



***Request for Proposals  
For research for and preparation of  
Elevating Quindaro: The Application for National Historic Landmark  
By Freedom's Frontier and the Unified Government of Wyandotte County***

## **Project Summary**

Freedom's Frontier National Heritage Area and the Unified Government of Wyandotte County (KS) are seeking proposals for research for and preparation of an application for National Historic Landmark status for the historic Quindaro Townsite in Kansas City, KS.

## **Project Background**

The story of the Quindaro Townsite provides a multi-faceted look at several overlapping historical themes that contribute to the larger story of our nation. The townsite is regarded as a bustling territorial settlement whose diverse population makes for a fascinating study of cultural life amid the tumultuous Border War between Kansas and Missouri. The prime years of the town's life, spelled out in the National Register nomination, focuses on 1857-1862. It was during this period that African American, Native American, Exploration and Settlement history all intertwined.

In 1856, the Quindaro Town Company was founded, supported by the Wyandot and settlers from the New England Emigrant Aid Company. Soon after settlement, as the only free-state river port, the town became a hub of commerce and industry. Located in the free-state of Kansas yet close to the slave-owning state of Missouri, the town is also said to have been connected to the Underground Railroad. After 1862, the town was abandoned, serving briefly as quarters for Union troops during the Civil War. It then became the African American community of Happy Hollow. Later, the area became home to several African American educational institutions including Freedom's University and Western University, as well as Douglass Hospital.

Since the town's heyday, the surrounding community has been committed to preserving the significance of Quindaro. Currently, the Quindaro Townsite is listed in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP), proving its significance historically and the importance of preserving it.

National Historic Landmark (NHL) status will uplift the Quindaro Townsite, elevating the significance of the story. An NHL, a federal recognition program administered by the National Park Service, recognizes those historic buildings, sites, structures, objects or districts that represent significant aspects of American history and culture. The first step of the NHL application process, an inquiry letter, was submitted to the National Park Service (NPS) in late

2015 by Quindaro community member Marvin S. Robinson, II. In their response, the NPS supported the initiative and clearly outlined next steps. Julie H. Earnstein, Supervisory Archeologist, National Register and National Historic Landmarks Program recommended:

That the best approach to successfully nominate Quindaro as a NHL would require expanding the scope of the discussion geographically, temporally, as well as thematically beyond the criterion, period of significance, and areas of significance identified in the NRHP nomination. (See Attachment)

## **Project Area**

At this time, the 56-acre National Register nominated area is the only property that would be included in the application for National Historic Landmark. The property is currently owned by the Allen Chapel AME Church/Western University Association and the Unified Government of Wyandotte County.

## **Research and Reassessment of Existing Data**

The consultant will provide research to expand the larger story that links initial settlement by the Wyandot to establishment of Quindaro as a port town and subsequent abandonment during the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, and the establishment of Western University. While these stories appear throughout the historical narrative, and are given mention in the NRHP nomination, to establish national significance these elements of history need to be broadened. NPS consultations with the Kansas State Historical Society State Archaeologist and the National Park Service Midwest Regional Office provided a foundation for what research exists currently and the complexities of the site. The NRHP designated Quindaro as having significance to the local region. Widening the scope of the site's history will extend its significance to a national level. The research conducted by the consultant will investigate NHL Criteria beyond Quindaro's NRHP archaeological significance.

The selected consultant on this project will analyze research and collections, including the archeological collections and research that post-dates the NRHP designation. The boundary of this designation is set now, but if the consultant finds adequate research to prove extending or modifying, the boundary could be reviewed. All work performed shall be consistent with the Secretary of the Interior's *Standards and Guidelines*.

Since the original NRHP designation in 2002, community members, professional historians, academics, and other interested parties have come forward with new historical perspectives on Quindaro's history. This research will provide a historical foundation that will assist the grant project's consultant in providing a more complete and accurate picture of the town's diverse history.

The 2002 NRHP nomination, conducted by William E. Banks and Martin Stein of the Kansas State Historical Society provides a detailed list of past surveys and reports done of the area that

will assist the consultant with the NHL process.<sup>1</sup> The provided research includes an archeological survey completed in 1984 by the Kansas State Historical Society, and a 1988 environmental report conducted by Larry Schmits, Environmental Systems Analysis, Inc. Secondary volumes and articles will also provide the consultant with supplementary information on the historical themes to include in the research that will contribute to the application. Consultant will be responsible for archival and other background research, including review of all pertinent background reports, and potential historic resources in the Kansas State Historical Society and other local repositories.

## **Community Involvement**

Freedom's Frontier National Heritage Area (FFNHA) along with interested community members and community organizations are currently working on several Quindaro-related projects that could better equip the hired consultant with the most concise story of the history of the town. These include oral history projects, digitization of primary resources, and public symposiums.

Quindaro community members will provide resources to the hired consultant. The consultant will hold two community meetings in Kansas City, KS, the project area, at the beginning and conclusion of the project to inform and educate community members about the project, its purpose and objectives.

## **Tentative Timeline**

**RFP Sent Out** – September 28<sup>th</sup>, 2017

**Identify Consultant** – October 28<sup>th</sup>, 2017

**Consultant mtg. with SHPO and FFNHA staff** – week of November 6th, 2017

**Consultant Contract Submitted to KS SHPO for review** – week of Nov. 6th, 2017

**First Community Meeting-** to be determined

**Research Begins** – December 4th, 2017

**Second Community Meeting-** to be determined

**Research and NHL Application Draft Completed** – July 14, 2018

## **Deliverables**

The final product will be the completed application for the NHL status. The timeline listed above is required by the funding source. This timeline may limit completion of all research, writing, and production of a full NHL nomination. This project is funded by a Historic Preservation Fund grant from the National Park Service through Kansas State Historic Preservation Office (Kansas Historical Society), therefore deliverables must be submitted by above date. The NHL process may extend past end of granting period.

## **Assumptions and Agreements**

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<sup>1</sup> Banks, William E. and Martin Stein. "Quindaro Townsite." National Register of Historic Places Inventory/Nomination Form. Kansas State Historical Society, Topeka, April 5, 2002.

The consultant will be responsible for providing all aspects of project management for project's completion. Tasks include all scheduling, communication, and coordination required to complete the project. Freedom's Frontier staff will be available to discuss project progress and address issues. Freedom's Frontier staff is also responsible for administering the grant and meeting grant requirements. Consistent communication will be scheduled between consultant and Freedom's Frontier staff. The consultant will also work with staff from the National Historic Landmark program and the Kansas State Historical Society Historic Preservation Office.

The budget for this project should not exceed \$20,000.

## **Required Information**

In this proposal, the consultant should outline:

- a. Workplan
- b. Timeline of research and fieldwork
- c. Staffing
- d. Work Experience
- e. Budget

## **Evaluation Criteria**

The proposals will be evaluated based on the following:

1. Complete proposal and overall presentation.
2. Qualifications of the consultant(s) or firm to provide the requested work.  
(Qualifications established by the National Park Service)  
[https://www.nps.gov/history/local-law/arch\\_stnds\\_9.htm](https://www.nps.gov/history/local-law/arch_stnds_9.htm)
3. Ability to complete project scope within timeframe.
4. Ability to complete project scope within budget.
5. Experience working with projects similar to the work requested in proposal.
6. Demonstrated ability to connect with community members to advocate for project completion and use community as a resource.

**Proposals are due October 26, 2017 by 5:00 Central Time**

**Submit proposals via e-mail and direct questions to:**

Liz Hobson  
Special Projects Coordinator  
Freedom's Frontier National Heritage Area  
[ehobson@freedomfrontier.org](mailto:ehobson@freedomfrontier.org)  
(785) 424-5086

Upon selection of a consultant, Freedom's Frontier National Heritage Area will begin contract negotiations based on project requirements, proposed timeline and additional constraints.

The research and reporting to support *Elevating Quindaro: The Application for National Historic Landmark* which is the subject of this type of report has been financed in part with

Federal Funds from the National Park Service, a division of the United States Department of the Interior, and administered by the Kansas State Historical Society. The contents and opinions, however, do not necessarily reflect the view or policies of the United States Department of the Interior or the Kansas State Historical Society.

The research and reporting to support *Elevating Quindaro: The Application for National Historic Landmark* receives Federal funds from the National Park Service. Regulations of the U.S. Department of the Interior strictly prohibit unlawful discrimination in departmental Federally Assisted Programs on the basis of race, color, national origin, age or handicap. Any person who believes he or she has been discriminated against in any program, activity, or facility operated by a recipient of Federal assistance should write to: Director, Equal Opportunity Program, U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 1849 C Street NW, Washington, DC 20240.



# United States Department of the Interior

## NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

1849 C Street, N.W.  
Washington, DC 20240

H32(2280)

JAN 13 2017

Mr. Marvin S. Robinson II



Dear Mr. Robinson:

Thank you for your letter of inquiry regarding the potential for designation of the National Register-listed Quindaro Ruins, in Kansas City, Wyandotte County, Kansas, as a National Historic Landmark.

My colleagues and I in the Washington Service Office (WASO) of the National Park Service have located and synthesized the readily-accessible, published secondary literature on the Quindaro Townsite and its immediate environs. We have consulted with our archeological counterpart in the National Park Service's Midwest Regional Office as well as the state archaeologist with the Kansas Historical Society as we endeavored to understand the site, its setting, and the complexities of its past and present. Your patience has been greatly appreciated while we have undertaken this work.

In short, we support an effort to prepare a National Historic Landmark (NHL) nomination for Quindaro and associated properties (more below), but do not have sufficient capacity to undertake this work ourselves. Consequently, this letter comes to formally convey our support as well as to provide some background and resources regarding the NHL designation process, to identify additional considerations and recommendations germane to the Quindaro Ruins and related resources, and to propose a strategy to assist future author(s) or a research team in preparing a draft NHL nomination for Quindaro and associated properties. The remainder of this letter addresses each of these points.

As you are doubtless aware, the Quindaro Townsite, 14WY314, was listed in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) in 2002. That designation invoked significance Criterion D ("Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history") with an associated period of significance of 1857 – 1862, and was designated at the *local* level of significance. That designation was limited to the roughly 56-acre archeological remains of the former townsite—land co-owned by the First AME Church and the Unified Government of Wyandotte County, both of Kansas City, Kansas.

As an initial point of departure, it is important to differentiate NRHP and NHL designations as the two differ in substantial ways. While it is, indeed, helpful that the Quindaro Ruins are a NRHP-designated property, it is no small matter to transition that level of designation to that of a NHL. These two types of designation are intended to denote different levels of significance; have different logistical considerations including differing significance criteria, criteria considerations/exceptions; and are evaluated, processed, and designated (if approved) in substantially different, albeit complementary ways.

In contrast to NRHP designation, NHL status is reserved for properties of *national* significance that possess a high degree of integrity. The latter may refer to archeological integrity as well as integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. Thus, while the case was successfully made some 14 years ago for the *local* significance of the archeological remains of the



Quindaro Townsite, any case to be made for *national* significance would need to be approached strategically and involve a good deal of additional research and synthesis in order to support one (or possibly more) of the six criteria used to evaluate and document national significance for potential NHLs. Each of the six NHL Criteria, and a great deal of additional guidance for evaluating properties for NHL designation, is outlined in detail in the enclosed *National Register Bulletin: How to Prepare National Historic Landmarks* (also available online as a downloadable .pdf at <https://www.nps.gov/nr/publications/bulletins/nhl/nhlstart.htm>). I will not attempt to repeat that information here.

Based on the materials reviewed and our conversations with colleagues in the region, it is our recommendation that the best approach to successfully nominate Quindaro as a NHL would require expanding the scope of the discussion geographically, temporally, as well as thematically beyond the criterion, period of significance, and areas of significance identified in the NRHP nomination. Please allow me to address each of those in turn.

First, to demonstrate the resource's or district's national significance, it may be necessary to tell the larger story that links initial settlement by Native peoples (esp. the Wyandot, who have living descendants in the region), with subsequent establishment of the Quindaro Townsite to optimize river transport, the fuller story of Quindaro's reoccupation (if it was indeed ever fully abandoned in the nineteenth century), the Freedman's University and later Western University stories, and the Douglass Hospital chapter, as well as any links or continuities among these sites and/or settlements and specific communities or neighborhoods in adjoining parts of modern Kansas City. Archeology would best play a role in moving beyond simply ground-truthing the town's layout and patterns elicited from documentary sources, to providing information regarding the spatial parameters of class, ethnicity, ideology or belief, agency, and other factors.

Each of these elements should be assessed regarding its contribution to the property's nationally-significant history. Elements of the property's landscape or history that do not directly contribute to this narrative need not be included in this study. The potential NHL nomination is not meant to be a comprehensive history of the property. Instead, it should be a reasonably concise documentation of its nationally-significant aspects.

By widening the geographic scope slightly outward from a sole focus on the Quindaro Townsite to the adjacent settlements that preceded, were coincident with, and/or developed in its aftermath, it is likely that broader, national themes could be successfully articulated. In fact, much of this work could be done via mining of existing materials that have either not heretofore been identified as possessing relevance for this study or—as is the case with the numerous archeological collections amassed to date—have gone either understudied or remain unanalyzed altogether. In fact, Kansas state archaeologist Bob Hoard is eager to make collections available to a qualified student or researcher. This notion of asking “new” questions of “old” data is sure to generate fuller, more nuanced understandings of these resources and their associated assemblages. An examination of the secondary literature alone provides a long list of local and non-local historical collections to be mined. One should not overlook the wealth of knowledge in the form of local community members and institutions (e.g., churches and museums) that have both formally and informally curated an abundance of community knowledge, family records, photographs, and other material (e.g., bus tickets, election campaign material, newspaper advertisements, etc.) that may prove invaluable in generating a draft NHL nomination. There are likewise national collections that may well document connections between these distinctly Native, African American, and multi-ethnic settlements and larger, national initiatives.

Next, once this slightly widened focus is applied, a period of significance much broader than the five-year span addressed in the NRHP nomination will likely emerge. I would suggest movement outward from a

single archeological townsite to consideration of what will likely assume the form of a district. The district could then be studied in a longitudinal, diachronic fashion via consideration of an ensemble of structures, buildings, sites, and possibly even objects to the unique history of this place, the events that unfolded there, and the people who once resided there. And finally, while one cannot anticipate from the outset the numerous areas of significance to emerge from this synthesis and further research, it is only reasonable to anticipate that widening outward from a solely archeology-based focus on the Quindaro Townsite would result in a better understanding of the unique nature of the property in relation to issues, topics, and concerns and initiatives of national importance. In particular, an expanded focus would help tie the site to the larger stories of pre- and post-emancipation cultural change and adaptation in a socially-, politically-, and depositionally-active environment.

In this same vein, the above-cited Bulletin on preparing NHL nominations notes that “Claims for national significance should be supported by presenting a historical summary and reasoned comparison of the property to themes of national importance and to similar properties nationwide” (p. 21). The widened geographic and temporal focus we recommend here would afford valuable comparison between the expanded district and a handful of other comparable (or near-comparable) sites such as the once-bustling river town of Arrow Rock, Missouri, or the Nicodemus National Historic Site, in Nicodemus, Kansas—as just two regional examples. Such comparisons are an essential component to assessing the integrity of the expanded Quindaro and environs district in relation to themes, topics, and questions of national importance (e.g., land speculation, westward settlement, transportation, opportunities for African Americans and other non-whites both pre- and post-emancipation, fringe settlements and abandonment, urbanization and the vicissitudes of segregated vs. multi-ethnic settlements, and site formation processes in a dynamic riverine setting).

As a starting point, we recommend additional primary research to either confirm or refute certain claims that appear in newspaper accounts that may/may not have a basis in fact, and mining existing oral historical information and possibly collecting, transcribing, and synthesizing additional oral histories on specific topics about which little is documented. We also recommend the detailed analysis of what have been identified as largely understudied archeological collections. In addition, an assessment of current conditions at and beyond the Quindaro Archeological Park—whose establishment post-dates the NRHP designation and would need to be integrated into an updated assessment of the potential district’s integrity—would be an important part of any NHL nomination.

Based on our understanding of the materials available to us, it is likely that an argument for NHL designation would likely commence with thoughtful consideration of NHL Criteria 1 and 6. The six NHL criteria are as follow:

- Criterion 1—Properties that are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to, and are identified with, or that outstandingly represent, the broad national patterns of United States history and from which an understanding and appreciation of those patterns may be gained;
- Criterion 2—Properties that are associated importantly with the lives of persons nationally significant in the history of the United States;
- Criterion 3—Properties that represent some great idea or ideal of the American people;
- Criterion 4—Properties that embody the distinguishing characteristics of an architectural type specimen exceptionally valuable for a study of a period, style, or method of construction, or that represent a significant, distinctive and exceptional entity whose components may lack individual distinction;



- Criterion 5—Properties that are composed of integral parts of the environment not sufficiently significant by reason of historical association or artistic merit to warrant individual recognition but collectively compose an entity of exceptional historical or artistic significance, or outstandingly commemorate or illustrate a way of life or culture; and
- Criterion 6—Properties that have yielded or may be likely to yield information of major scientific importance by revealing new cultures, or by shedding light upon periods of occupation over large areas of the United States. Such sites are those which have yielded, or which may reasonably be expected to yield, data affecting theories, concepts and ideas to a major degree.

Likewise, several investigators have cautioned against uncritical acceptance of association between the site and its environs with such notable historic personages as Susan B. Anthony (1820 – 1906), John Brown (1800 – 1859), or Harriet Tubman (d. 1913)—as might otherwise lend itself to invocation of NHL Criterion 2. For that reason, we do not recommend consideration of eligibility under Criterion 2 from the outset, and would only support its application if unimpeachable primary documentation is located to support it.

Under Criterion 6, it is impossible to make a determination of national significance without assessing the integrity and research potential of the material culture (i.e., artifactual), faunal, soil, and possible botanical collections amassed to date to understand whether the insights they are likely to provide are unique and may be made to address research questions of national import. Also if the author(s) decide to make a Criterion 6 argument, a reappraisal of the site's integrity would need to be made. This reappraisal could proceed, possibly either by reexamining the past reports and current conditions of previously-designated areas/properties, in addition to a walkover survey of any new portions or resources added to the expanded boundaries that would be included in a potential Criterion 6 discussion.

Before delving any further into a discussion of potential applicable NHL criteria and other logistics, it is essential that stakeholders identify the party that will be assuming the lead—whether as project manager, author, or perhaps funding source—for preparation of a draft NHL nomination. This organization or entity will need to work closely with National Park Service staff—either in the Midwest Region or here at WASO—regarding the nomination content, formatting, and other logistics. The NPS staff will assist that lead party to prepare a completed nomination for presentation and review by the National Historic Landmarks Committee at one of its two meetings each year. Given the rigor of this process, it can take as much as a year or two to finalize a nomination once all the research has been completed and a draft nomination prepared. I mention this not to dampen enthusiasm for this project, but simply to provide a realistic set of expectations.

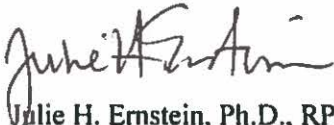
You will note that I have copied a number of individuals on this correspondence, below. These are individuals representing agencies and organizations that have either already expressed an interest in this expanded designation effort or whom I strongly suspect will be interested to know of and may wish to assist the effort. Some have already identified themselves as willing to serve as resources in the additional research and synthesis necessary to preparing a NHL nomination. In addition, others may be well-suited to provide assistance in identifying and/or vetting person(s) qualified to prepare such a nomination. This is by no means an exhaustive list of stakeholders, but should serve to inform those best positioned to assist in the research and synthesis necessary in order to generate a potential future draft NHL nomination.

In the course of the research conducted to respond to your initial letter of inquiry, we noted that a Call for Papers was distributed online by staff at the Freedom's Frontier National Heritage Area for a proposed symposium to be held in the Fall of 2017 with the stated purpose of assisting the community in telling the site's "larger story." It is likely that this symposium will play an important part in charting a path forward

and defining stakeholder roles and a strategy for moving toward possible designation of Quindaro as a NHL. In that same vein, I trust that this initial assessment is helpful and stress that the National Park Service is happy to provide technical assistance to those parties committed to this effort.

Please do not hesitate to contact me should you have any questions regarding these comments. I can be reached at the letterhead address, by telephone at 202.354.2217, or via e-mail at [julie\\_ernstein@nps.gov](mailto:julie_ernstein@nps.gov).

Sincerely,



Julie H. Ernstein, Ph.D., RPA  
Supervisory Archeologist, National Register and National Historic Landmarks Programs

IDENTICAL LETTER SENT TO:

Cc:

- Ms. Jennie A. Chin, Kansas State Historic Preservation Officer
- Ms. Sherri Clemons, Tribal Historic Preservation Officer, Wyandotte Nation
- Drs. Dorothy and Steve Collins, Kansas City Kansas Community College
- Chief Janith English, Wyandot Nation of Kansas
- Rev. Stacy R. Evans, Pastor, Allen Chapel AME Church
- Dr. Robert J. Hoard, State Archaeologist, Kansas Historical Society
- Ms. Elizabeth Hobson, Education & Interpretation Manager, Freedom's Frontier National Heritage Area
- Mr. Anthony Hope, Curator, Old Quindaro Museum
- Ms. Amanda Loughlin, National Register Coordinator, Kansas Historical Society – Cultural Resources
- Ms. Julie McPike, Managing Director, Freedom's Frontier National Heritage Area
- Ms. Diane Miller, Underground Railroad Network to Freedom, Midwest Region, National Park Service
- Dr. Vergil E. Noble, NHL Program, Midwest Archeological Center, National Park Service
- Mr. Rob Richardson, Program Supervisor, Department of Urban Planning and Land Use, Unified Government of Wyandot County
- Ms. Betty Roberts, President, Quindaro Town Preservation Society
- Ms. Dena Sanford, Architectural Historian, Midwest Regional Office, National Park Service
- Dr. Michael M. Swann, Assoc. Dean, Assoc. Professor & Director of the Graduate Program in Architectural Management, School of Architecture and Urban Design, University of Kansas

Revision 10-13-17:

#### Project Area

This project will focus on the current 56-acres within the National Register-listed property boundaries. However, if project research determines a justification, the area nominated for National Historic Landmark designation may differ from the boundaries listed in the National Register nomination. The currently listed property is owned by the Allen Chapel AME Church/Western University Association and the Unified Government of Wyandotte County.