

The First Free Black (African American) School Building in Ohio specifically built and devoted to the education of Indians and Negroes (*who had been denied the opportunity for public education*) was opened in Harveysburg in **1831, over thirty years before the Emancipation Proclamation**. The school was opened and conducted by **Elizabeth Harvey**. She believed that **freedom comes through education and devoted her life to the advancement and education of the Negro race**. She, with other (Quaker) Friends, did much to modify the feeling of prejudice against the colored people in the village of Harveysburg.



Photo of Elizabeth Burgess Harvey in old age.

Her name should be entered on the roll of honor of those noble people who gave their lives to a great cause."

In 1829 the Ohio School law refused to allow freed African-Americans into the newly developing public school system. Because of this unjust law, various people and organizations began to open segregated schools for blacks. This was the case in Harveysburg, Ohio in 1831. Quaker Elizabeth Burgess Harvey, and her husband Dr. Jesse Harvey, built the one-room brick School Building for non-whites (Blacks and Indians) on the north edge of Harveysburg.

FREEDOM THROUGH EDUCATION

Due to the Harveys and the First Free Black School student **Orindatus Simon Bolivar Wall** received his education which empowered him to become a Hero of African American History.



**Orindatus Simon Bolivar Wall
August 12th, 1825 ~ April 25th, 1891
Buried in Arlington National Cemetery**

Accomplishments:

- Underground Railroad Conductor
- Shoe & Boat Manufacturer
- Oberlin Rescuer - 1858
- Recruiter for the Union Army
- **1st Black Captain in the U.S. Army**
- Provost Marshal of Charleston, S. C.
- Recipient of the *Medal of Honor*
- Graduate of *Howard University*
- Police Magistrate & Public Servant
- Lawyer & Justice of the Peace of *Washington D.C.*

From the Plantation in North Carolina where he was born a slave: to the School for Blacks in Harveysburg, Ohio; to Oberlin, Ohio; to Washington D. C. Orindatus had learned through his own life experience that education and mobility was the key to freedom for the black person. In his own case and his siblings', their move to Ohio had changed their lives forever.

HARVEYSBURG COMMUNITY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Elizabeth Harvey First Free Black School Building in Ohio and the Northwest Territory.
Built in 1831.



"A school is a building that has four walls—with tomorrow inside..."

The brick, one room Schoolhouse specifically built to educate non-whites still stands on its original location and is now a museum.

**23 North Street
P.O. Box 105
Harveysburg, OH 45032**
Treasurer: Lucy McCarren
Secretary: Alma Plummer
(937) 382-0153

HISTORY OF HARVEYSBURG

On August 6, 1787, standing high on a bluff and looking down a path which meandered in a large "S" downward over 100 feet to the east bank of Caesar's Creek, Colonial Abraham Buford proclaimed the territory.

Levi Lukens, a Virginia Quaker, purchased the 1000 acre survey in 1812 and then sold a portion to Roden Ham in 1815.

In 1827, a Quaker, William Harvey, of North Carolina, came into this area looking for land and liking the location with its view of the creek, persuaded Mr. Ham to sell a portion of his farm to him.

William Harvey platted the land into 47 lots, with the pike between Waynesville and Wilmington being its main street, and the road from Middletown its principal cross street. This plat was recorded on January 3, 1829, and the little Quaker Village of Harveysburg was born. For years, due to the Quaker influence and to its location along the Bulskin Trace, Harveysburg was a major junction on the Underground Railroad. A house on Maple Street now known as "Ashley House", the Harvey's home on Main Street and other homes in Harveysburg were known as an underground station.

It became a thriving community, with many ambitious people and their various skills of that day, moving into the community.

A carding mill was built, wool being a chief industry; grain was grown in the outlying farm land. Hogs were grown and a pork packing plant, second only to Cincinnati, was in full production. Wagon makers, saddlers, blacksmiths, tanners, coopers, and tinsmiths were some of the trades. Grocery stores, a bakery, and other shops were numerous.

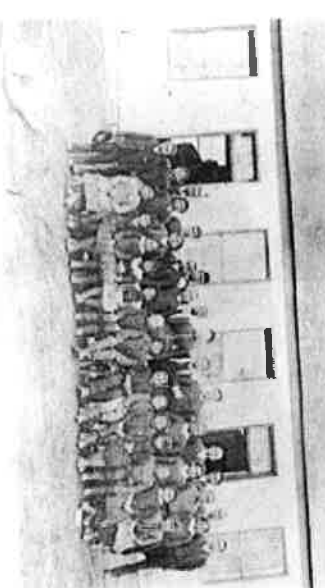
The first Post Office was established in 1839.

Harveysburg became incorporated in 1844.

EDUCATION IN HARVEYSBURG

Education was a primary interest to the Harvey family. Dr. Jesse Harvey and his wife, Elizabeth were both educators. Dr. Harvey, besides his practice of medicine, built a seminary in the village and financed the salaries of its teachers and supplied the teaching materials. Elizabeth saw a need to educate the black children so they built a school in 1831 to educate all non-whites. This was the first school building specifically built to educate non-whites in Ohio, the Northwest Territory and perhaps the United States. It was also partially supported by the Grove Monthly Meeting of Friends (Quakers).

Stephen Wall, a wealthy North Carolina plantation owner, provided funding to relocate eight slave children and their families to Harveysburg for their education at this school. One of these children "Orindatus S.B. Wall" became the **first regular commissioned African American Captain in the U.S. Army during the Civil War.**



The school remained in session every year until around 1909 when non-white students were integrated into the Massie Township School system.

NATIONAL REGISTERS OF HISTORIC PLACES

The black school was sold and it became a dwelling, and remained so until after 1976. In 1976 Harveysburg applied to become an official Bicentennial Community. The requirements that the American Revolution Bicentennial Commission in Washington D. C. had established to become a Bicentennial Community were to celebrate the 200th birthday of our nation in three categories: Heritage, Festival and Horizons.

The Horizons purpose chosen by the Harveysburg Committee was to acquire the black school building, **restore it, and open it to the public as a symbol of the progress of freedom through education.**

The purchase was finally accomplished in February 1977. Restoration began with a matching grant from the National Parks U. S. Department of the Interior, administered through the Ohio Historical Society. The School/Museum continues through the donations and hard work of the members of the Harveysburg Community Historical Society.

This Society was formed out of the former Bicentennial Committee and it represents the Village of Harveysburg and Massie Township, Warren County, Ohio.

The first Free Black School was put on the National Register of Historic Places on November 17, 1977

We do not have a full time curator at this time. Therefore, the museum is open by appointment only. Requests may be made by calling:

- 513-897-6195 or 937-382-0153
- Directions: I-71, exit 45 West on St. Rt. 73
- Or I-75, exit 38 East on St. Rt. 73
- Hours: Open by appointment only.

Tax-deductible charitable donations may be made to our account at the Warren County Foundation. Make your check payable to the Warren County Foundation, with Harveysburg Community Historical Society designated on the memo line. Donations should be mailed to the Warren County Foundation at P.O. Box 495 Lebanon, OH 45036. Donors will receive written acknowledgement of their donations for tax purposes.