

Speaker takes audience on the Underground RR

By Jennifer Archibald
Staff writer

Sharon Kirk Clifton of North Vernon set the stage for 1859 at the annual meeting of the Carroll County Wabash & Erie Canal Association.

It was the canal era in Indiana

and also a volatile time in our nation's history. The slavery issue was being debated, and the Underground Railroad was going strong.

Clifton assumed the role of Abigail Gray of Jennings County. She and her husband, Milton, were free-will Baptists, and their

house was a station on the Underground Railroad.

The audience had come to hear a program, but instead became part of the program. Clifton talked in first-person, and those facing her were run-away slaves.

Wearing a long dress and bonnet, and carrying a walking stick and sewing basket, she entered the room singing, "Follow the drinking gourd."

She explained that the drinking gourd is the constellation known as the Big Dipper, which points to the North Star. Escaped slaves may not know exactly where they're going, but they know they need to head north.

"I will not call you slaves, or those other names. I will call you freedom seekers," Abigail said.

She told the freedom seekers about various signs that have been used to help guide run-aways on their journey. She said, for example, they might be told to look for a house with candles in all the windows or look for a white fence with a red gate.

She said there are many hiding places for a freedom seeker, such as a wagon with a false bottom, cellars, attics, and secret rooms. She described one cellar that has a tunnel leading to another county. In one house, a loom sets on a rug. Under the rug is a trap door leading to the cellar.

"I love our tricks," she said with a laugh.

Abigail mentioned a man named Israel Cooper. "We call him Copperhead Cooper," she said. "He's a slave hunter - not a slave catcher - there is a difference." She laughed again. "If he comes close, the dogs bark."

She acknowledged that the freedom seekers came from Kentucky, and crossed the Ohio River, also known as the River Jordan. She said coming into Indiana east of Madison was safer than coming through Madison.

"We're going to get you as far north as you want to go," Abigail said. She added that most freedom seekers want to go to Canada, where slavery does not exist. Just coming into the free northern states is not always safe because slave hunters can still track slaves down and return them to their owners.

"They also come into Indiana and even take free men and women," she said.

Abigail told her charges to hold on to the coin they were given, that has a hole in it. "That's your pass. Hang on to that; it's worth your life," she said. "Those who don't have that may be spies," she said.

"They won't let you read in the South," Abigail lamented. "When you get to Canada, you learn to read and write."

She said on their journey, maybe they would get to meet the well-known abolitionist, Levi

Coffin, or the former slave, Frederick Douglass, who now gives eloquent anti-slavery speeches, runs a newspaper, and has published two books.

She said there is increased tension between the north and the south.

"This country is a powder keg, and the fuse has already been lit," she said.

"We'll load you in a wagon and take you to Ripley County," she said. "Get some sleep; we'll leave in the morning."

Sharon Kirk Clifton is a former teacher and newspaper writer. She now is a professional storyteller and writer of fiction.



Against slavery

Sharon Kirk Clifton (dressed as Abigail Gray in 1859) shows a quilt block that features the likeness of abolitionist George DeBaptiste. Comet photo by Jennifer Archibald

Police & Fire Calls

Police reports are gathered from available records on file at local police departments. This information is a matter of public record and does not imply guilt or innocence. Information for fire reports is also gathered from reports on file with local fire departments.

Delphi Police Dept.

April 15, 5 p.m. - Theft, Monroe Street. Susan R. Marchand, Camden, reported the theft of a cellular phone out of an unlocked vehicle. Officer Justin Wilson investigated.

April 19, 3 p.m. - Personal injury, SR25 at Indiana Street. Jerry L. Lattimore, 31, Delphi; Jose E. Sifuentes, 43, Logansport. Six passengers were taken to the hospital for minor injuries. Officer Brandon Endicott investigated.

April 19, 4:54 p.m. - Operating while intoxicated, 925W. Steven M. Lively, Delphi, was arrested after driving left of center and driving in ditches. He was also found to be in possession of a controlled substance, which was reported stolen. He was charged with OWI/prior, theft and possession of a controlled substance. Wilson is investigating.

April 21, 7 p.m. - Warrant service, SR25. Robin Albright, Lafayette. While on a traffic stop for speeding, Albright was found to have an active warrant from Montgomery County. Wilson investigated.

April 21, 8 p.m. - Theft, Washington Street. Kimberly R. Cripe, Delphi, reported the theft of CDs out of a vehicle. Officer Wilson investigated.

April 21, 10 p.m. - Operating while intoxicated, 421 North Street. Eusebio Bautista, Flora, and Hector U. Bautista, Delphi. While on a traffic stop for unsafe lane movement, the driver and passenger were found to be intoxicated. The driver tested .09 percent blood alcohol content, the passenger tested .12 percent BAC. Wilson investigated.

April 23, 12:59 a.m. - Operating while intoxicated, E. Main St. Shawn T. Cranmer, Osceola, was arrested for testing .10 percent BAC, possession of marijuana, underage consumption of alcohol and possession of paraphernalia. Officer Dave Yeager investigated.

April 28, 4:40 p.m. - Property damage accident, SR25S near Wabash St. George A. Hession, 68, Logansport and Wendy J. Schmidt, 23, Plymouth. Endicott investigated.

April 30, 3:31 p.m. - Domestic battery, Madison St. Endicott investigated.

May 1, no time given - Property damage accident, intersection of US421 and SR25. John A. Sprunger, 25, Lafayette and Stanley Frame, 58, Royal Center. Chief Ed Chapman investigated.

May 1, 9:40 p.m. - Illegal consumption, Main St. Jesse Starkey, 19, Peru, was arrested at McDonald's. He tested .13 BAC. Wilson investigated.

Sheriff's Department

April 18, 7 a.m. - Property damage accident, CR132N near SR25S. Michael D. Richardson, 36, Lafayette, and Amy R. Richardson, 36, Lafayette. Cpl. Tobe Leazenby investigated.

April 18, 7:30 a.m. - Property damage accident with injury, Tippecanoe Ranch Road. Marcia L. Stevens, 16, Delphi. She was transported to a medical facility by her parents. Leazenby investigated.

April 21, 11:42 a.m. - Property damage accident, CR500 at CR250W. Mark L. Abbott, 43, Delphi. Deputy Mike Thomas investigated.

April 22, 5:55 p.m. - Property damage accident and injury, CR725N near CR700W. Joshua D. Taylor, 24, Lafayette. Stevie R. Zook, 25, Frankfort and Lucas C. Temple, 28, Lafayette were injured. Deputy Grant Davidson investigated.

April 25, 8:19 a.m. - Property damage accident, 725N near 700W. Danny L. Garner, 42, Delphi. Sheriff Dennis Randle investigated.

April 25, 2:25 p.m. - Property damage accident with injury, 500W near US421. Tracy L. Claiborne, 45, Camden, received an injury to her arm/elbow and refused medical attention. Deputy Mark Back investigated.

April 26, 12 p.m. - Property damage accident and injury, SR25N near CR275W. Kevin D. Johnston, 23, West Lafayette, sustained minor injury to the head. Leazenby investigated.

April 30, 12:56 a.m. - Property damage accident and injury, CR1500W at CR725N. Judy J. French, 53, Lafayette, was transported to St. Elizabeth Hospital. Deputy Jay Schimmel investigating.

Deer-related accidents

April 24, 4:35 a.m. - US421 near 1000N. Derek M. Babcock, 24, Demotte. Back investigated.

April 25, 10 p.m. - US421N near CR700N. Erik K. Hageman, 17, Monticello. Deputy Zackary Hall investigated.

April 29, 8:10 a.m. - 900W at 550N. Charles L. McDonald, 65, Monticello. Back investigated.

April 29, 11:30 a.m. - 900W near 1100N. Darcie M. Martin, 23, Delphi. Back investigated.

Flora Police Dept.

April 24, 8:26 p.m. - A domestic disturbance was reported in the 100 block of W. Maple St. Sgt. James Bishop and Deputy Zach Hall investigated.

April 25, 9:10 a.m. - A hit and run report was taken at 230 E. Columbia St. Officer Randy Larimore investigated.

April 28, 1:30 p.m. - A report of telephone harassment was taken at 102 N. Division St. Larimore investigated.

April 29, 12:30 p.m. - Following a complaint, David W. Glasgow, 51, Bringham, was arrested on a warrant out of Cass County for conversion. Larimore investigated.

April 29, 7:34 p.m. - Theft of a yellow 1978 Honda scooter was reported at 230 E. Main St. Bishop investigated.

May 1, 12:53 a.m. - Report of juvenile delinquency was taken in the 400 block of W. Elm St. Bishop investigated.

May 1, 2:04 a.m. - A domestic disturbance was reported in the 200 block of S. Division St. Bishop investigated.

Burlington Police Dept.

April 24, 11:30 a.m. - SR 29 north of Mill Road. Following a traffic stop, Brittany Ross, 20, Goshen, was arrested on a warrant from Fulton and Clinton County. She was transported to Carroll County Jail. Town Marshal Jill Hammond investigated.

April 24, 5:25 p.m. - Minor personal injury accident was investigated at 605 E. 7th St., involving a 16-year-old who left the roadway and struck a sign at Wagoner Medical Center. The driver was transported to St. Joseph Memorial Hospital for treatment. Hammond investigated.

April 25, 12:15 p.m. - Property damage accident investigated on Earl Avenue involving a vehicle driven by Donald R. Sandlin, Bringham, and M&W Pork LTD. Both vehicles were drivable. Hammond investigated.

April 27, 8:30 a.m. - Fred Harrell, 1201 S. Michigan Road, reported that someone had struck his mailbox during the early morning hours. The vehicle left the scene with possible front end damage. Hammond investigated.

April 28, 5:45 p.m. - Burlington MaraMart reported two drive-offs - \$5 and \$25. Hammond made contact with the second driver who returned and paid for the gas.

Camden

Mary Whitfield
Camden 686-2553

The spring "Reminisce Day" meeting at the Camden-Jackson Township Public Library will be held at 10 a.m. Monday. Bring old time memories to share.

Carroll Chapter Order of the Eastern Star will meet Monday at 7:30 p.m. in the Masonic Temple. Officers will be elected. Hostesses will be Dean and Perrietta Appleton.

Camden Town Council will meet at 7 p.m. Tuesday in the Town Hall.

The board of the Camden-Jackson Township Public Library will meet at 7 p.m. May 10 at the library.

United Methodist Women will meet at 7 p.m. May 11 in the home

of Mary Trapp. Roll call response will be a Biblical mother.

Camden Elementary School will dismiss students at 12 noon Friday due to a teacher in-serve.

Fifteen members of the Aim Hi E.H. Club met April 20 in the home of Jean Willy with Mary Trapp as co-hostess. Devotions were given by Eva Lou Shanks. The lesson, "Living Well," was presented by Sharon Ashby. The birthday song was sung to Colleen Franek. Prize winners were Eva Lou Shanks and Evetta Recher. Refreshments were served afterwards.

Frank and Mary Whitfield were among 200 who attended the reunion of the descendents of Harvey and Nellie Ulery held Sunday at Riverside Park in Logansport.

Burlington

Cheryl Milburn
Burlington 566-3453

A community-wide garage sale will be held Saturday morning at the Community Building with proceeds benefiting Carroll County Relay for Life.

Bible Study at the Burlington Church of Christ has been discontinued for the summer months.

Burlington Church of Christ Mother-Daughter Banquet will be held May 9 at 6:30 p.m.

Hat Day will be observed Sunday at the United Methodist Church. The mid-week Wednesday Prayer and Bible Study will be held at 6:30 p.m. Praise and Worship Team practice will be held at 7:30 p.m. Thursday.

A "Thank You" reception honoring the Perkins family will be held during Sunday School time May 7 at Faith Church of Christ.

The annual Ladies Appreciation Night will be held

May 7 at 6 p.m. at Faith Church of Christ.

The WMS Mother-Daughter Banquet at the First Brethren Church will be held Wednesday.

Women's Bible Study at the Church of Christ will begin May 11.

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Brodar Chiropractic

Delphi Rotary Club

Outback Steakhouse

Alco Discount Store

Carroll County REMC

Camden Auction Barn

Diener Supply Inc.

Abbott Funeral Home

Pizza King (Delphi)

Fisher's Restaurant

Carroll County Comet

Wal-Mart Supercenter

Carolyn Maxwell Avon

Brown's Tire Service

McLemore Motors Inc.

Tan Lines & Balloons

The Flower Shoppe II

Indiana Packers Corp.

Great American Supply

Save-A-Lot Food Store

Dr. Robert Lucas, DDS

Dr. David Krause, DDS

Lafayette Bank & Trust

Stone House Restaurant

Delphi Hardware & Paint

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Bill Shank Construction

Hollow Acres Golf Center

Sand Tones Tanning Salon

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Mary Kay Products (Pam Ennis)

Hog Slat/Hog Equip. Warehouse

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Main Street Pizza King (Camden)

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Carroll County Abstract & Title LLC

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