

Ohio Historical Underground Railroad Trail

During the 19th century, a network of secret routes and safe houses were set up to assist enslaved African Americans escape through free states into Canada. This passage for freedom seekers became known as the Underground Railroad, which stretched across the U.S. and included states like Ohio.

Learn more at Ohio.org/UGRRTrail.



Underground Railroad Trail Locations

1. National Underground Railroad Freedom Center in Cincinnati

The National Underground Railroad Freedom Center immerses visitors into the stories of the Underground Railroad. The mission of the museum is to reveal stories of heroes from the era of the Underground Railroad to contemporary times, challenging, and inspiring us to fight for human rights today.

READ: “Discover the National Underground Railroad Freedom Center”

2. Harriet Beecher Stowe House in Cincinnati

Harriet Beecher Stowe and her family moved to Cincinnati in 1832. Stowe was an abolitionist and women’s rights advocate and wrote *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*, the popular 19th century novel credited with laying the groundwork for the Civil War.

READ: “Delve into America’s Storied Past at the Harriet Beecher Stowe House”

3. The Ross-Gowdy Museum of Historic New Richmond

The Greek Revival style house, built in 1853, was later lived in by Thomas Gowdy. Gowdy was a defendant along with Henry Poindexter in the famous Ohio Supreme Court case *Anderson v. Poindexter*. The Ohio Supreme Court unanimously upheld the ruling that Poindexter, a former enslaved man, became a free man once he started working in Ohio.

VISIT: Clermont County Freedom Trail

4. John Parker House in Ripley

The John Parker House in Ripley is the former home of African-American abolitionist and businessman, who is credited with assisting hundreds of enslaved people to freedom through his Front Street home, which is a National Historic Landmark.

READ: “Explore Ohio’s African American History”

5. John Rankin House in Ripley

The Reverend John Rankin was an ardent abolitionist who assisted enslaved people on their paths to freedom. His home, which is a National Historic Landmark, serves as one of the best-documented and most active Underground Railroad ‘stations’ in Ohio.

READ: “Learn How The John Rankin House Inspired Harriet Beecher Stowe to Write *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*”

6. “The Crossing” - Underground Railroad Mural in Portsmouth

The mural by artist Robert Dafford honors freedom seekers and Scioto County residents who aided them along the Underground Railroad. It is part of the Portsmouth Floodwall Murals, which show Portsmouth’s history through the present day.

VISIT: The River-To-Lake Freedom Trail beginning in Portsmouth

7. The Gammon House in Springfield

George and Sarah Gammon were free persons of color who helped other freedom seekers on their journey north to freedom. Their home is one of three existing Ohio ‘stops’ on the Underground Railroad owned by a free person of color.

VISIT: Paint Creek Freedom Trail in Greenfield

Underground Railroad Trail Locations

8. Hanby House in Westerville

Benjamin Hanby was an abolitionist and composer, whose family lived in the home from 1853-1870. The family moved to Westerville because his father helped to establish Otterbein University.

VISIT: Kelton House Museum & Garden in Columbus

9. Nelson T. Gant Homestead in Zanesville

Nelson T. Gant was a former enslaved man, whose entrepreneurial endeavors led him to becoming one of the wealthiest men in the U.S. His home has been preserved as a place for visitors to learn more about this notable Ohioan.

VISIT: Historic Prospect Place Estate in Trinway

10. Underground Railroad Museum in Flushing

Founded in 1993, the Underground Railroad Museum preserves the past with exhibits portraying the history of the Underground Railroad in Ohio and life in the 1800s.

READ: "Touring the Underground Railroad Museum in Flushing"

11. Haines House Underground Railroad Museum in Alliance

Quaker John Grant moved his family to Ohio in the 19th century. The Grant-Haines family were abolitionists and many of their family members were 'conductors' on the Underground Railroad.

VISIT: Spring Hill Historic Home & Underground Railroad Site in Massillon

12. The John Brown House in Akron

Built around 1830, the home was rented to John Brown and his family. Brown was a famed abolitionist and historians view him as the first U.S. citizen committed to absolute racial equality.

VISIT: The Anti-Slavery Movement And The Underground Railroad In Hudson Virtual Walk Tour with the Hudson Library and Historical Society

13. Hubbard House Underground Railroad Museum in Ashtabula

The home, built by William and Katherine Hubbard around 1841, was a northern terminus on the Underground Railroad. It is listed on the U.S. Department of the Interior National Register of Historic Places.

VISIT: Cozad-Bates House Interpretive Center in Cleveland

14. Follet House Museum in Sandusky

Operated by the Sandusky Library, the former home of Oran and Eliza Follet served as a shelter for freedom seekers. Follet was the publisher of the Lincoln-Douglas Debates, and his wife Eliza hid enslaved people in their basement or woodshed as they made their way across Lake Erie to freedom.

VISIT: Underground Railroad Historic Walking Tour in Sandusky

15. Lathrop House in Sylvania

The Greek-Style style home of the Lathrop family was built in 1850. Lucian and Larissa Lathrop were strong advocates for anti-slavery and part of the Underground Railroad network. They sheltered freedom seekers in a hidden area of their kitchen.

LISTEN: Ohio Freedom Path Audio Guide