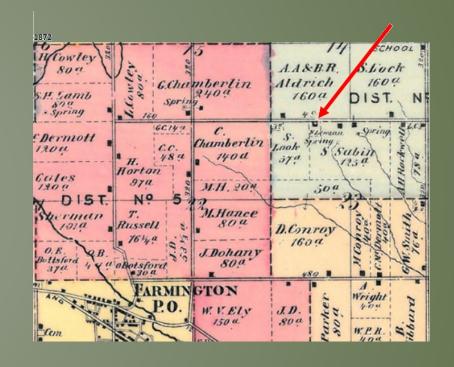
"FREEDOM ACRES"

THE AARON AND
ELLEN WILSON SITE



Leslie Pielack, Project Director

The Underground Railroad in Southern Oakland County

Funded in part by the Michigan Humanities Council an affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities

UNDERGROUND RAILROAD IN OAKLAND COUNTY



- A 3-year traveling exhibit
- An educational interactive web map

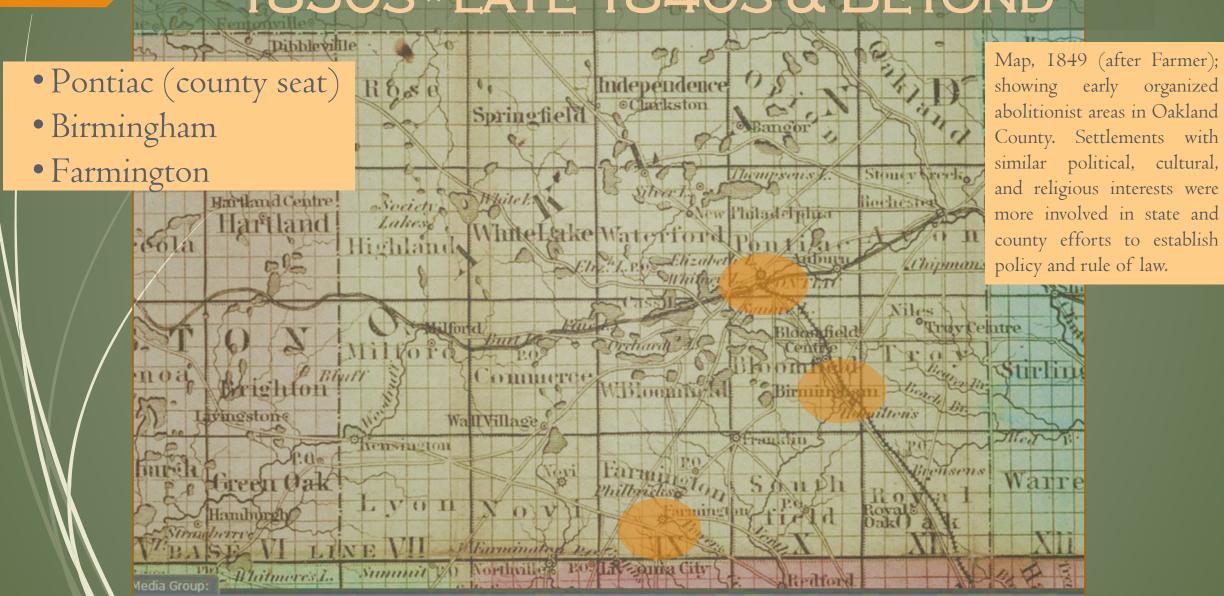
Study areas:
Birmingham
Farmington
Pontiac
Royal Oak
Southfield

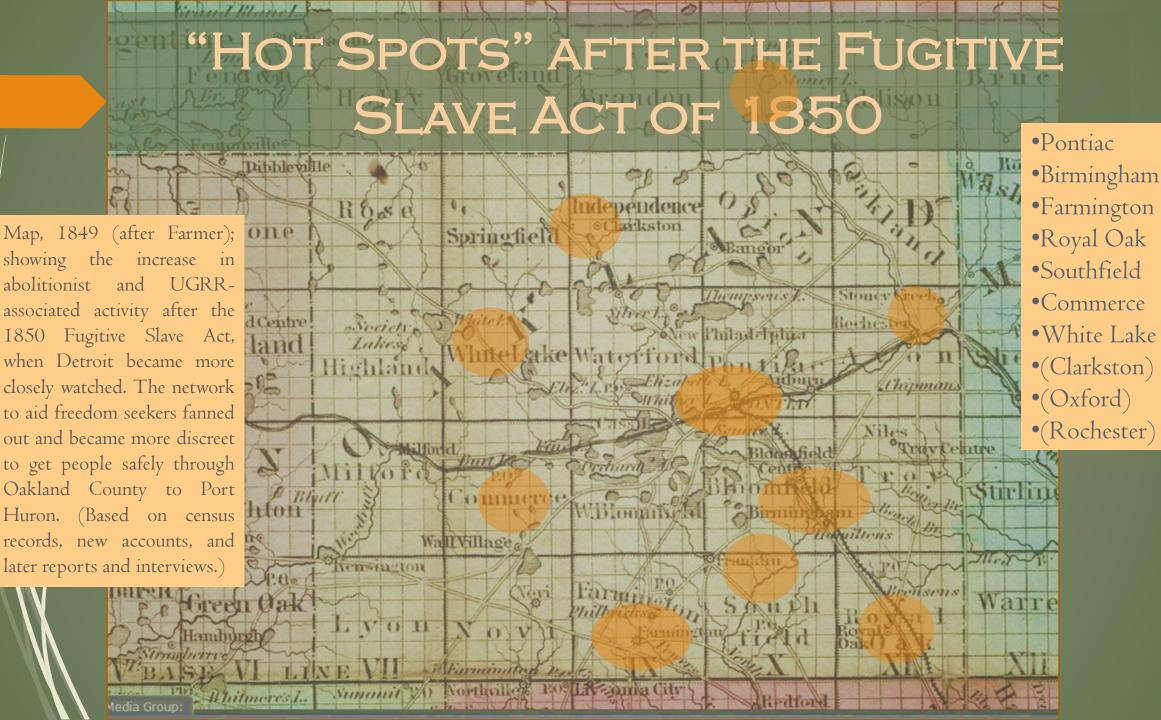




A MULTI-COMMUNITY PROJECT TO RESEARCH AND DOCUMENT ANTI-SLAVERY ACTIVITY IN OUR COMMUNITIES
FUNDED IN PART BY MICHIGAN HUMANITIES. AN AFFILIATE OF THE NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE HUMANITIE

EARLIEST ANTI-SLAVERY "HOT SPOTS," 1830s - LATE 1840s & BEYOND





FARMINGTON AREA ABOLITIONISTS

Nathan Power

- Well-documented
- National Park Service UGRR
 Network to Freedom (2012)
- Site: Quaker Cemetery

Abram Power

- Recently documented
- UGRR research project

Others (in process)



FARMINGTON AREA FREEDOM SEEKERS

What Makes the Wilsons Unique

Verified UGRR connection

- Published primary sources
- Family information-oral traditions
- Property information/survival of descendant's home

Inspiring Story

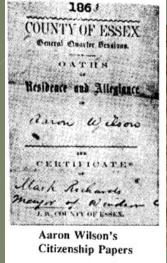
- Their connection to Farmington & return by choice
- Contributions of family to shaping of Farmington
- Relevance of story to wide audience
- Intact family occupation and preserved sense of place

FREEDOM ACRES

Upon this land, for over 100 years, lived descendants of slaves who fled the South before the Civil War.

Aaron and Ellen Wilson came from Virginia to Farmington via the Underground Railroad in the early 1850s. Going on to Canada, they became Canadian citizens to secure their freedom. After the Civil War they returned to Farmington, where "people had been so friendly," to make their home. Here four generations were respected members of the community, the only black family in Farmington, including Claude Wilson, a grandson, the first black deputy sheriff of Oakland County, and Wellington Hullm, known for years as Pete, the TV Man.

ELLEN JOHNSON (1836-1915) AND AARON WILSON (1832-1906)







- Assisted via UGRR in Farmington (likely by Power)
- Remained in Farmington area; had three children before 1860
- By 1864, had relocated to Ontario, where son John was born
- Stayed in Ontario until after the war; Aaron paid income taxes (1865)
- Returned after the war; purchased 5 acres of land in 1872; "Freedom Acres"

Over 100 Years Old

Mrs. Ellen Wilson Died Thurs day Morning

Mrs. Elley Wilson, a colored lady who lived north of town with her daughter, was severely burned about her left side Tuesday morninp as she attempted to check the fire she had built a few minutes

Mrs. Wilson, who slept near the stove, got up Tuesday morning and started a fire in the stove and went back to bed. In a short time the fire burned too briskly and the old lady attempted to turn the damper in the pipe, when her clothes caught fire. She shouted "fire," and the daughter rushed to her assistance with a pail of water, which she threw over her mother, and prevented her burning to death

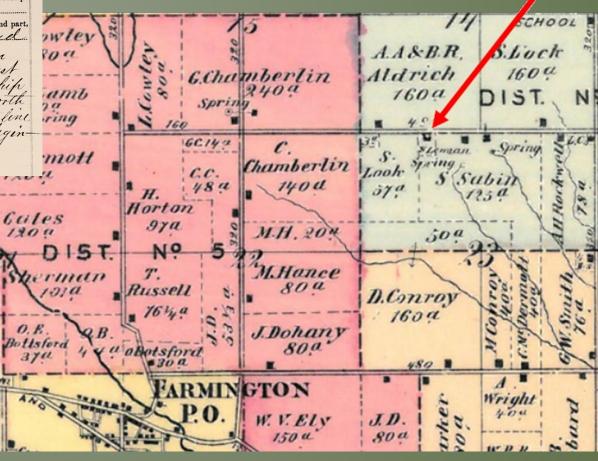
e A physician was called and her burns were dressed and she was made as comfortable as possible, but the shock and her extreme age, which is said to be over 100 years, caused her death Thursday morning.

Mrs. Wilson came here during slavery and could recount many an interesting story of her escape from the south on the saddle horse of her "Missus," and of hiding in corn shocks during, the time they were making their way to Michigan and freedom. She was a respected colored sooman, and had many friends.

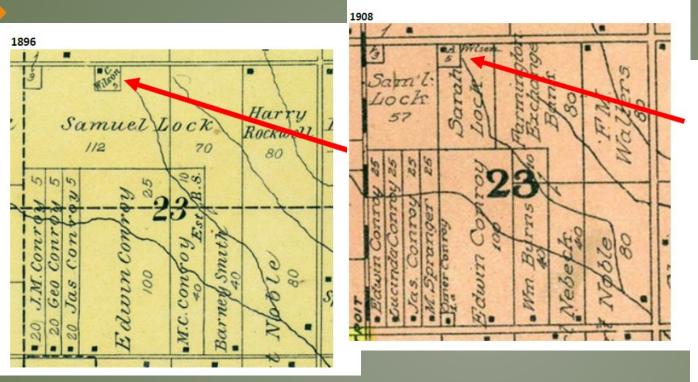
Received and Recorded, May 2,3° 1. D. 1873, at 11 o'clock WM.
Nicholas Lenan Register.
White Thirty we this twenty think a November
in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and String Into
BEWEEN CITIZEN Of the first part, and hailware
The Wilson of the same place
with the said part of of the first part for and in consideration of the sum of Assaid Hundred Purler 43/100
Collets
Jelland here's hereby confessed and acknowledged, dolla grant, bargain, sell, remise, release, alun and confirm unto the said party of the second part, tibes presents.
Ling in the lowership of Anomington Country of Oakland and state of Michigan
and designated and described as forced to wer to work the the in township
A THE OF THE PAINT WANTE WINDS WITH A WILLIAM WILLIAM TO HOUSE FIRE THE FUNC
1 the la llegar most promit rods mind notin fond was a me frace of agen-
ming containing five acres of land

Dated 23 November 1872, sale/deeded to Aaron Wilson by Nicholas Lenan [Lenon] for \$912.50: five acres in NW corner of E half of NW quarter of Section 23 Twp I N Range 9 E, with a dwelling. Courtesy Carol Bacak-Egbo

PROPERTY DEED: 1872



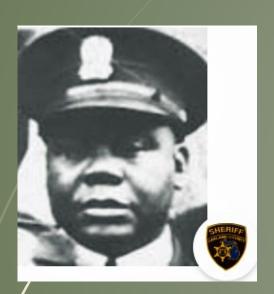
DOCUMENTED OCCUPATION



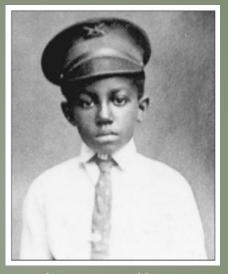


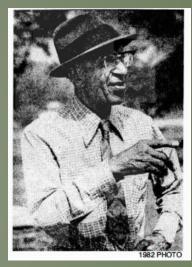
Wilson 5 acre property with same dwelling marked labeled **C Wilson** (son Charles) in 1896 map and **A** (Aaron) **Wilson** in 1908. In 1947 map, it is labeled **W. Hullm** (Wellingtongrandson) in 1947, with a new dwelling in a different property location. Property records show **MJ** (Mary J.) **Wilson** probate issue in 1976, although she died in 1939. (Property currently appears to be owned by Tracey Hullm.) *Courtesy Carol Bacak-Egbo*.

DESCENDANTS' CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE COMMUNITY



Grandson Claude (Claudell)
Wilson was the son of
Charles Wilson, and was the
first Black Oakland County
sheriff. He died in the line
of duty in 1935.





Great grandson Wellington ("Pete") Hullm was the grandson of John Wilson, Ellen and Aaron's eldest son. His mother was Emma Wilson Hullm. He was born in Canada but came to live at the house in Farmington while still a child, went to school in Farmington, and had a TV and radio repair business for many years. His son Dwight was a talented athlete and well known at Farmington High (graduated 1969)

WILSON FAMILY UNMARKED GRAVESITES



Ellen, Aaron, and their unmarried daughter Mary J. Wilson are all buried in Oakwood, aka Farmington Cemetery. The exact location of the graves was verified with information provided by the research project.

There is no marker.

AARON & ELLEN WILSON SITE

• Family/descendant interest

Identified with signage by Farmington
 Historical Commission

• UGRR Network to Freedom: possible future designation



