

“SLAVERY IS THE NEXT THING TO HELL. I HAVE SEEN HUNDREDS OF ESCAPED SLAVES. BUT I NEVER SAW ONE WHO WAS WILLING TO GO BACK AND BE A SLAVE.”

Harriet Tubman

Slavery In America

America's economy was built on slavery as the millions of Africans chained aboard slave ships arrived in the New World. Of those who survived this travel at sea, an estimated seven million landed in the North American colonies.



By the 1790s, the rising value of cotton had made a national trade in slaves profitable. In 1860, four million people—fifteen percent of the country's population—lived in slavery. Sold at auction with livestock, many had but one hope for freedom: escape by flight into Canada.

Slaves had always escaped, but by the 1830s, more organized escapes were aided by expanding free black communities, abolitionists in the northern United States, and prohibition of slavery in Canada and the Caribbean. This became a network of support called the Underground Railroad. Sustained by ideals of the Declaration of Independence that “all men are created equal” and from the Bible, “remembering those in bonds as bound with them,” people both black and white established safe houses and routes to freedom.



So compelling was Harriet Tubman's telling of experiences with slave catchers, reliance on prayer, use of songs as signals, and reaching safe houses that in the popular imagination, much of the Underground Railroad became associated with them and with her. Tubman never imagined that her name would tell the story of escape from slavery, of those who dedicated their lives to abolishing slavery, nor help exemplify freedoms of American life.



Leg irons bolted to ship hulls held slaves captive during months-long voyages. Captives and crew alike were sickened over vile living conditions and died.

ESCAPE ACROSS KANSAS

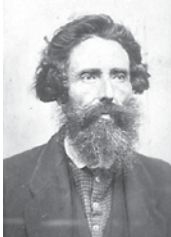
Following the Kansas Nebraska Act in 1854 and up to 1865, perhaps as many as 2,000 people escaped the bonds of slavery or the threat of return into slavery by a journey to freedom across Kansas. Northward across this land was a 250 mile trek. It could be twice this distance for those forced westerly in evasion of slave catchers.

At the Southern Boundary

Freedom seekers met with great obstacles in crossing the proslavery state of Missouri on their way to Kansas Territory. Bounty hunters paid to capture and return slaves fiercely patrolled passage into six present day southeast Kansas counties, where ten places tell of slave escapes.

The laws of the appointed, proslavery Territorial government called for death to anyone assisting slaves in flight. Free state settlers including John Brown risked this penalty. His dramatic “liberation” of slaves from a Missouri farm illustrates his abolition fervor. Brown and his men brought them on horseback at night to the McClure and Bondi cabins in Anderson County.

The woods around Fort Bain helped conceal escaping slaves until passage to Augustus Wattles' cabin in Linn County. The Montgomery cabin near Mound City is noted for having been a “hub” in routing those in flight.



James Montgomery

Kansas timeline

- 1541 Spanish exploration by Francisco de Coronado
- 1619 Slaves arrive in Virginia colony

National timeline

THE KANSAS NETWORK TO FREEDOM

Kansas historic sites, research facilities, and interpretive programs tell of enslaved African American escapes to freedom on the Kansas Underground Railroad. This subject is a primary theme of the recently authorized Freedom's Frontier National Heritage Area. Freedom's Frontier is being developed to tell about the significant role of Kansas and Missouri in our nation's decisions, struggles, and history leading into the Civil War.

Visit www.freedomfrontier.org

Major References

- United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service
 - Underground Railroad Official Handbook
 - Underground Railroad Resources Theme Study
 - The National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom Program
 - Exploring a Common Past: Researching and Interpreting the Underground Railroad
 - Underground Railroad Special Resource Study

Bound for Canaan: The Underground Railroad and the War for the Soul of America. Fergus M. Bordewich, 2005

- Territorial Kansas Heritage Alliance
 - Research and inventory of resources
 - See our website for additional details

Acknowledgements

- Judith Wellman PhD, Historical New York Research Associates
- National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom Program staff
- The Territorial Kansas Heritage Alliance partners and Underground Railroad committee, Martha Parker and Chris Meinhardt coordinating
- Territorial Kansas Heritage Alliance societies, museums, historic sites, and local governments
- Archival data and images courtesy of the Kansas State Historical Society
- The Lawrence Convention and Visitors Bureau
- Martha Parker and Eileen Robertson

Region-wide Travel Information

- Lawrence Visitor Information Center: 888-529-5267 – visittlawrence.com
- Fort Scott Visitor Information Center: 800-245-3678 – fortscott.com
- Ottawa Visitor Information Center: 785-242-1411 – visittottawakansas.com
- Kansas State Tourism: travelKS.com



This official logo of the federal Network to Freedom Program is increasingly associated with Underground Railroad history in the state of Kansas.

Brochure design: toComprehend, Jason Rincker, August 2007

The Free State Battleground

Escaping slaves began traveling across the Kansas Territory when the U.S. government opened this frontier for settlement. Their travel increased as free state settlers in towns near the Kansas River prevented federal officials and Missouri residents from establishing slavery in Kansas. New England Emigrant Aid Society agent Charles Robinson was elected governor under the Free State



Historic view of Constitution Hall–Topeka, as printed in the New York and London press, listed in the National Underground Network to Freedom Program.

Free-state Militia and Battery, Topeka, when settlers traveled in armed parties to protect themselves from proslavery marauders



“Topeka” constitution in 1856, which so enraged proslavery forces that he was promptly jailed. Appointed proslavery governors abandoned their seats as the two factions ignored each side's laws. Robinson, however, remained as Free State governor and became Kansas governor in 1861.

The presence of slave hunters and proslavery spies in free state towns required stealth by Underground Railroad conductors. Free State militias and

frontier churches guarded escape routes.

Proslavery arrests of conductors slowed travel and secrecy did not guarantee safety; escaping slave Napoleon Simpson was shot and killed while hiding inside Joseph Gardner's cabin. In Topeka, John Armstrong hid passengers in a large sugar barrel called a “hogs head.”



In the region's seven present day counties, over 80 places tell of the Underground Railroad. Some stations follow the ancient trails westward to the Beecher “Bible and Rifle” colony of Wabauunsee whose rifles, purchased with help from Henry Ward Beecher, came boxed as Bibles. William Mitchell and Enoch Platt escorted travelers northward by way of Nemaha. Among the many conductors around Lawrence and Topeka were Henry Hiatt, John Stewart, John Ritchie, and Danny Sheridan. Covert work carried out by many conductors, guards, and churches tied a solid roadbed for journeys continuing northward.



Gardner cabin, Douglas County

Joseph Gardner was among ten men who in 1859 set out to rescue fellow conductor John Doy, imprisoned in Missouri for attempting to free the slaves.

At his cabin on Washington Creek in Douglas County, the Gardner family was harboring two runaways. Slave catchers shot into the cabin, killing the slave Simpson. Dying on the cabin floor, Simpson cried out “Fight hard, fight hard.”

1803 U.S. acquires the land of the Louisiana Purchase

1808 Congress abolishes African slave importation

1820s Santa Fe and California (Oregon) trails open

1820 Missouri Compromise extends slavery boundary line, birth of Harriet Tubman

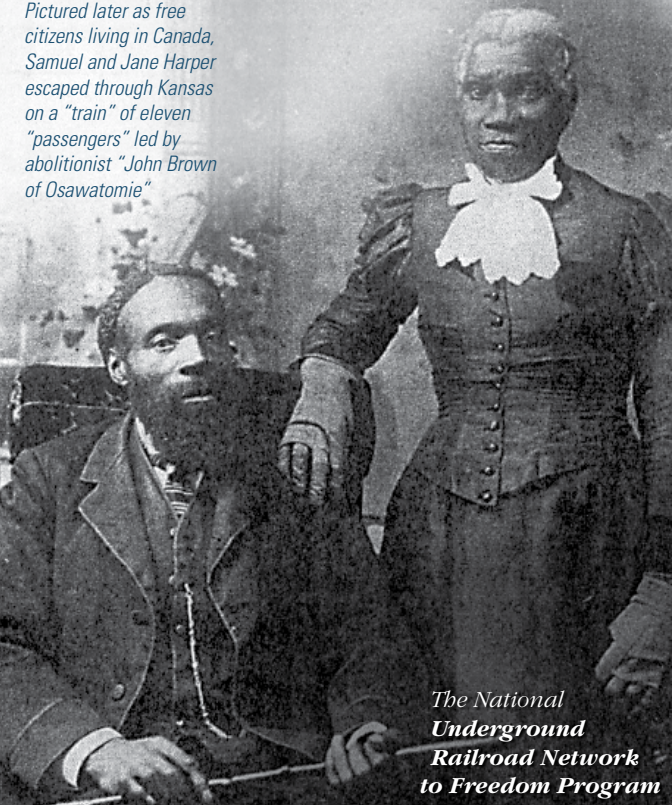
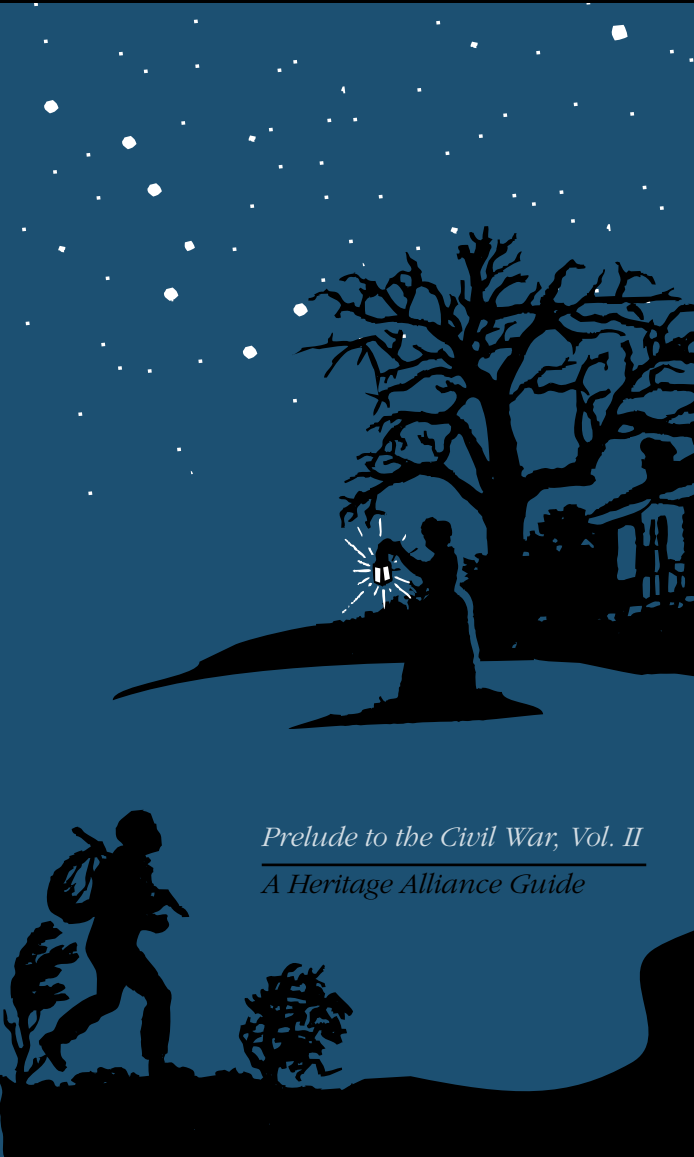
1830s The land is known as “Indian Territory”

1831 William Lloyd Garrison, Arthur and Lewis Tappan publish the Liberator

1842 U.S. exploration by John Fremont

1850 Uncle Tom's Cabin published

1850 Second fugitive slave act rewards slave bounty hunters



Pictured later as free citizens living in Canada, Samuel and Jane Harper escaped through Kansas on a “train” of eleven “passengers” led by abolitionist “John Brown of Osawatimie”

The National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom Program defines the Underground Railroad as “the resistance to enslavement through escape and flight until the end of the Civil War, and refers to enslaved African Americans gaining freedom by escaping from bondage...”

After the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850, the Underground Railroad became more organized. Antislavery settlers established the Kansas “branch.” Most of its passengers escaped from Missouri, where there were more than 84,000 people in bondage in 1856. They traveled past emerging Free State towns on the open prairie, heading onward to freedom in the North and Canada.

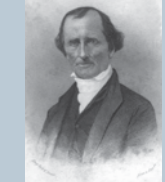
Inspired by the mission of the “Network to Freedom” program of the National Park Service, this guide is the first survey of the Kansas Underground Railroad.

Cover illustration: The North Star, “lady liberty,” and escape in the night are among the lore of the Underground Railroad. These symbolize heavenly guidance, nurture of freedom, and secret escape.

A famous John Brown hiding place, the Grover Barn is now inside the city of Lawrence and yet visible with later period additions.



Shawnee County conductors pose in their later years. Left to right: August Barnard, Jacob Willets, John Ritchie, John Armstrong, Charles Bodwell, Daniel Horne, Louis Bodwell, and Franklin Adams. Adams, an attorney and publisher, established the Kansas State Historical Society.



Henry Harvey, founder of the Harveyville settlement, his cabin a station on the way to the Beecher colonists at Wabauunsee

Kansas: Slavery or Freedom?

As the question of slavery threatened to divide the Union, the Compromise of 1850 allowed that California be admitted a free state, New Mexico residents to vote free state or pro slavery, and under the Fugitive Slave Law, federal officials would assist slave catchers. Nevertheless, debate over the ques escalated and the Kansas Territory, occupied by Native Americans, was soon embroiled in the national conflict.

Kansas was to have been forever free under the Missouri Compromise of 1820, but in 1854, the Kansas-Nebraska Act established “popular sovereignty.” This required residents of the territory to vote its land free or pro slavery. In the lingering hope that the North and South might again share federal power, Kansas would have had to become a proslavery state. This possibility was unacceptable to abolitionists because Kansas Territory was the only land then available to balance the slave power. An oft-said popular view was **As goes Kansas, so goes the nation!**

Kansas “settlers” from New England produced the antislavery Topeka Constitution in 1855 and federal officials appointed by President Pierce ratified the pro slavery Lecompton Constitution in 1857. Missourians rode onto the Kansas Territory to vote for this proslavery document, but abolition and antislavery settlers, now arriving from the Ohio Valley states, refused to



Abraham Lincoln, left, who was to set American slaves free, and Jefferson Davis, below left, who would become President of the Confederacy. Davis was U.S. Secretary of War at the time federal troops broke-up the July 4, 1856 session of the Topeka Legislature.



The Topeka constitutional convention met October 23 to November 11, 1855, in Constitution Hall–Topeka



northward.

Stations near the Nebraska border included camps and cabins at Old Powhattan and Albany. At the Missouri River town of Quindarro, antislavery lecturer Clarina Nichols hid escaping slaves down her dry well. Sam Smith escorted slave trains as far west as Manhattan.

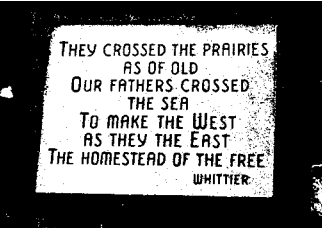
Near Hiawatha, James Kagi brought John Brown to Charles Smith's cabin. Brown said “Landlord, we are in need of something to eat ... there are some women who could help.” In two hours, 42 fugitives ate flour biscuits and a quarter of beef “pinched” by Smith, who was among the antislavery settlers cut-off from free trade.



The night after the “Battle of the Spurs” James Kagi returned with a tall lean man, and said: “Mr. Smith, make your acquaintance with General John Brown.”

participate. They called proslavery rule by non-resident Missourians the “bogus” government. In a six-year fight for control of the territory, using both guns and the ballot box, the western frontier was dubbed “Bleeding Kansas.”

In the midst of the strife, Free State emigrants laid “tracks” of the Underground Railroad in Kansas. As elsewhere around the nation, “conductors” led passengers northward by foot and wagon in the night. People escaping slavery used the paths of the Lane trail, a route named for James Lane and his frontier guardsmen. Lawrence residents could rightfully claim theirs was the “best-advertised antislavery town in the world.” John “Osawatimie” Brown led people escaping slavery out of this town in the south of the Territory to central free state settlements of the Wakarusa River. Conductors at Quindarro bypassed proslavery towns near the Missouri River and stations were established further west at Wabauunsee.



Poem by John Greenleaf Whittier, Wabauunsee Cemetery gatepost

Told below are some of the stories about escaping from slavery with aid by Kansas conductors. A list of presently known Underground Railroad historic sites, research facilities, and museums is on the reverse side. This guide is dedicated to those who escaped from bondage, aided by the settlers of Kansas.



The Reverend Mr. and Mrs. Charles Smith

Telling the Story

The 13th Amendment of the U.S. Constitution abolished slavery in 1865. In Kansas as elsewhere around the nation, the operations of the Underground Railroad were revealed. “The first Kansas railroad... was of the underground pattern...a fact not generally known until the road was liquidated over a lack of patronage,” wrote one resident of Wabauunsee County.

Stations and places of the National Underground Railroad in Kansas are listed on the back of this brochure. Many of these are silent landmarks of the courageous commitment to freedom. Others are represented in local museum exhibits and archival collections. More lies ahead in continuing discovery about the Kansas Territory and the state it has since become.



Great-great-great-great grandson Luke Lusk, age 3, visits abolitionist William Jesse's Lawrence gravesite

In an incident called the Battle of the Spurs, “John Brown...with twelve (escaping slaves) and with their property loaded into an odd-looking wagon drawn by the cattle taken from the slave's owner in Missouri, pushed forward in the dead of winter, relying on the mercy of God and on his own stout heart. On January 27, 1959, Brown reached Holton and occupied the cabin of Albert Fuller.”

Seeing slave hunters along Straight Creek, Brown's messenger rode back to Topeka and called for men to aid them. As the men's boot spurs sent horses bolting to the creek crossing, the slave hunters fled without a shot fired.

Events that led to the UGRR in the Nation and Kansas 3500 B.C. Slavery originates

Timescale of 5 years

1770 Mason–Dixon line becomes slavery boundary

1776 America declares independence from England

1775 Antislavery society forms in Philadelphia

1793 First fugitive slaveholder rights

1800 Congress abolishes African slave importation

1803 U.S. acquires the land of the Louisiana Purchase

1808 Congress abolishes African slave importation

1820s Santa Fe and California (Oregon) trails open

1820 Missouri Compromise extends slavery boundary line, birth of Harriet Tubman

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1831 William Lloyd Garrison, Arthur and Lewis Tappan publish the Liberator

1842 U.S. exploration by John Fremont

1850 Uncle Tom's Cabin published

1850 Second fugitive slave act rewards slave bounty hunters

1854 Kansas Territory opened for white settlement; New England emigrant aid societies sponsor antislavery settlers

1854 Kansas-Nebraska Act

1856 U.S. Senate defeats the Kansas Free State constitution

1857 U.S. court rules against Dred Scott: Blacks not citizens, slaves not free in free states, and Lecompton Constitution defeated

1859 John Brown raids Amory at Harpers Ferry, VA

1859 Wyandotte Constitution bans slavery

1861 Civil War begins

1862 Slavery prohibited in territories; military enlists blacks

1863 The Emancipation Proclamation ends Confederate slavery

1864 Kansas enters the Union as a Free State under the Wyandotte Constitution

1865 The Civil War ends and the Union abolishes slavery

1862 First black regiments fight for the Union

1863 Temporary Capitol built in Topeka, Lawrence attacked by Quantrill

1864 Kansas enters the Union as a Free State under the Wyandotte Constitution

1865 The Civil War ends and the Union abolishes slavery

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Timescale of 1 year

1854 Kansas Territory opened for white settlement; New England emigrant aid societies sponsor antislavery settlers

1854 Kansas-Nebraska Act

1856 U.S. Senate defeats the Kansas Free State constitution

1857 U.S. court rules against Dred Scott: Blacks not citizens, slaves not free in free states, and Lecompton Constitution defeated

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AN INVENTORY OF
KANSAS UNDERGROUND RAILROAD
SITES, FACILITIES, AND INTERPRETIVE PROGRAMS

Criteria of the National Park Service's National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom Program aided the preparation of this inventory. Continuing research is producing new material for interpretation.

The Underground Railroad still has something to teach: that every individual, no matter how humble, can make a difference in the world, and that the importance of one's life lies...in doing the right thing, even in silence or secrecy, and without reward.

Fergus M. Bordewich, author of *Bound for Canaan: The Underground Railroad and the War for the Soul of America*

Into the North

Atchison County, A1	
Pardee town site.....	D
Brown County, B1	
Albert Fuller House.....	D
Benj. Watkins House.....	D
Charles Smith House.....	D
Jonathan Scott House.....	D
Morgan Willet House.....	D
Old Powhattan town site.....	D
Seaman House.....	D
William Drake House.....	D
Doniphan County, A1	
Doniphan House.....	D
Old Doniphan town site.....	D
Jefferson County, B2	
Cletus Hosford House.....	D
Jackson County, C2	
Asa Reynard House.....	T
Leavenworth County, A2	
Bethel AME Church.....	D
Grind Brewery Tunnel.....	T
Richard Allen Cultural Center.....	M
Waverly House Hotel.....	D
W.D. Matthews Store.....	D
Nemaha County, C1	
Albany town site.....	D
John Graham House.....	D
William Slossen House.....	D
Riley County, E2	
Henry Strong House.....	D
Wyandotte County, A2	
Quindaro Ruins*.....	D

The Free State Battleground

Douglas County, B3	
Albert Stokes House.....	T
Amasa Soule House.....	D
Asa Dutton House.....	T
Clinton Cemetery.....	D
Clinton Lake Museum*.....	M
David Peabody House.....	D
Eastern House.....	T
Ed Smith House.....	D
Edwin Stokes House.....	T
Eliab Macy House.....	D
Erastus Heath House.....	D
Ezekiel Colman House.....	D
H. Thompson House.....	T
Henry Baldwin House.....	D
Hiatt House, Bloomington.....	D
Hiatt House, Twin Mound.....	D
Jacob Ulrich House.....	T
James Abbott House.....	D
Joel Grover Barn.....	D
John Archibald House.....	D
John Armstrong House.....	D
John Doy House*.....	D
John Doy House.....	D
Joseph Gardner House.....	D
Justus Heath House.....	T
Lawrence Bailey House.....	D
Oak Hill Cemetery.....	D
Richard Cordley House.....	D
Robert Miller House.....	T
Samuel Wood House.....	D
Second Congreg. Church.....	T
W.B. Kennedy House.....	D
Watkins Museum*.....	M
Wm. Lyon House.....	D
Wm. Monteith Houses.....	T
Johnson, A3	
Quaker Mission.....	D

The Southern Gate

Allen County, B6	
Aunt Polly's Cabin.....	T
Stack House.....	T
Thurston House.....	T
Anderson County, A5	
August Bondi House.....	D
Seyern House.....	D
Strong-McClure House.....	D
Bourbon County, A5	
Ft. Bayne.....	D
Linn County, B5	
Augustus Wattles House.....	D
Elwood Smith House.....	T
Ft. Montgomery Memorial.....	M
Ft. Montgomery.....	D
Linn County Museum.....	M

Key to listings

- D Source: Documentary
- T Source: Oral tradition
- M Education/Museum
- R Research facility
- * Registered by the Network to Freedom Program

Additional information may be available locally. Continuing study might result in revisions and new listings.

“THERE IS NO MONUMENT UNDER
HEAVEN ON WHICH I WOULD RATHER
HAVE MY NAME INSCRIBED THAN ON
THIS GOODLY STATE OF KANSAS.”

Henry Ward Beecher (1813-1887), American Congregationalist clergyman. A brother of Uncle Tom's Cabin author Harriet Beecher Stowe. He raised funds for the defense of Kansas; the rifles purchased were called "Beecher's Bibles."

The National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom Program

The National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom Act of 1998 directed the National Park Service to establish the Network to Freedom program, linking Underground Railroad sites, programs, and research facilities in communities across the country.

“Wherever slavery existed, there were efforts to escape, at first to maroon communities in rugged terrain away from settled areas, and later across state and international borders. While most began and completed their journeys unassisted, each subsequent decade in which slavery was legal in the United States saw an increase in active efforts to assist escape...Freedom seekers went in many directions to Canada, Mexico, Indian Territory, the West, Caribbean islands and Europe. Freedom seekers (usually called fugitives before the Civil War)...used wagons, horses, stagecoaches, and other means of the day. When these were unavailable, people traveled on foot.”

The Underground Railroad always began with the decision of enslaved African Americans to seek freedom. It began with the decision of Austin Steward to leave slavery in Bath, New York. It began when Jane Johnson took her sons and left her master forever, and it began with anonymous journeys northward to freedom, of which many were aided by Kansas Free State settlers.



Registered in the National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom Program, National Park Service:

- Clinton Lake Museum
- Constitution Hall-Topeka
- Douglas County UGAR
- Henry & Ann Harvey House
- John Doy House Ruins
- Quindaro Ruins
- Wabauunsee Cemetery
- Watkins Museum
- William Mitchell House

The Clinton Lake Museum in Clinton, Kansas, is a facility listed by the Network to Freedom Program



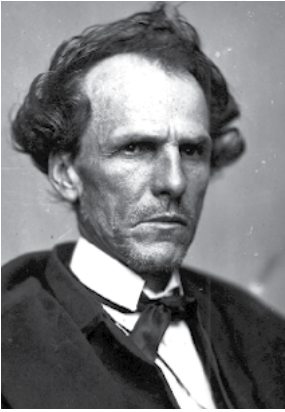
The Friends of the Network to Freedom Association is the premier national not-for-profit organization for education, preservation, and interpretation of the historic Underground Railroad. For membership and conference information, contact The Underground Railroad Research Institute at Georgetown College: www.ugri.org

INTO THE NORTH

William Connelly, historian and a long-time executive director of the Kansas State Historical Society, researched the Lane Trail in the early 20th century. His map charts the trail north of the Kansas River, through Nebraska, and into Iowa. Connelly titles his map:

“The Lane Trail through Kansas and Nebraska, Used as the Underground Railroad, Showing Also the Indian and Trader trails Used by the Pioneers as Public Highways.”

The “Indian and Trader trails” continued south of the Kansas River. Those escaping slavery used these routes to reach the Lane Trail. The Lane Trail was at first called the Freedom Road by Free State settlers, who used it to enter the territory during the blockade of western routes by proslavery forces.



James Lane, in 1855 elected president of the Topeka Constitutional Convention, organized efforts for those escaping slavery over the Lane Trail, earlier blazed by John Brown.

In this January 1858 letter, Samuel F. Tappan tells General Higginson:

“I am bappy to inform you that a certain Rail Road has been and is in full blast. Several persons have taken full advantage of it to visit their friends. Only one or two accidents have bappened. Our funds in these bard times have nearly run out, and we need some help, for the present is attended with considerable expense. If you know of any one desirous of helping the cause, just mention our case to him, and ask him to communicate with Walter Oakley at Topeka, James Blood and myself at Lawrence, or Sam C. Smith at Quindaro.”...Yours in baste, Samuel F. Tappan

THE FREE STATE BATTLEGROUND

Writing in 1870, Charles Leonhardt told of this 1860 journey:

“We crossed the old Santa Fe road several miles east of 110 Mile Creek...made Dragoon Creek Station on time. The depot-master here, friend Henry Harvey had spent a lifetime in the anti-slavery struggle.

The next day we started for Auburn Station, Dr. Sabin...kept the Depot there. At his cabin on a branch of the Wakarusa, we found a colored passenger (with) his free papers...but his last owner had a chattel mortgage given to the grantor, which remained unpaid...(We) also had the manservant Joe and woman cook Nancy who were claimed as chattels by a Major at Ft. Leavenworth. With these two slaves had also come an almost white girl...Kate, who had been sold at a most fabulous price.

...Before leaving Auburn Station it became necessary to lay in sufficient stores to last up to stations in Nemaha county...”

In the winter of 1857, “An underground railroad route was established through the settlement. The attic of the William Mitchell House, east of Wabauunsee, served as a hiding place for slaves. Mitchell took the slaves to Joshua Smith, who escorted them north to the state line. Enoch Platt was active in this movement.” Enoch's father, Jirard Platt, was one of the most active conductors in the state of Illinois.



William Mitchell, left, and a painting of his house near Wabauunsee

Julia Lovejoy, Kansas settler and a correspondent with several newspapers in New England:

“Last week a party of fugitives had fled from the land of bondage and stripes and reached Lawrence... They have lately found that the underground railroad reaches—; we must not tell how far, nor where the depots are located, for paid spies are on hand watching all our movements.”

