

# HOPE NOTES

A newsletter of Restore Cleveland Hope, a grassroots organization

March 2004

"Dear Sir:

I have seen your chattels, Pete, Mary and Sam, safe off for Canada. If I can serve you any farther I am at your command."

*Horace Ford,  
taunting a  
slaveowner*

"I shall praise God through all eternity for sending me to Cleveland."

*Julia Foote,  
former slave  
turned evangelist*

"I breathed my first breath in an atmosphere of Slavery. But though I am heir to a slave inheritance, I am bold to denounce the whole system as an outrage, a complication of crimes, and wrongs, and cruelties, that make angels weep."

*James Armstrong  
Thome, Lane Rebel  
who became a  
Cleveland minister*

"Distinctions which are founded on human policy ... and which tend to the degradation of a set of human beings, cannot be lasting and must sooner or later succumb to the dictates of reason and humanity."

*John Malvin,  
who worked to  
overcome Ohio's  
Black Laws*

## Greetings from Joan

Last year, I walked from Ripley, Ohio, to St. Catharine's, Canada, in a personal quest I named **IN THEIR PATH!** to honor all of the unknown Underground Railroad families -- free black, free white and enslaved -- who participated in that glorious network of courage and hope. The extraordinary joy of this project was the thousands of people, children and adults, who came to this educational project with passion that matched mine. They overflowed with grace, generosity and wonderful tales of their own good works. I have witnessed the amazing Underground Railroad spirit of courage and unity *alive and well* today.

Before my 519-mile Underground Railroad walk, I knew nothing of the significance of the Cozad-Bates home. I live near University Circle and have always loved that beautiful, old, red brick house set back on the deep front lawn on Mayfield Road. The architecture alone makes it worth preserving; learning of its link to Cleveland's anti-slavery activists makes its restoration imperative.

RESTORE CLEVELAND HOPE began quietly with six women gathered around my dining room table last summer. The grass-roots organization has grown in size and scope. Some members are drawn by a family tie to the home; some have admired its architectural significance; others are moved by its cultural importance. Some of us are new to this issue; others have been championing its cause for decades. The initial focus was simply saving

the house, but our mission has evolved into creating an Underground Railroad teaching center that celebrates Cleveland's anti-slavery past.

It feels like a lot has happened in less than a year. A group of us, including three architects, walked through the neglected old home to get a sense of its condition. Kathleen Crowther of the Cleveland Restoration Society and I met with James Lubetkin, a representative of the building's owner, University Hospitals. Councilman Kevin Conwell has worked to have University Hospital secure the home against further weather damage. And our first community meeting, held last month, was a success in size and spirit. We are beginning to discuss becoming a 501(c) 3 organization and planning the details of our vision.

My walk was in praise of *all* the Underground Railroad ancestors. Establishing RESTORE CLEVELAND HOPE was simply the next step in the same journey. As a grass-roots organization, we will be the community voice in an exciting "new" University Circle with the Cozad-Bates House as a vibrant Underground Railroad teaching center on the south end of Case's campus. We envision a safehouse for collaboration and creativity, a heritage connection to the neighborhoods.

I invite you to join us. Call (216) 761-8416 or e-mail [gornawalk439@aol.com](mailto:gornawalk439@aol.com) for more details on how you can get involved in this great mission.

Joan Southgate,  
Still **IN THEIR PATH!**

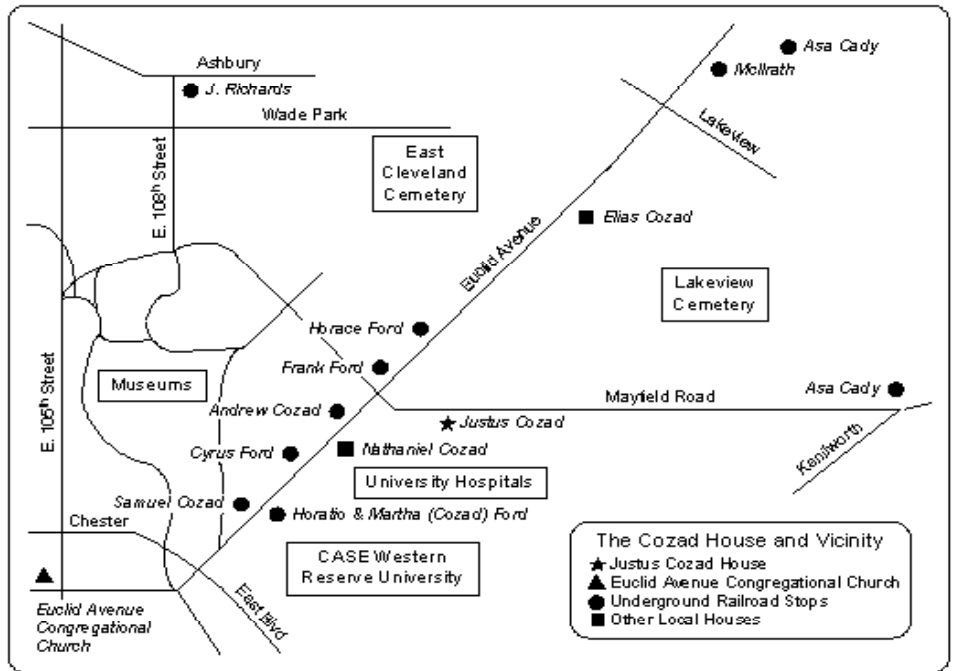
## Community meeting a success

We had a great turnout for our first communitywide event last month at Euclid Avenue Congregational Church, the church founded by the Cozad and Ford families.

About 100 people dedicated to our mission or simply interested in the Cozad-Bates House showed up for an excerpt from the Cleveland Public Theatre's reinterpretation of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. XX and XX presented powerful performances from the slave narratives of Mary Ball, Josiah Henson and Mary Armstrong.

The Rev. Felix Carrion kicked off the event by emphasizing Ohio's important role in the Underground Railroad: "It came through here and it belongs to all of us to keep that story, those stories, alive. . . . Joan Southgate embodies a prophetic voice to make sure that we all remember. And then remember to recommit

## Doan's Corners conductors



ourselves to the same journey of freedom and deliverance for all people, oppressed and oppressors."

Joan followed the slave narrative excerpts with her own newfound appreciation for Uncle Tom. "I thought I knew Uncle Tom. We all know

Uncle Tom. Uncle Tom was no Uncle Tom. This was a man of nobility and integrity and a man of his time."

Re-educating ourselves and our children about the courage of slaves and abolitionists will be one facet of a teaching center at the Cozad-Bates House.

Dear Councilman Conwell,

***We want to transform the Cozad-Bates House, 11508 Mayfield Rd., into an Underground Railroad teaching center.***

- **Thank you** for listening to our concerns.
- **Thank you** for arranging for a Restore Cleveland Hope team to tour the Cozad-Bates home.
- **Thank you** for sending a letter to University Hospital urging them to take immediate action to stabilize the roof decking and prevent further water infiltration and damage to the structure.

RESTORE CLEVELAND HOPE is a grassroots organization, [gonnawalk439@hotmail.com](mailto:gonnawalk439@hotmail.com), (216) 761-8416, whose mission is to save, restore and transform the Cozad-Bates house into an Underground Railroad teaching center praising the ancestors and honoring Cleveland's historic anti-slavery past.

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

***We are working to create something wonderful on this sacred ground.***

## 1,000 thanks

Help us thank Councilman Kevin Conwell for his interest and work to preserve the Cozad-Bates House. He has gotten University Hospitals to agree to protect the house from further deterioration. That's a positive step.

We want to show our appreciation for his efforts to preserve this landmark home and remind him of the broad community support to preserve this landmark.

We encourage you to copy the form at left, invited friends, family members, neighbors and co-workers to sign; and return the forms to us. We hope to deliver 1,000 signatures to Councilman Conwell.

Never underestimate the power of numbers.