

FUNDING OPPORTUNITY

National Park Service National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom

Statement of Interest due by **February 26, 2018**, 11:59pm CST

Special History Project:

"Slave Stampedes": The Underground Railroad on the Missouri Borderland

PROJECT OVERVIEW:

The proposed special history will examine the Underground Railroad in Missouri and Illinois through the lens of "slave stampedes" from 1845-1861. The term "slave stampede" was used to either describe a large number of enslaved people escaping in a group or several escapes from the same location in a particular space of time. These larger types of escapes, the majority of which took place in border states like Missouri (which had the longest border with free states and territories), captured the public imagination, serving as a powerful counter-narrative to the notion that enslaved people did not desire freedom and were content in their subservient status. These larger escapes that occurred before the Civil War have not received considerable attention in secondary literature; when they do, they are usually looked at as discrete events and not part of a larger phenomenon. The project will combine geography and history surrounding and including two National Park units, Jefferson National Expansion Memorial (JEFF) and Lincoln Home National Historic Site (LIHO), to explore the larger phenomenon of "slave stampedes" in this region. The project will examine these escapes in detail to improve our understanding of the phenomenon. Project activities will include researching primary sources (mainly newspapers and legal records), ascertaining not how they were constructed in the public sphere, but where they occurred, when they occurred, who was involved, and results (escapes that resulted in freedom vs. those that resulted in capture), etc. A key product will be an interactive, geographically-based digital platform to facilitate public understanding of the phenomenon. While the project is regionally focused, it will provide a context for looking more broadly at such incidents, helping to better understand slavery and freedom.

DESCRIPTION:

On January 17, 1850, Jameson Jenkins, a free African American drayman who lived near Abraham Lincoln in Springfield, Illinois on a lot that is now part of LIHO, was involved in an Underground Railroad incident that was reported in the press as a "slave stampede." Jenkins was believed to have provided assistance to 11 freedoms seekers who had run away from the St. Louis area. This escape was not an isolated or unique event but was part of a larger phenomenon. "Slave Stampedes": The Underground Railroad on the Missouri Borderland will develop **baseline documentation** to help to put this event in a larger context by researching escapes labelled as such in newspapers from 1845-1861. The documentation of slave stampedes can be used in multiple ways to support the preservation, planning, management and interpretation of existing and new cultural resources related to African American resistance to enslavement.

This project also connects to JEFF, as it has already been exploring African American Life in St. Louis, 1804-1865. The Old Court House, best known for its association with the Dred Scott Case (1857), is listed in the National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom Program (NTF) for the hundreds of fugitive slave cases that were tried there. Researching "slave stampedes" will help to better understand some of these cases, as those that were captured in connection with these escapes were often returned to St. Louis for legal proceedings.

Until the Civil War, "slave stampedes" were largely a border state phenomenon that illustrated the precarious nature of enslaving people in proximity to free states. These incidents increasingly captured

public attention, especially after the passage of the 1850 Fugitive Slave Act. To better understand these escapes, the project will focus on a geographical area of Missouri that is believed to have the most linkages with escapes that occurred to Illinois. This area extends as far south as Saint-Genevieve County, and as far west as Cole County. In order to identify these escapes, the project will first begin by documenting these escapes in regional Missouri and Illinois newspapers. It will also search newspapers that had a more national focus like the *New York Times*, and abolitionist newspapers like the *Liberator*, the *North Star* (later *Frederick Douglass' Paper*), the *Western Citizen*, and the *Voice of the Fugitive*. In the course of collecting data on "slave stampedes" from newspapers, information will also be collected on reports of large slave escapes during the time period in question. Collecting information on large escapes that were not labelled as "slave stampede," might illuminate whether there were special circumstances or reasons for an escape to receive such categorization. Collecting this information would not necessarily mean traveling to each of the counties as many newspaper collections are held at repositories such as the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library (Springfield, IL), the Missouri History Museum (St. Louis, MO), and the Newberry Library (Chicago, IL).

After identifying the incidents, additional sources will also be located that can lend further insight into these escapes and attempt to track these escapes from start to finish. This will include locating legal records related to the incidents, in both the Illinois and Missouri State Archives. The Missouri State Archives- St. Louis Branch has already agreed to provide research assistance, locating and scanning related documents at no charge.

Researching these incidents will help better understand the Underground Railroad in both Missouri and Illinois. Currently, there are only four sites listed in the NTF from Missouri, two of which are located in St. Louis, the Mary Meachum Crossing Site and St. Louis Old Courthouse. However, based on the state's history there is a rich history that has yet to be represented. This project will help identify additional sites/stories that have the potential to be recognized by not only by the NTF, but can provide new information to update existing National Register listings such as LIHO and JEFF, or to identify new properties associated with slave stampedes that are eligible for National Register listing. It can also serve as a model for other border state areas that are interested in researching and documenting, transferring not only knowledge about the history, but identifying cultural resources in other parts of the country that are related to this history.

Transfer of knowledge will not only be accomplished with the creation of baseline knowledge through a written report, but also through the design and development of an interactive GIS based map and database, which will be accessible to the public. These components will allow people to examine this phenomenon in both time and space in a way that is visually exciting and interactive, allowing for different learning styles and ages to find way to access the historical data produced by the project in meaningful ways.

PROJECT OUTCOMES:

- Provide baseline documentation through a written research report that includes a context for the phenomenon of slave stampedes and the research findings in the Jefferson National Expansion Memorial (JEFF) and Lincoln Home National Historic Site (LIHO) areas.
- Create a searchable database that catalogues "slave stampedes" to ensure that research is collected systematically.
- Transfer the knowledge to the public by the creation of a digital platform that features interactive GIS-based map and database, and integrates primary documents that allows for looking at the identified "slave stampedes" in both place and time. This map will have an education application, as educators will be able to use the platform to engage youth in critical analysis.
- Identify sites and facilities related to this history that are eligible for the National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom Program.

STUDENT ENGAGEMENT: It is hoped that this project will be able to engage youth in primary research by hiring at least two students through the Greening Youth Foundation's Historically Black Colleges &

Universities Internship Program, the Cultural Resource Diversity Internship Program, or through other means.

AVAILABLE FUNDING: Project funds available are \$129,800, which includes the CESU overhead rate of 17.5 percent. The project will be funded by the National Park Service. Only non-federal partners within the national CESU network are eligible to apply.

PROPOSED TIMELINE: August 2018 – December 2020

WHO MAY SUBMIT A SOI? Member organizations of any [Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Unit](#) nationwide. The research will be directed and overseen by a Principal Investigator (PI). The PI should be a historian with a Ph.D., or with demonstrable and comparable research. The researcher must demonstrate significant involvement in the research, writing, and the timely completion of research.

TO SUBMIT:

Please submit a short (e.g., 3-5 pages; additional attachments okay) Statement of Interest including the following elements:

- Project Investigator, and any additional partner, qualifications and expertise;
- Relevant experience and research history, including description of previously completed projects relevant to the topic, geographic area, and/or type of work;
- Description of capacity available for completion of work within proposed timeline (e.g., student availability, university partner with geospatial mapping capability, etc.);
- Description of the interactive digital database platform/geospatial mapping database platform, including how it will be developed, implemented and maintained for public access;
- A budget description and project timeline sufficient to evaluate consistency with proposed activities and products.

Submit the proposal via email no later than 11:59pm on Monday, February 26, 2018 to:

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AND

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Please contact Deanda Johnson for proposal or project-related questions, or Nicole Athearn for questions on proposal procedures or contents.