

(**Note:** This is the eighth in a series featuring the 11 Underground Railroad sites in Oswego County that have been placed on the National Register of Historic Places.)

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Oswego Home is Listed on the National Register of Historic Places



Nathan Green escaped from slavery and moved to Oswego around 1836. His former home on West Eighth Street is now listed on the National Register of Historic Places because of its significance to Underground Railroad activities.

Nathan Green's journey to freedom led him to Oswego around 1836. Like many African-Americans who traveled the Freedom Trail, he chose to settle in central New York instead of going all the way to Canada.

One way of protecting himself was hiding his real place of birth from federal census takers. Nathan consistently reported his birthplace to the census takers as Pennsylvania, however his burial record noted that he was born in Virginia. He is buried in the Riverside Cemetery, Scriba's largest cemetery.

In all census records from 1855 to 1870, Nathan listed his occupation as a “St Boat (steamboat) Cook.” His work on ships sailing Lake Ontario, to and from Canada, was a common occupation for African-Americans, and would have made it easy for him to help his fellow fugitive slaves.

Nathan and his wife Clarissa resided with their family at 98 W. Eighth St., Oswego. Nathan Green bought his own lot from noted abolitionist Gerrit Smith. He lived next door to John McKenzie, another African-American, who has been linked to Underground Railroad activities. In 1850, there was approximately 15 black families living in Oswego who were active abolitionist and/or fugitives themselves.

The Nathan Green house was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in March.

“It embodies most of the physical characteristics that existed during its historic period,” said Oswego County Historian Barbara Dix. “Even though the house has siding and a porch representative of the twentieth century, I’m sure the Greens would recognize it as their own. The house maintains its original materials and workmanship.”

Dix is chairwoman of the Oswego County Freedom Trial Commission. The commission, which was formed by the Oswego County Legislature, conducted research and successfully submitted the nominations of several Underground Railroad sites in Oswego County to the National Register of Historic Places.

For more information, contact Dix, weekdays, 349-8460 or 1-800-596-3200, ext. 8460.