

# Heritage Etched in Stone

## the project

Woodland Cemetery located at 6901 Woodland Avenue, Cleveland, Ohio was the first site in the City of Cleveland to become a member of the National Park Service Underground Railroad Network to Freedom by nominating Sara Lucy Bagby Johnson, Hiram Wilson, John Brown and Edward Wade. This has inspired us to do additional research of those residing in the cemetery who were part of the history of the Underground Railroad (UGRR). We have learned, while creating a cemetery tour guide of the Underground Railroad residents in Woodland Cemetery, that eight are in undocumented graves and the Vosburgh monument has toppled over and needs to be fixed.

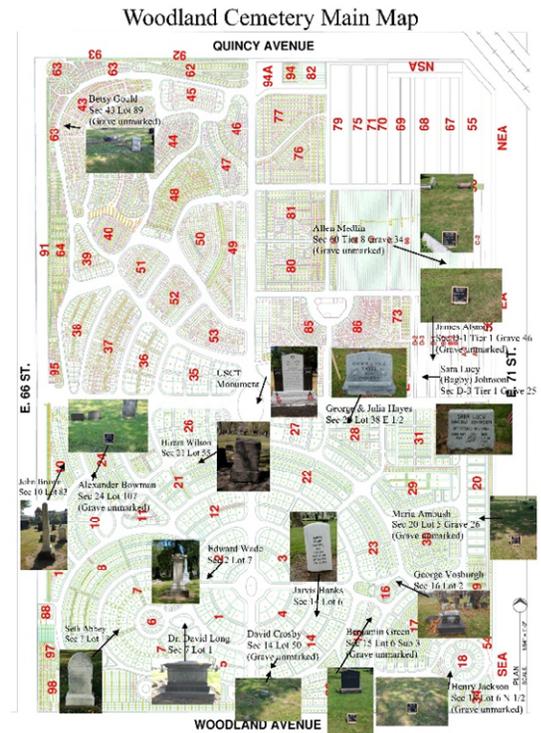
Absence of evidence is NOT evidence of absence. As with much of Black History being left out of textbooks, lack of headstones for LEADERS of the Underground Railroad means that people doing self-guided tours will never find these people, who sacrificed life and property to help Freedom Seekers. We want to correct this absence of headstones so graves can be documented and their stories will be told with our UGRR cemetery tour guides. We also seek donations to restore the George Vosburgh monument (he is one of only two (2) Black leaders of the Underground Railroad with a memorial).

It is important to provide a physical remembrance to tell their stories to educate current and future visitors and tourists to this historic cemetery. Once their resting place can be found, the educational possibilities are limitless. History is in your own backyard Clevelanders.

## the steps

Once funding is received, we will purchase the eight headstones for those who are buried in unmarked graves (James T Alston, Maria A Ambush, Alexander Bowman, David Hazzard Crosby, Betsy Gould, Benjamin S Green, Henry Jackson, and Allen Meddlin) and have the Vosburgh monument restored in time for us to plan Underground Railroad Tours to the public and organizations. It is disappointing to talk about the history of the UGRR and there is only a patch of grass. Lack of a physical presence of headstones can lead to absence of attention to their significance and sacrifices.

We also plan to add the information on the additional people we have discovered in our research to the data base at the National Park Service Underground Railroad Network to Freedom.



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## why we're doing it

Woodland Cemetery was the first site in the City of Cleveland to become a member of the National Park Service Underground Railroad Network to Freedom by nominating Sara Lucy Bagby Johnson, Hiram Wilson, John Brown and Edward Wade. These biographies inspired us to do additional research of those residing in the cemetery. Now we have 20 related to the history of the Underground Railroad and we know we will find more in our research. We want all of these people recognized by a headstone and included in our constantly updated cemetery tour guide of the Underground Railroad. Currently eight are in undocumented graves (all African Americans) and the Vosburgh monument has toppled over and needs to be repaired.

Woodland Cemetery's location in the Central neighborhood leads to our role as community educators. We document and preserve history in stone so others can share the history that exists in our own backyard. Over 85,000 residents of Woodland Cemetery are part of this city's past. Our focus at this time is the UGRR activists, who have no physical presence to document the past.

## amount we need

With the rising costs due to fluctuating inflation, this is an estimate at this time, with estimates we are averaging approximately \$750 for each headstone, total is \$6,000 plus restoration of the George Vosburgh monument of \$850. Currently we have raised \$4,850 and need to raise the additional \$2,000. Would you please help us preserve the history of the Underground Railroad at Woodland Cemetery?

You can support this project through Paypal or by mailing a check to Woodland Cemetery Foundation, PO Box 1966, Cleveland, OH 44106. Memo: UGRR Headstones. We are a 501(c) 3 nonprofit and your donation is tax deductible.

## contact information

If you should have any questions, please contact Dr. Dorothy Salem (216) 337-9217 [dorothysalem@yahoo.com](mailto:dorothysalem@yahoo.com) or Michelle A Day (216) 319-2091 [wcfcle@wcfcle.org](mailto:wcfcle@wcfcle.org)

Thank you for helping Woodland Cemetery preserve history.

