1. NAME OF PROPERTY

Historic Name: **EVANS, WILSON BRUCE, HOUSE**

Other Name/Site Number: LOR-239-21

2. LOCATION

Street & Number: 33 East Vine St. Not for publication: N/A

City/Town: Oberlin Vicinity: __

State: Ohio County: Lorain Code: 093 Zip Code: 44074

3. CLASSIFICATION

Ownership of Property		Category of Property	
Private:	X	Building(s):	X
Public-Local:	___	District:	___
Public-State:	___	Site:	___
Public-Federal:	___	Structure:	___
		Object:	___

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing
1	0 buildings
___	___ sites
___	___ structures
___	___ objects
1	0 Total

Number of Contributing Resources Previously Listed in the National Register: 1

Name of Related Multiple Property Listing:

4. STATE/FEDERAL AGENCY CERTIFICATION

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this ____ nomination ____ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property ____ meets ____ does not meet the National Register Criteria.

Signature of Certifying Official Date

State or Federal Agency and Bureau

In my opinion, the property ____ meets ____ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of Commenting or Other Official Date

State or Federal Agency and Bureau

5. NATIONAL PARK SERVICE CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify that this property is:

_X_ Entered in the National Register
___ Determined eligible for the National Register
___ Determined not eligible for the National Register
___ Removed from the National Register
___ Other (explain):

Signature of Keeper Date of Action

6. FUNCTION OR USE

Historic: Domestic Sub: Single Dwelling

Current: Domestic Sub: Multiple Dwelling

7. DESCRIPTION

ARCHITECTURAL CLASSIFICATION: Italianate

MATERIALS:
Foundation: Sandstone
Walls: Brick
Wood (Rear Addition)
Roof: Slate
Other:

Describe Present and Historic Physical Appearance.

The Wilson Bruce Evans house is located on a residential street within the city of Oberlin, Ohio. The house sits on a slight hill on the south side of East Vine Street, which was known as Mill Street in the 1850s. Built in 1854-1856, it is a two story Italianate style house constructed of red brick, with a low, hipped roof. A frame, one story, gable roofed rear addition housing the kitchen and two smaller rooms, was added during the lifetime of the original owner, Wilson Bruce Evans (1824-1898), probably ca. 1870. The kitchen wing exhibits painted wood shingle siding of unknown date, and small, one over one sashes. The front porch, which is made of wood supported by brick pillars, was added in 1927, by Cornelius Evans, the son of the original owner. The only non-historic fabric exhibited on the exterior is the use of vinyl siding between the porch posts. Four concrete steps allow access up to the porch. The roof material is slate; the porch roof is asphalt. There is one central chimney.

The house is a three bay, side hallway plan dwelling, with the entrance located on the far right side. The entrance has its original wooden double doors with an arched transom light. There is also a wooden and metal screen door. All of the windows, with the exception of two on the rear addition, are double hung, two over two panes. The other windows are also double hung, but smaller, and have one over one panes. Window lintels are also arched and have plain stone sills. The extended roof eaves are supported by simple concave-convex brackets attached to a frieze, with panels outlined with raised moldings. The brackets are painted white, as are the frame sections of the house. The fenestration is equally restrained and exhibits two evenly spaced bays. The windows on the west elevation are closely spaced to accommodate the interior staircase. Although it is a modest house, its simplicity lends it an air of elegance.

The interior of the house is distinctive because of its original woodwork, which was milled and installed by Wilson Bruce Evans and his brother, Henry. The two brothers were carpenters and furniture makers. The deep molding surrounds accentuate all the doorways, the doors themselves, and the trim around all the windows and the staircase. Constructed of walnut and oak, the woodwork is stained a rich, dark brown. The woodwork has never been painted. The doorways to the first floor rooms are arched, a distinguishing feature of this house. The original floor plan consists of a side entrance hall with the staircase leading to the second floor just behind the front door, on the west side of the house. A narrow hallway runs along the side of the staircase. There are two doorways leading from the hallway. The first door, on the immediate left, is seen almost as soon as one enters the house. This door leads to what is now functioning as the living room, but was probably the front parlor in Evans' time. The other door is at the rear end of the hallway, and it leads into the dining room. Adjacent to the dining room and behind the living room, on the east side of the house, is another smaller room, currently functioning as a bedroom; behind that is a bathroom. There are double doors leading into that bedroom off both the dining room and the living room. All the interior doors on the first floor and the heavy wooden balustrade appear to be original. Floors are wide board, probably pine planking, and are original. There are plaster walls throughout, which are painted white. The lighting fixtures throughout the first floor are definitely old; whether or not they are converted gas fixtures is not known. The second floor has been sensitively converted into an apartment. The major change on the second floor is the conversion of two small areas into a bathroom and kitchen.

The one story rear addition houses a large kitchen, which is accessed through a door off of the dining room. On the east side of the kitchen is a door leading to a bedroom. There is another door in the rear (south end) of the kitchen leading into another bedroom. The kitchen has two windows on the west side and to the south of these there is a door leading to the outside. The bedroom located to the rear of the kitchen has a window which is located south of the exterior kitchen door on the west facade and another window located on the south facade. There is an exterior cellar entrance just below the two west facade kitchen windows. The kitchen has linoleum flooring and plaster walls.

The Evans house is remarkably intact and, with the exception of the front porch, probably does not look noticeably different than it did in Wilson Bruce Evans' time. There are no extraneous buildings on the property. The two lots immediately to the west of the Evans house were historically, and still are, a part of the Evans holdings. The house on the lot closest to the Evans house is rental property while the other lot is vacant. The house that formerly stood there was so deteriorated that it was demolished probably ca. 1950. On the east side of the Evans house is a large white frame residence which looks like it may also date from the mid-nineteenth century. This particular house sits much further back from the street than does the Evans house.

A metal chain link fence currently demarcates the east side of the Evans house property. There is a gravel driveway along the west side, running between the Evans house and the adjacent property. Across the street is a small park, known as Martin Luther King, Jr. Park.

The Wilson Bruce Evans house has been passed down through his family. The current owner is Mrs. Frances Kent of Washington, D.C., the niece of Wilson Bruce Evans' granddaughter, Dorothy Inborden Miller. Mrs. Kent inherited the house upon the death of Mrs. Miller in November 1996.. Born in 1898, Mrs Miller was the daughter of Wilson Bruce's daughter Sarah and her husband, Thomas Sewell Inborden. Mrs. Miller used to live in the family home during the warm weather; however, as she aged and her health failed, she only visited once a year. Throughout its history, the house has been lovingly maintained by the heirs. They have kept the house in good repair; the most recent renovation was the replacement of the slate roof over the main portion of the house with another slate roof.

8. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:
Nationally: X Statewide:__ Locally:__

Applicable National Register Criteria:	A X B X C__ D__
Criteria Considerations (Exceptions):	A__ B__ C__ D__ E__ F__ G__
NHL Criteria:	1
NHL Theme(s):	II. Creating social institutions and movements 2. Reform movements
Areas of Significance:	Social History, African-American
Period(s) of Significance:	1856-1898
Significant Dates:	1858-1859
Significant Person(s):	
Cultural Affiliation:	African-American
Architect/Builder:	Wilson Bruce Evans, Henry Evans
NHL Historic Context:	XXXI. Social and humanitarian movements D. Abolitionism

State Significance of Property, and Justify Criteria, Criteria Considerations, and Areas and Periods of Significance Noted Above.

The Wilson Bruce Evans House is nationally significant under Criterion 1 for its important associations with the abolitionist movement in Ohio and the Underground Railroad, as represented by the 1858 Oberlin-Wellington Rescue, one of several open and well-publicized confrontations over the federal Fugitive Slave Act of 1850. Many Northern states were angered by the intrusion of "Southern slave power" into their affairs and the Fugitive Slave law had become a Federal Constitutional issue in the North as well as an abolitionist cause. The Oberlin-Wellington Rescue was significant in fueling the sectional differences in the United States prior to the Civil War. Wilson Bruce Evans and his brother Henry, participants in the Rescue, were leading African-American abolitionists in Oberlin, Ohio; they were also successful members of Oberlin's commercial and educational communities.[1]

The role of free blacks like the Evanses in abolition has largely been, at the very least marginalized, and at the worst, largely ignored. Many histories of abolition and even the Underground Railroad focus on the efforts of white Americans to end slavery with only a passing nod to famous blacks like Frederick Douglass. Free African-Americans had long been speaking out against slavery, giving a voice to those whose enslavement kept them silent. The Evans' part in the Oberlin-Wellington Rescue is significant in illustrating the pro-active role of blacks (often underestimated) in the efforts to aid fugitive slaves and the abolitionist movement.

The Wilson Bruce Evans House was built by both of the Evans brothers in 1854-56, although only Wilson Bruce and his family lived in it. (Henry and his family lived on Hamilton Street in Oberlin.) Wilson Bruce lived in this house on Vine Street (Mill Street) until his death in 1898. The house has remained in the family until the present.

The Evans family was well-known in Oberlin and its surrounding environs. Neither Wilson Bruce nor Henry Evans appeared to have been active in any organized abolitionist efforts. The brothers did not become famous as outspoken abolitionists like Harriet Tubman, Sojourner Truth, or Frederick Douglass. However, the Evans brothers played major roles in the Oberlin-Wellington Rescue. Their desire to help their brothers and sisters held in chains was put above their own personal safety. They risked imprisonment to fight slavery and the Fugitive Slave Act.

Wilson Bruce and Henry Evans were free born in Orange County, North Carolina in 1824 and 1817 respectively. It was in North Carolina where they learned their trade of cabinetmaking and carpentry. The two brothers married two sisters, Henrietta and Sarah Jane Leary. (Henrietta married Henry around 1844; Sarah and Wilson Bruce wed in 1854.[2]) The Leary sisters were also free born. Their father, Matthew Nathaniel Leary, was a prominent citizen of Fayetteville, North Carolina, known to be generous to his fellow

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[1]"The Leary Family," The Negro History Bulletin, November, 1946, pp. 27-34, 47; Robert Ewell Greene, The Leary-Evans, Ohio's Free People of Color, (Washington, D.C.: Keitt Printing Co., 1979).

[2]Ibid.; William E. Bigglestone, They Stopped in Oberlin: Black Residents and Visitors in the Nineteenth Century, (Oberlin: Privately Printed, 1981), pp.69-70.

African-Americans and often gave money to slaves so they could buy their freedom.[3]

Wilson Bruce and Henry Evans decided to leave North Carolina for Ohio in 1854. Although North Carolina throughout its history was home to a sizable free black population, by the 1850s, the situation was becoming difficult for all African-Americans, no matter their status. The South in general tightened the reins on the activities of free blacks to the point that many felt they needed to leave their homes for the North. Many believed that the northern states provided a more hospitable environment. After a three month long journey, and following a brief stay in Cincinnati, the Evans brothers and their families arrived in Oberlin. Cincinnati, the Evanses had discovered, did not welcome blacks--free or slave--with open arms, therefore, the town of Oberlin proved to be a more inviting choice of a new home for the Evanses.[4]

Upon their arrival in Oberlin, the two brothers set up shop as cabinetmakers and upholsterers. Their first shop was located on East Mill Street (later Vine); two years later, they purchased Walton Hall, a two story frame building on South Main Street that had once served as a men's dormitory for Oberlin College. The building was moved to Mill Street and served as a shop and store until it burned in 1864. The East Mill Street area was a major component of Oberlin's black community. Several prominent African-Americans lived on East Mill, including John Scott, who was also a participant in the Oberlin-Wellington Rescue. There were also a number of African-American owned businesses on this street, including a store and other commercial enterprises.[5]

OBERLIN, OHIO AND THE ANTI-SLAVERY MOVEMENT

Oberlin was a unique community in many ways. One of its most important and distinctive features was the presence of a large number of free black residents. Although free blacks had lived in Ohio since statehood in 1803, their numbers were relatively small. By 1860, they comprised only about two percent of the state's population. The great majority lived in southern Ohio; Hamilton County had the largest percentage of free blacks. Eastern Ohio, particularly in areas where there was a significant Quaker presence, also housed a sizable black population. Despite the region's strong antislavery sentiment, large black communities were uncommon in northern Ohio. According to the 1860 census, there were 549 blacks living in Lorain County; 442 lived in Oberlin itself. The total population of the Village of Oberlin in 1860 was 2,114. Even hotbeds of abolition like Ashtabula County had far fewer black inhabitants. Out of a total population of 34,075 in 1860, there were only 25 African-

[3]Greene, pp. 1-10.

[4]Bigglestone, p. 70.

[5]Ibid.

Americans in all of Ashtabula County. Thus, Oberlin stood out as a haven for free blacks.[6]

Oberlin was founded as an utopian community by John Shipherd, a Presbyterian minister from New York, and Philo T. Stewart, a former Indian missionary. The two men purchased land in Russia Township which was an isolated forested area on a flat, clay plain. They deliberately placed their community in an area far from the evils of urban life. The new town was named in honor of a reforming German minister named John Frederick Oberlin. Clearing of the land and settlement began in earnest in 1833. The original inhabitants had agreed to live wholesome lives, dressing plainly, working hard, and avoiding evils like alcohol. The center of the new town would be the college which was first known as the Oberlin Collegiate Institute. The school opened in 1833 with forty-four students.[7]

Oberlin College drew criticism for a number reasons, including its innovative curriculum. However, the biggest target of approbation was the presence of female students. When the school first opened, women could only attend a two year "Ladies' Course," although they could take some college-level classes. This changed in 1837, when women were admitted to the four year program. Upon their graduation in 1841, they were the first of their gender to receive bachelor's degrees.

As early as 1835, Oberlin also formulated the policy to admit black students on an equal footing with the whites. Not all students were happy about this arrangement. The reason Oberlin's trustees took this step had little to do with a crusading spirit, but a lot to do with the institution's finances. Oberlin was in desperate need for benefactors. To that end, Shipherd made contact with a group of students from Lane Theological Seminary in Cincinnati who had walked out of their school. Popularly known as the Lane Rebels, the students had been goaded into leaving over the issue of slavery and free speech. After a series of meetings to discuss the issue of slavery, the students voted to support immediate abolition and form an antislavery society. The Lane trustees barred the formation of any society not dealing directly with the school as well as forbidden the discussion of any issues that "detracted" from the students' studies. In protest of these actions and other actions, thirty-nine students walked out of the school and started their own.[8]

Shipherd contacted the Lane rebels, who agreed to come to Oberlin, but there were some strings attached, one of which was that blacks had to be admitted. Shipherd agreed to all the conditions. However, when news reached Oberlin, there were protests over the admission of black students. Although the students and residents of Oberlin were sympathetic to the plight of the slave, many were not ready to abandon their prejudices and accept blacks as their peers. There was a general belief, even among abolitionists, that somehow blacks were inferior and did not have the intelligence or ability to attend college. After much wrangling

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[6]George W. Knepper, Ohio and Its People, (Kent, Ohio: Kent State University Press, 1989), pp. 205-206; Brandt, pp. 27-28; United States Bureau of the Census, Census of 1860.

[7]Brandt, pp.27-32.

[8]Ibid, p. 35.

and debate, the trustees finally voted to accept all students, no matter their color.[9]

The community of Oberlin itself also suffered from frequent attacks and criticism because it harbored an unending stream of fugitive slaves. Many people outside of the community found it much too radical on the slavery issue. Blacks, both freeborn and fugitive slaves, found a congenial home in Oberlin. The town's reputation lured people like the Evans family to leave their homes and settle there.[10]

FUGITIVE SLAVE LAW

The Fugitive Slave Law was passed as a part of the package to placate the South known as the Compromise of 1850. It was designed to strengthen the Fugitive Slave Act of 1793, which stated that a slave master could seize his runaway slave without a warrant, bring the slave before a judge, and prove to the court that the person in custody was guilty of being a fugitive. The slave could not, of course, speak on his or her own behalf.[11] The basis for the 1793 law was Article IV, section 2, clause 3 of the U.S. Constitution, which stated:

> No person held to Service or Labour in one State, under the Laws, thereof, escaping into another, shall, in Consequence of an Law or Regulation therein, be discharged from such Service or Labour, but shall be delivered upon Claim of the Party to whom such Service of Labour may be due.

The Fugitive Slave Law of 1850 went much further. Not only did it deny the right of trial by jury as did the earlier law, but it also turned all Northerners into virtual slave catchers by stating that civilians had to assist in recapturing alleged runaway slaves. The law assumed the guilt of the person who was captured. Under the law even free blacks were subject to arrest, and often denied the opportunity to give proof of their innocence. The Fugitive Slave Law also called for the appointment of federal commissioners who were to rule on the status of the captured person. Commissioners were awarded five dollars when they decided in favor of the alleged fugitive, but, if he went the other way, he was given ten dollars. The federal commissioner thus had no incentive to further investigate each case and truly determine which party was in the right.[12]

Among the Northern populace even non-abolitionists were outraged at the violations of Constitutional rights inherent in the law's provisions. The measure was condemned throughout the North. It stirred up even more mistrust and resentment of the South on the part of many Northerners. As for the abolitionists, they had a new weapon they could use in their crusade and they exploited it fully. Blacks, even many who had been free for decades,

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[9]Ibid., pp. 36-37.

[10]Ibid., p. 44.

[11]Quarles, p.p. 143-144; William C. Cochran, The Western Reserve and the Fugitive Slave Law, (New York: DeCapo Press, 1972, reprint of 1920 ed.), p. 119.

[12]Quarles, pp. 197-198; Brandt, p. 16.

were fearful for their lives.[13]

The Fugitive Slave Law of 1850 was viewed with disparagement by many Northerners. More people were willing to assist fugitive slaves simply because they believed the law to be odious and unconstitutional. People already sympathetic to the slave were more than willing to assist runaways. In Oberlin, the law spawned one of the most important events in the town's history and certainly helped exacerbate sectionalism and tension nationwide. This event became known as the Oberlin-Wellington Rescue.

OBERLIN-WELLINGTON RESCUE

During the summer of 1858, three attempts were made to capture alleged fugitive slaves in the Oberlin vicinity, all of which were thwarted. The community took great pride that it had never lost any of its black citizens to slavecatchers. The most well-know attempt to recapture a fugitive slave was aborted by the Oberlin-Wellington Rescue. Anderson Jennings, a slavecatcher from Maysville, Kentucky, was in Oberlin searching for a fugitive slave named Henry, who had belonged to his late uncle, James. He soon discovered that the former slave had probably fled to Canada. While in Oberlin, Jennings recognized a fugitive slave named John Price. He sent word to John Price's former master, John Bacon, that his slave was living in Oberlin. Bacon gave Richard P. Mitchell, power of attorney to go to Ohio after John Price. Mitchell proceeded to Oberlin and met up with Jennings.[14] Jennings; Mitchell; Franklin County sheriff Samuel Davis; federal marshall Jacob Lowe; Oberlin citizens Malachi Warren (a local farmer), Lewis D. Boynton, and Boynton's thirteen year old son Shakespeare; devised a plot to lure John Price into a trap so he could be captured.[15]

On September 11, 1858, the plot was put into motion. Shakespeare asked John Price to help him dig potatoes. Price went along with the boy; about two miles outside of Oberlin, Lowe, Mitchell, and Davis overtook Price and Shakespeare and seized the former slave and took him to the town of Wellington. (The railroad north and south did not run through Oberlin at the time; the closest station was in Wellington, south of Oberlin.)[16] Shakespeare returned to Wack's Tavern, where the slavecatchers were staying, and informed Jennings of his success. Jennings started for Wellington to join the other three men.

Meanwhile, word of Price's capture spread to Oberlin and in a short time, a number of residents and Oberlin students sped to Wellington to stop the slavecatchers. Among the rescuers were Wilson Bruce Evans and Henry Evans. The crowd from Oberlin and Wellington gathered outside the Wellington hotel where Price was being kept. "The crowd

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[13]Ibid., pp. 198-199.

[14]Brandt, pp. 50-58.

[15]Ibid.

[16]Cochran, pp. 127-128.

pushed up the hotel stairs and into the room where Price was being held, created a commotion and general confusion, and sneaked Price out of the building and into awaiting wagon."[17] Price was secreted back to Oberlin where he was hidden in the attic of Professor James Fairchild's home. Although Fairchild was relatively conservative and did not hide fugitives, he hated slavery and agreed to hide Price for a short time. Price stayed with the Fairchilds for several days, until he was secreted to safety in Canada.[18]

The rescuers were given a triumphant welcome back home in Oberlin for their success in saving John Price. Although the enemies of the Fugitive Slave Law were jubilant, the rescuers had broken the law and the federal government acted. A federal court indicted thirty-seven of the rescuers, including the Evans brothers. All of the accused willingly agreed to await in the Cleveland jail until the trial began on April 5, 1859. The first two men tried, Simon Bushnell, who was white, and Charles Langston, who was black, were both found guilty and given heavy fines and jail sentences. Several other rescuers issued pleas of no contest to the charges and received lighter penalties of $20 fines and one-day jail sentences. As the trials went on into the spring, mass demonstrations accompanied each move made by the court. The men who remained in jail, which included the Evans brothers, were declared to be martyrs by the friends of the abolitionist cause. Both Joshua R. Giddings and Salmon P. Chase, who was then a Republican Senator representing Ohio, made impassioned speeches on behalf of the Rescuers, as they were popularly known.[19]

Foes of the Fugitive Slave Law had their very own cause celebre in the Oberlin-Wellington Rescue. The trials of the accused lawbreakers were exploited to the hilt. Oberlin College was supportive of the Rescuers, one of whom was Jacob R. Shipherd, a student and nephew of the school's co-founder. Prior to one of the many rallies held throughout the Western Reserve for the Rescuers, a group of students from Oberlin's Phi Delta Society debated whether "it would be wise" to release the Rescuers "by force provided they are not protected by our state courts."[20]

The defendants themselves also aided in exacerbating the tensions over their imprisonment. While in jail, they were able to publish their own newspaper which they aptly named *The Rescuer*. They were able to print it using bits and pieces to make a press, including fonts given them by the Republican-oriented newspaper, the *Cleveland Daily Leader*, whose editor, Edwin Weed Cowles, was an abolitionist.

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[17] Chapter 20: Wilson Bruce Evans House: Oberlin, (Washington, DC: "Wilson Bruce Evans House" National Historic Landmark file; National Historic Landmarks Survey; National Register, History and Education; National Park Service; n.d.) p. 109.

[18] Brandt, pp. 68-11; Cochran, pp. 129-132.

[19] Larry Gara, The Liberty Line: The Legend of the Underground Railroad, (Lexington, KY: University of Kentucky Press, 1961), pp. 138-139.

[20] The Rescuer, vol. 1, issue 1, 4 July 1859; for a detailed contemporary history of the Oberlin-Wellington Rescue, see Jacob R. Shipherd, The Oberlin-Wellington Rescue, (Boston: John P. Jewett and Company, 1859); Brandt, p. 194.

The defendants who published *The Rescuer* decided that this was the perfect name for their publication because "we rather like the idea it conveys."[21] The paper also noted that they had to rescue the nation from "an oligarchy of slave breeders...well organized, diligent, and desperate."[22] It included descriptions of the remaining thirteen prisoners, which included Wilson Bruce Evans and Henry Evans. There were also several advertisements which appeared in this newspaper, one of which read as follows:

> Upholsterers and Mattress Makers--Henry Evans and Brother (late of Oberlin, O) have removed to the shed one door west of J. Scott's saddle and Harness shop. All persons who secure a visit from 'Tired Nature's sweet restorer; balmy sleep' will please call and examine his work. You can rest on his beds, if you can rest anywhere. Government officials need not apply.[23]

Only one issue of *The Rescuer* was published. The last thirteen rescuers were released from prison on July 6, 1859 after charges against them were dropped in an agreement with Lorain County. An Ohio grand jury in Lorain County had indicted the men who had been involved in John Price's capture on kidnapping charges. The state agreed to drop the charges against the kidnappers if the U.S. attorney in Cleveland would not proceed with the prosecution of the Rescuers still awaiting trial.[24] When the Rescuers returned to Oberlin, after spending 84 days in jail, they were treated as conquering heroes. Several of the former inmates gave speeches about their imprisonment and subsequent release, including Henry Evans, who stated:

> I feel that we have discharged our duty; we have finished the work given us to do. The telegraph wires have flashed our victory through the country. It has gone up to heaven--angels and archangels are now singing hosannas to the Lord for our deliverance, and there are no words that better express my feelings than the following, which by way of conclusion I will repeat:--'Praise God from whom all blessings flow, Praise Him all creatures here below."[25]

During the Civil War, Wilson Bruce Evans enlisted in the Union Army in an all-white unit. (Evans was so light skinned that very few knew he wasn't Caucasian.) He was detailed to the post commissary in Tullahoma, Tennessee from November 3, 1864 to April 1865. He was mustered out on June 29, 1865. In 1890, he filed a claim and was rewarded a disability payment for his rheumatism. He died on September 16, 1898; his wife, Sarah, had died five months earlier.

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[21]The Rescuer, vol. 1, issue 1, 4 July 1859.

[22]Ibid.

[23]Ibid.

[24]Gara, pp. 138-140.

[25]Shipherd, p. 273.

BLACKS IN THE ABOLITIONIST MOVEMENT

By the 1830s there was growing discontent among black abolitionists. With the beginning of the publication of William Lloyd Garrison's *The Liberator* in 1832, and the formation of the American Anti-Slavery Society the following year, Black abolitionists were actively welcomed in the cause and worked with whites side by side. In fact, the New England Anti-Slavery Society was organized at the African Baptist Church in Boston's black section. Yet, while blacks were permitted to work with the white abolitionists, they could hardly be called peers. Many of the white abolitionists often adapted a paternalistic attitude toward their black brethren. They were prone to giving advice to blacks. What was even more irksome was that many African-Americans felt that the white abolitionists generally were not as supportive of equality for their race as they purported to be.[26]

When the 1840 American Anti-Slavery Society split occurred over the strategy and tactics in the abolitionist movement, black abolitionists questioned what their stand should be. For the most part, they stuck with William Lloyd Garrison, but the open rift encouraged blacks to air their grievances in public. At about the same time, a number of former slaves joined the abolitionist ranks. Their stories helped revitalize the cause in the 1840s and 1850s. Their firsthand accounts of their slave experience drew people to the cause who might not necessarily be so moved by white abolitionist lecturers.[27] There was also a vocal black press which presented a united front against slavery and was very effective in deepening abolitionist sentiment among its African-American readership.[28] African-American abolitionists also focused more on fighting for social and political equality. They believed it was important to fight for the vote and other civil rights and to try to combat racial prejudice wherever it was found.[29]

In general, black abolitionists tended to focus on more practical actions, such as Ohioan John Parker's frequent forays into the South to assist fugitive slaves. Parker, who was himself a former slave, lived in Ripley, in the southern part of Ohio. Although he was not a part of the organized antislavery movement, he often put himself at risk smuggling slaves out of the South and escorting them to freedom in Canada.[30] The Evans brothers also fit this mold of taking practical actions to assist their enslaved bretheran. Their efforts on behalf of the escaped slave John Price, and their subsequent imprisonment and publicity, aided the abolition movement.

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[26]Quarles, pp. vii-ix, 48-49.

[27]Ibid, pp.61-63.

[28]Quarles, pp.68-84.

[29]Roy E. Finkbine, Michael F. Hembree, and Donald Yacovone, eds., Witness for Freedom: African-American Voices on Race, Slavery, and Emancipation (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1993), pp. 15-27.

[30]Parker's house was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1980 and was designated a National Historic Landmark on February 18, 1997.

In spite of their differences and the racism on the part of some of the white abolitionists, both races often united together in the face of a common enemy. The Oberlin-Wellington Rescue was just such an incident in the history of anti-slavery and abolitionism. The Oberlin-Wellington Rescue, imprisonment of the rescuers, and trials added fuel to the already hot tinderbox of sectional conflict.

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Previous documentation on file (NPS):

__ Preliminary Determination of Individual Listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
_X_ Previously Listed in the National Register.
__ Previously Determined Eligible by the National Register.
__ Designated a National Historic Landmark.
__ Recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey: #
__ Recorded by Historic American Engineering Record: #

Primary Location of Additional Data:

_X_ State Historic Preservation Office
___ Other State Agency
___ Federal Agency
___ Local Government
___ University
___ Other (Specify Repository):

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

Acreage of Property: Less than one

UTM References: Zone 17 Easting 398170 Northing 4571300

Verbal Boundary Description:

The property consists of the house and lot located at 33 East Vine St., Oberlin, Lorain County, Ohio

Boundary Justification:

The nominated property includes the parcel historically associated with the home and residence of Wilson Bruce Evans.

11. FORM PREPARED BY

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