



Notable People

RELIGIOUS ORGANIZATIONS

Second Baptist Church
Reverend George Washington Curry
Reverend Henry Charles Clay co-pastor with Curry.
Served in American Civil War as porter/servant to White infantry units

Zion AME
Pastor Robert Graiton Mortimer
First Black graduate of OWU (1868)
Sarah Hurrigan
Zion AME former member and local Black church historian, longtime city school teacher

EDUCATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

At age 17, **Elmer Washington Bryant Curry** started a school called **“The Place of Knowledge for Old and Young.”** It was housed in his neighbor’s kitchen shed, located at the back of the home. Curry also taught at the **Delaware Night School**. In 1889, he founded the **Curry Institute** in Urbana, OH. The school focused on the instruction and training of Black youths and adults.

The South School / Woodward Elementary School (public) **Laura Alice Woodward** is the only person that a Delaware school is named for who was not a Delaware County native. She was a teacher and principal of the South School.

A CENSUS OF THE BLACK COMMUNITY IN DELAWARE (CITY AND COUNTY)*

Year	City	County
1820	4	37
1850	70	135
1880	446	610
1910	485	671
1940	462	650
1970	800	1231
2010	1564	7133

*The source for the 1820 – 1970 census figures is taken from *Roots of the Black Community* by Sarah Hurrigan.

NOTABLE BLACK FAMILIES with a long history in Delaware County

- Alston • Banks • Crawford • Curry • Depp
- Highwarden • Mendenhall • Mitchell • Whyte
- Wilson

PAST BLACK HISTORY PROGRAMS offered by the Delaware County Historical Society

“William Cratty and the Underground Railroad in Delaware County” *presented by Volunteers of the Delaware County Historical Society*

“Homes on Underground Railroad” *presented by Volunteers of the Delaware County Historical Society*

“Voices from the Underground Railroad” *presented by Volunteers of the Delaware County Historical Society*

“Fighting for Freedom: the United States Colored Troops in the Civil War” *presented by Anthony Gibbs, Local History Manager, Ohio History Connection*

“The Curry School, 1890s private school in Delaware, and African-Americans in Ohio in the late 19th Century into the early 20th Century” *presented by Professor Barbara Terzian, OWU and Delaware County Historical Society Volunteer Benny Shoults*

“Frederick Douglass” *reenacted by Tracey Sumner Sr.*

“Hidden Communities: African Americans in Ohio” *presented by Dr. Ric Sheffield from Kenyon College*

“The Underground Railroad” *presented by Volunteers of the Delaware County Historical Society*

“Perspectives on Rutherford B. Hayes and the Compromise of 1877” *Panel Discussion*

“Lucy Depp Settlement Historic Community” *Interviews with current residents (available on YouTube)*



Visit our Museums and other locations:

MEEKER HOMESTEAD MUSEUM
THE BARN AT STRATFORD EVENT VENUE
2690 Stratford Road, Delaware, OH 43015

CRYDER HISTORICAL CENTER:
NASH HOUSE MUSEUM
RESEARCH LIBRARY
Come learn about Black History!
157 East William Street, Delaware, OH 43015

MILLWORKER COTTAGE
2571 Stratford Road, Delaware, OH 43015
(Meeker Way and Stratford Road)

DelawareOhioHistory.org | 740-369-3831



Delaware County Historical Society
Our History, Our Heritage

CULTURAL COMMUNITIES OF DELAWARE COUNTY

Researching Black History

The mission of the Delaware County Historical Society is to promote and sustain interest in the history of Delaware County, through preservation and education. The Black community has a long history in Delaware County that we need to research, preserve and share. The Historical Society has begun the research into the Black community. This brochure is an indication of that research and the programs that have been developed. It is just the beginning. To gain a complete picture of the Black experience in Delaware County, we would like input from those who have lived it. If you have pictures, objects, or stories that give insight into the history of the Black community, please consider sharing with us.



Reenactors from a DCHS program.

Researching Black History

UNDERGROUND RAILROAD (UGRR)

Ohio's location made for a popular route taken by escaped slaves from the South seeking freedom in Canada. The anti-slavery sympathies of a percentage of Delaware County settlers supported the pre-Civil War "underground railroad" through the area.

The UGRR was a secret network of citizens willing to help fugitive slaves. Conductors and Station Masters were the citizens who guided the escaping slaves between stations (homes, barns, fields, caves) on their way to Canada.

Africa Road in eastern Delaware County owes its name to a long-ago farmer's critical reference to neighbors' assistance to fugitive slaves. The town of East Orange often was referred to by slave patrollers (local people who trying to do "citizens'" duties for their southerner neighbors) as Africa, Ohio, due to increase of free Black residents. In 1859, slaves from a North Carolina plantation owned by the Alston family were sent north. The plantation's mistress had disapproved of slavery and made arrangements for the slaves to travel to Ohio and freedom. These slaves moved to the community of Africa (or East Orange), lived in log homes, were employed by the anti-slavery farmers and joined the Wesleyan Methodist Church. After the Civil War, the freed slaves left Africa and settled in Delaware, Worthington, and Westerville. They took the last name of their former owner, Alston.

Among the known UGRR Conductors active in Delaware County:

- Benedict Family
- William Cratty
- George Gooding
- Samuel Patterson

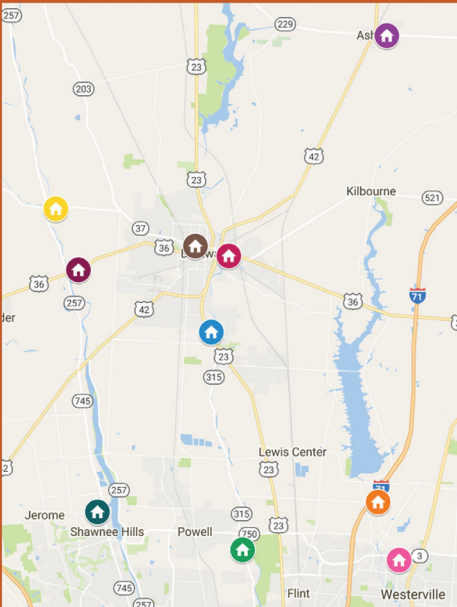
UGRR Stations / Station Masters:

- Benjamin and Major Bartholomew (corner of Jewett Rd. & State Route 315)
- Benedict Family (Morrow County)
- Hanby House (Westerville)
- Sharp Family home
- McClure Tavern

Though most of the properties are now private, the full self-guided Driving Tour of UGRR Homes at www.delawareohiohistory.org (map below) reveals documented UGRR sites in Delaware County with notes about the above families.

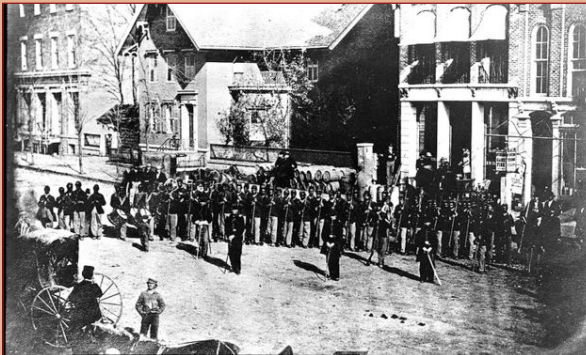
Delaware County Stations On The Underground Railroad

- Meeker Homestead
- Patterson House
- Ashley House
- House of Seven Oaks
- Bartholomew House
- Hodges House
- McClure Tavern and Barn
- Depp Settlement
- Van Deman House
- Sharpe House



MILITARY

There were two Union Army Civil War training camps in what is today the city of Delaware. In 1862, Camp Delaware stood on the west side of the Olentangy River near the area where Sandusky Street and Olentangy Avenue meet. The camp was for White soldiers. During the summer of 1863, a second camp was established for Black soldiers on the east side of the Olentangy. It became the rendezvous point for most Black Ohioans joining the army. At the completion of their training in November of 1863, the soldiers lined up on Sandusky Street for their official send-off to war. The unit was



Photograph showing a portion of the 127th Regiment, Ohio Volunteer Infantry (OVI). Taken in Delaware, on Sandusky Street immediately south of the Ft. Delaware Hotel, probably in 1863. The 127th Regiment OVI was the first complete African American regiment recruited in Ohio.

designated the 127th Regiment of the Ohio Volunteer Infantry. Upon recognition as a federal unit, the 127th was renamed the 5th Regiment United States Colored Infantry. Four members of the unit were awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor. Three were from Camp Delaware – Powhatan Beaty, James H. Bronson and Milton Holland. They were among only twenty-one Blacks in the Union forces to receive the medal. Other African American units were mustered into service at Camp Delaware through 1864. It is believed to be the only place in Ohio where Black men trained for the Union Army.

John Freeman Shorter was from Delaware and

served as a 2nd Lt. in the 55th Massachusetts Infantry Regiment. He was among 222 Black Ohioans who volunteered.

FREE NEGROES

In 1804, Ohio passed Black Code Laws. Black Laws were a series of restrictions on black citizens imposed by the Ohio Constitution of 1802 and by state law. Growing antislavery sentiment caused most of these laws to be repealed before the Civil War. Like other Northwest Territory states, Ohio was influenced by major southern slaveholders' attitude toward race. Though slavery was not permitted in Ohio, Blacks could not vote, testify in court against Whites, serve on a jury, hold office, or serve in the state militia. Further legislation required Blacks to file a \$500 bond before settling in the state and to register their certificates of freedom in the county clerk's office before getting a job. Blacks were not permitted in the public school system until 1849.

The Lucy Depp Settlement in Shawnee Hills was the first Black-owned farm in Delaware County. It was founded in 1835 by freed slave Abraham Depp and named for his daughter. The Black settlers there played a part in the Underground Railroad. In later years, Lucy Depp Park was also a summer resort for Blacks from Columbus and elsewhere in Ohio.

In the 1820s, Col. James Crawford and William McClure, arrived from Virginia. Crawford acquired property between Delaware and Ostrander through the Military District grant. The two friends brought in five slaves from Kentucky. The slaves were freed upon coming into Ohio but continued to live and work in the Delaware area. Thomas Crawford, one of the former slaves, helped construct the McClure Tavern. His son, Stewart co-founded the Crawford Brass Band with Benjamin Franklin Thomas. It became one of the more popular bands in Ohio. Stewart's daughter, Mildred, was the first native Delaware County Black OWU graduate (1908). She married Stephen McNeil, the second Black male to graduate from OWU (1907).