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# The Road to Freedom

### Anti-slavery Activity in Greenfield, Massachusetts

# Embracing the Cause: The Anti-slavery Movement in Massachusetts

By the 1850s, New Englanders prided themselves on their free labor economy. Though deeply ambivalent toward the increasingly immigrant workforce fueling the region's rapidly expanding manufacturing sector, many nevertheless rooted their regional identity in contrasting New England's labor system with that of the slaveholding South. The influence of free labor ideology led many New Englanders, even those possessing little compassion for the slaves themselves, to assert the moral superiority of supposedly "pious, hardworking Yankees" over "dissipated southern aristocrats" who relied on enslaved workers to take care of them. A Greenfield resident noted in an anonymous article in the Gazette and Mercury in 1838 that "we inherit the free hills and valleys of New England, far from the slave market and the slave ship." But in reality, New Englanders possessed strong historical connections to slavery. Enslaved Africans played an important role in building the region, and at least three resided in Greenfield prior to 1800. In the wake of a gradual emancipation process spanning the latter eighteenth and

## ANTI-SLAVERY CONVENTION IN FRANKLIN COUNTY.

In accordance with a public invitation to the people of Franklin County from a Committee of 12 gentlemen appointed for the purpose by Franklin Association of Ministers, to convene for the formation of a County Anti-Slavery Society, an assembly was convened in the Methodist Church in Greenfield, on Thursday, the 8th inst. The call of the convention.

call of the convention.

was read by Grorge T. Davis, and the convention was organized by the choice of William Whitakes was moderator, and Grorge T. Davis, and T. Pack. S. Ard, Js. as secretaries. The meeting was then opened with prayer, by Rey. Asa Rand.

A Committee consisting of T. Packard, Jr. G T. Davis and A. Howland, was appointed to report a Constitution for a County Auti-Slavery Society.

A Committee to arrange the business for the meeting was appointed, consisting of W. Tileston, C. P. GROSVENOR, and R. RANSOM.

Voted, That the following gentlemen, viz. Rev. Asa Rand, Rev. Cyrus P. Grosvenor, Mr. Henry B. Stanton, Mr. Ahnet B. Warner, and Mr. Amos Dresser, agents of the American Anti-Slavery Society, be invited to take a part in the meeting.

Several resolutions, hereafter named, were offered and supported by different gentlemen, and finally adopted.

The Committee appointed for the purpose, reported a Constitution, which was under discussion, when it was voted to adjourn till two o'clock P. M.

Convention met according to adjournment. After some discussion, the following Constitution and Preamble were adopted, viz.

Formation of the Franklin County Anti-Slavery Society Greenfield Gazette, Dec. 27, 1836

early nineteenth centuries, many remained in the region as free people of color, organizing strong black communities and taking up the cause of the southern slave.

The anti-slavery campaign in the United States first emerged during the revolutionary years. The nation's first two anti-slavery societies, the Pennsylvania Abolition Society (1775) and the New York Manumission Society (1784), advocated programs of gradual emancipation

achieved through legal and constitutional channels and spearheaded by socially prominent, well-educated elites. In the 1830s, however, the tactical center of American abolitionism shifted to Massachusetts, where a new generation of activists mobilized the grassroots—including blacks and women—to demand an immediate end to slavery. Black and white activists forged ties—sometimes strong, sometimes uneasy—



Center of Greenfield Barber's Historical Collections, 1841



to organize local anti-slavery societies across the state, transform public sentiment by appealing to the emotions as well as the intellect, and spark a grassroots revolt strong enough to topple the very foundations of the slave system. These new abolitionists sought to build a mass movement fueled by the actions of "ordinary" people, transfer Bay Staters' allegiance from colonization to immediate emancipation, and decrease the influence of the Massachusetts Colonization Society.

Organized in 1817, the American Colonization Society and its state affiliates echoed Thomas Jefferson's sentiments that blacks and whites could never live together in harmony. Colonizationists attempted to soothe southern fears of racial insurrection by insisting that emancipation and black emigration go hand in hand, going so far as to advocate the forcible removal of free people of color to Africa. While some African Americans supported black-led emigration programs to Canada, Haiti, and Africa, the majority opposed colonization as a blatantly racist attempt to deny blacks their natural rights of citizenship in the country of their birth. Contact with black anti-colonizationists radicalized many white opponents of slavery, including Massachusetts' own William Lloyd Garrison, editor of the nation's most famous anti-slavery paper—*The Liberator*—into the crusaders who led the grassroots campaigns of the 1830s. These new abolitionists drew interested crowds at their public lectures in Greenfield, but often found themselves debating local residents supportive of colonization, fearful of racial intermarriage, or disturbed by the speakers' explicit advocacy of racial equality.

#### **Organizing Franklin County**

Massachusetts abolitionists formed the world's first integrated anti-slavery organization—the New England Anti-Slavery Society—in 1832. Quickly renamed the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society (MAS), the group embraced two central goals: ending slavery at once and "revolutionizing public opinion" in regard to black rights. Devoting the majority of its funds to disseminating publications and keeping its traveling lecturers circulating throughout the state, the MAS worked tirelessly to build the local organizations so essential to mounting a grassroots campaign. By 1837, nearly two hundred local societies dotted the landscape, including at least thirteen in Franklin County.

The ninety-two member Franklin County Anti-Slavery Society (FCAS) formed in December 1836 to tie together the efforts of the town organizations. Its inaugural convention, held at the Methodist Episcopal Church in Greenfield, wrote a constitution, appointed a business committee and elected officers. Attendees chose, among others, Asa Howland of Conway as President, Theophilus Packard of Shelburne as Secretary, and George T. Davis of Greenfield as Treasurer. Other Greenfield representatives to the convention included Unitarian minister John Parkman, lawyer George Grennell, and merchants Hart Leavitt and Sylvester Maxwell.

Noting that "slaveholding is sin, and ought at all times to be regarded and treated as such," the FCAS constitution pledged the organization to "labor for the abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia and the territories," "promote the moral and intellectual improvement of the colored population at home," and "remove public prejudice." Several Franklin County men, including Greenfield lawyer George T. Davis and Rev. John Parkman, won appointment as Vice-Presidents of the state society in 1838 and 1839.

Members reconvened at the Methodist Church for the society's first annual meeting from January 16–17, 1838. The Board of Directors drew up a series of anti-slavery petitions to Congress to be distributed to town societies for signing and submission. These regular

#### **Greenfield Methodist Episcopal Church**

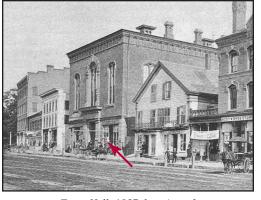
Around the turn of the twentieth century, long-time Greenfield resident Samuel O. Lamb noted that the early anti-slavery meetings at the Methodist church "made an impression on me that time has not effaced." Established in 1831, the congregation erected its first building around 1834 on the site currently occupied by the courthouse. Site of the inaugural convention and several later meetings of the Franklin County Anti-Slavery Society, the church lent strong institutional support to the growth of abolitionist sentiment in the county. After losing their building in 1846 due to a financial crisis within the congregation, the Methodists met for a time in the town hall before purchasing the old St. James Episcopal Church building and relocating the structure to just east of its current location at 25 Church Street.

#### **Washington Hall**

Constructed in 1857, the Washington Hall auditorium provided the space necessary to establish Greenfield's position on the lyceum lecture circuit. The auditorium comprised the second floor of the new town hall, which stood on the site of the current-day Veterans' Mall. Addresses by nationally prominent figures such as Henry Ward Beecher, Theodore Parker, Ralph Waldo Emerson, and Oliver Wendell Holmes exposed residents to some of the newest and most exciting currents in contemporary literary and political thought. Anti-slavery activists such as Beecher and Parker preached abolitionism at every opportunity, often using highly dramatic



Coldbrook Springs Baptist Church, original location Image courtesy Peter S. Miller



Town Hall, 1857, location of Washington Hall Auditorium Image courtesy Historical Society of Greenfield

niques to grip their audiences' emotions.

#### **Coldbrook Springs Baptist Church**

Though not a component of Greenfield's antebellum landscape, the current-day home of the Zion Korean Church possesses its own rich connections to the anti-slavery movement. According to a June 9, 1953 article in the *Greenfield Recorder*, the church, originally constructed in 1842 in Coldbrook Springs, a section of Barre, served as a meeting place for several anti-slavery societies and hosted many lectures by William Lloyd Garrison. When development of the Ware River threatened the village's future, the

Coldbrook Springs Baptists sold the building to the Greenfield Christian Science congregation. The Christian Scientists reconstructed the church at 463 Main Street in 1936, preserving the vast majority of the structure's original architectural features. As the Scientists possessed little use for the church bell, they offered it to Second Congregational Church as a replacement for the congregation's cracked one. The Coldbrook Springs bell hangs in the Second Congregational belfry to this day. Though a relatively recent addition to Greenfield's historic downtown, the building offers a firsthand connection to the broader history of anti-slavery activity across western Massachusetts. Its walls housed both local activists and national leaders, a reminder of Massachusetts' pivotal role in shaping the tactics and character of the national antislavery movement.

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ed several African Americans: Vincy, the nursemaid; Jim, a manservant; and Eliza, the cook. Their legal status is uncertain. Given the era, they could have been enslaved, free, or in transition. When Ezra Stiles died in 1795, Emelia Leavitt brought two of his aged servants— Newport and Nabby—to Greenfield. Stiles bought Newport in 1756 from a slave trader in his congregation who recently returned from a voyage to Guinea, naming the young boy for his new hometown. His discomfort with slavery rising in tandem with his willingness to accept blacks as equal members of his church, Stiles freed Newport in 1778 upon accepting the



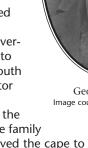
Leavitt-Hovey House, 1900 Image courtesy Historical Society of Greenfield

presidency of Yale. Four years later, the bleak economic prospects facing free blacks in Rhode Island drove the couple to New Haven, where Newport approached Stiles for a job. In accordance with common practice, Stiles agreed upon the condition that the couple indenture their two year old son Jacob to him until the age of twenty-four. Newport and Nabby did not linger long in Greenfield. Missing their old home, they soon returned to New Haven, revealing the strong communal ties that bound eighteenth century blacks as well as whites.

Both Roger Leavitt and his oldest son Joshua helped to found the American & Foreign Anti-Slavery Society, and the Yale-educated Joshua threw himself into the anti-slavery cause on a national scale, serving as publisher of the American Anti-Slavery Society's official newspaper, the Emancipator, and later the New York Independent. Ohio State University historian Wilbur Siebert listed Joshua's brother Hart, a Charlemont resident, as one of Franklin County's Underground Railroad operators, "a sturdy abolitionist who did all he could to help slaves gain their freedom."

#### **George Grennell**

Lawyer George Grennell, another founding member of the FCAS, ranked among the county's most prominent men. Elected to the U.S. House of Representatives in 1828, he served for eleven years, vocally encouraging his reluctant colleagues to extend diplomatic recognition to Haiti, the western hemisphere's first independent black republic and a lightning rod for Americans' racial fears. The first President of the Troy & Greenfield Railroad Company and the holder of many local and county offices, Grennell, according to the Greenfield Gazette Centennial Edition, "early took a positive stand in favor of human freedom and equal rights." Along with D.W. Alvord and Hugh Thompson, Grennell served as a Greenfield delegate to an 1854 mass meeting in Worcester that adopted a resolution condemning the Kansas-Nebraska Act (which overturned the historic Missouri Compromise to open the two territories to slavery). Two years later, he organized a public meeting to protest South Carolina congressman Preston Brooks' caning of Massachusetts senator Charles Sumner, an outspoken abolitionist, on the floor of the U.S. Senate. A cape style home now standing at 53 High Street served as the Grennell homestead at 500 Main Street until 1846, at which time the family





George Grennell Image courtesy Historical Society of Greenfield

constructed a larger and more stylish house on the property and moved the cape to its present-day location. Though later owners have altered both homes, the two Grennell residences continue to provide a link to an earlier era.

petitions, predominately signed and circulated by women, constituted a central element of the abolitionists' strategy through the 1850s, and Franklin County women actively participated. Roger Leavitt, a prosperous Charlemont farmer and head of a family whose anti-slavery work would eventually expand far beyond Franklin County, took over as President, and members re-elected George T. Davis Treasurer. Members of the Board noted in their annual report that "the conviction is becoming stronger in Franklin County that slavery concerns all men and that they have an important part to act in its removal from the United States."

Besides the FCAS, other groups in the county also spoke out against southern slaveholding. The Franklin County Association of Congregational Ministers condemned the practice in 1838, petitioned the U.S. House of Representatives in opposition to the annexation of Texas, and distributed a declaration of conviction against slavery to every minister in the county for declaration and publication. That same year, Deerfield residents adopted anti-slavery resolutions in Town Meeting calling upon Congress to abolish slavery and the slave trade and ensure northern free blacks' safety in the face of kidnapping and extradition attempts. The Greenfield newspapers devoted substantial space to slaveryrelated topics. From February to April 1838, the Gazette and Mercury published an ongoing debate over the constitutionality of restricting slavery and the effectiveness (or lack thereof) of the anti-slavery movement. Employing pen names, several local residents launched into a vitriolic exchange filled with hyperbole, strong convictions, and a significant diversity of opinion. Around the same time, regular columns from an ardently abolitionist writer calling himself FREEDOM augmented the debate by insisting that the fundamental issues at stake were not political, but rather moral in nature.

Despite the organizational successes of the 1830s, the decade brought schism to the anti-slavery movement, which fractured over differing opinions regarding the appropriate relationship between anti-slavery and the other reform movements of the day. Radical reformers such as Garrison blended their anti-slavery principles with progressive (and generally unpopular) positions on women's rights, organized religion, and governmental authority. Skeptical that true reform could be achieved through the ballot box, they opposed efforts to form an anti-slavery political party or make political action a litmus test for participation in the movement. Others, convinced that political engagement offered the only practical means for securing constitutional change and concerned that the progressives' positions on other issues would alienate moderates from the anti-slavery cause, pressed to block women from full participation in the movement and marginalize the Garrisonians.

When the conservatives failed to sway the majority of the MAS membership to their point of view at the 1839 annual convention, they organized a rival organization known as the Massachusetts Abolition Society. Supported by a new newspaper, the Massachusetts Abolitionist, the "new organization," as it was perpetually known, enrolled only men and required all members to participate in direct political activity. Adherents joined conservatives from other states in breaking away from the American Anti-Slavery Society the following year and forming the American & Foreign Anti-Slavery Society. At least two Franklin County men—Charlemont's Roger Leavitt and Conway's Joseph Avery—attended the A&FAS founding convention. The Massachusetts Abolitionist derided the MAS as a "women's rights, no-government" organization. Lydia Maria Child reported from Northampton that western Massachusetts activists did not understand the underlying causes of the split, holding only "a vague notion that it is a squabble between Presbyterians and Quakers," and consequently siding with the former.

At their October 1839 annual meeting, FCAS officers withdrew the society's membership in the MAS. Passing a resolution asserting that "he who, having the right, neglects, when an opportunity offers, to throw his vote in favor of the slave, fails in one of the most important and effectual means to accomplish emancipation," they renamed themselves the Franklin County Abolition Society and approved affiliation with the new organization. Not all members, however, applauded their leaders' course of action, and some continued to champion Garrisonian principles. The Massachusetts Abolition Society soon proved unpopular with the majority of state activists, who considered it a secessionist group determined to silence women and personally discredit Garrison. As the organization foundered, the Franklin County Abolition Society slowly disbanded.

Members, however, pursued new outlets for expressing their anti-slavery sentiments. Many with an electoral bent redoubled their efforts on part of Whig, Free Soil, and Liberty Party politicians. Charles Ingersoll, originally a publisher of the *Gazette and Courier*, left the paper when his partner Ansel Phelps refused to break with the Whig Party in wake of its 1848 nomination of the slaveholder Zachary Taylor for President. A convert to Free Soilism (which opposed the extension of slavery into the nation's western territories), Ingersoll set up a rival press, publishing *The American Republic* from 1848 to 1854. Despite Ingersoll's best efforts, Free Soil nominees ultimately captured only a small minority of town

residents' votes in the election of 1852. Most of Greenfield's anti-slavery men clung resolutely to their Whig heritage. The new party did, however, attract greater support in Montague, Whately and Deerfield. Other residents lent assistance to fugitives fleeing from bondage up the Connecticut River Valley or coming west from the seaport cities. Though western New England did not constitute one of the most heavily traveled escape routes, its anti-slavery reputation and relative proximity to the Canadian border did draw some freedom seekers.

#### The Local Scene

#### **Dexter and Eunice Marsh**

In 1953, a woman named Sophia Woodman sent the Historical Society of Greenfield her recollections of a story told her as a child by her surrogate "aunt" Arabella Marsh. Born in Greenfield in 1835, Arabella Marsh grew up on Clay Hill (on the site of present-day #39 Bank Row). Her father Dexter, a laborer who discovered fossilized dinosaur tracks while laying a sidewalk and eventually attained local renown for his extensive fossil collection, was the son of Joshua Marsh, a Montague man once described by a contemporary as an "abolitionist to the core." According to Woodman, a very young Arabella Marsh came home one day to find the yard full of black children, with whom she played delightedly until nightfall. Unable to locate them the following morning, she went crying to her stepmother, who asked, "What black children, dearie? There are no little black children; you must have had a very interesting dream. Now run along to school and don't talk about it." Only as she grew older did Marsh begin to suspect that her parents sheltered fugitive slaves. No other documentation has surfaced to date pointing to the Marshs' involvement with the underground, and Woodman herself acknowledged that her memory of the details of "Auntie Belle's" story was imperfect. Nevertheless, Dexter Marsh's family heritage lends credibility to the tale, establishing him as an individual with personal ties to the anti-slavery movement.



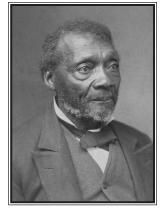
Dexter Marsh Image courtesy Historical Society of Greenfield



Eunice Marsh Image courtesy Historical Society of Greenfield

#### John Putnam

John Putnam's considerable musical talent and good humor have left a long-lasting impression on the region. Contemporaries often noted that "his infectious laughter, once heard, was long remembered." According to family stories passed down through descendants, Putnam and his wife Julia, both born into freedom in Massachusetts, actively assisted fugitives traveling through Franklin County. Black barbers such as Putnam—who tended to possess the contacts and resources necessary to help freedom seekers on to their next destination point—played an important role in the Underground Railroad. Putnam's shops above J.H. Hollister's jewelry store (located on the site of present-day 308 Main Street) and at the American House may have served as information centers for those aiding fugitives. Putnam came to Greenfield no later than 1845 and resided originally on Mill Street. The earliest specific documentation placing his family at 175 Wells Street is an 1871 map recording their presence on the lot next to the



John Putnam Image courtesy Historical Society of Greenfield

railroad tracks, although they did not actually purchase the property until 1880. J.H. Hollister, the jeweler who worked in such close proximity to Putnam, took over ownership of a tract of land including 175 Wells in 1866, opening up the possibility that the family rented the lot prior to 1871, or perhaps even before the Civil War. Putnam descendents have long recounted stories of an underground

tunnel leading from the house's basement toward the railroad tracks. A 1970s demolition at 175 Wells uncovered a subterranean tunnel closely matching the oral tradition. Lacking any documented family presence on the property prior to 1871, however, it is also possible that later generations, familiar with John and Julia's work with fugitives, may have invested the tunnel with Underground Railroad connotations it does not necessarily possess, unintentionally confusing activities taking place at the Mill Street house or the barbershop with those particular to the Wells Street property.



Hollister Block pre-1873 Image courtesy Peter S. Miller

#### The Leavitt Family

The prominent Leavitt family of Charlemont, Heath, and Greenfield spearheaded the crusade for evangelical social reform in western Massachusetts. Charlemont farmer Roger Leavitt served as President of the Franklin County Anti-Slavery Society, and in 1840, received the state Liberty Party Convention nomination for Lieutenant Governor. His wife Chloe Maxwell Leavitt actively collected signatures for petitions demanding the abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia. Two of Roger's brothers settled in Greenfield: Jonathan, who rose to public esteem as a judge, and Hart, a merchant who served as a founding member of the county anti-slavery society. Hart Leavitt's store—site of the town's first newspaper and post office—stood next to Jonathan's law office on Main Street.

Jonathan and his wife Emelia, daughter of Congregational minister and early critic of slavery Ezra Stiles, the first President of the Connecticut Society for the Promotion of Freedom, moved to Greenfield in 1789. Their household on Main Street (the current-day Greenfield Public Library) includ-



George Davis.
Image courtesy Historical Society

#### George T. Davis

One of the founding members of the Franklin County Anti-Slavery Society, George T. Davis served as the organization's first Treasurer, and later as a Vice President. A prominent lawyer who also served as a state representative, state senator, and U.S. Representative, Davis embraced political action as the most promising avenue for anti-slavery activity and supported the transfer of affiliation to the Massachusetts Abolition Society. As a member of the Business Committee, he helped guide the organization's first year as the Franklin County Abolition Society. The prosperous Davis owned multiple properties in town, including a house on the site of the current-day Greenfield Cooperative Bank and a larger one on eastern Main Street, immediately west of the present-day YMCA building.

#### Charles Devens, Jr.

Admitted to the Massachusetts bar in 1840, Charles Devens practiced law in Franklin County (Greenfield and Northfield) from 1841-1849 as a member of the firm Davis (Wendell), Devens, and Davis (George). He owned a home at 70 Devens Street (still standing). A devoted Whig, Devens served a term as a state senator (1848-49) before being appointed a U.S. Marshal for the District of Massachusetts in 1849. He held the office until 1854. Charged with enforcing the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850, Devens bore responsibility under the law for capturing and imprisoning individuals suspected of fugitive slave status, including Shadrach, whose 1851 rescue from a Boston courtroom stunned the nation, and Thomas Sims. When federal Commissioner George Curtis ruled in April 1852 that Sims must be returned to his owner, the task of carrying out the order fell to Devens. Though sources suggest he found Curtis' ruling abhorrent, the marshal complied. In the wake of Sims' return to Georgia, well-known abolitionist Lydia Maria Child organized a campaign to raise funds to pur-

chase his freedom. According to the *Greenfield Gazette Centennial Edition*, Devens offered to defray the entire expense himself, but Sims' owner refused to sell. In the aftermath of the Sims affair, Robert Wright, a fugitive slave employed as a cook at Greenfield's American House Hotel (located on the site of the current-day Wilson's Department Store), disappeared into hiding in fear of arrest. At Devens' suggestion, a group of Greenfield anti-slavery activists contacted Wright's owner to request permission to purchase his freedom. When he agreed, Devens contributed a substantial sum of money to the effort. Not long after, Greenfield judge Charles Allen triumphantly delivered Wright his manumission



Charles Devens, Jr. Image courtesy Wikipedia.com



Charles Devens, Jr.'s house. Image courtesy Greenfield Assessors

papers. One of the first officers of the Massachusetts state militia to volunteer for military service in the wake of Fort Sumter, Devens eventually rose to the rank of brevet major general. After the Civil War, he assumed a seat on the Massachusetts Supreme Court and served as U.S. Attorney General under President Rutherford B. Hayes. During his four years in Washington, D.C., Devens secured a government job for Thomas Sims, who finally escaped to permanent freedom during the war years.

#### **Billy Elliot**

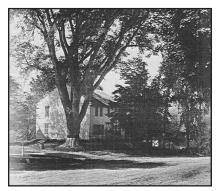
Merchant and insurance salesman William "Billy" Elliot played a leading role in the organized anti-slavery movement. Deeply committed to political action on behalf of the slave, he served as Secretary and Treasurer of the Franklin County Abolition Society and joined the Free Soil Party in 1848. A 1934 "Old Timer Remarks" column in the Greenfield Recorder, a repository of local lore, termed Elliot's home at 473 Main Street (still standing) a frequent "place of refuge for slaves fleeing from southern captivity," a stop-over point for those on the road to Canada. Elliot maintained various places of business throughout his career; sites that may have played a role in his underground activities. He worked for years at Lyman Kendall's store on the corner of Main and Federal Street and later operated his own business at currentday 310 Main Street. After retiring from mercantile life, he became an agent for the Conway Company and maintained an insurance office in the P.T. Sprague building, which stood on the site of current-day 320 Main Street.



William "Billy" Elliot Image courtesy Historical Society of Greenfield

#### **Samuel Wells Home**

Francis M. Thompson's 1904 *History of Greenfield* mentions an old-fashioned, square house on the western part of Main Street, near Coombs Avenue (now demolished), surrounded by rumors of underground activity. Thompson notes that some pre-Civil War residents, (potentially the Samuel Wells family, but also possibly a later owner) "were at one time involved in some trouble for harboring slaves." When historian Wilbur Siebert began his investigation into Underground Railroad activity in Massachusetts in the 1930s, Isadore Taylor of Charlemont wrote him that "it was said many years ago that the Samuel Wells farm was a station from which slaves were sent to Brattleboro, Vermont." Both Taylor and Greenfield librarian May Ashley, however, proved unable to locate any documentary evidence or oral verification for this claim, even from descendants of the Wells family.



Samuel Wells' house Image courtesy Historical Society of Greenfield

#### Dr. Charles L. and Emeline Fisk

In 1895, Greenfield resident J. Johnson wrote Ohio State University professor Wilbur Siebert, the first historian of the Underground Railroad, that Dr. Charles L. Fisk and his wife Emeline sheltered fugitives in their Main Street home (which stood on the lot between current-day Miles Street and Fiske Avenue), a claim that Siebert later repeated in his 1936 book, *The Underground Railroad in Massachusetts*. Fisk's son Charles, Jr., also in a letter to Siebert, lauded his father as "a great and early pioneer in the anti-slavery cause," but offered no further details about underground activity. In his *History of Greenfield*, Francis Thompson called the Fisk home a frequent refuge "of the fugitive slave in his search for freedom." An abolitionist of the Garrisonian model, Fisk may have maintained a personal friendship with the fiery editor.

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Coldbrook Springs Baptist Church, 463 Main Street. Currently houses the Zion Korean Church.

Image courtesy Greenfield Assessors





**Billy Elliot House**, 473 Main Street. Private Residence.

Image courtesy Greenfield Assessors





**Eunice Marsh House**, 63 Davis Street. Eunice Marsh relocated to this property after Dexter's death in 1853. Private Residence.

Image courtesy Greenfield Assessors





George Grennell House, pre-1846 53 High Street. Private Residence. Image courtesy Greenfield Assessors





George Grennell House, post-1846 500 Main Street. Private Residence Photo by Susan Elkin Photography





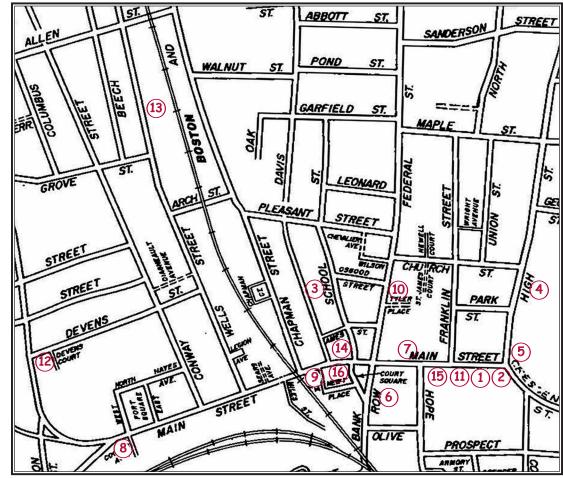
Leavitt House 402 Main Street, Public Library Image courtesy Greenfield Assessors





Charles Devens House
70 Devens Street, Private Residence
Image courtesy Greenfield Assessors

# Road to Freedom Sites



- 6 Dexter and Eunice Marsh House site 39 Bank Row
- 8 Samuel Wells Family Farmhouse site 1 Main Street
- 9 Charles and Emeline Fisk House site Main Street and Fiske Avenue
- George T. Davis House site, pre-1852, 63 Federal Street
- George T. Davis House site, post-1852, 451 Main Street

### **Greenfield Town Center**

2001 Street Guide, Department of Public Works

- John and Julia Putnam House site
  175 Wells Street
- John Putnam Barbershop site
  308 Main Street
- Methodist Episcopal Church site 425 Main Street
- Washington Hall site 253 Main Street

6