

# **The Underground Railroad and the Antislavery Movement in Fort Wayne and Allen County, Indiana**

**Angela M. Quinn**

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ARCH, Inc.  
437 East Berry Street, Suite 204  
Fort Wayne, IN 46802

ARCH is Fort Wayne's Historic Preservation Organization

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The antebellum story of African Americans in Fort Wayne is as grand and complex as the story of the city itself. The first African Americans were most likely here before Anthony Wayne, and several free Blacks served in various roles during the American military occupation of our community. From the earliest history of Fort Wayne to the end of the Civil War, African Americans have been participants in the story of our city. There were slaves here at the Three Rivers, and, later, a thriving Free African American Community. There were fugitive slaves and Underground Railroad Agents, and there were prosperous African American business owners.

At least five separate periods of African American residence and settlement can be identified in Indiana and Fort Wayne, coinciding with the national events that have formed the history of the country. The first includes those who came and left the three rivers prior to statehood in 1816. The second period spans statehood through the beginnings of the Civil War. Following this war a new wave of settlement appeared as freed slaves came north to distance themselves from the backlash of Reconstruction. The twentieth century brought new residents from the south to our factories before World War II and, in more recent years Fort Wayne has enjoyed continued increases in the population of both African Americans from other parts of the country, and natives of Africa herself, as we have become part of the global village.

The story of Fort Wayne's antebellum African American community can best be viewed through the lens of several specific events that affected African Americans throughout Indiana, and these are used as the backdrop for this story. They are Statehood and passage of the first Indiana Constitution; the settlement of Free African Americans and Quakers from the Upper South; the Underground Railroad; the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850 and the new Indiana Constitution of 1851; and the increasing legal oppression and racial

prejudice that swept over the state after 1850 as the country was pulled ever closer to the inevitable conflict of the Civil War.

Before beginning, an explanation of terms used in this paper is necessary.

African-American, Black, biracial, and multi-racial are the modern terms used throughout. The older terms Negro, colored, darkie, half-breed and mulatto represent quotes from older sources.

Article XI, Sec. 7th of the 1816 Indiana Constitution states:

“There shall be neither slavery nor involuntary servitude in this state, otherwise than for the punishment of crimes, whereof the party shall have been duly convicted. Nor shall any indenture of any Negro or mulatto hereafter made, and executed out of the bounds of this state be of any validity within the state.”

Prior to this the 1787 Northwest Ordinance had outlawed slavery, but had been unclear on the status of those enslaved prior to passage of the ordinance. It also left unclear the legality of indenture. Before passage of the Northwest Ordinance slavery was legal during the earlier years of French and British control of the confluence of the three rivers. The name of the first African slave at Fort Wayne is unknown. It is known that William Wells kept slaves on his land in Spy Run neighborhood, and that early traders at Kekionga held slaves. Other researchers have also noted several African Americans in service at the American Forts here, and although some were enlisted men, and others civilians employed by the military; there appear to be others who were either slaves or indentured servants also<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Kirby, J. Randolph. *The Appearance of Blacks in Fort Wayne Before 1820*, in Old Fort News, Vol. 48, #2, 1985. pp.2-7.

What is often overlooked, however, is the continuation of slavery within Indiana's borders after achieving statehood in 1816. For many slaveholders, it was business as usual, although those with more savvy contracted long term indentured servant agreements to by-pass the new law. Indentures of twenty or more years were not uncommon, and the status of a long-term indentured servant was no better than that of a south-of-the-Ohio River slave.<sup>2</sup>

However in 1820 -- the same year that Congress passed the Missouri Compromise outlawing slavery north of the 36 degree 30 minute north latitude-- the Indiana Supreme Court overturned a lower court decision that had allowed a young African-American woman to remain in slavery in Indiana. This test case, *Polly v. Hyacinth Lasselle*, involved at least one, if not two, Fort Wayne natives. Hyacinth Lasselle is often touted as the first white child to have been born in Fort Wayne, or the northern half of the state. According to the earliest history of Fort Wayne, Hyacinth's father, Coll. James Lasselle of Montreal, was appointed Indian Agent to northeastern Indiana by the French Government. In February, 1777, Hyacinth was born at Kekionga-- the large Miami village at the site of Fort Wayne. The family left the area in 1780 following an attack on Kekionga led by August La Balme, a French volunteer in the Revolutionary war, who attempted to take control of Kekionga from the British. The Lasselle family left in such a

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<sup>2</sup>Thornbrough, Emma Lou. *The Negro in Indiana Before 1900: A Study of a Minority*. Bloomington, IN, Indiana University Press, 1993. pp. 1-30. Crenshaw, Gwendolyn. *"Bury Me in a Free Land": The Abolitionist Movement in Indiana, 1816-1865*. Indianapolis, Indiana Historical Bureau, 1993. pp. 8-10.

hurry that one of Hyacinth's sisters was drowned as they boarded a pirogue in the Maumee. The family returned to Montreal, where Hyacinth was schooled. In 1793 he joined his two older brothers as a trader in Detroit, and in 1795 arrived in Fort Wayne to begin a decade of residence. It appears that sometime during Lasselle's residence at Kekionga he acquired several slaves belonging to his uncle, also at Kekionga, and purchased several more. By the time he left Kekionga, Hyacinth Lasselle owned an African-American woman and her daughter, Polly. He continued to hold Polly after moving to Vincennes. In a 1985 paper on this subject, local historian Dr. J. Randolph Kirby speculates that Polly's mother may have been owned first by an Isaac Williams of Detroit, who purchased her as a captive from Indians.<sup>3</sup>

Hyacinth Lasselle remained at Kekionga until 1808, when he moved to Vincennes. He continued to hold slaves and to buy and sell indentured Blacks for several years after the 1816 state constitution brought about the formal end to such activities. In Vincennes in 1820 Polly met a young attorney who had recently arrived in Indiana, and who was appalled at the number of slaves still being held in this "free" state. This young attorney, Amory Kinney, filed for Polly's freedom in the Knox County Court. Lasselle responded that since Polly's mother had been enslaved before passage of the Northwest Ordinance, her children followed the status of the mother. The Knox County Court agreed with Lasselle at this time and ordered Polly restored to her master.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup>Brice, Wallace A. *The History of Fort Wayne, from the Earliest Known Accounts of this Point, to the Present Period*. Fort Wayne, D.W. Jones and Sons, 1868.

Biographical Sketches section, pg. 15. Crenshaw, 8-9.

<sup>4</sup>Thornbrough, 25-27. Crenshaw, 8-9.

The first sitting members of the Indiana Supreme Court reviewed this case during the 1820 session. The three justices -- Jesse Holman, John Johnson and James Scott -- heard Polly's plea for freedom as a test case. The judges found in Polly's favor, and their decision voiced that without exception, and regardless of the earlier Northwest Ordinance or other codes, that the framers of Indiana's 1816 Constitution had clearly intended to prohibit slavery in the state. As one later writer put it, "There was no longer any excuse whatever for holding a Negro in involuntary servitude in Indiana except pure ignorance."<sup>5</sup>

Polly was awarded her freedom from Hyacinth Lasselle, and even succeeded in a second suit where she was awarded damages from Lasselle. Polly received twenty five dollars, and sixteen and 2/3 cents from her former master. <sup>6</sup>

The attorney Amory Kinney continued to take the cases of African Americans held at Vincennes, and in 1821 again brought a case before the State Supreme Court seeking freedom for a young Black woman indentured without her approval. The Supreme Court decision on her behalf effectively outlawed indentured servitude throughout the state. Justice Jesse Holman noted that "the mere fact that she applied for release from her indenture was evidence that service she rendered had become involuntary." It should be noted that Justice Jesse Holman was the father of Emerine Holman Hamilton, who would later assist Fort Wayne's African American community herself, with the donation of land for the Turner Chapel A.M.E. church. <sup>7</sup>

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<sup>5</sup>Blake, Israel George. *The Holmans of Veraestau*. Oxford, Ohio, The Mississippi Valley Press, 1943. 15-17. See also Thornbrough, 25-27, and Crenshaw, 8-9.

<sup>6</sup>Thornbrough, p. 6.

<sup>7</sup>Thornbrough, 28-30. Mather, George R. *Frontier Faith: The Story of the Pioneer Congregations of Fort Wayne, Indiana, 1820-1860*. Lima, Ohio, Fairway Press. 1992. p.

By 1830, the Indiana Census reported that 3,629 free blacks lived in Indiana -- about one percent of total population of 340, 000. Also noted in the census were three slaves, being held in Vincennes. It should be noted that a separate enumeration for Vincennes compiled by the township trustee noted 32 slaves residing in Vincennes in 1830. <sup>8</sup>

In northern Indiana, there was at still at least one woman enslaved in 1830. Local historian Robert S. Robertson retold a frightening story in his 1889 *Valley of the Upper Maumee River*. According to Robertson, a nameless biracial African-American woman was murdered in Fort Wayne in 1830. He writes:

“ Another famous Indian murder was the killing of a half-breed Indian-Negro woman, by Newelingua, or Big-Leg, a Miami. The woman, who he claimed as a slave, frequently stole meat from his cabin, he asserted, and he finally threatened to kill her if she did not desist.... She fled to Fort Wayne and took service with a white family to escape her fate. Big-Leg kept his promise, however. Finding her doing a washing, he stealthily crept up, and plunged a knife through her body...Although the not infrequent murders among the Indians were unpunished, except by their own vendetta, the villagers decided to draw the line at invasion of their homes for such outrages. Big-Leg was consequently imprisoned in the old county jail... He was prosecuted at the May, 1830, term of circuit court, and convicted, but recommended to mercy. The governor pardoned him, and he moved to Kansas with other Miami in 1848.” <sup>9</sup>

<sup>8</sup>Crenshaw, p. 12. Thornbrough, p. 30.

<sup>9</sup>Robertson, Robert S. *Valley of the Upper Maumee: With Historical Account of Allen County and the City of Fort Wayne, Indiana. The Story of its Progress from Savagery to*

An earlier version of this story appeared in the Brice history of 1868. In this version, the African-American woman was living with a family near the southeast corner of Clinton and Columbia. Newspaper man John Dawson in describing Fort Wayne in 1838, noted that the south-east corner of Clinton and Columbia was occupied by the dry-goods store of Madison Sweetser, with William G. Ewing occupying the home next door. This young woman was probably living with either the Sweetser or Ewing Families when the murder occurred. As both of these white families were well-known and influential in early Fort Wayne, it is not surprising that the town reacted to this atrocity in the manner that it did.

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During the decade following the murder of Big-Leg's woman, many African Americans came to Indiana, both free and as fugitive slaves seeking freedom. Free Blacks found Indiana to be attractive with its firmly stated laws against slavery and indentured servitude. Many free black families came to Indiana with the assistance of the Society of Friends, or Quakers. Friends were often times against slavery, and earned a reputation for assisting African Americans. As early as 1808 a committee was created by the North Carolina Yearly Meeting of Friends to assist masters who wished to free their slaves. After 1830, the committee took on broader relocation efforts as laws were enacted in

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*Civilization*. Madison, Wisconsin, Brant and Fuller, 1889.p. 186.

<sup>10</sup>Brice, pg. 300. Dawson, John W. *Charcoal Sketches of Old Times in Fort Wayne: Copied from the Daily Sentinel March 8 to May 20, 1872*. Fort Wayne, Fort Wayne Public Library, 1939. p. 20-21.

North Carolina that required manumitted slaves to leave the state within ninety days of their freedom. Committees of Friends in Indiana helped to relocate many families from North Carolina, Virginia and Maryland-- the states with the greatest numbers of free black residents, and many historians have noted that it is no accident that most-- but not all --of Indiana's rural free-black settlements were located near Quaker communities. These same Free Black communities and their Quaker neighbors also assisted fugitive slaves who wished to settle in Indiana, or to pass through to Michigan or Canada. Free African Americans also settled in larger towns including Indianapolis, Madison, Richmond and Fort Wayne.<sup>11</sup>

An early account of Quaker assistance to African Americans in Fort Wayne is a letter that has been duplicated in several sources. As cited in the Griswold history, it was written in 1829 by Frederick Hoover, an early Friend in the Richmond area, and it stated the following:

Now it came to pass in the first year of the reign of John [John Quincy Adams], who was governor of the united provinces and territories of North America, that the Ethiopians in the province of Kentucky were sore vexed by reason of their taskmasters...and they lifted their eyes toward the north country, over the great River Ohio, as thou goest toward the city of Brookville [in Franklin County, founded in 1807]. Now Indiana is a land flowing with milk and honey, and they said, therefore, let us flee thither, peradventure the people of the land will deal kindly with us and deliver us out of the hands of the oppressor. So the people gat them away by stealth and fled into the land of

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<sup>11</sup>Thornbrough, 33-40. Cord, Xenia. "Black Rural Settlements in Indiana Before 1860," in Gibbs, Wilma L., ed. *Indiana's African American Heritage: Essays from Black History News and Notes*. Indianapolis, Indiana Historical Society, 1993. p. 100-108.

Indiana and gat them possessions in the land. Howbeit they were sought by the negro-hunters...sons of belial... caught Saby, wife of Isom, and fled, but certain men of the land pursued the men of belial and delivered Saby... but the children of Ethiopia said therefore one to another, Wot yet not that if we tarry in this land we shall be spoiled of our possessions; let us, therefore, make ready and flee into the land of Canada...the people murmured because of the bitterness of the waters of the brook Mississinewa...Now it came to pass that by the 7th day of the 10th month that the people drew near to the city of Fort Wayne, moreover the people were afraid to pass through the city because they feared there were men of belial in the city who would evil entreat them -- but the leaders encouraged the people to be of good cheer. The people therefore sent the leaders into the city to confer with the chief men to know if the people might pass peaceably through their borders, moreover they said they would not turn to the right hand or to the left hand and if they took anything from thence they would give pieces of silver. The men therefore departed and conferred with the chief men of the city and they let the people pass through the principal streets after that they had bought food for themselves and provender for their beasts so they departed and took the way as one goeth toward the city of Defiance down the river Maumee and encamped on the river and there the people sang songs of praises to the Lord for his mercies in delivering them from their enemies... (after passing through Defiance, and Monroe, Michigan, they came near Detroit, and the leaders) spake unto them, saying, Tomorrow we must pass through City Detroit, over the great river into Canada. Ye must, therefore, shave off your beards and purify yourselves with water; ye must also put on goodly raiment so that haply ye may find favor in the eyes of the men of the city and they may let you pass peaceably through the city into the land of Canada to inherit it... the people rejoiced greatly because of their deliverance from their enemies and from the hands of those who sought to deliver them into bondage..."<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>12</sup>found in Griswold, Bert. The Pictorial History of Fort Wayne Indiana. Chicago, Robert O. Law Co., 1917. pp. 290-292, who copied a letter in the possession of Mrs. D. A. Dunkleberg, a resident of Fort Wayne in 1917, and a great granddaughter of Frederick Hoover."

While most of the rural Free Black settlements were located in the southern portion of the state, there were a handful in Northern Indiana. Many are known by the name of the most common surname. Weaver, located in Grant County, is still listed on road maps, and still is home to descendants of the Weavers, Pettifords, Burdens, and other families who settled outside of Marion in the 1840's with the assistance of Society of Friends members Aaron Betts and Obadiah Jones. Huggart was a small community located near South Bend, and consisted of scattered farmsteads in St. Joseph and LaPorte counties. It may have been a continuation of the very large Free Black community located across the state line in Cass County, Michigan, which numbered over a thousand by 1850. <sup>13</sup>

A much smaller settlement was found in northeastern Whitley County, in Smith Township, although today only a cemetery can be found. Known as Jefferies, its earliest members arrived in 1834, and by 1850 included at least 98 Free Black and multi-racial members. No evidence of Quaker assistance in organizing this settlement exists, although there is evidence of family ties connecting this settlement to the Weaver Settlement; scattered Free Black farmers in Eel River and Washington townships in Allen County, and to the urban community at Fort Wayne. <sup>14</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Cord, p. 100-108; Goldsworthy, Terry. *Was Freedom Dead or Only Sleeping?: The Pre-1870 African American Rural Communities of the Kankakee River Valley*. Presented January 29, 2000 at Lincoln Museum, Fort Wayne, IN.; Stevenson, Barbara J. compiler. *An Oral History of African Americans in Grant County*. Charleston, SC, Arcadia Publishing, 2000. p.9-30.

<sup>14</sup>Kaler, Samuel P. and R.H. Maring. *History of Whitley County, Indiana*. B.F.Bowen and Co., 1907. p. 298; Stevenson, p. 16-17; Federal Census. *Population Schedules for Allen County*, 1830, 1840, 1850, 1860, 1870. Federal Census. *Population Schedules for Whitley*

During the 1830's several free African American families settled in Fort Wayne, with varying degrees of success, and permanence. This trend continued through the 1840's. These residents made up the first true African American community in the town. The 1840 Allen County Census enumerated only 14 African Americans in Wayne Twp. (with two individuals in Washington Twp.), by 1850 this had increased to 81 Black or mulatto residents within Wayne Township, living in 21 households, along with two large farming families in Washington Township bringing the county total to 101. Statewide, known settlements at this time ranged from over 1200 in the Richmond, Indiana area; to 285 at Weaver in Grant County; to 98 at Jefferies, located just over the Allen County line along the Eel River in Whitley County. The only other concentrated settlement in northern Indiana was a wide area of rural households in LaPorte and St. Joseph Counties, with a combined total of 223 between the two counties.<sup>15</sup>

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*County, 1830, 1840, 1850, 1860, 1870. Williams, C.S. Williams Fort Wayne Directory, City Guide and Business Mirror. Vol. 1. - 1858-'59. Fort Wayne, C.S. Williams, 1858, p. 87.*

<sup>15</sup> Kirby, J. Randolph. *Notes on the Emergence of a Black Community in Fort Wayne, Indiana Between 1820 and 1850*, in Old Fort News. Fort Wayne, Allen County-Fort Wayne Historical Society, p. 4-10. Federal Census. *Population Schedules for Allen County, 1830, 1840, 1850*. Federal Census. *Population Schedules for Whitley County, 1830, 1840, 1850*. Goldsworthy, p. 3; Cord, p.105.

An unusual law was passed in Indiana in 1831, requiring "colored persons" who came into the state to post a bond of \$500.00 as a guarantee against becoming a public charge and as a pledge of good behavior. Failure to pay the bond would subject the individual to six months of hiring out by the Overseers of the Poor, or removal from the state.

Although it was rarely enforced the few instances of its use provide some information regarding the African American families beginning to settle in northeastern Indiana. In Whitley County, The Smith Township Overseer of the Poor required several families to appear in court during the Spring of 1840 to show good cause for their refusal to post the bond. Benjamin and Winford Jones; Wyatt and Eliza Jefferies; Brinton and Lucinda Jones, and Clayborn Pompey all gave evidence that they were in financial health, and would not likely become a public charge. None were required to post the bond. <sup>16</sup>

In Allen County, the law was enforced briefly during 1842, as a response to a complaint that Chief Richardville had relocated an old, blind Indian woman -- surely a future drain on township resources -- into Wayne township. The Township Overseers of the Poor then called others into court for failing to pay the bond. Records show that Thomas Fox; Burell Reid; Henry, John and James Cannady; and Nelson Black were called to court to pay the bond. While it may be assumed that several did pay the fine, the Cannady family hired attorneys Charles W. Ewing and Robert Brackenridge to defend them. They ultimately were not required to pay the bond. <sup>17</sup>

By the mid-1840's a recognizable community had begun to emerge in what is now the East Central Neighborhood, on land purchased in Samuel Hanna's First Addition to Fort Wayne. Although small, by 1850 it closely approximated the size of many other known

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<sup>16</sup> Thornbrough, p. 58; Kaler and Maring, p. 294.

<sup>17</sup> Kirby, "Notes" p. 4-5.

free Black settlements in Indiana. African American settlers in Fort Wayne during the 1840's and 1850's were a diverse group, socially, educationally, and economically. James Smith and his wife in 1840 were reported as illiterate farmers. Berl Reid, who arrived sometime before 1838, was described as "boot-black, town-crier and factotum.(eg. handy-man).. the loud-laughing Reed whom all knew." Sampson Black, listed as the household head of 4 in 1840 -- although not enumerated in the census total, himself -- was a blacksmith, who worked on the Landing. A possible relative of his, George Nelson Black, also worked as a blacksmith, and had by 1850 amassed property valued at over \$800.00. <sup>18</sup>

Solomon Griffin, listed in 1840, had seven people in his household, and all four adults were involved in manufacturing, and were literate. Solomon and his wife, Martha, were natives of Virginia, and probably moved to Fort Wayne in 1838. In January, 1839, he became the first African American to purchase land in Hanna's Addition, when he bought the lot at the northeast corner of Hanna and Jefferson streets. By 1846, Griffin owned five lots in East Central neighborhood. He also owned a plastering business, and held assets worth \$600.00 by 1850. <sup>19</sup>

The Canada or Cannady Family who settled in Fort Wayne present an interesting portrait of life for some Free Blacks during this period. Recently, a modern day descendent of these Fort Wayne Cannadys wrote: "Moving from Virginia through Ohio, the Henry Cannady family settled in Allen County by 1850. Skilled as plasterers, they contributed to the architectural beauty of the city of Fort Wayne... Henry Cannady, his wife Caroline

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<sup>18</sup> Kirby, "Notes" p. 7; Dawson, p.20; Federal Census. *Population Schedules for Allen County*, 1830, 1840, 1850. Nelson Black was enumerated in the Cabin Creek Settlement, Randolph County, in 1840, and appears to have moved to Fort Wayne shortly afterwards.

<sup>19</sup> Federal Census. *Population Schedules for Allen County*, 1830,1840,1850. Kirby, "Notes" p. 7.

Bunn, along with... (other family members)... relocated to Cass County, Michigan shortly after 1860. “<sup>20</sup>

The Cannadys, like many Free Black families from North Carolina, Maryland and Virginia, could trace their freedom back to the colonial era. During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries Free Blacks in the upper south met with fewer restrictions than is often recognized. They owned farmland, carried weapons, served in the Revolutionary War, and participated in the social life of many small towns. The multi-racial background of some Free Black families was established during this time as intermarriage with Native Americans was not uncommon, and in many places marriage between Europeans and Africans was not outlawed until the early 1800's. Although Free Blacks in these places enjoyed many of the freedoms of their white neighbors, the specter of enslavement was never far.<sup>21</sup>

The father of the Cannady brothers who came to Fort Wayne was James Cannady. James was one of eleven children of a Free Black who was “bound-out” for a period because of his father’s inability to pay his poll tax, or his church tithes in 1775, in Sussex County, Virginia. In Colonial America poor and orphaned Free Black children were “bound out” until the age of twenty one -- as were their white counterparts. However, As early as 1733, the General Assembly of North Carolina received complaints that Free Blacks were

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<sup>20</sup>[www. Phillipsplace.net/genealogy](http://www.Phillipsplace.net/genealogy).

<sup>21</sup> Heinegg, Paul. *Free African Americans of North Carolina and Virginia: Including the family histories of more than 80% of those counted as “all other free persons” in the 1790 and 1800 census*. Fourth Edition. Genealogical Publishing, 1999, found online at [www. freeafricanamericans.com](http://www.freeafricanamericans.com)., p. 1-38.

being held until age 31, and ruled that those illegally bound after age 21 should be released. Bound Children served as apprentices in various crafts, as coopers, cordwainers, and blacksmiths. The unlucky ones were bound to learn “the art, trade and mystery of farming” -- indicating that they would be used as farm hands. There are even cases where these bound children were resold into slavery. More frightening are stories where multiple family members were captured, and taken to other regions to be sold as slaves. In April, 1770, one North Carolina paper recounted the victimization of the family of Ann Driggers, describing how men with marks on their faces and clubs in their hands beat the mother and carried away four of her children. Stealing children for sale into slavery did not become a crime in North Carolina until 1779.<sup>22</sup>

During the years immediately following Independence, the Upper South began to create more restrictions for African American residents, and many Free Blacks moved to the Northwest Territory area during this time. James Cannady married Elizabeth Scott in Sussex County, Virginia in 1808, and they remained there until about 1820 when they moved to Stark County, Ohio. Their sons were raised in Stark County, and son Henry married Caroline Bunn there. Then during the early 1840's, the sons of James and Elizabeth Cannady moved to northeastern Indiana.<sup>23</sup>

Following their visit with the Wayne Township Overseer of the Poor, the Cannady brothers settled into life in Fort Wayne. Henry and Caroline began a family, and Henry went into business for himself, as a plasterer and brick mason. The 1850 census shows that Henry “Kennedy” was a mulatto plasterer, a native of Virginia, and had real estate valued at \$500.00. He and Caroline had five children ranging from 8 to 1 years of age.

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<sup>22</sup>Heinigg, pp. 12-15 and database for Cannady family.

<sup>23</sup>[www.phillipsplace.net/genealogy](http://www.phillipsplace.net/genealogy); Heinigg, Cannady Database.

Also, Caroline's sister Elizabeth Bunn, lived with the family. By the time Fort Wayne's first City Directory, appeared in 1858 Henry Kennedy was listed as a plasterer living at the southwest corner of Lewis and Hanna Streets, across the intersection from the estate of Samuel Hanna. The directory also shows a James William Pompey, a laborer, living at the same address as Henry Kennedy. James William Pompey was the son of Fielding Pompey, one of the first settlers at the Jefferies settlement in Whitley County, and his presence provides an indication that families in Fort Wayne had contact with the Whitley County community. <sup>24</sup>

The youngest of the children of James and Elizabeth Cannady was John. After arriving in Fort Wayne, he met a young woman named Louisa Brunn, and married her in Oct. 1844. By 1850, John and Louisa had three children and John was employed as a plasterer. By 1860 the couple purchased a farm in rural Washington Township. and held real estate valued at \$1200.00. John also continued to work as a plasterer.

The 1860 census also reveals that four of their seven children attended school during that year, presumably in one of the Washington Township schools. This is somewhat surprising because Indiana had outlawed African American enrollment in the public schools by this time. <sup>25</sup>

The oldest son of James and Elizabeth Cannady, James Cannady, Jr., stayed only briefly in Fort Wayne before moving farther north. Before 1850 he purchased a farm near

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<sup>24</sup> [www.phillipsplace.net/genealogy](http://www.phillipsplace.net/genealogy); Federal Census, Population Schedules for Allen County, 1850; Williams, pp. 70, 87;

<sup>25</sup> Federal Census, Population Schedules for Allen County, 1850, 1860; [www.phillipsplace.net](http://www.phillipsplace.net); Thornbrough, p. 161-167.

Ligonier, in Perry Township, Noble County where he and his wife Josephine raised three children.<sup>26</sup>

It should be noted that by 1850, the majority of African Americans enumerated in the Indiana census were listed as farmers. The second most frequent occupation was that of barber. Judith Wellman, a researcher in New York writes:

“Black barbers seem to have been key players[ in the underground railroad, ed.]. Their shops were centrally located. Almost every male in town -- white or black, U.S. or Canadian-- who could afford a haircut would come to a black barber. What better place for networking?”<sup>27</sup>

Cary Lynch was here by 1840, and found work as a barber. He headed a household of three adults in 1840, all were literate, and two --presumably the two males in the household-- were listed as being engaged in manufacturing and trade. Tragedy struck this household on a Friday evening in March of 1842. The *Fort Wayne Sentinel* reported that a fire had broken out in the Lynch household, located near the corner of Barr and Columbia, and in spite of efforts by the volunteer fire department, the building and its two neighboring structures were totally consumed. The *Sentinel* article goes on, saying :

“The Lynch family was absent at the time the fire broke out... His case is one calling for the commiseration of his neighbors. He is well known as an industrious, peaceable and worthy man, and his loss may seem small, yet it was his all. A few weeks ago he was robbed of the hard earned savings of many months which he had carefully saved to build himself a shop, and now he is burnt out of house and home. We hear that some of his neighbors purpose (sic) to contribute a little towards giving him a start again; and

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<sup>26</sup>[www.phillipsplace.net](http://www.phillipsplace.net); Federal Census, Noble County, 1850. It should be noted that the 1858 Fort Wayne City Directory notes a James Cannady living at or near a property owned by Nelson Black, on the north side of the canal near Webster Street. This may have been the elder James Cannady -- the father of the three sons who came to Fort Wayne.)

<sup>27</sup>Wellman, Judith. *The Underground Railroad in Central New York: A Research Guide*. Found online at [www.oswego.edu/Acad\\_Dept](http://www.oswego.edu/Acad_Dept) , page 20. This was sponsored by the Oswego County Freedom Trail Commission with funding from the National Park Service and the State University of New York at Oswego.

some propose to build his shop for him. Either way, much good might be done to an unfortunate man with but little inconvenience to his friends."

Whether or not this community endeavor ever took place is unknown, but Lynch remained in Fort Wayne through at least 1850.<sup>28</sup>

Another early resident, William Willis Elliott, also worked as a barber, and ultimately became one of Fort Wayne's most popular barbers, owning two shops.<sup>29</sup> In 1850 William Willis Elliot identifies his birthplace as North Carolina, but in 1860 he identifies himself as born in Ohio.<sup>30</sup> Wellman notes that :

"If African Americans in upstate New York listed their birthplaces as a slave state, Canada, or unknown, for example, they could have been fugitives(They may also, of course, have been free blacks...) Inconsistencies in the historical record also offer clues. If people listed their birthplace as a slave state in one source and a free state in another, the likelihood increases that they were fugitives."<sup>31</sup>

Kirby writes: "Elliot, ... became one of Fort Wayne's best patronized Columbia Street barbers, and a highly respected member of Fort Wayne's community.... These three men, Henry Canada, William W. Elliot, and George Fisher are undoubtedly the first patriarchs of a black community in Fort Wayne."<sup>32</sup> He did not settle in East Central, but instead

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<sup>28</sup>Federal Census. *Population Schedules for Allen County, 1840,1850; Fort Wayne Sentinel*, March 12, 1842. "Firè!"

<sup>29</sup>Kirby, "Notes" p. 7.

<sup>30</sup>Federal Census, *Population Schedules for Allen County, 1850, 1860.*

<sup>31</sup>Wellman, page. 11.

<sup>32</sup>Kirby, "Notes" p. 7.

purchased a lot located on the west side of downtown, today the site of the parking lot for the old Boxberger's store on Jefferson at Fulton

Other African American barbers identified in Fort Wayne from 1840-1860 include: William Edwards; William Jenkins; William Huffman; Charles Hardiman; Robert H. Gray; and Dawson Parker.

Others commonly listed were such building crafts as carpentry, masonry, and plastering; and also such skilled trades as shoemaker, blacksmith and cooper. Gustavus McClanahan and his sons were skilled coopers in Allen County. The McClanahans settled in Washington Township prior to 1850, and parents Gustavus and Mary raised their eight children there. Gustavus worked as a cooper, and at least four of their five sons learned the craft of copperworking from him. Another son became a farmer. In 1860 Gustavus and Mary were not enumerated in the census, but two sons were employed in the cooperage of John Begue in Adams Township. By 1870, Gustavus, now 81, and his wife owned a farm in Aboite Township, worth about \$3500.00. Gustavus still worked as a cooper, as did one of his sons.<sup>33</sup>

As this antebellum community became larger it began to form more formal social bonds. Early church goers most likely worshipped with the local Methodist congregation, but after about 1845 appear to have begun to worship separately. In 1850, Henry Cannady, George Fisher, and Willis Elliot, who served as the trustees for the congregation, purchased a lot on East Jefferson Street, located on the south side of the street, about midway between Francis and Hanna, at a sheriff's sale at the courthouse. They then

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<sup>33</sup>Thornbrough, 142; Federal Census, Population Schedules for Allen County, 1850, 1860, 1870.

resold the property to George Nelson Black --sometimes known as Nelson-- the minister of the Fort Wayne African Methodist Episcopal congregation, most likely as the intended place to build a church. George Nelson Black continued to work as a blacksmith, in addition to his duties to the congregation.<sup>34</sup>

The organization of the AME congregation soon led the way for other organized activities as well. After a well known African American minister in Covington, Indiana called for Free Blacks in Indiana to give up the effort for equal rights and instead join him in colonizing Liberia, Fort Wayne's African American community was called together by the leaders of the local A.M. E. congregation to discuss colonization. This meeting resulted in the formulation of a strong message against the colonization movement, published in the *Anti-Slavery Bugle* newspaper, the voice of the abolitionist movement in the Midwest. This response by Fort Wayne's African American community noted that:

**"1. That the enjoyment of life liberty and the pursuit of happiness belongs to us as an inalienable right from our creator, in common with all mankind.**

**2. Though denied in some things the full enjoyment of liberty and the pursuit of happiness at present, which are awarded to whites, yet we are determined to use all lawful means, and to continue in so doing, until we shall be allowed the full privileges of American citizens; for our forefathers fought, bled and died, to secure for us and to us those things, in common with other citizen soldiers, in the Revolutionary War.**

**3. That, because we are at present denied some of these rights in this State, we should not abandon the hope of attaining justice for ourselves and our posterity, when**

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<sup>34</sup>Mather, p 207; Kirby, "Notes" p. 9; Federal Census, *Population Schedules, Allen County*, 1850.

already the leaven of justice is beginning to show its perfect work in some of the Eastern States; and in some of the Western, though not yet arrived to a state of maturity, is so far improved as to assure us that patience and perseverance are only needed on our part; and if we should at such time flee our country, forsake the graves of our fathers, desert the places of our birth and the scenes of our childhood, we should show ourselves unworthy of the enjoyment of those things now withheld from us.

4. That the Prince of Slavery and Slaveholding never sprung upon the American people a more sure and destructive scheme for the annihilation of the Free Colored People of this land, than the scheme of colonization in Africa. It never designed to do anything for our benefit but to destroy. Let it speak for itself: "The moral, intellectual, and political improvement of the people of color within the united States are objects foreign to the powers of this society." (Address of the American Colonization Society to its auxiliaries, African Repository, vii.291.)

5. That, since the Colonization Society has sent forth the world this broad declaration, we feel insulted when asked to emigrate to Liberia; and when a colored man becomes the tool of such a society or, on his own responsibility, advocates colonization, we look upon him as recreant to the best good of his race.

6. That, while we will labor to elevate our race and secure to them the enjoyment of equal civil and political privileges with the whites, we feel bound to labor to prevent our people from colonizing Liberia; for every one that leaves this country for that American Golgotha weakens our hands and throws obstacles in our way that are hard to overcome.

7. That a copy of the foregoing preamble and resolutions be forwarded by the clerk to the Editor of the Bugle, published in Salem, Ohio, with the request that he will publish the same in that paper.

Done by order of the meeting.  
George N. Black, Moderator

**George Fisher, Clerk.<sup>35</sup>**

George Fisher came to Fort Wayne in 1846 at the age of nineteen, and was one of the few African American Settlers who came to Fort Wayne during that time who resided in the city for the remainder of his life. His obituary in October of 1884 provides a glimpse at the connection between Free blacks and whites in Fort Wayne during this time period. Entitled "An Honored Citizen Gone" it relates how Fisher came to town when still young, and his great intellect soon brought him to the attention of Sam Hanna, who gave him a lot in East central, and assisted him in setting up his own plastering business. Fisher's first large plastering contract was the whitewashing of the Pittsburgh Railroad Shops at their construction. It also described how Fisher worked with Emerine Holman Hamilton when she donated a lot for the construction of a new A.M.E.church in 1870. Fisher also helped to organize the Prince Hall Masonic Lodge in Fort Wayne. <sup>36</sup>

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<sup>35</sup>*Anti-Slavery Bugle*, Salem, Ohio, 11 August, 1849, found in Mather, p. 209.

<sup>36</sup>*Fort Wayne Daily Gazette*, Oct. 23, 1884. "An Honored Citizen Gone."

## Chapter Two:

### Free African Americans and the Underground Railroad

As Free Blacks settled in Fort Wayne, and throughout Indiana, they became the desired destination for many fugitive slaves. Unlike Free Black settlers who found Fort Wayne and Indiana to be somewhat welcoming in the years before 1850, escaping slaves were more likely to be short-term residents, ultimately leaving the state for Michigan or Canada where guaranteed freedom could be found. In Fort Wayne, as in most places, assistance to fugitives was most often provided by the Free Black community, with some participation by others as well. Although documentation is often slim, occasionally a good first-hand account can be found.<sup>37</sup>

The Rev. Jacob Cummings of Columbus Ohio was interviewed by one of the graduate students at Ohio State University, under the direction of Professor Wilbur Siebert. Siebert had a special interest in the Underground Railroad, and wrote almost a dozen books and articles on the subject. His collection of materials included oral histories transcribed by his students, newspaper articles, and other items. The entire collection was given to Ohio State University, and the contents of the 127 boxes are available on microfilm. The collection includes three separate versions of the Cummings interview (included in the appendix.)<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>37</sup>Thornbrough discusses emigration to Indiana, p. 31-39; "*The Route of Jacob Cummings from New Albany, Floyd County, Indiana.*" September 1894. Found in Siebert, Wilbur H. *Underground Railroad Materials*. Ohio Historical Society. Microfilm roll 79.

<sup>38</sup>ibid.

Jacob Cummings was one of 18 slaves belonging to a man near Chattanooga, Tennessee. During the latter part of July, 1839, Cummings fled, and traveled over the Cumberland Mountains where he was briefly captured. He escaped again, and finding a horse, traveled through Kentucky to the Ohio River. Cummings mentions several Free Blacks and abolitionists who assisted him at New Albany, and then told the interviewer that after a few weeks at New Albany he was again captured, and taken to Jeffersonville. Freed by a judge, he was then assisted out of the county by several men, who are not named. They traveled on to Wayne County, where Cummings said they found an Underground Railroad Station at Milton.<sup>39</sup>

From Milton, Cummings was led to Cabin Creek, the center of state's largest African American community that spanned Wayne and Randolph counties. He remained at Cabin Creek for about a year, working on a farm during the summer months, and attending a school in the winter. He also presumably paid close attention to the reports of Nathan Jones, a Quaker who arranged wagon trips for fugitives, and notified the community when advertisements offered rewards for runaways.

Then, in the latter part of 1840, Cummings moved on. His interviewer writes:

"He was then known to be a fugitive and told he'd better leave. He disappeared one night with a letter to Nelson Black, a colored Underground agent at Fort Wayne. He traveled northwest to Goshen, in Elkhart County, Ind., and crossed to West Cassopolis, Cass County, Michigan." Nelson Black, as mentioned, became the minister to the local A.M.E. congregation. <sup>40</sup>

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<sup>39</sup>ibid.

<sup>40</sup>ibid.

Several thousand slaves crossed the Ohio River into Indiana, Ohio and Illinois during the years preceding the Civil War. and, although the phrase “underground railroad” conjures up images of dark tunnels, hidden rooms, and wagons with false bottoms, most fugitive slaves crossed into free soil individually or in small groups, sometimes on their own, and sometimes with assistance from others. As fugitives made their way farther north, they might seek specific contacts, free African American settlements, or rely on the assumption that Quakers could provide help. Although much has been written on the efforts of Whites, often with claims of organized agents and station masters, more involvement was probably provided by African Americans to African Americans. Railroad activities ranged from providing shelter or transportation, to providing food or water, or directions. <sup>41</sup>

Sometimes misdirections were appropriate, as well, as slavehunters traveled throughout the state seeking fugitives. Levi Coffin, a Quaker from the Richmond area, was often hailed as the “President” of the Underground Railroad. He once noted the outreach efforts of such early Quaker abolitionists Daniel Puckett and Arnold Buffum and others who, “devoted much time and labor in pleading the cause of the oppressed, until the eastern, middle, and northern counties of the state became so strongly abolitionist in sentiment, that the number of people were very small who would risk their reputation in giving aid to the slavehunters.” <sup>42</sup>

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<sup>41</sup>Thornbrough, pp. 31-54; Crenshaw, pp. 30-31; *Exploring a Common Past: Researching and Interpreting the Underground Railroad*, 2nd Edition. Washington D.C., Park History Program, National Park Service. pp. 5,8-9.

<sup>42</sup>Coffin, Levi. *Reminiscences of Levi Coffin, the Reputed President of the Underground Railroad: being a brief history of the labors of a lifetime in behalf of the slave, with the stories of numerous fugitives who gained their freedom through his instrumentality, and many other incidents.* Cincinnati, Western Tract Society, 1876, p. 229.

Arnold Buffum had been sent to Indiana by the American Antislavery Society in 1840 as their second agent, to sell subscriptions to William Lloyd Garrison's Abolitionist paper, *The Liberator*, and to organize abolition groups throughout the state. The first Indiana agent for Garrison's group was Alexander Rankin, a Presbyterian Minister and Underground Railroad agent in Clermont County, Ohio, who had been called to the pulpit of the Fort Wayne Presbyterian Church. Although there is no direct documentation of Rankin's involvement in the Underground Railroad during his time in Fort Wayne, his activities in Ohio, and his identity as the brother of the famed Underground Railroad agent John Rankin, indicate that Alexander most likely provided some assistance to fugitives during his time in Fort Wayne. Interestingly, Rankin built his first house in the East Central Neighborhood, across the street from where Henry Cannady built his home. His second home abutted the Presbyterian Church, located at that time in the 300 block of East Berry Street.<sup>43</sup>

Daniel Puckett, also mentioned by Coffin as an early organizer, was Coffin's brother-in-law, married to Levi's sister Beulah. Daniel Puckett died in 1846, and several years later his widow moved to Fort Wayne to live with their daughter, also called Beulah. In 1860, Mrs. Puckett was listed in the census as living in the household of Lindley and Beulah Ninde, as was her son Henry Puckett.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>43</sup>Gamble, Douglas Andrew. *Moral Suasion in the West: Garrisonian Abolitionism, 1831-1861*. Ohio State University, PhD dissertation, 1973, pp.180-1.

<sup>44</sup> Coffin, *ibid*, p.; Joseph, Edna Harvey, ed. *Webster Parry Collection of Quaker Families* manuscript, p. ; Huff, Daniel. *Reminiscences of Newport and Fountain City, Wayne County, Indiana: and its environs from 1830-1896*. ; Federal Census, *Population Schedules, Allen County, Indiana*, 1860; Williams, *ibid*. p. 88.

The Ninde family were one of a handful of white families in northeastern Indiana who participated in Underground Railroad activities. Records show that various family members were active in Jay and Allen Counties, and possibly in Whitley County as well. One of the Siebert letters mentioned Lindley Ninde's father, saying, "We sometimes sent the fugitives to Camden in care of Benjamin Nines." A second Siebert letter states: "Judge Ninde and his parents were actively involved in the Underground." These and other accounts provide at least a hint of what Fort Wayne was like for the fugitive slave.<sup>45</sup>

The route from Camden to Fort Wayne was the Bluffton Plank road, today's Bluffton Road and Highway 1. It was one of the earliest improved roads to Fort Wayne, and it along with the other early roads are the most likely candidates for Allen County's underground railroad routes. North of Fort Wayne, the route of Jacob Cummings, and presumably others, was along the Goshen Road through Heller's Corners, the Jefferies Settlement, Ligonier, and Goshen, and then north to Cassopolis, Cass County, Michigan. Also to be considered are water routes, specifically the Wabash and Erie Canal, which after 1853 could be followed all the way from the Ohio River to Toledo, where many African Americans and whites provided the way north to Detroit, or across Lake Erie to Canada. Other water routes to be considered are the Aboite River from US 24 north through Lake township almost to the Eel River, and the Eel River west towards the Jefferies settlement.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>45</sup>Siebert, roll "Underground Railroad Materials in Indiana, v. 1. pp. 226-27, 238.

<sup>46</sup>For mention of the role of the Wabash and Erie Canal as an Underground Railroad route, see Siebert, roll # . Hedrick, Charles E, PhD.. "Slavery in the Transmontane (Fugitive Slaves and the U.G.R.R.). From: *Social and Economic Aspects of Slavery in the Transmontane (W.Va., Ky., & Tenn.) Prior to 1850*. Nashville, Tenn, George Peabody College for Teachers, 1927. pp. 101-102; also, Siebert, *ibid*. Purtee, Edward O'Conner. "The Underground Railroad from Southwestern Ohio to Lake Erie." PhD. dissertation. Ohio State University, 1932. p36.

Two events in the early 1850's had great impact on both the Free African American community and fugitives traveling through Fort Wayne. The first of these was the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850. This federal law amended earlier laws regarding the retaking of fugitive slaves, replacing enforcement by states to enforcement by Federal officers. Federal Commissioners and Federal Judges both had jurisdiction over fugitive slave cases, and the fugitives themselves lost the right to give testimony. If the slaveowner won, the fugitive would be removed from the free state and returned to his or her owner. It also stated that any person who knowingly or willingly obstructed this process, or who rescued or attempted to rescue a slave, or who aided abetted, or assisted a fugitive slave directly or indirectly, would be subject to a fine of \$1,000.00 and imprisonment of six months if indicted and convicted by the United States District Court. Additionally, the act gave Commissioners the power to deputize any private citizen to assist in the capture of fugitives.<sup>47</sup>

The Act of 1850 made it much more dangerous to assist fugitives, and many documents regarding the activities of the Underground Railroad were undoubtedly lost, as African Americans and Whites destroyed letters and other evidence of their participation. Even more dangerous for African Americans living in Fort Wayne, as in other northern communities, was the deputization of private citizens to act as slavehunters. Under the 1850 law, slavehunters could simply swear before a judge that their captives were fugitives, and the captive could give no testimony to the contrary.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> -----Fugitive Slave Act 1850. Found online at [www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/fugitive.htm](http://www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/fugitive.htm).

<sup>48</sup>Crenshaw, p. 35.

In several well documented instances, Free Blacks were captured in northern cities, and sold into slavery. One such case in Indianapolis was covered by the local papers, and was certainly followed closely by the local African American community. John Freeman had lived in Indianapolis since 1844, and had become a prosperous property owner and the owner of a restaurant. A man came to Indianapolis and claimed that Freeman was his slave "Sam" who had escaped in 1836, and Freeman was arrested. The case went to court, and Freeman was able to hire the services of an attorney, who eventually had his freedom proven, but not before he had paid considerable expenses. In response to the affair, the *Fort Wayne Sentinel* wrote:

"A more flagrant case of injustice we have never seen. It appears to us that in such cases, that if the person swearing to the identity of the accused and seeking to consign a free man to slavery, were tried for perjury, a wholesome lesson would be given which might prevent injustice to some persons of color. As it now stands, almost any one of them might be dragged into slavery."<sup>49</sup>

Closely following the passage of the Fugitive Slave Law of 1850 was the passage of Indiana's new State Constitution in 1851. Article 13 of this new constitution made it illegal for any African American or bi-racial person to settle in the state after its adoption. Further, It made it illegal for citizens of Indiana to employ African Americans or make contracts with them, or in any way encourage them to remain in the state. Any African American or white found committing such activities were to be fined any sum not less than \$10.00 or more than \$500.00, and that such fines would be collected and used specifically for the colonization of Indiana's African Americans in Liberia. This was followed by a legislative act in 1852 which set out the enforcement of Article 13,

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<sup>49</sup>*Fort Wayne Sentinel*, September 8, 1853, found in Thornbrough, pp. 115-118; Crenshaw, pp.34-35.

mandating that all African Americans in Indiana register with the county of their residence, in order to receive a certificate allowing them to remain in the state.<sup>50</sup>

Although almost all of Indiana's counties began some type of registration records, few succeeded in registering all their African American residents. Marion County, home of Indianapolis and the state's largest African American community, registered only 25 during the years 1853 through 1864. Randolph County, home of the large Cabin Creek Settlement registered a grand total of 12 of nearly a thousand African American residents during the same time period. Allen County also kept a register, however, no known copy exists today, and it is not known who or how many of the one hundred plus local African American residents registered.

Like the registration of African American residents, the other portions of Article Thirteen were only occasionally enforced at first. One case in Fort Wayne was covered by local newspapers. In July of 1855 an African American was arrested and fined for entering Indiana in violation of the 1851 Constitution. James P. Brown, of Ohio, had traveled into Indiana on business, and had stopped at Fort Wayne when he was arrested, fined \$10.00 by the magistrate, and in failing to pay, placed in jail. Brown's case went to court, and two white attorneys, Lindley Ninde and Charles Case, volunteered to represent him before Judge Borden. Both were ardent abolitionists. Lindley Ninde, as mentioned, was an active participant in the Underground Railroad in northeastern Indiana. Charles Case had been editor of an abolitionist paper in Bryan, Ohio before moving to Fort Wayne. In 1854 he was named the Abolitionist editor of the *Fort Wayne Standard*, the city's only known abolitionist newspaper. In 1857 he was picked to fill the Congressional seat

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<sup>50</sup> Crenshaw, pp.16-17.

vacated by the Free Soil party's Samuel Brenton, and in 1858 was elected as the district's first Republican congressman.<sup>51</sup>

Ninde and Case successfully argued that although Article 13 designated two classes of individuals, Negro and Mulatto, who were prohibited from entering the state, it failed to adequately define those terms, and implied that only those who were "full-blooded African or his descendent, and a half-blood -- half-white and half black-blooded" -- were excluded by the law, and that the case against Mr. Brown failed to define if him as one of the two classes. In presenting the final verdict, Judge Borden declared that "The State, having failed to prove Brown to be a Mulatto or Negro, he must be discharged."<sup>52</sup>

Some researchers have noted that violators of Article Thirteen were prosecuted more often than not in instances where a personal grudge had led to the charges in the first place. A second publicized case involving a resident of Allen County illustrates this. In August, 1860, Dawson's *Fort Wayne Daily Times* printed the following :

"The law against Negroes coming to this State was today put in force by Mayor Randall on complaint of J. J. Humbert. A Negro whose name is Logan has been an occasional resident of this city for a year or more just past, was brought before his honor and plead guilty to the charge-- namely that he acquired a residence contrary to the organic law of Indiana, and was fined ten dollars, the lowest amount allowed by law. In default of bail he was committed to prison."<sup>53</sup>

Dawson reported that it was thought that the complaint had been brought by Humbert because of personal malice, and inferred that the two had thrown brick-bats at the other.

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<sup>51</sup>Mather, *Frontier Faith*, pp. 210-213.

<sup>52</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>53</sup>Dawson's *Fort Wayne Daily Times*, August 20, 1860: "The Law against Negroes..."

The plaintiff, J.J. Humbert, was most likely the James Humbert listed without occupation in the city directory of the time. "Logan" may have been Wesley A. Logan, a young biracial man who had come to Allen County with his parents during the 1850's, by way of Ohio. Wesley's father, William Logan was a farmer who had purchased 80 acres along Carroll Road in 1857, just west of the high school. The Logans remained in Allen County through at least 1860, when they were included in the census, with Wesley Logan's occupation listed as laborer. <sup>54</sup>

As the 1850's progressed, enforcement of Article 13 became more common across Indiana, as did published reports of violence between whites and African Americans. One incident in Evansville in 1857 was widely reported in papers throughout the state. Newspaper accounts reported that a group of between 50 and 75 whites attacked the home of a free black family, following an alleged beating of a white man by one of the householders. Shots were fired in the ensuing brawl, and reports said that bowie knives, club and meat cleavers were used as well; resulting in the death of one white man, and serious wounds to several whites and African Americans. One researcher has noted that during the 1850's "racial prejudice certainly did not diminish, but on the contrary, seemed to increase in the period just before the Civil War. <sup>55</sup>

Fort Wayne also became a stage for racial violence. The *Fort Wayne Daily Times* on April 21, 1860 ran the following notice:

"On Monday next we shall expose the "negro doings" of a crowd who live in a House on Wayne Street one square

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<sup>54</sup> Ibid; Allen County Deed Records, book ; Federal Census, *Population Schedules for Allen County, Indiana*, 1860; Williams, p. 67.

<sup>55</sup>Thornbrough, pp. 130-132).

west of Calhoun, unless the people drive the inmates out before that time.”<sup>56</sup>

As promised, the Monday, April 23 issue of the paper ran the following:

“On Saturday night we alluded to a house on Wayne Street between Calhoun and Harrison occupied by some negress, who kept a kind of house of assignation for other darkies and some white men and women, and our purpose was to direct the public eye to it, that the vile creatures who tenant it, and those who frequent it might be forced to slink away out of sight, and their influence for evil be thus arrested, but it seems that our remarks if read by them did no good, or that they did not read them, for on last night so outrageous were their conduct that outsiders made an attack on the house and broke one end, thereof. These negroes are becoming intolerable-- new ones are daily arriving here--doubtless contrary to the law which forbade them from other states coming here for residence. To this we direct attention, that law be enforced for the benefit of the decent portion of white people who desire peace, quietude and morality to prevail. With the exception of the old citizens with African blood who were here when the new constitution went into effect, the negro crowd are idle, dishonest and immoral to a great extent, and it is full time that they were drummed out of town, and with them that class of white men and women who associate with them, and who are a great deal meaner.”<sup>57</sup>

While Indiana as a whole showed little change in the population of African Americans between census years of 1850 and 1860, (from 11,262 to 11,428) many counties with well defined African American communities showed slight increases. The area around New Albany, in Floyd County, reported a 32% increase; Indianapolis and Marion County

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<sup>56</sup>Dawson's *Fort Wayne Daily Times*, April 21, 1860: "On Monday Next..."

<sup>57</sup>Dawson's *Fort Wayne Daily Times*, April 23, 1860: "On Saturday We Alluded..."

an increase of 27%; and Randolph County showed an increase of 25%. Grant County's African American population more than doubled during the decade, going from 147 in 1850 to 384 in 1860. Other communities showed slight declines, with Madison losing 10% of its 1850 population; the Lost Creek area near Terre Haute losing 5%, and Richmond and Wayne County losing about 15%. During this same decade, Fort Wayne and Allen County reported one of the greatest declines in African American population, from 101 to 65, over 35%. By 1870, Allen County's total had dropped to 37, ( a 65% decrease from 1850) although it should be noted that George Fisher and his wife Emma were listed as white, as were the grandchildren of Henry Cannady, listed in the household of August Cannady and his white wife, Mary Grosjean Cannady.<sup>58</sup>

By the end of the Civil War many of the African American families who made up the community at Fort Wayne were gone. Nelson Black had moved to Richmond before 1860, along with his wife and the eight children who had been born in this city. Henry Cannady and many of his relatives had moved to Cass County, Michigan, although one son remained in the area, as mentioned above. The Elliots were gone, as were the Griffins and the Lynches. The McClanahans were still in the county, although in Aboite by this time.<sup>59</sup>

No doubt the increasing racial prejudice of the late 1850's played a part in this exodus. The changing political climate of Fort Wayne had a role as well. Generally Whig in the early years, by the 1850's political parties in Fort Wayne were numerous, and

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<sup>58</sup>Thornbrough, pp. 44-46; Federal Census, *Population Schedules for Allen County, Indiana*, 1850, 1860, 1870.

<sup>59</sup>Kilbane, Kevin. Notes on census records of Nelson Black, personal communication, February 2, 2001; Federal Census, *Population Schedules for Allen County, Indiana*, 1860.

identification with one party or another was often based on any one of several commonly held beliefs about slavery. Liberty Party members wanted emancipation, slowly, through the political process. The Free Soil party advocated the end of the extension of slavery into the west, particularly into Kansas and Nebraska. The Republicans entered the scene in the mid 1850's and combined Liberty, Free Soil and abolitionist members, along with nativists and Know-Nothings.

Democrats could be either those that were pro-union, but not anti-slavery; Peace Democrats who were against the impending war; or Copperheads, against the war, and against what was perceived to be growing tyranny by the federal government against state's rights. Fort Wayne's Democratic majority continued to increase throughout the 1850's. After Wilbur Siebert received a letter from Fort Wayne resident Augustus Caesar Beaver in 1896, he noted, "The writer of this letter, Mr. A.C. Beaver, who located at Fort Wayne in 1844, says that Allen County, in which the town is situated, was strongly democratic, by 6,000 or 7,000 majority, and that the friends of the fugitives could do nothing but contribute money and did so freely." <sup>60</sup>

Northeastern Indiana had its share of Copperheads during the war years, including those most radical members of the Knights of the Golden Circle who were arrested for fomenting rebellion in Indiana. According to Cincinnati historian Dr. John Miller, "Copperhead" or "Butternut" referred to : "all groups of Peace Societies, Peace Democrats, Peace at any Price, or militant groups working to overthrow the existing government and interfere by force, or otherwise with the conduct of the War between the States." A leader of this movement, Dr. William Bowles, of French Lick, organized many of Indiana's Copperheads into four military districts, and planned, according to Miller, "

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<sup>60</sup> Siebert, *ibid.* p. 222.

“when the time came, to murder all State and City officials and take over the government.” Lambden P. Milligan, an attorney in Huntington, lectured widely in northern Indiana against the war. In Fort Wayne, On August 13, 1864, Milligan delivered an inflammatory speech against the actions of the Union Government. Six weeks later Milligan, Bowles and others were arrested for treason, and sentenced to death by a military court.<sup>61</sup>

And, somewhat surprisingly, local citizens continued to call for the removal of non-certified African Americans even after Union troops had begun freeing slaves, as contraband, as they fought in the south. A Fort Wayne newspaper reported on May 3, 1862:

“Contrabands: The efforts of the Abolitionists towards emancipating the negroes, and the aid they have received from the army now in the slave States, have had the effect of causing a great influx of colored persons into the free States, and if a check is not put to it, we shall soon have far more of that class among us than would be desirable. There have been quite a number arrived in this city; but the authorities have properly commenced enforcing the provisions of the Constitution in this regard. Yesterday we mentioned that five had been brought before Justice Werden for violating the constitution. The effect of this has been most beneficial, as we learned this morning that the remainder have become alarmed and vamoused --skedaddled. It is believed there is not one in the city today who is not entitled to a residence in the State.”<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>61</sup>Miller, John W. *Copperhead Activities*, paper delivered to the Cincinnati Civil War Round Table, 1996. Found online at [members.aol.com/Cinti.CWRT/copper.html](http://members.aol.com/Cinti.CWRT/copper.html); Kelley, Darwin. *Milligan's Fight Against Lincoln*. New York, Exposition Press, 1973, p. 81-84.

<sup>62</sup>*Fort Wayne Weekly Sentinel*, May 3, 1862: “Contrabands”

Fort Wayne had become unwelcoming to the existing Free Black Community as well as to manumitted slaves, fugitives, and "contraband." After 1870, the next period of African American settlement began in Fort Wayne. Soon there was a move to re-organize the A.M.E. congregation, and the Turner Chapel was built. East Central continued to be a favored location to own a home. There were but few ties to the earlier community at Fort Wayne but outside of the city, many families remained, particularly in the Jefferies Settlement over the Whitley County line, where African Americans continued to live through the beginnings of the 20th century.

### Chapter 3:

#### Abolition Congregations in Allen County

**The Methodists:** The first Methodist church in Fort Wayne was built in 1840 at the northeast corner of Berry and Harrison Streets, and was wood frame.<sup>63</sup> In its beginnings, this congregation had Free African American members who were part of the congregation.<sup>64</sup> In 1843 many anti-slavery Methodist congregations around the country separated, and formed Wesleyan Methodist Churches. Fort Wayne did not join with the Wesleyans at this time. In 1844, the North Indiana General conference met at Fort Wayne and noted: "We declare that we are as much as ever convinced of the great evil of slavery: therefore no slaveholder shall be eligible to any official station in our Church... Our coloured preachers and members shall have all the privileges which are usual to others..."

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During this time George R. Hartman settled in Fort Wayne and joined the local Methodist congregation. In 1850, his household is listed next door to Henry Cannady, and he maintained contact with the Cannady's through at least July 1859, when he purchased a large lot from Cannady in the East Central neighborhood.<sup>66</sup> Hartman's son Homer C. Hartman would later ally himself with local abolitionists (see John Morris House discussion in South Wayne Section below).

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<sup>63</sup> Mather 48-49.

<sup>64</sup> (Mather 204).

<sup>65</sup> Mather 53).

<sup>66</sup> Book X, pg. 441. Hartman purchased the north half of Outlot 2 in Hanna's Addition from Cannady, today noted as G.R.Hartman Addition on modern plat maps. (see appendix)

There were also several rural Methodist congregations, including the Methodist Episcopal congregation in Eel River Township. The first class was organized in 1837 and by 1843 a small church building was constructed at the corner of Heffelfinger and Madden roads. (sections 18 and 19). This earlier structure was replaced in 1865 with a newer church built about a mile southeast of this site. The earlier structure was located on the Blue Glass Creek, a tributary of the Eel River. It is not known if this was an abolitionist congregation. However, it is interesting to note that the Rev. D.P. Hartman, a brother of George R. Hartman listed above, served as the minister in 1880.<sup>67</sup> Also, in 1880, one of the trustees of the congregation was A.W. Robinson. The 1870 census notes that A.W. Robinson is mulatto.<sup>68</sup> (The current Wesleyan Methodist Congregation in Eel River township was first formed as a United Brethren Church in 1853, and changed their affiliation in 1874. )<sup>69</sup>

By 1845 Fort Wayne had a separate African American Methodist congregation, and was part of the A.M.E. Ohio and Western Conference, on the Carthegena circuit, between Van Wert, Ohio and a congregation on the Eel River in Indiana.<sup>70</sup>

#### **The African Methodist Episcopal Church, Fort Wayne:**

In 1850, Henry Cannady, George Fisher, and Willis Elliot, who served as the trustees for the congregation, purchased a lot on East Jefferson Street, located on the south side of the street, about midway between Francis and Hanna, at a sheriff's sale at the courthouse. They then resold the property to George Nelson Black, the minister of the Fort Wayne

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<sup>67</sup> Helms, pg. 151.

<sup>68</sup> Federal Census, *Population Schedules for Allen County, Indiana, 1870.*

<sup>69</sup> Helms, pg. 151.

<sup>70</sup> Payne, Daniel, *History of the African Methodist Episcopal Church.* Nashville, TN: Publishing house of AME Sunday School Union, 1891[ reprint: Arno Press and the New York Times, New York, 19699)]p 184, found in Mather 205.

African Methodist Episcopal congregation, most likely as the intended place to build a church. George Nelson Black, also known as Nelson, continued to work as a blacksmith, in addition to his duties to the congregation.<sup>71</sup> Please refer to Chapters One and Two for more information on Nelson and other congregation members.

### **The Baptist Church:**

As early as 1820 Fort Wayne had a Baptist minister, the Rev. Isaac McCoy, who spent several years in the area, and who had at least one African American attending his school, and worshipping with his small congregation. In the 1830's the congregation became more organized, and in 1842 a small church was built by the congregation on land donated by Samuel Hanna, on "Clay Hill."<sup>72</sup> This was on East Washington, near Clay Street. In 1848 the structure was moved to the west side of Clinton Street, between Wayne and Berry streets.<sup>73</sup> The 1855 plat map of Fort Wayne shows its location on the south half of lot 112, Original plat, which was the southwest corner lot of the intersection of Berry and Clinton. Today, the 5/3 Bank and parking lot is found at this site.

In 1849 the local congregation asked local stationary and book store owner Daniel W. Burroughs to become their minister, until a permanent pastor could be hired.<sup>74</sup> He remained in this position until the end of 1850, and continued to be listed as a Baptist preacher on the Huntington Association roster until 1857. Burroughs started the *Fort Wayne Standard* newspaper in 1854 -- the community's first abolitionist paper, edited at

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<sup>71</sup>Mather, p 207; Kirby, "Notes" p. 9; Federal Census, Population Schedules, Allen County, 1850.

<sup>72</sup>Mather, 125-129.

<sup>73</sup>Mather, 129.

<sup>74</sup>Mather 131.

different times by Charles Case (refer back to chapter 1, pages 29-30); Isaac Julian -- the brother of abolitionist legislator George Julian; and John Hough. Griswold writes,

The published and spoken utterances of Mr. Burroughs, who spent much time on the platform speaking against slavery, brought upon him many threats of personal injury. He was active in the "underground railroad" system of the time. "Times were stormy then," observes the *Fort Wayne Sentinel* of February 26, 1889, "but Mr. Burroughs was as brave as a soldier and the 'egging' of his newspaper office and the murmurs of the crown had no terrors for him."<sup>75</sup> (Attempts to find the newspaper article quoted by Griswold have been unsuccessful.)

The location of the *Fort Wayne Standard* office is not certain, nor is the residence of Daniel W. Burroughs, as he is not recorded in Allen County Deed Records. Burrough's stationary and book store was located on the north side of Columbia Street, between Barr and Clinton, at old number 51. In 1854 D.W. Burroughs Book Store was purchased by Nathaniel Stockbridge.<sup>76</sup> It is interesting to note that the 1860 Allen County Census reports that Stockbridge's household includes Robert H. Gray, a 22 year old African American "Fancy Barber" from Tennessee, and this household (apparently on Columbia Street) is next door to the household of William Hoffman, an African American. Hoffman, also a "Fancy Barber" by occupation, lived with his wife Lucinda, and three children, as well as Bertram Jackson, who worked as a cook.<sup>77</sup> Bertram Jackson is listed in the 1858 City Directory residing on the north side of Columbia, between Clinton and Barr.<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>75</sup>Griswold, 415.

<sup>76</sup>*Pioneers Resting in Historic Lindenwood*. Fort Wayne, Lindenwood Historical Foundation, 1989. np.

<sup>77</sup>Federal Census, *Population Schedules for Allen County*, 1860. #2252/2256 and #2254/2258.

<sup>78</sup>Williams, p. 68.

## The First Presbyterian Church, Fort Wayne: Old School Presbytery

According to *Frontier Faith*, the Presbyterian Church first sent clergymen to Fort Wayne in 1822. John Ross ministered to the local congregation five times between 1822 and 1826. In 1825, Samuel Hanna's father, James Hanna, visited the tiny village, and organized a Sunday School. James Hanna was an Elder of the Dayton Presbytery. Then, from 1829-1830, the American Home Missionary Society sent Charles Furman as a missionary to Fort Wayne. While here, Furman organized a forty-member temperance society. In 1831 James Chute was invited by the local Presbyterians to Fort Wayne, and he formally organized the congregation. Chute remained in Fort Wayne until December of 1835, when he died of a relapse of "Bilious Fever." The church received some ministry from Daniel Jones, a minister at Leesburg, Indiana, in 1836, and for a portion of 1836 and the beginning of 1837 were led by Rev. Jesse Hoover, a Lutheran pastor who was teaching at the school. Finally, in 1837, Alexander T. Rankin arrived to take the pulpit.<sup>79</sup>

According to biographical material Alexander Rankin was born in Dandridge, Tennessee on December 4, 1803. The youngest of eleven sons, Alexander Rankin attended Washington College, in southeastern Tennessee and graduated in 1826. Alexander then moved to Ripley, Ohio to study for the Presbyterian ministry under his older brother, John Rankin.<sup>80</sup> In 1826, Alexander's older brother came to national attention, as John Rankin published a volume entitled *Letters on American Slavery: Addressed to Mr.*

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<sup>79</sup>Mather, pp. 19-33.

<sup>80</sup>Nolie Mumey: *Alexander Taylor Rankin, His Diary and Letters: A Pioneer Minister who Fought Lawlessness with Religion on the Prairies of Eastern Kansas and the Frontier Settlements of Denver Where Life was Harsh and Brutal*. Boulder, Colorado, Johnson Publishing Company, 1966.

*Thomas Rankin, Merchant at Middlebrook, Augusta County, Virginia.* <sup>81</sup>In this volume, John Rankin argued with his brother Thomas on the moral necessity of immediate abolition. This volume has been hailed as the first nationally distributed publication calling for immediate abolition. Indeed, William Lloyd Garrison called John Rankin the "Martin Luther of the Cause." <sup>82</sup> John Rankin had by this time located in Ripley, Ohio, and had established a "flourishing congregation, an underground railway to aid runaway slaves, an antislavery tract and book society and a theological school for clergy. To this school came Alexander and another brother; both, in turn married sisters of John's wife." <sup>83</sup> John had married Jean Gilfellen Lowry, Alexander married Mary Merriweather Lowry, and Robert married Eliza Lowry.

The underground railroad activities of John Rankin and John Parker of Ripley Ohio are well-documented, and the John Rankin House is a National Historic Landmark. In *Underground Railroad Resources in the U.S. Theme Study* (NPS NRHP, 1998) historians Marie Tyler-McGraw and Kira R. Badamo write: "The town of Ripley, Ohio, once nearly the rival of Cincinnati in prosperity, was at least the equal of Cincinnati in underground railroad activity. The most active and prominent persons giving aid to fugitives were John Parker and John Rankin and they were assisted by various other families in the community..." <sup>84</sup>

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<sup>82</sup>Quoted in Brownstein, Elizabeth Smith: *If this House Could Talk*, New York, Simon and Schuster, 1999. pg. 90.)

<sup>83</sup>George Mather: *Frontier Faith: the Pioneer Congregations of Fort Wayne, Indiana 1820-1860*. Fort Wayne, Allen County-Fort Wayne Historical Society, 1992

<sup>84</sup>*Underground Railroad Resources in the U.S. Theme Study* (NPS NRHP, 1998) page 32

In 1829 Alexander Rankin completed his training under his brother, John Rankin, and began preaching. In 1830 he accepted his first pulpit in Felicity, Clermont County, Ohio, located just west of Ripley. Alexander's activities were not solely devoted to the ministry. In *Proceedings of the Ohio Anti-Slavery Convention Held at Putnam on the Twenty-second, Twenty-third, and Twenty-fourth of April, 1835*<sup>85</sup>-- a publication documenting the organization of the Ohio Anti-Slavery Society-- the Reverend Alexander Rankin is listed as a "Manager" for the organization's activities in Clermont County. Alexander gave many public lectures on abolition and in 1837 was beaten by a mob in Dayton, Ohio following one such abolitionist lecture; accounts of which were published in the abolitionist newspapers *The Philanthropist* (Cincinnati, Ohio, February 25, 1837) and the *Friend of Man* (Utica, NY March 29, 1837).<sup>86</sup>

When Alexander Rankin moved to Fort Wayne to take the pulpit of the Presbyterian Church he brought with him his wife, Mary Merriweather Lowry Rankin, and three children -- Sylvester, Thomas, and Julia. On March 22, 1838, Rankin purchased four lots for a total of \$50.00 on the east corner of Lewis and Hanna streets, and it can be assumed that a home was built at this site. These four lots were located in Hanna's addition, and were within a block of several of the first African American property owners of Fort Wayne. In April of that year, the Rankins welcomed a new child -William-- to the family.<sup>87</sup>

Upon Rankin's arrival, early Fort Wayne citizen Hugh McCulloch wrote to his fiancée, Susan Man:

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<sup>85</sup>*Proceedings of the Ohio Anti-Slavery Convention Held at Putnam on the Twenty-second, Twenty-third, and Twenty-fourth of April, 1835* (Beaumont and Wallace, Printers

<sup>86</sup>Found in Mather, p. 263.

<sup>87</sup>Allen County Deed Records

“ His brother John Rankin is a very distinguished abolitionist and I am disposed to think that, on the subject of slavery, they sympathize with each other , both in feeling and sentiment. He (our preacher) is composed of the right kind of material for an abolitionist. Uncommonly fearless in expressing his sentiments, with a mind deeply imbued with the great principles of natural equality and civil liberty, he will be, I think at all times, the prompt, decided and fearless champion of the oppressed, and the advocate of the slaves.”<sup>88</sup>

In September, 1838, Alexander Rankin once again helped to organize a state-wide Abolition organization. He attended the organizational convention for the Indiana Anti-Slavery Society in Milton, IN.<sup>89</sup> Mather writes: “If there was a white leader of Fort Wayne’s underground railroad operatives during the late 1830s and early 1840s, it was most likely the Reverend Alexander T. Rankin, pastor of the First Presbyterian Church, a founder of the Indiana Anti-Slavery Society, and brother of the Reverend John Rankin...”<sup>90</sup>

In June 1839, The agency committee of the American Antislavery Society hired Alexander T. Rankin to serve as their agent in Indiana for one year. Later that year, they also sent Arnold Buffum to Indiana. Douglas Gamble writes, “ but on December 19, the agency committee even had to refuse Buffums request to pay only his travel expenses. It is probable that Rankin, like Buffum, was forced to find other employment.”<sup>91</sup> Gamble

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<sup>88</sup>Hugh McCulloch to Susan Man, 19 September, 1837, McCulloch Papers.

<sup>89</sup>*Proceedings of the Indiana Convention, Assembled to Organize a State Anti-Slavery Society, Held in Milton, Wayne Co., September 12, 1838.* Cincinnati: Samuel A. Alley, 1838.

<sup>90</sup>Mather, 210.

<sup>91</sup>Gamble, pp. 180-181.

apparently was not aware of Rankin's position with the Fort Wayne Presbyterian Church prior to his employment with the A.A.S.

The Rankin family maintained their ties to relatives along the Ohio River. In August, 1840, Fort Wayne citizen Lewis G. Thompson wrote to his brother, and noted: "The Roads are fine now. Brother Rankins, our Minister, left Felicity in a buggy with his family on Tuesday...and arrived here on Saturday night being only five days (to go about 160 miles)." <sup>92</sup>

This buggy ride may have caused unfortunate consequences, for Mumey notes "an infant who was born and died on the same day, September 18, 1840, at Fort Wayne, Indiana."<sup>93</sup> Mary Rankin had difficulty in a subsequent pregnancy, and both mother and infant died in childbirth on July 20, 1841. <sup>94</sup>

During the week following Mrs. Rankin's death, Rankin sold their home on Lewis St. , and moved to 818 Lafayette.<sup>95</sup>

The first home, located at Lewis and Hanna Streets, was almost eight city blocks from Rankin's church, located on Berry Street, near Lafayette. Rankin had directed the completion of this church soon after his arrival in the fall of 1837. The church was built on the lot that now is occupied by the J. Ross McCulloch House, 334-336 East Berry

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<sup>92</sup>*Praying Grounds and Pleading Terms: The Letters of Lewis G. and Wilson L. Thompson, 1837-1844.* Fort Wayne: Allen County-Fort Wayne Historical Society. 1969.

<sup>93</sup>Mumey, p. 8

<sup>94</sup>Mumey, page 8; Mather, page 41

<sup>95</sup>Allen County Deed Records

Street. 818 Lafayette was located across the alley from this first Presbyterian church and Rankin may have chosen to relocate so that his work would be in closer proximity to his four young children, now without their mother. That their welfare was a priority is evident in Rankin's action to bring his mother-in-law, Julia Doak Lowry, to live in his household and care for the children. <sup>96</sup>

On August 19, 1843 Alexander Rankin was the subject of a threatening editorial in a Grant County newspaper, reprinted in the *Fort Wayne Sentinel*:

#### **Clerical Politicians**

We would be pleased in some friend of the Rev. Mr. Rankin of Fort Wayne, the Presbyterian clergyman of that place, would favor us with a copy of the letter sent by that gentleman to the abolitionists of this county. We have no wish to do injustice to the Rev. gentleman, and regret that we are compelled to notice his interference, but if the letter purports to contain the matter we are advised it does, his clerical robes shall not screen him from the lash. Should we not be allowed to see it, we will take it for granted that our information is correct, and that it was only designed to aid Mr. (LG) Thompson, by secret circulation among the abolitionists, *and no where else.* --*Marion Democratic Herald.*<sup>97</sup>

On August 24, 1843, Rankin resigned his post in Fort Wayne. Then on September 30, 1843, an advertisement appears -- indicating that the Rankin family had left Fort Wayne. On September 30, 1843, this advertisement appeared in the local press:

#### **Fort Wayne Seminary**

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<sup>96</sup>Mather, page 41

<sup>97</sup>*Fort Wayne Sentinel*, August 19, 1843.

Miss M. Wallace proposes to open a Female Seminary in this city, at the house lately occupied by Rev. A.T. Rankin, commencing on Monday, the 2nd of October... <sup>98</sup>

Mather reports that Alexander Rankin spent the next several months ministering around Northern Indiana for the Home Missionary Society. <sup>99</sup> Mumey reports that upon leaving Indiana, Rankin moved to Buffalo, NY where he remarried on November 18, 1844. He remained in New York, mostly as pastor at Breckenridge Street Presbyterian Church in Buffalo, until 1858 <sup>100</sup> This author has found no information linking Rankin with Underground Railroad activities in Buffalo.

In 1859 Alexander Rankin accepted a call from the Home Missionary Board to go to Kansas Territory. In November, 1859, Rankin established a church at Fort Scott, and in December organized the first Presbyterian church in Topeka. He went to Denver in 1860, and on November 29, of that year led the first worship service in what was to become the state of Colorado. <sup>101</sup>

Following the resignation of A.T. Rankin, the Fort Wayne Presbyterian Church began to search again for a new minister. Having aligned with the more conservative Old School Presbyterians under Rankin, his vacancy left the congregation open to the possibilities of joining with the New School faction. <sup>102</sup>

### **Second Presbyterian Church: New School Presbytery**

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<sup>98</sup>*Fort Wayne Sentinel*, September 30, 1843

<sup>99</sup>Mather, p.41.

<sup>100</sup>Mumey, pp. 3-8.

<sup>101</sup>Mumey, 3-8.

<sup>102</sup>Mather, 19-41.

Following Rankin's resignation the Fort Wayne Presbyterian congregation sent invitations to several ministers, but all declined. Then, Henry Ward Beecher, a New School Presbyterian minister in Indianapolis, heard about the vacancy at Fort Wayne. As rumors spread that Beecher would attempt to take control of the local congregation, they responded with a plea to the Rev. William Anderson, of Hanover College, who agreed to assist them. Anderson arrived in Fort Wayne on April 14, 1844. On the following Sunday, Henry Ward Beecher arrived in Fort Wayne as well, and spent the next three weeks attempting to win the congregation over to the New School faction. At the end of the period, Beecher had managed to convince five women and one man to change their allegiance, and form a new congregation.

Henry Ward brought his brother Charles Beecher to Fort Wayne to preach to this small group. On May 4, 1844, the small group, with the addition of six more who had subsequently joined, asked Charles Beecher to be their "stated Supply" for one year, and formally organized Second Presbyterian Church. <sup>103</sup>

Charles Beecher served as the pastor at the Second Presbyterian Church in Fort Wayne from 1844-1850. During his tenure, membership included: Frederick H. Tyler; Susan McCulloch; Matilda M. Wallace; Daniel S. Beaver; Augustus Beaver; Mary Rockhill Tyler Wheeler; Mrs. Ann M. Thompson; and Dr. W. S. Thompson. To date, no direct evidence has been found to tie Charles Beecher to the Underground Railroad in Allen County. Circumstantial Evidence for his support, if not direct involvement abounds.

Associated Sites:

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<sup>103</sup>Mather163-165.

The Second Presbyterian congregation immediately began to raise funds to build their own church, located at the south side of Berry Street, between Webster and Ewing, the third lot west of Webster St. Today it is the location of a parking lot for the First Presbyterian Church.

#### Biography:

Charles Beecher was born in Litchfield, Connecticut in 1815. He was the youngest of six children of the Rev. Lyman Beecher and Roxana Foote Beecher, following Catharine, William, Edward, George, Mary, Harriet, and Henry Ward. Stepbrothers Thomas K. , James, and stepsister, Isabella, followed. In 1825 the family moved to Boston, where Lyman Beecher became pastor of the Hanover Street Presbyterian Church. William Lloyd Garrison was a member of the congregation at this time. Charles Beecher studied at Boston Latin School and graduated from Bowdoin College at age 19. Following graduation, he joined the rest of the family who had moved to Cincinnati. Lyman Beecher had been named president of Lane Theological Seminary in 1830, and many of his children had gone west with him. Charles was displeased with his seminary studies and left the school. He went to New Orleans in the mid- 1830's, where he found employment as a clerk. By 1844 he had returned to the Ohio Valley, and joined his brother, Henry Ward Beecher, in Indianapolis, where Charles became music director at Henry Ward's church. In 1844 the pulpit of Fort Wayne's Presbyterian church was vacated when Alexander Rankin resigned, and Henry Ward tried to win the position for his brother Charles. Instead, questions of theology between the "New School" of the Beechers and the "Old School" of orthodox Presbyterianism led to a split of this small congregation, with the Beechers organizing Second Presbyterian with six members of the original congregation. (Information on Second Presbyterian congregation members elsewhere in

this report.) In 1851 Charles and family returned to the East when Charles took the pulpit of the Free Presbyterian Church of Newark, New Jersey.

### **Connection to Abolition and Underground Railroad:**

While in Cincinnati, ( approx. 1834-1839) Charles assisted at least two fugitives to the safety of an Underground Railroad stop. According to Lyman Beecher Stowe, " That very night, dark and stormy though it was, Professor Stowe and his brother in-law, Charles, then a student at the seminary, took the woman and her child in the family carriage and drove them to the house of John Van Sant who ran one of the stations of what was called the Underground Railway." <sup>104</sup>

Harriet Beecher Stowe corroborates this:

"Mr. Stowe then inquired what could be done; and was recommended to carry her to some place of security until the inquiry for her was over. Accordingly, that night, a brother of the author, with Professor Stowe, performed for the fugitive that office which the senator is represented as performing for Eliza." <sup>105</sup>

During Charles Beecher' years in New Orleans, he worked as a clerk, and encountered many of the businessmen of that southern city. He was horrified by the slave markets and especially by the activities of one slave owner. This encounter later formed the basis of the evil Legree in sister Harriet's *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. His sister wrote: "The case of old

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<sup>104</sup>Stowe, Lyman Beecher: *Saints, Sinners, and Beechers*. Indianapolis, Bobbs-Merrill. 1934, 175.

<sup>105</sup>Stowe, *A key...* p. 23. Eliza is a main character of Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin*.

Pru was related by a brother and sister of the writer... relates story of slave beaten to death in New Orleans.”<sup>106</sup>

In November, 1850, upon passage of the Fugitive Slave Bill, Charles’ abolitionist tendencies came to a head. He preached a sermon entitled “ The Duty of Disobedience to Wicked Laws” to the Free Presbyterian Church in Newark, New Jersey in November. Lyman Beecher Stowe writes: “ It was all well enough to disapprove of slavery, -- many of them sympathized with him in that, -- but for a clergyman from the pulpit to deliberately tell the people that it was wicked to obey a law of the United States was really going too far beyond reason and common decency!”<sup>107</sup> The sermon was published in pamphlet form, and circulated nationally. As a result, Beecher was “disowned” by the Ministerial Association of Newark.

After publication of Harriet Beecher Stowe’s *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*, she was invited to tour Europe. The Stowes and Charles Beecher spent a year abroad, and Charles provided journal descriptions of the trip, recently published by the Stowe-Day Foundation of Hartford, Connecticut. At least one passage reflects Charles’ participation in Underground railroad activities:

Thursday, April 21, 1853. Aberdeen, Scotland.

“ After a hasty mouthful we went to the town hall, which I was glad to find was a smaller room, not over 800. By the way, it was thronged! I was 10 minutes in getting to the platform and at last had to walk on the benches...So far as

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<sup>106</sup>Stowe, *A Key* ...p.48-49.

<sup>107</sup>LB Stowe, *Saints*... pg. 339.

our feeling went, it was the best meeting in Scotland. Better arranged, Better managed, and there was more *oxygen* in the entire thing. Stowe responded to the welcome, and I to the presentation of the purse with 150 pounds. Among other things I told them that we proposed to devote it largely to the construction of *railroads*. Not pacific railroads, exactly, but a kind of subterranean railroad. At which they were highly edified.”  
( note: italics in original text.) <sup>108</sup>

After his return to America, Charles Beecher wrote an essay entitled “ The God of the Bible Against Slavery.” This short piece was published for national circulation by the American Anti-Slavery Society in 1855. It’s final words:

“... on every page of the Bible a glorious God of infinite order, purity, justice, benevolence, meekness, and grace, stands revealed against a system of disorder, lust, injustice, selfishness, despotism, and irreligion. Does, then, the Bible uphold Slavery? Nay, verily, it must ever be to that system a consuming fire. Either the system must be consumed, or the fire quenched. **EITHER SLAVERY OR THE BIBLE MUST BE PUT DOWN.**” (PAGE 11)

Other notes:

In 1867 Charles Beecher joined Harriet Beecher Stowe on a trip to Florida, in hopes to involve themselves in assisting newly freed slaves. By 1870, Charles Beecher had purchased land near Tallahassee, begun preaching among the African America residents and organized several schools. In 1872 Charles Beecher was appointed State Superintendent of Education, and successfully organized over 500 integrated school programs for all Floridians (white, Indian or African-American) during his tenure.<sup>109</sup>

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<sup>108</sup>Stowe in Europe, . p. 47. “Stowe” is Calvin... According to Charles, Harriet did not speak publicly, but her husband did in her stead.

<sup>109</sup>Foster, John T., Jr., and Sarah Whitman Foster. *Beechers, Stowes and Yankee*

## The Beecher Clan:

*Lyman Beecher:* Although he supported the end of slavery, immediate emancipation was not practical for him. During his tenure as President of Lane Seminary, the entire senior class--under the direction of acclaimed abolitionist Theodore Weld -- withdrew from the school due to anti-abolitionist policies set by the trustees. Weld and his classmates organized a new college with the support of abolitionist Arthur Tappan in Oberlin, Ohio.

*Harriet Beecher Stowe:* Harriet Beecher married one of the teachers at Lane, Calvin Stowe. The Stowes are included in the Siebert List of Underground Railroad Operators in Hamilton County, Ohio. In *The Key to Uncle Tom's Cabin*, She points to the information collected by Charles Beecher during his years in New Orleans as her source on the slave trade, conditions for slaves, and the evil Legree. She also notes that her story of Eliza is based on information received from Rev. John Rankin.

*Henry Ward Beecher:* After preaching in a small church in Indianapolis, Henry Ward took the pulpit of the Plymouth Church in Brooklyn, New York. He preached frequently against slavery, and soon became one of the most famous preachers in America. One of Beecher's more provocative tactics was the "selling" of slaves in his own church, raising funds from the congregation to buy the freedom of several slaves. Following the Missouri Compromise of 1854 pro-slavery forces attempted to take over Kansas Territory and make it a slave state. Beecher and his congregation raised funds for guns for one anti-slavery group of settlers. Marked as "bibles" several large packages of weapons were

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*Strangers: The Transformation of Florida.* Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1999.

sent by Plymouth Church to Kansas. The guns became known as “Beecher’s Bible’s” and soon all such assistance to Kansas was called by the same name.

*Edward Beecher:* One of the founding members of the Illinois Anti-Slavery Society, and oftentimes Charles’ theological soulmate. Edward Beecher was in Alton, Illinois at the time the abolitionist publisher Elijah P. Lovejoy was murdered, just hours after Edward Beecher had helped him unload the new press and install it in the newspaper office. Edward Beecher’s *Narrative of Riots at Alton* brought national attention to this outrage, and Garrison printed extracts of Edward’s book in *The Liberator*. After a move back to Boston, Edward was again drawn to the “west” and moved to Galesburg, Illinois in 1855. There, his house was a known stop on the Underground Railroad, and was next-door to another stop. <sup>110</sup>

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<sup>110</sup>Lyman Beecher Stow, p.150.

## Chapter 4: Quakers, Moral Suasionists, and others

In response to the Great Awakening, and the development of a common culture in post-revolutionary America, individuals and small groups began to question the connection between mainstream Christianity and morality. Many advocated universal reform of contemporary society, and "Moral Suasion" became a byword for the non-coercive actions of those individuals who attempted to bring about emancipation and inclusion of former slaves into society by encouraging a broad-sweeping change in social thought, and not governmental legislation. Moral Suasionists often found themselves at odds with their families, congregations, and neighbors, and often were lumped or voluntarily came together with others seeking to make an ideal society, and were sometimes called "Come-Outers." The term refers to a verse from the Book of Revelation: " And I heard another voice from heaven, saying Come out of her, my people, that ye not be partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues" (Rev. 18:4.) Utopian experiments, and reforms in diet, women's rights, and other progressive causes were also espoused by many. After attending one three-day convention of such individuals, Ralph Waldo Emerson described the proceedings:

"Dunkers, Muggletonians, Come-Outers, Groaners, Agrarians, Seventh-Day Baptists, Quakers, Abolitionists, Calvinists, Unitarians, and Philosophers --all came successively to the top, and seized their moment, if not their *hour*, wherein to chide, or pray, or preach, or protest...every shade of opinion, from the straightest orthodoxy to the wildest heresy, and many persons whose church was a church of one member only. <sup>111</sup>

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<sup>111</sup> Mayer, 300-301

It has been written that perhaps as many as 500,000 across the nation “came-out” from their mainstream congregations and lifestyles, and “ found spiritual homes in new church groupings, such as the Progressive Friends, The Baptist Free Mission Society, the Union church, the Free Presbyterian Church and the Indiana Yearly Meeting of Antislavery Friends... more came out of their old churches but entered no new one, taking their spiritual nourishment privately in the company of abolitionist friends...” The *Liberator* printed letters from such souls, including one who wrote that withdrawal from a church gave “ the strongest proof of his sincerity ... and the very fact of his departure will call...attention more effectively to its cause than anything he could say while yet a member.”<sup>112</sup>

As many found homes in the old Northwest, many different Utopian communities were attempted, and several small congregations formed from these “come-outers.” A survey of the stated goals and interests of these groups find that many were actively involved in the harboring, transporting and sheltering of fugitive slaves, as part of their work to transform society. Thus, it makes sense to identify those members of the Allen County population with ties to these groups. Two texts have been used as the source of this survey: *Backwoods Utopias: The Sectarian and Owenite Phases of Communitarian Socialism in America: 1663-1829*, by Arthur Eugene Bestor, Jr., (Philadelphia: U of Penn Press, 1950); and *God’s Government Begun: The Society for Universal Inquiry and Reform, 1842-1846*.

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<sup>112</sup>Mayer, 303.

Individuals identified in Allen County are described below, in relation with the utopian or moral suasionist connection they have.

### **Society of Friends:**

The Society of Friends, or Quakers, were among the first and the strongest advocates of abolition, and were often participants in Underground Railroad activities. As mentioned in Chapter One, many free black families came to Indiana with the assistance of the Society of Friends, or Quakers. Friends were often times against slavery, and earned a reputation for assisting African Americans. As early as 1808 a committee was created by the North Carolina Yearly Meeting of Friends to assist masters who wished to free their slaves. After 1830, the committee took on broader relocation efforts as laws were enacted in North Carolina that required manumitted slaves to leave the state within ninety days of their freedom. Committees of Friends in Indiana helped to relocate many families from North Carolina, Virginia and Maryland-- the states with the greatest numbers of free black residents, and many historians have noted that it is no accident that most-- but not all --of Indiana's rural free-black settlements were located near Quaker communities. These same Free Black communities and their Quaker neighbors also assisted fugitive slaves who wished to settle in Indiana, or to pass through to Michigan or Canada. Free African Americans also settled in larger towns including Indianapolis, Madison, Richmond and Fort Wayne. <sup>113</sup>

Also on page 8 is mention of a group headed by Jesse Hoover in 1829.

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<sup>113</sup>Thornbrough, 33-40. Cord, Xenia. "Black Rural Settlements in Indiana Before 1860," in Gibbs, Wilma L., ed. *Indiana's African American Heritage: Essays from Black History News and Notes*. Indianapolis, Indiana Historical Society, 1993. p. 100-108.

Although there is no record of organized worship by Friends in Allen County -- either Preparatory Meeting or Monthly Meeting -- there were several Friends residing in the area.

**Jesse Lynch Williams:**

Most widely known for his role as Superintendent of the Wabash and Erie Canal, Jesse Lynch Williams was raised an Orthodox Quaker. Born in Stokes County, NC, he moved with his family to the Ohio Valley, and attended Miami Monthly Meeting (in Ohio) until at least 1820. In August, 1820, the family transferred their membership to Whitewater Orthodox Monthly Meeting in Wayne County, Indiana. His first cousins Levi Coffin and Beulah Coffin Puckett settled nearby in the town of Newport, also in Wayne County. <sup>114</sup>

In 1832 Jesse Williams arrived in Fort Wayne, and soon settled in town, although the location of his early residence is not known. He joined with the Presbyterian congregation in 1833, and was soon elected an elder. <sup>115</sup> He remained involved as a leader in the congregation through the 1840s, and hosted Henry Ward, and Lyman Beecher when they made their trips to Fort Wayne. Williams did not join with the New School congregation, however, and remained affiliated with First Presbyterian. <sup>116</sup>

In February, 1853, Williams purchased 80 acres in Section 11, Wayne Township, and soon built a country estate there. This land ultimately became the Williams Woodland

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<sup>114</sup> Hinshaw, *Encyclopedia of American Quaker Genealogy*; Heiss, minutes of Whitewater Orthodox Monthly Meeting, in Vol. 1, part 1.

<sup>115</sup> Mather, 30.

<sup>116</sup> Mather, 164.

Park National Register District. The Williams Home no longer exists, but was located at the northwest corner of Webster and Pontiac streets. It was demolished during the 1940's. During the 1950's the homestead site was purchased by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, and during the 1970's became the home of Third Presbyterian Church. Today it is an Hispanic Apostolic church. <sup>117</sup>

Jesse Williams also owned a townhouse, which in the 1858 city directory was listed on Wayne Street, between Webster and Ewing. The 1855 plat map indicates he owned this house sometime prior to 1855. <sup>118</sup>Today, this home site is the location of the First Presbyterian Church.

There is no primary or secondary evidence to indicate that Williams had involvement with the Underground Railroad.

#### **The Ninde and Swayne Families, with Coffin and Puckett:**

The Siebert Collection includes multiple mentions of Lindley Ninde, his father, Benjamin Ninde, and his sister, Rhoda Ninde Swayne as active Underground Railroad agents in northeastern Indiana, as does a small collection of oral histories collected in Jay County.

Benjamin Ninde was born c. 1790 in Tewksbury, Gloucestershire, England, and was the son of Meliora (also spelled Meleorah, Meleora) and the Rev. James Ninde. The Rev. Ninde

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<sup>117</sup>Angela M. Quinn, ed. *Williams Woodland Park: A Bicentennial History of a Fort Wayne Neighborhood*. Fort Wayne, Winco Printing, 1994. pp. 19-20. Interview with Susan Archibold Stone, March, 2000. Mrs. Stone's grandparents lived across the street from the homestead from 1912 until their deaths in 1968, when she purchased the home. Mrs. Stone was born in 1932, and vividly recalls the Williams homestead.

<sup>118</sup>Williams, 108. Also, 1855 plat map of Fort Wayne

was a friend and early follower of John Wesley, and joined him when Methodism officially made its break from the Anglican Church. <sup>119</sup>

In 1802 Benjamin, aged 12, joined his father and brother Henry on a trip to Baltimore, to visit several of Benjamin's older half-siblings who had settled in the area. Family records report that the Rev. Ninde returned to England in 1803, leaving Benjamin and Henry "apprenticed to trades." The Rev. Ninde came to America again in 1816, leaving his wife, Meliora, in England. He settled with two of his children in Easton, Maryland, and remained there until his death. <sup>120</sup>

There is no further mention of Benjamin in the family records, other than a note that half-brother James Ninde, Jr., notified Benjamin in Ohio, when his father and brother, William, died. <sup>121</sup>

While the majority of the children of the Rev. James Ninde continued to worship in the Methodist, and Anglican churches, Benjamin chose to align himself with the Society of Friends. Sometime before 1814 Benjamin Ninde became a "Convinced Friend", or convert. Although Quakers of that period did not actively seek members or hold revivals, there were opportunities for non- "birthright" individuals to become members. Quaker ministers did occasionally hold "appointed meetings" among non-members, although, according to historian Thomas Hamm, "Friends usually perceived their mission as fundamentally different from that of evangelical religion... they made no regular, concerted efforts to win converts, instead depending on birthright membership to

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<sup>119</sup>Henry S. Ninde. *Genealogic Snapshots of the Family of James Ninde of Tewksbury and His Wife, Sarah Ward 1740-1929*. Rome, New York, Briggs, Printer, 1929, pp. 1-5. Benjamin was the son of the second wife, Meliora Prior.

<sup>120</sup>Ninde, pp. 5-6.

<sup>121</sup>Ninde, p. 9.

maintain their numerical numbers.” One can only speculate as to the reasons this son of the Methodist minister joined with the Society of Friends.<sup>122</sup>

Prior to 1814 Benjamin Ninde had become a member of the Indian Springs Monthly Meeting, Prince Georges County, Maryland, and remained there until he requested a “certificate” from his congregation, to join the Hopewell Friends Monthly Meeting, in Warren County, Ohio.<sup>123</sup> There, in 1816, he married Jane Whitacre, also of Warren County.<sup>124</sup> In 1829, they left this orthodox congregation and joined the Hicksite Friends.

In 1839 Friends Meeting records indicate that Benjamin and Jane Ninde and their children transferred their membership to Whitewater Hicksite Meeting, in Wayne County, IN, although they may have attended one of the smaller preparative meetings in Jay County, where they are found in the 1840 census.<sup>125</sup>

The Nindes settled near the Friends community of Camden, in Penn Township. It is today known as Pennville. The family settled on a large farm in section 26, just northeast of Camden, and south of the West Grove Settlement. By 1876 holdings in Penn Township totaled 400 acres.<sup>126</sup>

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<sup>122</sup>Hamm, *Transformation*, p.

<sup>123</sup>Hopewell, MM records, found in Hinshaw, William Wade, ed., *Encyclopedia of American Quaker Genealogy*, vol. 5, Ohio.

<sup>124</sup>ibid.

<sup>125</sup>Heiss

<sup>126</sup>Indiana Historical Society. *Maps of Indiana Counties in 1876: Together with the Plat of Indianapolis and a Sampling of Illustrations.* ( Reprinted from *Illustrated Historical atlas of the State of Indiana*, published by Baskin, Forster and Company, Chicago, 1876.) Indianapolis, Indiana Historical Society, 1968.

The Camden community had organized an abolitionist organization prior to 1840, and may have been the first group in the state to support the more radical views of William Lloyd Garrison.<sup>127</sup> The 1840's community at Camden also assisted fugitive slaves, and it was written, **"Truer hearts to the flying fugitives never lived."**<sup>128</sup> In 1843, Three members of Garrison's American Anti-Slavery Society visited Camden as part of a national campaign. African American abolitionist Charles Remond, along with Sydney Gay and James Monroe participated in a peaceful meeting. Gay later wrote that the Camden Friends were **"true-hearted abolitionists [who were] wielding an influence which has made itself felt already, and will yet revolutionize this section of the country."**<sup>129</sup>

The Friends community at Camden became an organized Hicksite Monthly Meeting in 1841, and Benjamin Ninde was given a leadership role, at its organization on October 21. Heiss notes the following about this Hicksite congregation:

Camden Monthly Meeting was set-off from Whitewater Monthly Meeting (Hicksite) and first held on the 21st of Tenth Month 1841. It was located in the village of Camden (now called Pennville). The meeting for worship and the preparative had been established two years earlier. There was a subordinated meeting, West Grove, located some two and a half miles northeast. The membership at West Grove became involved with a communal experiment and other reforms. As a result of the confusion within the monthly meeting, it was laid down and the membership re-attached to Whitewater Monthly Meeting in 1845.<sup>130</sup>

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<sup>127</sup>Hamm, *God's Government...*, p. 96.

<sup>128</sup>Found in Hamm, *ibid.* p. 96. Quote from J.H. Mendenhall, "Sketch of the Origin, Use and Method of Operating the Old Underground Railroad," Jan 1, 1896, box 77, Siebert Collection.

<sup>129</sup>Hamm, *ibid.* p. 97.

<sup>130</sup>Heiss, vol. 1, part 2, page 427. Please read information on Mary and Owen Thomas, below, for more information on the "communal experiment and other reforms."

Please refer to the next section on the Thomas, Davis, and Chandler families for more information on the “communal experiment” at West Grove.

Benjamin Ninde assisted fugitives in Jay County according to Siebert letters. In the Indiana file, Siebert includes a letter from John H. Bond to Charles W. Osborn, sent January 30, 1896:

**Friend Charles W. Osborne,**

**I will endeavor to answer thy questions regarding the route of the underground railroad from Cabin Creek on. I suppose thee only wants to know the places from here on. There was no stopping place between here and Jonesborough...For the most part , we either camped out or traveled all night. We did not go any farther than Jonesborough...We sometimes sent [the fugitives] to Camden in care of Benjamin Nines (sic). There was no station between my house and Camden...**

**I am thy friend,**

**John H. Bond <sup>131</sup>**

On June 3, 1841, eldest daughter Rhoda Ninde was married at the Camden Meeting House to Samuel Fothergill Swayne, also a recent settler to the Camden settlement. <sup>132</sup> The newlyweds moved to an unknown location in Huntington County, where they had three children (although daughter Margaret later listed her birth place as Lagro, Wabash

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<sup>131</sup> Siebert, roll page 238.

<sup>132</sup> Heiss, Camden MM records, also, Familysearch.org, family group record for Ninde.

County.)<sup>133</sup> Samuel F. Swayne was a carpenter, and died on 23 September 1846, and was buried in the Friends Cemetery in Camden.<sup>134</sup> Following her husband's death, Rhoda and her children lived briefly in her parents' household, and in 1850 moved to a 160 acre farm in Jefferson Township, Whitley County.<sup>135</sup> Rhoda's obituary describes this move: "In 1850, with her three children, the oldest seven years, she removed into the forests of Whitley County. By such energy and perseverance as is seldom seen she succeeded in opening up a valuable farm of 160 acres."<sup>136</sup> According to modern residents of Jefferson Township, the Swayne farm was located in section 22, and today the Swayne home can be found at 800 East, 500 South, the first home south of the site of the Jefferson Center School.<sup>137</sup> Rhoda Ninde Swayne and her children remained on this farm through the 1850's, although some sources suggest they were in Fort Wayne for a portion of the time.<sup>138</sup>

During her years in Jefferson Township, Rhoda apparently left her membership as a Friend. She is credited with founding the Saturn Christian Church in Jefferson Township. According to the 1995 Whitley County history book, :

"Some time before the year 1858, Mrs. Rhoda Swayne invited some of the old settlers of Jefferson Township, Whitley County, and their children to come to her home, (a

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<sup>133</sup> Oberlin College Archives. Group: 28-Alumni Records; series: Graduates and former Students; folder: Swayne, Margaret J.; Box: 916.

<sup>134</sup> Heiss, Camden MM.

<sup>135</sup> Federal Census, *Population Schedules, Jay County, 1850*. Cemetery Records, Pennville Cemetery.

<sup>136</sup> *Fort Wayne Journal Gazette*, December 31, 1895. This farm appears to be part of the 1837 land purchase of Benjamin Ninde.

<sup>137</sup> Conversation with Donna Wagner, who responded to an inquiry sent to the Saturn Christian Church office.

<sup>138</sup> *Eliza Harris Slept Here: A History of Balbec, Indiana*. Compiled from papers collected by Edwina Hanlin, and copied by William Edmundson. Machesney Park, IL. William Edmundson, 1997, pp. ; Griswold, p. 407.

log cabin situated the first dwelling south of Jefferson Center [school]) and there organized a Sunday School and Bible Study. They soon decided to get a minister of Christ and organize a congregation of Christians..."<sup>139</sup>

In 1862, Rhoda moved her family to Oberlin, Ohio, for the duration of the war. Daughter Margaret graduated in 1867 with a degree in Literature from Oberlin College, and Rebecca and Samuel F., Jr. both attended as well. The family then settled permanently in Fort Wayne, and by 1866 they had built their home at **1102 W. Berry**, in the West End National Register District (ISS 003-215-25018.)<sup>140</sup> In 1874, her daughters were organizers of the First Christian Church in Fort Wayne. <sup>141</sup>

During the above-mentioned visits to Fort Wayne in the 1850's, Rhoda and her family most likely resided with her brother, Lindley M. Ninde, and his wife, Beulah Puckett Ninde. Lindley and Beulah Ninde had been married at the Newport Anti-Slavery Friends Meeting House in Wayne County on September 24, 1850, and had subsequently moved to Fort Wayne. <sup>142</sup>

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<sup>139</sup>Whitley County Historical Society. *Whitley County and its Families*. Paducah, KY: Turner Publishing Co., 1995. p. 45. (Author's note: My in-laws are descendants of some of these early congregation members, but all claim no knowledge of fugitive slave assistance in Jefferson twp.)

<sup>140</sup>*Journal Gazette*, Dec. 31, 1895; Fort Wayne City Directory, 1866; Fort Wayne Sites and Structures Inventory, p. 121.

<sup>141</sup>Notes from Patricia Arthur, author of history of Fort Wayne Pipe Organs, (to be published, Spring, 2001.)

<sup>142</sup>Yount, Beverly. *Early Marriages of Wayne County, Indiana, 1845-1860*. p. 39. Notes original record found in county book E, 11845-1852, p. 456. They may have been married in a civil or non-Quaker ceremony, as records of the Newport Anti-Slavery Friends Monthly Meeting note that on Nov. 15, 1851, Beulah Puckett Ninde was "condemned" for marrying contrary to the Orthodox Quaker discipline. (Heiss, vol 1., part one Newport Antislavery Friends.)

Beulah Puckett was the daughter of Daniel Puckett and Beulah Coffin Puckett, who was the sister of Levi Coffin. Beulah's parents also participated in Underground Railroad activities, and Daniel Puckett was among the Quaker leaders removed from leadership positions in 1842 by the Indiana (Orthodox) Yearly Meeting. Levi Coffin notes that these abolition leaders included Charles Osborn, Daniel Puckett, Thomas Frazier, Abel Roberts, Isam Puckett (Daniel's brother, and Beulah's uncle), and Martha Wooten.<sup>143</sup> During the winter of 1842-1843, these individuals along with Levi Coffin and Beulah's mother, Beulah Coffin Puckett, formed the Indiana Anti-Slavery Friends Yearly Meeting. An Anti-Slavery Monthly Meeting was organized at Newport, and Beulah's mother and half-brother, Cyrus Puckett, assumed leadership roles.<sup>144</sup>

Lindley had attended Farmer's College in College Hill, Ohio during the 1840's, and Beulah had attended the nearby Oxford Female Institute during the same years, and they may have met at this time. Lindley's classmates included Benjamin Harrison, and Beulah's small group of confidants and fellow students included Carrie Scott -- who would later become Mrs. Benjamin Harrison.<sup>145</sup>

Following the move to Fort Wayne, the Nindes became active participants in the Underground Railroad, and in other assistance to African Americans in Allen County (see Chapter One.) Here are a series of quotes regarding their activities, gleaned from Siebert Letters, and oral histories from Jay County:

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<sup>143</sup>Levi Coffin, p. 231

<sup>144</sup>Heiss, vol.1 part 1 Newport Anti-slavery Friends.

<sup>145</sup>Letter to Beulah Ninde from Anna Howell, March 18, 1851, found in Ninde-Puckett Letters, Lewis G. Thompson Collection, Allen County-Fort Wayne Historical Society; Ohio Military Institute Calendar, 1923; *First Annual Catalogue of the Oxford Female Institute at Oxford, Ohio, 1849-1850*. Cincinnati: John D. Thorpe, 1850. Correspondence, 12 July, 2000, from Bob Schmidt, archivist, Miami University, Oxford, Ohio.

...The route began at the Ohio River, at one point near Lawrenceburg, Indiana, and the river was also crossed at or near Madison, Indiana. From the latter, the line ran north to a point in Jennings County, thence to or near Richmond in Wayne County, and north through Jay and Allen Counties to near Angola in Steuben county, close to the Michigan boundary (sic.)... Judge Gales was the prominent man in [Underground affairs] in Steuben County, and has left a large number of Descendants living there. Judge L.M. Ninde and his parents were actively engaged in [the Underground]. He now lives at Fort Wayne, Indiana, and no doubt could give you much information as to its workings in Jay and the adjoining counties...

Sincerely Yours, E.R. Wilson.<sup>146</sup>

In the 1920's individuals in Camden, Jay County -- now Pennville, on Indiana 1, were interviewed regarding their memories of the Underground Railroad, and several mentions of Fort Wayne were recorded. Margaret Bare Irey, spoke about her family, and noted: **"Jonah Irey...often took slaves to Fort Wayne, and turned them over to Lindley Ninde and the Swain family."** Later in her interview she noted that most of the slaves that were assisted in Jay County were on their way to Fort Wayne, and added this memorable quote: **"It was said that if a slave got that far, the devil himself couldn't get him."** <sup>147</sup>

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<sup>146</sup>Siebert, Indiana rolls, pg. 226

<sup>147</sup>-----*Eliza Harris Slept Here: A History of Balbec, Indiana*. Compiled from papers collected by Edwina Hanlin, and copied by William Edmundson. Machesney Park, IL. William Edmundson, 1997.p. 11; Hinshaw, William Wade, ed.. *Encyclopedia of American Quaker Genealogy*, v. 5, Ohio. Baltimore, Genealogical Publishing Co., 1973. p. 105; Heiss, Willard, ed. *Abstracts of the Records of the Society of Friends in Indiana*, v. 1 part 1. Indianapolis, Indiana Historical Society, 1975. pp. 226, 232; Federal Census, Population Schedules for Whitley County, Indiana, 1860. *Fort Wayne Gazette*, Tuesday Morning, December 31, 1895. "Rhoda N. Swayne." This obituary notes that Rhoda was widowed in 1846, and raised her three children by herself. It adds: "In 1850, with her

Alfred Ireby, another Camden resident shared a tale that describes the risks involved for fugitive slaves and their helpers in this tale:

**One of the men...had a fine team. He took a load of Negroes through to Fort Wayne, and just after they were unloaded, he saw some men looking around the wagon. They asked him if there were not some slaves around there, and probably made some threats. He became scared and left his team and started for home. He started in the evening and it took twenty four hours to reach home...Two of the Paxson brothers started for Fort Wayne, soon found the team, which stood hitched to the rack until nearly noon when it was taken care of by the town marshal. With the assistance of L. M. Ninde they soon got possession of the team and made light of the man who was so easily scared.”<sup>148</sup>**

One of the Paxsons from Jay County apparently continued to assist fugitives until the end.

A son, John Riley Paxson told his interviewer:

**“ Cyrus Paxson took the last load of Darkies to Fort Wayne that ever passed through Camden. There were so many that four horses were to draw the wagon and they had to rest often. He states that he thinks that Lindley Ninde and Mrs. Swain, both of Fort Wayne received these negroes, along with many others who came before.”<sup>149</sup>**

Sites associated with the Ninde Family are:

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three children, the oldest seven years, she removed into the forests of Whitley County. By such energy and perseverance as is seldom seen, she succeeded in opening up a valuable farm of 160 acres.”

<sup>148</sup> “*Eliza Harris Slept Here*”, p. 14.

<sup>149</sup> “*Eliza Harris Slept Here*”, p. 1.

**Wildwood:** Land purchased 1853, home built c. 1860. Wildwood was the country estate of Lindley and Beulah Ninde for forty years, and was considered to be the social center of the suburban community of South Wayne. Purchased 1904 by Lutheran Hospital. Original house demolished as part of 1950's expansion of hospital. Entire site demolished Spring, 2001, and a park is proposed for the vacant lot. Street Address: **3024 Fairfield Avenue**. Not listed in Indiana Sites and Structures Inventory. Site adjoins South Wayne National Register District.

**434 West Wayne:** first location identified with Lindley and Beulah Ninde, in 1858 City Directory (north east corner Wayne and Griffith). Griffith has been renamed Fairfield Avenue. In 1860 Census, Lindley and Beulah are listed at this site, as well as Beulah's mother, Beulah Coffin Puckett, and Beulah Ninde's brother, Henry Puckett. The Nindes most likely lived here until the country estate, Wildwood was completed, c. 1860. No photographs have been found of home. In about 1905, the home was demolished, and an American Foursquare constructed at this site. It is recorded in the Indiana Sites and Structures Inventory as # **003-215-25069**.

**Ninde Law Office:** Lindley Ninde had several law partners during the antebellum period, and their offices were located as follows:

Jacoby and Ninde: (with Lysander C. Jacoby) from at least April 23, 1853: no location given. <sup>150</sup>  
L.M. Ninde: from at least January 7, 1854: on the corner of Main and Calhoun. <sup>151</sup>  
Ninde and Puckett: (with Henry W. Puckett), in 1858, and 1860 northwest corner Calhoun and Berry, upstairs. <sup>152</sup>

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<sup>150</sup>advertisement, *Fort Wayne Sentinel*, April 23, 1853.

<sup>151</sup>advertisement, *Fort Wayne Sentinel*, January 7, 1854.

<sup>152</sup>Williams, 84.

The northeast corner of Calhoun and Berry is now the location of the National City Bank (Fort Wayne National Bank skyscraper). No buildings from the antebellum period stand at the corner of Calhoun and Main, even though exact location is not known.

#### **Rhoda Ninde Swayne Homes:**

**1102 West Berry Street:** ISS # 003-215-25018.<sup>153</sup> Although constructed following the end of the Civil War, this structure is the only identifiable standing structure directly related to the Nindes who participated in the Underground Railroad.

**Jefferson Township, Whitley County:** A house stands at **8363 500 South**, in Jefferson township, just behind the Jefferson Center School. It is a gabled-ell style home, with a low pitched roof, and is clad in aluminum. It sits only about 25 feet from the road, and a remaining accessory building is located about 5 feet from the road. Because the exterior has been modernized, it is not possible to verify its construction, and it may or may not be an altered hewn-log home, as described in the Swayne obituary.

#### **The Davis and Chandler Families:**

Among the neighbors of Benjamin Ninde at Camden were Benjamin F. Davis, his wife Ruth Chandler Davis, and her brother John Chandler. All three worshipped with the Camden Hicksite Monthly Meeting, and along with the Nindes were “re-attached” to the Whitewater Hicksite Monthly Meeting following the “laying-down” of the Camden Monthly Meeting, due to the “confusion” caused by the communal experiment. An incomplete list of commune participants exists, and it is not known if or how deeply

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<sup>153</sup>*Fort Wayne Journal Gazette*, Dec. 31, 1895; *Fort Wayne City Directory*, 1866; *Fort Wayne Sites and Structures Inventory*, p. 121.

involved the Nindes, Chandler, and Davis families were. They were undoubtedly affected by it.

In 1844 many members of the Camden Friends community determined that helping the fugitive slave was not enough. They joined with others in forming the Society for Universal Inquiry and Reform, an "Ultraist" reform group, developed by many of Garrison's followers. The organization was based on the tenet that slavery and other "sins" of American society could only be attacked through the implementation of a new form of government, based on God's laws. In eight separate communities around the country, including Camden, communal living groups were formed. All advocated immediate abolition and suffrage for African Americans, and their integration into White society; women's suffrage; non-coercion (pacifism); and communal property. Several advocated vegetarianism and other diet reforms as well. Although the "Fraternal Home" commune at Camden was short lived (1844-June 1845), it had an effect on the Friends community there. <sup>154</sup>

Following the "laying-down" of Camden Monthly Meeting, the Davises and Chandler moved to Jefferson Township, Whitley County, where they participated in the organization of the township in 1845. <sup>155</sup> The families may have moved to Whitley County prior to the break-up of the communal experiment, although they continued to be listed in Camden Meeting records through June, 1845. It is interesting to note that the Chandlers and Davises shared a double log cabin. Kaler and Maring write:

In 1844 Benjamin F. Davis and his brother-in-law John Chandler, settled on the farm now known as the Samuel Braden farm, which is in the southeast quarter of section

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<sup>154</sup>Hamm, *God's Government Begun*, pp.104, 125-128.

<sup>155</sup>Kaler and Maring, *History of Whitley County*, IN p. 336.

23. They occupied a double log cabin, Davis occupying one room and Chandler the other. Mr. Davis and his wife were well educated, and here in spring of 1845, in the room occupied by the family, Mrs. Davis taught the first school in Jefferson Township...Mr. Davis came from Camden, Jay County, Indiana, where he had an interest in a nursery, and it is said he propagated the celebrated "Ben Davis apple."  
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(It should be noted that Benjamin Ninde purchased the west half of Section 23, Jefferson Twp. in 1837).<sup>157</sup>

On May 1, 1849, Benjamin F. Davis purchase 146.05 acres in Allen County. Located in section 19, Aboite Township, this was approximately one mile due east (one section) from his earlier purchase in Whitley county.<sup>158</sup> Before the next spring, Davis and his wife had moved to this land in Aboite township, and they were listed next to Owen and Mary Frame Thomas in the 1850 census:

2513-2525	occupation	birthplace
Thamas, Owen (sic)	34 M Doctor	Ohio
Mary F. 3	4 F	Md.
Laura	9 F	Ohio
Paltina(Paulina)	6 F	Ohio
Julius (Julia)	2 F	Ohio
2514-2526		
Davis, Benjamin F.	37 M Farmer	Ohio
Ruth	25 F	Ohio
Goldsmith	7 M	Indiana
Hester Ann	2 F	Indiana
Clark, Hannah J.	12 F	Indiana

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<sup>156</sup>Ibid, p338.

<sup>157</sup>US Government Land Office Records, Accession/Serial # IN 1540\_184  
([www.glorerecords.blm.gov/search](http://www.glorerecords.blm.gov/search))

<sup>158</sup>Government Land Office Records, IN3700\_079.

Neither are listed with land according to the 1850 indexed Census, although it is known that the Davises owned the acreage in section 19 at this time, and no records of land purchases have ever been recorded in Allen county by Owen and Mary F. Thomas. This indicates that the Thomases are possibly tenants or co-habitants of the Davis household at the time of the census. It should also be noted that the Davises sold a portion of this acreage in 1853, and that Lindley M. Ninde acted as a witness on behalf of the Davises, indicating that the Nindes and Davises remained in contact after their moves from Camden.<sup>159</sup>

There is no primary or secondary evidence regarding the Davis or Chandler families and participation in Underground Railroad activities, although their associations with the Thomases and Nindes indicate that such participation was possible, and that further research should be completed.

**Dr. Owen Thomas and Dr. Mary Frame Myers Thomas:**

The Thomas's lived in Allen County from 1849 to 1856. Peggy Seigel writes:

While much of the work of the so-called Underground Railroad has been lost, surviving records suggest that within abolitionist families, the work of the Underground Railroad was a family affair. For example, Mary Frame Thomas (bn. 1816, d. 1888), a pioneer Indiana physician and an early leader of the state women's rights movement was described as "an abolitionist of the deepest dye, when to be an abolitionist meant persecution and contempt." ("Memorial Services"). If only we had accounts of fugitive slaves protected by Mary Thomas and her husband Owen in the years 1849 to 1856 when they lived near Fort Wayne or

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<sup>159</sup>*Allen County Deed Book P*, page 560. Benjamin F. Davis to James Hasty, 2 May, 1853.

during their Richmond, Indiana years leading up to the Civil War. Her father, Samuel Myers, was a well-known abolitionist in Washington ,D.C., and in Columbiana County, Ohio. In addition sheltering slaves would have been consistent with her life-long commitment to helping her black neighbors. <sup>160</sup>

Siebert lists Samuel Myers as an Underground Railroad participant in Columbiana County. Additionally, Mary and Owen were involved with a small group of Moral Suasionists living in both Columbiana and Stark counties during the early 1840s. Thomas Hamm writes:

Late in 1840, Garrison apparently gave new impetus to this movement by reprinting in the *Liberator* an article...assumption was that communitarianism was the logical outcome of reform. It noted the successes of the Shakers and Moravians... Unlike sectarian communities, however, they would not be inward looking but would devote "the entire residue of their intellectual, moral, and physical resources to the christianization and general welfare of the human race." ...In February, 1841, eight Hicksite Quakers in Columbiana County-- William and Hannah E. Myers, Owen and Mary F. Thomas, Benjamin B. Davis, Joseph Granetstone, James Barnaby, and Thomas Longshore--sent to the *Liberator* a plan for community. <sup>161</sup>

The Thomas's were among the organizing members of an abolitionist commune at Marlborough in Stark County, when it formed in 1841. Other inmates included Edward, Abraham and Elizabeth Brooke, Joseph Lukens, and Marius Robinson, all listed in the Siebert list as Underground Railroad agents in Columbiana or Stark counties. Robinson was not a Quaker, but was one of the Lane Rebels who worked to organize schools for African Americans in Cincinnati.

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<sup>160</sup>Peggy Seigel. "Breaking the Rules: Indiana Quaker Women and the Underground Railroad." Presented at the Underground Railroad in Indiana Symposium, The Lincoln Museum, January 29, 2000.

<sup>161</sup>Hamm, *God's Government*, pp. 58,59.

This commune allied itself with the suasionist group the Society for Universal Inquiry and Reform and led to the development of the other above-mentioned mentioned abolitionist communes of this organization, including the one at West Grove, near Camden in Jay County; one in Randolph County near the Whitewater Canal; and one in Fountain and Warren Counties in the western part of the state.

Following the end of the Marlborough commune, the Thomases apparently remained in Stark County until 1849, when they moved to Allen County. As mentioned above, no record of land purchases exist for them in Allen County, and their only known residence is next to the Benjamin Davis family in the 1850 census. The Doctors Thomas opened an office in Fort Wayne, which according to advertisements, was located on the northwest corner of Main and Calhoun streets, in the Phoenix Block.<sup>162</sup> Mather notes that an advertisement with this address ran from 1854-1856, when the Thomases left Fort Wayne.<sup>163</sup>

During the time that the Thomases were in Fort Wayne, Mary Frame Thomas and Beulah Puckett Ninde participated in the organization of the Indiana Women's Rights Association, with both holding state office at various times during the 1850's.<sup>164</sup> This

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<sup>162</sup>Mather, 293.

<sup>163</sup>ibid., 293-294.

<sup>164</sup>*Indiana Women's Rights Association: Minutes, 1851-1881*. Photocopy of transcription. Indiana State Library. Thomas appears in minutes at least 12 times between 1851 and 1859, (pages 2,7,9,16,30,35,36,39,40,41,41,43) and served as president of the organization in 1857. A "Mary" Ninde of Fort Wayne is listed in minutes from 1851 to 1859 (pages ii, 35,41), and served on the Executive Committee in 1857 and 1858. The first "Mary Ninde" noted as a signer of the original organizing document of October 14, 1851 is possibly Mary Elizabeth Gray-Ninde, the wife of Henry Ninde, Lindley's brother. Henry is listed among those who called this meeting (see Sesquicentennial Celebration leaflet, Fall 2001, Indiana Women's History Archives, Inc., et. al.) The Beulah Ninde Diary notes that Henry and Mary E. Ninde are living near Fort Wayne in diary notes of July and August 1851. However, family history records note that Henry and Mary E.

would indicate that the Nindes and Thomases shared at least one special cause, and due to their backgrounds and other connections, most likely corroborated on Underground Railroad activities.

### **The Ireys Family:**

Other members of the Camden community of abolitionists included members of the Ireys family. A large Quaker family, the Ireys were intermarried with Hilleses, Dugdales, Lewises, and other abolitionist families both in Jay County, and in Columbiana County, Ohio. Several Ireys also participated in the West Grove communal experiment. However, due to incomplete data, and the complexity of family relationships, it is not possible to directly tie Ireys in Fort Wayne to Ireys at Camden.

The 1858 City Directory lists a Mrs. Catherine Ireys on the west side of Griffith (Fairfield Ave.) south of Jefferson.<sup>165</sup> At this time Griffith (Fairfield) extended only as far south as Brackenridge Street, and was only developed on the west side of the road. The 1855 plat map of Fort Wayne notes 10 lots south of the site proposed for a public school, with no

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Ninde had moved to Oscaloosa, Iowa as early as September 1, 1851 when daughter Catherine was born there (familysearch.org, also Letter to Edward Ninde from L.C. McIntyre, August 1, 1966 given to ARCH by Richard Ninde, August, 2001.) Although it is possible for Henry Ninde to have called for the meeting, his name does not appear in the list of attendees at the October 14, 1851 meeting. It is also unlikely that Mary E. Ninde would have traveled from Iowa (or even from any location in Indiana) six weeks after giving birth. Thus, this first, and all other references to "Mary Ninde" of Fort Wayne, most likely are referring to Beulah, as no other Nindes lived in Fort Wayne or Allen County at this time. Beulah is mentioned in later parts of the minutes, particularly in 1873-1874, when Fort Wayne hosted the Annual Meeting. Lindley is also mentioned as a speaker and committee member during the 1870's.

<sup>165</sup>Williams, p. 67

dwellings erected. By 1874, Alfred K. Irey is listed as residing at 186 Griffith.<sup>166</sup> It may be assumed this is the same address.

### **Tryphena Shipman Rogers: New Haven Indiana.**

Tryphena Shipman was born in New Jersey, and moved with her parents to Ohio when young. Her parents died early and Tryphena lived for many years with the family of Israel Ludlow in the Cincinnati area. She married John Rogers in 1815, and the family lived successively in Springfield, Ohio, Vernon Indiana, Preble County, Ohio and finally to Allen County in 1825. John and Tryphena Shipman purchased many acres along the Maumee River east of Fort Wayne, and in 1830 opened "the Hoosier Nest" inn for travelers on the Maumee, and the road along its banks. Following construction of the Wabash and Erie Canal along their property, business increased dramatically. The location of the Roger's Homestead is noted to be about 4 miles east of downtown Fort Wayne, and may have been the stopping place of the 1829 Exodus of African Americans noted in the Hoover letter, above.<sup>167</sup>

As mentioned above, Tryphena Shipman Rogers was raised by Israel Ludlow, of Cincinnati. Israel Ludlow was a surveyor, and is credited as being a founder of the city of Cincinnati, arriving in 1789. Ludlow and his brother William both worked as surveyors and many portions of Ohio and Indiana were laid out by them. Israel Ludlow settled in an area of Cincinnati that he called "Ludlow Station," located where Chambers and Chase Streets meet the railroad in downtown Cincinnati. There he raised his children James C., Martha, Sarah Belle and Israel, Jr., along with Tryphena Shipman.<sup>168</sup>

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<sup>166</sup> *Fort Wayne Directory, 1874-1875*. Detroit: Polk, Murphy and Co., 1874. page 133.

<sup>167</sup> Obituary, also Robertson, p.221.

<sup>168</sup> Obituary; also familysearch.org; Clopper, Edward Nicholas. *An American Family: its*

Sarah Belle Ludlow married Salmon P. Chase, listed in the Siebert List of Underground Railroad agents in Hamilton County, Ohio. Chase was an attorney and represented many African Americans who were re-captured in Cincinnati. He became a United States Senator from Ohio, and later served as Secretary of the Treasury under Lincoln. <sup>169</sup>

James C. Ludlow lived at Ludlow Station for many years, and raised his own children there. In 1835 he was one of the founding members of the Ohio Anti-Slavery Society, and although he was unable to attend the convention in person, his letter to the convention was widely distributed, and was published with the official proceedings. He wrote: "I regret that circumstances beyond my control will prevent my attending the convention. To have been able to record my name with those who advocate the doctrine of immediate abolition of slavery, without expatriation, would have given me sincere pleasure."<sup>170</sup> By 1838, James C. Ludlow had served a term as president of the statewide anti-slavery organization, and is described by Hamm:

"...one of the leading abolitionists in Cincinnati... a supporter of the Lane Seminary abolitionists, and a financial backer of the Cincinnati Philanthropist, which was one of the leading abolitionist journals in the Ohio Valley. A few other families of similar sentiments lived around the Ludlows... In the vicinity was also 'The Hall of Free Discussion,' which James C. Ludlow had erected in 1832 in the 'interest of religion, literature, and education' ...The Ludlows and their neighbors, the Cloppers, were firm abolitionists, ... and were attracted to non-resistance."<sup>171</sup>

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*ups and downs through eight generations in New Amsterdam, New York, Pennsylvania, Maryland, Ohio and Texas, from 1650 to 1880.* Cincinnati; 1950. pp.422-423.

<sup>169</sup>Clopper. *An American Family*, pg. 422-423, also Siebert List, and familysearch.org.

<sup>170</sup>*Proceedings of Ohio Antislavery Society*, 1835, p.49.

<sup>171</sup>Hamm, *God's Government*, p. 7.

In 1838 James C. Ludlow hired John Wattles to tutor his children and others at Ludlow Station. John Wattles was the brother of Augustus Wattles, and both had enrolled at Lane Seminary, becoming part of the group known as the "Lane Rebels." Augustus Wattles spent many years providing assistance to African Americans in Ohio and eastern Indiana, and was responsible for helping to settle the "Randolph Slaves." John Wattles assisted his brother from 1836-1838 when he was hired by Ludlow. John Wattles returned to New England in 1839, and was hired as an agent for the American Anti-Slavery Society for Ohio, although it is unclear how long he remained in that capacity. <sup>172</sup>

The brother of Tryphena Shipman Rogers' foster father was William Ludlow. According to Hamm:

"Grand Prairie's story actually began in Red Lion, Ohio, near Lebanon... There a group of families, mostly from New Jersey, had about 1820 become interested in the communitarian ideas of William Ludlow. Ludlow was a surveyor who had surveyed much of western Ohio for the federal government, and somehow had come into contact with James M. Dorsey, the principal of the school at Oxford, Ohio, that later became Miami University. Together, Dorsey and Ludlow put together a plan for a group they called the "Rational Brethren." ... The group had lasted little more than a year when it dissolved in 1817. Ludlow, however, remained interested, and after giving up hope of reviving the "Rational Brethren," joined forces with the families of Jonathon Crane, Isaac Romine, Enoch Bowling, Oliver Osborne, and Mathias Dean in Warren County, Ohio... An attempt to combine their farms failed when they were unable to acquire intervening land. So they sold out in Ohio and in 1824 moved to Fountain County, Indiana, on the Wabash River. There they entered a thousand acres on Coal Creek and in the same years formed the Coal Creek Community and Church of God. The goal

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<sup>172</sup>Hamm, *God's Government*, p. 7; also Siebert, box 112, "The Underground Railroad in Northwest Ohio." E. Delorus Preston, Jr. 1932.

of the Society was "to ameliorate the condition of man by destroying individual aspirations for wealth, and establish a system of equal rights and privileges upon that estimable principal of doing to others as we should do unto us." ...The experiment was short lived....Ludlow went off to join Robert Owen at new Harmony, 150 miles down the Wabash. He came back in October 1826, but withdrew again in 1830... Ludlow's departure was the signal; for dissolution of the group and the division of its land... the Cranes and Romines were not discouraged. By early 1844 they had learned of Universal Inquiry and Reform...With hopes of expansion, however, they decided not to launch the experiment in Fountain County, but on the other side of the Wabash in Warren County, on what was known as the Grand Prairie." <sup>173</sup>

After the failure of this communal experiment as well, the Cranes and Romines remained in the area, and continued to work for progressive causes. In 1849 John and Esther Wattles joined them, after having lived with other Siebert-mentioned Underground Railroad Agents in Ohio in the Prairie Home Commune. <sup>174</sup> In the summer of 1849, the Wattles purchased land on the Wea Plains near West Point, in Tippecanoe County, and organized the Grand Prairie Harmonial Institute. <sup>175</sup>

### **David and Rayburn Beeson: More Aboite Quakers**

John Rogers was a widow with children when he married Tryphena, and several of the children from his first marriage accompanied them on their move to Allen County. Both Elizabeth and Louisa Rogers were married to David Beeson, at different times. David Beeson was born in Green County, Ohio, and was the son of Richard and Nancy

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<sup>173</sup>Hamm, *God's Government*, pp. 140-141.

<sup>174</sup>Hamm, *God's Government*, p. 111

<sup>175</sup>ibid, pp.222-224. The other Siebert mentioned URR agents who were co-inmates and/or organizers of Prairie Home with the Wattles included Elihu Oren, Valentine Nicholson, Abraham Allen, Benjamin B. Davis, Joel P. Davis, Wilson D. Schooley, and others.

(Cain)Beeson-- Quakers from Deep River Monthly Meeting in Guilford County, North Carolina.<sup>176</sup> According to the 1880 Helms History of Allen County, David's brother, Rayburn Beeson " ... came to Allen County with his parents in March, 1826, and worked on the farm of his father, Richard Beeson, in Wayne Township, until 1839. In that year he purchased a tract of land in Aboit (sic) Township, upon which he located shortly after."

<sup>177</sup> It can be assumed that David came to Allen County at this time as well.

David Beeson held the original land grant for the northwest corner of Section 19, Aboite Township, issued March 15, 1837. This section was purchased as follows:

David Beeson, NW marginal parcel, March 15, 1837, 6.9 acres

Benjamin F. Davis, Lot 2, May 1, 1849, unknown acreage

Benjamin F. Davis, Lot 3, May 1, 1849, unknown acreage

Benjamin F. Davis, southwest half of northeast quarter, May 1, 1849, 80 acres?

David Caven, northeast fractional part, February 10, 1835, 41.44 acres

Oliver Campbell, southwest fractional part, May 10, 1848, 68.88 acres

Barney Krouse, lot 1, May 1, 1849, 42.5 acres

Rayburn Beeson married Rosanna Vanada in Aboite Township in 1834. On February 28, 1849, Rayburn Beeson sold to James Sweetser 80 acres at the northwest quarter of section 26, in Aboite Township. At this location is found the intersection of the Upper

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<sup>176</sup>Beeson married Elizabeth Rogers in January of 1830. Following her death, he married Louisa Antoinette Rogers on 7 January, 1837, according to Familysearch.org Ancestral File, and International Genealogical Index (IGI). Please note that Deep River Monthly Meeting also organized slaves schools with assistance from Vestal and Levi Coffin and Beulah Coffin Puckett, and appears to have had a strong anti-slavery sentiment. (see Coffin, *Reminiscences*, pp. 69,72,104.)

<sup>177</sup>Helms, p. 145.

Huntington Road (US 24) and Liberty Mills Road, which travels through Whitley County, to just north of North Manchester. James Sweetser is the brother of the Madison Sweetser mentioned in Chapter 3, in relationship to Rankin and the election. James Sweetser is again mentioned below, in Chapter 6, in the discussion of the Vermilyea house.

David Beeson and his second wife, Louisa A. Rogers, moved from Allen County, to Warrick County sometime before 1846. Charles Blockson writes:

Near the city of Evansville was another place where the w s a very runaways crossed the Ohio. This was a very popular route as there were many free Negroes in the city among whom the refugees could be easily hidden. A third route was a short distance above the mouth of Little Pigeon. The refugees crossed here by skiff and were carried up and turned over to friends between Boonville and Lynnville in Warrick County, Indiana.<sup>178</sup>

David and Louisa Beeson settled in the area between Lynnville and Boonville, close to Stanley, although an exact location is not known. They are buried in the Barnett Cemetery located a mile west of Stanley, on Road 900N.<sup>179</sup>

Although there is no primary or secondary evidence of underground railroad involvement by Tryphena Shipman Rogers or John Rogers, the family connections of Tryphena Shipman Rogers, and their residential location along the Maumee River and Wabash and Erie Canal, and their daughters' connection to Aboite Township suggest that further research is called for.

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<sup>178</sup> Charles Blockson. *Underground Railroad, First Person Narratives of Escapes to Freedom in the North*. Prentice Hall, New York, 1987. from email sent to ARCH from Indiana DHPA, August 8, 2001. Pagination unknown.

<sup>179</sup>found online under Warrick County Churches and Cemeteries , and also at familysearch.org.

### David Winston Jones: Grant County and Fort Wayne

Akin to the above mentioned Society for Universal Inquiry communes was the Union Home Commune located in Randolph County, Indiana. The dream of Hiram Mendenhall (also a first cousin of Jesse Williams, mentioned above), Union Home was located near the Cabin Creek Settlement, outside of Huntsville. Mendenhall enlisted the help of several others to organize this venture, including a young Orthodox Quaker from Grant County, David Winston Jones. Jones was the son of Obadiah Jones, the founder of Jonesboro, and one of the Friends in Grant County who helped to settle the Weaver Community.

Although David W. Jones never lived at the Union Home Commune, his aunt and uncle, Mark and Mary (Jones) Patty, did. Hamm writes that "David W. Jones, who came from a stalwartly Orthodox family in Grant County, Indiana, found himself regarded as an infidel and treated as something of a pariah because of his interest in Universal Reform."<sup>180</sup> David W. Jones undoubtedly knew and associated with the organizers and inmates of Union Home, which included such Underground Railroad operators as John Wattles, Wilson D. Schooley, Hulda Wickersham, Asa Bales, and others.<sup>181</sup> One couple also from Grant County, was Charles and Lydia Atkinson, who may have been related to David W. Jones's wife, Jane Atkinson Jones.<sup>182</sup>

David W. Jones is remembered in Grant County as the publisher of the *Western Aurora*, an abolitionist paper, and the first regular news to be published in Jonesboro. Begun in 1845, it was described thus: "This was a fearless advocate of the abolition of the slaves, and be it said to the credit of the editor, who was at that time a mere boy, that he openly

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<sup>180</sup> Hamm, *God's Government*, pp. 163.

<sup>181</sup> Hamm, *God's Government*, pp. 128-136; Siebert List, Ohio and Indiana.

<sup>182</sup> Hamm, *ibid*, p.163.

proclaimed the right of a downtrodden race, although his life and property were threatened.”<sup>183</sup> Jones lived in Grant, and possibly Delaware County as well, until his move to Fort Wayne in 1863.

Upon his arrival in Allen County he commenced publishing the *Fort Wayne Daily Gazette* -- still in business today as the *Journal Gazette*, and served as its editor. He was soon joined in partnership with Isaac Jenkinson, a local attorney. Under the auspices of **Jones and Jenkinson**, the Gazette represented the Republican view in Fort Wayne. According to a grandson of David W. Jones, the move to Fort Wayne was specifically to provide an alternative to what was a Southern bias in the Democratically leaning press of Fort Wayne in the early 1860's. <sup>184</sup> In March, 1864, Jones sold his half of the business to Homer C. Hartman, who continued with Jenkinson until 1867. <sup>185</sup>

The arrival of Jones in Allen County followed the beginning of the Civil War, and it is not likely that he participated to any great extent in underground railroad activities after settling here. His social and business contacts upon his arrival imply associations, however, that will be discussed further, below.

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<sup>183</sup>Grant and Fuller, *History of Grant County, Indiana*. 1886. p. 580.

<sup>184</sup>Interview with Bud Jones, March 16, 2001.

<sup>185</sup>Williams, 1858, 1864, 1865; Robertson, p.320.

## Chapter 5: South Wayne Neighborhood

**Dr. Lewis G. Thompson** acquired a large area of property south of downtown Fort Wayne, and adjoining the St. Mary's River prior to his death in 1845. Thompson's land adjoined that of Asa Fairfield's, who controlled the bridge and crossing at what is now the Oakdale bridge. The Bluffton Plank crossed the St. Mary's at this spot, and it should be noted that it was the primary entry point to Fort Wayne from the south. <sup>186</sup>

Born in Kentucky, Lewis G. Thompson arrived in Fort Wayne in 1827, at the suggestion of Hugh McCulloch. <sup>187</sup> Dr. Thompson was a Universalist, although he worshipped with the Presbyterian congregation during the Alexander Rankin years, and wrote about Rankin in correspondence to his brother. <sup>188</sup> Later, Thompson was the leader of the very small group of Universalists, who aligned with Charles Beecher, and lent him their support. <sup>189</sup>

Thompson involved himself in local politics, serving on Fort Wayne's first Board of Trustees in 1829, and aligned himself with the Whig party. <sup>190</sup> Thompson's candidacy for US congressman in 1843 for the northeast Indiana district resulted in many articles in papers in both Allen and Grant Counties, with charges against the abolitionists of the area. <sup>191</sup> Charles R. Poinsatte writes:

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<sup>186</sup>See Map of area in appendix. The Winchester Road joins the Bluffton Road approximately 1.5 miles before the bridge.

<sup>187</sup>Mather, p. 241.

<sup>188</sup>*Praying Grounds and Pleading Terms: The Letters of Lewis G. and Wilson L. Thompson, 1837-184.* Fort Wayne: Allen County-Fort Wayne Historical Society. 1969.

<sup>189</sup>Mather, p.243.

<sup>190</sup>Mather p.241.

<sup>191</sup>See page 44 above.

"If any group within the city tended towards abolitionism, it was the professional class of men-- some of the Protestant ministers, such as Rankin, Charles Beecher, and (Samuel) Brenton, lawyers and newspaper editors, such as...Charles Case, and the physician Lewis Thompson...Thompson was a Whig, but shortly before he died the *Sentinel* accused him of being more of an abolitionist than a Whig."<sup>192</sup>

There is no evidence for the participation of Lewis G. Thompson in Underground Railroad activities, neither on the large landholding along the St. Mary's River, nor at his city home (demolished), which was located at the southwest corner of Berry and Clay Streets, about 500 feet east of the Alexander Rankin House.<sup>193</sup>

Following his death in 1845 a decade passed before his estate was finally settled and the landholdings along the St. Mary's River divided among his wife and children. His daughter Margaret Lucretia Thompson inherited that portion roughly bounded by Broadway, Fay, the St. Mary's River, and Park Street.<sup>194</sup>

A newspaper article dated July 24, 1938 gives the history of the home that Margaret Lucretia Thompson built on this site:

"One of the oldest homes in the city is that of Judge William J. Vesey at 2602 Thompson Avenue. Dr. Thompson left the estate to his daughter Lucretia, who married Alexander Hanna of Logansport. In 1855, Mr. and Mrs. Hanna built the house which was sold in 1865 to David W. Jones, founder of the *Gazette*. Mr. Jones and his family occupied the home until 1887 when it was again sold, this time to the Vesey family... A special old piece of

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<sup>192</sup>Poinsatte, Charles R. *Fort Wayne During the Canal Era, 1828-1855: A Study of a Western Community in the Middle Period of American History*. Indianapolis, Indiana Historical Bureau, 1969. p.188.

<sup>193</sup>Williams, p. 102; 1855 Plat Map of Fort Wayne.

<sup>194</sup>Abstract for 1335 Maple St.

furniture is a melodeon which the judge's mother, formerly Sara Waterhouse, carried in her buggy..."<sup>195</sup>

It is not known if Margaret Lucretia Hanna and her husband were abolitionists, or involved in URR activities. By 1868, Margaret Lewis had remarried-- to a William Lewis-- and had settled in Santa Clara, California. Family members sold on her behalf the remaining portions of her land holdings, to several individuals involved in URR or abolition activities.

**Homer C. Hartman** and his wife Sarepta purchased the land immediately east of the Hanna-Jones-Vesey house, and built a home identified today as 1321 Maple. As mentioned in Chapter 3, Hartman grew up next door to the Henry Cannady family. In March of 1864 he took over David W. Jones's interest in the Gazette.

In 1868 William Moellering purchased the west portion of the Hartman land, and built a house on speculation. In 1870 **John Morris** purchased the home, today known as 1335 Maple Street. John Morris was born in Lisbon, Columbiana County, Ohio, and according to biographies, attended Quaker schools there. He then went on to a Quaker boarding school in Richmond, Indiana. No record of this John Morris has been found in Friends records for Ohio. In 1843 he married, and moved to Auburn, Indiana, where he opened a law practice.

In 1852 Morris ran for Judge of Common Pleas Court as a Whig, with his circuit comprising Dekalb and Steuben Counties, and won, inspite of a democratic majority in those counties. <sup>196</sup>

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<sup>195</sup> "One of City's Oldest Houses," newspaper not identified, dated 7/24/38 in top margin. There appears to be a connection between Sara Waterhouse Vesey and the Waterhouse family of URR fame of Steuben and Lagrange counties.

Then in 1857, attorney Charles Case -- mentioned in Chapter 2-- convinced Morris to move to Fort Wayne, and joined with him in opening the firm of Case, Morris, and Withers.

Sometime prior to 1860, **Warren H. Withers** settled on Maple Street, platted on Margaret Lucretia Lewis's land. Withers, the law partner of Case and Morris, had been in Fort Wayne longer than Morris. In March, 1848, he purchased half of the *Fort Wayne Times* Newspaper, and owned it until August, 1849. During this time, the *Times* ran a small notice regarding fugitive slaves, which was highlighted a decade later, in *Dawson's Daily Times*, April 27, 1859:

#### **A Relic**

In looking over the files of Fort Wayne Times of 1848 -- the organ of the Whig Party, edited by W.H. Withers and T. N. Hood, we find the following, which we quote as the reflex of what was then the estimation in which the party then held "Free Soilers." Read it Mr. Withers and all you who have gone astray.

#### **Free Soil**

A number of wagons passed through this place one day last week, with FREE SOIL, and LIBERTY, inscribed in their covers. We thought to take a peep under the cover of one, and ascertain the kind of material that expressed their views so fearlessly and in so public a manner. We silently approached, gently raised the cover, and discovered to our surprise a load of darkies -- we retreated, we did.

Would Mr. Withers, now a ranting Republican still retreat at such a sight? We don't expect to be answered. <sup>197</sup>

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<sup>196</sup> Slocum, vol. 2, pp. 56-61.

<sup>197</sup> *Dawson's Daily Times*, April 27, 1859. Original found in *Fort Wayne Times*, October 26, 1848.

To the east of the Thompson landholdings lay the extensive holdings of **Asa Fairfield**. Fairfield, a native of Kennebunk, Maine, came to Fort Wayne in 1834, at the suggestion of his wife's cousin, Hugh McCulloch. Fairfield purchased 240 acres, and in 1837 purchased the mill that had been constructed by Davis and Hanna at the location of the Oakdale bridge. He later sold the mill later to Augustus Caesar Beaver. Asa Fairfield and his wife, Olive Stone were among the original members of Charles Beecher's Second Presbyterian congregation, and Beaver joined soon after. <sup>198</sup>

During the early 1850's Asa platted the eastern portion of his holdings, along Fairfield Avenue, into lots of about 4.5 acres each. <sup>199</sup> 1850's purchasers included: Lindley Ninde, Charles Case, Robert S. Taylor, Henry Puckett, and Stephen Bond.

**Charles and Jane Case** purchased two lots, including the lot that is the current location of Packard Park, in the 3300 block of Fairfield. As mentioned in earlier portions of this report, Case was the Abolition Editor for the *Fort Wayne Standard*, and served as the Republican Congressman from the northeastern part of Indiana 1857-1860. He also co-defended the African-American James Brown along with Lindley Ninde. The Cases never built a house on this lot, and it was under the control of the Nindes when, in 1872, the Packard Piano Company relocated to this site from Chicago. Charles and Jane Case lived for many years in a home near the southeast corner of Van Buren and Wayne Streets. <sup>200</sup>It was demolished sometime prior to the 1893 construction of the L.O. Hull House (Indiana Sites and Structures # 003-215-25117) ; located on that site today.

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<sup>198</sup>*Manual of the Second Presbyterian Church, Fort Wayne, Indiana. Fort Wayne: T.S.Taylor & Co., Printers, 1869, pp.10-13.*

<sup>199</sup>It should be noted that these lots were adjacent to the land purchased by Jesse Williams during the same time period.

<sup>200</sup>Williams, page.

**Robert S. Taylor** came to Fort Wayne in 1859 and took a position in the law office of Lindley Ninde. Taylor was the son of Isaac N. Taylor and Margaret Stewart Taylor, born in 1838, in Chillicothe, Ohio. His father was a Presbyterian minister, who helped to organize a congregation in Jay County, Indiana in 1840. Isaac N. Taylor was also the organizer of Liber College, south of Portland, and acted as its first principal. Liber College admitted both White and Free Black children from its opening in 1853. Liber College is described in *Indiana: A New Historical Guide*:

The site of Liber College is just south of Portland. Take US 27 (Meridian Street) south 1.6 m. from Main Street. to the turnoff to College Corner (CR 120) and travel east .4 m. before turning south onto CR 145 for .1 m. A bronze marker on a boulder in the yard of a house on the right commemorates the 25-year history of Liber College. Opened in 1853 on a six-acre lot, the school faced immediate problems when its acceptance of a black student split the organizing body and led to establishment of a rival institution, the Farmers' Academy, nearby. Liber College continued in operation until its mortgage was foreclosed in 1878. The college building was towed to the opposite side of the road and was sectioned into a residence (later destroyed by fire) and a combination outhouse and stable (subsequently torn down).<sup>201</sup>

Robert S. Taylor attended Liber College, graduated in 1854, and also worked as an instructor. Immediately following the 1854 commencement ceremony, Robert S. was married to fellow classmate Fannie Wright at the site.<sup>202</sup>

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<sup>201</sup> *Indiana: A New Historical Guide*. Indianapolis, Indiana Historical Society, 1989, p.73.

<sup>202</sup> On October 16, 1856, a "Mr. Taylor of Liber College" gave a presentation at the Indiana Woman's Rights Association Convention at Winchester, Indiana, indicating an additional connection of Robert S. Taylor to the Nindes and other moral Suasionists. *Indiana Women's Rights Association Minutes, 1851-1881*, in the collection of the Indiana State Library.

Years after arriving in Fort Wayne, Robert S. Taylor shared an Underground Railroad story with historian Bert Griswold:

"I have more than a passing interest in the subject of 'underground railroads,'" observes Judge Robert S. Taylor. "At Salem, Ohio, the house of my grandfather, William Taylor, was a station on one of the slave routes between the Ohio River and Canada. From this house for several years the sons of my grandfather, working at night to elude the pursuers who often sought the runaways, conveyed the Negroes in wagons to the next station, the farm of Robert Stewart, about twenty miles farther north. Arriving usually about 3 o'clock in the morning, the young ladies of the household arose and prepared coffee and other comforts for the night travelers. The friendship between one of these young men, Isaac N. Taylor, and one of these girls, Margaretta Stewart, resulted in their marriage. I am their son." <sup>203</sup>

In 1874 Taylor ran for the local congressional seat, against Andrew Holman Hamilton, a part owner of the Fort Wayne Sentinel. <sup>204</sup> His opponent made several statements about Taylor in a campaign speech in September, 1874, and Robert Taylor responded with a speech on Oct. 1, 1874, in Hometown. He quotes Hamilton's remarks against him, and replied to the charges, in this speech reprinted in its entirety on October 2, 1874 in *The Daily News*:

"My natural aristocracy, and selfishness are then set forth in plain terms.

*The greatest natural aristocrat in Fort Wayne is Bob Taylor, the Republican candidate for Congress. He is full of fanatical, New England ideas, and he has no sympathy whatsoever with the masses. He is too selfish to live in this city...*

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<sup>203</sup>Griswold, p. 320.

<sup>204</sup> Hamilton was a grandson of Jesse Holman, the builder of Veraustau.

*Bob Taylor, the worst Radical in the business. He's a fanatic of the worst type. There is only one other man in the district that approaches him as a fanatic, and that is his South Wayne neighbor, Lindley M. [ed.-- Lindley Ninde] For the past twenty years they both looked through one quill, and saw nothing dangling at the other end but cold water, woman suffrage and a little nigger..."<sup>205</sup>*

Later in the article is mention of the Taylor residence:

"I was born in a log cabin, cradled in a sugar trough, and reared on corn-bread and cheap molasses. In my youthful days I dug ginseng, cut hoop-poles, sold 'possum skins, hauled saw-logs and taught singing-school for a living. I commenced keeping house in Fort Wayne, fifteen years ago, in one room on an alley. In that commodious abode my aristocracy flourished on two hundred dollars a year. But I could not stand such high life in the city, and moved to the country, and added to my income by raising potatoes for sale at twenty-five cents a bushel. Until within a year I have lived in a frame shanty that cost less money than Mr. Hamilton spent for the wine supper that he gave the delegates that nominated him."<sup>206</sup>

Taylor's move to the "country" in 1860 took him to lots 8 and 9 in Fairfield's outlots, located between Fairfield, Hoagland, Downing and the northern boundary of the Fairfield Elementary School. Fairfield Elementary School, 2825 Fairfield Avenue, today covers most of the space once owned by Taylor. Today, these two lots are platted as R.S. and F.W. Taylor's Addition, Frank B. Taylor's Addition, and Burrows Addition.<sup>207</sup> No home identified as Taylor's remains at this site.

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<sup>205</sup>*Fort Wayne Daily News*, "Extract From Speech of R.S. Taylor, at Huntertown, Oct. 1, 1874."

<sup>206</sup>*ibid.*

<sup>207</sup>Frank Taylor, the son of Robert S. Taylor and Fannie Wright Taylor, became one of the preeminent geologists of North America in the early twentieth century. *See Pioneers Resting in Lindenwood Cemetery*, for more.

Burrows Addition was owned by the Taylor's prior to its platting, and the name is something of a mystery. Perhaps a misfiled deed record might have shown sale by Taylor to a Burrows, but no such item has been found. Taylor may very well have named it in honor of **Daniel W. Burroughs**, the vocal abolitionist and Underground Railroad agent mentioned in chapter 3.

The lot to Taylor's immediate west held the residence of Lindley Ninde, and to the north, the adjoining lot was purchased by Lindley Ninde's brother-in-law, **Henry W. Puckett**.

Henry W. Puckett, the older brother of Beulah Puckett Ninde, also grew up in the town of Fountain City (Newport), in Wayne County. An old-timer of the community, Daniel Huff, remembered Henry Puckett, in a manuscript submitted to the Earlham College Archives:

"H.W. Puckett son of Daniel Puckett was born here and he grew up a street boy he had a reputation of being the champion fighter of the town...the boy was fitted up and sent to that West Town school and came home a bright star and commenced teaching and finally entered the schools of Cincinnati and followed teaching some time. In 1850 he entered the company of emigrants for gold in California, and was gone 3 years. He read law while teaching and graduated in a law school in Philadelphia, went in partnership with his brotherinlaw [sic] Tinley [sic] M. Ninde of Ft. Wayne worked and studied hard and become diseased and...finally died lamented by all who knew him and was brought to the cemetery of his parents. He was a man of more than ordinary talents. <sup>208</sup>

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<sup>208</sup>Huff, Daniel. *A Biographical Sketch of some of the former and later Citizens of Newport and Fountain City Indiana*. Manuscript, Earlham College Archives, given May 1, 1968.

Henry Puckett undoubtedly shared the passion against slavery of his parents, sister and uncle, Levi Coffin. On page 52 of *"Bury Me in A Free Land": The Abolitionist Movement in Indiana, 1816-1865* Gwendolyn Crenshaw reproduced a petition from Indiana citizens, to the state of Missouri. Signers of this document include Henry W. Puckett and Beulah C. Puckett (may be Beulah Ninde or her mother). <sup>209</sup>

Henry Puckett is listed in the 1858 and 1860 City directories as residing with Lindley and Beulah Ninde at their home on W. Wayne, as does the 1860 Census. He died in Fort Wayne on 16 July, 1861, and his land came under the control of Lindley and Beulah Ninde. They platted it as part of L. M. Nindes Addition, and in 1868 James W. Ninde purchased a portion of the land, on what is approximately the southwest corner of Pontiac and Hoagland Streets. Although there are a handful of c. 1860-1870 gabled-ell homes on this block, none were included in the Sites and Structures Inventory, due to significant alterations. It is not known if Puckett or James Ninde built homes here.

To the west, in 1850, **Stephen B. Bond** purchased the lots adjoining Puckett, Taylor, and Lindley and Beulah Ninde. In 1863 Stephen B. Bond married Jessie Marie Vermilyea. Both the Bond House and the Vermilyea House have oral traditions regarding the Underground Railroad and are described in the next chapter.

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<sup>209</sup>Although a somewhat faded reproduction, these two signatures are quite clear. Henry's signature is one of the largest on the page.

## Chapter Six: Local Oral Traditions

**Vermilyea House:** Long reported to be an Underground Railroad Site. Jesse Vermilyea was a native of Dutchess County, New York, and came to Indiana sometime before 1818 with his parents, both of whom died that year, and are buried at Salem, Washington County.<sup>210</sup> Jesse was one of at least eight children who survived to adulthood. His oldest sister, Phoebe Vermilyea married David Burr in 1818, and in 1828 David Burr was one of the organizers of the Indiana Canal Board of Commissioners along with Samuel Hanna and Robert Johns.<sup>211</sup> Another sister, Anna Vermilyea, married James Sweetser in Grant County in 1837.<sup>212</sup> Jesse Vermilyea arrived in Grant County sometime before 1831 when he was elected Clerk of the Circuit Court in Grant County.<sup>213</sup> In 1832 he married Maria Taggart. In 1833 the family moved to Allen County, and purchased land in section 32, Aboite Township, and part of the Raccoon Reserve adjoining it. Kaler and Maring note:

“Raccoon Village originally consisted of a brick house with two rooms and a number of log cabins, all erected by the government for the Indians. The place was named in honor of Chief Raccoon, who occupied the brick house referred to...the land was sold and the brick house passed into the hands of Jesse Vermilyea. By him it was rented to different parties...It was built squarely on the county line, one room being in Whitley and the other in Allen.”<sup>214</sup>

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<sup>210</sup>Familysearch.org, Ancestral file, Edward Vermilya and Joanna Wright Vermilya.

<sup>211</sup>Brice, p. 303.

<sup>212</sup>Familysearch.org., Ancestral file, Edward Vermilya and Joanna Wright Vermilya.

<sup>213</sup>Brant and Fuller, *History of Grant County, Indiana*. 1886, p. 273, 291.

<sup>214</sup>Kaler, S.P. and R. H. Maring, *History of Whitley County, Indiana*. BF Bowen and Co., 1907.  
page 344.

Apparently Vermilyea lived first in the brick treaty house that had been built for Raccoon, before constructing his own house across the road.

On his arrival in 1833, Vermilyea kept an informal store at his home, and traded with the Native Americans. Robertson writes: "He was a prominent man, and when Aboite post office was established in 1839 he became the first postmaster. During (that)... year he manufactured brick and built the first brick house in the township."<sup>215</sup> Vermilyea also became a director of the Fort Wayne Branch of the Indiana Bank during the 1830's and also served as contractor for the sections of the Wabash and Erie Canal that connected his property. Following completion of the canal, the home became an inn.

Jesse and Maria Vermilyea had five children in Aboite township, although their first, David Burr Vermilyea, died at age three months in 1833.<sup>216</sup> Jesse Vermilyea died 11 August 1846, a victim of cholera. His wife followed in 1849. The parentless children were then sent to Grant County, to live with their aunt and uncle Anna and James Sweetser.

#### Chain of Title:

White Raccoon: Miami leader, gifted with land and treaty house at 1826 Treaty at Paradise Springs.<sup>217</sup>

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<sup>215</sup>Robertson, vol. 1, p. 284-285.

<sup>216</sup>Familysearch.org, Ancestral File.

<sup>217</sup>Perry, D.M. "The Richardville House." Fort Wayne, *Old Fort News*, vol. 53, number 1, 1990.

1833: Jesse Vermilyea and wife, Maria Taggart Vermilyea purchase a portion of land and occupy a brick treaty house, and later a double log cabin. In 1839, a brick house is constructed.

In 1846 Jesse Vermilyea died. January, 1849, Maria Vermilyea died. Children went to live with their uncle James Sweetser, in Grant County.

In 1849, Philo Rumsey, a local restaurateur and a past Fort Wayne City Councilman, opened the Vermilyea House Inn in the home.

Historian Bert Griswold writes: " In 1849...the year brought to Fort Wayne many substantial citizens... Philo Rumsey open the Vermilyea house fourteen miles southwest of Fort Wayne; he returned later to manage the Rockhill House."<sup>218</sup> In 1850 Rumsey and family are enumerated in census in Aboite township (2519-2531). Philo Rumsey was a native of Rutland County, Vermont, and moved to Fort Wayne in 1832.<sup>219</sup> On March 7, 1838 he married Rebecca Rockhill, the daughter of William Rockhill and Theodosia Richardson Rockhill at Fort Wayne. William and Theodosia had been raised as Quakers in Burlington, New Jersey, and had come to Fort Wayne in the 1820's.<sup>220</sup> It should be noted that Rebecca Rockhill was the sister of Mary Rockhill Tyler, the wife of Frederick Tyler, who was the among the first six members of the congregation to join with Charles Beecher, and he remained a trustee of Beecher's congregation until his death in 1854.<sup>221</sup>

#### Chain of Title Continues:

House sold Jan 8, 1853, from Estate of Vermilyea to Benjamin Ruffner and wife Mary. Reportedly a warehouse built near canal, called Ruffner's Warehouse.

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<sup>218</sup>Griswold, p. 406.

<sup>219</sup>Familysearch.org, Ancestral File; Griswold, p. 317.

<sup>220</sup>Marriage records, Allen County; Robertson, 406-407.

<sup>221</sup>Mather; also ARCH files on Mary Rockhill Tyler House, 918 Van Buren Street, which ARCH is currently restoring.

In 1854, Philo Rumsey apparently moved back to Fort Wayne, and assumed control over the Rockhill House, which opened in that year.<sup>222</sup>

Ruffner to John Brice and James L. Berke, April, 1855

Brice and Berke to Benjamin Ruffner, July 23, 1855

Ruffner to Charles and Julia Moores, 1861

Moores to Nathaniel Hogg, August 6, 1864. Hogg was a resident of Alleghany Co., PA-- apparently never visited his purchase.

Simmers --prior to 1944

Darling--1944 to 1963

Ellis--1963 to 2000

Freeland. 2000 to present.<sup>223</sup>

The Vermilyea House has had an oral tradition of Underground Railroad involvement since at least 1911, although no individual is named as an agent, conductor, or participant. ARCH interviewed former owner Jim Ellis March 29, 2001. Jim Ellis, owner from the 1960's to the fall of 2000, shared the following information:

**He reports that during the late 1980's he interviewed a man named Garl Jennings, who was aged 90-95, and was the father of one of Ellis' aunts. Garl Jennings had lived for most of his life on a farm near Liberty Mills Road and Homestead Road, approximately 1 1/2 miles northeast of the Vermilyea House. Mr. Ellis reports that Garl Jennings told him that he had known that the Vermilyea House was an**

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<sup>222</sup>ibid. 343.

<sup>223</sup>Chain of title provided by past owner Jim Ellis, developed from abstract in his possession.

underground railroad site for most of his life. He also recalled seeing the tunnel on several occasions, and that the tunnel did not go towards the canal, but rather to an open field to the west of the house. Mr. Ellis recalls that Garl Jennings said that it was intended to be used by fugitives, and because the canal was so busy at this basin and lodging area, that the fugitives would be less likely seen as they emerged from this tunnel away from the canal.<sup>224</sup>

If Garl Jennings lived near the Vermilyea House in the first decade of the twentieth century, he most probably would have heard local stories about the structure. This early story of the Underground Railroad is significant, and shows that the oral tradition of this site is long standing. ARCH verified that Jennings did indeed live near the Vermilyea House:

- c.1905 *Rural Mail Directory*, aka "*Fort Wayne, Indiana District Book*." Saginaw, Michigan, The Appleby Company. p. 166. The Directory lists Jennings, Joseph, RFD 7, Fort Wayne, 9 miles southwest in Aboite Twp., occupation, farmer, owns 80 acres. American born. Other residents include Mrs. Anna, \*Garl, Charles. (\* connotes under ten years old.)
- 1909 *Polk's Fort Wayne City Directory*: Jennings, Job E. and Nancy A., farmers, section 22, 80 acres, Aboite Township, value \$2500.00, RR7.
- 1911 *Polk's Fort Wayne City Directory*: Jennings, Garl. personal property \$150. Aboite, RR 7. Jennings, Job E. Nancy A., farmers, section 22 80 acres, value \$2500.00, RR 7. (The listing of Garl without land, or separate residence may indicate that he had recently become of legal age... prior listings note that he is a child, or do not mention him..)

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<sup>224</sup>Interview by Angie Quinn, March 29, 2001.

Mr. Jim Ellis further noted that he thought that the house was an underground railroad site due to its proximity to the Wabash and Erie Canal towpath, located about 200 feet from the house. He also shared information about writing in the attic, and suggested I look at the plaster he saved in the basement.

Conversation with Rev. George Mather, April 17, 2001: Rev. George Mather is a retired Presbyterian Minister, and is a well known historian of the Allen County area. His book, *Frontier Faith*, has been quoted frequently in other portions of this report. Rev. Mather is also on the Board of Directors of the Allen County Fort Wayne Historical Society, and is the facilitator of their Superior Essex Lecture Series.

Follow up conversation to comment made Rev. Mather at an Northeast Indiana Freedom Trails Meeting, March 10, 2001. ARCH asked: "You mentioned seeing evidence of the Underground Railroad at the Vermilyea house when you visited it back in the 1960's. What specifically do you recall?"

**Rev. Mather responded, saying that he had visited the Vermilyea House soon after he moved to Fort Wayne in 1971, and it had been advertised as a Historic Underground Railroad site, open for a tour. Rev. Mather attended the tour, and recalls that it was led by a knowledgeable man who he believes was the owner. Mather was taken to the third floor attic space, and told that it was a daytime resting place for fugitive slaves. Rev. Mather recalls seeing several diacritical marks on exposed wood rafters, and noticed several carvings or scratchiness on the rafters. He also recalls that the walls were simply bare plaster or may have been whitewashed.**<sup>225</sup>

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<sup>225</sup>Interview by Angie Quinn, March 10, 2001.

Visit to Vermilyea House, March 29, 2001: New owner Todd Freeland gave tour of site, and shared a dozen broken pieces of plaster with remnants of writing in pencil, left in a box in the basement, left by the previous owner who removed them from the attic space when they finished it into a bedroom for their children. This researcher made out words "Ru..." and "1852" on broken fragments.

ARCH corresponded by E-mail with the granddaughter of the Darlings, who owned the home from the 1940's through the 1960's. Diane Darling Moore, of Moultrie, Georgia responded on April 10, 2001. Mrs. Moore is the granddaughter of Earl and Olive Darling, who purchased the Vermilyea home in 1944, and completed most of the alterations and additions. Copy of correspondence included in appendix. ARCH sent this comment:

"I am curious what you might recall having heard about the Underground Railroad and the Vermilyea House. I have read much about the supposed tunnel, but am curious to know if there are other stories associated with the home."

Mrs. Moore replied:

**"I heard stories about the tunnel that supposedly led from the basement to the canal. But as I understand it, no one has ever located this tunnel. And then I have a vague recollection of going up to the third floor attic and being shown the chains which had been removed from the slaves who were hidden up there."**

In September, 1999 ARCH received a small album from Mrs. Moore, titled: *The Vermilyea House: The Darling Years 1944-1963*. Mrs. Moore had visited the home many times while it was the residence of her grandparents. It includes photos of the home prior to the 1944 renovation, and several photocopied newspaper clippings. Unfortunately, the original clippings had been cropped, and several do not include the date of publication.

This album includes a number of items related to the Underground Railroad. They are listed below in the order they appear in this booklet. (booklet reproduced in its entirety in appendix.)

A. **"The Darlings had been told of a secret tunnel that led from the basement to the nearby canal that had been part of the Underground Railway. Also there were stories of chains in the attic that the fleeing slaves had left behind. The Darlings, however, never located the supposed tunnel entrance."** (page 2)

B. *Lines and Angles*, column by Cliff Milnor. (no date: Diane Darling Moore notes that this was obviously written during the renovation late 1940's-early 1950's). **"One fairly well substantiated story about the historic place concerns a tunnel from the basement to the old canal bank, a distance of a quarter mile. There are men living today who claim to have explored the tunnel for a distance of about 100 feet from the canal end. In the basement there is a huge boulder set into the foundation. This could well be the tunnel's entrance, but the Darlings will not move the boulder for fear of weakening the wall. Instead, they intend to excavate outside in an effort to find the truth of the story. If such a tunnel exists it probably was used for hiding and aiding the escape of fugitive slaves before the Civil War. Quite a number of houses still stand in Northern Indiana that once were stations on the Underground Railroad, and the Vermilyea home was ideally located for the Abolitionist activity."** (page 11)

C. *Fort Wayne Journal-Gazette*, Sunday, December 5, 1954. "From Horses to Humans: Hayloft, Stalls Become Attractive Rooms in Barn-To-Home Change", by Aloyse Moritz, page 10w. **"Located on the Upper Huntington Road was a red brick farm house, built in 1832 and known as the oldest standing house in Allen County. Used as a resting station for runaway slaves during the Civil War, the vacant home was desolate and gloomy -- broken window panes, underbrush that nearly covered the front of the house-- completely run-down. But the Darlings**

visualized how the big red brick house might have looked in its heyday.”

D. *Fort Wayne Journal-Gazette*, Sunday, July 14, 1963: “Once Social Capitol: Vermilyea House in Aboite Ready to Shelter New Host, by Kenneth Keller (no page). “There are things about the old mansion that invite conjecture. Until the 1930’s there was an open tunnel which extended from the basement down to the canal. Early reports say it was an avenue of escape from belligerent Indians who, during the Vermilyea regime, loitered about the tavern in numbers. **In a more dramatic vein, it has been described as an expedient for the fabulous Underground Railroad. Either or both versions could be correct. Since the keepers of stations on the Underground Railroad destroyed all artifacts for very practical reasons, their locations have remained a constant subject of conjecture among historians. The Vermilyea tunnel was shallow and musty, and its opening into the basement reportedly was sealed with a large boulder. The Darlings closed it off with appropriate stone work, very likely to keep mold from invading the basement.**”

E. *Fort Wayne Journal-Gazette*, Sunday, July 28, 1963: “The Spark of Learning: Pioneer Gave his Home to Start First School,” by Dorothy Conner. (no page) “Few of the Aboite schools or dwellings remain today. One notable exception, however, is the 123-year-old Vermilyea mansion... the handsome Vermilyea House served also as the township’s first post office and first store... **A canal station at Little River was located in the rear of the Vermilea house, to the south. This venerable old house in Aboite Township also still bears signs of its use, 100 years ago, as an important and thriving station on the Underground Railway.**”

In 1990 the Vemrilyea House was featured as a Designer Showhouse, and opened to the public as a fundraiser for the Fort Wayne Art Museum. The brochure for this event was written by local historian Michael Hawfield. On page 6 he wrote:

“ Trade with the local Indians, who moved frequently between Fort Wayne and the Forks of the Wabash near Huntington, was always brisk and friendly, although the tunnel connecting the house to the canal bed is said to have been put in place in case of unexpected hostility by the natives. Perhaps fear of the roughnecks who sometimes plagued the canal in its early days was a more likely reason for the tunnel, since the home was also the township’s first post office and a place where valuables frequently were held..”

The Vermilyea House was again featured in the *Fort Wayne Journal Gazette* on April 21, 1988. “Historic Houses.” article states:

**“ Currently the home of the Ellises and three of their six children, the Vermilyea House is reputed to be a stop on the Underground Railroad, which carried slaves north. Ellis has searched unsuccessfully for the outside tunnel and secret passages within the house that supposedly were used to spirit slaves to a third floor hiding place.”**

A brochure entitled “The Vermilyea House” was completed in the mid 1980’s by Ellis family. It states:

**“ There is reportedly a tunnel leading from the basement to the edge of the canal. It is said to have been used in the Underground Railroad. It is also said to have been used to store a summer’s ice supply. We have made several efforts to find this tunnel but to no avail. So, if there is one, it is well hidden.”**

Yet another article featuring the Vermilyea House appeared in the *Fort Wayne News-Sentinel*, Neighbor’s Section, Dec. 13, 1986. In “Vermilyea House rich in history” by Earl Smith, he writes:

**“ Tradition has it that the house was built with a tunnel to the canal, which ran just south of today’s Redding Drive, with its towpath on the canal’s south edge. The tunnel was**

used as a means of escape from Indians, according to C.G. Wilkens, formerly of the Allen County Fort Wayne Historical Society. It may also have been a stop for slaves traveling the Underground Railroad to freedom in the Civil War era. Ellis was told there was a space under the eaves on the third floor where slaves could hide by day and escape through the tunnel by night. "It is said there was a secret stairway to the basement, but we have never found it," said Ellis. "In 1976 we put in a new septic system and I told the contractor the story about the tunnel. He was so interested he said he would do some additional digging free." The contour of the front yard indicated the canal's possible location. "He went as deep as the backhoe could dig and across the front of the house to the orchard (about 300 yards) but never found anything," said Ellis, adding there's no trace of an entrance in the basement, either."

In addition to these associations to the Vermilyea House, an additional association may be made to the Canal stop itself. ARCH recently received 8 pages from the journal of Beulah Puckett Ninde (chapter 4 above) which describe visits of Lindley Ninde to his brother Henry who most likely resided in Allen County<sup>226</sup>, and his sister, Rhoda, who lived in Section 22, Jefferson Township, Whitley County:

**Cottage Home - Fort Wayne, Thursday, July 9,  
1851**

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<sup>226</sup>Henry P. Ninde married Mary Elizabeth Gray in September 1850 in Jay County, and most likely moved to a location five miles from the canal shortly thereafter. No Allen County deed records exist for H.P. Ninde during the 1850's, and it is very possible that he was residing with the Thomas's and Davis's in section 19, Aboite Township. An advertisement for the Indiana Woman's Rights Association ran in the Indiana True Democrat, Vol. 4, No. 5, Centerville, IN, on October 25, 1851, and included Henry "Nind" as an organizer. Henry's wife Mary Ninde signed as an organizer at the meeting. Although Mary Frame Thomas was not able to attend the meeting, she also signed as an organizer on the advertisement, and later (1857) became the president of the organization.

**Dear Lindley started to Noble County this morning on business. The sky was clear and the Sun was shining beautifully when he started down to get-on the jacket and I hoped he would have a pleasant journey; but soon after he had it chanced up and commenced raining so hard I hardly know how he could get across from the Canal to Henry's which is near five miles and the roads very bad he intended walking....**

**...July 16, 1851**

**Dear Lindley is again at home he returned Sunday. Oh! how much more swiftly the time passes when he is here. He had a tedious toilsome journey and was glad enough to get home where he could rest. He had to walk almost all of the way from sister Rhoda's which is 12 or thirteen miles, for the canal is broken and the hot sun shone on him pretty near all the way.**  
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It should also be noted that the Vermilyea house was located very close (about 4-5 miles or so) to the residences of moral Suasionists Benjamin and Ruth Davis, and Drs. Owen and Mary Frame Thomas. The 1850 Census notes Benjamin F. Davis (2514-2526) and Dr. Owen Thomas and Dr. Mary Frame Thomas (2513-2525) enumerated four households away from Rumsey (2519-2531).<sup>228</sup>

The volume and continued (at least 90 years) stories of the Jesse Vermilyea House as an Underground Railroad stop, its proximity to the Wabash and Erie Canal -- a known route, and its geographical association to the Thomas's, Nindes, and Davis's, all strongly

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<sup>227</sup> *Journal of Beulah Ninde*, typescript, provided to ARCH by Richard Ninde, June, 2001. Richard is the grandson of Lindley and Beulah Ninde. Original in possession of Helen Trone, 113 C. Cambridge Circle, Clearwater, Florida, as of March 1976.

<sup>228</sup> Biographical information on Thomas and Davis families found in section on Moral Suasionists, above.

suggest that this is, indeed, a site associated in some way with the URR. Further research is strongly suggested.

**Stephen and Jessie Vermilyea Bond Residence: 2530 Beechwood.**

Several individuals contacted ARCH regarding Underground Railroad legends associated with this house, listed in the Indiana Sites and Structures Inventory as 003-215-35121.

The inventory lists this house as being the c. 1914 Arthur Hall House, designed by Wing and Mahurin. However, this listing is incorrect, and an addendum is prepared with additional information for the survey.

In 1855, the Fort Wayne Plat map shows that Stephen Bond owned Fairfield Lot 20, located at the site of 2530 Beechwood. The 1858 City Directory lists Stephen Bond “res. country.”<sup>229</sup> Asa Fairfield commenced the platting and sale of these outlots in May, 1852.<sup>230</sup> It should be noted that Bond later purchased lots 21 and 22 as well, and Lindley Ninde purchased the adjoining lot 23.<sup>231</sup>

A photograph exists for the Bond house located on this land, and shows a c. 1860 Gothic Revival cottage. According to the current homeowner, visual confirmation of exterior features, and local lore, this home was remodeled in 1914 by Wing and Mahurin, Architects, for Lincoln Life Insurance Company President Arthur F. Hall. A full second story and hipped roof were added at this time, and a large, American-Foursquare style porch replaced the earlier bric-a-brac.

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<sup>229</sup>Williams, p. 33.

<sup>230</sup>Allen County Deed Records, Book L, page 668.

<sup>231</sup>Griswold, 1907 Bird's-eye Map of Fort Wayne; 2000 Fort Wayne Plat map prepared by City of Fort Wayne; Fairfield to Lindley Ninde, February 26, 1853, Allen County Deed Records, Book T, page 212.

Stephen Bond was born in Lockport, New York, c. 1834, and moved to Fort Wayne with his parents, Stephen B. and Adelia (Darrow) Bond in 1842. After a brief move to Wisconsin, the family returned to Fort Wayne in 1846. In 1847, the father died, leaving the mother to raise four sons. He became involved in the Banking trade, as did his brothers. On January 1, 1863, he married Jessie Marie Vermilyea in Marion, Grant County. Jessie was the daughter of Jesse and Marie Taggart Vermilyea, mentioned above in the previous section.

After the death of her parents, Jessie Marie Vermilyea became a ward of her aunt and uncle, James and Anna Vermilyea Sweetser, in Marion, Grant County. Although the Sweetsters are not directly linked to underground railroad activities, they are linked to the abolition movement and to Alexander Rankin and Lewis G. Thompson, through other Sweetser connections. Above, page 44, quotes article in Marion *Democrat Herald*, involving actions of Rankin in securing the abolitionist vote of Grant County for the candidate Lewis G. Thompson. Following the election, this election, the *Fort Wayne Sentinel* writes:

#### **Allen County Right Side Up**

"This county has nobly redeemed herself and may henceforth be set down as thoroughly democratic... Notwithstanding the great persona; influence of the Whig candidate for Congress, here in his own county, and the means used to procure him votes, even at the expense of his friends running on the same ticket -- one of whom (Mr. Sweetser) is said by his friends to have been sacrificed by trading off his votes to secure others for Mr. Thompson -- he only obtained 93 majority in a county which gave Harrison about 300 -- less than one third what they anticipated. The sun of Dr. Thompson's power in Allen County is set never more to rise."<sup>232</sup>

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<sup>232</sup>*Fort Wayne Sentinel*, August 12, 1843.

The Sweetser mentioned in this article is Madison Sweetser, brother of James Sweetser, and a long time Allen County resident.

**John Morris House:** As mentioned in Chapter 5, John Morris was born and raised in Columbiana County, Ohio, attended Quaker schools, and settled in Dekalb County, IN in 1844. In 1857 he relocated to Fort Wayne at the suggestion of Charles Case.<sup>233</sup> He opened a law partnership with Warren H. Withers. The owner contacted ARCH in the spring of 2000 and said two tunnels leading to and from house had been found on separate parts of house. The house is located approximately 300 yards from St. Mary's River in area known as South Wayne, adjoining the Homer Hartman property, on land formerly owned by abolitionist Lewis G. Thompson. It stands across Thompson Avenue, and approximately 50 feet from the residence once owned by URR agent and abolitionist journalist David W. Jones.

*Builders of Greater Fort Wayne* notes the following:

"Stephen Morris, son of John and Theresa Jane (Farr) Morris, was born at Auburn, Indiana, November 17, 1856, and the family moved to Fort Wayne in the early summer of 1857. Their first residence here was on West Jefferson street, in the place later occupied by William S. ("Popgun") Smith. The corner of West Wayne and Union streets was the address for some years more. About 1866 a substantial brick residence built by William Moellering, Sr., as a homestead, but not occupied, beckoned them to Maple Avenue, and the ample house became the Morris Homestead. There were at that date only three other residents of the "avenue," which even in the contemporary maps is lost in uncharted perspective. The families of Homer C. Hartman, Aaron

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<sup>233</sup> Robertson, Robert S. *History of the Maumee River Basin: Allen County, Indiana*, vol. III. Bowen and Slocum, p. 58

Markley and of Judge Faye (who also had settled in Fort Wayne in 1857) were sharers in this distinguished seclusion.”<sup>234</sup>

Abstract information from the current owners show the following chain of title:

June 2, 1834: Ann Turner (granddaughter of Mishekennoquah -- Little Turtle) sells to Lewis G. Thompson South Fraction, Southeast corner, Section 10, containing 70.64 acres, more or less, being the same tract formerly occupied by John Leasure, for \$304.

August 12, 1837- April 13, 1838, heirs of Joel Wood sell to Lewis G. Thompson, one undivided part of the East Fraction Section 15, Township 30, Range 12, Allen County, Indiana, containing 142.89 acres, more or less.

September 5, 1845-January 11, 1855, Estate of Lewis G. Thompson settled among his heirs, and land comprising the South half, Southeast quarter, Section 10, and the Northeast fraction, Section 15, all in township 30 North, Range 12 East; except four acres of said Northeast Fraction to Rogers, by Lewis G. Thompson in his lifetime, according to the plat thereof subdivision following: (see attached sheets for plat and division.)

Dec, 30, 1854: To Lucretia Thompson: lot numbered 3 on said plat, containing 34.60 acres, lying south of and adjoining the said premises as aforesaid set apart to said Byron Thompson...

June 19, 1855: Alexander L. Hanna and Lucretia M. Thompson, united in marriage as husband and wife. (Marriage record 3, page 339)

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<sup>234</sup>Griswold, Bert J. *Builders of Greater Fort Wayne*, page 404.

September 6, 1864: Ann Thompson quit claim for \$1.00 to Lucretia M. Hanna: lot 3 of the South East quarter of Section 10, Township 30 North, of Range 12 East. It is understood that this deed to perform the office of a general release and nothing more.

November 14, 1866 Margaret L. Lewis and William A. Lewis, her husband, to Sarepta E. Hartman .. for \$1750.00... to wit: "a tract of land containing four 35/100 acres more or less in section ten (10) township 30 north, Range 12 East.... commencing at the northwest corner of a tract of land in said section sold to Edwin Evans by deed... Thence west along the south line of a street five hundred seventy seven (577) feet to a street. Thence south along a street three hundred fifty (350) feet thence east five hundred and seventy seven (577) feet to the southwest corner of said Evans tract thence north three hundred and fifty (350) feet to the place of beginning." (Allen County Deed Book 41 page 494)

December 21, 1868: Byron Thompson and Henrietta Thompson, his wife, quit claim for \$1.00 to Margaret L. Lewis, of Santa Clara, California, to same lot 3.

October 28, 1868: Hugh Bread (sic, should read Hugh B. Reed) and Anna E. (Thompson) Reed, his wife of the county of Somerset, New Jersey quit claim for \$1.00 paid to them by William A. Lewis and Margaret L. Lewis, his wife of \_\_\_\_\_ County, and State of California, ... lot 3... "being the same portion of said land set off to Lucretia Thompson, (now the said Margaret L. Lewis) in said partition, containing 34.6 acres."

October 24, 1868: Homer C. Hartman and Sarepta E. Hartman, his wife, convey and warrant to William Moellering for \$1200.00 ... " A lot 350 feet deep fronting 229 on Maple Avenue off from the West side of a tract of land in the South East quarter, Section 10, Township 30 North, of Range 12 East, sold Sarepta Hartman by Margaret L. Lewis and husband..."

There does not appear to be a record of the purchase of the subject property by the Hartmans, and it is unknown when the sale occurred. Lucretia Margaret Thompson Hanna Lewis owned the property following the division of her father's land after December 30, 1854. According to a newspaper article dated July 24, 1938, she and her husband Alexander Hanna built a house on the western portion of this lot, backing up to the St. Mary's River, in 1855. In 1865, it was purchased by David W. Jones, and in 1887 it was purchased by William Vesey, a descendent of the URR abolitionist Waterhouse family of Lagrange County. The eastern portion of this lot was sold to Hartman sometime after Lucretia's marriage to Hanna in 1855 and following her apparent re-marriage to a William Lewis prior to 1868.

Homer C. Hartman was born in Ohio in 1838, and moved to Fort Wayne with his parents in 1842. His father, George R. Hartman, was active in the local Methodist church, and was an original organizer of the Fort Wayne Methodist College. Homer's uncle, D.P. Hartman, was an instructor of the college, and also led classes for the local Methodist congregation during the 1840's. In 1850, Homer and his parents are listed in the Allen County Census (329-334) as living next door to the African American family of Henry Cannady (331-336). As mentioned elsewhere in this report, Henry Cannady helped to organize the separate African Methodist Episcopal congregation in Fort Wayne in 1850. Prior to 1850, several African Americans worshipped with the Methodist congregation. The families of George Hartman and Henry Cannady remained in contact at least through 1859, when Cannady sold Hartman a large lot on Francis Street, near Lewis in the East Central area.<sup>235</sup>

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<sup>235</sup> Allen County Deed Book X, page 211, "north 1/2 of outlot 2 Hanna's addition".

Homer C. Hartman studied the law under Isaac Jenkinson, c. 1858, and then joined him in his law office. In 1863, David W. Jones began publishing the *Fort Wayne Gazette*, in partnership with Jenkinson. In 1864, Jones sold his interest in the paper to Hartman, who maintained his interest until after the end of the Civil War, in 1867. Robertson's 1889 history of Allen County notes the following of the *Gazette*:

“The *Fort Wayne Gazette*, the leading republican organ of northern Indiana, like the *Sentinel* and the *Times* has had numerous changes of ownership, but never since its initial number has it failed to be the consistent and stalwart champion of the principles of freedom and equal rights to all men of whatever race or color, under the constitution.”<sup>236</sup>

Although it appears that the Morris House at 1333 Maple Avenue was not built until after the Civil War had ended, there does seem to be a general geographical connection with several individuals involved as URR agents or abolitionists, and should be further researched.

**The Baker House:** Located approximately 200 yards from St. Joseph River near the location of the second French Fort at Kekionga. This portion of Delaware Avenue was once a portion of the trail to Detroit and Quebec. By 1860 it was known as the St. Joseph State Road. Today, the modern highway has been rerouted, and is known as Indiana 1. Rumored to be an Underground Railroad site, with a tunnel that went to the river. The house is a Fort Wayne Local Historic District, built c. 1861, and is site # 003-214-17459. A letter in ARCH's file for this structure, dated November 3, 1985, from Ethel Meeks

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<sup>236</sup>vol. II, pages 320-321.

states: "In talking with neighbors I was told it was at one time an underground railroad station with a tunnel leading to the river. It was known as the Baker Farm."

Chain of Title: (from notes compiled by ARCH Office, c. 1985)

1. US to John R. Parks, the southwest fractional 1/4 section of Section 36 Township 31 of range 12 East containing 110 and 74/100 acres. May 1, 1826. (Indiana Deeds, vol. 142, page 87. Allen County Deed Records, book 189, page 333.)

2. John Parks and Margaret his wife to Francis Comparet, for \$900.00, March 22, 1834. (Allen CO., Book A 343-344)

3. Alexis Coquillard and Francis Comparet with other real estate to Francis Comparet, \$25,000 Oct. 24, 1835. (Allen County, Book B, page 204)

4. Francis Comparet and Eleanor Comparet to Samuel Hanna, 110.74 acres, for \$6000.00 June 22, 1839. (Allen County Book C, page 723.)

5. Samuel Hanna and Eliza Hanna to Henry Baker for \$3622.00, 36 acres, September 22, 1858. (Allen County Book V, page 298).

Henry Baker's purchase extended from the east bank of the St. Joseph River, at the line between townships 30 and 31, then northeast, then south, then southwest to another point along the river bank, then "meanders" north to the beginning point.

Henry Baker was the son of George and Catharine Baker, who arrived in Fort Wayne from Germany in 1838, along with their children, Henry, John Killian, Jacob.<sup>237</sup> Griswold notes in a paragraph on activities of 1838: "John Baker (born in Germany, in

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<sup>237</sup>Robertson, vol. II, pp. 45-46.

1817) operated the first plow factory and steam sawmill in company with his father, George Baker, and his brother, Jacob..."<sup>238</sup> According to Robertson, this was the first steam saw-mill in Fort Wayne, and was located at the corner of Lafayette and Superior Streets.<sup>239</sup>

By 1850, the Bakers are listed in the Allen County Census as follows:

89-90	name	age sex	occupation	birthplace
	Baker, George	59 M	Lawyer	Germany
	Catherine	54 F		"
	Jacob	28 M	Lawyer	"
	Henry	21 M	Boatman	"
	William	19 M	Engineer	"
	Elizabeth	17 F		" 240

Henry Baker was married sometime during the 1850's to a Mary Daugherty. According to their daughter, Julia Baker Stapleford, the family lived first at the southeast corner of Lafayette and Main Street. There, children Julia, Henry, Catherine, John and Ambrose were born. After the family moved to the Baker Homestead at the southeast corner of Bayer and Delaware, Margaret, Lawrence, Ellen and Gertrude were born.<sup>241</sup>

Little is known about Henry Baker, and the homestead on Delaware. It is assumed he became a farmer, as the homestead was known as the Baker Farm, and he did not have an interest in the sawmill. Baker was elected a city councilman for one term in 1856.<sup>242</sup> In 1858, he joined with other in creating the Kekionga Guards -- a "regulator" group, who

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<sup>238</sup>Griswold, p. 345.

<sup>239</sup>Robertson, vol. II, p. 23.

<sup>240</sup>Harter, 1850 Federal Census of Allen County, Indiana Indexed, p. 15 Please note that the compiler misread "Sawyer" -- one who operates a saw-mill -- for "Lawyer."

<sup>241</sup>*As I Remember*, from the Winifred J. Randall Collection, Allen County Public Library, pp. 35-38.

<sup>242</sup>Griswold, p.438.

utilized an Indiana Law of 1856 that "empowered them to capture criminals, give them a fair trial, and, if advisable, to inflict the punishment of death."<sup>243</sup> Others among the Kekionga organizers included: Hugh McCulloch-- a member of Second Presbyterian Church; Jesse Williams -- of Quaker birth, and a cousin of Levi Coffin, mentioned chapter 4; Hugh B. Reed -- the son-in-law of Lewis Thompson, and seller of real estate to Homer Hartman, chapter 5; Benjamin W. Oakley -- also an organizing member of Second Presbyterian; Orrin Hurd -- a 2nd Presbyterian member; Stephen B. Bond -- mentioned above, and others.<sup>244</sup> One might speculate on the actual purpose for this group, as the members are not those one would expect to find in a pack of grass-roots law enforcers.

In 1859 Henry Baker was one of five members of a building committee for the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception, and in 1864 was a member of the organizing committee for the Fort Wayne Relief Society -- to serve the needy of the county, particularly those families with soldiers serving in the war.<sup>245</sup>

The final mention of Henry Baker in the Griswold History is in conjunction with the organization of a bank: "On July 1 (1869) the Fort Wayne Savings Bank was opened for business at the southwest corner of Berry and Calhoun Street, with A.C. Huestis president, W.H. Withers and George DeWald vice-presidents, John Hough, Jr., treasurer and E.J. Sturgis secretary, together with John H. Bass, William T. Pratt, John Morris and Henry Baker trustees. The institution discontinued business in 1875, at the time of the death of John Hough, Jr., the active head."<sup>246</sup>

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<sup>243</sup>Griswold, p. 441.

<sup>244</sup>Griswold, p.441.

<sup>245</sup>Griswold, pp. 445 and 471.

<sup>246</sup>Griswold, p. 486.

There is no primary documentation for involvement by the Baker family in underground railroad activities. As the Ethel Meeks letter noted, neighbors have heard of both a tunnel and its connection with fugitives. Baker does appear to have associations with others mentioned in this paper, and further research is recommended.

**Braun-Leslie House:** Reported by the homeowner, whose family purchased the home in 1946. She recalls mention of the house as an Underground Railroad site from friends of her grandparents, most of whom have died. After research for this paper began, the homeowner attempted to collect these stories, but had no luck from living members of her grandparents' social circle. Thus no primary or secondary documentation exists for this site.

The Braun-Leslie House is located on high ground at the intersection of Reed Road and E. State Boulevard. At its creation, c.1852, it faced the Hicksville State Road which ran along the ridge between the Maumee and St. Joseph Rivers, and is the beach ridge of glacial lake Erie. This route has been changed somewhat over time, but still is found in general in Indiana 37. Following the general northeastern route of the Hicksville Road it might be assumed that it continued toward Bryan, Ohio and ultimately towards Adrian, Michigan and Route 12 (known URR trails in Michigan).

The nomination form of 4817 E. State Boulevard for Fort Wayne Local Historic District Designation suggests that the house was built c.1863 by John Braun, a German carpenter and brick manufacturer. He had arrived in the United States in 1847, and spent several years in New Jersey, before moving to Allen County in 1850. In 1852 he married Barbara He(i)ber, who had immigrated to Fort Wayne in that year. Braun worked as a carpenter between 1850 and 1863, when he moved to the site of this home. He opened a brickyard shortly thereafter. The brick making business prospered, and an addition was added to

the home approximately 1870. At this time, an additional building which may have been used as a summer kitchen or as an office for the brickworks was constructed. The Brauns retained ownership through three generations, passing from John Braun to his son, John C. Brown, to J.C.'s daughter, Mrs. J.H. Sheets. Sometime prior to 1946 it was sold to a family by the name of Martin. In 1946, the grandparents of the current owner purchased the home. (Robertson, II, 142-143.)

Although it has been thought that the home was built c. 1863 for John Braun, the chain of title indicates that the home was most likely built by Braun's father-in-law, John Heiber, c. 1852. Deed records show that the family of Barbara Heber or Heiber Braun owned land in Allen County as early as 1851. Little is known of the Heiber family. The Brauns and their children were members of local Lutheran congregations, and their political affiliations, and thoughts on abolition or fugitive slave assistance are unknown. The homeowner's grandfather copied the following information from the abstract:

1835: 40 acres to Calvin Nott, grant by President Andrew Jackson  
1836: Nott to Glays for \$164  
1839: Glays to Samuel Hanna for \$165  
1842: Hanna to Hauser for \$200  
1850: Hauser to Bernhardt for \$300  
1851: Bernhardt to John Heiber (aka Hueber) for \$345  
1863: John Heiber's widow, Barbara Heiber, to John Braun and Barbara Heiber Braun, for \$975  
1885: Will of John Braun indicates that land has increased to 54 acres  
1886: John Braun dies June 27, 1886.  
1896: Barbara Heiber Braun to John C. Braun (son) for \$3000  
1918: John C. Braun to John Sheets (son-in-law) for \$8200  
1942: Sheets to Flickinger 54 acres \$5400  
1944: Flickinger to Martin, 6 acres, \$6000  
1946: Martin to John Bass Leslie and Elizabeth Porter Leslie, 6 acres \$6000 (current occupant is their granddaughter.)

In summation, no primary evidence, or strong secondary evidence of Underground Railroad associations were found for either the subject property or the Heiber and Braun families.

## Chapter 7: A Conclusion

For decades in Allen County the only documented record of the Underground Railroad was the description of the 1829 trip through Fort Wayne, listed on page 8 in Chapter 1. For this reason, as recently as 1991 local historian J. Randolph Kirby commented on this text:

“Griswold and Arville L. Funk cite this manuscript as evidence that Fort Wayne was a “station” on the legendary underground railroad...However, if this manuscript is the only support for an underground railway station in Fort Wayne, then it is highly unlikely that it existed.”<sup>247</sup>

Due to the paucity of documents in Allen County, this project has worked in a somewhat backwards fashion. Instead of using existing documents to tie together the activities of identified participants, this paper has focused on the identification of possible participants, and worked to tie them to documented participants and activities. The methodology of this project has been the identification of potential participants, based on religion, family, ethnicity, and geography, and research to determine if significant connections can be made to other Abolitionists or Underground Railroad participants.

The scope of work for The Underground Railroad Research Assistantship program, UR00-2 “Underground Railroad Sites in Allen County, Indiana” was written as follows:

“The project will research and document individuals and sites pertaining to the Underground Railroad and Antislavery Movement in Fort Wayne and Allen County, Indiana. The project will develop Indiana Historic Sites and Structures reports for identified sites and/or prepare amendments for those sites already surveyed. ARCH, Inc. will endeavor to confirm the location of 1-5 standing structures directly linked to UGRR activities in Allen

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<sup>247</sup>Kirby, “Notes on the Emergence of a Black Community in Fort Wayne, Indiana, between 1820 and 1860,” p. 3.

County, confirm an additional 1-5 locations (without existing structures) that can be directly linked to the UGRR. ARCH will also attempt to identify 5-10 additional sites directly ties with the abolitionist movement in Allen County, with at least 1-5 existing structures. ARCH will focus research in South Wayne and East Central Neighborhood, a free black settlement east of downtown."<sup>248</sup>

The findings of this report are summarized below, using this scope of work as the organizing tool.

#### **I. 1-5 Standing Structures directly linked to UGRR activities in Allen County:**

**The Jesse Vermilyea House, 13501 Redding Drive.** (Indiana Sites and Structures Inventory # 003-021-70038) Although no first person documentation exists for this structure, the preponderance of oral history and its early recorded date provides good indication that this site can be verified. It is not known whether the Vermilyea family, the Rumsey family, or the Ruffner family were involved. Little is known of the Ruffners. A number of ties can be made between Vermilyea and Rumsey and the abolition movement in the area.

#### **II. 1-5 locations (without standing structures) linked to URR activities in Allen County:**

**Ninde Residence, 434 West Wayne Street.** The location of the Ninde home through about 1860, it is probably the location of "Pine Cottage," as identified by Beulah Ninde in her journal. The home housed not only Beulah and Lindley Ninde, but also Beulah Coffin

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<sup>248</sup>Indiana Department of Natural Resources, AWARD LETTER, Underground Railroad Research Assistantship #UR00-2, April 11, 2000.

Puckett, and Henry Puckett at some points during the 1850s. The home was replaced in the twentieth century by a more modern structure.

**Wildwood, 3400 Block of Fairfield.** Although it is not thought that the Nindes moved to this site until about 1860, the property was owned by them from 1853. It is quite possible that some structures -- barn, etc. -- was on the site during the 1850s and its use as an Underground Railroad site cannot be ruled out.

**Home of Henry Cannady: most probably 626 E. Lewis St.** The 1858 City Directory had noted that Henry "Kennedy" lived at the southwest corner of Hanna and Lewis, and was employed as a plasterer. A house was listed at 626 E. Lewis until the early 1970s, and most likely was an early victim of inner-city revitalization. A vacant lot occupies part of the site today, and a c. 1980 liquor store occupies the other half. of the site.

**George Fisher Residence, south side of East Washington between Francis and Hanna (250 Old number).** Fisher, the eloquent writer of the Fort Wayne African American community's 1849 appeal against colonization, lived until his death at a home in what is now the 700 block of East Washington.

**First location of AME congregation: lot 296, Hanna's First Addition, most likely 714-716, and 718 E. Jefferson.** No record of a completed church has been found for this site, and it was sold by the congregation before 1860. Later, two homes were built on the lot.

**Section 19, Aboite Township.** The exact location of the Davis and Thomas residences within section 19 of Aboite Township will most likely not be found, and today, no homes of that vintage are known. It can be assumed from the legal descriptions of the purchases

of land in Section 19, that the households were found in the northern half of the section. It is probable that Henry and Mary (Gray) Ninde also lived in this section, and earlier may have been the home to David or Rayburn Beeson. Today, Section 19 holds some of Fort Wayne's most exclusive homes in the "Devil's Hollow" area. Much of the terrain is still steep ridges and valleys, with numerous streams. The rough boundaries of Section 19 are West County Line Road, Aboite Center Road, Hamilton Road, and Liberty Mills Road.

**Home of William Willis Elliot: North side of Jefferson, between Fulton and Fairfield.** J. Randolph Kirby notes: On July 28, 1845 Elliot bought a lot in Ewing's Addition from Francis Aveline. This lot is on West Jefferson, near Fulton, where the parking lot of what was Roger's Market, but now is Box bergers."<sup>249</sup> The street address was most likely 534 W. Jefferson. That spot has been a parking lot since the mid 1950s, and Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps show no residential structure on that lot (Lot 8, Block 31, Ewing's Addition to Fort Wayne) as early as 1918.<sup>250</sup>

### **III. 5-10 Additional Sites linked to the Abolition Movement in Allen County:**

**Daniel Burroughs Store and Newspaper Office: #51 Columbia Street.** Daniel Burroughs, abolitionist, Baptist Minister, and publisher of the *Fort Wayne Standard* -- the city's only abolitionist newspaper, had his offices in old #51 Columbia Street, located between Clinton and Barr streets, on the north side of the street. The exact site has not

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<sup>249</sup>Kirby, "Notes on Emergence...", pg. 7.

<sup>250</sup>Sanborn Map Company. *Fort Wayne, Indiana, vol. 1*. Pelham, NY: Sanborn Map Company, 1918, with 1945 paste-overs. Pg. 33.

been identified, and all buildings on both sides of Columbia Street between Clinton and Barr were demolished during the winter of 1967-1968.<sup>251</sup>

**Robert S. Taylor Residence: 2905 Fairfield.** Robert S. Taylor purchased Fairfield's Outlot 9, along Fairfield Avenue, and built first a small home, and later a larger home later addressed as 2905 Fairfield. 2905 appears in older City Directories, while the Taylors owned the home. The address cannot be found during the years 1922-1940, and it is not known if the Taylor home was demolished during this time. A house and business are found at this address in City Directories between 1945-1962. After this time, the house is listed as vacant until later in the 1970s when it is listed as part of the Lutheran Hospital Complex. Today, 2905 Fairfield holds parking space on the Fairfield-facing two-thirds of the lot, and a warehouse-type building belong to the hospital on the rear of the lot. It is next door to Fairfield Elementary School.

**Eel River Methodist Church, corner Heffelfinger and Madden Road, Eel River Township.** Helms notes the location of this structure:

“ In 1843, they erected a hewed-log house opposite the present site of Wesley Chapel and consecrated it as a house of worship; and from that date, they received the visitation of a pastor every alternate Sunday. The congregation increased, and in 1865, they erected a frame church at Johnston & McKee's Corners.” <sup>252</sup>

The Helms History includes a map of the township that shows this first location to be near the corner of Heffelfinger and Madden Roads, where Sections 18 and 19 meet. There is no listing for this site in the Site s and Structures Inventory, and it assumed no evidence

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<sup>251</sup>Ankenbruck, John. *Twentieth Century History of Fort Wayne*. Fort Wayne: Twentieth Century Historical Fort Wayne, Inc., 1975. Pg. 540. Photo on page 524 included in Appendix.

<sup>252</sup>Helms, pg. 151.

of the structure remains at this site. The second structure was built in section 21, near the corner of Wesley Chapel and Hathaway Road.<sup>253</sup> The 1865 structure is listed in the Allen County Sites and Structures Inventory as 003-111-20052.

**2nd Presbyterian Church, southwest corner of Webster and Berry Streets.** The congregation founded by Charles and Henry Ward Beecher was located on the south side of Berry Street, between Webster and Ewing in 1846.<sup>254</sup> The 1855 Plat map shows its location on lot 503 in Original Plat of Fort Wayne. The 1918 Sanborn Map shows the church to be on fractional lot 502 and lot 503, with a street address of 315 W. Berry Street. Today, this is the location of the parking lot for the First Presbyterian Church.

Next to the parking lot is the site of the Second Presbyterian Church Parsonage, (003-215-25029). This Queen Anne home is reported to be from 1880 according to the current owner, although it is listed as c. 1890 in the Survey.<sup>255</sup> No house site has been associated with Charles Beecher, although the 1858 City Directory notes that a Mrs. C.M. Beecher lives on the south side of West Berry Street, between Webster and Ewing.<sup>256</sup> This is somewhat mysterious as the Beecher family is reported to have left Fort Wayne in 1850.<sup>257</sup> The 1855 Plat map does show a house located on the lot now occupied by 323 W. Berry, and thus it is possible that an earlier dwelling, used as the parsonage, was at this site.

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<sup>253</sup>Map of Eel river included in Appendix.

<sup>254</sup>Mather, p. 169.

<sup>255</sup>*Law Offices* brochure, prepared by Dorse Law Offices, 323 W. Berry St. no date.

<sup>256</sup>Williams, p. 29.

<sup>257</sup>It should be noted, however, that Charles Beecher went to England and Florida on several trips without his wife, who may have returned to Fort Wayne to visit friends, or some other reason.

**Ninde Law Office, northwest corner of Berry and Calhoun Streets.** The Ninde Law Office was located in a commercial building on this corner. However, due to the high density of buildings on this block, their frequent renaming, and remodeling, it would be difficult to give a modern street address. Since 1974 the Fort Wayne National Bank Building has stood on 2/3 of this entire block.

**Alexander T. Rankin House, 818 Lafayette Street,** (Indiana Sites and Structures Inventory # 003-215-28081). Although no direct evidence has been found tying Rankin to Underground railroad activities in Fort Wayne, his leadership as an early abolitionist in Indiana and in Ohio is well-documented, as are the family ties to the Underground railroad. The Rankin House still stands, in altered condition, and threatened with demolition at 818 Lafayette Street. It is a listed Fort Wayne Local Historic District.

#### **IV: 1-5 Standing Structures linked to Abolition Movement:**

**Rhoda Ninde Swayne Residence, 1102 W. Berry Street,** (Indiana Sites and Structures Inventory # 003-215-25019). The Rhoda Ninde-Swayne House sits in the West End National Register District, and is believed to have been built in 1866. Although this is after the end of the Civil War, and thus not possibly an Underground Railroad site, it is the only standing structure directly associated with Rhoda Ninde-Swayne -- a documented Underground Railroad participant.

**Turner Chapel A.M.E. Church, 836 E. Jefferson Blvd.,**(Indiana Sites and Structures Inventory # 003-215- 29031)and **801 E. Wayne Street**(003-215-29005). The current home of Fort Wayne's oldest African Methodist Episcopal congregation is in this 1927 church building at 836 E. Jefferson, originally built to house the Calvary United Brethren Church. The congregation moved to this location in the 1960s. Its earlier home was

located at 801 E. Wayne Street, where it located in 1870. The structure standing at this location was built for the congregation in 1917. Both locations would be suitable for a marker connecting the congregation to the Abolition and Underground Railroad movement.

In Addition, ARCH reviewed the lives of individuals identified as UGRR participants, abolitionists, and Free African Americans, and Moral Suasionists who can be tied to these activities, but to which no exact location or site can be assigned. These include the following:

**George Nelson Black:** the minister of the AME congregation, and named as an Underground Railroad Agent in Siebert. Unfortunately, no location was identified as the site of his residence. Black left Fort Wayne prior to the publication of the first city Directory (1858).

**John Rogers and Tryphena Shipman Rogers:** although the relationship to the URR is still undocumented, sufficient information is available regarding the families and associates of the Rogers to suggest support, if not actual participation. The Rogers lived four miles east of Fort Wayne, near the Maumee River, with Canal through their property. Have not yet found exact location, but a c. 1835-1840 structure is found in the area described. It is The John Ring-Peter Coonrod House at 5806 Old Maumee Rd. (Indiana Sites and Structures Inventory # 003-214-62717).<sup>258</sup> No connection between the Rogers family and this site has been made at this time.

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<sup>258</sup>Sites and Structures Inventory form notes: "Bldg. was known as a canal house used by canal passengers for bed and food. It lies south of the Wabash-Erie Canal bed-filled in 1882- the Maumee River and the Old Maumee River Road from Fort Wayne."

**African Americans in Washington Township:** John Cannady may have lived near the family of his brother's wife, Mary Grosjean. Members of the Grosjean family are found next door to, or in the household of other Cannady family members in the 1870 Census and 1874 City Directory.<sup>259</sup> The 1860 Census list John Cannady (211/208) next door to William Archer (212/209) in Washington Township.<sup>260</sup> Both of these White families (Grosjean and Archer) owned multiple tracts of land in Washington Township, mostly along the Coldwater Road, with both Grosjean and Archer owning property at what is today the area between Cook and Wallen Roads.<sup>261</sup> It should be noted that the William Cornell House in DeKalb County -- a documented URR site and National Register Site-- is located almost exactly 10 miles due north of this spot.

We also reviewed several individuals related to the subject by religious affiliation, or by proximity to others, such as the South Wayne Neighbors, without necessarily concluding their actual involvement in URR activities:

**Dr. Lewis G. Thompson:** One of the community's only Universalists, Lewis ran as a Whig candidate for Congress in 1843, and was rumored to be working with abolitionists in Grant County and with the Rev. Alexander Rankin. Owned large area near Thompson Avenue; inherited by children who sold to several possible abolitionists, including:

1. **Homer Hartman:** Purchased Fort Wayne Gazette -- the Republican newspaper-- from David W. Jones, and was a childhood neighbor of Henry Cannady.

2. **John Morris:** A Republican from Columbiana County, Ohio, an associate of Charles Case and Warren H. Withers.

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<sup>259</sup>Federal Population Schedules, Allen County, Indiana, 1870: Wayne Township, 116/119; and Polk, Fort Wayne Directory, 1874-75, pp. 64, 112.

<sup>260</sup>Federal Population Schedules, Allen County, IN, 1860

<sup>261</sup>Plat Map of Washington Township, found in Helms, page 164.

3. **David W. Jones:** Quaker, and abolition publisher in Grant County. Jones was an organizer of Society for Universal Inquiry and Reform commune in Randolph County, and an associate of other Siebert-listed URR participants. Founded the Republican newspaper, the Fort Wayne Gazette, and sold his half to Hartman.
4. **Warren H. Withers:** Editor of an abolition-leaning newspaper in the 1840s, and later a law partner with Charles Case, John Morris.

**Asa Fairfield**, an early settler of South Wayne, purchased the Mill at the Bluffton Road Bridge in 1837, and controlled the toll bridge. The Fairfields were early followers of Charles Beecher. Also owned large section of South Wayne, which he divided and sold to:

1. **Lindley and Beulah Ninde:** URR participants.
2. **Robert S. Taylor:** parents and grandparents were URR participants, and he was a close friend and business partner of Ninde. Lived directly across the street from *Wildwood*.
3. **Stephen and Jessie Vermilyea Bond:** Oral tradition, tie to parents mark possible participation. House one block north of Ninde and Taylor.
4. **Charles and Jane Case:** Republican Congressman, successfully represented African Americans held in Fort Wayne, law partner of Morris and Withers. Owned land, but not believed to have built on this site, the location of Packard Park.
5. **Henry Puckett:** son of Daniel Puckett and Beulah Coffin Puckett, both URR participants. Brother of Beulah Ninde, above. Purchased land at corner of Pontiac Street and Fairfield Avenue, one block north of Taylor, and connecting to the landholdings of Jesse Williams.

Finally, we looked at the African American Settlement in Smith Township, Whitley County, and noted that it appeared to cross the county line and continue into Eel River and Washington Townships in Allen County. Most of these African American settlers located the Goshen Plank Road, with the exception of John Cannady, who appears to have settled on the Coldwater Road, as mentioned above. Census information for Smith Township can be found in the Appendix.

As in most places touched by the plight of self-emancipated slaves, Allen County appears to have responded in different ways, and places during different periods. In the course of completing this research, some patterns have emerged, and are discussed below.

Falley, Siebert and others have drawn numerous maps documenting the routes of the Underground Railroad, sometimes including and sometimes bypassing Fort Wayne. This writer believes that three separate routes extended to and through Allen County, with some variations, and that these are due to the existence of such navigable resources as roads or canals, the location and duration of residence of assistance, and the political climate of the area.

It appears that early in the Nineteenth Century, fugitives came by the most direct and navigable route-- the Winchester Road. Before 1840 self-emancipated individuals settled at Fort Wayne, or passed through on their own, or sometimes with the assistance of such guides as Frederick Hoover, as documented in the 1829 journey from Richmond to Fort Wayne noted in Chapter 1. Dr. Lewis G. Thompson, John and Tryphena Rogers, and David or Rayburn Beeson may have participated during this time. Their trail to Fort Wayne was probably by the Winchester Road--also called the Quaker or Godfroy Trace. A trail was cut from Richmond to Fort Wayne in the first decade of the 19th century, and was soon improved as the road from Fort Wayne to its (then )county seat of Winchester. After Allen County was created in 1824, the road continued to be heavily used. The portion of this trail between Jay County, Wells County, and Allen County, was also known as the Godfroy Trace, as it connected several reservations and other holdings of the Godfroy family -- civil chiefs of the Miami Nation. (The Godfroy name comes from a

French trader who married into the family in the 18th century, a reputed descendent of Godfrey deBoullion-- the conqueror of Jerusalem during the Crusades.).

In "Slavery in the Transmontane", Charles Embury Hedrick writes:

"One of the most important routes was the one starting just below Cincinnati, and going thence to Richmond, where there was a settlement of free negroes who had been liberated by the Quakers of North Carolina, to Fort Wayne. Numerous roads led out of Cincinnati up to Fort Wayne, or by Columbus to Oberlin."<sup>262</sup>

From Fort Wayne, pre-1840 fugitives may have traveled the Maumee River to Toledo, Ohio.

The Wabash and Erie Canal opened from Fort Wayne to Huntington in 1834, and as other segments in Indiana and Ohio were completed, it is probable that individual fugitives followed the towpath to its end at Toledo, Ohio. Hedrick writes about the Canal route:

"All of the routes of the Underground Railroad leading from the Transmontane had the first station on the other side of the Ohio River. A very excellent road to freedom started at Evansville, Indiana, thence by the Wabash and Erie Canal to Toledo, and on to the Great Lakes, where there were secret ferries to carry them to Canada, if they cared to go there."<sup>263</sup>

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<sup>262</sup>Hedrick, Charles Embury, Ph.D. "Slavery in the Transmontane." from *Social and Economic Aspects of Slavery in the Transmontane [W. Va., Ky., & Tenn.] Prior to 1850*. Nashville: George Peabody College for Teachers, 1927, p. 102. Found in Siebert collection, Ohio.

<sup>263</sup>ibid., pp. 101-102.

With the exception of the possible connection of the Rogers family, no other canal related Underground railroad stops have been identified east of Fort Wayne in Allen County.

Another article found in the Siebert collection notes:

“From Toledo some of the passengers took boat for Canada. Some were taken to Detroit from the Maumee Valley by Adrian and Ypsilanti, Michigan, rather than by way of Toledo. It has already been stated that runaway slaves sometimes reached Toledo by following the Maumee Canal from northern Indiana, but it appears that there were few, if any, regular stations along that line.”<sup>264</sup>

By 1840, new routes became possible for fugitives in Allen County. In Fort Wayne, Alexander Rankin arrived in 1837, and George Nelson Black arrived by 1842. Also appearing on the scene during the time are the Cannadys, Elliot, and other African American Families. George Fisher arrives in 1846. Rankin leaves in 1843 and Charles Beecher arrives in 1844 and remains until 1850. Daniel Burroughs arrives sometime during the 1840's. The Jeffries settlement in Smith Township, Whitley County is also growing, and becoming more permanent.

Fugitives arriving in Allen County from the Winchester Road or Wabash and Erie Canal during the 1840s most likely came directly through Fort Wayne, where they were assisted by Black and other leaders of the African American community. This way would have taken fugitives through the landholdings of Lewis G. Thompson, and into the center of town where Rankin and Beecher lived and had their churches. From Fort Wayne, fugitives of the 1840's may have gone northwest along the Goshen Road to the Jeffries

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<sup>264</sup>Purtee, Edward O'Conner. *The Underground Railroad from Southwestern Ohio to Lake Erie*. Dissertation, Ohio State University, 1932. p. 36. Found in Siebert, Ohio collection.

Settlement, and on to Cassopolis; due north along the Coldwater Road, through Dekalb and Steuben counties; or east along the river or canal route to Toledo.

It is very possible that a second route emerged in Allen County during the 1840s and was strengthened during the 1850s when it became more difficult to travel through the increasingly Democratic populace of Fort Wayne. This route entered the county from the south via the Bluffton State Road, from Camden, Jay County (Pennville), and hugged the western border of the county. It might have included the Vermilyea House as early as the 1840s, as well as the settlement of Rhoda Ninde, the Thomas's, Henry Ninde, the Davis's, and Chandlers before 1850. Aboite Township and its adjoining Jefferson Township in Whitley County appears to have been populated by abolitionists as early as 1846, when Davis and Chandler arrived.

By the time Lindley and Beulah Ninde arrived in Fort Wayne in 1850, it appears that much of the underground activity had moved to the western half of the county, with occasional assistance still coming in the center of town from the strong African American community. By the end of the decade, as the war approached, and the Fugitive Slave Law and Indiana Constitution made assistance more difficult for Whites, and more dangerous for Fort Wayne's Free Blacks and longtime fugitive residents (like William Willis Elliot) it is likely that the western route became the main avenue for fugitives.

In spite of this research project, there are still many more questions to answer, participants to identify and avenues not yet traveled, and the complete story of Allen County and the Abolition Movement and Underground Railroad is yet to be told. What did the participants in Allen County think of their involvement? No first hand account has yet to be uncovered. Perhaps a hint can be found in the journal of Beulah Puckett Ninde, written after the war:

Wildwood  
March 27, 1869

“Forty years old today! How strange it seems that time has flown so swiftly and brought me so soon to the period of my life, more than half the allotted years of us poor frail mortals have passed over my head, and yet so little accomplished. Have I done all that I should have done? Have I fulfilled my destiny? God only knows, I am sure of one thing, that the strength of human weakness seems just as great now as it did years ago. That every day as it passes beings with it trials and temptations to be overcome and often very unsuccessfully have I battled with them.”

Beulah Ninde continued to battle, and in 1869 was elected first president of the Allen County Women's Rights Association, and was a leader in the statewide organization as well. In 1874, she organized the first shelter for women in need in Allen County.

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Appendix A:

*Dawson's Daily Times*, Friday Evening, August 17, 1860

**Roads in Allen County**

To the many, the most important highways in the county are unknown-- even by the ordinary names of each; hence for the want of a more fitting subject, we devote a short article to the roads of Allen County.

*First the Piqua Road* which properly commences at the South end of Calhoun street, and passes South via. the Railroad Depot, about one and a half mile, then bears a little East to the Plank Road which from that spot becomes the Piqua and Fort Wayne Plank (ed. Eastern?) Plank Road which enters Ft. Wayne on Lafayette street from the South and terminates at the toll gate on the Limas Plank Road two and a half miles North of this city via. Rudisill's Mills, St. Jo Tannery and Penn House. The Piqua Road passes from the point we left it South through a part of Wayne Township, then passes one mile through the S.W. corner of Adams Township into Marion near the North West corner, then diagonally through that township, passing Middletown 12 miles out, and about 10 miles from this city enters Adams County. This Road follows the general course of the River St. Mary's on the East side and is the direct route to Monmouth, Decatur, Pleasant Mills, Willshire, Shanesville, Mercer and St. Mary's, to Piqua, Ohio, and was originally the most distinguished Road which led to and from Fort Wayne.

The Indianapolis Road is the route of the Bluffton Plank Road, leaving Fort Wayne at the old Cemetery, and Running with it six miles, to Beck's School House; then to the right and South West through Wayne, across the North West corner of Pleasant and through Lafayette Township, leaving the county at Zanesville and passing into Wells-- crossing the Wabash at Markle.

The *Old Huntington Road* -- the one long traveled by the Indians from this place and Chief Richardville's residence on the St. Marys four miles from this city-- leaves the Bluffton Plank Road one fourth of a mile South of Beck's School House, passing through Wayne and South East Corner of Aboite, and through Lafayette following on the South side of the Prairie, leaving Allen county a few miles South of Roanoke into Huntington County.

The Old Winchester Road leaves the Bluffton Plank Road three and a half miles South of Fort Wayne and passing up the St. Marries River through Wayne, Pleasant and Marion townships, on the South side of the St. Marries River, enters Adams also about 16 miles from this city. It was originally the mail route from Winchester to Fort Wayne via. Jay C.H., Limberlost, Decatur, Poughkeepsie PO

The *Maumee Road* leads out East, passing the Lutheran College, down the Maumee River South side, and is the same as the Van Wet Road as far as New Haven in Adams Township-- six miles East on the Wabash & Erie Canal, and at that point the Van Wet Road takes the Ridge, as it is called, and follows it diagonally through Jefferson, the South West corner of Jackson and North East corner of Monroe, and into the State of Ohio toward Can Wert on the same Ridge.

The *Ridge Road*, or Fort Wayne and Hicksville, leaves Fort Wayne at the Maumee Bridge and passes along that fertile ridge between the Maumee and St. Joseph Rivers, out of Wayne into St. Joseph--through the North West corner of Milan, diagonally through Springfield -- passing Cuba and Maysville, and Hall's Corners, and into Scipio Township, near the North West corner, and thence out at the North East corner, into Ohio, in the direction of Hicksville.

The Leo Road--East-- leaves Fort Wayne at the Maumee Bridge, and passes up the East side of the St. Joseph River to Leo -- through St. Joseph Township into Cedar Creek.

The St. Joseph Road leads out of town from the Gas Works via. Rudisill's Mills to the Penn House, and there leaving to the right, through Washington Township, part of St. Joseph by the Feeder Dam, passing Cedar Creek at Cedarville, then to Leo, and out of the County about two miles South East of Spencerville, DeKalb county. This is the old mail route from Fort Wayne to Denmark, O.

The Coldwater Road leaves the St. Joseph Road two miles North East of the Penn House, passes North through Washington Township, a part of St. Joseph, into Perry, crossing Cedar Creek at Vandolah's Mill and on North.

The Auburn Road leaves the St. Joseph Road also near the Penn House and goes through Washington and Perry via. Perry Center College, crossing Cedar Creek at Stoner's Mills in Perry Township, and so on North.

The *Lima Road*, formerly the Mongoquinong is the Plank Road leaving Fort Wayne at Lees' Ford Bridge, then North via. Huntertown into Noble county, passing Avilla, Lisbon, Kendallville, Milford, &c.

The *Goshen Road* leaves the Lima Road one mile north of this city -- then passes to the left through Washington, Lake and Eel River via. Heller's Corners, to Wolf Lake, on to Goshen.

The Yellow River Road is now the Columbia City Plank Road, leaving the city at the S (ed. unreadable) Mills , passing through a corner of Washington, then into Lake via. Thaore's Mills -- a village called Pierson.

The Old Columbia City Road leaves the city limits, three miles West, and runs almost the (ed. unreadable) the Plank Road.

The Illinois Road leaves the Columbia City Plank Road at the crossing of the canal and passes a (ed. unreadable) through Wayne and Aboit townships.

The Huntington Road leaves the Illinois Road just west of Lindenwood Cemetery and follows the general course of the W. & E. canal westward.

These constitute the leading roads of Allen County all of which center or diverge from Fort Wayne; and it will be seen that with these highways, the railways, and the W. & E. canal , that Fort Wayne is (ed. centerpoint?) of a large trade, and we may add the centre of a most fertile region country, and yet to be distinguished over any other city in the State except the Capitol.

The African American Settlement of Jeffries, Smith Township, Whitley County, Indiana  
by: Angela M. Quinn

Xenia Cord, in her article "Black Rural Settlements in Indiana Before 1860" states that there were twenty-two documented Free Black settlements in antebellum Indiana.<sup>265</sup> Most ranged in size from under 100 to over 250. Most were found in southern or central Indiana, and the most northern of those listed was Huggart, in St. Joseph County.

The compilation by Barbara Stevenson, entitled *An Oral History of African Americans in Grant County*, includes a genealogy told by Joseph Casey which mentions several relatives with the surname "Jeffries" who were born and raised near "Cherabusco" (sic) in Whitley County. He further stated that they lived there from 1879 to 1910.<sup>266</sup>

After Miles Edwards, Ph.D. -- a local Fort Wayne African American historian -- notified this researcher that there might be an African American cemetery in Smith Township, a search of Whitley County sources was undertaken to find evidence for a possible Free Black community in Whitley County; its size, and relationship to other such communities. Local histories and census information confirmed that a Free Black community was located in Smith Township from as early as 1834, and that it continued until the end of the nineteenth century.

Kaler and Maring, in their History of Whitley County, report that the first pioneer death in Smith Township was that of a child of Wyatt Jeffries, in 1834. They note: "The first in the township to mourn the loss by death was Wyatt Jeffries and wife over the death of a child in 1834."<sup>267</sup> Wyatt Jeffries may have been the first African American to settle in the township, and was joined by several other families by 1840.

In 1840 the Jeffries and other families were called before the Smith Township Overseer of the Poor. Kaler and Maring write:

The 11th day of March, 1840, Justice Moore had a very rushing business, as we find that he disposed of five cases similar to the following except names and parties, which we give "verbatim et liberatim," which shows a very interesting period in the history of Smith Township. On page thirty is recorded as follows: "Be it remembered, that on the 11th day of March, A.D. 1840, personally came before me John W. More, a justice of the peace in and for

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<sup>265</sup>Found in Gibbs, Wilma L., ed. *Indiana's African American Heritage: Essays from Black History News & Notes*. Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Society, 1993.

<sup>266</sup>Stevenson, Barbara. *An Oral History of African Americans in Grant County*. Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 2000. pp. 16-17.

<sup>267</sup>Kaler and Maring, p. 288.

the county of Whitley, and state of Indiana, George C. Pence and Jacob Sine, overseers of the poor for Smith Township, and made application for a summons for Benjamin Jones and Winifred, his wife, to show cause why they don't comply with an act concerning free negroes and mulattoes, servants, and slaves,... on the 16th of the present month, came the parties, and the cause being fully heard it is adjudged that there has been no cause shown why Benjamin Jones and Winifred, his wife, don't comply with the provisions of an act concerning free negroes and mulattoes, servants, and slaves. And on the 11th day of April, A.D. 1840, came Benjamin Jones and made application for an appeal on the above case, which was granted." On the same day at 12 o'clock a.m., "Wyatt Jeffres and Eliza, his wife, Lucinda Jones at 2 p.m., Brinton Jones at 3 p.m. and Claborn Pompey at 4 o'clock p.m., were required by the overseers of the poor to show cause why they did not comply with the provisions of the same act."<sup>268</sup>

By 1840, most of these above-named individuals had purchased land in Smith Township, particularly in sections 23 and 26, as noted on the map on the next page. These and other African American settlers remained in Whitley County through 1850, and were enumerated in the Census.

#### Census Findings, Smith Township, 1850:

122/124	Burden, James	farmer	M	M	31	SC
	Minerva		M	F	25	TN
	Robison		M	M	5	IN
	Henry		M	M	3	IN
	Catherine		M	F	1	IN
	John		M	M	25	TN
126/128	Helms, George	laborer	W	M		
	Waugh, Daniel		B	M	40	OH
248/256	Casey, George	farmer	M	M	41	SC
	Nelly		M	F	41	VA
	Mahala		M	F	13	IN
	Lucinda		M	F	11	IN
	Jane		M	F	9	IN
	Ibba		M	F	9	IN
249/259	Griffin, Nancy		M	F	42	SC

<sup>268</sup>Kaler and Maring, p. 294.

	Marcus	farmer	M	M	18	NC
	Oliver		M	M	13	IN
	Matthena		M	F	12	IN
	Lucinda		M	F	11	IN
	Solomon	M	M	9	IN	
	Charlotte		M	F	7	IN
	George		M	M	6	IN
	Charlotte		M	F	78	VA
422/435	Moore, David		M	M	25	IN
	Elwina		M	F	21	NC
	Eliza		M	F	3	IN
	Mary F.		M	F	2	IN
	Griffin, Mathena		M	F	12	IN
425	Burden, John	farmer	M	M	52	SC
	Delana		M	F	50	NC
	Elbert	farmer	M	M	21	TN
	Sarah		M	F	16	TN
	Servis		M	M	14	IN
	Amanda		M	F	14	IN
	George		M	M	8	IN
	Casey, Zedd		M	M	23	SC
790/812	Pierce, Eli	Physician	W	M	55	NY
	Sarah B.		W	F	53	PA
	Mary I.		W	F	24	NY
	William B.	farmer	W	M	23	NY
	Howard		W	M	21	NY
	Ogden	farmer	W	M	20	NY
	Samuel H.		W	M	18	NY
	Hannah B.		W	F	16	NY
813	Pierce, William Y.B.	farmer	W	M	25	NY
	Mary		W	F	28	Ire.
	Letia		W	F	3	IN
	Peterson, Emily		M	F	15	NY
818/842	Pompey, Dawson	farmer	M	M	50	VA
	Sina		M	F	28	TN
	Eliza J.		M	F	14	OH
	Lorenzo		M	M	11	OH
	Napolean		M	M	9	OH
	Washington		M	M	7	IN
	Catherine		M	F	5	IN
	Susan M.		M	F	4	IN
	Dawson W.		M	M	2	IN
	Elias		M	M	11/12	IN
819/843	Pompey, Fielding	farmer	M	M	45	VA
	Susana		M	F	36	VA
	James W.	farmer	M	M	16	OH
	Nathan D.		M	M	14	IN
	Zachariah		M	M	13	IN
	Joseph F.		M	M	11	IN
	Mary E. J.		M	F	7	IN

	Allen S.		M	M	5	IN
	Peterson J.		M	M	2	IN
820/844	Jeffries, Wyatt	farmer	W	M	42	VA
	Eliza		M	F	33	VA
	Rebecca		M	F	17	OH
	Nancy A.		M	F	11	IN
	Augustus		M	M	6	IN
	Alfred		M	M	3	IN
	Esther		M	F	1/12	IN
821/845	Jones, Benjamin	farmer	M	M	65	VA
	Winnaford		M	F	54	VA
	Lucinda		M	F	30	VA
	Benjamin C.	farmer	M	M	32	OH
	Mary E.		M	F	20	OH
	James		M	M	18	OH
822/846	Jones, Brenton	farmer	M	M	36	OH
	Susan					
	Isaac					
	Alexander					
823/847	Smith, John	farmer	W	M		
824/848	Jones, John	farmer	M	M	28	OH
	Susan		M	F		
	Mary		M	F		
	Columbs	M	M			
825/849	Jones, Hiram		W	M	33	OH
858/873	Jeffries, Ridley		M	F	59	NC
	Martha		M	F		
	Martina		M	F		
	David		M	M		
	Marcus		M	M		
	Nathaniel		M	M		
	America		M	F		
862/877	Pompey, Clayborn	farmer	B	M	65	VA
	Fanny		M	F		
	John Wesley		M	M		
863/878	Jones, Peterson		M	M	32	
	Jane		M	F		
	Burden, Hezekiah		M	M	14	

In 1860, Whitley County continued to be home to a large African American population. In Columbia City, the Census reported:

62/63	Akers, James C.	barber	M	M	23	Tenn.
	Orena		M	F	24	VA

Smith Township's African American community grew during the period 1850-1860, and included the following:

979/984	Jeffers, R.	farmer	M	F	40	NC
	Lousia		M	F	30	VA
	Mary J.		M	F	8	OH
	Martha E.		M	F	6	OH
	William		M	M	5	OH
	John R.		M	M	5	OH
	Harvey S.		M	M	4	IN
980/985	Jeffers, M.	farmer	M	M	40	VA
	Elizabeth		M	F	24	NC
	Leander		M	M	12	IN
	I.		M	M	9	IN
	Levi		M	M	5	IN
	P.		M	F	3	IN
	Keen, Nancy E.		M	F		IN
981/986	Keen, L.		M	F	46	NC
	Harriet		M	F	20	NC
	N.		M	M	18	NC
982/987	Jeffers, David	farmer	M	M	36	VA
	Mary A.		blank	F	21	OH
	Duns, Jacob	labor	blank	M	20	OH
983/988	Jones, John	farmer	blank	M	34	OH
	I.		blank	F	32	VA
	Samantha		blank	F	5	IN
	Martha		blank	F	2	IN
	Jones, John		blank	M	88	NY
984/989	Jeffers, Marcus	farmer	M	M	31	VA
	Martha A.		M	F	21	NC
	McHall, Nancy	servant	M	F	17	NC
985/990	Jones, Winford	farming	M	F	73	VA
	Lucinda		M	F	46	VA
	Sarah A.	M	F	32	VA	
	Hulda J.		M	F	9	IN
986/991	Jones, Brenton	farmer	M	M	47	VA
	Susan		M	F	35	VA
	Harriet M.		M	F	9	IN
	Lucy A.		M	F	3	IN
	Sussanah		M	F	1	IN
987/992	Love, MC	laborer	blank	M	28	OH

G.		blank	F	33	OH	
McNichols, Mary	domestic	blank	F	15	OH	
988/993 Jones, B.C.	farmer		M	M	30	OH
E.I.			M	F	23	OH
989/994 Jones, Peterson	farmer		M	M	41	VA
Jane			M	F	38	MD
990/995 Pompey, D.	farmer		M	M	56	VA
L.			M	M	22	OH
Napolean			M	M	19	OH
Washington			M	M	17	IN
Catharine			M	F	16	IN
Susan			M	F	14	IN
Elias			M	M	10	IN
Miller			M	M	8	IN
G.			M	M	6	IN
S.			M	F	5	IN
L.			M	M	2	IN
991/996 Jones, James	farmer		M	M	26	OH
Amelia			M	F	22	OH
A.			M	F	6	IN
E.			M	M	5	IN
Winford			M	F	4	IN
Nelson			M	M	3	IN
U.			M	F	3/12	IN
992/997 Burden, Hezekiah	farmer		M	M	23	IN
Elizabeth			M	F	17	IN
993/998 Jeffers, W.	farmer		M	M	56	VA
Eliza			M	F	43	VA
Augustus			M	M	16	IN
Esther			M	F	11	IN
Isaiah			M	M	7	IN
Eliza			M	F	2	IN
994/999 Pompey, Fielding	farmer		M	M	53	VA
F.			M	F	43	VA
Z.			M	M	22	IN
Joseph			M	M	20	IN
Alice			M	F	18	IN
Jonas			M	M	13	IN
Henry			M	M	11	IN
Wilson			M	M	9	IN
Mahala			M	F	7	IN
Amanda			M	F	1	IN
1052/1057 McGuire, Jon	farmer		W	M	52	VA
Lett, Esther	domestic	M	F	16	OH	
1061/1066 Keller, Samuel	farmer		W	M	63	
Pompey, Fannie	domestic	M	F	66	VA	
Hunt, Elizabeth	domestic	M	F	20	IN	

1063/1060 Bowers, Wm.	labor	M	M	40	VA
Rebecca		M	F	34	VA
Henry		M	M	11	OH
Sarah		M	F	7	OH
John		M	M	5	OH
E.		M	F	3	OH
William		M	M	6/12	IN
1065/1070 Jeffers, John P.		M	M	54	VA
Nancy		M	F	47	VA
Caroline		M	F	19	OH
Margaret A.		M	F	17	OH
John		M	M	13	OH
James M.		M	M	11	OH
1074/1079 Jeffers, Nathan		M	M	30	VA
Mary		M	F	20	VA
Wm. Dayton		M	M	2	IN
Joseph C.		M	M	1	IN

This community remained in Smith Township following the Civil War, and continued to grow. The 1880 Census reveals that Smith Township held the following families in 1880:  
Smith Township, Town of Churubusco:

19	Weaver, Abram	printer	W	M	34	Penn.
	Nannie	wife	M	F	29	IN
90	Pompey, Fielding	ret. farmer	B	M	75	E. VA
	Reanna	wife	B	F	64	E. VA
	Owens, Douglas	s-in-law/farm	M	M	35	E. VA
	Amanda	dau.	B	F	20	IN
	Bessie E.A.	granddau.	M	F	1	IN
	Charles	grandson	M	M	13	IN
	William A.	grandson	M	M	9	IN
189	Jones, Peterson	ret. farmer	B	M	61	E. VA
	Mary	wife	B	F	56	D.C.
195	Pompey, Jonas	farmer	B	M	31	IN
	Martha E.	wife	B	F	25	Mich.
	Martha E.	dau.	B	F	6	IN
	George W.	son	B	M	5	IN
	William	son	B	M	4	IN
	Sarah E.	dau.	B	F	3	IN
	Daisie	dau.	B	F	1	IN

Smith Township:

274	Keen, James P.	farmer	M	M	25	IN
	Ida W.	wife	M	F	17	IN

	Walker	son	M	M	1/12	IN
	Jeffries, Nannie	sis-in-law	W	F	21	IN
275	Keen, Jesse W.	farmer	M	M	45	NC
	Ambarilea	wife	M	F	45	E. VA
	Martha A.	dau.	M	F	23	IN
	Amanda	dau.	M	F	19	IN
	Mary E.	dau./teacher	M	F	17	IN
	Jesse A.	dau.	M	F	4	IN
	Vela	mother	M	F	68	E. VA
	Christopher, John	boarder/labor	W	M	27	OH
276	Jones, Benjamin	farmer	B	M	54	OH
	Eliza J.	wife	B	F	44	OH
	Margaret E.	dau.	B	F	19	IN
	Mary C.S.	dau.	B	F	15	IN
	Charles F.	son	B	M	16	IN
	Stella S.	dau./student	B	F	12	IN
	Theradosa	dau./student	B	F	9	IN
	Pearly A.	dau./student	B	F	6	IN
	Alfred A. G.	son	B	M	3	IN
	Daniel	son	B	M	1	IN
277	Burden, Hezekiah	farmer	B	M	45	Mich.
	Mary E.	wife	B	F	37	IN
	George W.	son	B	M	13	IN
	Martha E.	dau.	B	F	11	IN
	Peterson D.	son/student	B	M	9	IN
	Riot F.	son/student	B	M	7	IN
	Rosetta	dau.	B	F	2	IN
	Tela R.	dau.	B	F	3/12	IN
(no 278 enumerated)						
279	Jeffries, Whiley	farm labor	B	M	40	Ala.
	Manervawife		B	F	35	OH
	Minnie	dau./student	B	F	6	OH
	John	son	B	M	4	IN
	Jeffries, Amos	farmer (widow)	M	M	29	OH
	Frances V.	dau.	M	F	7	IN
	Walter	son	M	M	4	IN
	Henry	son	M	M	2	IN
	Keen, Mary	mother-in-law	M	F	66	NC
280	Van Hoom, John	farmer	W	M	56	Penn.
	Elizabeth	wife	M	F	47	IN
	Jeffries, Andrew	step-son/farm	M	M	18	OH
	Samantha	step-dau.	M	F	12	OH
	Silas	step-son/student	M	M	10	OH
286	Jeffries, David	farmer	B	M	56	E. VA
	Sarah	wife	B	F	33	IN
	Henry	son/farm labor	B	M	17	IN

301	Jeffries, Nathan	farmer	M	M	57	E.VA
	Mary J.	wife	M	F	44	E.VA
	Wm. D.	son/farmer	M	M	22	IN
	Josephine	dau.	M	F	20	IN
	Charles	son/farm lab.	M	M	18	IN
	Samuel W.	son/farm lab.	M	M	16	IN
	Henry G.	son/farm lab.	M	M	14	IN
	Elberteen	son/farm lab.	M	M	10	IN
305	Jeffries, Marcus L.	farmer	M	M	55	E. VA
	Long, Noah	board/labor	W	M	25	IN
	Eliza	board/kp. house	W	F	22	IN
	William	boarder	W	M	3/12	IN
	Keen, Hester	board/kp. house	W	F	24	IN
306	Jones, Brinton	farmer	B	M	66	E.VA
	Susannah	wife	B	F	55	W.VA
	Johanna	dau.	B	F	22	IN
	Winburn, David	son-in-law/farm	M	M	22	IN
	Sarah A.D.	dau.	B	F	20	IN
	Willard	grandson	M	M	1	IN
308	Jeffries, Augustus	farmer	M	W	36	IN
	May J.	wife	W	F	37	Tenn.
	Milton J.	son/farm labor	M	M	15	IN
	Walker	son/farm labor	M	M	13	IN
	Albert A.	son/student	M	M	10	IN
	Georgia L.	dau.	M	F	5	IN
	Frederick R.	son	M	M	2	IN
	Winburn, Theodore	son/farm labor	M	M	20	IN
	Long, Esther A.	sister	M	F	27	IN
400	Crone, James W.	farmer	M	M	26	W.VA
	Priscilla	wife	M	F	23	IN
	David E.son		M	M	6	IN
401	Jeffries, Elizabeth	keep house	M	F	45	NC
	Levi	son/fam labor	M	M	24	IN
	Herbert	son	M	M	15	IN
	Lizzie	dau.	M	F	5	IN
	Mary	dau.	M	F	3	IN
	Crone, Margaret	boarder	M	F	60	E.VA
402	Jeffries, Leander	farmer	M	M	30	IN
	Nancy J.	wife	M	F	24	IN
	Turnbull, Henry	board/labor	W	M	30	IN
411	Pompey, Joseph	farmer	M	M	37	OH
	Mary E.	wife	M	F	33	IN
	Ostin, Frank	board/labor	W	M	20	Maine
425	Pompey, Isaiah	farmer	W(?)	M	26	IN
	Harriet M.	wife	M	F	28	IN

Leora V.	dau./student	M	F	7	IN
Alex M. son	M	M	4	IN	
Alma	dau.	M	F	2	IN
Edna	dau.	M	F	7/12	IN
Brown, Alonzo	board/labor	M	M	21	Mich.

Many of these families stayed in Smith Township through the end of the nineteenth century, with a few exceptions. Cemetery listings from Cass County, Michigan note that several members of the Pompey family moved from Smith township by the 1880's, and are buried there.

(Please note that this paper is in draft form only. Also, note that the next pages of this appendix are items pulled from the internet site [www.freeafricanamericans.com](http://www.freeafricanamericans.com). This site is an on-line version of the Heinegg publication listed in the bibliography for the Final Report.)

**POMPEY FAMILY**

1. John Pompey, born say 1710, was living in Brunswick County, Virginia, on 5 October 1733 when a case brought against him by Miles Thweet was dismissed. He and his wife Anne sued George Smith in court in September 1739, and they were sued for debt by Anthony Haynes and Clement Reed in September 1740. Charles Valentine sued him for debt in April 1741. A suit brought against him by Andrew King was dismissed at King's costs in June 1749 [Orders 1732-41, 40, 266, 357, 382, 412, 440, 441, 443; 1741-2, 45; 1745-9, 415, 505]. John and Anne were probably the parents of

i. James, born about 1735, a "Negro planter" from Sussex County, Virginia, listed in the Size Roll of Captain Thomas Waggener's Company at Fort Holland in August 1757: *22 years old, 5 feet 4 inches tall* [Clark, *Colonial Soldiers of the South*, 463].

2 ii. Littleberry, born say 1745.

2. Littleberry Pompey, born say 1745, purchased 50 acres in Brunswick County on Tomlins Run on 26 January 1778. On the same day he and his wife Nanny and James Stewart sold 135 acres in Brunswick County in Meherrin Parish on Stewart's Branch. They were living on land in Brunswick County on the south side of the Meherrin River adjoining Drury Going and Rebecca Stewart on 10 October 1787 when Going sold his land [DB 13:44-5; 14:366]. Nanny may have been James Stewart's sister and the daughter of Rebecca Stewart. Naney was taxable on one tithe and a horse in Brunswick County in 1800. They were probably the parents of

i. Mary, head of a Free Town, Brunswick County household of 3 "other free" in 1810 [VA:770].

ii. William, head of a Free Town, Brunswick County household of 1 "other free" in 1810 [VA:770].

iii. Jacob, head of a Stafford County household of 2 "other free" in 1810.

3 iv. Betty, born about 1771.

v. Rebecca, born 1776-1794, head of a Free Town, Brunswick County household of 3 "other free" in 1810 [VA:770] and head of Northampton County, North Carolina household of 1 "free colored" in 1820 [NC:250].

vi. Maria, married William Banks, 9 August 1825 Northampton County, North Carolina bond, Silas Banks bondsman.

3. Betty Pompey, born about 1771, was head of a Brunswick County household of 7 "free colored" in 1820 [VA:666]. She registered as a free Negro in Brunswick County on 26 September 1831: *a free woman of dark complexion about sixty years old five feet four inches high ... born free as appears by the evidence of Phebe Harrison*. She may have been the mother of

i. Claiborn, born about 1788, registered on 25 August 1823: *a free man of black Complexion five feet 8 Inches high about thirty five Years old ... born free as appears from the evidence of Phil Claiborn and by Occupation a farmer*.

ii. Peggy, born about 1789, head of a Brunswick County household of 7 "free colored" in 1820 [NC:666]. She registered in Brunswick County on 24 May 1824: *a free woman of a Yellow complection about thirty five years of Age five feet five Inches high ... born free in this County as appears from the Evidence of Phil Claiborne*.

iii. Cresy, born about 1795, head of a Brunswick County household of 4 "free colored" in 1830 [VA:267], registered in Brunswick County on 26 September 1831: *a free woman of dark complexion about thirty six years old five feet two inches high ... as appears from evidence of Phebe Harrison*.

iv. Thomas, born 1794-1806, head of a Greensville County, Virginia household of 3 "free colored" in 1820 [VA:264].

v. Turner, born about 1800, registered in Greensville County on 10 March 1825: *a free Colored man of a light yellow Complexion about*

*25 years old, 5'10-5/8 inches high in shoes ... by occupation a planter* [Register of Free Negroes, no.137]. He was head of a Brunswick County household of 4 "free colored" in 1830, one of whom was a woman over fifty-five years of age [VA:247].

vi. Dostin, born about 1802, registered as a free Negro in Brunswick County on 28 July 1823: *a free man of Yellow complexion, about twenty one years of Age Six feet high ... born free as appears from the evidence of Phil Claiborne and by Occupation a Carpenter.*

vii. Rowana, born about 1811, registered on 26 September 1831: *a free woman of dark complexion about twenty years old, five feet two inches high ... born free as appears by the evidence of John Wyche.*

viii. Lucinda, born about 1811, registered on 28 November 1831: *a free woman of dark complexion about twenty years of age, five feet and a half inch high has two small scars on the back of the right hand, and no others perceivable, was born free as appears by the evidence of John Wyche* [Wynne, Register of Free Negroes, 67, 112, 113, 119, 120, 195].

***Dungey, Pompey, and Rickman Families***

(from the collection of Thomas Kovalak)



Thomas Dungey and his sister Sarah in the 1880s. They were born in Virginia, the children of Richard Dungey and Nancy Penn (Pinn).

Sarah married Uriah Rickman and lived in Calvin Center, Michigan.

Their sister Matilda (not shown) married Samuel Hawkes, a freed slave whose photo is shown below.

The Dungey family descends from Frances Dungey, a servant woman who had mixed-race children in Brunswick County, Virginia, in the 1720s.

Like most free African American families who had been free since the colonial period, they claimed Indian ancestry.

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An 1890s photo of Napoleon Pompey.

Napoleon was the son of Dawson/ Dostin Pompey, born about 1802, who registered as a "free Negro" in Brunswick County, Virginia in 1823.

The Pompey family descend from John and Ann Pompey who were free in Brunswick County, Virginia in the 1730s.

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Washington Pompey, his wife Annis Jenkins, and children on their porch in Covert, Michigan about 1900.

Washington was the son of Dawson Pompey.

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Richard Pompey, his wife Libbie (Olivia) Gilbert, and their children: Harold, Corrine, and Casper, about 1910.

Richard, born in Whitley County, Indiana in 1875, was the son of Zachariah Pompey and Nancy Rickman (sister of William H. Rickman, shown

below).

Zachariah was the son of Fielding Pompey, born about 1801, who married Lavina Jeffries, daughter of Herbert Jeffries of Brunswick County, Virginia.

Libbie Gilbert was the daughter of a white woman and an African American man.

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Redelphia Rickman (born in 1854) and her brother William H. Rickman (born in 1859).

They were born in Calvin Center, Michigan, the children of Uriah Rickman and Sarah Dungey, and the grandchildren of Peter Rickman.

The Rickman family probably originated in Halifax

County, Virginia, during the colonial period. John and Nicholas Rickman were heads of "other free" households in Stokes County, North Carolina, in 1800.

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Richard Stewart, his wife Annie Day, and their daughter Alta Day in Calvin Township, Michigan.

Annie was the daughter of Isaiah Day and Martha Hawkes, the granddaughter of Peter Day and Edith Archer, and the great-granddaughter of Solomon Day and Julia Artis of Southampton County, Virginia.

The Day family descend from a white woman who had a child by a free African American man in 1692.

Martha Hawkes was the daughter of Samuel Hawkes, a former slave.

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Samuel Hawkes, a former slave who was freed in Nottoway County, Virginia about 1836.

He moved to Gallia, Ohio, and then to Calvin Center, Michigan, where he was reported to have been the largest taxpayer.

He married Matilda Dungey, sister of Sarah Dungey who is shown on the first page of these photos.

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Much of the nineteenth century genealogy for the above photos was taken from (rejected) Eastern Cherokee claims filed in 1907 [Files 35279, 35283].

Tom Kovalak, the owner of these photos, can be contacted at:

[tomk@cecelec.com](mailto:tomk@cecelec.com)

If you have photos of families from the same period or earlier which you are willing to publish on this site, please contact me at [p.heinegg@worldnet.att.net](mailto:p.heinegg@worldnet.att.net)

5. John<sup>3</sup> Jeffries, born say 1718, was called John Jefferson when he was granted 84 acres on Cattail Swamp in Brunswick County adjoining John Persons on 12 March 1739 [Patents 18:553-4]. The family was called Jefferson in the early land records but called Jeffries when they voted in Greenville County in 1792 and in the land records in the late 1790s and thereafter. On 26 May 1748 he purchased 228 acres in Brunswick County bounded by the north side of Cattail Creek from John Person of Isle of Wight County, heir to John Person of Surry County who was granted the land in 1726 [DB 3:447; Greenville DB 1:450]. He was among the freeholders of Brunswick County ordered to work on a road under Littleberry Robertson on 27 March 1759 [Orders 1757-9, 314]. His land on Cattail Creek was on the west side of Fountain Creek in the part of Brunswick County which became Greenville County in 1781. He was called John Jeffries on 28 June 1787 when the Greenville County Court discharged him from paying taxes (due to old age) starting from the year 1786 [Orders 1781-9, 332]. John and his wife Judy Jefferson made a deed of gift of 55 acres to their son Simon in 1796 and made deeds of sale to (their sons?) Andrew, Simon, Nathan, and John in Greenville County between 1789 and 1798. They sold 50 acres of land adjoining their land in Greenville County to Andrew Jeffers on 4 February 1789, and sold 40 acres to Nathan Jeffries for 20 pounds on 23 January 1798. By the terms of the deed Nathan was not to take possession of the land until the death of John Jeffries. On 27 December 1798 John and his wife Judy Jeffries also sold two parcels of land adjoining theirs to Andrew Jeffries, one of 40 acres for 9 pounds and another of 84 acres for 50 pounds. On 25 April 1792 they sold 45 acres on Person's Branch adjoining William Robinson to John Jeffers, Junior, for 3 pounds [DB 2:487, 498, 505-6, 520, 524]. John Jeffries' wife Judy was identified as Judy Lane by their great grandson Parker Jeffries (son of Sally Jeffries) in a Greene County, Ohio Court suit in 1841 [Parker Jeffries v. Ankeny]. Judy was probably the granddaughter of Elizabeth Lane who confessed in Surry County, Virginia Court on 7 January 1690/1 that she had two "Molato" children by "Nicholas Sessums his Negro Man" [Surry Orders 1682-91, 771, 777]. John's children were

6 i. Drury, born say 1750.

ii. Shadrack, born say 1760, surety for the 24 July 1791 Greenville County, Virginia marriage bond of (his niece) Grief Jeffries. He voted in Greenville County on 26 April 1792 [DB 1:450]. His 12 May 1812 Greenville County will was proved 12 October the same year. He left all his lands to his wife Sarah and at her death to Mary Jefferson

(Jeffries). And he left his property to his wife and at her death to his brother Nathan with one-twelfth to go to Sarah Wadkins (Watkins). His wife Sarah and brother Nathan were executors [WB 2:267-8].

iii. Nathan, born before 1776, married Clary Norton, 23 June 1791 Greenville County bond, Repts Steward surety. He was head of a Greenville County household of 9 "free colored" in 1820 [VA:263].

iv. John<sup>6</sup>.

v. Simon, born before 1776, head of an Orange County household of 6 "free colored" in 1820 [NC:410]. On 8 December 1807 he and his wife Silvey sold their land in Greenville County (51 acres) to David Robinson [DB 4:73].

6. Andrew Jeffries, born say 1750 (before 1776), was called Andrew Jeffers when he was discharged from paying taxes in Greenville County [Orders 1810-15, 253]. He was probably the Drury Jeffris whose Revolutionary War discharge papers, signed 1 July 1782, certified that he served twelve months and "Behaved as a Good and faithful Soldier" [NCGS/ XI:115]. He purchased 50 acres in Meherrin Parish, Greenville County, adjoining Shadrack, Simon, and John Jeffers from John Jeffers on 4 February 1789, purchased 30 acres on the southside of Jordan's Road adjoining the land of John Jefferson (Jeffries) on 20 April 1790 and another 30 acres on the southside of Jordan's Road on 28 April 1796. And he purchased two parcels of land from John Jeffries and his wife Judy on 27 December 1798: one for 9 pounds and another of 84 acres for 50 pounds. He voted in Greenville County on 26 April 1792. He and his wife Mary sold 12-1/4 acres adjoining their land for \$61 on 24 July 1815 [DB 1:292, 449; 2:359, 524; 4:520]. His 16 February 1821 Greenville County will was proved in October 1821. He left the part of his land adjoining David Robinson to his daughter Sally and the remainder on the southside to his daughters Linch and Morning. He named his surviving children: John, Drury, Littleton, Linch, Jancy, Grief, Morning, and Sally. Maclin Jeffries, Sally Jeffries and Grief Hathcock were buyers at the sale of his estate [WB 3:240, 299]. Andrew's wife was identified as Mary Dole in the Greene County, Ohio court suit of his grandson Parker Jeffries (son of Sally Jeffries) in 1841 [Parker Jeffries v. Ankeny]. Mary may have been the daughter of William Dale(s), head of a Northampton County, North Carolina

household of 10 "other free" in 1790 [NC:76]. Andrew was the father of

i. John<sup>7</sup>, born before 1776, head of an Orange County household of 5 "free colored" in 1820 [NC:342].

ii. Andrew/Drury<sup>2</sup>, born say 1769, married Silvia Scott, 28 January 1790 Greensville County bond, Andrew Jeffries surety. They were married by Rev. William Garner whose return was dated 10 Nov. 1789 [Minister's Returns, p.19]. He was head of an Orange County, North Carolina household of 13 "free colored" in 1820 [NC:342]. He purchased 110 acres on Jordans Creek in Orange County from Robert Scott on 8 November 1832 [DB pp.254-5].

iii. Littleton, born before 1776, head of an Orange County household of 8 "free colored" in 1820 [NC:342].

iv. Grief, born say 1770, daughter of Andrew Jeffries, married Colby Hathcock, 24 July 1791 Greensville County bond, Shadrach Jeffries surety [Minister's Returns p.30].

v. Jancy/Ginsy<sup>1</sup>, born before 1774, "over 21 years of age," married Robert Brooks Corn, 26 March 1795 Greensville County bond, Drury Going surety.

vi. Linchey Jeffers, born before 1776, head of a Greensville County household of 3 "free colored" in 1820 [VA:263].

vii. Morning Jeffers, born 1776- 94, head of a Greensville County household of 4 "free colored" in 1820 [VA:263].

7      viii. Sally, born say 1780.

7. Sally Jeffries, born say 1780, was left land adjoining Robinson by her father's October 1821 Greensville County will. She had a child named Augustus by her Greensville County neighbor, Darius Robinson (a white man), according to her son's Greene County, Ohio petition to change his name to Robinson.

Her children were

i. Augustus, petitioned the Greene County, Ohio Court to change his name to Augustus Wyche Robinson. The petition was filed on 8 May 1843 and recorded 29 May 1843.

ii. Parker.

Other Jeffries descendants were

i. Middy, head of a Northampton County, North Carolina household of 3 "other free" in 1810 [NC:731].

ii. Thomas, born before 1776, married Silvey **Hathcock**, 8 October 1789 Greensville County bond, by Rev. William Garner [Ministers Returns p.147]. He was head of an Orange County household of 9 "other free" in 1810 [NC:817] and 7 "free colored" in 1820 [NC:406].

iii. Eady, born before 1776, head of a Greensville County household of 3 "free colored" in 1820 [VA:263].

iv. Jinncy<sup>2</sup>, born before 1776, head of an Orange County household of 7 "free colored" in 1820 [NC:344].

v. L., head of an Orange County household of 4 "other free" in 1810 [NC:835], may have been Lewis, born before 1776, head of a household of 6 "free colored, or Littleton, head of a household of 8 "free colored" in 1820 [NC:342, 412]. Lewis was bondsman for the 5 February 1821 Orange County marriage bond of Tempe Jeffers and Dixon Corn.

vi. Elizabeth, married Vines Guy, 8 January 1805 Orange County bond, Jesse Blalock bondsman. Vines was head of an Orange County household of 5 "other free" in 1810 [NC:795].

vii. Herbert Jeffers, born 1776- 94, head of a Greensville County, Virginia household of 4 "free colored" in 1820 [VA:263].

viii. Nancy, born 1776- 1794, head of a Halifax County, North Carolina household of 4 "free colored" in 1830.

ix. Wyatt, head of a Whitley County, Indiana household of 4 "free colored" in 1840.

Jeffries Settlement  
Eel River Township  
Goshen Road  
AW. + Parker Robinson (Jeffries) land  
Eel River Methodist Church - 2 locations



Petition From Citizens of Indiana —  
To the Inhabitants of the State of Missouri.

Brothers and Sisters,  
We learn by the public prints, that three young men, Thompson, Cook, and Wark, are lying in the Penitentiary of your State under sentence of twelve years imprisonment, for attempting to aid some slaves in making their escape from bondage, and as we fully believe that man cannot under any circumstances, be the property of man, and that any person, claimed as such is not morally bound to remain a slave one moment longer. Than he can find a suitable opportunity to make his escape, by flight, and consequently, that it cannot be a crime for any one to assist him in so doing. Therefore we on our side of the young men, Phillips, and earnestly, remain still against their imprisonment, and recommend you to use all reasonable and honorable means for their release. — 1850

Samuel Weston William Foddy Joseph M.  
Milly Samuel Sarah William Williams John Taylor  
John R. Gifford J. D. Hunt James H. Smith  
Hazel Hough William H. Williams J. G. Gifford  
, & Ulrich, Eli Olson, Coluk G. Gifford

Mrs. M. W. (D. 1871) - The West Gate  
 Rebecca Ransom - Abigail Crampton  
 Elizabeth Ransom - Joseph Ransom  
 Susan Ransom - Mary Ransom  
 Elizabeth Ransom - Eliza Ransom  
 Mary Ransom - Michael Ransom  
 John Ransom - Henrietta Ransom  
 Sarah Ransom - Samuel Ransom

From: Crenshaw, Gwendolyn.  
"Bury me in a Free Land."  
Berlain Puckett, left column, bottom.  
Henry W. Puckett, left column, 3<sup>rd</sup> from bottom.

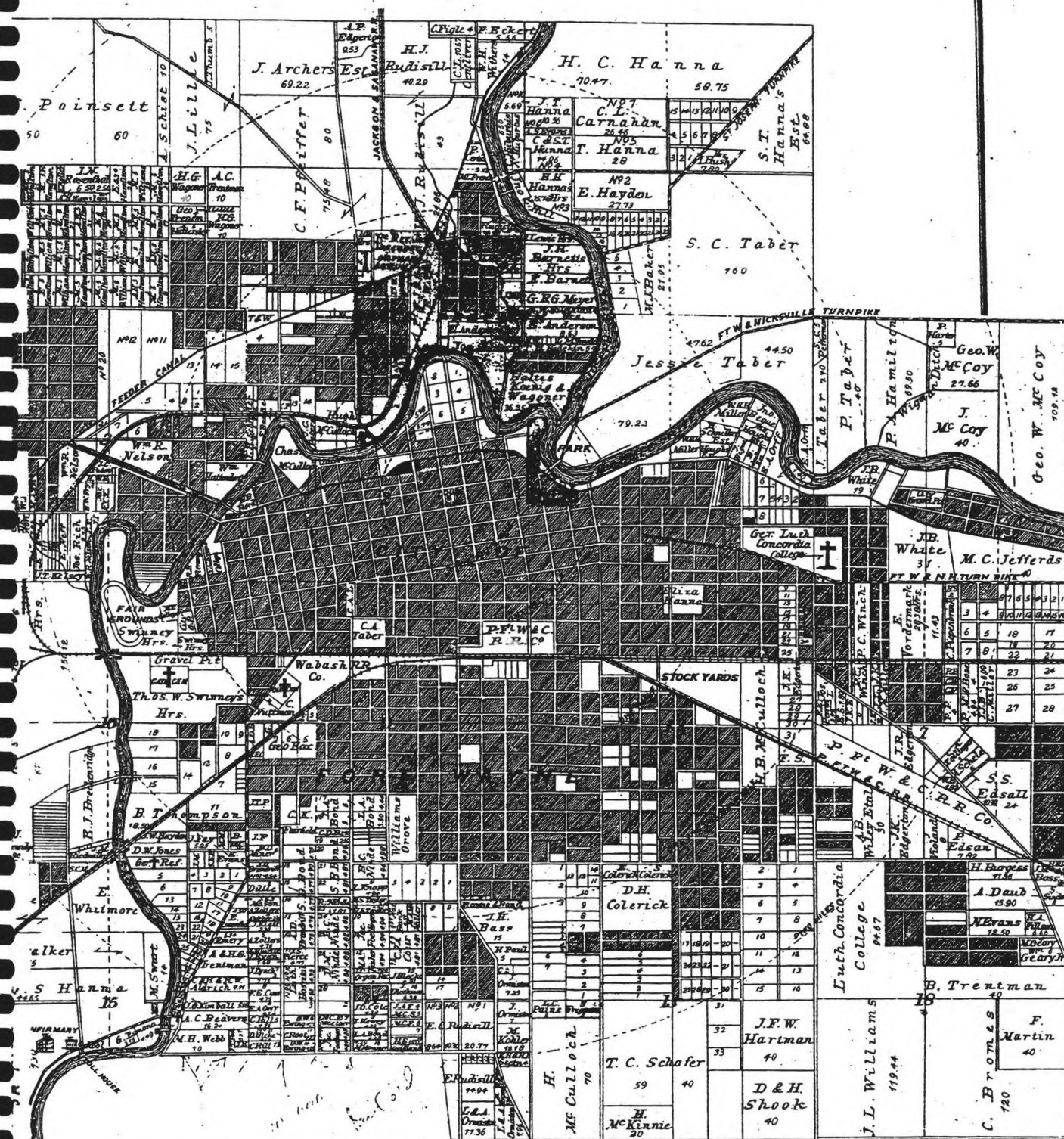
*A closer look at what disappeared in the Main St. Redevelopment Project. At top is a rat haven along old Columbia St. The street itself at this location soon disappeared. Middle: Some store fronts along Columbia. The Hedekin House (Home Hotel) and other Canal Era structures were swept away. At bottom is a view from Main and Calhoun where the City-County Building was later built.*



Columbia Street  
between Barr and  
Clinton Streets.



1880 - Helms



# Jay County, 1876 Atlas

BLACKFORD

C O.

WELLS C O.

