

WFWP Ohio tries to find a way to reconcile the painful history of the past

Nadya Hinson
October 1, 2019



"Because of them, I can now live the dream. I am the seed of the free, and I know it. I intend to bear great fruit." Sojourner Truth

My interest in the history of the emancipation of slaves was kindled after reading about the visit of Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon, founder of WFWP, to Senegal in January 2018. She held an international meeting there and visited historic sites. It was her visit to the "Door of No Return" on Gorée Island, the last stop for thousands of Africans from the 16th to the 19th century as they were loaded on ships like sardines never to return, that touched me deeply. She stood in the open door and prayed in tears for the liberation of those who perished during that tragic period.



WFWP's focus since its inception has been to find a way to reconcile the painful history of the past. It is the hope of the mother's heart which uses the Logic of Love as a way to bring peace to her family and the world. Dr. Moon has lived her life as a model of this heart, which is why so many call her Mother Moon.

Inspired by her example, in summer 2019 the WFWP Ohio chapter embarked on a mission to learn about the historical figures who helped bring an end to slavery, as well as the brave people who traveled the Underground Railway route. Our goal has been one of bringing reconciliation to the United States, which still struggles with divisions between white and black, unresolved even after the terrible Civil War, which took over 640,000 lives.

Ohio was the central state sitting on the north side of the mighty Ohio River, which separated it from the slave owning southern states. The abolitionist movement started as early as the American Revolution, a time when slaves were considered property even by some of the very founding fathers who had proclaimed that "All men are created equal." The Quakers particularly took on the mission of speaking out about this contradiction, though there were many levels of interpretation and commitment among them.

Over time, the northern states rejected slavery but still benefited by trade with the merchants from the south. It was a dangerous thing for the white abolitionists to create a route and provide transport and safe houses along the route that was called the Underground Railway. Ohio was the heart of activity as slaves came to the Ohio River and crossed by many varied means to travel north to freedom in Canada. Cincinnati was the central point where the travelers on the route were brought to safety as they moved on different routes to reach Detroit or Cleveland to cross into Canada.



Underground Railroad routes

Several historical women deserve attention as key figures of the Underground Railroad, among them Sojourner Truth, Harriet Tubman and Harriet Beecher Stowe. Harriet Tubman was a diminutive but fearless guide of hundreds of trips to safety from south to north. Harriet Beecher Stowe, whose father was a well known Minister and Abolitionist in Cincinnati, wrote the book that is often referred to as the final straw that sparked the Civil War, 'Uncle Tom's Cabin'.



Uncle Tom's Cabin

There were many brave women as well as men who risked all they had to end slavery and bring people in slavery to freedom. Each has a story which still cries from the earth, as the right of all people to be respected no matter what their race or beliefs is still challenged in 2019.

As we visited sites in Ohio and joined with others to report their experiences of exploring this history, it became clear that we were on a project of peace. We united with the [Peace Road project](#) to create a Bridge of Peace across Ohio from East to West and North to South. We hope to document this in more detail as the project continues to unfold.

Finally, we hope to create a Freedom Quilt, in the spirit of the early American women of both races, as a tribute to Mother Moon, who inspired the beginning of WFWP along with her husband, Dr. Sun Myung Moon, in 1992.

What follows are some photos from the Underground Railway Museum:

