

Underground Railroad Tours and Chili Supper Set for Sunday 8 November 2009

Written by Administrator

Monday, 26 October 2009 15:49 - Last Updated Monday, 02 November 2009 22:56

Jacksonville's important link to the Underground Railroad in Illinois will be explored in detail Sunday, November 8, when nine local sites that provided safe haven for runaway slaves will be on tour.

The tours will begin at 1 p.m. at Beecher Hall on the campus of Illinois College and end at approximately 5 p.m. Included in the price of the tickets will be a bus tour and a hearty chili supper and dessert. The limited number of bus tickets will also include stops at four of the sites where costumed guides will be waiting to take the riders into the houses and tell their stories of rescue and secret hiding places. Guides will also accompany each bus group and point out other locations in Jacksonville that were part of the Underground Railroad.

The bus tour tickets cost \$15 for adults and \$5 for youngsters between the ages of 6 and 12. Admission is free to children age five and under. Advance tickets can be purchased at the Jacksonville Convention and Visitors Bureau, 310 E. State St.; Festival Foods, 1255 W. Morton, and All Occasions Florist, 635 E. Morton Ave.

Tickets will also be sold at Beecher Hall starting at 12:30 p.m. on Sunday, November 8, but only the first 50 advance tickets holders will be guaranteed a place on one of the two buses scheduled for the event.

Upon departing from Beecher Hall after a brief presentation of its central role in the Underground Railroad, buses will transport ticketholders to four other sites: The Dr. Bezaleel Gillett House at 1005 Grove St., the Congregational Church at 520 W. College Ave., the General Grierson Manson at 852 E. State St., and Woodlawn Farm, located just east of the

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city. Guided tours will take place at each site. The buses are also scheduled to make brief stops at the Asa Talcott House at 859 Grove St. and the Porter Clay House at 1019 W. State St. Tour guides on each bus will explain the significance of the "Africa" community in Jacksonville and the Henry Irving House at 711 W. Beecher.

Tickets and maps will also be sold at the Gillett House, the Congregational Church, the Grierson Mansion and Woodlawn Farm for those who prefer to provide their own transportation.

The Underground Railroad Committee of the Morgan County Historical Society is sponsoring the tour and open houses at the four inside locations. Between 3 and 5 p.m., a home cooked meal of chili, corn bread, relishes and beverages will be served at the Congregational Church with dessert and other refreshments served at Woodlawn Farm. A large campfire on the grounds of Woodlawn Farm will serve as a signal that open house activities are underway.

Additional information is available by contacting the Jacksonville Convention and Visitors Bureau at 243-5678, or by email at ugrr@woodlawnfarm.com .