

State Historical Society of Iowa
Iowa Freedom Trail Grant Project - Biographical Form

Name of Individual or Family: **Henry Baker**

African Americans

- Slave
- Freedom Seeker/Runaway Slave
- Free Black
- Contrabands
- Unknown Status
- UGRR Station Master
- UGRR Conductor/Agent
- Associated with John Brown

European Americans

- UGRR Station Master
- UGRR Conductor/Agent
- Abolitionist
- Anti-Abolitionist/Proslavery
- Associated with John Brown
- Antislavery
- Unknown Status

Birth date: ca. 1832

Birth place: near Berksville, KY

Death date: 11-5-1906

Buried at: Oak Hill Cemetery, Nodaway County, Maryville, MO

Death Place: Maryville, MO
History p. 31

Pictures of Tombstone Source: Cook, Martha. Nodaway Black

Marriage to:

1. Minerva Turner
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

Location:
Page County, IA

Date:
6-30-1864

Profession: corn laborer, chimney sweep

Education: _____

Church Membership: A. M. E.

Public Offices: _____

Local: _____

State: _____

National: _____

Political Party: Republican

Military Service: _____

Civic Organizations: Colored Republican Club, Emancipation Celebration Committee

Parents:

Father

Birth date:

Birth place:

Death Date:

Buried at:

Mother

Birth date:

Birth place:

Dolly Baker

ca. 1786

VA

Death Date:

Buried at:

2-21-1889

Savannah, MO

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Children:	Birth date:	Birth place:
<u>Charles Baker</u>	<u>1867</u>	<u>Page County, IA</u>
<u>Clarence C. Baker</u>	<u>1871</u>	<u>Page County, IA</u>
<u>Alice Baker</u>	<u>1875</u>	<u>Maryville, Nodaway County, MO</u>
<u>Frances Baker</u>	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Locations of Individual or Family:

1. Berksville, KY
2. Plattsburg, MO
3. Andrew County, MO
4. Clarinda, Page County, IA
5. Maryville, Nodaway County, MO
6. _____
7. _____

Dates Present:

- 1832-33
1833-44
1844 - ?
?by 1864-1871
1871 or 72-1906

References:

Cook, Martha. Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness-Nodaway County, Missouri-A Black History 1840-1940. 1986. pp.28, 29, 31, 47, 51, 52, 83, 249-252.

Images of Individual or Family

Portraits: _____

Photographs: Line sketch of Baker in Emancipation Parade in Cook, Nodaway Black History, p. 51.

Associated Properties or Places

Historic Property Name: _____

Address: _____ (If rural, please provide Section, Township and Range)

Is the property or place extant? Yes No

Iowa Site Inventory Number: _____

Archaeological Site Number: _____

Listed on the National Register of Historic Places: Yes No Date Listed: _____

Photographs, Drawings, and Portraits: _____

Notes: _____

Underground Railroad Activities

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Baker escaped from a farm in Andrew County, MO and was in Clarinda, Iowa by 1864. He returned to Missouri several times to lead other enslaved persons north to Iowa by the same route.

References:

Cooper, Martha. Nodaway Black History pp. 31, 252

Abolitionist or Antislavery Activities

References:

Anti-Abolitionist or Proslavery Activities

References:

Notes

Henry Baker was born ca. 1832 near Berksville, Kentucky. His mother, Dolly, was born in Virginia. Their owner was Joseph Hunter. The Hunter family and enslaved moved to Plattsburg, MO in 1833 where Hunter built the first hotel. After six years, he traded the hotel for a farm southeast of Plattsburg. In 1844 Hunter moved to Andrew County. Sometime before 1864, Baker fled to Iowa, ending up in Clarinda, Page County, where he married Minerva Turner, a mulatto, on June 30, 1864. He returned several times to Missouri to lead other enslaved persons north to Iowa along the same route he followed.

Two children were born in Iowa, Charles in 1867 and Clarence in 1871. By 1872, the Bakers were living in Maryville, Nodaway County, MO. Baker was very active in promoting and supporting the annual emancipation parades and celebrations and served as marshall from 1873 to 1898. He was described in the 1885 local paper thus: "About 12 o'clock, the procession formed in Main Street, headed by the Graham brass band. In front of all I observed mounted upon a fiery steed as kind of curious compound. Upon his head he wore a plug hat decorated with small flags, red ribbons, etc. A broad red sash over his shoulder and a broadsword hanging by his side, he looked all over the warrior. Now and then some of the urchins would cry out, "Look at the old man, ain't he flying high?" Upon inquiry I learned that it was Gen. Henry Baker." For his leadership, he was given the honorary title of General or Colonel and was an orator at the celebrations as well.

Baker was an active voter, and led the drive to create the Wards Chapel A.M.E. Church in 1881, where his son Clarence became a pastor. He was active in the Colored Republican Party, and was well-liked by both white and black. A news article from 1887 noted that the Bakers received many presents for the celebration of their 25th wedding anniversary from white and black friends. The Bakers also hosted 15 to 20 whites at popular "possum suppers" in 1897, 1900 and 1901 complete with baked and roasted possums, corn pone, sweet potatoes and oyster soup. Mrs. Baker stated she had prepared many such meals in antebellum days.

Baker died 6 November, 1906 and is buried in Oak Hill Cemetery, Maryville, MO alongside his wife who passed away in 1917. They had 12 children, of which four survived to adulthood.

References:

Cook, Martha. Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness-Nodaway County, Missouri-A Black History 1840-1940. 1986. pp.28, 29, 31, 47, 51, 52, 83, 249-252.

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Year: 1880; Census Place: Maryville, Nodaway, Missouri; Roll: 706; Family History Film: 1254706; Page: 195C; Enumeration District: 261; Image: 0621

Year: 1900; Census Place: Maryville Ward 2, Nodaway, Missouri; Roll: 878; Page: 9B; Enumeration District: 0121; FHL microfilm: 1240878

U.S., Find A Grave Index, 1600s-Current

Connections

References:

Association with John Brown

References:

Researchers

Information in File Compiled By:

Name(s)

Carol Bohl

Date:

1-6-2016

Updates

Information:

Name(s)

Date:

Information:

Name(s)

Date:

Information:

Name(s)

Date:

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Information:

Name(s)

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