



Children are encouraged to experience the Underground Railroad firsthand through interactive exhibits and materials.

Underground Railroad Museum Opens in Ohio

Freedom center connects past with present

(AP) — The modern, curved design of the stone and copper building on the "freedom side" of the Ohio River sits in stark contrast to a rough-hewn structure inside — a small pen built by a slave trader in 1833.

The 20-by-30-foot pen is the starkest display in the National Underground Railroad Freedom Center in Cincinnati, Ohio, a \$110 million project opened last week in memory of the harrowing trips north by countless slaves.

"It's a place where we're getting people to understand the past and connect it to the present in an active way," the museum's executive director, Spencer Crew, said. The museum takes a forward look at race relations while focusing on the history of slavery in the United States and the secret network that

helped slaves escape north to freedom in the 1800s.

"What the Freedom Center can do is provide a context for America's current social dilemma," said Nathaniel Jones, a former civil rights lawyer and retired federal judge.

"From generation to generation, there is this disconnect; they do not understand the nexus between slavery, what it did as an institution ... and how that condition created the conditions we have today. Slavery reformed and distorted our institutions ... (which) reflected the stereotypes and perceptions that guide people's thinking."

The slave pen, much like a small house made of rough-hewn logs, was found on a farm near Maysville, Ky. Preservationists spent six years researching its history, verifying that its builder was a slave trader, then carefully disassembling it and marking each piece for identification.

It is the featured exhibit in the 158,000-square-foot museum. Other

exhibits include contemporary quilts, some 20 feet tall, and murals depicting the slave trade; photos and tributes to 19th century abolitionists; and a timeline of events starting with the introduction of African slaves to the Virginia colony in 1619.

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"We did a national competition to have artists offer us their ideas on the art they'd like to have in the Freedom Center, and then we had a jury make a selection," Crew said. "I think we've been very fortunate to get some very powerful and wonderful pieces that talk about free-

dom, illustrate people who have made important steps in that direction and also just give us the history of the United States on these issues."

There is a replica of a wagon with a false bottom that was used to hide fleeing slaves. And a 2-by-3-foot wooden crate like the one that Henry "Box" Brown used, with the help of an accomplice, to have himself shipped from Richmond to Philadelphia and freedom.

Displays in the "Pavilion of Perseverance" include the story of a female slave who escaped to Ohio by crossing the partly frozen Ohio River with her baby, inspiring Harriet Beecher Stowe — a preacher's daughter who lived in Cincinnati — to write "Uncle Tom's Cabin."

Although the Underground Railroad had numerous lines — possibly 500 routes in Ohio alone — Cincinnati was considered a gateway to the north, museum officials said.

Ask Deanna!



Real People. Real Advice

An advice column known for its fearless approach to reality-based subjects!

Dear Deanna!

Help me settle this dispute. I lived with my boyfriend for 3 years and we broke up. While we were together he bought me a few things like a wide screen television, a stereo and a computer. Now he wants these things back since we're no longer together. I feel it's my property regardless of who paid for it. Am I right? —Tisha Jones; Atlanta

Dear Tisha:

You set yourself up for this dilemma by making the mistake of shacking. If you lived together for this long without a commitment then he had a cow and got the milk for free. He gave you nothing for your time and efforts while you were there and don't plan to give you anything when you leave. Yes it was a gift when everything was good but now he's flexing the power of his receipts. Give him his stuff and make a clean break. If you don't, those possessions will be his excuse to keep bothering you.

Dear Deanna!

I'm a man that deserves a good woman. I do everything right. I open car doors, pull out chairs in restaurants, don't curse, drink or smoke. Why is it that some women want a

rough neck on the verge of a criminal record instead of a clean cut guy to take home to their parents? —James; East Orange, N.J.

Dear James:

You should thank network television, BET, drop-it-like-it's-hot videos, MTV and other money-making empires that exploit women. These venues dupe men and women into the fantasy that makes them think good relationships are about vulgarity, violence, drugs and being half dressed. Don't give up because times are changing and there are many self-respecting, God-fearing women left that appreciate and welcome a decent man.

Dear Deanna!

I'm a new Christian and it seems like my life turned upside down overnight. When I went to the altar I was crying and people were jumping around and it was great. I thought getting saved was going to make my life peaceful. Now my life seems worse than before. I have drama from people and I sometimes feel weak. Why is this? —Chad Thomas; Indiana, Ind.

Dear Chad:

Christianity changes your life for the better and as a result, the enemy will come at you harder than ever. Satan has a glimpse of the goodness God has in store for you and he'll place obstacles and trials in your path to get you off track. God will not burden you with more than you can handle. Stay in prayer and know that (Philippians 4:13) you can do all things in Christ which strengthen you and (Isaiah 54:17) no weapon formed against you shall prosper.

Ask Deanna is written by Deanna M. Write Ask Deanna! Email: askdeanna1@yahoo.com or 264 S. LaCienega Blvd. Suite 1283 Beverly Hills, CA 90211. Website: www.askdeanna.com

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