

**Application to
Indiana Landmarks / Black Heritage Preservation Grant**
*From the Calumet Heritage Partnership,
an Indiana not-for-profit organization*

Who or what is being recognized:

In the decades before the Civil War (1830–1861), hundreds of persons escaping their enslavement in southern states passed through northwestern Indiana. They had traveled through Illinois and were on their way to freedom in Canada. The core of this project is to identify and commemorate the journeys of these freedom seekers and the responding networks of the Underground Railroad across Lake, Porter, and La Porte Counties. In addition, in the 1840s and 1850s, northwest Indiana saw the beginnings of settlement by African Americans and their engagement in the Underground Railroad. The project would also connect with other historical periods containing unique freedom stories for African Americans and with activities in St. Joseph County and across northern Indiana.

Please describe how you want to recognize this heritage:

The Northwest Indiana Freedom Trail -- We are developing the “Freedom Trail” to commemorate the journeys of freedom seekers and the work of the Underground Railroad across northwest Indiana. This is a project of the Calumet Heritage Partnership, a long-standing Indiana organization engaged with cultural and environmental projects across northwest Indiana. This project would be the northwest Indiana part of the larger “Chicago Detroit Freedom Trail,” with parallel projects underway in Illinois and Michigan. Additional research and community engagement would provide the base for a Freedom Trail across northern Indiana. The Project builds from an initial planning meeting at Indiana Dunes National Park on May 31, 2023 with representatives from groups across northern Indiana.

The Calumet Heritage Partnership, in conjunction with the Little Calumet River Underground Railroad Project, is initiating this project and requesting, with strong matching elements, for a grant of \$9,950.00 from the Black Heritage Preservation program in support of this work. The Project will be continuously evolving so it would be possible to provide funding for a Phase I and a Phase II.

The Northwest Indiana Trail project will include community engagement and research to:

- Describe the two major streams of movement by freedom seekers through northwest Indiana, and additional movement taken by lake steamer and trains.
- Identify significant sites along these routes that are connected to the movement of freedom seekers, the networks of the Underground Railroad, Black settlement, and abolitionist activity, especially in relation to existing local historic places, state and national park properties.
- Identify locations for which application could be made to be placed on the National Park Service Network to Freedom listing of Underground Railroad sites of significance.

- Collect available information on existing historical/heritage resources including any related exhibits, historic markers, and cemetery sites.
- Recommend sites for historic markers, interpretive materials, and possible exhibits.
- Identify ways to connect with and commemorate other sites and events in Black history that are close to the Freedom Trail.
- Develop connections with civic organizations, schools and other institutions interested in our materials and further engagement with the emergence of the NW Indiana Freedom Trail
- Offer public programs in the Fall of 2023 to introduce “The Northwest Indiana Freedom Trail” as part of the “Chicago Detroit Freedom Trail.”
- Create an initial “Digital Trail” as an online resource.
- Interpret this region as part of a larger three-state corridor for the “Chicago to Detroit Freedom Trail.”
- Provide the base for developing detailed guides for automobile, bus, and bicycle tours of the Freedom Trail.

A northern Indiana Freedom Trail:

- Develop connections with other Underground Railroad sites in South Bend and across northern Indiana.
- Create the basic elements for a “Northern Indiana Freedom Trail” route and connections that encompasses the NW Indiana Freedom Trail and extends a route for automobile and bicycle travel across the northern tier of Indiana.

The above outlines the elements for the basic plan and the beginnings of a digital version of the Trail. Ways to build upon these initial ideas are reflected in the attached three-stage plan for the larger Chicago to Detroit Freedom Trail. In Indiana there are potential partners in local history groups, organizations with predominantly Black membership and goals, racially diverse communities, and levels of government who will be interested in being aware of and connecting with this project. The Project materials should prove to be of great value for taking the next steps toward designating sites of importance, creating historic markers, organizing community events, and creating educational materials. The Project would also research materials related to the movement of freedom seekers and the networks of the Underground Railroad in St. Joseph County, South Bend and east across northern Indiana although it appears that historically these reflect a different network of activity related to southern Indiana and not to the movement from Chicago to Detroit.

The Calumet Heritage Partnership, based in Indiana, has, for many years, been engaged across the region in heritage, cultural and environmental concerns. For this project, they will act as fiscal agent and collaborate with the Little Calumet River Underground Railroad Project and specifically the work of Professor Larry McClellan. He is a recognized authority in northeastern Illinois and has written extensively on the history of freedom seekers and the Underground Railroad. His book on *The Underground Railroad South of Chicago* includes the currently most comprehensive review of the movement of freedom seekers across northwest Indiana. He was the principal author for applications accepted for sites listed by the National Park Service’s Network to Freedom program. He is Emeritus Professor of Sociology and Community Studies at Governors State University and has lectured and written about freedom seekers and the Underground Railroad in Illinois and Indiana. For this work, the Partnership will contract with Professor McClellan and Tom Shepherd, who has served as Coordinator for the wide activities of

the Little Calumet River Underground Railroad Project. Both have been involved with the Calumet Heritage Partnership for years. Professor McClellan worked with Illinois and Indiana colleagues years ago to create the Calumet Heritage Partnership. In South Bend and for communities to the east, Brother Sage Gillam will assist with community engagement and research. He has been deeply involved with Underground Railroad research and community projects and with the National Park Service Network to Freedom programs.

***What is the history of this heritage, its importance or significance.
Please support with primary sources of information***

From the 1830s until the Civil War, individuals and families escaping enslavement in southern states came up the Mississippi River valley and then up the Illinois River valley into northern Illinois and continued across northwest Indiana. Across this region, there were two streams of movement for freedom seekers. From the Illinois River valley, many chose to continue northeast to Chicago, then overland south around the bottom of Lake Michigan and into Indiana. A stream of movement also came out of the Illinois River valley but continued east across Will County and southern Cook County in Illinois into northwest Indiana. Following these two streams, 3,000 to 4,500 people escaping from slavery came to and through the Chicago region in the decades before the Civil War. Almost all continued on toward Detroit and Canada. Some, after reaching Chicago, found passage on ships and lake steamers from Chicago to Detroit; some traveled by lake steamers along the south coast of Lake Michigan and then overland to Detroit, and much later some traveled to Detroit by train. All the others left northeastern Illinois overland to cross northwest Indiana. Those coming overland in Indiana numbered between seven hundred and fifteen hundred, with people travelling as individuals, families and small groups. In addition, a separate pattern of movement saw freedom seekers travel up through Indiana and pass through South Bend and communities to the east on their way to Detroit and freedom in Canada

When Chicago was first settled, a crucial element was the road from Detroit. People from the northeastern states used the lakes and rivers, but also needed a land route to reach Chicago and the "Illinois Country." An early major road ran between Detroit and Chicago and in northwest Indiana and Illinois, the road was on the lakeshore. In the 1820s and 30s, at times this beach road was great for wagons and stagecoaches and at other times the beaches were impassable.

In 1837, a new route developed that went straight south 15 miles from the growing community of Chicago to a ferry that crossed the Little Calumet River. Within a few years, this was replaced with a bridge. From the beginning, this was known as the "Riverdale Crossing." The ferry and bridge were at what is now the Indiana Avenue Bridge. The road from Chicago crossed the Little Calumet and turned to the southeast on what becomes Michigan City Road [this name is a remnant of the old historic road Detroit-Chicago Road which passes through Michigan City]. The road continued through Hammond, the Indiana dunes, and Michigan City, reaching into southern Michigan. Much of this route followed trails created by indigenous peoples.

In the second stream of movement, freedom seekers traveling directly east from the Illinois River valley were in the corridor of the old Sauk Trail, a highway established by indigenous peoples hundreds of years earlier. This connected Native American communities

along the Mississippi River (near Rock Island) with settlements across the region reaching to Detroit. Going through Joliet, it continued through Park Forest and close to Crete and, in Indiana, Dyer, Valparaiso, Westville and La Porte. From there it reached northeastward into Michigan. There, the Sauk Trail joined with and was the base for the original Detroit to Chicago Road across southern Michigan.

In seeking to understand the movement of freedom seekers, it is useful to think of these as streams of movement, or within corridors of movement. One stream more or less follows the Detroit-Chicago Road and the other the Sauk Trail, coming together in southwest Michigan. However, due to weather and other conditions that impacted on the movement of freedom seekers, these should not be seen as specific, "fixed" routes. In a similar way, the movement of freedom seekers north through Indiana followed several differing corridors of travel.

In northwest Indiana, the corridor for the movement of freedom seekers followed the old Detroit-Chicago Road near the southern edge of Lake Michigan. There is initial evidence of the movement of freedom seekers and responses that became the networks of the Underground Railroad in Hammond, along the dunes, in Crisman, Chesterton and Tremont and on into Michigan City and to the south of that community. Jan Ton, a Dutch farmer on the Little Calumet River near the Indiana Avenue bridge brought freedom seekers by wagon to Hammond.

South of that line, in the corridor following the Sauk Trail, there is initial evidence of freedom seekers and the Underground Railroad in Dyer, Merrillville, in and near Valparaiso, Westville and La Porte. The well-known story of Caroline Quarlls, who escaped from St. Louis in 1843 at age 16 and completed a remarkable journey across the Midwest to Canada stopped with a family in Westville. Northeast of La Porte, the Sauk Trail corridor reaches into southwest Michigan and turns east toward Detroit.

There is also evidence of freedom seekers traveling along the southern coast of Lake Michigan, having passage on small lake steamers that served early communities. Trains reached New Buffalo in 1850-51 and so travel was possible to Detroit by lake steamer and train. After 1852, there were full train connections from Chicago to Detroit with initial evidence of trains being used by freedom seekers.

Across the central and eastern counties of northern Indiana, there is initial evidence of the movement of freedom seekers in South Bend, Bristol, Goshen, Orland and Fremont.

In addition to the movement of freedom seekers, there is evidence of settlement in northern Indiana by African American families and individuals in the 1840s and 1850s. Also, at the time, there were several Quaker settlements and others who assisted freedom seekers.

The Northwest Indian Freedom Trail and the initial work focused on northern Indiana to the east of the Trail, will assist us all in understanding and documenting the profoundly important role played by the region in the movement of freedom seekers and the Underground Railroad. African American and Quaker settlements also need to be explored and their stories introduced. All of this is crucial to reframing stories of this period to more fully understand these unique elements in our common American history.

A beginning list of resources and references for this research:

Bordewich, Fergus M. *Bound for Canaan, The Underground Railroad and the War for the Soul of America*. New York: Harper Collins, 2005.

Brennan, George. *The Wonders of the Dunes*. Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1923.

- Drew, Benjamin. *The Refugee or The Narratives of Fugitive Slaves in Canada*. Boston: J. P. Jewett, 1856. Reprinted as *The Narratives of Fugitive Slaves*. Toronto: Prospero Books, 2000.
- Frost, Karolyn Smardz and Veta Smith Tucker. *A Fluid Frontier, Slavery, Resistance, and the Underground Railroad in the Detroit River Borderland*. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2016.
- History of La Porte County, Indiana*. Chicago: Chas. C. Chapman & Co., 1880.
- Howat, William. *A Standard History of Lake County, Indiana and the Calumet Region*. Chicago: Lewis Publishing Co., 1919.
- Julian, George W. "The Rank of Charles Osborn, Anti-Slavery Pioneer," *Indiana Historical Society Publications, Vol. II, No. 6*, 1891.
- LaRoche, Cheryl J. *The Geography of Resistance, Free Black Communities and the Underground Railroad*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2014.
- McClellan, Larry A. *The Underground Railroad South of Chicago*. Crete, IL: Thorn Creek Press, 2019.
- McClellan, Larry A. and Kimberly Simmons. *To the River, the Remarkable Journey of Caroline Quarlls, A Freedom Seeker on the Underground Railroad*. Crete, IL: Thorn Creek Press, 2019.
- Olin, Chauncey C. *A Complete Record of the John Olin Family*. Indianapolis: Baker-Randolph, 1893.
- Siebert, Wilbur H. *The Underground Railroad from Slavery to Freedom*. New York: The Macmillan Co., 1898.
- Siebert, Wilbur H. Collection of papers at Ohio Historical Society. Includes letters from persons in Indiana involved with the Underground Railroad.
- Underground Railroad Research in Select Indiana Counties*. Indianapolis: Division of Historic Preservation and Archaeology, 2003.
- Underground Railroad Research in Indiana*. Indianapolis: Division of Historic Preservation and Archaeology, 2003.
- Windle, Helen H. *The Underground Railroad in Northern Indiana*. South Bend: Privately published, 1939.

Timeframe for the project: 8-month project, projected completion: March 31, 2024
Depending upon the date of the receipt of grant support, the work of the Project could be seen in Phase I for four months and Phase II for four months.

Summer, 2023 - major elements

- Community engagement – convene regional meetings across NW Indiana and in South Bend for communities to the east. Establish collaborations with all interested groups and communities. Begin planning for commemorative events
- Research – continue work to document sites and routes across northern Indiana begin outlining specifics for the Freedom Trail for driving, identifying sites and routes with online materials, website development

Fall, 2023 - major elements

- Community engagement – sponsor regional gatherings to present initial plans and long term objectives to partners and general public. Seek online and newspaper

coverage of developments. Develop social media connections. Create advisory group for Freedom Trail.

Research – Continue documentation work and identify sites, patterns, historical events for possible commemoration through markers, stories, publications

Winter, 2024 - major elements

Community engagement – Use online and public resources to publicize the Freedom Trail. Work with groups and communities to identify and connect with elements in the Freedom Trail. Develop specific “way-marking” plan, that is, ideas for signage, markers, descriptive material

Research – Develop preliminary materials for printed and online guides to the Freedom Trail

Photos – see at end of materials :

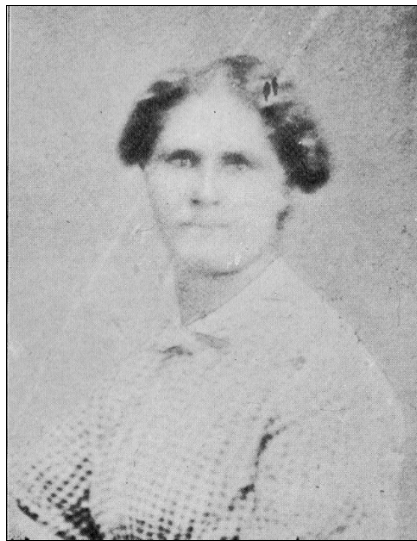
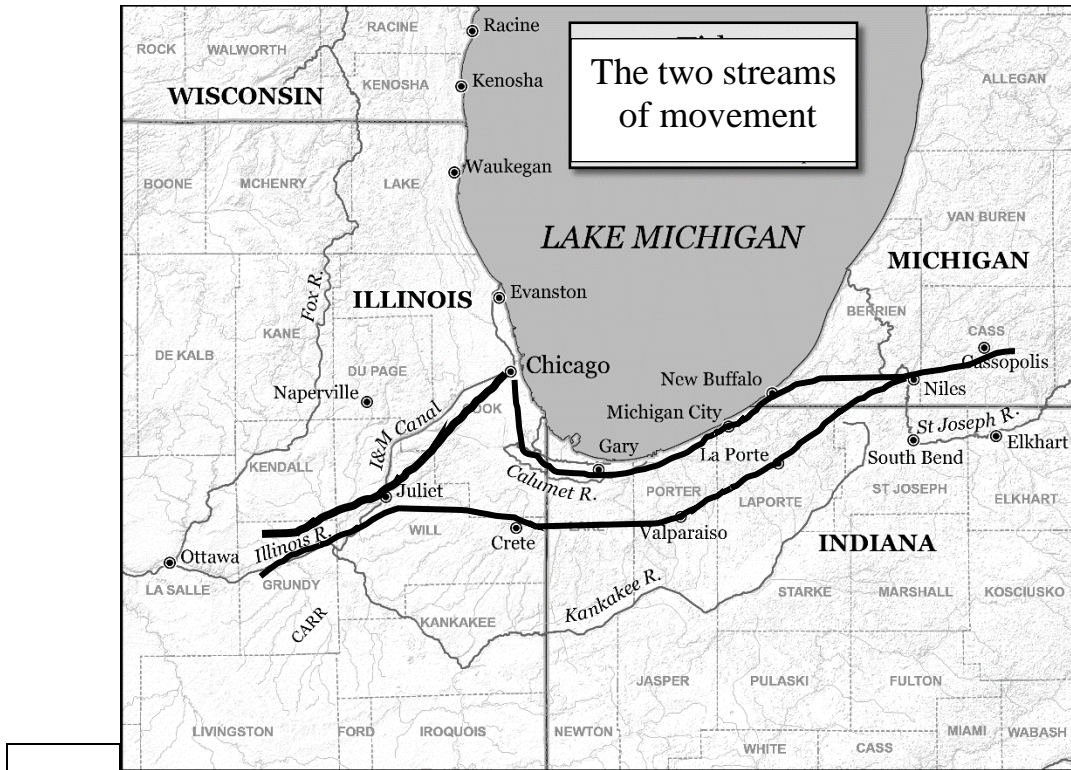
Map of the two streams of movement

Caroline Quarlls – in 1843 escaped from enslavement in St. Louis, on her journey to Canada, she stopped over in Westville

Historic Marker for Dr. Palmer in Merrillville, Lake County

Summary for Planned Budget:

	Total	Budget	In-Kind
Professor McClellan equivalent of 18 days @ \$500 / day	9,000	4,500	4,500
Mr. Shepherd equivalent of 12 days @ \$300 / day	3,600	1,800	1,800
Mr. Gillam equivalent of 6 days @ \$300 / day	1,800	900	900
Travel – multiple trips & site visits	900	900	
Research materials	200	200	
Printing/Copy costs	300	300	
Online/digitalizing costs	400	400	
Administrative support – CHP @ % 5.0	500	500	
Public Meetings-Honoria, fees	750	450	300
	17,450	9,950	7,500



Caroline Quarlls



Dr. Palmer

Proposal details from the initial Concept Paper:

Chicago Detroit Freedom Trail

Commemorating the Journeys of Freedom Seekers
and the Responding Networks of the Underground Railroad

Initial Concepts

Little Calumet River Underground Railroad Project

Larry A. McClellan

Three Major Areas for Development and Funding

Basic Trail Design

- Research and identify existing historic elements and connections
- Create a basic mapping framework for the Trail
- Create an initial “Digital Trail” online version of the Chicago Detroit Freedom Trail

Community Engagement

- Collaborate with community groups and institutions on Trail development and linkages to other freedom stories and locations
- Identify significant places and stories to connect on the Trail and locations for historic markers, interpretive signs, exhibits
- Recruit groups and organizations to establish their presence on the Trail – through signage, interpretive materials, etc
- Expand the “Digital Trail” to connect these groups and elements
- Create a “CDFT Advisory Board” with representation from Illinois, Indiana & Michigan

Recognition and Collaborations

- Collaborate with national, state and local governments and agencies to recognize and support this as a national heritage trail
- Encourage local entities to link their programming with the Trail
- Engage with local entities to seek funding and other forms of support for historic markers, interpretive signs, exhibits
- Collaborate with the Indiana Freedom Trails Commission and its resources
- Collaborate with the Michigan Freedom Trail Commission to integrate with and expand on their existing “Michigan Freedom Trail”
- Develop distinctive way-marking symbols and signage
- Identify specific places for directional signage
- Manage a fully developed “Digital Trail”
- Create guidebooks for heritage tourism on the Trail, for use with cars, bicycles, buses

March 1, 2023