

Warren County History Center Tour

FOLLOWING THE TRACKS OF THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD IN WARREN COUNTY

Pre-Tour Lessons

GOAL: The goal of this tour is to explore the role Warren County played in aiding hundreds, if not thousands, of fugitive slaves escape their bondage in the South and obtain freedom in Canada in the years leading up to the American Civil War. This was done through the use of a loose, and very secretive, network of individuals and groups known as the Underground Railroad.

PRE-VISIT DISCUSSION TOPICS: Before visiting the Warren County History Center discuss the following topics with your classes:

- 1- **What is slavery?**
- 2- **Why is slavery wrong?**
- 3- **Was slavery only in the United States?**
- 4- **Can slavery be based on something other than race? If “yes”, upon what else can it be based?**

PRE-VISIT TERMS TO KNOW: Students should be familiar with the following terms before visiting the Warren County History Center:

- 1- **SLAVE-** a person who is owned by someone else, and is forced to work for them.
- 2- **“UNDERGROUND RAILROAD”-** the name given to a loose network white and black people who helped escaped slaves achieve freedom prior to the Civil War. It was not a single organization, but many little groups working at the same time for the same goal. It was in operation long before the invention of the railroad and usually has nothing to do with trains.
- 3- **FUGITIVE SLAVE ACT OF 1793-** part of the U.S. Constitution that guaranteed slaveholders the right to take back escaped slaves.
- 4- **FUGITIVE SLAVE LAW OF 1850-** a tougher law than the Fugitive Slave Act. It made it the duty of every law-enforcement official to arrest anyone they thought might be a runaway slave and made it a crime for anyone to help an escaped slave with food or shelter.
- 5- **ABOLITIONIST-** a person who wants to do away with or “abolish” slavery.
- 6- **NORTHWEST ORDINANCE OF 1787-** an act of the U.S. Congress that established the territory northwest of the Ohio River that included the future state of Ohio. The Ordinance did not allow slavery in the territory, but it did not stop slaveholders from recapturing their escaped slaves there.