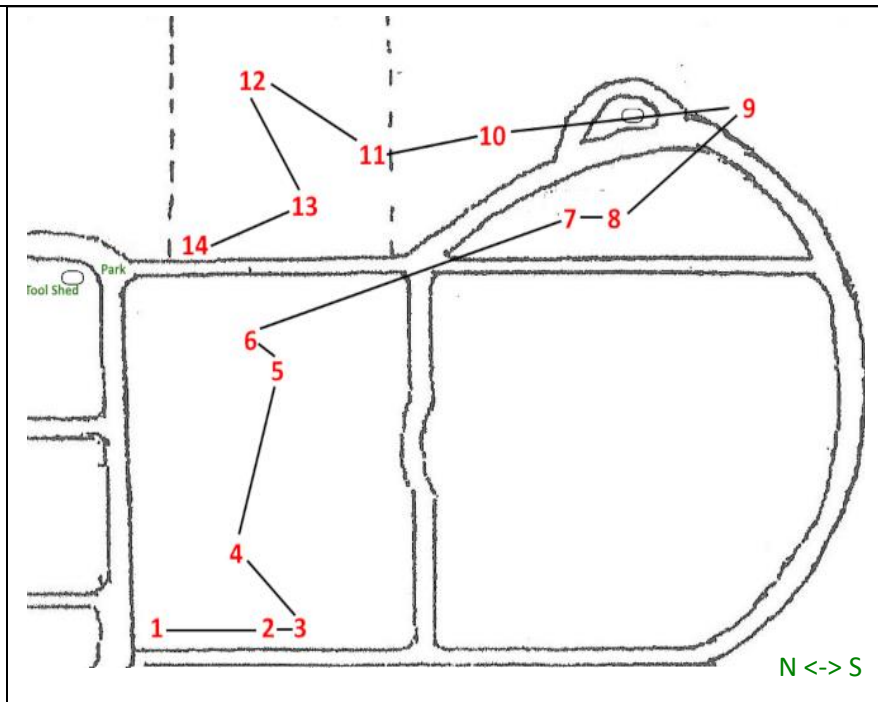


The Underground Railroad Within the Winterset Cemetery

There are 90 residents of Madison County known to have participated in the Underground Railroad (UGRR) from 1857 to 1862. Most are buried within the county's 50+ cemeteries with the greatest number in the Winterset Cemetery.

Follow the numbers on the map and find the corresponding number below to read about these individuals and their role in Madison County's Underground Railroad.

Note: Some quotes may contain words that are no longer in use today.



1 State of Iowa Historic Marker

Start here to read about the role of Madison County and southwest Iowa during the UGRR era.



2 John S. Bard

From a remembrance of a young neighbor in Jackson Township, "these night errands by father and some of the other abolitionists seemed strange to me when I was a boy, but I can see why now. John Bard, the Chases (9), Henry Dabney(10), and others, carried the baggage, transported the passengers and did sundry other chores about the old [UGRR] station."



3 Charles Moore

was a freedom seeker (fugitive slave) from Missouri and was given shelter in the attic of the home of Matthew and Caroline McGee (6) as he made his escape north to Canada. He returned to Madison County about 1870 and lived in Winterset for 50 years. Charlie received a gravestone in the summer of 2016 through donations of interested organizations and individuals.



4 Thomas C. and Rhoda (Bryan) Moorman

The Moormans's lived on a farm in southeast Madison County that was on a primary UGRR route entering from Clarke County.

A map provided by a neighbor "establishes quite definitely this section of the county as one of the cross-country, secret passages of fugitives on their way to Canada."

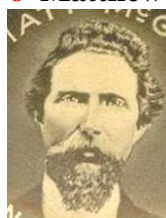


5 Dr. William L. and Elizabeth (Young) Leonard

Their son, Sylvester .R. Leonard, stated that his "father, a physician in Winterset, lived just west of Winterset and was a neighbor of Mr. Roberts [whose home was the center of UGRR activity], also assisted these runaways, and that he had driven the team for this father:." Later the couple used their medical skills in the Civil War for the Union Army.



6 Matthew and Caroline (Kale) McGee



This couple opened their home to freedom seekers, hiding slaves in their attic, including Charles Moore (3). Their daughter described her parents' home as "one of those in which colored refugees found a shelter and a haven in that stirring period preceding the Civil War."



The Underground Railroad Within the Winterset Cemetery

7 John and Margaret (Kiser) Tullis



A neighbor wrote that after some young freedom seekers ate cornbread and butter in their home, John “brought out his old faithful horses and put the boys on one of them, mounted the other, all riding bareback. They went down the hollow towards the Middle River ...next morning he and the horses were home.”



8 Nathan and Eliza (Winder) Newlon

Arriving here in 1854, the couple housed freedom seekers at their farm west of Winterset. A Des Moines newspaper article pronounced Nathan “the Presiding Genius in the Underground Railroad at Winterset” and mentioned that “his Big Crib has held frequent loads that were never gathered in a field of Yellow Dent nor Flint corn.”



9 George Blade Chase

lived northwest of Winterset, on an active UGRR route. The Madison County sheriff, on the trail of a freedom seeker, stopped by the Chase farm to ask directions. The instructions provided led the sheriff to make “quite a detour and Uncle George made a straight shot and hustled the passengers on to safety.” Later he served in the Civil War in the Union Army. .



10 Henry and Maria (Stanfield) Dabney

“Our Good Henry Dabney was a Virginian and inherited several slaves, but he thought that his God did not commend the practice and freed them and moved away from slave environments.” The Dabney’s were part of a group that “carried the baggage, transported the passengers and did sundry other chores about the old [Jackson Twp. UGRR] station.”



11 Charles Roland

The 1884 Adams County history book states a hotel there “was one link of the underground railroad, housing runaway slaves in the hotel basement, and transporting them when safe to Charles W. Roland in Winterset.” Roland has both an original and newer gravestone.



12 Rev. John and Mary (Small) Graham

John wrote in his 1869 autobiography, “When we came here [1856], and for years after, especially during the rebellion, the under-ground railroad (in which I was a share-holder and office-bearer) did a very extensive business; so much so, that additional night-trains had to be put on in order to accommodate the passengers. Now, no wanderer who had fled at the risk of his life from a land of bondage is seen crossing the Middle River at some secret place after sun-down when all is still; coming to our humble habitation.” His wife Mary is believed to be buried here, too.



13 William B. Ruby arrived in Madison County in 1852 and was soon widowed. A newspaper article, titled “From Slavery to Freedom,” lists him as a “Stockholder” in the Underground Railroad at Winterset. The term could have multiple meanings. Did he “hold the stock” that was moving? Or did he contribute funds to the cause?



14 Eli and Asenath (Parcher) Odell

Prior to moving their family to Madison County in 1854, the Odell’s were active abolitionists and UGRR operatives in Crawford County, Ohio and “held that it was a moral duty of every man to assist the runaway slaves.... no law could give to one man the right to own another human being, and therefore it was no crime to break any law which in itself was against the law of God.”



The Winterset Cemetery is listed on the National Park Service’s Network to Freedom as significant to the

Underground Railroad movement for those buried here. This plaque is located at the cemetery entrance.

