



# Welcome to Westwood Cemetery

## 455 Morgan Street, Oberlin, Ohio

*Westwood is a wonderful place for strolling, jogging, or bird watching as well as for visiting the graves of loved ones or learning about the many individuals—famous and infamous, former slaves and wealthy entrepreneurs, dedicated missionaries and valiant warriors—who have helped make Oberlin, and our nation, great. The Oberlin Heritage Center has prepared this guide to the gravestones, or memorials, to some of early Oberlin's most notable citizens to help you find their markers and, we hope, add to your enjoyment of the beautiful sanctuary that is Westwood.*

*If you wish, begin your visit by looking through the biographical snippets, then consult the map. The numbers on the map indicate locations of the individuals' gravestones or memorials; the letters refer to sections of the cemetery, most of which are identified on white posts.*

**1. Lucy Alexander (1802–1885)**, an African American mother from Kentucky with eight children, sent at least three daughters to Oberlin College. After being widowed she moved to Oberlin and operated a boardinghouse for African American students.

**2. George Nelson Allen (1812–1877)**, an 1838 graduate of Oberlin College, taught piano and violin and was a professor of sacred music and geology / natural history at Oberlin. Also a hymn writer, Allen established the Musical Union (the second-oldest choral society in America) and developed the germ of what became the Oberlin Conservatory of Music. His wife, **Mary Caroline Rudd Allen (1820–1892)**, an 1841 graduate of the College Course, was one of three Oberlin women to receive the first bachelor of arts degrees in the United States.

**3. Lewis Clarke (1815–1897)**, a fugitive slave and Underground Railroad “conductor,” gave public lectures about his family’s tribulations in Kentucky. In Massachusetts he met Harriet Beecher Stowe and later claimed to have been the inspiration for the George Harris character in *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*.

**4. Marianne Parker Dascomb (1810–1879)**, an early advocate of education for women, studied under the pioneering

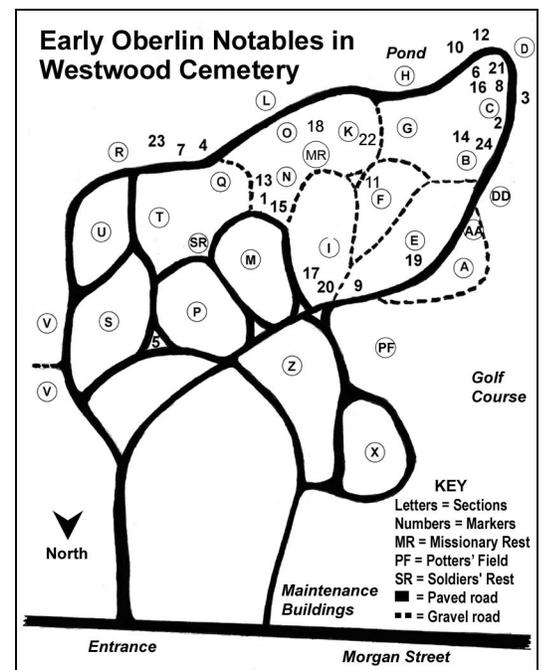
educators Zilpah Grant and Mary Lyon at the Ipswich Female Seminary in Massachusetts. She served as principal of Oberlin College’s Ladies’ Department in 1835 and from 1852 to 1870.

**5. Lee Howard Dobbins (1849–1853)**, an orphaned child of a slave who was fleeing to Canada, died in Oberlin. His remains were moved from Oberlin’s original burying ground after Westwood opened in 1863, but his grave is unmarked. This memorial to him is also a monument to the Underground Railroad.

**6. Wilson Bruce Evans (1824–1898)**, a freeborn African American from North Carolina, was long an Oberlin carpenter and furniture maker. In 1858 he participated in the Oberlin-Wellington Rescue. During the Civil War, while passing as white, he enlisted in an all-white unit of the Union Army.

**7. Rev. James Harris Fairchild (1817–1902)**, scholar and author, graduated from Oberlin College in 1838, was ordained in 1840, and taught Latin, Greek, mathematics, theology, and moral philosophy at the college. He served as Oberlin’s third president and influenced a number of all-male colleges and universities to become coeducational.

**8. Rev. Charles Grandison Finney (1797–1875)**. This is the most frequently visited grave in Westwood—and for good reason. A renowned evangelist and advocate of “Oberlin Perfectionism,” Finney



served as a professor of theology at Oberlin College, as the college’s second president, and as the designer and pastor of The First Church in Oberlin.

**9. Charles Martin Hall (1863–1914)** is honored as the inventor of an economically feasible process for refining aluminum ore, which had been more expensive than gold. The company he founded prospered and became ALCOA. Hall prospered, too, and shared his wealth generously with Oberlin.

**10. Adelia A. Field Johnston (1838–1910)**, an 1856 graduate of the Ladies’ Course, became Oberlin College’s first female faculty member. For more than



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35 years she held various positions: principal of the Women's Department, dean of women, professor of medieval history, lecturer on the history of painting and architecture, and trustee.

**11. Allen Jones** (1794–1877), an African American blacksmith and gunsmith, bought his freedom and that of his family in North Carolina. They arrived in Oberlin in time for Jones to help make the iron-work used in building The First Church in Oberlin. Four of his sons graduated from Oberlin College before the Civil War. Jones remained an outspoken Democrat in largely Republican Oberlin.

**12. Harriet Louise Keeler** (1846–1921), an 1870 graduate of Oberlin College, became the first female superintendent of schools in Cleveland. A dedicated amateur botanist, she published a number of popular books about flowers, shrubs, and trees, as well as a biography of Adelia A. Field Johnston.

**13. Rev. John Keep** (1781–1870), pastor of the Old Stone Church in Cleveland, became president of the Oberlin College Board of Trustees in 1835. As president he cast the deciding vote that opened Oberlin's doors to blacks. He was also instrumental in bringing the "Lane Rebels" to Oberlin, saved Oberlin from bankruptcy by obtaining funds from British abolitionists, and was one of the founders of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions.

**14. Cinque Langston** (1858–1861), named after the leader of an uprising of slave captives on the *Amistad*, was the daughter of John Mercer Langston. Her father, a noted African American abolitionist, attorney, educator, and activist, lived in Oberlin for 15 years after his graduation from the college in 1845. One of the *Amistad* captives, Margru, attended Oberlin College with him.

**15. Henry Lee** (1836–1899), a runaway slave from Virginia, came to Oberlin in 1859. He attended the village's public schools and supported himself by doing odd jobs for 6 cents an hour. In 1860 he enrolled in the college's Preparatory Department and in 1863 in its College Course. Remaining in Oberlin, he became an outspoken champion of civil rights and an activist in organizations seeking racial justice.

**16. James Monroe** (1821–1898) was an abolitionist lecturer before graduating from Oberlin College in 1846. In addition

to teaching rhetoric, political science, history and international law at Oberlin during the next five decades, Monroe served in the Ohio House and Senate, in the U.S. House, and as the U.S. consul at Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

**17. John Frederick Oberlin** (1740–1826), namesake of Oberlin, Ohio, was a pastor in impoverished northeastern France. He was renowned not only for his spirituality but also for the many ways in which he improved his parishioners' material lives. He never came to America, but under this marker is earth from his grave in France.

**18. Peter Pindar Pease** (1795–1861) and his family were the first residents of Oberlin Colony. A builder, "Deacon Pease" helped construct The First Church in Oberlin.

**19. John Scott** (1827–1912), son of a black man and a Scotswoman, set up a harness shop in Oberlin in 1856. A staunch temperance advocate, he was involved in the Underground Railroad and was jailed for participating in the Oberlin-Wellington Rescue. Four of his daughters attended Oberlin College; two of them graduated.

**20. Rev. John J. Shipherd** (1802–1844) and **Philo P. Stewart** (1798–1868), Oberlin's founders, are memorialized, along with their wives, on this obelisk, which is "A Copy of the Tablet / Placed in the Ladies Hall / and Burnt with the Hall / in 1886."

**21. Gen. Giles W. Shurtleff** (1831–1904), a battle-tested Civil War hero, led the 5th U.S. Colored Troops from 1863 until 1865. John Mercer Langston had organized the 5th USCT, Ohio's first all-black unit. Later, Shurtleff not only taught Latin and Greek at Oberlin College but also held several high administrative positions in the college and served on its Board of Trustees.

**22. Rev. James Steele** (1808–1859) graduated from Oberlin's Theology Department in 1840. In 1842 he accompanied a group of former captive slaves from the schooner *Amistad* back to their homeland in Sierra Leone, where he helped establish a mission station.

**23. Lt. Col. John W. Steele** (1835–1905) is Westwood's only recipient of the Congressional Medal of Honor, awarded for saving an ammunition train during an attack in Spring Hill, Tennessee, in 1864. After the Civil War Steele served in numerous positions, including probate judge of Lorain County and postmaster of Oberlin.

**24. Sgt. John Wall** (1842–1912) was the color-bearer for the historic, all-black 54th Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry until he was wounded during the attack on Fort Wagner, South Carolina in 1863. That attack is portrayed in the Oscar-winning film *Glory*. After the war Wall returned to Oberlin and worked as a mason, house painter, plasterer, and town constable.

### ***About the Westwood Cemetery Gravestone Transcription Project***

*In 1999 the Oberlin Heritage Center launched the Westwood Cemetery Gravestone Transcription Project with the goal of creating a fully descriptive, searchable, free, online database, replete with linked photographs. Since then OHC volunteers have recorded information about the nearly 9,000 individuals buried in the cemetery and about the markers—including family stones, headstones, footstones, corner stones, and carriage stones—on their graves.*

*As our work progressed we discovered that almost one-quarter of the graves in Westwood are unmarked; despite the name of the project we decided to include them in our database. Further complexity arose when we realized that a considerable number of markers are actually memorials to soldiers, missionaries, and other loved ones who are buried elsewhere, or nowhere; we added them to our database too.*

*By the tenth anniversary of the project our database was online, so our attention turned to facilitating its use. In addition, we have begun to print and post online some simple guides to help you find specific markers. This first, general guide features the most visited graves in Westwood, as well as memorials to some of the many other individuals who played a prominent role in nineteenth-century Oberlin. Guides with specific themes, such as education, abolition, women's rights, missionary activity, and the Civil War, will follow.*

*To access the database and for more resources, go to <[www.oberlinheritage.org/researchlearn/gravestone](http://www.oberlinheritage.org/researchlearn/gravestone)>.*

*We welcome your comments, additions, and suggestions concerning both the database and the guides. Just write to the Oberlin Heritage Center or email <[ohcweb@oberlinheritage.org](mailto:ohcweb@oberlinheritage.org)>.*