

[Henry Bibb Heritage Trail, from Louisville to Cincinnati - retracing Bibb's steps to freedom, Nov 2-7](#)

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Henry Bibb Heritage Trail A walk to honor former slave

November 2-7, 2016

"Sometimes standing on the Ohio River bluff, looking over on a free State, and as far north as my eyes could see, I have eagerly gazed upon the blue sky of the free North ... that I might soar away to where there is no slavery; no clanking of chains, no captives, no lacerating of backs, no parting of husbands and wives; and where man ceases to be the property of his fellow man." When Terrell Gerton read this statement written by former slave-turned-abolitionist [Henry Bibb](#), it made a lasting impression on him. So deep was the sentiment that he decided to literally trace Henry Bibb's footsteps to freedom.

Bibb was born a slave circa 1813/1814 in Henry County, Ky. He spent several years at the Gatewood Plantation in present-day Trimble County (the site was in Oldham County before 1836, at the time Bibb lived there). After several attempts, Bibb managed to escape to freedom in Canada, but at the price of leaving his wife and child behind. Every effort he made to reunite with them failed, and he eventually settled in Canada and remarried. Bibb established Canada's first African -American newspaper, the *Voice of the Fugitive*. He also published a biography in 1849, [Narrative of the Life and Adventures of Henry Bibb, An American Slave](#).

Gerton, a native of Springfield, Ky, will be joined on his trek from Louisville to Cincinnati by Eric Koestel. Both men reached out to the Oldham County History Center with the idea of a walking trail that would retrace Bibb's steps to freedom. The route will begin at "the Slave Jail Historical Marker in downtown Louisville and end at the Freedom Center in Cincinnati," said Dr. Nancy Stearns Theiss, executive director of the History Center, which formed a support committee for Gerton. "It would mostly follow US Hwy 42 in Kentucky. The counties included would be Jefferson, Oldham, Trimble, Carroll, Gallatin, Boone and Kenton." Along the way, Gerton and Koestel will be walking near sites connected to slavery and the Underground Railroad. They plan to walk an initial trial run of the route on November 2-7, 2016. If all goes well, the pair plan to make it a more public event next year and invite schools to participate.

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Gerton is the type of person to “always be doing something,” he said. “But this means so much more to me than just “doing something.” Eric and I are truly honored to have the opportunity to make this walk on behalf of Mr. Bibb. The efforts made by the History Center are in the true sprits of the Underground Railroad.”

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