

ARTIST OPPORTUNITY

Abolitionist & Underground Railroad Downtown Art Walk - City of Greenfield, Massachusetts

Release date: 12/19/2023

Due date for responses: 2/4/2024

Contact Information: makingitpublic@greenfield-ma.gov, 413-772-1548 ext.4

I. OVERVIEW

The City of Greenfield, in collaboration with local educators and historians, has identified twelve sites historically significant to the abolitionist movement in Greenfield that are located in the downtown neighborhood, which is also a Mass Cultural Council Cultural District. The sites include former residences of abolitionists, potential locations of underground railroad activity, and the location of addresses given by nationally prominent figures like Frederick Douglass. The City will hire up to twelve artists/teams to paint murals on the sidewalks nearest each site in order to inform residents and visitors of the historical connection to the abolitionist movement that exists in downtown Greenfield. The art should be illustrative of the subject of each site but final design decisions will rest with the artists. Source photos of involved individuals will be provided whenever possible (see Appendix A).

II. AWARD

The City of Greenfield will provide a stipend of \$1,000 for each mural painted on an approximately 48x48" section of sidewalk. Stipends are inclusive of the cost of art supplies selected by the artist/team and approved by the City. The City of Greenfield will provide low-slip, Americans-with-Disabilities-Act compliant paint to each artist/team at no cost (artists may use their own similar low-slip paint if approved by the City). If an artist is selected for multiple murals they will receive \$1,000 for each work (e.g. \$3,000 for 3 murals). The City will block off sections sidewalks and ensure that any permitting requirements are met before work begins.

The City of Greenfield will enter into grant agreements with individual artists and/or artist teams. 50% of the award amount will be paid upon signing the agreement and the remaining 50% paid upon completion and acceptance of the project by the City.

III. WHO CAN APPLY

The call is open to any resident of the United States of America aged 18 years or older. Current or former residents of Greenfield, Massachusetts, and Massachusetts artists familiar with Greenfield are strongly encouraged to apply. Artists and teams with experience in community arts, creative engagement, murals, and paintings are encouraged to apply. Preference will be given to applicants who demonstrate experience working with community-based organizations, BIPOC communities, and other segments of the population that are underrepresented in the public realm. Artists at all levels of experience – including individuals who are currently enrolled in school – are encouraged to apply.

IV. CONTEXT

See Appendix A for complete information on historic sites.

V. HOW TO APPLY

- Pre-applications may be submitted in any of the following ways by February 4, 2024:
 - a. Google Form <https://forms.gle/LMWLFiT28w6vXyab9>
 - b. Email responses to pre-application questions to makingitpublic@greenfield-ma.gov
 - c. Mail responses to pre-application questions to:
City of Greenfield
Attn: Christian LaPlante
14 Court Square
Greenfield, MA 01301
 - d. Video recording of responses to pre-application questions or other methods approved by Making It Public Grant Administrator.
- Pre-application Elements:
 - 1. Contact Information
 - a. Name of artist(s) (If applying on behalf of a team, please list the full names of all team members)
 - b. Mailing address of lead applicant
 - c. Email address of lead applicant
 - d. Phone number of lead applicant
 - 2. Artist Statement
 - a. Please describe your interest in this project and its subject matter. Why are you interested in creating artwork at locations tied to the abolitionist movement in Greenfield? What would it mean to you to create artwork for this kind of project? See Appendix A for details of project sites. *Preference will be given to artists that show a strong interest in the subject matter and commitment to the project.*
 - 3. Portfolio
 - a. Please provide one of the following
 - i. link to artist website with examples of artworks,
 - ii. upload examples of artwork to Google Form,
 - iii. Printed copies of previous artworks mailed to the address listed above,
OR
 - iv. email examples of artwork to makingitpublic@greenfield-ma.gov. *Preference will be given to applicants whose portfolios indicate a strong ability to create attractive, painted artwork on sidewalk or concrete.*
 - 4. Experience
 - a. Do you have experience working with community-based organizations, BIPOC communities, and other segments of the population that are underrepresented in the public realm? Please describe your experience below. Experience does not necessarily have to be art-related. *Preference will be given to applicants who demonstrate experience working with these populations.*
 - 5. Timeline
 - a. Are you able to meet the key dates listed in the call for art (final artwork completed by June 14, 2024)? *Preference will be given to artists who indicate they can complete artwork by June 14, 2024.*
 - 6. Accommodations
 - a. Do you require any accommodations in order to complete the tasks outlined in this project and/or to meet the key dates? Please list them below. If not, please respond “n/a” to this section. *No preference will be given to artists based on whether they do or do not require accommodations.*
 - 7. References

- a. If available, provide names, phone numbers, and email addresses for two (2) references who will vouch for the applicant's ability to meet deadlines, to understand complex information, to work within editorial constraints, and to modify artwork according to feedback. If you will not be providing references please reply "n/a" to this section. *No preference will be given to artists based on availability of references.*
8. Capacity
- a. How many sidewalk murals do you have the capacity to design and create by June 14, 2024? Note: twelve sites have been identified to be part of the project and the city intends to select multiple artists/teams. *No preference will be given to artists based on the number of murals they have the capacity to create.*

VI. KEY DATES

December 19, 2023	Call for Artists Pre-application Release Date
January 9, 2024 at 6 p.m.	Call for Artists Information Session via Zoom. Attendance is not required in order to submit a pre-application. Register here: https://forms.gle/Y5EdwK1teDLsaAff9
January 12, 2024 at 4 p.m.	Question Submission Deadline. Send questions about the project to makingitpublic@greenfield-ma.gov
January 19, 2024 at 4 p.m.	Responses to all questions received via email and during info sessions will be posted online by this date
February 4, 2024 at 11:59 p.m.	Pre-application Due Date
February 16, 2024	Notification of finalist selection on or before this date
February 26-29, 2024 Week	Information session for finalists on project background with local historians
March 31, 2024 at 11:59 p.m.	Artwork mockup due date
April 19, 2024	Awards announced on or before this date
May 3, 2024	Grant agreement signed on or before this date
June 14, 2024	Final artwork to be completed on or before this date

VII. SELECTION PROCESS & CRITERIA

A review committee consisting of local historians, Cultural District Committee members, and Human Rights Commission members will evaluate the proposals received. Committee members will review submissions in accordance with the criteria listed below. The review committee may seek outside expertise, including, but not limited to, input from technical and subject matter advisors to assist in evaluating proposals.

Pre-application review criteria: Up to twelve finalists will be selected based on: interest in the subject matter via the artist statement; ability to create attractive, painted artwork on sidewalk or

concrete; experience working with community-based organizations, BIPOC communities, and other segments of the population that are underrepresented in the public realm; ability to meet deadlines.

Final application review criteria: The finalists will receive a stipend of \$100 in order to create a mockup of one piece of art for a listed location (see Appendix A). The finalists will rank the locations listed in Appendix A based on their preference and will be assigned their highest ranked location for their mockup *if possible*. The creation of a mockup does not guarantee an artist will be selected to create artwork.

Up to twelve artists/teams will then be selected to create artwork based on: a mockup that is a compelling representation of the chosen site's historical context; a mockup that is of scale and detail that is suitable for an approximately 48x48" sidewalk square in downtown Greenfield and is ready for immediate creation. If fewer than twelve artists are selected, the remaining locations will be assigned using the original rankings, giving artists their top choices whenever possible. The City of Greenfield will enter into grant agreements with the selected artists to finalize a design for and create one to four murals each.

VIII. COPYRIGHT

The City of Greenfield and grantee each reserves a royalty-free, nonexclusive, and irrevocable right to reproduce, publish, and otherwise use, and authorize others to use any artworks/deliverables developed under this agreement with attribution. Grantee retains all ownership and copyright of any ancillary materials developed under the Grant Agreement and will grant the City a royalty-free, nonexclusive, limited right to reproduce, publish, and otherwise use any such ancillary materials on a case-by-case basis with the written permission of Grantee.

LEARN MORE: Visit <https://bit.ly/GreenfieldArtistOpportunity>.

PROPOSED UNDERGROUND RAILROAD & ABOLITIONIST SELF-GUIDED WALKING TOUR

ANTI-SLAVERY CONVENTION IN FRANKLIN COUNTY.

In accordance with a public invitation to the people of Franklin County from a Committee of 12 gentlemen appointed for the purpose by Franklin Association of Ministers, to convene for the formation of a County Anti-Slavery Society, an assembly was convened in the Methodist Church in Greenfield, on Thursday, the 8th inst. The call of the convention.

was read by GEORGE T. DAVIS, and the convention was organized by the choice of WILLIAM WHITAKER as moderator, and GEORGE T. DAVIS and T. PACKARD, JR. as secretaries. The meeting was then opened with prayer, by Rev. ASA RAND.

A Committee consisting of T. PACKARD, JR. G. T. DAVIS and A. HOWLAND, was appointed to report a Constitution for a County Anti-Slavery Society.

A Committee to arrange the business for the meeting was appointed, consisting of W. TILESTON, C. P. GROSVENOR, and R. RANSOM.

Voted, That the following gentlemen, viz. Rev. Asa Rand, Rev. Cyrus P. Grosvenor, Mr. Henry B. Stanton, Mr. Abner B. Warner, and Mr. Amos Dresser, agents of the American Anti-Slavery Society, be invited to take a part in the meeting.

Several resolutions, hereafter named, were offered and supported by different gentlemen, and finally adopted.

The Committee appointed for the purpose, reported a Constitution, which was under discussion, when it was voted to adjourn till two o'clock P. M.

Convention met according to adjournment. After some discussion, the following Constitution and Preamble were adopted, viz.

1. 39 Bank Row (originally Clay Hill), Dexter & Eunice Marsh house site



Dexter Marsh



Eunice Marsh

Dexter and Eunice Marsh In 1953, a woman named Sophia Woodman sent the Historical Society of Greenfield her recollections of a story told her as a child by her surrogate “aunt” Arabella Marsh. Born in Greenfield in 1835, Arabella Marsh grew up on Clay Hill (on the site of present-day #39 Bank Row). Her father Dexter, a laborer who discovered fossilized dinosaur tracks while laying a sidewalk and eventually attained local renown for his extensive fossil collection, was the son of Joshua Marsh, a Montague man once described by a contemporary as an “abolitionist to the core.” According to Woodman, a very young Arabella Marsh came home one day to find the yard full of black children, with whom she played delightedly until nightfall. Unable to locate them the following morning, she went crying to her stepmother, who asked, “What black children, dearie? There are no little black children; you must have had a very interesting dream. Now run along to school and don’t talk about it.” Only as she grew older did Marsh begin to suspect that her parents sheltered fugitive slaves. No other documentation has surfaced to date pointing to the Marshs’ involvement with the underground, and Woodman herself acknowledged that her memory of the details of “Auntie Belle’s” story was imperfect. Nevertheless, Dexter Marsh’s family heritage lends credibility to the tale, establishing him as an individual with personal ties to the anti-slavery movement.

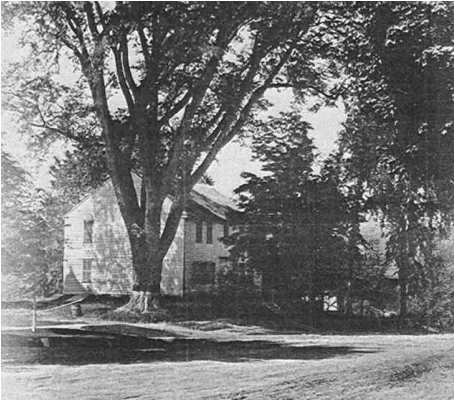
2. 473 Main St., Billy Elliot house



William “Billy” Elliot

Merchant and insurance salesman William “Billy” Elliot played a leading role in the organized anti-slavery movement. Deeply committed to political action on behalf of the slave, he served as Secretary and Treasurer of the Franklin County Abolition Society and joined the Free Soil Party in 1848. A 1934 “Old Timer Remarks” column in the Greenfield Recorder, a repository of local lore, termed Elliot’s home at 473 Main Street (still standing) a frequent “place of refuge for slaves fleeing from southern captivity,” a stop-over point for those on the road to Canada. Elliot maintained various places of business throughout his career; sites that may have played a role in his underground activities. He worked for years at Lyman Kendall’s store on the corner of Main and Federal Street and later operated his own business at current day 310 Main Street. After retiring from mercantile life, he became an agent for the Conway Company and maintained an insurance office in the P.T. Sprague building, which stood on the site of current-day 320 Main Street.

3. Main St. near Coombs Avenue, Samuel Wells house site [?]



Samuel Wells home

Francis M. Thompson's 1904 History of Greenfield mentions an old-fashioned, square house on the western part of Main Street, near Coombs Avenue (now demolished), surrounded by rumors of underground activity. Thompson notes that some pre-Civil War residents, (potentially the Samuel Wells family, but also possibly a later owner) "were at one time involved in some trouble for harboring slaves." When historian Wilbur Siebert began his investigation into Underground Railroad activity in Massachusetts in the 1930s, Isadore Taylor of Charlemont wrote him that "it was said many years ago that the Samuel Wells farm was a station from which slaves were sent to Brattleboro, Vermont." Both Taylor and Greenfield librarian May Ashley, however, proved unable to locate any documentary evidence or oral verification for this claim, even from descendants of the Wells family.

4. Lot between Fisk Avenue & Miles Street (current pocket park), Dr. Charles L. & Emiline Fisk house site



In 1895, Greenfield resident J. Johnson wrote Ohio State University professor Wilbur Siebert, the first historian of the Underground Railroad, that Dr. Charles L. Fisk and his wife Emeline sheltered fugitives in their Main Street home (which stood on the lot between current-day Miles Street and Fiske Avenue), a claim that Siebert later repeated in his 1936 book, *The Underground Railroad in Massachusetts*. Fisk's son Charles, Jr., also in a letter to Siebert, lauded his father as "a great and early pioneer in the anti-slavery cause," but offered no further details about underground activity. In his *History of Greenfield*, Francis Thompson called the Fisk home a frequent refuge "of the fugitive slave in his search for freedom." An abolitionist of the Garrisonian model, Fisk may have maintained a personal friendship with the fiery editor.

5. 63 Federal St. (pre-1852) and/or
6. 451 Main St. (post-1852), George T. Davis house/s site/s

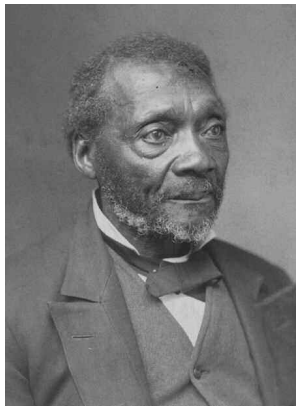


George T. Davis

One of the founding members of the Franklin County Anti-Slavery Society, George T. Davis served as the organization's first Treasurer, and later as a Vice President. A prominent lawyer who also served as a state representative, state senator, and U.S. Representative, Davis embraced political action as the most promising avenue for anti-slavery activity and supported the transfer of affiliation to the Massachusetts Abolition Society. As a member of the Business Committee, he helped guide the organization's first year as the Franklin County Abolition Society. The prosperous Davis owned multiple properties in town, including a house on the site of the current-day Greenfield Co-operative Bank and a larger one on eastern Main Street, immediately west of the present-day YMCA building.

7. 308 Main St. and

8. 258 Main St., John Putnam barbershops



John Putnam

John Putnam's considerable musical talent and good humor have left a long-lasting impression on the region. Contemporaries often noted that "his infectious laughter, once heard, was long remembered." According to family stories passed down through descendants, Putnam and his wife Julia, both born into freedom in Massachusetts, actively assisted fugitives traveling through Franklin County. Black barbers such as Putnam—who tended to possess the contacts and resources necessary to help freedom seekers on to their next destination point—played an important role in the Underground Railroad. Putnam's shops above J.H. Hollister's jewelry store (located on the site of present-day 308 Main Street) and at the American House may have served as information centers for those aiding fugitives. Putnam came to Greenfield no later than 1845 and resided originally on Mill Street. The earliest specific documentation placing his family at 175 Wells Street is an 1871 map recording their presence on the lot next to the railroad tracks, although they did not actually

purchase the property until 1880. J.H. Hollister, the jeweler who worked in such close proximity to Putnam, took over ownership of a tract of land including 175 Wells in 1866, opening up the possibility that the family rented the lot prior to 1871, or perhaps even before the Civil War. Putnam descendants have long recounted stories of an underground tunnel leading from the house's basement toward the railroad tracks. A 1970s demolition at 175 Wells uncovered a subterranean tunnel closely matching the oral tradition. Lacking any documented family presence on the property prior to 1871, however, it is also possible that later generations, familiar with John and Julia's work with fugitives, may have invested the tunnel with Underground Railroad connotations it does not necessarily possess, unintentionally confusing activities taking place at the Mill Street house or the barbershop with those particular to the Wells Street property.

9. 402 Main St., Leavitt Family house

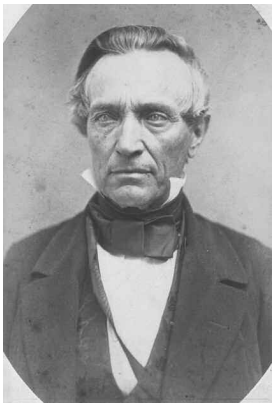


Jonathan Leavitt

The prominent Leavitt family of Charlemont, Heath, and Greenfield spearheaded the crusade for evangelical social reform in western Massachusetts. Charlemont farmer Roger Leavitt served as President of the Franklin County Anti-Slavery Society, and in 1840, received the state Liberty Party Convention nomination for Lieutenant Governor. His wife Chloe Maxwell Leavitt actively collected signatures for petitions demanding the abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia. Two of Roger's brothers settled in Greenfield: Jonathan, who rose to public esteem as a judge, and Hart, a merchant who served as a founding member of the county anti-slavery society. Hart Leavitt's store—site of the town's first newspaper and post office—stood next to Jonathan's law office on Main Street. Jonathan and his wife Emelia, daughter of Congregational minister and early critic of slavery Ezra Stiles, the first President of the Connecticut Society for the Promotion of Freedom, moved to Greenfield in 1789. Their household on Main Street (the Greenfield Public Library from 1909 until this year) included several African Americans: Vincy, the nursemaid; Jim, a manservant; and Eliza, the cook. Their legal status is uncertain. Given the era, they could have been enslaved, free, or in transition. When Ezra Stiles died in 1795, Emelia Leavitt brought two of his aged servants—Newport and Nabby—to Greenfield. Stiles bought Newport in 1756 from a slave trader in his congregation who recently returned from a voyage to Guinea, naming the young boy for his new hometown. His discomfort with slavery rising in tandem with his willingness to accept blacks as equal members of his church, Stiles freed Newport in 1778 upon accepting the presidency of Yale. Four years later, the bleak economic prospects facing free blacks in Rhode Island drove the couple to New Haven, where Newport approached Stiles for a job. In accordance with common practice, Stiles agreed upon the condition that the couple indenture their two year old son Jacob to him until the age of twenty-four. Newport and Nabby did not linger long in Greenfield. Missing their old home, they soon returned to New Haven, revealing the strong communal ties that bound eighteenth century blacks as well as whites. Both Roger Leavitt and his oldest son Joshua helped to found the American & Foreign Anti-Slavery Society, and the Yale-educated Joshua threw himself into the anti-slavery cause on a national scale, serving as publisher of the

American Anti-Slavery Society's official newspaper, the Emancipator, and later the New York Independent. Ohio State University historian Wilbur Siebert listed Joshua's brother Hart, a Charlemont resident, as one of Franklin County's Underground Railroad operators, "a sturdy abolitionist who did all he could to help slaves gain their freedom."

10. 500 Main St., George Grennell house



George Grennell

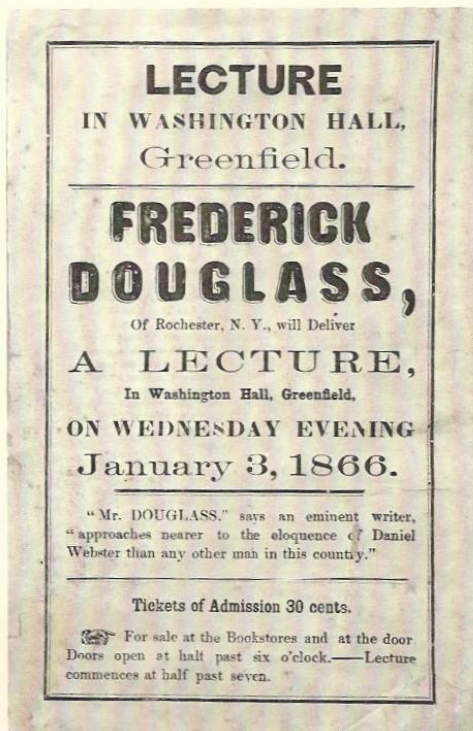
Lawyer George Grennell, another founding member of the FCAS, ranked among the county's most prominent men. Elected to the U.S. House of Representatives in 1828, he served for eleven years, vocally encouraging his reluctant colleagues to extend diplomatic recognition to Haiti, the western hemisphere's first independent black republic and a lightning rod for Americans' racial fears. The first President of the Troy & Greenfield Railroad Company and the holder of many local and county offices, Grennell, according to the Greenfield Gazette Centennial Edition, "early took a positive stand in favor of human freedom and equal rights." Along with D.W. Alvord and Hugh Thompson, Grennell served as a Greenfield delegate to an 1854 mass meeting in Worcester that adopted a resolution condemning the Kansas-Nebraska Act (which overturned the historic Missouri Compromise to open the two territories to slavery). Two years later, he organized a public meeting to protest South Carolina congressman Preston Brooks' caning of Massachusetts senator Charles Sumner, an outspoken abolitionist, on the floor of the U.S. Senate. A cape style home now standing at 53 High Street served as the Grennell homestead at 500 Main Street until 1846, at which time the family constructed a larger and more stylish house on the property and moved the cape to its present-day location. Though later owners have altered both homes, the two Grennell residences continue to provide a link to an earlier era.

11. Hope & Main streets



Around the turn of the twentieth century, long-time Greenfield resident Samuel O. Lamb noted that the early anti-slavery meetings at the Methodist church “made an impression on me that time has not effaced.” Established in 1831, the congregation erected its first building around 1834 on the site currently occupied by the courthouse. Site of the inaugural convention and several later meetings of the Franklin County Anti-Slavery Society, the church lent strong institutional support to the growth of abolitionist sentiment in the county. After losing their building in 1846 due to a financial crisis within the congregation, the Methodists met for a time in the town hall before purchasing the old St. James Episcopal Church building and relocating the structure to just east of its current location at 25 Church Street.

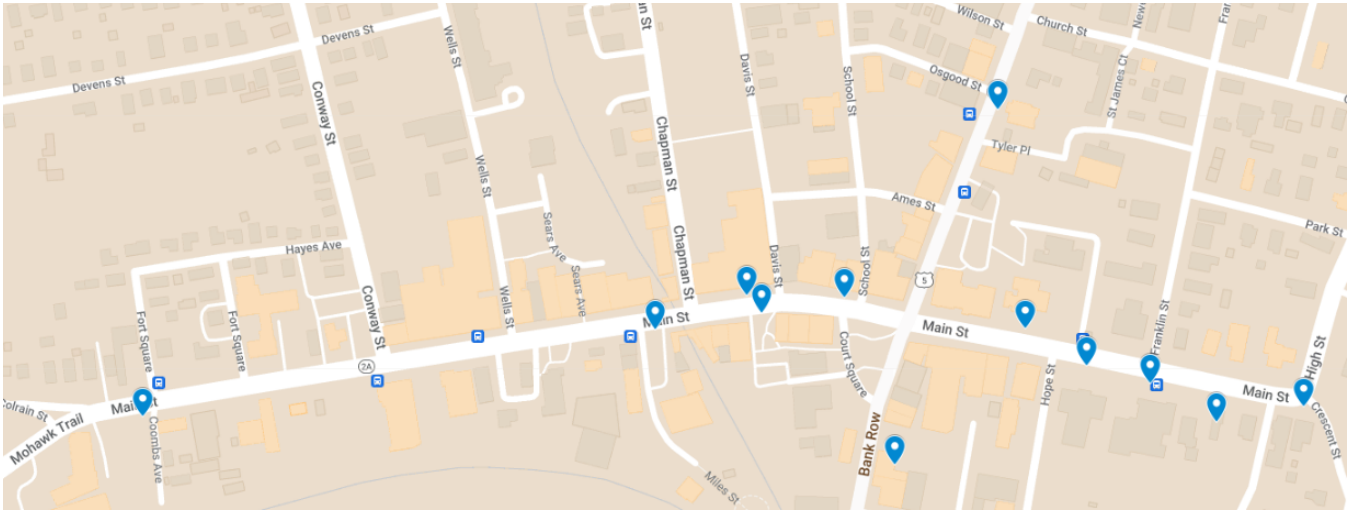
12. Washington Hall site



From the scrapbook of Laura A. Hoyt, 1866, courtesy of the Historical Society of Greenfield MA.
Her note on this says: "By my journal, I find that his subject was the Assassination of Lincoln."
Washington Hall, Greenfield's Town Hall from 1854-1963, stood where the Veterans' Mall is today.

Frederick Douglass Lecture

Constructed in 1857, the Washington Hall auditorium provided the space necessary to establish Greenfield's position on the lyceum lecture circuit. The auditorium comprised the second floor of the new town hall, which stood on the site of the current-day Veterans' Mall. Addresses by nationally prominent figures such as Frederick Douglass, Henry Ward Beecher, Theodore Parker, Ralph Waldo Emerson, and Oliver Wendell Holmes exposed residents to some of the newest and most exciting currents in contemporary literary and political thought. Anti-slavery activists such as Beecher and Parker preached abolitionism at every opportunity, often using highly dramatic oratorical techniques to grip their audiences' emotions.



[Recorder article about Luke Martin's tour.](#)

Text adapted from the pamphlet “The Road to Freedom: Anti-slavery Activity in Greenfield, Massachusetts,” produced by a partnership of the Greenfield Human Rights Commission, the Greenfield Historical Commission, and the Pioneer Valley Institute, Joan Featherman, project director, and Jill Oglie, project scholar and author. Funded by a grant from the National Trust for Historic Preservation’s Mildred Jones Keefe Preservation Fund for Massachusetts.