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**Collection title:** Cass County Underground Railroad research collection  
**Volume:** .70 cu. ft. [2 doc. boxes]  
**Collection number:** RHC- 34  
**Inclusive dates:** ca. 1970s-2008

**History:**

Sondra Mose-Ursery, community historian, founder of the Vandalia Underground Railroad Foundation, and former mayor of Vandalia, Michigan compiled this collection while researching the Underground Railroad in Cass County, Michigan. The collection documents Cass County, Michigan as a unique community where a number of Quaker abolitionists provided refuge to free African Americans and African Americans fleeing slavery in the south. Free and enslaved African Americans arrived in Cass County from Quaker settlements in central and northern Indiana. Many were offered tenant residency in Cass County in exchange for their labor. Cass County Underground Railroad conductors escorted freedom-seekers who wished to continue their journey to the next Underground Railroad stations in Schoolcraft, Flowerfield, and Kalamazoo and Calhoun (Battle Creek) Counties and on to stations ending in Detroit and Canada.

This collection and other efforts inspired by Mose-Ursery led to the creation of the Cass County Free Soil Underground Railroad Tour. In 2001 the National Park Service's National Network to Freedom recognized the Cass County Free Soil Underground Railroad Tour as an official Network to Freedom program. Mose-Ursery's collecting also inspired the local community to organize a drive to save the neglected home of one of Cass County's Underground Railroad conspirators, Quaker James E. Bonine.

**Collection description:**

The collection consists of historical articles, copies of original documents and newspaper clippings ca. 1841-2008, documenting the Underground Railroad and genealogies documenting the personal lives of Underground Railroad operatives, free African Americans and fugitives seeking freedom and their descendents.

**Preferred Citation:** Researchers wishing to cite this collection should use the following credit line: Cass County Underground Railroad research collection, RHC-34. Special Collections & University Archives, Grand Valley State University Libraries.

Box 1

- 1 Ramptown Project. Archaeological and historical investigation of the Underground Railroad in southwest Michigan, 2005
- 2 History of Cass Co., short history of Vandalia, Harry East, p. 1-8
- 3 History of Cass Co., Reminiscences of F.N. Bonine, p. 9-32
- 4 History of Cass Co., Reminiscences the Underground R.R., J.R. Bonine, p. 33-36
- 5 History of Cass Co., Reminiscences of R.R. Bonine, p. 37-41

- 6 History of Vandalia, Michigan by Nellie O'Dell
- 7 History of Calvin Township, Cass Co., Michigan by Treva Wooden
- 8 Story of the Birch Lake Quakers, Calvin Township, Cass Co., Michigan
- 9 Underground Railroad in Michigan by Blanche Coggan
- 10 Underground Railroad by George Fox
- 11 Michigan Centennial History, ch. 26 Underground Railroad in Michigan ed. Geo. Fuller
- 12 Historic Michigan, Battle Creek as a station of the Underground Railroad
- 13 Account of Quaker Abolitionists and the Kentucky Raid, [author unknown]
- 14 The Kentucky Raid: Lessons from Practical Abolitionism by Debian Marty, 2004
- 15 Cass Co., Michigan. Kentucky Raid
- 16 Census records and articles on African Americans in Cass Co., 1840-1880
- 17 Reflections of Mr. Orlando James
- 18 Out of Bondage: How Perry Sanford escaped in Heritage Battle Creek
- 19 Rev. Thomas S. Evans (freeman) Cass Co., Michigan newspaper clipping
- 20 James Buchanan Rhodes, manager of the Bonine farm
- 21 Free papers for Jessee and Lany James and family, North Carolina
- 22 European American abolitionists in Cass Co., Michigan
- 23 Underground operatives Cass Co., general
- 24 Underground operatives Cass Co., Stephen Bogue family
- 25 Underground operatives Cass Co., Bonine family
- 26 Bonines and related families in America
- 27 Bonine and Bogue property descriptions Cass Co., Michigan
- 28 Underground operatives Cass Co., Osborn family
- 29 Underground operatives Cass Co., Sickafus/Sigerfoos family
- 30 Obituary of Underground Railroad operatives
- 31 Michigan Place Names (Day, Michigan)
- 32 Zoning Ordinance of Penn Township with map and history, 1976
- 33 Property maps of Calvin Township, Cass Co., Michigan 1860, 1872
- 34 Property map Cassopolis, 1872
- 35 Photocopy of Vandalia School photo
- 36 Text of slideshow on Quakers in Cass County and Kentucky Raid
- 37 Underground Railroad tour route from South Bend to Vandalia
- 38 Underground Railroad in Michigan, GVSU conference, 2008
- 39 When we Get to Christiana Creek, play by Buddy Hannah, 1995
- 40 A Station on the Underground Railroad by Pamela S. Thomas, n.d.

#### Box 2

- 1 Chain Lake Baptist Church
- 2 Jones and related families
- 3 Story of Indiana: The slavery question by Ross F. Lockridge
- 4 Underground Railroad in northern Indiana compiled by Helen Windle
- 5 Underground Railroad in Bristol, Indiana
- 6 Personal narratives of fugitive slaves from Slaves of Knowledge tour, South Bend, Indiana
- 7 A Centennial history of Erlanger, Kentucky by Wayne Onkst
- 8 Slavery in Boone Co., Kentucky and its aftermath by Paul Tanner
- 9 Graves family, Kentucky
- 10 Preface and introduction to Levi Coffin's Reminiscences with Coffin family geneology
- 11 Two Generations under Freedom by Booker T. Washington

- 12 Follow the Drinking Gourd by Gail Habbyshaw, Mercer, PA , 2001
- 13 Dixon family
- 14-16 Zachariah Shugart account book and Day book [copied from Niles Community Library]
- 17 The Underground Railroad at Schoolcraft in Michigan History Magazine, 1954
- 18 Markers and documentation
- 19 Newspaper clippings