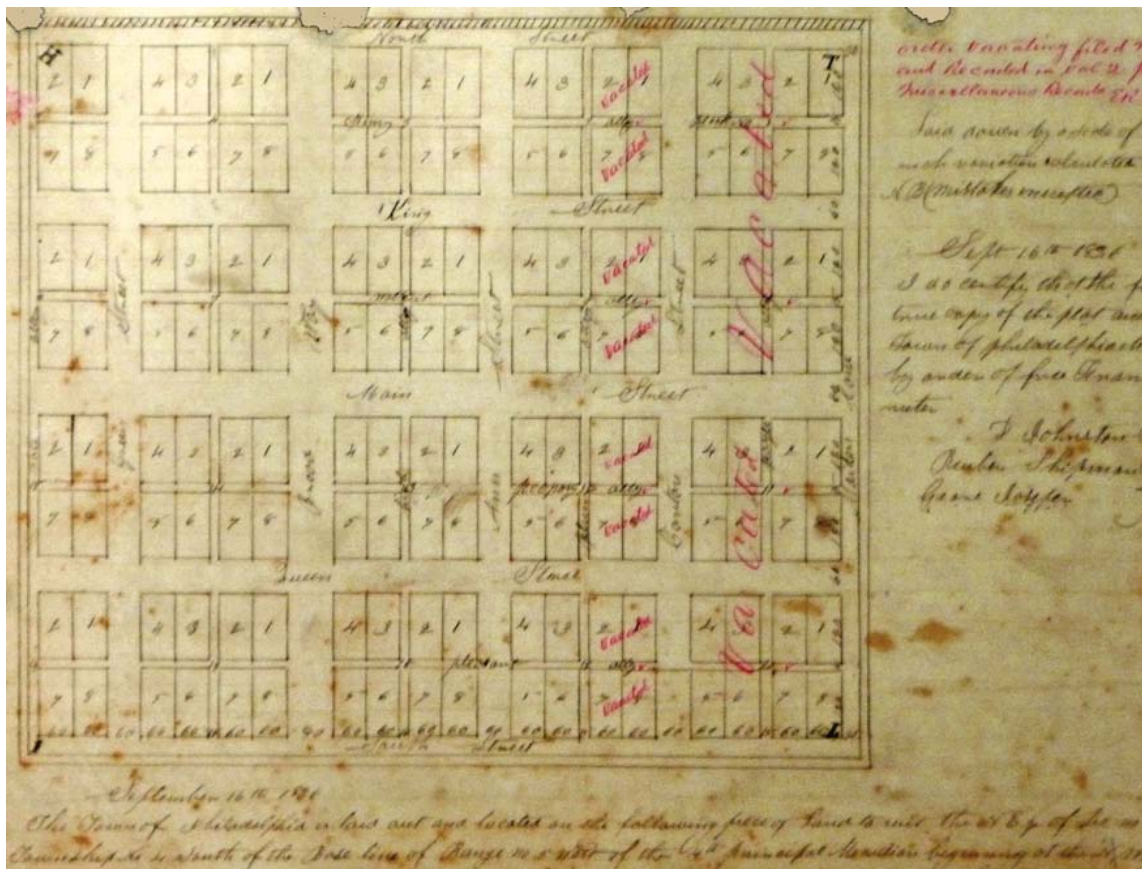


# Chapter 1

## Introduction

In 1836, Frank McWorter platted a town in west central Illinois and named it Philadelphia (later known as New Philadelphia). What made this act so remarkable was the fact that McWorter, also known as “Free Frank,” had purchased himself out of slavery only seventeen years before. Thus, New Philadelphia was not only an early town on the Illinois frontier, but it was the first town in the United States planned, founded, and formally registered by an African American.

The town that McWorter established consisted of 42 acres divided into 20 blocks separated by nine major streets and a series of named alleys and lanes (Figure 1.1). Federal and state censuses depict a town composed of residents of African and European ancestry originating in the states of the east, as well as from adjoining states and territories. The Illinois state census of 1865 records a population of 160 -- the town’s peak. By 1885, however, the community was no longer registered as a town and a number of the lots reverted to agricultural use. Over time, the entire 42 acres was returned to cultivation, and today, none of the town’s structures are visible above ground.



**Figure 1.1.** 1836 plat for New Philadelphia with 1885 notations. Sources: Pike County Deed Book, Vol. 9, 1836, p. 183.

Remembrances of New Philadelphia have been collected over the years (Matteson 1964, Burdick 1992), and the story of the town's founding is described in *Free Frank: A Black Pioneer on the Antebellum Frontier* (Walker 1983; 1995 reissue ed.). A new phase of research began with the historical and archaeological studies undertaken at the behest of the New Philadelphia Association, starting in 2002. Research from 2004 to 2006 was supported in part by a grant from the National Science Foundation and its Research Experiences for Undergraduates program (NSF-REU Grant number 0353550). A second NSF-REU was awarded in 2008 (Grant number 0752834). Reports on prior research are available on two linked websites dedicated to the New Philadelphia archaeology project ([www.heritage.umd.edu/](http://www.heritage.umd.edu/) and [www.histarch.uiuc.edu/NP/](http://www.histarch.uiuc.edu/NP/)). The present document presents developments and findings since the publication of the report for the 2008 field season (Fennell et al. 2009).

## **Research and related developments preceding the 2010 excavation season**

Research and analysis conducted prior to 2010 led to the identification of at least fourteen structures, thirty-six archaeological features, and over 100,000 artifacts, faunal, and botanical specimens. The structures were built using a mix of techniques and materials, including log as well as frame construction, with some builders utilizing stone and brick for foundations. Household items, tools, and consumer goods came to New Philadelphia from throughout the United States and beyond, although the finds also point to ties to local markets and merchants (Shackel et al. 2006).

Based on surface concentrations of artifacts, the main corridors of development in the town were along Broad Way and Main Street. Excavation has revealed the presence of structures not indicated by the written record. The distribution of households and businesses across the town site does not appear to have been shaped by principles of racial segregation, as families of European and African descent were found to be spatially interspersed throughout the nineteenth century (Shackel et al. 2006).

The 2008 season of the field school continued to fulfill the NSF-REU program's aim to provide a rigorous training in excavation and analytical methods to students from diverse backgrounds. Among the goals of the project is to recruit students from smaller colleges that may not offer archaeological field schools, and to train students from underrepresented groups within the discipline, in order to increase future diversity in the field of archaeology. At least two students from that field school are pursuing advanced degrees in anthropological archaeology (at the University of California at Berkeley and Illinois State University) and one is in graduate school for history. Given the paucity of students of color in anthropology and history graduate programs in the United States (Agbe-Davies 2002), to have had a hand in the training of two such students in one year is a notable achievement for the New Philadelphia project.

Participants in the New Philadelphia project successfully nominated the town site to the National Register of Historic Places in 2005. Thus, the town site joined the Frank McWorter grave site (successfully nominated in 1988 by Dr. Juliet Walker) on that list of "historic places worthy of preservation." In 2008 the National Historic Landmarks Committee voted unanimously to approve the nomination of the New Philadelphia town site for National Historic Landmark status. The designation was granted in January 2009 (see NPS [website](#) 2009). This successful

application was officially supported by numerous elected representatives including, from Illinois: Senators Richard Durbin and Barack Obama; U.S. Representatives Ray LaHood and John Shimkus; State Senators Deanna Demuzio; Emil Jones, Jr., and John Sullivan; and State Representative Jil Tracy and Mary Flowers, among others.

Additional legislation has been introduced by U.S. Senator Roland Burris and U.S. Representative Aaron Schock. The two study acts (S. 1629 and H.R. 5455) seek to authorize funding for activities including “determining the suitability and feasibility of designating the study area as a unit of the National Park System” The former was approved for consideration by the Senate, and the latter was re-introduced by Congressman Schock in early May 2011.

The Archaeological Conservancy finalized the purchase of approximately nine acres of the town site, another important step for the site’s preservation. The parcel includes Blocks 2, 3, 8, and 9 and the Conservancy’s mission will ensure that the archaeological site at New Philadelphia will be protected for future generations to explore and enjoy.

We continue to publish technical reports on all research undertaken for the New Philadelphia project, including analyses of excavated material, results of geophysical, surface, and shovel test surveys. We have also transcribed relevant census, tax assessment, deed, and newspaper information for use by colleagues and the general public. These reports and transcriptions are available via the Internet on sites hosted by the University of Maryland Center for Heritage [Resource Studies](#) and the University of [Illinois](#).

Recent articles written by members of the project have appeared in such publications as *Illinois Antiquity* (Fay et al. 2009), the Society for American Archaeology’s [Archaeological Record](#), The Society for Historical Archaeology’s [Newsletter](#), and the *African Diaspora Archaeology Network Newsletter*. Members of the project have also presented numerous papers and posters about specific aspects of the project at regional, national, and international conferences. The results of one New Philadelphia conference symposium recently appeared in print as a special issue of *Historical Archaeology* “New Philadelphia: Racism, Community, and the Illinois Frontier” (Fennell et. al. 2010). Information about the project has also appeared in general interest publications such as *American Archaeology Magazine* (Agbe-Davies 2010, Picat 2009), and the *Harvard Gazette* (Powell 2010).

In 2008, the New Philadelphia archaeology project had the opportunity to host the archaeologists from the PBS television series [Time Team America](#). The Time Team initiated a three-day excavation project during which they used geophysical techniques and targeted excavation in an attempt to identify the schoolhouse that has thus far eluded archaeologists, in part because of contradictory historical evidence and likelihood that any such structure would have left only a faint archaeological trace. Results of that excavation were included in the 2008 technical report. The television episode resulting from the collaboration was first broadcast in the summer of 2009.

Although there was no excavation in 2009, the New Philadelphia project speaker series continued, supported by a grant from the Illinois Humanities Council, the National Endowment for the Humanities, and the Illinois General Assembly. The series consisted of six lectures

addressing such topics as the undergraduate experience of the NSF-REU program, the use of technology in public outreach and presentation, inequality and the built environment in nineteenth-century Illinois, and the life and accomplishments of Harriet Tubman.

## **Overview of 2010 research and educational activities**

The 2010 season marks the second year of research sponsored by the 2008 NSF-REU. The project is co-directed by Anna Agbe-Davies (University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill [UNC]), Christopher Fennell (University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign [UIUC]) and Terrance Martin (Illinois State Museum [ISM]). The twin goals of the project continue to be 1) exploring the nature of social relationships in this frontier town through archaeological and documentary research, and 2) ensuring the preservation and protection of the site. The major research objectives also remain consistent, to:

- understand New Philadelphia's founding and its development as an integrated town
- explore and contrast dietary patterns between households of different ethnic and regional backgrounds via the examination of faunal and botanical remains
- reconstruct the town landscape and the use of town lots, with the understanding that the different ethnic and regional backgrounds of the town's households may have an influential role
- elucidate the consumer choices made by households in this frontier context, with particular attention to the role played by markets and structural racism

In May 2010, Fennell obtained a grant from the University of Illinois to support a LiDAR (Light Detection and Ranging) survey of the New Philadelphia townsite and surrounding landscape. This survey will be an important compliment to other survey techniques that have been used to identify significant archaeological features within the town. Furthermore, it provides detailed topographic information for comparison with the original town plat, which should help to establish how much of the town was ultimately developed as planned.

The summer speaker series continued in 2010 with a program that included a variety of speakers on the theme *Navigating Landscapes of Struggle and Freedom*. The talks were sponsored by the New Philadelphia Association, Sprague's Kinderhook Lodge in Pike County, and the Illinois State Museum Research and Collections Center in Springfield. The theme was particularly appropriate for the first year that the series was designated the *Marvin J. and Thomas Leo Likes Memorial Lecture Series*, in honor of two individuals who did so much to provide crucial surveying assistance in the project's early years, and continued advice as the archaeological investigations moved forward.

The lectures gave the students an opportunity to hear cutting-edge research from a range of experts, but were also geared toward a general audience. Students, New Philadelphia Association members, Pike County residents, and McWorter family members, descendants of families who resided at New Philadelphia, along with many others formed a lively and attentive audience. Talks were presented by Michael Hargrave and Carl Carlson-Drexler (U.S. Army Engineer Research and Development Center, Construction Engineering Research Laboratory, Champaign, Illinois), Andrew Agha (Brockington and Associates, Cultural Resource

Consultants), Norman D. Ellerbrock, PLS (Likes Land Surveyors, Inc.), Paul A. Shackel (University of Maryland, College Park), Anna S. Agbe-Davies (UNC), Terry Ransom (Illinois Underground Railroad Research Network) and Christopher Fennell (UIUC), Rebecca Ginsburg (UIUC), and John Michael Vlach (George Washington University).

The ten-week field school commenced on May 25 and concluded on July 30, 2010. Instruction in excavation and recording methods, artifact identification, archival research, and laboratory analysis was complimented by field trips to nearby archaeological and heritage sites. Students also participated in several discussion sessions that framed the project in light of larger issues such as race and racism, heritage, and public history. Several of these sessions used as their prompt videos, such as the PBS series “African-American Lives” and the New Philadelphia episode of “Time Team America,” or other reference points, such as the controversy surrounding remarks about reparations by leading African American scholars, and proposed DNA profiling of university students in California. Other discussions included a workshop exploring the concept of “community” in which students worked side by side with New Philadelphia Association members and other stakeholders, and a debate about future directions for heritage management and presentation at the town site.

Planning for the excavation season included an introductory week of geophysical survey and four weeks of excavation at the town site. The remaining five weeks were devoted to artifact identification, cataloguing, and analysis at the Illinois State Museum Research and Collection Center in Springfield. After discussions including members of the research team, consulting specialists, and community stakeholders, the following list of priorities was established.

- a) Target Block 12 for geophysical survey and excavation. A shovel test pit survey of Lots 1-4 indicated likely nineteenth century occupation of the parcel. It will also be an opportunity to follow up on oral history evidence that places the town’s school house on this block.
- b) Continue core sampling of geophysical anomalies and excavation of the cellar identified on Block 13. This feature was discovered in 2005 and appears to be the remains of the dwelling of Louisa McWorter and her household.
- c) Use large-bore hammer-driven core sampling to 1) test thermal anomalies identified in the 2008 low-aerial survey and 2) further investigate modern agricultural terraces on the western side of town site.
- d) Undertake core sampling and targeted excavation at the northern edge of the east-most of the west side terraces, where large-bore core sampling in 2008 revealed intact stratigraphic profiles.
- e) Initiate geophysical surveys on Blocks 11, 12, and 13 and commence systematic core sampling of newly-identified anomalies. Follow up with excavation as warranted.
- f) Initiate geophysical survey, with follow-up core sampling and excavation on Block 11, Lots 1-2. This would be the first investigation of the easternmost reaches of the town. Documentary research indicates that these particular lots were owned by Josephus Turpin, who later served in the 29<sup>th</sup> Colored Infantry during the Civil War (C.F. Martin, pers. comm. 2010).
- g) Collect and begin analysis of key archival data in the Pike County Courthouse in Pittsfield.

- h) Continue core sampling and excavation at the site of the blacksmith shop located on Block 3, Lots 1-2.
- i) Initiate geophysical and core sampling surveys of Block 2, east of the dwellings and blacksmith shop on Block 3. Follow up with excavation as warranted.
- j) Follow up on previously identified geophysical anomalies throughout the town site, with systematic core sampling and follow up excavation as warranted.

Field work during the excavation season undertook tasks described in items “a” through “g,” as described in the following chapters of this report. Tasks “h” and “i” were not feasible given the extremely wet conditions on Lots 1-2 of Block 3 and also on Block 2. Wet conditions also significantly impacted the results of geophysical survey data collection in Blocks 11-13.

The field effort was co-directed by Anna Agbe-Davies, Christopher Fennell, and Terrance Martin. Graduate student Kati Fay (UIUC) served as Laboratory Director, graduate student George Calfas (UIUC) as an excavation supervisor, and graduate student Mary Kathryn Rocheford (University of Iowa) as a geosciences supervisor. The NSF-REU students were divided into three excavation teams, each with a supervisor:

- Team X  
 Meaghan Alston (The Ohio State University)  
 Tyquin Washington (University of North Carolina, Greensboro)  
 Margaret Wolf (UIUC)  
 Graduate student volunteer: Blair Starnes (Michigan State University)  
 Supervisor: Anna Agbe-Davies
- Team Y  
 Beatrice Adams (Fisk University)  
 Courtney Ng (Rice University)  
 Tyrell Yarbrough (Western Illinois University)  
 Geosciences supervisor Kathryn Rocheford  
 Supervisor: George Calfas
- Team Z  
 Keishaia Griffith (Buffalo State University)  
 Sedrie Hart (Kennesaw State University)  
 John Schultz (University of Illinois, Springfield)  
 Senior Archaeologist volunteer Andrew Agha (Brockington Associates)  
 Supervisor: Terry Martin

Undergraduate participants in the NSF-REU program were chosen via a rigorous selection process from a pool of over seventy applicants. We are particularly gratified by the institutional, geographic, and cultural diversity of the 2010 cohort, which melded together into a fantastic research team (see Figure 1.2). This group was joined in the field by geophysical specialist Carl Carlson-Drexler, and geologist Dr. E. Arthur Bettis III (University of Iowa), in the archive by project historian and instructor Claire Fuller Martin, and in the lab by the staff of the Illinois State Museum Research and Collections Center.



**Figure 1.2.** NSF-REU students and project staff. Photo by Doug Carr (ISM).

The results of this season's research are presented in the chapters that follow. These interpretations are preliminary and will be expanded, updated, and revised, as the project progresses. Chapter 2 summarizes the results of the geophysical survey of 2010 and discusses the soil core testing undertaken to investigate anomalies identified during previous field seasons. Chapter 3 presents findings pertaining to Block 12. Chapter 4 discusses the further exploration of Feature 12, the cellar identified in 2005 on Block 13, Lots 3 and 4, including the identification of a new major feature, possibly a well on Lot 3 associated with the dwelling on Lot 4. Chapter 5 discusses the upcoming LiDAR (Light Detection and Ranging) survey. Chapter 6 is a report on the geoarchaeological findings from large-bore cores and column samples taken across the town site. The references cited are contained in Chapter 7. Chapter 8 presents basic field data in the form of excavation unit summaries. The artifact catalog for this season's excavations is provided as part of our project catalog [online](#).

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