



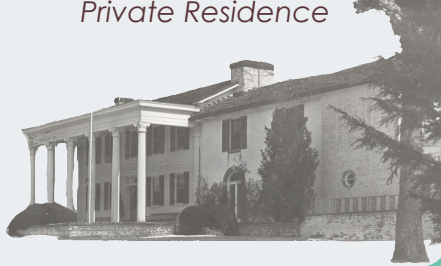
Westerville Public Library

AFRICA Alum Creek Dam Historic Marker



Lewis Center Rd.

SAMUEL PATTERSON HOME 4470 Katherine's Way Private Residence



UNDERGROUND RAILROAD SITES in Westerville

SHARP FAMILY HOMES 8025 Africa Rd. Private Residence/Historic Marker

8216 Africa Rd.
Private Residence

259 N. State St.
Business/Historic Marker

Africa Rd.

State St.

HANBY HOUSE 160 W. Main House Museum



N. West St.

Main St.

College Ave.

THOMAS ALEXANDER HOME 48 W. College Ave. Private residence



STONER HOUSE 133 S. State St. Business/Historic Marker



UNDERGROUND RAILROAD IN WESTERVILLE

HELPING TO FREE THE SLAVES

The history of the Underground Railroad is shrouded in mystery. From the day the first slave was brought to the shores of this country, dreams of freedom tantalized the men and women held in bondage. Slaves fled into Florida to live with the Native Americans, into the swamps of Georgia to live with fellow runaways, into the islands of the Caribbean and up through the northern states on their way to Canada. It is estimated that from 1830-1860, the peak years of this flight to freedom, approximately 30,000 slaves escaped. Because of the illegal and dangerous nature of the Underground Railroad little documentation remains for this clandestine activity. We have accounts written after the Civil War, in many instances, long after the actual events.

In Westerville, we are fortunate to have documented some of the activities of the brave individuals who aided fleeing slaves.

GEORGE STONER

A stagecoach driver and innkeeper by profession, George Stoner was a conductor on the Underground Railroad. His inn stood at the entrance to Westerville on State St. He hauled passengers and cargo to and from the village. Because of his profession he was in a unique position to transport and hide slaves.



GARRIT SHARP

Garrit Sharp, patriarch of a family of abolitionists, was an original settler of what was known as Sharp's Settlement now Westerville. He was active in the Methodist Church and a founder of the Blendon Young Men's Seminary whose campus later was acquired by Otterbein University. Garrit and his sons were all involved in the anti-slavery movement and assisted slaves escaping to freedom. His home and several of those owned by his sons still stand on State Street and Africa Road.



HANBY FAMILY

William Hanby declared his opposition to the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850: "But I say to you that when a law keeps a people from humanity, it is no longer the voice of God it's a counterfeit and must not be obeyed... As for me, my path is plain, I have chosen whom I will serve." Bishop Hanby had tasted the bitter life of bondage as an indentured youth and become a runaway. His experiences and faith led him to hide runaways aided by his next door neighbors the Lewis Davis family. Because of the example set by the father, young Ben Hanby chose to express his displeasure with the institution of slavery by composing one of the most poignant anti-slavery songs of the Civil War era- *Darling Nelly Gray*.

SAMUEL PATTERSON

The community of East Orange northwest of Westerville was home to Samuel Patterson and other prosperous farmers. They concealed runaways throughout the community. When a group of freed slaves needed homes and employment they were directed to East Orange. Because of the appearance in the small community of a lot of dark faces, a neighbor driving his wagon through East Orange coined the name "Africa" when describing the village. Today Africa Road reminds us of this history.



THOMAS ALEXANDER

Thomas Alexander's obituary describes him as a very moral man and believer in all progressive causes. He operated a foundry on Knox Ave. Slaves were hidden in his foundry before they were moved further north concealed in his wagon among farm utensils produced in his business. He would place one of his children on the wagon seat beside him and head northwest in broad daylight delivering his hidden cargo to their next stop.

