ABSTRACT

Title of Dissertation:	**ON THE EDGE OF FREEDOM: FREE BLACK COMMUNITIES, ARCHAEOLOGY, AND THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD**
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Dissertation Directed By:	**Professor Paul A. Shackel, Department of Anthropology**

"On the Edge of Freedom" is an interdisciplinary study of five free black communities that functioned as Underground Railroad sites along the southern borders of Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois. Small rural free black communities along the borders of the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers were situated in the landscape to offer sanctuary to runaways as first points of entry within often violent and racially hostile southern regions of the northern border states.

I worked with National Forest Service archaeologists, universities, and private non-profit preservation groups. By combining archaeology, with oral and documentary history, genealogy, and cultural landscape studies, I contribute new comparative and theoretical models for explicating African-American history, and

identifying and mapping undocumented Underground Railroad sites. The resulting geography of resistance reveals the risks African Americans endured in the cause of their own liberation. Blacks who participated in the subversive work of the Underground Railroad knew the level of violence to which whites would resort in response to black defiance in the face of oppression.

Interrelated families played a central role in the establishment of the frontier settlements. Exclusive and independent of white abolitionist activities, virtually every nineteenth-century black settlement, urban or rural, offered some form of assistance to those escaping slavery. African-American, as well as white, Underground Railroad workers were loosely organized to offer assistance within their separate religious denominations although they worked across racial lines.

For four out of the five sites, I demonstrate the relationship between the independent black church and the Underground Railroad. Methodist minister and fourth bishop of the African Methodist Episcopal Church, William Paul Quinn, who was instrumental in the spread of Methodism to the northwest, established two churches associated with Underground Railroad sites in this study.

Maps, in conjunction with archaeological techniques, are crucial to the identification and recovery of these enclaves. By mapping free black settlements, and black churches, new Underground Railroad routes emerge from the shadows of larger, nearby, better-known Quaker and abolitionist sites. Mapping little known African American Underground Railroad routes has implications for African American preservation initiatives and heritage tourism.

ON THE EDGE OF FREEDOM: FREE BLACK COMMUNITIES,

ARCHAEOLOGY, AND THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD

By

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PREFACE

At best, informal interviews reveal the Underground Railroad as poorly understood beyond the network of scholars, African-American studies students, and experts working in the field. Harvard graduates appear no more knowledgeable than high school students, blacks no more than whites. For more than a century and a half, a mythic story of kindly Quaker Friends[1] helping brave yet frightened fugitive slaves dominated America's retelling of this historic episode. Harriet Tubman, perhaps the country's best known and least understood historic figure, is most closely and consistently identified with the movement.[2]

On the Edge of Freedom reinterprets romanticized representations of the Underground Railroad. The image of the solitary man, escaping slavery on foot, aided by white abolitionists working within a loosely organized network, gives way to nuanced understandings of the elastic, reticulated network of routes, and methods of subterfuge employed by African Americans and their accomplices required to sustain the Underground Railroad movement.

Project Overview

In this study, I examine the relationship between pre-Civil War northern free black communities and the Underground Railroad. I combine historical,

archaeological, and cultural landscape methods, to provide a comparative analysis and a geographically informed understanding of Underground Railroad activities, settlement patterns, land use, and self-determination strategies employed by African Americans who lived in five rural communities: Rocky Fork, New Philadelphia and Miller Grove in Illinois, Lick Creek, Indiana, and Poke Patch, Ohio.

In addition to placing the sites in historical context, I incorporate recent histories by presenting contemporary interpretations and preservation initiatives. Heritage tourism occupies an influential position within the field. As public, institutions, and the Nation seek less confrontational venues for discussions of race, interpretation of the Underground Railroad as an interracial, interdenominational effort among nineteenth-century Americans becomes a vehicle through which contemporary racial harmony can be imagined.

For the sites in this study, renewed interest in African American history as a cultural, historical, and tourist commodity, also drives preservation efforts, reflecting the partnership between history and archaeology, and heritage tourism. Through preservation of the landscape, the recently formed Rocky Fork Historic District Project in Alton, Illinois seeks to preserve the history of pristine park-line Rocky Fork and thwart encroaching development that would erase fleeting traces of Underground Railroad history. Local historians, private preservation groups, researchers and archaeologists representing the University of Maryland, College Park, the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, the Illinois State Museum, and the New Philadelphia Association are partnering to study New Philadelphia in Pike County, IL. National Forest Service (NFS) archaeologists conduct ongoing archaeological initiatives and

educational programs at the remaining sites. Through the NFS Passport in Time program, the public is learning about the Underground Railroad, archaeology, black history, and preservation associated with sites within Forest Service jurisdictions. With the exception of New Philadelphia, the archaeological sites are situated in the southern portions of Illinois, Indiana, and Ohio, along the Ohio River. New Philadelphia in Pike County was situated near the west central Illinois border, 13 miles north east of the Mississippi River.

Autonomous, strategic communal activism among the rural free black population in the North remains poorly understood. Running away constituted the most direct means of confronting and challenging slavery.[3] Key questions in Underground Railroad research center on the role of free blacks in effecting their own freedom and the freedom of their enslaved brethren, although some families had been freed for generations.

Dozens of flourishing black farming communities were founded in Ohio and Indiana, for example, between 1808 and the Civil War.[4] Free blacks, some of who had escaped slavery, exhibited a deep commitment to the project of self-determination. The little communities that existed in the rural mid-western and northern states in the antebellum period represent a unique stratum of African-American history beyond traditional themes of southern plantation slavery, and life in northeastern cities. Rural communal lifeways of this population stand as a discourse on freedom and self-determination as well as interracial cooperation, often within a surrounding environment of violent racial hostility. Free blacks understood the consequences of both enslavement and freedom and willing took extraordinary risks

to help family members still held in bondage and to relieve the plight of the enslaved whenever and wherever possible.[5]

I use Rocky Fork, Miller Grove, New Philadelphia, Lick Creek and Poke Patch to support the assertion that small rural free black communities along the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers were situated in the landscape to offer sanctuary and function as firsts line of defense along hostile and violent southern regions of Illinois, Indiana, and Ohio.[6] I impose an interdisciplinary structure that adds spatial dimension to historical analysis and incorporates the role of the landscape in Underground Railroad activities.

At the inception of the study, establishing a strong relationship between the Underground Railroad and free black border communities along the Ohio River in represented my primary research goal. The research expanded, however, as issues related to race, emancipation, political action, denominational religion, moral authority, legal status, migration, racial uplift, and liberty associated with these small settlements paralleled the larger collective realities of black life in the nineteenth century. Through collective and individual action, free blacks risked their freedom in a country often violently opposed to their decisions to work toward emancipation through the Underground Railroad.

Preface Endnotes

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[1] As a point of clarification, Friends, when capitalized refers to a member of the Quaker sect traditionally known as The Society of Friends.

[2] At the inception of the dissertation writing process, no less than seven biographies of Tubman were anticipated, three of which have been published, Jean McMahon Humez, *Harriet Tubman: The Life and the Life Stories* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2003); Catherine Clinton, *Harriet Tubman: The Road to Freedom* (New York: Little, Brown and Company, 2004); Kate Clifford Larson, *Bound for the Promised Land: Harriet Tubman, Portrait of an American Hero* (New York: Ballantine Books, 2004).

[3] Edward Michael Groth, "Forging Freedom in the Mid-Hudson Valley: The End of Slavery and the Formation of a Free African-American Community in Dutchess County, New York, 1770-1850." (PhD Diss. State University of New York at Binghamton, 1994).

[4] C. Peter Ripley, ed. *The Black Abolitionist Papers* V, V vols. (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1992). Hereafter cited as *BAP*.

[5] Larry Gara, *The Liberty Line: The Legend of the Underground Railroad* (Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 1961). *BAP*, III; Herbert Aptheker, *To Be Free: Pioneering Studies in Afro-American History* (New York: Carol Publishing Group, 1991, 1948).

[6] Keith P. Griffler, *Front Line of Freedom: African Americans and the Forging of the Underground Railroad in the Ohio Valley* (Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 2004).

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

During the course of my research, I encountered Charlotte Johnson, which began my association with the Rocky Fork settlement. Through Charlotte I was introduced to Charles Benjamin Townsend, Clementine Kennedy, Rich Edwards, John Matlock, and the members of the New Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church at Rocky Fork all of whom shared their family histories, records, and photos. Clementine Kennedy fed me and provided a glimpse of the delicious food mentioned in various narratives and remembered by longtime residents. She treated me as a family member. It was a pleasure to attend church services with her. Thank you to the Green/Hawkins family for their warm hospitality in inviting me to attend their family reunion in 2002. I thank each of the Rocky Fork descendants for sharing the richness of their African-American family legacy. I am particularly indebted to Charlotte Johnson for her intellectual generosity and her meticulous attention to factual detail, and to her and her husband, Cyrus, and to Evelyn and her husband Harold Johnson for their hospitality during my visits to Alton.

Over the past four years I worked closely with Mary McCorvie, Heritage Officer and Forest Archaeologist on the Shawnee National Forest at Murphysboro, IL. Both Vicki Devenport and Elizabeth Fuller working with the Shawnee National generously shared their research and their ideas. Through efforts of National Forest Service employees, I was able to meet descendents of the Miller Grove community, James Crimm, Jessie McClure and to conduct a telephone interview with Wilbur McClure. Through McCorvie's work and the work and support of Heritage Officers and Forest Archaeologists, Angie Krieger on the Hoosier National Forest and Ann Cramer on the Wayne National Forest, I was able to collect the data necessary for this

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0   100   200

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(From *Front Line of Freedom.* Research sites added)

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INTRODUCTION

This study stands at the confluence of history and memory, and introduces dynamic multidisciplinary theories and methods to the study of the Underground Railroad and free black communities. The Underground Railroad remains ossified in American memory as the monolithic work of Harriet Tubman, and kindly Quakers from Ohio, or is misunderstood as an actual train, complete with tracks. Analysis reflecting change over time and place is finally emerging from the "thrilling" events and secret hiding places of American lore. The Underground Railroad now suffers under the weight of a long held cliché; it was "neither underground nor a railroad."[1] Yet even this inaccurate observation obscures the complexity of the movement, which was, at times, both physically and metaphorically underground, and frequently employed the railroad to transport its "passengers."[2]

I analyze five pre-Civil War free black settlements in the Northwest Territory states of Illinois, Indiana, and Ohio. Incorporating the Underground Railroad, archaeology, history, and landscape studies as elements within a multidisciplinary comparative and analytical frame, my study adds spatial and geographic dimension to historical documentation. The resulting geography of resistance yields a reinterpretation of the Underground Railroad with alternative parameters for understanding African American involvement in the cause of their own freedom.

I use Rocky Fork, Miller Grove, New Philadelphia, in Illinois, Lick Creek in Indiana, and Poke Patch in Ohio to support the assertion that small rural free black communities along the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers were situated in the landscape to

offer sanctuary and function as first points of entry into hostile southern regions of Illinois, Indiana, and Ohio.

By applying an east to west paradigm as opposed to the traditional south to north orientation, from the southern states "to Canada" that dominates Underground Railroad literature, maps, and preservation efforts,[3] I argue for the primacy of a fourth domain comprised of African Americans, their institutions and settlements essential to the success of the freedom seekers' efforts. The fourth domain, communal work of free blacks, lays beyond the traditional abolitionist's homes, documented routes, and anti-slavery societies closely associated with Underground Railroad activities.

The Underground Railroad operated through the free black church, with congregations of interrelated families rivaling institutions as major forces for social change. Within black communities as well as within the black church, extended families were the fundamental organizational unit. Black denominations, particularly the African Methodist Episcopal (AME), Baptist, and AME Zion (AMEZ) were deeply involved in, and crucial to, the success of the Underground Railroad. In concert with black organizations such as the Free and Accepted Masons,[4] the church played an integral role in expansion of the Underground Railroad in the Midwest. William Paul Quinn, following the guiding principles of racial uplift, education, and aid to the fugitive espoused by Bishop Allen, co-founder of the AME church, led the church west of the Alleghenies.

Interracial cooperative associations that developed through abolitionist and anti-slavery societies, vigilance committees, Black National Conventions, and other organizations such as the American Missionary Association (AMA), bound like-

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minded women and men together across the country offering opportunities to congregate and perhaps strategize. I found interdenominational cooperation among blacks or among whites was less common than interracial cooperation between blacks and whites.

Generational family connections of abolitionists from the Revels brothers to the Shadd family to the Beecher family, superimpose an important cohesive interpersonal, familial, and organizational structure to the Underground Railroad, particularly during the first half of the nineteenth-century. Lastly, I conclude the temporal range of this study with the Civil War and subsequent passage of the Civil Rights Amendments mirroring the ultimate goals of abolitionists.

Throughout the text, I use the terms African American, and black interchangeably, and colored or Negro within direct quotes. Nineteenth century African-American history is a particularly racialized subject requiring a racialized language. In recognition that blacks often intermarried with Native Americans and with whites, I use the nineteenth-century term, free people of color as well, to indicate throughout the text that I am referring to a range of black people within a racially diverse population.

I substitute terms such as "slave, fugitive slave," or "fugitive from justice" that criminalize the runaway and define the freedom seeking population from the enslaver's vantage point, with terms such as freedom seekers, runaways, and escapees to reflect revised language usage indicative of current approaches to the topic. Fugitive Slave Laws criminalized the runaway. Perpetuation of the language associated with the law simultaneously reinforces the image of the illegal runaway

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while failing to indict the legal injustice perpetuated by the law and by slavery. Similarly, following the lead of Henry Highland Garnet, I avoid general use of the term slave, preferring enslaved. In a letter dated April 10, 1857, Garnet was already using the term "enslaved" rather than slave.[5]

Methods

My study contributes several theoretical and methodological avenues of inquiry for Underground Railroad studies. Using the geography of resistance within a cultural landscape paradigm, I delineate westward moving influences on the development of the Underground Railroad. Freedom seekers were at one end of the freedom spectrum, the free black community at the other. Over time, the Underground Railroad rose as a central connector between the two. Virtually every nineteenth-century black settlement across the country, urban or rural offered some form of assistance or sanctuary to those escaping slavery, regardless of and independent from white abolitionist activities.

On the Edge of Freedom adds dimension to the study of the Underground Railroad, and extends the historical basis both temporally and geographically. Cultural landscape studies offer an ideal method for historicizing the African American experience and the history of the Underground Railroad, in particular. Until very recently, the discourse of geographers, preservationists, architectural historians, planners and environmentalists overlooked African-American experiences and contributions embedded in the landscape. Second only to judicial and constitutional mandates, the landscape has been effectively used as a medium of oppression against

African Americans from the inception of this country to this very day.[6]   Yet, landscape analysis is one of the most underrated avenues to historical awareness and understanding of African American history.[7]

"All human cultural landscapes have cultural meaning"[8] involving land use and manipulation. Specifically for this study, geophysical features that were used as natural shelters, routes and pathways, and settlements as well as houses are components of a cultural landscape critique. How people arranged themselves in the landscape; the quality of land they farmed; gardens and introduced flora within plant ecology, all fall within the cultural landscape approach. Certainly African Americans who were intimately tied to the land through knowledge derived from Africa, through the agricultural labor demands of slavery, and through national politicized racial agendas carried out in the landscape. Studies of how the landscape has been used as a form of both oppression and liberation inform the geography of resistance at the foundation of this study. The history of African Americans told through the landscape reveals a spatialized history with racial consequences writ large.

Most narratives, memoirs, and reminiscences reviewed acknowledge the involvement of blacks in the liberation effort. Though black settlements and homes are identified as sites of refuge, few details delineate the supporting communal infrastructure. Much of the work pertaining to the Underground Railroad and to the black communities that underpin its network relies on descriptive and narrative interpretations rather than on analytically critical interpretive frames, which I provide in this study.

Interdisciplinarity provides multiple strategies for thick descriptions[9] that tell

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a more complete story.   Relying solely on history or archaeology, or cultural landscape studies without oral narratives, for example, would result in the continuation of the narrow understandings and thin descriptions of both the free black community and the Underground Railroad that plagues these topics.   The limits of each discipline are readily apparent.

Archaeological methods and techniques, in combination with cultural landscape analysis facilitate study of people of color and their interactions with the landscape.   Archaeology reveals how blacks arranged themselves in the landscape, the material conditions of their lives, and makes retrieval of long forgotten settlement locations possible.   Archaeology, more than any other discipline is defining a new African-American landscape history.

My research is guided by the writings of Edward Soja who calls for "more critically revealing ways of looking at the combination of time and space, history and geography, period and region, sequence and simultaneity."[10] Soja envisions the rise of a "flexible and balanced critical theory that re-entwines the making of history with the social production of space, with the construction and configuration of human geographies." Soja calls for the "politicized spatiality of social life" that can be fitted into an interpretative significance of space within and beyond the contemporary privileging of history.[11] In privileging history over geography, the spatiality of social life was occluded. Therefore, my research infuses history with geography. I question the relationship between small, rural black settlements and the larger racialized, often hostile landscape surrounding the sites of refuge.

For southern portions of the northern border states research strategies should

resemble more that of Franklin and Schweninger[12] in the use of runaway ads, arrest records, and legal cases. All the sites in this study, situated as they were along state and river borders functioned as first points of refuge in a loosely defined Underground Railroad network in the hostile southern portions of Illinois, Indiana, and Ohio. In supporting my argument for strategic location, I present dispirit sources including oral narratives and fiction not so much to prove a point as to present the premise for an ongoing debate.

Among the most salient contributions of this study are maps and other visual materials used to contextualize the sites. I question the relationship between the black enclaves and their better-known counterparts, Underground Railroad station stops in nearby larger cities or towns. Maps, in conjunction with archaeological techniques are crucial to the identification and recovery of these enclaves. By mapping free black settlements, and particularly black churches, new Underground Railroad routes emerge that were obscured due to proximity of the settlements to larger, better known Quaker and abolitionist sites mapped primarily by Wilbur Siebert.[13]

The nature of the scholarship surrounding the Underground Railroad privileges the more readily available written record and prominent participants. From a historical perspective, rather than dismiss oral histories, purported lore, legend, and myth, I consider them a unique class of evidence that may lead to historical knowledge. The challenge is not to conflate inaccuracy with veracity while recognizing the liminal status of non-traditional lines of evidence, which must be used responsibly in the service of historical investigation. I use a variety of sources to support my research, some of which are solidly historical, other references are

anecdotal but are presented here in an effort to be inclusive rather than condemnatory and dismissive of sources at the risk of losing potentially pertinent data.

To that end, this work is informed by *Making Alternative Histories: The Practice of Archaeology History in Non-Western Settings* which advocates archaeologists interrogate and examine "the intersection of myth, history, and archaeology in their search for histories that fit the needs and circumstances of their communities" so that contemporary archaeology can learn from the problems confronting archaeologists who are trying to recuperate erased historical memory" as well as meet community needs.[14] In accord with contemporary applications of Underground Railroad research, a reconceptualized archaeology is a historical social science that relates the study of past societies to the present and incorporates the historical value of oral accounts, folklore and folk life, and written documents that reflect the voices of groups whose views of history are commonly ignored or erased. Historical approaches based on local and county histories, written records, oral accounts, and ethnographic observations within contemporary archaeology allow historical landscape interpretations.[15]

Historiography

The Underground Railroad arrived at its place in American memory via contemporaneous slave narratives, works of fiction such as *Uncle Tom's Cabin*[16] and newspaper accounts of escapes, primarily in abolitionist papers. First writing in installments for the *National Era*, in 1851 shortly after passage of the Fugitive Slave Law, Harriet Beecher Stowe would publish her classic work in 1852.[17] In addition to

these primary sources, reminiscences and memoirs written after the fact by direct participants in the Underground Railroad; writings based on stories gathered from informants; narratives of fugitive slaves, or historical works comprise the 19th century texts.[18]

One of the most enduring narratives of the Underground Railroad is Sarah Bradford's presentation of Harriet Tubman's biography in *Scenes in the Life of Harriet Tubman*.[19] Generally, once the danger of arrest and financial ruin subsided during the post-war period, Underground Railroad participants such as Tubman or would-be ethnographer, William Still, who published transcriptions based on oral interviews carefully collected from freedom seekers as they passed through his Philadelphia office of the Vigilance Committee, began to reveal the secrets of their clandestine life. In 1872, the same year in which Still compiled his classic American text, *The Underground Railroad*,[20] Henry Wilson, one of the earliest professional historians to include the Underground Railroad as a topic in his writings, produced *The History of the Rise and Fall of the Slave Power in America*.[21]

In 1879, Levi Coffin revealed the extent of his Underground Railroad work in Indiana and later in Cincinnati. *Reminiscences of Levi Coffin, the Reputed President of the Underground Railroad* coupled with Harriet Beecher Stowe's transformation of Coffin into kindly Quaker Simon Halliday in *Uncle Tom's Cabin* were the texts most responsible for perpetuating and cementing the myth of the kindly Quaker Friend in American historical memory.[22] In combination with Lydia Maria Child's 1854 biography of Isaac Hooper, *Isaac T. Hopper: A True Life*[23] the three works tenaciously linked Quakers to the Underground Railroad to the exclusion of all other

participants while simultaneously minimizing African-American agency. Quakers are diarists and their tradition of writing and personal recordation also shaped the literature. In the same year Coffin produced *Reminiscences*, Eber Pettit wrote of his and his father's extensive involvement in the Underground Railroad in Western New York. The majority of the these works were written by direct participants in the Underground Railroad 10 to 15 years after the close of the Civil War.[24]

Continuing Still's tradition of Underground Railroad writings focused on Pennsylvania, R. C. Smedley, M.D. wrote *History of the Underground Railroad in Chester and the Neighboring Counties of Pennsylvania*[25] in 1883. By 1896, H.U. Johnson referred to the UGRR as "one of the most wonderful and thrilling features of our national history" in *From Dixie to Canada: Romances and Realities of the Underground Railroad*. Johnson, who was familiar with the writings of Coffin, Pettit and others, wrote from personal observations and visitations based on systematic research, claiming to have "lived amid its excitements for years."[26]

Frequent use of the term thrilling sensationalizes the plight of the runaway, diminishes the historical credibility of the authors and the episodes, obscures the danger involved, and situates the Underground Railroad as an adventure. These works were, however, reflective of the times, written as dramatic entertainment for the nineteenth-century reading public. Slave narratives and Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* began the work of using literature pertaining to the Underground Railroad to influence public opinion and bring about social change. Punishment of blacks such as Sam Green who was sent to prison for ten years for possessing a copy, indicates the political power of this work.[27]

History professor Wilbur Siebert's enduring and influential, *The Underground Railroad From Slavery to Freedom*[28] marks the initial efforts on the part of a professional historian to methodically codify the movement. Although Siebert's work is one of the seminal productions of the Underground Railroad genre, the text is not without problems. He relied on informants from numerous states who responded to his letters and queries. In many instances, this method obliterated the African American involvement in the cause of their own freedom and the freedom of their families, loved-ones, friends, and acquaintances. As I discuss throughout the text, operation of the Underground Railroad relied heavily on discrete lines and routes with few individuals in possession of knowledge beyond a small regional network.

Siebert fails to mention, for example any involvement of the black churches that figured so prominently in the movement. In addition to this oversight, he misidentifies several of the African American Underground Railroad agents, misrepresenting as white Henry Bibb, Frederick Douglass, Robert Purvis, Stephen Smith, William Whipper, and Rev. Charles B. Ray, for example.[29] Underground Railroad expert Ronald D. Palmer has identified 21 African American Underground Railroad operators misidentified by Siebert. Palmer's list does not include the names of three additional women and four men bringing the total of misidentified individuals to 28.[30] As other state, local, and regional researchers review Siebert's list, further corrections will undoubtedly emerge. *Underground Railroad* fails to mention or acknowledge notable Illinois conductors John Jones and H.O. Wagoner and the stalwart work of Chapman Harris, George DeBaptiste, and William Lambert in Indiana.[31]

DuBois' extensive discussion of Underground Railroad activities in his 1907 *Economic Co-operation Among Negro Americans* relied almost exclusively on Siebert's work. By 1915, Col. William M. Cockrum of Indiana authored one of the last works of the genre.   He dedicated *History of the Underground Railroad as it Was Conducted by the Anti-Slavery League* to the memory of his father, one of "five brave, true-hearted men who gave their time and means unstintingly to help liberate the lowly slave."[32]

No major works on the Underground Railroad appeared during the twenty-five years between 1915 and 1941 when Henrietta Buckmaster wrote *Let My People Go* followed by *Flight To Freedom* in 1958.[33] It would require an additional 63 years beyond Siebert's production of *Underground Railroad* for historian Larry Gara to turn his attention to the subject. Until recently, Gara's 1961 classic work, *The Liberty Line: The Legend of the Underground Railroad*, [34] was one of the few contemporary works written by a historian. The work is largely a review and reassessment of many of the major Underground Railroad texts.

In the Preface to the 1967 edition, Gara reiterates the major focus his findings, the active role of enslaved African Americans in facilitating their flight, in contrast to "their passive roles in the legendary accounts."[35] Gara calls for further study of strategies of self-determination, but fails to recognize the crucial role of the free black community. He was not the first to call attention to the active role of African Americans in affecting their own freedom, however. Larry Gara followed the lead of Carter G. Woodson, W.E.B. DuBois, Charles Wesley, and Earl Conrad before him in observing that blacks were the main actors in the drama that was the Underground

Railroad.[36]   Each decried the lack of inclusion of African Americans in the scholarship. To paraphrase Conrad, a history of the Underground Railroad that excluded blacks had been both consciously distorted and incompetently written.[37]

Gara's more recent clarion call made it clear that historians and scholars had marginalized and disempowered African Americans in one of the central episodes of their black historical being. Difficulties recovering historical legacy from a factional, loose knit, reticulated interracial network of individuals, institutions, and anti-slavery societies are understandable. A lack of preservation of historic black communities and enclaves, which I argue are central to Underground Railroad efforts, further complicates responses to Gara's scholarly demands.

Although the topic was rarely explored or analyzed by mainstream historians, study of the Underground Railroad survived through the work of black scholars, historians, academicians, local and regional historical societies, doctors, lawyers, businessmen, and in family histories, both oral and written. Charles L. Blockson, John Hope Franklin and Alfred A. Moss, Jr., Benjamin Quarles, Dorothy Sterling, James Oliver Horton and Lois Horton follow other notable African American historians and scholars such as William Wells Brown, W.E.B. DuBois, Carter G. Woodson, Charles Wesley, and Benjamin Brawley among others who included analysis of the Underground Railroad within their larger works.[38]

Fourteen years after Gara's work, Charles Blockson reignited interest in the topic with the 1981 publication of an historical account of African American involvement in the Underground Railroad in Pennsylvania, *The Underground Railroad in Pennsylvania*. His 1984 *National Geographic* article, "Escape from

Slavery: The Underground Railroad" and his 1987 seminal work *The Underground Railroad*, largely a compilation of classic narratives, thrust the topic to the fore of American historical memory.[39]

Partly in response to historical neglect and scholarly inattention, The United States Congress mandated a study of the Underground Railroad in 1990 and the National Park Service (NPS) produced *The Underground Railroad Special Resource Study* in 1995. Three of the four subsequent NPS thematic publications are research guides on the subject intended for contemporary scholarship.[40] A historiography of texts pertaining to the Underground Railroad reveals why Congressional intervention into historical matters was necessary.

Resurgence occurred in 1999. One of the most important works of that year analyzed runaway slaves. *Runaway Slaves: Rebels on the Plantation* by John Hope Franklin and Loren Schweninger complements Underground Railroad research and focuses on strategies employed by escapees throughout the South. *Hidden in Plain View: A Secret Story of Quilts and the Underground Railroad* written by author Jacqueline Tobin, and art history professor Raymond Dobard is a unique work within the Underground Railroad genre.[41] Based on oral narrative, lore, and quilts, the text used material and expressive culture to present a little known regional dimension of the Underground Railroad. Based on use of oral sources and a lack of hard evidence, the book was met with both skepticism and enthusiasm.[42] As I advocate throughout this work, lore must be maintained as an important component of Underground Railroad research. Indeed, Dobard has quelled some skepticism by his continued discovery of antique tools corresponding to the coded patterns of the quilts.[43]

Bruce Chadwick produced *Traveling the Underground Railroad: A Visitor's Guide to More than 300 Sites*, also in 1999. And finally, Emma Marie Trusty's 1999 work, *The Underground Railroad: Ties that Bound Unveiled* is an excellent example of the effective combination of documentation, oral and family histories of Underground Railroad involvement in Cumberland, Cape May, Atlantic and Salem Counties in New Jersey.[44]

National Park Service directives resulting from Congressional mandates continue to impact the literature of the field, particularly at the State and local levels. Included here are a few notable examples among the works currently available from the Indiana Historical Bureau. The state of Indiana also has a number of texts on African American history in general and the Underground Railroad more specifically. These texts include Diane Perrine Coon's comprehensive work, *Southeastern Indiana's Underground Railroad Routes and Operations* produced in 2001 as a project of the State of Indiana Department of Natural Resources, Division of Historic Preservation and Archaeology and the NPS.[45] *The Underground Railroad in Floyd County, Indiana* by Pamela Peters continues the work of bringing Indiana's Underground History to light.[46] In 2001, Hillary Russell produced a *Final Research Report: The Operation of the Underground Railroad in Washington, D.C., C. 1800-1860* as part of a cooperative agreement between the Historical Society of Washington and the NPS.

With the production of *Underground Railroad in Pennsylvania*, William J. Switala continued the work of highlighting Pennsylvania's rich Underground Railroad history.[47] *Just Over the Line: Chester County and the Underground*

Railroad, a catalogue written by William C. Kashatus to accompany an exhibition organized by the Chester County Historical Society again highlighted Pennsylvania's role in the Underground Railroad, The exhibition relied on alternative scholarship, using images, sculpture and other forms of material culture to convey the story of the Underground Railroad in Chester County, Pennsylvania.[48]

Glenette Tilley Turner, one of Illinois' Underground Railroad experts authored *The Underground Railroad in Illinois* in 2001.[49] Two texts written in 2002 center on Ohio and Kentucky. Ann Hagedorn's *Beyond the River* focuses on John Rankin, John Parker and Underground Railroad activism in Ripley, Ohio.[50] *Fugitive Slaves and the Underground Railroad in the Kentucky Borderland* by J. Blaine Hudson investigates the borderland, a strip of land between northern and southern states as represented by southern Ohio and northern Kentucky.[51]

Two Canadian works add to a very informative chapter in Robin Winks' *The Blacks in Canada: A History*. The 2002 work of Adrienne L. Shadd, Afua Cooper and Karolyn Smardz Frost, *The Underground Railroad: Next Stop, Toronto!*, although targeted toward a young audience, provides excellent information about the Underground Railroad in Toronto.[52] A new 2004 work by Canadian Bryan Prince, *I Came As A Stranger-the Underground Railroad* was written on behalf of 11 Ontario Underground Railroad sites comprising the Central Ontario Network for Black History and the African Canadian Heritage Network who partner to promote Ontario Black history.[53] Both works broaden and add definition to the amorphous phrase "to Canada" so frequently found in Underground Railroad literature.   Judging from the number of recent publications, scholars are exhibiting renewed interest in the in the

richness of the Underground legacy.

Although I rely on a range of texts, the resurgence of scholarship provided a new foundation upon which to build arguments and base my conclusions. A most recent publication, *Front Line of Freedom* by Keith P. Griffler, is a case in point. Griffler's findings mirror my own, particularly "the historical agency of oppressed peoples in their own liberation," and the critical importance of black settlements along the Ohio River border.[54] He, too, links the study of the Underground Railroad with struggles to establish African American communities. Likewise, he found "the free African American population of the North suffered incessant persecution designed to disrupt and ultimately dislodge." I found this incessant persecution directly linked to African American migration.[55] My work diverges from Griffler's in one important area. Although Griffler reinforces my findings pertaining to the centrality of the black church, he fails to adequately explore this aspect of black communities.[56]

Oral Tradition

The combined use of history, archaeology, and landscape studies reflects the inadequacy of a single discipline for understanding the complex, history associated with the five sites in this study. Traditional sources reflect a history that was safe to tell. For the Underground Railroad, oral accounts and family histories are essential research components. Oral sources as presented for New Philadelphia by Juliet Walker in *Free Frank*, for example, are frequently the sole source of evidence for illegal and dangerous activities such as aiding those escaping slavery. Documenting

connections based on oral sources presents unique challenges. NPS observes that this class of evidence "should always be corroborated by other kinds of evidence."[57] Oral tradition is often the starting point of Underground Railroad research. The question remains, what should be the position of the scholar in the face of uncorroborated evidence? Historical research for the Rocky Fork site, for example, is scant; a wealth of oral testimony exists, however.[58] The families retain an important sense of history and the local community has preserved and rescued much of its history through genealogical studies in addition to recording and transcribing oral narratives. However, descriptive language associated with oral histories carries an inherent dismissive bias. Words such as myth and lore imply a lack of historical foundation, and perpetuate destabilization the oral record.   Caught in a trap between the dismissiveness of historians toward oral accounts, and fragmentary documentary sources, African American families heavily rely on treasured oral histories.

Archaeological Sources

The majority of rural free black settlements exist solely as archaeological resources. Although three of the five sites in this study have not been excavated, in the broadest sense, each site has an archaeological component. Archaeological investigations begin with historical contextualization, surveying, and testing.   In many instances, rural black settlements have faded from memory leaving only cemeteries to mark their former existence. Before the final phases of archaeology can be undertaken we must move through the initial phases of archaeological investigation, identifying, locating, and mapping the settlements. Following the

example of Xenia Cord in Indiana the settlements must be remembered and located in the landscape.[59] At the Harriet Tubman archaeological site in Bucktown outside Cambridge on Maryland's Eastern Shore, archaeologists Bonnie Ryan and John Sidel employed a variety of pre-excavation, remote sensing techniques in an attempt to define the boundaries and locate potential foundations associated with a site thought to be her birthplace.[60]

As a result of archaeological attention sites and individuals associated with them often come to the fore. For example, archaeology is redefining the life of antislavery Congressman and founder of the Republican Party, Thaddeus Stevens, who was the guiding force behind the 14th and 15th Amendments. Excavations in Lancaster, Pennsylvania by James Delle and Mary Ann Levine unearthed a cistern in a courtyard of a house belonging to one of America's most important nineteenth-century politicians. In one of the more compelling recent archaeological findings, archaeologists discovered an apparent hiding place for runaways in an altered cistern.

The discovery redirected historical research as the 20-year partnership between Stevens and Lydia Hamilton Smith, a mulatto woman who acted as his housekeeper, property manager and confidante became apparent. Heretofore unnoticed potential historical and Underground Railroad connections among Smith, the surrounding black community, and Stevens are emerging as a result of the archaeological work. Archaeologists sought further understanding of the nature of the Underground Railroad in Lancaster and the relationships among participants, black and white, through excavations behind the back lot of both Steven's home and Smith's real estate holdings.[61]

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Archaeology has a strong influence on the field of preservation, as well. Plans for the hotel/convention center were redesigned although Steven's home will be partially demolished to make way for the complex. Preservationists are actively working to save a site that held little meaning for the city before the archaeological discovery. In an opposing dynamic, preservationists in New Philadelphia turned to the recuperative impact of archaeology on history and memory as they seek to redefine and reconstruct New Philadelphia as a site of memory.

In 1971 archaeologists Robert Ascher and Charles H. Fairbanks asked "Why excavate at a place lived in a time for which documents are abundant?"[62] Realizing that archaeology would again be limited by historical fact and constrained by historical sources, Ascher and Fairbanks rejected the discipline's argument that archaeology supplemented historical analysis.[63] I argue that archaeology answers questions history knew not to ask. As is the case with the sites in this study, and the Underground Railroad sites beginning to be explored, the partnership between history and archaeology opens new strata of inquiry into the African-American experience.

Although further analysis of the relationship between history and archaeology is outside the scope of this dissertation, important questions and concerns remain for the field of Underground Railroad studies, particularly in the area of preservation.[64]

Overview

Rich historical narratives emerged from archaeological resources, geographical interpretation, historical documentation, legal mandates, and oral histories for the five sites. Issues pertaining to black empowerment through

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agrarianism; racial attitudes and abolitionist strategies; colonization and migration; liberty and self-emancipation; the impact of religious sectarianism on interracial cooperation, and African-American strategies for equal rights emerge from localized site specific studies associated with the Underground Railroad, exposing a microcosm of nineteenth-century black experiences in rural farm settlements across the North. The points of analysis brought forth by Underground Railroad studies include race, slavery, geography, the family, moral authority, geopolitics, migration and borderlands, the law, religion, world events, civil disobedience, and political action in the face of injustice.

Despite the multidisciplinary approach, this study has been all the more difficult, however, because it is, for the most part, the history of "quiet persons" little known beyond their localities, rather than the more historically accessible public agitators, political activists, and financial backers. *On the Edge of Freedom* presents the history and archaeology of anonymous persons whose actions were deemed more important than their identities. Siebert suggests that the quiet actors were "members of a class that historians find…exceedingly difficult to bring within their field of view."[65] Added to this quietism are the many persons in this study who acted under the most hostile conditions. Extremely dangerous, life-threatening nature of their work necessitated greater secrecy and caution than the better-known work of Pennsylvania and other Northern abolitionists, for example. Siebert suggested that the distance from danger correlated with public knowledge—the closer to danger, the greater the secrecy. If discovered, free blacks faced persistent risks from kidnapping, imprisonment, the specter of reenslavement, and violent retaliation by whites.

In the chapters that follow, family and church merge to form community history, which in turn informs black history. In speaking of the rich written legacy of literate free blacks, and the documentary record associated with those unable to read or write, Mary Frances Berry and John Blassingame remind researchers that such sources provide "a panoramic view of free blacks, their sentiments, personalities, ideologies, and place in American society.[66] Add this to Ira Berlin's comments on the family as the fundamental historical unit, "If the family is the building block of society, it is also the keystone of historical understanding. Nowhere is this more evident than in the study of black people who were free in the slave societies of the Americas."[67] The remaining chapters reconfigure existing scholarship and draw from new archaeological landscape discoveries, in combination with oral and historical sources, to yield increased knowledge of the hidden history of African Americans.

Each chapter of the study engages different points of analyses developed according to existing historical data, level of archaeological investigation, and available family history. Since few eighteenth-and nineteenth-century homes owned or sites occupied by African American families have survived, alternative strategies, such as site excavations combined with documentary sources must be used to inform the social history of African American settlements outside the south.[68]

Endnotes Introduction

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[1] See for example, S. S. Knabenshue, "The Underground Railroad," in *Ohio Archaeological and Historical Publications* 14 (Columbus: Fred J. Heer, 1905):396-403; Bertram Herbert, "National Park

Service, National Historic Landmark, Underground Railroad Archaeological Initiative." National Park Service, Jan. 6, 1997; Ripley, "The Underground Railroad."

[2] Most descriptions of underground passageways are relegated to myth or legend. The following narrative is typical, "One steady friend Quaker, living in quiet and imposing residence for the times, without the slightest indication of a basement, cellar or underground rooms; had a square [h]ole cut in the center of his parlor floor; a trap door fit in this hole so closely as to leave no sign. The floor was covered with a fine Brussels carpet, and under this apartment was a commodious room in which half a dozen fugitives or more could sit in comfort and security and listen to the officers of the law searching the premises for their hiding place. This is but one of the many devices for hiding away the fugitives. Then there were regular engineers or conductors, in short, pilots to convey fugitives from one "Station" to another. I myself piloted two companies of "runaways," some thirty miles on their way from the station, southwest of where Farmland, Indiana, now stands, to one northeast of Camden (Pennville) in Jay County. From Rev. Thomas Addington, *Jim Baker: A Thrilling Episode of Ante-Bellum Days: A True Story of the Oppressed Race Among Friends and Foes* (Winchester, IN: A.C. Beeson and Sons, The Journal, 1898), 111. Harriet Tubman rode the "iron horse," referring to the railroad, across the Suspension Bridge between Niagara Falls and Canada. Sarah Bradford, *Harriet Tubman: The Moses of Her People* (1886; Reprint ed. Bedford, MA: Applewood Books: 1993); Earl Conrad, *General Harriet Tubman* (Washington, DC: Associated Publishers, 1943). Wilbur Siebert identified the Illinois Central Railroad which was build in 1854, as one of the lines used in Illinois, "usually with the aid of an employee," "The Underground Railroad in Southern Illinois," 9.

[3] The most widely publicized map of the UGRR is in Wilbur Siebert, *The Underground Railroad from Slavery to Freedom* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1898).

[4] Hereafter referred to as Free Masons.

[5] Clara Merritt De Boer, "The Role of Afro-Americans in the Origin and Work of the American Missionary Association," (PhD Dissertation, Rutgers University, 1973), 189.

[6] See Grey Gundaker, ed. *Keep Your Head to the Sky: Interpreting African American Home Ground*. (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1998); George Lipsitz, *The Possessive Investment in Whiteness: How White People Profit from Identity Politics* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1998).

[7] Thomas Schlereth, "Preface: On Studying the Things They Left Behind," in Thomas J. Schlereth, ed. *Material Culture Studies in America*, (Nashville: The American Association for State and Local History, 1982), xiii.

[8] Peirce F. Lewis, "*Axioms for Reading the Landscape: Some Guides to the American Scene*," in ed. Schlereth, *Material Culture.*

[9] Clifford Gertz, The *Interpretation of Cultures* (New York: Basic Books, 1973; 2000).

[10] Edward W. Soja, *Postmodern Geographies: The Reassertion of Space in Critical Social Theory* (London: Verso, 1989), 2.

[11] *Ibid*., 11, 15.

[12] See John Hope Franklin and Loren Schweninger, *Runaway Slaves: Rebels on the Plantation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999).

[13] See fold out map in Siebert, *UGRR*.

[14] Peter R. Schmidt and Thomas C. Patterson, ed. *Making Alternative Histories: The Practice of Archaeology and History in Non-Western Settings* (Santa Fe: School of American Research Press, 1995), 13-5.

[15] Schmidt, *Alternative Histories*, 3, 10-11, 13-15.

[16] Harriet Beecher Stowe, *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (New York: Airmont Publishing Co., Inc., 1967).

[17] . The Institute for Advanced Technology in the Humanities, The University of Virginia, " Uncle Tom's Cabin & American Culture," Manuscript of Uncle Tom's Cabin, http://www.iath.virginia.edu/utc/index2f.html

[18] Elementary school educators find the UGRR a particularly rich resource. The numerous children's books written on the Underground Railroad and the several educational websites are excluded from this study. The political, educational, and social uses of the UGRR, and how and why educators use the UGRR are compelling dissertation topics.

[19] Sarah Bradford, *Scenes in the Life of Harriet Tubman* (Auburn, NY: W. J. Moses, 1869).

[20] William Still, *The Underground Railroad* (Philadelphia: Porter and Coates, 1872. Reprint, Ayer Company, Publishers, Inc. Salem, NH, 1992).

[21] Henry Wilson, *History of the Rise and Fall of the Slave Power in America,* Vol. II. (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1872; Reprinted New York: Negro Universities Press, 1969).

[22] Levi Coffin, *Reminiscences of Levi Coffin, the Reputed President of the Underground Railroad; Being a Brief History of the Labors of a Lifetime in Behalf of the Slave, with the Stories of Numerous Fugitives, Who Gained Their Freedom through His Instrumentality, and Many Other Incidents* (Cincinnati: Western Tract Society, 1879).

[23] Child, L., *Isaac T. Hopper: A True Life* (Boston: John P. Jewett and Company, 1854).

[24] H.U. Johnson, *From Dixie to Canada: Romances and Realities of the Underground Railroad* (Orwell, OH: H.U. Johnson, 1896).

[25] Robert Clemens Smedley, *History of the Underground Railroad in Chester and the Neighboring Counties of Pennsylvania* (1883; Reprint ed. New York: Negro Universities Press, 1968).

[26] Johnson, *From Dixie.*

[27] Sarah Bradford, *Harriet Tubman: The Moses of Her People* (1886; Reprint ed. Bedford, MA: Applewood Books: 1993).

[28] Siebert, *The UGRR.*

[29] *Ibid.*, Appendix E, 411, 414, 415; Benjamin Quarles, *Black Abolitionists* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1969).

[30] See also, Emma Marie Trusty, *The Underground Railroad, Ties That Bound Unveiled: A History of the Underground Railroad in Southern New Jersey from 1770 to 1861* (Philadelphia: Amed Literary, 1999), 13.

[31] See Emma Lou Thornbrough, *The Negro in Indiana before 1900: A Study in Minority* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985), 41.

[32] Col. William M. Cockrum, *History of the Underground Railroad as It Was Conducted by the Anti-Slavery League* (Oakland City, IN: J.W. Cockrum Printing Company, 1915. Reprint, Negro Universities Press, 1969).

[33] Henrietta Buckmaster [Henkle], *Let My People Go: The Story of the Underground Railroad and the Growth of the Abolition Movement* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1941; Reprint, Boston: Beacon Press, 1959) and *Flight to Freedom: The Story of the Underground Railroad* (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1958).

[34] Larry Gara, *The Liberty Line: The Legend of the Underground Railroad* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1967, with a new preface ed., 1996).

[35] *Ib*id.

[36] Woodson, A *Century*; W. E. B. Du Bois, ed. *Economic Co-Operation among Negro Americans*, 1907; Charles H. Wesley, *Neglected History: Essays in Negro History by a College President*. (Washington, DC: The Association for the Study of Negro Life and History, 1969), http://docsouth.unc.edu/church/dubois07/dubois.html#dub24

[37] Conrad, *Harriet Tubman*.

[38] Charles L. Blockson, "A Black Underground Resistance to Slavery, 1833-1860" *Pennsylvania Heritage* 4, No. 1 (1977): 29-33; *The Underground Railroad in Pennsylvania* (Jacksonville: Flame International, Inc., 1981); *The Underground Railroad* (Baltimore: Black Classics Press, 1994); *Hippocrene Guide to the Underground Railroad* (New York: Hippocrene Books, 1994); John Hope Franklin and Alfred A. Moss, Jr., *From Slavery to Freedom: A History of African Americans*, Eighth Edition ed. (Boston: McGraw Hill, 2000); Benjamin Quarles, *Black Abolitionists* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1969); Dorothy Sterling, *We Are Sisters: Black Women in the Nineteenth Century* (1984, Reissued W.W. Norton & Co., 1997); James Oliver Horton and Lois E. Horton, *Free People of Color: Inside the African American Community* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1993) and *Hard Road to Freedom: The Story of African America* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2001); William Wells Brown, *The Black Man; His Antecedents, His Genius, and His Achievements* 4th ed. (Miami: Mnemosyne Pub., Inc., 1969); W. E. B. Du Bois, ed. *Economic Co-Operation among Negro Americans. Report of a Study Made by Atlanta University, under the*

Patronage of the Carnegie Institution of Washington, D.C., Together with the Proceedings of the 12th Conference for the Study of the Negro Problems, Held at Atlanta University, on Tuesday, May the 28th, 1907. Electronic Edition, Documenting the American South, http://docsouth.unc.edu/church/dubois07/dubois.html#dub24; *The Negro* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1915. Reprint Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001); Carter G. Woodson, *A Century of Negro Migration* (New York: Russell and Russell, 1918. Reprint, 1969); and Charles H. Wesley, *The Story of the Negro Retold,* 4th ed. (Washington, D.C.: The Associated Publishers, Inc., 1935); Benjamin Brawley, *A Social History of the American Negro* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1921. Reprint, 2001. Mineola: Dover Publications, Inc.). See also, Earl Lewis, "To Turn as on a Pivot: Writing African Americans into a History of Overlapping Diasporas," *American Historical Review* Vol. 100, No. 3 (June 1995):765-787.

[39] Blockson, *The UGRR in Pennsylvania;* "Escape from Slavery: The Underground Railroad," *National Geographic,* (July 1984): 3-39; *The UGRR.*

[40] National Park Service, "The Underground Railroad: Official National Park Handbook." (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Interior, 1998); National Park Service, *Exploring a Common Past: Researching and Interpreting the Underground Railroad* (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Interior, 2000); National Register, History and Education, National Park Service, *Underground Railroad Resources in the United States: Theme Study* (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Interior, 2000).

[41] Franklin and Schweninger, *Runaway Slaves*; Jacqueline L. Tobin and Raymond G. Dobard, *Hidden in Plain View: A Secret Story of Quilts and the Underground Railroad* (New York: Double Day, 1999).

[42] Anastasia Ustinova, "An Underground Railroad Theory Being Questioned. *Grand Forks Herald.Com,* February 20, 2004. http://www.grandforks.com/mld/grandforks/news/8001794.htm

[43] Raymond Dobard lecture, Alton, Illinois, March 2003.

[44] Trusty, *Underground Railroad.*

[45] Diane Perrine Coon, *Southeastern Indiana's Underground Railroad Routes and Operations* (Louisville: State of Indiana Department of Natural Resources and NPS, 2001), http://www.statelib.lib.in.us/www/ihb/ugrr/ugrrbooks.html

[46] Pamela R. Peters, *The Underground Railroad* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Co., Inc., 2001).

[47] William J. Switala, *The Underground Railroad in Pennsylvania* (Mechanicsburg, Pa.: Stackpole Books, 2001).

[48] William C. Kashatus, *Just Over the Line: Chester County and the Underground Railroad* (University Park: Penn State University Press, 2002).

[49] Glennette Tilley Turner, *The Underground Railroad in Illinois* (Glen Ellyn, IL: Newman Educational Publishing, 2001).

[50] Ann Hagedorn, *Beyond the River: The Untold Story of the Heroes of the Underground Railroad* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2001).

[51] J. Blaine Hudson, *Fugitive Slaves and the Underground Railroad in the Kentucky Borderland* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, Inc., 2002).

[52] Robin W. Winks, *The Blacks in Canada: A History* 2ed. (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1997); Adrienne L. Shadd, Afua Cooper and Karolyn Smardz Frost. *The Underground Railroad: Next Stop, Toronto!* (Toronto, Ont: National Heritage Books, 2002).

[53] Jean Libby, e-mail communication to author.

[54] Keith P. Griffler, *Front Line of Freedom: African Americans and the Forging of the Underground Railroad in the Ohio Valley* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 2004), xi,

[55] *Ibid.,* xiii.

[56] *Ibid.,* 43-44.

[57] National Register, *Underground Railroad Resources in the United States, Theme Study*. Historic Landmarks Survey, U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, History and Education. September 2000.

[58] National Register, *UGRR Resources, Theme Study*.

[59] Xenia Cord, "*Black Rural Settlements in Indiana Before 1860*," in ed. Wilma L. Gibbs, *Indiana's African-American Heritage: Essays from Black History News & Notes*, (Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Society, 1993), 99-110.

[60] I participated with Bonnie Ryan and John Sidel during a cesium magnetometer survey of the site in 2001.

[61] Fergus M. Bordewich, "Digging Into A Historic Rivalry," in *Smithsonian Magazine* 4 (Feb, 2004), n.p, http://www.smithsonianmag.si.edu/smithsonian/issues04/feb04/pdf/buchanan.pdf .   I visited the site in 2003 and the window-like structure at the base of the cistern is highly unusual. The basement of the adjoining structure had also been altered at the point where the cistern abutted the foundation.

[62] Robert Ascher, and Charles H. Fairbanks., "Excavation of a Slave Cabin: Georgia, U.S.A." *Historical Archaeology* 5 (1971): 3-17, 7.

[63] J. C. Harrington, "Archaeology as an Auxiliary Science to American History." *American Anthropologist* 57, No. 6 (1955): 1121-30; James Deetz, *Invitation to Archaeology* (Garden City, NY: Natural History Press, 1967). Also see Nancy Muller, Nancy Ladd, "The House of the Black Burghardts: An Investigation of Gender, and Class at the W. E. B. Dubois Boyhood Homesite." In *Those of Little Note: Race, Gender and Class in Historical Archaeology*, ed. Elizabeth M. Scott, (Tucson: The University of Arizona Press, 1994), 81-94; Robert Paynter, "Afro-Americans in the Massachusetts Historical Landscape," in *Politics of the Past*, ed. P. Gathercole and D. Lowenthal, (London: Unwin Hyman, 1990), 49-62; Paul A. Shackel, *Memory in Black and White: Race, Commemoration, and the Post-Bellum Landscape* (Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press, 2003). For examples of historian's use of archaeological data see Sharla Fett, W*orking Cures: Healing, Health, and Power on Southern Slave Plantations* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2002) and Berlin, *Many Thousands Gone.*

[64] For the debate addressing one of the more pressing questions for African American sites see Barbara Little's "Archaeology, History, and Material Culture: Grounding Abstractions and other Imponderables;" Judith Wellman's "Documenting the Underground Railroad: Some Considerations," and the response of Carol Shull, Keeper, National Register of Historic Places and Chief, National Historic Landmark Program. Barbara J. Little, "Archaeology, History, and Material Culture: Grounding Abstractions and Other Imponderables," *International Journal of Historical Archaeology* 1, No. 2 (1997):179-187; Judith Wellman, "Documenting the Underground Railroad: Some Considerations." Conference paper, annual meeting of the Organization of American Historians, Toronto, CN, April 24, 1999; ASL Carol D. Shull to Judy Wellman, 19 August 1999.

[65] Siebert, *UGRR*, 2.

[66] Mary Frances Berry and John W. Blassingame, *Long Memory: The Black Experience in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982), 34.

[67] Ira Berlin, Forward. http://www.freeafricanamericans.com/foreword.htm

[68] Elizabeth M. Scott, *Those of Little Note: Gender, Race and Class in Historical Archaeology* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1994); Nancy Ladd Muller. "The House of the Black Burghardts: An Investigation of Gender, and Class at the W. E. B. Dubois Boyhood Homesite," in *Those of Little Note: Race, Gender and Class in Historical Archaeology*, ed. Elizabeth M. Scott, (Tucson: The University of Arizona Press, 1994), 81-94: 87. See Appendix A, The Fifteen Step Tautological Conundrum as the justification for the lack of preservation of African American historical, architectural and landscape resources.

Chapter 1: Preservation and Modern History

> "In telling new stories about our past, our intention is to reshape our future."
>
> Sandercock, *Framing Insurgent Historiographies* (18)

Introduction

In recent years the Underground Railroad has enjoyed a resurgence of interest due in part to the National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom Act of 1998[1] and to heritage tourism. Recent texts, the NPS's website, and Underground Railroad conferences reflect this heightened interest. Well in advance of its projected opening in Cincinnati in the summer 2004, The National Underground Railroad Freedom Center, under the direction of Spencer Crew, is having a significant impact on the field of study. The planned mission of the Freedom Center will offer lessons and reflections on the struggle for freedom through exhibits, programs, research, and interactive experiences promoting collaborative learning, interactive dialogue and action to inspire today's freedom movements.[2]

In response to tourism demands, the National Register of Historic Places has developed a flexible Underground Railroad Travel Itinerary, which includes an up-to-date list of related Historic Places.[3] Representatives from the tourism council or bureau of tourism are large stakeholders in the history of the Underground Railroad and invariably join historians and archaeologists and other academicians at the inception of research and interpretation.

Modern language usage, current legislation and publishing trends contribute to a redefinition as well as a reassessment of the Underground Railroad, a term referring to a mode of operation rather than to a material object or a structured organization. The (NPS) expanded the definition beyond the original nineteenth-century meaning discussed throughout the text. The "retrospective" use of the term by NPS includes "incidents which have all the characteristics of Underground Railroad activity, but which occurred earlier."[4] The National Historic Landmark Archaeological Initiative defines the Underground Railroad as "every attempt the enslaved made to escape from the 1600s to 1865."[5] The most recent definition simply refers to the effort of enslaved African Americans to gain their freedom by escaping bondage.[6] In the *Underground Railroad*, the Official Handbook of NPS, C. Peter Ripley defines the Underground Railroad as "the movement of African-American slaves escaping out of the South and the allies who assisted them in their search for freedom." Ripley continues,

> In its broadest definition, the Underground Railroad included every slave who made the difficult and dangerous journey out of bondage…countless other slaves who offered food, directions, and secrecy to runaways on the route to freedom; the occasional brave soul who made repeated trips into the South to guide slaves to the North…and a secret network of fugitive slaves, free blacks and whites of conscience who organized themselves to assist and protect the fleeing slaves.[7]

I define the Underground Railroad as a movement formed in the 1830s as a result of the sustained actions of self-liberators and abolitionist's efforts to assist them. Blacks were at the forefront of the movement, as Griffler states, "on the front-

line of freedom."[8] When I am referring to the Underground Railroad as broadly defined by NPS, the events in question will have occurred prior to 1830.

In 1990 Congress required the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a study of the Underground Railroad, which subsequently led to passage of the Network to Freedom Act. The resultant Network to Freedom is a diverse collection of elements comprised of historic sites and properties, and facilities and programs that have a verifiable association to the Underground Railroad. Working with individuals and grassroots organizations on a national and international level, NPS is implementing a national Underground Railroad program to coordinate preservation and education efforts nationwide and integrate local historical places, museums, and interpretive programs associated with the Underground Railroad into a mosaic of community, regional, and national stories.

Although inclusion in the Network facilitates recognition through use of the NPS Network to Freedom logo, inclusion in the Network does not guarantee protection or preservation for threatened sites. Nor does it guarantee that programs or facilities will receive financial assistance for planning or development.[9] Unfortunately, in 2003 the Bush administration eliminated the annual grant allotment for the Underground Railroad Network to Freedom and lowered the program's annual operating budget thereby limiting the effectiveness of the program and undercutting an already threatened resource.[10]

The Landscape Holds Memory

NPS recognizes the enormous number of possible sites and structures,

including natural features among potentially eligible sites. Landscape features were critical to the success of the overall Underground Railroad movement. Broadly defined in cultural landscape terms, "The Underground Railroad is every route the enslaved took, or attempted to take, to freedom. It is a vast network of paths and roads, through swamps and over mountains, along and across rivers and even by sea that cannot be documented with precision."[11] The broad based description of elements eligible for inclusion in the Network reflects the unique and diverse range of components associated with the Underground Railroad movement. Caves were natural shelters and safe havens. The caves of Western Virginia, Western North Carolina, Tennessee, Kentucky, Ohio, and Illinois offered daytime sanctuary where homes were unavailable.[12] Jermaine Loguen met in a cave in Tennessee to plan his escape to Indiana.[13]

At Miller Grove, landscape features such as Sand Cave offered both shelter and safety. The regional landscape and topography, particularly in the less developed rural southern-most regions of Illinois, Indiana, and Ohio dictated the experiences of the freedom seeker. At times caves, replaced hollowed trees, forests, mountains and barns as hiding places. To a large extent, geography defined the Underground Railroad as those escaping slavery moved through the landscape.[14]

Commemorating the Underground Railroad presents two preservation categories not commonly encountered among traditional preservation concerns. The first is reflected in earth bound features such as river crossings, land routes and waterways, and both natural and man-made hiding places; the second category is in the heavens.

Familiarity and rapport with the landscape lent Harriet Tubman's Underground Railroad efforts legendary effectiveness. She always preferred fieldwork to domestic toil. Although for many freedom seekers, the landscape was a site of hardship, frostbite, and starvation, the landscape also held free pleasures, fresh air, warmth of the sun, the smell of the earth, the sound of the water on the Eastern Shore. These pleasures no amount of money could command. When she crossed that "magic line, which then divided the land of bondage from the land of freedom" she lamented that no one was there to welcome her to the land of freedom. "Traveling by night, hiding by day, scaling the mountains, fording the rivers, treading the forests, lying concealed as pursuers passed," turning south though journeying north,[15] Tubman exploited the landscape as had so many runaways before and after her. The egalitarian landscape shared the North Star, now the national symbol of the Underground Railroad, with all who knew its secret.

In addition to the use of the North Star, geese flying north, and the rising and setting sun bring the heavens into the realm of preservation and commemoration. The enduring symbol of the North Star incorporated into the NPS logo graphically signifies the dual role of the heavens within the Underground Railroad, one earthly, the other spiritual (Figure 1). Heaven itself held inspiration, and prospects of hope and relief from suffering and the horrors of slavery.

Language associated with the Underground Railroad reflected the religious and spiritual character of the movement. Harriet Tubman was universally known as "the Moses of her people"; the flight out of bondage and black migration was an exodus from the land of Egypt; Canada was both heaven and the Promised Land;

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escapees were bound for glory.[16] Josiah Henson declared Canada, "that haven of

promise." He also recognized salvation in the celestial sphere declaring,

> I knew the North Star—blessed be God for setting it in the heavens!
> Like the Star of Bethlehem, it announced where my salvation lay.
> Could I follow it through forest, and stream, and field, it would
> guide my feet in the way of hope. I thought of it as my God-given
> guide to the land of promise far away beneath its light. I knew it
> had led thousands of my poor, hunted brethren to freedom and
> blessedness.[17]

It is only fitting that the heavens, the use of astronomy that guided so many slave

ships to American shores should guide the captives to freedom. The metaphor of

heaven as God's salvation, Canada as heaven, and the North Star guide in the heavens

is powerful throughout the Underground Railroad experience.

The history of African Americans when told through the landscape reveals the

pragmatic uses of the landscape in the history of racialized oppression. For free black

settlements that once dotted the countryside from New York to Iowa and Wisconsin,

comprehensive understanding of the collective histories and locations reveal

similarities and differences. Successful escapees and those who assisted them

required negotiation of physical and psychological boundaries, geographical

awareness of free black settlements, churches, schools, safe houses, and sympathetic

communities, and knowledge of escape routes, and waterways. A collective national

study of free black communities and associated churches will reveal a wider pattern

of routes available for incorporation into the literature and mapping of the

Underground Railroad.

This study begins the process and offers methodological and theoretical

conceptualizations toward preservation of the history and memory of free black

communities and their associations with the Underground Railroad. This act of recovery recognizes that until recently, African Americans were not part of the American collective identity[18] and therefore required little or no preservation efforts (See Appendix A). Frequently all that remained were cemeteries and place names such as Little Africa in Indiana to provide clues to once thriving African American presence in the landscape.[19]

The language of the landscape reveals evidence of daily activities of those who left few written records even though large parts of the evidence are missing from the landscape as well.[20] Archaeological data are well positioned to address both the conflicts between primary sources and "the 'silences' associated with the selective and subjective process of recording historical accounts"[21] By placing these no longer extant settlements in context, a "history of place" emerges. Black settlements have not been collectively subjected to historical analysis, geographic interpretation, or cultural landscape critique from the perspective of the geographies of resistance.

Preservation History

Each of the small rural farmsteads investigated for this study have a preservation history. Although archaeologists have located and mapped foundations associated with the settlements, none of the original buildings is extant at the five sites. Until recently, for example, preservation efforts and stewardship for the landscape resources at Rocky Fork in Illinois were nonexistent and the land began to fall into the hands of developers. Village and county officials are proposing a cross-town highway that would meander through the heavily forested area north of Camp
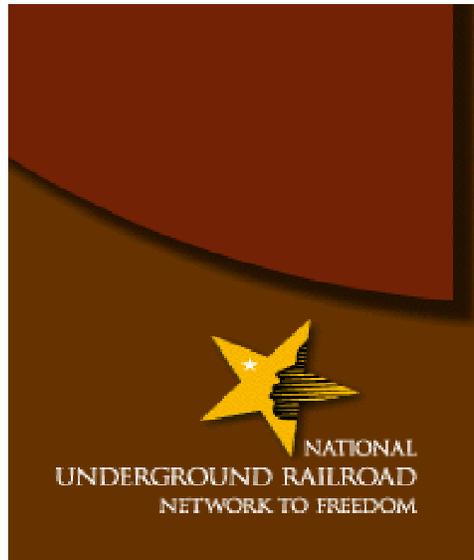
Use of the Network to Freedom Logo is for illustrative purposes only and does not imply National

Park Service endorsement or sanction.

Figure 1 National Park Service Logo Depicting North Star

Warren Levis forming a critical link to the future development of the town of Godfrey.[22]

Private citizens and not-for-profit organizations have assumed oversight for New Philadelphia, as well as Rocky Fork, which repeatedly suffered at the hands of vandals and arsonists leading to its ultimate demise as a residential community. Today a fourth church structure and accompanying churchyard remain as a symbol in the landscape of black communal perseverance.[23]

In response to encroaching development a committee representing land owners, the New Bethel AME Church, interested individuals, the Center for American Archaeology, the Boys Scouts, and Principia College came together under the guidance of Annie Hoagland, and former area resident George Wadleigh. The mission of this newly formed Rocky Fork Historic District Project is to save the land at Rocky Fork and rescue the history of a site believed to be one of the first stops on the Underground Railroad along the Mississippi River in Illinois.

Two hundred and fifty-three acres of the eastern portion of Rocky Fork were deeded to the Warren Levis Boy Scout Camp in Godfrey, Illinois in the 1950s.[24] Preservation work was largely a matter of efforts on the part of dedicated local individuals. The Network to Freedom accepted Charlotte Johnson's nomination for the Camp in 2003.[25]

As a land conservationist, Project Director Hoagland along with Wadleigh and the Rocky Fork Project are in the process of researching land acquisition funding necessary to reserve the approximately 530 acres or some portion thereof through purchase or conservation easements. Hoagland said this of her preservation work:

I am concerned that this lovely forest with its beautiful little creeks will be paved over and that nothing will be left for those that follow. I am concerned that this powerful story, that is a great part of our fabric in this country, will be forgotten. I am intrigued by these strong people who had so much to overcome and who did so and by their footprints in history. I find myself attached to the land and to the story and I see where I have a part I can play in trying to make sure this all is not lost and the lessons forgotten.[26]

The grave of Free Frank in the cemetery at New Philadelphia is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.[27] The cemetery is the sole tangible indicator of the former town. The cabin that now stands on the site is a reconstruction not original to the town. Competing organizations are interested in recreating the New Philadelphia site for educational and tourism purposes. Dr. Paul Shackel, Director of the Center for Heritage Resource Studies, University of Maryland, College Park has been awarded a three-year $225,000 grant from the National Science Foundation to develop a research project and train undergraduate students at New Philadelphia. The interdisciplinary team involved in the New Philadelphia project includes landowners, non-profit groups, the local community, universities and museums, in addition to scholars[28]

The National Forest Service

The three remaining sites in this study, Miller Grove, Illinois, Lick Creek, Indiana, and Poke Patch, Ohio, are located on public lands administered by the United States Department of Agriculture, Forest Service. The majority of the properties on National Forest System land associated with the Underground Railroad are archaeological sites containing no above ground physical structures. Most are located within rural contexts in the eastern and southern United States.[29]

Unlike the NPS the National Forest Service (NFS) lacks an Underground Railroad initiative. Heritage Resource Specialists Mary McCorvie on the Shawnee National Forest, Angie Krieger on the Hoosier National Forest, and Ann Cramer on the Wayne National Forest recognized the need to recover the history and memory of the Underground Railroad sites on NFS lands. They have been identifying and researching early African American heritage resources within their jurisdictions. In collaboration with NPS, State and Private Forestry, State Foresters and Department of Commerce and Tourism, the Heritage Resource Specialists of the NFS make nationally significant Underground Railroad related heritage properties available to the public for study and preservation. The three Forest archaeologists have won numerous awards for their work.[30]

As with all the organizations working with Underground Railroad sites, the NFS seeks to help Americans understand human experience and abilities in the struggle toward freedom. By bringing these sites to the attention of the public, the Forest Service seeks to influence the route of the National Underground Railroad Millennium Trail through National Forests in the Eastern and Southern Regions that contain relevant and affiliated properties.[31]

Summer 2004 will mark the 10th anniversary of the Historic Black College and University Cooperative summer internship program undertaken through Heritage Programs on three National Forests.[32] Through their various programs linked to Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), primarily Tennessee State University in Nashville, the Forest Service has developed partnerships with schools and universities, the public and one another to explore the black history on NFS sites

through the "USFS Early African American Heritage Recreation Initiative." The PASSPORT IN TIME project at Miller Grove combined the hands-on environmental education program designed to improve public understanding of American heritage with the Shawnee National Forests' commitment to excavating a little known segment of American history—rural African American heritage sites contained within National Forest System lands.[33]

The Underground Railroad was composed largely of persons of conscience and dedication. The work of the NFS archaeologists presented here mirrors that dedication. Three women of conscience, acting as individuals in their roles as Resource Specialists emphasize the study of the Underground Railroad properties in their National Forest sites inventory. I single out the archaeologists as individuals because their work is not part of a mandated Forest Service initiative or program, although as employees of the Department of Agriculture, the women do represent the Federal Government and have received national awards for their work.[34]

The work of analyzing and theorizing historical and archaeological results is a component of the foundational study of pre-civil war black settlements. I have collaborated with Mary McCorvie and Vickie Devenport in writing the application for the Network to Freedom for Miller Grove and wrote and provided the content for much of the National Register nomination for Rocky Fork. All the sites either have or expect to have Network to Freedom designations as well as National Register of Historic Places archaeological designations. The Network to Freedom application for Miller Grove was completed in the summer of 2003.

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Chapter 2: The Free Black Community and the Underground Railroad

Introduction

The Underground Railroad is a culmination; blacks in the United States struggled for two centuries under adverse circumstances to escape bondage and oppression "in quest of a land offering asylum and opportunity to the unfortunate."[1] In the large cities such as Philadelphia, a strong black community with its significant numbers of abolitionists was conducive to activities that benefited runaways.[2] Blacks came together collectively and individually, in the face of devastating racial oppression, with or without the assistance and cooperation of white America, seeking freedom from bondage and an end to slavery.

Method

I combine two topics, the Underground Railroad and the free black community, to yield a study that places African Americans in the landscape, reveals their economic, legal, communal and religious strategies in combination with interracial, interfaith abolitionist cooperation. I investigate patterns of black communal formation and provide a fuller understanding of black settlements before the Civil War. Although a lack of preservation of rural black settlements obscures important historical connections, archaeology and landscape analysis facilitate identification and recovery of understudied or undocumented Underground Railroad

sites, particularly those associated with free black communities.

I connect free black settlements to the Underground Railroad and to freedom-mindedness. Archaeology first and foremost was used to locate the settlements, and situate them in time and space. The recovery of memory that accompanies many archaeological discoveries frequently introduces sites such as Miller Grove or Lick Creek into the historical narrative for the first time. Contributions to black history through expansion of historical narratives rank among the important aspects of African American archaeology.

Association with the Underground Railroad varied with the five sites identified in this study, ranging from verification by Siebert in his work, *The Mysteries of Ohio's Underground Railroad*[3] to enigmatic participants leaving circumstantial evidence gleaned from a range of sources including oral testimony. With the exception of Rocky Fork and Poke Patch, archaeology provided a material understanding of the lives of former residents. History, genealogy, and landscape studies further developed the topic, adding dimension to sketchy outlines. Multidisciplinarity allowed a combination of data and a nuanced approach to free blacks, their settlements, and their involvement in the Underground Railroad.

What has been written thus far about the Underground Railroad touches selected aspects of a complex, long known, little understood, multifaceted operation. Southern Illinois, where historically the major works on the Underground Railroad provided multiple rationales for low regional participation, represents a case in point. Research in support of the Miller Grove community, suggests runaways were in and around the extreme southeastern portion of the state and that abolitionists were

operating there as well. That more has not been written about this portion of the state may reflect the hostile environment in southern Illinois where experiences of the fugitive parallel those of slaves escaping the deep south rather than circumstances associated with northern states. Runaways continued to rely on their own strategies with greater frequency in this area of the state than was required once they reached south central Illinois or a known station in southern Illinois.

Frequently, fugitives planned and executed the initial phase of their escape on their own or with the aid of associates in the South who may have provided food and shelter. Escapees often negotiated the more dangerous portion of the route through the south unaided and unassisted, particularly before origination of "the Underground Railroad" in the 1830s.[4] "Rarely were absconding slaves aided by abolitionists while still on the slavocracy's terrain."[5] In reality, runaways had to travel through the south and a certain distance in the north before encountering abolitionists, a distance that included extreme southern regions of Illinois, Indiana, and Ohio.

Once the runaway managed to cross the permeable political and ideological boundary, generally somewhere in the south central portion of the northern Border States, then discrete Underground Railroad lines within the state branched, providing multiple avenues of escape (See Map 1). In Illinois, no greater philosophical distance existed concerning race than between the southern portion of the state and the regions further north. For example, Miller Grove in southeastern Illinois faced the slave state of Kentucky across the Ohio River to the south and slave state of Missouri across the Mississippi River to the west.

Bound by slave states to the south and west, the geographical position of

Southern Illinois significantly shapes study of slavery in the state. Pro-slavery forces collided with anti-slavery factions, many of who were New School Presbyterians who formed a liaison with migrating Northern abolitionists.[6] The southern portions of Illinois, Indiana, and Ohio were dangerous sections of each state which, when conceptualized with northern portions of the southern border states, form a broad midsection of the nation which can be theorized as the border region. Kevin Phillips imagines it as the Lower North, Upper South borderland.[7]

Most freedom seekers remained in a small local radius near family in the south; others were captured before their dream of freedom could be realized. For the fortunate few who successfully negotiated their way to freedom, and reached the free states, local black communities became critical destinations,[8] particularly as they negotiated the traitorous, racially hostile southern portions of Illinois, Indiana, and Ohio. In southeastern Illinois, for example, where no routes were thought to exist,[9] runaway notices and narratives place escaping slaves in the area of Miller Grove.[10]

Each site reveals the differing regional and geographic circumstances. In Lick Creek, Indiana, for example, North Carolina was the strong southern counterpart. In Miller Grove, Marshall County, Tennessee was the region from which I suspect runaways migrated toward that area. Rocky Fork also held Marshall County Tennessee connections. Erasmus and Jane Green, founders of the AME Church at Rocky Fork migrated from there.

Sources

In this chapter I draw from a variety of sources, some of which are solidly

historical, others, anecdotal but are presented here nevertheless in an effort to be inclusive rather than dismissive of non-traditional sources at the risk of loosing potentially pertinent data. The effectiveness of the secrecy and ingenuity surrounding Underground Railroad activities continues to both skew and limit contemporary understandings.   Written notes were eschewed; incriminating journals and biographies were destroyed.[11]   Clandestine behavior associated with resistance to slavery generally resulted in limited local or regional awareness of geophysical sanctuaries, routes, footpaths, and rescue activities. For the most part, knowledge circulated as seditious information within the Underground Railroad movement. The majority of participants' efforts required anonymity that resulted in an operation so successful that 175 years later, researchers continue to experience great difficulty in unraveling the "riddle wrapped in a mystery inside an enigma."[12]

Historical Overview

Though the Underground Railroad probably began in the late 1830s, escape as a response to slavery is as old as the nation itself, beginning with the country's embrace of slavery as its primary labor and economic system. Both responses to enslavement—running away and harboring—are evident through laws enacted from the earliest days of the colonial period. Dating from the country's inception through the eve of the Civil War, both escape from slavery and offering assistance to the runaway were in violation of federal and state laws.[13]

Although politically invisible, the runaway's consistent decision to escape slavery destabilized the slave regime, which was the foundation of the American

economic and political system.[14]   Believing in the rhetoric of liberty, massive numbers of blacks escaped during and after the American Revolutionary War. With the defeat of the British thousands of Black Loyalists sailed with them in 1783.[15]

The Constitution that emerged at the formation of the new nation at the end of the Revolution was a pro-slavery document that racialized the landscape.   The Constitutional Convention of 1787 rendered escape from slavery and subsequent Underground Railroad activities a necessary solution to injustice.   The Constitution nationalized slavery by rendering the law of the south the law of the land[16] as the South emerged as a distinctive and racialized region. Actions of the fugitive aroused moral sentiment and public conscience that brought agitation[17] to principled women and men seeking to obey a Higher Law. Christians therefore, found they could not both obey Higher Law and the Constitution.[18]   Consequently, the abolitionist movement provided a moral compass—a conscience[19] for a country debased and besotted by slavery.

The first signs of the enslaved's opposition to slavery, however, lay with the inception of the heinous institution as the early laws of Virginia and New York demonstrate. Reactionary laws seeking to regulate runaways and dissuade abettors attempted to curb and control behavior sufficiently rampant to warrant legal intervention. As early as 1726, the Virginia colony enacted "An Act for amending the Act concerning Servants and Slaves and for the further preventing the clandestine transportation of Persons out of this colony." By 1740, South Carolina passed a law specifically addressing the problem of blacks aiding fugitives by levying a fine, and, in cases of forfeiture, punishment reduced free blacks to a life of enslavement.[20]

Blacks sought refuge in distinctive regions of North America outside the United States. For more than 300 years, Florida was a crucial sanctuary for outlyers and other runaways who were often assisted Native Americans.[21] Upper Canada abolished slavery in 1793 during the early Federal period of the United States of America. During that same year the newly formed U. S. Federal Government under the leadership of President George Washington enacted the Criminal Extradition Statute, which also included the first federal fugitive slave law.[22]

The decision by so many, Native Americans, citizens, and later black and white abolitionists, not to follow the many laws governing runaways, particularly the Fugitive Slave Law of 1850, was revolutionary, insurrectionary, and dangerous.[23] Conrad defines the movement as "one of the longest campaigns of defiance in the nation's history."[24] "All the black people who offered their food and clothing, their homes and wagons, and at times their lives—all these, with white allies, were engaged in serious civil disobedience against the laws of the United States" risking arrest, reenslavement, financial and social ruin, imprisonment and death.

Black women, particularly on the southern end of the escape fed and sustained runaways in the cabin quarters and kitchens. Stanley Harrold described the gender division within the movement. In general, men recruited and guided while the women harbored. The rule was permeable, however, men sometimes harbored and women planned and guided on occasion. Underground Railroad activist Thomas Smallwood reported two free black women were arrested in 1843 on charges they intended to take two runaways with them to Canada. Women of color also participated in planning escapes of their husbands and children.[25] Notable and

infamous black women such as Harriet Tubman and Pricilla Baltimore were also active and highly effective conductors.

The Geography of Resistance

During the early Federal period, Pittsburgh lay at the gateway to the Northwest Territory; western Pennsylvania demarked the eastern boundary of the frontier.[26] Throughout this work, I impose an east-west analytical frame rather than utilizing conventional south to north parameters. Underground Railroad, abolitionist activities and anti-slavery sentiment began in the West; its influence flowed to the East, and then moved westward again—each region of the country influencing the other. The stereotypical view of abolitionism and the Underground Railroad positions the East as the source of morality and civilization with New Englanders of superior character emigrating to the West. What is more accurate is to say Easterners, including but not limited to New Englanders, helped influence abolitionist thought in the West just as Benjamin Lundy and others to the south and west shaped the early intellectual thinking of William Lloyd Garrison and other Easterners as each region of the country impacted the other. It was Lundy who inspired Garrison with abolitionist zeal sparking the eastward spread of anti-slavery sentiment to New England.[27]

Pertinent literature reflects a decidedly eastern, Quaker, bias toward white abolitionists while eliding the story of abolitionism in the West. Benjamin Lundy delivered his first public address against slavery at Deep Creek, North Carolina in 1824.[28] Between 1821 and 1825, the first antislavery newspaper, Benjamin Lundy's *The Genius of Universal Emancipation* was published in Greeneville, Tennessee

before moving to Baltimore where William Lloyd Garrison was its editor between 1825-1831. The paper was moved to Washington from 1831-1833 and then on to Philadelphia from 1834 and 1836.[29] Philadelphia's black abolitionist Robert Purvis, the first "President" of the Underground Railroad, became interested in anti-slavery after meeting Lundy and Garrison in 1830. He cited 1838 as the year of the first organized society of the Underground Railroad.[30]

Individual and organized antislavery crusades gained substantial numbers of recruits in the later 1830s."[31] The 1830s signaled the rise, across race, class and gender, of both individual and organized opposition to slavery. Black women in New England started the first antislavery society in America, The Salem Female Antislavery Society, six-months before the inception of the American Antislavery Society in 1833. Ultimately, free women of color avoided the oppression associated with race and gender by working first within their own organizations. For the better part of three decades, black women labored in support of the American antislavery movement. They organized fund-raising projects to subsidize abolitionist journals, to finance lecturers in the field, and to aid fugitive slaves at stations along the Underground Railroad.[32] Anna Murray Douglass, wife of Frederick Douglass, was a co-worker in the Antislavery Societies of Boston and Lynn. She apportioned a certain amount of her earnings as a shoe binder as a donation to the antislavery cause.[33]

The literature also obscures the westward shift of the center of black abolitionism where status, leadership skills and class were less important than in Boston or Philadelphia. *The Mystery* edited by Martin Delany brought the black press to the west and represented the first black newspaper published on the frontier beyond

the Allegheny Mountains. Delany, who was America's foremost advocate of Black Nationalism before the Civil War, wanted it "borne in mind that Anti-Slavery took its rise among *colored men*."[34] Around 1843, Frederick Douglass, for example accompanied Charles Remond, Abby Kelley, John Collins, Sidney Gay and George Bradburn on an anti-slavery tour in the West.[35] Douglass was on hand in Chicago, in October 1853 giving a "soul-stirring" speech before an immense and impatient crowd at the First Convention of Colored Citizens of the State of Illinois.[36]

John Jones, a prominent businessman and black abolitionist worked ceaselessly, along with his wife for the Underground Railroad in Chicago. He met his wife, the former Mary Ann Richardson, while apprenticing as a tailor in Somerville, Tennessee and then moved to Alton, Illinois, three miles east of Rocky Fork in 1844. When Jones and his wife moved on to Chicago they immediately joined the antislavery movement there.[37] He would have been familiar with routes between his birth place in Tennessee and Chicago and his stay in the abolitionist town of Alton, would have given him familiarity with the little settlement although his class and status probably precluded interaction with the residents of the Rocky Fork community.

The Jones used their home to host local abolitionists as well as easterners such as Frederick Douglass whom John accompanied on one Western speaking tour. Mary and John Jones' ardent commitment as Underground Railroad workers transformed their home into "the local headquarters of the underground railroad," sheltering hundreds of runaways in their basement before sending them on to Canada West.

By 1835, abolitionist H. O. Wagoner worked with both the anti-slavery

movement and the Underground Railroad.   The east-west contacts of anti-slavery activists continually influenced Illinois abolitionists. In 1857 Wagoner met Frederick Douglass and "Old" John Brown. From time to time, Brown called on Wagoner whenever he visited Chicago. Indeed, it was to the Midwest that John Brown turned in his search for support for his war against slavery.[38] Brown maintained strong ties with black abolitionists in Chicago as well as Detroit. He visited Jones in Chicago to retrieve his forwarded mail sent in care of Jones just before the 1858 Chatham convention.[39] Brown habitually sent to Wagoner many fugitives who were in transit from Missouri and Kansas to Canada. The last company of Brown's freedom seekers passed through Chicago in March of 1859. The last group of escapees, fifteen in number, was under the personal charge of Brown himself, and four of his white assistants. Mr. Wagoner sheltered and fed the runaways for three days, while their old time friend, John Jones, entertained the white men. Under existing Fugitive Slave Laws they were liable to one thousand dollars fine and six months in prison for harboring fugitives. Brown personally contacted Wagoner and Jones, among other black abolitionists by letter asking them to join him in the secret meeting in Chatham, Canada in preparation for Harpers Ferry.[40]

Several abolitionists in the West were diligent antislavery workers, such as James H. Collins of Chicago, Illinois, who served as president of the Illinois State Anti-slavery Society. He worked actively with the Underground Railroad and won an acquittal for Elijah Lovejoy's surviving brother, Owen when he was charged with aiding runaways.[41] At New Philadelphia, Free Frank "was never far removed from the social and economic reform thinking of black spokesmen in the East." Although

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Frank never learned to read, his sons Frank, Jr. and Solomon may have read abolitionist newspapers to him.[42]

New England's transcendentalists also influenced abolitionist thinking. When the anti-slavery writings of Henry David Thoreau first advocated civil disobedience in 1848, Garrison and others in the movement took scant notice. Although the original precepts of the movement espoused non-resistance, by 1830 the movement had already abandoned their non-violent stand. Nevertheless, civil disobedience associated with abolitionism and participation in the Underground Railroad survives as one of the world's greatest resistance movements that began with both runaways and their abettors. The "dignified noncompliance with the injunction of civil powers"[43] espoused by Thoreau in "Civil Disobedience," still stands as a "landmark document in the dissenting tradition."[44]

Long known as one of the world's most important and influential writings on civil disobedience, Thoreau's work had its roots in protest against American slavery. The original act from which the writing of "Civil Disobedience" emerged was a simple on-going protest against a government that supported slavery. Thoreau recognized "the right to refuse allegiance to, and to resist, the government, when its tyranny or its inefficiency are great and unendurable."[45] Although influenced perhaps by Garrison's Christian perfectionism, the Thoreau essay was not widely used by abolitionists at the time it was written, as anti-slavery activities grew progressively more violent and deadly[46] and the Underground Railroad era progressed into "one of prolonged, small-scale guerilla warfare between the North and the South."[47]

The killing of abolitionist newspaper editor Elijah P. Lovejoy in 1837 in

Alton, Illinois a mere two or three miles from Rocky Fork established the danger of the region and signaled the initial clear breach of non-violent principles among whites. In attempting to protect the press on which his antislavery newspaper was printed, Lovejoy, or one of his men, shot and killed a local youth named Bishop.[48] Increasingly, the nation would move toward violent means to bring an end to slaveholders' insistence on uncompensated labor extracted from an enslaved work force. The subject of non-resistance "helped to split antislavery in two" with the division after 1840 between the "political action" men and the Garrisonian, or "disunion" abolitionists."[49] As James G. Birney prophetically observed, "Slavery was instituted by violence, is maintained by violence, and will die by violence."[50]

Addison Coffin saw Frederick Douglass when he first visited Indiana in 1843 for an abolition convention held at Pendleton/Dalton in the northwest corner of Wayne County, half way between Beech and Roberts Settlements in Indiana. Addison reports that he was unable to accompany Douglass to Indianapolis where "a half drunken mob of several hundred brutal men and boys came…armed with corn cutters, clubs and stones, and began swearing, shouting and using foul mouthed language...and began throwing stones." Frederick Douglass who was the object of their greatest fury was knocked down, beaten and left for dead. In remembering and comparing the brutality of the beating with their Civil War experiences, some of the witnesses attested they never saw in all the war "a more brutal, murderous scene in any battle anywhere."[51] Frederick Douglass says of the incident, "they tore down the platform on which we stood," knocked out several teeth of a fellow speaker, leaving Douglass prostrate on the ground with a broken right hand that "never recovered its

natural strength and dexterity."[52] Douglass did not let such brutal attacks deter him from his anti-slavery lectures around the country, however.

With tensions mounting, the State of Missouri was admitted to the Union as a slave state as part of the Missouri Compromise of 1820. It lay within sight, across the Mississippi from Rocky Fork and 13 miles from New Philadelphia. Slavery maintained a vice grip on the state. The Missouri Compromise opened a national chiasm and cast a long, dark shadow on the life of the nation. "Though most blacks and abolitionists strongly opposed the Compromise, the majority of Americans embraced it, believing that it offered a final, workable solution to the slavery question" by maintaining a balanced number of free states and slave states and by appeasing southern slaveholders.[53] With passage of the Fugitive Slave Act as part of the Missouri Compromise, the Underground Railroad began its growth towards its peak years, 1850 to1865.

The law emboldened and sanctioned kidnappers whose former endeavors now developed into a full-scale enterprise of pursuing free blacks under the pretense of acting on behalf of aggrieved slaveholders while preparing to sell the captive at auction.[54] Although the practice of kidnapping any unattached blacks in the area also diminished the number of recorded incidences, here too, legal evidence of the long-standing practice remains. In 1825, Illinois passed an "Act to More Effectually Prevent Kidnapping."[55] At least two AME Bishops had narrow escapes from kidnappers and stared at the harsh possibility of a lifetime of enslavement. As a result of kidnapping attempts, both Richard Allen and William Paul Quinn knew the tenuous nature of freedom before the Civil War.[56]

After passage of the second, more explicitly stringent Fugitive Slave Act in 1850, citizens were confronted with a direct choice and forced to either serve their country or serve their conscience, reflecting the split between personal, religious and moral duty, and civic responsibility. The law was a "shocking capitulation of the government to slaveholders."[57] With passage of the law came more formal, organized, institutional efforts to assist escapees; moving the runaway through the landscape became more efficient, enabling greater numbers to escape slavery. After the law's inception Henry Bibb witnessed the consequences, migration from Indiana into Canada. He reported in 1852, "22 from Indiana passed through to Amherstburg, with four fine covered wagons and eight horses. The Fugitive Slave Law is driving out brains and money,"[58] as it resounded "like a drumbeat on the path to the Civil War."[59]

Compromise, counterbalanced by schism and secession, dominated negotiation styles of the century with calamitous consequences for the rights and liberty of people of color throughout the country. It was a time when "The friends of slavery were not pleased, and the friends of freedom were divided."[60] The country fractured over racial issues and slavery on a civic, social, religious, and institutional level, long before the political and sectional split that would lead to the Civil War. Runaways and the Underground Railroad system into which they increasing found themselves, helped create bitter partisanship that finally erupted into internecine warfare.[61] John C. Calhoun blamed the severed cords of national solidarity on the rise of the abolitionist movement in the North[62] rather than on the insistence on slaveholding by the south. It would take John Brown's October 16, 1859 raid on

Harpers Ferry, Virginia to rivet national attention on the divisiveness of slavery and expose the "deep chasm between North and South"[63] that had been festering for decades in the various religious, institutional, political, and philosophical schisms.

The 1830s movement for "immediate, unconditional abolition of slavery" splintered and factionalized churches in the North.[64] The Wesleyan Methodists, numbering upwards of twenty thousand members seceded from the Methodist Episcopal Church, taking thoroughly Anti-Slavery ground. "No communion with Slaveholders," became one of their fundamental principles promulgated in their weekly abolitionist paper, the *Wesleyan*. The Presbyterian Secession, the Friends, the Free Will Baptists, and a few other churches, were equally conspicuous for their Anti-Slavery character.[65]

Beginning in the 1840s the Second Great Awakening galvanized the nation's religious culture of potent evangelicalism spread by insurgent populist preachers. The church schisms reflected, in part, the decentralization of religious power as tremendous numbers of people heeded the message and responded to the emotionalism that accompanied expressions of faith.[66] Even anti-slavery societies, which were among the institutions most directly involved in issues of slavery and freedom, could not agree on the form their activism should take—political or moral. There was a "disastrous schism in antislavery ranks in 1840."[67] The highly publicized split between Garrison and his protégé Frederick Douglass arose over Douglass' "insistence that blacks, not their white friends, should chart the course of their freedom efforts" rather than over the public assertion of "policy differences."[68] Black abolitionist Charles Ray was also concerned that equal civil rights for people of

color was not at the forefront of Garrison's concerns.[69]

A rupture over anti-slavery activity occurred in Cincinnati where Lyman Beecher's career included the Presidency of Lane Theological Seminary "where his mission was to train ministers to win the West for Protestantism."[70] In the 1830s Beecher, father to Harriet, Catherine, and Henry Ward, began to think of the West as virgin territory for revival religions. During the years of his Presidency, he was faced with controversy over the issue of slavery at Lane Seminary, which caused some students to rebel in the fall of 1834 and seek asylum in the newly formed Oberlin Collegiate Institute.[71]

Intellectual and organizational cohesiveness suffered among African American activists as well. By 1840 black abolitionists were divided not only over questions of means and ends, moral suasion versus political action but also over "issues of separate action" as a remedy for the "growing disillusionment with the vehemence of anti-abolitionism and the failure of moral suasion." Disenchantment with racist paternalism of their white allies, "the tendency of white abolitionists toward moral abstraction, and the comparative inattention given by whites to issues of political and civil equality of blacks in the North" convinced many African Americans throughout the free states of the need for action independent of their white brethren.[72]

By the third decade of the nineteenth-century, the Quakers split over antislavery activity. The Indiana Yearly Meeting, which the Lick Creek Quakers attended, split over slavery in 1842 when an anti-slavery schism developed. Levi Coffin was among those "disqualified for usefulness." He and approximately two

thousand members who left the Orthodox Friends organized the "Indiana Yearly Meeting of Anti-Slavery Friends.[73]

> What a paradox, that the Society of Friends—the first important
> Christian group in America to see the evil of slaveholding, and the
> first to renounce it without regard to cost—the Quakers who had
> faithfully guarded the antislavery flame in the years when it burned
> so low, should now divide over the issue of abolition![74]

Slavery became an issue at the Presbyterian General Assembly of 1836 causing it to split into Old School and New School Presbyterians around the issue of communion with slaveholders, which could not be resolved. New School Presbyterians were the initial settlers at Miller Grove in Southern Illinois.

Certainly all of this played itself out in the landscape. The fugitive slave law, "that legislative monster" brought "some of the most repugnant features of slavery into the heart of Northern cities and towns"[75] with ramifications for black communities. The laws and the countless fugitive slave advertisements posted by slaveholders seeking to return the runaway to a life of slavery attest to the magnitude of the problem. During the period of heavy migration out of the south, 1820s through the 1840s, free people of color with long standing histories of freedom, were joined by three other groups emerging from bondage—African Americans who had purchased their freedom, those brought to the Northwest to be emancipated by their enslavers or their agents, and fugitive slaves who clandestinely resettled in the region either independently or with the aid of the Underground Railroad.[76]

Sectional division as a result of the subsequent 1854 Kansas-Nebraska Act reached a point that precluded reconciliation. Sitting at the decayed junction of religious principle, and civil disobedience, the precepts of non-violence and the

abolitionist doctrine of suasion fully eroded. Rev. Henry Ward Beecher, Harriet's brother, raised funds to arm antislavery forces preferring the force of Sharp rifles to the power and moral argument of the bible. Beecher provided Kansas settlers with rifles that became known as "Beecher's Bibles." The tragedy of "bleeding" Kansas led to the political schism that brought Osawatomie Brown to the attention of the nation, and gave rise to a new political antislavery organization, the Republican Party, as the United States continued the decline toward civil war.[77]

To add to this judicial and legislative nightmare for blacks, one unjust law followed another. The Missouri Compromise was repealed and declared unconstitutional by the 1854 Kansas-Nebraska Act only to be followed by the equally heinous and pernicious Dred Scott decision of 1857. Three months after Kansas was admitted to the Union as a free state in 1861, the country separated into two nations, the United States of America and the Confederate States of America; the Presbyterian Church had split into four denominations as the Civil War began.[78] All this divisiveness rested first and foremost on issues of slavery and squarely on the backs of runaway slaves.

The Black Family as Church, the Church as Community, the Community as Family

The small, secluded rural free black settlements that are the subject of this study lay at the opposite end of the spectrum from the more highly publicized fugitive slave cases. Census data, marriage certificates, and probate records from Rocky Fork, or Lick Creek, Miller Grove or Poke Patch reveal the interconnectivity of

African-American community members who knew one another through family relations and intermarriage, church organizations, benevolent societies, and the fraternal structure of the Prince Hall Masons and other secret organizations.[79] Family and black church were the primary organizational units that formed each community. At New Philadelphia, the McWorter family formed the community foundation. Marriages widened the circle. Just as Andrew Wiese would find true a century later in Ohio, blacks in these rural settlements preferred living in family based communities whether extended or nuclear."[80]

Land ownership gave a measure of autonomy. At settlements such as Rocky Fork, where some residents essentially leased the land, the agrarian spirit survived and took hold. The rural landscape sheltered runaways at the settlements. In his work on all black towns, Harold Rose argues that all were related to the abolitionist movement, which, in turn, closely supported the Underground Railroad movement.

Whites targeted free people of color, who it was widely believed, were allies if not leaders in trying to overthrow slavery and in aiding runaways. Perhaps more importantly, in whites' minds free blacks became "the very symbol of whites' loss of control over southern society."[81] A newspaper in St. Louis attributed the active operations of the Underground Railroad in that city directly to the presence of hundreds of free blacks in that city.[82]

Establishment of early black towns within northern regions engendered Northern hostility and fueled fears that large numbers of fugitive slaves would plague the region.[83] In an 1860 letter, black abolitionist and moral reformer Frances Ellen Watkins Harper sought to bring her earnest and elevating influence to bear as part of

her anti-slavery work among people of color. She hoped that the example set by free blacks in these farming settlements would reduce the burden of racism for the rest of the race and change the public opinion of the country "not merely by influencing the public *around* them but *among* them."[84]

Emma Thornbrough states that an examination of black settlements in Indiana reveals that in nearly every instance they were located on one of the routes of the Underground Railroad suggesting either that runaways tended to seek out members of their own race or many remained in Indiana rather than fleeing further northward.[85] Clearly, the Xenia Cord, Wilbur Siebert overlay map I developed for this study bears this out (Map 2). Overlapping routes between the black settlement sites and better know routes through larger towns drawn on Siebert's map of the Underground Railroad in southern region of Indiana, suggests new avenues of inquiry. Juxtapositoning the maps visually communicates the proximity and parallels between the two types of routes. Analysis of the overlay map delineates the mechanisms of misinterpretation of African American involvement in the Underground Railroad.

Routes along which the Underground Railroad operators moved connected naturally with the Quaker settlements established in free States. Carter Woodson identified Hamilton, Howard, Wayne, Randolph, Vigo, Gibson, Grant, Rush, and Tipton Counties in Indiana, and Darke County, Ohio as the Quaker settlements connected with Levi Coffin. John Rankin, among other Quaker Underground Railroad workers established settlements for former slaves on lands purchased in the Northwest Territory.[86]
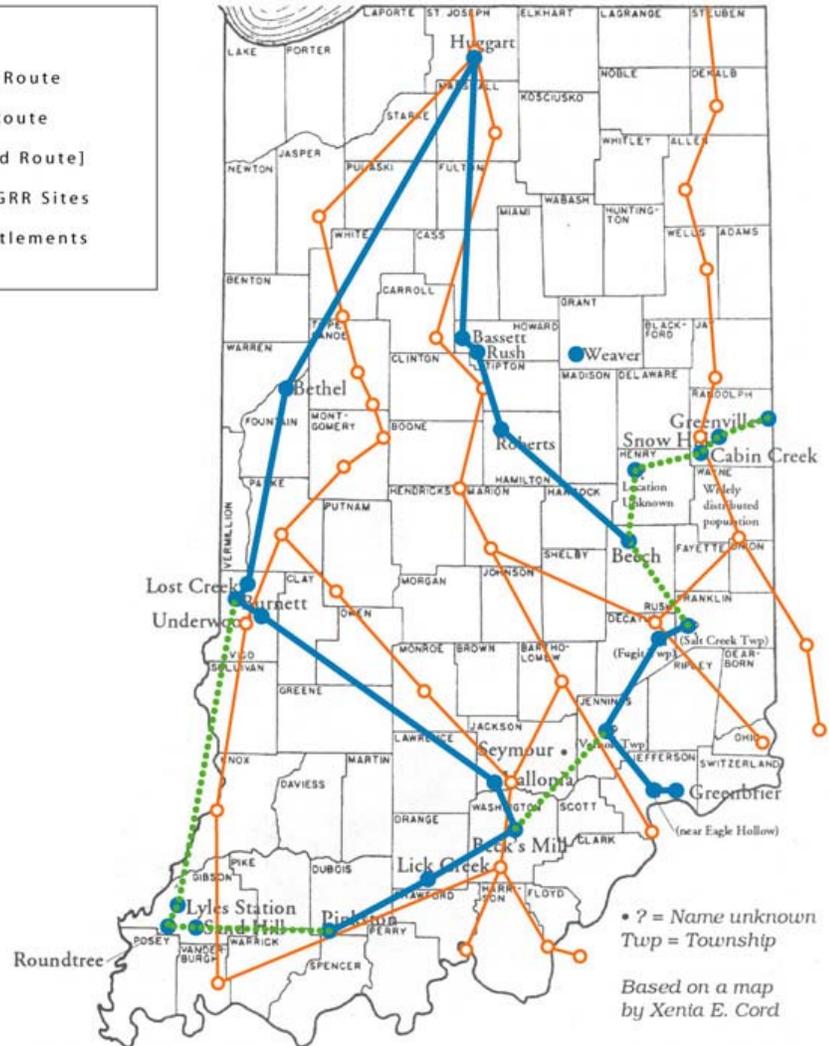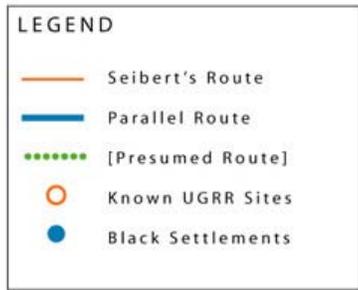
Revised Map: Indiana UGRR

Map 2 Revised Xenia Cord Map of Indiana

(From Xenia Cord, "Black Rural Settlements in Indiana before 1860, p. 101. Routes in red added from Siebert)
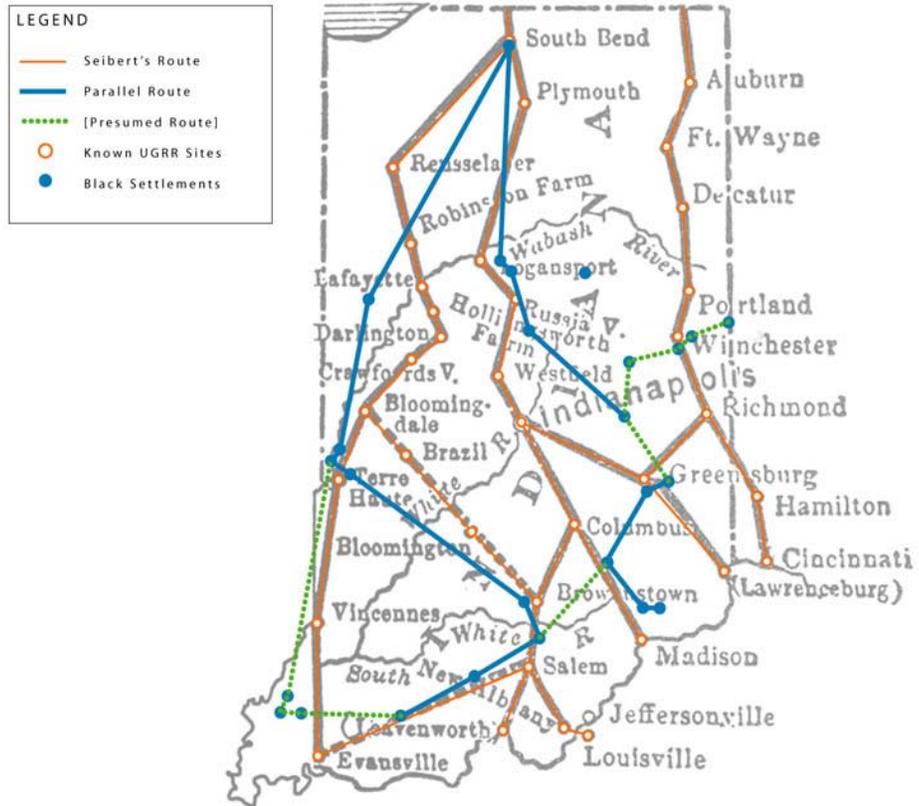
Map 3 Siebert's Indiana UGRR routes with black settlement sites

(From Wilbur Siebert, The Underground Railroad, p. 138. Routes in blue from Xenia Cord Map)

When Siebert mapped the Underground Railroad in Indiana, he identified Friends communities near both the Beech and Roberts neighborhoods, which were active stations on the Underground Railroad. Throughout the map, however, Siebert routinely failed to identify the black counterpart in the landscape paralleling and often overlapping the Quaker settlements. The map indicates how African Americans arranged themselves in the landscape to facilitate Underground Railroad operations. At the Beech community in Indiana settled by other branches of the Roberts family, blacks were also involved in aiding slaves on their way North. Local stories more than likely exaggerated the number of runaways in the vicinity, stating that "several thousand" fugitives passed near the Beech settlement.[87]

Runaways had little contacts in the North, and generally sought help from within the race first. Initial contact, shelter, and assistance more often than not came from other blacks, while sympathetic whites provided money, clothes, transportation, and the provision of legal services."[88] In the dangerous southern portions of Illinois, Indiana, and Ohio, the few well-worn routes leading out of the Southern portions of the states come the closest to merging between the black settlements and the nearby abolitionist centers. Routes branched into a lattice-like pattern of intersecting and transecting paths to freedom the further they extended north.

The AME Church

When scholars observe that blacks were assisting themselves out of slavery, the AME church was a leading facilitator. Churches were the central institution at four of the five sites that comprise this study. The black church, particularly but

certainly not limited to the AME church, lies at the core of radical self-help activities. "The very incorporation of separate and independent African-American churches was in itself an expression of resistance to the hypocrisy and racism of white institutions, and their continued presence provided a symbol of that resistance."[89] Certainly, adding black churches to Underground Railroad and black settlement maps will further refine our understanding of the mechanisms of African American involvement. Sarah Jane Woodson Early saw the black church as the harbinger freedom.[90] In southern Ohio, black Baptists were highly active conductors who maintained Underground Railroad connections. The Baptist experience in these settlements strongly mirrors the AME experience described here.

Several churches were known as "the abolition church."[91] They served multiple functions from sanctuary to school. Black congregations formed active stations and ministers acted as agents of the Underground Railroad,[92] despite warnings to the contrary. Black churches served as both antislavery meetinghouses and as centers for organizational and communal activities. Although black abolitionists such as Mary Ann Shadd Cary and Frederick Douglass criticized the black clergy for the ignorance and insolent bearing of their uneducated ministers, and for their accommodating tone and submissive behavior toward injustice and oppression,[93] black churches were natural allies in the campaign against slavery.[94] The First Colored Convention of the State of Illinois adopted a resolution in 1853 specifically viewing all ministers "who have it in their power to preach against slavery, and fail to do so, as our enemies; as likewise all ministers of the gospel who, in their preaching, fail to condemn and denounce, in positive terms, the great wrongs

done the colored race in the United States."[95]

The AME church among several others adopted strong denunciations of slavery. By then the mission of the church and the work of many of its pastors were inseparable from the goals of black abolitionism. Black vigilance committees and the Underground Railroad embodied the black community's expanding abolitionist commitment and its growing independence. In Pike County, Indiana, southwest of the Lick Creek settlement, a group of free black men formed "The Sons of Liberty" to thwart kidnappers, eventually entrapping ten.[96]

Individual blacks had sheltered fugitive slaves since the colonial era, but that informal assistance did not evolve into organized efforts until the 1830s when unprecedented numbers of fugitives settled in northern cities and kidnappings became commonplace. In response, black communities established permanent vigilance committees, which were part of a network that operated across the North and the upper South. In 1837, James G. Birney reported, "such matters are almost uniformly managed by the colored people." William Still went so far as to use the telegraph to facilitate cooperation among the distant and diverse elements of the portion of the Underground Railroad for which he had oversight.[97]

The Underground Railroad, aside from its oft-noted railroad references, also assumed a religious character. In addition to the use of landscape features such as caves, the various routes of the Underground Railroad were probably organized along denominational or sectarian lines after 1850. Siebert maintained, "The religious character of the operators was the most significant fact in the success of the enterprise."[98] AME, black Baptists, AME Zion, Quakers, Wesleyan Methodists,

Presbyterians, and Covenanters all participated. Interdenominational cooperation among blacks or among whites was less common than interracial cooperation between blacks and whites. When interdenominational and interracial cooperation did occur it was frequently at anti-slavery societies or organizations such as the AMA. It was this type of interfaith cooperation that Quakers found most objectionable.[99]

Siebert repeats one author's contention that localities such as the Miller Grove region in southern Illinois, where Presbyterian and Scotch Covenanters from New England lived, grew as centers of abolitionism and places of refuge with the founding of their churches coterminous with the rise of anti-slavery sentiment in the community in which they were founded.[100] Indeed, many of the known Underground Railroad stations located in the central portion of the state were affiliated with Presbyterians.

Many of these sects and denominations held yearly meeting and annual conferences where people from distant locales intermingled and perhaps laid out strategies. Certainly anti-slavery annual meetings, and the Black National and State Conventions, and religious conferences were ideal opportunities for working out Underground Railroad business. One look at the attendees, for example, at the Black State and National conventions yields the names of numerous escaped slaves gathering and strategizing together.

If we start to conceptualize the various routes of the Underground Railroad along denomination lines, i.e. along AME, Presbyterian, Baptist or Quaker lines it might prove a useful research tool. Many of these sects and denominations held

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yearly meeting and annual conferences where opportunities allowed participants from distant locales to intermingle and perhaps lay out strategies. This should also be considered for political and social factions. Certainly among anti-slavery annual meetings and the black national and state conventions were ideal locations to work out details and would have afforded these radicals access to one another. George Washington Gale, founder of both the Presbyterian Oneida Institute, and Galesburg, the Illinois colony and seat of abolitionism and Underground Railroad activity that bears his name, made direct contact with Dr. David Nelson of Quincy, Illinois Underground Railroad fame, and former Burned-over District zealot Reverend Moses Hunter at the second annual meeting of the Illinois Anti-Slavery Society held in Quincy in 1839.[101]

The Black Church and the Underground Railroad

Although I foreground the AME Church in this study, black Baptists were an active denomination in the quest for freedom and autonomy as was the AME Zion church. The Union Baptist Church in Poke Patch/Black Fork Ohio, which remains as site of worship, steadfastly provided aid to the runaway. Baptist Churches anchored several of the settlements within the network of surrounding escape routes. Further research is required to establish black Baptist Underground Railroad routes. Based on my findings here, I hypothesize the routes will parallel and overlap the Quaker settlements and other better-known Underground Railroad passageways.

Based on Daniel Payne's writings as official historian of the AME church,[102] Clarence Walker states "the major concern of the AME Church before the Civil War

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was setting a moral example, not political and social agitation."[103]   Clearly, moral

uplift, and education were foremost among the concerns of the Church.   Although

Bishop Daniel Payne's religious conservatism was legendary,[104] he was also a

member of the New York Vigilance Committee. The Committee, founded by David

Ruggles was known for relentlessly aiding and defending escaped slaves. At the time

of Frederick Douglass' escape, Ruggles brought him into the Underground Railroad

network.[105]

After his elevation to Bishop in 1852, Payne became the official

representative of the AME Church and may have chosen to de-emphasize the

clandestine work of ministers, in particular and the church more broadly, in offering

refuge and assistance to runaways. Furthermore, Payne and Bishop Quinn appear to

have had Black Nationalist leanings.   By separating the public, religious figure

responsible for his congregants while operating in the socially, politically and racially

controlling white world, from the political activist operating in the world of black

abolitionism and black radicalism, we gain insight into seemingly competing and

opposing ideologies.

Ambiguity and complexity surround the topic. "Blacks perceived infinitely

more acutely than their white allies the hypocrisy of slavery and discrimination in a

self-professed land of freedom and equality."[106] Though white abolitionists related to

slavery on an almost exclusively moral plane, African Americans, many of whom had

experienced the horrors of slavery and, at the very least, racial prejudice, defined the

struggle for equality and the crusade against slavery in personal and pragmatic terms.

For free people of color in the North and the Old Northwest, the struggle for political,

economic, and social equality was linked with the campaign to eliminate slavery in the South. For black abolitionists, the central issue was not merely emancipation, but the larger, more complex dilemma of racial prejudice, which undergirded and justified the institution of slavery and permeated Northern as well as Southern society.[107]

My research suggests that early AME church historians did not emphasize the more clandestine, radical aspects of the church. Before 1850 black denominations acted with greater circumspection than their individual congregations. The church preferred to limit itself to spiritual matters or, in the case of the AME church, equivocate on antislavery issues out of concern for southern congregants still held in bondage.[108] After 1850, the Fugitive Slave Act provoked the church to a more public and radical stance. The black church in general, and the AME church in particular, moved toward more radical self-help activities, becoming increasingly militant opponents of slavery.[109]

Understandably, at the time, neither Bishop Allen nor Payne chose to speak directly concerning the Churches' or of their own personal complicity with the Underground Railroad or fugitive slaves. Each was, nevertheless, intimately acquainted with the plight of their enslaved brethren. It took Allen five years to accumulate the wealth to purchase his freedom for $2,000 in 1781.[110]

By 1916, however, no such constraints remained and church historian Richard R. Wright reported that during the first 50 years of the church's existence "many of the ministers of this church were active in the anti-slavery movement and 'Underground Railroad,' and much of the actual work of receiving and transporting

escaped slaves was done by them."[111]   Bishop Walls, historian for the AME Zion Church offers identical testimony: "The Underground Railroad was practically a church movement."   Its prime leaders were preachers, and black churches, in particular, were used as Underground Railroad stations.[112]

African-American churches were important to the community formation process. Within these communities AME, Baptist, AME Zion Church members at all levels were concerned with the plight of freedom seekers whether at the small churches at Lick Creek, Poke Patch, or Rocky Fork or at large churches such as Mother Bethel in Philadelphia. Charles Blockson found the AME churches spread throughout Pennsylvania "formed a vital portion of the network of stations for the protection of escaping bondsmen."[113]

From 1797 to his death on March 26, 1831, Bishop Rt. Rev. Richard Allen and his wife, Sarah, operated a station on the Underground Railway for escaping slaves. Sarah Allen was known as a friend to the fugitives who came through the Philadelphia area. Although harboring runaways was both dangerous and illegal, jeopardizing the family and her husband's position, she nevertheless willingly donated her time, money and the safety of her home to facilitate their flight to freedom.[114]

Bishop Allen conspired with his wife in providing personal help, condoning the use of their home and, at times, interceding on behalf of kidnapped children. It is a subject with which Allen had first hand knowledge. After residing in Philadelphia for more than twenty years, a Maryland slave speculator "swore unblushingly" that Allen was the slave he had purchased and "claimed him as a fugitive slave, whom he

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had bought running." At the time of his arrest, however, the constable who served the warrant personally knew Allen.[115]

Allen, a strong and forceful leader of the emerging AME church, encouraged all freedmen to undertake acts of charity and mercy towards those still held in or attempting to escape slavery. He had traversed an enormous path, undergoing the transformation from "slave to bishop"[116] and so it is understandable that the AME church he founded would reflect his concerns and be deeply affected by the fate of the freedom seeker. From the inception of the Free African Society, precursor to the formal church, racial solidarity, racial uplift, and abolitionist activity were primary concerns that "persisted with the institutionalization of a formal church" although infighting and internal strife also accompanied its growth.[117] Bethel Church, in addition to several other churches, functioned as a station of the Underground Railroad.[118] After the death of Richard Allen, this work was continued by Bethel Church until Emancipation.

To further support my contention for the radical mindedness of the AME church, I turn to Peter Hinks' discussion of rebellion. Hinks identified the religious factor as central to organizing any large-scale insurrection. The AME church and ministers were implicated in a number of revolts and conspiracies. Several thousand members, class leaders, and religious instructors of the first AME church in Charleston, South Carolina were involved with the 1822 Denmark Vesey slave conspiracy that was planned while Allen was Bishop. Hinks places the Charleston AME Church at the center of the Vesey Conspiracy.[119] Outraged whites burned the church to the ground, and fearing mounting black solidarity within the black church

jailed black ministers. Rev. Morris Brown, pastor at the time, was forced to flee, escaping to Philadelphia where he quickly became one of the leading elders in the church.[120] Sometime before the Vesey incident, Brown had spent a year in jail for helping slaves purchase their freedom.[121] Upon Allen's death in 1831, Morris Brown became the presiding bishop of the AME church at which time he appointed William Paul Quinn as one of his assistants.[122]

As one of the more radical ministers Quinn, was instrumental in the formation of three churches in this study. Remembered as a "militant soldier of the cross" by AME church historians, Quinn left a legacy of radical activism. He was present at the organization of the AME church in Philadelphia in 1816,[123] a seminal moment in American history, and witnessed the bold radical consciousness and ferment from which the independent black church emerged. He defied slavery and organized churches in St. Louis, Missouri as well as Louisville, Kentucky and ordained ministers in New Orleans a decade before the Civil War.[124] In addition to his legacy of rural Underground Railroad churches evinced in this study, Quinn left two clear indications of his radical heart, one of which is most pronounced in the sole text thus far attributed to him.

While yet an Elder, Quinn published "The Origin, Horrors and Results of Slavery, Faithfully and Minutely Described, In a Series of Facts, and Its Advocates Pathetically Addressed," in 1834. Dorothy Porter observes that Quinn traveled widely in his duties ministering to congregants from Pittsburgh to the West 300 miles beyond the Missouri line. He was beaten, robbed and faced numerous dangers "while searching for souls in the wilderness," no doubt observing the horrors of slavery and

knowledge of conditions pertaining free people of color within his vast conference.[125]

Quinn appropriates, *verbatim* and without credit to David Walker, a four-page section from David Walker's "Appeal,"[126] written in 1829 revised in 1830. The text of "The Origin, Horrors and Results of Slavery" reflects the profound influence not only of David Walker's "Appeal" but also of the AME church and Bishop Allen whom Walker liberally cites and generously praises.[127]

Little is known of the circumstances surrounding production of Quinn's work; reactions to and ramifications of Walker's "Appeal," however, are widely understood and have been well studied.[128] "The Appeal" was arguably among the most radical of all anti-slavery documents that pushed abolitionists "from musing to militancy."[129] For an AME minister to associate himself so closely with Walker's work was an overt and radical act.

Bishop Quinn's radicalism can also be read through his role as a member of the largest single delegation representing Pittsburgh at the National Emigration Convention of 1854 held in August in Cleveland, Ohio. Those opposed to emigrating from the racist society of the United States were neither invited nor welcomed. Quinn, along with Mrs. Mary Bibb, wife of the recently deceased Henry Bibb, served as vice-presidents. Martin Delany who was responsible for heading the strategic business committee[130] would later organize and preside over John Brown's 1858 Constitutional Convention for the Oppressed People of the United States held in Chatham, Canada.[131] Such were the people with whom Quinn was associating at political and religious conventions.

Martin Delany was well chosen to chair the subsequent Chatham Convention.

John Brown's expressed, overt plan involved supplanting Canada as the main terminus of the Underground Railroad, forcibly replacing it with Kansas where a new sovereign state would be formed. Hence, by the time of this 1858 convention, the Underground Railroad contained sufficient structure and organization for Brown to conceptualize it at a national level, or at the very least, at a level beyond the narrow, local workings of individual conductors and regional and state escape routes.

Emigration as a solution to the racist policies of the United States evoked wide ranging impassioned responses.[132] The Emigration Convention endorsed emigration to the Caribbean area via Canada, which would serve as a way station in preparation for "an empire of the colored peoples in the tropical areas of the Western Hemisphere."[133] Although analysis of black nationalism in the AME church or among its Bishops is beyond the scope of this dissertation, the involvement of Quinn in the 1854 Emigration convention in addition to his use of David Walker's "Appeal" certainly requires closer scrutiny and binds the little churches Quinn founded in the rural areas of Illinois and Indiana, among other states, to the larger black Atlantic world. From Bethel AME church in Woodbury, New Jersey through Pennsylvania, Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, and Kentucky Bishop Quinn's name is consistently linked to Underground Railroad sites.[134]

Free and Accepted Masons

In addition to authoring incendiary literature and his activities with the Emigration Movement and association with Underground Railroad churches, Quinn's hidden hand also extended to the Prince Hall Masonic movement. Reportedly, the

Masonic lodge located in Richmond, Indiana, the site of Quinn's home retains a copy of his enrollment certificate from a New York lodge.

Quinn was not the sole Mason among the AME bishops; Bishop Allen was a Mason; Morris Brown may have been one as well, standing in opposition of the resolutely anti-Masonic position advocated by Bishop Payne. With the exception of Payne, who was one of the official historians of the AME church and therefore in control it its historical legacy, virtually every 19th century bishop was a Prince Hall Mason. Through the Masons Richard Allen and the subsequent Bishops found a vehicle for the continued espousal of middle class values, racial uplift, self-help and solidarity deemed necessary for black communal success.[135]

Throughout the antebellum period black Masons promoted education, protested illegal kidnappings, and agitated for an end to slavery. Some lodges served as stations on the Underground Railroad.[136] Here, too, the AME Bishops are heavily implicated in the clandestine work of the Free Masons. Bishop Allen co-organized the first Masonic Lodge among men of color in Pennsylvania, African Lodge 459 in Philadelphia.[137] AME ministers were associated with Free Masonry in tandem with the spread of the word of God. Rev. Early, for example, spent much time in the city of New Orleans, where he began planning for the establishment of the AME Church, while becoming closely allied with a number of men who were members of the Masonic fraternity.

The Civil War and The Underground Railroad

Ultimately, Southern enslavers were unable to suppress the longing for

freedom associated with the flight from slavery, not by terror, coercion, religious indoctrination, guilt, the imposition of ignorance, or legal tyranny and social injustice. Certainly, "had it not been for slavery and its concomitant evils, there would not have been a civil war in our Nation."[138] Numerous tactics combined to finally bring down the "many headed hydra" that slavery had become.

The Civil War lay along a strategic continuum among abolitionists and anti-slavery workers. Paul Quinn, for example, traveled to Kansas and ministered to freedmen who crossed the lines into the Union army.[139] Kansas had become another site offering freedom's refuge. Between 1860 and 1865 the black population of Kansas swelled from 627 to 12,527.[140]

Harriet Tubman turned the skills she developed guiding hundreds of captives out of slavery to aid the Union Army.[141] Escapees, with help from black participants, escaped from behind enemy lines retracing the fugitive's footsteps to freedom along Underground Railroad routes. Reaffirming the effectiveness of the clandestine effort, the "railroad" became a silent partner in the Union war effort.[142] By the time of the Civil War, the Underground Railroad had gained sufficient notoriety for Martin Delaney, who had been exposed to John Brown's plans for the Underground Railroad, to propose a plan to President Lincoln by which Underground Railroad routes could be used by Union soldiers to infiltrate the South.[143]

The United States Colored Troops (USCT) was another component of multi-pronged antislavery tactic. When the Civil War became a reality Chicago's John Jones used the respect he enjoyed in the black community to help recruit and enlist black soldiers, as did Martin Delany and Mary Ann Shadd.[144] AME preacher and

physician Willis Revels now relocated to Indianapolis lent his support by helping out of state recruiters and serving as a recruiting officer for Indiana.[145] From his Baltimore pulpit, his brother Hiram recruited two regiments, the 4th and 39th USCTs.[146]

Henry Highland Garnet encouraged black men to enlist with the Union army and volunteered his services as a chaplain to the black troops on Rikers Island acting as mediator between the troops and the government. Garnet continued in this work until the 20th, 26th, and 31st Regiments of the USCT left for the field.[147] Efforts to raise black regiments for the Union cause which stretched to Chatham and London, Canada West, observed one AMA minister, were met with opposition by the white citizens there who "seemed largely in favor of a Southern victory…fearing an influx of blacks into Canada as a result of emancipation."[148]

In the introduction to Siebert's *Underground Railroad*, Harvard history professor Albert Bushnell Hart, declared Siebert proved "the Underground Railroad was one of the greatest forces which brought on the Civil War and thus destroyed slavery."[149] By early 1865, with the military defeat of the Confederate States of America, William Lloyd Garrison, who never experienced nor endured the effects of racism, declared the end of the specific mission of the American Anti-slavery Society. He identified ratification of the Thirteenth Amendment as the culmination of his laudable life's work, which was to bring about the end of slavery.[150]

The Civil War did not signal the end of the fight against slavery and oppression, however. Abolitionists continued to work beyond the rebellion. TenBroek's *The Antislavery Origins of the 14th Amendment* details the strategies used

to end slavery and pass the Civil Rights amendments.[151] Immediately after the end of

the war, Tappan called for an antislavery amendment to the Constitution,[152] using

Civil Rights Amendments as another strategy for freedom.

Founder of the Republican Party, Thaddeus Stevens worked in the House and

Charles Sumner of Massachusetts in the Senate to oppose moderate plans for

reconstruction. As an extreme radical republican, Stevens guided passage of the 13th

and 14th Amendments. Owen Lovejoy, brother of martyr Elijah P. Lovejoy served as

the antislavery congressman from Illinois. Although he died prior to ratification, his

Senate efforts were directed toward passage of the 13th Amendment as well. He and

Wendell Phillips, one of the conspirators who aided John Brown,[153] disagreed with

Garrison and fought on until passage of the 15th Amendment.[154]   As Garrison

stepped aside, Wendell Phillips led the remaining members of the American Anti-

Slavery Society, which disbanded in 1870, after the ratification of the 15th

Amendment.[155]   Levi Coffin also chose the ratification of the 15th Amendment as the

time to resign his position and relinquish his title as "President of the Underground

Railroad."[156]

Although many white abolitionists concluded that emancipation signaled the

end of their work, Black abolitionists were clear that "enfranchisement, civil and

political equality, and economic opportunity" had been and would remain key

elements of the black abolitionist agenda.[157] J. C. Pennington, echoing the view of

fellow black abolitionist Henry Highland Garnet declared, "The battle has just

begun."[158] Five years before the ratification of the 15th Amendment, in an 1865

speech delivered before the annual meeting of the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery

Society in Boston, Frederick Douglass, ever the faithful abolitionist, clearly expressed "What The Black Man Wants." Douglass called for the "'immediate, unconditional, and universal' enfranchisement of the black man, in every state in the Union."[159] With ratification of the 15th Amendment and realization of Douglass' dream, Frances Watkins Harper expressed her joy in her poem, "The Fifteenth Amendment," "Ring out! Ring out! Your sweetest chimes…Let every heart with gladness thrill…Shake off the dust, O rising race! Justice to-day asserts her claim…"[160]

Although I end this chapter with black abolitionist's reactions to ratification of the 15th Amendment in 1870, James McPherson further documents the abolitionist's elongated temporal influence in *The Abolitionist Legacy*.[161] Many former abolitionists, their descendants and families, after first organizing themselves in the National Convention movement, continued to play a crucial role in educational developments in a direct line[162] through early civil rights movements through Du Bois' Niagara Movement to the founding of the NAACP. Perhaps anticipating the difficulty the country would face in eradicating all remaining vestiges of racism in America, Parker Pillsbury, one of Garrison's early associates warned abolitionists, "our work is not yet quite done…nor will it be done till the blackest man has every right which I, myself, enjoy."[163]

Endnotes Chapter 2

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[4] Franklin and Schweninger, *Runaway Slaves*; Griffler, *Front Line.*
[5] Cha-Jua, *America's First Black Town*, 40.
[6] Siebert, "UGRR in Southern Illinois."

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[10] Tregillis, *River Roads.*

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[21] Harding, *There is a River*.

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[28] Weeks, *Quakers*, 239.

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Chapter 3: Landscapes of Black Resistance: Freedom as a Place

Both Harriet Tubman and Jermaine Loguen among other self-liberators thought freedom was a place, with dimensions and boundaries distinctive in the landscape. At the moment of liberation, Tubman expressed her desolation—Loguen, his disappointment.[1]

Introduction

When disenfranchised people settle as a group in the landscape, social, political, and economic forces in combination with autonomous behavior influence settlement patterns, engender a "collective consciousness, and a common social agenda" that forms the foundation for social change. Sundiata Cha-Jua connects black town building with initial expressions of African-American nationalism. He and other scholars situate the construction of black towns as both a response to racial oppression and a product of protonationalism by which he means political attitudes representing "racial solidarity or a commitment to Black empowerment by organizing Blacks into autonomous organizations, institutions, and communities."[2] In the face of government-sponsored oppression, antebellum black community consciousness connected black leaders and early institutional formation with the individual.[3]

In this chapter, I examine multiple determinants ranging from emancipation to flight that affected African-American migration and settlement patterns in the development of rural free Black communities associated with the Underground

Railroad in the Old Northwest states of Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois.[4] The establishment of northern free Black settlements in conjunction with organized escape through the Underground Railroad emerged in the early nineteenth-century as partial solutions to African-American quests for freedom and equality in the landscape.

Memory and forgetting infuse the subtext of the dissertation. From the Atlantic states to the Mississippi River and beyond, small, rural Black enclaves formed an inconspicuous network across the northern United States that offered support and refuge to those escaping slavery. All were "open country" meaning rural dispersed settlements where "families resided on their own individual holdings rather than living in close proximity to one another near a nucleated village center."[5] These long forgotten, loosely defined sites, occasionally mentioned in passing in historical literature, are poorly preserved and rarely extent in the landscape. Cemeteries are often the sole markers of a once thriving community.

Examining these settlements collectively, beyond regional boundaries, gives rise to a national contextual narrative. In his influential work, *Southern Seed, Northern Soil*, Stephen Vincent found significant parallels and overlapping histories in his study of two rural Indiana settlements and those of approximately thirty other rural enclaves scattered across Indiana, Ohio, Michigan, and Wisconsin[6] to which I add Illinois. The sites in this study mirror Vincent's findings in other ways: intermarriage; residents serving as ministers, teachers, or church founders at other communities; interactions in African Methodist Episcopal Church, membership in Prince Hall Masonry, and support of or joining the Civil War USCT or United States Colored Infantry (USCI).

The five sites included in this study came to light under varying circumstances. The Lick Creek, Indiana heritage site under archaeological investigation in the Hoosier National Forest, and Poke Patch, in Ohio's Wayne National Forest have strong historical contexts.[7] Both sites are either mentioned in Wilbur Siebert's *Underground Railroad* or *Mysteries of Ohio's Underground Railroad*, which ties them directly to the Underground Railroad movement.[8] The third National Forest archaeological site, Miller Grove on the Shawnee in Illinois, was not identified as an Underground Railroad site historically. Results of archaeological and historical investigations, however, are yielding compelling evidence of nearby routes and clandestine, interracial operations. *On the Edge of Freedom* begins the recovery work of situating the heritage site within the Underground Railroad network. New Philadelphia, located in Pike County across the Illinois, Missouri border to the east of Hannibal, was the subject of a dissertation and subsequent historical analysis by Juliet E.K. Walker. Walker is the great-granddaughter of Free Frank McWorter, founder of the town. She identifies Free Frank's house as a site of Underground Railroad activity.[9]

These four sites exist solely as archaeological resources. Of the five sites, Rocky Fork site is the most threatened and has received the least archaeological attention. The site, which is located along the Mississippi River, 3 miles west of Alton, Illinois contains the New Bethel AME[10] church and associated cemetery, the Warren Levis Boy Scout Camp, in addition to large undisturbed areas that are imminently threatened by development.

The Black Pioneers in conjunction with the Alton Museum of Art and History

have rescued the history of Rocky Fork by gathering oral family histories that tie the site to the Underground Railroad. At the beginning of 2004, concerned citizens formed The Rocky Fork Historic District Project in an endeavor to save land associated with the Rocky Fork community that is increasingly falling into the hands of developers. Through the efforts of project members saving the Rocky Fork landscape for further study and commemoration may become a reality. Through preservation and oversight, Rocky Fork may join the protected NFS sites, or the New Philadelphia site under the stewardship of the New Philadelphia Association a private non-profit group, as preservationists work on behalf of the archaeological and heritage resources.

At all of these sites, nineteenth-century Blacks, many of who were born free, formed stable, enduring settlements and farming communities, often in conjunction with former slaveholders, or white philanthropists. Cha-Jua estimates a hundred or so black towns were built in the United States between the early 1800s and the mid-1900s.[11] I suspect a detailed study would yield higher numbers. Some of the settlements lasted into the third quarter of the twentieth-century with Rocky Fork's last residents being burned out by the Sheriff in the 1970s. Today the fourth church structure is still in active use by the New Bethel AME congregation.[12]

Methods

The little frontier communities that existed in the rural mid-western and northern states before the Civil War represent a unique stratum of African American history that lies beyond traditional themes of southern slavery, or life in northeastern

cities. The public widely interprets rural midwestern history as the history of white settlers. "It is often taken as an article of faith that in the states of the Old Northwest the black population was extremely small until the Great Migration of the twentieth-century."[13]

Archaeological methods and cultural landscape analysis facilitate identification and recovery of understudied or undocumented Underground Railroad sites, particularly those associated with free black communities. As one of the world's most successful resistance movements, I find the covert nature of the Underground Railroad presents theoretical and methodological challenges. Secrecy surrounding Underground Railroad activities continues to both skew and limit contemporary understandings. Moreover, the lack of preservation of rural black settlements encourages forgetting which obscures these important historical resources.[14]

According to material culture specialist Tom Schlereth, "Historians have been tardy in recognizing that the environment, natural and man-made, is an unusually useful historical document."[15] In *Postmodern Geographies,* Edward Soja confronts a "despatializing historicism" that "successfully occluded, devalued, and depoliticized space as an object of critical social discourse [so] that…an emancipatory spatial praxis disappeared from view for almost a century after the last decades of the nineteenth-century."[16] Soja's observations relate to historicity in general and are compounded for African American historical sites.

With few exceptions, the runaway slaves' flight to freedom is rarely conceptualized within the larger patterns of African American migration.[17] Tens of

thousands of blacks escaped southern slavery by fleeing to Northern states, the Old Northwest, Florida, and other parts of the south.[18] They found refuge among Native American settlements and in every part of North America.[19] Archaeological excavations at Garcia Real de Santa Teresa de Mosé in Spanish Florida, for example, offer insight into original communities of self liberating enslaved workers and demonstrate that running away as a response to slavery predates the Underground Railroad.[20] Escapees took refuge not only with the Spanish in Florida, but also established maroon settlements in the swamps of Virginia, North Carolina, and Louisiana. They traveled westward to Texas and California. In addition to these domestic locations, they sought international refuge in Canada, Mexico, the Caribbean, South America, Africa, and England, revealing a constant striving for freedom beyond the narrow parameters of the Underground Railroad, as it is generally understood. Autonomous "free" settlements of self-liberators were a Diasporic reality. Runaways could be found in the forbidding terrain of the hills of Brazil, Surinam, or Jamaica.[21]

Historical Overview

When the North began the process of gradually abolishing slavery after the American Revolution, the United States evolved from a society based on economic wealth derived from an enslaved workforce to one tolerant of slavery in specific geographic locations;[22] freedom became a place rather than a right. Although historically escape has been the enslaved's solution to the untenable reality of slavery, significant black migration out of the South increased at the turn of the nineteenth-

century and lasted well into the mid-twentieth-century.

Every state in the Old Northwest, with the exception of Wisconsin, legalized racial oppression and ratified restrictive laws.[23] Free or newly freed blacks, who either lived near or migrated out of the south with Quaker or Presbyterian abolitionists, established the three NFS heritage sites. Members of the Roberts family, settlers of Lick Creek, were of African, Native American, and white ancestry and had been freed before the American Revolution. A portion of the enslaved workers at Miller Grove were emancipated outright; they or their enslaver shared in the payment of the bonds required by the black laws of each state. Other blacks were required to pay the bonds themselves, or partnered with abolitionists to post the bonds.

Families and individuals in this study reflect the different economic circumstances and requirements that accompanied freedom. New Philadelphia's Free Frank purchased his freedom and that of his family, and land enough to start a town. In addition to the quest for prime farmland for the establishment of his town, Free Frank, most likely sought safe haven for family members whose freedom he worked so diligently to secure over the course of his life. Others, who were emancipated by their former enslavers, literally paid the price for freedom by either paying the full cost of bonds or sharing in the cost with their emancipators.

At the Rocky Fork settlement, we know from extant indenture records that early migrants such as London[24] Parks and Frank Hogg satisfied their own bonds. Freedom minded blacks, some who had probably escaped slavery in Missouri, Kentucky, or Tennessee, found landowners at Rocky Fork predisposed to selling land

to them, often after they had labored for years clearing the lots and working the farms. Rocky Fork was formed through the convergence of free blacks, escapees, and Quakers who either sold or leased the land cleared by the migrating blacks.

All five sites that form the basis of this study were situated in racially hostile environs. As farmers, the black residents were not among the socially or economically elite and their well-being and mobility were directly tied to their racial identity. With the exception of New Philadelphia, the settlements were unincorporated and lacked political structure. Cha-Jua argues for New Philadelphia as an integrated town.[25] In many respects it stands apart from the remaining four sites where church attendance defined communal boundaries.

One consistent difference between these rural frontier sites and their urban counterparts is the absence of evidence indicating the existence of benevolent societies during the early years. This may be due, in part, to the close relationships among community members many of who owned land and adopted one another's children; widows married widowers; intergenerational households guaranteed care for aging family members, and church members buried their own on land owned by the church. Community members were executors and handled probate proceedings.[26]

Runaways who stopped on their way from slavery to freedom encountered favorable secluded conditions in the small black settlements along the Ohio River.[27] Griffler differentiates this borderland region as the frontline "where African Americans…routinely engaged in the most hazardous, intensive, and effective work."[28] Harold Rose identified all black towns with both the abolitionist movement and with organization of the Underground Railroad.[29] Virtually every nineteenth-

century black settlement across the country, urban or rural, offered some form of sanctuary for escaping slaves regardless of and independent from white abolitionist activities. These settlements, which have all but disappeared, "did valuable service in the Underground Railroad work." Every one "did valiant work in helping the slaves to find Canada."[30] Richard Wright identified every black settlement in Indiana as a station on the Underground Railroad.[31] Pamela Peters found the same in her study of Floyd County, Indiana.[32] While offering assistance to runaways may not have been the original intent of the founders of New Philadelphia or Rocky Fork, they too served as critical border sites of refuge for those fleeing slavery as they migrated to other secure sites further north in Illinois, Indiana, and Ohio, or to Canada.

Although migration is not the subject of the dissertation, I do situate community formation and the Underground Railroad along a continuum of migration and displacement that started with the middle passage, moved through maroon settlements on to the Great Migrations of the twentieth-century. Both free black communities and the Underground Railroad are the consequences of forced migrations resulting from America's racist polices.

The migration trope generally moves from the Middle Passage to the Great Migration,[33] overlooking two other large migrations: the great displacements of the internal forced migration that moved millions of slaves to the deep south after the closing of the slave trade in 1808,[34] and the dispersed, disruptive migration of runaways that culminated in the Underground Railroad through which tens of thousands of freedom seekers escaped or attempted to escape.

To this last migration must be added various emigration schemes of the pre-

Civil War abolitionist era ranging from the American Colonization Society endeavors, to Quaker sponsored trips, to Black Nationalist ventures. Reactions to colonization and emigration covered the full range from despair to hope. At various times and for various reasons blacks and whites saw colonization and emigration schemes as both problem and solution to the problems associated with the racist policies at both the state and national levels.[35]

Review of the Literature

Carter G. Woodson marks 1815 as the beginning of a third migration. African Americans moved northward and westward out of the South to less racially hostile, more tolerant frontier environments of Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois and anywhere else that held the promise of a better life. In the introduction to the Dover edition of *A Century of Negro Migration*, Samuel Roberts lauds Woodson's cogent analysis that indicated blacks moved as the result of "premeditated self-interest, the classical economic definition of rational subjectivity."[36] Roberts and Woodson are referring to the Great Migration at the beginning of the twentieth-century but I argue that these self-interested, premeditated motivational determinants apply equally to the majority fleeing slavery.

In *Southern Seed, Northern Soil*, Stephen Vincent examines the nineteenth-century migration of African Americans to the rural North. My findings concur with Vincent's; African-American northern migration was not limited to the twentieth-century, and the north was not the sole destination.[37] *On the Edge of Freedom*, therefore, relies on Vincent's analysis in conjunction with Woodson's work on early

twentieth-century African-American migration, which emphasized the social and political dynamics of race relations. Many arguments pertaining to Black migration are anachronistic, identifying behavior and motivations that often began a century or more before the author indicates. Donald Henderson, for example, writes, "Ever since the time of their emancipation, Negroes have shown a tendency to migrate," putting freedom to the test.[38]

Recent works such as Steven Gregory's *Black Corona: Race and the Politics of Place in an Urban Community* contain cogent arguments and definitions of the black community that are applicable to the historic settlements in this study.[39] He defines twentieth-century Corona, New York as a "'black community,' not because its residents share a common culture or class position. Rather, it is a black community because, through much of its history, its residents have been subjected to practices of racial discrimination and subordination that inextricably tied their socioeconomic well-being and mobility to their racial identity *and* to the places where they lived and raised their children. And equally important, Corona is a black community because its residents fought back as a black community."[40]

There is a paucity of literature about northern ante-bellum rural free African-American settlements, with portions of Carter G. Woodson's *A Century of Negro Migration* shedding substantial light on the subject. His work, *The Rural Negro* appears ideal but it focuses on the second quarter of the twentieth-century.[41] Although historians have written numerous books detailing free black experiences in southern, or urban contexts before the Civil War, particularly in the northeastern cities of Boston, New York, Philadelphia, and Cincinnati, few works address rural northern

communities. Most free blacks were concentrated in northeastern urban areas, which is reflected in the literature. Moreover, fewer numbers of blacks lived in rural settlements in the North, which probably accounts for the neglect of the topic; preliminary research suggests the number of sites also suffers from underestimation. Miscalculations are due, in part, to their disappearance from the landscape, which facilitates the process of forgetting.

Leon Litwack's *North of Slavery* makes some reference to rural settlements although his focus is on urban centers. *Black Utopia* by William H. and Jane H. Pease dismisses rural Black settlements in the United States as "primitive" in a paragraph in the Introduction but goes on to give the most comprehensive coverage of the topic.[42] Many of the black settlements in Illinois and elsewhere formed just as reformers were establishing European American utopian communes.[43] *Free Blacks in America, 1800-1860*, edited by John H. Bracey, Jr., August Meier, and Elliott Rudwick, is a collection of essays that addresses a broad range of free black experiences in Northern as well as southern cities with analysis extending to the California gold rush.[44] Rural northern sites, however were not included among the essay topics, reaffirming the misconception that blacks have always been an urban people, without "ties to the surrounding countryside or their states' rural traditions and heritage."[45]

George Rawick's *From Sundown to Sunup: The Making of the Black Community* is concerned with slavery. Ira Berlin's seminal work, *Slaves Without Masters: The Free Negro in the Antebellum South* does not contain discussion of rural northern sites but does address colonization, African American migration out of

the south, and the restrictive measures implemented to dissuade or impede blacks from entering the free states. In *They Who Would Be Free: Blacks' Search for Freedom, 1830-1861* Jane H. Pease and William H. Pease also concentrate on northeastern urban experiences as does James Oliver Horton in *Free People of Color: Inside the African American Community*. Elizabeth Rauh Bethel's *The Roots of African-American Identity* is a series of essays that are arranged in loosely chronological form.[46] The essays address specific moments in African-American history and memory. Here, again, urban experiences predominate.

Methodologies and arguments from four excellent works, *Free Frank*, Juliet Walker's investigation of New Philadelphia, Illinois; *Forgotten Hoosiers* which is a compilation of records pertaining to Indiana blacks written by history professor Coy D. Robbins; *Southern Seed, Northern Soil* Stephen A. Vincent's work on the Roberts Settlement in Indiana, and *America's First Black Town: Brooklyn, Illinois, 1830-1915* by Sundiata Cha-Jua inform this work.[47] Each text addresses a specific black settlement, or "freedom village" as Cha-Jua refers to them.

Walker analyzes New Philadelphia using an entrepreneurial, economic model; Cha-Jua employs a Black Nationalist theoretical construct, Robbins work relies largely on genealogy and family lineage, and Vincent argues for the importance of landownership for all Americans of African decent. In *Myne Owne Ground* T.H. Breen and Stephen Innes cite landownership as the most significant factor in African American's establishing and maintaining their freedom.[48]

I rely on the works of Walker, Robbins, Vincent, and Cha-Jua for the insight the writers provide into local communities, the importance of landownership, church,

and family, and the rural black ante-bellum experience in the Northwest Territory. My argument relies on Vincent's work in particular. These are the primary texts that inform my scholarship on rural Northern community formation. *On the Edge of Freedom* adds to this short list of books addressing rural black settlements before the Civil War.

The subject of free black settlements is so productive it can easily support analytical complexity. I view the motivations of the freedom seekers through the lens of the myth and symbol of the American ideal blacks sought on the frontier of Ohio, Indiana and Illinois but found wanting in every aspect of their lives. Concurring with Vincent, I too found, "Family kinship, common heritage, community pride, and solid religious and educational institutions anchored the settlements."[49]

Community Formation

I can not write about the free black community and its relationship to the Underground Railroad without first defining the communities to which I refer, particularly considering I could find no single work that specifically addressed the multiple components of community formation. Juliet Walker marks the beginning of the nineteenth-century for formation of Organized Negro Community Settlements as a fourth example of black land occupancy. I also divide African American settlement patterns. I identify six rather than four determinants affecting land occupancy. In a footnote in *Free Frank*, Walker presents a cogent historiography for nineteenth and early twentieth-century black towns, including maroon communities.[50]

In the bright glare of the American libertarian ideal that followed the American Revolution, African Americans migrated in large numbers. They sought to avoid

slavery, racism, restrictive state and federal laws, and the constant threat of capture and being returned to slavery or, in the case of free blacks, being robbed of their freedom. Even as the American frontier beckoned, and Horace Greeley urged settlers to "Go West," westward migrating blacks found little relief from discriminatory forces plaguing them in the East.[51]

Overlapping antecedents affected migration as in the example of the Gist Settlement in Brown County Ohio, included here for comparative purposes. Although the topic of Black migration before the Civil War is a topic unto itself, I introduce associated considerations and implications for community formation. It is not my intent to provide a comprehensive study but rather to discuss in some detail only those circumstances that directly affected the five communities in this study.

Each settlement, when studied individually, contains elements of the nineteenth-century rural black experience. When black communities are studied collectively, I posit six determinants contributed to migration and the formation of pre-Civil War settlements. Only the first is not immediately relevant to the sites in this study. I found communities were formed as a result of:

1. Self-liberators who form maroon communities, analyzed here as free black settlements.

2. Agrarian experiments, and settlements established and often financed by abolitionists for manumitted families and individuals.

3. Forced manumissions through death of the enslaver.

4. Blacks with long-standing freedom, or self-liberated men and women, who often purchase freedom for themselves and their loved ones, have the

wherewithal to purchase land to establish towns and settlements.

5. Legal dictates of the federal government or individual states that either proscribed movement or foster mandatory migration, usually within 30 days.

6. Emigration schemes devised to rid the country of its free black population, or Black Nationalist plans that envisioned black settlements outside the United States as the only solution to American racist policies and legal proscriptions.

Woodson divides these into "pull and push factors." Freedom, "the general prospect of realizing autonomy," the chance to own land, and prospects of a better education were the pull factors. Push factors included slavery and forced labor, state repression, informal, pervasive anti-black violence, and a denial of rights.[52] Though contributory in North Carolina, I have not discussed laws that prohibited manumission, except for meritorious service at the end of the productive life of elderly slaves when they were usually less capable of caring for themselves.

Maroon Settlements as Free Black Communities

Maroon settlements, generally analyzed as sites of resistance, have greater implications for the chapter pertaining to the Underground Railroad and Free Black Settlements. For Cha-Jua, maroon communities, freedom villages, and "organized Black communities," were the earliest expressions of "territorial Black nationalism."[53] I include maroon settlements here because of their implications for autonomous behavior, community formation, and Underground Railroad sanctuary.

From the earliest moments of slavery, runaways across the Diaspora used flight to escape their condition.[54] In the United States this behavior foreshadowed the rise of the Underground Railroad. Through maroon societies, black communal affiliations manifest as primary cultural expressions in the landscape. This type of free black community formed the first vestiges of cohesive solidarity, harboring runaway slaves from inception. These counter communities "became the bases to which others might flee."[55] Between 1672 and 1864, no fewer than fifty maroon colonies existed in the south.[56]

Stable and enduring maroon settlements frequently required sustained military action to dislodge the self-liberated, freedom appropriating community. Stamped with the image of fugitive slaves, these early maroon sites are not generally analyzed or included among the first free black settlements. If, however, we replace the hegemonic criteria of an enslaving mentality with black's ultimate quest for freedom and liberty, then these sites reflect a different meaning. Maroon communities represent the first free black settlements where freedom was appropriated rather than granted, seized rather than bestowed, but it was freedom nevertheless.

The outlyers, a term applied to runaways, played a significant role in resistance to slavery. Throughout the history of the Diaspora, their existence "demonstrated the willingness of relatively large numbers of black men and women to live outside the nets of white law and order, especially when that system mandated their degradation." As would be the experience of generations of freedom seekers on the Underground Railroad, caves, mountainous terrain, lookout points, forests, and southern swamps offered inaccessible, difficult to traverse landscapes that facilitated

both the creation of new communities beyond the reach of slavery as well as escape to other locations outside slavery's boundaries, "summoning up memories of Africa and adapting them to the hard realities of the new land."[57] Their actions created alternatives to untenable situations by challenging the existing racist order of American society through black self-determination. Use of the landscape for resistance pervades the Diaspora.

Vincent Harding demonstrates the process by which these communities became "a living message for the enslaved people" of the plantations, farms, and homes by undermining the system of enslavement. Organized existence of runaways meant that those "black men, women, and children who lived within the apparently total institution of slavery could not view its power as all encompassing" so long as they knew of black outlaws living autonomously on appropriated freedom. "Their own relatives and close friends were often among the outlaws. Thus the outlyers represented a hidden, submerged black power that the enslaver struggled against, but could not break. The radical presence of maroon settlements challenged blacks and whites alike."[58]

Forced Manumissions Through Death of the Enslaver

Several families and individuals residing in the settlements that comprise this study were impacted by the death of the slaveholder and subsequent manumission. The details of their stories are in the chapters that follow. I present two examples here, one from the Miller Grove site and one from a site outside the study that is illustrative of circumstances impacting the migration of blacks.

Jeremiah Sheppard was manumitted in 1835 by the will of William Sheppard. Jeremiah eventually migrated to Miller Grove 10 years later. As with the Gist Settlement below, Sheppard's story transects several determinants that impacted community formation. I continue Sheppard's story and his interest in migrating to Liberia in the subsequent Emigration and Colonization section.

The Poke Patch site on the Wayne National Forest was one of more than forty settlements that dotted the Ohio landscape. I include one of the better-known rural settlements in Ohio, the Gist Settlement in Brown County, for illustrative and comparative purposes. Key circumstances surrounding formation of the Gist Settlement impacted African-American migration. The settlement resulted from manumissions stipulated in the will of Samuel Gist in 1816. Legal codes impacted formation of the community, however, when the Virginia General Assembly, due in part to Gabriel's Rebellion, passed a law in 1806 discouraging manumission of slaves. The law, as is shown in other examples below, had a direct impact on migration patterns by requiring removal or of manumitted slaves from the state of Virginia within a year or face re-enslavement. Consequently, the enslaved workforce manumitted by Gist's will was relocated to several settlements in Ohio.[59]

Agrarian Settlements and Experiments

White Philanthropic Abolitionist and Quaker Settlements

William and Jane Pease's overstatement that the impetus for the formation of organized black settlements for newly emancipated slaves came "entirely from white people strongly imbued with the simplest kind of philanthropic zeal"[60] completely

negates African American initiatives at sites such as the Roberts settlement in Indiana. Although it would take Quakers more than a century to reckon with their own slaveholding past, once they realized the implications of their ungodly behavior, the sect was a forceful leader in manumissions and in establishing settlements for the freed men and women. Driven more by conscience than experience, experimental communities in Ohio, settlements in Indiana, and Illinois reflect the Quaker commitment to bring freedom to an enslaved population.

However, other religious minded abolitionists such as the New School Presbyterians associated with Miller Grove also purchased land for settlements. At Miller Grove, Lick Creek and Poke Patch, the plans went beyond simple emancipation and resettlement; the community either included free people of color and their former oppressors or the former slaveholder lived nearby.

Agrarian Experiments

Agrarian experiments and abolitionist settlements figure prominently in the movement of African Americans in the nineteenth-century landscape. For blacks, agriculture and land ownership were paths to freedom that offered an opportunity to demonstrate self-determination and self-reliance while refuting racist myths of black inferiority. Frederick Douglass took exception to this view, however. For him slavery inculcated a lack of self-reliance leaving blacks unsuited "to go into the western wilderness, and there to lay the foundation of future society."[61] From the 1830s on, few black abolitionists took an Americanist stance and began encouraging resettlement on the American frontier. They claimed that separate communities there

would offer blacks a "sanctuary from discrimination and without abandoning their American birthright."[62] This idea lingered and resurfaced from time to time, and was "revisited after the outbreak of the Civil War in the hope that it might yield an answer to the question of what to do with the freedmen"[63] as Black migration, once again, was seen as the solution to the multiple problems resulting from the aftermath of slavery, and continuing legal and government sanctioned racist policies.

Dozens of flourishing black farming settlements were founded in Ohio and Indiana between 1808 and the Civil War, many of them by emancipated slaves from Virginia and North Carolina. Moved by their success, the Black National Convention, held in Buffalo in 1843 recommended formation of black farming settlements in Michigan, Illinois, Iowa, and Wisconsin and, as a result, sizable black farming settlements were established in southern Illinois by 1860.[64] Wilberforce community in Canada was directly established and supported by blacks as a result of the Black Convention movement.[65]

State conventions followed the lead of the National meetings. By 1841 black farming and community formation was on the agenda of the Black State Convention held in Pittsburgh. Convention members, who included Lewis Woodson and Martin R. Delaney, held the opinion that no calling was "more honorable, independent, and virtuous, than farming." To those who could not become successful mechanics they encouraged them "to become cultivators of the soil."[66]

The Committee on Agriculture reported at each meeting of the National Black Conventions. Many of the black men who convened over the four-day period at the 1843 Convention held in Buffalo, NY were prominent black abolitionists and workers

in other organizations focusing on anti-slavery and black equality. Ohio, Michigan and Illinois represented the Old Northwest. Several delegates, such as J. C. Pennington, Frederick Douglass, Jermain Loguen, and Henry Highland Garnet had escaped slavery by fleeing to the North. Others had purchased their freedom. Collectively the majority of the attendees either had been former slaves or had family members still held in bondage.

As a group the country had failed these men, as it had failed people of color in general. For the freedom seekers among them, their country criminalized their existence, particularly after passage of the Fugitive Slave Law of 1850. They had been disenfranchised throughout the country since 1840; their freedom was constantly imperiled as Richard Allen discovered after a slave speculator attempted to kidnap him.

Members of the 1847 National Convention of Colored People and Their Friends held in Troy, New York, interested in stabilizing the black community, urged people of color to own land and cultivate the soil. Some northern free blacks envisioned migration to the northern and western territories as one route to upward mobility and autonomy.[67]

When Frank McWorter, whose land claims began in 1821, settled New Philadelphia, Illinois in the 1830s, he found freedom, social, and economic advancement on the frontier, anticipating the rise of black agrarianism. An 1838 article in the *Colored American* sparked a discussion of the virtues of black agrarianism. Louis Woodson, in responding to white Quaker abolitionist Augustus Wattle's call for black settlements in the West, wondered whether it was prudent to

begin such settlements within the jurisdiction of the United States, or any of the individual states. Frederick Douglass also found the agrarian movement problematic citing the difficulty of getting blacks to go on the land, preferring as they did, to congregate in large towns and cities. Douglass also saw agrarian experiments as a band-aid stating that agricultural pursuits were no remedy for the evils of poverty and ignorance in which many people of color found themselves.[68]

In contrast to these land-holding initiatives, Germans of Mercer County Ohio adopted a resolution to register their protest against blacks settling there. The resolution stated, in part, that the blacks of the county were respectfully requested to leave the country on or before the first day of March 1847; and "in the case of their neglect or refusal to comply with this request, we pledge ourselves to *remove them, peacefully if we can, forcibly if we must."*[69]

Land ownership, becoming "*owners* and *cultivators* of the soil," was the key to empowerment. "The possession of houses and lands, and flocks and herds, inspires the possessor with a nobleness and independence of feeling, unknown to those in any other business."[70] This romanticized view aside, land ownership offered independence, the ability to establish churches on land controlled by congregants, a refuge and a home for extended families.

Illinois' First Black State Convention resolved and especially recommended that people throughout the State "become owners of land, to build houses, and cultivate the soil, as the surest means of making themselves and families independent and respectable." The Convention recommended that people of color obtain "an interest in the soil," cultivating and improving it whenever it was in their power to do

so, believing this to be one of the most powerful means of elevation in the country.[71]

Land ownership also provided the ability to offer sanctuary for runaways. Black abolitionist Lewis Woodson established a black settlement in Jackson County, Ohio in 1830. Ordained in 1828, the AME minister worked with the local Underground Railroad in Ohio, once venturing into Kentucky to rescue a runaway kidnapped from Ohio. He participated in the black convention movement of the 1830s and was present at the 1841 black state convention. The agricultural well-being of the people in the southern section of Illinois was also one of the key concerns of those gathered at the First Convention of the Colored Citizens of the State of Illinois held in Chicago in 1853.[72]

Free People of Color and Self-liberators Who Purchase Their Freedom

For some blacks, such as the Roberts family who settled Lick Creek and the Beech and Roberts settlements in Indiana, freedom had been a long standing right. For others, self purchase and purchase of family members was slavery's ransom as loved ones were held hostage by the system of enslavement. Neither economic status nor gender predicted who would purchase their freedom. A man no less accomplished than Richard Allen shared the same fate as New Philadelphia's Free Frank McWorter, a man who signed with his mark. Although Frank McWorter's accomplishments in purchasing sixteen members of his family at a cost of $14,000[73] may be an unsurpassed accomplishment, numerous men and women amassed enough financial resources to ransom loved ones from slavery.

Women also had the financial wherewithal to purchase their husbands,

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mothers and children.[74]   Priscilla Baltimore, for example, who probably hired her time, managed to purchase her freedom within seven years. She and her husband John led eleven families, including fugitives and freemen to Brooklyn, Illinois, a "sister" settlement to Rocky Fork. Paralleling the actions of Free Frank, the Baltimores purchased land on which the settlement was founded.[75]

Self purchase and paying for the freedom of family members throughout this time period represents a substantial drain on the financial resources of the black community and has not adequately been addressed in the literature. No study that I am aware of provides an accurate indication of the total number of persons who undertook this economic burden, the amounts of money spent in liberating family members and loved ones, or the amount of money and financial resources drained from the black community.[76] Blacks found themselves in a financial conundrum that required them to participate in the system of their own enslavement in order to gain their freedom. Often the threat of reenslavement or kidnapping jeopardized whatever freedom or security they managed to purchase. They labored in a system that did not compensate them for their work; they were required to purchase their freedom and that of their loved ones if they cherished freedom, and they were required to post substantial bonds to assure the states to which they wished to migrate that they would not be a financial burden to the state or a drain on public funds.

Legal Dictates

Blacks understood the numerous laws and attempts to legislate their inferiority as not only insulting to their humanity, but also calculated to destroy "the noble spirit

of liberty which so justly belongs to all freemen.[77]

Black Codes

The Northwest Ordinance, out of which the states of Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, and Wisconsin were formed, provided a means and precedence for the westward expansion of the United States. The prohibition of slavery in the Northwest Territories as stated in Article VI of the Ordinance led Northerners to consider the document "almost a sacred text."[78] Due to the inclusion of Article VI, the Northwest Ordinance of 1787 is considered "America's first antislavery and civil rights document."[79] Yet, the ambiguous language of the document failed to end slavery immediately; "specific dictates of the Ordinance protected some slavery in the region, even while Article VI seemed to proclaim an end to slavery."[80] Furthermore, the three major antebellum states resulting from the Ordinance, Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois instituted and enforced rigorous Black Codes while still territories.

The following laws reveal states violated the spirit and intent of Article VI with impunity. Each adopted restrictive measures designed to prohibit or at least discourage the migration of free blacks into the state. Much of the story of free blacks in this study resulted from required bonds and indentures posted by blacks migrating into Illinois and Indiana as mandated by the Black Codes. Ohio, for example, adopted Black Codes into the new state's constitution in 1807. Ohio's black code required certificates of freedom, registration, and barred blacks from settling in the state unless a $500 bond could be given within 20 days insuring good behavior militating against them becoming a public charge.[81]

The Laws of the Indiana Territory, which included Illinois at that time, approved in 1805, provided for indentures, required registration, and a $500 bond insuring that the individual would not become a county charge. A subsequent act was passed in 1810, which called for a six-month indenture and then removal of anyone unable to pay bond security. Illinois, too, had placed limits on black emigration since the territorial period. The state considered runaway slaves fugitives rather than refugees.[82] Indiana actually attempted, on numerous occasions, to introduce slavery into the Southern portion of the State and passed a stringent law for the return of fugitive slaves in 1824. By 1831 the State, again, required a bond for good behavior and support. Blacks met similar discouragement in Illinois.[83]

Trustees of Cincinnati became alarmed at the increasing black population and issued a proclamation in 1829 ordering blacks to comply with a little enforced provision requiring people of color to produce certificates and give bonds. After attempted enforcement of the code, a riot ensued on August 10, and tenements in Cincinnati's "Little Africa" were burned. According to Elizabeth Rauh Bethel, the first mass civil rights movement in the United States emerged in the aftermath of the riot, "guided by African-American community leaders who mobilized collective energies and resources from within a moral community around the principle of race unity and increasingly focused on New World sites of cultural memory." Ultimately twelve hundred Cincinnati blacks were displaced, forced to leave for Michigan, Western Pennsylvania, New York and Canada West where they established the settlement of Wilberforce.[84]

Black codes perpetuated "raced" spaces and places in the landscape. Blacks

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wishing to settle in Iowa were required by the 1839 *Laws of the Settlement of Iowa* to register in each county, post a five hundred dollar bond guaranteeing good behavior and ensuring they would not become public charges of the state. Many Southern state legislatures required free blacks to post a security bond and those traveling North often were required to present papers certifying their status as a free person of color.[85] Even the freeborn who had never experienced slavery could not escape the consequences of being born black in America. As a free person of color, Frances Ellen Watkins Harper, for example felt unable to return to her native Maryland after free blacks were no longer allowed to reside in the state after passage of an 1853 law.[86]

Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Iowa, Oregon and Nebraska established black codes in the North.[87] The three earliest settled states of the Northwest Territory, Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois sanctioned legal discriminations against free Blacks until the eve of the Civil War.[88] This was so despite black abolitionist John Jones' long fight, beginning in 1847, for abolition of Illinois' black laws.[89] Even California passed laws to discourage or prohibit free people of color from settling within the state.[90]

As Frances Ellen Watkins Harper observed, "Indiana shuts her doors upon us. Illinois denies us admission to her prairie homes. Oregon refuses us an abiding place for the soles of our weary feet. And even Minnesota has our exclusion under consideration."[91] Frederick Douglass said of the Black Law of Illinois "it would seem that the men who enacted that law had not only banished from their minds all sense of justice, but all sense of shame."[92] Black exclusion provisions were incorporated into the constitutions of Illinois in 1848, Indiana in 1851, and Oregon in

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1857 prohibiting further black settlement within their borders. The Illinois law, which finally passed in 1853, mandated a $100 to $500 fine and prosecution for anyone bringing blacks into the State for the purpose of freeing them. Free blacks coming into the state alone were to be fined if they remained longer than ten days, or arrested and deported.[93]

Similar to Gabriel's Rebellion and Nat Turner's 1831 insurrection, which heightened fears and catalyzed deportation schemes,[94] John Brown's attack on Harpers Ferry also held numerous implications for black migration. After November 1859, Arkansas, the first state to react, passed legislation ordering free blacks to leave the state by the start of the New Year or be reenslaved. Some exiled Arkansasans came west.[95] In 1860 Minnesota considered similar measures barring blacks from coming into the state and requiring registration of those already living there but the measure was defeated.[96] As an indication of the scope of the problem, the Pennsylvania state legislature also considered several proposals in early 1863 designed to prevent blacks from settling in the state.[97]

Fugitive Slave Legislation

Between the foundation of the Constitution in 1778 and 1860, thirty-eight National acts, propositions, bills and Indian treaties, not including minor propositions and excluding black codes, were enacted relative to fugitive slaves.[98] Here, I discuss two of the most notorious of the thirty-eight that had the greatest impact on black displacement and disruption of the black community.

The Missouri Compromise of 1820 exploited geopolitical boundaries to firmly

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establish freedom as a place.   At the same time, that Northern states were in the midst of gradual abolition an imaginary line, popularly known as the Mason Dixon Line, was drawn at 36 degrees 30 minutes' north latitude. Any portions north of the line and the Louisiana Territory north of the compromise line would be free. As had been the case in 1793, the act again addressed the issue of runaway slaves and provided that fugitive slaves who escaped into any state or territory of the United States could be lawfully reclaimed and returned to the person from whom they had fled. This applied in the free territories as well as in the slave states.[99] African Americans had to be aware of the long reach of state law. Laws enacted in other states affected their freedom and mobility. In 1832, the Virginia legislature passed a law that offered a $50 reward and twenty cents per mile traveled to anyone apprehending a Virginia runaway in Ohio, Pennsylvania, or Indiana.   Anyone returning runaways from New England or New York received $120 plus traveling expenses.[100]

Men and women, great and small felt the effects of the Black Codes, and restrictive laws. The Fugitive Slave Act of 1850, however, added another chapter to the forced migration of blacks in the Diaspora. "Of all the bills that made up the Compromise of 1850, the Fugitive Slave Act was the most controversial. It required citizens to assist in the recovery of fugitive slaves." The act not only made it a criminal offense for any American who failed to assist slave catchers, "but to withhold knowledge he might possess of any chance meeting with the fugitive."[101] Passage of the Fugitive Slave Act on September 18, 1850 criminalized as fugitives numerous men and women who had previously fled slavery.   "It brought further

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disruption and instability into their established lives and, in many instances, forced them to flee the country. For slaves attempting to build lives in the North, the new law was disastrous. Many left their homes and fled to Canada. During the next ten years, an estimated 20,000 blacks moved to the neighboring country. For Harriet Jacobs, a fugitive living in New York, passage of the law was "the beginning of a reign of terror to the colored population." She stayed put, even after learning that slave catchers were hired to track her down. Free blacks were in constant danger of being captured, kidnapped, and sent south."[102]

As part of the Compromise of 1850, the Fugitive Slave Act, like the Fugitive Slave Bill of 1793 and 1820 revealed the constancy and magnitude with which the enslaved population resorted to flight as the antidote to enslavement. The 1850 law, designed to appease slaveholders, reveals the tenacity of the spirit of freedom. The fugitive slave law brought "some of the most repugnant features of slavery into the heart of Northern cities and towns"[103] and "pushed both black and white abolitionists into openly avowed and preconcerted action to defy the law."[104]

Frances Ellen Watkins Harper, whom William Still ranked "as one of the ablest advocates of the Underground Rail Road," labeled the Fugitive Slave Law of 1850, which was designed to force northern states to recognize Southern claims to free labor of enslaved Africans,[105] "that abomination of the nineteenth-century…"[106] "It was one of the most unpopular and assailable laws ever passed by a Congress of the United States…"[107] After it was passed, Harriet Tubman's sentiments were clear, she wouldn't trust Uncle Sam with her people any longer, but brought them all clear off to Canada.[108]

Arrests and aggressive enforcement of the law sparked mass exodus among those who had escaped slavery, sometimes years before. Henry Highland Garnet, for example, watched his father, a long time resident of the Five Points area of New York City; flee slave catchers after passage of the Fugitive Slave Law. Because he too was considered a fugitive, Garnet first left the country migrating to Great Britain, and then to Canada before ultimately moving to Jamaica in the West Indies. Many of the more famous fugitive slave cases, such as the Jerry Rescue, demonstrate the destructive and disruptive effects of the law for the black community and the moral dilemma it inflicted on people of conscious by imposing a $1,000 fine or six-month prison sentence on anyone aiding runaways.[109]

The Fugitive Slave Act heightened tensions between escapee and would-be captor. Residents surrounding the Miller Grove site on the Shawnee openly sought the cash rewards for capturing runaways. Colporteur James West who traveled extensively through Miller Grove encountered a minister in cahoots with another man, who spoke of pursing a fugitive some forty miles and after spending the night hoping to get ahead of him, was denied "the pleasure of capturing him and consequently they missed the $150 reward."[110] The reward incentive made life more traitorous at New Philadelphia in Pike County, as well. The presence of slave catchers and the threat of "nigger stealers" in Pike County presented a clear, present, and persistent danger for the family Frank had succeeded in freeing. "Whether his family would retain their freedom remained a persistent and fearful question."[111]

Although the codes and laws are generally interpreted from a "Blacks as nuisance" perspective, the zeal with which state and federal governments sought to

rid themselves of free blacks through enforcement of draconian Black Codes and Fugitive Slave Laws tacitly affirms Black humanity and power. The laws reinforce how whites, "convinced of their own racial superiority, in fact displace and abuse blacks…betraying in the process their own moral and spiritual inferiority."[112] The mere necessity for such laws exposes slavery and inferiority as unnatural states requiring constant renegotiation, legislation, and vigilant, violent reinforcement. Moreover, no matter how humble or meager their circumstances may have been, free Blacks demonstrated that a life of freedom was possible.

Emigration and Colonization Schemes

Alarmed over the enactment of laws against blacks in several states, particularly Ohio, the first Article of the Constitution of the first Black National Convention held in Philadelphia on September 20, 1830 recommended the formation and establishment of a Parent Society "for the purpose of purchasing land, and locating a settlement in the Province of Upper Canada." The full name of the society was to have been "The American Society of Free Persons of Colour, for improving their condition in the United States; for purchasing lands; and for the establishment of a settlement in the Province of Upper Canada." The convention over which Richard Allen presided was interested in affording a place of refuge "to those who may be obliged to leave their homes, as well as to others inclined to emigrate with the view of improving their condition."[113]

The concept of self-government through emigration was a solution to American racial policies that circulated intermittently within the black community

with varying responses for more than thirty years. Whites also saw emigration as a chance to remove free blacks from within their midst. The first anti-slavery law was passed in Upper Canada in what is now known as Ontario in 1793, the same year the newly formed United States enacted the first of several fugitive slave laws. Following the Canadian legislation, a small number of blacks fled to Canada.[114]

As early as 1801, Thomas Jefferson expressed his belief that should blacks be free, they should reside in a distant colony beyond the limits of the United States on the northern boundary.[115] Early in the nineteenth-century, Black Nationalist Paul Cuffee transported several black families to Liberia. Cuffee was as part of the first wave of Black Nationalist "back to Africa" movement that viewed African emigration as a commitment to the universal improvement of the African condition.[116]

As Carter Woodson indicates, there were other schemes to locate blacks on "a few thousand acres of land at some distant part of the national domains for the Negroes' accommodation and support." The Kentucky Abolition Society sought to colonize free people of color on public lands of the Northwest Territory.[117] Blacks, however, had already appropriated the Northwest Territory as a place of freedom, by escaping slavery and finding refuge there prior to the American Revolution.

The American Colonization Society (ACS) was, for a time, a most powerful leader in the emigration movement. The Society was founded in 1826 by some of Cincinnati's most prominent citizens who were implicated in the 1829 riot. Members of the society agitated against Cincinnati's free Blacks in attempting to have officials enforce the Black Codes.[118]

The first National Black Convention was convened as a response. Members stood firm against the ACS, again evoking nationalist rhetoric. "However great the debt which these United States may owe to injured Africa…we who have been born and nurtured on this soil, we, whose habits, manners, and customs are the same in common with other Americans," would never consent to the emigration schemes of the Society.[119]

Abolitionists such as Quaker colonizer Benjamin Lundy and other southern Friends supported the work of the Society for a time. Between 1825 and 1831, North Carolina Yearly Meeting from which the Lick Creek Friends community migrated, was particularly interested in the work of this Society. Quakers embraced what were essentially deportation solutions of the American Colonization Society, contributing more than $2,000, and fitting a vessel, which sailed from Beaufort, N.C., for Hayti.[120] The ship carried 119 emigrants."[121] The June 7, 1826 edition of the Greensborough *Patriot* reporting on the manumission and colonization efforts of the Guilford County Friends in North Carolina, noted that 120 blacks were going to Haiti, 316 to Liberia, and 100 to the non-slave-holding states of Ohio and Indiana. Eleven had already gone to Africa, 47 to Liberia and 64 to Ohio."[122] By 1838, "Quakers reached the apex of their antislavery development and moved from a gradualist mentality to abolitionism." As it became clear that the American Colonization Society plans were little more than deportation schemes, support waned.

An article from a Richmond, Indiana paper reported on free blacks arriving at the instigation of the North Carolina Society of Friends, and expressed the hope "that the Negroes will either be retained there [North Carolina] or transported to Hayti or

Africa."[123]   By 1848, when North Carolina Quakers saw their work as largely complete, 525 blacks had been sent to free states, 681 to Haiti, and 479 to Liberia for a total of 1685.[124] These colonization schemes resulted, in part, from reluctance on the part of some Quakers to live among freed blacks with prejudice in Indiana equaling North Carolina. By 1836, however, the Indiana Yearly Meeting of Orthodox Friends warned its members against joining any association that advocated colonization as "the unrighteous work of expatriation."[125]

Canada, however, emerged as the most expedient site of refuge, contiguous and accessible as it was to the United States. Once the runaways arrived in Canada Martin Delany advised them to "purchase all the land they possibly can" while the land was selling at low rates, in anticipation of the day when "like the lands in the United States generally…they may be prevented entirely from settling or purchasing…the preference being given to a white applicant."[126] Purchase and ownership of land fulfilled the promise on the masthead of Mary Ann Shadd Carey's Canadian newspaper, *Provincial Freeman*: "Self reliance is the true road to independence."[127]

As a group, American and Canadian black colonists had similar structure, purpose, and function. They formed organized communities and established permanent homes providing a platform for civic responsibility and political cohesion.[128] Birchtown and Shelburne in Nova Scotia were among the first areas to receive expatriated blacks after the American Revolution. Blacks migrating to Canada established settlements in numerous towns, such as Amherstburg, Toronto, and St. Catherines.[129] In addition to these towns, Blacks settled in Dawn, Colchester, Elgin,

Dresden, Windsor, Sandwich, Bush, Wilberforce, Hamilton, Chatham, Riley, Anderton, London, Malden and Gonfield.[130]

Between 1850 and the eve of the Civil War, emigration movements to Africa, Haiti, Central America, and the West Indies proliferated among African American male leadership.[131] By 1853, after much discussion and modification the Illinois State Convention adopted the following:

> *Resolved,* That we regard all schemes of colonizing the free colored people of the United States to Africa, or any other foreign land, as most wicked attempts of Southern slaveholders and their Northern abettors to force us from our native homes, and by that means perpetuate slavery in this country…We will plant our trees in American soil, and repose in the shade thereof.[132]

Yet Hayti loomed large in the Black imagination. Black Nationalists such as J. T. Holly also promoted Hayti rather than Canada as a refuge from American slavery. Martin Delany preferred Liberia and Henry Highland Garnet eventually chose to permanently emigrate to Jamaica. England, too, provided a welcoming, financially lucrative mooring, even if only temporarily, for Frederick Douglass, Henry Highland Garnet, Alexander Crummell, James W.C. Pennington, William Wells Brown, and Ellen and William Craft.[133]

Emigration initiatives and colonization schemes affected the residents at the sites included in this study. Migration to both Canada and Liberia concerned them. At New Philadelphia, Free Frank's family risked their hard earned freedom by aiding runaways. "The McWorter family not only gave the fugitives specific instructions on how to get to Canada, but in many instances Free Frank's sons accompanied the fugitives to Canada to insure that they would get there safely." Between 1826 and

1829, Frank's son, Frank Jr. fled to Canada as a fugitive. His brothers Squire, Solomon, and Commodore must have been quite familiar with the Underground Railroad routes to Canada because they too, traveled to Canada to assist runaways.[134]

At Miller Grove, the freedom of lay AME preacher Jeremiah Sheppard was tied to migration. His enslaver may well have followed the American Colonization Society's attempts to yoke manumission with emigration, primarily to Liberia. As Berlin points out, "Some emancipators forced their slaves to migrate by giving them a choice between Liberia and bondage."[135] In emancipating Jerry Sheppard, William Sheppard's will stated that Jerry "should serve his estate for…three years and afterwards should be hired out or hire himself until he had acquired money sufficient to transport himself and wife Dinah to Liberia." By 1845, ten years after the death of William Sheppard, Jerry had served out his indenture and "procured money sufficient for his removal but owing to changes in the management of the colony of Liberia and difficulty of procuring a passage there," he decided to go to one of the free states where "he may spend the remainder of his days preaching the gospel."[136] He and his wife migrated to Illinois and settled in Miller Grove.

Grouping the six determinants that forced blacks to migrate under a migration rubric increases both the numbers of African Americans who escaped bondage and the number of sites available for analysis. From American Colonization Society plans, to Quaker emigration ventures, to Canadian settlements, to Black Nationalist emigration initiatives, international lands were seen as the only solution to American domestic policies. For some, black men and women would never be truly free as long as slavery existed anywhere in the country.

Settlement Patterns and Landscape Features

My research has shown that landscape features are commonly associated with the settlements although not every element is associated with every site. Frank McWorter, founder of New Philadelphia, for example, was able to acquire prime land to establish his town. Most free blacks, however, whether through economic constraints or racist policies, were often relegated to the least desirable tracts and lots. The following communal formations will be discussed further in subsequent chapters. The settlements generally contained one or more of the following elements:

1. A free black church, usually AME or Baptist, was the central institution, often doubling as the community school. If the location of the church is unknown, my preliminary research suggests that it might be situated on the edge or at the corner of the settlement rather than centrally located in accordance with European "centralized" landscape planning.

2. The rural dispersed settlements were arranged so that families resided on their own individual holdings. Families neither lived in close proximity to one another nor near a nucleated village center.[137]

3. Strong family connections and intermarriages of families, which should be evident from census data, lot and deed research.

4. There is generally a community/family cemetery often containing USCT graves of soldiers who fought in the Civil War.

5. Suspected or confirmed Underground Railroad activities, with routes, safe houses, lookout points, caves, or landscape features thought to have been used

by runaways. Legal proceedings, runaway slave notices identifying the area as a site of detention, capture or suspected destination.

6. Sites are often in proximity to larger, better known white abolitionist centers. Abolitionist/Underground Railroad activity was generally within a two to three mile radius, with identified Underground Railroad routes in the vicinity.

7. Abundance of natural resources such as fish and game, wild berries, nut trees, and vegetable gardens to sustain communities, introduced flora, particularly at cemeteries.

8. Inferior land relative to the surroundings, which in some cases was the ultimate cause of failure of the community. There are numerous examples across the nation —The Gist Settlement in Ohio, Rocky Fork and Brooklyn, Illinois, the Beech and Lick Creek Settlements in Indiana. Whether African Americans were relegated to the most inferior land or whether they purchased what they could afford, are two sides of the same question. They were situated on inferior land because of racial policies that either relegated them to the least desirable spaces, when any space was available, or restricted access to economic resources hampered their ability to purchase quality land. At times, they were late-comers who preferred to settle on inferior land in less hostile regions rather than on quality land in dangerous or hostile areas.[138] After the freed population had purchased their freedom and the freedom of families and loved ones, they then contended with several exorbitant financial drains on their resources. Required to post bonds, and left with the lowest jobs from which to derive a living, free blacks exhibited the wherewithal to

purchase affordable land from the meanest wages.

9. Nearby geophysical formations such as caves, sinkholes, lookout points, precipices, caverns, or ravines offered natural shelter and refuge for runaways. Frequently, Underground Railroad sites were near or had access to waterways.

Discussion

This discussion of the formation of rural black settlements, focused on Illinois, Indiana, and Ohio. Though historians have written numerous books detailing free black experiences in southern, or urban centers before the Civil War, rural northern contexts are understudied. A multidisciplinary approach incorporating archaeology, cultural landscape studies, oral and family histories combined with historical documentation provides a framework from which to begin. From runaways, to outlyers, to emigrationists, blacks created alternatives to untenable situations, raising the exorbitant costs of fines and bonds mandated by Black Codes, and challenging the existing order of society through black self-determination. Use of the landscape for resistance pervades the Diaspora.

Blacks sustained themselves through community, in separate churches and institutions. People of color shared "both the promise of America and the burden of its hypocrisy." As John Fleming points out, "It was not enough for blacks to be legally enslaved; psychologically, whites had to believe that blacks deserved to be slaves because of their inferior nature."[139] Abandoned as they were by a government that "entered a conspiracy to crush him,"[140] that exploited every opportunity to inculcate inferiority, to bar access to opportunity, to introduce and reinforce racial,

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social, educational, legal and judicial inequality, these men and women, used the landscape and land ownership to organize and sustain black institutions to derive communal support. Together, they acted as communal, institutional, and moral leaders in light of America's failures to her people of color. Too often free blacks "crossed the strongly fortified border into freedom only to see the American dream still besieged."[141]

Endnotes Chapter 3

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[1] Bradford, *Harriet Tubman,* 30*;*Rev. J. W. Loguen, *The Rev. J.W. Loguen as a Slave and a Freeman. A Narrative of a Real Life* (Syracuse: J. G. K. Truair & Co., 1859), 304-305. In a chapter titled "Great Disappointment," Loguen's describes his initial jubilance upon crossing the Ohio and reaching Indiana. His joy quickly turned to despair and sadness after a black man informed him "There is no place in the States where you can be safe. To be safe, you must get into Canada. I am sorry to say that the only power that gives freedom in North America, is in England."

[2] Sundiata Keita Cha-Jua, *America's First Black Town: Brooklyn, Illinois, 1830-1915* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2000), 3.

[3] Gayle T. Tate, "Free Black Resistance in the Antebellum Era, 1830-1860," *Journal of Black Studies* 28, No. 6 (1998): 764-82.

[4] The Old Northwest lay north and west of the Ohio River and included the present-day states of Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, and parts of Wisconsin.

[5] Stephen A. Vincent, Southern *Seed, Northern Soil: African-American Farm Communities in the Midwest, 1765-1900* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999), xiii.

[6] *Ibid*.

[7] I have been working with National Forest Service archaeologists and Heritage Officers, Mary McCorvie on the Shawnee National Forest, IL, Angie Krieger on the Hoosier National Forest, IN and Ann Cramer on the Wayne National Forest, OH who shared archaeological data and portions of their research with me.

[8] Siebert, *UGRR* and *Mysteries*.

[9] Walker, *Free Frank;* Juliet E.K. Walker, "'Free' Frank and New Philadelphia: Slave and Freedman, Frontiersman and Town Founder." (Ph. D. diss., The University of Chicago, 1976).

[10] The historic name is the Rocky Fork AME Church.

[11] Cha-Jua, *America's First Black Town.*

[12] Cheryl LaRoche, "On the Road to Ethnography." (Unpublished paper on file with the author.) John Matlock and Charlotte Johnson, LaRoche interviews, June 2000.

[13] Vincent, *Southern Seed.*

[14] See Appendix A, "The Fifteen Step Tautological Conundrum" for the justification for the lack of preservation of African American resources.

[15] Thomas J. Schlereth, ed. *Material Culture Studies in America* (Nashville: American Association for State and Local History, 1982), 17-18, 36.

[16] Edward W. Soja, *Postmodern Geographies: The Reassertion of Space in Critical Social Theory* (London: Verso, 1989), 4.

[17] See Vincent, *Southern Seed*, Cha-Jua, *America's First Black Town*, and Walker, *Free Frank* for discussions of pre-civil war black migration that influenced this work.

[18] See Franklin and Schweninger, *Runaway Slaves*; Chadwick states, "Some historians…claimed the number was about 40,000. It seems probable, though, that somewhere between 40,000 and 100,000 African Americans…found freedom," Chadwick, *Traveling the Underground Railroad*, 5. NPS refrains from providing hard numbers, NPS, *Underground Railroad*. Analysis of the many different figures listed for runaways would constitute a study in itself. Winks cite an average of 60,000 refugees in Canada alone. Robin W. Winks, *The Blacks in Canada, A History* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1997), 233.

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[22] Ira Berlin, *Many Thousands Gone* (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1998).

[23] Stephen Middleton. *The Black Laws in the Old Northwest: A Documentary History* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1993). Evoking state's rights, Wisconsin lawmakers also rejected the 1850 Fugitive Slave Act.

[24] Parks' name is variously spelled in the records as London, Londun, Lundun, Lundon.

[25] Cha-Jua, *America's First Black Town*.

[26] Vincent, *Southern Seed*.

[27] Carter G. Woodson, *A Century of Negro Migration* (Washington, D.C.: Association for the Study of Negro Life and History, 1918. Reprint edition, New York: Dover Publications, 2002), 91.

[28] Griffler, *Front Line*, xii.

[29] Harold M. Rose. "The All-Negro Town: Its Evolution and Function," *Geographical Review*, Vol. 55, No. 3 (Jul, 1965): 362-318.

[30] Richard R. Wright, Jr., "The Economic Condition of Negroes in the North: Rural Communities in Indiana," *Southern Workman* 37 (March 1908): 158- 168.

[31] Wright, "Economic Condition,"168.

[32] Pamela Peters, *The Underground Railroad in Floyd County, Indiana* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Co., Inc., 2001).

[33] A term used to describe the northward migration of Southern blacks during and after World War I. See for example Farah Jasmine Griffin. *"Who set you flowin'?": The African-American Migration Narrative* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995).

[34] Michael Tadman. *Speculators and Slaves: Masters, Traders, and Slaves in the Old South* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1989).

[35] Jane H. and William H. Pease, *They Who Would Be Free: Blacks' Search for Freedom, 1830-1861* (New York: Atheneum, 1974); Elizabeth Rauh Bethel, *The Roots of African-American Identity: Memory and History in Free Antebellum Communities* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997).

[36] Samuel Roberts, "Introduction," in Woodson, *A Century*, vii.

[37] Vincent, *Southern Seed*; Jason Carl Dingman, Book Review, *Southern Seed, Northern Soil*, in *International Labor and Working-Class History*, 6(1) 2003: 216-218.

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[40] *Ibid*., 11.

[41] Woodson, *A Century*.

[42] Leon Litwack, *North of Slavery: The Negro in the Free States, 1790-1860* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1961);William H. and Jane H. Pease, *Black Utopia: Negro Communal Experiments in America* (Madison: The State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1963),

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[44] John H. Bracey, Jr., August Meier and Elliott Rudwick., ed. *Free Blacks in America, 1800-1860* (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Publishing, 1971);

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[46] George P. Rawick, *From Sundown to Sunup: The Making of the Black Community* (Westport: Greenwood Publishing Company, 1972); Berlin, *Slaves Without Masters The Free Negro in the Antebellum South* (New York: The New Press, 1974); Jane H. and William H. Pease, *They Who Would Be Free: Blacks' Search for Freedom, 1830-1861* (New York: Atheneum, 1974); James Oliver Horton, *Free People of Color* (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1993); . Elizabeth Rauh Bethel, *The Roots of African-American Identity: Memory and History in Free Antebellum Communities* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997)..

[47] Walker, *Free Frank;* Coy D. Robbins, *Forgotten Hoosiers: African Heritage in Orange County, Indiana* (Bowie, MD: Heritage Books, 1994); Vincent, *Southern Seed*; Cha-Jua, *America's First Black Town*.

[48] T.H. Breen and Stephen Innes, *"Myne Owne Ground": Race and Freedom on Virginia's Eastern Shore, 1640-1676* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980).

[49] Graham Russell Hodges. Book Review, *Southern Seed Northern Soil,* in *Journal of American History.* 88(1) June 2001. Electronic Edition, History Cooperative.

[50] Juliet E.K. Walker. *Free Frank: A Black Pioneer on the Antebellum Frontier* (Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 1983), fn. 77, 196-7.

[51] *BAP* V, IV,102. Horace Greeley edited the "antislavery organ" *New York Tribune*.

[52] Samuel Roberts, Introduction, in Woodson, *A Century*, vii-viii.

[53] Cha-Jua, *America's First Black Town*, ix.

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[56] Charles M. Christian. *Black Saga: The African American Experience, A Chronology* (Washington, DC: Counterpoint, 1995).

[57] Harding, *River*, 116.

[58] *Ibid*., 39-40.

[59] "The Gist Settlement." http://hometown.aol.com/ugrrinfo/page36.html

[60] Pease, *Black Utopia*, 23.

[61] Douglass, "The Present Condition," Reprinted in Foner, ed. *Frederick Douglass*, 216.

[62] *BAP* V, 128.

[63] *Ibid*., 128

[64] Minutes of the National Convention of Colored Citizens Held at Buffalo, on the 15th, 16th, 17th, 18th and 19th of August 1843 32-35. *BAP* V, 82-83

[65] *BAP* IV.

[66] Philip S. Foner and George E. Walker, ed. *Proceedings of the Black State Conventions, 1840-1865. Vol I: New York, Pennsylvania, Indiana, Michigan, Ohio* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1979).

[67] Berry, *Long Memory*.

[68] Douglass. "The Present Condition," Reprinted in Foner, ed. *Frederick Douglass*, 217.

[69] Woodson, *A Century*, 56.

[70] *BAP* III, 256.

[71] Philip S. Foner and George E. Walker, ed. *Proceedings of the Black State Conventions, 1840-1865.*
Vol. II: New Jersey, Connecticut, Maryland, Illinois, Massachusetts, California, New England,
Kansas, Louisiana, Virginia, Missouri, South Carolina (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1980),
60.

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Vol. II: New Jersey, Connecticut, Maryland, Illinois, Massachusetts, California, New England,
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[88] Merton L. Dillon, "The Failure of the American Abolitionists," in *Antislavery*, *Articles on American*
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[90] *BAP* IV, 102.

[91] "An Appeal to Christians Throughout the World" Frances Ellen Watkins Harper, January 1860 as
cited in *BAP* V, 54.

[92] Douglass, "The Present Condition." Reprinted in Foner, ed. *Frederick Douglass*, 255.

[93] Woodson, *A Century*, 54; Walker, *Free Frank.*

[94] Dillon, "The Failure of the American Abolitionists"; Gordon E. Finne*, The* Antislavery Movement
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[108] Bradford, *Harriet Tubman*.

[109] *BAP* IV, fn. 2, 51.

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[119] Bell, *Minuets,* 10.

[120] Hayti is the nineteenth-century spelling for Haiti.

[121] Samuel Weeks, *Southern Quakers and Slavery* (Baltimore, 1896), 229-30.

[122] Greensborough *Patriot*, September 6, 1826.

[123] *Ibid*.

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[129] C. Eric Lincoln and Lawrence H. Mamiya, *The Black Church in the African American Experience* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1990), 58, 74; Winks, *The Blacks in Canada*, 355-6.

[130] Woodson, *A Century*, 36.

[131] Carla Peterson, *Doers of the Word*.

[132] Foner and Walker, ed. *Proceedings Vol. II*, 58, 60.

[133] Howard H. Bell, "The Negro Emigration Movement, 1849-1854: A Phase of Negro Nationalism." *The Phylon Quarterly* 20, No. 2 (2nd Qtr., 1959):132-142.

[134] Walker, *Free Frank*, 149.

[135] Berlin, *Slaves Without Masters*, 169.

[136] Free Bond posted by Jeremiah Sheppard. Hardeman County Tennessee. Recorded in Deed Book C, 328-329, Golconda Circuit Clerk's Office, Pope County, Illinois.

[137] Vincent, *Southern Seed.*

[138] *Ibid*.

[139] John E. Fleming, History and the Black Community. *The State of Afro-American History: Past, Present, and Future*, ed. Darlene Clark Hine (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University, 1989),197-203, 198.

[140] *BAP* V, 61.

[141] Berry, *Long Memory*, 33.

Chapter 4: Rocky Fork: Oral Tradition as Memory

> "If we don't do this now, we will lose a vital link to the past."
>
> Charlotte Johnson

Introduction

The remnants of a free black settlement at Rocky Fork remain secluded among dense trees, rolling pastures, hills, and dramatic rock outcroppings in Godfrey, Illinois. Rocky Fork is approximately three miles west of Alton, a major Underground Railroad station and one of Illinois' main abolitionist strongholds (See Map 3). Rocky Fork Creek, a small tributary accessible from the Big Piasa Creek, runs through the once thriving free black settlement, connecting the land and community directly to the legendary Mississippi River. The fluid boundaries and borders of the Rocky Fork settlement in Godfrey Township, Madison County changed over time according to landownership and attendance at the small local AME Church.[1] The history of Rocky Fork is entwined with Greater Alton, widely noted as the site of Elijah P. Lovejoy's death at the hands of a riotous proslavery mob in 1837. Although now threatened by development and highway construction, much of the original landscape of Rocky Fork remains largely undisturbed in the Warren Levis Boy Scout Camp and on privately held lands.

A compelling history of African American families associated with the community for more than a century, the Underground Railroad, and black self-determination on the nineteenth-century mid-western frontier emerges through analysis of the Rocky Fork settlement. The community contains significant historical

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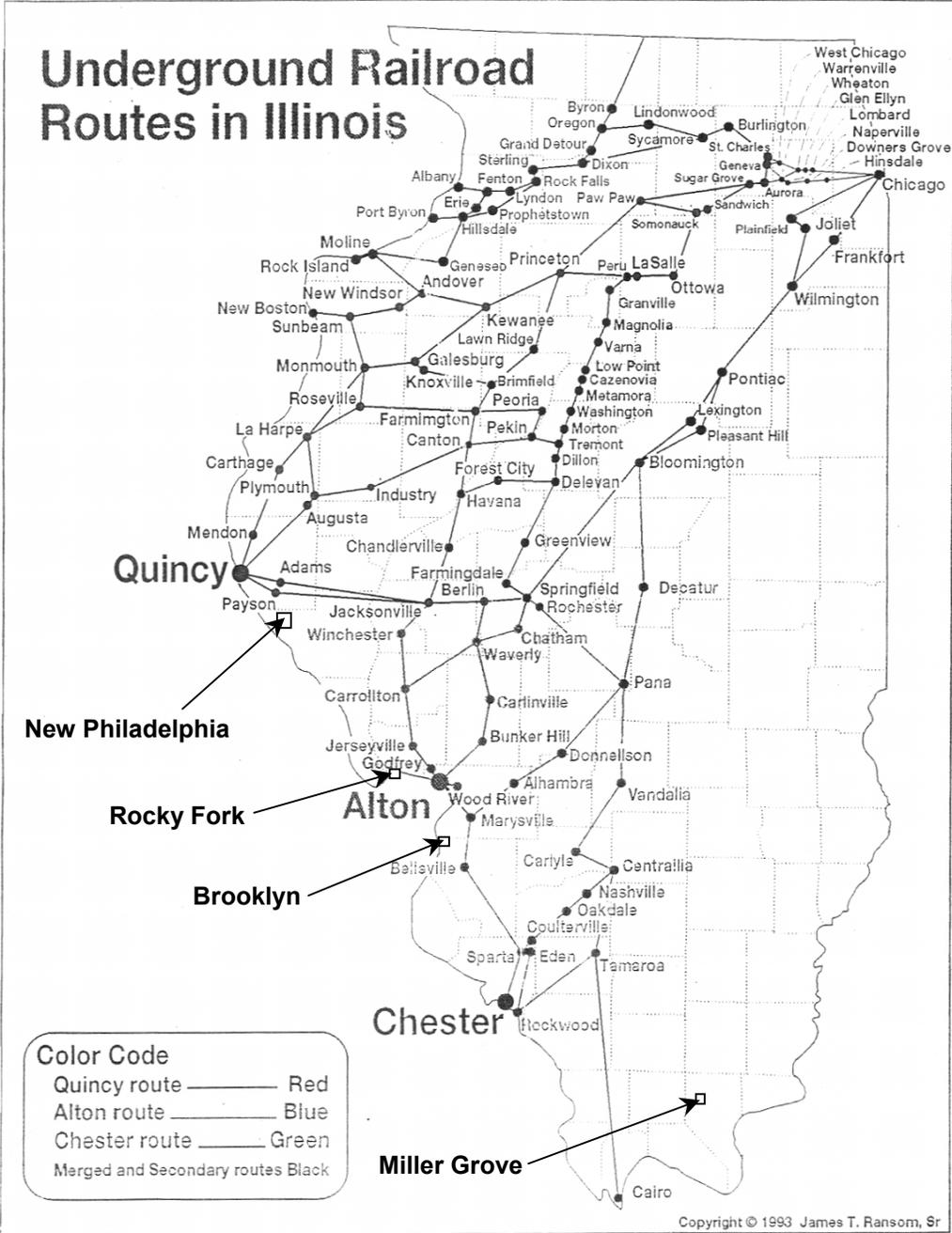
Map 4 Ransom's UGRR Map With Project Sites Included

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and archaeological resources. Descendants still living in the area maintain an uninterrupted association with the AME church at Rocky Fork, a center of worship and social activities. The adjacent Rocky Fork cemetery, a document in its own right, contains the graves of four USCI Civil War veterans, in addition to the graves of family members. The history of Rocky Fork reveals the importance of family and friendships, institution building, self-reliance, landownership, and economic stability in a pre-Civil War African American community. The humanity of the men and women in this study emerges through a variety of sources that reveal names, physical descriptions, lifeways, family connections, and communal bonds.[2]

Sources

As oral, local, landscape, and documentary history converge, patterns of migration and family histories add texture and life to the analysis. What follows is an analysis of Rocky Fork based on oral sources; landscape features understood through aquatic and botanical studies, historical documents, and archaeological resources.

Knowledge of the Rocky Fork settlement survived as a result of oral and family histories gathered by the Committee on Black Pioneers of the Alton Museum of Art and History. Committee member, Charlotte Johnson, a local African-American historian, seeking help in commemorating and documenting Rocky Fork first introduced me to the site. Guided by Johnson, I conducted oral interviews, and researched local histories, and culled newspaper accounts she provided privately and through the Black Pioneer resources at the Museum. The work of the Committee allowed me to contextualize the existing history of the settlement and its' ties to the
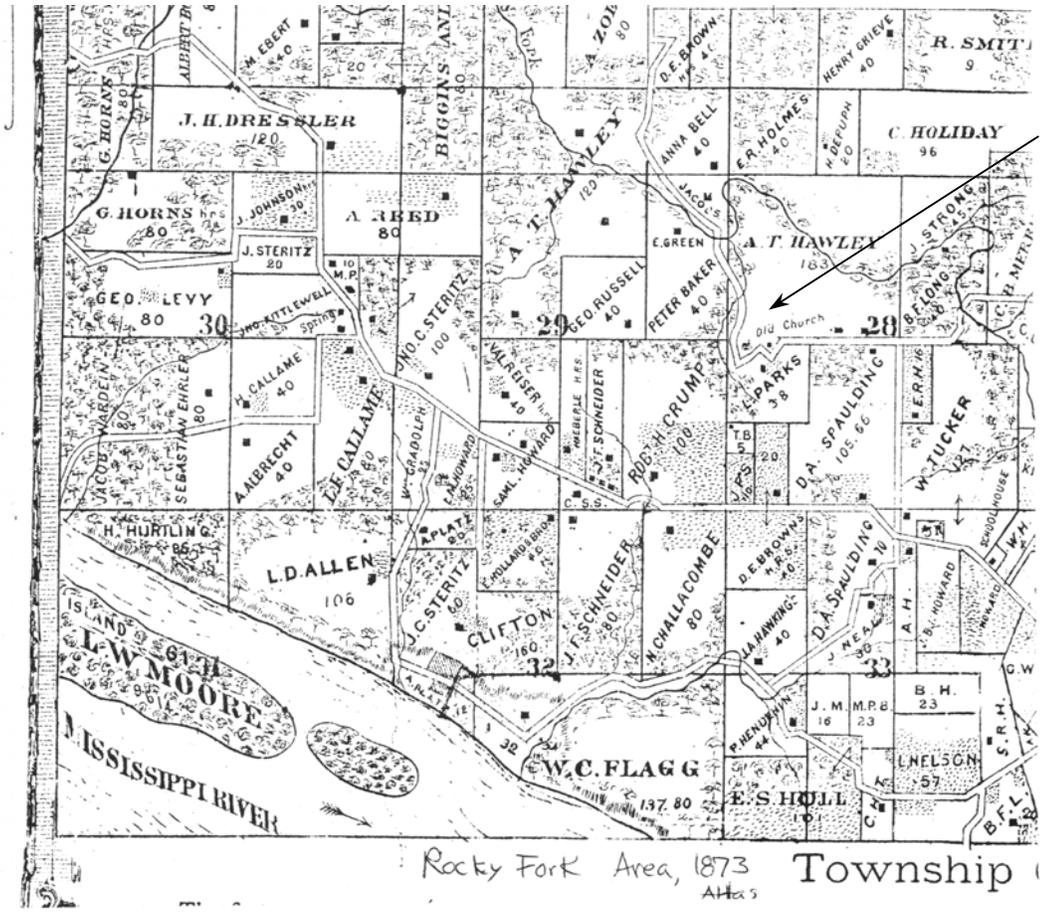
Map 5 1873 Plat Depicting "Old Church" at Rocky Fork
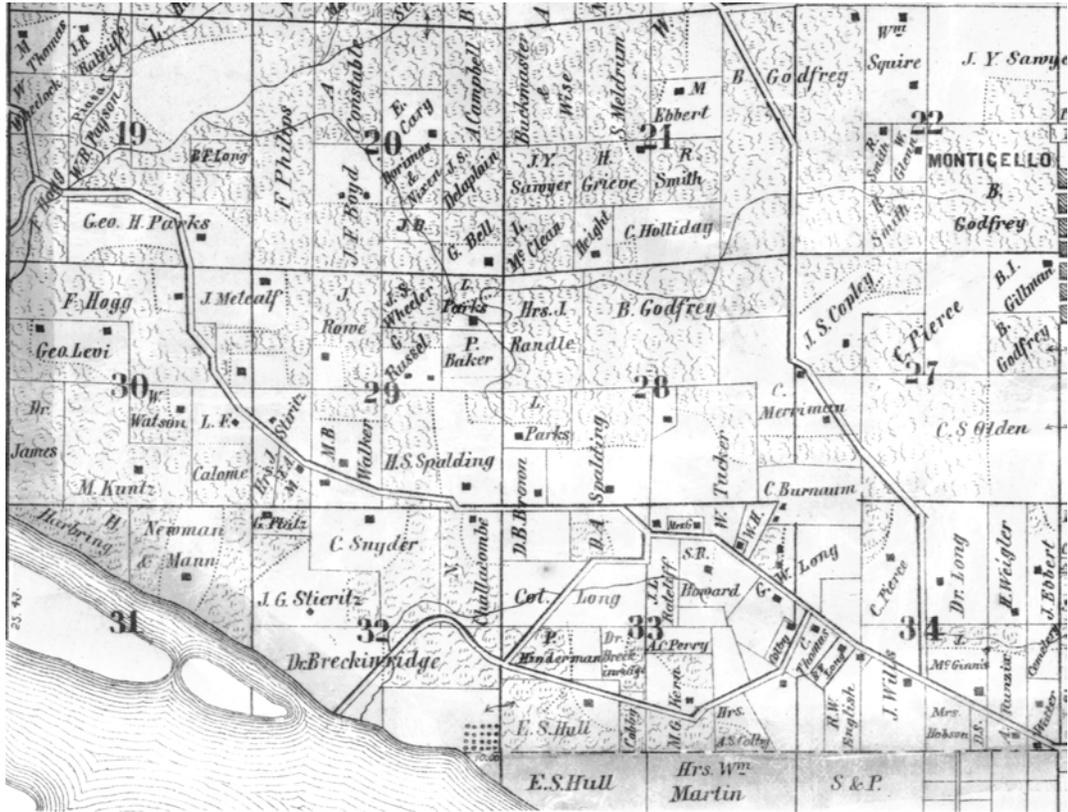
Map 6 1861 Plat Prior to Construction of Rocky Fork Church

Underground Railroad. Absences in documentary history, particularly for clandestine sites that operated as Underground Railroad stations, mandate alternative research strategies. This study investigates the African American presence in the area in the first half of the nineteenth-century and connects the settlement with the Underground Railroad. Tracing Underground Railroad connections based on oral sources presents unique challenges. Unlike the other two Illinois sites included in this study, New Philadelphia and Miller Grove, extant historical resources for Rocky Fork are limited although a wealth of oral testimony helps to create a context for the development of the place.

Ninety-four year-old Charles Benjamin Townsend III, the oldest living descendant born in Rocky Fork, functions as a "living library." (Figure 2) He lived with his grandparents and remembers stories of his great-grandparents. Mr. Townsend embodies five generations of living history. His lived experiences and the long reach of his memory of his grandparents' memories of his great-grandparents' memories tie the contemporary directly to the nineteenth-century. The basis of much of the social history gathered for this study rests on his testimony and those collected by the Committee on Black Pioneers combined with several others I gathered between 2000 and 2003.

The Rocky Fork community physically existed until the 1970s with some descendants remaining in close proximity. Rocky Fork, therefore, offers an opportunity to examine the community's collective memory and change over time. This is the only site in the study for which I was able to interact with an extensive network of descendants and attend a large family reunion. The families retain an

Figure 2 Mr. Charles Benjamin Townsend, III.

(Photo: Cheryl J. LaRoche)

important sense of history and the local community has preserved and rescued much of its historical resources through genealogical studies. The early social history of Rocky Fork, however, is less well known. With the passing of the oldest remaining members of the community living in nearby towns, Rocky Fork is loosing the vital power of living memory. By 1962 only five or six families remained in the area[3] but others are returning or live in neighboring communities.

Historical Overview

Local and family histories document the African American presence at Rocky Fork to 1863 when Erasmus Green[e], a former slave, and Andrew Jackson Hindman,[4] his friend from the Civil War, established the AME Church at Rocky Fork, known historically as the "Old Church." The church and associated historic Rocky Fork Cemetery have been in continual use since the inception of the church in 1863. The church anchored the community. Rocky Fork can be identified on Madison County Platt Maps largely because surveyors never failed to record the "Old Church" after it was erected (Map 4). Oral history, cemetery inscriptions, and census data, however, indicate the settlement predates the documented origins of the church and that African American migration to Rocky Fork began at least 40 years earlier than official records would indicate.

The name "Rocky Fork" describes the landscape of rocky outcroppings near the site of the present church where the old road made a fork and ran downhill to the west of the church rather than to the east as it now does. The road meets Rocky Fork Creek at the bottom of the hill.[5] Aptly named for the huge glacial boulders marking

the rugged terrain, the rocky landscape rendered much of the area unsuitable for farming although by necessity, Rocky Fork farmers tilled all usable acreage. Access to Rocky Fork from surrounding rivers and intersecting creeks negated the inhospitable terrain.

Geography and politics played a major role in populating the settlement.[6] Surrounding waterways facilitated escape from slavery. In the early 1800's fleeing slaves and black freed men and women migrated west concurrent with white eastern and southern Americans heeding the call to go northwest in pursuit of their destiny. Rocky Fork's accessibility from the Mississippi River, to the Big Piasa Creek, to the Rocky Fork Creek, made the area a stopping point for fugitive slaves—a secluded, safe refuge, first stop in the North for those runaways traveling the Kentucky route north, or crossing from the slave state of Missouri.

According to Charlotte Johnson, the first person of color in the area was Frank Hogg who arrived between 1805 and 1807. Hogg was an early entrepreneur with the financial wherewithal to start a sawmill, which he eventually sold. Hogg is described in the census records as mulatto. Based on his land transactions, he appears to have been a proficient businessman who owned parcels in and around Rocky Fork.

There were fugitive slaves in the Rocky Fork area as early as 1816, and religious services brought spiritual solace to the settlement by 1830s.[7] The censuses of 1830 and 1845 indicate that mulattos and a few blacks were already in the area. The 1845 Census lists 187 African Americans living in Alton where the overall number of residents totaled 2607.[8] By 1855, 97 African Americans out of a total population of 247 resided in Godfrey, the township that contained Rocky Fork. Of

that number, 52 blacks lived in direct proximity to Don Alonzo Spaulding. There is evidence that blacks and whites lived among one another and Spaulding appears to have held little concern living in close proximity or about how blacks obtained their freedom. He allowed them to work for him, clearing his land in exchange for eventual ownership.

Free blacks populated Alton as early as the 1820s. An early land transaction in Semple's Addition in Upper Alton places Ann Maria Bell in the landscape before mid century. According to the 1850 Census, Ann Bell, a free woman of color, came to Illinois from Virginia. On May 1, 1849, she became a black female landowner in Illinois. She purchased Lot 90 at State and Warf Streets, in Semple's Addition Town (now City) of Alton for the sum of One hundred and fifty dollars[9] which was a substantial amount for a woman to pay, particularly a black woman in Illinois at mid-century. She was from Virginia but other than that, we have no understanding of her life before she purchased her Alton property. In his research, local Underground Railroad expert, Terry Ransom, found that a large number of females from Virginia were property owners. This may have been due to the ability of Virginia women both enslaved and free, to retain their wealth in the 1840s and 1850s.[10]

Further research is necessary to determine if she was one of the landowning free people of color from Virginia who migrated to protect financial well being, as Stephen Vincent found in Indiana.[11] Bell was one of the progenitors of the Rocky Fork community. The obelisk marking her grave and that of her mother, Tisch or Letitia Garnet, is one of the earliest and the most elaborate markers in the Rocky Fork AME church cemetery. Peter Baker, another early resident, was Tish Garnet's

brother and Ann's Uncle.[12] Unfortunately, the pre-migration story of this family and their potential ties to other settlers of Rocky Fork remain unclear. Further genealogical investigation is required for this branch of the Rocky Fork family history.

Although AME church co-founder Erasmus Green was classified as mulatto in the census, and was the son of his enslaver circumstances surrounding his freedom are poorly understood. Green and Eliza Jane Duncan had been enslaved in Bolivar, Tennessee, married, and migrated to Rocky Fork upon obtaining their freedom. He and his wife led the community in building its first church (Figure 4).

Lundun Parks and his wife Jane figure prominently in the establishment of two of the earliest AME churches in the area and Rev. DePugh later ministered to the Rocky Fork community. Both were prominent Rocky Fork landowners living in the area in the first half of the century. In addition to these landowners, African Americans farmers were working in the area.

The land transactions of two prominent white antislavery families, the Spauldings and the Hawleys shaped the evolution of Rocky Fork as an African American settlement. The Hawley and Spaulding families acquired land encompassing the Rocky Fork area. D. A. Spaulding, born in Castleton, Rutland County, Vermont on Jan. 2, 1797, was considered one of the pioneer citizens of Madison County. He came to Edwardsville in Madison County in July of 1818, settled on section twenty-nine in Godfrey township in 1828, and four years later settled on section twenty-eight in Godfrey township where he still resided in 1882.[13] It would appear from the 1851, 1861, 1873, and 1892 Maps of Godfrey Township

Figure 3 Erasmus Greene and his wife Jane.

This is to Certify that the Bearer, Erasmus Green
of Rocky Fork is licensed to Preach in the

African * Methodist * Episcopal * Church.

Signed in behalf of the **District** Conference of said
Church, to be renewed once a year, so long as his life corresponds with the Gospel, and he submits to the rules of the
Discipline of said Church

Given under my hand this 22nd day of April 1901.

Andrew Burton Presiding Elder

Figure 4 E. Greene's AME Preachers License.

(Courtesy of Alton Museum of Art and History)

that the Spaulding holdings continued into section 33 just south of Section 28 with the Grafton Road transecting the property.

Spaulding held the position of surveyor of Madison County from 1825 to 1835 and was involved in numerous land sales and transactions. Perhaps his sentiments towards slavery may have changed over time because he had one female slave between the age of 10 and 24 living with his family according to the 1830 census.[14] Apparently she was sent to his wife at the time of their wedding. No additional details of her life are available, however.[15] After his first wife died in 1836, he married Sarah Ann Danforth on February 25, 1838.[16] The daughter from that union, Ellen Mariah married Andrew F. Hawley[17] of Alton and Spaulding became the father-in-law of A.[F.]? Hawley, further binding the antislavery families together.[18]

The Hawley's parents, white abolitionists from Massachusetts, came west and acquired land on either side of the old Grafton Road and along Rocky Fork Creek to the north. According to Joseph Hindman, grandson of A. J. Hindman, "the Spaulding and Hawley families set up a system of selling land to the one-time slaves, who availed themselves of the offer."[19] Charlotte Johnson reports, "when the escaped slaves came over [Spaulding and Hawley] gave them the ability to work…and as they worked for them they could move on or they could stay there and build their homes and buy property."[20] Oral accounts state that eventually laboring blacks or their descendants owned much of the district. This was not borne out, however, in the documentary record. After the backbreaking work of clearing the land, land ownership was rarely formalized or legalized and therefore left little documentation

to rely upon.

Spauldings and Hawleys chose to go against the prevailing racial attitudes existing in Illinois at that time. By 1829, the State of Illinois ruled that no black or mulatto would be "permitted to come and reside in this State, until such person shall have given bond and security" and that any person who brings into the state "any black or mulatto person, in order to free him or her from slavery, or who aids or assists any person in bringing any such black or mulatto person to settle or reside therein, shall be fined one hundred dollars on conviction, or indictment."[21]

Apparently, the two families went unmolested by the law. According to Hindman, the Spauldings and Hawleys gave out land for those who would clear it and pay over a period of time.[22] The two families did not appear concerned about the source of freedom, be it appropriated, purchased, or granted, for the blacks who came to them in the work-for-land exchange. Mr. Townsend asserts that Hawley worked the folks pretty hard,[23] suggesting that benevolence was not a primary motivator. In her research Charlotte found people who worked for them for a year, "made a little bit of money, bought a house and a horse so that they could move a little bit farther up the line; came back and worked for them and earned a little bit more money; moved further up the line until they moved…to Springfield and to Peoria.[24] This type of system is extremely difficult to track because often the workers did not take title to the land and therefore do not appear in official records. After the Civil War, however, documentary evidence increased. Peter Baker, for example, purchased, for $57, "one third interest in two fields of wheat now growing on the land of A.T. Hawley, one field containing nine acres, the other eight acres" along with a bay

horse.[25]

The Spauldings sold land to John Matlock, Sr. one of the early African American settlers who escaped from Cuba, Missouri and worked as a farm hand for Hawley. Matlock was able to acquire a substantial amount of acreage.[26] Currently his descendant, John Matlock along with Rich Edwards, a descendant of Erasmus Green, remain the sole landowning descendants among the original Rocky Fork families. African American families associated with Rocky Fork included Ann Bell, her mother Tisch Garnet, and her uncle Peter Baker and her son-in-law A.J. Hindman.[27] We do not understand what brought the family to the area or what connections they may have had with other blacks who migrated to Rocky Fork. Erasmus and Jane Green, Nora and Monroe North, Rev. Wilkinson, Rubin [Reuben] Jacobs, and Rev. DuPugh (DuPeu) were also among the residents.[28]

Similar to patterns found by Vincent in Indiana, families intermarried and bound the community together "in a confusing array of marital alliances."[29] The extended Rocky Fork family tree reveals the interconnectedness of the families. The families of the founders intermarried. A. J. Hindman, for example, married Ann Bell's daughter, Lucinda. Peter Baker was the great grandfather of ninety-five year old Charles Townsend, the oldest living descendant from Rocky Fork.[30] Mr. Townsend's oral testimony greatly informed this work.[31] He lived with his grandparents who told him the stories of their parents so Mr. Townsend is our living connection with the past. Other descendants still associated with Rocky Fork include the Matlocks, Townsends, Kennedys, Darbys, and Cannons.

According to descendant Joe Hindman, during his childhood and that of his

parents, too, "there were many black families living along Rocky Fork Creek, clustered together on small acreages." Hindman recalled at least one house was built of logs. "The story, no doubt true, was that the elder Hawleys permitted the families to acquire small parcels of the large farm in return for working at Lilac Lodge, the Hawley homeplace." Hyndman continued, "Our 47-acre farm, two miles west of the Alton city limits, and a short distance north of the Mississippi River, on bustling Old Grafton Road" (now 1828 W. Delmar Avenue) in Godfrey Township, Madison County was about one-forth mile from Hawley's Lilac Lodge farm.[32]

At some stage the Hawleys became breeders of purebred Hereford cattle. Their son and daughter, Andrew and Nina, neither of whom married, continued the enterprise for the duration of their lives, shipping their expensive animals throughout the United States. The Hawleys left no heirs. Fortunately the portion of land in Rocky Fork still owned by the family was donated to the Warren Levis Boy Scout Camp in the 1950s leaving large portions essentially undisturbed. In 2001, the Boy Scout Camp was nominated and accepted as part of the Underground Network to Freedom.[33]

African Methodist Episcopal Church

Origins of the Rocky Fork AME Church

As the American people moved west, populating the frontier, church edifices were nonexistent. When weather permitted, early religious service took the form of group gatherings or camp meetings where people traveling from great distances congregated for several days in a given area and listened to an itinerant minister or

preacher. This form of religious service was very popular in the Alton/Rocky Fork area. Mrs. Florence Cannon recalled stories of Camp Ground services on Ben Matlock Sr.'s property prior to erection of the church building. Mrs. Cannon referred to the site by its subsequent owners of Matlock descendants, Urice, Wesley, Barbara, and Mary Matlock[34]—one of the two remaining parcels now held by John Jr.

An active congregation must precede the building of any church. At Rocky Fork, in addition to campground meetings, the congregation met in the homes of members before forming the church. "We know the people met but I don't think they met as Baptist or Methodist until after Green became ordained." Charlotte continues, "Rocky Fork [church] was already in existence and going but it was not a Methodist church it was just a church. Folks got together and had church."[35] Charles Townsend also reports church meetings were held in the homes of various congregants.[36] Those who participated were free men and women, freed slaves or slaves some of whom had reached "free territory via the Underground Railroad."[37]

Oral accounts identify William Paul Quinn as the presiding elder of the AME Church who formed the congregation. In an archived letter, Elder Quinn is said to mention visiting Rocky Fork and having church with the people there before 1840.[38] At six feet three, weighing 250 pounds, he was a tall, erect, rugged man well suited for the "Herculean task of frontier preaching."[39] Quinn was a traveling exhorter, or circuit rider who "preferred half-wild horses and loved to come galloping up full tilt to places where he preached, dismounting when the horse stopped."[40]

He routinely traveled almost entirely on horseback from Pennsylvania and Maryland to the banks of the Mississippi River, spreading the AME church and the

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word of God, some 300 miles beyond the Missouri line.[41] "In 1832 he went over the Allegheny Mountains, and organized churches in Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, Kentucky, Missouri and Iowa."[42] The AME church was the first social institution organized in Brooklyn, Illinois, south of Rocky Fork. Sometime before 1837, Quinn organized the AME Church in nearby Brooklyn with the help of stalwarts John and Priscilla Baltimore.[43] Because of her tireless work on the Underground Railroad Priscilla is known as the "the Moses of the West," in homage to her courageous work on behalf of fugitive slaves paralleling the efforts of Harriet Tubman.

Quinn, who would become the fourth bishop of the AME church in 1844, was not known for effecting the "skillfully contrived masks crafted with an acute awareness of the demands of racial protocol and hierarchy." He routinely traveled from Pennsylvania and Maryland to the banks of the Mississippi River and beyond, ministering to his far-flung flock. "He had the faith and daring of Paul, the intrepidity of Francis Asbury, and the blood and iron of Bismarck. He was matchless in heroism, superb in courage, and relentless in his attacks on the foes of his people… He was a giant in his day."[44] The teachings of this "militant soldier of the Cross," influenced Brooklynites in establishing their town as a haven for anyone fleeing slavery.[45] As research continues into Bishop Quinn's ministry, it may well be proven that everywhere he went and every church he established was a haven used as an Underground Railroad stop. The AME churches at both Rocky Fork and Brooklyn, Illinois should be counted among that number.

The AME church at Rocky Fork was built on land deeded for one dollar by Lundun and Jane Parks. Although local history says the church was active in the

Underground Railroad, it is more likely that congregants of what was to become the church were active before the church structure was erected. Church members provided a haven for runaway slaves, some of whom stayed temporarily while working arrangements were made for them on farms in the area.[46]

After his election to Elder in 1838, Quinn organized The Lower Alton AME Church, also known as Campbell Chapel, during the winter of 1839. When he came to Alton that winter, he found seven African Americans of the Methodist persuasion, who occasionally attended the Methodist Episcopal Church. Together, William Barton, Jane Barton, Loudon[47] Parks, Shadrach Stewart, Jane Parks, Eliza Ellesworth and Thomas Ellesworth set about establishing one of the two earliest AME churches in the state of Illinois and probably the first in Madison County. Quinn preached the first sermon in William Barton's house, in Alton, located between Abby and Easton streets. This remained the preaching place for years. William Barton was also the first local preacher of the AME Church in Madison County and also in the state.[48] In 1840, Quinn received the official appointment by the General Conference as the general missionary, to "plant the A. M. E. Church in the far West."

More than likely, Quinn worked with the small religious group that congregated at Rocky Fork during that same winter of 1839. That would coincide with the oral history dating Quinn's formation of the church before 1840. Lundun and Jane Parks were instrumental in chartering both the Rocky Fork and the Lower Alton AME churches. Parks and his wife would have known and worked with Quinn at both locations which further ties Quinn to the Rocky Fork Church. Parks is listed in the city directories as a businessman. Through his ability to donate the land upon which

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the church was built, Parks helped finance the early church. Green began the more formal, organized church between 1857 and 1859, but the congregation had to wait until the end of the Civil War before erecting the church building that marks the "official" beginning of the documented church history.

After an absence of two years, Green returned to Rocky Fork, with his friend and fellow Civil War veteran, A.J Hindman, to begin again. Green and Hindman co-founded the church in 1863. Green served with Hindman in Company B56 of the USCI in Helena, Arkansas in 1863 and convinced his friend to relocate to Rocky Fork after the war. He had ministered to the tiny settlement, receiving his ordination in 1851 but probably not as a Methodist. A copy of his license is on exhibit at The Alton Museum of Art and History. Erasmus Green, a former slave, and A.J. Hindman, preached from the pulpit that Rocky Fork should always be a place of refuge against trouble and strife—and it upholds that tradition today (Figure 5).

The Deed for the Rocky Fork AME church lists land donors Lundun Parks and his wife Jane, among the first trustees and stewardesses. They appear in the census records twenty years before the founding of the church. Forty-eight year old Parks is listed as London in the 1845 Census of Madison County.[49] Parks, in addition to Ruben Jacobs and Carter Russell, was one of the trustees at the time the first deed was drawn. Charter members of the church were: Lundun Parks, Ruben Jacobs, Carter Russell, Jacob Galloway, George North, George Fox, Robert Kinney, John Conway, Arthur Cannon, Lamuel Welsch, Benton Jones, Andrew Dickison, and John Davidson. The first stewardesses were: Sisters Berr (Beriman) Thompson, Eliza Daugherty, Jane Kinney, Jane Williams, and Marjorie Henderson.[50]

As was true of almost every rural black church, the Rocky Fork AME church was the center of religious and social activities. Members walked many miles to receive the "word."[51] The AME denomination was deeply interested in education and the Rocky Fork church also served as the first school. By 1844 Bishop Quinn reported to the AME General Conference that through his efforts, he had established 50 Sunday schools with 200 teachers, and 2,000 scholars. As the Rocky Fork community grew, some church members moved into North Alton after the Civil War and formed Model Chapel in 1880. The Galloway, Cannon, Gills and Pitts were among the founding families.

Underground Railroad

Rocky Fork

The African American presence in the vicinity of Rocky Fork builds slowly towards the oft-repeated historical narrative. According to the oral histories gathered by the Black Pioneers, the elder Hawleys, settling in Godfrey Township before the Civil War, permitted their farm to be used as a stopping place on the Underground Railroad before the abolition of slavery. Land once owned by Hawley, now comprises the Warren Levis Boy Scout Camp.[52]

Buffeted by sympathetic neighbors in an otherwise hostile environment, Rocky Fork was remote and not easily accessed. Homesteading deep in the woods helped discourage pursuers, who, fearing for their safety, would abandon the search for runaways.[53] In *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, for example, Harriet Beecher Stowe (1967:88-89) offers one scenario for the safety and refuge the landscape offered those

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fleeing slavery:

> Van Trompe has come over from Kentucky, and set all his slaves
> free; and has bought a place seven miles up the creek, here, back in
> the woods, where nobody goes, unless they go on purpose; and it's
> a place that isn't found in a hurry.[54]

The quote could well describe the remote, isolated location of Rocky Fork. Stowe draws from a number of noteworthy examples of enslaved workers being manumitted and settled in the landscape. Edward Coles, an early governor of Illinois, manumitted his enslaved workers on July 4th, 1819.[55]

Word of mouth history passed from generation to generation details the flight of runaway slaves. As early as 1830, they made their way up the Mississippi River to Piasa Creek, which they followed to the Rocky Fork Creek. At that time, the Mississippi River would have looked quite different from its modern appearance. Artificial intrusions reshaped the landscape of the River affecting its flow and breadth. Across the Mississippi, between St. Charles County, Missouri and the mouth of the Big Piasa Creek lay two islands near enough to swim from one to the other. The Piasa Creek leading to the Rocky Fork Creek renders Rocky Fork, which is somewhat remote and inaccessible by land, highly accessible by water.

According to the narrative of Mary Ann Clark, her great-grandmother swam across the Mississippi River, through the tunnel at [what is now] Enos Apartments in Alton where she was sheltered overnight before moving on to Rocky Fork. There has been some confusion about reference to the Enos Apartments because construction was started before the Civil War, halted and then completed after the War leading some to suggest that her story could not be true because the Enos Apartments were

not constructed until after the War.[56]

Parallel circumstances existed between Brooklyn, Illinois, another black town situated on the Mississippi across from St. Louis, and Rocky Fork. It, too, was a first point of refuge on the Illinois border. The AME church at both sites functioned as a site of refuge. Runaways were hidden in the Brooklyn AME church as well as Antioch Baptist Church or in private homes before they were smuggled through the woods to Alton, which is one of the best-known Underground Railroad lines.[57]

Although I have yet to find a narrative mentioning Rocky Fork, it would be reasonable to assume that on occasion some fugitives were moved from the black town of Brooklyn to the black settlement at Rocky Fork. Priscilla Baltimore, Lundun and Jane Parks are common to the church histories of both settlements. From the Alton, Rocky Fork area, blacks moved on, traveling past Jacksonville along the Illinois River to LaSalle and Ottawa, on to Chicago[58] perhaps finding refuge in the home of black abolitionist and former Alton resident John Jones and his activist wife Mary Richardson before finally finding safety in Canada.

The Alton Area

The riverports of Alton and Quincy were main points of entry for fugitive runaways from Missouri. One of the three major escape routes among the river towns, after Chester and Quincy, Illinois, originated in Alton, which probably had the largest number of runaways escaping slavery and coming across the Mississippi. Within a seven-block radius in Upper Alton, there are five documentable Underground Railroad stations. Alton was strategically situated across from St. Louis

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and runaways made their way either from the Missouri or the Illinois side of the River. According to Siebert, once the runaways were near Alton "they met friends who were generally expecting them." In 1854, a black man driving a covered wagon passed through the county. He had fifteen men, women and children concealed in the wagon. The driver/conductor was a free black living in Alton who had brought his passengers from eastern Missouri where they crossed the river in skiffs. He eventually sent them on to Chicago.[59]

Alton had a thriving black population that supported Union Baptist Church and Campbell Chapel AME Church, which are among the oldest Black churches in Illinois. Most free Blacks worked in the river trade or at the brick works; many conducted an Underground Railroad network running the length of the Mississippi River. One conductor, James P. Thomas, lived in Alton on Belle Street, the site of the current Post Office. Another, Isaac Kelly, lived near Sixth and George streets; his cabin has been excavated and transferred intact twelve miles upstream to a farm in rural Grafton. Apparently, the sign for the Underground Railroad network operated by Kelly was Jocko the jockey[60] and his symbol was a daisy. The lantern placed in the left hand of the jockey signaled safety.

Steep hills surrounding Alton provide a commanding view of the Mississippi; the city's location just below the Illinois River allowed the port town to control river traffic. Alton was strategically situated between the tiny black settlement of Rocky Fork to the west and Brooklyn, America's first black town, to the south in St. Clair County. Alton and Brooklyn are named as Underground Railroad stations.[61] By mapping the borders, rivers, creeks and woods contained in the landscape, the

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geography in the region of Brooklyn, Alton, and Rocky Fork more accurately reflects the nature of the Underground Railroad along the Mississippi border in south central Illinois (See Map 3). So often, the history and Underground Railroad activities in the little black settlements gets subsumed by the more flamboyant, better documented history of the abolitionist strongholds, obliterating the strategic and crucial efforts of African Americans on their own behalf.

After a series of group escapes in 1845, a St. Louis paper speculated that perhaps the runaways had been enticed by abolitionists who had helped them along "'the great under-ground railway' through Alton and Chicago to Canada."[62] Each of the River cities had long borders along the Mississippi River where crossings such as Mary Ann Clark's great grandmothers could occur. As was the case with William Wells Brown, slaves often escaped in anticipation of an impending sale or while being taken to auction in St. Louis. On one of his unsuccessful escape attempts that began in St. Louis, Brown used a board to row a skiff across the Mississippi River. Landing south of Alton, he then headed on the main road toward Alton, hiding in the woods during the day.[63] He made no mention in his *Narrative* of Brooklyn or of encountering any blacks in the immediate vicinity. Brown would learn, safety was not guaranteed merely because he was in a free state on northern soil.

Siebert dates the rise of the Underground Railroad in Alton to 1831 and centers the role of the Presbyterian Church where the first Illinois depot was established in Bond County. The line out of Alton converged in Springfield with the White Plains, Jerseyville, Waverley, Quincy, and Jacksonville lines.

Many parts of Illinois maintained a strong pro-slavery stance. This was

repeatedly demonstrated in cities across the North but nowhere did it approach the depths of conviction than in Alton where Presbyterian minister, Elijah P. Lovejoy was murdered by a pro-slavery mob in 1837 for his stand for freedom of the press and his staunch position against slavery (Figure 5). He published *The Observer*, an abolitionist Presbyterian weekly newspaper in St. Louis, where, for a brief time, William Wells Brown worked the press and received what little learning he would obtain while still held in slavery.[64] Lovejoy was eventually driven out of the state for his anti-slavery views. In 1836, he moved across the Missouri border to Alton where he was one of the founders of the Illinois Anti-Slavery Society the following year but the violent sentiment against him was unabated. Three presses were destroyed in one year by angry mobs in Alton. The loss of the presses impeded the circulation anti-slavery materials.[65]

John Anderson, one of the early pastors at Union Baptist Church, was another of Lovejoy's black pressman during that fateful time in 1837. Finally, a pro-slavery crowd destroyed a fourth press, which Lovejoy was attempting to guard before he was killed on the night of November 7th. He was buried, two days later on his thirty-fifth birthday.[66] His death, which is generally referred to as martyrdom,[67] helped advance the causes for which he stood such as immediate abolitionism. In the wake of his murder, hundreds of citizens throughout the region were awakened to the effects of slavery.[68] Alton also figured in the infamous Anderson Fugitive Slave case. After John Anderson was sold away from his wife and child he escaped in an attempt to rejoin them. After his pursuers cornered him, he subsequently stabbed and killed the slaveholder while defending himself. He escaped from St. Louis to Alton before
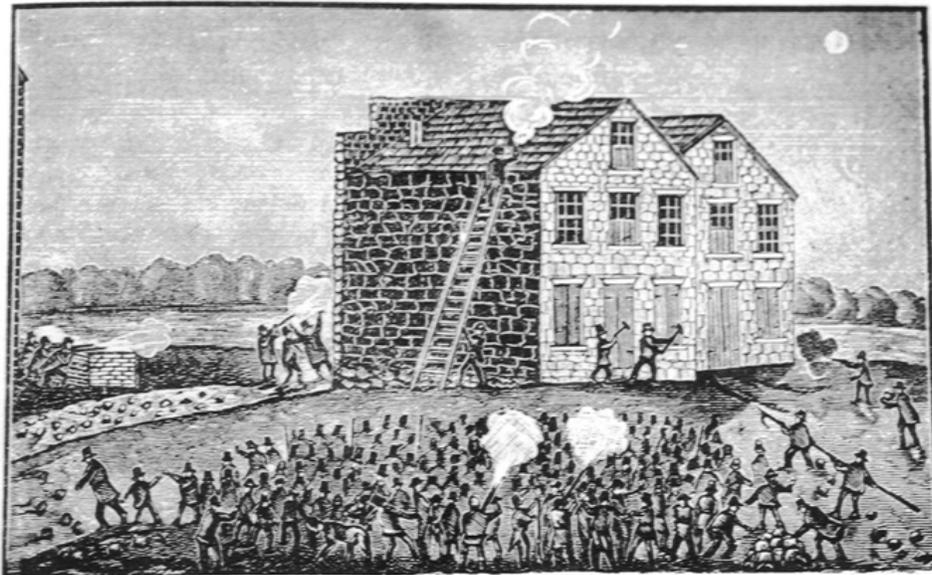
THE PRO-SLAVERY RIOT OF NOVEMBER 7, 1837, ALTON, ILL. DEATH OF
REV. E. P. LOVEJOY. FROM WOODCUT MADE IN 1838.

Figure 5 Woodcut of Alton Riots

(Courtesy of Alton Museum of Art and History)

moving on to Canada via the Underground Railroad. The governor of Missouri and the United States government attempted to extradite Anderson from Canada, to no avail. His wife and child, however, remained in bondage in St. Louis. Fearing for his safety and his freedom, Anderson first migrated to England where he furthered his education before finally emmigrating to Liberia.[69]

Alton was one of several towns that buffeted Rocky Fork. Free men and women and some former slaves, for example settled Forster Township. In the 1830's, the free Black communities around Alton, Hunterstown, Rocky Fork, and Wood Station absorbed runaways. "A major Alton developer, Charles Hunter, was one of Alton's best known Underground Railroad conductors. His Hunterstown area, founded in the 1830's, had many free Blacks as residents, some of whom were escaped slaves. He was also the only landowner who allowed Elijah Lovejoy to live on his property."[70]   Rock House, one of the Alton area landmarks known as an Underground Railroad station was the site of the first anti-slavery association organized by Lovejoy shortly before his death.[71]

Several prominent African Americans from Alton represented Madison County at the First Convention of Colored Citizens of the State of Illinois in 1853. Rev. R.J. Robinson, H. Ellsworth, A. Ellsworth and Job Vincint were present. Robinson was appointed President *pro tem*.[72] The 1856 convention convened in Alton between November 13-15, again with Chicago's prominent Underground Railroad agent and Alton former resident, John Jones taking a leading role. Jones was deeply involved in the Underground Railroad in Chicago and probably understood the routes and participants from the Rocky Fork, Alton, and Brooklyn

area very well. Further research is required to further connect State convention participants with their Underground Railroad activities.

The Landscape

Rocky Fork Cemetery

Cemeteries, particularly those associated with pre-Civil War African-American communities, are among the country's most precious historical resources and the most threatened. Interrelated African American families have used and maintained the historic New Bethel AME Church cemetery at Rocky Fork as a site of community building and heritage for more than 160 years. Since the late 1830s, the cemetery has stood as a historical document in the face of racially motivated vandalism, economic encroachment, and modern forced migration. Although few available plots remain in the cemetery adjacent to the church, it continues as an active burying ground that contains the graves of four Civil War veterans, including that of co-founders Erasmus Green and A.J. Hindman. Graves of the earliest settlers, war veterans, and their families serve as evidence of African-American patriotism and military service as well as familial concern.

Cemeteries containing the graves of Civil War veterans, Colored Troops or Infantrymen, mark these landscape features as Civil War sites. USCI or USCT graves at African American cemeteries function as reminders that the Civil War was one component of a continuum of freedom strategies that included publication of slave autobiographies as antislavery documents,[73] establishment of free black settlements, legal challenges to slavery, and passage of the Civil Rights amendments.

The site contains the graves of Civil War Veterans, veterans of World Wars I and II, and the Korean War. John Matlock, one of the last surviving former residents is a veteran of the War in Vietnam and will probably be among the last interments.[74]

An obelisk in one corner of the Rocky Fork cemetery marks the graves of Anna Bell and her mother Tisch Garnett, two of the earliest settlers of the small community. Bell's grave and surrounding markers date the northeastern quadrant as the oldest portion of the cemetery site. The monument offers an opportunity to investigate these important women. The grave marker stands as the largest and most elaborate, as well as the oldest on the site indicating that a woman, Anna Bell, was among the early African Americans to appear in the Rocky Fork landscape. Through inscriptions on the grave marker, combined with census data, Anna Bell emerges from the shadows of the settlement's better-known founders whose families have preserved their histories. Her grave predates that of Erasmus Green, his wife Eliza Jane, and A.J. Hindman, the original founders of the Rocky Fork AME church.

The cemetery is rapidly running out of space; modern burials are impacting historic interments. Inaccurate mapping and a lack of records leave little understanding of large unmarked portions of the cemetery or availability of remaining burial plots. In 1989, Madison County officials surveyed the grave markers and recorded all inscriptions. The information is incomplete, however, because several graves are unmarked, and broken or moved stones no longer correlate with original burials. The 1989 survey recorded the cemetery and grave markers as found and did not address or adjust for disturbance. This recordation strategy resulted in several inaccuracies.

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Because the church maintained no sextant records, locating graves of infants and children is particularly problematic. The congregation actively uses the cemetery and accurate mapping would decrease the likelihood of interruptions or disturbance to existing graves (as has inadvertently happened from time to time) and help the congregation in the management and maximization of available land resources as they plan for future burials. Congregants want to minimize any further disruptions of older burials.

The few remaining survivors who once lived in Rocky Fork want to be buried in the cemetery there; they want to complete that historical chapter although the community is already feeling the limitations of the cemetery resources. Recently, Mrs. Florence Cannon was brought home from California to order to be buried at Rocky Fork. She and Mr. Wesley Burl Matlock, descendant of one of the early settlers of Rocky Fork were two of the most recent interments.

Although the parents, aunt, grandparents, and great grandfather of Mr. Charles Benjamin Townsend III, the oldest living descendant born in Rocky Fork, are all buried in the churchyard, he purchased cemetery plots for himself and his wife in the nearby "white cemetery"[75] of Valhalla because of space limitations in the Rocky Fork cemetery. Mr. Townsend's wife Mildred, one of the founding members of the Committee on Black Pioneers, passed away at the beginning of this study in August 2000. Her grave, which is in Valhalla cemetery, overlooks the cemetery at Rocky Fork and is situated on land that once owned by the New Bethel AME Church. With the passing of the oldest remaining members of the community, Rocky Fork is loosing the vital power of living memory.

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Local informants also indicate the presence of a minimum of three other cemeteries. Location, identification and documentation of the "Peter Baker" cemetery may be extremely useful in unraveling the early history of Rocky Fork by potentially indicating the earliest areas of occupation. Charles Townsend, John Matlock, Rich Edwards and George Wadleigh each report observing tombstones at the site of the "Peter Baker" cemetery. On a walkover with archaeologist Gail Anderson from the Center for American Archaeology, I also observed a grave marker at the site.

The cemetery is located in a hilly, undulating ravine that may require a variety of techniques for determining the presence of graves where no tombstones exist. In several instances existing tombstones have been dislodged, moved, or broken, resulting in uncertainty as to the exact placement of burials associated with marked graves. The cemetery is on private land and further disturbance was evident during my last visit in the summer of 2002.

Archaeological Resources

Topographical mapping may be feasible for the undulating, unmarked areas on the hillsides leading into the ravine of the main cemetery. Although archaeological remains can be difficult to determine through the use of remote sensing, it may prove useful for the site. The members of the New Bethel AME Church at Rocky Fork are interested in mapping the cemetery, first and foremost. The eastern edge is of particular concern. This area is thought to contain the burials of several children. Because the search for infant and children's burials is such a high priority, techniques that would render the most detailed and accurate data are needed.

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Technicians working in congested, dense urban areas have honed remote sensing techniques for precise detection and have realized excellent results in identifying grave shafts and features.

Former residents and local preservationists recognized the need for archaeology at Rocky Fork and contacted the anthropology department at Southern Illinois University at Edwardsville. Repeated burnings of the New Bethel Rocky Fork AME Church in 1927 and twice in 1988, prompted community leaders to rebuild and explore the site. Mary Lentz, professor at Southern Illinois University, Edwardsville, and her students began systematically clearing and preparing the Hindman and Kennedy home site for archaeological exploration. Unfortunately, after uncovering a few items, Pastor Rev. Jackson halted the excavation, fearing government or state intervention.[76]

Archaeologist Bonnie Gums describes the same circumstances. One of the goals of the community was to conduct a survey to ascertain the extent of archaeological remains of African-American farmsteads. Using the 1873 Platt map of Madison County, SIU Staff Archaeologist Bonnie L. Gums spent two days surveying and locating the remains four houses. The little information she was able to gather convinced her that the area was an important site for understanding late 19th century African-American households in the area. No surface collection of artifacts was conducted at that time because extensive work was anticipated at a later date. The project progressed no further, apparently due to lack of support on the part of the members of the church.[77]

Archaeological exploration of multigenerational occupation of family

structures explored could potentially lead to understanding life in Rocky Fork during the 1840 or 50s. Of the five sites in this study, however, Rocky Fork has received the least archaeological attention. In the summer of 2001, Archaeologist Gail Anderson from the Center for American Archaeology in Kampsville, Illinois and I walked much of the area as she mapped features and foundations. At the present time, neither Bonnie Gums survey results nor Gail Anderson's marked map of the site are available. I believe The Center for American Archaeology also conducted either a feasibility study or exploratory remote sensing work at the cemetery, but budgetary restrictions precluded further work and no report is available.

Rocky soil conditions present at the cemetery site probably militate against using traditional remote sensing techniques such as ground penetrating radar. Innovative, experimental use of other remote sensing techniques such as a soil penetrometer may be useful in understanding cemeteries such as the one associated with Rocky Fork in Illinois. Remote sensing techniques could be used to understand the density of the burial site, locate unmarked graves, and delineate the poorly understood boundaries.

Bonnie Gums observed that the settlement should remain available for study "unless this area undergoes development which is quite possible."[78] Land comprising the Rocky Fork community was largely undisturbed when I first began studying the area in 2000. Development is rapidly overtaking the site, however. In areas where disturbance or construction has encroached, original foundations remain discernable. At the time of this writing, a highway was planned that would transect the community and destroy a portion of its archaeological resources.

Although the temporal range of the site is not firmly established and archival research supports an earlier settlement date, archaeological study could map existing foundations and features, generate a more accurate map of the cemetery, and interpret the conceptual boundaries of the site in geographic terminology. Much of the evidence that exists in support of earliest occupation dates may be primarily archaeological, however, since homes and structures have been obscured or destroyed by fire, arson, demolition, or vegetation and overgrowth, and in the case of the cemetery, broken, buried, lost, and stolen tombstones.[79]

Many of these sites, such as the Green and Hyndman homesteads, for example, are associated with multi-generational occupation. According to 95 year-old[80] Charles Benjamin Townsend III, the floor of the log cabins would have been built on four cornerstones. Mr. Townsend's mother died when he was five, leaving his grandparents, Charles Robert and Augusta Darby Townsend the responsibility of raising him. As a result, his memories skip a generation and are indicative of the intergenerational nature of the community that has facilitated the historical study.

Remnants of rural African American communities and their associated cemeteries contain the stories of migration, community, and family that are so central to the African experience in the Diaspora. Cemeteries, in particular are an important historical document for African Americans. The historical wealth contained in these communities remains largely unrecognized; they have been allowed to quietly disappear from the documentary record; their inhabitants, along with their history, silently buried.

A social history of the community can be realized through a combination of

archaeological investigation, oral histories and documentary investigation, archival research, and aquatic and botanical studies. Archaeology, guided by local informants could also be used to identify some of the transecting footpaths that were so vital to the internal navigation of Rocky Fork and the short cuts that were the external links to neighboring communities.

Botanical and Aquatic Investigations

Remains of gardens and rose bush property markers are extant within the Rocky Fork landscape. In addition to introduced flora, indigenous vegetation is also evident. Archaeo-botanical studies of the gardens associated with African American settlements may be used as indicators of diet and foodways as well as medicinal practices. Where no written record exists, these gardens can be valuable in reconstructing the lifeways of this rural, isolated, self-sustaining farming community.

Charles Townsend, Clementine Kennedy, and John Matlock, who together represent several generations of descendants, reminisce of the rose bush boundary markers, and the abundant lilac bushes associated with the Hawley and Matlock properties specifically, and with other Rocky Fork homes in general. Rich Edwards indicated that dogwood trees were once plentiful in Rocky Fork but few are evident now because local homeowners have removed many. They report that food was plentiful and that as children they fished in the creek, catching enormous crayfish. Mushrooms abounded. They picked berries, and damsel plums, ate hickory nuts, walnuts, filberts and hazelnuts, delicious corn bread, and ground hog. They were treated to all manner of cakes and pies baked from the produce of blackberry and

blueberry bushes, wild strawberries, and peach, apple, plum, and cherry trees. "We had taffe-pulls, we coasted on the hills in the winter, swam and fished in the summer." As in most rural areas, participants placed great value on community entertainment because of their common background, common aspirations and remote location.

Pollen samples, seed studies and botanical investigation would reveal the types vegetation available for consumption by the occupants of Rocky Fork, and separate the indigenous plants from introduced vegetation. Botanical studies could help to reconstruct the abundant plant life and floral beauty that was such an important aspect of the little settlement.

Fishing was a large part of the Rocky Fork experience; in addition to the church, the Rocky Fork Stream was a central feature in the landscape. John Matlock Jr. recounted many a fond memory of swimming in the swimming hole. By modern standards, the area of Rocky Fork is rural, secluded, and difficult to access. It is also a quiet, peaceful, largely undeveloped, natural and bountiful landscape. It has a natural park-like quality that still offers evidence of the refuge that the settlement once was.

In Rocky Fork and nearby Wood Station large portions of the landscape have remained unchanged for a century or more; farms remained in the families for over one hundred years in some cases. Informant Charlotte Johnson who urged me to write about Rocky Fork is the wife of Cyrus, a descendant of the Johnson family, whose farm, founded in the 1840s, is the oldest African-American family farm in Illinois.[81]

The Rocky Fork community was described in the church history written at the time of the rededication in 1975 as a community of some stature with numerous log cabins dotting the area north of the A. Joseph Hyndman property off the Old Jerseyville Road. In addition to the church and cemetery, the Rocky Fork community consisted of small plots of land, farmsteads, and cabins loosely connected by a series of pathways internal to Rocky Fork. Short cuts also connected the community outward to surrounding neighbors in Melville and Wood Station. In a 1999 newspaper description local historian Judy Hoffman states that the Rocky Fork area was also known as Sugar Tree and that it was once a 400 acre settlement with as many as 100 cabins at one time.[82]

Based on the 1870 census at the height of Rocky Fork's occupancy there were, more likely, 107 people residing in 25 families. The Madison County census of 1873 shows that blacks owned 200 acres.[83] By 1907, a newspaper article lamented "the demise of the black community in Rocky Fork," with only 7 remaining families in an area that was once supported by several hundred African-American residents.[84]

In 1926, erosion of the shallow foundation area of the Old Church required relocation to the current site. The remodeled church was erected from a major portion of the old building under the pastorate of Reverend Green Price.[85] The salvageable portions of original church structure, primarily the rough-hewn beam cut by Green and Hindman were reused. The original church structure was moved 50 yards to the south of the present church and was approximately ten feet longer. The

structure, built without a cellar, rested on a stone foundation and had a vaulted ceiling. At that time, the name was changed to the New Bethel AME Church at Rocky Fork.

By 1962 only five or six families remained in the area.[86] The community repeatedly suffered from the destructive physical and psychological effects of arson. The Sheriff burned many of the remaining homes on New Years Eve, 1976-1977 forcing the few residents out of their homes and effectively bringing the residential history of Rocky Fork to an end. Most residents had no insurance and did not rebuild. The residents never recovered from the burning of their homes, which signaled the end of the residential life of the community.

The small congregation remains in existence today because of the determination, fortitude, and bravery of its members. The New Bethel Rocky Fork AME Church is a living testimony to the resilience and endurance embedded in the African American experience. It is also a metaphor for the racial realities of America as a nation.

In 1974, the interior of the old church was damaged but not destroyed by homemade bombs. "The church sanctuary was desecrated, hymnals were burned, windows were shattered, and a sacred painting was stolen."[87] The church was rededicated in 1977 by the tiny congregation, which pledged to serve humanity in brotherhood and love. Hundreds of people gathered on the church grounds to celebrate the rebirth of the church that resulted from a grassroots campaign in which blacks and as well as whites joined forces to renovate the church after the vandalism attacks.

The church was repeatedly vandalized in the '70s and '80s with racial slurs spray painted on the walls.[88] It was one of the churches burned during the highly publicized period of terror against black churches in the 1980s. Life-long resident Clementine Kennedy became a spokesperson for the church. The present structure is the third building; two were burned in one six-month interval between April and October of 1988.[89] The church was rebuild after it was burned on April 16. Then, to the horror of the congregation and surrounding community, two weeks before its scheduled reopening, the church was burned to the ground on October 17.[90] Miraculously, the hand-hewn beam, originally cut by Heinman "was not damaged by the fire even though it directly supports the entire burnt out church building." It, perhaps, should be viewed as a metaphor for the stamina, determination, and resilience of not only the Rocky Fork congregation but of African Americans in this study who endured so much in the quest for freedom.

Seventy-seven year old Clementine Kennedy, the oldest living member of the church, was christened there. She vowed they would not be driven from the church. The church that stands today was again rebuilt with community effort and dedication.[91] Clyde Woods indicated that this decades-old practice of bombing and burning rural Black churches reemerged in the 1990s as a form of "social and political control over African American communities through violence, fear, and out-migration.[92] The demise of Rocky Fork as a residential community was a direct result of the devastating effects of arson and the bombing of the church, which severely stressed the physical and emotional resources of the settlement.

Communities as old as Rocky Fork carry a large measure of tradition and

memories. "The traditional Sunrise Service and accompanying breakfast…are over 100 years old. Many townspeople from Alton and the surrounding area attend the event each Easter."[93] The 137th Annual Homecoming Picnic took place Labor Day Weekend, September 2, 2000. It is the last big picnic of the summer and has always been a major event in the community. In the summer of 2002, I was fortunate enough to meet many of the Rocky Fork descendants while attending the Green-Hawkins family reunion.

Conclusion

Memory and tradition form an unbroken historical connection from the inception of Rocky Fork to the present. Several aspects of the history of the community parallel the history of the free black community in other parts of the United States and its associations with self-determination, the black church, education, and the Underground Railroad. Because of this combination of circumstances, Rocky Fork offers an opportunity for researching and understanding the archaeological experience not only for Rocky Fork but also for other similar sites in the mid-west. The compelling history of the settlement is the story of continual African American presence in the landscape prior to the Civil War, extending to the present. While arson has diminished their numbers, it has not obliterated their presence. The church congregation continues in direct descent from its founders. We have an obligation to insure that this important historical resource is not lost.

The local community has preserved and rescued much of its history through genealogical studies. The early social history of Rocky Fork, however, is less well

documented. Rocky Fork was a conceptual community that transcended a physical, bounded space. With the passing of the oldest remaining members of the community, Rocky Fork is loosing the vital power of living memory. By 1962 only five or six families remained in the area. [94] Although the New Bethel Rocky Fork AME Church and adjoining cemetery remain the nucleus of the community, Rocky Fork has ceased functioning as a residential community.

Archaeology, history, oral narratives, local lore, and cultural landscape studies foster comprehension of the puzzling riddles of the Underground Railroad and the obscure origins of rural communities. The proximity of Rocky Fork to Alton, along a major Underground Railroad route in Illinois, its geographic and religious relationship with Brooklyn, it's accessibility from the Mississippi River and from the Rocky Fork Creek, its location among Quakers and sympathetic whites, combined with oral narratives and the radical history of the AME church represent the combined analytical elements that signal potential Underground Railroad activity. As small rural black enclaves are mapped and situated in geographic context, patterns will emerge between the settlements and the well-known abolitionist centers.

When taken together, the Underground Railroad emerges as a multi-pronged, vehicle for black resistance. The loosely organized, subversive organization began with freedom seekers, supported first by black communal activities on southern plantations, then by free black communities in the north. As William Wells Brown would learn upon his recapture in central Illinois, 150 miles away from St. Louis, in many instances it was not the North that offered safety or refuge to escaping slaves but moral minded individuals, black and white from the South as well as the North.

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Endnotes Chapter 4

[1] For research purposes, sections 20, 21, 22, 27, 29, 30, and 33 are also associated with the settlement. The site can be reached from State Street in Alton, Illinois 2.1 miles West on Illinois Route 3 (formerly Route 100 Delmar Avenue) to Boy Scout Lane, North on Boy Scout Lane 0.6 miles to Rocky Ford Road, West on Rocky Ford Road 0.4 miles to Rocky Fork Cemetery.
Description taken from *Cemeteries and Tombstones Inscriptions of Madison County, Illinois, Volume V*. Madison County Genealogical Society. 1989. The cemetery inventory is inaccurate and is in the process of being corrected by John Matlock.
[2] Much of the information contained in this report was taken from text panels, Alton Museum of History and Art, Compiled by Charlotte Johnson, Committee on Black Pioneers, Black History Commission.
[3] George Leighty, "Old Rocky Fork: Hundreds Look on 'Settlement' As Their 'Home.'" *The Telegraph*, Wednesday, September 26, 1962; Carol Sue Goers, "Rocky Fork," *Today's AdVantage*. Wednesday, April 27, 1988.
[4] Hindman is variously spelled Hyndman, Heinman. I have followed the spelling associated with each citation.
[5] Irene Timmermiere, "History of New Bethel AME Church Rocky Fork," from The Rededication Program of New Bethel Rocky Fork AME Church. May 18, 1975. Provided by Clementine Kennedy. On file, Black Pioneers Collection, Alton Museum of History and Art, Alton, IL.
[6] George Leighty, "Old Rocky Fork: Hundreds Look on 'Settlement' As Their 'Home.'" *The Telegraph*, Wednesday, September 26, 1962.
[7] Rosemary Thornton, "New Bethel Church in Godfrey Withstands Arsonists, Vandals, Time." *Alton Area Post*. February 8, 1999. AA5
[8] Elsie M. Wasser, compiler, 1845 Census, Madison County, Illinois, 1985.
[9] J.C. Milner & W.A. Platt to Ann Maria Bell. Land Transfer Records, Madison County Courthouse, Edwardsville, Il.
[10] Interview with Terry Ransom, UGRR-Illinois expert, Civil Rights Division of the Illinois Department of Transportation, Springfield, IL. Conducted by Cheryl LaRoche, June 2000.
[11] Vincent, *Southern Seed.*
[12] Based on a preliminary outline of the Rocky Fork genealogical chart compiled by Charlotte Johnson and Cheryl LaRoche.
[13] *History of Madison County Illinois* (Edwardsville,IL : W.R. Brinks & Co., 1882).
[14] Fifth Census of the United States, 1830, Illinois.
[15] Personal Communication from Charlotte Johnson.
[16] *History of Madison*; "Don A. Spaulding Was Early Surveyor, " *Alton Evening Telegraph, Granite City Press-Record, Edwardsville Intelligencer*, Tuesday, Sept. n.d. Hawley is listed as A.T. Hawley.
[17] Listed in the 1860 Madison County Census as Andrew F. and Hellen M. Hawley.
[18] Biographical Sketches, of Madison County, IL.
[19] Hindman as cited in Thornton, "New Bethel."
[20] Interview with Charlotte Johnson, Committee Member, Committee on Black Pioneers, Alton Museum of History and Art, Alton, Illinois. Tape Recording. Conducted by Cheryl LaRoche, Wood Station, IL, June 2000.
[21] Stephen Middleton. *The Black Laws of the Old Northwest: A Documentary History* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1993), 293.
[22] Hindman as quoted in Thornton, "New Bethel."
[23] Interview with Charles B. Townsend. Tape Recording Conducted by Cheryl LaRoche, Alton, IL, June 2000.
[24] Charlotte Johnson interview.
[25] Mortgage between A.T. Hawley and Peter Baker, Recorded August 3, 1868, p. 258-9. Mortgage Deed Book, Madison County Court, Edwardsville, IL.
[26] Interview with John Matlock, Jr. Tape Recording. Conducted by Cheryl LaRoche, Rocky Fork, IL, June 2000; UGRR Network to Freedom Application, Camp Warren Levis.

[27] In the 1850 census, Ann is listed as living with Gabriel Bell, her first husband.

[28] Thornton, "New Bethel."

[29] Vincent, *Southern Seed.*

[30] Mr. Townsend was born November 8, 1908. LaRoche interview, June 2000.

[31] *Ibid.*

[32] A.T. Hawley did not register the farm name "Lilac Lodge" until December 13, 1916. Index to Farm Names, Register of Farm Names Madison County, Madison County Courthouse, Edwardsville, Il.

[33] Network to Freedom Application, Camp Warren Levis, September 10, 2001.

[34] Leighty, "Old Rocky Fork."

[35] Charlotte Johnson interview.

[36] Townsend Interview.

[37] Thornton, "New Bethel."

[38] Charlotte Johnson interview. I have yet to locate the letter.

[39] George Singleton, *The Romance of African Methodism: A Study of the African Methodist Episcopal Church*. (New York: Exposition Press, 1952); Ronald D. Palmer, "AME Bishop William Paul Quinn – A Chronology," Unpublished Manuscript, April 28, 2002. On file with LaRoche and Palmer.

[40] Welch, *William Paul Quinn,*

[41] Palmer, "AME Bishop."

[42] James A. Handy, *Scraps of African Methodist Episcopal History*, (Philadelphia: AME Concern, 1902, Reprint, 1984).

[43] Cha-Jua, *America's First Black Town.*

[44] Smith, *History of the AME Church*, 17.

[45] Wright, *Centennial* http://docsouth.unc.edu/church/wright/wright.html; Cha-Jua, *America's First Black Town.*

[46] Spaulding Account Books, Box 1, Illinois State Historical Library, Springfield, and Ledger in the possession of John Matlock.

[47] This is Lundun Parks.

[48] Rev. M. W. Beckly, "The African Methodist Episcopal Church," in *History of Madison County Illinois* (Edwardsville: W.R. Brinks and Co., 1882).

[49] Lundun had four "free males" and "three free females" living with him in Alton, (Township 5 N R10W) at the time.

[50] Timmermiere, *History of New Bethel AME.*

[51] *Ibid*.

[52] Black Pioneer Files, Alton Museum of History and Art, Alton, Illinois.

[53] Goers, "Rocky Fork," 8.

[54] Harriet Beecher, *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (New York: Airmont Publishing Co., Inc., 1967).

[55] John Thomas Cassidy, "The Issue of Freedom in Illinois under Gov. Edward Coles, 1822-1826," *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society* 57 (1964): 284-88.

[56] Black Pioneer File, Alton Museum of History and Art, Alton, IL.

[57] Woodson, *A Century*; Cha-Jua, *America's First Black Town*.

[58] N. Dwight Harris, *Negro Servitude in Illinois* (New York: Haskell House Publishers, 1969); Cha-Jua, *America's First Black Town*.

[59] Wilbur Siebert, "The Underground Railroad in Southern Illinois." Unpublished manuscript, Illinois State Historical Library, Springfield.

[60] See Moses Dickson, *Signs and Landmarks of the Underground Railroad*, c. 1879.

[61] Siebert, *The UGRR*; Blockson, *The UGRR: Narratives*; Blockson, *Hippocrene*.

[62] Larry Gara, "The Underground Railroad in Illinois," *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society* 56 No. 3 (Autumn 1963): 508-528.

[63] Paul Jefferson, ed., *The Travels of William Wells Brown* (New York: Markus Wiener Publishing, Inc., 1991); Turner, *The UGRR in Illinois*.

[64] Jefferson, *Travels of William Wells Brown*.

[65] Illinois Anti-Slavery Convention [1838], *Proceedings of the Ill. Anti-Slavery Convention: Held at Upper Alton on the Twenty-sixth, Twenty-seventh, and Twenty-eighth October, 1837* (Alton, IL: Parks

and Breath). The Illinois Historical Digitization Projects, Northern Illinois University Libraries.
http://lincoln.lib.niu.edu/cgibin/getobject_?c.105:1./lib35/artfl1/databases/sources/IMAG/

[66] Paul Simon, *Freedom's Champion: Elijah Lovejoy* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1994).

[67] Muelder, *Fighters for Freedom*; Cha-Jua, *America's First Black Town.*

[68] Blockson, *Hippocrene.*

[69] Shadd, *Next Stop, Toronto!*

[70] Illinois Anti-Slavery Convention [1838].

[71] Blockson, *Hippocrene.*

[72] Foner and Walker, ed. *Proceedings, Vol. II.*

[73] Charles H. Nichols, *Many Thousand Gone: The Ex-Slaves Account of Their Bondage and Freedom* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1963).

[74] Personal Communication, John Matlock to Cheryl LaRoche, June 2000.

[75] Mr. Townsend explained during an oral history interview in June of 2000 that at one time, Valhalla Cemetery was segregated and that burial of Blacks was not permitted there.

[76] Charlotte Johnson, Network to Freedom Application, Camp Warren Levis, September 10, 2001.

[77] Letter to Raymond Collins, Illinois State Library from Bonnie L. Gums, Staff Archaeologist, Southern Illinois University at Edwardsville, January 12, 1990.

[78] *Ibid*.

[79] The marker for Civil War Veteran and church co-founder Erasmus Green was stolen in late 1987. John Matlack informed me that it was returned after it was discovered at a St. Louis auction. Also see Goers, "Rocky Fork," 8.

[80] Mr. Townsend was born November 5, 1908.

[81] "Alton in the Civil War: Alton and the Underground Railroad."
http://www.altonweb.com/history/civilwar/railroad.htm

[82] Thornton, "New Bethel."

[83] *Personal* communication, George Wadleigh, September 2, 2000; Goers, Carol Sue. "Rocky Fork," *Today's Ad Vantage*. Wednesday, April 27, 1988, 8.

[84] *Alton Telegraph*, January 26, 1907.

[85] Timmermiere, *History of New Bethel AME.*

[86] Leighty. "Old Rocky Fork."

[87] Timmermiere, *History of New Bethel AME.*

[88] Thornton, "New Bethel," AA5.

[89] Goers, "Rocky Fork."

[90] Sanford J. Schmidt, "Blaze Destroys Rocky Fork Again." *Telegraph*, n.d.

[91] St. Louis Post Dispatch, Monday, December 12, 1988.

[92] Clyde Woods, *Development Arrested: Race, Power, and the Blues in the Mississippi Delta.* (London: Verso, 1998), 12.

[93] Goers, "Rocky Fork."

[94] Leighty. "Old Rocky Fork."

Chapter 5: New Philadelphia, IL: Private Funds, Public History

Introduction

New Philadelphia, Illinois is unique in American history as the earliest known town incorporated by an African American in the United States. Situated 20 miles east of the Mississippi River in the rolling hills of the Pike County countryside, New Philadelphia was incorporated by Free Frank McWorter in 1836. As McWorter's historical legacy, New Philadelphia is a rare example of an integrated early farming community on the nation's midwestern frontier. McWorter became one of the black pioneers who helped build and shape the West by establishing New Philadelphia on the American frontier as part of his journey from slavery in Kentucky to freedom in Illinois.

Despite Frank's inability to either read or write, he combined business acumen with determination in the face of adversity and managed to earn sufficient money to purchase his freedom and the freedom of his wife. In addition to income derived from his labors, and commercial farming, McWorter accumulated a portion of the money for the price of freedom of 14 additional family members from the profits derived from subdividing his land holdings and selling lots in New Philadelphia. Land ownership was perhaps the most important strategy enabling Free Frank to purchase the freedom of the majority of his family members.[1]

The town site, which is three miles east of Barry, Illinois remains solely as an

archaeological resource, which is now under archaeological investigation by an interdisciplinary team. The project was initiated and is supported by the New Philadelphia Association as part of a cooperative effort linking the University of Maryland, University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, Illinois State Museum, the New Philadelphia Association, and the University of Central Florida.[2] The town contained two family cemeteries, which are not part of the study.

Sources

Certainly the definitive source on New Philadelphia and its founder Free Frank McWorter is *Free Frank: A Black Pioneer on the Antebellum Frontier*[3] written by his great-great granddaughter, Juliet Walker. The portion of Walker's text that is of interest for this work in connecting black communities with the Underground Railroad concerns a few pages devoted to the Underground Railroad.[4] Although *Free Frank* is a scholarly work based on Walker's dissertation,[5] as is frequently the case, the portion pertaining to the Underground Railroad is derived from oral family histories.

Unlike sites in this study, such as Lick Creek, Indiana and Miller Grove, Illinois, the general location of New Philadelphia has always been known. However, archaeologists consulted historic and topographic maps and aerial photographs to ascertain the specific location and boundaries of the town. A few scattered foundations are visible within the portion of the original 42-acre site plowed in preparation for the first stage of the archaeological fieldwork.

In addition to historic resources such as census data, plats, and maps the

project will generate new sources in the form of field drawings, and overlay maps. Using Geographic Information Systems (GIS) technology, for example, the archaeology team laid historic maps over the images of the current landscape generating new images for use in determining the boundaries of the project area for the archaeological survey.[6]

Historical Overview[7]

Free Frank endured slavery for 42 years, first in Union County near the Pacolet River, his South Carolina birthplace in 1777, and later on the Pennyroyal Kentucky frontier. Once in Kentucky, Frank established a saltpeter enterprise from the profits derived from hiring his time. In 1817, with the profits from that venture he first purchased the freedom of his wife Lucy who was carrying their fifth child, Squire. Two years later, in 1817 he had earned enough to purchase his freedom, beginning a life long economic investment in the freedom of his family that continued after his death in 1854 at age 77 through stipulations in his will. Upon leaving Kentucky in the spring of 1831 after obtaining their freedom, Frank and his wife Lucy and four of their children settled on land obtained sight unseen while still residing in Kentucky.[8]

New Philadelphia, the town established by Free Frank, began as an 80-acre tract purchased for $100 from the federal government in 1835. By September 16, 1836, justice of the peace Jonathan Piper honored Frank's claims and the perfect plat of a "new Town named Philadelphia." Walker speculates on the numerous traits of Philadelphia Frank may have found worthy of emulating. The city had enjoyed

commercial, social, economic, and political success at its zenith. Frank chose to name his fledgling town after the "City of Brotherly Love."

Philadelphia was also Richard Allen's American icon as the city in which he adopted a radical stand for the independent black church by establishing the African Methodist Episcopal Church. James Forten one of the nation's leading antebellum business leaders and one of the most financially successful black businessmen at that time also lived in Philadelphia. The city was the nation's leading black community at the time Frank founded New Philadelphia. As a successful businessman who produced and sold saltpeter used in the production of gunpowder, Frank would have known and understood Philadelphia as a commercial and industrial center.

Although there are other settlements in the country with a strong historical legacy such as Weeksville in Brooklyn, New York, what distinguishes New Philadelphia is the legal sanction through the act of incorporation Free Frank sought for his town. New Philadelphia is the only site in this study to receive legal status. Rocky Fork and Miller Grove in Illinois, Lick Creek in Indiana and Payne's Crossing and Poke Patch in Ohio are unincorporated settlements either named or recognized for a founder or landscape feature.

What is unusual is Frank's willingness to use the legal system for his own benefit is the era when the courts and the judicial system were either actively working against or denying access to legal recourse for blacks. Frank incorporated the town during an era of violence in Illinois that saw the murder of Elijah Lovejoy 50 miles to the south in Alton, Illinois in 1837. The Black Codes of Illinois left no doubt that the state was both at war with and unwelcoming to people of color. In this overtly hostile

environment, Frank and Lucy repeatedly turned to the courts for legal sanction and protection, vindication and justice.[9]

McWorter demonstrated his willing to work within the legal parameters that defined his life. Unlike Josiah Henson who chose to escape slavery by fleeing with his family, Frank chose the legally prudent and equally arduous solution of paying for his family's freedom rather than appropriating it. His unobtrusive act of self-purchase yielded the coveted papers of freedom made necessary by the Black Codes. For a man who could neither read nor write it is ironic that the proof of his freedom, the value of his efforts, the tangible legacy of freeing his family lay in an indecipherable document. Over a 40-year period Frank was shrewd enough to purchase his own freedom and the freedom of sixteen family members at a total cost of $14,000.[10] The freedom Frank earned for his family came from a lifetime "as a pioneer entrepreneur on the new nation's western frontiers."[11]

Settling in Illinois close to his former enslaver in Kentucky gave McWorter the advantage of maintaining close ties with the members of his family still held in bondage. Not only were free blacks such as the McWorter family in danger of being kidnapped and sold south, but the same fate, being sold south, threatened all the McWorter family members still held in bondage. Although Obediah Denham continued to enslave members of the family, Frank was able to purchase their freedom because they had not been "sold south."[12]

McWorter's life long devotion to family despite a slave system intent on destroying the black family and ignoring the deep bonds of affection that naturally arose through familial concern becomes clear in his acts of manumission. How to

make the decision of who receives freedom first is a business as well as an emotional decision. His will reveals his methodical, lifelong strategy. Four years after he settled in Illinois, Frank was able to free his twenty year-old son, Solomon and eight years later; in 1843 he purchased the freedom of his 32-year-old daughter Sally.

The difficult decision making process is clearest in his efforts in freeing his grandchildren. The system of slavery was so self-perpetuating that at the age of 69 he set aside enough funds to purchase the freedom of six additional grandchildren. By 1850 two grandchildren and the wife of his son Squire were freed. By 1854 he had purchased the freedom of nine of his family members. The slave system extracted a heavy toll on the black family, one that required placing a hierarchical value on loved ones. In Frank's case, for example, he secured his wife's freedom first probably so that the baby she was carrying would be born free. It was a decision Frank had to face each time he paid another family member's way out of slavery, or faced Denham's refusal to release a family member as he did with Charlotte, Frank's granddaughter by Sally. Despite his best efforts, he would never secure the freedom of Charlotte or her children. As Walker reports, upon his death at the age of 77, despite his Herculean efforts, "He had not lived to see the achievement of his dream that his entire family be free from slavery."[13] By 1859, however, his dream was realized through the financial legacy built during his lifetime. His son Solomon completed the four generation quest with the purchase of Charlotte, who had given birth to another child, and her children with monies realized from the sale of family held farmland and New Philadelphia town lots.[14]

Free Frank's investment in land was one among several moneymaking

ventures designed to raise funds to free enslaved loved ones. Runaways published autobiographies in the expectation of purchasing the freedom of relatives still in slavery with the proceeds they obtained. Moses Grandy's narrative, for example, was "sold for the benefit of his relations still in slavery."[15] As Nichols points out "they wrote to correct impressions rather than to make them."[16]

No data exists enumerating the vast sums of monies spent by the enslaved population and free people of color to purchase their freedom and the freedom of their loved ones. Herbert Aptheker offers some reckoning in "Buying Freedom." He cites Lewis Tappan's estimation that more than three-fourths of the 3,000 blacks living in Cincinnati worked out their freedom and were paying for themselves, while multitudes were "toiling to purchase their friends who are now in slavery." Limited accounting in Philadelphia in 1847 found 275 formerly enslaved residents purchased their freedom at a cost of more than $60,000.[17] No mechanism existed by which one could list self-possession as a personal asset. The financial drain on the antebellum black community has yet to receive widespread scholarly attention. Add to the price of purchasing freedom, the costs of various bonds required by black codes and the financial demands placed on a population historically forced to work for no pay become clear. To put the tremendous cost of freedom in context, for Frank McWorter, the vast sums expended amount to approximately $282,556 in 2003 dollars.[18] As Walker observes, however, "blacks who purchased their freedom found that the social costs of freedom were not included in the price of manumission."[19]

Underground Railroad: The Paths to Liberty

The closest known Underground Railroad routes passed approximately 35 miles to the west at Quincy, Illinois and 13 miles east of New Philadelphia at Griggsville.[20] The Mississippi River was 13 miles from New Philadelphia at its nearest point, rendering the town highly accessible from the River. Crossings did not occur exclusively at large towns and cities known for their Underground Railroad activities. In the early period of blacks efforts at freedom, before the main routes had been established, it is likely that River crossings occurred at random or geographically conducive places. As I have shown throughout this work, escapees appropriated skiffs and crossed at isolated areas.

The legendary Quincy line originated in Hannibal across the Mississippi and then turned northeast toward the large free black community in Chicago. Pike County stretched 25 miles at its furthest east-west points and could have been traversed in a day on foot or more quickly depending on the mode of transportation eliminating the need for numerous stations.[21] The route out of New Philadelphia could have connected to the Griggsville line and then on to Jacksonville. Benjamin Henderson, another free black man who had purchased his freedom, was a conductor in Jacksonville who directed his passengers to other free people of color and to white conductors who took them north to Springfield.[22]

Eighteen thirty-six, the year Free Frank platted New Philadelphia, was a pivotal time in Illinois history. One year later Elijah Lovejoy helped organize the Illinois Anti-Slavery Society in Upper Alton on October 28 and then met his death at

the hands of a proslavery mob on November 7, following a series of antislavery editorials.[23] The society called for the immediate abolition of slavery and acted on its convictions by also assisting runaways.[24] The citizens of Alton assumed a threatening posture around the formation of the society, disrupting and impeding the first meeting and their ability to circulate the call for a subsequent meeting to large numbers throughout the state.[25] This was not the sole example of violence in the vicinity. Violence erupted in nearby Griggsville in Pike County over antislavery activities in 1838. [26]

Many black participants in the Underground Railroad knew the hardships of slavery because they were former slaves themselves. Free Frank had relatives and loved that were still enslaved at the time of his death in 1854. With his move to Illinois, Frank was now positioned in a free although hostile portion of the State. Benjamin Quarles calls such people "middlemen" who didn't lead runaways out of the south but rather sped them on their way.[27] Free blacks were often suspected of assisting runaways in the quest for freedom; the activities of Free Frank and his family were not above suspicion in this regard. They were suspected of using their home as a place of refuge for runaways fleeing slavery.[28]

Although Frank managed to secure the liberty of several family members, others remained in bondage in Kentucky reflecting his inability to amass enough money to free all his family at once. Frank Jr., the oldest son fled slavery in Kentucky to Canada in December 1826.[29] Walker speculated that perhaps Obediah Denham, who still held Frank in slavery, might have threatened to sell him as a means of intimidating Frank and Lucy over a contested legal matter. Because Frank

Jr. enjoyed a high degree of mobility he may have been able to slip away and remain undetected for a number of days before his enslaver would have grown concerned over his absence. Timing escapes around routinized and expected patterns of absence was a well-worn strategy of the runaway slave.

Running away and self-purchase were countervailing solutions to the realities of enslavement. As Frank would demonstrate time and again, he preferred to purchase the freedom of his family rather than gain freedom through an act of appropriation. Therefore, he traded his profitable Danville Kentucky saltpeter enterprise for Frank's freedom thereby securing and assuring young Frank's legal status as a free man of color. News of his manumission reached Frank Jr. along a network that stretched to Canada. To the extent possible, Frank junior's freedom papers assured his freedom. He returned from Canada in time to assist his mother and father with plans to leave Kentucky.[30]

So, from at least 1826 forward, the McWorter family understood Canada as a place of refuge from slavery while they were Kentucky residents. From the time of Frank junior's escape, after the family moved from Kentucky to Illinois, they were active in the Underground Railroad and remained prepared for any opportunity to offer aid and assistance to runaways. Free Frank seemed to have some understanding of the settlements in Canada and many of Frank and Lucy's grandchildren were born there. Squire was born in Chatham, Ontario in 1846.[31] The McWorter's association with Canada was a quarter century before the peak of the Underground Railroad in the 1850s.

Knowing through his sons the inner workings of the flight from slavery,

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Frank may well have deliberately chosen high ground with a panoramic view of the gently rolling hills surrounding New Philadelphia as the site of his home. The strategic location, which was situated in a copse of trees north of the town, was removed from New Philadelphia proper. A McWorter descendant, John reported that Frank's son Solomon assisted many slaves on their way to freedom in Canada. In addition to Solomon, his brothers Squire and Commodore also traveled to Canada to assist runaways.[32]

Free Frank and his family's work on the Underground Railroad exemplified their commitment to freedom. Within the black community, this commitment extended to service in the Civil War as one of the central jewels in the crown of freedom. Numerous men from the Midwest and Border States traveled great distances to enlist. Consistent with the four other sites in this study, the McWorter family was represented in the Civil War although at the outbreak of the War, all of Frank's sons were either deceased or too old to join. Squire, Free Frank's grandson was the only family member who served in the War. Squire McWorter fought for the 38th Regiment, Company G of the USCTs.[33]

The Landscape

The unique interracial character of New Philadelphia provides a contrast to the four other sites that comprise this study. At Rocky Fork, Lick Creek, Miller Grove and Poke Patch, the sites are secluded and nestled deep in the countryside, shrouded by hills, and chiseled with ravines. By contrast, New Philadelphia was located in the relatively flat, rolling hills of Pike County.

The interracial nature of the town impacted the religious life of the community. At the remaining sites in the study, the black church maintained a prominent position in the lives of the inhabitants. At New Philadelphia, Free Frank attempted to build a Baptist church and a school. However, controversy and discord hindered the work and the church was never erected. Perhaps the need for the cohesive influence of a stabilizing black church which, in turn solidified the community, was less urgent in the integrated setting at New Philadelphia.

Archaeology

The New Philadelphia Project is in the initial phase of a multi-year program. A pedestrian walk over survey, which is an above ground archaeological technique, was the first phase. The pedestrian walk over survey is one of the most important archaeological methods for African American sites. Although not the case in New Philadelphia, the survey often is crucial for determining the location of long forgotten, poorly understood antebellum black settlements. For New Philadelphia the survey technique involved a systematic walk over of newly plowed fields, which facilitated visual examination of exposed sections of soil for artifacts or archaeological features. "Pedestrian field surveys are designed to delineate archaeological properties and to identify their cultural affiliation and research potential, and are particularly useful for assessment of large tracts of land where subsurface testing is not feasible."[34] The field walkover survey was intended to demonstrate existing archaeological resources at the New Philadelphia site.

Through the survey, surface artifact concentrations were co-registered with

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the New Philadelphia plat.[35] Even though the boundaries of New Philadelphia were mapped and well delineated, new information was derived from the survey. The identification of surface artifact concentrations at New Philadelphia can potentially indicate which lots may contain remnant historic structures or other archaeological resources, which would indicate areas warranting further archaeological investigation. Certain artifact types may be indicative of the manner in which individual town lots were utilized, such as the difference between the location and remains of domestic houses versus commercial enterprises. "Much of the material history of New Philadelphia still exists in discrete concentrations associated with known house lots."[36] "This lot specific research will allow us to create a comparison of the archaeobiology and material culture remains of the different households."[37] All of the archaeologically documented sites appear to cluster around the town's known commercial district.[38]

In the winter of 2003, the projected received funding through the National Science Foundation Research Experiences for Undergraduate Program. Through archaeological exploration the students will be exposed to "scientific interdisciplinary research as they examine the growth and development of the town. This research will elucidate how individual members and families of this integrated community made choices to create their immediate environment, diet, agricultural practices, and consumer choices."[39]

As the program gets underway, the interdisciplinary team will develop research parameters. Clearly, social interactions and the interracial nature of the town deserve close study. "However, it is probable that some form of local hierarchy based

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on race did occur. Placing future archaeological work within the context of the changing meaning of race is essential for knowing how groups in this community became racially identified and how racial conflicts shape American society"[40]

The following are the primary goals of the NSF-REU archaeological project 1) understand the town's founding and development as an integrated town; 2) explore and contrast dietary patterns between different households of different ethnic backgrounds by examining faunal and botanical remains; 3) to reconstruct the townscape and town lot uses of different households from different ethnic backgrounds using botanical data and archaeological landscape features; 4) elucidate the different consumer choices residents of different ethnic backgrounds made on a frontier situation and understand how household choices changed with the increased connection to distant markets and changing perceptions of racism.

The artifact assemblages collected from the New Philadelphia site provide a tangible link to the past. Buttons, broken bottle and pottery shards, farm implements, toys, and pieces of slate, for example, bring life to both the static historical record and to the people who once inhabited the town." In addition to this, the Pike county court house burned in leaving incomplete and missing documentary records. As is true for the other sites in this study multidisciplinarity fills the voids that result from incomplete evidence and helps us fully understand the history of New Philadelphia.

Recent History

The town reached its peak of approximately 170 people following the Civil War. New Philadelphia began its slow decline in 1871 when municipal authorities

decided to locate the new railroad route a half-mile outside New Philadelphia to the detriment of the town. The town was unincorporated in 1885 and ceased being a viable site at the turn of the century although informants report that occupied cabins were still there into the 1930s. As a rare example of an integrated early farming community on the nation's midwestern frontier, the history of New Philadelphia offers an opportunity to explore issues of race and race relations in an open setting. It is important to note, however that no blacks currently reside in the area that was once known as New Philadelphia and the black population of the County is nil.

Research Questions

"Stories about the past have power and bestow power."[41] As Paul Shackel observes, "we cannot assume that all groups, and all members of the same group, understand the past in the same way."[42] At New Philadelphia, an interdisciplinary team of academics, the local community, and the descendants of Free Frank find divergent meanings in the resources available for study out of which will arise a new public memory. Several organizations are working both collaboratively and independently to bring the history of New Philadelphia to a wider audience.

Free Frank's great-great granddaughter has formed the New Philadelphia Historic Preservation Foundation; Pike County citizens have joined together to form the New Philadelphia Association. The Association has partnered with the University of Maryland, College Park; the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign; the Illinois State Museum, and the University of Central Florida to make the rebirth of New Philadelphia a reality.

These competing interests insure a complex narrative of an interracial town with a plurality of cultures and a multiplicity of interpretative landscapes.[43] Over time, I hope collaboration will form with Dr. Walker so that she too can provide both her expertise and her family understanding to the project. For this specific research, her understanding of her family history and family papers would be indispensable for understanding the family connections to the Underground Railroad and to Canada. Her knowledge would further the study of the Underground Railroad in Illinois through the reconstruction a map of the area around New Philadelphia, Griggsville and Jacksonville and on to Canada, connecting known Underground Railroad sites with New Philadelphia. The routes from Quincy and across the Mississippi River from Hannibal are well understood. Mapping the local New Philadelphia route will connect the area to the larger Underground Railroad network in south central Illinois. Underground Railroad maps are an integral aspect of the scholarship. Maps are part of the Underground Railroad genre and symbolize African Americans moving through the landscape toward freedom.

Research for the New Philadelphia project is in the early phases commensurate with the archaeological study. The research design has yet to be written. Although the multicomponents of the rich archaeological and historical resources available for New Philadelphia, this dissertation is concerned with the association of the free black community with the Underground Railroad. New Philadelphia is included here as part of the free black community in recognition of its founder Frank McWorter, a black man, and its early history, which was largely the history of the McWorter family.

A primary research question, therefore, focuses on the site of Frank's first cabin. Walker reports that Free Frank's great-granddaughter recalled,

> When Frank built his first cabin he deliberately selected a site underlain by granite, which he used as the walls for his cellar. One of the cellar walls opened to a room, which the family dug out to be used as a hiding place for fugitives. When there was time, the fugitives were taken to Hadley Creek to prevent any trace of their desperate flight. When they hid in the cellar room behind the stone door they could not be detected by the dogs, which slave catchers invariably used.[44]

Notwithstanding the difficulty of imagining dogs, presumably bloodhounds, tracking runaways across the Mississippi River into a free state, even one as hostile as Illinois, the statement requires further deed research and archaeological investigation to determine the exact location of Frank's first home site. Narrators of oral history often conflate time periods and locations thereby appearing incorrect rather than merely inaccurate or imprecise in the retelling of the event. Further research will be required as more sources become available to determine how and by what route the McWorter family and the runaway slaves they assisted followed to Canada.

Walker also speculates that the Free Frank family, similar to Thomas Garrett's activities in Delaware,[45] may have provided shoes for fugitives. The presence of two shoemakers in a town with a population of fifty-eight people raised Walker's suspicion.[46] Although organic matter such as shoe leather is often poorly preserved depending upon the archaeological contexts and soil chemistry, we should expect to find numerous soles and wooden heels indicative of a commercial enterprise.

For legal reasons and out of respect for the wishes of the family, the cemetery is not a part of the study. Each site under investigation has a black cemetery

associated with it. With the exception of Rocky Fork, which also has a standing church, the cemetery is the sole indicator in the landscape of the once thriving black communities. Cemeteries and churches associated with them are important resources for accessing black history, even though the original church structure may not survive. Therefore, included here are a number of research questions that are relevant for each site.

As is true of the communal and familial responses in the black community, residents at the five sites tended to marry within their own race or in the case of the Roberts family intermarry with Native Americans. Many of the people who are part of this study, such as Erasmus Green and Frank McWorter were most certainly the child of their enslaver and therefore of mixed heritage. Cemeteries stand at the raced juncture of family, church, and community. Therefore a segregated cemetery such as the McWorter family cemetery may be indicative of a family plot rather than a raced space.[47] The separate Johnson cemetery at New Philadelphia reflects the white Johnson family's burial ground.[48] These separate burial spaces open understudied questions, such as attitudes associated with the mixing of the races in death. Where is the dividing line between family plot and segregated cemetery?

Cemeteries, in addition to serving as a valuable resource for understanding community life and cultural expression through death, offer alternatives to conventional discourses on race centered around housing, employment, education, legal status, and the like, by revealing the concepts of race that structure the landscape as well as state and civil society.[49] The study recognizes that segregated cemeteries provide an alternative lens through which to view the role of race in the way

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Americans think about their history.[50]   Segregated cemeteries underscore an

important question; do the effects of a racialized society ever end.[51] What meaning

did cemeteries hold for free black communities in rural areas across the North before

the Civil War? What can be said about the iconography of the remaining stones?

These questions reflect an alternative archaeological approach that centers on

deciphering cultural meaning in the spatial distribution of people's activities."[52]

Burial practices and policies of the dominant culture toward subordinate

groups provide examples of race and power inscribed in the landscape.   The

racialized history of America collides with geography, revealing the depth of racial

sentiment embedded in the marrow of the country, from the segregated cemeteries

and headstones, to the Civil War regiments of the USCT in which the African

American community members at each site fought for freedom. Whether located in

the rural mid-west countryside, or Section 27 and 23 on the fringes of Arlington

National Cemetery, where the USCT and 3000 Civil War "contrabands" are buried,

headstones and cemeteries serve as lasting historical reminders of the country's once

official stand on race, namely segregation to the death.

Paul Lovejoy also observes that sites and monuments require urgent

inspection and singles out cemeteries for their potential linkages to the historical

record.[53] Grave markers stand as visible witness signifying both place and time.

Material culture specialists consider surviving headstones optimal objects of

authenticity. Primary data derived from geographically anchored cemeteries and

gravestones allow security in attaching cultural complexity and interpretation.[54]

Prown indicates that faking of gravestones has been minimal, limited to recarving or

relocation. Theft of grave markers, deterioration of headstones associated with climatic conditions, vegetation and overgrowth, neglect, and vandalism, however, skew analysis of any cemetery site and severely threaten the integrity of the resource. Data is also vanishing through the rapid deterioration of several of the inscriptions in the limestone headstones, and through neglect that allows weeds and other overgrowth to choke pathways, obstruct access and disrupt grave markers.

The choice of a final resting place by abolitionist Thaddeus Stevens exemplifies racial politics in both life and death. Known as "the Great Commoner," Stevens guided the thirteenth and fourteenth amendments through Congress, and worked tirelessly toward emancipation and black suffrage. He is buried in Schreiner's cemetery, the sole integrated cemetery in Lancaster, PA where burial was not denied to blacks. The epitaph inscribed on his tombstone reads:

> I repose in this quiet and secluded spot, not from any natural preference for solitude; but finding other cemeteries limited as to race, by charter rules, I have chosen this that I might illustrate in my death the principles which I advocated through a long life, equality of man before the Creator.[55]

Although the racialized nature of cemeteries is now part of a seemingly by-gone era, segregated burial grounds existed until the second half of the twentieth-century. Omni and Winant define race as a "concept that signifies and symbolizes social conflicts and interests by referring to different types of human bodies." These conflicts and interests in difference do not end with death but follow African Americans and other ethnic groups beyond the grave.[56] The complexity of the topic, the difference between family plot and segregated cemetery, between race and skin color, between ethnicity and nationality, between concept and belief, between

ideology and reality, between class and economics, between achievement and privilege, require new approaches in confronting the challenges of studying these raced spaces. In the forward to *Lay Body Down,* Michael Blakey notes that in cemeteries, memorialized "African-American identities are entombed, marked, fought for, preserved, celebrated, symbolized, mourned, and incorporated…"[57]

Dr. Walker has established a separate New Philadelphia Historic Preservation Foundation for the preservation of the memory and ideals of Free Frank. The foundation seeks to preserve the historical record of both New Philadelphia and Free Frank while continuing to promote accurate historical portrayal of New Philadelphia. Both the NSF-REU archaeological project and the Preservation Foundation intend to use the site to promote public education on the historical significance of New Philadelphia. The privately funded, not-for-profit New Philadelphia Association is committed to preserving and promoting the history of Pike County, Illinois. The Association also hopes to establish and educational, cultural, historical and archaeological site where the townspeople once lived and worked.

One of the current caretakers of the property, the New Philadelphia Land Trust, also sees the importance of preserving and studying the property. This group, along with the research team, believes the story of New Philadelphia is unique because it is about the personal struggle of an African American to exist in a racist society while incorporating and settling in an integrated town on the western frontier. They hope that one day the story of New Philadelphia will become part of the national story by designating it a state or a national park.[58]

Dr. Walker's Preservation Foundation is also committed to recreating the

town of New Philadelphia as an educational and historic site.[59] One of the expressed

goals of the interdisciplinary NSF-REU project is to make the story of New

Philadelphia part of the national public memory.[60]   Similarly, Dr. Walker has

commissioned an architectural and survey work for the rebuilding of the historic town

of New Philadelphia, Illinois with the goal of establishing New Philadelphia in its

proper place in history.[61]   One of the current caretakers of the property, the New

Philadelphia Land Trust also sees the importance of preserving and studying the

property in the hope that the story of New Philadelphia will become part of the

national historical narrative by designating it a State or a National Park.[62]   These

various initiatives from separate organizations highlight Paul Shackel's observation,

"as we perform archaeology and develop an interpretation of New Philadelphia we

need to be aware of the political work of which we have become a part."[63]

Endnotes Chapter 5

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[1] Walker, *Free Frank*.
[2] Center for Heritage Resource Studies, University of Maryland, "New Philadelphia."
http://www.heritage.umd.edu/CHRSWeb/New%20Philadelphia/New%20Philadelphia.htm
[3] Walker, *Free Frank.*
[4] *Ibid*. see pages 53, 61-62, 81-82,111, 118, 149-51, 157, 200 n.10.
[5] Juliet E.K. Walker, "'Free' Frank and New Philadelphia: Slave and Freedman, Frontiersman and
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[6] Joy Beasley and Tom Gwaltney, "New Philadelphia: Archaeological Investigations at an African-
American Frontier Town." Paper Presented, Society for Historical Archaeology Annual Meeting, St.
Louis, January 7-11, 2004.
[7] Portions of the following narrative are derived from Juliet Walker, *Free Frank*.
[8] Walker, *Free Frank*, 81.
[9] *Ibid.,* 49-54.
[10] *Ibid.,* 162. See Table 14, Free Frank Family Members Purchased, 1817-1857.
[11] *Ibid.,* 1.
[12] *Ibid.*
[13] *Ibid.,* 159.
[14] Summary derived from Walker, *Free Frank.*
[15] *Narrative of Moses Grandy*, as cited in Charles H. Nichols, "Who Read the Slave Narratives?" *The
Phylon Quarterly* 20, no. 2 (1959): 149-62. http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0885-
6826%28195932%2920%3A2%3C149%3AWRTSN%3E2.0.CO%3B2-N150.
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[17] This amounts to approximately $1,363,000 in 2003 dollars. Herbert Aptheker, *To Be Free: Pioneering Studies in Afro-American History* (New York: Carol Publishing Group, 1991), 35.

[18] Dollar conversion for the $1,000 bond required by the Black Codes equates to approximately $22, 727.27 in 1850 dollars. The cost per person per year was converted using the conversion factor applicable for each year of purchase based on the chart referenced below. Based on the Consumer Price Index, (CPI), Dollars converted from each applicable base year to an estimate in 2003 by dividing the year's dollar amount by the conversion factor for that year rounded to 2-3 decimal places. Because the Bureau of Labor Statistics came into existence in 1913, all figures prior to that date are estimates. Sahr, "Inflation Conversion, http://oregonstate.edu/Dept/pol_sci/fac/sahr/cf166503.xls.

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[20] Siebert, *UGRR*; Blockson, *Hippocrene*; Chadwick, *Traveling the UGRR*.

[21] Robin Whitt, "New Philadelphia: An Historical and Demographic Case Study of a Free African-American Settlement and the Underground Railroad in Pike County, Illinois." Senior Honors Thesis, University of Maryland, 2001.

[22] Blockson, *Hippocrene*.

[23] Chadwick, *Traveling the UGRR*.

[24] Blockson, *The UGRR*.

[25] Illinois Anti-Slavery Convention [1838], *Proceedings of the Ill. Anti-Slavery Convention: Held at Upper Alton on the Twenty-sixth, Twenty-seventh, and Twenty-eighth October, 1837* (Alton, IL: Parks and Breath), The Illinois Historical Digitization Projects, Northern Illinois University Libraries, 2001. http://lincoln.lib.niu.edu/cgi-bin/getobject_?c.105:1./lib35/artfl1/databases/sources/IMAGE/

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[27] Benjamin Quarles, *Black Abolitionists*.

[28] Walker, *Free Frank*, 81.

[29] *Ibid*., 53.

[30] *Ibid.,* 61-2.

[31] *Ibid.*, 118, 149.

[32] *Ibid.*, 149.

[33] McWorter History of Military Service, http://www.mcworter.net/military_service.html; National Park Service, Civil War Soldiers and Sailors System, http://www.itd.nps.gov/cwss/soldiers.htm.

[34] Joy Beasley and Thomas Gwaltney, "New Philadelphia: Archaeological Investigations at an African-American Frontier Town." Paper presented at the Society for Historical Archaeology Annual Meeting, St. Louis, Jan. 7-11 2004.

[35] *Ibid.*

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[44] Walker, *Free Frank*, 149.

[45] Bradford, *Tubman*; Larson, *Bound for the Promised Land*.

[46] Walker, *Free Frank,* 150.

[47] Pike County, IL, McWorter (Old Philadelphia) Cemetery, Hadley Township. http://www.pikecoilgenweb.org/cemeteries/Hadley/McWorter.html

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Chapter 6: Miller Grove

"Whosoever is fearful or afraid let him return and depart from Mount Gilead"

Judges 7:3

Introduction

Freed men and women, emancipated during the 1840s in Hardeman, Marshall, and Henry Counties in south-central Tennessee, established the historic community of Miller Grove, located in the Shawnee Hills of Southern Illinois. Foundations, wells, garden flowers, and yucca plants comprise the archaeological remains of Miller Grove, located in a hilly, wooded, largely undisturbed area within the Shawnee National Forest. On-going archaeological investigations by NFS archaeologist Mary McCorvie from the Murphysboro Ranger Station provide an excellent opportunity to research and understand two family sites, the William Riley Williams home, and the homeplace of Bedford and Abby Gill Miller, in addition to the community at large.[1]

The lives of the other Miller Grove families are emerging from historical documents and letters supporting the archaeological research. Slowly, the documents have led researchers to the conclusion that the Miller Grove area was an important anti-slavery location and a clandestine, poorly understood part of a broadly defined Underground Railroad. Runaways probably escaped from the South as individuals, and passed through the area without benefit of organized assistances relying, instead, on individuals of conscience.

Miller Grove is named for Harrison and Lucinda Miller's eldest son, Bedford. Sixty-eight persons emancipated in south-central Tennessee by one of four families

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formed the heart of the small community. These freedmen, perhaps with Harrison and Lucinda as their founding members, formed the nucleus of Miller Grove.[2] The people recently freed by the Millers, Sides,[3] Singletons and Dabbs families of Tennessee all settled near one another.

The stories of the families of Miller Grove survive through four primary sources: the record of indentures and county recordings of the $1,000 bonds required of any free person of color entering the state of Illinois; marriage certificates, wills, and other official documents; the letters of AMA colporteurs James West and James Scott Davis, and through landscape features including a cemetery.

Sources

Although the records of indenture are codified evidence of the continuous racial tyranny of the north, they are, nevertheless, deeply informative documents. Upon his death, Peter Singleton, for example, one of the four white emancipating Tennesseans, released a total of 42 people from bondage, many of whom married and formed the communal foundation for Miller Grove. A final decree filed on November 19, 1850 in Shelbyville, Bedford County, Tennessee, named the persons who had "each and every one of them given bond," and "good and sufficient security in a sum equal to their respective values" paid to the clerk and master of the court on the condition "that each and every one of them shall faithfully remove from this State." After meeting these conditions, Julia, California, Mississippi, Houston, Napoleon, and Salina and 36 others were "emancipated and set free."[4] The portion of the bonds paid in Tennessee or in Illinois by blacks purchasing their own freedom,

versus Peter Singleton's estate providing part or all of the funds is difficult to determine. In all likelihood, the freed men and women, combined with Singleton's estate in contributing the $42,0000 cost of freedom, not including any bonds demanded by Tennessee to guarantee their departure.[5]

The bonds, which were required by law to ensure that the newly emancipated would not be a burden to the state, were not unique to Illinois. Many of the northern states adopted some form of prohibitive measure to restrict immigration of people of color. Ohio, too, had enacted restrictive black codes that impacted the movement and migration of African Americans. In order to discourage blacks from entering the state, Illinois required any free black entering the state post a $1,000 bond guaranteeing that he or she would not become a public charge.[6] Each was required to register at the county seat and obtain certification. The names of the families listed in the indentures and bonds comprise the community that emerges from the pages of these records.

The relationships among the black residents of Miller Grove emerge through analysis of marriage certificates, grave markers, indentures, deeds, census, emancipation, and tax records. The Miller family deeded the land for the Mt. Gilead AME church, which was probably the settlement's central institution.[7] In a pattern similar to other sites in this study,[8] marriage records reveal the strong relationships among the blacks once enslaved by the various emancipating families. Shortly after arriving in Miller Grove, for example, Ned or Edward Dabbs married Dolly Sides in April of 1848.[9] Community members adopted one another's children, widows and widowers married. Children of the different families intermarried and perpetuated the

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settlement.[10] They more than likely met in one another's homes for religious services before building the first of three AME churches. At all the sites under investigation, the tightly knit interconnectedness of family, community, and church cannot be separated.

Letters also reveal life in Pope County. The correspondences of two known white abolitionists and AMA colporteurs, James Scott Davis and James West, both of whom settled within three or four miles of Miller Grove, refer by name to at least two Miller Grove residents. James West lived in the vicinity of Miller Grove beginning in 1856 and was listed in the 1860s census.11 The Broad Oak Post Office, located in what is now Glendale, Illinois in Pope County, serviced Miller Grove.12 West's letters connect him directly with the black community in the vicinity of Broad Oak and Miller Grove. The names and post office address of Edward Dabbs and Jeremiah Sheppard, in addition to Matthew Holloway and William Lloyd, identify free people of color listed among "the Active Friends of the Society" and link the missionaries and the larger abolitionist world to Miller Grove.

Historical Overview

Although Miller Grove is named for Bedford Miller, it is likely that Edward Dabbs and preacher Jeremiah Sheppard, both of who were able to read and write, were leaders within the Miller Grove community. Harrison Miller probably functioned as the founder and patriarch. Edward Dabbs was a subscriber to the AMA's literature and more than likely expressed strong antislavery sentiments. He had at least some contact with West and Davis since West named him, Sheppard, and

other African American residents of Miller Grove in his letters and reports to AMA corresponding secretary Simeon Jocelyn in New York City.[13]

Joseph Dabbs, who moved from Tennessee to Miller Grove, "with my black family," emancipated Edward Dabbs, his sister Clarissa and his brother Charles. It is not clear if Joseph Dabbs used the phrase literally, figuratively, or spiritually. Edward (or Ned) Dabbs' sizable estate was probably derived, in part, from his inheritance upon the death of Joseph Dabbs. Joseph willed all of his estate "consisting of horses, open waggons…together with notes and vouchers for dues in the State of Tennessee be divided among my black family whom I have freed in the State of Tennessee and with whom I have come to this state of Illinois." Ned's third of the estate included a mare, two beds, a shotgun, cutting knife, and wagon.

When Ned Dabbs died in 1866, Bedford's father, Harrison Miller, signing by his mark, served as executor of the estate. In his study of the Beech and Roberts settlements in Indiana, Vincent demonstrates that leaving a will not only protected assets, probate proceedings also reduced blacks vulnerability in the face of marginalized legal status.[14]

The probate inventory further establishes the important role Dabbs most likely held within the community. In addition to numerous farm animals and implements, two clocks, several books, including law books, and a U.S. history book, were among his itemized effects; unusual for the time period, particularly for a black man on the Illinois frontier.[15] These items were not part of his inheritance.

Considering the volume and variety of books sold by the colporteurs, it is not unrealistic to infer that Dabbs purchased some of the books among his considerable

collection from them. Dabbs' hand written 1864 note to the AMA in New York requesting a subscription for anti-slavery literature reveals that he was quite literate and, therefore, could well have referred to, and used to the law books in his possession to maintain and secure his freedom and that of the Miller Grove community. He probably served as a reader and disseminator of information for those in the community, such as Harrison, Bedford and others, who, as evinced by their marks, had not been taught to read or write. In observing the popularity of one tract of the Christian press, West comments, "One individual…here told me that his 'Press' was read and loaned, until it was literally worn out."[16]

Since colporteurs were first and foremost bible salesmen who probably had contact with some of the black members of the society from Miller Grove, it would be reasonable to expect to find a bible among Edward Dabbs many books. Although many whites used the bible to justify slavery, for Blacks the holy book provided not only the path to godliness and moral uplift but also served as their first "reader." Henry Bibb was convinced the bible was a potent anti-slavery document to be distributed among the enslaved population. In 1849, he joined the AMA effort to distribute bibles among southern bondsmen.[17]

Literacy and education were primary concerns for the community. A slate was listed among Edward Dabbs' estate, and archaeologists recovered slates from both the Riley Williams, and Bedford and Lucinda Miller sites.[18] The 1850 census enumerates Julia Singleton, one of the 42 persons emancipated by Peter Singleton in 1850, as a schoolteacher and topographical maps identify a schoolhouse although the foundation has yet to be located.[19]

Jeremiah Sheppard, like Dabbs, connects the colporteurs to Miller Grove through his request for a subscription for anti-slavery literature. Sheppard also served as the AME preacher and ties the community to the church. His life offers a commentary on the times and reveals the interfaith, interracial cooperation that was the founding tenant of the AMA. A review of the emancipation records for Sheppard and Dabbs, in addition to other Miller Grove residents, is quite instructive on the workings of the Illinois Black Codes and the forces shaping migration of African Americans.

Although Edgar Raines observes that generally the ministers, colporteurs, and missionaries had little contact with Blacks in the area in the period up to emancipation,[20] James West's letters indicate considerable contact and personal visits to their rural homes. West and Davis' discussed their affiliation with the people of Miller Grove in their letters to Jocelyn. In 1859, West distributed 18 bibles and about 10 small testaments "to the free Colored People" of Pope County "for which they were very thankful promised to read them for themselves and for others."[21]

West characterizes the region as "one of the healthiest localities in the West" with "genial clime" and low priced land for the quality. He comments on the proximity to the River where steamboat passage is seldom obstructed, and a favorable place for a Railway Depot. His letters chronicle his work in Pope County; his quarterly reports give specific information about the people he contacted and the names of anti-slavery proponents.

West mentions that he "spent the night with one who, a few years back, came to Illinois for to liberate his slaves. And being Agent for some other liberated slaves,

was robbed and injured."[22]   Although West does not refer by name to the injured party, more than likely, he is referring to the well-documented robbery and beating of Henry Sides and his wife Barbara. Sides was known to have large sums of cash on hand because he contributed substantial amounts of money helping migrating blacks post their $1,000 bond at the Golconda Courthouse as required by state law. From all indications, payment of the full $1,000 was required.   Sides acted as a mediator for Joseph Dabbs, Andrew and Matilda Miller, Allen Coffee, and John Ellison, his Tennessee associates. Sides posted bonds to ensure the emancipation of not only his enslaved workers but of theirs as well.

Census records reveal that Sides migrated, presumably with the families, and purchased land near the freed families in Miller Grove.[23]   Sides used that land to ensure the perpetual care for himself and his wife. In his last will and testament, Sides bequeathed and gave land, all his farming utensils, and his young horse to "Abraham Sides a person of color…on the following conditions that he live with and take care of and do and perform all offices required of him as long as myself and my wife Barbara Sides shall live." The will further states that Henry and Barbara are to remain in possession of the land as long as either lived. If Abraham failed "to fulfill the requirements" then the portion of the will pertaining to Abraham would be null and void.[24] Sides did not make his perpetual care a condition of emancipation, only a condition of inheritance.

Although the Tennessee connections among the various families are poorly understood, the ancestors of the Miller, Coffee (or Coffey), and Leeper families were Presbyterians who, similar to Quaker migrants, sold their holdings in the south and

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moved with the freed men and women to the north. The families helped establish the New School Presbyterian Church, Bethbirei, in 1810. Ancestors of the families were charter members of Bethbirei located just outside of Lewisburg, in Marshall County, TN. Miller and Coffee ancestors are buried in the Presbyterian Round Hill Cemetery near Belfast in Marshall County, which establishes the Presbyterian lineage of the migrating white families and connects them to the AMA as well.

Sides revealed his political beliefs, by emancipating his enslaved workers, by posting a portion or all of the monies for bonds for them, and by living, dying, and being buried among the blacks at Miller Grove. There is no record of his sentiments toward runaways, toward black liberation, or the black church, his thoughts on abolitionism, or anti-slavery. We have yet to learn his religious affiliation or his attitude toward the AMA missionaries working in the area but we can infer, based on the pattern of denominational sectarianism prevalent at the time, that he was a Presbyterian.

New school Presbyterian ministers and colporteurs, West and James Scott Davis were among the white members of the AMA, a religious group known for committed abolitionist principles and Underground Railroad activities.[25] West was particularly eloquent in his "purpose of enlightening the minds of the readers" and was dismayed to "look around and see the numbers that remain in the gaul of bitterness and bonds of iniquity." An early letter dated July 16, 1856, indicates that West was already experiencing persecution and abuse for his views. A professed minister he encountered spoke of the propriety of running him off on account of his "'Abolition' Principles."[26]

The AMA was distinguished by its particular attention to work among blacks. All five of the colleges that admitted black students in the 1840s had ties to the Presbyterians.[27] In disseminating the message of antislavery, the AMA invaded pro-slavery communities with abolitionist tracts and sermons."[28] In this regard, the AMA paralleled the earlier work of *Fugitive Blacksmith* author, J.C. Pennington's Union Missionary Society which, in addition to it's foreign missionary work, resolved to promote the distribution of Bibles to the enslaved as well as to free people of color.[29]

The AMA began as a non-sectarian benevolent society advocating radical abolitionist principles. Formed in 1846, the association grew out of a merger of the American and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society; Lewis Tappan, Joshua Leavitt and Simeon Smith Jocelyn's Amistad Committee; the Hartford, Ct. based Union Missionary Society led by Congregational minister James W. C. Pennington; the Western Evangelical Missionary Society; and the Committee for West India Missions formed by five Congregational ministers from Oberlin.[30] Tappan, Jocelyn, and Leavitt formed the Amistad Committee to raise funds for the defense and legal aid of the Amistad captives. Pennington also responded to the African captives and formed the Union Missionary Society around the Mendi from the Amistad.[31]

Lewis Tappan was well-acquainted with black members of the AMA many of whom influence his thinking. Tappan's long reach moved westward through his influence over AMA members such as Bro. Jocelyn, and George Whipple, with whom West and Davis regularly communicated. Not only was work with blacks central to the association, African Americans, many of whom were Presbyterian or congregational ministers were prominent members and participants in AMA

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programs. In addition to Pennington, who actively worked with the captives from the Amistad while they were in his city and state of Hartford, CT, Charles Bennett Ray, Theodore Sedgwick Wright and Samuel Ringgold Ward, served as the association's first board members in 1842.[32]

With few exceptions, black ministers involved in the antislavery movement were former members of Pennington's Union Missionary Society, a predominantly black association formed in 1841 that promoted outreach to the fugitives in Canada West. The Society was the black predecessor to the AMA.[33] Christopher Rush, second bishop of the AMEZ Church, along with AME Bishop Morris Brown, and Ohio's infamous Underground Railroad leader, Rev. John Rankin, crossed racial barriers and denominational restrictions as they served as vice presidents. Simeon Jocelyn, pastor of a black Congregational church in New Haven, served as corresponding secretary. Presbyterian minister Theodore S. Wright offered prayers at the marriage of Angelina Grimké and Theodore Weld in 1838; Rev. Samuel Cornish served as senior editor of the first black newspaper, *Freedom's Journal*; Rev. Lewis Woodson, and Reverend Daniel A. Payne, who would become the third Bishop of the AME church, were among a 43 man interracial, interdenominational group serving as the association's managers. New York City's Charles B. Ray was one of five commissioned ministers supported by the AMA in 1847. By 1850 Henry Highland Garnet and Jermain W. Loguen were among twenty-one ministers receiving support.

In later years, Henry Highland Garnet, Amos Beman, Henry Bibb, and Mary Shadd Cary, among other African Americans, would serve as teachers for the AMA.[34]

The AMA also sustained Shadd's school, which opened in 1851 in Windsor, Canada West, now known as Ontario although the support was discontinued in 1853.[35] One day after she closed her school in Windsor, the first issue of the *Provincial Freeman* was published on March 24th.[36] Frederick Douglass, although fundamentally philosophically opposed to religious organizations lectured for, published and associated with AMA members. He joined with Tappan and Garnet in support of the Liberty Party, which put an antislavery interpretation on the Constitution,[37] assisting them in the establishment of the American Abolition Society in 1855. Martin Delany, seeking funding in support of his emigration plan, began his contact with the AMA in Canada after he approached officers through Henry Ward Beecher in the summer 1858.

The AMA had a broad reach and many of the organizations members were active workers on the Underground Railroad. Lewis Tappan and Simeon Jocelyn were known to aid runaways; Tappan worked with David Ruggles of the New York Vigilance committee since its' founding in 1836.[38]

West and Davis brought the larger world of the AMA to Southern Illinois through their correspondences. They were among seventeen other anti-slavery men of various denominations living in the Broad Oak area.[39] James West had been located in Fleming County Kentucky before coming to the Miller Grove area in 1856. These bible salesmen along with their evangelical abolitionist sponsors understood the power of the press, and the importance of literacy in effecting social change. The list of literature available in Lewis Tappan's Antislavery Library included radical works such as *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, the possession of which among the enslaved in

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some states of the south meant certain imprisonment.[40] The AMA list of titles available to colporteurs serves as a primer for antislavery thought and literature available at the time. The AMA's position on education and literacy, and the efforts toward education by the residents of Miller Grove, stand in opposition to the anti-literacy laws enacted to perpetuate slavery by enslaving not only the bodies but also the minds of Blacks through legislated or forced illiteracy.[41]

It is no accident that the near-by Broad Oak post office was the colporteur's main location for receiving mail. Because local post offices were in the hands of Democrats, "it required moral courage to receive a known abolition periodical through the mails and a greater commitment to the cause than a similar act in an area further north."[42] Post offices, therefore, were critical sites for control and dissemination of information. As the originator of an 1835 postal campaign that disseminated one hundred and seventy-five thousand copies of four antislavery pamphlets for the American Antislavery Society, Louis Tappan understood the power derived from effective use of the postal system.[43]

Federal law prohibited blacks from carrying the U.S. Mail.[44] The Postmaster General's 1802 objection to appointing African American mail carriers reveals post offices as important sites for the dissemination or suppression of seditious information or radical literature. As Leon Litwack observed, allowing blacks employment in the postal service would "constitute a peril to the nation's security, for employment in the postal service afforded them an opportunity to co-ordinate insurrectionary activities, mix with other people, and acquire subversive information and ideas."[45] Certainly, the widespread circulation of seditious literature, such as

David Walker's *Appeal*, surely helped fuel the fires of fear of "the dangerous fringes of antebellum black activism."[46]

Although West lived south of the Miller Grove area in Township 13 S, Range 5 E, he, and Davis for the short time he lived there, received their mail, including anti-slavery literature, at this location rather than in their own township. "Fred Douglass' Paper," formerly *The North Star*, was included among the anti-slavery literature introduced into the region by the colporteurs, "perhaps the first regular anti-slavery periodical that was ever mailed to any Office within the limits of the county."[47] The individual officers of the AMA contributed to Douglass' newspaper and served as subscription agents.[48]

In addition to the religious tracts listed on the colporteur's order form, West mentions a number of other books and tracts, certainly radical for the time and place. Certainly West would have known through the death of Elijah Lovejoy the often violent opposition to militant abolitionism. West referred to the influence of disseminated literature as "silent, yet powerful messengers…exerting an influence for the last 12 months which my pen cannot portray to your mind."[49] On February 5, 1858, West also mentioned selling a copy of Douglass' *My Bondage and Freedom* to a family that "seemed most pleased with it.[50] Three months before he was forced to leave the State by an enraged mob, West sold a copy of *The Compendium of the Impending Crisis of the South* in September of 1860.[51] In the years leading to the Civil War, he also mentions in his October 28, 1861 Monthly Report to Rev. Jocelyn, selling "Bro. Tappan's little tract, 'The War, Its Cause and Remedy.'" At the opening of the Civil War, Tappan's pamphlet along with his *Immediate Emancipation: The*

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Only Wise and Safe Mode, were circulated by the thousands."[52] Abolitionist and North Carolina AMA agent, Daniel Worth had been arrested in Greensboro for similar behavior. In December of 1859, following the backlash and furor associated with John Brown's raid on Harper's Ferry, Worth was charged and convicted of circulating incendiary literature, in this case, Hinton Rowan Helper's *The Impending Crisis of the South.*[53]

Fellow colporteur James Scott Davis' brief association with Broad Oak contrasts West's extended stay and commitment to the area. Davis had an impeccable anti-slavery pedigree and deep ties in the anti-slavery community. His mother, Mary Brown Davis, was a prominent abolitionist who wrote widely, publishing her anti-slavery articles in *The Genius of Universal Emancipation* and the *Western Citizen* from her home first in Peoria and then in Galesburg. She was instrumental in the founding a Female Anti-Slavery Society in Peoria in 1843 and was the chief proponent of "a mammoth state-wide petition by women" against the black codes of the state of Illinois. His father, Samuel, a Whig newspaperman by profession, was converted to the anti-slavery largely by the actions of his wife. Virginia born Davis graduated from Knox College in Galesburg in 1851, and in 1854 from Oberlin Theological Seminary,[54] a school financed in part by Lewis' brother Arthur Tappan. Oberlin was one of the most prominent stations of the Underground Railroad in Ohio.[55] The schools Davis attended and with which he was associated epitomize anti-slavery, abolitionist institutions. He was ordained at Glendale, Ky., and preached at various churches for John Fee along the borders of the state in Lewis County, allowing Fee to move to Berea, deeper into the interior.[56]

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In the fall of 1855, the year Davis arrived in Kentucky, "a colporteur traveling for the AMA in the same neighborhood was jailed on suspicion of aiding fugitive slaves," and after being released was forced by vigilantes to leave the state.[57] Of that incident, John Fee would declare "We had colporteurs in the field who were distributing Bibles, publications of the American Tract Society, and anti-slavery documents. One of these colporteurs was charged falsely with telling a slave how he might get into a free State."[58] Kentucky imposed serious retribution for those caught aiding freedom seekers. Oberlin's Calvin Fairbanks, for example, was imprisoned for seventeen years for going south and helping slaves escape, he died in prison.[59]

In 1858, Davis and his brother-in law, J.A.R. Rogers along with Fee, were instrumental in starting Beria College, in Beria Kentucky, closely modeling its constitution after Oberlin's.[60] Davis came to Broad Oak, in Pope County, in 1860. He had been driven out "the Abolition" church in Lewis County, Kentucky in December of 1859 shortly after former AMA missionary, John G. Fee, and the anti-slavery colony at Berea had been expelled, and the entire "Kentucky force" of the AMA exiled,[61] victims of the aftermath of John Brown's raid on Harpers Ferry. Fee who had been misquoted in the *Louisville Courier* as well as other Kentucky newspapers paid dearly for the headline, "John G. Fee is in Beecher's church, calling for more John Browns." [62]

Davis' first letter from Broad Oak is dated March 19, 1860.[63] He lived with West in Broad Oak, and stayed until April 7, 1860 before continuing his travels throughout Illinois and Ohio. West mentions in his December 16, 1860 letter that Davis continued preaching in the area, north and south and was scheduled to speak at

the Pleasant Valley School, in addition to "visiting in the neighborhood."[64] In mid January 1861, Davis left, or was driven out of Broad Oak, to establish the "free colony" of Hoyleton, west of Mt. Vernon. The colony, advertised as a religious and anti-slavery colony was populated with Yankee settlers from New England.[65]

Not only did people, family and religious principles flow back and forth, from east to west and from west to east but intellectual property and anti-slavery literature, thought, and information flowed as well. The majority of the correspondence about Broad Oak took place between James West, referring to southeastern Illinois as Western Egypt, and Brother Jocelyn of New York City. In discussing the relationship of Lewis Tappan and Jocelyn with black abolitionist Charles B. Ray, De Boers describes the two men as "two great abolitionists with whom [Ray] was long associated in antislavery agitation and the more specific acts of aiding escaped slaves."[66]

In total, by 1860 the AMA had expended in excess of one million dollars on antislavery missions worldwide including more than one hundred in North America.[67] Despite its worldwide interests, the AMA was not in support of the deportation schemes and denounced the American Colonization Society's efforts to remove free blacks to Liberia. In the early nineteenth-century, most Americans found the presence of large numbers of free Blacks within the community so dangerous to society as to be intolerable. Nat Turner's 1831 insurrection heightened fears and catalyzed deportation schemes.[68]

As early as 1821, Benjamin Lundy and other abolitionists realized the Colonization Society was founded on racial prejudice.[69] In particular, black members

of the AMA indicted the ACS for advocating deportation of free people of color, and fought tirelessly against removing free blacks from the country. The Colonization Society attempted to yoke manumission with emigration, primarily to Liberia.

In emancipating Jerry Sheppard in 1835, William Sheppard's will stated that Jerry "should serve his estate for…three years and afterwards should be hired out or hire himself until he had acquired money sufficient to transport himself and wife Dinah to Liberia." By 1845, ten years after the death of William Sheppard, Jerry had served out his indenture and "procured money sufficient for his removal but owing to changes in the management of the colony of Liberia and difficulty of procuring a passage there, he now wishes to go to one of the free states where he may spend the remainder of his days preaching the gospel."[70]

Sheppard's petition for his free papers reflects the efforts of so many enslaved people of color; Jerry not only obtained the funds to finance the trip, he also purchased the freedom of his wife Dinah. To overcome the difficulty of obtaining his free papers, Sheppard gave bond and security as assurance that he would leave the State of Tennessee in twenty days as the law required. After posting a $500 bond, Jerry was manumitted on February 3, 1845 and migrated to Miller Grove where he purchased several parcels of land and became an AME preacher. He probably acted in the absence of an officiating minister.

It would not be inconsistent for Sheppard to minister to his AME flock and work with the AMA. Cooperation between the AME church and the AMA[71] was consistent with the interdenominational, interracial nature of AMA before the Civil War and with the stand of the AME church working as a conduit for black freedom

by whatever channels necessary.

By 1860 the AMA supported four colporteurs in the Home Missions field.[72] In April of that year, West noted, "persecution is raging here to an alarming extent." As yet, however, violence had not erupted "but threats are freely made. Every issue of the *Golconda Weekly Herald* since March 9th has contained abuses, misrepresentations, and threats of the 'Martyr's Garment', Tar and Feathers." By October 1860, West's letters again, contained continual references to threats of "tar and feathering," with reports of his persecutors active in slanderously attempting to injure his reputation.[73] As a consequence of this incendiary press, "the contagion spreads with great rapidity."[74] West's last letter from Broad Oak was dated 1861. Raines reports, in January 1861, a mob threatened to lynch West and Davis, forcing them to flee Pope County while local authorities offered no assistance to the two abolitionists.[75] In his quarterly report West reports that "if we are here at the expiration of the [?] notice to leave, than I am to be hung" leaving him exposed and without protection from the "liabilities of an infuriated, drunk, lawless mob, during the hours of repose, at any night."[76] It was, by now, an experience with which he and Davis were no doubt familiar after suffering similar expulsion from Kentucky five years earlier. Work of AMA missionaries in the Border States became increasingly dangerous, subject to mob action, and expulsion, particularly after John Brown's raid at Harper's Ferry in 1859.[77]

By February 22. 1861, West was writing from Duquoin, thanking friends for their contributions making up for his "loss occasioned by mob violence."[78] Calling them "riotous mobocrats," West speculated that perhaps his position on the use of

tobacco and ardent spirits "had a large share in inducing the action of the late mob," whereupon, he asks for an additional 10,000 anti-tobacco and temperance tracts to circulate in Southern Illinois.[79]

Building a Case for the Underground Railroad

The quiet manner in which these black and white abolitionists conducted their work belies descriptions of the Underground Railroad as dramatic, glamorous, thrilling, or romantic. The work was deadly and dangerous, frequently leading to ruined health, financial hardship, or imprisonment. Blacks involved in the work, risked loss of freedom and the constant threat of reenslavement. Unlike the dramatic, flamboyant, well known dealings of Harriet Tubman, William Still, Levi Coffin and others, heroic deeds of the men and women in the small black settlements received no exaggerated recounting, no details of the confiding diarist. Furthermore, perhaps reflecting the anonymous character of the Underground Railroad in southeastern Illinois, expert Wilbur Siebert failed to find evidence of routes in the southeastern portion of the state, owing, he surmised to the extreme pro-slavery sentiment held by large portions of the area.[80]

By 1857, West was writing to Jocelyn that his close proximity to the river and of prospects for a railway passing through the region, which is "a favorable place for the second depot, near at hand." In the same letter, West asks for a sufficient number of "our Eastern friends to form a nucleus, where we can make our influence to be felt. Why not engage in this enterprise, in sufficient numbers to build up a Town, put an engine into operation, and to build a church and such schools as may be needed?"[81]

Part of the ongoing research of this project is to understand precisely what West meant since a Railroad line already existed and there was no "first" depot in place so a favorable place for a second depot is ambiguous, and the passage referring to putting an engine in operation is cryptic. West also mentions making deposits in "the Golconda River Bank." Thus far, however, we have not been able to locate or identify such an institution. The word "depot," in particular, is language closely associated with the Underground Railroad.[82] Figuratively and ambiguously phrased messages commonly conveyed information about Underground Railroad activities and make research all the more confusing.[83] Furthermore, both West and Davis associated with known Underground Railroad operators and were affiliated with institutions such as Oberlin that were outright stations on the Underground Railroad.

When West relocated to Broad Oak in March 1860, he settled just across the river from Kentucky, where a former colleague who had been expelled in 1855, returned and had resettled for four years. Continued research must be undertaken to determine if this is the same individual who had been expelled in 1855 upon suspicion of aiding fugitive slaves. Furthermore, Wilbur Siebert named West's close associate, John G. Fee, as an operator on the Underground Railroad.[84] Presbyterians would have had a chance to come together at their annual meetings of the Synod.

West's letters make frequent references to fugitive slaves. On August 24, 1859 he mentions a resident of Ohio he recently met, who assured him that he gave the fugitive "some good advise." Presumably that advice helped the runaway in the cause of his own freedom. In the same letter, however, West reports, "One man said, 'I would take up a fugitive, for the bribe that is offered,'"[85] revealing the very present

danger of capture, kidnapping, and reenslavement as well as the polarity of opinions held by residents of Southern Illinois during this time period. In either case, there is no question that fugitive slaves were passing through the area and being actively pursued.

The southeastern portion of southern Illinois is one of the most misunderstood areas in the Underground Railroad network. Certainly, overt hostility of proslavery factions, the danger of kidnapping, and the activities at the saltworks at Shawneetown on Illinois' eastern most border contributed to a dearth of activity. The Cairo branch of the Underground Railroad, leading to Springfield remains the most important route through southern Illinois.

J. Blaine Hudson observes, "While extreme southern Illinois would seem a natural escape route for fugitives from the Jackson Purchase region of far western Kentucky and from Tennessee, this section of the state also had a reputation for intense hostility to African Americans and was home to relatively few free people of color." This dangerous region offered little help to the cause of the runaway. "As a consequence, Illinois was not a particularly attractive escape route for Kentucky fugitives." Hudson lays a second route through Pope County. He discovered that fugitives from Kentucky attempted to avoid or minimize the duration of their stay in Illinois by using Pope County, and possibly Miller Grove as a corridor "that passed briefly through Illinois, skirting the Wabash River, then into Indiana." Hudson believes this second route out of Southern Illinois, following the course of the Wabash River into Indiana was probably more important that the Cairo to Springfield route. Available records suggest many Kentucky fugitive slaves chose this second

option or by-passed Illinois altogether,[86] further reinforcing understanding of the dangerous and hostile conditions threatening Miller Grove residents.

Among the 1860 letters to Lewis Tappan, treasurer for the AMA, Davis indicated his expenditure of the rather large sum of $37.35 for the "relief fund" at Broad Oak.[87] Although evidence of the precise application or distribution of the monies is unclear, the "relief fund" probably referred to the Canada Relief Fund for aiding runaways once they arrived in Canadian settlements indicating broad concern for the plight of the runaway slave, even in small rural areas such as Miller Grove.

When taken together, the Miller Grove vicinity emerges as a critical site through which runaway freedom seekers would have passed although there would not have been any formalized organization, other than the noted routes out of Cairo, until they reached places such as Alton in Madison County in South Central Illinois. The mentality and thoughts on slavery in Southern Illinois were more closely aligned with its southern neighbors than with the central and northern regions of the state. Rigid borders demarcating the North along the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers were inconsistent with the fluid psychological and political proslavery boundaries characteristic of the southern region of the state.

The evidence supporting Underground Railroad activity in or near Miller Grove, Pope County, Illinois, coalesces around a variety of disparate elements: a free black community, natural landscape features, and missionary work of the AMA. Fugitive slave newspaper notices confirm near-by Golconda as a destination and site of detention for runaways. Crow Knob and Sand Cave, which were in proximity to Miller Grove, 15 miles west of Golconda, offered natural shelter and protection.

Local Pope County folklore connects the two geological features with the Miller Grove community. Sand Cave and Crow Knob purportedly served as hideouts and lookouts for the Underground Railroad. Crow Knob is a large sandstone bluff overlooking the Miller Grove community to the south. Known historically as "Nigger Knob," the pejorative term hints at the function of this prominent landscape feature. Crow Knob, served as both lookout and signal point while Sand Cave, laying a few miles west and north of Miller Grove in the line of sight from Crow Knob, served as a hiding place. Local lore tells us that large bonfires were lit on the top of Crow Knob to guide escaping slaves toward the safety of the Miller Grove area. Even in the modern context, when positioned atop Crow Knob, the view extends for miles. It is a natural vantage point for anyone keeping a watchful eye for runaways or slave catchers. By contrast, Sand Cave is a large, deep cave that would have provided shelter and seclusion. Both features were located within the loosely defined boundaries of the black settlement of Miller Grove.

The ultimate success of a clandestine operation is complete avoidance of discovery. Southern Illinois was dangerous territory for abolitionists and this is reflected in surviving documentation. Slave catchers infested the area, although "both Eden and Sparta north of Miller Grove had deserved reputations as stations on the Underground Railway.[88] Not only were slave catchers and kidnapping a problem but cash rewards offered for capturing runaways fostered betrayal. In Illinois, for example, two escapees from slavery were arrested rather than helped when they sought assistance from a free Black man who sought the reward.[89] Pursuing runaways or unknown blacks in the area and selling them South was a common

practice, sanctioned by both the secular and religious leaders of the community.[90] James West letters also confirmed this view. A minister he encountered, in cahoots with another man, spoke of pursing a fugitive some forty miles and spending the night hoping to get ahead of him but they were denied "the pleasure of capturing him and consequently they missed the $150 reward."[91]

Noted Underground Railroad expert, Wilbur Siebert, identifies few UGRR lines through Southern Illinois,[92] and the Southeast portion of the state where Miller Grove was located "was the enemy's country for the fugitive." Verna Cooley reports that there was bitter animosity toward any person aiding runaways in this section of the state.[93] Participants in the Underground Railroad struggled to make its records elusive, to "cover their tracks." The Underground Railroad was, after all, an illegal operation that became ever more viable with the passage of the Fugitive Slave Bill of 1850. Conductors and beneficiaries were careful to leave few clues, particularly in successful cases. Southern Illinois is also poorly understood because the abolitionist activities were less flagrant and more informal in organization than those of safer strongholds in the northern part of the state. It cannot be overemphasized that Southern Illinois was an extremely dangerous area for runaways and abolitionists alike.[94] Pro-slavery forces in Kentucky, Tennessee and Missouri complained about the anti-slavery activities within the state. As a result, the UGRR history of Southern Illinois is slowly emerging.

We know from historic documents that runaways passed through the area. Benjamin Drew, a Boston abolitionist acting in cooperation with officers of the Canadian Anti-Slavery Society, visited various towns of Upper Canada around the

middle 1850's, interviewing scores of refugees from the slave states, copying their words soon after they were spoken. For reasons of safety, he protected the identity of his informants by using fictitious names. One such informant was William Hall whose route passed through Pope County and may have skirted Miller Grove. Hall describes his ordeal:

> At night I found a canoe, 12 feet long, and travelled down the river several days, to its mouth. There I got on an island, the river being low. I took my canoe across a tongue of land, --a sandbar--into the Ohio, which I crossed into Illinois. I travelled three nights, not daring to travel days, until I came to Golconda, which I recognized by a description I had given on a previous attempt, --for this last time when I got away was my fourth effort.[95]

From there Hall indicates he ventured too far west and was tired, lost, and sick as he attempted to reach Marion, Illinois to the north. He mentions: "At last I ventured, and asked the road--got the information-- reached Marion: got bewildered, and went wrong again, and travelled back for Golconda, --but I was set right by some children." Traveling a route through Southern Illinois he arrived at Frankfort at daybreak, after traveling "13 miles all night long." He traveled to Mount Vernon, encountered numerous ordeals, and after spending several days traveling, coping with illness, eluding captors, and back tracking, he attempted to get to Springfield and then went on to Taylorville. He was eventually conveyed to Ottawa, IL where he found an abolitionist who helped him to Chicago. Hall eventually settled in Dresden and Dawn, Canada.[96]

In the narrative, William Hall clearly used Golconda as a major reference point in his escape route. This, according to his testimony, was his fourth escape

attempt. He specifically mentions Golconda twice, he first states that he recognized Golconda from a previous description, and then, upon losing his way begins to head back to Golconda presumably to reorient himself. Golconda is located approximately 15 miles from the Miller Grove area, and Hall's routes through the region that more than likely transected the vicinity of Miller Grove, are an important indication of an escape route indicating Underground Railroad activity in the area.

Golconda is also the site of the jail in which captured runaways were housed and from which they also escaped. The need to detain runaways in the jail is evidence that freedom seekers passed through the area. In an 1822 runaway notice, for example, Adam, a 60 year-old runaway, and an unusually old man for the time, was detained at the jail until his enslaver could claim him.[97] Golconda jail was also the place from which James, another runaway, escaped. He was recaptured in June of 1822 by the sheriff of White County. These runaway advertisements attest to the long-standing problem of runaways in this area of Pope County in Southern Illinois. When James Henry Jones escaped from that same jail two months later, his success was attested to by the $100 reward mentioned in the *Illinois Gazette* notice for his return.[98]

Modern local lore also suggests that Golconda was an active area for runaways. Bill Tanner stated that he grew up in Golconda and explored the area widely as a boy. He heard stories that the cellars he encountered along the bluff during his explorations were hiding places used by fugitive slaves. Connie Gibbs, the County Clerk of Pope County also repeated much the same story, adding that there were wine cellars in the side of the hill facing the Ohio River and that she was told

that they were used to hide runaway slaves.[99] Although Shawneetown, or Cairo further to the west, are the most frequently mentioned destinations of runaways coming through Southern Illinois, Golconda,[100] Crow Knob, Sand Cave, and the area surrounding the free black community of Miller Grove were also likely destinations.

Southern Illinois, with its long borders along the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers, standing at the mouth of the Tennessee River, was an important entry point for runaways from Tennessee and Kentucky. Edgar Raines named 381 abolitionists and anti-slavery advocates living in twenty of the twenty-eight counties of Southern Illinois. During the period 1856 through 1860, the extreme south-eastern portion of Southern Illinois was thoroughly covered by colporteur and fervent abolitionist James West working out of the Broad Oak Post Office that serviced Miller Grove.[101] Colporteurs West and Davis were strongly suspected of Underground Railroad activities and Edward Dabbs and Jeremiah Sheppard link them to the Miller Grove community.

Archaeology

Although the settlement of Miller Grove no longer exists, the headstone and scattered grave markers stand in silent testimony to freedom minded Americans who comprised the community. The stones of the Miller family, as well as the Woodsmen of the World marker for Henry Sides [Sydes], symbolize Miller Grove as a site of memory (Figure 6). Currently, the lifeways and history of the little settlement are being reconstructed through archaeological investigations. Thus far, the Forest Service has extensively explored two sites, the homes of William Riley Williams, and
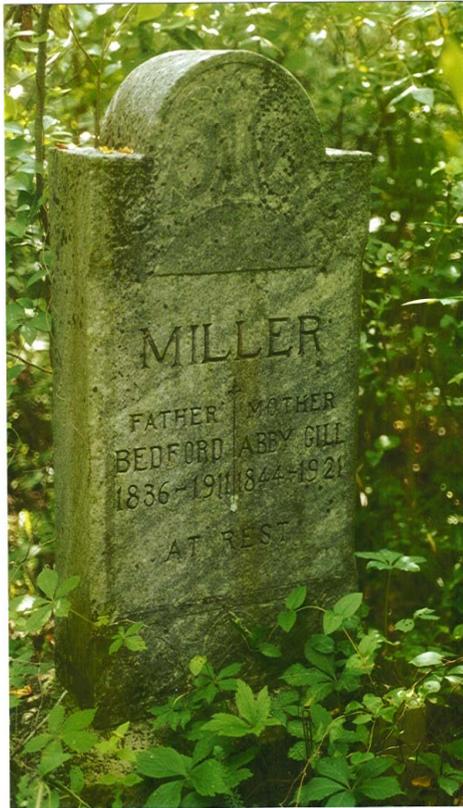
Headstone-Bedford and Abby Gill Miller

Henry Sydes-[Sides]

Woodsmen of the World Marker

Figure 6 Headstones from Miller Grove Cemetery

(Photo: Cheryl J. LaRoche)

Abby Gill and Bedford Miller. In addition to these, there are numerous remaining foundations available for continued exploration, interpretation, and education. The NFS instituted the Shawnee National Forest Miller Grove Historically Black College Project using the resources at Miller Grove to teach undergraduate students archaeological and historical principles, concepts and methods.[102] The Underground Railroad connection emerged slowly through the historical research partially conducted by the students.

Recent History

Between 1830 and 1927, the rural farming community of Miller Grove functioned as a place where African American families could worship, bury their dead, educate their children, and resist slavery and subsequent racial prejudice in relative isolation and inaccessibility. Throughout the period of its existence spiritual needs of the families at Miller Grove were ministered by an itinerant AME preacher, often referred to as a circuit rider, who also served the churches further south and west at Elizabethtown and Golconda along the Ohio River.[103] It is not clear if Jeremiah Sheppard was that preacher. We know Mt. Gilead was probably the AME church in Miller Grove before the Civil War but records have not yet been uncovered.

The AME church is known for its involvement with the Underground Railroad. During the first fifty years of the existence of the AME church, according to the Richard R. Wright's church history, "many of the ministers of this church were active in the anti-slavery movement and "Underground Railroad," and much of the

actual work of receiving and transporting escaped slaves was done by them.[104]

According to oral accounts, the church building functioned as a church on Sunday and, during the remainder of the week, as a school. Minutes of the school Trustees meeting of April of 1877 show education of the children of Miller Grove as a constant source of concern and entreating on the part of the residents. At that meeting, William Riley Williams, B.J. Demery (Dimnery) and C.O. Smith, Williams son-in-law, complained to the District Trustees that they had not been provided with a school and "beg the Board of Trustees to provide for them a school."[105] The request appears to have been denied on legal technicalities, the District stating that "the old Schoolhouse and the District had a burden debt at the time the Division was made which was both illegal."[106] References to the "old schoolhouse" indicate that a separate school was already in existence.[107]

By September of the same year, Bedford and his wife Abigail (Abby Gill) Miller donated a half-acre of land "expressly for school purposes and after that, this shall be null and void."[108] Perhaps anticipating later racial redistricting, the Board of Trustees drew and redrew boundary lines around District 1 containing the Miller Grove School while the Board created a new District No. 3 servicing white children only.[109] By 1931 the Board called a Special Meeting to create a new school district that combined several sections, including "all in Township No. 12"[110] which had the effect of desegregating the school districts. This stands in contrast to official Pope County history, which states "Except for the city of Golconda, which built a separate school for Blacks, the county schools were integrated from the start."[111]

In 1879, two years after Bedford and Abby Gill donated the land for the

school, Josephine Tanner who "signs by mark" donated one acre of land in the South West corner of South East fourth of the South West quarter of Section Eleven, Township twelve, Range 5 for the special purpose of a burial ground. The deed indicates that the land is for "the society known as the [Mount Gilead congregation]" which indicates that the congregation was probably in existence prior to that date.[112] Although documentary records indicate Bedford Miller, Henry Miller, Cynthia Logan, and Francis M. Sides, donated an acre of land in 1891 to the Trustees of the AME Church an AME congregation must have been worshipping together at an early period at Miller Grove. Preacher Jeremiah Sheppard appears in the records as of 1845.[113] The religious life of the community would have been an immediate concern for Harrison and Lucinda Miller. If a church structure was associated the settlement prior to the Civil War, NFS archaeologists have yet to locate it.

Sometime during this period, because of the existence of deeds mentioning the school and the church separately, we can infer that the church and school were housed in different buildings. According to Miller descendants James Crimm, Jr. and Wilbur McClure, three churches were built over the life of the community: the first a log cabin; the last two were frame structures. Each of the previous churches burned and the subsequent church building was relocated as well as rebuilt. NFS archaeologists have not yet located the site of the previous three churches. The various locations of the church and school remain primary research questions.

In Mr. McClure's oral statement, he indicated that his mother, Bedford and Abby's daughter Fannie continued to attend Mount Gilead AME Church. In subsequent years, Fannie's brother, Leander Miller continued the family association

with the AME Church. According to Dearinger, he was "the most noted [Black] in Southern Illinois."[114] At the time of his death in April 1946, at sixty years of age, he was conference evangelist for the AME church. Mr. McClure recalls a specific trip to Miller Grove, he, his oldest son, and Alvin Coles, his brother-in-law, made in search of the farm in 1977. At that time, a white farmer shared with them a story of riding over to Miller Grove just to hear Lee [Leander Miller] preach. "Uncle was a well-respected traveling evangelist in Southern Illinois. What they would call today, a dynamic speaker."[115] Another relative, Rev. Jeff Sydes, also preached for sixty years and his brother continued the family AME tradition. He was next in line for bishop of his conference when he died at the Negro Methodist Assembly at Detroit.[116] Wilbur McClure indicated that the family is still associated with the AME Church.

Wilbur observed that by 1927 Miller Grove was a dying settlement.[117] Residents moved to Carrier Mills to work in the mines although his grandmother, Abby Gill stayed in Carrier Mills and spent her last days there. Others moved further north to Mt. Vernon in search of work. During the winter, Wilbur's father worked at the foundry in Mt. Vernon where railroad wheel parts were made, and farmed during the summer. From Mt. Vernon some family members migrated further north to Whiting outside Chicago where the same parts were manufactured so his father's skills were transferable and in demand.

In 1927, Wilbur's parents left him and his sister behind in Carrier Mills while they looked for work. His father and three brothers eventually traveled to Toledo. They came into a suburb where they saw a factory that manufactured wheels. They were hired "on the spot" to work for the Southern Wheel Company in Toledo. Once

the family moved from Carrier Mills to Toledo, they continued as AME members and the children were baptized there.[118]

Other residents of Miller Grove moved to Brownfield where the rich and fertile bottomland was more conducive to farming than the bluffs of Miller Grove. The family owned 3000 acres in the Bay Bottoms Colony. The area is often referred to as "the Black Bottom," probably in reference to the African-American inhabitants who came to the area in the early 1800s. "Most of Bay Bottoms, from the Homberg Bridge to Route 145, was owned by Black people.[119] The Macedonia Free Will Baptist Church is still active and the names of former Miller Grove residents are prominent on the headstones in the church cemetery. Mr. James Crimm, Jr. one of the few descendants of the Miller Grove community, who continues to live in the area, continues the tradition of an annual reunion of friends and family on July 4th at the church. In 2003, the NFS team and I were fortunate to attend a family reunion where we were able to visit the cemetery and speak with Mr. Crimm.

In addition to the church and school, the Silver Trowel Masonic Lodge also provided institutional support to the local communities. The Prince Hall Masons formed an important institutional foundation for the free Black community both before and after the Civil War. Mr. McClure's father James McClure was a Worshipful Master of the Masonic Lodge and his mother, Bedford's daughter Fannie, was a Matron of the Eastern Star in Carrier Mills. Mr. McClure has a 1921 Masonic certificate in his possession. Both parents were active in social and political life. The Masonic Lodge members maintained ties to Miller Grove. A December 27, 1925 roster of newly installed officers contained the names of William Alsup and John

Rouse, both of whom married Miller Grove descendants. One of the elected officers of the Golconda Chapter of the Eastern Star was Jessie Colver of Carrier Mills, Wilbur McClure's aunt, and Abby Gill's sister.[120] Jessie Colver remained active and was listed as an officer of the Silver Trowel Lodge, Bethany Chapter in January of 1930.[121] We also expect to find former Miller Grove residents in the Grand Army of the Republic.[122]

Although the Miller Grove community exists solely as an archaeological resource, Mr. Wilber McClure maintained the family property that "is still in my name." "It's the only land left in Miller Grove still owned by blacks." Mr. McClure takes pleasure in going to Golconda to pay his taxes in person "so that they can see that a black man owns the land." Mr. McClure is concerned about landownership by blacks because, "Now you see blacks trying to reclaim land they walked away from. Easily, at least 55% of the land was lost to taxes [in Miller Grove]." This is why Mr. McClure has tried to hold on to that piece of property, "it's a definite piece of history." He said, "I was able to see how many gave up their land to taxes. We have maintained this land in our own name for 100 years."[123] In the process, Mr. McClure and his oral testimony provided one more piece of the Miller Grove puzzle.

Endnotes Chapter 6

[1] Michael J. McNerney, "A Thematic Study of Rural Historic Farmsteads, Pope County, Illinois. Harrisburg, IL.: Prepared for USDA, Forest Service, Shawnee National Forest. American Resources Group, Ltd., April 1987.
[2] Edward Annable, *Forgotten Records: Pope County Illinois* (Cypress, IL: Ed Annable Publishing Company, 1993; Revised 1995).
[3] Also spelled Sydes.
[4] Final Decree, Peter Singleton, decd. November 19, 1850, recorded December 31, 1850. Deed Book E, 52-53. Circuit Clerk's Office, Pope County Courthouse, Golconda, IL.

[5] *Ibid.*

[6] Donald R. Wright, *African Americans in the Early Republic 1789-1831*(Arlington Heights, IL: Harlan Davidson, Inc., 1993), 135.

[7] NFS, "Miller Grove: An Early African American Community in Pope County," 2002. http://www.fs.fed.us/r9/shawnee/heritage/elizabeth/millergrove2000.htm.

[8] See for example Vincent, *Southern Seed.*

[9] Marriage Certificate Edward Dabbs to Dolly Sides, April 1, 1848.

[10] Annable, *Forgotten*; Marriage Certificate of Edward Dabbs and Dolly Sides; Marriage Certificate of Edward Dabbs and Clarissa Fields

[11] 1860 Pope County Census; Annable, *Forgotten.*

[12] Miller Grove is located in Alexander Township 12 S, Range 5 E.

[13] West to Jocelyn, June 1, 1857, Amistad Center, American Missionary Association Archives 30582. Tulane University, New Orleans. Cited as AMAA.

[14] Vincent, *Southern Seed.*

[15] State of Illinois, Sale Bill, Estate of Edward Dabbs, Filed July 30, 1866. On file, Pope County Clerk's Office, Golconda, IL.

[16] West to Jocelyn, June 1, 1857, AMAA.

[17] *BAP*

[18] Elizabeth L. Fuller, "Miller Grove: African American Identities in a Southern Illinois Farming Community." Paper Presented Annual Meeting, Society for Historical Archaeology, St. Louis, January 7-11, 2004.

[19] Annable, *Forgotten.*

[20] Raines, *Abolitionists*, 12.

[21] West to Jocelyn, July 18, 1859. AMAA 31569.

[22] West to Jocelyn, July 5, 1859. AMAA 31453.

[23] Annabel, *Forgotten.*

[24] Will of Henry Sides

[25] Muelder, *Fighters for Freedom*, 207.

[26] West to Tappan, Gilbert, Whipple and Joslin, July 16, 1856. AMAA 30133

[27] *BAP* V3, 439, fn 12.

[28] Muelder, *Fighters for Freedom*, 312.

[29] De Boer, "The Role of the AMA," 83.

[30] *American and Foreign Anti-Slavery Reporter*, II (November, 1845), 77 as cited in De Boer, "The Role of AMA," 593, iii, 71, 74.

[31] Bertram Wyatt-Brown, *Lewis Tappan and the Evangelical War Against Slavery* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1997).

[32] Cornish, Wright, Garnet were Presbyterian ministers; Pennington, Beman, Ward and Ray were Congregational clergymen, De Boer, "The Role of the AMA," 77. Pennington would later become an itinerant preacher for the AME Church in Natchez, *BAP* V, 394.

[33] *BAP* III, V.

[34] De Boer, "The Role of the AMA," iii, 40-41, 76-78, 190; Quarles, *Black Abolitionists,* 38.

[35] Clifton H. Johnson, "Mary Ann Shadd: Crusader for the Freedom of Man." *Crisis* 78 No. 3 (1971):89-90.

[36] Jane Rhodes, *Mary Ann Shadd Cary: The Black Press and Protest in the Nineteenth-Century* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1998); De Boer, "The Role of the AMA," 162.

[37] H.G. Adams, ed., *God's Image in Ebony: Being a Series of Biographical Sketches, Facts, Anecdotes, etc., Demonstrative of the Mental Powers and Intellectual Capacities of the Negro Race* (London: Partridge and Oakey, 1854) 26.

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[39] Edgar F. Raines. *Abolitionists and Anti-Slavery Men in Southern Illinois, 1850-1863*. (Unpublished Manuscript, 1969), 2.

[40]Lewis Tappan Antislavery Library Catalogue, Lewis Tappan Collection, Catalogues of Anti-Slavery Books and Pamphlets 101-3, 1851. Folders 12-14. Moorland-Spingarn Research Center, Manuscript Division, Howard University; Bradford, *Harriet Tubman*.

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[42] Raines, *Abolitionists*, 13.

[43] Bertram Wyatt-Brown, "The Abolitionists' Postal Campaign of 1835," *The Journal of Negro History* 50, No. 4 (Oct., 1965):227-238. http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0022-2992%28196510%2950%3A4%3C227%3ATAPCO1%3E2.0.CO%3B2-5.

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[46] Peter P. Hinks. *To Awaken My Afflicted Brethren: David Walker and the Problem of Antebellum Slave Resistance* (University Park: Penn State University Press, 1997), 115.

[47] James M. West, Monthly Statement to the AMA, June 1-July 15, 1857. AMAA 30630.

[48] De Boer, "The Role of the AMA," 67.

[49] West to Jocelyn, June 1, 1857, AMAA 30582.

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[51] West to Jocelyn, Monthly Statement to the AMA, July 2-Aug. 1, 1860. AMAA 32076.

[52] De Boers, 231.

[53] Thomas D. Hamm, "The Evolution of an Abolitionist: Daniel Worth and the Friends of North Carolina," *The Southern Friend, Journal of the North Carolina Friends Historical Society* 2, No. 2 (Autumn 1980):55-70.

[54] Muelder, *Fighters for Freedom*.

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[58] Fee, *Autobiography.*

[59] Gara, *The Liberty Line*, 86.

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[61] Augustus Field Beard, *A Crusade of Brotherhood: A History of the AMA*. (Boston: Pilgrim Press, 1909), 100-103.

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[63] Davis to Joeclyn. AMAA 31870.

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[65] Paul Wallace Gates, *The Illinois Central Railroad and its Colonization Work* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1934), 229; Muelder, *Fighters for Freedom*, 310.

[66] De Boers, "The Role of the AMA,"192.

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[71] De Boer, "The Role of AMA," 78.

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[73] West to Jocelyn, Monthly Statement to the AMA, Sept 7-Oct 11, 1860, dated Oct. 15, 1860. AMAA 32209.

[74] West to Jocelyn, April 16, 1860. AMAA 31917.

[75] Raines, *Abolitionists*, 22.

[76] West to Jocelyn, Monthly Statement to the AMA, Oct 15, 1860 to Jan 11, 1861. AMAA 29.

[77] De Boer, "The Role of the AMA," 92.

[78] West, Broad Oak, Feb. 22, 1861. AMAA 32400.

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[84] Siebert, *UGRR,* 411.

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[89] Gara, *Liberty Line,* 55.

[90] Raines, *The Abolitionists,* 18.

[91] West to Tappan, Gilbert, Whipple and Joslin, July 16, 1856. AMAA 30133

[92] Siebert , *The UGRR,* 32

[93] Cooley, "Illinois and the Underground Railroad to Canada."

[94] Siebert, "UGRR in Southern Illinois."

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[101] Raines, *Abolitionists*, 7, 10-11.

[102] "Shawnee National Forest Miller Grove Historically Black College Project," n.d. On File, Murphysboro Ranger Station, IL, NFS.

[103] Lowell A. Dearinger, "Miller Grove: Pope County's Early Negro Community Led a Pattern of Life Which Has Disappeared," *Outdoor Illinois* (Nov. 1965): 7-12.

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[108] Warranty Deed, Bedford and Abigail Miller to School Directors of District No. 1 Township 12 R East, Pope County, Illinois. Book Y of Deeds, 374.

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[112] Joesphine Tanner, "For Burial purposes of the society known as the Nunnt Guilded congration and the public Jenerly." Book 3 of Deeds, Page 265. Golconda Court House, Office of the County Clerk, Golconda, IL.

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[114] Dearinger, "Miller Grove," 9ru.

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[116] Dearinger, "Miller Grove," 10.

[117] LaRoche-McClure interview 7/31/03.

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[121] "Silver Trowel Lodge, Bethany Chapter, O.E.S. Install Officers." *Herald Enterprise*, Jan. 16, 1930.

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Chapter 7: Lick Creek, Indiana

> This chapter is dedicated to the memory of Coy D. Robbins.

Introduction

The African American settlement of Lick Creek was located two miles southeast of Paoli, Orange County in Southern Indiana, and 20 miles north of the Kentucky border. The settlement is south of Chambersburg, a town noted in local histories as an Underground Railroad station.[1] Freeborn African Americans first came to the area and purchased land in what would become the Lick Creek settlement in 1817. Blacks also came accompanying Quakers who were fleeing racial persecution in North Carolina.

People of color had been migrating to Indiana, however, since at least the 1740s. As frontier lands opened for settlement, free Africans, perhaps encouraged by the anti-slavery provisions of the Northwest Ordinance, joined whites in migration to the Northwest Territory. Many were free born or recently emancipated and came primarily from Kentucky and the eastern states of Maryland, Virginia and North Carolina. People of color came to escape restrictive state laws mandating newly freed men and women leave their respective states, usually within 30 days or face reenslavement. Runaways were also among the early migrants.

Similar to many of the sites in this study, the exact boundaries of the settlement are difficult to define. Lick Creek was located within Southeast and Stampers Creek townships.[2] Archaeological findings suggest that the physical layout

of the settlement consisted mainly of a scattered arrangement of log houses where the residents farmed or worked as tradesmen.[3]

Although portions of Orange County Indiana were well populated in the 1800s, access to the hilly, remote and secluded area southeast of Paoli has always been difficult. Comparable to other sites in this study, blacks in Indiana were often too poor to buy any other than the least desirable, small uncleared tracts of land which men and women, mainly husbands and wives purchased from white neighbors.[4] By 1840, however, ten men of color had accumulated a total of 780 acres in the Lick Creek settlement.[5] The landscape undoubtedly benefited those who may have been secretly moving freedom seekers through the area.

As previously discussed, the Black Codes of Indiana greatly restricted the liberty of African Americans after 1800. By 1820, Indiana had a population of 1, 230 free people of color. [6] By 1851, Indiana voters approved a constitutional provision that stated that "No [N]egro or mulatto shall come into or settle in, the State, after the adoption of this Constitution," further abridging the rights guaranteed by the Northwest Ordinance. This provision of Article XIII remained in effect for thirty years.[7] By 1860, at the eve of the Civil War, the black population of the settlement had grown to 260 people,[8] while the state population had swelled to 11,428 blacks and mulattoes.[9] Approximately a third of the black population lived in Southeast Township in the Lick Creek Settlement, which was a racially integrated community at that time.[10]

Lick Creek, one of three settlements managed by the U.S. Forest Service, exists primarily as an archaeological site. The multiple archaeological sites that

comprise the settlement contain cemeteries, foundations of barns and houses, wells, cisterns, and remnants of old roads once used by free black farmers who transported produce to market and perhaps, took their children to school.[11]

Sources

Much of the information for this chapter is based on work by Coy D. Robbins as well as data provided by Angie Krieger, National Forest Archaeologist and Heritage Resource Specialist for the Hoosier National Forest. A substantial portion of Mr. Robbins work is a compilation based on local, state and national public documents amassed over a fifteen-year period while researching his African ancestry. Robbins worked in collaboration with Rocco Gibala, Assistant District Ranger, United States Department of Agriculture NFS, Hoosier National Forest, Paoli Indiana office.[12] Robbins makes extensive use of these documents. In the process of investigating this American heritage, he unearthed "a distinctive, meaningful, illustrious captivating and also extremely enigmatic history" of blacks in Indiana.[13]

Freedom papers filed in the County Courthouse are also an illustrative though unfortunate source of information pertaining to residents of Lick Creek settlement. The County Register of 1853 required by Indiana law recorded people of color and mulattos, listing physical descriptions, often including distinguishing marks. Statements by white witnesses vouching for the registrants free status and character, attesting that the person in question comported themselves "civilly, honestly and industriously," for example, were also included.

After the close of Atlantic slave trade in 1808, kidnapping free blacks and

selling them into slavery in Kentucky became a prevalent practice leaving free blacks little recourse to the law; papers attesting to their status as free persons were often ignored.[14] Indiana law required that blacks and mulattoes file their freedom papers in the courthouse and be included in a Negro Register. The law reflects the oppressive nature of slavery and semi-free legal status of blacks in Indiana, leaving the historical record shaped by racist policies rather than by a rich, vibrant, legacy of a people in control of their own destiny. The result, however, is that the Lick Creek Settlement is known historically and we have an understanding of the residents because the Negro Register included physical descriptions of many individuals.[15]

Three recently published works inform this chapter, *Southern Seed, Northern Soil* by Stephen Vincent, *The Underground Railroad in Floyd County, Indiana* by Pamela Peters, and *Fugitive Slaves and the Underground Railroad in the Kentucky Borderland* by J. Blaine Hudson. I have not relied on two seminal works on Indiana's Underground Railroad, Levi Coffin's *Reminiscences*, and Col. William Cockrum's History *of the Underground Railroad as It Was Conducted by the Anti-Slavery League* because these works privilege the efforts of white conductors of the Underground Railroad. For these same reasons, I consult Wilbur Siebert's *The Underground Railroad*[16] sparingly. In moving away from these foundational texts, I provide an alternative narrative illustrative of the crucial role played by blacks on behalf of their own freedom and the interconnectedness of the efforts of black and white antislavery workers.

Archaeological resources are robust for the Lick Creek settlement. Archaeologists have located house sites using old maps, aerial photos from 1938, and

a variety of historical and land records. Numerous farmsteads now covered with thick second-growth forest, including that of Elias Roberts have received archaeological attention. Work has also focused on the remnants of Mathew Thomas' home.

Historical Overview

The first African American settlers migrated to Orange County, Indiana before 1820. Pioneering free people of color began to appear in the County in 1817 when William Constant and Charles Goin together obtained a patent deed from the United States and purchased 160 acres in Section 27, Township 2 North, Range 1 East of South East Township.[17] Eleven families consisting of sixty-three individuals, most of whom were children, were listed in the census of 1820. In addition to Charles Goings, Jonathan Broady, Lewis Burnett, Judah Canon, Darcus Constant, Hazel Cummins, David Dugged, Claiborne Goings, Simeon Goings, Richard Potridge and Bryant Thomas were listed as heads of households.

In addition to these families, the Roberts family, a very prominent name in Indiana black history, is associated with the Lick Creek settlement. The family has a long ancestry in this country as freeborn people of color. They lived in primarily in Northampton County, North Carolina in 1790 and were enumerated in the first United States Population Census. The Roberts joined their family, friends, and neighbors in the mid-1820s and migrated westward in search of a haven in the states of the Northwest Territory. According to Robbins, the family did not leave North Carolina at the same time nor is there any indication that they ever accompanied the Quakers who also migrated to Indiana. The Roberts family migrations from North Carolina to

Indiana lasted into the 1840s.[18]

The Lick Creek Settlement appears to be the second community where the Roberts of North Carolina gathered in Indiana. Branches of the family also settled the Beech Settlement in Rush County and then migrated to the Roberts Settlement in Hamilton County. Elias Roberts and his wife Nancy bought and sold land in Lick Creek for more than 30 years. By the time 64 year-old Elias and his 54 year-old wife Nancy were recorded in the Register of Negroes and Mulattoes in Orange County, Indiana they were both gray haired. Elias was described as mulatto and his wife as light mulatto reflecting the Native, African, and European American mixed race status of much of the Roberts family.[19] When Elias died in 1866, he and his wife had amassed 304 acres of land.

The mixed-race family appears to have had Native American ancestry and had long known freedom. Ishmael Roberts, for example was a Revolutionary War veteran of Private Shepard's Company, Tenth North Carolina Regiment and received a government land grant for his service.[20] Stephen Vincent documented related branches of the family in *Southern Seed, Northern Soil*.[21] Further research is necessary to determine if genealogy efforts have established the relationship between Elias Roberts of Lick Creek and Elias Roberts of the Beech and Roberts settlements.

In addition to the Roberts family and other free people of color settling Lick Creek, eleven families from North Carolina accompanied Jonathan Lindley and a group of sympathetic Quakers in search of a new land that forbade slavery and offered racial tolerance. Friend Lindley migrated from Cane Creek in Orange County, North Carolina and had settled in Orange County in 1811, five years before

establishment of the County or statehood was granted Indiana.[22] These free citizens fled racial persecution and increasingly restrictive laws against free blacks in North Carolina, their previous home.

North Carolina whites in general reflected the sentiment of many other parts of the country. Renewed public discussion seeking to restrict free blacks and their growing legal status motivated migrations to Indiana. Census data lists North Carolina as either the birthplace or residence for many of the inhabitants of Lick Creek. North Carolina's political and racial climate there had a major impact on black migration out of the state. By the mid-1790s North Carolina assembly restricted both manumissions and movement of free blacks within the state.[23] North Carolina law, with the exception of freedom for "meritorious service" allowed no manumissions. "Overall, a pattern emerged, especially after the Revolutionary War, that each step to facilitate emancipation was frustrated by a governmental step to counteract the freeing of slaves." Friends, in addition to the population in general, "were effectively constrained from making general emancipation practical, and they even had problems ridding their own denomination of the taint of slavery."[24] A bond of $1,000 was a requirement for emancipation and was a financial obstacle of considerable magnitude for blacks seeking their freedom from slavery. After payment of the bond, the condition of emancipation mandated immediate and permanent removal from the State of the newly freed former slave.[25]

Quakers may well have migrated out of fears of impending slave revolts as reflected in legislation which ostensibly sought to curb or limit revolt and unrest among the enslaved in North Carolina. As Addison Coffin stated Quakers did not

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fear that they would be in danger in case of a revolt among slaves but rather that they shrank from the thought of living amid such possible scenes. This, according to Coffin, can be marked as one of the deep-seated causes of Friends leaving the south.[26] In a similar search for racial and religious harmony, Friends had migrated from Virginia to western North Carolina to avoid persecution.[27]

Free people of color occupied a contradictory position in a society based on exploited labor from an enslaved population. "If blackness was inherent to slavery, then slavery could never be completely abolished unless black skin itself could be abolished."[28] "Many North Carolina Friends viewed free people of color with considerable disdain and resentment, in part because of the heavy toll that the struggle against slavery had taken on the Quakers themselves" as some Friends blamed blacks, both slave and free, "for at least a portion of their problems and wished they could be entirely rid of their presence."[29] Quakers in general were as conflicted over slavery as other denominations and tended to accept the views of racial inferiority held by whites in general.[30] They treated blacks with paternalism and failed to welcome former slaves as full-fledged members of their religion.[31]

North Carolina Quakers,[32] however, have a long history of the condemnation of slavery and exerted the strongest antislavery influence in the state from the Revolutionary period to the Civil War.[33] However, many Quakers who represented the largest religious body in the colony during the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century, adopted slavery for their own Carolina plantations.[34] Increasingly though, North Carolina Friends found themselves adhering to unpopular antislavery abolitionist beliefs in the midst of slave territory.[35] As Quakers became uneasy with

slaveholding, they sought ways to circumvent the rigid 1741 restrictions against manumission in North Carolina by establishing a trusteeship system to receive assignments of slaves from Quaker slaveholding masters and holding them in trust until such time as the enslaved person could be freed and colonized outside the United States or resettled in free states.[36]

For those blacks migrating with Quakers, traveling with them offered some protection on their journey and the promise of supportive neighbors upon their arrival. Having been migrants before, or the offspring of migrants, most Quakers understood how to plan for long journeys into wilderness areas. "One participant even declared that the Quakers had developed migratory practices to the point of being a science."[37] North Carolina Quakers moving to the Northwest mostly followed well-established routes used by Indians or by previous migrants.

Because of the legal stand adopted by North Carolina, several Quakers, particularly from Guilford and Chatham counties, chose to resettle in the free states and migrated to Indiana. Direct migration from northeastern North Carolina to the West began in 1812. Between 1812 and 1818, forty-six migrants come into Indiana from North Carolina. Lick Creek was one of the destinations.[38]

Friends are organized around weekly, monthly, quarterly and yearly meetings on regional, local and communal levels culminating in Yearly Meetings. For some North Carolina Quaker communities, a major portion of the membership would decide to make the journey westward together leaving whole areas without the benefit of a monthly meeting.[39] After such a mass exodus, the meeting declined in membership, never to regain its former strength.

Quaker history states that in 1811 an illustrious citizen of the Cane Creek Valley area, Jonathan Lindley, led a caravan of approximately two hundred people to southern Indiana, many of whom were from the Spring Community. Chatham County North Carolina Quakers belonged to the Western Quarterly Meeting that included members from Centre in Gilford County, including the Cane Creek meeting attended by the Lindley family.[40] When general references are made to North Carolina Quakers migrating to Indiana, they specifically originated from the Guilford, Chatham and parts of Orange Counties and were members of the Western Quarterly Meeting.

By the late 1830s, the Indiana Yearly Meeting was one of the world's largest, growing steadily through migration, particularly from North Carolina.[41] This concentration of Quakers did not preclude whites from actively seeking to bar migration, and blacks liberated by the Friends of North Carolina were generally not welcomed in the state. When sixty or seventy liberated blacks arrived in 1818 their presence only fueled inhospitable reactions on the part of the white population.[42]

Friends had been helping their former slaves reach the free states long before their formal decision of 1823 to remove blacks under the protective care of the yearly meeting to Illinois, Indiana, or Ohio.[43] The year 1826 also marked a major exodus of blacks from North Carolina with newly arrived settlers to Indiana maintaining their former ties.[44] Quakers spent twenty years transporting their own former slaves to states such as Indiana, and countries where slavery was not imposed.

Quakers have enjoyed an uncritical place in African American history and in the history of the Underground Railroad. Indeed, the sect was at the forefront of the

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antislavery cause and was "the mainstay of the antislavery movement" in their challenge to slavery.[45] Yet, Friends, as well as other religious and benevolent organizations including Presbyterians in North Carolina sought various means of dealing with the problems of slavery. Migrations of blacks to the Midwest as well as Liberia were viewed as solutions. Quakers and Presbyterians, therefore, supported and worked in close cooperation with the American Colonization Society after having come to the conclusion that free blacks were a problem and that colonization was a viable solution.[46] Members of the Colonization Society attempted to make colonization a condition of freedom, "an odious plan of expatriation concocted by slaveholders" to get rid of free Negroes whom they regard as a dangerous element among slaves."[47]

Between 1825 and 1831, North Carolina Yearly Meeting demonstrated particular interested in the work of this Society. Although members such as Levi Coffin looked upon it as little more than an adjunct of the slave power, the Society of Friends worked in harmony with the Colonization Society. Friends acted as a sort of agency for the Society and contributed more than $2,000 to its funds.[48] These colonization schemes resulted, in part, from reluctance on the part of some Quakers to live among freed blacks with prejudice in Indiana equaling prejudice in North Carolina. By 1836, however, the Indiana Yearly Meeting of Orthodox Friends warned its members against joining any association that advocated colonization as "the unrighteous work of expatriation."[49] At the same time that the Indiana Yearly Meeting at Richmond took a stand against colonization it also discouraged its

EASTERN QUARTERLY MEETING,

Is held on last 7th-day in 2, 5, 8, and 11 mo.
2 and 8 mo. at Rich Square, Northampton
County, N. C.
5 and 11 mo. at Piney Woods, Perquimans.
Meeting of Ministers and Elders on 6th-day pre-
ceding.

MONTHLY MEETINGS.

1. Rich Square, third 7th-day.
2. Piney Woods, first 7th-day.

PREPARATIVE MEETINGS.

1. Rich Square,   4th-day preceding Mo. Mg. week.
2. Piney Woods,   5th-day preceding Mo. Mg. week.

MEETINGS FOR WORSHIP.

1. Rich Square,   1st and 4th-days.
2. Piney Woods,   1st and 5th-days.

WESTERN QUARTERLY MEETING,

Is held 2d-seventh day in 2, 5, 8, and 11 mo.
2 mo. at Cane Creek, Orange County, N. C.
5 mo. at Rocky River, Chatham do.
8 mo. at Spring Meeting, Orange do.
11 mo. at Centre,   Guilford do.
Meeting of Ministers and Elders, on Sixth-day pre-
ceding.

MONTHLY MEETINGS.

1. Cane Creek, 1st-seventh day.
1, 3, 5, 7, 9, and 11 mo. at Cane Creek, Orange
County.
2, 4, 6, 8, 10 and 12 mo. at Rocky River, Chatham
County.
Centre, third 7th-day.
Spring, last 7th-day.

PREPARATIVE MEETINGS.

1. Cane Creek.	5th-day preceding Mo. Mg.
1. Rocky River,	4th-day preceding Mo. Mg.
2. Providence,	4th-day preceding Mo. Mg.
2. Centre,	5th-day preceding Mo. Mg.

MEETINGS FOR WORSHIP.

1. Cane Creek,	1st and 5th-days.
1. Rocky River,	1st and 4th-days.
2. Providence,	1st and 4th-days.
2. Centre,	1st and 5th-days.
3. Spring,	1st and 4th-days.
3. Chatham,	
3. South Fork,	

NEW GARDEN QUARTERLY MEETING,

Is held 5th-day after second 7th-day in 3, 6, 9, and 12 mo.
Meeting of Ministers and Elders, on 4th-day prece-
ding.

MONTHLY MEETINGS.

| 1. New Garden, | last 4th-day. |
| 2. Dover, | last 5th-day. |

PREPARATIVE MEETINGS.

| 1. New Garden, | 4th-day preceding Mo. Mg. |
| 2. Dover, | 5th-day preceding Mo. Mg. |

MEETINGS FOR WORSHIP.

| 1. New Garden, | 1st and 4th-days. |
| 2. Dover, | 1st and 5th-days. |

Figure 7 Western Quarterly Meeting Members

(From *Book of Meetings,* Samuels and William Wood. Courtesy of Friends Library, Swarthmore College)

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members from going outside the Society of Friends in any antislavery work.[50] Yet as late as 1858, debates by North Carolina lawmakers considering outright expulsion of free blacks revealed the ongoing nature of the problems encountered by North Carolina's free people of color that propelled them to find refuge in Indiana and other states.[51]

According to the census records, there were 96 blacks living in Orange County in 1820. By May 21, 1831, Mathew Thomas became one of the first people of color to obtain land in the Lick Creek vicinity. Thomas was free born but was bound to Zachariah Lindley and indentured in 1821 by his widowed mother. Upon fulfilling his apprenticeship he purchased 80 acres. Two years later, he secured his certificate of freedom proving his free status in Indiana. Other people of color soon followed and purchased land in the hills south of Chambersburg that would develop into the Lick Creek settlement. Benjamin Roberts, David Dugged, Peter Lindley and Elias Roberts, some with their wives, were recent migrants from North Carolina. Each purchased 40 acres of patented land from the United States of America in 1832. With the exception of Dugged's holdings, these land purchases formed the nucleus of the Lick Creek Settlement. During these early years, blacks and whites often lived among one another and were often adjoining landholders.[52]

James Guthrie was one of the blacks specifically mentioned by name who came to Lick Creek with Quakers. Quaker Nathaniel Newlin in North Carolina purchased his freedom in 1842,[53] perhaps as part of the Quaker emancipation scheme. Newlin indicated that he was interested in freeing Guthrie but was prevented from doing so by North Carolina law. He then deeded Guthrie to his brother, Thomas

Newlin with the stipulation that Guthrie be granted his freedom.[54] Newlin transported him to Paoli in Orange County[55] and entered a Certificate of Freedom for Guthrie on November 28.[56] By June 23, 1847, Guthrie who was described in the Register of Negroes and Mulattoes of Orange County as a six-foot "pureblooded African" had purchased 40 acres from the United States of America (patented).[57]

Free people of color in Indiana formed a strong familial network that kept close ties with friends and relatives residing in other settlements. They visited, shared holiday celebrations, and social and religious activities including revivals, camp meetings and homecomings. Intermarriages bound unrelated families and expanded the geographic reach of the small rural enclave.[58] By 1855, the settlement reached its maximum size of 1,557 acres.[59]

Banister Chavis' probate records from the same year present an interesting picture of the holdings of a Lick Creek farmer. Each piece of property was listed with its appraised valuation. Included are such items as 4 split bottom chairs, 2 beds, 1 lot of cupboard ware, 1 lot of bed clothes, 1 chopping axe, 1 2-horse wagon, 1 mattock, 1 wedge, and 3 clevises, 3 weeding hoes, 1 cary [carry?] plow, 1 loom, 2 wash tubs, 1 shovel plow and singletree, 1 scythe and cradle, 2 bay mares, 2 bridles, 6 head of sheep, 1 spotted sow, 1 black sow and six pigs, 6 fat hogs, 5 geese, 1 stack of oats, 1 red cow, 1 red heifer, 2 yearling calves, 1 lot of tobacco, 1 lot of shock corn, 1 field of corn. Included was 1 note on Elias Roberts due twelve months after date for $425.[60]

Origins of AME Church

In 1836, AME Elder William Paul Quinn built churches southwest of Lick

Creek along the Ohio across from Louisville in New Albany, Floyd County, Indiana to which he came in conjunction with his work in establishing Quinn Chapel in Louisville. He established churches in Jeffersonville also in Floyd County, and in Salem and Paoli in Washington County, and at his home in Richmond in Wayne County, Indiana in 1836.[61] In addition to his work at the Mount Pleasant Church in Rush County, he probably helped establish churches in Greenville, Snow Hill, and Cabin Creek in Randolph County. These churches were a vital link to the eastern branch of the Underground Railroad, north of Wayne County.[62] At the same time, Quinn was put in charge of the Brooklyn Illinois circuit he was also given oversight of all the circuits of the Indiana Conference in 1840.[63] Quinn would have had oversight for the church at the Lick Creek settlement, which was within his Conference.

During the 1830s and early 1840s Elder Quinn led several hundred mid-western free people of color into the AME church.[64] Quinn was present when Indiana became the sixth AME conference. Bishop Morris Brown organized the Indiana Conference at another settlement dominated by the Roberts family, the Beech Settlement Church at Blue River in northern Rush County on October 2, 1840. Brown had already established the Indianapolis Station in 1836.[65]

As was true of many black settlements, the church maintained a central position in the community and was the focal point of the Lick Creek settlement. In 1843, Thomas and Matilda Roberts sold one acre of their 120 acres to five trustees for the purpose of establishing a church. The deed instructs trustees Elias Roberts, Mathew Thomas, Thomas Roberts, Isaac Scott, and Samuel Chandler to erect or

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cause to erect a house or place of worship for use by the members of the AME of the United States of America. Further research is necessary to recovery the early history of the church, which operated from 1843-1869. Bishop Quinn is linked directly to the settlement through land transactions. By 1863 Bishop Quinn sold the one-acre church lot along the north side of Section 27, Township 1N Range 1E to Eli Roberts although more research is needed to understand the circumstances by which he came into possession of the land. This AME church was near the site of the colored Methodist Union Meeting House, which was built in 1837 on land owned by Ishmael Roberts. Roberts and his wife Lucretia deeded one acre of land to David Dugged and Martin Scott, Union House Trustees, on April 27.[66] It is unclear when the Methodist Union Meeting House was abandoned, but the new AME church probably replaced it.[67]

Elder Quinn had strong ties to Quakerism and would have been at home among the Quakers living in the Lick Creek vicinity. He learned about the sect from an English Quakeress and was befriended by Elias Hicks, leader of the Separation of 1827-28 that resulted in formation of the Hicksite Friends. Hicks, a staunch and uncompromising abolitionist, led a campaign against the use of slave-made produce.[68] Abolitionist Lydia Maria Child reported that Hicks was so opposed to slavery and the use of slave made products that his dying concern was that no cotton blanket should touch his skin.[69]

In addition to Quinn's association with Quakers, he was also a dynamic circuit-riding preacher who converted many to the AME faith. The AME denomination relied heavily on these itinerant ministers to penetrate the far reaches of

the frontier. Elder Quinn was instrumental in the establishment of at least two of the churches associated with the sites in this study. Circuit riders such as Quinn established churches and returned on occasion to preach while relying on lay preachers and local ministers to reinforce the efforts of the itinerant preachers.

For a time, Willis Revels, who was ordained in 1842,[70] was the local AME minister at the Lick Creek settlement. His younger brother Hiram Revels, who was the first person of color elected to the United States Senate, also had an association with the AME church as well as with the Quaker sect. Beginning in 1844, Revels attended an Indiana Friends school for one or two years, probably Beech Grove Seminary, near Lincoln.[71] Hiram also entered the AME denomination during the 1840s. After Elder Quinn founded Allen chapel in Terre Haute in 1837 he again associated with one of the Revel brothers when Hiram Revels became pastor of Allen Chapel in 1840.[72] Apparently, Revels shared his association with Quakerism and his mid-western education with his wife, Phoeba Bass Revels, who was a practicing Quakeress.[73]

Both Revels brothers held influential positions within the AME church. Although he would eventually split from and then rejoin the church, Hiram held prominent charges in Indiana, Illinois, Ohio, Missouri, and Maryland. Lick Creek's Willis Revels, who would later become a church elder and a physician of prominence, reveals the deep connections facilitated by the church. Revels influenced Henry M. Turner to join the church in 1854. Turner would later become prominent in the AME church in Washington, D.C., where he would eventually lead the Israel Metropolitan Church.[74] The little-noted though widespread influence of Quinn and the AME

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church extended across the country, penetrating into New Orleans, the very depths of the south.

Bishop Morris Brown ordained Elder Quinn as the 4th bishop of the AME church in May of 1844. He became Senior Bishop in 1849 after Brown's death. Quinn left an enduring legacy in Indiana. By 1854, 1,387 people were members of the AME church, which meant that more than one fifth of the blacks in the state of Indiana were members.[75] Between 1856 and 1860, Quinn assumed responsibility for the Philadelphia, New York and New England Conference. During the same period, Bishop Payne assumed responsibility for the Missouri and Indiana regions. Up to this time, the Indiana Conference covering Indiana, Illinois, Missouri, Kentucky and Louisiana had been the responsibility of Bishop Quinn.[76]

Bishop Quinn served the church until his death at 85 years of age in 1873, until that time, the longest term in the history of the AME church.[77] He adopted Richmond, Indiana as his home and died there on February 3rd. As evidence of his enduring association with the Quaker sect, Bishop Quinn is buried in the cemetery at Earlham College, a Quaker institution in Richmond.[78] His home in Richmond is one of the Indiana properties listed in the National Register of Historic Places in recognition of the significant role he played in organizing Bethel AME in Richmond and his efforts in the Underground Railroad[79] (Figure 9).

Underground Railroad

Free blacks were often placed in a precarious position. It was widely held that they constituted a threat, acting as leaders and allies in the overthrow of slavery. As a

result, constant efforts to restrict their legal status plagued their tenuous freedom.[80] Free blacks lived in communities such as Lick Creek, were not "towns" per se, but rather loose-knit systems of farmsteads spread over the rural landscape, usually within a 5-mile radius. As such, occupants of these relatively isolated rural farmsteads were able to offer aid and assistance to runaways as they sought freedom.[81] Thornbrough states that an examination of black settlements in Indiana reveals that in nearly every case they were located on one of the routes of the Underground Railroad suggesting that runaways tended to seek out members of their own race and that some chose to remain along the escape route in Indiana, perhaps to aid others.[82]

African American churches were important components in the community formation process and were associated with most rural black settlements. Several black communities were closely associated with William Paul Quinn. He helped runaways in Indianapolis as well as other areas of Indiana.[83] Not only did Quinn build up the AME church in Indianapolis, Blue River, New Albany, Salem, Richmond, and Terre Haute, in addition to Lick Creek, he also was active in Louisville, KY across the river from New Albany. At Brooklyn, Alton, and Rocky Fork in Illinois to name but a few sites also connect him to known Underground Railroad locations. In the counties surround his home in Richmond, he helped establish churches in Greenville, Snow Hill, and Cabin Creek in Randolph County, all vital links in the eastern branch of the Underground Railroad in Indiana, in addition to his work at the Mount Pleasant Church in Rush County.[84] The Mount Pleasant AME church at the Beech Settlement maintained an important link between the residents

there and other like-minded African Americans throughout Indiana.[85] In concert with other small, isolated rural AME churches in this study, Quinn's association with the larger world around him also brought the small churches into what is emerging as the greater AME Underground Railroad network and into Quinn's larger political world.

Certainly, the activities of Elder Quinn deserve close scrutiny. Remembered as a "militant soldier of the cross" by AME church historians, Quinn left a legacy of radical activism. He was present at the organization of the AME church in Philadelphia in 1816,[86] a seminal moment in American history, and witnessed the bold radical consciousness and ferment from which the independent black church emerged. He defied slavery and organized churches in St. Louis, Missouri as well as Louisville, Kentucky and ordained ministers in New Orleans a decade before the Civil War.[87] When he came to New Albany, Indiana as a circuit preacher, it was in conjunction with his work in establishing Quinn Chapel in Louisville, Kentucky. The chapel was known as the "abolitionist church." Quinn Chapel AME in Louisville "was a lynchpin of organized AME activity along the Ohio River border."

Just as Bishop Quinn connected the small churches to his larger world, the Kentucky church was connected closely to other small AME congregations in southern Indiana and Ohio. The church was also connected to the Quaker friends of Indiana who gave liberally to assist in the construction of a new church edifice in 1854. According to J. Blaine Hudson, "Quinn Chapel, probably more than any of the other seven antebellum black churches in Louisville, was part of the network associated with Underground Railroad activity in north central Kentucky."[88] Based on a map by Xenia Cord, Pamela Peters concluded "an examination of black

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Figure 8 William Paul Quinn's Home in Richmond, IN

(Photo courtesy of Indiana Department of Natural Resources, Division of Historic Preservation & Archaeology)

settlements in Indiana shows that in nearly every case, they were located on one of the flight paths and near Quaker settlements" (See Map 1). [89]

In his analysis of the Underground Railroad in Kentucky, one of the states from which escapees left on their way to Indiana, Hudson observed the difference between African American and white perceptions of assisting runaways. Most African Americans who rendered or received aid considered their actions unrelated to an organized Underground Railroad. "Most African Americans in the Kentucky borderland viewed assisting runaway slaves as an extension of their community values, but viewed the Underground Railroad as an organization 'staffed' by whites or by other African Americans who lived elsewhere," which frequently meant to the north. For many runaways who were largely in contact with other African Americans, the Underground Railroad "was peripheral, rather than indispensable, to the success or failure of their escapes."[90]

Josiah Henson, for example, the purported model for Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, was in actuality a runaway slave whose first footsteps in freedom were taken in southern Indiana. With little time to reflect on his new liberty, after he had "induced a fellow-slave to set us across the [Ohio] River," he, his wife and four children hasten through that portion of the state on their way to Cincinnati, Buffalo and eventually Canada. With the exception of the help he received crossing the river, Henson observed, "We had no friends to look to for assistance, for the population in that section of the country was then bitterly hostile to the fugitive. If discovered, we should be seized and lodged in jail."[91]

In 1836, Indiana's most notable Underground Railroad worker, Levi Coffin

also noted that other blacks usually aided blacks fleeing slavery. Coffin observed that runaways generally stopped in a neighborhood of free blacks living near Newport, Indiana, now known as Fountain City at the center of the state.   This settlement was composed largely of blacks descendants of those who had been manumitted by North Carolina Quakers years before.   After Coffin learned of recapture of runaways he began using his house as a place of refuge.[92]

The routes runaways may have used in the area originated in the vicinity of Brandenburg, Kentucky before moving on to the natural protection of the hills and hollows around Corydon diverging on to New Albany and Paoli Pike. As is true for the other sites in this study, the Ohio River forms the southern boundary of Indiana, separating it from the slave state of Kentucky. Many of those fleeing slavery made their way to the border and crossed from Kentucky into Indiana in route to Michigan or Canada.[93] Others, however, did settle in Indiana permanently. In the settlements on the Indiana side of the Ohio River, blacks actively helped runaways cross the river and offered them shelter in their homes or communities before sending them further north.[94]   Blacks in Indiana often exchanged signals with their counterparts on the Kentucky side, using lighted hilltop bonfires as signals. When the way was clear, runaways were ferried across the river in skiffs.[95]

The Kentucky border was a mere 20 miles from Lick Creek and certainly runaways who traveled from Kentucky to Indiana were in the vicinity. "According to early histories, Chambersburg, one half mile north of Lick Creek was a station on the Underground Railroad. Apparently it was the first stop north of the Ohio River. The Quakers in the area were instrumental in this effort and the Eli Lindley House north

of Chambersburg may have been used as a station."[96]

Quakers worked actively in the Underground Railroad, and were probably involved with the Lick Creek settlement moving people safely through the area. Quaker Howard Hall is descended from Eli and Elizabeth Lindley[97] who lived near Lick Creek before Indiana became state. He was born in an old log house 68 years ago and explained that the fireplace hearth in the house had a trap door that opened into an 8 ft. x 6 ft. pit. A rug covered the trap door, and during daylight hours, fugitive slaves were hidden out of sight.[98]

Indiana Quakers were known antislavery activists working with the Underground Railroad. After their families migrated from the Carolinas, Quaker communities at Blue River were supportive of the escape effort.[99] Blue River, which was the site of Indiana Conferences of the AME church until 1867,[100] was also the location of the Society of Friends Quarterly Meeting called the Blue River Quarterly Meeting. Members of the Society of Friends most likely came into contact with members of the Beech Settlement's Mount Pleasant AME church at Blue River. The black settlements near Paoli in Orange County and Salem in Washington County, Indiana were surely known to Levi Coffin, "reputed President of the Underground Railroad." Coffin spent time in the counties visiting relatives there.[101]

Quinn's close association with Quakers also held important implications in Indiana. At the age of 17, he was deeply influenced by Elizabeth Walker, a Quakeress who traveled from England on a mission to India, Quinn's birthplace.[102] Quinn's long-standing associations with Quakers extended to the area around Richmond, Indiana where he lived and was buried in 1873. His interest stemmed

from the friendly nature of the black-white relations there and probably from the city's strategic location in Indiana, situated along an Underground Railroad route surrounded by churches he helped establish in Randolph County.

The Civil War

Consequences of the proximity of the Kentucky border to Indiana continued during the Civil War as men crossed the Ohio River to join the 28th USCT, Indiana's black regiment. Eight runaways from Ownesboro, KY escaped. One was captured at Vincennes, seven successfully made it to Indianapolis where they enlisted in the black regiment. Their enslavers also ventured to Indianapolis "for the patriotic purpose of getting the bounty money allowed by the act of Congress to loyal masters."[103]

Participation in the Civil War effort continued African American quests for liberation. At least 1,390 blacks from Indiana served in the USCTs; most were volunteers. African-American men from 73 Indiana counties served in the Union Army during the Civil War. The majority formed a battalion of the 28th Regiment. "The 28th USCT is of special interest because over half the number were recruited from Ellicott Mills, Maryland, near the location of John Brown's farmhouse headquarters."[104] The 28th in addition to the 109th and 127th Colored Infantry, included among them men who were friends of John Brown and his fellow conspirator, Osborne P. Anderson. Willis Revels, first cousin to Leary Lewis, a member of John Brown's army, recruited for Indiana's 28th USCT. He was a frequent correspondent to the *Christian Recorder*, the AME newspaper which reported on the

progress of the Indiana 28th.[105] Mary Ann Shadd also traveled from Canada to the United States recruiting for Indiana, among other states. Empowered by a certificate of authorization to act as Martin Delany's agent in recruiting for the 28th, Shadd Cary was among dozens of American women who defied gender conventions by engaging in wartime efforts.[106]

Simon Locust is the only veteran listed in the Orange County records. He was drafted in September of 1864, mustered in at Jeffersonville, IN, and served for one year in the Civil War in Company E of the 13th Infantry Regiment of the U.S. Colored Troops.[107] In addition to these county men two other residents of Lick Creek fought in the War. Harry Hunter Civil War expert and weapons curator from the Smithsonian identified Martin Scott, the Union Meeting House trustee, as a Civil War veteran. Scott is listed in the 1860 Owen County Census as a [N]egro and described in the literature as mulatto.[108] Hunter provided a surviving photo that reveals a fair skin man. In 1864, Scott enlisted with local white troops in Co. I, 19th Indiana Infantry and fought with them in the Civil War. Private Scott was wounded at the Battle of the Wilderness, where he was captured and held at Andersonville. He was held a prisoner there until he was mustered out May 24, 1865 and discharged from the 20th Indiana Infantry. Scott died in 1918 and was buried in Spencer, Indiana. His obituary described him as "no darker skinned than the majority of the weather tanned Yankees." The article went on to state, "Had it been known by the confederates that he was a [N]egro, they would have shot him forthwith."[109] James A. Seddon, Confederate secretary of war ordered captured black Union soldiers put to death on the spot and without trial.[110] Considering Confederate troops rarely held blacks

captive in southern prison camps, Scott took a calculated and potentially deadly racial risk. Upon surrender or capture, blacks were frequently shot to death by captors on the battlefields,[111] or sold into slavery.[112]

A different story of the Civil War is associated with the family history of Solomon and Margaret Newby, which reveals how one family responded to the call to fight. The North Carolina natives were free born and migrated from Orange County in that state to Orange County, Indiana. Subsequently, they lived in Lick Creek from 1840 to 1862, where Solomon was active in the affairs of the community, serving on the Board of Trustees of the AME church in 1851. In 1862 the family migrated to North Buxton, Kent County, Ontario, Canada. During that time period, their third child and eldest son, James Harling Newby responded to the Civil War being fought in the land of his birth. At twenty years old, James traveled to Philadelphia, Pennsylvania and enlisted in Company I, Third Regiment Infantry, USCT on July 21, 1863. James was mustered out of service on October 31, 1865 in Jacksonville, Florida. In the British Methodist Episcopal Church Cemetery in North Buxton, Ontario, Canada stands a gravestone inscribed with the following: "Jas Nuby, Co I, 3 U.S.C. Inf—James Harling Nuby, 1842-1928—NATIVE OF INDIANA, U.S.A."[113]

Cemetery

Few stones mark the cemetery at Lick Creek where at least one hundred graves lie unmarked.[114] Remaining markers were professionally cut stones that attest to the wealth of the families and the community. Although it is no longer known by the name, the Little Africa Cemetery is clearly marked but noted incorrectly on

Portion of USGS 7.5' Valeene Quad. It was first thought that the cemetery served the entire Lick Creek settlement. It is now interpreted as the Roberts and Thomas family cemetery, with burials dating between 1856 and 1891.[115] Remnants of the cemetery are located on Hoosier National Forest land approximately a mile and a half south of Chambersburg in Section 27, Township 1 North, Range 1 East of South East Township. It can be reached by highway 150 east of Paoli to Grease Gravy Road.

There are several unmarked graves in the cemetery which according to oral histories, may be runaway slaves who died while being sheltered."[116] Marked Civil War graves provide evidence in the landscape of one gendered aspect of black involvement in the liberation effort that is removed from written Civil War histories. Civil War veteran Simon Locust was the last interment in the graveyard in 1891.

Maintenance of these rural cemeteries is a problem for the NFS, local counties, and private landowners. The sites are frequently overgrown, difficult to locate or access. Toppled, broken and dislodged grave markers present preservation and maintenance problems. The cemetery has been maintained through volunteer efforts throughout the years, including that of the Boy Scouts. All that remains of the graveyard are 14 visible headstones near the site of the former AME Church.[117]

Coy Robbins indicated that "Little Africa," the local epithet applied to the graveyard, came into usage years after the original settlers had left the area. It was not a term used by the settlers of Lick Creek.[118] The settlement and the cemetery were once known as "Little Africa." Robbins thought the term an outdated prejudicial label that he hoped would be replaced by the name selected by the original inhabitants for their pioneer farming community—the Lick Creek Settlement. Such an act "would

constitute an honest, timely and respectful tribute to the memory of those gallant settlers of African ancestry, both the free-born and captive people, who first migrated into this region of the state more than one hundred and seventy years ago."[119]

Archaeological Resources and Landscape Studies

At its peak, African Americans owned 1,557 acres in and around Lick Creek.[120] As with most archaeological sites, excavations at Lick Creek sought to identify chronological sensitive artifacts to establish temporal controls for confirming or altering the sites described history of occupation. The project sought to distinguish the pre-1876 African-American occupation from the European-American component that followed. This section is based on Angie Krieger's Initial Phase 1 survey report of the Lick Creek African American settlement. The USDA NFS research design for Lick Creek planned for a multi-year initial Phase I survey. Archaeologists were interested in locating a majority of the early farmsteads of the Lick Creek Settlement and in defining the boundaries of the settlement. Research focused on lands currently managed by the USDA NFS, Hoosier National Forest. Test excavations at several sites were conducted to identify the range of socio-economic conditions represented by material culture both within the African American community and between African Americans and neighboring white settlers. Archaeologists hoped to determine the role of the settlement and surrounding areas and their connections to the Underground Railroad. National Forest Service archaeologists are interested in using archaeological data in more effectively situating pre-civil war African American history in broader historical contexts. The NFS strives to make its

archaeological findings more accessible for educational purposes and uses data derived from excavated materials in developing future interpretative, recreational and community programs and tourism endeavors.

Forest Service archaeologists use the U.S. Census of Agriculture records for 1850, 1860, and 1870 detailing farming activities of specific individuals in the county to correlate specific land parcels ensuring accuracy in identifying land ownership at the various site excavations. Site surveys are revealing root cellars, barns, artifact scatter, chimney falls, building construction, machine made jars and zinc jar liners in addition to the usual whitewares, sets of pressed glassware, crockery and bottles associated with nineteenth and twentieth-century occupations.

Archaeologists excavated the site of Elias Roberts homestead in the summer of 2000. The artifacts uncovered confirmed the probate records indicating a family of comfortable means on the Indiana frontier. Among the artifacts recovered were eyeglasses, shoehooks, buttons and beads, all articles indicating personal adornment and refinement expressed through clothing. Certainly the retrieval of a collar stave reinforces that image.

Gunflints indicated the presence of firearms. The faunal remains retrieved from the site indicate that a variety of meats were consumed, including hog, squirrel, rabbit, opossum, chicken, cow and raccoon. A portion of these meats would have been derived from hunting. Nancy Roberts apparently was a spinner. The spinning and weaving implements and the presence of 20 sheep indicate that she probably contributed to the household economy through her weaving efforts.[121]

The multi-component remains of the Lick Creek African Methodist Episcopal

Church have also been surveyed. All that remains of the church is a large pile of stones and brick and two pits. Diagnostic artifacts from the site include cut nails, olive green glass, a pipe fragment and a dark blue transfer printed whiteware rim. Aqua canning jars, jar liners, screw caps, and other kitchen materials were also present. Both the AME church site and the Union Meeting House site have been recorded. Archaeologists hope to conduct test excavations at the AME church in the summer of 2004.[122] Unfortunately, past land management practices, such as logging and agriculture have erased much of the surface indications associated with these early sites. Subsurface testing, such as shovel testing is vital to adequately locating and recording these historic properties.

The Indiana State Museum is using the Lick Creek settlement as a teaching tool for grades 4-6 showing how archaeology is used in investigating the past to shed light on the African American historical experience that has "remained elusive, if not entirely unknown for far too long" in Indiana.[123] Lick Creek is intended to be an ongoing archaeological and historical project. The NFS anticipates nominating the site for the National Register of Historic Places.[124]

Recent History

By 1870, Mathew Thomas, one of the original settlers of Lick Creek, became the largest landowner by purchasing land as his neighbors sold their land and moved elsewhere. Many of the Roberts family remained and worked the land belonging to the unsettled estate of Elias Roberts who died in 1866 while holding title to 304 acres of land. By 1890 Mathew Thomas' son William was the only working African

American farmer remaining in the region.[125]

The population of Lick Creek declined sharply after the Civil War and by the early 1900's African Americans were no longer present in the landscape; many left in 1862 under circumstances not fully understood. Several factors may have contributed to this decline. The war was in progress, a boom of industry occurred in nearby cities, and racial pressure was increasing with the establishment of anti-black organizations.[126] The last resident of Lick Creek Settlement, William Thomas, sold his land in 1902 and moved with his family to a farm south of Paoli.[127] "After the black landowners left the area, the land was purchased by white neighbors who continued farming until 1930 when they lost their land to taxes.[128]

Several families such as the Newbys migrated to Canada. Robbins reports that a handcrafted, rectangular hinged box constructed by Solomon Newby to hold the original copy of his Certificate of Freedom is on display in Raleigh Township Centennial Museum in North Buxton, Canada. On special occasions, Newby would display his historical document to his grandchildren.[129]

Discussion

I place each of the sites investigated for this dissertation in a broad context that reflects the rich black experience and historical narrative that can be extracted from study of small rural settlements. The Underground Railroad is one consistent aspect of the sites. Robbins, however, argued against the limiting effects of what he saw as two primary themes in black history, slavery and the Underground Railroad intimating that the only Africans to enter Indiana before the Civil War were slaves or

runaways. As a result, Indiana institutions tended to narrowly focus their collections around these topics. For Robbins, slavery indicated that slaves and indenture servants were the only persons of African descent to participate in early Indiana history. Themes of slavery indicated that blacks never arrived in Indiana of their own volition. The concept that free people of color migrated into Indiana before the Civil War was wholly incomprehensible to proponents of slavery studies.

For Robbins, the Underground Railroad and Hoosier black history were synonymous indicating a surreptitious and fleeting black presence as runaways traveled through Indiana via the Underground Railroad. His studies led him to conclude that the Underground Railroad in Indiana consisted largely of Hoosier myths filled with lengthy accounts describing stalwart white males, unusual hiding places, clever signals, displays of compassion towards the wretched, and the kindly sharing of warm food and clothing as blacks, assisted by sympathetic whites moved toward their ultimate goal, Canada. The human passengers rarely emerged; when they did, they were "mystical beings who traveled only at night and often wore disguises" waiting patiently for the kindly conductor to transport them to the next safe haven.[130]

In this chapter, I have presented an alternative view of African Americans working in the cause of their own freedom. At the same time, I present a more realistic view of Quakers and their ambivalent sentiments towards black equality. They were at the forefront of the abolitionist movement and conductors such as Levi Coffin were effective in aiding runaways but the runaway negotiated the most difficult and dangerous portions of the trip either alone or with the help of other

blacks.

All of the sites in this dissertation study demonstrate the viability of combining genealogy, history, and archaeology to further explicate the African American pioneer experience associated with family histories and the Underground Railroad. Because intermarriages were so prevalent in the small rural enclaves, genealogy is a key methodological tool. Coy Robbins was able to uncover a rich history rarely embodied in traditional historical narratives although genealogical literature also tended to exclude much data about African Americans. Such exclusions necessarily lead to gross misinterpretations.[131] As a result, Robbins found himself without a substantial body of historical or genealogical literature about persons of African ancestry in Indiana.

Until the 1970s, "no major historical society, library, archive, or academic program supported by taxes and staffed by professionals was dedicated to the gathering and preservation of significant state-wide historical documents pertaining to racial minorities" in the state of Indiana.[132] The Indiana Historical Bureau and other organizations now offer a range of African-American resources.[133]

Research Questions

Underground Railroad researchers are often distracted by tangential though seemingly relevant questions. Such is the case with the unanticipated presence of the Revels brothers in this study. Rev. Hiram Revels left his AME ministry and in 1856, enrolled in Knox College a liberal arts college with a Presbyterian seminary in Illinois, which was also attended by James Scott Davis of Miller Grove. Researching

the weak connections of Knox College to two sites in this study, Lick Creek and Miller Grove may prove fruitful. The North Carolina origins and possible familial connection through intermarriage of the Revels family to the Roberts families is a second research question. Why was Willis Revels at Lick Creek?[134] Furthermore, recent genealogical data pertaining to Willis and his brother Hiram, who was a minister in Baltimore at the time of Brown's raid, provides new evidence of the connections among black abolitionist leaders and Harpers Ferry. Hiram's "constant association with known Underground Railroad areas—indeed, moving to them—in Indiana, Illinois, and Maryland requires further investigation."[135] He was related to two men, cousin Lewis Leary and distant relative John Copeland, both of who participated in John Brown's raid on Harper's Ferry.

And finally, the recent movie, *Cold Mountain* has brought renewed interest in the 28th Regiment of the USCT associated with the veterans of Orange County. In June of 1864, the regiment had its first engagement and suffered heavy losses at what was called the "White House" battle in eastern Virginia. Subsequently, while assigned to the Ninth Army Corp, the Regiment fought in the military campaign against Petersburg during the summer and fall of 1864. Nearly half of its men died in the Battle of the Crater or from battlefield injuries.[136]

The movie *Cold Mountain* fails to accurately depict African American participation. Historians Gary Gallagher, Edward Ayers and Stephen Cushman rightly decry the movie's impact by observing that Americans process their past through analysis of fictionalized history. The Hollywood version has greater impact and more influence that do historians or their books.[137] Brief though the scene may

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be, the movie misrepresents African American involvement in the especially horrific Battle of the Crater. This type of casual omission in a film that paid meticulous attention to the usual requisite Civil War details leaves the public ever more ignorant. Racial issues surrounding decisions pertaining to how the battle was to be fought were not addressed nor were African American's participation. The mechanisms of historical erasure take many forms, be they through the landscape, through history, or through popular culture.

Endnotes Chapter 7

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[2] Angie R. Krieger, Initial Report of Phase I Survey of the Lick Creek African American Settlement Orange County, Indiana 1817-1911. *Cultural Resource Reconnaissance Report No. 09-12-04-170.* USDA National Forest Service, Hoosier National Forest. African Americans are known to have owned land in T1N, R1E Sections 10, 12, 14, 20, 21, 22, 23, 27, 28, 29, 32, 33 and T1S, R1E Section 4, and T2N, R1E Section 27.

[3] National Forest Service, CD Rom.

[4] Emma Lou Thornborough, *The Negro in Indiana Before 1900: A Study of a Minority* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985).

[5] Robbins, *Forgotten Hoosiers.*

[6] *Ibid.*

[7] Middleton, *The Black Laws*, 204; Robbins, *Forgotten Hoosiers.*

[8] NFS, CD Rom with power point overview of the three Forest Service sites provided by Angie Krieger.

[9] Robbins, *Forgotten Hoosiers*.

[10] "Lick Creek." http://www.fs.fed.us/r9/hoosier/docs/history/lick_creek.htm

[11] NFS, CD Rom.

[12] Robbins, *Forgotten Hoosiers;* Krieger, Initial Report.

[13] *Ibid.*

[14] National Forest Service, http://www.fs.fed.us/r9/hoosier/docs/history/lick_creek.htm

[15] NFS, CD Rom

[16] Vincent, *Southern Seed;* Peters, *The UGRR in Floyd County*; Hudson, *Fugitive Slaves*; Coffin, *Reminiscences*; Cockrum, *History of Anti-Slavery League*; Siebert, *The UGRR.*

[17] Robbins, *Forgotten Hoosiers*.

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[19] Coy Robbins, Register of Negroes and Mulattoes in Orange County, Indiana, 153.

[20] Robbins, *Forgotten Hoosiers*; Cord, "Indiana Applications."

[21] Vincent, *Southern Seed.*

[22] Jonathan's sister marries Joshua Hadley. From William Wade Hinshaw, "North Carolina Yearly Meeting of Friends" in *Encyclopedia of American Quaker Genealogy*, Vol I. (Ann Arbor: Edwards

Brothers, Inc, 1936), 358. Lindley attended the Cane Creek Monthly Meeting. Distance between Cane Creek & New Garden is 30 miles.

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[24] George H. Cox, Jr., The Peace and Social Concerns of Wrightsborough Friends: Part III, The Taint of Slavery. *The Southern Friend, Journal of the North Carolina Friends Historical Society* 12, No. 1 (Spring 1990);1-10, 7.

[25] John Hope Franklin, "Slaves Virtually Free in Ante-bellum North Carolina," *Journal of Negro History* 28, No. 3 (July 1946): 284-310.

[26] Daniel Richard Kroupa *Slave Revolts and North Carolina Quaker Migration* (Master's Thesis, Department of History, Michigan State University), 37.

[27] Mary C. O'Hair, *Slavery: The Underground Railroad Movement and Some History as Related to Wabash County, Indiana* (Wabash IN: Wabash County Historical Museum, 1965).

[28] *Ibid*., Jeffery Crow, *The Black Experience in Revolutionary North Carolina* (Raleigh: North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources, 1977), 29. Contains discussion of badges saying "free" worn on the shoulder for free blacks.

[29] Vincent, S*outhern Seed*, 33.

[30] *Ibid.*

[31] Jean R. Soderlund, *Quakers and Slavery: A Divided Spirit* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985).

[32] Guilford County Friends Meetings during 1830s were New Garden, Deep River, Dover, Center, Hopewell and Springfield. Levi Coffin, a prominent Guilford County Quaker, emigrated to Indiana in 1826. A tide of emigration flowed from Guilford and Randolph County.

[33] Katherine Dungy, "A Friend in Deed: Quakers and Manumission in Perquimans County, North Carolina 1775-1800," *The Southern Friend: Journal of the North Carolina Friends Historical Society*. 24, No. 1 (Spring 2002): 5-36.

[34] Hiram H. Hilty, "North Carolina Quakers and Slavery" (Ph.D. Dissertation, Department of History, Duke University, 1969).

[35] George H. Cox, Jr., "The Peace and Social Concerns of Wrightsborough Friends: Part III, The Taint of Slavery," *The Southern Friend, Journal of the North Carolina Friends Historical Society* 12, No. 1 (Spring 1990):1-10.

[36] Susan Tucker Hatcher, "North Carolina Quakers: Bona Fide Abolitionists," *The Southern Friend: Journal of the North Carolina Friends Historical Society* 1, No. 2 (Autumn 1979):81-99; Samuel Weeks, *Southern Quakers and Slavery* (Baltimore, 1896), 224.

[37] Kroupa, *Slave Revolts*, 19.

[38] Weeks, *Southern Quakers*, 261.

[39] Katherine Dungy, "A Friend in Deed: Quakers and Manumission in Perquimans County, North Carolina 1775-1800," *The Southern Friend: Journal of the North Carolina Friends Historical Society*. 24, No. 1 (Spring 2002): 5-36.

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[48] Weeks, *Quakers and Slavery*, 229-230.

[49] Hamm "Moral Choices," 117-154.

[50] Drake, *Quakers and Slavery.*

[51] Berlin, *Slaves Without Masters*.

[52] Robbins, *Forgotten Hoosiers.*

[53] Hilty, *North Carolina Quakers*.

[54] Robbins, *Forgotten Hoosiers.*

[55] Hilty, North Carolina Quakers, 167. See Algie I. Newlin, *The Newlin Family, Ancestors and Descendants of John and Mary Pyle Newlin*, Guilford College, Greensboro, North Carolina, 57-58 for a description of Jim Guthrie (Black Jim) and his manumission.

[56] Robbins, *Forgotten Hoosiers.*

[57] *Ibid.*

[58] *Ibid*.

[59] NFS, http://www.fs.fed.us/r9/hoosier/docs/history/lick_creek.htm

[60] *Ibid.*

[61] Peters, *The UGRR in Floyd County*; Ronald D. Palmer, "Early Organization of the AME Church." Unpublished Manuscript.

[62] Thornbrough, *Negro in Indiana*; Cord, "Rural Black Settlements"; Palmer, "Early Organization of AME."

[63] Marlene K. Lu, *Walkin' the Wabash* (Indiana Department of Natural Resources, Division of Historic Preservation and Archaeology, June 2001).

[64] Vincent, *Southern Seed.*

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[83] Peters, *The UGRR in Floyd County.*

[84] Thornbrough, *Negro in Indiana*; Cord, "Rural Settlements."

[85] Vincent, *Southern Seed.*

[86] Payne, *History of the AME,* http://docsouth.unc.edu/church/payne/payne.html

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[131] *Ibid*.

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[134] Robbins' compilation of census records lists two Revels women present at Lick Creek.

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[137] Bob Thompson, "Civil War, Take 2; Hollywood Captured The Blood of Battle But Shrank Away From Slavery's Reality," *Washington Post*, Style C1, December 24, 2003; Sylvester Brown, Jr., "'Cold Mountain' Glosses Over Critical Part of Civil War," *St. Louis Post Dispatch, Inc.,* Metro C2, January 18, 2004.

Chapter 8: Poke Patch, Ohio: A Different Route

Introduction

Of the states included in this study, Ohio probably enjoys the most advanced and organized statewide research.   Wilbur Siebert was a professor of history at Ohio State University and produced a substantial body of work delineating Ohio's role in the Underground Railroad.[1] In addition to Siebert's historical works, Kathy Nelson and Beverly Gray, Coordinator of the Southern Region, Ohio Underground Railroad Association actively worked to insure inclusion of the Underground Railroad as part of the Millennium Trails Initiative. As members of the Friends of Freedom Society, Ohio Underground Railroad Association, they promote research, identify, document, preserve, and commemorate Ohio's numerous Underground Railroad sites.[2] Their organization sponsors the annual Ohio Underground Railroad Summit. The most infamous of the antislavery colleges, Oberlin is located in the northern part of the state, 35 miles southwest of Cleveland. John Rankin's home atop Liberty Hill in Brown County in Ripley Ohio, survives as the signature of the Underground Railroad in the landscape. The hilltop home overlooking the Ohio is visible for miles and Rankin's reputation as an antislavery, activist working on the Underground Railroad is nothing less than legendary. In addition to these resources, the National Underground Railroad Freedom Center, located in Cincinnati, although focused on the national story, actively promotes Cincinnati's role in the Underground Railroad.

For the specific Ohio sites included in this study, Ann Cramer, Heritage Officer and forest archaeologist for The Wayne National Forest, is conducting research on the remnants of two Underground Railroad sites Payne Cemetery and Poke Patch, as they now exist on Forest owned land within her jurisdiction. Similar to the other sites in this study, Payne Cemetery stands as the visual reminder in the landscape of the no longer extant Payne Crossing Settlement. In 1993, working through the Passport In Time (PIT) project of the Wayne National Forest Service, Cramer began the process of researching the families represented in the graveyard which is located on State Route 595 just south of New Straitsville, Perry County, Ohio, 50 miles southeast of Columbus.

A few years after the work of Payne's Cemetery, public interest in southern Ohio developed pertaining to a second site on the Wayne, a known Underground Railroad station known as Poke Patch in western Gallia County.[3] The site is approximately 85 miles southeast of Columbus. In *Mysteries of Ohio's Underground Railroad*, Siebert documented the little known African-American settlement as an Underground Railroad site. The NFS now largely owns the archaeological remains of the Poke patch area. The church and cemetery associated with the settlement are archaeological resource situated on private land,[4] although the NFS owns two potential house sites.[5] These sites, however, are disturbed contexts that were occupied until the 1970s and 1980s.[6] In 1997, Cramer and Recreation Technician Gary Dixon began researching the history of Poke Patch although little archaeological

work has yet been undertaken in support of the historical research. Two years later, the Civil Rights Office of the NFS awarded Wayne National Forest a five-year grant. Seeking to expose African American students to opportunities within the government, the NFS, partnered with Lincoln University in Missouri and Tennessee State University in Nashville, two Historically Black Colleges, providing summer programs at the Wayne National Forest in Nelsonville, Ohio.[7] The students were also exposed to archaeology as a discipline. These projects are designed to encourage and provide educational opportunities for students not traditionally included, or involved in NFS programs.[8] Poke Patch remained the focus of Cramer's efforts until the summer of 2002 when students again turned their attention to Payne's Cemetery and its associated settlement site in an attempt to establish a link between the settlement site and the Underground Railroad. At least one Civil War veteran is buried there and the family seeks to have the cemetery listed on the National Register.[9] The level of research thus far completed for Payne's Crossing and its associated cemetery coupled with research focused on genealogical rather than archaeological resources necessitates that I restrict my analysis to Poke Patch.[10]

Historical Overview

Of all the three earliest states formed out of the Old Northwest, Ohio enjoys the most liberal image as a state with multiple highly developed routes through which runaways found refuge along the Underground Railroad. In 1803, Ohio entered the Union as the first state in which slavery was completely forbidden. Yet, Ohio, like Illinois and Indiana instituted Black Codes and intermittently enforced restrictive

measures against black residents of the state. As early as 1815 blacks began to make their way across the Western Reserve,[11] at the same time, runaways were beginning to either find refuge in the area or make their way across the state escaping to Canada through multiple ports along Lake Erie.[12] By 1817 Kentucky slaveholders were complaining of their inability to reclaim escapees once they entered into Ohio and neighboring free states.[13] The Kentuckians were confronting the start of a system for moving runaways through the landscape. By 1820 a basic system was in place along the routes that would become the Underground Railroad.[14] The name would eventually change from the notion of an underground road to the Underground Railroad as steam railroads gained in popularity during the 1830s.[15]

Poke Patch and the Underground Railroad

Poke Patch was among the most active Underground Railroad sites in southern Ohio. Located Free blacks settled Poke Patch in the 1820s and one of its founders, Benjamin Holly was an underground agent. John J. Stewart and his wife in conjunction with his four brothers were also early settlers active in promoting underground traffic.[16] John Thomas McKeels, on whose farm the original Baptist church was built from logs, migrated from Virginia to Gallia County where he purchased land. McKeels married Amanda Davidson who was a relative of Olivia Davidson, Booker T. Washington's wife.[17] During its existence between 1820 and 1870, the sole purpose of Poke Patch may have been to harbor escaping slaves as they moved further north along the Underground Railroad.[18] According to Siebert, more than 200 runaways were fed and lodged at the settlement.[19] Three routes converged

at Poke Patch, the Ironton, Burlington, and Rio Grande lines. Included among the residents of Poke Patch were freed African Americans, whites, mulattoes, and Native Americans who settled in the area to assist runaways.[20] These communities were not "towns" per se, but rather a loosely knit system of farmsteads spread over the rural landscape within a 5-mile radius.

Hanging Rock Iron Region

Stations along the southern borders of the Ohio River were points through which branches of the Underground Railroad passed into Ohio leading further northward. There were at least 20 areas, including Ironton.[21] Ironton and Burlington were two major crossing points in Lawrence County, the southernmost of the Ohio counties. Burlington sat at the extreme southern tip with Ironton to the north and slightly west. The route north leading to Poke Patch passed through the Hanging Rock Iron Region, a 30-mile iron ore belt that included Jackson, Vinton, Lawrence and Scioto counties and a portion of Kentucky.[22] From Hanging Rock and Ironton, an Underground Railroad route passed through the Vernon and Olive Furnaces.

Student research revealed the important role of iron furnaces in the southern regions of Ohio. Industrialist John Campbell and others used profits from the prosperous iron furnace industry in the Hanging Rock Iron region, for example, to subsidize the Underground Railroad in that area, frequently supplying horses, saddles or wagons.[23] Between 1830 and 1900, the Hanging Rock Iron region produced the majority of iron in the United States. Although born in Ripley, OH, Campbell, a noted iron-master and follower of John Rankin, one of Ohio's most notable

abolitionists, settled in the region in 1834. Campbell founded and named Ironton in 1840, naming the streets after the furnaces in the region. He owned more than a dozen blast furnaces before the Civil War[24] (See Map 6).

Many ironmasters were among the ranks of the abolitionists, who exploited their company towns, ironworks and access to transportation routes to move runaways through the landscape, often from one furnace to another.[25] Campbell and others were responsible for building the Mt. Vernon Furnace and he shared responsibility with John Peters in the construction of the Olive Furnaces, two major Underground Railroad stops noted and mapped by Siebert.[26]   John Peters was known for aiding runaways who crossed the Ohio in skiffs and John Campbell's home is situated on the Ohio River in Ironton. Two African American males who lived at the Campbell house acted as conductors moving runaways up through the furnaces; Campbell and the iron furnace operations own the land. James Stewart, for example, the main pivotal family in Poke Patch was situated northeast of Poke Patch working the Galleon Furnace. John Campbell appointed him iron master. The last two runaways brought to Stewart, a brother and sister, Tom and Julia were taken further north by Stewart and John Dicher along the Hocking Valley line where the runaways were seized and returned to slavery.[27] After leaving Ironton, runaways moved up from the Mt. Vernon Furnace to the Olive Furnace along the route leading to Poke Patch in Gallia County or moved on to the Buckhorn Furnace, nine miles northeast of the Olive Furnace.[28]   At the Buckhorn Furnace, Campbell's
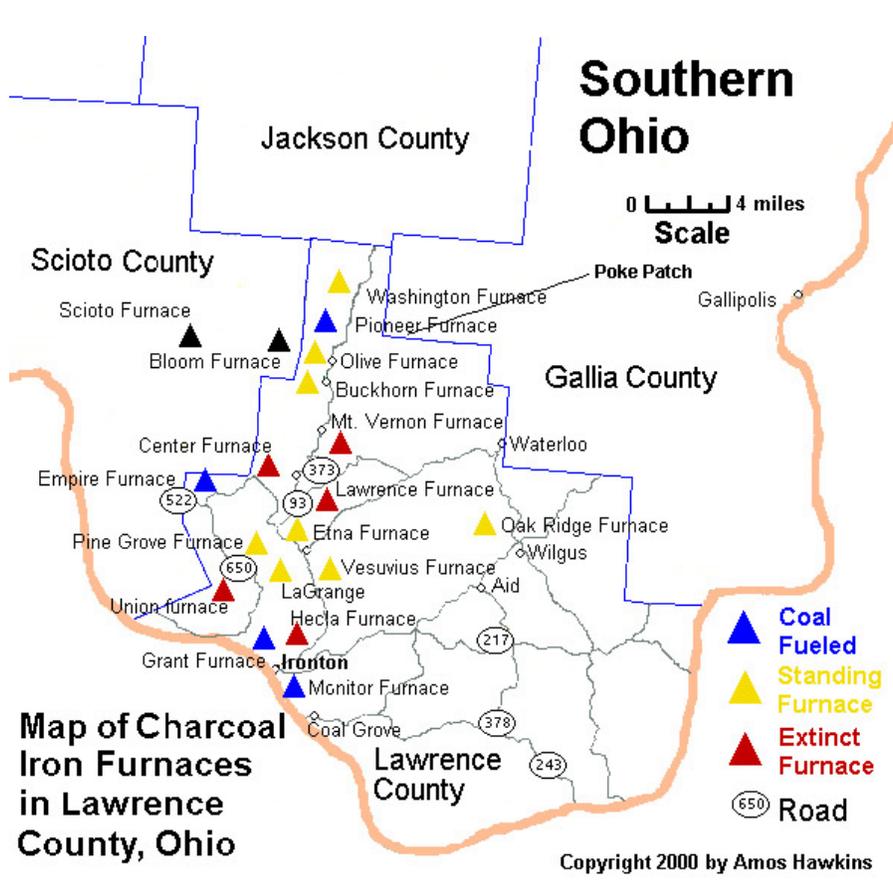
Map 7 Iron Furnaces Map (Source:

http://www.irontonfurnace.freeservers.com/)

superintendent sent the runaways twenty miles northwest to the town of Jackson in Jackson County. Once the freedom seekers left Gallia County, Gabe Johnson and Madison Black might drive John Campbell's wagon to deliver them to the Monroe Furnace in also in Jackson County. Ann Cramer notes that the map of the town of Ironton can be used as a guide through the Hanging Rock Iron Region. Each street name corresponds to the furnaces in Lawrence and Jackson counties.[29]

After crossing the Ohio from Cabell County, VA, freedom seekers were also directed to Poke Patch from Proctorville approximately nine miles east of Burlington by John Dicher, a black man known as a fearless conductor. Dicher often began by following the railroad tracks before diverging through the woods to the Poke Patch settlement. An interdenominational, interdenominational group worked out of Burlington, Philip Wilson a black man took them on to the Mount Vernon and Olive Furnaces after which they were either directed or led a few miles northeast to Poke Patch. Rev. Mr. Beaman and Dr. Cornelius Ball were Presbyterians, and Stephen Wilson a Methodist also offered assistance.[30]

The Black Baptist Church

According to Siebert, blacks, Quakers, Covenanters, Wesleyan Methodists and other abolitionists operated routes.[31] My research suggests that African Americans involved in the Underground Railroad should not be identified solely by race but by religious denomination. Many of the small black settlements along the route into and out of Poke Patch contained black Baptist Churches active in the work of the Underground Railroad.

The Union Baptist Church at Black Fork, served the Poke Patch community although it was located in the adjacent community. The church was organized in 1819 and predated the formation of the Providence Anti-Slavery Missionary Baptist Association, which was formed in 1821. As indicated by the name of the Association, the church and the people of Poke Patch were actively engaged in anti-slavery activities from an early date.[32] The church, which served the Poke Patch community, was moved from the original 1819 to a different site in Poke Patch. Black Fork was an African American company town founded by the Washington Iron Furnace Co. near Poke Patch. Black Fork residents attended the Union Baptist Church with Poke Patch settlers and both enclaves were heavily involved in the Underground Railroad.[33] The first 1819 church and the subsequent church built in 1879 were both log construction. The 1879 church was eventually destroyed by fire. When the church was rebuilt, it was situated between Black Fork and Poke Patch for the convenience of each community.[34]

A route ran north to Poke Patch from two adjacent black settlements, Burlington and Macedonia, which were approximately 30 miles to the south along the Ohio River border.[35] The Macedonia Missionary Baptist Church, which was organized in 1813, is known as the "Mother Church," primarily for the post Civil War churches that were established. Further north along one of two routes out of Poke Patch lay Chillicothe, a known and very active Underground Railroad station in Scioto County. Chillicothe's Quinn Chapel AME Church founded by Peter James was organized in 1821 and the First Anti-Slavery Baptist Church of God in Christ was founded in 1824.

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Although the Baptist Church predominated at Poke Patch, the interaction between church and community parallels the AME church/community relationship present at Rocky Fork, and Lick Creek. The Baptist church would have been central to the settlement, provided spiritual leadership, and helped families maintain ties with relatives and friends in other southern Ohio communities. The Baptist convention in Brown County in 1847 and the Baptist Association of Churches in 1848 provided opportunities for delegates from Cincinnati, Columbus, Xenia, and Chillicothe to exchange political and social ideas, in addition to attending to matters of spiritual concern. The returning delegates would have spread not only church news, but also news of other African American communities, as well as Underground Road activities.[36] In addition to the religious conventions held in the state, the National Convention of Colored Freemen convened in Cleveland in 1848, which John Jones of Illinois chaired. Jones served as Vice President while Frederick Douglass presided. Henry Bibb, himself an escaped slave was also present. Ohio's Langston delivered an impromptu speech to the National Black Convention in Cleveland, condemning those who refused to help fugitive slaves. [37]

Runaways coming across the Ohio at Gallipolis along the Kanawha River at the southeastern portion of the state often sought refuge at the John Gee AME Church. Members of the Paint Creek Baptist Church, which was also one of the churches in the Providence Anti-Slavery Missionary Baptist Association, were also Underground Railroad operators. Runaways fleeing from Virginia, entered Ohio at Gallipolis, then through a system of converging and diverging routes moved on through Porter, Rio Grand, and then diverged either to Poke Patch or on to Thurman

all of which are in Gallia County. If runaways were sent to Berlin Cross Road from Poke Patch, another black man, Noah Brooks would move them on. From Thurman the route continued on 15 miles to Berlin Cross Roads in Jackson County. From Jackson County, runaways crossed into Ross County, traveled through Richmond Dale, a Quaker settlement before heading northeast of Chillicothe through Springfield Township. Runaways continued their journey to stations east of Columbus and then to points further north.[38]

The Civil War and Poke Patch Cemetery

Several soldiers from the USCT are buried in the cemetery at Union Baptist church. The grave of Henry Burke, as well as Jesse Moss can be found among those buried at the Poke Patch cemetery. After the Civil War, most residents in the Poke Patch area moved on. Some of their descendants still live in the adjacent community of Black Fork. The current church building was constructed in 1919. Similar to Rocky Fork, the church is still an active congregation and the adjacent cemetery contains the graves of veterans from most American wars, including a Vietnam War Medal of Honor winner, Donald Russell Long.[39]

Discussion

Four outstanding historical circumstances set Poke Patch apart from the four other sites in this study, providing a counterbalance to the narrative accounts of Rocky Fork, and the strictly archaeological sites for which there are no retained oral histories and little documentation. Poke Patch is the only site for which the relationship between the Underground Railroad and the free black community is

extensively documented by Siebert or other major historians.

Ohio was Siebert's home. Judging from the amount of documentation he included pertaining to African American participation in Ohio's Underground Railroad in *Mysteries of Ohio's Underground Railroad*, Siebert broadened his data collection strategies to include black informants. *Mysteries* contains images of black participants, includes their names and mentions several of the more that 40 black settlements that once dotted the state. Although Griffler finds in Gara's portrayals, "a willingness to make light of the terror" commonly experienced during escape and a dismissive tone in the Vaudevillian racist tradition."[40] The inclusive nature of this later work does provide broad understanding of the interrelationships developed across race and religious lines. [41] Perhaps Siebert was able to access a more racially complete history of the Underground Railroad in the intervening 53 years between the publication of *The Underground Railroad* in 1898 and 1951, when *Mysteries* was published, 53 years later.[42] Griffler contends that his efforts were more toward entertainment for his bored students.[43] Siebert was born in 1866 and died in 1961. His long life afforded him the status of "living library." Siebert had the unique advantage in 1951 to have had some contact with a few of the original workers on the Underground Railroad.

Poke Patch is also best situated for the argument for deliberate strategic placement in the landscape. The sole purpose of the site appears to have been as a critical juncture point near river and state borders on the edge of the route through the iron furnaces. The demise of the town at the end of the war gives further credence to this analysis. Certainly further research is necessary but the historical component is

viable. John Rankin's home high atop Liberty Hill in Ripley in Brown County was two counties west of Gallia County. Rankin's home may be the clearest example of how the landscape was used to both facilitate escape and thwart would be captors.[44]

Rankin's association with John Campbell parallels the interconnectedness between and among antislavery workers. Similar strategies and land use patterns may reflect strategic interactions among Underground Railroad workers as the century progressed. The religious denomination of each man is important for Underground Railroad research. My hypothesis pertaining to religious affiliations within the Underground Railroad network, leads me to theorize both men as Presbyterians. Did they attend any of the same yearly meetings?

The use of iron furnaces as sites of refuge is an understudied aspect of the enslaved's flight to freedom. Blacks have had a long relationship with blacksmithing and iron working. The iron master is a position of power, expertise, and capacity. Investigating the role of iron working in the lives of blacks as it relates to the Underground Railroad should prove a fruitful avenue of research.

For much of this dissertation, I have focused on Bishop Quinn and the overarching role of the AME church. Poke Patch and the surrounding communities supporting its Underground Railroad activities were largely comprised of black Baptists further reinforcing my argument for the centrality of the independent black church, which was crucial in the struggle for freedom. The church was the institutional, familial, and religious center of life in the small communities and was the lifeline to the larger black world beyond the hills, thickets, woods and caves of the sequestered rural life of the free black settlements. Whether Baptist or AME,

religious minded men and women displayed an unceasing concerned for their brothers and sisters held in bondage.

Yet, despite these distinctions, Poke Patch retains crucial similarities to the four other sites in this study. Civil War veterans are present at the cemetery, indicating a continued dedication to the cause of freedom. The site is in proximity to larger, better known centers of abolition such as Ironton. And most importantly, free blacks are actively working throughout Ohio on behalf of freedom.

John Campbell's funding of Underground Railroad activities conforms to a familiar pattern where the wealthy dedicated funds to insure the safe passage of runaway slaves. Wealthy black abolitionists such as James Forten contributed monies to aid escaped slaves.[45] Thomas Garret used his wealth to purchase shoes, Gerrit Smith contributed land for the Timbuctoo settlement in North Elba, New York, and the Tappan Brothers donated enormous sums to the cause of liberty. Each gave according to his or her means and access to vital resources. Train conductors allowed safe passage, ads cautioning ferrymen not to facilitate the flight of the fugitive at the end of virtually every runaway notice reveals the sentiments of the boatmen. Certainly one of the patterns of the Underground Railroad that made it as effective as it was stemmed from men like Campbell who used their resources to circumvent the law.

The landscape history of Poke Patch that can be extracted from the rich historical accounts left by Siebert is particularly compelling. His map included in *Mysteries* lists a few black settlements although they are not identified as such. As I have demonstrated, mapping black settlement sites is essential for greater

understanding of routes and operations of the Underground Railroad. The research conducted at Poke Patch contributes to a greater understanding of understudied or heretofore unrecognized topics.

The five sites in this study came to light under different circumstances and research strategies tailored to those circumstances yielded robust analytical data. As I conclude the dissertation, one important conclusion emerges. Although the five sites have different levels and types of documentation, African-American experiences evinced from the disparate sources corroborate findings on a broader level. The oral record yielded information equally, if not more compelling than the written record. Census data compensated for low numbers of informants at the Lick Creek site. For sites, such as Poke Patch where no archaeology has been undertaken, the discipline, nevertheless is crucial in the rescue of the site. Archaeologist Ann Cramer, by taking the preliminary steps necessary for any investigation, gave visibility to Poke Patch and renewed public interest. When taken together, the five sites provide a rich and varied understanding of the African-American rural experience.

Endnotes Chapter 8

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[1] Wilbur Siebert, "The Underground Railroad in Ohio," in *Ohio Archaeological and Historical Publications* 4, 1895; Siebert, *Mysteries*. Siebert also covers Ohio in *Underground Railroad*.
[2] The Friends of Freedom Society, Ohio Underground Railroad Association. http://www.ohioundergroundrailroad.org/AboutUs.htm. Their website also provides a useful index, with page numbers of black Underground Railroad workers mentioned in Siebert's *Mysteries*, http://www.ohioundergroundrailroad.org/siebert.htm.
[3] NFS, "Wayne National Forest and Paynes Crossing, Recent History," http://www.fs.fed.us/r9/wayne/heritage/Research_History/index.shtml
[4] NFS CD Rom
[5] These sites are disturbed contexts that were occupied until the 1970s and 80s.
[6] *The Cincinnati Enquirer,* Associated Press, "Ohio Civil War History Sought: Researchers Look for Railroad Site," June 18, 2001. http://www.enquirer.com/editions/2001/06/18/loc_ohio_civil_war.html
[7] Wayne NFS Recent History.

[8] Hoosier National Forest, The Underground Railroad and African American Heritage, http://www.fs.fed.us/r9/hoosier/docs/history/ur_research.htm;

[9] Personal Communication, Ann Cramer to LaRoche, January 2004.

[10] *Ibid*.

[11] Henry Wilson, *History of the Rise and Fall of the Slave Power in America* (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1872: Reprinted New York: Negro Universities Press, 1969), 63. Western Reserve is a tract of land in NE Ohio, on the South shore of Lake Erie, retained by Conn. in 1786 when it ceded its claims to its Western lands of the Old Northwest Territory. In 1792, Conn. gave 500,000 acres called "firelands," to citizens whose property had been burned during the American Revolution. The Conn. Land Company bought (1795) the remaining acreage. Cleveland was established in 1796 as the first permanent settlement in the Reserve. In 1880 the reserve gained government when it was included in the Northwest Territory as Trumbull County. Later this region was divided into 10 counties and parts of four others. The chief cities are Cleveland, Akron, Youngstown, Ashtabula, Lorain, and Sandusky. "Western Reserve, Ohio, Facts and Statistics." http://reference.allrefer.com/gazetteer/W/W02473-western-reserve.html

[12] Siebert, *Mysteries*.

[13] *Ibid*.

[14] Beverly Gray, "The Underground Railroad in Southern Ohio" http://www.angelfire.com/oh/chillicothe/ugrr.html

[15] Charles Thomas Hickok, *The Negro in Ohio, 1802-1870*. PhD. Diss. Western Reserve University (Cleveland: Williams Publishing and Electric Co., 1896; New York: AMS Press, 1975).

[16] Siebert, *Mysteries*.

[17] "Poke Patch/Black Fork, Ohio." Summary provided by Ann Cramer, National Forest Service.

[18] NFS CD Rom

[19] Siebert, *Mysteries.*

[20] NFS CD Rom

[21] E. Delorus Preston, Jr., "Underground Railroad in Northwest Ohio," Journal *of Negro History* 17, No. 4 (Oct., 1932):409-436.

[22] Ohio Department of Natural Resources, "Ohio's Iron Age." http://www.dnr.state.oh.us/parks/explore/magazine/sprsum98/ironage.htm Source for Iron Furnace Map. Amos Hawkins, "Charcoal Iron Furnaces of Lawrence County, Ohio," http://www.irontonfurnace.freeservers.com/

[23] *Ibid*.

[24] David E. Malloy, "Marker Honoring Abolitionist to be Displayed," *The Herald-Dispatch*, September 18, 2003. http://www.herald-dispatch.com/2003/September/18/LNlist6.htm

[25] NFS CD Rom

[26] Siebert, *Mysteries.*

[27] *Ibid*.; Taken from a "Letter from Gabe N. Johnson, colored, Ironton, O., Oct. 15, 1894."

[28] Siebert, *Mysteries.*

[29] Personal Communication.

[30] Siebert, *Mysteries*.

[31] *Ibid.*

[32] The 150th Souvenir Book of Providence Regular Missionary Baptist Association, 1984. Photocopy on file with the author.

[33] NFS CD Rom

[34] "Poke Patch/Black Fork, Ohio." Summary provided by Wayne National Forest.

[35] Siebert, *Mysteries*.

[36] Gray, "The UGRR."

[37] Bell, *Minutes*.

[38] Gray, "The UGRR;" Siebert, *Mysteries.*

[39] "Poke Patch/Black Fork, Ohio." Summary provided by Wayne National Forest. Long veteran information taken from image of headstone provided by the Wayne NF.

[40] Griffler, *Front Line*, 3.

[41] Personal Communication, Mary Ann Oldham and John Fleming.
[42] Siebert, *UGRR* and *Mysteries*.
[43] Griffler, *Front Line*, 3.
[44] Hagedorn, *Beyond the River.*
[45] Walker, *History of Black Business.*

Chapter 9:   The Underground Railroad in History and Memory

"…the Negro has been throughout the centuries of controversy an active collaborator, and often a pioneer, in the struggle for his own freedom and advancement."

Arthur A. Schomburg[1]

For more than a century, the work of Wilber Siebert and William Still has dominated Underground Railroad scholarship. Siebert's thorough, in depth mapping, and Still's faithful retelling of the Underground Railroad story, reified the movement. Each captured the last vestiges of eyewitness accounts, or secondary sources from individuals who had interacted with conductors, station keepers, and workers along the anti-slavery line. A majority of the references cited in Underground Railroad scholarship invariably refer to these two seminal works. The work of Larry Gara, although ground breaking, revealed no new sites, his work was largely a critique with little suggestion for advancing methodological study of the Underground Railroad.

Yet, another line of evidence survived the century, paralleling the well-known and oft-cited texts. Within the black community an alternative history was handed from parent to child, from family to family, and from black historian to the reading public. Each passed on a powerful story of blacks ensuring their own liberation in the midst of constant economic, social, judicial, and educational hardships within a system designed to legislate inferiority. The maps presented in *On the Edge of Freedom* graphically demonstrate black life at the edges of freedom.

Memory of the Underground Railroad survives largely through reminiscences, narratives, and recollections rather than through historical writings. Oral, family, and anecdotal histories that dominate African American understandings of the Underground Railroad have been much maligned. Consequently, based on historical criteria little validity remained. Contrary to conventional wisdom, I am cautious about disregarding lore and long standing legends without rigorous research supporting refutation and have chosen to rely on oral testimony in support of this research. Underground Railroad lore frequently defies logic; one part of a long cherished story may be proved false and misremembered, yet the remaining elements of the story may hold historical truths. Therefore, I advocate preserving stories despite apparently implausible, anachronistic, or temporally and geographically inaccurate data. These same errors can and do occur in the written record as well.

Correspondingly, acceptable methods of rescuing and preserving marginalized stories should constitute routine research strategies. Rather than dismiss them as inaccurate we should begin to think of legend as existing in a pre-verifiable form. In that way we maintain the stories as research questions rather than assign them to oblivion. The onus shifts towards inclusion until proved wrong and away from dismissiveness unless proved correct. The later approach leads to potential data loss

The NPS manuals, websites and pamphlets address research methodologies and theoretical approaches for understanding and analyzing Underground Railroad sites. *On the Edge of Freedom* builds on NPS Network to Freedom Program recommendations. Documenting African American sites presents particular challenges, as the sites are rarely extant in the landscape. For those without access to

archaeological resources, facing limited historical documentation, and dwindling numbers of community informants, the task of recovering the African American historical presence associated with the Underground Railroad can be challenging if not daunting. Yet even under these circumstances, the landscape can be exploited to great effect.

Through an interdisciplinary approach my research contributes tools for evaluating sites not identified as Underground Railroad stations in the historical record. I am working with Underground Railroad researchers to chart new frontiers that require different insights and research methodologies on the part of archaeologists and historians. Archaeology of Underground Railroad sites is in the developmental stage and need not follow familiar conventions. Unlike other types of archaeological investigations that are rich in stratigraphic analysis and material remains, data generated from free black settlement sites require less focus on artifactual assemblages. Identifying, surveying, and mapping locations of potential sites, spatial relationships, settlement patterns, and landscape studies are equally relevant and as I have proved, crucial for understanding the covert work of African Americans along the Underground Railroad. Geophysical analysis, ethno-botanical and aquatic studies, topographical analysis, and GIS technology are part of today's powerful analytical tools that go beyond traditional documentation to lend geographic complexity to historical information. Archaeology introduces questions and addresses topics that are rendered inaccessible to historian due to a lack of documentation. Archaeology compensates for the absence of historical resources that leaves the historical narrative mute in areas crucial to black history.

The Free Black Community

The little communities that existed in the rural mid-western and northern states before the Civil War represent a unique stratum of African American history beyond traditional themes of southern slavery, or life in northeastern cities. A detailed study of Pre-Civil War black communities has yet to be undertaken therefore, any attempts at a rigorous survey history is premature. After investigating the sites specific to this study as well as other related black communities, I conclude that whenever pre-civil war free black settlements are investigated, the Underground Railroad must be considered a component of the research. Embedded within the larger story of the free black community is the inextricable story sanctuary, rescue, and aid through the Underground Railroad. The extent, depth, and complexity of the relationship between the Underground Railroad and free black settlements require detailed analysis. Moving from the particular to the general to the larger world, I connect small rural black settlements with the larger nineteenth-century black experience as it relates to American political, social, cultural, religious, economic and landscape history.

The Underground Railroad

A level of structure existed within the loosely organized components of the Underground Railroad. Wherever aid and assistance were offered along the various routes, some sort of structure was imperative for dealing with the runaway. The rejection of stories of hidden passageways, tunnels and the like must be tempered with the reality that the fugitive had to be hidden somewhere. We need dynamic

theoretical space around the African American history of the Underground Railroad. For example, the relationship between Brooklyn, Illinois and Rocky Fork is not documented. Following the methodology outlined in this work, we can hypothesize that the AME churches at each site were established by the same preacher with a known history of association with Underground Railroad churches and radical abolitionists. The Underground Railroad connections both claimed and documented for each settlement gives me the space to theorize that the Alton region, rather than the city itself was more than likely an Underground Railroad hub.

The nature of the scholarship surrounding the Underground Railroad privileges the written record and the more prominent participants crowding out the small sites that are the subject of this study. Rocky Fork in particular could well have been overshadowed by Alton. Historians routinely overlook or misunderstand relevant data, crucial information, and pertinent names that could potentially link African American history which the broader historical narrative.

Mapping the Underground Railroad

Study of the Underground Railroad through the black church and associated black communities and black families opens up alternative analytical frames. Untapped resources emerge through which a wider pattern of routes become available for incorporation into the literature and mapping of the Underground Railroad. For example, I have superimposed Xenia Cord's Indiana map of black settlements over the Wilber Siebert's Indiana map showing that black settlements were, indeed the African American Underground Railroad routes that Siebert mapped but did not

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recognize because of the tendency of blacks and Quakers to settle among one another. Cord's map is an act of memory resulting from landscape knowledge of poorly preserved, largely nonexistent sites.

The AME Church

Communities researched for this study reflect commonalities applicable to virtually every rural AME settlement. As the most influential institution in the community, the black church, including the black Baptist church, supported a pragmatic action program of racial elevation, self-determination, education, and economic autonomy. These qualities were not particular to the AME church; they were the aims and values of the black church and nineteenth-century black organizations such as the Baptist church, or the Masons writ large.

The AME church in general and Bishop Quinn in particular, followed the leadership exemplified through Bishop Allen's bold stand for African American agency in establishing the separate black church. What Charles Blockson found on a local level in Pennsylvania, I found on a regional level, and believe that further research will support the contention on a national level, that "the Underground was primarily a church movement." Blockson found nearly every black minister throughout the state of Pennsylvania whenever possible used their churches to aid fugitives.[2] I cannot speak for every black minister across the United States in the nineteenth-century but for each site for which evidence of a black church exists, Underground Railroad activity must be carefully considered and investigated. This logically must hold true for black communities as well.   Consistently, sites

seemingly unrelated to the Underground Railroad, such as Brooklyn, Illinois or the Beech and Roberts Settlements in Indiana, reveal evidence of Underground Railroad activity. This also holds true for the New Philadelphia which is often used to speak about 19th century integrated spaces and racial harmony. In the midst of the interracial environment, the McWorter family was actively participating in the Underground Railroad.

In the words of Martin Delany, the black church was the Alpha and Omega of all things. It was the center, the cement, the soul of the African-American community. As the political and social, as well as spiritual, gathering place, the church served as concert hall, school, recreational center, and meetinghouse for the exchange of political ideas, and site of beneficial aid and mutual assistance.[3]

Further research into the antebellum black church, particularly in the rural regions of the west will continue to expand our understanding of the radical stance of the church. Miller Grove requires further research simply to locate the church and begin to write the church history.

The Cost of Freedom

At the risk of reenslavement, fine, imprisonment, and violent attack, free African Americans settled in the landscape and began to affect the freedom of their brethren. Landownership ensured economic stability for families such as the MrWorters. When the sheer amount of economic drain on the black family imposed either by slavery or by purchasing oneself out of slavery, is considered, alternative

social standards necessarily emerge when owning oneself was a great personal and economic attainment.

Rural communal lifeways of pre-Civil War black communities is a discourse on freedom, self-determination and interracial cooperation often within a surrounding environment of violent racial hostility. In this violent era, the Underground Railroad is far from romantic, or thrilling. Violence was not only directed to the enslaved population in the south. It was widespread throughout the north as well. Several individuals in this study were exposed, James West was threatened with tar and feathering, Douglass was beaten, Henry Sides was robbed and beaten, Bishop Quinn was robbed and beaten so badly he could not preach.

All who participated in the subversive work of the Underground Railroad knew the level of violence to which whites would resort in response to black activism and defiance in the face of oppression.[4] If whites had known the extent of the complicity of the black church during this time—that angry, defiant, subversive, intelligent, capable, quick witted African Americans were in their midst rather than the poor degraded Negro, no amount of harm and danger would have been enough to visit upon them. A cohesive, operational black community operating over a wide geographic region would have been unthinkable. Yet, as comparative analysis reveals, familial, social, and political relations such as the Revels brothers in Indiana, Bishop Quinn, John and Mary Jones, Pricilla Baltimore, and others associated with small rural settlements were politically as well as personally interconnected with the larger world. A vision of benign blackness was absolutely necessary to obscure activities and reinforce the inability of many whites, positioned on the perch of

arrogant racial superiority, to see blacks clearly or understand or fathom black capacity. Present day inability to believe some of the more ingenious, well thought out, or effective schemes of the Underground Railroad must not be rooted in this racist tradition. It was hard for whites to realize the enormity of the intellectual burden carried by African American during the pre-Civil War era.

The Black Family

The black family stalwartly offered aid. Church, community, and family were entwined, interdependent, and inseparable. Ira Berlin's characterization of the black family as the fundamental historical unit speaks directly to the structure within these communities.[5] The family emerges in this study as foundational to both the black community and the black church, providing refuge within hostile environments through which the Underground Railroad operated.[6] Tenants of racial uplift, economic and social autonomy stabilized African American households. Organized familial efforts to free enslaved relatives and maintain kinship ties were central motivations for participating in the Underground Railroad movement. Key questions in researching the Underground Railroad centered on organizational strategies, and the role of free blacks and their families in effecting freedom for enslaved brethren.

Family relationships require careful analysis for I envision this avenue of inquiry yielding compelling results. For example, the increasingly suspicious web surrounding Willis and Hiram Revels requires further exploration. Of all the areas of research, genealogical studies must be included as a crucial methodological component of future research projects. When combined with oral histories, census

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data, and marriage certificates the resulting resource circumvents the collective forgetting associated with the lack of traditional historical documents and a lack of concern on the part of preservationists.

For all the interdisciplinarity of this work, I regret that I did not anticipate how crucial a genealogist would have been for untangling family histories where sporadic census records, multiple spouses, official and unofficial adoption of children, arbitrary spelling and name changes, the intergenerational reuse of first names and the ubiquitous presence of common sir names such as Roberts, Green, and Miller made the study of familial connections difficult and very confusing.

Black Organizations

Further Research Questions

By studying black institutions, the churches, vigilance committees, schools and Masonic halls African American involvement in the cause of their own liberation emerges. Prince Hall Masonry is critical to unraveling the clandestine work of blacks in the Underground Railroad movement. Evidence presented in *On the Edge of Freedom* conjoins the Masons, the AME bishops, and the Underground Railroad. Similar work questioning relationships between black Baptists and other religious denominations and Free Masonry could potentially lead to discovery of other Underground Railroad networks. The lodge may be an additional site of congregation, and interdenominational cooperation among blacks.

Virtually no work has been undertaken on the wives of Masons as represented by either the Order of the Eastern Star or earlier organizations leading to the

formation of the Eastern Star Order. I suspect insider knowledge will be necessary for this work to be effective.

Attendees at Black National Conventions, antislavery meetings, Vigilance Committees, church conventions and meetings should to be compared with one another. Wives and spouses should be identified and named so that their work in support of their husbands, or like that of Mary Jones and Sarah Allen, work in their own right can be identified and more fully explored.

Comparison of organizational affiliations through membership lists and rosters of attendees at conventions and congresses establishes crucial associations among abolitionists and anti-slavery workers. Anti-slavery newspaper agents should also be scrutinized. Following these parameters further research might yield connections between John Jones, for example, and one of the prominent members of the Rocky Fork community or perhaps Miller Grove's Edward Dabbs' may emerge. As Barry and Blassingame state, researching the named free black population as opposed to the facelessness and namelessness of slavery exposes numerous avenues of research.[7]

Beginning in the 1840s many black abolitionists rose to prominence. Their names and influence weave through Underground Railroad narratives. Organizations and meetings not traditionally associated with the Underground Railroad must be reinvestigated with a fresh eye, the black church, of course, but also such institutions as the AMA, the American Home Missionary Society, Friends Yearly Meetings, the State and National Black Convention Movement, Vigilance Committees and Anti-Slavery Societies. As I have repeatedly demonstrated throughout this study,

frequently attendees were associated with the Underground Railroad in one way or another. Harriet Tubman, Richard and Sarah Allen, Frederick Douglass, John Jones, John Brown, William Wells Brown, Mary Ann Shadd, Martin R. Delany, William Paul Quinn, Daniel Payne, Henry Highland Garnet, Frances Ellen Watkins Harper, J.W.C. Pennington, James McCune Smith, John G. Fee, Lewis Tappan, and Levi Coffin sought to relieve the plight of people of color by laboring on the Underground Railroad in some capacity. Their names also appear on the roles of AME Annual Conventions, Black Conventions, Vigilance Committees, anti-slavery societies, in AMA correspondences, and political gatherings.

The interracial component of the Underground Railroad movement emerged as part of political and equal rights movements, or through moral reform and religious principle, depending upon the motivations of the participants. The interracial nature of the Underground Railroad followed distinct patterns. Interdenominational cooperation among whites or among blacks was less common than interracial cooperation between blacks and whites. When interracial and interdenominational cooperation did occur, it was frequently in anti-slavery societies or organizations such as the AMA. It was this type of interfaith cooperation that Quakers found most objectionable. As a result of these findings, the most effective Underground Railroad research considers the religious denomination of each participant under investigation and looks to other contacts, conductors and participants within that same denomination. The AME members are working within that religious line; the Presbyterians of Southern Illinois are working within a Presbyterian network in the familiar and well-known pattern of the Quaker tradition. It is vital that the

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denominational affiliation of each abolitionist and anti-slavery worker be understood. Operating from a premise that most UGRR activists chose to work within denominational lines is key for the next level of research. Did the abolitionist attend yearly meetings or conventions, or synods, and were other abolitionists in attendance? What organizational affiliations did abolitionists have in common?

Just as lines of investigation must be established along religious denominations, carefully scrutiny of the areas in the south from which black pioneers and new settlers fled when migrating to the southern regions of Illinois, Indiana and Ohio should help in solving the puzzle that is the Underground Railroad. If a pattern can be established of tracing freedom seekers regionally, fruitful lines of research might open up. For example, both Erasmus Green and Henry Sides were from Marshall County Tennessee. We know that John Jones of Chicago by way of Alton also began life in Tennessee. It is beyond the scope of this dissertation to determine Jones' early life or religious affiliation, but regional understandings of origins in addition to religious affiliation might well inform future UGRR research.

Race and Landscape

Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Iowa, Oregon and Nebraska established black codes in attempts to perpetuate "raced" spaces and places in the landscape.[8] The three earliest settled states of the Northwest Territory, Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois sanctioned legal discriminations against free Blacks until the eve of the Civil War.[9]

Black settlements or farms such as Poke Patch or Free Frank's home were strategically situated to offer maximum aid and optimal security either through

vantage point or seclusion, two consistent landscape features of the Underground Railroad. John Rankin's hilltop home or John Parker's river front business in Ripley, Ohio are classic examples.

Archaeology, Preservation and the Landscape

Throughout this work, I have repeatedly argued that archaeology's impact on history is distinctive. The lack of preservation of rural black settlements encourages forgetting which obscures these important historical resources.   In *On the Edge of Freedom*, I have reconfigured and recombined existing scholarship in dynamic ways to reach different conclusions that compensate for the pervasive neglect of preservation. For these sites, large parts of the historical record are often non existent, genealogical data is sporadic, the archaeological record is inherently incomplete, unstable, and destroyed upon excavation, and, increasingly the natural landscape is being threatened. Large sums of money are necessary to purchase the private sites for archaeological study and preservation.

Heritage tourism also holds an important stake in recovery of Underground Railroad sites. As small towns and culturally bland regions of the country discover and benefit from the lure of historical tourism, long neglected African American sites are seen as sources of revenue and an avenue for safe racial discourse.

Delimitations

Although not a subject of this dissertation, education does figure prominently in all reports, meetings, minutes of the AME church as well as the National Black

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conventions as part of the project of racial uplift. Similarly, the subject of Black Nationalism among AME ministers emerged at the end of this study. Analysis of Black Nationalism in the AME church or among its Bishops is beyond the scope of this dissertation. The involvement of Quinn in the 1854 Emigration Convention in addition to his use of David Walker's "Appeal" certainly requires closer scrutiny and binds the little churches Quinn founded in the rural areas of Illinois and Indiana, among other states, to the larger black Atlantic world. From Bethel AME church in Woodbury, New Jersey through Pennsylvania, Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Kentucky, and Missouri Bishop Quinn's name is consistently linked to Underground Railroad sites.[10]

Conclusion

Throughout its history, the Underground Railroad has been used in support of many causes—to reinforce American ideals of freedom; heroism; tourism, and interracial and interdenominational cooperation. Modern history of the movement continues this long tradition of appropriation of memory and history. People take comfort in associating themselves with the noble virtues of self-sacrifice, and compassionate concern for others. Harriet Tubman viewed the Underground Railroad as "the front line against Slavery."[11] With the freedom seeker, Harriet Tubman, and John Brown at the helm, these women and men of principle ushered a new era in race relations in this country. They took a stand against coercive government, weak morals, and the lazy indolence slavery fostered in the slaveholder.

In conclusion, I again turn to twentieth-century arguments about black community formation that are applicable to these 19th century sites. Clyde Woods'

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observation about working-class African American communities in the Mississippi Delta, of which southern Illinois is a part, is a case in point. Woods found in the twentieth-century what I also found in the early 19th, that the worldview embedded in these communities provided "a sense of collective self and a tectonic footing from which to oppose and dismantle the American intellectual, cultural and socioeconomic traditions constructed from the raw material of African American exploitation and denigration.[12] Stephen Vincent had much the same to say of the Beech and Roberts settlements in nineteenth-century Indiana where the community but not the memory disappeared. "The two communities became sites for commemorative reunions as descendants looked to them for inspiration in a troubling, urbanized world. Celebrants at annual homecomings praised the distinctive examples of the Beech and Roberts communities…"[13] Through collective comparative studies broad commonalities, as well as regional and local differences, establish a baseline for future study.

As the conclusions reveal, much work remains. Frankly, I end with more questions than answers but I trust this work has moved the debate forward. Through the combined work of archaeologists, genealogists, family historians and landscape specialists, analysis reflecting change over time and place is finally emerging from the "thrilling" events and secret hiding places of American lore. Investigation of the relationship of free black settlement sites to the Underground Railroad and the quest for freedom represents an area of scholarship that can be most fully comprehended through a historically informed multidisciplinarity with archaeology at its center.

On the Edge of Freedom contributes an additional chapter to the growing body of Underground Railroad scholarship. By placing the settlements in historical

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context, and presenting this history without blame, victimization, or valorization, the powerful, triumphant, and tragic story of this complex and shrouded history will necessarily emerge and take its well-deserved place in American memory.

Endnotes Chapter 9

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[1] Arthur A. Schomburg, "The Negro Digs Up His Past," in *Anthology of American Negro Literature*, ed. V. F. Calverton (New York: Modern Library, 1929), 299-323.
[2] Blockson, *UGRR in Pennsylvania.*
[3] Groth, *Forging Freedom*, 253.
[4] Demos, "Violent 'Means'," 123.
[5] Berlin, "Forward," http://www.freeafricanamericans.com/foreword.htm
[6] Groth, *Forging Freedom*, 251.
[7] Berry, *Long Memory.*
[8] *Ibid*.
[9] Dillon, "The Failure of Abolitionists," 172.
[10] Trusty, *The Underground Railroad: Ties That Bound Unveiled* (Philadelphia: Amed Literary, 1997).
[11] Conrad, *General Tubman*, 47.
[12] Woods, *Development Arrested.*
[13] Hodges. Book Review, *Southern Seed*. Electronic Ed., History Cooperative.

Appendix A

Rules for African American Preservation

The 15 Step Tautological Conundrum

1. Legislate against literacy for the enslaved population, then claim,

2. There are no written sources to support scholarship.

3. Infuse available sources with doubt

    a. because they are oral rather than written,

    b. or, when written, refute sources that have been dictated, edited or altered as unreliable, invoke the abusive *ad hominem* argument

4. Require written sources.

5. If an element of the oral narrative is incorrect, negate the entire source. Deny the argument by relying on a *non sequitur*.

6. Impose narrow criteria for acceptable sources, and supporting documentation allow no latitude, and negate non-complying scholarship.

7. Accept weak logical arguments proffered by those outside required areas of expertise on topics about which they are unqualified to judge.

8. If these critics do not believe or understand the argument, and remain unconvinced, the argument must, therefore, be false.

9. Impose binaries such as fact or fiction, true or false, veracity or fallacy that cannot work and leave no room for possibility or conjecture.

10. Looking to the present for comparative models of cultural continuum is presentism, and looking to an African past is inappropriate because there is no monolithic African past and African Americans are unable to trace their origins.

11. In the face of new scholarship unsubstantiated through written sources, invoke an abusive *ad hominem* argument, i.e. despite impressive credentials doubt the scholar to impugn the scholarship.

12. Since an African American past has been invented through doubtful scholarship, there is no credible past as exemplified by a lack of written sources.

13. Since the African American past is invented, it is not to be believed.

14. Therefore, African Americans have no past, and they have no past worthy of preservation,

15. Because if there is an African American a past, there would be written sources.

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