

Request for Proposals
Special History Study: African American History at Lindenwald
Martin Van Buren National Historic Site
November 5, 2021

The National Park Service (NPS), through a cooperative agreement with the Association for the Study of African American Life and History, Inc., (ASALH), is seeking the services of a Principal Investigator (PI) who will achieve very specific goals. The primary goal of the project is to produce a Special History Study (SHS) that will provide critical baseline research and historic context for African American history at Lindenwald, the historic home of Martin Van Buren at Martin Van Buren National Historic Site (MAVA), and the broader community of Kinderhook in Columbia County, NY. This project will provide needed historical and ethnohistorical information that will inform an archaeological investigation at the site to kick off the following year. The project will compile historical research, ethnographic information, and archeological data to answer fundamental questions about slavery and African American life at Lindenwald and the surrounding community of Kinderhook.

The contract is administered by ASALH and the work prepared for and completed in coordination with the National Park Service. All work accomplished by this research project will be credited to ASALH but becomes the property of the National Park Service and will be made publicly available.

Interested parties should submit a proposal in response to this RFP to ASALH no later than 5:00 pm EST on November 19, 2021. Electronic copies may be directed to ASALH at nps@asalh.org with the subject line “African American History at Lindenwald.”

Project Background

Martin Van Buren National Historic Site in Kinderhook, Columbia County, New York, preserves the home of the eighth President of the United States and is associated with his political career during his residence there (1841-1848). During that period, Van Buren, who moved to Lindenwald—the two-and-one half-story mansion on the property—after his single term as President of the United States (1837-1841), launched two unsuccessful, but historically important campaigns to regain the presidency in 1844 and 1848. The only home that he ever owned, Lindenwald, represents the culmination of a remarkable political career that saw Van Buren rise from meager beginnings as a Kinderhook tavern-keeper's son to become the nation's highest elected office. Van Buren's subsequent development of Lindenwald into a country estate and working farm reflected his Jeffersonian beliefs in the value and virtue of agriculture to a democratic society.

The primary resource on the property is Lindenwald, Van Buren's two-and-one-half-story mansion. Built by Peter Van Ness in 1797 as a Federal-style mansion, the house was remodeled and enlarged in 1849-1850 by nationally prominent architect Richard Upjohn to reflect the then popular Italian Villa-style. The grounds immediately surrounding the house and the open agricultural fields beyond contribute to an understanding of how Van Buren developed the estate to reflect his wealth and Jeffersonian agrarian beliefs. Among the other significant resources that were built during Van Buren's tenure and contribute to the district are the South Gatehouse,

Farm Cottage, and Upper Pond. Archeological sites associated with the significant history of this place include the Lindenwald South and North Field Native American sites and the historic period Lindenwald Estate and North Gatehouse and Dump sites.

At the time the property was constructed, Kinderhook was a vibrant community that included the boyhood home of Van Buren, who operated a tavern. Enslaved people were a vital part of the economic and social fabric of Kinderhook and wider Columbia County, including in both the Van Ness and Van Buren households. According to the 1790 and 1800 census, Van Ness enslaved 10 people; by 1804 his will only mentioned three enslaved women and a child. Van Buren's father enslaved six people. In 1790, the town of Kinderhook had a population of 4,661, including 638 enslaved people (13% of the population). During debates about New York state's gradual emancipation law, passed in 1799, the town's representative opposed such measures. The historic community had a strong presence of people of African descent and a reliance on enslaved labor that needs further exploration.

When Van Buren returned to his hometown after the presidency, the African American community was fragmented with a variety of experiences. Some enslaved people were sold to other states before their emancipation; some people moved following their emancipation; and some remained in Kinderhook. Many had assumed the surnames of their former masters-- Vanderpoel, Van Ness, Barthrop, Burgett, Harder. Quite a few, according to one contemporary observer, were "neat and well cared for." Others, especially those who lived in "Guinea Hill," a black settlement on the outskirts of town, resided in "rude huts," often partly underground, and gained "their scanty subsistence from the forest's game and the finny inhabitants of the creek." We have minimal documentary evidence of this community gleaned through the lens of antiquarian histories relying on local recollection, which need to be reexamined. In 1840, the total black population of Kinderhook had declined to 228 people, about one-third of the 1790 total. A "Persons of Color" burial ground (now on the National Register of Historic Places) is a small remaining vestige of the Kinderhook African American community, as is the Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church (now a private home), formed in 1851.

Lindenwald was designated a National Historic Landmark in 1961 and was administratively listed in the National Register in 1966. In 1974, the house and about 39 acres of surrounding land were established as Martin Van Buren National Historic Site by Public Law 93-486 and placed under the administration of the National Park Service. National Register documentation prepared in 1980 established the National Register boundaries to include Lindenwald and its immediate setting comprising 12.8 acres of land. In 2009, Congress approved the expansion of the boundary to include an additional 261 acres of land encompassing all of Van Buren's farmland northwest of New York State Highway Route 9H and Albany Avenue (County Road 25) and some additional property intended to provide protection for its setting. Updated National Register documentation, completed in 2012, expanded the historic district boundary to conform to the park's legislated boundary and evaluated all resources within the district. The district encompasses 176.95 acres and contains a total of 14 contributing resources, including three buildings, five sites, five structures, and one object that are associated with Martin Van Buren, the eighth president of the United States, during his ownership of the property between 1839 and 1862.

Required Principal Investigator Qualifications

The minimum professional qualifications in history are a graduate degree in history or closely-related field plus one of the following:

1. At least two years of full-time experience in research, writing, teaching, interpretation, or other demonstrable professional activity with an academic institution, historic organization or agency, museum, or other professional institution, or
2. Substantial contribution through research and publication to the body of scholarly knowledge in the field of history.
3. Past Experience – to include at least 3 years similar, successfully completed projects within the last 5 years.

Additional Qualifications

Knowledge, skills, and ability in the following:

- Organize data and analyze and interpret its authenticity and relative significance;
- Gather historical data from sources such as archives, court records, diaries, news files, and photographs, as well as collect data sources such as books, pamphlets, and periodicals;
- Conduct historical research as a basis for the identification, conservation, and reconstruction of historic places and materials;
- Conduct historical research and publish or present findings and theories;
- Organize information for publication and for means of dissemination;
- Collect detailed information on individuals for use in the preparation of biographies;

Scope of Work

This Special History Study (SHS) is a two-part funded project that will combine historical and ethnographic research (conducted during this project) with archeological research (conducted in 2022 by the NPS) to create a comprehensive narrative. Park interpreters are actively engaged in the interpretation of slavery and the racial politics of antebellum America. However, more information about the African American experience in Kinderhook and at the Lindenwald estate is needed to fully engage in this dynamic, relevant topic in a thoughtful and appropriate way. This information is essential to bring interpretation of Lindenwald and Van Buren up to date using the most recent scholarship and to provide managers with knowledge of a dimension of MAVA's cultural resources previously unidentified.

Central questions for the SHS at MAVA are:

- 1) Who were the enslaved occupants of Martin Van Buren's childhood home in Kinderhook?
- 2) Who were the enslaved who lived at Lindenwald before Van Buren's arrival?
- 3) What was the role of the enslaved in the construction and later economic and social operations of Lindenwald and how is this reflected in the cultural resources at the site?

- 4) What does archival and archeological information tell us about the socioeconomic status and experience of the enslaved occupants of Lindenwald, and how does this compare to contemporary Euroamerican tenants, workers, and occupants?
- 5) What strategies did African American occupants pursue to construct, express, and maintain their identities?
- 6) What happened to the enslaved residents after their emancipation?
- 7) What was the experience of enslaved people who were brought to Lindenwald on a temporary basis, such as Henry Clay's enslaved body servant Levi, who "went truant" during the stay and Van Buren's Vice President Richard Mentor Johnson, who visited with enslaved servants?
- 8) What was the free black community of Kinderhook? Who lived there and what were their social networks?
- 9) What, if any, relationship existed between the free black community of Kinderhook and the Lindenwald farm and orchard? Did African Americans continue to work and live on the estate? Were there other social or economic relationships?

Part 1: Special History Study

Using interdisciplinary methods, this project will document the African American experience at Lindenwald and the surrounding community of Kinderhook. This project will combine the tools and methodologies of historians and ethnohistorians to uncover the lives and communities of enslaved people who worked at Lindenwald and lived in the surrounding community after gradual emancipation. The compelling story of the enslaved experience at the site has never been researched. The relationship between the operation of the Lindenwald farm during Van Buren's time and the local free black community is similarly unknown. Archival data including census records, church records, wills and probate inventories, and newspapers illuminate the potential to fill the gap in African American history at the site. This phase should include community outreach with partners to help build additional research questions, identify sources, and engage with potential descendent communities.

Part 2: Archeological Investigation African-American Resources

There are unexplored park archeological resources that may cast some light on African-American residents at Lindenwald during and after Van Buren's tenure. An archeological investigation of select areas of Lindenwald associated with African American history will be completed and archeological data used to inform the final report. This work will be conducted by the National Park Service or contractor selected by the NPS, contingent upon funding formulated for fiscal year 2022. No archeological investigations pertaining to this agreement will be conducted prior to fiscal year 2022. Instead, the archeological study will complement the SHS, by performing archeological investigations based on the documentary research and development of testable research questions generated during the initial work on the SHS in 2021.

Part 3. Project Report Completion

The final phase will combine all data gathered in the first two phases (SHS and archeology study) into a comprehensive report that responds to the research questions. It will include a final report and Transfer of Knowledge component to be mutually agreed upon by the NPS and ASALH, such as essays or “minihistories” for NPS websites or StoryMaps. In addition, the project will close with a public presentation and a NPS closeout discussion with MAVA staff and Principal Investigator (PI) to identify potential future research and interpretation opportunities.

Project Guidelines:

Sources:

Existing Park Baseline Documentation:

In addition to 2012 National Register documentation, the site has completed baseline documentation studies that inform resource management and operational needs, including a Historic Structure Report (1985), Historic Furnishings Report (1986, revised 2019), Historic Resource Study (1982, revised 2006), an Administrative History (2011), an Ethnographic Landscape Study (2012), a Cultural Landscape Report (1995, revised 2004, addendum 2016), and an Archeological Overview and Assessment (2002). The site also has existing studies examining the Progressive farmer philosophy Van Buren used at Lindenwald (2004) and Irish Immigrant Workers who were domestic servants on the property (1992).

External archival sources:

A reconnaissance study has identified several types of useful sources, not including the sources available at local historical societies or other institutions. For the colonial era, records of enslaved and/or free black persons are rare in the southeastern corner of what was once Albany County but later became Columbia County. One of the best sources for identifying them can be found in the wills of Dutch residents of Kinderhook and perhaps Claverack. In these documents, testators customarily would bequeath individual enslaved persons to their surviving spouse and then to a son or daughter. Often, though not always, slaves are named in these wills.

New York colonial estate inventories are another potential source for information about enslavement in this period. However, colonial era estate inventories for Kinderhook and Claverack are even rarer than wills. Even so a study of inventories for other New York communities might yield useful information about the character of slavery and of household relationships among white and black persons during the pre-Revolutionary period.

Finally, census records, local histories, and local newspapers provide promising information. Edward Collier in his *History of Old Kinderhook*, preserves a description of Guinea Hill as it was recalled c1854 by Matilda C. Metcalf who published a memoir of her native village in the *Christian Intelligencer* (1854). Another source, published in 1876, was by William H. Winans, whose memoir *Live and Lively reminiscences and experiences in the life of an editor*, devoted

some space to his childhood and youth in Kinderhook. Finally, the *Kinderhook Rough Notes* provide insight into community news.

Collaboration

This project will include regular communication and collaboration with ASALH and the NPS to accomplish project goals. This project will also require community outreach with partners to help build additional research questions, identify sources, and engage with potential descendent communities. The PI will work in collaboration with the NPS and ASALH to identify partners and facilitate collaboration and engagement. Collaboration roles include:

- Martin Van Buren National Historic Site (MAVA) staff will be involved in every step of this project from planning to final reporting. Logistics, research, site safety, public outreach, and interpretation are just a few of the ways MAVA staff will be involved.
- The Region 1 History and Preservation Assistance Program, Archeological Resources Program, and Tribal and Cultural Affairs Program will provide staff who will also be involved as collaborators in all steps of the project.
- Potential community partners, including local historical societies, local churches, university professors, descendants, and other volunteers will be identified as part of this project prior to conducting research and fieldwork. A site visit, discussion of research questions and interpretation results, and input on project deliverables are some of the ways that community partners may be involved.

II. Stipulations

1. The Primary Investigator (PI) and key team members must be fully qualified personnel and conform to current standards of scholarship. At least one team member must meet the requirements for a historian specified in OPM Handbook X-118 and, in addition, the quality ranking factors stated in *NPS-28: Cultural Resource Management Guideline*, (http://www.nps.gov/history/history/online_books/nps28/28contents.htm) Appendix E, “Qualification Standards and Selective or Quality Ranking Factors for Cultural Resource Specialists” for an anthropologist or historian. In order to access archeological reports and data the researcher’s team must include the participation of at least one qualified person who meets the Secretary of the Interior’s Professional Qualification Standards for archeology (36 CFR 61).
2. Recipient shall coordinate with the ATR as necessary to complete the work as and when required. Coordination may include participating in conference calls and product review meetings.
3. All work must be technically and legally defensible.
4. Research must meet NPS standards for a “thorough investigation” as defined in *NPS-28: Cultural Resource Management Guideline* for an historical study; i.e. research will be done in selected published and documentary sources of known or presumed relevance that are readily accessible without extensive travel and that promise expeditious extraction of relevant data. The researcher shall conduct interviews with knowledgeable persons important to the understanding of the park’s history who are readily available; and prior to the scheduling of interviews, the NPS and the researcher shall mutually agree upon a list of

interviewees. Findings must be presented in no greater detail than required by this scope of work.

5. The researcher's quality control efforts must ensure that all draft and final deliverables are completed documents, as specified, that meet the standards of scholarship as defined by the guidelines of the various professional organizations including but not limited to the Association for the Study of African American Life and History (ASALH) and American Historical and that have been reviewed for copy quality, technical accuracy, and consistency with style guidelines. Submittals not displaying such efforts will not be accepted.
6. The researcher must coordinate with the NPS and ASALH as necessary to complete the work as and when required. This may include participating in conference calls and product review meetings. The researcher will coordinate with staff at MAVA accessing park records and to obtain reproductions of photographs and other illustrations in park collections.
7. The researcher is responsible for the cost of all reproductions and for securing copyright permission, where applicable. Wherever possible, the researcher shall choose illustrations that are in the public domain. All illustrations must be labeled with captions that fully identify the subject, where published (if published), and provide credit/courtesy lines identifying where the original can be found. Illustrations must be numbered and referred to by number in the text. A full list of illustrations with captions must be included following the table of contents.
8. The *Chicago Manual of Style*, 16th edition, guidelines will be used for citations and as a general guide to style. The NPS will provide specific formatting guidelines for the NER History Program, which details formatting and font requirements and copies of the NPS RawlinsonOT typeface. The license for NPS Rawlinson covers only work performed on NPS-related business and the researcher is not authorized to use NPS Rawlinson on non-NPS work. For illustration captions, the researcher may use Times New Roman 9 pt instead of Frutiger.
9. Research files (or copies of these files), negatives and photographs, original document files (word, InDesign), and other material produced as a result of this project, except for those items for which another institution either has copyrights or has placed restrictions on its distribution, shall be delivered to the NPS and become the property of NPS upon completion of the project or upon its being declared null and void whether they are used in the preparation of the study or not.
10. The NPS retains all rights to publish and disseminate this report. The research materials and completed products will be in the public domain and may not be copyrighted. However, the researcher may publish the results of the research without written permission, but shall inform the NPS and ASALH of any publications resulting directly from the products of this research. Revision of the manuscript for publication with an academic press, after completion of the project, is encouraged, provided that the role of the National Park Service and ASALH is acknowledged in print. The researcher must obtain prior Government approval from the NPS for any public information releases concerning this award (including outside publication) which refer to the Department of the Interior or any bureau or employee (by name or title). The specific text, layout photographs, etc. of the proposed release must be submitted with the request for approval.
11. The following statement must be included in the report and any other publications developed as a result of this agreement:

“This report was accomplished with assistance from the U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service. The statement, findings, conclusions, recommendations, and other data in this report are solely those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service.”

III. Delivery/Performance Schedule

What follows is a draft proposed delivery schedule. Along with deliverables, key dates for researcher commitment during this project include a 1) start-up meeting, 2) one-day workshop with NPS staff and select partners at or near the conclusion of the project to share the results of the study so that the information can be incorporated, as appropriate, into public programming at the park, and 3) a public presentation.

The researcher agrees to provide quarterly progress reports in which the scholar(s) describe work accomplished, any issues or concerns related to completion of deliverables, and notify ASALH and NPS of any deviations from agreed-upon products and timelines;

PRODUCT	DETAILED DESCRIPTION	DUE
Start up meeting	Consult with ASALH and NPS staff to schedule an on-site orientation meeting with the park staff, NPS regional office and the ASALH to discuss content, location of source material, access to	No later than one month from selection of researcher.

PRODUCT	DETAILED DESCRIPTION	DUE
	documentary resources, research goals, schedule, and project deliverables. The NPS and ASALH will provide a tour to acquaint the researcher with the park and its resources and provide initial introduction to partners.	
Research and Collaborative Outreach	Conduct historical and ethnographical research to compile project research material, which will be incorporated into the final study and inform interpretation of archeological evidence. Conduct outreach and engagement with relevant partners. Deliverable will include summary of efforts and initial research findings, along with suggestions to be incorporated into following archeological investigation and a mid-point transfer of knowledge component such as a social media post describing the project and findings thus far.	No later than one year from selection of researcher
Archeological Investigation	NPS will conduct strategic archeological investigation of African-American associated resources at MAVA; locations informed by preexisting baseline documentation or prior research phase	Beginning after September 2022
Detailed Outline	Review assembled information and complete a research plan and detailed outline. Address the topics and issues specified in the Purpose and Scope. The outline should contain all pertinent information necessary for sound decisions to be reached regarding further topical research and content of the final report. It should also include a list of all repositories consulted. If necessary following the ASALH and NPS review, a meeting or conference call may be scheduled to develop further the final content of the study. An approved outline will result from this review.	No later than 3 months from completion of archeological investigation
Draft of one chapter	The chapter draft submitted should be a substantive chapter from the main body of the report. The submitted chapter will adhere to the format for the first draft..	No later than 5 months after NPS returns outline comments
First draft of study	The first draft will consist of a substantially completed report, including front matter, footnotes, and preliminary bibliography. Following submission, the researcher will meet by phone with NPS regional and site staff and the ASALH to discuss specific issues that need to be addressed. Submittal shall include photocopies of illustrations and maps.	No later than 9 months after NPS returns chapter comments

PRODUCT	DETAILED DESCRIPTION	DUE
Second draft of study	The second draft will be submitted for peer review in addition to NPS/ASALH review. In addition to meeting the requirements for the first draft, the researcher is responsible for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • obtaining copyright permission and providing appropriate credit line for government printing of all images • providing images as digital images in high resolution jpg or tif format suitable for printing – see NER Formatting Guidelines • identifying images by subject, publication information, and location of original 	No later than 4 months after NPS returns first draft comments
Final study and interpretive media	In addition to meeting the requirements for the second draft (except for line numbers), the researcher will select an appropriate illustration for the cover and may provide a descriptive title	No later than 5 months after NPS returns second draft comments
Public Presentation at park, workshop, and delivery of notes	Researcher will make a public presentation and engage in discussion with park staff, including other park managers, and interested members of the public. The presentation will include an overview of the study findings; the principal investigator will join a facilitated discussion on the case study identified by the project team. Please note that before final payment is made, copies of all research notes shall be turned over to the NPS. Also, copies of permission agreements, grouped together and clearly labeled, must be included in the research materials that are turned over the park at the completion of the project.	No later than 1 month after completion of ASALH editing of final.

IV. Payment Schedule

SUBMITTAL	PAYMENT
Upon completion of the start-up meeting and receipt of signed statement of commitment	10%
Research summary and archeological phase recommendations	15%
Detailed narrative outline	5%
Draft of One Chapter	10%
First Complete Draft	20%
Second Complete Draft	10%
Final Report	20%
Public Presentation and Delivery of research Notes	10%

Proposal Submissions

For evaluation purposes, proposals should provide sufficient information as to assist ASALH in determining the most qualified Principal Investigator for the project. Interested parties should submit a written proposal that includes the following:

- Name of the individual(s) that would be working on the project and their proposed area(s) of responsibility.
- A curriculum vitae.
- A minimum of at least 3 similar, successfully completed projects within the last 5 years.
- Information on projects of a similar nature and of significant work completed by the Principal Investigator candidate in the past five (5) years. Include specific dates and types of services provided, and highlight success in meeting work schedules, project budgets, and product deadlines.
- A list of references (at least three (3), but not more than five (5)) that may be contacted. The Principal Investigator candidate must return three (3) reference questionnaires from projects of similar scope within the last five (5) years.
- A short narrative that responds to the scope of work as described in this RFP, which demonstrates the Principal Investigator candidate's proposed approach to the project and capability to accomplish the desired goals.
- Resumes of key personnel (Not to exceed two (2) pages on each resume). This factor will be used to evaluate documented evidence of the candidate's ability to provide key personnel who meet all contract qualifications requirements. Proposed key personnel must meet all minimum requirements specified in the RFP for the duties/positions they are proposed to perform. Historian specializing in African American history, particularly of Civil War and Civil Rights history, strongly preferred.
- A proposed project Schedule A
- A proposed budget.

All proposals must be received no later than 5:00 pm EST on November 19, 2021. They should be prepared simply and economically, providing a straight forward, concise description of the Principal Investigator candidate's qualifications and capabilities to satisfy the requirements of this RFP. Proposals may be submitted via email in electronic format (MS Word or PDF format) to Ms. Kay Phillips, ASALH Project Manager, at nps@asalh.org. ASALH will confirm receipt of submissions. However, if there are any issues (e.g., with the attachments working correctly), the Principal Investigator candidate is responsible for resolving these issues with an alternative submission method acceptable to ASALH and NPS.

Selection Criteria

Submittals will be evaluated and ranked based on the following factors, presented in no particular order:

- Qualifications of Principal Investigator candidate.
- The extent to which the proposal addresses the project's purpose and scope of work.
- Experience in conducting historical research for historical biographies, publications, and disseminating research using several forms of distribution.
- Knowledge of use and means of primary resources, searching through digital and hard copy archives, and basic historical interpretation.
- Demonstrated capability of meeting projected deadlines and successfully completing contracts of this type.
- Past performance and references.
- Proposed project schedule.

Available Funding

The stipend for the Principal Investigator of this project is \$26,250. Funding is available to pay for a qualified ethnographer/historian and for the services of an archeologist. Additionally, funding is set aside to pay for limited travel for the PI with associated expenses.

Terms and Conditions

- A. ASALH reserves the right to reject any and all proposals, and to waive minor irregularities in any proposal.
- B. ASALH reserves the right to request clarification of information submitted, and to request additional information from any Principal Investigator candidate.
- C. ASALH and NPS shall not be responsible for any costs incurred by Principal Investigator candidates in preparing, submitting or presenting its response to this RFP.
- D. All completed nominations and executive summaries must fully comply with Section 508 accessibility standards ([https://www.section 508.gov/content/build/create-accessible-documents](https://www.section508.gov/content/build/create-accessible-documents)) for electronic documents.
- E. Any and all rights to work produced through his project will be vested in the Department of the Interior, National Park Service, including any copyrights.
- F. The selected Principal Investigator must also comply with all applicable provisions of [OMB Circular A-110 A-110 REVISED 11/19/93 As Further Amended 9/30/99](https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/omb/circulars_a110/). (https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/omb/circulars_a110/)

Questions

Respondents are invited to submit written questions requesting clarifications or explanations of the information contained in this RFP. Please direct all proposal or contract-related questions to Ms. Kay Phillips, ASALH Project Manager, at nps@asalh.org.