FREEDOM IN THE AIR

Indiana County's Underground Railroad in Black and White

Chris Catalfamo, PhD, and Veronica T. Watson, PhD,
Curators

THE UNIVERSITY MUSEUM • INDIANA UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA

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Special appreciation to our families for their patience this last year; Clarence, Marcella, and Grace Stephenson; and to the African American citizens of Indiana County whose images we wish we had, whose sacrifice we appreciate, and whose story we will work to recover.

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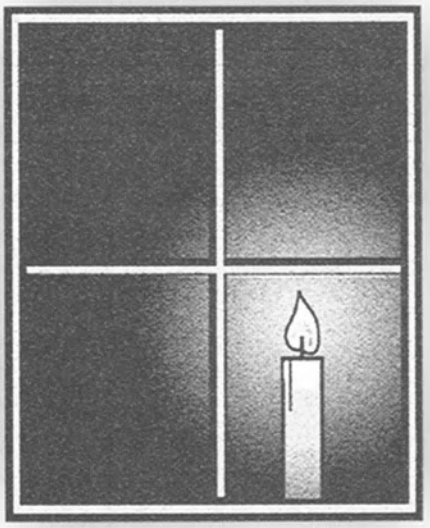

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The Indiana County Underground Railroad Project

In July 1998, President Bill Clinton signed the National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom Act. Noting that the Underground Railroad "bridged the divides of race, religion, sectional differences and nationalities" the act lauded "the extraordinary actions of ordinary men and women working in common purpose to free a people." The Network to Freedom Act proposed the establishment of "an enduring national commemorative Underground Railroad program of education, example, reflection and reconciliation."

Clarence D. Stephenson, Indiana County Historian, descendant of Underground Railroad conductors John and Alexander Sutor.
The Indiana Gazette

In response to this national call, the Indiana County Underground Railroad Project was organized. In the remarkable work of Indiana County Historian Clarence Stephenson, our permanent Honorary Chair (whose ancestors, the Sutors, were Underground Railroad conductors), the project has an excellent research base. Stephenson's *The Anti-Slavery Issue in Indiana County*, his multi-volume *Indiana County: 175th Anniversary History*, and his many articles and pamphlets provide substantial and significant information on African Americans, the slavery issue, and anti-slavery activities in Indiana County. In addition, Sonya Stewart's *African American Migration Patterns in Indiana County*, a 1996 IUP Masters thesis, adds valuable census data and African American family histories; and the Indiana Area School District has a Keystone Integrated Curriculum on the Underground Railroad which could act as a model for other school districts.

The Indiana County Underground Railroad Project will continue to add to this remarkable local and national research base. Tentative projects include historical markers, further research into the lives of fugitives who traveled through Indiana County, a history of Indiana County African Americans before the Civil War, a collective biography of anti-slavery activists and a number of public programs. We will also assist the Historical and Genealogical Society of Indiana County in whatever ways we can to present the story of Indiana County people before and during the Civil War.

—Chris Catalfamo, PhD
Veronica T. Watson, PhD

Following the Tracks: Myth and Reality in Underground Railroad Tradition

[The Underground Railroad] may properly be called legendary*—as one historian has done—but the word in this case should not be confused with* mythical *as some have done; rather it was legendary in the sense of extraordinary, reflecting the nearly incredible.*

—Historian Herbert Aptheker

The historical tradition of the Underground Railroad is a complex blend of legend, myth and fact. The mystery and romance of this covert freedom movement often leads to speculation that every newly discovered niche or cranny in a pre-Civil War dwelling might be somehow connected with Underground Railroad activity. National attention in the past decade has made these speculations even more common. Sorting out fact from fantasy is a fundamental task of Underground Railroad research. Even by the 1850s, the exaggerated perception of widespread Underground Railroad activity was a factor in convincing Southern slaveholders that they could not protect their slave property. Ultimately this would be one of the causes of Southern secession. And when the Union won the Civil War and the enslaved were free, being an abolitionist had an elevated social status that it had not previously enjoyed.

Thus the challenge of recovering Underground Railroad history requires historians and researchers to work together and to apply careful and critical analysis to old and new sources to produce a realistic picture. Since it is extremely difficult to document actual places associated with Underground Railroad activities except circumstantially, unsupported claims have to be seriously scrutinized. The Network to Freedom Association, the Federal Government's national Underground Railroad umbrella group has provided rigorous guidelines for research identifying various levels of acceptable documentation to establish the validity of historical research.

Still, historians must honor family and community tradition as a starting point for further study and be sensitive to community identity. Oral tradition is often the first step toward more serious documentation. With proper corroboration, old stories can take on new meaning. And with persistent investigation, old legends can become documented realities. In addition, historical memory often has to do with the way a community perceives itself and therefore must be treated with respect.

The fact is that Indiana County has a serious anti-slavery past, a freedom story well established in historical fact and backed by valid sources. Anti-slavery activists were a minority, for sure, and there were those who opposed them. But it does not take a majority to change history, only a small brotherhood and sisterhood of dedicated justice-seekers. This is their story.

In *Freedom in the Air: Indiana County's Underground Railroad in Black and White*, we have presented a collection of resources on anti-slavery activities and African Americans in Indiana County. Our sources include newspaper articles, memoirs, court, legal and archival records, church histories, census returns, map studies and published memoirs, as well as a variety of secondary sources. When we have included oral tradition, it has been corroborated by other sources or is presented as a "tradition." The duty of the project is to continually apply critical analysis and rigorous methodology to the sources. Clarence D. Stephenson's careful scholarship has set a strong precedent that we will continue to follow as this important project advances.

—Chris Catalfamo, PhD
Veronica T. Watson, PhD

FREEDOM IN THE AIR:

Indiana County's Underground Railroad in Black and White

The Fugitive Experience

Historians have estimated that from 30,000 to 100,000 Americans fled chattel slavery in the 90 years from the American Revolution to the Civil War. The vast majority of successful runaways were young men between the ages of 18 and 35. A considerable percentage came from the Upper South making the Pennsylvania border an important objective.

Most runaways headed north, to Free States or Canada. By the 1840s in Canada West, large, thriving communities of ex-slaves welcomed newcomers, ensured their safety and worked to acquire homesteads for them.

The hazards of the fugitive experience were many. Deciding to run was an exceptionally painful emotional decision since for most it involved abandoning family and community to embrace the great unknown. Once on the road, the two greatest threats were White men and hunger. Southern nightly patrols were on the lookout for runaways and other suspicious activity because the collective White Southern nightmare was slave insurrection. Federal fugitive slave laws in 1793 and the more stringent 1850 act made slavecatching a lucrative business backed by police authority and generous bounties. Dealers would buy the right to runaways from ex-masters, assemble local posses, capture fugitives often with brutality, and make a profit re-selling them. As a result most fugitives were taking a terrible chance trusting any White person, and either proceeded on their own or were aided by other African Americans, slave and free. Some, however, heard through the grapevine about people bound together in secrecy, moral fervor, and determination to help them along the freedom trail. Friends of friends, with secret codes and secret roads. Black and White working together in what came to be called the Underground Railroad.

Friends of Humanity

[In Indiana County] it was a matter of public knowledge...that fanatics, 'friends of humanity,' were banded together under professions of conscience and philanthropy, and vows of propagandism to disregard the

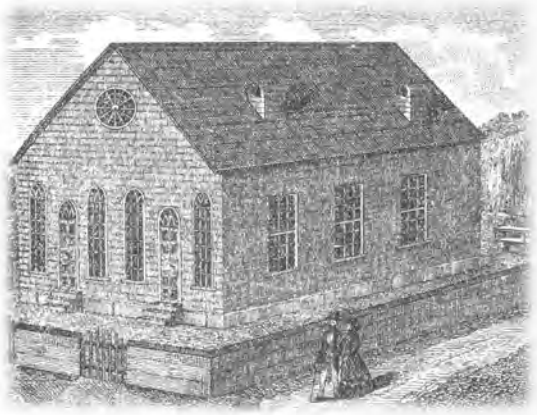
constitution and laws of the country...A regularly organized association existed there to entice negroes from their owners, and to aid them in escaping... —Van Meter v. Mitchell Trial Record

Indiana County's participation in the Underground Railroad is one of its most abiding and fascinating historical traditions. Popular legends of secret hideaways and tunnels where terrified fugitive slaves had frantic close calls abound. Indeed, Underground Railroad stories often revolve around the County's many pre-Civil War dwellings. Although some documentary sites do indeed exist, the Underground Railroad drama is much more complex than legendary houses and tunnels. The name itself is a catch-all term for any and all secret activity to aid fugitive slaves.

In Indiana County the Underground Railroad was a loosely organized network of men, women and children who were willing to actively resist authority, disregard the law, and suffer the consequences in order to assist fugitive slaves. Because slavery and the rights of slaveholders were protected by the Constitution, and local authorities were expected to uphold the law with police action if necessary, Underground Railroad activities were acts of civil disobedience.

The Holiest of Causes

Most people who aided runaway slaves were motivated by simple decency and/or religious conviction. The fundamental New Testament commands to love one's neighbor, feed the hungry, and aid the oppressed mattered most to the ordinary folks who offered a dipper of water or a place to rest. But organized religion, too, debated the slavery issue. Some of Indiana County's earliest congregations were Associate Presbyterians. Fired with the traditional Scottish/Irish love of liberty born of their own religious oppression, the "Seceders" had serious reservations about collusion with the sin of slavery. In Indiana, their first Associate Presbyterian pastor, Reverend Dr. David Blair, was an ardent abolitionist. But all five Seceder churches in the area provided and nourished the core of Indiana County's anti-slavery leaders. By the 1850s, church members who found even the Seceders too lenient on the slavery issue organized a more radical Free Presbyterian Church.



Old Associate Presbyterian Church, 1827. Its pastor, Rev. Dr. David Blair, was an abolitionist; many Underground Railroad conductors were members.

Beers Atlas of Indiana County, 1871, from a sketch by R.C. Taylor

In 1844, the first African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church was organized in Indiana and Blairsville. Reverend Nelson Williams was the first pastor. James Robinson, Abraham Johnson, and John Clark were the first trustees. Nationally, Zion was known as the "Freedom Church" because it welcomed the fugitive and supported the newly free. Indeed, among its membership were numerous abolitionist leaders, including Frederick Douglass, Sojourner Truth, and Araminta (Harriet) Ross

Tubman. One of Zion's most important bishops, Singleton T. Jones, was first called to preach in the Blairsville AME Zion Church.

Also in the 1840s, Methodists and Baptists split over the slavery issue and Lutherans and Wesleyan Methodists opposed slavery. In the late 1850s, the Plumville Baptist Church, with its abolitionist pastor, Rev. William Bingham, organized Indiana County citizens to go to Kansas to make it a free state.

Who were the Abolitionists?

White Northerners who opposed slavery did so for a variety of reasons. Most coupled their opposition with a rejection of the possibility that African Americans could ever live side by side with whites in any kind of harmony. One popular solution, proposed by the American Colonization Society, was to relocate African Americans to Africa or Latin America. Northerners also opposed slavery because of what they perceived to be the disproportionate political and economic power of the Southern "slavocracy." White men of the North did not want to have to compete with slaveholders or their slaves for land, markets, or livelihoods in the expanding western territories. In the broader sense, many Northern industrialists perceived the Southern slave-based economy as a reactionary obstacle to progress, which they identified with the advance of free-market capitalism based upon free labor and individual rights.

Abolitionist symbol

Among the small minority who actively opposed slavery, abolitionists were considered radical for two major reasons. First, they believed in the *immediate* emancipation of the slaves. This would break the tenuous social contract with Southern slaveholders on which the Union stood. Economically it would mean the expropriation of billions of dollars in slave property. Slave industries accounted for half the United States GNP in 1860, and slaveholding interests dominated domestic and foreign policy as well as political and legal institutions. Abolitionists were willing to challenge this power structure using a variety of methods. Even so, many of them believed that the ex-slaves would stay in the South and work for wages upon emancipation, and thus be no threat to the Southern or the United States economy.

What further distinguished abolitionists from others who opposed slavery was their egalitarian credo. According to historian Paul Goodman, whose *Of One Blood: Abolitionism and the Origins of Racial Equality* (1999) was published posthumously, abolitionists' religious fervor and belief in a God of righteousness led them to challenge the pervasive racial prejudice of the day. As one Rhode Island anti-slavery society affirmed in the 1830s: "We believe and would do all

in our power to convince others, that 'God hath made of one *blood* all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth.'" It became very clear very quickly that this would be an extremely arduous task and that they must begin with their personal relationships. But most never doubted that God was on their side.

One of abolitionism's ubiquitous visual symbols was a disc with an enslaved man (or woman) in chains, kneeling, hands folded in supplication, with the words "Am I not a Man and a Brother?" In anti-slavery societies, and working together, Black and White abolitionists began carrying out their dedication to the obliteration of racism in their relationships to each other. This cooperation in the cause of the enslaved, their challenge to racial prejudice, and the methods they used have prompted some historians to call the Abolitionist Movement and the Underground Railroad the first Civil Rights Movement.

Anti-slavery, Abolitionists and the Underground Railroad in Indiana County

Not all people who participated in Underground Railroad activities in Indiana County were committed abolitionists. The leadership, however, was grounded in abolitionist principles and anti-slavery societies were organized in the mid 1830s in Indiana, Blairsville, and Center Township.

Indiana County had two abolitionist newspapers in the 1840s and 50s, the *Clarion of Freedom* and *The Independent*, both founded and edited by James Moorhead. The *Clarion* also helped to organize the Liberty Party after 1840 and the short-lived Free Democratic (anti-slavery) Party in the early 1850s.

Besides Moorhead, other prominent abolitionist leaders included Dr. Robert Mitchell of Indiana and John Graff of Blairsville. These men were also Underground Railroad managers. But there were at least 40 others who conducted for the Railroad and organized anti-slavery activities in the County. More often than not, multiple family members were involved: the men as conductors, the women in the "Subsistence Department," and the children as watchguards, guides, and messengers.

African Americans were the Anti-Slavery Movement's most dedicated and unified power base. The 1840 census shows only 155 African Americans in Indiana County's population of 20,782. But when slavecatchers came to town, they often inquired where "the colored community" lived since it was well known that fugitive slaves could always find refuge there.

Alexander Thompson Moorhead, Jr., grandson of Indiana's anti-slavery leader and *Clarion of Freedom* editor James Moorhead. A.T., Jr. greeted fugitive Charles Brown and later wrote his memoirs.

Moorhead: Stephenson, *Indiana County 175th Anniversary History*, vol. 4

Clarion of Freedom: Historical and Genealogical Society of Indiana County

Abolitionists may have been a small minority in Indiana County, but many were prominent, respected community and church leaders. Dr. Mitchell claimed in 1840 that there were only 50 professed abolitionists in Indiana County. But five years later, the events surrounding the arrival of three fugitive slaves galvanized anti-slavery sentiment all over the county and turned apathy into activism.

Dr. Robert Mitchell, whose portrait was painted by his daughter Jennie. Mitchell was an abolitionist leader convicted of violating the Fugitive Slave Law of 1793.

Historical and Genealogical Society of Indiana County

The Sweets of Liberty

Anthony Hollingsworth was only 12 years old when he and his two companions, Charles Brown (19) and Garrett (Jared) Harris (late 20s), limped the last few steps to the outskirts of Indiana, Pennsylvania on a morning late in April 1845. Exhausted and famished, the three young men collapsed in the overgrown brush and brambles of the old neglected Lutheran cemetery. There, amidst the graves of Indiana County Revolutionary War patriots and pioneers, in what today is Memorial Park, they planned their next move.

The three fugitives didn't know whom to trust, but they had some names. Finally, after waiting hidden for most of the day, hunger drove them to action. Charlie Brown, the boldest of the three, would go for food and to make the connection, even though it was not yet "candle-lighting time." Beyond the cemetery the three could see a structure and could probably hear the joking banter of the young Academy students sitting on the front steps. Charlie Brown rose to his full height, took a deep breath of Indiana County's "free blue mountain air," and headed toward the school and the main street beyond.

The two young men and the boy on the verge of manhood, by slavery's standards, were committing an act of daring resistance. By boldly taking their freedom in a country in which the law forcibly upheld property rights in people, they were stealing themselves. In the broader sense they were helping to subvert the system of rigid social control that was necessary to sustain human bondage in pre-Civil War America. Intent on their own individual liberty and survival, they and other fugitive slaves, as well as those who gave them aid, were helping to insure that slavery itself would die. In freeing themselves, these young Americans of African descent were helping to free America.

Charlie Brown's Story

Charles Brown was a favored house servant of the Garrett Van Meter family of Hardy County, Virginia and Mrs. Van Meter's carriage driver. The Van Meter daughters started teaching Charlie to read and write until they were warned by a family friend that this was illegal. Although the Van Meters were kind to Charlie, if the crops were short,

Van Meter was willing to sell even his best servants. Because this upset his wife, he would wait until she was not at home.

One day in 1844, Charlie and Mrs.Van Meter were returning from marketing when they were met in the road by a slave dealer and two young servants cuffed in the wagon. When the two boys saw the mistress, they began crying out for her to save them. There was nothing Mrs.Van Meter could do; they had been sold a week before. When the young people's pitiful cries grew louder the slave trader turned and struck them with his whip, saying, "If you don't keep quiet, I'll give you something to howl for." Mrs.Van Meter was inconsolable and when Charlie attempted to comfort her, she said, "Poor boy! You may be the next."

From that moment, Charlie began to plan his escape. For one year he gathered information and late at night practiced his reading with every piece of print he could smuggle from the Van Meter house. So zealous was he that his mother grew fearful that he would be discovered and "sold to the Indigo plantations."

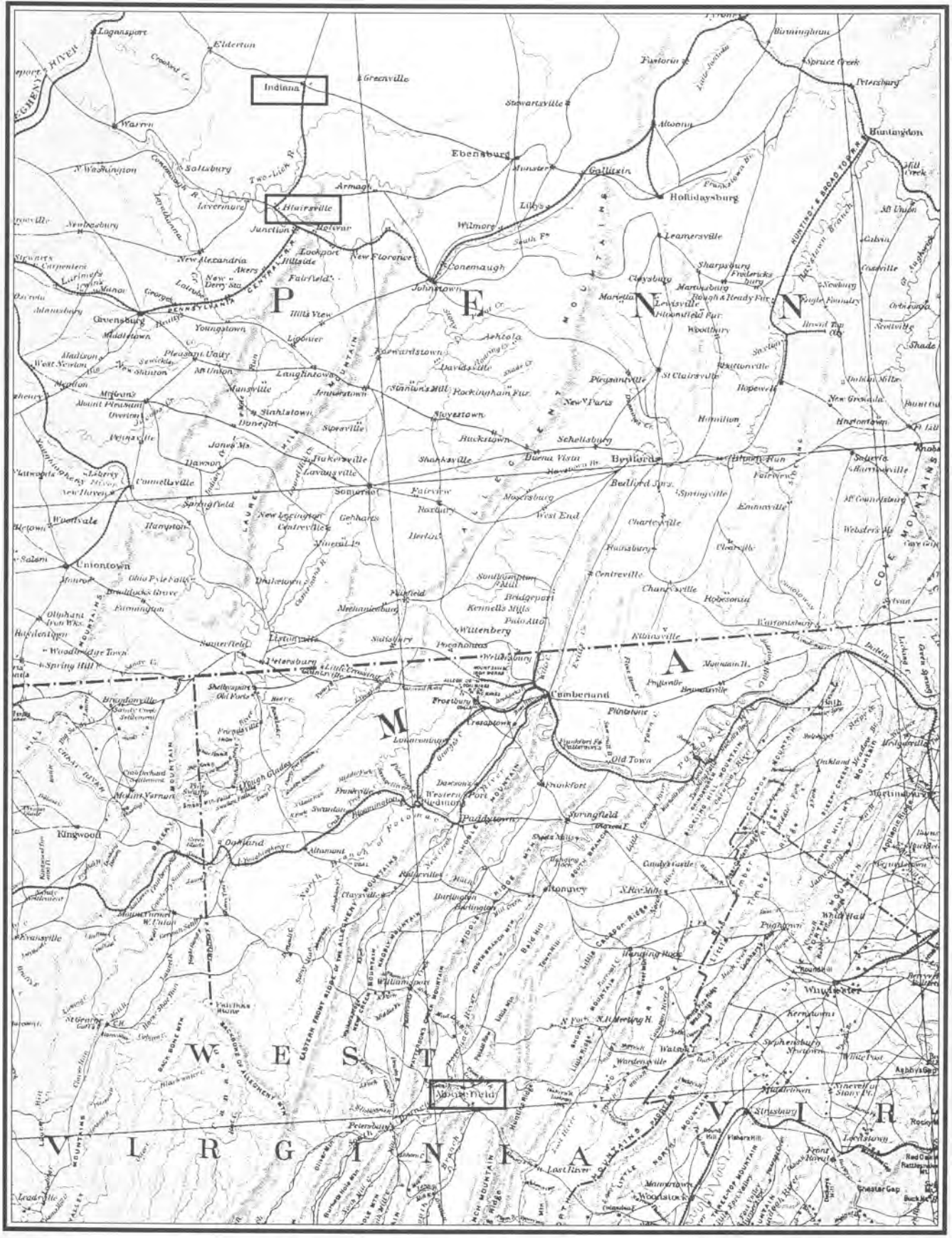
On one occasion a guest told the Van Meter family that five slaves had escaped from the next county. Mrs.Van Meter asked how they knew where to go. The visitor said there was a secret group bound together to help people escape and that they followed the North Star. One of the Van Meter daughters observed that "the north star to the slave was like the Star of Bethlehem to the wise men." Charlie was listening.

Charlie and several other Van Meter slaves began to have Saturday night meetings. On one such night, Charlie was walking home to his mother's cabin when a man jumped out in front of him brandishing a club, accusing him of plotting to run away. Charlie, terribly frightened, said, no—he was just out setting his traps. The man called him a liar and repeated exactly the words spoken at the meeting. "What are you going to do?" the man said, "You want to run away but you don't know whar to go to. I'se sent to tell you whar." (Moorhead account, *Indiana Progress*)

Charlie started forward but the man stopped him, told him never, never to come any nearer, and the two planned to meet again the following week. Finally, the night came to make the break. Charlie, Anthony Hollingsworth, Jared Harris, and three other men set out. After three miles, half of them turned back. Fifteen miles on, the mysterious stranger reappeared. At the meetings, Charlie had always thought him to be Black, but now he changed clothes and "the old guide became a White gentleman and the new White guide became a darkey."

Somewhere between Virginia and Pennsylvania, Charlie, Anthony, and Jared connected with the Underground Railroad network of Blairsville's John Graff. Graff's network led Brown, Harris, and Hollingsworth to Indiana. Alexander Moorhead, Jr., age 12, grandson

John Graff, Blairsville businessman and Underground Railroad conductor. His network transported Hollingsworth, Harris, and Brown to Indiana in 1845.
Griffin, *Blairsville Souvenir*


Indiana
Blairsville
Ebensburg
Hollidaysburg
Johnstown
Somerset
Cumberland
Uniontown
Connellsville
Greensburg
Kingwood
Morgantown
Martinsburg
Chambersburg
Gettysburg
PENNSYLVANIA
WEST VIRGINIA
MARYLAND

of abolitionist editor James Moorhead, was working as an apprentice in the *Clarion of Freedom* office when Charlie knocked on the door near dusk. Moorhead wrote:

[Charlie] was about 5 feet 10 inches in height, straight as an arrow, full-breasted, a clear, bright eye, dark-skinned; his hair had the regular African crinkle, and there was something that was very pleasing and winning. He had a merry, cunning twinkle in his eye, and when he smiled, showed a row of ivories that would have been envied by any of our beautiful ladies... Charlie magnetized me at our first meeting. (Indiana Progress)

James Moorhead, editor of the *Clarion of Freedom*, and Dr. Robert Mitchell were entertaining ministers of the Associate Presbyterian Synod when word came of the arrival. Moorhead brought the three fugitives home and seated them at the dinner table. They ate ravenously.

After supplying them with additional food and clothing, the Underground Railroad committee took Hollingsworth, Harris, and Brown to a cabin on Mitchell's farm near Diamondville. Hollingsworth later moved to the farm of James Simpson near Phillip's Mills (Homer City) to avoid suspicion.

Opposite: Map of West Virginia, Maryland, and Pennsylvania shows Moorefield in West Virginia (just below and to the right of the word "West" on the map), Blairsville, and Indiana, near the top of the map. Hollingsworth, Harris, and Brown traveled approximately 165 miles from Mooresfield to Indiana.

Official Atlas of the Civil War, 1861-65

The Lord Bids You Shout! The Rescue of Anthony Hollingsworth

Anthony Hollingsworth was enjoying his second month of freedom in June 1845, working in James Simpson's fields as a free laborer, when he turned to find two familiar Hardy County men approaching him. They forced the small, thin, 12-year-old boy onto a horse and tied his feet together under the horse's belly for the ride into town.

Arriving in Indiana, the men took Hollingsworth into their quarters at the Indiana House Hotel (where the Dollar Store stands today), owned by pro-slavery Sheriff David Ralston, who had begun his long career of aiding slavecatchers. But they did not arrive unseen and uncontested. It was Court Week in Indiana. People observing the unfamiliar White men with the boy bound to the horse began following them into town demanding an explanation for the boy's treatment. By the time they reached the hotel where Anthony's ex-master Garrett Van Meter may have waited, an angry mob was filling Philadelphia Street.

Word of the capture had spread like wildfire and people on foot and horseback were hurrying into town. Cries from the mob rent the air: "Down with the manhunters!" "Tear the house down over his head and set the man free!"

Inside, Anthony huddled, bound and frightened. With the situation deteriorating by the minute, Ralston sent for the town's abolitionist

Indiana House Hotel. Fugitive Anthony Hollingsworth was imprisoned in the hotel by Sheriff David Ralston and the slavecatchers in 1845.

Illustration: David Peelor Map, 1856. Historical and Genealogical Society of Indiana County

leaders, Moorhead and Mitchell, who agreed to talk to the crowd. But by now, angry townsfolk had entered the hotel and were climbing the staircase. Moorhead met them on the second landing and convinced the crowd to put the case before the law: 'He that is for us is stronger than they who are against us. Be persuaded. It may be on the morrow we will have to battle for the right. Make your guard line strong and wait for the morning." (Moorhead account, *Indiana Progress*)

The next morning, excited townspeople packed the courthouse while others waited in the streets. Mitchell applied for a writ of *habeas corpus* and William Banks, a local attorney, agreed to defend Hollingsworth. It was no secret in Indiana that Judge Thomas White was an anti-slavery man. He was also an Underground Railroad stationkeeper who hid fugitives in the stone guardhouse on his property in Whites Woods.

When White demanded that Van Meter and the slavecatchers produce written evidence that slavery existed in Virginia, they could not. The judge turned to Ralston and said, "Sheriff, release that man from custody." James Hamilton, a devoted abolitionist, cried out, "Shout! The Lord bids you shout! He is saved!" The courthouse crowd roared as the women waved their white handkerchiefs.

On the steps of the courthouse, little Anthony Hollingsworth was set free as all of Indiana watched. Alex and Dick White, the sons of the judge, and Robert Mitchell Jr. hoisted him on their shoulders and paraded him through the streets to the cheers of the crowd. Then they helped him up behind Bob Mitchell on his horse, and off the two galloped to Green Township, and the tenuous safety of the cabins.

Old Indiana Courthouse, built in 1807. Judge Thomas White, an abolitionist and Underground Railroad stationkeeper, freed Anthony Hollingsworth here in June, 1845.

Old Indiana Courthouse: *Beers Atlas of Indiana County*, 1871, Historical and Genealogical Society of Indiana County

Judge Thomas White: Historical and Genealogical Society of Indiana County

Freedom Struggle in the Green: September 1845

For the next two months, Hollingsworth, Harris and Brown lived on Mitchell's farm in Green Township. The cabins on Two Lick Creek were no secret to Indiana Countians. The three freedmen attended anti-slavery meetings in Diamondville and other towns and educated their neighbors on the realities of enslavement. The cabins became a favorite place for young people to visit and hear the exciting story of their escape with accompaniment played on the banjo and the bones.

But in August, Charlie Brown began to get restless. He wanted to return to Virginia to bring back a young woman whom he loved named Dinah. Young Alex Moorhead tried to convince him not to try. "Forget that Southern girl and love another." Charlie replied, "You have never loved as I love or you wouldn't say that." While Charlie visited the home of Dr. Mitchell, Mitchell, too, begged him not to take the risk, but

A view of the intersection of Philadelphia and Clymer (now Sixth) Streets in Indiana, c. 1843. This was the scene of citizen action in 1845 to rescue fugitive Anthony Hollingsworth. The Indiana House Hotel is visible on the left and the Old Indiana Courthouse is on the right side of the illustration.

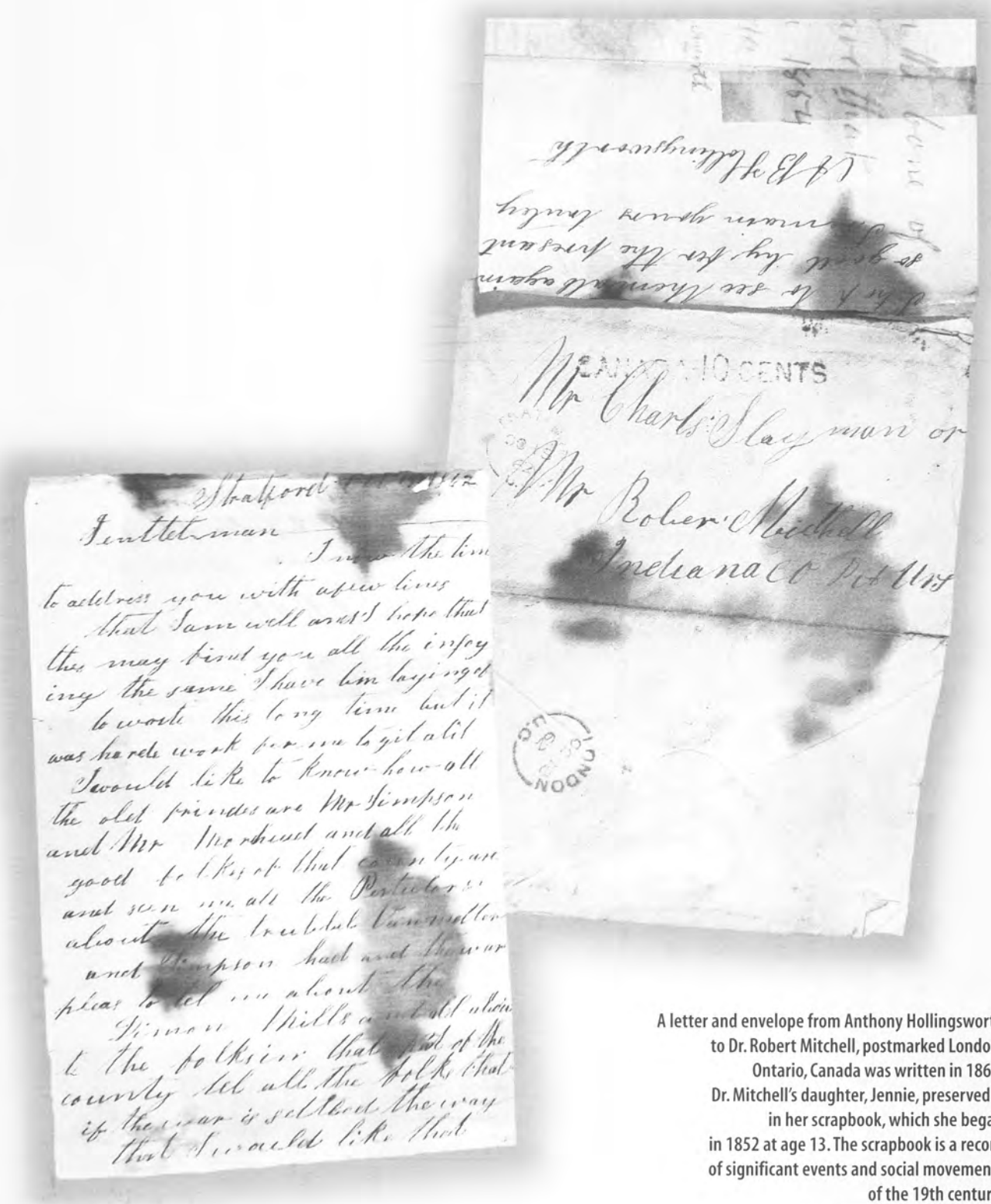
I. Daniel Rupp, *History and Topography of Dauphin...Counties, 1846*

Charlie's mind was made up. Dressed in a suit of Mitchell's clothes, Charlie made his way back to Virginia. A few miles south of Cumberland, Maryland, he was apprehended by a B & O railroad employee and imprisoned; Van Meter was sent for. He took Charlie home and chained him to the floor in the attic. Van Meter summoned the slave dealer but by morning Charlie had escaped.

In the quarters, his mother furnished Charlie with food and rubbed his feet with onions to fool the bloodhounds. While the slavecatcher and his dogs began a five day search, Charlie hid out in a remote field. Then he visited his mother for the last time, rubbed the onions on his feet once more, and headed north. Charlie returned to Mitchell's fugitive slave cabins, half-starved, sick and weak, his heart and his body broken. On the banks of the Two Lick, John McGuire and his family nursed Charlie back to health, although at times McGuire believed he would not make it.

Disaster struck again in September 1845, when Indiana Sheriff David Ralston, three deputies and eight slavecatchers raided Mitchell's cabins on Two Lick Creek in the middle of the night. Using a log, they broke down the door. Brown, Hollingsworth, Harris and two newly arrived fugitives were within. A vicious struggle ensued.

A sheriff's deputy later told what happened at the cabins:
Garret Harris was a powerful man and fought with the strength of a lion. We had the advantage on him in the suddenness of the attack. We pounced upon him while he was still lying on the floor, attempting to tie him before he could get on his feet. One large man sat down on his breast and tried to keep him down while two others would tie him, but by superhuman exertion, he threw the man off and fought and crawled to the door, then springing up, he got free and escaped into the woods.



A letter and envelope from Anthony Hollingsworth to Dr. Robert Mitchell, postmarked London, Ontario, Canada was written in 1862. Dr. Mitchell's daughter, Jennie, preserved it in her scrapbook, which she began in 1852 at age 13. The scrapbook is a record of significant events and social movements of the 19th century.

Jennie Mitchell Scrapbook, Historical and Genealogical Society of Indiana County

Sheriff Ralston made a hair-breadth escape. Charlie Brown ran in on him, tripped him up, wrested his club from him, and drew it up to strike. I thought it was all up with the sheriff when one of the southerners gave an under stroke with his club arresting a fatal blow. Another slavecatcher struck him a fearful blow on the head, knocking him insensible. Before he regained consciousness, they had him securely bound. (Moorhead account, Stephenson Vol. 3)

Hollingsworth climbed a ladder and hid flat on the roof during the attack. Then he jumped down and ran, in his undergarment, to the farm of Widow Sarah Chapman and climbed a tree, hiding in its branches. When dawn came, Anthony called for help. When the Widow Chapman came out to investigate, the lad called out, "Missus, it's Anthony. I'm up the tree. But don't come any nearer, Missus, I've got no clothes on." Chapman sent for John McGuire, who brought some clothes and Anthony climbed down. Shortly after this second close call, Hollingsworth went to Canada.

As the slavecatchers carried Brown and two others off on horseback, Charlie called back, "Tell Dr. Mitchell I have tasted the sweets of liberty and will never live a slave...Then bursting out in a wild song, he disappeared in the forest and was never heard from again." (Moorhead account, *Indiana Progress*)

Rumors of Charlie's fate came in scattered reports. One said that Charlie had sent correspondence north that he was going to remain in slavery, be obedient and just do the best he could. Another rumor said that he had been whipped to death in front of his mother. At least one Charles Brown, an African American male of approximately the right age who was born in the United States, appears in the 1871 Ontario Census.

Some said that Jared Harris went to Pittsburgh, others that he went to Canada.

Thanks to County Historian Clarence Stephenson, we know the most about what happened to Anthony Hollingsworth after the events of 1845. After the raid on the cabins, he went on to Canada, probably through Windsor, near Detroit. A letter arrived from Hollingsworth addressed to Dr.Robert Mitchell in 1852, postmarked London, Ontario, Canada through the courtesy of Charles Slaysman, an Indiana County conductor. In 1862, Hollingsworth was living in Stratford, Ontario and in 1863 he was listed as "Hollingsworth, A.B., Hairdresser and Shampooner" in the *County of Perth Gazeteer* (Canada). His barber shop was on Ontario Street, the main street in Stratford.

In 1864, A.B. Hollingsworth carried on a debate with a man who was "disparaging Negroes" in three Ontario newspapers. In a long letter

in the *County of Perth Herald*, Hollingsworth wrote, "Sir—I am a colored man. The authors of my being were Negro slaves. I have tasted the bitter, bitter fruits of slavery." Anthony Hollingsworth last appears in the Ontario Census of 1871, at age 38.

Van Meter v. Mitchell

As a result of the events of 1845, Garrett Van Meter of Hardy County, Virginia sued Dr. Robert Mitchell for violation of the Fugitive Slave Act of 1793 in knowingly providing food and shelter for Garrett (Jared) Harris. In eight years of litigation, Mitchell won the first two trials and lost the third. He was finally convicted on the basis of a scrap of paper on which he had written to his tenant farmer, Josiah Shields, "Kill a sheep and give half to Jerry." Dr. Mitchell refused to settle out of court and eventually ended up forfeiting $10,000 in property and funds for fines and court costs. He said, "I'd do it again if they take every penny I've got."

Jane Swisshelm and daughter, c. 1865
Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh

The Free Democratic Picnic of 1853

After the Mexican War, the sectional conflict between North and South sharpened. A new Fugitive Slave Act in 1850 made harboring fugitives much more dangerous in Indiana County. Still, the Railroad chugged on. Local anti-slavery leaders were instrumental in forming a new statewide political party, the Free Democratic Party, which ran Dr. Mitchell as Canal Commissioner and hosted an anti-slavery Fourth of July Picnic/Convention in a pine grove outside Diamondville in 1853.

Diamondville, or Mitchell's Mills, was a mini-industrial boom town founded by Dr. Robert Mitchell. Owners of mills and foundries there, including the Moorheads and the Rodkeys, were also anti-slavery leaders. Mitchell asked his good friend, Jane Grey Swisshelm, noted Pittsburgh abolitionist and Women's Rights activist, to be the keynote speaker at the event. Swisshelm was the editor of the *Saturday Visiter*, a Pittsburgh reform newspaper.

As Swisshelm finished her speech and descended from the make-shift podium, ex-Sheriff Ralston and his supporters jumped up on the stage and Ralston attempted to give a pro-slavery speech. The men and boys in the crowd of several hundred people charged forward and tore the podium stick by stick from under Ralston's feet. They then chased him and his men all the way back to Diamondville and deposited Ralston near a stump, from which he could exercise his freedom of speech. The militia, which was on hand as part of the celebration, quieted the melee.

Not long after, the Free Democratic Party gave way to the new Republican Party, opposed to the extension of slavery, and organized in response to the crisis that became known as "Bleeding Kansas."

Let Us Die to Make Men Free: Bleeding Kansas, Harper's Ferry and the Civil War

In 1854, open conflict broke out over how Kansas would be admitted to the Union. Through the vehicle of "popular sovereignty," territorial settlers would decide whether Kansas was to be Slave or Free. Pro-slavery and anti-slavery groups began organizing homesteaders to determine Kansas' fate. Guerrilla warfare broke out in Kansas, with particularly brutal consequences along the Missouri border.

In Indiana County, the Plumville Baptist Church sponsored the first Pennsylvania Kansas Liberty Meeting to support families who agreed to go to Kansas to make it a Free State. Free State Emigrants included George Atcheson of Clearfield County and John C. Mitchell, Dr. Robert Mitchell's son. When pro-slavery Border Ruffians sacked the Free State capital of Lawrence, Mitchell volunteered to go for food. He was captured and imprisoned at Lecompton, the pro-slavery capital. He freely told everyone that he was an abolitionist and they threatened to hang him. His courage and his refusal to recant saved his life. When released, he received death threats, but refused to carry a weapon because he was a "non-resistor" (a pacifist). Mitchell never recovered from the privation he suffered while in prison and died in 1860 at the age of 28.

More militant among the Free State men was Albert Hazlett. Born in Green Township to a poor farming family near the old "Devil's Elbow" in 1837, Hazlett was tall, slender, with curly blonde hair. He joined the Free State military company of Colonel James Montgomery, who later commanded Black troops during the Civil War, including the famous 54th Massachusetts. Under Montgomery's command, Hazlett went on a raid into Missouri to free slaves. The Free Staters escorted James Daniels, his pregnant wife, and two children to Canada and freedom. Mrs. Daniels gave birth along the way.

In Kansas, Hazlett met John "Ossawatomie" Brown. For Brown, Kansas was the first major campaign in his "holy war" against slavery. When the battles in Kansas began winding down, Brown began making plans for an insurrection in the East. In 1858, Hazlett was elected Lieutenant and 4th in command of Brown's "provisional army." He went home to Indiana County to await the next call.

Albert Hazlett of Indiana County was a lieutenant in John Brown's Provisional Army in Kansas and the Harper's Ferry Raid of 1859. He was executed in 1860.

West Virginia State Archives, Charleston, West Virginia

Above: Abolitionist warrior and martyr John Brown as he looked in Kansas in the 1850s. He was executed at Charlestown, Virginia, after his failed insurrection at Harper's Ferry.

Below: Osborne Perry Anderson guarded the armory at Harper's Ferry and escaped with Albert Hazlett. Anderson later served in the Union Army.

John Brown: West Virginia State Archives, Charleston, West Virginia

Osborne Perry Anderson: Hinton, *John Brown and His Men*, 1894

In September 1859, Hazlett was working on the farm of John B. Allison, Esq. He told Allison that he could see the letter "B" on all the oat grains. When Allison, bemused, asked what the "B" stood for, Hazlett said, "It stands for blood—blood to be shed in the liberation of the slave." Shortly thereafter, Hazlett left for Harper's Ferry, Virginia.

John Brown's plan was to take the Federal Arsenal at Harper's Ferry, arm the slaves with the guns and carry on guerrilla warfare against slavery in the mountains. After his successes as a guerrilla leader in Kansas, he had every reason to think the plan could be successful, but Brown underestimated Virginia's preparedness for slave insurrection. Harper's Ferry was soon flooded with troops and Brown and his raiders were trapped in the Fire Engine House. When it became apparent that the raid was doomed, Albert Hazlett and Osborne Anderson, who were guarding the armory across the street, escaped across the river. Near Chambersburg, Pennsylvania, Hazlett couldn't go on and begged Anderson to proceed without him. Albert Hazlett was captured, imprisoned, and hanged on March 16, 1860, four months after the execution of John Brown. Osborne Anderson later served in the United States Colored Troops.

Springing to the Call: Indiana Countians and the Civil War

In November 1860, Abraham Lincoln was elected President of the United States by a highly sectional vote in the Electoral College. Lincoln's Republicans, organized in 1854 in response to the Kansas-Nebraska controversy, favored a free-labor economy and opposed any further extension of slavery. In fact, most Republicans were determined that slavery must go. In response to another serious threat to the South's "peculiar institution," South Carolina seceded from the Union. Other Southern states followed and formed a Confederate government, whose leaders called slavery its "cornerstone."

In April 1861, South Carolina fired on Fort Sumter, in Charleston Harbor, South Carolina. President Lincoln called for volunteers to defend the Union.

Indiana County men organized military companies to defend the Union even before the attack on Sumter. By late summer, at least 1600 men had donned the Union blue. Among them were the sons of anti-slavery activists and Underground Railroad conductors. Dr. Robert Mitchell's son, William, served; a nephew commanded troops in Kansas; and another nephew died at Andersonville Prison. Albert Hazlett's brothers joined the Union Army to fight slavery a little over a year after their brother was executed for the same cause. Judge

Thomas White's two sons, Dickie and Harry White, served as commissioned officers in the Union Army and both were captured by the enemy and sent to prison. Richard was one of the boys who hoisted Anthony Hollingsworth on their shoulders in front of the courthouse after his father, the judge, freed him in 1845.

Major Harry White of the 67th Pennsylvania was captured in June 1863 and sent to Libby Prison. White escaped from Libby, was recaptured, and spent time in four different prisons. The last time he escaped he was hidden by Georgia slaves and lived among them for 29 days. White wrote later that he "never asked a black man to assist him who refused. They secreted [him] by day and piloted [him] by night, regardless of the doom which they knew their conduct would incur for them." (Stephenson Vol. 1) Incredibly, White was captured again with the aid of bloodhounds, once again imprisoned, and escaped again, returning to Indiana in October 1865.

Dickie White, too, served valiantly as an officer in the 55th Pennsylvania and was captured in Virginia in May 1864. He was released from a Charleston, South Carolina prison and reached Indiana in August 1864. Enfeebled by his experience, he died eight months later, on the same day Lincoln was assassinated at Ford's Theater.

At home, anti-slavery families who had fed and clothed fugitive slaves now turned their attention to their liberators. By November 1861, Mrs. Daniel Stanard, whose husband had loaned money for Dr. Mitchell's fines, and Mrs. John Sutton, who had been in the Underground Railroad Subsistence Department, organized a soldiers' relief society that met in the Lutheran Church. It eventually became a local unit of the United States Sanitary Commission.

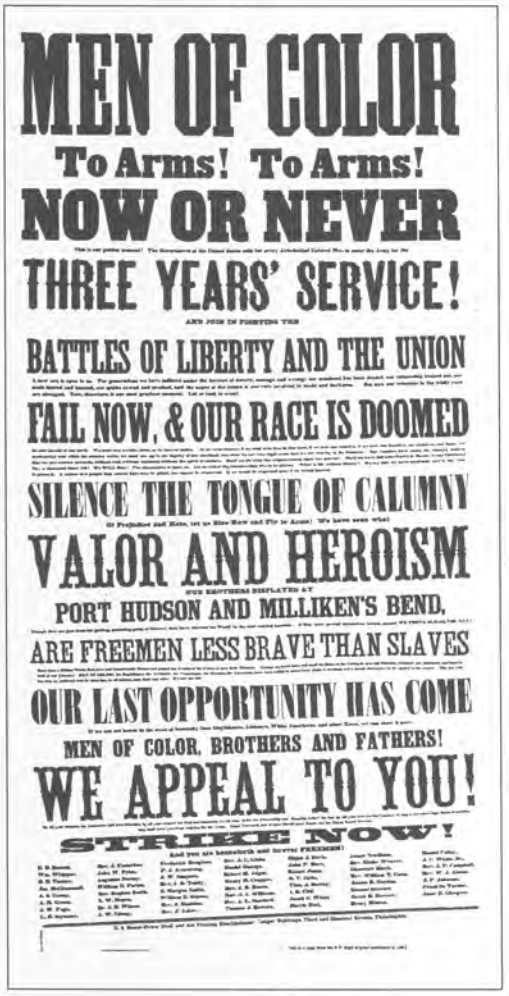
Anti-slavery families were instrumental in the 1862 organization of the Indiana County Soldiers' Relief Association whose purpose was to attend the needs of the county's wounded soldiers in the field. Its leadership included Hon. Thomas White and John Graff as well as Suttons, Moorheads and Kinters. White's son Harry, Union soldier and later prisoner, gave his entire salary as a State Senator to these relief organizations.

Harry White, an officer of the 67th Pennsylvania Volunteer Infantry. A son of Judge Thomas White who freed fugitive Anthony Hollingsworth in 1845, Major Harry White escaped from a Confederate Prison and was hidden by enslaved Georgians. In 1865 he was brevetted a Brigadier General by President Abraham Lincoln.

Historical and Genealogical Society of Indiana County

Jubilee Time

Meanwhile in the South, enslaved men, women, and children took matters into their own hands. Knowing that Jubilee time was at hand, they began transforming Union war aims. Thousands came into Union lines by August 1861 and abolitionist generals like Benjamin Butler, with his famous "contraband" order, refused to return them to their masters. The Confiscation Acts passed by Congress turned the Union



Civil War recruiting poster, United States Colored Troops

Chicago Historical Society

Army into an "overground railroad express." The last tasks of emancipation had begun.

At the White House, Lincoln told abolitionist leaders that if they found the votes, he would free the slaves. Some abolitionists were pacifists, but most wholeheartedly supported the war effort because they knew that with a little more push, anti-slavery goals could become more obvious war aims. Lincoln needed a victory to go to the next step. In September 1862, one of the bloodiest days of the Civil War provided that "victory" at Antietam Creek, Maryland. Lincoln signed the Preliminary Emancipation Proclamation, threatening to free slaves in states still in rebellion on January 1, 1863.

The letter of the law didn't free many slaves. But the spirit of the law transformed the war. The Emancipation Proclamation provided for the enlistment of African American soldiers. With a stroke of the pen, Lincoln handed the abolitionists an astounding victory and actualized the South's most horrifying nightmare: Slaves with guns. Slaves no more. Social Revolution!

Men of Color, Men of Valor

Indiana County men of African descent began enlisting in the Union Army: the three grandsons of Andrew Armstrong (an early ferryman at Saltsburg)—Harrison, Thomas, and James Taylor—served in the United States Colored Troops, as did Underground Railroad Stationkeeper Lewis Johnson's son, Lewis Jr.; Samuel McClellen of the 32nd United States Colored Infantry, whose descendants still live in Blairsville; William Robinson of the 24th United States Colored Infantry; AME Zion Pastor Nelson Williams' son; James Henry Bronson of Blacklick Township of the 5th United States Colored Infantry; and Alexander Kelly, a coal miner from Conemaugh, of the 6th United States Colored Infantry.

One White Indiana County man served as an officer of African American troops. Samuel William Campbell, born in West Wheatfield Township 1843, grew up on the south side of Black Lick Creek. He enlisted in the Union Army in 1862, serving in two White Pennsylvania regiments. In 1864, he trained for a Regular Army position and took command of Company I, 109th United States Colored Infantry, for the duration of the war.

At least five Indiana County men received Congressional Medals of Honor for their meritorious conduct in the midst of battle in the Civil War. Two of them were African American: Alexander Kelly of the 6th United States Colored Infantry and James Henry Bronson of the

5th United States Colored Infantry. First Sergeant James Henry Bronson won his medal for gallantry in an assault launched against Confederate works by the 5th, 36th and 38th U.S. Colored Infantry at Chaffin's Farm, Virginia in September 1864. With all his officers wounded or dead, Bronson rallied the men and led the company. Thomas Morris Chester, an African American Civil War correspondent reported:

...With the advantage greatly in favor of the enemy, it seemed almost impossible to encourage the troops upon the works, and they were equally as stubborn in their resolution not to retreat. They, however, advanced to the very muzzles of the rebels' muskets, when the most galling fire was poured into them.

Colonel Draper now...leading off in the war yell which precedes a desperate charge, and which was swelled to the liveliest chorus of enthusiasm by the troops, immediately made a grand assault against the enemy's breastworks. The rebels seeing us coming, one of their officers leaped upon the parapet, crying "Give it to them, my brave boys," when [a private of the 36th] rushed in advance of the column, shot him down, and ran his bayonet through him up to the muzzle.... Over the works, the colored troops went after them, driving them out in much confusion.

After his baptism of fire, Bronson asked to be demoted to private so that he could play in the brass band.

Alexander Kelly's medal was also issued for extraordinary courage at Chaffin's Farm. In the early-morning fog, the men of the 6th United States Colored Infantry fought their way through felled trees and abattis and waded a swamp with bayonets fixed. Mired in the muddy waters, they were cut down by withering fire from the rebel fortifications.

It was then that five-foot, three-and-one-half-inch Kelly rallied the men, urging them on. He "gallantly seized the colors which had fallen near the enemy's line...raised them and rallied the men at a time of confusion and in a place of the greatest danger."

In this assault, the 6th lost over 57 percent of its men. They were finally reinforced by three more regiments of Black Troops and forced a Confederate retreat. The Union Army took Fort Gilmer on the second day with a loss of 1,732 Black and 1,559 White soldiers.

Ironically, this hero signed up as a "substitute volunteer" for his drafted brother, Joseph Kelly, of Allegheny County, who had a wife and children.

Above: Captain Samuel W. Campbell, Co. I, 109th United States Colored Infantry. Campbell was born in West Wheatfield Township.

Below: Sergeant Alexander Kelly 6th United States Colored Infantry, Congressional Medal of Honor winner, Battle of Chaffin's Farm, Virginia, 1864

Samuel W. Campbell: Elisabeth Campbell Haggerty, *The Campbell Story*, 1999

Alexander Kelly: Library of Congress and James Paradis, *Strike the Blow for Freedom*, 1998

With Charity Toward All: The Aftermath of the War

Anti-slavery activists also took part in efforts to aid the freedmen and freedwomen with relief, education and protection of human rights after the war. Their reform activities continued in other reform areas as well, including temperance, anti-capital punishment, labor and prison reform, women's rights and suffrage, and care for the poor, often through church missionary societies.

Slavery: The Modern Debate

Was the Civil War about slavery? Most scholars agree that slavery and its economic, social, and political ramifications was the central cause of the Civil War. Confederate leaders spoke of slavery as a positive good, necessary to [White man's] democracy and the "cornerstone" of Southern society. In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, a cult of the Lost Cause romanticized the antebellum South. Books like Margaret Mitchell's *Gone With the Wind* (1936) and movies like D.W. Griffith's *Birth of a Nation* (1915) perpetuated the "moonlight and magnolia" myth of a victimized White South. Historians wrote one-sided interpretations of Reconstruction depicting "carpetbaggers and scalawags," but not teachers, missionaries, and African American church and community builders. Segregation was in full swing and it dealt a serious blow to efforts to tell the African American side of the story.

Although the persistence of African American historians and the Civil Rights Movement have provided fertile ground for a more realistic look at the issues of the 19th century, the debate over slavery still continues. In 2000, a five-star panel of historians reported that Civil War battlefields still tended to present the war with a pro-Southern White male bias, neglecting the stories of civilians, women, and minorities, especially African Americans. In response, the Federal Government tied battlefield appropriations to the interpretation of slavery as a primary cause of the war.

In addition, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People staged a successful boycott in Columbia, South Carolina to bring down the Confederate Flag flying over the state capitol. The NAACP argued that the flag was a symbol of slavery and that African Americans should not have to tolerate it. Neo-Confederate groups replied that the flag symbolized Southern heritage. The flag came down and the NAACP is planning a similar campaign in Georgia.

Another aspect of the slavery debate is presented by the American Anti-Slavery Group. There are 27 million slaves in the world today,

mostly forced laborers who are women and children. The modern Anti-Slavery Movement uses graphic art and the tradition of the 19th century abolitionists in organizing to stop slavery worldwide.

The Dreams of Harriet Tubman

What would this woman—who worked the fields as a slave, who worked as a lumberjack cutting down trees, and who toiled as a domestic worker until she was very old, because the government she had fought for refused to relinquish her pension—what would she have to say about the sweatshop conditions of workers today? What would she have to say about the plight of immigrant workers and those who have been disenfranchised in the boom economy?... —Mike Alewitz, Muralist

The IUP Museum is honored to present as part of "Freedom in the Air" a mural featuring Harriet Tubman by labor artist Mike Alewitz of Connecticut. Mr. Alewitz is a well-known muralist working in the United States and internationally. He holds a BFA in Painting and an MFA in Interrelated Media from Massachusetts College of Art. He currently teaches mural painting at Central Connecticut State University. Alewitz is a longtime activist in the labor, peace and justice movements. As Artistic Director of the Labor Art and Mural Project (LAMP), he has painted murals in Mexico City, Baghdad, Chernobyl, South-Central LA, Nicaragua, and many other locations in support of working-class struggles for social and economic justice.

The mural Mr. Alewitz presents here is entitled *Move or Die*. It shows Harriet Tubman with a lantern in one hand and a rifle in the other as she leads slaves from captivity and into a future of freedom. She is depicted as a Moses parting the sea, overturning a slave ship and a sweatshop in the process of leading her people. The mural was originally commissioned for a wall in Baltimore but was rejected when the artist painted Tubman carrying a musket. When asked to replace the musket with a staff, Mr. Alewitz refused. He later commented:

I don't want a kinder, gentler Harriet Tubman. She was a tough woman who lived in scary times. I don't want to make Harriet Tubman a meaningless icon that hangs in McDonalds to try to get you to buy hamburgers. She was a freedom fighter—and that is how she should be painted.

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Indiana County's Underground Railroad in Black and White

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