

## Freedom's Frontier National Heritage Area Statement of National Significance and Themes

### **Background**

The statement of national significance and the interpretive themes for Freedom's Frontier National Heritage Area (FFNHA) are part of the basic foundation for the heritage area along with the vision, mission and goals. These statements will provide a basis for much of the work that the heritage area will undertake in the next ten to twenty years by defining resources within the 41-county region that contribute to the national significance of the region and provide a framework for interpretive efforts.

As this heritage area originated in Kansas as the "Bleeding Kansas Heritage Area," one fundamental aspect of drafting the statement of national significance and the themes is ensuring that the perspective of the Missouri counties that have been added to the region is incorporated. In addition, while local stakeholders agree that the Missouri-Kansas Border War is one of the most significant stories they have to tell, stakeholders have different opinions about whether or not other nationally significant stories should also be included as part of the heritage area's interpretive focus. Some stakeholders feel that in addition to the stories and time period (1854-1865) of the Border War, related stories about frontier settlement that effectively set the stage for the Border War should be included. Other stakeholders feel that other stories of struggles for freedom that directly resulted from the Border War should also be included. Still others feel that *all* nationally significant struggles for freedom, regardless of whether they have a connection to the Border War, should be included as part of the interpretive focus for the heritage area.

FFNHA stakeholders have very strong feelings about the relative merits of a more narrowly focused approach versus a broader and more inclusive approach. Until this issue is decided and fully accepted by stakeholders, it will continue to divert discussions away from other heritage area issues. It will be important to resolve, once and for all, the issue of the interpretive scope and period of significance for the FFNHA.

In order to reach agreement on these important issues, it is important to understand the reasoning and the concerns behind different perspectives. This heritage area began with a smaller geographic area in Kansas and a narrower focus on Bleeding Kansas, thus many of the original stakeholders who have invested years into this effort came to the table with this specific interest. When national heritage area status was secured, the negotiations resulted in a broader geographic region that included more counties in Missouri as well as a new moniker with the potential to include a broader focus on other struggles for freedom (Freedom's Frontier National Heritage Area instead of the

Bleeding Kansas National Heritage Area). To effectively address the ramifications of these expanded geography and thematic scope of the heritage area the consultant team needed to reach out to Missouri stakeholders to ensure that their perspective was included and also help stakeholders determine what interpretive scope and time frame would be most appropriate.

### ***Outreach to Missouri Stakeholders***

While ensuring that the Missouri perspective was addressed in both the statement of national significance and the themes was identified as an early priority, Missouri stakeholders are currently underrepresented on the FFNHA Partnership Team. There are, for example, only three Missouri stakeholders on the current Interpretation and Education committee. It quickly became clear that additional outreach to other Missouri stakeholders outside of the FFNHA meetings would be essential in order to develop themes and a statement of national significance that truly reflected the perspectives of both Kansas and Missouri stakeholders. Starting with the Missouri stakeholders on the Interpretation & Education Committee, planning team member Amy Webb conducted phone interviews to discuss key questions relating not only to themes, but also to the statement of national significance (see full list of questions and responses in Appendix A). In addition, interviewees were asked for the names of other Missouri stakeholders for additional phone interviews. A total of 17 Missouri stakeholders were identified and contacted and 12 phone interviews were conducted in March and April 2008.

Missouri stakeholders interviewed generally agreed on the following:

- The proposed criteria for theme development generally made sense, with the additional clarification that the themes should reflect the nationally significant elements of the heritage area.
- None of the existing sets of themes are exactly what FFNHA needs.
  - Themes from the FFNHA feasibility study are too narrowly focused on the Kansas perspective do not encompass the Missouri perspective.
  - Themes from the Rivers, Trails and Rails feasibility study are too focused on Missouri and do not fit with “Freedom’s Frontier.” While these themes highlight nationally significant stories in the Missouri counties that have been added to the heritage area, not all these stories are directly connected to stories of “freedom.”
  - Themes brainstormed during Spring 2007 FFNHA meetings are abstract and confusing to many stakeholders.
- The Border War is a key story. Substituting “Missouri-Kansas Border War” for “Bleeding Kansas” would allow FFNHA to provide a broader perspective that includes both Missouri and Kansas while retaining a primary focus on the same stories and time period.
- The addition of the Missouri counties strengthens several aspects of the heritage area including adding in the starting point for several significant national trails and the Pony Express.

- The addition of the Missouri counties provides a good opportunity to provide different perspectives on the Border War.

Missouri stakeholders had different opinions about the following:

- The time period that FFNHA should be interpreting. Some stakeholders felt that the primary focus should be on the Border War/Civil War period, others felt that the events leading up to or directly resulting from the Border War should be included. Other stakeholders felt no time frame or period of significance should be imposed.
- The inclusiveness of the proposed themes. Some felt that the focus should be on stories directly related to the Border War; others felt that stories related to other unrelated struggles for freedom should be included as well.

Missouri stakeholders also expressed several concerns, including:

- Concern that Missouri would be cast as the “villain” with Kansas as the “hero” in telling the stories of the heritage area, with a related concern that the heritage area would dictate exactly how these stories should be told.
- Concern about the commitment of time and travel that is required to be part of the monthly FFNHA meetings, with related concerns about what is accomplished at the meetings due in part to the large number of attendees and the requirements placed on a national heritage area.
- Concern that the heritage area might benefit only large, established sites and that there may not be a benefit for smaller sites to participate. Related to this concern is the observation that currently, a number of smaller, volunteer-run sites are making a substantial personal commitment to attend FFNHA meetings while other larger, professionally staffed organizations that potentially stand to benefit from the heritage area are not making the same investment of time and travel funds.

Missouri and Kansas FFNHA stakeholders share a common passion for history, especially related to the Border War—even though their specific interpretation or perspectives of the events of that time are not always the same. It is this shared passion, however, that should drive the statement of national significance and themes to allow for multiple perspectives to be shared. The goal of the heritage area would be to share multiple perspectives without judgment in order to allow visitors or residents to consider all sides and come to their own conclusions. By participating in the GMP process, smaller sites have an opportunity to ensure that the kind of assistance they need most will be included as a priority for the heritage area.

### ***The Merits of a More Inclusive Approach***

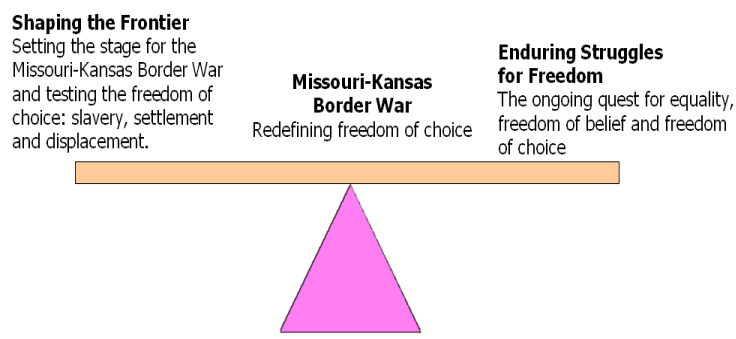
As noted above, there is also disagreement between FFNHA stakeholders about whether the heritage area should focus more narrowly on the Border War or more broadly on the Border War and all other nationally significant struggles for freedom within the region. While acknowledging the concerns of some FFNHA stakeholders

about the ramifications of a broader approach, the management team strongly recommends a more inclusive approach of addressing all nationally significant struggles for freedom (including, but not limited to the Border War) as the appropriate choice for FFNHA. The reasons for this recommendation are outlined below.

- 1) **A more inclusive approach that includes all nationally significant struggles for freedom is more in keeping with the intent implied by the name change to “Freedom’s Frontier National Heritage Area” and the broader focus implied by the feasibility study that was submitted to secure preliminary National Heritage Area status.** Every heritage area is created as an individual Act of Congress, and the process of designation is very political. While FFNHA has already secured preliminary national heritage area designation, the general management plan (GMP) is the final step to help secure permanent designation. If the focus of the heritage area is substantially changed from the description in the original feasibility study, this change back to a more narrow focus on the Border War has the potential to create challenges in seeking permanent designation and/or efforts to secure federal funding once permanent designation is secured.
  
- 2) **The significance of the Border War cannot be fully explained without an understanding of the events leading up to this time. Likewise, while the resolution of the Border War resolved some issues related to freedom, it did not resolve all issues. This is most effectively illustrated by sharing other enduring struggles for freedom.** By including a broader focus the events of the Border War can be placed into a larger context which will ensure that they are better understood. The image below illustrates how the core stories of the Border War can be balanced by stories of other struggles for freedom that came before and after these events.

A key to successful interpretation is connecting the past with the present, and by creating a larger context that includes other struggles for freedom it will be easier to make these connections. A broader approach will make the stories of the Border War and the struggles for freedom this war represents more relevant for today’s

### Placing Stories into a Larger Context



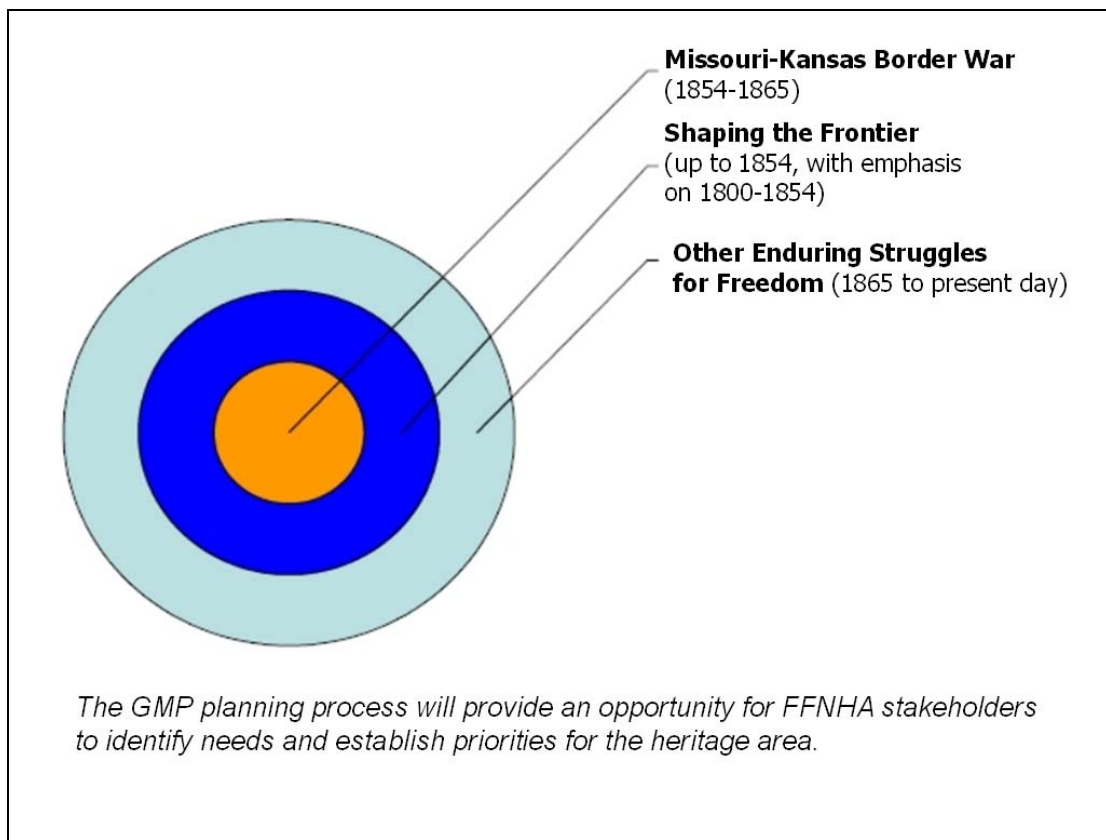
audiences.

- 3) **A more inclusive approach will expand possible funding opportunities for the heritage area.** Federal funding for the heritage area is not guaranteed and is likely to be highly competitive. The intent would be to leverage federal funding with other funding sources from philanthropic entities within the region. A broader focus will help with efforts to secure both federal funds and other funds as well. Funders are more likely to give to a regional effort, and the inclusion of other struggles for freedom, particularly those that address the struggles of groups such as African Americans, Native Americans and women, will open up potential funding opportunities for FFNHA that would not be available if the focus was just on the Border War.
- 4) **There are only a limited number of sites in the FFNHA that have fully developed visitor experiences focused on the Border War.** This is a large heritage area, and currently there are limited opportunities for visitors to learn about the Border War at sites within the region. More developed sites (such as Brown v. Board of Education or sites associated with the national trails) in the region that tell the story of other struggles for freedom will be important for early tourism promotional efforts for FFNHA in order to create a critical mass of related things for visitors to see and do in the area now. By strengthening connections between these established sites and other contributing sites in the FFNHA region, FFNHA will help to ensure that the destination is well worth the drive for potential visitors.

By including well developed visitor sites associated with other enduring struggles for freedom in early promotional efforts for FFNHA, less developed sites within the region have an opportunity for greater visibility by creating a connection with established attractions. Many of these sites already attract a substantial number of visitors, and if these established sites begin to cross-promote other FFNHA sites within the region, smaller sites stand to benefit from increased visitation.

- 5) **While a more inclusive approach leaves the door open for broader involvement by other partners down the road, it does not mean that all partners have the same priority for development efforts in the region.** A number of current FFNHA stakeholders are primarily interested in the Border War, which is currently not interpreted to the extent that other stories (such as the national trails or Brown v. Board of Education) have been. As a number of these other sites have already made a substantial investment into developing the visitor experience, it would be logical to make the Border War the first priority for interpretive development efforts through FFNHA.

This “bullseye” graphic below illustrates how priorities might be established by local FFNHA stakeholders through the GMP process. Given the interests of current stakeholders and the need to more fully develop visitor experiences around the Border War in order to effectively tell the story, creating an initial focus on developing this aspect of FFNHA would be very appropriate.



- 6) **While there are differences of opinion, the majority of FFNHA stakeholders prefer the more inclusive approach.** A Spring 2008 online survey of FFNHA stakeholders indicated that the majority of stakeholders would like to see a broader focus. 74.2% of the FFNHA stakeholders responding to the survey indicated that they would like to see FFNHA focus on the Missouri-Kansas Border War as well as other enduring struggles for freedom in this region, as opposed to 25.8% who favored focusing exclusively on the Border War and the events leading up to or resulting from the war. While there are differences of opinion on this subject even amongst members of the FFNA Steering Committee, the majority of Steering Committee members also favor a more inclusive approach.

Additionally, the discussion around the development of a vision, mission and goals for FFNHA support a more inclusive approach. The mission states that FFNHA “*identifies and articulates the multiple definitions of freedom debated in the past and still relevant today.*” The small group discussions in the visioning process indicated a preference for a broad range of stories. Yet, the participants also desired that FFNHA achieve a national reputation as an authentically interpreted region where the Border Wars took place. Visitors could be drawn by the Border War story and then find a wealth of other stories that are interpreted.

**Statement of National Significance**

For the reasons cited above, the draft statement of national significance is based on a broader focus that includes the Border War as well as all other nationally significant struggles for freedom within the region. In drafting the statement of national significance, several National Park Service definitions of “national significance” were taken into consideration including the National Heritage Area feasibility study guidelines for nationally distinctive landscapes as well as the definition of “national significance” included in the guidelines for *Save America’s Treasures* projects. These definitions are as follows:

**NATIONAL HERITAGE AREA FEASIBILITY STUDY GUIDELINES  
EXAMPLES OF NATIONALLY DISTINCTIVE LANDSCAPES**

Nationally distinctive landscapes are places that contain important regional and national stories that, together with their associated natural and/or cultural resources, enable the American people to understand, preserve and celebrate key components of the multi-faceted character of the Nation’s heritage. The landscapes are often places that represent and contain identifiable assemblages of resources with integrity associated with one or more of the following:

1. important historical periods of the Nation and its people;
2. major events, persons and groups that contributed substantively to the Nation’s history, customs, beliefs, and folklore;
3. distinctive cultures and cultural mores;
4. major industries and technological, business and manufacturing innovations/practices, labor movements and labor advancements that contributed substantively to the economic growth of the Nation and the well-being of its people;
5. transportation innovations and routes that played central roles in important military actions, settlement, migration, and commerce;
6. social movements that substantively influenced past and present day society;
7. American art, crafts, literature and music;
8. distinctive architecture and architectural periods and movements;
9. major scientific discoveries and advancements; and
10. other comparable representations that together with their associated resources substantively contributed to the Nation’s heritage.

(Source: <http://www.nps.gov/history/heritageareas/FSGUIDE/appendix1.html>)

**SAVE AMERICA'S TREASURES  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE**

The quality of **national significance** is ascribed to collections and historic properties that possess exceptional value or quality in illustrating or interpreting the intellectual and cultural heritage and the built environment of the United States, that possess a high degree of integrity and that:

- Are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to, and are identified with, or that outstandingly represent the broad patterns of United States history and culture and from which an understanding and appreciation of those patterns may be gained; or,
- Are associated importantly with the lives of persons nationally significant in the United States history or culture; or,
- Represent great historic, cultural, artistic or scholarly ideas or ideals of the American people; or,
- Embody the distinguishing characteristics of a resource type that:
  - Is exceptionally valuable for the study of a period or theme of United States history or culture; or
  - Represents a significant, distinctive and exceptional entity whose components may lack individual distinction but that collectively form an entity of exceptional historical, artistic or cultural significance (e.g., an historic district with national significance), or
  - Outstandingly commemorates or illustrates a way of life or culture; or,
- Have yielded or may yield information of major importance by revealing or by shedding light upon periods or themes of United States history or culture.

(Source: <http://www.nps.gov/history/hps/treasures/national.htm>)

Existing statements regarding national significance from past feasibility studies as well as a compilation of the existing themes were shared with key FFNHA stakeholders in both Missouri and Kansas to identify elements that stakeholders liked and wanted to keep as well as elements that stakeholders did not feel were a good fit. Stakeholders also recommended historical accounts of the region that could provide a balanced overview of the region to inform both the statement of national significance as well as the themes. Based on these definitions, a review of historical documents about this region, and discussions on national significance with FFNHA stakeholders, a statement of national significance was drafted. Once the initial statement of national significance and themes were completed, two conference calls were held with the FFNHA Steering Committee and the FFNHA Interpretation and Education Committee to secure additional feedback in advance of the May FFNHA Partnership Team meeting where the statement of national significance and themes were presented. E-mail correspondence with committee members both before and after each call yielded additional input for both the themes and the statement of national significance.

### ***Draft Statement of National Significance***

Freedom's Frontier National Heritage Area is nationally significant for its association with important historical periods of the Nation and its people; major events, persons and groups that contributed substantively to the Nation's history; and transportation innovations and routes that played central roles in military actions, settlement, migration and commerce. During the first two-thirds of the nineteenth century, this region was a crossroads where peoples with varying definitions of "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness" collided, inciting and fueling the bloodiest conflict ever fought on American soil – the Civil War. The events have shaped the way the people in the region address the ongoing struggles that continue to re-define the nation's meaning of "freedom."

From the time of Missouri statehood in 1821 and the setting up of the "Indian Line" by Secretary of War John C. Calhoun in 1825 until the Kansas-Nebraska Act of 1854, the border between the present-day states of Kansas and Missouri marked the boundary between Euro-American and Native American settlement in the United States. In the early nineteenth century, while mostly Northern and European pioneers poured into the vast new lands of the Northwest Territory and northern reaches of the Louisiana Territory, their Southern counterparts moved into the region later named "Missouri." For forty years after Missouri became a territory in 1812, Southern expansion northwest was stalled by what is now the Missouri-Kansas border. Because of the policy of Indian Removal and the establishment of the new territory for white settlement, this border marked the boundary between the "permanent Indian Frontier" in present day Kansas and white settlement in Missouri.

In 1821, Missouri was granted statehood and, as part of the hotly debated Missouri Compromise, entered the union as a slave state while Maine was admitted as a free state to maintain political balance. The compromise further stated that all of the Louisiana Purchase territory north of the southern boundary of Missouri (with the exception of Missouri itself) would be free, while slavery would be permitted to exist south of or below Missouri's southern border. This placed Missouri, the northernmost slave state, in an exposed and vulnerable geographic position surrounded on several sides by free states, especially as the debate over the extent and the boundaries of the slavery system intensified in the years leading up to the Civil War.

Federal law prohibited permanent white settlement in Indian Territory, with the exception of religious missions, white pioneers, explorers, and traders. The Euro-Americans that did travel through or settle in Indian Territory during this time—many from Missouri—became increasingly familiar with the land to the west. Three nationally significant trails associated with westward expansion were developed during the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Santa Fe Trail, the Oregon Trail, and the California Trail stretched from Missouri through Kansas. The Oregon and California trails began in Independence, Missouri and this region was also a primary jumping off point for the Santa Fe Trail. These trails served as vital transportation routes for settlers, traders and prospectors in the pre-railroad west. Yet, Kansas was among the places to which a

number of Native American peoples had been forcibly resettled, then later pressured to “remove” to other parts of Indian Territory. The Native American “Trail of Tears” and the later “Trail of Blood on Ice” ultimately connected to Kansas and impacted Missouri.

The thousands of wagons and animals also stressed the regional ecology and its support of those Indian cultures that remained. The significant increase of wagon and animal traffic across the region led to the rapid deforestation of river and stream valleys as the pioneers sought forage and firewood—a rare commodity on the plains. The depleted valleys provided to be a great loss to the indigenous Indian tribes who relied on them for shelter during the fierce winter months.

The westward expansion and mingling of cultures soon turned to intrigue. Perhaps this land was more than the “Great American Desert.” The less-vegetated landscape of the Great Plains might indicate less precipitation – but would also require less effort to place into cultivation than the forested lands to the east. By the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century, the lure of a new life and opportunities in the western frontier proved too enticing to ignore. Additionally, the lure of wealth in California increased the desire to build railroads across Indian Territory and become wealthy through land speculation. White pioneers of all persuasions pressured Congress to open the Indian frontier for white settlement. In 1854, Congress finally succumbed to the pressure, passing the Kansas-Nebraska Act. The Act was controversial for many reasons. First, it opened Kansas to white settlement before the new territory was surveyed and Indian treaties were negotiated, resulting in a culture of squatting and land disputes. Second, it nullified the Missouri Compromise by calling for popular sovereignty on the issue of slavery, placing the slavery status of the new territories in the hands of the people who were willing to give their lives or pay others to do so to extend the reach of their influence.

Uncertainty over land ownership in advance of the election in the Kansas territory led to unconventional and, in some cases, illegal actions. Representatives of both sides, from as far as Massachusetts and Alabama, provided aid to settlers in an effort to swing the vote. Missourians crossed the border in large numbers to vote illegally in the Kansas elections. When the first vote resulted in a pro-slavery government, free-staters denounced it as fraudulent and established a competing free-state government. At the time, the establishment of a free-state government was both illegal and treason as this government was not considered by pro-slavery national leaders to have officially won general support in the territory.

Both sides resorted to violence. A pro-slavery raid on Lawrence, Kansas on May 21, 1856, resulted in a tremendous loss of property including the destruction of the presses for two free-soil newspapers and a hotel serving the New England Emigrant Aid Company. Just three days later, John Brown’s execution of five unarmed proslavery settlers along Pottawatomie Creek further escalated the violence from looting and destruction to murder. These events marked the onset of years of violent guerilla warfare along the Kansas-Missouri border that garnered national headlines about

“Bleeding Kansas,” focusing national attention on this heated border dispute and ultimately helping to precipitate and fuel the Civil War.

Americans closely monitored the events through national news coverage and public speeches. The slavery issue, brought to light by the Border War between Kansas and Missouri, became a central national concern with the role of the new Republican Party in the 1860 presidential election. Abraham Lincoln’s victory intensified the rift, hastening Southern Secession.

Although Missouri did not formally secede from the Union, the state was split between the Union and Confederate causes. Kansas remained decidedly on the side of the Union, becoming the first state to recruit African-Americans to serve in the Union Army. A unit that would become known as the “Tricolor Brigade” included blacks, whites and Indians, some of whom had followed Opothleyahola, a Loyal Muskogee, from the South to Kansas at the start of the war. The First Kansas Colored Volunteer Infantry was the first “colored” infantry to see combat at Island Mound in Bates County in Missouri.

As the Civil War escalated, border tensions only further intensified. Whereas many Missourians enlisted in both the Union and Confederate Armies, some Missourians, like William Quantrill, formed their own militias. Jayhawker James H. Lane formed the Kansas Brigade, a Union infantry regiment that employed guerilla tactics to counter the militias. In response to three years of Jayhawker raids on homes, businesses, and families in western Missouri, William Quantrill and his militia responded with a second sacking of Lawrence in 1863. The Union Army’s attempts to round up bushwhackers in Missouri was stymied in part by the support Missouri residents provided to the bushwhackers, who were viewed as local protectors in extremely unsettled times. In addition, the hilly and heavily vegetated landscape in western Missouri afforded ample opportunities for the bushwhackers to hide. The Union Army ultimately responded by issuing Order No. 11, which called for the unprecedented evacuation and burning of entire counties along Missouri’s western border. This part of western Missouri became known as the “Burnt District” because of the extent of the devastation in the region. Despite the escalating violence in the region, the settlement of the west continued to advance with this region as a critical jumping off point. The legendary but short-lived Pony Express established a transcontinental communications system between 1861 and 1862 by establishing a link between St. Joseph, Missouri and Sacramento, California that reduced the transit time to ten days.

Although the Civil War brought freedom-related issues to the fore, it did not resolve them. In his November 1863 Gettysburg Address, Abraham Lincoln referred to this “*unfinished work*” towards redefining freedom. He stated “*...It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us...that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain -- that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom -- and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth.*” Just as this region was the front line of the Civil War, it continued

to contribute to the nation's progress and setbacks in the ongoing struggle for freedom in the years to follow.

Some of the escaped slaves remained in Kansas settlements, such as Quindaro. Many others lived throughout eastern Kansas. While slaves were freed following the Civil War, racism persisted on both sides of the Kansas-Missouri border. Following Reconstruction, Kansas Governor John P. St. John's policy of welcoming black emigrants who came to the state as part of the Exoduster Movement was extremely controversial. Although the State of Kansas was the first state to legally oust the Ku Klux Klan in 1925, the Kansas Supreme Court repeatedly upheld the constitutionality of school segregation. It was not until the landmark 1954 case of *Brown v. Topeka Board of Education* that the United States Supreme Court overturned this decision and paved the way for school integration nationwide. President Harry Truman, who was raised in western Missouri and whose grandparents had suffered tremendous losses during the Border War, advanced Civil Rights with his 1948 Executive Order 9981 which declared that everyone in the armed services, regardless of race, color, religion or national origin, should be provided with equal treatment and opportunity.

African Americans are only one of the groups that have endured national struggles for freedom in this region. Growing freedom and rights for other groups such as Native Americans and women provided new opportunities for leadership and achievement by individuals in this region in the twentieth century. Native Americans like Charles Curtis, who grew up on the Kaw Indian Reservation in Kansas, went on to become Vice President of the United States in 1929 under Herbert Hoover. Women - including Amelia Earhart who was born in Atchison Kansas - grew up to defy gender stereotypes and blaze new trails in the traditionally male-dominated field of aviation.

The ongoing quest for freedom is an elusive struggle that continues to be developed and refined. The lessons that can be learned from the Missouri-Kansas Border War as well as other struggles for freedom by Native Americans, women seeking equal rights, and other groups all contribute to an evolving definition of freedom continues to shape who we are as Americans. The sobering as well as the inspiring nationally significant stories in this region can help us learn from the past to inform the way we view freedom today. The Freedom's Frontier National Heritage Area provides opportunities to learn about and experience the evolving ideal and fundamental American value known as "Freedom."

### ***Theme Development***

The draft statement of national significance provides an important starting point for the FFNHA themes. In addition to considering the statement of national significance, three existing sets of themes were identified to build from in developing themes and sub-themes for the FFNHA General Management Plan (see Appendix B for more information about existing themes). These included:

- A) themes set forth in the 2004 Feasibility Study prepared for Freedom's Frontier National Heritage Area reflecting the Kansas counties in the heritage area;
- B) themes outlined in the draft 2005 Missouri-Kansas Rivers, Trails and Rails National Heritage Area Feasibility Study for a proposed heritage area in the greater Kansas City area that did not come to fruition ; and
- C) two iterations of themes brainstormed by the full Freedom's Frontier Partnership Team in its March 2007 meeting.

Given that substantial effort and energy had already been spent by other consultants and the FFNHA Partnership Team in exploring potential themes, the planning team spent a considerable amount of time analyzing the existing themes and developing a revised set of themes based upon feedback from current stakeholders (with special outreach to Missouri stakeholders as described above). The themes in the FFNHA Feasibility Study were given careful consideration as these were the themes that were submitted to the National Park Service for the preliminary National Heritage Area designation. The acknowledged deficiency in the FFNHA feasibility study themes was the lack of representation on the part of the Missouri counties that are now part of the Freedom's Frontier National Heritage Area.

Based on theme development work for other planning projects, management team consultant Amy Webb developed an initial list of seven (7) key criteria for theme development to assist in evaluating the existing proposed themes and identifying the strongest aspects as well as gaps or missing elements. These seven criteria include:

#### *Key criteria for theme development*

- 1) Must tie in to "Freedom's Frontier" title/name in some way
- 2) Must incorporate stories that are unique to this region
- 3) Fewer themes are better than more themes
- 4) Need to be simple and easy to understand
- 5) Must be distinct from each other (avoid overlap between themes)
- 6) Allow for growth/expansion over time without alteration
- 7) Represent the national significance of the full region, not just one part, place or perspective

### **Observations on the FFNHA Feasibility Study Themes**

As the FFNHA Feasibility Study was conducted prior to the addition of Missouri counties, it is not surprising that the themes proposed in the document reflect a Kansas perspective. “Kansas” is mentioned four times—in the main theme as well as in two of the five sub-themes. “Missouri” does not appear in any of the themes or sub-themes. While the Kansas focus is not surprising given the genesis of FFNHA as the “Bleeding Kansas Heritage Area” and the focus in the feasibility study on the Kansas counties, the expansion of the region to encompass a number of Missouri counties, themes might more appropriately refer to the “Missouri-Kansas Border War” rather than “Bleeding Kansas.”

The Border War and the implications for both Kansas and Missouri is the biggest story that FFNHA stakeholders are most anxious to share. Using this broader moniker as part of the main theme and sub-themes will offer FFNHA the flexibility to provide multiple perspectives on these significant events in American history. The Bleeding Kansas story will continue to be one of the region’s important stories. However, a broader lens will encompass other related stories, including those of Order No. 11, the Burnt District and Civil War battles. While “Bleeding Kansas” received a tremendous amount of national press at the time, history shows that there was a great deal of bleeding on both sides of the border.

In the proposed themes in the FFNHA Feasibility Study, the third and fourth sub-themes overlap as they both address the African-American experience within the region (one focuses on the Underground Railroad, the other on the enduring struggles of African Americans). Also, even though the Underground Railroad is identified as one of the four most important sub-themes in the FFNHA Feasibility Study, only one site in the FFNHA-developed *Contributing Sites* database mentions the Underground Railroad in the site description. The full story of the African-American struggle for freedom cannot be told without also discussing the Underground Railroad; thus combining these two sub-themes would create a more concise list of sub-themes in keeping with the third criteria of brevity above. It would also provide greater clarity about the most appropriate sub-theme for stories by avoiding situations where the same story fits under multiple sub-themes.

Sub-themes 4 and 5 focus on the “enduring struggle for freedom” and specify two specific groups (African Americans and Native Americans). Again, with the goal of having as concise a list as possible and with the additional goal of allowing for growth and expansion over time without needing to add new themes, it might be preferable to collapse these two themes into “Enduring Struggles for Freedom” which then allows the flexibility to explore the struggles of African Americans, Native Americans, Women, Religious groups or any other group in the future without altering the basic framework of the main theme and sub-themes.

### ***Observations on the Draft Missouri-Kansas Rivers, Trails and Rails National Heritage Area Feasibility Study***

The second set of draft themes was developed in 2005 for the feasibility study for the Rivers, Trails and Rails National Heritage Area, a separately proposed heritage area that did not come to fruition. This proposed National Heritage Area would have included the greater Kansas City area. A number of the Missouri counties included in this proposed heritage area are now part of the expanded Freedom's Frontier National Heritage Area. Thus these themes (while coming from a different perspective and approach of "Rivers, Trails and Rails") shed light on several significant stories that the additional Missouri counties bring to the expanded FFNHA region.

These stories include the national trails that were part of westward expansion that originated in western Missouri and ran through Kansas as well as an important presidential figure, Harry Truman, who grew up in western Missouri. The sub-themes of "Borders and Bridges" as well as the "Cultural Crossroads" overlap to some extent with the Kansas oriented border stories under "The Kansas Conflict: Bleeding Kansas" and the "Kansas Territory: Geography of Rivers, Trails and Road Development" in the first set of themes, reiterating the importance of these topics.

### ***Observations on Themes Brainstormed during Spring '07 FFNHA Meetings***

The third proposed sub-theme from this feasibility study, "Shaping of a President," is important, and yet specific to certain locations in western Missouri rather than to the full 41-county region. For that reason, just as "Bleeding Kansas" should not appear in the main theme and sub-themes for the 41-county region, "Shaping of a President" or "Harry Truman" would also not appear in the main theme or sub-themes for FFNHA. However, both are significant stories that can be told under appropriate sub-themes.

The third set of existing themes from the FFNHA meetings in March and April 2007 initially resulted in five proposed themes. Interestingly, while "Bleeding Kansas" no longer appears in the initial version, one of these five proposed themes is "Territorial Kansas" with no corresponding mention about Missouri, even though both Kansas and Missouri stakeholders were in attendance at this brainstorming meeting. The five proposed themes are very different, ranging from "Landscapes" to "Jargon." While several of the themes could be tied into "frontier" including "Territorial Kansas" and "Settlement," none of these proposed themes directly allude to "freedom."

At the FFNHA meeting the following month, a revised set of themes was presented which *do* have strong link to the "freedom" aspect of "Freedom's Frontier." These proposed themes include "Freedom: Struggle/Endurance," "Freedom: Way of Life," and "Freedom: of Believing." The goal of these more conceptual themes was to elevate the conversation away from the very basic level of *what* happened to a discussion of *why* it happened and *why* it was significant.

Some of the sub-themes included in this list incorporate the major themes at significant sites within the region. For example, the three primary themes at Fort Scott National Historic Site are Manifest Destiny, Bleeding Kansas and the Civil War. The broadest of these three themes for Fort Scott (Manifest Destiny) also appears in this revised list under “Freedom: Struggle/Endurance.” While the longer list of sub-themes under each of these topics provides a good sense of the range of stories to be told within the region and reflects the interests of stakeholders participating in the brainstorming session, this list is long and challenging to decipher.

This third set of revised themes, which represents the most recent thinking regarding themes for the heritage area, includes three main themes and eighteen sub-themes, which is quite a few more than any other proposed set of themes. The meanings of some of the proposed sub-themes are not self-evident. Additional explanation would be required to understand what is meant by proposed sub-themes such as “Choice/Forced Combination,” “Patterns,” or “Assigned.” With the large number of proposed sub-themes, the themes are not all fully distinct from one another. There could easily be overlap between proposed themes such as “Military,” “Military Orders,” “Official Battles,” and “Unofficial Battles,” for example. It would be a challenge to determine which theme would be the best fit for many of the stories in this region.

For an outsider without background knowledge of this region, these proposed themes would not provide a logical hierarchy to help better understand the stories this region has to tell. In addition, by blending sub-themes under broader topics related to freedom (survival/way of life, way of life, believing) there is little emphasis in this (or in the other proposed sets of themes) on chronology. Given, however, the nature of the significance of this region, which is built in large part around an escalating conflict that resulted in the Civil War, chronology will be a critical element to help visitors fully understand the stories this region has to tell. It is impossible to comprehend how civilized Americans could be driven to carry out the violent acts that took place during the Border War without knowledge of the context and the timeline. The bloody attacks were not unprovoked acts of random violence, but rather an escalating conflict that spiraled out of control and drew in otherwise upstanding, law-abiding citizens.

***Proposed Themes for FFNHA***

With this analysis of existing themes in mind, a revised set of FFNHA themes and sub-themes could be structured as follows:

- Main Theme:**
- Missouri-Kansas Border War and the Enduring Struggle for Freedom
- OR
- Struggles for Freedom on the Missouri/Kansas Frontier

### ***Sub-Theme #1: Shaping of a Frontier***

During the first two-thirds of the nineteenth century, this frontier region was a crossroads where peoples with varying definitions of "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness" collided. Emigrants flocked, fled or were forced into this region based on what they believed and how that manifested itself in how they lived. This region was both a literal frontier on the edge of civilization as well as a figurative frontier where the clashing of morals, ideals, ways-of-life and freedom of choice came together.

Because of this region's strategic geographical location, this territorial region was the focus of national efforts towards westward expansion by Euro-American settlers as well as wrestling with the national question of slavery through legislation such as the Missouri Compromise, which helped to maintain the balance of slave states and free states by simultaneously admitting Missouri as a slave state and Maine as a free state, and the Kansas-Nebraska Act. National politics and the physical geography of the present day states of Kansas and Missouri played an important role in defining the time and place of the Missouri-Kansas Border Wars and the ultimate resolution of the national slavery question. Stories under this sub-theme will focus primarily on the frontier period of 1800-1854, though appropriate stories prior to 1800 or stories of settlement between 1854 and 1869 when the transcontinental railroad was completed may also be included.

### ***Sub-Theme #2: Missouri-Kansas Border War***

The question of individual or state rights over the common good for an entire country fueled growing debates as our nation faced fundamental issues of states rights and slavery in the mid nineteenth century. The debate over slavery epitomized battles before and after about freedom and equality. Freedom from and for what? Equality to whom, and what does equality mean for each?

The Kansas-Nebraska Act effectively revoked the Missouri Compromise by giving new states the freedom to choose whether they were to be a slave state or a free state by popular sovereignty. Kansas was one of the first states to test this new approach, leading to a struggle over whether Kansas was to be admitted to the union as a slave state or as a free state that escalated into a bloody border war between Kansas and Missouri. The Missouri-Kansas Border War focused national attention on this region where the national question of slavery was being put to the test, ultimately sparking the Civil War. The stakes were high on both sides as Missouri, the northernmost slave state, was already exposed to the north and the east to free states. If Kansas was admitted to the Union as a free state, Missouri would be a slave state surrounded on three sides by free states. If admitted as a slave state, there was no telling where the limits to the slavery system would be in the United States. The Missouri-Kansas Border War

continued throughout the Civil War and resulted in heavy losses on both sides of the border. Ultimately, Kansas was admitted to the Union as a free state and a few years later, slavery in America was abolished and the country was reunited as one nation “with freedom and justice for all” at the close of the Civil War. The stories under this sub-theme will focus primarily on the period beginning with the onset of the Missouri-Kansas Border War in 1854 through the end of the Civil War in 1865.

***Sub-Theme #3: The Enduring Struggle for Freedom***

The ongoing quest to define freedom—equality for all people, freedom of choice, and freedom of beliefs—continues in this region just as it does in the nation and in the world.

Although the Missouri-Kansas Border War helped to resolve issues of states rights and slavery, the way in which we define “freedom” continues to evolve. Racism on both sides of the border created challenges for free blacks following the Civil War, and the struggle to secure rights for African Americans as well as other groups such as women and Native Americans are ongoing. The stories under this sub-theme will focus primarily on the major ongoing national struggles for freedom and justice that came after the frontier was established and the Missouri-Kansas Border War ended, from 1865 through the present day.

One of the proposed main themes (“Missouri-Kansas Border War and the Enduring Struggle for Freedom”) ties into the heritage area name for the region of “Freedom’s Frontier” by keeping a primary focus on the Missouri-Kansas Border War as the primary focus (which encompasses, but is not limited to, the geographic area and shorter timeframe of Bleeding Kansas) which generally refers to the pre Civil War Years, while retaining the “Enduring Struggle for Freedom” wording to allow the flexibility to include other struggles for freedom as the region as desired. An alternative way to describe the main theme that would not repeat two of the three sub-themes would be “Struggles for Freedom on the Missouri/Kansas Frontier.” While it would be preferable to avoid repetition, the downside of this option is that the Border War, which is seen as an important priority by local stakeholders, is not mentioned until the sub-themes.

In addition to providing a framework for discussions about freedom, the sub-themes provide a simplified timeline of events which will make it easier for stakeholders with little interpretive training to determine where their stories might fit. The first sub-theme of “Shaping of a Frontier” provides an opportunity to discuss the events that set the stage for the Border War as the western Frontier was developed in the early 19<sup>th</sup> Century. This sub-theme can be illustrated with stories about the Louisiana Purchase, the Missouri Compromise, the Indian Removal Act and the Kansas-Nebraska Act. Stories of landscape, settlement, Territorial Kansas, Missouri’s statehood, American Indians, survival and the national trails that played a key role in westward expansion can all be told under this sub-theme to help better understand the social and political

factors that set the stage for the bloody conflict between Kansas and Missouri in the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century.

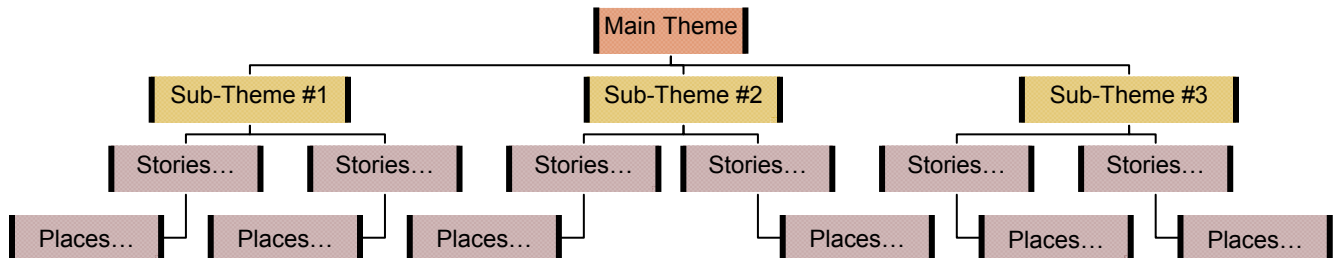
The second sub-theme, the “Missouri-Kansas Border War,” lends additional importance to this primary focus which also appears in one of the two proposed versions of the main theme. Because there are other border wars it is important to specify *which* border war this sub-theme refers to. The appellation “Missouri-Kansas Border War” is used here as that is how this conflict is referred to by the Missouri-Kansas Border War Network, a bi-state coalition of sites with a specific interest in the Border War between Kansas and Missouri. This sub-theme provides a home for the many Border War stories starting after the fateful Kansas Nebraska Act of 1854 and continuing through the end of the Civil War. Many of the important topics or stories brainstormed in the March 2007 FFNHA meeting can fit here, such as Military, Survival, Manifest Destiny, Choice, Forced, Assigned, “Official” Battles, “Unofficial” Battles, Military Orders, Taking Advantage of the Situation, Legislation, and Martyrs.

The third sub-theme of “The Enduring Struggle for Freedom” provides FFNHA with the flexibility to expand the focus to include any other struggles for freedom to help connect the past with the present to enrich the visitor experience. This sub-theme could include subsets of stories related to the African American struggle for freedom, the Native American struggle for freedom as well as struggles for freedom by any other group such as women or religious groups. It would be under this sub-theme, for example, that the story of President Harry Truman’s 1948 Executive Order 9981 could be told. It was in this Executive Order that Truman declared all persons in the armed services without regard to race, color, religion or national origin should be treated equally. As Truman’s grandparents lived in western Missouri and were dramatically impacted by the Border War, connections could also be made between the second sub-theme about the Border War and the environment in which Truman was raised, and how those family influences shaped him both as a man and as a President.

This structure of themes and sub-themes is intended to provide a simple and easy to remember framework under which any number of stories can be told to fully develop each sub-theme. Though this proposed set of themes and sub-themes will encompass a broad range of stories and sites, there will be other attractions in the region that do not fit these themes. While these other attractions would not be included in FFNHA interpretive or educational infrastructure or programs, they could be listed in FFNHA promotional materials as “other things to see and do in the area while you are here.” In this way, FFNHA interpretive materials can provide a cohesive and seamless visitor experience that allows for the logical development of a specific storyline related to the nationally significant aspects of this region while allowing visitors to customize their visit to include a range of other attractions based on their specific interests and schedule.

While the main theme and three sub-themes would remain constant, an unlimited number of stories could be told under each of the three sub-themes. Likewise, for each

of the stories under each sub-theme, there may be multiple sites or places in the region where that story (or parts of that story) can be told. The flow chart below provides a sense of how the themes, sub-themes, stories and places in the region will be connected. As noted elsewhere, places that do not connect to the stories and themes for FFNHA would not be included in FFNHA interpretive efforts but could be included in FFNHA promotional materials as “other things to see and do in the area.”



The separate FFNHA Data Analysis Report includes a preliminary exploration of potential stories and places within the FFNHA region that could fit under the proposed main theme and sub-themes to connect stories and places within the region.

**Conclusion**

The draft statement and national significance and themes that are proposed in this document will provide room for the FFNHA to grow and expand over time. At the same time allowing for an initial development focus on the Border War, which is both an area of great importance to FFNHA stakeholders as well as an area that has not yet been fully developed as a visitor experience. By continuing to be actively involved in the GMP process, FFNHA stakeholders will have an opportunity to help define the needs for specific kinds of assistance to help develop the region’s nationally significant stories and to set priorities for the heritage area. The statement of national significance and the themes proposed here are in draft form and will be subject to a public review process before they are finalized as part of the GMP.

**Appendix A: Phone Interviews with Missouri Stakeholders**

*The following questions were posed to Missouri stakeholders:*

- 1) Do the seven key criteria for theme selection make sense to you? Anything you would add or delete?
- 2) There are three sets of themes that have already been developed within this region in recent years. In looking at these themes and thinking about the key criteria, are there any that you like? Any that you don't like (and why)?
- 3) I have pulled statements from two National Heritage Area feasibility studies for this region that relate to national significance. If you had to summarize why this region is nationally significant in just a few sentences, what would you say?
- 4) Any other observations or concerns that you have about Freedom's Frontier National Heritage Area that I should be aware of?

*The following is a compilation of the responses from phone interviews from FFNHA stakeholders in Missouri.*

**1) Do the seven key criteria for theme selection make sense to you? Anything you would add or delete?**

- Yes, these make sense to me. It needs to be simple and understandable.
- What did you mean by "fewer is better?"
- All 7 make sense. None to add or take off.
- Yes, these all make sense and I can't think of any others to add
- I see where you are going with this.
- The new draft criteria that you mention make a lot of sense to me.
- Yes, these are simple and easy to understand
- I agree with every all these criteria, especially: "fewer themes are better than more themes" and that this needs to be "simple and understandable"

**2) There are three sets of themes that have already been developed within this region in recent years. In looking at these themes and thinking about the key criteria, are there any that you like? Any that you don't like (and why)?**

- In terms of the FFNHA themes, talking about Bleeding Kansas just won't fly for a KS/MO region. Bleeding Kansas is a big red flag. You could, however, talk about the Border War which picks up both sides of this same issue—though Bleeding Kansas is seen as the events leading up to the Civil War, whereas the Border War continued *through* the Civil War.
- The Border War needs to be the central theme. The Border War is the heart of all of this, and it's what people want to talk about, it's what gets them fired

- up. If this isn't about the Border War, we won't go out of our way to be involved. This is the story that you can't talk about anywhere else—it's a story that is truly unique to this region.
- Other stories, like the Underground Railroad, for example, could also be told in other places. Also, for our part of Missouri, there is no Underground Railroad story. We need to look for stories/themes that are common throughout the region.
  - A big challenge for Missouri will be how to tell the story without Missouri being cast as the "bad guy." We need to tell this story in a positive way, and we're going to need a lot of interpretive help to do that.
  - (regarding themes that were brainstormed at the Spring 2007 FFNHA meeting) We don't understand them, and we're not sure how they were put together out of the brainstorming we had. If we don't understand them, how will we explain them to others? This was one of the very first meetings that Missourians were involved with and it set us back. Some people had the impression that like it or not, these were going to be the themes. It was too rushed—we needed to establish some trust first before we committed to this. It turned into a very heated discussion, which led to the decision that we were no longer allowed to refer to the "Missouri side" or the "Kansas side." If we can't refer to the "Missouri Side" or the "border," how can we tell our story? We felt like we were being censored and that if we continued to be involved with FFNHA, we'd have to tell our story in a certain way. Saying "east side" instead of "Missouri side" just doesn't cut it.
  - Many of the very specific proposed themes only apply to parts of the region, not to us.
  - The trails would be the other big unique story in Missouri beside the Border War, as we had some major trailheads that started here. But the trail travelers didn't spend much time in Missouri, and then they simply passed through Kansas.
  - The main theme needs to be the Border War.
  - There is a link to Truman and the Border War. Truman's grandparents lived in Cass County during Order No. 11, and Truman's grandfather was very wealthy and was essentially wiped out during this time. The home of Truman's grandparents still survives, and Quantrill stopped here on his way to the raid in Lawrence.
  - What about all the things that led up to (and set the stage for) the Border War? We shouldn't forget the "*Frontier*" part of "*Freedom's Frontier*."
  - We don't like Bleeding Kansas, that's a problem in Missouri. There might even have been more bloodshed in Missouri.
  - Yes, it would be OK to swap out "Bleeding Kansas" with "Border War." That would work to give a broader perspective that includes both sides.
  - This was initially about the Border War story and now it's gone into other irrelevant themes.

- Border War is important to keep in.
- I like the African American part and we need to keep that in the themes. There were other enduring struggles for freedom too...Native Americans, even the Caucasians had struggles for freedom that we can talk about.
- African American and Underground Railroad should be under same theme not different themes.
- The themes that were brainstormed last spring are much too broad, too confusing—even for us, and we know what this is all about.
- It's a little problematic to not be allowed to say "Missouri side" when we're talking about the Border War. There *were* sides and we need to talk about that.
- Culture is not represented in these themes. We need to build in where the frontiersmen came from, where their families lived, need to include the culture as part of this. Sets of settlers that came from different parts of the country
- With the large attendance at FFNHA it's hard to get everyone's opinions.
- There is a cause and effect with the Border War. We can also talk about how we were so closely related with each other.
- Proximity of Kansas and Missouri evolution and culture from Missouri River Valley. That jumps across the imaginary border line.
- Ike Skelton's letter was very powerful. It was the best of times it was the worst of times...
- No one wants to celebrate a Civil War. It was a very bad time.
- Order No. 11 is a really big story for Missouri.
- 1854 up to the year of Drake Act would be good timeframe for the themes. (would that be 1868?)
- The existing themes ramble somewhat. The themes brainstormed last spring are really more of a laundry list of stories and relationships—not really themes
- Westward expansion (an opportunity to tell the Native American experience and other immigrant groups, trails,). This is a glaring omission in the FFNHA set of themes. Border War wouldn't have occurred if stage hadn't been set (white settlers, etc.)
- Missouri story is more about the Border War during Civil War, so we need to be sure to include that timeframe not just the Border War before the Civil War
- Reconstruction affected Missouri more than Kansas and that's an important story to tell, what came afterwards.
- The Border War really broke the back of the Union and forced the Civil War
- The Underground Railroad and African American fighting for freedom are different stories and should be separate themes.
- Border War and Civil War should be separate themes.
- If you say Bleeding Kansas it sounds like only Kansas was bleeding.
- Missouri had more trouble with Reconstruction.
- Trails were busy through the Civil War because people wanted to get away.
- The emotional catalyst for this effort comes from Border War and Civil War

- Missouri was on the edge of civilization back then.
- The borders of our country kept getting pushed out to the west
- Leave time frame open to pick up other important stories (like Brown v. Topeka)
- “Border War” is more neutral term than “Bleeding Kansas”
- “Missouri-Kansas Border War” is probably the way to say it. That’s the name used for the current Border War Network.
- Missouri was in the Union and Abraham Lincoln was committed to protecting these properties. Kansans were coming across the border and making no discriminations in who they stole from. This drove Missourians to have southern sympathies.
- For second set of themes for the MARC heritage area feasibility study, it bothers me that it’s described as a Kansas City area project. There was no Kansas City back then.
- Santa Fe Trail started near Arrow Rock.
- Some things are being left out. Border War, guerilla war. James Buchanan, huge state of limbo.
- More needs to be done to show what was going on in Missouri.
- Missouri had just as much at stake as Kansas, Missouri was the back door to the south, Kansas was the front door to the west.
- Mormon migration is a Missouri story, the Railroad ended at St. Joe so that’s a Missouri story. Lewis & Clark came through MO and only docked at Atchison one time, so mostly a Missouri story.
- Border War sesquicentennial will end in a few years so that’s almost over. We need to be thinking about the Civil War, as there is more time to be active with the Civil War sesquicentennial.
- The focus should be on Border War through Civil War. The Civil War story is that down the state line Kansas experienced worst drought they’d ever had at the beginning of the Civil War. Jayhawkers from Kansas came over to raid grain because much of Kansas was destroyed, and because they were getting their revenge.
- There are diverse personalities in the Civil War like John Brown. Arming slaves to march on the whites. The South was scared to death of this.
- This story is right at our door. There is now a Civil War commission for Missouri, which is better late than never.
- At the FFNHA meetings it is hard to get planning done. The people who attend are eclectic, lots of historians. It gets frustrating because we hear about what’s happening at this site or that site. Most of the attendees don’t have drive and push to get things done the way Judy Billings does.
- The Pony Express celebration has a Civil War connection because this held east and west together.

- The themes brainstormed last spring were too esoteric, too hard to understand (freedom of believing...what does that mean?). People became disenfranchised.
- The main theme needs to be built around freedom
- Border War is our big story that is strongly unique. Other stories (Native Americans) are not as unique
- Sub-themes could be: Border War/Civil War, Westward Expansion and settlement, Important Trails (Shaping of the Frontier), then Minorities (Native Americans, religious groups, women, African American)
- Missouri-Kansas Border War vs. just Border War. Does that affect the national status if we call it the Missouri Kansas Border War? There were other border wars, so perhaps that distinction is important. Generally, I'd say the simpler the better.

**3) I have pulled some statements from two National Heritage Area feasibility studies for this region that relate to national significance. If you had to summarize why this region is nationally significant in just a few sentences, what would you say?**

- The Border War and the struggle for freedom shaped the way Kansas and Missouri evolved. The Civil War would have been shorter if they hadn't had to put as many resources into stopping the Border War. This hit the papers all over the country so it got national attention.
- The Border War. Why is this significant? It was a time when respect for the law disappeared, and the resulting "lawlessness" resulted in an unprecedented loss of life and property. It's because of the war that so many outlaws came from this region after the Civil War...once the law goes away, it's hard to get it back. We learned that there are other less violent ways to resolve conflicts, but it was a tough lesson to learn. It's not just a prelude to the Civil War, the Border War continued through the Civil War as well.
- There were so many opportunities and challenges where decisions could have been different, and because they were *not* different we went on this grand adventure. It was the youth who fought the battles, and sometimes father and son were on different sides. When it was over, we didn't learn. We all contributed to the events that happened that created Order No. 11. What made Missouri secede from the Union? Racism is still an issue. It is a painful era and we try to forget, but maybe we shouldn't forget.
- The Border War effectively resulted in the Civil War, and it continues to affect many things in this area. The Border War forced the nation to make a decision about freedom and slavery. Missouri Compromise had held us together barely, and this just tore us apart. The Civil War one of most important things that ever happened here in the United States. The trails are an important story too, though other states can talk about trails as well.

- This was the place and time where the entire nation decided that we couldn't continue to offer states the choice of being a free state or a pro-slavery state.
  - The test was in Kansas where Missouri didn't want to be surrounded on three sides by slave states.
  - I need to think about this.
  - Our children are going to ask about Civil War... how did this all happen? There was a diversity of politics, race, and westward expansion. The seeds of the second great rebellion of our country started right here
  - This region includes the western terminus for the US. Transcontinental mail service. This region was the beachhead for steamboat traffic. The railroad didn't come till 1859, so riverboats were very important.
  - The national story here is about the territorial time for this region and how we crafted this nation to respect everyone's views and it didn't work very well (it resulted in a bloody war). We had a nation that was very divided (moral, economic) and part of it became a separate nation--- and they were defeated. The most important part was that we became a united nation again. This is a lesson that should never be lost. The way the war was fought here was guerilla warfare, lessons that our military should be listening to today—regardless of how you feel about the war today.
  - Why did this evolve in 1854? Why was there so much concern about Kansas becoming a free state?
  - Statehood for Kansas and the struggles that came with that leading up to the Civil War.
  - The development of agriculture and industry in this area
- 4) Any other observations or concerns that you have about Freedom's Frontier National Heritage Area that I should be aware of?**
- Potential of Missouri not being included is what has been a big concern in Missouri.
  - There are some big concerns that need to be addressed before we can really move forward. Specifically:
    - There is a big concern that we're going to be told how to tell the story with "approved" language
    - There is a big concern that the "little guy" (the museum with an all volunteer staff) won't have the capacity to be a player, and that the National Heritage Area (NHA) will only benefit the big site that already have capacity.
    - There is a big concern about private property rights. Someone heard about an NHA in Maryland where land was taken in eminent domain. People here remember when the Corps of Engineers came in to take land for lakes or for conservation, to questions of access to private property are big. Will that happen to us?



- The story is that we had a border, so we do need to be able to talk about sides (Missouri and Kansas) in the interpretation.
- I think we need to differentiate for FFNHA stakeholders that while we all need to be working together as one region and on the same side as part of a unified FFNHA, it's still OK for us to be talking about the "Missouri side" or the "Kansas side" when we tell our stories.
- The change in purpose/direction at each FFNHA meeting makes it hard. For example, first we were going to do a big brochure that folds out with John Brown, etc. Then we added Border War so we changed the story a little bit. Then we decided to go electronic instead because of changes with people/sites being added. We were looking at tourism routes to find these places. First we were only going to include sites that had completed the visitor readiness forms. Then that changed and we were trying to do all sites. It's a moving target.
- I'm worried about making the 3 year deadline because we keep rehashing the same things. We need to move on. We may just need to decide that if someone isn't willing to fill out the visitor readiness forms you may just need to cut them. Take those that are most interested and run with them.
- We need to get into modern era of iPods and the Internet.
- We need to look at travel as a way to learn. With gas approaching \$4/gallon, more people might stop here instead of just traveling through...and we do have many people passing through now. There are things that you can learn and things to do that won't cost you as much in gas as going to other destinations further away.
- Some people in the interpretation and education committee said the meeting wasn't what they expected. For the little sites, they expected to hear more about how to present themselves. The new trend, for example, is to let people touch things have their own experience instead of telling them everything you know.
- This can't be about heroes and villains—we can't portray Missouri as the bad guys. From the FFNHA study we're afraid that's what is going to happen.
- Nicole Etcheson *Bleeding Kansas: Contested Liberty in the Civil War Era* is one of the best books I've read on the subject Bleeding Kansas. Both sides were working from their own definition of liberty.
- Our current definition of liberty really came about in Lincoln's Gettysburg Address.
- David McCullough's biography of Truman tells the Jayhawker story.
- Jeremy Neely, *The Border Between Them: Violence and Reconciliation on the Kansas-Missouri Line* is another good resource. It deals with six or eight counties on either side of the river and initial settlement, border. It is one of the more objective resources out there and it does include a

discussion of the post war as well as events leading up to the war which other accounts have not. Neely lives in Nevada.

- The National Park Service is now talking about the new birth of freedom which says that the north was right and south was wrong. This is hard to do.
- Didn't know if there would be money for the heritage area. Where's the money for this?
- At the FFNHA meetings last spring, people had their own axes to grind and things to get on the list in terms of themes. I came away confused
- I describe FFNHA as one big museum, and the individual sites are like different exhibits in the museum. You need to go to all the sites to get the whole story.
- The Civil War is still being fought here. How do you find a middle path?

**Appendix B: Existing Themes Used in FFNHA Theme Development**

These existing sets of themes that have been developed for the entire region or subsets of the full region are as follows:

**A) 2004 Freedom's Frontier National Heritage Area Feasibility Study Themes**

**Main Theme:**

Bleeding Kansas and the Enduring Struggle for Freedom

**Sub Themes:**

- 1) Kansas Territory: Geography of Rivers, Trails and Road Development
- 2) The Kansas Conflict: Bleeding Kansas
- 3) The Underground Railroad
- 4) African Americans and the Enduring Struggle for Freedom
- 5) Native Americans and the Enduring Struggle for Freedom

**B) Themes from draft 2005 Missouri-Kansas Rivers, Trails and Rails National Heritage Area Feasibility Study.**

**Main Theme:**

Rivers, Trails and Rails

**Sub Themes:**

- 1) Cultural Crossroads
- 2) Borders and Bridges
- 3) Shaping of a President

**C) Initial themes brainstormed by Kansas and Missouri FFNHA stakeholders at the March 2007 FFNHA meeting**

- 1) Landscapes
- 2) Territorial Kansas
- 3) Battles
- 4) Settlement
- 5) Jargon

***Revised Set of Themes based on the March 2007 FFNHA Meeting  
Presented at the April 2007 FFNHA Meeting***

- 1) Freedom: Struggle / Endurance
  - a. American Indians
  - b. Euro Americans
  - c. African Americans
  - d. Military
  - e. Survival
  - f. Manifest Destiny
  
- 2) Freedom: Way of Life
  - a. Choice
  - b. Patterns
  - c. Passing Through
  - d. Forced
  - e. Assigned
  - f. Choice/Forced Combination
  
- 3) Freedom: Of Believing.
  - a. "Official" Battles
  - b. "Unofficial" Battles
  - c. Military Orders
  - d. Taking Advantage of the Situation
  - e. Legislation
  - f. Martyrs

*Each sub-theme then shows specific events, situations, places and/or people.*