A Century of Negro Migration

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Dedication

To My Father

James Woodson

Who Made It Possible for Me

To Enter the Literary World

Preface

In treating this movement of the Negroes, the writer does not presume to say the last word on the subject. The exodus of the Negroes from the South has just begun. The blacks have recently realized that they have freedom of body and they will now proceed to exercise that right. To presume, therefore, to exhaust the treatment of this movement in its incipiency is far from the intention of the writer. The aim here is rather to direct attention to this new phase of Negro American life which will doubtless prove to be the most significant event in our local history since the Civil War.

Many of the facts herein set forth have seen light before. The effort here is directed toward an original treatment of facts, many of which have already periodically appeared in some form. As these works, however, are too numerous to be consulted by the layman, the writer has endeavored to present in succinct form the leading facts as to how the Negroes in the United States have struggled under adverse circumstances to flee from bondage and oppression in quest of a land offering asylum to the oppressed and opportunity to the unfortunate. How they have often been deceived has been carefully noted.

With the hope that this volume may interest another worker to the extent of publishing many other facts in this field, it is respectfully submitted to the public.

Carter G. Woodson

Washington, D.C., March 31, 1918

1 Finding a Place of Refuge

The migration of the blacks from the Southern States to those offering them better opportunities is nothing new. The objective here, therefore, will be not merely to present the causes and results of the recent movement of the Negroes to the North but to connect this event with the periodical movements of the blacks to that section, from about the year 1815 to the present day. That this movement should date from that period indicates that the policy of the commonwealths towards the Negro must have then begun decidedly to differ so as to make one section of the country more congenial to the despised blacks than the other. As a matter of fact, to justify this conclusion, we need but give passing mention here to developments too well known to be discussed in detail. Slavery in the original thirteen States was the normal condition of the Negroes. When, however, James Otis, Patrick Henry and Thomas Jefferson began to discuss the natural rights of the colonists, then said to be oppressed by Great Britain, some of the patriots of the Revolution carried their reasoning to its logical conclusion, contending that the Negro slaves should be freed on the same grounds, as their rights were also founded in the laws of nature.[1] And so it was soon done in most Northern commonwealths.

Vermont, New Hampshire, and Massachusetts exterminated the institution by constitutional provision and Rhode Island, Connecticut, New Jersey, New York and Pennsylvania by gradual emancipation acts.[2] And it was thought that the institution would soon thereafter pass away even in all

[1] Locke, *Anti-Slavery*, pp. 19, 20, 23; *Works of John Woolman*, pp. 58, 73; and Moore, *Notes on Slavery in Massachusetts*, p. 71.

[2] Bassett, *Federalist System*, chap. xii. Hart, *Slavery and Abolition*, pp. 153, 154.

southern commonwealths except South Carolina and Georgia, where it had seemingly become profitable. There came later the industrial revolution following the invention of Watt's steam engine and mechanical appliances like Whitney's cotton gin, all which changed the economic aspect of the modern world, making slavery an institution offering means of exploitation to those engaged in the production of cotton. This revolution rendered necessary a large supply of cheap labor for cotton culture, out of which the plantation system grew. The Negro slaves, therefore, lost all hope of ever winning their freedom in South Carolina and Georgia; and in Maryland, Virginia, and North Carolina, where the sentiment in favor of abolition had been favorable, there was a decided reaction which soon blighted their hopes.[3] In the Northern commonwealths, however, the sentiment in behalf of universal freedom, though at times dormant, was ever apparent despite the attachment to the South of the trading classes of northern cities, which profited by the slave trade and their commerce with the slaveholding States. The Northern States maintaining this liberal attitude developed, therefore, into an asylum for the Negroes who were oppressed in the South.

The Negroes, however, were not generally welcomed in the North. Many of the northerners who sympathized with the oppressed blacks in the South never dreamt of having them as their neighbors. There were, consequently, always two classes of anti-slavery people, those who advocated the abolition of slavery to elevate the blacks to the dignity of citizenship, and those who merely hoped to exterminate the institution because it was an economic evil.[4] The latter generally believed that the blacks constituted an inferior class that could not discharge the duties of citizenship, and when the proposal to incorporate the blacks into the body politic was clearly presented to these agitators their anti-slavery ardor was decidedly dampened. Unwilling, however, to take the position that a race should be doomed because of personal objections, many of the early anti-slavery

[3] Rhodes, *History of the United States*, chap. i, p. 6; Bancroft, *History of the United States*, chap. ii, p. 401; and Locke, *Anti-Slavery*, p. 32.

[4] *A Brief Statement of the Rise and Progress of the Testimony of the Quakers*, passim; Woodson, *The Education of the Negro Prior to 1861*, p. 43.

group looked toward colonization for a solution of this problem.[5] Some thought of Africa, but since the deportation of a large number of persons who had been brought under the influence of modern civilization seemed cruel, the most popular colonization scheme at first seemed to be that of settling the Negroes on the public lands in the West. As this region had been lately ceded, however, and no one could determine what use could be made of it by white men, no such policy was generally accepted.

When this territory was ceded to the United States an effort to provide for the government of it finally culminated in the proposed Ordinance of 1784 carrying the provision that slavery should not exist in the Northwest Territory after the year 1800.[6] This measure finally failed to pass and fortunately too, thought some, because, had slavery been given sixteen years of growth on that soil, it might not have been abolished there until the Civil War or it might have caused such a preponderance of slave commonwealths as to make the rebellion successful. The Ordinance of 1784 was antecedent to the more important Ordinance of 1787, which carried the famous sixth article that neither slavery nor involuntary servitude except as a punishment for crime should exist in that territory. At first, it was generally deemed feasible to establish Negro colonies on that domain. Yet despite the assurance of the Ordinance of 1787 conditions were such that one could not determine exactly whether the Northwest Territory would be slave or free.[7]

What then was the situation in this partly unoccupied territory? Slavery existed in what is now the Northwest Territory from the time of the early exploration and settlement of that region by the French. The first slaves of white men were Indians. Though it is true that the red men usually chose death rather than slavery, there were some of them that bowed to the yoke. So many Pawnee Indians became bondsmen that the word *Pani*

[5]Woodson, *The Education of the Negro Prior to 1861*, p. 44; and Locke, *Anti-Slavery*, p. 32.
[6] *The Southern Workman*, xxxvii, pp. 158-169.
[7]Turner, *The Negro in Pennsylvania*, pp. 144, 145, 151, 155.

became synonymous with slave in the West.[8] Western Indians themselves, following the custom of white men, enslaved their captives in war rather than choose the alternative of putting them to death. In this way they were known to hold a number of blacks and whites.

The enslavement of the black man by the whites in this section dates from the early part of the eighteenth century. Being a part of the Louisiana Territory which under France extended over the whole Mississippi Valley as far as the Allegheny mountains, it was governed by the same colonial regulations.[9] Slavery, therefore, had legal standing in this territory. When Antoine Crozat, upon being placed in control of Louisiana, was authorized to begin a traffic in slaves, Crozat himself did nothing to carry out his plan. But in 1717 when the control of the colony was transferred to the *Compagnie de l'Occident* steps were taken toward the importation of slaves. In 1719, when 500 Guinea Negroes were brought over to serve in Lower Louisiana, Philip Francis Renault imported 500 other bondsmen into Upper Louisiana or what was later included in the Northwest Territory. Slavery then became more and more extensive until by 1750 there were along the Mississippi five settlements of slaves, Kaskaskia, Kaokia, Fort Chartres, St. Phillipe and Prairie du Rocher.[10] In 1763 Negroes were relatively numerous in the Northwest Territory but when this section that year was transferred to the British the number was diminished by the action of those Frenchmen who, unwilling to become subjects of Great Britain, moved from the territory.[11] There was no material increase in the slave population thereafter until the end of the eighteenth century when some Negroes came from the original thirteen.

The Ordinance of 1787 did not disturb the relation of slave and master. Some pioneers thought that the sixth article exterminated slavery there; others contended that it did not. The latter believed that such expressions in the Ordinance of 1787 as the "free inhabitants" and the "free male

[8] *Southern Workman*, xxxvii, p. 157.
[9] Levi Coffin, *Reminiscences*, chaps, I and II.
[10] *Southern Workman*, xxxvii, pp. 161-163.
[11] Coffin, *Reminiscences*, p. 109; and Howe's *Historical Collections*, p. 356.

inhabitants of full size" implied the continuance of slavery and others found ground for its perpetuation in that clause of the Ordinance which allowed the people of the territory to adopt the constitution and laws of any one of the thirteen States. Students of law saw protection for slavery in Jay's treaty which guaranteed to the settlers their property of all kinds.[12] When, therefore, the slave question came up in the Northwest Territory about the close of the eighteenth century, there were three classes of slaves: first, those who were in servitude to French owners previous to the cession of the Territory to England and were still claimed as property in the possession of which the owners were protected under the treaty of 1763; second, those who were held by British owners at the time of Jay's treaty and claimed afterward as property under its protection; and third, those who, since the Territory had been controlled by the United States, had been brought from the commonwealths in which slavery was allowed.[13] Freedom, however, was recognized as the ultimate status of the Negro in that territory.

This question having been seemingly settled, Anthony Benezet, who for years advocated the abolition of slavery and devoted his time and means to the preparation of the Negroes for living as freedmen, was practical enough to recommend to the Congress of the Confederation a plan of colonizing the emancipated blacks on the western lands.[14] Jefferson incorporated into his scheme for a modern system of public schools the training of the slaves in industrial and agricultural branches to equip them for a higher station in life. He believed, however, that the blacks not being equal to the white race should not be assimilated and should they be free, they should, by all means, be colonized afar off.[15] Thinking that the western lands might be so used, he said in writing to James Monroe in 1801: "A very great extent of country north of the Ohio has been laid off in townships, and is now at market, according to the provisions of the act of Congress....

[12] *Southern Workman*, xxxvii, pp. 162, 163.
[13] Levi Coffin, *Reminiscences*, pp. 108-111.
[14] Siebert, *The Underground Railroad*, p. 249.
[15] Langston, *From the Virginia Plantation to the National Capitol*, p. 35.

There is nothing," said he, "which would restrain the State of Virginia either in the purchase or the application of these lands."[16] Yet he raised the question as to whether the establishment of such a colony within our limits and to become a part of the Union would be desirable. He thought then of procuring a place beyond the limits of the United States on our northern boundary, by purchasing the Indian lands with the consent of Great Britain. He then doubted that the black race would live in such a rigorous climate.

This plan did not easily pass from the minds of the friends of the slaves, for in 1805 Thomas Brannagan asserted in his *Serious Remonstrances* that the government should appropriate a few thousand acres of land at some distant part of the national domains for the Negroes' accommodation and support. He believed that the new State might be established upwards of 2,000 miles from our frontier.[17] A copy of the pamphlet containing this proposition was sent to Thomas Jefferson, who was impressed thereby, but not having the courage to brave the torture of being branded as a friend of the slave, he failed to give it his support.[18] The same question was brought prominently before the public again in 1816 when there was presented to the House of Representatives a memorial from the Kentucky Abolition Society praying that the free people of color be colonized on the public lands. The committee to whom the memorial was referred for consideration reported that it was expedient to refuse the request on the ground that, as such lands were not granted to free white men, they saw

[16] Howe, *Historical Collections*, p. 465.

[17] *History of Brown County, Ohio*, p. 313.

[18] Wattles said: he purchased for himself 190 acres of land, to establish a manual labor school for colored boys. He had maintained a school on it, at his own expense, till the eleventh of November, 1842. While in Philadelphia the winter before, he became acquainted with the trustees of the late Samuel Emlen, a Friend of New Jersey. He left by his will $20,000 for the "support and education in school learning and the mechanic arts and agriculture, boys, of African and Indian descent, whose parents would give them up to the school. They united their means and purchased Wattles farm, and appointed him the superintendent of the establishment, which they called the Emlen Institute."–See Howe's *Historical Collections*, p. 356.

no reason for granting them to others.[19]

Some Negro slaves unwilling to wait to be carried or invited to the Northwest Territory escaped to that section even when it was controlled by the French prior to the American Revolution. Slaves who reached the West by this route caused trouble between the French and the British colonists. Advertising in 1746 for James Wenyam, a slave, Richard Colgate, his master, said that he swore to a Negro whom he endeavored to induce to go with him, that he had often been in the backwoods with his master and that he would go to the French and Indians and fight for them.[20] In an advertisement for a mulatto slave in 1755 Thomas Ringold, his master, expressed fear that he had escaped by the same route to the French. He, therefore, said: "It seems to be the interest, at least, of every gentleman that has slaves, to be active in the beginning of these attempts, for whilst we have the French such near neighbors, we shall not have the least security in that kind of property."[21]

The good treatment which these slaves received among the French, and especially at Pittsburgh the gateway to the Northwest Territory, tended to make that city an asylum for those slaves who had sufficient spirit of adventure to brave the wilderness through which they had to go. Negroes even then had the idea that there was in this country a place of more privilege than those they enjoyed in the seaboard colonies. Knowing of the likelihood of the Negroes to rise during the French and Indian War, Governor Dinwiddie wrote Fox one of the Secretaries of State in 1756: "We dare not venture to part with any of our white men any distance, as we must have a watchful eye over our Negro slaves, who are upward of one hundred thousand."[22] Brissot de Warville mentions in his *Travels of 1788* several examples of marriages of white and blacks in Pittsburgh. He noted the case of a Negro who married an indentured French servant woman. Out of this union came a desirable mulatto girl who married a

[19] Howe's *Historical Collections*, p. 355.
[20] *Manuscripts* in the possession of J.E. Moorland.
[21] *The African Repository*, xxii, pp. 322, 333.
[22] Simmons, *Men of Mark*, p. 723.

surgeon of Nantes then stationed at Pittsburgh. His family was considered one of the most respectable of the city. The Negro referred to was doing a creditable business and his wife took it upon herself to welcome foreigners, especially the French, who came that way. Along the Ohio also there were several cases of women of color living with unmarried white men; but this was looked upon by the Negroes as detestable as was evidenced by the fact that, if black women had a quarrel with a mulatto woman, the former would reproach the latter for being of ignoble blood.[23]

These tendencies, however, could not assure the Negro that the Northwest Territory was to be an asylum for freedom when in 1763 it passed into the hands of the British, the promoters of the slave trade, and later to the independent colonies, two of which had no desire to exterminate slavery. Furthermore, when the Ordinance of 1787 with its famous sixth article against slavery was proclaimed, it was soon discovered that this document was not necessarily emancipatory. As the right to hold slaves was guaranteed to those who owned them prior to the passage of the Ordinance of 1787, it was to be expected that those attached to that institution would not indifferently see it pass away. Various petitions, therefore, were sent to the territorial legislature and to Congress praying that the sixth article of the Ordinance of 1787 be abrogated.[24] No formal action to this effect was taken, but the practice of slavery was continued even at the winking of the government. Some slaves came from the Canadians who, in accordance with the slave trade laws of the British Empire, were supplied with bondsmen. It was the Canadians themselves who provided by act of parliament in 1793 for prohibiting the importation of slaves and for gradual emancipation. When it seemed later that the cause of freedom would eventually triumph the proslavery element undertook to perpetuate slavery through a system of indentured servant labor.

In the formation of the States of Indiana and Illinois the question as to what should be done to harmonize with the new constitution the system of

[23] *Southern Workman*, xxxvii, p. 158.
[24] *The Journal of Negro History*, I, pp. 23-33.

indenture to which the territorial legislatures had been committed, caused heated debate and at times almost conflict. Both Indiana[25] and Illinois[26] finally incorporated into their constitutions compromise provisions for a nominal prohibition of slavery modified by clauses for the continuation of the system of indentured labor of the Negroes held to service. The proslavery party persistently struggled for some years to secure by the interpretation of the laws, by legislation and even by amending the constitution so to change the fundamental law as to provide for actual slavery. These States, however, gradually worked toward freedom in keeping with the spirit of the majority who framed the constitution, despite the fact that the indenture system in southern Illinois and especially in Indiana was at times tantamount to slavery as it was practiced in parts of the South.

It must be borne in mind here, however, that the North at this time was far from becoming a place of refuge for Negroes. In the first place, the industrial revolution had not then had time to reduce the Negroes to the plane of beasts in the cotton kingdom. The rigorous climate and the industries of the northern people, moreover, were not inviting to the blacks and the development of the carrying trade and the rise of manufacturing there did not make that section more attractive to unskilled labor. Furthermore, when we consider the fact that there were many thousands of Negroes in the Southern States the presence of a few in the North must be regarded as insignificant. This paucity of blacks then obtained especially in the Northwest Territory, for its French inhabitants instead of being an exploiting people were pioneering, having little use for slaves in carrying out their policy of merely holding the country for France. Moreover, like certain gentlemen from Virginia, who after the American Revolution were afraid to bring their slaves with them to occupy their bounty lands in Ohio, few enterprising settlers from the slave States had invaded the territory with their Negroes, not knowing whether or not they would be secure in the possession of such property. When we consider that in 1810 there

[25] *Ibid.*, I, p. 26.
[26] *The African Repository*, passim.

were only 102,137 Negroes in the North and no more than 3,454 in the Northwest Territory, we must look to the second decade of the nineteenth century for the beginning of the migration of the Negroes in the United States.

2 A Transplantation to the North

Just after the settlement of the question of holding the western posts by the British and the adjustment of the trouble arising from their capture of slaves during our second war with England, there started a movement of the blacks to this frontier territory. But, as there were few towns or cities in the Northwest during the first decades of the new republic, the flight of the Negro into that territory was like that of a fugitive taking his chances in the wilderness. Having lost their pioneering spirit in passing through the ordeal of slavery, not many of the bondmen took flight in that direction and few free Negroes ventured to seek their fortunes in those wilds during the period of the frontier conditions, especially when the country had not then undergone a thorough reaction against the Negro.

The migration of the Negroes, however, received an impetus early in the nineteenth century. This came from the Quakers, who by the middle of the eighteenth century had taken the position that all members of their sect should free their slaves.[1] The Quakers of North Carolina and Virginia had as early as 1740 taken up the serious question of humanely treating their Negroes. The North Carolina Quakers advised Friends to emancipate their slaves, later prohibited traffic in them, forbade their members from even hiring the blacks out in 1780 and by 1818 had exterminated the institution among their communicants.[2] After healing themselves of the sin, they had before the close of the eighteenth century militantly addressed themselves to the task of abolishing slavery and the slave trade throughout the world.

[1] Moore, *Anti-Slavery*, p. 79; and *Special Report of the United States Commissioner of Education*, 1871, p. 376; Weeks, *Southern Quakers*, pp. 215, 216, 231, 230, 242.

[2] *The Southern Workman*, xxvii, p. 161.

Differing in their scheme from that of most anti-slavery leaders, they were advocating the establishment of the freedmen in society as good citizens and to that end had provided for the religious and mental instruction of their slaves prior to emancipating them.[3]

Despite the fact that the Quakers were not free to extend their operations throughout the colonies, they did much to enable the Negroes to reach free soil. As the Quakers believed in the freedom of the will, human brotherhood, and equality before God, they did not, like the Puritans, find difficulties in solving the problem of elevating the Negroes. Whereas certain Puritans were afraid that conversion might lead to the destruction of caste and the incorporation of undesirable persons into the "Body Politick," the Quakers proceeded on the principle that all men are brethren and, being equal before God, should be considered equal before the law. On account of unduly emphasizing the relation of man to God, the Puritans "atrophied their social humanitarian instinct" and developed into a race of self-conscious saints. Believing in human nature and laying stress upon the relation between man and man, the Quakers became the friends of all humanity.[4]

In 1693 George Keith, a leading Quaker of his day, came forward as a promoter of the religious training of the slaves as a preparation for emancipation. William Penn advocated the emancipation of slaves, that they might have every opportunity for improvement. In 1695 the Quakers while protesting against the slave trade denounced also the policy of neglecting their moral and spiritual welfare.[5] The growing interest of this sect in the Negroes was shown later by the development in 1713 of a definite scheme for freeing and returning them to Africa after having been educated and trained to serve as missionaries on that continent.

[3] Rhodes, *History of the United States*, chap. i, p. 6; Bancroft, *History of the United States*, chap. ii, p. 401; and Locke, *Anti-Slavery*, p. 32.

[4] *A Brief Statement of the Rise and Progress of the Testimony of the Quakers*, passim; Woodson, *The Education of the Negro Prior to 1861*, p. 43.

[5] Woodson, *The Education of the Negro Prior to 1861*, p. 44; and Locke, *Anti-Slavery*, p. 32.

When the manumission of the slaves was checked by the reaction against that class and it became more of a problem to establish them in a hostile environment, certain Quakers of North Carolina and Virginia adopted the scheme of settling them in Northern States.[6] At first, they sent such freedmen to Pennsylvania. But for various reasons this did not prove to be the best asylum. In the first place, Pennsylvania bordered on the slave States, Maryland and Virginia, from which agents came to kidnap free Negroes. Furthermore, too many Negroes were already rushing to that commonwealth as the Negroes' heaven and there was the chance that the Negroes might be settled elsewhere in the North, where they might have better economic opportunities.[7] A committee of forty was accordingly appointed by North Carolina Quakers in 1822 to examine the laws of other free States with a view to determining what section would be most suitable for colonizing these blacks. This committee recommended in its report that the blacks be colonized in Ohio, Indiana and Illinois.

The yearly meeting, therefore, ordered the removal of such Negroes as fast as they were willing or as might be consistent with the profession of their sect, and instructed the agents effecting the removal to draw on the treasury for any sum not exceeding two hundred dollars to defray expenses. An increasing number reached these States every year but, owing to the inducements offered by the American Colonization Society, some of them went to Liberia. When Liberia, however, developed into every thing but a haven of rest, the number sent to the settlements in the Northwest greatly increased.

The quarterly meeting succeeded in sending to the West 133 Negroes, including 23 free blacks and slaves given up because they were connected by marriage with those to be transplanted.[8] The Negro colonists seemed to prefer Indiana.[9] They went in three companies and with suitable young Friends to whom were executed powers of attorney to manumit, set free,

[6] *The Southern Workman*, xxxvii, pp. 158-169.
[7] Turner, *The Negro in Pennsylvania*, pp. 144, 145, 151, 155.
[8] *Southern Workman*, xxxvii, p. 157.
[9] Levi Coffin, *Reminiscences*, chaps, I and II.

settle and bind them out.[10] Thirteen carts and wagons were bought for these three companies; $1,250 was furnished for their traveling expenses and clothing, the whole cost amounting to $2,490. It was planned to send forty or fifty to Long Island and twenty to the interior of Pennsylvania, but they failed to prosper and reports concerning them stamped them as destitute and deplorably ignorant. Those who went to Ohio and Indiana, however, did well.[11]

Later we receive another interesting account of this exodus. David White led a company of fifty-three into the West, thirty-eight of whom belonged to Friends, five to a member who had ordered that they be taken West at his expense. Six of these slaves belonged to Samuel Lawrence, a Negro slaveholder, who had purchased himself and family. White pathetically reports the case of four of the women who had married slave husbands and had twenty children for the possession of whom the Friends had to stand a lawsuit in the courts. The women had decided to leave their husbands behind but the thought of separation so tormented them that they made an effort to secure their liberty. Upon appealing to their masters for terms the owners, somewhat moved by compassion, sold them for one half of their value. White then went West and left four in Chillicothe, twenty-three in Leesburg and twenty-six in Wayne County, Indiana, without encountering any material difficulty.[12]

Others had thought of this plan but the Quakers actually carried it out on a small scale. Here we see again not only their desire to have the Negroes emancipated but the vital interest of the Quakers in success of the blacks, for members of this sect not only liberated their slaves but sold out their own holdings in the South and moved with these freedmen into the North. Quakers who then lived in free States offered fugitives material assistance by open and clandestine methods.[13] The most prominent leader developed by the movement was Levi Coffin, whose daring deeds in behalf of the

[10] *Southern Workman*, xxxvii, pp. 161-163.
[11] Coffin, *Reminiscences*, p. 109; and Howe's *Historical Collections*, p. 356.
[12] *Southern Workman*, xxxvii, pp. 162, 163.
[13] Levi Coffin, *Reminiscences*, pp. 108-111.

fugitives made him the reputed President of the Underground Railroad. Most of the Quaker settlements of Negroes with which he was connected were made in what is now Hamilton, Howard, Wayne, Randolph, Vigo, Gibson, Grant, Rush, and Tipton Counties, Indiana, and Darke County, Ohio.

The promotion of this movement by the Quakers was well on its way by 1815 and was not materially checked until the fifties when the operations of the drastic fugitive slave law interfered, and even then the movement had gained such momentum and the execution of that mischievous measure had produced in the North so much reaction like that expressed in the personal liberty laws, that it could not be stopped. The Negroes found homes in Western New York, Western Pennsylvania and throughout the Northwest Territory. The Negro population of York, Harrisburg and Philadelphia rapidly increased. A settlement of Negroes developed at Sandy Lake in Northwestern Pennsylvania[14] and there was another near Berlin Cross Roads in Ohio.[15] A group of Negroes migrating to this same State found homes in the Van Buren Township of Shelby County.[16] A more significant settlement in the State was made by Samuel Gist, an Englishman possessing extensive plantations in Hanover, Amherst, and Henrico Counties, Virginia. He provided in his will that his slaves should be freed and sent to the North. He further provided that the revenue from his plantation the last year of his life be applied in building schoolhouses and churches for their accommodation, and "that all money coming to him in Virginia be set aside for the employment of ministers and teachers to instruct them." In 1818, Wickham, the executor of his estate, purchased land and established these Negroes in what was called the Upper and Lower Camps of Brown County.[17]

Augustus Wattles, a Quaker from Connecticut, made a settlement in Mercer County, Ohio, early in the nineteenth century. In the winter of 1833-4,

[14]Siebert, *The Underground Railroad*, p. 249.
[15]Langston, *From the Virginia Plantation to the National Capitol*, p. 35.
[16]Howe, *Historical Collections*, p. 465.
[17]*History of Brown County, Ohio*, p. 313.

he providentially became acquainted with the colored people of Cincinnati, finding there about "4,000 totally ignorant of every thing calculated to make good citizens." As most of them had been slaves, excluded from every avenue of moral and mental improvement, he established for them a school which he maintained for two years. He then proposed to these Negroes to go into the country and purchase land to remove them "from those contaminating influences which had so long crushed them in our cities and villages."[18] They consented on the condition that he would accompany them and teach school. He travelled through Canada, Michigan and Indiana, looking for a suitable location, and finally selected for settlement a place in Mercer County, Ohio. In 1835, he made the first purchase of land there for this purpose and before 1838 Negroes had bought there about 30,000 acres, at the earnest appeal of this benefactor, who had travelled into almost every neighborhood of the blacks in the State, and laid before them the benefits of a permanent home for themselves and of education for their children.[19]

This settlement was further increased in 1858 by the manumitted slaves of John Harper of North Carolina.[20] John Randolph of Roanoke endeavored to establish his slaves as freemen in this county but the Germans who had settled in that community a little ahead of them started such a disturbance that Randolph's executor could not carry out his plan, although he had purchased a large tract of land there.[21] It was necessary to send these freemen to Miami County. Theodoric H. Gregg of Dinwiddie County,

[18] Wattles said: he purchased for himself 190 acres of land, to establish a manual labor school for colored boys. He had maintained a school on it, at his own expense, till the eleventh of November, 1842. While in Philadelphia the winter before, he became acquainted with the trustees of the late Samuel Emlen, a Friend of New Jersey. He left by his will $20,000 for the "support and education in school learning and the mechanic arts and agriculture, boys, of African and Indian descent, whose parents would give them up to the school. They united their means and purchased Wattles farm, and appointed him the superintendent of the establishment, which they called the Emlen Institute."–See Howe's *Historical Collections*, p. 356.

[19] Howe's *Historical Collections*, p. 355.

[20] *Manuscripts* in the possession of J.E. Moorland.

[21] *The African Repository*, xxii, pp. 322, 333.

Virginia, liberated his slaves in 1854 and sent them to Ohio.[22] Nearer to the Civil War, when public opinion was proscribing the uplift of Negroes in Kentucky, Noah Spears secured near Xenia, Greene County, Ohio, a small parcel of land for sixteen of his former bondsmen in 1856.[23] Other freedmen found their way to this community in later years and it became so prosperous that it was selected as the site of Wilberforce University.

This transplantation extended into Michigan. With the help of persons philanthropically inclined there sprang up a flourishing group of Negroes in Detroit. Early in the nineteenth century they began to acquire property and to provide for the education of their children. Their record was such as to merit the encomiums of their fellow white citizens. In later years this group in Detroit was increased by the operation of laws hostile to free Negroes in the South in that life for this class not only became intolerable but necessitated their expatriation. Because of the Virginia drastic laws and especially that of 1838 prohibiting the return to that State of such Negro students as had been accustomed to go North to attend school, after they were denied this privilege at home, the father of Richard DeBaptiste and Marie Louis More, the mother of Fannie M. Richards, led a colony of free Negroes from Fredericksburg to Detroit.[24] And for about similar reasons the father of Robert A. Pelham conducted others from Petersburg, Virginia, in 1859.[25] One Saunders, a planter of Cabell County, West Virginia, liberated his slaves some years later and furnished them homes among the Negroes settled in Cass County, Michigan, about ninety miles east of Chicago, and ninety-five miles west of Detroit.

This settlement had become attractive to fugitive slaves and freedmen because the Quakers settled there welcomed them on their way to freedom and in some cases encouraged them to remain among them. When the increase of fugitives was rendered impossible during the fifties when the Fugitive Slave Law was being enforced, there was still a steady growth due

[22] Simmons, *Men of Mark*, p. 723.
[23] *Southern Workman*, xxxvii, p. 158.
[24] *The Journal of Negro History*, I, pp. 23-33.
[25] *Ibid.*, I, p. 26.

to the manumission of slaves by sympathetic and benevolent masters in the South.[26] Most of these Negroes settled in Calvin Township, in that county, so that of the 1,376 residing there in 1860, 795 were established in this district, there being only 580 whites dispersed among them. The Negro settlers did not then obtain control of the government but they early purchased land to the extent of several thousand acres and developed into successful small farmers. Being a little more prosperous than the average Negro community in the North, the Cass County settlement not only attracted Negroes fleeing from hardships in the South but also those who had for some years unsuccessfully endeavored to establish themselves in other communities on free soil.[27]

These settlements were duplicated a little farther west in Illinois. Edward Coles, a Virginian, who in 1818 emigrated to Illinois, of which he later served as Governor and as liberator from slavery, settled his slaves in that commonwealth. He brought them to Edwardsville, where they constituted a community known as "Coles' Negroes."[28] There was another community of Negroes in Illinois in what is now called Brooklyn situated north of East St. Louis. This town was a center of some consequence in the thirties. It became a station of the Underground Railroad on the route to Alton and to Canada. As all of the Negroes who emerged from the South did not go

[26] *The African Repository*, passim.

[27] Although constituting a majority of the population even before the Civil War the Negroes of this township did not get recognition in the local government until 1875 when John Allen, a Negro, was elected township treasurer. From that time until about 1890 the Negroes always shared the honors of office with their white citizens and since that time they have usually had entire control of the local government in that township, holding such offices as supervisor, clerk, treasurer, road commissioner, and school director. Their record has been that of efficiency. Boss rule among them is not known. The best man for an office is generally sought; for this is a community of independent farmers. In 1907 one hundred and eleven different farmers in this community had holdings of 10,439 acres. Their township usually has very few delinquent taxpayers and it promptly makes its returns to the county.–See the *Southern Workman*, xxxvii, pp. 486-489.

[28] Davidson and Stowe, *A Complete History of Illinois*, pp. 321, 322; and Washburn, *Edward Coles*, pp. 44 and 53.

farther into the North, the black population of the town gradually grew despite the fact that slave hunters captured and reenslaved many of the Negroes who settled there.[29]

These settlements together with favorable communities of sympathetic whites promoted the migration of the free Negroes and fugitives from the South by serving as centers offering assistance to those fleeing to the free States and to Canada. The fugitives usually found friends in Philadelphia, Columbia, Pittsburgh, Elmira, Rochester, Buffalo, Gallipolis, Portsmouth, Akron, Cincinnati, and Detroit. They passed on the way to freedom through Columbia, Philadelphia, Elizabethtown and by way of sea to New York and Boston, from which they proceeded to permanent settlements in the North.[30]

In the West, the migration of the blacks was further facilitated by the peculiar geographic condition in that the Appalachian highland, extending like a peninsula into the South, had a natural endowment which produced a class of white citizens hostile to the institution of slavery. These mountaineers coming later to the colonies had to go to the hills and mountains because the first comers from Europe had taken up the land near the sea. Being of the German and Scotch-Irish Presbyterian stock, they had ideals differing widely from those of the seaboard slaveholders.[31] The mountaineers believed in "civil liberty in fee simple, and an open road to civil honors, secured to the poorest and feeblest members of society." The eastern element had for their ideal a government of interests for the people. They believed in liberty but that of kings, lords, and commons, not of all the people.[32]

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[29]The Negro population of this town so rapidly increased after the war that it has become a Negro town and unfortunately a bad one. Much improvement has been made in recent years.–See *Southern Workman*, xxxvii, pp. 489-494.

[30]Still, *Underground Railroad*, passim; Siebert, *Underground Railroad*, pp. 34, 35, 40, 42, 43, 48, 56, 59, 62, 64, 70, 145, 147; Drew, *Refugee*, pp. 72, 97, 114, 152, 335 and 373.

[31] *The Journal of Negro History*, I, pp. 132-162.

[32] *Ibid.*, I, 138.

Settled along the Appalachian highland, these new stocks continued to differ from those dwelling near the sea, especially on the slavery question.[33] The natural endowment of the mountainous section made slavery there unprofitable and the mountaineers bore it grievously that they were attached to commonwealths dominated by the radical pro-slavery element of the South, who sacrificed all other interests to safeguard those of the peculiar institution. There developed a number of clashes in all of the legislatures and constitutional conventions of the Southern States along the Atlantic, but in every case the defenders of the interests of slavery won. When, therefore, slaves with the assistance of anti-slavery mountaineers began to escape to the free States, they had little difficulty in making their way through the Appalachian region, where the love of freedom had so set the people against slavery that although some of them yielded to the inevitable sin, they never made any systematic effort to protect it.[34]

The development of the movement in these mountains was more than interesting. During the first quarter of the nineteenth century there were many ardent anti-slavery leaders in the mountains. These were not particularly interested in the Negro but were determined to keep that soil for freedom that the settlers might there realize the ideals for which they had left their homes in Europe. When the industrial revolution with the attendant rise of the plantation cotton culture made abolition in the South improbable, some of them became colonizationists, hoping to destroy the institution through deportation, which would remove the objection of certain masters who would free their slaves provided they were not left in

[33]Olmsted, *Back Country*, p. 134.

[34]: In the Appalachian mountains, however, the settlers were loath to follow the fortunes of the ardent pro-slavery element. Actual abolition, for example, was never popular in western Virginia, but the love of the people of that section for freedom kept them estranged from the slaveholding districts of the State, which by 1850 had completely committed themselves to the pro-slavery propaganda. In the Convention of 1829-30 Upshur said there existed in a great portion of the West (of Virginia) a rooted antipathy to the slave. John Randolph was alarmed at the fanatical spirit on the subject of slavery, which was growing in Virginia,–See the *Journal of Negro History*, I, p. 142.

the States to become a public charge.[35] Some of this sentiment continued in the mountains even until the Civil War. The highlanders, therefore, found themselves involved in a continuous embroglio because they were not moved by reactionary influences which were unifying the South for its bold effort to make slavery a national institution.[36] The other members of the mountaineer anti-slavery group became attached to the Underground Railroad system, endeavoring by secret methods to place on free soil a sufficiently large number of fugitives to show a decided diminution in the South.[37] John Brown, who communicated with the South through these mountains, thought that his work would be a success, if he could change the situation in one county in each of these States.

The lines along which these Underground Railroad operators moved connected naturally with the Quaker settlements established in free States and the favorable sections in the Appalachian region. Many of these workers were Quakers who had already established settlements of slaves on estates which they had purchased in the Northwest Territory. Among these were John Rankin, James Gilliland, Jesse Lockehart, Robert Dobbins, Samuel Crothers, Hugh L. Fullerton, and William Dickey. Thus they connected the heart of the South with the avenues to freedom in the North.[38] There were routes extending from this section into Ohio, Indiana, Illinois and Pennsylvania. Over the Ohio and Kentucky route culminating chiefly in Cleveland, Sandusky and Detroit, however, more fugitives made their way to freedom than through any other avenue,[39] partly too because they found the limestone caves very helpful for hiding by day. These operations extended even through Tennessee into northern Georgia and Alabama. Dillingham, Josiah Henson and Harriet Tubman used these routes to deliver many a Negro from slavery.

The opportunity thus offered to help the oppressed brought forward a

[35] Adams, *Neglected Period of Anti-Slavery.*
[36] *The Journal of Negro History*, I, pp. 132-160.
[37] Siebert, *Underground Railroad*, p. 166.
[38] Adams, *Neglected Period of Anti-Slavery.*
[39] Siebert, *Underground Railroad*, chaps. v and vi.

class of anti-slavery men, who went beyond the limit of merely expressing their horror of the evil. They believed that something should be done "to deliver the poor that cry and to direct the wanderer in the right way."[40] Translating into action what had long been restricted to academic discussion, these philanthropic workers ushered in a new era in the uplift of the blacks, making abolition more of a reality. The abolition element of the North then could no longer be considered an insignificant minority advocating a hopeless cause but a factor in drawing from the South a part of its slave population and at the same time offering asylum to the free Negroes whom the southerners considered undesirable.[41] Prominent among those who aided this migration in various ways were Benjamin Lundy of Tennessee and James G. Birney, a former slaveholder of Huntsville, Alabama, who manumitted his slaves and apprenticed and educated some of them in Ohio.

This exodus of the Negroes to the free States promoted the migration of others of their race to Canada, a more congenial part beyond the borders of the United States. The movement from the free States into Canada, moreover, was contemporary with that from the South to the free States as will be evidenced by the fact that 15,000 of the 60,000 Negroes in Canada in 1860 were free born. As Detroit was the chief gateway for them to Canada, most of these refugees settled in towns of Southern Ontario not far from that city. These were Dawn, Colchester, Elgin, Dresden, Windsor, Sandwich, Bush, Wilberforce, Hamilton, St. Catherines, Chatham, Riley, Anderton, London, Malden and Gonfield.[42] And their coming to Canada was not checked even by request from their enemies that they be turned away from that country as undesirables, for some of the white people there welcomed and assisted them. Canadians later experienced a change in their attitude toward these refugees but these British Americans never

[40] *An Address to the People of North Carolina on the Evils of Slavery.*

[41] Washington, *Story of the Negro*, I, chaps. xii, xiii and xiv.

[42] *Father Henson's Story of his own Life*, p. 209; Coffin, *Reminiscences*, pp. 247-256; Howe, *The Refugees from Slavery*, p. 77; Haviland, *A Woman's Work*, pp. 192, 193, 196.

made the life of the Negro there so intolerable as was the case in some of the free States.

It should be observed here that this movement, unlike the exodus of the Negroes of today, affected an unequal distribution of the enlightened Negroes.[43] Those who are fleeing from the South today are largely laborers seeking economic opportunities. The motive at work in the mind of the antebellum refugee was higher. In 1840 there were more intelligent blacks in the South than in the North but not so after 1850, despite the vigorous execution of the Fugitive Slave Law in some parts of the North. While the free Negro population of the slave States increased only 23,736 from 1850 to 1860, that of the free States increased 29,839. In the South, only Delaware, Maryland and North Carolina showed a noticeable increase in the number of free persons of color during the decade immediately preceding the Civil War. This element of the population had only slightly increased in Alabama, Kentucky, Missouri, Tennessee, Virginia, Louisiana, South Carolina and the District of Columbia. The number of free Negroes of Florida remained constant. Those of Arkansas, Mississippi and Texas diminished. In the North, of course, the migration had caused the tendency to be in the other direction. With the exception of Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont and New York which had about the same free colored population in 1860 as they had in 1850 there was a general increase in the number of Negroes in the free States. Ohio led in this respect, having had during this period an increase of 11,394.[44] A glance at the table on the accompanying page will show in detail the results of this migration.

Table 2.1: Statistics of the Free Colored Population of the United States

State	Population 1850	Population 1860	
Alabama		2,265	2,690
Arkansas		608	144

[43] Woodson, *The Education of the Negro Prior to 1861*, pp. 236-240.
[44] *The United States Censuses of 1850 and 1860.*

State	Population 1850	Population 1860
California	962	4,086
Connecticut	7,693	8,627
Delaware	18,073	19,829
Florida	932	932
Georgia	2,931	3,500
Illinois	5,436	7,628
Indiana	11,262	11,428
Iowa	333	1,069
Kentucky	10,011	10,684
Louisiana	17,462	18,647
Maine	1,356	1,327
Kansas	-	625
Maryland	74,723	83,942
Massachusetts	9,064	9,602
Michigan	2,583	6,797
Minnesota	-	259
Mississippi	930	773
Missouri	2,618	3,572
New Hampshire	520	494
New Jersey	23,810	25,318
New York	49,069	49,005
North Carolina	27,463	30,463
Ohio	25,279	36,673
Oregon	-	128
Pennsylvania	53,626	56,949
Rhode Island	3,670	3,952
South Carolina	8,960	9,914
Tennessee	6,422	7,300
Texas	397	355
Vermont	718	709
Virginia	54,333	58,042
Wisconsin	635	1,171

State	Population 1850	Population 1860
Territories:		
Colorado	-	46
Dakota	-	0
District of Columbia	10,059	11,131
Minnesota Territory	39	-
Nebraska	-	67
Nevada	-	45
New Mexico	207	85
Oregon Territory	24	-
Utah	22	30
Washington	-	30
Total	434,495	488,070