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Jacqueline Y. Brown  
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Dear Ms. Brown:

Re: Archival Research at Wilberforce University  
"The Beginnings"

I've read and re-read your article hoping to find some reference to the Black Seminary that was located here in Brown Township, Franklin County, Ohio. Several years ago, Mary Weaver Miller, the Local Historian for Hilliard, did a lot of research culminating in an article entitled "Emancipation to Integration" which appeared in the West Ohio News, a publication of United Methodist Church. Prior to writing this article, Mary visited Wilberforce University and did considerable research in their archives. This was to "flash out" the local History about the Black Seminary which was located on the northerly side of Roberts Road east of Big Darby Creek and west of Amity Road. Mary then wrote:

In 1844 the Ohio Conference of the AMEC appointed a committee to locate "suitable lands for a Seminary of Learning, on the Manual Labor plan, for the instruction of the youth, in the various branches of literature, science, agriculture and mechanic arts; and also for the young men who may desire to prepare their minds for the work of the ministry." In 1845 the committee reported that 172 acres, 12 miles west of Columbus, 2 miles north of National Road (U.S. 40) and 7 miles from the area that would eventually be Hilliard..... could be purchased for the sum of \$1720.00. This report was accepted and thus was laid the foundation of Union Seminary.

A charter was secured from the General Assembly of Ohio. In 1847 Bishop J.M. Brown was placed in charge, assisted by Mrs. Francis E. Watkins Harper. By 1853 financial problems were developing. In 1856 the Ohio African University at Xenia came into existence to provide facilities for the education of the estimated 30,000 colored people in Ohio. The Cincinnati Conference of the AME Church appointed John F. Wright to look into the situation and help this struggling Union Seminary. It was decided that it be disbanded and the land sold for \$6,000. By 1863 all effects had been transferred to the new institution in Xenia: Wilberforce.

The Williams Brothers History of Franklin and Pickaway Counties of 1880 contains a brief comment regarding the Seminary.

In, perhaps, the year 1847, the number of colored people formed an Association for the Advancement of the Cause of Education for the Children of their Race. A trace of land was purchased in Brown Township, buildings erected, and a school formed. It was finally abandoned, but the writer is not conversant with the causes that produced this result. Nothing is left to mark the location of this institution.



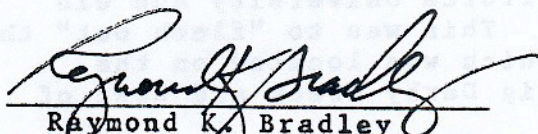
Also of note is this excerpt from the OGS report 35:4(1995) in an article entitled "The Ohio Colored Teachers' Association 1860-1863" by Nancy E. Aiken, Ph. D. In 1861 Mr. E. D. Davis was listed as a Vice President of the Association and the following report was made:

Mr. E.D. Davis of the Union Seminary had only 15 students enrolled but with an average daily attendance of 12. This school was under the supervision of the "Ohio Conference".

Mr. Davis made a \$200 annual salary.

Many years later this same land was owned by Walter and Mary Seaman. Walter had grown up on the farm and could well remember that his father, Wesley Seaman, had used the buildings left by the Seminary to suit his farm purposes. None of these buildings now remain. I enjoyed hearing Walter tell this story and found this to be an important and interesting bit of our local history.

Respectfully Submitted



Raymond K. Bradley

A Brown Township Historian

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