

Oviatt House is part of the Richfield Heritage Preserve, overseen by the Park Director and governed by the Richfield Joint Recreation District Board of Trustees. We are an all-volunteer organization formed in 2021 that relies on the dedication of our volunteers, the generosity of our donors, and the awarding of specified grants. Oviatt House Inc. is actively working to restore the 1836 home while crafting the framework to develop it into a museum. Our team of restoration volunteers is led by Ken Bowman, retired Historic Preservation Carpenter for the National Park Service.



## Mission



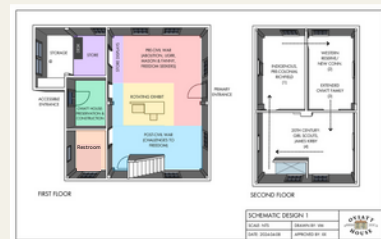
Oviatt House Inc. shall restore and preserve the historic Oviatt House located in Richfield Heritage Preserve to honor its significant ties to the Underground Railroad, preserve the pioneer spirit of the Western Reserve, and inspire the community and future generations to celebrate the freedom it represents.

HONOR • PRESERVE • INSPIRE

## Vision



Oviatt House envisions a welcoming museum experience that immerses visitors in the history of the Oviatt house, its occupants, and their role in the Underground Railroad. Through partnerships and community involvement, we invite guests to connect with the past, reflect on freedom's struggle, and inspire introspection and movement toward a more equitable society.



## The History that Drives Us

Mason and Fanny Carter Oviatt moved from Connecticut to Richfield in the early 1800's with each of their families as early settlers of Richfield. Sometime after they were married in 1831, they bought 100 acres of land from Mason's parents and, with the help of Mason's brother Erastus, built a sawmill next to the stream running through the property. Using lumber from the sawmill, Mason built their family home, completing it in 1836.

The famous abolitionist, John Brown, lived in Richfield between 1842 - 1844 and had a friendly relationship with Mason and Fanny. In 1843, Fanny helped care for the Brown family during an epidemic that took the young lives of four Brown children, all of whom are buried together in the Richfield Fairview Cemetery. In addition to evidence that supports their anti-slavery views, Oviatt family history recounts an event when Mason picked up five Freedom Seekers from John Brown's house and transported them to Oberlin, while hiding in a secret compartment built into Mason's hay wagon.