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TRAVEL

WORLD'S LONGEST FLIGHT Qatar Airways launches new Auckland route

Qatar Airways has launched the world's longest scheduled commercial airline route with the arrival of its flight from Doha to Auckland, New Zealand.

The Gulf carrier said flight QR920 touched down in Auckland early on Monday after covering a distance of 14,535 kilometres, or 9,032 miles.

That is the furthest distance between any two cities linked by direct flights. The outbound journey is scheduled to take 16 hours and 20 minutes on the Boeing 777-200LR. That's relatively short compared to the return trip of 17 hours and 30 minutes, which is slower because of headwinds.

The Associated Press



PHOTO COURTESY OF NIAGARA ARTS & CULTURAL CENTER

The suspension bridge near Niagara Falls that Harriet Tubman used to spirit slaves across the border into Canada.

Escape to the promised land

During Black History Month visit the Underground Railroad sites in Buffalo-Niagara used by fugitive slaves

ANNE BOKMA

She's the most celebrated face of the Underground Railroad — and it's a face destined to become even more famous since the U.S. Treasury announced that Harriet Tubman will replace Andrew Jackson on the front of the \$20 bill. Known as the "Moses of her people," Tubman, an escaped slave from Maryland, guided other fugitives to freedom in Canada across a wooden suspension bridge in Niagara Falls, often by hiding them in fruit wagons and railroad cattle cars.

Before the construction of the bridge in 1848, the only option for runaway slaves was to cross the Niagara River by rowboat under the cover of night or by climbing aboard ferries and steamboats operated by sympathetic captains. Some risked their lives by swimming across the river at its calmer points or clung to pieces of wood in a desperate attempt to make it to Canada, considered the Promised Land.

Buffalo-Niagara was a hotbed of Underground Railroad activity from the early 1800s until 1865 when the Civil War outlawed slavery. (Canada had already banned the importing of slaves back in 1793.)

February's Black History Month is an ideal time to visit some of the significant sites of this network of secret routes, safe houses and hiding places that represented the first racially-integrated U.S. civil rights movement in which blacks and whites worked together to actively oppose the federal laws that condoned slavery.

In Niagara Falls, the Niagara Arts & Cultural



PHOTO BY ANNE BOKMA

The Freedom Crossing monument commemorating the Underground Railroad in Lewiston N.Y. portrays a family being loaded into a boat to make the Niagara River crossing.

Center's Freedom Crossing: The Underground Railroad in Greater Niagara, tells the story of the Underground Railroad movement in Buffalo-Niagara through historic photos and artifacts.

In addition to Tubman and her fellow famous abolitionist, Frederick Douglass, you can learn about the lives of many lesser known, mostly anonymous, "conductors," who played a pivotal role in helping an estimated 50,000 freedom seekers escape to Canada.

These included the hundreds of African-Americans who worked as cooks, waiters, drivers and porters at grand hotels such as the Cataract House, once the largest hotel in Niagara Falls. These hotel workers led double lives, serving rich hotel guests

— many of whom were plantation owners, accompanied by their enslaved maids and valets, who vacationed in Niagara Falls to get away from the oppressive heat of the southern states — and then helping spirit those slaves into small rowboats located just a few blocks away at the base of the American Falls.

Canada was just a 15-minute crossing, but it was a dangerous ride since bounty hunters and federal agents constantly patrolled the area.

Local safe houses are also highlighted in the exhibit, including the McClews farm, now called Murphy's Orchards, where a hiding room under a trap door in the barn can still be viewed today.

Railroad continues // G12

Buffalo and Niagara was a hotbed of Underground Railroad activity from the early 1800s until 1865.

Upcoming Travel Seminars at our Stoney Creek Office

Iceland Presentation

Wednesday, March 8th at 6:30pm



Australia Presentation

Sunday, March 5th at 1pm



Rocky Mountaineer Presentation

February 28th at 6:30pm



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