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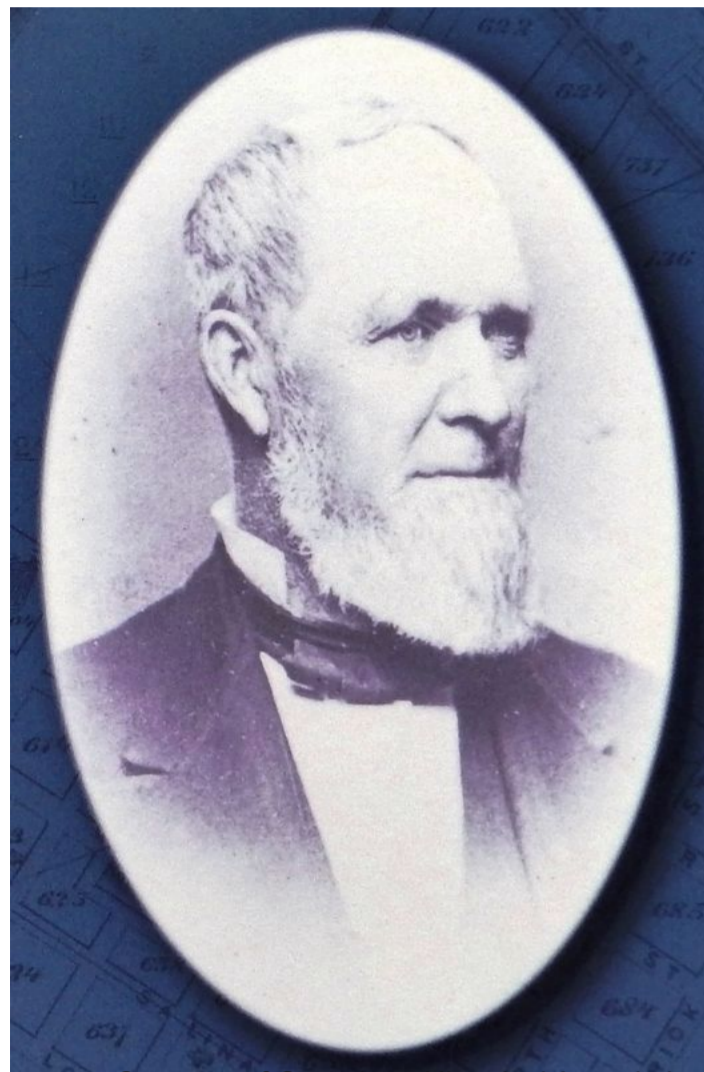
Syracuse in Onondaga County, New York — *The American Northeast (Mid-Atlantic)*

## Wesleyan Methodist Church The Freedom Trail — The Underground Railroad —

**Inscription.** "The president of the railroad... humanely provided me with free passes for the fugitives on the road to Canada and freedom." — Charles Merrick, *Reminiscences of the Jerry Rescue*, 1893

The Wesleyan Methodist Church was a biracial abolitionist congregation and a major center of the Underground Railroad. Luther Lee, pastor (1843 and 1852-1855) and editor of the *True Wesleyan* (1844-1852), assisted as many as 365 freedom seekers a year. Church members Charles, Montgomery, and Chloe Merrick raised money and supplied passes on the railroad to freedom seekers. James Baker, a Georgia-born whitewasher, and Mary Baker, his Maryland-born wife, were freedom seekers themselves. The Bakers and some other fugitives residing in Syracuse worried that the 1851 arrest of William "Jerry" Henry might lead to more arrests. They fled to Canada soon thereafter.

The church hosted a prayer service for John Brown when he was hung on December 2, 1859. It also hosted a gathering of Syracuse black citizens on January 20, 1863, to celebrate Lincoln's issuance of the Emancipation Proclamation.



Courtesy of Onondaga Historical Association

2. Marker detail: Charles Merrick

Wesleyan Church members also supported the early women's rights movement. Susan B. Anthony spoke here in 1852 and demanded for women "all the rights enjoyed by men, even to the ballot box."

**Erected by** Preservation Association of Central New York, City of Syracuse, and Onondaga Historical Association. (Marker Number 4.)

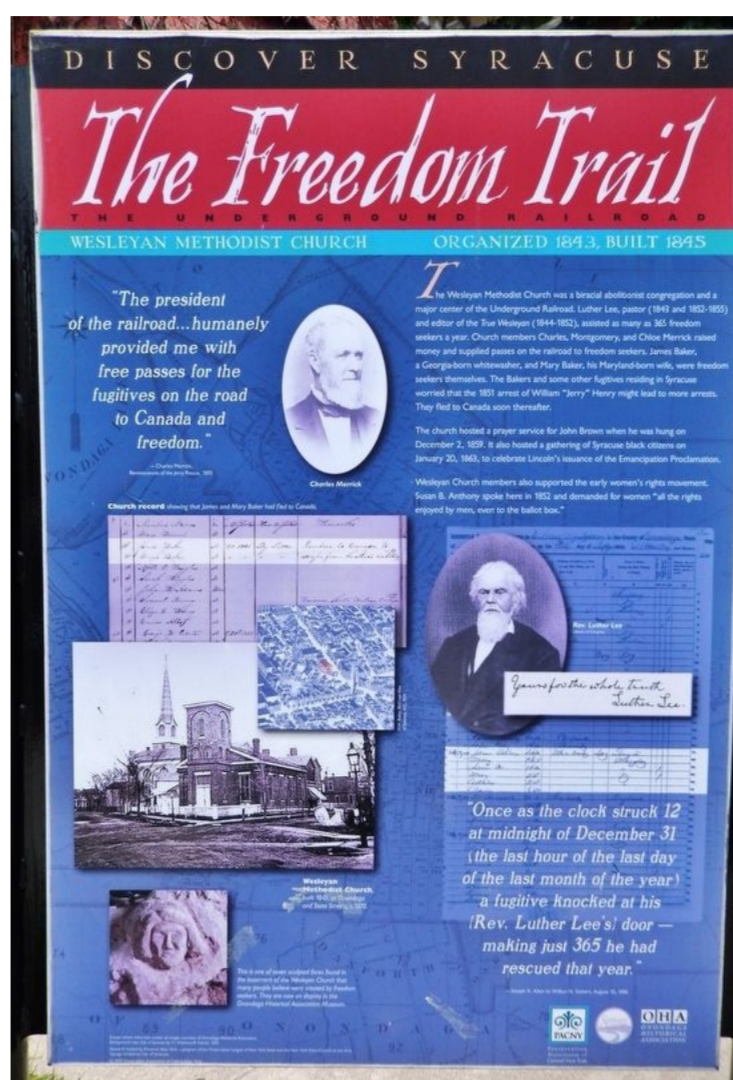
**Topics.** This historical marker is listed in these topic lists: [Abolition & Underground RR](#) • [African Americans](#) • [Churches & Religion](#) • [Civil Rights](#).

**Location.** 43° 2.826' N, 76° 8.904' W. Marker is in Syracuse, New York, in Onondaga County. Marker is at the intersection of East Jefferson Street and East Onondaga Street, on the left when traveling east on East Jefferson Street. Marker is located along the sidewalk, directly in front of the former Wesleyan Methodist Church building. [Touch for map](#). Marker is at or near this postal address: 304 East Onondaga Street, Syracuse NY 13202, United States of America. [Touch for directions](#).

**Other nearby markers.** At least 8 other markers are within walking distance of

this marker. [The Great Central Depot](#) (here, next to this marker); [Fayette Park](#) (approx. 0.2 miles away); [University Club](#) (approx. 0.2 miles away); [James K. McGuire](#) (approx. 0.2 miles away); [Syracuse Grade Crossing Elimination](#) (approx. 0.2 miles away); [Courier Building](#) (approx. 0.2 miles away); [Daniel Webster's "Syracuse Speech"](#) (approx. 0.2 miles away); [Double Enders](#) (approx. 1/4 mile away). [Touch for a list and map](#) of all markers in Syracuse.

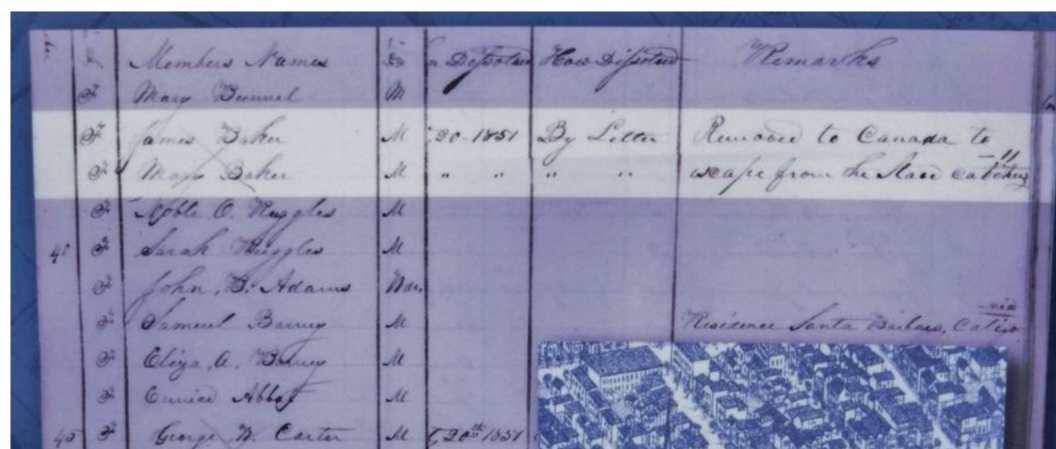
**Related markers.** Click here for a [list of markers](#) that are related to this marker. Syracuse Freedom Trail & Underground Railroad



Photographed By Cosmos Mariner, August 17, 2019

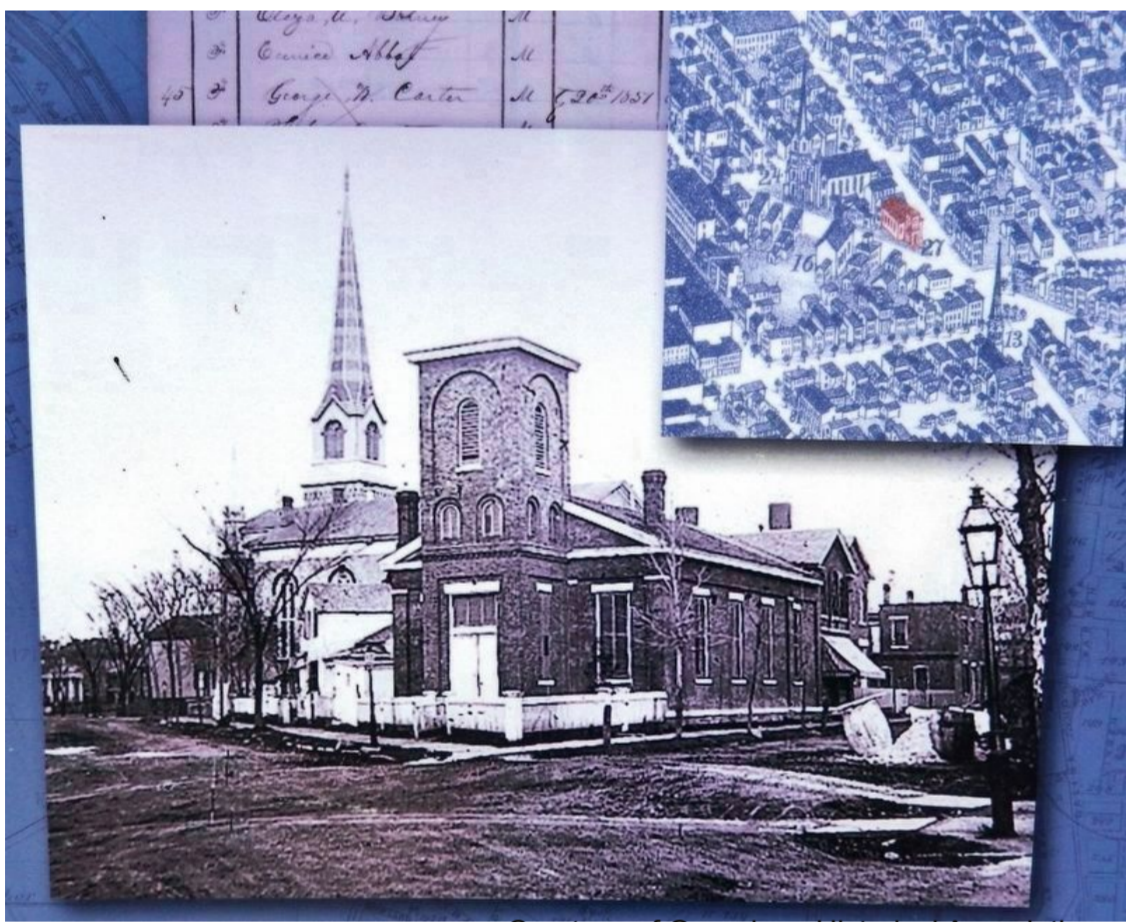
1. Wesleyan Methodist Church Marker

**Other nearby markers.** At least 8 other markers are within walking distance of



Courtesy of Onondaga Historical Association

3. Marker detail: Church record showing that James and Mary Baker had fled to Canada



Courtesy of Onondaga Historical Association

4. Marker detail: Wesleyan Methodist Church, built 1845 (circa 1870)

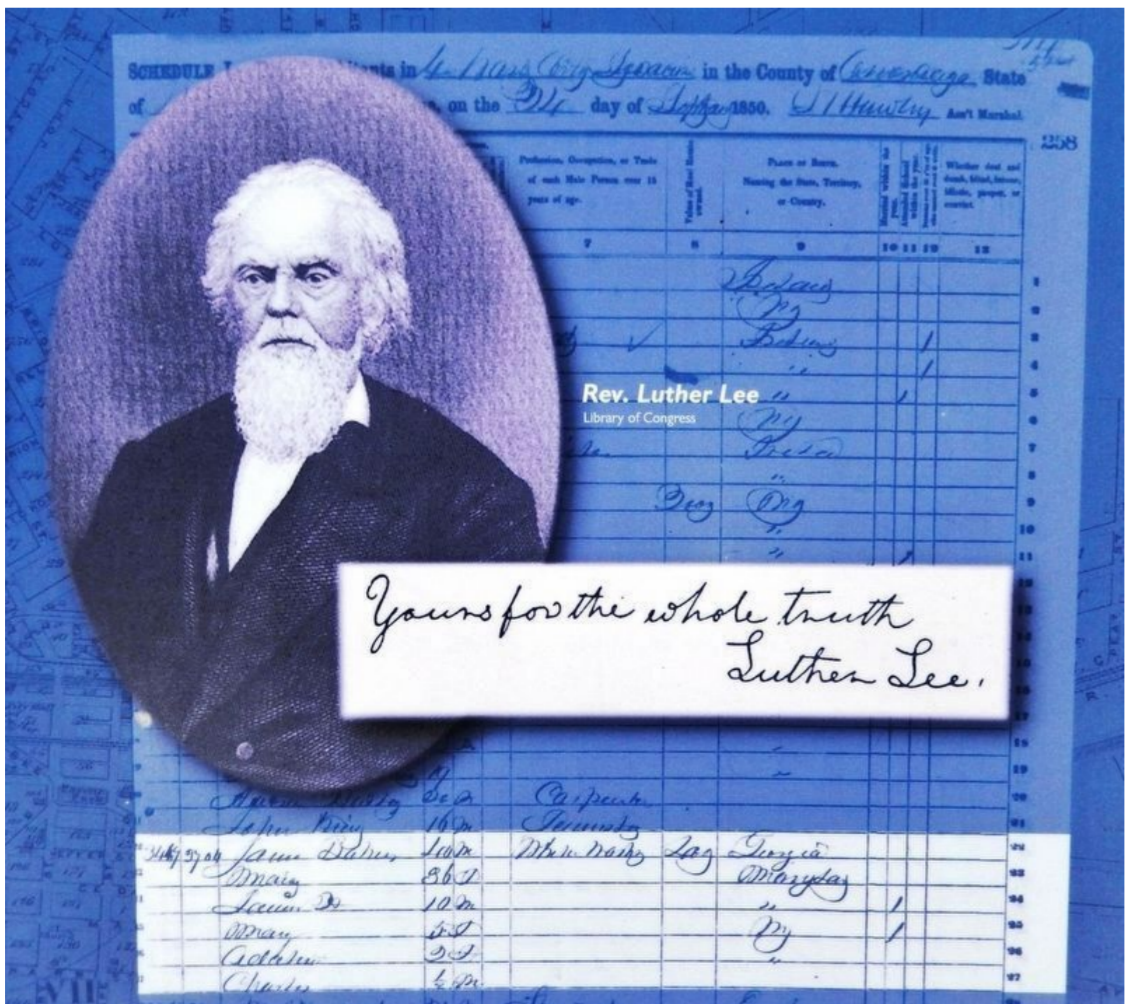
Map credit: H.H. Bailey, *Bird's-eye View of Syracuse, N.Y., 1874*



Courtesy of Onondaga Historical Association

5. Marker detail: Sculptured face found in the basement of the Wesleyan Church

This is one of seven sculptured faces found in the basement of the Wesleyan Church that many people believe were created by freedom seekers. They are now on display in the Onondaga Historical Association Museum.



Library of Congress

6. Marker detail: Rev. Luther Lee

"Once as the clock struck 12 at midnight of December 31 (the last hour of the last day of the last month of the year) a fugitive knocked at his (Rev. Luther Lee's) door making just 365 he had rescued that year."

— Joseph A. Allen to Wilbur H. Siebert, August 10, 1896



Photographed By Cosmos Mariner, August 17, 2019

7. Wesleyan Methodist Church Marker (wide view from East Jefferson Street)

**Credits.** This page was last revised on September 5, 2019. It was originally submitted on September 3, 2019, by Cosmos Mariner of Cape Canaveral, Florida. This page has been viewed 150 times since then and 36 times this year. **Photos:** 1. submitted on September 3, 2019, by Cosmos Mariner of Cape Canaveral, Florida. 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7. submitted on September 5, 2019, by Cosmos Mariner of Cape Canaveral, Florida.

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