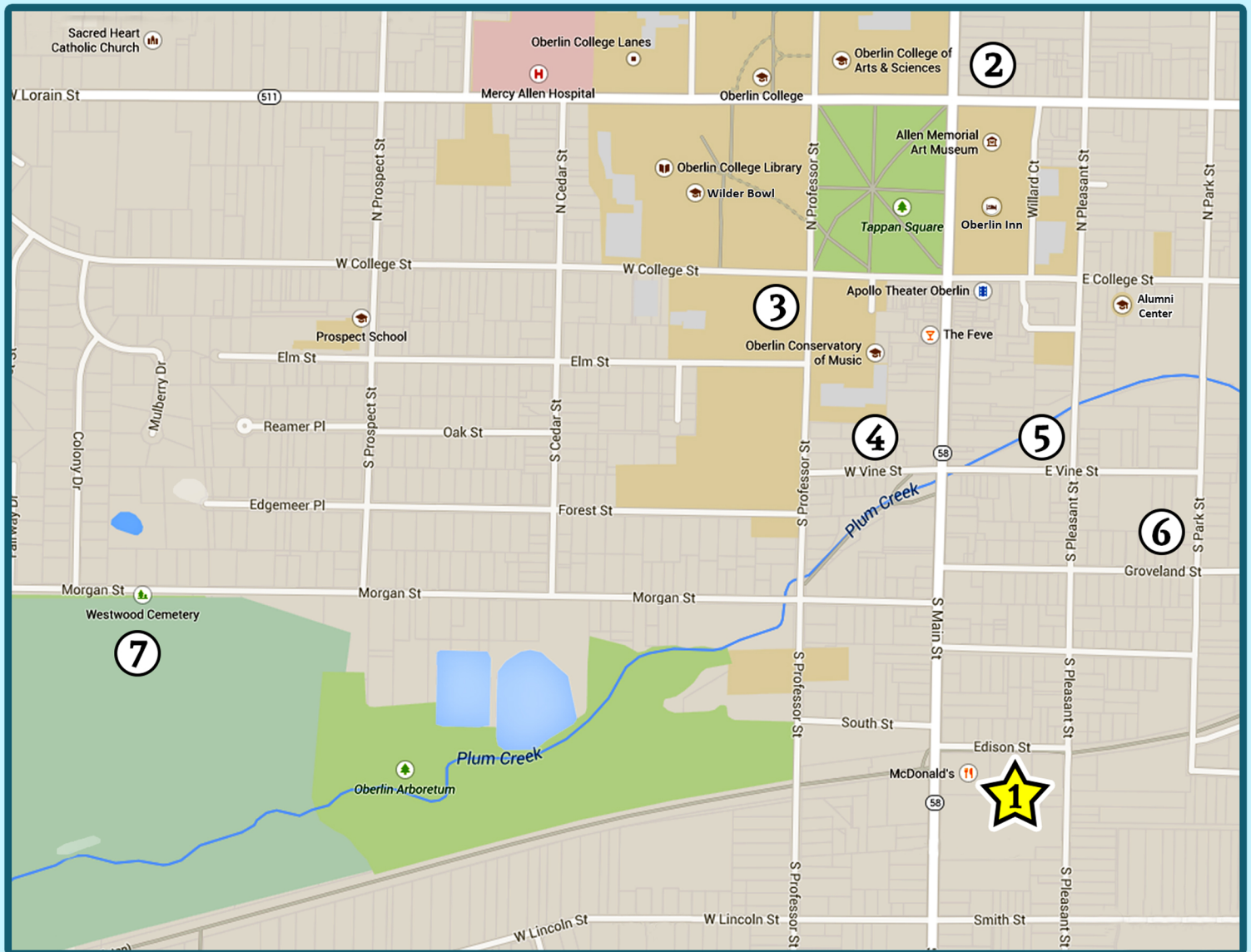




Underground Railroad History — Comes Alive in Oberlin!

Use the map below to follow a self-guided tour of points of interest related to Oberlin's rich history in the Underground Railroad & Abolitionist movement.



See back page for more information about each site

- ★ Gasholder Building (Future Oberlin Underground Railroad Center & Park - N - Ride Facility)**
 - 2. Oberlin Underground Railroad Marker & Garden**
 - 3. Underground Railroad Sculpture & Healing Garden**
 - 4. Oberlin Heritage Center**
 - 5. MLK Park**
 - 6. Rust United Methodist Church**
 - 7. Westwood Cemetery**
- ↳ (Oberlin-Wellington Rescue Monument • MLK Monument • Harpers Ferry Memorial)



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★ Gasholder Building (Future home of the Oberlin Underground Railroad Center): (273 S. Main Street) The Oberlin Gasholder Building (AKA the “Round House”) was constructed in 1889 for the purpose of storing manufactured coal gas to produce light and heat in the City during the 19th century. As technology advanced, the Gasholder Building no longer served a practical purpose, but in the late 1980s, a group of Oberlin residents united to save the Gasholder Building from demolition. Due to the efforts of the residents, the US Department of the Interior listed the Gasholder Building on the National Register of Historic Places in 1998.

In 2004, the family of A.H. (Kenny) Clark donated the building to the City and the notion of re-purposing the building as an interpretive Underground Railroad Center and Park-N-Ride facility garnered the most support within the community. In 2012, the City completed Phase I of the project, the stabilization and rehabilitation of the exterior of the Gasholder Building, and plans to begin construction on Phase II (development of the grounds and Park-N-Ride facilities) this year.

2. Oberlin Underground Railroad Marker & Garden: (Northeast corner of N. Main & E. Lorain Streets) This park serves as a point of reflection and commemorates Oberlin’s role in the Underground Railroad. The marker was erected in 2005 by the Friends of Freedom Society and the Ohio Underground Railroad Association. In 2009, Nobel Laureate Toni Morrison visited Oberlin and dedicated a bench in the park as part of her “A Bench by the Road” project.

3. Underground Railroad Sculpture and Healing Garden: (Southwest corner of S. Professor & W. College Streets) In 1977, Cameron Armstrong (then a senior at Oberlin College) created the sculpture of a railroad track emerging from the ground to commemorate Oberlin’s part in the Underground Railroad. The surrounding Healing Garden includes plants representative to those used by slaves on the road to freedom.

4. Oberlin Heritage Center: (20 W. Vine Street) The Oberlin Heritage Center is an award-winning museum complex that includes three beautifully preserved historic sites: the Monroe House (1866), Jewett House (1884) and Schoolhouse (1836). The OHC offers a variety of tours and programs that allow you to explore Oberlin’s unique history, including discovering Oberlin’s crucial role as part of the Underground Railroad and a hotbed of abolitionism, women’s activism, and scientific discovery.

5. MLK Park (Northwest corner of S. Pleasant & W. Vine Streets) This park honoring Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. includes three distinctive statues commemorating individuals and events that advanced the abolitionist and civil rights movements.

- ♦ **Oberlin-Wellington Rescue Monument:** This monument commemorates those involved in the 1858 rescue of former slave John Price from Federal Marshalls working under the Fugitive Slave Act with the intent of returning him to his “owners” in Kentucky. Price was living as a freeman in Oberlin for two years before being captured. Many Oberlin and Wellington residents gathered at the Wellington hotel where the Marshalls were holding Price and helped him escape his captors and return to Oberlin.
- ♦ **Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Monument:** This statue, which honors Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and his significance in the Civil Rights movement, was erected in 1987 by Professor Emeritus Paul Arnold.
- ♦ **Harpers Ferry Memorial:** This memorial commemorates the three African-American Oberlinians (Shields Green, Lewis Sheridan Leary, and John Anthony Copeland) who died during John Brown’s raid on Harpers Ferry, Virginia. The 1859 raid was an attempt to start an armed slave revolt by seizing a US arsenal, but was defeated by US Marines. The statue was originally erected in Westwood Cemetery in 1865, but was moved to MLK Park in 1971.

6. Rust United Methodist Church (128 Groveland Street) This historic church was founded by freedmen in 1872. The church was the first African American church in Oberlin and had a peak membership of about 120 people in the early 20th century. The church was named in honor of Richard S. Rust, a Methodist educator who led the Church to found several black Methodist colleges in the south. The current edifice was built in 1917, designed pro bono by notable architect Cass Gilbert, who worked for Oberlin College at the time.

7. Westwood Cemetery (Morgan Street in Southwest Oberlin) Westwood Cemetery was dedicated in 1864 and serves as the final resting place of many Oberlin residents. Many former slaves, abolitionists, scholars, artists, and other prominent Oberlinians are buried here. Information about grave markers or memorials in the cemetery can be obtained at the cemetery’s entrance or from the Oberlin Heritage Center.