

New Philadelphia and our path to becoming part of the National Park Service

Paul A. Shackel

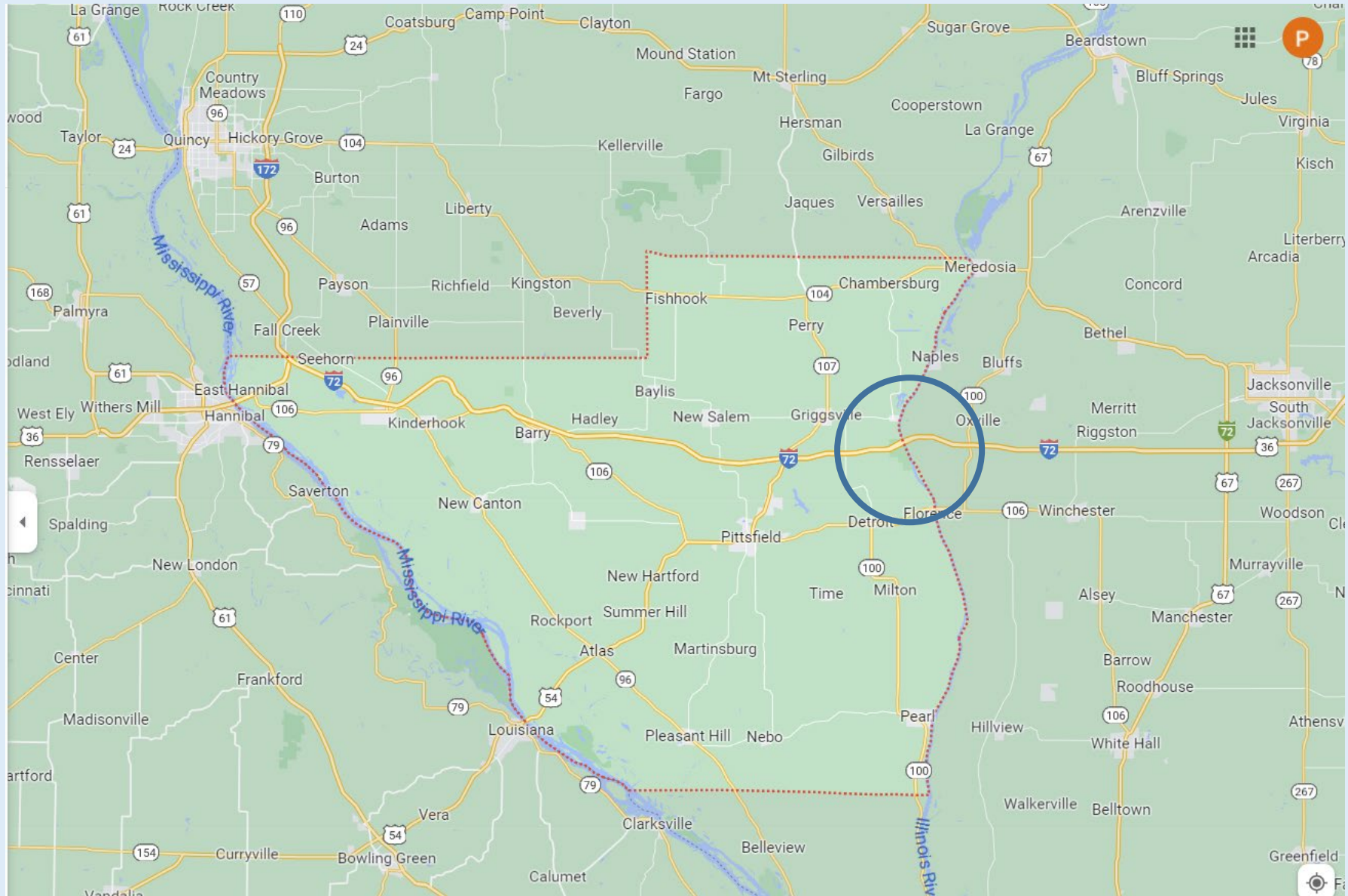
Department of Anthropology

University of Maryland

June 6, 2023



Bridge crossing Illinois River





Center for American Archaeology (1998)

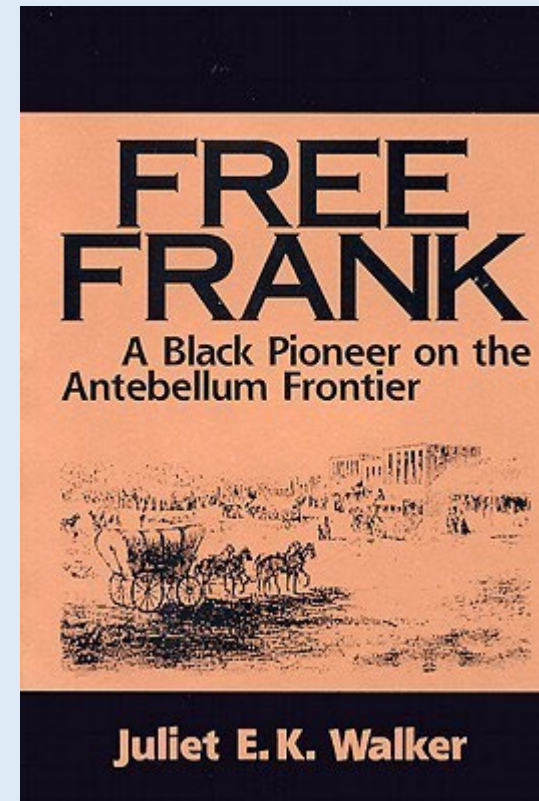
**Mormontown Site - Pittsfield, IL
(1839-1845)**

New Philadelphia (1836 – 20th c)



Memory of New Philadelphia

- Emancipation Centennial painting (1963)
- Matteson (1964) oral histories
- Helen McWorter Simpson (1981)
- Juliet Walker (1983)
- Frank McWorters grave site
 - NRHP (1988)





Vibert White



Meeting at University of Illinois, Springfield (June, 2002)





New Philadelphia Land Trust



1939 aerial photograph



Roger Woods and Phil Bradshaw





The walkover survey





The Archaeological Survey

(began in fall 2002)

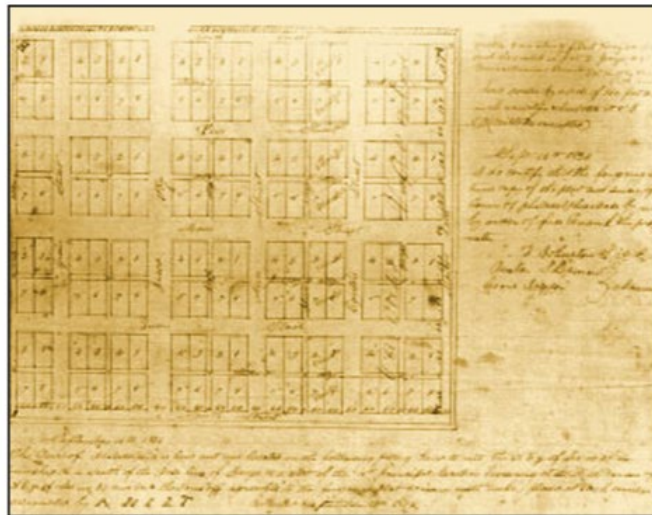




New Philadelphia Project Pedestrian Survey: Final Report and Catalog

Phase I Archaeology at the Historic Town of New Philadelphia, Illinois

Tom Gwaltney



June 2004

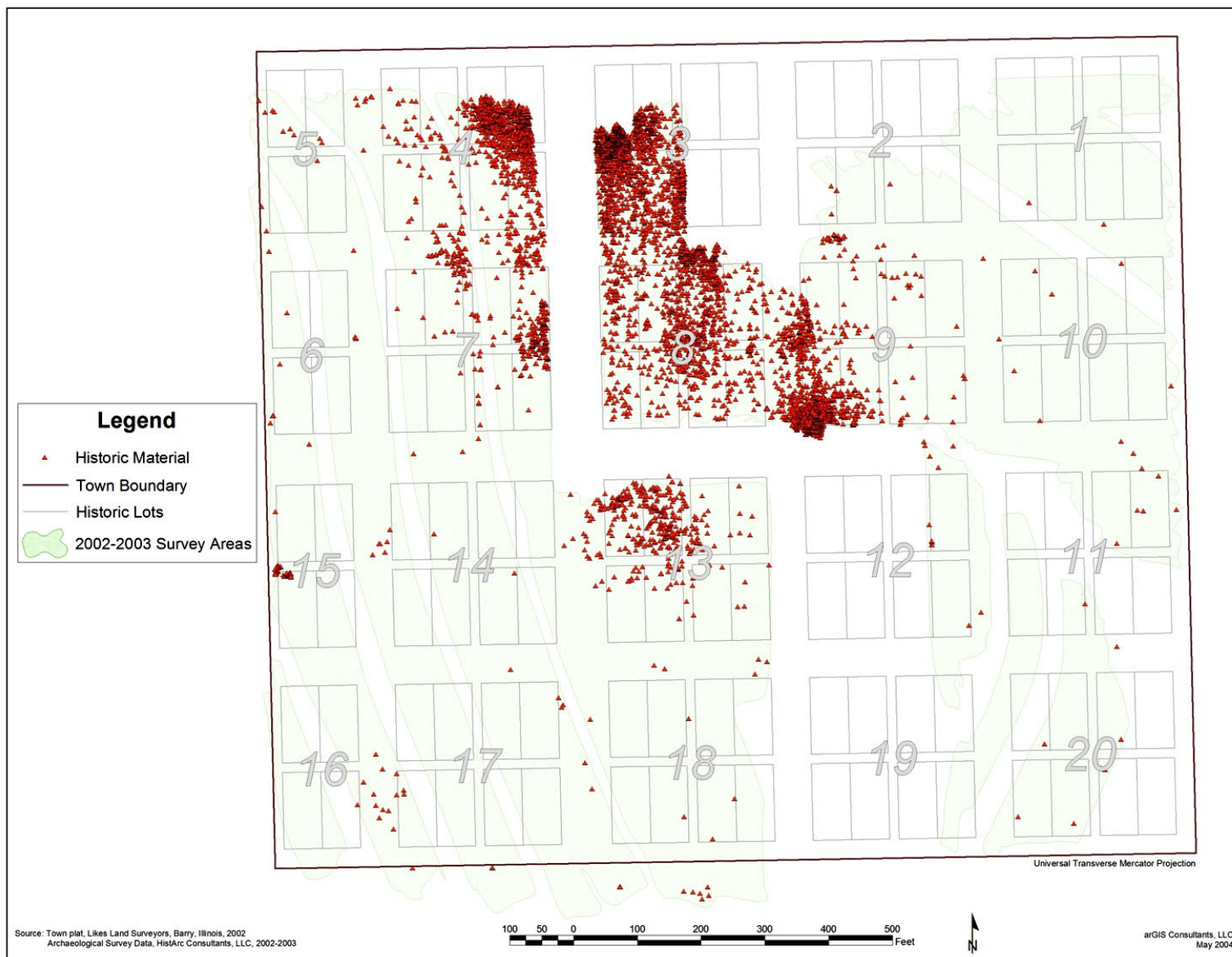


arGIS Consultants, LLC
4902 Newport Avenue
Bethesda, Maryland 20816

Oakley-Lindsay Foundation of Quincy Newspapers Inc.



New Philadelphia Historic Material Distribution



Distribution of Historic Artifacts



NSF- REU - 2004-2006, 2008-2011

- University of Maryland
- University of Illinois
- Illinois State Museum
- University of North Carolina





U.S. Army Engineer Research and Development Center



Geophysical Survey
2004-2006

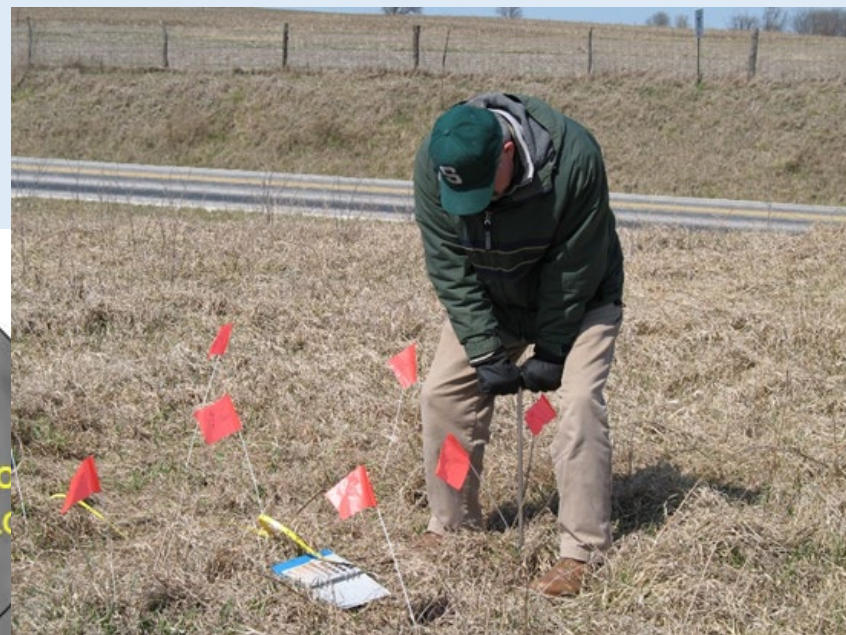
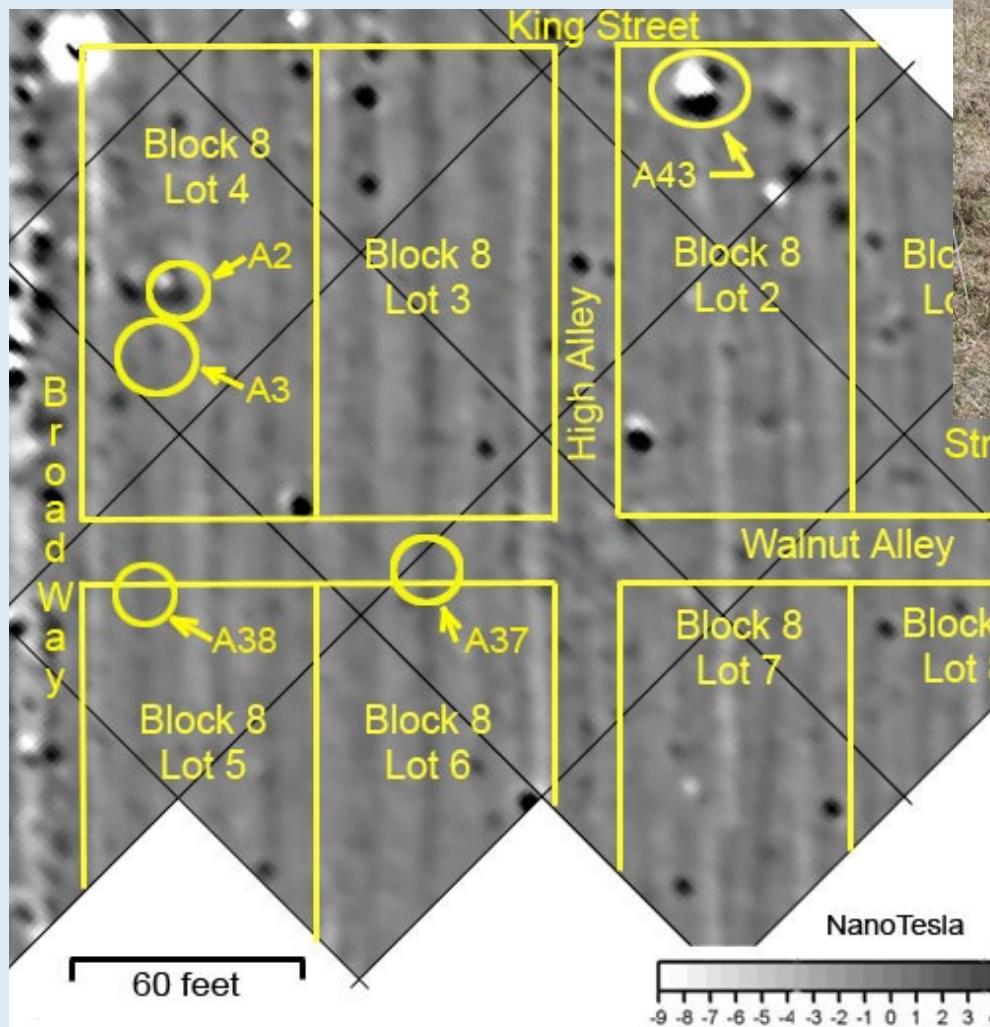
Electrical resistance



Magnetic field gradiometer



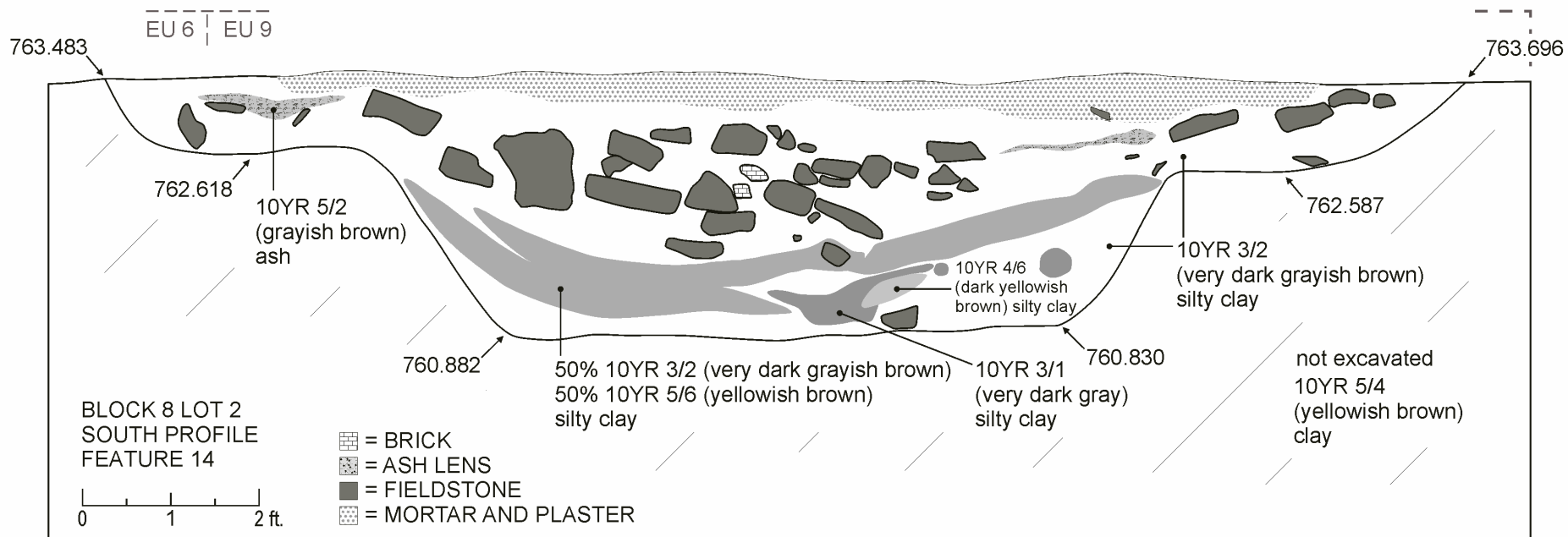
Block 8, Lot 2





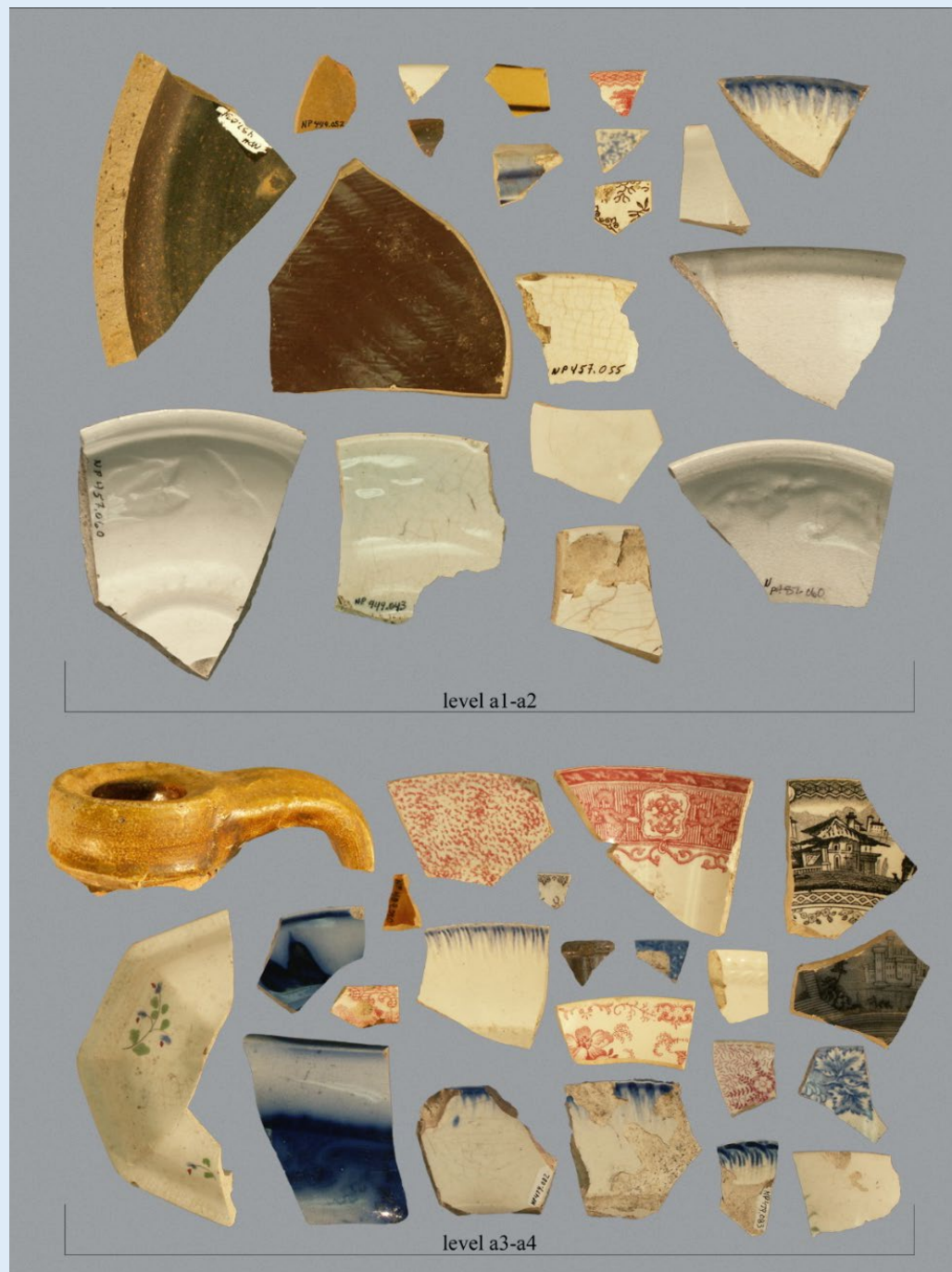
Block 8, Lot 2







Block 8, Lot 2



Twentieth-Century House Foundation



Fred and Nancy Venicomb, 1900 - 1938

Some results

- Despite plowing the site is intact (NRHP)
- Residents settled near each other on Broadway and Main Streets (not a segregated town)
- Artifacts challenge the perception of frontier
- Despite connections to markets – still self reliant for food
-



Traditional Memory Challenged

- Remembered as an all black town
 - *Census Research 25-35% African American*
- Only a few families settled the town
 - *At least several dozen different families*
- Town died after 1869
 - *Building phase around 1900*
- “where black and white Americans lived together peacefully on the antebellum Illinois frontier”
 - *Oral histories – sundown town & Klan violence*



National Register of Historic Places (2005)



THE TOWN SITE
NEW PHILADELPHIA
FOUNDED
1836
BY
FREE FRANK MCWORTER
IS LISTED IN THE
**NATIONAL REGISTER
OF HISTORIC PLACES**
BY THE UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
AUGUST 11, 2005



National Register of Historic Place (2005)

Listed in the NRHP for the *potential of archaeology providing nationally significant information* about the lifeways and economic and social relationships of African Americans and European Americans in a pioneer town on the frontier.





COLUMN ONE

A Land of Racial Harmony?

■ New Philadelphia, Ill., settled by a freed slave, was seen as a colorblind utopia. Amid doubts, town descendants want the truth unearthed.

By P.J. HUPFSTUTTER
Times Staff Writer

HADLEY TOWNSHIP, Ill. — Sandra McWorter knelt on the soil and gingerly swept through the dirt with a tiny brush to find hints of her heritage.

The clues hidden beneath the wild grasses and rolling hills could give McWorter insight into what life was like for her pioneer ancestors in the Land of Lincoln. "Free Frank" McWorter bought his freedom from slavery and came here in 1831 to build New Philadelphia — the first town in the U.S. legally settled, platted and surveyed by an African American.

Regional lore hails the town as a haven of racial harmony: a place where whites and blacks lived side by side, farmed the land, sold their goods, married one another and worshipped together — more than two decades before the Civil War. But there's no evidence — no recorded memories, no journals, no newspaper accounts — that proves or dismisses such camaraderie.

Today, New Philadelphia is a lightly-covered pasture, and its Main Street a gravel path to a farmhouse. What remains is a puzzle that has teased scholars, history buffs and New Philadelphia descendants for years: Was

Smithsonian Magazine
Archaeology Magazine
Chicago Tribune
Los Angeles Times
Boston Globe
St Louis Post-Dispatch
Philadelphia Inquirer
Atlanta Journal
Constitution



Archaeology helps place New Philadelphia in the national public memory



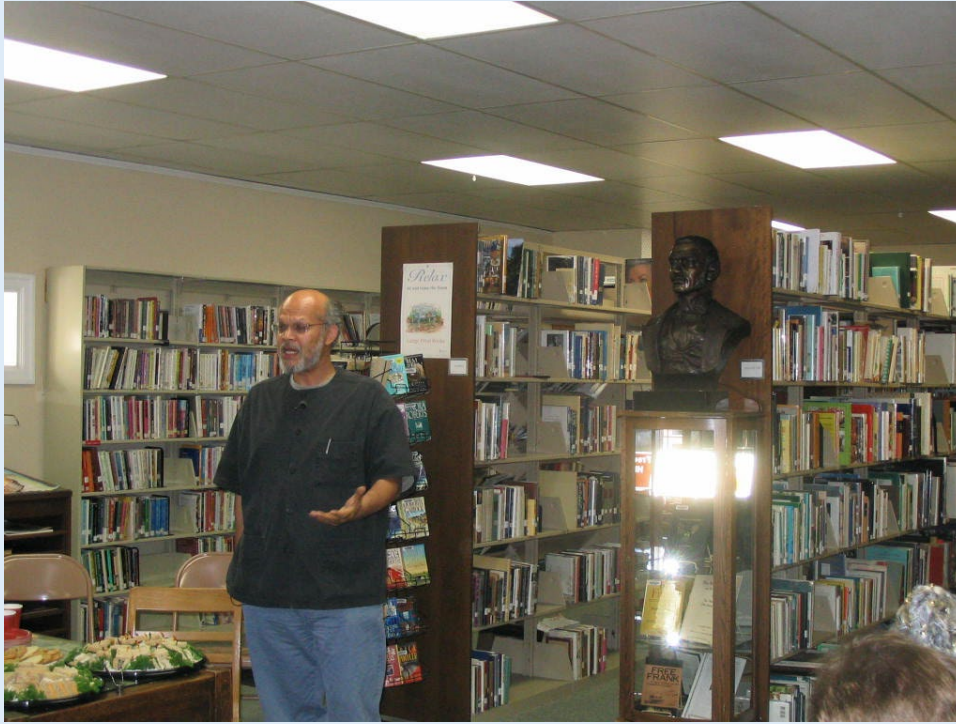
McWorter Family Reunion (2005)



Family reunion at Barry Baptist Church (2005)



Barry Apple Festival (2005)



“How many families have an opportunity at a National Science Foundation grant to add another little piece to the overall clipboard....

We have to figure out a way of not acting like we’re writing the Pat Boone version of New Philadelphia, you know – happy, white socks and white bucks kind of version - of American history”

Gerald McWorter (from the minutes of the Barry Apple Festival visit, 2 October 2004).



- The Importance of Archaeology
- The Power of Archaeology

Teaching with Historic Places (2005)

Teaching with Historic Places

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior



New Philadelphia: A Multiracial Town on the Illinois Frontier

New Philadelphia: A Multiracial Town on the Illinois Frontier



(Pat Likes, photographer)



National Historic Landmark

NPS – inspection of site



National Historic Landmark (2009)





National Historic Landmark (2009)

Designated for extraordinary national significance for high archaeological integrity and potential to yield information of major scientific importance of free, integrated rural communities and possibilities the town site possesses to affect theories, concepts, methods and ideas in historical archaeology to a major degree.



The Archaeological Conservancy (2009)

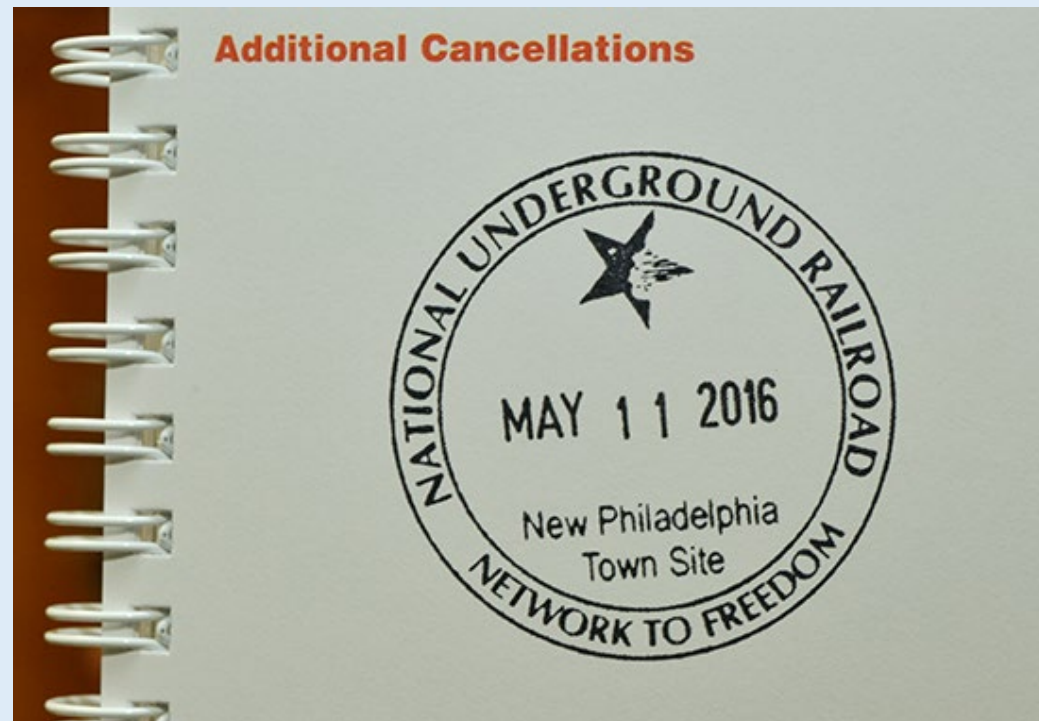


By DEBORAH GERTZ HUSAR
Sep 26, 2009



National Park Service National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom (2013)

“...the New Philadelphia town site has made a significant contribution to the understanding of the Underground railroad in American history and therefore meets the requirements for inclusion in the National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom”





Legislative History of New Philadelphia

S. 1629 **The New Philadelphia, Illinois, Study Act**

- 2009 Introduced by Sen. Burris, co-sponsor Sen. Durbin
- 2010 Passed sub and full Energy and Natural Resources Committees

HR 5455 **The New Philadelphia, Illinois, Study Act**

- 2010 Introduced by Rep. Schock





New Philadelphia Townsite Reconnaissance Survey, 2010 (reported in 2012)

- A reconnaissance survey examines the issues of national significance, suitability, feasibility, and level of National Park Service.
- Determines whether further evaluation through a congressionally authorized special resource study should be considered.





Legislative History of New Philadelphia

HR 1563 The New Philadelphia, Illinois, Study Act

- 2011 Introduced by Rep. Schock

HR 930 The New Philadelphia, Illinois, Study Act

- 2013 Introduced by Rep. Schock
- Bill passed by House, April 2014

S. 1328 The New Philadelphia, Illinois, Study Act

- 2013 Introduced by Sen. Kirk, co-sponsor Sen. Durbin
- 2013 Sen. National Parks Subcommittee hearing
- 2013 Sen. National Parks Full committee approval
- **2014 - included in National Defense Authorization Act – signed into law by President Obama**

Special Resource Study (2016)





Special Resource Study (2016)



Special Resource Study (2016)



Special Resource Study (2016)





Smithsonian Museum of American History

“Many Voices, One Nation” (June 2017)

Incorporating
Western Lands

Beyond the
Continent

Creating Community:
Chicago and Los
Angeles, 1900–1965

New Americans,
Continuing Debates,
1965–2000

Places of Negotiation

About

Search this exhibition



The Free Frank McWorter Family

Though living in the free state of Illinois, the family was never entirely safe from slave catchers who moved along the Mississippi River before the Civil War. The McWorters remained in the community of New Philadelphia for generations as farmers and artisans.



Marie Thomas, great-granddaughter of Free Frank, near New Philadelphia, Illinois, early 1900s

Courtesy of Pamela and Sheena Franklin

New Philadelphia



by Gerald A. McWorter
and Kate Williams-McWorter
for the New Philadelphia Association

Gerald McWorter & Kate Williams McWorter (2018)

Legislative History of New Philadelphia

HR 820 New Philadelphia National Historic Site Act

- 2020 Introduced by Representative Darin LaHood

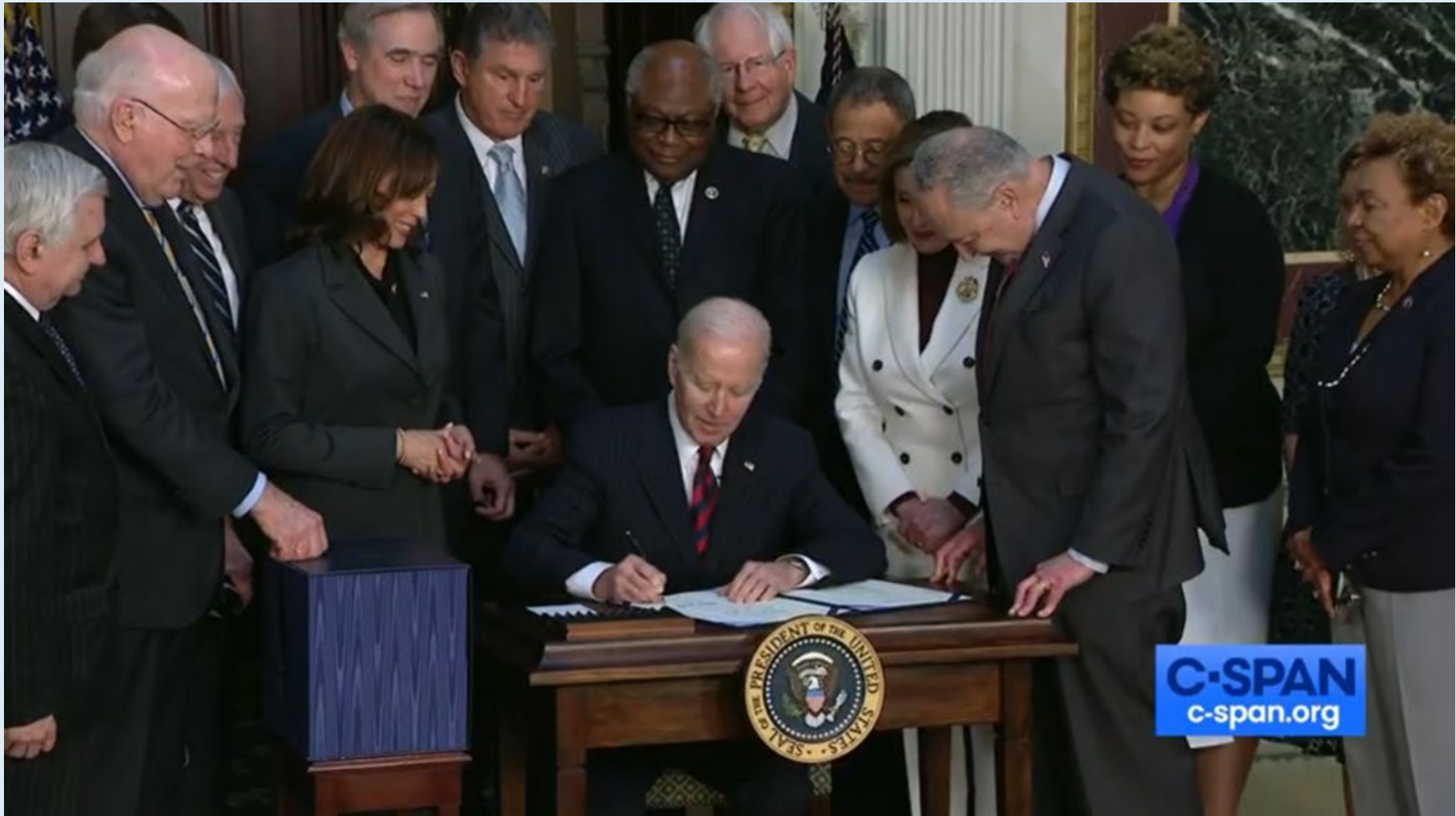
HR 8224 New Philadelphia National Historical Park Act

- 2021 Introduced by Representative Darin LaHood
- 2022 Passed House Energy and Natural Resources sub and full committees

S. 3141 New Philadelphia National Historical Park Act

- 2022 Introduced by Sen. Richard Durbin and Sen. Tammy Duckworth
- 2022 Passed Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee

2022 Included in Omnibus Appropriations Act and signed into law by President Biden





Universal Values

Values that are considered important for all people:

- *peace*
- *freedom*
- *social progress*
- *equal rights*
- *human dignity*

–Kofi Annan, 2002

seventh secretary-general of the United Nations from 1997 to 2006.

