PIKE COUNTY BOARD

Pike County Courthouse

Pittsfield, IL 62363

Ph.: (217) 285-6812

July 26, 2013

The Honorable Aaron Schock
328 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D. C. 20515

Dear Congressman Schock:

I am pleased to endorse *The New Philadelphia Study Act,* H.R. 930, legislation you introduced to the House of Representatives to approve a feasibility study to determine the qualifications of New Philadelphia, Illinois for inclusion as a unit of the National Park Service for its exceptional national historic significance. As a place where formerly enslaved individuals, free born African Americans, and European Americans lived together in a region and an era of intense racial strife, a National Park unit at New Philadelphia will inspire current and future generations and commemorate themes important to all Americans: the struggle for freedom and opportunity.

Free Frank McWorter, the founder of New Philadelphia, was remarkable not only for his vision of establishing a racially-integrated community in West-central Illinois during the early nineteenth century, but also for purchasing freedom for himself, his wife and more than a dozen additional family members. Despite Illinois' Black Codes, the slave state of Missouri on Illinois' border to the west, and intense racial discrimination that persisted well after the Civil War, the town of New Philadelphia survived until the beginning of the twentieth century. The enduring public memory of New Philadelphia continues today in West-central Illinois nearly a century after most of its residents moved away.

Archaeological investigations of the town site since late in 2002 have demonstrated that long-forgotten architectural foundations, cellars, cisterns, wells, and refuse deposits have survived agricultural activities and other ground surface modifications. New research methods are being applied as ways of locating these archaeological resources. National Park status will ensure that the unique opportunity to study nineteenth-century race relations within a small multi-racial community setting will be protected by the federal government for the good of the American people.

By including New Philadelphia among the national treasures designated as National Parks, we have the opportunity to contribute to a more complete and accurate account of the people, events, and cultural interactions that shaped our nation's character. Therefore, I am pleased to support the nomination of the New Philadelphia Town Site for designation as a National Park.

Sincerely,

Andy Borrowman

Andy Borrowman
Chairman Pike County Board