

# IS THIS AN UNGROUND RAILROAD SITE?

*“only a small part of what happened in the past was ever observed.... And only a small part of what was observed in the past was remembered by those who observed it; only a small part of what has survived has come to historian’s attention; only a part of what has come to their attention is credible; only a part of what is credible has been grasped; and only a part of what has been grasped can be expounded or narrated by the historian.” (Understanding History, Gottschalk, 1969)*

How do you find evidence for an illegal movement that was not written about, and was discussed behind closed doors? While there is a great deal that we will never know, documents such as census records, letters, maps, pictures, old newspaper stories, organizations’ membership lists and more help establish a trail that can lead us to names, places and, most importantly, county-wide attitudes involved with the Underground Railroad. While the conductors may not have written about their involvement, they couldn’t help but leave a trail that today’s historians can follow.



**Racine Heritage Museum**  
701 Main Street  
Racine, WI 53403  
Phone 262-636-3926  
[RacineHeritageMuseum.org](http://RacineHeritageMuseum.org)

*Find us on  
Facebook and Twitter!*

**Exhibit Hours**  
Tuesday- Friday 9am- 5pm  
Saturday 10am-3pm  
Sunday 12pm-4pm  
Closed Mondays

For additional information on this subject or other Racine related topics that might interest you, visit our  
**RESEARCH CENTER:**  
Tuesdays 1pm-4:30pm  
Saturdays 10pm-1pm

## RHM EXPLORES...

THIS TRAIN IS BOUND FOR  
GLORY: RACINE COUNTY'S  
UNDERGROUND RAILROAD

# RACINE COUNTY SITES



*ARTIST'S RENDERING OF  
THE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN  
CHURCH*

*Discover four of the possible, probable or verified Underground Railroad sites in the county and the evidence that ties the site to this illegal movement.*

***The First Presbyterian Church  
716 College Ave, Downtown Racine  
Probable Site***

**Evidence:**

- Artifacts found in the crawl space (on exhibit at Racine Heritage Museum)
- There were known abolitionists in the congregation such as Nathan Burnham, F.W. DeBerard, Henry S. Durand, Hiram Foote and Silas B. Peck. Some of these men signed the 1845 Memorial to Congress, a document that told congress that the people of the Wisconsin Territory did not approve of slavery.
- A woman named Mrs. Nancy R. White was denied membership to the church when it was believed that she had been a slave owner in North Carolina. Later, the church learned that Mrs. White was not legally the slave's owner. Notes for the church's February 16, 1846 meeting read "Mrs. Nancy R. White is not in fact a slaveholder, therefore, resolved, that the vote refusing her application as recorded under date of January 3, 1846, be and hereby is rescinded. Resolved, that the clerk be and hereby is directed to forward a copy of the foregoing resolution to Mrs. White."
- The church's Rev. Zebulon Humphrey gave the invocation at the Republican National Convention in Chicago when Lincoln, who favored the emancipation of slaves, was nominated for President.

***Dutton Warehouse & Grain Elevator,  
no longer standing, was located on  
Racine's harbor  
Verified Site***

**Evidence:**

- The warehouse and its owner, A.P. Dutton, were mentioned in written accounts by abolitionists after the Civil War.
- Dutton wrote letter to W. Seibert after the Civil War admitting to his role in the Underground Railroad.
- A.P. Dutton was known to be an active abolitionist as shown by his signing of the declaration that praised Col. William Utey's abolitionist practices in Kentucky.
- Dutton would have access to information about the ships and captains friendly to fugitives and the ships' routes.



*An advertisement for A.P. Dutton's Warehouse*

***Dr. Dyer House  
No longer standing, was located on  
the 100 block of State Street,  
Burlington  
Verified Site***

**Evidence:**

- Dr. Dyer's daughter wrote about finding a fugitive slave in their attic.
- Dyer was a well-known abolitionist: helping to organize the Territorial Anti-Slavery Society in August 1842 and the Burlington Liberty Association in 1844; as a stockholder in the American Freeman, an abolitionist newspaper; acting as a delegate for the 1843 Territorial Liberty Party Convention in Madison; and acting as a delegate to the 1848 Liberty Party Convention in Buffalo, New York.



*Dr. Edward Dyer and his wife, Ann Eliza*

***Richard Ela House Water Street,  
Rochester  
Verified Site***

**Evidence:**

- Ela is named in C.C. Olin's (one of Glover's Conductors) written account of the escape of Joshua Glover.