitchel	John Anderson
Samuel Titus	C M Howard	Wm Daniels
G W Winson	A Hill	Richard Smith
Wm Cate	Samuel Anderson	R A Robinson
A Barber	John Samuels	
Solomon Wilson	A Lawles	
D H Kelley	Chas Pitman	
Gibson Mead	Wm Barton	
Joseph Winson	Saml Bates	
Henry Donahoe	Edmond Fry	
J McWorter	Wesley Barton	
I McWorter	Thos Fry	

Signers include William Butler, longtime janitor in the Capitol. What connection was he to William Butler of New Philadelphia? Minister R. S. Robinson established day schools and Sunday schools at the behest of the Wood River Baptist Assn. Rev. James H. Johnson farmed in Wood River, Madison County.

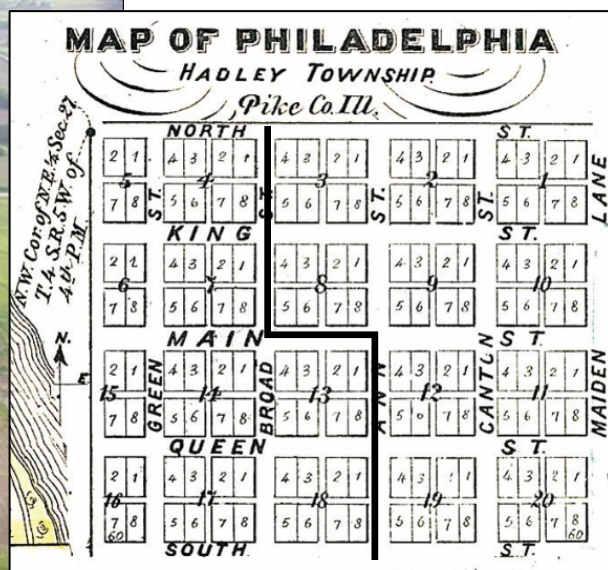
Who are the other signers? How many Illinois counties are represented? We invite readers to help with this remarkable pre-Civil-War story of mobilizing for civil rights. Write to newphiladelphiaill@gmail.com or justin.blandford@illinois.gov.

With three McWorters signing—Frank, Solomon, and Commodore—this is the first documentary evidence of New Philadelphians taking political action, as distinct from the direct action of practical abolitionism.

Here are the title and page two of a remarkable 1800s document now being studied by historians in the Illinois Department of Natural Resources/Old State Capital in Springfield, where the state's politics was carried on from 1840 to 1876. It is titled "Petition of 52 Colored Citizens of Illinois asking a change of the school law so as to permit them to receive the benefit of such tax paid by them."—in other words, for the right to educate their children. Full document at <http://newphiladelphiaill.org>.

*Petition of 52
Colored Citizens
of Illinois
asking a change
of ^{the} school law
so as to permit
them to receive
the benefit of
such tax paid
by them*

New Philadelphia land owned free and clear Thank you to all who pitched in!



On two past occasions, New Philadelphia land parcels became available. We bought. We became legal owners and stewards of the New Philadelphia townsite.

Each time, we had no funds. But Great Rivers Bank lent the money. The Archaeological Conservancy bought part of the land. And we began making payments—an all-volunteer organization depending on human generosity.

As in 1837, New Philadelphia's supporters today are generous. They, we, vote Republican, Democrat, and none-of-the-above. They, we, are rural people and city people, Black, white, as diverse as Illinois and the nation.

Last year our Land Campaign got underway, to secure the land free and clear, debt free. With help, we did it. With funds set aside for sorely needed site work.

So we continue to preserve New Philadelphia in perpetuity for history, archaeology, and human

understanding. Thank you again to all who've pitched in. In addition to more than hundred individuals and families, and in-kind help of all sorts, we acknowledge the following organizations for their financial support in this 2020-2021 campaign:

Champaign County Genealogical Society
CoBank
Federal Home Loan Bank
Illinois Electric Cooperative
Illinois Humanities
Landmarks Illinois
Lummis Funeral Home
Macoupin County Historical Society
McGraw Hill
National Park Service Network to Freedom
Network for Good
Preservation Resources, Inc.

Two Railroads by Carol McCartney, continued

Slaves often escaped with only the clothes on their backs and the thing most needed when they reached the North was shoes. It seems likely the Free Frank family provided shoes for the fugitives," Walker states. "New Philadelphia had two shoemakers, out of a total of fifteen in Pike County with a population of 23,351 in 1850. In comparison with the rest of Pike's population, there is no reason for two shoemakers in a town of only 58 people."

Free Frank's place is the only known Pike County underground railroad site. I wondered why Free Frank did not urge his family to escape through the Underground Railway network and save thousands of dollars.

Like the railroad tracks he wanted visible proof of his life's work and how far they had come. The receipts and manumission papers for each purchased McWorter cleared and freed them from worry about ever being captured, enslaved or considered property again.*



First Free Frank Freedom Day celebrates Frank, McWorter women

On September 13 two events honored Frank McWorter Freedom Day with music and words. Sandra McWorter Marsh (at podium above) spoke at New Philadelphia and later Brig. Gen. Donald L. Scott (inset photo) spoke at Barry Baptist Church. Full remarks are on our website.

Sandra: Next to Free Frank was Free Lucy, his wife and partner in family and freedom. Lucy was the first in the family to be freed, while she was pregnant, so the next child would be born free. She managed to find ways to care for her children, some free and others enslaved.... She made the journey from Kentucky to Illinois and was central to establishing a home here in Pike County. She lived to be 99, 52 years of that as a free woman.

Lucy gave birth to 17 children. Seven survived and three of those were females. One was named Sarah (1811 – 1891). Sarah was freed in 1843, because her father Frank came back to Kentucky to buy her freedom. She lived free for 48 years. She took up the task and the resources that Frank left in his will to implement his desire to free the rest of his family. Without the skill of reading and writing, as a single woman, following her father's example she made the journey by wagon back to Kentucky from Illinois to buy her three children from three different owners... in one single day.

Frank's son, Solomon, married Frances Jane Colman from Springfield. Following Lucy's example, Jane became the matriarch of her time. She became that grandmother of mythic proportions, mentoring her girls and disciplining her boys, while supporting her husband's economic work and scientific creativity.

Solomon's son, Arthur, married Ophelia Walker. The Walkers were a family like the McWorters. They came out of Missouri, and did that by also buying their freedom. In the small town of New Philadelphia, Walker women married McWorter men. Ophelia died early but we were

heartened to learn that Mary Helen Yokem (who sewed a reproduction of Lucy McWorter's dress) is researching her family, the Walkers. ... We women are at least half of every story, and without that half there is no story worth telling.

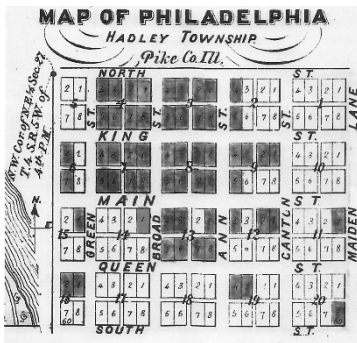
Brig. Gen Scott told of September 13, 1819:

Lucy and one son are free. Frank saves up enough money to where Frank buys his own self. ... The daddy of four brothers and sisters and Frank had died four years ago. And since he did not free Frank, Frank was passed to his children. They and Frank came to agree where Frank was paying them \$800 for his own freedom. Documented with the recorder of deeds, half-brother John and half-brother Abner and two sisters are listed as the persons who own Frank. And it's recorded within parentheses in the deed, that they believe it was the intention of their father to release Frank. If our father intended to free you but didn't, then ask: why didn't he? Why did Frank have to pay \$800 for his own freedom, if his father intended to free him? ... Slavery was a system that did so much damage. ...

When Frank goes back to get his last enslaved child Juda, he is 73 years old. And he left in his will to free his grandchildren still enslaved. He died in 1854 a member of this church and his grandchildren were freed that year. ... If America is to survive, if democracy is to survive, we have to ... learn from Frank McWorter. *



New Philadelphia Association
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New Philadelphia in west central Illinois was the first U.S. town platted and legally registered by an African American, "Free" Frank McWorter. Established in 1836, it was an abolitionist village where African Americans and European Americans lived and farmed for decades. Today it is still growing as a site for learning and appreciation open to all.

For subscription changes or to read more online:
newphiladelphial@gmail.com or
<http://newphiladelphial.org>

New Philadelphia's Student Archaeologists: Where Are They Now?

The 2002-2013 student archaeologists in New Philadelphia went on to great things! Here's one more example.

George Calfas participated in the New Philadelphia Archaeological Project from 2008-2010 as a field school undergraduate student and graduate student archaeological site supervisor. Participation in the New Philadelphia field school provided George with a both the skills to be a professional archaeologist as well as a deep understanding of the cultural conflict embedded within American slavery. Equipped with these attributes, George went on to complete his doctoral research in Edgefield, SC, where he focused on enslaved African American influences on 18th century pottery production.

Currently, George is a Division Chief with the US Army Corps of Engineers, Engineer Research and Development Center. In this position George leads a college-level research team of 180 federal employees and 40 graduate students who focus on climate change, energy optimization, water reuse, and robotics; to name a few. He conducts research focused on cultural heritage, protection of cultural properties, and reciprocal effects that occur between local populations and person from outside the cultural traditional boundaries. He is also a member of the Society of Historical Archaeology Committee to UNESCO. As a member of the UNESCO Committee, George works

to aid world-wide protection of underwater historic resource and submerged cultural materials.

Prior to joining ERDC, George had a distinguish 14-year career in the US Army where he served as an Airborne Ranger stationed at Fort Bragg, NC, Schofield Barracks, Hawai'i, and Camp Greaves, Korea. During service, he conducted clandestine long range reconnaissance operations focused on counter-drug, anti-genocide, and anti-terrorism operations.

George holds a bachelor's degree in mathematics and masters and doctoral degrees in archaeology from the University of Illinois. He has authored and co-authored peer-reviewed journal articles and book chapters that focus on the Edgefield (SC) district and is currently writing a book on industrial slavery in the antebellum South. ✱

