Follow our Travels through Freedom's Frontier
NATIONAL HERITAGE AREA
On May 20, the Freedom’s Frontier National Heritage Area (http://www.freedomsfrontier.org) staff headed out on a yet another overcast spring Friday for monthly Fieldwork Day.

This month, Managing Director Julie McPike was the designated driver. Executive Director Jim Ogle and Marketing Manager Sonia Smith met her at the Anita B. Gorman Conservation Discovery Center (http://nature.mdc.mo.gov/discover-nature/places/gorman-anita-b-conservation-discovery-center) to begin their trek in Jackson County, Missouri, and see some Kansas City sights.

Elizabeth Hobson, Education and Interpretation Manager, joined the group later because she was meeting with the committee that was formed to work on getting the American Association for State and Local History (http://about.aaslh.org/home/) 2018 conference held in Kansas City. IKR! (I know, right?)
Just a 10-minute walk from the Plaza shopping area, the Anita B. Gorman Conservation Discovery Center is a unique, hands-on, urban conservation education center located on eight acres in the heart of Kansas City.

On our walk there, we saw many flowers, a replica of a dug-out canoe, a keelboat like the one Lewis and Clark traveled in, and much more. Outside, the gardens are beautiful and We marveled over the quietness of the park, right smack in the middle of a lot of traffic and road noise.

Inside the building, there is yet another Missouri place (Prairie State Park – http://www.freedomsfrontier.org/Visitors/Sites/Comments.aspx?id=102 – in MindenMines, MO also had a Bison education area - ) to learn about Bison – the State Mammal of Kansas – as well as a display about wetlands, some binoculars and field guides for birdwatching, and more!
Though it wasn’t on our “official” itinerary, Julie decided to take us on a short detour to see these walking tour signs at **Loose Park** (on Facebook at [https://www.facebook.com/pages/Loose-Park-Jacob-L-Loose-Park/125354610845526](https://www.facebook.com/pages/Loose-Park-Jacob-L-Loose-Park/125354610845526)) the third largest park in Kansas City.

At 75-acres, Jacob L. Loose Park is well-known locally as a major site for the Battle of Westport, where Confederate forces were routed by Union forces in the area in which the park is now located. It is estimated that 29,000 people were involved in the battle. The property at that time was owned by William Bent, a man who led wagon trains and traded with the Indians. [Download Loose Park Map](http://kcparks.org/park/loose-park/).
Next stop: National World War I Museum and Memorial (http://www.freedomsfrontier.org/Visitors/Sites/Comments.aspx?id=93). Read *In Flanders Field*, by John McCrae, on the Academy of American Poets website (https://www.poets.org/poetsorg/poem/flanders-fields). You can listen to it at the museum, in one of the cool listening stations, (where you can also hear other poems, prose selections, music of the WWI era, and important speeches from that time). There are also other interactive exhibits, such as the one that I’m (Sonia) using to make a propaganda poster.
In the trenches at the National World War I Museum and Memorial
Here’s a view of our next stop, taken from the National World War I Museum and Memorial: **Union Station** ([http://www.unionstation.org/](http://www.unionstation.org/)).
And then, after lunch, we roaming around this historic train depot immersing ourselves in Union Station’s past, by way of a cool phone app. You download the app to a smartphone, then find the interpretive stops (circles on the floor – a couple of the circles are outside, and difficult to find). Aim your phone in the direction of the arrow, and watch history coming to life.
Paul Gutierrez, Recreation Director, with the Kansas City Museum at Corinthian Hall (http://kansascitymuseum.org/), gave us (minus Jim, who had to leave to attend a meeting) a tour of this site that is in the process of planning for the future – a historic restoration and rehabilitation of the entire property, including the mansion to the splendor of its bygone days. The museum offers Hard Hat Tours of the first floor at 2 p.m. Wednesday-Saturday so you can learn about the history and legacy of the Long family.
Julie, Liz and Sonia ended the day with a trip to the Kansas City Toy and Miniature Museum (http://toyandminiaturemuseum.org/). Many of our Boys and Girls Club day campers will visit the museum to learn about the Civil Rights era through a special, temporary exhibit that addresses stereotypes in paper dolls and other toys.

We learned a lot during our visit and were impressed with the possibilities for partnership with the museum. Where else could you visualize life in the heritage area from the 1850s to present day through toys, miniatures and special exhibits? Not only can you do all that, you can also let down your hair and act like a kid again, as evidenced by our photos! (Like some other museums, the Toy and Miniature Museum has a strict photo policy – we had to limit ourselves to sharing pictures from the special photo spots. Obviously, no fun at all – just “kid”ding!)

As always, we thank everyone at the Partner sites for giving us informative, educational tours, and helping us to learn more about the heritage area connected stories. Until next time, keep following our travels through Freedom’s Frontier National Heritage Area by visiting some of the museums and other historic sites!