Northward bound: Slave refugees and the pursuit of freedom in the Northern US and Canada, 1775-1861

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Part II: Forging Freedom

Chapter Three
"Self-Reliance is the True Road to Independence" [302]: Freedom Seekers and the Pursuit of Land, Labor, and Education

> I was in the midst of an ocean of my fellow-men, and yet a perfect stranger to every one [sic]. I was without home, without acquaintance, without money, without credit, without work… In such an extremity, a man has something beside his new-born freedom of which to think. While wandering about the streets of New York, and lodging at least one night among the barrels on one of the wharves, I was indeed free – free from slavery, but free from food and shelter as well.
>
> - Frederick Douglass[303]

After escaping from bondage, slave refugees set about establishing new lives in the North and Canada. As Frederick Douglass' testimony implies, however, this was far from easy. With little money, few resources, and potentially no social connections, most freedom seekers had to start anew. They had to obtain housing and employment, as well as integrate into northern black communities. Across the 'free' states and Canadian provinces, self-emancipated people settled in a variety of locales. On the one hand, growing urban centers – such as New York City, Philadelphia, Cincinnati, and Toronto – became magnets for freedom seekers. Others established rural settlements and farming communities. The promise of land-ownership was an appealing prospect for formerly enslaved people; not only was it potentially a means of becoming truly self-sufficient, but it also symbolized their claims to personhood. Each region offered its own set of opportunities and challenges. Urban centers presented the greatest array of jobs for self-emancipated newcomers. In northern and Canadian towns and cities, urban refugees found work in shipyards, docks, markets, hotels, factories, and other sites of black labor. Yet urban life was also marked by

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[302] Chapter title taken from the masthead of the African Canadian newspaper *Provincial Freeman* (discussed further in Chapter Five).

[303] Frederick Douglass, *Life and Times of Frederick Douglass, Written by Himself. His Early Life as a Slave, His Escape from Bondage, and His Complete History to the Present Time, Including His Connection with the Anti-Slavery Movement; His Labors in Great Britain as well as His Own Country; His Experience in the Conduct of an Influential Newspaper; His Connection with the Underground Railroad; His Relations with John Brown and the Harper's Ferry Raid; His Recruiting the 54th and 55th Mass. Colored Regiments; His Interviews with Presidents Lincoln and Johnson; His Appointment by Gen. Grant to Accompany the Santo Domingo Commission – Also a Seat in the Council of the District of Columbia; His Appointment as United States Marshal by President R.B. Hayes; Also His Appointment to Be Recorder of Deeds in Washington by President J.A. Garfield; with Many Other Interesting and Important Events of His Most Eventful Life; With an Introduction by Mr. George L. Ruffin, of Boston* (Boston: De Wolfe, Fiske & Co., 1882), 252-253, accessed Feb. 10, 2020. https://docsouth.unc.edu/neh/dougl92/dougl92.html.

poverty, illness, and homeless. While many found employment, other free and self-emancipated African Americans could not obtain work. Some were required to seek assistance from almshouses and benevolent societies. Additionally, racial prejudice was commonplace in major urban centers, particularly as European immigrants increasingly migrated to North American towns and cities. Elsewhere, slave refugees sought to become independent farmers in the rural North and Canada. In some instances, rural settlements were predicated by a lack of major urban centers (particularly in the Canadian province and the former Northwest Territory). For some, it was an active choice. Becoming self-sufficient land-owners was the ultimate goal. Yet even in rural areas, slave refugees and free blacks encountered poverty, racism, and other hardships.

Apart from jobs and land-ownership, slave refugees and free blacks sought access to schools and colleges. Education was viewed by many as the primary means of self-improvement and communal advancement. Across the North and Canada, slave refugees and free blacks petitioned for equal access to common schools. In Upper Canada, black activists and white abolitionists founded a series of utopian communities that aimed to combine the central tenets of land ownership and education. For the most part, these transnational endeavors were short-lived and met with criticism from whites. This chapter explores slave refugee settlement patterns across the northern US and Canada. It seeks to uncover why freedom seekers settled in certain places and analyze their respective advantages and disadvantages. It addresses the distinction between urban and rural settlement throughout the North and Canada. What were the advantages of settling in towns and cities over rural communities? Conversely, why did some refugees seek to establish independent rural settlements? Lastly, this chapter reconsiders the 'success' rate of utopian settlements. Previous studies claim these ventures were ultimately failures because they each only survived for relatively short periods. This chapter breaks from previous studies by arguing that these settlements were not abject failures. Although most were short-lived ventures, they provided slave refugees with unprecedented opportunities to practice land-ownership and gain an education. In many respects, these settlements were truly ground-breaking.

Overall, the Canadian provinces offered more opportunities for slave refugees to procure lands and establish independent settlements than the northern US. This was largely due to the differences between formal and semi-formal freedom. As self-emancipated people in the North were still legally regarded as 'fugitives,' they sought to retain a low-profile by integrating into pre-existing free black communities. Without proof of legal status, they were generally unable to purchase property or work in certain professions. This was not the case in British North America, where self-emancipators shed their status as human 'property' upon setting foot on Canadian soil. At the same time, slave refugees in the northern states and Canada also

encountered similar difficulties regarding poverty and racism. Furthermore, for most refugees in Canada, land ownership and education were financially beyond their reach, As a result, the experiences of many blacks in Canada was not entirely different from their counterparts in the North. Nevertheless, the right to property, lands, and education, which were afforded by formal freedom, remained highly significant.

Community, Labor, and Poverty in the Antebellum North

Towns and cities became magnets for free people of color and self-emancipated refugees in the northern US. On the Eastern Seaboard, freedom seekers from Virginia, Maryland, and elsewhere fled to Philadelphia, New York City, Boston, and other towns and cities in the Mid-Atlantic states and New England. Taking advantage of their sizable African American populations, self-emancipators hoped to pass for free people of color among the bustling crowds. Similarly, in the Old Northwest, freedom seekers from the Upper South and beyond fled to Cincinnati and other urban centers to hide among each locale's black communities. Many subsequently journeyed onward to Canada to begin their new lives under the lion's paw.

Regardless of their legal status, African Americans typically occupied the bottom rung of society. Most black men and women held low-wage, temporary jobs across the northern states. Bruce Levine argues that they "supplied a disproportionate share of the North's heavy, low-paid, and menial labor" in the decades following the first emancipation.[304] Black men typically worked in docks, ports, factories, and other menial occupations. Meanwhile, women were normally employed in domestic occupations. Most African Americans in Boston, New York City, and Philadelphia lived in relative poverty, earning just enough to support themselves and their families. For slave refugees, establishing new lives in unfamiliar urban settings was very challenging. At times, African American men and women were compelled to solicit aid from almshouses and other external sources. Additionally, slave refugees (alongside legally free blacks) faced growing racial prejudice and sporadic violence. White Euro-Americans and European immigrants regularly directed their anger and frustration at African-descended people, attacking their communities and business. While some fled in response to terror attacks, most stood their ground and steadfastly refused to leave their homes.[305]

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[304] Bruce Levine, *Half Slave and Half Free: The Roots of the Civil War* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1992), 60.

[305] Suggested readings for black urban life in the northeastern US include Nash, *Forging Freedom*; Hodges, *Root & Branch*; Harris, *In the Shadow of Slavery*; White, *Somewhat More Independent*; Horton and Horton, *Black Bostonians*; James O. Horton and Lois E. Horton, *In Hope of Liberty: Culture, Community, and Protest among Northern Free Blacks, 1700-1860* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997). For the foremost study on African American women in the urban northeast, see Erica Armstrong

Philadelphia, New York City, and Boston were home to some of the most diverse black communities on the continent. Free-born, manumitted, and self-emancipated African Americans resided in each city, as well as black immigrants and refugees from the Caribbean. Within each city, African Americans clustered around a handful of wards and neighborhoods. In Boston, most blacks resided in the neighborhood of Beacon Hill (located in the city's Sixth Ward). Gary Collison writes, "Southac [present-day Phillips] and Belknap Streets, were populated almost exclusively by blacks." Prominent freedom seekers, including Lewis and Harriet Hayden, settled in Beacon Hill and became active members of the city's abolitionist network. In New York City, African Americans began to congregate over various wards and neighborhoods in the decades following the state's 1799 gradual abolition act. According to Leslie M. Harris, most African Americans initially resided in Manhattan's Fifth and Sixth Wards. "Settling below Houston Street, from the Hudson River to the East River," she notes, "newly free blacks rented and sometimes bought homes and established churches." Over time, African Americans resided predominantly in western Manhattan's Sixth Ward.[306]

Patterns of spatial segregation varied from place to place. According to Leonard Curry, Boston was "the most thoroughly segregated city in the nation in its residential patterns." Other free black communities were not completely segregated from whites, even if they clustered together. They often lived relatively close to Euro-Americans and European immigrants, most notably Irish and German newcomers. The most famous example was the Five Points in New York City which, from the 1840s onward, was occupied by African Americans and Irish newcomers. As Leslie Harris notes, "The Irish increasingly "whitened" residential and social spaces previously designated as good enough only for blacks." Philadelphia also witnessed a similar pattern of spatial segregation. Beginning in the late eighteenth century, free African Americans increasingly moved into South Philadelphia.[307]

While most self-emancipated and legally free blacks in urban centers could not afford to purchase lands, a small number experimented with land ownership. Leslie Harris writes that Seneca Village symbolized "the largest group of black landholdings in Manhattan." Led by free African American Andrew Williams,

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Dunbar, *A Fragile Freedom: African American Women and Emancipation in the Antebellum City* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011). For the most comprehensive overview of anti-abolition mobs and terror attacks on northern black communities, see Leonard L. Richards, *Gentlemen of Property and Standing: Anti-Abolition Mobs in Jacksonian America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970).

[306] Horton and Horton, *Black Bostonians*, 3; Kantrowitz, *More than Freedom*, 17; Gary Collison, *Shadrach Minkins: From Fugitive Slave to Citizen* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997; Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998), 64; Harris, *In the Shadow of Slavery*, 74-75.

[307] Leonard P. Curry, *The Free Black in Urban America, 1800-1850: The Shadow of the Dream* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), 24; Harris, *In the Shadow of Slavery*, 250; Murray Dubin, *South Philadelphia: Mummers, Memories, and the Melrose Diner* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1996) 65.

prospective African American landowners began establishing homes and businesses in the area near Central Park. Similarly, African Americans on Staten Island established the Sandy Ground settlement, while free black Brooklynites bought lands and founded Weeksville in the late 1830s. Just over one decade later, it was among the country's largest free black communities.[308]

The free black populations of Boston, New York City, and Philadelphia rose sharply after the gradual abolition of slavery across the North. However, African American residents of Boston, New York City, and Philadelphia remained a minority in each city. In 1850, African Americans in Boston represented less than two percent of the total population. In New York City and Philadelphia, the proportion of free blacks was generally higher. African Americans in Philadelphia represented almost ten percent of the total population in 1820, but this fell to about four percent by the eve of the Civil War. Over time, white Euro-Americans and European immigrants competed with African Americans for cheap labor in northern cities. As the industrial revolution took hold across the North, towns, and cities became a magnet for black men and women.[309] Northern cities were exciting places for freedom seekers. For men like Shadrach Minkins, who escaped from Norfolk, Virginia to Boston, this was certainly true. Gary Collison writes, "Boston was in many ways the antithesis of the South city Minkins had left. Boston was the financial, political, social, and cultural hub of the surging new industrial economy."[310]

With its bustling streets, busy docks and harbors, businesses and factories, and railroad and transportation networks, Boston was a city in motion. The same was true for New York City and Philadelphia. As the industrial revolution took hold, these cities consolidated their status as two of the country's largest metropolitan areas. The influx of free and self-emancipated African Americans, Irish, and German immigrants added to the cultural diversity and economic prosperity of northern cities. "In 1850," writes Collison, "foreign-born persons and their children accounted for roughly 45 percent of all Bostonians; by 1855, they would account for over 50 percent." Similar waves of African American, German, and Irish newcomers (as well as others) transformed New York City and Philadelphia.[311]

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[308] Harris, *In the Shadow of Slavery*, 74-75; Craig Steven Wilder, *In the Company of Black Men: The African Influence on African American Culture in New York City* (New York: New York University Press, 2001), 101-102; Donna Lee, "On Visionary Soil, the Dreams Turn Real," *New York Times*, Nov. 7, 2008. https://www.nytimes.com/2008/11/09/nyregion/thecity/09sand.html. Accessed May 7, 2019; Cassandra Zens, "Weeksville, New York (1838-)," *BlackPast.org*, Oct. 14, 2010. https://www.blackpast.org/african-american-history/weeksville-new-york-1838/. Accessed Sep. 17, 2019.

[309] Collison, *Shadrach Minkins*, 62; Horton and Horton, *Black Bostonians*, 2; Andrew Diemer, "Free Black Communities," *Encyclopedia of Greater Philadelphia*, accessed Sep. 17, 2019. https://philadelphiaencyclopedia.org/archive/free-black-communities/.

[310] Collison, *Shadrach Minkins*, 61.

[311] Collison, *Shadrach Minkins*, 61.

Freedom seekers in northern cities often lived in cramped, destitute conditions. Many were required to share rooms and other accommodations with other free people of color and slave refugees. Young, single men "typically became boarders in black households," notes Collison, "or found lodging in one of several roominghouses catering to blacks, particularly seamen." Moreover, black families in Boston opened their doors to slave refugees and free blacks in search of accommodation. According to Collison, "Steep rents and extremely limited housing choices compelled many black families to take in boarders to meet ends meet." Additionally, African Americans also transformed other spaces, such as cellars and basements, into temporary housing. Black Philadelphians faced similar conditions. As noted by Gary Nash, growing numbers of poorer and working-class African Americans "lived in densely packed alleys and courtyards scattered through the city and adjoining districts[.]" Most black newcomers over the 1820s lived in "tenements and shanties" in South Philadelphia. At the same time, the antebellum period saw the emergence of a free black middle-class. But most remained part of the working class (if not unemployed or homeless).[312] Slave refugees took refuge with other self-emancipators and legally free blacks. Collison notes that Shadrach Minkins "may have found shelter among the many Virginia blacks who had come to the city before him." Similarly, slave refugees in New York City and Philadelphia typically sought refuge with other African Americans.[313]

Of course, survival in northern cities required earning a wage. Soon after arrival, freedom seekers set about finding jobs to support themselves. As Gary Nash notes, African Americans in Philadelphia, as well as other northern cities, suffered from greater economic hardship after the War of 1812. "The most severe depression in Philadelphia's history," Nash notes, "threw as much as one-third of the labor force out of work." African Americans suffered disproportionately from this economic downturn. The loss of jobs and the decline in wages led to a rise in black poverty throughout northern cities. In response, black men and women increasingly turned to various forms of poor relief, including almshouses and soup kitchens. At the same time, early waves of Irish and German immigrants began displacing working-class African Americans in factories, harbors, and other sites of working-class labor. Black Philadelphians were "largely excluded from the industrializing textile, shoe, and metal sectors of the economy." Despite its hardships, slave refugees preferred living in northern cities to the horrors of southern slavery.[314]

The primary obstacles for slave refugees and legally free blacks were primarily structural. Most forms of employment in urban centers discriminated against African Americans. James and Lois Horton write that "racially restricted

[312] Collison, *Shadrach Minkins*, 64; Nash, *Forging Freedom*, 248.
[313] Collison, *Shadrach Minkins*, 64-65; Horton and Horton, *Black Bostonians*, 6.
[314] Nash, *Forging Freedom*, 214-217, 246.

system of employment practically guaranteed that many free blacks would become poor, dependent and, perhaps, criminal." Consequently, most African Americans occupied low-wage, unskilled positions. Professional occupations in antebellum urban centers were typically divided based on gender. Black men worked as day laborers, draymen, carters, waiters, servants, cooks, dock workers, boatmen, and sailors. A small number worked as carpenters, blacksmiths, shopkeepers, tailors, and barbers. Meanwhile, women worked in domestic occupations, including domestic laborers, servants, hairdressers, sewers, and seamstresses. More often than not, black women earned significantly less than black men, which was already significantly less than whites.[315]

Autobiographies and testimonies refer to the types of occupations taken up by slave refugees. William Craft recalled, "We finally, as I have stated, settled at Boston, where we remained nearly two years, I employed as a cabinet-maker and furniture broker, and my wife [Ellen] at her needle[.]" In Boston, Moses Grandy "went to work at sawing wood, sawing with the whip-saw, laboring in the coal yards, loading and unloading vessels, &c." At other times, Grandy worked aboard various ships. He recalled, "I went [on] a voyage to St. John's in Porto Rico [sic], with Captain Cobb, in the schooner, *New Packet*… I went [on] several other voyages, and particularly two to the Mediterranean" According to Collison, black seamen "accounted for almost one-quarter of all working black males" in Boston. Similarly, Nash notes that maritime work among black men "continued to be a mainstay." Across the Northeast, slave refugees and free blacks worked in various maritime industries. In New Bedford, Massachusetts, for instance, 154 African American whalers were recorded in 1850.[316]

Other historical records shed light on the forms of employment taken up by slave refugees and legally free blacks in northern cities. Anti-slavery records, for example, also describe the occupations taken up by free people of color and slave refugees in the urban Northeast. In 1838, the Pennsylvania Abolition Society's Committee to Visit the Colored People compiled a census of black families in Philadelphia. A cursory glance reveals that black men were most commonly employed as laborers, porters, waiters, carters, coachmen, boatmen, sailors, and cooks. The previous year, over 350 black men were involved in harbor, maritime and seafaring enterprises. Only a small proportion worked as blacksmiths, barbers, carpenters, shoe and boot makers, grocers, bakers, preachers, cabinet makers, physicians, dentists, tailors, musicians, and school teachers. Black women worked as

[315] Horton and Horton, *In Hope of Liberty*, 110, 114-117. For more on black labor in northeastern cities, see Kantrowitz, *More than Freedom*, 20; Harris, *In the Shadow of Slavery*, 79-81.
[316] Craft, *Running a Thousand Miles for Freedom*, 86; Moses Grandy, *Narrative of the Life of Moses; Late a Slave in the United States of America* (London: C. Gilpin, 5, Bishopsgate-street, 1843), 41-42, accessed Jun. 8, 2019. https://docsouth.unc.edu/fpn/grandy/grandy.html; Collison, *Shadrach Minkins*, 67; Nash, *Forging Freedom*, 251; Grover, *The Fugitive's Gibraltar*, 56.

whitewashers, sewers, dressmakers, cooks, day workers, and service jobs were the most common professions listed in the census. Others were registered as shopkeepers, nurses, grocers, and teachers.[317]

City directories also offer valuable insight into black employment in northern cities. Longworth's 1840 directory for New York City, for example, details numerous black residents, including porter Alexander William, oysterman William Allen, and hairdresser Samuel Benben. Later directories provide more details on African American residents in New York City. John Doggett, Jr.'s 1851 street directory offers excellent insight into the occupations of black New Yorkers, especially those in the Five Points. On Anthony Street (present-day Worth Street), Doggett recorded numerous African American men and women. These included washer Sarah Smith, whitewasher Stephen Horseman, laborer William Brown, mariner George Brown, and others whose professions are not listed. Likewise, African Americans in Arch Place worked as coachmen, mariners, coopers, and laborers, among other occupations. Black men and women on Attorney Street worked in similar unskilled and semi-skilled jobs. Meanwhile, some African Americans held other occupations. For instance, Daniel Lane of Broome Street was listed as a musician, highlighting the contribution of black New Yorkers to the city's cultural life. But most African Americans held menial labor and unskilled jobs.[318]

Poverty was widespread in urban black communities. Each year, slave refugees and free African Americans sought relief from municipal almshouses which, notes Mara Kaktins, "offered food, shelter, clothing, and medical care to the poorest and most vulnerable, often in exchange for hard labor and forfeiture of freedom." Nonetheless, most almshouses were overcrowded, unsanitary, and lacking in resources. "Mismanagement, corruption, and an ever-growing indigent population created an almost constant need for more money." Almshouse administrators even indentured children to raise funds. Through this system, many children were torn from their families, never to be seen again.[319] According to Jane Dabel, "blacks in the almshouse in New York just about equaled the proportion of the population, but by 1843 the proportion of blacks in the almshouse was 50 percent larger than their proportion in the overall population." Six years later, African Americans comprised

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[317] Committee to visit the Colored People. Census Facts Collected by Benjamin C. Bacon and Charles Gardener, 1838, vol. 1-5. PAS Papers Series 5.6. HSP. PAS Papers accessed via Slavery, Abolition & Social Justice. Adam Matthew Digital. Universiteit Leiden/LUMC. 2 Mar. 2019; Nash, *Forging Freedom*, 251-252.

[318] Irma and Paul Milstein Division of United States History, Local History and Genealogy, The NYPL. "New York City directory" NYPL Digital Collections. Accessed September 18, 2019. http://digitalcollections.nypl.org/items/17e3e2c0-8a22-0136-1f25-4949c287a53f. 56, 58, 83; Irma and Paul Milstein Division of United States History, Local History and Genealogy, NYPL. "Doggett's New York City street directory for 1851" NYPL Digital Collections. Accessed September 18, 2019. https://digitalcollections.nypl.org/items/83d239c0-436c-0137-7c12-47556b15bdb0. 16-18, 79.

[319] Mara Kaktins, "Almshouses (Poorhouses)," *Encyclopedia of Greater Philadelphia*, accessed May 8, 2019. https://philadelphiaencyclopedia.org/archive/almshouses-poorhouses/.

almost one-fifth of New York City's almshouse residents, even though free people of color represented less than ten percent of the city's total population.[320]

Most admission books did not distinguish between free African Americans and slave refugees. Yet there were some exceptions. The record keepers at the Danvers Alms House in Peabody, Massachusetts (fifteen miles northwest of Boston) recorded the arrival of several presumed self-emancipators. On June 21, 1852, thirty-year-old "Colerd [sic] Fugitive" James Smith from South Carolina was committed to the Danvers Alms House. In August 1854, two presumed freedom seekers (George William and John Collins) were admitted. The final freedom seeker registered at the Danvers Alms House was George Vannen from Virginia in March 1858, who arrived in Massachusetts aboard a ship. The register notes that he was "going to Lowell."[321] African Americans and white abolitionists established benevolent organizations to assist free blacks and slave refugees, particularly women and children. In 1787, Richard Allen, Absalom Jones, and other religious leaders in Philadelphia created the Free African Society (FAS), a nondenominational association which provided funds and donations for recently freed blacks and their descendants. Shirley Yee argues that the FAS "served as a catalyst for the establishment of other black mutual aid societies in the city during the mid-nineteenth century[.]" In 1808, the New York African Society for Mutual Relief (NYASMR) was founded to assist black women and children in the city.[322]

In 1836, Anna and Hannah Shotwell, and Mary Murray founded the Colored Orphan Asylum in New York City. "The unostentatious and self-denying labors of the managers of this asylum," wrote the *National Era*, "have been for years unremitted and unfaltering; and we sincerely rejoice in the measure of success manifested in their present report."[323] Many children in the Asylum were born to manumitted and illegally self-liberated African Americans. Eight-year-old Jacob

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[320] Jane E. Dabel, *A Respectable Woman: The Public Roles of African American Women in 19th Century New York* (New York: New York University Press, 2008), 60.

[321] See entries for James Smith, Jun. 21, 1852; George William, Aug. 1, 1854; John Collins, Aug. 24, 1854; and George Vannen, Mar. 13, 1858. Register of Paupers at Danvers Alms House (Peabody, Mass.). Ms. N-2-3285. MHS. Boston, MA.

[322] Harris, *In the Shadow of Slavery*, 82-88; Julie Winch, *Philadelphia's Black Elite: Activism, Accommodation, and the Struggle for Autonomy, 1787-1848* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1998), 5-8; Shirley Yee, "Free African Society of Philadelphia (1787-?)," *BlackPast.org*, Feb. 10, 2011. https://www.blackpast.org/african-american-history/free-african-society-philadelphia-1787/. Accessed May 9, 2019 (quote); Shirley Yee, "The New York African Society for Mutual Relief (1808-1860)," *BlackPast.org*, Jan. 22, 2011. https://www.blackpast.org/african-american-history/new-york-african-society-mutual-relief-1808-1860/ Accessed May 9, 2019. For more on the FAS, see Julie Winch, *A Gentleman of Color: The Life of James Forten* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 139-144.

[323] Harris, *In the Shadow of Slavery*, 144-149; Euell A. Nielsen, "The Colored Orphans Asylum of New York (1836-1946," *BlackPast.org*, Nov. 11, 2017. https://www.blackpast.org/global-african-history/institutions-global-african-history/colored-orphans-asylum-new-york-1836-1946/. Accessed May 9, 2019; "NEW YORK COLORED ORPHAN ASYLUM," *NE*, Jan. 21, 1847; "COLORED ORPHAN ASYLUM," *Liberator*, Dec. 23, 1853.

Becket Lee was admitted in 1837. His mother "died of cholera in New York in 1833" and that his father "was a fugitive slave from Virginia and was apprehended by his master in New York and carried back to slavery." Meanwhile, Jeremiah and Adeline Rawle were "the children of Minerva Rawle, a slave in the state of Virginia, who were liberated under the will of her master… together with about forty others, who removed to New York in the autumn of 1837." At the time of their arrival, Minerva and her children were "in destitute circumstances at the time of their arrival, and the children… were with the consent of their mother brought there, not long after their arrival." Their father was "believed to still be living in slavery in Virginia."[324] Leslie Harris writes that the Asylum was generally "a more stable option" than alternative institutions. Conditions were better than most almshouses, with food and clothes provided regularly. Sickness and death also posed serious threats to the Asylum's residents. Physician James MacDonald's report from 1839 states that a twelve-month-old child named Sidney Johnson died at the Asylum. Moreover, hundreds of children were indentured out by the managers to white families and businesses.[325]

Across the Old Northwest, black urban communities experienced a similar array of opportunities and challenges. Cincinnati's African American community quickly became the largest in the whole region. The steamboat trade opened the city to settlers from the Eastern Seaboard and linked its economy to other port cities, such as Pittsburgh, Natchez, and New Orleans. By the 1820s, manufacturing and industry had grown exponentially. Factories, businesses, and shops were established across the city. Cincinnati became a chief exporter of pork. Each year, businesses and traders exported tens of thousands of pork barrels and millions of pounds of lard, ham, and bacon. As Nikki Taylor writes, "it was still easier for blacks to get jobs in Cincinnati than in smaller towns, where job opportunities were few to none."[326]

Cincinnati's total population jumped from 10,283 to 161,044 between 1819 and 1860. Each year, African Americans comprised between two and five percent of inhabitants. The one major exception occurred between 1826 and 1829 when Cincinnati's black population rose unexpectedly from just under 700 to over 2,000.[327] Freedom seekers found work in the city's port and thriving steamboat trade, which regularly employed black men as sailors, dockers, and stewards. Elsewhere, African

[324] Harris, *In the Shadow of Slavery*, 156-157; Records of the Association for the Benefit of Colored Orphans. Series III: Admission Records, 1837-1937, vol. 23. NYHS Digital Collection, accessed Mar. 10, 2019. http://digitalcollections.nyhistory.org/islandora/object/islandora%3A154815#page/1/mode/2up.
[325] Harris, *In the Shadow of Slavery*, 161-163, 165-166; James MacDonald, "COLORED ORPHAN'S ASYLUM," *CA*, Jan. 26, 1839.
[326] Taylor, *Frontiers of Freedom*, 14-19, 83 (quote).
[327] Taylor, *Frontiers of Freedom*, 19-20, 28-29, 33.

American men were employed as cooks, porters, waiters, carters, and day laborers, while women worked in more domestic occupations.[328]

Slave refugees and free blacks were mostly confined to Cincinnati's First and Fourth wards. In 1830, 429 black residents were recorded in each ward. At the same time, seventy-five blacks lived in the Second Ward, one hundred and ten in the Third Ward, and forty-seven in the Fifth Ward. While most were free-born, a significant number of Cincinnati blacks were once enslaved. They retained kinship ties with enslaved loved ones in the South and hoped to either purchase their freedom or rescue them.[329] African Americans often shared residential spaces with German and Irish immigrants. "Living and working in such close proximity," writes Nikki Taylor, "it is highly likely that Irish and black workers frequented the same taverns, grog shops, and brothels."[330]

Newspaper reports illustrate the living and working conditions of Cincinnati's black communities. In 1850, the *Cincinnati Chronicle & Atlas* reported on the capture of an alleged freedom seeker named George Jackson "has resided here some three or four years. He worked as a barber at Cousin's on Water street [sic], between Walnut and Main. He had also been employed at La Belle Restaurat [sic], on Broadway."[331] Following his visit to Cincinnati in 1850, Frederick Douglass expressed his admiration for African Americans in the Queen City. He declared, "There are, in Cincinnati, enterprising and successful merchants, whose honesty, manliness and business talents command the respect of business men, not only of Cincinnati, but of New York, Boston, and even of Baltimore."[332]

Yet unemployment remained a persistent problem for African Americans in Cincinnati. Their heavy reliance on temporary or seasonal positions left many vulnerable to prolonged periods of economic insecurity. Poor relief for black residents was a controversial subject among Cincinnati whites, many of whom believed that people of color should be excluded from relief funds and relief organizations. Impoverished blacks struggled to obtain donations and were admitted to inferior institutions. "The indigent colored people," wrote the *Anti-Slavery Bugle* in 1852, "… have for a dozen years been provided for by the township Trustees in the building formerly used for those sick with contagious diseases, and called "the

[328] Taylor, *Frontiers of Freedom*, 25, 28-29; Nancy Bertaux, "Structural Economic Chance and Occupational Decline among Black Workers in Nineteenth-Century Cincinnati," in Horton (ed.), *Race and the City*, 132-134.
[329] Taylor, *Frontiers of Freedom*, 51, 54, 81-83.
[330] Taylor, *Frontiers of Freedom*, 22-26 (quote on pg. 26).
[331] "Runaway Negro Captured – Great Excitement," *Cincinnati Chronicle & Atlas*, reprinted in (Camden, SC) *Camden Journal*, Jun. 14, 1850; "Comment (by the Memphis Enquirer, a Whig paper)," *Camden Journal*, Jun. 14, 1850. George Jackson's story is also detailed in McDaniel, *Sweet Taste of Liberty*, 62.
[332] Frederick Douglass, "Character and Condition of the Colored People of Cincinnati," *NS*, reprinted in *ASB*, Aug. 10, 1850.

old Pest house."[333] Other cities in the former Northwest Territory saw their respective populations rise, but at a lower rate than Cincinnati's growth. In 1825, about 500 people officially resided in Cleveland. By 1860, over 43,000 people lived in the city. "It was comparable in size to Milwaukee and Detroit," writes Michael J. McTighe, "but well behind Cincinnati and Chicago among Western cities." As each city grew, free and self-emancipated African Americans migrated to each urban center in the Old Northwest in search of socio-economic prosperity and, in the case of the latter, free black communities.[334]

Slave refugees and legally free African Americans were not limited to urban centers in the Old Northwest, however. As discussed in Chapter One, free blacks founded farming settlements across the region. Some were settled by freed and self-purchased African Americans predominantly from the Upper South. Formerly enslaved people from Virginia, Kentucky, Maryland, and North Carolina resettled in various settlements across the Old Northwest. Between 1807 and 1823, for instance, nineteen formerly enslaved people from present-day West Virginia and Kentucky relocated to Champaign County, Ohio, including a man named Lewis, who was previously enslaved in Shelby County, Kentucky. Greene, Clarke, Montgomery, and Logan Counties also witnessed the arrival of freed blacks from the South. Meanwhile, other settlements were established by free-born African Americans from the East Coast and the South, who sought to acquire lands of their own to escape urban poverty and racial prejudice. For many African American leaders, land ownership was directly intertwined with the black freedom movement.[335]

Frontier life contrasted sharply with urban centers. On the Beech and Roberts settlements in Indiana, Stephen Vincent writes that black newcomers shared the largely uncleared forest with an "abundance of animal life… Foxes and wolves, panther and bear, deer and opossums, raccoons and muskrats, turkeys and pheasant, passenger pigeons and quail – all made their homes' amidst the pioneers' crude log cabins." African American pioneers essentially built new lives for themselves from

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[333] Douglass, "Character and Condition of the Colored People of Cincinnati,"; "Letter from Cincinnati," *ASB*, Sep. 11, 1852; Taylor, *Frontiers of Freedom*, 36-38, 101.

[334] Michael J. McTighe, *A Measure of Success: Protestants and Public Culture in Antebellum Cleveland* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1994), 14-15; "Timeline," *Case.edu*, accessed Sep. 16, 2019. https://case.edu/ech/timeline.

[335] Cox, *Bone and Sinew*, xi-xvi. Cox's research is indispensable to historians of black settlements in the former Northwest Territory but her definition of 'settlement' is quite broad. As stipulated in her list of farming communities, the smallest black settlements are defined as those "with at least one African American farmer owning less than two hundred acres or with property valued at less than $2,000." This is arguably an overly generous definition of 'settlement.' For other suggested reasons on African American farming communities in the former Northwest Territory, see William Loren Katz, *Black Pioneers: An Untold Story* (New York: Atheneum Books, 1999); and Stephen A. Vincent, *Southern Seed, Northern Soil: African American Farm Communities in the Midwest, 1765-1900* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1999). Katz's book provides a general overview of rural and urban African American settlement in the former Northwest Territory. Meanwhile, Vincent's book focuses on the Beech and Roberts settlements in Rush County and Hamilton County, Indiana respectively.

scratch with limited lands and few resources. Southern enslavers did not provide freed and self-purchased men and women with the tools to become successful cultivators of the land. Likewise, free people of color also possessed little in the way of economic capital or experience in land ownership. Life in farming settlements was generally characterized by poverty and uncertainty. In summary, African American settlers, with some external assistance from white abolitionists and benevolent societies, established moderately successful (if typically short-lived) rural farming communities throughout the Old Northwest.[336]

Unfortunately, relatively few historical records detail black farming settlements in the former Northwest Territory, namely deeds of emancipation, 'negro' and 'mulatto' registers for each county, census records, and land grants, pertain exclusively to manumitted, self-purchased, or free-born African Americans and yield no information on self-liberated people. This does not suggest that freedom seekers did not live and work in the rural former Northwest Territory, however. As was the case elsewhere, refugees in these locales likely avoided enumeration in official records. With little-to-no financial capital and a strong desire to preserve their anonymity, self-emancipators in rural Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois almost certainly occupied low-wage, agricultural or menial positions for as long as they resided in black farming communities. According to Vincent, most freedom seekers did not stay at the Beech and Roberts settlements for long. Land ownership was thus never on the cards for freedom seekers in the region, who were more concerned with guaranteeing security from re-enslavement or escaping to Upper Canada.[337]

Rural whites in the Old Northwest were generally hostile toward black farming communities, however. In 1846, residents of Mercer County, Ohio, were alarmed by the arrival of almost 400 freed African Americans from Virginia. A group of black settlers from Shelby County, Kentucky had recently migrated to the area and planned to form an independent rural community. "The negroes were met by an armed body of men while on the way to the place of their destination," claimed the *Cincinnati Commercial*, "and threats of violence were made." Fortunately, no attack took place and the black newcomers were reportedly "amongst their colored brethren in the black settlement." In response, black newcomers often established their settlements in isolated parts or near sympathetic whites, namely abolitionists and Quakers. Black pioneers in the Roberts and Beech settlement made sure to establish their settlements near sympathetic Quakers and white abolitionists.[338] Across the

[336] Vincent, *Southern Seed, Northern Soil*, 46.
[337] Vincent, *Southern Seed, Northern Soil*, 65.
[338] "RANDOLPH'S MANUMITTED SLAVES," *ASR*, Dec. 1, 1846; "RANDOLPH'S NEGROES," *Cincinnati Commercial*, reprinted in *Indiana State Sentinel*, Aug. 1, 1846; Vincent, *Southern Seed, Northern Soil*, 63-64. For more on the arrival of freed people in Mercer County, Ohio, see Frank F. Mathias, "John Randolph's Freedmen: The Thwarting of a Will," *Journal of Southern History* 39, no. 2 (1973), 263-272.

North, black communities were regularly subject to discrimination and violent attacks. Moreover, anti-black mob violence and domestic terror attacks became almost routine from the late 1820s onward. The next section will examine white supremacy and racial violence in the antebellum North.

White Supremacy and Racial Violence in the Antebellum North

As the free African American population of the northern US rose in the decades after abolition, northern whites expressed concern and hostility toward the idea of black settlement. Particularly in the Old Northwest, many subscribed to the notion that the United States was a 'white man's republic' and advocated for the removal of African-descended people (see Chapter Five) In response to growing white racial anxieties, northern lawmakers proposed measures to limit or prohibit black settlement. In 1821, Massachusetts' legislature formed a committee to, in the words of James O. Horton and Lois E. Horton, "investigate the possibility of prohibiting blacks from migrating to the Commonwealth because they were believed to be dangerous to order and a burden to public charity." Ten years later, Franklin Vansant of Philadelphia introduced a bill to the Pennsylvania General Assembly which sought "to prohibit [sic] the emigration of negroes and mulattoes in this commonwealth." In particular, Vansant warned against an overwhelming tide of enslaved men and women from neighboring Virginia and Maryland pouring across the Mason-Dixon line. Yet neither state passed such restrictive measures. None of the other northern Mid-Atlantic or New England states restricted African American settlement.[339]

The states of the former Northwest Territory were different matters entirely, however. Beginning in the late eighteenth century, whites in the Old Northwest were gravely concerned by the prospect of black settlement. Most white newcomers came from Virginia, Kentucky, and North Carolina. Others came later from the Mid-Atlantic and New England (the latter settled predominantly in the Western Reserve in northeast Ohio) but most held strong anti-black prejudices. State and territorial legislators were gravely concerned about the prospect of black settlement. "Bordering the slave states of Kentucky and Virginia," Stephen Middleton writes, "Ohio was accessible to free black migration and to runaway slaves from the other southern states, most frequently North Carolina and Tennessee." Additionally, African

[339] Horton and Horton, *In Hope of Liberty*, 102; Vansant quoted in Eric Ledell Smith, "The End of Black Voting Rights in Pennsylvania: African Americans and the Pennsylvania Constitutional Convention," *Pennsylvania History: A Journal of Mid-Atlantic Studies* 65, no. 3 (1998), 282.

Americans from New England and the northern Mid-Atlantic states looked westward for available lands.[340]

State governments in the Old Northwest passed measures designed to limit black settlement within their borders. Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois enacted the so-called 'Black Laws' to prohibit African Americans settlers. In 1804, Ohio's General Assembly passed 'An act to regulate black and mulatto persons,' which mandated that African Americans must provide proof of their legally free status to their county clerk. African American settlers were also obliged to pay a registration fee of twelve-and-a-half cents. Furthermore, Ohio's Black Laws stripped African Americans of civil and political rights, namely the right to vote, sit on juries, or testify against whites. Three years later, Ohio strengthened its Black Laws by requiring black newcomers to pay a $500 bond to settle in the state. Indiana and Illinois followed suit over the coming decades. Indiana's 1816 constitution reiterated the state's commitment to anti-slavery and 'free soil' policies but ignored black civil and political rights. From 1831, African American residents were required to post $500 to guarantee good behavior. Similarly, Illinois adopted Black Codes which aimed to limit African American settlement.[341]

Despite these measures, free and self-emancipated African Americans flowed into Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois. The black population of the Old Northwest grew much more rapidly than in New England or the northern Mid-Atlantic states. Ohio witnessed the largest rise of any state in the region. In 1800, 337 black residents were recorded in the state. Forty years later, over 17,000 African Americans officially resided in Ohio. Meanwhile, more than 7,000 were recorded in Indiana, and just under 40,000 officially resided in Illinois. These figures likely underestimate each state's antebellum black population, however, as freedom seekers usually avoided being recorded in US census records to preserve their anonymity.[342] Racial tensions boiled over into mob violence with frightening regularity. In October 1824, writes Christy-Clark Pujara, "white Rhode Islanders destroyed nearly all the homes in the predominantly African American neighborhood of Hardscrabble." Seven years later, the black community of Snowtown, Providence was attacked by whites for four days, resulting in the state militia being called in to quell the violence.[343]

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[340] Stephen Middleton, *The Black Laws: Race and the Legal Process in Early Ohio* (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2005), 44, 47 (quote).
[341] Middleton, *The Black Laws*, 48-50, 59; "Being Black in Indiana," *IN.gov*, accessed May 13, 2019. https://www.in.gov/history/2548.htm; Horton and Horton, *In Hope of Liberty*, 102-103.
[342] Middleton, *The Black Laws*, 60; David Lodge, "Ohio as a Non-Slave State," *ShelbyCountyHistory.org*, accessed May 13, 2019. https://www.shelbycountyhistory.org/schs/blackhistory/ohioasanonslave.htm. Population statistics taken from Horton and Horton, *In Hope of Liberty*, 104. The specific estimates are: Ohio – 17,345; Indiana – 7,168; and Illinois – 3,929. Additionally, 707 African Americans officially resided in Michigan in 1840.
[343] Gigantino II, *Ragged Road to Abolition*, 208; Clark-Pujara, *Dark Work*, 101-109.

The Lower North witnessed the most incidents of anti-black mob violence. New York City and Philadelphia witnessed several instances of terror attacks on black communities. In July 1834, white New Yorkers launched a series of attacks against African Americans in the city. The *Liberator* reported, "the vengeance of the mob appeared to be directed entirely against blacks; whenever a colored person appeared, it was a signal of combat, fight, and riot." The following month, white mobs attacked African Americans in Philadelphia. The *New York Evangelist* claimed, "it is supposed that four or five hundred persons were engaged in the conflict. The mob then marched down South [street], through the various streets, Bedford, Mary and others, in which the blacks are chiefly congregated, committing the violence of every kind."[344] Other incidents of racially motivated violence took place in Philadelphia over the 1830s and early 1840s. On May 17, 1838, white mobs attacked black communities and businesses in the city. In the evening, arsonists burned down Pennsylvania Hall and other important sites for black activists and white abolitionists. Four years later, white mobs attacked African Americans near Lombard and Sixth Streets, who were celebrating the eighth anniversary of the abolition of slavery in the British West Indies (discussed in Chapter Five). The clashes lasted three days and led to the destruction of a black Presbyterian church.[345]

[344] "RIOTS IN NEW-YORK," *Liberator*, Jul. 12, 1834; "A REAL ROW," *New York Journal of Commerce*, reprinted in *Liberator*, Jul. 12, 1834; Lewis Tappan, "RIOT AT CHATHAM-STREET CHAPEL," *New York Journal of Commerce*, reprinted in *Liberator*, Jul. 12, 1834; "DREADFUL RIOTS," *Emancipator*, Jul. 15, 1834; "HAVE IT AS YOU PLEASE," *Emancipator*, Jul. 15, 1834; "RIOTS CONTINUED," *Liberator*, Jul. 19, 1834; "CONTINUED RIOTS!," *Liberator*, Jul. 19, 1834; "THE RIOTS IN New-York," *Liberator*, Jul. 26, 1834; "THE GRAND INSTIGATORS OF THE NEW-YORK RIOTS," *Liberator*, Jul. 26, 1834; "MORE MOBS," *New York Evangelist*, reprinted in *Emancipator*, Aug. 26, 1834; "The Riot at Newark," *Liberator*, Jul. 19, 1834; Patrick Grubbs, "Riots (1830s and 1840s)," *Philadelphiaencyclopedia.org*, accessed May 10, 2019. https://philadelphiaencyclopedia.org/archive/riots-1830s-and-1840s/. Horton quoted in Gigantino II, *Ragged Road to Abolition*, 210. For more on the 1834 Philadelphia attacks, see John Runcie, "'Hunting the Nigs' in Philadelphia: The Race Riot of August 1834," *Pennsylvania History* 39 (1972), 187-218.

[345] Rugemer, *The Problem of Emancipation*, 277-278; Nash, *Forging Freedom*, 277-288; Grubbs, "Riots (1830s and 1840s),"; Williams, *I Freed Myself*, 32; Beverly C. Tomek, "Pennsylvania Hall," *Philadelphiaencyclopedia.org*, accessed May 10, 2019. https://philadelphiaencyclopedia.org/archive/pennsylvania-hall/.

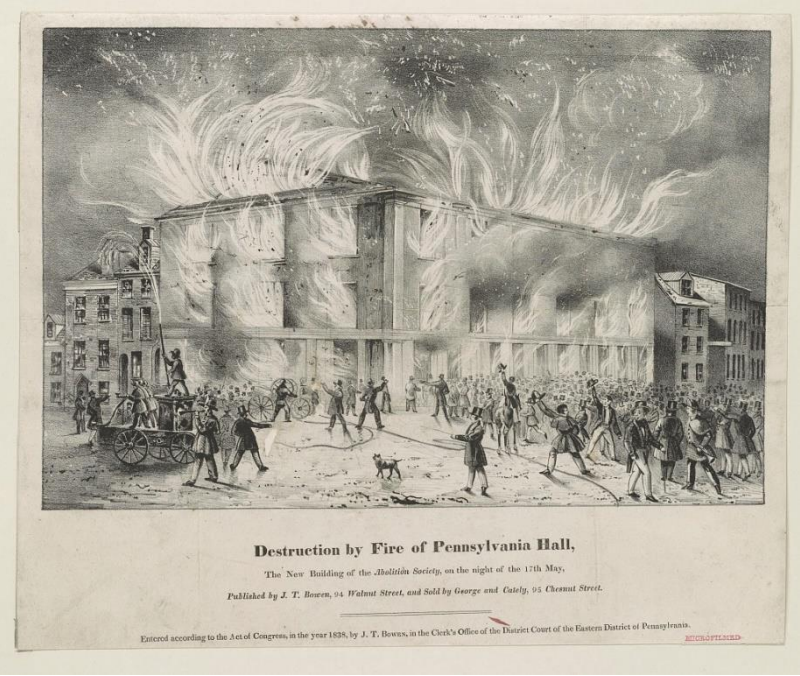

Figure 10: Pennsylvania Hall Fire, 1838.

Source: John T. Bowen & J.C. Wild, *Destruction by Fire of Pennsylvania Hall, the new building of the Abolition Society, on the night of the 17th May* (Philadelphia: Published by J.T. Bowen, 94 Walnut Street, and sold by George and Cately, 95 Chestnut Street, May). Photograph. Retrieved from LOC, https://www.loc.gov/item/2014645336/.

Cincinnati witnessed some of the worst cases of racial violence in the Old Northwest. In the Queen City, tensions between African Americans and whites in the city were exacerbated following the rapid growth of Cincinnati's black population. In 1827, white petitioners in the city's First Ward complained about the poor state of African American housing in the area, which was a thinly veiled attempt to remove black settlers. The city council rejected the petition, stating, "We cannot drive the black population from the city in the summary way of pulling down the houses over their heads." Council members belonged to the business and merchant class, which relied on black labor.[346] The first wave of violence took place in the summer of 1829. Between 15-22 August, white mobs of several hundred whites attacked African American homes, institutions, and businesses in the Fourth Ward. Most whites came

[346] Taylor, *Frontiers of Freedom*, 50-62 (quote on pg. 55).

from working-class backgrounds, although merchants and businessmen also participated in the violence. City officials did little to quell the mob and the police offered African Americans little protection. The 1829 attacks convinced Cincinnati blacks that they would never be entirely safe in the city. In response, many African Americans resolved to leave the city and search for liberty and autonomy in Upper Canada (discussed later in this chapter)[347]

In 1836, anti-black mobs burned down the offices of abolitionist James G. Birney's newspaper *The Philanthropist* and destroyed their printing presses. The mobs also attacked and killed several African Americans in the First and Fourth Wards. The incident was reported with grave concern in anti-slavery newspapers across the North. The *New York Evangelist* called the riots "among the most alarming signs of general anarchy that we have yet witnessed." Five years later, anti-black attacks broke out in Cincinnati once more. The *Cincinnati Gazette* wrote that the city was "in a most alarming condition. . . almost entirely at the mercy of a lawless mob, ranging in number from two to fifteen hundred." The violent episode allegedly began after an initial clash between "a party of Irishmen, and some negroes, in which blows were exchanged, and other weapons, if not fire-arms, used." The *Colored American* asserted that the police "were slower to move than they should have been," and that many African Americans were later "taken by the city authorities, and locked up in jail and elsewhere, for protection from the mob."[348]

African American and white opposition to the Black Laws eventually had some effect. In 1849, Ohio's General Assembly partially repealed the state's Black Laws. Most notably, the state legislature abolished the bond requirement for African American settlers in the state. Reforms to black education were also adopted. In March 1849, the *North Star* declared the repeal "a great triumph – a victory of humanity over oppression – a victory worth all the efforts of the friends of freedom in Ohio." African Americans and white abolitionists saw the moment as a major turning point. "The spirit of freedom," proclaimed the *North Star*, "will not thus be

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[347] Taylor, *Frontiers of Freedom*, 63-64; Nikki Taylor, "Reconsidering the "Forced" Exodus of 1829: Free Black Emigration from Cincinnati, Ohio to Wilberforce, Canada," *Journal of African American History* 87, no. 3 (2002)," 290-292.

[348] Douglas Edelstein, "Cincinnati Race Riots (1836)," *BlackPast,org*, Mar. 1, 2018. https://www.blackpast.org/african-american-history/cincinnati-race-riots-1836/. Accessed May 15, 2019; "THE CINCINNATI RIOTS," *New York Evangelist*, Aug. 20, 1836; "Riot and Mobs, Confusion and Politics," *Cincinnati Gazette*, reprinted in *Liberator*, Sep. 17, 1841; "RIOT AT CINCINNATI," *Liberator*, Sep. 17, 1841; "The Cincinnati Riot," *Liberator*, Sep. 17, 1841; "The Mob," *Liberator*, Sep. 17, 1841; "THE CINCINNATI RIOT," *CA*, Sep. 18, 1841; "The Riot in Cincinnati," *Liberator*, Oct. 15, 1841. For more on the 1829, 1836, and 1841 Cincinnati 'riots,' see Cox, *Bone and Sinew*, 99-131; Leonard L. Richards, *Gentlemen of Property and Standing*, 122-129; Bridget Ford, *Bonds of Union: Religion, Race, and Politics in a Civil War Borderland* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2016), 96-99; William F. Cheek and Aimee Lee Cheek, "John Mercer Langston and the Cincinnati Riot of 1841," in Taylor, Jr. (ed.), *Race and the City*, 29-69.

smothered."[349] At the same time, Indiana and Illinois' state governments reinforced their laws against African American settlement. In 1851, Indiana's legislature approved Article 13 of its new state constitution. It read, "No negro or mulatto shall come into or settle in the State." African Americans and white abolitionists mobilized quickly against Article 13. An anonymous author wrote in the *Plymouth Pilot* that the clause was "directly opposed to those republican principles which we profess to cherish." Similarly, J. Y. Hoover of Jay County, Indiana, proclaimed that the new state constitution "renders it just to class Indiana henceforth with the slave states." The *Pennsylvania Freeman* called Article 13 "a monstrous invasion of natural justice and the professed principles of our government[.]" In 1853, Illinois' General Assembly prohibited blacks from staying in the state for more than ten days.[350]

Exclusionary policies in the Old Northwest were largely ineffective, however. As Richard Blackett notes, the Indiana constitution became unenforceable. Although several men and women of color were accused of violating Article 13, only one was ever found guilty. Arthur Barkshire was convicted of illegally bringing his wife Elizabeth Keith, an Ohio resident, into the state. The court ruled that Indiana's constitution sanctioned her removal from the state "as speedily as possible" and refused to recognize their marriage. In another instance, John P. Brown of Ohio was seized while visiting Fort Wayne, Indiana, and charged with violating Indiana's constitution. Given his skin complexion, however, the prosecution was unable to adequately prove that Brown was either a 'negro' or 'mulatto.' However, the case was subsequently dismissed.[351]

Generally, African Americans continued to ignore the Black Laws' registration requirements. In June 1853, the Terre Haute *Wabash Express* stated that most African Americans in Vigo County, Indiana "*refuse* [original italic] to comply with the law. We believe that there is no penalty for said refusal." Ultimately, the refusal of black residents in Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois to register with county clerks was critical for freedom seekers, who sought to remain virtually hidden in plain sight. Amid the largely unregistered black communities, it became almost impossible for

[349] Middleton, *The Black Laws*, 152-153; "Correction – The Ohio Black Laws are repealed," *NS*, Mar. 2, 1849.
[350] James H. Madison, *Hoosiers: A New History of Indiana* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2014), 144-145; "Indiana Constitution," *ASB*, Jul. 12, 1851; "OUR NEW CONSTITUTION," (Plymouth, IN) *Plymouth Pilot*, Jul. 16, 1851; J. Y. Hoover, "THE DEGRADATION OF INDIANA," *ASB*, Sep. 20, 1851; "Enslavement or Banishment," *Pennsylvania Freeman*, Sep. 11, 1851; James P. Jones, *"Black Jack": John A. Logan and Southern Illinois in the Civil War Era* (Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 1967), 17-18.
[351] Blackett, *Captive's Quest for Freedom*, 105; Stephen Middelton, *The Black Laws in the Old Northwest: A Documentary History* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1993), 263.

white authorities to distinguish illegally self-emancipated refugees from legally free African Americans.[352]

Northern newspapers, mostly those with pro-slavery sympathies, claimed that African American refugees and migrants in Upper Canada were impoverished and indolent. The *Cincinnati Commercial* claimed in 1853 that black newcomers in the province were "regarded as a great drawback upon the prosperity of that country, and that its rapid increase by emigration is productive of evils which loudly demand a prompt and efficient remedy." Three years later, the *Evansville Daily Journal* even claimed that there was a "movement on foot in Canada… to prohibit blacks coming into the Province; and by which fugitive slaves may be sent back to the United States." It added that the "worthless black population is retarding the settlement and improvement of the country." Of course, the motivations behind these articles must be considered. Editors and politicians in the Old Northwest, wary of free African Americans and freedom seekers entering the region, attempted to stoke fears among white readers by portraying Canada as a disastrous example of black settlement.[353] The next section of this chapter will focus on black refugee settlements in Canada between the American Revolutionary War and the US Civil War. Given that black refugee migration to the formed occurred earlier, the following section will first explore settlement patterns in the Canadian Maritimes before shifting attention to Upper Canada.

Slave Refugees in the Canadian Maritimes

Upon arrival in the Canadian Maritimes, slave refugee newcomers sought to obtain lands for farming and settlement, "for without it no true independence was believed possible."[354] By acquiring cultivable acres, black newcomers hoped to become autonomous, self-sufficient subjects. To support themselves and their families, it was crucial to find ways to generate a sustainable income, food supplies, and other resources. Furthermore, land ownership in itself symbolized independence. Although their parcels were small, holding cultivable lands reaffirmed the inherent personhood of formerly enslaved African Americans. Nevertheless, black newcomers soon learned that life in the Maritimes was a far cry from what had been promised.

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[352] Peggy Pascoe, *What Comes Naturally: Miscegenation Law and the Making of Race in America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 51; Madison, *Hoosiers*, 146-147; "Registry of Blacks," (Terre Haute, IN) *Wabash Express*, Jun. 15, 1853.
[353] *Cincinnati Commercial* quoted in "African Colonization – Ohio on the Right Track at Last," *Wabash Express*, Feb. 2, 1853; "A movement is on foot in Canada…," *Evansville Daily Journal*, Nov. 12, 1856.
[354] Walker, *Black Loyalists*, 18.

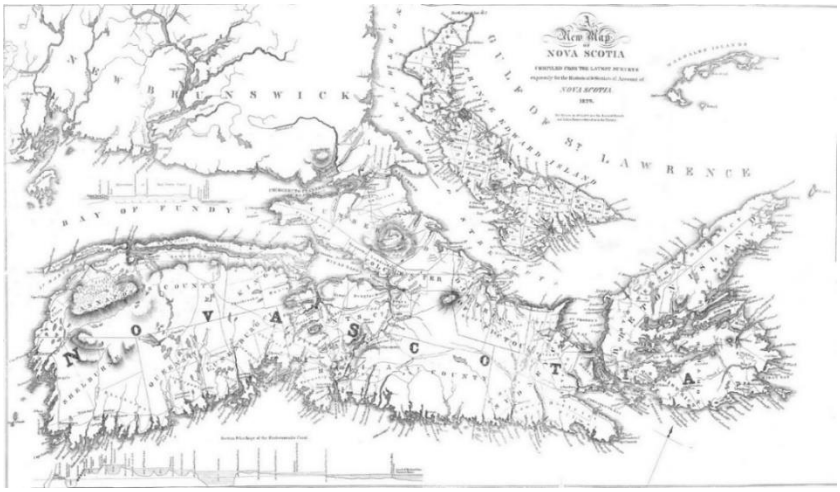

Figure 11: Map of Canadian Maritime Provinces

Source: "A New Map of Nova Scotia, compiled… for the Historical & Statistical Account of Nova Scotia." 1829. Map Collection. NSARM neg. N-10, 007. NSA, accessed Jan. 29, 2020, https://novascotia.ca/archives/africanns/archives.asp?ID=99.

The influx of thousands of Loyalist refugees overwhelmed the provincial governments. Many newcomers faced long delays in receiving lands and provisions. In 1784, Governor John Parr noted, "Discontent and uneasiness have arisen in several of the New Settlements now forming in this Province because they have not hitherto received Grants for the Lands which have been assigned to them." Loyalists petitioned the provincial government for lands, resources, and other forms of assistance. In 1786, New Jersey Loyalist Abraham Parsell wrote that he had "suffered much during the later war & Rebellion [,] that he had a wife and three children, and is endeavouring [sic] to settle at Lunenburg."[355] Despite these challenges, Loyalist newcomers established settlements across the peninsula. Shelburne, the port of entry for many refugees, was envisioned as an economic powerhouse to compete with major port cities in New England, such as Boston. Thousands of Loyalists settled in the burgeoning port town and established new homesteads, communities, and

[355] Walker, *Black Loyalists*, 18-21 (Parr quote on page 20); "Nova Scotia Land Papers 1765-1800," NSA, accessed Apr. 8, 2020, https://novascotia.ca/archives/landpapers/archives.asp?ID=878&Doc=memorial. Also see Neil MacKinnon, *This Unfriendly Soil: The Loyalist Experience in Nova Scotia, 1783-1791*, (Kingston and Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1986), 50.

livelihoods. Others settled in Halifax, Annapolis Royal, Saint John, and other locales throughout the Maritime provinces. Nevertheless, Loyalist refugees in these settlements continued to experience problems with claiming land and provisions. In Shelburne, some Loyalists had to wait for three years or longer to receive their land grants.[356] Meanwhile, slave refugees struggled to obtain lands and form settlements in the early years. Racial prejudice among provincial officials meant that white Loyalist refugees were prioritized over their black counterparts. If they found it difficult to obtain land grants, black newcomers found it significantly harder. "It seemed inevitable," claims Neil MacKinnon, "that where so many were demanding so much from so few, and where white settlers often waited years for their land, black settlers would wait much longer for much less."[357]

Black newcomers in southwestern Nova Scotia founded Birchtown, a separate community on the outskirts of Shelburne. In 1784, roughly 1,500 blacks were recorded in Birchtown. However, the majority of black settlers in Birchtown were denied land grants. Of the 649 black men in Birchtown, only 184 received land. According to Walker, the "fortunate third had to wait two more years after their white colleagues were satisfied, and when their grants were finalised [sic] in 1788, they averaged only 34 acres." The land at Birchtown was hardly ideal. A mixture of swampy and craggy lands, small-scale farming proved a challenging endeavor for most Birchtown settlers. In November 1787, Stephen Blucke noted that 179 lots of land had been surveyed and distributed to Birchtown settlers. Black families were assigned approximately forty acres, while single men received twenty. By contrast, white Loyalists regularly received over 100 acres each.[358] Birchtown suffered from intense poverty over its lifetime. Economic activity in the region was generally restricted to white Loyalist settlements and port towns, such as Halifax and Shelburne. Facing deprivation and starvation, slave refugee settlers were forced to seek work elsewhere, namely Shelburne. Most held unskilled, low-wage occupations in the young settlement. Black men typically worked menial jobs and earned barely enough to support themselves. Others, including women and children, worked as domestics for white Loyalists.[359]

Black and white Loyalist refugees also settled in towns and villages in Annapolis County. Around 211 people were officially recorded at Digby in June 1784, including sixty-nine black refugees. Most settled in Brindley Town, which lay

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[356] Walker, *Black Loyalists*, 23; MacKinnon, *This Unfriendly Soil*, 37-38.
[357] Walker, *Black Loyalists*, 18.
[358] Walker, *Black Loyalists*, 21-23 (quote on 23); MacKinnon, *This Unfriendly Soil*, 50; "Bill to provincial government for surveying Birchtown," MG 100, vol. 256, no. 30 (microfilm no. 21819). NSA, accessed Jan. 10, 2019. https://novascotia.ca/archives/africanns/archives.asp?ID=38.
[359] Walker, *Black Loyalists*, 23-24; Channon Oyeniran, "Black Loyalists in British North America,' *TheCanadianEncyclopedia.ca*, Mar. 25, 2019. https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/black-loyalists-in-british-north-america.

just under two miles from Digby. Sixty-five free black families were recorded in the settlement. Brindley Town became the second largest black community on the peninsula. In Annapolis County, black refugees had more reason to feel optimistic. Walker writes that the region "offered better prospects for agriculture. Good sandy soil was present around the town itself and along the banks of the Annapolis River."[360] Most black refugees in Annapolis County did not receive any lands for settlement, however. In August 1784, Thomas Peters and Murphy Steel petitioned for land on behalf of Digby settlers. They wrote, "when we first inlisted [sic] & swore we were promised that we should have land & provitions [sic] … which we have not received[.]" Overall, only seventy-six acres were awarded to refugees in the region.[361]

Farther east, African American refugees settled in Halifax, the largest city in the peninsula. In 1791, 472 blacks were recorded in the city, comprising just under ten percent of the population. Many resolved to settle in Halifax "rather than face the risks of pioneer life in uncertain country." Most barely lived about the poverty line, forced to rely on low-wage, unskilled jobs. Those who were unable to find work often indentured themselves out to whites in Halifax. Living conditions in the city were also generally poor for African American refugees. Moreover, the lack of adequate housing meant that black newcomers often resided in makeshift accommodation, which increased the risk of disease.[362]

Eleven miles east of Halifax, Preston became home to about 150 black families. Preston was comparatively less segregated; several white Loyalists took up lands in the settlement. The region, notes Walker, was suitable for "small-farm produce such as vegetables and poultry, [and] the lakes, rivers and coasts nearby offered excellent opportunities for fishing[.]" The abundance of timber presented settlers with an invaluable resource for sale and trade. Yet only half of the African American refugees in Preston received any lands from the provincial government. Their lots were also about one-quarter the size of those given to whites. Nevertheless, the blacks of Preston fared better than their counterparts in Birchtown and Brindley Town.[363]

On the eastern tip of Nova Scotia, Tricadie was settled by slave refugees. Thomas Brownspriggs, a prominent leader of the black settlers at Tricadie, petitioned for roughly 3,000 acres of land to be distributed among seventy-four black families. Surprisingly, the provincial government granted Brownspriggs' request and each

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[360] Walker, *Black Loyalists*, 24; "Brindley Town," *BlackLoyalist.com*, accessed Apr. 21, 2019, http://blackloyalist.com/cdc/communities/brindley.htm.
[361] Walker, *Black Loyalists*, 24-27; "Petition on behalf of the Black Pioneers," Commissioner of Public Records, RG 1, vol. 359, no. 65 (microfilm no. 15428). NSA, accessed Nov. 30, 2019, https://novascotia.ca/archives/africanns/archives.asp?ID=32.
[362] Walker, *Black Loyalists*, 30 (first quote), 45-46.
[363] Walker, *Black Loyalists*, 28-30; "Preston," *BlackLoyalist.com*, accessed Apr. 21, 2019. http://blackloyalist.com/cdc/communities/preston.htm.

family received approximately forty acres each. Nevertheless, black land ownership in Tricadie suffered several setbacks. As Walker notes, the small size of the holdings "was un-economical, and hence some of them [black Loyalists] moved away to seek a livelihood elsewhere." Elsewhere, black refugee settlers struggled to obtain lands from the provincial government. At Manchester, Thomas Richardson and Peter French petitioned the Nova Scotia Assembly on behalf of black settlers who had "never got no Lands not even Town lotts [sic]" over the past two years.[364]

Slave refugees also settled in other provinces within the Maritimes. In New Brunswick, black refugees encountered similar challenges. A lack of lands and resources greatly constrained the ability of African American newcomers to support themselves. A self-emancipator from Virginia, Moses Simpson, sailed with the Loyalists from New York City to Saint John, New Brunswick in 1783. Two years later, he was granted a small plot on Great George Street in Saint John. In 1787, Simpson and several other black newcomers petitioned for 1,000 acres about fourteen miles from Saint John. They claimed they had not received any land, supplies, or provisions since their arrival. In 1788, Simpson received a small lot in present-day Fredericton. By 1802, he and thirty others shared fifty-six acres.[365]

Life in the Canadian Maritimes proved tough for most slave refugee newcomers. According to Walker, they "had no choice but to grasp at any opportunity, however unfair, to keep themselves alive." At best, they could find work in low-wage trades but this provided hardly enough income to support their families. A small number translated previously learned skills to their new environment. Some slave refugees became carpenters, sailors, fishers, tailors, blacksmiths, bakers, shoemakers, sawyers, barbers, weavers, and coopers. But this was not the case for most black newcomers. To support themselves and their families, they had to contemplate arrangements which brought their newfound liberty into question.[366]

Across the Maritimes, slave refugees entered into unfavorable arrangements with white Loyalists. In Birchtown, Digby, and other settlements, many African American refugees became sharecroppers, a system which "tied the tenant to the land of another and to the landowner himself." In essence, black settlers lived and worked on the property of white landowners in exchange for a share of their income. Sharecropping essentially precluded social mobility or economic advancement, and barely provided black tenants with enough to survive. Furthermore, indentured

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[364] Walker, *Black Loyalists*, 27-28; "Land petition from black settlers of Manchester," Commissioner of Crown Lands, RG 20, series A, vol. 17 (1786) (microfilm 15691). NSA, accessed Nov. 30, 2019, https://novascotia.ca/archives/africanns/archives.asp?ID=36.

[365] For the most detailed overview of Moses Simpson's petitions for land, see *New Brunswick Loyalist Journeys*, accessed Apr. 22, 2019. https://unbgis.maps.arcgis.com/apps/MapSeries/index.html?appid=074bbc635b0b464e94f72ffc2b4bda6a. For more on black Loyalist refugees in New Brunswick, see W. A. Spray, *The Blacks in New Brunswick* (Fredericton, NB: Brunswick Press, 1972).

[366] Walker, *Black Loyalists*, 45-48; Spray, *Blacks in New Brunswick*, 33.

servitude remained commonplace in the Canadian Maritimes. Robin Winks notes that 198 white families within the vicinity of Birchtown "employed or owned 396 servants[.]" Men, women, and children were indentured to white settlers, including former enslavers.[367]

At the same time, the newfound liberty of slave refugees was not guaranteed. Several cases illustrate the precarious nature of black freedom in the Maritimes. In 1791, a Loyalist enslaver at Argyle, Nova Scotia named Jesse sought to re-enslave a woman named Mary Postell and her children. Postell escaped from her South Carolina enslaver to Charleston, where the Loyalists issued her with a certificate of freedom. However, Postell's certificate was taken by an officer who checked her legal papers. She subsequently traveled with her children to Florida to work as a servant for Jesse Gray. Postell journeyed to Nova Scotia with him after the war but absconded to Birchtown shortly after their arrival. After her recapture, Gray attempted to sell Postell and her children to another Loyalist enslaver. Postell and two residents of Birchtown testified before the Nova Scotia courts that she and her children were legally free. Although Gray claimed legal ownership, he could not produce a receipt or bill of sale to corroborate his claim. The Loyalist judges ultimately sided with Gray and sanctioned the re-enslavement of Postell and her daughter.[368]

That same year, Lydia Jackson of Manchester was kidnapped and sold into slavery. Abolitionist John Clarkson claimed that Jackson was "in great distress having been left by her husband" when she was taken in by Henry Hedley. After seven days, Hedley "required her to either pay him for her board or bind herself to him for seven years; she was unable to pay him and refused to be bound[.]" Jackson agreed to a one-year term of indenture. Yet Hedley deceived Jackson and extended the term of her indenture to thirty-nine years without her knowledge. Hedley subsequently sold Jackson for twenty pounds. Upon learning of Bulman's intention to sell her to the West Indies, Jackson fled to Halifax where she met Clarkson.[369]

Apart from socio-economic concerns, slave refugees in the Maritimes encountered other challenges. Most notably, anti-black prejudice and racial discrimination were also commonplace throughout the Canadian Maritimes. Despite its reputation as a sanctuary for people of African descent, white Loyalists and others throughout the provinces were generally unwelcoming, and sometimes hostile,

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[367] Walker, *Black Loyalists*, 46 (first quote); Winks, *Blacks in Canada*, 38 (second quote), 47.
[368] For the indictment of Jesse Gray, see Shelburne County Court of General Sessions of the Peace. RG 60, Shelburne County, vol. 1, file 49-4. NSA, accessed Nov. 30, 2019, https://novascotia.ca/archives/africanns/archives.asp?ID=46. For the most complete account of the Mary Postell case, see Carole Watterson Troxler, "Re-enslavement of Black Loyalists: Mary Postell in South Carolina, East Florida, and Nova Scotia," *Acadiensis* 37, no. 2 (2008), 70-85.
[369] "John Clarkson's account of the story of Lydia Jackson," John Clarkson, NSA. MG 1, vol. 219 pp. 197-201; published in *Clarkson's Mission to America, 1791-1792*, 89-90 (Public Archives of Nova Scotia Publication no. 11, 1971) (F90/N85/Ar2P no. 11), accessed Mar. 18, 2020, https://novascotia.ca/archives/africanns/archives.asp?ID=45; Walker, *Black Loyalists*, 50-51.

toward the slave refugee population. While it mostly took the form of everyday verbal abuse and discriminatory policies, it sometimes spilled over into violence. On July 25, 1784, white mobs attacked blacks in Birchtown to drive them out of the region. David George, a black preacher in Shelburne, described the scenes in his memoir: "Several of the black people has houses upon my lot, but forty (40) or fifty (50) disbanded soldiers were employed, who came with the tackle of ships, and turned my dwelling house, and every one of their houses, quite over, and the meeting house they would have burned down, had not the ringleader of the mob himself prevented it." The following day, a group of disbanded white Loyalists beat George with sticks "and drove me into the swamp."[370]

Dismayed with their impoverished condition and systemic racial prejudice, about 1,200 black refugees emigrated from the Canadian Maritimes to Sierra Leone in 1792. The Sierra Leone Company promised that free black settlers would receive "not less than TWENTY ACRES of LAND for himself; TEN for his Wife, and FIVE for every child[.]" The government was overwhelmed by the black Loyalist response to their appeal. In December 1791, an agent for the Sierra Leone Company, wrote that the number of prospective free black settlers "far exceeded" his expectations. Several prominent leaders, including Boston King, left Nova Scotia with their families and, in some cases, their congregations. Aboard fifteen ships, the black Loyalists left their temporary home in search of a better sanctuary. Nonetheless, most African American refugees remained in the Maritime provinces.[371]

As discussed in Chapter One, the War of 1812 spurred another wave of slave refugee migration to the Maritimes. Most arrived in a near destitute condition. "The Black Refugees," notes Harvey Amani Whitfield, "arrived on the shores of Nova Scotia in need of medical attention, food, and shelter after their lengthy voyage up the Atlantic from the southern United States." Over 800 men, women, and children were quarantined on Melville Island in Halifax, a former prisoner-of-war camp. Although the Black Refugees were provided with food and drink, blankets, clothing, and medical treatment, conditions on Melville Island were harsh. A return from 1815 reveals that 160 out of 375 documented men, women, and children arrived in family units.[372]

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[370] Walker, *Black Loyalists*, 48. For a transcription of David George's memoir, see "AN ACCOUNT OF LIFE OF Mr. David George from S. L. A. Given by himself," *blackloyalist.com*, accessed Sep. 16, 2019. http://blackloyalist.com/cdc/documents/diaries/george_a_life.htm.

[371] "Advertisement for the settlement of black Nova Scotians in Sierra Leone," Commissioner of Public Records, NSA. RG 1, vol. 419, no. 1 (microfilm no. 15460), accessed Nov. 30, 2018, https://novascotia.ca/archives/africanns/archives.asp?ID=44. (first quote); "Letter From Michael Wallace concerning the number of black people interested in leaving for Sierra Leone," Commissioner of Public Records, NSA, RG 1, vol. 419, no. 10 (microfilm no. 15460), accessed Nov. 30, 2019, https://novascotia.ca/archives/africanns/archives.asp?ID=48. (second quote); Pybus, *Epic Journeys of Freedom*, 148-151.

[372] Whitfield, *Blacks on the Border*, 49-51 (quote on 49); "Contract between Lewis DeMolitor and the collector of customs for the port of Halifax to supply provisions for black refugees," Commissioner of

Black Refugee newcomers mostly settled in the Halifax area. Officially, 924 were recorded in Preston, while 504 officially resided at the Hammonds Plains settlement. "Former Chesapeake slaves," writes Alan Taylor, "tended to settle at Preston, while former Georgians prevailed at Hammonds Plains, although each township had a minority of refugees from the other region of origin." Black Refugees were also recorded in other settlements in the peninsula. A Return from March 1815 stated that 684 African American refugees resettled in Halifax, Windsor Road, Dartmouth, Preston, and Porter's Lake. A report from the end of that same year claims that 72 Black Refugees resided on the Windsor Road. Meanwhile, twenty-three refugees were recorded at the North West Arm of Halifax Harbor in November. Dartmouth and Preston's combined total was about 270.[373]

Roughly 500 of the Black Refugees were resettled in New Brunswick.[374] Refugee settlers struggled with the climate and natural terrain. Consequently, they sought to obtain provisions and lands to alleviate their condition. In February 1817, William Hood and forty other refugees in Saint John petitioned the Nova Scotia House of Assembly for additional resources. The petition stated that the refugees had "already consumed the rewards of the last summer's labour [sic] and not now being able to find employment they are reduced to great necessity and distress at this inclement season of the year, and at a period when provisions and fuel are at an enormously high price." The petitioners noted that they "are in great want of clothing, that which they now have being the last they received from [the] government and being nearly worn out, and they being without any means of obtaining a fresh supply." Furthermore, they signaled their "great gratitude [for] the allotment of land that has been made for them… near Loch Lomond which they wish to profit by [sic] settling and cultivating the same as early in the ensuing spring… but in their present destitute

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Public Records, RG 1, vol. 420, no. 17 (microfilm 15464). NSA, accessed Oct. 28, 2018, https://novascotia.ca/archives/africanns/archives.asp?ID=77; "Return of black people at Halifax arrived from the Chesapeake," Commissioner of Public Records, Nova Scotia Archives, RG 1, vol. 305, no. 7 (microfilm no. 15387), NSA, accessed Oct. 28, 2018, https://novascotia.ca/archives/africanns/archives.asp?ID=73.

[373] Whitfield, *Blacks on the Border*, 52; Taylor, *The Internal Enemy*, 369-370; "Return of black persons lately brought to the province from the United States…," Commissioner of Public Records, RG 1, vol. 411, no. 78 (microfilm no. 15457). NSA, accessed Oct. 28, 2018, https://novascotia.ca/archives/africanns/archives.asp?ID=75; "Return of black people at Halifax arrived from the Chesapeake,"; "List of Blacks recently brought from the United States of America and settled on the Windsor Road," Commissioner of Public Records, RG 1, vol. 420. No. 133 (microfilm no. 15464). NSA, accessed Oct. 28, 2018, https://novascotia.ca/archives/africanns/archives.asp?ID=74; "Names of men of colour who are settled upon lands conveyed to them by Henry H. Cogswell… at the Head of the North West Arm," Commissioner of Public Records, RG 1, vol. 420. No. 93 (microfilm no. 15464). NSA, accessed Oct. 28, 2018, https://novascotia.ca/archives/africanns/archives.asp?ID=79; "Report of lands cleared by the people of colour in the settlement of Preston…," Commissioner of Public Records, RG 1, vol. 421, no. 3 (microfilm no. 15464). NSA, accessed Oct. 28, 2018, https://novascotia.ca/archives/africanns/archives.asp?ID=81.

[374] W. A. Spray, "The Settlement of the Black Refugees in New Brunswick 1815-1836," *Acadiensis* 6, no. 2 (1997), 64-66.

state it will be impossible for them to do this or even to get their allotment of land surveyed without some aid being extended to them[.]" One year later, Ward Chipman, who played an important role in the abolition of slavery in the province, and John Robinson petitioned for funds to compensate the deputy-surveyor for his work at Loch Lomond.[375]

Black Refugees struggled with unemployment, poverty, and sickness. Aside from their lack of capital, systemic prejudice ensured that they would remain rooted at the bottom of society. Harvey Whitfield writes that most officials believed that slave refugees "should not be independent landowning farmers but rather should work for the local white population as servants or laborers for hire." Aside from systemic prejudice, the Black Refugees' arrival in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick coincided with "a serious economic recession" following the War of 1812, and the influx of European immigrants, who competed with slave refugees for unskilled labor. In the words of Judith Fingard, slave refugees "became a special class of permanent poor in town and suburb, as well as the meanest of the urban laborers."[376]

Some whites sought to take advantage of cheap black labor. William McLaughlin, a "weaver by trade," requested permission to employ Black Refugee women in 1836. He claimed, "the black women are generally good spinners and that if he had the means to procure wool, that many who are now in a state would thus be enabled to procure a livelihood." McLaughlin was interested in taking advantage of the high demand for wool in Canada and the United States. He stated that "wool is from time to time brought from the Country and is in Halifax purchased in large quantities and exported to the states." McLaughlin estimated that he could "manufacture between three & four thousand yards of cloth in a year."[377]

Poverty and prejudice were not the only issues that plagued Black Refugee communities in the Maritimes. Sickness and disease were common problems for slave refugees across the region. In 1816, Dr. Samuel Head wrote to Charles Morris, a member of the Nova Scotia Council, on the conditions at Preston. He claimed that many people were sick, including one woman who was "nearly exhausted from

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[375] Spray, "The Settlement of the Black Refugees in New Brunswick," 69; Petition of several black people asking aid to assist them in forming a settlement at Loch Lomond, Saint John County. 14 Feb. 1817, p. 15. Legislative Assembly: Sessional Records (RS24). S25-P20. Microfilm F16735. PANB, accessed May 30, 2019, https://archives.gnb.ca/Search/RS24/DocumentViewer.aspx?culture=en-CA&record=2684; Petition of Ward Chipman and John Robinson praying for a grant to allow them to remunerate the Deputy-Surveyor for surveying at Loch Lomond for the settlement of black refugees. 21 Feb. 1818, p. 46. Legislative Assembly: Sessional Records (RS24). S26-P29. Microfilm F16746. PANB, accessed May 30, 2019, https://archives.gnb.ca/Search/RS24/DocumentViewer.aspx?culture=en-CA&record=3017.

[376] Whitfield, *Blacks on the Border*, 49; Judith Fingard, "The Relief of the Unemployed Poor in Saint John, Halifax, and St. John's, 1815-1860," *Acadiensis* 5, no. 1 (1975), 32.

[377] "Memorial of William McLaughlin of Preston," Nova Scotia House of Assembly – Assembly petitions series, RG 5, series P, vol. 52, no. 45 (microfilm no. 9798). NSA, accessed Nov. 4, 2018. https://novascotia.ca/archives/africanns/archives.asp?ID=109.

inflammation of her lungs… I think there is a very small chance of her surviving[.]" The Preston settlers were also supposedly not "accustomed to a climate so severe as this" and lacked adequate clothing. Homes in Preston were "made of green materials, & neither proof against the wet or cold, & having no cellars under them, & some ever no floors[.]" Another report described most houses in Preston as huts, while a plan of the Preston settlement from later that year claimed that the land was "rough and rocky for cultivation."[378] In 1826, a scarlet fever epidemic tore through Hammonds Plains and killed dozens of settlers. A report claimed that "most of these huts have found fever or the remaining effects of it: evidently increased by the want of clothing, Bedding, nourishment and medicine." The report added that "very few have any other food than potatoes which in the present year are of an inferior quality; and some families are even destitute of these, and live by begging a single meal from their poor neighbours [sic]. Their want of clothing is equally distressing - many are without a blanket – some have scarcely a covering of rags for their bones[.]"[379]

Across the Maritimes, Black Refugees had to contend with pervasive racial prejudice. In 1815, Peleg Wiswall of Annapolis County introduced a motion into the Nova Scotia House of Representatives which stated, "we observe with concern, and alarm, the frequent arrival in this Province of Bodies of Negroes, and Mulattoes, of whom many have already become [burdensome] to the Public… the proportion of Africans already in this country is productive of many inconveniences[.]" Meanwhile Lord Dalhousie, the Lieutenant-Governor of Nova Scotia, believed that the Black Refugees were "slaves by habit and education." Over time, some expressed interest in leaving the Maritimes entirely. An 1820 return of Hammonds Plains reveals that some families considered emigrating from Nova Scotia to Trinidad. Indeed, Walker notes that Trinidad passed "special laws to encourage black immigration, sending envoys to Nova Scotia, promising free houses on half-acre plots and promising wages of 4 [shillings] to 5 [shillings] a day plus provisions, even offering assistance in the establishment of churches and schools."[380]

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[378] "Dr. Head's report respecting black families settled at Preston," Commissioner of Public Records, RG 1, vol. 419, no. 47 (microfilm no. 15460). NSA, accessed Nov. 4, 2018, https://novascotia.ca/archives/africanns/archives.asp?ID=80; "Report of lands cleared by the people of colour in the settlement of Preston…,"; "Plot plan of lands at Preston," Commissioner of Public Records. RG 1, vol. 419, no. 29. NSA, accessed Nov. 4, 2018, https://novascotia.ca/archives/africanns/archives.asp?ID=82.

[379] "Government report concerning the scarlet fever outbreak in Hammonds Plains during the fall of 1826 and winter of 1827," Commissioner of Public Records, RG 1, vol. 422, no. 35 (microfilm no. 15463). NSA, accessed Nov. 4, 2018, https://novascotia.ca/archives/africanns/archives.asp?ID=95.

[380] "Address of the House of Assembly to Lieutenant Governor Sherbrooke opposing black refugee immigration," *Journal of the House of Assembly* 1815, p. 107 (microfilm no. 3528). NSA, accessed Nov. 7, 2018, https://novascotia.ca/archives/africanns/archives.asp?ID=76; "Letter From Lord Dalhousie to Earl Bathurst about the black refugees," Commissioner of Public Records, RG 1, vol. 112, pp. 6-9 (microfilm no. 15262). NSA, accessed Nov. 7, 2018, https://novascotia.ca/archives/africanns/archives.asp?ID=83; "Return of the black American refugees residing at Hammonds Plains," Commissioner of Public Records, RG 1, vol. 422, no. 19 (microfilm no.

Black Refugees continued to petition for lands into the following decade. In 1821, Levin Winder of Preston, "a sober [,] deacent [sic] industrious man" applied for 150 acres. His petition stated, "owing to the difficulty there was in finding a shelter for himself and family, in the year 1815 he [accepted] the offer of Government and sat himself on a lot of land on which he now finds, owing to its limited size and sterile quality[,] he cannot make a living for himself and his family." Similarly, Gabriel Hall of Preston, "a refugee man of colour [sic]," petitioned for twenty-five acres of land. His petition stated, "he is twenty one years of age and expects shortly to have a wife. That he has no means of making a living but by husbandry[.]" Although Hall's petition was initially approved, the lands were never distributed.[381]

Refugee settlers sought assistance with other matters. "One of the greatest needs of the black settlers," writes Spray, "was a mill to grind their oats, buckwheat, barley and rye." In 1828, the refugees near Loch Lomond, New Brunswick petitioned the Lieutenant Governor for assistance with the erection of an oat mill. By this stage, over forty people resided in the settlement, "the majority of whom are industriously inclined, and are earnestly striving to make themselves independent[.]" They alleged that their portable mill had broken due to "continued use… and want of proper skill on the part of your Petitioners to keep it in repair… and were it even in order now [sic] its capacity would be quite inadequate to the wants of the settlement." Furthermore, the petitioners claimed that a new mill, "would have the happiest effect for the Black settlement, and would truly make it a land of pure delight and flowing milk and honey[.]"[382]

Over time, Maritime officials grew increasingly frustrated by the financial support directed toward slave refugee settlers. In 1826, the Justices of the Peace for the City and County of Saint John petitioned the Lieutenant-Governor of New Brunswick for financial assistance. They insisted that "these black refugees ought not to be chargeable upon any particular Town or Parish, and especially upon the Parish of Portland, where the Poor rates are much heavier than in any other part of the Province, and that from the peculiar circumstances attending their settlement in this Province, they have an irresistable [sic] claim on its Government for support." Two years later, the Overseers of the Poor in Portland petitioned the House of Assembly

15463). NSA, accessed Nov. 7, 2018, https://novascotia.ca/archives/africanns/archives.asp?ID=86; Walker, *Black Loyalists*, 394.

[381] "Memorial of Levin Winder," Commissioner of Crown Lands, RG 20, series A, vol. 85 (1821) (microfilm no. 15733). NSA, accessed Nov. 7, 2018, https://novascotia.ca/archives/africanns/archives.asp?ID=88; "Memorial of Gabriel Hall of Preston," Commissioner of Crown Lands, RG 20, Series A., vol. 90 (1824) (microfilm 15737). NSA, accessed Nov. 7, 2018, https://novascotia.ca/archives/africanns/archives.asp?ID=93.

[382] Spray, "The Settlement of Black Refugees," 76-77; Petition of the "Colored Population" of Loch Lomond, Saint John County, praying aid to build an oat mill. 10 Mar. 1828, p. 74. Legislative Assembly: Sessional Records (RS24). S36-P146. Microfilm F17183. PANB, accessed May 30, 2019, https://archives.gnb.ca/Search/RS24/DocumentViewer.aspx?culture=en-CA&record=6784.

additional aid for the Loch Lomond settlers.[383] As mentioned earlier, the next section will shift focus to slave refugee settlement in Upper Canada.

"as thick as blackbirds in a corn-field": African American Refugees in Upper Canada

On the eve of the US Civil War, thousands of African American refugees settled in Upper Canada. The American Freedmen's Inquiry Commission (AFIC) sanctioned a report on the condition of slave refugees in Upper Canada. Samuel Gridley Howe journeyed to the province to, in the words of Matthew Furrow, "study how the black population there, which he assumed comprised mostly runaway slaves from the United States, was coping with freedom and equality under the law."[384] Over two trips, Howe interviewed African Americans and white abolitionist missionaries in the Niagara and Detroit River borderlands, the Greater Toronto Area, and Central Ontario. One correspondent, American abolitionist Hiram Wilson, reported that African Americans in the province "consist of two classes. 1st Refugees directly from Slavery. 2nd political refugees from oppressive laws and mob violence in Free states." Wilson estimated that seven-eighths of slave refugees were self-emancipated people "who have shown great zeal and energy in escaping from the most terrible energy that ever afflicted the human race." Wilson noted that refugees faced numerous challenges, most notably poverty and racial prejudice, particularly in rural areas. He wrote, "They are found in almost every part of Canada West, industriously employed in a great variety of occupations and rendering entire satisfaction to their employers."[385]

Such positive reports from Upper Canada belied the widely held belief among white Southerners (and indeed, white Northerners) that African-descended people were incapable of becoming self-sufficient. US enslavers regularly lied to

[383] Petition and account of the Justices of the Peace for the City and County of Saint John praying reimbursement for the Parish of Portland for supporting black refugees in 1825. 24 Jan. 1826, p. 14. Legislative Assembly: Sessional Records (RS24). S34-P10. Microfilm F17170. PANB, accessed May 30, 2019. https://archives.gnb.ca/Search/RS24/DocumentViewer.aspx?culture=en-CA&record=5926; Petition of the Overseers of the Poor for Portland, Saint John County, praying aid for the support of black refugees. 22 Feb. 1828, p. 29. Legislative Assembly: Sessional Records (RS24). S36-P-39. Microfilm F17182. PANB, accessed May 30, 2019, https://archives.gnb.ca/Search/RS24/DocumentViewer.aspx?culture=en-CA&record=6830.

[384] Matthew Furrow, "Samuel Gridley Howe, the Black Population of Canada West, and the Racial Ideology of the "Blueprint for Radical Reconstruction," *Journal of American History* 97, no. 2 (2010), 352-354.

[385] Wilson, Hiram, 1803-1864. Letter to the Commission, St. Catharines, Canada, 1863 Dec. 10. United States. American Freedmen's Inquiry Commission records, 1862-1864. MS Am 702 (122). Houghton Library, Harvard University. Cambridge, MA, accessed Oct. 31, 2019, https://iiif.lib.harvard.edu/manifests/view/drs:431380001$1i.

enslaved people about Canada's climate and socio-economic prospects. As increasing numbers of freedom seekers fled to Upper Canada, southern whites regularly claimed that the province was virtually uninhabitable.[386] Furthermore, newspapers throughout the South published disparaging reports on black refugees in the province. In 1856, for example, the *Fayetteville Observer* claimed that a correspondent had recently encountered a young slave refugee in Toronto. It claimed that the 16 or 17-year-old boy was "standing bareheaded, barefoot – in short, without any other clothing than a shirt and pantaloons." Canadian philanthropists, the *Observer* claimed, "took no more notice of him than if he had been a dog." Four years later, the *Abbeville Banner* reported that black Canadian settlements were "abject," and that "crime and degradation are the chief characteristics of these deluded victims of abolition humanitarianism." The *Alexandria Gazette*, meanwhile, alleged that a self-emancipator from Maryland wrote to his former enslaver asking "to come on and bring him home, as he was tired of his 'freedom' there [Canada]."[387]

Pro-slavery sympathizing northern newspapers also printed negative accounts of black refugees in Upper Canada. In 1830, the *Ohio Republican* asserted that Africa "seems to be the only place where this degraded class of our population can be permitted to pursue… life, liberty, and happiness[.]" Similarly, in 1859, the *Cleveland Democrat* claimed that sixteen southern black refugees returned from the province to the United States after "Becoming weary of Canadian freedom… and of nearly being starved to death[.]" Some newspapers (particularly in the Old Northwest) warned of impending 'invasions' of their states, similar to Upper Canada. In 1860, the Ohio-based *Ashland Union* claimed that slave refugees in Upper Canada were "a poor, miserable, degraded, half starved set. They have been sent there by the Abolitionists of the North, in order to place them beyond the reach of their Southern owners. The Canadians are getting tired of them; they are opposed to any more coming, and threaten to expell [sic] those that are already there." It added that self-emancipators had recently "taken up their abode in Ohio, and already the black [sic] in Canada are emigrating to this State."[388]

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[386] For more on southern enslavers' false claims regarding Canada, see Dann J. Broyld, "Fannin' Flies and Tellin' Lies: Black Runaways and American Tales of Life in British Canada before the Civil War," *American Review of Canadian Studies* 44, no. 2 (2014), 169-186.

[387] "UNDERGROUND RAILROAD," *Fayetteville Observer* (Fayetteville, NC), Sep. 4, 1856; "FREE NEGROES IN CANADA," *Abbeville Banner* (Abbeville, SC), Jan. 19, 1860; "A gentleman from Calvert County…" *Alexandria Gazette*, Dec. 23, 1858.

[388] "Negro settlement in Canada," *Ohio Republican*, reprinted in *Western Sun & General Advertiser*, May 1, 1830; "EXTENSIVE ARRIVAL OF BLACKS FROM CANADA, EN ROUTE TO THE SOUTH – SIXTEEN FUGITIVE SLAVES ON THE BACK TRACK," *Cleveland Democrat*, reprinted in *Delaware Gazette* (Delaware, NY), Jul. 27, 1859; "NEGRO INVASION OF OHIO," *Ashland Union* (Ashland, OH), Oct. 31, 1860. For examples of newspaper articles on 'failed' black settlement, alleged riots and 'disturbances' in Upper Canada, and attempts to remove slave refugees, see "THE CANADIANS AND THEIR FREE NEGRO POPULATION," *Nashville Union and American*, Sep. 17, 1857; "THE CANADIANS AND THEIR FREE NEGRO POPULATION," *Plattsburgh Republican* (Plattsburgh, NY), Sep. 19, 1857; "The Hon. Colonel Prince…" *Alexandria Gazette*, Sep. 27, 1858; "RUNAWAY NEGROES

African American, African Canadian, and white abolitionist newspapers refuted these negative portrayals of Upper Canadian refugee communities. The *Advocate* claimed in 1855 that most self-emancipators in the province "are represented as industrious, moderately enterprising, and decidedly thriving in their circumstances." It acknowledged that there was "room for a wide variety of character, conduct, and condition" in refugee communities but was generally satisfied with their progress. Five years later, the *Liberator* wrote, "The condition of the colored race in Canada, as a whole… is favorable to their capability to support themselves by their own unaided efforts, free from the tyranny of the white man." While the newspaper acknowledged that poverty was a concern in some instances, it also noted that many refugees "establish themselves in farming and trading, and support themselves and their families in comfort[.]" In 1860, the *Tiffin Weekly Democrat* dismissed reports of black disturbances in the province as simply "a fight which took place among a few white and colored schoolboys[.]" A few weeks later, the *Union County Star and Lewisburg Chronicle* dismissed reports of "negro riots" in Upper Canada as "pure fabrications[.]"[389]

The total number of African American refugees that migrated to Upper Canada remains somewhat unclear. Indeed, estimates have fluctuated substantially over time. In 1837, the American Anti-Slavery Society (AASS) estimated that 10,000 people of African descent resided in the province, most of whom were self-emancipated refugees. Nine years later, William Lloyd Garrison proclaimed that 15,000 had migrated to Canada, "and they are multiplying every day[.]" In 1852, the *Anti-Slavery Reporter* estimated that between 25,000 and 35,000 people of African descent lived in the province.[390] Frank Severance's *Old Trails on the Niagara*

IN CANADA," *New Orleans Daily Crescent* (New Orleans, LA), Sep. 2, 1859; "A MOVEMENT AGAINST NEGROES IN CANADA," *North Carolina Standard*, Jan. 18, 1860; "NEGRO OUTRAGE IN CANADA WEST," *Evening Star*, Jan. 20, 1860; "THE NEGRO DISTURBANCES IN CANADA," *Daily Exchange* (Baltimore, MD), Jan. 27, 1860; "The Fugitive Slaves in Canada," *Daily Democrat and News* (Davenport, IA), Jan. 28, 1860; "Disturbances in Canada," *Newbern Weekly Press* (Newbern, NC), Jan. 31, 1860; "TRACTS FOR THE PEOPLE," *Cadiz Democratic Sentinel*, Feb. 1, 1860; "Free Negroes North and South," *Semi-Weekly Mississippian* (Jackson, MS), Apr. 24, 1860.

[389] "FUGITIVE SLAVES IN CANADA," *Advocate* (Buffalo, NY), Sep. 13, 1855; "THE RUNAWAY SLAVES," *Liberator*, Feb. 3, 1860; "The Reported Negro Excitement in Canada a Humburg," *Tiffin Weekly Democrat* (Tiffin, OH), Feb. 3, 1860; "Negroes in Canada – and Free Negroes Generally," *St. Louis Herald*, reprinted in *Spirit of Democracy* (Woodsfield, OH), Feb. 8, 1860; "The reports of negro riots…," *Union County Star and Lewisburg Chronicle* (Lewisburg, PA), Feb. 17, 1860.

[390] American Anti-Slavery Society, *Fourth Annual Report of the American Anti-Slavery Society, with the Speeches Delivered at the Anniversary Meeting Held in the City of New York, on the 9th May, 1837, and the Minutes of the Meetings of the Society for Business* (New York, NY: William S. Dorr, 1837), 34, accessed May 28, 2020. http://ebooks.library.cornell.edu/cgi/t/text/pageviewer-idx?c=mayantislavery&cc=mayantislavery&idno=02817510&q1=Canada&view=image&seq=1&size=100; William Lloyd Garrison, *American Slavery. Address on the Subject of American Slavery, and the Progress of the Cause of Freedom throughout the World. Delivered in the National Hall, Holborn, on Wednesday Evening, September 2, 1846* (London: Richard Kinder,1846), 18, accessed May 25, 2020. http://ebooks.library.cornell.edu/cgi/t/text/pageviewer-

Frontier (1899) notes that some early reports place the number of blacks in Upper Canada as high as 75,000. Severance added that "it is probably within the fact to say that more than 50,000 crossed to Upper Canada, nearly all from points on Lake Erie, the Detroit and Niagara Rivers." By the mid-twentieth century, historians incorporated these estimates into their own studies, placing the total number closer to 40,000. More recently, Michael Wayne placed the actual figure closer to 20,000.[391]

Figure 12: Map of Upper Canada, 1835

Source: A Map of the Province of Upper Canada describing all the New Settlements, Townships, etc. with the Counties adjacent from Quebec to Lake Huron, accessed May 20, 2020. https://mdl.library.utoronto.ca/collections/scanned-maps/map-province-upper-canada-describing-all-new-settlements-townships-etc.

idx?c=mayantislavery;cc=mayantislavery;idno=10841913;q1=Canada;view=image;seq=1;size=100;page=root; "THE REFUGEES IN CANADA," *ASR*, Jan. 1, 1852.

[391] Frank H. Severance, *Old Trails on the Niagara Frontier* (Buffalo, NY: Matthews-Northup, 1899), 231-232, accessed May 28, 2020. https://www.canadiana.ca/view/oocihm.13523/1?r=0&s=1; Winks, *The Blacks in Canada*, 240; Michael Wayne, "The Black Population of Canada West on the Eve of the American Civil War: A Reassessment Based on the Manuscript Census of 1861," *Histoire Social/Social History* 28, no. 56 (1995), 470.

The availability of fertile lands at relatively affordable prices was Upper Canada's primary appeal. Various diaries, travelogues, and reports highlighted this desire to populate Upper Canada. In 1794, John Cosens Ogden praised Upper Canada's lands and early settlements. He noted that the province was "well adapted for raising wheat, Indian corn, and other summer grain; flax… succeeds remarkably well, and the face of the country yields grass in abundance[.]"[392] In 1820, Adam Hodgson recalled during his trip across the province, "The lands which the Government is at present distributing in Upper Canada lie parallel to the St. Lawrence [River] and the [Great] Lakes, and constitute a range of townships in the rear of those already granted… Land offices are established in ten different districts… but their power is restricted to grant a hundred acres." Hodgson that Upper Canada's soil was "generally extremely good, and the climate, with the exception of a long and severe winter, unobjectionable[.]"[393]

The first slave refugee settlements were founded in the years after the Revolutionary War. Richard Pierpoint, a Bundu-born soldier who fought for the British, received 200 acres in Grantham Township near St. Catharines. He and other blacks who served in Loyalist ranks believed that they would receive Canadian land grants upon the war's conclusion. Yet despite earlier assurances, African and African American newcomers were denied equal access to Upper Canadian lands. In 1794, Pierpoint and eighteen others submitted the 'Petition of Free Negroes' to Lieutenant-Governor Simcoe, which requested adjacent lands to assist with community formation, as well as the chance to "give assistance (in work) to those amongst them who may most want it." They indicated their preference for living separately from white settlers, perhaps to escape racial prejudice, and concluded, "your Petitioners hope their behaviour [sic] will be such as to shew [sic], that Negroes are capable of being industrious, and in loyalty to the Crown they are not deficient." However, Upper Canada's Executive Council turned down the petition.[394]

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[392] John Cosens Ogden, *A Tour through Upper and Lower Canada By a Citizen of the United States. Containing, A View of the present State of Religion, Learning, Commerce, Agriculture, Colonization, Customs and Manners, among the English, French, and Indian Settlements* (Litchfield, CT: Printed at Litchfield (according to Act of Congress, 1799), 103, accessed May 17, 2020. https://www.canadiana.ca/view/oocihm.20852/1?r=0&s=1.

[393] Adam Hodgson, *Remarks During a Journey through North America in the Years 1819, 1820, and 1821, in a series of letters; with an appendix, containing an account of several of the Indian Tribes, and the principal missionary stations, &c., also, a letter to M. Jean Baptiste Say, on the comparative expense of free and slave labour* (New York: Samuel Writing, 1823), 9-10, 15, 17, accessed May 7, 2020, https://www.canadiana.ca/view/oocihm.35775/1?r=0&s=1.

[394] David Meyler and Peter Meyler, *A Stolen Life: Searching for Richard Pierpoint* (Toronto: Natural Heritage Books, 1999). 12, 69-70, 73; Zach Parroit, "Richard Pierpoint," *CanadianEncyclopedia.ca*, Oct. 6, 2016; Steve Pitt, "Richard Pierpoint: A Very Canadian Hero," (Toronto) *Star*, Feb. 7, 2012; https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/richard-pierpoint, accessed May 23, 2019; 1794 Land Petition of Free Negroes. RG 1, L3, vol. 196. LAC, microfilm C-2022, accessed Mar. 21, 2019. http://tubman.info.yorku.ca/educational-resources/war-of-1812/richard-pierpoint/documents/.

The War of 1812 also provided black servicemen in British ranks to claim land grants in Upper Canada. During the war, Pierpoint and others formed a black company in the Niagara region to defend the province. The 1st Lincoln Militia (later rebranded the 'Coloured Corps,') was composed of little over fifty men. The company served in several prominent battles. Most notably, black soldiers repelled US forces at the Battle of Queenstown Heights in 1812. Pierpoint and the other company members endured much hardship during the war. Four black soldiers were killed during the Battle of Fort George, and others suffered from sickness and poor health due to the generally harsh conditions. Nevertheless, they persisted in their efforts to defend Canada against the United States.[395]

After the conflict, veterans petitioned for lands to establish homes and communities. In November 1818, Charles Faulkner of Niagara appealed to the provincial legislature for "that quantity of land which is usually allocated to soldiers." Two months later, Samuel Edmonds, a black resident of York and "Native of the United States of America," who served for the British stated that he and other black veterans had been denied lands "on the same footing as other Discharged Soldiers[.]" Other black veterans, including Jonathan Butler, Woodford Mills, John Call, and John Jackson, also petitioned the government for assistance. Greater access to lands was central to their demands. Butler's petition stated that he was a "farmer of the township of Toronto in the Home District… [who] is desirous of obtaining more wild lands and has never obtained any lands or grants of Lands whatsoever from the Crown."[396]

On April 26, 1819, Upper Canada's Executive Council approved the opening of lands for black settlement in Oro Township. Black settlers typically received smaller lots than whites (only 100 acres compared to at least 200 acres) and were restricted to less favorable plots. Furthermore, Oro Township's distance from most population centers made it difficult for black newcomers to reach the allocated lands. In 1819, Charles Faulkner wrote to Lieutenant Governor Sir Peregrine

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[395] Gareth Newfield, "The Coloured Corps: Black Canadians and the War of 1812," *TheCanadianEncyclopedia.ca*, Mar. 31, 2011. https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/the-coloured-corps-african-canadians-and-the-war-of-1812; "Coloured Corps," *HarrietTubmanInstitute*, accessed Dec. 11, 2018. http://tubman.info.yorku.ca/educational-resources/war-of-1812/richard-pierpoint/coloured-corps/. For more on Richard Pierpoint and the Coloured Corps, see Steve Pitt, *To Stand and To Fight: Richard Pierpoint and the Coloured Corps of Upper Canada* (Toronto: Dundurn Press, 2008); Gareth Newfield, "Upper Canada's Black Defenders? Re-evaluating the War of 1812 Coloured Corps," *Canadian Military History* 18, no. 3 (2015), 31-40.

[396] Newfield, "Upper Canada's Black Defenders?" 38-39; Petition of Charles Faulkner, Nov. 4, 1818. RG 1, L3 vol. 189A. LAC, microfilm C-1896, accessed Mar. 21, 2019. http://tubman.info.yorku.ca/educational-resources/war-of-1812/post-war-aftermath/oro-settlement/documents/; Petition of Samuel Edmonds, January 18, 1819. RG 1, L3, vol. 177A. LAC, microfilm C-1888, accessed Mar. 21, 2019. http://tubman.info.yorku.ca/educational-resources/war-of-1812/richard-pierpoint/coloured-corps/documents/. For more on the list of various petitions mentioned, see Via "Related Documents/Les documents connexes," *HarrietTubmanInstitute*, accessed Dec. 11, 2018. http://tubman.info.yorku.ca/educational-resources/war-of-1812/post-war-aftermath/oro-settlement/documents/.

Maitland, "there are many disadvantages which prevent us from getting to that place," and requested lands "contiguous to the main road leading from Burlington to Lake Huron… on which to establish a settlement of Colored People."[397] Over subsequent years, black settlers soon founded the Wilberforce Street settlement in Oro Township. Twenty-three Orders in Council were issued, which awarded land grants to "a disparate group, mostly labourers [sic] who had emigrated from the United States." Eleven of those who received land grants served in the War of 1812. Daniel Cokely, a veteran of the Colored Corps, received a land grant in 1825. Most petitioners had to wait for many years to receive their lots. In 1816, Humphrey Waters petitioned for lands as compensation for destroyed crops and property during the recent conflict. Eventually, he was awarded a grant in Oro Township, although he did not assume these lands himself.[398]

During the late 1820s, another wave of African American refugees bolstered Oro Township's black population. Numerous refugee families began the process of clearing the Canadian wilderness, establishing farmsteads, and forming communities in Oro Township. Scottish traveler John Galt visited the region and wrote that there were "settled several negro families… I went into a cottage pleasantly situated on a rising ground, and found it inhabited by a crow-like flock of negro children; the mother was busy with them, and the father, a good-natured looking fellow, told me that they were very comfortable, but had not yet made great progress in clearing the land[.]"[399] Although the Wilberforce Street settlement held some early promise, it quickly fell into decline. A lack of socio-economic opportunities, geographical isolation, and a lack of infrastructure ultimately hampered Oro's potential growth. In 1831, the Wilberforce Street settlement was opened to whites, which coincided with an increase in land prices and racial hostility. Increasing numbers of black residents

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[397] Meyler and Meyler, *A Stolen Life*, 101; Silverman, *Unwelcome Guests*, 24-25; Council Minutes April 26, 1819. RG 1, L1, vol. 29, LAC, microfilm C-103, accessed Mar. 21, 2019. http://tubman.info.yorku.ca/educational-resources/war-of-1812/post-war-aftermath/oro-settlement/documents/; Land grant notices for Albert, Edmonds, Butler, and Faulkner, April 26, 1819. RG 1, L1, vol. 29. LAC, microfilm C-103, accessed Mar. 21, 2019. http://tubman.info.yorku.ca/educational-resources/war-of-1812/post-war-aftermath/oro-settlement/documents/; Faulkner to Maitland, 1819. RG 1, L3, vol. 190. LAC, microfilm C-1897, accessed Mar. 21, 2019. http://tubman.info.yorku.ca/educational-resources/war-of-1812/post-war-aftermath/oro-settlement/documents/.

[398] "The Black Settlement in Oro Township," *Simcoe.ca*, accessed Dec. 11, 2018. https://www.simcoe.ca/Archives/Pages/black.aspx (quote); "Daniel Cokely," *HarrietTubmanInstitute*, accessed Dec. 11, 2018. http://tubman.info.yorku.ca/educational-resources/war-of-1812/richard-pierpoint/coloured-corps/daniel-cokely/; Petition of Daniel Cokely, 1825. RG 1, L3, vol. 106. LAC, microfilm C-1724. Via "Related Documents/Les documents connexes," *HarrietTubmanInstitute*, accessed Dec. 11, 2018. http://tubman.info.yorku.ca/educational-resources/war-of-1812/richard-pierpoint/coloured-corps/daniel-cokely/documents/; "James & Humphrey Waters," *HarrietTubmanInstitute*, accessed Dec. 11, 2018. http://tubman.info.yorku.ca/educational-resources/war-of-1812/richard-pierpoint/coloured-corps/james-humphrey-waters/.

[399] John Galt, *The Autobiography of John Galt* (Philadelphia, PA: Key and Biddle, 1833), 63.

opted to leave for other settlements, where socio-economic opportunities were markedly better.[400]

Cincinnati refugees also procured lands in Upper Canada. Following the Cincinnati riots of 1829, African Americans in the Queen City expressed a greater desire to emigrate. Two representatives, Israel Lewis and Thomas Crissup, were dispatched to negotiate the procurement of lands with the provincial government. Lieutenant Governor John Colborne reportedly told them, "Tell the Republicans on your side of the line that we royalists do not know men by their color. Should you come to us you will be entitled to all the privileges of the rest of His Majesty's subjects."[401] They negotiated the purchase of 4,000 acres near Lucan in Biddulph Township (roughly twenty miles north of London). Crissup and Lewis solicited the necessary funds without any success. Soon after, Ohio Quakers agreed to contribute funds to the burgeoning settlement. African Americans from Ohio began making their way towards Upper Canada. British abolitionist Charles Stuart claimed that approximately 1,100 journeyed to the province. Since then, other reports have either increased and reduced this total figure.[402]

This migration sparked concern among Upper Canadian whites. Resolutions against the arrival of black newcomers were introduced into the province's House of Assembly, one of which stated that "the sudden introduction of a mass of Black Population, likely to continue without limitation, is a matter so dangerous to the peace and comfort of the inhabitants, that it now becomes necessary to prevent or check[.]" American Abolitionist Benjamin Lundy recalled that Canadian politicians "requested the Governor to apply to the British Parliament, for the future prohibition of such

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[400] "Black Settlement in Oro Township," *Simcoe.ca*; Brown-Kubisch, *The Queen's Bush Settlement*, 26. For more on the Wilberforce Street Settlement, see Gary E. French, *Men of Colour: An Historical Account of the Black Settlement on Wilberforce Street in Oro Township, Simcoe County, Ontario, 1819-1949* (Stroud, ON: Kaste Books, 1978). For more on the AME Church in the settlement, see Tim Crawford (ed.), *The Oro African Church: A History of the African Methodist Episcopal Church, Edgar, Ontario, Canada* (Oro, ON: The Township of Oro-Medonte, 1999).

[401] Quote taken from Ohio Anti-Slavery Society, *Condition of the People of Color in the State of Ohio. With Interesting Anecdotes* (Boston, MA: Isaac Knapp, 1839), 7, accessed May 20, 2020. http://ebooks.library.cornell.edu/cgi/t/text/pageviewer-idx?c=mayantislavery&cc=mayantislavery&idno=11842808&q1=Canada&view=image&seq=1&size=100.

[402] Taylor, *Frontiers of Freedom*, 67; Charles Stuart, *Remarks on the Colony of Liberia and the American Colonization Society: With Some Account of the Settlement of Coloured People, at Wilberforce, Upper Canada* (London: J. Messeder, 1832), 9; "COLONY OF BLACKS," *Cincinnati Gazette*, reprinted in *Genius of Universal Emancipation*, Jul. 1, 1830. For key readings on the Wilberforce Settlement, see Taylor, *Frontiers of Freedom*, 65-80; Taylor, "Reconsidering the "Forced" Exodus."; Winks, *The Blacks in Canada*, 153-162; Marilyn Baily, "From Cincinnati, Ohio to Wilberforce, Canada: A Note on Antebellum Colonization," *Journal of Negro History* 58, no. 4 (1973), 427-440; Fred Landon, "The History of the Wilberforce Refugee Colony in Middlesex County," London & Middlesex Historical Society 19 (1918), 30-44," in Karolyn Smardz Frost, Bryan Walls, Hillay Bates Neary, and Frederick H. Armstrong (eds.), *Ontario's African-Canadian Heritage: Collected Writings by Fred Landon, 1918-1967* (Toronto: Natural Heritage Books, 2009), 75-94.

emigration." These attempts ultimately failed, however, and the African American refugees were permitted to settle in the province.[403]

By 1831, the settlement was up and running, although it was hampered by several issues from the outset. For starters, only a small minority of the Cincinnati refugees made it to Wilberforce. Many integrated into towns and settlements in northern Ohio, while those that took the ferry from Sandusky to Port Stanley were deterred by the thirty-five-mile trek through uncleared forests. Nevertheless, many African American newcomers pushed on to Wilberforce. "Land ownership," notes Nikki Taylor, "was the key to real freedom for these settlers." In June, a meeting of African American leaders in Philadelphia urged "different Societies engaged in the Canadian Settlement… to persevere in their praiseworthy and philanthropic undertaking; firmly believing, that, at a future period, their labours [sic] will be crowned with success." The primary address of the convention claimed that 2,000 refugees "have left the soil of their birth, crossed the lines, and laid the foundation for a structure which promises to prove an asylum for the coloured populations of these United States."[404]

The settlement boasted some attractive features, most notably its cultivable lands. In 1832, the *Genius of Universal Emancipation* wrote, "It is covered with a heavy growth of timber, consisting of oak, poplar, bass… with some cherry and walnut; and along the streams may be seen a portion of elm and sycamore." Wilberforce's soil was "extremely fertile. All kinds of grain, &c., produced north of the Carolinas, succeed well here." Moreover, the abundance of fauna offered black refugee newcomers other sources of food and resources. Many settlers began hunting and selling animal skins and fur to traders. "The forest," wrote Austin Steward, "abounded with deer, wolves, bears, and other wild animals." There were also nearby limestone quarries and streams with fresh water.[405]

Wilberforce's leaders set about promoting the settlement and its early achievements. In particular, they described the resilience and ingenuity of the black settlers. Austin Steward, a formerly enslaved black abolitionist and president of the

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[403] "From the National Gazette," *Indiana Palladium,* Apr. 10, 1830; Benjamin Lundy, *The Life, Travels and Opinions of Benjamin Lundy, Including His Journey to Texas and Mexico; with a Sketch of Contemporary Events, and a Notice of the Revolution in Hayti* (Philadelphia: William D. Parrish, 1847), 240.

[404] Taylor, *Frontiers of Freedom*, 65-67; Convention of the People of Color, First Annual (1831: Philadelphia, PA), "Minutes and Proceedings of the First Annual Convention of the People of Colour, held by adjustments in the city of Philadelphia, from the sixth to the eleventh of June, inclusive, 1831.," *Colored Conventions Project Digital Records*, accessed May 20, 2020, https://omeka.coloredconventions.org/items/show/72.

[405] "WILBERFORCE SETTLEMENT," *Genius of Universal Emancipation*, reprinted in *Liberator*, May 12, 1832; Austin Steward, *Twenty-Two Years a Slave, and Forty Years a Freeman; Embracing a Correspondence of Several Years, While President of Wilberforce Colony, London, Canada West* (Rochester: William Alling, Exchange Street, 1857), 194, accessed Sep. 10, 2018. https://docsouth.unc.edu/fpn/steward/steward.html.

settlement, recalled that there were "some fourteen or fifteen families, and numbered over fifty persons in all" by 1831. In another letter, Steward claimed that the Wilberforce settlers "have erected for our accommodations comfortable log buildings," as well as a sabbath school. Additionally, they built three sawmills and erected a grist mill. At its height, Wilberforce comprised a few hundred black settlers. A correspondent for the *Rochester Observer*, for instance, wrote, "I was much pleased to observe the exertions making among them to rise above prejudice and slavery… [and] I am of the opinion that this colony will ere long, convince the enemies of the African race, of having spoken wrong concerning them."[406]

Despite its early promise, the Wilberforce settlement soon fell into decline. Fundraising campaigns in the United States and Great Britain failed to generate the necessary income to support Wilberforce. Moreover, the personal rift between Israel Lewis and the board of managers quickly publicized and undermined Wilberforce's credibility. Steward and his supporters accused Lewis of embezzling funds and warned people against giving him donations. New York abolitionist Arthur Tappan claimed that Lewis "obtained in this city, at different times, upwards of Fifteen Hundred Dollars… of which money he has paid over short of One Hundred Dollars, and gives no account of the funds collected by him." Likewise, the Michigan Anti-Slavery Society disapproved of Lewis' management and recommended that allies "withhold all contributions from the society under existing circumstances." Ultimately, Wilberforce's board of managers severed all ties with Lewis, and the settlement continued to decline. Over the 1840s, black settlers were supplanted by European immigrants.[407]

What happened to the Wilberforce settlers? Some moved to the 'Queen's Bush,' a region of uncleared wilderness in central Ontario (roughly present-day Waterloo and Wellington Counties). Linda Kubisch-Brown writes that the Queen's Bush "comprised an area eight by twelve miles." By the mid-1840s, the region's black community was highly diverse, comprised of self-emancipated refugees from enslavement, self-purchased, freed, and free-born blacks. At its peak, more than 1,500 blacks resided in the Queen's Bush.[408] The new settlers cleared the forests, built

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[406] Taylor, *Frontiers of Freedom*, 68; Steward, *Twenty-Two Years a Slave*, 182; Ripley et al. (eds.), *BAP: vol. 2: Canada, 1830-1865*, 47-49; "IMPROVEMENTS AMONG COLORED PEOPLE," *Rochester Observer*, reprinted in *Liberator*, Nov. 5, 1831.

[407] Taylor, *Frontiers of Freedom*, 75-79; Ripley et al. (eds.), *BAP: vol. 2: Canada, 1830-1865*, 57-58, 63; Arthur Tappan, "CAUTION TO THE PUBLIC," *Liberator*, Mar. 9, 1833; Michigan State Anti-Slavery Society, *Report of the Meeting of the Michigan State Anti-Slavery Society June 28th, 1837, Being the First Annual Meeting, Adjourned from June 1st, 1837* (Detroit, MI: Geo. L. Whitney, 1837), 9, accessed May 28, 2020. http://ebooks.library.cornell.edu/cgi/t/text/pageviewer-idx?c=mayantislavery&cc=mayantislavery&idno=04820111&q1=Canada&view=image&seq=1&size=100.

[408] Linda Kubisch-Brown, *The Queen's Bush Settlement: Black Pioneers, 1839-1865* (Toronto: Natural Heritage Books, 2004), 52-53. For more on the Queen's Bush, see Natasha L. Henry, *Emancipation Day: Celebrating Freedom in Canada* (Toronto: Natural Heritage Books, 2010), 156-158.

homes, and established farmsteads with limited resources on unfamiliar terrain. William Jackson, who traveled to the Queen's Bush in 1846, told Drew, "We went four and a half miles beyond the other farms, to Castenogo, where he cleared up and had a farm; for years scarcely any white people came in, but fugitive slaves came in, in great numbers, and cleared the land." Similarly, Thomas L. Wood Knox from Pennsylvania, noted "Most of the colored people living here are doing as well, if not better, than one could reasonably expect. Most of the grown people among them are fugitive slaves." John Francis, a self-emancipator from Virginia, claimed that the settlers were "doing pretty well – they have many drawbacks: as they can keep no books nor accounts, they are liable to be over-reached – and are overreached sometimes."[409]

From the outset, the Queen's Bush settlers exhibited an independent, industrious spirit. John Little recalled that he and his wife built "a little log hut amid the snow" and cleared the lands. He cultivated a range of vegetables and grains, and also owned pigs, horses, and oxen. He claimed to have raised "several hundred of bushels of wheat last year, two hundred bushels of potatoes, one hundred bushels of peas, two hundred and fifty bushels of oats, and ten tons of hay[.]" His unnamed wife's testimony illustrates that black women played an integral role in establishing farms. She claimed, "I could hand an axe, or hoe, or any thing [sic]. I felt proud to be able to do it – to help get cleared up, so that we could have a home, and plenty to live on. I now enjoy my life very well – I have nothing to complain of."[410]

Nevertheless, the Queen's Bush was soon beset by legal and financial problems. Most newcomers established their farms on Clergy Reserves, which had not been aside for black settlement. Upper Canada's Governor General eventually agreed to allow the settlers to procure their lands but set payment terms which most could not afford. Consequently, settlers began to leave the Queen's Bush for nearby locales. Thomas Knox noted, "Many have removed to Owen's Sound and other places," while William Jackson told Drew, "A great many who sold out went to Mr. King's settlement [discussed later], and to Owen Sound."[411]

The Western District (present-day Essex and Chatham-Kent Counties) saw the greatest influx of African American refugees. In particular, the black populations of Essex and Chatham-Kent grew exponentially. By 1851, African-descended people comprised roughly eleven percent of Essex County's total population. Almost 2,400 people of African descent were recorded in the 1861 census, although the true figure was likely higher. In Windsor, Benjamin Drew estimated that there were "fifty families of colored people, some of whom entertain as boarders a number of fugitives

[409] Drew, *North-Side View of Slavery*, 189, 191, 195-197.
[410] Drew, *North-Side View of Slavery*, 215-219, 233.
[411] Henry, *Emancipation Day*, 156; Drew, *North-Side View of Slavery*, 190, 191.

from bondage." Meanwhile, about twenty-one black families lived in nearby Sandwich. Farther south, Amherstburg was another prominent haven for freedom seekers. James Bryce Brown recalled that Amherstburg was "a town famed as the great landing-place and asylum for runaway slaves from the adjacent states." He noted that many refugees were "engaged in growing and preparing tobacco for the Montreal market; and have a church and school-house in the small but pleasantly situated town." Likewise, English emigrant Joseph Pickering recalled that there were "some hundreds of these people settled at Sandwich and Amherstburg, who are formed into a volunteer militia corps, and trained to arms."[412]

Slave refugees also documented the region's early black communities. Henry Goings wrote that Amherstburg's black community was "doing well" settled in the town for a short time before moving farther inland. Meanwhile, William Troy provides excellent insight into Essex County's refugee community. He became a pastor in Amherstburg before

Figure 13: Slave refugees in Windsor, n.d.
Source: A group of refugee settlers, of Windsor, Ontario. Mrs. Anne Mary Jane Hunt, Mansfield Smith, Mrs. Lucinda Seymour, Henry Stevenson, Bush Johnson. (From a recent photograph). From the Schomburg Photographs and Prints Division (Slavery – Fugitive Slaves). SC-CN-93-0229. Slavery, Abolition & Social Justice. Adam Matthew Digital. Universiteit Leiden/LUMC. 11 Nov., 2019.

[412] Irene Moore Davis, "Canadian Black Settlements in the Detroit River Region," in Smardz Frost and Tucket (eds.), *A Fluid Frontier*, 83-86, 92-94; Drew, *North-Side View of Slavery*, 321; James Bryce Brown, *Views of Canada and the Colonists: Embracing the Experience of a Residence; Views of the Present State, Progress, and Prospects of the Colony; with Detailed and Practical Information for Intending Emigrants* (Edinburgh: Adam and Charles Black, 1844), 18-19; Pickering, Joseph. Emigration, or no emigration: being the narrative of the author, (an English farmer) from the year 1824 to 1830; during which time he traversed the United States of America, and the British province of Canada, with a view to settle as en emigrant: containing observations on the manners and customs – the soil and climate of the countries; and a comparative statement on the advantages and disadvantages offered in the United States and Canada: thus enabling persons to form a judgement on the propriety of emigrating. London, 1830. Slavery and Anti-Slavery. Gale. Universiteit Leiden/LUMC. 10 June 2020, 65.

moving to Windsor, where his congregation was "composed chiefly of fugitive slaves." Troy claimed that about 3,000 people lived in Windsor, of whom "eight hundred are coloured settlers from various portions of the Southern States of America… In Sandwich there are about five hundred fugitive slaves. Adjacent to both these towns are large numbers of fugitives, mostly engaged in farming." Others worked as "carpenters and joiners, bricklayers, masons, plasterers, and boot and shoe makers." Troy's account presents a highly industrious spirit to the black refugee settlers in Windsor, Sandwich, and Amherstburg. However, he also wrote that the refugee communities had "much to contend with from the prejudices of the white people, which may be considered as a result of the influence of their contact with Yankees." Despite this, he acknowledged that racial prejudice was "being removed slowly, but is being removed: it is not as strong as it has been. Yet it is very powerful."[413]

Slave refugees worked predominantly in unskilled or semi-skilled occupations, such as day laborers, barbers, shoemakers, carpenters, blacksmiths, cooks, and waiters. Spencer Jackson of George Street, Amherstburg was recorded as a laborer in the 1861 census and a list of 'colored' citizens in 1866. Meanwhile, George Crawford worked as a carpenter in the town, and David Smith as a barber. Others worked as sailors and dockworkers in the Detroit River and Lake Erie commercial trades. Washington and Luther Bush, James Case, George Cooper, and John Green were all listed as sailors in the 1866 assessment rolls.[414] Similarly, Henry Goings worked aboard steamboats on the River Thames.[415] Trade between farmers, merchants, and businesses in Essex County and Detroit created a thriving regional economy. Henry Bibb claimed, "Our stores and shops here are thronged with customers… many come from Detroit here to trade… our docks are so frequently crowded with steamboats and sailing vessels loading and unloading, that there is scarcely room for the ferry boats to land." The *Voice of the Fugitive* mentioned that "a colored friend of ours to-day cross on the ferry boat with almost 200 dozen of eggs,

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[413] Goings, et. al., *Rambles of a Runaway Slave,* 41; William Troy, *Hair-Breadth Escapes from Slavery to Freedom* (Manchester: W. Bremner, 11, Market Street, and 15, Piccadilly, 1861), 7-9, accessed Mar. 20, 2019. https://docsouth.unc.edu/neh/troy/troy.html#p100. Troy's *Hair-Breadth Escapes* are also discussed in Gordon S. Barker, "Revisiting "British Principle" Talk" Antebellum Black Expectations and Racism in Early Ontario," in Pargas (ed.), *Fugitive Slaves,* 34-69.

[414] 'Spencer Jackson,' Census of the Canadas, 1861, Essex County, Canada West. MS C-1019-1020. Item Number: 1997653. LAC, accessed Jul. 1, 2019. https://www.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/census/1861/Pages/item.aspx?itemid=1997653; 'George Crawford,' Census of the Canadas, 1861, Essex County, Canada West. LAC, microfilm C-1019-1020. Item Number: 1033147. Accessed via: https://www.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/census/1861/Pages/item.aspx?itemid=1033147; 'David Smith,' Census of the Canadas, 1861, Essex County, Canada West. LAC, microfilm C-1019-1020. Item Number: 1033021. Accessed via: https://www.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/census/1861/Pages/item.aspx?itemid=1033021; "A'burg Colored Citizens – 1866," Alvin McCurdy Fonds. F 2076 3. LAC, MS 1167. AO. Toronto. Unfortunately, there is no way to determine if these individuals were self-liberated refugees or legally free people of color using these sources alone.

[415] Goings, et. al., *Rambles of a Runaway Slave,* 48.

six or eight turkeys with chickens and butter[.]" In 1859, the *Cleveland Morning Leader* reported, "At Windsor I made the acquaintance of many [blacks] who had "emigrated" from various parts of the South, and I was much gratified to find so many who had once toiled without remuneration, now hard at work for their wives and little ones, owning a good property and continually accumulating." Among them was a refugee from Kentucky who "has now three pretty little houses and lots[.]"[416]

Elsewhere, about 350 black residents resided in Anderson, and about 450 in Colchester, and 78 in Gosfield. Refugee communities were also documented in Fort Erie, Malden, New Canaan, Tilbury, Lakeshore, Rochester, Little River, Puce, Leamington, and Harrow. Southwestern Ontario's soil was rich and fertile – very suitable for small-scale farming. Henry Bibb's *Voice of the Fugitive* claimed that there were "about 6000 acres of Canada Company land for sale… [the] price of which is from $2 to $2.50 per acre." Those who grew hemp and flax were often able "to reap an abundant harvest[.]" Irene Moore Davis writes that other black farmers grew a range of crops, including "tobacco, wheat, corn, oats, potatoes, sweet potatoes, and a variety of other vegetables and fruits, and raised livestock and poultry." The lands at Malden, wrote the *Voice*, were covered with "hickory, black walnut, white oak, &c., in abundance… and the tallest blue grass we have ever seen." Another traveler noted, "The soil at Malden seems superior to that of Colchester and improves, on approaching Amherstburg, to the finest quality… a considerable amount of tobacco is here grown, chiefly by the black population."[417]

Essex County's black communities were diverse, transnational bodies, composed of slave refugees, free African Americans, African Canadians, and others. Genealogical records highlight the transnational nature of black Canadian communities in the region. Samuel Gabriel Clingman, an enslaved African American from Kentucky, escaped to Canada in the early 1820s. About twenty-five years later, his son also fled from Kentucky with his wife and their three children. The family resettled in Colchester, where they had eight more children. Similarly, Washington and Jemima Hurst, a formerly enslaved couple reportedly from Virginia, were recorded in Colchester with their seven children. Ten years later, Washington Hurst owned twenty-four acres, all of which were employed for cultivation.[418]

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[416] "Progress of Improvement in Windsor," *VF*, Jun. 3, 1852; "CANADA CORRESPONDENCE," *CML*, Dec. 7, 1859.
[417] Drew, *North-Side View of Slavery*, 367, 378; "HEMP AND FLAX GROWING," *VF*, Mar. 12, 1851; Davis, "Canadian Black Settlements," 83-84, 96; "Agricultural Resources," *VF*, Jun. 17, 1852; Patrick Sheriff, *A Tour Through North America; Together with a Comprehensive View of the Canadas and United States. As Adapted for Agricultural Emigration* (Edinburgh: Oliver & Boyd, 1835), 207.
[418] "Clingman Family," *amherstburgfreedom.org*, accessed Jun. 5, 2019. https://amherstburgfreedom.org/clingman-family/; "Hurst Family (Washington), *amherstburgfreedom.org*, accessed Jun. 5, 2019. https://amherstburgfreedom.org/hurst-family-washington/.

In Upper Canada, slave refugees managed to attain a modicum of independence. George Williams of Sandwich told Drew, "I work at whitewashing, etc. I rent a house and own a small piece of land. The colored men here are getting a living." James Smith of Amherstburg claimed, "I am doing tolerably well in Canada, and am getting a very comfortable living. I own a lot of land worth about two hundred dollars, and have other property. I keep a grocery, and sell to all who will buy, without distinction of color." Robert Nelson of Colchester claimed, "I can raise corn sixty or seventy bushels to the acre, as good corn as ever was raised in the South."[419]

Nevertheless, poverty remained a pervasive issue for black refugee communities in Essex. Jermain W. Loguen's narrative claims that the recently arrived freedom seekers were unable to find employment in Windsor, which compelled him to journey farther inland. Meanwhile, Robert Nelson recalled, "The prejudice is higher here in this place than in any part of Canada. It arises from a wish to keep the colored people so that they can get their labor." He noted the existence of "begging agencies" which raised donations for blacks in Essex County. Local activists founded organizations designed to aid slave refugees in the Western District. Benjamin Drew referenced the local 'True Band,' society, a 'self-help' relief agency that sought to disperse funds among the black refugees and aid newcomers in finding homes, land, and jobs. Adrienne Shadd writes True Bands grew in popularity and spread to other refugee communities.[420]

Black activists and white abolitionists promoted affordable land distribution schemes to slave refugees. The Refugee Home Society (RHS) was the most notable attempt to provide lands for freedom seekers in Essex. Led by Michigan abolitionists, its central purpose was "to assist the refugees from American slavery; to obtain permanent homes in Canada; and to promote their moral, social, physical and intellectual elevation." RHS sponsors purchased 2,000 acres around Sandwich and Maidstone. Refugees could buy twenty-five acre lots via multi-annual repayments. Henry Bibb was chosen to manage the RHS. In 1852, his newspaper, the *Voice of the Fugitive*, reported that "twelve worthy settlers" had already bought lands under the RHS banner and were "now slaying down the tall forest and converting it into

[419] Drew, *North-Side View of Slavery*, 343, 353, 370.

[420] Jermain W. Loguen, *The Rev. J.W. Loguen as a Slave and a Freeman* (Syracuse, NY: J.G.K. Truair & co, 1859), 338, accessed Jun. 20, 2019. https://docsouth.unc.edu/neh/loguen/loguen.html; Drew, *North-Side View of Slavery*, 371-372. Adrienne Shadd, "Extending the Right Hand of Fellowship: Sandwich Baptist Church, Amherstburg First Baptist, and the Amherstburg Baptist Association," in Smardz and Frost (eds.), *A Fluid Frontier*, 127. For more on black Canadian settlements in Essex County, see Simpson, *Under the North Star*, 271-314. The 'begging' question remained a contentious issue among black abolitionists in Upper Canada. See Michael F. Hembree, "The Question of Begging: Fugitive Slave Relief in Canada, 1830-1865," *Civil War History* 37, no. 4 (1991), 314-327.

cordwood… All the persons can now for the first time in their lives say that they are landholders in a free country."[421]

The RHS lands, Bibb claimed, were "well timbered with white oak, beech, white ash, black ash, hickory, basswood, &c. The soil is of black sandy loam, with clay bottom, and is well adapted for the growing of wheat, corn, potatoes, and all kinds of products that will grow in the State of Ohio or Michigan." Other RHS agents praised Bibb's leadership and affirmed the new land-owning scheme's value to black refugees in Upper Canada. Rev. Charles C. Foote declared, "Too much praise cannot be awarded to them for what they are doing for the fugitive." The RHS' reports were highly positive about the settlers' progress. The Third Annual Report from 1855 that most families on RHS were "in possession of improved homes, pleasant gardens, growing orchards and increasing stock."[422]

The RHS was also met with criticism, however. Samuel Ringgold Ward insisted that there was "no need of any other land-buying or land-selling organizations in Canada, for Fugitives or others, than those provided by our laws… my mind is that the Fugitives who choose to be farmers, can find abundant facilities for acquisition of land in Canada without the aid of the Society in question." Likewise, James Theodore Holly criticized the RHS as "a continuation of the disgraceful begging system" which "discourages self-reliance on the part of the fugitives." Mary Ann Shadd Cary, a free-born black activist, accused Bibb of deliberately misappropriating funds and, in a letter to William Lloyd Garrison, wrote that RHS settlers were "begging for money and clothes[.]" In response, Bibb dismissed these criticisms and claimed that the Windsor protestors were "*only* by a set of half cracked, hot headed individuals[.]"[423]

In the end, sustained criticism of the RHS, as well as Henry Bibb's death in 1854, proved fatal to the RHS. Testimonies from refugee settlers were decidedly mixed. Thomas Jones claimed that the settlers were "not doing very well… Some dissatisfaction exists because there has been an advance made of four shillings an acre for surveying, although the land had been surveyed once. The refugees all

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[421] "Refugees' Home Society," *VF*, Aug. 12, 1852; "REPORT OF THE REFUGEE'S HOME SOCIETY," *FDP*, Oct. 15, 1852; "The Refugee's Home," *VF*, Oct. 21, 1852; Kerry Walters, *The Underground Railroad: A Reference Guide* (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2012), 174-175.

[422] "Land for the Refugee's Home," *VF*, Dec. 16, 1852; C.C. Foote, "The Colored People in Canada – Do They Need Help?," *Liberator*, Dec. 24, 1852; "THE REFUGEE HOME SOCIETY," *ASB*, Dec. 29, 1855.

[423] "TRAVELING AGENTS FOR THE FUGITIVES HOME SOCIETY IN MICH.," *VF*, Jun. 18, 1851; S. R. Ward, "The Fugitives and Their Needs," *NASS*, Jan. 20, 1853; J. Theodore Holly, "Refugees' Home Society," *Liberator*, Mar. 4, 1853; Cary, Mary Ann Shadd, and William Lloyd Garrison. "Letter from Mary Ann Shadd, Windsor [Ontario], to William Lloyd Garrison, 1852 Oct[ober] 5." Correspondence. October 5, 1852. *Digital Commonwealth*, accessed Jun. 3, 2020. https://www.digitalcommonwealth.org/search/commonwealth:2v23x214t; Jane Rhodes, *Mary Ann Shadd Cary: The Black Press and Protest in the Nineteenth Century* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1998), 41-42, 61-62; Washington, "'I Am Going Straight for Canada'" in Smardz Frost and Tucker (eds.), *A Fluid Frontier*, 175.

refused to pay it." He added that the RHS Constitution had been amended without the settlers' consent, resulting in much less favorable terms for them. "They were to clear up the five acres in three years," he noted; "They have altered the constitution bringing it down to two years." Overall, those who remained on RHS lands had begun "to think 't is a humbug."[424]

While many newspaper articles stress the progress made by slave refugee settlers, others highlight the challenges which they faced. The *Cadiz Democratic Sentinel* reported that communities in Anderson, Sandwich, Malden, and Colchester were "small, and invariably sunk into poverty." White Canadians, it added, opposed the arrival of African American refugees because "it depresses the value of their property, diminishes their personal comfort and safety [,] and destroys the peace and good order of the community." Freedom seekers, wrote the *Sentinel*, "go into Canada as beggars, and the mass of them commit larceny and lay in jail until they become lowered and debased, and ready for worse crimes." The newspaper's aim becomes readily apparent in another section, in which it asks readers if they were "willing to have the value of their lands depreciated, and to subject their crops and stock to constant depredations by inviting here the same class of neighbors that at present deplete who Canadian townships of their sheep?"[425]

Chatham-Kent was another popular destination for African American refugees. Indeed, the *Cincinnati Daily Press* called Chatham "the headquarters of the negro race in Canada[.]"[426] Historians have long noted Chatham-Kent's prominence as a center for slave refugees in Upper Canada. Kate Clifford Larson writes, "Chatham and nearby communities had larger and more well-established black fugitive communities"[427] John Little, a formerly enslaved resident of the town, claimed, "the fugitives are as thick as blackbirds in a corn-field." After visiting Chatham, Benjamin Drew estimated that 800 black residents lived and worked in the region (approximately one-third of the total population). "At every turn," he wrote, "he [visitors] meets members of the African race, single or in groups; he sees them building and painting houses, working in mills, engaged in every handicraft employment: here he notices a street occupied by colored shopkeepers and clerks, working in mills, engaged in every handicraft employment: here he notices a street occupied by colored shopkeepers and clerks[.]" By 1861, more than 1,200 black people were recorded in Chatham.[428]

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[424] Walter, *Underground Railroad*, 114; Drew, *North Side View of Slavery*, 327-328 (Jones quotes).
[425] "TRACTS FOR THE PEOPLE," (Cadiz, OH) *Cadiz Democratic Sentinel*, Feb. 1, 1860.
[426] "FUGITIVE SLAVES IN CANADA," *Cincinnati Daily Press* (Cincinnati, OH), Feb. 28, 1861.
[427] Larson, *Bound for the Promised Land*, 117.
[428] Drew, *North-Side View of Slavery*, 234; Howard Law, "'Self-Reliance is the True Road to Independence': Ideology and Ex-Slaves in Buxton and Chatham," in Ventresca, Draper, and Iacovetta (eds.), *A Nation of Immigrants*, 83. Paul Heicke, "Out of Chatham: Abolitionism on the Canadian frontier," *Atlantic Studies* 8, no. 2 (2011), 169. For more on black settlement in Chatham, see Simpson,

Abolitionists and newspaper reports discuss the condition of slave refugees in Chatham-Kent. Samuel J. May wrote, "Chatham is the asylum of about five hundred colored people, nearly all of them fugitives from our country" He noted that they worked as "carpenters, blacksmiths, cabinet makers, shoemakers, &c., without let or hindrance." Testimonies from black refugees in the region also shed light on their condition in the region. Edward Hicks stated, "I have been here about six years. I like Canada well – I am satisfied with it. I have gotten a little property together, worth some two thousand dollars." Thomas Hedgebeth, who escaped from North Carolina, declared, "I like the country, the soil, as well as any country I ever saw. I like the laws, which leave a man as much freedom as a man can have[.]"[429] At the same time, black refugees encountered various obstacles in Chatham-Kent. Samuel Ringgold Ward wrote, "there is not a town in Canada, in which the feeling against Negroes is stronger than in Chatham. Most of the white settlers in Chatham were low, degraded persons, in early and former life. They are the Negro-haters."[430]

Slave refugees also established their homes and communities across the Niagara River borderland. St. Catharines was home to hundreds of slave refugees. Rev. Alexander Hemsley, a self-emancipator from Maryland, told Drew, "When I reached St. Catharines I was enfeebled in health… I rented a house, and with another man took five acres of cleared land, and got along with it very well. We did not get enough from this to support us; but I got work at half a dollar or seventy-five cents a day and board myself." Hotels and steamboats regularly employed black waiters, servants, and workers. William Grose claimed that he worked in the Clifton House, one of the most popular hotels in the region. Yet small numbers worked in semi-skilled and skilled professions. William Johnson recalled, "I have been about among the colored people in St. Catharines considerably, and have found them industrious and frugal."[431]

In 1853, the *Provincial Freeman* informed readers that the "prejudice against our people, was not so strong, so prevalent nor so unprovoked as we had thought, from what we had heard." It added that black residents were "not the poorest in the town, by a good deal. Many of them own little houses and lots, and enjoy a comfortable maintenance." As an example, the *Freeman* insisted that John W. Lindsay, a self-emancipator from Tennessee, and James Harris "live as comfortably as any one [sic] needs to live. Each of them has a good team, and they are making as rapid progress, in worldly wealth, as the majority of their white fellow-subjects." The 'Negro Village' (a large black community) was far from the "mud-hold" which they

Under the North Star, 314-317; Jonathan W. Walton, "Blacks in Buxton and Chatham, Ontario, 1830-1990: Did the 49th Parallel Make a Difference (PhD diss., Princeton University, 1979).

[429] Samuel J. May, "LETTER FROM SAMUEL J. MAY. – NO. II," *FDP*, Aug. 27, 1852; Drew, *North-Side View of Slavery*, 269, 279.

[430] Ward, *Autobiography*, 201.

[431] Drew, *North-Side View of Slavery*, 30, 39, 44.

expected; "The site is good, the property valuable, the part of the town respectable, and whites live in the most immediate vicinity."[432]

Other testimonies illustrate the prominence of prejudice and poverty in the Niagara River borderland. John W. Lindsay stated, "I find the prejudice here the same as in the States. I don't find any difference at all. In fact, as far as prejudice goes, the slaveholders have not so much absolute prejudice as the people here – not half." Lindsay detailed tensions between black settlers and European immigrants. "The Irish," he alleged, "are getting so, down at the docks, where the colored men may do a few hours' work, once in a while, loading & unloading, that they want to run them off the docks." Similarly, one 'Mrs. Ellis' claimed, "Rents and provisions are dear here, and it takes all I can earn to support myself and children." Black newcomers settled in nearby towns and communities, such as Niagara-on-the-Lake, Niagara Falls, Drummondville, Fort Erie, and Port Stanley. William Kirby's *Annals of Niagara* from 1896 notes that "between four and five hundred blacks had settled" in Niagara, and that a "portion of the town was called Negro Town from so many of that class living in that quarter. They were quiet, peaceable and industrious, most loyal and grateful to the British Government, which protected them in their self-acquired freedom."[433]

Situated on the northern shores of Lake Ontario, Toronto had one of the largest black populations in the province. In 1802, eighteen free people of color were documented in the city minutes. Of course, enslaved and indentured blacks also resided in the city around this time.[434] Over the nineteenth century, Toronto experienced rapid growth and socio-economic development (although it remained smaller than most major cities in the northern states). Aside from white settlers, Toronto also became home to a rising black population. Diaries, travelogues, and newspaper reports shed light on Toronto's black community. In 1846, James Taylor noted that the city was "composed of people from all nations, but principally from the shores of Ireland… A few hundreds of the coloured tribe constituted part of the last census… the generality of them appear to be a very industrious and sober race, very orderly in their conduct, and their dress on a Sabbath is of a neat and becoming

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[432] "A Recent Tour," *PF*, Mar. 24, 1854. For more on St. Catharines black community and transnational antislavery operations in the Niagara borderland, see Clinton, *Harriet Tubman*; Broyld, "'Over the Way'"; and Dann J. Broyld, "The "Dark Sheep" of the Atlantic World: Following the Transnational Trail of Blacks to Canada," in Benjamin Talton and Quincy T. Mills (eds.), *Black Subjects in Africa and Its Diasporas* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 95-108.

[433] Blassingame (ed.), *Slave Testimony*, 397, 404-405; Drew, *North-Side View of Slavery*, 86-87; William Kirby, *Annals of Niagara* (Welland, ON: Tribune, 1896), 230, accessed May 27, 2020. https://www.canadiana.ca/view/oocihm.09996/241?r=0&s=1. 'Negro Town' is also referenced in Severance, *Old Trails on the Niagara Frontier*, 234. For more on other black refugee settlements in the Niagara border zone, see Simpson, *Under the North Star*, 384-395.

[434] "York, Upper Canada Minutes of town meetings and lists of inhabitants, July 17, 1797 – January 6, 1823," *TPL Virtual Exhibits*, accessed Feb. 15, 2020, http://omeka.tplcs.ca/virtual-exhibits/exhibits/show/freedom-city/item/141.

description[.]" Many black residents were recently arrived settlers from the United States who had "spent part of their lives in slavery[.]"[435]

As newcomers settled in Toronto, the city quickly became a bustling metropolis. Indeed, Taylor was impressed by the speed and scale of the city's development. "The streets," he recalled, "they are planking and macadamizing, improving the side walks [sic], and making deep drains, which are strongly arched over with bricks, and rapidly progressing… The numerous improvements, in addition to the immense building speculations, gives life and activity to the appearance of the City of Toronto."[436] Other travelers also documented Toronto's economic growth. Henry A. Murray noticed that the city was "prettily situated, and looks flourishing and prosperous; the way in which property is increasing in value here is wonderful[.]" Toronto's status as a port city on Lake Ontario undoubtedly contributed to its socio-economic growth. As Murray wrote, Toronto's geographical location meant that it was "admirably adapted for a great commercial city[.]"[437]

For slave refugees, Toronto must have been an exciting city filled with social and economic promise. Walter Hawkins experiences resembled that of newly arrived refugees in the city. Born enslaved in Georgetown, Maryland, Hawkins escaped from the South upon learning that he was to be sold following the death of his enslaver. During this time, he worked as a waiter in Buffalo, New York, and later as a farmer and grocer in New Bedford, Massachusetts. In response to the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850, Hawkins resolved to migrate to Upper Canada. His memoir notes that he "had come to Toronto a perfect stranger, and nearly penniless, so that it took all he could earn to build up his home[.]" Hawkins later became a preacher and journeyed throughout the province.[438]

By 1850, roughly 47,000 people lived in Toronto. The *Friends' Intelligencer* estimated that between 1,200 and 1,600 people of African descent resided in the city. Drew noted that most blacks lived "in the north-western section of the city. Their houses resemble those of the same class of persons in St. Catharines[.]" St. John's Ward popular among black refugees, as well as European immigrants. According to Drew, black Torontonians "own the houses in which they dwell, and some have acquired valuable estates." Robert Belt claimed, "I got work soon after my arrival

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[435] James Taylor, *Narrative of a Voyage to, and Travels in, Upper Canada: With Accounts of the Customs, Character, and Dialect of the Country: Also, Remarks on Emigration, Agriculture, &c.* (Hull: John Nicholson, 48, Lowgate, 1846), 18.
[436] Taylor, *Narrative*, 22-23.
[437] Henry A. Murray, *Lands of the Slave and the Free: Or, Cuba, the United States, and Canada* (London: John W. Parker and Son, 1855), 87, accessed May 21, 2020. https://www.canadiana.ca/view/oocihm.39363.
[438] S.J. Celestine Edwards, *From Slavery to a Bishropic, or, The Life of Bishop Walter Hawkins of the British Methodist Episcopal Church Canada* (London: John Kensit, 1891), 129, accessed May 29, 2020. https://docsouth.unc.edu/neh/edwardsc/edwards.html?fbclid=IwAR1-vlhxCJ2qlrtniNbQDSBbyG4Mqc3tnLLGEzO5_FQRuiuthBXg9rVWc74#Edwards86.

here, which was quite recent: since I have been here, I have prospered well." Likewise, William Howard declared, "Canada is the best place that ever I saw: I can make more money here than anywhere else I know of. The colored people, taken as a whole, are as industrious as any people you will find."[439]

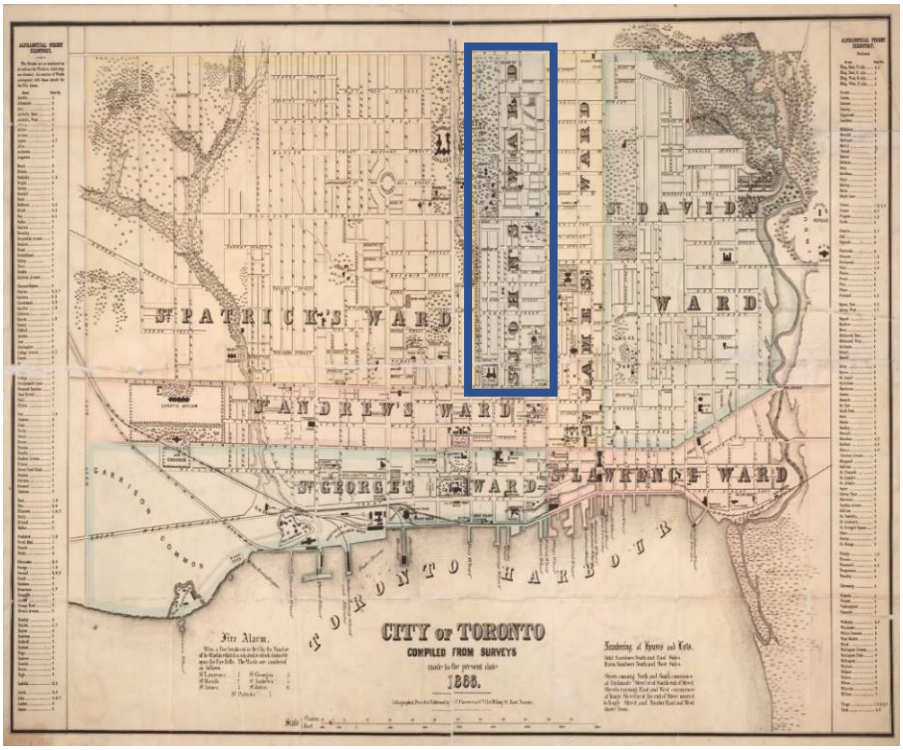

Figure 14: Map of Toronto, 1866. St. John's Ward highlighted.

Source: "City of Toronto compiled from surveys made to the present date 1866," *TPL Virtual Exhibits*, accessed January 22, 2020, http://omeka.tplcs.ca/virtual-exhibits/exhibits/show/freedom-city/item/156.

Black activists and white abolitionists spoke highly of the condition and work ethic of Toronto's black community. Drew claimed black men and women in the city were "on the whole, remarkably industrious. Their condition is such as to

[439] Karolyn Smardz Frost, "A Fresh Start: Black Toronto in the 19th Century," in John Lorinc, Michael McClelland, Ellen Scheinberg and Tatum Taylor (eds.), *The Ward: The Life and Loss of Toronto's First Immigrant Neighbourhood* (Toronto: Coach House Books, 2015); 66-68; "THE NEGROES OF TORONTO," *Friends' Intelligencer*, Oct. 31, 1857; Drew, *North-Side View of Slavery*, 94, 112-113; Collison, *Shadrach Minkins*, 172; Shadd, Cooper, and Frost (eds.), *Underground Railroad: Next Stop, Toronto!*, 33-35.

gratify the philanthropist, and to afford encouragement to the friends of emancipation everywhere."[440] Most worked in unskilled or semi-skilled occupations. Some managed to establish thriving businesses and work in skilled professions. Thornton and Lucie Blackburn, self-emancipators from Kentucky, escaped to Upper Canada and started the city's first taxi cab company.[441] The 1846-47 and 1850-51 city directories document black laborers, cooks, dyers, tobacconists, fishmongers, plasterers, waiters, rope makers, barbers, grocers, tailors, whitewashers, carpenters, bricklayers, hatters, ministers, steamboat workers. In the 1850-51 directory, one Benjamin Holmes is listed as a waiter aboard the steamboat *City of Toronto*, while Henry Jones worked aboard the steamboat *America*. As was the case in industrialized northern cities, Toronto's harbor, markets, and factories were increasingly populated by black laborers. On Yonge Street, Toronto's longest and busiest street, slave refugees were a common presence. At its foot lay factories," writes Karolyn Smardz Frost, "where white men worked alongside skilled African American tradesmen[.]"[442]

That being said, others were concerned about reports of poverty in Toronto's black communities. In 1852, Samuel J. May wrote to abolitionists Charles and Caroline Wells Healey Dall about reports he had received "from several of the fugitives in Canada West, representing that they are in a very suffering condition and begging for aid from us." In response, May and others sought to determine "whether there are in Toronto and vicinity, cases of suffering among the fugitives, which are not met & cannot be, by the charity of those around, or by employment furnished to such as are able to work." According to May, he had received letters from two refugees in nearby Hamilton "representing themselves as extremely needy."[443] Slave refugees in Toronto faced various hardships. Much of this mirrored the development of urban centers in the northern US. According to Karolyn Smardz Frost, the "employment prospects" of African-descended people "took a turn for the worse when Irish immigrants began arriving in their thousands." Unskilled black workers competed with European newcomers for low-wage jobs. Moreover, most black

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[440] Drew, *North-Side View of Slavery*, 94.
[441] For more on Thornton and Lucie Blackburn, see Smardz Frost, *I've Got a Home in Glory Land*.
[442] *Brown's Toronto City and Home District Directory. 1846-7. Containing the Names, Professions, and Addresses of the Householders in the City of Toronto, Alphabetically Arranged; the Names of Landholders in the Home District, by Townships, Stating the Concessions and Numbers of their Respective Lots; Together with a Large Amount of General Information* (Toronto: George Brown, 1846); J. Armstrong (ed.), *Roswell's City of Toronto and County of York Directory, for 1850-1; Being the 14th & 15th Years of the Reign of Her Majesty Queen Victoria, Containing an Alphabetical List of the Inhabitant Householders and Others in the City of Toronto and Village of Yorkville; also an Alphabetical List of the Inhabitant Householders and Landholders in the County of York; with a Large Amount of General Information* (Toronto: Henry Roswell, 1850), 62, "Digital Toronto City Directories," *Toronto Public Library*, accessed May 1, 2019. https://www.torontopubliclibrary.ca/history-genealogy/lh-digital-city-directories.jsp; Smardz Frost, *Steal Away Home*, 52.
[443] Samuel J. May to Charles Henry Appleton Dall and Caroline Wells Healey Dall, Jan. 24, 1852. Caroline Wells Healey Dall Papers, 1811-1917. Ms. N-1083. P-323. Reel 2, Box 2, Folder 2. MHS. Boston, MA.

residents in Toronto had to contend with poverty and illness. In the 1840s, a typhus epidemic ravaged much of the city, particularly affecting its poorer residents.[444]

In central Ontario, slave refugees settled in a range of urban and rural locales. "Hamilton," writes Adrienne Shadd, "had become a bustling town, and fugitive slaves and free Blacks were increasingly taking advantage of the opportunities it offered." Drew claimed that 274 black people resided in the city in 1854, most of whom resided in the same ward. He noted that they were "good mechanics, and good "subjects" in the English sense of the word." Self-emancipator R.S.W. Sorrick recalled that blacks in Hamilton were "not in a very good condition, when I first came here, although some were wealthy."[445] London was another popular destination for freedom seekers. James Bryce Brown estimated that approximately 300 black men and women (223 men and 77 women) lived in London, most of whom were "from the United States, and a considerable portion of them liberated or runaway slaves[.]" Brown added that most black settlers in London had "little or no opportunities of gaining the first elements of education or correct moral training, the greater part of these people find only employment of the most inferior kind."[446]

In his study, Drew estimated that 350 blacks lived in the town. Nelson Moss claimed, "There are a large majority here who are industrious; a few are wealthy; a good many are well off… Nearly all the grown colored people have been slaves." While most worked low-wage jobs, some obtained lands and became farmers. Lewis C. Chambers stated, "I rent a farm of fifty acres at London, and pay $150 a year for it. Last year, I had 350 bushels of wheat, 150 bushels of oats, and 100 bushels of peas. I own a house on that place[.]" Alfred T. Jones, who owned an apothecary store, claimed that black residents were "employed in this city in almost all the mechanic arts; also in grocery and provision stores, etc. Many are succeeding well, are buying houses, speculating in lands, and some are living on the interest of their money." Black refugee communities were also established in nearby Ingersoll, Soho, Norwich, Tillsonburg, Simcoe, and St. Thomas.[447]

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[444] Smardz Frost, *Steal Away Home*, 66.
[445] Adrienne Shadd, *The Journey from Tollgate to Parkway: African Canadians in Hamilton* (Toronto: National Heritage Books, 2010), 96; Drew, *North-Side View of Slavery*, 118-120.
[446] Brown, *Views of Canada and the Colonists*, 12-13.
[447] Drew, *North-Side View of Slavery*, 147, 152; Blassingame (ed.), *Slave Testimony*, 413; Simpson, *Under the North Star*, 372-383.

Black Elevation, Education, and Utopian Communities in the Northern US and Canada

Land and labor were not the sole concerns of freedom seekers in the northern US and British Canada. Black activists and white abolitionists believed that education was vital to black elevation. Without access to schools, colleges, and other educational initiatives, slave refugees understood that they would always remain at a socio-economic disadvantage. Alongside free blacks and white abolitionists, they campaigned for equal access to public education and, in some instances, founded new schools and biracial manual labor colleges. In general, slave refugees in Canada had greater access to schools and colleges than their US counterparts. However, most found it difficult to avail of educational opportunities due to poverty and racial prejudice. This section will examine efforts to promote black education in the northern US, the Canadian Maritimes, and Upper Canada.

Across the northern US, campaigns for black education gained new significance in the early 1830s. Hillary Moss notes this period witnessed "the birth of public education" in the United States. Common schools were founded across the country to provide children "from disparate social, religious, and economic backgrounds with a common set of values and experiences."[448] Across the North, growing numbers of white children were enrolled in common schools. Meanwhile, black people were systematically excluded from public schools. In response, African Americans moved quickly to campaign for equal access to common schools and educational initiatives. A small number of schools opened their doors to black students. In 1827, reformers in New Haven, Connecticut founded the African Improvement Society (AIS) which aimed to promote the "moral, intellectual, and religious condition" of African Americans. In Cincinnati, black residents founded the School Fund Institute in 1837 with the aim of opening schools for students of color. According to Nikki Taylor, it received enough funds to open four schools in Ohio for approximately two years. Nevertheless, common schools across the North generally remained off-limits for most black students.[449]

Furthermore, colleges, manual labor schools, and universities in the North generally denied access to black students. Beginning in the late 1820s, African Americans and white abolitionists spearheaded efforts to create new colleges for black students. The Oneida Institute in Whitestown, New York (northeast of Utica)

[448] Hilary J. Moss, *Schooling Citizens: The Struggle for African American Education in Antebellum America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009), 3

[449] Moss, *Schooling Citizens*, 3-5, 21 (quote); Taylor, *Frontiers of Freedom*, 108. The School Fund Institute schools were located in Cleveland, Columbus, Cincinnati, and Springfield respectively. For newspaper reports on the School Fund Institute, see "Schools," *CA*, Oct. 19, 1839; "SCHOOL FUND INSTITUTE," *Philanthropist*, Oct. 22, 1839.

was the first interracial manual labor school in the United States. Founded in 1827, it was built on a 115-acre tract of land. "For nearly twenty years," writes Paul Goodman, "Oneida stood as a pioneer in manual laborism." Male and female students from various socio-economic backgrounds were able to enroll at the school during its lifetime. In exchange for teaching, books, room, and board, students performed manual labor for the institute. The school and surrounding settlement "became a hotbed of abolition, [and] opened its doors to blacks[.]"[450] Over time, Oneida was praised in the abolitionist press. In 1843, the *Emancipator* reported that it "appears to be in a very promising state, and only needs the funds it deserves, in order to realize the highest hopes of its founders." It praised the manual labor system and claimed that it improved the academic, moral, and spiritual well-being of all students at Oneida. The Boston *Abolitionist* noted that faculty and students at Oneida had formed an anti-slavery society. While most students of color were free-born or manumitted, Jermain Wesley Loguen, a self-emancipator from Tennessee, was among the most well-known students at the institute. During his final year, Loguen even opened a school in Utica for African American students.[451]

In 1833, white abolitionists established Oberlin College in Oberlin, Ohio. Based on a similar model to Oneida, Oberlin represented an early model of interracial education in the antebellum North. Its early leadership and student body came predominantly from the Lane Theological Seminary in Cincinnati. After its trustees banned any debates on anti-slavery matters, several students (dubbed the 'Lane Rebels') left the seminary and founded a utopian settlement in Oberlin. The first black students at the college, writes John Frederick Bell, "studied in the preparatory department, since secondary schooling was unavailable, unaffordable, or off limits in their hometown." The first African American bachelor's student, George Boyer Vashon, was admitted in 1840. He later became a prominent civil rights activist. Others graduated with bachelor's degrees and other certificates in the following decades. At first, some white students at Oberlin College were largely opposed to the admission of black students. But this sentiment faded over time.[452]

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[450] Sinha, *The Slave's Cause*, 229; Paul Goodman, "The Manual Labor Movement and the Origins of Abolitionism," *Journal of the Early Republic* 13, no. 3 (1993), 355, 362, 365 (quotes).
[451] "ONEIDA INSTITUTE," *Emancipator*, Sep. 23, 1834; "ANTI-SLAVERY SOCIETY IN ONEIDA INSTITUTE," *Abolitionist* (Boston, MA), Aug. 1, 1833; Milton Sernett, *Abolition's Ax: Beriah Green, Oneida Institute, and the Black Freedom Struggle* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1986), 59.
[452] Goodman, "The Manual Labor Movement," 355-356; "Oberlin History," *Oberlin.edu*, accessed Oct. 28, 2019. https://www.oberlin.edu/about-oberlin/oberlin-history; John Frederick Bell, "Confronting Colorism: Interracial Abolition and the Consequences of Complexion," *Journal of the Early Republic* 39, no. 2 (2019), 245-247; "George B. Vashon," *BlackPast.org*, accessed Oct. 28, 2019. https://www.blackpast.org/african-american-history/vashon-george-b-1824-1878/; "Circular of Oberlin College," *OE*, Nov. 20, 1850. Cally L. Waite, "The Segregation of Black Students at Oberlin College after Reconstruction," *History of Education Quarterly* 41, no. 3 (2001), 344-364; J. Brent Morris, *Oberlin, Hotbed of Abolitionism: College, Community, and the Fight for Freedom and Equality in Antebellum America* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2014); Kabria Baumgartner, "Building the Future: White Women, Black Education, and Civic Inclusion in Antebellum Ohio,"

Oberlin grew steadily over the years. In 1836, the *Zion's Watchman* wrote that the college "has now about three hundred students… Freedom is discussion if allowed, and in the Oberlin College the benefits of education are bestowed without distinction of color." Just over four years later, the *Philanthropist* claimed Oberlin was "in a very flourishing condition" and praised the efforts of its faculty. Over subsequent decades, Oberlin relied heavily on donations from anti-slavery societies and activists in North America and Great Britain. In 1845, for instance, the *Oberlin Evangelist* published a report on donations to the "colored school" in Oberlin. Ultimately, students of color never comprised more than five percent of the student body, most of whom were free-born blacks. Anthony Burns (discussed in Chapter Four) was the only notable slave refugee to attend Oberlin.[453]

In many northern locales, women were at the forefront of the movement for black education. In 1837, Laura Haviland Smith, Elizabeth Margaret Chandler, and other female reformers established the Raisin Institute in Lenawee County, Michigan. The school followed Oberlin's manual labor system and admitted students without distinction of race or sex. It was also a vital UGRR stop in the region. Manisha Sinha notes that teachers and students at the school were "known for sheltering fugitive slaves[.]" Levi Coffin recalled that a self-emancipator from Kentucky named John White escaped across the Ohio River and made his way north through Indiana and Michigan. "He finally started toward Canada," wrote Coffin, "stopping on the way at the Raisin Institute… a school open to all, irrespective of color, where he met that noted abolitionist and noble-hearted woman, Laura S. Haviland, having been directed to her by me."[454]

Elsewhere, African Americans and white abolitionists founded schools in black farming communities in the Old Northwest. In 1835, Quaker Augustus Wattles (a Lane Rebel) founded the African American farming community of Carthagena in Mercer County, Ohio. Not long after, he opened the Emlen Institute, a manual labor school based on the Oberlin model. By 1840, roughly fifty students were enrolled at the school. From early on, Wattles sought to recruit teachers to work at the Emlen Institute and other schools in the region. In an 1837 letter to Henry Cowles at Oberlin, Wattles asked for "three young men to teach colored school" in Sidney and

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Journal of the Early Republic 37, no. 1 (2017), 117-145; Gary Kornblith and Carol Lasser, *Elusive Utopia: The Struggle for Racial Equality in Oberlin, Ohio* (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 2018).

[453] "OBERLIN INSTITUTE," *ZW*, Oct. 12, 1836; "OBERLIN COLLEGE INSTITUTE," *Philanthropist*, Jan. 13, 1841; "DONATIONS TO THE OBERLIN COLORED SCHOOL," *OE*, Feb. 12, 1845; Waite, "The Segregation of Black Students at Oberlin College after Reconstruction," 347.

[454] Sinha, *The Slave's Cause*, 398; Robertson, *Hearts Beating for Liberty*, 167; Coffin, *Reminiscences*, 216-217. For more on the contributions of African American and white women to black education, see Baumgartner, "Building the Future"; Kabria Baumgartner, "Love and Justice: African American Women, Education, and Protest in Antebellum New England," *Journal of Social History* 52, no. 3 (2019), 652-676.

Zanesville, Ohio, as well as Rush County, Indiana. The Emlen Institute received tremendous acclaim in abolitionist newspapers. The *Massachusetts Abolitionist* praised Wattles' efforts "in promoting education among the people of color, and in inducing and assisting them to turn their attention to the cultivation of land[.]" The school enjoyed some success but was forced to close in the 1840s due to financial difficulties.[455]

In the Cabin Creek settlement, Quakers and other reformers founded schools for black students. Minutes from a meeting of the Cabin Creek Anti-Slavery Friends in 1847 claim, "one school taught for the term of three months under the direction of the monthly meeting, 174 children of a suitable age and in the practice more or less of attending school. None growing up without education." Other entries in the society minutes note that black students at the Cabin Creek settlement received good schooling. Moreover, debates were held over boycotting goods produced by enslaved people and other anti-slavery activities. In nearby Wayne County, the Economy Anti-Slavery Society also promoted African American education and elevation. In 1840, it resolved to provide students with books, school teachers, and other resources.[456]

In 1846, white abolitionists established the Union Literary Institute (ULI). A manual labor school in a black settlement, it promoted the academic, moral, and religious elevation of African Americans. Ebenezer Tucker, the ULI's first teacher, wrote in the *National Era*, "Two hundred acres of good land belonging to the institution, and a boarding-house sufficient for forty students of both sexes, and a large and commodious seminary building, have been erected on the premises." The ULI had a biracial board of managers, with African Americans comprising four of the thirteen members. The institute received positive reviews in the abolitionist press. In 1849, however, the *Non-Slaveholder* claimed that the school was "burdened with a debt of several hundred dollars, unavoidably incurred in erecting the building, and that aid is greatly needed for their completion, and also to furnish the school with books and philosophical apparatus, and to extend its benefits to the poorest class of colored children." Yet the newspaper commended the ULI for its work in promoting

[455] Sinha, *The Slave's Cause*, 242-243, 357; Virginia Evans McCormick, *Educational Architecture in Ohio: From One-Room Schools and Carnegie Libraries to Community Education Villages* (Kent, OH: Kent State University Press, 2001), 18; Augustus Wattles to Henry Cowles, Sep. 14, 1837. Robert S. Fletcher Papers, RG 30/24. Box 4, Folder 12. OCA. Oberlin; "THE COLORED PEOPLE OF OHIO," *Massachusetts Abolitionist*, Nov. 26, 1840. For more on Carthagena and the Emlen Institute, see Jill E. Rowe, *Invisible in Plain Sight: Self-Determination Strategies of Free Blacks in the Old Northwest* (New York: Peter Lang Publishing, Inc., 2017), 69-80. For more positive assessments of Carthagena and the Emlen Institute, see "A Colored Settlement," *Liberator*, Jan. 1, 1841; "AUGUSTUS WATTLES AGAIN," *Pennsylvania Freeman*, Dec. 29, 1841; "COLORED SETTLEMENT," *Liberator*, Dec. 12, 1845.

[456] Cabin Creek Society of Anti-Slavery Friends, vol. 1. BV 0401a-d. HIS. Indianapolis, IN; Economy Anti-Slavery Society Records, 1840. SC 0021. IHS. Indianapolis, IN.

black education. The school's first annual report claimed that 137 students were enrolled at the school, 97 of whom were black.[457]

The ULI's first annual report detailed the school's activities and progress. It claimed that a "large amount of labor has been performed on the farm by the students… in chopping wood, burning it into charcoal, digging ditches, &c." Yet it is clear that there was trouble behind the scenes. The ULI's 1850 annual report claimed that the school's board of managers "experience great difficulty in sustaining the school in this early stage of its existence, with the low charge for boarding and tuition[.]" Other newspapers published optimistic reports regarding the ULI's future. The *Oberlin Evangelist* wrote that it "has done nobly for the outcast race thus far, few schools of equal means having done so much and none perhaps more."[458]

At least one freedom seeker was documented at the ULI. Levi Coffin noted that he directed a freedom seeker named Jane to William Beard, an "active agent for the Underground Railroad, who lived in Union County, Indiana, and he took her to a colored school in Randolph County, called the Union Literary Institute, and there left her to attend the school." Jane later migrated to Upper Canada. The ULI eventually fell into decline as African Americans sought opportunities elsewhere. Overall, slave refugees and free blacks managed to attend some schools or colleges in the northern US, but the overwhelming majority were legally excluded. Free people of color had better opportunities to avail of public and private education given their legal status, but even then most were unable to receive any formal education. At the same time, these early efforts soon became the model for interracial schools elsewhere, most notably in Canada.[459]

In the Canadian Maritimes, schools were also established in slave refugee communities Yet they faced numerous obstacles, most notably a lack of financial resources, books, teachers, and other materials. In 1820, James Bell submitted a petition to the provincial government for funds to continue teaching in Preston. Signed by thirty heads of households, it stated that refugee parents "wish to have their Children instructed and being in [a] state of great indigence are incapable of suporting [sic] a school master." Roughly six years later, black settlers of Hammonds Plains petitioned the lieutenant governor of the province for funds and supplies to erect "a place of worship of God but that owing to most of them being burdened with large families, they are unable to contribute as much as they would willingly do, to effect so desirable an object." In turn, the lieutenant governor requested the opinion of the

[457] Ebenezer Tucker, "UNION LITERARY INSTITUTE," *National Era*, Aug. 24, 1848; "THE UNION LITERARY INSTITUTE, INDIANA," (Philadelphia) *Non-Slaveholder*, Oct. 1, 1849; "ANNUAL REPORT OF THE UNION LITERARY INSTITUTE, INDIANA," *Non-Slaveholder*, Feb. 1, 1850.
[458] "ANNUAL REPORT OF THE UNION LITERARY INSTITUTE, INDIANA," *Non-Slaveholder*, Feb. 1, 1850; "Union Literary Institute," *OE*, May 11, 1853.
[459] Coffin, *Reminiscences*, 333.

Bishop of Nova Scotia, who advised against supporting the settlers because they may not belong to the Church of England.[460]

Schools in Maritime refugee settlements focused on basic academics, namely reading, writings, and mathematics. Having been deprived of these essential skills, African American parents greatly desired to see their children avoid the same fate. Boys and girls were admitted, although the former was more represented than the latter. An 1828 return of a Preston school reveals that sixteen out of 117 students were white. Churches and schools often acted in concert to promote their interrelated goals. In February 1834, Richard Preston and other members of Halifax's African Baptist Church appealed for additional funds to hire a school teacher. Four years later, a report from schools in Digby showed that forty-two students were enrolled at the African School in Grand Joggins.[461]

Yet the most extensive initiatives to promote black education in British North America took place in Upper Canada. African-descended people in the province struggled to obtain an education, even though common schools in the province were nominally open to all students. "Practically," wrote Samuel Gridley Howe, "… there is a distinction of color, and negroes do not have equal advantage from public instruction with whites."[462] As they became a greater presence in the province, slave refugees and free black migrants set about challenging segregation in common schools. In 1828, refugees in Ancaster and Hamilton petitioned the Lieutenant Governor for equal access to common schools. Fourteen years later, blacks in London and Wilberforce claimed that they were unable to send their children to the local school due to prevailing racial prejudice and discrimination. The following year, an anonymous slave refugee wrote to Governor-General Sir Charles T. Metcalfe, "I thought that there was not a man to be known by his colour under the

[460] "Preston schoolmaster's petition for a salary," Commissioner of Public Records. RG 1, vol. 422, no. 22 (microfilm no. 15463). NSA, accessed Aug. 10, 2019. https://novascotia.ca/archives/africanns/archives.asp?ID=87; "Petition of black residents of Hammonds Plains for assistance to build a church," Commissioner of Public Records. RG 1, vol. 422, no. 33 (microfilm no. 15463). NSA, accessed Aug. 10, 2019. https://novascotia.ca/archives/africanns/archives.asp?ID=94.

[461] "Half-yearly return of the school kept at Preston from 1st June to 1st day of November 1828," RG 14, vol. 23, no. 82 (1828) (microfilm no. 21877). NSA, accessed Aug. 10, 2019. https://novascotia.ca/archives/africanns/archives.asp?ID=97; "Return of schools in the County of Digby for the year ended the 30th Nov. 1838," RG 14, vol. 12, no. 73 (1838) (microfilm no. 21875). NSA, accessed Aug. 10, 2019. https://novascotia.ca/archives/africanns/archives.asp?ID=110; "Petition of Richard Preston for money to pay for a teacher," Nova Scotia House of Assembly – Assembly Petitions Series. RG 5, Series P, vol. 72, no. 44 (microfilm no. 9957). NSA, accessed Aug. 10, 2019. https://novascotia.ca/archives/africanns/archives.asp?ID=105.

[462] Howe, *Refugees from Slavery*, 50. William H. Pease and Jane Pease first branded nineteenth-century black settlements in the United States and Canada as 'utopian' experiments. See William H. Pease and Jane Pease, *Black Utopia: Negro Communal Experiments in America* (Madison, WI: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1961).

British flag[.]" The Governor-General's office ordered the police board to desegregate the common schools.[463]

Black education in common schools remained an important issue over the following decades. In 1850, the Upper Canadian government approved a new Common School Act, which effectively segregated public schools in the province. Two years later, Dennis Hill of Kent County petitioned to send his son to the nearby common school. Yet Chief Justice Beverly Robinson ruled that students of color had to attend separate schools if they existed. For black refugees, the lack of schools, tuition rates, and discrimination hindered their efforts to promote black education.[464] Upper Canadian whites generally opposed the racial integration of common schools. In 1854, the *St. Catharines Journal* reported that black parents tried to send their children to a recently opened school. It claimed, "that owing to the colored people crowding their children into this school-house, we were on the eve of a tumult… There is no contending against the laws of nature and the colored people must duly educate their children in the way the law provides."[465]

News of school desegregation campaigns in Upper Canada filtered to parts of the United States. In 1860, the *Dayton Daily Empire* claimed that African American refugees had taken over schools in Chatham. It stated that black settlers "declare that as they are in the majority, they will have things their own way; and the people there are too weak to prevent it." Furthermore, it made the erroneous allegation that the British government "favors the negroes, and declines to interfere… At several other points in Canada, the negroes have taken public affairs into their own hands." The central goal of this editorial, as well as others, was to rally northern whites against permitting black students in common schools at home.[466]

African Americans, African Canadians, and white abolitionists attempted to fill the void by opening schools for black refugees. The Colonial Church and School Society (CCSS) operated schools in the town for students of color. The society's 1856 report, "Excellent schools upon a scriptural basis have been established in London, C. W.; and these are likely to produce lasting benefits, not alone to the coloured race, but the whole population of the Western District of the Province." Three years later, the CCSS' reported that the mission "is still progressing favorably." The report insisted that the Mission's efforts "proved the feasibility of educating together white and colored children without reference to their origin or complexion." One

[463] Shadd, *The Journey from Tollgate to Parkway*, 18; Power and Butler, *Slavery and Freedom in Niagara*, 58; Petition of the Coloured men heads of families to Sir Charles Bagot G.C.B. Governor General of British North America. Dated: London, C.W., 10th October 1842. Fred Landon Fonds, Box B4220, Folder 18. DBW, UWO. London, Canada; Ripley et al. (eds.), *BAP: vol. 2: Canada, 1830-1865*, 97-98.
[464] Ripley et al. (eds.), *BAP: vol. 2: Canada, 1830-1865*, 243-244.
[465] Shadd, *The Journey from Tollgate to Parkway*, 116; "SCHOOLS – THE COLORED POPULATION," *St. Catharines Journal*, Jan. 8, 1854.
[466] "PRACTICAL ABOLITIONISM," *Dayton Daily Empire* (Dayton, OH), Jan. 20, 1860.

missionary in London, whose letters feature in the 1859 report, claimed that "the number of colored children [in schools] has been for some time past steadily increasing." Not only was attendance allegedly more consistent, but "many fresh names" had been added to the enrollment list. Yet the nature of seasonal agricultural work, a lack of adequate resources, and poor weather (particularly during the winter months) meant that many refugee children were unable to attend.[467]

The American Missionary Association (AMA) sponsored initiatives to educate slave refugees in Upper Canada. Black women played a particularly important role in educating black refugee children. Shirley J. Yee writes that education "was central to the community work of many black women."[468] Mary Ann Shadd Cary, a free-born black activist from Delaware, founded a school in Windsor for refugee children. Shadd was soon involved in a public feud with Henry and Mary Bibb, however, who endorsed separate schools for black students. Shadd believed that separate schools were tantamount to self-segregation.[469]

In 1851, she wrote to the AMA Secretary Rev. George Whipple, "Whatever excuse may be offered in the states for exclusive institutions, I am convinced that in this country, and in this particular region… none could be offered with a shadow of reason, and with this conviction, I opened [a] school here with the condition of admission to children of all complexion."[470] The AMA eventually severed ties with Shadd, likely as a consequence of her feud with Henry and Mary Bibb. Furthermore, as Adrienne Shadd writes, her dispute with the organization's male leadership "overstepped the bounds of accepted female behaviour [sic] of the time." Shadd continued to teach in Upper Canada without the AMA's official backing.[471]

In the Queen's Bush, abolitionist missionaries taught black refugee students. In 1846, Fidelia Coburn opened the Mount Pleasant Mission School. She noted in an earlier letter that "the soil [in the Queen's Bush] is of the very best quality," but added

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[467] Mission to Fugitive Slaves in Canada. Mission to the fugitive slaves in Canada: West London branch of the Colonial Church and School Society. London, [1856?], 4. Slavery and Anti-Slavery. Gale. Universiteit Leiden/LUMC. 8 Oct. 2019; Mission to the Fugitive Slaves in Canada, and Colonial Church and School Society. *Report for the Year 1858-9* (London: Serjeant's Inn, Fleet Street, 1859), 10 (first quote), 12 (second quote), 14-15 (third and fourth quotes), accessed May 12, 2020. https://www.loc.gov/item/87659235/. By this stage, the CCSS' operations had also expanded to Chatham, Amherstburg, and other parts of Upper Canada. For more on the origins and activities of Rev. Dillon and the CCSS, see Nina Reid-Maroney, *The Reverend Jennie Johnson and African Canadian History, 1868-1967* (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2013), 36-38; see Asaka, "'Our Brethren in the West Indies,'" 231-234.

[468] Shirley J. Yee, *Black Women Abolitionists: A Study in Activism, 1828-1860* (Knoxville, TN: University of Tennessee Press, 1992), 62. For more on Mary Bibb and her teaching efforts, see Afua Cooper, "Black Women and Work in Nineteenth Century Canada West: Black Woman Teacher Mary Bibb," in Peggy Bristow (ed.), *We're Rooted Here and They Can't Pull Us Up: Essays in African Canadian Women's History* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999).

[469] Shadd, *The Journey from Tollgate to Parkway*, 124.

[470] Ripley et al. (eds.), *BAP: vol. 2: Canada, 1830-1865*, 184-185.

[471] Shadd, *The Journey from Tollgate to Parkway*, 124-125.

that "the cause of education must be advanced – this, and nothing but *this* will elevate, or essentially benefit them." Soon enough, dozens of refugee students enrolled in the Mount Pleasant Mission. Students learned basic spelling, reading, writing, mathematics, and geography among other subjects. Coburn and the other missionaries, notes Brown-Kubisch, imbued the values of "hard work, self-reliance, temperance and moral improvement."[472] The Mount Pleasant missionaries worked with few resources and relied on donations. In 1848, Coburn wrote, "we have had to labor destitute of means, which has increased the burden exceedingly." The following June, her husband (also a missionary teacher) admitted that the Mount Pleasant School would likely "be broken up. The difficulties in the way of the colored people becoming proprietors of their own soil… prematurely blasted our prospects." Despite their efforts, the Mount Pleasant School was eventually forced to close its doors.[473]

Chatham-Kent witnessed the most expansive black educational initiatives. After graduating from Oberlin College, Hiram Wilson traveled to Upper Canada "to determine the needs of its black population." He concluded that self-emancipators in the province lacked adequate opportunities to secure an education. Wilson first considered establishing a school in Essex County. In a letter to Henry Cowles, Wilson noted that the soil around Amherstburg "is level, well timbered, well watered, & rich & productive as the sun ever shun upon." He later met with Josiah Henson, and the pair resolved to open an interracial college in the Western District. Wilson believed that the proposed school would have a positive impact on racial relations in the province. He wrote, "prejudice against color will be completely destroyed & a bright example will be given to the world of a community differing in complexion but harmonizing in the great object of human existence."[474] Wilson informed others of his intention to open an interracial school in the province. In 1839, he wrote to abolitionist Amos A. Phelps, "We hope to have a school established in which the whites & colored youth & children may mingle on equal terms though most of the scholars will doubtley [sic] be colored."[475] Three years later, Wilson and Henson

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[472] Brown-Kubisch, *The Queen's Bush*, 79; Fidelia Coburn, "Letter from Miss F. Coburn," *Zion's Advocate*, reprinted in *Liberty Standard*, Apr. 7, 1845.

[473] Brooks, F.C. *Letters: October 8, 1848 to George Whipple; Waterloo, Wellington District, Canada*. October 8, 1848. MS AMA Archives, 1839-1882 F1-47. F1-47. Amistad Research Center at Tulane University. Slavery and Anti-Slavery. Gale. Universiteit Leiden/LUMC. 22 Mar. 2020; Brooks, J.C. *Letters: Jun 12, 1849 to Whipple; Waterloo, Wellington District, Canada*. June 12, 1849. MS AMA Archives, 1839-1882 F1-68. F1-68. Amistad Research Center at Tulane University. Slavery and Anti-Slavery. Gale. Universiteit Leiden/LUMC. 22 Mar. 2020.

[474] Hiram Wilson to Henry Cowles, Jan. 2, 1837. Robert S. Fletcher Papers, RG 30/24. Box 4, Folder 18. OCA. Oberlin, OH; Morris, *Oberlin*, 84.

[475] Wilson, Hiram, and Amos A. (Amos Augustus) Phelps. "Letter from Hiram Wilson, Toronto, [Ontario], to Amos Augustus Phelps, 1839 Aug[ust] 19." Correspondence. Aug. 19, 1839. *Digital Commonwealth*, accessed Jun. 2, 2019. https://www.digitalcommonwealth.org/search/commonwealth:2v23xs33c?view=commonwealth%3A2v23xs35x

opened the British American Institute (BAI), a manual labor school in the Dawn Settlement.[476]

Numerous factors suggested that the BAI and Dawn could succeed. Situated on the Sydenham River, the region's soil and climate were considered excellent for settlement. Henson claimed that it "was covered with a beautiful forest of noble trees of various kinds. Our people were accustomed to cut them down and burn them on the ground, simply to get rid of them." Wilson claimed the climate was "mild and perfectly healthy," and the land was "moderately undulating and extremely fertile, covered principally with sugar maple and black walnut."[477] Refugee settlers erected log houses, established farmsteads, and even built a grist mill. In 1843, Wilson wrote in the Canada Mission's Sixth Annual Report, "There are now twelve acres cleared and mostly under good fence, three-dwelling-houses up and occupied, as also a school-house of a story and a half[.]" One year later, the Canada Mission expressed "undoubted confidence" in Wilson and declared, "We think it the wisest course they can pursue, to become the successful cultivators of their own soil[.]"[478]

Nina Reid-Maroney writes that Wilson and Henson "enjoyed early success" with the BAI. Unsurprisingly, the school was modeled on other manual labor schools (especially Oberlin) in the northern US. Students at the BAI were educated in "agricultural methods, mechanical skills, and domestic arts, in addition to receiving a thorough and useful education." In 1845, Oberlin graduate William Newman claimed that new students were enrolling at the school every day. Furthermore, abolitionist teachers and missionaries made their way to Dawn to teach black refugee students. Roughly forty-three "college scholars" taught at the school during the first five years of its existence, at least three of whom "lost their lives to the fierce Canadian frontier elements."[479] Anti-slavery supporters of Wilson and Henson sent donations and resources to ensure the BAI's survival. In 1840, the *Massachusetts*

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[476] Winks, *The Blacks in Canada*, 178. For a recent biography on Josiah Henson and his involvement with the Dawn Settlement, see Jared A. Brock, *The Road to Dawn: Josiah Henson and the Story that Sparked the Civil War* (New York, NY: Public Affairs, 2018).

[477] Marie Carter, "Reimagining the Dawn Settlement," in Boulou Ebanda de B'béri, Nina Reid-Maroney, and Handel Kashope Wright (eds.), *The Promised Land: History and Historiography of the Black Experience in Chatham-Kent's Settlements and Beyond* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2014), 185-189; Josiah Henson, *An Autobiography of the Rev. Josiah Henson ("Uncle Tom"). From 1789 to 1881. With a Preface by Harriet Beecher Stowe, and Introductory Notes by George Sturge, S. Morley, Esq., M. P., Wendell Phillips, and John G. Whittier. Edited by John Lobb, F. R. G. S. Revised and Enlarged.* (London: Ontario: Schuyler, Smith, & Co., 1881). 127, accessed Jun. 12, 2019. https://docsouth.unc.edu/neh/henson81/henson81.html; Hiram Wilson, "HIRAM WILSON'S SETTLEMENT FOR COLORED PEOPLE IN CANADA," *Friend of Man*, reprinted in *NASS*, Mar. 24, 1842.

[478] Hiram Wilson, "Sixth Annual Reports of the Canada Mission," *Liberator*, Mar. 17, 1843; Canada Mission. Seventh annual report of the Canada Mission. Rochester, 1844. Slavery and Anti-Slavery. Gale. Universiteit Leiden/LUMC. 27 May 2019, 5.

[479] Reid-Maroney, *The Reverend Jennie Johnson*, 21 (first quote), 22; Morris, *Oberlin*, 84 (second quote), 85.

Abolitionist noted that their agent sent $150 to Wilson "for the Canada schools." Meanwhile, Drew claimed that three hundred and fifty pounds was raised in England "mostly among Quakers" in 1840. Wilson even traveled to Great Britain to raise funds for the school and settlement. In 1843, Wilson attended the General Anti-Slavery Convention in London. He spoke on the BAI's behalf and solicited friends and allies for donations.[480]

Despite its early promise, the BAI struggled financially. At various times, Wilson and Henson were unable to compensate abolitionist missionaries for their work at the school. In 1844, Wilson acknowledged that "several colored brethren at Oberlin" had not been paid for their work at the BAI. "I am resolved," he wrote, "however that these young men who were seen in Canada teaching the last winter shall be paid to the better for the most timing as soon as in my power to do so."[481] Two years later, Wilson recommended that donations made to the BAI ought to be "divided among such colored brethren in Oberlin … till they are reasonably compensated. They have complained bitterly of me as I have been informed & I am determined to hush such complaints if it strips me as naked as when I came into the world to do it." Nevertheless Wilson insisted that the BAI "must be sustained & our means are so limited that we are necessarily involved much of the time."[482]

Anti-slavery newspapers published positive reports of the BAI and Dawn. In 1843, the *Liberator* claimed, "It is a fortunate circumstance for the poor panting fugitives, that they can find such a friend [Wilson] to sympathize with them on their arrival in Canada, and to give them all needful advice and as much succor as his limited means will allow." Four years later, the *Detroit Free Press* reported that "there is a flourishing colony of blacks" at Dawn, and noted that most were "fugitives from the south, and accessions are constantly being made to their number by new arrivals of slaves."[483] The *National Era* published one report which claimed that African American refugee settlers were thriving at Dawn. Meanwhile, abolitionist allies defended Wilson and Henson against charges of mismanagement. William Newman wrote in the *Evangelist*, "I am perfectly satisfied that he [Wilson] has carefully entered on his journal all the receipts of money, clothing, &c., as far as

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[480] "CANADA SCHOOLS," *Massachusetts Abolitionist,* Jun. 11, 2840; Drew, *North-Side View of Slavery*, 309; General Anti-Slavery Convention (2nd: 1843: London, England). Proceedings of the General anti-Slavery Convention called by the Committee of the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society and held in London from… June 13th to… June 20th, 1843. London, [1843]. Slavery and Anti-Slavery. Gale. Universiteit Leiden/LUMC. Jun. 1, 2020, 286-287.

[481] Letter from Hiram Wilson to Hamilton Hill, August 1844. Obtained via "Hamilton Hill, August 1844," *Letters of Hiram Wilson,* accessed Sep. 24, 2019. https://hiramwilson.wordpress.com/2013/03/28/hamilton-hill-august-1844/.

[482] Letter from Hiram Wilson to Hamilton Hill, Feb. 26, 1845. Obtained via "Hamilton Hill, February 26 1845," *Letters of Hiram Wilson,* accessed Sep. 24, 2019. https://hiramwilson.wordpress.com/2013/03/28/dawn-mills-february-26-1845/.

[483] "The Star-Led Fugitives," *Liberator*, Mar. 17, 1843; "COLONY OF 20,000 BLACKS IN CANADA," *Detroit Free Press,* Dec. 11, 1847.

possible, while being so much from home; and that during his absence, his wife has faithfully done the same."[484]

Behind the scenes, however, the BAI's struggles only worsened. In May 1848, Wilson wrote to AMA Secretary George Whipple, "Last year I was obliged to sell my house & have no conveyance… the present year I have been spared the painful necessity of selling my house & ground but am still in debt." A couple of months later, he acknowledged that prominent abolitionists, including Lewis Tappan, opposed his leadership. He responded, "So long as his [Tappan's] ear is open to the misrepresentation of disaffected persons from Canada & consequently his mind prejudiced he will probably not be satisfied without a visit to the asylum of the sable refugees."[485] Some anti-slavery newspapers began to question Wilson and Henson's management. Frederick Douglass' *North Star* urged Wilson to account for $20,000 which had supposedly gone missing. At the same time, others reaffirmed their faith in Wilson and Henson. Congregational minister John Roaf wrote in 1849, "I regard him [Wilson] as an upright, disinterested, laborious friend of the colored race; as well as a devout follower of the Lord Jesus Christ."[486]

Eventually, tensions between Wilson, Henson, and the BAI Board of Managers boiled over. Dissatisfied with their leadership, the board pushed for Wilson and Henson's resignation in 1849. Wilson and his wife relocated to St. Catharines, where they continued to teach and preach. In December 1850, he wrote to George Whipple, "My conviction is that the change of my location is for the best." In another letter, he was more candid about his experiences at Dawn. He told Whipple, "I have entirely abandoned the hope of bringing pass any considerable amount of good for the refugee and their children, through a manual Labor Institute [sic]."[487] Wilson and Henson's reputations never fully recovered in some circles. In 1852, William Wells Brown attended one of Henson's lectures. He recalled, "All who know anything of

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[484] "BRITISH AMERICAN INSTITUTE," *NE*, Nov. 18, 1847; W. P. Newman, "THE COLORED PEOPLE, AND THE CANADIAN SCHOOLS," *OE*, Dec. 20, 1843.
[485] "No Account of the $20,000 at Dawn," *NS*, Mar. 2, 1849; "Notice," *NS*, Apr. 27, 1849.
[486] Allen P. Stouffer, *The Light of Nature and the Law of God: Antislavery in Ontario, 1833-1877* (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1992), 69; "Hiram Wilson, "DAWN MILLS, CANADA WEST, MARCH 25, 1848," *Liberator*, Apr. 7, 1848; Letter from Hiram Wilson to Rev. George Whipple, May 1, 1848. Obtained via "Brother Whipple," *Letters of Hiram Wilson*, accessed Sep. 24, 2019. https://hiramwilson.wordpress.com/2013/03/28/dawn-mills-may-1-1848/; Letter from Hiram Wilson to Rev. George Whipple, Jul. 19, 1848. Obtained via "Brother Whipple, July 19, 1848," *Letters of Hiram Wilson*, accessed Sep. 24, 2019. https://hiramwilson.wordpress.com/2013/03/28/boston-july-19-1848/..
[487] Letter from Hiram Wilson to Rev. George Whipple, Dec. 16, 1850. Accessed via "Brother Whipple, December 16 1850," *Letters of Hiram Wilson*, accessed Sep. 24, 2019. https://hiramwilson.wordpress.com/2013/04/04/brother-whipple-december-16-1850/; Letter from Hiram Wilson to Rev. George Whipple, July 4, 1850. Obtained via "Brother Whipple, July 4, 1850," *Letters from Hiram Wilson*, accessed Sep. 24, 1850. https://hiramwilson.wordpress.com/2013/03/28/darow-hills-july-4-1850/.

the Dawn School, know very well that Father Henson's connection with it, as financier, has been anything but satisfactory to the fugitives and their friends."[488]

Although Wilson and Henson departed, the settlement carried on. Following his visit to Dawn, Samuel Ringgold Ward noted that settlers had begun leaving for other locales. He called "the general, almost universal, want of energy and enterprise among the young people" as the most disappointing facet of the settlement. At the same time, Ward called Dawn "a very successful settlement… [which] speaks well for the energy, perseverance, and economy of the settlers."[489] Many refugees remained at Dawn for years to come and continued to raise farms, educate themselves, and support their community. In 1851, the *Voice of the Fugitive* reported that those who stayed "are not half so numerous as at Chatham, but more independent, more hospitable, and more intelligent… Almost every man cultivates the soil and produces from it what he consumes[.]" Two years later, the *Frederick Douglass' Paper* claimed that the Dawn Settlement's debt had been paid off entirely and predicted "brighter days" for the settlement. However, Dawn was unable to recover and blacks gradually departed the settlement for more prosperous regions.[490]

Around the time of Wilson and Henson's resignations, Rev. William King established a similar utopian community at Buxton (just south of Chatham). Working alongside the Toronto-based Elgin Association, King acquired Clergy Reserve lands in Raleigh Township. In a petition dated February 1849, white residents of the Western District appealed to the provincial government to block King's proposed settlement for slave refugees. They claimed that "such a settlement in any part of this District would be highly deleterious to the morals and social condition of the present and future inhabitants of this District, as well as to its prosperity in every other respect." Hundreds of white residents in Raleigh Township and the Western District, including prominent racist politician Edwin Larwill, signed the petition.[491]

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[488] William Wells Brown, "BRITISH AND AMERICAN INSTITUTE FOR THE EDUCATION OF FUGITIVE SLAVES AND INDIANS," *FDP*, Jun. 24, 1852.
[489] Ward, *Autobiography*, 196-199.
[490] "DAWN MILLS," *VF*, Apr. 9, 1851; "Dawn Mills, Canada West," *FDP*, Jan. 14, 1853.
[491] Peggy Bristow, "'Whatever you raise in the ground you can sell it in Chatham': Black Women in Buxton and Chatham, 1850-65," in Peggy Bristow (ed.) *"We're Rooted Here and They Can't Pull Up": Essays in African Canadian Women's History* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994), 75-78; Buxton Mission and Elgin Settlement Papers, R4402-5-0-E, 698-699, 701-703. LAC. Slavery, Abolition & Social Justice. Adam Matthew Digital. Universiteit Leiden/LUMC. 4 Jun. 2019. For more on William King and the Elgin Settlement, see Sharon A. Roger Hepburn, *Crossing the Border: A Free Black Community in Upper Canada* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2007); Sharon A. Roger Hepburn, "Following the North Star: Canada as a Haven for Nineteenth-Century American Blacks," *Michigan Historical Review* 25, no. 2 (1999), 91-126; Sharon A. Roger Hepburn. "Crossing the Border from Slavery to Freedom: The Building of a Community at Buxton, Upper Canada," *American Nineteenth Century History* 3, no. 2 (2002), 25-68; Victor Ullman, *Look to the North Star: A Life of William King* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1969); and Catherine Slaney, *Family Secrets: Crossing the Colour Line* (Toronto: Natural Heritage Books, 2003), 31-;43; For more on the black settlers at Buxton, see Law, "Self-Reliance is the True Road to Independence." For more on white opposition to the Elgin Settlement,

In August, Larwill and his supporters convened at Chatham's Royal Exchange Hotel. The *Kent Advertiser* noted that King "attempted to several times to address the meeting, but owing to the noises made by the crowd below, he was obligated to forbear until many influential persons on the balcony solicited the crowd below[.]" The Toronto *Examiner* reported that Chatham whites were "alarmed at the probable increase of [black refugees]." African Canadian activists and white abolitionists lambasted Larwill and those in attendance. The Toronto *Globe* later criticized "the gross partiality of the Chairman, the intemperance of the speakers, and the behavior of the crowd."[492] These efforts ultimately failed, however, and King pushed ahead with his plans.

The Elgin Settlement was founded not long after. Its constitution declared, "The object of this society shall be to improve the racial and moral condition of the coloured population of Canada. To induce them to settle in rural districts… to educate their children, and generally to protect their rights, and advance their interests." King served as the Managing Director of the Elgin Settlement.[493] He claimed that Canada was "the only place on this side of the Atlantic where a coloured man can enjoy freedom; the free states of the union do not afford this privilege[.]" African Americans in the United States, King noted, lacked the "privileges of free citizens," which not only protected people from enslavement but also permitted them to purchase lands and attend schools. "The land is good," King added, "but owing to the prejudice which exists against coloured persons they do not enjoy its benefits… This prejudice will remain as long as they continue in ignorance." This shaped his belief that schools and lands would improve their condition and bring an end to racial prejudice in the province. King concluded, "There is only one way in which the feelings against them can be removed, and that is by giving the young a Christian education."[494]

Colchester resident Robert Lachlan appealed to the provincial legislature in 1850 against "the great influx of fugitive slaves, of the worst character, from the neighbouring [sic] American states[.]" Lachlan claimed that the expansion of Essex County's black population prevented "the introduction of a far more congenial class of agricultural labourers [sic] from the Mother Country[.]" Moreover, he claimed that

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see William H. Pease and Jane H. Pease, "Opposition to the Founding of the Elgin Settlement," *Canadian Historical Review* 38, no. 3 (1957), 202-218.

[492] "PUBLIC MEETING," *Kent Advertiser*, Aug. 23, 1849; "THE COLOURED SETTLEMENT IN KENT," *Globe* (Toronto), Aug. 25, 1849; "COLONIZATION OF THE COLOURED RACE – IN THE SETTLED TOWNSHIPS," *Examiner* (Toronto), Aug. 29, 1849.

[493] Constitution of the Elgin Settlement, Buxton Mission and Elgin Settlement Papers, R4402-5-0-E, 636. LAC. Slavery, Abolition & Social Justice. Adam Matthew Digital. Universiteit Leiden/LUMC. 4 Jun. 2019; Ikuko Asaka, "Exiles in America: Canadian Anti-Black Racism and the Meaning of Nation in the Age of the 1848 Revolutions," in Stewart and Marks (eds.), *Race and Nation*, 59-61.

[494] Rev. William King, "Scheme for Improving the Coloured People of Canada." Buxton Mission and Elgin Settlement Papers, R4402-5-0-E, 651-653. LAC. Slavery, Abolition & Social Justice. Adam Matthew Digital. Universiteit Leiden/LUMC. 4 Jun. 2019.

refugee settlers had "a very demoralizing influence, from the fearful amount of crime observed to be committed by them, compared with the great bulk of the inhabitants." Lachlan criticized the Elgin Association, which he dubbed "an ill-advised though philanthropic society," which stood for "the far more obnoxious and objectionable purpose of establishing Negro colonies in the very midst of a British population[.]" Lachlan believed that the growing number of black refugees compelled whites "to abandon *British* soil, and seek a livelihood in the neighboring American states – to the great detriment of a remote and thinly settled part of the Province[.]"[495]

According to Drew, the Elgin Settlement encompassed "nine thousand acres of land, - a tract some six miles in length, by three in breadth, - and is situated between the Great Western Railway and Lake Erie; its boundary being about a mile and one fourth from [Lake Erie's] shore." Abolitionist Samuel J. May noted that the lands were divided into fifty-acre plots and "offered for sale to colored persons of approved moral character, who will become settlers upon their lots." He was impressed by the "wholesome spirit of industry and enterprise throughout the settlement." Living conditions at Buxton were basic but largely satisfactory. Most homes were "built of logs… the model was 18 feet by 24, and 12 feet in height, with a gallery running the whole length of the front." Settlers benefited from the fertile soil, which was "best adapted for the culture of wheat; but it also produces corn, tobacco, and hemp[.]" The Elgin settlers also erected a grist mill and brickyard.[496]

Slave refugees were among the first to populate the Elgin Settlement. Isaac Riley, a freedom seeker who escaped from Missouri, with his wife Catherine and their five children. Isaac Riley is the first name recorded in the settlement's Register of Lands. Catherine recalled, "We came up here before it was surveyed, and Mr. Riley helped with the surveyors. He took one hundred acres of land, and we are all contented." King also referred to Riley in his autobiography, noting that he came to Buxton with his family "to be near the school and church, to give his children a good education." Free-born and freed blacks were also among the Buxton settlers. R. Van Branken was born free in New York and immigrated to Canada to escape racial prejudice. "I have four acres and a half of land here," he told Drew, "and a fifty-acre wood-lot on the fourteenth concession, and can make a good living here."[497]

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[495] Robert Lachlan, *Petition of Robert Lachlan, of Colchester, Essex, in the Province of Canada, Esquire: Printed by order of the Legislative Assembly* (Toronto: Lovell and Gibson, 1850). https://static.torontopubliclibrary.ca/da/pdfs/37131055434948d.pdf, accessed Feb. 14, 2020.

[496] Drew, *North-Side View of Slavery*, 291-293; Samuel J. May, "Condition and Prospect of the Fugitives in Canada," *FDP*, reprinted in *ASB*, Oct. 4, 1851.

[497] Drew, *North-Side View of Slavery*, 298, 300, 305-306; Register of Lands, Buxton Mission and Elgin Settlement Papers, R4402-5-0-E, 763, 765. LAC. Slavery, Abolition & Social Justice. Adam Matthew Digital. Universiteit Leiden/LUMC. 4 Jun. 2019; Manuscript Autobiography of Rev. William King, 1892. R4402-3-7-E, 284. LAC. Slavery, Abolition & Social Justice. Adam Matthew Digital. Universiteit Leiden/LUMC. 30. Sep. 2019; "Isaac Riley, Early Settler of Buxton," *Buxtonmuseum.com*, accessed Sep. 27, 2019. http://www.buxtonmuseum.com/history/PEOPLE/riley-isaac.html.

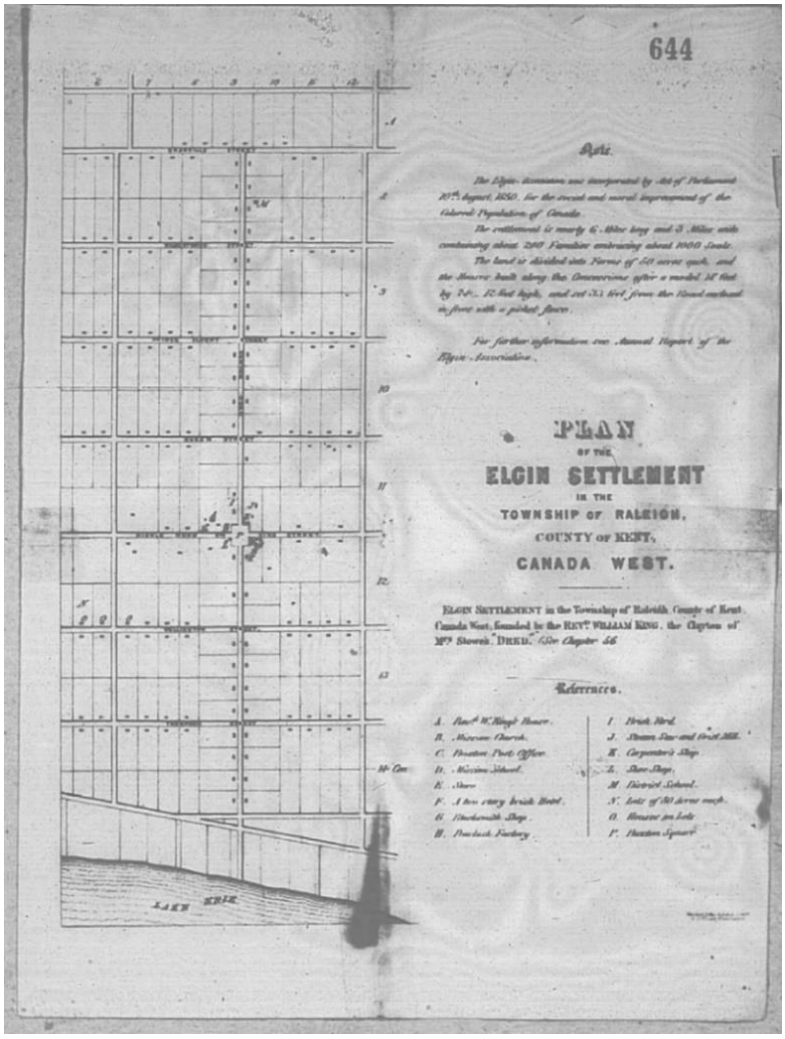

Figure 15: Plan of the Elgin Settlement

Source: Plan of the Elgin Settlement in the Township of Raleigh, County of Kent, Canada West. Buxton Mission and Elgin Settlement Papers, 644. LAC. R4402-5-0-E. Slavery, Abolition & Social Justice. Adam Matthew Digital. Universiteit Leiden/LUMC. 11 Nov. 2019.

Early evaluations of the settlement were quite positive. The American and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society's thirteenth annual report noted that "the number of families of colored persons settled on the lands of the Association is increased, while

progress has been made in education and religion."[498] Drew claimed that the refugee settlers "have purchased homes for themselves, paid the price demanded by government, erected their own buildings, and supported their own families by their own industry[.]" Samuel Ringgold Ward spoke highly of the Buxton settlers' "most commendable progress." Six years after the Elgin Settlement's founding, the black settlers at Buxton had erected "comfortable houses, of the primitive description; clearings growing more and more extensive, good crops, a fair proportion of stock, and as many signs of present comfort and future prosperity as any settlement of the same age in Canada." He also noted that the "physical and intellectual development of the settlers, along with their high-toned moral character, already makes the settlement a model one."[499]

Various reports praised the Elgin settlers for their industry and ingenuity. The *Frederick Douglass's Paper* wrote, "Rich fields of corn, of grass, and grain, are here springing up… In one direction you may see the colored farmer behind *his* plough – in another leveling the forest – in another erecting his cottage – in another making brick – and in another thrashing out his grain." The Buxton settlers supposedly bore themselves "like free men and women." King was praised by the abolitionist press. The *Frederick Douglass' Paper* described him as a "most sensible, industrious, enterprising and competent gentleman," and insisted that he was "just the man for the place, and that he shared the love and respect of all around him."[500]

Like Dawn, education was a central objective of the Elgin Settlement. In 1853, King recalled that most newcomers "were formerly slaves in the United States… The children, like the parents, were left to grow up in ignorance and vice – no person to take them to Sabbath School – no kind teacher to tell them about Christ, and the way of salvation." King quickly set about erecting churches, day schools, sabbath schools for the settlement. From the outset, churches were extremely popular among the Buxton settlers. In 1851, King claimed that the average attendance "has been steady and on the increase, varying from 100 to 150, according to the state of the roads." He added that the black congregants "hear the word with attention, and for some months past, especially in the Bible-class there appears a spirit of earnest inquiry among some of its members, which, we trust, is a token for good[.]"[501]

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[498] American and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society, *The Thirteenth Annual Report of the American & Foreign Anti-Slavery Society. Presented at New-York, May 11, 1853; with the Addresses and Resolutions* (New York, NY: American and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society, 1853), 173-174, accessed May 28, 2020. http://ebooks.library.cornell.edu/cgi/t/text/pageviewer-idx?c=mayantislavery&cc=mayantislavery&idno=02818209&q1=Canada&view=image&seq=1&size=100.

[499] Drew, *North-Side View of Slavery*, 297; Ward, *Autobiography*, 212, 214.

[500] "The Elgin Settlement at Buxton, Canada West," *FDP*, Aug. 25, 1854.

[501] "Buxton Mission," *EMR*, Apr. 1853; "Report of the Mission of the Coloured Population," *EMR*, Jul. 1851, Fred Landon Fonds, Box B4220, Folder 6A. DBW, UWO. London, CA.

Sharon Roger Hepburn writes that the Buxton Mission "imparted a common school education for intellectual betterment[.]" Following his visit to Buxton, black abolitionist William Cooper Nell recalled that the Elgin school "has become so much superior to the one which was mostly attended by white children of Buxton, that the latter has been discontinued, and the school at the Elgin Settlement is attended not only by the children of the settlers, but also indiscriminately by the white children of Buxton." In response to growing numbers, more missionaries were dispatched to teach at the settlement. King recalled that, in 1855, "a female teacher was added, for the purpose of giving instructions in sewing, and some of the useful branches of female education." About fifty-three students attended the Sabbath school, and the settlement's third annual report stated that church "is attended from 100 to 140 persons; and the desire for the administration of the word and ordinances seems to be on the increase."[502] Alex McLachlan, who taught at Buxton in 1850 and 1851, called King's mission "a most interesting one." He had mixed opinions of the Buxton settlers; "the colored man," he claimed, "is just as deceitful & desperately wicked as that of the white man." Nevertheless, McLachlan also acknowledged that "the colored man has a heart to feel, that sin is a burden to[o]heavy for him to bear – He has a soul that cannot die[.]"[503]

African Americans and white abolitionists supported the Buxton mission from its inception. In 1850, Pittsburgh blacks sent a church bell (called the 'Liberty Bell') for the settlement's church. They wrote, "We sincerely hope that by your industry and good conduct you will put to silence those who speak evil of you, and show yourselves worthy of the respect and confidence of the members of the "Elgin Association," who have nobly advanced your cause." The Buxton settlers responded, "We are delighted at all times to hear from the friends that we have left in a land of pretended freedom, and although separated in body, we are present with you in spirit[.]" Women abolitionists in the Pittsburgh area also sent books and maps to the Elgin Settlement.[504] By 1854, almost 150 students were enrolled in the Elgin school. Meanwhile, the settlement's fifth annual report claimed, "the residents in the northern part of the settlement, anxious that their children should receive education, have erected a neat school-house at their own expense, with a view of getting a teacher for it, at least six months in the year." Several Buxton settlers discussed the Elgin Settlement's educational advantages for black newcomers. Isaac Riley told Drew, "I

[502] Hepburn, *Crossing the Border*, 164; William C. Nell, "Impressions and Gleanings of Canada West," *Liberator*, Dec. 24, 1858; Drew, *North-Side View of Slavery*, 293-294; "Buxton Mission," *EMR*, Nov. 1856. Fred Landon Fonds, Box B4220, Folder 6A. DBW, UWO. London, CA.
[503] Letter from Alex McLachlan to Rev. Alexander Gale, Apr. 4, 1851. Rev. William King Correspondence, R4402-4-9-E, 540. LAC. Slavery, Abolition & Social Justice. Adam Matthew Digital. Universiteit Leiden/LUMC. 4 Jun. 2019.
[504] Hepburn, *Crossing the Border*, 91; "Letter to the Settlers at Raleigh, from the Coloured Inhabitants of Pittsburgh, Penn.," *EMR*, Feb. 1851. Fred Landon Fonds, Box B4220, Folder 6A. DBW, UWO. London, CA.

came here, and have got along well. My children can get good learning here." His wife noted that two of their children attend the school, where the oldest "studies Latin and Greek." She added that they "have good schools here – music and needlework are taught." Similarly, Henry Johnson declared, "I left the States for Canada, for rights, freedom, liberty. I came to Buxton to educate my children."[505]

Numerous settlers spoke highly of their experiences in Buxton. Harry Thomas stated, "I am now hiring a piece of land in Buxton. My calculation is, if I live, to own a farm if I can. My health is good, and the climate agrees with me – and it does with colored men generally." Mary Jane Robinson, who went with her husband to Buxton, sought to convince her friend Sarah Ann Harris to join them. The couple "purchased a farm of fifty acres, with nine acres cut down and one all cleared… I raised a fine sight of tobacco. We had turnips as big as the crown of your husband's hat, and cabbage as large as a water-pail… Whatever you raise in the ground, you can sell it in Chatham, six miles from here." Newspaper reports emphasized the autonomy and enterprise of the Elgin settlers. "Every man," wrote the *Provincial Freeman*, "helps himself in Buxton, and every man's neighbor helps him to do so… Every man buys his land and pays for it[.]"[506]

That being said, the Elgin settlers endured many challenges and hardships. Poor infrastructure reduced their Buxton to trade with farmers and merchants elsewhere. This greatly reduced the opportunities for settlers to sell their crops, foods, and other products. Several factors, including climate and disease, also negatively impacted the annual output of black farmers at Buxton. For example, King noted in 1858 that the previous year "was one of severe trial to the settlers. The wheat crop which promised fair for an abundant harvest, was entirely cut off by the weevil and rust." Moreover, the corn yield was also greatly reduced because it "was late in planting, and did not mature before frost. When gathered although appearing sound, much of it rotted afterwards." The 1861 census officially lists almost 700 settlers in the Elgin Settlement.[507]

To raise funds, King and others embarked upon various fundraising campaigns. In the late 1850s, King traveled to the British Isles on a fundraising campaign. During a meeting in Edinburgh, he described the horrors of US slavery before extolling the virtues of the Elgin Settlement. At a second meeting, King noted that "the church and school buildings were all of a temporary kind, and would require

[505] Drew, *North-Side View of Slavery*, 295-296, 298, 300, 307.
[506] Drew, *North-Side View of Slavery*, 306; Mary Jane Robinson, "LETTER FROM CANADA," *NASS*, Jan. 6, 1855; "Rev. Wm. King – The Buxton Settlement," *PF*, Apr. 15, 1854; Stouffer, *Light of Nature*, 102-104.
[507] "The Eighth Annual Report of the Buxton Mission, Presented at the Meeting of the Synod in Hamilton, June 21st, 1858," *EMR*, Aug. 1858. Fred Landon Fonds, Box B4220, Folder 6A. DBW, UWO. London, CA; 1861 census figure taken from Hepburn, *Crossing the Border*, 214n18.

to be replaced by others of a more substantial and permanent nature."[508] King addressed other anti-slavery audiences in Scotland, Ireland, and England. In August 1859, he spoke at the Athenaeum in Cork, Ireland. Apart from public meetings and speeches, King appealed for donations to the Elgin Settlement from friends and allies across the British Isles. In the Belfast *Banner of Ulster*, for instance, King solicited books and funds for the Buxton schools and library.[509]

Yet the challenges of rural settlement and growing socio-economic opportunities elsewhere ultimately took their toll. An 1866 report noted, "The zeal and enthusiasm with which many at first entered upon their arduous and hopeful task, gave way for a time before the continuance of severe labor, unaccompanied by present requital, these persons leaving their farms and going elsewhere to seek employment[.]"[510] Although many refugees left Buxton, others remained. In 1872, the *Chatham Tri-Weekly Planet* reported on a meeting of approximately two hundred electors in Raleigh, the vast majority of whom "were coloured electors resident on lots purchased from the Elgin Association[.]" In 1884, the *Detroit Free Press* noted that "the educational and municipal affairs of the settlement have been merged in the common institutions of the county, and the association… has ceased to be[.]"[511]

Conclusion

Across the northern US and Canada, slave refugees encountered a range of new social environments. From urban centers to rural farming communities, freedom seekers integrated into a wide variety of places and, in some instances, established new settlements. Cities and towns offered a greater abundance of low-wage jobs and boasted sizable free black communities. New York City, Philadelphia, Boston, and

[508] For reports on the meetings at Queen Street Hall in Edinburgh, see "FUGITIVE SLAVES IN CANADA," *Daily Scotsman* (Edinburgh, UK), Nov. 17, 1859; "FUGITIVE SLAVES IN CANADA," *Edinburgh Evening Courant*, Nov. 17, 1859; "FUGITIVE SLAVES IN CANADA," *Witness* (Edinburgh, UK), Nov. 19, 1850; "THE ELGIN SETTLEMENT, CANADA," *Witness*, Nov. 30, 1859 (quote). Newspapers obtained in William King Fonds; Printed Material Relating to Slavery. R4402-6-2-E, LAC. Accessed via Slavery, Abolition & Social Justice.

[509] "THE COLOURED POPULATION IN CANADA. ELGIN SETTLEMENT," *Southern Reporter and Cork Daily Commercial Courier* (Cork, IRL), Aug. 23, 1859; "FUGITIVE SLAVES – MEETING AT THE ATHENAEUM," *Constitution or Cork Advertiser* (Cork, IRL), Aug. 25, 1859; "FUGITIVE SLAVE," *Banner of Ulster* (Belfast, UK), Sep. 8, 1859. Newspaper articles found in William King Collection. R44202-0-1-E. LAC. Digitized copies accessed May 27, 2020. https://www.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/discover/immigration/history-ethnic-cultural/under-northern-star/Pages/king-newspapers.aspx.

[510] A.M. Harris, *A Sketch of the Buxton Mission and Elgin Settlement, Raleigh, Canada West* (Birmingham: J.S. Wilson, 1866), 9, accessed May 5, 2020. https://www.canadiana.ca/view/oocihm.23368/1?r=0&s=1.

[511] "MEETING IN RALEIGH," *Chatham Tri-Weekly Planet*, Aug. 2, 1872; "MRS. STOWE'S 'CLAYTON'" *Detroit Free Press*, Feb. 3, 1884.

Cincinnati became beacons for self-emancipated refugees who sought work and shelter. Urban slave refugees typically lived in poverty and faced racial prejudice, but the promise of temporary and semi-permanent employment proved quite appealing. The northern US was a superior site for freedom seekers hoping to integrate into urban environments. Compared to Canada, its towns and cities were more industrialized and offered improved socio-economic opportunities.

Furthermore, slave refugees soon learned that Canada offered its own set of advantages. Most notably, land ownership was (at least theoretically) a more feasible prospect in the Maritimes and Upper Canada. This stemmed from the fact that British North America was a space of formal freedom. Upon reaching Canadian soil, slave refugees were recognized as people, not property. In the Maritimes and Upper Canada, slave refugees set out to establish farms and independent communities of their own. However, poverty and racial prejudice among Canadian white officials often meant that black refugees were resigned to smaller plots of poorer lands (if they received any at all). Moreover, Canadian whites often responded to black settlers with prejudice and hostility. Nevertheless, African American newcomers established farmsteads and new communities across Canada and gained experience with land ownership for the first time in their lives.

Finally, slave refugees had better access to educational initiatives in Canada. Unlike the northern US, African-descended people in British North America were officially able to gain access to common schools. Of course, the reality was more ambiguous. Even if they could afford to enroll themselves or their children in schools, white Canadians often resisted attempts at racial integration. Consequently, black refugees in British North America were often unable to attend schools, even if there were no legal barriers. Yet abolitionist missionaries opened new schools for slave refugees and founded utopian settlements across the province. The goal of these communities was to promote black elevation and interracial harmony in British North America. These settlements were met with resistance from whites in the northern US and Canadians. Despite this, they made invaluable contributions to the promotion of black settlement, education, and elevation.

Apart from land, labor, and education, African American refugees held other concerns and faced other challenges to their newfound liberty. Most notably, self-emancipated men, women, and children (as well as legally free people of color) lived under the risk of recapture and kidnapping. Southern enslavers, slave catchers, and state and federal officials engaged in the business of recapturing self-emancipators in the North and Canada. The next chapter will examine one of the most significant threats to slave refugees: re-enslavement.