

Albion Circuit and Its Neighbors

Since about 1850, Wesleyans had been operating in the northeastern corner of Indiana, in Noble, Lagrange, Steuben, Dekalb, Whitley, and even a bit in Allen County. The most stable part of the work was known as Albion Circuit, although various other circuits and missions were formed for shorter or longer periods. In 1867 there was one circuit and one mission, with a total of 107 members and one meeting-house. By 1887 there were three circuits, with six churches, 184 members, six church buildings, and three parsonages.

The Albion Church in Noble County dates from the early reform period. George Harvey, one of its charter members, was the builder of the county courthouse and a candidate for the state legislature. According to L. N. Stratton, his defeat was due to the fact that he refused to bow to the "baser elements."¹⁸⁶ The congregation's services were held in schoolhouses, homes, other churches, and occasionally the county courtroom until in 1877 it completed and dedicated its brick building. A new parsonage had been provided Aaron Worth apparently in the year before.¹⁸⁷ Green Chapel in Lagrange County also dates from the early reform period. It was enabled to move from schoolhouse to meeting-house when land was donated in August 1877, with the erection of a brick building with a tall steeple following. In 1885 light-

¹⁸⁶American Wesleyan, XXXIV, 1747, June 28, 1876, p. 4.

¹⁸⁷Ibid., XXXIV, 1768, Nov. 22, 1876, p. 5; cf. Albion local church history.

ning struck the steeple which was then cut off in sections. The building was named after prominent layman Richard Green, a hog farmer, who was well known because of many years service as a delegate to both the annual and general conferences. In 1871 Aaron Worth visited him and observed that he was still driving "the same span of grays" that he had driven to conference at Westfield sixteen years before, and added that both Green and the horses were still lively.¹⁸⁸ Both Albion and Green Chapel continued throughout the period. Another church was organized in Lagrange County in November 1883, but nothing more is known of it.¹⁸⁹

In 1867 there existed in Steuben County what was called Angola Mission. Efforts had been made repeatedly to establish work here, members having joined the Wesleyans as early as 1851.¹⁹⁰ During the 1870-71 conference year, two new organizations were effected, one in Michigan and one in Indiana.¹⁹¹ But by 1872 Angola disappears from the pastoral assignments and from the statistical reports. Dekalb County was set off in 1868 as Dekalb Mission. Although Lee Chapel (Laotto) was probably still located in the edge of Dekalb County, it appears that it continued to be reported in the Albion statistics. In any event, the mission reported two preaching ap-

¹⁸⁸American Wesleyan, XXIX, 1468, Feb. 22, 1871, p. 31; Green Chapel local church history.

¹⁸⁹American Wesleyan, XLI, 2141, Nov. 21, 1883, p. 5.

¹⁹⁰Ibid., XXVIII, 1421, March 30, 1870, p. 52.

¹⁹¹Ibid., XXIX, 1474, April 5, 1871, p. 57.

pointments, one Sunday school, and one meeting-house in 1871, and in December of that year a church was organized with thirty-six members.¹⁹² By 1872 the mission reported four preaching points and apparently had its name changed to Waterloo Circuit. It reached a high point of five preaching points in 1874, but never reported more than the one meeting-house. After 1875 it disappears from the pastoral assignments and the statistical reports. In 1869 Wawaka Mission was set off, apparently involving northwestern Noble County. In the summer of 1870 it reported the organization of two Sunday schools, with one church organized and promise of another.¹⁹³ However it never reported any official statistics and disappeared from the pastoral appointments by 1873. In 1871 Whitley Mission was set off, apparently involving the county of the same name. Nothing was heard from it and it was dropped from the list of pastoral assignments in 1873.

In 1878 the Laotto Circuit was established, and continued a separate existence until 1881. The church at Laotto had originated in the early reform period, being constructed about one-half mile east of Laotto and known as Lee Chapel. In 1875 it was moved to town, repaired, and dedicated in November of that year.¹⁹⁴ It continues to the present time. While Laotto was located virtually on the line between Dekalb and Noble Counties, it was the organi-

¹⁹²Ibid., XXIX, 1511, Dec. 20, 1871, p. 200.

¹⁹³Ibid., XXVIII, 1438, July 27, 1870, p. 118.

¹⁹⁴Laotto local church history. See also American Wesleyan, XXXIV, 1759, Sept. 20, 1876, p. 4; and Counties of Lagrange and Noble, Indiana, Historical and Biographical, (Chicago: F. A. Batley and Co., 1882), Part II, p. 286.

zation of a church in Whitley County which led to the creation of the Laotto Circuit. Late in 1877 a church was organized near Churubusco, which was subsequently named Mt. Zion, the long range result of a holiness meeting held there about four years earlier. Rev. S. Rice, its founder, declared, "The fundamental principle of its organization is 'holiness unto the Lord' which means in this case, separation from all sin."¹⁹⁵ This church continued throughout this period. Plans were laid for it to join Laotto in a new circuit.¹⁹⁶ By the end of the first year of the new circuit's existence, it was increased by the addition of a church at Larwill, although it was apparently organized through the joint efforts of Laotto and Albion Circuits. Ten members of the Methodist Episcopal Church became dissatisfied over what they called formality, worldliness, and secretism, and withdrew. Weekly prayer meetings were established, and on June 13, 1879 a church of seven members was organized. A church building was erected at once, and was dedicated by Aaron Worth on December 28, 1879.¹⁹⁷ This church continues to the present. When Laotto went back on the Albion Circuit in 1881, Mt. Zion and Larwill continued as the Larwill Circuit. On December 31, 1882, this circuit gave birth to another new congregation, Mt. Gilead, located five miles northwest

¹⁹⁵American Wesleyan, XXXV, 1821, Nov. 28, 1877, p. 5; 1822, Dec. 5, 1877, p. 6.

¹⁹⁶Ibid., XXXVI, 1844, May 8, 1878, p. 4.

¹⁹⁷Larwill local church history. Cf. American Wesleyan, XXXVII, 1883, Feb. 5, 1879, p. 5; 1927, Dec. 10, 1879, p. 5.

of Larwill.¹⁹⁸ According to Larwill's local history, Mt. Gilead was not associated with the circuit after 1884. A Bucyrus church existed by late 1883, and services were apparently held in Columbia City in 1884,¹⁹⁹ but nothing more is known of Wesleyan work in these places.

It was apparently in 1877 that a tent meeting was held on the streets of Ligonier in northwest Noble County, leading to the organization of a Wesleyan Church there. At about the same time a church had been formed at Fair View Schoolhouse, nearby, and these members apparently moved their membership to town. The leading member was Rev. William Leuty, whose philanthropy blessed many Wesleyan interests, including the infant Wheaton Theological Seminary mentioned above. He gave \$1,500 to pay for the erection of a brick church, and paid \$800 for a parsonage which he gave to the church. The church was apparently dedicated in the summer of 1878.²⁰⁰ In 1881 Ligonier was set off as a separate pastoral assignment, and so continued throughout the remainder of the period.

Pleasant Grove Circuit

To the northwest of Marion, in southwestern Wabash County and in the edge of Miami County, there had developed during the earlier reform period a circuit known as Pleasant Grove. Except for a period from 1876 to 1880

¹⁹⁸American Wesleyan XLI, 2089, Jan. 17, 1883, p. 5.

¹⁹⁹The Wesleyan Methodist, XLII, 2140, Jan. 9, 1884, p. 5; XLII, 1267 (sic), July 16, 1884, p. 5.

²⁰⁰Counties of Lagrange and Noble, Part II, p. 154; American Wesleyan, XXXVI, 1852, July 3, 1878, p. 5.

NOBLE COUNTY HISTORICAL MARKER

Site #38: Lisbon Platted 1847 Post Office 1849-1919 Asa Brown Tavern and Underground Railroad Station

This sign is located on old State Road 3 (Lima Plank Road), at its intersection with County Road 410 North (Lisbon Road) on southwest corner.

Asa Brown came into the wilderness of Allen Township with money. He built the first frame house in 1837, and erected a steam saw mill which for many years did good work. In 1840, he built an ashery and began on an extensive scale to manufacture black and white salts and fine articles of pearl-ash. He manufactured some twenty tons of the ash, which was shipped by wagon to the market in Fort Wayne. About the time the ashery was started, he built an addition to the house in which he placed a large stock of goods, too large and costly to be profitable in the back woods. Goods were given in exchange for ashes and sold on credit, which proved to be long and troublesome. He also opened his house for the entertainment of the public, and his hotel became widely known because of the hospitality of the landlord.

He surveyed and platted the town of Lisbon in October 1847, at which time twenty four lots were laid out along the Lima and Fort Wayne road. His influence enabled him to bring the village mechanics and artisans of all descriptions, but these men were too poor to pay several hundred dollars for a small lot upon which to live, and so were compelled to go to some other locality. At first Mr. Brown did not observe the injury he was doing to his town, as he thought the village must grow, and that sooner or later the prices demanded must be paid. He suffered for his lack of foresight, and when it was too late, his prices for lots were lowered.

Asa Brown could have used his influence to bring the railroad through Lisbon, but he did not believe in railroads, and so Kendallville succeeded in getting the road.

A post office was established in Kendallville December 7, 1836, but was changed to Lisbon in May 1849. Asa Brown became the postmaster January 6, 1850. The post office was begun and discontinued many times during the next years until it was finally closed when Wilbur L. Baughman was postmaster August 30, 1919.

The old Lima Plank Road was a well traveled line for the underground railroad which extended across Allen Township for many years prior to the Civil War. History books record that Lisbon was a station on this railroad. Stories were that many a load of fugitive slaves were seen being conveyed along this line, stopping here and there for refreshments. Augustus H. Whitford is said to have been master, engineer, conductor, and train dispatcher. Mr Waterhouse, residing in Lagrange County, was a sort of Tom Scott or William H. Vanderbilt on this road, and at all hours would order out special trains. One day Mr. Wadsworth saw a load moving very rapidly along, when upon turning the corner swiftly and suddenly, the wagon very nearly overturned, causing several heads to appear in alarm from the covering. Mr. Wadsworth called out to the driver, "Ah, here's your underground railroad!" "Yes," answered the driver, "They're going it almost every night." Many an unfortunate colored man or woman, aiming by the north star for the dominion of the British Queen, has received much needed assistance from the John Browns and Owen Lovejoys of Allen Township.

History of LaGrange and Noble Counties, published 1882

NOBLE COUNTY HISTORICAL MARKER

Site #14: Underground Railroad Station, built in 1840's

This site is located on State Road 3, north of Kendallville, one quarter mile south of 900 N.

The underground railroad was a system of cooperation among anti slavery people, called abolitionists, before 1861 for assisting fugitive slaves to escape to Canada from the south. One such station in Noble County was said to have been the old Stutley Whitford Mansion, located on 1 1/2 miles north of US 6 on Indiana 3. The "passengers" it was said, were hid in the basement beneath the family room. The hearth of the fireplace in that room has several removable bricks which afford an opening through which food could be passed to the escapees. Some claim there was an underground passage way from the basement to a point in a nearby field where the slaves were received and dispatched. Mr. Hossinger, one time owner of the home, said that pieces of brick have been bulldozed up in the area which might be evidence of such an arrangement. The Hart family is in the process of restoring the house to its original beauty. Hundreds of feet of hand made gingerbread trim have been repainted, a balcony accessible from the second floor has been replaced and extensive interior decorating done. A "widows watch", and a cupola have been added atop the house.

This branch of the underground railroad came from Cincinnati through Richmond to Fort Wayne and on to Kendallville and Orland.



Freedom's path

County sites were key 'stations' for Underground Railroad

By DAVE KNOPP

KENDALLVILLE — Voices of freedom once whispered in the attic of a LaOtto church, inside an old Lisbon tavern and under the floor of a rural Kendallville home.

Each was a hiding place or "station" on the Underground Railroad, a network of roads, paths, waterways and shelters organized by whites and blacks in the North to help slaves escape from the South.

In Noble County, those people who led the slaves to freedom, known as "conductors," generally followed the course of what is today old Ind. 3.

A bullet-scarred wooden door displayed in the lobby of LaOtto Wesleyan Church speaks of the congregation's pride for the role its church had as a station.

During the time of the Underground Railroad, in operation from about 1804 until the abolishment of slavery in the United States in 1865, LaOtto Wesleyan was known as Lee Chapel.

It was built in 1859 and originally stood about a quarter mile north of Ind. 205, before being moved to the heart of LaOtto in

1876.

The Wesleyan Methodist Church as a whole had spoken out against slavery, but for the people of Lee Chapel words were not enough; they made their sanctuary, attic and belfry available to the Underground.

One day the church was surrounded by gun-toting slave holders from the South, either out for vengeance or trying to retrieve slaves.

Although northern states such as Indiana were free, the federal Fugitive Slave Law allowed for the capture and return of escaped slaves.

The Southerners fired at the church and hit not only the door that is displayed in the lobby today, but walls and pews.

"Apparently they had enough respect not to shoot out the stained glass, since the original glass is still in," said Jim Watkins, who is co-pastor of LaOtto Wesleyan with his wife, Lois.

Runaway slaves who stayed in Lee Chapel were on one of three main Underground Railways that stretched from the Ohio River (the Kentucky side of which was slave

territory) to Battle Creek, Mich.

Due to the threat posed by the Fugitive Slave Law, most escaping slaves continued from Battle Creek to Port Huron or Detroit and into Canada, where slavery was banned in 1833.

Going north from LaOtto, the next available shelter in Noble County for Underground travelers was the two-story Asa Brown Tavern, at the southwest corner of the Ind. 3 and Lisbon Road.

A house today, the tavern was built around the 1840s and was popular with stage coach drivers, who "changed horses on their trips from Sturgis to Fort Wayne" and "most generally put up for the night," according to a 1916 Fort Wayne newspaper article.

"A lot of people take pictures of it," said Julianna Halmagyi, pointing to the home, which she has lived in for many years, and the historical sign in front of it pro-

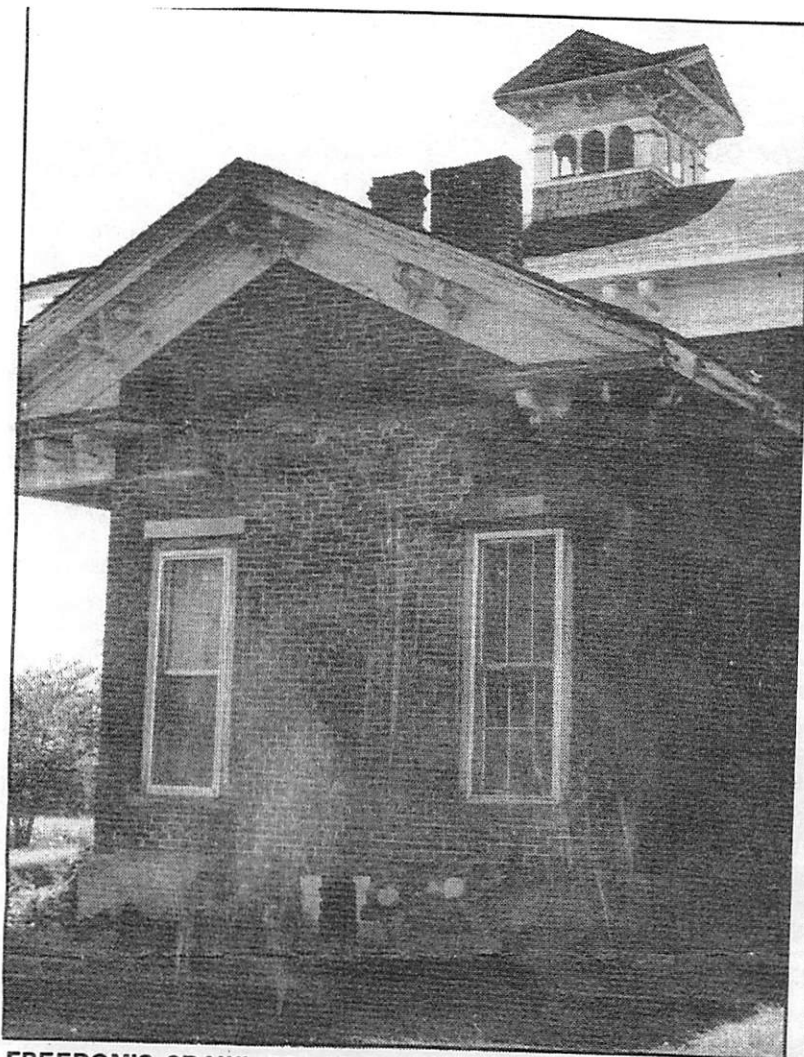
claiming an Underground Railroad station.

Halmagyi has never found anything unusual about the house that would have made it a better-than-average hiding place.

But Wyllis Herrick, a Kendallville resident who grew up in Lisbon and knows a great deal about its history, said he was told the building once had a trap door in a closet that led to a tunnel and out to a barn that no longer stands.

Although much walking was done on the Underground Railroad, slaves were transported any way that worked, and a history of Noble County assembled in 1882 by Weston A. Goodspeed shows many got to Brown's Tavern hidden in wagons.

The history tells of a citizen from the Lisbon area who saw a wagon with a covered load almost



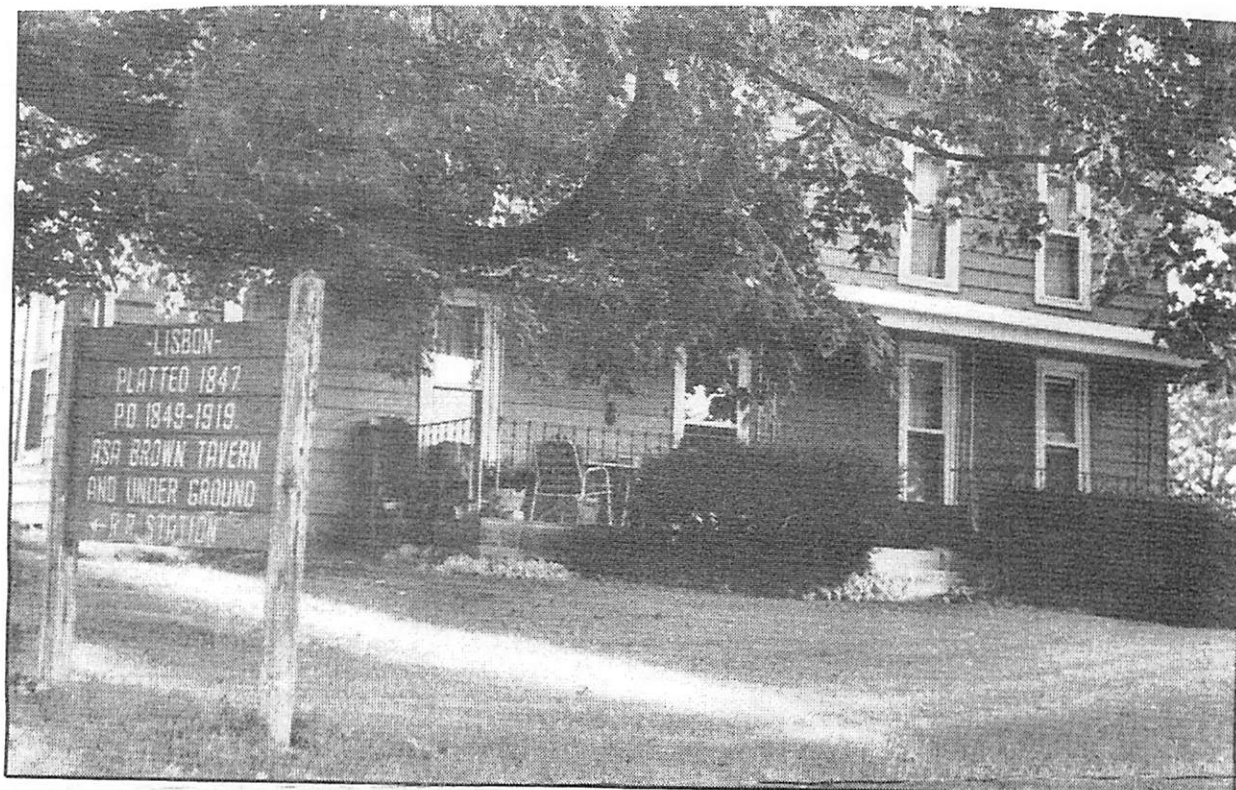
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FREEDOM'S CRAWL SPACE — The opening at the base of the Richard and Deanna Hart home north of Kendalville leads to a crawl space that once hid fugitive slaves on the Underground Railroad. Those assisting the slaves watched for their arrival in the widow's watch at the roof's peak. (News-Sun photo by Dave Knopp)



PROUD SCAR — Jim and Lois Watkins, co-pastors of LaOtto Wesleyan Church, point to one of the gouges on the old church door left by bullets fired from slave owners. (News-Sun photo by Dave Knopp)



SAFE HAVEN — This home in Lisbon, owned by Julianna Halmagyi, is said to have had an underground tunnel leading to a barn that helped con-

ceal runaway slaves. (News-Sun photo by Dave Knopp)

FREEDOM

Continued from Page A1

overtake around a corner.

The near-accident caused "several woolly heads to appear in alarm from the covering," according to Goodspeed, and the citizen said to the driver, "Ah, here's your Underground Railroad!"

"Yes," the driver replied, "they're going it almost every night."

Night was the only safe time to travel, so stations were used mainly during the day, with Underground passengers often arriving during the early morning.

Looking for arrivals was easy from the widow's watch of a home about 1 1/2 miles north of Kendallville along the west side of Ind. 3, the last chance for sanctuary in Noble County going north.

The majestic, two-story brick home was built by Stutley Whitford in 1844, but did not become an Underground Railroad station until after he added a north wing in 1855.

Under the approximately 540-square-foot wing is a crawl space about 30 inches high, with the only access through a tunnel leading to an orchard north of the house.

Some of the floor bricks around the wing's fireplace were removable, so food and other items could be passed down.

The home's owners today, Richard and Deanna Hart, estimate the crawl space could have held 25 to 30 people.

In 1860 Whitford sold the home and surrounding property to Chauncey Waterhouse, a wealthy landowner and farmer who did not move into the house but devoted its use to the Underground Railroad.

So popular was the station that a map showing routes the Underground had used across the country, published in the late 1890s, has a line going through "Waterhouse's Place."

The tunnel is no longer there, having been leveled by a bulldozer more than 30 years ago after a barn burned.

The crawl space is still there, however, with its entrance exposed by the leveling and worn away to a larger size.

A historical sign marking it as an Underground Railroad station attracts a steady stream of attention, the Harts said.

Some people just stop to take a photo, while others come up to the

house with questions.

"It's amazing how many people think it was an actual railroad," Deanna Hart said, adding that some wonder if there are any ghosts and, "If there are, I've never heard them."

Estimates of the number of runaway slaves who passed through Indiana range from 2,000-10,000.

There may have been other stations in Noble County, but the secrecy surrounding the Underground has caused many details and stories to be lost.

"They tried to keep their stations secret," said Bob Gagen, Noble County historian, "and for the most part they did."

Even less is known of the people who helped run the Underground.

"They were rich in faith and courage and their hospitality was equal to every emergency," wrote M. B. Butler of Steuben County in his 1914 book, "My Story of the Civil War and the Underground Railroad."

"You would be very much surprised," Butler tells his readers, "if now you should learn that some of your oldest and best neighbors and friends were once operators of the Underground Railroad."

'Underground Railroad' Active Here

By JOHNSTON CRAIG

Underground railroad! Today we would interpret this to mean a railway underground — perhaps a subway. In the 1850's, some residents of Noble and LaGrange played an active part in the operation of the Underground Railroad.

The organization of the Underground Railroad in Indiana was perfected by John T. Hanover, alias John Hansen. He was actually an agent of the Anti-Slavery League. Hanover recruited educated and intelligent young and middle-aged men. These men had different occupations; some were book agents, some were singing teachers, some school teachers and writing teachers, some were map makers, some were real Yankee peddlers and some were geologists and naturalists. These agents never engaged in political arguments, always acquiesced to the sentiment of the majority of the people.

There were four regular crossing places established on the Ohio River, one at Evansville, one at Leavenworth, one at Madison, and another at Lawrenceburg. At these places there were men, usually supposed to be fishermen, who were always prepared to take fugitive parties across the river.

The young men assigned to the hazardous duties of keeping the Underground Railroad open were disciplined men similar to that of secret service men. Each man had a code, generally using names of townships and numbers of sections and ranges, and by acres when the numbers were above 36. The routes these men were on were called by the names of timber such as linden, oak, maple, hickory, walnut, dogwood, sassafras, beech, and all sorts of timber that were native to the country in which the men worked.

The two principal routes of the Underground Railroad were, one which passed through Indianapolis, Plymouth, and South Bend and thence to Battle Creek, Michigan; the other starting at Cincinnati, north through Richmond, Portland, Decatur, Fort Wayne, Orland, Coldwater, to Battle Creek. From Battle Creek, Michigan, the fugitive slaves were sent to Canada, either through Detroit or north through Flint and Port Huron.

As a boy in Michigan, I was enthralled by the tales of the Underground Railroad. Our colored barber in Romeo, Michigan, Ben Bradley, used to tell how his father escaped from Covington, Kentucky in 1853. It seems that Ben's father was a free-negro, working in the barbershop of a man who was friendly toward escaping fugitives. He was thought to be a member of the Underground Railroad.

One day, toward evening, Ben's father was shaving a white man. In the midst of lathering his customer's face, Ben's employer came rushing in and whispered in his ear that "the slavers were after them." Straightway Ben Bradley's father told his customer that he had to be excused for a moment and went to the backroom. That was the last Bradley's father saw his customer, it is no telling how long he sat in the chair before he realized that the barber had flown.

Ben tells that his father contacted the agent for the Underground Railroad, and soon he was on his way across the Ohio. According to the story, Ben's father was passed from one agent to another up the Fort Wayne route, passing through Orland to Flint, Michigan, and thence to Canada. However, in two years, Ben's father returned to Flint, where Ben Bradley was born in 1856. When Ben was but 16 he started as a barber in my home town of Romeo, Michigan.

Ben Bradley, I shall always remember. A barber to bankers, doctors, lawyers, and teachers. Some men never having had their hair cut by none other than Ben during their entire life. It was from Ben that I learned how to play checkers. To this venerable colored man, I am indebted to him for many homely philosophies — durable in any generation.

Benjamin B. Waterhouse, a native of New York State, will be long remembered in Noble County for his part in the Underground Railroad. Historians write that "he was one of the noblest and kindest-hearted men that ever lived." His conscience cried out against human slavery and this led him to prominent connection with the Underground Railroad.

Mr. Waterhouse lived in Milford Township, LaGrange County, and he lost no opportunity to assist runaway slaves on their way to Canada, and his house became a harbor in the storm, and was known to colored people far down the southern states.

As far as we know, the first noted station on the Noble County branch line of the Underground Railroad was at the home of Alon-

the fugitives in a covered buggy or, in some cases, just using an open wagon, a blanket was thrown over their heads. The escaping negroes were taken to Orland and were delivered to men named Clark or Barry; hence they were taken to John Waterhouse's residence south of Coldwater. It is reported that Mr. B. B. Waterhouse helped some 100 runaway slaves to escape.

After the enactment of the fugitive slave law in 1852, Mr. Waterhouse worked harder than ever. He had loyal support from Miss Whitford, daughter of Alonzo Whitford, in Allen Township (Noble County).

Strong anti-slavery sentiment developed in 1860, even though nine-tenths of the Northern people had no knowledge whatever of the work of the Underground Railroad. Abolitionists held meetings in nearby counties. The center of activity was around Orland. One such meeting was noted, at which Miss Whitford, of Allen Township, Noble County, was present and sang "with power and effect." One verse of an appropriate song went like this:

"The baying hounds are on my track; Old massa's close behind,

And he's resolved to take me back, across the Dixon line."

The name of B. B. Waterhouse will be written on the pages of history alongside that of "Old" John Brown.

These were the days of "Whigs," "Free Soilers," "Know-Nothings," and the "People's Party," the "Democrats" and the "Republicans." The events of 1854, 1855, and 1856 were but a forerunner to secession of the southern states over the slavery question. In 1856, the Methodist Church declared the exclusion of slave owners causing a split of the Know-Nothing Party.

The people of Indiana were not ready to sacrifice the Union for the abolition of slavery. However, by 1858, the parting of the ways over the slavery question was an actuality. It had been going on for over a decade. In the election of 1860, Lincoln carried the State practically bringing to an end any sympathy for the Southern view of slavery.

The Anti-Slavery question of the 1850's brought about more participation in politics than at any period of American history. It is a period of history to which we pay little attention in 1963. Some of the great American leaders of all time blossomed on the horizon. The pages of history are not epitaphs like some grave markers but are alive with events that portend the future.

zo D. Whitford, Allen Township, south of Coldwater, Michigan.
a strong anti-slavery man. The William Cockrum, in his novel,
home of B. B. Waterhouse in Mil. "The Underground Railroad,"
ford Township was next important (Oakland City, 1915) gives thrill-
station. From there, the Under- ing accounts of the hectic days of
ground Railway's next stop was the 1850's when anti-slavery (Abolitionists) fostered the passage of
at Orland. From there, the fugi- tives were directed to the home of
John Waterhouse, twelve miles Mr. B. B. Waterhouse would put e

Sons quarreled over Waterhouse fortune

At the time of his death on June 29, 1917, at the age of 90, Chauncey G.R. Waterhouse was reputedly the richest man in Noble County.

After coming to Kendallville from Milford Township, LaGrange County, in 1869, he acquired over 2,000 acres of land on six farms throughout the area.

Known as the "farm king" of northern Indiana, Waterhouse acquired his fortune through successful stock dealing, sound investments and progressive agricultural practices on his farms.

In 1881, he built the ornate 14-room brick mansion in the English Regency style on Kendallville's north edge overlooking what is now Publix Village Square shopping center.

The building was razed a few years ago to make room for the brick house and outbuildings now on the site.

The Waterhouse home was set amid orchards and fields, which in the early decades of this century provided the playing grounds for early Kendallville high school and semi-pro baseball and football teams.

It was there that Waterhouse, a widower, died after a two-year struggle with cancer, leaving an estate of a quarter-of-a-million dollars.

Distribution of this estate led to an acrimonious three-week trial in Auburn, with Albert B. Waterhouse, known around Kendallville as Bert, the eldest of the three Waterhouse sons, charging that his brothers, Frank and Homer, had received larger shares of the inheritance than him because their father was of "unsound mind" when he made his will in December 1914.

It was, according to the Auburn Evening Star, "one of the hardest-fought cases in the history of the courts in this part of the state."

The two parties assembled a glittering array of legal talent to present their arguments, with the final legal costs said to



**Bob
Gagen**

have exceeded \$10,000.

Plaintiff Albert Waterhouse retained Kendallville attorney Vermont Finley, Howard W. Mountz of Auburn and Charles W. Miller, former United States district attorney for Indiana and former attorney general of Indiana, from Indianapolis.

Counsel for defendants Frank and Homer Waterhouse were Theodore A. Redmond and Rex S. Emerick of Kendallville. Auburn's Edgar W. Atkinson, former Judge L.W. Royce of Warsaw, and W.F. McNagny of Columbia City.

Royce and McNagny were both former congressmen and McNagny had been a law partner of Thomas R. Marshall, vice president of the United States under President Woodrow Wilson.

Thus were the opposing sides arrayed at the trial's opening Jan. 6, 1919, before Judge Dan M. Link in the DeKalb Circuit Court.

Chauncey G.R. Waterhouse and his parents came to northeastern Indiana in 1837 when he was a boy of 10.

Originally from Connecticut, they traveled to northern Indiana by wagon from Oswego County in upstate New York, following the same route taken by many of LaGrange County's earliest pioneers.

From his farm in Milford Township, Benjamin Waterhouse, Chauncey's father, became active in the underground railroad established to move southern slaves through this part of the state to Canada and freedom.

Waterhouse assisted these runaways at every opportunity and is said to have helped more than 100 blacks to become free persons.

His home north of South Milford was one of the four permanent underground "stations" in the area.

First was the Whitfords, two miles north of Kendallville (still an imposing pillared brick home of the west side of Ind. 3), with the others to the north being at Orland (an abolitionist stronghold originally named Vermont Station by its first settlers from New England) and the residence of John Waterhouse (a relative) 12 miles south of Coldwater, Mich.

The escaping slaves were conveyed along the route at night by covered buggies and wagons.

Such assistance became illegal with the passage of the fugitive slave law in 1852, but this did not keep "conductor" Benjamin Waterhouse from his work.

In the fall of 1854, he was arraigned in the U.S. Circuit Court at Indianapolis for violation of this law.

One of the prosecuting witnesses was Cyrus Fillmore, a LaGrange County farmer and brother of ex-President Millard Fillmore.

He was found guilty and fined \$50 and given a 24-hour suspended jail sentence.

This had little effect on the elder Mr. Waterhouse, who continued to assist fleeing slaves until the start of the Civil War in 1861.

"May his name be written with those of John Brown and Owen Lovejoy" was the praise rendered him in the 1882 history of LaGrange County — ranking him with the two most prominent figures in the abolitionist movement.

Next week: Waterhouse vs. Waterhouse. The trial.

Bob Gagen's column appears weekly in *The News-Sun*.

NOBLE COUNTY CAPITALS & (Popular history of) GREATER ALBION 1808

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NOBLE COUNTY CAPITALS

church organization. Mr. Brown, at an early day, had settled upon the farm south of Albion where he died December 21, 1907. Some fine timber grew upon the farm, and Mr. Brown was clearing it off rapidly with his strong hands. The church society needed a place of worship, so the new minister visited Mr. Brown at his farm and solicited aid for the structure. Not belonging to any church organization, but of a generous disposition to benefit the morals of the community, he said he had some fine large oak trees, and he promised the preacher he would cut them down and have them sawed into lumber to help build the church. This he did; and when worship was held in the new building, Mr. Brown and his wife went and heard the sermons several times. The seed fell upon fertile soil, for soon both become active and conscientious adherents of the faith. From that time until his death he was a constant devotee each Sunday, and at all times, of the church and the Sunday school.

WESLEYAN METHODIST.

It is to be regretted that at present the old records of this society are not to be found; but enough has been gleaned to give somewhat reliable data. It is probable that the organization was effected in 1867 or '78. A juncture of two other circuits or missions were merged into Albion.

Among the earliest preachers were Rev. Jesse Hyatt, succeeded by Rev. Albert H. Hyatt. The

AND GREATER ALBION.

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present handsome little place of worship is located at the extreme east end of Main street, a photo-engraving of which is shown. It was dedicated by Rev. Henry West, at the time that Rev. Worth was its pastor.

The late Solomon Franks and wife were charter members. Some of the staunch supporters of this church were the late George Black and wife Emma. An excellent Sunday school is successfully conducted, and is a valuable auxiliary to the church.