

# The Underground Railroad



Alexander Nelson, my daughter-in-law's 6th great grandfather, was born in County Down, Ireland. He emigrated to America with his parents in 1759, when he was just ten years old. They first arrived in Philadelphia where he had the fortune to be patronized by Robert Morris, the celebrated financier of the Revolution. As he grew, he eventually moved to Virginia, purchased a plantation called "Poplar Grove" and became an influential member of the community.

He, as so many did in those times, built his success on the backs of the slaves he "owned." This had a profound effect on at least one of his children. John Mathews Nelson left Virginia and his family home out of disgust for the practice of slavery to which he was witness. He and his wife Mary Lewis Trimble Nelson moved to Ohio where they established a way station for the Underground Railroad. They were involved in aiding rescues for fleeing black slaves up until they retired. Their son, Marshall Telfair Nelson, took over where they left off, using the family home at Clear Creek, northeast of Hillsboro, Ohio, as a safe haven for those who could make the journey.

In 1842, James Nelson, John's brother, purchased a family retainer, 33 year old Lewis Morton, who bought the freedom of his ailing wife and three children. They reached the Nelson

safe house in a one-horse cart and set up a forge on Clear Creek where they continued to aid fellow refugees from slavery.

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