



Network to Freedom



Freedom seekers passed through the Mayhew Cabin in Nebraska to cross the Missouri River into the free state of Iowa and then to freedom in Canada.

What is the Underground Railroad?

The Underground Railroad refers to the efforts of enslaved African Americans to resist enslavement and gain their freedom by escape and flight through the end of the Civil War. Wherever slavery existed, there were efforts to escape. Early escapes led slaves to form maroon communities in rugged terrain away from settlements, and later to move across state and international borders.

While most individuals began and completed their journeys unassisted, active efforts to aid those escaping increased with each subsequent decade of legal slavery in the United States. Some may have decided spontaneously to assist a freedom seeker, but particularly following the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850, the Underground Railroad was deliberate and organized. Freedom seekers went in many directions—Canada, Mexico, Indian Territory, the West, Caribbean islands, and Europe.

What is the Network to Freedom?

Mandated by Public Law 105-203 in 1998, the National Park Service commemorates and preserves this history through the National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom Program. The program extols the historical significance of the Underground Railroad in the eradication of slavery, in the evolution of the national civil rights movement, and through its relevance in fostering the spirit of racial harmony and national reconciliation.

Recognizing that all human beings embrace the right to self-determination and freedom from oppression, the historical Underground Railroad sought to address the injustices of slavery and to make freedom for all a reality in the United States.

The National Park Service, through shared leadership with local, state, and federal entities, as well as interested individuals and organizations, will:

Promote programs and partnerships to commemorate; preserve sites and other resources associated with; and educate the public about the historical significance of the Underground Railroad.

How can I get involved?

Individuals, organizations, state and local governments, and federal agencies are invited to nominate sites, programs and facilities with a verifiable association with the Underground Railroad to the Network to Freedom. Please consult the Network to Freedom website for further information.

www.nps.gov/ugrr



**NATIONAL
UNDERGROUND RAILROAD
NETWORK TO FREEDOM**