



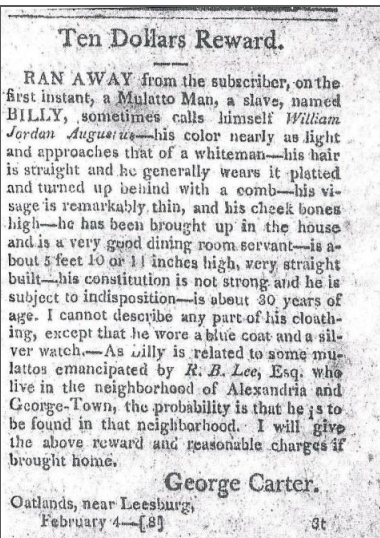
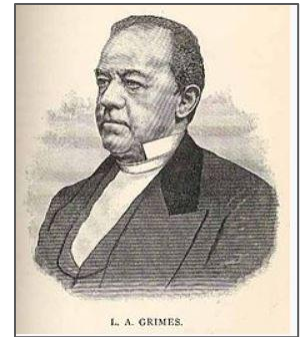
The Freedom Seekers: Network to Freedom Sites in Loudoun County

During the time of slavery, enslaved African Americans sought to gain their freedom through escape and flight. These Freedom Seekers were often assisted by others who were opposed to slavery. Often referred to as the Underground Railroad, there were numerous escape routes throughout the United States. Loudoun County was part of routes to the north, west, and east.

Loudoun County is home to four National Park Service Network To Freedom sites: the Loudoun County Courthouse, Melrose Farm in Waterford, Oatlands, and the Thomas Balch Library. A series of talks during Black History Month will discuss the stories at each of these locations. All talks start at 2:00 PM and are free and open to the public.

February 6 – “Leonard A. Grimes: Free Black Champion of Freedom”

Born and raised in Leesburg, Leonard Grimes was an early organizer of the Underground Railroad in Washington, D.C., and became a prominent pastor and antislavery activist in Boston. Dr. Deborah Lee will present her research on Grimes and his high-profile trial in 1840 at the Loudoun County Courthouse. The snow date is February 13. **Loudoun County Courthouse Complex, 18 East Market Street, Leesburg. Contact: Eric Larson at 703-737-8391 or clerks-archives@loudoun.gov.**



February 20 – “Ten Dollars Reward”

William Jordan Augustus left Oatlands in 1809 to seek his freedom in the north. Lori Kimball will share William’s story. Sheri Huerta will present "**Freedom Seekers, Public Opinion, and the Law.**" As courts in slaveholding states meted out harsh punishments to people who aided freedom seekers, courts in "free" states grappled with enforcing laws that protected slavery at the cost of denying individual rights. Follow captured freedom seekers from northern Virginia into courtrooms in Loudoun County, Ohio, and Pennsylvania to discover how public opinion of their efforts sparked intense national debate. **Oatlands, 20850 Oatlands Plantation Lane, Leesburg, VA 20175. Contact: Lori Kimball at 703-777-3174 x103 or lkimball@oatlands.org**

February 27 – “Tracking the Flight to Freedom”

Research into the enslaved is often aided by newspaper advertisements that owners placed about freedom seekers. Referred to as “runaway slave ads”, historian Bronwen Souders will share her research into over 200 ads that were placed by the owners or Loudoun’s jailer in the local Loudoun newspaper, The Genius of Liberty, between 1817 and 1842. **The Thomas Balch Library, 208 West Market Street, Leesburg, VA 20176. Contact Bronwen Souders at Bronwen.Souders@gmail.com.**

Sponsored by the Black History Committee of the Friends of the Thomas Balch Library; Gary M. Clemens, Clerk of the Circuit Court; Oatlands Historic House and Gardens; and the Waterford Foundation.