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ABSTRACT

In the mid-nineteenth century a compulsory education system was emerging that allowed all children to attend public schools in northern states. This dissertation investigates school attendance rates among African American children in New York State from 1850–1870 by examining household patterns and educational access for African American school-age children in three communities: Sandy Ground, Syracuse, and Watertown. These communities were selected because of their involvement in the Underground Railroad. I employed a combination of educational and social history methods, qualitative and quantitative. An analysis of federal census reports, state superintendent reports, city directories, area maps, and property records for the years 1820–1870 yielded comparative data on households, African American and European American, in which African American school-age children resided. The nature of schooling and the manner in which the household and community advocated for school attendance during this period are also described and compared.

Between the passage of the Fugitive Slave Law in 1850 and the Fifteenth Amendment in 1870, advocates were preparing African Americans for full citizenship (suffrage rights, educational access, and homeownership) in these three communities and throughout New York State. Using Pearson's correlational coefficient, the data reveal that before the U.S. Civil War there was a significant correlation between African American school-age children's attendance in school, the head of household's literacy, and the head of household homeownership. In Sandy Ground the significance level was .05; in Syracuse the significance level was .05; and in Watertown the significance level

was .01. This study reveals that African American children in the communities under study, whether they attended school or not, had access to literate adults.

The dominant discourse on African American education in the United States is oftentimes told through the lens of post–Civil War emancipation in the South. In New York State, slavery was abolished in 1827, and the children identified in this study were the first generation of free-born African Americans in the state.

EDUCATION ON THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD:
A CASE STUDY ON THE INTERSECTION OF CHURCH, COMMUNITY, AND
EDUCATION IN NEW YORK STATE (1820–1870)

By

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DISSERTATION

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy in Cultural Foundations of Education in the
Graduate School of Syracuse University

December 2013

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I give thanks to God, foremost and always, for guidance through the process, for being my light and my staff; and for providing me the opportunity to research the history of African American education, community, life, and families.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT	i
Acknowledgments	v
Table of Contents	vii
CHAPTER ONE	1
Introduction	1
Purpose and Plan of the Dissertation	5
CHAPTER TWO: ECOLOGY OF CULTURAL IDENTITY	9
Introduction	9
Recontextualizing the Underground Railroad.....	15
Historic Demography of African American Households	19
Education for African Americans in New York State	29
Community-Sponsored Education.....	30
African American Abolitionist Educators.....	41
Community Advocacy for Equal Education	48
Occupation and Education	52
Summary of Findings.....	55
CHAPTER THREE: LEGACY OF SLAVERY.....	57
Introduction	57
Research Methods and Theoretical Approach.....	61
Data Collection and Analysis	66
Contributions of This Research	73
Summary of Findings.....	76
CHAPTER FOUR: EDUCATION IN AN AGRARIAN COMMUNITY.....	78
Introduction	78
The Longest Inhabited African American Settlement in the United States.....	79
Economic Development on Staten Island.....	87
African American Children’s School Attendance in Sandy Ground, New York, 1850	90
Head of Household Owned Property; Children Attended School.....	98
Literate African American Head of Household; Children Attended School	99
Illiterate African American Head of Household; Children Attended School.....	100
African American Children in European Households.....	101
Literate African American Head of Household; Children Did Not Attend School.	106
Illiterate African American Head of Household; Children Did Not Attend School.....	108
Analysis of Sandy Ground’s African American Community, 1850.....	109
Education, Occupation, and Community Building	113
African American School-Age Children by Occupation, 1855–1865	117
Ten Years Later—1860 Sandy Ground, New York	120
Twenty Years Later—1870 Sandy Ground, New York	122
Conclusion.....	124
CHAPTER FIVE: LISTEN FOR THE SIGNAL—THREE LONG WHISTLE BLOWS..	126
Introduction	126
African American Presence in Early Syracuse	128
African American Children’s School Attendance and Household Demographics..	131

Syracuse, New York, 1850.....	131
African American School-Age Children Attending School in Syracuse, 1850	135
Literate African American Head of Household; Children Not Attending School	143
Illiterate African American Heads of Households; Children Not Attending	147
Analysis of Syracuse's African American Community, 1850-1870	152
The Rescue of Jerry and Untold Others	161
293 Genesee Street at Pine, Syracuse, New York	164
Community Ethos.....	175
Ten Years Later: 1860, Syracuse, New York.....	179
Twenty Years Later: 1870, Syracuse, New York.....	182
The Significance of the Highgates and Other Vigilance Committee Families.....	183
Summary of Syracuse's African American Community.....	188
CHAPTER SIX: THIRTY MILES NORTH TO THE PROMISED LAND	190
Introduction	190
Literate Head of Household; Children Attended School.....	193
Literate Head of Household; Children Did Not Attend.....	195
Other African American Headed Households	196
Five Years Later—1855 City Directory	199
Ten Years Later—1860 Census.....	200
Twenty Years Later—1870 Census.....	201
Summary of Watertown's African American Community.....	202
CHAPTER SEVEN: A NEW PERSPECTIVE ON AFRICAN AMERICAN EDUCATION	204
Introduction	204
Procedures Used	205
Suggestions for Further Research on the Three Communities	205
Sandy Ground, An Oystering Community.....	206
Syracuse and the King of the Underground Railroad	208
Watertown and the Thompson Memorial A. M. E. Zion Church.....	211
General Overview of the Study.....	213
Discussion of the Findings.....	215
Limitations of the Study	215
Demography and Education	216
A. M. E. Zion Church and African American Education	220
Integration of African American Studies	220
Continuing Legacy of Slavery	221
Opportunities for Further Research	224
Final Comments.....	225
What I Now Know	226
BIBLIOGRAPHY	225
VITA OF APRIL HARRIS	243

LIST OF TABLES

Table 3.1. Population demographics for New York State and three study areas, 1850....	59
Table 3.2. School attendance during the year as reported by families on the 1850 census (percentage columns represent the percentage of all attendees, white and free color combined)	59
Table 3.3. Adults who cannot read and write, New York State, 1850.....	60
Table 4.1. African American school-age children, Sandy Ground, Richmond County, New York, 1850.....	95
Table 4.2. Correlation between African American school-age children's attendance and head of household ownership, Sandy Ground, New York, 1850.....	111
Table 4.3. Correlation between African American school-age children attendance in correlation with head of household literacy, Sandy Ground, New York, 1850.....	112
Table 4.4. African American school-age children by occupation, town of Westfield, 1855–1865.....	118
Table 5.1. Population by ethnicity in the city of Syracuse, Onondaga County, 1850	130
Table 5.2. Free persons of color, Syracuse, New York, 1850	130
Table 5.3. African American school-age children, Syracuse, Onondaga County, New York, 1850	132
Table 5.4. Correlation between African American school-age children's attendance and head of household literacy, Syracuse, New York, 1850	154
Table 5.5. Correlation between African American school-age children's attendance and head of household ownership, Syracuse, New York, 1850	158
Table 6.1. African American school-age children, Watertown, New York, 1850	193
Table 7.1. African American heads of household and school-age children in 1850 from Sandy Ground, Syracuse, and Watertown, identified in the 1850, 1860, and 1870 censuses.....	217
Table 7.2. Comparison of three communities in 1850.....	218

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1. 1855 Map of the City of Syracuse.....	160
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CHAPTER ONE

Freedom is and has always been America's root concern, a concern that found dramatic expression in the abolitionist movement. The most important and revolutionary reform in our country's past, it forced the American people to come to grips with an anomaly that would not down—the existence of slavery in the land of the free.

Benjamin Quarles¹

Introduction

This study examines the modes of education available to African American children from 1850 to 1870 in New York State. I ask, How did the state of New York extend educational opportunities to the population under study? Did African American children attend public school? How did their households and communities support their efforts to become literate?

This dissertation addresses these questions within a social historical framework, through analyses of three nineteenth-century multiethnic communities in New York State: Sandy Ground, Syracuse, and Watertown. In addition to modes of education available to African American children beginning in 1850, I look at how household demographics may have influenced whether an African American child attended school. At that time schools were being consolidated under state administrative control, and scientific methods in education were being implemented in the curriculum and in teacher training. In this new unified statewide system, the social environment spilled over into the school system, which now had to handle rising racial and ethnic animosities, as

¹ Benjamin Quarles, *Black Abolitionists* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1969), vii.

community and state demographics shifted with the influx of immigrants and freedom seekers.

Individuals seeking freedom had advocates in abolitionists throughout the northern states. Black leaders and white abolitionists embraced the democratic ideal, and they wanted black children to be educated for full participation as citizens of the United States. This goal was accomplished, if only briefly, after the Civil War, only to be compromised by legal restrictions in the decades before the twentieth century.

African American communities in New York State responded to inequity in various ways. In this dissertation, I explore how three such communities responded to the increased opportunities to have their children attend public school, how literacy was attained even if a child did not attend public school, and how ethnic communities sustained their literacy efforts in the shadow of the Fugitive Slave Law.

Each of the three communities under investigation is located in a different tier of New York State: Sandy Ground in the south, Syracuse in the center, and Watertown in the north. Sandy Ground in 1850 was a small multiethnic community with “a marked degree of conviviality between Black and white residents.”² Many African Americans worked in that community’s oyster industry, mainly in the waters of the Arthur Kill between the south shore of Staten Island and New Jersey. Many of them appeared to have attained some financial security and social status based on entrepreneurial enterprises. Sandy Ground’s community culture was founded on economic interdependence and mutual respect.

² Askins, *Sandy Ground: Historical Archeology of Class and Ethnicity in a Nineteenth-Century Community on Staten Island* (PhD diss., City University of New York, 1988), 119.

Syracuse attained the status of a city in 1841. The Erie Canal was operational then, as were multiple railroad lines. The city's African American community was relatively small for a growing metropolitan area. Still, many Syracusans were known to have antislavery leanings in the 1840s, and African American ministries sprang up there. Not surprisingly, this commercial hub became a major station on the Underground Railroad because of its geographic position at the crossroads of east-west, north-south transportation routes.

Watertown is of geographic significance in this analysis. The community is located a mere thirty miles from the Canadian border and provided easy access to the growing use of canals and rail for transportation throughout the region. Within the borders of Jefferson County a dispersed islet system may have also provided sanctuary for potential freedom seekers.

I had some questions about the education available to people of African descent in the United States during the 1850s, particularly in light of the 1850 Fugitive Slave Law, the growing strength of the Anti-Slavery Movement, and publicized accounts of the Underground Railroad (UGR) throughout New York State. Who were the African American children of school age during the period? Did they attend school? How was literacy reinforced in the households in which they resided? To what extent did African American children have access to the public educational system(s)? How did household demographics influence school attendance among the selected population?

These questions arose from my reading of Gerald Grant's *The World We Created at Hamilton High*.³ The book, written as a response to the school desegregation efforts,

³ Gerald Grant, *The World We Created at Hamilton High* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998).

recounted that transition in a Syracuse high school during the civil rights era. When I was reading the book, I was working as a research assistant with the Syracuse University Violence Prevention Project (SUVPP). The project was part of a federally funded eight-institution consortium under the direction of the Hamilton Fish Institute on School and Community Violence. In Syracuse, we worked in collaboration with the Syracuse City Schools at a school called VINTA (Violence Is Not the Answer). The school was for children who had already brought a weapon to their regular school and had been sent for a short time (up to one school year) to VINTA. My duties as the “transition coordinator” for the program involved working with the students, parents, school administrators, and teachers to assist students in making the transition back from the alternative school for weapon violators into the regular educational system. This experience exposed me to community and household activism and support for a child’s education. Such trends are discussed in social histories that are placed in a larger context of political as well as social forces that influence education.

My research questions reflect what I learned in my formal education about the education of African Americans prior to the Civil War. However, I was taught very little about African Americans’ participation in their own emancipation and their participation in the development of their own education. That information was not even taught in my undergraduate history classes. Had I learned about the agency demonstrated by African Americans in the mid-nineteenth century, I would have had a difference perspective on U.S. educational history. Knowing about the civic engagement and activism of family and community now removes some of the stigma associated with the legacy of bondage.

This dissertation project contributes to the ongoing analysis in education and social history of the ways in which cultural groups have participated in and gained access to the educational system in the United States. This work will add to the small number of monographs on the social history and education of free and freedom-seeking African Americans in the nineteenth century in New York State. Other scholars have published historical analyses of African American education in New York State, which laid the foundation for the discussion in the following chapter.

Purpose and Plan of the Dissertation

The struggles for educational equality that took place during the twentieth century were rooted in imbalances recognized a century before, and, as discourses on inclusion continue into the twenty-first century, multiple perspectives on American history are being written. One more voice is asking to be included in the discussion.

The history of education in the United States may be more effectively told by bringing to bear scholarship from multiple disciplines. Oftentimes, the experiences of people of color in the United States are told as a separate subject, as though people of color have existed in a vacuum and have not been part of the whole U.S. experience. Just as Native Americans are often portrayed as “savages,” stereotypical images of African American slaves continue to be perpetuated, even though scholars know these portrayals are inaccurate.

Local histories that include the names of African Americans and their contributions to the development of a comprehensive public education system give voice to the enslaved, formerly enslaved, and their descendants. Few comprehensive studies have been conducted that center on the lives of enslaved or formerly enslaved people in

New York State.⁴ In undertaking this research, my objective has been to shed light on the complexities of educating children who were often excluded from organized institutions such as schools, and who lived in constant fear of being captured by man hunters and being sold “south.”⁵

The literature I reviewed relates to the education of children of color between 1850 and 1870 and the relationship between the African American community and the larger abolitionist community in New York State, in the movement known as the Underground Railroad. The role and influence of the local black church was also taken into account. The methodology I employed was a combination of educational and social history. Here is a brief outline of the chapters:

Chapter Two discusses personal identity as part of a larger social group identity. In this chapter I discuss African American participation in the Underground Railroad movement. I also discuss the construction of black family households headed by African Americans, using literature concerning ethnic identity and formation of household structures, focusing primarily on literacy and school attendance. I focus on the significance of literacy and home ownership in the creation and reinforcement of school attendance rates.⁶

⁴ Natalie A. Naylor, director of the Long Island Studies Institute, Hofstra University, in the foreword to Lynda R. Day’s *Making a Way to Freedom: A History of African Americans on Long Island* (Interlaken, NY: Empire State Books, 1997).

⁵ Solomon Northrup, *Twelve Years a Slave, Narrative of Solomon Northrup, A Citizen of New York, Kidnapped in Washington City in 1841, and Rescued in 1853, from a Cotton Plantation near the Red River in Louisiana* (Auburn: Derby and Miller, Buffalo; Derby, Orton and Mulligan: England; Sampson Low, Son, and Company, 47 Ludgate Hill, 1854; repr. Mineola, NY: Dover, 2000).

⁶ William Askins, *Sandy Ground: Historical Archaeology of Class and Ethnicity in a Nineteenth Century Community on Staten Island* (PhD diss., City University of New York, 1988), 5. Askins forgoes the use of a functionalist approach to conceptualizing the notion of ethnic groups. A normative concept of ethnicity was enhanced by the acknowledgement of the complex realities of identity choices made by individuals as processual. This approach allowed Askins to focus on workplace relations to demonstrate how laborers were segregated by ethnicity into occupational titles. He used federal and state census data for his baseline analysis.

Also in Chapter Two I address how education was conceived within the African American community as an expression of social identity and as a mode of social mobility while compulsory education was being implemented throughout New York State. I conclude the literature review with an analysis of how community advocacy became a cornerstone of cultural production through the efforts of church congregations, particularly in regard to access to literacy.

Chapter Three describes the qualitative and quantitative research methods used in this analysis. The oral tradition methods I used consisted of interviewing descendants of Sandy Ground's original settlers. Quantitative correlation methods of analysis, using the SPSS 11.0 program, aided in finding the relationships between and among the school-age children and variables related to the households in which they resided. The use of a mixed methodology to analyze data is a growing practice, based on the belief that such a methodology will help researchers define history less narrowly. By considering multiple facets one can better confirm the relevance, accuracy, and reliability of the information.

In Chapters Four, Five, and Six, the 1850s African American communities of Sandy Ground, Syracuse, and Watertown, respectively, are described. The education of African American school-age children was maintained through individual, household, and community efforts. The perseverance of freedom seekers as well as free people of color to advocate for the right to receive an education in public institutions was remarkable. This dissertation is a story of literacy and school enrollment among school-age children of free and formerly enslaved African Americans.

The final chapter summarizes the findings and concludes with a discussion of the implications of theories related to archeology, education, and social history. A large body

of literature on social history and social identity in relation to literacy and household demographics, as well as community advocacy, was explored. This study demonstrates that a traditional review of educational history is inadequate. An approach rich in methods that addresses the complexities of racism, social policy, religious ideologies, and the legacy of the Underground Railroad as they relate to the education of African American children is more appropriate.

CHAPTER TWO: ECOLOGY OF CULTURAL IDENTITY

The great majority of children attending our Public Schools enter at 5 years of age, and do not leave till after the age of 14. Such children leaving at the age of 14 should be thoroughly familiar with all the branches of a common English education; and this can be accomplished by a systematic course of study in every department of the same grade, from the Primary to the Senior.

—M. L. Brown, Clerk
Board of Education, City of Syracuse (1855)¹

Introduction

Five years before the publication of the 1855 annual report quoted above, the federal government enacted the 1850 Fugitive Slave Law. In that same year, several dozen African American children enrolled in school in the three New York State communities examined in this study: Sandy Ground, Syracuse, and Watertown. This dissertation will examine the identities of these children, their respective household demographics, and how those demographics may have had a bearing on their education. To garner a more comprehensive understanding of how education was defined and delivered to African American children, I will use interdisciplinary theoretical frameworks. I will also describe some of the educational opportunities available to the population under study. The analytical approach offered in the following chapter allows one to quantify relationships between school attendance and head of household social demographics, resulting in new knowledge about the educational history of African Americans and filling gaps in the general history of education in New York State and the United States.

¹ *Annual Report of the Board of Education of the City of Syracuse for the Year Ending March 25, 1855* (W. T. Hamilton, Publisher and Bookseller, No. 23, South Salina Street, Syracuse, 1855), 26.

In his groundbreaking work *Lies My Teacher Told Me: Everything Your American History Textbook Got Wrong*, James Loewen observes that many times ethnic history is overlooked in college-level survey courses, unless the course has a specific emphasis, such as slavery and abolition, Chinese American history, Pan-African history, or Chicano labor movements in the United States. As a result, students are generally ill informed.”²

Why is ethnic history not readily available to inquiring minds as part of survey history courses? Loewen states that “amnesia set in” regarding the relationship between Europeans and Africans. For example, he writes that “Europe gradually found it convenient to forget that Moors from Africa had brought to Spain and Italy much of the learning that led to the Renaissance. Europeans had known that Timbuctu [*sic*], with its renowned university and library, was a center for learning.”³ Thus, the contributions of entire segments of humanity were written out of history, becoming unavailable to the future.⁴ African American history has been equated with post-Emancipation Proclamation literature and its visual representations. In Western interdisciplinary studies, literature and art depicting African Americans tends to emphasize southern representations of slavery, from when that practice began in the earliest American settlements. Moving beyond the common perception that only southern states prospered because of human bondage, the

² James Loewen, *Lies My Teacher Told Me: Everything Your American History Textbook Got Wrong* (New York: Touchstone Publishers, 1995), 13.

³ *Ibid.*, 143.

⁴ See James A. Banks and Cherry A. McGee Banks, *Handbook of Research on Multicultural Education*, 2nd ed. (New York: Jossey-Bass, 2004); Beverly Tatum Daniels, “*Why Are All the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria?*” and *Other Conversations about Race* (New York: Basic Books, 1997); and 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). Many other researchers have observed that historical omissions have led to inaccurate accounts of ethnic group inclusion in United States history. This literature is quite extensive; the scholars cited have researched the African American community predominantly from historical and sociological perspectives.

present analysis is centered in New York State. While this study does not examine New York States' role in the slave trade, I do acknowledge that interwoven history from its Dutch colonial years, through the American Revolution, and into statehood. The study begins after the 1827 abolition of slavery in New York State; yet long-held stereotypes and prejudices still affected the public's willingness to provide education for African American children.

To frame this analysis I will use the definition of education provided by Thomas L. Webber in his analysis of early African American education. In his pivotal work *Deep Like the Rivers: Education in the Slave Quarter Community 1831–1965*, Webber provides a broad definition:

Education is defined as the knowledge, attitudes, values, skills and sensibilities which an individual, or a group, consciously or unconsciously, has internalized. It is the content of what is learned. The socialization and enculturation of the African American community is best defined as a society within a society, where black men and women[,] whose common experiences [were] grounded in American slavery, nurtured the rites and beliefs of their community and religious life by instilling in their children and other community members the cultural themes of the community itself.⁵

I use Webber's definition in relation to the African American community in New York State because its members also had a history of being in bondage.

This study concentrates on three communities, each located at strategic points in New York State. The first community, Sandy Ground, is located in the southern tier of

⁵ Thomas L. Webber, *Deep Like the Rivers: Education in the Slave Quarter Community 1831–1865* (New York: Norton. 1978), ix–xiii.

the state, in Richmond County. It is geographically isolated from the main body of the state. Sandy Ground is positioned in the southwest region of Staten Island. Historically an agrarian community, the African American population of Sandy Ground was most known for its participation in the oyster industry, as well as manual labor and domestic service-related occupations. National recognition of this settlement as the longest-inhabited African American settlement in the United States makes it of particular interest. An article in the *Staten Island Advance* describes Sandy Ground, in present day Woodrow and Rossville, as a community that has “become the nation’s oldest free black community with descendants of the original founders still living there.”⁶ There have been few studies of this American settlement. Sandy Ground was established before the manumission of slavery in New York State. Its residents created a solid community base that enabled them to succeed economically and socially. Later on they provided occupational opportunity and community membership to recently emancipated kindred. The process continued after the Civil War and through the period in American history known as the Reconstruction.

The second community examined was the city of Syracuse, in central New York’s Onondaga County. Originally the city was economically dependent upon the salt industry. Later it expanded into industrial trades due in part to the convergence of the Oswego and Erie Canals in the northeast section of the city. Syracuse was a major transportation intersection for the canal and railway systems. People of color within this community were predominantly service-related employees and laborers, and a small number of men held the title of clergy. Syracuse was ground zero for the antislavery and

⁶ “Island Blacks: From Slavery to Success,” *Staten Island Advance*, December 26, 1999, <http://www.silive.com> [archived Document ID: 1121B5EB200C8877].

vigilance committee movement in Central New York. Residents of the city hosted a number of Colored Citizens Conferences. The city also became famous for the rescue of a fugitive slave named William “Jerry” Henry, and it was home to Jermain Loguen, “King of the Underground Railroad.”

The third community is the city of Watertown. Incorporated on April 5, 1816, Watertown is the metropolis and county seat of Jefferson County. This city is advantageously located along the Black River, which provided almost unlimited and inexhaustible power from its raging water.⁷ Much like the other two communities under investigation, Watertown relied upon waterways and tributaries for commercial use, which led to the town’s fiscal viability.

The intent of my research is to learn about children who were reared in the shadows of slavery by conducting a historical analysis of their education in the three communities. I review literature on the Underground Railroad, particularly in respect to African American involvement; on the demographics of the African American households and communities in which school-age children resided; and on the educational opportunities available to African American youth in New York State during the mid-1800s. A synthesis of these data will provide a new glimpse into the lives of African Americans in New York State between two significant events: the enactment of the Fugitive Slave Law (1850) and the ratification of the Fifteenth Amendment (1870).⁸

⁷ William H. Horton, *Geographical Gazetteer of Jefferson County, NY, 1684–1890* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse Journal Company, 1890). The volume compiled by Hamilton Child provides a brief history of each city, town, and hamlet in Jefferson County in the First Part; an 1890 business directory is compiled in the Second Part.

⁸ The study covers the period in U.S. history that began with the law allowing proslavery agents to seek out and enslave freedom seekers and freeborn people of color. The Fifteenth Amendment was the federal law that allowed men of color the rights of suffrage.

Theoretical Framework

As this dissertation is an exploration of education along a part of the Underground Railroad, I will begin my discussion by placing that movement within the context of community-based activism. In this chapter I will review abolitionism and Underground Railroad scholarship as it relates to African American educational history. I will also report on household demography by consulting church- and community-activism-related sources, and documents reflecting the emergence of the New York State public school system.

My approach, based on the concept of the ecology of cultural identity, takes into account many aspects of identity: cultural customs and traditions, as well as social and domestic environments. I use this approach in an effort to reconstruct hitherto obscured information about the education available to African American children at a specific time and place in history.

Between the enactment of the Fugitive Slave Law in 1850 and the signing of the law that granted voting rights to African Americans in 1870, the legal status of formerly enslaved men shifted from that of chattel to citizen. In New York State, abolitionists were actively advocating for this change, as were members of the black churches. During that period (1850–1870) there was a shift, nationally, in relations between whites and various people of color. Native Americans were being displaced and sent to reservations in the Midwest and *rancherías* in California. Mexicans from former Spanish colonies became aliens in a new country when California entered the Union along with other western territories. African Americans from southern states were seeking emancipation from slavery. Northern states were abolishing slavery within their borders and advocating the

same for any new territories, and women were calling for the right to vote. By 1870 the Union had achieved the goal of “Manifest Destiny,” one united country from the Atlantic to the Pacific Oceans.

African Americans, depending on their geographic location, were actively participating in many aspects of American society. The northern free black community comprised free and formerly enslaved persons from the North, as well as formerly enslaved persons from the South seeking freedom in northern territories. The collective actions of various segments of society had a profound influence on educational access for children of color, regardless of their legal status.

Social organizations, family, politics, judiciary, geography, nationality, religious affiliation, sexual orientation, ethnicity, age, gender, and levels of education all influence culture. Cultural identity and group knowledge are based upon the experiences of individuals who are influenced by the culture, which is influenced by the environment. These form a never-ending rotation of influence and counter-influence.⁹

Recontextualizing the Underground Railroad

In the North, antislavery activity involved more than European Americans assisting their bonded African brethren; research shows that African Americans played a pivotal role in helping fugitives who were seeking liberty. Larry Gara, in his generative work, *The Liberty Line: The Legend of the Underground Railroad*, emphasizes this

⁹ James E. Gray, *The Ecological Paradigm* (Rohnert Park, CA, 1998), an unpublished theory of the social construction of reality related to the culture of teaching, the teaching of culture, and the lay comprehension of culture and its components.

point.¹⁰ Judith Wellman provides us with a rubric by which to measure evidence collected. Wellman's rubric will be discussed further in the following chapter.

Notions about African American children and their education in the 1850s—like notions about the communities with recorded Underground Railroad activity—tend to be based on folklore. According to Alan Dundes, author of *Folklore Matters*, folklore “includes myths, folktales, legends, proverbs, riddles, folk beliefs, costumes, folk medicine, traditional food, folk speech, charms, curses, games, folk music, folk dances, etc.”¹¹ Dundes also states that individuals seek to acquire new identities as a form of resistance against becoming “lost in a crowd or just a number, a nonentity. Folklore is more than a source of data for social scientists[;] it also serves as a medium for expressing personal and group identity.”¹² The folklore of identity includes both the desire to change one's identity and the realization that it may be impossible to do so—as in the case of identity constructions based on bureaucratic systems (e.g., social security numbers, passport numbers, and numbers used in communication media and financial institutions). The population for this study is identified by individuals' community status, as well as their household demographics and other indications of their personal identities.

The Underground Railroad is recognized as a phase of United States antislavery history. According to William H. Siebert, in his 1896 article “Light on the Underground Railroad,” the Underground Railroad was circumscribed and local in character, and most of the literature on the subject drew on recollections of self-identified abolitionists.¹³

¹⁰ Larry Gara, *The Liberty Line: The Legend of the Underground Railroad* (Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 1961).

¹¹ Alan Dundes, *Folklore Matters* (Knoxville, TN: University of Tennessee Press, 1989), 9.

¹² *Ibid.*, 32–33.

¹³ William H. Siebert, “Light on the Underground Railroad,” *American History Review* 1, no. 3 (April 1896): 455–463, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1833723>.

Siebert combines a topographical analysis of the Underground Railroad with first-hand accounts of abolitionists from Ohio and other states who recorded activities of participants in the movement. His groundbreaking study was one of the first post-Civil War examinations of this social justice movement of the nineteenth century. He suggests the use of maps and noteworthy findings to identify the geographic extent of the routes used and recorded, and to examine the movement through the Jeffersonian ideals written about in the “abolitionist tract called the Declaration of Independence.”¹⁴

In his article Siebert notes that terminals or places of deportation for freedom seekers, particularly along the north-northeast boundary of the United States, numbered less than two dozen. Before 1850 many who sought liberation settled in “northern states, or neighborhoods where the presence of Quakers, Wesleyan Methodists, Covenanters and Free Presbyterians, or people of their own color, gave them assurances of safety.”¹⁵ His analysis of the Underground Railroad reveals how freedom seekers and freeborn African Americans dispersed throughout the northern states by mid-century. “The passage of the Fugitive Slave Bill of 1850 and the sudden influx of blacks over the Canadian borders are two complementary facts whose significance is best seen when they are taken together.”¹⁶

Activists within the black community recognized the danger of the 1850 law. Many took preemptive actions, leaving their communities to avoid capture of themselves or their family members. Siebert directs his readers to material sources, such as first-hand recorded recollections, diary entries, newspaper reports, and official legal documents to

¹⁴ Siebert, “Light on Underground Railroad,” quoted in George W. Julian, *The Life of Joshua R. Giddings* (Chicago: A.C. McClurg, 1892), 157.

¹⁵ Siebert, “Light on the Underground Railroad,” 459.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 461.

reveal the activities of local advocates of freedom seekers (who were sometimes one and the same).¹⁷

In 1961 Leon F. Litwack authored *North of Slavery: The Negro in the Free States 1790–1860*. This was one of the first academic studies of the twentieth century to direct the conversation about the institution of slavery to northern states. “Although slavery eventually confined itself to the region below the Mason-Dixon Line, discrimination against the Negro and a firmly held belief in the superiority of the white race were not restricted to one section but were shared by an overwhelming majority of white Americans in both the North and the South.”¹⁸ Litwack states that “on January 6, 1832, twelve white men gathered in a schoolroom under Boston’s African Baptist Church and dedicated a new organization—the New England Anti-Slavery society—to the cause of immediate abolition and the improvement of the political and economic position of northern Negroes.”¹⁹ Improving the condition of northern blacks included, but was not limited to, the rights of suffrage, occupational opportunity, and access to education.

Establishment of American and New York State Anti-Slavery Society

Today, many Americans can retell some anecdote about the abolition of slavery in the United States. Many can also share what they have heard about how those seeking freedom before the end of the U.S. Civil War made their way north. However, few could provide the names of African Americans who sought freedom, except for such notable individuals as Frederick Douglass and Harriet Tubman. Though it is important to know and understand the history of African Americans through the lens of their most

¹⁷ Ibid., 462.

¹⁸ Leon F. Litwack. *North of Slavery: The Negro in the Free States 1790–1860* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961), vii.

¹⁹ Litwack, *North of Slavery*, 214.

noteworthy representatives, such anecdotes do not tell the story of the community's advocates, their contributions, and the strength that produced and sustained their children.

Historic Demography of African American Households

All individuals are shaped by their household dynamics and their community, as well as the formal or informal education they receive in conjunction with other aspects of their culture. For this reason, an inclusive ecological definition of culture was used to analyze educational opportunities for the children included in this study. Stories, facts, and figures as they relate to school attendance rates of African American children in the mid-nineteenth century in New York State will be analyzed using household demographics such as the number of literate adults in that household.

Alan Dundes's extensive studies of identity span most social science disciplines. His findings reveal variations between personal identification and group identification; he concludes that the two are intricately intertwined. "The conscious feeling of having a personal identity is based on two simultaneous observations: the perception of self-sameness and continuity of one's existence in time and space and perception of the fact that others recognize one's sameness and continuity."²⁰ Dundes uses a mirror metaphor: individuals construct their identity based on reflections of themselves that come from other individuals. "Reciprocal mirroring is an elementary condition of the formation of

²⁰ Dundes, *Folklore Matters*, 5. Dundes used theories of Erik Erikson, *Identity: Youth and Crisis* (New York: Norton, 1968), 50; Phyllis Greenacre, "Early Physical Determinants in the Development of the Sense of Identity," *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association* 6, no. 4 (Oct. 1958): 612–627; and Thomas Luckman, "Personal Identity as an Evolutionary and Historical Problem," in M. von Cranach, L. Foppa, W. Lehenies, and D. Ploog (eds.), *Human Ethology: Claims and Limits of a New Discipline* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 56–74. The reference to "land and language" concerns where a person comes from and the dialect or vernacular they speak. Both geography and language are salient aspects of an individual's identity. People discriminate and have been discriminated against based on place of origin, as well as an accent, drawl, or lilt.

all personal identities beginning in childhood.”²¹ He states that “cultural elements are essential features of personal and collective identity systems. Land and language are among the constructed symbols, as well as common constituents such as music, dance and heroes.”²²

In my study, definitions of individual and group identity and the interconnected nature of the identity system are considered along with aspects of culture, tradition, and geography in the construction of self, and these are brought to bear on the notion of educational history. When one includes in this mix the sociological context of household demographics and community activism as related to child development, it is then possible to construct an ecological (or holistic) approach to the problem under study. I contend that the use of this ecological definition of cultural identity also results in a new understanding of the history of education in New York State.

The use of historical demography allows the comparison of a child’s enrollment status with other census categories (e.g., head of household ethnicity, home ownership status, literacy status, and occupation). For this study, I am interested in the names of the school-age children on the census and whether they attended school. I am also interested in who the heads of the household were and their social demographics as listed on the census tract. Through this examination of the 1850 census data and a search of two subsequent federal censuses and literature related to each community, I reveal salient aspects of education within three communities associated with the Underground Railroad.

Thomas Webber, *Deep Like the Rivers: Education in the Slave Quarter*

Community: 1831–1865, writes, “To the oppressed slave his culture was like a deep river;

²¹ Dundes, *Folklore Matters*, 5; Luckman, *Personal Identity*, 66, 72.

²² Dundes, *Folklore Matters*, 8; Edward H. Spicer, “Persistent Cultural Systems: A Comparative Study of Identity Systems That Can Adapt to Contrasting Environments,” *Science* 174, no. 4011 (1971): 795–800.

to immerse oneself in its water was to commune with one's own culture."²³ Though never the same river twice, it always contained undercurrents of the collective ancestral experience. He identifies cultural themes centered on the "nine strongest currents" that were fundamental to the American slaves' experience in a southern context. Though each of these themes is placed within the context of the slave quarter community, each also applies to the experiences of brethren in the North. Webber provides a comprehensive understanding of the time period and the localized experiences of the quarter inhabitants.

Webber defines his study as both anthropological and historical. He states that "it is perhaps best understood as 'cultural history,' an extension of what Margaret Mead and others have termed 'the study of culture at a distance.'"²⁴ Webber describes multiple forms of artistic expression, modes of religious practice, distinctions in family patterns, and community structure. Each of the themed currents identified by Webber reflects the mechanisms by which slave culture survived.

Webber makes it clear that slaveholders controlled much of what their chattel learned and how they learned it. However, the slave community as defined by slaveholders was only one part of the enslaved children's inheritance. They learned about the customs and traditions of the African societies from which the adult slaves in their community had been torn. This understanding runs counter to the myth that has been

²³ Thomas Webber, *Deep Like the Rivers: Education in the Slave Quarter Community* (New York: Norton and Company, 1978), 60. For additional works related to the education of African Americans in the south during slavery, the Reconstruction, the early twentieth century up to the Great Depression, see: James D. Anderson, *The Education of Blacks in the South, 1860-1935* (Chapel Hill, North Carolina: University of North Carolina Press, 1988); Heather Andrea Williams, *Self-Taught: African American Education in Slavery and Freedom* (Chapel Hill and London: University of North Carolina Press, 2005); Hilary J. Moss, *Schooling Citizens: The Struggle for African American Education in Antebellum America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009), and Christopher M. Span, *From the Cotton Field to the Schoolhouse: African American Education in Mississippi, 1862-1875* (Chapel Hill, North Carolina: University of North Carolina Press, 2009).

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 263.

common in American tradition, that the only culture known to African Americans was that of the plantation itself.

A study of the African American family (as well as the origins and development of their culture), *Black Family in Slavery and Freedom 1750–1925*, was published in 1976. Author Herbert G. Gutman, in collaboration with Laurence Glasco, studied the black community in Buffalo, New York. The study was in response to a number of academic publications claiming that “the deterioration of the Negro family” was rooted in the enslavement of Africans in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.²⁵ The volume was also stimulated by the bitter public and academic controversy surrounding publication of Nathan Glazer and Daniel P. Moynihan’s *Beyond the Melting Pot: The Negroes, Puerto Ricans, Jews, Italians and Irish of New York City* (1963) and the subsequent piece written by Daniel P. Moynihan, *The Negro Family in America: The Case for National Action* (1965).²⁶

During the 175-year period under examination, Gutman found that most African Americans held positions as day laborers and service workers; few had middle-class status, and double-headed kin-related households were the norm. The alleged “tangle of pathology” was not visible. Gutman used New York State manuscript census schedules,

²⁵ Herbert G. Gutman, *The Black Family in Slavery and Freedom: 1750–1925* (New York: Vintage Books, 1977): xvii–xxviii. Gutman relates how his research was inspired by the following controversial publications: Daniel P. Moynihan, *The Negro Family: The Case for National Action* (Washington: U.S. Dept. of Labor, Office of Policy Planning and Research, 1965); Edward Franklin Frazier, *The Negro Family in the United States* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1939); and Nathan Glazer and Daniel P. Moynihan, *Beyond the Melting Pot: The Negroes, Puerto Ricans, Jews, Italians and Irish of New York City* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press and Harvard University Press, 1963). Each of these works treats the problems of migration, uprooting urbanization, and an already fundamentally “weak” family structure among minorities that magnifies the problems of poverty and dereliction. According to these authors, slavery exacerbated these problems for the African American family.

²⁶ Gutman, *Black Family*, xvii.

as well as United States federal census tracts for his data, in addition to other source material.

Gutman notes, “The most important single piece of historical evidence in this book is neither an isolated statistic, a historical ‘anecdote,’ a numerical table, nor a chart; it is the photograph that adorns the jacket of this book and serves as its frontispiece. The picture, taken during the Civil War, shows five generations within one family on Smith’s plantation, Beaufort, South Carolina.”²⁷ Throughout his study, Gutman analyzes the social and cultural adaptations of the slave family and the larger kin group. Each chapter addresses a variant theme similar to those outlined by Webber. Marriage is the first theme discussed, followed by the development of the slave family and the kinship network on the plantation. Next, patterns of familial domestic arrangements are compared among plantations in different southern states. As the family network is deconstructed, common beliefs and behaviors are revealed to show the adaptability of the definition of “family” within the slave community.

In his book *The Slave Community: Plantation Life in the Antebellum South*, John Blassingame furthers this discourse when he notes that the slave family, particularly in the southern United States, was unique due to gender imbalances. Because planters wished to increase the number of bondspersons, monogamous relationships were authorized for reproductive reasons. According to Blassingame, family was, in short, an important survival mechanism.²⁸ Family, in its contemporary definition as a nuclear unit, did not necessarily define the community of the slave family. Blassingame discusses the

²⁷ Ibid., xxiv.

²⁸ John W. Blassingame, *The Slave Community: Plantation Life in the Antebellum South* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1972, 1979), 149–191. Blassingame bases this comparison on slavery in Latin America, particularly Cuba and areas of South America.

perils of enslavement, acculturation, and survival of the Middle Passage, as well as what he called the “Americanization of the slave and the Africanization of the South.”²⁹ Again, the theme of culture and the slave family are raised, in addition to an examination of rebels and runaways, plantation stereotypes, and institutional roles. Also discussed are the realities of life on the plantation and slave personality types. These themes will be revisited as we begin the journey into each of the three communities in antebellum New York State.

Tracing specific individuals over time requires some reliable form of identification: a name. Gutman explores the cultural and social meaning behind the naming practices within the slave community and how the surname obligated the name owner to the slaveholder. The retention of the surname over time, and particularly after emancipation, served as a sociocultural device to demonstrate one’s importance within one’s community. In the journey from slavery to freedom, changing one’s name became a tool for redefining one’s status. As products of miscegenation, Frederick Douglass and Jermain Loguen took the liberty of renaming themselves. Both were born of black mothers who served as concubines of the slaveholders who fathered each man. In the slave narratives that they wrote, both men mention the tension in their masters’ households because of their mulatto identities and features, which were undeniably similar to those of the legitimate children living there. Illegitimate children of slaveholders were also constant reminders of men’s infidelity.³⁰ Douglass and Loguen are

²⁹ Blassingame, *Slave Community*, 49. Chapter Two of this book has the same title; it opens with the following quote from Ralph Ellison: “Southern whites cannot walk, talk, sing, conceive of laws or justice, think of sex, love, the family or freedom without responding to the presence of the Negroes.”

³⁰ Blassingame, *Slave Community*, 149; Frederick Douglass, *My Bondage and My Freedom* (New York, Miller, Orton and Mulligan, 1855; repr. 1968); Jermain Wesley Loguen, *The Rev. J. W. Loguen, as a Slave and as a Freeman: A Narrative of Real Life* (Syracuse, NY: J. G. K. Truair, 1859).

significant figures in New York State and United States history. Their autobiographies as former enslaved men provide an emic perspective on the journey from slavery to freedom.³¹

Herbert Gutman closes the first part of the volume of *The Black Family in Slavery and Freedom: 1750–1925* by relating his findings to other aspects of slave life and behavior, and to models developed by historians such as E. Franklin Frazier, Kenneth Stampp, Stanley M. Elkins, and Eugene D. Genovese. Drawing on Works Progress Administration (WPA) interviews, census data, and written histories, their research on the slave experience was limited to institutional arrangements, slave beliefs, and plantation records. Perceptions of the slave community have likewise been limited. Such perceptions have led to erroneous conclusions in many influential historical writings. As suggested by Gutman, a bicultural analysis of the African American's process of socialization, together with an awareness of the relationships between family and larger community, will allow us to view the African American family as more than a white-dominated and -sponsored device to reproduce forced labor and maintain social control. As suggested in the works of John Blassingame, Robert Fogel, Stanley Engerman, and Eugene D. Genovese, there is an alternative perspective worthy of embrace.³²

Blassingame contends that, however oppressive or dehumanizing plantation life was in the South or bonded servitude was in the North, the struggle for survival was not

³¹ Following are a few of the biographies and autobiographies written from the former slave perspective: William Webb, *The History of William Webb* (Detroit: E. Hoekstra, 1873); Josiah Henson, *The Life of Josiah Henson: Formerly a Slave, Now an Inhabitant of Canada* (Boston: A. D. Phelps, 1849); Austin Steward, *Twenty-Two Years a Slave and Forty Years a Freeman* (Rochester, NY: W. Alling, 1857); and Solomon Northrup and D. Wilson, *Twelve Years a Slave: Narrative of Solomon Northrup, Citizen of New York, Kidnapped in Washington City in 1841 and Rescued in 1853 from a Cotton Plantation Near the Red River, in Louisiana* (Auburn, NY: Derby and Miller, 1853). Each author wrote about the desire for and the meaning of freedom.

³² Webber, *Deep Like the Rivers*, 261.

severe enough to crush the slave's creative instincts.³³ Blassingame posits that, through this creativity, several unique cultural forms evolved, which lightened the burden of those oppressed, promoted group solidarity, and provided ways for expressing aggression, sustaining hope, and building self-esteem; and these cultural forms often represented areas of life largely free from the control of whites. These aspects of black culture included language, customs, beliefs, values, ideals, and behaviors. However, they also included elements such as emotional religion, folk songs, tales, dance, and superstition. Each constituent helped define the social culture of the black community, which in turn helped individuals construct their own identity.

This primary environment provided members with ethical rules, and fostered cooperation, mutual assistance, and solidarity. The dominant society, a secondary environment, was far less influential in defining the cultural identity of African Americans. According to Blassingame, the heritage of black culture is a way of life determined by the norms of conduct; it defines roles and patterns of behavior while providing a network of individual and group relationships. This socialization process was (and is) based upon shared experiences, expectations, and culture, promoted by group identification, social cohesion, tight communal bonds, and a positive self-concept.³⁴ The black community evolved over time, based upon common experiences and knowledge that were transmitted under the shroud of slavery.

Gutman used case studies of African American families to illustrate his points. In the final chapters, he revisits the lives of former slaves, recorded in late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century ethnographies. Using census data, historic demography, and oral

³³ Blassingame, *Slave Community*, 105.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 105–106.

histories, he demonstrates the importance of social and cultural processes that contextualized family through intergenerational community links.

Oral traditions of diverse ethnic communities, as taught to each member to ensure enculturation into the dominant society, are considered reliable sources of information. “What a slave child learned always depended upon how that child was taught and who taught that child.”³⁵ The notion of biculturation helps to explain how people learned and practiced mainstream culture and ethnic culture simultaneously. Gutman and Blassingame provide an understanding of the ability of African Americans in northern states, particularly New York, to internalize their bicultural state of being and to survive the inhumanity of being a person of color in a country built on the foundation of racial discrimination and inequality.

According to Leon Litwack, “The position of the Negro in the ante-bellum North invites obvious comparisons with that of the slave in the South and the same popular pressures that forced political parties to embrace the doctrine of white supremacy demanded and sanctioned the social and economic repression of the Negro population.”³⁶

Litwack’s study reveals that, like their southern counterparts, African Americans in the North were not passive, meek, and subservient; nor did their experiences align with conventional stereotypes; their forms of protest and self-identification simply manifested themselves in a different form. Like Gutman, Webber, and Blassingame, Litwack examines the culture of African Americans through multiple themes. Beginning with the institution of slavery in the North, he then reflects upon the effects of being legally free and of color.

³⁵ Gutman, *Black Family*, 261.

³⁶ Litwack, *North of Slavery*, viii.

Freedom seekers had to take into account their ignorance about the world and local geography before taking the first steps. They had heard accounts, by slaveholders and overseers of fugitives who managed to make it North, of the horrors and poverty endured by many such bondsmen. Nonetheless, the means by which enslaved persons escaped bondage were as varied as the occupational capacities of those who chose to self-emancipate. House servants, craftsmen, and field hands often escaped during weekends or Christmas holidays, or in the months when the corn was still in the field, providing cover for their departure; bolder ones stole the master's horses to flee. Some received aid from black sailors or sympathetic white captains who would allow them passage in the holds of the northbound vessels; or they simply stowed away. Those who were literate wrote their own passes and some paid poor whites to forge passes for them. By a few accounts, some survived being mailed North, or pretended to be loyal to a master heading into northern states—until arrival; upon reaching their destination, they would disappear, or change their gendered appearance until safe, or try to pass for white.³⁷ These challenges were only the beginning of the freedom seekers' journey.

The ubiquitous runaway was the “bogeyman” for young whites, “worrisome property” for the master, and a hero in the quarters. Symbolic of black resistance to slavery, those who chose to run away were committing individual acts that constituted a threat to their own safety and stability while challenging the very existence of the

³⁷ See Jermain Wesley Loguen, *The Rev. J. W. Loguen, as a Slave and as a Freeman: A Narrative of Real Life* (Syracuse, NY: Truair, 1859), <http://www.docsouth.unc.edu/neh/Loguen/Loguen.html>. Loguen escaped on the mare of his plantation master, who was also his father. William Craft wrote *Running a Thousand Miles for Freedom: Or the Escape of William and Ellen Craft from Slavery* (London: William Tweedie, 1860). This husband and wife team used their knowledge of their social environment to make their way from slavery to freedom. The story of Henry “Box” Brown, *Narrative of the Life of Henry Box Brown, Written by Himself* (<http://www.docsouth.unc.edu/neh/brownbox.html>), another example of the ingenuity of those seeking freedom, tells of a multiethnic collaborative effort to send a man to freedom in a shipping crate.

plantation society. Periodically, groups of slaves would band together in an attempt to escape.³⁸

Oftentimes, the history of intercultural relations in the United States begins with a phase of oppression and distrust, followed by religious conversion of those enslaved by colonizers and plantation owners, and ending with symbolic equality through the abolition movement.

Long-held prejudices and ways of knowing (epistemologies) often hold firm in cultural traditions that are transmitted intergenerationally. By the middle of the nineteenth century, the Supreme Court had stripped African Americans of their hopes of citizenship (their Holy Grail), and more repressive federal laws were being enacted as the nation expanded westward to the Pacific Coast. Simultaneously, southern states were positioning themselves to rebel against the nation to maintain slavery, and northerners were drafting new antislavery legislation and articles of colonization requesting that free persons of color remove themselves from this land.

Education for African Americans in New York State

As regards the lives of slaves in the North and their access to education, few facts are widely taught in college-level survey courses in U.S. history or literature or in preservice teacher training courses in social studies. Early Puritan educators such as John Eliot encouraged slave owners of the time to instruct their chattel in the reading of the Bible, while Cotton Mather went as far as to establish a charity Bible school for black and Indian children in 1717.³⁹ Though the actions of Eliot and Mather were within the

³⁸ Blassingame, *Slave Community*, 206–222.

³⁹ U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, National Register, History and Education, *Racial Desegregation in Public Education in the United States* (Washington, DC: National Park Service, 2000).

context of their theological philosophies, their aim was to save the souls of individuals through the reading of selected scripture, not to educate or develop autonomous or self-sufficient individuals. These early policies and practices established during the settlement of the original thirteen colonies were foundational to the nineteenth-century educational system.

Community-Sponsored Education

In 1758 a school for black children was opened under Anglican auspices in Philadelphia; and two years later others were started in Newport and New York City. The children were taught reading, writing, and arithmetic.⁴⁰ In 1795 a law that appropriated money raised through land sales and levied taxes was used to fund the common schools of New York State.⁴¹ The schools in Pennsylvania and New York, described by Edgar J. McManus in *Black Bondage in the North*, were organized almost sixty years before the abolition of slavery. School-age children were defined as any child between the ages of five and twenty-one, and under special circumstances either younger or older.⁴²

Central to this study are questions about the identities and experiences of African American students in New York State. When did public schooling become readily available to children of color? Did African American children attend separate or integrated schools? How did the church and the community advocate for educational opportunities in the mid-nineteenth century? In a larger social context one might ask,

⁴⁰ Edgar J. McManus, *Black Bondage in the North* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1973).

⁴¹ Thomas J. Pugh, "Rural School Consolidation in New York State 1795–1993: A Struggle for Control" (PhD diss., Syracuse University, 1994), 105.

⁴² *Annual Report of the Board of Education for the City of Syracuse* (1855). In this report, school-age children were defined as those between the ages of five and twenty-one years.

How did the children of the Middle Passage learn to survive presumably hostile social and educational environments?

Two decades before the Fugitive Slave Law went into effect, New York State finally implemented the law to abolish the practice of slavery within its borders. Simultaneously a system of public education was emerging. New York State's Gradual Emancipation Act was enacted at the turn of the nineteenth century, and the law that finally abolished slavery was ratified in 1827. The number of free people of color in the state naturally rose. Before slaves were fully emancipated, many slaveholders were instructed to provide bondsmen (women and children) with skills that would allow them to be self-sufficient and autonomous as freed people.

The New York Gradual Emancipation Act . . . freed all newborns of slave mothers on 4 July 1799. To placate the owners the law required that the newborns of slave mothers remain the servants of the master or mistress of their mother—the male children until they reached the age of 27, and the females until the age of 25, “provided the master or mistress cause the children to be taught to read the holy scriptures previous to their becoming 21 years of age.”⁴³

However, the meaning and the value of “freedom” depend on the perspective of the person using the word.⁴⁴ Similarly, education has multiple values and definitions.

Between 1827, with the final ratification of emancipation for those enslaved in New York State, and 1870, when the United States Congress ratified the Fifteenth Amendment, thereby granting the right to vote to male citizens of African descent, forty-

⁴³ “Celebration of the Abolition of Slavery,” *Albany Argus and Cit Gazette*, July 6, 1827, as cited in A. J. Williams-Myers, *Long Hammering: Essays on the Forging of an African American Presence in the Hudson River Valley to the Early Twentieth Century* (Trenton, NJ: African World Press, 1994), 130.

⁴⁴ Eammon Callan, *Autonomy and Schooling* (Kingston, Canada: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1988).

three years elapsed, during which other significant sociopolitical developments took place. Joel Spring states that, with “political concerns sparked by the Revolution, Americans began to organize institutions for the moral reformation of society. It was believed that crime and poverty would end with the reformation of prisons and the establishment of charity schools. Central to this discussion was the acceptance of the idea that a person’s character would be reformed.”⁴⁵ Spring continues, “The developments set the stage for the evolution of the common school system in the 1830s and the multiplication of colleges in the early nineteenth century. The organization of the common school system in different states in the 1830s and 1840s provided the basis for the modern system of public schooling in the United States.”⁴⁶

One is reminded that initially schools were religious institutions when Pugh notes, “In order to get State funds the administration of the school would have to be turned over to a secular board, locally elected. The congregation no longer directly controlled formal education.”⁴⁷ Pugh, also embracing the continuity thesis, notes that there is much to be gained from tracing the rather narrow scope of state education policy, law, and local activity over a long historical time span. The continuity thesis emphasizes the evolution of themes over time versus trying to identify a specific transformative moment, period, idea, or person. Significantly, public education is perhaps the only institution in which the interests of parents, professionals, citizens, children, and the state intersect regularly and pervasively.⁴⁸

⁴⁵ Joel Spring, *The American School: 1642–1996*, 4th ed. (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1997), 54.

⁴⁶ Spring, *The American School*, 54.

⁴⁷ Pugh, “Rural School Consolidation,” 106.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 187–189.

In 1987 Carlton Mabee authored *Black Education in New York State*. This groundbreaking text identifies pedagogical inequalities in the first compulsory education laws written for the state, and simultaneously a divergent system of education was created for children of color.⁴⁹ In the following pages, scholarship will be presented and generalizations based on Mabee's findings examined to explain more fully the educational system available to African Americans in three communities in New York State during the 1850s.

This research begins with the 1850s after the enactment of the Fugitive Slave Law. Abolitionist ideology led the social consciousness of the time toward human rights; and the Underground Railroad laid the foundation for activism in bringing about civil rights for all citizens. Carl Kaestle, in *Pillars of the Republic: Common Schools and American Society 1780–1860*, provides a foundational understanding of the country's obligation to provide education as a community service:

The cultural, political and economic evolution of the United States in the early national period had fostered the development of elementary schools, not as a result of state policy, but as a result of local customs. . . . In the North, rural district school enrollment became almost universal, and throughout the nation, charity schooling for the urban poor was advocated with little opposition and with increasing organizational vigor. . . . In many communities, school sessions were brief, facilities were crude, and teachers were only a few steps ahead of their pupils. Uniformity was provided only by the strong Protestant religious content of

⁴⁹ Carlton Mabee, *Black Education in New York State* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1974). In this text Mabee examines education and educational systems among African Americans in New York State from the early eighteenth century through the early twentieth century. He describes at length the education of black educators, their access to their chosen profession, and popular opinion as to how children of color *should be* educated.

most schools, by the popularity of certain textbooks, and by informal traditions of school architecture.⁵⁰

Teacher competence and pedagogical practice varied greatly. Pugh acknowledges that “early parallel sources of instruction from schools and schoolmasters [were] ‘qualitatively and/or quantitatively’ different than the instruction of the catechism provided by the pastor.”⁵¹ In an effort to standardize instruction, as well as teacher preparedness, the state funded a number of new education laws.

The students who are the subject of this study were educated multiculturally, by their environment (in school or out), by their community, and by the state. As these students were constructing their identities as individuals and as members of a group, New York State law was defining the educational system. Before oversight was relinquished to the state and local governments, the church, the community, and the students’ families, as well as the society at large, influenced the educational opportunities afforded to students.

In a few short years, legislation was enacted that changed the educational landscape in New York State. In 1853 Charter 433 allowed common school districts to join together as one high school district, thus beginning the modern public high school. The next year, 1854, marked the inauguration of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, which eliminated the Office of Superintendent of Common Schools. This move signaled the beginning of an active administrative agency for public schools. In 1856 Charter 179 abolished the system of town supervisors of the common schools and replaced them with a system of school commissioners elected at large, with one per assembly district.⁵² The

⁵⁰ Carl F. Kaestle, *Pillars of the Republic: Common Schools and American Society, 1780–1860* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1983).

⁵¹ Pugh, *Rural School Consolidation*, 92.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 190–191.

architects of the sociopolitical system were the same individuals who created the public school system: elected representatives.

The Underground Railroad brings to mind a number of metaphors, rooted in fact and fiction. A significant challenge for those studying aspects of African American life, culture, and history is to continue to investigate and redefine this clandestine network and the contributions of the larger African American community, regardless of the legal status, education level, or occupation of individual members. I chose to look at the education-related activities of abolitionists from within the community.

Other social movements that occurred included the installation of compulsory education in New York and, later, the call for suffrage rights for all regardless of gender. This research focuses on the education of African American children living in three New York State communities associated with the Underground Railroad. Sociopolitical realities, such as parents' literacy, legal status, and/or gender as related to organized education, intersected with the movement known as the Underground Railroad in many communities throughout the United States, particularly in the three communities under study. The literature demonstrates the extent to which African Americans advocated on behalf of other African Americans in order for them to achieve emancipation from slavery and freedom through citizenship. While the Underground Railroad is recognized as a multiethnic, loose association of individuals unified by their moral opposition to the institution of slavery, the activities of *everyday* African Americans and their fight for educational opportunities for their children remains grossly underexamined. According to Litwack, when African American children were "excluded from white schools, Negroes moved to establish their own educational institutions and enlist the support of

abolitionists, some white philanthropists, and several state legislatures. By 1860, a number of private ventures had been attempted, with varying success, and nearly every northern state had provided for a Negro public school system.”⁵³

The educational system, initiated by the emerging public school administrative bureaucracy, hired white teachers in the absence of qualified teachers of color. Teachers hired into these positions received relatively meager salaries and sometimes suffered insult and social ostracism. African American educators would earn less than their European American counterparts, without regard to qualifications or class size.⁵⁴ This early separate and unequal educational system provided only the most elementary curriculum and, oftentimes, substandard teaching. The outcome of these systemic failings reflected “the exclusion of Negroes from most professional pursuits and the prevailing belief that the average Negro’s intellectual capacity debarred him from advanced studies.”⁵⁵

Many of the mid-century African American leaders were educated in church-sponsored schools. A brief history of the New York State school system from the website of the New York State Department of Education follows:

Since colonial days New York State has had a proud history in education.

Beginning with a statewide system of support for public schools enacted in 1795, the state has taken an active role in the assurance of publicly supported education for its citizens. The establishment of common schools in 1812, union free school districts in 1853 and the central school districts in 1914 and 1925, were milestones in education for New York’s children. These major enactments,

⁵³ Litwack, *North of Slavery*, 120–121.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 133.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 134.

together with a multitude of lesser, but still important actions, were responsible for the evolution of the system of public education in its present form.⁵⁶

“On November 1, 1787 in New York City, the Trinity Church reopened their Episcopal catechism school in a private home on Cliff Street Lower Manhattan renaming it the African Free School. The New York Manumission society employed white teachers and administrators and paid expenses until 1834.”⁵⁷ Many of the early community-organized schools adopted the Lancasterian method, by which older students would act as prefects, or teachers, to their younger peers. The school began receiving state assistance from the Common School Fund, which also included an administrative bureaucracy and a standardized, yet expanded, curriculum. The common school followed the model of the old nongraded one-room school. The common school district was the local district within which no more than one elementary school might exist. This system was the genesis of a nonsystemic, decentralized, and locally controlled, motivated, and funded educational system.⁵⁸

The number of free schools expanded to four by 1827. By 1832 African American teachers and administrators were being hired. In 1834 the New York Public School Society took over administration of seven free schools, which four years later were renamed the colored free schools. In 1853 the schools were absorbed into the New York

⁵⁶ “Guide to the Reorganization of School Districts in New York State,” *New York State Department of Education, Ed Management Services*, reports that common schools did not have the authority to operate a high school and were usually administered by a local trustee. Free schools (or union free schools) were administered by a local school board and included at least one high school in the district. Central school districts were formed by combining common schools and free schools under a single state administration, http://www.p12.nysed.gov/mgtserv/sch_dist_org/GuideToReorganizationOfSchoolDistricts.htm.

⁵⁷ April L. Harris, “African Free Schools,” in *The Encyclopedia of New York State*, ed., Peter Eisenstadt and Laura-Eve Moss (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2005), 25–26. Primary and secondary sources used by the author for the encyclopedia entry included Charles C. Andrews, *The History of the New York African Free Schools* (1830; repr. New York: Negro University Press, 1969); and Carleton Mabey, *Black Education in New York State* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1970).

⁵⁸ Pugh, “Rural School Consolidation,” 119–120.

City Board of Education, which was developed under the watchful eye of the New York State Board of Education.⁵⁹

In his unpublished dissertation, “Rural School Consolidation in New York State, 1795–1993: A Struggle for Control,” Thomas J. Pugh writes:

A shift from local to State control and identity involved a lengthy political struggle and reveals the historical workings out of two conflicting themes in the American political tradition: (1) popular democratic control represented by the political theories espoused by Thomas Jefferson and (2) Administrative efficiency and filtered representation represented by the writings of Alexander Hamilton.⁶⁰

Framing his analyses through the ideals of the signers of the Declaration of Independence, Pugh provides an analysis of the emergence of what became the New York State Department of Education. Pugh concludes that the move from local control to centralized control resulted in the elimination of the civic function of education and the loss of community identity. The Jeffersonian idea described by Pugh was that civic education is a function of local control. Jefferson’s vision, according to Pugh, was democratic citizenship as an ongoing apprenticeship. Under this model, democratic citizens only became competent, and thus worthy of being entrusted with the future of the polity, through practice.⁶¹

In 1849 the New York Central College opened in McGrawville as a biracial educational institution. Founded by the American Baptist Free Mission Society, the college admitted both races and sexes and adopted the manual-labor system of education. William G. Allen was appointed to the faculty. The school’s partial dependence on state

⁵⁹ Harris, “African Free Schools,” 25–26;

⁶⁰ Pugh, “Rural School Consolidation,” abstract.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 18.

support occasioned some bitter protests and legislative debates, including the charge that it promoted a “mottled conglomerate of insanities”—miscegenation, women’s rights, abolitionism, and socialism. The school was bankrupt by 1858; it was sold to Gerrit Smith and briefly reopened in 1860, only to close a year later.⁶² The school’s closure correlates with the onset of the American Civil War.

In March 1859 Frederick Douglass wrote in his monthly news tract, “The point which we must aim at is to obtain admission for our children into the nearest school house, and the best school house in our respective neighborhoods.”⁶³ Douglass, like many African American leaders, believed integrated schools would afford their children a better education, while striking a damaging blow at racial segregation and simultaneously creating an atmosphere of social and political equality.

The civil rights movement of the twentieth century mirrored the arguments about school segregation used during the nineteenth century. The City of Boston Primary School Committee (1846) argued that segregated schools not only required additional and needless expense; they exercised a damaging effect on white youths. “We deem it morally injurious to the white children, inasmuch as it tends to create in most, and foster in all, feelings of repugnance and contempt for the colored race as degraded inferiors, whom they may, or must, treat as such. This is the standard of morals and humanity which these schools teach our children, who are thus led to attach to color alone, sentiments and emotions, which should arise, if at all, only in view of character.”⁶⁴

⁶² Litwack, *North of Slavery*, 141.

⁶³ Frederick Douglass, *Douglass’ Monthly*, March 1859; Litwack, *North of Slavery*, 143.

⁶⁴ Litwack, *North of Slavery*, 146; City of Boston, *Minority Report of the Primary School Committee, 1846*, 12–13, 15–16, 21–27; City of Boston, *Minority Report of the Committee up on the Petition of John T. Hilton and Others* (1849), 8.

More than one hundred years before the crusade for equal educational opportunities that led to school desegregation in the United States, a multiethnic cadre of community advocates was asking for equal access to education for all children based on the content of their character, not the color of their skin or their gender.

According to Litwack, education gave African Americans hope to improve their economic status, produce their own literary and scientific figures, and break down barriers of discrimination. Though education was thought to be a panacea for social ills, a problem still lurked on the issue of proximity and race mixing. The hope was that

social amalgamation would be near complete when children of all ethnicities shared the same classroom, [but this] . . . aroused even greater fears and prejudices than those who consigned the Negro to an inferior place in the church, the theatre and the railroad car. . . . The means employed to exclude Negroes from the public schools varied only slightly from state to state. The New York legislature authorized any school district to provide for segregation. In the absence of legal restrictions, custom and popular prejudice often excluded Negro children from schools.⁶⁵

Further, Pugh states, “Education was of primary religious, social and vocational importance. Religion, law and vocation were the legally prescribed subjects of intentional education.”⁶⁶ Given the two definitions of education offered by Kaestle (espousing community service) and Pugh (emphasizing religion and social and vocational importance), community-oriented education provided local children with the skills necessary to transition into adult roles regardless of race. The emergent New York State

⁶⁵ Litwack, *North of Slavery*, 114–115.

⁶⁶ Pugh, “Rural School Consolidation,” 101.

educational system was fraught from its inception with problems related to prejudice and issues of control between the state and parental/community advocacy, thereby creating a system that relegated children to adult roles based on sociopolitical identities. Children of color were arbitrarily excluded if the local ethos deemed it necessary, and parents, through their acceptance of state funding and oversight, would lose their “voice” related to their child’s education.

It has been thought that there is a lack of evidence regarding the origins of a separate and/or inclusive education system for African Americans. One source of evidence is the education legacy left by each community, one household at a time, in the form of census data, city directories, personal, and public records.

African American Abolitionist Educators

During the mid-nineteenth century, most hamlets, towns, and villages in the state of New York had established primary schools and were receiving state financial assistance. These schools taught educational basics: reading, writing, and arithmetic, with a few offering more advanced studies. The New York City common schools that were established in the late eighteenth century set the standard for African American schooling. They prepared their students to become participating citizens in the evolving republic. Using models from other metropolitan areas, such as Cincinnati, instruction was provided for the Negro community through the establishment of a regular adult school, as well as Sabbath and evening schools, Lyceum lectures, and Bible classes.⁶⁷ The schools educated distinguished African American leaders in New York City and State, as well as throughout the United States, Liberia, and the British Isles. The structure of the New

⁶⁷ Litwack, *North of Slavery*, 122.

York African free schools gave rise to the black public education system throughout the city and served as a model for the state of New York.⁶⁸

According to Benjamin Quarles in his groundbreaking text *Black Abolitionists*, “Many of the Negro leaders in the crusade were former slaves, men and women who brought to the platform an experience that in its way was [as] eloquent, however broken the English, as the oratory of Wendell Phillips.”⁶⁹ According to Leon Litwack, in *North of Slavery*, “In March, 1835, twenty-eight white and fourteen Negroes commenced classes at the newly established Noyes Academy in Canaan, New Hampshire. From New York, Henry H. Garnet, Thomas S. Sidney, and Alexander Crummell traveled by Jim Crow steamboats and stagecoaches to attend the academy.”⁷⁰ These three, former students of New York’s African free schools, then attended the Oneida Institute of Manual Labor in Whitesboro, New York, beginning with Alexander Crummell during the mid-1830s.⁷¹ Milton C. Sernett, in *Abolition’s Axe: Beriah Green, Oneida Institute and the Black Freedom Struggle*, recovered the following observation of Alexander Crummell. While attending the Oneida Institute, Crummell noted that the school “opened its doors to colored boys. . . . Thither we three New York boys at once repaired and spent three years under the instruction of that Master-thinker and teacher, Rev. Beriah Green.”⁷² Crummell had enrolled at Oneida Institute with Henry Highland Garnet and Thomas Sidney in 1836, after a brief tenure as students of the Noyes Institute. The friends departed for Whitesboro, New York, after local farmers and ninety yoke of oxen

⁶⁸ *Annual Reports of Superintendent of Common Schools of the State of New York* (Albany, 1844; 1855).

⁶⁹ Benjamin Quarles, *Black Abolitionists* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1969), viii.

⁷⁰ Leon Litwack, *North of Slavery*, 117–118.

⁷¹ Quarles, *Black Abolitionists*, viii.

⁷² Milton C. Sernett, *Abolition’s Axe: Beriah Green, Oneida Institute, and the Black Freedom Struggle* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1986); Milton C. Sernett, *North Star County: Upstate New York and the Crusade for African American Freedom* (Syracuse: NY, Syracuse University Press, 2002), 54.

in Canaan dragged the “Nigger School” into the swamp. Crummell graduated from the Oneida Institute in 1839.⁷³

Sernett has identified fourteen known African American leaders who attended the institute in Whitesboro.⁷⁴ Six of the fourteen became ministers; Jermaine Loguen became particularly instrumental in the development of African American education in Syracuse.⁷⁵ According to Carol Hunter, “Teaching was also a popular choice of career for Oneida (African American) graduates.”⁷⁶ William Allen became a professor at New York Central College; Garrett Cantine served as teacher and principal at the Nevada City Colored School, Nevada. Thomas Sidney and Alexander Crummell started schools in New York City for African American children. Crummell eventually served a term as principal of the New York Select Academy (a black high school). Jermain Loguen settled in Syracuse; like many educated African Americans, he combined teaching and preaching.⁷⁷

The training of Oneida Institute’s African American alumni in the philosophy of abolitionism is reflected in the structure of the schools many of them established. That

⁷³ Literature related to the life of Reverend Jermain Loguen includes Carol M. Hunter, *To Set the Captives Free: Reverend Jermain Wesley Loguen and the Struggle for Freedom in Central New York, 1835–1872* (New York: Garland, 1996); Milton J. Sernett, *Abolition’s Axe: Beriah Green, Oneida Institute, and the Black Freedom Struggle* (Syracuse: NY, Syracuse University Press, 1986); Milton J. Sernett, *North Star Country: Upstate New York and the Crusade for African American Freedom* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2002).

⁷⁴ James Brewer Stewart, *Holy Warriors: The Abolitionists and American Slavery* (Canada: Douglas and McIntyre, 1976, 1997), 173, 175. Stewart provides accounts of Loguen’s involvement with the political process in the last quarter of the nineteenth century and his exile to Canada after John Brown’s raid at Harper’s Ferry.

⁷⁵ Hunter, *Set the Captives Free*, 1996; Sernett, *Abolition’s Axe*, 1986; and Sernett, *North Star Country*, 2002. A number of African American students who rose to prominence in the abolitionist movement were identified during the decade-long tenure of Beriah Green as president of the Oneida Institute. Those identified by Sernett were Alexander Crummell, Amos Beman, Amos Freeman, Augustus Washington, Elymus Roger, Garrett Cantine, Henry Highland Garnet, Jacob Prime, Jermain Loguen, John Degrasse, Samuel Jackson, William Allen, William Forten, and Thomas Sidney. They all attended the Oneida Institute.

⁷⁶ Hunter, *Set the Captives Free*.

⁷⁷ Walls, *African Methodist Episcopal Zion*, 162-163.

training is also evident within the social context of the communities where they resided. Many of the first African Americans in the country who were accepted into institutions of higher education had been born into slavery. They shared an individual and collective consciousness, and their life philosophies and actions demonstrated that shared experience. Their early abolitionist training prepared them for a life of active participation to end the institution of slavery.

In 1853 two days after the Fourth of July, African Americans from the eastern coastal states arrived in Rochester, New York, to serve as delegates to the National Colored Convention.⁷⁸ The convention held many conferences from 1831 onward. At the 1853 convention, in addition to many African American abolitionists, there were white abolitionists, including Gerrit Smith and Henry Highland Garnet, who argued that until former slaves owned land, true equality would never be possible, just as segregated schools, one for blacks and the others for whites, would be the norm. The committee on social relations and polity gave a critical report on the population's general status, how the patent failure of "two distinct, yet inseparable branches of education had set and kept the population adrift."⁷⁹

Various historical moments involved African Americans who both supported and argued against school integration. Kathryn Grover, in *Make a Way Somehow: African American Life in a Northern Community*, analyzed the community of Geneva, New York. Grover notes that Geneva had a history prior to 1827 of providing educational instruction to slaves. This practice was similar to that in New York City and throughout the state during the last decade of the 1700s. African Americans were provided with a highly

⁷⁸ Kathryn Grover, *Make a Way Somehow: African American Life in a Northern Community, 1790–1965* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1994).

⁷⁹ Grover, *Make a Way Somehow*.

selective education that was primarily for religious conversion. Segregation in the New York City schools began at its origins. Segregation practices in the Geneva schools began in the late 1820s and continued into the next century. The Presbyterian Church established a separate school for people of color. The church's colored Sunday school enrolled roughly two-third of individuals residing in black households on the 1830 census.

The presence of Mary Miller and other African American women who served as teachers in Geneva, New York, may have contributed to such a large enrollment in a segregated local school. First, she was African American and female; second, she wasn't perceived as a threat to the security of potential freedom seekers hidden within the community; and third, she was the "community." Her education was derived from the cultural underpinnings of African American life and culture. Pedagogical practices of such Sunday schools were similar to those articulated by scholars examining African American education in the South. Instruction consisted of listening to, memorizing, and learning to read Bible verses in segregated environments.

By the 1850s, in order to avoid discussing integrated education, the local school board invoked a New York State law that deemed segregation permissible if "the white majority deemed the presence of African American children 'offensive.'"⁸⁰ The majority of white folks found the notion of integrated schooling offensive, regardless of the lowly status of the segregated schools for children of color. Samuel Ringgold Ward found the African American community at Geneva to be in "a more rapid and healthy state of improvement."⁸¹

⁸⁰ Ibid., 177.

⁸¹ Ibid., 3.

Henry Highland Garnet had started the High Street School in Geneva, which served as a potential model for a successful segregated school. Nell reports on a presentation at the school that, he said, gave the white audience an opportunity “of witnessing the mental capacity of those so commonly and unjustly termed an inferior class.” Garnet also used the school presentation to inform the attendees of the strides made by other African Americans. One example he used was Charles L. Reason, who had been a principal of a colored school in New York City and had been appointed a professor at New York Central College in McGrawville, which was reorganized as a multiracial college by Gerrit Smith in 1849.⁸²

Prior to the Garnet school presentation, Bibb said that Geneva was the “most aristocratic, proslavery hole I have visited” on a tour he conducted of upstate towns with black populations.⁸³ Despite the proslavery reputation of Ontario County, Geneva’s James W. Duffin, at the 1855 National Council of Colored People, argued that opportunities were available to African Americans. “We can get all our children into the best workshops and into the public schools,” but Grover countered that Duffin’s assertions were without justification. The only African American admitted to Hobart Free College was a light-complexioned mulatto from New York City.

Another well-intended desire to create access to higher education for African Americans was planned by Harriet Beecher Stowe. According to Litwack, Stowe allocated “proceeds from the sales of her book, *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*, to found an integrated institution of higher education. ‘She wished to promote their education, but

⁸² Ibid., 179.

⁸³ Grover, *Make a Way Somehow*, 3. Reported in *Impartial Citizen*, 14 March 1949, “The Spirit of Anti-Slavery in Western New York.”

would have it conducted in mixed schools. Samuel May Jr. wrote, this she thinks, will be Uncle Tom's last monument.' She eventually abandoned the project."⁸⁴

During the 1850s, Grace A. Mapps and Sarah Mapps Douglass taught at the Institute for Colored Youth in Philadelphia. Sarah Mapps Douglass headed the girls' preparatory department and the teaching of science. After attending courses at the Female Medical College of Pennsylvania and Penn Medical University, Mrs. Mapps Douglass ran her own private school offering the only high school in the city designed to educate young black women in medical science. As noted by Horton and Horton in their book *In Hope of Liberty: Culture, Community and Protest Among Northern Free Blacks 1700–1860*, black communities throughout the North offering schooling for African Americans, young and old, were first started and maintained by black women.⁸⁵

Garnet married Sarah Smith Thompson after his first wife died. Mrs. Thompson-Garnet began her teaching career at the African Free School in Williamsburg in 1854. She was later the first African American female appointed as a principal in the New York Public School system.⁸⁶

The African Methodist Episcopal Zion churches, established in the three communities under study, were founded by members of each community with various legal statuses and literacy levels, and from various ethnic backgrounds and occupations, all with a unified goal of providing educational opportunities to *all* children.

⁸⁴ Litwack, *North of Slavery*, 138–139.

⁸⁵ 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), 151.

⁸⁶ Harris, "African Free Schools," 26.

Community Advocacy for Equal Education

The A. M. E. Zion churches and other black churches served as the meeting places for businesses and organizations. In addition, before compulsory education, church schools were the only classrooms that black children in many cities, towns, and villages ever knew. The church was the chief advertising market for professional men and women and the “send-off” location for those venturing into the larger world of adulthood. The idea of education as a social panacea is richly woven throughout American history.

The process towards equality in education did not begin during the 1950s in the United States. Carlton Mabee’s *Black Education in New York State* describes the framework of African American education during the 1850s in New York State. The long and arduous history of education for African Americans began within a segregated system.⁸⁷ As early as the 1830s, protests had begun over the issue of segregation in schools. On April 22, 1837, the editor of *New York Colored American*, Samuel E. Cornish, railed against the state of black schools and how they were “highly calculated to keep up prejudice against coloreds” and offered “little advantage” to the students they served.⁸⁸ Cornish attempted to integrate schools in New York and New Jersey, only to realize that his influence as a Presbyterian minister and newspaper editor was negated because he was a black man.

In 1840 in Buffalo, New York, William Wells Brown, while he was a freedom seeker himself, along with Frederick Douglass and William Nell of Rochester, publicly refused to send their children to segregated schools. Other families throughout the region

⁸⁷ Carlton Mabee, *Black Education in New York State* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press 1987), xi.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 181.

also advocated for integration.⁸⁹ By 1848 Nell began teaching at one of the two black public schools in Rochester, but Douglass still refused to enroll his daughter. He sought out a private academy for her to attend, only to withdraw her in a fury upon learning that she was segregated from her peers.⁹⁰

In 1841 Reverend Loguen of Syracuse called attention to the flourishing school sponsored by the St. James congregation in Ithaca, New York, as well as its pastor, Reverend George H. Washington, and the two Benevolent and Moral Improvement Societies. Bishop Walls, in his history of the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, reiterates the words of the young Reverend Loguen as they were reprinted in Samuel Ringgold Ward's newspaper, *The Colored America*. According to Loguen, the children demonstrated a desire to learn, "in which they manifest a deep and becoming interest. . . . They are, for the most part, endeavoring to become possessed of property, and all have some honest occupation which they pursue with commendable industry."⁹¹

In September 1851, due to a successful community-led boycott, school officials in Rochester "encouraged black children who lived at a distance of the remaining black school to enter white schools near where they lived."⁹² By 1854 Rochester schools were integrated; however, the doors of the black school located in the basement of the Zion African Methodist Church remained open.

[Mrs.] Lucy Colman, a widowed, Massachusetts-born, white abolitionist, was a teacher at the Zion school. She worked quietly to end segregated schooling in Rochester. Upon her urging, African American parents enrolled their more advanced children in

⁸⁹ Ibid., 182–183.

⁹⁰ Ibid., 185.

⁹¹ Bishop W. J. Walls, *The African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church: Reality of the Black Church* (Charlotte, NC: A. M. E. Zion Publication House, 1972), 536.

⁹² Mabee, *Black Education*, 186.

white schools. She cautioned the parents to keep their children “particularly clean” and to instill a personal behavior as “faultless as possible.”⁹³ Mrs. Colman was conscious of stereotypes of African Americans and aware that perceptions based on cleanliness, morality, and humility were part of the antiblack rhetoric of the time. Her advice reinforced the social norms developed within the African American community in the mid-1800s. Much to the credit of Mrs. Lucy Colman, local officials closed the Zion school in 1856.⁹⁴

In the fight for educational inclusion, other boycott attempts in upstate New York were not as successful. In Albany and Kinderhook, local school boards rescinded their policies on school integration in the 1850s. According to the abolitionist editor of Syracuse’s antislavery paper *Impartial Citizen*, educator and freedom seeker Samuel Ringgold Ward reported that the state superintendent of schools “saw the black children turned out of school without moving the outer edge of the nail of his little finger on their behalf.”⁹⁵

In the Albany area, those engaged in occupations with close proximity to whites—a sign of acceptance into specific social spheres of society—included two barbers, William P. McIntyre and Francis Van Vranken (both active in the colored convention movement). The two men solicited aid from Gerrit Smith to challenge the local school board’s ruling in court. Smith donated twenty-five dollars and offered additional financial assistance. In 1851 African American parents from Albany and Troy, New York (including McIntyre), promoted a Colored Citizens’ Convention, with school

⁹³ Ibid., 187.

⁹⁴ Ibid., 186.

⁹⁵ Ibid., 188.

integration as a major topic. Integrated schools would prepare African American children for equitable positions as adults with their peers, they argued.⁹⁶

Neither conventions nor constant legal agitation had an immediate effect on the state in regards to racial isolation within schools in New York's capital city of Albany. The philosophy of a community varied depending on the makeup of its voting citizenry. African Americans involved with the African Methodist Episcopal Zion (A. M. E. Zion) Church were known for their vocal advocacy for fairness in education and other social institutions. Individuals affiliated with this denomination were instrumental in promoting statewide conventions to discuss the state of education for children of color, which led to the establishment of institutions of higher education in the postwar years.

Many leaders in the A. M. E. Zion Church were involved with student recruitment to Wilberforce Academy in Ohio, an integrated institution of higher education. Wilberforce served as a model for the first institution of higher education to be established by this denomination, on the Pacific Coast in the newly established state of California. In 1852 the St. Cyprian A. M. E. Zion Church and School opened in San Francisco, followed by the Rush Academy, in New York (1864).⁹⁷ According to Walls, "this movement betokened the universal desire of the black race for knowledge to become useful freemen."⁹⁸

In 1860 Jermain Loguen, with Henry Johnson and Abraham Cole, served as book stewards in an effort to "improve the means of circulating the literature" to church-

⁹⁶ Ibid., 188.

⁹⁷ Walls, *African Methodist Episcopal Zion*, 312. The institutions of higher education established by this denomination include Livingstone College (1877) and Zion Wesley Institute (1879), both in North Carolina. These two institutions merged and were incorporated in 1885. As Livingstone College was being established, efforts were made to open schools in every section of the country where the AME Zion Church had laid a foundation.

⁹⁸ Walls, *African Methodist Episcopal Zion*, 319.

sponsored schools.⁹⁹ The A. M. E. Zion Church had a lion's share of responsibility in molding the life and character of the African Americans through educational institutions and causes.¹⁰⁰

In Philadelphia and throughout the north, many black churches housed and sponsored elementary schools beginning in the 1790s. Absalom Jones opened a school in 1800 at the St. Thomas African Episcopal Church. Mother Bethel and the First African Presbyterian Church supported day and evening classes for the local population. In comparison, in Boston's educational system for the African American community during the eighteenth century, instruction of black children and illiterate adults was conducted primarily in private homes, according to Horton and Horton.¹⁰¹

By the mid-nineteenth century, the common schools throughout New York State were consolidated into one bureaucratic system. The state was establishing a system of financial assistance and instructional dependence in its efforts to wrest control from local interest groups. The die had been cast in favor of a canonized educational curriculum and pedagogy.

Occupation and Education

Quarles writes, "To picture the Negro as civic-minded, as a reformer, might arouse interest in him as a human being (and sympathy for him), as a figure battling

⁹⁹ Ibid., 336. On the eve of the twentieth century, two junior colleges were sponsored by the church. The first, Lomav-Hannon Junior College, was founded in 1893 in Greenville, Alabama. Originally organized as the reputed high school in Butler County, Greenville High School included 200 acres that were instrumental in changing the status of the institution. In 1894 Clinton Junior College was founded in Rock Hill, South Carolina. It specialized in granting teacher certificates.

¹⁰⁰ Walls, *African Methodist Episcopal Zion*, 536.

¹⁰¹ 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).

against the odds.”¹⁰² The individuals in the African American community were fighting for equality and access in spite of their social stations. Domestics and skilled artisans—the ones with apparently the closest ties to the planter class—ran away (from the South and the North, before slavery was abolished) as did field hands and common laborers. In the eighteenth century, The list of runaways includes sailors, coopers, carpenters, butchers, tailors, bakers, goldsmiths, tanners, shoemakers, blacksmiths, and chimney sweeps.¹⁰³ In *A History of Negro Slavery in New York*, Edgar McManus developed the list using newspaper advertisements as early as the 1720s and before the 1827 the abolition of slavery in New York State.

Siebert notes that “vessels engaged in our coastwise trade became more or less involved in transporting slaves from Southern ports . . . sometimes without the knowledge of the ship master; sometimes, no doubt, with his connivance, or with the knowledge of his men.”¹⁰⁴ Waterways as well as circuitous land routes became known avenues for freedom seekers. E. C. H. Cavins, in a letter dated December 5, 1895, postmarked from Bloomfield, Indiana, states:

The Wabash and Erie Canal became a thoroughfare [*sic*] for slaves who would follow it. . . . Sometimes, when there was not the usual eagerness of pursuit, and when the intelligence or Caucasian cast of the fugitive warranted it, the traveler, with the necessary ticket and instructions, was put aboard the cars for his or her destination.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰² Quarles, *Black Abolitionists*, 1969, ix.

¹⁰³ Edgar J. McManus, *A History of Negro Slavery in New York* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1966; repr. 2001), 106. McManus notes the following New York City news journal reports on fugitive slaves in the eighteenth century: *New York Gazette* (1726–34); *New York Weekly Journal* (1734–43); *New York Weekly Post-Boy* (1743–73); *New York Mercury* (1752–83).

¹⁰⁴ Siebert, “Light on Underground Railroad,” 460.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 458.

Without a formal education, many ex-slaves found economic opportunity in skilled or semiskilled employment. Craftsmen filled occupations such as those noted above, as well as maritime trades and entrepreneurial ventures, while women found fiscal independence as washerwomen, dressmakers, seamstresses, and domestic servants. Children not enrolled or partaking in formal education were apprenticed to families who normally took some responsibility for educating and formally training them in a useful skill.¹⁰⁶

As Lynda Day posits, in *Making a Way to Freedom: A History of African Americans on Long Island*, most African American children did not attend school prior to the advent of free tax-funded civic institutions in New York State in 1867. Many children were not economically privileged enough to attend public or private schools. Parents paid tuition based upon the number of days the student was in attendance throughout the year.¹⁰⁷ Older children, if not in school, transitioned into the work world.

Tenant farming or migrant labor were dominant occupations for many African Americans in New York State before 1900, due in part to the major reliance on agriculture in the state. A. J. Williams-Meyers, in his work *Long Hammering: Essays on the Forging of an African American Presence in the Hudson River Valley to the Early Twentieth Century*, highlights intergenerational participation in agricultural endeavors that provided families with a sufficient means to make a living and to provide solid “on the job training” for families and their children, black and white. Antebellum immigration from Europe led to significant changes in occupational opportunity for African Americans. In the decade before the Civil War, European immigrants began to move into

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., 458.

¹⁰⁷ Lynda R. Day, *Making a Way to Freedom: A History of African Americans on Long Island* (New York: Empire State Books, 1997).

the so-called “Negro” jobs. African Americans were displaced on many employment levels during the Reconstruction period.¹⁰⁸

A restrictive marketplace resulted in African American men holding menial low-paying jobs, with women working to make up the economic shortfall. Even today, the effects of discrimination can be seen in the workplace. Education was a principal means by which one could elevate one’s social status and move closer to full citizenship. And, for African American parents, education aided in preparing them and their children to survive in the face of such adversity.

Summary of Findings

My theoretical frame was constructed using literature pertaining to African American parents in New York State that advocated on behalf of their children to attend school. Also used were demographics about households and educational access for African Americans in the emergent public school system in New York State. Literature reviewed on the state of education in throughout New York, particularly communities on the Underground Railroad, reveals that these communities’ values were shaped by antislavery philosophies. African American communities and households were chiefly concerned with abolishing slavery while simultaneously earning citizenship. Education was a principal means by which to attain those goals. African American leaders, trained in early integrated institutions of higher education, became the parents of the students and community organizers who at mid-century were enrolled in schools in the shadow of the Fugitive Slave Law of 1850.

¹⁰⁸ A. J. Williams-Myers, *Long Hammering: Essays on the Forging of an African American Presence in the Hudson River Valley to the Early Twentieth Century* (Trenton, NJ: African World Press, 1994).

Issues that contributed to the relevance of education, as well as the level of access provided to these children, must be examined from a micro, or local, level. Each community's history of inclusion and/or segregation in the formal education system as it emerged throughout the state varied based on the level of parental advocacy in establishing and maintaining local common school districts before state consolidation and oversight. By the end of the Civil War, the process was complete. Under Chapter 406 of New York State Law, also known as the Free School Act, rate bills were abolished and school funding was established on the basis of a tax on real property.¹⁰⁹ State funding led to state oversight of curriculum and teacher training and development. This emergent state administration embraced scientific theories of the day that promoted curricular and pedagogical standardization for educating the masses.

Much like today, one's attendance at a private or public school could determine the value of the education received, as could the policies versus the actual practices of schools that allowed students of color to enroll. Being allowed to attend a school and being educated were (and still are) two different things. I predict that, for those who examine the history of education for African Americans using an ecological perspective, including analysis of African American school-age children's attendance rates, the nuances of the education that African American school age children received in 1850 will become less obscure and will provide a new context for considering the educational history of African Americans.

¹⁰⁹ Pugh, "Rural School Consolidation," 190–191.

CHAPTER THREE: LEGACY OF SLAVERY

The white folks did not allow us to have nothing to do with books. You better not be found trying to learn to read. Our marster was harder down on that than anything else. You better not be caught with a book. They read the Bible and told us to obey our marster, for the Bible said obey your marster.

Hannah Crasson, age 84, when interviewed¹

Introduction

In 1799 the New York State Gradual Abolition Law was enacted, which began the process of emancipation for tens of thousands of enslaved African Americans residing throughout the state. On July 4, 1827, the last vestiges of slavery were seemingly removed from New York State with the final ratification of the law.² Yet slavery persisted throughout the nation; New York State became a hotbed of abolitionism and antislavery protest, before and after the passage of the Fugitive Slave Law of 1850.

I began the study with an examination of the 1850 Federal Census because this was the enumeration conducted prior to the Fugitive Slave Law. This starting point is significant because it coincides with the passage of the law punished the aiding and abetting of suspected fugitives from slavery. The Fugitive Slave Law created an imbalance in the fiscal viability of retrieving runaways. Federal commissioners would receive ten dollars for identifying an accused person as enslaved and only five dollars for identifying an accused person as free. No one accused under the Fugitive Slave Law had a right to testify on his or her own behalf. Furthermore, many African American leaders,

¹ Belinda Hurmence, *My Folks Don't Want Me to Talk about Slavery*, 8th ed. (Winston-Salem, NC: J. F. Blair Publisher, 1998), 18.

² Two counties in New York State reported three female slaves in the 1830 federal census.

such as Tubman, Garnet, and Loguen, who acknowledged their status as freedom seekers, became more vulnerable to slave catchers because of their public statements and high visibility. This census manuscript also notes whether individuals (children or adults) were enrolled in school(s), as reported to the census taker.³

Thomas L. Webber, author of *Deep Like the Rivers: Education in the Slave Quarter Community, 1831–1865*, is one of the foremost authorities on the education of African Americans before the Civil War. He concentrated only on the education of slaves in southern states. However, this study suggests that the educational opportunities for free people of color in New York State was very different from the educational opportunities for enslaved people in the South.⁴

In 1850, according to the *Seventh Census of the United States* (see table 3.1), the population of the New York State was 3,097,394. The populations of the counties under investigation were as follows: Richmond County: 68,153; Onondaga County: 85,890; and Jefferson County: 15,061. The table below compares population figures for people of color with figures for those identified as white.

³ Census data is only reliable based on the truthfulness of the respondent. In 2000, I worked as a census taker for the U.S. Department of the Interior. My assignment was to go into Spanish speaking communities and interview an adult in households that had not returned the form via the mail. Oftentimes, respondents did not want to reveal information about their legal status.

⁴ Thomas L. Webber, *Deep Like the Rivers: Education in the Slave Quarter Community, 1831–1865* (New York: Norton, 1978).

Table 3.1. Population demographics for New York State and three study areas, 1850⁵

Location	White				Free color				Aggregate
	Male	Female	Total	%	Male	Female	Total	%	
<i>Richmond</i>	7,325	7,146	14,471	96.08	309	281	590	3.92	15,061
<i>Onondaga</i>	44,610	40,678	85,277	99.28	305	398	613	.72	85,890
<i>Jefferson</i>	34,742	33,220	67,962	99.72	94	97	191	.28	68,153
<i>NYS</i>	1,544,480	1,503,836	3,048,325	98.42	23,452	25,617	49,069	1.58	3,097,394

We find that the African American population was relatively small statewide and within each county. Although this subpopulation averaged only 1.58 percent of the overall state population, countywide or local percentages varied. For example, in Jefferson County, free persons of color comprised merely .28 percent of the population. In Onondaga County and Richmond County free persons of color comprised .72 percent and 3.92 percent, respectively. Given the small size of this subpopulation, it is remarkable that so many African American children attended school.

Table 3.2. School attendance during the year as reported by families on the 1850 census (percentage columns represent the percentage of all attendees, white and free color combined)⁶

Counties	White				Free color				Aggregate
	Male	Female	Total	%	Male	Female	Total	%	
<i>Richmond</i>	1,191	1,038	2,229	98.15	19	23	42	1.85	2,271
<i>Onondaga</i>	10,184	9,585	19,769	99.65	35	35	70	.35	19,839
<i>Jefferson</i>	9,675	8,900	18,575	99.84	15	15	30	.16	18,605
<i>NYS</i>	356,602	331,272	687,874	99.21	2840	2607	5447	.79	69,3321

Table 3.2 shows the rate of school attendance among African American students. These students were underrepresented in Jefferson and Onondaga Counties in comparison

⁵ *The Seventh Census of the United States: 1850*, Onondaga County, New York State, Table I, 91 (Washington: Robert Armstrong, Public Printer, 1853).

⁶ *The Seventh Census of the United States: 1850*, New York State, Table VIII, Attending School During the Year as Returned by Families (Washington: Robert Armstrong, Public Printer, 1853), 115. The table includes aggregate data on native and foreign populations for comparison.

with the state average. In Richmond County, African American students were represented at more than twice the state average.

A variable important to this study is the students' access to literate adults. A cursory glance at literacy rates in New York State during this period reveals that the general population was quite literate. Men and women of color were proportionately illiterate as a subpopulation with that of the general population. White women were more illiterate than white men, and of all the groups mentioned, foreign immigrants had the highest rates of illiteracy.

Table 3.3. Adults who cannot read and write, New York State, 1850⁷

Location	White			Free color			Aggregate
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	
<i>Richmond</i>	104	137	241	53	54	107	3,48
<i>Onondaga</i>	1,482	1,706	3,188	36	50	86	3,274
<i>Jefferson</i>	792	768	1,560	10	7	17	1,577
<i>NYS</i>	39,178	52,115	91,293	3,387	4,042	7,429	98,722

Over two more censuses encompassing twenty years, a natural transition occurred in these communities' makeup. The 1850 census identified the names of children who reportedly attended school. After surveying the 1860 census for those same names, I created a list of "matches," or individuals who appeared in the successive enumerations. After examining the final report, I created another column of data on those individuals who remained in the community for three consecutive censuses. In this way I reported data over a total of twenty years. As the African American children of 1850 grew up and became parents, some left their hometown and a few stayed.

⁷ *The Seventh Census of the United States: 1850*, New York State, Table IX, Adults in the State Who Cannot Read and Write (Washington: Robert Armstrong, Public Printer, 1853), 118. The table includes aggregate data on native and foreign populations as a means of comparison.

Research Methods and Theoretical Approach

This study is a social historical analysis of education grounded in mixed methodologies—ethnographic, qualitative, and quantitative. The ethnographic component takes into account the subpopulation as African American students augmented by interviews conducted with direct descendants of the Sandy Ground community. The qualitative analysis of the material collected which included census data, newspaper articles of the period, as well as administrative school reports, and finally the statistical measurement of the enrollment rates among African American students in the three communities in correlation with head of household literacy and ownership. According to Robert C. Bogdan and Sari Knopp Biklen, “Qualitative data can be used to supplement, validate, explain, illuminate or reinterpret quantitative data gathered from the same subjects or site.”⁸

To provide a theoretical framework for my study, I have applied critical social theory to educational practices and philosophies in the mid-nineteenth century in New York State. Critical social theory emerged during the civil rights era as a qualitative research method and gained a wide audience within the academy. According to Bogdan and Biklen, this method is an “ethical and political act” that is intended to benefit specific (usually marginalized) groups. Using this method, many scholars took that opportunity to widen the discourse on ethnic inclusion in educational research.

Bogdan and Biklen suggest that critical social theory opened new avenues, predominantly to sociologists and anthropologists, to examine issues of rights and

⁸ Robert C. Bogden and Sari Knopp Biklen, *Qualitative Research for Education: An Introduction to Theory and Methods*, 3rd ed. (Needham Heights, MA: Allyn and Bacon, 1998), 37.

privileges that were challenging societal norms.⁹ Groups of researchers began doing what they came to call ethnomethodology—ethnographic research methodology.

Ethnomethodologists study how people negotiate the daily rituals of their lives.¹⁰

In this method, a variety of approaches—typically cultural studies, gender studies, postmodernism and critical theory—are employed to gain a more holistic perspective on the phenomenon under examination.¹¹ According to Jack R. Frankel and Norman E. Wallen, authors of *How to Design and Evaluate Research in Education*, “The emphasis in ethnographic research is on documenting or portraying the everyday experiences of individuals. . . . The final product is a *holistic cultural portrayal* of the group—a pulling together by the researcher of everything he or she learned about the group in all its complexity.”¹² Similarly, Harry Wolcott points out that the ethnographical process, as with qualitative research, requires (1) a detailed description of the culture-sharing group being studied, which includes (2) analysis of the researcher’s perceived themes and perspectives, and (3) interpretation of their meanings and generalizations about their social life.¹³ What makes a study ethnographic is the “kind of data gathered, the kinds of analysis that are appropriate, and a sense of what is meant by the broad character of ‘cultural’ interpretation.”¹⁴ The final product is a *holistic cultural portrait* of the group under study—a coherent compilation by the researcher of everything learned about the group in all of its intricacy.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid., 19.

¹¹ Ibid., 30.

¹² Jack R. Fraenkel and Norman E. Wallen, *How to Design and Evaluate Research in Education*, 4th ed. (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2003), 512.

¹³ Harry Wolcott, *Ethnography: A Way of Seeing*, 2nd ed. (Lanham: MD: Alta Mira Press, 2008), 54.

¹⁴ Wolcott, *Ethnography*, 54.

This study is a case study in that it traces a population of students over time. A wide net was cast and information was selected based on its relevance to the topic. The scope of data collected and the research activities narrowed as themes emerged.¹⁵

Equally important to this investigation is the writing of social or ethnic history. According to Gary Okihiro, the aim of history is to produce explanations and guidance; historians are required to reconstruct and explicate historical reality freed from the oppression of myth and lies.¹⁶ Historical accuracy is achieved when evidence is substantiated. In the end, the historian seeks to distinguish between the apparent meaning of his or her findings and the meaning that was implicit during the time the phenomenon occurred.

Any effort to characterize social history in the United States must start with some warning.¹⁷ Practitioners of social history have the difficult task of reviving the context of the past, to make it come alive and greet the present. Unearthing the circumstances in which our forefathers and foremothers lived can help us understand the daily practices of their communities—in this case, the ways in which children of color were educated. For example, a place where someone is born [(in the three communities under study this meant being born free or enslaved)] and/or educated is relevant to the study of migration, occupational status, religion, and social mobility.

Many social historians consider themselves to be social scientists, and much social history uses social science techniques. One method of qualitative research, the case

¹⁵ Bogden and Biklen, *Qualitative Research for Education*, 54.

¹⁶ Gary Y. Okihiro, "Oral History and the Writing of Ethnic History: A Reconnaissance into Method and Theory," *The Oral History Review* 9: 27–46.

¹⁷ Peter N. Stearns, "Toward a Wider Vision: Trends in Social History," in Richard McCormick, ed., *Party Period and Public Policy: American Politics from the Age of Jackson to the Progressive Era* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989). (CFE 821—course handout, Syracuse University, Syracuse, NY, Fall 2000).

study, is distinguished by its use of a single “case” to study in depth. Qualitative designs typically investigate behavior as it occurs naturally, in uncontrived situations; there is no manipulation of conditions or experience.¹⁸ In historical analysis, conditions or experiences simply are and, therefore, the ways criticisms are presented determine the significance or validity of the research. Because of the limited research in the area of African American settlements in the northeast region of the United States, there may be questions about the validity of the evidence, and there is the danger of romanticizing otherwise ordinary people and their experience.

When conducting a study on the social history of a community, analysis of documents written in political and economic contexts is considered legitimate because history has been written primarily in these two spheres. Information pertaining to the presence or influence of non-elites was not preserved and cannot usually be found among historical accounts of the colonial, antebellum, and post–Civil War eras in U. S. history.

Equally useful in historical analysis is information about the behavior of ordinary people: how they voted, where they moved, what they ate and drank, how they spent and saved money, the size of their families, and the alliances they made.¹⁹ Creating a historical dialogue, using sources such as oral testimonies and primary documents as well as anthropological and historical relics, allows scholars to delve into the material, social, economic, and political culture of a specific time.

¹⁸ James H. McMillan and Sally Schumacher, *Research in Education: A Conceptual Introduction*, 4th ed. (New York: Addison-Wesley Educational Publishers, 1997), 412-413. Bodgan and Biklen, *Qualitative Research in Education*, 10-11.

¹⁹ Alice Kessler-Harris, “Social History,” in Eric Foner (ed.), *The New American History* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1990). (CFE 821—course handout, Syracuse University, Syracuse, NY, Fall 2000).

An ethnographic method, grounded in sociopolitical arguments, describes a community—unlike the traditional method, which provides a historical narrative. Through the former method, voices of community members long ago silenced are heard again. Unlike an etic (outsider) interpretation, an in-depth interpretation of how community members perceived their position in society, in terms of education, religion, and occupational status, reveals their emic (insider) experience. Thus, the story emerges from within the community in which it occurred, as well as from historical records and accounts from outside the community.

Inductive data analysis looks for the patterns that emerge from the data, instead of imposing data, based on prior information, onto the topic under study. The inductive method of analysis is a continuing process of discovery, categorization, and ordering of data; it involves a qualitative assessment of the trustworthiness of the data collected and a synthesis of themes and concepts.

This study has employed an inductive, ethnographic method to respond to a deductive (quantitative) methodological process in hopes of reconciling the discrepancies, based on omission, used thus far to revisit the history of African Americans and the education of African Americans in the United States. Among ethnographic approaches used in this study were interviews and participant observations of descendants of the Sandy Ground community. The deductive social history method was used to collect and analyze data related to the stories told. For this study it was not appropriate to use either inductive or deductive modes of thinking exclusively because the interpretation strategy was to move back and forth between raw data and tentative analyses as understandings emerged.

Data Collection and Analysis

Regarding those who may have participated in formal and informal systems of education in communities on the Underground Railroad, one must first understand that some children living in these communities were of African descent and enrolled in public schools, and they received an education that reflected the pedagogical practices of their time. For this study, these same children have been personally identified to enrich the value of this investigation. The simple act of naming the participants makes the findings more tangible as the experience is personalized genealogically and historically.

A triangulation of oral traditions, federal census records, newspapers, local history print materials, and secondary sources was used to develop a holistic account of the educational experiences of African Americans in the nineteenth-century communities at Sandy Ground, Syracuse, and Watertown, New York. The following methods were employed: an examination of primary documents found in government reports, census records and local historical collections, augmented by oral family traditions of descendants. Secondary sources were examined, including period-specific accounts of events in local histories, newspapers, diaries, and biographies. Other sources included theses, dissertations, and other scholarly reports on the topic.

Multiple archival collections located in three states and one province were used. The search began at Syracuse University's E. S. Bird Library. Also in Syracuse, I used the Onondaga Public Library's Archives, and the Onondaga Historical Association's Local History collection. I visited the Schromburg Center for Research in Black Culture, located in Harlem, New York. I consulted the Amistad Collection, housed at Tulane University in New Orleans, Louisiana. In Richmond County, the Sandy Ground

Historical Society provided me with personal contacts who were direct descendants of those whose names are found in the 1850 census data; they also gave me access to original sources in the Staten Island Institute of Arts and Sciences history collection. Additionally, I examined local histories in the Port Richmond branch of the New York State Public Library, Staten Island. I made visits to the New York State Archives, Albany, and the New York State Hall of Record, New York City. The final collection I investigated was at the Moorland-Spingarn Research Center, located on the campus of Howard University, Washington, D.C. The data I collected there on the Loguen family enhanced the rich information that is available on community life in 1850 Syracuse. Though these collections have been invaluable, just as valuable to me was my ten months work as a historical researcher with Dr. Judith Wellman, principal investigator of a project titled *Uncovering the Freedom Trail in Central New York*. As part of that assignment, I was trained in methods of identifying key players on the Underground Railroad in Onondaga County, and identifying structures, geographic locations, and individuals who were principal players in the movement in Syracuse.

Judith Wellman, in her article published in the *Public Historian*, notes, “We discovered that oral tradition offered important clues to Underground Railroad activity. Although Underground Railroad participants were usually discrete, they did leave a considerable body of material, both in private manuscripts and public records that allowed us to confirm many oral stories about way stations.”²⁰ To further the historical work of examining the Underground Railroad, Wellman developed a rubric to address the problem of documentation and evidentiary support. On a one-to-five scale, sources used

²⁰ Judith Wellman, “The Underground Railroad and the National Register of Historic Places: Historical Importance v. Architectural Integrity?” *The Public Historian* 24, no.1 (Winter 2002), 11–29.

as evidence are rated, with *one* having the least evidential significance. Though the personal interviews that I conducted in Sandy Ground may rate as a one until a more thorough investigation is conducted, leads from the interviews may uncover evidence that would be rated a *five* according to Wellman. A five would include the corroboration of the lead with reliable primary source documentation.

The snowball sampling method was used to build on the personal interviews with the descendants of 1850 settlers of Sandy Ground. This method, as described by Bogdan and Biklen, is the selection of the next informant based on a referral by the previous source.²¹ The “ball” began rolling when the borough historian of Staten Island provided me with the name, telephone number, and address of one of the descendants, who in turn suggested another family member. I conducted six interviews with various descendants of the 1850 Sandy Ground community. Stories told by the interviewees helped to guide the research and to fill in the gaps between the literature and each family member’s memories.²²

I followed leads to various parts of New York State in my attempt to verify the location and activities of communities involved in the Underground Railroad. As another example of the snowball method, on March 4, 2001, after church I stayed behind to speak with Reverend Sherman G. Dunmore, pastor of People’s A. M. E. Zion Church, Syracuse. I asked if I could borrow the hymnals to check some resources I saw during the service. I told him of the project I was working on for Dr. Milton Sernett’s class; he gave

²¹ Bogdan and Biklen, *Qualitative Research for Education*.

²² Beginning in spring 2001 and concluding in spring 2003, six interviews were conducted with descendants of the Sandy Ground community. One was held at the office of the Staten Island historian, Dick Dickinson, with Mrs. Yvonne Taylor. One interview was held at the home of Mrs. Lois Henry, in Willingboro, New Jersey. Two were conducted at the Sandy Ground Historical Society, one at the Rossville AME Zion Church and the final one with Mrs. Taylor at the Staten Island Hotel.

me the directory of the North Eastern Episcopal District 2000–2001. Rev. Dunmore suggested that I contact Rev. Dr. Alvin T. Durant of Mother Zion in New York City.

Four days later, I made a telephone call to Rev. Durant and was told by the secretary that he was out of town. I told her what my inquiry was pertaining to, and she gave me the number of the church historian, Mr. Dabney Montgomery. Once I made contact with Mr. Montgomery, I told him that I was a member of People's A. M. E. Zion Church in Syracuse. I informed him of my previous visit, approximately a month prior, and that a young man had given my friends and me a tour of the church. He said that the guide's name was Tony. I then stated that I was doing research on the history of the A. M. E. Zion Church; that I was looking for information about the designation of "Freedom Church" and the abolition movement through the church of the Syracuse community. He stated that he would be glad to meet with me on Monday, March 12, 2001, at 5:00 p.m. at the Varick Center at 151 W.137th Street and Lenox Avenue. At this meeting, my friends and I were given a tour of the church, a brief history of the church, and a viewing of Bishop Varick's crypt, and the church's original cornerstone. Thus, a conversation with Rev. Dunmore at People's A. M. E. Zion Church in Syracuse led me to the Varick Center in Harlem, New York City.

As I held conversations with informants, I found that I preferred note-taking to taping, because note-taking seemed to encourage less performing and more authenticity in interviewees. The notes were transcribed and analyzed. The information I obtained furthered my effort to grasp the historical reality of the education of the children residing in Sandy Ground, New York.

I began my interviews with a standard line of questions: What do you recall, through family stories, about your ancestors who lived in Sandy Ground? What do you know about the education of your ancestors? What else do you remember about your family forefathers and foremothers?²³ In the chapter on Sandy Ground I will be using the five-point rubric designed by Judith Wellman.²⁴ She introduced the rubric in 2002 to help scholars rate the reliability of documentation and evidentiary support. Historians argued that, as a secret network, the Underground Railroad could not be documented except through inherently unreliable oral sources. Without corroborating evidence, historians were understandably reluctant to recycle stories about underground tunnels and rooms.²⁵ This five-point scale is an instrument to help evaluate evidence relating to Underground Railroad sites. The five points are summarized below:

1. “People and sites which have some local story attached to them but which seemed unlikely to have been Underground Railroad sites.”
2. People and sites that “might reasonably have been associated with the UGRR but for which we had yet no corroborating evidence.”
3. “Local stories and strong evidence of consistent commitment to abolitionism,” without contemporary primary-source evidence.
4. People and sites tied to specific people or groups known to be sympathetic to fugitives or the abolitionist movement.

²³ Upon completion of this research, any tape recordings will be donated to the Sandy Ground Historical Society; the voices on the recordings are the memories of that community.

²⁴ Wellman, “Author’s Response.”

²⁵ Ibid., 15. Judith Wellman is the principal investigator at Historical New York Research Associate, The rubric was used in part by the National Park Service’s Network to Freedom; the rest of the manuscript is unpublished. <http://www.historicalnewyork.net/contact.html>.

5. People and sites that “could definitely be tied to Underground Railroad activity from primary sources, recorded, as close as possible within the time of their involvement, by a person actually involved in the Underground Railroad. . . . We also accepted obituaries or membership in Vigilance Committees as compelling evidence, worthy of a ‘5.’”²⁶

Wellman’s rubric is an instrument to measure family stories about life in 1850 New York State, in collaboration with public records, written histories, and within the context of the local landscape.

In Syracuse, no descendants have been identified thus far; therefore, no interviews were conducted. The Watertown investigation yielded no information about or contacts with any direct descendants of the African American families identified in the 1850 census.

The tool I used for the statistical analysis of the information taken from the 1850 census was SPSS Student Version 11.0.²⁷ The following variables were chosen to compare the selected cases [households headed by an African American] within each community, and a chart was designed to collect data on fourteen variables: (1) name of school-age child, (2) age, (3) gender, (4) ethnicity, (5) birthplace, (6) whether child attended school, (7) gender of head of household, (8) birthplace of head of household, (9) age of head of household, (10) head of household literacy status, (11) head of household occupation, (12) head of household ownership status, (13) head of household marital status, (14) value of home, if owned, (15) literacy status of other literate adults within the

²⁶ Ibid., 15.

²⁷ SPSS Student Version 11.0 for Windows Statistical Software (New York: Prentice-Hall, 2003).

household, (16) mother's first name, (17) mother's birthplace, and (18) mother's literacy status.²⁸

In order to analyze associations between variables the statistical method of Pearson's correlation was used. For quantitative variables the measurement of association is a standardization of the slopes. Pearson's correlation was useful in comparing relationships between variables measured in different units, as a potential predictor of comparable variables. According to McMillan and Schumacher, a common correlation technique is the Pearson's product-moment coefficient.²⁹ As a statistical summary used to describe the nature of the relationship between two variables, the use of correlation coefficients, Pearson's method is widely used.³⁰ This method made it possible to track population trends within each community in an effort to distinguish correlations between the coefficients—school-age children who attended school in 1850 and relative factors, which might indicate other modes of educating children and the household demographics in which they resided. Blalock posits that researchers in most applied fields have become accustomed to the correlation coefficient because it is easily interpreted, its range being from -1.0 to 1.0. Anthony Walsh and Jane C. Ollenburger furthers the position widespread use of the technique when they state “correlation tells us how accurate these

²⁸ The designation *African American* included those ethnicities classified as (B) Black or (M) Mulatto. After the work began to chart each household, the multiplicity of household structures began to emerge and the chart was modified to include households in which African American school-age children resided, among which were homes of European Americans. A few children did not live with their birthmothers, therefore those cases were omitted from the sample.

²⁹ James H. McMillan and Sally Schumacher, *Research in Education: A Conceptual Introduction*, 4th ed. (New York: Longman Publishers, 1997), 227.

³⁰ Ibid.

predictions are and describes the nature (strength and direction) of the relationship [between variables].”³¹

Contributions of This Research

Though this research examined the under-recorded history of African Americans in the nineteenth century, it was in no way confined only to African Americans. In fact this study broadens the history of the United States by furthering our understanding of African Americans’ participation in that history.

The intention of this study was to provide a new perspective on how African Americans in the antebellum United States were educated. This examination presents findings on three communities in New York State that were active in the Underground Railroad movement; within those communities, a system for educating youth was established. It is common knowledge that many freedom seekers found their way through the Empire State and into Canada via the clandestine network. Less known is that many children received educational assistance from within the communities that sheltered and assisted them in the form of Vigilance Committees and individual efforts.

Understanding the role of education for African Americans in communities that were supportive of the Underground Railroad makes clear the complex social and economic intersections of freedmen (including women and children) and freedom seekers in communities. This study was designed to complement the literature currently available on the experiences of African Americans and the complex history of the development of compulsory education in New York State specifically and the United States in general.

³¹ Anthony Walsh and Jane C. Ollenburger, *Essential Statistics for the Social and Behavior Sciences: A Conceptual Approach* (Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 2001), 213.

The primary data used to identify my target population was the United States Federal Census. Census takers recorded either “black” or “mulatto” for people of color. For purposes of this study, however, I made no distinction between the terms and have used them interchangeably with “people of color” and “African American.” Racial designations have changed over time, reflecting the historical context of each era.³² In the 1800s African Americans were referred to as slaves, blacks, mulattos, mustees, and persons of color, or colored. For clarity, in accordance with census practices at the time, Blacks (proper noun) were those who often arrived directly from Africa or the West Indies, or individuals having no visible characteristics indicating miscegenation between the enslaved and the enslavers. Mulattos were the offspring of mixed-race couples, typically African and European descendants. Mustee designated individuals with mixed African and Native American ancestors. As these ethnic mixtures created multiethnic, multicultural people, the term “people of color” was used. For the sake of understanding, each of these terms has been used interchangeably in this examination, with the common denominator being African American (to signify their national status as Americans and their ancestral affiliation with Africa). When describing events of the period, I used the terminology of the period.

For clarification, terminology used to define the enslaved seeking freedom, when describing specific events, the period or individual-case terminology was used. However, when describing people held in bondage, the term *slave* was used instead of bondsmen (and women). When describing specific events related to people seeking liberty from slavery, I used the term *freedom seeker*, a revisionist term that is becoming widely used

³² Lynda R. Day, *Making a Way to Freedom: A History of African Americans on Long Island* (New York: Empire State Books, 1997).

by scholars of the Underground Railroad instead of the more commonly used terms *runaway* or *fugitive*. This decision was made to accentuate the notion of assuming autonomy and liberty. By using this method of reporting the lives and legacies of individuals, this work may highlight the fact that African Americans who lived in the nineteenth century are, in the twenty-first century, unacknowledged as agents.

Barriers encountered in doing this research were not insurmountable. Gaining access to primary sources was the most significant challenge. The discovery that records were destroyed by fire or mismanagement is common in historical research. This goes not only for private collections, but also for public records and library collections. Gaining access to private collections and, oftentimes, library collections, was difficult if the resource person behind the desk didn't think that I had the right credentials. The longitudinal study of school-age children became problematic for the second decade under study. Their transition to married life made tracking female children more difficult. The spelling and often-uncertain reporting of ages from one census to the next offered another set of challenges, which was overcome by cross-referencing other variables such as individuals in the residence, occupations, literacy, or homeownership.

A challenge often associated with doing research on African American history is the scarcity of available records. One must be creative and delineate what is deemed evidentiary. The informants at Sandy Ground each had knowledge about the work of Mrs. Pernell's school, but none could give an accurate date of its operation. One example was that by cross-referencing the presence of the Pernell family on the census manuscripts with property records, the evidence revealed that the Pernells did not arrive on Sandy Ground until the eve of the Civil War.

Obvious weaknesses related to this project included the lack of school records related specifically to African American children. Though there are general references made to the existence of schools, both public and private, that served an African American clientele, inferences were triangulated with other source material when possible. History is often written with a “smoking gun” in hand; unfortunately, in doing ethnic history many times there are few artifacts but many legends. For example, according to local history, the Wesleyan Methodist Church located in today’s downtown Syracuse was a center of abolitionist activity as early as the 1840s. This activity has been confirmed by recent historical research.³³

Summary of Findings

This analysis is based on an empirical search for historical evidence related to the education of African American children who resided in Sandy Ground, Syracuse, and Watertown, New York, during the mid-1800s. Strengths of this research included the recollections of direct descendants and information from African American newspapers published during this period as well as scholarship conducted outside the realm of education. Many times in reconstructing a community without the aid of folklore or familial recollections, we have only the data generated through scholarly examinations. With remembrances of family members, a unique and authentic story emerges.

Sources available online through Accessible Archives include time-specific newspapers, such as *The North Star*, *Frederick Douglass’ Paper*, and *The Colored American*. These resources can enhance the research with rich description of what was

³³ “Faces from the Past: PACNY Helps Preserve a Freedom Trail Site in CNY,” http://pacny.net/Newsletter/The%20Landmarker_1998_12.pdf, or Douglas Armstrong and Lou Ann Wurth, “Faces in the Past: Archeology of an Underground Railroad Site in Syracuse, New York,” *Syracuse University Archeology Report*, Volume 10 (1998). According,

occurring within the African American community. Many articles give details, about specific geographic locations, that came from individuals who were themselves either enslaved or descendants of the enslaved. Many pieces were written by freedom seekers educated within the communities on the Underground Railroad. Finally, previous scholarship outside the discipline of education has served to guide the study, to help place my research within a larger social context. Longitudinal data unveiling the history of communities in New York State have allowed me to trace the educational experience of children into adulthood while providing an indication of their life and role in society to the present day.

CHAPTER FOUR: EDUCATION IN AN AGRARIAN COMMUNITY

Thou hidden Source of calm repose,
 Thou all sufficient Love divine,
 My help and refuge from my foes,
 Secure I am while Thou art mine;
 And lo! from Sin, and grief and shame
 I hide me, Jesus, in Thy name.

Thou Hidden Source of Calm, Hymn 387¹
 Charles Wesley (1707–1788)

Introduction

This chapter is a historical overview of the southwest region of Staten Island in relation to the education of African American school-age children and the households in which they resided. Sandy Ground has a history that is rich and deep. This African American community had an educational presence before the end of the colonial era and managed to sustain itself prior to the end of slavery in New York State in 1827 and throughout the Civil War.² The descendants of the original settlers continue to have a presence on Staten Island today.

In the decades before the Civil War, architects of the emerging national statewide public school system wrestled with the issue of education for African American children. Many African American parents regarded the ill-equipped facilities and oftentimes less-than-adequately-educated teachers assigned to this population as an injustice. In some communities in New York State, even abolitionists supported schools that enrolled only African American children, particularly when de-facto segregation was the law. The

¹ *African Methodist Episcopal Zion Hymnal* (Charlotte, NC: A. M. E. Zion Publishing House, 1957).

² The New York State Gradual Manumission Law, whereby owners of slaves in the state were to gradually release their slaves, was passed in 1799. The law was ratified in 1827, when all slaves in New York were officially free. Also see, Leng and Davis, *Staten Island and Its People*, 140.

community of Sandy Ground epitomizes the common practice of educating children through multiple venues.

Sandy Ground was located in Westfield, or the Fifth Ward, of Staten Island. According to Charles W. Leng and Charles T. Davis's *Staten Island and Its People: A History 1609–1929*, the community was called Harrisville in 1890; was known by then-locals as “Little Africa,” because of the presence of African Americans in the settlement near Rossville Road. The Harris brothers were among the first African American men to purchase land and prosper in the region. The name Sandy Ground (or West Quarter) was used as its general topographical description.³ What remains of the Sandy Ground community are a few architectural structures, along with many descendants who are willing to talk about the community established immediately after the abolition of slavery in New York State.

The Longest Inhabited African American Settlement in the United States

Fifteen families are acknowledged as the founders in 1850 of Rossville African Methodist Episcopal (A. M. E.) Zion Church in Sandy Ground, of whom the following were noted in the 1850 census: Caesar Jackson, Francis Williams, John J. Henry, William H. Stephens, William Pitts, and Elizabeth Titus Henry, who continued to live in the Sandy Ground community.⁴ Of the three communities in this study, this was the only one

³ Charles W. Leng and William T. Davis, *Staten Island and Its People: A History, 1609–1929* (New York: Lewis Historical Publishing Company, 1930), 344–349.

⁴ Richard Dickenson, *Census Occupations of Afro-American Families on Staten Island 1840–1875* (New York: Staten Island Institute of Arts and Sciences, 1981). The following names were listed in his surveys as instrumental to the establishment of the Rossville Church: Jefta Barcroft, Charles Bishop, John Ephraim, Joseph Ephraim, Moses K. Harris, Silas K. Harris, Edmund Henman (Hinman), James Henry, John J. Holmes, Thomas Holmes, Caesar Jackson, John Jackson, Dawson Lambden (Landin), Robert Lambden (Landin), Israel Pitts, William H. Pitts, Isaac Purnell, Littleton Purnell, Saul Robbins, William H. Stevens, Benjamin Titus, William Webb, and Francis Williams. Also see, Lois A. H. Mosley, *Sandy Ground Memories* (Staten Island: Staten Island Historical Society, 2003), 18–19. Mrs. Mosley mentioned Caesar Jackson, Francisco Williams, John Henry, Hiram Jones, and William Henry Stephens as the persons

in which this researcher could interview descendants of the original settlers. At the taking of the 1870 census, the wife and the son of Caesar Jackson were still living in Sandy Ground. Of the seven individuals named above, six were African Americans who had first-hand knowledge of the A. M. E. Zion Church, its effect on the community, and how it has been remembered. Some residents of Sandy Ground, namely Sarah Jackson, John and Elizabeth Henry, Moses Harris, Sarah Landin, and Bornt Winant, remained in the community over the entire span of my study, 1850–1870. Two men who were school-age children in 1850, John Jackson and William Decker, were still residing in the Sandy Ground community twenty years later. John Jackson, thirty-five, was an oysterman living with a younger John, age eight. William Decker was the father of seven. He worked as a laborer in 1870.⁵

Many Sandy Ground leading families were reported to have originated from the Snow Hill region of Worchester County, Maryland.⁶ According to the 1870 census and testimony collected for this study through interviews with direct descendents of Sandy Ground settlers, Jefta Barcroft, the Bishop families, the Henman family, the Lambdens, the Purnells, and Saul Robbins are noted as having origins in Maryland. Three other individuals came from New Jersey, namely, the Harris brothers and William Francis. The Pitts brothers originated in Virginia. William Stevens came from Delaware. Though the

identified as having signed the Richmond County Clerk register of deeds December 9, 1850. (Liber 25, 513 or Deed Book 25, page 513).

⁵ According to the record in the 1870 New York State census, William Decker headed the household with the following members: Charlott, twenty-six; Chas. E., fourteen (Chas. Decker, thirteen, is also listed as a laborer at the home of a local attorney, John Headsly); Georgiana, fourteen; John C., seven; Leona J., six; Carrie B., four; Dolen C., nine; and Jessie N., nine and a half.

⁶ Minna C. Wilkins, "Sandy Ground, A Tiny Racial Island," in *Staten Island Historian* (Staten Island, Staten Island Historical Society, 1943; repr., 1989). Lois A. H. Mosley, *Sandy Ground Memories*, 30, notes Wilkins as the first to point out Sandy Ground was established as a free black community and that Maryland oystermen were among the early settlers. Captain Jackson is discussed by Wilkins on pages 1–3, page 7, and in the reprinted version on pages 1–10.

origins of Titus and Webb are not known, the remaining families—the Henrys, Thomas Holmes, the Jacksons, and Hiram Jones—had origins in Richmond County, New York.

Captain John Jackson operated a ferry from Rossville to New York City. His boat, named *Lewis Columbia*, was the vessel that is rumored to have transported fugitives from slavery. This suspicion, combined with local oral and written history, suggests his role as an Underground Railroad agent. He was also the first African American to purchase land on Staten Island in 1828. He purchased 2.5 acres in the southern region of the island, then known as Westfield, from Isaac Winant, a brother of Bornt Winant, who served as witness to the A. M. E. Zion Church’s incorporation. The property was located near the main road leading from the Blazing Star Ferry to Butler’s Mill. In 1835 Captain Jackson and Thomas Jackson (of New York City) purchased a tract of land from Washington Edel for \$600. The tract was on a public road comprising approximately eight acres, stretching from Blazing Star Ferry to Woodrow Road. In 1838 Captain Jackson purchased another two acres that adjoined his previous purchases, bringing his personal landholding to 12.5 acres in ten years. Captain Jackson died the year Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation. The inscription on his gravestone reads: “Captain John Jackson died June 12, 1863, in the 86th year of his age.”⁷ A local legend of the settlement holds that the “Old Captain” could not persuade anyone to assist him in docking his old and

⁷ Ibid., 7. “Sandy Ground and Rossville” also mentions the presence of Louis Napoleon, Underground Railroad agent and well known associate of Henry Ward Beecher, http://www.stjohns.edu/academics/centers/yehgallery/silent_beaches/sandy_ground_and_rossville.stj; the National Parks Service, application for the Louis Napoleon House at Sandy Ground, http://www.academia.edu/3088830/NPS_UGRR_Louis_Napoleon_House_Site_Application; and “The Underground Railroad’s Trail to Freedom” video, <http://www1.cuny.edu/mu/forum/2012/05/28/video-the-underground-railroads-trail-to-freedom/>.

unseaworthy vessel; in his attempt to set her a sail once again, the ship sank with him on board. The captain went down with his ship, as he preferred.⁸

In a 1943 report, Minna C. Wilkins writes that the Henry family was among the elite of the local African Americans.⁹ The sister of Captain Jackson married into the Henry family, and her son, John Jackson Henry, became the patriarch of the early twentieth-century descendants. Wilkins reports that this prominent family included a physician who resided in New Jersey. All the descendants claimed Sandy Ground as their hometown.

Robert and Dawson Lambden changed their name to Landin, upon the insistence of the local schoolteacher, Mrs. Esther Purnell. The purpose behind the name change is unknown today, according to Mrs. Yvonne Landin-Taylor, a direct descendant.

I'm not sure why they changed their names, but they did. It was originally LAMBDEN and later it was changed to LANDIN. . . . My family was the only black owners of oyster boats, there were three sloops. . . . I don't know about being millionaires, but they made a good living.¹⁰

Francis (Frank) Henry was the owner of the *Fannie Ferne*, a thirty-foot oyster boat. His father-in-law, Robert Landin, owned the *Independent*, a forty-foot oyster sloop, and Dawson Landin, Robert's brother, owned a sloop called *The Pacific*. According to Mrs. Landin-Taylor, these three men were the only African Americans in the Sandy Ground area—and, possibly, on Staten Island—who were owners of their own oyster boats in the 1860s.

⁸ Ibid. Yvonne Taylor interview (2003); Sandy Ground Historical Society pamphlets (1998).

⁹ Wilkins, *Sandy Ground*, 1–3; 7.

¹⁰ Yvonne Taylor, interview by author at the office of Richard Dickenson, Staten Island Borough Historian, Boroughs Hall, Room 125, Stuyvesant Place, on Tuesday, March 13, 2001.

In 1943 Minna C. Wilkins interviewed Isaac Harris. At ninety-two, he was the oldest member in his family. Harris reported that his grandmother, endearingly called Granny Keyes, was a Mohawk Indian who gave both of her sons, Silas and Moses, her last name, Keyes, as their middle names. The Harris brothers, Moses K. and Silas K., gave the settlement its early name, Harrisville. This name did not stick, as locals continued to use the name given to the community based on its loamy soil, Sandy Ground. The Harris family does not appear on the census in the community until 1850.

Margaret, the daughter of Silas Harris, was born in 1842 in New York City. She was a school-age girl in 1850 and did not attend school that year. In 1860 she married Joseph Post and spent her life on the island until her death at nearly 100 years of age. For many years, she was the oldest communicant of St. Luke's Episcopal Church of Rossville.¹¹

In 1859 Frances Ann (the second wife of Silas) paid \$840 for land between Rossville Road and Pleasant Plains that adjoined her husband's property. In 1867 Silas added to his property holdings when he purchased from his son, Thomas Jefferson Harris, land that adjoined his wife's property. Silas Harris built a large house, and his homestead is the current home of the Sandy Ground Historical Society. Silas and his wife purchased lot 170 at the Silver Mount Cemetery. Silas died about the age of 106. He was laid to rest next to his wife. The cemetery changed ownership sometime later, and the plots and gravestones were lost.

¹¹ Wilkins, *Sandy Ground* (1989), 7; Lois Mosley and Yvonne Taylor interviewed at the office of Staten Island Borough Historian, Richard Dickenson, Tuesday, March 13, 2001; Mosley, *Sandy Ground Memories*, 21.

In 1870 Silas Keyes Harris, fifty, had property valued at \$700. He lived with his wife, Louisa, forty, and their children, Anna, sixteen; Louisa, thirteen; Andrew, ten; and Dawson, six. This was the only Harris family living in Harrisville in 1870.

Isaac Harris was born in the mid-1850s on Staten Island and lived on Bloomingdale Road, a major thoroughway of the Sandy Ground community. In 1860 he was recorded as the four-year-old son of Silas Keyes Harris, a gardener by trade and a man of property on Staten Island and in New York City. Both Lois Mosley and Yvonne Taylor, Harris's direct descendants, shared stories with the author of this study about their distant cousin, Isaac, son of Silas. Legend has it that he became the personal servant to New York City architect Stanford White. Isaac later became a dentist in Germany and married into the social elite of Europe. Most of his life he worked for two prominent New York families: Bishop Henry Codman Potter, of the Episcopal Church of the United States, and famed architect Stanford White. His employer, Mr. White, designed the home of Isaac Harris in 1906. The structure is one of very few original homes of African Americas remaining in the Sandy Ground community, because of a 1963 fire that ravaged the community.¹²

As Wilkins indicates in her article, the Silas Keyes Harris family was unlike many of the prominent Staten Island African American families.¹³ Silas Harris worked in New York City for wealthy white families during the week and returned to the island on the weekends. He was a pioneer commuter, much like the island residents of today. He was also a member of the Episcopal Church, while most of the other residents of Sandy

¹² Lois Mosley and Yvonne Taylor, interviews with author (2003).

¹³ Wilkins, *Sandy Ground*, 10.

Ground were members of the A. M. E. Zion Church. It is recorded that he was “probably somewhat more worldly and less strict in his religious views.”¹⁴

Moses Harris purchased three acres and three rods (a unit of measure equal to approximately 16.5 feet or 5.5 yards), from James Guyon of Westfield in 1850. A year later, 1851, Silas and his wife Louisa purchased from his brother some land that was on the road from Rossville to the Woodrow schoolhouse. In 1855 Moses purchased more land adjoining his first plot. Although Moses Harris did not appear on the federal census until 1860, his purchase of property, listed on the church deed in the same year (1850), provides evidence of his presence in the community.

According to Mrs. Mosley and Mrs. Taylor, Esther Purnell was the teacher of the Sandy Ground School beginning in the 1850s.¹⁵ This was a private institution where children of African and European descent attended school together for more than fifty years. The date of the school’s establishment is unclear. Esther Purnell was not reported on the 1850 census for Westfield, Staten Island. However, she did make an appearance in legal documents related to the establishment of the Rossville A. M. E. Zion Church during the same year. Neither Mrs. Purnell nor her husband, Littleton, could read or write, according to the census data. Little[ton] and Hettie (Esther) Parnell [*sic*] lived next door to Joseph Winant in 1870. The Purnell household, in that year, consisted of Erma, twenty-two; Ebbin (Eben), twenty; Ephraim, eighteen; Henry, sixteen; and Ann, fourteen.¹⁶ At the turn of the century, Staten Island was incorporated into New York City, and a new teacher, Miss Julia Hurd, began teaching students at the first public school,

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Lois Mosley and Yvonne Taylor, interviews with author (2003).

¹⁶ There are discrepancies between ages in the census data for the two dates. Names have different spellings: Ebbin to Eben, Harry to Henry. Each person in the household was born in the State of Maryland, with the exception of Ann. This information held consistent on both census manuscripts.

established in 1904 on Bloomingdale Road, Staten Island. Plain School later opened as part of a centralization policy. The school on Bloomingdale Road closed and the Sandy Ground community children rode busses to another area of the island for their education.

The investigation of the Sandy Ground community in this study was enhanced by family lore. Each of the interviews with direct descendants of the original Sandy Ground settlers suggested that A. M. E. Zion Church members, including Caesar Jackson and founding members of the church, were agents for the Underground Railroad. At various meetings over a three-year period, the descendants' memories of their ancestors' role in assisting freedom seekers was a topic of conversation.¹⁷ I concur with Wellman "that oral tradition offered important clues to Underground Railroad activity. Although Underground Railroad participants were usually discreet, they did leave a considerable body of material, both in private manuscripts and public records that allowed us to confirm many oral stories about way stations."¹⁸

Staten Island today is a "bedroom community," just a ferry ride away from the bustle of Wall Street and New York's famed lower Manhattan. At the time of my interviews with the direct descendants of the community, a visitor could ride the ferry to St. George Terminal *free* or ferry their car across the bay for a mere three dollars.¹⁹ On the transit across the bay, one can view historical sites such as Ellis Island and the Statue

¹⁷ During 2001 and 2002 I conducted interviews with Sylvia De'Allesandro and her daughter, Julie Moody-Lewis, during tours of the Sandy Ground Historical Society. The building, located at 1538 Woodrow Road, Staten Island, is the last remaining structure from the original Sandy Ground Community. Also, see Lois A. H. Mosley, *Sandy Ground Memories: Including Family Stories by Other Sandy Grounders* (New York: Staten Island Historical Society, 2003).

¹⁸ Judith Wellman, "The Underground Railroad and the National Register of Historic Places: Historical Importance vs. Architectural Integrity," *The Public Historian* 24, no. 1 (Winter 2002): 11–30. Judith Wellman, "[The Underground Railroad: Refining Eligibility Criteria]: Author's Response," *The Public Historian* 24, no. 2 (Spring 2002): 91.

¹⁹ In post-9/11 New York, automobiles are no longer ferried between the Staten Island and the major part of the city.

of Liberty. The ferry between Long Island and Staten Island has been in existence since before the American Revolution. When Sandy Ground was settled in the 1820s, the ferry transported people between New York City and the historically agrarian communities located on Staten Island. According to Lois A. H. Mosley, a descendant of an early settler in Sandy Ground, “Today, the rapid development of Staten Island’s South Shore has transformed Sandy Ground into a white suburb. Its once open fields and woodlands are now occupied by newly built townhouses.”²⁰

Economic Development on Staten Island

In 1698 Africans made up about 10 percent of the Staten Island population (73 of 727 inhabitants); all were enslaved. By 1771 African Americans accounted for more than 20 percent of the island’s population.²¹ In 1799 abolitionists in New York State achieved their first major victory in their battle against the practice of human bondage. As the eighteenth century came to an end, the system of slavery began to be dismantled throughout New York. On July 4, 1827, slavery finally ended in New York State. On this date, the African American community of Staten Island celebrated at the Swan Hotel, located on Richmond Terrace in the New Brighton area.²²

The southwestern region of the island became the center of the African American community. This particular community was established after the emancipation of slaves in New York State in 1827 and before the emancipation of slaves in the southern region of the United States at the close of the Civil War. The inhabitants of this community

²⁰ Mosley, *Sandy Ground Memories*, 27–28.

²¹ “Island Blacks: From Slavery to Success,” *Staten Island Advance*, People section, December 26, 1999, www.silive.com [archived Document ID: 1121B5EB200C8877].

²² Kim DiCicco, College of Staten Island, History Department, *Moments in Staten Island’s Black Heritage* [online exhibition], <http://www.library.csi.cuny.edu/dept/history/decicco/swan.html>.

developed economic enterprises that were sustained for more than 150 years, with descendants of the original settlers still residing in the region.

African Americans' presence on Staten Island through the Civil War, Reconstruction, and into the twentieth century is noteworthy. The island's African Americans made contributions to the whaling and oystering businesses, the naval and maritime industries, and to mining and manufacturing.

Richard D. Littell, a European American business owner who employed African Americans, established the Staten Island Whaling Company in 1837. A prominent Staten Island businessman, Littell, was also the president of the Staten Island Bank. On December 9, 1837, Littell launched the 324-ton brig *White Oak* on her maiden voyage. On the first transcontinental whaling excursion, the *White Oak* caught enough sperm whales to produce more than seventy barrels of whale oil. Littell spent the next five years selling stock shares in his new enterprise. The Staten Island Whaling Company built an oil factory on the harbor of Port Richmond. The company came to an unexpected halt when the factory burned to the ground in 1842.

In the early 1800s oystering became the principal economic base for many African Americans residing in Westfield area of Staten Island. By 1853 the oyster industry employed more than 3,000 men—both African American and European American—and their families. “Oyster millionaires” became common in the Staten Island area and “Prince’s Bay Oysters” were a popular item on menus from Manhattan to London.²³ Oyster harvesting ceased in New York harbors in 1916, when the Health

²³ “From Beer to Bricks, the Island Produced,” *Staten Island Advance*, December 26, 1999, www.silive.com [archived Document ID: 1121B5EB62CD00FC].

Department condemned the water because of a typhoid epidemic and chemical contamination.

Boat building began on Staten Island in the early 1800s. An increase in maritime activity and commerce led to the growth of oyster harvesting. New technologies led to the establishment of more than seventeen shipyards along the shoreline of Staten Island. The national and international importance of this region grew when the US Navy established a shipyard at Port Richmond. William H. and James M. Rutan owned one of the earliest and most prominent shipyards, located in Tottenville. Producing more than one hundred schooners and sloops in 1855, the Rutans employed twelve men in the southwest region that year.

Iron mining was a major source of wealth for Richmond County from 1832 through 1881. After the Civil War, the steel industry created a mining boom, spurred by the rise of railroads and the industrialization that the advent of steel perpetuated. The iron mining industry provided jobs for hundreds of men for approximately fifty years.

A lower-Manhattan businessman, James P. Gage, opened a sandpaper factory in Tottenville in the mid-1800s and employed dozens of “boys” from the south shore. “His factory employed mostly boys, since much of the work—essentially grinding stones and gluing the sand to paper—required unskilled labor.”²⁴ Staten Island had a rich history of cutting-edge enterprises. The close proximity to manufacturing and industry in New York City meant a low overhead for business owners on the island; goods could be shipped to a major consumer market via a short ferry ride.

²⁴ Ibid.

African American Children's School Attendance in Sandy Ground, New York, 1850

Social history, which provides conceptual frameworks and methods for data collection, aided in shaping the analysis of the data collected.²⁵ Statistical tables were created for the study from census data concerning African American children in each of the communities. These tables measure the correlation between school attendance and gender, and the correlation between school attendance and the literacy of the head of household, as well as school attendance and household ownership, in an effort to accurately analyze the rates at which African American children attending school in 1850.

In the mid-nineteenth century, religiosity was an integral aspect of the American cultural landscape, particularly, among the African American communities under study. Individuals throughout the state (and nation) affectionately referred to the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church of Sandy Ground as the “Freedom Church” because of the work parishioners conducted on behalf of freedom seekers. The phrase is attributed to Bishop James Walker Hood, who coined it in 1856 from the pulpit of Mother Zion Church in New York City. In his history of the church, Bishop Walls writes:

Thus we have the comprehensive and living definition of a small, restless, dissatisfied group, who with wholehearted determination and zeal made the giant step in eliminating brutal slavery and proscription. From then on they moved with magnifying force not only to produce some of the world's greatest freedom

²⁵ Peter N. Stearns, “Toward a Wider Vision: Trends in Social History,” in Richard McCormick, ed., *Party Period and Public Policy: American Politics from the Age of Jackson to the Progressive Era* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 205–206. (CFE 821—course handout, Syracuse University, Syracuse, NY, Fall 2000.)

fighters and advocates, but to shine as a beacon light, for individual rights and privileges, in becoming prominent and well known as “The Freedom Church.”²⁶

The Rossville A. M. E. Zion Church was reported to be a stop on the Underground Railroad,²⁷ just as the boat owned by Caesar Jackson’s father, Captain John Jackson, was reported to have transported fugitives towards freedom. The literature reveals that when African American communities assisted freedom seekers, they more often than not also provided access to educational services. Using the Wellman scale, the current investigations into the abolitionist activities of Captain Jackson, Louis Napoleon, and other members of the Sandy Ground Community, along with white abolitionists on Staten Island such as Sidney Howard Gay and Francis George Shaw, indicate that the people and community had specific ties to the abolitionist movement and would rate between a “4” and a “5.”

An examination of municipal records from the County of Richmond revealed a plethora of information about the governance of schools on Staten Island. A preliminary review of the records kept by various school districts of Richmond County indicated two important points: (1) a comprehensive curriculum was available to the students who attended school on Staten Island, and (2) the records for the years 1839–1897 make no mention of African American students attending any of the schools. Although Carlton Mabee notes the establishment in 1855 of a black school in Stapleton (which is located in Middletown, a good distance north of Westfield), I did not find reference to such a school

²⁶ Wall, *The AME Zion Church*, 45.

²⁷ Yvonne Taylor in each of her interviews indicated that the Sandy Ground Church was an Underground Railroad stop. This claim was also made by Mrs. Sylvia Moody-D’Alessandro and Mrs. Julie Moody-Lewis of the Sandy Ground Historical Society. Mrs. Mosley’s account does not make an explicit connection to the Underground Railroad and the Rossville AME Zion Church; instead, she lists the names, ages, occupation, and birthplaces of the church trustees.

in the municipal records that I examined. This may not be surprising because, according to Richard Dickenson, Yvonne Taylor, Lois Mosley, and others on Staten Island whom the author interviewed, many local archives have been lost to fire and lax management. According to my Sandy Ground informants, Mrs. Pernell operated a school out of her home; which may also account for the lack of an official record.²⁸

In Richmond County during this time, there were no schools supported by public funding that were exclusively for children of color.²⁹ According to the 1853 Annual Report of Superintendent of Common Schools, there were seventeen whole districts and ten partial districts in the county. The average number of months students attended school was slightly more than nine. Approximately 2,055 students attended school during the 1852 reporting year. We know from the 1850 census that two years earlier in the Sandy Ground community twenty-five African American students were part of the annual cohort of students enrolled in educational institutions. Using the 1853 Annual Report totals, they would have represented approximately one-hundredth of the total student population in the county (and state).

The records reviewed spanned the period from 1839 to 1897. In an interview with Kenneth Cobb, municipal court archivist for the City and County of New York, he stated, “In 1898, a consolidation of the five boroughs ensued and the records were seized from local municipalities.”³⁰ Mr. Cobb said that, when the five boroughs (Bronx, Brooklyn,

²⁸ Carlton Mabee, *Black Education in New York State: From Colonial to Modern Times* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1979), 288.

²⁹ *New York (State) Department of Common Schools, Assembly No. 4 (1853)*, Abstract A, “Town Superintendents of Common Schools of the State of New York, for the year on the first day of July, 1852.” There were thirty publicly funded schools for African American students throughout the state. The following counties each had one colored school: Broome, Chautauqua, Columbia, Erie, Niagara, Orange, Schenectady, and Westchester. Suffolk and Rensselaer counties housed two and Saratoga County, three. New York County had fourteen schools for children of color.

³⁰ Kenneth Cobb interview with author, May 21, 2001.

Queens, Manhattan, and Staten Island) merged, the city and county of New York took control of all historical documents. During the course of this investigation, I discovered that four of the five boroughs complied with most record requests; Staten Island still maintained control of a significant amount of historical documents, while the others relinquished their holdings to the City and County of New York.

While searching the records at the New York City and County Archives, I uncovered evidence related to the expenditures for teacher and administration salaries, and tax assessments. These findings need further exploration. Across the bay in lower Manhattan was the African Free School. This school was founded in 1787 under the auspices of the New York Manumission Society. Curricular records of this school are preserved in a book written by one of the school's first superintendents.

In 1834 the New York Public Schools Society took over the administration of the seven Free Schools located throughout New York City. Renamed the Colored Free Schools in 1838, the schools were absorbed by the city's Board of Education in 1853.³¹ The African Free School offered the following curriculum: catechism, reading, arithmetic, English grammar, composition, geography, astronomy, the use of globes, maps and linear drawing, as well as plain sewing and knitting.³² This school was the second in the United States to use the Lancasterian Model (or the Monitorial System).³³ As one of the first schools created for the education of descendants of Africans, it served

³¹ April Harris, "African Free Schools," in Peter Eisenstadt and Laura-Eve Moss (eds.), *The Encyclopedia of New York State* (New York: Syracuse University Press, 2005), 25–26.

³² Charles C. Andrews, "The History of the New-York African Free Schools, from their Establishment in 1787, to the Present Time: Embracing a Period of More than Forty Years." Originally printed in 1830 in New York by Mahlon Day, the book was reprinted in 1969 by the Negro University Press of New York. Charles Andrews was a teacher of male students in the school located on Mulberry Street in Manhattan. The New York Manumission Society established this school. John Jay, abolitionist and later senator of New York State, was a founder and trustee.

³³ Mabee, *Black Education in New York State*, 28. The Lancasterian Method of instruction used older school children as prefects for younger ones.

as a stepping stone to intellectual emancipation forty years before physical emancipation took place in New York State.

The school's curriculum was representative of those of many common schools throughout New York State. Therefore, the students attending schools within the town of Westfield, on Staten Island, may also have received a comparable education. As noted in the Superintendent of Schools' Annual Report, many districts throughout the state used the same textbooks.³⁴ In the late 1870s, secondary schools and teacher preparation academies were expanding. Admission was available for women at all-female seminaries and colleges, as well as those that allowed admission for students of color.

The Sandy Ground African American community (like those of Syracuse and Watertown) consisted of adults who were both literate and illiterate, from the North and from the South, and they worked in a variety of occupations from menial labor to denominational minister. In 1850, according to the US census of that year, twenty-five African American children residing in the Sandy Ground community attended school.³⁵ The ages of these students ranged from three to sixteen years and the population was evenly split between female and male students.

Most of the heads of household at Sandy Ground did not own their homes; however, six African American families did own their homes, with an average property value of \$641. Property ownership during this period of New York State history correlated with an adult white male's right to vote. The right of suffrage was a major political rallying call for women and people of color during this period and, in the 1840s and '50s, was directly related to the abolitionist movement.

³⁴ New York Department of Common Schools, Assembly No. 4 (New York: Public Printer, 1853).

³⁵ In table 4.1, "Euro" signifies that the African American child reported residing in the home of a European American.

The children of color reported on the 1850 census are identified in this study by many variables. Their ages are reported as well as their ethnic identity. African Americans are identified by two classifications on the US census, by either *mulatto* (m) (signifying their mixed race status) or *black* (b). The children's place of birth, if they attended school or not, as well as the home ownership status of the head of household (and, if pertinent the value of the home), and the head of household's literacy status are all included in the analysis. The children's names and all the information discussed in the previous paragraph are identified in table 4.1 below and are described in detail in the pages that follow.

Table 4.1. African American school-age children, Sandy Ground, Richmond County, New York, 1850

Name	Age	Gender	Race	Birthplace	Attended school	HH owned	HH literate
Bogert, Frances	9	F	B	New York	No	Yes. \$500.	Yes
Bond, Emma	7	F	B	New York	No	No	Yes
Bond, Charles	5	M	B	New York	No	No	Yes
Burger, William	6	M	B	New York	Yes	No	No
Burger, James T.	3	M	B	New York	Yes	No	No
Carvay, John	16	M	B	North Carolina	No	No	No
Cole, Ann	9	F	B	New York	No	No	No
Cooley, Sarah	13	F	B	New York	Yes	Yes. \$800.	Yes
Cooley, Solomon	11	M	B	New York	Yes	Yes. \$800.	Yes
Crocheron, Charles	6	M	B	New York	No	No	Yes
Decker, William	14	M	B	New York	Yes	Yes. Euro.	Yes
Eaton, Johanna	11	F	M	Pennsylvania	Yes	Yes. \$800.	Yes
Eaton, John W.	8	M	M	New York	Yes	Yes. \$800.	Yes

Eaton, James M.	3	M	M	New York	Yes	Yes. \$800.	Yes
Frasier, Ann	16	F	B	New York	Yes	No	Yes
Frasier, Louisa	10	F	B	New York	Yes	No	Yes
Frasier, John	5	M	B	New York	No	No. Euro.	Yes
Harris, Margaret	8	F	M	New York	No	No	Yes
Harris, Thomas	6	M	M	New York	No	No	Yes
Herndon, William	14	M	B	New York	Yes	Yes. Euro. \$78,000.	Yes
Hirden, William	16	M	B	New York	Yes	No	No
Hirden, Susan	15	F	B	New York	Yes	Yes. Euro.	Yes
Hirden, John	14	M	B	New York	No	No	No
Hirden, Frank	13	M	B	New York	No	No	No
Hirden, George	11	M	B	New York	No	No	No
Hirden, James	9	M	B	New York	No	No	No
Hirden, Theodore	7	M	B	New York	No	No	No
Jackson, Anson	11	F	B	New York	No	No. Euro.	Yes
Jackson, Betsy	12	F	B	New York	No	Yes. Euro. \$10,000.	Yes
Jackson, Cornelia	9	F	B	New York	No	No	Yes
Jackson, Sarah	6	F	B	New York	No	No	Yes
Jackson, Jane	14	F	B	New York	No	No	Yes
Jackson, Susan	12	F	B	New York	No	No	Yes
Jackson, John	10	M	B	New York	No	No	Yes
Jenkins, Francis	13	M	B	New York	Yes	No	Yes
Jenkins, Rich	10	M	B	New York	Yes	No	Yes
King, George	14	M	B	New York	No	No. Euro.	Yes
Peterson, Ann	16	F	B	New York	No	Yes. Euro. \$5,000.	Yes
Robinson, Maria	14	F	B	New York	No	No	No

Table 4.1. African American school-age children, Sandy Ground, Richmond County, New York, 1850, continued

Name	Age	Gender	Race	Birthplace	Attended school	HH owned	HH literate
Robinson, Robert	11	M	B	New York	No	No	No
Robinson, Leonard	9	M	B	New York	No	No	No
Sales, James A.	9	M	B	New York	Yes	No	Yes
Sales, Mary	11	F	B	New York	Yes	No	Yes
Sales, Margaret	15	F	B	New York	No	No	Yes
Sales, Matilda	13	F	B	New York	Yes	No	Yes
Sales, William	7	M	B	New York	No	No	Yes
Sherma, Phoebe	6	F	B	New Jersey	Yes	No	Yes
Stephens, Mary A.	8	F	B	Maryland	Yes	No	No
Stephens, Tary C.	6	F	B	Maryland	Yes	No	No
Strong, Mary L.	5	F	B	New York	Yes	No	Yes
Taylor, Mary	14	F	B	New York	No	No	Yes
Taylor, Frances	12	F	B	New York	No	No	Yes
Taylor, Louisa	10	F	B	New York	No	No	Yes
Taylor, Joseph	6	M	B	New York	No	No	Yes
Williams, John*	15	M	B	New York	No	No	Yes
Williams, Martha	12	F	B	New York	No	No	Yes
Williams, Fanny	9	F	B	New York	No	No	Yes
Williams, Pitt	5	M	B	New York	No	No	Yes
Williams, Morrison	13	M	B	New York	No	No	Yes
Wilson, Julia	13	F	B	New York	No	Yes. Euro. \$6,000.	Yes
Yearmore, James	6	M	B	New York	No	No	Yes
Young, Adolphus	8	M	B	New York	Yes	Yes. \$800.	Yes
Young, John	5	M	B	New York	Yes	Yes. \$800.	Yes

Head of Household Owned Property; Children Attended School

Of the population residing in Westfield, Richmond County, known as Sandy Ground, seven literate heads of household lived with their families and three of them owned their homes; during this year, their children also attended school. The household headed by Houria Eaton housed two school-age children and one infant. One of the children attended school; the other did not.³⁶ Adolphus Young, eight years old, and five-year-old John, attended school. Both boys were born in New York State, as was ten-month-old Alice Wilks. Each of the adults within the household was born in Virginia. Mr. John Eaton, the elder male in the house, was a boatman, also from Virginia. Two adult females resided in the household and both were reported as literate. Mrs. Eaton's property was valued at \$800.

William Eaton was a Virginia-born, thirty-five-year-old mulatto boatman, who was married to Mary, a white female born in Pennsylvania. This biracial family lived on the edge of Sandy Ground between the Tottens (the family for which Tottenville was named) and the Browns (a family of ship carpenters and boatmen). The occupations of their nearby neighbors included other maritime-related kinds of employment. Mr. Eaton was the head of a household with three African American children who attended school. Also in this household were one white fourteen-year-old female not enrolled in school and an infant. Both Mr. and Mrs. Eaton were literate. Mr. Eaton's property was valued at \$800.

³⁶ Closer examination may reveal that the two school-age children are not the offspring of the head of household, but of the elder woman in residence, Joan Eaton, age fifty-five years.

The third family that owned their property and had children attending school was that of the Cooleys. Bailey Cooley was a Virginia-born laborer with two children who attended school. In the Cooley household, both parents were literate, as was their twenty-year-old daughter. Mr. Cooley's property was valued at \$800. Solomon, eleven, and Sarah, thirteen, both attended school. Sarah was also listed in the household of a European American, Samuel Hazelton. Mr. Hazelton owned his property, valued at \$150. He was employed as a mariner and literate at the time. Two boys in the Hazelton household also attended school.

Literate African American Head of Household; Children Attended School

The households of John Frasier, Richard Jenkins, Edward Sales, and George Strong each had school-age children attending school in 1850. In the household of John and Catherine Frasier, two children attended school, namely, Ann, sixteen, and Louisa, ten years of age. Mr. Frasier was a New York-born, forty-five-year-old laborer. Mrs. Frasier, also born in New York, was literate, as was her husband.

Unlike the Frasier household, the Jenkinses were not a two-parent literate household. Maria Jenkins, thirty years old, could not read or write. Both children, Francis, thirteen, and Rich, ten, were attending school in 1850. As a barber, Mr. Jenkins's position in the community was prestigious. As it is today, the role of the barber in the African American community was important, particularly for the dissemination of information. Mr. Jenkins was one of two African American barbers in the community, and all members of his family were born in New York State. The mulatto identity of the Jenkins family is notable because it suggests that Mr. Jenkins, as a mulatto, may have had access to European Americans as clients. The additional socialization his children may

have had because of his occupation could have become relevant to their future positions within the community as they became more educated.

The household of Edward Sales was home to two sons and four daughters (including Susan, eleven months), all born in New York State. The eldest of the Sales children was Margaret, fifteen, who did not attend school. Matilda, thirteen, and Mary, eleven, along with nine-year-old James, attended school. The younger son William, seven, did not.

The last family in the category of literate head of household with children who attended school in 1850 from Sandy Ground was the family of George Strong. Mr. Strong was a Virginia-born laborer. Mary L. Strong, five, and Phoebe Sherma, six, both attended school. This was a multifamily residence in which two of the four adults were illiterate, and one was currently attending school.

Illiterate African American Head of Household; Children Attended School

The category with the least number of children within it was that of illiterate heads of household with children who attended school in 1850. The significance of this classification is that it suggests the aspiration of illiterate parents for their children to become upwardly mobile through education.

The household of Thomas Burger was home to three adults and two children. Mr. Burger, farmer, and James LaVerne, boatman, were listed as unable to read or write, while Mrs. Ann Burger was listed as literate. An outlier according to his age, three-year-old James Burger was reported attending school along with his six-year-old brother William during the census year.

In a neighboring home, nine-year-old Ann Cole also attended school in 1850. Seventy-year-old Ann Thompson headed this household. Also residing in the home were Hannah Cole, forty-five, and Edward Cole, nineteen. All adults in the home reported that they were unable to read and write.

The Stephens family contained three school-age children and one infant. Mary and Tary, ages eight and six, respectively, attended school during this period, while John Carvay, sixteen, did not. William Stephens, forty-two, was born in Delaware and could not read or write. Frances, thirty-one, was born in Maryland (as were the two girls who attended school). Young William, age one year, was born in New York State. The position within the family of John Carvay is uncertain. He was born in North Carolina and was reported as married at the time of the census. That no spouse was listed raises speculation that he was a seeker of freedom.

The parents of William Hirden were both illiterate. Robert, a fifty-year-old farmer, and his wife, Louisa, were the parents of eight children, six school-age boys and two infant daughters. Only the eldest son, William, attended school.³⁷ Also in residence on the Hirden farm was Peter Wilson, an unrelated adult.³⁸ While young William's sibling did not attend school, William did so and was listed in two households, that of his parents and the family of a European American.

African American Children in European Households

In 1850 there were eleven African American students who lived in households headed by European Americans in the Sandy Ground community; six were girls and five

³⁷ William Hirden, age fourteen, was a rare double entry, also residing in the household of European American farmer, Isaac Jessup.

³⁸ Peter Wilson was listed twice on the census tract with two different ages. Mr. Wilson was also identified as being capable of reading and writing.

were boys. The children ranged in age between five and sixteen.³⁹ The children were all born in New York State and identified as black, not as mulatto, on the census; all the heads of household were literate. Eight of the eleven European American heads of household in which African American school-age children resided owned their homes, and five of these same eleven households made sure the children of color who lived within them were enrolled in school. The occupations of these heads of household were diverse. However, each of the heads of household in which the African American school-age child resided and attended school was a homeowner.

As previously reported, Sarah Cooley, thirteen, attended school while residing in the home of her parents and local mariner, Samuel Hazelton. William Herndon (Hirden) was a fourteen-year-old African American male living within the households of his parents and European American farmer Isaac Jessup in 1850. William was the only child in the home attending school that year, although two Jessup children of school age also lived in the home. Mr. Jessup, an Irish immigrant, was host to three immigrants from Ireland; his estate was valued at \$78,000.

Susan Hirden, age fifteen, resided in the home of Henry Siamon, a European American. Mr. Siamon was a merchant and owned his property, valued at two thousand dollars. Along with Susan, the Siamon children also attended school. Each member of this household was born in New York with the exception of Mary Carron, she was born in Scotland.

³⁹ One child, John Frasier, was five years old and recorded by the census taker as residing in the household of Daniel Moore. Upon closer examination, it was revealed that the Frasier household was next door to that of the Moores. Perhaps John Frasier's kid was playing at the Moores' house when the census taker came to do his data collection.

Betsy Jackson was twelve years old in 1850. She lived in the household of local farmer Henry Hogg Biddle. Mr. Biddle lived at 70 Satterlee Street in the Westfield region of Staten Island.⁴⁰ He was a sea captain as well as a farmer. He operated a ferry from Amboy Road on Staten Island across the Kill Van Kull to Perth Amboy, New Jersey. His estate, with its 1840s Greek Revival home, had waterfront access. The estate served as a summer resort for temperance groups during the 1850s. For the 1850 census year under study, Henry Biddle, forty-four, lived with his second wife, Margaret, forty-five, and her two children, William Henry, thirteen, and Charles Steven, twelve, respectively. Also in residence was another farmer, Courtland P. Butler, forty-four, as well as Miss Jackson. All of the children in this household attended school. Mr. Biddle owned his estate, valued at \$10,000; and all of the residents of the home were born in New York State.

William Decker was an African American fourteen-year-old male in 1850. He lived in the household of a seventy-seven-year-old Elizabeth Cole, who, with no occupation, had an estate valued at \$3,500. The other school-age children within the Cole household were William A., thirteen, and Elizabeth, nine. All of these school-age children attended school. All those in the Cole household were born in New York State.

The estate value of households in which African American children resided ranged from \$150.00 to \$78,000. The occupations of the heads of the households were also diverse: a boatman, two farmers, two women (with no occupations listed), and a merchant. All the heads of the households were literate; all made sure that the African American children in their care attended school in 1850.

⁴⁰ For more information on Henry Hogg Biddle, see www.tottenvillehistory.com or www.confencehouse.org/biddle.html. Each of these sites provides a brief historic overview of Mr. Biddle and his contributions to Staten Island history. Captain Biddle's third wife was Sarah Coutelyou. She was fifty-seven years old when she married Capt. Biddle in 1882. Mrs. Sarah Coutelyou-Biddle remained on the estate until her death in 1904.

Six European Americans headed households in which African American children resided and did not attend school had diverse economic circumstances, occupations, and property values, though they were all literate, but not all were property owners.

In 1850 John Frasier, a five-year-old African American male, resided in the household of Daniel Moore, a fifty-eight-year-old New York-born wheelwright of European American descent. Mr. Moore lived with his wife, Catherine, age thirty-seven, along with their sons, George, seventeen, and Edward, three, and their daughter, Elizabeth, fifteen. The Moores did not own their property. George was the nephew of Bishop Daniel Moore, who in 1815 was appointed to head the Staten Island Methodist church, Saint Andrew's. He and much of his family were buried in that cemetery.⁴¹

Anson Jackson was an eleven-year-old African American female who in 1850 resided in the household of local attorney and judge Henry B. Metcalf. The Honorable Judge Metcalf, forty-five, lived with his wife, Mary, forty-three, and their eight children. Of the Metcalf children, five of the eight were of school age, and all of them attended school, though Anson did not. All who resided in the Metcalf household during the taking of the census that year had been born in New York State. Mr. Metcalf did not own his property, even though he was then serving as the county judge and presumably could have afforded to buy property.⁴²

⁴¹ The Frasier household was next door to the Moore family. I believe this is another case in which a child playing with a friend was recorded as being part of the friend's household because the census taker recorded what he or she found at that moment in time. For more information on Daniel Moore and his family, see www.historichampshire.org/moore/early.html. Daniel Moore was appointed to the Staten Island region the same year as Joseph Totten, in 1815.

⁴² Henry Bleacher Metcalf (alternate spelling: Metcalfe) served as the Staten Island prosecuting attorney from 1826 through 1832. In 1840 he was elected county judge and resigned his post in 1841. He resumed the position from 1847 through 1875 in the role of County Judge and Surrogate of Richmond County, New York, and was elected to one term as a New York State Representative from 1875 to 1877. For more information, see en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Henry_B._Metcalf or www.rootsweb.ancestry.com.

Thirteen-year-old Morrison Williams lived in the household of European American farmer, Edward Weir, in 1850.⁴³ Mr. Weir was an Irish-born male, seventy-seven, with property valued at \$6,000. Morrison was the only school-age person in the Weir household and he did not attend school.

A shipbuilder, William Rutan, was the head of the household where thirteen-year-old Julia Wilson lived in 1850. Mr. Rutan was the only male in the household, which also included his wife, Mary, and another unrelated adult female, Mary Smith, a thirty-year-old Irish immigrant. Julia did not attend school. The Rutan-Journey House was designated a historic landmark in 2009.⁴⁴

In 1850 Connecticut-born Alexander Benedict was a schoolteacher in the Westfield region of Staten Island; he did not own his property. At the age of twenty-eight, he and his wife, Catherine, were the parents of three children. Only one was of school age, Mary E., five. The other school-age child in their household was fourteen-year-old George King, but he did not attend school. All in the Benedict household were born in New York State, except Mr. Benedict.

The eldest of the African American school-age children who resided in the homes of European Americans was Ann Peterson, who at the age of sixteen lived with a local

⁴³ For more information on Edward Weir, see Ira Morris, *Memorial History of Staten Island, New York*, Vol. 2, 315; at [boards/ancestry.com](https://boards.ancestry.com) it was reported that Edward Weir was born in Edinburgh, Scotland. He was a carriage maker in Manhattan before retiring to farm on Staten Island. Mr. Weir was a constituent of the West Baptist Church of Staten Island, which began on May 24, 1848. Services were held in his home until the church was officially organized.

⁴⁴ William H. Rutan and his brother established Rutan Shipyard in the mid-1840s. His property, located at 7647 Amboy Road, Tottenville, Staten Island, New York, is adjoined to that of Henry Biddle. William H. Rutan served in the New York State Assembly in 1864; according to www.politicalgraveyard.com, his burial location is unknown. On March 25, 1850, John S. Journey, blacksmith, purchased the home from Mr. Rutan, <http://www.nyc.gov/html/lpc/downloads/pdf/reports/RutanJourneyHousedesigrep.pdf>.

farmer, Henry LaForge, and his family.⁴⁵ The LaForge estate was valued at \$6,000. At the age of sixty, Mr. LaForge was the father of seven children. Four of his children were of school age and did attend school, while Miss Peterson did not.

The households of European Americans that housed African American school-age children in Richmond County's Westfield region were diverse. Some of the heads of household owned their property and some did not; all of them were literate. In total, eleven African American children resided in the homes of European Americans; five of the children did attend school and six did not.

Literate African American Head of Household; Children Did Not Attend School.

Thirteen Sandy Ground African American families had children who did not attend school in 1850 in addition to the European headed households previously mentioned. These African American-led households made up the largest proportion of the complete number of families for this study. Five of the heads of household in those families were illiterate, representing 17 percent of the entire African American-headed families. Eight of the heads of household were literate, however.

Commencing with children not attending school who lived in an African American household where the head was capable of reading and writing: In the home of Peter Bogert, a New Jersey-born boatman, who owned his property, valued at \$500, there was one school-age child, Frances, nine, in residence and one toddler. Both children were born in New York State. There were four adults in the household and all were literate. With the exception of Mr. Bogert, the adults of the household were all born in Virginia.

⁴⁵ According to data retrieved from www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~nyrichmo/military/war1812.html, Mr. LaForge was given a military award for services to his country during the War of 1812.

Anthony Bond and his wife, Francis, were born in New Jersey and Ohio, respectively.⁴⁶ Each of their four children was born in New York State. The two eldest daughters, Mary, twenty-two, and Catherine, twenty, were listed as being able to read and write, as were the parents. Young Emma, seven, and Charles, five, did not attend school.

New York-born John Crocheron was capable of reading and writing, but his Massachusetts-born wife, Marion, was not. A third adult in the home, Mary Spicer, a seventy-five-year-old New York-born woman, was reported as being able to read and write. Three children resided in the Crocheron household: Charles, six, Lydia, three, and Clarissa, eight months. No occupations were listed for the adults in this household, and they did not own the property where the family resided.

The children residing in the Harris household did not attend school either. Margaret, eight, and Thomas, six, were born in New York State, as were their younger siblings, Asher, six months, and George, three. Silas Harris, thirty-four years at the time of this census, was born in New York State. Ann Harris, twenty-five, was born in New Jersey. The occupation of Mr. Harris was not noted on the census manuscript, and he did not own property during this time. Both adults in the household could read and write.

Caesar Jackson, his wife, Sarah, and their three children were all born in New York. Jane, fourteen, Susan, twelve, and John, ten, did not attend school during this

⁴⁶ The Bond, Harris, Lewis, Jenkins, Crocheron, Bruggens, and Bush families lived at the end of the Southfield portion of the census tract, while the other families lived in Westfield. Additionally, there were a number of blank pages on the census reel before coming to the names of these African American families and their neighbors. Four of these seven families were mulatto and only two of the seven school-age children attended school. Three families had occupations listed, which included two barbers and a preacher. Two of the three families without school-age children owned their property. This finding suggests there may have been an “outsider” community of elites who “schooled” their children privately.

period, though their mother did. Mr. Jackson was noted on the census as being a laborer; he did not own property and he was literate.⁴⁷

The household of Nicholas and Silva Jackson was unique in that both parents attended school in 1850; the children did not, even though Cornelia, nine, and Sarah, six, were considered school age.⁴⁸ Mr. Jackson was a laborer, and he did not own his property. All of the people who resided in this household were born in New York.

Illiterate African American Head of Household; Children Did Not Attend School

Robert and Eliza Robinson were the parents of seven children. Nancy, twenty, and Emeline, eighteen, were noted as being able to read and write according to the census taker, as was their mother. Mr. Robinson could not read or write, nor did he own the property on which the family resided. No occupation was noted for Mr. Robinson. Of the five remaining children in the household, three were school age. Maria, fourteen, Robert, eleven, and Leonard, nine, reportedly did not attend school during this period. All those residing within the Robinson household were born in New York State.

Thomas Taylor was the head of a family in which the three adults residing in the home were unable to read or write. Taylor, a New York-born laborer, was the parent of four school-age children: Mary, fourteen; Frances, twelve; Louisa, ten; and Joseph, six. None of these children attended school according to the census. Additionally, Taylor was the parent of one young adult and one infant.

The Williams household was the only one in which a school-age child was listed with an occupation. John, fifteen, was listed as a laborer, as were his older brother and

⁴⁷ Caesar Jackson's father, John, was the first African American to purchase property on Staten Island in 1824. John Jackson was also the captain of a ferry that traversed the bay between Manhattan and Staten Island.

⁴⁸ This may be enumerator error; it is plausible that the children were attending school and not the parents.

father. Francis Williams, forty-five, and his wife, Grace, also age forty-five, were not able to read or write, and none of their children attended school during this period. The school-age children in the household were Martha, twelve, Fanny, nine, and Pitt, five. There were two infants in the home, and the eldest son, William, eighteen. He may have been able to read and write, for there was no notation on the census indicating otherwise.

The household of Henry Yearmore consisted of two parents and two children. Both Mr. and Mrs. Yearmore were listed as being able to read and write. James, their six-year-old son, did not attend school at this time; the other child was too young. Mr. Yearmore, who was a farmer, and those residing within his household were all born in New York State.

Analysis of Sandy Ground's African American Community, 1850

Forty households at Sandy Ground housed African American school-age children in 1850. Twenty-nine were headed by African Americans and eleven by European Americans. Three heads of household were identified as female (two African American and one European American), and the remaining thirty-seven were male. Of the African American children attending school at Sandy Ground in 1850, there was no difference between attendance rates for boys and girls; there were twelve females and twelve males. Of those twenty-four children, eighteen—nine females and nine males—came from households in which the head was literate. The remaining six—three females and three males, lived with a head of household who was unable to read or write. The majority of African American school-age children of Sandy Ground who did not attend school and were living in households with illiterate heads of household totaled seventeen children—six girls and eleven boys. Children living with literate heads of household, but not

attending school totaled thirteen students—six girls and seven boys. In total, twelve girls and eighteen boys from African American-headed households did not attend school during the census year of 1850. In addition to these school-age children, six of their African American peers resided in the households of European Americans and did not attend school.⁴⁹

Only one of the six African American property owners living in Sandy Ground at the time of the 1850 census originated from the state of New York. Three, or one-half, of the property holders from within the Sandy Ground African American community were born in Virginia. The remaining property owners were from Maryland and New Jersey. This finding suggests that individuals who left their state of origin were enterprising individuals who acted upon opportunities to purchase property. As previously stated, home ownership offered these heads of household the right of suffrage.

There is a significant correlation between the literacy rates of the African American heads of households and their children attending school. In the 1850 federal census, of the twenty-nine African American heads of households in Sandy Ground, twenty-one persons were identified as being able to read and write. Eighteen households with school-age children had a literate person at the head of the family.

The place of origin of the head of household is an important variable to consider. Seven of the African American heads of household were illiterate. Six African American heads of household in the Sandy Ground community who reported being unable to read and write on the 1850 census were born in New York State, and one was born in Delaware. Of the twenty-nine heads of household, nineteen were born in New York.

⁴⁹ To avoid skewing the data related to the state of the African American community, the property value of European American heads of household was omitted in this analysis.

Among the remaining eleven heads of household, five originated from the southern state of Virginia, two from New Jersey, and one each from Maryland, Delaware, and Pennsylvania. Similarly, most of the school-age children residing in the community were also born in New York State.

The remaining four households did not house school-age children.

There was no correlation between the status of other literate adults in the household and a child's attendance in school. The correlation was slightly significant between *head of household ownership* and school-age children's attendance in school. The statistical significance was 0.01 level (2-tailed) (see table 4.2).

Table 4.2. Correlation between African American school-age children's attendance and head of household ownership, Sandy Ground, New York, 1850

		Attended	HH owned
Attended	Pearson correlation	1	.364
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.003
	N	63	63
HH owned	Pearson correlation	.364	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.003	
	N	63	63

Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

A stronger correlation was that school-age children of color in 1850 Westfield, Staten Island, were more likely to have attended school if the head of the household in which they resided was literate. The statistical significance was 0.05 level of a (2-tailed) correlation (see table 4.3).

Table 4.3. Correlation between African American school-age children attendance in correlation with head of household literacy, Sandy Ground, New York, 1850

		Attended	HH owned
Attended	Pearson correlation	1	.259
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.040
	N	63	63
HH owned	Pearson correlation	.259	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.040	
	N	63	63

Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

In Richmond County, New York, forty-two children of color attended school, representing 1.85 percent of the total school attending population.⁵⁰ Of the sixty-three children of color residing in Sandy Ground, twenty-six were reported as attending school.⁵¹ Within the Sandy Ground population, one fifteen-year-old male was employed as a laborer and the other thirty-six school-age children did not attend school, this is only part of a larger story. When children did not attend school in this rural community, many sought employment in various occupations to support themselves and their extended families. According to the Annual Report of the Secretary of State, as the Superintendent of Common Schools, no family in Richmond County was exempted from levied district

⁵⁰ *Seventh Census of the United States*, Table VII, Attending School During Year as Returned by Families, 116.

⁵¹ Two children, Sarah Cooley and William Hirden (Herdon), reported residing in two households, one familial, the other a European American-headed household. According to both entries, the students identified as having attended school during this period. Sarah Cooley was listed in the household of mariner Samuel Hazelton; no occupation was listed for her. Similarly, William Hirden had no occupation listed while he was residing in the home of Isaac K. Jessup, farmer, but he is reported as having attended school. There was also a two-year age difference in the reporting of William, along with the name spelling discrepancy.

taxes because of indigence.⁵² This fact indicates that parents who reported their children attending school were in a financial position to help fund their children's public education had they chosen to do so.

Education, Occupation, and Community Building

In each site for this study, education was an important aspect of social development in the communities that housed A. M. E. Zion denominational churches. With or without literacy skills, those residing within this community had the ability to purchase property, gain employment, and send their children to school. In the case of Nicholas and Silva Jackson, both attended school while their children (Cornelia and Sarah) did not. Education in the Sandy Ground community included those skills learned in formal and informal settings that prepared—in this case school-age—children for their adult roles in society.

Also important in this agrarian community was one's occupational status. The occupational status of the heads of household and others residing within the household, particularly school-age students, affected the future occupations available to the students themselves. Individuals engaged in occupations related to waterways included one mariner who resided within the African American community of Sandy Ground. Hiram Jones owned his property, valued at \$1,000. He and his wife, Julia, were the parents of three-year-old Robert. William Eaton, Peter Bogert, and John and Jim Henry were all boatmen, according to the 1850 federal census for New York State. The Henrys were both born in New York State, Eaton in Virginia, and Bogert, in New Jersey. The men in

⁵² From the report of the respective documents accompanying the report of the Superintendent of Common Schools included in Abstract A, *Town Superintendents of Common Schools of the State of New York, for the year on the first day of July, 1852*.

such occupations enhanced the prosperity of the community, particularly by disseminating information and facilitating the movement of freedom seekers further towards their independence. Mr. Bogert owned an estate valued at \$800, compared to the average estate value of less than \$500 for the remaining African Americans. Again, suffrage rights were afforded men with property values above \$250. The participation of these men in the local voting populace was based upon the value of their property.

Pastors have always held a position of esteem in the United States, as have waterways workers. A mariner was a seaman of higher status than a boatman. According to Debbie Beavis, a system of voluntary examination for masters and mates of foreign trade vessels was introduced in 1845 by the Board of Trade in Great Britain. The Mercantile Marine Act of 1850 required compulsory examinations for Certificates of Competency.⁵³ Thus, mariners, based on literacy skills, property value, voting rights, and occupational status, were community leaders.

Another occupation garnering community-wide respect was that of the barber. Richard Jenkins and Samuel Lewis were the two resident barbers among the African American population living in Sandy Ground, New York. Two school-age children resided within the Jenkins home, namely, Francis, thirteen, and Rich, ten. Both children were enrolled in school. Mrs. Maria Jenkins was not able to read and write.

Mr. Lewis was the father of two-year-old Alleoria. The other adult in the household was twenty-four year-old Joseph Lewis, who could not read and write. Two men were raising little Miss Alleoria in 1850. Both barbers in the African American community of Sandy Ground were literate, but neither owned his property.

⁵³ Debbie Beavis, *Tracing Master Mariners in British Record*, www.mariners-l.co.uk. Ms. Beavis notes that most believe these criteria to be irrelevant today, but in 1850 ordinary seamen or apprentices could not earn the title of Masters or Mates (Mariners) without gaining their certificates.

Another non-property-owning group was that of the African American farmers who resided at Sandy Ground in 1850. Thomas Burger, Robert Hirden, and Henry Yearmore were all born in New York State; two were not able to read or write in 1850. Hirden's eldest son, William, sixteen, was the only one of his six school-age children to attend school in 1850. William was also one of two children with double entries on the census as living in both an African American household and a European American household at the time of the 1850 census. Both of Burger's school-age children attended school. Yearmore had one school-age child who did not attend school during the year.

Cartman was another highly visible occupation in the African American community. Cartmen were the direct link between the market and the farmer. William Holmes was the only person with the occupation of cartman in Sandy Ground. The household of Mr. Holmes consisted only of adults, ranging in age from twenty-five to seventy-eight years. Henry Brown, a thirty-three-year-old resident, was employed in the occupation of farmer. This was a common occupation for African American men in the Sandy Ground community. The collaborative efforts of Mr. Brown's farming and Mr. Holmes's salesmanship as a small business entrepreneur (produce vendor) provided an income conducive to the survival of this African American household.

The occupation of laborer assigned to seven African American heads of household in the Sandy Ground community. Five of the seven were born in New York State, the other two in Virginia. Only Virginia-born, Bailey Cooley owned property. Among the laborers, the children of Cooley, John Frasier and George Strong, attended school in 1850. Among the adults, Nicholas Jackson and his wife, Silva, were reported to have attended school during the census year, as was the wife of Caesar Jackson, Sarah.

The five children from within the Jackson households did not attend school, but all adults were reported as literate. Not so for Thomas or Francis Williams, who were reported as being unable to read or write. In both the Taylor and Williams households lived four school-age children who did not attend school. John Williams, fifteen, was the only school-age child listed with an occupation. He was a laborer, the same occupation as was listed for his father and older brother.

There were no occupations listed for the two female heads of household in this community. Houria Eaton (Virginia-born) and Ann Thompson (New York-born) headed those households. In the Eaton home, two school-age children attended school in 1850. The adults in the Eaton household were literate while those in the Thompson home were not. Eaton was also a property owner, with an estate value of \$800. Seven male heads of household were also listed without occupations.

John Crocheron, Silas Harris, and Robert Robinson were all born in New York State. Of the three children residing in the Crocheron household, Charles, six, was the only one old enough to attend school, but he did not do so. While Mr. Crocheron was able to read and write, his wife, Marion, could not. Mary Spicer, a seventy-five-year-old resident of the home, could. Two of the four Harris children were of school age, but did not attend school. Both Silas and Ann Harris were able to read and write. Mr. Robinson, listed as being unable to read or write, was the parent of three school-age children who did not attend school during the census year. His wife, Eliza, and eldest daughter, listed as being literate, reinforcing the notion of children having access to literate adults whether or not they attended school.

Many who originated from Delaware, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania did not have occupations reported. William Stephens was the father of two school-age children who attended school during the year 1850. Neither Mr. nor Mrs. Stephens was literate. One school-age child, who appeared to be a nonrelative, also resided in the home but did not attend school. Neither of the two school-age children in the home of Anthony Bond attended school in 1850, even though each of the four adults in the home could read and write. There were no children in the home of Jeremiah Bush, and he owned property valued at \$500.

To recapitulate, the occupations of the African American heads of household living at Sandy Ground in 1850 were as follows: one mariner, one cartman, two clergymen, two barbers, three farmers, four boatmen, seven laborers, and nine individuals for whom no occupation was listed. Seven of these individuals could not read or write and six were property owners. Eighteen were born in New York State, five in Virginia, two in New Jersey, and one each in Maryland, Delaware, and Pennsylvania.

Statistically, the correlation between school attendance and the variables related to head of household literacy and head of household ownership was at 0.05 percent. A work ethic based on manual labor was evident in this community, based on the occupations noted for the working adults. While only one school-age child was listed with an occupation on the 1850 census, many more reported occupations five years later.

African American School-Age Children by Occupation, 1855–1865

In 1981 Richard Dickenson, Borough Historian of Staten Island, compiled a list of the African American children who reported employment in various occupational

capacities on Staten Island between 1855 and 1865 (see table 4.4).⁵⁴ The names of the children were listed by town. Here only those from Westfield are noted by name, age, occupation, and place of birth, as well as the year of the reported employment.⁵⁵

Table 4.4. African American school-age children by occupation, town of Westfield, 1855–1865⁵⁶

Name	Age	Occupation	Place of Birth	Year
Cooley, William	14	Farmer	VA	1855
Decker, Susan	10	Servant	Richmond	1855
Herden, Frank	14	Servant	Richmond	1855
Herman, Hanah	15	Servant	MD	1855
Hicks, Hary	10	Servant	Richmond	1855
Homes, Robert	16	Farmer	Richmond	1855
Homes, Mary	11	Servant	Richmond	1855
Jackson, Francis ^a	14	Servant	Richmond	1855
Jackson, John Henry	14	Servant	Richmond	1855
Purnell, Edward	13	Laborer	MD	1855
Peterson, Betsey	14	Servant	Richmond	1855
Price, Maniar	15	Servant	Richmond	1855
Robinson, Maria	16	Servant	Richmond	1855
Sailes, William	13	Servant	Richmond	1855

⁵⁴ April L. Harris, *Unearthing Sandy Ground: An African American Settlement on New York's Staten Island*, Syracuse University, Cultural Foundations of Education, CFE 821–Historiography, submitted to Dr. John Briggs, April 19, 2001 (unpublished paper) adapted from Richard Dickenson, *Census Occupations of Afro-American Families on Staten Island 1840–1875*, New York: Staten Island Institute of Arts and Sciences (1981).

⁵⁵ *Ibid.* In the case of Isabella Stevens, three different census years of occupations are listed that cover the years 1855, 1860, and 1865. She began working at the age of ten and remained in domestic service through the age of twenty-two on the last census.

⁵⁶ See Dickenson, *Census Occupations of Afro-American Families* (1981).

(Sayles or Sales)

Scott, Josephine	13	Servant	Richmond	1865
Stevens, Isabella	10	Servant	Richmond	1855
	16	GHW ^b	NYS	1860
	22	Servant	Richmond	1865
Stevens, Charles	14	Servant	Richmond	1855
Thomas, James	11	Servant	Richmond	1855

^a Francis Jackson is listed as female. ^b GHW is an abbreviation for general house work.

Thirty-nine African American children worked in various occupations on Staten Island in 1855. In Westfield eighteen children served in three occupations. Two children, William Cooley and Robert Homes, were farmers. One child within the Purnell home, Edward, had the occupation of laborer. The Purnell family is today considered to have been one of the original African American families; however, the Purnells did not arrive in the community before the enumeration of the 1850 census.⁵⁷ This family was instrumental in starting the first African American school after 1850, in collaboration with the local A. M. E. Zion Church. The Homes family (alternative spelling: Holmes), also recognized as one of the original families that settled the Sandy Ground region of Staten Island, had two children employed in 1850, Sarah, a servant, and Robert, a farmer. The remaining fifteen children had the job title of servant. In the Westfield region, male and female school-age children in the African American community were evenly employed in the occupation of servant—there were eight females and seven males. A

⁵⁷ In personal interviews with Richard Dickenson, Staten Island Borough Historian, Lois Mosley and Yvonne Taylor, both direct descendants of Sandy Ground, each mention the Purnell School as a cornerstone of the Sandy Ground educational legacy.

comparison between the published analysis by Staten Island Borough Historian Richard Dickenson and the findings of this study shows that five school-age children listed on the 1850 census were employed by 1855.⁵⁸ Brothers Theodore Herdon, twelve, was employed as a domestic in Southfield, and Frank Herdon, fourteen, was employed as a servant in Westfield. John Jackson, fourteen, Maria Robinson, sixteen, and William Sailes (or Sayles or Sales), were also servants at homes in Westfield in 1855.⁵⁹ The Westfield region of Staten Island had the highest employment rate of African American children, which happens to include the Sandy Ground community—the only African American enclave on the island.

Ten Years Later—1860 Sandy Ground, New York

By 1860, ten of the school-age children listed on the 1850 census for the Westfield region of Richmond County were still in the community. Of the children who were reported as having attended school in 1850, only four were identified. They were Sarah Cooley, Solomon Cooley, William Decker, and Louisa Frazier.

In 1860 Sarah Cooley was a twenty-two-year-old servant living within her parent's home; she was reported as being literate. Solomon, her younger brother, was now twenty years old. He worked as a laborer, also lived with their parents, and he too was reportedly literate. Louisa Frazier lived with her parents. She also was literate. William Decker was the head of his own household in 1860. At the age of twenty-four,

⁵⁸ Richard Dickenson, *Census Occupations of Afro-American Families on Staten Island 1840–1875* (New York: Staten Island Institute of Arts and Sciences, 1981).

⁵⁹ Dickenson, *Census Occupations of Afro-American Families*, disparities arise in the ages of some of the children. In 1850 Frank Herdon was thirteen and Maria Robinson was fourteen. Underreporting one's age may have enabled them to get the job, as older children/young adults may have been deemed too mature for the entry-level position of "servant."

he lived with his Virginia-born wife, Charlott, twenty-six, and their son, Charles, three. William worked as a laborer, and both he and his wife were reported as being literate.

Of all the school-age children who attended school in 1850, only William Decker was discovered to have begun a new generation in Sandy Ground. He was one of the few children reported in the study to have been raised in a European American household. In 1850 he lived in the home of the widow Elizabeth Cole, age seventy, and was enrolled in school along with the other school-age children in the household. In 1855 William Decker was reportedly employed as a domestic. Apparently, in the household in which William Decker was raised, the adults believed that children should be educated.

Of the African American children of 1850 who did not attend school, six were still in the community ten years later; all were reported as literate adults. This finding is indicative of the fact that many adult residents of Sandy Ground in 1850 were literate; because there were literate adults in most African American households of the time, the children in the community were exposed to literacy. Siblings Susan and John Jackson, twenty-two and twenty years of age, respectively, were living with their parents, and John was employed as an oysterman. Margaret (Jane), eighteen, and Thomas Harris, sixteen, lived with their parents in 1860. Neither was enrolled in school in 1850, yet Margaret is listed as literate; Thomas's literary skill is unknown based on information provided on the census. The Harris family was one of the original landowning families among the African Americans at Sandy Ground.

George Herdon (Hirden), eighteen in 1860, was employed as a laborer. He lived with the family of Bornt Winant, a local European American merchant and business leader. Mr. Winant served as the witness in the establishment of the A. M. E. Zion

Church and also sold property to African Americans. John Frazier did not attend school in 1850, but he was attending in 1860 at the age of sixteen. These data suggest that, in spite of not attending school according to the 1850 census, many of the school-age children of Sandy Ground learned to read and write.

Twenty Years Later—1870 Sandy Ground, New York

Only two African American adults present in the original households were still residing in Westfield, Staten Island, twenty years later. John Henry and Sarah Jackson, wife of Caesar, still lived in Sandy Ground. Three of the school-age children listed in the 1850 census remained twenty years later. William Decker was the only student who attended school in 1850 who was still in the community. He had been a boy of about fourteen years in 1850, living in the household of European Americans and attending school. Twenty years later, he was the father of seven. The two other school-age children from the 1850 census who remained in Sandy Ground in 1870 were John Jackson, son of Caesar who was an oysterman with a son, also named John, and Ann Peterson, who was a domestic in the home of Bornt Winant.

The Winant family had a constant stream of African American boarders, and records of their business dealings with members of this community span the timeframe of this study. A closer examination of white-black relationships may reveal more about the members who participated in the multiracial enterprise of the Underground Railroad within the community known as Sandy Ground. According to Dickenson, in 1855 John Henry Jackson and Susan Jackson were employed as servants in Westfield and Northfield, respectively. These children were grandchildren of Captain John Jackson. Jackson, the first African American landowner in the Sandy Ground community, was an

emancipated slave and ferryman with the reputation of being an Underground Railroad agent.⁶⁰ Sarah, the sister of a boatman named John Henry, was married to Caesar Jackson in 1850. Sarah was the mother of John Henry and Susan. Sarah was one of the few parents in the study reported to have attended school in 1850. By 1860, John Henry Jackson was also employed as an oysterman, and both he and his sister, Susan, in their early twenties, were reported as being literate adults, recipients of the seemingly silent pedagogical practices of their cultural community, because they did not attend school in 1850.

John Henry, boatman and Sarah's younger brother, lived between Joseph and William Winant in 1850. The Winant brothers were then both employed as mariners. Bornt Winant was a local merchant and the head of household in which fourteen-year-old Sarah Henry resided. Over the years, the Winant families had African American boarders, and had a role in selling land to people of color. John Henry's father-in-law Captain John Jackson, and his brother Jim Henry, a boatman, lived in close proximity to the other mariners. Captain Jackson was born enslaved in Richmond County and was often times detained for carrying "suspected contraband" through the waterways of the Hudson Bay and the Chesapeake canal into the Kill van Kull over the years.⁶¹

In 1860 Bornt Winant had in his home two of the school-age African American children who were listed in 1850: George Herdon and Ann Peterson. George served as a laborer and Ann as a domestic. Jacob Winant also had African American boarders. John Hurdy, twenty, was a laborer, and Elizabeth Peterson, sixteen, was a housekeeper. In the

⁶⁰ See Rob Bailey, *Staten Island's Sandy Ground Historical Society Festival returns June 25*, www.silive.com; Lois Mosley, Yvonne Taylor, Sylvia Moody-D'Allessandro and Julie Moody-Lewis also reported on the legacy of Captain Jackson.

⁶¹ Interviews with Mosley, Taylor, Moody-D'Allessandro, and Moody-Lewis.

1850 census there was an Elizabeth Peterson who resided in the home of a farmer by the name of Henry LaForge. She was one of the few children in the study who resided with a European American family. While she did not attend school in 1850, by 1860 she was reported as literate on the census.⁶²

The Harris brothers and several other African American men settled this region and helped establish an oystering and agrarian economic base within the African American segment of the community that would sustain their families for generations. Among multiple sources of information on the occupants of Sandy Ground are the works of Hubbell (1898), the oral history recorded by Wilkins (1943a, 1943b), and the list of church trustees of the Rossville A. M. E. Zion Church Deed. These records warrant in-depth exploration.

Conclusion

This chapter was intended to introduce the prominent African American families on Staten Island, specifically the Sandy Ground community. This analysis covered the period from the Fugitive Slave Law (1850) through the Civil War and into the early phases of Reconstruction. There is ample evidence of a high literacy rate among the heads of household in the study: seventy-four percent of all the heads of household or sixty-seven percent of African Americans that housed school age children. Their industriousness and occupations as adults reflected those of their parents. As part of their movement towards full citizenship, I wonder if any of the African American male school-age children of 1850 joined the fight for freedom during the Civil War. Of the twenty-five male school-age children living in Sandy Ground in 1850, only two remained twenty

⁶² John Hirden was the fourteen-year-old son of a farmer, Robert Hirden, in 1850. John Hurdy may be the same person who in 1860 resided with the family of Peter Winant.

years later. Could this be because of their military service or was it simple attrition? Of those remaining, one attended school in 1850; the other did not; but by 1870, both were literate. This study of the Sandy Ground community is just the beginning. Staten Island history remains an integral part of New York State history. African American contributions to that history deserve further analysis.

CHAPTER FIVE: LISTEN FOR THE SIGNAL—THREE LONG WHISTLE BLOWS

This child, however, was safely brought to the Vigilance Committee, in Philadelphia, and was duly forwarded, *via* friends in New York, to its mother, in Syracuse, where she had stopped to work and wait for her little one, left behind at the time she escaped.

William Still¹

Introduction

Shortly before his death, Frederick Douglass wrote, from his Cedar Hill, Anacostia, home outside of Washington, D.C., about the relationship between William Still, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and Jermain Loguen, Syracuse, New York, as two of the most active Underground Railroad stationmasters in the North. He recalled that “fugitives were received in Pennsylvania by William Still, by him sent to New York, where they were cared for by Mr. David Ruggles and afterwards by Mr. Gibbs, thence to Stephen Myers at Albany; thence to J. W. Loguen, Syracuse; thence to Frederick Douglass, Rochester, and thence to Hiram Wilson, St. Catherine’s, Canada West.”² This source places the city of Syracuse in the middle of the movement against slavery and the fight for equality.

Incorporated as a city in 1841, Syracuse had a long-standing history as a safe haven for fugitives from slavery. By the mid-1800s, the vocal presence of abolitionists in the area reflected an African American community in Syracuse that was determined to protect and serve fellow citizens of color seeking self-emancipation.

¹ William Still, *The Underground Railroad: The American Negro, His History and Literature* (Philadelphia: Porter and Coates, 1872; repr., New York: Arno Press and the *New York Times*, 1968).

² Wilbur Siebert, *The Underground Railroad from Slavery to Freedom* (New York: Russell and Russell, 1898), 26. Frederick Douglass, letter to Wilbur Siebert, March 27, 1893.

In 1841 African Methodist Episcopal Zion minister Elder Lewis ordained Jermain Wesley Loguen, who had recently left the community of Utica and the Oneida Institute to marry the former Caroline Storum.³ The newest minister in town, Loguen immediately began his first school, which was located at Lot near Park streets in the city of Syracuse.⁴ Loguen opened his second school in the Church Street House. According to Wellman, et al., the second building used by Loguen was located near the old Baptist Church; the school was later moved near McKinstry's Candle Factory. Eventually, the original building was again relocated and renamed Bates and Williams' Tannery, owned by W. H. Van Buren in 1859.⁵

Having been engaged in aiding runaways before 1850, abolitionists in Syracuse, under the direction of Rev. Loguen, founded the Fugitive Aid Society.⁶ Abolition crusaders had provided prior generations' access to higher education. Loguen had been a recipient of such education while attending the Oneida Institute. According to Benjamin Quarles, the clergyman, orator, and Underground Railroad operator Jermain Wesley Loguen of Syracuse was among the prominent correspondents whose letters to former masters were displayed over and over in the columns of the antislavery weeklies.⁷ As part of his ministerial and social duties, he formed an alliance with the American Missionary Association. Loguen preferred to assist and to be assisted by this national organization

³ See Milton C. Sernett, *North Star Country: Upstate New York and the Crusade for African American Freedom* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2002); Milton C. Sernett, *Abolition's Axe: Beriah Green, Oneida Institute and the Black Freedom Struggle* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1986); Judith Wellman, Milton C. Sernett, April L. Harris, Angela Williams, and Angela Owens, *Uncovering the Freedom Trail in Syracuse and Onondaga County: The Underground Railroad, Abolitionism and African American Life, 1820–1870* (Preservation Association of Central New York, 2002), 14.

⁴ See J. W. Loguen, *As a Slave and as a Freeman* (Syracuse, NY: J. G. K. Truair, 1859), 372; Wellman, et al., *Uncovering the Freedom Trail*, appendix.

⁵ See Loguen, *As a Slave and as a Freeman*, 373–374; Wellman, et al., *Uncovering the Freedom Trail*, appendix.

⁶ Benjamin Quarles, *Black Abolitionists* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1969), 154.

⁷ Quarles, *Black Abolitionists*, 66–67.

when it formed in 1846 because other existing missionary societies were too quiet about slavery.⁸

African American Presence in Early Syracuse

In 1800 the total population of the village of Syracuse was 7,406, including eleven slaves. Ten years later, in 1810, many changes had occurred in the region, most noticeably the preparation for the construction of the Erie Canal. The population had grown by more than three times to 25,987, of which 114 were free people of color and fifty were slaves. In 1820, five years before construction was completed on the canal, Syracuse's population had grown to 42,243, with 195 free people of color and fifty-nine slaves. This was the last census enumeration before the end of legal slavery in the state.⁹

In 1830, as the shift in abolitionist methods and discourse became more infused with immediatist rhetoric regarding the abolition of slavery on a national level, the state of New York itself was itself three years into the abolition of slavery [on the local level]. During that census year, the population had grown to 58,073, of which 493 were free people of color, and there were no slaves.¹⁰ By 1840 much had changed in Syracuse. In the following year the village incorporated as a city. The population in Onondaga County had risen to 67,911 people, of which 477 were people of color. Reported that same year were twelve academies and grammar schools countywide, and they enrolled 1,532 students. Three hundred thirty-three primary schools enrolled 17,890 students.

According to the federal census of 1850, there were 613 free persons of color in Onondaga County out of the total population of 85,890. Of the 613 persons of color, 190

⁸ Ibid., 76, 80.

⁹ United States federal census years 1800, 1810, 1820, and 1830 were enumerated aggregates in the seventh census of 1850.

¹⁰ Federal census of 1850, New York, Table VIII, Attending School, as Returned by Families.

were considered school age. Based on the information provided in table 6, and the return of the number of pupils attending school in the 1850 census as reported in census Table VIII, less than one-third of school-age children of color were attending school in the county. Educational facilities in Onondaga County included one public library, and school libraries were in each of the 272 public schools located throughout the county. Those schools employed 338 teachers who taught 20,847 pupils (of whom thirty-five were females of color and thirty-five were males of color). The annual school budget was \$47,337, of which \$38,272 was from tax revenues, \$16,070 came from public donations, and \$3,047 came from miscellaneous sources.

On the local level, there were 370 free persons of color in the city of Syracuse, as reported in the 1850 census.¹¹ When enumerated, the census reported that there were 22,271 people living in the city. The white population was 21,901, comprising 98.36 percent of the population. During the enumeration of the 1850 federal census, there were four wards in the city (see table 5.1). This table demonstrates the density or dispersion of the African American community based on residential patterns.

¹¹ Loguen, *As a Slave and as a Freeman*; Wellman, et al., *Uncovering the Freedom Trail*.

Table 5.1. Population by ethnicity in the city of Syracuse, Onondaga County, 1850

	Total		White		Total	Free		Color	Total Pop.
	Male	Female	Total	%	Male	Female	Total	%	Aggregate
1st Ward	2,314	2,145	4,459	98.78	28	27	55	1.22	4,514
2nd Ward	4,114	3,368	7,482	98.07	78	69	147	1.93	7,629
3rd Ward	2,500	2,131	4,631	99.57	11	12	23	0.49	4,651
4th Ward	2,695	2,634	5,329	97.35	63	82	145	2.65	5,474
Total	11,623	10,278	21,901	98.34	180	190	370	1.66	22,271

The highest concentration of free persons of color living in Onondaga County was within the city of Syracuse. As noted in the table below, the Second Ward of Syracuse was home to 39.72 percent of the total African American population of the city (or 1.93 percent of the general population countywide). The Second Ward held the largest proportion of the African American community (see table 5.2).

Table 5.2. Free persons of color, Syracuse, New York, 1850

Ward	Female	Male	Total
1st Ward	27	28	55
2nd Ward	69	78	147
3rd Ward	12	11	23
4th Ward	82	63	145
Total	190	180	370

High concentrations of African Americans lived in the Second and Fourth Wards of Syracuse. The Second Ward historically included the downtown area and the only house of worship established for African Americans, and it was pastored by an African American. The Fayette Street A. M. E. Zion Church was established in 1847. The second largest proportion of the African American population resided in the city's Fourth Ward.

Residents in this area of the city may have been aware of the many times visitors knocked on the door of the pastor of the A. M. E. Zion congregation, the local stationmaster and educator Reverend Loguen. Syracuse was indeed a haven for social justice, with school age-children in its “living” classroom.

African American Children’s School Attendance and Household Demographics

Syracuse, New York, 1850

In 1850 seventy African American (ages five through sixteen), as returned by their families attended school in the county of Onondaga.¹² Of these students, thirty-five were female and thirty-five male, who together represented 0.35 percent of the school-age student population residing in the county at large.¹³ The numbers for the city of Syracuse were even smaller.

It is worth noting the unique nature of the intersection between school attendance and head of household literacy and homeownership in the African American community. African American children were being educated in schools, public and private, at this time. This was a time when African Americans, in the shadow of slavery, struggled to identify themselves as individuals, while seeking freedom and, often, education. It was a tumultuous time in American history, when freedom was being defined and slavery abolished. An analysis of African American children’s engagement in a public schooling system in conjunction with their home lives provides a peek into how these same children used social resources to uplift themselves and their community (see table 5.3).

¹² *Seventh Census of the United States*, Table VIII, 1850, Attending School During the Year, as Returned by Families.

¹³ *Ibid.*

Table 5.3. African American school-age children, Syracuse, Onondaga County, New York, 1850

Name	Age	Gender	Race	Birthplace	Attended	HH owned	HH literate
Allen, Hannah	16	F	B	New York	Yes	Yes	Yes
Allen, Francis	15	F	B	New York	Yes	\$600 Yes	Yes
Allen, Thomas	15	M	B	New York	No	\$300 Yes	Yes
Allen, Elisabeth	7	F	B	New York	Yes	\$300 No	Yes
Allen, Mary	7	F	B	New York	No	No	Yes
Allen, Sarah	6	F	B	New York	No	Yes	Yes
Allen, Miller	5	M	B	New York	No	\$300 Yes	Yes
Allen, Henry	5	M	B	New York	No	No	Yes
Audry, Julia	10	F	M	New York	Yes	No	Yes
Bastion, Melinda	7	F	B	New York	No	No	No
Beebee, Anna	9	F	B	New York	No	No	Yes
Burger, Sarah	5	F	B	New York	No	No	Yes
Cash, Elisabeth	11	F	B	New York	No	No	Yes
Cash, Frances	9	F	B	New York	No	No	Yes
Coulrie, Christiana	7	F	M	New York	Yes	Yes	Yes
Coulrie, Catherine	6	F	M	New York	Yes	\$3,000 Yes	Yes
Daniels, Loring	14	M	B	New York	Yes	\$3,000 No	Yes
Daniels, John	9	M	B	New York	Yes	No	Yes
Daniels, Ira	6	M	B	New York	Yes	No	Yes
Dayson, Charles	6	M	B	"X"	No	No	No
DeFoote, William	9	M	B	New York	Yes	Yes	Yes
DeFoote, Mary E.	8	F	B	New York	Yes	\$600 Yes	Yes
DeFoote, Aubrey	7	M	B	New York	Yes	\$600 Yes	Yes
DeFoote, James	5	M	B	New York	Yes	\$600 Yes	Yes
Dendanty, Sarah	9	F	B	New York	Yes	\$600 No	No
Dendanty, William	7	M	B	New York	Yes	No	No
Denning, Sarah	15	F	B	New York	No	No	No
Denning, William H.	13	M	B	New York	No	No	No
Denning, Lorenzo	11	M	B	New York	No	No	No
Denning, David	7	M	B	New York	No	No	No
Foster, William	12	M	M	New York	No	Yes	Yes
						\$600	

Foster, Mary	8	F	M	New York	No	Yes \$600	Yes
Foster, Garret	7	M	M	New York	No	Yes \$600	Yes
Foster, Theo	5	M	M	New York	No	Yes \$600	Yes
Gray, William H.	10	M	B	New York	Yes	No	Yes
Hawley, Sally	15	F	B	Unknown	No	No	No
Jacobson, Mary	14	F	B	New York	Yes	No	Yes
Jacobson, Henrietta	12	F	B	New York	Yes	No	Yes
Jackson, Jesoren	15	M	B	New York	Yes	Yes \$600	Yes
Jackson, Julia	14	F	B	New York	Yes	Yes \$600	Yes
Jackson, Rachel	14	F	B	New York	No	No	Yes
Jackson, Samuel Jr.	9	M	B	New York	Yes	Yes \$400	Yes
Jackson, Josiah	7	M	B	New York	Yes	Yes \$400	Yes
Jackson, Elisabeth	7	F	B	New York	Yes	Yes \$400	Yes
Jackson, Phillip	7	M	B	New York	No	No	Yes
Jackson, Albert	7	M	B	New York	No	Yes \$300	Yes
Jackson, James	6	M	B	New York	No	Yes \$300	Yes
Jackson, James	5	M	B	New York	Yes	No	Yes
Jackson, Buick A.	5	M	B	New York	No	Yes \$400	Yes
Jackson, Mahlia	5	F	B	New York	No	Yes \$400	Yes
Kellogg, Caroline	16	F	M	New York	No	No	Yes
Lanworth, Laura	16	F	B	Unknown	No	No	No
Lanworth, Martha	15	F	B	Unknown	No	No	No
Lanworth, Mary	10	F	B	Unknown	No	No	No
Lewis, Charley	12	M	B	New Jersey	No	No	Yes
Lewis, Susan	10	F	B	Syracuse	No	No	Yes
Lewis, Isaac	6	M	B	New Jersey	No	No	Yes
Lewis, Elisa	5	F	B	Syracuse	No	No	Yes
Lisle, Elisabeth	12	F	B	New York	Yes	No	Yes
Lisle, John	7	M	B	New York	Yes	No	Yes
Livingston, William	15	M	B	New York	Yes	No	Yes
Livingston, Charles	5	M	B	New York	No	No	Yes
Logan, Elisabeth	9	F	M	New York	No	Yes \$600	Yes
Logan, Hellen	8	F	M	New York	No	Yes \$600	Yes
Loring, Charles	10	M	M	New York	Yes	Yes \$400	Yes
Mason, Sally	12	F	B	New York	Yes	No	No

Mayes, Matilda	11	F	M	New York	No	Yes \$10,000	Yes
McWhorten, William	13	M	B	New York	No	No	No
McWhorten, Sarah	12	F	B	New York	No	No	No
McWhorten, Peter,	8	M	B	New York	No	No	No
McWhorten, Margaret	6	F	B	Syracuse	No	No	No
Miller, Hannah	10	F	B	New York	No	No	No
Mines, Charles	14	M	B	New York	No	Yes \$200	Yes
Mines, Mary E.	12	F	B	New York	Yes	Yes \$200	Yes
Newell, Sarah	6	F	B	New York	No	Yes \$250	Yes
Newell, Elisabeth	5	F	B	New York	No	Yes \$250	Yes
Penfield, Elisabeth	13	F	B	New York	Yes	Yes \$300	Yes
Randall, James H	5	M	B	New York	No	No	Yes
Randall, James	5	M	B	New York	No	No	Yes
Randall, Jane	5	F	B	New York	No	No	Yes
Ray, Ondro	16	M	M	New York	Yes	Yes \$300	Yes
Ray, Madison	12	M	M	New York	Yes	Yes \$300	Yes
Ray, Rachael	10	F	M	New York	Yes	Yes \$300	Yes
Ray, Lovice	5	F	M	New York	Yes	Yes \$300	Yes
Robinson, Mary E.	8	F	M	New York	Yes	Yes \$400	Yes
Robinson, Edward	5	M	M	New York	Yes	Yes \$400	Yes
Sioux, Mary	5	F	M	New York	No	No	Yes
Smith, Samuel	16	M	B	New York	No	Yes \$200	Yes
Smith, Debra	15	F	B	New York	No	Yes \$200	Yes
Talicon, David	13	M	M	New York	No	Yes \$10,000	Yes
Thomas, Charles	14	M	B	South Carolina	No	No	Yes
Vanburge, Christian	9	M	B	New York	Yes	Yes \$300	Yes
Vanburge, Charlutz	7	F	B	New York	Yes	Yes \$300	Yes
Waggoner, Hannah	15	F	B	New York	No	No	Yes

African American School-Age Children Attending School in Syracuse, 1850

In 1850 forty-nine families in Syracuse housed African American school-age children. Twenty-three households (47%) were home to school-age children who attended a school in Syracuse at the time. As with the community at Sandy Ground, I will present data on each household based on the school attendance of children residing in the home in correlation with the head of household's property ownership and literacy status.

Two African American families in the First Ward of Syracuse sent their children to school during this time and owned property. Francis Allen, a fifty-four-year-old laborer, was the parent of nine children (with ages ranging from five to thirty years) and the owner of property valued at \$300. Two people in the household attended school: Sarah, six, and Francis Jr., fifteen.¹⁴ Mr. Allen was literate, according to the record, while Mrs. Allen was not. Each of the adult children residing in the household was also literate. All members of the Allen family had been born in New York.

In 1850 two children in the household of Samuel Jackson, Samuel Jackson Jr. and Isaiah Jackson, ages nine and seven, respectively, also attended school. The senior Samuel Jackson worked as a cook and owned property valued at \$600. Parents of two younger children, Mr. and Mrs. Jackson, could read and write, and all members of the household were born in New York State.

The Second Ward of Syracuse was home to six families who sent their children to school and owned property, one being the household of John Florhig. Attorney Florhig

¹⁴ An error by the census taker may have resulted in young Francis Allen (Jr.) being listed as employed, while James Allen, age twenty-eight, was reported as having attended school. In the interest of justice, I will report that Francis Allen was attending school; James Allen was employed as a laborer. An alternative scenario is that Francis and James were either, or both, employed and attending school. The large distribution of ages in this family leads me to believe that this household was home to at least three generations of Allens or that Mrs. Allen continued to have children past her prime childbearing years.

was one of three European Americans reportedly providing shelter for an African American school-age child in Syracuse at the taking of the 1850 census. Thomas Allen, fourteen, resided in the residence and attended school. According to the record, young Mr. Allen's birthplace is unknown, which suggests that he might have been a freedom seeker.¹⁵

The family of Charles Mines included his wife, Daphne, and their three children. A salt maker, Mr. Mines owned property valued at \$200 and was able to read and write, though his wife could not. The eldest son of the Mineses, James, seventeen, was employed as a baker. Of the two remaining children, Charles, fourteen, and Mary, twelve, only Mary attended school. Each of the Mines family members was born in New York State.

Sam and Only Aida Ray were both forty-two years old in 1850. These parents of five children were literate and owned property valued at \$300. Their three oldest children, named Ondro, sixteen, Madison, twelve, and Rachael Ray, ten, attended school. Sam Ray was a carpenter. His household was also home to Charles Brewster, a forty-five-year-old farmer who, like the members of the Ray family, was born in the state of New York.

Based on the composition of the residents in the home of Prince and Jesoren Jackson, the home appears to have been a boarding facility. Both African and European Americans resided there. Of those reported to have attended school from this household

¹⁵ The presence of this single adolescent male raises questions about his legal status or his status as an employee of the landowner, because there were no slaves in New York State in 1850. Thomas lived in close proximity to a landowning middle-aged man with the same last name (Francis Allen). Perhaps they were related and the younger son was hired out to the neighbor to supplement the family's income.

in 1850, only Mrs. Jackson and daughter Julia, fourteen, are noted.¹⁶ All were born in New York. The estate of Prince Jackson, baker, was reportedly valued at \$600.

German-born George Coulrie, a carpenter, accumulated an estate in Central New York worth \$3,000.¹⁷ He and his wife, Barbara (also born in Germany), were parents of four children, all born in New York State. Two of them attended school in 1850: Christiana, seven, and Catherine, six. The other two were not of school age. Boarders in this household included four adult white males, all carpenters and all born in New York State.

In 1850 Buick and Mary Jackson accumulated property valued at \$400. Two of their three children were of school age and attended school. There was Elisabeth, seven, and Buick A., five. Sarah was too young. Each person in the home was born in New York. The occupation of Mr. Jackson was not on the census tract, but we know that he was literate, though his spouse was not.

During the 1850 census year, there were three African American-headed households in the Third Ward, where the children attended school and heads of household owned their property. In the home of John and Harriet Foster, only one of the

¹⁶ Mrs. Jesoran Jackson, the spouse of a boarding house owner, known Vigilance Committee member, and trustee of the AME Zion Church, was attending school in 1850. There is a high likelihood that Jesoran and her daughter Julia continued their educations and served as “private” tutors to guests passing through their home.

¹⁷ On the census, George Coulrie was identified as mulatto, while his family members were all identified as white, as were his boarders. The case of this family raises questions about identity and social position within the African American community. The father identified as a man of color, but the children did not. Parents make decisions “in the best interests of the children” every day. I wonder if the children of the Coulrie family were preparing to “pass” in their adult lives? The lack of ethnic identity noted on the census tract implies membership in the dominant ethnic group of society. Were the carpenter’s boarders also family members attempting to pass as members of the dominant society? Additionally, the last name Coulrie could have been a name change, as in the case of Susan Bell. It is perhaps no coincidence that Coulrie is the name of ancient African currency and an item used for bartering and adornment throughout the African diaspora, and that their birthplaces were listed as Germany. After examining literature on racial identification, and taking into consideration the interview of Mr. Coulrie during the census for which he self-identified as mulatto, I decided to include the children in the cohort. (See footnote 15.)

six children attended school. Four were eligible to attend school, but only the youngest did. Theodore Foster, five, attended school, while his older siblings, William, twelve; Garret, eight; and Mary, seven, did not. Mr. Foster was a barber. He and his wife were able to read and write, and their property was valued at \$600 at the time of the census. The Fosters all identified as mulatto and all were born in New York State.¹⁸

Also in the Third Ward was the family of Abram Vanburge. All in this household were born in New York, and the Vanburgers' property was valued at \$300. Two of their four children attended school: Christian, nine, and Charlotte, seven. The occupation of Mr. Vanburge is unknown, but we do know he was capable of reading and writing, and that his wife, Mary, was not.

Mary Robinson was one of three females who headed African American households in Syracuse. According to the census, it appears that she operated a boarding home. In 1850 three children in the home attended school: Mary E. Robinson, eight, Edward Robinson, five, and Charles Loring, ten, resided in this household. Mrs. Robinson owned property valued at \$400, and she could read and write. The ethnic identity of the children is listed as mulatto and all were born in New York.¹⁹

Frances Penfield resided in the Fourth Ward; he owned his property, valued at \$300, and his occupation is unknown. Both Mr. and Mrs. Penfield were able to read and write, and each member of the Penfield household was born in New York State. One of

¹⁸ The Foster family also had a "Garret" in their household, which is an indication of the father's sociopolitical alliances. The Fosters, like the Douglasses, would become relatives of Reverend Loguen when their children, Theodore and Carrie, married. Carrie Loguen Foster was buried in Oakwood Cemetery, Section 6, in Syracuse, New York, with her parents. Lewis Douglass, son of Frederick, married the eldest daughter of Rev. Loguen, Hellen Amelia.

¹⁹ The birthplace of Horace Loring, the father of Charles, was not listed. The father could have been a freedom seeker. The child would be considered free, his birthplace being New York, assuming that the child's mother was considered free.

their three children, Elisabeth, age thirteen, attended school. According to the record, Sand Williams, an adult laborer, was also in residence.

Henry DeFoote was a forty-year-old barber in 1850. He and his wife, Roxana, were the parents of four children: William, nine; Mary E., eight; Aubrey, seven; and James, five. All attended school. Also listed as being in residence was a fifth school-age child, Hannah Waggoner, fifteen; she did not attend school.²⁰ Mr. DeFoote was able to read and write; his wife could not. The birthplaces of the DeFoote family members are unknown. Miss Waggoner was born in New York State.

The last African American family to report children attending school and owning property in Syracuse during the taking of the 1850 census was the family of Hyman Allen. Mr. Allen was New York-born; he identified as mulatto and was a forty-year-old cigar maker.²¹ Hyman and Elisabeth Allen were the parents of three children, two of whom attended school. Bethany, seventeen, and Hannah, sixteen, both attended school in 1850.²² Given the ages of Bethany and Hannah Allen, it seems likely that these two young women were receiving normal school training in preparation for careers as teachers, particularly when considering their father's occupation and the value of his estate.²³ Mr. and Mrs. Allen were literate, and the family property was valued at \$600.

The first fourteen households reported children attending school, as well as those not attending. Twenty-four of the thirty-one children in these households, or seventy-

²⁰ Hannah Waggoner was listed twice on the census, once in the DeFoote household and once in the Waggoner household. Hannah did not attend school in 1850, according to both entries.

²¹ Hyman's is one of the few original landmarks in downtown Syracuse still in operation. The building currently houses a gourmet coffee and culinary shop near Interstate 81, in the old Fifteenth Ward, a later redistricting manifestation.

²² Only Hannah, age sixteen, is included in the data.

²³ During Reconstruction it is well documented that educated northern African Americans served as educators at schools for freed people in southern states. So-called Freedom Schools were established by the United States Government in collaboration with institutions such as the American Missionary Association.

seven percent, attended school; all of the heads of household owned property and were literate. Of the fourteen homes, a European American male headed one, where the African American child in attendance had questionable legal status. Also in this group of households, one adult was reported as attending school at the same time as her child.

Regarding the remaining eight households that had children attending school, five were homes of literate heads of household and three were homes in which the heads could not read or write. In the Second Ward, William Daniels was the father of three children who attended school in 1850 Syracuse. A carpenter, Mr. Daniels did know how to read and write, though his wife, Alonnia, did not. Each of their sons—Loring, fourteen; John, nine; and Ira, six—attended school during the census year. The Daniels family did not own their property; all family members were born in New York State.

Two of the four children of David and Worthy Jackson attended school in 1850. Mary, fourteen, and Henrietta, twelve, attended, while Phillip, seven, and Gilliam, two, did not. Mr. Jackson, a boatman, and his wife could read and write. Each family member was born in New York State.

As reported on the 1850 federal census, John Lisle was a minister in Syracuse of the Congregational Church, [a New England denomination of Calvinism in the United States.]²⁴ He and his wife, Elisabeth, were the parents of three children, two of whom attended school. Elisabeth, twelve, and John, seven, attended, while, Ellen Lisle, four, did not. The Lisle family did not own their property. Both parents could read and write; all members of the household were born in New York.

²⁴ According to Walls, *The AME Zion Church*, as reported earlier, Alexander Crummell became a Congregationalist minister after attending the Oneida Institute. Reverend Lisle's Congregationalist affiliation reflects the long history of African American clergy and the relationship between Loguen and Crummell as Oneida Institute alumni, which suggests another possible connection between Reverends Lisle and Loguen, and their friend and colleague in the struggle, Reverend Alexander Crummell.

William Gray was a laborer in 1850. He and his wife were the parents of a ten-year old son, William. Young William did attend school during the year, both of his parents were literate, and all were born in New York State.

The home of George Stryden appears also to have been a boarding house. Of the sixteen people residing in the home, only four were of school age and none appears to have been the offspring of Mr. and Mrs. Stryden. Charles Thomas was a fourteen-year-old-male, born in South Carolina, and he did not attend school. John Jackson, also fourteen years old, was born in New York, and he did not attend school. Julia Audrey, ten, born in New York, did not attend school. Hannah Jackson, seven, and born in New York, did.

It is uncertain whether Hannah and John were relatives. There were twelve different last names listed for this residence. Hannah was listed as mulatto, while John is noted as being black. In U.S. slave society it was common for siblings to have different ethnic identities; therefore, it is plausible that they were indeed related. Each of the adults in residence is listed as being able to read and write with the exception of Ellen Stryden and Mary Audrey (mother of Julia).

Dinah Livingston headed a household in which Charles, fifteen, did attend school during the time of the census. Two adult offspring in residence were able to read and write. All members of the family were born in New York.

William Jackson was a thirty-nine-year-old laborer; he owned his property, valued at \$400, but could not read and write. Martha Jackson, his wife, could read and write, as could their seventeen-year-old son, William A. Jackson. The Jacksons shared

their residence with another family. In residence were two children, Sally Mason, twelve, and Sarah Burger, five. Sally attended school; Sarah did not.

Sally's relationship to the head of household is uncertain. Sarah lived in the Jackson residence with both parents and two siblings. Lister and Phijan Burger were born in New York State, as were their three children, Sarah and two younger children. The Jackson household included immediate family members, along with Miss Mason, an apparent unattended minor, and the Burger family. Mr. Burger, like the head of household, was also a laborer.

Two other heads of household could not read and write; they did not own the property, and their children attended school. Henry Allen was a twenty-five-year-old laborer. Neither he nor his wife could read and write. Their seven-year-old daughter, Elisabeth, did attend school; all were born in New York State.

William and Elisa Dendanty were the parents of four children, two of whom, Sarah, nine, and William, seven, were of school age and did attend. Both Mr. and Mrs. Dendanty were not able to read and write. All members of the Dendanty family were born in New York State. Also in residence was Mary Ann Thomas, an eighteen-year-old New York-born woman who could read and write.

At the taking of the 1850 census, there were twenty-three African American-headed households in Syracuse in which school-age children resided and attended school.²⁵ Men headed all but two of these households, specifically, the homes of Mary Robinson and Dinah Livingston. Fourteen of the heads of household were literate and property owners, including Mary Robinson and a European American, an attorney named

²⁵ Mr. Coulrie self-identified as mulatto; he is, therefore, included as an African American head of household.

John Florhig, who housed a suspected freedom seeker. The other household headed by a female was that of Dinah Livingston; though she was illiterate, there were adults in her household who could read and write. Indeed, literate adults were within the household sphere of many school-age children whether they attended school or not.

Literate African American Head of Household; Children Not Attending School

According to the 1850 census, children in twenty-six households did not attend school. Four households were distinguished by the literate and property-owning status of the heads of household. One household was located in the Second Ward and the other three were located in the Fourth Ward, the site of the largest concentration of African American households.

Samuel E. Roman was a New Jersey-born, seventy-year-old farmer. His property was valued at \$10,000. Each person residing in the household identified as mulatto. Residing in the home were two school-age children who did not attend school: Matilda Mayes, eleven, David Talicon, thirteen, and Mary Newcomb, thirty-five, all born in New York. The Roman household contained a number of possible freedom seekers. Edna Mayes, twenty, was born in Ireland, as were David Cokely, twenty-nine, and Mary Mulligan, twenty.

In 1850 Jermain (Germain) Loguen and his wife, Caroline, were the parents of four children, two of whom were of school age. Elisabeth G. and Hellen E. were ages nine and eight, respectively; their siblings, Gerrit Smith and Sarah M., were ages three years and six months at that time.²⁶ The Loguens' only son was named after their

²⁶ Like Reverend and Mrs. Loguen, a number of freedom seekers associated with the Underground Railroad named their sons Gerrit Smith or derivatives thereof, including friend and fellow Syracuse Vigilance Committee member John and his wife, Harriet Foster, who later became in-laws.

associate in the cause for freedom, the famous abolitionist Gerrit Smith. As part of his duties as an *agent*, Reverend Loguen was a real estate agent/broker. Gerrit Smith owned a significant proportion of the Catskill Mountains in New York State. In 1850 these mountains were considered wilderness, and Smith “donated” a large proportion of this land for the cause of abolition. Serving as his land agent, Loguen advocated on behalf of land recipients during the transfer of property, provided an accounting to Smith, and occasionally traveled to the property with a new citizen.²⁷

In 1850 the Loguen property was valued at \$600. In 1850 his occupation was listed as Methodist clergyman. Each person in the Loguen family was born in New York State, with the exception of Mr. Loguen, who was born in Tennessee and was a known freedom seeker. Another adult resided in the Loguen household. Mary A. Willis was a forty-two-year-old New York-born woman who was also literate.

In 1850 Edwin Newell was a twenty-seven-year-old carman, with property valued at \$350. The Newell household was home to two school-age children, Sarah, six, and Elisabeth, five, who did not attend school. Their father was capable of reading and writing; their mother, Martha, twenty-nine, could not. Each person in the Newell household was born in New York State.

Henry and Malvina Jackson were the parents of two children. Young James was six years old, and Julia, six months. Mr. Jackson was a laborer and owned property valued at \$350. Jeni Lander also resided in the Jackson household. Each adult in the household was capable of reading and writing; all were born in New York State.

²⁷ See “Distribution of Land file,” Gerrit Smith Collection, Special Collections Research Center, Syracuse University Library. As mentioned in Chapter 4, property owners had the privilege of voting. The Smith-Loguen partnership provides a rare example of how acquisition of property by freedom seekers was used to legitimize their status as citizens during the antislavery movement.

In this cohort, ten literate heads of household housed children who did not attend school and did not own their property. Beginning in the First Ward, James Randall was the head of a literate household and his child did not attend school. With one school-age child in residence, James and Chaileth were the parents of James H. Randall, five. Mr. Randall was a laborer, and both he and his wife were capable of reading and writing. Each person in the household was born in New York State.

Forten Lewis and family also resided in the First Ward. Forten was a basket maker; he and Clara Lewis were the parents of two school-age children and two toddlers. Susan, ten, and Elisa, five, did not attend school. Mary, three, and Harriet, one, were not old enough to attend. Each person in the household was born in New York State; the children were born in the city of Syracuse.

Andrew, sixty-five, and Hannah Waggoner, fifty-one, lived in the Second Ward of Syracuse in 1850. Both were literate. Their daughter, Hannah, fifteen, did not attend school.²⁸ Their two older daughters, Maria, twenty-five, and Alice, twenty-three, were capable of reading and writing, as was Thomas Brown, another adult in the household. The occupation of Mr. Waggoner was “all work.” All persons residing in the Waggoner household were born in New York State.

²⁸ Hannah Waggoner also resided in another African American household, that of Henry DeFoote. In 1850 DeFoote was a forty-year-old barber, and the birthplace of all of his family members was New York State. Provided their ages are accurate, Andrew Waggoner would have been born c. 1785 and his wife, Harriet, c. 1799. Given that both Mr. and Mrs. Waggoner were born in New York State, they would have been born as slaves and emancipated during the abolition of slavery in New York State in 1827. Hannah’s older siblings, Maria (born c. 1825) and Alice (born c. 1827), would both have been born before Emancipation Day and therefore may have been born slaves. Given that Hannah was the only possible first-born “freeperson” in her household, and that Mr. DeFoote had known affiliations with the Underground Railroad in Syracuse, one wonders what her role in these households might have been as a young, female Underground Railroad agent. Hannah’s case suggests the intergenerational nature of community participation in aiding persons seeking their freedom. It also suggests her personal sacrifice to help a fellow human being, particularly in light of the Fugitive Slave Law and its penalties.

Also residing in the Second Ward of Syracuse in 1850 was Jane Beebee, thirty-six, and her daughter, Anna, nine. Mrs. Beebee could read and write, yet Anna did not attend school. Her mother's occupation and birthplace was unknown, which leads one to speculate about their legal status.²⁹

Two families residing in the Third Ward had children not attending school, and the literate heads of households did not own property. Henry and Mary Livingston were the parents of four children, only one of school age. Mr. Livingston's occupation was unknown in 1850. William, five, was followed by his siblings: Henry, four; Smith, two; and Mary, one. All of the Livingston family members were born in New York.

Edward, thirty-eight, and Sarah Randall, thirty, headed a household with three children and an additional family. Mr. Randall was a teamster by trade. Ann Randall was seventeen; Jane was five, and Garret was one.³⁰ Jane did not attend school. Lucy Moon and her son, Charles, resided within the Randall household. All persons in residence were born in New York State and all adults could read and write.

In the Fourth Ward, four households in which children resided had literate parents but did not attend school. Julia Cash, thirty, headed a household in which her two daughters also resided. Elisabeth, eleven, and Frances, nine, did not attend school, but

²⁹ On the outskirts of Ithaca, New York, is a waterfall and lake bearing the same name as this woman and her child. Could they have been passengers on the Underground Railroad who took the name of the beautiful landmark that marked their safety along the rail towards freedom?

³⁰ Edward Randall is the father of another Garrett (or Gerritt or Gerrit). Syracuse was a known station on the Underground Railroad in Central New York, just as Reverend Loguen was a known agent, having affiliations with a known abolitionist, Gerrit Smith. The popular use of the name in this community indicates a political ethos among the African American community, much like the use of the letter "X" in the 1960 United States. For a comprehensive analysis of the modern use of "X" as part of one's identity, see Algernon Austin, *Achieving Blackness: Race, Black Nationalism and Afrocentrism in the Twentieth Century* (New York: New York University, 2006), 47–73, in which the author defines blackness in a social-historical context and using the intersection of sociopolitical identities in the Black Power era.

their mother did know how to read and write. They were all born in New York. The occupation of the head of household is unknown.

John Jackson was a thirty-five-year-old laborer, and his, wife, Nancy, thirty-eight, were the parents of Susan, seventeen, and Rachael, fourteen. Both Mr. and Mrs. Jackson could read and write, although their children did not attend school. All persons in this household were born in the state of New York.

Although Henry Kellogg, twenty-eight, was not identified as African American, all the other residents in the home were identified as mulatto. Kellogg and his wife Margaret, twenty-five, were the guardians of two children, Peter, six months, and Caroline, sixteen.³¹ Caroline did not attend school. Both adults in the household were literate. Mr. Kellogg's occupation is unknown. All persons in the household were born in New York.

The final household to report under the criterion of literate head of household with children not attending school in 1850 was that of Jane Williams. Mrs. Williams, thirty-nine, resided in the Fourth Ward with two children, Mary Sioux, five, and Charles Maxwell, one year. Mrs. Williams identified as Indian and the children as mulatto. All were born in New York. The occupation of Mrs. Williams is unknown.

Illiterate African American Heads of Households; Children Not Attending

Under the criterion of alphabetic heads of household among African American children not attending school in 1850 Syracuse, there were eleven families, two of which owned property.

³¹ Based upon their ages, Caroline may be the sister of Henry Kellogg.

William Jackson, thirty-seven, was a weaver and owned property valued at \$400. Although he could not read or write, his wife, Hannah, twenty-eight, could. Two children resided in the home, Albert, seven, and Hannah, six months. James Garding, fifty, also lived in the household. All persons were born in New York State.

James W. Smith, fifty, and his wife, Betsey, forty, owned property in Syracuse's Fourth Ward that was valued at \$200. They were the parents of four children: Moses, twenty-three, George, nineteen, Samuel, sixteen, and Debra, fifteen. Samuel's occupation, like that of his father, was listed as laborer. Neither Mr. Smith nor Moses was capable of reading or writing, yet George and Mrs. Smith were literate. Each person in the household was born in New York State.

The remaining nine households met the following criteria: students were not attending school according to the 1850 census manuscript, and the heads of household were illiterate and did not own property. In the First Ward, Samuel McWorten was a New Jersey-born basket maker, who at the age of thirty-five was the parent of seven children. Like her husband, Ann McWorten, thirty-seven, could not read or write; nor could their two eldest children, Rachael, nineteen, and Mary, seventeen. William, thirteen; Sarah, twelve; Peter, eight; and Margaret, six, were of school age, but did not attend school. John, at the age of one, did not qualify. The two youngest McWorten children were born in Syracuse, while the elder children were born in New Jersey. Mrs. McWorten was born in Pennsylvania.

Henry Allen and his family also resided in the First Ward. Mr. Allen, twenty-three, was a laborer. He resided with his wife, Jane, twenty-six, and the following children: Mary I., seven, William, five, and Caroline, three. Mr. Allen's sibling, Elisa

Allen, seventeen, was also in residence. Mrs. Allen was capable of reading and writing.

All persons in the household were born in New York.

Charles Lewis, a forty-five-year-old basket maker, could not read or write; nor could his wife, Mary, nor two of their five children, Jakie, twenty, or Samuel, twenty-two. The two school-age children in this household, Charly, ten, and Isaac, six, were not attending school in 1850. Only Edward, twenty-four, was reported as being able to read or write. Samuel, Charly, and Isaac Lewis were born in New Jersey.

Enoch Miller, a thirty-two-year-old boatman, his wife, Mary Ann, thirty, and their daughter, Hannah, ten, resided in the Second Ward of Syracuse within the household of a European American family in 1850. Mr. Miller could not read or write; his wife could. All were born in New York State.

In the Third Ward, Abram and Maria Denning, both forty-four years old, could not read, did not own property, and their children did not attend school. The eldest of the Denning children was Harriet, eighteen, who could read. Sarah, fifteen; William, thirteen; Lorenzo, eleven; and David, seven, did not attend school even though they were of school age. While Mr. Denning's occupation is unknown, we do know that each member of the family reported being born in New York State.

Anna Baston was another female heading a household in Syracuse in 1850. Mrs. Baston was the mother of one child, Melinda, seven. While Melinda did not attend school, Mrs. Baston did, in spite of her classification of not being able to read or write.³²

³² As a single, female head of household, Anna Baston—like her female head of household counterparts Jane Beebee, Julia Cash, Janey Lanworth, Dinah Livingston, Jane Williams, and Mary Robinson—is an anomaly, or her case provides us with indications of a larger social trend. The presence in 1850 in this community of a large number of households headed by single black mothers suggests the prevalence of the problem of single parenthood in this community before the problem gained greater attention in the era of civil rights and urban renewal. In order to protect Melinda's social status as a *mulatto* female, Anna might have chosen instead to isolate her. If Anna had indeed attended school, she might have taught her daughter

The occupation of Mrs. Baston is unknown. Anna and Melinda Baston were both born in New York.

In the Fourth Ward, three families shared the current criteria of examination. Janey Lanworth headed a household of all females. Laura, sixteen, Martha, fifteen, and Mary, ten, did not attend school. Mrs. Lanworth was illiterate, and her occupation was unrecorded as were the birthplaces of each family member.³³

Similarly, the entry for the household of Henry, thirty, and Rachel Dayson, twenty-six, does not record the occupation or birthplace of the family members. Four children resided within this residence: Charles, six, Harriet, four, Theodore, two, and Mary, one. No adult in the household could read or write. The Loguen, Lanworth, and Dayson families resided next to each other.³⁴

Isaiah D. Hawley, sixty, and Rachael, forty, could not read or write. No occupation or birthplaces were recorded for family members. Nancy, eighteen, could read and write, and Sally, fifteen, did not attend school. Mrs. Hawley did attend school.³⁵ The absence of birthplace data leads one to speculate that the last three families were freedom seekers and each household is worthy of further investigation.

as she learned herself. As in the Highgate findings, social class is predicated in part on ethnic identity and physical appearance. Anna's was one of the eight households headed by African Americans, and Melinda was one of seven school-age children who still resided in Syracuse in 1870 and who had been identified in the 1850 cohort.

³³ These female-dominated households are suspicious to say the least. No birthplaces or occupations were given for the heads of household. Like Susan Bell, the woman whose story was quoted from Still's *Underground Railroad*, Anna Baston, Jane Beebee, Julia Cash, Janey Lanworth, and their daughters may have been recipients of the benevolence of antislavery advocates, either being assisted through the network or recently redeemed and waiting to be reunited with family members.

³⁴ See Wellman, et al., *Uncovering the Freedom Trail*. Further investigation may reveal that these families were renting from Reverend Loguen. According to findings of the research I conducted with Judith Wellman in 2002–2003 among records housed at the Onondaga County Recorder, the home of Prince Jackson was located at 12 Gazelle; it was on the street adjacent to the Loguen home and had been previously owned by Reverend Loguen.

³⁵ This information may be incorrect; it could be a census taker error. Again, not recording the places of birth might have been the parents' attempt to protect their children.

Of the twelve households in this cohort that reported the head being unable to read and write, eight housed women who were literate. This finding supports the notion that school-age children had access to adults who could read and write regardless of whether they attended school. In the Fourth Ward, the households of Lanworth, Dayson, and Hawley reported members with no places of birth and no occupations. Table 5.1 lists the 145 African Americans residing in the Fourth Ward. In households with school-age children, four males and nine females had questionable legal status. Their close proximity to the Loguen household also suggests that these families were freedom seekers. In 1860 Reverend Loguen owned nineteen properties in the city of Syracuse and may have used his extra properties to shelter freedom seekers.³⁶

Anna Baston and Janey Lanworth, both female heads of households, had questionable legal status. Anna reported attending school, while her daughter did not; the women residing in the Lanworth home did not attend school. Both women were reportedly unable to read and write.

Other African American households with school-age children were not included because the children were white. George Hogan, a twenty-six-year-old black man, was a baker who could not read or write, and he owned property valued at \$380. Rebecca Hogan, twenty-one, was identified as white and literate. Jane Myers, eleven, was also identified as white; she did not attend school, nor was her birthplace or that of Mrs. Hogan identified.³⁷ A number of homes in Syracuse had multiethnic compositions.

³⁶ See Wellman, *Uncovering the Freedom Trail*, comprising findings of research conducted in 2002–2003.

³⁷ Jane Myers may have been the child of Rebecca by another man. As both she and the other female in the household are both identified as white on the census form, the decision was made to keep Jane out of the cohort. The interracial dynamics of this household were also unique in that the head of the home was identified as “black,” not “mulatto,” and the females in the home were “white,” another anomaly for this data set. Jane Myer was not included in the data.

William Lecuy was a thirty-two-year-old mulatto male born in Ireland. Eight of the nine people in his residence were born in Ireland and only he was identified as mulatto. There were two school-age boys in residence: William Macaulay, fourteen, attended school, while T. (name illegible) Macaulay, sixteen, did not. John S. Hay, a thirty-year-old white male born in Canada, also lived in this household.³⁸

A common factor among the households headed by African Americans, or where African American school-age children resided, was that there was a literate adult, whether the children attended school or not.

Analysis of Syracuse's African American Community, 1850–1870

In Syracuse at the time of the 1850 census, African American school-age children resided in forty-seven households; and within those households, there were ninety-three school-age children. Of the forty-seven households in which African American school-age children resided, two were headed by European American males, one by a Native American female, and the others by African Americans.³⁹

³⁸ The Macaulay boys were not included in the data.

³⁹ The homes in which James Randall was listed included what appears to be that of his biological family and that of a neighbor, a European American. Thomas Allen lived with John Floring, a local attorney, and Caroline Kellogg lived with Henry and Margaret Kellogg, a European American and his mulatto wife.

On the National Archives website, the Federal Decennial Census, 1790–1930 (<http://www.archives.gov/research/census/native-americans/1790-1930.html>), states: “Indians are not identified in the 1790–1840 censuses. In 1860 Indians living in the general population are identified for the first time. . . . [1850] is the first census to list all family members and record information about each person. People are identified as white, black, or mulatto; although in rare instances as Indian. There was no census in Indian Country (most of the Midwest).”

In Syracuse there was one male and one female Native American-headed household. After examining literature related to the status of people identified as “Indian,” in the best interests of this project, I decided not to include the male-headed household in the data. Ariela J. Gross writes, “In general, Indian status, like slave status, followed that of the mother. This was in sharp contrast, however, to racial identity, as ‘negro’; it was possible to be considered white with half-Indian ‘blood.’” (“Litigating Whiteness: Trial of Racial Determination in the Nineteenth-Century South,” in *The Social Construction of Race and Ethnicity in the United States*, 2nd ed., ed. Joan Ferrante and Prince Brown Jr. [Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 2001, 1998], 191.) See, e.g., *United States v. Sanders*, 27 F. Cas. 950, 950–951 (C.C.D. Ark. 1847) (No. 16,220) (“The child of a white woman by an Indian father, would . . . be deemed of the white race; the condition of the mother, and the quantum of Indian blood in the views, determining the condition

Of the ninety-three school age children who were living in Syracuse, thirty-eight students in the cohort attended school in 1850. The African American students attending in Syracuse accounted for more than half of the seventy African American students enrolled throughout Onondaga County. Forty-one percent of the African American students eligible to attend school within the city of Syracuse did attend; of African American students attending countywide, fifty-four percent lived within the metropolitan area.

Of the African American school-age children who attended school in 1850, fourteen men and one woman who were literate and owned their property headed the households in which they resided. Three additional households were headed by literate men, but they did not own their property, and of the four households headed by illiterate men, one man, William Jackson, was recorded as an illiterate homeowner, yet his wife was able to read and write. The other three homes in which children attended school and in which the heads of the household were illiterate included two homes in which literate adults were present and only one in which both present adults were illiterate.

of the offspring.”) The Hawk family in Syracuse was comprised of a Native American male heading the household with a European American female as his spouse. Therefore, according to *U.S. v. Sanders*, Ark. 1847, the Hawk children would be identified as “white.” The children in the Coulrie family were included in the data, in spite of the mother being identified as of European descent. In the same volume of *The Social Construction of Race and Ethnicity in the United State*, Ferrante and Browne provided a letter, dated March 4, 1815, from Thomas Jefferson on Virginia’s definition of race. The letter states, “Every person, other than a Negro, of whose grandfathers or grandmothers anyone shall have been a Negro, shall be deemed a mulatto, and so every such person who shall have one-fourth part or more of Negro blood, shall in like manner be deemed a mulatto,” 386. Jefferson goes on to provide a nineteenth-century race classification, which included the equation for defining “half blood, quarteroon, and an ‘eighth.’” Notice that a person who is 3/16ths pure Negro is no longer mulatto; yet, note that this classification does not redefine or reestablish one’s status as free, which still depends upon the legal status of the mother. In the case of Jane Williams, the children were identified as mulatto (implying African descent) and are therefore included in the data by self-identification.

In 1850 Syracuse, African American children were more likely to have attended school if the head of household in which they resided was literate. The statistical significance is also 0.05 percent level of a (2-tailed) correlation (see table 5.4).

Table 5.4. Correlation between African American school-age children's attendance and head of household literacy, Syracuse, New York, 1850

		Attended	HH Literacy
Attended	Pearson Correlation	1	.263
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.011
	N	92	92
Head of Household Literacy	Pearson Correlation	.263*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.011	.
	N	92	92

Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

In Syracuse at the time of the 1850 census, of the forty-seven households, twenty-five of them housed children who did not attend school. Of the ninety-three school-age children who were living in Syracuse, fifty-four students in the cohort did not attend school in 1850.

Men and women who were literate and owned their property and whose children did not attend school headed three of these households; literate men and three literate women who did not own their property headed seven additional households. Within the population of heads of households who were illiterate and their children did not attend school, according to the 1850 census, three owned their property and each of their wives was literate. Men who were illiterate and did not own their property and their children did not attend school headed seven of these households; two women who were also illiterate and did not own their property headed additional households.

In 1850 Syracuse was a city with a large activist community. The African American community provided their school-age children with access to a literate foundation. Of the twelve families in the cohort of the forty-seven households with illiterate heads of household, there were only four homes in which both adults were reportedly illiterate. Henry Allen and his wife could not read or write, but their school-age child, Elizabeth, attended school. William Dendanty and his wife, Elisa, were parents of four children, two of them of school age. Sarah and William may have been receiving private tutoring from a live-in who was literate, Mary Ann Thomas. Dinah Livingston was illiterate, yet a number of her children in residence could read and write. Literate adults in the household may have chosen to teach fifteen-year-old Charles at home. Schooling, at home or at a public or private institution, was available to children of African descent in this community.

The following households with school-age children that did not attend school were those of Jermain W. Loguen, Janey Lanworth, Henry Dayson, Isaiah Hawley, and Jane Williams. These households were clustered together. Reverend Loguen's household had a history of Underground Railroad activity. The multitudes that passed through the threshold of the Loguen home received aid and assistance on their journeys toward freedom. We also know that he owned a significant number of residences throughout the city. None of the people living close to Reverend Loguen owned their homes, and none in the cluster, except Jane Williams, had a birthplace recorded. An "X" covered the space for her birthplace of New York, as it did for Mary Sioux and Charles Maxwell.

As noted previously, the last households reported in the cohort had residents of questionable legal status. Janey Lanworth, Henry Dayson, and Isaiah Hawley were all

illiterate; Jane Williams was not. Rachel Hawley, forty, was attending school; yet her school-age children were not. These families' close proximity to each other and the home of the local stationmaster leads one to believe that they were freedom seekers waiting to move on. Larry Gara, author of *Liberty Line*, notes comments made by the editor of the *Syracuse Courier* about the activities of Reverend Loguen and his open practice of social resistance:

The so-called "Agent of the Underground Railroad" not only stalks through our streets in open noon-day but publically drives his wagonloads of deluded "fugitives" and boastingly appropriates the funds placed at his disposal to pay their way to Canada.⁴⁰

Living in the Second Ward were George Coulrie, George Stryden, and Jane Beebee; Mary Robinson lived in the Third Ward. These families had school-age children with questionable legal status residing in their homes. The Coulries were a foreign-born family with questionable ethnic identity. According to the census, each family member was born in Germany; the husband identified as "mulatto" while the wife and children identified as "white."

Mr. Stryden owned a boarding home housing a number of school-age children. Two fourteen-year-old boys in residence did not attend school. One boy, Charles Thomas, was reportedly born in South Carolina, so he was most likely a freedom seeker. Julia Audrey and her mother, Mary, also resided in the Stryden household. Julia, at the age of ten, did not attend school, and her mother along with Mrs. Stryden was not able to read and write.

⁴⁰ Gara, *Liberty Line*, 150.

Jane Beebee and her young daughter lived alone. Mrs. Beebee could read and write, and her daughter did not attend school. Mrs. Beebee's occupation was unknown, which prompts a number of speculations about her legal status and whether she and her daughter were freedom seekers.

Nineteen heads of household owned their property, ranging in value from \$200 to \$10,000. Two of these individuals were illiterate. Yet, the fact they were property owners meant that they also had the right to vote. William Jackson was born in New York; his occupation was unknown, and he owned property valued at \$400. James Smith, also born in New York, worked as a laborer and his property was valued at \$200. Buick Jackson and Abram Vanborge were two property owners who had no occupation noted on the census. Their properties were valued at \$400 and \$300, respectively. Two of the property owners were not born in New York State, namely, Jermain Loguen and Samuel Roman. Reverend Loguen, born in Tennessee, had property valued at \$600, and New Jersey-born farmer Samuel E. Roman had the most valuable estate among Syracuse's African Americans; it was worth \$10,000. One female, Mary Robinson, owned her property, valued at \$400. The occupations of the remaining property owners were carman, cigar maker, baker, cook, and salt maker; there were two barbers, two more laborers, and three carpenters. Each of these occupations required close association with the public.

The correlation between school-age children attendance and head of household ownership is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed) (see table 5.5).

Table 5.5. Correlation between African American school-age children's attendance and head of household ownership, Syracuse, New York, 1850

		Attended	HH Owned
Attended	Pearson Correlation	1	.232
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.026
	N	92	92
HH Owned	Pearson Correlation	.232*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.026	
	N	92	93

Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Of the forty-seven households in which African American school-age children resided, thirty-nine of the children were born in New York State, two in New Jersey, one in Maryland, and one in Tennessee. Property owners who were recipients of Gerrit Smith's land grants included John Lisle, John Foster, Thomas Jackson, and Samuel Ray. All four had school-age children in residence. Birthplaces were unknown for four other heads of household: Henry Dayson, Isaiah Hawley, Janey Lanworth, and Charles Lewis. Having an unknown birthplace suggests a questioning legal status as possible freedom seekers.

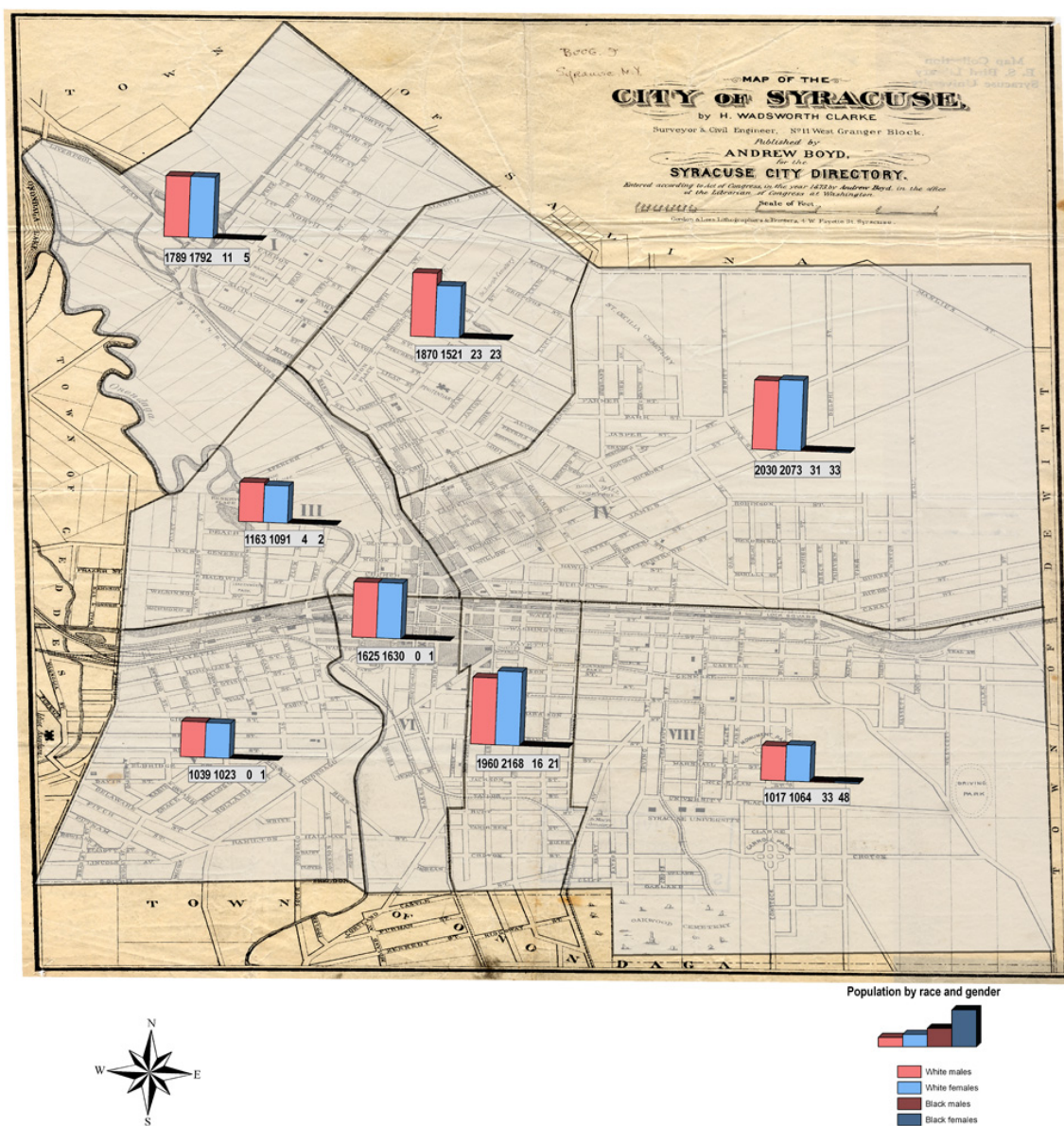
To summarize the findings, of the ninety-three school-age children of color residing in Syracuse, thirty-nine were reported as attending school. In Onondaga County, seventy children of color attended school. They represented more than 50 percent of the total population of children of color attending school in the county. The remaining fifty-four African American school-age children living in the city did not attend school. Only four out of forty-seven households with African American school-age children in residence did not house a literate adult. The correlation between African American school-age children's school attendance and the literacy rate of the head of household as

well as the ownership status of the households in which they resided were significant at the .05 level (2-tailed).

As revealed in the literature reviewed on abolitionism, activism, and higher education of the time, Syracuse had been the site of an abolitionist enclave for more than a generation, and a number of heads of households in the city would witness and/or partake in one of the most noted slave rescues in United States history. The year of the 1850 census was also the year that Reverend Loguen became a paid agent for the American Missionary Association. He was also a founding member and manager of the Fugitive Aid Society of Syracuse, engaged in the business of “helping runaways.”⁴¹

⁴¹ Quarles, *Black Abolitionists*, 154.

Figure 1. 1855 Map of the City of Syracuse⁴²



⁴² The map above depicts the 1855 boundaries for the city of Syracuse. In 1852 the number of wards doubled from four to eight. The ledger demonstrates population distribution by race and gender. “*That Laboratory of Abolitionism, Libel and Treason*”: Syracuse and the Underground Railroad, an exhibition of the Special Collections Research Center, Syracuse University Library, <http://library.syr.edu/digital/exhibits/u/undergroundrr/maps.htm>.

The Rescue of Jerry and Untold Others

Webber notes that Loguen filled the role of the “absent father” to many of those he assisted. Loguen, like other members of the Vigilance Committee, knew that those seeking freedom needed guidance, reassurances, as well as employment opportunities and sustenance, much like that given by a caregiver. The Syracuse Vigilance Committee demonstrated the level by which they were willing to exercise their pseudo-parental duty on behalf of a slave named Jerry, who was sold away from his wife and children. Jerry sought his own freedom and was the focus of the event known as the “Jerry Rescue.”⁴³

In Wellman’s *Uncovering the Underground Railroad in Syracuse and Onondaga County: The Underground Railroad, Abolition, and African American Life, 1820-1870*, Milton Sernett notes that the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850, as part of the Compromise of 1850, was signed into law by President Millard Fillmore and promoted by Daniel Webster as a means to preserve the union. Abolitionists in Syracuse formed the biracial Vigilance Committee, comprised of thirteen individuals who vowed to protect any freedom seeker who sought shelter in their city.⁴⁴ On October 4, 1850, amidst a crowd of approximately five hundred people attending a meeting to protest the new law, Loguen told the protesters:

What is life to me if I am to be a slave in Tennessee? My neighbors! I have lived with you many years and you know me. My home is here, and my children were

⁴³ Webber, *Deep Like the Rivers*, 103, 166, 178, and 232. Multiple references were made to the life of Frederick Douglass and his interpretation of life during slavery and life as an emancipated man. Also see Still, *The Underground Railroad*, and Loguen, *As a Slave and as a Freeman*, which provide descriptions of the role of Douglass as an editor, orator, and diplomat.

⁴⁴ See Loguen, *As a Slave and as a Freeman*, 396. The members of the Vigilance Committee were Charles A. Wheaton, Dr. Lyman Clary, V. W. Smith, C. B. Sedgwick, Hiram Putnam, E. W. Leavenworth, Abner Bates, George Barnes, Patrick H. Agan, Jermain W. Loguen, John Wilkinson, the Reverend R. R. Raymond, and John Thomas. Wheaton would later become Superintendent of Schools for Onondaga County.

born here. I am bound to Syracuse by pecuniary interests, and social and family bonds. . . . I don't respect this law—I don't fear it—I won't obey it! It outlaws me and I outlaw it, and the men who attempt to enforce it on me. I place the government officials on the ground that they place me. I will not live a slave, and if force is employed to re-enslave me, I shall make preparations to meet the crisis as becomes a man.⁴⁵

A year later Loguen was to challenge the law.

On October 1, 1851, thousands of visitors converged on the city of Syracuse for the Onondaga County Agricultural Society's annual fair in the Hanover Square area. As Wellman described the scene,

At approximately the noon hour, the bell of the Presbyterian Church began to sound, and within minutes, every church bell in Syracuse tolled, except that of the Episcopalian church. While visitors were puzzled by the alarm, members of the Syracuse Vigilance Committee began to congregate in the center of town, wondering whom among them had been apprehended by slave catchers. William "Jerry" Henry, described as an "athletic Mulatto" working in the cooperage shop of Frederic Morrell, was apprehended as a fugitive slave and his employer served with a warrant accusing him of theft.⁴⁶

Jerry, taken to the office of Commissioner Joseph F. Sabine, was jailed where twenty-one marshals and deputies guarded the handcuffed inmate. After much mayhem, secret meetings, and legal wrangling, the following evening at about 8 p.m., the cry

⁴⁵ See Loguen, *As a Slave and as a Freeman*, 391, 393–394; Wellman et al., *Uncovering the Freedom Trail*, 23–34.

⁴⁶ Wellman et al., *Uncovering the Freedom Trail*, 23–34; Earl E. Sperry, *The Jerry Rescue* (Onondaga Historical Society, Syracuse, 1894), 24.

“NOW!” was heard, and rescuers, including Peter Hollenbeck and William Gray, himself a fugitive from slavery, charged the jail, carried Jerry out the front door, and paraded him through the streets. Peter Lilly filed off the handcuffs and Mrs. Mahala Robbins helped to remove the shackles, and, with the assistance of Lucy Watson, buried them. Harriet and Susan Watkins disguised Jerry in “a dress, hood and shawl; Jerry took refuge for four days at the home of an unlikely ally, a pro-slavery Democrat named Caleb or ‘Cale’ Davis, who lived at Genesee and Orange streets.”⁴⁷ Mr. John Foster was the chairman of the Vigilance Committee and Reverend Loguen was indicted for his active role in the rescue of William “Jerry” Henry.

According to Sernett, at least twelve of the fifty-two participants in the rescue of Jerry were African American, among them Prince Jackson, Samuel R. Ward, Jermain W. Loguen, Peter Hallenbeck, William Gray, Enoch Reed, John Lyles (Lisle), William Thompson, and James Baker, as well as Harrison Allen, and George Carter.⁴⁸ According to Sperry, *The Jerry Rescue*, and Quarles, *Black Abolitionists*, five African American participants, William Thompson, Harrison Allen, Prince Jackson, Enoch Reed, and Jermain Loguen, were indicted for violating the Fugitive Slave Law. Only Reed was convicted of violating the law; the jury convicted him of a lesser charge when the argument was presented that McHenry was not technically the “owner” of Jerry, as he

⁴⁷ See Wellman et al., *Uncovering the Freedom Trail*, 28–29; Sperry, *The Jerry Rescue*, 42–43.

⁴⁸ See Wellman et al., *Uncovering the Freedom Trail*, 31, appendix; and Jayme Sokolov, “The Jerry McHenry Rescue and the Growth of Northern Anti-Slavery Sentiment during the 1850s,” *Journal of American Studies* 16 (December 1982), 427–445. Marion Gleason McDougall, in *Fugitive Slaves: 1619–1865* (Cambridge, MA: Ginn and Company, 1891), notes many significant court cases, of which the Jerry Rescue is listed. Wilbur H. Siebert, *Underground Railroad from Slavery to Freedom* (New York: Macmillan, 1898), 373, notes the following references on the Jerry Rescue: “Rescue of Jerry McHenry in Syracuse, New York,” *Liberator* (Oct. 10–17), 1851; S. J. May, *Recollections of an Anti-Slavery Conflict*, 1864; O. B. Frothingham, *Gerrit Smith: A Biography* (New York, 1879), 117; Henry Wilson, *History of the Rise and Fall of the Slave Power in America*, Vol. 2, 4th ed. (New York: Houghton, Osgood and Company, 1879), 327; F. W. Seward, *E. W. Seward, Seward at Washington as Senator and Secretary of State*, Vol. 1 (New York, 1891), 169, 170; Marion Gleason MacDougall, *Fugitive Slaves 1619–1865* (Cambridge, MA: Ginn and Company, 1891), 44, 47–51.

had been sold *in absentia* at the time of his escape.⁴⁹ Quarles reports that two months after the event, on December 2, 1851, Loguen, in response to his wife's urgings, wrote to Governor Hunt requesting protection should he return to Syracuse.⁵⁰

293 Genesee Street at Pine, Syracuse, New York

After moving from the United States upon his indictment in the "Jerry Rescue," Reverend Loguen continued to make known his positions on slavery from settlements throughout Canada. His reports on the state of African American settlers were reprinted in various newsletters, particularly Douglass's *North Star*. According to Siebert, "The condition in which many of the [freedom seekers] arrived beyond the borders, especially those who migrated before the forties, is vividly told by J. W. Loguen in his account of his first arrival at Hamilton, Canada West in 1835."⁵¹ On May 8, 1856, Loguen wrote to Frederick Douglass, his longtime friend and associate in the abolition movement: "Twenty-one years ago—I stood on this spot, penniless, ragged, lonely, homeless, helpless, hungry and forlorn. . . . Hamilton was a cold wilderness for the fugitive when I came there."⁵² Much had changed in his life in two decades.

Shortly after his return from his second exile in Canada, Loguen was among the small contingent of African Americans to attend the national convention of the Free Soil Party in 1852 at Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, to select a presidential candidate for the United

⁴⁹ Wellman et al., *Uncovering the Freedom Trail*, 32; Earl E. Sperry, *The Jerry Rescue* (Syracuse, NY: Onondaga Historical Association, 1924), 27–28; Carol M. Hunter, *To Set the Captives Free: Reverend Jermain Wesley Loguen and the Struggle for Freedom in Central New York* (New York: Garland, 1993), 135–138.

⁵⁰ Jermain W. Loguen, *As a Slave and as a Freeman*, 442; Quarles, *Black Abolitionists*, 210. Quarles also notes that African Americans indicted along with Loguen in the Jerry Rescue were Prince Jackson, William Thompson, Harrison Allen, and Enoch Reed. Of the eighteen rescuers indicted, three were put on trial and only Reed was convicted. When he died his appeal was still pending.

⁵¹ Siebert, *The Underground Railroad*, 198.

⁵² Loguen, *As a Slave and as a Freeman*, 338, 340. Siebert, *The Underground Railroad*, 126.

States. Loguen was one of the speakers called upon to advance the antislavery platform and to get out the vote on behalf of the party.⁵³ In 1854 bitter opposition to the Kansas-Nebraska Act, which opened the door for slavery in the plains, created deep resentment in the North, and not only among African Americans and abolitionists. Loguen wrote to Frederick Douglass, “This Nebraska business is the great smasher in Syracuse, as elsewhere,” further adding that the bill’s author, Stephen A. Douglas, was advancing the atrocious villainy of slavery.⁵⁴

By the summer of 1853, Loguen had returned to his life in New York State, adding his voice to those of many other abolitionists. Quarles notes “the militant tone growing out of their belief that liberty and slavery could not escape a head-on collision. . . . Loguen was of the opinion that slavery would be done away with either by agitation or bloodshed, adding ominously, ‘and I sometimes think that I care not which.’”⁵⁵

Amidst the unwavering positions that people were taking on slavery as well as the growing political discourse on the topic, Reverend Loguen demonstrated through his work the importance he placed on education and training for those seeking freedom. Loguen operated schools throughout Central New York and, as reported by Quarles, he was a school fund executor, named in the will of Homer Treat in 1855. Mr. Treat of Litchfield County, Connecticut, left \$4,000 for the founding of a colored school or for assisting needy Negro students, whichever the trustees decided.⁵⁶ While Loguen was

⁵³ Quarles, *Black Abolitionists*, 187; *Liberator*, December 10, 1852.

⁵⁴ Quarles, *Black Abolitionists*, 187; Loguen to Douglass, March 7, 1854, in *Frederick Douglass’ Paper*, April 14, 1853 and April 7, 1854.

⁵⁵ Quarles, *Black Abolitionists*, 228.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 109. Quarles also reports on other institutions with endowments for the founding or administration of schools for students of color throughout the Northeast.

deciding how to further educate the recipients of his services, he also sought to make known the opinions of landowning, literate African American men and women.

Reverend Loguen was openly known as “King of the Underground Railroad,” and he advertised his address to “friends” of the oppressed. His work on behalf of those in bondage, according to Quarles, was overshadowed only by that of William Still in Philadelphia.⁵⁷ Night visitors to Loguen’s home included adult men and women, often with children in tow. The case of the child, alluded to in the quote below by William Still, is a great demonstration. Strangers escorted the child in an effort to reunite child and mother.⁵⁸

The account referred to by Still is one in which a child, only fourteen months of age, traveled through the network in the constant care of strangers. Loguen wrote to Still:

Syracuse, Oct. 5, 1856.

Dear Friend Still: — I write to you for Mrs. Susan Bell, who was at your city some time in September last. She is from Washington city. She left her dear little children behind (two children). She is stopping in our city, and wants to hear from her children very much indeed.⁵⁹

The letter goes on to inquire about the well-being of Mrs. Bell’s husband, to mention a communication with Mr. Bigelow of “Washington city” and to express Mrs. Bell’s appreciation to Mr. Still and his family during her travel through the Philadelphia Underground Railroad network. Loguen apologizes for his tardy response, due to his

⁵⁷ Quarles, *Black Abolitionists*, 154.

⁵⁸ Still, *The Underground Railroad*, 155–158.

⁵⁹ Still, *The Underground Railroad*, 158. This is a rare find. There are few surviving Loguen records. Reverend Loguen burned his correspondence and records related to his *station* as before he fled Central New York in the wake of the Jerry Rescue.

travel itinerary. He informs his friend that mutual acquaintances were recently in his home.

Miss F. E. Watkins left our house yesterday for Ithaca, and other places in that part of the State. Frederick Douglass, Wm. J. Watkins and others were with us last week; Gerrit Smith with others . . . ⁶⁰

In closing, Reverend Loguen, in an almost competitive spirit, announces the number of freedom seekers who recently passed through his home and closes the letter with his signature salutation:

We have had thirty-one fugitives in the last twenty-seven days; but you no doubt have had many more than that. I hope that the good Lord may bless you and spare you long to do good to the hunted and outraged among our brethren.

Yours truly,

J. W. Loguen

Agent of the Underground Rail Road⁶¹

From my perspective, this rare example of Reverend Loguen's literary abilities and of the salutation closing the inquiry, J. W. Loguen, Agent of the Underground Railroad,⁶² demonstrates his resolve to claim himself as a total human.

Mrs. Susan Bell escaped from a plantation in Alabama in 1857, when the child in question was five months old. Nine months later, mother and child were reunited at Loguen's home, 293 Genesee at Pine Street, Syracuse, New York. According to Still's account, "true hearted sympathizers" aided in redeeming the boy: "The master has agreed

⁶⁰ Still, *The Underground Railroad*, 158.

⁶¹ Ibid, 158.

⁶² Still, *The Underground Railroad*, 157.

to take for him just what he gave, \$1,100.”⁶³ Instead of paying the ransom, as a result of Loguen and Still’s collaboration, “This child, however, was safely brought to the Vigilance Committee, in Philadelphia, and was duly forwarded, *via* friends in New York, to its mother, in Syracuse, where she had stopped to work and wait for her little one, left behind at the time she escaped.”⁶⁴

Through multiple correspondences with agents of the movement, we know how young John Henry reunited with his mother after traveling with Mrs. Arrah Weems from Washington, D.C., to the city of Philadelphia sometime in July 1857. In the ten months after the child’s emancipation, Loguen’s letter inquired about the estimated reunion date with his birth mother.⁶⁵

Still reports that, as the mother waited anxiously in Syracuse for her infant child, the story of their escape did not go unnoticed. Below is a newspaper advertisement regarding the escape of the woman identified as Susan Bell, who was named Emeline Chapman before her escape:

\$300 Reward. – RAN AWAY from the subscriber on Saturday, the 30th of August, 1856, my SERVANT WOMAN, named EMELINE CHAPMAN, about 25 years of age, quite dark, slender built, speaks short, and stammers some; with two children, one a female about two and a half years old; the other a male, seven or eight months, bright color. I will give the above reward if they are delivered to me in Washington.

⁶³ Ibid., 156.

⁶⁴ Ibid., 157.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 155–56. The story of Arrah Weems is equally heartrending. In two years, two of her sons had been “redeemed” and another still waited in bondage. According to Still’s account, “The story in regard to the Weems family was published in Frederick Douglass’ paper two years ago. . . . There were about \$5,000 raised in England to redeem this family and they are now all free except this one.”

MRS. EMILY THOMPSON

Capitol Hill, Washington, D.C.⁶⁶

It seems that Mrs. Thompson was part of the elite of the nation's capital. Her reference to Mrs. Bell's speech pattern, skin color, and physical build are very general. A woman with these identifiers, coupled with two small children, one of each gender, and a fair complexion on the smallest child narrows the search for this "contraband." The decision to separate parent from children lessened the potential for all of the family to be captured and returned to bondage. Loguen, as part of his duties in the community of Syracuse, assisted the woman to secure housing and employment to help her transition to her new role as a *free* person, in which she may have been able to become a self-sufficient contributor to the community. Still was born in the *free* state of Pennsylvania and never knew the effects of slavery on one's spirit, as Loguen and the above-referenced mother and child had. The empathy demonstrated by Still in his work to assist freedom seekers and the invaluable record he left of his work continue to inform future generations. Loguen left a legacy also, though little remains of his personal correspondence or other records.

Reverend Loguen served as a part-time appointee of the American Missionary Association (AMA), taking on his duties full time by 1857. His missionary work would not go unnoticed by a certain zealot bent on ending slavery in his lifetime.

⁶⁶ Still, *The Underground Railroad*, 157. Emeline Chapman, now known as Susan Bell, was the wife of John Henry and mother to Margaret Ann and baby John Henry Jr. Examples of name changes are oftentimes mentioned in records related to freedom seekers of this period. Reverend Jermain Loguen was born Jarm Logue, he changed his name after self-emancipation. See Loguen, *As a Slave and as a Freeman*; and Sernett, *North Star Country and Abolition's Axe*.

On May 17, 1859, John Brown wrote to Loguen, after other African American leaders refused to assist him in his assault on Harpers Ferry. “I will just whisper in your private ear that I have no doubt you will soon have a call from God to minister at a different location,” wrote Brown to Loguen.⁶⁷ Like others, Loguen felt that Brown’s work was admirable, but the plan to overtake a government arsenal was foolhardy. In October 1859, twenty-three men (of whom five were African American) marched into the arsenal. Ten were killed, seven were captured, and five escaped. Brown was among the captured. After a brief and expedited trial, he was found guilty and sentenced to death by hanging. The Harper’s Ferry incident, in correlation with the rise of a Republican named Lincoln, would soon change the sociopolitical landscape of the United States.

Webber’s *Deep Like the Rivers* makes four references to the life of Bishop Reverend Jermain Wesley Loguen. Regarding Loguen’s internalized cultural education, Webber notes that Loguen admitted to “fear of the lash” and the harshness of discipline in the slave society. On page 166, Loguen recalls being beaten into a “state of semiconsciousness” by his father (who was also his master). Loguen’s fear may have influenced his decision not to assist Brown.

Loguen referred to his colleagues in the movement, especially William Still, as *brothers*. This term of endearment reflects the familial connections that existed within the Underground Railroad community. That community included individuals who nurtured, protected, educated, and otherwise cared for both children and adults.⁶⁸ One of the most important roles that the community played in the education of its members was that of encouraging and sustaining the family. The most respected people were those who acted

⁶⁷ See Loguen, *As a Slave and as a Freeman*, 451; Quarles, *Black Abolitionists*, 238.

⁶⁸ Webber, *Deep Like the Rivers*, 158.

in accordance with the principles of the community. These were men and women who stood by their families, worked hard to protect them, and raised their children to live within the community codes. Loguen was such a man. He knew that in the absence of family members, the community was to share responsibility for its members, particularly the children. Webber noted, “In the event a family member was torn apart by death or sale the community made certain that the children were placed with a family able and *willing* to provide for them.”⁶⁹ Much of what Webber notes as characteristic of the *quarter community*, Loguen demonstrated in his actions and activism. “He wrote letters to the local newspapers urging their readers to hire fugitives in their shops and on their farms. How many jobs he found for the more than three hundred former slaves that passed through his hand cannot be known, but it earned for Syracuse the title of ‘Canada of the United States.’”⁷⁰

One “visitor” became known as a “member” of the Loguen household. One night a young freedom seeker, Henry Kelso, was brought to the side door of Rev. Loguen’s home. Kelso became a companion to Rev. and Mrs. Loguen and their children, and he was particularly remembered by Sarah Loguen Fraser, M.D. Gregoria Fraser Goins, granddaughter of Loguen, remembered “Henry Kelso, the young man who came to live ‘off and on’ with the different members [of the Loguen family] until his death in 1907.”⁷¹

⁶⁹ Webber, *Deep Like the Rivers*, 239.

⁷⁰ Quarles, *Black Abolitionists*, 154. Quarles’s footnote states, “For the constitution of the Fugitive Aid Society, see *Douglass’ Weekly*, Apr. 6, 1855. *Weekly Anglo-African*, May 5, 1860.”

⁷¹ Gregoria Fraser Goins Collection, Howard University, Moorland-Spingarn Research Center, Manuscript Department, Washington, D.C. According to Goins, as quoted in *Underground Railroad Princess: Sarah Loguen Fraser, MD: A Biography* (unpublished, undated), Henry Kelso, “fugitive” from Maryland, was about twelve to fourteen years of age. “He had grown to love ‘Mars and Missy Loguen.’ When his party was divided into two, one headed toward Douglass in Rochester and the other to Mrs. Patterson of Niagara Falls on their way to Canada,” 4. From October 1946 to June 1947, Gregoria Goins made a numerous inquiries to Syracuse University and Upstate Medical for records to verify facts about the life of Sarah Loguen.

The names of other individuals who passed through the Loguen home (and homes of others who aided freedom seekers) are waiting to be uncovered. It is quite possible that children listed in the 1850 census passed through the Loguen home. Gregoria Goins wrote of her mother's recollections of the architecture of the Loguen home. Sarah Loguen recalled the "secret room" where she helped to nurse and play with children seeking lodging.⁷² Siebert described the significance of the home as a place where

fugitive settlers in the Northern states there were some at least that became widely known among abolitionists and others as active agents of the Underground Railroad. . . . The Rev. J. W. Loguen, who became a bishop of the African Methodist Church about 1869, settled in Syracuse, New York, in 1841 and became immediately one of the managers of secret operation there. In his hospitable home, Samuel J. May relates, was fitted up with an apartment for fugitive slaves, and for years before the Emancipation Act, scarcely a week passed without some one, in his flight from slavery to Canada, enjoyed shelter and repose at Elder Loguen's.⁷³

Being raised in an activist household left an imprint on the Loguen children. Later in their lives they became members of the Syracuse elite, with the exception of Leticia Loguen, who died of consumption. Taken from the files at Onondaga Historical Association, Syracuse, New York, is the notice of Miss Loguen's death. "Elizabeth Laticia [*sic*], eldest daughter to Rev. J. W. Loguen aged 13 years and 9 months. Funeral

⁷² Ibid. Sarah Loguen Fraser mentioned that these experiences are what led her to the field of medicine. Early in her life she learned about traditional Native American healing techniques from her mother's circle of friends.

⁷³ Siebert, *The Underground Railroad*, 251; Samuel J. May, *Some Recollections of our Anti-Slavery Conflict* (Boston, 1869), 202, 203. University of Michigan Library, 2005, <http://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/moa/ABT7666.0001.001?rgn=subject;view=toc;q1=Antislavery+movements+--+United+States>.

on Wed., August 1st at 2 o'clock P.M. from residence of Mr. Loguen [2]93 East Genessee Street.”⁷⁴

H. Amelia Loguen was listed as twelve years old in 1855. The *Syracuse Journal* and the *Standard* reported on her marriage in 1869. “Married at the residence of the bride’s father, Oct. 7th, 1869, in this city by Bishop S. T. Jones, Lewis H. Douglas formerly of Rochester, New York, now of Washington, D.C. to Miss H. Amelia, eldest daughter of Bishop Loguen.”⁷⁵ The union between the offspring of two of the antislavery movement’s largest figures (Frederick Douglass and Jermain Loguen) produced no children.⁷⁶

Gerrit Smith Loguen, named after abolitionist and philanthropist Gerrit Smith, became a noted artist.

Mr. Gerrit Smith Loguen, of this city, has recently made a portrait of Fred. Douglass, which was presented to that gentleman at his residence, Hillsdale, across the river, with appropriate speeches, on a late evening to which the Marshall was most happy in his response.⁷⁷

The *New York Tribune* reported Loguen’s artistic accomplishments in this excerpt, dated March 25, 1884: “Gerrit Smith Loguen, a son of the late Bishop Loguen, has executed a life-like portrait of Wendell Phillips. Mr. Loguen is the only colored artist of repute in the state.”⁷⁸ Gerrit Smith Loguen was appointed to the position of deputy

⁷⁴ See Sylvester J. H. Clark and Onondaga Historical Association, Syracuse, New York, Loguen Family Papers.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Walls, *AME Zion Church*.

⁷⁷ See Wells, *A. M. E. Zion Church*. In 1879 Frederick Douglass was living in Washington, D.C. See *Life and Times of Frederick Douglass, Written by Himself* (Boston: De Wolfe and Fiske, 1892).

⁷⁸ Sylvester J. H. Clark, *Early Black Syracusians*, 70.

recorder of deeds in Washington, D.C. Reportedly, “He is well educated, capable, intelligent, a Republican in politics, and personally deserving of the honor conferred.”⁷⁹

In 1883 Gerrit Smith Loguen married Louisa Matthews. Of this union four sons were born: William James, Gerrit Spelman, Charles Kelso, and Lewis Douglass. The two youngest boys died during childhood. Mrs. Gerrit Smith Loguen earned a certificate to embalm the dead in 1899. According to the article in the OHA file, it was reported that she “is extremely well educated, having taught for several years in Washington previous to her marriage.”⁸⁰

Dr. Sarah Marinda Loguen was the first African American female to graduate from Syracuse University’s Medical School, in 1876. A woman who was the “first” many more times in her life, she became the first female doctor in Santo Domingo (present-day Haiti) shortly after her marriage to Dr. S. L. Fraser, a pharmacist. Born of their union was one daughter, Gregoria Fraser, a former student of music at Syracuse University. Sarah Loguen Fraser died at the age of 83 in Washington, D.C. in June 1933. In the city of Syracuse, a particular African American woman navigated the halls of higher education. Ms. Loguen grew up in a middle-class family with a strong social/political presence and religious base within the city of Syracuse. Ms. Loguen also came from a family of apparent “firsts.” Her father was one of the first African Americans to attend the Oneida Institute in Whitesboro, New York, earning the equivalent of a college education based on a “classical” curriculum, which during that time was reserved for schools such as

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ Ibid. The practice of giving children the names of people significant in the lives of the parents is evident in the names of Gerrit Loguen’s children: William James, Gerrit Spelman, Charles Kelso, and Lewis Douglass. William Lloyd Garrison and Gerrit Smith were noted abolitionists. Spelman is the name of the women’s college dedicated to the education of African American women; Kelso was the name of Gerrit Loguen’s “brother,” rescued by his father in the early 1850s, and Douglass, the name of his in-law and famous African American civic leader, Frederick Douglass.

Harvard. He was also one of the first Syracuse ministers of the African American community.

Sarah Miranda Loguen-Fraser was one of many who were influenced by the political climate in the United States during the early 1850s. Her exposure to social activism and community service at home seem to have prepared her well for academic/social achievement in higher education. An examination of African American women who are considered “firsts” during the post-Civil War period, particularly those given a place at the table of higher education in the United States, would prove a worthy study.

Sarah’s younger sister, Cora Juliette, in 1883 married a barber, Eugene Foster, who had also been listed as a child on the census of 1855. In 1850 John Foster, Eugene’s father, and Rev. Loguen were founding members of the Vigilance Committee of Syracuse. Of their union between Cora and Eugene, one child was born, on December 27, 1884. His name was Loguen Foster. The community of Syracuse in 1850 formed many bonds—philosophical, social, and familial. The name of young Loguen Foster carries the legacy of the Syracuse antislavery efforts.

Community Ethos

The investigation revealed that the Syracuse community shielded many African Americans who were seeking refuge from bondage. The parents of the children residing in Syracuse in 1850 were leaders in the African American community and participants in the rescue of William “Jerry” Henry. Additionally, many of the men and women of color in the community were trustees of their churches and social organizations. Most notable

were individuals who were nominated to head the Vigilance Committee in 1850 as well as individuals who were ministers, barbers, and local landowners.

The First Ward of Syracuse was formerly the town of Salina. As the political lines were redefined, familial traditions were being solidified. The eldest Lewis child and his father were salt boilers, the principal industry in that region. As with many of the African American heads of household noted in the census of 1855, the parents of the children in the First Ward were literate, and they did not own their land. Yet many of those migrating to Syracuse came on the promise of land ownership from land grants provided by Gerrit Smith. Between 1841 and 1850 twenty-seven men were identified as having received property from Smith. Two of these men, George Carter and Harrison Allen, were indicted in the Jerry Rescue. John Lisle, John Foster, Thomas Jackson, William Jenkins, and Samuel Ray, also recipients of the land grants, headed households with school-age children in Syracuse in 1850.⁸¹ Of the school-age children in Syracuse during the 1850 census, three men, John Foster, Jermain Loguen, and Edward Randall, named their sons Gerrit (or Garrett). Two of these men were recipients of Gerrit Smith's benevolence during the land auctions and, the third served as a real estate agent for Smith. While Foster's children attended school, Loguen and Randall opted not to report their children as having attended school during that census year.

Prince Jackson, known for his role in the rescue of William "Jerry" Henry, also known as the Jerry Rescue, was also one of a few men indicted in this act of civil disobedience. He had school-age children in Syracuse in 1850. Mr. Jackson was the local

⁸¹ See Wellman et al., *Uncovering the Freedom Trail*, appendix. The 1851 Syracuse city directory lists other Gerrit Smith land grantees, including Charles Myers, 64 Pearl Street; Henry Dyson, 46 Gazelle; Frederick Jackson, 124 Burnett; Henry Jackson, 150 E. Fayette; Isaac Wales, 56 Ash; James Baker, 231 E. Fayette; and Peter Freeman, 33 Water.

blacksmith who reportedly removed the shackles from Henry after his escape from the bounty hunters. The case of Jackson aiding Henry may be one the first recorded incidents in which a freedom seeker helped secure the freedom of a fugitive from slavery. This event occurred one year after the passage of the Fugitive Slave Law.

The two African American girls residing in the Third Ward for the 1855 census did not live with family members. One was a domestic servant and the other was listed as an inmate. The status of an inmate residing in what appears to be a boarding house needs further investigation. There were no African American school-age children residing within the Sixth Ward of Syracuse in 1855. One school-age child of African descent resided in the Fifth Ward and was hired as a laborer. These findings demonstrate the complex structure of home life for many school-age children.

African Americans owned homes throughout the city of Syracuse. The largest proportion of ownership and of residency was in the Fourth Ward. Two ministers in the African American community had school-age children. Reverend John Lisle, a Congregationalist minister, lived in the Second Ward; he did not own his own home and his children did attend school. Reverend Jermain W. Loguen, a Methodist minister, lived in the Fourth Ward; he owned his home and his children did not attend school during the study's initial census year.

Another subcategory of heads of household worth noting is the female-headed homes. Mentioned earlier were Mary Robinson, Dinah Livingston, Jane Beebee, Julia Cash, Jane Williams, Anna Baston, and Janey Lanworth. The diversity of the community is reflected in the status of these women—as homeowners and not, as literate and not, as legal residents and as freedom seekers. Mary Robinson owned her home, a boarding

house that had a school-age resident with questionable legal status. Little is known about the families residing in the Fourth Ward. Zeph Robinson Sr. died as a result of injuries sustained in a munitions explosion. His widow, Mary Robinson, was a laundress who was also a very successful landowner. She acquired a home on Catherine Street and later purchased another home next door and a vacant lot. According to the research that I conducted in collaboration with Wellman, the Robinson Home still exists at 24 Catherine Street.⁸² The children in her residence attended school and she was literate. Her financial stability arose from the estate of her husband, who was killed in an explosion. The “Widow Robinson” was a leading citizen of black Syracuse. Though not recognized as a historic site, her home, as well as her boarding home, is still standing.⁸³

Dinah Livingston provided housing to school-age children who attended school, even though she was illiterate. Jane Beebee, Julia Cash, and Jane Williams were all literate women who chose not to have their children attend school. Each of these women would have been considered “women of color” and not necessarily “black.” Both Jane Beebee and Julia Cash were identified as mulatto and Jane Williams, as Native American. Anna Baston and Janey Lanworth were both illiterate women and chose not to send their children to school. Though Anna and her young daughter comprised their entire household and both were born in New York State, the place of origin for Janey and the other women in her home were unknown, which suggests their illegal status. The Fourth Ward housed a number of individuals with questionable legal status.

⁸² Research conducted in collaboration with Judith Wellman in 2002–2004 identified the residences of a number of families on the 1850 census.

⁸³ An application has been submitted by Judith Wellman to have the Robinson home and boarding house recognized as historic places.

On the 1850 census tract, Hannah Waggoner appears in two households, the one of her parents and that of a seemingly fugitive family. A cursory examination of her family demographics suggests that Mr. and Mrs. Waggoner and their elder daughters (if their dates are correct) would have been born slaves in New York State. Hannah would have been the first free-born person in her family. This finding suggests her motivation for being an agent of the Syracuse Underground Railroad network.

The practice of hiding in plain view is reported in analyses of folk art, animal husbandry (such as special marking on horseshoes), and quilt making. Similarly, these freedom seekers were housed strategically amongst local Vigilance Committee members.

Ten Years Later: 1860, Syracuse, New York

Many changes can occur in a community in a single decade. In Syracuse between the period 1850 and 1860, the number of families with school-age children decreased significantly and the number of residential wards in the city doubled. Only seven of the original forty-seven individuals heading households in Syracuse, New York, in 1850 were there ten years later, namely, Anna Baston (Wells), John Foster, Samuel Jackson, Prince Jackson, Dinah (Diana) Livingston, Mary Robinson, and Jermain Loguen.

The Eighth Ward of Syracuse in 1860 had the largest number of African American residents and children of school age, a result of the 1852 redistricting of residential boundaries. The Foster family and the Loguen family resided within this ward before they were located within the Fourth Ward. The Zion Church was located within blocks of the Loguen homestead. In 1855 Jermain Loguen was the pastor of the Fayette Street Church, also known as the colored Zion Church. The Ginkiss or Jenkins families

were active in Fayette Street Church as were the Decker and Foster families. All of the fathers of these children served at one time or another on the board of trustees for the church and all the men were members of the Syracuse Vigilance Committee.

Each person in this cohort was a recognized or suspected member of the local Vigilance Committee associated with the Underground Railroad. Anna Baston reported no occupation and was born in New York. Her daughter Melinda was seven in 1850 and did not attend school, though she did in 1860.

John Foster and his wife, Harriet, were parents to six children in 1850, but only their son Theodore, age five, attended school that year. Mr. Foster was a barber, and his property was valued at \$600. His family identified as mulatto, and both he and his spouse were able to read and write. John Foster was also father to one of the boys named after Gerrit Smith, famed abolitionist. In 1860 Mr. Foster was still a barber and his property was valued at \$200. Residing in the household were his wife, Harriett, along with their children, Frederick, thirteen, Eugene, eleven, Betsy, six, and Hattie, two. All of the children of school age were attending. Theodore was not on the census.

Samuel Jackson in 1850 was employed as a cook and owned property valued at \$600. He and his wife were literate, and their children, Samuel Jackson Jr. and Isaiah, attended school. Ten years later, Mr. Jackson was still employed as a cook. He and his wife did not own property. Their children were Isaiah, sixteen, Matilda, sixteen, Nehmarin, twelve, William Heinrich, eight, Elancha, five, and Edward, three. Nehmarin and William were attending school.

Prince Jackson also owned a boarding facility that housed both African Americans and European Americans. In 1850 Mrs. Jackson was attending school with her

daughter Julia. In 1860 Prince Jackson was employed as a horse doctor and owned property valued at \$1,000. Elizabeth Jackson, thirty, and Albert, fifteen, were in residence. Albert was employed as a laborer.

Dinah Livingston was another of the females heading a household in which school-age children attended school, according to the 1850 census. Though Dinah could not read and write, other adults in her household could. A decade later, Dinah Livingston owned property valued at \$350. Margaret Bile was a six-year-old female in residence and she did attend school.

Mary Robinson was owner of a boarding facility where the children in residence also attended school. She was literate and a small business owner. Ten years later, Mrs. Robinson was employed as a washerwoman, and her property was valued at \$2,500. Her daughter Mary was seventeen, as was Seth Robinson. Seth was employed as a barber apprentice.

Jermain W. Loguen and his wife, Caroline, were both literate. Their children did not attend school in 1850. Loguen, like his neighbor John Foster, named his son after his fellow abolitionist Gerrit Smith. Ten years later, Reverend Loguen owned property valued at \$4,500. He and his wife, Caroline, shared their residence with their children: Amelia, seventeen; Geritt, twelve; Sarah, ten; Jarmin, eight; Mary, six; and Juliette, two. Also in the home was Mrs. Loguen's sister, Sarah M. Storum, thirty-four, and Henry Bale, seventeen. Henry Bale (who I believe changed his last name to Kelso) was reported as being born in Canada, worked as a day laborer, and was recently married, but there was no wife present. There was also a notation on the census tract in the form of a

checkmark next to his name. This was not present on other names reviewed. During this year, every Loguen child attended school.

Of the ninety-three school-age children in 1850, only seven remained in the community ten years later. Samuel and Isaiah Jackson attended school, as did Mary E. Robinson. Melinda Baston (Wells), Helen E. (Amelia) Loguen, William Foster, and Hannah Waggoner did not attend school during the year 1850. At the taking of the 1860 census, only Amelia Loguen was reportedly enrolled in school.

Twenty Years Later: 1870, Syracuse, New York

Another decade later (the end of the study period), only the elders remained in Syracuse. They were Harriet Foster, Dinah Livingston, and student Hannah Waggoner, along with the “King of the Underground Railroad,” Jermain W. Loguen. In a twenty-year period, this community had grown, and the children had begun their own lives as adults.

Recent archaeological research on the New World focusing on slave dwellings and postemancipation communities has provided insights into slave life and the emergence of African American culture.⁸⁴ In their efforts to analyze the lives of slaves and the communities in which they resided, archeological teams are unearthing evidence of the existence of these ethnic communities throughout the southern and northern regions of colonial United States. By using ethnomethodology and the practices of analyzing political organization and economic relations as well as the social and

⁸⁴ Christopher DeCorse, “West African Archeology and the Atlantic Slave Trade,” *Slavery and Abolition* (London: Frank Cass, 1991), 92–96; Theresa Singleton, ed., *The Archaeology of Slavery and Plantation Life* (New York: Academic Press, 1985); and Theresa Singleton, ed., *Studies in African American Archaeology* (Richmond: University of Virginia Press, 1991).

historical background of the regions in which the studies are conducted, researchers are able to document the culture of the inhabitants.

The culture of former slave communities was based on shared beliefs, rituals, occupations, religion, diet, and social practices. More research needs to be done on the social structures of the communities such as Syracuse in which former slaves resided. It would be useful to know how space was utilized within their living areas and how the slaves contributed to surrounding settlements, towns, and greater communities.

According to DeCorse, “Documentary studies of the slave trade have tended to be holistic in approach, focusing on the numbers of people exported and overall effects, not on case studies of particular settlements, communities or regions. However, increasing attention is being focused on the regional and ethnic origins of slaves.”⁸⁵ Population trends and methods of socialization through occupation, education, and religion will be the focal areas of documentation. After studying this community, it would be appropriate to add new criteria for selecting subjects such as military service or teaching service.

The Significance of the Highgates and Other Vigilance Committee Families

The Highgate, Brisco, and DeForest families did not have children listed on the 1850 census. They are noteworthy because of their particular importance to understanding African American life in Syracuse. Charles Highgate was the only African American graduate of the inaugural class of Syracuse High School in 1860. He was killed in action while serving in the Civil War, and he is buried in Oakwood Cemetery, Syracuse.

⁸⁵ DeCorse, “West African Archaeology and the Atlantic Slave Trade”; Paul E. Lovejoy, “The Impact of the Atlantic Slave Trade on Africa: A Review of the Literature,” *Journal of African History* 30 (1989), 365.

The Highgate family came from Buffalo, New York. During the 1850s in Syracuse they were renowned barbers. Their housing situation was a bit unusual in that the family was constantly moving. A survey of multiple city directories of the 1850s and early 1860s reveals that the Highgate family was never in one location for more than two years.

In 1860 an Edmonia Highgate was listed as a member of the household of a white boatman, Daniel Stewart. Three children in the Stewart household attended school during that year, Emmett and Isabella Stewart, and “Etmonia” Highgate, age sixteen.

Edmonia was also reported to live at the residence of Charles and Hannah Highgate. Five Highgate children enrolled in school in 1860: Edmonia G., sixteen, Charles, fourteen, James, twelve, and Caroline, eleven. The two younger Highgate children, Willetta and William, ages eight and six, respectively, did not attend. Carrie Highgate, age ten, lived in the home of George and Sarah Lefft, ages fifty-five and forty-seven, respectively. Carrie did attend school during that year. The fact that both Carrie and Edmonia resided outside their families at least part-time leads one to believe that they were employed as au pairs for white families.

The Highgate family lost children at early ages due to military service; there was a failed abortion, and a younger daughter decided to “pass” as white. Sylvester Clark’s *Early Black Syracusians* reveals the position of many of the school-age children during a later time period. The following section gives an account of a selection of these notable pupils of color from Syracuse’s public school system.

By 1863 many African American males in the city of Syracuse enlisted on the side of the Union Army. “Census shows that Henry Gardner first entered service at

Syracuse in January 1865 for 3 years as Private, has been promoted to Ord. Sergeant which he now is, 29th Conn., Volunteer.”⁸⁶ Charles Highgate was a member of Company D, of the New York 185th Volunteer Regiment. A private burial ceremony held at the Plymouth Church in Syracuse.⁸⁷ Highgate died on the second of April at City Point, Virginia, of severe wounds during heroic fighting.⁸⁸ Tragically, Charles Highgate, the first African American graduate of Syracuse High School, died in the Civil War.⁸⁹

The sisters of fallen war hero Charles Highgate were famous in their own right. The *Syracuse Journal* reported on a lecture at Zion’s Church, which Miss Highgate was to deliver in March 1864.

Miss Edmonia G. Highgate, a young colored woman, who is to leave in a few days for the South, where she is to serve as a teacher of freedmen, will lecture at Zion’s (Rev. Mr. Loguen’s) church, in the Eighth Ward, on Sunday evening at seven o’clock. All well-wishers of the colored people are invited to attend.”⁹⁰

Miss Highgate taught in Virginia and eventually was “appointed principal of one of the public schools of the city of New Orleans.”⁹¹

Edmonia Highgate served as an agent for the American Missionary Association of New York, touring the country lecturing and soliciting funds to clothe former slaves and establish schools. In 1870 scandal rocked Syracuse when a mulatto woman died of an apparent abortion. “The funeral services of the late Miss Edmonia G. Highgate took place in the Wesleyan Church yesterday afternoon at four o’clock. The high respect felt for the

⁸⁶ Sylvester J. H. Clark, *Early Black Syracuseans*.

⁸⁷ Ibid., 45.

⁸⁸ Ibid., 45.

⁸⁹ Bruce Loring Bigelow, “Ethnic Stratification in a Pedestrian City: A Social Geography of Syracuse, New York in 1860” (PhD diss., Syracuse University, 1973)

⁹⁰ Clark, *Early Black Syracuseans*, 45.

⁹¹ Ibid., 46.

deceased by many of our citizens, called out a large attendance in addition to the family and relatives of the unfortunate girl.”⁹² According to Sernett, On October 17, 1870, the *Syracuse Daily Courier* carried an item under the heading “Melancholy and Sudden Death.” “Edmonia Highgate, age 26, has been found dead in Syracuse in the house of an abortionist.”⁹³ Caroline Highgate was reported to have stated, “‘Let me kiss my sister’ as she was laid to rest by the side of her kind father and patriotic brother in Oakwood Cemetery.”⁹⁴ The Highgates, along with their father, are buried a few feet from the Loguen family in Oakwood Cemetery’s racially segregated section.

Caroline “Carrie” V. Highgate married Louisiana Senator Albert T. Morgan on August 4, 1870. He was both a senator and a colonel in the Union Army. Carrie Highgate taught in Albany before heading south. She taught in the “colored Sabbath school attached to the African M. E. Church on Hamilton Street,” Albany, New York.⁹⁵

The strict orthodox rules of Methodism, according to Walls, prevented women from assuming certain leadership responsibilities. In 1876, at the General Conference meeting, the A. M. E. Zion Church became the first Methodist denomination to permit women to vote for trustees of local church boards.⁹⁶ Edmonia did extensive work for the American Methodist Association during her years in New Orleans. Quatroom Balls of New Orleans elite society were common events for women of mulatto identity, who were

⁹² Ibid., 47.

⁹³ Sernett, *North Star Country*, 264.

⁹⁴ Ibid., 48.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ Walls, *A. M. E. Zion Church*, 111; Bishop Cicero Richardson Harris, *African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church and C. R. (Cicero Richardson) Harris, 1844–1917: Historical Catechism, of the A. M. E. Zion Church. For Use in Families and Sunday Schools* (A. M. E. Zion Publication House: Charlotte, N.C., 1922); also see *Zion’s Historical Catechism*, 17: *Minutes*, Eleventh Session, South Carolina Annual Conference, 1876, 9.

introduced, through a complex process called *plasage*, to wealthy white men.⁹⁷ Was Carrie's life as a beneficiary in 1860 Syracuse to a senator's wife in Louisiana in 1870 part of the training she received to live a life *passing*? A closer examination of the Amistad collection at Tulane University may reveal some understanding of Ms. Highgate's tragic end and her sister's uncertain fate as a woman *passing* in the elite, southern planter society. Further research on the life of the Highgate women may reveal aspects of African American women's work during the Reconstruction Era (1865–1870). Additional research on the life of Edmonia Highgate will reveal further information about her role in post-Civil War missionary societies, as well as the roles and responsibilities of African American female administrators of freedom schools in the south. Of particular interest are Edmonia's duties as principal at the Douglass School in the city of New Orleans, Louisiana, where she was employed prior to her trip to Syracuse and her premature death.⁹⁸

The Brisco and DeForest Families were very active in the A. M. E. Zion Church. Fathers of both families served as trustees in the African American church from the 1850s through the 1860s. The DeForest boys later fought in the Civil War and returned to Syracuse to live, work, and raise their families.

According to the 1855 census, the DeForest brothers, William, Andrew, and James, served in the United States Civil War. These three young men were fourteen, eleven, and nine years old, respectively, in that year. All three of the DeForest brothers

⁹⁷ Austin, *Achieving Blackness*, 227; provides a legal analysis of racial identity in the United States, using the Supreme Court Decision of *Plessy v. Ferguson*, as well as the case of Thomas Jefferson's illicit affair with his slave, Sally Hemings. The descendants of Jefferson and Hemings were two women and two men who were less than one-eighth African. Two chose to "pass" as white, the other two raised their children as people of color.

⁹⁸ See Wellman et al., *Uncovering the Freedom Trail*, appendix.

returned from the “War between the States,” and settled in Syracuse. According to the 1868 city directory, all three brothers were boarding at 145 Montgomery Street at the home of their parents and all had the occupation of waiter.

Civil War service among African Americans in the military and teaching ranks was not found in the study of Sandy Ground.

Summary of Syracuse’s African American Community

There were ninety-three school-age children of color in the city of Syracuse in 1850, and thirty-nine (forty-two percent) did attend school. Of the African American children in Onondaga County who attended school, fifty-four percent lived within the city limits. Seventy-eight percent of the African American heads of household were literate in Syracuse. Fifty-one percent of the boys attended school compared to forty-nine percent of the girls.

Similar to the community located at Sandy Ground, there was no correlation between attendance and age in Syracuse. There was no indication of a correlation between gender and ethnicity (individuals identified as black or mulatto) on one hand and attendance of school-age children on the other. The relationship between *attendance and head of household literacy* in the city of Syracuse in 1850 is significant at the .05 level of a (2-tailed) statistical correlation (table 5.4). Similarly, the relationship between *attendance and head of household ownership* was also significant at the .05 level of a (2-tailed) statistical correlation (table 5.5). There was no significance in the relationship between attendance and the existence of other literate adults in the homes of school-age children of color in 1850 Syracuse, as all the children had access to literate adults.

Like their peers in southern New York, African American school-age children residing in Central New York who lived in homes headed by literate adults were more likely to have attended school in the Syracuse community, a known “safe haven” for freedom seekers on the Underground Railroad. Anomalous patterns emerged in Syracuse in regard to adult attendance in school. The census of 1850 revealed that a few children who did not attend school had an adult in their household who did. The case of the three households headed by women where the children did not attend school—namely, Jane Beebee, Anna Baston, and Janey Lanworth—sheds new light on the role of women, and on societal restrictions for women in homes without male influence.

The demographic representation of the African American school-age population in Syracuse compared with that in the state was minute; the overall African American population in the city was less than 1 percent of the countywide, as well as the student, demographic. These were the children of Syracuse, New York, in the mid-1800s, living in an urban community, with diversity within and without each household. Whether attending school or not, in property owned or not by the heads of household, these youth had access to literacy through community networks. Based on the names and ages of ninety-two African American school-age children in Syracuse, along with other demographic information, it was possible to identify a correlation between the heads of household and their cultural capital within their community as literate homeowners and individuals whose children attended school.

For the two communities reported on thus far, there is a statistically significant correlation between school attendance and head of household literacy, and between school attendance and home ownership. Does the trend hold for their peers living in the

community of Watertown, located in the “North Country” and influenced by the A. M. E. Zion Church and the Underground Railroad?

CHAPTER SIX: THIRTY MILES NORTH TO THE PROMISED LAND

When Butler was asked why he entrusted such responsibility to Negro soldiers, the abolitionist general . . . replied, "I knew that they would fight more desperately than any white troops, in order to prevent capture, because they knew . . . that if captured they would be returned to slavery."

David Donald et al.¹

Introduction

The African American community in Watertown was the smallest community analyzed. In this community, located thirty miles from the Canadian border, there were nine African American heads of household in 1850.

In an attempt to place the Watertown community in historical context, I looked at the United States census data on Jefferson County for the year 1810. In that year the county became a separate jurisdiction. The total population at that time was 15,140. Of that total, 15,100 were identified as free whites, and the remaining thirty, as free persons of color, except for Indians.² No slaves lived in this county.

The following census, for 1820, reported 33,652 individuals residing in the county. There were five slaves and 135 free persons of color.³ The white population of the county numbered 33,512. Because of the ratification of the Gradual Emancipation

¹ David Donald, Hirst D. Milhollen, Milton Kaplan, and Stuart, Hulen, *Divided We Fought: A Pictorial History of the War 1861 to 1865* (New York: Macmillan, 1952), 331. The text quoted above is below the picture of a troop of African Americans. The caption reads, "Company E, 4th U.S. Colored Infantry, at Fort Lincoln."

² According to the National Archives website, Native Americans were not usually identified on the census as living in the general population until 1860. "People were identified as white, black, or mulatto; although in rare instances as Indian." *American Indians in the Federal Decennial Census, 1790–1930*, accessed March 20, 2013, <http://www.archives.gov/research/census/native-americans/1790-1930.html>.

³ The five slaves in the county were identified as one male between the ages of fourteen and twenty-five-years and four females, of whom one was under the age of fourteen and three were between the ages of fourteen and twenty-five. Historical Census Browser, from the University of Virginia's Geospatial and Statistical Data Center, <http://www.mapserver.lib.virginia.edu/collections/stats/histcensus/index.html>.

Law of New York State, which outlawed slavery in the state, Jefferson County reported no slaves in 1830.

By 1840 the federal census was reporting school and education demographics, in addition to general population statistics. That year the total population was 60,984, including 141 free persons of color. During this census cycle, there were two academies and grammar schools in Jefferson County with 125 scholars enrolled therein. There were 292 primary and common schools serving 11,548 students.

The 1850 census reported the population of Jefferson County as 65,153. In Watertown, the county seat, 15,061 individuals resided. The total student population for Jefferson County was 18,605.⁴ Thirty African American school-age children were attending school (fifteen female and fifteen male), nine of them residing in Watertown.⁵

The 1850 census report included additional details on school funding. That year Jefferson County was home to three public libraries and 397 school libraries. No Jefferson County residents reported college enrollment, but there were 21,584 enrolled in public school. At 323 public schools, 530 teachers were employed. Teachers' salaries and other education-related expenses were paid by local school districts from local income taxes and other revenues. In 1850 the Jefferson County public schools had a budget of \$32,485. Collected taxes amounted to \$20,590; another \$11,880 came from public donations, and \$15 came from unknown sources.

⁴ There was a discrepancy in the number of students attending school in Jefferson County in 1850. Using the same source, University of Virginia Library Geostat Center Collection, my query regarding this population resulted in two numbers. An aggregate number of *persons attending school* was 18,605; the *number of pupils in public school* was reported as 21,584. Historical Census Browser, University of Virginia's Geospatial and Statistical Data Center, <http://www.mapserver.lib.virginia.edu/collections/stats/histcensus/index.html>.

⁵ Ibid., table 4, 116. There were 18,575 white students enrolled in Jefferson County during the same period.

As I did with the two previous communities, I will introduce the children in the Watertown community who are part of the total data and analyze each of the households in which they resided, then conclude with findings unique to their community.

Table 6.1 lists the names, ages, gender, ethnicity, attendance status, and place of birth of the fifteen African American school-age children residing in Watertown, New York, in 1850. The nine children who attended school in Watertown came from one-third of the households headed by an African American. All who attended school were born in New York State.

Table 6.1. African American school-age children, Watertown, New York, 1850

Name	Age	Gender	Ethnicity	Attended	Birth place	HH literate	Property owned by HH
Anderson, James	8	M	B	No	New York	Yes	No
Anderson, Susan	6	F	B	No	New York	Yes	No
Dowery, Joseph	10	M	B	No	New York	Yes	No
Dowery, William	6	M	B	No	New York	Yes	No
Hardin, Joseph	14	M	B	No	South Carolina	Yes	No
Jones, William	14	M	B	No	New York	Yes	No
Jones, Roselia	12	F	B	Yes	New York	Yes	No
Jones, Hannah	11	F	B	Yes	New York	Yes	No
Jones, Celia	9	F	B	Yes	New York	Yes	No
Jones, David	4	M	B	Yes	New York	Yes	No
Ray, Phebe A.	12	F	B	Yes	New York	Yes	No
Ray, Soffia	10	F	B	Yes	New York	Yes	No
Ray, David	8	M	B	Yes	New York	Yes	No
Ray, Samuel	6	M	B	Yes	New York	Yes	No
Robinson, Caroline V.	7	F	B	Yes	New York	Yes	No

Literate Head of Household; Children Attended School

In this community, in each of the homes in which an African American school-age child lived, attending school or not, a literate adult also resided. Thus, in this

community adult literacy was not useful as a predictor of school attendance for children. In 1850 the household of William and Pricilla Jones, ages fifty-four and forty-four, respectively, housed four children who attended school in Watertown, and a child, William, fourteen, who did not. Roselia, twelve, Hannah, eleven, Celia, nine, and David, four, all attended school. The census indicates that the eldest of the Jones children, seventeen-year-old Arbella, was capable of reading and writing. Mr. Jones was a laborer; he did not own his property, and the entire family was comprised of New York natives.

New Jersey-born David Ray, thirty-six, and his wife, Betsy, thirty-five, were the parents of four children who all attended school in 1850. The census lists Phebe, twelve, Soffia, ten, David, eight, and Samuel, six, as having attended school. While no occupation was noted for Mr. Ray, the census data indicate that he did not own property during this time and that he and his wife were both able to read and write.

The only other African American family in Watertown that had a child attending school was the family of Virginia-born Jim Robinson. He was twenty-four years old and his wife, Caroline C., was twenty-three, when the census was taken.⁶ Mr. Robinson was a barber. Of their three children, only one, seven-year-old Caroline V., attended school in 1850. Their two other children, Cinetia G., three, and Adelaide, one, were not of school age. Mrs. Robinson and the children of the union were all born in New York State.

Two other adults resided in the Robinson household: George Washington, twenty-eight, born in Maryland, and Sarah Armstrong, a seventeen-year-old white female born in New York.⁷ Theirs was one of two integrated households within the African American community of Watertown in 1850. In three households that did send their children to

⁶ Jim and Caroline Robinson, both born in Virginia, may also have been born into the institution of slavery, considering their birth dates of 1826 and 1827, respectively.

⁷ There is no indication from the census data that Mr. Washington and Miss Armstrong were married.

school, nine children lived (six female and three male); all the children who attended school were born in New York State. Of the children attending school, twice as many girls as boys attended.

Literate Head of Household; Children Did Not Attend

In 1850 James Anderson was forty years of age and his wife was thirty. The Andersons' children's names and ages are as follows: James, eight; Susan, six; Maria, four; and Thomas, two. Each person within the household was born in New York State. No occupation was listed for Mr. Anderson. He and his wife were reported to have been literate.

Charles Dowery was one of two foreign-born African Americans living in Watertown in 1850. Born in England, the twenty-six-year-old laborer was married and the parent of two school-age children, of whom neither attended school. Catherine Dowery, twenty-six, and their two sons, Joseph, ten, and William, six, were each born in New York State. This family was one of three African American households that lived next to each other.

One other African American household reported a foreign-born resident. The household headed by Joshua Hardin, a thirty-year-old Virginia-born laborer, included two people who appear to have been his mother and brother. Elizabeth Hardin was a fifty-year-old woman born in Africa. The other person was fourteen-year-old Joseph Hardin, born in South Carolina. He had access to literate adults, even though he did not attend school. Because Elizabeth was born in Africa and the two sons were born in a southern state, one might speculate that they were freedom seekers who had journeyed as far as Watertown, just shy of the border to "freedom."

Regarding the three households in which six school-age children did not attend school, five times as many boys did not attend as girls. These children were born in New York State, except for one male who was born in South Carolina. Again, these children all resided with literate adults.

Other African American Headed Households

The remaining three Watertown households headed by African Americans in 1850 did not house school-age children. The home of Richard and Maria Lacy, ages twenty-seven and twenty-four, respectively, housed young Richard, nine months old. Mr. Lacy was a laborer. He, his wife, and his son were reported as having been born in New York State.

The Miller household was the other multiethnic household within the community that was headed by an African American. Tar Miller, sixty, and his Native-American wife, Nelly, fifty, lived between the Lacy and Dowery residences. Mr. Miller, a laborer, was born in Virginia. His wife was born in New Jersey. The Millers had a young white male residing in their home, John Ally, eighteen. Mr. Ally was born in New York; there is no indication that he worked or attended school.

Laura Thomas headed the third household. Miss Thomas was a forty-nine year-old black woman, born in New York State. She resided with two other adults: Melipa Robbins, eighteen, also born in New York, and a man of mystery. The census entry of "R. C." was followed by a "?" (next to his name, instead of a last name). R. C. was a twenty-year-old black male who was reportedly born in New York.⁸

⁸ There was a double slash (//) in front of the initials R. C. on the census page for this household entry. While conducting research with Judith Wellman, I saw similar notations, which are now recognized as the

To summarize, in Watertown, New York, in 1850 sixty percent of the eligible African Americans headed nine households, of which six were home to school-age children; whether the children attended school or not, there was a literate adult within the home. Girls attended school at a rate of two to one with boys; of the children who did not attend, boys outnumbered girls at a rate of five to one.

Five of the nine heads of household within this community were laborers. One head of household was employed as a barber; the occupations of the three others were not listed. Again, none of the African American families owned their property. All the adults in the Watertown cohort were literate. Compared to Sandy Ground and Syracuse, this finding is an anomaly. Some African Americans owned property in both other communities, but not all the adults were literate.

Four out of the seven correlation analyses used elsewhere in this study to define the relationship of school attendance to other variables could not be computed for the Watertown cohort. In the case of Watertown, New York, at least one variable was universal. First, attendance measured against head of household literacy revealed that children attending school came from households where all the heads of the household were literate, even though not all literate heads of household sent their children to school. Second, all heads of household in 1850 Watertown were identified as black (versus a mixture of black and mulatto ethnic identities). Third, none owned their property; and finally, all adults within the community were reported to be literate. Though not statistically significant to the attendance of school age children but worthy of note is the fact that eight, or eighty-nine percent, of the nine heads of household were married. In

census takers' mark for freedom seekers. The // notation is symbolic of railroad tracks, and may indicate a passenger on the Underground Railroad. The absence of a last name further obscured R. C.'s identity.

Watertown in 1850 all children within the African American community had access to an individual, within or outside of their family unit, who could read and write. An additional finding is that all the children in this cohort who attended school were also born in New York State.

Households in which the children attended school were, in significant ways, similar to households that did not send their children to school. The difference between Sandy Ground and Syracuse, on the one hand, and Watertown, on the other, is that girls in Watertown attended school at a rate of two-to-one with boys.⁹

Of the remaining six children (one female and five males), who did not attend school, none was reported to be engaged in an occupation, unlike some of their peers in Sandy Ground and Syracuse.

Watertown's African American community of 1850 challenges history's representation of literacy among people of color before the Civil War, in both the North and the South. All the adults in this community were literate, unlike the comparison communities at Sandy Ground and in Syracuse. Though there was a statistically significant correlation between literacy and school attendance in the two other communities, in Watertown the variable of literacy was constant between adults and the children residing in the homes, whether or not the children attended school. Also, there was a constant variable of no home ownership among African Americans in the community. Therefore, the contribution towards public schooling from taxes paid by homeowners did not apply to this population. Private contributions by parents in New

⁹ This finding raises the question of why the girls attended and the boys did not. Was a conscious decision made to allow girls to attend and not boys in light of the fact that most of the African American males in the community were laborers? Were the boys apprenticing to do similar work?

York State at this time are known to have included the purchase of books and supplies for their young scholars.¹⁰

On the eve of the American Civil War, Watertown, thirty miles from the Canadian Border, became an accessible escape route towards greater freedom. None of the families listed on the 1850 census remained in the community ten years later, but a few individuals did. To learn more about the community between the federal censuses, I consulted other sources. The local residence directory proved especially useful.

Five Years Later—1855 City Directory

According to the city directory of Watertown, New York, in 1855 five families reported in the previous federal census were still in the community. Two of the households had previously housed school-age children. J. M. Anderson was residing at Six Jefferson Street and was employed as a whitewasher. The Anderson's eldest child, James, would have been thirteen in 1855. Therefore, the children were most likely still in residence.

David Ray was thirty-six years old in 1850, and each of his four children was enrolled in school. Five years later, in 1855, D. H. Ray was reported as living at Two John Street and was employed as a barber. Mr. Ray's occupation had not been reported in 1850.

Three other African American heads of household were present in the city directory, where school-age children had not previously been noted. Laura (Susan) Thomas was the head of the household in which the mysterious R. C. resided. In 1855

¹⁰ Carlton Mabey, in *Black Education in New York* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1979), provides one of the earliest comprehensive examinations of African American participation in the education of their children.

Mrs. Thomas would have been approximately fifty-four years old. She was reported to reside at River and Court Streets and was a washerwoman. Tar (Yat) Miller lived in Smith's Alley and, as in the 1850 census, was employed as a laborer.

In 1850 Joshua Hardin, thirty, had been the head of the household in which he, his mother Elizabeth, and his brother Joseph resided. Joshua Hardin was then employed as a laborer. The 1855 city directory reports a John Hardin living at the Jefferson Hotel and still working as a laborer.

Ten Years Later—1860 Census

Elizabeth Hardin was fifty years old in 1850, and she lived with her sons, Joshua and Joseph. Mrs. Hardin was born in Africa and her sons, in Virginia and South Carolina; they were thirty and fourteen, respectively. In 1860 Elizabeth resided in the home of Joshua "Harden," age forty, birthplace unknown, and he owned property valued at \$200. Elizabeth was reported as being sixty years of age; her occupation was washerwoman and her birthplace was Africa.

For the 1860 census, a washerwoman by the name of Laura (Susan) Thomas, fifty-five, was living with a school-age child named Amelia, nine, and a woman named Carmela, twenty-four. Amelia did not attend school, but both adult women in the household were reported as being literate. Susan Thomas lived at River and Court Streets in 1855. She had also been the head of household of the mysterious R. C. in 1850. Was the Thomas home a station stop for men, women, and children en route to Canada? This would explain the fact that two consecutive censuses reported young women, children, and an unnamed man living in her home.

The status of Watertown African American residents in 1860 suggests the collaborative nature of the community. John Jackson was a whitewasher living at River and Court Streets in 1855. Mr. Jackson was fifty-nine years of age in 1860. He lived with his wife, Nancy, sixty-five, and their three children: Amanda, eleven, Charles, six, and Adam, three. His reportedly Canadian-born wife was literate, but he was not. Not one of their children was enrolled in school. The children were quite young for such a mature couple.

William Smith was forty-five years old in 1860. This New York-born saloon keeper identified as a mulatto. He lived with his wife, Mary. Mary, thirty years old, was born in Ireland. Mary and William Smith had a New York-born son, George, who was six years old and attending school at that time. In the Watertown city directory of 1855, William Smith was a cook living at Number Two Anthony and Thirty-Two Franklin Streets. Within five years he gained a foreign-born wife and son, and he became the owner instead of an employee of the saloon.

By 1860 the census reflected a changed Watertown. None of the school-age children reported in the 1850 census was still residing in the community. In fact, only two heads of household remained and only three of the 1850 residents were still there.

Twenty Years Later—1870 Census

According to the data available through Heritage Quest Online, there were no African Americans, black or mulatto, residing in Watertown, New York, in 1870.¹¹ This is the period when people such as Henry Barr came to Watertown. Barr escaped from

¹¹ Heritage Quest Online, Proquest, LLC, 1999–2013, <http://www.heritagequestonline.com/hgoweb/libraryh/do/index>. Heritage Quest Online is a genealogical resource that provides a searchable database of seven core sets of data.

slavery to live in Canada for a while, and then went to Watertown, where he helped set up the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church. He soon became the owner of an entire business block in downtown Watertown. After the Civil War African Americans began migrating back into Watertown.

Summary of Watertown's African American Community

The Watertown data from 1850, 1855, and 1860 indicate that this was a migrant community for African Americans—a place to wait for an opportunity to find a permanent home. While waiting, many were able to educate their children and learn a trade themselves. Education in the context of Cremin's sociohistorical definitions is the deliberate effort, successful or not, to be taught how to survive and elevate one's status within a social sphere or culture.¹² Full United States citizenship for African Americans, as the literature has revealed, included literacy, equal opportunity for education, steady employment, homeownership, and the right to vote. In 1850 David (H.) Ray's occupation was unknown. Five years later, Mr. Ray served in one of the most esteemed positions in the African American community in the mid-nineteenth century, that of a barber. William Smith went from cook to saloonkeeper, from employee an entrepreneur, within five years.

The presence of European Americans residing in African American households in the period before the Civil War is a phenomenon that is understudied today. What became of individuals residing in the integrated households, such as Sarah Armstrong,

¹² Webber, *Deep Like the Rivers*, 1978, x; see Lawrence Cremin, *American Education: The Colonial Experience* (New York: Harper and Row, 1970), 154. "Admittedly the study's definition of education closely resembles what social scientists would call culture. The author [Cremin] would argue, however, that the study of education should include the learning processes which are deliberate, systematic and sustained as well as processes not nearly so intentional. To limit the study of education to less than the entire learning process is to risk excluding many of those processes and dynamics which most profoundly influence how individuals and groups learn, think, feel and act," 275.

the young white female who resided in the Robinson household, or John Ally, the young white male living with Tar Miller and his indigenous-American wife, Nelly?

For this study, I held many interviews with Reverend Roosevelt Baum, pastor of Thompson A. M. E. Zion Church in Watertown. He stated that he knew little about the community and their activities before the Civil War or even during the early part of the twentieth century.¹³ He suggested that I investigate the “islands,” referring to the “Thousand Islands” surrounding Watertown, Sag Harbor, and other inlets between the New York coastline of Lake Ontario and the Canadian border because legend has it that fugitives hid on the islands, which are similar to South Carolina’s Gullah Islands.

Unlike the communities of Sandy Ground and Syracuse, the entire adult population within the cohort in Watertown was literate. In other words, all the children who resided in Watertown in 1850 had access, socially or through familial relations, to an adult who could read and write. Additionally, no African American in the community during this period was a property owner, nor were any identified as mulatto.

This investigation has led me from one source to the other through the snowball method, primarily because much of the legacy of African American history was shared through the oral tradition, a “silent” pedagogy passed from generation to generation. The investigation continues.

¹³ Reverend Roosevelt Baum, pastor, Thompson A. M. E. Zion Church, Watertown, New York, spoke with me on numerous occasions as well as via e-mail during 2002–2004. He is currently collaborating with Judith Wellman, of the Preservation Association of Central New York, to uncover more of the local history.

CHAPTER SEVEN: A NEW PERSPECTIVE ON AFRICAN AMERICAN EDUCATION

Another movement in the direction of furnishing literature for the church was the Book of Concern of the A. M. E. Zion Church established in New York City by the New York Conference. . . . Reverends Henry Johnson, Abraham Cole and Jermain W. Loguen were appointed Book Stewards for the several annual conferences to improve the means of circulating the literature.¹

John J. Moore, 1884

Introduction

This study examines attendance among African American children living in three communities in New York State in 1850. The findings of this study reveal how the households and communities in which the children resided supported their efforts to become literate. This dissertation addresses these questions through a social historical framework with correlation analyses of three nineteenth-century multiethnic communities in New York State: Sandy Ground, Syracuse, and Watertown.

Each of these communities' harbored escaped slaves on the Underground Railroad, each established schools attended by African American children before the Civil War, and each was a site for the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church. In this dissertation I explore how African Americans in each of the three communities responded to new opportunities to have their children attend public school, how literacy could be attained even if a child did not attend public school, and how ethnic communities sustained their literary efforts in spite of the Fugitive Slave Law.

¹ William J. Walls, *The African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church: Reality of the Black Church* (Charlotte, NC: A. M. E. Zion Publishing House, 1974), 336; John J. Moore, *History of the A. M. E. Zion Church in America* (York, PA: Teachers Journal Office, 1884). Bishops Walls and Moore were commenting on the involvement and influence the New York Conference of the A. M. E. Zion Church in the organization and distribution of literature at Colored Citizens Conferences during the mid-nineteenth century.

Procedures Used

I reviewed literature related to the education for children of color in the 1850s. I also reviewed the relationship between the African American community and the larger abolitionist community in New York State in the movement known as the Underground Railroad, as well as the role and influence of local black churches. I used an interdisciplinary approach, drawing on anthropological, educational, and social historical theory.

I obtained information on the rates of school attendance by children of color in these communities, along with indications that they had access to literate adults within their households. I consulted twenty years of data from the United States censuses to identify the name of each child who attended school, his or her age and ethnic identity, the social demographics and literacy levels of adults within each child's residence, and the head of household's ownership status. These were discussed in detail in Chapters 4, 5, and 6.

The census data provided no information on issues such as what was meant in 1850 for people to call themselves literate. Other records about the families identified in the 1850 census can only be suggestive and not definitive. For instance, church records, Vigilance Committee membership, and references to individuals in local newspapers all provide evidence of participation in community activities that possibly involved literacy.

Suggestions for Further Research on the Three Communities

The three communities were alike in making particularly important contributions to local, state, and national history, and they offer many opportunities for further research.

Sandy Ground, An Oystering Community

Staten Island, the location of Sandy Ground, has a rich history related to the whaling and fishing industries. Many of the African American men engaged in these industries were independent business owners. Migrants from the Chesapeake Bay region of Maryland relocated to Staten Island to escape discrimination: black men were not allowed to fish in Chesapeake Bay. During centuries of trade between Chesapeake Bay and Hudson Bay, African Americans had performed the work of transplanting and reseeded oyster beds. Such knowledge and skills in the industry proved beneficial for the individuals who migrated from Maryland and called Sandy Ground their home.

Some men, such as Captain John Jackson, left a legacy that deserves further examination. A maritime ferry operator and mover of “contraband,” he is likely to have been involved in the *Amistad* event, since that vessel was moored off Staten Island before its return voyage to Africa. Frederick Douglass attended the relaunching of the ship; therefore, an examination of his papers or of the *Amistad* collection may reveal more about the involvement of the African American community in this event, which set a precedence in the prosecution of organized, illegal, international slave transportation in the waters surrounding the United States, as international trade was outlawed in 1807.

The industrial growth of the United States in the last half of the nineteenth century precipitated a need for skilled and unskilled labor in businesses related to mining, manufacturing, and ship building, as well as other maritime and naval occupations. The African American community was a source of human capital for these industries as well.

Although this study analyzed only the Westfield community of Sandy Ground, a larger examination of Staten Island might reveal a trend of African Americans residing

within the residences of European Americans in order to work and survive. The former Staten Island Borough historian, Richard Dickinson, possesses a wealth of information. He provided information on school-age children working in domestic service between 1855 and 1875.

The Winant family not only housed various African Americans, but they also sold property to them. Bornt Winant, Jacob Winant, and Henry LaForge housed African Americans over extended periods of time. The Winants are also considered “founders of Westfield.” Were they abolitionists? Their histories deserve further examination.² Regarding the relationship between the African American females residing in European American homes and the families of the homeowners, was it strictly, as the census occupation notes, domestic, or was there more to the housing arrangement?

Judith Wellman has provided a tool to measure the accuracy of oral histories of African Americans, using methods gleaned from Larry Gara’s *Liberty Line: The Legend of the Underground Railroad*. The stories shared in this study by Lois Mosley and her cousin, Yvonne Taylor, both retired educators of the New York City Public Schools, have added to the legacy of the community of Sandy Ground. The descendants of Sandy Ground have memorialized the history of the Rossville A. M. E. Zion Church, the names of many of the families involved in the community’s development, and references to possible participants in the clandestine network known as the Underground Railroad. Mrs. Mosley and Mrs. Taylor have documents related to their foreparents’ property ownership and entrepreneurship before the Civil War.

² A cursory examination of abolitionist activity on Staten Island did not reveal the Winant name to be part of the movement.

In addition, Mrs. Henry and Mrs. Taylor shared their perspectives on school and schooling on Staten Island in their own times, especially since national school desegregation in the 1960s. They had common memories related to the closing of the black school and being bused to white schools as children. They shared memories of having watched the few remnants of the Harrisville community being systemically and illegally removed, “as if removing us from history.”³ Few vestiges of the Sandy Ground community remain today. The waters of the Kill van Kull are considered toxic and are part of the national Superfund program.

The church is still standing and has shared residency with the local Spanish-speaking community. The home of Moses K. Harris serves as the Sandy Ground Historical Society, and the “Negro cemetery” remains, surrounded by new townhouses and, a block away, a recently built penal institution.

Syracuse and the King of the Underground Railroad

In 1850 there were forty-six African American heads of household in Syracuse with a total of ninety-three school-age children. At the taking of the next census only eight heads of household remained—those of Samuel Jackson, Mary Robinson, Ann Baston (Wells), Jermain Loguen, John Foster, Dinah (Diana) Livingston, Hannah Waggoner, and Prince Jackson. In these households, the following school-age children resided: Samuel Jackson Jr., Isaiah Jackson, Mary E. Robinson, Melinda Baston, Helen Amelia Loguen, William Foster, and Hannah Waggoner.⁴ Of these children, the first

³ Yvonne Taylor, personal interview, when discussing the suspicious burning of the home of a blacksmith and the removal of the anvil by the city in the 1970s. Real estate investors began targeting the Sandy Ground community for blight removal during the national period of urban renewal in the mid-twentieth century.

⁴ Melinda Baston married and her last name changed to Wells; Helen Amelia Loguen married and her name became Douglass. Hannah Waggoner was also listed as Hannah Ann; her mother’s name was also Hannah.

three attended school during the survey year and the other four did not. In 1860 Amelia Loguen was the only student identified on the 1850 census who was still enrolled in school; she did not attend according to the previous census.

By 1870 only two individuals listed as head of a household in 1850 were listed, namely, Jermain Loguen and Dinah Livingston.⁵ The only two adults in the community remaining from 1850 were Harriet Foster (wife of John Foster, Gerrit Smith land recipient and Vigilance Committee member) and Hannah Waggoner (the school-age girl mysteriously listed in 1850 in two separate households). The achievements of the Loguen family have been mentioned in previous pages. Who were Dinah (Diana) Livingston, Harriet Foster, and Hannah Waggoner? One of these women headed a household in the study and little is known about the social roles of these women within the context of family dynamics and social contributions.

Jermain Loguen has a story that should be told in a revisionist manner. According to the 1870 census, he was the only person of color remaining in Syracuse who headed a household. Several sources allude to his remarkable contributions to education and democracy in the periods covered in this study. He went from slavery to freedom to becoming a bishop in one of the country's most influential African American denominational churches. He lectured domestically and abroad; his extended family included Civil War heroes and United States ambassadors. Bishop Loguen passed away en route to his new assignment in San Francisco, California. How might the Golden State have benefited from the skills of a man such as Jermain Loguen? What do we know about the third generation of Bishop Loguen's family?

⁵ Harriet Foster is listed as the head of household in the John Foster family in 1870.

Helen Amelia Loguen was the oldest of the Loguen children who survived into adulthood. Dr. Sarah Loguen Fraser, her sister, left parts of a manuscript detailing her role as her father's secretary after their mother passed away. Sarah recalls this time of her life in her memoir as the daughter of the "King of the Underground Railroad."⁶ The papers can be found in the collection held in her daughter's name, Gregoria Fraser, at the Moorland-Spingarn Research Center at Howard University, Washington, D.C.

What was Gregoria Fraser's life like growing up the only daughter of the only female physician of color and an apothecary (pharmacist) on the island of Puerto Plato, Dominican Republic? What became of the other descendants? The two sources named herein, H. Amelia Loguen Douglass and her niece, Gregoria Fraser Goins, did not leave offspring, although we know that other Loguen descendants did. Three Loguen family members attended Syracuse University. Gerrit Loguen, the only son of Jermain Loguen, became a noted visual artist; he was commissioned to paint a portrait of Frederick Douglass. Gregoria left her own legacy in the music world; a closer examination of her letters should reveal aspects of the Loguen legacy.

My findings from Syracuse have left avenues worthy of researching for larger social meaning. The role of African American ministers in the movement is well known, but I have not seen a collection of papers by those among them who were self-emancipated. The role of boarding house operators within the African American community in the years between the Fugitive Slave Law and the passage of the Fifteenth

⁶ Aspects of this collection have been published. A closer examination of the role of Sarah Loguen Fraser in relationship to her father's operations as the central New York stationmaster was not revealing. Bishop Loguen noted in his own autobiography that he destroyed his records after the arrest of John Brown. A search through records such as Still's *Underground Railroad* left evidentiary notations of Loguen's contribution, as did the collections of letters and records held by the American Missionary Association and the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church. Another way to learn more about Loguen's role is to study Frederick Douglass, Gerrit Smith, Berea Green, and other abolitionists and related institutions.

Amendment could provide greater understanding of the origins of civil rights advocacy and organizing. Like the barber shop, the boarding house has significant meaning within the context of social justice and grassroots organizations.

A closer examination of the Fourth Ward in Syracuse is warranted because of the large concentration of individuals with questionable legal status and their close proximity to Reverends Loguen and Lisle. Both men had ties to the Underground Railroad, particularly to the radical abolitionist school of thought espoused by Berea Green and the Oneida Institute graduates. Loguen attended Oneida, as did Rev. Alexander Crummell, a friend and close associate to Lisle.

Many of the findings in Syracuse deserve closer analysis within the context of larger social movements and historic events. Crummell was involved with the establishment of the colony in Liberia, Africa. His role as ambassador to Haiti, and the role of Frederick Douglass as a prominent orator, played a part in the passage of the Fifteenth Amendment as Reconstruction programs aimed at equalizing the American experience for all were being systemically eradicated.

Watertown and the Thompson Memorial A. M. E. Zion Church

A census of Watertown taken in April 1827, two years before full emancipation in New York State, indicated that there were 1,098 males and 941 females residing in the village—a gain of 500 people in two years. There were three denominational churches, Methodist, Universalist, and Presbyterian; and each was housed in stone structures. Seven public schools operated within the village of Watertown in 1827.

In 1850 there were six African American heads of households with school-age children in residence; the number of children totaled fifteen. By 1860 all of the children

were gone and only one person, Elizabeth Hardin, an Africa-born washerwoman, was still in the city. Elizabeth was one of the oldest African American women in the city in 1850 and one of the only Africa-born people in this entire study. This finding suggests that Mrs. Hardin knew personally the horrors of the Middle Passage. No person listed on the 1850 census lived in Watertown twenty years later.

The history of the African American community in Watertown, New York, is waiting to be revealed. For example, much could be learned about Henry Barr, a barber and grocer who owned a city block in the county seat. How did this man come to own an entire city block? How was Henry Barr associated with the A. M. E. Zion denomination? What is the history of No. 76 River Street, the location of Thompson Memorial African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church? During the time between 1888 and 1909, the A. M. E. Zion church in Watertown had eleven different pastors.⁷ Whom did the pastors serve? These and many other questions might guide further inquiry into this region's history of resistance against slavery.

In the 1850s many of the city directories separated "colored" residents from the main body of the publication. The names of African Americans were listed at the end.

The later directories did not make ethnic or racial distinctions. A more detailed examination of the directories may reveal significant historical facts about the influence

⁷ A search of the city directories located in the Jefferson County Archives reveals that the address of the church was not always the parsonage. Zachariah H. Tyler was pastor of Thompson Memorial from 1888 to 1890; he lived at 71 River Street. During the year 1892 George C. Smith was pastor of the church and he resided at the rear of 131½ Main Street. G. C. Carter was pastor from 1894 to 1895. In 1896 no pastor was reported, and the following year, 1897, one Mason Jones was pastor of the African American congregation. These volumes were few in number and oftentimes there were gaps in years. The next resource available was dated 1900, with W. Gonzales Higgins living at 20 Morrison Street as pastor. In 1902 Francis E. Owens, of 138 Court Street, was the noted pastor. The following year M. H. Dougherty replaced Owens as pastor of the church. J. Douglass Jackson of No. 2 New York Avenue was pastor in 1904; William L. Lane was noted as pastor in 1907. Pastor Lane lived at 38 Factory Street. Pastor Mason Jones returned to office in 1908, and Noah C. Roundtree was the pastor of Thompson Memorial A. M. E. Zion Church at the end of the first decade of the new century.

of African Americans in the three communities of this study as they entered the twentieth century.

General Overview of the Study

As a way to examine the modes of education of African Americans in New York State, I studied the rates of African American children's school attendance in three communities in New York State at the time of the 1850 census. The A. M. E. Zion church was present in each community. Children in the study had access to literate adults within their domestic sphere. Families included those related by blood and common experience. Each child in these communities was given exposure to many individuals within their "village," and it appears many of them took responsibility for shaping the children into citizens.

The intricate weave of history, community, and collective experience has influenced United States history and the histories of the communities under study. The experiences of people of color in U.S. society no longer need to be told in a vacuum, separate from the experiences of whites. A holistic retelling of U.S. history requires that both groups' experiences be understood and integrated.

The African American children listed on the 1850 census have been given voice in this study. Their names are known and, once again, have been made public. We know from the 1850 census data which of the children attended school and lived in households with literate parents, and statistical significance was found between these two factors. In addition, there is a statistical correlation between African American children's school attendance and whether their parents were landowners.

School attendance, literacy, and homeownership were primary goals of African Americans in New York State as pathways to citizenship. Some of the young men in this study served their country and died for the emancipation of their southern brethren and the reunification of the country.⁸ A quick review of the school attendance rates among African American children in Sandy Ground was forty-one percent; that is, thirteen boys and thirteen girls attended school of the sixty-three who were eligible. In Syracuse, forty-three percent, or twenty boys and twenty girls, attended school of the ninety-three students who were of age. In Watertown, sixty percent; that is, three boys and six girls of the eligible children in this cohort attended school.

The literacy rate among the heads of household in Sandy Ground was seventy-four percent, in Syracuse seventy-nine percent, and in Watertown 100 percent. Literacy was relatively high in each community, considering that this was the first post-emancipation generation in New York State.

Approximately one-third of the African American children at Sandy Ground (thirty-eight percent) and Syracuse (thirty-eight percent) resided in homes of people that owned their property. No African Americans owned property in Watertown. One generation after slavery in these three communities, children were witnesses and recipients of their parents dreams of America – educational access, economic opportunity, and the right to vote through home ownership.

Still today little is known about the collective and individual struggles and successes of African American children in 1850s Sandy Ground, Syracuse, or Watertown. The lives and histories of the children on the Underground Railroad need to

⁸ Charles Highgate, the first African American graduate of Syracuse High School, died in battle during the Civil War. The Foster boys returned home after serving in the Union Army.

be further examined and shared. The succeeding generations faced similar social and political struggles, such as for equal access, equal facilities, equal funding, and adequately educated teachers. An examination of school-age children populations through the lens of the ecology of cultural identity may prove beneficial as we continue to deconstruct how race has determined and oftentimes blocked opportunities for success in public and private spheres, particularly within schools, academies, and universities.

Discussion of the Findings

This account of local histories reveals the names of African Americans and their contributions to their communities and country. Few comprehensive studies have been conducted on the lives of enslaved or free people of color in New York State.⁹ This study has sought to shed light on the complexities of educating children in the shadow of slavery, which caused African American children often to be excluded from organized institutions of education. This research was conducted in honor of those who hope for a democratic nation, hope for equal opportunity, and hope to be educated to their fullest potential.

Limitations of the Study

A limitation of the study is that, of necessity, it relied on inferences about how long a school-age child lived in his or her community between the years 1850 and 1870. Surnames of female children may have changed. I examined each census survey to find name patterns that correlated with age, ethnicity, and place of birth when seeking to find a “match.” Children grow up and move on; only two of the children of the 1850 census

⁹ Lynda R. Day, *Making a Way to Freedom: A History of African Americans on Long Island* (Interlake, NY: Heart of the Lakes Publishing), 9.

could be traced in the Sandy Ground Community twenty years later; there was one in Syracuse and none in Watertown. What remains in each of the communities are the legacies created while they were present.

Demography and Education

The names of all African American school-age children living in Sandy Ground, Syracuse, and Watertown, New York in 1850 were listed and analyzed. The data were originally collected in 1850 as part of the Seventh United States Census tracts from the year the Fugitive Slave Law was enacted. The names of children enrolled in school who lived in the communities under study were provided by the census. I conducted a longitudinal examination of community members and school-age children's presence in the area over time. The analysis provides a rare glimpse into the lives of African Americans in New York State, between two significant historic events, the Fugitive Slave Law (1850) and the Fifteenth Amendment (1870).¹⁰

A closer examination of the lives of John Henry, Sarah and John Jackson, as well as Ann Peterson and William Decker from Sandy Ground; Jermain Loguen, Dinah Livingston, Harriet Foster, and Hannah Waggoner of Syracuse; and finally Elizabeth Hardin from Watertown, would tell us a bit more about the ethos of these communities over a twenty-year period (table 7.1).

¹⁰ The study covers the periods in United State history that began with the law allowing proslavery agents to seek out and enslave freedom seekers and free-born people of color. The Fifteenth Amendment was the federal law enacted that allowed men of color the right of suffrage.

Table 7.1. African American heads of household and school-age children in 1850 from Sandy Ground, Syracuse, and Watertown, identified in the 1850, 1860, and 1870 censuses¹¹

Variable	Sandy Ground 1850	Syracuse 1850	Watertown 1850
# of African American HH w/ school-age children	34	48	6
# of school-age children	63	93	15
	1860	1860	1860
# of 1850 African American HH remaining in community	5	8	2
# of 1850 school-age children remaining in community	12	7	0
	1870	1870	1870
# of African American HH remaining in community	2	4*	0
# of 1850 school-age children remaining in community	3	1	0

* Harriet Foster and Hannah Waggoner became heads of household during the census year. Previously their husbands, John and Andrew, held that distinction.

The above table indicates that African American children left their community upon reaching adulthood, as only twelve, seven, and none of the school-age children in Sandy Ground, Syracuse, and Watertown, respectively, were present a decade later. The numbers also indicate that the families were mobile during this time in history, as only five, eight, and two of the 1850 heads of household were present in 1860. By 1870 the number significantly declined to no children from 1850 remaining in Watertown, one in Syracuse, and only three in Sandy Ground. Only two adults listed on the 1850 census remained in Sandy Ground and only four in Syracuse.

¹¹ In 1860 Joshua Hardin and Laura Thomas remained in the Watertown community after ten years. The Hardin residence consisted of an Africa-born mother and her two sons, born in the South. Mrs. Thomas had a boarder in 1850, a man by the name of R. C. In 1870 Dinah Livingston and Jermain Loguen were original heads of household in Syracuse; Harriet Foster was the wife of John, and Hannah Waggoner, the wife of Andrew, original heads of household.

Table 7.2 provides the number of households in which African American school-age children resided and the household demographics used to measure their likelihood of attending school. The relatively small numbers in this sample provides an important key to understanding the education of African Americans as compulsory education was emerging in New York State.

Table 7.2. Comparison of three communities in 1850

Description	Sandy Ground	Syracuse	Watertown
# HH w/ AfrAmer children	34	48	6
# of AfrAmer school-age children	63	93 43 boys; 50 girls	15 8 boys; 7 girls
# of AfrAmer children in school	24 12 boys; 12 girls	40 20 boy; 20 girls	9 3 boys; 6 girls
% of AfrAmer children attending	41%	43%	60%
# of literate HH	25 (.05)	38 (.05)	6 (null)
% of literate HH	74%	79%	100%
# of HH owned	13 (.01)	18 (.05)	0 (null)
% of HH owned	38%	38%	0%

Based on the information provided in the *Seventh Census of the United States* in 1850, European American children attended school at approximately twice the rate of African Americans. African American school-age children in the communities analyzed in this study appear to have attended school at higher rates than African American children throughout their respective counties.¹²

Thirty-four households in Sandy Ground housed African American school-age children. In Syracuse, there were forty-eight, in Watertown six. There were sixty-three

¹² *The Seventh Census of the United States*, Table 1, Population of Counties, and Table VIII, Attending School During the Year, as Returned by Families.

children of school age in Sandy Ground in 1850; twenty-six attended school that year, or 41% of the population under study. There were ninety-three school-age children residing in the city of Syracuse in 1850; a total of forty African American children (or 43% of this population) attended school that year, twenty boys and twenty girls. In Watertown, of the fifteen eligible African American children, nine attended, three boys and six girls, which is equivalent to 60% of the population.

Head of household literacy proved to be significant correlation factor in regards to African American children's school attendance in Sandy Ground and in Syracuse. The number of literate heads of households in Sandy Ground numbered twenty-five, or 74%; in Syracuse the numbers were thirty-eight, or 79%. In Watertown, the six heads of household were literate.

Significance was also found in the correlation between school attendance and head of household ownership. In Sandy Ground there were thirteen heads of household that owned their homes, or 38%. In Syracuse, there were eighteen heads of household that owned their homes, or 38%. While in Watertown, there was no homeownership among African Americans.

The correlation between school attendance rates and head of household literacy and home ownership among African American school age children in the 1850 is new information to me. Again, the fact that I was taught African American education history through the lens of a post-Civil War perspective skewed this reality. As well as the fact that African Americans and their neighbors were diligently advocating for educational access before the Civil War.

A. M. E. Zion Church and African American Education

Many religious denominations such as Methodists, Baptists, Quakers, and Unitarians were involved in the development of education for African Americans. In this study I chose to concentrate on the contributions of the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church. Many of the adults included in this study were instrumental in bringing the A. M. E. Zion churches to their communities. Through this examination we now know at that least three-fourths of the heads of household in which African American children resided (in each of the communities) were literate. With the churches came opportunities to be educated formally. The work of local and national organizations, multiple denominations, parents, and concerned citizens worked to create a system of education, segregated and integrated, for African American children in New York State. In light of the results of this investigation, the education of African Americans in communities associated with the Underground Railroad in New York State should be considered adequate. This study unveils three commonly held myths about African American education before 1865. African Americans were attending schools, their heads of household were overwhelmingly literate, and about one-third owned property. The students had access not only to rudimentary lessons in reading, writing, and basic computations, but also to more advanced education.

Integration of African American Studies

A criticism raised at the onset of this investigation was that students in the United States receive little instruction in African American history until their postsecondary education. In the June 27, 2005, issue of *Jet* magazine, a student at Philadelphia High School for Girls is pictured and the caption reads: "Class is in Session." The brief

narrative states, “Victoria Pertell . . . is one of the city’s 210,000 high school students who will be required to take a yearlong African American history course. . . . The decision comes three decades after students demanding African American studies in city schools clashed with police during a school board meeting. Philadelphia, whose public schools are two-thirds Black, may be the first U.S. school district to require the class.”¹³

Miss Pertell shares my sentiments when she acknowledges, “[T]hey’ll usually just focus on African American history in February, and it should be all year-round.”¹⁴

African American history is woven into the fabric of the U.S. identity, history, and experience; the whole story cannot be told without the inclusion of all people of whatever color who arrived on these shores or who were here before the conquest of the land by Europeans. Although change comes slowly, it does arrive—again, hope is kindled and there is promise of equality and freedom for all.

Continuing Legacy of Slavery

On June 11, 2009, the 111th Congress, First Session, passed Senate Congressional Resolution 26, apologizing for the enslavement and racial segregation of African Americans. The Congress of the United States thus acknowledged the longevity of the institution of slavery as set “from 1619 through 1865,” a total of 246 years. The U.S.

¹³ “Class Is in Session,” *Jet* 107, June 27, 2005, 22. An age-appropriate exercise is used by Mara Sapon-Sevin in her work on race, class, gender, and ability equality. It is called “The Level Playing Field.” In this exercise for preservice teachers, aspects of power, privilege, and who benefits from the myth are revealed to participants. See “Inclusive Education, High Stakes Testing, and Capitalist Schooling,”

<http://monthlyreview.org/2011/07/01/inclusive-education-high-stakes-testing-and-capitalist-schooling>. James Haywood Rolling Jr. offers a new perspective on identity through the lens of Western visual culture. See “Un-Naming the Story: The Post Structuralist Repositioning of African American Identity in Western Visual Culture,” http://www.academia.edu/414249/Un-Naming_the_Story_The_Poststructuralist_Repositioning_of_African-American_Identity_in_Western_Visual_Culture; “Visual Culture Archeology: A Criti/ Politi/cal Methodology of Image and Identity,” http://www.academia.edu/265293/Visual_Culture_Archaeology_A_Criti_Politi_cal_Methodology_of_Image_and_Identity.

¹⁴ Ibid.

Congress also admitted the social, political, and economic ramifications of “officially sanctioned racial segregation in virtually all areas of life; Whereas, the system of *de jure* racial segregation known as ‘Jim Crow’ . . . laws officially existed until the 1960s—a century after the official end of slavery in the United States—until Congress took action to end it, but the vestiges of Jim Crow continue to this day.”¹⁵ Within the remaining text are acknowledgments and apologies for losses and damages suffered under slavery and Jim Crow, by individuals and an entire people for generations.

The United States Congress demonstrated in quantifiable terms the reality of slavery and *de jure* racism. On July 8, 2003, President George W. Bush visited Goree Island, Senegal, a former slave port, where he acknowledged the “continuing legacy of slavery in life in the United States and the need to confront that legacy, when he stated that slavery ‘was . . . one of the greatest of crimes in history.’”¹⁶ The subsequent United States President, Bill Clinton, initiated a national dialogue about race.¹⁷ In this action, the United States Congress paid homage to “the Commonwealth of Virginia and the States of Alabama, Florida, Maryland and North Carolina” for adopting resolutions “expressing remorse for slavery” while demonstrating their recommitment to the principle that all people are “created equal and endowed with inalienable rights to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness, and calls on all people of the United States to work toward eliminating racial prejudices, injustices, and discrimination from our society.”¹⁸

¹⁵ 111th Congress, First Session S. CON. RES. 26: Apologizing for the enslavement and racial segregation of African Americans IN THE SENATE OF UNITED STATES, June 11, 2009. Authenticated U.S. Government Information, GPO Online, <https://www.govtrack.us/congress/bills/111/sconres26/text>.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid. In this second of a two-part apology is the “DISCLAIMER—Nothing in this resolution (A) authorizes or supports any claim against the United States; or (B) serves as a settlement of claim against the United States.” In other words, this is in no way promises reparations.

A few months later President Obama stood before an audience to announce his amendment to the Civil Rights Law to include lesbians, bisexuals, homosexuals, and transgendered (LGBT) Americans. Barack Obama was elected on November 7, 2008, the forty-fourth President of the United States, the son of a Kenyan exchange student and an American student of Scots-Irish descent from the Midwest, the first president of African descent in the history of the country. On November 10, 2009, President Obama spent a total of twenty-six hours in Oslo, Norway, as the recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize. His receipt of the prize was not without controversy. In his address he acknowledged those who felt the honor was unjustified and also that the receipt was in the spirit of the aspirations for his role in the global community—of hope for what he would do in the future. Obama's honor by the world peace community reflected enthusiasm for the platform on which he ran; indeed, he had won the hearts of the American people and the world. Obama received the Nobel Peace Prize forty-five years to the day after his personal hero received the same prize: Reverend Doctor Martin Luther King Jr., the icon of the Civil Rights Movement and of nonviolent demonstration. The Obama Effect was demonstrated on this date, when the city in which he spent a number of his childhood years, Jakarta, Indonesia, unveiled a public sculpture of the young Barack Obama. The dedication was to honor a "citizen" of Jakarta, who is now memorialized as an agent of peace. While acknowledging that the country he leads as commander-in-chief is in the midst of a military conflict, Obama stated that "sometimes war is necessary and morally justified." While demonstrating his hope in the path he had chosen, he stated, "I face the world as it is."

Opportunities for Further Research

Others can build on this research by further examining curricula offered by public and private schools at the time. An examination of the curricula of colleges and teacher training schools should provide an idea of what skills educators had during this period. A more thorough examination of local newspapers, flyers, and African American conference literature should give a better sense of the education received by school-age children.

For African Americans after World Wars I and II, the social landscape has been too much like that of their foreparents during the days before and after slavery. Those experiences included resettlement exoduses that catapulted individuals from rural settings with rigid social systems into rapidly moving urban environments.¹⁹ Much like the investigations Audrey Faulkner conducted to uncover the stories of those formerly enslaved, the stories of those who experienced Jim Crow during the years of the Great Depression and World War II, and of those who participated in the early years of the Civil Rights Movement are “part of a folk movement, blurred by nostalgia and rambling reminiscences with sometimes incomplete or unspecified dates because of fading memories,” but invaluable nonetheless.²⁰ The investigations into the lives of African Americans should begin within these contexts of slavery, Reconstruction, and both world wars, as well as smaller international military conflicts and the various civil rights movements.²¹ In order for the history of African Americans to be clarified, it has to be

¹⁹ Audrey Faulkner and Rutgers University, *When I Was Comin' Up: An Oral History of Aged Blacks* (Hamden, CT: Archon Books, 1982).

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ The Civil Rights Movement, led by Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. in the 1950s, was one of many simultaneous civil rights movements, which by the 1970s included people with disabilities, women, students, various ethnic groups (such as Asians, Native Americans, and Latinos), and people seeking sexual equality.

considered within the context of black society on the local, regional, state, and national levels. The manner in which black society has survived, the reasons people leave their homes, and the effects of northern industrialization and Western defense industry build-up have to be included. Having conducted this study, the researcher suggests further investigations into the legacy of urban renewal and the proliferation of public housing in urban centers with defense industry histories. Revisionist analyses should include a review of the impact of latent manifestations of a rigid system of white supremacy, black codes, and racial violence, as well as political and civil rights movements in relation to the rising black middle class and interracial marriage in the twentieth century, as well as the first black president of the United States.

Final Comments

Sandy Ground has been identified as one of the longest inhabited African American settlement in the United States. This study found there was a small correlation between African American children attending school there and their heads of household owning their own home in 1850. There was a more significant correlation (.05) between the children attending school and the heads of household being literate. In Sandy Ground, a few African American children lived in the homes of European Americans and two were listed as residing in two households (that of their parents and of a white neighbor). The community appears to have been the home of Underground Railroad agents who were also members of the A. M. E. Zion Church. The fact that some African American families resided on the same street in clusters helped to make this finding salient.

Similar patterns held for the community in Syracuse. The Underground Railroad activities of this central New York community are well known, yet the correlational

significance between African American children's school attendance rates and the rates of ownership among their parents and their high rates of literacy were not. The number of multiethnic households in Syracuse headed by African American men was an unexpected finding. The number of African American households headed by women, and the manner in which households clustered based on the legal status of the family, and their neighbors' affiliation with the A. M. E. Zion Church was also revealing considering that the community played a significant role in educating freedom seekers while ensuring their safety in route toward freedom.

In Watertown there was a correlation between African American children attending school and the heads of household being literate. In fact, all the heads of household in this subpopulation were literate. There were no African American heads of household that owned property in this community. One hundred percent of the African American heads of household were literate in this community. All the children, whether they attended school or not, lived with a literate adult.

What I Now Know

In 1850 African American school-age children in three communities in New York State had access to public education and many attended school. Some of their parents owned property and most were literate; in fact, most African American children had access to literate adults in their homes whether they attended school or not.

The advocacy of African American parents and community members on behalf of their children gave rise to a comprehensive system that served as the model for the New York State compulsory education system. As the state educational bureaucracy gained

control through laws and policies, parents and community were removed from the process of shaping their children's pedagogical experiences.

Few African Americans appear to have remained in the same communities over a twenty-year period. The individual households analyzed in the study included multiethnic neighbors interested in social justice and educational opportunities for all children. The documents, stories, and legends collected and analyzed reveal a new perspective on the roles of African Americans and the education their children may have received in three communities in New York State.

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Gerrit Smith Collection. Special Collections Research Center, Syracuse University
Library.

Gregoria Goins Collection. Moorland-Spingarn Research Center, Howard University.

Jefferson County Historical Society Museum, Watertown, NY.

Local History and Genealogy Department. Onondaga County Public Library, Syracuse,
NY.

Onondaga Historical Association, Syracuse, NY.

New York State Hall of Records, New York, NY.

Richmond County Archives. Office of Burrough Historian, Staten Island, NY.

Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture. Harlem, NY.

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Education:

Present Doctoral Candidate, Cultural Foundations of Education
Syracuse University, Syracuse, New York
Defense Date: November 23, 2013

2000 Master's Degree, Interdisciplinary Studies w/ emphasis on
Multicultural Curriculum Development, Sonoma State University
Rohnert Park, California

1998 Bachelor's Degree, American Multicultural Studies,
Sonoma State University, Rohnert Park, California
Summa Cum Laude; Distinctions Honor

Teaching Experience:

August 2005 – Present Santa Rosa Junior College, Santa Rosa, California, Adjunct Faculty
Department of Interdisciplinary Studies in Philosophy, Humanities,
and Religion

Course(s) taught:

<i>Western Cultures</i>	(Human 4.1)
<i>Western Cultures</i>	(Human 4.2)
<i>American Cultures</i>	(Human 6)
<i>Comparative Mythologies</i>	(Human 8)
<i>Humanities in Africa</i>	(Human 10.4) Pending

August 2003 – 2007 Sonoma State University, Rohnert Park, California, Adjunct Faculty
American Multicultural Studies; Extended Education Departments and
Women and Gender Studies

Courses taught:

<i>Ethnicity in the Humanities</i>	(AMCS 255)
<i>Ethnic History in California</i>	(AMCS 331)
<i>Language and Ethnicity</i>	(AMCS 355)
<i>Ethnic Images in Film and Media</i>	(AMCS 392)
<i>Research and Methodology</i>	(AMCS 480)
<i>Gender, Sexuality and Family</i>	(WGS 350)

Aug 2001 – May 2002 Syracuse University, Syracuse, New York, Research/Teaching Assistant
Cultural Foundations of Education and Higher Education Departments

Courses co-taught:

<i>History of U.S. Higher Education</i>	(HED 605)
<i>Race and Gender: Higher Ed in the U.S. 20th Century</i>	(HED 700)
<i>Schooling and Violence</i>	(CFE 641)

Jan 2000 – May 2000 Sonoma State University, Rohnert Park, California
 American Multicultural Studies Department
Community Involvement Program (AMCS 395)
 Mentor Course Facilitator; Curriculum Developer

Aug 1999 – Dec 1999 Sonoma State University, Rohnert Park, California
 American Multicultural Studies Department
Community Involvement Program (AMCS 395)
 Mentor Course Facilitator; Curriculum Developer

Research and Methodology (AMCS 480)
 Course Co-Facilitator; Curriculum Developer

Certification:

1996 California Basic Education Skills Test (CBEST), Permanent Verification
 Status for Educators (K-12)

Publications:

- 2005 Harris, April L., “African Free Schools,” in Peter Eisenstadt and Laura Eve-Moss, *The Encyclopedia of New York State* (New York: Syracuse University Press, 2005), 25–26.
- 2004 Davis, R. Deborah, and April L. Harris, “*I Put on the Armor Everyday*”: *Influences of Students Socialization Based Upon Culture and Ethnicity* (On-line: National Association of African American Studies, monograph).
- 1999 Harris, April L., and William H. Thomas, *Developing the Confident Student: A Study Guide for Mentors in After-School Enrichment Programs* (Developed for Sonoma-Lake-Mendocino United Way).

Professional Reviewer:

- Spring 2002 Current Issues in Comparative Education (CICE)
 Columbia University, New York
- Fall 2002 American Education Researchers Association (AERA)
 Division F, History and Historiography
- Fall 2002 American Educational Researchers Association (AERA)
 Division G, Social Context of Education

Presentations:

- February 2011 Santa Rosa Junior College
 Black History Month at the Petaluma Cinema Series
 Co-Presenter/Discussion Facilitator: “Moolaade” (2004), film directed by Ousmane Sembene on the topic of female genital mutilation in Senegal and Burkina Faso with Michael Traina, SRJC Film and Media Studies; Director of Petaluma Film Alliance
- Guinda 10th Annual Black History Month/ Multicultural Celebration
 Guinda, Yolo County, California
 Exhibitor: *Summit Community of Guinda – A Historical Black Town and Settlement in Early California* (Photography)
- November 2010 Santa Rosa Junior College
 Works of Literary Merit (WOLM) – “Their Eyes were Watching God”
 Santa Rosa, California
 Presenter: *Negro Literati: A Precursor to Black Feminist Thought* (Accession # LD-1888)
- October 2010 *What’s Hot* – Local Public Television
 Host: Ida Johnson
 Segment: *Nuggets of Gold* w/ Guy Washington, NPS (No. 342)
- September 2010 *What’s Hot* – Local Public Television
 Host: Ida Johnson
 Segment: *Marinship & Underground Railroad* (No. 339)
- March 2010 *What’s Hot* – Local Public Television
 Host: Ida Johnson
 Segment: *Midwestern Migration* w/ Verla Ostlund, Marinship Rosie (No. 330)
- March 2010 Santa Rosa Junior College Women’s History Month
 Santa Rosa, California
 Presenter: *Rosies, Wendies, Buds and Rivets: Legacy of (WWII) Home Front Workers of the North Bay* (Accession # LD-1840)
- February 2010 Underground Railroad History Project of the Capital Region:
 10th Annual Underground Railroad Conference
 Russell Sage College, Troy, NY
 Presenter: *Sistahs in the Struggle: Female Abolitionist Agents in Syracuse, New York (1850-1870)*
- December 2009 *What’s Hot* – Local Public Television
 Host: Ida Johnson
 Segment: *Celebration Women* w/ L. J. Hughes, Mare Island Rosie (No. 320)
- October 2009 National Parks Services, Rosie the Riveter, Home Front Festival
 Ford Assembly Building, Richmond, CA

Exhibitor: *Ships of Marinship 1942-1945*

13th Annual National Conference on Planning History (SCARPH)
Oakland, California

Presenter: *Uniqueness of Marin City 1942-1945: A "Successful" Social Experiment in Race Relations during World War II*

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|----------------|---|
| March 2009 | <p>Santa Rosa Junior College Women's History Month
Santa Rosa, California
Presenter: <i>Rosies in Richmond: Bay Area Women's Contributions during World War II</i>, with Betty Reid-Soskin (National Parks Services, Rosie the Riveter National Park) and Anne Donegan (SRJC, History Dept.)</p> |
| October 2008 | <p>National Parks Services, Rosie the Riveter, Home Front Festival
Ford Assembly Building, Richmond, CA
Exhibitor: <i>Pictorial History of Marin City: Marinship, Ahoy! An Integrated Community 1942-1945</i></p> |
| May 2006 | <p>National Rural Health Association
12th Annual Rural Minority and Multicultural Health Conference
Nugget Hotel, Reno, Nevada
Presenter: <i>Kaleidoscope of Rural Minority and Multicultural Health Care Issues</i></p> |
| February 2006 | <p>Underground Railroad History Project of the Capital Region:
Underground Railroad: Connecting Pathways to Liberty
Russell Sage College, Troy, NY
Presenter: <i>Education on the Underground Railroad in Central NYS: The Genealogy of African American School Age Children in an Abolitionist Community</i></p> |
| August 2005 | <p>Office of Rural Health Policy (ORHP) Crossroads of Rural Health Conference, Washington, D.C.
Presenter: <i>Lake County "Reach Out" Promotoras as Community Health Workers</i></p> |
| February 2005 | <p>National Association of Native American Studies (NANAS)
2005 Annual Conference, Houston, Texas
Co-presenter: <i>Cultural Competence Training for Health Care: Building Bridges between a College Campus and the Ethnic Community in Rural California</i></p> <p>National Association of African American Studies (NAAAS)
2005 Annual Conference, Houston, Texas
Co-Presenter: <i>Research, Resources and Readings on the Underground Railroad in Central New York: The Genealogy of African Americans in an Abolitionist Community</i></p> |
| September 2004 | <p>Healthier Indian Communities through Partnership and Prevention
National Institutes of Health – Indian Health Services Conference
Washington, D.C.</p> |

Co-Presenter: *“Reach Out”: A Community-based Program Designed to Address Diabetes and High Blood Pressure in a Rural California County*

- April 2004 National Association of African American Studies
2004 Annual Conference, Houston, Texas
Co-Presenter w/ R. Deborah Davis, PhD: *“I Put on the Armor Everyday”: Influences of Student Socialization Based Upon Culture and Ethnicity.*
- Spring 2003 New York State Project SAVE Legislation Training
Co-Facilitator w/ Syracuse University Violence Prevention Project (SUVPP), Office of Professional Development, Syracuse University, Syracuse, New York
Syracuse University Pre-Service Teacher Training
- November 2002 Association for the Study of Higher Education (ASHE)
28th Annual Conference, Sacramento, California
Commentator: *Rethinking Student Persistence* w/ R. Deborah Davis, PhD, Oswego State University, and Vincent Tinto, PhD, Syracuse University.
- April 2002 American Education Researchers Association (AERA)
83rd Annual Meeting, New Orleans, Louisiana
Co-Presenter: *It Takes a Whole School: An Intervention to Violence as the Catalyst for Change in an Urban Alternative School* w/ R. Deborah Davis, Syracuse University; Ronnie Cassella, Central Connecticut University; Stephanie Waterman, ABD, Syracuse University; and Patricia King, MA, Syracuse University
- Spring 2002 New York State Project SAVE Legislation Training
Co-facilitator w/ Syracuse University Violence Prevention Project (SUVPP), Office of Professional Development, Syracuse University, Syracuse, New York
Syracuse University Preservice Teacher Training
- Fall 2001 New York State Project SAVE Legislation Training
Co-Facilitator w/ Syracuse University Violence Prevention Project (SUVPP), Office of Professional Development, Syracuse University, Syracuse, New York
Syracuse University Pre-Service Teacher Training
- August 2001 Violence Prevention and Whole School Development Training
Co-Facilitator w/ SUVPP
Office of Professional Development, Syracuse University, Syracuse, New York
- April 2001 11th Annual Philosophy, Interpretation, and Culture Conference
Binghamton University, Binghamton, New York
Roundtable Discussant: *Silent Roar from the Margins: Effects of Test Bias on Students of Color*

- 11th Annual Philosophy, Interpretation, and Culture Conference
Binghamton University, Binghamton, New York
Paper Presentation: *The Big House and the Quarters: Comparative Perspectives on African American Education in Post-Colonial Southern United States*
- April 2001 New York State Project SAVE Legislation Training
Co-Facilitator w/ Syracuse University Violence Prevention Project (SUVPP), Office of Professional Development, Syracuse University, Syracuse, New York
Syracuse University Pre-Service Teacher Training
- New York State Science and Technology Entry Program (STEP)
Annual Conference, Albany, New York
Workshop Presenter: *Dream Building and Career Development*
- October 2000 4th Annual Upstate New York Conference for Doctoral Students in Education, Cornell University, Ithaca, New York
Paper Presentation: *Social Manifestations of the "At-Risk" Student: An Examination of the Literate Mann*
- April 2000 10th Annual Philosophy, Interpretation, and Culture Conference
Binghamton University, Binghamton, New York
Roundtable Discussant: *Community Involvement through Mentoring for At-Risk Students*
- Fall 1999 Sonoma State University Inter-Cultural Center, Student Advocate Retreat
Novato, California
Presenter: *Community Involvement through Mentoring*
- Spring 1998 Marin City Project, Marin City, California
Co-Facilitator: *Workplace Preparedness and Workplace Re-Entry Training*
- Fall 1997 Sonoma State University Student Union, Student Leadership Retreat
Occidental, California
Co-Facilitator: *Cross Cultural Communications in Higher Education*

Scholarships, Grants and Awards:

- 2011 Princeton's Who's Who in Higher Education
- 2010, 2011, & 2013 Syracuse University, School of Education
Department of Cultural Foundations of Education,
Dissertation Tuition Grant
- 2002 – 2003 Syracuse University Research Assistant
Department of Cultural Foundations of Education
Gerald Grant, Hannah Hammond Professor of Education and Sociology
- Syracuse University Graduate Scholarship, Full Tuition

2001-2002	Syracuse University Graduate Assistant Department of Cultural Foundations of Education Syracuse University Violence Prevention Project (SUVPP) Syracuse University Graduate Scholarship, Full Tuition
Summer 2001	Syracuse University, School of Education, Summer Research Grant
2000 – 2001	Syracuse University Graduate Assistant Department of Cultural Foundations of Education Syracuse University Violence Prevention Project (SUVPP) Syracuse University Graduate Scholarship, Full Tuition

Employment

June 2005 – Present	American Multicultural Research Institute Proprietor/ Senior Researcher Kelseyville, CA 95451
August 2005 – Present	Santa Rosa Junior College Adjunct Faculty Department of Interdisciplinary Studies in Philosophy, Humanities, and Religion 1501 Mendocino Avenue, Santa Rosa, California 95403
Jul 2004 – Dec 2006	Lake County Tribal Heath, “Reach Out” Consultant, Lakeport, California
Aug 2003 – Dec 2006	Sonoma State University Adjunct Faculty American Multicultural Studies, Extended Education, and Women and Gender Studies Departments 1801 East Cotati Avenue, Rohnert Park, California 94928
Aug 2000 – May 2004	Syracuse University Research/ Teaching Assistant Cultural Foundations of Education and Higher Education Departments 350 Huntington Hall, Syracuse, New York 13244
2001 – 2002	Preservation New York, Historic Researcher Fulton, New York
2000	Sonoma County Junior Tennis Association, Grant Writer Santa Rosa, California
Summer 2000	U.S. Department of Interior, U.S. Census Bureau North Coast Region Census Enumerator Eureka, California
Mar 1999 – Oct 1999	Sonoma, Mendocino, and Lake Counties – United Way

	After School Site Coordinator Santa Rosa, CA 95401
1994 – 1997	County of Sonoma – Clerk Typist III Department of Health Services Santa Rosa, CA 95403
1991 – 1994	County of Sonoma – Clerk Typist II District Attorney’s Office Santa Rosa, CA 95403
Mar 1990 – June 1991	Law Offices of Lysbeth Goodman, Stanley Greenberg, and Paul Jamond Office Manager Santa Rosa, CA 95403
1998-1990 1985-1987 1981-1983	Macy’s California – Sales Associate Santa Rosa Plaza, Santa Rosa, California
1987 – 1988	Law Offices of Larson and Weinberg Receptionist and Law Library Manager San Francisco, CA 94110
Summer 1981	Hewlett-Packard – Summer Intern Research and Development Santa Rosa, CA 95403

Volunteerism:

2003 – 2006	Lake County NAACP, Chapter President, Clearlake Oaks, CA
2002 – 2005	Northern California United States Tennis Association (NorCal USTA) Executive Committee Member, Junior Recreation Division Santa Rosa, CA
1992 – 2005	Redwood Empire Elks, Temple No. 1288, past Vice-Daughter Ruler Co-Chair, Annual Martin Luther King Jr. Community Festival Santa Rosa, CA
2000	Young Adult Missionary Services (YAMS) People’s AME Zion Church Syracuse, NY
1999 – 2000	Lake County Race Unity Day Planning Committee and Mistress of Ceremony Lakeport, CA
1998	Sonoma State University Inter-Cultural Center Black Students’ Union High School Day Academic Panel Commentator

	Rohnert Park, CA
	Sonoma County African/African American Women Kwanzaa Celebration Planning Committee Santa Rosa, CA
	Konocti Youth Soccer League Assistant Coach Lakeport, CA
1996 – 1998	Riviera Elementary School Parent-Volunteer Kelseyville, CA
1995 – 1996	SEIU Local Union 707 Executive Board Member, Clerical Representative Santa Rosa, CA
	Sonoma County Department of Health Services Multicultural Advisory Committee Santa Rosa, CA
1994 – 1995	Private Industry Council Mentor Program Santa Rosa, CA
	Santa Rosa Junior High Youth 2000 Program – Cultural Awareness Panelist Santa Rosa, CA
1991	Rohnert Park PeeWee Baseball League Team Coach Rohnert Park, CA
	Santa Rosa City School District Career Faire Panelist Santa Rosa, CA