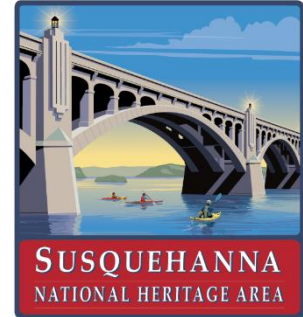


Request for Proposal

Emancipation Generation: Understanding African American Life in Antebellum Era of Susquehanna National Heritage Area

Susquehanna National Heritage Area

April 2023



Introduction

Susquehanna National Heritage Area (SNHA) is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization and officially designated National Heritage Area and Pennsylvania Heritage Area for Lancaster and York Counties and the Susquehanna River corridor through our region. We operate two visitor education facilities: the Zimmerman Center for Heritage, a historic 18th-century home and land/water trailhead on the York County shore south of Wrightsville; and the Columbia Crossing River Trails Center, a riverfront visitor education facility in the historic Lancaster County river town of Columbia. Susquehanna NHA recently helped save the Mifflin Farm and Home in Wrightsville from demolition and it is now under SNHA management. That property is slated to open as an Underground Railroad heritage site and visitor center in the future.

This project seeks to uncover the complex and difficult reality of African Americans in the Susquehanna NHA during antebellum America. This project challenges the assumption that emancipation was a moment, a single stroke of a pen that proclaimed and changed, immediately, the lives of African Americans. Pennsylvania was the first to pass extensive abolition legislation in the western hemisphere in 1780. By exposing the experience of African Americans at three Susquehanna NHA sites, SNHA can uplift the untold story of free Blacks, freedom seekers, and enslaved persons – whom all coexisted here within 4 square miles of each other. Funding will be used to research and develop a SNHA African American Heritage Guide, install outdoor interpretative signage at three sites, and present interpretive programs during Riverfest, an event coordinated by SNHA that attracted over 1200 people in 2022.

Project Overview

SNHA seeks a consultant to develop an African American Heritage Guide for our three sites as well as a regional perspective; to prepare materials for interpretative signs at SNHA's three sites, and to prepare a National Park Service Underground Railroad Network to Freedom Application for the Mifflin Farm. This project has been funded by the National Park Foundation's Inclusive Storytelling Grant Program.

This project involves researching the experience of African Americans at three primary sites: the Zimmerman Center for Heritage, the Mifflin House & Farm, and the Columbia Crossing River Trails Center. Jacob Dritt owned and lived at the Zimmerman Center home at the turn of the 19th century. He purchased an enslaved boy named Moses in 1795 – 15 years after Pennsylvania's Gradual Abolition legislation. This research will illuminate the experience of life for an enslaved person during gradual abolition and how it could be and was manipulated by enslavers. Richard Smedley mentions the Mifflin Farm and family in his History of the Underground Railroad. The property has recently been saved from

demolition and is under SNHA management. It was also the site of a skirmish during the Civil War, where African Americans from Columbia defended their freedom from Confederate forces. This research will uncover the experience of freedom seekers moving to and through the National Heritage Area. Hopefully, it will also reveal the names and lives of the 53 men that defended the bridge in 1863. Finally, Columbia Crossing River Trails Center sits on a public property that was once leased to William Whipper and Stephen Smith for a lumber mill. Smith and Whipper were two wealthy African American men that were very successful in business and activism. Their freedom and success had benefits across the Black community but also caused tension with local whites. Research into their lives and connection to the moral suasion movement will reveal the diverse advocacy methods used to end slavery. Using the completed research, the consultant will submit an application for the Network to Freedom program for the Mifflin House & Farm.

Scope of Work

Task 1: Conduct at least 3 project meetings with SNHA to:

- *Review the scope of work and confirm project deliverables.*
- *Set communication contacts and procedures.*
- *Develop a schedule for stakeholder involvement, project submittals, and invoice payments.*
- *Review timeline and task progress.*
- *Wrap up project and transfer all files and materials to SNHA.*

Task 2: Visit the Zimmerman Center for Heritage, Columbia Crossing River Trails Center, Mifflin Farm, and other key locations within the heritage area to familiarize the consultant team with existing African American heritage storytelling in the region.

Task 3: Conduct research on African American Heritage Experience across the Susquehanna NHA.

- *Focus on the period from Pennsylvania Emancipation legislation (1780) to the Civil War.*
- *Develop a detailed bibliography of primary and secondary materials (add information on archives)*

Task 4: Conduct research on Moses – the individual enslaved by Jacob Dritt – at the Zimmerman Center for Heritage to develop an African American Heritage Guide for the site.

- *Explain the importance of Pennsylvania Emancipation legislation in African American genealogy and heritage storytelling.*

Task 5: Conduct research on Underground Railroad operations in Columbia, Pennsylvania, including Stephen Smith, William Whipper, Tow Hill Neighborhood, and Thaddeus Stevens to develop an African American Heritage Guide for the site.

- *If possible, showcase the beliefs, like moral suasion, that Whipper and others used to try to end slavery in America.*

Task 6: Conduct research on Mifflin Farm and family to understand their role in assisting freedom seekers to develop an African American Heritage Guide for the site.

- *Place the Mifflin family in the larger, nationwide network to freedom to create a clear image of the diverse groups working to help freedom seekers on their journey.*

Task 7: Prepare an online application for the National Underground Network to Freedom Program for the Mifflin Farm property. (Submission due January 15, 2024)

Task 8: Prepare and transfer content for interpretative signage at all three sites in partnership with SNHA Staff.

Project Schedule

This project shall commence by June 1, 2023, and shall be completed by May 30, 2024.

June 2023: Host a launch meeting between SNHA staff and the consultant.

September 2023: Host a progress meeting between SNHA staff and the consultant.

October 2023: Draft heritage guide and site reports will be shared with SNHA Staff for Review

December 2023: Draft application for Network to Freedom program will be shared with SNHA Staff for Review

November - January 2023: Consultant will revise and finalize guide, site reports, and Network to Freedom application. (Network to Freedom due for submission by January 15, 2024.)

December - January 2024: Consultant will prepare content for interpretative signs.

February 2023: Consultant will draft content for interpretative signs to share with SNHA Staff for Review

January - May 2024: SNHA will engage a design firm to design, construct, and install interpretative signs.

Project Budget

The total budget available for this project is \$30,000 to \$37,000. Proposals that exceed this budget range may not be considered.

Submission Information

Clear and well-organized proposal package including the following components:

Proposed timeline and fee schedule.

Professional qualifications of the firm or individual. Key team members' resumes as well as sample project or previous work to showcase research abilities.

Explanation of methodology of approach to tasks in this request.

Description of your philosophy for making an African American heritage guide for the National Heritage Area that is a usable tool on the ground, yet generic enough to be relevant to a wide variety of kinds of places.

Submissions can be sent to hbyers@susqnha.org on or before May 22, 2023.

SNHA Contact

Hope Byers, hbyers@susqnha.org, 717-449-5607 or Sophia Vayansky, svayansky@susqnha.org, 717-449-5607. Jonathan Pinkerton, jpinkerton@susqnha.org, 717-252-0229

Additional Information

[Susquehanna National Heritage Area Request for Proposals](#)

[National Park Foundation Inclusive Storytelling Grant Program](#)