

*Solomon Knows*



NATIONAL UNDERGROUND RAILROAD FREEDOM CENTER





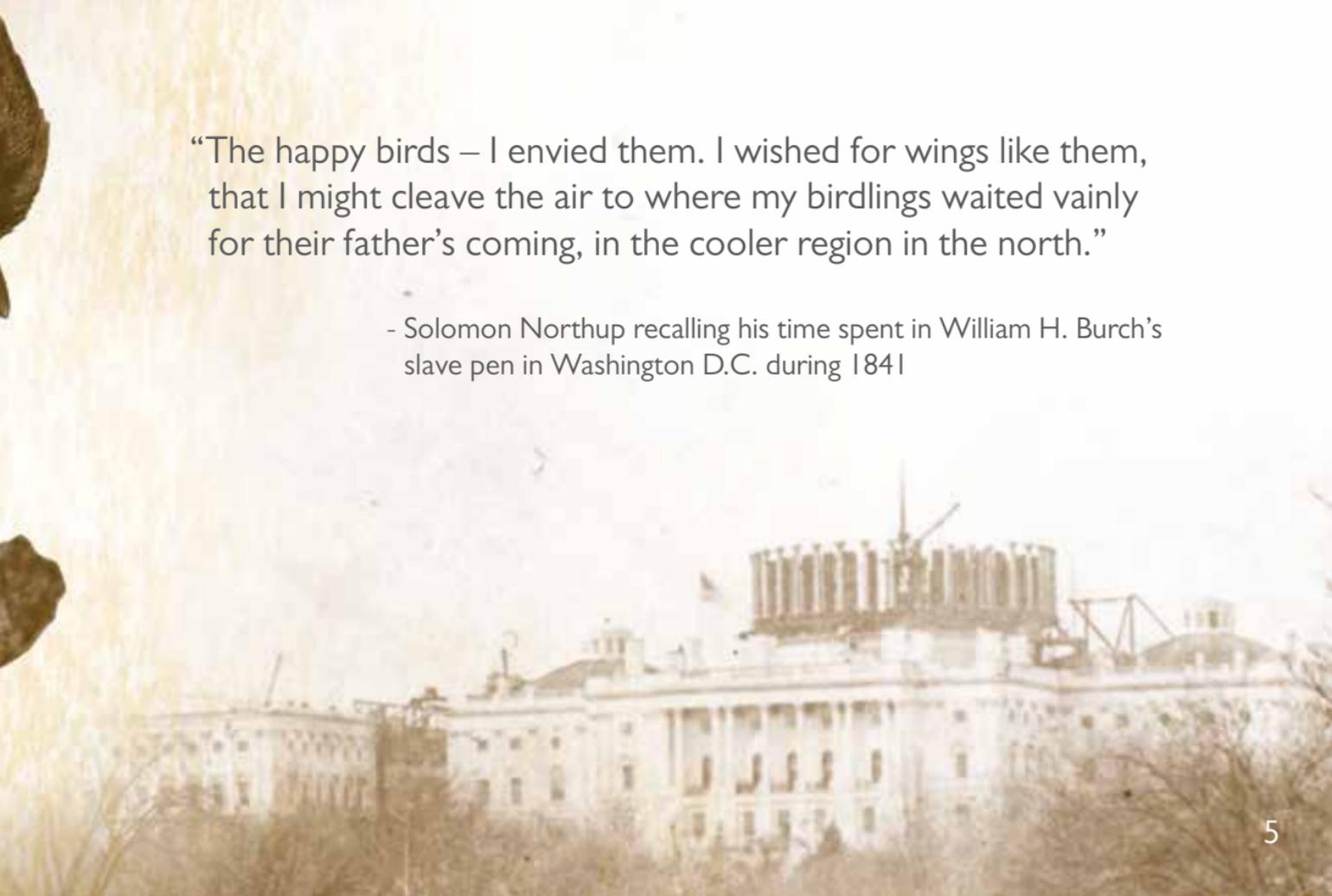
## OUR MISSION

We reveal stories about freedom's heroes from the era of the Underground Railroad to contemporary times, challenging and inspiring everyone to take courageous steps for freedom today.



“The happy birds – I envied them. I wished for wings like them, that I might cleave the air to where my birdlings waited vainly for their father’s coming, in the cooler region in the north.”

- Solomon Northup recalling his time spent in William H. Burch’s slave pen in Washington D.C. during 1841



# NATIONAL UNDERGROUND RAILROAD FREEDOM CENTER

At our core we believe that stories have the power to educate and inspire. Stories humanize the historical perspective and bring history to life in ways facts alone cannot.

One of the many stories we tell within our walls is the story of Solomon Northup.

Solomon Northup published his original narrative in 1853 immediately after escaping from slavery. Dr. Sue Eakin rediscovered his narrative in 1931 and made it her life's work. Dr. Eakin released an edited version of the narrative in 1968 with new background information based on research and photos. Fox Searchlight released the story of Solomon Northup as a major motion picture in October 2013. The film is one of the best depictions of slave life in Antebellum America.

This self-guided tour will take you through several locations throughout the museum to highlight Solomon Northup's story. Please move through at your own pace and use the map located on pages 36 and 37 of this booklet.

We hope this tour will inspire you to learn more about his story and those that remain enslaved today.

We also encourage visitors to listen to the Freedom Center Mobile Tour while traveling through this experience. This will provide more in-depth historical perspective on the stops you visit on today's journey.

The mobile tour can be checked out at the ticket counter on the first floor or viewed on any smart phone by visiting [freedom.toursphere.com](http://freedom.toursphere.com).

Each location on the Solomon Northup Tour will also state a mobile tour stop number in case you wish to follow along.

*Please take the elevator to the second floor. Located directly off the elevator is your first stop. Locate the sign "Solomon Northup Stop 1" to begin your journey.*



# SOLOMON AS A FREE MAN: STOP 1

*Walk toward the large windows to the right of the elevator  
(also Mobile Tour Stop 2 on your smart phone or iPod)*

By 1841 the nation was already beginning to split over the question of slavery. In cities like Cincinnati the evils of the institution of slavery could be seen on a daily basis. Just outside these windows slave ships traveled up and down the Ohio River. Slave auctions took place just across this river, at the foot of the stone bridge in front of you.

By law, Ohio was a free state, but its geographic location next to the slave-holding state of Kentucky enabled slavery to flourish within its borders. Masters brought enslaved people in and out of Cincinnati, and the enslaved were even rented out to work here.

However, Cincinnati was also quickly becoming known as a destination on the Underground Railroad, with abolitionists and free blacks helping runaway slaves escape to the North.



In that same year in upstate New York, a middle-aged man's life changed forever.

Born a free man of color in Minerva, New York in 1808, Solomon Northup married Ann Hampton, and they had three children: Elizabeth, Margaret, and Alonzo. A loving father and husband, Solomon was also a skilled violinist.

One day, two men approached him about performing in their traveling show. They promised him a decent wage of a dollar per day and three dollars for each evening performance. The men also agreed to pay for Northup's return trip to his home in Saratoga, New York. Solomon agreed to take the job and traveled with the men.

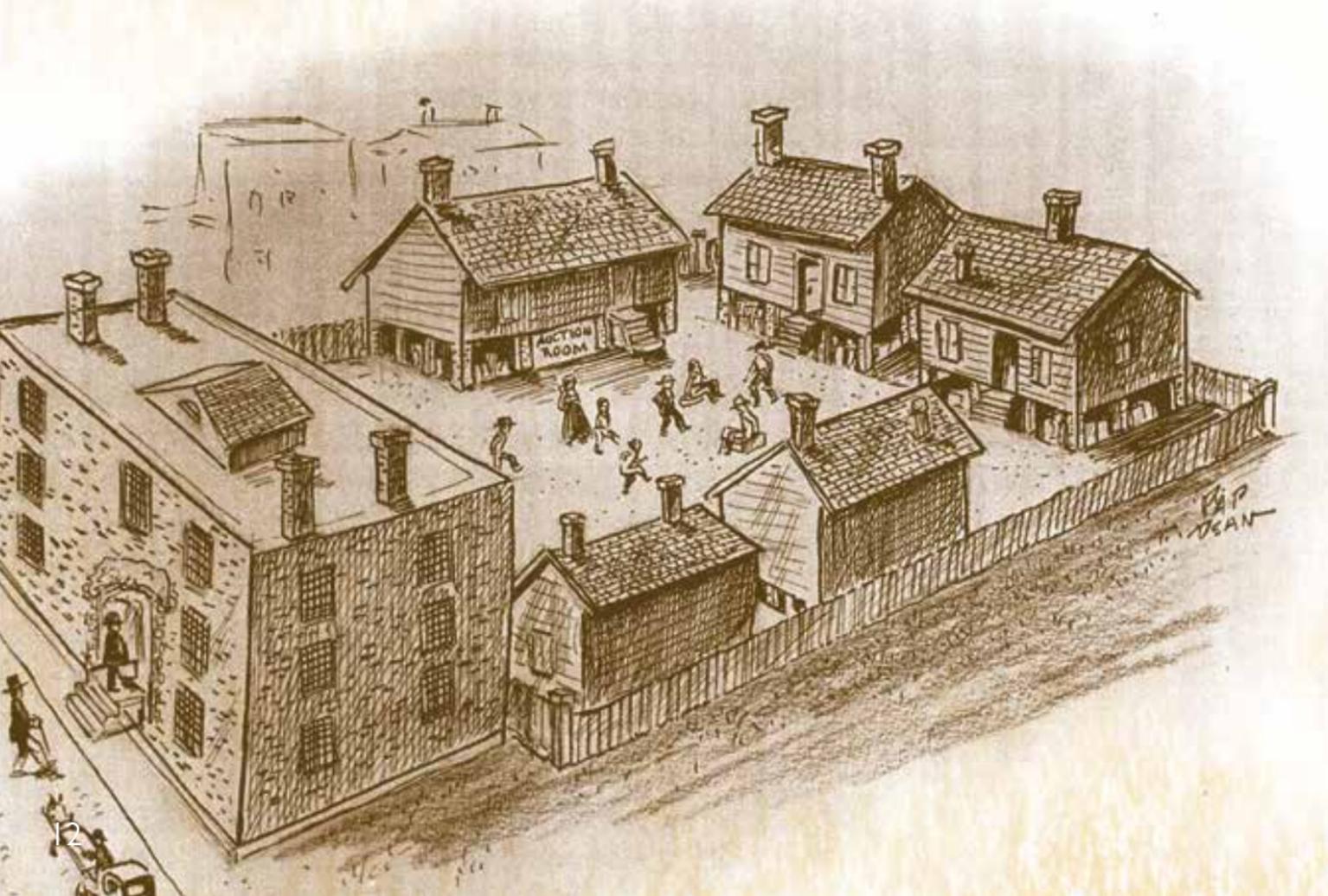
*Please turn around and walk toward the slave pen located directly behind you to Stop 2.*

## SOLOMON'S KIDNAPPING: STOP 2

*Step inside the building, the John W. Anderson Slave Pen  
(also Mobile Tour Stop 5 on your smart phone or iPod)*

This building is a real slave pen. It was located approximately one hour east of Cincinnati in Germantown, Kentucky. John W. Anderson owned this building and made his living as a slave trader. Anderson purchased enslaved people from around the area and held them inside this building until he acquired enough people. Once Anderson had 30-80 enslaved people, he transported them to Natchez, Mississippi. The internal slave trade like this was most active from the early 1790s until 1860. Between these dates, approximately 1 million enslaved people were moved from the upper slave states to the lower slave states. On average an enslaved person was sold between one and three times in their lifetime.

Solomon Northup's experience in a slave pen began shortly after he arrived in Washington, D.C. The two men who offered Solomon a job playing the violin, Merrill Brown and Abram Hamilton, escorted Solomon around the city. They passed drinks back and forth until Solomon became gravely ill and returned to the hotel room. Solomon fell unconscious and remembered very few things once back in the room. He recalled men entering his room to inform him that he must immediately be taken to a physician's office.



Solomon never ended up in the physician's office. He awoke, finding himself in chains inside a slave pen similar to the one you're standing in. Brown and Hamilton had sold him to a slave trader in Washington D.C. As Solomon recalled, he was in *"a slave pen within the very shadow of the Capitol."*

Inside the slave pen, Solomon declared that he was a free man. Upon hearing this, William H. Burch, the slave trader who purchased him, severely whipped Solomon into submission. Burch called him a liar and claimed Solomon was a slave from Georgia. Realizing that continuing to call himself a free man would only lead to further pain, anguish and even death, Solomon stopped claiming he was free.

His capture and time in Burch's slave pen was traumatizing. Despite silencing his cries for freedom, Solomon would never lose hope. Throughout his kidnapping and enslavement he continued to find ways to resist and search for opportunities to secure his freedom.

*Please exit the Slave Pen and walk to the right to the Tom Feelings Mural on the wall in the Grand Hall.*

## SOLD INTO ENSLAVEMENT FOR \$1,000: STOP 3

*Solomon Northup Stop 3: Look up to the Tom Feelings Mural  
(also Mobile Tour Stop 4 on your smart phone or iPod)*

This mural was created by Tom Feelings and completed by Tyron Geter.

It illustrates the internal slave trade in the United States, which Solomon fell captive to. The images reveal multiple pieces of the slave trade, including the buying and selling of individuals, the ways the enslaved were transported and crops the enslaved grew. Take a few moments to observe the different scenes.

Can you spot:

- A scene of a mother being separated from her child (top right corner of the artwork)?
- Enslaved individuals laboring in a cotton field (bottom left)?
- An auction block with a man being examined, similar to property like cattle and horses (top right)?
- Faces of individuals and the emotions they portray as they're sold as property?



372/11a

State of Louisiana }  
CITY OF NEW-ORLEANS }  
It is known, That you owe, EDWARD BARNETT,  
a notary public in and for the City and Parish of NEW-ORLEANS, State of Louisiana,  
amount, duly demanded and paid, PERSONALLY CASH AND SPENT.

Mr. Stephen T. ...

of this city

WHO ENCLOSED, That for the consideration of Two thousand five  
hundred Dollars

to him paid in ready money, the receipt whereof is hereby acknowledged, he doth by  
these presents grant, bargain, sell, convey, transfer, assign, and an exec. with a full power  
against all troubles, debts, mortgages, claims, actions, demands, allegations, or other uncertainties  
whatsoever, unto

Mr. William Prince Ford, of the  
parish of Rapides in this state, here

present and accepting delivery and payment thereof, that  
this Henry, a negro aged about thirty years,  
Black, a gliff, aged about thirty years,  
and Bradley, a negro aged about thirty years,  
belonging to the said Mr. William Prince Ford,

from ...  
1/2 ...  
...





Shortly after arriving at the slave pen in Washington D.C., William Burch transported Solomon and several other enslaved individuals on a steamboat to the Deep South. Solomon met another man, Robert, who was also born free and kidnapped into slavery. In fact, Robert lived in Cincinnati for a period of time. He had a wife and two children. Similarly to Solomon, Robert also sought employment and was tricked by two men. Robert ended up in Fredericksburg, Virginia without free papers, the government-issued documents required of persons of color to prove their freedom. Robert tried to explain he was a free man, but was beaten into submission.

On the steamboat, Solomon and Robert became allies. With the help of another enslaved man, they planned a mutiny to take over the ship. Unfortunately, the plan never came to life because Robert fell gravely ill with smallpox. He passed away just days before the steamboat arrived in New Orleans. His body was thrown overboard.

Upon the steamboat's arrival in New Orleans Solomon and the rest of William Burch's inventory were transferred to Theophilus Freeman. Freeman called out the lot of enslaved people by name. Solomon did not stand up because he did not hear his name called. He quickly realized, however, that his name had been changed to Platt.

*Stop 4 is located on the third floor. Once you arrive to the third floor take a right, walk around the staircase to the exhibit, "From Slavery to Freedom." The next stop is located in the exhibit and marked with a sign, "Solomon Northup Tour Stop 4."*



## PICKING COTTON: STOP 4

*The cotton bale, located in “From Slavery to Freedom”  
(also Mobile Tour Stop 24 on your smart phone or iPod)*

After being sold at the New Orleans slave market, three different individuals owned Solomon Northup during his 12 years in enslavement: William Ford, John Tibbeats and Edwin Epps. His slave owners rented him out to other individuals, too. Solomon’s experiences and treatment varied under these three men. Ford seemed compassionate, while Tibbeats whipped him and attempted to kill him twice. His final owner, Edward Epps was brutal. Epps’ cruelty towards his enslaved property would be at its worst on his “drunken fits.” Solomon recalled:

*“Master Epps was a roistering, blustering, noisy fellow, whose chief delight was in dancing his ‘niggers’ or lashing them about the yard with his long whip, just for the pleasure of seeing them screech and scream, as the great welts were planted on their backs. When sober, he was silent, reserved and cunning, not beating us indiscriminately, as in his drunken moment, but sending the end of his rawhide to some tender spot of a lagging slave, with a sly dexterity peculiar to himself.”*



Solomon labored in many different jobs during his time enslaved. These jobs included: carpentry, fiddle playing, serving as an overseer, working on a sugarcane plantation and picking cotton. Read Solomon's detailed account of working a cotton plantation in Louisiana:

*"In the latter part of August begins the cotton-picking season. At this time each slave is presented with a sack. A strap is fastened to it, which goes over the neck, holding the mouth of the sack breast high, while the bottom reaches nearly to the ground. Each one is also presented with a large basket that will hold about two barrels. This is to put the cotton in when the sack is filled. The baskets are carried to the field and placed at the beginning of the rows. When a new hand, one unaccustomed to the business, is sent for the first time into the field, he is whipped up smartly, and made for that day to pick as fast as he can possibly. At night it is weighed, so that his capability in cotton picking is known. He must bring in the same weight each night following. If it falls short, it is considered evidence that he has been laggard, and a greater or less number of lashes is the penalty... An ordinary day's work is two hundred pounds. A slave who is accustomed to picking is punished, if he or she brings in a less quantity than that."*

*Stop 5 is located behind you on the back wall. You will need to go around the statue that looks like a runaway slave behind a tree.*



## PATSEY & MASTER EPPS: STOP 5

*The Margaret Garner Painting*

*(also Mobile Tour Stop 27 on your smart phone or iPod)*

Let's learn about another story for a moment. Enslaved with her four children on the Archibald Gaines farm in Boone County, Kentucky, Margaret Garner could no longer tolerate the sexual abuse from her owner. She and her husband, who was enslaved on a nearby farm, broke away one January night in 1856 with their children. Crossing the frozen Ohio River on foot, Margaret and her children went on to the home of a free black man. But Gaines knew the location, and soon he and officers surrounded the house. Determined not to surrender her children to the horrors of slavery, she took a knife and cut the throat of her young daughter and tried to do the same with her other children, but was stopped.

After a trial that lasted several weeks, the U.S. Commissioner ruled that the runaways were property and must be returned to Gaines. The event drew national attention, and Frederick Douglass called Margaret a heroine. Gaines sold Margaret south. Traveling by ship, an accident occurred aboard, and one of Margaret's children drowned. Margaret survived the event and lived in slavery for another two years, until she died of a horrible fever in 1858.



The sexual abuses that led Margaret Garner to take this necessary step were a constant reality for enslaved women. In Solomon Northup's narrative we meet a young woman named Patsey. Patsey was also sexually abused by her owner, Edward Epps. Patsey's forced relationship with Epps led to her own physical punishment by Epps's wife who despised young Patsey. The relationships between Patsey and Epps escalated to a moment when an enraged Epps ordered Solomon to whip Patsey. At the end of the narrative the readers are left wondering whatever happened to her – and we don't know her fate.

*Stop 6 is located past the large white building located behind you. Pass through the building to see the Solomon Northup sign located to the left back corner.*

“ ...but the most cruel whipping that ever I was doomed to witness - one I can never recall with any other emotion than that of horror - was inflicted on the unfortunate Patsey... In Epps’ absence the mistress often ordered me to whip her without the remotest provocation.”

- Solomon Northup



## 12 YEARS LATER: STOP 6

*Portraits of John Brown, Frederick Douglass and Harriet Beecher Stowe  
(also Mobile Tour Stop 34 on your smart phone or iPod)*

Throughout the entire 12 years, Solomon Northup never lost hope in finding freedom again. He tried several times to resist his enslavement and secure his freedom. The first occurrence took place with his attempted mutiny aboard the steamboat. Because it failed with Robert's death, Solomon attempted another route: befriending a white sailor on the steamboat to New Orleans. The sailor, John Manning, agreed to send a letter to New York informing Solomon's family that he had been kidnapped. Solomon learned after his enslavement that the letter reached individuals in New York. He stated, *"The letter did reach Sandy Hill and Mr. Northup visited the Governor Seward, but inasmuch as it gave no definite information as to my probable locality, it was not, at the that time, deemed advisable to institute measures for liberation. It was concluded to delay, trusting that a knowledge of where I was might eventually be obtained."*

Solomon also stood up against his second master, John Tibbeats, who routinely attempted to punish him for no reason. Twice Solomon refused to receive a beating and turned the whip against his white owner.

Solomon waited for an opportunity to find someone who might forward a letter north again. Solomon attempted a second time while on the Edwin Epps property. Solomon trusted an individual that was looking for work as an overseer and approached him one evening with a request to mail a letter. This man revealed Solomon's secret to Epps, who then approached Solomon. Solomon denied the accusation and convinced Epps that the overseer tried to trick him. Epps miraculously believed Solomon and sent the man away.

Solomon's fourth attempt was another letter, and it finally saved him from enslavement. Solomon overheard a conversation between Epps and a carpenter named Bass who clearly stated his disagreement with the institution of slavery. When the opportunity presented itself, Northup courageously revealed his story to Bass. Bass agreed to help Northup despite the enormous risks. Bass sent a letter north and continued meeting with Solomon until news finally came from New York.

Henry B. Northup received the letter regarding Solomon's enslavement and traveled to Louisiana to help him regain his freedom. Henry was a relative of the family that freed Northup's father.

*"Throw down that sack," Northup added, finally, "your cotton-picking days are over. Come with us to the man you live with."*

Solomon returned to his family in upstate New York. He wrote:

*“As I entered their comfortable cottage, Margaret was the first that met me. She did not recognize me. When I left her, she was but seven years old, a little prattling girl, playing with her toys. Now she was grown to womanhood – was married, with a bright-eyed boy standing by her side. Not forgetful of his enslaved, unfortunate grand-father, she had named the child Solomon Northup Staunton. When told who I was, she was overcome with emotion, and unable to speak. Presently Elizabeth entered the room, and Anne came running from the hotel, having been informed of my arrival. They embraced me, and with tears flowing down their cheeks, hung upon my neck.”*

*Please exit the exhibit and head towards the opposite side of the building to*

*“Invisible: Slavery Today,” for your final stop.*

## 12 YEARS A SLAVE RELEVANCE TO TODAY: STOP 7

*“Invisible: Slavery Today” exhibit (also Mobile Tour Stop 42 on your smart phone or iPod)*

Solomon’s story has a connection to our world today because slavery didn’t end with the Emancipation Proclamation or men like him being freed. There are between 21 and 30 million people enslaved in the world today.

Men, women and children are no longer owned as property as they were in the American South. We call that form – the form of enslavement Solomon faced – chattel slavery, or the legal ownership of a human being by another. The U.S. ended this form of enslavement in 1865, but the final country, Mauritania, to eliminate chattel slavery didn't do so until 1981. But there are still many forms of enslavement that persist throughout the world today. Forced labor, domestic servitude, child labor, sexual enslavement and bonded labor can be found in hundreds of countries today, including the United States.



Walk through this exhibit space to learn more about slavery in the world today. Men, women and children from all backgrounds are forced to work against their will, under the threat of violence like Solomon faced, and with no ready means of escape. Although it is everywhere, it's also largely invisible.

Learn the stories of five individuals and their real experiences as people enslaved in the 21st century. Their stories are true.

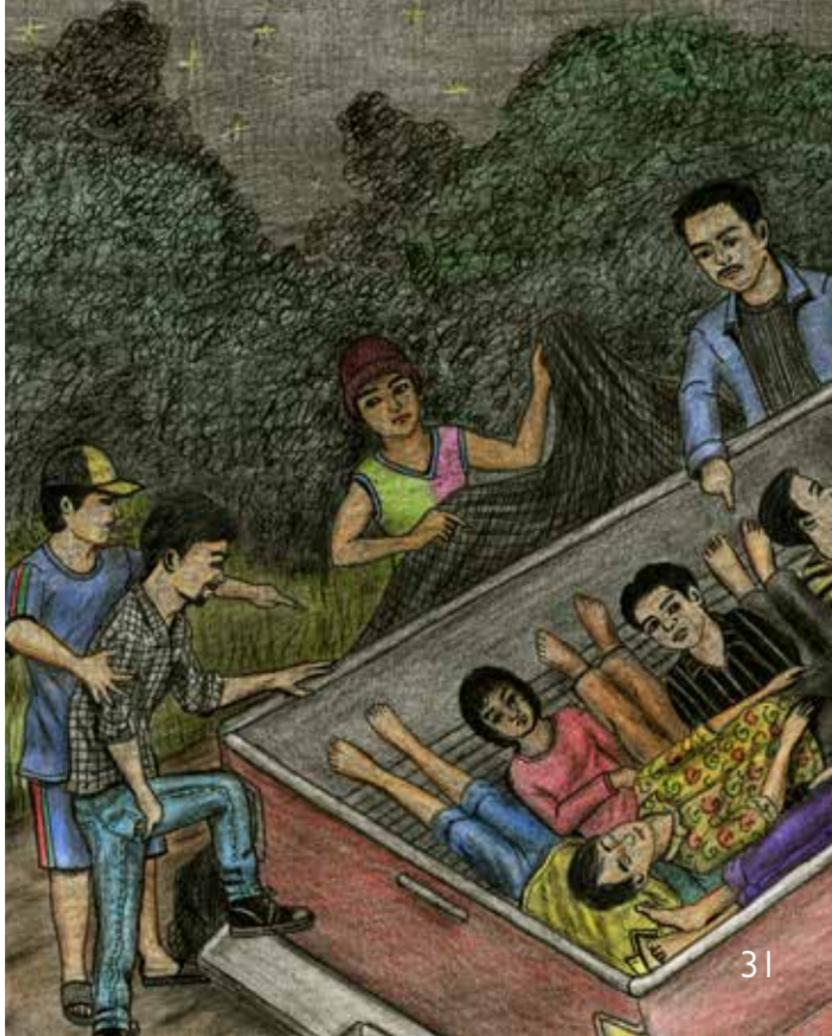
- Alexandre from Brazil, working in a charcoal camp
- Seven-year-old Kumar forced to work in an Indian brick kiln
- Tatyana from Moldova, trafficked to Italy
- Mariano working in the tomato fields of the U.S.
- Helia, a child from Haiti

Modern slavery isn't just a problem in other countries – it's a problem here.

In the U.S. people enslave others in both labor trafficking and sex trafficking situations. Labor traffickers commonly force people to work in agriculture and farms, as domestic servants, in restaurants and food service, in peddling and begging rings, as hostesses and dancers in strip clubs, in factories, and in the hospitality industry. In the U.S., these forms of labor trafficking are much more common than people realize.

Sex trafficking in the U.S. occurs in fake massage businesses, residential brothels, strip clubs, escort services and truck stops. It's often facilitated through the internet and street prostitution. Sex trafficking occurs when people – men and women – are forced or coerced into the commercial sex trade against their will. It includes any child involved in commercial sex.

We challenge you to share these stories with others and to take courageous steps for freedom today. Join Bass and Solomon and other abolitionists like Harriet Tubman and Frederick Douglass in supporting the emancipation of the world's slaves and supporting their roads to real freedom.





## WHAT HAPPENED TO SOLOMON NORTHUP?

After the release of his narrative in 1853, few records indicate what happened to Solomon Northup. Surviving documents show that he became a speaker at abolitionist rallies, and it's believed that he actively assisted enslaved individuals escape through the Underground Railroad. Records also show that Solomon attempted to pursue justice by filing a lawsuit against the men that enslaved him. The legal team that assisted him included Henry B. Northup, who traveled to the South to free Solomon, Orville Clark of Sandy Hill, New York, and Senator Salmon P. Chase from Ohio.

The first man they tried to convict for involvement in Solomon's kidnapping and enslavement was Washington D.C. slave trader William H. Burch. Burch was arrested; however, he was never convicted because no one would testify against him. Solomon's own testimony in the case was not permitted because of the color of his skin.

The two men who kidnapped and sold Solomon, Merrill Brown and Abram Hamilton (whose real name was Joseph Russell), were also arrested and tried on four charges. They were indicted on one of the charges: tricking Solomon into leaving Saratoga County in order to sell him as a slave. Unfortunately, the New York Court of Appeals overturned this indictment and sent the case back to the lower court. The lower court set a date for a new trial, but it never took place. There are no records as to why it did not. A newspaper in 1857 indicates that the case was discharged, "The People against Henry Merrill and Joseph Russell, under an indictment for kidnapping Solomon [sic] Northup. Case discharged." The case would never be tried again.

# INTERESTED IN LEARNING MORE?

## JOURNEY TO FREEDOM

Watch our documentary *Journey to Freedom* featuring Solomon Northup and Vannak Prum's stories in our beautiful Harriet Tubman Theater. *Journey to Freedom* focuses on the common roles played by individual abolitionists throughout history and the present day — Advocates, Defenders, Fighters, Caretakers — and then pulls back to reveal these individuals to be part of a vast network, a community of abolitionists, that has and continues to wage this battle. In showing the inter-related individual roles that everyday people have played in history and today to end slavery, *Journey to Freedom* really asks “Will you join the network?”

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Location: Harriet Tubman Theater on the 2nd floor

## SUITE FOR FREEDOM

*Suite for Freedom* is a brief orientation film that introduces the Freedom Center experience. *Suite for Freedom* features a trilogy of distinct but interrelated animated shorts tied together by a musical suite. It features three world-class animators and musicians combined with inspiring words to create a unique visual experience.

Location: Harriet Tubman Theater on the 2nd floor

## THE STRUGGLE CONTINUES

*The Struggle Continues* examines the desire to fight for freedom around the world and reminds us that slavery in many forms and guises continues to exist in the world around us.

*The Struggle Continues* explores six conditions or circumstances -- which we call “unfreedoms” --- that prevent people from achieving freedom and the protection of basic human rights. These unfreedoms are hunger, illiteracy, slavery, racism, tyranny and genocide.

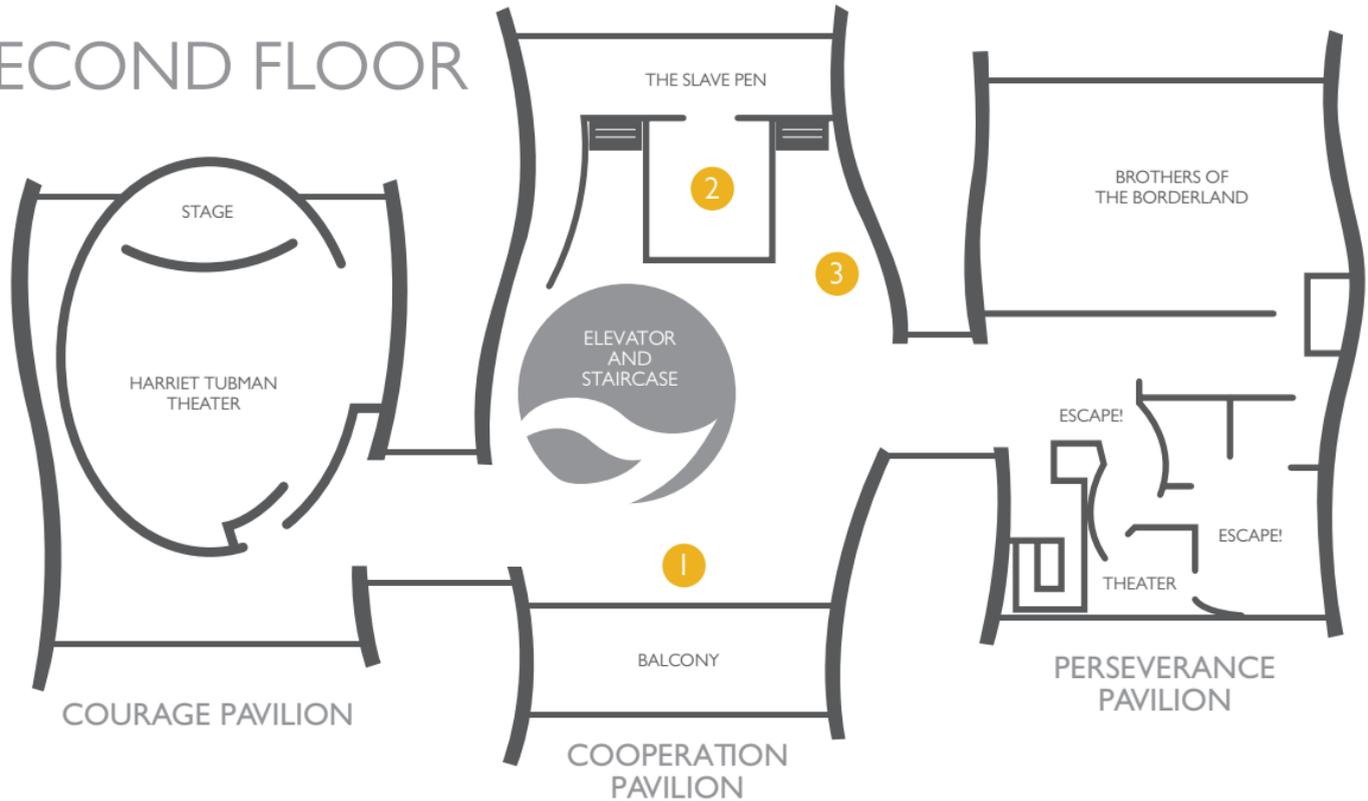
Location: 3rd floor, next to *Invisible: Slavery Today*

## BROTHERS OF THE BORDERLAND

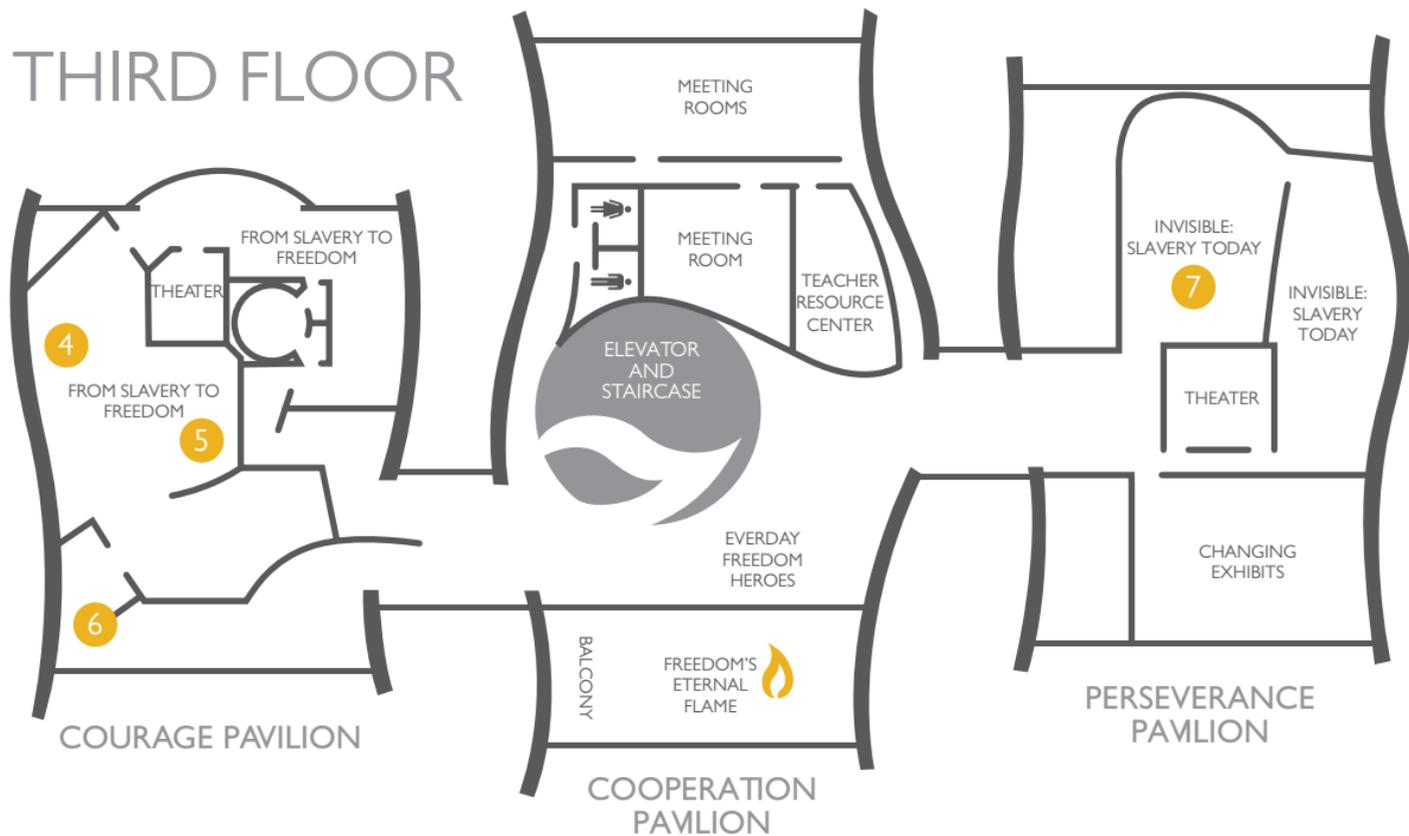
*Brothers of the Borderland* immerses guests in a thrilling flight to freedom, showcasing the courage and cooperation of John Parker and Rev. John Rankin as they aid a woman risking all to flee slavery. The 25-minute film features a segment narrated by Oprah Winfrey that introduces the main historical figures John Parker and Rev. John Rankin, abolitionists in Ripley, OH. The film is shown in an “experiential” theater, complete with fog rising from the river and crickets chirping in the background.

Location: 2nd floor, across from the *Escape* gallery

# SECOND FLOOR



# THIRD FLOOR



Images from the film *12 Years a Slave* are property of Fox Searchlight Pictures and are reproduced with permission. All rights reserved.

“Drawing of a Description of Williams Slave Pen from a Narrative Written by a Fugitive Slave,” courtesy of Dr. Sue Eakin, *Twelve Years A Slave Enhanced Edition*, 2013.

“Separation of Eliza and her Last Child,” 1853, Image in the Public Domain; courtesy of Dr. Sue Eakin, *Twelve Years A Slave Enhanced Edition*, 2013.

“Chapin Rescues Solomon from Hanging,” 1853, Image in the Public Domain; courtesy of Dr. Sue Eakin, *Twelve Years A Slave Enhanced Edition*, 2013.

Conveyance record for the sale of Northup, aka “Platt,” from Theophilus Freeman to planter William Prince Ford, 1841, Image in the Public Domain; courtesy of Dr. Sue Eakin, *Twelve Years A Slave Enhanced Edition*, 2013.

Vannak Prum, Sketch of himself smuggled in a truck, 2011, Collection of the National Underground Railroad Freedom Center.

“Arrival Home, and First Meeting with His Wife and Children,” 1853, Image in the Public Domain; courtesy of Dr. Sue Eakin, *Twelve Years A Slave Enhanced Edition*, 2013.

Tour curated by Richard Cooper and Brooke Hathaway  
Tour materials designed by Jesse Kramer

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If you've enjoyed your experience today, consider joining  
our movement by becoming a member of the museum  
or supporting our mission.



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National Underground Railroad  
**FREEDOM CENTER**