

The President's Column

By Ada Woodson Adams

GRAND OPENING - GRAND OPENING - GRAND OPENING

A BIG SUCCESS!

We did it! After 13 years and a tremendous amount of work and dedication to our mission and goals, the Multicultural Genealogical Center is open for business!

We give thanks to Gracie Mayle Hill who had the original idea of a place others like herself who had been researching families and histories could come and share or research.

What a Grand Opening! Multicultural Genealogical Center (MGC) on May 1, 2013.

We estimate that over 200 people came and shared a moment in history that won't soon be forgotten.

When I was in elementary school, we celebrated "May Day." I never got chosen as one of the children to participate in the May Pole Dance in all of those six years of the May Pole Wrap. But this day, at the Multicultural Genealogical Center Grand Opening, I made up for all those days. The smiles of joy, pride and satisfaction of a mission well done was a delight to see upon the faces of the MGC Board, the members, the volunteers, the donors, and community. They all played a key role in bringing this day to fruition.

The weather even cooperated with a balmy, but slightly



windy day. It seemed like everything was in alignment in honor of those who had dreamed and worked to achieve a research library and museum. Dr. Richmond of McConnelsville came with video camera to record the event. Others came with cameras to take back pieces of history.

We had media coverage from the Morgan County Her-



In memory of the Board Directors who had this vision of a Research Center



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THE FIRST FUGITIVE SLAVE ACT CASE IN ZANESVILLE

By Michel S. Perdreau and Nancy E. Aiken

(Note: Michel S. Perdreau has donated his extensive collection of research on African Americans in Southeast Ohio to the Multicultural Genealogical Center. This article comes from the file titled "Jackson Slave Case - Reuben Johnson, Zanesville, Ohio 1859" which consists of photocopies of newspaper stories about the case.)

The United States Constitution gave slave owners the right to capture and re-enslave those freedom seekers who had fled their so-called owners. In 1850 the Fugitive Slave Act required U.S. marshals to search for and attempt to bring freedom seekers back to slavery. Marshals who refused could be fined \$1,000. Federal commissioners made the decisions regarding freedom or enslavement for African Americans brought to them by the marshals. If the commissioner ruled against the slaveholder, the marshal earned only five dollars. If the commissioner ruled in favor of the slaveholder, the marshal earned ten dollars. Abolitionists strongly asserted that this portion of the Fugitive Slave Act encouraged bribery.

From 1850 to 1860 federal commissioners decided the fates of 343 blacks, and 332 of them were sent to slavery. Thousands of blacks, some of whom had never been enslaved, fled to Canada. Abolitionists challenged the Fugitive Slave Act in court, but the United States Supreme Court upheld its constitutionality in 1859. Ohio abolitionists urged their fellow citizens to work against enforcement of the law. In a few instances Ohioans physically impeded enforcement. One

example was the Oberlin-Wellington Rescue Case in 1858. A marshal had captured a runaway and was taking him back to the South when Oberlin and Wellington residents helped the freedom seeker to escape from the marshal. Although 37 people were indicted for violating the Fugitive Slave Law, only two were convicted and served any jail time. This example illustrates the tension in Ohio about slavery and the animosity among some against the Fugitive Slave Act.

Another incident occurred in Zanesville in 1859. The case was reported in several newspapers and, as will be seen, sentiment was on the side of the fugitive. Here is the report from the Morgan County Herald for May 12, 1859, p. 2:

"Fugitive Slave Case in Zanesville"

"The State of Ohio seems to be of late the hunting ground on which men, under the influence of the transforming power possessed by the Fugitive Slave Act, display their affinity to that species of the canine race known as blood hounds. Zanesville has lately been the scene of such an exhibition, and has witnessed the delectable sight of human beings hunting down human beings as hounds pursue the objects of their prey. Jackson is the name of the Negro who created such a hub-bub; his owner, a resident of Clarksburg, Va., was also named Jackson, whether the father of the slave we know not. The following is a condensed statement of the affair:

"The fugitive, Jackson, had lived for the past three years in Belmont County, and

was claimed by James Jackson of Clarksburg, Va. A few days since a Mr. Honeycutt called upon J.C. McSimpson, a colored resident of Zanesville, and told him that Jackson was father of an illegitimate child by a white girl, whose relatives had driven her away but were still anxious to wipe out the shame if possible, and would give Jackson \$500 if he would marry her and go to Canada.

"Accompanied by Honeycutt, McSimpson was confronted with a white woman and child who corroborated this story and McS. was finally prevailed upon to go to Barnesville to bring Jackson to Zanesville to marry the girl, but heard that he was already in the latter place. He afterwards joined Honeycutt and found Jackson, who was induced to believe that all was right, and consented to the marriage. Honeycutt then took him to the house where the white girl was, and there the United States officers, lying in wait, arrested him as a fugitive. He was hurried before the U.S. Commissioner, who heard the case with locked doors, and the prisoner was then placed in jail. A writ of *habeas corpus* was issued by Judge Marsh. The Negro was brought before him, and declared to be illegally held in arrest.

"He was discharged; 'whereupon he was re-arrested by Marshal Cox and his posse - Mr. C calling on all present to aid him. He was manacled and taken out of the back door of the court house and placed in a hack standing in readiness on 4th Street, and conveyed to the

depot for the purpose, we presume, of carrying him to Wheeling on the train then nearly due.

"Arrived at the depot, a rescue was attempted by a crowd of colored men, but it proved unsuccessful. During the melee, clubs, bricks, pistols, etc., were used indiscriminately, and serious damage was done to a good many heads, white as well as black.

"In the meantime a writ was issued and served on the Marshal commanding him to bring the prisoner into court and show cause why he held him, &c.

"The Negro was again taken before Judge Marsh, and after argument by counsel *pro* and *con*, Messrs. Hazlitt and Ball, appearing for, and Blockson and Gaston against the slave, the Judge delivered his opinion, which was substantially this:

"The Court had no doubt of the unconstitutionality of the law in that respect, but inasmuch as it had received the sanction of the Supreme Court of the United States and of various Circuit Courts, it was not the province of this Court to put its own interpretation of law in opposition to such decisions. The only remaining question in the case relied upon by counsel was as to the regularity of the certificate granted to the claimant. It was claimed that the certificate did not set forth the substantial facts of the labor or service due from the alleged fugitive to the claimant and of his escape from Virginia to Ohio. This question was determined by an inspection of the return to the writ and the copy of the certificate

(Continued on page 3)

THE FIRST FUGITIVE SLAVE ACT CASE IN ZANESVILLE (continued from page 2)

attached to such return and made a part thereof. The Court said that unless such certificate complied not only with the spirit but with the strict letter of the law it was his duty to discharge from custody. Under this rule of interpretation he held that the certificate was strictly within the letter of the law, and he accordingly remanded the fugitive into the custody of the Marshal.

"The victim of oppression was therefore sent back to the land of clanking chains.

"The man, through whose instrumentality the Negro was decoyed to Zanesville, Mordecai P. Hunnicutt, was formerly a resident of this county, and had he received his just dues for crimes committed he would not now be engaged in such nefarious business, but would be doing more honorable work in the capacity of a convict in the Ohio Penitentiary. Since he left this county, he has been a "Border Ruffian" in the Kansas troubles and one of the piratical band under Walker in his thieving descent on Nicaragua.* His training is therefore of such a kind as to render him a suitable person to become a deputy U.S. Marshal under the Administration of Buchanan, and had creation been searched, a fitter tool for such debasing service could not have been found. The part he played and his vicious character fully comport."

This incident was first reported May 3, 1859, in the *Ohio State Journal*. William Jackson, the fugitive slave, was arrested in Zanesville the night of May 2nd, and the situation was on-going at the time of the report. The *Zanesville City Times* (May 7, 1859, p. 3)

carried this: "A Fugitive Slave Case in Zanesville - Our city was thrown into a ferment of excitement in the early part of the week by the arrest of a colored man alleged to be a fugitive slave owned by Mr. James Jackson of Clarksburg, VA., who escaped some three years ago and has most of the time since been a resident of Belmont County, O. where it was generally known that he was a fugitive. The particulars of this arrest are thus minutely detailed in the *Courier*:" The particulars printed on May 7 were much the same as those already recounted above except names were named. The men with E.T. Cox, Deputy Marshal were Joseph T. Stanley, Joseph Johnson and Isaac Campbell, and the U.S. Commissioner was Esq. Jones Cochran. Nearly the whole of "the colored population of the city and its surroundings "made a "bold attempt" to rescue Jackson at the depot. They were led by "an athletic Negro named Johnson." The *Ohio State Journal* for May 7th quotes the *Courier* article: "In reverting to the case, the first inquiry which presents itself is - Why was the fugitive decoyed to this city by so disreputable and criminal a device? Why was public feeling here outraged and our city, of all others, selected as the field for a turbulent and bloody collision between excited and sympathizing blacks and over-officious and needlessly valiant supernumeraries? Why were our wives and children made to bear the indignity of seeing a human being rushed through our streets in chains by blustering bailiffs, arrested for no

other crime than seeking his personal liberty?...."

The *Tri-Weekly Journal* of Columbus, Ohio, published this in its May 12, 1859, edition: "More Rescue Trials" (The trials resulting from the Oberlin-Wellington Rescue attempt were on-going in Cleveland at the time.) "The southern district of Ohio is to be edified by another rescue trial in the United States Court. Reuben Johnson, a colored man, has been arrested for an attempt to rescue the fugitive slave Jackson at Zanesville." . . . "It is hardly to be expected that a colored man will have a profound respect for a law that enslaves him . . . The Negro certainly has the same right to rebel against negro slavery that a white man has against white slavery. If risking life to rescue a brother is a crime in one case, it is in the other."

The *Zanesville City News* for May 14 carried this article: "Reuben Johnson, the colored man who led off in the mob that last week attempted the rescue of the fugitive slave Jackson from the custody of the U.S. Marshal, and who at the time came near paying the forfeit of his life for his temerity, was the occasion of another sensation on Tuesday of this week. Reuben, on the day of the attempted rescue, was arrested and placed in 'dungeon vile' within the county's stone building and, after remaining there several days, was released (no process having been issued to occasion his detention) and, by his friends, hurried off on the underground railroad for the asylum for the shackled people of his color, Canada. Reuben relented after having made a part of his contemplated journey and returned, preferring the free soil of Ohio . . . On Monday it was discovered that he was lurking about Putnam, and the Mar-

shal and his aide were soon upon the scent of him. Tuesday he was routed from his ambush and pursued in the cellar of Mr. Charles Potwin where he had taken refuge with an axe that he had picked up . . . the exhibition of divers shooting irons soon brought Reuben to submission however . . . and he was brought to the office of Commissioner Cochran of this city for preliminary examination and remanded for trial at the U.S. Court in Cincinnati . . ."

According to the June 18th, 1859, edition of a Zanesville paper Deacon Ezekiel T. Cox, the U.S. Marshal who arrested the fugitive slave Jackson and returned him to his owner, was "unchurched" by the congregation of the Market Street Baptist Church for his actions because his role in the fugitive slave case was "wholly unwarranted by the word of God, and by so doing had grieved his brethren in the Church and brought dishonor upon the cause of Christ . . ." The July 9th edition of the *Zanesville City Times* noted that Reuben Johnson was tried before the U.S. Circuit Court at Cincinnati, and the jury found him guilty but recommended him to the mercy of the Court. The judge fined him \$5.00 and gave him thirty days in the county jail. The August 13th edition of the *City Times* carried an article about the Christian Anti-Slavery Convention at which it was noted that Peck, the Oberlin rescuer received 80 days in the Cleveland jail.

*[Violence racked Kansas in the 1850s as pro- and anti-slavery forces fought over whether Kansas would come into the union as a free or a slave state. Kansas's neighbor, Missouri, was a slave state and many pro-slavers, called "Border Ruffians," came from Missouri into Kansas so they could vote for slavery for the new state. William Walker (1824-1860) was an American adventurer and pro-slaver who managed to gain control of Nicaragua in 1856-57 as its president. He tried to control most of Central America but was executed by firing squad in 1860 in Honduras.]

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

Continued from page 1

THANK YOU

From Michael Jackson

ald. The new editor of the Herald, Mark Faulhaber, did a fantastic job reporting the event. Thanks to Dr. Richmond collecting extra newspapers, we can offer a copy of the paper with the news article of our Grand opening to anyone who wishes one. If, you would like a copy, send \$1.50 (to cover postage) to MGC, and we will send you one. We are working on putting together a CD of the presentations at the event and will inform you when it is ready for purchase.

In other news, the research center will have the Perdreau Collection. The Perdreau Collection contains the research work of Cornelia (Connie) Whitener-Perdreau & Michel S. Perdreau. Their collection began in the 70's and covers Black experiences, history, genealogy and contributions of the people and places associated with Southeastern Ohio. Almost every Black family that lived in Athens County is mentioned in their research. We are in the process of recording and digitizing this body of work.

We also have a large collection from John Ogden that will be accessible to the public. His research covers a wide documentation of the Black experiences throughout American history. Additionally, we have many books, newspaper articles, pamphlets and miscellaneous items available for researchers.

The Alvin and Ada Woodson Adams collection of books and research is also being added to the MGC Research Center. This collection includes family's histories and death, birth, marriage and census records. Thanks to people like Glenn Barnett, William Bill Burroughs, Henry Burke, Irita

Canady, Polly Flowers, Voneta Kay Harris, Russell Tippet, Richard Walker, and so many others who have given their time and research to MGC, our collection is expanding. We thank all who have donated. Ray and Janice McGreehan are sharing their research of the families of the Hocking Valley that included the Betts, Harper, Letts, Normans, Richards, Warricks, Woodsons, Workmans, and many other families. They will present a program on their research in June of 2014. You will also find an extensive amount of data on the melungeon people, quaker histories and the underground railroad. We are entering all of this material into a database that will help our visitors find what they are looking for more quickly.



Chairwoman, Emilie Wood will not be the only one who will miss Ed Hitchcock

Recently, we had to say, "See you later!" to Ed Hitchcock, one of MGC's faithful volunteers. Ed spent many hours/days working with the landscape committee, and he took painstaking effort to repair, scrape and paint the iron fencing around the Center. Ed has moved, but we

did not say "goodbye" because we will see Ed again, and he is always in our thoughts as we get to see the results of his work every day, and it is a reminder of how much of Ed is part of MGC.

There are so many people to name who helped get us here and there are many others who could not be with us to see this journey continue, but without their help, we could not and would not have been able to offer this place of research.

We are ever thankful and mindful of the blessings we have received through the hard work and dedication of those who believe anything is possible. The Multicultural Genealogical Center exists because there is a need and there was a desire to have an organization that will add pride and recognition to many unsung voices.

QUERIES

We can add your queries to our newsletter. If you are interested in communicating with other MGC members, please send your contact information to MGC. If you have a query to be posted in the *Newsletter*, please tell us you want it posted.

To the Leaders of the MGC:

Those of 'us, the over 100 who attended the MGC Open House on June 1, 2013, say "Thank You" for a wonderful day and a 'job well done'. It was a day that could have ended so differently had not someone spoken 'Peace be still' when the winds began to blow and the drops of rain were felt. But, even He looked out for us, and, suddenly, a beautiful day appeared and the rest is history; another part of 'our' history.

Because of your vision, patience, commitment, and labor of love, each of us witnessed what 'should be', 'could be', and 'can be'; and now is, a lasting legacy for all who believed: an example of what can be accomplished if people will work together for a common purpose.

Not only did you plan for a tour of the house, but the Mayor was there, speakers on various topics were enjoyed, and the Celia and Charlie Lewis Band entertained us; not excluding the wonderful food under the tent.

Why all the time and effort? To preserve 'our' rich history for future generations; for those who were there on that day and time. And it is on behalf of 'them', with no reservations, I say, THANK YOU!

Michael Jackson



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Multicultural Genealogical Center
P.O. Box 125 - Chesterhill Ohio 43728

MGC's first president, Stephen Smith talked about a Newsletter to the Membership, he also talked about how we need to grow MGC. He stated that the easiest way to grow is to ask everyone who is a member to rejoin and also get at least one other person to join too.

MEMBERSHIP FORM 2014
(Please Print Clearly)

Date: _____

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____ E-Mail _____

Place an "X" before the appropriate category): Renewal _____ New

_____	Annual Student membership	\$6.00
_____	Annual Regular Individual membership	\$15.00
_____	Annual Senior membership--age 50 and over	\$10.00
_____	Organization or Sponsor membership	\$100.00
_____	Lifetime membership.....	\$200.00
_____	Organization Lifetime Membership	\$500.00

I am interested in supporting the MGC by:

_____	Serving as a Board member
_____	Serving as a Webpage designer
_____	Keeping the webpage up to date
_____	Presenting a monthly membership program
_____	Volunteering to work in the Center doing clerical and data entry
_____	Donating copies of family tree/family history data, family pictures, videos, etc.
_____	Working on a committee to compile data from primary public sources
_____	Sharing my experiences gathering family history
_____	Conducting short training session(s) on how to gather family history
_____	Conducting workshops on organizational make-up and/or policy
_____	Participating in Underground Railroad programs as a guide or speaker

"The Old House" Building Fund Donation \$ _____

General Donation \$ _____

MGC is a 501 (3) (C)---Not-for-profit organization and any donation is tax deductible

For more information, please contact:

Ada Woodson Adams, President:
740 448-1305
adams1803@gmail.com

Virginia Norris, Secretary
740-551-9035
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Return application to: **The Multicultural Genealogical Center, P.O. Box 125, Chesterhill, Ohio 43728**

Membership Meetings are held at the Center on the first Saturday of each month at 1 PM. No meetings in January, July and September. The Center is located in Chesterhill, Morgan County, Ohio. The Center is on the corner of where routes 377 and 555 intersect. There is parking with handicap accessibility in the back of the Center.

BOOKS PUBLISHED BY MGC

Heritage Cookbook, Vol. 1

\$15.00



A collection of recipes that are reflective of heritage, culture and just plain goodness. Many cooking tips are collected in this publication. 8 1/2 x 11 coated soft cover, spiral bound. 110 pgs.

Heritage Cookbook, Vol. 2

\$15.00



Cookbook recipes were submitted by MGC members and friends as old family recipes, sometimes with family stories about the dish, and other historical recipes, with tips and historical treats. 8 1/2 x 11 coated soft cover, spiral bound. 110 pgs.

As Long as Hearts Remember; Tributes to Our Late Loved Ones

\$25.00



Edited by Alvin C. Adams, the original poems, stories, photographs, and obituaries which serve as tributes to deceased family members form not only lasting memorials but important historical testaments to the contributions made by families of the area. 8 1/2 x 11 soft bound, perfect binding. 175 pgs.

Hold Tight to the Hames

\$25.00



Stories about growing up black in rural southern Ohio by Alvin C. Adams who grew up to be the first black graduate of Ohio University's School of Journalism, covered the Civil Rights protests in the south, interviewed Dr. Martin Luther King and Malcolm X, helped found the Multicultural Genealogical Center, and had a dormitory named after him at Ohio University. 6 1/2 x 9 soft bound, perfect binding. 164 pgs. With pictures.

A Significant Presence: A Pictorial Glimpse of the Black Experience in Athens County, Ohio

\$25.00



Compiled and written by Ada Woodson Adams and Nancy E. Aiken, this is the story told with many photographs of a glimpse of the accomplishments of blacks in Athens County, Ohio as Ohio University students, professionals, laborers, businessmen and women, activists, athletes, and pioneers. A number of these accomplishments had impact on a national and, even an international scene. 8 1/2 x 11 coated soft cover, saddle stitched. 60 pgs. Hundreds of photographs.

The Sandusky-Muskingum Indian Trail in Southeastern Ohio 1786-1807



A historical collection of information by Richard Walker, Ph.D. Maps and photographs add to the tracing of this ancient historical trail used by the first Native Americans and many of this country's pioneers. 8 1/2 x 11 spiral bound, coated soft cover. Approximately 140 pages.

Please send check or money order to: MGC, PO Box 125 • Chesterhill, OH 43728

Please add \$5.00 per book for shipping and handling

JOHN B. ASBURY, CIVIL WAR SOLDIER

BY NANCY E. AIKEN AND ADA WOODSON ADAMS

The Multicultural Genealogical Center in Chesterhill is devoted to finding the stories of unsung people of the area who have accomplished interesting and, even, extraordinary things. Since 2011-2015 is the 150th anniversary of the Civil War, MGC, in recognition of this anniversary, is researching men from Morgan, Muskingum, Washington, and Athens Counties who volunteered for the United States Colored Troops (U.S.C.T.). The plan is to publish their stories in one or more books. African American men were not welcome to join the Union Army until 1863, but they dropped their plows, barber's clippers, and horse's reins and volunteered as soon as the call came. Many of them had been born in the south, and some of them had been born into slavery, but they took the chance of going to battle in the south when, if captured, it meant almost certain death. Denied the chance to move up through the ranks as officers, they fought valiantly under the command of white officers. Not all of the men were young, and many left families at home. Training was very limited and pay was generally owed from the date they volunteered to the date they were mustered out.

This is the story of John B. Asbury, who was born in the south, but who also lived in Athens, Washington, and Morgan Counties during his lifetime.

John B. Asbury served as a private in Co. G of the 5th Regiment, U.S.C.T. He joined August 17, 1864, and was mustered out or discharged 22 Aug 1865. He was 38 years old when he enlisted,

which made him a bit of an old man for going to war. He was described as dark with black hair and black eyes and 5 feet 9 inches tall. Asbury was born in Ohio County, Virginia (now West Virginia), and his occupation was that of farmer. Even though training was generally brief, the men in the U.S.C.T. went right to the front. The front in Asbury's case proved to be General Grant's Siege of Richmond, Virginia, the Confederate capitol of the South.

September 29, 1864, Grant attempted to break the stalemate around Richmond and Petersburg, Virginia, by attacking Confederate General Robert E. Lee's defenses around the cities. Grant chose Major General Benjamin Butler's Army of the James to make the attacks. Butler scouted the Confederate fortifications and found two weaknesses which caused him to send Major General Edward Ord to strike at Fort Harrison and Major General David Birney to attack New Market Heights. Under Birney were regiments of U.S.C.T. soldiers led by Brigadier General Charles J. Paine who were to spearhead the attack because, as Butler put it, he "wanted to convince" himself "whether the negro troops will fight, and whether I can take, with the negroes, a stronghold that had denied previous Union attack."

The geography of the battlefield was against the attacking troops. To reach the Confederate earthworks, the U.S.C.T. soldiers had to cross about 500 yards of a rising plain. Across this plain ran Four Mile Creek, creating a marshy but not impassible

swamp. Beyond the creek lay a deep, heavily wooded ravine that ran parallel to the New Market Road. Beyond the ravine another open plain of about 300 yards sloped northward toward the road and the Confederate breastworks. With no covering artillery barrage, the Battle of New Market Heights opened with the 4th U.S.C.T. leading and the 6th U.S.C.T. to the left rear. The Confederates held their fire as the Federals crossed the open field, stumbled through the wooded ravine and splashed through the marshes of Four Mile Creek. Then the barrage began.

With most of the officers dead or wounded, the sergeants of the 4th U.S.C.T. assumed leadership. Those men of the 4th U.S.C.T. who made it to the first line of the barricade of felled trees were blown apart in a matter of minutes. "Most of the attackers were killed outright, but some were briefly taken prisoner. Confederate accounts differ about what happened to the captured black soldiers. Some reports indicate that the captives and some of the wounded were quickly shot. Other accounts indicate that the black troopers were offered the choice of Libby Prison or becoming regimental servants."

Colonel John W. Ames of the 6th U.S.C.T. chose to launch a separate attack but fared no better than the previous onslaught. With the two regiments shot to pieces, Ames began a withdrawal. The entire action had taken about 40 minutes. With the sun barely up, the Confederate firestorm had effectively destroyed both U.S.C.T. regi-

ments.

"Unwilling to accept failure, Birney and Paine chose to repeat the unsuccessful tactics, this time using Draper's 1,300-man 2nd Brigade. At about 7 a.m., Draper's regiments, the 5th, 36th and 38th U.S.C.T., dutifully moved out. Draper aligned his regiments into a column, with the 5th leading, followed by the 36th and 38th. Instead of presenting a long line of targets as the 4th and 6th had done, Draper's front was only six companies wide and 10 ranks deep. It didn't make any difference, however. Draper's attackers marched into another devastating blast of musket and artillery fire from the Confederate position." Like the men of the 4th and 6th "before them, the brave black troopers hacked their way through the obstacles and struggled toward the earthworks." As had happened earlier in the morning, "Draper's sergeants took up the colors and rallied their men when their officers were killed or wounded."

"Draper's is the only official after-action report filed by any Union officer in the Official Records. Submitted on October 6 while he recuperated from his wounds, it describes the second assault developing much like the first one: 'After passing about 300 yards through young pines, always under fire, we emerged upon the open plain about 800 yards from the enemy's works . . . Within twenty or thirty yards of the rebel line, we found a swamp which broke the charge . . . Our men were falling by the scores. All the officers were

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JOHN B. ASBURY, CIVIL WAR SOLDIER

(CONTINUED)

striving constantly to get the men forward.' The efforts of the white officers and black noncoms yielded success. After withstanding withering fire for what Draper called "a half hour of terrible suspense," the Confederate fire seemed to slacken. Draper's men swept up the remnants of the 4th and 6th U.S.C.T., and the determined attackers surged forward into the Confederate positions."

"Butler's report to Secretary of War Edwin M. Stanton four days after the battle in part read: 'My colored troops under General Paine' were most gallant 'with most severe loss. Their praises are in the mouth of every officer in this army. Treated fairly and disciplined, they have fought most heroically.' Butler had his answer as to whether black men could fight." (The quoted and paraphrased material above is from "Battle of New Market heights: USCT Soldiers Proved Their Heroism," *America's Civil War Magazine* (historynet.com)).

Butler's Army of the James received 375 recruits just before the battle. (Since Asbury just enlisted in August, he must have been one of those recruits.) In the fighting September 29, 1864, the 5th Regiment lost 85 killed and 248 wounded (one of whom was John B. Asbury), and nine officers wounded out of 550 men on the field that day. Sergeants Beatty, Holland, Pinn, and Brunson were awarded medals both by Congress and by General Butler for gallantry in action (*The Military History of Ohio*, 1866). General Butler's medals were for soldiers who fought in his Army of the James.

Asbury was wounded in action in the right instep by grapeshot which was a cluster of small iron balls fired by a

cannon. He was out of action for three months first in DeCamp U.S.A. General Hospital at David's Island, New York Harbor. (The hospital was built in 1862 to treat Union soldiers at first, but later it also treated Confederate soldiers.) Later he was transferred as a "detached soldier" to Fort Wood, Bedloe's Island, New York Harbor. (Fort Wood dated from 1809/1811; it had been abandoned but was re-garrisoned in 1861. After the war it was placed in caretaker status. In 1884 the old granite fort in the shape of a 12 point star was selected to be the base for the Statue of Liberty just presented by France to the United States.)

By November Asbury had rejoined his regiment to participate in the campaign which resulted in the capture of Fort Fisher and Wilmington, N.C. He was mustered out at New Bern, N.C., and on his papers it was noted that he was free on or before April 19, 1861. Although he was discharged August 22, 1865, the last time he had been paid was April 30, 1865. He was due \$100 minus 60 cents for a lost scales and \$6.43 for a gun and screw driver that apparently were missing. His clothing account was not settled, but he had drawn \$73.13.

According to his pension papers, John B. Asbury was born in 1828 near West Liberty (13 miles from Wheeling, West Virginia). Hugh Kennedy reported to the pension board that he and Asbury had hauled timber together in the Cutler, Ohio, area where they both lived in 1856. John was married first to a woman who died in 1862 in Albany, Athens County, Ohio. He had a barber shop in Albany at that time. According to his pension papers, he lived in Albany 1857-58 and again in 1861-1862. His second marriage was to

Mrs. Clarissa Cook, who was a couple of years his senior, 14 Jan 1864, in Athens County. According to the pension papers, her first husband was Hugh Cook, whom she married in 1857, but he deserted her taking three of their four children with him. Hugh Cook died in the war. After John died, she lived in Barnesville, Ohio, and then Xenia, Ohio.

John Doudna, age 61 in 1894 (at the time Asbury's pension was being considered) testified before the pension board that he lived in Chesterhill, Ohio. He had been recruiting soldiers on behalf of Marion Township, Morgan County, during the Civil War. (Since he was a Quaker, going to war was forbidden but, apparently, he could recruit others to do so.) There had been a call for more troops, and Doudna was trying to fill a quota that had been given the township. He found Asbury near Cutler in Washington County. He took him before a Justice of the Peace and had him sworn in and, then, they went to Marietta where he was examined and mustered in by Levi Barber who was the Provost Marshal. Doudna reported that he was often present when they examined recruits. They took them into a long room where they had one physician and a secretary. The recruit was made to walk up and down and execute a number of maneuvers to determine his physical condition. Recruits were examined very carefully at that time because they were paying them such large bounties. There was a danger of men not in sound condition being accepted and getting the bounty but being discharged due to their condition soon after enlistment. Marion Township paid \$500

to each recruit accepted, but Doudna did not recall if Asbury was recruited under the \$500 bounty call. (\$500 would have meant a great deal to the family Asbury left behind.)

According to his pension papers, Asbury lived in McConnelsville 1859-1860. Thomas Simpson reported that Asbury lived near him on Big Run, Cutler Post Office from about 1867 to 1869. By 1877 he was living in Chesterhill, Morgan County. When the 1880 federal census was taken, he and his family were living in Marion Township, Morgan County, Ohio. John was following his trade as a barber. Clarissa was keeping house, and their children, Amelia, age 16, and Hester A., age 11, were living with them and attending school. Also living with them was Clarissa's mother, Susan Newman, age 80,. The family was still in Marion Township, Morgan County when the special census of surviving soldiers, sailors, marines and widows was taken in 1890. According to his pension papers, John died 17 Jul 1894 in Chesterhill, Morgan County, Ohio.

The Multicultural Genealogical Center is collecting the stories of African Americans who served in the Civil War. If you can offer a story or a name, please contact the center (740-554-3257) or Nancy Aiken (740-662-5701).

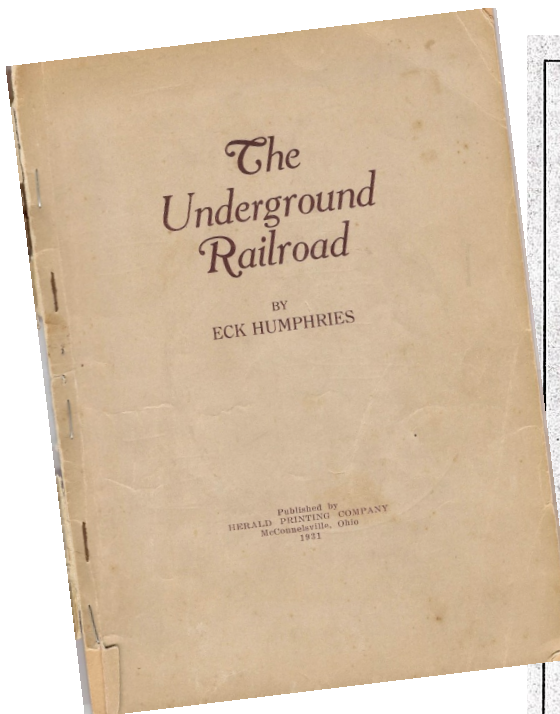
References

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McPherson, James M. (1994). *The Atlas of the Civil War*. New York: MacMillan.
Stevens, Larry (compiler) 127th Ohio Infantry, 5th U.S. Colored Troops, <<http://www.ohiocivilwar.com/cw127.html>>
Union Tries to Break Stalemate in Virginia, September 29, 1864. <<http://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/battle-of-new-market-heights-chaffins-farmfort-harrison>>

A GREAT GIFT TO MGC

Thanks to the Morgan County Historical Society of McConnelsville, Ohio

TIDBITS OF NEWS FROM THE PAST



Thanks to the Morgan County Historical Society of McConnelsville, Ohio, Eck Humphries' book, *The Underground Railroad*, written in 1931 is in our Research Center. Mr. Humphries talks about Rial Cheadle and other conductors of this time period and about Morgan County's participation in Underground Railroad activity. It is an excellent resource.

FOREWORD

The following chapters of the activities of the trainmen, Stationmen and others of the "Underground Railroad" appeared in the Weekly Herald, McConnelsville, Ohio, during the summer and fall of 1931. From the first, the difficulties of writing a story after all of the actors are long since dead, was apparent, and only through the help of many descendants of Underground officials and other friends, was this series made possible. In this connection, the writer desires to thank the following persons: William A. Hiatt, Okmulgee, Okla.; Nathan Burgess, Bartlett, Ohio; Carl Patterson, Chesterhill, Ohio; W. D. Cheadle, Utica, Ohio; Hettie Campbell Woodward, Chesterhill, Ohio; J. E. Campbell, Cleveland, Ohio; Samuel Smith, Malta, Ohio; Charles Martin, Malta, Ohio; Lizzie Cheadle Brooks, Stockport, Ohio; Belle Flanders Embree, McConnelsville, Ohio; Harold G. Simpson, Newspaper Librarian, Ohio Archaeological and Historical Society, Columbus, Ohio.

ECK HUMPHRIES,
McConnelsville, Ohio,
November 30, 1931

"The Fugitive Slave law would have disgraced hell in its palmyest days."
—Robert G. Ingersoll.

Those of you who have been collecting genealogical data over fifty years will understand that so much miscellaneous information is saved for "future" use. This column presents news articles as written and of interest long ago.

Barrett, Anthony, d. 18 May 1866 ae 85y. First Negro resident of Columbus, OH. Nurse during cholera prevalence. First Negro to enter New Legislative Hall of Old Capitol. (19 May 1866)

Fulton, Elizabeth, d. 22 Apr 1866, Athens Co. OH, ae 77y. Came to Athens Co 1801 with father Abraham Pugsley from Pa. Married first Rufus Neal, killed in War of 1812. (17 May 1866)

Keel, Asbury (colored), shot by David Boyden at Yankee Town Farm, Pitt Co. NC 10 Mar 1866. (31 May 1866)

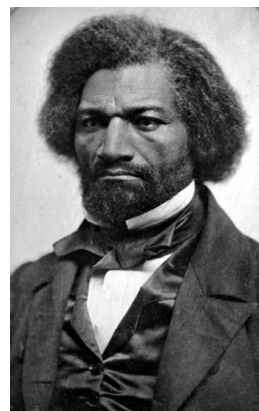
From:
Ohio State Journal Newspaper,
Columbus, Ohio

BROADSHEET

On March 14, 1864, a broadsheet appeared in Albany, Ohio. It was distributed to "The Friends of the Colored People," and was signed by several board members of the Albany Enterprise Academy as a way to gain support for the completion of their school, the Albany Enterprise Academy.

"The School will be owned and managed by colored persons; but this does not in our opinion make an argument against it. The day has gone by for the colored man to be used as a mere machine.

He must now reflect the light of his own intellectual and moral development, must either shine in the effulgence of his own wisdom, or sink to poverty and wretchedness by his own ignorance."



WHO ARE THE HEROES OF THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD? BY RON LUCE

First and Foremost: The Freedom Seekers themselves who took the greatest risks by daring to give their lives for freedom.

Families of the Freedom Seekers who let them go to a better life.

Cohorts within the Black community who helped even when they couldn't obtain their own freedom.

People (Black and White) who "looked the other way."

Abolitionists in the north and in the south—both Black and White.

Individuals and families who risked their lives by hosting Freedom Seekers.

Men, women, and children who cared about other human beings.

Quakers and other religious groups opposed to slavery.

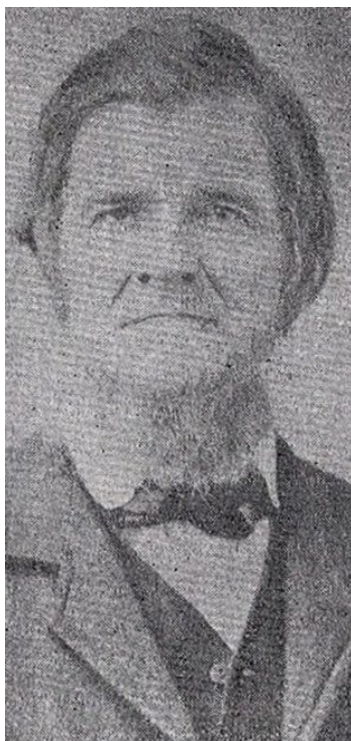
Blacks who risked their lives to return to the south to "bring out" their families, friends, and neighbors.

Black and White abolitionists and community members who armed to take Freedom Seekers from slave catchers and kidnappers.

Whites, "free" blacks, and people who "passed" as white who infiltrated the south to inform Freedom Seekers about how to escape.

Politicians (Black and White) who fought to change laws.

*Writers and other artists (Black and White) who kept the issue in the "public eye."
The Canadians.*



RIAL CHEADLE: ABOLITIONIST

- Born August 27, 1801.
- Married Mary Tafts in 1819, and removed to the site of Stockport and built first cabin in town.
- A son, Thomas D. Cheadle, was born 1820 and was proclaimed the "first white child" born in Stockport.
- Rial was a carpenter, maker of pewter buttons and a hunter.
- Became a teacher, teaching subscription schools in Windsor, Marion, Union and Homer townships.
- Underground work extended over 30 years.
- Died in McConnelsville in 1867

"About 1840 he married Mrs. Rebecca Sands, who resided west of Ringgold on the present Emery Urdike farm. Here for 20 years he pursued his Underground activities, his journeys being made in the intervals of school teaching and farming. It is believed that the Underground work of Rial Cheadle extended over 30 years and that while living in Windsor Township and before the death of his first wife, he was interested in the Emancipation movement." (Unknown source).

It is well known that he travelled into Virginia pretending to be an imbecile salesman. This was to keep the slave holders thinking he was "safe" around their "slaves." In reality, he was telling freedom seekers how to escape.

**Indulged in "harmless imbecility" in travels to Virginia!
Freedom Seekers disappeared!**



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