



Celebrating Free Frank's freedom

By **BETH ZUMWALT**

Pike Press

Approximately 30 people gathered Friday, Sept. 13 at the First Baptist Church in Barry, to recognize the date. Sept. 13, Frank McWorter purchased his freedom. Marynel Corton, a member of the New Philadelphia Association, organized the event.

The former slave had also purchased the freedom of his wife, Lucy, earlier, when she was pregnant in order to assure his child would be born free.

He then came from Kentucky, into Illinois on to Pike County to establish the first town for freed slaves in Hadley Township, near Barry.

The morning activities included a look at the McWorter family, and the sacrifices the family made.

Sandra McWorter, Franks, great, great, granddaughter attended the celebration.

Organizations attending the event included members of the First Baptist Church of Barry, where the McWorters attended, representatives of the Barry Museum, the Pike County Historical Society, Barry City Council, the Pinkerton Prairie



Beth Zumwalt/Pike Press

Barry Mayor Sean Rennecker delivers a proclamation declaring Sept. 13 Free Frank McWorter Freedom Day in Barry going forward. With Rennecker is McWorter's, great-great-granddaughter Sandra McWorter with Marynel Corton providing support for McWorter. McWorter was having some voice issues and was unable to speak but did thank everyone for coming.

Chapter of the Daughter of the 1812 War and members of the New Philadelphia Association.

Leslie Reynolds gave a brief presentation on how Frank was able to raise the funds needed to buy his family member's freedom. It is estimated he spent more than \$5,000 in buying his and his family members freedom and endured other hardships, according to Reynolds.

"They stopped in Greene County, because they were broke and tired and it was a bad

winter," Reynolds said.

Clara Nation, a sixth grader at Western Middle School also gave her report on Free Frank and New Philadelphia, proving that interest in historical landmark is traveling through generations.

Sean Rennecker, mayor of Barry gave a speech proclaiming Sept. 4 as Free Frank Freedom Day in Barry.

"We are going to try to have an event every year," Rennecker said.

Sixth grader addresses Freedom Day crowd

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Clara Nation addressed the group gathered in the sanctuary of the Barry First Baptist with confidence.

"Our fourth grade class went to New Philadelphia," the sixth grader said. "I have just been really interested in it ever since."

Nation said she checked out a lot of books on the subject and was honored when she was asked to give a presentation Sept. 13. She said she wrote her presentation on her own.

"Speaking to a group of older adults is not as scary as talking to kids my own age," Nation said, adding that she competes in the talent show at the Barry Apple Festival and also has worked with the Quincy Community Theater.

She is the daughter of Brian and Christine Nation of Barry.



Beth Zumwalt/Pike Press

Clara Nation delivered a report on Free Frank McWorter at Friday Sept. 13, Freedom Day celebration. Nation said her class took a field trip to the New Philadelphia site when she was in fourth grade and she has been interested in the history of the site ever since.