Vol.24 n.54 February 27th 1997

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NAACP Calls For Economic Reciprocity

NAACP President Kwesi Mosu has launched by leaders of other national African-American organizations, issued a report that gives priority to the country's African-American community.

They come by car, they came by bus, and for the first time is 62 years, the train (Amtrak) stopped to disembark passengers in Allensworth. Allensworth is historic site important in the history of being the only town in California founded by former slaves. Colonel Allensworth, one of the founders, was born in an area that would become the Civil War and served with the Union forces. He was called back into the military in 1865 to serve as Chaplain of the all Black 24th Army Infantry, after he retired, he held the rank of Lt. Colonel, and was both the highest ranking Chaplain and Black officer.

Early in the 1990's, Colonel Allen Allensworth, Professor William Payne, Rev. William Wall, and Mr. J.W. Payne decided to establish a town where Blacks when they were former slaves could own property and achieve full citizenship. The theme of the convention is "Momma's Place: a Place for All," with the purpose of inviting writers and speakers to share their stories about life in that time.

The park is set in the 1908 -1918 time period and depicts the way of life that continues to this day.

The new town was prosperous and grew when the word of the valuable artisan wells and the region's climate spurred people to come and grow. The town was recognized by the state legislature to help develop the town.

The hotel industry was developing friendships with local farmers and business owners.

The hotel industry was developed for the first time in 62 years but the state was declared a state historic park. In 1976, a portion of Allensworth became a State Historic Park in recognition of the contributions of African Americans in all aspects of American life.

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The city of San Bernardino has requested the citizens of San Bernardino vote for a special Ordinance known as the Tax Measure S that will be used to help such purposes as paying for Fire and Police services. The ordinance is supposed to replace the current city-wide Street Sweeping and Street Lighting Assessment District which is $64.00 per year per single family with $101.75 per year per single family. It will gradually increase over a period of five years to $183.75 per year per single family. The formula for businesses has not been formulated as of yet.

However, before I could support this worthwhile endeavor I sought some other assurances of which the supporters informed me. I understand the measures to be put in the measure that a minimum share of people of color be hired and if this did not happen the personnel responsible be fired $1000 plus refund. Second, the persons hired be required to live in this city since their livelihood would be totally derived from this City. Third, the senior citizens on fixed incomes of this community who have given so much must be protected against any layoffs.

I have supported many measures in the past but the diversity composition of the workforce did not change, the contractors did not change, the sub contractors did not change, the freeway off ramps have not changed. I am convinced that in my community we go to schools with local citizens work together, when the law makers live in my community, when the police officers live in my community, when the teachers live in my community, I will support the ordinance in the future with the right assurances.

Without these assurances I urge you to join with NAACP, the U.S. Constitution, Rev. William Dunston and others to vote NO on Measure S.

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**By Dennis Schatzman**

**New York**

California is the land from which Carl Rowan's "coming tomorrow" America is escalating to near-full scale. Among first signs, found "round the nation," is as a waste on the eve of the signing of 1948 right to be seen in southern California.

This shot involved a Black civil rights which were violated by the "system." No. 1 in line, I had discussions about O.J. Simpson, whose rights to a fair trial have been violated. The violations against his right to be seen in this country need to be corrected.

The CHP quickly launched an investigation into Burks' alleged crime and the Moreno Valley City Council. Burks, the right to due process before a person is punished. The rights to due process before a person is punished. The right to due process has been violated by the CHP.

The CHP released a copy of a California Highway Patrol form which is still pending. The rights to due process before a person is punished. The right to due process has been violated by the CHP.

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Nordstrom's Hosts Local Women's Organizations

By Cheryl Brown

Nordstrom celebrated their annual Black History program last Saturday.

The keynote speaker was Colonel Paul L. Green, U.S.A.F.

Green is a former Base Commander at Norton Air Force Base. After 33 years of active duty, he retired from military service.

Green is the recipient of the Meritorious Service Medal, the Air Medal, the Bronze Star and the Presidential Unit Citation.

Green and Nordstrom Manager, Fran Broda.

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distinction of the "Town that Refuses to Die." Today just outside of the 200 historic acres park is a town of about 100 families.

In celebration of Black History Month, they came in bus loads with heavy representation from the Inland Empire. They represented the Dora Nelson Museum in Perris, The Southern California Young People's Department of the AME Church, Kaiser Hospital employees, social clubs and families. They came to enjoy the day and soak up the history and to honor the founders.

"We need to make the State finish the park and then for people to make it a duty to use the park," said Mrs. Royal. "They are holding on to the rarely documented history of a people who built America by the sweat of their brows."

Correction:
We mistakenly recorded that the African Trade Investment Seminar will be held on March 6, 1997. We were mistaken, it will be held on March 5th.
Additionally, we identified a photo in the Nordstrom’s article as Don Griff. It was Renaldo Barros.

It's a given. Most of us know that with education and hard work, you can do just about anything. But it takes a little more than just providing a classroom for our kids to do well. It takes nurturing and an understanding of how to succeed in our society. We believe that's why Historically Black Colleges and Universities graduate more black children into a productive work force than any other major university. HBCUs fill our communities with brilliant black professionals, graduating over 40% of the nation's black doctors and dentists, 50% of black lawyers, and 75% of black PhDs. That's why Nissan supports HBCUs by sponsoring the Nissan-HBCU Summer Institute to help enrich and develop HBCU faculty. With this support, black institutions have better aids and tools to empower and inspire our children for our community and our future. Nissan is dedicated to taking people places.
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- Styled Full Wheel Covers

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- Halogen Headlights
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- Carpeted Cargo Area w/ Light
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Smoke-Free Party At Pompeii Night Club

"Pompeii, the largest and busiest new Night Spot in the Coachella Valley, will be holding a FREE SMOKE-FREE PARTY on Thursday, March 19, from 8:00 PM to 11:00 PM to show night spot workers the same right to a smoke-free workplace that the rest of us enjoy. "We invites will also see that there are many customers who love smoke-free Night Spots," said Henrikse.

"We invite all adults, 21 and over to come and enjoy smoke-free fun with a great DJ, free food, free prizes from KPSI Radio, Pompeii Night Club and Tri-County South. Come meet the KPSI Morning Team Barry and Andy, get information on smoke-free work places, and have a great time. Best of all when the party is over, you and your friends won't smell like smoke," added Henrikse.

"I am also excited to see how well our customers like the idea of a smoke-free bar," said Henrikse.

"We only lost four customers since the change and found a new customer base that has more than made up for any issues," said Sue Sterling, manager of the San Bernardino Black Angus. "Going smoke-free doesn't mean going profit-free!" Sterling added.

"The unions recognize that the proposed PE-Enova merger will better enable The Gas Company to compete and achieve continued success in a deregulated marketplace. This has the potential to benefit workers in the long run." In addition, the unions and the Company's commitment to provide job training and career development opportunities will help employees make the transition that will come with this merger.

The unions' decision parallels the action taken by the union representing SDGE employees - the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local 6465 - which also voted to support the merger.

Full information on Smoke-Free Parties at Pompeii Night Club, and other Smoke-Free Parties in the Inland Empire can be found on our website.

Please join us at Pompeii Night Club for a smoke-free evening of fun and excitement. Let's show the rest of the world that smoke-free doesn't mean losing business. Let's show the rest of the world that smoke-free doesn't mean losing business.
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SAN BERNARDINO
Are good employees always hard to find?
Not if employees go to the Inland Empire Diversity Job Fair on Wednesday, May 7, 1997, at the National Orange Show Event Center.

For the third year in a row, the twice-yearly Diversity Job Fair will attract thousands of Inland Empire residents. More than 50 regional and local employers are expected to take advantage of the opportunity to speak with 3,800 plus qualified job seekers searching for better career opportunities.

The Inland Empire Diversity Job Fair, sponsored by the National American Unity Association (NAUA), a non-profit organization, attracts employers from all manner of disciplines, from entry-level clerical, to educational and professional, health care, retail, high-tech, fire protection and law enforcement agencies and more.

When we started the job fair in 1995, we attracted about 3,600 job applicants and about 30 companies, now it has become a phenomenal success for our employers," said Carl Dameron, president of Dameron Communications, producer of the job fairs.

"This job fair attracts qualified job applicants, and participating employers know this, otherwise they wouldn't keep coming back," said Dameron. The Inland Empire Diversity Job Fairs are held each May and November.

The Inland Empire Minority Job Fair is co-sponsored by National American Unity Association, the San Bernardino Sun, the Inland Valley Daily Bulletin, radio stations KOLA 99.9, KCAL-AM, and Super Z 590 AM, Inland Empire Business Journal, Westside Story, Black Voice News, The American News and Dameron Communications. The event is free and IEDJF is asking for canned food donations.

Employers interested in taking advantage of the opportunity to meet thousands of Inland Empire job seekers may contact Dameron Communications at (909) 888-4571 for more information. Dameron Communications is located at 330 North 'D' Street, Suite 430, San Bernardino, CA 92401.

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Compiled by the Community with Quality Care and Expert Service.
Pastor Peeler Celebrates 4th Anniversary

By Donna Barker

Pastor of the 16th Street Seventh Day Adventist Church (SDA) at Chicago, Illinois areas.

This month's theme has been "African American in America," "Our Journey" and the culminating event will take place on Saturday, March 1, 1997 beginning promptly at 6:00 p.m.

The event is designed to bring about a greater appreciation and pride in African-American history. It features the magnificence and richness of our culture will be presented in dramatic and musical renditions, beginning with the historical past and concluding with an eye-opening view of our future.

Pay your respects. Admission is free and a reception will immediately follow the program. This event's activities have been planned and coordinated by the Black Heritage Committee of the Second SDA Church. For more information, please call (909) 884-1241.

New Life Christian Church, 132 N. Medical Center St., Dr. S.D., passed by Dr. Elizean Solomon Singletary grants its pastor's Chaplaincy, Horse, March 9th at 4 p.m. The theme is "A Praying Spirit."
NEW JOY BAPTIST CHURCH
7094 Junipero Avenue, Riverside, CA 92504
(909) 376-5825

WEKLY SERVICES
Sunday School 9:00 a.m.
Morning Worship 10:00 a.m.
Evangelistic Service 6:30 p.m.

Mt. Zion Lighthouse Full Gospel Church
6310 Lane Street Street
Riverside, CA 92504
(909) 783-1121

WEKLY SERVICES
Sunday School 9:00 a.m.
Morning Worship 11:00 a.m.
Evangelistic Service 6:30 p.m.

AMOS TEMPLE
2800 Martin Luther King Blvd.
Ontario, CA 91761
(909) 780-4170

WEKLY SERVICES
Worship Service 9:00 a.m.
Sunday School 10:00 a.m.
Morning Worship 11:00 a.m.
Evangelistic Service 6:30 p.m.

RIVERDALE BAPTIST CHURCH
3123 Prince Place
Ontario, CA 91762
(909) 985-8060

WEKLY SERVICES
Sunday School 9:00 a.m.
Morning Worship 10:00 a.m.
Evangelistic Service 6:30 p.m.

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Church Directory Listing

The Black Voice News Page A-9 Thursday, February 27, 1997

CATHEDRAL OF PRAISE
2591 Rubidoux Riverside, CA 92507
Pastor Craig W. Johnson

SCHEDULE OF SERVICES
Midday Praise Service 12 p.m.
Evening Ministry 2:00 p.m.
Afternoon Praise Service 4:00 p.m.
Tuesday Sabbath Service 7:00 p.m.

Lily Of The Valley Church
Of God In Christ
200 Oasis Rd.
Fontana, CA 92337
Pastor Jery J. Johnson Sr.

Sunday School 10 a.m.
Morning Worship 11 a.m.
Prayer Meeting & Bible Study 7 p.m.

New Beginnings Community Baptist Church
Services held at: Kansas Avenue S.D.A. Church 4495 Kansas Avenue Riverside, CA 92507
Pastor: Rev. Edward Hawthorne

Weekly Services
Sunday School 10 a.m.
Morning Worship 11 a.m.
Prayer Meeting & Bible Study 7 p.m.

Allen Chapel African Methodist Episcopal Church
4009 Locust (at 100th St.)
Riverside, CA 92507
Pastor: Rev. A. T. Harris

Schedule of Services
Sunday School 10:00 a.m.
Morning Worship 11:00 a.m.
Prayer & Bible Study 7:00 p.m.

The Book Of Acts
7480 Sterling Avenue
Fontana, CA 92337
Pastor: Rev. James C. Howard

Services
Monday Morning Service 7:00 a.m.
Sunday School 9:00 a.m.
Morning Worship 11:00 a.m.
Prayer Meeting & Bible Study 7:00 p.m.

GROSSE TERRACE
Free-Way Missionary Baptist Church
1373 E. Temple Ave.
Riverside, CA 92507
Pastor: Rev. Jerald McKee

Services
Sunday School 9:00 a.m.
Morning Worship 11:00 a.m.
Prayer Meeting & Bible Study 7:00 p.m.

HIGHLAND
Angel Oak Missionary Church
16710 San Bernardino Avenue
Riverside, CA 92507
Pastor: Rev. Albert Riley

Services
Sunday School 9:00 a.m.
Morning Worship 11:00 a.m.
Prayer Meeting & Bible Study 7:00 p.m.
### Quality Used Cars and Trucks

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Olympic gymnasts display sport's entertainment side

L.A. Sports Council is co-presenter of Reese's International Gymnastics Cup featuring a number of Olympians.

By MELEATA SMALLS

ANAHEIM - At the Anaheim Convention Center - in a warm, cozy environment - many of the world's best and brightest gymnasts competed at the fourth annual Reese's International Gymnastics Cup. The star-studded lineup included six of the Magnificent Seven, which was the first all WOMEN's gymnastics team to win the team gold medal at the Olympics. The all-around medal winners from the 1996 Olympics, Lilia Podkopayeva, teamed with former National Champion Kristie Phillips, who flew in from New York to vie for the 1997 Reese's Cup Championship. Furthermore, the male gymnasts from past and present, including John Roethlisberger, John Macready, Dmitri Bilinevitch, Paul O'Neill, Mikhail Bubnov and Kirk Simon turned out to showcase their talents. Hometown hero, Chauney Umphrey and Chris Waller, who both attended UCLA, also took time out of their busy schedules to compete.

The format of this show was somewhat different from the Olympics as well as the World Championships, in that the participants were paired and were only allowed to compete in two events. The male and female pairs, with the highest cumulative total score determined the winners. The performances emphasized showmanship/exercise presentation rather than technique - it was all about having fun.

According to Shannon Miller and Umphrey, this format makes the competition more enjoyable to watch. Consequently, the routines, judged by former gymnasts and coaches - Kurt Thomas, Kathy Johnson, Peter Vidmar and Betsi Kardy - were critiqued on creativity/originality, audience appeal and showmanship/optional presentation.

By adopting this format, it allowed the gymnasts to show some of their personality on the floor Umphrey stated, "In an arena like this, you get to see their (the gymnasts') personalities. That's what endears them to the public."

Umphrey's partner, Waller, agreed that the invitational, "was a totally unique opportunity." The Gym Blossoms, comprised of Amy Chow and Miller, won the female division with a cumulative score of 39.950, while Team UCLA (Umphrey and Waller) took the crown for the male division. Miller showed her talent on the balance beam to clinch the win for the Gym Blossoms. She later stunned to learn that he had shaved his head bald for this routine. Perhaps the defining moment in this competition came when Waller began his second routine on the high bar. For the first thirty seconds, his whole body was covered with a long black cape. When he threw off the cape, however, the audience was stunned to learn that he had shaved his head for his routine. Although he missed one release move, he was rewarded for the shock value of his new haircut. His score for that routine was 9.950. He later commented that the motivation behind his routine, "I was having fun today and no one was expecting me to do it. Also, we (Team UCLA) wanted to be more theatrical in telling a story and entertaining that way."

Obviously, they succeeded in impressing both the crowd and the judges by obtaining the highest cumulative score of the competition.

Meanwhile, Chow and Miller simply used crisp and precise movements to win their division. Miller showed her talent on the balance beam to clinch the win for the Gym Blossoms. She later stated that although she doesn't know if she agrees with the International federation of Gymnastics' decision to remove compulsory routines from the Olympics, she thinks "it will be a lot more exciting to watch. There's more lighting, music and things like that." Miller also believes that, "special competitions is where the public can really appreciate the talents that I may have."

Ex-North star Gray was leading the Pac-10 in scoring and Cal into NCAA tournament, too.

By LEL AND STEIN III

WESTWOOD - The University of California, Berkeley, had lost its head coach and three blue chip recruits that transferred because of a myriad of problems. But one constant that remained was former Riverside North star Ed Gray.

Stepping up to the challenge of a new coach and carrying the burden of being the go-to guy on the team expected to go nowhere, was the pre-season preseason\"Gray found himself at.

Boy did he meet the challenge as he always has. Unleashing a career high and school record 48 points against Washington State in Pullman, Gray should have been on top of the Pac-10 basketball world. Instead, a fire injury with a little more than a minute remaining in the game finished Gray for the season. Still, the seriously injured cannot diminish the magnificent season Gray was experiencing. He had the Bears to within a half a game of first place UCLA (85-89), Pac-10 overall and a national No. 25 ranking.

"When the guys started transferring, we didn't complaiit or get down as a team," Gray said. "We look in it as a challenge. It's not about me. It's what we can do as a unit after him. We are committed to defense and everyone left just had to step up in his absence."

What an effort indeed the Golden Bears have had to remined in the Pac-10 and non-conference games. When Cal came into Pauley Pavilion and defeated UCLA with Gray scoring over 30 points to lead the way, everyone in the conference knew the Bears were here. And the UCLA players were talking about Gray and Cal in the PAC-10's BEST.

Photo by Robert Ahiot - BVN

Photo by Robert Ahiot - BVN

Photo by Robert Ahiot - BVN

Photo by Robert Ahiot - BVN

Photo by Robert Ahiot - BVN

Photo by Robert Ahiot - BVN
By Stanton Allen Weeks

The theme of the 28th NAACP Image Awards is the "Celebration of Family." Both immediate and extended, family has always been the focus, rooted deeply in the principle on which the NAACP was founded. The Image Awards ceremony continues to pay tribute to companies and persons that support positive change and images for African Americans in the Arts and Entertainment industries.

While the 1996 Academy Awards ceremony produced only two nominations for African Americans and none in any of the major categories, it became the backdrop for a boycott last year as well, being criticized with allegations of racism. The Image Awards, therefore, has become a significant channel in which to recognize the achievements of Black artists and performers.

The Awards ceremony, hosted by Arsenio Hall and Patti Labelle, will be broadcast in a 2-hour prime-time telecast airing on Fox Television on Thursday, February 27 at 8 p.m. The telecast is produced under the leadership of NAACP chairman, Myrlie Evers-Williams, Pre-CEO Keesee Mfume and a recently restructured Image Awards Committee, led by Image Awards Chairman, Joe Madison.

TV anchorwoman, Bryant Gumbel, will receive the President's Award. Aretha Franklin and George Clinton will share the honor of the Hall of Fame Award. The Artist (formerly known as Prince) will be performing the opening number, and receive a Special Achievement Award. The Awards program will be complemented by a new CD, including live performances by Busta Rhymes, Black Smoke, Q-Tip, and The Fugees. Other honorees include Denzel Washington, Entertainer of the Year Joseph E. Madison, The Honorable Representative Maxine Waters, and Memetic Dick Gregory will receive The Chairman's Award. Other performers include Jamie Foxx and Will Smith.

Eric Benet "True To Myself"

With the hit "Let's Stay Together" on the soundtrack of the feature film "A Thin Line Between Love and Hate," an NAACP Image Award nomination for Best New Artist, and sold out concerts everywhere, Eric Benet has become a household name in the music industry.

With the re-birth of 70's retro-soul, it's likely that comparisons will be made about Benet's (pronounced beh-ney) and other artists, namely O'Neal, Maxwell, Rahaan Patterson. However his passionate and smooth stylings are more reminiscent of legends from Motown, Smokey, Wonder, Marvin Gaye. With the popularity of the soundtrack to the film on Warner Brothers, "True To Myself," it won't be long before comparisons become obsolete.

True to himself, Eric Benet, ten of which are written and performed by Benet, his cousin George Nash Jr., and Keyboardist, Denomie Poole; predictably a new team to be reckoned with. Already masters of the soul genre this production team experiments successfully with funk laden riffs, in the Sly Stone remake of "You Want Me To Stay" and "What If We Was Cool," and "Spiritual Thang" as well as creative vocal harmonies. Yet the autobiographical "Whatcha You Were Here," stands out as the emotional climax of the album. Expressing his experience and insight, pain and journey through a musician's path dedicated to his flancon, with whom he shared laughter, died in a car accident. Her memorial gone away, the memories I see you more each day. How can I repay all your pain and suffering. And it's been a long time since then.

What moves me about Benet is his honest and courageous approach to telling the whole story. The intensity of a veteran artist wrapped in his 26-year old voice. Reinventing the classic accompanied by a contemporary flavor, "True To Myself," is a new friend, carry it with you and listen to it often.

Eric Benet "True To Myself"
R&B Welcomes The Gablz

The Gablz wrote the greatest part of the album and share production credits with Nevelie Hodge and Maurice Johnson. The debut single, "Shookie Shookie," promises to entertain and arouse. A ballad heavy album that will romance and soothe the most heartful of music connoisseurs. "Who gonna Love You," "Milk," and "Do You Want Me" will secure a Gablz fan.

It’s no wonder that Maurice DeVaux-Stuckey (President and CEO of MDS Entertainment) would sign this group to Warner Bros. Records after hearing them mesmerize audiences in the club circuit of Connecticut. "Our goal," explains Johnson, "is to be the new kings of R&B and set a new standard, mixing an extra element of soul with a subtle hint of funk."

Lend an ear to the new royal heirs of the R&B sound and lay your weary soul down as their sultry soulful melodies soothe your aching heart.

The Gablz, a trio from Hartford, Connecticut, with urban funk and soul.

Lost started his career in the offices of Crosby and Gould, a building in New York. He also supervised installations in Philadelphia, London, England, and Montreal, Canada. Maxim sent him to England to set up an incandescent-lamp factory in the dam factory’s factory. There in 1858 Edison put in a band of experts in electricity and electrical lighting called the Edison Pioneers. One of those Pioneers was Lewis Latimer. Latimer’s life was extraordinary. Full he painted, creating many fine portraits of his family, and played flute extremely well. He also wrote poetry and some theatrical comedies.

Celebrating Black History Month

Lewis Howard Latimer
Born September 4, 1848
Chelsea, Massachusetts

Before his twenty-sixth birth-
day, Latimer received a patent for one of his own inventions—a device that improved the bathroom facilities on trains.

In 1879, Thomas Edison invent-
et the incandescent light bulb. Lu-
ded Latimer, who began studying electricity. In 1880, he was hired by Hiram Stevens Maxim, the chief engineer of the United States Electric Company, as a draftsman and, in 1881, he received a patent, with Joseph V. Nichols, for inventing a way of attaching filaments in lamps. In 1882 he received his most important patent, for an improved process of manufacturing filaments.

It was Latimer who helped install the lights in some of the first electrically lighted build-
s, such as the old Equitable Building in New York. He also supervised installations in Philadelphia, London, England, and Montreal, Canada.

Maxim sent him to England to set up an incandescent-lamp factory in the dam factory’s factory. There in 1858 Edison put in a band of experts in electricity and electrical lighting called the Edison Pioneers. One of those Pioneers was Lewis Latimer.

Lewis Latimer’s life was extra-
onomically full. He painted, cre-
ing many fine portraits of his family, and played flute extremely well. He also wrote poetry and some theatrical comedies. Lewis Latimer died on December 11, 1928.

ROSEWOOD

Riverside Municipal Museum presents its first Sunday with entertainment and fun for the entire family. For further information contact Riverside Municipal Museum at 760-5277.

Participants sought for six computer studies at Palm Springs. Male and female, ages 18-24, with psychological, physical, mental, or other disabilities. For more information call the Riverside Municipal Museum at 760-5277.

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Preserve Your Family Story

Black Voice News

FRIDAY
Make a connection to history, March 15th and 16th. The Riverside Municipal Museum will be hosting, “How to Preserve Your Own Public History,” a workshop for generations.

The workshops are geared to inform and teach individuals the steps taken in creating preserving their ancestral history.

The event will be held at the Riverside Visitor Center, 3720 Main Street, Downtown Riverside from 3:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.

Facilitator Alyce Smith

**Ollie McDonald Senior Talent Showcase**

**SAN BERNARDINO**

The 9th Annual Ollie McDonald Senior Talent Showcase presents “Backstage at the Folies,” a play that shows what typically happens behind the scenes and the trials and tribulations of putting on a folie.

The performance takes place at Sturges Center for the Performing Arts, 790 North “E” Street, San Bernardino on Saturday, March 15th, 1997, at 2:15 p.m.

Grapes of Wrath Auditions

**SAN BERNARDINO**

Auditions for the 1998 theater department’s production of "Grapes of Wrath," the stage version of John Steinbeck’s American masterpiece, will be held from 7 to 9 p.m. Tuesday and Wednesday, March 4 and 5, at the University of California, Riverside.

"Grapes of Wrath" follows the migration of the Joad family from the dust bowl of Oklahoma to the promised land of California. This Pulitzer prize-winning novel affirms the human spirit and the strength which resides in the common man, and the stage version’s elemental simplicity is powerful and affecting.

Auditions will be held in Sturges Hall, room 1316, and are open to the public. A final night of callbacks will be held from 7 to 9 p.m. Thursday, March 6. Roles are available for men and women. Rehearsals, which will be held in the evenings, begin March 11. The production opens May 9 and performances continue through May 18. For more information, please telephone (909) 787-3433.

The Winner’s Circle

The Winner’s Circle is a television program that focuses on winners in the San Bernardino/Riverside community from all walks of life. The Winner’s Circle is produced by KCSB Channel 3 and The Readers Program, PeaceBuilder, and Basketball; California Junior College Activities.

THE SAN BERNARDINO CITY UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

In celebration of

**Black History Month**

The Board of Education and Superintendent are proud to present the following outstanding students who exemplify the culture and achievements of the African American spirit.

Lindsay Lewis: 5th grade, San Bernardino Valley Middle School, School Activities: Math peer tutor, cross-grade age.<br>Community Activities: tennis, modeling, graduate of Barbolin School.<br>Future Plans: attend college, law enforcement.

Linda Cox: 4th grade, Claremont McKenna College School Activities: Basketball team, reading mentor for the Dragon Reading Program, PeaceBuilder, former Student Council Representative.<br>Community Activities: attend Peacebuilder Olympics, participate on City Basketball League.<br>Future Plans: attend college, architect.

Michael Rambiseau: 5th grade, Inglewood Community School Activities: basketball team, reading tutor for the Dragon Reading Program, former Student Council Representative.<br>Community Activities: attend Peacebuilder Olympics, participate on City Basketball League.<br>Future Plans: attend college, architect.

Using the pen name Lola, she began writing for the Evening Star in 1869, with the money she had saved, she bought stocks in a paper called Free Speech and Headlight. During this period, mob lynchings began arising in the South. Though most people in both the North and South regarded these events as retaliation for crimes, Ida recognized that the lynchings were really about economic competition. From that day forward, she concentrated her efforts on curtailting the practice of lynching.

In 1892, she became partners with T. Thomas Fortune, a famous black journalist, and Jerome B. Peterson, both owners and editors of the New York Age. She had attained equal footing with the top two African-American newspapermen in the country.

In 1921, she rallied to the cause of a group of African-American farmers in Arkansas, who were on trial for false accusations. Sending a telegram to the Governor of Arkansas, she stated that if the farmers were executed, her organization, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, would encourage thousands of blacks to leave the state. This led to the governor setting a new trial. Few people at that time understood that racism was not about liking or not liking someone, it was about controlling the economic power of the South.

Ida B. Wells died in 1931, but she led the way to bring the fight against lynching from the battlefields of war to the newspapers of America.
There is a little-known story of a remarkable, predominantly Black film industry outside Hollywood that produced close to 500 movies for African-American audiences between 1910 and 1950. Filmmaker Oscar Micheaux, who became the most controversial "race movie" director of his time, writing and directing more than 40 features. (TOP): The Rex Theatre For Colored People in Leland, Mississippi, an example of the many Black movie theatres that thrived during the "race film" period. (BOTTOM): A still from one of the first feature-length race films, "Realization of a Negro's Ambition.

Photos: top/Marlon Post Wolcott/Library of Congress; bottom/UCLA, George P. Johnson Collection.

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Creating and providing health care solutions for our community
San Bernardino and Riverside

By Cheryl Brown

San Bernardino

Black history achievements were again celebrated in the Inland Empire with a weekend of events. As has been the custom, San Bernardino Black Culture Foundation did not disappoint as they celebrated with a flurry of activities.

This year, the parade was dedicated to the memory of Dr. LÊMar Foster who died last year. He was the pastor of New Hope Missionary Baptist Church. His wife, Mrs. Betty Foster was on hand for the honor.

Friday evening the senior king and queen, Rev. and Mrs. Charles Brooks were named as well as Minsha Varner, Miss Black San Bernardino. Her court included First Runner-up LaQuette S. Miller, and Second Runner-Up Chantel E. Ridley. One of the highlights of this year’s celebration was the Grand Marshal none other that Ms. Oseola McCarty, the 88 year old woman who washed and ironed all her life and saved her money. Of which she donated $150,000 to Southern Missippi University in Hattiesburg, Miss and shocked the school and the world. The parade dubbed as the Parade of stars didn’t disappoint.

Each division was headed by a well know figure. Actor Dorian Harwood, Theodore Borders of television show Sister Sister, rappers Rappin 4 Tay and Lil Fly and the BET Executives were among the division heads.

“The parade was two hours long but I missed the equestrian and band entries which are there usually every year,” said one onlooker.

Dorian Harwood, bails from Dayton, Ohio. He is a very quiet unassuming man who lets his work speak for him. He has appeared in countless television and movie roles and is best known for his role in Roots: The Next Generation, where he aged from 17 to 70. He is an accomplished singer and will soon release a new album.

Borders is presently working on Sister, Sister. He has been involved since he was eight years old. To his credit he has worked on E.R., Jag, House We Shrink Ourselevs and Beverly Hills Cop 3.

“Terry” (4 Tay) debuted on a record in 1989 and by 1993 had his own album, Don’t fight The Feeling; He has gone straight after being released from prison and wants to show young people not to make the same mistakes he made. “My mission is clear,” he said. Lil Fly is new on the scene and is moving up the charts. The dinner was well attended at the National Orange Show on Saturday night and the wrap-up at St. Paul A.M.E. is the talk of the town.

The choir sang old Negro spirituals and recitations were performed by members of St. Paul. Gary Kirkwood gave excerpts of the I Have a Dream speech by Dr. Martin Luther King.

Roskind Kraut is the President of the Black Culture Foundation.

Riverside

The Riverside 18th Annual Black History Parade was a community focused success. Close to 100 entries from communities around Southern California participated. The focus of their parade has been traditionally community role models. This year was no different. Rev. Will Edmonds was named Grand Marshal of the parade, and rode in a horse drawn carriage. Rev. Edwards for several years was the associate pastor at Second Baptist Church in Riverside. He is known as a committed Christian and an upstanding citizen. He was a great choice for the honor.

Following the parade in Riverside, the festivities continued with an African Marketplace, the awarding of trophies and a program featuring community people.

Parade entries include Riverside City and County Black Firefighters, City Council Members, and Riverside Community Relations Commission; Poly High School, JROTC; Carmen Roberts, Black History Chair, First Place winners, Miller High School Marching Relebs, Second Place winners, Second Baptist Church, Horneowman Judy Arbuckle, Dr. Lula Mae Clemens, and Dr. and Mrs. Barnett Grier, represented the Riverside...
**Black History Month Festivities**

Museum. Sickle Cell Poster Child, Kaja DeVaughn, the Black Infant Health Program, Tuskegee Airmen, Inc., mounted horses the Cavaliers of El Sobrante, Cindy North, and Steve Herrera, the Lions Club and Harper & Harper Business Service. This ended the first division.

Division 2, included, Equestrian Trails Patrol, Townsend Junior High School Marching Rangers, Allen Chapel A.M.E. Church, Friendship High Steppers, Armada Elementary School, Christian Fields beauty pageant queen, Girl Scouts Junior Troop 277, NAACP Child Development Centers, Riverside Poly BSU, Princess Nicole Ricci, LA Sheriff Trailblazers, Amos Temple C.M.E. Church youth ministry, Xtreme Illusions, Sheik Court No. 138, 98 patrol and mini car; Riverside County Commission for Women, Mrs. Dana Kruckenburg, Riverside Unified School District Board of Education, Afro American Unique.

Division 3 included, San Bernardino Fire Department, Mission Belles Equestrian Drill team, El Roble Intermediate School, Jeanne Williams and Darre Anderson, Martin Luther King, Jr. Senior Club-Saratoga center, ReClaim Our Youth, Antioch Missionary Baptist Church, Horsewoman Lakimba Bradberry, Horseman Harold White, Arlington FFA Equestrian team.

Division 4, Tropico Eagles marching band, Clifford Breland and Bre’s Dance Studio, Compton Junior Posse, Head “2” Toe Beauty & Barber Salon, Black Diamond, Mr. Image of Beauty, Lasalle Kenyon, Jr., J.W. North High Empire Black Nurses Association, Riverside Community Reunion, Inc. Westside Dominettes Drill Team and Drum Squad, ReClaim Our Youth, Antioch Missionary Baptist Church, Horsewoman Lakimba Bradberry, Horseman Harold White, Arlington FFA Equestrian team.

Nevada’s first firemen participate every year.

BSU King and Queen.

**City of Riverside**

President Don Bardo, San Bernardino/Riverside Urban League.


Dell Roberts is the parade chair.

Painters. T. Elsworth Gantt, Second Baptist Church.

Shiek Court No. 138.

Dell Roberts, Black History Chair.

President Don Bardo, San Bernardino/Riverside Urban League.

Little Miss America.

President Don Bardo, San Bernardino/Riverside Urban League.

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Retracing the Underground Railroad
"An Experience"

By Cheryl Brown - Black Voice News
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Thanks to:
Henry Ford Museum & Greenfield Village
Loraine County Convention and Visitor's Bureau
Windsor Essex County & Pelee Island Convention and Visitor's Bureau
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Invites the community
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The Ralphs / Food 4 Less Orange Blossom Festival Features:
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• Continuous Live Entertainment on Five Stages
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• Children's Grove with Games & Activities

To volunteer for the Turn-of-the-Century Riverside, call Jeanette Ward at the Second Baptist Church (909) 684-7532 or contact the Orange Blossom Festival (909) 715-3400

Black Voice News' Collector's Edition/Black History Month Special
February 27, 1997
Proudly Takes a look back at the Underground Railroad

- this Black History Month

Take time to remember those that gave their lives to better this great nation!

4480 CHINO HILLS PKWY, CHINO, CA 91710
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CONDUCTORS: LaUna Newman, Minneapolis Spokesman; Vicky Douglas, Minneapolis Spokesman; Judy Seal, Tri State Defender; Gwyneth Windon, Tri State Defender; Cheryl Brown, Black Voice News; Delores Johnson, Atlanta Tribune; Alice Thomas, Jackson Advocate; Renell Whitehead, Cincinnati Herald; Mike McNair; Louise McNair; Celeste McNair; Linda McNair, Buckeye Review; R.J. Billage, Detroit CVB; Sandra Bradt, Ontario Canada, CVB; Mary Richardson, Detroit, CVB; Cheryl Bierly, Greene CVB; John Able, Greene County CVB and Suzanne Kneesley, Lorain Co., CVB.

When I received the invitation to participate in the 'First International Trip on the Underground Railroad (UGR),' I was more than inquisitive -- I was intrigued. Why should I revisit, much less relive, such a painful and dangerous passage of slaves led by a most daring "conductor," a slave herself? I thought my history had died with my ancestors. My job, though, is to write history telling it like it is, - and what better way to inform my readers than to experience first hand. As I continued to discuss the details with Greene County Convention and Visitor's Bureau, I soon realized that this trip would not be one for fun, laughs or light heartedness, rather, an insightful journey of serious ancestral business. And, since my daughter Regina was enrolled at Wilberforce University in Ohio (a major point-of-interest on the itinerary), this was an ideal chance to see her as well.

The journey began in Xenia and Wilberforce, Ohio. At Wilberforce, my traveling companions and I had the honor of meeting Mrs. Edith Washington-Johnson, Booker T. Washington's granddaughter. The atmosphere was lighthearted and jovial as we exchanged names and backgrounds, but in a short time, a more somber air pervaded the scene, for this area (Wilberforce) was the safe refuge to enslaved Africans who escaped from the brutal treatment on the plantations.

Next, we traveled through Amish Country to Oberlin, Ohio. The town of Oberlin is significant in that it is credited for starting the Civil War because of its refusal to carry out the mandates of the Fugitive Slave Law of 1850. That law, supported by the 15th U.S. President James Buchanan, required citizens to aide slave catchers.

We journeyed throughout other historic cities in Ohio such as Cleveland, where the Oberlin Rescuers were tried and found guilty of aiding my enslaved ancestors. The city is also the home of many historically rich African-American Museums, and the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame Museum as well. Detroit was the next physical stop where we heard, first hand from a griot, stories of sheer survival about those enslaved Africans who courageously fled to freedom and those who helped them on this dangerous highway. We then traveled to Canada where the enslaved Africans cross the sometimes ice covered river to Freedom.

In Windsor, Ontario, Canada we visited the five communities in which the free Africans settled. They are Sandwich, Chatham, Elgin, Amherstburg, Dresden and North Buxton. With their strong sense of helping each other, the free men and women then built a community wherein they supported each other in businesses and the trades. At the end of this momentous Canadian connection we were given the honor and title of "Conductor on the Underground Railroad."

We, the participants on the 'First International Trip on the Underground Railroad (UGR),' wish to thank the following convention and visitor bureaus for introducing us to our heritage:

- Greene County, Ohio
- Lorain County, Ohio
- Detroit Michigan
- Windsor, Essex County and Palee Island, Windsor, Ontario, Canada

And, now, it is my duty -- as it was Harriet Tubman's, Josiah Henson's and others -- to tell the story, to conduct the experience, to teach my people to honor and love our ancestors and appreciate what they did for us. It is my duty to communicate to you the strength and courage our ancestors used to pave the way for us, in this modern day and age, to be free from bondage. I invite you to turn these pages and imagine the steps taken by those daring Africans; and, I hope everyone reading this special edition is compelled to action in honoring our ancestral heritage. Please join me as I call on the inimitable spirit of Harriet Tubman to guide me, your conductor, as we travel on the Underground Railroad. As your editor, I am pleased to offer you this gift of history. All Aboard!

-- Cheryl Brown
Retracing The Underground Railroad

By Cheryl Brown

Just as Christians go to the Holy Land, Muslims return to Mecca, and Jews return to Israel, every African American and African from any nation should retrace one of the many routes on the Underground Railroad.

We must return to the past so we can better understand our future.

My past was connected as I retraced the steps my ancestors took when they refused to be slaves anymore. It was truly a religious experience.

They left the plantations of the south in the dead of night and in the cold of winter to escape the selling, raping, beating, killings and the breaking up of our families. Make no mistake about it, what my ancestors went through was more inhumane than any person or group of people should ever have to go through.

Every African American and African Canadian are direct descendants of the survivors of slavery. Many families trace their roots to the Underground Railroad.

The Underground Railroad, for whom Harriet Tubman is so famous, is not a mode of transportation. It was instead a system of safe houses, churches, barns and other places
where the fugitive slaves could rest and eat during the day as they travelled by night the 900 plus miles to freedom in a land called Canada.

This re-creation is not to glorify or glamorize what they did. It was, for me, at least a time to be connected to my ancestors, to know that they were brilliant people and to know we, their ancestors, are products of that brilliancy and strength.

Beginning in 1619, for close to 250 years, some 100 million Africans were selected to be transported across the Atlantic ocean. They were a strong people. If they were weak, they didn’t survive, what is referred to by historians as the ‘Middle Passage.’ Those who survived were the strong of the strong.

The slave traders took the Africans to many different nations including, China, Japan, Australia, Europe, the Caribbean, South America and even Canada, virtually all over the world. They had to survive the different climate changes, and the different nationalities of the people. Although they were all Black they were not the same, their differences were as real as the English and the Irish or the Cherokee and the Sioux. But those differences were never taken into consideration. No one cared.

This ugly part of American history has been virtually hidden until now. Some of the hideouts are still visible, others have been destroyed, many locations and many stories died with the owners because it was death to anyone helping an escaping African.

As far as we know, the first re-enactment of the Underground Railroad began in 1978 in the town of Oberlin, Ohio, the town that started the Civil War. A town which was very much against slavery and was founded on the principle of equality. The students who conceived the idea researched and planned it with the help of historians like John Hope Franklin, and Lerone Bennett, Jr. The first idea was to re-create a slave escape by the Oberlin students to satisfy the requirements of a class project.

However, the more they researched, the more the project took on a life of its own and instead of the leisurely travel through the South to record their experiences in a journal the idea began to take shape as a 19th century experience of a fugitive slave circa 1850. The experiences of the seven is enough to fill a book as they walked in the cold, avoiding heavily populated areas, hiding in barns and being fed by friendly abolitionists. They began their trek in Greensburg, KY near the Tennessee border and ended at Oberlin University. They spent one month and travelled 420 miles.

Going into the project, the students felt like many Blacks today: slavery is negative, it conjured up feelings of guilt, embarrassment and irritation when it is spoken about. The students reported at the end of the journey that they didn't feel that way. They focused on the slaves high ambition, ingenuity and perseverance.

The Oberlin students felt what I felt when I tried to retrace the steps of my ancestors in the flight to freedom, through the Underground Railroad. "We must look at slavery as a time when we were an enslaved people," said one of the participants on the trip. Time and time again as we met the keepers of the culture, they'd say, our history is too important for any portion of it to be romanticized and lightly glazed over, rather than be SERIOUSLY investigated.

My trip to freedom began in Greene County Ohio, the home of Wilberforce University, an AME church college. It is because of the African Methodist Episcopal Church activities in the anti-slavery movement, the county is the location of many, many stops on the Underground Railroad. We followed the "North Star" on the railroad and ended in Canada at the furthest point for slaves settling in the Winsor, Ontario area of Canada.

Although my travel on the Underground Railroad wasn't dangerous and I experienced it in the comfort of hotels and a bus, I was no less moved to tears and I now feel connected to an important part of my past. The trip was an eye opener and a moving experience and when I reached "destination freedom"; the emotion was so great just thinking about it brings tears to my eyes.

Of all the awards I've received, all the accolades that have been bestowed on me did not prepare me for the emotion that followed Dr. Bryan E. Walls' bestowing the title of "Conductor" of the Underground Railroad on me.

He said to us, “do as my ancestors did go back and tell somebody and have our people show honor and respect to the ancestors many of whom travelled over 900 miles to change their lives, the lives of their family,” and yes, even mine.
History

In 1820 the Missouri Compromise permitted an extension of slavery into Missouri but not into Maine as the two states were admitted into the Union. It divided the country into half free and half slave. By 1857, the U.S. Supreme Court outlawed the Compromise and said in the Dred Scott decision that the government had no right to prohibit slavery. That decision instead, set up more controversy surrounding slavery.

However, abolitionist were on the rise. Contrary to the beliefs of many, there were many Black abolitionists fighting to end slavery in the United States. One of the great, was Bishop Richard Allen, who founded the African Methodist Episcopal Church the nation's oldest and largest Black organization in America. Most of the White abolitionists were Quakers who were religiously opposed to slavery. They were helpful but they were not the only reason that slavery was abolished. Records suggests that Blacks working with other Blacks is what "broke the back" of slavery.

One of the main routes of the fleeing slaves began in Brown County, Ohio, in the town of Cincinatti. On top of a steep hill in Ripley, was the home of Rev. John Rankin, called "Liberty Hill," the house on the hill, according to The Town That Started the Civil War, by Nat Brant. There were 102 steps that led to the top, overlooking the city, and between 1830 and 1865 it was estimated 2,000 fleeing slaves passed through Ripley, (Charles I. Blackson, The Underground Railroad, 1940).

The fleeing slaves gave way to a new industry, slave catching. In 1849, Kentucky became a major market for the purchase and sale of slaves, and the Kentucky legislature repealed a nonimportation act and allowed slaves to be sold or shipped to other states.

Every Black, free and slave, were fair game. It was so bad that many free Blacks were caught and sold on the auction block back into slavery. By 1850, teeth were put into the Fugitive Slave Law of 1793 and slave catchers were plentiful. Fleeing slaves who made it to the house on the hill had a chance to make it to Wilberforce, Ohio located in Greene County and the home of the Wilberforce University. The school was named for the British abolitionist, William Wilberforce. Wilberforce in 1808 almost single-handedly abolished slavery in the British empire. It was this school near the town of Xenia, Ohio, twenty miles from Dayton that our trip on the Underground Railroad began.
The Black Voice News

Blacks Oppose Slavery

The American abolitionists began their organized opposition as far back as the 1787 when the Free African Society was founded by Bishop Richard Allen and Rev. Absolom Jones. It had as its goals, the establishment of a church, an insurance company, and a political organization. Its major goal was the establishment of educational facilities for Blacks. It was illegal by statute of law to teach the slaves to read and write. But regardless of the opposition, the tenacity and sheer brain power of the slaves propelled them to learn anyway.

They founded the great Black colleges of today which continue to educate and graduate over 75% of all students who attend.

Wilberforce University a Main UGR Stop

Wilberforce University is one of the main areas of the UGR, and Shorter Hall, one of the primary buildings on the campus, was said to be a station. Shorter Hall is the third building to be built on this site. It is scheduled to be torn down because of asbestos contamination. It is one of the last buildings left of the original campus. In 1974, the worse tornado in the history of Ohio struck Wilberforce and destroyed the other university adjacent to Wilberforce, Central State. It also affected the Wilberforce campus, which, because of age, was relocated across the road from the original site.

Near the University is the home of Col. Charles Young, the third Black to graduate from West Point, which is a former UGR stop. Apparently, the cellar and barn were hiding places. The cellar was filled with various routes created to mislead searching slave owners and catchers. A crack across U.S. Highway 42 lies directly above a tunnel used to help the slaves. The restoration of the home and site is being undertaken by Omega Psi Phi Fraternity.

Time did not permit a visit to every location that has been identified but among the places to see are: the site of the Ohio Anti-Slavery Society Convention in the early 1830's; the Rev. Jones Farm (Jones, Wilberforce University's fourth President, hid runaways in a barn that had a false floored hayloft); The Mitchell House (with stairs capable of concealing fleeing slaves); the Hilltop Road House (a pantry floor lifted out to reveal an underground room), and the Nosker Residence (a trapdoor revealed steps leading to a tunnel that connected to a small cave in the front yard).

Sites Identified in Green County

The Reverend Samuel Wilson Home - 204 East Market Street (now the site of the Assembly of God Church). An early convert to the anti-slavery movement, Rev. Wilson offered his home for an Anti-Slavery convention in the early 1830's.

The David Monroe House - 246 East Market Street. Monroe was one of Xenia's most prominent abolitionists. Slaves received refuge in a cellar beneath the carriage house (no longer exists) that is rumored to have had a tunnel to the house. The main house at this location was completed in 1864.

The Davis House - 559 East Market Street. Local tradition gives the basement of this site as a station.

The Col. Charles Young House - 1120 U.S. 42 East, now being restored by Omega Psi Phi Fraternity (Col. Young was the third Black American to graduate from West Point). The cellar and barn are cited as hiding places. The cellar was filled with roots to mislead searching slaveowners. A crack across U.S. 42 lies directly above a tunnel.

The Samuel Howell Place - Wilberforce Switch Road, off U.S. 42 East (no longer exists). Fugitive slaves were hidden in the cellar. At night Howell took runaways by wagon to the next station.

Rev. Jones Farm - Near 1805 U.S. 42 East (no longer exists). Hiding places on the farm, once owned by Bishop Joshua H. Jones, Wilberforce University's fourth president, were the barn with a false floored hayloft, cave and root cellar.

The Mitchell House - 1230 Wilberforce-Clifton Road (no longer exists). While no one can say exactly, how stairways could conceal slaves, people familiar with the house agree there was something different about its three stairways.

Shorter Hall - Near 1350 Brush Row Road. Today's Shorter Hall is the third on this site. The original building was said to be a station.

William Collins Place - Near 2433 Wilberforce-Clifton Road (no longer exists). The house had a hidden underground room with a trapdoor to give access.

Harding House - Near 2661 Wilberforce-Clifton Road (no longer exists). A granddaughter heard her Grandmother Harding tell about holes in the backyard used to conceal slaves and of a secret cellar under the house and connected to the regular cellar. Still visible are a hand-dug well and the entry into a tunnel from a cellar wall.

The Henry Cory House - 2975 Grinnell Road (no longer exists). The old stone house, destroyed by fire in the 1960's, had a hidden trapdoor leading to an underground room. The original barn still exists.

The Ferguson House - 1040 Clifton Road. Moving a chest from under a stairway recently revealed a trapdoor entry to a concealed room from in the cellar.

This is a partial listing of the many sites in Greene County. Those sites still existing are not open to the public. Their locations are offered only as points of reference.
Meeting Booker T’s Granddaughter

As our travels continued we stopped for a visit at the National Afro-American Museum and Cultural Center. We viewed an outstanding Malcolm X exhibit and the permanent exhibit “From Victory To Freedom.”

However, as exciting as that was, for me the highlight of that evening was the dinner and visit with among others, Edith Washington-Johnson, the granddaughter of Booker T. Washington. Mrs. Johnson is the daughter of Booker T. Washington’s youngest son and she was born in 1924 nine years after (Booker T) died. She is well versed in his philosophy of self help and says her godfather was George Washington Carver. Additionally, her first cousin married Frederick Douglas the great grandson of another famous abolitionist. Her godfather and godfather were good friends. She said Washington asked Carver to join the faculty of the school he founded in Tuskegee, Alabama because he needed someone to head his Agriculture Department.

“He got him when he told him if he didn’t come he would have to hire a White man,” she said. Mrs. Johnson sighed, she is saddened that Blacks are not supporting each other in what she calls another part of the brainwashing of Black people.

“I think what Farrakhan did was great. Our Black men need that boost and rededication,” said Mrs. Johnson referring to Malcolm X exhibit, and the permanent exhibit, “From Victory To Freedom.”

However, as exciting as that was, for me the highlight of that evening was the dinner and visit with among others, Edith Washington-Johnson, the granddaughter of Booker T. Washington. Mrs. Johnson is the daughter of Booker T. Washington’s youngest son and she was born in 1924 nine years after (Booker T) died. She is well versed in his philosophy of self help and says her godfather was George Washington Carver. Additionally, her first cousin married Frederick Douglas the great grandson of another famous abolitionist. Her godfather and godfather were good friends. She said Washington asked Carver to join the faculty of the school he founded in Tuskegee, Alabama because he needed someone to head his Agriculture Department.

“She told the story of when her grandfather was asked if education would solve the race problem. He said, “I don’t know but I do know ignorance will not.”

“Racism has harmed Whites just as much as Blacks because it set up a false sense of superiority for them. We need to know about each other, but we must learn about our own history,” continued Mrs. Washington. “It (society) will work when all of us perceive and experience justice. We must find a way to level the playing field because Blacks haven’t experienced justice yet,” she said. One of the reasons Blacks seem to lack knowledge is because we don’t know our history and there is a lot of divide and conquer. She feels we need to learn from what Jewish people have done. “We ought to spend our time building ourselves and our race,” she said.

Mrs. Johnson for many years was the Financial Aid Department at Central State University. She discussed when she met the grandson of W.E.B. DuBois, who needed to talk to her about financial aid. When he came to her office she said, “I want to declare a truce.” He laughed and they moved on.

“The disagreement between DuBois and Booker T. Washington was a distractor, both philosophers were needed,” she said. DuBois was of the ‘talented tenth theory’ while Washington wanted to pull Blacks up by teaching the trades. It was a constant discussion on what was right for the Negro people.

When the evening ended my heart was full. Why don’t we see what Mrs. Johnson talked about? This was just the beginning of a journey as with a heavy heart I followed on my ancestors footsteps as they bravely traveled the Underground Railroad.
A Visit To The Home Of Paul Lawrence Dunbar

There were many steps on my Underground Railroad trip that merely showed the heritage of the area, but some of our steps were destined to break the intensity of the journey. One such place was the Historic Clifton Mill. There is no proof that this was a stop on the way to freedom, however the mill dates back to 1802 and was critical during the Civil War. It is the largest grist mill in existence, an overwhelming site to visit. During the Civil War the mill had to be burned down because the Confederate soldiers stole the flour for their troops. In order not to aide them in the war the mill was destroyed. Following the war the mill was rebuilt.

It was at this mill that the group met Paul Lawrence Dunbar, (Dr. Herbert Woodward Martin) the famous poet, who was the son of an escaped slave.

Dayton, Ohio just 20 miles from Wilberforce, was the home of Dunbar, who was made famous by William Howells then considered the dean of American literary critics. It was Dunbar’s second book Majors and Minors which caught the attention of Howells. It was his favorable review in Harper’s Weekly that made Dunbar a national figure virtually overnight.

Dunbar was born in 1872 to Mitilda, a former slave and Joshua Dunbar, who had escaped from slavery and fled to Canada probably taking the same route we were on. He (Joshua) returned to the United States as did many heroes to fight in the Civil War, and to end slavery, (his mother was enslaved in the deep south). He joined the 55th Massachusetts Infantry, an all Black Civil War unit.

The family was poor and because Joshua could not find steady work after the war, Matilda took in washing to keep food on the table, while Paul and his two half brothers performed odd jobs to make ends meet.

It was his mother who inspired, gave support and told stories to her sons. She instilled in him a desire to achieve and that is just what he did. He was only six years old when he wrote his first poem and he recited poetry at the age of nine.

As he grew his reputation grew. He was the only Black student in his class at Central High School in Dayton. He was named to the school’s debate society and became president of the prestigious Philomathean Literary Society. He edited the school newspaper and wrote for various Dayton community newspapers. He graduated Valedictorian of his class. Among his classmates and good friends were Orville and Wilbur Wright. Dunbar and the Wright Brother eventually published their own newspapers.

With all he had going for himself he still had trouble finding a job not because of qualifications but because of his race. He finally landed a job as an elevator operator in the Callahan Building located in the city and supplemented his salary by freelance writing in various national publications. His reputation grew, local people recognized him and he was invited to speak at numerous events.

By the age of 22 Dunbar published his first book of poetry, Oak and Ivy. As a writer he struggled for financial independence, by writing for magazines and selling his poetry book for a dollar.

It was at the 1892 World’s Fair that he met Frederick Douglas, who was in charge of the Haitian exhibit. Douglas gave Dunbar a job after hearing him recite his poetry and called him “the most promising young colored man in America.”

The sentiment expressed by Douglas was echoed by Dr. H.A. Tobey, the superintendent of the Toledo State Hospital who had struck up a friendship with Dunbar after reading Oak and Ivy. Along with Toledo, attorney Charles Thatcher and Dr. Tobey provided the money to publish Dunbar’s second book, Majors and Minors.

Following Howells’ review in Harper’s the publishing firm Dodd Mead and Company combined Dunbar’s first two books and published them under the title, Lyrics of a Lowly Life for which Howells wrote the introduction.

He went on tour to England. When he returned he married another writer, Alice Ruth Moore of New Orleans and settled down. He took a job at the Library of Congress in Washington D.C. He had already contracted Tuberculosis and the dust of the library aggravated the condition. Although he was under doctor’s orders to rest, he devoted his time to writing and lectures.

The happiness that Dunbar felt in his success as a writer was also his nemesis. He was an excellent writer and the only thing anyone wanted to buy or hear was the Negro dialect. No one wanted to recognize his talent. Dunbar’s life and his work were becoming symbolic of the Negro struggle in America. He often wrote and spoke about civil rights issues. One famous piece was “We Wear The Mask.”

Dunbar’s health and his marriage declined and he died at his home in 1906 at the age of 33 from Tuberculosis and it is rumored a “broken heart.” He had published four books of short stories, a variety of song lyrics and thirteen books of poetry.

With his success he was able to purchase for his mother the home where he died. His mother died in 1934. The home was restored to the original look at the turn of the century by order of the Ohio Legislature. His boar hair toothbrush is in the cup in the bathroom. His suit on the bed, his mother’s cookie making bowl in the pantry and his beautiful library of books are in tact. Also on display is his bicycle built by the Wright Brothers.

Visitors must have a buckeye from his tree in the yard, the same tree he loved so much.
Oberlinite Historian Traces Roots

Thelma Quinn Smith is a historian, who gives the Underground Railroad tour from a Black perspective. She is a 5th generation Oberlinite and has a great working knowledge of the history of the Underground Railroad. Some of her relatives can be found today in Canada.

Thomas and Catherine Brown are great-grandparents of Thelma Quinn Smith local historian and tour guide in Oberlin, Ohio. They can be traced in the early 1820s in Oberlin, Ohio. Thomas was a Cherokee Indian stolen as a child from his family in Kentucky at age nine. He was taken to Cincinnati, Ohio to train race horses. When he became a teenager he ran away and came to Oberlin. Due to racial conflicts in 1835-1837, many slave and free people of color were driven out by laws requiring $500 bond money and the Fugitive Slave Act. Thomas came to Oberlin where he married Catherine. Eliza Brown, Mrs. Smith's grandmother, was deeded a gift of land in North Carolina from her father, November 21, 1820 of 146 acres on Mathews Branch called "Blizzard Place." She and her husband Enoch Quinn lived on this plantation later accumulating over 800 acres of land in Lenoir County, North Carolina. Enoch died in 1840 and Winifred's father died in 1853.

The period of 1835-1850 became very unstable for slaves and free people of color in the New Bern, North Carolina area. New Bern was the hub of an elite society of African Americans who were not only politically active, they held high offices, were property owners and some owned slaves. Repressive laws were being passed to restrict movements of the slaves and free people of color and they banded together in support of each other.

In 1853 Winifred remarried John Conner (also of mixed heritage) with whom she and fifty other relatives and friends migrated to Ohio as rumblings of the civil war was evident and life became a harsh reality of survival for them. These families had members of family serving in the Revolutionary War, War of 1812 and also the Civil War. Many had returned to the South to fight for the Union Army to free the slaves and for the remainder of their families living there.

Winifred was the matriarch of this group who migrated to Ohio. By 1857, she had bought property in Cleveland, moving westward into Pittsfield, Sandusky County and bought property in Elmore and Oberlin, Ohio. Many descendants and their families continue to live in the areas today.

The Laughinghouse-Godette-Quinn reunion will celebrate seventy-five years in Ohio in 1997. Winifred died in 1874 in Oberlin and is buried in Westwood Cemetery there along with many other members of the family. She deeded the homestead property to her son George Halter. In 1853 Winifred remarried John Conner (also of mixed heritage) with whom she and fifty other relatives and friends migrated to Ohio as rumblings of the civil war was evident and life became a harsh reality of survival for them. These families had members of family serving in the Revolutionary War, War of 1812 and also the Civil War. Many had returned to the South to fight for the Union Army to free the slaves and for the remainder of their families living there.

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Rust United Methodist Church in Oberlin, Ohio, founded in July, 1872, will be celebrating its 125th Anniversary this year.

Methodism in Oberlin has enjoyed a very prosperous growth. This phenomenal growth covering the past 100 years is a result of the dedicated activities of just a small interracial group of consecrated men and women. The names of most charter members of The Methodist Episcopal Church have been lost to posterity, but it was this group that prior to 1872, worshiped in the old "Colonial Hall," later used for the Zoological Laboratory of the College and now is part of the Conservatory of Music site on West College Street.

It is highly probable that the church was organized entirely by White persons and then subsequent to this organization, the invitation to Negroes to join in worship was made.

It was at some time prior to the period of July 26, 1872 that the congregation divided along "racial" lines. The White group continued to occupy the building on South Main Street while the Negro members purchased property on South Water Street. A small frame building was purchased and moved to the South Water Street site. Organizational plans were completed and the group became known as the Second Methodist Episcopal Church.

The newly organized Lexington Annual Conference probably provided a strong influence in the thinking of Oberlin's Negro Methodists. The available records do not tell of any reason for the division except that "Both...groups felt they could be self supporting."

The first pastor of Second Church was Mrs. Elizabeth Carr. No records remain that would shed any light on her administration.

The names of the first trustees of Second Methodist Episcopal Church are preserved on the Land Title Deeds. John Ramsy, James Houston, Perry Carter, James R. Montgomery, Thomas H. Burnett, Frank Savo and William H. Brown were the first duly elected Trustees of Second Methodist Church.

The interior of the building was described in a journal kept by Samuel King, a member of the Board of Trustees in 1915 and active member of the church in the 1890's thusly: "The floors were made of wide boards with open cracks between them. The heating system was poor. A cook stove was used to heat the church and 16 oil lamps were used for light."
Oberlin

The Town That Started The Civil War

One of the most awesome places we visited on the Underground Railroad, was Oberlin, Ohio. A town that made integration work.

Historians don't all agree on the history of the Underground Railroad because the information is mostly oral and because the penalties for harboring fleeing slaves was jail, fines and even death. Oberlin, stop #99 on the Underground Railroad, is proud to point out they never lost a passenger.

History

The Fugitive Slave Law in 1850 was most heinous because it forced citizens who were against slavery to assist Slave Catchers. It punished some abolitionists by law for not helping.

The discussion, just over 100 years ago was that Africans were chattel, (property) that translated into dollars for their owners. The more intelligent the slave the more he/she was worth. A healthy Black male adult...was worth $1000 at that time, one who was skilled brought several hundred dollars more. The Governor of Mississippi estimated $30 million in slaves was lost between 1820-1850. A Georgia congressman blamed Abolitionists, who numbered some 2,000 in Ohio and Virginia near the Ohio River, for assisting some 40,000 to 50,000 fleeing slaves for the property loss.

The South was crying for more slaves. The Mississippi Democrat newspaper said during this time "without an increase of slave labor the South cannot progress." A Georgian named Col. Gauldren, of

The Savannah News Report, declared that "African Slavery (remember at this time there were also White slaves, who assimilated into the population) is morally and legally right, and that it has been a blessing to both races, that on the score of religion, morality and interest, it is the duty of the Southern people to import as many Blacks direct from Africa as convenient."

With this attitude and that of the Fugitive Slave Law on their side, Slave Catchers and slave owners captured anyone Black, fleeing slave or free Black.

Northern states including Ohio enacted several statutes to counter the Fugitive Slave Law. They (some Northern states) established the right to a jury trial and the privilege of seeking a writ of habeas corpus. The function of the writ was to bring the alleged fleeing slave before the state court or judge in order to free him/her from unlawful restraint and to allow time for the fleeing slave to escape to Canada.

It was not uncommon for bands of Northerners to physically free Black slaves. The vigilante groups became known as the Rescuers.

It was this back drop a group known as the Oberlin Wellington Rescuers that the town of Oberlin is most proud.

The Rescue

In 1858, a Black man named John Price was caught by a Slave Catcher and a U.S. Marshal, who kidnapped him in Oberlin and took him to the Wadsworth Hotel in nearby Wellington. The town got wind of the situation and 200-500 people gathered in front of the hotel. The town was told by Deputy Marshal Jacob Lowe, the arresting officer, that the Militia had been called and would be on the 5:15 train. The crowd was angered at the kidnapping and shouted for Price to be let go. Records say that the slave catchers were afraid of the Militia threat, but 5:15 came and Militia members were not on the train. Following much discussion back and forth, maneuvers took place and ended with the Whites diverting the attention of the Slave Catcher and Marshal away from Price and the Blacks pulling him out of the back door of the hotel. When he was released he was hidden in the home of Oberlin professor James Fairchild, the least likely place for someone to look, before he escaped to Canada.
Returning to Oberlin from the Rescue, was like a parade with cheering crowds. Charles Langston, a Rescuer and local teacher, was feeling good about what they had done. Langston is also the brother of John Mercer Langston and relative of author Langston Hughes. The crowd called for a speech from Charlie, and for over an hour the integrated group gave speeches and marveled in what had taken place. Little did they know Oberlin's postmaster Democrat Edward Munson was taking notes. Democrats were against any attempt to get rid of slavery.

A total of 37 people were indicted for aiding and abetting the rescue of John Price. Twenty-three Rescuers were from Oberlin, eleven were from Wellington the others were from nearby communities. Of the twenty-three from Oberlin twelve were Black. Three jeopardized their own freedom because they also were fleeing slaves. Six of them were emancipated and three were freeborn. A larger number of Blacks went to rescue Price but they could not be identified by the government witnesses.

As the government case unfolded it became clear to the town of Oberlin they were being punished because the town insulted the 15th President of the United States, James Buchanan, a Democrat who vigorously enforced the Fugitive Slave Law of 1850. That law was to put teeth in the Fugitive Slave Law of 1793. It was the 13th Pro Slavery President, Millard Fillmore, (1850-53) who signed the legislation and established a stronger Fugitive Slave Law. Twenty of the Rescuers went to jail for freeing Price. They were released three months later when the town countered by bringing kidnapping charges against the Slave Catchers, who detained Price. Among the Rescuers was a Black man named John Copeland, who took Price to Canada.

Later in the anti-slavery uprising known as John Brown's raid on Harper's Ferry, Copeland lost his life along with John Brown. Oberlin had no choice in their response to slavery and all its evils. They had to walk the walk. Oberlin was named for John Frederick Oberlin who developed the first kindergarten and who believed in educating women which was unheard of at that time. Oberlin the town, was actually the school. He the founder was a Frenchman who never came to the United States but in 1832 John Jay Shipherd and Philo Stewart heard about him and wanted to start a town where the ideals of Oberlin could flourish. However, shortly after its founding the school ran into trouble. The year was 1835, wealthy businessman and abolitionist Arthur Tappan, said he would save the college if they would admit Blacks and hire certain anti-slavery professors. On a 4-4 vote they were hopelessly deadlocked. While a group of women stood outside of the door praying, the tie was broken. The chairman of the Board Rev. John Keep broke the tie and Oberlin began admitting Blacks to the school. For years it has remained the leading institution for Blacks in higher education.

Oberlin is famous also for another incident in the 1800's. In 1853 a fleeing slave Miriam from Dover, Kentucky escaped from her captor with her children, a grandchild and a foster child. Once they reached Oberlin, the foster child named Lee Howard Dubbins, age 4, was too ill to make the rest of the journey so a man and his wife gave shelter to Miriam and her children. Seeing his condition had worsened the couple decided to take care of Lee Howard. He died shortly after Miriam and the other children left.

The town held a funeral for him in First Church of Oberlin on March 26, 1853. Nearly every person in town attended. In 1993, a beautiful granite memorial was erected in his honor at the grave site.

Another famous event took place that involved a group of African American students from Oberlin College in 1980.

Students re-enact Escape

Oberlin has had its share of problems, especially when the attention was turned away from the Tappan focus.

In 1980, students preparing to complete a senior project wanted to re-enact a slave escape. Reportedly the project had its detractors. They (the students) first wanted to travel by bus and write about the experience travelling leisurely through the South, recording some of the experiences in a journal. As the research was being compiled the event began taking on a life of its own. It was student David Hoard who suggested modifying the trip into a slave escape along the Underground Railroad. It was decided the students would dress in slave clothing, taking a bare minimum of food and trek the 420 miles the slaves had to travel, hiding out in barns, and being at the mercy of people along their way. One account told of the students actually facing a landowner who cursing and swinging a baseball bat, ordered them off his property. As they progressed, they attempted to stay close to the shoulder of the Highway 68. This precaution seemed ludicrous to them until an angry motorist, swerved to shout obscenities at the group. From then on they traveled along the bottom of the ditches, in fear for their lives. They never knew where they would stay, as the advance crew, secured permission from the friendly Abolitionists daily. The trek was to resemble, as closely as possible, the experience of the fleeing slaves.

Oberlin has at least 15 sites to visit on the Underground Railroad Experience. This is a place every Black person and every other race should visit. It tells the story and gives the history of an enslaved people, who in spite of the circumstances persevered.

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Students who retraced the steps of the Underground Railroad.

Rev. Betty Howard, pastor of Rust United Methodist.

Neck chain and lock worn for seven weeks by a 19-year old slave, Margaret Toogood.
Detroit: Fleeing Slaves Last Stop To Freedom!

Many times I’ve heard Detroit (pronounced Datroit by natives) referred to as the Northern Star, but I didn’t understand the magnitude of the history of the city until my trek on the Underground Railroad.

The fleeing slaves could spend time in Oberlin, because it was a safe haven. There were people who would hide the slaves, because it was a part of their moral duty. And, the Abolitionists were both Black and White. There were many other historic stops of the Underground Railroad between Oberlin and Detroit, however we did not visit them, except for Cleveland, the place where the Oberlin-Wellington Rescuers were tried. In Cleveland, we visited the Rock N Roll Museum and saw a fabulous presentation of the history of the art form that they (the museum) acknowledges came from Blacks out of the suffering from slavery to Jim Crow to the Civil Rights Era and on to the Vietnam protests until today.

Detroit had to be seen in a day and a half and there still wasn’t enough time. My appreciation for the city was enhanced in this visit. From the Second Baptist Church to the visit to the Motown Museum and in-between the historic terminal of the Underground Railroad was exciting, impressive and sad.

The role of Detroit in the Underground Railroad was the last stop to freedom, well almost. The Slave Catchers would go into Canada near the border and snatch Black people if they could.

The first visit was to the basement of the Second Baptist Church. We began in the sanctuary, where Ralph Bunche was baptized. We saw areas where fleeing slaves were hidden and we read the story off the wall (stories were literally on the wall). In every area there is history of Black struggles and stories of successes. But when we followed our guide Dr. Leech, through a tight room and winding walkway the feeling of my ancestors running for their lives, scared, probably hungry and very tired, a knot developed in the pit of my stomach. As we entered the area named the Croghan Street Station we were placed in a little room hidden deep down inside of the church and easily missed if one were not directed to the secret hiding place. My demeanor changed. I became consumed with the feeling of the tiny room and what my ancestors had to endure. The room had no luxuries, just a hard floor and sometimes a pad for sleeping.

The walls told the story. It was there the road map of the many routes of the UGR was located. It was there the names of the station masters were listed. It was there we heard from Dr. Leech about the members of the church who helped the slaves flee into Canada. It was from this church the Emancipation Proclamation was read. Second Baptist is the oldest church in the Midwest. In 1836, thirteen former slaves and members decided to establish their own church in response to the discriminatory practices of First Baptist. (At this time in the history of our country Blacks and Whites attended the same church. However, they could never participate fully in the membership of the church. They had to sit in the balcony and were not allowed to pray with Whites).

The church has been politically active since 1841 (or earlier) in the Underground Railroad movement. There are many customs and quirks that came out of the slave experience. “The Slaves used corn cobs for toilet paper and jumped the broom for a marriage ceremony. If you could jump backward you become the leader,” he said. Leech questioned the growing practice of men with pierced ears, “the slave owner would pierce a male’s right ear to identify him as a slave for life.” Not wanting to dwell on it he said if they (today’s young men) only knew what that meant maybe it wouldn’t be so popular. “Men just do it, they don’t know where it came from,” he said.

In Detroit there are many sites that are historical and if a building was torn down historic markers mark the site. One such place is the Finney House Barn, built by Seymour Finney. By 1850 his barn had become a major station on the UGR. His role in the movement earned him the title of Superintendent of the Underground Railroad, a title given to those who were active in assisting and hiding fleeing slaves. According to Leech, the slave owners would stay in Finney’s hotel many times lamenting that they couldn’t catch whoever they were looking for. Finney would be hiding them in his barn next door.

Dr. Leech said when it was safe, the slave would steal into the night and board a steamboat owned by George DeBaptiste, grandson of Jean DeBaptiste and Pointe DuSable, and travel across the river to freedom in Canada. Or if the river was frozen over they would walk across to freedom. This was dangerous because slave catchers were stationed along the river. It was also dangerous because the river may not be frozen solid.

Bethel AME (African Methodist Episcopal) the oldest AME church in Michigan, was organized in 1839. Its founder, Bishop Richard Allen was a great abolitionist. In 1845, the first church was built and the basement was used for the first Detroit Public School classes for Black children. Among its...
Leech questioned the growing practice of men with pierced ears, “the slave owner would pierce a male’s right ear to identify him as a slave for life.”

The Law Enslaved People:

There was the whole discussion of the Missouri Compromise, of 1820 where expansion of the U.S. was inevitable and expansion of slavery was aggressively pursued by southerners. They even wanted to remove the ban on the importation of slaves. The southerners felt they could not continue to grow and be successful without the use of labor from the enslaved people. While in the North the tide was changing. America was the only country in the civilized world to maintain legal slavery. The abolitionists were winning the opinion war. Two territories, Missouri and Maine wanted to become states. The tide was against expansion of slavery into northern states. The deal was cut and the Mason-Dixon Line was used as a demarcation for states who enslaved their masses and those who didn’t. Missouri became a slave state to keep the balance of power. The Kansas-Nebraska Act, of 1854, in effect repealed the Missouri Compromise and permitted the extension of slavery. The Dred Scott Decision of 1857 solidified legalized slavery and said because slaves were property they had no rights under the Constitution. Resentment grew because even free Blacks were sold back into enslavement. There was no escaping, except into another country. The country of choice was for some over 1000 miles and they, my ancestors, walked every step of the way.

The Enslaved People Arriving in Detroit:

By the time they arrived in Detroit the fleeing slaves could see, feel and touch freedom that many of their own parents, grandparents and great grandparents could only dream about. They died in slavery. They died building this nation. They died working for no pay. Many were beaten and killed at the hands of their masters. Families were sold, children taken away from their fathers and mothers separated from their children and husbands—husbands with whom they had jumped the broom.

The emotion from the presentation of Dr. Leech was strong. My amazement lessened, my smile left and the intensity of his words struck my heart as tears came to my eyes.

He reminded us that our culture from Africa was stripped from us and we even had to adopt the master’s name. ALL Black people had slave names from their masters. He also reminded us that Thomas Jefferson, was also the father of children born into slavery. Times were tumultuous. There were uprisings and blatant disobedience to the unjust Fugitive Slave Law of 1850, a pet project of President James Buchanan.

The Civil War/Lincoln and Henry Ford Museum:

President Abraham Lincoln (1861-1865) followed Democrat Buchanan, he won on the anti-slavery platform. The handwriting was on the wall, Northerners wanted an end to the laws that governed slavery. Lincoln inherited the bad policies from the Buchanan administration, that sided with the Democratic, states rights leadership in the south. The war was fought after the southern states who wanted to maintain slavery, succeeded in 1860-1861 and set up their President, Jefferson Davis. Lincoln declared this illegal, and warned the Federal Forts in the south would be held by the government. Confederate forces attacked Fort Sumner on April 12, 1861 and the Civil War began. Brave Black men fought for freedom of slavery. In 1862, they formed the 54th and 55th Massachusetts, the first regiment formed by a northern state. Even the fleeing slaves who went to Canada came back to join the fight for freedom. In 1863 Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation, giving freedom to all of the country’s enslaved people. Driven by the obsession to preserve the Union, he won and the long war ended two years later on April 9, 1865.

On April 14, 1865, Lincoln was assassinated by a Southern fanatic, John Wilkes Booth. Lincoln died the following day. Located in Detroit as a part of the UGR discovery of my roots was the chair Lincoln was sitting in and the blanket used to cover him at the Henry Ford Museum located in Dearfield, Michigan.
The museum is not to be missed. Not only is the Lincoln display there, you can also visit the log cabin where George Washington Carver stayed. Inventions by African Americans, like Lewis Latimer, who developed the improved method for making filament for Edison's light bulb. Garrett Morgan who invented the traffic light we still use today. Grandville Woods, inventor of the Electric Trolley car and others. There is an original plantation the Hermitage House complete with slave quarters and many, many historical items too numerous to name. The most exciting exhibit of this century was the Motown exhibit, "The Motown Sound The Music, the Story."

A Visit To Historic Motown:

Back in Detroit a visit to Hitsville USA, the former Motown Studio and conglomeration is fascinating. It is different from the Ford display. It is close and up-front. This is where we met Berry Gordy's sister Esther and heard her speak about the original Motown days and the Gordy family. She has an unassuming polite reserved way of telling the story. She is the Gordy family keeper of the culture. She tells the story of how the empire was built through family cooperation. It wasn't easy she was the main holdout on the loan her brother needed to start his record label. The story of Mr. Gordy, father of Berry and Esther gives the framework for the unparalleled success of his son. When he came to Detroit, in the wave of the people in the industrial revolution he opened a grocery store and named it Booker T. Washington Grocery Store. Everyone in the family worked together in the store. The Gordy's instilled the work ethic and excellence in all seven of their children. It was particularly disturbing to the family when Berry quit his secure job and decided to get into the record business. He had no money but the family members developed a bank for their own use. Berry had to go before the group to borrow the $500 needed to get started. He cleared 10 cents on his first record deal. Remember the hit record, "Shop Around? When Smoky Robinson saw what all the hard worked netted them he encouraged Gordy to strike out on his own label. He did, but was only mildly successful. To be completely successful, he needed more labels with different names.

Disk Jockey's were not inclined to play different artist on the same label. Gordy peddled his records from the trunk of his car. The Motown sound was hot. He also developed venues for all of his artists. Since the recording artists for the most part came off the street, he had charm classes for each. They were taught they would be performing for kings and queens so they must be prepared. They were taught how to eat properly, how to walk, how to meet their fans, everything possible for their success.

The music was always uplifting. There were problems, this was at the height of the Civil Rights era and songs (one by the Temptations) addressed the issue in a positive way. "And The Band Played On." The message was there, so was the hope.

It was the hope and the success of these the ancestors of the enslaved Africans, it was just the lift needed to face the trip across the water to Windsor, Canada and with the exception of Sandwich, Canada, FREEDOM! Sandwich was so close to the water that the Slave Catchers would sneak over the border in hot pursuit of the enslaved African who was running for his/her life to freedom.

There are 10 historical sites and markers of UGR activity in the city of Detroit. If you have ever wondered why people from Detroit are self reliant, go-getters, full of pride and successful, it comes from the gene pool of people who feared no one and who believed in and fought for the cause of freedom. It comes from their trials and tribulations it also comes from a deep abiding love for each other.
As you walk through Henry Ford Museum, Dearborn, MI, be on the lookout for signs that identify five of the items that are the work of African-American Innovators.

Granville Woods
Electric Trolley 1800s
Granville Woods was an electrical inventor and a railroad engineer. He patented many electrical systems and devices which modernized transportation. One of his important inventions was an overhead wheel and pole which extended from the top of a street car. The wheel - known as a troller or trolley - drew electricity from a power line overhead to run the motor.

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Elijah McCoy Steam Engine Lubricator 1882

Elijah McCoy was one of the most prominent African-American inventors of his day, obtaining more than 50 patents between 1872 and 1929. He used the skills he learned as an engineer and locomotive fireman to invent devices that automatically oiled moving parts on steam engines, especially locomotives. He demanded such high-quality workmanship that he coined the phrase “The Real McCoy.”
Garrett Morgan, a Cleveland businessman, is credited with the 1923 invention of the first four-way traffic signal. His original design resembled a railroad semaphore. The arms of device were printed with STOP and GO, and could be raised and lowered mechanically. Morgan later added colored lights for greater visibility. Traffic signals such as Morgan’s were important because autos and buses created public safety problems during the 1920s. Morgan also patented a breathing device or “gas masks” for use by American troops during World War I.
Lewis Latimer patented an improved method for making electric lamp filaments while working for electrical inventor Hiram Percy Maxim in 1882. Latimer whose father had escaped slavery in Virginia, joined The Edison Electric Light Co. in 1884 as a draftsman-engineer and served as the company's patent advisor and consultant.
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Member of CHW Southern California
Freedom Oh Freedom, before I be a slave
I'd be buried in my grave. ... Follow the Drinking Gourd... and Follow the Northern Star.

Canada was the heaven in many spirituals sung by the enslaved people. The gourd was the big dipper, and the North Star to which its handle points, served as a map that pointed to Canada. The gourd was also a dried squash that when cut in half made the drinking gourd. These gourds were placed at the right side of the door as a signal of a safe house to fleeing Africans. Many of the enslaved Africans who sought freedom in Canada through Windsor, were still in danger if they had not travelled far enough away from the border once they arrived. The community of Sandwich in the southwestern section of Windsor is one such place. The first passengers on the Underground Railroad came in the 1820's and by the 1830's some became permanent residents of Sandwich, where they built the Sandwich First Baptist Church.

The original structure was a log cabin built in 1848 six years after its founding by few members who were very poor, and in 1851 a brick structure replaced it. Families were asked to donate a certain number of bricks and time to build the church. These bricks were hand-made and baked by the ex-slaves and their families. The beautiful hardwood floor, windows and ceiling were hand carved by the hands of the ex-slaves and their families. Inside the church the meticulous ceiling remains in tact, just as it was first installed.

The church in Canada was and is a source of strength. I met no one who didn’t attend a church. In fact, in every settlement we visited the church is the primary focus of the community. We began with prayer before the historical presentations were made and, it was noted in every presentation that most of the freed enslaved people were strong Christians.

After the presentation of all the activities the church is involved in today our group was taken on a tour of the 150 year old church. On the outside was a entire section of the bricks made by the ex-slaves.

What took my breath was the escape route in the pulpit area of the church. The fleeing Africans would be ushered through a trap door, down the steps, through a window in the bottom of the church and out into the woods surrounding the church. The deteriorated steps are being replaced with new ones but the feel is still the same. My ancestors ran for their lives where I was standing. An eerie feeling came over me.

Canada was not always free of slavery. According to The Freedom Seekers: Blacks In Early Canada, by Daniel G. Hill, the first Black to arrive there came in 1628, a ship carried a Black slave child from Madagascar. The area at this time was called New France which was a French colony, ruled for 35 years by the Company of New France, King Louis XIV tried to strengthen the colony and appointed a governor, Jean Talon. Talon and some of the community citizens complained to the King that they could not develop because of the shortage of servants and workers. French law forbade slavery but in 1689 limited approval was given to permit slavery there. After the approval was given, Blacks and Pawnee Indians were purchased to work as household servants and field hands. And by 1709 the King gave full permission for slave ownership. “Black slaves are certainly the only people to be depended upon...” said General James Murray, first British governor of Quebec in 1763. British Loyalists who left dissident territories who moved north to re-establish their families were offered generous grants and permission to bring their slaves.

In 1791, Upper Canada, which takes in the areas accessed through Detroit, was developed. Amherstburg accessed
through the narrowest point in the river had been settled by 1784 when Colonel Matthew Elliott brought 60 slaves he captured during the American Revolution. And passage of the first anti-slavery law in 1787 that abolished slavery in the American Northwest territories, the law did not take hold until 1796. Detroit was both a free American territory and slave British territory at the same time. Some of the fleeing slaves swam across the River to freedom in Detroit. Opposition to slavery was being heard in England, William Wilberforce introduced a bill in the House of Commons to stop the importation of slaves. One of his supporters was John Graves Simcoe, who later became the Governor of Upper Canada. He was instrumental in a new law in 1793 that allowed the existing slaves, outlawed new ones and gave freedom to any child born to a slave mother at the age of 25.

The law helped to turn the tide of public opinion and by 1800 most enslaved Canadians were free. The short growing season, rendered slaves unproductive in the winter and it became expensive to keep cloth and feed them throughout the long winters. When the word trickled down in the United States that people would not be enslaved in Canada, American slaves slowly began to follow the North Star...the Drinking Gourd and a better life than the harsh slavery that existed in the United States. According to the Attorney General of Upper Canada, John Beverly Robinson, soon after the War of 1812 any Black reaching Canada was free forever.

At the North American Black Historical Museum and Cultural Centre, the African culture is deep. It is from Africa that much of the culture is derived and our history begins. Many of the utensils, and the lifestyles were directly from our native habitat. There is proven information about the lengths fleeing Africans went to escape. The history has been passed down and going to Amherstburg is just like going back in time to the 1800's.

My enslaved ancestors escaped anyway possible: in false bottom wagons, in tattered clothing, in the finest of finery, through a system of barns, attics and secret rooms, even in boxes, a coffin and trunks and using an array of signals. One 11 year old girl was shipped to Canada in a trunk with very small inconspicuous air holes. She arrived safely. The trunk is in the museum. Also in the museum is history of the churches, the schools, the military and life in general in the Amherstburg area. Next door, an AME (African Methodist Episcopal) Church is being restored. Although the AME Church was deemed too political in Canada because of the Abolitionist activities of the founder and members, many Canadian AME Churches became BME (British Methodist Episcopal), and remain BME today.

The fleeing enslaved people were ingenious they used a system that zigzagged and doubled back as well as changed courses. There were many ways to get to Canada. One of the most valuable tools carried by the fleeing enslaved Africans was a bag of black pepper. It was used to throw the dogs off the fleeing man/woman's scent and allow them time to escape.

First Baptist Church (called by some John Brown's Meeting House) is also a historic building located in Chatham. It was founded in 1841 by refugees who were formerly enslaved in the United States. This site is where one of the last of a series of meetings held by White abolitionist John Brown, and an integrated group of supporters in May of 1858 met prior to the planned raid at Harper's Ferry. John Brown was born into a religious family May 9, 1800. His father was a station master in the Underground Railroad and a Trustee at Oberlin College (Ohio). Their home was a haven for fleeing Africans. It was in Chatham that he developed his Master Plan to empower the enslaved people in his country. First Baptist is where the forty-eight article Constitution was completed. Part of his secret plan led him to the Federal Arsenal at Harper's Ferry, Virginia. He was hanged December 2, 1859, "I am very prosperous still and looking forward to a time when peace on earth and goodwill to men shall everywhere prevail," was his final note. Many brave people both White and Black gave their all for the cause.

Canada was heaven for the formerly enslaved African people. They were the artisans, the skilled craftsmen, the builders, and the businesspersons. They built a new life in a new land and many returned time after time to show others the way to the North Star and FREEDOM.
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Although Canada had a history of enslavement, segregation, prejudice and cold weather, it was still heaven to the formerly enslaved Africans, who were many times brutally beaten and separated from their families.

The proud tradition of the African Canadians (they are torn between referring to themselves as Black, Colored or African Canadian) is catalogued in the Centennial Museum, the original site of the Elgin Settlement. The Elgin Settlement located in North Buxton in Raleigh County, Ontario, Canada, was a community where arriving refugees could become self-sufficient. Probably the first land use planning areas in Canada were here. The refugees were given an opportunity to own land, build a house and develop a self-sufficient community.

For many, the Elgin Settlement was the last stop on the Underground Railroad. The settlement was founded by Rev. William King, a Presbyterian minister who was loved by the refugee settlers. He formed the idea of a plan for refugee settlement in 1846.

But Rev. King in 1848 inherited 14 enslaved Africans after the death of his father-in-law, (his wife and children preceded his father-in-law in death), causing him great embarrassment. He petitioned the church to allow him to step down until he could take care of this problem. It took about two years to settle the will with the rest of the family. He picked up a Black child along the way and when he returned to the Ohio farm he told all of the enslaved, they were free. Then he invited them to stay on the farm with him for the winter and then join him in Canada to live as free persons in his proposed settlement. All 15 went with him. During the winter the Blacks attended school to learn all they could about farming, carpentry and any other skills they needed in the new land.

According to Daniel Hill in The Freedom Seekers: Blacks In Early Canada, there were a considerable number of free Blacks settlers in the region due to first the loyalist movement before and after the American Revolution, in 1776, after the time of Black Codes. In the beginning of the 1800s midwestern states passed laws to limit the rights of free Blacks. Ohio's code banished Blacks and mulattos unless they could show a certificate of freedom from the courts. Employers could be fined for hiring a Black with no certificate. Blacks could not settle in the state unless, within 20 days, they showed proof that they could support themselves, posted a $500 bond and gave other assurances of good behavior.

King was convinced Blacks could succeed if they could own land. The church gave approval and the plan moved forward. It was not, however, without opposition. Edwin Larwill, an influential member of the political community said Blacks were inferior, property would be devalued and respectable citizens would leave the area. He organized a vigilante committee. In 1849, three hundred people mostly in opposition, came together. A group of Blacks were also there to assure and support Rev. King. One other White man spoke out in favor of the Black settlement named Archibald McKellar.

Larwill protested to the Parliament and recommended that Blacks be barred from public schools, and public office, that they should pay a poll tax and the question of the Blacks voting should be examined. He additionally recommended Blacks be required to post bonds to stay in Canada. He lost community support with his unauthorized recommendations. The settlement was founded, November 28, 1849, with King and the 15 formerly enslaved persons, and Issac Riley and family, Elgin's first settlers.

The settlement was supported by the Presbyterian church who supervised the chapel; schools, and in Canada took up a collection to help the settlement.

Restrictions, covenants and rules of land use were placed on each land owner. They purchased one acre, at $2.50 and had 10 years to pay it off. They had to build a log home, 18x24 ft. and 12 ft. high. There had to be no fewer than four rooms and it had to have a 33 ft. setback from the property line. They also had to plant flowers and vegetables.

King was determined to be successful. Blacks should own property and pass it down to their heirs. A clause in the deed was they could not sell to a White person for 10 years. The land could not be rented or sharecropped until it was paid off. King taught the residents to become self-sufficient and even though many were hired by the railroad, he'd warn them not to depend on the railroad money. They would earn more in the long run by developing their land. Rev. King even helped established the AME and Baptist Church, of which the Blacks were familiar.

By 1850 a post office, church/school were built and adults and children attended from Elgin and nearby communities. When the school opened there were fourteen Black children and two Whites. The parents of the White children sent them because of the excellent teachers. The education in the Buxton School in Elgin became so superior to the state run schools that by 1854 Blacks and Whites had to compete for spots in the school and another school had to be opened. Students were reciting long passages of Latin and Greek and the notion that Blacks could only do menial work was shattered as students began leaving the area to teach in other communities and countries. Elgin children began to teach the adults at night.

No liquor was allowed in Elgin, but a store was opened outside of the settlement. It was closed from a lack of business.

Business quickly developed and the settlement was very prosperous. By 1853, they attracted 30 families. They developed their own savings bank and kept the money in their own community. They owned cattle, developed a potash industry, sawmills, gristmills, a brickyard, a good country store, and they built a railroad line. They were governed by an arbitration board made up of local citizens. There was no crime.

People started to leave the settlement by the time of the Civil War, to help the United States war effort. Many returned to restart their lives, others went to Haiti, the U.S., and other Canadian cities.

As Elgin grew and thrived, the opposers, were by 1856, ready to acknowledge the settlement's achievements. About 1000 Whites from Chatham on the lawn of the St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, located in South Buxton joined about 1000 Blacks from Elgin. There was a huge pavilion made from the lumber from Elgin's sawmill, flowers from...
Popular jockeys were used as signals to fleeing enslaved persons.

Elgin's gardens decorated the tables, the food was impeccable from the herds of Elgin citizens, bread from the gristmill, milk from the cows and vegetables from the nearly 250 yards of Elgin settlers. In less than seven years these accomplishments had been made. McKellar, who earlier stood up to the opposition, was given the loudest applause. And to further show their appreciation, the settlers, late in 1856 cast their votes to throw out Larwill in an overwhelming defeat, and elected McKellar. The prejudice in Chatham began to disappear when the settlers were able to cast over 200 votes and controlled the election.

Elgin produced some of the finest citizens in Canada and the world. It was the hope of a proud people: Canada's first Black doctor Anderson Ruffin Abbott Canadian born and an American Congressman; James T. Rapier, who fought for and won the passage of 1895 Civil Rights Act; Abraham Shadd, one of the very few Blacks to become a commissioned officer in the Union Army; and Artis Lane the only Black artist commissioned to do art for the celebration of the Statue of Liberty, but was dismissed by the committee when she refused to remove the tear from the eye of a Black man draped in an American Flag.

After Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation many of the settlers began to move back to the southern states in the U.S. Today North Buxton is still home to the descendants of the original settlers who stayed. It is active but does not flourish as it once did. They continue to remember and preserve their roots through the Raleigh Township Centennial Museum. It is home to a bedroom suite handmade by the grateful people freed by Rev. King with whom he started the Elgin Settlement. It includes his diary, as well as many implements used by the settlers in everyday life.

In the second school built, an original classroom remains as it was last used. It includes many maps and charts that showed the way for the fleeing: enslaved people of America. A gourd sits by the door of a house to show how fleeing Africans actually followed the drinking gourd. It was not only symbolic of the Big Dipper but was an actual gourd that if sat by the right side of the door, was a signal of a safe house on the UGR. And the jockey who is offensive to Blacks today was a warm sight for those on the UGR. If the lamp he was holding was lit or there was a red rag tied to it, that meant safety to those fleeing from enslavement.

North Buxton remains one of a very few pre-civil war Black communities in existence today. The lives of the people who remain reflect the same determination, dedication and tenacity as their ancestors.
Uncle Tom's Cabin
Josiah Henson Big Shoes to Fill

Uncle Tom of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* was not a fictional character. He was as real as we are, and if Josiah Henson's grand-daughter, Barbara Carter has anything to say about it she will make it unacceptable to use her great great grandfather's name in a derogatory way. According to his own writings and of information passed down, Josiah Henson was a genius.

"My great great grandfather was a visionary," she said. He could not read or write but he narrated a book about his life. He fled slavery and escaped to Canada in 1830. He established the FIRST vocational school in Canada. He taught the arriving refugees how to survive in the cold climate. He even made several trips back (to the United States) to show the way (to Canada) to our enslaved ancestors who wanted freedom.

"Our family does not appreciate the way he is now depicted. If you knew him you would know calling someone an Uncle Tom should mean a person would have some pretty big shoes to fill."

When Harriet Beecher Stowe published her book *Uncle Tom's Cabin* in 1851, she used incidents in the life of Rev. Josiah Henson, whose book was published in 1849 and of other enslaved Africans to tell of the horrors of the institution of slavery. She was the daughter of a Quaker Minister and grew up detesting slavery. Before writing the book she interviewed Henson who related the story about his father.

Henson, who was born in Charles County, Maryland on June 15, 1789, said his father's right ear was cut off and had received 100 lashes on his back for beating the White overseer who had brutally beaten Henson's mother. His father changed after that (according to his autobiography, *The Life of Josiah Henson*) and was sold. The master shortly thereafter died in an accident, brought on by drinking and fighting. The family was sold individually, and so heart broken was his mother to lose her children that she begged her new owner to purchase her youngest son. He didn't and Henson took sick with the new master. He was not expected to live and was sold at a loss to the owner of his mother. Her nurturing proved to be what the doctor ordered and Henson fully recovered.

It was his mother who first taught him the Lord's Prayer and a smattering of religion. This instilled in him a insatiable desire to know more about Christianity. He was standing near a church one day when he heard a preacher speak about Jesus and how He died for everyone, "He died for the rich, the poor and even the slave in chains." He committed to memory what he heard that day.

Henson's master, Isaac Riley, lived a life of drinking, gambling, and fighting with other farmers on Saturday nights. It was the duty of the enslaved Africans to break up the fights and take the masters home. Once this led to Henson being brutally beaten for hitting an overseer. His arm and collar bone was so badly damaged that he could never again raise them normally. This master took the matter to court and won. This act along with Henson's desire to please his master endeared him and made him very loyal to Riley. Henson handled the business of the plantation. He was successful at doubling the crops and was trusted with the management of the farm. He became the overseer. However the riotous living caught up with Riley, he lost the farm and the slaves were to be sold.

In 1825 Riley went to Henson and begged him to flee with the other slaves to his brother's plantation in Kentucky. Pleased with the confidence Riley placed in him, Henson journeyed, 1000 miles to Kentucky, he his wife, two children and 18 other enslaved people. He arrived after having to sell the horse and wagon to buy a boat to finish the journey. Along the way he ran across people in Cincinnati who encouraged him to break for freedom but he had given his word and in April of 1825 he arrived at the brothers farm. The enslaved people at Amos Riley's farm numbered 80 to 100, Henson's ability of farm management was recognized and soon he was serving in the same capacity, this gave him time to improve his learning about the word of God. He began preaching throughout the area and was accepted as a Methodist Episcopal preacher. His preaching netted him over $200 and
he was ready to buy his freedom.

In 1828, he secured a pass from Amos Riley to visit his former master Isaac Riley in Maryland to secure his freedom. Henson was tricked, the stated price of $350 was increased to $1000 and because he could not read or write what he signed, he was once again in the same situation; enslaved. He returned to Kentucky and was told a year later to accompany the owner's son Amos, Jr. to New Orleans. Henson found out there was a plan to sell him in New Orleans. While on the trip Amos, Jr. became ill and nearly died. Henson nursed him and took him back to the plantation but received no thanks. He woke up! There was no intention to do right by him and after discussing it with his wife, the family took off for Canada. They arrived after a difficult journey and because of his skills immediately got a decent job and a place to stay.

He acquired some livestock and soon became a leader among the formerly enslaved Africans. He preached and encouraged the Blacks to save their money to buy land. Meanwhile he made return trips to the south and organized groups of people who wanted freedom. In 1834 he found land to purchase. As a result of his fund-raising efforts in England $1500 was raised and with it he purchased 200 acres of land which contained white wood and black walnut trees. From that a saw mill, a blacksmith shop, a carpenter shop and other necessary businesses were developed. But the need was for the refugees to learn trades and skills so that their community would be self-sufficient. Henson, who could not read or write then founded a school. Boys were taught trades and girls were taught to cook and sew.

According to The Freedom-Seekers, Blacks in Early Canada by Daniel G. Hill, Henson met a Congressional minister and abolitionist named Hiram Wilson and began the plan for the Dawn Settlement near Dresden, Canada, in an area where many Blacks had already settled. Wilson wrote to James C. Fuller, a Quaker philanthropist in New York and invited him to the area to see for himself the desperate needs of the Black refugees. He accepted and became convinced that this could be successful. He had contacts in England and was able to raise money for the settlement.

The group had purchased some land and The British American Institute was born. It was a boarding school offering elementary education with an emphasis on industrial and manual training. Property around the school was reserved for families connected with it. Students were taught free of charge over the age of fifteen. They were to pay $1.00 for food and lodging and they would be paid 5 cents an hour for work performed.

Henson visited towns in New England to study lumber operations because of the excellent timber on their property.

Henson also traveled to England to raise money for the institute. On his first visit in 1850 he took walnut products which he displayed at the Crystal Palace, the Queen and her attendants took notice of his great exhibition at that time.

On his second visit in 1852 he was called home because of the illness of his wife who died shortly after he arrived and by 1876 on his third visit Henson was received by Queen Victoria at Windsor Castle.

Jealousy, arguments, and accusations of mismanagement, which were later proved to be false, took its toll on the reputation of Dawn. Some Blacks in Chatham argued that the segregated town encouraged prejudice and said Whites and Natives should be included in the school and on the governing board (State run schools were inferior). They said the goal should be to integrate with other Canadians. Articles in the Provincial Freeman, a Black newspaper, written by the former secretary-treasurer of the institute Rev. William P. Newman further damaged the institute's name and the morale of its staff.

After the circulation of an embarrassing document, a committee of Henson's friends sent John Scoble, (a former friend of Henson's) secretary of he British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society to look into the problems plaguing Dawn. He took over many of the deeds and powers of the board and began using it for his own benefit. The area became rundown and Canadian Blacks were offended. They stepped in and Newman, and the editors of Provincial Freeman all attacked Scoble and to a lesser degree Henson. By 1860 the board of trustees who had not turned their powers over to Scoble began legal action against him. Scoble left, and a new board of trustees sold the land and assets and used the $40,000 proceeds to set up the Wilberforce Educational Institute in Chatham, Ontario Canada.

Before his (Henson's) death in 1883, he desired to return to the Isaac Riley Plantation in Maryland. When he did, he was shocked by the dilapidated condition of the place. Riley had died many years before but his widow greeted him. According to The Story of Uncle Tom by William Chapple, she said to him, "you are dressed like a gentleman." "Ma'am," said Henson respectfully, "I always was."

He turned away from the miserable conditions and went to visit his mother's grave where he made new resolutions to live and to honor her name throughout the rest of his life.

He died at the age of 94, after a three day illness. His grave is located in front of his log cabin home. His pulpit now stands in a replicated church of the same period because his church burned down. There are other structures of that time period and a newly built beautiful museum and multipurpose building which houses a conference room, a store, and other rooms. It is run by his great great-granddaughter and their family.

"Tell the story of Uncle Tom. Remember for 85 years minstrels traveled the world in blackface making fun of Uncle Tom and distorting our history. They were so successful that we (Blacks) all over the world bought into it. This is not true and I hope in my lifetime to change it," said Barbara G. Carter.

For information call, (519) 862-2291.
The Underground Terminus

The John Freeman Museum

The terminus of the UGR in this part of Canada was Maidstone Township, the location of the John Freeman Wells Historic Site and Underground Railroad Museum.

Each site we visited was unique and special and it was an experience I will never forget. This museum traced the journey of African Canadians from Africa across the Atlantic Ocean through the United States and on into Canada and freedom. It realistically portrayed what our ancestors had to endure. My trip through the woods, with the sound of dogs at my heels, seemed so real that it caused me to have an emotional release. The tears flowed and one of the organizers, concerned about my reaction, was quick to pat me on the shoulder and say it was alright. Oh, but what my ancestors had to endure!

We were met by a train whistle and a Walls family member. Allen Walls, who took his job very seriously, greeted us dressed in a conductor’s uniform, and waited in front of what appeared to be a railroad depot. This dramatic site is not your typical museum. In our sight were markers highlighting the distance of various states from which the enslaved Africans escaped. Some escaped in false bottom wagons, and one greets you with a person still hiding inside. The 20 acre property is heavily wooded. And the trip, simulating the journey of a fleeing enslaved Black, took us through the woods over a creek and into freedom on the other side. On the site, which is owned by the family of John and Jane Walls, is their log cabin, barn, the Rosa Parks Peace Chapel, the Sir John Simcoe Educational Resource Log Cabin, and but historical story of the Walls family, is found in the book The Road That Led To Somewhere, by Dr. Bryan Walls, a retired dentist and member of the Walls’ fourth generation.

In the early 1800’s, John was the property of Eli Walls and then his son, and running the tobacco farm. Additionally, Daniel had grown up with John as a brother. It was Daniel who gave words of wisdom to his father, Eli, who died shortly after Hannibal’s escape. Daniel understood that keeping John would benefit the plantation. John “Freeman.”

Years passed and his master Daniel was dying and called in his wife Jane, and his slave John. His first order of business was to sign John’s manumission papers making him a free man. The second was to ask John to take care of his wife Jane and their four children. The three had grown very close, and neither Daniel or Jane believed in slavery. Before long John and Jane fell in love. This was surely a death sentence for John and probably Jane as well, whose family was so famous they named a mountain: after them. She came from the King family and was of Scottish and Irish lineage. Before anyone could find out about their relationship, they left Rockingham County, North Carolina (near Raleigh).

For a period of time they stayed in Indiana with Ephriam and Mary Stout, a Quaker couple who was active in the UGR. Meanwhile, Jane returned to the North Carolina plantation to bring back others who were still enslaved. She was successful and before long, the couple was married in a civil ceremony as well as a broom jumping ceremony (the only way slaves were allowed to marry).

Interracial marriages were unheard of at that time and even the most liberal persons objected. They were able to get away with it because one of the women on the plantation who escaped with them pretended to be John’s wife, while Jane acted as their Clifford E. Walls Dinner Theater One, (a dinner house, and a restaurant). Also are railroad cars full of family mementos including those of famous Boxing Hall of Famer, Earl Walls.

However, the museum is mainly a tribute to John and Jane Walls who came to Canada to find peace and to bring enslaved persons to freedom. The fictionalized Daniel, of North Carolina. John’s mother raised Daniel because his mother died during childbirth. Hannibal was John’s father, and was killed by plantation owners who caught him during a daring escape to freedom. John’s mother was sold after the escape, and John remained on the Walls plantation because of his excellent skills at carpentry was torn between his loyalty to Daniel and his insatiable desire to be free in Canada. John always remembered his father’s words, “remember, the side of the tree the moss grows on and the north star, is the way to freedom to Canada, like my native Africa.”

The desire to be free was so strong that, he gave himself the middle name Freeman.
The Black Voice News

Bryan Walls at the end of the UGR.

John and Jane traveled on to Canada before long. As they had done before, when they were stopped by Slave Catchers he became her slave who was sent with her by her husband to visit relatives. They would explain that he was accompanying her as protection. At one point she had to whip him in front of Slave Catchers to save his life. The deception didn’t last long, soon there was a hefty bounty out for both of them as they found out when they pulled a notice describing them off a tree.

The family, Jane, and her children by Daniel and John arrived in Canada in the summer of 1845. The family settled in Amerthurstberg for a year and finally moved a good 20 miles, as far away from others as possible. It was deep in the woods away from Windsor where the Slave Catchers and roving bands would not travel. By 1858 census records found that they owned a log cabin, two oxen, eight cows, three sheep, six horses, two dogs, and twenty-five acres of land. Their home became a haven for enslaved people fleeing from the hideous Fugitive Slave Law of 1850. The law made it a crime for ordinary citizens to refuse to assist a slave catcher. The Walls were safe and their home became the final terminal on the UGR.

The museum is in receipt of a letter from the Stout’s dated December 19, 1854. It was in response to a letter Jane sent telling them they would help anyone fleeing slavery. The Stout’s gave fleeing Africans a map to the Walls home. Many found their way and brought greetings from the Stout’s.

John and Jane had six children, Henry, the firstborn of their union married a native Parthena, daughter of an Indian, White Cloud. It was Martha one of the twins, who was the mother of Aunt Stella, the family griot.

Aunt Stella lived to be 102, and died in 1986. Aunt Stella was 23 years old when Jane and John died, one year apart, she was 88 and he was 96 years old. Two of Jane’s children by Daniel married Blacks, one never married, and Daniel Jr. died from an illness when the family moved to the final homestead.

Members of the Wall family taught peace, harmony, love, and tolerance for all people. They feel the world would be a better place if only people showed the love for each other that Jane and John showed. They are God fearing Christians and working hard to preserve the heritage of the family. “This generation, my uncles, brothers, sisters and others are doing what we can. When we die our children will take it to another level,” said Bryan Walls.

Allen Walls, Conductor in front of train station.

The dogs at your heels

Underground Railroad Station

Simcoo Educational Cabin
Learning from a troubled past.

The Underground Railroad spirited thousands out of slavery to freedom in Canada.

Approximately 40,000 people succeeded with their perilous journey; a great many more died trying.

Technically, the Underground Railroad was neither underground and it wasn’t a railroad. It was a secret network of good people, united by their anti-slavery convictions, certain that all men were equal and that all men should be free. You are invited to discover this moving tale at historic sites from Ohio north to Canada.

In Greene County, Ohio, travellers can visit the Wilberforce University, the first autonomous Black institution in America. Founded by the African Methodist Church, the University was an important midwest “station” on the Railroad. Another station was the Lt. Colonel Charles Young House. Other sites worth noting are the Paul Laurence Dunbar home, the National Afro-American Museum & Cultural Center and the United States Air Force Museum, which features an exhibit dedicated to the Tuskegee Airmen.

Continue your journey to Detroit, Michigan, known as the “station” of “Midnight”, the last stop before Freedom. It was in the hidden rooms of Second Baptist Church that fugitives eagerly awaited the darkness so that they could slip across the river into Canada. When it opens in 1997, Detroit’s Museum of African American History will be the largest of its kind in the world. The Detroit Institute of Arts and Henry Ford Museum & Greenfield Village also have enlightening exhibits pertaining to African American History and the Underground Railroad. While in Detroit, visitors will also want to stop by the Motown Historical Museum, the birthplace of Motown Records and that fabulous Motown sound!

At long last Ontario, Canada – Freedom. The Underground Railroad terminated in Canada, having fulfilled its role of bringing the desperate to safety. In Essex and Kent Counties, experience the Canadian portion of the Underground Railroad by visiting Sandwich Baptist Church in Windsor and the North American Black Historical Museum in Amherstburg. The John Freeman Walls Historic site also testifies to the journey of escaping slaves. Fort Malden National Historic Park and Raleigh Township Centennial Museum are waiting to share their stories. Learn the true story of Josiah Henson at Uncle Tom’s Cabin Historic Site, in Dresden, Ontario.

A call to any of the numbers listed below will start you on the route of the Underground Railroad where you can learn from a troubled past.

Detroit
1-800-225-5389

Windsor
1-800-265-3633

Lorain County Visitor’s Bureau
1-800-334-1673

Greene County
1-800-733-9109