

# A Man of Means



Hiram Young came to Missouri as an enslaved African American. He earned his freedom step by step. First he purchased his wife Matilda's freedom in the early 1840s. For children

to be free, they had to be born to a free mother. The Youngs welcomed Amanda Jane into the family in the late 1840s. Ever focused, Young earned his own freedom in 1846.

By 1850 Young and his family settled in Independence, a starting point of the Santa Fe, Oregon, and California trails. Hiram quickly established himself as a wagon manufacturer supplying vehicles for freighters, emigrants, farmers, and the US Army. Through skill and dedication, he built a reputation for high quality work.

By 1860 Young's factory employed 20 black and white men. Working side by side, they turned out as many as 900 wagons a year and thousands of ox yokes, saddle frames, and ax handles. Each wagon could haul nearly three tons of freight, pulled by 12 oxen. Young branded his work Hiram Young & Company—representing one man's freedom to prosper.



### *A Successful Daughter*

The Youngs sent daughter Amanda to Oberlin College in Ohio. She taught in Independence and Kansas City schools.

WAGONS & YOKES  
MANUFACTURED BY  
HIRAM YOUNG and CO.  
INDEP. MO.

Young constructed farm, emigrant, and freight (below) wagons to specifications.



Santa Fe, Oregon, and California  
National Historic Trails

McCoy Park  
Oregon-California Trails Association  
City of Independence  
National Park Service

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