



# The Lyles Station Story

The legacy of Lyles Station, a small community located 4.5 miles west of Princeton, Indiana, began in the early 1800's as a settlement of free black men near the convergence of the Wabash, Patoka, and White Rivers. In 1870, Joshua Lyles, a free black man from Tennessee, donated 6 acres of ground to the Old Airline Railroad to establish a rail station in what was then called the Switch Settlement. In 1886, the settlement was officially named Lyles Station in honor of Joshua Lyles and his contribution. The town flourished during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, developing into a self-sustaining community of approximately 800 residents. At its peak (1880-1913), Lyles Station consisted of fifty-five homes, a post office, a railroad station, an elementary school, two churches, two general stores, a blacksmith shop and a lumber mill. However, the 1913 flood of the Patoka, White and Wabash Rivers left much of the area under water, marking the start of the settlement's decline. Today, only a few homes remain in the community of Lyles Station but nearly half of the residents are descendants of the original black settlers. Along with the scattered houses, the African Methodist Episcopal Church, a grain elevator, and the schoolhouse are all that stand as a physical reminder of the once-thriving settlement of Lyles Station, Indiana. However, the spirit of freedom and perseverance which made the town prosper is still very much alive in the hearts and minds of those individuals who have worked to restore the Lyles Consolidated School building. Groundbreaking on the renovation project was held in June of 2002 and in June of 2003, the dreams of preserving the Lyles Station legacy were realized with the opening of the restored Lyles Consolidated School.



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## Preserve Lyles Station

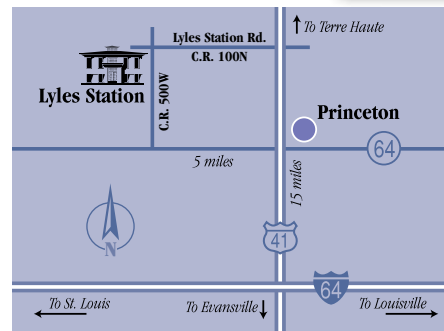
Join us as a partner to preserve Lyles Station. On June 18, 1997 the Lyles Station Historic Preservation Corporation was formed to preserve the oral, written and physical history, artifacts, buildings and land which identify and/or describe events, activities and life experiences of the people and the community known as Lyles Station in Gibson County, Indiana.

**Join us in saying... Yes! I want to help preserve the heritage of Lyles Station, one of the last remaining African-American communities in the state of Indiana.**

- Historic..... \$5,000 & Above
- Preservation..... \$1,000
- Corporate..... \$500
- Sustaining..... \$250
- Sponsor..... \$100
- Patrons..... \$50
- Contributing..... \$25



**Call 812-385-2534 for summer hours or an appointment.**



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For more information on the history of Lyles Station and the Lyles Consolidated School, a schedule of events, genealogy research, or more photographs of early Lyles Station residents, please visit our website at

[www.lylesstation.org](http://www.lylesstation.org)

Celebrating Indiana's

**FREEDOM  
KNOWLEDGE  
SUCCESS**



**HISTORICAL SCHOOL & MUSEUM**

**PRINCETON, INDIANA**

# LYLES STATION, INDIANA

## Discover a legacy of struggle and triumph

**A STORY OF RUNAWAY SLAVES AND FREE MEN ENDEAVORING TO FIND A BETTER LIFE FOR THEMSELVES AND THEIR FAMILIES.**

Celebrate the successes achieved by those who triumphed over staggering odds to fulfill their dreams. From Lyles Station to the White House and beyond, individuals born and raised in this small southern Indiana farming community have found success in all walks of life. The Alonzo Fields Gallery honors accomplished former residents of Lyles Station, including Alonzo Fields, Chief Butler at the White House under Presidents Hoover, Roosevelt, Truman and Eisenhower. Learn how the pursuit of a solid education would provide the foundation for this once-thriving community. The Heritage Classroom recreates a 1920's-era classroom as it was when this community was at its peak. A visit to the Period Garden with its native plant life reveals how education for the children of Lyles Station stretched far beyond the classroom walls.

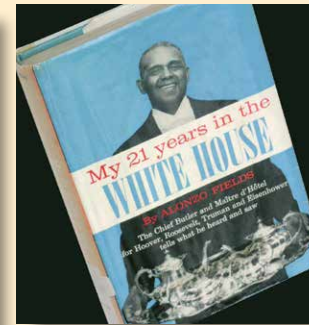
In 2015, the community of Lyles Station will have several artifacts on display as a part of an exhibit which will be included in the new Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture in Washington, D.C.



*A 1920's-era school room has been recreated in the Heritage Classroom.*



*Architect's rendering of the new Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture building under construction in Washington D.C. which will include several Lyles Station artifacts.*



*Alonzo Fields' autobiography details his tenure as Chief Butler at the White House.*



*A 12-acre corn maze is just one of the many family activities enjoyed by visitors to Lyles Station throughout the year.*



*A timeline depicting significant events in the history of Lyles Station is displayed in the museum.*



*This log cabin, originally built in the Lyles Station community and later moved, has recently been reconstructed on the grounds of the school and houses visitor activities.*

