

Introduction of Sheri Jackson

Sheri Jackson, Southeast Regional Manager of the National Park Service's National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom Program, has worked 26 years with the National Park Service. Sixteen of those years have been with the Network to Freedom Program.

The Network to Freedom Program is a national program in the National Park Service that tells the stories of freedom seekers from all over the United States. This program has over 600 members, including sites, facilities, and programs. Through this program, Freedom seeker's histories, from their escape site, their journey, their destination site, and their burial site have all been connected.

Jackson works with local, state, and federal entities, as well as interested individuals and organizations to provide advice, subject matter expertise and technical support to preserve and tell the stories of the Underground Railroad (UGRR). The program demonstrates the significance of the UGRR not only in the eradication of slavery, but also as a cornerstone of our national civil rights movement.

Sheri explains the definition of the Underground Railroad which is often misunderstood:

The UGRR was not a train operating along hidden railroad tracks. The UGRR refers to the efforts of enslaved Africans to gain their freedom through escape and flight – and the assistance of people who opposed slavery and willingly chose to help them to escape – through the end of the U.S. Civil War. Wherever slavery existed, there were efforts to escape, at first, to maroon communities in rugged terrain away from settled areas, and later across state and international borders.

