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HARRIET TUBMAN SPECIAL RESOURCE STUDY ACT

114 STAT. 2404 PUBLIC LAW 106-516—NOV. 13, 2000

AN ACT

To direct the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a special resource study concerning the preservation and public use of sites associated with Harriet Tubman located in Auburn, New York, and for other purposes.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “Harriet Tubman Special Resource Study Act”.

SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

Congress finds that—

- (1) Harriet Tubman was born into slavery on a plantation in Dorchester County, Maryland, in 1821;
- (2) in 1849, Harriet Tubman escaped the plantation on foot, using the North Star for direction and following a route through Maryland, Delaware, and Pennsylvania to Philadelphia, where she gained her freedom;
- (3) Harriet Tubman is an important figure in the history of the United States, and is most famous for her role as a “conductor” on the Underground Railroad, in which, as a fugitive slave, she helped hundreds of enslaved individuals to escape to freedom before and during the Civil War;
- (4) during the Civil War, Harriet Tubman served the Union Army as a guide, spy, and nurse;
- (5) after the Civil War, Harriet Tubman was an advocate for the education of black children;
- (6) Harriet Tubman settled in Auburn, New York, in 1857, and lived there until 1913;
- (7) while in Auburn, Harriet Tubman dedicated her life to caring selflessly and tirelessly for people who could not care for themselves, was an influential member of the community and an active member of the Thompson Memorial A.M.E. Zion Church, and established a home for the elderly;

(8) Harriet Tubman was a friend of William Henry Seward, who served as the Governor of and a Senator from the State of New York and as Secretary of State under President Abraham Lincoln;

(9) 4 sites in Auburn that directly relate to Harriet Tubman and are listed on the National Register of Historic Places are—

- (A) Harriet Tubman’s home;
- (B) the Harriet Tubman Home for the Aged;
- (C) the Thompson Memorial A.M.E. Zion Church; and
- (D) Harriet Tubman Home for the Aged and William Henry Seward’s home in Auburn are national historic landmarks.

SEC. 3. STUDY CONCERNING SITES IN AUBURN, NEW YORK, ASSOCIATED WITH HARRIET TUBMAN.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of the Interior shall conduct a special resource study of the national significance, feasibility of long-term preservation, and public use of the following sites associated with Harriet Tubman:

- (1) Harriet Tubman’s birthplace, located on Greenbriar Road, off of Route 50, in Dorchester County, Maryland.
- (2) Bazel Church, located 1 mile South of Greenbriar Road in Cambridge, Maryland.
- (3) Harriet Tubman’s home, located at 182 South Street, Auburn, New York.
- (4) The Harriet Tubman Home for the Aged, located at 180 South Street, Auburn, New York.
- (5) The Thompson Memorial A.M.E. Zion Church, located at 33 Parker Street, Auburn, New York.
- (6) Harriet Tubman’s grave at Fort Hill Cemetery, located at 19 Fort Street, Auburn, New York.
- (7) William Henry Seward’s home, located at 33 South Street, Auburn, New York.

(b) INCLUSION OF SITES IN THE NATIONAL PARK SYSTEM.—

The study under subsection (a) shall include an analysis and any recommendations of the Secretary concerning the suitability and feasibility of—

- (1) designating one or more of the sites specified in subsection (a) as units of the National Park System; and

- (2) establishing a national heritage corridor that incorporates the sites specified in subsection (a) and any other sites associated with Harriet Tubman.

(c) STUDY GUIDELINES.—In conducting the study authorized by this Act, the Secretary shall use the criteria for the study of areas for potential inclusion in the National Park System contained in section 8 of Public Law 91–383, as amended by section 303 of the National Park Omnibus Management Act (P.L. 105– 391; 112 Stat. 3501).

(d) CONSULTATION.—In preparing and conducting the study under subsection (a), the Secretary shall consult with—

- (1) the Governors of the States of Maryland and New York;
- (2) a member of the Board of County Commissioners of Dorchester County, Maryland;
- (3) the Mayor of the city of Auburn, New York;
- (4) the owner of the sites specified in subsection (a); and
- (5) the appropriate representatives of—
 - (A) the Thompson Memorial A.M.E. Zion Church;
 - (B) the Bazel Church;
 - (C) the Harriet Tubman Foundation; and
 - (D) the Harriet Tubman Organization, Inc.

(e) REPORT.—Not later than 2 years after the date on which funds are made available for the study under subsection (a), the Secretary shall submit to Congress a report describing the results of the study.

Approved November 13, 2000.

LEGISLATIVE HISTORY—S. 2345:
SENATE REPORTS: No. 106–440 (Comm. on Energy and Natural Resources).
CONGRESSIONAL RECORD, Vol. 146 (2000):
Oct. 5, considered and passed Senate.
Oct. 24, considered and passed House.

Harriet Tubman Special Resource Study Acknowledgements

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Harriet Tubman Home: Executive Director Karen V. Hill; site managers Rev. Paul Carter and Christine Carter; former Executive Director Ward DeWitt; Board of Directors: Rev. W. Darin Moore, Chairman, Karen Krieger, David Aiken, Rev. Erroll E. Hunt, Rev. Margaret Lawson, Rev. Dr. Kenneth Q. James, Rev. Terry L. Jones, Sr., Rev. Michael Rouse

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US Department of Fish & Wildlife: Suzanne Baird, Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge

Ontario, Canada, Organizations: Arden Phair, Rochelle Bush

Historians: Kate Clifford Larson, Tubman biographer; John Creighton, Eastern Shore African American history; Lois Horton, George Mason University; Page Putnam Miller, University of South Carolina; Milton C. Sernett, emeritus, Syracuse University; Daina Ramey Berry, Michigan State University; Judith Wellman, emeritus, State University of New York; Jim McGowan (deceased)

Tubman Family Members: Judy Bryant, Pauline Johnson

Other Researchers and Independent Tubman Supporters: Beth Crawford, Crawford and Stearns Architects and Preservation Planners; Douglas V. Armstrong, Bonnie Ryan, Syracuse University Archeology; Elizabeth Rankin-Fulcher, Black Women’s Leadership Caucus; Vivian Abdul Rahim, Harriet Tubman Historical Society, Inc.; Cynthia R. Copeland; Queen Qu’et.



IN REPLY REFER TO:
H30(2201)

United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
1849 C Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20240

MAY 20 2008

Memorandum

To: Associate Regional Director, Planning, Construction & Facility Management,
Northeast Region

From: Associate Director, Cultural Resources *Paul Snyder Matthews*

Subject: Evaluation of National Significance of "Harriet Tubman Historic Area,
Dorchester and Caroline Counties, Maryland, Finding of National Significance"

This memorandum summarizes our review of the February 4, 2008, "Harriet Tubman Historic Area, Dorchester and Caroline Counties, Maryland, Finding of National Significance" report which forms part of the National Park Service Harriet Tubman Special Resource Study. Your message of February 4, 2008, requested that we evaluate the **national significance** of the Harriet Tubman Historic Area.

Background

In 2000, Congress passed a law directing the National Park Service to conduct a special resource study concerning the preservation and public use of sites associated with Harriet Tubman. One of the criteria for an area to be considered for inclusion in the national park system is that the area "must possess nationally significant natural, cultural, or recreational resources."

The Northeast Regional Office (NERO) is handling the preparation of this study. On February 4, 2008, NERO submitted the "Harriet Tubman Historic Area" report and asked the National Historic Landmarks (NHL) Program staff to review this document and provide its professional opinion on the national significance of the properties outlined in the document.

Criteria for Evaluation of National Significance

The NHL Program staff reviewed the "Harriet Tubman Historic Area" report and prepared this evaluation of the property's national significance. According to the directives of the *National Park Service Management Policies*, national significance for cultural resources will be evaluated by applying the National Historic Landmarks criteria contained in 36 CFR Part 65 (*Code of Federal Regulations*).

National Historic Landmarks Criteria

NHL Criterion 2

NHL Criterion 2 states that potential NHLs are evaluated for their national significance according to a number of criteria, including:

NHL Criterion 2: Properties that are associated importantly with the lives of persons nationally significant in the history of the United States.

In the 1998 Underground Railroad Resources of the United States Theme Study, in the discussion of NHL Criterion 2, it is stated:

There are few national figures of the Underground Railroad. The exceptions that come to mind most readily are Frederick Douglass—perhaps America’s most famous runaway, William Lloyd Garrison, John Brown—America’s most infamous abolitionist, Gerrit Smith, and Harriet Tubman.

The historic area is highly important not only because of its association with Tubman, but also because it is an outstanding surviving example of a 19th century agrarian landscape associated with events of national importance—the resistance of African Americans to enslavement and the emergence and success of the Underground Railroad in the Eastern United States. Not only was this region one of the most active in the operation of the Underground Railroad, but its propitious location near Philadelphia, enriched with its association with events and trends of national importance, such as the rise of abolitionist thinking, the self-reliance and empowerment of free African Americans, and resistance to the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850. While Tubman’s escape occurred before the 1850 Act was enacted, most of her subsequent rescues took place in the shadow of the law.

The area is the actual location and historic setting for important events in Tubman’s life. It represents the early 19th century working landscape based on agriculture, lumbering, and maritime activity. On this landscape, several distinct groups interacted and contributed to the narrative of human events that characterized the antebellum period in Border States. The interaction of these groups—free blacks, white abolitionists, slave holders and supporters, and enslaved people—is integral to Tubman’s story and, moreover, to the understanding of the social and economic forces underlying the institution of slavery, African American resistance to slavery, and its demise. The rise of abolitionist thought and the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850 are important chapters in the chronicle of Tubman’s work.

Integrity

The Tubman historic area retains sufficient integrity for NHL designation. The landscape of the Eastern Shore in the portion of Dorchester County is outstanding. The natural features of the land area exhibit a compelling interface of marsh, open water, woodland, cultivated land, and sporadic development. The cultural history blends antebellum farming, fishing, and logging, followed by long periods of more or less stagnant development. All roads lead to water in this

part of the world and it was the water, as much as the dark woods and the North Star, that led Harriet Tubman to freedom.

This unique historic landscape cannot effectively be evaluated for its exact resemblance to the landscape that Harriet Tubman knew. Instead, the land can be appreciated for the similarity of land patterns and the continuity of marsh and woodland, even with shifting water and vegetation. The area's sparse development and open water act as a natural barrier to undesired encroachments.

The essence of the cultural landscape of Harriet Tubman remains. Flat, open fields, and marsh and thick woodlands are interrupted by shaded home sites at the end of poker-straight drives. The area's history seems inscrutable, with remnants of old houses and outbuildings as ghosts on the landscape. Some are concealed behind new construction—often trailers—and others are in various states of decay and collapse.

The establishment of the Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge in 1933 fortuitously preserved the Tubman landscape on the Eastern Shore, and other conservation efforts will add to the initiative. The acquisition of conservation easements by the Federal and state governments over the past decade and the establishment of the Tubman State Park will further these efforts. Designation of the area as a Historic Area is an important step toward preserving the integrity of the remarkable landscape.

Summary

The Harriet Tubman Historic Area meets the National Historic Landmarks criteria. This conclusion is based on: 1) the important association of the property with Harriet Tubman, a person nationally significant in the history of the United States, and 2) the high degree of integrity that allows for the property's national significance to be conveyed.

Harriet Tubman Special Resource Study Interpretive Themes Workshop

Wednesday, March 12, 2003
National Park Service, 1201 Eye Street
Washington, DC

1. Introduction

On March 12, 2003, twenty-eight individuals – each with expertise related either to Harriet Tubman or to national park planning – met in Washington, DC. Their purpose: to develop interpretive themes for the Harriet Tubman Special Resource Study, now being carried out by the National Park Service (NPS). A list of participants is included in the appendices.

2. Context

Congress has directed the NPS to study the preservation and public use of sites associated with Harriet Tubman and to make recommendations regarding the establishment of a national heritage corridor. At present, the NPS is carrying out research and consultations to identify and document resources associated with Harriet Tubman and to evaluate their national significance. The Harriet Tubman Special Resource Study is separate from the Underground Railway program, even though there are some overlaps.

A required part of any special resource study is the development of interpretive themes. Since interpretive themes communicate national significance, they are helpful in evaluating which sites and resources are most important to include in any NPS recommendation. Interpretive themes also guide the development of facilities and programs if a NPS unit is created.

It should be noted that the interpretive themes developed during a Special Resource Study are subject to change once a NPS unit is in place with a general management plan and long-range interpretive plan.

3. Workshop Objectives

The objectives for the theme workshop were threefold:

- (1) Achieve consensus on two to five primary interpretive themes that can be used to communicate Harriet Tubman's significance to the public;

- (2) Develop ideas for secondary themes and story statements that support the primary themes;
- (3) Identify places and programs that will communicate themes.

4. Workshop Process

The workshop consisted of a series of facilitated exercises to determine what were the most essential ideas to communicate about Harriet Tubman.

The foundation of the workshop was a preliminary exercise that challenged participants to write down the one key thing the public should know about Harriet Tubman. During the rest of the day, these key messages were grouped, synthesized and prioritized. Finally, working groups crafted the prioritized ideas into draft theme statements.

The appendices contain the detailed results of each of the exercises and five sets of draft primary theme statements. Time did not permit the development of secondary themes or story statements, or the identification of places to communicate theme.

5. Criteria for Interpretive Theme Development

As defined by the NPS, interpretive themes are the core stories that communicate the significance of resources to the public. They connect significant resources to the larger ideas, meanings, and values of which they are a part. Interpretive themes are written as single sentences.

During the workshop, participants identified the following criteria for interpretive themes:

- They should be relevant to the nation.
- They should communicate something important to recognize and honor.
- They should reflect a story that is either unique or representative.

6. Draft Primary Themes

During the workshop, five sets of primary interpretive themes were developed by groups of participants. (See Appendix D). There was a high level of similarity between the sets of themes and no inherent contradictions. Rather than wordsmith in a large group, it was agreed that the facilitator would attempt to synthesize the results into one set of draft themes.

Following the workshop, the facilitator crafted draft themes (see below)based on the ideas generated from the workshop. It should be noted that the particular wording of these themes was not actually discussed or endorsed during the session. They are presented here as drafts for consideration and will, undoubtedly undergo several revisions before being finalized.

The proposed primary themes for interpreting Harriet Tubman are:

A. Harriet Tubman was an enslaved African-American woman who overcame overwhelming obstacles to become an internationally significant activist and humanitarian ,

Topics for sub-themes

- Personal situation and characteristics (could not read or write, disability, enslaved)
- Political, social and economic obstacles in the time
- Fight for racial and gender equality
- Humanitarian work

B. Harriet Tubman fought for freedom for herself and other enslaved African-Americans before, during and after the Civil war and helped abolish the institution of slavery in the USA.

Topics for sub-themes

- Her flight to freedom
- Underground railway
- Role in Civil war

C. Harriet Tubman’s spirituality was a central force of her life and led her to help countless others: the enslaved, the sick, the aged, the disabled, and those less fortunate.

Topics for sub-themes

- Spirituality
- Helping her family and others escape
- Nursing/healing
- Humanitarian work (educational aid, home for aged)

D. Harriet Tubman’s actions influenced others in both the United States and Canada and over time she has come to be seen as an international symbol of the struggle for freedom and human dignity.

Topics for sub-themes

- international role

- influence on important people in her time
- how her story has been told through the years

7. Other Points

In the wide-ranging discussion around themes, some other important ideas emerged:

- While Harriet Tubman should be identified as an African-American, her significance is not just of interest to African-Americans. Her significance and relevance is universal, and extends beyond the United States.
- In all communications related to Harriet Tubman, care needs to be taken about the use of language and images. Different audiences can perceive the same words and pictures differently. For example, consider the perceptions related to the word “enslaved” vs. that of “slave”. Similarly, there will be a different reaction if the image of a man running through the woods is described as a ‘runaway slave’ or as a ‘freedom seeker’.
- The research on resources associated with Harriet Tubman is challenging since few sites are extant, much of her activity was ‘secret’ and therefore undocumented, and also because she covered so much territory. There is a need for everyone to collaborate on the research study and share what they know. Over the next few years, a number of books about Harriet Tubman will be published which will add to the information available. Unfortunately, some of the authors are unwilling to share their research prior to publication.
- The NPS is still busy with the research phase of the study. It has not yet evaluated sites or made any recommendations regarding designation. Several alternatives will be considered before any recommendations are made.
- The NPS does not decide on designation of a NPS unit. The NPS does a professional study and makes recommendations to Congress, but ultimately NPS units are designated through the political process.
- Workshop participants requested copies of the legislation authorizing the Harriet Tubman Special Resource Study and a list of the Congressional committees that would be involved in reviewing the recommendations.
- The NPS staff asked all participants to help flesh out the historical chronology, and resource lists that had been drafted.

8. Conclusion

At the end of the workshop, participants expressed satisfaction that the primary themes taking shape were different than what people normally think of Harriet Tubman. They were pleased that untold stories were coming to the forefront and looked forward to the remainder of the study.

Chronology of Harriet Tubman's Life

*Courtesy of Kate Clifford Larson,
<http://www.harriettubmanbiography.com/>*

- 1785–1790 Harriet Tubman's parents, Ben Ross and Harriet "Rit" Green were born probably during this period in Dorchester County, Maryland. Both are enslaved, but by different masters. Ben is owned by Anthony Thompson; Rit is enslaved by Atthow Pattison.
- 1797 Atthow Pattison died and left Rit to his granddaughter, Mary Pattison.
- 1800 Mary Pattison married Joseph Brodess of Bucktown, Maryland.
- 1801 Edward Brodess was born to Mary and Joseph Brodess.
- 1802 Joseph Brodess probably died this year
- 1803 Mary Pattison Brodess married widower Anthony Thompson of Church Creek.
- 1808 Ben and Rit marry about this time.
- 1810 Mary Pattison Brodess Thompson probably died during this year, leaving young Edward under the guardianship of his step-father, Anthony Thompson.
- 1822 Araminta "Minty" Ross, later known as Harriet Tubman, was born, probably in February or early March on Anthony Thompson's plantation, located in the Peter's Neck district along the Big Blackwater River, south of Tobacco Stick (now called Madison) in Dorchester County.
- 1823–1824 Edward Brodess moved to his ancestral property on Greenbriar Road in Bucktown. He married Eliza Ann Keene in March, 1824. They had eight children over the next twenty years.
- 1828–1835 Young Araminta was hired out by Brodess to various other masters.
- 1834–1836 Araminta was struck on the head by an iron weight, nearly killing her. She suffered from serious side effects from this head injury for the rest of her life.
- 1836 Anthony Thompson died.

- 1836–1842 Tubman was hired out to John T. Stewart of Tobacco Stick (now Madison).
- 1840 Ben Ross was given his freedom through a provision in Thompson’s will.
- 1844 Araminta probably married freeman John Tubman this year. She took the name Harriet at this time.
- 1847–1849 Harriet Tubman hired herself out to Dr. Anthony C. Thompson, Anthony Thompson’s son.
- 1849 Edward Brodess died in March, leaving his widow Eliza encumbered with debt. Harriet Tubman ran away from slavery sometime during the late fall after hearing she might be sold.
- 1850 The Fugitive Slave Act was passed. Tubman conducted her first rescue mission by helping her niece, Kessiah, and Kessiah’s two children, James Alfred and baby Araminta, escape.
- 1851–1852 Tubman assisted several other individuals escape enslavement on the Eastern Shore, including her brother Moses. When she returns to Dorchester County in the fall of 1851 to bring her husband John to Philadelphia with her, he refuses. He has remarried and moved on with his life.
- 1854 Tubman finally succeeds in rescuing her brothers on Christmas Day, bringing them to freedom in Philadelphia and then St. Catharines, Ontario, Canada. By now Harriet has attracted the attention of abolitionists and Underground Railroad operators Thomas Garrett, William Still, Lucretia Mott, and others.
- 1855–1860 Tubman made several more trips to the Eastern Shore of Maryland, trying to bring away another sister, Rachel, and Rachel’s children, Ben and Angerine. Though she was unsuccessful, she did bring away other friends and relatives, many of whom settled in Canada. Altogether, Tubman brought to freedom about 70 individuals in approximately 13 trips, though she gave important instructions to scores more who found their way to freedom on their own.
- 1857 Tubman brought away her aged parents from Caroline County, Maryland, when she learned her father was at risk of arrest for aiding slaves to run away.

- 1858 In April, Harriet Tubman met John Brown at her home on North Street in St. Catharines, Ontario, Canada. She remained a vital supporter of Brown's plans for an armed attack in the South.
- 1859 John Brown's Virginia raid ended in failure in October. Tubman purchased a home and seven acres of land from William H. Seward, President Lincoln's future Secretary of State, in Fleming (on the outskirts of Auburn), New York, in May. It was during this year that Tubman became more publicly active, particularly in Boston where she gave many lectures as a heroic Underground Railroad operator.
- 1860 Tubman was involved in the dramatic rescue of fugitive slave Charles Nalle in Troy, New York.
- 1861 The Civil War starts with the firing of Fort Sumter in Charleston Harbor in April.
- 1862–1865 Tubman worked as a cook, nurse, laundress, teacher, scout, and spy for the Union Forces stationed in the Hilton Head district in South Carolina, and in Florida.
- 1863 Under the command of General James Montgomery, Tubman became the first woman to lead an armed raid. On June 2, she led Montgomery's forces, the 2nd South Carolina, up the Combahee River, where they routed rebel forces, freed over 700 slaves, and burned buildings, crops, and stockpiles of munitions and food.
- 1865 The Civil War ended and President Lincoln was assassinated in April. Tubman was hired to provide nursing service to wounded soldiers at Fortress Monroe in Hampton, Virginia. On her way home to New York, she was violently thrown from a passenger train by a racist conductor, becoming severely injured.
- 1867 John Tubman, Harriet's husband, was murdered on a country road near his home in Dorchester County by Robert Vincent after a dispute.
- 1869 Sarah Bradford published her first biography called, "Scenes in the Life of Harriet Tubman." Harriet married Nelson Davis at Central Presbyterian Church in Auburn.
- 1871 Ben Ross, Tubman's father, may have died this year.

- 1873 Tubman became involved in a mysterious gold swindle, perpetrated by two con men, which left her badly beaten but her reputation still intact.
- 1880 Rit died. Tubman continued to farm her seven acre property and run a small brick-making business with Davis.
- 1886 Sarah Bradford published her second biography of Tubman, "Harriet Tubman, The Moses of Her People."
- 1888 Nelson Davis died of tuberculosis.
- 1890s Tubman became more actively involved in the suffrage movement, attending both black and white suffrage conventions.
- 1896 Tubman purchased the 25-acre parcel next to her property to establish a home and hospital for indigent, aged, and sick African Americans.
- 1903 Tubman transferred ownership of the 25-acre property to the AME Zion Church.
- 1908 The Harriet Tubman Home was opened by the AME Zion Church.
- 1913 Tubman died on March 10 and was buried next to her brother, William Henry Stewart, at Fort Hill Cemetery in Auburn, NY.
- 1944 The Liberty Ship S.S. Harriet Tubman was launched at a South Portland, Maine shipyard.

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This report has been prepared to provide Congress and the public with information about resources in the study areas, and about how they relate to the criteria for units of the national park system. These criteria are applied by professional National Park Service staff. Publication and transmittal of this report, including any discussion of a preferred course of action, should not be considered an endorsement or commitment by the National Park Service to seek or support either specific legislative authorization for a project, or appropriations for its implementation. Authorization and funding for any new commitments by the National Park Service will have to be considered in light of competing priorities for existing units of the National Park Service and other programs.

The National Park Service cares for special places saved by the American people so that all may experience our heritage.



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