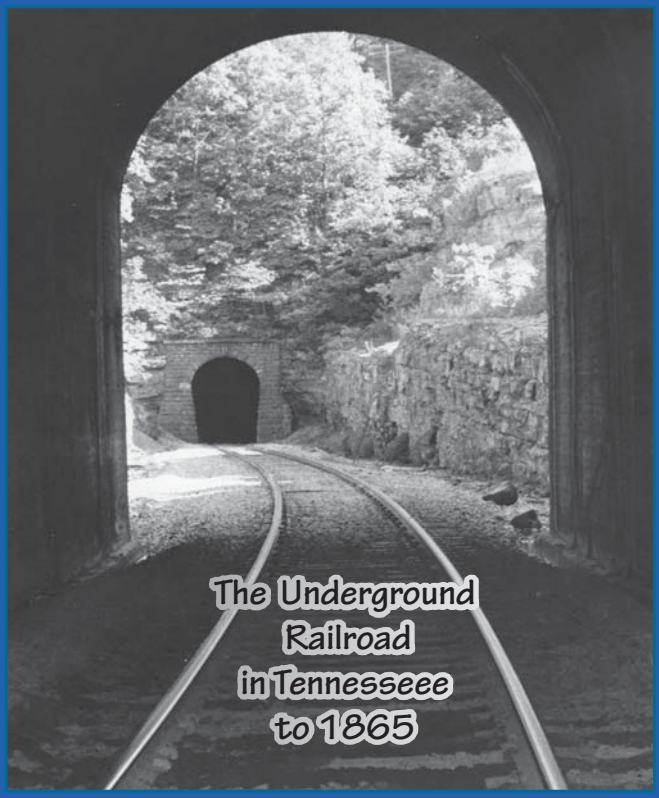
The State of State History in Tennessee in 2008



A Report By
State Historian
Walter T. Durham

The State of State History in Tennessee in 2008

The Underground Railroad in Tennessee to 1865

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Walter T. Durham

Tennessee State Library and Archives
Department of State
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Jeanne D. Sugg

State Librarian and Archivist

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Preface and Acknowledgments

In 2004 and again in 2006, I published studies called *The State of State History in Tennessee*. The works surveyed the organizations and activities that preserve and interpret Tennessee history and bring it to a diverse public.

This year I deviate by making a study of the *Underground Railroad in Tennessee* and bringing it into the *State of State History* series. No prior statewide study of this remarkable phenomenon has been produced, a situation now remedied.

During the early nineteenth century, the number of slaves escaping the South to find freedom in the northern states slowly increased. The escape methodologies and experience, repeated over and over again, became known as the Underground Railroad.

In the period immediately after the Civil War a plethora of books and articles appeared dealing with the Underground Railroad. Largely written by or for white men, the accounts contained recollections of the roles they played in assisting slaves make their escapes. There was understandable exaggeration because most of them had been prewar abolitionists who wanted it known that they had contributed much to the successful flights of a number of slaves, oft times at great danger to themselves.

Newspaper and magazine writers often enlarged on stories they had accepted uncritically. Readers in the North and East were eager to see how slave owners had been duped or stripped of their property. The print media accounts almost resulted in turning a historical reality into a grand myth. At the very least, by 1900 it had become difficult to separate fact from fiction in matters of the Underground Railroad.

Much of the literature left the impression that the Railroad was operated by whites who were due great credit. A few recollections by former slaves, who had escaped to the North, somewhat offset the accounts that made heroes of the white abolitionists and supplicants of the fleeing blacks.

Notwithstanding the clouding of history by myths and fiction, careful research documents the existence of the Underground Railroad, especially north of the Ohio River and in the East. The passengers or fleeing slaves came from the South, however. And as they came, many were from Tennessee and many others from below followed the Railroad northward across the state.

All of this leads to the questions that have prompted this small volume. Did the Underground Railroad truly exist in Tennessee? Where was it? Who were some of the slaves who traveled it? Who were some of the whites and free blacks who assisted in its operation? Were there other ways to freedom without the risk involved in running away? What was its legacy to the twenty-first century?

Searching for answers to these questions has not been easy. Secrecy surrounded the subject from the beginning. Slaves escaping from Tennessee, those passing through from the states below, and the whites and free blacks who might have assisted them kept no records and avoided public commentary on the subject. It was dangerous business with bodily punishment for slaves and fines and jail time for those offering aid and succor.

State and county court records and newspapers of the period offer hard evidence of slaves' desire for freedom and their efforts to achieve it. Notices of runaway slaves appeared frequently in newspapers, and occasionally there were notices of runaways having been captured and held for return. News columns reported on the real and suspected acts of abolitionists and the rise and fall of emancipation and colonization societies in the state. The press kept an eager eye on any activities that might have assisted run-

aways or might have incited insurrection. The courts approved a few owner petitions to free slaves, ruled on disputed slave ownership, and enforced the terms of testamentary wills by which owners sought to free their slaves after their own deaths. Also, state courts enforced slave laws that protected the rights of owners. Slavery was legal until 1865.

Book-length accounts of successful Underground Railroad experiences of a few Tennessee slaves have been helpful. Two of the most significant of these are Jermaine Wesley Loguen, *The Rev. J. W. Loguen, as a Slave and as a Free Man; a Narrative of Real Life* (New York: Negro Universities Press, 1968), and Ann Hagedorn tells of the works of the Rev. John Rankin in *Beyond the River, The Untold Story of the Underground Railroad* (New York: Simon and Schuster Paperbacks, 2002).

Both of the men were Tennesseans. Loguen escaped slavery in Middle Tennessee to become a stationmaster for the Underground Railroad at Syracuse, New York. Rankin was a Tennessee expatriate who operated a major station at Ripley, Ohio. Also, helpful for understanding the Railroad in Tennessee were the manuscript autobiographies of John Rankin and his oldest son, Adam Lowry Rankin.

Two studies originating in Tennessee have been useful. E. Raymond Evans, *Chattanooga: Tennessee's Gateway to the Underground Railroad* (Chattanooga: Chattanooga African American Museum, 2005). The book faithfully follows its title. A challenge to secondary schoolteachers was issued in 1999 by Middle Tennessee State University, *The Underground Railroad in Tennessee, A Workshop for Teachers*. In a three-day workshop, teachers developed plans to determine the legacy of the Railroad by encouraging their students to seek relevant facts and traditional stories from their own communities.

Locating routes, surviving landmarks, and the names of participating parties has depended heavily on local traditions. I know that embracing traditional stories is done at

great risk, but ignoring them can be equally risky. I identify traditional material used herein and/or evaluate it in terms of the place, persons, and times that it treats. I try to be careful in this less than hard proof area.

Determining the number of Tennessee slaves who exited via the Underground Railroad is an impossible task. I have examined estimates from a number of sources and have arrived at what I think is a very conservative figure.

My purpose is to determine what the Underground Railroad meant in its time and what it means at the beginning of the twenty-first century. To do this I examine the Railroad against the background of a modest antislavery movement in Tennessee beset by an intransigent slave culture. I look at legal ways out of slavery, evaluate incursions of out-of-state abolitionists seeking to escort slaves north to freedom, and identify passengers. I travel with them, follow their routes, and try to locate existing landmarks.

Many have aided me in this endeavor. I recognize special help from Dean Stone, Maryville; George Henry, Friendsville; Sherry Britton, Randi Nott, and Dr. Robert Orr, Greeneville; and Alison Gibson, Union Township Public Library, Ripley, Ohio. I have received unfailing assistance from staff members of the Tennessee State Library and Archives and the Jean and Alexander Heard Library of Vanderbilt University, Nashville; the Walter Thigpen Library of Volunteer State Community College and the Sumner County Archives, Gallatin.

The office of State Historian is attached to the State Library and Archives, a division of the office of the Secretary of State. This *State of State History in Tennessee, 2008*, report is made possible by the encouragement and cooperation of State Librarian and Archivist Jeanne Sugg and the generous assistance of Secretary of State Riley Darnell.

The comments and suggestions of readers have been extremely helpful. They came from historians

Richard Blackett, Vanderbilt University; Robert Polk Thomson of Nashville; and Tennessee State Librarian and Archivist emeritus Edwin S. Gleaves.

Many others assisted me but special acknowledgment must go to Glenda Brown Milliken, my capable and tireless co-worker; the various state and private agencies that have contributed photographs; and Robert Greene and Melissa Fisher of the Secretary of State's office, who are adept at developing printed products of the very highest quality.

Walter T. Durham
State Historian
November 1, 2008

Photographs*

*Unless attributed to the holdings of others, all photographs are from collections of the Tennessee State Library and Archives.

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I

Background and Origins

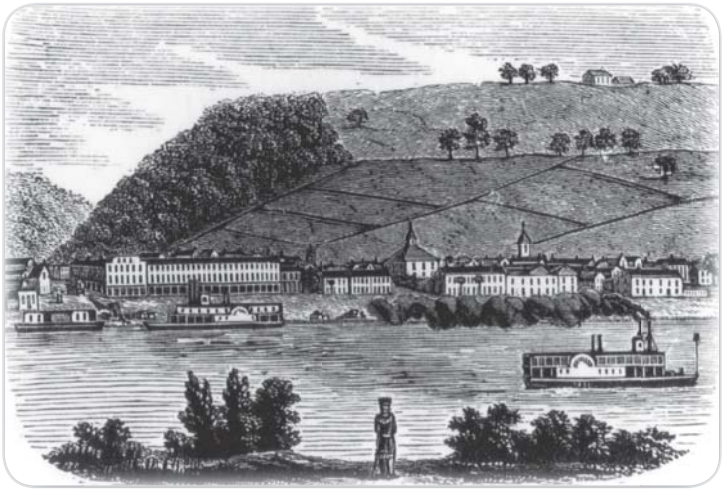
The Underground Railroad is a compelling metaphor first used about 1834 to describe the flight of slaves from the slaveholding states of the South to the free states of the North. Neither underground nor railroad, the term referred to unnumbered routes over which fugitive slaves might secretly escape to freedom, usually with assistance from persons along the way. It was their bold efforts to free themselves that prompted helpful responses by free blacks and whites.

Persistent traditions suggest the haunting term "Underground" was coined in 1831 by a frustrated Kentucky slaveholder who unsuccessfully pursued his slave Tice Davids across the Ohio River at Ripley. Suddenly losing all trace of Davids, the master exclaimed, "He must have gone off on an underground road."[1] A few years later the advent of railroads with speedy steam-powered locomotives brought the Underground Railroad name into general use. A participant explained, "It was so called because they who took passage on it disappeared from public view as really as if they had gone into the ground. After the fugitive slaves entered a depot on that road, no trace of them could be found."[2]

South of the Ohio River, the first fugitive slaves set out northward with little expectation of finding help along their journey. Yet unexpected, even accidental contacts that enabled them to avoid law enforcement officers and slave hunters were vital to the success of those trying to reach a free state.

North of the Ohio River there was enough sympathy for escaped slaves that dedicated local "railroad" persons could conduct their fugitive passengers often referred to as "baggage" or "cargo" to safe houses called "depots" or "stations." As soon as possible, usually the next day, the conductor would direct them along loosely organized networks farther away from the slaveholding states. The operation was an above ground underground.

After Congress passed the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850, Canada, where Great Britain had abolished slavery in 1833, became the destination for those who had crossed the Ohio. Congress had placed fugitive slave cases under Federal jurisdiction. U.S. Commissioners, created by the act, could issue warrants for the arrest of runaway slaves and could originate special papers to return them to their masters. Anyone assisting or concealing a fugitive slave was subject to a fine of up to $1,000 and imprisonment for up to six months.[3]



Ripley, Ohio, as seen from the Kentucky side of the Ohio River
Courtesy of Ohio Historical Society

How many slaves escaped from the southern states to the free states of the North before the end of the Civil War? The number is unknown. Most historians agree that there is no reliable way to estimate the slave exodus. Estimates made at various times between 1865 and 2008 range from low five figures to low seven figures, but current judgments seem to put the total in the low six figures. No records of the immigration were kept. Census records offer little help because slaves who relocated to the North frequently avoided census takers, and because the exodus from the South, extending over more than 65 years, was a trickle rather than a great surge.

How many slaves escaped from Tennessee masters to freedom? No one knows. This historian estimates the number at more than 5,000 but less than 10,000. The numbers were not large, but freedom for each of the persons represented is of the greatest significance.

From its earliest days the Underground Railroad was destined to cross the state of Tennessee at more than one place between the Appalachian Mountains in the east and the Mississippi River in the west. The physical geography of the area facilitated it. Valleys thread northeasterly through the mountains of East Tennessee; the Tennessee and Cumberland Rivers loop through the state into the Ohio; and the busy river ports of Knoxville, Nashville, and Memphis provided cover for those carrying falsified passes, those posing as free blacks working on riverboats, and those stowing away on board.

Slaves fleeing to the free North from Mississippi, Alabama, and Northwestern Georgia, could hardly avoid crossing the Volunteer State.[4] They were often able to access the Tennessee River as it flowed westward across the northern reaches of the three states. From time to time newspaper advertisements to apprehend fugitive slaves warned that escapees from those states as well as from Louisiana, Arkansas, Missouri, and Kentucky might be found in Tennessee.

The mountain-valley topography of East Tennessee was a factor in the development of the Underground Railroad in that part of the state because the land did not support the kinds of agriculture that employed slave labor. Consequently there were few slaves and few slaveholders in the region. The topography also provided cover for fugitives who preferred the forested ridges and valleys to confrontation with officers of the law in more populous places.

The Appalachian Mountains seemed always to hold out hope for protecting the movement of fugitive slaves from South to North. John Brown's convention of Underground Railroad leaders at Chatham, Ontario, in April 1858 studied plans to enlarge and increase the principal escape routes.

At first the convention focused on a proposal to develop a subterranean passage of about two thousand miles in length under the Appalachians. At least a part of it would likely have been in and/or under East Tennessee. The proposal died aborning, however.[5]

Samuel Doak

Of the very greatest importance to the nascent Underground Railroad in East Tennessee was the presence of citizens who opposed slavery and who were willing to organize their opposition to it. As a matter of religious faith, the Quakers at Friendsville, Unitia, and Rheatown, among other places, opposed human bondage. The ministry of certain Presbyterian preachers, notably Samuel Doak at Washington College, encouraged a compassionate view of the plight of slaves. A number of Methodist preachers actively upheld their church's view stated in 1780 that slavery contradicted the laws of God and men.

Organized antislavery groups helped clear the way for the railroad. As early as 1797 Thomas Embree, a Quaker and successful iron manufacturer near Jonesborough, Tennessee, had called for the gradual abolition of slavery in the state. Advocating the formation of an antislavery society, he sought memberships from "spirited citizens of every denomination whose patriotic zeal is not limited to those of their own color."[6] There was little response to his call, however.

A few years later, discouraged by his failure to interest Tennesseans in the abolitionist movement, Thomas Embree relocated with most of his family to southern Ohio. Two of his sons remained behind to operate the iron manufactory. Early in 1815 one of them, Elihu Embree, demonstrated his passion for abolishing slavery by joining one of the first societies to promote the manumission of slaves.[7]

The Tennessee Society for the Manumission of Slaves, the first local society, was organized February 25, 1815, by the Quaker minister Charles Osborne at Lost Creek meetinghouse in Jefferson County. A preliminary meeting to draft a constitution to be presented at Lost Creek had been held in December 1814 at the home of Elihu Swain. In addition to Elihu, those present were Charles Osborne, John Swain, Jesse Willis, John Underhill, John Canady, David Maulsby, and John Morgan.

Within six months fifteen other societies were organized in East Tennessee. Gathering at Lick Creek Meetinghouse in Greene County November 21, 1815, the sixteen merged memberships to create the Manumission Society of Tennessee with 474 members.[8] The statewide organization elected Quaker abolitionist James Jones its president. As such he wrote essays and addresses issued by the society and corresponded with antislavery workers in Tennessee and elsewhere.[9] When he died in 1830, an abolitionist editor wrote of him: "A great man has fallen . . . the steady, ardent and persevering friend of universal emancipation. . . . Long shall the poor oppressed African mourn his irreparable loss."[10]

From its inception the manumission movement in Tennessee was based on the principle of gradual emancipation; immediate emancipation had few advocates. The manumitters believed that a process of gradual emancipation would be the humane way to accomplish assimilation of former slaves by the larger community. The gradual process could also provide time for educating and preparing them for life in a free society.

With the cooperation of the Manumission Society of Tennessee, Elihu Embree began publishing the *Manumission Intelligencer* at Jonesborough in the spring of 1819. An antislavery newspaper, it also offered general coverage of the news. Hobbled by agreeing to have the contents of each issue reviewed by representatives of the society before going to press, Embree replaced the weekly on April 30, 1820, with *The Emancipator*, an octavo monthly. It is generally regarded as the first newspaper in the United States dedicated exclusively to the abolition of American slavery. After publishing only seven issues of *The Emancipator*, Embree died December 4, 1820, at the age of 38 years.[11]

Embree had believed that, given the opportunity, slaves would likely free themselves. "I view the slaves as prisoners of war [who] according to the laws of nations have the right to seize any opportunity to free themselves--nor have we doubt that they will embrace every opportunity that promises success."[12]

A publication succeeding Embree's newspaper appeared in Tennessee soon after his death. Benjamin Lundy, an Ohio Quaker abolitionist, brought his new *Genius of Universal Emancipation* from Mt. Pleasant, Ohio, printing it in shops along the way until using Embree's old press at Jonesborough and finally settling at Greeneville. Lundy and his newspaper remained there until relocating to Baltimore, Maryland, in August 1824. He was confident that he was leaving the antislavery movement in good hands in East Tennessee because he said that one-fifth of all abolitionist societies in the United States were located there.[13]

As an example of abolitionist enthusiasm in the area, Congressman John Rhea of Blountville presented memorials from the seventh and eighth conventions of the Tennessee Manumission Society to the U.S. House of Representatives in 1822 and again in 1823. Beseeching the Congress to consider "the situation of the people of color of the United States . . . and provide by law for their relief," the petitioners sought "the final abolition of African slavery within the United States." Congress made no response.[14]

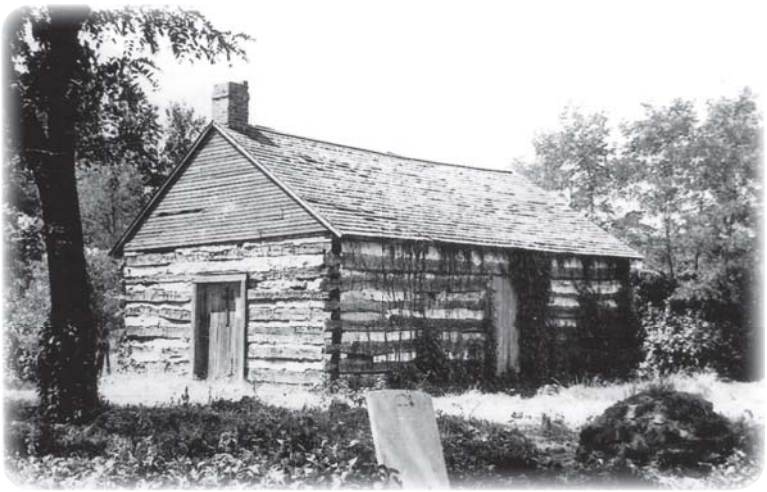
In 1824 Tennessee Congressman John Blair of Jonesborough delivered another memorial to the House calling for the "prevention of slavery in the future in any state" where it was then "not allowed by law" and for the prohibition in states "hereafter to be formed and admitted to the Union." All of the memorials were referred to the Committee on the Judiciary from which they never emerged.[15]

Antislavery sentiment in the region had developed principally out of the ministries of both Presbyterian and Quaker leaders. Charles Osborne, a Quaker pastor then living in Washington County, worked with other churchmen throughout East Tennessee, first organizing meetinghouses for the Friends and, later, manumission societies. His travels, including forays into Virginia, North Carolina, and Georgia, occurred from 1809 to 1817, at which time he moved to Mt. Pleasant in southern Ohio.

The teachings of Presbyterian Samuel Doak at Washington College reached future preachers and public officials. His Christian theology provided a religious basis for opposing slavery. Although he owned slaves when he established Washington College, he freed them in 1818 and eleven of them moved to Brown County, Ohio.[16] Some of Doak's students preached to congregations throughout East Tennessee, and others sought and held public office. One of his graduates, the North Carolina political leader Zebulon Vance, said that when he arrived in the nation's capital in 1858 to be sworn in as a member of Congress, he found 22 other congressmen who had been schooled at Washington College.[17] In 1818 Doak left the college to the care of his son John Whitefield Doak to join another son, Samuel

Witherspoon Doak, at Tusculum Academy near Greeneville, the forerunner of Tusculum College.[18]

Isaac Anderson, founder of the Southern and Western Theological Seminary at Maryville in 1819, was an important figure in the antislavery movement. A Presbyterian preacher, Anderson established the seminary to prepare students for the Presbyterian ministry, but later renamed and expanded it as Maryville College. Under his leadership it was known as a bastion of southern abolitionist thought. The college was one of the first in North America to open its doors to Native American Indians and African Americans.[19]



Washington College early nineteenth century log building
Courtesy of Washington College Academy Archives

Neither Middle nor West Tennessee experienced an antislavery movement as strong as had prepared East Tennessee for the Underground Railroad. Abolitionists in Middle Tennessee organized several African colonization societies during the 1820s and 1830s, but their emphasis was setting up colonies of freed slaves in Africa, an extremely slow process at best.

Opened to settlement after the Jackson Purchase of 1818 with a soil and growing season ideal for producing cotton, West Tennessee developed an economy that depended on slave labor. With the area ideally situated for the development of

plantations comparable to those in the Deep South, few who lived or who were about to move there entertained doubts about the legitimacy of slavery. Yet even though there was scant preparation for it, the Underground Railroad later functioned in both Middle and West Tennessee.

In 1824 a group of Maury Countians formed the Moral Religious Manumission Society of West Tennessee at Columbia.[20] Restricting its membership to nonslaveholders, the society denounced slavery as a crime and incompatible with the teachings of Christianity. Their object was to achieve manumission by argument and persuasion. "As we believe that slavery will exist while men of talents are wishing to tyrannize, and as we are convinced that nothing but the moral and religious principle can make men unwilling to tyrannize, we therefore deem it unnecessary to make use of any other means but argument."[21]

During the next three or four years, the society made public pleas by petitions, addresses, memorials, and letters with little measurable result. It disbanded about 1827.[22]

In 1835 there were no societies for immediate emancipation active in Tennessee until a single society of that nature was organized at Rock Creek in East Tennessee. The nine charter members elected James Kennedy president, but after two years the society ceased to exist. During its brief lifetime, it was one of only three organizations in the South that advocated immediate emancipation.[23]

The interest in antislavery activities in East Tennessee had suffered a setback during the years from 1815 to 1825 when a significant number of abolitionist families relocated to the Midwest for safety from threatened harm by pro-slavery neighbors. It is estimated that about five thousand persons from the mountains of East Tennessee and western North Carolina, most with antislavery convictions, immigrated to the Midwest during the decade. Among the most prominent were Thomas Embree, Rev. Charles Osborne, Benjamin Lundy, Rev. John Rankin, John Underhill, Jesse Willis, Jesse Lockhart, Rev. David Nelson, Rev. Gideon Blackburn, and other leaders who left Tennessee during this period.

Thomas Embree, Rankin, Osborne, and Lockhart settled in Ohio; Underhill and Willis in Indiana; Blackburn in Illinois; and Nelson first in Missouri by way of Kentucky and later in Illinois. Families usually accompanied the expatriates.[24]

Although the number of local branches of the Manumission Society of Tennessee had increased to 25 chapters with a total of one thousand members by 1827,[25] change was in the air. Agreement on specific plans to free slaves on a gradual basis was almost impossible to achieve, but plans to deport and colonize them in Africa began to attract favorable attention. Other plans suggested colonies for them in a separate part of the United States or in Mexico or Haiti.

The impending death of the Manumission Society of Tennessee was indicated in 1823 when it accepted the concept of colonization. The society favored locating the colony on land in the U.S. to be set aside for that purpose, but the prospect of freeing slaves and returning them to their homeland Africa had more appeal.[26] Colonization freed the slaves from bondage and rid the country of their presence. For many reasons, including the lack of compensation to owners and other expenses involved, many saw colonization as a gradual process and one they could terminate at any time, should they choose.

The disappearance of the traditional antislavery societies in the state during the early 1830s was attributable to other factors as well. First, their gradual emancipation views were so gentle that they had little impact on those shielding slavery. Next, there was the widespread fear created by the Nat Turner insurrection of 1831 and the threatening tone of William Lloyd Garrison's *Liberator*. Further, the population center of the state had moved toward the West where slavery was deeply involved in the agricultural economy. Planters needed the labor, especially in cultivating the hundreds of thousands of acres recently made available by the Jackson Purchase.

Organized December 21, 1829, in Nashville, with Philip Lindsley, president of the University of Nashville, its

first president, the Tennessee Colonization Society started strong but ultimately made only modest contributions to colonization.[27] Three years later, in addition to the state society, eighteen local colonization societies existed in Tennessee, including one in each of the principal cities of Knoxville, Nashville and Memphis. There were five in East Tennessee, seven in Middle and six in West Tennessee. Bishop William McKendree, the first American-born bishop of the Methodist Episcopal Church, who had family at Fountain Head, Tennessee, was one of the 24 vice presidents of the American Colonization Society.[28] Also, Episcopal Bishop James H. Otey, later a founder of the University of the South at Sewanee, was for several years a vice president of the national organization.[29]

Agents of the American Colonization Society, organized in 1817, tried to rally Tennesseans to their cause. On August 8, 1831, an East Tennessee educator, the Reverend Oramel S. Hinckley addressed the Tennessee branch at the First Presbyterian Church in Nashville. A former member of the faculty at Dartmouth College, Hinckley had come to Greene County to teach at Greeneville College. Two years later he became superintendent of the East Tennessee Female Academy at Greeneville.[30] Nothing of note resulted from the meeting.

James G. Birney, who in 1840 would become the newly-organized Liberty Party's unsuccessful candidate for president of the United States, lectured on colonization in several mid-state towns in 1832. A year later he addressed a meeting of the Tennessee Colonization Society in the Hall of the House of Representatives in the State Capitol. That there was little excitement for colonization was shown by the General Assembly of the state which in 1833 allowed the society ten dollars for each freeman sent to Liberia, provided not more than $500 be spent in any one year.[31] Birney fared better with the *National Banner and* Nashville *Daily Advertiser* when the newspaper in its issues of May 22 and June 5, 10, 11, and 15, 1833, published a series of essays he had written to introduce the American Colonization Society to Tennesseans.

Although emergence of the Tennessee Colonization Society seemed to discourage the activities of manumission societies, its accomplishments in the way of colonization were meager, indeed. Tennessee ranked fourth among the Southern states in the number of freedmen sent to Africa between 1829 and 1866 by sending 870 to the colony in Liberia even as Virginia sent 3,733; North Carolina 1,371; and Georgia 1,341.[32] Unsuccessful fund-raising hampered the Tennessee Society.[33]

Many of the Tennessee slaves who were colonized came from the ironworks of Montgomery Bell. The Middle Tennessee manufacturer used the facilities of the American Colonization Society to send a number of slaves from his Dickson County iron furnaces to Liberia. He first sent a family of 38, a man, wife and 36 children and grandchildren. To each of the 38 he gave "a good outfit, paid all expenses to the place of embarkation and gave . . . $2,000 toward the expenses of their colonization." On December 16, 1853, they left Savannah, Georgia, on the brigantine *Gen. Pierce* for Liberia. In May, 1854, he sent 50 more on the *Sophie Walker*. Selecting approximately 83 slave ironworkers for the next expedition, Bell proposed to outfit them, pay their expenses to "the place of sailing" and furnish "one half of the amount necessary to transport them to Liberia and support them for six months."[34]

An editor for the American Colonization Society was enthusiastic. Commenting on the future of Bell's slaves, he said, "These are the 'river men' of Tennessee." They understood the iron business and "were competent to build furnaces and make iron, and to carry on the business themselves." He expected they would receive "unusually large acreages in Liberia so as to enable them to open furnaces."[35] But it was not to be.

Due to the difficulty of raising money in Tennessee to match Bell's guarantee for one-half the transportation and six months living expenses, the 83 iron makers' relocation to Liberia stalled. A few months later, on April 1, 1855, Bell died. Under the terms of his will, the slaves were sold.[36] That Montgomery Bell was serious about colonizing these last of

his ironworkers is shown by his plans to send his favorite nephew George Bain to purchase iron making equipment for them in England and then follow it to Liberia to assist setting it up.[37]

Still another colonization plan was advanced by the Scottish reformer Frances Wright as she announced plans to establish an experimental community at Nashoba, the twenty-first century location of Germantown, Tennessee. Having visited the United States, she thought the American people lived with more happiness and pleasure than their peers in Europe, with the exception of the slaves. Freedom for them would make American life nearly free of fault, she insisted.[38]

Montgomery Bell

Publishing "A Plan for the Gradual Abolition of Slavery in the United States Without Danger or Loss to the Citizens of the South," Wright explained her intentions. The Nashoba experiment would purchase slaves and/or accept them by donation. They would be brought into the community to be educated, for, as Frances believed, the only way to "true freedom and equality was through education." Simultaneously, they would labor to pay for the cost of transportation to freedom.

In this case, they would find freedom on the island nation of Haiti where the Haitian president had assured Wright that a colony would be warmly received. Although she was philosophically opposed to colonization, she accepted it to win the support of leading political figures in the United States.[39]

Unfortunately for Wright, friends in high places did not have the power to avert disaster for Nashoba and Haitian colonization. Her long absences due to illness during a return trip to Europe and her advocacy of unconstrained sexual relations between any two consenting adults combined to sound the death knell for the Nashoba experiment. It did not survive long enough to serve the cause of emancipation and colonization.[40]

Notwithstanding the well-organized efforts to free slaves and remove them to Africa, the Underground Railroad continued to function in its grandly loose fashion. The combination of a runaway slave seeking freedom and finding persons, black and white, willing to help was effective. The Underground extended into Canada, but traveling it did not force all passengers out of the United States. Before 1850, stopping below the Great Lakes was a popular option, and going into Canada did not preclude returning to the United States.

The decline of organized antislavery societies that had thrived in the 1820s did not squelch abolitionist support of government action to end slavery; East Tennesseans showered petitions for antislavery legislation on the General Assembly. When the Constitutional Convention of 1834 was convened, the secretary received a number of memorials from East and Middle Tennessee counties asking that the new constitution include provisions for the gradual abolition of slavery and/or colonization by 1866. Neither the legislature nor the convention responded affirmatively to the requests.[41]

With the passing of the more aggressive antislavery societies in the state, *The Emancipator*, then published in New York, rushed to praise faithful East Tennessee abolitionists in its edition of March 8, 1838.

> We can rejoice to know that in East Tennessee and directly in the very center of the slaveholding country among the fastness of the American Alps, God has secured a little Spartan band of devoted abolitionists of the best stamp, whom neither death nor danger can turn.

Notwithstanding the short lives of many of the antislavery organizations in Tennessee, their existence kept the issue of slavery before the public. From them, slaves learned they had allies as well as masters, a point not lost on those who were willing to take a risk for freedom. Yet the antislavery discussion also had the effect of hardening the position of the defenders of the peculiar institution. The issue was not settled nationwide until the Thirteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution, adopted in 1865, prohibited the practice of slavery.

II

Legal Ways to Freedom

Escaping the slave South in favor of a free state was the best option available to former slaves who coveted life in a free society. Yet legal means existed by which slaves, at their master's initiative, could become free blacks within or outside the bounds of Tennessee. From time to time, a fortunate few of the slave population were emancipated by the county courts on petition from their owners or by provisions in their owner's last will and testament.

Although the freeing of slaves by this means was usually an act of compassion and/or reward for faithful service, it did not result in a large increase in the numbers of freemen. In nearly all cases in which the Underground Railroad did not actively participate, the owner usually posted bond so that the freemen could remain in Tennessee. Later, when terms of the emancipation statute required them to leave the state, most chose to go north, and many opted for the Underground Railroad. Should they be going to Liberia, the American Colonization Society would assist.

From the earliest settlement period until the Civil War, a number of slave owners emancipated one or more bondsmen in their possession. From 1801 until 1831, the County Courts of Pleas and Quarter Session could approve or on rare occasions reject petitions from owners to free slaves. Most petitions coming to the courts sought to emancipate a single slave, and the court would set him or her free. Total numbers involved in petitions of this kind were small with no known totals.

Examples are found in court approved petitions such as that filed in 1820 by Culling Joyner who prayed the county court to emancipate his slave, "a yellow Negro man by the name of Donaldson" because of "the meritorious service" he had rendered.[1] Another owner petitioned the county court in 1821 to free three slaves that he owned: "Esther, about twenty-seven years old, Sarah, about twenty-five years of age," and Parale "child of Sarah." He had concluded to

seek freedom for them "because of the good fidelity . . . and attention" which the two women had "observed in and about" his home and especially for "the care they took of him during several spells of sickness, watching over him by the night and day."[2]

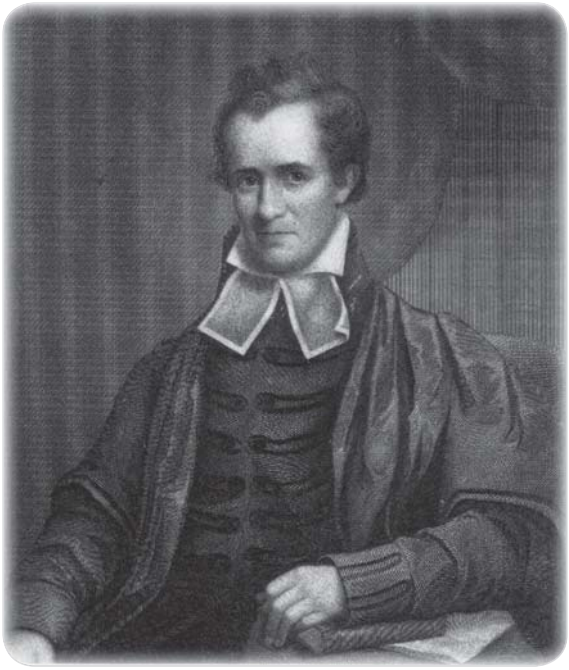
After 1831 owners provided securities for bonds required of newly-freed slaves. Court approval of Jacob H. Browning's petition in 1838 to emancipate his slaves Moses and Clandy directed him to post bond to offset any costs that the public may incur should the two freedmen later become wards of the county.[3]

Occasionally a slave or slaves purchased their freedom from their owner, but to make it legally binding the master petitioned the court to emancipate them. Recognizing that his "boy Clinton" about 40 years old, had performed valuable service to his father and had subsequently "purchased and paid for himself and wife Betsy," slave owner William G. Cage petitioned the court for their freedom in 1847.[4]

Another avenue to freedom was through testamentary wills by which emancipation was granted at the owner's death or at the end of a stipulated period thereafter. Bequeathing emancipation was neither easy nor certain. The method was subject to the laws in force at the time of the testator's death and to the designs of executors who administered the will.

On September 20, 1825, Elizabeth Mansker, widow of frontiersman Kasper Mansker, signed her last will and testament providing that all her "negroes and their increase" be emancipated by the executor of her estate. Should he fail to comply with her wishes, it was her desire to have a neighbor, Charles S. Byrd, remove the slaves to freedom in any of the states of Illinois, Indiana, and Ohio. Further, she left to them her "stock of horses, wagons, and gear" and specified that monies from sale of other of her properties be divided among the freed slaves, both male and female. To be set free were three men, two women, and an unspecified number of children belonging to the women.[5]

Elizabeth Mansker died April 28, 1841, but her slaves were far from free when the will was probated a month later. Litigation of the estate of her second husband, Isaac Walton, interfered with the settlement of her own. Jack and others of her slaves filed suit against the Walton estate executors who were alleging that Elizabeth's slaves had become the property of Isaac Walton by virtue of their marriage, but the Chancery Court of Sumner County ruled against that contention. The slaves were, indeed, her property and had been freed by her will. Under the laws of that time, they were required to post bond and security in the penal sum of $500 each to leave the state, but a statute passed by the General Assembly a few months before this case granted each county court the authority to permit an emancipated slave born in or resident of the state before 1836 to remain in his county of residence on good behavior. This option also required a $500 bond to be renewed at three-year intervals.[6]



Philip Lindsley

The new law seemed to open the way for Elizabeth Mansker's slaves to go about as free persons but by this

time, 1844, some of the slaves had been taken out of Sumner County. That suggested each slave would be forced to seek his own freedom through the appropriate county court.[7]

Other impediments arose. In 1845, four Illinois descendants of Kasper Mansker, having heard of the emancipation ruling, filed suit against Kasper's executors and their securities claiming that they were entitled to one-half of the properties that Kasper bequeathed to Lewis and John Mansker.[8]

On October 16, 1846, Chancellor H. L. Ridley handed down what came to be the definitive ruling in the slave emancipation challenge. He decreed that Elizabeth had the clear right to emancipate her slaves and that they were free on the stated conditions. The slaves Jack, Jesse, Mitchell, Jenny, and Milly, and their numerous offspring included in their parents' freedom as "increase" had waited just over five years to be free. During most of that time they had been in the custody of the courts, hired out. Theirs was a documented example of how routes to freedom for slaves, by way of owners' testamentary wills, were likely to be obstructed.[9]

Others wrestled with the issue of freeing their slaves. From his home in Williamson County, Thomas Edward Sumner repeatedly petitioned the legislature without success to emancipate his slaves. Between 1810 and his death in 1819, he and his sister, Mrs. Mary Sumner Blount of Tarborough, North Carolina, corresponded about freeing their slaves. His will, probated in 1820, called for the emancipation of his slaves. He was so anxious to block any possible interference with freedom for them that he made cash gifts to his wife and sister contingent on their not interfering with the emancipation provision in any way. As if further to emphasize his opposition to slavery, Sumner left a cash gift of $5,000 to the Pennsylvania Abolition Society.[10]

Another example, among many, of planning to free slaves after the death of their owner was the will of Thomas Foxall dated March 16, 1835, Sumner County, Tennessee. Foxall provided specific instructions for emancipating his twelve slaves in three different groups. First, "in

consideration of great abhorrence to slavery and the service of faithful servants," he instructed the executor of his estate to set free Henry, Rose, Sampson, and "Rachel (black)." He bequeathed slaves Thornton, Saul, Harriett, and Lewis to his wife with the provision that at her death they would be "free and liberated." Four remaining slaves, Edmund, Eliza, Kane, and "Rachel (yellow)" would remain in the Foxall family to work, leased out, for twenty years after which they and their increase would be "set free and liberated."[11]

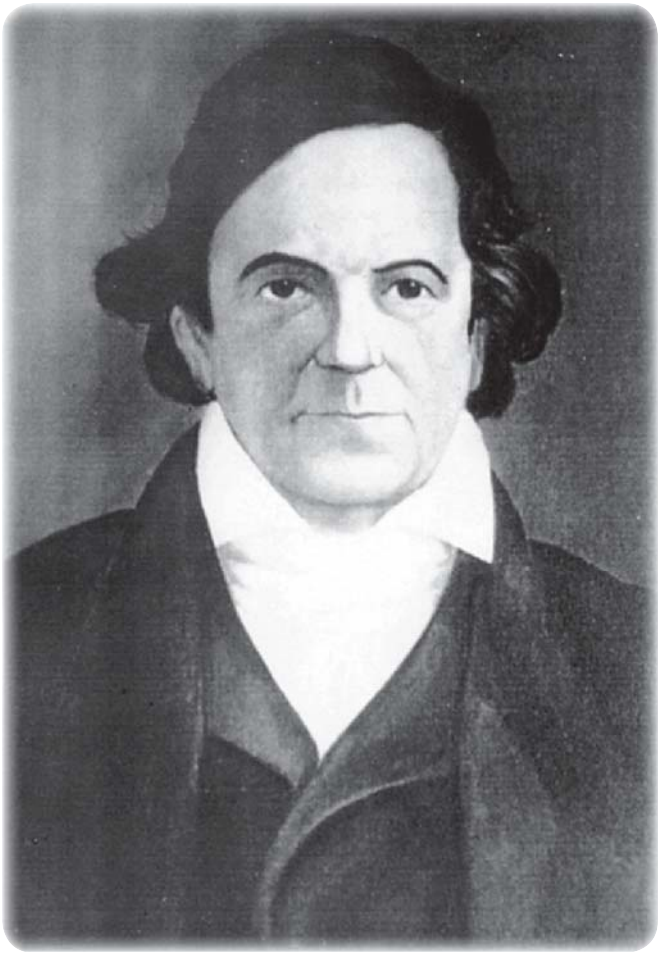
The will of John Donelson of Davidson County freed his twenty slaves in 1835, but the county court, in its consent, specified that they be sent to Liberia. Granting them a year to make arrangements to relocate to Africa, the court required bond in the amount of twice the value of each slave. At year's end, finding them unable to make bond in the required amount, the court granted an extension of twelve months and reduced the necessary security by fifty percent.[12] Soon thereafter they left for Liberia, but opted for freedom in the North by leaving their riverboat at Pittsburgh short of their ocean port destination.

The wishes of two sisters to free the slaves they owned by provisions in their testamentary wills were ultimately fulfilled but under circumstances quite different from those existing when they signed the documents in 1858. By identical wills each of the maiden sisters, Mary H. and Ann J. Banks, left her entire estate including slaves to the sister who survived the other.[13]

The welfare of their 14 slaves was the main concern of the two who for many years had been proprietors of the Misses Banks School at Gallatin. Each will further provided funds and directions for them to be sent to the American colony in Liberia, probably because Tennessee law at that time did not permit newly freed slaves to remain in the state. Each provided, also, that certain property such as beds, tables, other furnishings and horses, and all residual cash be distributed to the slaves.[14]

Both sisters died during the Civil War. By the time the Chancery Court of Sumner County reopened for business in

March 1865, the slaves had been freed by an amendment to the Tennessee State Constitution adopted February 22 of the same year. The court ruled their freedom nullified the wills' provisions that they be sent to Liberia, and upheld the provisions that the estate of the last sister was to be divided among them.[15]



Isaac Anderson
Courtesy of Dean Stone and Maryville College Archives

Out-of-state nephews of the Banks contested the will in Chancery Court, but the slaves won it all. On appeal, the Tennessee Supreme Court upheld the lower court's ruling. There were yet obstacles ahead, but the former slaves and

their descendants finally received complete distribution from the estate.[16]

From time to time prominent attorneys represented slaves whose freedom by their masters' wills was being denied by the lethargy or design of the executor. One such barrister was Josephus Conn Guild of Gallatin, who guided the case of 24 slaves to the Tennessee Supreme Court and, on January 26, 1846, won their freedom.[17] The slaves' owner, Betsy Mary Parrish, had specified in her will that they be returned from Kentucky to Sumner County, Tennessee, to be set free where she and they had formerly lived. For several years before her death, she had spoken freely of her plan to emancipate them by her last will and testament.[18]

The executor of her estate, Joel Parrish, brought them back to Sumner County, but instead of setting them free, he hired them out. They were functioning as slaves under his control when Guild brought suit.[19]

Holding that the 24 were "free persons of color," the Supreme Court ruled that the executor should pay over to the complainants their hire for the six years he had them in his possession. Unable to recover their hire in Tennessee because the executor had qualified in Kentucky, the former slaves brought suit in that state for the money due them.[20]

In an egregious example of a scheming executor ignoring the terms of a testamentary will, Guild represented slaves in a highly complicated manumission suit in 1846 in Wilson County. There were only four slave complainants in this case, but Zedikiah Tate, executor of the estate of Ignatius Jones, had tried to have the emancipating will set aside. Failing in that effort, Tate initiated a number of schemes to shift slaves to different owners by feigned sales and other trickery.[21]

The slaves for whom Guild brought suit were John, Andrew, Charity, and her daughter Cina. By the terms of Jones's will, probated in 1824, he set each of them free after serving specified periods of time for designated beneficiaries. Tate had blocked their freedom by holding them in slavery

beyond the specified dates for emancipation. When Guild filed the suit in July 1846, Charity had been held five years beyond her time to be freed and both John and Andrew had been held ten years beyond their assigned times. Cina, Charity's daughter and her only increase, was to be freed after 21 years from the date the will was probated.[22]

Steering through the maze of the executor's fraudulent ways, the Wilson County Chancery Court ruled that Charity, John, and Andrew were free and that Cina would be free in 1855 as specified by the will. The ruling required the freed complainants to make bond within six months and leave the state within 18 months. It further required those in possession of the slaves to pay them for their hire from the time they were held beyond that set forth in the will.[23]

Soon thereafter, the Tennessee Supreme Court upheld the ruling of the Wilson County Chancery Court. By then it was 1848, and each of the three adult slaves had been denied another two years of freedom they could never recover.[24]

In his will of January 1, 1854, Joshua Pearce of Williamson County provided limited choices for his three slaves. If they chose to be relocated to Liberia, they would be freed for that purpose. Any money they made as leased laborers in the interim between his death and their departure for Liberia would be held to assist them in their new country. If they declined the Liberian option, they would be sold as slaves.[25]

Given the chicanery of certain executors and the not so unusual instances of court fights over wills and estates, slaves probably saw the Underground Railroad as a more hopeful way to freedom. It was risky to be sure, but flight by that route took one to freedom and beyond Southern slave culture. Free blacks in the South enjoyed a very limited freedom, and they were never beyond the possibility of thieves seizing them and selling them back into slavery.

III

Zealous Expatriates

From 1815 to 1825, the departure of leading East Tennessee abolitionists to locales north of the Ohio River weakened the antislavery movement in Tennessee, but the expatriates worked for the cause with renewed fervor in their new situations. In fact, their leadership in the Underground Railroad was probably Tennessee's most important contribution to slaves and free blacks seeking haven outside the South.

Some historians believe that the railroad would never have existed without the leadership of these and other white southerners.[1] Yet it must be remembered that, without passengers, there would have been no call for this railroad. Slaves willing to take their chances for freedom were the passengers whose daring evoked responses that, taken together, made the Underground Railroad possible.

Of all those who emigrated north across the Ohio River to work against slavery, none was as relentless as John Rankin. Born near Dandridge in Jefferson County in 1793, Rankin was tutored by Samuel Doak at Washington College and was licensed to preach by the Abingdon Presbytery in 1817. While in college he had married his teacher's granddaughter Jean Lowry whose parents, like John's, were committed abolitionists.

During the few years before John Rankin received his license, he had advocated abolition wherever he went in East Tennessee and Southwest Virginia. He successfully cultivated sympathy for slaves and especially for those who sought freedom in the North.

Once in the pulpit, Rankin expressed such strong antislavery views that the congregation advised him to abandon his position on the issue or leave the state. He immediately made plans to leave Tennessee, moving his family first to Kentucky in 1817 and, on the last day of 1821, to Ripley, Ohio. He was possessed by the conviction that

slavery was the greatest of human sins and he would not be silenced on the question.

John, his wife Jean, and their daughter and three sons settled into a house on the bank of the Ohio River in Ripley. He became minister of the local Presbyterian Church and the church at Strait Creek, seven miles away, and attempted to be a conscience for his congregations on the question of slavery. He and Jean had left behind in Tennessee his parents, Richard and Jane Steele Rankin, and her parents, Adam and Julia Doak Lowry. Their several brothers and sisters also remained in Tennessee. Later, three of John's brothers became Presbyterian ministers, moved north of the Ohio, and served churches in Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, and Iowa.

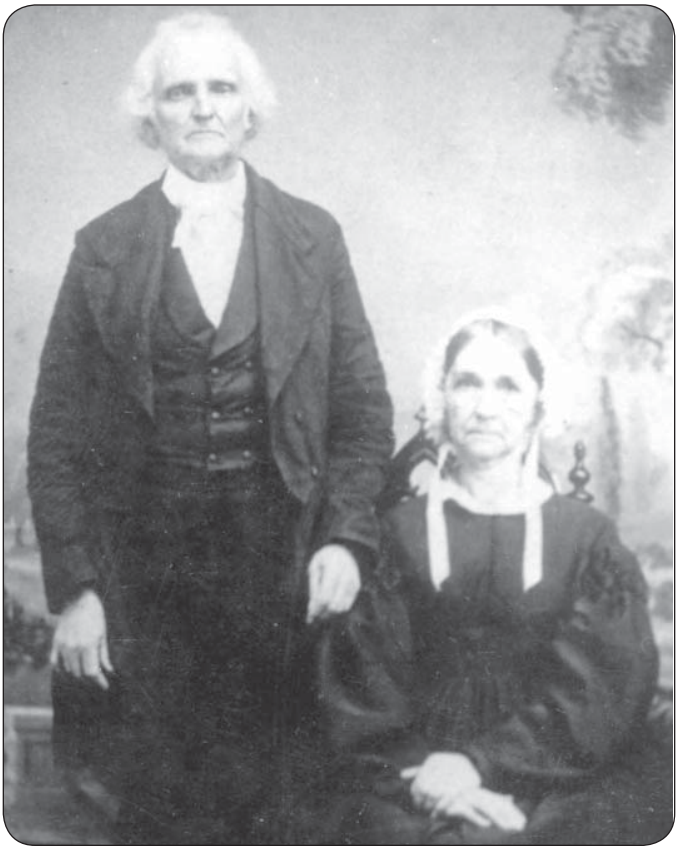
Able to express his views freely, John Rankin rose to positions of leadership in the abolitionist movement in Ohio and beyond. His rise was not without resistance, however. The 421 citizens of Ripley, a small river town about fifty miles upstream from Cincinnati, were oriented to the river and trade, and cared little about religion or slavery matters. Distressed by the lackadaisical and, at times hostile, response to him, Rankin considered abandoning his efforts at Ripley.[2]

When the *Castigator*, the local weekly newspaper, printed the first of a series of antislavery letters that he had written to his brother Thomas Rankin in Virginia, John's spirits soared. Seeking to persuade Thomas to free the slaves he had just bought, John's 21 letters stated the case against slavery so convincingly that they attracted national attention. After John had condensed the contents of the 21 letters into a total of 13, the local newspaper collected them into a single volume, *Rankin's Letters on Slavery*, and published one thousand copies. Six hundred were distributed and the remaining books were lost in a warehouse fire.[3]

Later the Society of Friends in New Jersey printed the book as *Rankin's Slavery*, a British publisher issued three additional printings, and the American Anti-Slavery Society sponsored five more. Between 1832 and 1856, 18 additional

editions appeared, and in 1832 William Lloyd Garrison serialized the letters in his newspaper, *The Liberator*.[4]

Garrison's discovery of *Rankin's Letters on Slavery* had affected him greatly. He said that he regarded Rankin "as my antislavery father; his book was the cause of my entering the antislavery conflict." The book inspired many others as well.[5]



John and Jean Lowry Rankin
Courtesy of Ohio Historical Society

Rankin continued to serve the church at Ripley, and worked for the antislavery movement especially in Ohio wherever he was called. In 1832 he participated in the organizational meeting of the National Anti-Slavery Society at Philadelphia.[6] In 1833, while attending a meeting in New York City to organize an antislavery society there, he was

called to preside over the session. Agreeing to name their creation the New York Anti-Slavery Society, the delegates adopted a constitution and elected officers among whom was John Rankin, their choice for treasurer.[7] With other abolitionist advocates and 110 delegates from 25 county antislavery societies, Rankin was present at the organizational meeting of the Ohio Anti-Slavery Society at Zanesville in 1835. His presence had been sought and he was regarded as the most noted abolitionist at the gathering. The statewide organization voted to initiate publication of a newspaper, *The Anti-Slavery Bugle*.[8] The next year, on leave from his church, Rankin traveled the state giving antislavery lectures at the behest of the American Anti-Slavery Society. In 1851, he was elected president of the Western Reform Book and Tract Society during its convention at Cincinnati.[9]

Although frequently absent from home rallying antislavery support, John Rankin maintained an active interest in life in Ripley. From the beginning he had permitted runaway slaves to sleep in his home and to eat with his family.[10] In 1829 Rankin and his family moved from the riverfront to the top of Liberty Hill about 540 feet above the town where he built a brick house.[11] There he and his family maintained an Underground Railroad station from which they conducted passengers from Ripley to other stations in a network connecting to destinations much farther north, even to Canada.[12]

Many of the slaves who reached Rankin's house on the hill had been assisted in crossing the Ohio River by John P. Parker, a free black who worked as a moulder in a foundry in Ripley. From about 1850 until the Civil War, it is estimated that he brought across the river from Kentucky about eight hundred persons in his rowboat. Most of these were fugitive slaves but a few were whites coming to join the Union Army. Parker also made numerous arrangements whereby others of like mind used their boats to accommodate fugitives.[13]

One of the Rankin family's experiences in February 1838 gave rise to the character of the slave heroine Eliza, created by Harriet Beecher Stowe in her memorable book, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. On a cold winter night a young slave

woman and her baby, fleeing from the dogs of a search party sent out by their Kentucky owner, succeeded in crossing the Ohio River on thin, thawing ice that was cracking and breaking under their weight. As she reached the Ohio shore, so cold and wet she could barely crawl to dry land, a local free-lance slave catcher grabbed her arm and pulled her up the bank. So impressed was he with her courage to undertake what he regarded as an impossible crossing that he told her of the Rankin house at the top of the hill. Guiding her to the long hillside stairway that led to the house, he told her the front door would be unlatched and that no escaped slaves who had entered that door had ever been captured.[14]

Finding the door open, she took her baby inside and rushed to the fire at the hearth. Mrs. Rankin came to their side, dried them, and produced warm clothing. John Rankin called his sons John, Jr., and Calvin down from upstairs to hear the incredible story of the crossing and to prepare to conduct the mother and baby farther north for their safety. The Rankin boys escorted the escapees to the next station, the home of the Rev. James Gilliland, a former South Carolina Presbyterian minister then at Red Oak Chapel. After a day at Red Oak, the mother and child were conducted to the house of Dr. Greenleaf Norton in Decatur, thence to a Quaker home near Sardinia and then, in an effort to confuse her pursuers, turned southwestward to the home of Levi Coffin, an Underground Railroad stationmaster in Newport, Indiana, six miles west of the Ohio border. From Coffin's, they reached safety in Canada via the Underground Railroad.

The Rankins' experience with the young slave mother was an example of how the former Tennesseans participated in the Underground Railroad in Ohio. Other passengers had reached their station before and many more would pass that way.

John Rankin's passion for abolition contributed substantially to Ripley's becoming a popular crossing point on the Ohio River for escaped slaves. A family on Front Street frequently signaled the approach of fleeing slaves to the Rankins by hanging a lantern from a skylight in the attic of their house. Other railroaders in town would guide

them to the hillside steps that led to the Rankins who guided hundreds, perhaps thousands, to freedom.[15]

Slave catchers, including a few locals acting as bounty hunters, frequented the riverfront at Ripley. The operation of the Underground Railroad so frustrated them that they attempted to keep the Rankin house under surveillance on nights when the weather favored safe river crossings. The result was periodic confrontations between slave hunters and the Rankins.

On the morning of February 17, 1840, when John Rankin's wife, her one-year-old daughter, and 17-year-old son were the only ones at home, slave catchers appeared and demanded the surrender of fugitive slaves they believed were in the home. Holding her baby in her arms and standing beside her son Samuel armed with a shotgun, Jean Rankin refused the men permission to enter her home. Assuring them truthfully there were no slaves in the house, she argued her privilege of privacy in a long exchange. To her great relief her older sons Richard and David appeared on horseback with several townsmen who held the intruders at bay until their client, a Kentucky slave owner appeared. With his arrival, the Rankin sons ended the stalemate by forcing him and the principal members of his group off the property.[16]

John Rankin was present when his family withstood another invasion of their property. On an early Sunday morning in 1841, a group of proslavery men tried to burn his house and barn, but his sons rallied support and drove them off. John subsequently warned would-be invaders from his pulpit and through the local newspaper that it was "as much my duty to shoot the midnight assassin in his attacks as it is to pray."[17]

In the summer of 1841, the native Tennessean's roles in the Underground Railroad and as an abolitionist advocate prompted certain Kentucky slaveholders to offer rewards of from $500 to $2,500 for him "dead or alive."[18] Hearing of the rewards offer, Rankin intensified his efforts on behalf of escaped slaves and abolition. Somehow, perhaps it was his

fearless response, he survived these and other threats while experiencing no bodily harm.

Adam Lowry Rankin, John's oldest son, was born in Tennessee and was only seven years old when the family moved to Ohio. He was the most dedicated of his siblings to the antislavery cause and later personally conducted about three hundred escaped slaves north from Ripley to safe stations along the Underground Railroad.

The John Rankin House
Courtesy of Ohio Historical Society

Influenced by his father and Henry Ward Beecher, his teacher at Lane Seminary, Adam Rankin became a Presbyterian minister. On January 1, 1840, he was appointed publishing agent for the Ohio Anti-Slavery Society. A year later he moved to Iowa as a Presbyterian missionary. His wife's poor health caused them to return to Ripley in the autumn of 1843 from which base he preached and ministered to Presbyterian churches in nearby communities. In 1845 he became publishing agent for the *True American*, Cassius Clay's newspaper published then at Cincinnati since its original plant at Lexington, Kentucky, had been destroyed by a mob sometime earlier.[19]

For the rest of his career, Adam Rankin lectured, organized churches, and agitated relentlessly to create an antislavery political party. He worked in Illinois and Missouri in the mission field and in1862 became chaplain of the 113th Regiment Illinois Volunteer Infantry, U.S.A.[20]

At war's end Adam was in Memphis, Tennessee, where he chose to remain to preach and teach at a school for freedmen's children sponsored by the American Missionary Association. He was instrumental in procuring a gift of $20,000 for a new building at the school from an old friend in Pennsylvania, Dr. Francis Julius LeMoyne. Adam and others associated with the school changed its name to LeMoyne Normal, now LeMoyne-Owen College.[21]

In 1873, Adam left Memphis to accept a position with the Home Missionary Society of California in Tulare County. Retiring from active work in 1891, he and his wife lived with their daughter Fannie Sarah Green in Petaluma, California.[22]

Among Tennessee's earliest and most energetic abolitionists was Charles Osborne, who had cultivated interest in manumission societies as early as 1808 when he went about promoting church meetings in East Tennessee. He was the organizer of the first manumission society in Tennessee in 1815. He had moved to Washington County, Tennessee, from his native North Carolina in 1794.[23]

While traveling through the mountains in the cause of his Quaker church and manumission, he and Elihu Embree met Levi Coffin, a North Carolinian, who was seriously impressed by their mission. Soon after, Coffin moved to Newport, Indiana, where he became one of the stalwarts in the antislavery movement and a leader of the Underground Railroad in the Midwest. In 1847 he moved to Cincinnati and continued his work there.[24]

In 1816, Osborne moved to Mt. Pleasant, Ohio, and, a year later, began to publish a weekly newspaper, *The Philanthropist*. Breaking with many Tennessee abolitionists who favored gradual emancipation, Osborne came out for

the immediate emancipation of slaves. In 1818 he sold the newspaper to fellow abolitionist Elisha Bates who continued its editorial policy largely unchanged. After relocating to Indiana in the early 1830s, Osborne was chosen by abolitionists to represent that state at the World Antislavery convention in London, England. Poor health prevented his attending, but nonetheless he continued to be a leader in organizing manumission societies throughout Indiana. From 1842 to 1847 he lived in Michigan but wherever he lived, slaves had a friend and a highly effective voice for emancipation.[25] Osborne's son Josiah, born in Lost Creek, Tennessee, followed his father's example as an antislavery leader, working with the Underground Railroad in Michigan.[26]

Other former Tennesseans buttressed Rankin's efforts with the Underground Railroad. Jesse H. Lockhart, born in Jefferson County, East Tennessee, in 1793, was a Presbyterian preacher and abolitionist. He left Tennessee in the 1820s and settled first in Decatur and later in Russellville, Ohio, about 25 miles north of Ripley. In both places he actively assisted fugitive slaves. At Russellville his house was a station on the Underground Railroad often reached by passengers conducted to his door by sons of his cousin John Rankin.[27]

One of Samuel Doak's several talented students at Washington College, David Nelson moved to Kentucky in 1828 and to Missouri in 1830. Preacher, medical doctor, and founder of Marion College, Nelson wrote poetry and church hymns. The force of his antislavery views was such that a proslavery group drove him out of Missouri. He located near Qunicy, Illinois, where he pursued his Presbyterian ministry, opened a missionary institute, and preached against slavery. Nearby he established an Underground Railroad ranch of 185 acres for receiving fugitive slaves and preparing them to proceed northward.[28]

Gideon Blackburn was another Doak-educated Presbyterian minister of note. His ministry included East and Middle Tennessee and a period as a missionary to the Cherokee in Tennessee and North Georgia. From the missionary work he was sensitized to the needs of the oppressed and became

an advocate for the manumission of slaves. He was president of Danville (KY) College from 1827 to 1830 before returning to the pastorate at Versailles, Kentucky. One of his last acts was the formation of a theological seminary which was built at Carlinville, Illinois, after his death. It was given his name: Blackburn Seminary.[29]

Early in his career, Blackburn learned that manumitting a slave could be a daunting task even when legal procedures existed for that purpose. While a member of the New Providence Presbyterian Church in Maryville in 1806, he met Jack, a slave and fellow church member, in whom he saw great potential for the ministry. Blackburn purchased his new acquaintance, taught him, and set about freeing him. Using the occasion to call public attention to the plight of slaves, he petitioned the Tennessee General Assembly to pass a law freeing Jack, but it was not to be. The legislature had handed over manumission authority to the counties the year before.[30]

Appealing to the Blount County Court, Blackburn was successful. The court set his slave free and changed his name from Jack to John Gloucester.[31]

On his way to prepare for the Presbyterian ministry, Gloucester was the first African American to attend Greeneville College. By 1809, he was situated in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, as pastor of a newly established African American Presbyterian Church.[32] There a small group of abolitionists including Benjamin Rush, a signer of the Declaration of Independence, raised funds to purchase freedom for Gloucester's wife and children. They soon were reunited with him.

John Underhill, a local Quaker, instrumental in establishing some of the first manumission societies in East Tennessee, moved to Indiana prior to 1820. There he continued his interest in abolition for the rest of his life. A Tennessee colleague, Jesse Willis, also removed to Indiana to advance his antislavery work, but he died soon after reaching his new home.[33]

Two Jefferson County Quakers, John Prior Wright and Hepsibah Coats Wright, moved to Vermillion, Illinois, and raised their family in that state. They relocated to Howard County, Indiana, in 1840 where they operated a station on the Underground Railroad northwest of Russiaville.[34]

Another Greene County expatriate was Elihu Oren. He and his wife Jane Newcomb of Berkeley, Virginia, operated one of the main Underground depots in Southern Ohio at Liberty Township, Clinton County.[35]

The departure of these and other antislavery leaders weakened but did not destroy support for abolition in East Tennessee. The arrival from Connecticut of Ezekiel Birdseye at Newport, Cocke County, in 1838 added a strong advocate to the abolition cause in East Tennessee. At a time when the strength of manumission societies was failing, Birdseye's outspoken abolitionist sentiments and his personal correspondence, largely with leaders of the movement outside the state, were timely indeed.[36]

Birdseye joined a group of regional leaders who opposed slavery but were willing for it to be abolished gradually. Among them were Isaac Anderson, president of Maryville College, who admitted students across both gender and racial lines, and Seth J. W. Lucky, an attorney, chancellor, railroad promoter, and abolitionist who emancipated his own slaves before 1830.[37]

Abolitionists of the region included, also, State Senator William Chesley Roadman, who represented Carter and Washington Counties in the legislature 1815-1817. Elected to the Constitutional Convention of 1834, he voted consistently against proslavery positions. From 1819 to 1847, he was a respected merchant and postmaster at Newport.[38] Another of the group was Judge Jacob Peck, a justice of the Tennessee Supreme Court from 1822 to 1834, who guarded his abolitionist sentiments from his neighbors. His true position on slavery issues appeared in his rulings from the bench and in his readiness to dissent from the opinions of others. As a state senator 1821-1823, Peck had chaired a committee that unanimously recommended removing the

existing restrictions on emancipation and asked for "further research into freeing "those yet unborn."[39]

The period of 1815-1860 had no abolitionist more loyal than John Caldwell of Jefferson County. He was a leader in the Liberian colonization movement. Although not a lawyer, he was "tireless in writing wills for his neighbors which provided emancipation" at the death of their owners, and he operated a boarding school in his home for young Southern white men, providing antislavery training to them surreptitiously.[40]

By the 1840s Caldwell had become fascinated by the possibilities of copper mining. He led the development of mining in Southeast Tennessee, and at various times was a shareholder in at least three mines there.[41]

Still another Presbyterian preacher who remained in Tennessee to advocate manumission was Thomas Brown, Maryville College student, teacher, and protégé of Dr. Isaac Anderson. He was an unwavering foe of slavery and his position on the issue was well-known; as a Christian, he would not tolerate the ownership of one human being by another.[42]

The majority of the abolitionists who left Tennessee did not seek leadership positions in the antislavery movement, but wanted to live and speak freely without intimidation because of their beliefs. Much of their opposition to slavery came from religious backgrounds that emphasized peace and abhorred violence. But they surely recognized that "the more the abolitionist movement emerged as an organized force, the more it advanced the underground work of receiving fugitives."[43] Whether in the free states or in Tennessee, those men and women were willing to extend a helping hand to anyone in need. And whose need was greater than a slave seeking freedom?

IV

Slave Owners Fear Underground Railroad

By the mid 1830s, many slaveholders in Tennessee had become almost paranoid about slaves escaping. They believed that outside forces were attempting to lure slaves away to freedom. Their fear of abolitionists was so strong that it "plagued [Christian] efforts to evangelize blacks," a United Methodist historian has noted.[1] The masters' anxiety intensified during the summer of 1835 when the American Anti-Slavery Society printed more than one million copies of antislavery literature for distribution in five southern states including Tennessee.[2] One of the results was anyone seeking to encourage or assist freedom-seeking slaves was suspected of being a slave stealer and subject to trial as such.

In a large number of the instances of runaway slaves, the master suspected they were aided by white men. To be sure, there were thieves who attempted to steal slaves and sell them, but plantation owners primarily feared the influence of abolitionists. It was with their help that more and more bondsmen might leave via the Underground Railroad to reach free states or might remain at home to incite insurrections.

Discovery of the presence of out-of-state abolitionists always heightened slave owner anxiety. A New York State Quaker, Seth Concklin, surveyed Tennessee and Kentucky for the Underground Railroad during the 1830s. Traveling unarmed, he identified potential hideouts and recruited secret operatives yet avoided detection. Turning northward to Illinois and Indiana, he observed bounty hunters and spies and noted their usual bases of operations.

No one interfered with his travels until he led a party of slaves from Alabama to New Harmony, Indiana. There he was arrested, put in chains, and turned over to the Alabama slave owner. On the way to Alabama by riverboat, Concklin drowned when he either jumped or was pushed overboard.[3]

A few unidentified border state abolitionists were suspected of encouraging Tennessee slaves to seek freedom

outside the South. Andrew Cavitt, a slave owner at Bolivar, believed that someone had enticed his slave Ned to leave him. Advertising in the Nashville *Republican and State Gazette*, July 5, 1833, he offered fifty dollars to anyone who could return Ned and "a similar sum for bringing the scoundrel to punishment who had seduced him off." He said that Ned possessed forged papers.

There were a few instances when slave stealers were identified, caught, and charged. Threats of violence seemed to discourage most out-of-state abolitionists from making forays into Tennessee to entice slaves away from their owners. Nonetheless, a few entered the state and some of them were caught.

The most notable instance of clamping down on the activities of an out-of-state abolitionist who ventured into Tennessee was the case of Amos Dresser. Living with his uncle in Cincinnati while studying for the ministry at Lane Seminary, Dresser was a member of the Abolitionist Society of Ohio. He left the seminary in protest before graduating because the institution had taken a stance against abolition. He then set out to visit an uncle in Mississippi, selling Bibles along the way through Kentucky and Tennessee to pay expenses and handing out antislavery tracts to interested whites.

Traveling in a horse-drawn barouche, Dresser met no obstacles until he reached Nashville on July 18, 1835. The discovery of abolitionist literature in his vehicle while it was being repaired led to his arrest, trial, and conviction by the local Committee of Vigilance and Safety. His punishment was twenty lashes applied to his bare back and an order to leave the city within 24 hours. Admitting that he was an abolitionist and that he had come from Cincinnati quickly gave rise to rumors that the purpose of his visit was to encourage slaves to mutiny. He had friends in Nashville, but they were of no avail to him before the committee.[4]

In an account of his experiences in Nashville written soon after he returned to Cincinnati,[5] Dresser explained his confrontation with an obviously agitated pro-slavery group

of Nashvillians. In Kentucky he freely distributed "a large share" of his antislavery documents. As he moved toward Tennessee, he distributed temperance almanacs and sold Bibles. He said that he gave no antislavery materials to "any person of color, bond or free."

Near Gallatin in Sumner County, Tennessee, he sold a single copy of *Rankin's Letters on Slavery*, but trouble began when he reached Nashville. After he left his barouche at a shop for repairs one of the workmen found among the other pamphlets a February number of the *Anti-Slavery Record*.

The cover of the magazine depicted "a drove of slaves chained, the two foremost having violins, on which they were playing--the American flag waving in the centre, whilst the slave driver, with his whip, was urging on the rear." Concluding that Dresser was a troublemaker, the shop owner spread the word and soon it was enlarged into the accusation that he had been "circulating incendiary periodicals among the free colored people, and trying to excite the slaves to insurrection." It was falsely reported that he had posted handbills to that purpose.

"Knowing all the charges to be false--feeling unconscious of any evil intention, and therefore fearless of danger," Dresser remained in the city selling Bibles until confronted a few days later by the city marshal who escorted him to a meeting with Mayor John P. Erwin. Invited to appear before the Committee of Vigilance, he went with the mayor and the marshal directly to the courtroom "which was at once crowded full to overflowing." There the committee awaited them. "The meeting being called to order, the mayor stated that he had caused me to be arrested, and brought before the Committee, in consequence of the excitement produced by the periodicals known to have been in my possession," Dresser wrote. Producing the defendant's trunk, the mayor led an examination of its contents. The committee examined several items of clothing and then thumbed through three of his books on slavery. His business and personal letters were next and "extracts were read aloud."

The committee examined Dresser thoroughly about the authors of the letters. "They labored much to prove I was sent out by some society, and that I was, under the guise of a religious mission, performing the odious office of an insurrectionary agent."

The committee questioned Dresser about a copy of an antislavery newspaper found on the counter of the Nashville Inn where he registered for lodging. (It had been used as a wrapper for one of the Bibles he was selling.) Insisting that he had been circulating antislavery tracts in Nashville, the committee tried to establish that charge as a natural result of his being an abolitionist and an admitted member of the

American Anti-Slavery Society. He freely admitted that he had sold a copy of *Rankin's Letters* to a man near Gallatin and had read to a friend a piece from the *Anti-Slavery Record*.

When called on to present his own defense, although no charges of lawbreaking had been made, Dresser declared his position on slavery. "While I told them I believed slaveholding to be inconsistent with the gospel, and a constant transgression of God's law, I yet said, that in bringing about emancipation the interests of the master were to be consulted as well as those of the slave. And that the whole scheme of emancipation contemplated this result, that the slave should be put in possession of rights which we have declared to be inalienable from him as a man; that he should be considered as an immortal fellow being . . . that he should be treated as our neighbor and our brother."

After he concluded, the crowd withdrew and the committee discussed the case. Dresser was confident of the outcome. "What I had done, I had done openly. There was no law forbidding what I had done. . . . I had no secret feelings of guilt, arraigning me before the bar of my conscience. . , too, among my triers, there was a great portion of the respectability of Nashville. Nearly half of the whole number, professors of Christianity, supporters of the cause of benevolence in the form of Tracts and Missionary Societies and Sabbath Schools, several members, and most of the elders of the Presbyterian Church, from whose hands, but a few days before, I had received the emblems of the broken body and shed blood of our blessed Saviour."

The verdict of the committee stunned him. He wrote: "It was prefaced by a few remarks of this kind by the chairman, 'that they acted with great caution and deliberation, and however unsatisfactory their conclusions might be to me, they had acted conscientiously, with a full recognition of their duty to their God.'--that they had found me guilty, '1st of being a member of an Anti-Slavery Society in Ohio;' 2nd, 'of having in my possession periodicals published by the American Anti-Slavery Society:' and 3d, 'they BELIEVED I had circulated these periodicals and advocated in the community the principles they inculcated.' He then pronounced that I

was condemned to receive twenty lashes on my bare back, and ordered to leave the place in 24 hours."

The crowd that had gathered received the sentence with great applause. Recognizing their approbation, the chairman then called upon the spectators to "pledge themselves" that Dresser "should receive no injury after the execution of the sentence." While some of the company around were engaged in removing his shirt to bare his back, someone made a motion and another seconded it to exonerate Dresser "altogether from the punishment." The motion incited "many and furious imprecations on the mover's head, and created a commotion which was appeased" only when the lashing began.

After the punishment, Dresser was put in the care of a family of absolute strangers who cared for him overnight and assisted him the next day as he left for Cincinnati by riverboat. He explained, "owing to the great excitement that was still prevailing, I found it necessary to leave the place in disguise, with only what clothing I had about my person; leaving unsold property to the amount of nearly three hundred dollars, and sacrificing at least two hundred on my barouche, horse, &c. which I was obliged to sell." Amos Dresser did not return to Tennessee. After graduating from Oberlin College in 1839, Dresser became an antislavery lecturer, a foreign missionary, but principally a local pastor to a number of churches in the Midwest. He died in Lawrence, Kansas, in 1904.

Admitting that Dresser had broken no law, the *National Banner and* Nashville *Whig* defended the action of the Vigilance Committee by asserting that there should have been a law in place to prohibit the possession and distribution of antislavery literature. The editor fervently hoped that the next legislature would remedy the discrepancy. He was certain that the stature and respectability of the Vigilance Committee constituted a dependable safeguard for the accused. Indeed, the committee, chaired by the venerable Dr. John Shelby, was formed of 60 of the white male leaders of the city. Among their number were merchants, lawyers, physicians, bankers, politicians, architects, planters, editors,

and publishers, many of whom were slave owners.[6] Many believed that the "prudence and firmness" of the committee, the guilty verdict, and the infliction of "twenty stripes" saved Dresser from the hands of a restless mob which probably would have taken his life.[7]

Public excitement caused by the Dresser case continued at a high level. A few days after dealing with the young abolitionist, the Committee of Vigilance and Safety adopted a resolution condemning the New York merchant and abolitionist Arthur Tappan for contributing large sums of money to those disseminating antislavery literature in the South. Asking for retaliatory action at the local level, the committee petitioned local merchants who purchased goods from Tappan and his company to abstain from further trading with them. It suggested that local citizens should abstain from dealing with any merchant who purchased goods from Tappan. Arthur and his brother Lewis Tappan had founded the National Anti-Slavery Society in New York in 1853.[8]

After the Nashville Vigilance Committee asserted itself, proslavery elements at Athens, Tennessee, had a chance to vent their wrath on antislavery literature. When a shipment of abolitionist newspapers arrived at the post office, an angry mob took them away from the postmaster and burned them.[9]

Concerned that antislavery literature was getting into the hands of slaves, the General Assembly passed an act on February 13, 1836, that prohibited the publication and circulation of "seditious papers and pamphlets" within the state. Any printed piece calculated "to incite discontent, or insurrection, or rebellion among the slaves or free persons of color" was considered seditious. Upon conviction first offenders were subject to confinement for five to ten years at hard labor.[10]

Three years prior to Amos Dresser's visit, Benjamin Lundy, publisher of the *Genius of Universal Emancipation*, traveled to Tennessee en route to meet with Mexican officials at Nacogdoches, Texas, where he hoped to acquire land for colonization by freed slaves. In disguise part of the time, he

nonetheless visited and solicited funds for the colonization project from known abolitionists in Columbia and Nashville. He made the river trip from Nashville to Nacogdoches by steamboat.[11]

In the early summer of 1833, Lundy was again on the road to Mexico by a route that took him through Nashville. He contracted cholera in the city, but overcame it and by July 21 had reached his destination, Brazoria County, Texas. He was in Nashville again in the spring of 1834 stopping long enough to write fellow abolitionists in the East, charging them with carrying on the work in his absence. Also, he attempted to raise funds to offset a promised loan that had failed to materialize by rallying financial support from a group of free Negroes and two white men whom he identified as abolitionist friends, Thomas Hoge and William Bryant. He left by steamboat for New Orleans during the latter part of May.[12]

On this trip to Texas he spent nearly a year searching for lands that might be available for colonization, but he could never make the necessary arrangements. He returned to Nashville on May 4, 1835, "sick, exhausted and destitute of money." Cared for at the home of another of his friends, R. P. Graham, he soon recuperated and resumed his journey to Cincinnati. Apparently, this was his last time in Nashville.[13]

By the time of this final departure, the Nashville *Union* had taken hostile notice of his presence in the city. Calling him an "impostor and hypocrite," the editor said that it was "almost certain that there have been continual private consultations carried on between certain free Negroes, slaves and white persons, in and about this city on the subject of abolition by peaceable or forcible means."[14]

Later charging Lundy with being an "incendiary and hypocrite," the editor said that during his stay he had "gulled our free Negroes and slaves out of a few hundred dollars in cash." All the while he was passing himself off to the whites as a "disinterested philanthropist" whose only aim was the welfare of all people irrespective of color. His presence had set in motion "a number of secret and insurrectionary movements"

among free Negroes and slaves, the editor claimed, although offering no proof of the allegations. Only the alertness of the local postmaster kept Lundy from circulating through the local mails a "great number of inflammatory and incendiary papers on the subject of slavery and abolition."[15]

Lundy did not escape the wrath of a local editor's pen by returning northward. Readers of the *Union* noted that when he accepted free passage on the steamboat and at the same time accepted a cash gift from a fellow passenger ostensibly for travel expenses, the editor termed him a "swindler" in addition to his titles of "incendiary and hypocrite."[16] In the columns of the *National Banner and* Nashville *Whig*, Lundy was warned to stay out of town or "tremble for the consequences."[17]

In spite of the hostility of the press, Lundy escaped bodily harm in Nashville, but Dresser did not. Why? Perhaps Lundy's unobstructed passage in and out of Middle Tennessee had been tolerated because he was trying to settle the slavery issue by colonization, a very slow process indeed. Also, Lundy was a known person who agreed that freeing the slave population abruptly would be unfair to them and to the white and free black population as well.

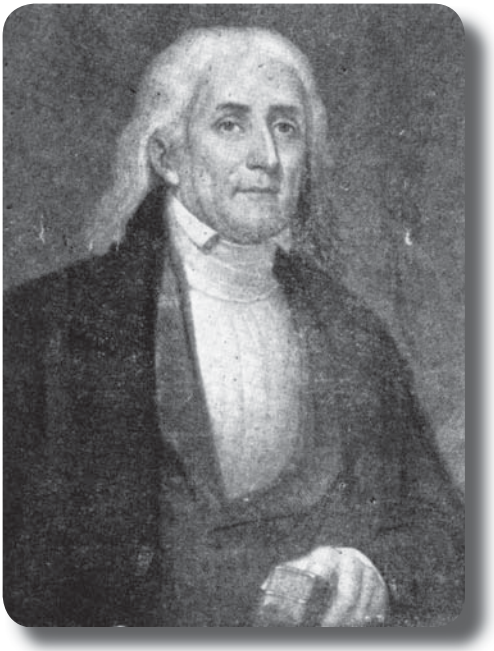
Although masters and vigilance committees were on guard, another West Tennessee slave slipped away, this one to Cincinnati. After an Ohio abolitionist read a runaway slave notice, he chortled with glee and anonymously wrote a scathing letter to the slave's owner, Edmund D. Tarver. A member of the General Assembly (1835-1837) representing Hardeman County, Tarver shared the letter with the editor of the Randolph *Recorder* who characterized the author as an "unknown dastard of an abolitionist."

The abolitionist chided Tarver, "Blush, tyrant, blush; Let confusion and shame mantle your face. Seek concealment in darkness, or retreat from civilized life. Be a beast."[18]

Seething with rage, the editor described the letter as mean, insolent, and disgusting. He challenged the abolitionist to turn his back on the safety of Cincinnati if he is truly

interested in "the freedom of the black." Most reformers "reform from afar," he noted, as "bold apostles of liberty." The editor failed to note that reformers often inspired slaves to try the Underground Railroad.

At times slave owners' negrophobia affected free blacks as well. Alphonso M. Sumner, a popular free Negro barber in Nashville, had been teaching a few slave children in private classes when in 1836 whites accused him of writing letters to a local fugitive slave in the North. For giving such aid and comfort to a runaway, he received a public whipping.[19]



Gideon Blackburn

With the assistance of the Underground Railroad, Sumner fled to Cincinnati and became a leader in the abolitionist movement. He was founder and coeditor of *The Disenfranchised American*, Cincinnati's first African American newspaper. Although a mob seized their press during the city's race riot of 1841, he and associates continued to produce the paper. He taught in the newly-organized colored public schools and was a member of its board of trustees. Later he was president of the Cincinnati Colored Orphans

Asylum and treasurer of the Ohio Equal Rights League.[20] His example and influence surely inspired many to test the routes of the Underground Railroad.

Although Amos Dresser was tried and punished outside the law, fourteen years later another Ohio abolitionist found the law even more unforgiving. In 1849 Richard Dillingham, "occupation abolitionist," was arrested, charged, and convicted in the Davidson County Criminal Court for "Negro stealing." Sentenced to be confined in the state penitentiary for a term of three years, he died of cholera in his first year of confinement. He was 26 years old.[21]

A Quaker schoolteacher, Dillingham had come to Nashville at the behest of "some colored people of Cincinnati" to rescue three of their kin from a "hard master." He found them with little difficulty and, ready to return to Cincinnati, placed the three in a closed carriage and set out accompanying them on horseback. Apprehended as they approached the Cumberland River bridge near the city limits, Dillingham admitted that he was attempting to transport the slaves to a free state. Further, he said that he was responsible "for the error into which his education and his feelings of philanthropy led him." He had volunteered his services free of charge. A Nashville newspaper reported that Dillingham had enjoyed the sympathy of many who attended his trial, but the editor observed, "It was a foolhardy enterprise in which he embarked, and dearly has he to pay for his rashness."[22]

When the slave Richard "between 40 and 50 years of age" absented himself from his owner's care near Clarksville in 1848, the plantation manager believed he "may have furnished himself with a pass or free papers, or he may be under the guidance and protection of some white man." A newspaper advertisement seeking his return suggested that he might be found "north of the Ohio River" after exiting Tennessee via the Underground Railroad.[23]

White escorts did not guarantee success to slaves fleeing out of the state. In 1858 Abolitionist Ed Williams and a slave owned by J. W. Ferris of Memphis had freedom in sight when arrested at Louisville, Kentucky, trying to cross

to Indiana on the ferryboat. They had traveled by stage from West Tennessee without difficulty until apprehended on the ferry. Both were placed in jail to await extradition to Tennessee.[24]

Public confidence that abolitionists were hard at work among Tennessee slaves contributed to exaggerated reports of slave uprisings and escapes. Fears of slave insurrections lingered long after the Nat Turner rebellion of 1831 in Virginia, and were fed by isolated instances of attacks on supervisors and slave owners by one of their bondsmen.

In 1835 rumors spread in Dickson County and beyond that slaves working at the Middle Tennessee iron furnaces planned to revolt against the whites. Responding, white citizens procured weapons from the state armory at Nashville and the insurrection never materialized.[25]

Rumors that slaves were involved in "scrapes" and "trouble" in a neighborhood north of Gallatin reached Sumner Countian Cyrus H. Wallace at Atlanta in the spring of 1836. To his brother Joseph Wallace in the reportedly affected neighborhood, Cyrus wrote, "[I] . . . was sorry to learn that the whole neighborhood was in such an uproar. . . . Joseph, if you and Uncle Samuel Donnell and all that have Negroes in the Scrape will . . . come to some conclusion about what you will do with them . . . I can find a man that wants such Negroes and has got plenty of money."[26] Thus far there has been no discovery of the "scrapes" or "trouble" referred to by Cyrus H. Wallace. Was there ever trouble or was this another of the reports circulating in the state that fed fears of a slave insurrection?

In 1856 a new round of insurrection rumors, aided by excited discussions in the press, caused widespread fear among the whites wherever there was a significant slave population. Readers of the Nashville *Banner* of November 27, 1856, were understandably frightened by the newspaper's claim that slaves, organized as military troops, planned to march on the City of Clarksville on Christmas Day, "capture the town, plunder its banks, and flee to free territory in the North." The slaves' plans, if they truly existed, came to

naught, but at the Cumberland River town of Dover nineteen slaves suspected of planning insurrection were hanged. Throughout the region law enforcement officers incarcerated suspects.[27]

At the same time, the citizens of Springfield, Tennessee, were alarmed by rumors that a slave insurrection was brewing in their community and possibly at nearby Wessyngton Plantation, the home of approximately 274 slaves. It was only a rush to fear; nothing ever came of it.[28]

The Underground Railroad threatened the troubled plantation system. It meant freedom to slaves but to slave owners, for that very reason, it was disruption and a financial drain. An escaped slave reduced his owner's labor force by one and reduced his financial assets by the slave's value, usually in the range of eight to twelve hundred dollars.

In total the loss to slave owners in the border states alone was staggering. Governor Isham G. Harris, in his annual address to the Tennessee General Assembly in 1861, struck at the antislavery movement in the North. "It has run off slave property by means of the 'underground railroad,'" he said, "amounting in value to millions of dollars, and thus made the tenure by which slaves are held in the border states so precarious as to materially impair their value."[29]

V

Follow the Drinking Gourd

Any discussion of the Underground Railroad in Tennessee must introduce the names and experiences of at least a few escaped slaves as well as the names and contributions of guides, conductors, stationmasters, and other railroad personnel. To understand the relationships of the passengers and trainmen, it is also necessary to know the location of a few of the routes followed and the methods of travel employed.

Runaway slaves were numerous in the antebellum period. Most of them were "young males in their teens or twenties who generally absconded alone." Many found liberty in the northern states or Canada, but the majority who escaped remained in the South, many of them apprehended and returned to their masters.[1] As being a fugitive slave or assisting the fugitive in any manner to attain freedom was prohibited by law in Tennessee and, after 1850, was unlawful throughout the United States, the Railroad was shrouded in secrecy. Why keep records? It was a high-risk operation, but it offered hope and an option for those slaves who had initiative and daring enough for the undertaking.

From the earliest settlement days, the natural waterways of the state beckoned to those who sought a better life elsewhere. Tennessee river travel had become such an acknowledged escape route by 1833 that the General Assembly passed an act to reduce the traffic to freedom by steamboats as well as by overland stages. It provided that no "black or colored person" could be transported to points either within the state or to points outside unless he or she presented certificates proving their free status or, if slave, presented a document bearing the owner's consent for the slave to travel.

Violations meant steamboat captains and stage operators faced penalties of from $200 to $500 and imprisonment from three to six months. An amendment to the act passed two months later waived the penalties if the

captain or other person in charge apprehended the runaways and placed them in the next county jail in the direction they were going and advertised their action in "some convenient newspaper."[2]

Forged papers were desirable for any slave leaving his master without permission, and escape travel by riverboat soon fueled a lucrative trade in falsified documents. A free black who had worked on Mississippi River steamboats, declared that he had seen large numbers of slaves use forged passes. If "colored men . . . and women" had twenty-five dollars to spare, they "could always buy a pass," he said.[3]

For forty years before the Civil War, those without the necessary funds could copy passes, whether legal or forged. A West Tennessee slave named Tom and another, John Warren, presented their falsified papers and were readily accepted aboard separate north-bound riverboats at Memphis.[4]

Sitting in a Nashville tavern, slave James Fisher wrote a pass for himself under the assumed name of slave Jones with permission to hire for work on riverboats. Using the pass, he was hired on a Louisville bound boat, but not before he was required to obtain a recommendation from a white man.[5]

West and Middle Tennessee were not the only grand divisions of the state where Underground Railroad travelers used forged passes. When two Greene County slaves, a woman known only as Melinda and a man Marshall, were apprehended in Rogersville, Hawkins County, in 1842, on their way to freedom by way of Cumberland Gap, they were in possession of forged passes. A grand jury indicted the well-known abolitionist Washington P. House of Greene County for allegedly furnishing the forged papers. On trial, he was acquitted, and the slaves returned to their respective owners, Reuben H. Davis and Bolin Jones.[6] House was regarded as an active participant in Underground Railroad operations in East Tennessee by his neighbors in Greene County.

In addition to the escape routes provided by the rivers, overland passage attracted many fugitives from slavery. From

West Tennessee, escapees who avoided the rivers went north overland across Kentucky and the Ohio River, principally to Illinois or Indiana. With forged passes and cash for fare, they could even cross Kentucky by stagecoach until 1838 when the state instituted legal restrictions against the practice.[7]

A group of slaves in the northwestern part of Kentucky, armed and mounted on stolen horses, set out for Ohio by sweeping south to Nashville. The ploy enabled them to elude pursuers. Hiding by day and riding by night, they turned northward at Nashville and traveled through Central Kentucky to Maysville. There they received major assistance from the Underground station for crossing the Ohio River. Inasmuch as the slaves initiated their own flight and carried it out only with incidental help until reaching Maysville, they had traveled the Underground Railroad, even if they had not recognized it.[8]

Fugitives from Middle Tennessee entered Kentucky south of Bowling Green, passed by Mammoth Cave, and journeyed on to North Central Kentucky where there were several places for crossing the Ohio. Variances on this route sometimes led to Louisville for a crossing into Indiana or a riverboat ride upstream to Cincinnati or beyond. Twelve major crossing points from the Kentucky side of the Ohio have been identified.[9]

Most of the routes north through East Tennessee started at or near Chattanooga. One led from Chattanooga to the natural and man-made caves of Bradley County and across the Hiwassee River into McMinn County. Next was Loudon County with its Quaker villages and then north to Greene County. From Greeneville, trails led to a Quaker community at Chucky, to the Embree house at Telford, through Cumberland Gap into Kentucky, and through the mountains of Eastern Kentucky to the Ohio River.[10]

A second East Tennessee passage left Chattanooga, crossed the Tennessee River, wound up Walden's Ridge and down into the Sequatchie Valley. It next reached Big Laurel Creek in Cumberland County and Richard Flynn's station or safe house in Flynn's Cove before going into Fentress

County and crossing into Kentucky at Possum Creek.[11] Trails originating in East Tennessee north of Knoxville usually led through Cumberland Gap, the mountains of eastern Kentucky, and across the Ohio at a point upriver from Maysville.[12]

Jermaine W. Loguen
Courtesy of New York Public Library

Although these routes of the Underground in Tennessee seem logical enough, the actual passages often varied significantly from them. There were no man-made markers and few, if any, of the crudest maps. When slaves traveled overland toward freedom in the North or when they became lost, they took their bearings on the North Star, located by its relationship to the Big Dipper constellation, Ursa Major. They ofttimes spoke of following the drinking

gourd in reference to the Big Dipper pointing toward the North Star.

Many remembered the song, *Follow the Drinking Gourd*, taught to them by a carpenter called Peg Leg Joe as he traveled from one plantation to another. He imagined he would be their guide, and the words were his instructions to make their way to freedom. From the Gulf of Mexico northward, they should follow marked dead trees along the banks of the Tombigbee River until taking the Tennessee River across that state and Kentucky to the Ohio River. On the northern bank of the Ohio, Underground Railroad conductors would send them farther northward in the free states of Illinois, Indiana, or Ohio.

If the slaves in the Deep South set out in the early spring as he instructed, they would reach the Ohio River nine months or so later. On such a schedule, they would arrive in time to cross the river by walking on its frozen surface.[13]

Follow the Drinking Gourd

When the Sun comes back
And the first quail calls
Follow the Drinking Gourd.
For the old man is a-waiting for to carry you to freedom
If you follow the Drinking Gourd.

The riverbank makes a very good road.
The dead trees will show you the way.
Left foot, peg foot, traveling on,
Follow the Drinking Gourd.

The river ends between two hills
Follow the Drinking Gourd.
There's another river on the other side
Follow the Drinking Gourd.

When the great big river meets the little river
Follow the Drinking Gourd.

For the old man is a-waiting for to carry you to freedom
If you follow the Drinking Gourd.[14]

Several accounts of escapes from Tennessee to the free states north of the Ohio River have survived. One of them is the story of a male slave born February 5, 1813, on the banks of Mansker's Creek in Davidson County, Tennessee, sixteen miles north of Nashville.[15] Jermaine Wesley Logue(n) was the son of David Logue, a white plantation owner, and Jane, later called Cherry, a "pure African" slave owned by David and his brothers, Carnes and Menasseth. After having two other children by Cherry, David Logue took a white woman for his wife. He then dispatched Cherry and the three children to live on the plantation of his brother Menasseth in the southern part of Middle Tennessee.[16]

At first leased out to another family of planters, Jermaine later became Menasseth's "confidential servant" and head man over his plantation. While in the latter capacity, he made plans to escape northward.[17]

On Christmas Eve of 1834, Jermaine and John Farney, another slave, slipped away on horseback with forged passes prepared by a white friend who represented them to be free men.[18] Turning their horses, stolen from their masters, northward, they reached Nashville in three days, crossed the Cumberland River on the tall bridge, and continued toward the North Star.[19]

They made slow progress toward Kentucky. On their way from Nashville, they spent the first night in the palatial home of a white man who received them as free men. The second night they put up comfortably in a tavern, and the next night they slept in a barn with their horses. After three nights of assistance from whites, the fourth day brought a confrontation with slave catchers, but Jermaine and John successfully eluded them. The experience prompted them to leave the roads and travel across country even though it slowed their progress. On the sixth day, they crossed out of Tennessee.[20]

During their journey through Kentucky, they had one hostile encounter with five white men on foot, but the group broke and ran when a blow from John Farney knocked one of them to the ground. Before and after this event, free men and whites directed them across the state to the Ohio River where by crossing over thick ice they landed in Indiana near Evansville.[21]

Surprised to find many pro-slavery people in Indiana, they fortunately found sympathetic persons who could direct them to others a day distant and so on until they should reach the wilds of northern Indiana. For example, a free man they met after crossing the Ohio convinced them that only in Canada could they find the freedom they sought. He then directed them to another railroader in Corydon twenty miles away who sent them to Indianapolis to see a certain "Mr. Overall."[22]

At Corydon, they had received specific instructions for the two-hundred-mile trip to Indianapolis. The first stop was at a tavern in Salem, Indiana, and next at a colony of free African Americans, a day's ride from Salem. Upon arriving in Indianapolis, Jermaine and John met Overall who took them in as he had many others. He pointed them to a Quaker settlement about forty miles north of the city. Drawing on the Quakers' experiences with other fugitives who had preceded them, they agreed to proceed due north through rough and largely uninhabited terrain over some of which local American Indians still roamed and hunted.[23] Loguen and Farney could expect little helpful advice or aid in the frontier area, but would have to depend on their own strength and ingenuity. They took comfort in the knowledge that others had made the passage before them. They must have understood that most of the help they had received in Indiana came from persons who had offered similar assistance to others many times before.

Soon after Jermaine and John arrived in Canada at Windsor, Ontario, John returned across the river to Detroit to reverse an unsatisfactory horse trade in which he believed he had been badly cheated. Jermaine never heard from him again; no account of what happened to John has been

discovered.[24] Two years later in 1837, Jermaine crossed into the United States near Rochester, New York, and remained in that country for the remainder of his life.

Loguen became a stationmaster on the Underground Railroad at Syracuse, New York. An abolitionist, minister, and ultimately bishop of the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, he issued calls for aid and assistance to fugitive slaves. His station was regarded as one of the busiest on the Underground Railroad and one of the most openly operated.[25]

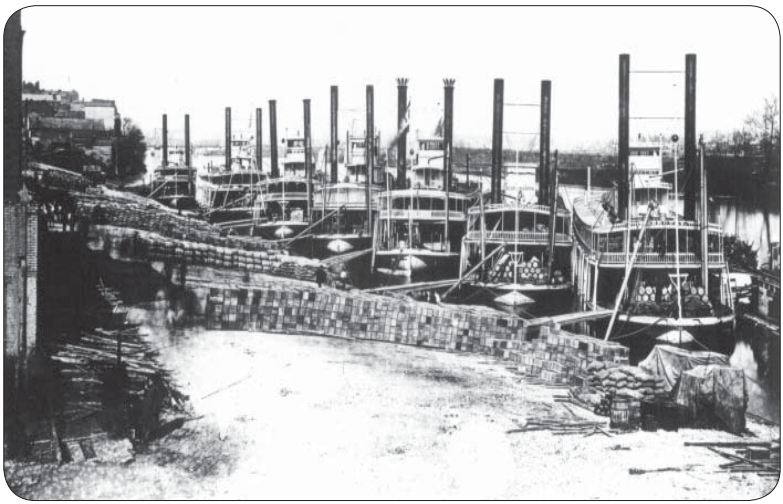
Notwithstanding Jermaine's later denial that his escape to freedom had been facilitated by the Underground Railroad,[26] his experiences from the time he left Menasseth Logue until he arrived in Canada were classic examples of the Underground in operation. He had passed safely through Tennessee and Kentucky on forged "passes" prepared by a white friend. In addition, they found help along the way from unexpected sources both black and white, similar assistance that undoubtedly had been offered to others before them.

A Jonesborough slave couple, Willis and Elsie Hamilton, and their two daughters fled in 1842 when they learned their master planned to sell them to a trader. After hiding out at an East Tennessee Underground Railroad depot for five weeks, they were directed to a Quaker family in southern Indiana. They remained with the Quakers for a year during which time their third child was born.[27]

Following the Underground Railroad, they relocated northward to Adrian, Michigan, where they were received by Charles and Laura Haviland. Willis farmed twenty acres near Adrian for three years until, with the appearance of slave catchers in the area, they took shelter at farms in Ypsilanti and Monroe. Probably the bounty hunters' search had been prompted by a letter sent to Jonesborough by Elsie and intercepted by the postmaster, her former owner.[28]

Such exhausting escapes did not appeal to all who sought freedom. A few seemed to think they could make their escape more easily by being sealed in a wooden crate

and shipped by riverboat or later by rail. At least one slave in a box never made it out of town, however. On June 8, 1825, when the heat had become unbearable inside a box awaiting shipment from its resting place on a wharf boat at Memphis, the fugitive inside cried out for release. Several hours in the box without water on a hot summer day had reduced him to a helpless condition. The plan to ship him and his box to Cincinnati had been suggested by a free black, John Bennett, known to many Memphians as "a rascal." Bennett was arrested and the boxed fugitive returned to his owner, John Lewis Phillips of Germantown.[29]



Nashville Wharf 1862

In 1858 an unknown fugitive in a box shipped from Nashville to Cincinnati on the steamer Portsmouth, accompanied by a white woman, three children, and a dog. He had fled from his owner, Mrs. Susan Pool of Stewart County. When the riverboat stopped at Louisville, Kentucky, a police officer came aboard with a telegraphic dispatch from Nashville seeking the arrest of the slave. He found the woman, children, and dog, but was unable to find the fugitive.[30]

On their way to Cincinnati, a crew member discovered the concealed passenger. His flight to freedom ended as the steamboat captain turned him over to the police at Covington,

Kentucky. He was committed to jail there, across the river from his destination.[31]

On April 14, 1860, friends of Alexander McClure, a slave living in Nashville, helped him into a wooden box, nailed it shut, and shipped him via the new railroad to Hanna M. Johnson, in care of Levi Coffin at Cincinnati.[32] At Seymour, Indiana, trainmen rushing to transfer freight to a Cincinnati-bound train dropped McClure's box, breaking it open and revealing him inside. Law enforcement officers arrested McClure and charged him with violating laws regarding runaway slaves. Later he was extradited to Tennessee.[33]

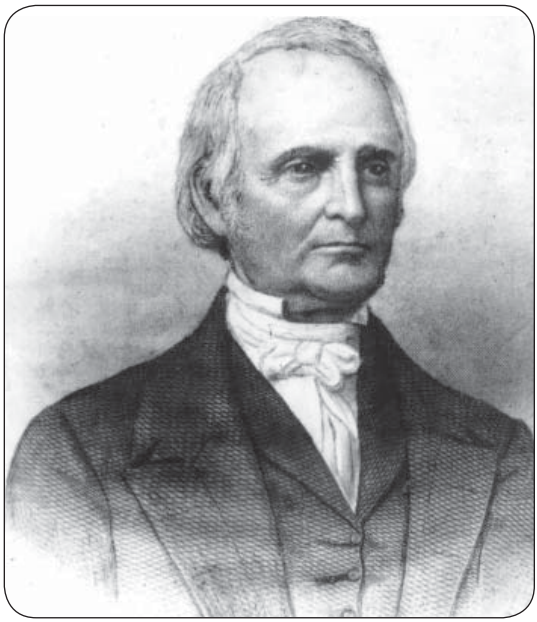
In Nashville again, McClure disclosed that one white and two black men had assisted him in his plan to flee. Officers never revealed the name of the white man. The other two co-conspirators were Nathan James, reputedly a free black but found to be an escaped slave, and Alfred Savage, a slave who was the intermediary who introduced McClure to the unidentified white man. At first held in the city jail, James seems to have been sold into slavery. Savage received fifteen lashes for his part.[34]

Questioned about his role in the shipment, Levi Coffin declared he had no knowledge of the aborted escape attempt. Neither Coffin nor law officers in Cincinnati or Nashville could find Hanna M. Johnson who appeared as the addressee on the box.[35] The likelihood is that whoever furnished the address fabricated the name of Hanna but sent the box in care of Levi Coffin because he was well-known for his Underground Railroad station in Cincinnati. It was intended that he be the recipient and none other because it was expected that he would send the freedom-seeking slave to a haven in Canada.

Returned to his Nashville owner, Alexander McClure was reported to be living and working in the city after the Civil War. The role of the unidentified white coconspirator has not been discovered.

There were a number of instances in which a slave, leaving his family behind, escaped to a free state and then

sought Underground Railroad help to have them conducted safely to him. One such case was that of the runaway Robert Burrell of East Tennessee, who, with Underground assistance, had made his way to Indiana in the latter 1830s. Working on a farm in Henry County during his first summer north of the Ohio and having no winter job, he appealed successfully to abolitionist Levi Coffin for work. After a few months, he confided to Coffin that he had left his family behind in East Tennessee and wanted very much to have them with him in the free North. When Burrell mentioned that while in Tennessee he knew of the work of John Rankin, Coffin asked his fellow abolitionist what he thought of the possibilities of bringing the wife and two children north without raising suspicions that would lead to Robert's "detection."[36]



John Rankin
Courtesy of Ohio Historical Society

Rankin recommended they make an effort to bring the mother and children from Tennessee, but when some of the Rankin family, visiting in Tennessee, approached Robert's wife, she declined their offer, fearing it was a scheme to betray her husband's whereabouts. The Rankins renewed

the effort two years later, and this time were able to bring the family to Ripley. Hoping to confuse slave catchers that might have been following, Rankin sent them to Cincinnati instead of one of the stations located north of Ripley. After remaining in that city several days, they were sent across the state line into Newport, Indiana, where Coffin received them. United after a separation of four years, the Burrells settled near Newport until the passage of the Fugitive Slave Act after which they moved to Canada beyond the reach of United States law.[37]

Why did Robert Burrell leave his wife, a free woman of color, and their children to flee to Indiana? In his case as in many others, he was motivated by a report that he was about to be sold to a trader who would sell him into the Deep South away from his family. Robert's strong work ethic and thrifty living north of the Ohio River suggested that his objective was to earn the money required to buy his own freedom and bring his family to live with him.[38]

Slaves who safely reached Indiana did not always find their new freedom secure. Bounty hunters seemed particularly successful in capturing fugitive slaves in the southern part of the state. Although he thought he was free in Indiana, Jim, a stonemason owned by Tolbert Fanning, founder and president of Franklin College near Nashville, was captured there, taken to Kentucky, and incarcerated in the Jefferson County jail. A legal notice in the Louisville *Public Advertiser*, August 2, 1860, invited the owner "to come forward, prove property, and pay charges."

A young Memphis slave woman, Eliza Winston, won her freedom in 1860 after petitioning a Minnesota court where the judge ruled she was free by having arrived in free territory. She had reached Hennepin County, Minnesota, in company with her owners Col. and Mrs. Richard Christmas of Memphis. It is not clear that the Christmas family intended for freedom to be her lot, but had they not, they must have known the risk they were taking. Had they been depending on the Dred Scott Supreme Court decision of 1857 which ruled that slavery could not be excluded from the territories? Underground Railroad

operatives quickly conveyed her to safety in Windsor, Ontario, out of reach of the fugitive slave law.[39]

Another Memphian, daughter of a free blacksmith, married a Chicago real estate agent and tailor. Living in Chicago, Mary Jane Richardson and her husband John Jones supported the Underground by receiving and concealing runaways in the cellar of their home at 109 Dearborn Street.[40]

VI

Many Routes to Liberty

As the Underground Railroad south of the Ohio River was essentially any route taken from slavery to a free state with help along the way from whatever sources, some of the passages were strangely improvised and others easily predictable by the runaway's owner. From the early 1800s most Tennessee slaves ambitious for freedom knew they could find it in the free states of the Midwest or in neighboring Canada. And their owners knew that, too.

Michael Campbell, a slave owner living near Nashville, was confident about the destination of his runaway named Sam who escaped on April 27, 1813. "It is most likely," he advertised, "he will make his way to Cincinnati, and from thence to Canada." Offering a reward for his capture, Campbell said that Sam was a remarkably capable servant in the house, the field, or distillery. He noted that if examined closely, Sam's back and thighs "will shew the marks of the whip."[1]

In 1816, a slave catcher employed by the iron maker Montgomery Bell at Cumberland Furnace in Dickson County, followed one of Bell's runaways as far as Chillicothe, Ohio, but lost his trail and returned empty-handed. The fugitive Cary was 26 years old; newspaper notices described him as "intelligent but not remarkable for honesty or industry."[2]

Cary had escaped the Furnace by stowing away on a keel boat headed down the Cumberland River. When he reached the Ohio, he boarded a barge going up the river to Louisville. It is not clear where Cary, by then calling himself Bud, crossed the Ohio, but he made his way into Ohio where he eluded the slave catcher. He carried forged passes, picked up along the way, that identified him as a freeman.[3]

Bell speculated in a newspaper advertisement that Bud had "passed to Pittsburgh or some other part of the state of Pennsylvania." Although he offered rewards of $300

in notices placed in "at least eight newspapers including the Pittsburgh *Mercury* and the Cincinnati *Western Spy*," Bell was never able to find the runaway.[4]

Not all efforts to ride the Underground Railroad to freedom succeeded the first time. A young Nashville male slave, sold to a New Orleans master in the early 1830s, escaped the Crescent City July 7, 1838, on the oceangoing ship *Hercules* bound for Philadelphia. He used the "free papers of a colored man" purchased for "fifty silver dollars" to pass the customs officers.[5]

When his master learned that James Fisher had been seen going aboard the *Hercules*, he took passage on a riverboat to Wheeling, Virginia, and overland to Philadelphia to intercept the runaway. Caught there by his master, James returned with him to New Orleans where he was sold to a new owner at Athens, Alabama. The Athens experience ended in short order as the new owner's business failed and James, riding one of his master's horses, fled to Nashville where his mother lived. He reached the city with the help of some children he had met along the way. His freedom was of brief duration as a Huntsville judge, who had a mortgage on him, apprehended him and took him to Alabama to be his house servant and coachman.[6]

Having secretly learned to write, James scrawled out a pass for himself to Nashville that satisfied the local stage office. It was his third break for freedom.[7]

Arriving at Nashville, he wrote another pass that let him on board a Cumberland River boat to Smithland. Marooned at the tiny river port for ten days, he, with the help of a local white man, convinced a steamboat captain that his pass was valid. A few days later he reached Cincinnati and, with the assistance of new friends "both colored and white," he set out for Canada.[8]

Forged papers, his unrelenting quest for freedom, and the help of whites and blacks along the way "Railroaded" him north into Canada. It had not been easy.

Concentrations of former slaves in the Midwest held out hope to others, especially to fugitive family members. Two young slave sisters from Tennessee escaped in 1839 and traveled safely across Kentucky and the Ohio River to Cabin Creek, a colony of free blacks in Randolph County, Indiana. Susan and Margaret Stringfield found "their grandparents and most of their near relatives" among the colonists. Residing with the grandparents, the girls enjoyed their newfound freedom, but the pleasure was short-lived. Their owner, Thomas Stringfield, from whom they had escaped, had arrived at the nearby town of Richmond, ostensibly interested in buying cattle, but really intent on capturing the girls and taking them back to Tennessee.[9]

Armed with a writ issued at Richmond, the master and a law enforcement officer rounded up a group of ruffians and rode over to Cabin Creek. They had learned the girls were there with their grandparents and, upon arriving, found their cabin easily. Accustomed to slave catchers searching their community, the blacks rallied to the aid of the girls and successfully stalled the procedure.[10]

While neighbors held the slave catchers at bay, the girls, dressed as boys, slipped out and were whisked away on two fleet horses. Riding through the Quaker settlement of Cherry Grove, the pair raced twenty miles unmolested to Newport, Indiana, where they were taken into the home of Levi Coffin. They stayed with the Coffins until their master abandoned the search and returned to Tennessee. Coffin sent the girls "via the Greenville and Sandusky route" of the Underground Railroad to a safe arrival in Canada.[11]

Born a slave in Davidson County, Benjamin Singleton fled to New Orleans as a young man when he learned that his master was about to sell him to a slave trader. Later he was apprehended in New Orleans and returned to his owner in Nashville. Benjamin ran away again and made his way north to Canada via the Underground Railroad. Soon afterward, he relocated to Detroit and, after the war, to Nashville.

At home again and free, Singleton became a leader in the Middle Tennessee black exodus to Kansas. By 1880, 5,418 African Americans from Tennessee lived in Kansas.[12]

Born the slave son of a judge in 1827 added nothing to the security of James Thomas even after his mother purchased his freedom from his father. James's father was Judge John Catron of the Tennessee Superior Court of Errors and Appeals 1824 to 1835, and its chief justice 1831 to 1835. Just before leaving office President Andrew Jackson appointed Catron to the United States Supreme Court where he assumed duties as an associate justice on May 1, 1837. He seems to have had no relationship with his son.[13] As a freeman James worked on riverboats between Nashville and New Orleans and, for a few years, operated a barber shop in Nashville. Opportunities for a free black in Nashville were limited, however.[14]

Learning that the Nashville filibuster William Walker had taken over the government of Nicaragua, James Thomas yielded to the prospect of free land there. Visiting Walker in 1855 in the capital city of Granada, he found that slavery would be legal under the Tennessee dictator's regime, a disappointment that sent him scurrying back to Nashville.[15]

Although legally a freeman, James Thomas began to feel racial biases tightening all around him. In 1856 he closed his Nashville business, liquidated his real property, and set out for the free states of the North. He made his way through Kentucky across the Ohio River into Illinois, but winter weather overtook him when he reached snowbound Wisconsin. Unaccustomed to such severely cold weather, he retraced his steps, arriving at Nashville in February 1857.[16]

With the advent of spring, James traveled north to Louisville and then, hoping to find an opportunity for land speculation, went to Iowa and Kansas. When threatened by ruffians in the latter place, he turned east into Missouri and settled in St. Louis. He prospered in the new location and by 1874 was regarded as one of the wealthiest blacks in America. The financial panic of 1893 wiped out most of his

wealth and a tornado in 1896 administered a coup de grace. He died in poverty in 1913.[17]

William A. Hall, a Davidson County slave, said that the patient support of secret agents had enabled him to attempt repeatedly to escape during the 1850s. He failed in three attempts to escape a new owner, but succeeded in his fourth.

Embree House
Courtesy of Patricia and Patrick Stern

Unable to read or write, Hall was heavily dependent on those whose compassion nurtured the Underground Railroad. When he reached Golconda, Illinois, a local pilot led him to a stationmaster at Mount Vernon from whence he journeyed to Ottawa, both in the same state, and finally to Chicago. He reached freedom in Canada by traversing the state of Wisconsin from south to north and crossing Lake Superior into the province of Ontario.[18]

The valleys of East Tennessee provided Underground Railroad route and cover from Georgia to Virginia for a runaway from below who was on his way to Canada. A yearning to be reunited with his wife who had escaped to Canada inspired Magog, a Georgia slave, to run away through East Tennessee

in the early 1850s. Hoping to reach Canada by way of the free states north of the Ohio River, he nonetheless wanted to avoid crossing Kentucky because he had worked for a white family there before being sold to a Georgia planter and feared slave catchers would expect him to return to his old home.[19]

Working his way through the mountains of Northern Georgia, Magog stayed away from settlements, even lone cabins, for the first five days. The sixth day, nearing exhaustion, he met two white men with guns. They seemed not to be surprised, but shook his hand and led him to their Mennonite settlement of Felsheim. He was shocked when they explained that he had come through the mountains about two hundred miles and was then in Tennessee. It helped him understand why he needed to spend three days with them to recover from the exhausting mountain passage. In every way their behavior suggested to him that previously they had helped others in his predicament.[20]

As he set out again, the Mennonites directed him to a Quaker settlement thirty miles northeast, his next stop on the Underground Railroad. His journey through East Tennessee to Virginia, making about ten to twenty miles between stops, probably included among others, underground stations at Unitia, Friendsville, and Rheatown.[21]

Passing through Virginia safely, Magog found a conductor who smuggled him across the Ohio River on a dark, rainy night. Assisted by underground volunteers, he traveled to Cleveland, Ohio, from whence he crossed to Canada. He and Jane were reunited.[22]

A Tennessee fugitive slave was not acquainted with a single abolitionist when he made his way from Chattanooga across Tennessee and Kentucky to freedom in Indiana. Jacob Cummings, the property of James Smith who lived near Chattanooga, slipped across the Tennessee River in the summer of 1839, crossed the state of Tennessee, and “came out on the north side of the Cumberland Mountains,” apparently in Kentucky.[23]

Captured north of the Cumberland range, he seemed to be at the end of a daring flight. After a few days, however, the resourceful Cummings escaped his captors and crossed the Ohio River into Indiana. At New Albany he met his first abolitionists and accepted their hospitality, but law enforcement officers found and arrested him. Taken to court at nearby Jeffersonville, Cummings came before a judge who dismissed charges and set him free. Celebrating the judge's ruling, a group of friends escorted him to an Underground Railroad station and he departed for Canada, a destination he reached in due time.[24]

About the time of President Andrew Jackson's death in 1845, a trusted slave Henry Johnson, who had served in his artillery at the battle of New Orleans, fled the Hermitage near Nashville and escaped to Canada. Initiated by his own daring, the journey was greatly assisted by the Underground Railroad. After a brief stay in Canada, he relocated to Oberlin, Ohio, where, working as a brick mason and grounds keeper, he was a volunteer with the Underground. Driving a horse-drawn wagon, he often served as a decoy to slave hunters.[25]

A slave born at Statesville in Wilson County, Tennessee, George L. Knox found freedom in Indiana by the unlikely process of going with his master as a body servant in the Confederate Army in 1862. Permitted to return home in Wilson County to visit, Knox led a party of fellow slaves, including his brother Charles, into Union lines near Murfreesboro.[26]

Becoming a body servant to Union Army Captain Addison Dunn, Knox accompanied him home to Indianapolis, Indiana, on leave in 1864. When the captain returned to his company, Knox remained behind and opened a barber shop in Greenfield, Indiana. It was the hometown of several of the Union soldiers he had met when acting as Captain Dunn's body servant.[27]

Soon a leader in the black communities in Greenfield and surrounding towns, Knox was active in church and school matters. In 1884 he moved to Indianapolis and set up a barber shop and a newspaper. The editor of his

autobiography said he soon became "the foremost black citizen of Indiana."[28]

The demeanor of Tennessee slaves fleeing for freedom attracted the attention of an Underground Railroad conductor who conveyed many of them across the Ohio River at Ripley, Ohio. Molder in an iron foundry there that he later purchased, John Parker was a free black who periodically conveyed freedom hunters across from Kentucky to Ohio.[29] He afterward said of the Tennesseans:

> Men and women whom I helped on their way came from Tennessee, requiring weeks to make the journey, sleeping under trees in the daytime and slowly picking their dangerous way at night. . . . As a matter of fact, they became backwoodsmen, following the north star, or even mountains, to reach their destination. These long distance travelers were usually people strong physically, as well as people of character, and were resourceful when confronted with trouble.[30]

Parker knew something about escaping to freedom. As a slave at Mobile, Alabama, apprenticed to a plasterer, he had run away on a steamboat to New Orleans, but soon after was caught and returned to Mobile. Working in an iron foundry there, he earned enough money by 1845 to buy his freedom.[31]

As a free man with papers to prove it, Parker took a Mississippi River packet north to the Ohio River and up its course to Jeffersonville, Indiana. He worked as a molder in a foundry there before moving to Cincinnati and later to Ripley, working in foundries at both places.[32]

Not only talented at helping other slaves escape, he became a nationally recognized figure in foundry operations. He held several U.S. patents on products he designed.[33]

The successful passage through East Tennessee by fugitive slaves was repeated during the Civil War by young southern white men. They came from those who wanted to

avoid conscription into military service by the Confederacy, who wanted to join the Union Army, or who for other reasons wanted to relocate secretly in the North. The whites usually traveled in groups of from 25 to 125 following a guide to whom each paid a fee.[34]

There was no direct connection between the movements of the whites and slaves; they were on the road for different reasons. Their common interests were leaving the South and avoiding any activity that might benefit the plantation culture. The slaves and whites traveled together to Union Army camps in Kentucky or Tennessee only after the Union Army began to enlist blacks in 1863.

Daniel Ellis, an East Tennessee guide who left a written narrative of his experiences, at first led parties from Sullivan County through Cumberland Gap into Kentucky and subsequently to Union Army training camps there. White Oak Flats in Sullivan County was a gathering place for men who wanted to make the journey with him. The crossing on foot from White Oak typically required seven days, but, traveling alone, he often made the return trip in four.[35]

In January 1864, Ellis readjusted his travel routes. Gathering the men in Carter County or at the boatyard in Kingsport, he led them to Knoxville. Due to the fluid situation in the military contest for that city, he occasionally avoided the area and led his charges across the Cumberland Mountains to Nashville. Later in the year Nashville became the destination for most of his trips. The presence of the 13th Regiment Tennessee Volunteers, U.S.A., in the Nashville area attracted many of the men who came with Ellis. And the opportunity to travel by rail from Knoxville made that part of the journey much easier.[36]

Ellis rarely guided slaves seeking freedom, but in February 1865 he brought some “Negroes” to Nashville with a group of whites, all of whom enlisted in the Union Army. He regarded himself as a recruiter for the Union Army, and the army recognized his “military service” by issuing him an honorable discharge on September 1, 1865, at Knoxville.[37]

During the period of frequent crossings into Kentucky, Ellis developed a number of regular stops. He liked to gather his men at White Oak Flats because concealing them there was easy and "Mrs. Grills" always seemed able to produce a hot meal. Regularly seeking information about the presence of Confederate soldiers, he stopped for updates at the homes of several "good Union men." He visited his "old friend Clark" in Harlan County, Kentucky; John McInturf in Grassy Cove, Washington County, Tennessee; and a "Mr. Stephins" at Kelly's Gap in the "Chucky Mountains." Finding many loyal Union women willing to help his travelers, he mentioned Mrs. William B. Carter of Elizabethton, "the widow Bayless" near the red banks of the Chucky River, and "Mrs. Kelly" at Paint Rock Mountain.[38]

Ellis had been preceded and tutored by one William McClain who obviously understood the operations of the Underground Railroad and made use of its methods. He guided refugees, would-be Union soldiers, and escapees from Confederate prisoner of war camps in Georgia to safety.

Another pilot was Emanuel Header who led escaped prisoners and refugees from the North Georgia mountains to Chattanooga and Knoxville. Slaves and free blacks in East Tennessee, though minor in number, were major in rendering assistance to Union refugees and prisoners of war and to the pilots who led them to safety.[39]

The valley of East Tennessee had a number of pilots or guides who operated in the manner of Ellis and McClain. From the fall of 1861 to July 1862, in the northern part of Bradley County, Thomas Spurgeon guided pro-Unionist refugees and military recruits across the Tennessee River and northward up the valley. In July 1862 he enlisted in the 7th Tennessee Infantry, U.S.A., at Huntsville, Scott County, Tennessee. His subsequent assignments included behind the lines activity such as he had previously practiced.[40]

A faithful Union guide who assisted many refugees from Sevier and Knox Counties to reach Kentucky or beyond was Spencer Deaton. The farm of Dr. Joseph C. Strong, about twelve miles east of Knoxville on the Holston River,

was his principal base of operations. Generously credited by East Tennessee historian Oliver P. Temple with piloting "thousands of fleeing Union men" to safety outside the state, Deaton was captured by Confederate forces in the latter part of 1863 or early 1864. He was taken to Richmond, Virginia, "condemned as a spy and hanged in Libby Prison."[41]

There were pilots in the southern Cumberland Mountains as well. Regional historians have mentioned Polly Hand, a woman who guided fugitives from her Cumberland County home in Devil Step Hollow to Kentucky. In the Sequatchie Valley, J. W. Farmer and James S. Garrison were pilots.[42]

For several months after the beginning of the Civil War, Wayne Lee of Friendsville piloted refugees from Tennessee to Indiana and Ohio. When a large reward was offered for him "dead or alive," he moved to Economy, Indiana. He returned to live in Friendsville after the war.[43]

Cumberland County's Richard Flynn, a pilot known as "the Red Fox," knew the hills and valleys "from Chattanooga to the Kentucky line, even on the darkest night." He used that knowledge to lead refugees, escaped slaves, and Union Army escapees from Confederate prisoner of war camps to Kentucky. A resolute Unionist, Flynn began his activities when the Confederate government instituted the Conscription Act and southern Unionists sought a way out to join the Union Army. From Chattanooga, the Underground route crossed the Tennessee River and led to the house of a conductor on Walden's Ridge. The next stop was in Sequatchie Valley, followed by Flynn's Station on Big Laurel Creek. Always ready to minister to the travelers, Flynn's wife Ezylphia provided food and rest before sending them on their way to Possum Creek, Kentucky, by way of Fentress County, Tennessee.[44]

The Flynns' dedication to assisting those seeking freedom was based on their understanding that slaveholding was contrary to the teachings of the Bible and their belief that dividing the Union would be destructive to the liberty of all. Aware that there was a significant number of Confederates in Cumberland County, Richard and Ezylphia felled trees and

managed otherwise to make their home inaccessible except to those who knew the location of the secret entrance.[45]

VII

Landmarks Along the Way

Twenty-first century identification of routes and stations of the Underground Railroad in Tennessee, although interesting, is of secondary importance to the fact that they existed and were used for about fifty years prior to the end of the Civil War. The major routes: the Tennessee, Cumberland, and Mississippi Rivers, and the south-north mountain valley trails through East Tennessee, were the most used. Many improvised routes frequently caught slave catchers off guard. Numerous landmarks were located along the trails, but which have survived the intervening years and how can they be identified?

Underground Railroad landmarks are supported by pervasive local traditions, especially in East Tennessee. Some are actually underground. A cave near the Friendsville Meeting House in Loudon County is believed to have been an Underground Railroad stop. Wilson J. Hackney, a local Quaker leader, kept the cave, since known as Cudjo's Cave, stocked with food and provisions. Local historians credit Hackney with assisting more than 2,000 persons going north via the Underground.[1] Smaller caves and other potential hiding places dotted the landscape around Friendsville.[2]

Other caves were used as stations. Near Greenback in Loudon County is a cave traditionally regarded as a stop on the Underground Railroad for those en route to Blount County. The possibility of a large number of cave stations, "from at least 50 to 75," is claimed for Bradley County by historian J. S. Hurlburt.[3]

Calling the stations "Union dungeons," Hurlburt claimed he had visited five of them: One near the residence of Amos Potter, one near Israel Brown's place, and three in the Tenth District near the farm of Elisha Wise. The caves, some of which had been dug by hand in the hillsides, were the most numerous in the northern part of the county, he said, and were most used by fugitive whites on their way north.[4]

Quaker communities, wherever found in Tennessee, were prepared to offer aid and assistance to fleeing slaves and to whites seeking to avoid the Confederate draft. The Quaker towns of Unitia, Friendsville, and Rheatown were regarded as stations on the Underground Railroad. They were safe stops because the Friends opposed both slavery and war. The stone house built by Thomas Embree near Telford in Washington County where Elihu Embree later lived is traditionally represented as an Underground Railroad station.

George Henry of Friendsville stands at the entrance to Cudjo's Cave, nearly blocked by the accumulation of debris and soil. Courtesy of Dean Stone and the Maryville *Daily Times*

Local tradition insists the 1790s stone house built between Maryville and Friendsville by Samuel Frazier was a station. Its many farm buildings offered opportunities for fleeing slaves to rest, gather provisions, and receive guidance to the next station.[5] Historians cite the William H. Griffitts house on the north edge of Tellico Lake as an Underground Railroad Station. Built in the mid-1850s, the wood framed two-story farmhouse and its Quaker owners were hospitable to escaping slaves and young white men seeking to avoid the Confederate Conscription Act.[6]

Friendsville historian George Henry shared his assessment of runaway slaves coming into Blount County from nearby states:

> We think many of the runaways came from North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia over the mountain. The routes from nearby Louisville and Morganton to this area were often used. I think the routes away from this area were over the river to Union Valley in Knox County, then toward Kentucky and Virginia and Ohio and continued on to other northern states on to Canada. Some, we think, went through the mountains of Kentucky and toward Cincinnati.[7]

Greeneville College, Washington College, and Maryville College seem to have been safe havens as were several private homes. In Greeneville the Edmund Miller house had a secret room supposedly to conceal escaped slaves, and the George Jones house had a large cistern within a cistern that created an unusual but safe hiding place.

Another depot in Greene County was the Levi Pickering house called Grassy Pond in the Chucky community. Built soon after Levi and Annis Olympus Gauntt were married in 1848, the house was situated near the track of a new steam-powered railroad. Close by was a switch or stopping point for unloading coal for local distribution. Tradition credits Annis, a Quaker and arguably the first woman physician in East Tennessee, with caring for runaway slaves and steering

them on to their next station, sometimes with the aid of the above ground railroad.[8]

In a detailed study of the Underground Railroad in Greene County, local historians Randi Nott, Sherry Britton, and Dr. Bob Orr have found a correlation between the location of stations and high density abolitionist neighborhoods. Taking the names of 303 Greene Countians who signed a petition against slavery to the State Constitutional Convention of 1834, Sherry Britton plotted the locations of their places of residence on a county map. The heaviest clusters are in the neighborhoods of 18 traditional station sites.[9]

Traditional Greene County stations not mentioned elsewhere in the text but regarded by Nott, Britton, and Orr as "possible Underground Railroad sites," are New Hope Church, Timber Ridge Church, and the houses of Samuel Brunner, Samuel McNeese, David Rankin, Levi Rankin, Ernest Fort, David Kennedy, Thomas Alexander, Washington P. House, and Eli Rambo. In addition, there were William McNeese's barn, caves near the Nolichucky River, and Pilot Knob, a natural landmark.[10]

On Lone Oak Road between Jonesborough and Johnson City, a two-story brick house built about 1836 was the home of the Kinchen Miller family. According to family history, it was a station on the Underground Railroad. The Millers were Dunkards, a religious faith that opposed slavery and war. The house has a large cellar accessible from inside the first floor through three trap doors. Two tunnels with a combined length of approximately 200 yards led from the cellar toward a nearby creek and a small cave. The trap doors, cellar, and tunnels have sustained succeeding generations' confidence that the house was truly a station.[11]

Shelby County folklore presents the Burkle House in Memphis as an Underground Railroad station. Located near the river and owned by Jacob Burkle who came to Memphis from Germany about 1850, the house has a basement that could have concealed refugee slaves. An abolitionist, Burkle was a livestock dealer who shipped on riverboats and had almost daily contacts with steamboat captains. Could he

have forwarded slaves from the basement of his house to cattle boats going up the Mississippi River? Perhaps so, but who truly knows? As this Underground Railroad station story has been told and retold, the Burkle house has been dubbed "slave haven."[12]

William H. Griffitts House
Courtesy of Joe E. Spence

By 1840 the number of runaway slaves being caught at young and growing Memphis overflowed the tiny jail and hinted that larger numbers were passing through the city in flights to freedom. At any given day, eight to ten slaves were crowded into "a few small, unhealthy cells." Asserting that more runaways were arriving in Memphis than any other city in the state, leaders of the community petitioned the state legislature to pass an act to authorize them to work the prisoners outside in chain gangs.[13]

The Union Army invasion of Tennessee and the fall of Fort Donelson opened the way for Tennessee slaves to flee to the protection of soldiers whom they perceived to be their saviors. Located on the Cumberland River near Dover about 45 miles below Nashville, Fort Donelson seemed appropriately located to be a place of northward exit for local slaves. Any opportunities for slaves leaving Fort Donelson to go to free states beyond the Ohio were greatly reduced by Union command orders calling for slaves arriving at the fort to be employed there or at nearby Fort Henry. The quartermaster would be their employer, and they would

work on fortifications and otherwise work "for the benefit of the government."[14]

As more arrived, the question of dealing with them became very difficult. Soldiers hired many as body servants, but what could be done with the women and children and older persons who accompanied them? Regarding the slaves as property and thus contraband, the army placed them in makeshift contraband camps from which it recruited both male and female laborers and, later, soldiers as well.

For the duration of the war, slaves from farms and plantations in the area gathered at Fort Donelson. Notwithstanding army orders to restrain them, a number were able to slip away northward to the free states, often with the help of soldiers. Slaves detailed from the fort to load packet boats at Smithland, Kentucky, at the mouth of the Cumberland River often did not return, but made their ways to freedom. The practice at one time was so common that additional orders were issued to prevent slaves from escaping on boats.[15]

Although there was no official effort at Fort Donelson to assist the movement of slaves to free states, evidence of the Underground Railroad appeared now and then. A chaplain of the Fifth Iowa Cavalry put up one hundred dollars for the safe passage of a slave to Cincinnati, Ohio. The wife of a Union Army colonel helped at least one slave named Rachel escape to Chicago. A more ambitious plan to "help the boys get their freedom" is hinted by an Ohio captain's report that a local white man sought from him "a complete list of the Negroes who [had] worked on the fort" but begged to remain anonymous because, were his interests known, it "might cost him his life."[16]

The Union Army command had not prepared for the influx of blacks, but nonetheless Fort Donelson was a safe haven for them. The number who used the fort as a springboard to the free states was not large, but like the Underground Railroad throughout the Upper South, numbers were of secondary importance. The successful northward movement of single persons or small groups indicated the

Underground Railroad was succeeding and former slaves were breathing the air of freedom for the first time.

Contraband camps at Nashville, Murfreesboro, Gallatin, and elsewhere in the state held large numbers of liberty-seeking slaves, but the locations were not convenient for escape northward. Nevertheless, there were opportunities for positive interaction between the contrabands and the Union Army personnel they worked with. The service of Mary Ann Ball Bickerdyke, a Union nurse in one of many army hospitals in Nashville, is a case in point. Informally recruiting contrabands to assist her hospital ward, Bickerdyke taught and fed them inasmuch as she had no funds to pay them. She was regarded as active in the Underground Railroad because her teaching helped the former slaves learn to function in a free society. The encouragement she offered could speed her helpers along the Underground to the freedom they coveted.[17]

Washington College, Harris Hall
Courtesy of Washington College Academy Archives

VIII

Important Beyond Its Time

During 1865 the need for escape assistance provided by the Underground Railroad ceased to exist. In Tennessee on February 22, a public referendum ratified an amendment to the State Constitution abolishing slavery. The war ended April 8 when the commander-in-chief of Confederate forces, General Robert E. Lee, surrendered his army to General Ulysses Grant at Appomattox Court House, Virginia. On December 18 the Thirteenth Amendment to the Constitution of the United States prohibiting slavery and involuntary servitude was ratified. Slaves throughout the country were free at last.

From the time the first Tennessee runaway slaves were successful in escaping to points north of the Ohio River, the Underground Railroad assisted those seeking freedom. Played out against a background of legal slavery in the South, this escape mechanism was more available than used. The peculiar institution of slavery was an intimidating adversary.

Although never strong throughout the state, the antislavery movement prompted public discussion of the issue. In that process slaves learned they had friends and advocates beyond their owners, even including a few of them. This undoubtedly encouraged slaves to believe that, short of violence, there were ways out of bondage. It served, also, to remind them that any initiative to freedom must come from them, and as a practical matter, they could only expect to succeed in extremely small groups, even in ones and twos, and not every time.

Perceptive slave owners should have welcomed the existence of the Underground as a pressure relief valve to vent the pent up frustrations of those unwilling to wait indefinitely for liberty. Although expected, essentially no slave insurrections occurred in Tennessee. Without the Underground, always an option for the bondsmen, master-slave relations might have been much more difficult for both.

As slaves heard of others reaching freedom, they learned, also, of the patrols of slave catchers or bounty hunters who made their living by collecting rewards for apprehending runaways. Passage of the Fugitive Save Law by Congress in 1850 raised the risk even higher by making it a violation of federal law for anyone to assist or conceal a fugitive slave. If caught, a runaway could expect corporal punishment, even if the absence was due to visiting a wife or other family or friend at another place only a few miles down the road.

The Underground Railroad in Tennessee existed because individual slaves and certain free people black and white across the state were willing to extend a helping hand. It might have been in the form of lodging, food, forged papers, advice, directions to a safe house or station, passage on a riverboat or stagecoach, warnings about slave catchers, or simply looking the other way. Help came, also, from the fact that as there were numerous slaves working under lease arrangements with their owners, others running errands for them, and 7,300 "free colored" living across the state, it was not unusual to see blacks moving about without restraint.[1] The Railroad not only met the needs of slaves to escape to freedom, but met the needs of numerous whites and free blacks to assist them in their flight.

Vitally important to the Underground Railroad were the antislavery convictions of members of certain Christian religious bodies. Among the very first to embrace manumission in Tennessee were the Presbyterians and the Quakers. Neither church body took an early political stand in favor of abolishing slavery, but leading ministers of both denominations and significant numbers of parishioners promoted abolition in the early years of the nineteenth century.

The ways of the Underground Railroad, the locations of stations or safe houses, the names of its guides, conductors, and stationmasters were not as well known to the public in Tennessee as similar places and names were known north of the Ohio River. Although helping slaves escape was not publicly condoned in Tennessee, runaways could expect to

receive a certain amount of secret assistance from whites, other slaves, and free blacks.

Notwithstanding slave owners' fears that northern abolitionists were sending agents into Tennessee to lure slaves away, little of that occurred. The abolitionists seemed to understand that successful escapes depended more on the individual slave's courage and creativity than on the company of an agent from north of the Ohio River. It appears that when northerners came into the state to assist in an escape to freedom, their efforts frequently failed. Due to the secrecy necessary in the practice, no comprehensive records exist of agents coming into the state to aid slave flight. In the larger picture of all slave attempts to reach freedom, it is not known how many failed or how many succeeded.

The Railroad's success and methodology in moving persons from South to North attracted the attention of the Union Army early in the Civil War. As a result, local guides suddenly appeared in East Tennessee to lead groups of pro-Union young white men out of the South and away from being conscripted into the Confederate Army. Most were taken to Union Army camps in Kentucky. Among the men were a few conscientious objectors to military service and, near the end of the war, a number of slaves who, at their destination, were enlisted in the Union Army.

Moral issues raised by one human being holding another in bondage troubled the consciences of numerous slave owners. A few emancipated a slave or slaves by petitioning the county courts. Others provided for the emancipation of their slaves through their last will and testament. This practice of bequeathed emancipation salved their own consciences, ultimately freed the slaves, and in the meantime maintained existing master-slave relationships.

It is certain that two former Tennesseans, both Protestant ministers, one black and one white, operated Underground Railroad stations of unsurpassed importance to fleeing slaves. Jermaine Wesley Loguen expedited direct crossings into Canada from his station at Syracuse, and John Rankin arranged for passengers to be conducted into

the interior of a free state and ultimately to Canada from his house at Ripley. After 1850, their acts were in violation of the fugitive slave law, but neither feared the consequences. Both were pioneers of great daring.

African colonization, an alternative to emancipating and permitting them to remain in the United States, attracted public support but not enough to fund the relatively high costs involved. Promoters oversimplified colonization by representing it as an opportunity for slaves to return to their native land and live in freedom. The native land of most Tennessee slaves was the United States and few, if any, were born in Liberia, the West African site of the colony.

Although they would be free of masters in Liberia, they faced a generally hostile reception from the local people and an uncertain future. There are social and political tensions in Liberia today that had their origins in the arrival of the freed American slaves. It is safe to say that about eight to ten times as many Tennessee slaves traveled the Underground Railroad to freedom as sailed to Africa.

The Underground Railroad passed through Tennessee wherever and whenever a free black or fugitive slave made his/her way north to freedom and received along the way any assistance, large or small, from whites, free blacks, or other slaves. Its existence and its successes were symbols of hope for all of its passengers as well as for those who remained behind.

Was the Underground Railroad the first civil rights movement in America? Was it the precursor by more than one hundred years of the civil rights movement of the 1960s?

It was something of both. Certainly, it was the first time that significant numbers of black and white Americans had cooperated to assist slaves escape bondage, a procedure that would not have developed if individual slaves had not dared to run toward freedom. In recognizing the humanity of those held in slavery, the Underground Railroad implicitly invited them to become citizens. But few, if any, North and South, ever dreamed that the privileges and responsibilities

of full citizenship would not be available to them until courageous blacks with white allies took up the cause more than one hundred years later. Cooperation across race lines made the Underground possible. The same coalition made the Civil Rights Act of 1964 the law of the land. In mid-2008, cooperation across race lines has resulted for the first time in one of the two major political parties nominating an African American for President of the United States.

END NOTES

[1]Richard B. Morris, ed., *Encyclopedia of American History* (New York, 1953), 516. Throughout this work the term Underground Railroad is used in reference to assisted slave flights to freedom, including those that predated iron and steel railroads.

[2]George and Willene Hendrick, eds., *Fleeing for Freedom, Stories of the Underground Railroad as told by Levi Coffin and William Still* (Chicago, 2004), ix.

[3]Morris, ed., *Encyclopedia of American History*, 213.

[4]Any doubt that Tennessee was the Volunteer State was erased in 1846 when President James K. Polk called on the governor for 2,800 volunteers for the war with Mexico and more than ten times that number responded. Robert H. White, "The Volunteer State," *Tennessee Historical Quarterly*, 15 (Mar. 1956): 53.

[5]Mary Ellen Snodgrass, *The Underground Railroad, An Encyclopedia of People, Places and Operations*, Vol. 2 of 2 vols. (Armonk, NY, 2007), 603.

[6]Knoxville *Gazette*, January 23, 1797.

[7]Jeff Biggers, *The United States of Appalachia: How Southern Mountaineers Brought Independence, Culture and Enlightenment to America* (New York, 2006), 86-88.

[8]Asa Martin, "The Anti-Slavery Societies of Tennessee," *Tennessee Historical Magazine*, Vol. 1, No. 4 (Dec. 1915): 262-64, 266.

[9]Elihu Embree, *The Emancipator (complete) published by Elihu Embree, Jonesboro, Tennessee, 1820*, Robert H. White, ed. (Nashville, 1932), 10-12.

[10]*Genius of Universal Emancipation*, Vol. II, 2.

[11]Biggers, *The United States of Appalachia*, 92, 93, 96; Embree, *The Emancipator*, x, 1, 9, 85.

[12]Embree, *The Emancipator*, 85.

[13]Biggers, *The United States of Appalachia*, 97, 100; *Genius of Universal Emancipation*, October 13, 1827.

[14]*Annals of Congress*, 17th Congress, 1st Session (1821-1822), 709; ibid., 2nd Session (1822-1823), 642.

[15]Ibid., 18th Congress, 1st Session (1823-1824), 931.

[16]Stuart Sprague, ed., *His Promised Land: The Autobiography of John P. Parker, Former Slave and conductor on the Underground Railroad* (New York, 1996), 156; Biggers, *The United States of Appalachia*, 89.

[17]Ibid., 83.

[18]William Gunn Calhoun, comp., *Samuel Doak, 1749-1830* (Washington College, TN, 1966), 13.

[19]Carroll Van West, ed., *The Tennessee Encyclopedia of History and Culture* (Nashville, 1998), 576.

[20]The use of the term West Tennessee in this instance embraced all of present West and Middle Tennessee.

[21]*Genius of Universal Emancipation*, Vol. IV, 76, 142.

[22]Martin, "The Anti-Slavery Societies of Tennessee," 276.

[23]Ibid., 277.

[24]Embree, *The Emancipator*, 10-11; John Rankin, *Life of Rev. John Rankin Written by Himself in his 80th Year c. 1872*, edited from manuscript in the Duke University Archives, (Ripley, OH, 2004), 6; Biggers, *The United States of Appalachia*, 100.

[25]Chase C. Mooney, *Slavery in Tennessee* (Reprint, Westport, CT, 1971), 69.

[26]Ibid.

[27]Ibid., 73.

[28]*Fifteenth Annual Report of the American Society for Colonizing the Free People of Color of the United States* (Washington, DC, 1832), XXX, 56, and appendix, n.p. The 18 local societies listed in the appendix are Bolivar, Somerville, Memphis, Covington, Jackson, Paris, Clarksville, Franklin, Rutherford County, Columbia, Shelbyville, Winchester, Sumner County, Knoxville, Blount County, New Market, Washington County, and Kingsport.

[29]*Twenty-fourth Annual Report of the American Colonization Society* (Washington, DC, 1841), 23.; *Twenty Fifth*, 1842, 20; *Twenty-Ninth*, 1846, 23; and *Thirtieth*, 1847, 26.

[30]Knoxville *Enquirer*, November 24, 1824; Knoxville *Register*, November 8, 1826.

[31]Mooney, *Slavery in Tennessee*, 73-75.

[32]*Memorial of the Semi-Centennial Anniversary of the American Colonization Society*, 190-91.

[33]*Twenty-Ninth Annual Report of the American Colonization Society* (Washington, DC, 1846), 11.

[34]*The African Repository*, Vol. XXX (Washington, DC, 1854), 37; Ed Huddleston, "The Saga of Montgomery Bell," Part 7, Nashville *Banner*, May 17, 1955.

[35]*The African Repository*, ibid.

[36]Huddleston, "The Saga of Montgomery Bell," Part 12, Nashville *Banner*, May 23, 1955.

[37]Ibid., Part 7, Nashville *Banner*, May 17, 1955.

[38]Lauren Elizabeth Nickas, "Concerning Happiness: Frances Wright and the Nashoba Experiment," *West Tennessee Historical Society Papers*, LXI, (2007), 112-14.

[39]Ibid.

[40]Ibid.

[41]Martin, "The Anti-Slavery Societies of Tennessee," 276-77; For a full account of the failed efforts to amend the state constitution in favor of emancipation or colonization by 1866, see Chase C. Mooney, "The Question of Slavery and the Free Negro in the Tennessee Constitutional Convention of 1834," *Journal of Southern History*, 12 (Nov. 1946): 487-509.

[1]Sumner County Loose Court Records, Miscellaneous, #172, Sumner County Archives.

[2]Ibid., #170.

[3]Ibid., #176.

[4]Ibid., #168.

[5]Sumner County Records, Will Book #2, p. 277. Kasper Mansker was owner of Mansker's Station, an important frontier fort of the 1780s located in twenty-first century Goodlettsville, TN.

[6]Robert Polk Thomson, bound typescript, "Isaac Walton, 1764-1840," Vol. 1, Chapter 8, pp. 4-5.

[7]Wilson County Records, Court Minute Book, April 3, 1843, p. 616.

[8]Sumner County Loose Court Records, Chancery Lawsuit #467.

[9]Sumner County Records, Chancery Court Minute Book C, 25-26.

[10]John Sumner Russwurm Papers, 1786-1914, Tennessee State Library and Archives.

[11]Sumner County Records, Will Book #2, 187-88.

[12]Davidson County Records, County Court Minutes, January 1835, p. 257; January 1836, p. 77.

[13]Sumner County Loose Court Records, Miscellaneous, #457 and #745.

[14]Ibid; Walter T. Durham, *Old Sumner, A History of Sumner County, Tennessee, From 1805 to 1861* (Gallatin, 1972), 315.

[15]Sumner County Records, Chancery Court Minute Book 4, pp. 342, 345.

[16]Thomas H. Coldwell, *Tennessee Reports*, Vol. II (1865-66) 1906, pp. 385-91.

[17]Reuben, Sidney, Eliza, and others vs. Joel Parrish, executor. Middle Tennessee Supreme Court Records, 1846, Box MT78, Tennessee State Library and Archives.

[18]Ibid.

[19]Ibid.

[20]Ibid.

[21]John, Andrew, Charity, and child Cina vs. Tate and Graves, executors, Middle Tennessee Supreme Court Records, 1847, Box MT83, Tennessee State Library and Archives. John S. Graves was co-executor with Tate, but did not participate in the fraudulent acts that Tate perpetrated at the slaves' expense.

[22]Ibid.

[23]Ibid.

[24]Ibid.

[25]Williamson County Records, Chancery Court, Horace H. Harris, Chancellor, Armstrong vs. Pearce, November 26, 1867.

[1]Keith P. Griffler, *Front Line of Freedom, African Americans and the Forging of the Underground Railroad in the Ohio Valley* (Lexington, KY, 2004), 60.

[2]*The Life of Rev. John Rankin, Written by Himself in his 80th Year* (Ripley, OH, 2004), 14-15.

[3]Ibid., 26; "Autobiography of Adam Lowry Rankin," unpublished typescript, handwritten in the early 1890s, copied by his granddaughter Belle Rankin in 1931, Union Township Public Library, Ripley, OH, 13.

[4]Ann Hagedorn, *Beyond the River, The Untold Story of the Heroes of the Underground Railroad* (New York, 2002), 58.

[5]"Autobiography of Adam Lowry Rankin," 4.

[6]Hagedorn, *Beyond the River*, 67.

[7] Nashville *Republican and State Gazette*, October 15, 1833.

[8] Hagedorn, *Beyond the River*, 99.

[9]"Autobiography of Adam Lowry Rankin," 25, 73.

[10]Hagedorn, *Beyond the River*, 41.

[11]"Autobiography of Adam Lowery Rankin," 19. On February 18, 1997, the U.S. Department of the Interior designated the Rankin house a National Historic Landmark. *National Historic Landmarks Survey, List of National Historic Landmarks by State* (Washington, National Park Service, 2007), 77.

[12]"John Rankin did more to propagate practical abolition in Ohio than any of its other citizens. His house on Liberty Hill was best situated and staffed on the Ohio [River] to be an initial depot [for the Underground Railroad]." Wilbur Henry Siebert, *The Mysteries of Ohio's Underground Railroads* (Columbus, OH, 1951), 82.

[13]Sprague, ed., *His Promised Land: The Autobiography of John P. Parker, 70-98.*

[14]This account is based on several narratives analyzed by Ann Hagedon in her *Beyond the River*, 135-39.

[15]Griffler, *Front Line of Freedom*, 63.

[16]Hagedorn, *Beyond the River*, 193-97.

[17]Ibid., 219-22.

[18]George and Willene Hendrick, eds., *Fleeing for Freedom, Stories of the Underground Railroad as told by Levi Coffin and William Still* (Chicago, 2004), 8.

[19]"Autobiography of Adam Lowry Rankin," 50, 62, 71.

[20]Ibid., 72, 78, 83, 89.

[21]Ibid., 92-96; West, ed., *The Tennessee Encyclopedia of History and Culture*, 534.

[22]"Autobiography of Adam Lowry Rankin," 100.

[23]Minutes, Newberry Monthly Meeting, Blount County, May 14, 1808.

[24]"Charles Osborne," *Ohio History Central: An Online Encyclopedia of Ohio History*; George K. Schweitzer, "Early Abolitionism in Tennessee," *Tennessee Ancestors*, (April 2007), 27; Biggers, *The United States of Appalachia, 99*.

[25]"Charles Osborne," *Ohio History Central: An Online Encyclopedia of Ohio History*; Schweitzer, "Early Abolitionism in Tennessee," *Tennessee Ancestors*, 27; Biggers, *The United States of Appalachia*, 99; Durwood Dunn, *An Abolitionist in the Appalachian South, Ezekiel Birdseye on Slavery, Abolition, and Separate Statehood in East Tennessee*, 1841-1846 (Knoxville, 1997), 5.

[26]Snodgrass, *The Underground Railroad, An Encyclopedia*, Vol. 2, p. 392.

[27]Hagedorn, *Beyond the River*, 42, 68, 82, 252; Mary Ellen Snodgrass, *The Underground Railroad, An Encyclopedia of People, Places and Operations*, Vol. 1 of 2 vols. (Armonk, NY, 2007), 329-30.

[28]J. E. Alexander, *A Brief History of the Synod of Tennessee from 1817 to 1887*, (Philadelphia, 1890), 112-116; Biggers, *The United States of Appalachia*, 84; Snodgrass, *The Underground Railroad, An Encyclopedia*, Vol. 2, p. 382.

[29]Alexander, *A Brief History of the Synod of Tennessee from 1817 to 1887*, pp. 87-90.

[30]George M. Apperson, "African Americans on the Frontier, John Gloucester and his Contemporaries," *Tennessee Historical Quarterly*, LIX, No. 1 (Spring 2000), 3.

[31]Ibid., 12.

[32]Ibid.

[33]*The Emancipator (Complete) Published by Elihu Embree*, 11.

[34]Snodgrass, *The Underground Railroad, An Encyclopedia*, Vol. 2, p. 588.

[35]Ibid., 392.

[36]W. Freeman Galpin, ed., "Letters of an East Tennessee Abolitionist," *East Tennessee Historical Society's Publications*, No. 3 (1931), 135.

[37]*Dunn, An Abolitionist in the Appalachian South*, 48, 141.

[38]Ibid., 140.

[39]Ibid., 48-49.

[40]bid., 56-57.

[41]Ibid., 57-59.

[42]Alexander, *A Brief History of the Synod of Tennessee from 1817 to 1867*, pp. 90-91.

[43]Griffler, *Front Line of Freedom*, 73.

[1]John Abernathy Smith, *Cross and Flame*: *Two Centuries of United Methodism in Middle Tennessee* (Nashville, 1984), 112.

[2]Hagedorn, *Beyond the River*, 98.

[3]Snodgrass, *The Underground Railroad, An Encyclopedia,* Vol. 1, 133.

[4]Nashville *Republican*, August 11, 1835; Cincinnati *Gazette* in *The Liberator*, September 26, 1835.

[5]The following eleven paragraphs are based primarily on the account of his Nashville visit written after he had returned to Cincinnati in the latter part of July 1835. The article first appeared in the Cincinnati *Gazette* August 25 and was copied in *The Liberator* of September 26, 1835.

[6]In addition to Dr. Shelby, the members of the Committee of Vigilance and Safety were: John Nichol, George Crockett, John Vaulx, Thomas Crutcher, James P. Clark, John P. Erwin, H. R. W. Hill, H. L. Douglass, Robert Woods, Thomas Claiborne, Thomas H. Fletcher, Allen A. Hall, James Irwin, Robert Farquharson, Alpha Kingsley, John Somerville, A. A. Caseday, Samuel Seay, Mason Vannoy, Samuel Watkins, John Austin, Beverly W. White, James A. Porter, Robert W. Greene, John M. Hill, Robert I. Moore, Thomas Wells, John M. Bass, Edward D. Hicks, James Young, George Wilson, Andrew Hynes, Wm. Armstrong, James Nichol, W. Hasell Hunt, Floyd Hurt, Thomas Callender, Anthony W. Johnston, James Woods, Edward Trabue, George Brown, J. B. Knowles, Greenwood Payne, S. V. D. Stout, John Estell, J. C. Robinson, Thomas J. Read, George S. Yerger, Joel M. Smith, Wm. M. Berryhill, Joseph Miller, Theo. P. Minor, Nicholas Hobson, Elihu S. Hall, Samuel M. Barner, Foster G. Crutcher, Washington Barrow, F. P. Wood, Joseph Smith, H. R. Cartmell, and W. H. Moore. *National Banner and* Nashville *Whig*, August 26, 1835.

[7]Nashville *Republican*, August 11, 1835.

[8]Ibid., August 22, 1835.

[9]Philip M. Hamer, *Tennessee A History*, *1673-1932*,Vol. I, (New York, 1933), 466.

[10]*Public Acts Passed at the First Session of the Twenty-First General Assembly of the State of Tennessee*, *1835-36*, Chapter XLIV (Nashville, 1836), 145-46.

[11]Merton L. Dillon, *Benjamin Lundy and the Struggle for Negro Freedom*, (Urbana, IL, 1966), 180.

[12]Ibid., 191, 198.

[13]*Western Methodist*, Nashville, May 8, 1836; *The Liberator*, May 23, 1835; Dillon, *Benjamin Lundy*, 206.

[14]Nashville *Union*, August 5, 1835.

[15]Ibid., August 21, 1835.

[16]Ibid.

[17]August 10, 1835.

[18]Randolph *Recorder*, August 5, 1836.

[19]Bobby Lovett, *The African American History of Nashville, Tennessee, 1780-1930* (Fayetteville, AR, 1999), 34-35.

[20]Ibid., 35.

[21]Charles A. Sherrill and Tomye Sherrill, *Tennessee Convicts, Early Records of the State Penitentiary, 1831-1850*, Vol. I (Mt. Juliet, TN, 1997), 296; *Tennessee State Prison Records, 1831-1850*, Record Group 25, Reel 12, Vol. 43, Tennessee State Library and Archives, Nashville; Nashville *Whig*, April 28, 1849.

[22]Mooney, *Slavery in Tennessee*, 60-61; Nashville *Daily Gazette*, April 13, 1849.

[23]Reward notice reprinted from the Clarksville *Chronicle* in the Louisville *Journal* of March 18, 1848.

[24]Louisville *Courier*, May 11, 1858.

[25]Robert E. Corlew, *A History of Dickson County, From the Earliest Times to the Present* (Nashville, 1956), 77.

[26]Durham, *Old Sumner*, 287.

[27]Corlew, *A History of Dickson County*, 77-78.

[28]Charles E. Orser, Jr., and David W. Babson, *Families and Cabins: Archaeological and Historical Investigation at Wessyngton Plantation, Robertson County, Tennessee* (Normal, IL, 1994), 36.

[29]*Message of His Excellency Isham G. Harris to the General Assembly of Tennessee, in Extra Session*, January 7, 1861 (Nashville: 1861), 8.

[1]David W. Blight, ed., *Passages to Freedom, The Underground Railroad in History and Memory* (Washington, DC, 2004), 243.

[2]*Public Acts Passed at the First Session of the Twentieth General Assembly of the State of Tennessee, 1833* (Nashville, 1833), 2, 75.

[3]Loren Schweninger, ed., *From Tennessee Slave to Entrepreneur in St. Louis, the Autobiography of James Thomas* (Columbia, MO, 1984), 113-14.

[4]Louis Hughes, *Thirty Years a Slave: From Bondage to Freedom* (Milwaukee, 1897), 105; Benjamin Drew, *The Refugee: A North-Side View of Slavery* (Reading, MA, 1969), 130.

[5]John W. Blassingame, ed., *Slave Testimony: Two Centuries of Letters, Speeches, Interviews, and Autobiographies* (Baton Rouge, 1977), 237.

[6]Greene County Records, Deed Book #2, p. 475, Cox Archives, Greeneville.

[7]Jo Blair Hudson, *Fugitive Slaves and the Underground Railroad in the Kentucky Borderland* (Jefferson, NC, 2002), 99.

[8]Hendrick, eds., *Fleeing For Freedom*, 82.

[9]Ibid., 98, 101, 103.

[10]E. Raymond Evans, *Chattanooga: Tennessee's Gateway to the Underground Railroad* (Chattanooga, 2005), 38-40; *The Lamplighter*, Greene County Heritage Trust, Vol. XL, No. 2 (May 2006), 2.

[11]J. Leonard Raulston and James W. Livingood, *Sequatchie: A Story of the Southern Cumberlands* (Knoxville, 1974), 137-38.

[12]Daniel Ellis, *The Thrilling Adventures of Daniel Ellis, The Great Union Guide of East Tennessee for a Period of Nearly Four Years During the Great Southern Rebellion* (New York, 1867), 71.

[13]Gloria D. Rall, "The Stars of Freedom," *Sky and Telescope* (February 1995), 36-38; Gloria D. Rall, "Follow the Drinking Gourd," *The Planetarian*, Vol. 23 (1994), 8-12.

[14]Ibid.

[15]*The Rev. J. W. Loguen, as a Slave and a Freeman* (Reprint,

New York, 1968), 15.

[16]Ibid., 14, 15, 22, 39, 77-78.

[17]Ibid., 159, 218, 226, 260.

[18]This was probably the time when Jermaine added the *n* to make his name Loguen.

[19]*The Rev. J. W. Loguen*, 279-83.

[20]Ibid., 286-97.

[21]Ibid., 299, 501-503.

[22]Ibid., 304-305, 309, 335.

[23]Ibid., 316, 318, 323, 324.

[24]Ibid., 337-38.

[25]New York History net, http://www.nyhistory.com/central/loguen.htm.

[26]*The Rev. J. W. Loguen*, 338.

[27]Laura S. Haviland, *A Woman's Life Work: Labors and Experiences of Laura S. Haviland* (Cincinnati, 1882), in Snodgrass, *The Underground Railroad, An Encyclopedia*, Vol. 1, p. 245. This account does not give the location of the East Tennessee depot or the name of the stationmaster.

[28]Haviland, ibid.

[29]New Orleans *Bee*, June 16, 1825, in Ulrich B. Phillips, *Plantation and Frontier Documents*, *1649-1863*, *Documenting History of American Industrial Society*, Vol. II (Cleveland, OH, 1909), 80.

[30]Louisville *Courier*, April 2, 1858.

[31]Ibid.

[32]Jeannie Regan-Dinius, "Two More Indiana Listings on the National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom, Seymour Train Station, Jackson County," *Preserving Indiana*, (Spring and Summer, 2007) 10.

[33]Ibid.

[34]Ibid.

[35]Ibid.

[36]Hendrick, eds., *Fleeing for Freedom*, 60-61.

[37]Ibid., 61.

[38]Ibid.

[39]Snodgrass, *The Underground Railroad, An Encyclopedia*, Vol. 1, p. 34.

[40]Ibid., 297.

[1]Nashville *Whig*, May 26, 1813.

[2]Ibid., July 2, 9, 16, 1816.

[3]Ibid.

[4]John Hope Franklin and Loren Schweninger, *Runaway Slaves, Rebels on the Plantation* (New York, 1999), 158.

[5]Blassingame, ed., *Slave Testimony*, 230-31.

[6]Ibid., 231-34.

[7]Ibid., 236.

[8]Ibid., 237.

[9]Hendrick, eds., *Fleeing for Freedom*, 68-71; Snodgrass, *The Underground Railroad, An Encyclopedia*, Vol. 2, p. 642.

[10]Hendrick, eds., *Fleeing for Freedom*, 69-70.

[11]Ibid., 71-72.

[12]West, ed., *The Tennessee Encyclopedia of History and Culture*, 850-51.

[13]Schweninger, ed., *From Tennessee Slave to Entrepreneur*, 2; West, ed., *Tennessee Encyclopedia of History and Culture*, 134.

[14]Schweninger, ed., *From Tennessee Slave to Entrepreneur*, 2, 3, 8.

[15]Ibid., 8.

[16]Ibid., 9.

[17]Ibid., 9, 10, 14, 15, 19.

[18]Snodgrass, *The Underground Railroad, An Encyclopedia*, Vol. 1, p. 244.

[19]William A. Breyfogle, *Make Free, the Story of the Underground Railroad* (Philadelphia, 1958), 132-33.

[20]Ibid., 134-35.

[21]Ibid.

[22]Ibid., 135.

[23]"Route of Jacob Cummings," *Indiana Underground Railroad*,

Vol. 1, William H. Siebert Papers, Ohio Historical Society, Box 79, p. 241; Snodgrass, *The Underground Railroad, An Encyclopedia*, Vol. 2, p. 642.

[24]"Route of Jacob Cummings," 241.

[25]Snodgrass, *The Underground Railroad, An Encyclopedia*, Vol. 1, 292.

[26]Willard B. Gatewood, Jr., ed., *Slave and Freeman, the Autobiography of George L. Knox* (Lexington, KY, 1979), 4, 8, 9.

[27]Ibid., 9, 10.

[28]Ibid., 12, 13, 131, 133.

[29]In 1997, the U.S. Department of the Interior declared his riverfront house in Ripley a National Historic Landmark. *National Historic Landmarks Survey, List of National Historic Landmarks by State* (Washington, National Park Service, 2007), 77.

[30]Sprague, ed., *His Promised Land*, 8-9, 127.

[31]Ibid., 68.

[32]Ibid., 70.

[33]Ibid., 9, 10.

[34]Daniel Ellis, *The Thrilling Adventures of Daniel Ellis*, 71, 75, 248-49.

[35]Ibid., 75, 163, 172.

[36]Ibid., 208, 234, 241, 251-53.

[37]Ibid., 376, 420.

[38]Ibid., 92, 98, 123, 125, 218, 226, 277, 367.

[39]W. B. Hesseltine, "The Underground Railroad from Confederate Prisons to East Tennessee," *East Tennessee Historical Society Publications*, Vol. 2, (1930), 55, 56, 69.

[40]J. S. Hurlburt, *History of the Rebellion in Bradley County, East Tennessee* (Indianapolis, 1866), 213-16.

[41]Oliver P. Temple, *Notable Men of Tennessee from 1833 to 1875, Their Lives and Their Contemporaries* (New York, 1912), 195-96.

[42]Evans, *Chattanooga: Tennessee's Gateway to the Underground Railroad*, 40.

[43]George Henry, undated typescript essay about Friendsville, formerly Newberry Meeting, 4 pp. including bibliography, n.p.

[44]Helen Bullard and Joseph Marshall Krechniak, *Cumberland County's First Hundred Years* (Crossville, 1956), 55.

[45]Ibid.

[1]Dean Stone, *Snapshots of Blount County History*, Vol. II, and *History of the Daily Times* (Maryville, TN, 2006), n.p. In 1863 *Cudjo's Cave*, an antislavery novel of the Civil War period by John T. Trowbridge, was published. Set in an imagined rural village in East Tennessee, the story was designed to restore waning enthusiasm for a war the author believed was being fought for the emancipation of slaves. *Cudjo's Cave* was republished by the University of Alabama Press in 2001.

[2]George Henry typescript, n.p.

[3]Hurlburt, *History of the Rebellion in Bradley County,* 261-62.

[4]He is not clear about when he visited the "Union dungeons," but it must have been before and/or during the war as his book was published in 1866. Hurlburt, *History of the Rebellion in Bradley County*, 261-62.

[5]George Henry interview with author, November 4, 2007.

[6]Joe E. Spence, ed., George R. Kiley, photographer, ed., *Landmarks of Loudon County: Its History Through Architecture* (Gloucester Point, VA, 1997), 30-31.

[7]George Henry Interview with author, November 4, 2007.

[8]Fred Brown, "Woman Doctor Served During War," *The Civil War Courier*, (June, 2006), 6; Bob Hurley, "This Doctor was a Lady," Greeneville *Sun Week-Ender*, April 8, 1972, 1 *et seq.*

[9]Copy of petition in General Nathanael Greene Museum, Greeneville. See also, Legislative Petitions, 1834, Record Group 60, Tennessee State Library and Archives, Nashville.

[10]Author's interview with Randi Nott, Sherry Britton, and Dr. Robert Orr, May 16, 2008.

[11]Mary Miller Ayers, undated typescript furnished by K. Erickson Herrin, May 31, 2007.

[12]Douglas Brinkley, "Memphis Manor gave Escaping Slaves Refuge," *USA Today*, May 4, 2001.

[13]Franklin and Schweninger, *Runaway Slaves, Rebels on the Plantation*, 181.

[14]Susan Hawkins, "The African American Experience at Forts Henry, Heiman, and Donelson, 1862-1867," *Tennessee Historical*

Quarterly, LXI (Winter 2002), 229.

[15]Ibid., 229.

[16]Ibid.

[17]Larry G. Eggleston, *Women in the Civil War, Extraordinary Stories of Soldiers, Spies, Nurses, Doctors, Crusaders, and Others* (Jefferson, NC, 2002), 167.

[1]*Population of the United States in 1860*; *Compiled from the Original Returns of the Eighth Census Under the Direction of the Secretary of the Interior* (Washington, 1864), 467.

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