Canada to Honor International Icon Harriet Tubman, as a National Historic Person, at May 27, 2011 Plaque Unveiling in St. Catharines, Ontario

The Government of Canada will honor international icon Harriet Tubman as a person of national historic significance, on May 27, 2011, at the Niagara region church where the distinguished abolitionist and Underground Railroad conductor worshipped.

The Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada will recognize Tubman with the national designation for her heroism and outstanding contributions during a plaque dedication program at 11:00 am, Friday, May 27, 2011 at:

Salem Chapel British Methodist Episcopal (BME) Church
National Historic Site of Canada
92 Geneva Street
St. Catharines, Ontario L2R 4N2
Canada Phone: 905-682-0993

Born circa 1822 into slavery in Dorchester County, Maryland, Harriet Tubman escaped to Philadelphia, Pennsylvania in 1849, before the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850 that federalized the return of escaped slaves to their owners. She returned often to dangerous slaveholding territory to free others, including her family. Tubman is a North American icon who symbolizes the Underground Railroad, the historic resistance to enslavement through flight to freedom in the Western Hemisphere: she was a chief conductor on this clandestine network of antislavery activists and safe houses, guiding many enslaved through such dangerous territory, at great personal risk, to safety and freedom in the North, and especially Canada.

The British Imperial Slavery Abolition Act 1833 came into force August 1, 1834, to outlaw slavery throughout the British Empire. At that time, the Empire spanned several continents and encompassed parts of the Caribbean, Africa, Canada, India, China, Australia, and South America as far as the tip of Argentina. This historic action fueled abolition movements worldwide that led to slavery’s end in Europe, the Caribbean colonies, the U.S., and South America.
INTERNATIONAL BLACK HISTORY NEWS

From 1850 to 1861, Tubman made her base of operations in St. Catharines, Canada West (now Ontario), where she was a leader in the abolitionist community, worked with church groups to help black refugees adapt to life in Canada, and fought to end slavery in the U.S. Tubman lived there and worshipped at the Salem Chapel BME Church, which was active in the antislavery movement.

Tubman served honorably during the U.S. Civil War (1861-1865) as a cook, nurse, scout, and spy for the Union forces in Virginia, South Carolina, and Florida. She again risked her life and advanced the quest for freedom by aiding enslaved persons. President Abraham Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation in January 1863, and some five months later in June 1863, Tubman guided Union troops in South Carolina on a successful raid along the Combahee River. The raid: freed over 700 enslaved persons; destroyed enemy commissary stores and buildings; and confiscated Confederate property. In 1865, the U.S. achieved the war’s end and the 13th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution that ended slavery.

After the war, Tubman settled in Auburn, New York, where she cared for her family and other blacks who sought sanctuary in the North, and fought for progressive causes, including women’s suffrage. A deeply spiritual person involved with the African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Zion Church, Tubman donated land to the church on which she founded a home for poor and elderly blacks. Harriet Tubman died March 10, 1913 at this home and was buried with full military honors at the nearby Fort Hill Cemetery.

Harriet Tubman received numerous honors and tributes in her lifetime. Among many who praised her were her contemporaries, abolitionist Frederick Douglass and women’s suffragist leader Susan B. Anthony. Queen Victoria recognized former British subject Tubman’s distinguished contributions and invited her to the Diamond Jubilee Celebration (60th anniversary of the queen’s reign) in England, providing a gift of a shawl (ca. 1897) and according to accounts, a Diamond Jubilee silver medal.

In a March 21, 2011 statement in the Canadian House of Commons, Rick-Dykstra, Member of Parliament for St. Catharines [http://www.rickdykstra.ca/ ] said, “The Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada will honor Harriet Tubman with a plaque to commemorate her heroism for future generations of Canadians…On May 27, I will proudly be joined by the members of the BME Church and my community to celebrate Harriet Tubman as one of Canada’s leading abolitionists and a person of national historic significance.”

Harriet Tubman Institute for Research on the Global Migrations of African Peoples York University | Toronto, Ontario Commemorating the UN International Year for People of African Descent http://harriet.tubman1.yorku.ca/

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Related Tourism Resources
Toronto Pearson International Airport http://www.gtaa.com/en/home/

Via Rail Canada [with service to Toronto and Niagara Falls, Ontario]
http://www.viarail.ca/en

Ontario Black History Society
http://www.blackhistorysociety.ca/

Toronto Convention and Visitors Association
http://www.seetorontonow.com/

Niagara Falls Convention and Visitors Bureau http://www.niagarafallstourism.com/

City of St. Catharines Tourism
http://www.tourismstcatharines.ca/

The National Historical Park in New York will be located in Auburn and will focus on her later years where she was active in the women’s suffrage movement and in providing for the welfare of aged African Americans.
Harriet Tubman was born in Dorchester County, Maryland, where she spent nearly 30 years as a slave. She escaped slavery in 1849, but returned for more than 10 years to Dorchester and Caroline counties where she led hundreds of African Americans to freedom. Known as “Moses” by African-American and white abolitionists, she reportedly never lost a “passenger” on the Underground Railroad. Tubman was also a U.S. Civil War cook, nurse, scout and spy.

For more Information
U.S. Senate Bill S.247, visit http://www.govtrack.us or http://www.thomas.gov and enter the bill number.


Related Information
National Park Service Harriet Tubman Special Resource Study
http://www.harriettubmanstudy.org/

Harriet Tubman Historical Society
Vivian Abdur-Rahim, Founder
Website: www.harriettubman.com

Charles L. Blockson Afro American Collection, Temple University http://library.temple.edu/collections/blockson/


International Coalition of Sites of Conscience sitesofconscience.org Smithsonian Harriet Tubman Collection nmaahc.si.edu/

Washington Post March 11, 2010 article Distinguished Historian/Curator Charles Blockson Donates Harriet Tubman artifacts to Smithsonian
http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/03/10/AR2010031003451.html

SAVE THE DATE cont.

Frederick Douglass Path to Freedom Walking Tours and Harriet Tubman in Maryland events | Summer/Fall 2011 | and Annual Harriet Tubman Day in Maryland | March 2012 Contact: Lou Fields | email: loucfields@gmail.com


Main Website: http://www.karenjonesmeadows.com/ Email: onpurposenow@cs.com

Nkeiru Okoye, Composer Harriet Tubman: When I Crossed that Line to Freedom Opera

Main Website: http://www.harriettubmanopera.com/ Email: nkeiruokoye@mac.com

African American Civil War Memorial Freedom Foundation and Museum Museum Grand Opening | July 16-18, 2011 | Washington, DC

Commemorating the 150th Anniversary of the U.S. Civil War 2011 to 2015 [The museum will include an international dimension in its interpretation and exhibits related to the contributions of Blacks to the U.S. Civil War].

http://www.afroamcivilwar.org