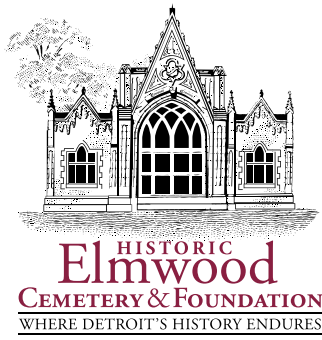
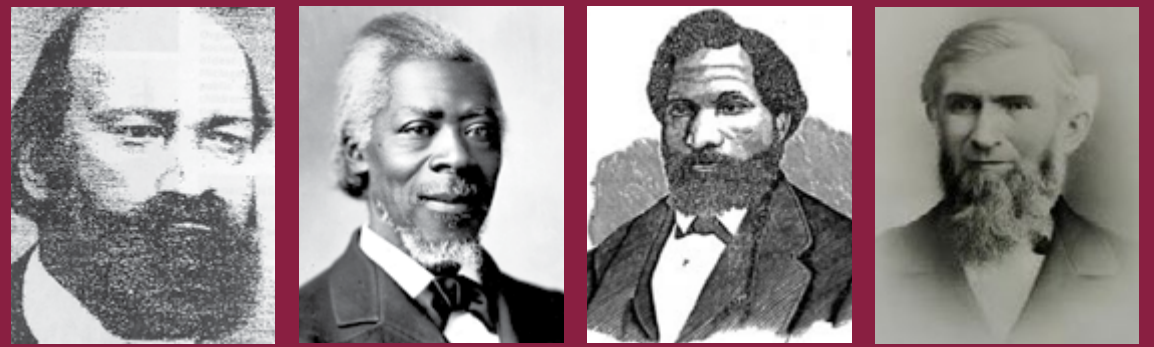


Underground Railroad Network to Freedom



1200 Elmwood Avenue | Detroit, Michigan 48207 | Phone: 313-567-3453

www.ElmwoodHistoricCemetery.org



George DeBaptiste

William Lambert

William Webb

Samuel Zug

Integral members of Detroit's Underground Railroad are buried here at Elmwood Cemetery. Some were freedom seekers; others were key figures who led the network and freedom seekers, organized secret meetings, were abolitionists, and/or provided financial assistance to the network. This map highlights some of these people.



This logo is used to indicate those individuals identified who are recognized by the National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom Program.

Underground Railroad Network to Freedom Self-Guided Tour Map

The Underground Railroad (UGRR) is defined as resistance to enslavement through escape and flight. It includes the freedom seekers who made their journeys with or without assistance and those who aided them providing guidance, shelter, food, essential supplies, money, and transportation. It existed from the moment people were held in bondage until the end of the Civil War. Detroit, known as "Midnight", was one of the last stops on the UGRR.

The Fugitive Slave Act of 1850 ensured that even if escaped slaves arrived in free states in the North, they could be captured and sent back to their slave owners. However, Canada, which lay only one mile across the Detroit River, prohibited slavery, and thus offered opportunities for liberation and safety.

After passage of the 1850 Fugitive Slave Law, secrecy became more essential to the operations of the UGRR.

Even in Northern states, individuals found collaborating with freedom seekers could be heavily fined and sometimes imprisoned. Therefore, flags and lanterns became clandestine signals, verbal language carried code, and handbills and newspapers were often encrypted with Railroad symbols.

Freedom seekers generally made their way on foot, often at night, from one town to the next. They were assisted by sympathizers commonly referred to "conductors," "station masters" or "stockholders". These Underground Railroad operatives of all backgrounds risked their livelihood by assisting those who escaped slavery in their houses, barns, attics, cellars, churches, shops and sheds. In direct defiance of the law, these brave individuals provided freedom seekers with food and a place to sleep. They also facilitated transfer to the subsequent "stop" or UGRR shelter.

Detroit was one of the most exciting stops on the UGRR. There are at least seven known paths that led freedom seekers from various points in Michigan to the Canadian shore and it is estimated that 200 UGRR stops existed throughout Michigan between the 1820s and 1865. The last runs on the UGRR ended in 1865 with the end of the Civil War and the U.S. Constitution's 13th Amendment's abolishment of slavery.

Elmwood Cemetery was recognized in 2016 by the National Park Service as a significant site for the Underground Railroad Network to Freedom because of the people buried on the grounds who were integral to the UGRR network. Some of these people were freedom seekers themselves but others were key figures in Detroit who professed anti-slavery thoughts and took direct action, who organized meetings of like-minded people, who provided financial assistance, and who helped lead freedom seekers to their freedom.

1 Dr. Charles H. Wright (1918 – 2002)
Section 10, Lot 95
Although not directly involved in Detroit's UGRR, Dr. Wright is included here for his passion for sharing true history, including slavery, the Underground Railroad, and advancement of black Americans. Founder of Dr. Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History.

2 Russell A. Alger (1836 – 1907)
Section 10, Alger Mausoleum
Founder Republican Party and assisted with draft of first Republican platform seeking to abolish slavery. Michigan Governor 1885 – 1886.

3 Reverend Oren Thompson (1805 – 1890)
Section B, Lot 2



Abolitionist who hid freedom seekers in his home until it was safe to row them across the St. Clair River to Canada. Vice President of the first annual Michigan Anti-slavery Society and of the St. Clair Liberty Party. Helped arm a party participating in Kansas' anti-slavery conflict. Served in the US Christian Commission during the Civil War that assisted the Union's sick and wounded. Minister to St. Clair Presbyterian/Congregational Church and operated the St. Clair Academy.

4 Henry Porter Baldwin (1814 – 1892)
Section B, Lot 9
Founder Republican Party and assisted with draft of first Republican platform seeking to abolish slavery. Michigan governor 1869 – 1873.

5 George DeBaptiste (1816 – 1875)
Section C, Lot 24
Abolitionist. Born free in Fredericksburg, Virginia. Integral member of Detroit's UGRR network. In 1850, purchased T. Whitney to ferry freedom seekers across the Detroit River to Canada. Cofounded Detroit's Colored Vigilant Committee. Organized the first Michigan Colored Troops who fought for the Union in the Civil War. Helped provision the military

during campaigns in the South. A statue in Hart Plaza is erected in his honor. His home site at East Larned and Beaubien streets is recognized with a Michigan Historical Marker and is listed in the National Parks Service Network to Freedom. Also known as DeBaptist.



(Left: George DeBaptiste. Right: Statue of George DeBaptiste in Hart Plaza, Detroit, pointing the way to freedom through Canada.)

6 Benjamin B. DeBaptiste (1843 – 1919)
Section C, Lot 24
Laborer and plasterer. Enlisted on May 5, 1863 and served as a private in the Union's first colored regiment, the 54th Massachusetts Infantry. Private, Company K. After 15 months without pay, U.S. Congress granted the 54th the right to equal pay. Mustered out on August 20, 1865. The 54th was immortalized in the movie Glory. Also known as DeBaptist.

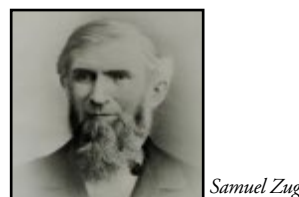
7 James F. Joy (1810 – 1896)
Cypress Mound
Attorney who, with others, defended the citizens of Marshall, Michigan in a nationally recognized case *Giltner v Gorham et al* (1847) where a slave owner sued citizens of Marshall, Michigan for helping the Crosswhite family to escape. Joy represented freedom seekers in court as well.

8 Reverend James Robinson (1753 – 1868)
Section E, Lot 61



Born enslaved in Maryland. After meritorious service in the Revolutionary War, awarded the Gold Medal of Valor. Col. DeShields stipulated in his will that Robinson be granted freedom, however, DeShields' son sold Robinson. Robinson served in the War of 1812 in his owner's name. Robinson fought bravely and was wounded in New Orleans. Destined to return to slavery, he was assisted by northern sympathizers.

8 Samuel Zug (1816 – 1889)
Section F, Lot 16



Samuel Zug

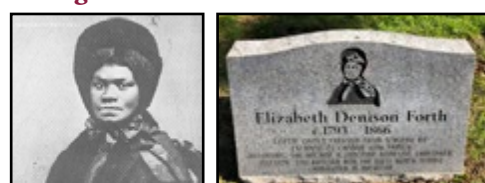
Abolitionist and Underground Railroad worker. Provided shelter to freedom seekers and was a key member of the Michigan Anti-Slavery Society in the 1840s. Supported the anti-slavery newspaper, the *Signal of Liberty*. Served on the executive committee of the Refuge Home Society, contributing to the colonization of Canada by purchasing tracts of land to be leased to formerly bonded people. Served as chairman of the Free Soil State Central Committee and the Republican Party.

9 William Lambert (1817 – 1890)
Section G, Lot 90



Key organizer of Detroit's Underground Railroad. Community Leader. Founded secret organization known as African-American Mysteries - Order of the Men of Oppression that worked in tandem with Detroit's UGRR network. Organizer and first chairman of the first State Convention of Colored Citizens in 1843. Key figure in the John Brown 1859 meeting at William Webb's home. Helped establish a school, library and social society for blacks in Detroit. Co-founder of St. Matthew's Episcopal Church in Detroit. Born free in New Jersey.

10 Elizabeth "Lisette" Denison Forth (c. 1793 – 1866)
Strangers Ground T 45 – 194 G



Elizabeth Denison Forth

Freedom seeker who fled as a child with her family to Canada with the help of Col. Elijah Brush in 1807 to obtain freedom.

Returned to US and became the first African American landowner in Pontiac, Michigan where a Michigan Historical Marker is erected in her honor. Co-founded St. James Episcopal Church, Grosse Ile.

11 John D. Richards (1831 – 1882)
Section N, Lot 150
Organizer of the 102nd U.S. Colored Troops. Civil rights activist. Brother to Fannie Richards and promoted her kindergarten concept for schools. Born free in Fredericksburg, Virginia.

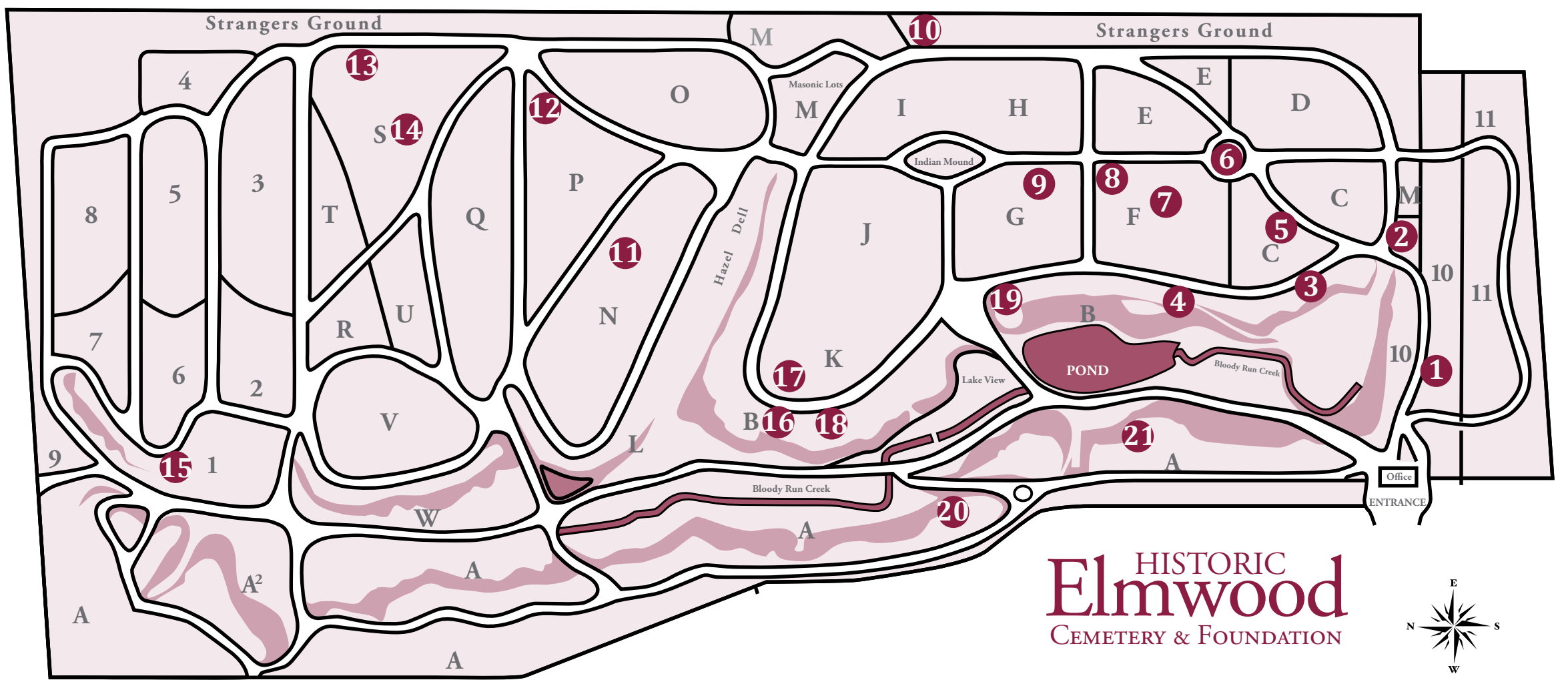
12 Dr. Joseph Ferguson (1821 – 1877)
Section P, Lot 25
Abolitionist. Underground Railroad conductor. One of Michigan's first African American doctors. Member of William Lambert's innermost trusted circle in UGRR network. Involved in African-American Mysteries whose primary business was transporting freedom seekers through the UGRR and funding settlements in Canada. Born in Richmond, Virginia.

12 William Webb (1812 – 1868)
Section P, Lot 25

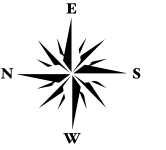


Top left: William Webb Michigan Historical Marker
Top right: William Webb
Bottom: Webb marker

Abolitionist, community leader and attorney. In 1859, Webb's home was the site of one of the most prominent meetings in the anti-slavery movement where Abolitionist John Brown met privately with Detroit's leading UGRR workers (including DeBaptiste, Ferguson, Lambert and Webb) to reveal his plan for an armed invasion. Officer of the National Emigration Conference where members passed a resolution pertaining to equal rights and a denial of enslavement. Officer of the Refuge Home Society, a network of the UGRR that was bringing fugitive freedom seekers North and considered a grand receiving depot for Detroit's UGRR. His home site is recognized with a Michigan Historical Marker and is listed in the National Parks Service Network to Freedom. Born free in Petersburg, Virginia.



HISTORIC Elmwood CEMETERY & FOUNDATION



13 United States Colored Troops Section S, Civil War Lots

Elmwood Cemetery has over six hundred Civil War veterans buried across its 86 acres. Here in section S lie over two hundred who survived the war but chose to be buried in this special burial ground purchased by the State of Michigan for Civil War Veterans. Each Veterans Day a celebration is held here to honor those who fought for our liberty.

Formed entirely of volunteers from 1863 – 1865. The First Michigan Colored Regiment, which became the 102nd US Colored Troops, was organized at Camp Ward (named after Eber Brock Ward). The Camp was located three blocks from Elmwood Cemetery. The Regiment saw battles in South Carolina, Georgia and Florida. More than 1,400 men served in the 102nd and ten percent gave their lives in battle for freedom. More research needs to be done, regarding who among this group may have been enslaved, escaped on the UGRR or participated in helping others out of bondage. Eighteen members of the USCT are buried here:

Row 1 **John Griffin**, Co. F (1812 – 1871)
Birthplace: unknown.

Pvt. Augustus Stewart, Co. C (1819 – 1894)
Birthplace: "on the ocean." Enlisted on 11/4/1863 in Detroit. Before enlisting employed as a cook and continued in this capacity. Mustered out in Charleston, South Carolina on 9/30/1865. Records indicate he was "free on or before April 19, 1861."

Row 2 **Pvt. Robert K. Russell**, Co. D (1847 – 1889)
Birthplace: unknown.

SGM William H. Carter, Co. F (1841 – 1876)
Birthplace: Cincinnati, Ohio. Enlisted on 11/15/1864 in Ypsilanti. Occupation listed as a laborer. Described as a most "faithfull (sic) soldier." Promoted to 1st Sergeant on 2/2/1864. Promoted to Sergeant Major on 8/18/1865 and transferred to non-commissioned staff. Mustered out in Charleston, South Carolina on 9/30/1865. Records indicate he was "free on or before April 19, 1861."

SGT Henry Smith, Co. I (1835 – 1889)
Birthplace: Burlington, New Jersey. Laborer. Enlisted in Detroit on 12/11/1863. Promoted to Sergeant on 1/3/1864 but requested his rank be reduced due to his deafness. Discharged due to physical disability on 7/13/1865 in Orangeburg, South Carolina.

Pvt. Daniel B. Walker, Co. D (1814 – 1890)
Birthplace: Virginia. Occupation listed as farmer. Enlisted in Detroit on 11/23/1863 and served as a cook. Mustered out in Charleston, South Carolina on 9/30/1865. Military records contain a reference to him being a slave.

William Riley, Co. A (1830 – 1891)
Birthplace: Rockville, Maryland. Laborer. Enlisted in Detroit on 1/23/1864. Mustered out in Charleston, South Carolina on 9/30/1865.

Pvt. George A. Holmes, Co. E (1830 – 1891)
Birthplace: New York. Sailor. Enlisted on 12/15/1863 in Ypsilanti. Mustered out in Charleston, South Carolina on 9/30/1865. Records indicate he was "free on or before April 19, 1861."

Row 3 **Pvt. Greenberry Hodge**, Co. C (1814 – 1879)
Birthplace: Nashville, Tennessee. Laborer. Enlisted on 9/16/1863 in Detroit. Mustered out in Charleston, South Carolina on 9/30/1865. Records indicate he was "free on or before April 19, 1861." Also known as Greenbury Hodge.

Pvt. Henry H. Williams, Co. F (1850 – 1888)
Birthplace: Malden Canada. Laborer. Enlisted on 9/13/1863 in Detroit. Duties included taking care of horses.

Pvt. Berry Thomas, Co. K (1845 – 1866) Also known in Military records as Benjamin Thomas. Birthplace: Virginia. Laborer. Enlisted on 1/31/1865 in Pontiac as a substitute for John B. Nixon. Assigned to Co. K in May. Mustered out in Charleston, South Carolina on 9/30/1865. Military records state he was free. Also known as Benjamin Hodge.



Left: Battle flag of the 102nd USCT Right: 102nd soldier

Musician Frank K. Robinson, Co. E (1855 – 1910)
Birthplace: Newport, Kentucky. Laborer. Enlisted in Detroit in 11/1863. Served as a musician in the regimental band that toured Michigan as part of its recruitment efforts. Also played in post and brigade bands. Mustered out in Charleston, South Carolina on 9/30/1865. Records indicate he was "free on or before April 19, 1861."

Row 4 **CPL Charles Gilbert**, Co. H (1842 – 1888)
Birthplace: Pike County, Georgia. Enlisted on 12/21/1863 in Jonesville, Michigan, as a corporal. Mustered in at Detroit. Promoted to sergeant on 5/10/1864. Noted in military records as free. Mustered out in Charleston, South Carolina on 9/30/1865.

Row 5 **CPL William Shorter**, Co. G (1844 – 1864)
Birthplace: New York. Farmer. Enlisted on 12/26/1863 in Detroit. In March 1864, hospitalized and died in May.
CPL George H. Griggs, Co. D (1844 – 1877)
Birthplace: Woodstock, Canada. Laborer. Enlisted as a private on 2/18/1864 in Detroit. Promoted to corporal on 3/12/1864, demoted 3/24/1865, and promoted back on 7/18/1865. Mustered out in Charleston, South Carolina on 9/30/1865. Military records contain contradictory statements about his status as a free or enslaved person. Canadian birth would suggest Griggs was free.

Pvt. Albert J. Ratliff, Co. F (1845 – 1866)
Birthplace: Gosfield, Canada. Laborer. Enlisted on 11/18/1863 in Ypsilanti. Ill during most of his military time and received a medical discharge.

Row 7 **Pvt. London Floyd**, Co. D (1840 – 1890)
Birthplace: North Carolina or Georgia around 1844. Farmer. Enlistment remarks state "slave...joined Co. August 26, 64 at Magnolia, Florida by Enlistment." May have been a freedom seeker. Mustered out in Charleston, South Carolina on 9/30/1865. Also known as Leonard and Landon.

CPL Robert Thomas, Co. F (1829 – 1865)
Birthplace: Lafayette County, Kentucky. Farmer. Enlisted on 2/13/1864 in Wisconsin. Mustered in on 2/14/1864 in Detroit. Promoted from private to corporal on 7/10/1864. Became ill in July 1865. Military records state he was a slave.

14 Amanda "Minda" Lynch (1755 – 1865) Section S, Lot 81



Born in slavery in South Carolina. Emancipated in 1856.

14 Richard Bush (1813 – 1895) Section S, Lot 81 (unmarked gravesite)

First African American U.S. Court bailiff. Served for Associate Supreme Court Justice Henry Billings Brown.

15 Honorable Ross Wilkins (1799 – 1872) Section 1, Lot 7

Pursuant to the 1850 Fugitive Slave Act, a Tennessee man applied for a warrant to take the Hamilton, later known as Gordon, Family and return them to slavery. Wilkins complied with the law and issued the warrant but gave advance warning to George DeBaptiste who was able to spirit the family away. The Tennessee man accused Judge Wilkins of being a rabid abolitionist and unsuccessfully tried to remove him from office. In another case, Wilkins allowed a freedom seeker at the center of a case to take the stand and then return without arrest to his refuge in Canada.

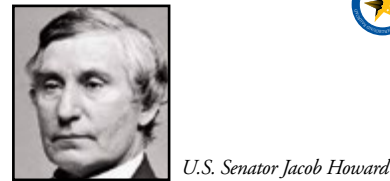
16 Horace Hallock (1807 – 1892) Section B, Lot 104

Abolitionist who sheltered and fed freedom seekers. Participated in a UGRR network from Battle Creek to Detroit to Canada among other routes. Founding member Detroit Anti-Slavery Society. President of the Liberty Party Association that sought to promote the election of anti-slavery candidates. Treasurer of Refugee Home Society. President of Michigan Anti-Slavery Association. Financially supported freedom seekers by purchasing tracts of Canadian land.

17 Shubael Conant (1783 – 1867) Section B, Lot 97

Founded and served as the first president of Detroit's Anti-Slavery Society, an auxiliary of the Michigan State Anti-Slavery Society, with a goal to end all slavery in the US. Organizer of the Republican Party. George DeBaptiste worked with him in Conant's later years.

18 Jacob Merritt Howard (1805 – 1871) Section B, Lot 90



Attorney, politician, and abolitionist. Founder Republican Party and assisted with draft of first platform seeking to abolish slavery. U.S. senator 1862 – 1871. One of the drafters of the 13th, 14th, and 15th amendments to the U. S. Constitution. Known to shelter freedom seekers. Instrumental attorney in a well-known fugitive slave case. The words of the 13th Amendment are engraved upon his monument.

19 Zachariah Chandler (1813 – 1879) Section B, Lot 49

Founder Republican Party and assisted with draft of first Republican platform seeking to abolish slavery. Liberal supporter of the UGRR providing large sums of money toward its operating expenses and defense of many legal actions brought against the harborers of fugitive slaves. He also attended the trials to further demonstrate his support. Assisted with establishment of the 102nd USCT. Advocated for civil rights for newly freed slaves.

20 Eber Brock Ward (1811 – 1875) Section A, Lot 86

Ward, a wealthy abolitionist, operated a steamboat company with regular lines between Cleveland and Detroit that would regularly ferry freedom seekers to Canada. Ward also raised funds for UGRR efforts in Detroit by hosting events that increased awareness about slavery and anti-slavery activism.

21 Elijah Brush (1772 – 1814) Section B, Lot 49

Attorney in the first legal case testing the right to hold people in slavery in Michigan. Brush filed the case on behalf of children born into slavery and kept enslaved despite the grant of freedom to their parents. The case established gradual emancipation rules that granted freedom to children of slaves. Scholars further believe Brush very likely assisted the Denison family in their escape to Canada to obtain freedom for their children born into slavery.

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