

## Randolph and the Underground Railroad Part I continued

it from Oliver C. Dickinson. But they weren't just partners, they were brothers-in-laws! Chauncey had married Harriet Dickinson in 1840 and Truman married Lovisa Dickinson in 1836. Oliver was their father-in-law! Both Harriet and Lovisa owned 14 acres of the lot, perhaps where their houses stood, but that is still undetermined.

This mill on lot 44 fits the description of Walter's as being one and half miles southeast of the town center. In a later map, a Mrs Cavender did live on lot 44. There is no record of Brainard and Mead owning a mill in Johnny Cake Hollow during the time in question, in fact the deed

records show they owned that mill well after the events of 1847.

The great irony of all of this is that last October, Linda Lauderdale, a direct descendant of Oliver C. Dickinson came to help unveil the Underground Railroad marker. She came to honor her ancestors, Oliver and distant uncle J. C. Brainard. Little did we know then that it was really her 3rd great grandfather who we should have been honoring along side the others who risked their property and lives to protect the fugitive slaves. A couple nights ago, I was searching through the Dickinson history file that Linda Lauderdale had given me. And there it was all this time: Harriet

Dickinson Brainard's obituary states "The Dickinson home was one of the stations on the "underground railway" and many a colored man and woman has been helped on his trip to Canada by members of this household."

I would like to thank Howard Mangold for having shared his vast knowledge of Randolph's history and his hunch that the mill was located on lot 44. It was his initial search that got this ball rolling.

In the Second part of this series, I will go back to the years leading up to the 1847 rescue to give you a glimpse of the turmoil the anti-slavery issue was causing among the citizens of Randolph.

Any questions or comments contact Carey Steele  
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# The Randolph LEGACY

The Randolph Historical Society Newsletter

## Randolph and the Underground Railroad, — Part I: A Family Affair

October 5<sup>th</sup> will mark the one year anniversary of the Underground Railroad marker dedication. A great deal has changed since last October, the greatest change of course being the tragic loss of Jim Caccamo. It was truly his behind the scenes efforts that resulted in the Randolph marker. It was something he had longed to see done and so each time that I drive by the Town Hall and see the marker, I am comforted by the knowledge that he saw it to completion. Last summer, Jim, Richard Staats and I constantly went over the 1847 incident to look for hidden clues and details. I would like to present to you what details we had discovered then and update you on what we are researching now. What a difference a year can make!

Although there are a few accounts of the 1847 rescue, probably some of the details were duplicated from the same source. I think that Walter Dickinson's (Pioneer History, p.84) version is quite true to the story. But there is a caveat: every writer has a bias and Walter was directly related to those involved in the rescue. His version may intentionally leave out details to protect family members (though most were darn proud of their anti-slavery activities!).

Here is a brief summary of the facts he gives: William Stedman was instrumental in bringing Harriet and John to Randolph from the Parkersburg area of West Virginia (then Virginia) in the fall of 1846. They worked through the winter at the Brainard and Mead Mill until the incident in May of 1847. He places the mill, one and half miles southeast of the town center, where a Mrs. H.

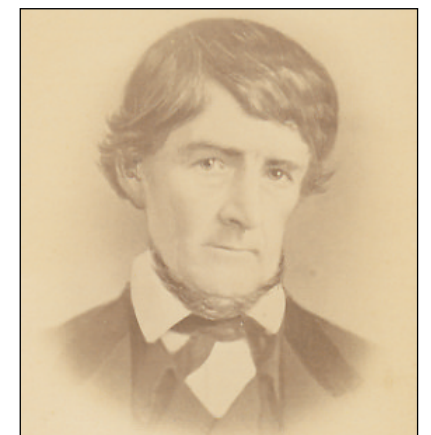
Cavender later lived, although the 1857 map puts a mill owned by Brainard and Mead in Johnny Cake Hollow (but we'll come back to that later). He names Dr. Joseph Price and Thomas Dundon as racing to the mill before the slave catchers, and T. P. Mead swinging an axe, and Chauncey Sears using a corn cutter to scare them. Although the slave catchers had come armed, they were intimidated by the determination and ferocity of the large number of citizens who dropped everything to run to the aid of Harriet and John. The fugitives were then sent to Austin Collins and were later married with a great many from Randolph in attendance. They went on to Canada, but Harriet returned in 1853, a widow with children in need of assistance. There was talk of legal action against her (this was after the fugitive slave law of 1850 was passed making it a felony to harbor fugitive slaves). From here, she disappears into history.

Walter states that a meeting was held the following Monday to "consider the matter." Fortunately for us, those in attendance sent the summary of their meeting to the Anti-Slavery Bugle. (an abolitionist paper out of Salem) to be published. The information provided gave us more names of those involved in the incident. We have reprinted the article and if you notice, Rev. Meriam was the chair of the meeting with Oliver Cromwell Dickinson as secretary, who was also appointed to a committee to protect the fugitives in any future emergency. (It should be noted that Oliver was Walter Dickinson's uncle.) Brainard and Mead are listed as well as

Chauncey Sears and a few others who we know to be involved with anti-slavery activities.

It's at this point one might be tempted to close the story, but there is so much more to learn. If you dig further into the old records and look closely for the clues, you'll find that this rescue of 1847 was just one chapter in a highly volatile story, starring the Dickinson family.

The best place to start is with Oliver Cromwell Dickinson, the figure in much of Randolph's anti-slavery activities. He was a deacon in the Congregational Church, his father having brought Rev. Joseph Meriam to Randolph. Rev. Meriam proved to be a leader in the charge for abolition, but it's not clear how he felt about his more radical church members. Oliver must have been quite an influential man, for many of the people involved in the 1847 rescue were actually related to him. William Stedman was Oliver's nephew (Oliver's wife and William's mom were sisters). This would make William Stedman and



Oliver Cromwell Dickinson  
Photo complements of Linda Lauderdale

Pick up a Membership Form at the Heritage Festival  
and become a member of the Randolph Historical Society

Single Membership \$10 yearly — Family Membership \$15 yearly — Student Membership \$5 yearly



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ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

## Randolph and the Underground Railroad Part I: continued ...

Walter Dickinson first cousins.

But now facts have been uncovered about the "Brainard" of Brainard and Mead. Since J. C. Brainard is listed in attendance at the special meeting, I along with others, had assumed that he was "the Brainard". But he wasn't, Joseph C. Brainard was one of three brothers. Enos Brainard, who lived in Randolph but later lived in Ravenna was a conductor for the underground railroad. This is confirmed by his obituary, Joseph C. Brainard was an active anti-slavery advocate and co-hosted anti-slavery meetings with other well

known activists. But, it wasn't either of these two brothers that bravely hired John and Harriet to work at his mill. It was Chauncey O. Brainard. I discovered this fact when I went searching for deeds to prove the mill's location. Like a light bulb going off in my head, other facts that rested somewhere in my brain suddenly sparked a realization.

According to the information I found in County records and in the Dickinson family history. Chauncey O. Brainard and Truman P. Mead owned a saw mill and grist mill in 1846-1847 on lot 44. They purchased

Continued on page 4

### The Good Old Days ...

By Ellen Staton Draheim

Grandma Hayes was baby-sitting  
When suddenly she stopped her knitting,  
"If you children will be good,  
I'll tell you about Red Riding Hood."

Little Joey, just past 4,  
Said, "We don't want to hear that any-  
more,  
Why don't you tell us, Grandma Hayes,  
All about the good old days?"

"We washed our clothes in great big tubs  
With laundry soap that made good suds,  
We had no pollution then;  
Detergents had not yet come in.

"We wove our carpets on a loom,  
Swept them clean with an old corn  
broom.  
Spring and fall was the time  
To beat and air them on the line.

"A copper-clad stove in the kitchen  
stood  
And we built our fires with kindling  
wood  
It helped to keep us nice and warm;  
Felt real good on a chilly morn.

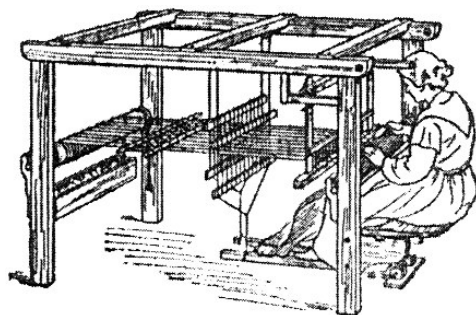
"We planted beans, peas, potatoes,  
Cabbage, corn and tomatoes,  
Then we canned and pickled them  
Before the winter cold set in.

"We skimmed the cream from the milk,  
Churned golden butter smooth as silk.  
We even made our cottage cheese and  
Gathered honey from the bees.

"At 8 o'clock we laid our head  
Upon a downy feather bed  
For we were very early risers  
Who never needed tranquilizers.

"Sunday was a day of rest;  
We put on our very best,  
Hitched that horses to the sleigh,  
Down to church 3 miles away."

The children sat quietly on the floor  
Waiting patiently to hear more.  
Then Joey looked up; his face amazed,  
Said "Grandma, why'd you  
call 'em the 'good' old days?"



### Proceedings at Randolph

The citizens of Randolph having convened in large numbers on the evening of the 2d Inst., came to order by calling Rev. Joseph Meriam to the chair.

On motion O. C. Dickinson was chosen secretary.

Some time in the afternoon of yesterday two-covered wagons filled with men, drove to our little village and put up at the tavern. Their appearance and movements excited some suspicion. Towards evening they filed off in a direction for the whereabouts of two colored persons, one and a half miles from where their wagons were left in charge of their teamster. When they successively arrived (with bowie-knife and pistol) where they fondly hoped to find their victims, they found plenty of men who believe that all men have "certain inalienable rights," and who were determined that those "rights" should be respected. The odds against the gentlemen of the bowie-knife were so decisive, that they returned to their quarters without violence, and left town very early in the morning, on the way they came.

On motion, Truman Case, John W. Glasgow, J. F. Smalley, J. C. Brainard and T. P. Mead were appointed a committee to report resolutions for the meeting.

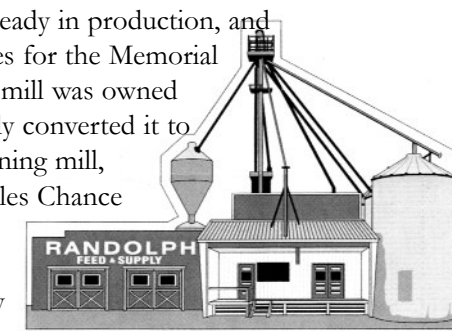
On motion, O. C. Dickinson, J. W. Glasgow, C. N. Sears, T. P. Mead and Justin Belding were appointed as committee to act in any future emergency, touching the safety of the above named colored persons.

May 21, 1847

Excerpt from Anti-Slavery Bugle

## Woodcut of Feed Mill to be ready for Memorial Day Parade 2004

The wood cut of the Feed Mill is already in production, and we hope to be able to start our sales for the Memorial Day Parade 2004. In the 1900 atlas the mill was owned by A. G. Horning, the Louie Huth family converted it to a Steam Saw Mill and added a wood planing mill, apple cider and apple butter sales. Charles Chance first ran it as a feed mill and Ferguson tractor sales. It as since remained a feed mill. If your interested in ordering early contact Laura Rogers.



## "Grassroots History of the American Civil War, the Life and Times of Ephraim Cooper" is being printed

April 20, 1861 was a pleasant spring Sunday, but a tempest brewed in Randolph's crowded Congregational Church. This community meeting was not about repentance and peace, it was about WAR. At the end of the session, young Ephraim Cooper stepped to the front of the packed building and signed his name to the list of three months' volunteers, who were going to defend the flag of the finest government on the face of the earth.

As a teenager growing up in Johnny Cake Hollow, Ephraim's character was shaped by the same general forces that have affected teenagers of other generations. The schoolhouse up the road, peer pressure, religious leaders in his community, the economy, politics, and what his parents and neighbors thought of the day's burning issues — these all had a bearing on 17-year old Ephraim as he moved through the buzzing throng that Sunday.

The people of Randolph were quite active in the anti-slavery,

women's rights and temperance movements. Whether for or against an issue, this race of people were not complainers, apathetic souls, or talkers; they were activists, achievers, movers and shakers. Volume One of *A Grassroots History of the Civil War, The Life and Times of Ephraim Cooper* is really about the people of Randolph and Portage County in the pre-Civil War days — what they thought and said, why they reacted as they did, and how they lived their lives. The volume concludes with the three months' service of the 7<sup>th</sup> Ohio Infantry (Ephraim's regiment) at Camp Dennison, Ohio. The text also serves as an introduction to the leading characters in the other three volumes of the series: (II) *The Bully Seventh Ohio Infantry*, (III) *Captain Cotter's Battery* and (IV) *William Stedman*.

Due to some late revisions and additions, Volume One is currently at the printers for Heritage Books, Inc. and it should be available within a month.

## Ready for some fall and winter recreational reading? Try some books from the Historical Society

The Randolph Historical Society offers all of Richard Staats books: (Volume I) *The Life and Times of Pvt. Ephraim Cooper*, (Volume II) *The Bully Seventh, Ohio Volunteer Infantry*, (Volume

III) *Captain Cotter's Battery*, (Volume IV) *The Life and Times of Colonel William Stedman of the 6th Ohio Cavalry*, plus *Pioneer History 1802-1865* and *Randolph Centennial Souvenir 1802-1902*.

## A Grassroots History of Baseball ...

By Richard J. Staats

The magical era of "Base Ball" exploded with enthusiasm across northeast Ohio in 1867. Base Ball clubs sprung up in every city, small town, and hamlet. Challenges to "matches" flew through the area. Perhaps Base Ball matches were a form of escapism during the Civil War, but baseball seemed to bring out the best in Americans — bravery, good sportsmanship, self-discipline, and a striving to do one's best.

The author's original research focused on the quest of the Ravenna Star Base Ball Club to win its own trophy, "the Rosewood Bat and the Silver Ball." at the Portage County Fair in 1867. In order to present a better picture of the atmosphere in which Star Club played, as well as satisfy historical inquisitiveness, other areas of Base Ball have been included. Contemporary newspaper articles preserve the aura, the excitement, the high value of sportsmanship, the humor, and community pride that accompanied our National Pastime. Vintage photographs enliven the text. Richard's Base Ball book is currently being reprinted. Anyone interested in buying a copy please contact the Historical Society.

### Newsletter Staff:

Kathy Lang • Howard Mangold  
Richard Staats • Carey Steele  
Anyone with any ideas or stories concerning the history of Randolph please contact the R.H.S.