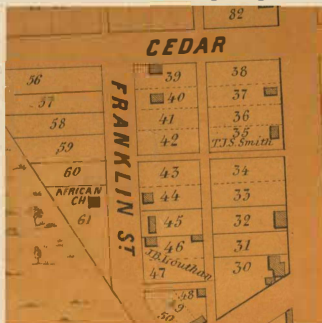


12. St. James Church, 702 Sherman Ave.
Formerly St. James African Methodist Episcopal Church, St. James Church is the oldest operational congregation serving Troy's African-American community. The church was founded in 1837 by freed slaves, and originally met in a schoolhouse at Main and Oxford Streets. They moved to the present location in 1851.



This 1854 map shows an area on Franklin Street, now Sherman Avenue, labeled "African Church"



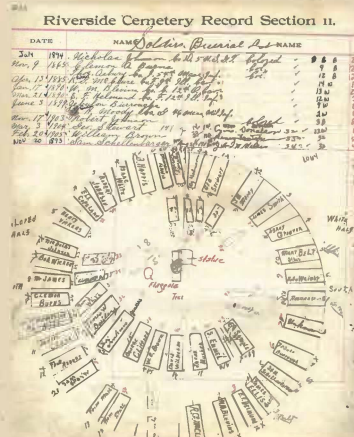
Signs at the gazebo in McKaig & Race Park

13. Signs at McKaig & Race Park, 822 McKaig Ave.

In 2022, the City of Troy's Human Relations Commission, with the support of local historians and volunteers, installed two new signs at the gazebo in McKaig & Race Park honoring the accomplishments and contributions of five African-American leaders. The signs discuss the work of Charles R. Ross, a civil rights activist and Troy's first Black City Council member; Perlema W. and Grace L. Sewell, local philanthropists and advocates of racial equality; Charles R. Sharett, Jr., Troy's first Recreation Director and a proponent of fair housing and equality; and Lucille K. Wheat, an activist who promoted diversity hiring and integration in education and housing.

14. Soldiers Circle, Riverside Cemetery, 101 Riverside Dr., Section 11

Riverside Cemetery opened in 1867, two years after the Civil War ended. More than 20 African-American men who served during the war are buried here, mostly in the "Soldier's Circle." The burials reflected the separation that persisted between the races. The circle is divided between a "colored half" and a "white half." About 3,000 Black men from Ohio fought for the 54th and 55th Massachusetts (Colored) Regiments, challenging prevailing prejudices about the fitness of African-American soldiers at the time.



Riverside Cemetery records

15. Robert Kenney's Grave, Riverside Cemetery, 101 Riverside Dr., Section 7

Robert Kenney, a member of the local African-American community, tragically died while attempting to save five people who were in the Nineveh area at the time of the 1913 flood. In 1914, Kenney, along with a fellow rescuer Raymond Harrison, were posthumously awarded the Carnegie Hero Medal for their bravery. In 2023, the Troy Local History Library, using research by local historian Judy Deeter and funding from several donors, unveiled a grave marker at Robert Kenney's grave, the first to ever be placed there.



Kenney's grave marker, installed in 2023

For more information, visit:

Local History & Genealogy Center
510 West Water Street, Suite 210

Museum of Troy History
124 East Water Street

TROY

HUMAN RELATIONS
COMMISSION



Troy, Ohio
African-American
Historical Sites

Troy's Underground Railroad Stops

During the era of slavery, the Underground Railroad was a network of routes, places, and people that helped enslaved people in the American South escape to the North. Although Ohio was a free state, laws against assisting runaway slaves from nearby Kentucky and Virginia, and rewards paid by southern slave owners for the return of escaped slaves, made true freedom difficult for formerly enslaved people. This secret system of safe houses passed through West Milton and north through Troy.

1. Asa Mayo House, 11 N. Walnut St.

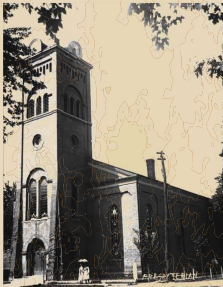


Asa Mayo's house in 1966

This Greek Revival-style house was built in 1841 by Asa Mayo, a prominent merchant. It is rumored that this house, one of the largest of Troy's surviving mansions, served as an Underground Railroad station.

2. Richard Brandiff-Dye-Corner-Gillis House, 210 E. Main St.

Richard Brandiff built the house in 1847. He was a Methodist preacher, a well-known abolitionist, and a druggist, grocer, and dry goods merchant, as well as a conductor on the Underground Railroad. The basement connected to an underground tunnel that led across the street.



First Presbyterian circa 1890



A secret hiding place, discovered behind a false wall

3. First Presbyterian Church, 20 S. Walnut St.

This church was home to many abolitionists and has some of the most definite proof of Underground Railroad activity in Troy, including a tunnel, an inactive pump that was used to pump air into the tunnel, and a hole in the wall along the tunnel that the enslaved people would crawl through. Even after the Civil War, many people did not want to reveal their assistance, so the hiding place created in the basement of the church was hidden behind a false wall and only revealed several years ago.

4. Robert McCurdy

Robert McCurdy immigrated to Troy from Germany in 1824. He was a school teacher and a worker on the Underground Railroad. In 1842, he taught in a small building, which stood behind the Presbyterian Church on South Walnut Street, and then, in a private house at South Plum Street located in the rear of 206 West Main Street. Mr. McCurdy was described as a man of broad education and an excellent teacher.



The McCampbell house in 1966

5. McCampbell House, 21-23 W. Water St.

The McCampbell house is believed to have been constructed in the 1840s. John M. McCampbell was a boarding house proprietor, who also operated a tannery and currier business from this house. A room adjoining the cellar was said to be a hiding place for slaves, and Mr. McCampbell is said to have supplied shoes for runaways. Tannery work would have been a common occupation for African-American people and escaped slaves could have passed through the property unnoticed.

6. Tullis Farm, 138 S. Ridge Ave.

This house was once the home of John Tullis, who worked as a merchant, justice of the peace, postmaster, and editor of the Troy Times newspaper. For a time, Mr. Tullis worked as a bookbinder, and had a large wagon built with drawers set in such a way as to leave a hiding place in the center. As he traveled the country, he is believed to have found opportunities to help fugitives escape to Canada.



The McKaig-Galbreath House in 1966

7. McKaig-Galbreath House, 406 S. Ridge Ave.

The house is believed to have been an Underground Railroad station, with a portion of a tunnel under the flooring that led to the street.

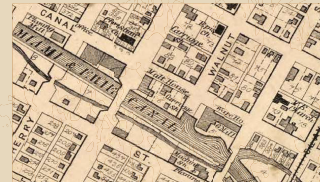
Sources:

Miami County of Ohio Underground Railroad, Rachel Ann Minnich and Vita Marie Saluke, 2007;
The Mystery of Ohio's Underground Railroads, Wilber Henry Siebert, 1981;
The History of Miami County Ohio, W.H Beers and CO., 1880.

Other African-American Historical Sites

8. Canal Repair and Loading Basin, Walnut & Canal Sts.

This intersection sits where a canal basin once stood in the 1800s and where canal boats were repaired and had cargo loaded and unloaded. Freight was carried into and out of warehouses from Cincinnati to Toledo and then to Detroit and Canada. For enslaved people, the only sure way to obtain their freedom was to escape to Canada, and several canal boat captains were active in the Underground Railroad and allowed escapees to hide on their boats. African-American communities along the way provided shelter and instructions.



The Miami-Erie Canal in an 1871 Atlas of Miami County

9. Old Miami County Courthouse, 112-118 W. Main St.

The third Miami County Courthouse was built here in 1841 and served as the county's courtroom until 1888. In the courtroom, individuals caught harboring or aiding enslaved people to evade capture were tried as the federal law of the day said that enslaved people were not people, they were property, and by helping one escape, a person was being deprived of his "property". For said crime, one could be fined or imprisoned, or both.



An 1834 "Manumission of Black Persons"

The courthouse was also used for the registration of African-Americans. During the so-called Black Laws of 1804 and 1807, until their abolition in 1849, any African-Americans entering Ohio were required by law to state their intent to settle in the county of "choice," provide any papers proving their freedom and post a \$500 bond. Additionally, the representative of the Randolph Freed People most likely came to this courthouse to register. The Randolph enslaved people acquired their name from John Randolph, a plantation owner in Charlotte County, Virginia, and a Virginia Congressman. At his death in 1833, he freed his 400 slaves as part of his will. Randolph's brother disputed the will, but after thirteen years of legal battles, the court granted the enslaved people their freedom.



Nineveh in the 1913 flood

10. Nineveh

At the beginning of the 20th century, Nineveh was a predominately African-American community located along the north bank of the Great Miami River, near the current location of the North Market Street Ballfields. Although little is recorded about the community there, several businesses existed at the turn of the century. There exist records of the Cortez Smith Livery Stable, a pool hall, and a temporary ticket office for the Springfield, Troy and Piqua Electric Railway.

The neighborhood was prone to flooding, forcing people to flee their homes, including during a major flood in March 1898. Fifteen years later, the Great Flood of 1913 destroyed the community, killing five.



The Lincoln School was a one-room schoolhouse attended by African-American students

11. Lincoln Community Center, 110 Ash St.

The Lincoln Community Center is built on the foundation of the Lincoln School, which African-American students attended from 1865 to 1874. After 1874, with the passing of the Arnett Bill by the state legislature, the Board of Education allowed African-American students to attend Edwards School. In 1916, the Miami Athletics, a local semi-pro football team, asked the Board of Education to allow the team to use the building as a dressing room and the grounds as a practice field. In the following year, a group of citizens asked the board to turn the grounds over to the community for a playground and meeting place. Today, the Lincoln Community Center provides opportunities for people of all ages and races to participate in a wide range of programs and athletics.

