



Crossings, Coercion, and Consequences  
SLAVERY AND ITS REPERCUSSIONS IN CANADA

Transcribed and curated by Chris Willmore

Dedicated to

**DR. AFUA COOPER**

An inspiration and guiding  
light, whose pioneering  
work reminded us  
how much has been  
forgotten, and how much  
should be known,  
about slavery, Canada,  
crossings, coercion, and  
consequences.

“Our Yankee friends across the line  
Talk loud of liberty divine  
Then buy and sell, like sheep or swine,  
Three million fellow-creatures;  
But let a slave once touch our shores  
Poor Jonathan has to deplore  
His dollars lost for evermore,  
Which rather ‘riles’ his nature.

Here’s to our noble country  
Where white and black alike are free,  
To think and speak whate’er may be  
Their various opinions.  
And here’s unto our noble Queen,  
The best of sovereigns e’er was seen,  
And long and happy may she reign  
O’er all her vast dominions.”

*Canada* – poet unknown.  
*The British Whig* (Kingston), December 13, 1850

“Resolved, That although this House has long observed without uneasiness that fugitive slaves of color do, occasionally, escape into this Province; and, recognizing the law of nature which says ‘that the fugitive shall not be delivered up to his pursuers,’ this House is still unwilling to shut the door against the outcast; yet, the sudden introduction of a mass of Black Population, likely to continue without limitation, is a matter so dangerous to the peace and comfort of the inhabitants, that it now becomes necessary to prevent or check, by some prudent restrictions, this threatened evil.” –House of Assembly of Upper Canada, 1830.

## Before we begin: a note on language

When these articles were written, words such as “colored,” “negro” and “mulatto” were acceptable ways to refer to Black people and people of mixed heritage. Please be aware that these terms, when used in English, are often considered offensive<sup>1</sup> in modern society.

## Table of Contents

<i>Before we begin: a note on language</i> .....	4
<i>A selection of classified ads</i> .....	18
“From Mr. Orillat’s farm” (Montreal, 1775).....	18
“Plays the violin very well” (Quebec, 1775) .....	18
“Not very black” (Halifax, 1776) .....	18
“At the same time” (Halifax, 1776).....	18
“Born in Africa” (Quebec, 1777).....	19
Joe again (Quebec, 1778).....	19
“Guinea accent” (Montreal, 1778).....	20
“A Mulatto fellow called Jacob” (Montreal, 1778).....	20
“Both town and country housework” (Halifax, 1779).....	20
“Get him again or his wages” (Halifax, 1779).....	20
“Ten Dollars Reward for each” (Quebec, 1779) .....	21
“For no fault” (Halifax, 1780) .....	21
“Both ran away” (Halifax, 1780).....	21
“A Negro boy named Mungo” (Windsor, 1780).....	22
“Took with him a short blue coat” (Quebec, 1781) .....	22
“A Negro man named Cuff” (Quebec, 1785).....	22
“Broke out of His Majesty’s Gaol in Quebec” (Quebec, 1786).....	23
“Just arrived from Detroit” (Montreal, 1786) .....	23
“About thirteen years of age” (Quebec, 1788) .....	23
“A stout strong lad” (Quebec, 1788).....	23
“He will call himself a free Negro” (Quebec, 1788) .....	24

---

<sup>1</sup> For more details, see Smith, T. W. (1992). Changing Racial Labels: From “Colored” to “Negro” to “Black” to “African American”. *The Public Opinion Quarterly*, 56(4), 496-514.

“A young healthy Negro woman” (1790) .....	24
“Apprentice to Mr. Marshman” (Halifax, 1788) .....	24
“A Pawney boy” (Quebec, 1789) .....	25
“Stout, healthy” (Quebec, 1789) .....	25
“With a warranted title” (Quebec, 1789) .....	25
“All reasonable expenses will be paid” (Quebec, 1789) .....	25
“Has a cast in one eye” (Quebec, 1790) .....	25
“Has had the smallpox and measles” (Quebec, 1791) .....	26
“Low speech” (Westmoreland, 1791) .....	26
Selling cheese and a woman (Montreal, 1791) .....	26
“Peter Parker, master” (Shelbourne, 1791) .....	26
“Remarkable white teeth” (Digby, 1792) .....	27
“From Upper Canada” (Montreal, 1795) .....	27
A decade of “service” for sale (Montreal, 1797) .....	27
A runaway family (Montreal, 1798) .....	27
<i>Overview and Background</i> .....	28
“Some Interesting Facts” (1899) .....	28
Slavery in Canada (1886) .....	31
“The state of the law with reference to slaves” (1852) .....	34
Slavery in Upper Canada (1869) .....	36
IMPERIAL ACTS .....	36
LEGISLATION IN CANADA .....	37
THE SEVERAL CLAUSES .....	37
SLAVERY IN LOWER CANADA .....	38
JUSTICE OSGOOD .....	39
SLAVERY AT THE REBELLION .....	39
THOSE WHO HELD SLAVES .....	40
DESCENDANTS OF THE SLAVES .....	42
“FOR SALE” .....	42
“INDIAN SLAVE” .....	42
“ <i>Canadian Indian slavery in the eighteenth century</i> ” (1897) .....	43
<b>I. EXAMPLES OF EARLY CANADIAN SLAVERY</b> .....	43
<i>Slavery among the Portuguese, Spaniards, and New Englanders</i> .....	43
<i>Story of Inkle and Yarico</i> .....	44
<i>Reference to panis</i> .....	44
<i>The Pawnees, and Pani stock and their habitat</i> .....	46

[CONTENT WARNING – BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF HUMAN SACRIFICE]	46
<i>New York and other early Colonial documents</i> .....	48
<b>II. THE LOWER CANADA RECORDS AS TO PANIS</b> .....	<b>49</b>
<i>In [the] cities of Quebec, Three Rivers, Montreal, and elsewhere</i> .....	49
<i>The punishment of slaves, the pillory, carcan and rack</i> .....	49
<i>Panis in Montreal Hospital, [and] in the seigniories</i> .....	49
<b>III. LEGAL POSITION OF CANADIAN SLAVES</b> .....	<b>51</b>
<i>The statutes, ordinances, and edicts as to them</i> .....	51
<b>IV. PANIS IN UPPER CANADA</b> .....	<b>53</b>
<b><i>Slavery and Law</i></b> .....	<b>54</b>
Terms for the surrender of Montreal (1760) .....	54
A Nova Scotian Act restricting sales of alcohol to slaves (1761) .....	54
A brief mention of an Indigenous slave (1768) .....	56
“The right and power of selling them and their children” (1799) .....	56
“Slavery under certain modifications exists in this Province” (1800) .....	59
Monday, 21st April, 1800 .....	61
“The atrocious slave system” .....	62
“Negro servitude in the Province of Nova Scotia” (1802) .....	63
PREFACE.....	63
CASE.....	64
MR. APLIN’S OPINION .....	65
THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL’S OPINION .....	74
THE OPINION OF MR. TIDD .....	74
THE OPINION OF MR. PERCIVAL .....	75
“Concealed under a Spanish character” (1811).....	<b>76</b>
THE MERCED, ECHEVERRIA.....	76
FURTHER PROOF, DECREED.....	78
LA MERCED, ECHEVERIA.....	83
[EXTRACTS FROM A PETITION BY ANDREW BELCHER] .....	84
[RESPONSE OF THE COURT] .....	84
[EXTRACT FROM A PETITION BY FOREMAN, GRASSIE AND CO.] .....	85
[THE CASE OF THE SCHOONER SEVERN] .....	85
<b>The capture of the Amedie (1810)</b> .....	<b>87</b>
CAUSE OF THE AMEDIE, JAMES JOHNSON, MASTER .....	87
[JUDGMENT OF THE COURT] .....	87
<b>The Battle at Fuller’s Farm (1818)</b> .....	<b>88</b>
“Negro settlers” (1830).....	<b>91</b>
“No beneficial results will flow from it” (1830) .....	<b>92</b>

Resolutions of the House of Assembly of Upper Canada (1830) .....	92
<b>The rescue of Solomon Moseby (1837) .....</b>	<b>93</b>
[IN THE WORDS OF THE INFORMANT, A WOMAN OF COLOR] .....	93
[THE SAME STORY AS TOLD BY THE AUTHOR'S FRIEND, SECOND HAND] .....	96
[OTHER EXPLANATIONS OF THE HANDCUFFS] .....	99
[THE STORY AS TOLD BY FATHER HENSON TO A TORONTONIAN] .....	99
[DETAILS FROM OTHER INFORMANTS] .....	99
[NEWSPAPER ACCOUNTS OF THE INCIDENT] .....	99
<b>Another account of the rescue of Solomon Moseby (1852) .....</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>“Kindness toward the wandering fugitive” (1843) .....</b>	<b>103</b>
[THE BRITISH AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF SCIENCE AND INDUSTRY] .....	105
<b>The United States' Fugitive Slave Bill (1850) .....</b>	<b>107</b>
<b>A slavery sympathizer on a “slave’s abduction” at Chatham (1858).....</b>	<b>108</b>
<b>More information on “The Chatham Slave Case” (1858) .....</b>	<b>109</b>
<b>Dr. Jenkins buys back his daughters (1858).....</b>	<b>110</b>
<b>A fugitive slave in Victoria (1860) .....</b>	<b>111</b>
<b>“The decision of the Chief Justice” (1860).....</b>	<b>112</b>
<b><i>A North-Side View of Slavery (Abridged) (1856).....</i></b>	<b><i>113</i></b>
<b>AUTHOR'S PREFACE .....</b>	<b>113</b>
<b>INTRODUCTION.....</b>	<b>114</b>
<b>ST. CATHARINES .....</b>	<b>121</b>
JAMES ADAMS.....	122
WILLIAM JOHNSON .....	122
HARRIET TUBMAN .....	123
MRS. — — .....	123
REV. ALEXANDER HEMSLEY .....	123
JOHN SEWARD .....	125
JAMES SEWARD (BROTHER OF THE FOREGOING) .....	125
MRS. JAMES SEWARD .....	125
MR. — BOHM.....	125
JAMES M. WILLIAMS .....	125
JOHN ATKINSON .....	125
MRS. ELLIS .....	125
DAN JOSIAH LOCKHART .....	126
MRS. NANCY HOWARD.....	126
GEORGE JOHNSON .....	126
ISAAC WILLIAMS.....	126
CHRISTOPHER NICHOLS.....	126

HENRY BANKS .....	127
JOHN W. LINDSEY .....	127
HENRY ATKINSON .....	127
WILLIAM GROSE .....	128
DAVID WEST .....	129
HENRY JACKSON .....	129
<b>TORONTO.....</b>	<b>130</b>
CHARLES HENRY GREEN.....	131
JAMES W. SUMLER .....	131
PATRICK SNEAD .....	131
CHARLES PEYTON LUCAS .....	133
BENEDICT DUNCAN .....	133
WILLIAM HOWARD .....	134
ROBERT BELT.....	134
ELIJAH JENKINS .....	134
JOHN A. HUNTER .....	135
SAM DAVIS .....	135
<b>LONDON [ONTARIO].....</b>	<b>135</b>
ABY B. JONES .....	137
ALFRED T. JONES.....	138
NELSON MOSS.....	138
FRANCIS HENDERSON.....	139
MRS. FRANCIS HENDERSON .....	140
JOHN HOLMES .....	140
MRS. — BROWN .....	141
JOHN D. MOORE .....	141
CHRISTOPHER HAMILTON .....	141
MRS. CHRISTOPHER HAMILTON .....	142
ALEXANDER HAMILTON .....	142
MRS. SARAH JACKSON.....	143
HENRY MOREHEAD .....	143
AN OLD WOMAN .....	144
JOHN WARREN.....	144
BENJAMIN MILLER.....	144
<b>QUEEN'S BUSH .....</b>	<b>145</b>
WILLIAM JACKSON.....	145
THOMAS L. WOOD KNOX .....	146
SOPHIA POOLEY .....	146
JOHN FRANCIS.....	148
JOHN LITTLE.....	149
MRS. JOHN LITTLE .....	152
<b>CHATHAM.....</b>	<b>153</b>
J. C. BROWN .....	155



PHILIP YOUNGER.....	158
GILBERT DICKEY .....	158
WILLIAM J. ANDERSON.....	158
HENRY CRAWHION.....	159
MARY YOUNGER.....	159
EDWARD HICKS.....	159
HENRY BLUE.....	160
AARON SIDDLERS.....	160
JOHN C—N.....	161
REUBEN SAUNDERS.....	161
THOMAS HEDGEBETH.....	161
WILLIAM BROWN.....	161
MR. — —.....	162
ISAAC GRIFFIN.....	163
WILLIAM STREET.....	163
<b>[THE ELGIN SETTLEMENT AT] BUXTON.....</b>	<b>163</b>
ISAAC RILEY.....	167
MRS. ISAAC RILEY.....	167
HARRY THOMAS.....	168
R. VAN BRACKEN.....	168
HENRY JOHNSON.....	169
<b>DRESDEN; DAWN.....</b>	<b>169</b>
BRITISH AMERICAN INSTITUTE.....	169
WILLIAM HENRY BRADLEY.....	171
WILLIAM A. HALL.....	172
<b>WINDSOR.....</b>	<b>172</b>
REFUGEES' HOME.....	173
THOMAS JONES.....	175
WILLIAM S. EDWARDS.....	176
BEN BLACKBURN.....	176
WILLIAM L. HUMBERT.....	176
DAVID COOPER.....	176
JOHN MARTIN.....	177
DANIEL HALL.....	177
LYDIA ADAMS.....	178
J. F. WHITE.....	178
LEONARD HARROD.....	178
<b>SANDWICH.....</b>	<b>179</b>
GEORGE WILLIAMS.....	180
HENRY BRANT.....	181
MRS. HENRY BRANT.....	181
<b>AMHERSTBURG.....</b>	<b>182</b>

CHARLES BROWN.....	183
JAMES SMITH.....	183
REV. WILLIAM TROY.....	184
WILLIAM LYONS.....	184
<b>COLCHESTER.....</b>	<b>184</b>
ROBERT NELSON.....	185
DAVID GREER.....	187
EPHRAIM WATERFORD.....	187
ELI ARTIS.....	188
EPHRAIM CASEY.....	188
REV. WILLIAM RUTH.....	188
<b>GOSFIELD.....</b>	<b>189</b>
JOHN CHAPMAN.....	189
THOMAS JOHNSON.....	190
ELI JOHNSON.....	190
END.....	190
<b>“The exiled negroes in Canada” (1857).....</b>	<b>191</b>
I. THE NEGROES OF TORONTO.....	191
II. THE NEGROES OF HAMILTON AND CHATHAM.....	195
III. THE COLONY AT BUXTON.....	198
IV. GENERAL SOCIAL CONDITION – HEALTH.....	202
V. AFTERWORD BY THE EDITORS OF <i>THE TRIBUNE</i> .....	206
<b><i>The Elgin Settlement at Buxton.....</i></b>	<b><i>207</i></b>
<b>“The Elgin Settlement, Canada West” (1855).....</b>	<b>207</b>
A VISIT TO THE ELGIN SETTLEMENT.....	208
<b>“To render comfortable the situation” (1859).....</b>	<b>210</b>
<b>“The Abolitionist missionary and philanthropist” (1884).....</b>	<b>211</b>
<b>“The death of Rev. William King” (1895).....</b>	<b>214</b>
<b><i>The Dawn Institute.....</i></b>	<b><i>215</i></b>
<b>“Who will be able to plead like them?” (1843).....</b>	<b>215</b>
<b>The British American Institution, Dawn (1843).....</b>	<b>215</b>
<b>“Plans of operation” (1843).....</b>	<b>216</b>
CONSTITUTION.....	216
RULES.....	217
<b>“Its conditions and wants” (1845).....</b>	<b>218</b>
BRITISH AMERICAN INSTITUTE AND CANADA MISSION.....	218
<b>A letter from Fidelia Coburn (1845).....</b>	<b>220</b>
<b>“Progress and prospects” (1847).....</b>	<b>225</b>

BRITISH AMERICAN INSTITUTE .....	225
“He has no such credentials” (1851) .....	227
JOSIAH HENSON – CAUTION .....	227
MEETING .....	227
CERTIFICATE.....	228
<b>Incidents from the life of Josiah Henson (1852) .....</b>	<b>228</b>
[THE BRITISH AND AMERICAN INSTITUTE].....	242
“False and calumnious” (1852) .....	244
“In self-defense” (1852).....	245
THE COMMITTEE claiming to be the DAWN INSTITUTE COMMITTEE ...	245
“No agent at all” (1852) .....	246
“Agent of the Free Mission Baptists” (1853).....	246
An “interesting incident” at Niagara (1851).....	247
John Brown and the Dawn Institute (1855) .....	248
<i>The Refugees’ Home Society</i> .....	<i>249</i>
“No more begging for farms or clothes” (1852).....	249
“Aid to fugitives in Canada” (1852) .....	250
“The cause of justice demands an explanation” (1852) .....	252
“You have been wrongly informed” (1852) .....	253
“A long array of appalling facts” (1852) .....	256
“Truth is mighty and will prevail” (1853).....	260
MINUTES.....	264
“Highly useful and philanthropic” (1853) .....	265
“A good meeting – one of the right sort” (1853) .....	269
“We believe them to be benevolent” (1853).....	270
“Bickering between different religious creeds” (1857) .....	271
“Very difficult of fulfilment” (1860) .....	271
THE REFUGEE HOME SOCIETY.....	271
<i>John Anderson, Fugitive Slave</i> .....	<i>273</i>
“Differences in the administration of justice” (1861) .....	274
Anderson’s life in Canada, and betrayal (1863).....	277
PROCEEDS TO CHICAGO .....	277
ANDERSON BENEATH THE BRITISH FLAG.....	277
ANDERSON’S CONFIDENCE IS BETRAYED .....	278

“Their lordships’ intervention” (1861) .....	279
“A final decision” (1861).....	282
“The Anderson extradition case” (1861) .....	282
“Anderson makes a speech” (1861) .....	284
“It was a justifiable act” (1861).....	284
“To purchase his wife and children” (1861) .....	285
From England to Liberia (1863) .....	286
The final letter (1863).....	287
<i>From Nova Scotia to Sierra Leone</i> .....	<i>287</i>
“An English settlement on the coast of Guinea” (1786) .....	287
“His Lordship advised them not to go” (1786) .....	287
“Strange anecdotes” (1786).....	288
“A meeting of West India Planters and Merchants” (1791) .....	289
“Free settlement on the coast of Africa” (1792) .....	289
“Joyous feelings” (1792).....	290
“On their passage from Nova Scotia” (1792).....	290
“Under the protection of the Company” (1792) .....	291
“All in good health” (1792).....	291
“Some degree of sickness” (1792) .....	291
“But alas! It is all show!” (1792) .....	292
“A direct contradiction” (1792).....	293
“No doubt of their accomplishing this object” (1792) .....	293
“Freighted with all kinds of merchandise” (1792).....	294
“They have nothing to eat” (1792) .....	294
“The most melancholy accounts” (1792) .....	294
“Sickness and mortality” (1792) .....	295
“Greatly exaggerated” (1792).....	295
“Misery, diseases and death” (1792) .....	296
“The ferocity of the natives” (1792).....	296
“Not the least reason to believe” (1792) .....	296
“Of the most flattering nature” (1792).....	297
“Recovering from all the difficulties” (1792) .....	297

“Health of the Nova Scotia blacks was much improved” (1793).....	298
“The new settlers are very unhealthy” (1793) .....	298
“Our thanks are due to the directors” (1793).....	299
“In a flourishing state” (1793) .....	300
“A fair prospect of success” (1793) .....	300
“The mortality there was shocking” (1793).....	301
“Disagreeable accounts” (1793).....	303
“Extremely friendly” (1793).....	303
“Go on and prosper!” (1793).....	303
“The death of Prince Naimbana” (1793) .....	306
“Well inured to the climate” (1794).....	306
“An intention of murdering the Government and Council” (1794) .....	307
“They destroyed Sierra Leone” (1795) .....	308
“His vengeance should be confined to the British” (1795) .....	308
“The distresses of the Colony” (1795) .....	309
“Amounts to 40,000l.” (1795) .....	309
“Materially recovered” (1795) .....	309
“Sierra Leone continues to flourish” (1795) .....	310
“English vessels laden with slaves” (1795) .....	310
John McGregor on black immigration to Nova Scotia (1832) .....	310
<i>Appendix: Jamaican Maroons and Nova Scotia</i> .....	<i>315</i>
Overview and background (1927) .....	315
A supporter of slavery on the Maroons (1796).....	321
Letters on the settlement of Maroons in Nova Scotia (1797).....	323
No. 1 .....	323
No. 2 .....	323
No. 3 .....	323
No. 4 .....	325
No. 5 .....	327
No. 6 .....	327
No. 7 .....	327
No. 8 .....	330
No. 9 .....	331
No. 10 .....	331
([Enclosed paper] No. 1. In Sir John Wentworth’s [letter] of 2d June 1797.) ..	333

([Enclosed paper] No. 2. In Sir John Wentworth’s [letter] of 2d June 1797.)..	334
No. 11 .....	334
No. 12 .....	335
([Enclosed paper] No. 1. In Sir John Wentworth’s [letter] of the 12th August 1797.).....	336
([Enclosed paper] No. 2. In Sir John Wentworth’s [letter] of the 12th August 1797.).....	337
No. 13 .....	341
<b>General Walpole on the Maroons (1798).....</b>	<b>342</b>
<b>Preston in the late 19th century (1863).....</b>	<b>343</b>
<b><i>Appendix: From Slavery to Apprenticeship in Jamaica.....</i></b>	<b><i>345</i></b>
<b>“An interesting correspondence” (1828).....</b>	<b>345</b>
<b>“After the rebellion in Jamaica” (1835) .....</b>	<b>345</b>
<b>“The bitterness of the apprenticeship system” (1834).....</b>	<b>346</b>
LETTER FROM JAMAICA .....	346
EXTRACT FROM THE ADDRESS OF THE ASSEMBLY .....	346
REPLY OF THE GOVERNOR .....	347
<b>“Circumstances calculated to humiliate” (1837).....</b>	<b>349</b>
[MORE DETAILS FROM DR. PALMER] .....	353
[CONTENT WARNING – GRAPHIC PHYSICAL ABUSE BELOW].....	359
<b><i>Appendix: Indentured Apprenticeship in Canada.....</i></b>	<b><i>361</i></b>
<b>Eber Welden and Pierre Agie, runaways (1792).....</b>	<b>361</b>
<i>Twenty Dollars Reward</i> .....	361
<b>John Larkin, indentured apprentice (1809) .....</b>	<b>361</b>
EIGHT DOLLARS REWARD .....	361
<b>Samuel Ray, indentured apprentice (1810).....</b>	<b>362</b>
FIVE SHILLINGS REWARD .....	362
<b>Two apprentice shoemakers (1811) .....</b>	<b>362</b>
<b>Pierre La Rue, indentured apprentice (1824).....</b>	<b>363</b>
RUN AWAY.....	363
<b>Mary Finlay, apprentice servant (1830) .....</b>	<b>363</b>
<b>Samuel Styles, “good-for-nothing” apprentice (1835) .....</b>	<b>363</b>
<b>Thomas Donalds, indentured apprentice (1847) .....</b>	<b>364</b>
<b>A tongue-in-cheek Proclamation (1837).....</b>	<b>364</b>
PROCLAMATION .....	364
<b>Prince Edward Island’s new Act regarding apprentices (1845) .....</b>	<b>365</b>
<b>“An apprentice is a servant” (1847) .....</b>	<b>369</b>

“A word to apprentices” (1847) .....	370
BY ONE OF THEMSELVES .....	370
<b>The Apprentices: A Montreal comedy (1859) .....</b>	<b>372</b>
SCENE THE FIRST – NOTRE DAME STREET, MONTREAL .....	372
SCENE THE SECOND – THE COFFEE ROOM OF “THE FOUNTAIN” .....	373
SCENE THE THIRD – A PUBLIC STREET: A DARK NIGHT .....	374
SCENE THE FOURTH – THE COFFEE-ROOM OF “THE FOUNTAIN” .....	375
SCENE THE FOURTH – BOLUS’S SHOP, CLOSED.....	377
SCENE THE FIFTH – FIG’S SHOP, CLOSED.....	377
SCENE THE LAST – THE COFFEE-HOUSE OF “THE FOUNTAIN” .....	377
<b><i>Appendix: Naval Impressment .....</i></b>	<b><i>378</i></b>
“Dragged into bondage” (1849) .....	378
“Compared impressment to slavery” (1834).....	379
IMPRESSMENT OF SEAMEN [IMPERIAL PARLIAMENT].....	379
“A round-about and wasteful method” (1848).....	386
Naval desertion at Halifax (1807) .....	387
PUBLIC MEETING.....	387
<i>Reward of Seventy-four Dollars</i> .....	387
NOTICE.....	388
<b><i>Appendix: Joseph Brant.....</i></b>	<b><i>389</i></b>
“To rouse up the Six Nations to war” (1776).....	389
“Under the independent command of Capt. Joseph Brant” (1778) .....	389
<i>Extract of a letter from a gentleman at Albany dated August 22, 1778</i> .....	389
“Joseph drew them into an ambush” (1778) .....	390
<i>Extract of a letter from Quebec, dated July 8.....</i>	390
“Col. Brant, with a number of Indians” (1778) .....	390
“Has done every thing that has been done” (1778) .....	390
<i>Extract of a Letter from Quebec, Oct. 16.....</i>	390
The attack on Cherry Valley (1778).....	391
Defeating Washington’s brigades (1779) .....	392
“An ambush concerted by Capt. Joseph Brant” (1779) .....	392
“Entirely destroyed” (1780) .....	392
“Shared in the glory of this conquest” (1780).....	393
“The infamous Captain Brant” (1781) .....	393
“United with them in the same sentiments, and opinion” (1785) .....	393
Countering Brant’s influence (1785).....	394

“Forming a confederacy” (1785).....	395
“The celebrated King of the Mohawks” (1785).....	396
<i>Extract of a letter from Salisbury, Dec. 12</i> .....	396
“Presented to the Queen” (1785).....	396
“Visited several noblemen’s seats” (1786).....	397
“Peace with America” (1786) .....	397
“To counsel and try to pacify the Indians” (1786) .....	397
“Behaved with much generosity” (1786).....	398
“The most friendly disposition” (1790).....	398
“Colonel Brant, with about 40 chiefs” (1791).....	398
“I hope I will answer the good purpose” (1792).....	399
“Do not disturb them” (1792).....	400
“Now their king of kings” (1793).....	401
“From Captain Brant to Cornplanter” (1794) .....	401
“On a visit to the President of the United States” (1797) .....	402
“Among us we have no prisoners” (1801).....	402
“They never make a prisoner a slave” (1754).....	404
“The least that ought to be paid for a Prisoner” (1754) .....	406
The death of Joseph Brant (1808).....	407
<i>Appendix: The legend of Minnie Mink</i> .....	408
“A \$30,000 wife” (June 30, 1880) .....	408
“Buying experience” (1878).....	410
“A remarkable career” (June 30, 1880).....	411
“A dusky story” (July 1, 1880) .....	412
“Old story revived” (July 2, 1880) .....	414
“The Mink Family” (July 31, 1880).....	415
From “Landmarks of Toronto” (1894) .....	416
“Reminiscences” (1895).....	417
“The colored citizens of Toronto” (1914) .....	418
[AN EMANCIPATION DAY PARADE].....	418
[GEORGE MINK] .....	418
[RICHARDSON, THE “SPRING WATER ICE MAN”] .....	419
[LEMON JOHN, ALIAS THE REVEREND JOHN STOKES].....	419



[ANOTHER INCIDENT] .....	420
[BRIDGET AND GEORGE].....	420
[MRS. D'ORSAY] .....	422
<b>“The smartest man in creation” (1861).....</b>	<b>422</b>
<b>“More kidnapping” (1853).....</b>	<b>430</b>

Transcribed, annotated and curated by Chris Willmore

Victoria, B.C., Summer, 2022

A Skeride Publication



Note: This is an updated version, by the original curator, of  
*Slavery and Canada*, ISBN 978-1-9992295-6-6

Like that earlier version, this work is licensed under a  
[Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/).

Cover illustration by Chris Willmore.

## A selection of classified ads

### “From Mr. Orillat’s farm”<sup>2</sup> (Montreal, 1775)

Run away from Mr. Orillat’s<sup>3</sup> Farm on the Island of Montreal, on the 20th ult. A Negro about five feet five or six inches high, well-made, about twenty-two years of age, a mild countenance, long visage, with a small scar on the left side of his neck joining the jawbone, occasioned by a gland not yet cured: he had on when he went away a short grey coat of English druggat. Whoever brings him back to Mr. John Orillat shall have a reasonable reward.

### “Plays the violin very well”<sup>4</sup> (Quebec, 1775)

Run away from the Subscriber (on the eighteen instant) a Negro man named *Lowcanes*, aged twenty-five years, thin-faced, and remarkable long hair tied behind, about five feet ten inches high, speaks good French, no English, plays the violin very well. He had on when he went off a light-colored short coat with a red cape to it, waistcoat and breeches: Whoever secures the said Negro man so that his Master may have him again shall have sixteen dollars reward, and charges from WILLIAM GILL.

### “Not very black”<sup>5</sup> (Halifax, 1776)

Ran away on Monday the 10th of June last, between the hours of 9 and 10 at night, a Negro woman named FLORIMELL. She had on when she went away a red poplin gown, a blue baize outside petticoat and a pair [of] men’s shoes. She commonly wears a handkerchief round her head, has scars in her face, speaks broken English and is not very black; whoever will apprehend said runaway and bring word to the Printer shall have One Guinea Reward and all charges paid for their trouble.

### “At the same time”<sup>6</sup> (Halifax, 1776)

Run away, from the Subscriber on Thursday last, a Negro man called CATO about five feet two or three inches high, has a heavy look, about thirty years of age, speaks good English. [He] had on when he went away a long green coat with black horn buttons, white coarse cloth breeches with flat pewter buttons, white yarn stockings, a brown coat, a white cloth waistcoat, almost new, with flat pewter buttons, some new white shirts, and sundry other things. The said [missing line] deceased at Horton; and is supposed to have gone that way, he being (as he said) often invited to go up the country.

---

<sup>2</sup> From AVERTISSEMENS. (1775, September 7). *Quebec Gazette*, p. 3.

<sup>3</sup> Jean Orillat (1733 – 1797), a prominent merchant and fur trader.

<sup>4</sup> From Gill, W. (1775, November 30). RUN AWAY [Advertisement]. *Quebec Gazette*, p. 4.

<sup>5</sup> From RAN AWAY. (1776, July 9). *Nova Scotia Gazette*, p. 1.

<sup>6</sup> From RAN AWAY. (1776, September 17). *Nova Scotia Gazette*, p. 4.

Run away, at the same time, JAMES BONEMAN, an apprentice to the Subscriber, between fifteen and sixteen years of age, straight short hair, thin countenance and full-eyed; very talkative and speaks quick. [He] had on when he went away, either a blue stroud coat with flat white metal buttons, or an old brown coat with horn buttons (having both with him), a pair of coarse trousers, woollen stockings, his shoes full large with brass or copper buckles, [and] a silver brooch in his bosom. [He] carried with him some shirts old and new, and a pair of plated buckles, which he bought the night he went off.

Whoever will secure the above persons, so that they may be returned to me in Halifax, shall receive Twenty Dollars Reward for each of them, and all reasonable charges paid by RICH[ARD] WENMAN.<sup>7</sup>

N. B. If they will return of themselves, they shall be forgiven.

### **“Born in Africa”<sup>8</sup> (Quebec, 1777)**

Ran away from the printing-office in Quebec, on Saturday evening the twenty-second instant, a Negro lad named Joe, born in Africa, about twenty years of age, about five feet and a half high, full round face, a little marked with the small-pox, speaks English and French tolerably; he had on when he went away an old green fur cap, an old sky-blue broadcloth coat, an old grey ratteen jacket, leather breeches, brown leggings and Canadian moccasins. All persons are hereby forewarned from harboring or aiding him to escape, as they may depend on being prosecuted to the utmost rigor of the Law, and whoever will give information where he is harbored, or bring him back, shall have four dollars reward from the Printer.

### **Joe again<sup>9</sup> (Quebec, 1778)**

Ran away from the printing-office in Quebec, on Saturday night the twenty-fifth instant, a Negro lad named Joe, born in Africa, about twenty years of age, about five feet and a half high, full round fac'd, a little marked with the smallpox, speaks English and French tolerably; he had on when he went away a new green fur cap, a blue suit of clothes, a pair of grey worsted stockings and Canadian moccasins. All persons are hereby forewarned from harboring or aiding him escape, as they may depend on being prosecuted to the utmost rigor of the Law, and whoever will give information where he is harbored, or bring him back, shall have Eight Dollars Reward from the Printer.

---

<sup>7</sup> Richard Wenman (c. 1711 – 1781) arrived in Halifax in 1749 as one of its first settlers. According to the *Canadian Encyclopedia*, Cato was eventually recaptured, but freed in his will.

<sup>8</sup> From ADVERTISEMENTS. (1777, November 27). *Quebec Gazette*, p. 3..

<sup>9</sup> From FADVERTISEMENTS. (1778, January 29). *Quebec Gazette*, p. 3.

### **“Guinea accent”<sup>10</sup> (Montreal, 1778)**

Run away on Saturday night the 10th instant, a Negro man named Jack, about five feet eight inches high, had on when he went away a red coat faced with green, buff waistcoat and breeches, and an old blanket coat, speaks no other tongue but English, and that upon the Guinea accent, his foretop turned back, very black, with a large beard, was lately purchased at Captain Covell’s, of Colonel Peter’s Volunteers. Whoever will secure the said Negro, that his master may get him again, shall have a Reward of Eight Dollars and all reasonable charges paid by Finlay & Gregory, merchants near the marketplace, Montreal.

### **“A Mulatto fellow called Jacob”<sup>11</sup> (Montreal, 1778)**

Run away on Friday night the 10th instant, from Mr. Prentice’s, a Mulatto fellow called Jacob, about eighteen years of age, had on when he went away a light brown fustian short coat, white cloth waistcoat and breeches, and a round hat, about five feet five inches high, well made and very active, speaks little or no French. Whoever secures and brings said Mulatto to Mr. Miles Prentice in Quebec, or to Mr. Thomas Richardson, at the Coffee House, Montreal, shall receive Four Dollars Reward and reasonable charges. All Captains and Masters of vessels are desired not to take on board said Mulatto.

### **“Both town and country housework”<sup>12</sup> (Halifax, 1779)**

To be sold, an able Negro wench, about 21 years of age, who is capable of performing both town and country housework. She is an exceeding good cook. For further particulars enquire of the Printer.

### **“Get him again or his wages”<sup>13</sup> (Halifax, 1779)**

Run away on Friday the 20 instant, from the Subscriber, a Negro man servant named CROMWELL, a short, thick-set, strong fellow, has had the smallpox very full in the face, especially over his nose; speaks good English, had on when he went away, an outside green cloth jacket, white shirt and white breeches, long trousers and shoes, and a cocked hat. Whoever will apprehend said Negro, or secure him, by favor of the Captain, on board any of his Majesty’s ships, or others bound here, so that his Master may get him again or his wages, shall receive Five Pounds<sup>14</sup> Reward and all necessary charges paid; or if any true intelligence can be given of him, that it may be certainly known whether he went off in the Fleet, which sailed last, as is supposed, and in

---

<sup>10</sup> From RUN AWAY. (1778, June 4). *Quebec Gazette*, p. 2.

<sup>11</sup> From RUN away. (1778, July 30). *Quebec Gazette*, p. 2.

<sup>12</sup> From To be SOLD. (1779, January 19). *Nova Scotia Gazette*, p. 2.

<sup>13</sup> From Twenty Dollars Reward. (1779, September 14). *Nova Scotia Gazette*, p. 3.

<sup>14</sup> Listed as “Twenty Dollars” in the title of the ad, implying an exchange rate of \$4 to £1.

which ship, Twenty Shillings shall be paid to the first person that informs of him, to his said Master. JACOB HURD.

N. B. All masters of vessels and others are cautioned against harboring and concealing said servant, as they would avoid being prosecuted.

### **“Ten Dollars Reward for each”<sup>15</sup> (Quebec, 1779)**

Ran away from the Subscriber, on Sunday morning the 24th ult., about four o'clock, a Negro lad named Nemo, born in Albany, near eighteen years of age, about five feet high, a little marked with the smallpox, speaks English and French tolerably; he had on when he went away a double-breasted jacket of striped flannel, old worsted stockings, and a pair of English shoes.

Also a Negro wench named Cash, twenty-six years old, about 5 feet 8 inches high, speaks English and French very fluently; she carried with her a considerable quantity of linen and other valuable effects not her own; and as she has also taken with her a large bundle of wearing apparel belonging to herself, consisting of a black satin cloak, caps, bonnets, ruffles, ribbons, six or seven petticoats, a pair of old stays, and many other articles of value which cannot be ascertained, it is likely she may change her dress.

All persons are hereby forewarned from harboring or aiding them to escape, and Masters of vessels from carrying them off, as they may depend on being prosecuted to the utmost rigor of the Law; and whoever will give information where they are harbored, or bring them back to the Subscriber at Quebec, or to Mr. George Ross, merchant at Sorel, shall have Ten Dollars Reward for each, and all other reasonable charges. HUGH RITCHIE.

N.B. The lad was seen at Sorel on Friday morning the 29th ult. And there is reason to believe they are both lurking thereabout.

### **“For no fault”<sup>16</sup> (Halifax, 1780)**

To be sold, for no fault, a likely Negro girl, about 14 years of age. Enquire of the Printer of this Paper.

### **“Both ran away”<sup>17</sup> (Halifax, 1780)**

Whereas two Negro men, named BON PORTER, about 30 years of age, stout and well made, nearly five feet six inches high, lame in one foot, and limps much in his walk; and SILAS RUEN, a thin-made Negro, about eighteen years of age, has a sauntering walk and a sullen look, *both ran away* a few nights since:

---

<sup>15</sup> From ADVERTISEMENTS. (1779, December 9). *Quebec Gazette*, p. 2.

<sup>16</sup> From To be SOLD. (1780, August 1). *Nova Scotia Gazette*, p. 4.

<sup>17</sup> From Four Guineas Reward. (1780, September 5). *Nova Scotia Gazette*, p. 2.

This is to give notice, that any person apprehending them, and bringing them to the commanding Engineer's Office in *Halifax*; shall have Four Guineas Reward, or Two Guineas for one of them, to be paid by the Subscriber. RICHARDSON.

HALIFAX, Sept. 2d, 1780.

N. B. Supposed to have on blue jackets, and long blue and white trousers when they eloped. Whoever harbors or employs them will be prosecuted.

### **“A Negro boy named Mungo”<sup>18</sup> (Windsor, 1780)**

Ran away from BENJAMING DEWOLF of *Windsor*, on Tuesday 17th instant, a Negro boy named Mungo, about 14 years of age, straight and well-built. [He] had on when he went away a short blue jacket, lined with white flannel, with a brown cloth jacket underneath, long trousers of dark checked linen, a white dowlas shirt, and a broad-brimmed hat. [He] had in a bundle another shirt [of] striped cotton, and a short brown cloth coat trimmed with red livery. Whoever will apprehend said Negro boy, and secure him in some of his Majesty's jails, and notify his said Master or send him home, shall be paid all necessary charges and shall be further handsomely rewarded for their trouble by B. DEWOLF.

N. B. Masters of vessels and all others are cautioned not to harbor or carry off said Negro boy, as they would avoid prosecution.

### **“Took with him a short blue coat”<sup>19</sup> (Quebec, 1781)**

Run away from the subscriber, the 27th of June last, a Negro man named Nero, 24 years of age, about 5 feet nine inches high; took with him a short blue coat lined with red serge; a short grey coat; one ditto of green blanket; a double-breasted green jacket, one ditto of Tuken [sic.] with trousers of the same, a fustian waistcoat and breeches. Whoever apprehends the said Negro and secures him, so that his Master may have him, shall receive Fifty Shillings Reward and all reasonable charges paid, by applying to Mr. William Laing in Quebec, if the Negro should be taken near it, but if near Montreal apply to the owner, John Mittleberger.

N. B. All persons are hereby forbid to harbor or employ the above-described slave, or they may depend on being prosecuted with the utmost rigor of the Law. All Captains of vessels and others are forewarned not to carry him off at their peril; strict search will be made, and warrants are issued for that purpose.

### **“A Negro man named Cuff”<sup>20</sup> (Quebec, 1785)**

Ran away the 28th or 29th of last month, a Negro man named Cuff, about 38 years of age, 5 feet 8 inches high; had on when he went away a white shirt, a drab-colored waistcoat, the sleeves of old stockings, a blue greatcoat, round hat, with a

---

<sup>18</sup> From RAN AWAY. (1780, October 3). *Nova Scotia Gazette*, p. 4.

<sup>19</sup> From RUN away. (1781, October 18). *Quebec Gazette*, p. 4.

<sup>20</sup> From A NEGRO MAN. (1785, June 30). *Quebec Gazette*, p. 4.

band and buckle, a pair of green leggings, and black buckles in his shoes; he has some scars on his temples, and a scar on one of his hands. Whoever will apprehend him and bring him to the Subscriber, shall have Six Dollars reward, and all reasonable charges paid. Captains of vessels and others are requested not to harbor or carry off said Negro. ELIZABETH MCNEILL.

**“Broke out of His Majesty’s Gaol in Quebec”<sup>21</sup> (Quebec, 1786)**

Broke out of His Majesty’s Gaol in Quebec, on Saturday morning the 18th of February last, a Negro man slave named Joe, born in Africa, twenty-six years of age, about five feet seven inches high, a little pitted with the smallpox, has several scars on his legs, speaks English and French fluently, and is by trade a Pressman.<sup>22</sup> He had on him when he broke out a blue greatcoat, a red outside jacket, a white under-jacket, and [a] round hat. He was seen some time ago in the parish of L’Ange Gardien below the falls of Montmorency. All persons are hereby forewarned from harboring or aiding him to escape, as they will be prosecuted to the utmost extent of the Law; and whoever will give information where he is harbored, that he may be had again, shall receive Three Guineas Reward from the Printer of the Gazette.

**“Just arrived from Detroit”<sup>23</sup> (Montreal, 1786)**

To be sold by private sale. A Mulatto, of about 24 Years old, just arrived from Detroit; has had the smallpox, speaks good English and French; those who chooses to purchase him, may inquire at the Subscriber. Jos. ROY.

**“About thirteen years of age”<sup>24</sup> (Quebec, 1788)**

Run away on the 24th instant, a Negro boy named Ben, about thirteen years of age, five feet four or five inches high, black hair, and very straight; had on when he went off a blue round jacket and trousers, and a round hat. Whoever will apprehend the said boy and return him to his master at Mr. *Levy Solomons’*, shall be well rewarded and all expenses paid. All persons are forewarned to harbor or employ the said Negro, under pain of being prosecuted as the law directs. M. MICHAELS.

**“A stout strong lad”<sup>25</sup> (Quebec, 1788)**

Run away from the Schooner Lucy, a Mulatto fellow named Pascal Puro, the property of John Sargent; he is about eighteen years of age, a stout strong lad, about five feet six or seven inches high, talks good English, writes and reads, has a scar

---

<sup>21</sup> From BROKE. (1786, June 1). *Quebec Gazette*, p. 4.

<sup>22</sup> This is probably the same Joe who escaped the printer in late 1777 and early 1778.

<sup>23</sup> From Roy, G. (1786, August 31). A Vendre [Advertisement]. *Montreal Gazette*, p. 4.

<sup>24</sup> From RUN away. (1788, May 22). *Quebec Gazette*, p. 4.

<sup>25</sup> From RUN AWAY. (1788, June 26). *Quebec Gazette*, p. 4.

under one of his ears, calls himself a free man, [and] is supposed to be concealed in some house in this town. Any person harboring or taking away said fellow, will be dealt with agreeable to law. Four Dollars Reward will be given any person giving information, so that he may be secured, by applying to CONSTANT FREEMAN.

### **“He will call himself a free Negro”<sup>26</sup> (Quebec, 1788)**

Eight Dollars Reward: Run away from the Subscriber on Saturday morning, a Negro man named Ishmael, aged about thirty-five years, five feet eight inches high, black short curled hair, marked with the smallpox, wants some teeth, and a joint to his left hand little finger; speaks English, a little French and Dutch; had on when he ran away a round hat, a sailor’s blue jacket, a white waistcoat, blue trousers and no shoes, &c. It is supposed he will call himself a free Negro.

Whoever apprehends said Negro, and brings him to his Master, shall receive the promised Reward, and all reasonable charges. JOHN TURNER, Senior.

### **“A young healthy Negro woman”<sup>27</sup> (1790)**

To be sold, a young healthy Negro woman capable of most kind of business [who] is a good cook and housemaid, understands milking cows and making butter, and [is] of undoubted sobriety and honesty. *For particulars apply to the printer.*

### **“Apprentice to Mr. Marshman”<sup>28</sup> (Halifax, 1788)**

**Hannah Thompson may not have been enslaved, but an apprenticeship was enough to empower her “Master” to legally prevent her escape.**

Run away, the 26th instant, in Halifax, a Negro woman, who calls herself Hannah Thompson (if not changes her name), the said Negro woman [an] apprentice to Mr. MARSHMAN. She had on when she went away, a brown jacket, a white blanket petticoat, a handkerchief with a blue grouse red and white spotted, and red borders near an inch broad, a pair of men’s stockings black and white striped, and a pair of Megasons [?]<sup>29</sup>. Some years ago, her legs were very much scalded, which may easily be discerned. She chews tobacco like a man. It is requested, that no person or persons hire or entertain said Negro woman, as the Law will be put in force against them if proved. Any person apprehending the said Negro woman, so that she may be

---

<sup>26</sup> From EIGHT DOLLARS REWARD. (1788, July 17). *Quebec Gazette*, p. 4.

<sup>27</sup> From TO BE SOLD. (1790, May 3). *Quebec Herald*, p. 2.

<sup>28</sup> From RUN AWAY. (1789, January 20). *Royal Gazette*, p. 2. The ad was printed in January, 1889, but Hannah ran away on December 26, 1788.

<sup>29</sup> The French word “mégason” is a folk name for the earthnut pea, which has distinctive bell-shaped, magenta flowers. It may be a reference to an article of clothing, such as brightly colored baggy pants, resembling them. Due to blurred ink in the original, the word could also be “Megasones” or “Megafones”.



brought back, shall receive Four Dollars Reward with thanks; and if [gone] into the country all reasonable expenses shall be [paid] by JEREMIAH MARSHMAN.

**“A Pawney boy”<sup>30</sup> (Quebec, 1789)**

**The term “Pawney,” or *Panis*, indicated an Indigenous slave.**

To be sold, a Pawney boy, about seventeen years of age, remarkable sober, very healthy and stout, and an excellent servant to attend table. His present master has had him nine years, and has now no further use for him. *Enquire of the printer.*

**“Stout, healthy”<sup>31</sup> (Quebec, 1789)**

For sale, a stout, healthy Mulatto girl, 26 years of age, or thereabouts. *Enquire of the Printer.*

**“With a warranted title”<sup>32</sup> (Quebec, 1789)**

To be sold (*with a warranted title*) a stout healthy<sup>33</sup> Mulatto woman, *at a moderate price* – Apply to the Printer.

**“All reasonable expenses will be paid”<sup>34</sup> (Quebec, 1789)**

Run away from the subscriber, last spring, a Negro wench named *Ruth*; it is suspected she is about St. John’s. If any person will apprehend the said Negro wench and deliver her to Mr. *Fitch*, at St. John’s, Mr. *Dillon* at Montreal, or the Subscriber in Quebec, all reasonable expenses will be paid, by JOHN SAUL.

**“Has a cast in one eye”<sup>35</sup> (Quebec, 1790)**

Run away from the Subscriber, a Negro man named Richard, about five foot seven inches high, twenty-seven years of age, and has a cast in one eye; had on when he went away, dark brown jacket and long trousers; whoever will apprehend and return him to the subscriber shall receive Two Guineas Reward and all reasonable expenses paid. *Rosseter Hoyle.*

---

<sup>30</sup> From TO BE SOLD. (1789, February 16). *Quebec Herald*, p. 116.

<sup>31</sup> From FOR SALE. (1789, May 25). *Quebec Herald*, p. 233.

<sup>32</sup> From TO BE SOLD. (1789, September 14). *Quebec Herald*, p. 370.

<sup>33</sup> Probably the same stout, healthy woman advertised for sale the previous May.

<sup>34</sup> From RUN AWAY. (1789, December 14). *Quebec Herald*, p. 28.

<sup>35</sup> From RUN AWAY. (1790, November 1). *Quebec Herald*, p. 1.

### **“Has had the smallpox and measles”<sup>36</sup> (Quebec, 1791)**

To be sold, a young Negro lad, about 18 or 19 years of age, strong and very healthy, has had the smallpox and measles, brought up to the farming business and understands it well. He speaks the *English, French, and German* languages well. Any person who has a mind to purchase the same, for further particulars apply to the Printer.

### **“Low speech”<sup>37</sup> (Westmoreland, 1791)**

Ran away from the Subscriber the 25th last a Negro man named Nero, about 25 years old, five feet ten inches high, low speech, not very Black, part of the Mulatto breed. [He] had on when run away, a dark brown coat, homespun brown and white twilled trousers, [and] also carried away with him a blanket and a woollen shirt. Whoever will take up said Negro and return him to the Subscriber, shall have Two Guineas Reward, and all reasonable charges paid. GID. PALMER.<sup>38</sup>

### **Selling cheese and a woman<sup>39</sup> (Montreal, 1791)**

J. A. Gray has for sale at his stores in Saint Joseph’s Street, next the Grand Parade, double and single Gloucester Cheese, London Porter, in Hampers of 3 dozen each. Also to be sold, a healthy Negro Woman aged about twenty-five, a tolerable good cook. Understands washing and the business appertaining to a female servant. – She will be disposed of on very moderate terms.

### **“Peter Parker, master”<sup>40</sup> (Shelbourne, 1791)**

Run away, the first inst., from the Schooner *Friends Adventure*, Peter Parker, master, a yellow fellow named Isaac Lusher, about twenty years old, five feet four inches high, a remarkable round face; part of the Mulatto breed; speaks very good English; had on when he went away a blue jacket and linen trousers, [and] a large felt hat, half worn.

Whoever will take up said Mulatto or Negro, and return him to Mr. *Charles Hill* or Mr. *Richard Townshend*, merchant in Shelbourne, shall have Five Dollars Reward, and all reasonable charges paid.

All persons are forewarned not to harbor or employ said Mulatto, as they may expect to be prosecuted as the Law directs.

---

<sup>36</sup> From TO BE SOLD. (1791, April 7). *Quebec Herald*, p. 1.

<sup>37</sup> From RUN AWAY. (1791, June 28). *Royal Gazette*, p. 1.

<sup>38</sup> Probably Gideon Palmer (1749 – 1824), who fought for the British as part of De Lancey’s Brigade during the U. S. War of Independence.

<sup>39</sup> From Gray, J. A. (1791, November 4). J. A. GRAY [Advertisement]. *Montreal Gazette*, p. 4.

<sup>40</sup> From RUN AWAY. (1791, July 12). *Royal Gazette*, p. 1.

### **“Remarkable white teeth”<sup>41</sup> (Digby, 1792)**

Run away, Joseph Odel and Peter Lawrence (Negroes) from their Masters, and left Digby last evening. The first mentioned is about twenty-four years of age, five feet six inches high, [and] had on a light brown coat, red waistcoat and thickset breeches, but took other clothes with him. He is a likely young fellow with remarkable white teeth. The other is about five feet eight inches high, very black, [and] had on light-ish colored clothes. Whoever will secure said Negroes so that their Masters may have them again, shall receive Ten Dollars Reward, and all reasonable charges paid [by] DANIEL ODEL [and] PHILIP EARL.

### **“From Upper Canada”<sup>42</sup> (Montreal, 1795)**

For Sale. A young healthy Negro wench between 12 and 13 years of age, lately from Upper Canada, where she was brought up – Enquire of GIBB & PRIOR.

### **A decade of “service” for sale<sup>43</sup> (Montreal, 1797)**

For Sale. Ten years’ service of a Negro girl aged about seventeen years – Enquire of the Printers.

### **A runaway family<sup>44</sup> (Montreal, 1798)**

Nine Dollars Reward: Ran away from the Subscriber, on the 12th instant, a Negro man named Robin or Bob. He is about five feet six inches high, had on when he went away, coarse shirt and trousers, a light-colored cloth waistcoat, felt hat, and old shoes, also a Negro Woman named Lydia or Lil, partly of the mulatto color, about five feet high had on a blue and white striped short gown, a blue druggit<sup>45</sup> petticoat and black silk bonnet. She is thick and well set. They may possibly change their clothes; they took with them a mulatto child, named Jane about four years old. Any person taking up and securing said Negroes and child, so that the owner gets them again, shall have the above reward and all reasonable charges paid by JAMES FRAZER.

N.B. All masters of vessels and all others are hereby forbid to harbor, employ, carry off, or conceal, said negroes, as they will be prosecuted in the highest manner, the said James Frazer has the protection of Government for said Negroes.

---

<sup>41</sup> From RUN AWAY. (1792, July 3). *Royal Gazette*, p. 3.

<sup>42</sup> FOR SALE [Advertisement]. (1795, December 28). *Montreal Gazette*, p. 4.

<sup>43</sup> FOR SALE [Advertisement]. (1797, July 31). *Montreal Gazette*, p. 3.

<sup>44</sup> From Frazer, J. (1798, August 20). Nine Dollars Reward [Advertisement]. *Montreal Gazette*, p. 3.

<sup>45</sup> A cheap woolen cloth.

## Overview and Background

### “Some Interesting Facts”<sup>46</sup> (1899)

Canadians just held the slave trade and everything pertaining to it in abhorrence. Yet the searchlight of history shows us that in the early part of the present century, as well as in the past, slaves and slave-owners were to be found both in Upper Canada<sup>47</sup> and the lower provinces. Dr. T. Watson Smith<sup>48</sup> in the latest publication<sup>49</sup> of the Nova Scotia historical society has brought together a great many facts relating to Canadian slavery, the larger part of which will be entirely new to most readers.

The first slave sale reported in Canada took place in 1628, when David Kertk sold a Madagascar negro boy for 50 half-crowns. Late in the 17th century occasional mention is made of the presence of Indian slaves at Montreal. These “Panis,” captured in war, made better domestics than the aborigines of some other tribes. But the Indian after a time had an uncomfortable habit of finding his way back to his native forest, and the French, for lack of servants, were often in rather hard straits.

Naturally then they looked toward Africa for relief, for the fame of the Virginia slaves had extended beyond the English colonies. King Louis apparently hesitated a little before giving permission to his African subjects to engage in the slave trade until, as a salve for his conscience and theirs, it was suggested that the conversion of these proposed slaves to Christianity might counterbalance any ill-effects arising from the traffic.

Throughout the 18th century, at least during the French supremacy, there is repeated legal recognition of slaves in Canada. One edict made the negro movable property, and another, in 1736, regulated the manner in which he should be emancipated. The demand for slaves in Canada was not as great as first expected, although “negroes, effects and merchandise” continued to be grouped together in documents down to the transfer of Canada to the English. The articles of capitulation provided that negroes and Panis should remain in their condition of slaves.

Until after the Revolution the slaves in the province of Quebec did not increase greatly. Indeed, the census of 1784 gave only 304 as the number, and some of these had come in with loyalist<sup>50</sup> refugees from New York. The number in Ontario may have been larger in proportion to the larger number of loyalists in this province, but

---

<sup>46</sup> From Reed, H. L. (1899, December 28). OLD-TIME SLAVERY IN CANADA. *The New Haven Morning Journal and Courier*, p. 10. Written by Helen Leah Reed (1864 – 1926). The title I’ve given this article is taken from the original’s sub-title: “Some Interesting Facts – Brought to Light by the Nova Scotia Historical Society.”

<sup>47</sup> Now part of Ontario. The author of the article, an American, may have meant Lower Canada (now part of Quebec), which is north of Upper Canada and therefore above it on a conventional map. The confusion is resolved once one knows that ‘Lower’ and ‘Upper’ were relative to traveling along the St. Lawrence, from Europe via the Atlantic Ocean. The ‘lower’ portion was the part first reached.

<sup>48</sup> Thomas Watson Smith (c. 1835 – 1902).

<sup>49</sup> “The Slave in Canada,” in *Collections of the Royal Nova Scotia Historical Society, Vol. X.*

<sup>50</sup> People who remained loyal to Britain during and after the American Revolution (1765 – 1783)..

on the whole there was a growing sentiment in Upper Canada against slavery. In 1793 Lieut-Gov. Simcoe<sup>51</sup> had said: "From the moment that I assume the government of Upper Canada, under no modification will I assent to a law that discriminates by honest policy between the natives of Africa, America or Europe." In the same year, during the second session of the first Parliament of Upper Canada, a bill was passed "to prevent the further introduction of slaves," and "to limit the term of contracts for servitude in this province." While those who then owned slaves were not disturbed in the possession of their property, the further importation of slaves was forbidden, and all children born to those negroes who were then slaves were to be free after reaching the age of 25. [...]

The French in Acadia<sup>52</sup> probably had no slaves, but doubtless they were bought and sold in Halifax soon after that City was founded. A number of them were employed in the building of the rocky city, as may be readily inferred from an advertisement in the Boston Evening Post, 1751: "Just arrived from Halifax, and to be sold, 10 strong, hearty negro men, mostly tradesmen, such as caulkers, carpenters, sail-makers and ropemakers." An [...] advertisement in the Halifax Gazette reads: "To be sold at public auction, on Monday, the 3d of November, at the house of Mr. John Rider, two slaves, viz., a boy and a girl, about 11 years old; likewise a puncheon of choice cherry brandy and sundry other articles." Advertisements offering rewards for runaway slaves were not uncommon, but it is doubtful if these slaves were very often found. The nearness of Halifax to the sea offered too easy a means of escape.

Many negroes accompanied the loyalists to the Maritime provinces. Most of these were escaped slaves from the southern states, who during the Revolution had fled within the British lines. Sir Henry Clinton and other British generals had offered their protection, and many of them had served in the British regiments in various capacities. One negro corps, the black pioneers, was formed, and rendered efficient military service. The 2,000 escaped slaves in New York at the close of the war were in great terror lest they should be returned to their former owners. Sir Guy refused Washington's demand for the giving up of these slaves, adding that if sending them away should be regarded as an infraction of the treaty, compensation must be made to their owners by the British government. Accordingly, a register was kept of the name, age and occupation of each negro sent away from New York, together with the name and residence of his former master. These escaped slaves, provided with certificates, were sent in transports to Nova Scotia and New Brunswick. The addition to their number of many liberated slaves from the South gave Nova Scotia a fairly large negro population after the war.

In connection with the settling of the black pioneers in Nova Scotia, a [...] letter may be quoted, which the writer recently came across in the archives at Halifax. It is dated Annapolis Royal, August 21, 1784, and was addressed to "Wm. Parr, Esq., Captain-General and Governor of his Majesty's Province, Nova Scotia."

---

<sup>51</sup> John Graves Simcoe (1752 – 1806), first Lieutenant Governor of Upper Canada.

<sup>52</sup> A French colony containing modern P.E.I., New Brunswick and Nova Scotia.

Sir: The Humble Petition of the Black Pioneers beg your Honours would be so good as to look into the following description. Sir, we first enlisted in the year 1776, and was promised when we was sworn by Alderman Wadla by order of Sir Henry Clinton to serve faithfully and truly during the American rebellion, which, when it was over, we was to be at our own Liberty to do and provide for ourselves.

Which when we came to this place I look upon it the order of government, we have not received, which we would be very much obliged to your excellency if you would be so good as to grant the articles allowed by government to us the same as the rest of the Disbanded Soldiers of His Majesty's army.

Which when we first enlisted and served and swore, we was promised that we should have land and provisions the same as the rest of the disbanded soldiers, and which we have not received, but would be ever bound to pray for your Excellency if you would be so good as to order us what was all ours by Government the same as the rest of the new core<sup>53</sup>, which our provision is now stopped, and we would be much obliged to and bound to pray for your excellency, if you would be so good as to order us to receive it. As we have behaved ourselves according to our promise at the first swearing in, which for myself I have my character<sup>54</sup> along with me to show, which I believe that any Gentleman that knows the Pioneers give them the same, which we would be ever bound to pray for your Excellency if you would grant us what is allowed by Government.

In behalf of the Black Pioneers.

Thomas Murphy Peters<sup>55</sup>.

Murphy Still.

Sergeants of the Company of Pioneers.

This letter, in spite of peculiarities of spelling, evidently had some weight, for it is endorsed: "If his excellency will be pleased to grant a warrant of jury for the quantity each man is to have, Mr. Norris will write to his deputy to lay out the same." [...] The number of negroes in Nova Scotia after the war might have proved [large] but for arrangements made by the Sierra Leone company to transfer at the expense of the British government all who wished to remove to Africa. In January, 1792, 1180 of these freedmen sailed for Africa from different parts of New Brunswick and Nova Scotia. [...]

Gradually in both sections of Canada slavery began to die a natural death. Nevertheless slaves continued to be bought and sold in Nova Scotia throughout the first decade of the present century, while the last offer of a reward for a runaway slave was made through the Royal Gazette of New Brunswick in 1816. [...]

---

<sup>53</sup> Possibly a mis-spelling of 'corps'.

<sup>54</sup> Spelled 'careter' in the original newspaper article.

<sup>55</sup> Thomas Murphy Peters (1738 – 1792) is a founder of the nation of Sierra Leone. He was born to a Yoruba tribe in West Africa, and was enslaved as a youth. He escaped slavery in 1776. Disillusionment with Nova Scotia led him to petition the British Government in London for permission to establish Sierra Leone, a new colony for former slaves in West Africa. This was granted, and Peters, with nearly 1,100 others, arrived at their new home in 1792.

After the act of 1797 in Upper Canada slavery certainly declined; from time to time there were legal conflicts, with decisions more often made in favor of the slave than the master. In the maritime provinces, too, very strong proof had to be given before an escaped slave would be returned to bondage.

In the war of 1812 many slaves took refuge from southern plantations on board British ships. Of these the majority were taken to Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, where they were treated as freemen, later enfranchised, and finally permitted to sit on juries. This enfranchising came after the act of William IV, in 1833, had freed all slaves<sup>56</sup> held in British possessions.

## Slavery in Canada<sup>57</sup> (1886)

**This article gives more details and a second perspective on certain items mentioned in passing in the previous article.**

Slavery was introduced into Canada about 1689, and it is a well known fact that it was continued by the treaty in Canada of 1760, the year of the capitulation of Montreal. In the articles of capitulation, number 42 states, “The French and Canadians will continue to be governed according to the *Coutume de Paris*, and the laws and customs established in the country;” and number 47 states: “The negroes and *panis* of both sexes will remain as slaves in the possession of the French and Canadians, to whom they belong; they will be at liberty to keep them in their employ in the colony or sell them; they can also continue to have them brought up in the Catholic religion.” These articles show indisputably that slavery existed under the French regime and was continued under English rule.

In a letter from the Marquis de Vaudreuil to M. de Belestre, commandant at Detroit, [...] the former announces that he has been “in the necessity of capitulating yesterday to the army of General Amherst,” and says the conditions are particularly favorable to the inhabitants of Detroit, and their property, moveable and immovable, is not to be disturbed, and “they keep their negroes and *panis*, but must give up those made prisoners of to the English.”

An act of the Imperial Parliament passed in 1732 enacts that “houses, lands, negroes, \* \* \* situate or being within any of the said plantations belonging to any person indebted shall be liable and chargeable with all just debts, duties and demands,” and exacts that such houses, lands, negroes, etc., can be “seized, extended, sold or disposed of for the satisfaction of debts.” Now in the Act of Quebec (1774) under chap. 83, sec. 18 it is provided “that nothing in this Act of Quebec is to be construed as altering or annulling any act of Parliament of Great Britain,” concerning the commerce, etc., of the colonies and plantations, which imperial acts are declared to be in force in the province of Quebec and every part of it.

---

<sup>56</sup> Though approved in August, 1833, the Slavery Abolition Act did not go into effect until August, 1834.

<sup>57</sup> From SLAVERY IN CANADA. (1896, April 27). *The Montreal Gazette*, p. 7.

In the Quebec *Gazette*, 18th March, 1784, a negress is offered for sale<sup>58</sup>, and in the issue of 25th March a negro, 25 years old, who has had the smallpox, is also offered for sale. An affidavit made on the 16th July, 1788, by John Munro states that during an expedition “to the enemy’s frontiers” a number of negroes were captured “which negroes were chained and detained by the respective white men and Indians who captured them, and were brought to Montreal and sold, as was customary in such case, excepting one who was known to be a free man;” this latter shows that some of the negroes were free men. An Imperial act of Parliament in 1790, chap. 27, is rather “an act for encouraging new settlers in His Majesty’s colonies and plantations in America.” In this it is enacted that any person coming from the United States, being a subject thereof, with his family, to Bahama, Bermuda, Quebec or Nova Scotia, for the purpose of settling, can import, under license from the Governor, in British ships, any negroes, furniture, farm implements, or clothing free of duty; provided the value shall not exceed a certain amount (which is mentioned in the act) and it is further enacted that any sales of any negro, furniture, etc., made within twelve months after the importation shall be null and void. This was evidently to prevent fraud. On the 9th July, 1793, the Parliament of Upper Canada passed an act “to prevent the further introduction of slaves and to limit the term of contracts of servitude within this province.” This act was intended to do away with slavery and contained conditions which did so effectually.

In the first session of the Lower Canada Parliament an act was introduced to abolish slavery in Lower Canada; this was in January, 1793. Nothing was done with it except to order it to be laid upon the table, and [it] remained there till 1799. On the 19th April in that year a petition was presented by some citizens of Montreal, which, after enumerating certain facts relating to slavery being legal, prayed that the slaves might be subjected to the same laws as apprentices and imprisoned whenever refractory. The petition also stated that the citizens of Montreal in particular had purchased a large number of slaves and had also imported a large number, and that these had until lately behaved themselves, but had now become possessed of a spirit of insubordination, pretending that slavery did not exist in the country. Complaint was also made that the negroes threatened to revolt, that two negroes arrested and brought before the chief justice for desertion were discharged by him on a writ of *habeas corpus*, and the Chief Justice had declared that he would likewise discharge all negroes or apprentices brought before him on similar charges. On the 18th April, 1800, a petition was made asking that an act be passed declaring that slavery under certain restrictions exists in the province, and that negroes and *panis* are property,

---

<sup>58</sup> At least one similar sale took place in 1781. John V. Ham, M.D., found a copy of the bill of sale in 1850 and transcribed it in a letter to the *Daily British Whig* (Kingston). “Know all men by these presents, that I John Magin, now of Niagara, have this day sold unto John Thompson, Merchant of Montreal, one Negro Wench, named Nelle, about twelve years of age, for the sum of Seventy Pounds, New York Currency, to me in hand, now paid before the *delivery* of said Wench, for which I do Warrant and Defend the said Negro Wench unto the said John Thompson, his heirs and assigns forever. As witness my hand and seal this 8th June, 1781. Witness (signed) SAM’L. THOMPSON. (Signed) GEORGE MAGIN, L. S.” Ham, J.V. (1850, February 11). SLAVERY IN CANADA. *Daily British Whig*, p. 2.



and that pauper laws and regulations be passed. These petitions were referred to a committee of five.

On the 30th April, Mr. Cuthbert introduced a bill regulating the condition of slaves, limiting the term of slavery, [and] forbidding further importation of slaves into the province. What with adjournments, lack of quorums, [etc.] nothing was done till 17th January, 1801, when it was reintroduced and read a first time; on the 23rd January it was read a second time and referred to a committee of the whole, and nothing more was done. On the 7th of March, 1803, the bill was referred to a committee of five, to which, on the 15th, two members were added. This bill died a natural death.

In the Court of Common Pleas, Montreal, 18th March, 1788, an action was brought for the sum of £100 currency, or that the defendants do deliver up two negro [women] bought on the 4th December, 1785, for the sum of £50. There is also on record a case brought by John Mittleberger against Patrick Langan in the Court of Common Pleas, July, 1788, for £60, the price of a slave sold under private deed at Montreal, 5th December, 1780. Another case is also on record, J. Poiree et J. Lagard, for £47½, the price owing for a slave.

In 1797 an Imperial act was passed repealing that part of an act passed in 1732 (referred to above) "as relates to negroes in his Majesty's plantations." What bearing this had on the law and practice in Canada the writer is not competent to state, but the fact is that it could not have been regarded as very important to this province, as slavery was only abolished by the act of 1833, ch. 73, in the opinion of Sir L. H. Lafontaine.

The writer has been unable to find any mention of public sales of negroes in the province of Quebec – that is to say, of auction sales. It is certain the greater number were sold at private sale. The last sale of a slave in the city of Montreal is that of a negro named Manuel, about 33 years of age; this sale was effected 25th August, 1797, by a deed passed before Mr. Gray and his colleague notaries. The purchaser was T. J. Sullivan, the sellers J. G. Turner and his wife. A lawsuit followed for pecuniary reasons and the court annulled the sale, not on the ground that Manuel was not a slave (as was contended by the latter intervention), but on the ground that Turner and his wife had not proved their title. At this time (1797) a feeling was being aroused in Canada against slavery.

To sum up, slavery was abolished in Upper Canada in 1793 and in Lower Canada in 1833. This difference in time is very much more apparent than real, as public opinion after 1800 was strongly against slavery in both provinces, and there was no more, or very little slavery, in the Lower province. The judge could not endorse it, and it is certain that slavery was practically abolished in Lower Canada thirty years before the legal enactment was passed in 1833.

## “The state of the law with reference to slaves”<sup>59</sup> (1852)

**From an account of a public meeting at which the main speaker was Samuel Ringgold Ward (1817 – 1866). Ward’s parents escaped slavery in 1820 by moving from Maryland to the Free State of New York. He moved to Toronto in 1851, where he joined the Anti-Slavery Society of Canada.**

On Wednesday evening, a public meeting was held in the [Birmingham] Town Hall, to hear an address from the Rev. S. R. Ward, a Canadian minister, of the pure African race, “On the Condition, Prospects, and Wants of the Refugees from American Slavery in Canada.” Considering the stormy character of the weather, there was a good attendance, upwards of a thousand persons being present. [...]

The Rev. S. R. Ward [...] addressed the meeting amidst considerable cheering. Mr. Ward is “a black,” of tall muscular proportions, and good figure, speaks English purely with the exception of a Transatlantic intonation and a few Yankeeisms, and gives fluent utterances to his thoughts. He is a fine specimen of the educated negro; evidently has a cultivated mind, and speaks well generally, often powerfully, and sometimes rises into eloquence. He was loudly applauded throughout a lengthened address, of which we present the salient points. He showed the state of the law with reference to slaves in times gone by.

It was in May, 1772, that a decision was decreed in the Court of King’s Bench that the moment a slave touched the soil of Britain he ceased to be a slave. From that hour commenced a series of great historical facts, which called attention to the African race – a race universally trampled upon by its brother races – more ill-treated than any race descended from Adam. But no sooner was this decision given than men began to ask about these people; to inquire whether wrong things were not done them; and discussions arose even as to whether the slave system should be abolished altogether.

There was, however, a strange anomaly existing then. The slave was free in England; but in the English colonies – in South Africa, the West Indies, and in America - the negro was a slave still. A vessel laden with slaves touching at British islands, wheresoever they were, were free, while the British themselves held slaves upon them. This treatment of other slaves better than their own continued till long after 1772. But four years after arose another anomaly in the proceedings of the white man with his black brother. The United States declared themselves free, solemnly decreeing all men equal and alike; and yet from the hands of one of their 600,000 slaves they did not strike off a fetter. Even now [1853] in that land, after sixty-six years of freedom, one in every six of its inhabitants were slaves.

In 1834 England earned and bought the right to speak out on this subject by the twenty millions sterling she gave to free the negroes in the distance; and yet the British people are the only nation that is not to tell America of its sin. They said the British people entailed slavery in America; but the men of Yankeeland would not

---

<sup>59</sup> From Ward, S. R., et al. (1853, October 22). ESCAPED SLAVES IN CANADA. *Birmingham Journal*, p. 6.

follow the example of the British people in abolishing slavery for ever. They said, "You taught us to sin; but after you have seen the error of your ways, and repented, we won't allow you to teach us righteousness." But even although it were true that Britain inaugurated slavery in the States, they threw overboard British tea in Boston harbor; why should they not also have thrown overboard British slavery?

But they did not do this. They even in 1825 made an application to the British Government for permission to chase their slaves into Canada. To the honor of that Ministry they refused; so that from that time to this, and he hoped for ever, when the slave touched the Canadian shores his shackles fell. He confessed with some shame that in two wars the blacks fought against the British; but now they ran to them to get rid of the people in whose behalf they bled.

Now, what was the Fugitive Slave Law? Slavery had different phases in different countries; but in none were its rigors so intense as in the United States. Their treatment in Cuba, Puerto Rico, Surinam, and Brazil was mild [compared] to that in America. In Brazil a slave could purchase his freedom. In America there was no such law. In Brazil his black face was no badge of eternal disgrace. They knew what it was in America; that no matter what was the black skin's wealth, talent, character, or piety, he was the butt of universal ridicule. Even in the Church of God he was made to sit in a corner; even in the administration of the communion he must not touch the body and blood of God until the whites were done. That was true of the middle and southern states. In school the black child must sit apart; must have a separate teacher, if he had education at all. It was not so elsewhere in slave countries. Nay; even in the church yard, the black must not sleep in death by the side of the white man until the great resurrection. The slave of America by law was a mere chattel, with no property even in himself, his wife, or family. In the eye of the law he was "no man – a dead man – a quadruped."

Now, when the slaves escaped to Canada, they escaped from that condition. And who blamed them for escaping? Any man there? (Cheers, and shouts of "No.") Why, the most peaceful thing a man could do was to run away. Some would fight for their freedom; but they were scattered, isolated, and unarmed, and although they were more numerous than their masters, he never counseled them to fight.

He did not say what he should do were he among them, for there were things in him sometimes which had better be out. He showed, however, that there was little spirit among the negroes of America. The whole system was one to crush him. If he looked steadily in the white man's face, it was impudence to be punished by a blow; if an insult was offered by the smallest slaver and he struck him, his arm might be the penalty; if he insulted a child, he was whipped. The great majority of them cringed in the United States. If he escaped from this bondage it was a hard thing; he went without anything. If he was caught running away, no torture was too severe for him. They were kept ignorant, for their hard masters knew that slavery and intelligence could not coexist. But, for all that, the black had learned three great facts: that there was a star in the heavens called the north star; that if he followed that he will get to a country called Canada; and that, if he got there, he was a slave no longer.

In 1825, Mr. Clay spoke of this star-leading as “a great and increasing evil.” Now in 1853 they had from 35,000 to 40,000 in Canada. He gave some narratives of the sufferings of slaves effecting their escape – of deaths by the way – and of perishing on the verge of deliverance. They must travel by night, lurk in the woods by day; no white man must see them, or the white man was liable to a heavy penalty if he did not seize upon them. He denounced the professing Christians of these states as the worst offenders of the slave, and mentioned the case of a Methodist preacher in Cleveland gathering subscriptions to purchase his freedom from his master, who was also a Methodist minister. He showed also how the slaves, having escaped destitute and often ill health, were tended and supported for a time by the society of which he was an agent; and related several anecdotes to show how some of those who had been the objects of this care had prospered in Canada, and were very grateful.

He pointed out the difference of social relation between the black and white man in Canada, as contrasted with America. In the former the black was equal in the eye of the law and in the eye of the Church, whatever social distinctions might otherwise exist. He gave an interesting account of a black settlement of some 125 families, founded in Kent, by Mr. King, three years ago, where some went three miles through the woods by torch light to attend a school, where not a drop of alcohol was sold or drunk, and which was as far forward as any white settlement in the province. It had met with some opposition at first from the lower class of the white population, who petitioned Lord Elgin not to sell the blacks’ land; but nothing came of it, and now the white schools were deserted, and the children, white and black, mix together in the settlement school, their parents believing that black people were quite as good as anybody else. Wherever the English and Scotch people were – wherever there was enlightened opinion, there the black was recognized as an equal.

Now, what were their wants? They only wanted temporary aid for a few days after they first escaped. They were not a permanent set of beggars; they did not want them to believe that they were dependent, and they were not. He then stated that he had got £500 in Birmingham already, and expected to get as much more. If he did, his mission would be fulfilled. He asked them to assist in helping them to develop the negro, the best rebuke they could give their Yankee brother; they wanted but a little aid; they could do the rest for themselves.

Mr. Ward concluded amidst loud cheers.

## Slavery in Upper Canada<sup>60</sup> (1869)

### IMPERIAL ACTS

In the year 1732, an Act was passed in the Imperial Parliament “for the more easy recovery of debts in His Majesty’s plantations and colonies in America,” by which “lands, houses, negroes, and other hereditaments and real estate, shall be liable to be taken by due process of law for any indebtedness.”

---

<sup>60</sup> From Canniff, W. (1869). *History of the Settlement of Upper Canada*. Toronto: Dodley & Burns. Written by William Canniff (1830 – 1910).

Another Imperial Act having reference to slavery in Canada was passed so late as 1790. The Act is entitled "An Act for encouraging new settlers in His Majesty's colonies and plantations in America." Among other things it is provided that if any person shall come to the West India Islands or the Province of Quebec, from [the] United States, with the view of settling, it shall be lawful for such, having obtained a license from the Governor, to import among other things "any negroes" he may possess. Such was the law in all Canada when Upper Canada was erected into a distinct Province.

### LEGISLATION IN CANADA

The first Session of Parliament in Upper Canada was naturally and necessarily occupied in arranging the machinery requisite for the government of the body public. The second Session witnessed legislation to secure defense of the country by organizing a militia body; and also upon two most important subjects having reference to moral principles, viz.: concerning marriage, and "*An Act to prevent the further introduction of slaves, and to limit the term of contract for servitude within this Province.*"

### THE SEVERAL CLAUSES

"Whereas it is unjust that a people who enjoy freedom by law, should encourage the introduction of slaves, and whereas it is highly expedient to abolish slavery in this Province, so far as the same may be gradually done without violating private property; be it enacted by the King's Most Excellent Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Legislative Council and Assembly of the Province of Upper Canada," &c. It is enacted "that from and after the passing of this Act, so much of a certain Act of the Parliament of Great Britain, entitled 'An Act for encouraging new settlers,' &c., as may enable the Governor or Lieutenant-Governor of this Province, heretofore parcel of His Majesty's Province of Quebec, to grant a license for importing into the same, any negro or negroes, shall be, and the same is hereby repealed; and that from and after the passing of this Act, it shall not be lawful for the Governor to grant a license for the importation of any negro or other person to be subjected to the condition of a slave, or to such service as aforesaid, within this Province, nor shall any voluntary contract of service or indentures that may be entered into by any parties within this Province, after the passing of this Act, be binding upon them or either of them for a longer term than a term of nine years.

The second clause provided that the owners of slaves, at the time within the Province, should be secured in their property and contracts already made should not be affected. But in the third clause it is declared that:

"In order to prevent the continuation of slavery within this Province, be it enacted by the authority aforesaid, that immediately from and after the passing of this Act, every child that shall be born of a negro mother, or other woman subjected to such service as aforesaid, shall abide and remain with the master or mistress in whose service the mother shall be living at the time of such child's birth (unless such mother and child shall leave such service, by and with the consent of such master or mistress) – and such master or mistress shall, and is hereby required to give proper nourishment and clothing to such child or children, and shall and may put such child

or children to work, when he, she, or they shall be able so to do, and may retain him or her in their service until every such child shall have obtained the age of 25 years, at which time shall be entitled to demand his or her discharge from, and shall be discharged by such master or mistress, from any further service. And to the end that the age of such child or children may be more easily ascertained, the master or mistress of the mother thereof, shall, and is hereby required, to cause the day of the birth of every child as shall be born of a negro or other mother, subjected to the condition of a slave, in their service, as aforesaid, to be registered within three months after its birth, by the clerk of the parish, township or place wherein such master or mistress reside, which clerk shall be authorized to demand and receive the sum of one shilling for registering the same. And in case any master or mistress shall refuse or neglect to cause such register to be made within the time aforesaid, and shall be convicted thereof, either on his or her confession, or by the oath of one or more credible witnesses before any justice of the peace, he or she shall for such offence forfeit and pay the sum of £5 to the public stock of the district.

“And be it further enacted, that in case any master or mistress shall detain any such child born in their service, after the passing of this Act, under any pretense whatever, after such servant shall have attained the age of 25 years, except by virtue of a contract of service or indentures duly and voluntarily executed, after such discharge as aforesaid, it shall be for such servant to apply for a discharge to any justice of the peace,” and the party accused may be summoned to show cause why the servant is not discharged. The master failing to prove the servant under age, the justice is to discharge the same, and it was “provided always that in case any issue shall be born of such children during their infant servitude or after, such issue shall be entitled to all the rights and privileges of free-born subjects.”

“And be it further enacted, that whenever any master or mistress shall liberate or release any person subject to the condition of a slave from their service, they shall at the same time give good and sufficient security to the church or town wardens of the parish or township where they live, that the person so released by them shall not become chargeable to the same, or any other parish or township.”

This Act which reflects so much glory upon the Upper Canadian Legislators, was passed July 9, 1793. We thought our readers would prefer to see the Act complete, [rather] than any synopsis we might prepare.

To Robert Gray, then Solicitor-General, is Upper Canada primarily indebted for the above Act. He was lost in the schooner *Speedy*, on Lake Ontario.

#### SLAVERY IN LOWER CANADA

According to Garneau<sup>61</sup>, in the year 1689, it was proposed to introduce negroes to the colony of [New] France. But it was thought the climate would prove unsuitable. That slavery was, not long after, introduced, seems certain, and that it “was legally recognized in Canada is plain, from an ordinance of intendant Hocquart, dated 1736, regulating the manner of emancipating slaves in Canada.” – (Bell.)

---

<sup>61</sup> François-Xavier Garneau (1809 – 1866). The text referred to is probably his *Histoire du Canada*.

There are several royal declarations respecting slaves in the colony, bearing the dates 1721, 1742 and 1745. At the Conquest there were slaves in the province; and slavery “then increased for an instant, only to disappear forever,” slavery having continued to exist in Canada until the first decade of the present [19th] century. By a stipulation in the Treaty of Montreal, the colonists were “to be allowed to retain their slaves.” Says Bell in Garneau’s history, “Sir L. H. Lafontaine in 1859, investigated this matter,” (respecting the existence of slaves in French Canada), and from the published reports of his enquiries, it appears that in 1799-1800, the citizens of Montreal presented requisitions to Parliament, tending to cause the Legislature to vindicate the rights of masters over their slaves. The applicants invoked in favor of their demand, an ordinance rendered by Jacques Roudat, 9th intendant, dated April 13, 1709, which edict was, they urged, in force when the definitive treaty of peace was signed, and by consequence formed part and parcel of the laws, usages, and customs of Canada, recognized by the Act of Quebec. The bills, on the subject, were introduced in 1800, 1801, and 1803; but none of them passed. Since that time no local legislation sanctioned this matter; and if the act of the Imperial Parliament in 1797 had the effect of abolishing slavery in the British plantations, these would, of course, include Canada. “But,” says Bell, “the act in question could have no such effect. It only enacted that negroes could not be taken in execution as chattels, for the debts of their masters, as had previously been the case in His Majesty’s American Colonies.” It appears tolerably certain from the foregoing, that slaves were introduced by the French into Canada, about the beginning of the 18th century, and that at least in 1709 it was a recognized institution, by virtue of an edict issued by the intendant. And, when the country was conquered by Great Britain, the colonists were “allowed to retain their slaves.” In 1784, when Upper Canada was first settled, the number of slaves in Lower Canada according to the census was 304.

#### JUSTICE OSGOOD

When Upper Canada, in 1793, took the lead in the whole of Britain’s vast domain in legislating against slavery, Lower Canada continued to regard it without disfavor; and, even in Montreal, endeavored to fix the chains of bondage more firmly upon the negro. But what the Provincial Legislature did not, although presented with the example set by Upper Canada, was done in a different way by Chief Justice Osgood, who in 1803, at Montreal, declared slavery inconsistent with the laws of the country, and gave freedom to the persons in that condition. And when the British Act of Emancipation was passed, in 1833, setting free the slaves in all parts of the Empire, there [were] no slaves in Canada, Upper or Lower. Thirty years previous had the evil been crushed in Lower Canada, and forty years before Upper Canada had declared that it was “highly expedient to abolish slavery,” and had enacted laws to secure its abolition.

#### SLAVERY AT THE REBELLION

At the time of the rebellion of 1776 – 83 [the U.S. War of Independence], slavery was not limited to the Southern States.

There were a good many held by the old Knickerbocker families, both amongst the loyalists and rebels. When the families, both of English and Dutch nationality,

came as refugees to Canada, there accompanied them a number of slaves. In many cases these slaves came of their own accord, [and] would not be separated from their masters, with whom they always lived, [and] upon whose land they had been born. Indeed, the attachment between these faithful blacks and their owners was frequently of the most enduring nature, and, as we shall see, in some cases, although made free, they would not leave their old places as domestics.<sup>62</sup>

#### THOSE WHO HELD SLAVES

The Rev. Mr. Stuart<sup>63</sup>, in his memoir, says, in speaking of his removal to Canada, “My negroes, being personal property, I take with me, one of which being a young man, and capable of bearing arms, I have to give £100 security to send back a white prisoner in his stead. Capt. Joseph Allan brought with him from New Jersey, after the war had ended, to Upper Canada, three slaves – Tom, Sam and Sal. The two men, some years after, ran away to Lower Canada. Their owner pursued them to Montreal, and searched for them for ten days; but failed to get them. He sold the female, Sal, with her child, to Silas Hill. This boy was afterwards sold to Abram Barker, who kept him until he became twenty-one, when he became free. Freedom did not suit him, as he became a worthless fellow. Major Van Alstine had slaves, whom he treated with patriarchal kindness, and who lived in great comfort in the old-fashioned Dutch cellar kitchen, in his home, in Fourth Town. The Bogarts and John Hyuck also had slaves. Capt. Myers had slaves; one, Black Bet, would never leave him, but continued until his death under the care of her old master.”

Cartwright<sup>64</sup>, Herkimer<sup>65</sup>, and Everitt, each was the owner of slaves. And Powles Claus, of the Mohawk settlement, had two slaves.

Col. Clark speaks, in his memoirs of his mother’s death, in 1789, and of the funeral, when the negro Joe drove the favorite horses, Jolly and Bonny, before the sleigh, painted black. Again, Col. C. says:

“After the Declaration of Independence, drovers used to come in with droves of horses, cattle, sheep and negroes, for the use of the troops, forts, and settlers in Canada, and my father purchased his four negroes, three males and one female, named Sue. In 1812, she gladly returned to our family, having become old and decrepit. She died in our house at Fifteen-Mile Creek, in 1814.”

Sheriff Ruttan<sup>66</sup> says, “My uncle brought two negro servants with him, who were very faithful, hard-working fellows.” During the year of famine, they were sent down from Adolphustown to Albany, “for four bushels of Indian corn; a dreadful hazardous journey through the forest, with no road, and the snow very deep. They executed this mission, and returned in safety.”

---

<sup>62</sup> The reader may find it profitable to note how much of the evidence for this, provided below, comes directly from former slaves, and how much comes second-hand, or from their former owners.

<sup>63</sup> Probably John Stuart (1740 – 1811), the first Anglican priest in Ontario. He was once a missionary to a Mohawk community in New York, where he worked with Joseph Brant to translate parts of the Bible into the Mohawk language. He left for Quebec in 1781.

<sup>64</sup> Possibly Richard Cartwright (1759 – 1815), a notable Loyalist.

<sup>65</sup> George Herchmer Markland (1790 – 1862).

<sup>66</sup> Henry Ruttan (1792 – 1871).



These slaves were generally faithful, good-natured, and occasionally mischievous. It was the custom, in the first years of Canada, to place the ovens in the yard upon stakes, and they could be lifted off them. It is related that sometimes they would slyly carry off the oven, when filled with good things.

Sheriff Sherwood says: "In answer to your letter of yesterday, as regards slaves, I only recollect two or three which settled in the District of Johnstown; one in particular, named Caesar Congo, owned by Captain Justus Sherwood<sup>67</sup>, who came with his family in the same brigade of boats that my father and family did, and located about two miles above Prescott. They were the very first actual settlers. Well I remember Caesar Congo, then a stout, strong young man, and who often took the late Justice Sherwood, of Toronto, and myself on his back to assist us along, while the boats were drawn up the rapids. Caesar was sold to a half-pay officer named Bottom, who settled about six miles above Prescott, who, after a year's service, gave Caesar his freedom. Caesar soon after married suitably, and by his industry obtained a snug little place in the town of Brockville, where he lived many years, and died."

Daniel Jones, father of Sir Daniel Jones, of Brockville, had a female slave, and there were a few others residing in the district of which I had no personal knowledge.

Squire Bleeker, of the Trent, had a slave called Ham. Abraham Cronk, of Sophiasburgh, bought a female slave from Mrs. Simpson, of Myers' Creek, for \$300. After a time, she returned to Mrs. Simpson, with whom she lived till her death. This female had a daughter, who grew up to be an unusually "smart girl".

Nicholas Lazier had slaves. One, named Sal, was noted for her attachment to Methodism, and would go long distances to attend meetings. As a female slave, Black Betty, was one of the first congregation to which the first Methodist preacher in America preached at New York, so this woman was one of the first Methodists at the Bay, and in Upper Canada. John Cronk and she were the only Methodists in the Township for a long time.

Pryne, who lived a short distance above Bath, had two slaves. Col. Thompson also had some, and Lieut. McGuinness, of Amherst Isle, likewise possessed them. Capt. Trumpour, of Adolphustown, had two negroes. Leavens, of Belleville, bought a female slave of Wallbridge, for \$100. A son of hers was purchased by Captain McIntosh.

The Hon. Peter Russell<sup>68</sup>, when Receiver-General, had a man and his wife as slaves, with their son and two daughters.

Samuel Sherwood, writing to a person at Kingston, from Thurlow, in Oct. 1793 says, "My negro boy, and Canadian boy have absented themselves last night without leave. I send Jim and two Indians in pursuit of them. I beg, if you can give any assistance, you will do me that service. McLean's black woman is my boy's mother; he may call to see her."

We have before us the copy of an assignment made in 1824, by Eli Keeler, of Haldimand, Newcastle, to William Bell, of Thurlow, of a Mulatto boy, Tom, in which it is set forth that the said boy has time unexpired to serve as the child of a female

---

<sup>67</sup> Justus Sherwood (1747 – 1798), a Loyalist intelligence offer once involved in negotiations to return Vermont to the British Empire.

<sup>68</sup> Peter Russell (1733 – 1808), judge and military officer.

slave, namely, ten years, from the 29th Feb. 1824, according to the laws of the Province; for the sum of \$75. Probably, this was the last slave in Canada whose service closed, [in] 1835.

#### DESCENDANTS OF THE SLAVES

There are, at the present time, a good many of the descendants of the early Canadian slaves. Some of them have done badly, others again have made themselves respectable and happy. The Mink family are descended from an old slave that belonged to William Herkimer.

When made free, they, in many instances, preferred to remain in connection with their old masters, and even to this day, their children manifest a predilection for the name of their father's master. In and about Belleville, may yet be found such as spoken of. Most, or all of these are descendants of "Black Bess," who, at different times, was in possession of Wallbridge's, Leaven's, and McLellan.

#### "A BRITISH SLAVE"

In the *Ottawa Citizen* of [May 3,]<sup>69</sup> 1867, appeared the following:

"A BRITISH SLAVE – An old negro appeared at [the] Court of Assize yesterday as a witness in the case of *Morris vs. Henderson*. He is 101 years of age and was formerly a slave in Upper Canada, before the abolition of slavery in the British possessions. He fought through the American war of 1812 on the side of the British, was at the battles of Chippewa and Lundy's Lane, and was wounded at Sackett's Harbor. He is in full possession of all his faculties. He was born in New York State in 1766, and was the slave of a U. E. loyalist, who brought him over to Canada. He was brought to this city to prove the death of a person in 1803 and another in 1814."

#### "FOR SALE"

It would seem odd enough at the present day to see the following advertisements in a Canadian journal. [They] appeared in the *Gazette*, Newark:

"FOR SALE – The negro man and woman, the property of Mrs. (widow) Clement. They have been bred to the business of a farm; will be sold on advantageous terms, for cash or lands. Apply to Mrs. Clement. Niagara, January 9th, 1802."

"FOR SALE – A negro slave, 18 years of age, stout and healthy, has had the small pox, and is capable of service either in house or out door. The terms will be made easy to the purchaser; and cash or new lands received in payment. Enquire of the printer. Niagara, November 18th, 1802."

#### "INDIAN SLAVE"

"INDIAN SLAVE – All persons are forbidden harboring, employing, or concealing my Indian slave, called Sal, as I am determined to prosecute any offender, to the utmost extremity of the law; and persons who may suffer her to remain on their premises for the space of half an hour, without my written consent, will be taken as offending, and dealt with according to law. (Signed) CHARLES FIELDS. Niagara, August 28th, 1802."

---

<sup>69</sup> I've taken my transcription from the original *Citizen* story, but it matches Canniff's own aside from the final date, which is 1804 in the latter. The story is on page 3, column 3 of the paper.

## “Canadian Indian slavery in the eighteenth century”<sup>70</sup> (1897)

Though this work provides a wealth of interesting information, the author was a product of his time, and appears from his words to have harbored some of the more common biases and prejudices of the period. This, and the lack of Indigenous voices, should be considered by modern readers.

### I. EXAMPLES OF EARLY CANADIAN SLAVERY

#### *Slavery among the Portuguese, Spaniards, and New Englanders*

The Portuguese in 1500 sent out an expedition to North America under Gaspar Cortereal, which entered Hudson’s Straits. They brought away fifty-seven natives, to be sold as slaves and used as laborers.

The supposed excellent quality of these kidnapped natives, and the large supply which the country was likely to furnish, caused it, as our author alleges, to be called Terra Labrador, or the land of laborers, whence its present name<sup>71</sup>. This seems to have been the beginning of the subjugation of aborigines on the North American Continent to slavery by Europeans and their descendants.

Before this the Spaniards had been active in Haiti and Jamaica in reducing the natives there to servitude, working them in the mines, and exporting many to the home slave market. In 1498 Christopher Columbus sent 600 of the natives to Spain and wrote as to them in impious blasphemy: “In the name of the Holy Trinity there can be sent as many slaves as sale can be found for in Spain, and they tell me 4,000 can be sold.” He is said to have repented of his cruelty after being in turn sent to Spain in chains by Bovadilla. Tennyson makes him thus bemoan his fate, and theirs:-

“Ah God, the harmless people whom we found  
In Hispaniola’s island paradise—  
And we have sent them very fiends from hell.  
And I, myself, myself not blameless, I  
Could sometimes wish I had never led the way.”

The Spaniards’ cruelty in the Antilles was only paralleled by their conduct toward the natives of Mexico. The enslavement of red, as well as of black men, was not unfamiliar to even the Puritan Colonists. In 1675 many towns, villages, and farmsteads in Massachusetts and Rhode Island were destroyed by the Wampanoags, under the famous King Philip.

There were few families in the region attacked who did not mourn some of their members. When Philip had fallen, his chiefs, sachems and bravest men were put to death; the remainder were sold as slaves.

The son of Philip, whose only crime was his relationship to this great chief, was among the prisoners, and was sent as a slave to Bermuda, whence he never returned.

---

<sup>70</sup> From Hamilton, J. C. (1897). *The Panis – An historical outline of Canadian Indian slavery in the eighteenth century*. Toronto: Arbuthnot Bros. & Co. Written by James Cleland Hamilton (1836 – 1907).

<sup>71</sup> *History of Nova Scotia and other British Provinces*, by James S. Buckingham, p. 168. Other derivations have been given, but the above seems appropriate and well founded. [Note in the original.]

An attempt to supply such labor for the New England home market led to speedy repentance.

A New Hampshire Provincial Law of 1714 recited that notorious crimes and enormities had of late been committed by Indians and other slaves within Her Majesty's plantations, and forbade the importation of any Indians to be used as slaves.

Washington Irving was among the first who criticized the stern and cruel features of the Puritans. They, he cried, trained the Indians for Heaven and then sent them there<sup>72</sup>.

#### *Story of Inkle and Yarico*

The story of Inkle and Yarico, as told by [Richard] Steele, and familiar to all readers of *The Spectator*, illustrates the cruel practice of Europeans of the seventeenth century in treating all persons of darker complexions than themselves as proper subjects for barter.

Young Inkle, an English merchant adventurer, wanders from his ship on the American main, is found and saved by Yarico, an Indian girl, with whom he lived in tender correspondence for some months, when both escaped on a passing ship bound for Barbados. Here, as each vessel arrived, there was an immediate market of the Indian and other slaves, as with us of horses and oxen. The prudent and frugal young Englishman sold his companion to a Barbadian merchant. Had Yarico been carried to the old Province of Quebec she would have been called a pani<sup>73</sup>.

From these instances of native American slavery beyond our immediate borders, we pass to consider how far such a system obtained in Canada.

#### *Reference to panis*

Canadian negro slavery has been before described<sup>74</sup>, and reference is now made to the enforced servitude of red men in the French Province of Quebec, and the later Provinces of Lower and Upper Canada.

The Recollet Father, Louis Hennepin, was with LaSalle in 1679, and, writing at Niagara, says: "The Iroquois made excursions beyond Virginia and New Sweden \* \* \* from whence they brought a great many slaves."<sup>75</sup>

A vessel, called "the Griffin," was built on Lake Erie, and in these early [days] adventurers crossed through that lake, the River St. Clair, and Lake Huron to Mackinac, where LaSalle parted from Hennepin, the vessel having been, meantime,

---

<sup>72</sup> As to Indian Slavery in the United States, see Kent's *Commentaries*, part vi., lec. 51, and the authorities there cited. Winthrop's *History of New England*, vol. I pp. 192 to 237. In Carolina hostilities were fomented among the tribes in order to purchase or kidnap captives and sell them as slaves to the West Indies. The sale and slavery of Indians was deemed lawful and the exile and bondage of captives in war, of all conditions, was sanctioned by the sternest Puritans. Bancroft's *History*, I, pp. 41-182. The war with the Pequots in 1637, and the confederacy of Indian nations in 1675 by Metacom, Sachem of the Wampanoags, commonly called King Philip, would seem to have been formed for protection and through patriotic views. Chalmer's *Political Annals*, p. 291. Indian Slavery ceased in Virginia only in 1705. *Magazine of American History*, vol. 21, p. 62. [Note in the original.]

<sup>73</sup> *The Spectator*, No. 11, March 13, 1710. [Note in the original.]

<sup>74</sup> *Transactions of Canadian Institute*, 1890, vol. I, p. 102 [Note in the original.]

<sup>75</sup> Louis Hennepin's *Discovery of America*, cap. 18, pp. 19-37. [Note in the original.]

lost in Lake Huron. Hennepin professes to have gone down the Mississippi, and to have been the hero of many wonderful adventures. This part of the story is questioned by Mr. Shea and others, but such details as Hennepin did not personally witness are, no doubt, taken from LaSalle's Journal, and are substantially correct.

As the Pawnee Nation had its habitat on, and west of, the Missouri, we do not find them or their relations, the Caddoes, Wichitas and Huecos, mentioned in this interesting volume. It is stated that the Illinois Indians were accustomed to make excursions far to the westward, and bring slaves from thence, which they bartered with other nations.

The southwestern Indians raided by the Illinoisans may be inferred to have been Pawnees. From their captors they passed to the white settlers in French Louisiana and Quebec.

Forty years after LaSalle's time, intercourse between Louisiana and Quebec became comparatively common, and families coming up by the Mississippi, brought their negro and pani slaves with them.

Charlevois, who visited Canada in 1721, refers to a nation settled on the banks of the Missouri, from whom persons taken captive were made slaves. He remarks: "The Arkansas River comes, it is said, from the country of certain Indians, who are called Panis Noirs – I have a slave of this nation with me."<sup>76</sup>

Next in date, refer to the story of the adventures of Alexander Henry, the fur trader at Michilmacinac in 1763. When that outpost of Canada was taken and the garrison massacred by the Chippewas and Sacs, he was led to a hiding-place by a faithful pani slave woman, and ultimately escaped. Her owner was Charles Langlade, a French halfbreed merchant and interpreter, and afterwards one of the early settlers in Wisconsin, but her name is not given. The Sacs and Chippewas were then at enmity with the Pawnee nation, and made slaves of such of them as they captured<sup>77</sup>.

Colonel Landmann relates that, in 1800, when journeying from Amherstburg to St. Joseph's Island, he found a large Indian camp in busy preparation for the burning of a female prisoner, with a child at her breast. The usual horrors of torture had begun, and death was threatened, but the woman, in stoicism only expected from the other sex, was apparently indifferent to all. The Colonel negotiated for the purchase of both mother and child, and secured them, in consideration of six bottles of rum, "that is," writes the careful chronicler, "two of rum, mixed with four of water." The woman showed no apparent feeling, nor did she express thanks for her delivery from a terrible fate. This was but a part of the stoic manner of her race. She told all her people, and before the young officer left St. Joseph's Island, a number of the woman's relations came and, to show their gratitude, made a considerable present of the finest skins they had been able at the instant to collect. The woman and child so saved were Pawnee captives<sup>78</sup>.

---

<sup>76</sup> Charlevois' *Journal*, vol. 3, pp. 212 and 410. [Note in the original.]

<sup>77</sup> Henry's *Travels*, part I, cap. 10. Parkman's *Conspiracy of Pontiac*, vol. I, cap. 18. [Note in the original.]

<sup>78</sup> *Adventures and Recollections of Col. Landmann*, vol. 2, cap. 6. [Note in the original.]

The capitulation at Montreal had taken place on the 8th of September, 1760, and we find the word *pani* used in its 47th section, which provides that the negroes and *panis* of both sexes should remain in their condition of slavery, and belong to their French and Canadian masters, under British rule, as they had been before under the French regime, and that the masters were to be at liberty to retain them or to sell them, and to train them in the Catholic religion, except those who had been made prisoners of war.

Captain Knox visited Canada soon after this, and, commenting loosely on this section of the treaty, states his belief that *panis* imply convicts condemned to slavery<sup>79</sup>. He gives no authority, and is entirely mistaken. This is the more to be regretted as others, assuming to write Canadian history, have copied his remark, traducing the character of the humble, early servant of the old Canadian homesteads. It is also remarkable that the part occupied by them in the social fabric has not been introduced into books of fiction and other writings descriptive of the seignorial times.

May we not have a gentle *Yarico*, taking the place of *Briseis* or *Helen*, in an epic of the old regime; or even the story of a devoted *Friday*?

The stately mansion of *Belmont*, overlooking the *St. Charles*, home of the brave bourgeois, *Philibert*; the manor house of *Tilly* on the shores of the *St. Lawrence*; the *Chateau of Beaumanoir*, famous for the bacchanalian revels of the intendant *Bigot*; the castle of *St. Louis*, and other "Seats of the Mighty" in *New France*, have often been described, but who has pictured the little huts in their courtyards, of the negro and *pani*?

#### *The Pawnees, and Pani stock and their habitat*

Dr. Daniel G. Brinton says that the *Pani* stock was scattered irregularly from the Middle Missouri River to the Gulf of Mexico. The *Pawnees* proper occupied the territory from the *Niobrara* River south to the *Arkansas*. The *Niobrara* River courses in an easterly direction through the northerly part of the State of *Nebraska* and falls into the *Missouri*. It includes many cities and towns, among them being *Des Moines*, *St. Louis*, *Topeka*, and *Omaha*. The *Arikari* and *Skidi* branches of the nation separated at an early date and went north, while the *Wichita*, *Caddoes*, and *Huecoes* roamed over *Eastern Louisiana* and *Western Texas*.

#### [CONTENT WARNING – BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF HUMAN SACRIFICE]

The *Pani* stock, as a rule, had an excellent physique, being tall and robust, with well-proportioned features, the lips and eyes small. Their marriage customs were lax; agriculture was more in favor with them than generally on the plains. Their religion somewhat resembled that of the *Mexicans*, and indicates a southern origin. One of their divinities was *Opirikut*, who represented the deity of fertility and agriculture. At the time of corn planting, a young girl, usually a captive, was sacrificed to this divinity. The victim was bound to a stake and partly burned, her breast was cut open, her heart was torn out, and flung into the flames. Her flesh was then divided into small pieces and buried in the corn field, to secure an abundant crop. In *Mr. Grimmell's* book this divinity appears under the name of *Ti-ra-wa*, and

---

<sup>79</sup> *Historical Journal*, vol. 2, p. 428. [Note in the original.]

this sacrifice seems to have been most used by that portion of the nation known as the Skidi, whose home was on the Platte and Loup Rivers in Nebraska.

In 1806, the Pawnee tribe had a population of 6,223, with nearly 2,000 warriors. The Caddoes were of the same stock, and were also numerous on the western plains. "Since the removal of these people to reserves, mostly in the Indian Territory, the evidences of their progress towards civilization are cheering; but their character has changed. In the old barbaric days they were light-hearted, merry, makers of jokes, keenly alive to the humorous side of life. Now they are serious, grave, [and] little disposed to laugh. Then they were like children, without a care. Now they are like men, on whom the anxieties of life weigh heavily. Civilization, bringing with it some measure of material prosperity, has also brought care, responsibility, [and] repression. No doubt it is best, and it is inevitable, but it is said, too."

Recent information as to the remnant of this nation is given by Mr. Geo. B. Grinnell, from whom we have just quoted. Many of the young men were embodied into companies of armed scouts, under Major North and other officers, during the construction of the Union Pacific Railway in 1863, to guard against the depredations of the Sioux and Arapahoes. They were brave and reliable soldiers, and it is to be regretted that the tribe of Pawnees proper is reduced to a few hundred souls, while the whole Caddoan or Pani stock does not probably exceed in number two thousand<sup>80</sup>.

The American Cyclopaedia, article Pawnee, describes the tribe as warlike, long resident in Nebraska on the Platte River and its tributaries. The name Pawnee of Pani is from the Illinois language, and is said to be from Pariki, meaning a horn, referring to the peculiar scalp lock, dressed to stand erect and curve slightly back like a horn; the rest of the hair was shaven off. They were constantly at war with the Sioux and other nations, and, being considered irreclaimable savages, were permitted to be held as slaves in Canada, when bought from other tribes; wherefore, any Indian held in bondage was called a pani.

As to this our worthy and renowned Canadian ethnologist, Mr. Horatio Hale, writes me: "Pani and Pawnee are undoubtedly the same word, in different orthographies." He states that the article last quoted is from the pen of J. G. Shea, the distinguished ethnologist, and editor of Charlevoix: "All that he wrote on Indian matters is of the highest authority – what Mr. Brinton writes is also entirely trustworthy." "The Pawnees were true Ishmaelites. They had no friends upon the prairies, save those they had conquered and held by fear<sup>81</sup>." In addition to the Pawnees, there was certainly another tribe which contributed slaves to Canada<sup>82</sup>. In 1712 the Renards, or Foxes, endeavored to capture and destroy Fort Detroit, but were defeated and compelled to surrender at discretion. Those found in arms were massacred; the rest were distributed as slaves among the victors.

---

<sup>80</sup> U.S. Bureau of Ethnology, Vol. 7, pp. 61, 62 and 113, date 1885-6. "The present number of the Caddoan stock is 2,259, settled in Fort Berthold Reservation, N. Dakota, and some on the Indian Territory, some of the Ponca, Pawnee, and Otae Reservations, and others on the Kiowa, Comanche and Wichita Reservations." They are now self-supporting. [Note in the original.]

<sup>81</sup> *Pawnee Hero Stories and Folk Tales*, by Geo. B. Grinnell, 1889, p. 307. [Note in the original.]

<sup>82</sup> McMillan's *History of Canada*, p. 91. [Note in the original.]

*New York and other early Colonial documents*

There are a few references in the New York Colonial Documents to panis, or to Indians enslaved by whites. A narrative, presented to the Mayor's Court of New York City, 24th January, 1689, complaining of the violent acts of the Lieutenant-Governor, Jacob Leysler, states that an Indian slave of Phillip French was, by him, dragged to Fort William on the 23rd of the previous December, and there imprisoned, but French was himself arrested by order of this bold Governor, and spent his Christmas in durance, for various matters of alleged contempt to His Honor. (Vol. 3, 676.)

Colonel Heathcote reports to Lord Townsend, British Colonial Secretary, July 16th, 1715, that the Indians complain that their children, who had been bound out for a limited time to be taught and instructed by the Christians, were transferred to other plantations and sold for slaves. He adds, "And I don't know but that there may be some truth in what they allege." (Vol. 5, 433.) M. La Galissoniere's Journal of events in Canada, under date Nov. 11, 1747, says: "The four negroes and a panis, who were captured by the English, would be put on board a small vessel bound for Martinico, to be there sold for the benefit of the proprietors." (Vol. 10, 138.)

Colonel William Johnson writes to Governor Clinton, of New York, 22nd January, 1750: "I am very glad your Excellency has given orders to have the Indian children returned, who are kept by the traders as pawns or pledges, as they call it, but rather stolen from them, as the parents came at the appointed time to redeem them, but they sent them away before hand, and as they were children of our friends and allies, and if they are not returned next spring it will confirm what the French told the Six Nations, viz.: that they are looked upon as our slaves, or negroes, which affair gave me a great deal of trouble at that time to reconcile. I cannot find that Mr. Abeil, who has a Seneca child, or Vandrieson, who has got a Missionary, are to deliver theirs, which I am apprehensive, will cause a great disturbance." (Vol. 6, 546.)

We find references of a similar character in the diary of David Zeisberger, the good Moravian missionary<sup>83</sup>. He was loath to believe that such cruelty was practiced, and ascribed the stories he heard to "lying rumors." Yet it is clear that these were well founded. Writing in 1795 at Fairfield-on-the-Thames, now known as Moraviantown, Ont., he says: "We had many lying rumors which the Indians hatch out, that the Indians here are entrapped by the white people, and will not be let go until they have been all sold as slaves. . . . The Chippewas have war with the North-Western Indians. They have brought into Macinaw one hundred prisoners, a part of whom they sold to the whites. This is a nation with which they have waged war for many years."<sup>84</sup>

---

<sup>83</sup> *Diary of David Zeisberger*, by Eugene F. Bliss, published by the Historical and Philosophical Society of Ohio, 1885, Vol. II, pp. 411 and 491. [Note in the original.]

<sup>84</sup> *A Travers les Registres*, Montreal, 1886. [Note in the original.]



## II. THE LOWER CANADA RECORDS AS TO PANIS

*In [the] cities of Quebec, Three Rivers, Montreal, and elsewhere*

[We] next refer to the records in the old Province of Quebec relating to Panis. For these we are mainly indebted to the Abbe Tanguay's researches, made and published in 1886 under the Quebec Government. In the church registers at the City of Quebec, under date 1718, it appears that "in the course of that year several Panis, being introduced from Louisiana, being slaves of Quebec families, were baptized."

In 1730 and following years the Church registers of Three Rivers contain records of baptisms and burials of several such slaves belonging to the principal families of the town.

November 4, 1756 – "Marie Judith, agée de Treize ans, a été baptisé,"<sup>85</sup> appears on the register of the parish church at Longue Pointe.

*The punishment of slaves, the pillory, carcan and rack*

January 22, 1757 – A record shows that a pani slave called Constant, belonging to Madame de Saint Blain, was condemned to the punishment *du carcan*, and to be perpetually banished from Montreal. The mischievous character of this red woman was fully equaled by a negro slave<sup>86</sup> of Madame de Francheville, who, in 1734, caused<sup>87</sup> a great conflagration which destroyed part of Montreal. This negress was born in Portugal, and purchased by her mistress in New England. She was subjected to severe examination ("a la question ordinaire et extraordinaire"), when, it is stated, she confessed her guilt<sup>88</sup>. These cases are mentioned together, as they seem to be the only instances on the published records of such slaves being punished through the courts of Quebec; nor do panis appear on the Civil Court records, though their darker companions' names are often to be found there.

The *carcan* was an iron collar, placed around the neck, and connected by a chain to a post or to a wall, so compelling the prisoner to stand for a stated time, often for long, weary hours, in a strained position, and subject to ridicule. It was similar to the English stocks.

"La question extraordinaire" was the French name for the rack. These modes of punishment were not abolished in France until 1832.

*Panis in Montreal Hospital, [and] in the seigniories*

We will now look at the records of the Montreal General Hospital, and we find, in a table prepared by the Abbe Tanguay, of families possessing slaves of the nation of the Panis, that seventy-nine such slaves died in that hospital between 1754 and 1799. The birth, age and time of death of each are here given, and we have a record full of interesting facts and suggestions. Each poor slave has his or her Christian

---

<sup>85</sup> "Marie Judith, thirteen years old, has been baptized."

<sup>86</sup> Marie-Joseph Angelique, the subject of Dr. Afua Cooper's seminal work, *The Hanging of Angelique: The Untold Story of Canadian Slavery and the Burning of Old Montreal* (2006).

<sup>87</sup> Marie-Joseph Angelique initially maintained her innocence, only "confessing" when subjected to unbearable torture. She may have started the fire as a diversion to help her escape slavery and the uncertainty of being sold in the future. See Dr. Cooper's work for full details and context.

<sup>88</sup> Abbe Ferland's *History of Canada*, cap. 29. [Note in the original.]

name, and the names, were evidently given when the rite of baptism was performed. Mons. De la Verandrie had two, Joseph and Marie. Saint Luc la Corne had his Pani, Marie Joseph, who died in 1799, aged 100 years.

Among the masters were some gentlemen of aboriginal stock, or connected with Indian missions: M. Perthuis, interpreter of the Iroquois; De Quiensek, chief, and De la Garde, missionary to the Algonquins<sup>89</sup>.

Seigniorial, or well-known, families are represented in the masters, Deschambault, De Bleury, Chevalier de la Corne, De Veaudreuil, Benoit, Desriviers, Perigny, Reame, Decharme, Dames Deslignery and Monier, Meers. De la Ronde, Delisle, De Longueil, La Coste, Leschelle, Senneville, De Barne and Clignanceur.

There is nothing in the record relating to the origin of these Panis except in regard to the last two, when we find that M. Gamelin had Jacque Cesar and M. Longueil had Marie, both put down as Panis noirs, or black Indians of the plains, who were of darker hue than those in wooded lands. This being a distinctive term, places them as derived from the Pawnee nation proper, as designated by Charlevois.

The Montreal newspapers of 100 years ago had occasional advertisements as to runaway slaves, and these were adorned with wood cuts representing the lost chattel. When a negro was wanted, he was shown running with naked body, save a cloth around the waist. The Pani was represented standing erect, with a feather head-dress standing upright and a feather waist-covering, the body tattoo-marked. This comical figure, whether by accident or design, coincides with Mr. Grinnell's description of Pawnee Picts, or tattooed Pawnees. Rollin Michael Barrin, Count de la Gallissoniere, above mentioned, was Governor of New France, and a gentleman of scholarly taste and refinement. He is one of the leading characters in Mr. Kirby's excellent story, "The Golden Dog," the opening scene being laid in Quebec in 1748. Among the masters of Panis is the name of De Veauderuil, who succeeded as Governor, and of the Chevalier la Corne St. Luc, a gallant soldier, who remained after the capitulation, and became a loyal defender of British rule. Other names, such as Benoit De Longueil and La Coste, are familiar to all readers of Canadian history.

Some months ago a worthy member of the Canadian Institute, with a handful of ashes from an ancient kitchen-midden, by means of a microscope brought up the Huron inhabitants and their surroundings as they were when Champlain unfolded the fleur-de-lis on the Georgian Bay. Our attempt is now, with these disjointed historic fragments from the ashes of time, to produce for development some features of these humble persons, the domestic slaves, and of their surroundings in those grand old times, when slavery was a thing of course and the seigniorial tenure most flourished in the old regime. The Pani no doubt spoke in a patois of French and Illinoisan. His dress was a rude commingling of the styles of Quebec and the wild

---

<sup>89</sup> Holding captives as slaves was, as is well known, common with the Indians. The Cherokees and Choctaws also had many negroes in bondage. There are some instances in Canada of red men holding blacks. The most notable of these was Colonel Brant Thayendinagea, who had several, among them being his body-servants, Patton and Ganseville, referred to in the writings of travelers such as Colonel Landmann and the Duke de Liancourt. [Note in the original. See the Appendix on Joseph Brant and the interview with Sophia Pooley for more information.]

South. He had no taste for work at the tail of the plough, but supplied venison and fish, made bows and lacrosse sticks for the boys, and joined them in games and hunting. The [Pani women] waited on table, were the ladies' maids, the children's ayahs, and fashioned moose-skin moccasins, adorned with bright-tinted quills of the bristling porcupine. Removed from his native wilds, the Pani doubtless followed, to some extent, the religion of his masters, with its rites and ceremonies. But when he gazed on the rising sun, away from the presence of the Black-robe, we may imagine him imploring the protection of the dread Opirikut, god of his fathers; and when in the winter evenings, the aurora flashed across the vault above, he saw the spirits of his friends in flight from the far south land, and then his heart filled with longings for the banks of the Niobrara, where the ancestral tents were set and the buffalo shook the plains.

With such suggestions, names and facts as have been placed before us, it only needs the wand of imagination to raise the curtain of six-score years and show the home of the seigneur among his habitant friends and neighbors beside the St. Lawrence, the St. Francis or the Chaudiere. And when there comes that happiest hour of the day, when the work is done and the night as yet is young, they gather into the great room, beech logs blaze and cast their light on bronzed features as they enter, capots are thrown back, waist-sashes loosened, and the snow is shaken from homespun coats and deerskin leggings. Pleasant greetings and kind enquiries pass around, and the news of the day is exchanged. The [priest], the seigneur and the notary sit where all can see and hear. In and out flits, on moccasined feet, a dusky figure almost unnoticed, yet not unwelcome. He quiets barking dogs, brings a coal to light a pipe, or stirs the logs to a fresh blaze. He is the Indian slave, the pani.

### III. LEGAL POSITION OF CANADIAN SLAVES

#### *The statutes, ordinances, and edicts as to them*

The edict of Louis XIV in 1688, authorizing the importation of slaves from Africa, referred only to negroes.

Some doubt seems to have existed as to the legal status of panis, and to remove these, Jacques Raudot, Ninth Intendant, issued an ordinance at Quebec on April 13th, 1709, referring to negroes and the Indian people called Panis, and declaring, "We, therefore, under the good pleasure of His Majesty, order that all the panis and negroes who have been bought, and who shall be purchased hereafter, shall belong in full proprietorship to those who have purchased them as their slaves." Then followed an injunction, prohibiting the slaves from running away, and provisions for imposing on those who aided them in so doing a fine of 50 livres.

Hocquart, Intendant under the Marquis de Beauharnois, Governor-General, in 1756 issued an ordinance, declaring null all enfranchisements not made in compliance with certain regulations and registered.

A declaration of the Paris Royal Council of 23rd July, 1745, declared that slaves who follow the enemy to the colonies of France, and their effects, should belong to His Most Christian Majesty.

This was a precedent of General Butler's famous order, made more than a century later, confiscating slaves coming into the Union ranks as "contrabands."

The Parliament of Great Britain was, when Canada was secured to the Empire, very favorable to the importation of slaves into the plantations, and had passed many Acts to aid this object.

Proceedings in the Montreal courts towards the end of last century tended to weaken the master's claims, and ultimately entirely broke them, with more regard to the rising public sentiment in England and France against slavery than to the actual state of the law, as has been shown in our previous paper<sup>90</sup>.

A census taken in 1784 states the number of slaves in Lower Canada at 304, of whom 212 were in the District of Montreal, 88 in that of Quebec, and 4 in Three Rivers. No distinction is there made between negroes and panis. An attempt was made in the first Parliament of Lower Canada, in 1793, to obtain an Act similar to that passed in the Upper Canada House at Niagara, which would have declared all slaves, then held, to be in bondage for life, and only given freedom gradually to their offspring; but this proposal, though warmly debated, was not successful. In 1799, and again in 1800, Mr. Papineau presented petitions from many inhabitants of Montreal referring to the ordinances of Intendants Radout and Hocquart, also to the Quebec Act, maintaining the former laws and usages to the people of Canada, and also an Act of George III, under cover of which the petitioners allege a number of slaves, panis and negroes, were imported<sup>91</sup>. Bills brought in on these petitions were much discussed, but sentiment was against their object, the declaration of the rights of slave-holders, and they failed to pass into law – thus slavery disappeared from Lower Canada<sup>92</sup>. It practically ceased at this time in Nova Scotia also and New Brunswick. The Upper Province had no such judicial and legislative experience as Lower Canada in regard to domestic slavery. When separated from the Mother Province in 1791, civil rights, including the law and customs as to slaves, still held in force. The Upper Canada Act of 1793 passed without difficulty, and there was no enactment here between that and the Imperial Act, which freed the few remaining slaves in 1834. While slavery existed, its character was modified, and personal cruelty guarded against by the code noir and provincial ordinances. As for the Indian slaves, there was also sympathy through the fact that not a few of the inhabitants were connected with the tribes by marriage. Mr. Parkman says with much truth: "Spanish civilization crushed the Indian, English civilization neglected him. French civilization embraced and cherished him."<sup>93</sup>

---

<sup>90</sup> "De L'esclavage in Canada," by Sir L. H. Lafontaine, *Proceedings of Societe Historique de Montreal*, 1858, and "Slavery in Canada," by J. C. Hamilton. *Transactions of the Canadian Institute*. 1890 Vol. I, p. 102. [Note in the original.]

<sup>91</sup> 14. Geo. III., cap. 83; 30 Geo. III., cap. 27. [Note in the original.]

<sup>92</sup> *Journal* of 1799, p. 123, and of 1800, p. 51. [Note in the original.]

<sup>93</sup> *The Jesuits in North America*, p. 44. [Note in the original.]

## IV. PANIS IN UPPER CANADA

There are few instances of panis in Western Canada. That of Mr. Langlade, who saved the life of Henry, the trader, at Mackinac, has been referred to. By the second article of a treaty of peace and amity, made by Sir W. Johnson with the Hurons 18th July, 1764<sup>94</sup>, and it is provided that "any English who may be prisoners or deserters, any negroes, panis, or other slaves amongst the Hurons, who are British property, shall be delivered up within one month to the commandment of the Detroit." It may be concluded that there were a considerable number of panis in this western region then.

In the Niagara Herald of 25th August, 1802, Charles Field forbids all persons harboring his Indian slave, "Sall." Old residents of Essex County remember a pani who lived at Amherstburg fifty years ago.

Mr. Solomon White, lately member of the Legislative Assembly for Essex, is one of those who speak of him. When a child, Mr. White saw "a little yellow man" at church, and he asked his mother who he was. "That is Mr. Caldwell's pani, Alexander," she answered. Though set free in 1834, he continued generally to reside at the old homestead, near the banks of the beautiful Detroit river. Here he was content to stay, passing an humble, happy existence.

There were many colored people formerly slaves in the neighborhood, and not far away was a settlement of the Hurons, but he preferred to look on the face and follow the footsteps of his old master, the late Mr. John Caldwell, enjoying the same civilization and religion. He died when on a visit to Detroit. His faith was that of his white protector, and his hope was, not to go to any happy hunting ground of his savage ancestors, but to participate in the white man's future. With him passed from Canada the last of the panis.

---

<sup>94</sup> Mr. S. White has the original treaty, but for copy see N.Y. Colonial Documents Vol. VII., p. 650. [Note in the original.]

# Slavery and Law

## Terms for the surrender of Montreal<sup>95</sup> (1760)

*Articles of capitulation between His Excellency General Amherst, Commander in Chief of His Britannic Majesty's Troops and Forces in North-America, and his Excellency the Marquis de Vaudreuil, Grand Croix of the Royal and Military Order of St. Lewis, Governor, and Lieutenant-General for the King in Canada.*

Art. 1. Twenty-four hours after the signing of the present Capitulation, the English General shall cause the Troops of His Britannic Majesty to take Possession of the Gate of the Town of Montreal; and the English Garrison shall not come into the Place, till after the French Troops shall have evacuated it. [...]

Art. 47. The Negroes and Panis, of both sexes, shall remain in their quality of slaves, in the possession of the French and Canadians to whom they belong; they shall be at Liberty to keep them in their Service to the Colony, or to sell them, and they may also continue to bring them up in the Roman Religion. (Granted; except those who shall have been made Prisoners.) [...]

Art. 49. The Inhabitants, and other persons, who shall have suffered any damage in their goods, moveable or immoveable, which remained at Quebec, under the faith of the capitulation of that city, may make their representations to the British Government, who shall render them due justice, against the person to whom it shall belong. (Granted.) [...]

P. S. Art. 51. The English General shall engage, in case any Indians remain after the surrender of this town, to prevent their coming into the towns; and that they do not, in any manner, insult the subjects of his Most Christian Majesty. (Care shall be taken that the Indians do not insult any of the subjects of his Most Christian Majesty.) [...]

*Done at Montreal, Sept. 8, 1760. VAUDREUILLE. [...]*

*Done in the camp before Montreal, the 8<sup>th</sup> of Sept. 1760. JEFF. AMHERST.*

## A Nova Scotian Act restricting sales of alcohol to slaves<sup>96</sup> (1761)

*Be it enacted, by the Lieutenant Governor, Council and Assembly, that from and after the publication hereof no Retailer, Innholder, Tavern or Alehouse Keeper, who shall sell upon trust or credit, any wine, strong beer, ale, brandy, rum, or other spirituous liquors, mixed or unmixed, to any soldier, sailor, servant, or day laborer, or other person whatsoever, to the amount of any sum exceeding the sum of five shillings, shall have any remedy to recover the same, either at law or in equity, against any of the persons aforesaid, their executors or administrators.*

---

<sup>95</sup> From ARTICLES. (1760, December 25). *The Pennsylvania Gazette*, p. 1.

<sup>96</sup> From General Assembly of Nova Scotia. (1761). An Act For the Regulating Innholders, Tavernkeepers and Retailers of Spirituous Liquors. Nova Scotia: General Assembly of Nova Scotia.

*And be it further enacted*, that in case any soldier, sailor, servant, apprentice, bound servant or negro slave, or any other person whatsoever, shall leave any pawn or pledge, as a security for the payment of any sum exceeding *five shillings*, contracted in such manner, such soldier, sailor, servant, apprentice, bound servant or negro slave, or other person whatsoever, or the masters or mistresses of such servant, apprentice, bound servant, or negro slave, may complain to any Justice of the Peace where such *retailer, innholder, tavern or alehouse keeper*, or any other persons whatsoever, receiving such pawns or pledges, usually resides, that such pawn or pledge is detained from him or her by such *retailer, innholder, tavern or alehouse keeper*, or any other person whatsoever, and having made proof thereof upon oath, or otherwise to the satisfaction of said Justice, such Justice of the Peace is required, by Warrant under his Hand and Seal, to compel such *retailer, innholder, tavern or alehouse keeper*, or other person whatsoever, by distress and sale of his goods, to restore the aforesaid pawn or pledge to the party complaining, or to make him or her satisfaction for the loss or abuse thereof; and shall further be subject to a fine not exceeding *twenty shillings*, for the use of the poor, and costs of prosecution.

*And be it further enacted*, that no *retailer* or person whatsoever, shall harbor or suffer any apprentice, bound servant, or negro slave, to sit drinking in his or her house, nor sell or give him or them, nor suffer to be sold or given him or them, any of the liquors aforesaid, without special order or allowance of their respective masters or mistresses, on pain of forfeiting the sum of *twenty shillings* for each such offence, together with the charges of prosecution; to be recovered upon conviction on the oath of *one* credible witness, before any *one* of His Majesty's Justices of the Peace within the Town or Precinct where the offence shall be committed, or such other proof as shall be to the satisfaction of such Justice; and to be levied by Warrant of Distress and sale of the offender's goods and chattels, under the Hand and Seal of the said Justice, and for want of sufficient distress, such Justice shall and may commit such offender to His Majesty's Gaol, there to remain for the space of *one month*, or till he shall have paid and satisfied the same. And such sum to [be] levied shall, by the said Justice, be paid into the hands of the Overseers of the Poor of the Town or Precinct where the offence shall be committed, to be by them applied to the use of the poor of such Town or Precinct.

*Provided always*, that nothing herein contained shall extend to debar any *retailer, innholder, tavern or alehouse keeper*, from furnishing any traveler, or boarders in his family, with necessary refreshments on credit.

## A brief mention of an Indigenous slave<sup>97</sup> (1768)

Mr. Daniel Jaqueri, who left Montreal the 25<sup>th</sup> of last month, informs us that Ensign Schloser, who it was supposed had murdered his servant, was himself and his servant killed by a Panise<sup>98</sup> Indian Slave (whose dog Mr. Schloser had shot some time before) who confessed the horrid deed, and discovered the place where he had hid Mr. Schloser's body, which was taken up, carried to Montreal, and there decently interred the 20<sup>th</sup> ult. Near Lieut. DeMestral, who died suddenly a few days before.

## “The right and power of selling them and their children”<sup>99</sup> (1799)

A petition from sundry persons inhabitants of the city of *Montreal*, whose names are thereunto subscribed, was presented to the House by Mr. *Papineau*: and the same was received and read:

SETTING FORTH – That by an ordinance<sup>100</sup> of *Jacques Raudot*, intendant of *Canada*, bearing date the thirteenth day of April, which was in the year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred and nine, registered and published according to law, it is ordained, under the good pleasure of His Most Christian Majesty, that all Panis and Negroes which, before then were, and which thereafter should be purchased in *Canada*, should appertain, in full property, to the purchasers thereof, as their proper slaves; and the said Panis and Negroes are thereby enjoined not to leave the service of their masters, and all persons not to encourage them to desert, or harbor them, under a penalty of fifty livres.

That His Most Christian Majesty did never signify his displeasure or disapprobation of the said ordinance, whereby the same was in force at the definitive Treaty of Peace and Cession of this Province to His Majesty, and therefore by the Statute of the 14<sup>th</sup> *George III* Chapter 83d, commonly called the *Quebec Act*, makes now part of the laws, usages and customs of *Canada*.

That the importation of negroes from *Africa* to the *West India* islands and British plantations, has, from the first establishment of an *African* Company, and since the trade has been set free to all His Majesty's subjects, under Parliamentary Regulations, been deemed lawful, and the owners of such negroes vested with the right and power of selling them and their children, whereby slavery was effectually established in the said islands and plantations.

That by the Statute of the 5<sup>th</sup> *Geo. II* Chap 7 Section 4, intituled, “An Act for the more easy recovery of debts in His Majesty's Plantations and Colonies in America,” it is enacted: “That from and after the twenty ninth day of September, one thousand seven hundred and thirty-two, the houses, lands, negroes and other hereditaments

---

<sup>97</sup> From NEW-YORK, April 21. (1768, April 25). *Connecticut Courant*, p. 3.

<sup>98</sup> Possibly a member of the Pawnee nation, but the term “Panis” was used to describe Indigenous slaves in general.

<sup>99</sup> From House of Assembly of Lower Canada. (1799). Journal of the House of Assembly of Lower-Canada from the 28<sup>th</sup> March to the 3d June 1799, both days inclusive. Quebec: John Neilson.

<sup>100</sup>



and real estates, situate or being within any of the said plantations, belonging to any person indebted, shall be liable to, and chargeable with, all just debts, duties and demands of what nature or kind soever, owing by any such person to His Majesty, or any of His Subjects, and shall and may be assets for the satisfaction thereof, in like manner as real estates are by the laws of *England* liable to the satisfaction of debts due by Bond or other specialty, and shall be subject to the like remedies, proceedings and process in any court of Law or Equity, in any of the said plantations respectively, for seizing, extending, selling or disposing of any such houses, lands, negroes, and other hereditaments and real estates, towards the satisfaction of such debts, duties and demands, and in like manner as personal estates in any of the said plantations respectively, are seized, extended, sold or disposed of for the satisfaction of debts.” Which Statute forms a part of the Laws of the Province under the *Quebec Act*, whereby all Acts of Parliament before then made, concerning or respecting the said colonies and plantations, are declared to be in force within the said Province of *Quebec*, and every part thereof.

That by the Statute 30 *Geo.* III Chap. 27<sup>th</sup>, intituled, “An Act for encouraging new settlers in His Majesty’s colonies and plantations in *America*,” it is enacted, “That from and after the first day of August, one thousand seven hundred and ninety, if any person or persons, being a subject or subjects of the territories or countries belonging to the United States of *America*, shall come from thence, together with his or their family or families, to any of the *Bahama* or *Bermuda* or *Somers* Islands, or to any part of the Province of *Quebec*, or *Nova-Scotia*, or any of the territories belonging to His Majesty in *North America*, for the purpose of residing and settling there, it shall be lawful for any such person or persons, having first obtained a license for that purpose from the Governor, or, in his absence, from the Lieutenant Governor, of the said islands, colonies or provinces respectively, to import into the same, in British ships, owned by His Majesty’s subjects, and navigated according to law, any negroes, household furniture, utensils of husbandry, or clothing free of duty.” And it is also enacted by the said Act, “That all sales or bargains for the sale of any negro, household furniture, utensils of husbandry, or clothing to be imported, which shall be made within twelve calendar months after the importation of the same (except in cases of the Bankruptcy or death of the owner thereof) shall be null and void to all intents and purposes whatsoever.”

That upon the faith of His Majesty’s Government, solemnly pledged by the above mentioned laws, the inhabitants of this Province in general and the inhabitants of the city and district of *Montreal* in particular, have purchased for a valuable consideration, a considerable number of Panis and negro slaves; and divers persons, formerly subjects of the United States of *America*, have, upon the faith of the above in part recited Statute of 30<sup>th</sup> *George* III Chapter 27<sup>th</sup> imported into this Province, according to law, a number of negroes, slaves belonging to them; and which Panis and negro slaves have always demeaned themselves in a becoming manner until lately, that they have imbibed a refractory & disobedient spirit, under pretext that no slavery exists in the Province.

In February 1798, one *Charlotte*, a negro woman, belonging to a Miss *Jane Cook*, absconded from the service of her mistress, and having refused to return, was, upon a complaint on oath, apprehended in virtue of a warrant from a Magistrate, and having still persisted in refusing to return to her duty, was, upon legal conviction, committed to the prison of the District (for want of a House of Correction), but having applied for, and obtained a Writ of *Habeas Corpus*, she was, in vacation, discharged by his Honor the Chief Justice of this District, without being obliged to give security for her appearance in the Court of King's Bench.

Upon this enlargement, the negroes in the city and district of *Montreal* threatened a general revolt; and one *Jude*, a negro woman belonging to *Elias Smith*, of *Montreal*, Merchant, purchased by him at *Albany*, on the 27<sup>th</sup> day of January, 1795, in consideration of eighty pounds, *New York* currency, absconded, and refusing to return, was, upon conviction, committed to prison; but upon a petition presented by her to the Court of King's Bench for this district, holding criminal pleas, she was on the eighth day of March, 1798, without deciding upon the question of slavery, discharged; the Chief Justice declaring at the same time, in open court, that he would, upon *Habeas Corpus*, discharge every negro, indentured apprentice, and servant, who should be committed to gaol under the Magistrate's Warrant in the like cases.

That His Majesty's Justices of the Peace, having thus no power to compel absconding slaves to return to their owner's service, nor the owners any power to enforce obedience, or detain their slaves in their service, your Memorialists foresee that alarming consequences to this Province may ensue therefrom, independent of the great loss which his Majesty's Subjects of this Province, owners of negro slaves, and the creditors of such owners, may sustain by the disability such owners now labor under of preserving their property in slaves.

That it may therefore please this House to frame an Act to be passed into a law, ordaining and enacting, that (until provision shall be made by law for establishing a House of Correction) whenever any Panis or negro slave shall desert from his owner's service in this Province: it shall be lawful to proceed against him or her in the manner directed and provided for against indentured apprentices and servants in *England* in *Great Britain*, and to commit him or her to the common Gaol of the district where he or she may be apprehended, there to be detained as effectually as if the same was such House of Correction, as by the laws respecting indentured apprentices and servants in *England* is intended; and that the Keeper of the Gaol shall be as compellable to receive and detain such slave or slaves, under the penalties to which a Keeper of a House of Correction may be liable on a commitment of indentured apprentices and servants in *England*, until such slave shall return to his or her owner's service, or until such slave shall be delivered by the due course of law. And farther, that no person shall knowingly aid, countenance, harbor or conceal, any such deserting slave; or, that a law may be made declaring there is no slavery in the Province; or such other provision, respecting slaves as this House in its wisdom shall think proper.

## “Slavery under certain modifications exists in this Province”<sup>101</sup> (1800)

**Montreal slaveholders were unhappy with the result of their first petition and submitted a second on the following year. The second petition recycles a few of the points made in the first, but also provides additional information.**

A Petition of divers inhabitants of the District of Montreal, whose names are thereunto subscribed, was presented to the House by Mr. Papineau, and the same was brought up and read:-

SETTING FORTH – That doubts have lately been entertained how far by the laws and statutes in force in this Province there can be any property in Negroes and Panis. From such doubts having affected the interests of many of the Petitioners, they feel themselves deeply impressed with the necessity of having it determined by an Act of the Legislature that slavery under certain modifications exists in this Province, and at the same time of vesting in a more effectual manner the property in slaves in their masters, and of providing laws for the proper regulation and government of such a class of men as come under the description of slaves. That the Petitioners humbly conceive that such an Act would be of great and general advantage to the Province.

That the Petitioners beg leave to submit that an Ordinance of Mr. Raudot, Intendant of Canada, dated 13th of April, 1709, enacts under the pleasure of His Most Christian Majesty, “Que tous les Panis et Negres qui ont été achetés, ou qui le seront par la suite, apartiendront en pleine propriété à ceux qui en ont fait ou qui en seront l’acquisition en qualité d’Esclaves.”<sup>102</sup> That this law which was duly enregistered and published, and was never altered or repealed, the Petitioners humbly conceive, was in full force at the Definitive Treaty of Peace, and under the 14th of His present Majesty, makes a part of the laws of this Province.

That it appears in the opinion of the Petitioners that since the establishment of the African Company, in the year 1661, the existence of slavery so far as it respects Negroes, has been established and confirmed in all His Majesty’s Dominions in America. Free liberty was given by a variety of statutes from that time to the present day, to purchase slaves on the Coasts of Africa, and they, their children and posterity, were declared the property of the purchasers, and of those to whom they were afterwards sold.

That by the statute 30. Geo. 3. C. 27., made after the close of the late unhappy [U.S. Revolutionary] war, it is enacted, “That from and after the 1st day of August, 1790, if any person or persons, being subjects of the Territories or Countries belonging to the United States of America, shall come from thence, together with his or their family or families, to any of the Bahama or Bermuda or Somers Islands, or to any part of the Province of Quebec, or Nova-Scotia, or any of the Territories belonging to His Majesty in North-America, for the purpose of residing and settling there, it shall

---

<sup>101</sup> From La Chambre D’Assemblée (1800). Journal de la Chambre D’Assemblée du Bas-Canada. Quebec: John Neilson. Extract starts on p. 150.

<sup>102</sup> In English, “That all the Panis and Negroes who have been bought, or will be bought hereafter, will belong completely to those who have, or who will, acquire them in the capacity of Slaves.”

be lawful for any such person or persons, having first obtained a license for that purpose from the Governor, or in his absence from the Lieutenant Governor of the said Islands, Colonies, or Plantations respectively to import into the same in British ships, owned by His Majesty's subjects, and navigated according to Law, any negroes, household furniture, utensils of husbandry, or clothing free of duty."

And it is also enacted by the said statute "That all sales or bargains for the sale of any negro, household furniture, utensils of husbandry or clothing so imported which shall be made within twelve calendar months after the importation of the same (except in case of Bankruptcy or death of the owner thereof) shall be null and void to all intents and purposes whatsoever."

That if any doubt remained before the passing of this Act whether slavery really, under any modification, existed in this Province, the Petitioners flatter themselves this statute expressly recognizes its existence in the same manner as it prevailed in all His Majesty's Plantations in America before the late war.

That the Petitioners can assure this House with confidence, that many faithful and loyal subjects of His Majesty, after exposing their lives in his service, and sacrificing almost the whole property they were possessed of in the late calamitous war, came into this Province with their slaves under the sacred promise held out to them in the last mentioned statute, and from an idea lately gone abroad, that slavery does not exist in this country, have found that their slaves on whom was all their dependence for support, have deserted them, and held them at defiance. That as the Petitioners most ardently desire to put the House in possession of all the facts which belong to their case, they beg leave to inform the House that a Mr. Fraser, of their district, obtained lately a warrant from three Justices of the Peace to commit to the House of Correction his slave who had deserted his service (and who was one of three, the only property he had saved from the ravages of the late war, and his chief dependence for support in his old age); and that on a writ of *Habeas Corpus* being sued out, the slave was discharged by the Court of King's Bench, under an opinion that the property was not sufficiently provide by Mr. Fraser. The petitioners, though they entertain a high opinion for the authority of that Honorable Court, cannot but remark, that the evidence produced on that occasion was, in their apprehension, the best which it was possible in any case to produce, and that the Court in desiring more, have asked what it would be impossible almost ever to obtain, and in this manner have divested all the owners of slaves of any property in them.

That it was stated in the course of the judgment of the Court that the Act of the 37th of His present Majesty, C. 119 had repealed all the laws respecting slavery: but this statute, in the humble opinion of the petitioners, only goes the length to declare, that slaves shall not in future be assessed for the payment of debts used by their owners; it does not go so far as to divest such owners of their property in their slaves, nor can it be considered as tending to emancipate the slaves in His Majesty's plantations. That so far from this, subsequent Acts still further recognize slavery to exist, and encourage the importation of Negroes from the coast of Africa.

That the petitioners are extremely sorry to detain the House so long on this occasion, so interesting to them, as many of the petitioners have paid considerable

sums for slaves who have deserted their service, and all of them are deeply sensible that this class of men who are now let loose on society, and live and idle and profligate life, may be tempted to commit crimes, which it is the duty of every citizen to endeavor to prevent.

That the petitioners under all the circumstances which they have taken the liberty to state, cannot but entertain a well-grounded hope, that the House will take this subject into their serious consideration, and that they will pass such a Declaratory Act as will give force and efficacy to the Laws and Statutes which relate to this subject, and at the same time that the House will by such means as they think fit, secure to the owners a property in their slaves, and make such further regulations for the proper government of slaves as in their wisdom may be thought expedient.

And that it may therefore please this House to frame such an Act as will declare that slavery exists under certain modifications in this Province, and will completely vest the property in Panis and Negroes in the owners thereof; and further, that this House will provide such laws and regulations for the government of slaves as in the wisdom of the House may be thought expedient.

On motion of Mr. Papineau, seconded by Mr. Berthelot,

ORDERED, that the said Petition, with the papers thereunto annexed, and also one on the same subject, presented to this house on the 19th of April of last year; be referred to a Committee of five members, whereof three shall form a *Quorum*, to examine the matter thereof, and report thereon with all possible diligence; and that the said Committee do meet in one of the Committee Rooms to-morrow morning at Ten o'clock.

ORDERED, that Messieurs Papineau, Grant, Craigie, Cuthbert and Dumas do compose the said Committee.

And then on motion of Mr. Dumas, seconded by Mr. Cuthbert, the House adjourned till Monday next.

Monday, 21st April 1800

[...] Mr. Cuthbert, from the Committee to whom was referred the petition of diverse Citizens of the District of Montreal relative to slaves, with the papers thereunto annexed, as also the one on the same subject presented to this House the 19th of April of the last year, reported, that the Committee had examined the contents and matter thereof, and had directed him to report their opinion thereon to the House – and he read the report in his place and afterwards delivered it at the table, where it was again read by the Clerk; and the same is as follows:

RESOLVED, that it is the opinion of this Committee, that there are reasonable grounds for passing a law to regulate the condition of slaves, to limit the term of Slavery, and prevent the further introduction of slaves in this Province.

RESOLVED, that it is the opinion of this Committee, that the Chairman move the House, that leave be given to the said Committee to bring in a Bill<sup>103</sup> accordingly.

---

<sup>103</sup> The proposed Bill was still being discussed and put to committee as of 1803.

## “The atrocious slave system”<sup>104</sup>

There is one subject which at that early period came under legal discussion, in this Province [of Nova Scotia], on which it may be interesting to the public to be informed, and of which, I feel confident, but very few if any of our population, except myself, have any knowledge whatever. It is that of the atrocious slave system.

My readers will doubtless be startled at the thought, or supposition, that it could ever have been a question, whether that cruel outrage on humanity, ever existed in this Province. But the question did arise and was legally argued and decided. I think it was in the year 1806.

Before relating the case in which the decision was given, I must state some preliminary facts relating to the subject. During the progress, and especially at the close of the revolutionary war in the British Provinces, now the United States, rather large numbers of the loyalist families left those lands, and came to Nova Scotia, which then included New Brunswick, and as I think the Islands of Cape Breton and St. John, this latter now named Prince Edward. A large number of them settled in Shelbourne.

Several of these loyal or *refugee* families, as they were often called, brought with them in their service, individuals of the slave population, who came with the families, either from kind attachment to them, or hoping thus to secure their freedom. One of them abruptly left his master's service, in Shelbourne, and came to Halifax. The master pursued him, and by some legal process, or other means, procured his arrest, and was about to convey him back to Shelbourne. Application on his behalf was made to Mr. Wilkins, who obtained a writ of *habeas corpus*, under which master and servant were brought before the Chief Justice, and the case, and the slave question were fully argued on each side, and the Judge legally and righteously decided, that this Province was not debased with that cruel and abominable slave system, which John Wesley appropriately characterized, as “*the sum of all villainies.*” Thus the subject as to our free country, was settled for all time.

---

<sup>104</sup> From Marshall, J. G. (n.d.). *A brief history of public proceedings and events, legal, parliamentary and miscellaneous in the province of Nova Scotia*. Halifax: The Wesleyan. Written by John George Marshall (1786 – 1880).

## “Negro servitude in the Province of Nova Scotia”<sup>105</sup> (1802)

This pamphlet clarifies the relationship between slavery and British law. Briefly, Statute Law can provide for ownership of the individual. This is the law that enabled British slavery in the West Indies. British Common Law has no provision for ownership of the person, but did provide for the possibility of owning an individual’s service, even in perpetuity, and even against their will – as in the cases of indentured apprenticeship and impressment into naval service. The opinion of the legal experts below was that even if a slave became free by escaping to British Territory, under Common Law his (former) master could still be entitled to their service.

### PREFACE

Such is the authority of custom, that nothing is now given to the public without a preface. Though not “*Oblig’d by hunger, or request of Friends,*” I nevertheless find myself, on the present occasion, under the necessity of submitting to this same authority.

It must naturally excite some degree of surprise in the mind of the reader, to see the public in possession of papers which embrace only a private concern of Col. Delancy, were not some explanation of the motive which induced to the publication, to accompany them. I will now proceed to give this explanation with the waste of as few words as possible: And not only so, but I will relate the manner in which I became possessed of these very interesting papers.

First, as to my motive to this publication. Let me then say, that the question, whether any such thing as Negro Slavery can legally exist in this Province, has long occupied the attention both of the learned and unlearned among us. It has, indeed, lately undergone a judicial investigation, but without any judicial decision. Now, whether any particular Negro (admitting him to be a slave) belongs either to A or B, is a matter in which none but the litigating parties are directly interested. Therefore a judicial decision of it, can only disappoint the hopes of one of two men. But when it becomes questionable, whether any *particular thing* is really and truly *property*, which had hitherto been considered as *property*, the dispute becomes a matter in which every member of the community is either nearly or remotely interested; for although every man in this Province is not possessed of this species of property, yet every man *may* be possessed of it. Nothing, therefore, can be of more extensive utility to the public, than to have this question put so fast a-sleep, that it may never awake again. How far the publication of these papers may go towards effecting this, the event only can tell.

Thus much as to my motive.

As to the *manner* in which I became possessed of these papers, I desire leave to refer the reader to the following short narrative.

---

<sup>105</sup> From *Opinions of several gentlemen of the law, on the subject of Negro servitude, in the Province of Nova-Scotia*. (1802). St. John: John Ryan.

About a year ago, I heard that Col. Delancy (an old acquaintance of mine, and who lives near Annapolis, in our neighboring Province) had instituted a suit against a Mr. Wooden for detaining his Negro slave. I heard also, that after a verdict in his favor, there was a motion in arrest of judgment grounded upon the idea, that an action of Trover (as lawyers call it) would not lie for a Negro in that Province, but that some other action was the proper one. All this happened at the last September Term of the Supreme Court there. And I since find, that the hearing of the motion was delayed till the September Term in the present year.

Now, happening since to understand, that Col. Delancy had resorted to several of the most learned counsellors in England for their opinions on this interesting subject, and that he had obtained opinions from them parallel to his most sanguine wishes, I thought I should be doing well were I to request Col. Delancy, by letter, to send me a copy of these opinions, with his leave to show them where I might think they would be of service. Accordingly I wrote him, and receive from him the papers in the order in which they are now published, together with his leave to make what prudent use of them I might think proper. Although this permission does not go the full length of *literally* justifying me in sending them to the press; yet I have taken the liberty of amplifying this my authority, from a well-grounded belief, that the liberty would have been granted me, were it more specifically requested.

I would just add, that the Attorney-General of England is always, from the high official rank which he sustains, considered as being at the very top of his profession. As to Mr. Tidd, it can scarcely be a secret here, that he is reputed to be the most learned special pleader in that country. And I am informed, that the professional character of Mr. Percival, rises far above the level of mediocrity. As Mr. Aplin's opinion is pretty generally referred to in the three English opinions, and as the latter would not be well understood without a perusal of the former, the whole was sent me; and accordingly I publish the whole.

#### CASE

James Delancy, Esquire, of Annapolis, in the Province of Nova-Scotia, had a Negro slave, named Jack, who ran away from his service without leave, and went to Halifax, above an hundred miles distant from Annapolis, where he was taken into the service of a Mr. Wooden on wages.

On hearing this, Col. Delancy directed his Attorney to write to Mr. Wooden, informing him, that the Negro belonged to Mr. Delancy, and that if he detained him, an action would be brought against him for so doing. To which Mr. Wooden's Attorney returned for answer, that the Negro in question was indeed retained by Mr. Wooden in his service, but that he, as well as all other Negroes in this Province, were Free-men; there not being any law here to make them otherwise.

Whereupon an action of Trover<sup>106</sup> was commenced by Mr. Delancy against Mr. Wooden, for the Negro slave: And the cause came on to be tried at the last Term of the Supreme Court, which was in September last, when the Plaintiff obtained a verdict with £70 damages. But the Counsel for the defendant moved the Court in

---

<sup>106</sup> An action used, by the owner of the property, to recover the value of property "converted" to the use of someone else without their permission.



arrest of judgment, upon the ground, that an action of Trover would not be for the conversion of a Negro in this Province. And the motion was ordered to stand over for argument to the Term in September next.

It was strongly urged, on the part of the defendant at the trial, that instead of an action of Trover, the plaintiff should have brought his action for damages for detaining the Negro, *per quod Servitium amisit*,<sup>107</sup> as in the case of any other servant; and that no action of Trover could be maintained for the Negro, as he could be no more the slave of Mr. Delancy in this Province, than he could that of any other person in London, or elsewhere.

[To Mr Aplin:] Your opinion is therefore requested, whether an action of Trover was the proper form of action for Mr. Delancy to recover the value of his Negro slave; or what is his proper remedy for recovery of amends for the damages he has sustained.

#### MR. APLIN'S OPINION

Sir, your letter of the tenth of October last, in which you desire my opinion on a stated case, I have both received and carefully perused: And I am much mistaken indeed, if an action of Trover does not lie for the conversion of a Negro in this Province. I am almost tempted to say, that it is the only proper action, unless the taking should appear in proof to be a tortuous one. In this latter case, the plaintiff has his election, either to bring this action, or trespass. Property in the plaintiff, and a subsequent conversion, are the characteristic ingredients of an action of Trover.

But the question is, whether a Negro is or can be, in the legal sense of the word, the property of any man in this Province.

Now, whether a Negro is or can be the property of any man in this Province, will emphatically depend upon another question – whether a Negro can or cannot be a slave in this Province. For if he can be a slave here, I think when we come coolly to consider the legal dominion which the master has over him, he cannot be taken to be anything less than his master's property. If so, Trover must necessarily lie against any man who detains the slave, after a demand and refusal; unless, indeed, the general law, in respect to Trover, is laid prostrate in favor of this species of property.

Two things, therefore, at this stage of the inquiry, seem to offer themselves for distinct consideration. First, whether a Negro can, in this Province, be a slave. Secondly, although he may legally be a slave here; yet, whether he can legally be deemed the property of any other man. Answering the first of these questions will, I think, go a great way towards answering the other.

In respect to the first proposition, whether a Negro can, in this Province, be a slave, I would just observe, that such a question has never yet come directly before any of the Courts of Westminster-Hall. I say directly, because it certainly has several times come before them in a collateral way, as I shall take occasion, in a subsequent stage of the present inquiry, more particularly to remark.

It is to the Statute Law of the mother country, I presume, that we are principally to look for a solution of this very interesting question. And when we come

---

<sup>107</sup> Roughly, “By which the service was lost”. This type of action was used in cases where, for example, a servant was injured in a way that left them unable to complete their duties.

to recur to the original charter constituting the African Company, the several Royal confirmations of it, the several Proclamations to secure the exclusive trade against interlopers, and particularly the 23. Geo. 2. (which latter lets in all His Majesty's subjects, without exception, to an equal participation in the African trade); we shall be at a loss to discover any legal grounds for supposing Negroes, who are constantly mentioned as slaves, not to be truly and legally such.

In the ninth of the privileges granted by this same original charter, which was made by Charles the Second, in the year 1661, Negroes are expressly named as one article of exclusive traffic. And why a Negro, so made an article of traffic, should not be as much the property of a Company trader, as ostrich feathers, indigo, or gold dust, is an enigma which I am unable to unravel.

The Preamble of the 23. Geo. 2. Recites, "that the trade to and from Africa, being very advantageous to Great Britain, and necessary for the supplying [of] the plantations and colonies belonging thereto, with a sufficient number of Negroes, at reasonable rates, ought to be free and open to all His Majesty's subjects." And accordingly the trade was made free and open by an enacting clause of the same act.

Under the latitude of this and other acts it was, that the subjects of the more Northern Colonies, while they yet remained under the dominion of His Majesty, prosecuted a very gainful trade to the coasts of Africa, no less for the supply of Negroes to the West-India islands, than to supply the more southern colonies with that article of traffic. Add to all this, that under the protection of the same general laws, these northern colonial traders supplied their own separate districts of country, with just as many negroes as they could find a market for.

I have carefully run my eye over the earlier laws of Antigua, Virginia, and New-York; and it is worth remarking, that there is no law among any of these provincial codes, that is *creative* of any such state as that of slavery. Many of their laws, indeed, and particularly those which were nearly contemporaneous with the first organization of the respective governments, do recognize Negroes as slaves. But then these same acts go no further than to regulate their pre-existing state of bondage. The reason is obvious. They considered, and rightly too, that this description of Men were already made slaves by those acts of Parliament which made them emphatically articles of traffic. Consequently, they had nothing further to do, than barely to make the before mentioned regulating acts, and to adjust them to the then existing circumstances of the case.

The same thing may be said of the more northern colonies: and particularly of Massachusetts, Rhode-Island, and Connecticut. I mention these three, because I am pretty well acquainted with their whole system of colonial jurisprudence. Their laws also speak of Negroes as slaves; but none of them are declaratory of a state of slavery. The only law of this Province, which so much as mentions a Negro, is entitled, "An act for the regulating [of] Inn-holders, Tavern-keepers, and Retailers of Spiritous Liquors." Now this Act, in the second section of it, enacts, "that in case any soldier, sailor, servant, apprentice, bound servant, or *Negro slave*, or other person whatsoever, shall leave any pawn or pledge, as a security for the payment of any sum exceeding five shillings, contracted in such manner, such soldier, sailor, servant,

apprentice, bound servant, or *Negro slave*, may complain to any Justice of the Peace where such retailer, inn-holder, tavern or ale-house keeper, or any other person whatsoever, receiving such pawns or pledges, usually resides, that such pawn or pledge is detained from him or her by such retailer, inn-holder, tavern or ale-house keeper, or any other person whatsoever, and having made proof thereof upon oath, or otherwise to the satisfaction of the said Justice, such Justice of the Peace is required, by warrant under his hand and seal, to compel such retailer," &c.

It is observable that this Act does, and that in the most emphatical manner, speak of Negroes as *slaves*. But it may easily be discerned, that it does just as emphatically suppose them to have been so before the Act was made, or even thought of. Hence it may be inferred, at least, that the provincial Legislature had in their eye (if indeed they had any thing in it rational) that these very Acts of Parliament had already made slaves of Negroes within the Province. Therefore it may not improperly be said, that a law of this Province does, in fact, *admit* of such a state as that of slavery in it.

This same Act of the 23. Geo. 2. Further says, that "any of His Majesty's subjects" (whether British or Colonial) "for the security of their goods, or slaves, may erect houses," &c. It speaks of Negroes, in several other parts of it, as *slaves*. There are also several other subsequent Acts of Parliament, which speak of Negroes as being in the same state of bondage.

Hence we may safely argue, that as several Acts of the British Parliament do makes slaves of Negroes; and as all His Majesty's subjects (whether British or Colonial) are made equal sharers in the profits of the African or Negro traffic, the colonial traders might carry their slaves, either to the West-Indies, or to any other of His Majesty's colonies on the continent. Consequently, if Negroes, so imported into the West-Indies, were legally held as slaves *there*, they cannot, when imported into any of the continental colonies, be in a better state than they would have been, had they been imported into the *West-Indies*.

If Negroes therefore are slaves, as well within this Province, as in the West-Indies (for the same law that makes them slaves *there*, makes them so *here*) then it remains to be considered, whether Negroes, so made slaves, can be the property of their masters.

I would only further remark, on this head, that whatever is made an article of traffic, must necessarily have an owner, and consequently become an article of sale. And whatever may be legally sold, must have been the property of the seller: For nothing but property can be sold, and therefore, whatever can be sold, must be property.

But, that the matter in dispute may not depend altogether on the foregoing reasoning, let us next see, whether there is no law that does, still more pointedly, make Negroes property in the hands of their masters. Surely there is; for the Act of the 5. Geo. 2. C. 7. does expressly make personal Estate of them, and subject them to be sold under Execution to satisfy the demands of English creditors. Some of the colonies, it seems, and particularly Barbados and Virginia, had made laws which turned Negroes, who were before personal Estate, into real. Consequently, when an

English creditor attempted to sue out Execution for a personal demand against a colonial debtor, if he meant to fasten it on the Negro property of the defendant, he must necessarily sue out an *Elegit*; and Negroes being turned into real Estate, the creditor could only take one half of them. But this is not quite all; for he must, even afterwards, be put to his ejection. Now, this shuffling game being perceived by the British Legislature, they were not content barely with metamorphosing Negroes into personal Estate again; but they proceeded, in the last mentioned Act, to turn all real Estate in the colonies into personal Estate also. Any one may easily perceive how much the colonists lost by this kind of legislative trick.

Whoever considers this clause of the Act, along with the several colonial acts which it was meant to defeat, must wonder much at hearing that Negroes in those *particular Provinces* were not property. But if they were indeed property in those *particular Provinces*, it will require much sophistical reasoning to prove, that they are not as much property *here*, as they ever were or could be *there*. This Act embraces all the colonies without distinction. A Negro *here*, as well as *elsewhere*, is made property by it, and subject to a *feri facias*<sup>108</sup> at the suit of an English creditor. If making a Negro liable to be thus sold, does not make him property in the hands of the purchaser, we must wander far out of the system of English jurisprudence to find out what property is. Buying and selling, if they imply any thing must necessarily imply property both in the seller and purchaser.

It may not be amiss just to mention, before I enter upon the other proposed point of consideration, that Negroes, even in this Province, have always been allowed to pass by will, as personal Estate. They have always found their way into inventories both of testate and intestate persons. They have constantly been made the subjects of distribution, under our Provincial law, as part of the inestate's personal Estate. They have uniformly been sold under Execution; and, add to all this, they are and always have been sold, in the common course of traffic, as other chattel interests are or were sold, and warranted by the bill of sale to be the property of the seller.

If I could be excused a little syllogistic pedantry, I would make this part of the argument to stand thus: Trover will lie for any chattel that is legally made the subject of property. But Negroes are, by express Act of Parliament, made the subjects of property in this Province. Therefore, Trover will lie for a Negro in this Province.

I am now prepared to enter upon the other point of consideration, which has nothing further for its object, than just to obviate such objections as have already stood, or may in future stand in the way of the foregoing reasoning.

To prove that Trover does not lie for a Negro in the plantations, the case, *Smith vs. Gould*, in 2. Salk. 666, has been cited and wholly relied on. The same case is reported in Ray. 1274. But when we look into this case, and accurately attend to the reasoning of the Court, we shall find it only to prove, that such an action would not lie for a Negro in *England*. Now, before I can be brought to think the cited case to prove any thing against the present action, it must clearly be shown me, that there is no legal difference between the state of a Negro in England, and the state of one in the plantations: And this no man can believe, who has read and duly considered the

---

<sup>108</sup> A writ that allows a sheriff to confiscate property in order to satisfy a legal action.

before cited authorities. “Men,” say the Court, “may be the owners, and therefore cannot be the subjects of property.” Or, in other words, “as a Negro, the very moment he lands in England, becomes a Freeman; so he then becomes capable also of acquiring property. Therefore, whoever is rendered capable of acquiring this, can never remain the subject of it. Freedom, and a capacity of acquiring property, are always concomitants, and can no more be put asunder than Man and Wife.” In the case next preceding the cited one, where *Indebitatees* was brought for the price of a Negro sold in England, Holt, Ch. J. held, “that as soon as a man comes into England, he becomes free.” Consequently, having now become free, he has become capable of acquiring property; and having acquired this capacity, he can no longer remain the subject of property.

The peculiarity of his Lordship’s expression in this last cited case, appears to deserve more than a cursory attention. If a Negro does indeed *become* free as soon as he lands in England, then there must be just the same difference between his latter and former state, as there is between a state of freedom and a state of slavery. Were the two cited cases to be taken in *pari Materia*, as I think they ought to be taken, they would be seen to be so far from proving Trover not to be the proper action, to recover damages from a Negro in the plantations, that they will go very far towards proving it to be the only proper action, if the taking is not a tortious taking. The former and latter state of the Negro are clearly ascertained by the Court, the one being a state of slavery, which implies a state of property, and the other a state of freedom, which implies his being his own man. Therefore, before it can be made out, that Trover will not lie for a Negro, who is property, it must be shown, that property or no property in the subject of an action of Trover, makes no difference in the question, whether it is the proper or improper remedy.

The before mentioned case of Smith vs. Brown and Cooper, when rightly understood, may, I think, throw yet some additional light on this subject. The action was, as I have already hinted, *Indebitatees* for the price of a Negro sold in England. Whereas he actually was, at the time of sale, in Virginia – of course, had the sale been in Virginia, there could have been no objection to the action’s being brought in England. But though the sale was actually in England, the Court held, that the action would have been well brought, had the declaration stated a sale at London (which was the truth of the case) and that the Negro was then in Virginia, and that Negroes were saleable articles by the laws of that country.

Had the Negro been in England at the time of sale, no such action could have been sustained; for according to the stated axiom, that a Negro upon landing in England becomes free, the Negro then being a free man, could no longer remain the subject of sale. But still, while this same Negro remained in Virginia, he was a saleable article even in London; and all the plaintiff had to do, was to adjust his declaration to the real state of the case. Surely this case, if it proves any thing, proves that the Negro was a slave, and therefore property in Virginia. If property in Virginia, the same law that made him property *there*, makes him so in *Nova-Scotia*.

The conversion of any thing that can be the subject of an action of Trover, has always been considered by the Courts of Westminster-Hall, to be the very point of the

action. Consequently, if a Negro, who was before a slave, becomes a free man as soon as he gets to England, Trover will not lie for him *there*, because he *there* ceases to remain a subject of property. Yet, I believe, no man will, upon a little cool reflection, say, that this same action would not lie in Westminster-Hall, for the conversion of a Negro in Virginia, as in the latter place he was legally the property of his master. The truth is, a Negro can no more be converted than sold in England. Converted he cannot be, unless it can be made out, that a Negro, who is there his own man, can be converted to the use of some other man.

The authority of the case, Smith vs. Brown and Cooper, has been established by a course of commercial dealing, from that time down to the present hour. Cargos of Negroes are continually insured from Africa to the plantations; and, with a very few exceptions, whatever may be insured may be sold. Therefore, at this day, *Indebitatees* would lie in England for a cargo of Negroes that were sold while the ship was yet on the African coast. But this action would not lie for a cargo of slaves that were sold while the ship was lying in the Thames. And for this plain reason, because Negroes becoming Freemen as soon as they reach England, could no more become subjects of sale, than they could the subjects of conversion. And subjects of conversion they could not be, because nothing but property is capable of being converted to any man's use. And Negroes, while in England, are not property.

Let us recur, for a moment, the report of the before-mentioned case by Raymond. This more accurate reporter makes the whole Court to say, "this action does not lie for a Negro, no more than for any other man: for the common law takes no notice of Negroes being different from other men. By the common law no man can have property in another, but in special cases," &c.

Surely this is no more than saying, that by the common law of England, no man *there* can have property in another. It can never be construed to mean, that one man cannot be the property of another in the plantations: For this opinion is expressly grounded on the common law, "which takes no notice of Negroes being different from other Men." But the Statute Law does make a difference between them and other men, while they yet remain in the plantations, where they are subject to the controlling authority of the law. However, as none of these statutes legalize the importation of slaves into Great-Britain, so the common law, which still remains unaltered *there*, will not and cannot distinguish between them and other men *there*.

In Bacon's Abridgment, under title Trover, my idea of this matter will appear correctly right. His words are, "it has been holden, that a person cannot have such a property in a Negro in *England*," (putting the latter word in Italics) "as will enable him to maintain an action of Trover for the conversion of the Negro; and that he can only recover," (that is to say, in *England*) "as he may in the case of any other servant, damages for the loss of his services." This is the abridged case of Chamberlain vs. Harvey. Ray. 146.

When he speaks of the case more immediately under consideration, he says, "in a still later case it has been holden, that a man cannot have such a property in a Negro in *England*," (putting the latter word again in Italics) "as will enable him to maintain an action of Trover for the Negro." Surely I may, without putting any tone

upon this author's words, suppose him to have meant, that although Trover would not lie for a Negro in England, where he is out of reach of the Statute Law; yet in the plantations, where he is under the immediate operation of it, this action is the proper, if not the only proper action.

What the learned Blackstone says upon this subject, in the 424<sup>th</sup> page of his Commentaries, will show that I have had a right apprehension of the opinion of the Court, as it stands reported in the preceding case by Salkeld and Raymond. This profound lawyer, speaking of the abhorred state of slavery, has these remarkable words: "And now it is laid down, that a slave or Negro, the instant he lands in England, becomes a Freeman; that is, the Law will protect him in the enjoyment of his person and his property." Two things decidedly appear from this recited clause. First, that a Negro, before he lands in England, either is or may be a slave. Secondly, that the instant he lands in England, he becomes a Freeman. He next proceeds to describe the distinguishing badges of Freedom; and accordingly he adds, that "the Law," (meaning the common law of England) "will protect him in the enjoyment of his person and his property." Hence it is clear, that a Negro, who had been incapable of acquiring property, while remaining under the plantation laws, may nevertheless acquire property after he gets to England. He is now capable of taking by device, or gift, no less than acquiring property by lawful traffic. But this he could not do, while he remained under a plantation jurisprudence. Nor could he hold property acquired in England, after his return, if he took it along with him; for then his property, as well as his person, fall immediately again under the power and dominion of his owner.

This same learned author tells us before in p. 127, pretty nearly what he tells us in the before recited passage. Here he says, that "the spirit of liberty is so deeply implanted into our constitution, and rooted in our very soil, that a slave or a Negro, the moment he lands in England, falls under the protection of the laws, and so far becomes a Freeman; though his master's right to his services may *possibly* remain." By this last passage it no less appears that a Negro, before he lands in England, is a slave.

I understand attempts have been made, to make the case of a Negro, and that of a villain, parallel cases. On this head I would just observe, that the most characteristic marks of difference which at present occur to me, between these two descriptions of men, seem to be these. First, a villain was, at the worst of times, capable of holding lands by long usage or immemorial custom. Secondly, if he purchased lands or goods, and afterwards sold them before his Lord had seized upon them, the last purchaser would hold them against the claim of his Lord. But neither of these languid sparks of freedom belong to a Negro slave. For if lands should be devised to such a slave, I apprehend the master could not enter upon them, but that the heir at law might enter, and claim them as an undisposed part of the real Estate. I believe it to have been a generally received opinion, even in New-England, where slaves were treated with great humanity, that they were rendered so incapable of acquiring property themselves, that it could not be derived through them to any one else. In short, they were considered as incapable of receiving any thing, except through their masters: And consequently their masters could not receive any thing

through them, except their earnings and services. No man, who coolly reflects on the state of a Negro slave, in all the aspects of it, can help feeling, that the state of a villain is but very faintly analogous to that of the former.

No man who has the lawful possession of goods can be the object of an action of Trover, till after demand and refusal, because, till then, there can be no conversion. The conversion, therefore, being the very point of the action, must necessarily be under the control of the laws of the country where the conversion happens. If a Jamaica gentleman brings his slave over to England, and another takes his slave into his service, it is admitted the owner cannot maintain Trover for him *there*. The reason is obvious – because the master could have no property in him where the conversion is laid: And no man can bring Trover for any thing in which he has no property. But still, although the master has no property in the person of the Negro, while he remains in England, he may, in the cautious language of Blackstone, *possibly* retain a right to his services. “But can a master remain entitled to the services of a Negro, and yet have no property in his person?” He assuredly may: For although property always implies a power of disposing of it, yet, when a Negro lands in England, he is, *co instant*, under the protection of the common law, and therefore ceases to be property *there*. He is now capable of acquiring property, and of disposing of it afterwards; which would be nonsense, if he was not owner of himself.

“But if he is truly owner of himself, how happens it that another man should be entitled to his services?” Let Blackstone answer the question. “Yet,” says he, “with regard to any right which the master may have acquired to the personal services of John or Thomas, this will remain exactly in the same state as before; for this is no more than the same subjection for life, which every Apprentice submits to for the space of seven years, or sometimes for a longer term.” Now, the master did not acquire the perpetual service of John or Thomas, by his or their *personal* submission; for they never submitted either their persons or services to any master, as apprentices do. “Yet, are not these two cases different from each other, which this great man makes to be similar ones?” By no means, if this author is rightly understood: For he plainly means a *right* to services *acquired* in the plantations, and under the operation of Plantation Laws<sup>109</sup>. Whereas, in England, no such right could be acquired without the consent of the party.

The whole reasoning, on this part of the subject, amounts to but simply this. “As an apprentice in England, can yield his services to a master for seven or more years; so the Plantation Laws give the master of a Negro, while the latter is resident in the plantations, a right as well to the person as to the services of the slaves. But when the same Negro lands in England, the Plantation Laws cease to make him the absolute property of his master, so as to be sold as an article of traffic, because, by the common law, no man can be a slave in England. Yet, as the laws of the realm do admit of persons yielding their *services* to a master, so the Plantation Laws shall still so far affect the Negro, even while in England, as to entitle his master to his services,

---

<sup>109</sup> By Plantation Laws, is not meant laws made by any of the Colonial Legislatures, but those Acts of Parliament which affect the plantations. These latter Acts are indifferently called *Plantation Laws, or Laws regulating Plantation Trade*. [Note in the original.]



although they are perpetual." It should be carefully noted, that the West-India planter acquires no property either in the person or services of the Negro, after the latter becomes resident in England; for, by the common law of the realm, he could acquire none, unless by the Negro's voluntary consent.

It is, therefore, by the Statute Law, which extends to the plantations, but not to England, that the master still retains an interest even in the services of the Negro. The truth is, the same Statute Law which gave him a right to the person of the Negro, while in Jamaica, leaves him only entitled to the services of the Negro, while he is resident in England. Both rights are acquired by the same Statute Law, though this same law operates variously on the Negro, accommodating itself to the different places of his residence.

The common law courts have always displayed so jealous a regard for the common law of the realm, that they may, without carrying the expression to any undue length, be called guardians of that law. Hence it is, these courts will never suffer it to be abrogated or altered, even by Act of Parliament, unless the Act contains words, of unequivocal interpretation, showing an intention that it should be altered in certain respects. And hence it is, that although these Acts regulating the African trade, do permit English merchants to send their vessels from any of the ports within the realm, to the coasts of Africa, and after taking in there cargoes of slaves and other articles of traffic, to carry the slaves to any part of the plantations (and where they have a right to carry them by the express words of those Acts). Yet, such has been the jealousy of the common law courts over the common law of the realm, that the African trader has never yet been permitted to bring his slaves within any of its ports. The plain and obvious reason of all this, is, that England is not named in those Acts. And as no man, by the common law, can be a slave in England, so these same slaves, when once they land *here*, become Freemen as to their *persons*. Hence it appears, that the trader, after he has purchased his slaves on the African coast, becomes the absolute owner of them; for, if a man has not a property in what he can buy and sell, he cannot be the owner of any thing. Yet he cannot bring this same property to England, because by the common law, which is not there abrogated or altered by any Act of Parliament, the person of no man can be the property of another. Or, as C. J. Holt has it, "Men may be the owners, and therefore cannot be the subjects of property."

From this view of the matter, a British trader may, under the various Acts, as well encouraging as regulating the African trade, become the absolute owner of a Negro, either on the coasts of Africa, or in any of the plantations. But the common law of England, upon the arrival of the slave *there*, so far operates as a manumission, as to transmute the master's right to his person, into a bare right to his services. Yet, on the return of the Negro to any of the plantations, he, I apprehend, is out of the transmuting operation of the common law, and consequently falls again under the controlling power of the Statute Law, which makes him a slave *there*. Of course, the residence of the slave in England, affects only a temporary suspension, both of the master's rights and the Negro's easement.

From the preceding remarks, one may easily discover, that the master's claim to a Negro while in the plantations, is not the same that it is while he is resident in

England. In the latter case, the master is entitled to the services of his Negro, but not to his person. In the plantations, he is entitled to both. Now, it must appear singular to a legal eye, that the master should have no action more appropriating for a Negro in the plantations, than he could have in England, when it is evident, that in the former, the master had no less a right to the person of his Negro than to his services: whereas in the latter, the master is entitled to his services only.

Any man, who has only a common foresight of things, may easily see to the full length of what is hoped for from this motion. Negroes are made articles of traffic, and consequently saleable articles in the Plantations generally, by express act of Parliament. It is seen by the abettors of the motion, that if no action more appropriating than an action *per quod Servitium amisit* would lie for a Negro, the master's right to his person is extinct: for this action is, in the very nature of it, appropriate only to the case of a servant, or an apprentice, in whose person the master has no direct property. Their services, indeed, the master has a right to; and therefore, if they are enticed away and detained, this action accommodates itself to the recovery of damages for the loss of those services. And if it is once solemnly adjudged here, on the strength of Blackstone, and the case of Smith vs. Gould, that no action more appropriating would lie, the Negro would be exactly in the same situation here, that a Negro is in London, where he is no more a saleable article than a servant, or indeed any other man. Should a man here, therefore, be disposed to sell his Negro, he still must be delivered on a *habeas corpus*, as any other servant in England would be, should his master *there* take it into his head to sell him as his property.

Yet even this is not quite all: For such a judgment on the motion would operate as an effectual repeal of the 5. Geo. 2. Which, as has been already remarked, makes personal Estate of Negroes in the plantations, and subjects them to be sold, as such, under a *fieri facias* at the suit of English creditors.

I am therefore clearly of opinion, that an action of Trover, on the case stated, is the proper action, if not the only proper one.

#### THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL'S OPINION

I am of opinion, that an action of Trover was the proper form of action for Mr. Delancy to recover the value of his Negro slave. I concur so *entirely* with Mr. Aplin, in the very able opinion which he has given on the subject, that I cannot do better than generally refer to his reasoning. It appears to me, that the legal inference which he draws from the 5. Geo. 2. C. 7. as applicable to this question, is *quite irresistible and unanswerable*.

#### THE OPINION OF MR. TIDD

I am of opinion, that under the circumstances of this case, an action of Trover was the proper form of action for the recovery of the value of the slave in question. In order to maintain this action, three things are necessary to be proved. First, property in the plaintiff. Secondly, possession in the defendant. And, thirdly, a conversion.

The great criterion of property, is the power of disposing of it: And it appears from the very able opinion of Mr. Aplin, and the Acts of Parliament and cases he refers to, that in the plantations and colonies in America, as well as in the West-India

islands, slaves are considered as saleable property – that they pass by will, or go to the next of kin, in case of an Intestacy, and that they may be taken in Execution to answer the owner's debts.

Considering a slave, then, as saleable property, I think there can be no doubt but that an action of Trover might be maintained for the recovery of his value, upon proofs that he came to the possession of, and was converted by, the defendant. Supposing the Sheriff, under an Execution authorized by the Stat. 5. Geo. 2., C. 7. were to take and dispose of a slave not belonging to the defendant, can it be said that an action of Trespass, or Trover, would not lie against him? Or, that such an action would not lie against the defendant or a third person, for taking away and disposing of a slave, which the Sheriff had rightfully taken under such an Execution? As in the case of *Welbraham vs. Snow*, Saund. 47. – See also 2. Ld. Ray. 1073, and Gilbert's Exec. 15.

A special action of the case, which might perhaps have been maintained for detaining the slave *per quod Servitium amisit*, would have been founded upon the idea, that the plaintiff was only entitled to his services. But in truth it appears, that he was entitled to some thing more, namely, to *the property in him and right of disposing of him*. And, upon that ground, I think an action of Trover was the proper form of action. And, indeed, a special action on the case would not, in the case of an actual conversion, be an adequate remedy; as the damages, in that case, would not arise from the detention of the slave. The case referred to in 2. Salk. 666, and 2. Ld. Ray. 1274, is not, I think, applicable to the present question, for the reasons stated in Mr. Aplin's opinion.

The only doubt seems to be, whether there was a proper demand and refusal of the slave, previous to the commencement of the action. Or, whether the evidence stated was sufficient to authorize the jury in finding a conversion. But, as they have found it, that consideration cannot be material on a motion in arrest of judgment.

#### THE OPINION OF MR. PERCIVAL

I am of opinion, that an action of Trover was the proper action for Mr. Delancy to recover the value of his Negro slave. I concur so *entirely* with Mr. Aplin, in the very able opinion which he has given upon the subject, that I cannot do better than generally refer to his reasoning. It appears to me, that the legal inference which he draws from 5. Geo. 2. C. 7. as applicable to this question, is *quite irresistible and unanswerable*.

## “Concealed under a Spanish character”<sup>110</sup> (1811)

In 1807, both Britain and the United States passed acts prohibiting the importation of slaves from Africa. Both countries still had legal slavery – in the West Indies, by British Statute Law (until 1833), and within the United States until the end of its Civil War in 1865. Cases of suspected slave importation were occasionally tried in the Court of Vice-Admiralty, at Halifax. In the following account, one particular American ship tried to avoid forfeiture by passing itself off as Spanish, since the importation of slaves was still legal in Spain.

### THE MERCED, ECHEVERRIA

*March 5<sup>th</sup>, 1811. Slave trade. Detection of American property, concealed under a Spanish character. Condemned.*

The King’s Advocate for the Captors, upon the original hearing, contended, that, admitting this ship to be Spanish, she would be liable to condemnation, upon the principles established in the case of the *Amedie*, having fitted out, in a port of the United States, for the avowed purpose engaging in the slave trade. That although the government of Spain had thought fit to permit a continuance of a traffic, which other nations had recently abolished, the owners of the *Merced* and her cargo, had, in a port of the United States, in defiance of the prohibitory laws of America, undertaken to equip the ship, upon a voyage to the coast of Africa, there to receive slaves, and proceed with them to the Havana. This was an act, not only contrary to the laws of the country, in which she was sojourning, but contrary to the statute laws of Great Britain, and, indeed, to the ordinary notions of humanity.

So that admitting the *Merced* to be a Spanish vessel, she would, for these reasons, be liable to a forfeiture. But this ship is not documented, as a Spanish vessel, having no regular papers that can give her that character; and there is every reason to believe, from the general deficiency of the evidence, that both ship and cargo are the property of Americans. If so, the judgment that has been given in the case of the *Amedie*, will forcibly apply to the present case, and a decree of condemnation must ensue.

On the behalf of the claimants, the Solicitor General observed, that, if the ship and cargo were admitted to be Spanish property, there would be little difficulty in the case. Under the government of Spain, there are no prohibitory laws against the trade in question, and the equipment of the ship in a part of the United States, if it be a violation of any law of that country, is not elsewhere a subject of legal discussion. The ship and cargo are evidently Spanish, nor is there any deficiency among the papers that can warrant a suspicion of American interest in the property, or any part of it. But, allowing such interest to exist in this projected voyage to the coast of Africa, it

---

<sup>110</sup> From Stewart, J. (1814). *Reports of Cases, argued and determined in the Court of Vice-Admiralty, at Halifax, in Nova-Scotia, from the commencement of the War, in 1803, to the end of the year 1813, in the time of Alexander Croke, LL.D., Judge of that Court.* London: J. Butterworth and Son. Written by James Stewart, Solicitor-General for Nova Scotia.

may be argued, in the first place, that although the ultimate destination of the ship was to the African coast for slaves, the immediate voyage was to the island of Tenerife, and at all events, she has not been captured *in delicto*.

In the next place, if the principles adopted in the case of the *Amedie*, are to be applied in the present one, it becomes requisite to ascertain what are the specific prohibitory regulations of America, with regard to the slave trade. A knowledge of American law, upon this important point, is absolutely essential, if the punishment of an offender against the law, is to be inflicted by the decree of a British court. Different penalties may, perhaps, attach at different stage of the offence, and to different persons engaged in it. Does the condemnation of the ship and cargo, ensue in all cases? In what way is the crime defined by the legislative acts of America? What are the provisions or exceptions of those acts, and to what extent have they carried the prohibition of the trade? These are questions, that can only be answered by an acquaintance with the law, of which, nothing more seems to be known, but that it prohibits a trafficking in slaves, which had been previously sanctioned by the custom of past generations, in all parts of America. The case of the *Amedie* has not been, as yet, officially reported. It has only appeared in newspapers<sup>111</sup> and reviews, in which one cannot look for great accuracy of statement, with regard either to law or fact.

The great and good judge, who pronounced the decree of their lordships in that case, is said to have observed, that until the British legislature thought fit to prohibit a continuance of the slave trade no notice could be taken of the prohibition on the part of America; and that an Act of Parliament having now abolished the trade, it is the interest and duty of the nation to unite with America in preventing a traffic so inconsistent with the first principles of humanity. But the same learned judge, we are told, acknowledged it to be the general rule of nations, not to interfere with, or take cognizance of the municipal regulations of each other. Now this rule will be materially infringed by an adjudication of this ship, upon the legislative acts of America, or in other words, the laws of a foreign country, for which there is no precedent among the records of English jurisprudence, or indeed, those of any other country.

If the universal law of humanity be the rule of conduct, by which to try offenders of the description of the description of the claimants, it will apply equally to them in their Spanish or American characters; but the learned judge has also observed, that we cannot legislate for other countries, and that if other countries violate the natural law of humanity, by encouraging a trade in slaves, we have no legal right to control their conduct. So that the general sentiment of accusation against this pernicious trade, is founded, after all, upon the municipal regulations of the country in which it is prohibited. When prohibited in America, it was allowed in England, and though now prohibited in England, it is permitted in other nations in Europe. If this ships and cargo, therefore, be Spanish, they must be tried by the test of Spanish law, and the ordinances of Spain referred to and cited for the direction of the Court in its sentence. If they be American, reference must be had to the statute books of America, and though a law of that country may prohibit the trade in

---

<sup>111</sup> An example is transcribed elsewhere in this collection.

question, and inflict a penalty for the transgression of it, that penalty, in certain cases, may be far short of the condemnation of the ship and cargo; and yet, in the present instance, and in all cases of the kind, a forfeiture of the whole property, if American, is required, without a consideration of any part of the law, under which the condemnation is sought, but the mere prohibition of the trade on the part of America.

As this is a case *primae impressionis*, and no reported decision of that of the *Amedie* has yet been published, these arguments on behalf of the claimants, are submitted, with the utmost diffidence, to the consideration of the Court, which may probably conceive itself bound by the judgment in that case; if so, the cause must proceed to further proof, should there be any doubt as to the property being Spanish.

#### FURTHER PROOF, DECREED

Upon the further proof, after hearing the arguments of counsel, the Court gave its final decision.

#### JUDGMENT – Dr. Croke.

This vessel and cargo are both claimed, as Spanish property, by the master, for himself, Don Francisco de Ajuria, Don Francisco de Bengechea, and Don Diego de Unsign. all of the Havana. The present cargo was shipped at Philadelphia, from whence the vessel sailed upon the 17<sup>th</sup> of July last for Santa Cruz in Tenerife, intending to proceed from that island to the coast of Africa to purchase slaves.

When this cause was heard upon the original evidence it appeared that the vessel was engaged in the slave trade. By the decision of the Lords of Appeal in the case of the *Amedie*, it was established that this trade was unlawful in itself, and that claimants cannot recover property employed in it, unless they can show a special justification, that it is a permitted trade under the laws of their own country. It followed therefore, that if this property should prove to be American, it would be condemnable under the authority of that case directly. But if it belonged to Spaniards, as it has been claimed, it remained for the parties to show the legality of the trade by the laws of Spain: for, although it has been notoriously carried on by that country for many years, yet as the British Government, in compliance with the wishes of Parliament, has pledged itself by negotiation to procure its universal abolition, from the friendly relations which subsist between the two countries, it is not impossible that some arrangements upon that subject may have already taken place with Spain, as they have with some other countries.

As to the property, the vessel appears to have been purchased of an American, and there was not only a deficiency as to proof, no documentary evidence whatever relating to the purchase having been found on board, but there was great reason to suspect, from the vessel's continuing, after the alleged sale, to trade to the ports of the former owners, who still appeared to be concerned, under the character of consignees, that the transfer was merely fictitious, and for the purpose of covering this unlawful trade. The Court therefore directed further proof, as to the property, and as to the existing laws of Spain upon this subject. A voluminous body of papers is now brought in, upon which it is the business of the Court to decide.

The general history of the vessel as far as we can trace it is this. She was built at New York. In the month of April 1809, she made a journey from Philadelphia to the Havana, and back. In July, in the same year, she was purchased by Mr. Worth of Philadelphia, in whose name she was then registered. She was immediately chartered by him to Ajuria, one of the present claimants, and sailed to the Havana under that charter party. Here it is alleged she was sold by Hawkins, the master of her at that time, by a power of attorney from Worth to Ajuria. Since that period she has made three voyages; the first of them was from the Havana to Philadelphia and back again to the Havana, in 1809. The second voyage was in 1810, from the Havana destined to Philadelphia, but not being able to enter the Delaware, she went to New York, and returned again to the Havana. On her third voyage, she sailed from the Havana to Philadelphia, where she took in her present cargo, and was proceeding to Tenerife, and so to the coast of Africa, when she was captured.

The nature of the trade with the Spanish colonies, which is under the severest restrictions and prohibitions, and altogether confined to the subjects of Spain, necessarily involves all foreigners who engage in it in secrecy and deception; but if this is really Spanish property, all reason for mystery ceases. It was the business, and the interest of the Spanish owners that every thing should be fair and open. Nothing but proof, or suspicion, of foreign ownership could injure them. Under that supposition it is perfectly unaccountable why this vessel should be sent to sea in the first instance, without any written documents to prove the ownership, and with a concealed destination as to the latter part of her voyage.

That Mr. Worth, the original owner of the vessel, was not indisposed to be concerned in profitable engagements, of whatever nature they might be, is proved by his own letter to Ajuria, of the 15<sup>th</sup> of November, 1809. "The ports of Cuba," he says, "and on the Main being shut to foreign commerce, handsome speculations might be entered into. We have first-rate vessels; *point out any voyage we could make money by, and I would willingly join you.*" I would not press this letter so far as to endeavor to prove Worth's property in this vessel from it, because it is not expressly mentioned. But when it appears that the vessel ever since the alleged sale has continued to carry on trade in the same manner as before, from and to the port of the former owner, and through his hands, it would not be unreasonable for the Court to require the fullest and most satisfactory proof of an actual sale.

Now the only evidence which has been produced to this point, are the affidavits of Worth, the very party concerned in the fraud, if there is any, and of Hawkins the former master, who knew but little of the transaction, and speaks merely to his belief in the ownership, and other material points. The proof could not be considered as sufficient unless the bill of sale had been brought forward, and the power of attorney given by Worth to Hawkins to sell, which are the only title deeds of the vessel. Neither is there any affidavit from Ajuria, though he is held out as the principal owner, nor any information from Echeveria and the other claimants, to specify their respective shares in the concern, the means by which they acquired their interests, or what consideration they paid for them.

The case is equally barren of the usual Spanish documents; there is no Spanish register, or any other paper equivalent to it, no passport or licence, nor is the letter of marque, which she is said to have had from the government, to be found amongst the papers. Yet these omissions are not to be attributed to the want of time, or of means, or of opportunity to procure them, for there are certificates and affidavits, both from the Havana and from Philadelphia, procured since the capture. And it may be remarked, that all the additional evidence comes from Mr. Worth, who, according to the claimant's case, has no interest whatever, and none of it from the only persons who are alleged to be proprietors.

To establish a fair sale the payment ought to be proved. The master has sworn, that the purchase-money, amounting to 16,400 dollars, was actually paid. But upon inspecting the account current between Worth and Ajuria, it appears that the vessel was never paid for, and is even now [a] mere matter of account between them. Ajuria is made debtor for the vessel, but, at the time she sailed for Philadelphia, it is remarkable that the balance in favor of Worth was 17,112 dollars, nearly the amount of the price of the ship. And the purchase money is so far from having been since paid, that in the subsequent part of the account which is continued to November, three months after the capture, by the consignment of cargoes, the balance is still farther increased against Ajurias. Nothing but an ideal payment has therefore been made.

If we look minutely at the evidence, it is full of contradictions. There are great differences as to the price of the vessel; one witness states it to have been 16,400 dollars, another 10,000, and a third at 16,100. So as to the *seller*, the master who claims as a part owner, and who says he saw the bill of sale, swears that she was purchased not of Worth, but of John Goff, of the house of Gardner and Co., the former owners. The payment is sworn by Antelo the mate to have been actually made in his presence at the time of sale. There is even a variation as to the day on which the transfer was made, and the witnesses fluctuate between the 4<sup>th</sup> of August and the 20<sup>th</sup>.

The claim confronted with the subsequent papers is falsified in many of its statements. The master, who is not a common commander, but a part owner likewise, has there sworn that at New York he purchased a return cargo of flour, fish, and other articles with the *proceeds* of the outward cargo. Now if there is any one fact fully established in this case, it is that, that the proceeds of the outward cargo were transmitted to Worth, between whom and Robinson of New York there is part of a correspondence upon the subject, and which concludes by Worth's refusal to find funds for the return cargo, as he says "he can do better with his cash." The master states that he stayed behind the vessel at New York to receive payment upon notes which had been received for the cargo, and were then unpaid. Yet it appears that the sales were made by Robinson, and the proceeds by him remitted to Worth, and received by him on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of April at Philadelphia; he swears that he purchased this cargo out of the proceeds of the outward cargo, yet the purchase money for it appears to be still owing to Worth, and the cargo to have been purchased on his credit.

There is an unaccountable circumstance respecting the American register obtained by Worth upon his purchase. This register is endorsed as having been



surrendered up to the Custom-House at Philadelphia upon the 11<sup>th</sup> of July, “the vessel having been sold to a foreigner.” Yet the vessel is not said to be sold to Ajuria till she arrived at the Havana in August. After the surrender of her register, how did she clear out from the port when she sailed under the charter party to Ajuria? She must have cleared out as a foreign vessel, and paid the foreign duties. It is so very improbable that the surrender of the register should have been so prematurely made, and so much to the loss of the parties, that these unexplained circumstances are sufficient alone to falsify the whole business.

In all the letters from Ajuria there is constantly an erasure of the word which expressed the relation of the parties to the vessel, whenever there was an occasion to mention it. There is no correspondence whatever relating to the first voyage, or to the purchase, though there must have been, if the sale had been real, or the price was not paid but remained in credit.

As to any general expression in the letters by which the vessel is stated as belonging to Ajuria, nothing can be concluded from it. If this was a system of coloring, it must have been carried on ostensibly in various parts of the correspondence. The farce must have been kept up between them. It is more material to enquire in what manner this alleged ownership has been exercised. This must be presumed to have been the object of the production of a great part of this correspondence.

If this was the property of those Spaniards, who amongst them is alleged to have had the principal direction? Not Echeveria, the master, since no authority to him to act for the owners is to be found, and he states his writing to the other owners for directions. The affidavits of Harwood, Worth’s clerk, is decisive. He swears that the whole of the transactions of the concern in the Merced were conducted by Francisco Ajuria, and that the chief of the correspondence respecting the same was carried on between Ajuria and Worth. To them therefore, and not to the other owners we must look for the management and control of every thing. Now if we examine the papers, there is not a single document proceeding from the Ajuria. No instructions from him to the captain, no directions whatever given to his correspondent, agent, and consignee, Worth. As to the other alleged owners, there are two letters from Bengeeha with some trifling orders of articles for his own use, and not a word respecting Unsigna, who is completely a sleeping partner.

Let us examine the papers relating to the three voyages which the vessel made after the supposed purchase, for the purpose of discovering who had the real management. The first voyage she made was from the Havana to Philadelphia and back. As she was now become the property of a new owner, and going on a new account, it was natural that there should have been some correspondence with the consignee and agents, to settle the matter in which the vessel was to be employed and to make the requisite arrangements. There is a letter, written at the time of sailing, from Ajuria to Echeveria, in which he requests him to bring some copper to sheath another vessel, and he is to bring them *en su fregata*, that is, in his, Echeveria’s, vessel, and the word *su* [“his”] is nearly erased. There is no letter to Worth. Relating to the return voyage, there is a letter from Worth to Ajuria, merely enclosing the bill of lading. Another which states a heavy balance against him, and proposes some new

speculations, but these letters are dry, meager, and evidently garbled, and afford no conclusion whatever that Ajuria was the owner, or had any control over the vessel.

Upon the second voyage, she sailed from Havana again bound to Philadelphia, but being unable to enter the Delaware, she bore away for New York<sup>112</sup>. Here was an accidental deviation from the voyage intended, and it might reasonably have been expected that it would have been explained to Ajuria, and that they would have written for his instructions under this unexpected change of destination. There is a letter from Ajuria written upon the outward voyage, directing Worth to put 500 or 1000 barrels of flour “with a false letter, that as he could not procure provisions, he had shipped flour to *remit proceeds*.” Though it is evident from Worth’s account current, that there was at that time a large balance against Ajuria. Another letter to Echeveria refers him to Worth, and says, if he could not get a cargo as proposed, he was to take a freight to London or to Cadiz. Now Worth is so far from complying with these directions, that on the vessel’s arriving at New York, though he receives the proceeds from Robinson, he refuses to furnish a cargo, or to be accountable for it, and suggests to the master to take freight to the Havana.

In Worth’s letter to Ajuria, after the arrival at New York, he says nothing about her return voyage, nor does he give any answer to Ajuria’s letter about the return cargo. He is short, for a consignee; he gives no account of his proceedings, and asks for no directions. Worth’s letter is answered by Ajuria, who, most unaccountably, is perfectly silent as to the return voyage, and what Worth had been doing. In short, Ajuria at this critical time, whilst the vessel was at New York, says little or nothing about the ship or her employment.

It is evident, that though Ajuria has a sort of ostensible ownership, in name, attributed to him, Worth acts entirely of his own accord; Ajuria is not consulted; and in those letters, which are evidently mere formal letters written for the purpose of holding out Ajuria as the owner, he received, with the most philosophic indifference and little observation, any information respecting the vessel which is communicated by Worth, who is equally indifferent to the directions given, and to the intimations conveyed in Worth’s correspondence.

The present voyage was the most important. It was a new employment of the vessel, and so hazardous, that it appears that no insurance could be obtained. For such a voyage it would be necessary to have the fullest authority and directions from the owners of the vessel; yet here is not a line of evidence to prove that Ajuria knew any thing at all about it. On the outward voyage from the Havana to Philadelphia, there was a letter from Ajuria to Worth, in which he informs him that the *Merced* had on board 500 boxes of sugar, and other articles, “consigned to you, whereof I shall give you advice for your direction.” We may recollect that Worth’s clerk swore that Ajuria conducted the whole of the said concern in the *Merced*; but the master Echeveria, in his claim, states, that on his arrival at Philadelphia, “he wrote to the other owners, requesting to know on what voyage they wished to employ the vessel,

---

<sup>112</sup> “NEW YORK, March 17 [...] CLEARED, ships James Cook, Poukins, Tonningen, or a permitted port in the north of Europe; *Merced* (alias *La Flor*) Anthelo, Havanna”. *GAZETTE MARINE LIST*. (1810, March 22). *United States’ Gazette* (Pennsylvania), p. 4.

on which they proposed the present.” Worth in his affidavit, says that the vessel was consigned to him, with *orders* to follow the directions of Echeveria.

These accounts are not consistent; but be that as it may, neither any authority or directions, either from Ajuria or the other owners, are produced; all the letters from Worth to Ajuria consist of three short ones, informing him that the vessel was ready to sail, and had sailed; there is not a scrap of paper to show that this voyage was commenced or conducted by the claimants, or that they ever knew where she was going. Tenerife is mentioned in Worth’s letter only. Any farther voyage to Africa is not alluded to; and though there might be reasons for deceiving the American custom-house or the British cruisers, there could be none for concealing the destination from the owner, in letters which were sent by other conveyances. Since Worth acted without authority or directions from his supposed principals, and without giving them advice of his proceedings, it is clear that he must have acted as owner, and not as a mere consignee.

It is palpable likewise, that the evidence, such as it is, has been much garbled. Many letters are referred to, which have not been produced; and they appear to be the very letters by which each voyage was planned and directed. There are no letters from Echeveria, when at New York, to his alleged owners; none from Worth to Robinson respecting the proceeds of the second cargo, nor in any of the correspondence is Echeveria considered as a part owner, but merely as a master.

It is impossible to conceive evidence, both positive and negative, more full in every part, to prove that this is a fraudulent transaction, and that the real property is still in Worth, an American citizen, and therefore this vessel is subject to condemnation<sup>113</sup>, as having been engaged in the slave trade.

The cargo does not consist so much of mercantile articles, as of stores and outfit for the slave trade; it is, besides, Worth’s property, having been shipped by him without orders, and without funds. As materially connected therefore, with this illegal traffic, and likewise as belonging to the same owner, it must follow the fate of the vessel.

#### LA MERCED, ECHEVERIA

*On the Petition of Andrew Belcher<sup>114</sup>, one of the Agents for the Captors. April 16<sup>th</sup>, 1811. Upon commissions of unlivery it remains with the Court to appoint the place, and the agents of the captors and claimants are not entitled to have the goods deposited in their stores. Charge against certain stores proved to be untrue.*

---

<sup>113</sup> “*List of vessels captured by the British off the Coast of Africa, to the 1<sup>st</sup> of October 1810 – received by the San Carlos, at this port.* The ship Merced, Vismonte, Pensacola, condemned and sold for 1200 dollars. [...] The schr Floridana, Dugaro, Pensacola; condemned and sold to the supercargo of the Merced [!] for \$480, provided he would carry to Havana all the prisoners of the condemned vessels; she sailed the 20<sup>th</sup> September, with about 60, who were mostly sick, with little salt provision and no bread; in lieu thereof, rice and musty casadaa flower, a very small stock and no fresh provisions.” *List of vessels.* (1810, December 6). *United States’ Gazette for the Country* (Pennsylvania), p. 4.

<sup>114</sup> Interestingly, “Sir John Wentworth, Brigadier Gen. Houghton, Hon. Alexander Croke, and the Hon. Andrew Belcher, were passengers in vessels from Halifax for England, which sailed from the former place January 14,” 1810. From Halifax. (1810, February 22). *Charleston Courier*, p. 3. I have not found further details of this trip.

JUDGMENT – Dr. Croke.

This vessel and cargo having been condemned, and an appeal interposed, upon the application of the parties, a commission of unlivery issued to the marshal, directing the goods to be unloaded and to be put into the warehouses usually employed by the Court for that purpose. A petition has been given in by Mr. Belcher, one of the agents for the captors, accompanied by a protest, against the proceedings of the marshal. He therein states:

[EXTRACTS FROM A PETITION BY ANDREW BELCHER]

That there are no warehouses belonging to the King, or to the officers of the Customs. That to save expense to the captors he had offered to the marshal, one of the best wharves in Halifax, for the ship to lie at, and the best stores in the town for the cargo to be deposited in, free from all expense; that the marshal refused to accept of the offer, declaring that he had been ordered by the Judge of the Court to have the vessel brought to the wharf of Messrs. Foreman, Grassie, and Company, and to have the cargo deposited in their stores; that the said stores are private property, and no more under the direction and control of the King than those of the protestor.

That the wharf of Foreman and Grassie is one of the most exposed and dangerous wharves in Halifax for vessels to lie at, and prize vessels have heretofore suffered and received great damage by lying at the same.

That the stores are likewise unsafe and exposed; as the cargo, if deposited therein, must be put into the same stores with their own property, unless considerable expense is incurred.

That if the protestor had examined the proceedings of the Court since 1794, and believes this practice, until lately, to have been, to allow the marshal and parties to deposit cargoes where they deemed it most convenient. That the Prize Act directs the landing of cargoes to be at the expense of the party applying, and that as the captors have applied, the protestor wishes to save expense to them, and that the captors and their agents are entitled to a joint custody.

Wherefore he protests against the marshal for removing the vessel and cargo to the said wharf and stores, and against all expenses, and damages occasioned by the delay in not allowing the said ship to have been immediately removed to the wharf of the protestor, when he received the order of Court for unlivery; and all further expenses.

In the conclusion of his petition, “he prays that proper persons may be appointed to survey the respective wharves and stores, and that the Court will restrain the marshal from thus acting to the manifest prejudice and injury of all persons concerned.”

[RESPONSE OF THE COURT]

Upon this petition the Court directed a writ of enquiry to the registrar, together with three of the most respectable inhabitants of the town, to inspect the wharves and stores, and to report upon them.

They have reported, that “having visited the wharf and stores belonging to Messrs. Foreman, Grassie, and Co. there does not any thing appear to them, whereby they should have any doubt of the safety of vessels lying at the said wharf, nor of

property that may be lodged in the stores; unless in the event of an uncommon and extraordinary hurricane, such as was experienced here in September 1798, when other wharves and stores generally suffered.”

[EXTRACT FROM A PETITION BY FOREMAN, GRASSIE AND CO.]

Besides this report, Messrs. Foreman, Grassie and Co. have presented a petition to the Court, in which they allege, that:

“The statements contained [in] Mr. Belcher’s petition, respecting their wharf and stores, are incorrect and unfounded; that the petitioners considering such statement to be highly injurious to them, not only in this province, but in Great Britain, where their connections in trade are extensive, have stated on oath, an answer to the affidavit of the said Andrew Belcher; and they have brought in a certificate of thirty respectable persons, merchants, traders, and owners of property in Halifax. That for a long time past they have held the said stores in readiness, upon the shortest notice, for the use of the Admiralty Court, in consequence of an application from the said Court, and the assurance given by the Court, that prize ships and vessels would in future be sent into their wharf.”

They say likewise, “that in the present instance, if the cargo of the *Merced* consist of tubs and casks of water, as they are informed, they would not make any charge for the wharfage or storage thereof.”

In their affidavit annexed they farther state, “that their wharves and stores have been occasionally occupied, for many years past, with prize cargoes and vessels; and after alleging generally, the fitness, safety and security of their wharves and stores,” they swear “That no prize ship or vessel has at any time received any injury of any description by lying at their wharf, except a ship called the *Liberty*, which parted, and was driven from the said wharf in September 1798, in an uncommon and violent hurricane which destroyed many wharves and stores in Halifax, and in which many vessels are wrecked in the harbor.”

They state, “that the apartments where prize goods have usually been deposited, are separate and distinct apartments, with separate and distinct entrances from the wharf, and that ever since the application from the Court of Admiralty, they have considered themselves as bound to furnish and provide a wharf and stores whenever required.”

The certificate of thirty of the most respectable merchants in Halifax, states “the fitness and safety of the wharf and the stores, and their strength to deposit any kind of merchandise; and likewise the division of the respective apartments.” [...]

It is a universal rule that they who apply to a court of justice must come with clean hands. Whatever otherwise may be its merit or seasonableness, a petition founded in untruths, and upon untruths highly injurious to a respectable merchant house in this place, this Court is bound to reject, and it directs the marshal to proceed forthwith in execution of unlivery according to the former order. [...]

[THE CASE OF THE SCHOONER SEVERN]

*Oct. 7<sup>th</sup>, 1811. Slave Trade. The Schooner Severn, P. Bradford, taken by the Tartarus, Captain Pascoe.*

The Master claimed for Nathan Bardine and Samuel Blake, of Bristol, in Rhode Island, in the United States, both ship and cargo; the latter, consisting of 7 or 8 hds. Of tobacco, 1300 gallons of rum, 2 barrels of currant wine, 10 or 15 casks of gunpowder, 8 or 10 casks of butter, 5 or 6 tierces of rice, 30 or 40 half barrels of beef, 2 of pork; 5 or 6 barrels of flour, 5 bales of dry goods, a few boxes of soap and candles, and several shook chests.

He swore “that he was sent on a trading voyage to the coast of Africa, that he loaded at Bristol, was to proceed to Sierra Leone, and there dispose of as much of the cargo as possible. If not able to sell the whole there, he was to proceed with the remainder along the coast of Africa, either to the southward, or the northward, and to barter the remainder with the natives. In return he was ordered to procure by barter from the natives, gum-arabic, ivory, bees’-wax, and other articles; but he was strictly forbidden to have any concern in the trade for slaves or to purchase negroes; and he had no intention whatever to engage in the traffic for slaves.”

They had two iron guns (one-pounders) and four muskets, to protect themselves against the natives.

SENTENCE – Dr. Croke.

The general principles of the law of nations, and the fact, that the slave trade is prohibited by the laws of the United States, have been established in the cases of the *Amedie* and the *Fortuna*. A claimant cannot recover property employed in a course of trade which is against the laws of humanity, and in defiance of the laws of his own country.

It is not necessary to have slaves actually on board; it was laid down in the *Fortuna* [case], that it was sufficient if the unlawful traffic was either incipient, progressive, or complete.

All we have to do here is to establish the fact of trading. This may be proved by direct evidence, or by circumstances. Where the slaves are not actually on board, it may be difficult to find direct proof. This trade requires concealment. The persons concerned in this inhuman traffic, must have proper instruments to conduct it, who must necessarily be more unfeeling and unprincipled. They must have masters hardened, and qualified to go thoroughly through the business. Little attention can be paid to the evidence of such men, when the circumstances are decisively against their testimony.

An examination of this vessel and cargo has taken place, by persons nominated by the claimants themselves. They have reported, that this vessel and cargo are well adapted to the slave trade, and they state many reasons in corroboration of it.

The African Society has published a report, in which they have described seven characteristic circumstances of a slave voyage. Five of them occur here. There have been found on board a number of small arms, a great quantity of water, rice and slaves’ provisions, mess kits and shackles. The two other circumstances stated in the report, as being often found in such vessels, namely, bulk-heads and main-deck gratings, would be unnecessary in a small vessel like the present [one]. It must have been known to merchants, that the slave trade is considered in an unfavorable light. If the vessel was really going for gum, ivory, and the other innocent articles stated,

what can account for their having on board so many things peculiar to the slave trade, but totally unnecessary for the other species of commerce? It would be contrary to all reason, and inconsistent with probable suppositions. I consider the fact to be sufficiently proved, and I condemn this vessel and cargo.

### The capture of the *Amedie*<sup>115</sup> (1810)

**Though not directly related to Canada, this case provided a precedent for the one discussed above.**

#### CAUSE OF THE AMEDIE, JAMES JOHNSON, MASTER

This was a vessel under American colors, with slaves from Africa, captured in Dec. 1807, in the West Indies, and carried into Tortola, where the ship was condemned. The claimant pretended that she [the *Amedie*] was bound to Charleston, South Carolina, where the importation of slaves continued to be lawful till the end of that year; but that having been detained on the coast, and there being no prospect of reaching Charleston before 1<sup>st</sup> January, 1808, the period appointed for the cessation of the slave trade in the United States, the master of necessity bore away for the island of Cuba, there to wait directions from his owners. It was further contended for the claimant, that a British Court of Prize had no right to take any cognizance of American municipal law; and that as no belligerent right of this country had been violated, the property ought to be restored to the neutral owner.

The case was solemnly argued in March last; but as it turned on the new question of the effect of the American and British Abolition Acts on this species of contraband commerce, when brought before a Court of Prize, the case, on account of its importance, has since stood over for judgment. Several other cases of American slave ships depend on the same question. On the above day the judgment of the Court was delivered by Sir W. Grant, the Master of the Rolls, as follows:

#### [JUDGMENT OF THE COURT]

This ship must be considered as being employed at the time of capture in carrying slaves from Africa to a Spanish colony. We think that this was evidently the original plan and purpose of the voyage, notwithstanding the pretence set up to veil the true intention. The claimant, however, who is an American, complains<sup>116</sup> of the capture, and demands from us the restitution of property of which he alleges that he has been unjustly dispossessed.

In all the former cases of this kind which have come before this Court, the slave trade was liable to considerations very different from those which belong to it now. It

---

<sup>115</sup> From *Slave Cause*. (1810, August 15). *Bury and Norwich Post*, p. 4.

<sup>116</sup> They were not the only ones to complain of similar issues. "When an American vessel is carried into Halifax, all hands, except one, are turned on shore for the captain to maintain – no provisions out of his own ship will be allowed for their subsistence, and the unfortunate Americans are treated with that hauteur and insolence which so predominantly mark the character of Englishmen. Halifax exhibits at this time nothing but a den of pirates." Patriot. (1811, November 11). VERY IMPORTANT. *Wilson's Knoxville Gazette*, p. 3.

had at that time been prohibited (as far as respected carrying slaves to the colonies of foreign nations) by America, but by our own laws it was still allowed. It appeared to us, therefore, difficult to consider the prohibitory law of America in any other light than as one of those municipal regulations of a foreign state of which this Court could not take cognizance. But by the alterations which have since taken place, the question stands on different grounds, and is open to the application of very different principles.

The slave trade has since been totally abolished by this country, and our Legislature has pronounced it to be contrary to the principles of justice and humanity. Whatever we might think as individuals before, we could not, sitting as judges in a British court of justice, regard the trade in that light, while our own laws permitted it. But we can now assert that this trade cannot, abstractedly speaking, have a legitimate existence.

When I say abstractedly speaking, I mean that this country has no right to control any foreign legislature that may think fit to dissent from this doctrine, and to permit to its own subjects the prosecution of this trade; but we have now a right to affirm that *prima facie* the trade is illegal, and thus to throw on claimants the burden of proof that, in respect of them, by the authority of their own laws, it is otherwise.

As the case now stands, we think we are entitled to say, that a claimant can have no right upon principles of universal law to claim the restitution in a Prize Court of human beings carried as slaves: he must show some right that has been violated by the capture, some property of which he has been dispossessed, and to which he ought to be restored. In this case the laws of the claimant's country allow of no right of property such as he claims. There can therefore be no right to restitution. The consequence is, that the judgment must be affirmed.

### The Battle at Fuller's Farm<sup>117</sup> (1818)

**Though not directly related to slavery, this incident sheds light on the prejudices that early black settlers in Nova Scotia, former slaves and otherwise, had to deal with. In March, 1818, an armed party of white hunters led by Mr. Gordon trespassed on land owned by a black farmer (Mr. Fuller) and his family. The trespassers refused to leave when asked to do so. The conflict escalated and turned violent. The hunters took Fuller to court on charges of assault. In court, Mr. Fuller's lawyer argued his client had the right to defend his property, and a white landowner would never have been charged in this fashion. The jury found Fuller guilty.**

Inferior Court of Common Pleas, HALIFAX.

In this case the Defendant, a coloured man, was prosecuted for assaulting Mr. James Gordon and others, on the 25th March last.

[TESTIMONY OF MR. GORDON]

---

<sup>117</sup> From The Battle at Fuller's Farm – or, Robin-shooting in high style! (1818, July 4). *The Acadian Recorder*, p. 2. For a modern historian's discussion of this incident, see Whitfield, H. A. (2002). "We Can Do As We Like Here": An Analysis of Self Assertion and Agency among Black Refugees in Halifax, Nova Scotia, 1813 – 1821. *Acadiensis*, XXXII(1), 29-49.



Mr. Gordon stated that on the above day, Mr. Hobson, Mr. Gentles, Mr. Hunter and himself made up a party to shoot Robins, and they went to the Dartmouth side for that purpose, where it appeared, the Defendant resided, and was possessed of a piece of ground, on which he did not feel disposed to suffer the sportsmen to trespass. That before they entered upon his property, Fuller came towards them and cried out, "halloo, halloo," which the witness did not at first understand what he meant by it. The black fellow, however, soon made himself comprehended by using the most insulting language imaginable.

Mr. Gordon then told him he was "a black villain, and that they were not upon his property." The fellow, however, continued his abusive tongue. He followed him and by that means, he believed, got upon his land. The Ground was not enclosed, it was partly covered with snow but appeared to have been cultivated.

Fuller at last came up to him, and shoved him, and at the same time Mrs. Fuller and her children came up also, armed with stones, which they let fly at him as quick as thunder. Several hit him, and one in particular struck him on the head which made him stagger, and he felt the effect of it to this day – he bled profusely, and whilst in that situation, Fuller's wife insulted him in a most violent rage, and he certainly should have shot her, had it not been for Mr. Hobson. The black fellow next made a blow at Mr. Gentles' head, with an ax handle, which he believed, had it hit him; fortunately Mr. Gentles stooped at the instant, by which means he avoided the blow.

[TESTIMONY OF THOMAS GENTLES]

Mr. Thomas Gentles related, that having lost Mr. Hunter in their route, they were in search of him when he first saw the black man, who rudely warned them off his place, in a most violent manner, and commenced pelting them with stones. Mr. Hobson, he observed, went and got a switch, and gave the fellow two or three good cuts with it. The Black man then took up a pick-ax handle and made a desperate blow at him. About this time he saw Gordon all over blood, in consequence of stones being thrown at him, one of which had cut him on the head.

He threatened to fire at them if they did not desist. Mr. Hobson, he believed, called Fuller "a black rascal." He could not help laughing at the idea of a black man engaging three whites armed with guns. When the black fellow shoved Mr. Gordon, he saw him present the butt end of his gun to Fuller's breast, desiring him not to do so again. He had heard a-many women's tongues in his life, but he never heard one so abusive as the black fellow's wife's was.

"The Land," said she, "is our own, we are not in the U. States, and we can do as we like here." Mr. Hobson said, the ground was not enclosed, but appeared as if it had been cleared. When Fuller called out "You have no business on my Property," he answered, "You black rascal, what do you mean?"

They had no intention to injure his property. Mr. Gordon then remarked, it was not Fuller's property they were on, but part of the Common – Fuller's wife immediately cried out – "You lie, you lie, you lie you white rascal, you red-head dog, I know you well" – they pelted stones at them, which were thrown as dexterously as if they had been brought up to it.

He presented his piece at Fuller's legs and threatened to fire – he afterwards went and cut a switch, which he laid twice or thrice round the black fellow's shoulders. Fuller then returned to his house, and returned with an axe-handle in his hand, and immediately made a blow at Mr. Gentles with it, but it missed his head in consequence of his stopping at the moment. Previous to this the black woman had cut Gordon on the head with a stone.

He then collared Fuller, and threatened to take him before a magistrate, upon which the black fellow and his wife and children, set up a most horrid yell, that induced him to let go – the black tribe then re-commenced throwing stones at them.

The shooting party afterwards went to Mr. Hartsborne's, to whom they related the circumstances, and he granted a warrant to apprehend Fuller. The warrant was given to Connors to execute, who did not like to go alone to take the man, because he had heard he was a very violent fellow, and they agreed in consequence, to follow him at a distance, to render him assistance, should it have been necessary. Connors, however, took him without their aid.

[J. T. HILL DEFENDS HIS CLIENT, MR. FULLER]

Mr. J. T. Hill addressed the Jury on behalf of the Negro, with much warmth and *feeling* for his client's interest, insisting, that the assault and battery, was one, which the defendant could be justified in. He endeavoured to show, that after a person had been warned off the property of another, and continued to trespass, the law authorized force to be used to compel him.

An objection, he observed, was made the other day, that because a property was not enclosed, it made a difference. There is a law, he said, of this Province, which directs a fine of 40s. for trespass if a fence is up; and if the fence was not up, it was still a trespass, if the person continued on the property after being warned.

Mr. Hill reversed the case for argument's sake, and supposed Mr. Gordon to have owned a piece of land, and the Black man had come across his property, and called him a white coloured rascal, what would have been the consequence? Would the Jury not have said, that if assault and battery had taken place, Mr. Gordon would have been justified? Certainly they would.

But, gentlemen of the Jury, this affair took place with stones. With whose stones, gentlemen? Why, with the black man's stones! The law of the land as he had stated to them before, gave the defendant the right to use force if they would not go away. It was evident that the defendant did not intend in this instance to assault them, because it appears that when he picked up the stones, he piled them deliberately upon his arm, and his object was no doubt, to defend himself: but what was the conduct of Mr. Hobson? Why, he went and cut a switch, and lashed the poor fellow.

If justice was due in this case, it was Gordon who should have been prosecuted, and not the black man. Mr. Hill again touched on the nature of trespasses. In England, he believed, persons were allowed to go on lands after foxes, but the parties in this case surely could not take the black man for such, tho' it is very probable that Fuller might have taken Gordon for one. Mr. Hill then proceeded-

Gentlemen of the Jury – the ground on which this alleged assault and battery took place, was contiguous to the defendant’s house, so that they could not have been mistaken it was his property; but in fact, if Fuller had not warned them at all, he would have been justified in indicting them for trespass.

A Jurymen observed, they were not taking notice of the trespass, but of the assault.

The Court had scarcely commenced addressing the Jury, remarking that there appeared to be a great forbearance on the part of Mr. Gordon and Mr. Hobson; when the Foreman of the Jury interposed and declared their minds were made up, that Fuller was *Guilty*.

The Court, taking into consideration, that he had been in Gaol 6 weeks already, sentenced him to 1 week; admonishing him in future to learn how to behave himself. Had you been in your own country, added the worthy magistrate, and acted as it appears you have done in this case, you would probably have been shot. I am sorry to observe there are too many of *your colour* in this country, whose conduct is highly reprehensible; and you may depend upon it, if you continue the same course, it will be the means of uniting the voice of the people against you, in one loud and general complaint, to have you sent out of the Province altogether.

### “Negro settlers”<sup>118</sup> (1830)

**In 1830, the U.S. state of Ohio passed laws severely restricting the ability of black people to settle there. A land settlement organization, The Canada Company, planned to help black residents of Ohio re-settle in Upper Canada (modern southern Ontario). The House of Assembly of Upper Canada passed several resolutions against this initiative.**

The laws of Ohio having set their face against the settlement of the free people of colour, their next place of refuge was Upper Canada; and it was understood they had made arrangements with the Canada Company<sup>119</sup> for this purpose. But the House of Upper Canada have passed resolutions of a strong character against this measure.

They call upon their committee to bring in a bill, to prevent the settlement of Blacks and Mulattoes in the Province; and they have determined to address His Majesty’s Government on the subject.

---

<sup>118</sup> From “Negro settlers.” (1830, April 16). *North Carolina Spectator and Western Advertiser*, p. 2.

<sup>119</sup> Founded in 1826 to help settle Upper Canada. “Since 1791, two-sevenths of the land in Canada, (in lots 60 acres each,) granted by Government, have been reserved for the Crown, and for the support of the Clergy [...] They have long been confessedly a great drawback to the improvement of the Colony, and it is the object of this Company to bring them to immediate sale, and to induce persons with the capital, to become the purchasers.” RESERVED CROWN LANDS IN CANADA. (1824, August 8). *The London Observer*, p. 3.

## **“No beneficial results will flow from it”<sup>120</sup> (1830)**

The *African Repository* for March in mentioning the attempt of the colored people of Ohio to settle themselves in Canada, expresses its conviction that no beneficial results will flow from it, and that those who have undertaken it will only meet with disappointment.

“They are already viewed,” says that journal, “as unwelcome intruders, and neither the government, people, nor climate of Canada are favorable to their wishes. It ought to be remembered that the colored people who joined the English in the revolutionary war, and had lands assigned to them in Nova Scotia, entreated the British government to remove them to Sierra Leone and that a compliance with that request alone probably saved them from destruction.”

We find in the *Repository* the resolutions of the House of Assembly in Upper Canada on the subject of those who are inclined to plant themselves on their territory, which we have not met with before entire, and which certainly show a strong jealousy of these new denizens.

## **Resolutions of the House of Assembly of Upper Canada<sup>121</sup> (1830)**

1. Resolved, that this House has just cause of alarm for the peace and security of the inhabitants of the Western parts of this Province, by reason of the rumored intention, on the part of the Canada Company, of introducing large bodies of Negro settlers into this Province.

2. Resolved, That in affording such encouragement, the Canada Company seem not to have duly reflected on the danger in which it involves the peace and happiness of the people; and that the act of the Imperial Parliament, constituting this Company, marks the subject of these resolutions as one of the many evils which must result from Legislation by the Imperial Parliament in matters of the internal concerns of this Province.

3. Resolved, That no subject calls more seriously for the attention of the Legislature than the settlement of the country by all reasonable given to strangers to come to this Province and cultivate its wastes.

4. Resolved, That although this House has long observed without uneasiness that fugitive slaves of color do, occasionally, escape into this Province; and, recognizing the law of nature which says “that the fugitive shall not be delivered up to his pursuers,” this House is still unwilling to shut the door against the outcast; yet, the sudden introduction of a mass of Black Population, likely to continue without limitation, is a matter so dangerous to the peace and comfort of the inhabitants, that it now becomes necessary to prevent or check, by some prudent restrictions, this threatened evil.

5. Resolved, That inasmuch as such a Population, sometimes surpassing and at others approaching an equality with whites in several States of this Continent, has

---

<sup>120</sup> From The *African Repository* for March. (1830, May 4). *New York Evening Post*, p. 2.

<sup>121</sup> From *The following Resolutions*. (1830, April 23). *Huntsville Democrat*, p. 1.

proved, in various ways, highly inconvenient and dangerous to those States, it is too certain that the like disasters must flow from the same cause in this Province if such projects be permitted to be effected.

6. Resolved, That the Committee to whom was referred the petition of the inhabitants of Gosfield and Colchester, do bring it in a bill, if it be practicable, during this session, to prevent the introduction of Blacks and Mulattoes into this Province, as settlers, participating in all the civil rights of the people of this Province.

7. Resolved, That an humble address be presented to His Excellency the Lieutenant Governor, requesting him to forward with as little delay as possible, these resolutions to His Majesty's Secretary of State for the Colonies, to be by him, with His Majesty's gracious permission, laid before the Imperial House of Commons; and further requesting His Excellency to discourage as far as may be within his power, the introduction of such population, until the Legislature of the Province may be enabled to mature some safe enactment on the subject.

### **The rescue of Solomon Moseby<sup>122</sup> (1837)**

Not all heroes are known to fame. Not all heroes are of the dominant races, nor are they always of the class trained by ages of culture to do knightly deeds. [...] My hero was a black man, who gave his life to save a black man, or it may rather be said there were heroes, and, though their lives were the forfeit, they accomplished what they aimed at, and struck a blow for freedom, which went on resounding through the years. [...]

In 1837 Niagara was an important place – St. Catharines and Hamilton were comparatively insignificant. There were 4,000 inhabitants, of whom 400 were blacks who had nearly all escaped from slavery, following the north star through devious and dangerous ways, but now having purchased little plots of land and built houses thereon, they formed an important part of the population. They had two churches, Baptist and Methodist, a school, generally taught by a black man, but at one time by a white woman. A company of black men was enlisted during the rebellion, so that they did their share to help the Government which had given them shelter, spreading over them its flag as an aegis. Niagara was then also a military station; nearly all the lake vessels were built here. It was the headquarters for the fugitive slaves and other colored Canadians.

My informant, a large woman, somewhat portly, with good features, not darker than many Caucasians, with a stately presence, and bearing well the snows of seventy winters, told the story well in her soft voice:

[IN THE WORDS OF THE INFORMANT, A WOMAN OF COLOR]

“Yes, I could tell you about the old times. I was born in Niagara in 1824 and my father came here in 1802. He was a slave. No, he did not run away. He came with his master all the way from Fredericksburg, Virginia, driving the carriage with six horses, his master bringing his money in bags, enough to last him; he came all that

---

<sup>122</sup> From Carnochan, J. (1897). *Slave Rescue in Niagara, Sixty Years Ago*. *Niagara Historical Society*, 2, 8-18. Written by Janet Carnochan (1839 – 1926).

way to see the Falls, and stayed at Black Rock a while. My father was the coachman, and though his master was not cruel like some masters, my father was always afraid he might be sold off to work in the cotton fields, and a gentleman from Niagara, Mr. D., told him he could easily escape and come to Niagara, where there were many colored people. So he hid in the corn fields.

“It was September, and oh, the misery my father was in when September came; he had his dark days every year, for he remembered lying out at night, the cold, and the fright of being taken, and little to eat, and the rain, oh! the children did not like when that time of year came, for he never forgot it, and he was down, down then. But I must go back to my story.

“At last his master had to go back without his coachman, although he waited a long time, and then my father came to Niagara where he bought a little piece of land here in Colored Village. That is a picture of the log house. No, it is not standing now. Mrs. — took a picture of it for me before it was pulled down, and I have had it framed, as you see. Far from here? No, my father owned this piece of land, too, and I built this little house.

“War? Yes, my father used to tell about driving some of the officers, and about the dances, and the old Blue House and the Block House, and he remembered General Brock and many officials. My mother, with many others, went to Burlington Bay during the war; my father was a teamster; hard times they had then. Do you know what our people used for hairpins then? There were no stores – what, perhaps they had stores, but people had no money – well, we used the thorns from the hawthorn trees, and sometimes used them to pin our clothes together from when they were torn, instead of buttons and hooks and pins.

“My mother was a German woman and was brought up by a lady, and my grandmother came from the States in the Revolutionary War, and went and lived with the Indians at Chippawa, but my mother came away to Niagara and lived as a servant with Parson Addison, and when she married my father in 1818 he gave her a grand wedding out at Lake Lodge. There were fifty people present, and Rev. John Burns helped to marry them.

“Where did I go to school? Oh, the first school I went to was to a yellow man called Herbert Holmes – Hubbard Holmes, our people called him. I will tell you afterwards what became of him and how he died. Oh, he was severe; they were then, you know, but he was a fine man, had been educated by a gentleman in Nova Scotia, and then he went to England for a while, and I went to school upstairs in the schoolhouse of the Scotch church; you know the first church was burned down in the war and then they used the schoolhouse where the sexton lives now, and downstairs they had preaching and Sunday school, and upstairs was a schoolroom for the colored children. It was a black man taught it. How many? Oh, it was full – full of children. The benches were slabs with the flat side up and the bark down, with round sticks put in slanting for legs. The children all studied aloud, and the one that made the most noise was the best scholar in those days. Then I went to a Miss Brooks, from Oberlin, in 1838-9. I remember just how she looked, and how she dressed. She was delicate and died of consumption; oh, she had hard times with some of the boys – bad,

rough ones. I remember how Hubbard Holmes used to drill the boys, and then when holiday time came, he would march us all in twos to a grocery kept by a black woman, and treat us all to bulls'-eyes and gingerbread. Holidays were not two months as they are now, but two weeks. Oh, he was a fine man – but I must tell you how he died.

“There was a slave who escaped from Louisville, Kentucky, Solomon Moseby by name. In those days they followed the north star and that brought them to Canada. Now, this slave had stolen his master's horse, or they said so, and so they tracked him and found him here at Niagara, and he was arrested and put in jail.

“*Yes, where Miss Rye's Western Home is.*<sup>123</sup> It did not look like that then. So you know they could take him back, and hang him for taking the horse, and so they brought the papers, and the lawyers and the judge said he must go back, and our people were worked up 'til they said they would “*live with him or die with him.*”

“Yes, *do or die*, that's what they said, and they went up on that day, crowds and crowds, and the sheriff, that was McLeod, and the constables and soldiers, and the people, and children and the white people, crowds and crowds.

“*Did I go?* No, mother took us up on the top of our house, and we could hear the shouting and the screaming and the screeching and the firing. Ephraim Wheeler was the jailer, and the sheriff went up and down slashing with his sword and keeping the people back. Many of our people had sword cuts on their necks. They were armed with all kinds of weapons: pitchforks, flails, sticks, stones. One woman had a large stone in a stocking, and many had their aprons full of stones, and threw them, too. The constables had muskets, and when the wagon came out of the jail-yard with the prisoner, Solomon Moseby, sitting in it with handcuffs, to go back to slavery, or be beaten to death or hanged after he had come all these miles, our people were nearly frantic, and Hubbard Holmes sprang forward and caught one horse by the head, and a black man called Green caught the other. Some one must have sprung in the wagon and knocked off the prisoner's handcuffs; the constables fired, and Hubbard Holmes and Green fell dead, but Solomon Moseby jumped out and ran off in the direction of Mr. Hiscott's. Oh, I can remember the screaming and the shouting – but *Hubbard Holmes was dead! Tragedy!* Yes, he was a martyr, he gave his life to free his brother; they said they would live or die with the prisoner, and they did.

“Oh, what a funeral that was. Nearly all the people in town coming up to see the dead bodies when they were laid out, and the funeral afterwards. Where is he buried? In the graveyard of the colored church. Monument? No, but he was a hero.

“Some of those who helped Hubbard Holmes were taken up and kept in jail for a month and then they let them out. After some years Solomon Moseby came back, and meanwhile his wife had come here. They met in Mr. —'s house, but at first they hardly knew one another, but it was a sight to see the tears streaming down their faces with joy, but our people did not give him any encouragement, so he did not stay long, for they thought when they had suffered so much for him and lives had been lost, he ought not to have come back.

“Sunday School? Yes, some Methodists used to have Sunday school round in the houses of our people. Mr. Vary and Mrs. Judge Powell and Mrs. Whitten went

---

<sup>123</sup> Italics in the original.

round teaching and praying. They dressed different from the Methodists now, and Hubbard Holmes was what they called an *exhorter*. And I remember when the white Baptists and the black Baptists had the fight about the meeting house, *but the blacks got it*. That was in 1839. There are some white people buried there: a child of Mr. Oakley, who was a teacher and used to exhort, and I went to another teacher who taught in the Methodist schoolhouse. They used to baptize in the river; sometimes there would be fifty immersed in the water at one time down near where the Queen's hotel is now. And sometimes they went to the creek near Mr. Burns' orchard, instead of going to the river, to be baptized."

[THE SAME STORY AS TOLD BY THE AUTHOR'S FRIEND, SECOND HAND]

And now, from a friend, comes the same story; the same, and yet different, parts of it explaining what seemed strange in the other, one point especially, how the handcuffs were so easily got rid of. This narration gives dignity to the deeds of the blacks. It was a well-organized plan, the steady determination of hundreds to save a companion from the awful fate which they knew only too well awaited him, a persistent effort on their part involving self-denial, suffering and risk, which was as truly heroic as many deeds of which we read in Greek, Scottish or Dutch history, or our own U. E. Loyalists; deeds immortalized in song or story.

The story, this time told to my friend by an old black man, a full black, is that the slave Moseby took his master's horse to help him escape, and after using it some time, abandoned it, and made his way on foot the remaining distance to Canada. Shortly after he was arrested, and after considerable legal wrangling, the Canadian authorities consented to deliver him up to the Americans as a criminal for horse-stealing. Of course, the colored people on the Niagara frontier thought it was a shameful surrender.

The blacks then formed a numerous, if not wealthy, element of the Niagara population. One of their preachers, Herbert Holmes, who was also a teacher, not like some temporizers, was also *a man*, although his skin was neither white nor black, but yellow. When it was decided that Moseby was to be returned to slavery, Herbert Holmes, the teacher and preacher, said, "Never while I live," and he at once, with other leading colored citizens, gave the alarm to all their comrades on the Niagara frontier, and called on them to come to the rescue at once, and nobly they responded.

Few of the blacks then were better than hewers of wood and drawers of water for their white brethren, but many instances can be given of self-sacrifice by those to whom word was sent. Teamsters gave up their situations and lost their wages, journeys were made to take word to friends, by boys and girls, journeys difficult and dangerous, for besides those in authority who wanted to surrender Moseby, there were a number of black ruffians, as well as whites, who made their living at times by kidnapping escaped slaves and other colored people, getting them back over the Niagara River. To the physical hardships endured, which were light, comparatively, add the mental sufferings, for instance, while the superstitious [black people]<sup>124</sup> were passing the numerous burial places of the early settlers on their own farms, the

---

<sup>124</sup> The original has a disparaging term here (albeit not the n-word).



runners who were sent off to give the alarm, journeys often in the night, over nearly impassable roads to St. David's, Drummondville, Chippewa, Fort Erie, Port Colborne (then called Granelly Bay), or the Twenty and Forty-Mile Creeks.

The Deputy Sheriff of the Niagara district at this time was McLeod, who was anxious to have Moseby extradited, but, fortunately, there were some formalities to be complied with, and before this was done Holmes' recruits had arrived and assembled around the Niagara jail, determined to die before Moseby was given up.

The town was in a ferment; the majority of the whites were opposed to the surrender but did not want to interfere, and fortunately for Moseby he had friends even among his guards, and although attempts were made to get him secretly from the jail and down to the ferry, the watchers always were alert, and time after time frustrated the attempted night delivery of the prisoner.

Capt. Eccles and Col. Adams, of St. Catharines, interested themselves for Moseby, and got up a largely signed petition, but without avail. McLeod wished Capt. Richardson of the *Canada* to take Moseby to Lewiston in his vessel, and received for an answer a reply, forcible and somewhat profane, but this certainly might be a case where the recording angel might drop a tear to erase the word. It was the answer of a humane man: that no vessel commanded by him would be used to convey a man back to slavery.

Moseby's owner and the Americans were clamoring for him and at last, after a three weeks' siege of the jail by from 200 to 300 negroes, some say over 400, it was determined to deliver the prisoner on a certain day. Many of the white inhabitants of the town had given help in the way of food and shelter to the blockading army, who had erected temporary huts for shelter for some, as the weather was cold, while others obtained shelter with their colored brethren. Although there were four taverns in the vicinity of the jail, there was not accommodation for all.

Special constables were engaged, [and] a couple of bombardiers from Fort Mississauga in their gorgeous uniforms, to inspire fear, were detailed to ride on the wagon, one on each side of the prisoner as he was being conveyed to the wharf. As there had been numerous false alarms, there were not so many white spectators as might have been expected, but there were some hundreds who were nearly all sympathizers.

It was thought during the first week that Moseby's friends would soon tire, and it was given out at different times that the prisoner was to be given up, but Holmes was not thus deceived. He and his were always on hand. Sentinels had been posted on guard, night and day for those three weary weeks. What a time of excitement this must have been for all concerned; it sounds to us, in these prosaic days, almost beyond belief. The prisoner did not lack friends inside the prison walls, and Holmes was always warned when danger threatened.

At last the day came; the Deputy Sheriff on horseback, with a drawn sword, the wagon with two spirited horses, constables in front on the wagon, constables on the rear seat of the wagon, prisoner handcuffed in the center with bombardiers on either side of him, constables with fixed bayonets on foot, on each side of the wagon and rear, white spectators on the roofs of the neighboring houses. The prisoner was

handcuffed in the jail yard and bidden good-by by Wheeler and helped into the wagon. Outside the jail the Riot Act was read, and then the gates are thrown open and the spirited team came out with a rush. Two hundred determined black men on each side of the road and across in front of the bounding team were there as well. Most of them, personally, had felt the lash of slavery; and there also was Holmes, who, however, had never been in bondage, but had made their wrongs his own, and deserves all the more credit. [...]

Holmes, although a heavy, corpulent man, was the first to reach the horses' heads and bring them to a standstill: another man took hold of the other horse, and a third black man by the name of Green, with a fence-rail, now that the wagon was stopped, ran the rail between the spokes of the hind wheels and locked the wagon. The prisoner, whose handcuffs had either not been locked or had been so weakened that they easily broke, jumped from the wagon into the thickest of the crowd and disappeared. All this did not take over two minutes.

McLeod on his charger, who, with his drawn sword was making way for the team, had got into an altercation with a large fat woman who would not make way for him, her ponderosity happily offering an effectual bar, but on whom he hesitated to use his sword, on looking back and seeing the horses, shouted "Fire!"<sup>125</sup> and "Charge!" The bombardiers fired, one of them into the air, the other at Holmes, killing him instantly, and one of the special constables with his bayonet charged at poor Green, who had just locked the wagon wheels and had not time to get away.

The prisoner, who was an athletic man, jumped a rail fence, and ran into a corn field where a man by the name of Gibson was at work, who is credited with giving him assistance. At a farm house near Virgil it is told that he stopped to get a drunk of water (and in the same house is still shown, [as of 1897,] an earthenware jar, called "the Holmes jar," having belonged to our dusky hero at one time). Moseby finally reached Montreal, and afterwards England, for he was safe neither in Canada nor the United States.

The authorities were enraged at his escape, and thirty or forty of the blacks were immediately arrested and imprisoned in the jail, the leader next to Holmes being a man named Sims. They were kept prisoners for some time, and at breaking out of the rebellion were released, and joined a colored company, marched to the Falls and afterwards to Chippewa. Capt. Johnson Clench was their first captain.

My [friend's] informant could give no account of the funeral, there being a warrant out against him, but he escaped and afterwards enlisted with the others, being then a lad of sixteen.

---

<sup>125</sup> "HORRIBLE – We learn from the Kingston Herald that a colored man having been lately arrested at Niagara, U. C. at the instance of some persons on the South, on what is supposed to be a trumped-up charge of horse stealing, contrived to shake off his irons and make his escape. Several colored people, present when he made his escape, gave three cheers on seeing him run away, without making the least attempt to rescue him. The Sheriff of Niagara, without more ado, ordered his men to fire on the by-standers, and after the affair was over, horrible to relate! three colored men were found to have been shot dead on the ground, and others wounded." HORRIBLE. (1837, September 29). *New York Evening Post*, p. 2.

### [OTHER EXPLANATIONS OF THE HANDCUFFS]

It is strange how many stories are told of how the handcuffs were removed, showing what a hold this had taken on the popular fancy, and also how differently people see and narrate the same circumstance, but all showing the sympathy felt for the prisoner. One tells that the blacksmith who made the fetters, so constructed them as to be easily opened; another that a file was conveyed to Moseby in food sent to him; another, that a friendly turnkey helped him, and still another, that when he left the wagon, the handcuffs were still on, and then he ran to a large stone in a field and struck them off. One of the constables lost a finger<sup>126</sup> in the contest, as was well known to many in town.

### [THE STORY AS TOLD BY FATHER HENSON TO A TORONTONIAN]

Another vivid word picture of the same scene was given by a gentleman from Toronto, the story being told him by Father Henson, of Chatham, who was either a witness or was told of it by a participator in the scene. [...]

A wooden bridge crossed some low ground near the jail, and the idea of the blacks was to use no violence, but the women were instructed to stand on the bridge forming a solid mass, so that there would be some time taken up in dispersing them, which would cause a diversion and give time and opportunity to the prisoner to escape in the confusion. The women sang hymns, [...] and between the bridge and the jail, [there was] a lone of black men watching for their brother, whom they had determined to rescue. The crowd sang till all were excited, then when the constables got out of the wagon to clear the way, rails were taken down from the fence, which proved to be effective weapons; some were stuck in the wagon wheels, and thus an opportunity for escape was given. A stone in a stocking formed a formidable weapon for the women.

### [DETAILS FROM OTHER INFORMANTS]

Another informant tells me that the black women, worked up to a high pitch of fury, did "grievous bodily harm" to some of the officials, who never liked to have this episode referred to afterwards. A lady from St. Catharines, prominent in good works, told me she remembered as one of her earliest recollections, seeing a wagon full of black men standing up driving wildly through St. David's to the rescue, and that one of these men returned with a pike wound through his cheek.

### [NEWSPAPER ACCOUNTS OF THE INCIDENT]

Singularly enough, after writing the above, comes another version of the story which disputes my title of hero. Through the kindness of J. P. Merritt, Esq., of St. Catharines, access was obtained to a newspaper file of 1837, bound volumes of the St. Catharines *Journal*. The thought had often obtruded itself that another side of the story might call this band of men, trying to save a brother, a mob, or even by a harsher name, and what all who had told the story had called heroism, might be called rebellion or treason. How far it is right to resist constituted authority is a question

---

<sup>126</sup> "The name of the colored man who ran away from Kentucky, and who was arrested in Niagara, on a charge of horse stealing, is Solomon Moseby; he belonged to Mr. Castleman. The names of the persons killed in attempting the rescue, were Herbert Holmes and Jacob Green. Another colored man named Thomas Parker, had his arm broken by a rifle ball, and one of the sheriff's officers was wounded by a dirk." The name. (1837, October 4). *Baltimore Sun*, p. 2.

yet unsettled. The difference between a patriot and a rebel, perhaps, depends on his measure of success. If successful a patriot and here, if unsuccessful a rebel and traitor. In the issue of the *Journal* for Sept. 21, 1837, is an article headed "Mobocracy in Canada," [...] [which] begins thus:

"A most lamentable and exciting occurrence took place a few days ago, in the town of Niagara, by which two colored men lost their lives, and several others were seriously injured. A runaway slave from Kentucky (here follows the story). Application was made to the Lieutenant-Governor to remove said felon, which was granted. An armed mob, principally of colored people of all sexes and conditions, having collected about the jail, several magistrates, soldiers and constables were called in, the Riot Act was read, the mob rushed on the officers with clubs and knives, the military was ordered to fire; but the grand object of the mob was gained, as the prisoner escaped; \$100 is offered by the sheriff as a reward for his capture. A coroner's inquest was held. The pretext of the blacks for their violent conduct was the suspicion that the slave was not to be punished as a horse thief, but to be returned to slavery, losing sight of the enormity of the crime of resisting the law." [...]

An extract from the Niagara *Chronicle* gives the account of the inquest: "At 10 o'clock on Sunday morning, Sept. 24th, the jury having been confined seventeen hours, returned their verdict unanimously in the case of Herbert Holmes, 'justifiable homicide,' by twelve of the jurors; in the case of Jacob Green, 'That the deceased was killed by a wound inflicted by a sharp cutting instrument, but whether justifiably or unjustifiably there is not sufficient evidence before the jury to decide.'" <sup>127</sup>

### **Another account of the rescue of Solomon Moseby<sup>128</sup> (1852)**

Before quitting the subject of Niagara, I may as well mention an incident which occurred shortly afterwards, on my last visit to the town, which interested me much at the time, and threw the whole of this little community into a wonderful ferment.

A black man, a slave somewhere in Kentucky, having been sent on a message, mounted on a very valuable horse, seized the opportunity of escaping. He reached Buffalo after many days of hard riding, sold the horse, and escaped beyond the lines into Canada. Here, as in all British dominions, God be praised! the slave is slave no more, but free, and protected in his freedom.<sup>129</sup> This man acknowledged that he had not been ill treated; he had received some education, and had been a favorite with his

---

<sup>127</sup> "The verdict in the case of Holmes was the only possible verdict on the admitted facts. Holmes was forcibly resisting an officer of the law in executing a legal order of the proper authority. In the case of Green the doubt arose from the uncertainty whether he was bayoneted while resisting the officers or after Moseby had made his escape. The evidence was conflicting and the fact has never been made quite clear." Riddell, W. R. (1919). *The slave in Upper Canada*. Written by William Renwick Riddell (1852 – 1945).

<sup>128</sup> From Jameson, A. (1852). *Sketches in Canada: and rambles among the red men*. London: Longman, Brown, Green and Longmans. Written by Anna Jameson (1794 – 1860).

<sup>129</sup> Among the addresses presented to Sir Frances Head in 1836, was one from the colored inhabitants of this part of the province, signed by four hundred and thirty-one individuals, most of them refugees from the United States, or their descendants. [Note in the original.]

master. He gave as a reason for his flight, that he had long wished to marry, but was resolved that his children should not be born slaves.

In Canada, a runaway slave is assured of legal protection; but, by an international compact between the United States and our provinces, all felons are mutually surrendered. Against this young man the jury in Kentucky had found a true bill for horse-stealing; as a felon, therefore, he was pursued, and, on the proper legal requisition, arrested; and then lodged in the jail of Niagara, to be given up to his master, who, with an American constable, was in readiness to take him into custody, as soon as the government order should arrive.

His case excited a strong interest among the whites, while the colored population, consisting of many hundreds in the districts of Gore and Niagara, chiefly refugees from the States, were half frantic with excitement. They loudly and openly declared that they would peril their lives to prevent his being carried again across the frontiers, and surrendered to the vengeance of his angry master. Meantime there was some delay about legal forms, and the mayor and several of the inhabitants of the town united in a petition to the governor in his favor. In this petition it was expressly mentioned, that the master of the slave had been heard to avow that his intention was not to give the culprit up to justice, but to make what he called an *example* of him. Now, there had been lately some frightful instances of what the slave proprietors of the south called “making an example;” and the petitioners entreated the governor to interpose, and save the man from a torturing death “under the lash or at the stake.” Probably the governor’s own humane feelings pleaded even more strongly in behalf of the poor fellow. But it was a case in which he could not act from feeling, or, “to do a great right, do a little wrong.” The law was too expressly and distinctly laid down, and his duty<sup>130</sup> as governor was clear and imperative – to give up the felon, although, to have protected the slave, he would, if necessary, have armed the province.

In the mean time the colored people assembled from the adjacent villages, and among them a great number of their women. The conduct of this black mob, animated and even directed by the females, was really admirable for its good sense, forbearance, and resolution. They were quite unarmed, and declared their intention not to commit any violence against the English law. The culprit, they said, might lie in the jail, till they could raise among them the price of the horse; but if any attempt were made to take him from the prison, and send him across to Lewiston, they would resist it at the hazard of their lives.

The fatal order *did* at length come; the sheriff with a party of constables prepared to enforce it. The blacks, still unarmed, assembled round the jail, and waited till their comrade, or their brother as they called him, was brought out and placed handcuffed in a cart. They then threw themselves simultaneously on the sheriff’s party, and a dreadful scuffle ensued; the artillery men from our little fort, our only military, were called in aid of the civil authorities, and ordered to fire on the

---

<sup>130</sup> “There was nothing in the common law, or in the statute of 1833 which made it the duty of the governor to order extradition, and there was no binding compact between the United States and Upper Canada such as Mrs. Jameson speaks of.” Riddell, W. R. (1919). *The slave in Upper Canada*.

assailants. Two blacks were killed, and two or three wounded. In the melee the poor slave escaped, and has not since been retaken, neither was he, I believe, pursued.

But it was the conduct of the women which, on this occasion, excited the strongest surprise and interest. By all those passionate and persuasive arguments that a woman knows so well how to use, whatever be her color, country, or class, they had prevailed on their husbands, brothers, and lovers to use no arms, to do no illegal violence, but to lose their lives rather than see their comrade taken by force across the lines. They had been most active in the fray, throwing themselves fearlessly between the black men and the whites, who, of course, shrank from injuring them.

One woman had seized the sheriff, and held him pinioned in her arms; another, on one of the artillerymen presenting his piece, and swearing that he would shoot her if she did not get out of his way, gave him only one glance of unutterable contempt, and with one hand knocking up his piece, and collaring him with the other, held him in such a manner as to prevent his firing.

I was curious to see a mulatto woman who had been foremost in the fray, and whose intelligence and influence had mainly contributed to the success of her people; M—, under pretense of inquiring after a sick child, drove me round to the hovel in which she lived, outside the town. She came out to speak to us.

She was a fine creature, apparently about five-and-twenty, with a kindly animated countenance; but the feelings of exasperation and indignation had evidently not yet subsided. She told us, in answer to my close questioning, that she had formerly been a slave in Virginia; that, so far from being ill treated, she had been regarded with a special kindness by the family on whose estate she was born. When she was about sixteen her master died, and it was said that all the slaves on the estate would be sold, and therefore she ran away.

“Were you attached to your mistress?” I asked.

“Yes, said she, “I liked my mistress, but I did not like to be sold.”

I asked her if she was happy here in Canada.

She hesitated a moment, and then replied, on my repeating the question, “Yes – that is, I *was* happy here – but now – I don’t know – I thought we were safe *here* – I thought nothing could touch us *here*, on your British ground, but it seems I was mistaken, and if so, I won’t stay here – I won’t – I won’t! I’ll go and find some country where they cannot reach us! I’ll go to the end of the world, I will!”

And as she spoke, her black eyes flashing, she extended her arms, and folded them across her bosom, with an attitude and expression of resolute dignity, which a painter might have studied; and truly the fairest white face I ever looked on never beamed with more of soul and high resolve than hers at that moment.

## “Kindness toward the wandering fugitive”<sup>131</sup> (1843)

**In 1833, Britain abolished slavery. Since slavery was still legal in the United States, Canada, operating under British rule, became a haven for fugitive slaves. The following article was written ten years after the end of British slavery, and provides details of help given by various organizations and individuals to escaping slaves.**

Dear Brethren: Two years have elapsed since the mission of Justice and Humanity among the self-emancipated refugees in Canada, was placed by a large Convention at Le Roy, N. Y., under your supervision.

During this period, our work, though subject to changes and fluctuations, favorable and adverse, has gone steadily forward. The loving kindness of the Lord has crowned the efforts of the past year. The cause of emigration from cruel oppression to “the land of promise,” has prospered. We venture to state, as a moderate estimate, that 1500 of your countrymen have broken their fetters during the year, and are either safe in Canada, or safely sheltered in the midst of anti-slavery communities on their way. The everlasting Jehovah is evidently fulfilling his word of promise: “For the oppression of the poor and for the sighing of the needy, now will I arise, saith the Lord; I will set him in safety from him that puffeth at him.” We know not that a much larger number than usual have passed the Provincial line the last year, but we are happy to know that the facilities for escape from slavery have greatly increased in the free States. Vigilance committees have been doubly vigilant, and increasingly efficient, particularly on the Philadelphia and New York route. It would seem as if they have received afresh the heavenly mandate, “Thou shalt not deliver unto his master, the servant which is escaped from his master unto thee.”

How applicable is the language of Job to every faithful vigilance committee man! “I was a father to the poor, and the cause I knew not I searched out.” Nothing is more manifest than that a spirit of Samaritan-like kindness toward the wandering fugitive from slavery, is rapidly spreading and prevailing, which will soon mock the decisions of misanthropic judges, and the diabolical enactments of the law-making sons of Belial. It is fast becoming unpopular to aid and abet the delivery of a human being into the hideous fangs of slavery. As evidence of this, we have but to cite the cases of Hackett and Latimer. The one has agitated the Imperial as well as the Provincial Parliament of Her Britannic Majesty – the other has caused the Old Cradle of American liberty to rock as if by the convulsions of an earthquake.

In the case of the unfortunate Nelson Hackett, who, by stratagem and duplicity, was imprisoned five months at Sandwich, [Ontario,] and conducted, under cover of night, across the Detroit river, and hurried thence into slavery, your agent has held a correspondence with the Committee of the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society, and communicated to them such facts as the nature of the case would furnish. We trust that, hereafter, the British authorities will act in similar cases, in accordance with the recent decision of Judge Morrow, of Missouri: “That the negro slave could not commit forgery, as by the Constitution and laws of the country,

---

<sup>131</sup> From Wilson, H. (1843, March 17). Sixth Annual Report of the Canada Missions. *Liberator*, p. 1.

negroes are not recognized as persons, any more than any other animals.” Thus, can British jurists decide upon the CRIME of chattels mounting chattels, and riding away. It is easy to conceive of one chattel running away with another, but the question for Her Britannic Majesty’s Representative to solve is, can a chattel steal a chattel? Or can property steal property? John Bull<sup>132</sup> will look deep into the matter before another Hackett case will ever occur. Notwithstanding the fate of poor Hackett, the thousands of refugees in Canada never felt more secure under the protection of British law, than at present.

They generally observe the laws of the land as peaceable subjects, and are prospering under the mild and benignant sway of Victoria’s scepter. The government under which they have the happiness to live, dispenses favors to its subjects of different hue, with an impartial hand; hence, in one of the most inviting regions of the Province, between the head of Lake Ontario and Lake Huron, colored emigrants are rapidly settling upon free grant lots of land from fifty acres each, in common with emigrants from England, Scotland and Ireland.

Large numbers, in accordance with oft-repeated advice from our lips, are forsaking the monied and other occupations of cities and villages, and turning their attention to the more honorable and useful employments of husbandry. By region of prejudice which prevails among the ignorant and vicious in Canada, as on your side of the national line, the common schools of the country are not generally open to them and their children; but public sentiment is gradually changing for the better. The government has taken measures this past year, by far more efficient and liberal, to promote education than ever before, and in the general diffusion of the blessings of science, it is to be hoped that the colored population will have their full share.

The greatest difficulty we have experienced, has been a want of means with which to reward teachers for their services. Could British subjects be had to teach nine months in the year, they could readily draw government money, which would, in part, support them. During the first quarter of the year, eleven schools were in successful operation, which embraced about 400 pupils; most of these were suspended through the summer. I am sorry to say, that for want of teachers and means of supporting them, six important places hitherto occupied, are now vacant, viz: Toronto, Niagara, St. Catharines, Colchester, London, and the Wilberforce colony.

Fourteen laborers are now in the field, supplying but in part, the need of so many thousands. They are variously occupied in doing good to the colored people. Their names and locations are as follows: Isaac J. Rice, Amherstburg; Josiah Henson, (agent) Colchester; Wm. P. Newman, Elias E. Kirkland and wife, Fidelia Coburn, Sybel Clary, and Hannah M. Wilson, Dawn; Emerson Prescott, Brantford; Mary C. Shepard, Norwich; Gilbert O. Field, Queen’s Bush; Ari Raymond and wife, Oro. In addition, we might mention John Fishhool, minister of the gospel, from England, who is extending his ministerial services occasionally to the colored population of Chatham, while his son, who was once imprisoned at New Orleans, for teaching slaves to read, is now giving instruction there, to colored soldiers and others, in an evening school. Brother Rice has kept a flourishing school the year through, and

---

<sup>132</sup> The British equivalent of the U.S.’s “Uncle Sam”.



accomplished much good otherwise, in the neighborhood of Freedom's West Gate, which has been thronged with emigrants.

[THE BRITISH AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF SCIENCE AND INDUSTRY]

Your attention is earnestly invited to the *British American Institute of Science and Industry*, lately founded in the township of Dawn, which promises to be extremely useful. It is designed not to supersede, but greatly to subserve the interests of common schools, by training up teachers, and is to be conducted strictly on the manual labor system. Students, over fifteen years of age, are to have instruction free of cost, and be furnished with plain, but wholesome diet, and lodging at \$1.00 per week, to be paid in work, for which they will be allowed five cents per hour. They are to be trained thoroughly upon a full and practical system of discipline, which aims to cultivate the *entire being*, and elicit the fairest and fullest possible developments of the physical, intellectual and moral powers. A little more than a year ago, 200 acres of unimproved land were purchased near the head of navigation, on the river Sydenham, sixty miles north by east from Detroit.

Possessing all the advantages of a healthy climate, of a milder type than that of central New York, or the more southern states of New England, a navigable river abounding with fish, and communicating with the waters of the great American lakes – a fertile and productive soil, well timbered, well watered, and most beautifully situated – the efficient and persevering hand of industry – the protecting shield and fostering care of a powerful government – the auspices of British and American philanthropy combined, and above all, the propitious smiles of Heaven, it cannot but flourish and prosper, and be a blessing to the country and to posterity.

We wish our British friends who contributed their gold and silver for the object, into the hands of our trusty friend, James C. Fuller, *to know*, that upon this beautiful spot, which seems, by traces left, to have been a pleasure-ground for Indians<sup>133</sup> in by-gone years, a small company representing three different nations, formed a semi-circle under the spreading branches of a mighty oak, a little more than a year since, gave thanks to God Most High – with reverence bowed the knee, and consecrated the ground to the King of kings, and to the cause of Humanity.

There are now twelve acres cleared and mostly under good fence, three dwelling-houses up and occupied, as also a school-house of a story and a half, affording a school-room sufficiently large for fifty or sixty scholars, with a dormitory that will accommodate twenty. The school was organized on the 12th inst., with nine young men. We should not despise the day of small things. By dint of assiduous and persevering toil, we have prepared accommodations for thirty boarding students, and expect to have that number for the present winter. We hope, ere long, to have the Institution chartered by an act of the Provincial Parliament. It is expected also, that friend James C. Fuller will, ere long, present its claims to the British public. Should British and American philanthropists feel that lively interest in its advancement, for which the necessities of the deeply injured refugees from slavery LOUDLY CALL,

---

<sup>133</sup> The site is on the traditional territory of the Mississauga Nation.

means will not be wanting to prepare accommodations the ensuing year, for, at least, *two hundred students, nor will teachers be wanting to give them instruction.*

The expenses for the year 1842, including the new institution and the other schools, amount to	\$1,498.95
Sum total of receipts in money, for the same	\$1,167.95
Leaving the mission at the close of the year, or the beginning of 1843, <i>minus</i>	\$331.00
To which add the debts of the previous year	\$120.00
Mission now in debt to the amount of	\$451.00
The improvements made on Institution premises, and the amount of property accumulated during the year, estimated at	\$1,000.00

Twenty boxes of clothing, bedding, shoes, &c. have been received and distributed here and elsewhere, and twelve more have been heard from, on their way, which failed of reaching their destination before navigation closed. Several of the boxes were highly valuable, and of essential service to the Institution. From these developments of philanthropy, it clearly appears that a growing interest is felt among the Dorcas-like females of America, in behalf of the poor exiles from the Bastille of slavery. Boxes should be seasonably directed to Dawn Mills *via* Buffalo and Detroit, care of Martin Wilson, Esq., of the latter place. A list of the articles should come in the box, and a letter at the same time by mail. Since the removal of your agent from Toronto to Dawn Mills, large numbers of fugitives have arrived in that place, and have not been provided for as was desirable they should be. Mr. James C. Brown, a vigilant and trusty gentleman of color, of that city, has, for months past, been overburdened with care and labor, in attending to the welfare of fresh emigrants from the South, without having received adequate means of sustaining him. We would therefore suggest that some of the boxes entrusted from time to time, to your care as the committee, be forwarded to him for distribution, as also some means of defraying the necessary expenses incurred in the work.

It has fallen to the lot of your humble agent to superintend the interests of the mission generally, and education among the refugees. Our cup has been mingled with joy and sorrow. We have had conflicts powerful and protracted, which were followed by victories triumphant and glorious. Our labors at home and abroad have been more abundant than in any previous year. Like the Apostle to the Gentiles, we have learned “both how to be abased and how to abound – both to be full and to be hungry – both to abound and to suffer need;” but we cheerfully testify, that by the grace of God, we have not “labored in vain, nor spent our strength for naught.”

Respectfully submitted,

HIRAM WILSON

*Agent and missionary.*

## The United States' Fugitive Slave Bill<sup>134</sup> (1850)

**Numerous free black Americans and fugitive slaves emigrated to Canada as a result of this law, which made it unsafe to remain in free States.**

The question of slavery in the United States, it is too evident, is not receiving that gradual solution which a series of great men have confidently hoped for. [...] A fundamental law of the Union requires that the Federal Government shall not only respect the rights of slave-owners and the laws of the slave states, but that it shall render its utmost assistance towards the enforcement of those rights. Accordingly, the slave-owners are demanding no more than their right, and indeed in their own opinion somewhat less, in what is called the Fugitive Slave Bill, the provisions of which are of a nature to startle an English ear.

In every township of the United States [...] every man, woman and child whose complexion betrays the least trace of an African origin is to be liable by that bill to the following treatment. A stranger may suddenly present himself, armed with a document from the authorities of a distant state, and demand that colored person as a fugitive slave; and, if that person cannot prove his counter-statements with the evidence of free men, may carry him off as he would a recovered horse, or dog, or carpet bag. It may be a colored man who has for years worked for wages, or kept a store; it may be the daughter or the wife of a man known to be free; it may be any negro, mulatto, or creole who cannot prove by the evidence of free men his history and condition from the day of his birth; he is to be liable to be carried off in the eyes of a free city, and forcibly transported to the heart of a slave state a thousand miles off. More than this, should the alleged owner, or his agent, make an *affidavit* that he has reason to apprehend a rescue, or any degree of forcible opposition, then the officers of the Federal Union are to be compelled by the terms of the above-mentioned bill to undertake themselves the conveyance of the alleged slave, and his safe delivery into the hands of his alleged owner, at the place of his alleged escape. Or, should a rescue actually be effected, the state wherein it takes place is to make good the value of the slave to the alleged owner. Any attempt to rescue is, of course, to be punished with the severest penalties.

---

<sup>134</sup> From Slavery in the United States. (1850, October 3). *Hamilton Spectator*, p. 5. o

## A slavery sympathizer on a “slave’s abduction” at Chatham<sup>135</sup> (1858)

**From 1834 to 1865, slavery was illegal in Canada but legal in the United States. Within the U.S., states were divided between southern Slave States, where slavery was practiced, and northern Free States, where slavery did not exist, but where the right of others – such as “Southerners” – to own slaves was recognized until the Civil War (1861 – 1865).**

A case of abduction, of the most violent nature, occurred yesterday at Chatham, C. W., which surpasses in atrocity and violence the highly-colored pictures of Uncle Tom’s Cabin, and far exceeds any transaction that has come to our notice on American soil.

A passenger on the day express train coming west, Mr. W. R. Merwin, of St. Louis, had with him a little negro boy, only ten years of age, a bright, active little fellow – a slave, it is true, and the property of Mr. Merwin, but one whose ties of kindness and affection all centered in that gentleman’s family, in which he had been raised, and where reside his father, his mother, and several brothers and sisters – an unbroken family, that had never known want or suffering, and that are attached to their master’s family by the strongest bonds of affection of which a negro is capable. Mr. Merwin had taken this boy for a companion and pet in his northern tour. He had visited the principal eastern cities, and wherever he had been the boy had his liberty to go and come when he chose. At Niagara Falls he was a pet in the hotel where his master stopped, and was played with and humored by the guests, who were won by his peculiar brightness and playfulness.

It seems that at London, where the train stopped to afford the passengers opportunity to dine, the little negro, who had been furnished with dinner at the same table that his master had eaten from, was noticed by one of the vagabond, and who was afterwards heard to say that Mr. Merwin would never bring a slave through Canada again. Nothing more was thought of this, and the train moved on.

When it arrived at Chatham, the boy was occupying one of the seats in the center of the car which stand lengthwise with the cars, and his master was seated near him. As soon as the train had stopped, a mulatto came into the car, and immediately proceeded to take the little fellow by force, but he cried out, which called the attention of Mr. Merwin, who went to his assistance. He succeeded in rescuing him, but was immediately beset by a car full of stout, burly negroes, that, to use his own expression, reminded him of the Sepoys of India. They were armed with revolvers, knives and clubs, and were headed by a white man, who pretended to be “one of her Majesty’s officers,” and who attempted to arrest Mr. Merwin.

Mr. M., however, was assisted by the conductor, Mr. G. E. Goodrich, and by the other passengers, who came forward to protect him, and he eluded their efforts, but, in the tumult and confusion, the boy was dragged off, screaming in the most pitiful tones to his master to save him. He clung frantically to Mr. Merwin until he was

---

<sup>135</sup> From Abduction of a Negro Boy from a Train on the Great Western Railway of Canada. (1858, September 28). *Detroit Free Press*, p. 1.

pulled away by main force. When the miscreants had succeeded in dragging him out, they all retried from the car.

We have the opinion of several gentlemen who were passengers on the train that there were about three hundred of them, mostly negroes, all fully armed. When they had got the boy out, they gathered on the platform and raised a shout of triumph, in which were mixed the most demoniacal gestures and expressions. But above all the cries of the little fellow calling to his master for protection were distinctly heard. It was deemed prudent for the security of Mr. Merwin, as, without doubt, the villains would have set upon the car, and not have been satisfied short of taking his life. He was therefore compelled to come away and leave a little favorite in the clutches of the miserable vagabonds who had succeeded in tearing him away.

In a conversation which we had with that gentleman last evening, he expressed a perfect willingness to place the boy in the hands of any respectable person who would give good security for his good keeping and kind protection, provided the boy was willing. This offer he has before made; but he is not willing to leave him in such hands as he now is in, and will use every exertion to rescue him. If there be any legal way in which he can be recovered, it will be resorted to.

### More information on “The Chatham Slave Case”<sup>136</sup> (1858)

#### A letter from New York offers a different perspective on the “abuction” at Chatham.

New York, Oct. 2, 1858

Sir – An article copied from the *Detroit Free Press*, and concerning the good behavior of your [Chatham] townspeople, being extensively copied into our city papers, I take the liberty of stating a few facts, both for the encouragement of your citizens to continue the good efforts in favor of the oppressed, and also for the proper and just exposure of Mr. W. R. Merwin.

This gentleman, then, to begin at the beginning, is no Southerner at all, but a Western man, born in Ohio, and who, for the most part of his life, has lived in the Free States. His mother now resides in Illinois; and all his friends, without exception, are Northern people. So much for “this party of Southerners”.

Mr. Merwin has only been back from California about 20 months, and since that time has been, and now is, in the employ of O. J. Wood & Co., of No. 312 Broadway, New York, proprietors of Wood’s Hair Restorative, as traveling agent, and for the first ten or twelve months for Job Moses of Rochester, proprietor of Sir James Clarke’s Female Pills, &c. Also during the past summer he has been driving a team for these firms through New York and part of Pennsylvania, in one of which states he picked up “the little favorite,” so touchingly spoken of by the *Free Press*, much to the astonishment of one of the firm of O. J. W. & Co, who accidentally happened to pass over part of the route Mr. M. had just traversed, and that for the first time heard of the magnificence of his Agent in traveling with a “negro servant”.

---

<sup>136</sup> From M. J. M. (1858, October 9). THE CHATHAM SLAVE CASE. *Semi-Weekly Spectator* (Hamilton), p. 2.

Nothing was said by him to Mr. M., however, till his arrival in the city of New York about three weeks after, when he openly taxed him with having this “free negro child in his possession, and that he was kidnapping him with the intention of selling him when he got South” – whither he was just about to go – into slavery. He then most positively denied any such intention, saying that the boy was in Mr. Moses’ employ to go about with him and distribute Moses’ circular in all the towns he went through, and in answer to direct enquiry of Dr. Wood, said the boy was no longer with him, although at the very time with him in New York. This explanation was accepted as satisfactory until he turns up again claiming to be the owner of this boy and purporting to take him as his slave.

One thing more and my statement is finished. Mr. Merwin was, it seems, rescued from “one of her Majesty’s officers” “by Mr. G. E. Goodrich,” “the conductor.” I hope he is proud of his performance and still more so, that the punishment Merwin deserved may be meted out to him.

Again, “above all, the cries of the little fellow calling to his master for protection were distinctly heard.” He supposed he was in honorable employment, and having very little to do, and the pleasure of traveling through the country, and living at hotels, &c., together, with no doubt kind treatment in view of the prospective reward to be reaped by his sale, it is very likely he wished to remain with his supposed master.

Finally, the Detroit *Free Press* knew Mr. Merwin to be a traveling agent for the firms already mentioned, and to be no Southerner, and must have known the boy whose fate it so sadly laments to be no slave, but just what he is, a deceived and nearly lost Free negro child.

This, Mr. Editor, is a fair sample of the statements that occasionally find their way into the papers wherein by the seeming affection of the slave for his master, this horrible institution of slavery is made to appear a happy one.

Please give the above a space in your columns that your people may feel fully justified in what they have done, and have the happy consciousness of having saved one poor little sufferer’s back from the scourge of the slave driver, and the fangs of the blood-hound.

M. J. M.

### **Dr. Jenkins buys back his daughters<sup>137</sup> (1858)**

On the Brock Road in West Flamboro, lives a colored man, Dr. John Jenkins, who in his early life, was a slave in Virginia. Twenty-four years ago he made his escape, leaving two daughters in bondage. He resided in Rochester sixteen years, and in 1851 he removed into this country, where he is now settled. He prospered in his undertaking, and it became the darling wish of his heart to redeem his daughters from Slavery; but for eighteen long years he could obtain no tidings of them. At length,

---

<sup>137</sup> From On the Brock Road. (1858, December 8). *Daily British Whig* (Kingston), p. 2.

in 1853, he succeeded in communicating with his brother, from whom he learned that they were separated and had been carried South.

Two years passed before he could get any further information; in 1855, hearing that his youngest daughter was in Richmond, Va., he gave a man fifty dollars to fetch her away; but he never saw the man or his money again. Next year he found that the name of his daughter's owner was Allan Y. Stokes, and he wrote to him to enquire whether he would sell her, and for what price. Mr. Stokes demanded \$850; the father paid the money, and in 1857 his daughter and her husband (a free man) arrived in this country.

This year, Dr. Jenkins discovered that his eldest daughter was in Florida, owned by Ex-Governor R. K. Call, and he wrote to him to offer to purchase her freedom. Mr. Call replied that he would sell her to no one but her father, as she was the most valuable house servant that he owned, and for her faithfulness in his business since she had been in his possession he would let her father have her for \$400, and make her a present of \$50. Her father remitted the money at once, and had the happiness of meeting her at the Hamilton Railway Station on the 4th of November.

### A fugitive slave in Victoria<sup>138</sup> (1860)

#### **British Columbia would not join Confederation until 1871.**

Shortly after the Eliza Anderson had reached her wharf yesterday afternoon, it became noised abroad that a slave, who had escaped from one of the towns on the Sound, was on board, and was being kept in close confinement by the officers of the boat, with a view of returning him to his owner.

H. P. P. Crease, Esq., immediately waited upon Chief Justice Cameron, and applied for a writ of *habeas corpus*, which his lordship granted, and made returnable at 10 o'clock this morning. The writ was handed to Sheriff Naylor, and that officer, accompanied by Sergt. Carey, of the police force, went on board the Anderson, and demanded the alleged fugitive. The officers in charge of the boat stated that Capt. Fleming being on shore, they did not feel justified in taking any steps in the matter. Capt. F. soon made his appearance, however, and declined delivering the fugitive up until he had consulted with Acting Governor McGill, of Washington Territory, who is in town.

The sheriff then requested that the room in which the slave was confined might be pointed out, which was done, and Sergeant Carey left to guard the door. Capt. Fleming and Gov. McGill subsequently consulted authorities, and arriving at the conclusion that the slave could not be held, consented to deliver him up; and at four o'clock, Sheriff Naylor again visited the steamer, and securing the prisoner, took him to jail.

The fugitive proves to be a mulatto boy, about 14 years of age, who has been living with Surveyor-General Tilton, in Washington Territory, for the past five years.

---

<sup>138</sup> From A Fugitive Slave Case. (1860, September 26). *British Colonist*, p. 2.

The boys says he was born in Maryland, is a slave, and came to the Sound with the Surveyor-General. He seems to be a bright, intelligent lad, and has received some education.

The case will be heard in the Supreme Court Room, before Chief Justice Cameron, at 10 o'clock this morning.

### **“The decision of the Chief Justice”<sup>139</sup> (1860)**

Yesterday morning a large number of white and colored citizens were attracted to the Supreme Court Room to hear the decision of the Chief Justice in the case of the mulatto boy, Charles, who was taken into custody the day previous under a writ of *habeas corpus*, whilst under arrest on board the U. S. Mail Steamer, Eliza Anderson. When Judge Cameron took his seat on the bench, Mr. Attorney General Cary moved that the writ be filed. He read two affidavits, one from W. Davis and the other from W. Gerome, on which the writ was granted. The affidavits alleged that the boy Charles was a slave, belonging to Major Tilton, of Olympia, W. T. That trying to make his escape to obtain his liberty, he had gone on board the Eliza Anderson, but that the Captain had placed him in custody in order to take him back to his master. He then argued that if there were any doubts about the right of the Court to discharge the boy on the ground that he was found on board the steamer, that no doubt could now exist to liberating him, inasmuch as he was now on British soil, and within the Court. Numerous authorities were cited to show that slavery was repugnant to British law; that when the slave touches British soil he is free; that the Court had jurisdiction over any vessel, whether British or foreign, within our waters; and he therefore claimed that Charles be set at liberty. The Sheriff's return to the writ was then read, stating that he found Charles in the lamp-room, and had taken him into custody.

Capt. Fleming, of the Eliza Anderson, appeared for the defense, and said that as this case would probably be brought under the notice of the United States Government, he would only enter a protest against taking the boy out of his custody. The protest alleged that the boy was a slave belonging to Major Tilton; that he tried to escape by secreting himself on board his vessel, and that he had placed him under arrest to return him to his owner, and he held it was a violation of international law to take him from on board an United States mail steamer.

The protest was recorded, when Judge Cameron decided that the law was clear; that no man could be held as a slave on British soil; that there was no doubt about the jurisdiction of the Court in this case; and that the arrest by Capt. Fleming was illegal; and that he therefore ordered Charles be forthwith set at liberty.

The decision was met by considerable applause and a few hisses. The boy was then welcomed to liberty by his colored friends. It was a righteous decision.

---

<sup>139</sup> From Fugitive Slave Case. (1860, September 27). *British Colonist*, p. 2.



## A North-Side View of Slavery (Abridged)<sup>140</sup> (1856)

The original book contains numerous accounts of events that happened strictly within the United States. I have omitted most of these from the following transcription. The result is, I believe, a rather different text, with a focus on the experiences of fugitives from slavery *after* reaching Canada. For readers who would like a detailed account of an escape from the United States, an account of events in the life of Josiah Henson, elsewhere in this collection, should prove satisfying. Among other exploits, Henson returned to the United States on a rescue mission, *after* reaching Canada for the first time.

### AUTHOR'S PREFACE

The colored population of Upper Canada, was estimated in the First Report of the Anti-Slavery Society of Canada, in 1852, at thirty thousand. Of this large number, nearly all the adults, and many of the children, have been fugitive slaves from the United States; it is, therefore, natural that the citizens of this Republic should feel an interest in their fate and fortunes. Many causes, however, have hitherto prevented the public generally from knowing their exact condition and circumstances. Their enemies, the supporters of slavery, have represented them as "indolent, vicious and debased; suffering and starving, because they have no kind masters to do the thinking for them, and to urge them to the necessary labor, which their own laziness and want of forecast, lead them to avoid." Some of their friends, anxious to obtain aid for the comparatively few in number (perhaps three thousand in all), who have actually stood in need of assistance, have not, in all cases, been sufficiently discriminating in their statements: old settlers and new, the rich and the poor, the good and the bad, have suffered alike from imputations of poverty and starvation – misfortunes, which, if resulting from idleness, are akin to crimes. Still another set of men, selfish in purpose, have, while pretending to act for the fugitives, found a way to the purses of the sympathetic, and appropriated to their own use, funds intended for suppositious sufferers.

Such being the state of the case, it may relieve some minds from doubt and perplexity, to hear from the refugees themselves, their own opinions of their condition and their wants. These will be found among the narratives which occupy the greater part<sup>141</sup> of the present volume.

Further, the personal experiences of the colored Canadians, while held in bondage in their native land, shed a peculiar luster on the Institution of the South. They reveal the hideousness of the sin, which, while calling on the North to fall down and worship it, almost equals the tempter himself in the felicity of scriptural quotations.

---

<sup>140</sup> From Drew, B. (1856). A north-side view of slavery. Boston: John P. Jewett and Company. Written by Benjamin Drew (1812 -1903) and various former slaves.

<sup>141</sup> I have omitted most material particular to experiences in the United States, substantially shortening the book.

The narratives were gathered promiscuously from persons whom the author met in the course of a tour through the cities and settlements of Canada West. While his informants talked, the author wrote: nor are there in the whole volume a dozen verbal alterations which were not made at the moment of writing, while in haste to make the pen become a tongue for the dumb.

Many who furnished interesting anecdotes and personal histories may, perhaps, feel some disappointment because their contributions are omitted in the present work. But to publish the whole, would far transcend the limits of a single volume. The manuscripts, however, are in safe-keeping, and will, in all probability, be given to the world on some future occasion.

For the real names which appear in the manuscripts of the narratives published, it has been deemed advisable, with few exceptions, that letters should be substituted.

To those persons mentioned in the course of the work as having given him assistance and aid, the author acknowledges his obligations: and he feels, likewise, that his thanks are due to Thomas Henning, Esq., Secretary of the Anti-Slavery Society of Canada; F. G. Simpson, Esq., Agent of the same Society, and S. Walton, Esq., of Toronto; John Doyle, Esq., City Clerk, London; Rev. Mr. Peyden, of Hamilton; Rev. William King, Buxton; John Hatfield, Esq., Amherstburg; John Fairfield, Esq., Canada West.

BOSTON, 1855.

## INTRODUCTION

When in any State, the oppression of the laboring portion of the community amounts to an entire deprivation of their civil and personal rights; when it assumes to control their wills, to assign them tasks, to reap the rewards of their labor, and to punish with bodily tortures the least infraction of its mandates, it is obvious that the class so overwhelmed with injustice, are necessarily, unless prevented by ignorance from knowing their rights and their wrongs, the enemies of the government. To them, insurrection and rebellion are primary, original duties. If successfully thwarted in the performance of these, emigration suggests itself as the next means of escaping the evils under which they groan. From the exercise of this right, they can only be restrained by fear and force. These, however, will sometimes be found inadequate to hold in check the natural desire of liberty. Many, in spite of all opposition, in the face of torture and death, will seek an asylum in foreign lands, and reveal to the ears of pitying indignation, the secrets of the prison house.

The escape of slaves forms the most irritating subject of discussion between the North and the South.

If on this, as on all other evils connected with or growing out of slavery, a common man of plain common sense, were asked his opinion, he would probably say, "remove the cause and the effects will cease; remove the oppression which induces to emigration, and a fugitive slave will be an impossibility." But this "would only excite a smile at the South." How mistaken is common sense!

The South are taking measures (when was it otherwise?) to preserve, extend, and perpetuate slavery. The problem must be solved, if solved at all, without the oppression being removed.

By the combined influence of ignorance and fear, the amount of emigration has been reduced to a minimum. We could wish the South would adopt a mode of reasoning sometimes presented to us,, something of this sort; in all kinds of business, losses are inevitable. Men at the North lose by fall of stocks, by consignments, by fires, and in a great variety of ways. If a Yankee loses a ship worth twenty thousand dollars, he does not expend one hundred thousand in endeavoring to fish it up. He simply enters it in his account of profit and loss. And if a slave runs away, we might as well make the same entry quietly, as to wound the feelings and sensibilities of our northern friends; magnifying and increasing “the deep sectional difference of inborn feeling,” and filling whole cities with grief, shame, and an indignation irrepressible, except by marines and detachments of artillery.

Meanwhile, the fugitive slave law continues to be enforced.

Gloss the matter over as much as we may, and take “south-side views” through a magnifying glass – yet we must admit, that the slave’s is a cruel lot.

We may compare King James’s or the Douay Bible with the Hebrew and the Septuagint; we may find there, and in all recensions, polyglots, and translations extant, the history of Abraham and Hagar – yet we must allow, that an American slave, in his best estate, is a man badly educated, and systematically ill used.

We may study the New Testament and become conversant with the proceedings of Paul in regard to Onesimus; we may wade through the commentaries of pro-slavery and anti-slavery writers thereupon – yet the truth will remain, that an American slave is deemed “a chattel personal,” “the property of a master to whom he belongs,” that he is liable to be flogged, sold, and divorced, as the interest, caprice, or spite of his master may dictate.

It may possibly be the case that the denunciatory language which the South has used in speaking of abolitionists, may have “irritated” them, and that, under this irritation, they have manifested more zeal in the cause of emancipation, than they would otherwise have done. Still we deem it undeniable, that if there is any situation on earth in which a man can be placed, which should stir up from its depths, the most active sympathies of the human heart, it is the deplorable situation of an American slave.

If these things are so, how can it be wrong to assist a slave who is making his escape? Surely, to aid the unfortunate is a duty, which no power on earth can legislate into a crime.

But at this late day, the question is forced upon us, whether it is an unfortunate thing for a man to be a slave. This “excites a smile” at the North – but as this book is destined to be read at the South as well as at the North, we will examine the question a little.

Slavery, we are told, has its bright as well as its dark parts. In southern cities, there is good order, the streets are quiet in the night, and there is an absence of mobs. In that portion of southern society which is under highest cultivation, the slaves

smile, laugh, are happy – one must see that they are happy. Religion has gained a wonderful ascendancy among the colored people. The number of communicants among them is very large. “The only difference between them and us, as to religious instruction is, they cannot generally read.” “As responsibility, anxiety about the present and future, are the chief enemies to cheerfulness, and, among mental causes, to health, it is obvious that if one can have all his present wants supplied, with no care about short crops, the markets, notes payable, bills due, be relieved from the necessity of planning and contriving, all the hard thinking being done for him by another, while useful and honorable employment fills his thoughts and hands, he is so far in a situation favorable to great comfort, which will show itself in his whole outer man. Some will say, ‘This is the lowest kind of happiness.’ Yet it is all that a large portion of the race seek for; and few, except slaves, obtain it.”

“If the colored people of Savannah, Columbia, and Richmond, are not, as a whole, happy people, I,” says the reverend author from whom we quote, “have never seen any.” We are told, indeed, that “Cases illustrating the opposite of almost every agreeable statement now made could also be multiplied; still the things just described are as represented, and he is not in a healthful state of mind, who cannot appreciate them. Our error has been in mixing the dark and bright parts of slavery together. This is wrong. We should never lose sight of distinct moral qualities in character, as we do of different colors in mixing paint. Let us judge slavery in this manner; let us keep her different qualities distinct – abhor that in her which is evil, rejoice in that which is good.”

Damocles sits at the royal banquet, surrounded with gold and silver plate; the table is loaded with delicacies of every kind. “Happy fellow that Damocles,” says Mr. South, “he is in a broad laugh!”

“Yes,” answers Mr. North, “but look – do you see that glittering sword hanging over his head by a single hair?”

“Never mind the sword – you are mixing together the bright and the dark. This is wrong. Let us, at present, consider only the dinner. What splendid fare! Judging from the gold and silver plate, from the chaplets of roses, from the handsome pages about him, from the mingled flavors of the roast and the boiled, and from the appetite of Damocles himself, one must see that he is a happy man.”

“If he is happy it is either because he is ignorant of his condition, or knowing ‘the day of trouble and of treading down,’ he has adopted the philosophy spoken of by the prophet, ‘let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we shall die.’ As happy as Damocles appears, there is the sword – who would want a good dinner with such an accompaniment?”

“You are wrong. The dinner is good – let us rejoice over that. Damocles fares well. It is a pity that the hungry, dirty, rascally, riotous Celts cannot have just such a dinner every day at the table of Dionysius. Now we will examine the sword a little – but let us handle it gingerly.”

If slavery causes an “absence of mobs,” let slavery have all due credit on that score. Give it joy that it prevented the destruction of Cassius M. Clay’s press, the murder of Lovejoy, the expulsion of Judge Hoar, the lynching of Amos Dresser, and

the thousand and one acts of violence and outrage which have caused some unreflecting men to deny that the South is tenanted by a civilized people: more recently that it prevented a mob of armed Missourians from interfering in the Kansas election, and spared the office of the Parkville Luminary. We presume that the absence of mobs of colored persons must have been intended.

A strong police must watch the motions of the oppressed – prevent them from meeting together unless some of the oppressors are present – keep them in their quarters at night, etc. This system of police usually answers its atrocious purpose very well. It wields the lash against offenders, and instils into the oppressed the fear requisite to suppress any overt act toward gaining their rights as human beings. Incidentally, it hinders the commission of crimes, prevents mobs (of colored persons), and keeps the streets quiet, and is so far beneficent in its action. Yet it cannot be denied that the cause of liberty in the world has been much indebted to mobs.

“Oppression driveth a wise man mad.” The oppressed, then, must not be made wise. If they do not know that a laborer can be a free man, the thought of freedom for themselves will not, perhaps, enter their heads. If they can be *raised*, so ignorant as to believe that slavery is the proper and natural condition of their being, that they cannot take care of themselves, they will probably be contented with their lot. The more infantile their minds are suffered to remain, the less will they comprehend the absolute wretchedness of their estate; the less opportunity will they have to learn of lands where all are free – the less capable will they be of putting forth exertion to resist oppression or to escape from it. The intention of the slaveholders in this respect, seems to be approximately realized. Unaware of the delights of mental cultivation, of the proper growth and expansion of the human soul, many of the oppressed class will appear in good humor and often in a “broad laugh.” The manhood of this portion of the sufferers has not, indeed, been “crushed out oof them”: it has never been developed. They are little children in every thing but bodily maturity. “The slaves in Savannah,” says Patrick Snead, a fugitive slave from that city, “are poor, ignorant creatures – *they don’t know their condition.*”

A class of men retained in the lowest form of bondage, hopeless of any thing higher and better on earth, at the best dividing their earnings with masters, but more often urged to hard and prolonged labor, through the influence of fear, incapable of obtaining any degree of cultivation or dignity here below, will be peculiarly interested in representations of a better life hereafter. A religion which insists on obedience to masters and mistresses, and which inculcates forgiveness of injuries, will find many teachers among those whose domestic cares lessen, and whose profits rise in proportion to the number of proselytes, and whose codes legalize the grossest wrongs: a faith which promises heavenly rewards to humility, obedience, and patience, which admonishes him that is smitten on one cheek to turn the other also, will find many converts among those who are glad to escape a sense of their indignities and incessant humiliations, by believing that servility itself is a Christian grace.

Suppose a family (of slaves) [is] bound to their master by affection and respect. Whatever he can make appear to their understandings and consciences to be right, he has as much power to enforce upon them as ever falls to the power of moral

suasion.” “If the numbers of pious slaves are an indication, it must be confessed that slave-owners, as a body, have performed their Christian duties to their slaves to a degree which the masters of free apprentices and the employers of free laborers have as yet hardly equaled.” What knowledge the slaves have of the Scripture is obtained by the ear, for “they are generally unable to read.” While we would hope that many among the class of oppressors are faithful in proclaiming the whole counsel of God, it must be admitted that there is a strong temptation on the part of the masters to use the Scriptures mainly as an auxiliary to the overseer.

The South-side View of Slavery says, “The gospel which is preached to them (the slaves), so far as I heard it, is the same gospel which is preached to us.” But the prayers of the slaves and the hymns they selected, Watts’ Ps. 51, Hymns 139, B. I. and 90, B. II., seem to confirm the view we have presented; while the address of the superintendent of the colored Sabbath school by no means contradicts it: nor does the hymn sung by slaves.

To magnify the benefits which incidentally and casually grow out of the system of slavery, and to represent them as vast enough to sink its direct enormities into comparative insignificance, is, as if a man were to point to an abundant harvest of corn, on the blood-enriched field of Waterloo, as a sufficient reason for involving the world in the horrors of war.

If, as we have said, the slave’s lot is a cruel one – if, in his best state, the enslaved American is a man badly educated, and systematically ill-used – if, by law he is “the property of a master to whom he belongs,” liable to be flogged, sold, and robbed of his wife and children, as the interest, or caprice, or spite of the master may dictate – it appears to us that to assist him if he endeavors to escape from bondage, is a binding duty which not all the constitutions, laws, and sophistries in Christendom can erect into a crime.

But before you render assistance, you should know “whom you are helping and for what reason he has fled.” Perhaps he is running away to get rid of a scolding wife, or he may be an ungrateful man – nay, he may be a thief or a murderer<sup>142</sup>.

And where am I to go for information on these points? To his pursuers? They will not tell me the truth. Patrick Snead, a fugitive from Savannah, as white as nine tenths of the men of the north, and not therefore “a fugitive *black* man,” was arrested on a false charge of *murder*. Sims and Burns, both “*black* men,” were kidnapped in Boston on charges of *theft*. By taking the word of a pursuer, I may “plunge a shipmate into the jaws of a shark.” Proceedings are “summary,” and by the time I could obtain reliable intelligence, the fugitive might become the victim of an incensed tyrant, whose malice is protected by written atrocities denominated laws.

In any particular case, the probabilities are, that the fugitive slave is an innocent man – a wronged and suffering brother, to hear whose prayer it would be perilous for a Christian to refuse. But if, in one case out of a thousand, it should subsequently appear, that he had committed larceny, or had even “killed an Egyptian,” it might quiet our consciences to reflect that in judging of a slave’s guilt,

---

<sup>142</sup> The case of Anderson, a fugitive slave charged with murder, is chronicled elsewhere in this collection.

allowances ought to be made for the peculiar privations and wrongs, incident to a slave's life, and on the score of the abject ignorance, to which he has been condemned by an unjust law – that if the same crime had been perpetrated by a white man, in order to effect his escape from wrongful captivity among Patagonians or Arabs, he would be acquitted both in conscience and law – and that it were better to aid ten, nay, ten thousand poor, unenlightened, uninstructed creatures to escape hanging, than to incur the tremendous responsibility of consigning an innocent man to a doom worse than death itself.

But even in cases where the fugitives bring proof that they are fleeing from brutal treatment, “no rule was ever made that could determine a man's duty.” We must “return to the Constitution!” Return to the gospel, rather. “Lord when we saw thee, *a stranger*, and did not minister unto thee? Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily, I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these ye did it not to me.” Could not an ingenious clergyman manage to construct from this passage a rule to determine a man's duty in case of a fugitive stranger? To suppose that one on the left hand might urge in reply, “Lord, the least of thy brethren came to my door, hungered, and athirst, a stranger, and naked; it offended my moral sense to have him taken back to involuntary servitude: but there were other interests for moral sense to be concerned about besides those of a fugitive black man. I lived in a Union, under a Constitution, which contained a ‘simple provision’ that he must be delivered up, and there was a law of the land, which made it penal to minister to thy brother, and I chose to obey man, rather than to obey God, therefore place me among the sheep.” To suppose that this might be urged in reply, were taking a south-side view of the day of judgment.

A certain man on his way from Jerusalem to Jericho “fell among thieves which stripped him of his raiment, and wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead.” Leaving *him!* They were quite merciful compared with slave-hunters – these take man and all. The priest and the Levite saw him but had no compassion on him – perhaps they wanted to know whom they were helping, before they lent their aid, or perhaps they had constitutional scruples. But a certain Samaritan put him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn. “Which now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbor unto him that fell among the thieves? And he said, *he that showed mercy on him*. Then said JESUS unto him, *Go, and do thou likewise.*”

This is in illustration of the LAW, “Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself” – a LAW rather “HIGHER” than the Blue Ridge, or the Black Code: and considering the source from which it emanated, possibly somewhat higher than any form of Constitution in any human government whatever: nay, than that embodiment of American civilization, that flower of human wisdom, that rarest union of exact justice and gentle mercy, the unconstitutional fugitive slave law. But until the “law of the land” is repealed, all appeals to a “higher law” are “fanaticism!” Let us strive to amend the Constitution, and to repeal the obnoxious statute – for Constitution, and laws, and the Republic itself must come to naught, if the people subscribe to the doctrine, that the enactments of man, however unjust and abominable, are paramount to the merciful laws of the Most High God.

But with whatever tint of words oppression may be decked: with what zeal soever it may strive to bring a clean thing out of an unclean, and to prove that ignorance and degradation and man-chattelism are productive of happiness to their victims, and pregnant with some immense good in some unknown way to Africa, and to those persons in this country having less or more African blood, and who are of all shades and colors, “from snowy white to sooty”; it is a positive fact, that many thousands have fled from the “happiness” of southern servitude, and found freedom in Canada. From the ties of a common humanity and a common nationality, we feel a deep interest in those exiled men.

Why have they left a government which acknowledges that “all men are born free and equal,” and given their allegiance to another which does not recognize so democratic a doctrine? What circumstances have led them to prefer a monarchy to a *republic*? Why have they exchanged the genial clime of the south for a realm where winter holds half the year? Why have they abandoned friends and kindred, kind masters and mistresses who were willing to take care of them (wives, children, and home, we would add, were it not that the idea would “excite a smile at the South”), to live a life of exile among strangers? What are their views of the patriarchal institution? Which condition do they find best suited to the African race, or rather to a race partly African, partly Saxon – slavery or freedom? Should a contest with England arise, would they enlist under the cross of St. George, or under our stars – and stripes? What is their present condition? What are their prospects for the future?

These and similar questions can be most satisfactorily answered by the refugees themselves.

The history of their sufferings and their wrongs, of their bondage and their escape, may excite in some heart hitherto unmoved a glow of sympathy for our colored brother, yet fraudulently deprived of his birthright – it may furnish the true friends of our country – the friends of liberty and equal rights – additional means toward overthrowing the slave power; that scandalous aristocracy which has hitherto been allowed to a great extent to sway the destinies of our nation.

The opinions and views of those who have been held in bondage in the United States may enable us to obtain a clearer insight into the nature of American slavery – may prompt us to perform more energetically than hitherto, our duties to the oppressor and the oppressed – to the North and to the South – to the national government, and to the State in which we dwell.

The writer of these pages intends to visit those Americans who have fled from the North and the South into Upper Canada to escape the oppression exercised upon them by their native countrymen. He will assure them that they have the sympathies of many friends in the United States, and advise them that their good conduct and success in life may have an important bearing on the destinies of millions of their brethren, colored and white, in this country, who have the misfortune to be descended from slave mothers. He will endeavor to collect, with a view to placing their testimony on record, their experiences of the actual workings of slavery – what experience they have had of the condition of liberty – and such statements generally as they may be inclined to make, bearing upon the weighty subjects of oppression and freedom.



Objections may be urged to the testimony of the refugees on the score of their ignorance. We may naturally expect errors and mistakes in regard to dates, ages, proceedings at law, and other matters to know which would require an amount of information not vouchsafed to American slaves. But errors of this sort are of secondary consequence, and should rather be imputed to those who have from interest or necessity (the tyrant's plea) placed their candle under a bushel, that it might not give light to all who were in their house. With this qualification there appears to be no reason why the statements of the colored Canadians should not be received as readily as any human testimony whatever.

If verbal alterations are required, care will be taken to preserve the meaning; and if any portion of a narrative is found to trench upon affairs having no connection with slavery, or is likely to involve any good Samaritan in trouble, it will receive no other attention from the writer than to be studiously omitted.

And now we will make the best of our way to Canada. From that point let us survey the institution which entails many "domestic evils deplored by the whites," which "impoverishes a State," "stays the development of its natural resources," is "a great curse," "a blot on our holy religion," "a curse in all its relations of master and servant," exerting a "bad influence," says a slaveholder, "upon our passions, upon our children, destroying that sense of moral responsibility which ought to bear upon us": and let us indulge a hope that the cause of emancipation may receive a new impulse from a NORTH-SIDE VIEW OF SLAVERY.

## ST. CATHARINES

Refuge! Refuge for the oppressed! Refuge for Americans escaping from abuse and cruel bondage in their native land! Refuge for my countrymen from the lash of the overseer, from the hounds and guns of northern man-hunters, from the clutches of northern marshals and commissioners! Rest! Rest for the hunted slave! Rest for the travel-soiled and foot-sore fugitive.

Refuge and Rest! These are the first ideas which arise in my mind in connection with the town of St. Catharines.

I might mention here its pleasant situation, its commercial advantages, the Welland Canal, its telegraphic wires, its railroads, its famous mineral springs, and other matters interesting to the tourist; but we will step aside from these, and look at St. Catharines as the peaceful home of hundreds of the colored race.

Of the population of about six thousand, it is estimated that eight hundred are of African descent. Nearly all the adult colored people have at some time been slaves.

The name, too, of a distinguished, self-denying philanthropist comes into my mind with the recollection of St. Catharines, the Rev. Hiram Wilson. With him the refugee finds a welcome and a home; the poor stranger is pointed by him to the means of honorable self-support, and from him receives wise counsel and religious instruction. The lady of Mr. Wilson warmly seconds his benevolent exertions. The wayfarer, however forlorn, degraded, or repulsive even, shares her hospitality, and is refreshed by her words of kindness and her cheerful smile.

I have seen the negro – the fugitive slave, wearied with his thousand miles of traveling by night, without suitable shelter meanwhile for rest by day, who had trodden the roughest and most unfrequented ways, fearing, with too much cause, an enemy in every human being who had crossed his path; I have seen such arrive at Mr. Wilson's, bringing with him the subdued look, the air of sufferance, the furtive glance bespeaking dread, and deprecating punishment; I have seen such waited on by Mr. and Mrs. Wilson, fed and clothed, and cheered, and cared for. Such ministrations give a title to true greatness, a title recognized by Divine wisdom, and deriving its authority from revelation itself: "Whosoever would be great among you, let him be your minister."

The houses occupied by the colored people are neat and plain without; tidy and comfortable within. Through the kindness of Mr. Wilson and other friends, I was enabled to visit many families, and was invariably received with courtesy and kindness. Such narratives and statements as I received in St. Catharines, it is now my purpose to spread before the reader.

#### JAMES ADAMS

I was raised in Virginia, about twenty miles above the mouth of the Big Kanawha. At the age of seventeen, I set out to seek freedom in company with Benjamin Harris, (who was a cousin of mine), and a woman and four children. I was young, and they had not treated me very badly; but I had seen older men treated worse than a horse or a hog ought to be treated; so, seeing what I was coming to, I wished to get away. My father being overseer, I was not used so badly as some even younger than myself, who were kicked, cuffed, and whipped very badly for little or nothing. We started away at night, on the 12<sup>th</sup> of August, 1824. [...]

I am now buying this place. My family are with me; we live well and enjoy ourselves. I worship in the Methodist church. What religious instruction I received on plantation, was from my mother.

I look upon slavery as the most disgusting system a man can live under. I would not be a slave again, except that I could not put an end to my own existence, through fear of the punishment of the future.

Men who have never seen or felt slavery cannot realize it for the thing it is. If those who say that fugitives had better go back, were to go to the South and *see* slavery, they would never wish any slave to go back.

I have seen separations by sales, of husbands from wives, of parents from children – if a man threatens to run away, he is sure to be sold. Ben's mother was sold down South – to New Orleans – when he was about twenty years old.

I arrived in Canada on the 13<sup>th</sup> September, 1824.

#### WILLIAM JOHNSON

I look upon slavery as I do upon a deadly poison. The slaves are not contented nor happy in their lot. Neither on the farm where I was in Virginia, nor in the neighborhood were the slaves satisfied. The man I belonged to did not give us enough to eat. My feet were frostbitten on my way North, but I would rather have died on the way than to go back. [...]

I have found good friends in Canada, but have been able to do no work on account of my frozen feet – I lost two toes from my right foot. My determination is to go to work as soon as I am able. I have been about among the colored people in St. Catharines considerably, and have found them industrious and frugal. No person has offered me any liquor since I have been here: I have seen no colored person use it. I have been trying to learn to read since I came here, and I know a great many fugitives who are trying to learn.

#### HARRIET TUBMAN

I grew up like a neglected weed – ignorant of liberty, having no experience of it. Then I was not happy or contented: every time I saw a white man I was afraid of being carried away. I had two sisters carried away in a chain-gang – one of them left two children. We were always uneasy. Now I've been free, I know what a dreadful condition slavery is. I have seen hundreds of escaped slaves, but I never saw one who was willing to go back and be a slave. I have no opportunity to see my friends in my native land. We would rather stay in our native land, if we could be as free as we are here. I think slavery is the next thing to hell. If a person would send another into bondage, he would, it appears to me, be bad enough to send him into hell, if he could.

MRS. — —

(The lady who gave the following narrative wished to withhold her name, for private reasons. She is well known at St. Catharines as a very intelligent and respectable person.)

I was held as a slave in —, without even legal right according to the slave laws. [...] After my escape from slavery, I married a free colored man. We were comfortably settled in the States, and were broken up by the fugitive slave law – compelled to leave our home and friends, and to go at later than middle life into a foreign country among strangers.

I look upon slavery as the worst evil that ever was. My life has been taken from me in a measure by it. If any are disposed to apologize for slavery, it would be well for them to try it awhile.

#### REV. ALEXANDER HEMSLEY

(The famous decision of Judge Hornblower, of New Jersey, some years ago, in a case of a fugitive, will doubtless be recollected by many readers. The narrative subjoined was given by the individual more immediately interested in that decision. Mr. Hemsley is confined to his bed a great part of the time by dropsy. He is a very intelligent man, and his face wears, notwithstanding his many trials and his sickness, a remarkable expression of cheerfulness and good-will. His dwelling is clean and nice, and he is well nursed and cared for by Mrs. Hemsley, a sensible, painstaking woman, the very impersonation of neatness. As it does not appear in the narrative, it may properly be stated here, that Mr. Hemsley has lost two children by death, since his removal to St. Catharines; their sickness [...] extending through three consecutive years. If any capitalist is looking about him for an opportunity to invest, I think he might profitably employ two hundred dollars in lifting the mortgage from Hemsley's house and garden. [...] But to the narrative.)

I was in bondage in Queen Anne County, Maryland, from birth until twenty-three years of age. My name in slavery was Nathan Mead. My master was a professor of religion, and used to instruct me in a hypocritical way in the duties of religion. I used to go to the church on Sunday to hear him talk, and experience the contrary on Monday. On the Sabbath he used to catechize us, and tell us if we were good honest boys, and obedient to our master, we should enjoy the life that now is, and that which is to come.

My idea of freedom during my youth was, that it was a state of liberty for the mind there was a freedom of thought, which I could not enjoy unless I was free – that is, if I thought of any thing beneficial for me, I should have liberty to execute it. My escape was not owing to any sudden impulse or fear of present punishment, but from a natural wish to be free: and had it not been for near and dear friends, I should not have remained in slavery so long. [...]

When I reached English territory, I had a comfort in the law – that my shackles were struck off, and that a man was a man by law. I had been in comfortable circumstances, but all my little property was *lawed* away. I was among strangers, poverty-stricken, and in a cold country. I had been used to farming, and so could not find in the city such assistance as I needed: in a few days, I left for St. Catharines, where I have ever since remained. [...]

Contrasting my condition here with what it was in New Jersey, I say, that for years after I came here, my mind was continually reverting to my native land. For some ten years, I was in hopes that something might happen, whereby I might safely return to my old home in New Jersey. [...]

When I reached St. Catharines I was enfeebled in health. I had come to a small inferior place; there were pines growing all about here where you now see brick houses. I rented a house, and with another man took five acres of cleared land, and got along with it very well. We did not get enough from this to support us; but I got work at half a dollar or seventy-five cents a day and board myself. We were then making both ends meet. I then made up my mind that salt and potatoes in Canada, were better than pound-cake and chickens in a state of suspense and anxiety in the United States. Now I am a regular Britisher. My American blood has been scourged out of me; I have lost my American tastes; I am an enemy to tyranny. I would as life meet serpents as some people I know of in the States. If I were to meet them, my fighting propensities would come up. To meet one here, I would not mind it; there I would be afraid of the ghost of a white man after he was dead. I am no scholar, but if some one would refine it, I could give a history of slavery, and show how tyranny operates upon the mind of the slaves. I have dreamed of being back on my master's farm, and of dodging away from my master; he endeavoring to get between me and the land I was aiming for. Then I would awake in a complete perspiration, and troubled in mind. Oh, it was awful! When you go back home, remember poor Joseph in Egypt.

I am now about sixty years of age, and have been lying sick about nine months. I have hear a house and a quarter acre of land. I have had a deal of sickness in my family, and it has kept me comparatively poor; it would take two hundred dollars to

clear my estate from incumbrances. Had it not been for sickness, it would have been paid long ago.

I have served the people in the provinces as a minister in the Methodist persuasion for some twenty years. My pay has been little, for our people all start poor, and have to struggle to support themselves. My mind has ever been to trust the Lord. I have never prayed for wealth nor honor, but only to guide his church and do his will.

JOHN SEWARD

The man that owned me, was not fit to own a dog. I had been wanting to get away for the last twenty years. I grieved over my condition, and groaned over it. A few months ago I succeeded in escaping. After I got among abolitionists, I was almost scared; they used me so well, I was afraid of a trick. I had been used so ill before, that I did not know what to make of it to be used decently.

JAMES SEWARD (BROTHER OF THE FOREGOING)

Where I came from, it would make your flesh creep, and your hair stand on end, to know what they do to the slaves. [...] I have been in Canada but a short time.

MRS. JAMES SEWARD

The slaves want to get away bad enough. They are not content with their situation. [...] I have been wanting to come away for eight years back. I waited for Jim Seward to get ready. Jim had promised to take me away and marry me. Our master would allow no marriages on the farm. When Jim had got ready, he let me know – he brought to me two suits of clothes – men's clothes – which he had bought on purpose for me. I put on both suits to keep me warm. We eluded pursuit and reached Canada in safety.

MR. — BOHM

I escaped from slavery in Norfolk, Va.

I think that the institution of slavery is of no utility whatever to the colored race. Slavery is the worst kind of robbery.

JAMES M. WILLIAMS

I came from bondage in Norfolk, Va. Slavery is horrible! horrible! horrible!

JOHN ATKINSON

I escaped from Norfolk, Va. A man who has been in slavery knows, and no one else can know, the yearnings to be free, and the fear of making the attempt. It is like trying to get religion, and not seeing the way to avoid condemnation.

MRS. ELLIS

It is more than a year ago, that I left slavery in Delaware, having been thirty-two years a slave. [...] I got off without much trouble. I suffered a great deal from wet and cold, on the first part of the way – afterwards, I was helped on by kind white men.

Rents and provisions are dear here, and it takes all I can earn to support myself and children. I could have one of my children well brought up and taken care of, by some friends in Massachusetts, which would much relieve me – but I cannot have my child go there on account of the laws, which would not protect her. This is a hardship: but had I to struggle much harder than at present, I would prefer it to being a slave.

Now I can lie down at night in peace – there I had no peace, even at night, on account of my master’s conduct.

Slavery is a wicked institution. I think if the whites were to free the slaves, they would incur no danger. I think the colored people would go to work without any trouble.

DAN JOSIAH LOCKHART

I belonged in Frederick county, Va. I was sold at five years of age; and when I first saw my mother to know her, I had a wife and child. [...] It was in the year 1847, that I made my escape. [...] My work is as hard here as it was in slavery. The hardest thing in slavery is not the work – it is the abuse of a man, and in my case, of a man’s wife and children. [...] It is ignorance that keeps the slaves there. I was told before I left Virginia – have heard it as common talk, that the wild geese were so numerous in Canada, and so bad, that they would scratch a man’s eyes out; that corn wouldn’t grow there, nor any thing else but *rice*; that every thing they had there was imported. [...]

MRS. NANCY HOWARD

I was born in Anne Arundel county, Maryland – was brought up in Baltimore. After my escape, I lived in Lynn, Mass., seven years, but I left there through fear of being carried back, owing to the fugitive slave law. I have lived in St. Catharines less than a year. [...]

GEORGE JOHNSON

I arrived in St. Catharines about two hours ago (1855, 4, 17). I was raised near Harper’s Ferry. [...] I think that slavery is not the best condition for the blacks. Whipping and slashing are bad enough, but selling children from their mothers and husbands from their wives is worse. [...]

ISAAC WILLIAMS

My master’s farm is in Virginia. When my first master died, his widow married a man who got into debt and was put into prison. The woman gave up her rights to get him out. Then we were sold. Every man came to be sold for her lifetime – then to revert to the heirs. [...] My purchaser bought also the interest of the heirs in me, and I remained with him ten years – until my escape, near the close of 1854. [...] We reached Canada the morning after Christmas, at 3 o’clock.

It is the wickedest thing a man can do to hold a slave – the most unconscionable sin a man can do. If there were any chance to fight for the slaves’ freedom, I’d go and stand up at the south and fight as readily as I would now go out of doors. I believe it would be just, and a righteous cause. I feel great pity for the poor creatures there, who long for a way, yet can see no way out. They think if Great Britain were to get into a war with America, it would be the means of freeing them. They would slip round and get on the English side.

If slavery were abolished, I would rather live in a southern State – I would work for some one, but I should want to have a piece of land of my own.

CHRISTOPHER NICHOLS

I made my escape from slavery in Virginia; don’t know my age – suppose some forty odd. [...] If I were to sit here until to-morrow morning, I couldn’t tell you half as

bad as I have been used since I can remember. [...] My master used me so, that I was determined to start off, live or die. I made up my mind that I would rather die than be taken. [...] I left a wife and three children, and three grandchildren – I never expect to see them again in this world – never.

I have seen parents and children, husbands and wives, separated by sale.

It seems not right for slavery to be. I do not think it does any good to the colored men. I feel no inclination to go back – I don't want to cross the line. All the time I was in slavery, I lived in dead dread and fear. If I slept it was in dread – and in the morning it was dread – dread, night and day. It seems to me I must have been dead by this time, if I had not got away. My master was killing me as fast as he could when I got away.

#### HENRY BANKS

I was born in Stafford Co., in 1835. I was brought up on a farm. I did not go to school. I learned to read of my brother-in-law, but I cannot write. There was a Sunday school, but not for colored children. One of the earliest things I remember is my being sold to Mr. N—, a farmer in the neighborhood. [...] I do not think it was intended for any man to be a slave. I never thought so, from a little boy. The slaves are not contented and happy. They can't be: I never knew one to be so when I was.

#### JOHN W. LINDSEY

(Mr. Lindsey reached St. Catharines in an entirely destitute condition. He is now reputed to be worth from eight to ten thousand dollars, acquired by industry and economy.)

I was born free. At the age of seven, I was kidnapped by S— G—, and carried to West Tennessee. [...] Finding that I was to get no assistance from any quarter, and that justice was refused me, I resolved to free myself. I was whiter then than I am now, for it was twenty-one years ago, and I worked under cover at blacksmithing. A person across the street could not tell whether I were a white or a colored man. Whether I was pursued or not I am unable to say. I walked by day and rested at night.

I passed people working in the fields, and once I heard one ask another, "Do you think that is a white man?" I took no notice of this, and walked on. [...]

I have traveled in Maryland, Virginia, Kentucky and Tennessee. If a man says slavery is a good institution, he might as well say there is no God – only a devil. Slavery is like the bottomless pit. You hear people say to the negro, "Why don't you accomplish something?" You see the colored men, their faces scarred and wrinkled, and almost deprived of intelligence in some cases – their manliness crushed out; stooping, awkward in gait – kept in entire ignorance. Now, to ask them why they don't do some great thing, is like tying a man or weakening him by medicine, and then saying, "Why don't you go and do that piece of work, or plant that field with wheat and corn?" Slavery is mean. The slaveholders want their slaves for pocket-money. The slaves are their right hand to do their work.

#### HENRY ATKINSON

I belonged in Norfolk, Va., from birth until thirty-four years of age. I never saw my owner, but when I was a little boy. I was hired out by the year by an agent of my

owner. Sometimes I was well cared for, sometimes not, according to the man's disposition that employed me. [...]

In regard to religious instruction, I was allowed to go to church on Sunday, to a white clergyman – no colored preacher being allowed in Norfolk. [...] The white clergymen don't preach the whole gospel there. Since I have been here, I have heard the passage about the fast that the Lord hath chosen, to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke. I never heard that down South. If a colored man were to say it, he'd have the handcuffs put on quick – if a white man were to say it, he'd have to leave, because they'd say he was "putting too much into the [slaves']<sup>143</sup> heads." I've seen white children driven away from among the colored, when they said something the old folks did not like, because it was "putting something into the [slaves'] heads."

At last, I found an opportunity to escape, after studying upon it for a long time. But it went hard to leave my wife; it was like taking my heart's blood: but I could not help it – I expected to be taken away where I should never see here again, and so I concluded that it would be right to leave her. (Here Atkinson's eyes filled with tears.) I never expect to see her again in this world – nor our child.

I reached Canada about a year ago. Liberty I find to be sweet indeed.

I think slavery is the worst and meanest thing to be thought of. It appears to me that God cannot receive into the kingdom of heaven, those who deal in slaves. God made all men – He is no respecter of persons – and it is impossible that He should, on account of my color, intend that I should be the slave of a man, because he is of a brighter skin than I am.

#### WILLIAM GROSE

I was held as a slave at Harper's Ferry, Va. [...] I found a friend who helped me on the way to Canada, which I reached in 1851.

I served twenty-five years in slavery, and about five I have been free. I feel now like a man, while before I felt more as though I were but a brute. When in the United States, if a white man spoke to me, I would be frightened, whether I were in the right or wrong; but now it is quite a different thing – if a white man speaks to me, I can look him right in the eyes – if he were to insult me, I could give him an answer. I have the rights and privileges of any other man. I am now with my wife and children, and doing very well. When I lie down at night, I do not feel afraid of over-sleeping, so that my employer might jump on me if he pleased. I am a true British subject, and I have a vote every year as much as any other man. I often used to wonder in the United States, when I saw carriages going round for voters, why they never asked me to vote. But I have since found out the reason – I know they were using my vote instead of my using it – now I use it myself. Now I feel like a man, and I wish to God that all my fellow-creatures could feel the same freedom that I feel. I am not prejudiced against all the white race in the United States – it is only the portion that sustain the cursed laws of slavery.

---

<sup>143</sup> The original has the n-word here.



Here's something I want to say to the colored people in the United States: You think you are free there, but you are very much mistaken: if you wish to be free men, I hope you will all come to Canada as soon as possible. There is plenty of land here, and schools to educate your children. I have no education myself, but I don't intend to let my children come up as I did. I have but two, and instead of making servants out of them, I'll give them a good education, which I could not do in the southern portion of the United States. True, they were not slaves there, but I could not have given them any education.

I have been through both Upper and Lower Canada, and I have found the colored people keeping stores, farming, etc., and doing well. I have made more money since I came here, than I made in the United States. I know several colored people who have become wealthy by industry – owning horses and carriages – one who was a fellow-servant of mine, now owns two span of horses, and two as fine carriages as there are on the bank. As a general thing, the colored people are more sober and industrious than in the States: there they feel when they have money, that they cannot make what use they would like of it, they are so kept down, so looked down upon. Here they have something to do with their money, and put it to a good purpose.

I am employed in the Clifton House, at the Falls.

#### DAVID WEST

I came from King and Queen county, Va., where I left a wife and children. I was treated well – I paid my master two hundred dollars a year, and acted honorably all through the time I remained there. My master died, and I heard that I was to be sold, which would separate me from my family, and knowing no law which would defend me, I concluded to come away. [...] When I left, I told my purpose to no one. I studied a plan by which I might get away, and I succeeded.

I am now in Canada doing well at my trade, and I expect to do yet better. My only trouble is about my wife and family. I never should have come away but for being forced away. [...] My family are perpetually on my mind. I should be perfectly happy if I could have my wife and the four children. If my wife had known it, and had said half a word, I should have stayed to the moment of being sold.

I look upon slavery as a disgrace, and as breaking the laws of God: that no man can keep the laws of God and hold to slavery. [...]

#### HENRY JACKSON

I was born free at Chatham Four Corners, N. Y. State. I was sent to school and learned to read and write. My parents had been free at the time of my birth, but had been slaves under the old laws of New York. At about the age of sixteen, my father bound me out to a man named G—, to remain till twenty-one, then to receive two hundred and fifty dollars. G— went to California, where he remained over a year, and then came back for his wife and children and me to take us to that State. [...] They took me to an auction room where were other colored people, and I was sold at auction to the highest bidder for four hundred and fifty dollars. I thought it a strange transaction, but I felt that I was in their power – I was among strangers, had no friends there, knew it would be of no use to remonstrate, and so said nothing. [...]

I think it necessary for all free people of color to be on their guard.

## TORONTO

The population of this wealthy, enterprising, and beautiful city is estimated at forty-seven thousand, of whom about one thousand are colored persons. Of these no separate count is made in taking the census. The greater part of the colored people reside in the north-west section of the city. Their houses resemble those of the same class of persons in St. Catharines; but as they have not generally so expensive gardens, more time can be allotted to the beautifying and general care of their dwelling than in St. Catharines.

Many of the colored people own the houses in which they dwell, and some have acquired valuable estates. No distinction exists in Toronto, in regard to school privileges. One of the students in the Normal School was a fugitive slave, and colored youths are attending lectures in the University. There are three churches exclusively belonging to the colored people – a Baptist and two Methodist churches. They are excluded, however, from none of the churches, and in all of them a few of the African race may be found.

The colored people in Toronto are, on the whole, remarkably industrious. Their condition is such as to gratify the philanthropist, and to afford encouragement to the friends of emancipation everywhere. A portion of them sustain a lyceum or debating club (which is attended by both sexes) where debates are held, and original essays are read. A large majority of the adult colored people are refugees from the South. Several of these furnished their testimony in regard to the institution under whose fostering care they were reared. They gave their statements readily and with every appearance of truth. Their evidence is as reliable as any which can be obtained. No longer dreading the lash, they are free to utter their real sentiments, and to communicate their actual experiences. Some of the details would appear too shocking for credence, were it not admitted on all hands, that the only limit to the cruelty of a mean, ill-tempered, virtually irresponsible tyrant, is the capacity for suffering with which the victims of his malignity may be endowed.

Those who have been most cruelly treated and unjustly used, are most likely to undertake an escape. Those who have succeeded in the undertaking, therefore, may fairly be expected to give a very dark picture. Ought slavery then, as a whole, to be condemned by the evidence they present? We answer, that every slave is *liable* to the same maltreatment and abuse from which the fugitives in Canada have escaped; and that an institution which holds such liabilities over the heads of millions, and inflicts the most enormous evils on many thousands, might as well be set aside.

Again, in forming a judgment of slavery as to its merits and demerits, this testimony should receive at least as much weight as a class of anecdotes so readily chronicled, and so widely circulated, of individual slaves who have manifested great attachment to their masters, or refused to receive their freedom. The excellence of pious masters who exhort and pray with their slaves from the best of motives, is also deemed worthy of record; and if from such anecdotes, of slaves loving slavery, and of the kindness of some masters, inferences are drawn favorable to the continuance of slavery, facts in the opposite class, although it is a more ungrateful task to expose

them, ought also to be fully stated, lest humanity and benevolence be lulled to sleep over evils which they should do their utmost to remove.

Let it not be understood, however, that in this work we intend to make a selection of the most atrocious cases of abuse. Any instances of kind, self-sacrificing masters, or humane, benevolent overseers, will be mentioned at greater length<sup>144</sup> and in greater fulness than those of opposite character, to relieve, if possible, the canvas which truth is reluctantly obliged to crowd “with bitter and with black.”

What is here incidentally said in regard to the narratives of the fugitives in Toronto, applies with equal force to all statements of fugitives in Canada West in this work.

#### CHARLES HENRY GREEN

I was a slave in Delaware from birth, until twenty-three years of age: am now twenty-four. I never had any religious or other instruction from my master. I picked up a knowledge of reading, and some religious knowledge among people where I was hired out. I was well used – have been hit over the head with chunks of wood – hit over the back with a pitchfork handle, but was never whipped with a cowskin.

Slavery is horrid. I think if the slaves were set free, they would readily go to work for money.

#### JAMES W. SUMLER

Arrived in Canada, March 3, 1855. I came from Norfolk, Va.; was in bondage twenty-six years. I was not sent to school – never. My first master and mistress gave me no religious instruction at all, nor any other. I learned to read: the way was, I hid in a hayloft on Sunday, and got the younger white children to teach me. I bought the book with a ninepence that a man gave me for holding his horse. [...]

I enjoy myself here more than I did in slavery. I believe that liberty is the true and proper state for the colored man, and for every man. I came here with nothing. I think I can make a living here, and am disposed to try. I left slavery and with the expectation that I would have to work, and I am glad to get work.

I look upon slavery as wrong, and as a curse upon the masters. I do not believe that there is any religion in the masters. The slaves are not religious in consequence of slavery; they have often impediments in the way of their going to meetings. I believe that the slaveholders know that they are guilty in holding slaves. If the slaves were all set at liberty, I think it would be better for the slaves and for the slaveholders too. The abolitionists have helped me a great deal.

#### PATRICK SNEAD

I belonged in Savannah, Georgia. I am as white as my master was, but I was born a slave. [...] I started for a land of liberty. I left in July, 1851, at 3 on a Monday morning. I reached Canada safely, and had no difficulty until two years had elapsed. Then I was employed in the summer of 1853 as a waiter in the Cataract House, on the American side of the Falls. Then a constable of Buffalo came in, on Sunday after dinner, and sent the barkeeper into the dining-room for me. I went into the hall, and

---

<sup>144</sup> Though mostly omitted in this transcription, due to the events taking place before the arrival in Canada of the people in question.

met the constable – I had my jacket in my hand, and was going to put it up. He stepped up to me.

“Here, Watson,” (this was the name I assumed on escaping), “you waited on me, and I’ll give you some change.” His fingers were then in his pocket, and he dropped a quarter dollar on the floor.

I told him, “I have not waited on you – you must be mistaken in the man, and I don’t want another waiter’s money.”

He approached – I suspected, and stepped back toward the dining-room door.

By that time he made a grab at me, caught me by the collar of my shirt and vest – then four more constables, he had brought with him, sprung on me – they dragged me to the street door – there was a jam – I hung on by the doorway. The head constable shackled my left hand. I had on a new silk cravat twice round my neck; he hung on to this, twisting it till my tongue lolled out of my mouth, but he could not start me through the door.

By this time the waiters pushed through the crowd – there were three hundred visitors there at the time – and Smith and Grave, colored waiters, caught me by the hands – then the others came on, and dragged me from the officers by main force. They dragged me over chairs and every thing, down to the ferry way. I got into the cars, and the waiters were lowering me down, when the constables came and stopped them, saying, “Stop that murderer!” – they called me a *murderer!* Then I was dragged down the steps by the waiters, and flung into the ferry boat.

The boatmen rowed me to within fifty feet of the Canada shore – into Canada water – when the head boatman in the other boat gave the word to row back. They did accordingly, but they could not land me at the usual place on account of the waiters. So they had to go down to Suspension Bridge; they landed me, opened a way through the crowd – shackled me, pushed me into a carriage, and away we went.

The head constable then asked me “if I knew any person in Lockport.”

I told him “no.”

Then, “In Buffalo?”

“No.”

“Well, then,” said he, “let’s go to Buffalo – Lockport is too far.”

We reached Buffalo at ten o’clock at night, when I was put in jail. I told the jailer I wished he would be so good as to tell lawyer —— to come round the jail. Mr. —— came, and I engaged him for my lawyer. When the constables saw that, pretending to know no one in Buffalo, I had engaged one of the best lawyers in the place, they were astonished. I told them that “as scared as they thought I was, I wanted them to know that I had my senses about me.”

The court was not opened until nine days; the tenth day my trial commenced. The object was, to show some evidence as if of murder, so that they could take me to *Baltimore*. On the eleventh day the claimant was defeated, and I was cleared at 10 A.M.

After I was cleared, and while I was yet in the court room, a telegraphic dispatch came from a Judge in Savannah, saying that I was no murderer, but a fugitive slave. However, before a new warrant could be got out, I was in a carriage

and on my way. I crossed over into Canada, and walked thirty miles to the Clifton House.

This broke up my summer's work at the Falls, and threw me back; and as I had to pay money to my lawyer, I have hardly got over it. [...]

I consider that the slaves in Savannah, where I was born and raised, are poor ignorant creatures: they don't know their condition. It is ignorance that keeps them there. If they knew what I know, they could not be kept there a moment. Let a man escape, and have but a month's freedom, and he will feel the greatest animosity against slavery. I can't give slavery any name or description bad enough for it.

#### CHARLES PEYTON LUCAS

My name in slavery was Peyton Lucas; I changed my name in running, to Charles Bentley. I was raised in Leesburg, Loudon county, Va. My master never sent me to school, nor gave me any instruction from the Bible, excepting one passage of Scripture which he used to quote to me – "He that knoweth his master's will, and doeth it not, shall be beaten with many stripes." He was a Baptist Minister – and after he had quoted the text, he would take me to the barn-yard and give me a practical explanation with raw hides. My mistress used to beat me over the head with a dairy key about as big as a child's fist. [...]

At fifteen, I was hired out to the blacksmithing business. I served at it five years, and was then hired out as a journeyman, my Reverend master taking my wages. I worked out five or six years, and was well fed, well clothed, and well used. I enjoyed life then very well, and had many privileges: nor did I run away for either fear of my master, or of the man I lived with, nor in consequence of ill treatment.

My sister worked in the house where I lived. My master had come into the shop where I worked. My master had come into the shop where I worked, bringing a stranger with him, and they had talked with my employer. On inquiry of her, she told me that the stranger had dined there, and that while she was clearing away the table, she heard the master say, "I won't take less than fifteen hundred dollars; he is a first-rate blacksmith." We knew it meant me, as I was the only blacksmith on the place. This was in 1841.

In one week's time I started for the North with two companions [...] and soon struck the track of the underground railroad, which we followed into the northern free States. [...] I worked in Geneva, N. Y., until the passage of the fugitive slave law, when my friends advised me to go to Canada, with which advice I complied, at a great sacrifice, on account of some property which I was trying to buy.

I feel that I am out of the lion's paw, and I feel that **THERE IS NO CURSE ON GOD'S EARTH, EQUAL TO SLAVERY.**

I think that emancipation ought to be so arranged, as that the sick and infirm should be taken care of by those who have had the benefit of their labor. Provision for education ought also to be made. It would take a generation to accomplish this: but the practical mode of emancipating ought to be planned by the South.

#### BENEDICT DUNCAN

I was a slave in Maryland, twenty-eight years. [...] I left through fear of being sold, as my master's business was going down hill. I experienced no trouble in getting

off. I walked one hundred and fifty miles of the way. I remained in the States four months and then came over here a short time since.

I had rather have a day free, than a week of life in slavery: I think slavery is the worst evil that ever was.

#### WILLIAM HOWARD

I was raised in Baltimore county, Md. – was a slave from birth, until twenty-seven years old. I had no master – my mistress was a widow lady. She gave me no religious instruction, neither taught me to read nor write – she didn't want I should know any such thing as that. She was kind to me, but I didn't hardly thank her for it. I hired my time, giving her seven dollars a month, although I could earn a great deal more. The reason she did this was, she was afraid I would come away: she never sold any of her servants. I married a free-woman, and had two children there. My mistress died, and I was told that the farm was to be sold. Upon this, I came away, and had no difficulty in doing so. My wife and children followed.

I stopped a while in the free States, but came here on account of my friends being here. I did not feel concerned as regards the fugitive slave law. [...]

My opinion is, that the yoke ought to be taken from every man, and that every one should be loosed. It looks quite strange to me when I look back into the country where I was born, and see the state of things there. If they would set the slaves free, they would go to work and make a living. If any people can make a living they can. All they want is a little education, and something to start upon. I do not think the masters would incur any danger by setting the slaves free. I thought it honorable to carry to my mistress the money I earned: it seems to me now that she was not honorable in taking it, if I was in giving it.

I expected to be working for a living, go where I would. I could not be stopped from working. Canada is the best place that ever I saw: I can make more money here than anywhere else I know of. The colored people, taken as a whole, are as industrious as any people you will find. They have a good deal of ambition to go forward, and take a good stand in the community. I know several who own houses and lands. They are a very temperate people.

#### ROBERT BELT

I came from Maryland – I was in slavery about twenty-five years. I had heard that there was a notion of selling me. There was a mystery about it – some saying that I was born free. A white man told me that he thought I would be sold, as there was a dispute. In about one month after, I came away. [...]

I got work soon after my arrival here, which was quite recent: since I have been here, I have prospered well. My calculation is, to own a house and a piece of land by and by.

I feel much better satisfied for myself since I have been free, than when I was a slave: but I feel grieved to think that my friends are in slavery. I wish they could come out here. My wife came on with me from an adjoining farm.

#### ELIJAH JENKINS

Last winter I came away from Norfolk, Va. I am thirty-six years of age.

My mistress, a young woman, died, and I fell to her mother, an old woman. Knowing that on her death I would have to be sold, I ran away, and did not meet with much difficulty in doing so.

We are told in Norfolk that they would set us free, but we couldn't get along without them to take care of us. But since I got here, I find that colored people do get along without masters, better than those who are slaves.

I have no wish to go back, although I am sick. I intend to get work, as soon as I am well enough.

Since I grew up to be a man, slavery has never looked to me right. It seemed hard when I had earned any money to have to carry it to another man, when my wife needed it herself. I had a good wife, and, if I could, would have her and the children here this minute. I never heard of a man running away from slavery to get rid of his wife.

#### JOHN A. HUNTER

I feel more like a man – I feel that I am a man a great deal more than I did a year ago. A year ago I was in bondage.

I was raised in a city in Maryland, and was a slave from birth until twenty years of age. [...] I heard from a colored man that I was going to be sold; afterward from a white man, that I was sold, and that my master had the money in his pocket. . . . I came away, and met no difficulty in reaching a land of freedom. I now attend the Normal School, to get an education if I can.

A great many slaves know nothing of Canada – they don't know that there is such a country. [...]

I think that slavery is the greatest evil that ever existed.

I consider that the efforts of the abolitionists for the slaves are salutary.

#### SAM DAVIS

I was in bondage in Virginia, from birth until thirty years of age. I have had no instruction at all. [...] The man I was last hired to did not give me enough to eat, and used me hardly otherwise: I then thought I would leave for a better country. [...] I did not stop to work in the States, but came on to Canada. I arrived here a few months ago.

I know that liberty is far preferable for every colored man, to slavery. I know many who are very anxious to be free, but they are afraid to start. Money is almost necessary to start with. When I set out, I had seven dollars: it cost me five to get over a river on my way. They knew I must cross, and they charged me as much as they thought I could pay.

I have had work enough to support myself since I have been here. I intend to work, and save all I can. [...]

### LONDON [ONTARIO]

This city contains twelve thousand inhabitants, three hundred and fifty of whom are colored persons. Some of the latter are among the most intelligent and respectable citizens; but others do not improve their time and opportunities as they

ought. "The tyrant who held their persons in the chains of slavery, stifled their souls also in the rude grasp of ignorance and vice."

The common schools are open to all, without distinction of color. The Union School has an average daily attendance of 184. On the 21<sup>st</sup> of June, 1855, when the writer visited it, there were present 174 pupils of both sexes, of whom 13 were colored. In the St. George School, which has on some fortunate days, an attendance of 190, but 4 colored children were present.

The principal reason for this neglect of common school advantages by the colored people, is the prejudice of the whites. Many of the whites object to having their children sit in the same forms with the colored pupils; and some of the lower classes will not send their children to schools where the blacks are admitted. Under these circumstances, it is unpleasant to the colored children to attend the public schools – especially if any of the teachers happen to be victims of the very same prejudice which they should induce others to overcome.

An interesting scene was presented in the school very recently organized by Rev. M. M. Dillon (late Rector of Dominica), and Mr. Ballantine, lay-assistant, under the patronage of the English "Colonial Church and School Society." Here were one hundred and seventy-five pupils of both sexes in attendance, fifty of whom were colored. The writer entered the school-room at the hour of recess. The children were neat and cleanly – not one wore the appearance of dejection; all were playing in the enclosure or amusing themselves in the room, in the most perfect good humor. There was no separation into cliques – black was playing with white, and white with black.

Rev. M. Dillon's mission is to minister to the spiritual wants of the refugees, and to establish schools of a high order, which shall afford religious and secular instruction especially to the children of fugitive slaves; the schools, however, to be free to all who may see fit to profit by their advantages. Both the Rev. Mr. Dillon and Mr. Ballantine are devoted friends of the negro race. They have very capable assistants in two young colored ladies from the West Indies.

At a signal, the scholars arranged themselves in lines on the floor, and then filed to the parts of the room allotted for recitations. Something of the monitorial system was observable; and two or three colored pupil-teachers attended to the reading from the Scriptures, of as many classes, composed indiscriminately of whites and blacks.

The "Colonial Church and School Society" is a union and extension of the "Newfoundland School Society," organized more than thirty years ago, and of the "Colonial Church Society," which has existed about twenty years. It is composed of the highest dignitaries of Great Britain both in church and State. The object of the Society is "to send Clergymen, Catechists, and Schoolmasters to the Colonies of Great Britain, and to British residents in other parts of the world." "The religious instruction in all schools maintained wholly or in part by the Society, shall be in the Holy Scriptures, and (except in cases where the parents or guardians of the children formally object) in the formularies of the Church of England."

The accommodations for the Society's school in London are found to be insufficient, as the numbers in attendance are rapidly increasing. A new building is



shortly to be erected, which will afford ample room for five hundred pupils. Five or six similar schools are to be organized forthwith in other parts of the province. This is a noble charity, and full of the most hopeful auguries for the colored population of Canada.

The condition of the colored people in and about London, may be gathered from the testimonies which follow, given by those who are able to draw from their own experience the contrast between slavery and liberty.

ABY B. JONES

I was formerly a field hand in Madison Co., Ky. – remained there until thirty years of age. My treatment was not harsh – nor was there any hard treatment in the neighborhood.

My brother was set free in this way: his master was a millwright, and told him if he would serve him so many years he would set him free. He did so – meanwhile building a large merchant mill, and employing my brother in it. My brother was subsequently employed in this mill as a miller and received high wages, his employer thinking there never was such a man, from his trustworthiness and the general confidence he could repose in him. His good opportunities enabled him to advance nearly money enough to free myself and a younger brother – the deficiency we borrowed, and afterward paid up. The sum paid for the two was seven hundred dollars; our master favoring us in the price.

I was never sent to any school. Since I have been free I have learned to read and write.

Yet, although I was nominally free, and had free papers, I did not consider myself free in the eye of the law; the freedom was limited. The papers said I was to have as much liberty as was allowed to a free man of color. I saw at once that I was not really free; that there was a distinction made. I wished then to emigrate to some place where I could really be a FREE MAN.

I heard that in Canada colored men were free; therefore I came here, and am only sorry to say that I did not come years before I did.

When I came here I was not worth one cent. I neither begged nor received a farthing of money. I went to work at once, and, by the blessing of the Lord, I prospered, and have placed my family beyond the reach of want.

I am satisfied, that any colored man coming to Canada, can, in a few years, accumulate property to give himself and family a living.

Slavery is, I believe, the most abominable system that ever men were subjected to. Although my treatment was not severe, I never could form a good opinion of slavery. I believe it ruinous to the mind of man, in that it keeps the key of knowledge from him: it is stupefying to man. I believe that all men should be made free at once.

The future prospects of the colored people of Canada are very favorable. All that is required of them is, to use industry in common with white people. The colored children and white children are educated together in this place, and I see as fair an advancement in one as in the other.

The colored people usually attend divine service: some in the same societies with the whites; others maintain separate churches. But I do not think it advisable

to have separate churches. In this place the door is open into all the churches of the denominations that the colored people profess, therefore I think those lines of distinction drawn by the colored people themselves will soon be put down. I speak of London.

I think there is as much morality and temperance among the colored people as among any others.

The amount required for supplying the wants of fugitives is so small, that it is hardly worth talking about. It can be silently raised in the towns by contribution, without any stirring appeals to the public. Where there is work to be done and money to pay for it, pecuniary assistance does more hurt than good.

(Mr. Jones, whose testimony is given above, resides on Gray St. in a brick dwelling-house, as good or better than the average of houses in London [Ontario]. In front is a garden of choice flowers, and it has a well-ordered kitchen garden in the rear. The estate, deducting the encumbrance of ground-rent, is worth about four thousand dollars. Mr. J. owns other property in various parts of the city – a brick building, in the business quarter, comprising two stores which rents for between seven hundred and eight hundred dollars per annum – and several building lots in the immediate vicinity of the freight depot of the Great Western Railway. Mr. J. is of unmixed African blood.)

#### ALFRED T. JONES

I keep an apothecary on Ridout street. I belonged in Madison Co., Ky. I have made an arrangement with my master to purchase my freedom for \$350. This was in 1833, when I was twenty-three years old. But before the business was completed, I learned that my master was negotiating with another party to sell me for \$400. Upon this, I wrote myself a pass – it was not spelled correctly, but nobody there supposed that a slave could write at all. I had to exhibit it but once on my way.

I stopped a month at St. Catharines, then came to London, [Ontario.] and have remained here ever since.

The people from the old country, being many of them unaccustomed to colored people, have some strange ideas respecting us: a sort of “second-hand prejudice,” as Ward calls it. The majority of the people of color who come over here are not such as give a very good idea of what the people of color really are. They are not refined and educated. But as some years are passed since the colored men began to come in, there is an improvement perceptible.

There are colored people employed in this city in almost all the mechanic arts; also in grocery and provision stores, etc. Many are succeeding well, are buying houses, speculating in lands, and some are living on the interest of their money.

I expect to go to England shortly on a suit at law involving my title to a large property on Dundas street, valued at \$45,000. The case has been through chancery in the provincial court, and I have now appealed to the House of Lords. I am winding up my business preparatory to leaving.

#### NELSON MOSS

I have lived in a slave State all my life until seven years ago. I am now forty-five. I lived three years in Pennsylvania, in which State I suffered more from

prejudice than in Virginia, and there is a great deal here in London [Ontario], but not so much as in Pennsylvania. I got along well, having energy to attend to business properly. I carry on the boot and shoe business. I was never sent to school in my life, and it is a loss to me not to know how to keep accounts; but I am able to employ another to do it for me.

I did not leave Pennsylvania so much on account of the prejudice, as on that of the fugitive slave bill. I did not like to live in a country which was governed by a partial law. I made considerable sacrifice in breaking up.

The laws here are impartial. We have access to the public schools here, and can have our children educated with the white children. If the children grow up together, prejudice will not be formed.

There are a large majority who are industrious; a few are wealthy; a good many are well off. There are not many who are dissolute and abandoned – not so many in proportion as of the whites, taking every thing into consideration. If there are some who are not so industrious as they should be, it is easily accounted for. Solomon says, “Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old, he will not depart from it.” It’s a bad rule that don’t work both ways: they have been trained in a way they should not go. Accustomed to be driven when they work, it is no wonder that they don’t work so smartly as they would otherwise. But in the face of this, I know many colored men who came here fugitive slaves, who came here without any thing to help themselves with, not even money for a night’s lodging, and who had nothing given to them, who now have a house and land of their own. It is not necessary to give a fugitive money – it may make him lazy and dependent. All he needs to have given him is work.

Nearly all the grown colored people have been slaves. Of course, they are not capable of instructing their children well themselves, but, under the free schools, I am of opinion that we are progressing.

#### FRANCIS HENDERSON

I escaped from slavery in Washington City, D. C., in 1841, aged nineteen. I was not sent to school as a boy, and had no educational advantages at all. My master’s family were Church of England people themselves and wished me to attend there. I do not know my age, but suppose thirty-three. [...]

At length I turned my back on Washington, and had no difficulty getting off. Sixteen persons came at the same time – all men – I was the youngest of the lot.

I enjoy freedom as all other hard-working men do. I was broken up in Rochester, N. Y. by the fugitive slave bill.

There is much prejudice here against us. I have always minded my own business and tried to deserve well. At one time, I stopped at a hotel and was going to register my name, but was informed that the hotel was “full.” At another time, I visited a town on business, and entered my name on the register, as did the other passengers who stopped there. Afterward I saw that my name had been scratched off. I went to another hotel and was politely received by the landlady: but in the public room – the bar – were two or three persons, who as I sat there, talked a great deal

about “[black people]”<sup>145</sup> – aiming at me. But I paid no attention to it, knowing that when “whiskey is in, wit is out.”

MRS. FRANCIS HENDERSON

I was born of a slave mother in Washington, D. C., and was raised in that city. I was set to be set free at the age of thirty. When my old mistress died, I was sold for the balance of the time to an Irish woman. [...] Her husband was under bonds of two thousand dollars to treat me well. But she treated the others [slaves] so badly that some of my friends told me I had better leave. — — was there then with some persons who were going to travel north with him, and I joined them and came away.

I like liberty, and if Washington were a free country, I would like to go back there – my parents were there. There are so many congressmen there that the slaves are not treated so badly as in other parts.

JOHN HOLMES

My name in slavery was John Clopton. I belonged originally in Hanover Co., Va. My treatment was so bad, I hate to say anything about it. [...] I have two children in slavery. They were carried away from me when they were a few months old.

I have lived in Canada twenty-four years, and have made out pretty fair since I have been here. I came here expecting to work, but have not had work so hard here as I did at the South. I know all the old settlers, but a great many have come lately, whom I am not acquainted with. Those that will work, do well – those that will not – not: it is the same here as everywhere. It is the best poor man’s country that I know of – if a man comes without a shilling, he can get along well. There is no more idleness among colored than other people – there are idlers among all nations. I came here with money enough to buy a hundred acres of land. My money was stolen; but I did not get discouraged. I now own this house and land – ten acres here, and twelve in another place. I had a house and land which the railroad took, and I got a good price.

If I had any knowledge how to calculate and scheme, as I should if I had learning, I should be worth ten thousand dollars. London [Ontario] has grown up since I came here. I had an opportunity to buy land in the heart of the city, but did not bother about it. Many of our people remain poor for want of education. It cannot be expected that men who have just got away from slavery should look far ahead: they are only looking for to-day and to-morrow. The colored people are mostly given to hard work: for the time we have been here, we have made great progress in this country. They have many good farms about Wilberforce. There is some prejudice, but not so much as there used to be. There is no separate school here. There are a Baptist and a Methodist church exclusively for colored people. Whether this is best, I cannot say. I used to persuade the colored people to go into the white folks’ churches. They came near making me say I would never go to church any more: on coming out, the colored people were insulted: things were said then that would not be said now. Colored people attend at every church in London.

---

<sup>145</sup> The original has the n-word here.

MRS. — BROWN

I keep a boarding-house, and have now ten boarders, all fugitives, as nearly as I can recollect. One of them came last winter. They have all got employment.

JOHN D. MOORE

I lived in Pennsylvania and New Jersey some twenty years. I suffered a great deal there solely on account of my color. Many a time, when I have been traveling, and would come to a tavern tired and hungry, I would be told, "We have no accommodations for men of your color," and I would have to go on. Perhaps I might get a luncheon at a private house – or at some place kept by a foreigner, who needed the colored's money.

I have suffered a great many other ways on account of my color. Several times I wanted to go into business there, but was dissuaded by my white friends, who said I would be mobbed or burned out. I was discouraged in so many ways, that I came to Canada, to see if I could find a place where a colored man could have some privilege. I find it the reverse here from what it was in the States. There is prejudice here among the low class of people, but they have not got the power to carry it out here that they have in the States. The law here is stronger than the mob – it is not so there. If a man insults me here, he is glad to get out of the way for fear of the law; it was not so in the States where I lived. A ruffian there may insult or throw stones at a colored man, and he must get out of the way – I found no law on my side.

I can't complain – I am doing well here, and am satisfied with Canada. I have lived here eighteen months.

CHRISTOPHER HAMILTON

I was raised in St. Louis, Mo. I went to school a little, to a Sunday School, and learned to read, but was stopped – I suppose because I was learning too fast. My people came from Virginia. They were all free by right. My grandmother was an Indian woman. She put up my mother with a man by the name of E— G—, to bring up. He moved to Kentucky, stopped a little while, then went to Missouri, then to Jackson, Miss. While they were moving out, on their way to Kentucky, I was born on a boat in Pittsburg. After we reached Jackson, my mother, and all their sons and daughters, except myself and a sister who had two children, were sent to Mine Oburden – lead mines – they moved there with Dr. G—, who kept them all for slaves. After he had stopped there awhile, he sold them to a man named S— P—. My sister, her two children, and myself, were sold by W— G—, to whom the Dr. had given us up for debt, to a man in St. Louis. W— G— was in debt to a man named H—, and H— was in debt to a Frenchman named B—. We slipped along from one to another to pay debts. With B— I remained from ten years old, till I left for the North. I have written kind letters to B—, but got no reply. The people who were sold to S— P— were finally removed with him to St. Louis, except one who died in the South.

I look on slavery as the greatest evil that ever existed. The preaching I used to hear was, "Servants, be obedient to your masters." "He that knoweth his master's will, and doeth it not, shall be beaten with many stripes." I was well used by my master, and well treated, until he married a second time. He married a very mean

woman. He was a very wealthy man, and when she married him, it raised her right up. Nothing could please her. I had been married two years, and she tried to persuade her husband to sell my wife down the river: she wanted to whip my wife, and my wife wouldn't let her. I did not wait to see whether he would sell her or not: but we came away – got off very comfortably. I had only sixteen dollars when I started. When I got here, I found a brother of mine here – he helped me about getting work, and I make out to live comfortably. I wouldn't go back to St. Louis, poor as I am. [...]

The colored people in London [Ontario] are generally saving; they do not waste their means; they are getting along as well as they can expect, as a general thing. I do not know of one who suffered so much here, as he would in slavery. There are some who are vicious and dissolute, and so there are of all nations. Take them in general, and they are getting along first-rate.

MRS. CHRISTOPHER HAMILTON

I left Mississippi about fourteen years ago. I was raised a house servant, and was well used – but I saw and heard a great deal of the cruelty of slavery. I saw more than I wanted to – I never want to see so much again. The slaveholders say their slaves are better off than if they were free, and that they prefer slavery to freedom. I do not, and never saw one that wished to go back. It would be a hard trial to make me a slave again. I had rather live in Canada, on one potato a day, than to live in the South with all the wealth they have got. I am now my own mistress, and need not work when I am sick. I can do my own thinkings, without having any one to think for me – to tell me when to come, what to do, and to sell me when they get ready. I wish I could have my relatives here. I might say a great deal more against slavery – nothing for it.

The people who raised me failed; they borrowed money and mortgaged me. I went to live with people whose ways did not suit me, and I thought it best to come to Canada, and live as I pleased.

ALEXANDER HAMILTON<sup>146</sup>

I was brought up in St. Louis, Mo. – was not very badly used, except that I was not taught to read nor write – I was not used well enough to stay there. [...] I left St. Louis in '34, at the age of about eighteen. We don't know our ages exactly. [...]

I think that God made all men to be free and equal – not one to be a slave. [...]

I reached Canada in 1834. I had only a dollar and a half. I had no need to beg, for I found work at once. I have done well since I came here: have made a good living and something more. I own real estate in London – three houses and several lots of land. It is a healthy country – Canada.

The colored people in London [Ontario] are all making a living: there is no beggar among them. Some of us would like to live in the South if slavery was done away with, and the laws were right. I am naturalized here, and have all the rights and privileges of a British subject.

---

<sup>146</sup> Not that one.

Many have gone about, collecting money and clothes for fugitives, but I think that is not necessary now: they can get work. A great many fugitives are coming into London; they are coming almost every day.

MRS. SARAH JACKSON

I belonged to a bachelor, who said I might come away with my three children if I chose. I always desired to come to a free State; and I could not bear the idea of my children's being slaves. He did not think I really would leave, although he said I might. There was some opposition from his relatives – they told me they thought I was mighty foolish to come away from a good master. I thought I wasn't foolish, considering I had served all my days, and did not feel safe at night: not knowing whom I might belong to in the morning. It is a great heaviness on a person's mind to be a slave. It never looked right to see people taken and chained in a gang to be driven off. I never could bear to see my own color all fastened together to go to such a place as down the river. I sued to go in the house and shut myself up. I did not know how long before it would be my own fate.

I had just enough to pay my way here. I expect to work for a living, and I am trying to get a house. I am better here than I was at home – I feel lighter – the dread is gone. I have a sister and brother in slavery in Kentucky. I intend to send my children to school. I have been here about a week.

HENRY MOREHEAD

I came from Louisville, Ky., where I was born and bred a slave. The colored people have not sent their children to school in London [Ontario], so generally as is desirable, for this reason. The fugitives who came to this country for freedom from bondage, have been kept down in such a manner, that these privileges granted to them seem somewhat strange, and they have to take some time to consider whether they shall send their children to school with the white children or not. This free school is something so unusual to them, that they can't realize it, until they become naturalized to the country. Although they know they are free, they have a kind of timidness about them, so that they cannot mingle with the whites of this country, as they would if they had been free born. Yet the day, I believe is fast approaching, when the people of color will see that they stand in their own light by not sending their children to school. The time is now, when the colored men begin to see that it is the want of education which has kept them in bondage so long. [...]

I left slavery a little more than a year ago. I brought my wife and three children with me, and had not enough to bring us through. My owners did not know that we were coming. I left because they were about selling my wife and children to the South. I would rather have followed them to the grave, than to the Ohio River to see them go down. I knew it was death or victory – so I took them and started for Canada. [...]

I am making out very well here – I have not been in the country long enough to accumulate any wealth, but I am getting along as well as the general run of people. It stands to reason, that a man must be doing something to pay a rent of five dollars a month, and support a family of four besides himself, as provisions are, and have been. To do this does not look much like starving.

## AN OLD WOMAN

My name is — —, but you must not tell it, for I have children at the South, who would be eaten up if their masters knew. [...]

## JOHN WARREN

I was born in Wilson Co., Tenn., lived there twelve and a half years, and was then carried to Mississippi, by my owners who settled in Marshall Co. Two of us, brothers, went down with the young man, to whom we fell on settlement of estate. Then he sold us to his brother who was a regular speculator, buying and selling all the time – kept from eighteen to twenty [slaves] on the place. [...]

I learned to spell and read some in Tennessee, among the children. The owners knew I could read. I bought a copy of the letters in writing of a white boy in Mississippi, for half a dollar. I kept that copy of the letters three years, and learned to write from it. [...] I wrote three passes for myself. I wrote one to go to Memphis with. I left the farm on the night of 3d July, 1854. [...] At Memphis, I [...] hired on a boat bound to Cincinnati. I saw the sign “Cincinnati,” and went aboard: sailed that evening, and got safely to Cincinnati in five days. I stopped there two or three days, and then left for Canada. A man in Chatham hired me to come here to work. I get good wages.

I always hated slavery from the first. It never seemed right to work for nothing, driven in the rain, and so on. When I was small, I had heard of a free State where black people were free, and had no master nor mistress, and I wanted to go there. I have no disposition to go South again – I love liberty too well for that. [...] I believe that if the slaves were hired and paid for their labor, they'd all go to work, and they would do a great deal more work than they do now, for they would not be thinking all the time about running away, and fighting the overseers – there would not be so much confusion. [...] I came here to work and expect to work. Time goes smoother with me than it did. One month there seemed longer than two do now.

## BENJAMIN MILLER

I came from St. Louis, Mo., about twenty years ago. I had the privilege of purchasing my freedom, and paid of the \$500 asked, all but \$220: then I had good reasons to believe, from information which I received, that after all was paid, I was to be carried down the river and sold. I then made for the North. I was a slave, to be sure, but was doing business as boot and shoemaker. I learned the trade while I was paying \$120 per annum for my time. If I had been sure of my free papers, I could have paid the \$220, and would have been doing a good business there. My partner was a free man.

I have lived in and about London [Ontario] ever since I came out. My property here is worth about \$1,800. It consists partly of a house and land. I have brought up a large family – have a wife and eight children living – have buried ten – three in St. Louis, the remainder here.

I feel thankful that I can mention that I have given a part of my time to the spiritual interests of the people here without pay: having served them as pastor in the Methodist denomination some years.



I have traveled in all the principal places in Canada West, and, generally speaking, the colored people are doing well: thank God, uncommon well, considering the way they came. Men who at home know nothing but to come and go just as they are bid, here go into business, and do well, very well. They are temperate men, considering the way they are brought up.

We that being here illiterate men, have to go against wind and tide. We have a learned, enterprising people to contend with; we have a colder climate than we have been used to, to contend with; we have our own ignorance and poverty to contend with. It takes a smart man to do all that; but may do it, all make a living, and some do lay up money. I asked one of our old white 'squires, if he ever saw a colored man that was well, in this township, begging. He said, "No."

## QUEEN'S BUSH

This name was originally given to a large, unsurveyed tract of land, now comprising the townships of Peel and Wellesley, and the country extending thence to Lake Huron. While it was yet a wilderness, it was settled mainly by colored people, about the year 1846. The following, communicated by a resident of Galt, gives the main features of the settlement of the Queen's Bush. The testimonials following Jackson's, are from that part of the scarcely reclaimed wilderness now known as the township of Peel.

### WILLIAM JACKSON

My father and myself went to the Queen's Bush in 1846. We went four and a half miles beyond the other farms, to Canestogo, where he cleared up and had a farm; for years scarcely any white people came in, but fugitive slaves came in, in great numbers, and cleared the land. Before it was surveyed, there were as many as fifty families. It was surveyed about two years after we went there. The colored people might have held their land still, but they were afraid they would not be able to pay when pay-day came. Under these circumstances, many of them sold out cheap. They now consider that they were overreached – for many who bought out the colored people have not yet paid for the land, and some of the first settlers yet remain, who have not yet been required to pay all up.

Some colored people have come in from the free States, on account of the fugitive slave bill, and bought land. The farms are usually from fifty to one hundred acres. The timber is hard wood. The soil is productive, and it is a good wheat country.

A great many who sold out went to Mr. King's settlement, and to Owen Sound. The health of the colored people was very good – there was hardly any sickness at all: indeed, the climate of Canada agrees with them as well as with the white people. It is healthy for all.

I have heard white people who lived at Queen's Bush say, that they never lived amongst a set of people that they had rather live with as to their habits of industry and general good conduct. I never knew of but one to be taken before a court, for any thing but debt, and I lived there seven years.

In regard to riding in coaches or cars, I never had any trouble in Canada. I have heard of some who have suffered from prejudice, but I never did. The amount of prejudice is small here, and what there is grows out of slavery: for some, when they first come, feel so free, that they go beyond good limits, and have not courtesy enough. But I find that they get over this after a while.

THOMAS L. WOOD KNOX

I was born free in the eastern part of Pennsylvania, but removed to Pittsburg. I should not have left the States only that I was not treated with respect. [...] I have been in Canada eleven years – eight in the Queen’s Bush. When I came here it was a complete wilderness: I took hold and cleared a farm. I would rather have remained in my native country, among my friends, could I have had such treatment as I felt that I deserved. But that was not to be, and I came into the wilderness.

Most of the colored people living here are doing as well, if not better, than one could reasonably expect. Most of the grown people among them are fugitive slaves. I know of but one, free-born, from Pennsylvania, that is myself. The number here I cannot speak of with any certainty. Many have removed to Owen’s Sound and other places: there may be now five hundred persons. All are equal here: I have been about here a great deal, but have seen no prejudice at all.

SOPHIA POOLEY

I was born in Fishkill, New York State, twelve miles from North River. My father’s name was Oliver Burthen, my mother’s Dinah. I am now more than ninety years old. I was stolen from my parents when I was seven years old, and brought to Canada; that was long before the American Revolution. There were hardly any white people in Canada then – nothing here but Indians and wild beasts. Many a deer I have helped catch on the lakes in a canoe: one year we took ninety. I was a woman grown when the first governor of Canada came from England: that was Gov. Simcoe.

My parents were slaves in New York State. My master’s sons-in-law, Daniel Outwaters and Simon Knox, came into the garden where my sister and I were playing among the currant bushes, tied their handkerchiefs over our mouths, carried us to a vessel, put us in the hold, and sailed up the river. I know not how far nor how long – it was dark there all the time. Then we came by land. I remember when we came to Genesee – there were Indian settlements there – Onondagas, Senecas, and Oneidas. I guess I was the first colored girl brought into Canada.

The white men sold us at Niagara to old Indian Brant<sup>147</sup>, the king. I lived with old Brant about twelve or thirteen years as nigh as I can tell. Brant lived part of the time at Mohawk<sup>148</sup>, part at Ancaster, part at Preston, then called Lower Block: the Upper Block was at Snyder’s Mills, While I lived with old Brant we caught the deer. It was at Dundas at the outlet. We would let the hounds loose, and when we heard

---

<sup>147</sup> Joseph Brant (1742 – 1807). Brantford is named after him.

<sup>148</sup> “A party of Savages, commanded by one Joseph Brant, a civilized Indian, have lately been on an expedition to the Mohawk River. After they had done much mischief, a party of Rebels was sent out after them, but Joseph drew them into an ambuscade, and killed or took prisoners all the party, except three: He brought in five prisoners, and 300 scalps: Not a person was killed or hurt but such as was found in arms.” SATURDAY’S POST. (1778, September 29). *Leeds Intelligencer*, p. 3.

them bark we would run for the canoe – Peggy, and Mary, and Katy, Brant’s daughters and I. Brant’s sons, Joseph and Jacob, would wait on the shore to kill the deer when we fetched him in. I had a tomahawk, and would hit the deer on the head – then the [Indigenous women]<sup>149</sup> would take it by the horns and paddle ashore. The boys would bleed and skin the deer and take the meat to the house. Sometimes white people in the neighborhood, John Chisholm and Bill Chisholm, would come and say ‘twas their hounds, and they must have the meat. But we would not give it up.

Canada was then filling up with white people. And after Brant went to England, and kissed the queen’s hand, he was made a colonel<sup>150</sup>. Then there began to be laws in Canada. Brant was only half Indian: his mother was [an Indigenous woman] – I saw her when I came to this country. She was an old body; her hair was quite white. Brant was a good looking man – quite portly. He was as big as Jim Douglass who lived here in the bush, and weighed two hundred pounds. He lived in an Indian village – white men came among them and they intermarried. They had an English schoolmaster, an English preacher, and an English blacksmith. When Brant went among the English, he wore the English dress – when he was among the Indians, he wore the Indian dress – broadcloth leggings, blanket, moccasins, fur cap. He had his ears slit with a long loop at the edge, and in these he hung long silver ornaments. He wore a silver half-moon on his breast with the king’s name on it, and broad silver bracelets on his arms. He never would paint, but his people painted a great deal. Brant was always for making peace among his people; that was the reason of his going about so much. I used to talk Indian better than I could English. I have forgotten some of it – there are none to talk it with now.

Brant’s third wife, my mistress, was a barbarous creature. She could talk English, but she would not. She would tell me in Indian to do things, and then hit me with any thing that came to hand, because I did not understand her. I have a scar on my head from a wound she gave me with a hatchet; and this long scar over my eye, is where she cut me with a knife. The skin dropped over my eye; a white woman bound it up. (The scars spoken of were quite perceptible, but the writer saw many worse looking cicatrices of wounds not inflicted by *Indian* savages, but by civilized (?) men.) Brant was very angry, when he came home, at what she had done, and punished her as if she had been a child. Said he, “you know I adopted her as one of the family, and now you are trying to put all the work on her.”

I liked the Indians pretty well in their place; some of them were very savage – some friendly. I have seen them have the war-dance – in a ring with only a cloth about them, and painted up. They did not look ridiculous – they looked savage – enough to frighten anybody. One would take a bowl and rub the edge with a knotted stick: then they would raise their tomahawks and whoop. Brant had two colored men for slaves: one of them was the father of John Patten, who lives over yonder, the other called

---

<sup>149</sup> The original has the s-word here.

<sup>150</sup> “Col. Joseph Brant, an Indian Chief, belonging to the Six Nations, was presented to the Queen in the Habit of his Country.” (1785, December 22). *Derby Mercury*, p. 1. His grandfather, Peter Brant, also visited an English queen – Queen Anne, in 1710, as part of a delegation of ‘Four Indian Kings’.

himself Simon Ganseville. There was but one other Indian that I knew, who owned a slave. I had no care to get my freedom.

At twelve years old, [sic.] I was sold by Brant to an Englishman in Ancaster, for one hundred dollars – his name was Samuel Hatt, and I lived with him seven years: then the white people said I was free, and put me up to running away. He did not stop me – he said he could not take the law into his own hands. Then I lived in what is now Waterloo. I married Robert Pooley, a black man. He ran away with a white woman: he is dead.

Brant died two years before the second war<sup>151</sup> with the United States. His wife survived him until the year the stars fell. She was a pretty [Indigenous woman]: her father was an English colonel. She hid a crock of gold before she died, and I never heard of its being found. Brant was a freemason.

I was seven miles from Stoney Creek at the time of the battle – the cannonade made every thing shake well.

I am now unable to work, and am entirely dependent on others for subsistence: but I find plenty of people in the bush to help me a good deal.

#### JOHN FRANCIS

I was twenty-eight years old when I came into the Queen's Bush from Virginia. My usage down South was hard. I was sold three times: first, for debt; then I was traded off: the third time I sold myself to myself.

I came in ten years ago. Then there were few families. More kept coming – colored people – there were not many white. The land was not surveyed. We settled down where we saw fit. We knew nothing about price nor terms. After considerable many settlers had come in, we called a meeting, and sent a man to get a grant of the land if he could; or, if not that, to find the terms. The answer was, that we were on clergy reserves, and they could give no grant. Still we kept at work, clearing and planting. The land came into market about seven years ago, being surveyed and a price set on it.

Then came a land agent, to sell and take payments. He put up public notices, that the settlers who had made improvements were to come and pay the first instalment, or the land would be sold from under them. The payment was to be in ten annual instalments of 15s. 6d. currency, 5s. to the dollar. It was then hard times in Canada, and many could not make the payment. The agent, as we now know, transcended his powers, for some people, white and colored, still hold their lands, not having made payments. The agent had a percentage for collecting. His course in driving people for money, ruined a great many poor people, here in the bush. Fearing that the land would be sold, and they get nothing for their betterments, they sold out for very little and moved to other parts. The agent himself told me he would sell my land unless the instalment was paid. I sacrificed my two cows and a steer, to make the payment that I might hold the land. Others did not do that and yet hold. One

---

<sup>151</sup> Probably a reference to the war of 1812, but Brant died in late 1807 or very early 1808: "DIED – [...] At his seat at the head of Lake Ontario, the terrific and much celebrated Indian, Col. Joseph Brant. He departed this life, after a short illness, much regretted by the Six Nations, of whom he was Chief." DIED. (1808, January 11). *North Star* (Danville), p. 3.

man, fearing to lose all he had done, sold out for ten dollars, having cleared eight or ten acres – that property is now estimated at \$15,000. Some borrowed money on mortgages, and some paid a heavy per cent. for money to meet that instalment: which was very hard on the poor settlers who had their hands full in trying to live, and clearing land so that they could live. But it was done: and it has kept many back by trying to meet that borrowed money, and others by their moving where they would have to begin again: that is what has scattered the colored people away from here. There are now about three hundred – there were tree times as many. Some went where they got grants of fifty acres for settling.

The young men growing up here have not so much knowledge as desirable, as there were no schools here when they were growing up. Now it is different, and many send their children. The teachers generally have not the feelings in regard to slavery that we have. It would be well to have the young taught, that they should improve themselves as a means of elevating their race. When my children get old enough to read, I intend to instruct them about slavery, and get books to show them what we have been through, and fit them for a good example.

My mother was sold away from me, when I was about eleven years old. In escaping, I sailed over two hundred miles on the sea in an open boat with my father, a day without eating, and ten days without drinking. One night we were near being lost in a storm. We put in to get water and were taken: but we made out to clear ourselves.

The colored people in the Queen's Bush, are doing pretty well – they have many drawbacks: as they can keep no books nor accounts, they are liable to be overreached – and are overreached sometimes.

#### JOHN LITTLE

(The hero of the following narrative is much respected, wherever he is known – in Canada West. And in that country of good farms, Mr. Little's is one of the best, and among the best managed.)

I have been bought and sold by several masters. [...]

I had heard that if I could get into Ohio, and manage to stay there one year, I would, after that, be a free man. I intended to wait for my wife to get smart, she being sick at the time. [...] I had appointed a place where she was to come to meet me[,] [...] I turned back, and went to the place I had appointed. She was near by, saw me and ran to me, and so we were together once more We then walked nine miles northwardly to a little village where I had put up my clothes. [...] At night, between sunset and dark, I went back to the house in the village – at the door I saw a person with our things. They gave them to me, and bade me God-speed, and that, if ever I was taken, not to betray them. I then put forth, and with my wife, reached Canada. God save the Queen! [...] I took passage for Detroit, and then crossed to Windsor, in Canada. That was the first time I set my foot on free soil.

Work was dull among the French at Windsor. We stayed there about six months. We heard of the Queen's Bush, where any people might go and settle, colored or poor, and might have a reasonable chance to pay for the land. We set out to find the Queen's Bush – went to Buffalo – thence to Black Rock – thence to St. Catharines,

and there I got straight instructions. We had not a second suit of clothes apiece; we had one bedquilt and one blanket, and eighteen dollars in money. I bought two axes in Hamilton, one for myself, and one for my wife; half a dozen plates, knives and forks, an iron pot, and a Dutch oven: that's all for tools and furniture. For provisions I bought fifty weight of flour, and twenty pounds of pork. Then we marched right into the wilderness, where there were thousands of acres of woods which the chain had never run round since Adam. At night we made a fire, and cut down a tree, and put up some slats like a wigwam. This was in February, when the snow was two feet deep. It was about fourteen years ago. We made our bed of cedar boughs from a swamp. Thus we traveled three or four days, seeing plenty of deer: wolves, as plenty as sheep are now, were howling about us, and bears were numerous.

At last I came to a place where I judged, from the timber, the land was good – and so it proved. My nearest neighbor was two miles off. I felt thankful that I had got into a place where I could not see the face of a white man. For something like five or six years, I felt suspicious when I saw a white man, thinking he was prying round to take some advantage. This was because I had been so bedeviled and harassed by them. At length that feeling wore off through kindness that I received from some here, and from abolitionists, who came over from the States to instruct us, and I felt that it was not the white man I should dislike, but the mean spirit which is in some men, whether white or black. I am sensible of that now.

The settlers were to take as much land as they pleased, when it should be surveyed, at various prices, according to quality. Mine was the highest price, as I had taken of the best land. It was three dollars seventy cents an acre. I took a hundred acres at first, and then bought in fifty.

Myself and wife built us here a little log hut amid the snow. We made it ourselves, shouldering the logs to bring up to the place. We went to the cedar swamp, and split out boards for the roof. We had plenty of firewood, which served instead of blankets. Wolves, any quantity, were howling about us constantly, night and day – big, savage wolves, which alarmed the people. Some men carrying meat, were chased by them. Isaac Johnson was obliged to take up a tree. We got used to them on our way here, and did not fear them at all. In the spring, plenty of bears came about us after sheep and hogs. One day my wife and I were walking out, and we saw four bears in the cherry trees eating the fruit. My wife went for my gun, called some neighbors, and we killed all four. Now the wolves are all gone, and the deer and the bears are scarce. There are idle men enough about here, colored and white, to drive them away, when they had better be chopping and clearing land.

We went to chopping, day and night; there was no delay; we logged the trunks with our own hands, without cattle, or horses, or help – all with our own hands, and burned them. I raised that year one hundred and ten bushels of spring wheat, and three hundred bushels of potatoes on land which we had cleared ourselves, and cultivated without plough or drag. All as done with the hoe and hand-rake. This I can prove by my nearest neighbors. I got the seed on credit of some Dutchmen in the towns, by promising to work for them in harvest. They put their own price on the seed, and on my labor.

In the next winter we went to clearing again. My wife worked right along with me: I did not realize it then; but now I see that she was a brave woman. I thank God that freedom has never overweighted us: some it has, but I worked to support it, and not to discourage it. I thought I ought to take hold and work and go ahead, to show others that there is a chance for the colored man in Canada; to show the spirit of a man, and a desire to improve his condition. As it is so often said by slaveholders, that if the “n—s” were free, and put in a place where they would be together they would starve to death, I wanted to show to the contrary. I have one hundred and fifty acres of land: one hundred and ten of it cleared, and under good cultivation: two span of horses, a yoke of oxen, ten milch cows and young cattle, twenty head of hogs, forty head of sheep; I have two wagons, two ploughs, and two drags. I would like to show this to that everlasting scoundrel, E—, my former master, and tell him, “All this, I would have done for you cheerfully, and thought myself at-home, and felt happy in doing it, if you would have let me: but I am glad that you scarred and abused me, as it has given to myself and my family the fruits of my own labor.”

I would like to show it to those stout, able men, who, while they might be independent here, remain in the towns as waiters, blacking boots, cleaning houses, and driving coaches for men, who scarcely allow them enough for a living. To them I say, go into the backwoods of Queen Victoria’s dominions, and you can secure an independent support. I am the man who has proved it; never man came into an unsettled country with lesser means to begin with. Some say, you cannot live in the woods without a year’s provisions – but this is not so: I have come here and proved to the contrary. I have hired myself out two days to get things to work on at home one.

If there is a man in the free States who says the colored people cannot take care of themselves, I want him to come here and see John Little. There is no white blood in me; not a drop. My mother’s father was imported from Africa, and both my grandparents on the father’s side were also imported. I can prove to him that every thing which was due on the land is paid; that I raised seven hundred bushels of wheat last year, two hundred bushels to potatoes, one hundred bushels of peas, two hundred and fifty bushels of oats, then tons of hay; fattened fifteen hundred weight of pork, one ox, besides other produce of less consequence. I have now growing fifty acres of wheat, eighteen acres of oats, ten of peas, one acre of potatoes, and twenty acres of meadow grass: I have horses, oxen, cows, hogs, sheep, and poultry in abundance. The man who was a “bad n—” in the South, is here a respected, independent farmer. I thank God that I am respected in this neighborhood by the best men the country can afford – can lend or borrow two thousand dollars any time I am asked, or choose to ask for it. I don’t say this for the sake of boasting – I say it to show that colored men can take care of themselves – and to answer any who deny that Canada is a good country.

The “n—” who was so “BAD” among Southerners, as to be scarred with whips, put in the stocks, chained at his work, with ankles sore from the irons, months together, legally shot and maimed for life by a boy who was too young to be trusted with a gun, sold into Tennessee, his character “*bad*,” sent after him to debase him there, put in jail after jail, hunted by hounds – stands up here at the North, a man

respectable and respected. I don't ask any one to take my word for it, merely. Ask the people of Peel, Wellesley, Woolwich and Waterloo – those are the places where I am known, and where they can get acquainted with my character; and I am willing it should be compared with that of any slaveholder whatever.

The abuse a man receives at the South is enough to drive every good thing from the mind. I sometimes felt such a spirit of vengeance, that I seriously meditated setting the house on fire at night, and killing all as they came out. I overcame the evil, and never got at it – but a little more punishment would have done it. I had been so bruised and wounded and beset, that I was out of patience. I had been separated from all my relatives, from every friend I had in the world, whipped and ironed till I was tired of it. On that night when I was threatened with the paddle again, I was fully determined to kill, even if I were to be hanged and, if it pleased God, sent to hell: I could bear no more. If any man thinks slavery a proper thing, let him go and be abused as I was for years in North Carolina, much of the time in agony from irons and whips and paddles – then let him be sold off a thousand miles into Tennessee, and begin to live it over again, and I think he would be tired of it, too. [...]

They say that the slaves are happy, because they laugh, and are merry. I myself, and three or four others, have received two hundred lashes in the day, and had our feet in fetters: yet, at night, we would sing and dance, and make others laugh at the rattling of our chains. Happy men we must have been! We did it to keep down trouble, and to keep our hearts from being completely broken: that is as true as gospel! Just look at it – consider upon it – must not we have been very happy? Yet I have done it myself – I have cut capers in chains!

#### MRS. JOHN LITTLE

I was born in Petersburg, Va. When very young, I was taken to Montgomery county. My old master died there, and I remember that all the people were sold. My father and mother were sold together about one mile from me. After a year, they were sold a great distance, and I saw them no more. My mother came to me before she went away, and said, "Good bye, be a good girl; I never expect to see you any more."

Then I belonged to Mr. T— N—, the son of my old master. [...] I belonged to them until I got married at sixteen, to Mr. John Little, of Jackson. My master sold me for debt – he was a man that would drink, and he had to sell me. I was sold to F— T—, a planter and slave. [...] I stayed with T— more than a year. [...] I was put under a guard – but I was too cunning for him, and joined my husband.

My shoes gave out before many days – then I wore my husband's old shoes till they were used up. [...] I got to be quite hardy – quite used to water and bush-whacking; so that by the time I got to Canada, I could handle an axe, or hoe, or any thing. I felt proud to be able to do it – to help get cleared up, so that we could have a home, and plenty to live on.

I now enjoy my life very well – I have nothing to complain of. We have horses and a pleasure-wagon, and I can ride out when and where I please, without a pas. The best of the merchants and clerks pay me as much attention as though I were a white woman: I am as politely accosted as any woman would wish to be.



I have lost two children by death; one little girl is all that is spared to me. She is but four years old. I intend to have her well educated, if the Lord lets us.

## CHATHAM

“At Chatham,” said Mr. John Little, “the fugitives are as thick as blackbirds in a corn-field.” Here, indeed, more fully than anywhere else, the traveler realizes the extent of the American exodus. At every turn, he meets members of the African race, single or in groups; he sees them building and painting houses, working in mills, engaged in every handicraft employment: here he notices a street occupied by colored shopkeepers and clerks: if he steps into the environs, he finds the blacks in every quarter, busy upon their gardens and farms.

The white population of Chatham is reckoned at four thousand: the number of colored persons in the town may be safely estimated at eight hundred. If to this estimate is added the number residing in the neighborhood, the amount cannot be less than two thousand. A gentleman, holding an office in the town, and who, having been one of the earliest settlers, has seen the town grow up around him, remarked of the colored population, “They are as good a body of people as you can find anywhere”: and their general appearance, and attention to business confirm his opinion.

Among that portion of the whites who put a high value on their prejudices, and a lofty estimate on their own personal importance, there seems to be a dread that some terrible and unpardonable crime, termed “sauciness,” may yet become rife among the blacks. A white farmer in the vicinity of Chatham, manifested in conversation a great dislike of the colored residents. His main objection to them seemed to be, that, on one occasion, as somebody had told him, four or five of them kept the side-walk, whereby a white woman was obliged to step off – “that’s the way ‘tis with ‘em – they’ll get so *saucy*, by and by, that there’ll be a rebellion.” On mentioning this circumstance to a colored man, he answered, “I have had to step off fifty times for impudent white fellow – but I do not blame *all* the whites for it: but if the colored man does any thing out of the way, his fault is tacked to the whole of us.” And this is too much the case.

In another part of Canada, a white man expressed lively fears that the negroes would yet become “saucy”. He explained this term as applicable to “language” which would be well enough from a white man, but out of the way from a negro – because a man won’t take from them, what he would from a white man. “And why should he not?” “Why – *he won’t*.”

In 1832, there were in Chatham, but two or three shops, and a few houses. The oldest deed on record is dated 1801. In 1837, two steamboats commenced plying to Detroit, one occasionally extending its trips to Buffalo. The facilities thus afforded to trade, proved highly conducive to the prosperity of the town: but Chatham “took its great start” in 1852, while the Great Western Railway was constructing. Colored people began to come in at the first settlement of the town: at present they are increasing in a greater ratio than the whites. They maintain separate churches, and attend a separate public school. This the writer visited, and found fifty pupils of both

sexes in attendance under a colored teacher. A private school is taught by Mr. Alfred Whipper, a colored man. This school appeared to be in very good condition: fifty-eight colored pupils of both sexes were present.

It was in Chatham that the writer first heard of the Associations called True Bands. A True Band has just been formed here, enrolling at first three hundred and seventy-five members, and it was continually receiving accessions of numbers. On inquiry, the following was furnished as an answer to the question, "What is meant by a True Band?"

A True Band is composed of colored persons of both sexes, associated for their own improvement. Its objects are manifold: mainly these – the members are to take a general interest in each other's welfare; to pursue such plans and objects as may be for their mutual advantage; to improve all schools, and to induce their race to send their children into the schools; to break down all prejudice; to bring all churches as far as possible into one body, and not let minor differences divide them; to prevent litigation by referring all disputes among themselves to a committee; to stop the begging system entirely (that is, going to the United States and there representing that the fugitives are starving and suffering, raising large sums of money, of which the fugitives never receive the benefit – misrepresenting the character of the fugitives for industry, and underrating the advance of the country, which supplies abundant work for all at fair wages); to raise such funds among themselves as may be necessary for the poor, the sick, and the destitute fugitive newly arrived; and to prepare themselves ultimately to bear the due weight of political power.

The first True Band was organized in Malden, in September, 1854. It consists of six hundred members. It is represented as having thus far fulfilled its objects admirably. Since its organization, no action at law has been brought by one member against another: their differences being arranged by a committee of arbitration. A small monthly payment is made by the members. The receipts have enabled them to meet all cases of destitution, and leave a surplus in the treasury. In all other places where the bands have been organized, the same good results, as I was creditably informed, have followed as in Malden: thus showing that the colored population possess the means and the will, when acting in concert, to take care of themselves and of the strangers as they arrive. There are not fourteen True Bands organized in various sections of Canada West.

What in the above sketch of the bands is characterized as "the begging system," meets the almost universal reprobation of the colored people of Canada. Many of them express themselves with indignation against it: "We have heard that thousands of dollars have been raised for us in the United States, but we never received any of it; a great deal of clothing, but it never reached us. Not that we want the money or the clothing; we can support ourselves: but we don't want others begging over our backs: representing us as starving and freezing through our own laziness and vice, and thus injuring our character while they pretend to befriend us – meanwhile, subserving nobody's interest but their own. What cases of suffering occur, can be taken care of here." Some expressed a wish that those who were disposed to give money, should

give it to the fugitive on his way, or use it to relieve those who suffer from having assisted fugitives.

One case was named to me of a man who raised a sum of money in the United States for some imaginary persons, whom he called suffering, starving fugitives, and who, on his return, erected for himself a fine dwelling-house. By and by, wanting a fence about his premises, he again raised a sum of money for some miserable fugitives, and, soon after, his grounds were duly fenced in. Many similar stories are in circulation. What part of them is true, and how much is scandal, it may be different to determine: but every one at all acquainted with the present status of Upper Canada, knows that any man there, able to labor, can readily find work, and get his pay for it when it is done. The cases of suffering and destitution occasioned by sickness and improvidence, can best be relieved by local institutions.

The annual report of "The Toronto Ladies' Association for the relief of destitute Colored Fugitives" for 1853-1855, states, "During the past inclement winter, much suffering was alleviated, and many cases of extreme hardship prevented. Throughout the year, the committee continued to observe the practice of appointing weekly visitors to examine into the truth of every statement made by applicants for aid. In this way between two and three hundred cases have been attended to, each receiving more or less, according to their circumstances." How much money was disbursed during the year is not stated: the amount of subscriptions and donations for the year was a little more than one hundred and sixty pounds. Of this society, Mrs. Arnold is president; Mrs. Willis treasurer, and Mrs. Henning corresponding secretary.

The Rev. Hiram Wilson succeeded a few years since, in organizing in St. Catharines, a "Refugee Slaves' Friend Society," which embraces many of the most respectable citizens of the place. If these and similar well-managed associations, which practice a judicious system of expenditure, see fit to appeal to friends of the fugitives in the United States, there can be no doubt of a suitable response.

The opinions of a portion of the fugitives themselves on the subject of charities in their behalf will be found among the narratives which follow.

#### J. C. BROWN

I was born in Frederick county, Va. My father was a white man; my mother mixed blood. She was given away by a man named N—— to a man named B——, so that she could not appear at a court against N. on a suit for her freedom and her three children's. B. took her to Kentucky: therefore, myself and brother and sister remained slaves with N. He in a short time removed to Kentucky. At fifteen, I was hired to Capt. George Smith, who volunteered to go to Tippecanoe. I was a fifer in his company. The freedom of myself, Moses, and some others was promised us on our return. But the last time I saw Moses, he was bowed down in hellish slavery in Little Rock, Ark., and I had the misfortune to have to pay N. eighteen hundred dollars for my freedom – my step-father and mother hiring my time for six years. [...]

After I became a free man, I carried on the mason business in Bardstown, Shelbyville, and Louisville. My misfortunes now began. I had been used well as a slave, for my mistress was my aunt. I was an object of jealousy to the white

mechanics, because I was more successful in getting jobs. They threatened me, unless I left the neighborhood, to break every bone in my body. [...]

In 1819, under the advice of Stratford Gowen and Benjamin Lunday, I was sent to Texas to find shelter and suitable situations for free people of color. Meeting there with Mr. Black or Blake, a member of the council of that colony, he told me that Texas was to be a great cotton and sugar-growing country, and would one day be annexed to the United States. He said a majority of the council were opposed to having a free colored settlement in Texas, and it would be useless for me to look further. I then returned to Louisville, and in a short time removed with my family to Cincinnati. [...]

Three years after this affair, the law of 1804, known as the Ohio black law, was revived in that State, and enforced. By this law, every colored man was to give bonds in \$500 not to become a town charge, and to find bonds also for his heirs. No one could employ a colored man or colored woman to do any kind of labor, under penalty of \$100. There were then about 3,000 colored people there – by this law they were thrown out of employment. I was then clearing \$600 a year, and refused to give bonds. The colored people had a meeting, and talked about a court of appeals to test the law. Some talked of going to Texas – we knew not what to do: we were perplexed.

I spoke to them of Canada, and we formed a Colonization Society, of which I was President. I wrote for the Board to Sir John Colborne, at Little York, now Toronto, to know if we could find in Canada an asylum for ourselves, our wives, and children. Two members of the Board went with the letter to Toronto, and were well received by Sir John. He wrote us to remove into Canada with our wives and children, if we chose to do so; and that so long as we remained true and loyal subjects, we should have every privilege extended to us that was enjoyed by any of Her Majesty's subjects, no distinction being made on account of color. I have his letter now in my possession – his memorable words. Mr. Hammonds, our friend, editor of a daily paper in Cincinnati, published the letter at my request. The publication made an excitement in the corporation of Cincinnati.

Two or three of us, including myself, were sent for by the city government, next day. The reason was, as Mr. Hotchkiss said, that I, as one of the leading spirits, was doing a great deal of mischief; for every one that I took off to Canada was a sword drawn against the United States.

At this time Cincinnati was full of women, without husbands, and their children. These were sent there by planters from Louisiana and Mississippi, who had now got fortunes, and had found that white women could live in those States. In consequence, they had sent their slave-wives and children to Cincinnati, and set them free. They had begun to come about the close of the last war. Cincinnati was the great point for them. I was agent of a man who had eighteen of these headless families in one house. I asked the Mayor, "Now that they have deprived us of work, who is to go begging for these people, to keep them alive?" He said they were taking steps to have the law repealed, and wished me to stay any action about sending people to Canada.

I paid no attention to what he told me, and sent three wagon loads to Sandusky next day. In three or four weeks I and my family left – came to Sandusky – thence I

took a boat, the "Gov. Cass," and went to Little York, where I entered into a contract with the Canada Company, for a township of land, agreeing to pay \$6,000 a year, for ten years. It was the township of Biddulph.

The black law had now become inoperative in Cincinnati, and the colored people wrote me, that they could now walk without being pushed off the side-walks, were well used, and were living in clover. Of 2,700 who were to have come, only 460 came out. They settled promiscuously in the province, buying land here and there, and getting work. Only five or six families of them settled in Biddulph. Three weeks after they settled, fifteen families from Boston, Mass., met them there, and settled there, where they remain. We only paid for 1,220 acres, which was divided, from 25 to 50 acres to a family. Numbers, who came afterward, had to leave for other places. These families in Biddulph are now independent. Their lands will sell at forty to fifty dollars an acre: it cost one dollar and fifty cents. I settled in Toronto, where I could have some means of making myself useful for them among the white people, and where my trade was good.

My wife became dissatisfied, and I removed with her and my daughter – my son having died – to Cincinnati, where I remained thirteen months. I went on to Louisville, to see my old mother. [...] I was put in jail, charged with running off large quantities of slaves. [...] The Grand-Jury failed to find a bill, and I was discharged.

I returned to Cincinnati. My wife had seen so much of my persecution, that she was more anxious to remove to Canada than she had been to leave it. We returned to Toronto, and I was a gunner there in the Patriot war. I removed to Dawn, and was elected one of the trustees of the school in that place. From Dawn I came to Chatham about 1849.

Chatham was then a little village of frame buildings and log cabins. There were then no masons, bricklayers, or plasterers among the colored men. I went for some, and got them here, and we are now able to build a house from the stump. We can cut timber and make the brick. The greater part of the bricklaying and plastering is in the hands of the colored mechanics. There are four churches of colored people which are well filled. We have separate schools which are tolerably well attended. There are three charitable societies of men, and two of women, which do much good, relieving the wants of the sick and destitute. There is a great deal of property owned here by the colored people: their number has doubled in two years, mainly by immigration, which continues still – especially of fugitive slaves – sometimes twenty in one day.

Many agents have come here, nominally to assist the fugitives, but some of them have not been so honest as one could wish. They collected money, but the fugitives did not get it. However, what money the fugitives have received, has been an injury, rather than a benefit. I have seen cases where the money would have done good, if rightly distributed.

Our children growing up in this country, and not having the fear of any white man, and being taught to read and write, will grow up entirely different from their fathers – of more benefit to themselves, of more benefit to the government, and will be more able to set good examples to the rising generation. Intelligent parents will raise up intelligent children.

Slavery disarms a man of virtue, of every thing: it prevents his being a man. Anticipation is what we live for – it makes us anxious to improve ourselves and our children; but the slave anticipates nothing, but the setting of the sun, or the passage of some law to curtail what little of privilege he possesses. The effects of slavery are perceptible here in our courts. I have seen fugitives, brought as witnesses, afraid to testify against a white man. This is a part of the horrid effects of slavery. The younger ones are better than this. They grow up without slavish fear: they know nothing about it.

#### PHILIP YOUNGER

I served in slavery fifty-five years, and am now nearly seventy-two years old. I was born in Virginia, went, at ten, to Tennessee; at twelve, to Alabama: was, all the time, body servant of a military man. [...] I hired my time, and made some money. I bought my wife's freedom first, and sent her away. I got off by skill. I have children and grand children in slavery.

I had rather starve to death here, being a free man, than to have plenty in slavery. I cannot be a slave any more – nobody could hold me as a slave now, except in irons. Old as I am, I would rather face the Russian fire, or die at the point of the sword, than go into slavery.

We are placed in different circumstances here – some drag along, without doing much – some are doing well. I have a house; I have taken up fifty acres of land, and have made the payments as required; I have other property besides. Here is Henry Blue, worth twelve thousand dollars; Syddles, worth a fortune; Lucky, worth a very handsome fortune; Ramsay, a great deal of land and other property, at least twelve thousand dollars; all these were slaves at some time. And there are many others wealthy, through their own skill and industry.

Before I came here, I resided in the free States. I came here in consequence of the Fugitive Slave Bill. It was a hardship at first; but I feel better here – more like a man – I know I am – than in the States. I suffer from want of education. I manage by skill and experience and industry – but it is as if feeling my way in the dark.

#### GILBERT DICKEY

I have been in Canada but six weeks: am 55 years old. I was raised a slave until 35. I was born in North Carolina, Guildford Co., where I was the main hand on the farm, where we raised wheat, corn, rye, etc., some cotton. [...] No man, who has not been in slavery, knows the real curse of it. A northern man can't tell half how bad it is. [...] I came on purpose to this country where I could be a free man, and to encourage men of my color to take hold of work; to set them a good example, and to make their condition here better, if my assistance could do any good.

#### WILLIAM J. ANDERSON

I was a slave from birth, until thirty-two years old, on Red River, Bayou Rapide. [...] I have seen many whipped till they could not stand up. S— P. S—

whipped a man in Red River jail while I was turnkey, until he burst a blood vessel, and died. I saw this done: no notice was taken of it.<sup>152</sup>

#### HENRY CRAWHION

Was born in Louisville, Ky. A soon as able to work, I was hired out on a steamboat, and have mainly followed steamboating. Master died, and I remained with my mistress: young master being a sporting character, I had to be sold to pay his debts. Was sold to a trader in L., who took me to South Carolina, where I was employed three months to take care of race-horses. While there, I undertook to escape. [...] I went to see my wife, and left for the North. I got here last night. I don't feel reconciled, on account of my wife and family. I am anxious now to get work (he got employment in the course of the day). I would prefer Louisville, if I could be free there. It is hard on me that I am obliged to live away from my family.

I cannot express what I think of slavery, I have so horrible ideas of it. [...]

#### MARY YOUNGER

I was reared a slave, and have seen a great deal of barbarity in the State I came from. [...] If those slaveholders were to come here, I would treat them well, just to shame them by showing that I had humanity. [...] I often wish that people from the North could just go through the southern country at harvest time, and see and hear what is done there. There was a man whipped there one day, and at night I took pity on him and greased his back – he died on my floor.

The barbarity of slavery I never want to see again. I have children now who have got the yoke on them. It almost kills me to think that they are there, and that I can do them no good. There they are – I know how it is – it brings distress on my mind – there they are, working till late at night; off before day; and where there is no humanity – where the lash is not spared.

#### EDWARD HICKS

I was born and raised in old Virginia, Lunenburg county, and was sold when a well-grown boy – was put on the block at the court house and sold. [...] I have been here about six years. I like Canada well – I am satisfied with it. I have got a little property together, worth some two thousand dollars.

Liquor is right along the road here, and some make fools of themselves: but I mind my business, and am doing well.

My opinion of slavery is, that it ought to be broken down. If the white people were to set the slaves free, and offer to hire them, they would jump at the chance: they wouldn't cut throats.

We have got some good white friends in the United States. If it had not been for them, I would not have got here.

---

<sup>152</sup> Female slaves enceinte [pregnant] were formerly tied up for punishment: but to avoid the pecuniary loss which sometimes ensued, the masters adopted the *humane* method said to have been first practiced by the French of Louisiana. The woman's limbs are fastened to four stakes driven into the ground; a portion of the earth having been previously removed in the centre of the space staked out. The traveler in Canada West will hear of this mode in almost every town and village; from old settlers and recent immigrants; from persons who came from different slave States, and from parts of the same State remote from each other. [Note in the original.]

## HENRY BLUE

I learned the trade of a blacksmith in Kentucky. I should have been perfectly miserable to have had to work all my life for another man for nothing. As soon as I had arrived to years of discretion, I felt determined that I would not be a slave all my days. My master was a kind and honorable man; purchased no slaves himself: what he had, came by marriage. He used to say it was wrong to hold slaves, and a good many who hold them say the same. It's a habit – they mean, they say, to set them free at such a time, or such a time – by and by they die, and the children hold on to the slaves.

I purchased my freedom and remained in Kentucky awhile; then removed to Cincinnati; thence to Chatham. Every thing goes well with me in Canada: I have no reason to complain.

I think that if a slaveholder offers his servant freedom, on condition that he will earn and pay a certain sum, and the slave accepts freedom on that condition, he is bound in honor to pay the sum promised.

Some poor, ignorant fellows may be satisfied with their condition as slaves, but, as a general thing, they are not satisfied with being slaves.

## AARON SIDDLES

By the law of Almighty God, I was born free – by the law of man a slave. I was born in South Carolina: was raised in Murfreesboro', Tenn., until nineteen. I was taken into Kentucky, and sold three times. Then I was sold to one of the worst negro-traders that ever was, to be taken five miles below Baton Rouge. While he was purchasing more, I gave my guard the slip, and went in the bush five months. In this time I slept in no man's house nor barn: I felt that there were only two persons in the world I could trust: one girl, Lavina Robinson, who brought me food from a white man, and that white man himself, Timothy Guard. Mr. Guard knew me well – I was his foreman – cooper. [...] The trader got discouraged, and sold the chance of me to Guard for \$1,000. [...]

I had a previous understanding with Guard, that if he bought me, I was to have a chance to buy myself. He gave me a paper signed before witnesses, that I was to be free, when I paid him \$1,600. He also gave me papers stating that I was allowed to trade for myself: if I would not pay, he would, and if any one would not pay me, he would compel them. I went to work as a steward of a steamboat. At first, I got \$35 a month, which raised till I got \$100 a month. I paid off Guard between six and seven years after: still remained on the boats, and, in all, I worked eleven years with one man at \$100 a month – and he would give me that now, if I would go back. [...]

Living in Indiana, I was dissatisfied with the laws of the country. I had a good deal of property there; it was not safe, for any loafing white might destroy or steal, and unless a white man were to see it, I could get no redress. [...] I removed to Canada, where I would have an equal oath with any man, when any thing occurred; where I would have every right that every man has. I brought ten thousand dollars into Canada with me, and I find profitable employment for my capital here.

Excepting for the oppressive laws, I would rather have remained in Indiana. [...] I blame for this the Tories and turncoats of the free States. They don't put in



right men, that are true to their country. They are chosen to represent the free States, but they act with the South. Just exactly what they call dough-faces.

I was never taught to read or write.

#### JOHN C—N

I live at the concession line and farm about four miles from Chatham. I was many years a slave, and have been up and down the Mississippi a great deal. In the morning the great bells ring on the plantations. Before you can see persons on the farms, you hear the whips crack and the slaves cry out. I have heard them every morning, when passing up or down the river – “Oh Lord! master! – Oh Lord! master!” It seems to me always as I heard them in the dark, as if hell was there, and I heard the cries of them who were just going into it.

#### REUBEN SAUNDERS

I was born in Greene Co., Georgia. At about twelve years old, our family was broken up by the death of my master. I was the oldest child: there were three brothers and two sisters. My master’s children had grown, and were married, and settled in various parts of Georgia. We were all separated – no two went together. [...]

I don’t think any man can of right, hold property in another. I like the condition of freedom – what I make is mine. I arrived here last April.

#### THOMAS HEDGEBETH

I was born free, in Halifax Co. North Carolina, where I lived thirty-five years. About ten years ago, I removed to Indiana. [...] On removing to Indiana, the white people did not seem so hostile altogether, nor want the colored people to knuckle quite so low. There were more white people who were friendly than in North Carolina. I was not allowed my vote nor my oath. There were more who wished colored people to have their rights than in North Carolina – I mean there were abolitionists in Indiana.

I came here a year last spring, to escape the oppression of the laws upon the colored men. After the fugitive slave bill was passed, a man came into Indianapolis, and claimed John Freeman, a free colored man, an industrious and respectable man, as his slave. He brought *proofs* enough. Freeman was kept in jail several weeks – but at last it turned out that the slave sought, was not Freeman, but a colored man in Canada, and F. was released. The danger of being taken as Freeman was, and suffering from a different decision, worked on my mind. I came away into Canada in consequence, as did many others. There were colored people who could have testified to Freeman’s being free from his birth, but their oath would not be taken in Indiana.

In regard to Canada, I like the country, the soil, as well as any country I ever saw. I like the laws, which leave a man as much freedom as a man can have – still there is prejudice here. The colored people are trying to remove this by educating themselves, and by industry, to show that they are a people who have minds, and that all they want is cultivating.

I do not know how many colored people are here – but last summer five hundred and twenty-five were counted leaving the four churches.

#### WILLIAM BROWN

(An old man, apparently eighty years of age, nearly bald: what little hair he had was grey. His countenance wore a pleasant but subdued expression.)

I am not eighty – only sixty-three – but I am worked down, and worn out with hard work. Work all the time in the South – in Fauquier county, Va. When I began work in the morning, I could usually see a little red in the east, and I worked till ten before eating: at two I would eat again, and then work, at some seasons, until ten at night. Then I would have a pint of meal and a roasted herring. Tired and hungry – tired and hungry – the slaves are obliged to steal; they are so hungry, that they will steal whatever they can find to eat. [...]

The slaves work and the planter gets the benefit for it. It is wrong for him to have the money for their labor, and if a man goes to him for ten cents, to be refused. But they can't prosper: Providence won't let 'em. My master got all broke up at last, and started with his slaves for Missouri. I have a wife and three children that belong to another master. When my master was about moving, the man that owned my family came to him and said: "William is old, and his family are here; his work won't amount to much now. I will give you two hundred and twenty dollars for him, and let him stay with his family." But my master cared nothing for that. "I can get that out of him in Missouri in three years," says he. I had to leave my family behind.

When we got to Cincinnati, he put all the slaves but me in a boat and kept them on the Kentucky side. I took care of his five horses on board. [...] In the evening, while he was on the other side, I [...] went up into the city and passed a great many folks, but they took no notice of me. I wanted to find some abolitionists or Quakers. At last, I saw two white men standing together, and spoke to them. They were friendly, and it was not long after that, I got into Canada.

It is three years ago that I left my family, and I don't know whether they are dead or alive. I want to hear from them.

MR. — —

(The name and former residence of the person who furnished the following testimony of his experience as a slave, and his present doings as a free man, are suppressed, on account of the circumstances connected with his escape. The writer has suppressed several narratives and parts of narratives for similar reasons.)

At sixteen years of age, I went in a chain-gang to Mississippi, where I was sold and taken to another state. [...] I made my escape by hiding in the brush. The first friend I met was a white man at last – an abolitionist. He kept me two weeks till I got recruited.

I leased a piece of ground, and went to clearing up. It was heavily wooded. I have cleared four acres, and cut it into cord-wood; have got it under good fence – have raised one crop, and have a prospect of another. I was to have it three years more if I wished – if I leave it, I am to be paid for my improvements. I can understand about written agreements, but do not know how to write, and have suffered losses from this cause.

Slavery is one of the greatest curses that ever was. There could not be one so despised in the sight of God. I believe that the place of punishment was made for those who separate husbands and wives, and traffic in their fellow men. [...] <sup>153</sup>

---

<sup>153</sup> I've here omitted a brief but graphic description of a baby murdered by slavers for being inconvenient to them.

### ISAAC GRIFFIN

I am from Trimble county, Ky. I was a slave in Kentucky forty-six years. Then I had \$500 for self, wife, and child. I left eight children in bondage, who undertook to escape. The oldest got here; the others were retaken, and sold in Texas. [...]

Slavery is the greatest curse on earth. Nothing exceeds it for wickedness. A slave in the South suffers death many times before he does die.

I felt, when free, as light as a feather – a burden was off of me. I could get up and go to my work without being bruised and beaten. The worst thought was for my children – what they might have to go through. I cannot hear from them.

I have lived in Canada one year. I find the people laboring well generally: as industrious as any men. The law is the same for one as another. We have our meetings and gatherings here, and have no trouble at all.

I am doing as well, for a poor man, as I can expect – I get a good living.

### WILLIAM STREET

I am from Middle Tennessee, where I worked as a blacksmith, another man taking my wages. All I got was my victuals and clothes, and not much at that. Twenty-five years I was a slave – was bred and born a slave, and cannot read or write. [...]

It is above my language to tell how overjoyed I was on getting into Canada. Nothing harasses a man so much as slavery. There is nothing under the sun so mean: after a man is dead, they won't let him rest. It is a horrible thing to think of, the ignorance slaves are brought up in. There is not a man born, who can represent slavery so bad as it is. I work here at blacksmithing: I own this shop. I have plenty of work, and good pay.

## [THE ELGIN SETTLEMENT AT] BUXTON

The ELGIN SETTLEMENT, or, as it is more commonly<sup>154</sup> called, KING'S SETTLEMENT, is in Buxton, in the township of Raleigh, county of Kent. The colored population of Buxton numbers eight hundred. Nearly all the adults have, at some time, been slaves, but many resided in the free States before entering Canada.

King's Settlement comprises nine thousand acres of land – a tract some six miles in length, by three in breadth – and is situated between the Great Western Railway and Lake Erie: its boundary being about a mile and one fourth from the lake shore. A company has been chartered by the Provincial Legislature, for the purpose of constructing a railroad to connect Niagara with Amherstburg. This road is to pass through the southern portion of the settlement, and will afford a ready market for all the firewood, of which there is an abundance on the lands.

The settlement at Buxton, was first projected by the Rev. Wim. King in 1849. Mr. King was formerly a slaveholder in Louisiana; but not being "to the manner born," he manumitted his own slaves, about fourteen in number (for whom he had been offered nine thousand dollars), and brought them with him to Canada, where he settled them on farms or on lands recently purchased of the government. From long

---

<sup>154</sup> I've been unable to verify this statement. Nearly all references to the settlement that I have seen refer to it as either Buxton, or the Elgin Settlement.

acquaintance with the colored people in the South, and from their previous history, Mr. King was satisfied, that, when placed in favorable circumstances, they could support themselves as well as the emigrants from Europe, and would be capable of making the same progress in education. The colored people and their friends owe a debt of gratitude to Mr. King, for having successfully conducted the experiment at Buxton.

In furtherance of Mr. King's views, an association was "formed in Upper Canada by diverse persons resident therein, under the name of the ELGIN ASSOCIATION, for the settlement and moral improvement of the colored population of Canada, for the purpose of purchasing Crown or Clergy Reserve Lands, in the township of Raleigh, and settling the same with colored families resident in Canada, of approved moral character." The association under the above style and description was incorporated on the 10<sup>th</sup> of August, 1850.

The land is divided into farms of fifty acres each, and so situated that a road runs past each man's farm. The houses are set thirty-three feet from this road, facing streets, so that the whole settlement, when cleared up and opened, will present a uniform appearance. The land is sold to the settlers at \$2.50 per acre, the government price, and is paid in ten annual instalments, with interest at the rate of 6 per cent. But although ten years were allowed to the settlers to pay for their farms, a number have taken out their deeds already; and there is no doubt that before the ten years shall have expired, each settler will have his deed in possession: for which he will be indebted to his own exertions – since the settlers receive no money, no grants of land, no farming implements – nothing but protection and advice. Whatever they have is purchased by themselves, and as far as the supply of their physical wants is concerned, they are self-supporting.

The houses in the settlement are built of logs, after a model prescribed by the Improvement Committee. The model was 18 feet by 24, and 12 feet in height, with a gallery running the whole length of the front. While no house was allowed to go up inferior to the model, the settlers were allowed to build as much better as they pleased. The first actual settler entered in December, 1849.

The third annual report of the directors, September, 1852, says, "The number of families of colored persons settled on the lands of the association up to August 1, 1852, is 75 – and the number of inhabitants 400. By these settlers not fewer than 50 houses have been erected. Besides the regular occupants, about 25 families of colored people, attracted by the advantages of this settlement, have purchased lands in its immediate proximity. Including these 100 colored families, about 500 individuals are now comfortably settled on their own property in that district. The number of acres cleared on the Elgin grounds to August 1, is 350; and 204 of those have been under crop this season. The land is best adapted for the culture of wheat; but it also produces corn, tobacco, and hemp, equal to any that is grown in the Western States. With regard to the moral state of the people, sobriety is so general that no case of drunkenness has occurred; and as a guarantee for peace among the settlers, a *court of arbitration* has been set up, before which *five* cases only have been brought, which were decided easily and amicably, and without expense to either party. The day

school has 73 on the roll; the attendance is good, and the number increasing. About 20 of the present number are the children of white parents. The Sabbath school has 53 attending it. The church, which is supplied by Mr. King, the indefatigable and able missionary to the Elgin settlement, is attended by from 100 to 140 persons; and the desire for the administration of the word and ordinances seems to be on the increase. A Latin class was opened last November, which is attended by 6 colored youths; and it is hoped that some of them may be found qualified for teaching their brethren, or for filling the office of the Christian ministry.”

Mr. King is chiefly paid by the Home Mission Committee of the Presbyterian (Free) Church of Canada, which has always borne testimony against the evils of slavery.

The fourth annual report of the directors, made in September, 1853, states: “Up to this time, 130 families have settled on the lands of the association, and improved farms in the neighborhood: these families contain 520 persons in all. 500 acres are cleared and under fence; 135 cut down and partially cleared. Of the cleared land, 236 acres are in corn; 60 acres in wheat; 29 in oats, and 90 in other crops: making in all 415 acres under cultivation. The number of cattle in the settlement is 128. There are 15 horses, 30 sheep, and 250 hogs. The temperance principle is strictly acted on through the whole settlement – no intoxicating drinks being either manufactured or sold. The Sabbath is generally observed; and most of the settlers attend some place of worship. The number of children at the day school is 112; at the Sabbath day school, 80. They were all improving, both in secular and scriptural knowledge: a number of the more advanced pupils were studying Latin, with a view to future usefulness.”

The fifth annual report, September, 1854, shows that the settlement was making good progress. It informs us that “several houses have been built during the past year far above the model, and one person has contracted for a brick cottage, the first on the lands of the Association (this has since been completed); others, both of brick and frame, will be erected in a few years. The clay on the land is found to make excellent brick: 250,000 have been made during the last year, and the same number will be furnished during the next year. About 150 families are on the association lands and farms in this neighborhood; 77 houses have been built after the model, most of them enclosed with a picket fence and whitewashed: 8 are above the model. The rest are making arrangements to have their houses put up during the ensuing year. The number of acres cleared and under fence is 726; the number chopped down and ready for clearing is 174. Of the cleared land, 334 are in corn, 95 in wheat, 48 in oats, and 100 in other crops, making in all 577 acres under crop. This shows an increase over last year of cleared land, 226 acres; and of crops, 162. The number of cows and oxen is 150; of horses, 38; of sheep, 25; and of hogs, 700. The health of the settlement continues good; peace and harmony reign among the people. The Sabbath is strictly kept as a day of rest. Temperance prevails; nothing that intoxicates is made or sold in the settlement. The schools and church are well attended; 147 are on the roll in the day school; 120 in the Sabbath school. Progress has been made in secular and scriptural knowledge. The population has increased so fast during the last year, that

one school failing to accommodate all, the residents in the northern part of the settlement, anxious that their children should receive education, have erected a neat schoolhouse at their own expense, with a view of getting a teacher for it, at least six months in the year.”

The value of the oak timber of the lands of the Association has been estimated by good judges at \$57,000; of the maple, hickory, etc., at \$70,000. Lumber, however, has hitherto been of little avail to the settlers, for want of a saw-mill and a market. A steam saw-mill was, however, completed, and ready for operation on the 4<sup>th</sup> of July, 1855; and a plank road is contemplated, which, extending eight miles from the Great Western Railway to the Lake, will give the settlers two markets – one on the Lake, and another on the Railroad.”

The annual report for 1855, states that “the colored population have manifested a more fixed determination to raise from the soil what will support themselves and their families, without going abroad to work, a part of the year, for money to purchase the necessaries and comfort of life. . . . Nearly all the settlers have made a steady advance in clearing and cropping: the quantity of land clear and under fence is 827 acres, besides 216 acres that have been chopped down, and will be ready to put in fall and winter crops. Of the land cleared, 180 acres have been sown with wheat; 340 with corn; 50 with potatoes; 40 with oats; and 200 with hay, buckwheat, and turnips. Besides these crops, there is a considerable quantity of tobacco – the leaf of which is said by competent judges to be equal in quality to any raised in Virginia and Kentucky. . . . During the past year, but little has been done in raising stock. It has been found that sheep and horses cannot be raised with much profit, till there is more open land, and more hay to support them during the winter. The number of cows in the settlement is 140; of oxen, 50; of horses, 40; of sheep, 38; and of hogs, 600. . . . The improvement in the buildings has not made the same progress this year as last. Several buildings after the model, have gone up, and some above the model, but none have been finished for want of lumber. That difficulty will now be obviated. A good saw and grist-mill has been erected. The saw now supplies abundance of lumber for the settlement: so that, during the next year, there is a prospect of having more houses finished than during any one year since the settlement commenced. . . . One hundred and fifty children have been going to school during the last year; and some of them have made considerable progress in the higher branches of education. . . . The health and morality of the settlement continue good.”

The settlers at Buxton are characterized by a manly, independent air and manner. Most of them came into the province stripped of every thing but life. They have purchased homes for themselves, paid the price demanded by the government, erected their own buildings, and supported their own families by their own industry; receiving no aid whatever from any benevolent society, but carefully excluding donations of any kind from coming into the settlement.

Mr. King having full faith in the natural powers, capacity, and capabilities of the African race, is practically working out his belief, by placing the refugees in circumstances where they may learn self-reliance, and maintain a perfect independence of aid: trusting, under God, on their own right arm.

A few testimonials from residents of Buxton are appended. Those of Mr. and Mrs. Isaac Riley are the most favorable to the “peculiar” institution, of any that the writer heard in Canada – and yet they tell against slavery with tremendous force. Comparatively well treated as was Mrs. R., she was yet urged by a young white man to make her escape from “darkness,” and from evils which impended over her.

#### ISAAC RILEY

In Perry county, Missouri, where I was raised, I never saw an overseer, nor a negro-trader, nor driver, nor any abuse, such as is practiced in other places. I’ve never seen any separations of families. I always from a small boy meant to be free at some day. After I had a son, it grieved me to see some small boys in the neighborhood, who were hired out to work twenty miles from home. I looked at my boy, and thought if he remained, he would have to leave us in the same way, and grow up in ignorance. It appeared cruel to keep him ignorant.

I escaped with my wife and child to Canada. Among the French near Windsor, I got small wages – 2s. or 1s. 6d. a day, York: and morning and night up to my knees in water – still I preferred this to abundance in slavery. I crossed over and got work and better pay in Michigan. They would have liked me to remain, and offered to build a house for me. But I did not feel free in Michigan, and did not remain. I went to St. Catharines, and got fifty cents a day. By and by, I heard of Mr. King’s settlement – I came here, and have got along well. My children can get good learning here.

#### MRS. ISAAC RILEY

I was born in Maryland, and raised in Perry County, Mo. Where I was raised, the treatment was kind. [...] I used often to think that I would like to be free as the white people were. I often told them, when they made me angry, that they had no more business with me, than I had with them.

My master was very particular about my having clothing and food enough. When I first came to Canada, the colored people seemed cold and indifferent to each other; and so it was with the white people and the colored. It seemed as if the white people did not want to speak to us. I took this very much to heart, for where I grew up, the white people talk freely to their neighbors’ colored people. I felt so about it, that if they had come for me, I would have gone back willingly. [...]

For two years before I left, my husband talked of coming to Canada. I felt no desire for leaving. But (a young man, a relative of my master) often persuaded me to leave for Canada – and he talked with a great deal of reason. He said he would not, if he were I, bring my boy up to be a slave: “you don’t know,” he would say, “how long (the old gentleman) may live – and when he dies, you may come under altogether different treatment.” At last, when there was a camp-meeting, I told my husband we had better leave, as it might be so by and by, we could not leave at all. We left, and made a long camp-meeting of it.

We crossed over at Windsor, and had rather hard times about Potico, among the French – there’s where the people seemed so distant. I thought if Canada was all like that place, it was a hard place. We stayed there a few months, and went to St. Catharines, where we did better. After a while, we heard that Mr. King was buying a place to settle the colored people. We came up here before it was surveyed, and Mr.

Riley helped the surveyors. He took one hundred acres of land, and we are well contented. If I do not live to see it, perhaps my children will, that this will one day be a great place.

My two oldest children go to school. The oldest is well along, and studies Latin and Greek. The other three are not old enough to go to school. We have good schools here – music and needlework are taught.

I think my present condition here far preferable to what it would have been in slavery. There we are in darkness – here we are in light. My children also would have grown up, had I remained there, in ignorance and darkness.

#### HARRY THOMAS

I was born in Brunswick, partly raised in Southampton, ten miles below Bethlehem, Virginia. Was then bought by a “n— trader,” J— B—, and was sold to J— S—, in South Carolina. The treatment there was barbarous. [...] In Ohio, I found the best kind of friends, and soon reached Canada. When I first came, I joined the soldiers just after the rebellion: then practiced up and down the province as a physician, from the knowledge I had obtained from a colored man in Mississippi, who knew roots and herbs – but there were many kinds I wanted which I could not find here.

I am now hiring a piece of land in Buxton. My calculation is, if I live, to own a farm if I can. My health is good, and the climate agrees with me – and it does with colored men generally.

Slavery is barbarous. In my view, slaveholders, judged by the way they treat colored people, are the worst persons on earth.

#### R. VAN BRACKEN

I was born and brought up in New York State. I have suffered in the States somewhat on account of my color: in traveling, not being allowed the same privileges as others, when they took my money: not having cabin fare like others, when I paid cabin passage. If my work was that of an hostler or cook, or any thing of that sort, I did not think my place was in the parlor; but when clean and well dressed, in occupations not offensive, then I think I am as good as anybody, and deserve good treatment.

I have four acres and a half of land here, and a fifty-acre wood-lot on the fourteenth concession, and can make a good living here.

Among some people here, there is as much prejudice as in the States, but they cannot carry it out as they do in the States: the law makes the difference.

I am acquainted with many of the colored families here, and they are doing well. We have good schools here.

The separate schools and churches work badly for the colored people in the States and in Canada. In Rochester, N. Y., it injured them very much, although the separate school was petitioned for by a portion of the colored people themselves. In Cleveland, Ohio, they have separate churches but no separate school. In Chatham, the separate school was by request of themselves. I never was in favor of such a thing.



## HENRY JOHNSON

I have lived in Canada four years – in Buxton one year. I came originally from Pennsylvania. The situation and circumstances of the colored people in Canada are better than in the United States. I have a large family – ten persons – and know. I have bought, paid for, and have a deed of one hundred acres of land. The people here are very prosperous – they came into the woods without means, depending on their own hands; they never begged a meal here – nor have any goods nor old clothing been distributed. If any were sent, I should want it sent back. In other places, where money and clothes have been given, the tendency is to make men lazy – that I know, for I saw the bad effects in Amherstburg. I wouldn't receive any of their help: I didn't want it: I felt 't would do more injury than good. We look upon the steam saw and grist-mill, just finished, as of great benefit to us here. I left the States for Canada, for rights, freedom, liberty. I came to Buxton to educate my children.

## DRESDEN; DAWN

Dresden is situated at the head of navigation on the Big Bear Creek, just above the bend in the river which indents the land of the Dawn Institute. It is in the gore [sic.] of Camden, being part of the township of Camden. The village contains about 100 whites and 70 blacks. There is not land enough cleared and under cultivation to supply the wants of the inhabitants: their principal business is in lumber, especially staves. One individual had, in the spring of the present year, 125,000 ready for shipment, worth, as I was informed, from \$55 to \$60 per M.; and as many more had been manufactured by others. About one fifth of the labor of these was performed by colored men. Many of the colored settlers were attracted to Dresden and Dawn by the proffered advantages of education, on the industrial plan, in the Dawn Institute. Their children at present attend a school situated on the Institute Farm, but not under the supervision of its managing agent; it is in the hands of trustees, connected with the common school system. Twenty-four children were assembled about the house, a little before the hour for opening school. The white and colored do not attend the same school.

The colored people in the neighborhood of Dresden and Dawn are generally very prosperous farmers – of good morals, and mostly Methodists or Baptists. But here, as among all people, are a few persons of doubtful character, who have not been trained “to look out for a rainy day” – and when these get a little beforehand, they are too apt to rest on their oars.

Some of the settlers are mechanics – shoemakers, blacksmiths, etc. About one third of the adult settlers are in possession of land, which is, either in whole or in part, paid for.

## BRITISH AMERICAN INSTITUTE

In the early history of its settlement, this was known as the Dawn Institute. In 1840, £350 was raised in England, mostly among Quakers, for the purpose of establishing an Industrial or Manual Labor School for the benefit of refugees and

their children. Three hundred acres of land were purchased and deeded to trustees, solely to subserve educational purposes.

The Dawn Institute Farm, lies partly in the gore of Camden, and partly in the township of Dawn. It is beautifully situated on a bend of the river Sydenham (the Big Bear Creek of the maps). At one extremity of the curve, where the river “comes cranking in,” with “deep indent,” is a windowless, uninhabited, two story frame building, against which props are placed to keep it from falling. This house was injured by fire soon after its erection, and has never been repaired. At the opposite extremity of the bend, and nearly half a mile distant, is situated a dilapidated steam saw-mill, which has not fired up for about two years: huge logs, brought to the mill long ago, lie rotting on the ground. The ruined dwelling-house on the one hand, and the old, unused saw-mill on the other, and the unbroken stillness of a spot so well fitted for the home of busy men, give an unfavorable and melancholy impression to the mind, which the sight of the growing grain on the farm, and of the deep and beautiful river, winding from view among lofty woods, can scarcely dispel. An unfreighted canoe, paddled down the stream by a colored man, and a larger boat which a youngster was pushing to the shore, assisted by two lads tugging at a line, was the only navigation observable.

I was hospitably and kindly received by John Scoble, Esq., resident superintendent, who expatiated with pleasing enthusiasm on the natural advantages of the place, and accompanied me in a walk along the bank of the river, to point out the site where the church is to be erected, on either side of which is to be a school-house, one for boys, the other for girls. The cultivated clearing, across the stream, he pointed out as the spot where the college is to be erected. In a beautiful piece of woods, a little above the ruined dwelling-house, and extending from the Dresden road to the river, trees have been felled, to open an avenue to the shore: and when the obstructions shall have been removed, and the road graveled, this avenue will add much to the beauty of the place. The ground opposite the avenue on the right of the Dresden road, rises gently in a wooded knoll – the trees are to be “thinned out,” leaving a magnificent grove, and, on the summit of the elevation, a cottage is to be erected, from which the superintendent will be able to survey all parts of the farm.

The Rev. Hiram Wilson originally conceived the plan of establishing here an Industrial School; and he directed and managed the school for nearly seven years from its commencement in the wilderness. At that time there were no more than fifty colored persons in all, in the vicinity of the tract purchased. Mr. Wilson began the school with fourteen boarding scholars, received the refugees as they arrived, and did what he could for their encouragement. About seven years ago, Mr. W. left the Institute: it was then a little embarrassed, but was considered to be in good condition for accomplishing the main design. The saw-mill was in the process of erection, about the time that Mr. Wilson resigned.

The original purchase was two hundred acres, to which one hundred were subsequently added. Nearly half the tract has been cleared, and is well cultivated. Three or four colored families support themselves on the Institute Farm. Mr. Josiah

Henson resides here, but as he was absent at the time of my visit to Dawn, I had not the pleasure of an interview.

The First Annual Report to the Anti-Slavery Society of Canada, presented March 24, 1842, says of the Educational Institute, "About sixty pupils are attending the school. The Institution is soon to be placed under the management of the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society, a change likely to prove favorable to its future success." The property of the Institute has since been conveyed through John Scoble, Esq., by "lease and release".

The whole number of colored persons in Dawn and Dresden, who are within reach of the place where the church and school-houses are to be built, does not exceed five hundred.

There is not a single colored person coming into Dawn or Dresden, who if he have health and industrious habits cannot support himself within one week of his arrival. Refugees need no pecuniary or other aid, except on first arriving, or in sickness, or with young children.

Mr. Scoble is ready to assist in any enterprise which would be of advantage to the Institute. Sydenham River is deep and bold; from its banks commerce may be carried on with St. Clair and the adjacent lakes – nay, with the Atlantic itself. What is wanted is, the hearty cooperation of wealthy, energetic, and enterprising men.

#### WILLIAM HENRY BRADLEY

This is my name since I left slavery: in slavery I was known as ABRAM YOUNG. I left Maryland with my wife and two children in 1851. While body-servant, I was well used – while a farm-hand, had more hardship.

In Baltimore, I was acquainted with Mr. M—— L. N——.

I look at slavery as the most horrid thing on earth. It is awful to think of the poor slaves panting for a place of refuge, and so few able to find it. There is not a day or night that I don't think about them, and wish that slavery might be abolished, and every man have his God-given rights.

I have prospered well in freedom. I thank the Lord for my success here. I own fifty acres of land, bought and paid for by my own energy and exertions, and I have the deed in my house.

If there were a law to abolish the use of liquor as a beverage, it would be a good thing for Canada.

I own two span of horses, twelve head of hogs, six sheep, two milch cows, and am putting up a farm barn.

There is a great deal of prejudice here. Statements have been made that colored people wished for separate schools; some did ask for them, and so these have been established, although many colored people have prayed against them as an infringement of their rights. Still, we have more freedom here than in the United States, as far as the government law guarantees. In consequence of the ignorance of the colored men, who come here unlearned out of slavery, the white people have an overpowering chance. There are many respectable colored people moving in, but I have not much hope of a better state of things. Public sentiment will move mountains of laws.

Steam-engines don't work harder than a man's heart and veins, when he starts from his master, and fears being overtaken. I don't understand how an honest man can partake of any principle to carry him back.

If a man could make slaves of mud or block, and have them work for him, it would be wrong – all men came of the hand of the Almighty; every man ought to have life, and his own method of pursuing happiness.

Mr. Scoble is doing all he can for the benefit of the colored people. His plans are all for the good, but they don't seem to see it, and so don't help along as they might.

#### WILLIAM A. HALL

I was born seven miles from Nashville, Tenn., Davidson county. I lived one year in Mississippi. [...] I went from Mississippi to Bedford county, Tenn. My master died there. [...] The doctor who attended my master had be sold at auction, and bought me himself, and promised he would never sell me to anybody; but in six months he tried to sell me. Not making out, he sent me to his father's farm in Tennessee, where I was treated tolerably well. [...]

I like Canada. If the United States were as free as Canada, I would still prefer to live here. I can do as much toward living here in three days, as there in six.

### WINDSOR

Windsor, at the terminus of the Great Western Railway, is in the township of Sandwich. It was incorporated January 1, 1854, with a population of 1000 souls. It is now estimated to contain one thousand four hundred inhabitants. There are settled in various parts of the village fifty families of colored people, some of whom entertain as boarders a number of fugitives in bondage. Assuming an average of five in a family, the colored population may be set down at two hundred and fifty. The general appearance of these is very much in their favor. There are many good mechanics among them: nearly all have comfortable homes, and some occupy very neat and handsome houses of their own.

Appearances indicate that the inhabitants of Windsor will unite in supporting good schools for the rising generation, without distinction of color. Where separate schools exist, the advantage in respect to buildings and teachers is for the most part on the side of the whites; and unless the separate schools are abolished, there is reason to fear that the progress of the colored people in education will be very much retarded in the greater part of the province. Mrs. Mary E. Bibb, widow of the late lamented Henry Bibb, Esq., has devoted herself to teaching a private school in Windsor, and with good success. During the last spring term, she had an attendance of forty-six pupils, seven of whom were white children.

A gentleman of Windsor who has taken a deep interest in the welfare of the African race, is of opinion that immigrants who have been engaged in agricultural pursuits in Pennsylvania and other free states are more industrious and "more to be depended upon than those who come into Canada directly from a state of slavery." The same gentleman assured me that the best and most dexterous blacksmith he had

ever known was a refugee: he had not such tools as he wanted, nor would take good ones on credit, for fear he might not be able to pay: yet he would make or mend various utensils, while other smiths could not. He is now at Buxton.

While in Windsor, I was repeatedly informed by those who have the best means of knowing, that “there is no need of raising money to aid the colored people here, unless for a day or two when a fugitive family first comes in. Women get half a dollar for washing, and it is difficult to hire them at that.”

A circumstance which fell under my notice in this township of Sandwich<sup>155</sup>, reminds me of what I might with propriety have said in referring to other parts of the province, that it is fortunate for some conscience-stricken slaveholders, that Canada affords a refuge for a certain class of their household victims – their slave-wives, or slave-children, or both. If it be a crime to assist slaves in reaching a land of freedom, it is not a crime of which those terrible fellows, the northern abolitionists, alone are guilty. Slaveholders may pour contempt on the names and the deeds of northern philanthropists: but these have no slanderous epithets to hurl back upon the southerner, who snatches his children and the mother of his children from the threatening hammer of the auctioneer, and hurriedly and tearfully starts them for the North with the parting injunction, “Stop not short of Canada!” We rejoice with him that England offers a place of refuge where his wife and his offspring may be free. Yet, of any head of such a family, a northern fanatic might be prompted to ask, “Is this course honorable and manly? Do not these children need *both* parents to look after their interests? And does not this slave-wife, ignorant and among strangers in a strange land, need your presence, your counsel, your direction?” He that provideth not for his own household is worse than an infidel, and almost as bad as an abolitionist: but your family are in arrears for board, and are quartered upon the charity of persons who are themselves poor refugees.

Mr. David Cooper, who lives on the lands of the Industrial Institution, has furnished a statement which will be found below, showing the position of affairs where he resides.

### REFUGEES' HOME

At about nine miles from Windsor, in the townships of Sandwich and Madison, the Refugees' Home Society have made a purchase of nearly two thousand acres of land, on which reside some twenty families, each on a farm of twenty-five acres. Forty 25 acre lots have been taken up. A school is maintained there three fourths of the year.

Mr. Henry Bibb, who was himself a fugitive from the house of bondage, originated the idea of establishing a society which should “aim to purchase thirty thousand acres of government land somewhere in the most suitable sections of Canada where it can be obtained for the homeless refugees from American slavery to settle upon.” This was soon after the passage of the fugitive slave bill.

The society was organized and a constitution adopted in August, 1852. The object of the society is declared to be “to assist the refugees from American slavery to

---

<sup>155</sup> See the narrative of J. C. Brown, Chatham. [Note in the original.]

obtain permanent homes, and to promote their social, moral, physical, and intellectual elevation." The society propose to purchase of the Canadian government, fifty thousand acres of land, at a cost of one hundred thousand dollars. Money for the purchase is obtained in part by contributions; and one half of the moneys received for the sale of the lands is devoted to the purchase of other lands. The other moiety of moneys received is to be devoted to the support of schools.

By the constitution adopted in 1852, it appears that each family of actual settlers receives twenty-five acres of land, five of which they receive free of cost, provided they shall, within three years from the time of occupancy, clear and cultivate the same. "For the remaining twenty acres, they shall pay the primary cost in nine equal annual payments, free of use, for which they shall receive deeds." This article may be varied to favor the aged, etc. "This Society shall give deeds to none but landless refugees from American slavery." "No person receiving land by gift or purchase from the Society shall have the power to transfer the same under fifteen years from the time of the purchase or gift." "All lands becoming vacated by the removal or extinction of families, shall revert to the Executive Committee."

Here, too, as in Buxton, the claims of temperance are kept fully in view. A by-law provides that "No house shall be used for manufacturing or vending intoxicating liquors on any lot received from this Society."

The Refugees' Home Society, its officers and agents, possess the entire confidence of the American public: at least of that portion which sympathizes with the wandering outcasts from the United States. It will be seen by some of the testimonials which follows, that some dissatisfaction exists among the settlers: having its origin doubtless, in some misapprehension or mistake. Still, I have not felt at liberty to depart from my original plan – that so far as the limits of a single volume may extend, the colored people of Canada might express their own opinions, and tell their own story of their slavery in the past, their present condition, and their future prospects.

The second report of the Canada Anti-Slavery Society (for 1853) remarks: "There is doubtless a better state of things amongst the fugitives, than existed at the time when such a plan was proposed. The panic produced by the fugitive law, having subsided, the poor refugees have had more time allowed them to prepare for the change, and in consequence their wants have been diminished. The true principle is now to assume that every man, unless disabled by sickness, can support himself and his family after he has obtained steady employment. All that able-bodied men and women require, is a fair chance, friendly advice, and a little encouragement, perhaps a little assistance at first. Those who are really willing to work, can procure employment in a short time after their arrival, so that what is specially needed, is such associations of friends at the different places where fugitives land, as will interest themselves in the colored man, put him in the way of finding employment, and extend to him such encouragement in the way of grants of land or otherwise, as his altered circumstances may require. In some places, fully to accomplish this, aid from abroad may be necessary, though in most places local charity will, we think, prove sufficient."

A True Band has been organized by the residents of the Home, and other persons in the vicinity.

#### THOMAS JONES

I was a slave in Kentucky, and made my scape five years ago, at the age of thirty. The usage in Kentucky on the front part of the State is pretty good – back, it is rather tight.

I came here without any thing. I had no money or aid of any kind. I went right into the bush chopping wood. I brought my lady with me, and we were married on the way at Bloomingsburg in Fayette Co. I have one child. With what I earned by hard licks, I bought land and have built me a frame-house. I now follow plastering and any thing I can find to do. I am worth three or four thousand dollars, and pay about thirty dollars a year tax.

If a man have aid furnished him, he does not have so much satisfaction in what he has – he feels dependent and beholden, and does not make out so well. I have seen this, ever since I have been here – the bad effects of this giving. I have seen men waiting, doing nothing, expecting something to come over to them. Besides, it makes a division among the colored people. The industrious are against it, the other class favor it; and so they fall out. My opinion is, that the fugitive on the road, should be assisted, but not after he gets here. If people have money to give, they had better give it to those who suffer in trying to get them here. For those who come sick, or actually stand in need, there is a society here among ourselves to take care of them.

In regard to aid from societies on the other side, there are many who know that money is raised for the poor traveling fugitive, and they take advantage of it: free people of color from the States come over pretending to be fugitives, who never were fugitives. They come in a miserable condition, often drinking men, worthless, to get the money that is raised. I have known six or seven such cases.

The colored people are doing very well. They are poor, some of them, but are all able to have enough to eat and wear, and they have comfortable homes, with few exceptions – and some of these are in a way to have them. Some few don't seem to care whether they have good houses or not, as is the case among all people.

In the Refugees' Home they are not doing very well. Land was to be sold to the refugees at cost, giving them five acres, and they to buy twenty. Some dissatisfaction exists because there has been an advance made of four shillings an acre for surveying, although the land had been surveyed once. The refugees all refused to pay it. They were to clear up the five acres in three years. They have altered the constitution bringing it down to two years. Some had not been on three years, but went with that understanding. Alterations were made, too, enlarging the size of the houses. One of them has left the lands in consequence, and more talk of doing so. They doubt about getting deeds, and they begin to think 'tis a humbug. The restrictions in regard to liquor, and not selling under so many years, nor the power to will his property to his friends, only to his children, if he has any, make them dissatisfied. They want to do as they please. If they want to exchange and get a bigger place, they want to do it without getting cramped.

In addition, the men who have settled here, have been a bother to the society. As they were dependent, smart men would not go, and it has been occupied by men who expected aid from the other side.

The colored men must rely on their own two hands, or they'll never be any thing. The colored people are temperate and moral.

WILLIAM S. EDWARDS

I was born in Springfield, Ohio. [...] At length my mistress's son, by her consent, gave me free papers. I went to Ohio: then came into Canada, and settled down in Chatham.

I have five children. One goes to school; we are not able to send all on account of the price partly, as we have to pay fifty cents a quarter for each child, at the public school. I went into Chatham with nothing, and I want the children some in the family.

I have seen many things practiced in slavery which are too horrible to name.  
MRS. COLMAN FREEMAN

I am a native of North Carolina. I was born free, and lived with my father and mother. My father was a quadroon – my mother a mulatto. [...] I came away from North Carolina in consequence of persecution. [...] We live here honestly and comfortably. We entertain many poor strangers.

BEN BLACKBURN

I was born in Maysville, Ky. I got here last Tuesday evening, and spent the Fourth of July in Canada. I felt as big and free as any man could feel, and I worked part of the day for my own benefit: I guess my master's time is out. Seventeen came away in the same gang I did.

WILLIAM L. HUMBERT

I am from the city of Charleston, S. C., and have been in various parts of South Carolina and Georgia. I used to run a steamboat from Savannah to Charleston.

I left Charleston in September, 1853. I lived in the free States some months, but finally left on account of the Fugitive Slave Bill. This was a law of tyranny, and I had to come to Canada to avoid the ten dollar commissioner. I would rather die than go back – that's a settled point with me – not on account of ill-treatment of the person; but I could not stand the idea of being held by another man as chattel. Slavery itself is cruel enough, without regard to the hardships which slaves in general have to undergo. I do not believe that any slaveholder under the canopy of heaven can see God's face; that is, if I read the Bible right. Slaveholding is against all reason. All men are from the same mother dust, and no one can have no right to hold another as a chattel.. [...]

DAVID COOPER

There was an institution started here in Sandwich about six years ago, called the Industrial Institution. The land was bought by Rev. Mr. Willis, colored Methodist preacher, with money raised in the United States. It comprised two hundred acres, and was divided into ten-acre lots, and sold to any colored men who were disposed to buy, at three dollars on taking possession, and then six dollars the two subsequent years – then they were to have a deed. The land has never been wholly occupied. Some bought the land, but never went on it. There are now eight families on this land,



who have forty acres cleared. A part of them can principally support themselves on what they have cleared, but they have to work out to keep their families supplied<sup>156</sup>. The roads there are very bad – being wet and muddy. We have had a school there, but it is not kept up. We attend here at church – (at the Refugees' Home).

I was from Virginia originally, but was brought up in Pennsylvania. My wife was a slave.

#### JOHN MARTIN

I was born in Virginia, raised up in Tennessee, ran into Ohio, and emigrated to Canada, in order to avoid the oppressive laws of the States.

The Refugees' Home in Sandwich was commenced in 1851. It comprises between sixteen and seventeen hundred acres of land – I do not know how many families reside on it. I commenced here in the bush three years ago, and have gone over about eight acres – I think the biggest clearing there is. Those near round me are well satisfied with their homes, excepting the oppression they have tried to raise on us as to the price. They were to have it at the original price, but they bought more land on a higher rate, and wanted to average it on all alike. The old settlers are dissatisfied, and will probably leave, if this is enforced.

We have a school here. I cannot tell whether it is good or not, as it has just commenced under a new teacher: the former one did well.

The prospect is, that if the new arrangements about the price are given up, the settlers will go on clearing, and progress in the best way we can: I believe the lands will be taken up, and that the colored people will have good farms there.

Slavery is a dreadful thing. Slaveholders – I know not what will become of them. Some of them I love – I but I know they deserve punishment, and leave them in the hands of God.

The people have been told absolute falsehoods about our freezing and suffering, and money has been raised which does no good. It has been reported to us, that thousands of dollars have been raised for our benefit, of which we have never received the first red cent. I say so – I am fifty-five years old, and have ever tried to keep the truth on my side.

I was not sent to school in slave States, but have since learned to write, as witness my hand,

(Signed) JOHN MARTIN.

#### DANIEL HALL

I escaped from the neighborhood of New Orleans, seventeen years ago; had some difficulty about getting through Illinois – there were many slaveholders in heart in Illinois – but I got through. I settled in Malden at Amherstburg. It was then a dense woods – with but little cleared land. There were very few colored people when I got there. If a man had half or three quarters of an acre of corn, he thought he had

---

<sup>156</sup> The same evil hinders to some extent the advance of the Elgin Settlement at Buxton: the Directors of which, in 1854, report as follows: "Could it be so arranged that all the settlers could work on their own farms during the whole year, the improvement in clearing and cropping would be very easily doubled. We do hope, before another year, that some arrangement will be made by which the settlers will be enabled to spend more time on their own farms, and with their families." [Note in the original.]

a large patch: now they have twenty-five or thirty acre lots. The clearing has been done by colored and white, mostly by colored men, as I know, for I cleared up a great deal myself. On the Lake Erie shore, the colored people have raised in past years, a great deal of tobacco, but now they raise corn, wheat, potatoes, and buckwheat.

I look at slavery as being heinous in the sight of God. And as for slaveholders, what is to become of people who take the husband from his wife, and the infant from its mother, and sell them where they can never see each other again?

What the colored people want is, land and education. With these, they will do well here.

By the blessing of God, I have been enabled to become possessor of fifty acres in Colchester, of which six or seven acres are cleared.

#### LYDIA ADAMS

(Mrs. A. lives in a very comfortable log-house on the road from Windsor to the Refugees' Home.)

I am seventy or eighty years old. [...] I have been in Canada about one year, and like it as far as I have seen.

I've been wanting to be free ever since I was a little girl child. I said to them I didn't believe God ever made me to be a slave, if my skin was black – at any rate not all my lifetime: why not have it as in olden times, seven years' servants? Master would say, "No, you were made to wait on white people: what was n—— made for? – why, just to wait on us all."

I am afraid the slaveholders will go to a bad place – I am really afraid they will. I don't think any slaveholder can get to the kingdom.

#### J. F. WHITE

I have served twenty-five years as a slave; born in Virginia, and brought up, or rather whipped up, in Kentucky. I have lived in Canada two years – I have bought one hundred acres of land in Sandwich, suitable to raise any kind of grain.

I want to tell the people of the United States, that as far as begging for fugitives is concerned, that we are amply able to take care of ourselves: we have done it, and can do it. We want none to beg for us; let them give to the fugitive on his way, and to those who are assisting him on his way. Money has been raised – an immense quantity of it, too, but we don't get it – indeed, we don't want it. We have a society here to take care of our brothers when they get here, and we can do it without assistance. If people send things through pure motives to the suffering, we thank them for their intentions – still, there is no need of their doing even that.

#### LEONARD HARROD

I was born and raised in Georgetown, D.C., where I had a wife and two children. About six o'clock one morning, I was taken suddenly from my wife; she knew no more where I had gone than the hen knows where the hawk carries her chicken. Fifteen hundred miles I wore iron on my wrist, chained in a gang from Georgetown to Port Gibson. There I was sold and put to receive and pack cotton, etc., for six years. Then I was sold to Nashville, Tenn., one year; then to New Orleans fifteen years; then I took up my bed and walked for Canada. I have been in Canada nearly two years. I was poor – as low down as a man could be who is not underground. It was in winter

– my wife was in a delicate situation – and we had nothing for bedclothes at night but what we had worn through the day. We suffered all the winter for things we left on the way, which were never sent us. My wife is now under the doctor’s care in consequence.

I have hired a place to work on, and have bought two acres of land.

A man can get more information in Canada about slavery, than he can in the South. There I would have told you to ask master, because I would have been afraid to trust a white man: I would have been afraid that you would tell my master. Many a time my master has told me things to try me. Among others, he said he thought of moving up to Cincinnati, and asked me if I did not want to go. I would tell him, “No! I don’t want to go to none of your *free* countries!” Then he’d laugh – but I did want to come – surely I did. A colored man tells the truth here – there he is afraid to.

## SANDWICH

This beautiful and quiet town, two miles from Windsor, has a population of about fifteen hundred, including twenty-one colored families, which number, perhaps, one hundred persons.

The colored population have the right to send their children when qualified, into the grammar school. None have hitherto availed themselves of this right. Here, as in many other parts of the province, the colored people by accepting of that provision of law, which *allows* them separate schools, fail of securing the best education for their children. The colored teachers who present themselves are examined with a great deal of “lenity” – and some who cannot even spell, are placed in charge of the young.

The prejudice against the African race is here very strongly marked. I had not been customary to levy school taxes on the colored people. Some three or four years since, a trustee assessed a school tax on some of the wealthier citizens of that class. They sent their children at once into a public school. As these sat down, the white children near them deserted the benches: and in a day or two, the white children were wholly withdrawn, leaving the school-house to the teacher and his colored pupils. The matter was at last – “compromised”: a notice – “Select School” – was put up on the school-house: the white children were selected *in*, and the black were selected *out*.

Still, the prejudice here is not deeply seated: it is only skin-deep. Some slight affairs on the border prove that if a slaveholder were to set his foot in the township with any sinister intention, the true sentiments and feelings of the people would manifest themselves in the most decided and unmistakable manner. The people of Sandwich, as one of them jocosely remarked to me, are “awful independent”: and such is their old-fashioned English hatred of oppression, that the population would rally, almost to a man, to defend the rights of the humblest negro in their midst – even of “crazy Jack,” the butt of the village boys.

It is to be observed, moreover, that the law allows separate schools not only to colored people, but to Catholic and Protestant sects, when these are in a minority.

The colored people have also their separate churches here. The Methodists contemplate erecting a building for public worship, and a member of that society remarked to me that he for one, would like to have aid for that purpose, as he did not see how it could be done without; but that the sentiment of his brethren generally was against begging. I asked him why they did not attend the churches of the whites of the same denomination. His reply indicated that they thought they would not be welcomed there with a single exception: "One church," said he, "has thrown open its doors to us; and that is the English Church – Mr. Dewey's – they have invited us all in, and they say if it is not big enough, they will make it bigger." Whether I advised him to comply with an invitation so truly Christian in character, the reader, if he is a Yankee, and cares to take the trouble, can readily guess.

There is a school now open here registering thirty colored children, and having an average attendance of twenty-four. It is under the charge of an able and accomplished lady teacher – Miss Gifford – who informed me that the school was established by the Refugees' Home Society.

#### GEORGE WILLIAMS

I was from Maysville, Ky., but belonged in Fairfax county at first. Left Virginia at fourteen years old – am now fifty-three; have lived in Sandwich about fourteen years. When we removed from Virginia, my mother left her husband and two sisters behind. She was much grieved at leaving her husband: the children were taken from her before. This separation of families is an awful thing. At ten or twelve years old, the thought grew in me, that slavery was wrong. I felt mad every day when I thought of being kept a slave. I calculated on buying myself, and offered my master two hundred and fifty dollars. He wanted me to work a year first, going with me to another town. I did not want to go, and came off peaceably.

I remained about six years in the free States. In some respects, I suffered in them on account of my color. Many looked on me with contempt because I was a colored man. My oath was not taken as a white man's. I had a farm in Ohio, and was doing well, but a law was then passed requiring security for good behavior. A white man represented it worse than it was, so as to take advantage, as myself and two others had a heavy crop standing. I lost by coming off before harvest: all I got was a few bushels of wheat. It was a great damage breaking us up at that time.

I work at whitewashing, etc. I rent a house and own a small piece of land. The colored men here get a living. The greater part of them have no learning – almost all of them have been slaves. Some of them have homes of their own; but most of them hire. Most of them send their children to school. But we have to rent a house, and although the rent is low, yet we get behind on the rent, till some of use make a sacrifice and pay up. The school is not kept up through the year. We have not had regular schooling – we do not send to the same school as the whites. There were too few of us to raise money for a separate school. We received £18 from government, but could not carry it on, and gave it up. There is one school now supported by abolitionists in the United States.

I do not go so strong as some against receiving assistance. I have seen many cases of destitute suffering people, who needed aid, and our people could scarcely help

them. But the best way would be to manage by means of societies corresponding with those of the States. In some places, the colored people can manage without aid – but here not.

#### HENRY BRANT

I was from Millwood, Frederic Co., Virginia. I was brought up by Col. N——’s widow. I remained in bondage until twenty-three, hired out at different places. I had very little chance to get money – perhaps two or three dollars a year. Usage was, compared to farming usage, good, as when I was hired out, there were restrictions, that I should be well used.

It always appeared to me that I wanted to be free, and could be free. No person ever taught me so – it came naturally in my mind. Finally I saw that my case was pretty bad, if I was to live all my lifetime subject to be driven about at the will of another. When I thought of it, I felt wrathful at the white men. At length, I said – this will not do – if I stay here I shall kill somebody – I’d better go.

In 1834, my mistress being old, I feared that in event of her death, I might be placed on some farm, and be cruelly used. I sought out a chance to get off. I found friends among those who were in the interests of slaveholders, and by their instructions reached Canada without trouble, and had the satisfaction of having a friend come too by my persuasion. He is in Canada, but I have not seen him since. I settled in Sandwich.

I received on coming into the country neither victuals, clothes, nor money – I received only a welcome – that was all I wanted, and I was thankful to get it. I did just what work I could find to be done. I managed to save up what little I got pretty well. I invested in a home. I got me a house and lot. I own ten acres in the bush.

Comparing the condition of the colored population here with an equal number of families of white laborers, I think they are about equal in means.

Slavery is abominable – I think slaveholders know it is wrong: they are an intelligent people and they know it. They ought to have done their duty – given me my freedom and something to live on for what myself and forefathers had earned. I don’t see how a man can obtain heaven, and continue to do as the slaveholders do. A man may do wrong a long time and repent – but if he continues it, as they do, I think it is a hard case for him.

#### MRS. HENRY BRANT

I am from Maryland. I suffered the worst kind of usage: that of being held as a slave. I was fortunately among those who did not beat and bruise me. I was gambled off to a trader by my owner. I made such a fuss (and the people told him ‘twas a shame to let me go to a trader – that I was too good a girl for that, having taken care of him in sickness – that I ought to have had a chance to find some one to buy me), that he felt ashamed of what he had done, and bought me back. Then he gave me a chance to buy myself – gave me one year to pay \$270: before the year was out, I offered him \$150 in part payment – he wouldn’t take that unless I’d pay all. I then asked him, would he take that, and security for \$120, payable six months after, and give me my papers down? He refused. Then I said to myself, “If you won’t take that, you shan’t take any.” I started to Canada, and traveled in style – he couldn’t take me.

My sister was a free-woman. She was to buy me, and pay \$270, and I was to be the security. But he overreached himself: for he drew the paper in such a way, that he could not get the money of my sister. Had I overstayed the year, I would never have seen Canada' for then I would have been carried back to the eastern shore.

One thing which makes it bad about getting our children into school here is, we are so near Detroit. The people here would feel ashamed to have the Detroit people know that they sent the white into the same school with the colored. I have heard this from a white woman.

## AMHERSTBURG

Contains a population of more than two thousand. The colored portion is variously estimated at from four hundred to five hundred – the latter number probably being near exactness. Some of these, who had resided in the free States, before emigrating to Canada, assured me that here the colored people are “doing rather better than the same class in the United States.”

A separate school has been established here, at their own request: their request was given them, but leanness went with it. I visited the school. There was an attendance of twenty-four – number on the list, thirty. The school-house is a small, low building and contains neither blackboard nor chair. Long benches extend on the sides of the room, close to the walls, with desks of corresponding length in front of them. The whole interior is comfortless and repulsive. The teacher, a colored lady, is much troubled by the frequent absences of the pupils, and the miserably tattered and worn-out condition of the books. Two inkstands were in use, which, on being nearly inverted, yielded a very little bad ink. The teacher appeared to be one of the working sort, disposed to bear up as well as she could under her many discouragements: but the whole school adds one more dreary chapter to “the pursuit of knowledge under difficulties.” But there is a better time coming. Malden (Amherstburg) is one of the stations at which the Colonial Church and School Society propose to establish schools, “expressly for the benefit of the colored race, but open to all.”

The colored people are engaged in the various mechanic arts, and as shopkeepers, etc. <sup>157</sup> One of the best hotels is kept by a very intelligent colored man.

---

<sup>157</sup> Including at least one tobacco farmer. “*The following is an interesting extract of a letter from a Gentleman in Sandwich, [Ontario,] to his friend in this city [Montreal].* On the 12th August, two hogsheads of leaf tobacco were shipped at Amherstburg, consigned to you, with a certificate from John Wilson, Esqr., Collector at that port, of their being the growth of this Province. This tobacco belongs to an industrious, respectable Negro, to whom I sold some land, and who is one of a number of the same color, whom I have advised to settle together and form a village; so far the undertaking is promising, and the owner of the two hogsheads in question, informs me that in a very short time he expected that at least 60 hogsheads of the same article, would be raised in this small settlement. These hogsheads are sent to you by my advice, by way of experiment, and if the plan succeeds, the greater part of what is raised annually, will be disposed of in the same manner; the object at present is to raise money to pay for their lands – I believe the quality is good, if not the best. I wish you, therefore, to dispose of it to the best advantage, and after deducting your charges, let me know the net proceeds. I wish it to be sold as early as possible, as these people are unaccustomed to, and therefore impatient of, delay. I have sold nearly 1000 acres of land in small parcels, to a number of these poor fugitives,

In an evening walk about the town, his was the only house from which I heard the cheerful sound of vocal and instrumental music: and this was occasionally interrupted by some “saucy” white boy shouting, as he passed, a stave of our Union-saving air; the same which was played in State street, Boston, by a full band, when Massachusetts swallowed so bitter a dose, that the whole world made up faces: when, with all the pride, pomp, and circumstance of glorious war, it sent one poor “fugitive black man” “to old Virginia’s shore.” [...] <sup>158</sup>

#### CHARLES BROWN

I was born in Virginia, and was raised a slave. [...] I was used kindly, as I always did my work faithfully. But I knew I ought to be free. I told my master one day – said I, “You white folks set the bad example of stealing – you stole us from Africa, and not content with that, if any got free here, you stole them afterwards and so we are made slaves.” I told him, I would not stay. He shed tears, and said he thought I would be the last one to leave him.

A year after, I left for the North. I have been cook for large hotels. My health is now very poor – I have had a bad cough for two or three years, from overwork – cooking sometimes for three hundred persons in a hotel. I have always supported myself, and have some money by me yet. I reside in Chatham, and came here to see a physician.

#### JAMES SMITH

I was raised on the head waters of the south branch of the Potomac, in Pendleton Co., Va. The treatment there is mild, if there can be any mildness in it. I remained there until my escape in 1847. My father was a white man, and was my master too. My mother’s father was also a white man. [...]

I stayed upwards of three years in the free States, married there a few days before I left in 1850, and came to Canada. I left the United States, in consequence of the Fugitive Slave Bill – it’s only a *Bill*. It vexed me as I was leaving in the boat, to hear the Germans, whom I could understand, laughing about the “n—s” having to leave, and come to Canada. One man was taken away from his wife and three children and carried back before I left.

I am doing tolerably well in Canada, and am getting a very comfortable living. I own a lot of land worth about two hundred dollars, and have other property. I keep a grocery, and sell to all who buy, without distinction of color.

---

who have escaped from the most cruel and degrading of all conditions, *slavery!* Many of them are very worthless, but no wonder, when it becomes the interest of their oppressors to brutify them as much as possible. Reproaching one of them, for his immoral habits, he observed, “we are in a state of slavery, obliged to lie to save our backs, and to steal to fill our bellies.” It is their intention after they have paid for their lands, to supply their wants in merchandise from Montreal.” MONTREAL. (1826, September 21). *Montreal Gazette*, p. 3.

<sup>158</sup> A digression on an incident in Massachusetts is omitted. The original author wrote that “The reader is requested to pardon this digression, the only one we have made hitherto.”

### REV. WILLIAM TROY.

From Essex county, Va. My father was a slave of — —, Senator of the United States. My mother was a free-woman. I lived there until twenty-one. I left there the 11<sup>th</sup> March, 1848. [...]

Personally, I have suffered on account of my color in regard to education. I was not allowed to go to school publicly – had to learn privately. The reason of my coming away was, I knew that I was open to the assaults of any ruffian, if he were a white man, and if I made any reply, I was liable to nine and thirty before what they call a justice of the peace. Further, I could not educate my children there, and make them feel as women and men ought – for, under those oppressive laws, they would feel a degradation not intended by Him who made of one blood all the people of the earth.

I have been here a few weeks only – am settled as pastor over the First Baptists Church; about one hundred usually attend divine service here, most of whom have been slaves. They seem to enjoy religion and freedom very much indeed. None are desirous to return to the corn-cobs of Egypt. [...]

### WILLIAM LYONS

I have worked in Amherstburg at joining – have worked here two years. I get 15s. York, a day. My family are in Detroit. I was free-born in Virginia, and have been ill-treated in the free States, on account of my color. [...]

The colored people here are industrious and doing well. They are doing as well as those in the States. There is less whisky drinking by colored people here, than in any place I know of. They use less, in my opinion, than the whites in general. [...]

### COLCHESTER

This beautiful farming town, on the northern shore of Lake Erie, contains a population not far from 1,500, of whom about 450 are colored persons.

The reeve of the town, Peter Wright, Esq., informed me that much of the land which has been opened to cultivation was cleared by fugitive slaves. They leased portions of wild land for a term of years, and by the time they had made a good clearing, they were obliged to go somewhere else. The amount of crime among them was no more than might have been expected from so ignorant and unenlightened a people. But as a whole, there is a manifest improvement in respect to honesty, and in their general deportment.

They have the same opportunity to instruct their children as is enjoyed by the whites – that is, they draw their share of the school funds, and the trustees are bound to employ competent teachers. It would be convenient sometimes to employ teachers from the United States, but in that case they cannot draw government money.

The fugitive slave bill drove into Canada a great many who had resided in the free States: these brought some means with them, and their efforts and good example have improved the condition of the older settlers.

The town clerk of Colchester coincided in the main with Mr. Wright, but expressed himself in more positive terms on the general improvement of the colored race. They have, however, I fear, but few friends among the white settlers. “They



ought to be by themselves;" "if we try to encourage them, we shall have to mix with them" – these and similar expressions are very common. There are not many who wish to see the colored people come up to an equal rank with themselves, politically or otherwise. The True Bands even begin to form an object of groundless distrust.

Mr. Benj. Knapp, a native of the town, an intelligent farmer, and who is one of the assessors, gave me some information, which, with a few items from other sources, and the statements of the colored people themselves, will show the state of things in Colchester.

The school system is not so well organized as in some of the States; sectarianism and prejudice interfere too much: the law allows too many separate schools paid for out of the public funds.

The front part of the township along Lake Erie is well cleared up. The farms in this part belong to white settlers, native Canadians. In the interior there is yet a great deal of wild lands; to clear these up must be a work of time. Back of the cleared farms on the Lake Shore, are farms owned mostly by whites, as far back as the fourth concession, with here and there a farm owned by a colored man. These farms are not generally so thoroughly nor so neatly cultivated as those of the whites; though there are some white men's farms no better than theirs.

In regard to fugitives, there is not one who cannot find work within a few hours after he gets here. There is no trouble about that: "we can't get men enough to do our work."

Beyond the fourth concession, "farms belonging to white and colored are mixed in." This is a newly settled part; it is within a few years that farmers have begun to settle there. Colored people have penetrated further into the woods than any of the whites: they are scattered all through the township up to the sixth concession. They are settled both north and south of the old Malden road: none would have ventured there but them: they are all anxious to own land: they go in anywhere they can make a claim, and clear up a patch. But their ignorance stands most woefully, and in some cases insurmountably, in their way. Instances of this sort are said to have occurred: a settler for instance takes a farm of 100 acres, appraised value \$200, with ten years to pay for it. He pays \$12 a year *interest* for ten years, supposing meanwhile that he is paying up the principal. *He doesn't understand it* – and when the ten years have come round, he has not got the \$200, and must leave his clearing.

The colored people send their children to school, when they have schools, and seem anxious to send their children to school. The "Colonial Church and School Society" have noted this town as a school station.

The settlement spoken of above where the colored people have "penetrated into the woods," is known as New Canaan. It is a prosperous settlement, in which the element of progress is strikingly manifest.

#### ROBERT NELSON

I was born in Orange county, Va. My mother was sold away from me before I can remember. I was taken from Virginia at seven, and remained there in Kentucky, in Boone county, until forty-seven. While I was in slavery, I belonged to a man who

used me as he did his children, except that he gave me no education. I cannot write or read.

My master got involved, and I was mortgaged. The mortgage was out and closed – the sheriff got after me, and I ran to Canada. I was to have been taken to a cotton farm in Louisiana. This was in April, 1845. I left without money. I had heard about the abolitionists, but was afraid of them: I thought no white men would do what they said the abolitionists would do. I had been told that they would sell us. So I was afraid to trust them. The abolitionists wanted to have a meeting to raise money for me, but I slipped out of their hands. After I got here, I found they were all true.

Some persons who wanted to betray me, told me I could not live in Canada. I came in without a shilling. I now own a house and one hundred and one acres of land. I have averaged about fifteen acres of land a year that I cultivated, having myself two thirds of the crop. This enabled me to support myself and family, and buy land. My wife belonged to another man. I sent on and bought her for \$400.

It is reported throughout the world, that colored people cannot live here: I have been here ten years, and have seen no one starving yet. Any man that will work can get \$10 or \$12 a month, cash, and more if he takes it in trade. I can raise corn sixty or seventy bushels to the acre, as good corn as was ever raised in the South. It has been stated that the colored population are lazy, and won't work. The principal part all work. This report has been got out by begging agents, to fill their own pockets by raising money.

The prejudice is higher here in this place than in any part of Canada. It arises from a wish to keep the colored people so that they can get their labor. They used to work for the whites, but they only received half price, and cases have been known where, for ten pounds of pork, the laborer received five. The fugitive, as ignorant of figures as a hog is of a holiday, had cunning enough to go to another place and get it weighed. By these means, the colored people became unwilling to work for the whites, and tried to make themselves independent. They began to take up land and work for themselves: of course the whites could not hire them. They have consequently become freeholders, and are of some consequence at the polls.

The colored people have cleared up two thirds of what has been cleared in this township. Those who came first, bought lands of individuals and lost them again: but when they began to buy of the government, they began to have good claims on the land.

Some, when they first came, would take a lease of a few acres of wild land, for six or seven years. By the time they had got it cleared, and removed some of the stumps, the lease was out. Then the white man said, "you can't have that piece any more – you must go back in the bush." They found they must do different from this. They began to work on the land for themselves, and to get farms of their own. Now because the white men cannot hire them, they say the colored people won't work.

They say, too, that the colored people steal. It may be that a few are a little light-fingered, they take, perhaps, a few small articles, and the greatest mischief is, it scandalizes us. What two or three bad fellows do, prejudice lays to the whole of us. But some white men have stolen on the credit of the colored. It is very easy to say

when a thing is missed – “O, ‘tis some colored man stole it” – although, it has, to my knowledge, been proved, that when theft was charged on a colored man, it turned out that a white man did it.

There is a settlement here called New Canaan, where was a large body of wild land. Colored people went in and took it up at one hundred acres apiece. I guess there may be now forty families. (In 1852, there were twenty families.) They paid the first instalment, and had ten years to pay in. But three quarters of them have already paid the whole price, and got the deeds, and are making good improvements on their lands, making enough to support their families. The preaching of the gospel is regularly kept up.

My wish to the people of the States is, to give no more money to the begging agencies. If they wish to give money to the fugitives and the sick, it should be given to the True Band societies, who can disburse it as it is wanted. The Band will attend to the fugitives.

#### DAVID GREER

I was born free in Maryland – was stolen and sold in Kentucky, when between eight and nine years old. In Kentucky I was set free by will, and as they were trying to break the will up, some of my claimant’s friends persuaded me to come off to Ohio. From Ohio, I came here on account of the oppressive laws demanding security for good behavior – I was a stranger and could not give it. I had to leave my family in Kentucky.

I came in 1831. I have cleared land on lease for five or six years, then have to leave it, and go into the bush again. I worked so about thirteen years. I could do no better, and the white people, I believe, took advantage of it to get the land cleared. This has kept me poor. I guess I have cleared not short of seventy or eighty acres, and got no benefit. I have now six acres cleared.

#### EPHRAIM WATERFORD

I was born free; was bound until twenty-one, in Virginia. The man I was bound out to, was to teach me to read and write, but did not – never gave me any education at all.

I came into Indiana in the spring that James K. Polk was made president. I stayed there till about two years ago. I left on account of oppression in Indiana. [...] Between thirty and forty of us, little and big, came over at the same time. I have a farm here of two hundred acres wild land: I have five acres under fence in corn now. E. Casey and S. Casey came over at the same time. They are doing first-rate. Both have farms on the 1<sup>st</sup> concession – I think between twenty-five and thirty acres under fence together.

There is prejudice right smart in some places in this town. We try to live as upright as we can, get a little stock, etc. The whites can easily hire any colored man who has no work to do for himself. A great many are doing hired work about the town to-day – hired more by white men than by colored, the white being more able. I intend to give my child as good an education as I can.

### ELI ARTIS

I have twenty-five acres of land, bought and paid for – about five acres cleared. I am often hired out, and never refuse to work where I can get my pay, and have often worked where I got no pay. The colored people are industrious, and if any say they are not willing to work, it is a lie, and I'll say so, and sign my name to it.

I suffered from mean, oppressive laws in my native State, Ohio, or I would not have been in this country. I have lived here fourteen years.

### EPHRAIM CASEY

I am from the State of Georgia, where I was born free. But the laws were no better about learning for a free man than for a slave. I was never sent to a school in my life. My opportunities for religious information were poor. I am now a member of the Methodist Church. At about twenty-three, I emigrated to Indiana, carrying no property. In Indiana, I attended to farming. I had a farm there, and when I left, owned one hundred and eighteen acres. I left on principle – on account of the laws. I liked the country very well. The laws bore hard on me before I came away – I had a case in law, and could not prove my side good by the evidence of colored men, which caused me a loss of fifty or sixty dollars. I did not feel disposed to stand this, and emigrated into Canada.

I settled in Colchester, where I bought out a white settler, land and stock, for seven hundred and fifty dollars. The farm was sixty acres, one half improved: seventeen head of hogs, and five head of cattle. There was no good water there. He had dug in a few places, but got no supply. I sunk a well twenty-eight feet, and the water now rises and runs over the surface, a stream eighteen inches deep; enough to supply water for a steam saw-mill. I have growing eight or ten acres of corn, five or six in wheat, two or three in oats, some potatoes, and other vegetables. The land is better than where I was in Indiana.

I moved in, two years ago last May. I have hired colored men to work for me whenever I wanted their help, and have seen them hired by others: but they prefer, so far as I know, to work for themselves, and to get an independent living.

### REV. WILLIAM RUTH

I am a native of Bourbon, Ky., left there at twenty-seven, and have resided principally in Colchester since 1825. I never met with any rough usage in slavery. It was expected that I would be set at liberty at thirty-one, by the will of my former master; but as there was supposed to be a disposition not to give me a fair chance, I was assisted off by a man who was a slaveholder himself. There are a great many such movements there.

I was young when I left there, but often saw separations of families by sales and by hiring. I happened to fall to an Irishman, who was a good sort of man – an extraordinary man for a slaveholder – in advance of all the county for kindness to his slaves.

I have fifty acres of land under fence, and had it all cleared and improved years ago. It is well supplied with water. I have an orchard with a good assortment of fruits – apples, pears and peaches. It is one of the best farms in Colchester. I own seventy acres besides in New Canaan.

New Canaan is going to be one of the finest and most beautiful places. It has every advantage necessary to make it a fine settlement. It is covered with heavy timber, and has a first-rate soil. The settlers are doing extraordinarily for the time they have been there.

The colored people have their inferior class as well as other people; I mean a careless, loafing, negligent, vicious class – and they have their turn in prison, like other persons of that sort. We don't claim to be better than other people, but we claim to be as good.

In regard to education, we are destitute of it, as a general thing. But the prospect is advancing. The government schools are kept up. The rising generation are improving.

My candid opinion in regard to raising money in the United States for fugitives is, that they should have an agent here whom they can place confidence in, and have him expend it under the direction of a committee of white men belonging to the province. I would have the board white, in order to bring the races more to an understanding and better feeling towards each other; another reason is, that the colored population have not generally had the opportunity to learn how to transact business. They might, as they improve, be placed on the board.

The society over which I am placed, is connected with the Wesley or New Connexion in Canada. I preach every Sabbath, generally two or three times a day. They pay good attention to religion, and as a general thing are a moral people. The laws of chastity are well observed: in this they excel the whites.

## GOSFIELD

Numbers nearly 2,600 inhabitants. The whole colored population, by actual count, is 78. Of the heads of families all but two or three are freeholders, and some of them have very good farms. James King, Esq., Clerk of the Courts for the County of Essex, C. W., thus characterized the colored people of Gosfield: "They are good, loyal subjects and good, honest people. They are as moral as any people. There is no fault to be found with them at all."

### JOHN CHAPMAN

I was originally from Kentucky, but removed into Indiana at fourteen. I did not feel safe in Indiana, and removed with my family into Canada at Gosfield. Then it was pretty much all bush. The farmers raised but little more than they wanted themselves. One raises as much now as twenty did then. It was hard to get a start when I came to this country.

There are now seventy-eight men, women, and children: when I came there were but three colored. We live like rich folks, but when we came I was almost discouraged.

They are generally getting along as well as could be expected. All make a good living. Most of them own houses and land. They generally attend divine service, and send their children to school when it is open. It is not kept up in the summer.

## THOMAS JOHNSON

I was raised in Virginia, which I left with my master for Kentucky, at the age of twenty-one. Twenty years after we moved, my master died, and I remained with my mistress taking care of the farm. [...]

I had a wife and several children on a neighboring farm. She wished to leave for Canada, with the three youngest children. I gave her money and she got away into Canada safe enough. As soon as she was gone, I was seized and put in jail – her owners said, if they shut up the hen they could soon find the chickens. [...] In a few days, I was let out. [...] My mistress' friends, suspecting that when she died, I would run off to rejoin my wife, persuaded her to sell me. [...] I carefully slipped off my boots, then jumped up and ran for the woods. [...] I could not realize that I had done such a thing as to run away – it seemed so *low*. I – that had always been trusted, and had served faithfully – to be a *runaway* at last. [...]

I aimed for Toronto, but on my way fell in with a man [...] who knew where my wife and children lived in Malden. I went there and joined them: and since that time, three others of my children have made their escape and are here.

I hired a piece of land in Malden for three years. It was not cleared – I cleared it: then my lease was up, and I rented a farm fifty dollars a year for five years. When I took it, the fence was down. I fixed it up, and cleared more. Then I told my folks that I would have a piece of land of my own. They thought I could not pay for it. I told them if they put a piece of ice on a log in the sun, they would see the ice melt away – so, said I, our strength is melting away. I took a piece of fifty acres, six acres cleared, at five dollars an acre, and I have got the deed of it. Others have done the same, and are doing it now. I don't want anybody to beg for me in the United States.

## ELI JOHNSON

[...] I received assistance from kind friends, and reached Canada without difficulty about five years ago. I have had a serious time in my life.

I felt so thankful on reaching a land of freedom, that I couldn't express myself. When I look back at what I endured, it seems as if I had entered Paradise. I can here sing and pray with none to molest me. I am a member of the Baptist Church, and endeavor to live a Christian life.

I rent a piece of land, and make out to live. My family are sickly, so that I have not been able to purchase land. But I am not discouraged, and intend to work on while I have health and strength, and to live such a life as I should wish when I come to die.

END

## “The exiled negroes in Canada”<sup>159</sup> (1857)

### I. THE NEGROES OF TORONTO

The neighboring British provinces have long been the refuge of the fugitive slave, and every increase on this side of the border of the rigor of the laws to ensure his return to his master, causes him to look with more eager longing to a country in which his liberty is secure and he possesses the same political rights as the rest of mankind. There the law is a protector, and the public, always more rigidly virtuous when the crime to be condemned is that of a neighbor, will see that it is neither violated nor evaded. The desire of safety and of political equality, valued the more highly from its being strenuously denied, has attracted numbers of colored men, both fugitive slaves and free, to a climate naturally ungenial to them. What have been the effects of this security and this political equality upon them? Have they improved morally and socially? Have they become more industrious and more intelligent, or, in the absence of all restraint, have they become idler and more vicious? Are they capable, under favorable circumstances, of becoming good citizens in a well-ordered community, or is there a want in their organization which renders the overseer and the taskmaster necessary to their well-being? A hurried trip through a portion of Upper Canada, undertaken as a relaxation from professional toil and care, has enabled the writer to answer some of these questions, at least to his own satisfaction. He claims no peculiar fitness for his task, beyond an honest desire to learn the truth, to see facts as they exist, uncolored as far as possible by prejudice or theory; and if, with every well-wisher of his race, he hoped to find the colored man improved, both morally and socially, by his elevation in the political scale, his anticipations were that circumstances and the short lapse of time had hitherto prevented such improvement.

There is in Canada a remarkable lack of separate statistical information regarding the people of color. Even their numbers cannot be arrived at with any degree of accuracy. The census of 1852 is in this respect notoriously unreliable, and its inaccuracy is acknowledged by the authorities themselves. It is generally estimated at between 30,000 and 40,000 souls, and though this computation rests on no very certain basis, it is perhaps the closest approximation we can attain to the truth. The largest body of them is to be found in the counties of Kent and Essex. Next to these places Toronto contains the greatest number; then perhaps Hamilton, St. Catharine's and London; but they are found more or less scattered throughout the towns and villages, and to some extent interspersed among the rural population.

The large and thriving City of Toronto contains a more numerous colored population than any other town of Canada. Out of its 50,000 inhabitants, from 1,200 to 1,600 are estimated to be colored. Though the great majority belong to the class of unskilled laborers, among them are to be found followers of a great number and variety of occupations. One of them, a man of wealth, lives upon his means, attending to his own prosperity, and occasionally discounting a note, when he is satisfied with

---

<sup>159</sup> This article was originally published in the *New York Daily Tribune* on Oct. 24, Nov. 2, Nov. 11 and Nov. 27, 1857. The author is credited only as 'The Tribune's Special Commissioner'.

the rate per cent and the soundness of the endorsers. One is a regularly educated physician; three are studying law, one medicine; two at least are master builders, taking contracts and employing a number of journeymen both white and black; four are grocers, and the store of one of them – the only one we visited – was in a good part of the town, handsome, neat, well stocked, and evidently doing a thriving business, the customers being mostly whites; one keeps a large livery stable, one of the best in town, and is employed to take the mails to and from the Post-Office to the railroad depot, steamboats, &c.; several within the precincts of the city are occupied in farming and gardening; others are bricklayers, carpenters, shoemakers, plasterers, blacksmiths and carters. Many find employment in sawing and chopping the wood which is the general fuel; and the barbers and waiters in hotels and private families are almost exclusively colored men.

Many of them have accumulated considerable property. This has happened chiefly among the older residents, who, purchasing real estate at a low price, have been enriched by the rapid enhancement in value it has undergone within the last few years. One colored man (a light mulatto<sup>160</sup>) is estimated to be worth at least \$100,000. The property of another is valued at \$35,000; of a third at \$25,000; of a fourth at \$15,000; of a fifth at \$10,000; several are worth over \$5,000; eighteen between \$2,000 and \$3,000, and a still greater number, \$1,000. These figures are not mere rough guesses. In obtaining them the names of the individuals were taken down, the value of their property estimated and allowances made for the encumbrances on it, and, though all such statements are necessarily liable to error, we are satisfied of the substantial accuracy of this one. We visited the wealthiest of the colored men at his own residence. It was a plain two-story frame building, such as in a country town in the States would be occupied by a respectable mechanic. The sitting-room, on the second floor, was covered with a good ingrain carpet; a table on which were lights and books occupied the center of the apartment; there was a sofa and the usual complement of chairs; an open piano stood on one side of the room; a melodeon occupied the pier between the windows; on the walls hung a well-painted portrait of the owner of the house, and engravings representing the Queen, her husband and children. Though early in September, the evening being somewhat cool, a small wood-fire blazed upon the hearth. Our host was a light-colored mulatto of middle age, short, spare, well and strongly built, with a large square head and a firm, sagacious-looking countenance. Many years previous he had emigrated with his wife and elder children from Mobile, bringing some capital with him. He was by trade a carpenter, and industry, economy and judicious investments had gradually raised him to his present position. His wife, apparently in ill health, was darker than himself; the children, somewhat darker, too, than the father, consisted of a well-built lad of 19, a slender girl of 17 and a boy of 12, who was busy at the table writing a school exercise. The elder boy was studying medicine, and, at the same time, preparing himself to pass the classical examination, which, in Upper Canada, is a necessary preliminary to taking the degree of Doctor of Medicine, and had advanced

---

<sup>160</sup> A mulatto is a person of mixed race with partly Black and partly white ancestry. The term, when used in English, is now offensive.



so far as to read Cicero's *De Senectute*. The language of the young people was correct and well chosen, and both in manner and conversation they would be looked upon as good examples of the youth of the middle class of any nation. In the course of the evening the young man played several pieces on the piano, and he and his sister sang duets with skill and taste.

The physician, Dr. A. T. A., is a mulatto, a native of Virginia, but for a long time resident in Philadelphia. Finding that he was unable to obtain access to the medical schools in that city, he came to Toronto and entered there upon the study of medicine, attending the lectures of the faculty of medicine at Trinity College. He has not yet obtained a degree, since, though he passed a creditable examination in medicine, he failed in the classical examination, which is a necessary preliminary to graduation. He is now prepared for this ordeal, and after being examined again upon the prescribed books of Plato and Cicero, and translating the necessary amount of good English into bad Latin, will become an M.D. He, however, is already engaged in practice, and has received the appointment of Physician to the Poorhouse, which, as it is in the gift of medical men, is a proof of the advancement he has made. He both talks and writes well, and is generally respected throughout the city.

The livery-stable keeper<sup>161</sup> is a fine example, physically, of the pure black man; in countenance good-humored, open, and sensible, stout in figure and inclined to obesity, in manner equally free from rudeness and servility, and with none of that wonderful polish which in negroes accustomed to good society is apt to produce a smile. He is a Canadian born, his parents having been brought to the country from New York by one of the Herkimer family more than fifty years ago. At sixteen he was left the eldest of eleven children, with an old and widowed mother, and labored manfully in the fields for their support. Four only of the eleven are left, all men, all residents of Canada, and all possessed of property.

One of the master builders was a light-colored mulatto – a slight, active, wiry-looking man; shrewd, ready and enterprising. He talked well and fluently, but with a trace of his Southern origin in his pronunciation.

We instance these individuals not as the most remarkable men among the colored population of Toronto, but because in the few days of our stay there we came in contact with them, and because they struck us as instances of shrewd sense, industry, energy and, we believe, integrity. In any population of 1,500 or 1,600 souls, they would, we think, have been marked men. They all, while denying anything like pauperism or beggary existed among their fellows unless as a rare exception, acknowledged and regretted the faults of their countrymen, their improvidence, their love of finery, [and] their disposition to shirk hard work. The builder, employing both white and colored men, said that it was his interest to employ the former alone; they required, as a rule, less looking after. The capitalist found the colored men too apt to neglect to discharge their pecuniary obligations promptly and punctually. They all said that while there was little grave crime found among the negroes, there were bad men of all complexions, and that the colored men had their share of them.

---

<sup>161</sup> Possibly James Mink. See the appendix titled "The legend of Minnie Mink".

The public schools of Canada are open alike to all, without distinction of color. The negroes, as a general rule, are anxious for education, and many indeed attach more value to school education than perhaps it deserves. About one half of all the colored children of Toronto attend the public schools. Of the remainder, many attend private schools. We saw several colored children at the Model School, which is attached to the Normal School at Toronto. The teachers informed me that they found them equally docile and intelligent with the whites. Some allowance had to be made for their conduct on account of the annoyance and teasing they suffered from the white children.

The negroes have four churches at Toronto – two belonging to the Baptist and two to the Methodist persuasion. The former pay their clergymen \$400 a year, and the latter from \$150 to \$200. A number attend the Church of England, and there are some few Congregationalists and Roman Catholics. The only colored clergyman I met left no favorable impression either of his ability or his learning.

On first entering Canada, we repeatedly heard it asserted that the colored population was given to petty thieving, and one gentleman connected with the press told me that he believed the jail at Toronto was filled with colored people. On inquiry at the jail itself we found but three colored persons in it; the remainder of the inmates, and they were numerous, were whites. The reports of the Chief of Police and the Keeper of the Prison, however, put this matter, so far as Toronto is concerned, finally at rest. In his annual statistical report to the Council, Mr. Samuel Sherwood, Chief of the Police at Toronto, returns 5,346 persons as arrested by the police force during the year ending December 31, 1856. Of these, 78 only were colored – not 1½ per cent. Now, as the colored people constitute at the lowest computation between two and three per cent of the total population of Toronto, this is a high, and I may add an unexpected evidence of the general good conduct of the colored people; and the value of it is increased when we remember that they all originally belonged to the class in which crimes against order and property are the most rife. Of the whole number of persons arrested, 4,295 were males and 1,051, or nearly one-fourth, were females; while of the colored people 70 were males and 8 only, not quite one-ninth, were females.

The printed report of Mr. Sherwood refers, as was stated, to the total number of arrests. Of these, 1,922 were summarily punished by fine, in 273 cases the charges were withdrawn, and 230 cases were dismissed. Thinking that possibly the actual commitments to jail might set a different face upon the matter, we obtained from Mr. George L. Allan, the intelligent keeper of the jail at Toronto, the monthly return of commitments to that prison from October 1, 1855, to July 31, 1857, a period of twenty-two months, transcribing them from the books of the jail in his presence. The total commitments amounted in that period to 3,370, of whom 62, not quite two per cent, were colored. Immediately after the passage of our Fugitive Slave Law, Mr. Allan informed us that there was a sudden increase in the number of commitments among the colored people, almost wholly for petty larcenies. This increase of crime Mr. A. attributed to the number of fugitives who flocked into Canada without any means of support, and whom destitution drove to theft; in a few months, as the new-comers

found employment, this increase disappeared. On the whole, Mr. Allan was decided in the opinion that, as regards crimes against the law, the condition of the colored people was better than that of the mass of the population.

## II. THE NEGROES OF HAMILTON AND CHATHAM

At Hamilton, in a population of 24,000, there are from 400 to 600 colored people, among them blacksmiths, carpenters, plasterers, and one wheelwright. There are two churches, small frame buildings, a Baptist and a Methodist, but they are not well supported, and neither of them at present has a regular resident clergyman. Many of the colored men are reputed to own property, but I do not give the estimates as I am not entirely confident of the correctness of my information. One hackman, a mulatto, who still drives his own hack, is worth at the lowest valuation from \$12,000 to \$15,000. He emigrated to Hamilton 17 years ago, acted as a porter in a store for twelve years, and then bought a hack; he has now two carriages and four horses. The town, needing the lot on which his house stands for a market, has lately paid him \$8,000 for it, and he is putting up a larger and better house on another lot which he owns. His parlor was covered with bright-colored Brussels carpet, hair-seated mahogany chairs were protected by handsome crochet-work antimacassars<sup>162</sup>, and there was a sofa, marble-covered center-table, and a piano in the room. He took three newspapers, one weekly and two dailies. This man told us that every once in a while colored men, dressed in the height of fashion and tricked out with rings and chains, would call upon him, and announce themselves as deputations from Baltimore or Philadelphia or some other city in the States, sent to inquire into the condition of their brethren in Canada. "They make me mad," continued he, "to look at them, and I have often said to them, 'Why do you stay there? You will never be anything but Tom or Dick or Jim, or good boys, or clever n—s<sup>163</sup>. Take off these fine clothes and gimcracks; come here and be men!'"

Of London, which, in a population of 12,000 or 13,000, contains from 500 to 600 colored people, we have little to say. The condition of the blacks there resembles that of their fellows in Hamilton and Toronto. Pauperism and beggary are almost unknown among them, work is abundant, and labor is fairly rewarded. The heads of the police department thought that petty crime, particularly larceny, was more frequent among the blacks than among the inhabitants at large, though in both places they thought it was less so than among the lower Irish. In London this, however, was merely an opinion, as in the statistical statements of the police department the offences committed by the blacks were not separately recorded. At London a neat and well-furnished drug store is kept by a black man, who 23 years ago escaped from Slavery in Kentucky. At that time he could write a little, sufficient, as he laughingly said, to put his name to a pass. For a long time he had dealt only in herbs and simples, but foreign drugs were gradually added, and we found him hard at work at a little Latin manual, mastering the barbarous Latin in which physicians couch their prescriptions! The condition of the colored people in regard to violations of the law, as shown by the records of the police department, is not so favorable in Hamilton as

---

<sup>162</sup> Protective (and often decorative) coverings for the backs of chairs.

<sup>163</sup> In the original, the n-word was written out in full.

in Toronto. According to Mr. John Caruthers, Chief Constable of Hamilton, there were 1,922 arrested or summoned to appear at Court in that place during the year 1856, and of those 81 were colored people. If we put down the population of Hamilton in round numbers at 24,000, the proportion of arrests would be 1 to 12½; and estimating the colored population to be at 550, the arrests among them would be a fraction over 1 in 7. It must be recollected in this connection that, from the fact of their being almost exclusively emigrants, the proportion of adults among the colored people is greater than in the population at large, and some deduction from their proportional criminality must obviously be made on this account.

Chatham, Canada West, the headquarters of the colored people, is a straggling town containing about 6,000 inhabitants, situated at the head of navigation upon the River Thames. Unlike Toronto and Hamilton, and even London, it possesses no fine buildings, and there is little outward appearance of wealth. For the first time in my travels the women were without hoops, and some strapping lassies I met, covered with huge flat Bloomer hats, their naturally broad shoulders rendered broader by a cape; their clinging skirts, innocent of starch, brass, or whalebone, presented to one fresh from the city a sight sufficiently strange. Here at last was an inversion of the common order of things! The principal hotel at which we put up was a large, wooden barrack of a building, the entrance on a level with the unpaved street, and sharing necessarily somewhat its color and appearance. Inside, things were more inviting; the rooms were clean, neat and comfortable, and the beds, except that they were stuffed with feathers, irreproachable. We found the landlord, a huge, jolly Englishman, at the head of his own tea-table, carving a round of boiled beef big enough to have fed the Common Council of a city; and, for the first time since we had been in Canada, in a place swarming with negroes, the waiters at the table were white, and females. The town consists of one long street – King street – closely built, in which the stores are all situated, while the dwellings, mostly surrounded by gardens, are scattered over streets crossing and running parallel to it.

Despite its unpromising appearance, Chatham seems an active and stirring place. In the town there are three saw-mills, two shingle-mills, two potash factories, two sash and blind factories, four flour-mills, four brick-yards, several iron-foundries, three or four wagon factories, three cabinet warehouses, three breweries and two distilleries. It is a port of entry, and exports a large amount of lumber, staves, shingles, bricks, drain tiles and flour. A large steamboat was, when we were there, being loaded for Buffalo, and two smaller steamers and a brig were lying in the stream. Before the present depression in business, which prevails equally in Canada as in the United States, seven steamboats and a dozen sailing vessels have been seen in port at one time, completely filling up the river.

Of this busy town about one-third of the population are colored people, and they appear to contribute their full quota toward its industry. Among them are one gunsmith, four cabinetmakers working on their own account and employing others, six master carpenters, a number of plasterers, three printers, two watchmakers, two ship-carpenters, two millers, four blacksmiths, one upholsterer, one chandler, six master shoemakers, six grocers, and a cigar-maker. Unskilled workmen find

abundant employment in the various mills, in agricultural labor, and in cutting, sawing and splitting the wood which is used for fuel. Common laborers obtain from a dollar to twelve shillings a day. The houses inhabited by the better class of colored people are two-story frame buildings, painted white, for the most part surrounded by well-kept gardens, and quite equal in appearance to those belonging to the same class of white residents. In one which we entered the furniture was handsome, and a new piano occupied one corner of the parlor; the master of the house, a colored man (acting by the way as a land agent), and represented to me as a man of rare intelligence, was absent. The poorer blacks live commonly in small detached cabins, sometimes built of unhewn logs, consisting ordinarily of one room. The furniture was commonly one or two bedsteads, with bedding, a chest or two, chairs, tables and cooking utensils, sometimes a looking-glass, clock or bureau. In the garden-spot about the cabin were grown corn, beans, pumpkins, squashes, potatoes, &c; their gardens, indeed, were quite as flourishing and well tended as those of their white neighbors. In every instance that came under my observation the inmates seemed comfortable, well fed and contented.

In the market place, on the day I visited it, the greater number of wagons or carts with vegetables seemed to belong to negroes. One large wagon, drawn by two good horses and tended by an active, intelligent-looking, jet-black man, was particularly well supplied. Two of the wagons were each drawn by a mare, with a colt running by its side. One rickety old cart, drawn by a half-starved horses, and containing a scanty stock of vegetables, put me in mind of old Tiff's turn-out at the camp meeting.

The means of education are not liberally provided. There is but one public school for the colored people, and that is crowded, and two private schools, one attended by about fifty and the other by fifteen pupils. The wife of the teacher for the larger of these schools, a New-England woman, the teacher himself being absent, complained that the pupils frequently did not pay the small stipend demanded of them.

Beggary, we were informed, did not exist among them, and I could learn of but two or three persons who were assisted from the town funds. In regard to sexual morality, I could hear of but one case of bastardy as having occurred in the last two years.

In the shop of the gunsmith, who has been mentioned as one of the colored mechanics of the town, we saw a rifle which he had just finished, which seemed an exceedingly neat and handsome piece of workmanship, as it was, we have no doubt, a good and effective weapon. The engraving upon it – and art in which he had no instruction – was both well designed and well executed. The gunsmith was a dark-colored mulatto from North Carolina; he had been redeemed from slavery when twenty-one years of age by his father, a mulatto. He at that time knew something of the business which he afterward followed, and acquired some further knowledge of it at the North. Misunderstanding something that had been said, we observed, with some surprise: “You surely know how to write?” He answered, with a smile, that he

had somewhere a diploma constituting him an A.B.!<sup>164</sup> On coming North he had entered Oberlin College, and graduated from that institution; and in a late catalogue of the same College he showed us the name of a younger brother who had just completed a course of instruction there. He was one who, by his good sense, intelligence and information, would have been a marked man anywhere. J— is not a singular instance in Chatham; indeed there is to be found there a much higher degree of education and culture than among the same class at Toronto.

In Kent, the county in which Chatham is situated, many of the colored people are agriculturalists, residing upon and cultivating their own farms. Many of them are represented as doing exceedingly well. One farm, owned and occupied by a colored man recently deceased, and still cultivated by his family, was generally allowed by those not disposed to favor the blacks, as well as by their well-wishers, to be the model farm of the neighborhood. Some, without capital or skill, and probably, too, without sustained industry, do not succeed; but it is generally admitted that, on the whole, they make better farmers than the Irish, and far better than the French Canadians, a considerable number of whom reside in the immediate neighborhood of Chatham.

### III. THE COLONY AT BUXTON.

One of the most interesting places visited in the course of our inquiries was the colony at Buxton. About nine years ago, the Rev. William King, an Irish Presbyterian clergyman, residing at the time in Louisiana, and owning several slaves, servants of his family, and having through his wife become possessed of a number more, brought them, fifteen in all, to Canada, and there emancipated them. Not content with this, and desirous to try, on a sufficient scale, the question whether the emancipated negro would, as an agriculturalist, be found self-supporting, and burning to improve the moral and social condition of the negro, Mr. King became the head and moving agent of an association, which obtained, on favorable terms, a large grant of lands, belonging originally to the clergy reserves. The land, forming a tract six miles long by three miles wide, was surveyed, cut through by avenues intersecting each other at right angles, and divided into plots of fifty acres each, each plot fronting upon one of the avenues. The expenses of surveying, added to the original price of the land, made its cost amount to \$2 per acre. The ground was level, heavily timbered with oak, hickory, beech, elm, maple and basswood, and the virgin soil was a deep, rich, black loam. To this place the negroes were invited to try the grand experiment; each applicant was to receive a farm, not as a gratuity, but paying for it the full cost price in ten annual installments, with interest added. He bound himself at the same time, within a given period, to put up a house upon his land conforming to a prescribed model; he was to furnish his own farming tools and implements, and to support himself and family. Only when these conditions were complied with, and the lands paid for, was he to receive his deed. A school-house, teachers and tuition were furnished gratuitously; a Sabbath School was established; and a rude log church, in which Mr. King himself officiated, was erected, and was open to all who might choose to attend public worship in it. Such is an outline of the plan of the settlement of the

---

<sup>164</sup> An abbreviation of the Latin for Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) – *Artium Baccalaureus*.

Elgin Association at Buxton, and at the end of seven years from the date of its origin that settlement numbers two hundred families and about eight hundred souls!<sup>165</sup>

Buxton is about thirteen miles south west from Chatham, and is about three miles distant from the shore of Lake Erie. Having procured a conveyance we set out to visit it, under the guidance of the son of a warm-hearted Irishman, whose Quaker education only gave point to the impulsive and genial spirit of his countrymen. For the first seven miles the road was admirable but was bordered for the most part, even in the immediate vicinity of the town, by the primeval forest, the land being held in large tracts by those who had bought it to hold for higher prices. As we turned off toward Buxton the road became worse, being a good deal broken into holes, which, in bad weather, must have been nearly impassable; on either side, however, there were well-improved farms. On the way we frequently met with blacks from the settlement, sometimes a large wagon full of men and women, with a good two-horse team, sometimes in a rickety affair drawn by a single horse, and once a black woman on horseback, with a boy of 11 or 12 years of age behind her. There was a quarterly meeting of the Methodists in session, and they were on the way to attend it. As we approached the settlement the neighborhood became populous, and we saw frequent cabins, which we took to form part of it. Inquiring the way, we were shown a little church as a guide, and, driving by it, we found ourselves within the domain.

The house of Mr. King is a long log-house, with a high, steep roof and dormer windows, and a porch extending the whole length of the building; interiorly, it is divided by transverse partitions into a number of rooms which serve as office, sitting-room, dining-room, &c. Everything was perfectly plain, but neat and substantial. Not far from the house are the little mission church, already mentioned, the schoolhouse and post-office of the settlement, all built of unhewn logs, while at some little distance are a steam saw-mill, a brickyard, [and] a pearl-ash factory, with blacksmith, carpenter and shoe shop, and the country store for the settlement. Fortunately we found the Rev. Mr. King at home and disengaged, a strongly-built, middle-sized and middle-aged man, of dark complexion, with a full square head and a homely countenance, indicative at once of kindness and sagacity. From him we learned that there were now at the settlement 200 families, each occupying their own house, and numbering in all about 800 souls. Of the land, 1,025 acres were cleared and under fence, beside 200 acres on which the trees had been felled and were ready for burning, and which would be under cultivation the ensuing Spring. Of the land already fenced, 354 acres were planted with corn, which already, at the time of my visit, was safe from the frost, and promised a more than average crop; 200 acres had been planted with wheat, 70 with oats, 80 with potatoes, and 120 with other crops, such as beans, peas, turnips and grass. There are owned by the settlers 200 cows, 80 oxen, 300 hogs, and 52 horses; there are likewise a few sheep, but they have not done well, and the experience of the community has not been favorable to sheep raising.

There are now two schools at Buxton, a male and female, the latter established within the past year for the purpose of teaching the girls plain sewing, as well as those that might wish it, the higher branches of female education. The number

---

<sup>165</sup> North Buxton still exists as part of the municipality of Chatham-Kent.

enrolled in both schools was, during the past year, 140, and the average attendance 58. Hitherto these schools have been gratuitous, but, in conformity with the original idea of making the whole establishment self supporting, a small payment will henceforth be required. A Sabbath School, kept open on every Sabbath during the year, is attended by 112 pupils, and the average attendance is 52.

Mr. King is a Director of the Elgin Association, and as such has a general superintendence over the temporal affairs of the Association; but his office is chiefly advisory, the colonists, so long as they conform to the rules of the Association in regard to their buildings and fences, being left to their own discretion. He is likewise a missionary of the Presbyterian Church of Canada, and in that capacity officiates in the Mission Church on the settlement. The negroes, for the greater part belong to the Baptist and Methodist persuasion; and while Mr. K.'s personal influence has brought a full attendance to his own little church, many of the negroes maintain their former religious connections. About one quarter of the whole number do not attend church at all, and no compulsion is used. No intoxicating liquor is made or sold within the settlement; drunkenness is unknown there, and since its first formation but one person connected with it has been arrested for a violation of the laws. No case of bastardy has hitherto occurred; the general moral standard of the community is high, and the social improvement is marked and manifest.

The settlers are for the most part fugitive slaves, and of the whole number about one-third are of pure African descent. If Mr. King be right in this, the proportion of blacks is, I think, much greater than in the Province at large. Those of them who have been accustomed to farming and have had some capital to commence with, have done exceedingly well, having cleared more land and made greater improvements than the great majority of white settlers in the same time and under similar circumstances. Those who have brought neither skill nor capital have had a much more difficult task, but even these have so far either paid up their installments regularly, or when they have passed them, it has been by permission, the money being laid out upon the land, so as to render future payment easier. *Many have already paid in full for their farms and received their deeds*, others are prepared to do so in the coming year, and Mr. K. is confident that at the expiration of the ten years all will have come into full possession of their lands.

Two settlements of Europeans have been formed in Canada under Government direction, one of Highlanders at Nottawasaga, north of Toronto, another of mixed Irish, English and Scotch emigrants at Ramsey, near Brockville; the settlers of both for some time received aid in provisions, farming implements, &c., but both have failed. At the Highland settlement some 20 or 30 of the original settlers, with their families, still remain; the others have long been dispersed. They began to do better immediately [after] the Government aid was discontinued. Mr. King attributes the greater success of the settlement at Buxton partly to the fact that, in the first place, the negroes are better ax-men than European emigrants, and so are better fitted to contend with the difficulties attendant upon clearing a heavily timbered country; but mainly to the circumstance that the colony at Buxton was, from the beginning, self-supporting. The negroes perfectly understood that they were to depend upon



themselves alone, that they were to receive no supplies in money, in food, or in clothing: and thus their pride and self-reliance being excited, they worked with a will, not otherwise to have been looked for. If, on the whole, this has been wise and has worked well in one respect, it may have retarded the progress of the settlement, or, at least, have diminished the result as seen in it; since many of the negroes have found it more profitable, perhaps necessary, to employ part of their time and labor at a distance from Buxton. Now, however, the completion of the saw-mill, the brick-yard and the potash factory affords a field for labor on the place itself.

Of the fifteen slaves Mr. King originally brought with him, three have died, though their places have been taken by children that have since been born in Canada; nine are with him still settled at Buxton; one is married and lives at Chatham; two, a mother and daughter, are at Detroit, but Mr. King has lately received a letter from the daughter, stating that they are about to return to Buxton. One of the slaves, at that time an old man of 65, received, in consideration of his age, some assistance in putting up his cabin, and we believe in clearing his land. He married at Buxton a woman of suitable years, and has ever since supported her and himself without assistance. I saw his house, his garden, and his corn patch, and everything looked neat and flourishing.

In company with Mr. K. and our companions from Chatham, we walked over a part of the settlement. The place was certainly no realization of a Utopia, nor did the cabins resemble the neat, white-painted houses of a New England village. Everything was new, rude and rough. To a city-bred man the timber was terrible. I saw one tree left standing by the roadside, at least five foot through at the base, and rising straight as an arrow and scarcely diminished in circumference to an immense height, before it gave off a branch. Most of them were from two to four feet in diameter. The road was merely a wide land cut straight through the forest, with the roots of the trees everywhere traversing the deep, friable<sup>166</sup> soil. On either side, here and there, were scattered the cabins and clearings of the settlers – the former all built of unhewn logs, set back the prescribed number of feet from the road, and each one surrounded by its kitchen-garden. They were not destitute of all traces of ornament. Over the rude porch in front of the cabin creepers were frequently trained and one, covered with a hop-vine in full bearing, looked exceedingly pretty. Some of the gardens boasted flower-beds, and bright-colored phloxes and poppies and corn-flowers were in contrast with the dark forest which hemmed us in. We entered the cabin of a fugitive, but two years from Kentucky, and who had married, we believe, some time after he had reached the settlement. The cabin was smaller than the model; but the owner, with an eye at a future time of adding to it, had built the chimney double, and a huge brick fire-place stared at us from the outside. Within was the wife, with a couple of small children, her relations, to whom the couple afforded a home. There were chairs, a table, a large chest, and a cooking-stove and its utensils. The family dinner was still on the stove, pork and potatoes, while into another vessel, in a quantity of hot, bubbling fat, had been thrown some green corn in the ear. The man was absent at work in the brick-yard.

---

<sup>166</sup> An adjective meaning that the soil crumbles easily.

Another cabin we entered belonged to a man – a full black – who, fourteen years before, had escaped from Missouri. He had been six years at the settlement, and had twenty-four acres of land fenced and under cultivation, and six more on which the wood had been felled. He had paid up four of his installments, and owned a wagon, a yoke of oxen, a mare and two colts. He had four or five children, and his eldest boy, fourteen years old, was reading Virgil! – for him, I fear, unprofitable reading. The day was warm, and the smaller children, like the rest of those we saw, were dressed for warm weather: their legs, feet and arms were bare, and their garments had apertures about them which had not been bestowed by the tailor or dressmaker. In the house, beside the ordinary bed and bedding, chairs, table &c., we found a rocking chair, and a large new safe – a recent importation from Yankee land. On asking for a glass of water, it was brought in a clean tumbler and upon a plate.

Another cabin, belonging to an old settler, was more ambitious. It was larger, with a vine-covered porch; had a hall in the center, and a room on either side; about thee walls were hung sundry staring prints, and a carpet, sofa and a large cooking stove were added to the usual articles of furniture. One feature of all the cabins we must not forget – the huge brick fire-place, occupying the best part of one side of the room, and which, with its chimney, here tokens of the roaring fires which blazed in it during the Winter.

We saw only a small, and, as we were informed, the newest and least advanced part of the settlement, but our stay in Canada was limited, and despite the hospitable invitation of Mr. King to remain a few days with him, we felt ourselves compelled to hasten home. We left Buxton with the belief that we had seen one of those rare men who, by a single-minded devotion to one worthy object, not only accomplish great ends but ennoble our common humanity.

#### IV. GENERAL SOCIAL CONDITION – HEALTH.

In our account of the colored people of Canada we have stated only what we saw, or what was given us on undoubted authority. We were unprepared for a state of things so favorable. That others, looking at them from a different point of view, may see them in a different light, is probable – indeed, certain. The blacks must have among them their quota of the idle, the vicious and the degraded. There can be no doubt that some, disappointed in their expectations and pinched by the climate, look back with regret upon their condition in the States; but what does this prove? The condition of the Irish and German laboring man is, as a rule, greatly ameliorated by emigration to the United States, yet how many of them can we find longing for the old country or the fatherland, and declaring that they did better and happier at home? It is certain that the material and social condition of the colored people is better in Canada than anywhere in the States. There is among them a manlier tone of feeling, more avenues open to exertion, more intelligence, [and] higher culture. This is most seen among the older residents, and will be still more marked among those who have been born and educated in the Provinces. Something, too, of this depends upon the character of the emigration there. It is a mistake to think that the fugitive slave only finds a refuge in Canada; many of the most intelligent of the free colored people, who have acquired in the Union some capital by their industry, seek in Canada more

liberal institutions and a better education for their children. Many, too, who find it to their interest to pursue their avocations in the States during a part of the year, have their permanent homes on the other side of the border.

In Toronto and Hamilton, we heard among the colored men the opinion frequently expressed that those did best in Canada who had resided a time in the Northern States; that the fugitives in general had not the necessary habits of self government and industry; that these came slowly, and by many were never acquired. The experience of Mr. King, on the other hand, led him to think that the fugitives were equal to the free blacks, and, indeed, that the very fact of their escape showed superior energy and determination. Which of the two opinions may be correct, we have no means of knowing.

The vast majority of the colored people in Canada are of mixed race. Mr. King estimated, that of those at Buxton one-third were of pure African descent; but even this proportion seems to me much greater than obtains in the Province at large. As a rule, not, however, without many exceptions, the mulattoes are the most intelligent and the best educated; they are the prominent men of their class, and take the lead in all questions which affect them as a race.

The more intelligent of the colored men are loyal and devoted subjects of the British crown. They set a high value upon the equality under the law which they enjoy. "Can we," said one of them, a shrewd, hard business man well advanced in middle life, "Can we help loving a government which is so kind and which has done so much for us?" and his voice was disturbed by emotion. And if gratitude on the one hand induces loyalty, hatred – no softer word will do – on the other confirms and strengthens it. They hold frequent meetings among themselves, and the staple topic of discussion is the injustice under which their race suffers in the United States; bad as the facts are they lose nothing in repetition; no distinctions are made, and North and South are involved in a common condemnation. Like all other men who suffer oppression, they are apt to fancy the attention of the world fixed upon themselves; the evil which overtops every other evil in their horizon, must seem equally prominent to all mankind. They underrate the difficulties under which their well-wishers in the States labor; they see only the obloquy under which their race suffers, and do not and will not see the causes which render their removal a work of time and patience. They overrate, too, greatly the power of England, and underrate that of the Union. In any dissension between the two countries, England would have no warmer friends and America no more bitter and unrelenting foes than the colored men of Canada.

On one subject, equally at Toronto and Hamilton, at London and Chatham, all the colored people whom we saw agreed – in repudiating those who sought in the United States contributions in clothes and in money for the destitute negroes in Canada. They deny that there is anything like destitution among them except that arising from sickness, from vice, or from idleness; they affirm that they are abundantly able and willing to maintain their own poor; that the contributions rarely reach those for whom they are intended, and that while in some cases aid may be solicited by well-meaning or ill-advised persons, in most it was sought by those who

converted the contributions they received to their own benefit. On what facts the latter assertion was founded I did not inquire; we give the statement as it was repeatedly made to us, and it would be well for those in the Northern States, who are applied to for such objects, to bear it in mind and look closely to the character of the applicants.

While by the law no distinction is made among the inhabitants, either in rights or privileges, on account of color, socially, the same prejudices, if not to the same extent, exist against the colored people in Canada as in the United States. The better classes of society come little in contact with them, and know nothing of their aims and progress. Most are indifferent upon the subject; many are strongly prejudiced against them. As was before stated, a prominent editor of a daily paper in Toronto – a liberal, kindly and well-informed man – told me that they were addicted to thefts and brawls, and that he believed that the jail was filled with them; yet, on accompanying him to the prison, we found but three colored people in it. In many places white mechanics will not work in company with a colored man, and, while by law the public schools are open to all without distinction of color, the children even of light-colored mulattoes are frequently refused admission to private schools. What is strange, all this is referred by the negroes themselves to the influence of Americans! We have previously stated we found several of the children and youths pursuing the study of the dead languages, and Mr. King is desirous that free scholarships, open to competition, should be established in the Universities for the colored people. So far as the education of those who are intended for the learned professions is concerned, this may be very well; but in other cases, the time devoted to the dead languages appears mis-spent, or not spent so profitably as it might be. To those who have to struggle in active life, those sciences which have an immediate practical bearing – mathematics, natural philosophy, chemistry, engineering, &c. – are much more useful than Latin and Greek. As for the elevation of his race, the colored man who invents a labor-saving machine, builds a superior bridge or makes a valuable discovery in the arts, will do far more for his people than one who may be able to edit Lucretius or Aristophanes.

One other topic in conclusion – health. It is well known that the negro in America, while less liable to fevers, suffers more from tubercular disease than the white man, and that his liability to it is much greater in the North than in the South. A part of this tendency may be owing, in cities, to over-crowding and want of vegetables, but a large part of it would seem due directly to the effects of climate. Many physicians believe that the mulatto has this tendency to tubercular disease in a still higher degree than the black man. For such an opinion there is at present no solid foundation, and the vital statistics of the different races require to be studied much more carefully and more accurately than has hitherto been done, before any certain conclusion can be arrived at. The part of Canada West chiefly inhabited by the colored people lies in the same latitude and partakes of the climate of Western New York and Michigan; what is the general mortality of the colored race there, and to what extent they suffer from particular diseases, it is impossible to ascertain; the statistics on which such knowledge must rest, are not in existence. The colored people

themselves almost universally maintain that the climate agrees with them, and that they enjoy there a full measure of health. Many circumstances impressed me with a contrary opinion, and I fear that consumption and its allied diseases will prove heavy drawbacks to the enjoyment of more liberal institutions. Whether the liability to the disease increases with each succeeding generation, or whether, contrary to general experience in such diseases, it may be gradually lessened and extinguished, remains for experience to determine. This whole subject of climate, in its effect upon different races, forms one of the most important and interesting questions to which the attention of medical men can be directed.

Since our return from Canada we have received from Dr. J. D. Litchfield, the medical superintendent of criminal lunatics in the Provincial Asylum at Kingston, an account of the comparative numbers of colored and white men confined in the general prison at that place, which is at variance with the returns of those confined in the jail at Toronto. The whole number of prisoners on the 31st day of December, 1856<sup>167</sup>, was 688, and of this number 45 were negroes and 17 were mulattoes, making in all 62 colored people, nearly 1/10 of the total number. Now, as the colored do not form more than 1/50 of the population of the Province, this would make crime five times more rife among them than among the whites. The returns for the year 1856 present a similar result; thus in the total number of prisoners, 279, 28 (21 negroes and 7 mulattoes) were colored people. The crimes were all of a serious character; of 56 negro convicts there were for:

Assault, with intent to kill	1	Horse stealing	4
Horse and sheep stealing	1	Felony	7
Rape	1	Manslaughter	3
Murder	2	Receiving stolen goods	1
Burglary	3	Burglary and larceny	1
Larceny	26	Felony and larceny	1
Robbery	3	Assault and robbery	1
Sheep stealing	1		
Total			56

It will be noticed that while the ratio of negroes to mulattoes in Upper Canada is assumed to be no greater than 1 to 3, here the proportions are reversed, and there are three negroes to one of mixed race. The explanation of the large proportion of colored convicts is probably to be found in the fact that Canada is not the refuge of the fugitive slave or industrious emigrant alone, but that many of our colored criminals, educated to vice in our large cities, evade the penalty of their crimes by escaping to Canada, and there, continuing their career, become inmates of the provincial prison.

---

<sup>167</sup> The original reads 1857, which is impossible, as this would be five days *after* the publication of the article.

In the same communication of Dr. Litchfield, it is stated that in 831 convicts, the mortality was among the whites, 1½ per cent; Africans, 10 per cent, and among the Indians, 30 per cent. Though the number of negroes embraced in the calculation is too small to enable us to place implicit reliance upon it, we cannot but regard it as a strong indication of the injurious effect of a northern climate upon the black race.

#### V. AFTERWORD BY THE EDITORS OF *THE TRIBUNE*.

We conclude to-day our series of articles on the Exiled Negroes of Canada, and in doing so we embrace the opportunity to make a few remarks of our own. These articles, as we stated when we commenced their publication, are the fruit of personal observation by a fully competent person, and nobody, we think, can read them without perceiving abundant internal evidence of the candor and sagacity of the writer. As to the general result of the survey, we coincide with our correspondent, that it is, to a degree hardly to have been expected, favorable to these negro exiles. It must be borne in mind that they enter Canada under very unfavorable circumstances. Of course, they can carry thither no capital whatever, nothing but their own personal capacity of labor, with such a moderate degree of skill, and such habits of industry and thrift, as they may have acquired on a slave plantation. The climate is decidedly unfavorable to them, the most southern point of Canada being quite too far north to suit the negro constitution. It is true that the British and Canadian laws do not recognize, in the matter of civil rights, any distinction of color. The public schools are open to all, black and white equally. Yet it is no less true that antipathy of races prevails in Canada to about the same degree that it does in the United States; so that, so far as that matter goes, the exiles gain very little by crossing the border. In fact, the single decided advantage of this change of jurisdiction is, that they are out of the reach of the Fugitive Slave Law, and are able to devote themselves to the business of getting a livelihood free from the dread and drawbacks of being any day pounced upon and dragged back to Slavery.

The same thing that has been noticed of the negro population of the Free States is observable also in Canada. They cluster along the border, as if anxious to get as near the sun as possible. They show a disposition also, as with us, to congregate in the towns, though Canada exhibits instances of a thriving rural negro population, such as can hardly be found on our side of the border. The account given of the colony at Buxton, which is a purely agricultural settlement, affords an encouraging specimen of what can be done in that way. This settlement, which is purely negro, having been begun some years ago by fifteen emancipated slaves from Louisiana, has already reached the number of two hundred families, many of whom are the owners of comfortable houses and well-improved farms, redeemed by their labor within that period from the depths of the forest. It is true that this has not been exclusively a negro achievement. The former owner of the fifteen slaves accompanied them to Canada, and there exchanged the position of a master for that of the founder of a Free Labor colony, with no less satisfaction to himself, we doubt not, than benefit to his protégés. It was he who obtained on favorable terms from the British Government the original site of the colony, a tract of eighteen square miles, which he caused to be surveyed into fifty-acre lots, and has since distributed among the settlers – not,

however, as a gratuity. These negro settlers, beside building themselves houses and supporting their families, reimburse by annual installments their quota of the original cost of the land, amounting to about two dollars the acre. Many of the settlers have already paid in full for their farms, and received their deeds. Undoubtedly, a very large share of the credit of this success is to be ascribed to the Rev. Mr. King, the energetic and philanthropic founder of the settlement, but it also prove what the negroes are capable of when fairly put in the way of taking care of themselves.

The town of Chatham, in Canada West, which may be considered in some respects as the headquarters of the colored population of Canada, also presents a condition of things such as we might look for in vain on our side of the border. Here is a busy manufacturing and commercial town, of about six thousand inhabitants, in which the negroes, about a third part of the whole, instead of forming, as everywhere among us, a decidedly inferior class, come in for their full share of wealth and business activity. In the environs of this town, there is also a numerous population of negro farmers, not at all inferior in prosperity and skill to their white neighbors.

In Toronto, and the other large towns of Canada further east, the colored population occupies apposition more like that on our side of the border; though there would seem to be among them, at least in particular instances, a greater accumulation of property than with us.

On the whole, the condition of the exiled negroes in Canada does not give much color to the theory of the inferiority of the negro race, or their absolute incapacity to take care of themselves. It may well be doubted whether a similar number of white refugees of any country, with no more advantages to begin with than they, would have succeeded any better.

## The Elgin Settlement at Buxton

### “The Elgin Settlement, Canada West”<sup>168</sup> (1855)

I enclose an article, taken from the Toronto *Globe*, full of interest to the colored man and his friends. If you will insert it into your columns, you will do a great favor to a large number of persons throughout the country. I happen to know the writer, who is a respectable gentleman at Toronto. His statements may be relied upon. Mr. King I have long known by reputation. He is doing well for the colored population of Canada. I trust that the facts in the article will greatly encourage our colored friends. They will have fresh experience of the truth of the saying, “God helps those who help themselves.” They are very encouraging also to the friends of the colored man. We are not laboring in vain nor spending our strength for naught. Give the colored man the opportunity – remove crushing disabilities – treat him as equal before the law – and he will soon demonstrate his native equality.

Yours, truly,

---

<sup>168</sup> From Tappan, L., & a respectable gentleman. (1855, October 18). THE ELGIN SETTLEMENT, CANADA WEST. *National Era* (Washington, D.C.), p. 4.

Lewis Tappan.

#### A VISIT TO THE ELGIN SETTLEMENT

In company with several friends, both male and female, I paid a visit lately to the "Elgin Settlement," and although expecting much, I was not prepared to find matters in such a flourishing condition. The readers of the *Globe* are already partially acquainted with the history of this Settlement. At different periods, attempts were made to improve the physical and social condition of the colored persons, who, having escaped from the despotism of the United States Republic, sought an asylum and a home on the free soil of monarchical Britain. Settlements were formed in different localities, but, from some cause or another, none of them prospered long – difficulties arose, and it began to be surmised that the black man was an intractable sort of being, incapable of improvement under any management; and especially that as a tiller of the soil he was utterly useless.

Several benevolent gentlemen, having deliberated over the matter, came to the conclusion that the experiment had not been fairly and fully tested; that there were peculiar circumstances which operated prejudicially in the previous cases, and that at least another effort should be made on a proper scale, and with suitable instrumentalities. Accordingly, about 1848, certain individuals in Toronto, Hamilton, and elsewhere, formed themselves into an "Association for the settlement and moral improvement of the colored population of Canada," procured an act of incorporation from the Legislature, and with the aid of the Rev. William King, set themselves to work out in earnest the contemplated scheme. With this object in view, about nine thousand acres of land were selected in the township of Raleigh, in the county of Kent; and on the 22nd October, 1849, some 4,300 acres of this block were secured from Government. Since that time, additional purchases have been made; and the Settlement is now six miles long by about three miles wide. The lands were divided into lots of fifty acres each, and are sold only to actual colored settlers of approved moral character at the rate of \$2½ per acre. The first instalment has to be paid down at the time of purchase, and the balance in nine equal annual instalments, with interest.

On the 3d December, 1849, the first settler entered upon this land, and from that time to the present, yearly additions have been made, so that almost the whole of the land has been occupied by actual settlers. The houses are all erected on a uniform plan, after a certain model. They stand about 33 feet distant from a road 66 feet wide, which runs past each lot, and are built of round logs, 18 by 24 feet, and 12 feet high, with a gallery running along the length of the front. The space between the house and the road is tastefully laid out in grass plots or planted with shrubbery – the whole, together with a small garden at the end of the house, being surrounded by a picket fence. While none may build houses inferior to the model, all may surpass it as far as they please. Several have availed themselves of this license, and have constructed larger and more commodious dwellings. The first house that attracted our attention, on entering the Settlement, was a two-story brick one, which was built by Alfred H. Meet, and is kept by him as a hotel on Temperance principles. Passing this, we soon arrived at the Mission Church and School House – small, neat buildings,



somewhat like porter lodges at the entrance of the avenue leading up to the dwelling-house of the Rev. Mr. King, who resides on the premises, superintending and guiding all the affairs of the Settlement. Acting both in a civil and ecclesiastical capacity, he is the moving spirit who keeps all the parts of the machine, so to speak, in harmonious working. He is regarded throughout the settlement as the King whom all are bound to obey, and, to judge from what I witnessed, the obedience of the settlers was no less implicit than their confidence and respect were sincere and profound.

In order that education and morality might progress *pari passu* with the physical improvement around, a school house and church were erected at the very commencement of the Settlement, and both, I am glad to find, have been regularly and well attended throughout. Several of the colored children, of whom 150 have been attending school during the year, have made very creditable progress in their studies, and some of them can translate Latin and Greek with considerable facility. The girls are studying music; and to hear the notes of the piano-forte, under such circumstances, was as pleasing as it was unexpected. The church is under the pastoral care of Mr. King, who is paid by the Free Church of Canada. The moral condition of Buxton is good. Nothing that intoxicates is made or sold on the lands. The Sabbath, I am informed, is generally observed as a day of rest, and peace and harmony reign throughout. The first sounds that greeted our ears were those of prayer and praise, a weekly prayer meeting being held in the minister's house. On these occasions, there is generally a good attendance.

In company with Mr. King, I visited as much of the lands as my time would permit, and with all I saw I was highly gratified. During the past year, a new steam saw and grist mill was erected, and is in full working order. This will prove of eminent service to the settlers, who can now procure at hand the lumber required for building purposes, and thus afford to make more extensive improvements. Besides, in the winter season they can haul to the mill logs enough to pay for their lumber – thus clearing their farms, and at the same time providing material for keeping the mill in motion. There are some eight men employed in hauling and cutting logs, which are of the best oak, white ash, hickory, maple, and button-wood. It was a pleasant sight to see them all so profitably employed, and all so happy and energetic looking. There is a compound corn mill attached, but it was not in motion during my visit. Upwards of 100 barrels of pearl ashes were turned out of their factory during the last eight months. The quantity of land at present clear and under fence is 827 acres. There are, in addition, 216 acres chopped down, and ready for fall and spring crops. There is a large quantity of wheat sown this season, some 180 acres being under crop. Three hundred and forty acres are planted with corn, 50 with potatoes, 40 with oats, and 200 with hay, buckwheat, and turnips. There is also a considerable quantity of tobacco raised, and it is said to be of a superior quality.

The following is the financial statement of the affairs of the Association, as given in the report for the present year: "The present liabilities of the Association amount to £2,944 19s. 2d. [ £2,944.96 ]; that is, to Government, for land and interest, £2,211 3s. 6d [ £2,211.18 ]; stockholders, for instalments and interest, £733 15s. 8d. [ £733.78 ]. The assets amount to £3,539 12s. 10d. [ £3,539.64 ]; that is, for land sold,

and interest thereon, £3,352 2s. 10d. [ £3,352.14 ]; land unsold, £187 10s. [ £187.50 ]; leaving a balance of assets, to meet the current or ordinary expenses of the Association, of £594 13s. 8d. [ £594.68 ].”

In order to estimate aright the progress that has thus been made, it is necessary to observe that the settlers have not been permitted to receive any extraneous aid. Most of them entered the lands destitute of means, and having to rely solely on their own labor for support. It is wisely said that the spirit of independence will thus be generated, and, instead of those begging customs which have tended to the ruin of other places, habits of industry and frugality will prevail. What the colored man needs, on his arrival in Canada, is not so much money or clothes as the means of earning both for himself. Of course, temporary aid, in many cases, is absolutely necessary, but this is only for periods of very limited duration. Mr. King and the committee, in conducting the affairs of the Association, act upon this principle, and they do so wisely.

I might say much more of a similar encouraging character regarding this settlement, but enough has been told to prove that under proper management the black man is as capable of success, even in agricultural pursuits, as the white one, and that the social and moral habits of the Ethiopian, when properly directed, are not inferior in any respect to those of the European. To the gentlemen who, in the spirit of benevolence and philanthropy, originated this Settlement, and to the Rev. William King, who has so wisely and energetically, and with such unflagging zeal, carried out their plans and intentions, the public are largely indebted. So long as the colored man resides amongst us, it is of the utmost consequence to society that his intellectual and moral faculties be cultivated, and that he be allowed the freest scope for the acquisition of physical good. By helping him to overcome the degrading and brutalizing effects of his training while a slave, we thereby not merely aid him in exhibiting to the world that he is fitted for freedom, but do much to hasten that day, which cannot be much longer deferred, when the bonds shall fall from the limbs of the oppressed, and when all in every land shall be put in the possession of those inalienable, because Heaven-given rights, “the right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.” Of our visit to Buxton, and of the pleasant drive along the banks of Lake Erie which we enjoyed on our return, we shall long cherish many pleasing remembrances.

### **“To render comfortable the situation”<sup>169</sup> (1859)**

A second meeting was held in Queen Street Hall on Monday, to hear statements from the deputation from Canada regarding the settlement of fugitive slaves in that country by Lord Elgin. The hall was crowded in every part – a large number of ladies being present. [...]

The Rev. Mr. King first addressed the meeting, and after some preliminary remarks regarding the persecutions and abuses which were heaped upon the

---

<sup>169</sup> From THE ELGIN SETTLEMENT OF FUGITIVE SLAVES IN CANADA. (1859, November 3). *North British Daily Mail* (Glasgow), p. 3.

unfortunate slaves, adverted to the efforts made by Lord Elgin to render comfortable the situation of the fugitive slaves in Canada.

Before the Elgin settlement, the fugitive slaves occupied a very false position. They were living in an entirely dependent state, and in lands which were not their own, and were consequently deprived of all opportunity of rising to the position to which they were entitled by the British constitution. Their case was brought before Lord Elgin, who was then governor of that province, and who took a great interest in the movement. It was proposed to form an association for the purpose of settling the lands permanently on the fugitive slaves, and to give them a title to the lands for a small sum of money. Through Lord Elgin's influence, about eighteen square miles of land were secured in the western part of the province, and there the slaves were settled.

The settlement had improved very much since its formation; the morals of the settlers were most exemplary; and he might state that since the year 1850 there had only been one man arrested for crime. (Applause.) Schools had been established for the benefit of the settlers. A church had also been erected, which numbered 70 members and about 200 or 300 of a congregation. It was in behalf of these schools that the deputation now solicited the aid of the people of this country. The buildings were of a mere temporary description; but the growing demands of the settlers required that they should be extended and made permanent establishments. They also wished to place the schools on a permanent basis, and to create a few bursaries, so that a few young men amongst them of piety and talents might be prepared for future usefulness. There had been a sum of £3000 already raised, but in order to place the school on a firm basis, they would require a few thousands more.

He wished to take leave to thank the ladies of the town for the zeal with which they had entered into this work. He had always the opinion that one lady was worth two gentlemen and a half. (Laughter and applause.) He concluded by expressing the hope that the ladies would still continue to labor in the good works in which they were engaged; and if they did so he had little fear as to the result.

### **“The Abolitionist missionary and philanthropist”<sup>170</sup> (1884)**

“Woe to you scribes and pharisees!” were the words that first reached my ear from an adjoining room as I was left in the parlor of a comfortable residence in the suburbs of the busy little market town of Chatham, Ont., on a recent market day.

I did not consider the scriptural quotation personal. The evening meal was just over and the family devotions were in progress, so I sat and watched the fire glow until the exercises were ended. The voice was that of a patriarch in the faith, one who had wrestled often in prayer. There was a conscious sense of strength in the petition that rose from the old man's lips that seemed to lay hold on the very arm of Omnipotence.

---

<sup>170</sup> From MRS. STOWE'S “CLAYTON”. (1884, February 3). *Detroit Free Press*, p. 18.

A little later a man considerably past the allotted three-score years and ten entered the room and extended his hand in a cordial way. He was of medium height and more stout than was natural; dark complexioned and dark hair; the face close shaven as a Catholic ecclesiast's, and it was more than a fancy that caused me to see in his features something typical of the African visage, for surroundings have their influence upon matter as well as upon mind.

This was the Rev. William King, after whom Mrs. Stowe modeled her "Clayton" in the familiar story of "Dred,"<sup>171</sup> as stated in a foot-note on its concluding pages. The reverend gentleman received me with all kindness when I had introduced myself, and the conversation at once turned on the life and labors of this most practical Abolitionist.

Those who have read the story of "Dred" will remember the warm debates that were constantly coming up between "Clayton" and his father as to the moral and civil injustice of slavery, and most of its readers are agreed that for logical acumen it excels everything else Mrs. Stowe has written. In fact, it has been said by some critics of the book that Mrs. Stowe wrote the sentiment and her father wrote the argument.

"Upon this point," said Mr. King, "I may tell you what is not generally known, namely, that when Mrs. Stowe wrote 'Uncle Tom's Cabin' she had never so much as visited a slave State. It is true she was where she had ample opportunity of learning of the condition of the slave, for her father was then a teacher in a Cincinnati theological school and the fugitives were constantly coming over into Ohio. It was there I met her and have had frequent correspondence with her since. I intend, some day, if I have the leisure, to collate my correspondence pertaining to the anti-slavery struggle and put it in some connected form."

Mr. King was born in Londonderry, Ireland, at the beginning of the century and with a good education he came in his youth to New Orleans. At the age of 18 he held the position of a professor in Louisiana College, Jackson. His position permitted him to mingle freely with the first families in the State and made him well acquainted with the peculiar institutions of the country. He married the daughter of a planter and became a slave holder himself to some extent. But in his earliest youth he had listened to the speeches of Wilberforce and his coadjutors in the emancipation agitation that was sweeping over Great Britain, and he had imbibed strongly the principle of personal freedom as the inherent and inalienable right of man, so that he and his father-in-law often debated the question.

He returned to Scotland for the purpose of studying theology and had the honor of being a pupil under the excellent Dr. Chalmers. It was at this time that Sir Thomas Foxwell Buxton succeeded in completing what Wilberforce had begun, and the West India Emancipation bill passed the British Parliament. With increased zeal for the cause of the African bondsman he returned to Louisiana, where he had left his few slaves to the reward of their own labor while he had been pursuing his studies. His father-in-law had died and his wife also was taken from him, so that the estate, with an additional number of slaves, became his by inheritance. The Free Church of Scotland was then seeking to plant a mission in Upper Canada, as the Province of

---

<sup>171</sup> *Dred: A Tale of the Great Dismal Swamp* (1856), by Harriet Beecher Stowe.

Ontario was at that time called, and Mr. King conceived the idea of accepting the charge and combining it with a scheme for the amelioration of the fugitive slave.

In 1848 he manumitted all his slaves, some fifteen in number, upon which the planters had put an estimated value of \$9,000, and came with them to Canada. He spent some time in searching for a suitable piece of ground and securing the grant of it from the government. The site chosen was in the County of Kent, about forty miles east of Windsor and midway between Lakes St. Clair and Erie. The tract of land was eighteen square miles, the soil excellent and the climate favorable. To this spot he brought his fifteen freedmen and gave it the name of "The Elgin Settlement," in honor of Lord Elgin, the then Governor-General of Canada, and the interested friend of Mr. King in all his plans for the elevation of the colored man. To the religious organization of the people he gave the name of "The Buxton Mission." The lands were not given to the colored people, but sold at a nominal price per acre, payable in easy instalments. They were also required to build their log houses of stipulated dimensions, and put a white picket fence before them.

There was commotion and opposition from the white settlers when it became known that Mr. King was bringing his black proteges into Kent County. A rumor was set afloat that three vessels of indefinite size laden with blacks were on their way across Lake Erie, and for a time the valiant missionary's life was in danger. But strong in the defense of the law he proceeded with his work, and as the country did not overflow with negroes the whites became reconciled to the situation. In the very center of the little settlement a church, a school and a manse for the missionary, all of comfortable proportions, were erected, with funds provided by the Presbyterian Church, and there began one of the earliest and most effective institutions for [the] elevation of the colored race that American [sic.] history has yet to record.

The year immediately following the Dred Scott decision and the passage of the Fugitive Slave law it is estimated that 5,000 fugitives passed into Canada, and all the land of the Elgin settlement was taken up.

At the close of the American civil war it had a population of 1,200. Its school had flourished greatly, and was not only able to provide its own teachers, but upon the cessation of hostilities several men and women from the Buxton Mission went South to become teachers of their race in the late slave States. Others went with an eagerness to share in acknowledged rights in the very districts where they had been denied them, and from the Elgin settlement went James Rapier, who was elected Representative of the City of Montgomery, Ala., the late seat of the Confederate Government, over two white candidates.

It was a young negro from the Buxton Mission, too, who came to Detroit at the time of President Lincoln's proclamation and organized the first company of colored recruits that entered the Northern service. "And in Michigan," said Mr. King, "the colored man has always enjoyed a larger amount of liberty than in any other State in the Union."

In 1857, Lord Spencer, the late Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, visited the Elgin settlement and a grand barbecue was held in his honor, the provision for which in the way of cuisine highly delighted his Lordship and the gentlemen who accompanied

him. Festivities were frequent among them, and Emancipation Day, the 1st of August, was always observed with demonstrative rejoicing.

For some years past the educational and municipal affairs of the settlement have been merged in the common institutions of the county, and the association, as such, has ceased to be. A few years more and it will only be traceable in the deeds and official records of the early holders of Elgin lands. The Abolitionist missionary and philanthropist has retired from active labor, and with the blessings of a grateful community on his head.

### **“The death of Rev. William King”<sup>172</sup> (1895)**

Chatham, Ont., January 6 – (Special) – The death of Rev. William King, which occurred at his quiet and quaint little home on West street Saturday night at 10 p.m., removes from the scene of action a gentleman famous in the history of two North American countries. Born on the 11th of November, 1812, in the county of Londonderry, Ireland, he was educated at Glasgow University and at the age of 21 emigrated with his parents to America. He remained with them one year and then went south to Louisiana, where he obtained a situation as rector of St. Matthew’s Academy. In 1846 he was licensed to preach and sent by the free church of Scotland as a missionary to Canada. The following year he again went south to Louisiana, and sold a plantation which he owned there and manumitted his slaves, fifteen in number, brought them to Canada, and founded the Buxton or Elgin settlement for the social and moral improvement of the colored people in Canada. The association was incorporated by an act of the Ontario legislature, and control of 9,000 acres in the township of Raleigh, Kent Co., was secured. On this farm 1,200 fugitive slaves found shelter, and if they were thrifty succeeded in making for themselves a home.

The distinguished divine who conceived and carried out the above idea, and whose death has just occurred, was a man of no ordinary attainments. Gifted with a powerful and pathetic eloquence and possessed to a remarkable degree with a devotion to principle and firmness of purpose, he succeeded in overcoming obstacles that would have discouraged a Napoleon. To know him was to revere him as a prince among men, and he passed away with the conscious assurance that the work given him to do had been done to the fullest of his ability. Mr. King was twice married. In 1840 to Mary Phares, daughter of John E. Phares, a planter in Louisiana; she died in 1846. In 1853 he married Jemima N. Baxter, daughter of the late Rev. David Baxter, of Lillies-Leaf, Scotland.

---

<sup>172</sup> From FRIEND OF RUNAWAY SLAVES. (1895, January 7). *Detroit Free Press*, p. 8.

## The Dawn Institute

### “Who will be able to plead like them?”<sup>173</sup> (1843)

He must be short-sighted who does not perceive, that the elevation of the emancipated colored population of Canada will have a very important bearing on the total and speedy abolition of slavery in this country [U.S.]. It will weaken the hands and terrify the minds of southern slaveholders, and furnish abolitionists with new weapons of offence and defense. Should success attend ‘The British and American Institute of Science and Industry’ at Dawn, it is expected (and not unreasonably) that it will in due time send forth many highly intelligent and well-educated colored youth, to take the field as lecturers and agents in the cause of universal emancipation. And who will be able to plead like them?

### The British American Institution, Dawn<sup>174</sup> (1843)

A public meeting of the members and friends of this society was [...] addressed by the Rev. Hiram Wilson, President of the British American Institution, lately founded for the benefit of the refugees in Canada from American slavery. This institution has lately been founded in the township of Dawn, county of Kent, Canada West, upon the manual labor system, and is called the “British American Institute of Science and Industry”. The necessity of such an establishment will readily appear in the fact that Canada now contains about sixteen thousand colored inhabitants, of whom twelve thousand have emerged from the horrid prison of American slavery; and that this number is increasing by at least one thousand annually. We are sorry to add that, by reason of prejudice against their condition and color, they are generally excluded from the common schools of that country.

The condition of the fugitives on arriving in Canada is, in many respects, truly deplorable. They reach the British territory destitute of the necessaries of life, with minds for the most part uncultivated, and with much of superstition mingling with the religious convictions they may entertain. The debasing effects of slavery, oppression, and selfishness, will, it is hoped, under the Divine blessing, be counteracted by raising up, from among the redeemed captives in Canada, those who may become enlightened teachers and benefactors of their injured and benighted brethren. The institution is designed to provide for them profitable employment, combined with mental and moral cultivation. To facilitate these objects, a purchase has been made of two hundred acres of excellent land, which is conveyed to a board of trustees. Three small buildings and a public school-house were erected during the past year; and twenty acres of land have been cleared and put under fence. Two teachers have been employed, who have had the care of sixteen young men since last December, and about twenty pupils in the preparatory department.

---

<sup>173</sup> From *The Star-Led Fugitives*. (1843, March 17). *The Liberator*, p. 3.

<sup>174</sup> From COLCHESTER ANTI-SLAVERY SOCIETY. (1843, July 21). *Essex Standard* (England), p. 3.

## “Plans of operation”<sup>175</sup> (1843)

Dawn, June 2d, 1843

Dear Sir,

A letter from Mrs. Serana Parker by today’s mail, requests that we give you information concerning our “plans of operation,” &c., among the refugees from oppression. It is generally known that for several years past the Rev. Hiram Wilson has been laboring in this Province for the education and elevation of the colored man. He has labored in establishing schools in different parts of the province and has depended upon the liberality of friends of the cause for support. Teachers have been here from different parts of the States and labored somewhat successfully. Several, of late, have been obliged to leave for want of funds. You will see by the “Liberator Extra,” the number of laborers in the field last December. Since that time two or three have left.

Owing to want of funds, we were not able to support as large a school at this place as we expected at the beginning of winter. There were 17 members of the Institution and a school for children from the neighborhood. With the labor performed by the students during the winter and thus far in the vacation, 10 or 12 acres of land have been cleared and most of it planted.

The students were, several of them, just from slavery without any education. Some not even knowing the alphabet. They were very diligent and made good progress. As might be expected, some made slow progress, as they had never been in the habit of thinking for themselves. They are very anxious to learn, and apply themselves diligently. We expect to commence our school again the first of July if we can get means to furnish food for students and laborers. We very much need more buildings for the accommodation of students, but we cannot proceed in building for want of means. We design if possible to erect a building before winter that shall accommodate 40 or 50 students. This will depend upon the assistance friends render us. We are at present greatly straitened from want of money to purchase provisions.

There are several boxes of clothing at Detroit, which we greatly need, but cannot obtain, for want of money to pay the freight.

If the friends of the cause at your place should contribute money, you will please direct [it] to George Johnson, as he is treasurer of the Executive Committee of the British American Institute. It is in contemplation as soon as money can be obtained for the object, to establish a school for colored girls – orphans or those whose parents cannot provide for them. They greatly need instruction. As you requested I will give you the constitution of the Institution.

### CONSTITUTION

The British American Institute of Science and Industry founded, by the Grace of God, on the River Sydenham, in the Township of Dawn, Canada West, for the benefit of the colored refugees from slavery, and their offspring, not excluding others, shall be governed by the following *constitution*.

---

<sup>175</sup> Kirtland, E. E. (1843, September 5). At the special request. *The Liberator*, p. 2.



Art. 1<sup>st</sup>. This Institution shall be conducted strictly upon the Manual Labor system, which aims to promote industry in harmony with the acquisition of science and Christian knowledge, and each student shall work not less than three nor more than four hours per day.

Art. 2. The officers of the Institution shall consist of a board of trustees, President and board of tuition, consisting of professors or teachers, an Executive Committee to be called by the President, by concurrence of the Trustees, a steward to be appointed by the Executive Committee and a Prudential Committee to be called by the steward.

Art. 3. The President shall preside over the deliberations of the board of tuition and also over the meetings of the Executive Committee. He shall have the power of admitting students and governing them by paternal kindness, but not of expelling any without the concurrence of the board of tuition and Executive Committee.

Art. 4. The President and board of tuition shall regulate the internal affairs of the Institution, guard the morals of the students and conduct a public examination annually, in the presence of the Executive Committee and other officers and patrons of the Institution.

Art. 5. It shall be the duty of the Executive Committee to exercise a constant, watchful care over the interests of the Institution, regulate all its external concerns – receive and disburse funds – employ laborers when needed – erect buildings – keep an exact account of all receipts and expenditures and make an annual report of the same.

Art. 6. It shall be the duty of the steward to provide for and regulate the boarding establishment and superintend the manual labor department – see that the students are furnished with employment, and that a minute account is rendered of all labor performed, [that it should be] the same more or less. The steward shall call a prudential committee, to consist of such as manage domestic affairs; he shall preside over the deliberations of said committee, [and] faithfully and promptly report from time to time, to the Executive Committee any delinquencies which may occur in the department over which he presides.

## RULES

To secure the great ends for which the Institution is founded, the following rules must be strictly observed.

1. No person shall be received who cannot produce testimonials of good moral character, with the exception of such as are recently from slaver.

2. No person shall be admitted as a member of the Institution for a less term of time than one year.

3. No person shall be admitted a member of the Institution under 15 years of age.

4. Applications for admission shall in all cases be made to the President.

5. Students regularly admitted shall be exempt from tuition fees.

6. each student shall be required to render an equivalent for board, in Manual Labor.

7. No students shall be allowed to visit the apartment of the other sexes.

8. No student shall be allowed to leave the institution premises without permission from the president, or his teacher.

9. No student shall be allowed to make use of intoxicating drinks or tobacco, nor be indulged in any kind of games, as card playing, dice, &c.

10. Each student shall be required to attend worship every morning and evening and public services twice on the Sabbath.

11. The price of board shall be one dollar per week, while each student shall be allowed 5 cts. per hour for work.

12. Students shall be charged 37½ cents for [c]lashing.

These rules are not like the “Laws of the Medes and Persians,” but are subject to alteration whenever it can be done for the better.

In building up this Institution, we meet with many obstacles, but by the help of God hope we shall overcome them all.

You will render the cause an essential service [by] sending us barrels of provisions, nails, glass, old boxes of clothing, also boots and shoes. If provisions or other articles are contributed please forward them as soon as possible, directed as stated in the “report,” and if practicable, raise at least money enough to pay freight.

Yours for the cause of God and Humanity,

ELIAS E. KIRTLAND,

Teacher and Secy. Of the B. A. Institute.

### “Its conditions and wants”<sup>176</sup> (1845)

#### BRITISH AMERICAN INSTITUTE AND CANADA MISSION

The undersigned, as the Committee of the Institute above mentioned, beg leave to bring before the Christian public a brief statement of its conditions and wants, as well as the mission with which it is connected. This institute, which is conducted on the manual labor system, especially for the benefit of refugees from oppression and slavery, has its location in the township of Dawn, Canada West, at the head of navigation on the Sydenham river, 60 miles North by East of Detroit. Its site is commanding and beautiful, and in the midst of a fertile section of the country, where the climate is mild and healthy, and in that part of the province which is the easiest of access to the numerous emigrants from slavery. It has attached to it 300 acres of first quality land, held equally by whites and colored trustees, who are all British subjects. Sixty acres or more have been cleared of the heavy timber, and brought under cultivation, during the last three years. A large school house, and several dwellings of moderate dimensions, have been erected and are now occupied; a framed barn was built the last year, and a pot ashery started. During the present year, a brick building, 30 by 32 ft., 2 stories high, the foundation of which was laid last fall, has been erected and will soon be completed and in use. Another building, of hewn timber, 22 by 34 feet, two stories high, is now in progress, and will probably be occupied by the first of December next.

---

<sup>176</sup> From Smith, P.B. et al.. (1845, November 20). CIRCULAR. *Green-Mountain Freeman*, p. 1.

Our agent, Bro. Josiah Henson, who labored assiduously last winter and spring in New England, returned in May with a report of his services and success highly satisfactory to the committee. As a result of his agency, a payment of \$220 has been made upon the last purchase of 100 acres of land for the institution, and the deed secured – its operations have been sustained through the season, and its debts considerably diminished. (He has spent most of the summer itinerating at his own charges among the colored people of Canada). Our present number of scholars is over 80. Applications for admission are frequent. We shall doubtless have at least 100 scholars in the coming winter, and might have three times that number had we accommodations for them.

The Institution is now in debt to the amount of about \$500, which is mostly due to the steward and others immediately concerned, for service rendered and monies advanced for its relief.

By reason of the late spring frosts and subsequent drought, our crops have come short. Had they been plentiful as usual we could hardly expect a supply, as the Institute is yet in its infancy, in a new country, with small improvements, yet rapidly increasing in numbers. But lately it has had important accessions from the house of bondage, of those who promise fair for usefulness, if educated. Several of these have been hopefully converted to God in the midst of a precious revival of religion now in progress in the Institution and community. At such accessions we rejoice, but our sympathies are moved and our souls weighed down with sorrow when compelled to turn away importunate applicants for want of a shelter and the means of subsistence. The principal labor for young men in the winter season is chopping and clearing land, the fruits of which we cannot begin to realize till the ensuing summer; yet every advance made upon the surrounding forest tells to the future advantage of the Institution by furnishing increased facilities for its expansion and support. Hence such aid as may easily be furnished by generous friends at the West, in the form of produce (freightage paid), to be shipped upon the Lake and water courses to Detroit, Mich., care of Messrs. Gillet & Desnoyers, would be thankfully received; also such implements as axes, hoes, &c.

The importance of our work can scarcely be appreciated by those who have not by personal observation become acquainted with the condition of the colored people, and the cruel prejudices of a share of the white inhabitants. We add that such is the destitution of the colored people in the western portion of Canada, as respects common school institutions, that we feel bound to act in their behalf. We have resolved to keep up an intimate correspondence with our brethren in every part of the province, with the view of supplying the destitute.

It is proper hereto allude to what has already been made known, that it is a prominent and fondly cherished object of the Manual Labor Institute to rear up Teachers of the right stamp, for the destitute and benighted poor. Thus acting for the welfare of the refugees and their children generally, and in harmony with the committee of the Canada Mission Board in Rochester, N. Y., we earnestly solicit help for the destitute, and would state that such means as may come through the Committee above named, or through any other channels, designated for the support

of common schools, will be appropriated accordingly. This arrangement we doubt not will meet the approbation of all who feel an interest in the prosperity of the Canada Mission; & for the more effectual prosecution of the great work before us, we have extended a call to a most devoted and untiring friend of the oppressed, who, it is hoped, will soon be associated with us to promote equally the interests of the Institution and Mission which are indissolubly connected. We now ask the generous concurrence of Christian Philanthropists, with the generous design of heaven in the prosecution and consummation of this good work, which seeks the disenthralment and elevation of the deeply injured race with which some of us are connected. In the fullness of confidence and fraternal solicitude, we commend to the kind consideration and sympathy of the Christian public, our beloved brethren Hiram Wilson and Josiah Henson, as the accredited agents for our Christian enterprise.

PETER B. SMITH,  
JAMES STUMP,  
EDWARD HARBERD,  
GEORGE JOHNSON,  
WM. P. NEWMAN, Committee.

*Dawn Mills*, Canada West, Oct. 4, 1845.

### A letter from Fidelity Coburn<sup>177</sup> (1845)

**Fidelity Coburn played a role in the history of both the Dawn Institute and the settlement at Queen's Bush. She died in Sierra Leone, married to a missionary named Brooks, five years after writing this letter.**

Bloomfield, Mass. Dec. 15, 1845

*Respected Friends of the Oppressed* – With pleasure I shall endeavor to answer some of your inquiries. Now having sufficiently recovered from recent sickness, and a painful disease of the eyes to tax either my eyes or my head, to prepare an epistle for critics. I shall write as a friend to a friend, trusting you will make every necessary allowance. I dislike to speak of myself when writing, but your inquiries will justify me in giving a brief sketch of my leaving home, sweet home, and of my residence among the fugitives from *American Oppression*.

Two years and a half before I went to Canada, I was brought to the border of the grave, and at this time, when my mind seemed almost detached from earth, it was drawn away from heaven, and to think of this class of our fellow men. I knew merely nothing of them. I supposed from the very nature of things, they must be ignorant, poor, and needy and felt, that altho' they had broken the direful chain of slavery, they must need instruction. The inquiry consequently was, "Does any one care for them, or look after them? Is it not possible that I, with my feeble abilities, can do them good?" At first I felt a reluctance to live again in the world, as all for a

---

<sup>177</sup> From Coburn, F. (1846, January 15). Letter from Miss Fidelity Coburn. *Green-Mountain Freeman*, p. 1. Includes the conclusion, published the following week.

long time had been given up, and never through a protracted sickness, had I addressed a petition to the throne of the Divine Grace for life or health.

Reflecting on their situation, and the sustaining Grace of God and his goodness to me during my sickness, I thought I should not be afraid to *trust* God in any situation whatever, nor fear but that his Grace would be sufficient, and therefore was led to say, “If there be a spot in the world where the people can be so ignorant that I can do them good, restore me to health and direct my steps thither; if not let me die – living or dying I am thine.” I felt an entire willingness to live and suffer all my Heavenly Father’s will, and tho’ my sickness was protracted, I believed that it was to prepare me for all that awaited me in this present life; and that it was for this very purpose, even to go to Canada, that he was raising me up. He had taught me by sweet experience that His Grace was sufficient for every trying emergency. After having written to Rev. Hiram Wilson, Missionary in the Province, and receiving an encouraging answer, I laid the matter before my friends, but they felt that they could not give their consent. The cause was an unpopular one, and the way was unpopular too. However I felt that I must go – that the Grace of God was sufficient, even under such trying circumstances – and that the promise was mine – “I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.”

Thus I started – a lone female – sent out by no society – to be sustained by none – against public opinion and the wishes of all my friends. But the Lord was with me, and His Grace sustained me, even till this present time, and to Him be all the praise. [I] arrived at Dawn about four months before the British American Institute went into operation, over which Rev. Hiram Wilson presided, and engaged in teaching the youth of the neighborhood.

Sometime in Dec. that school was opened, and though it was against my wishes, I engaged in it and remained more than a year, giving my entire services and all I received from my friends. However, I did not feel satisfied that it was the place the Lord would have me occupy for several reasons which I will briefly give.

1st. I was never satisfied that the plan adopted there, was the best way of doing the greatest amount of good with the least means.

2ly. I went with the expectation of going into some poor and destitute neighborhood, and doing them all the good I could, without the world knowing where I was, except the little world around me, which had been aroused by the course I was pursuing. I knew I had not abilities competent for the performance of great things, but the Lord had made me willing, and prepared me to act in a small sphere, even such a plan as those of greater mental powers, would overlook – had made me willing to suffer his will as well as do it.

“Lord, keep me little and unknown, / Lov’d and prized by thee alone” was the desire of my heart – therefore I did not wish so public a station as that, and thought I might be equally useful as a teacher in a private neighborhood, and have various other ways of benefitting them. In short, I desired and sought a place which else would be wholly neglected. Enough might be found to engage in that school (especially after the first year or two of trials were past) if paid, and as the public sustained it, they expected the teachers were paid, of course.

At length Divine Providence opening the door for me to leave, and Br. Wilson consenting, each desiring the greatest amount of good to this despised and abused and neglected people, I most cheerfully embraced the opportunity, accompanied by Charles Golpin, a student from Oberlin, who visited the Province for the purpose of ascertaining the condition of the colored people.

I had no motive but to satisfy myself where I could be most useful, and if at Dawn was ready to return there again. Had I remained, I should have received my daily sustenance (which was all I deserved) and without care had my daily labor marked out, enjoying at the same time many of the comforts of life. Whereas, on leaving, I absolved Br. Wilson from all expense, responsibility or care, feeling that he had then a far greater burden than he was able to bear, and subjected myself to very great inconveniences.

Our steps were directed to a new settlement called Queen's Bush. It was Clergy reserved lands, to be sold by the Government in due time and the avails to go to the clergy. The colored people, having frequently gone on to land, and being driven off, petitioned the government for land on which they might remain unsold, until it came into market, and then purchase, if able, and even directed to this plan. There are four townships of land, and it is settled by Dutch, Scotch, Irish, Africans and Americans, but it has so happened that each nation have to a considerable extent, located together. The climate is healthy, though cold, being about 43 1-2 degrees N. lat. And 3 1-2 degrees West long. From Washington. The soil is very fertile, though being a very heavy hard wood growth it is a slow and laborious operation to prepare it for a crop, especially under the disadvantages under which this poor and destitute people labor.

There were about 75 colored families in this settlement, mostly Americans, which had been driven off by cruelty and oppression, to burst asunder the chains that bound them in their native land, and seek asylum among strangers, in a Foreign country. There are now about 200 families in the settlement.

We spent about 2 weeks in visiting from house to house, that we might be the better prepared to decide what was best to be done, and if anything, how to do it. Having been there but a short time their openings were small – little log cabins with but one room and mostly without chimneys or glass, and the inmates poor and needy, though [with] a plenty of children which needed instruction. None had raised their bread but in part, and provisions must be obtained by day labor, from considerable distance and packed in, as most were destitute of teams.

I sympathized with them, and though I knew that many difficulties and trials were to be encountered and that they could not even board me, I decided to take up my residence with them. A log house was nearly prepared for school, though with but one window and that paper instead of glass, and otherwise uncomfortable. I engaged to teach for nothing and find myself 9 months, hoping by that time they would be able to sustain a teacher.

Br. Golpin put up a room of logs on one end of a house nearest the school, clinked it with wood and corked it with moss – made a small sheet iron box stove to warm it and cook by, some benches, table &c. [I] sent to Dawn for my clothing,

bedding, and some boxes of clothing sent by friends which I had not disposed of, and which, in some measure, prepared the children for school. Being short of means, we lived on boiled peas salted, and bread, cooking the peas in a tin pail on the top of the stove, and baking my bread in a tin baker sitting against the sides; the two accompanying my cooking establishment. However, I was very comfortable – far more so than anybody around me – and I was happy, which is the real Panacea to make one comfortable.

We thought it best to select a lot on which to establish a permanent school, eventually to be of a higher order than the common schools, if needed – and to be a kind of Missionary station – a house for teachers, and a resort for visitors. A four corner lot, in the center of the town and where it would be likely to be the center of business, three and a half miles from my present location, was selected, and Br. Galpin, concluding to stop till navigation opened, when he had leisure from other engagement, chopped 5 or 6 acres.

About the time Br. Galpin left a man, who was supposed to be trusty, took the last money I had, a 20 dollar bill, to change into Canada currency, as he was going near the American shore, and he ran away. Such were the circumstances connected with this, that I could but believe that the Lord had some wise purpose to accomplish, though the man was not the less guilty.

Thus I was left alone, among strangers, nearly 200 miles from former acquaintances, and 800 from home, destitute of means, and about four dollars in debt. However, I felt that the earth was the Lord's and the fulness thereof – that the gold and silver were his, and that he would turn the hearts of the children of men and direct as much to me as he saw best. If he saw that more good could be accomplished by my being left in this situation I was willing – willing the Lord should take his won way, if that people could only be raised from that state of ignorance in which they then were, and prepared for usefulness in the common walks of life.

For nearly four months, I sustained myself by my own efforts, though my school and other duties occupied most of the day (often working most of the night) yet feeling that I was sustained as was Elijah; seeing the hand of God in opening the way to obtain provisions for work. I was always supplied without care or anxiety, feeling entire confidence in my Heavenly Father to supply my every returning want, though often I had not enough for one half meal before hand and knew not where any more was to come from.

Whatever would satisfy the cravings of nature, I received as from the hand of God, and partook of it with a thankful heart, often wishing that those who sit down to a table, filled with the bounties of heaven, could partake of one meal with the same relish that I did mine. I can now see the hand of God in all his dealings with me, and I have not the least doubt but it is to these peculiar Providences combined (such was the state of things when I went there) that we owe all the good that has been done among this people, rather than any efforts of my own. Indeed a greater change has been produced among that people, by the Providences of God toward me, than we supposed could have been done by efficient laborers in several years, and such has been the sustaining grace of God that through them all I have been happy – nay,

rejoiced. The greater the trials and difficulties produced by ignorance and prejudice, the more closely did I bind my heart to the children, being satisfied that they had immortal souls as precious as others, and minds as capable of mental or moral cultivation. Feeling that I could not leave them to grow up in a moral waste, I calmly, but firmly decided, that as long as my Heavenly Father supplied me with food, and gave me strength and grace sufficient for my day, whatever were the difficulties to be encountered, I would not leave them.

The trials and hardships I have passed through I cannot describe, neither do I wish to but suffice it to say, "Strength has been equal to the day." I have felt an abiding consciousness that I was in the place the Lord would have me and enjoyed his favor which is life and his loving kindness which is better than life, and have only regretted that I could do no more.

At the close of the nine months, I left the place to another teacher and went to the location we had selected for a permanent school. Not being any house to teach in, and the people just moving in, poor and needy themselves, and not having a moment's time to devote to the building [of] one, I put up a log house, at the expense of about \$50 (paying for much of the work in my own labor) which answered the double purpose of a school house and a dwelling house for myself, and commenced teaching. The first year and a half I received about enough to pay my postage (except from home) but since the public have ascertained the circumstances, we have from time to time received aid from friends of the cause.

In April, Rev. Elias E. Kirkland, a graduate from Mission Institute, Illinois, resigned his offer as Principal of the British American Institute at Dawn, and moved with his family into the house with me and engaged in clearing and getting in a crop &c., and building him a house. The compensation received at that place only about sustained them, therefore to defray the expenses of moving, he sold his cow, furniture &c. and came almost destitute, and sustained by no society like myself.

I have drawn from home, money left me by my departed father, over \$300, and we are now about \$30 in debt for lumber &c., used in building the house, but have raised our bread and therefore whatever means we now get can be used for building and other necessary purposes.

During the summer I taught school in a log house that was vacated near by, and since I left Br. Kirkland has finished his own house and moved into it and is teaching in mine, where the school will be kept during the winter. We need a school house very much; one large enough to accommodate all our scholars and hold meetings in at present. We hope and confidently believe the friends will furnish enough. Also boots and clothing to prepare the children for school are wanted. I have felt and still feel, though at home in the midst of my friends, surrounded by all the comforts of civilized life and refined society, that I can not leave that field of labor, and wish to do that which will benefit them most.

After advising with others I have come to the conclusion to build in the spring and take orphans and destitute children, as many as the public will aid in sustaining, from those families when they would otherwise be totally neglected, feed, clothe and educate and thus prepare them for usefulness, and to aid in the work in which we are



engaged. The building I expect to do at my own expense and think with what we shall be able to do ourselves, that they may be sustained for \$10 a year individually, and clothing found.

I have given but an imperfect sketch, but whatever inquiries you may wish to make I shall be happy to answer.

Yours in behalf of the Oppressed,

FIDELIA COBURN.

Queen's Bush, Waterloo Post Office, Canada West.

### **“Progress and prospects”<sup>178</sup> (1847)**

#### BRITISH AMERICAN INSTITUTE

The undersigned, as the Executive Committee of the above Institution, in Dawn, Canada West, take pleasure in making known to the public its progress and prospects.

Its benevolent design is extensively known to well-informed Anti-Slavery people, which is to favor with the blessing of education, especially, though not exclusively, the colored population of Canada upon the Industrial or Manual Labor System. The public mind is too well enlightened to require from us any special pleading as to the necessity or utility of this system.

The Institution is admirably located, at the head of navigation, on the Sydenham river, thirteen miles with its junction with the waters of the St. Clair, in the midst of a remarkably fertile district of country, sixty miles north by east from Detroit, which is the most prominent crossing place for colored emigration to Canada on the Continent.

In this section of Canada, within one day's travel of the Institution, there are not less than four thousand colored people, with few exceptions refugees from Slavery.

The Institution has attached to it three hundred acres of first quality land, held by trustees, the original cost of which was eleven hundred dollars, when purchased five years ago, but with buildings erected, and improvements made, is now worth as many thousands. Number of acres cleared, nearly one hundred; buildings erected, seven.

It commands the river for nearly half a mile on both sides, and the center of the tract is not more than half a mile from the flourishing village of Dresden, and but six miles from the survey of the Great Western Railway.

*Secular Enterprises* – Two enterprising men of color, from North Carolina and Virginia, have already erected a rope-walk and commenced manufacturing the best of cordage, with hemp of their own growing, upon the soil, which, for quality and quantity to the acre, is rarely surpassed in Ohio or Kentucky. This enterprise is no longer a doubtful experiment; it is introducing a new era among the colored hemp-growers from Kentucky and other parts of the South.

---

<sup>178</sup> From Smith, P. B. et al.. (1847, December 3). British American Institute. *Anti-Slavery Bugle*, p. 1.

A steam saw-mill is being erected, to which is to be attached a grist-mill and some other machinery, which is expected to be in operation by the first of January ensuing, at about three thousand dollars cost; two thousand five hundred of which have been raised through the instrumentality of the Rev. Josiah Henderson, from a few rich men in Boston and vicinity, with the express understanding, that when put in successful operation, all the profits arising therefrom should be sacredly devoted to the cause of education. As the country is new, and the forests in the region abound with black walnut and other valuable timber of the most stately growth, it is confidently expected that it will operate advantageously to the cause for which it is now being erected, and greatly, if not wholly, diminish the necessity of soliciting help from abroad.

A colored man from South Carolina, who is an experienced and well-bred millwright, is the designer and master builder. Two colored men, who are first-rate blacksmiths (one of them an experienced engineer and engine builder), are diligently at work making the boilers. An apartment for the engine, furnaces, &c., will be built of brick in the most substantial manner, there being about one hundred thousand bricks on hand, which were made on the premises last year.

Without taking to ourselves any praise, but rather giving thanks to the Father of Mercies, whence all our blessings flow, we are bold to say that the Institution has already accomplished much good, and its prospects for usefulness are now brighter than at any former period. Applications for admission are frequent, and in all probability not less than eighty scholars will be instructed in the adult and juvenile departments the ensuing winter. Our enterprise in Dawn is evidently the dawning of hope for the injured race, with which most of us are connected, *on the American Continent*. We have been favored the past summer with the presence of many distinguished visitors, white and colored, who, if called on, would cheerfully add their testimony to our statements.

In conclusion, we would modestly ask assistance from such as have it in their power to give, and have the best interests of the refugees from Slavery and their children at heart.

Trusting in the God of Heaven, and not in an arm of flesh, our watchword is onward. We verily believe that help will come, and that right early, and that God will be glorified in the strengthening of our feeble hands and the elevation of our afflicted race.

PETER B. SMITH,  
JAMES STUMP,  
VINCENT JOHNSON,  
JOSIAH HENSON,  
GEORGE CARY,

*Executive Committee.*

*Dawn Mills, Canada West, Oct. 4, 1847*

“He has no such credentials”<sup>179</sup> (1851)

Josiah Henson was an escaped slave, a pioneer of the Dawn settlement, and an inspiration<sup>180</sup> for the title character in *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* (1852), arguably the single most influential text relating to American slavery. The following notice was seen as an attack on his character and started a heated debate.

JOSIAH HENSON – CAUTION

We learn that the individual above named is in England, professing to have been sent there by the Trustees of the Dawn (C. W.) School to collect funds. The Anti-Slavery Reporter for January says, “Mr. Henson has been sent hither to appeal to the friends of education to enable the Trustees to complete the arrangements begun some time since.” This is a mistake. Mr. Henson has no authority from the Trustees to solicit funds in England. Neither is he authorized, as we are informed, by any act of the colored refugees in Canada, to collect moneys for their aid. Mr. Newman, our [Baptist] Missionary in Canada, writes us under date of March 12, that the colored citizens of Chatham have held a public meeting, and passed strong resolutions against Mr. Henson and his mission, which were published in a Chatham paper, and which, together with a certificate of the Sheriff of Kent County, will be found below:

MEETING

Whereas the impression is abroad in the United States and in England, that Mr. Josiah Henson, of Dawn, Canada West, has colonized and settled a community of fugitive slaves, and that he is sent out as their Agent to collect funds for them, and the fugitives generally in this country:

Therefore, Resolved, That we deem it due to ourselves – the fugitives generally in Canada, and especially to our friends in the United States, and in England, to *declare positively* that Mr. Josiah Henson has never colonized or settled a community of Fugitive Slaves in this country, and that he is not the agent of any public Society in Canada, and has *no rightful authority* to collect funds in the name of the colored people of this Province.

And as it is stated in the public newspapers friendly to us, that Mr. Henson has credentials from the colored people, and gentlemen of high authority in this country:

Be it further Resolved, That the public should know, and are hereby informed, that he has *no such credentials*, so far as the colored people of this country know.

---

<sup>179</sup> From JOSIAH HENSON – CAUTION. (1851, April 11). *The Liberator*, p. 4.

<sup>180</sup> “A correspondent of Fred. Douglass’ paper says that Rev. Josiah Henson, a colored preacher and fugitive slave, who resides at Dawn, Canada West, is the real Uncle Tom represented in Mrs. Stowe’s book.” THE REAL “UNCLE TOM”. (1853, May 5). *The Sun* (Baltimore), p. 1.

And Resolved, That we *earnestly request* all newspapers, in this and other countries, friendly to the right, and opposed to the wrong, to publish the above resolutions.

Resolved, That we consider it a duty of necessity to inform the benevolent of England, Ireland and Scotland, that Josiah Henson is a totally unworthy medium through which to transmit their donations for the poor fugitive slaves arriving in Canada, as he has proven false; and we warn all concerned, that his statements are gratuitous and utterly without truth; that he has no credentials worthy of credit, as will be seen by the subjoined certificate from the worthy Sheriff of Kent, J. Waddell, Esq.; and it is greatly to be desired that contributions for the poor fugitives should be sent to some individuals of known good character, for distribution, and that Henson should be deprived of any opportunity of acquiring moneys, which once in his possession, no law in this colony could force from him.

R. S. CORNWELL, *Chairman*.

S. O. GRIFFIN, *Secretary*.

#### CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that an article which appears to have been copied from the 'Christian Register' into a newspaper published in Sandwich in this Province, called 'Voice of the Fugitive,' under date of the 1<sup>st</sup> of January last, wherein reference is made to a person of color designated Father Henson as the bearer of sundry testimonials from persons resident in the colony, and particularly one document from 'the Sheriff of the county where he (Father Henson) resides,' is quite untrue as regards this certificate or testimonial, as I never gave Mr. Henson such a paper as this is represented to be in the article in question.

J. WADDELL,

Sheriff, County of Kent, Canada.

Chatham, 8<sup>th</sup> of February, 1851.

### Incidents from the life of Josiah Henson<sup>181</sup> (1852)

**The following extracts from Henson's autobiography shed light on his life and actions after escaping to Canada. Included are a detailed account of a rescue mission into the United States, and the genesis of his involvement with the British American Institute.**

When I got on the Canada side, on the morning of the 28<sup>th</sup> of October, 1830, my first impulse was to throw myself on the ground, and, giving way to the riotous exultation of my feelings, to execute sundry antics which excited the astonishment of those who were looking on.

A gentleman of the neighborhood, Colonel Warren, who happened to be present, thought I was in a fit, and as he inquired what was the matter with the poor fellow, I jumped up and told him *I was free!* "O," said he, with a hearty laugh, "is that it? I never knew freedom make a man roll in the sand before." It is not much to be

---

<sup>181</sup> From Henson, J. (1852). *The life of Josiah Henson, formerly a slave*. London: Charles Gilpin.

wondered at, that my certainty of being free was not quite a sober one at the first moment; and I hugged and kissed my wife and children all round, with a vivacity which made them laugh as well as myself.

There was no time to be lost, though, in frolic, even at this extraordinary moment. I was a stranger in a strange land, and had to look about me, at once, for refuge and resource. I found a lodging for the night; and the next morning set about exploring the interior for the means of support. I knew nothing about the country, or the people; but kept my eyes and ears open, and made such enquiries as opportunity afforded.

I heard, in the course of the day, of a Mr. Hibbard, who lived some six or seven miles off, and who was a rich man, as riches were counted there, with a large farm, and several small tenements on it, which he was in the habit of letting to his laborers. To him I went, immediately, though the character given him by his neighbors was not, by any means, unexceptionably good. But I thought the was not, probably, any worse than those I had been accustomed to serve, and that I could get along with him, if honest and faithful work would satisfy him.

In the afternoon I found him, and soon struck a bargain with him for employment. I asked him if there was any house where he would let me live. He said yes, and led the way to an old two-story sort of shanty, into the lower story of which the pigs had broken, and had apparently made it their resting-place for some time. Still, it was a house, and I forthwith expelled the pigs, and set about clearing it for the occupancy of a better sort of tenants. With the aid of hoe and shovel, hot water and a mop, I got the floor into a tolerable condition by midnight, and only then did I rest from my labor.

The next day I brought the rest of the Hensons to *my house*, and though there was nothing there but bare walls and floors, we were all in a state of great delight, and my old woman laughed and acknowledged that it was worth while, and that it was better than a log-cabin with an earth floor. I begged some straw of Mr. Hibbard, and confining it by logs in the corners of the room, I made beds of it three feet thick, upon which we reposed luxuriously after our long fatigues.

Another trial awaited me which I had not anticipated. In consequence of the great exposures we had gone through, my wife and all the children fell sick; and it was not without extreme peril that they escaped with their lives.

My employer soon found that my labor was of more value to him than that of those he was accustomed to hire; and as I consequently gained his favor, and his wife took quite a fancy to mine, we soon procured some of the comforts of life, while the necessaries of food and fuel were abundant. I remained with Mr. Hibbard three years, sometimes working on shares, and sometimes for wages; and I managed in that time to procure some pigs, a cow, and a horse. Thus my condition gradually improved, and I felt that my toils and sacrifices for freedom had not been in vain. Nor were my labors for the improvement of myself and others, in more important things than food and clothing, without effect.

It so happened, that one of my Maryland friends arrived in this neighborhood, and hearing of my being here, inquired if I ever preached now, and spread the

reputation I had acquired elsewhere, for my gifts in the pulpit. I had said nothing myself, and had not intended to say anything of my having ever officiated in that way. I went to meeting with others, when I had an opportunity, and enjoyed the quiet of the Sabbath when there was no assembly. I would not refuse to labor in this field, however, when desired to do so; and I hope it is no violation of modesty to state the fact that I was frequently called upon, not by blacks alone, but by all classes in my vicinity – the comparatively educated, as well as the lamentably ignorant – to speak to them on their duty, responsibility, and immortality, on their obligations to their Maker, their Savior, and themselves.

It may, nay, I am aware it must, seem strange to many, that a man so ignorant as myself, unable to read, and having heard so little as I had of religion, natural or revealed, should be able to preach acceptably to persons who had enjoyed greater advantages than myself. I can explain it only by reference to our Savior's comparison of the kingdom of heaven to a plant which may spring from a seed no bigger than a mustard-seed, and may yet reach such a size, that the birds of the air may take shelter therein. Religion is not so much knowledge, as wisdom – and observation upon what passes without, and reflection upon what passes within a man's heart, will give him a larger growth in grace than is imagined by the devoted adherents of creeds, or the confident followers of Christ, who call him "Lord, Lord," but do not the things which he says.

Mr. Hibbard was good enough to give my eldest boy, Tom, two quarters' schooling, to which the schoolmaster added more, of his own kindness, so that my boy learned to read fluently and well. It was a great advantage, not only to him, but to me; for I used to get him to read much to me in the Bible, especially on Sunday mornings, when I was going to preach; and I could easily commit to memory a few verses, or a chapter, from hearing him read it over. One beautiful summer Sabbath, I rose early, and called him to come and read to me.

"Where shall I read, father?"

"Anywhere, my son," I answered, for I knew not how to direct him. He opened upon Psalm ciii.

"Bless the Lord, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless his holy name;" and as he read this beautiful outpouring of gratitude, which I now first heard, my heart melted within me. I recalled, with all the rapidity with which thought is capable, the whole current of my life; and, as I remembered the dangers and afflictions from which the Lord had delivered me, and compared my present condition with what it had been, not only my heart but my eyes overflowed, and I could neither check nor conceal the emotion which overpowered me. The words, "Bless the Lord, O my soul," with which the Psalm begins and ends, were all I needed, or could use, to express the fulness of my thankful heart.

When he had finished, Tom turned to me and asked, "Father, who was David?" He had observed my excitement, and added, "He writes pretty, don't he?" and then repeated his question. It was a question I was utterly unable to answer. I had never heard of David, but could not bear to acknowledge my ignorance to my own child. So I answered evasively,

“He was a man of God, my son.”

“I suppose so,” said he, “but I want to know something more about him. Where did he live? What did he do?”

As he went on questioning me, I saw it was in vain to attempt to escape, and so I told him frankly I did not know.

“Why, father,” said he, “can’t you read?”

This was a worse question than the other, and if I had any pride in me at the moment, it took it all out of me pretty quick. It was a direct question, and must have a direct answer; so I told him at once I could not.

“Why not?” said he.

“Because I never had an opportunity to learn, nor anybody to teach me.”

“Well, you can learn now, father.”

“No, my son, I am too old, and have not time enough. I must work all day, or you would not have enough to eat.”

“Then you might do it at night.”

“But still there is nobody to teach me. I can’t afford to pay anybody for it, and, of course, no one can do it for nothing.”

“Why, father, *I’ll teach you*. I can do it, I know. And then you’ll know so much more, that you can talk better, and preach better.”

The little fellow was so earnest, there was no resisting him; but it is hard to described the conflicting feelings within me at such a proposition from such a quarter. I was delighted with the conviction that my children would have advantages I had never enjoyed; but it was no slight mortification to think of being instructed by a child of twelve years old. Yet ambition, and a true desire to learn, for the good it would do my own mind, conquered the shame, and I agreed to try. But I did not reach this state mind instantly.

I was greatly moved by the conversation I had with Tom – so much so that I could not undertake to preach that day. The congregation were disappointed, and I passed the Sunday in solitary reflection in the woods. I was too much engrossed with the multitude of my thoughts within me to return home to dinner, and spent the whole day in secret meditation and prayer, trying to compose myself, and ascertain my true position.

It was not difficult to see that my predicament was one of profound ignorance, and that I ought to use every opportunity of enlightening it. I began to take lessons of Tom, therefore, immediately, and followed it up, every evening, by the light of a pine knot, or some hickory bark, which was the only light I could afford. Weeks passed, and my progress was so slow, that poor Tom was almost discouraged, and used to drop asleep, sometimes, and whine a little over my dullness, and talk to me very much as a schoolmaster talks to a stupid boy, till I began to be afraid that my age, my want of practice in looking at such little scratches, the daily fatigue, and the dim light, would be effectual preventives of my ever acquiring the art of reading. But Tom’s perseverance and mine conquered at last, and in the course of the winter I did really learn to read a little.

It was, and has been ever since, a great comfort to me to have made this acquisition; though it has made me comprehend better the terrible abyss of ignorance in which I have been plunged all my previous life. It made me also feel more deeply and bitterly the oppression under which I had toiled and groaned; but the crushing and cruel nature of which I had not appreciated, till I found out, in some slight degree, from what I had been debarred. At the same time it made me more anxious than before to do something for the rescue and elevation of those who were suffering the same evils I had endured, and who did not know how degraded and ignorant they really were.

After about three years had passed, I improved my condition again, by taking service with a gentleman by the name of Riseley, whose residence was only a few miles distant, and who was a man of more elevation of mind than Mr. Hibbard, and of superior abilities. At his place I began to reflect, more and more, upon the circumstances of the blacks, who were already somewhat numerous in this region.

I was not the only one who had escaped from the States, and had settled on the first spot in Canada which they had reached. Several hundreds of colored persons were in the neighborhood; and, in the first joy of their deliverance, were going on in a way which, I could see, led to little or no progress in improvement. They were content to have the proceeds of their labor at their own command, and had not the ambition for, or the perception of what was within their easy reach, if they did but know it. They were generally working for hire upon the lands of others, and had not yet dreamed of becoming independent proprietors themselves.

It soon became my great object to awaken them to a sense of the advantages which offered themselves to their grasp; and Mr. Riseley, seeing clearly the justness of my views, and willing to co-operate with me in the attempt to make them generally known among the blacks, permitted me to call meetings at his house, of those who were known to be among the most intelligent and successful of our class.

At these meetings we considered and discussed the subject, till we were all of one mind; and it was agreed, among the ten or twelve of us who assembled at them, that we would invest our earnings in land, and undertake the task – which, though no light one, certainly, would yet soon reward us for our effort – of settling where every tree which we felled, and every bushel of corn we raised, would be for ourselves; in other words, where we could secure all the profits of our own labor.

The advantages of this course need not be dwelt upon, in a country which is every day exemplifying it, and has done so for two hundred years and more; and has, by this very means, acquired an indestructible character for energy, enterprise, and self-reliance. It was precisely the Yankee spirit which I wished to instill into my fellow-slaves, if possible; and I was not deterred from the task by the perception of the immense contrast in all the habits and character generated by long ages of freedom and servitude, activity and sloth, independence and subjection.

My associates agreed with me, and we resolved to select some spot among the many offered to our choice, where we could colonize and raise our own crops, eat our own bread, and be, in short, our own masters. I was deputed to explore the country, and find a place to which I would be willing to migrate myself; and they all said they



would go with me, whenever such a one should be found. I set out accordingly in the autumn of 1834, and traveled on foot all over the extensive region between lakes Ontario, Erie, and Huron. When I came to the territory east of Lake St. Clair and Detroit River, I was strongly impressed with its fertility, its convenience, and, indeed, its superiority, for our purposes, to any other spot I had seen. I determined this should be the place; and so reported, on my return, to my future companions. They were wisely cautious, however, and sent me off again in the summer, that I might see it at the opposite seasons of the year, and be better able to judge its advantages.

I found no reason to change my opinion, but upon going farther towards the head of Lake Erie, I discovered an extensive tract of government land, which, for some years, had been granted to a Mr. McCormick upon certain conditions, and which he had rented out to settlers upon such terms as he could obtain. This land being already cleared, offered some advantages for the immediate raising of crops, which were not to be overlooked by persons whose resources were so limited as ours; and we determined to go there first, for a time, and with the proceeds of what we could earn there, to make our purchases in Dawn afterwards. This plan was followed, and some dozen or more of us settled upon these lands, the following spring, and accumulated something by the crops of wheat and tobacco we were able to raise.

I discovered, before long, that McCormick had not complied with the conditions of his grant, and was not, therefore, entitled to the rent he exacted from the settlers. I was advised by Sir John Cockburn, to whom I applied on the subject, to appeal to the legislature for relief. We did so; and though McCormick was able, by the aid of his friends, to defeat us for one year, yet we succeeded the next, upon a second appeal, and were freed from all rent thereafter, so long as we remained.

Still, this was not our land. The government, though it demanded no rent, might set up the land for sale at any time, and then we should, probably, be driven off by wealthier purchasers, with the entire loss of all our improvements, and with no retreat provided. It was manifest that it was altogether better for us to purchase before competition was invited; and we kept this fully in mind during the time we stayed here.

We remained in this position six or seven years; and all this while the colored population was increasing rapidly around us, and spreading very fast into the interior settlements and the large towns. The immigration from the United States was incessant, and some, I am not unwilling to admit, were brought hither with my knowledge and connivance; and I will now proceed to give a short account of the plans and operations I had arranged for the liberation of some of my brethren, and which I hope may prove interesting to the reader.

The degraded and hopeless condition of a slave can never be properly felt by him while he remains in such a position. After I had tasted the blessings of freedom, my mind reverted to those whom I knew were groaning in captivity, and I at once proceeded to take measures to free as many as I could. I thought that, by using exertion, numbers might make their escape as I did, if they had some practical advice how to proceed.

I was once attending a very large meeting at Fort Erie, at which a great many colored people were present. In the course of my preaching I tried to impress upon them the importance of the obligations they were under – first, to God, for their deliverance; and then, secondly, to their fellow-men, to do all that was in their power to bring others out of bondage.

In the congregation was a man named James Lightfoot, who was of a very active temperament, and had obtained his freedom by fleeing to Canada, but had never thought of his family and friends, whom he had left behind, until the time he heard me speaking, although he himself had been free for some five years. However, that day the cause was brought home to his heart. When the service was concluded he begged to have an interview with me, to which I gladly acceded, and an arrangement was made for further conversation on the same subject at a week from that time.

He informed me where he came from, also to whom he belonged, and that he had left behind a dear father and mother, three sisters, and four brothers; and that they lived on the Ohio River, not far from the city of Maysville. He said, that he never saw his duty towards them to be so clear and unmistakable as he did at that time, and professed himself ready to co-operate in any measure that might be devised for their release. During the short period of his freedom, he had accumulated some little property, the whole of which, he stated, he would cheerfully devote to carrying out those measures; for he had not had any rest, night nor day, since the meeting above-mentioned.

I was not able at that time to propose what was best to be done, and thus we parted; but in a few days he came to see me again on the same errand. I then, seeing the agony of his heart in behalf of his kindred, consented to commence the painful and dangerous task of endeavoring to free those whom he so much loved. I left my own family in the hands of no other save God, and commenced the journey alone, on foot, and traveled thus about four hundred miles. But the Lord furnished me with strength sufficient for the undertaking.

I passed through the States of New York, Pennsylvania, and Ohio – free States so called – and crossed the Ohio River into Kentucky, and ultimately found his friends in the place he had described. I was an entire stranger to them, but I took with me a small token of their brother who was gone, which they at once recognized; and this was to let them know that he had gone to Canada, the land of freedom, and had now sent a friend to assist them in making their escape.

This created no little excitement. But his parents had become so far advanced in years that they could not undertake the fatigue; his sisters had a number of children, and they could not travel; his four brothers and a nephew were young men, and sufficiently able for the journey, but the thought of leaving their father, and mother, and sisters, was too painful; and they also considered it was not safe to make the attempt then, for fear that the excitement and grief of their friends might betray them; so they declined going at that time, but promised that they would go in a year, if I would return for them. To this I assented, and then went between forty and fifty

miles into the interior of Kentucky, having heard that there was a large party ready to attempt their escape, if they had a leader to direct their movements.

I traveled by night, resting by day, and at length reached Bourbon County, the place where I expected to find these people. After a delay of about a week, spent in discussing plans, making arrangements, and other matters, I found that there were about thirty collected from different States, who were disposed to make the attempt.

At length, on a Saturday night, we started. The agony of parting can be better conceived than described – as, in their case, husbands were leaving their wives, mothers their children, and children their parents. This, at first sight, will appear strange, and even incredible; but, when we take the fact into consideration, that at any time they were liable to be separated, by being sold to what are termed “n—traders,” and even probable that such an event would take place, it will, I think, cease to excite any surprise.

We succeeded in crossing the Ohio River in safety, and arrived in Cincinnati the third night after our departure. Here we got assistance, and after stopping a short time to rest, we proceeded forthwith for Richmond, Indiana. This is a town which has been settled by Quakers, and there we found friends indeed, who at once helped us on our way, without a loss of time; and after a difficult journey of two weeks, through the wilderness, we reached Toledo, Ohio, a town on the south-western shore of Lake Erie, and there we took passage for Canada, which we reached in safety. I then went home to my family, taking with me the whole of this large party, perfectly satisfied with my conduct in the matter, in being permitted to be the instrument of freeing such a number of my fellow-creatures.

I remained at home, working on my farm, until the next autumn, soon after which time I had promised to assist in the restoring to liberty the friends of James Lightfoot, the individual who had excited my sympathy at the meeting at Fort Erie. In pursuance of this promise, I again started on my long journey into Kentucky, and, on arriving at Portsmouth, in the State of Ohio, I had a very narrow escape from being detected. The place was frequented by a number of Kentuckians, who were quite alive to suspect a colored man, if they saw anything unusual about him.

I reached Portsmouth in the morning, and waited until two in the afternoon for the steamboat, so that I might not arrive in Maysville till after dark. While in the town I was obliged to resort to a stratagem, in order to avoid being questioned by the Kentuckians I saw in the place. To this end I procured some dried leaves, put them into a cloth, and bound it all round my face, reaching nearly to my eyes, and pretended to be so seriously affected in my head and teeth as not to be able to speak. I then lay down on the side of the road, and no doubt looked a very pitiable object, sufficiently so, as it proved, to attract attention. I was accosted by several during my short stay in Portsmouth, who appeared very anxious to get some particulars from me as to who I was, where I was going, and to whom I belonged. To all their numerous inquiries I merely shook my head, mumbled out indistinct answers, and acted so that they could not get anything out of me; and, by this artifice, I succeeded in avoiding any unpleasant consequences. I got on board the boat, and reached Maysville in the evening, about a fortnight from the time I had left Canada.

On landing, the second person I met in the street was Jefferson Lightfoot, brothers of the James Lightfoot previously mentioned, and one of the party who had promised to escape if I would assist them. He stated that they were still determined to make the attempt, and the following Saturday night was named to put it into execution, and preparations for the journey were at once commenced. The reason why Saturday night was chosen on this and the previous occasion was that, from not having to labor the next day, and being allowed to visit their families, they would not be missed until the time came for their usual appearance in the field, at which period they would be some eighty or a hundred miles away. During the interval, I had to keep myself concealed by day, and used to meet them by night to make the necessary arrangements.

For fear of being detected, they started off without bidding their father or mother farewell, and then, in order to prevent the hounds from following on our trail, we seized a skiff, a little below the city, and made our way down the river. It was not the shortest way, but it was the surest. It was sixty-five miles from Maysville to Cincinnati, and we thought we could reach that city before daylight, and then take the stage for Sandusky; but a sad accident occurred through our boat springing a leak before we got half-way, and we narrowly escaped being drowned; providentially, however, we got to the shore before the boat sunk. We then took another boat, but this detention prevented us from arriving at Cincinnati in time for the stage.

Day broke upon us when we were about ten miles above the city, and we were compelled to leave our boat from fear of being apprehended. This was an anxious time. However, we had got so far away that we knew there was no danger of being discovered by the hounds, and we thought we would go on foot.

When we got within seven miles of Cincinnati, we came to the Miami River, and we could not reach the city without crossing it. This was a great barrier to us, for the water appeared to be deep, and we were afraid to ask for the loan of a boat, being apprehensive it might lead to our detection. We went first up and then down the river, trying to find a convenient crossing place, but failed.

I then said to my company, "Boys, let us go up the river and try again." We started, and after going about a mile we saw a cow coming out of a wood, and going to the river as though she intended to drink. Then said I, "Boys, let us go and see what this cow is about; it may be that she will tell us some news." I said this in order to cheer them up. One of them replied, in rather a peevish way, "Oh, that cow can't talk," but I again urged them to come on. The cow remained until we approached her within a rod or two; she then walked into the river, and went straight across without swimming, which caused me to remark, "The Lord has sent that cow to show us where to cross the river."

Having urged our way with considerable haste, we were literally saturated with perspiration, and my companions thought that it would be highly dangerous for us to proceed through the water, especially as snow was rapidly falling, and there was a large quantity of ice in the river. But as it was a question of life or death with us, there was no time left for reasoning; I therefore advanced – they reluctantly following.

The youngest of the Lightfoots experienced such serious effects from his passage towards the opposite shore, that, ere he had reached midway, he was seized with violent contraction of the limbs, which prevented further self-exertion on his part; he was, therefore, carried the remainder of the distance. After resorting to continued friction, he partially recovered, and we proceeded on our journey.

We got to Cincinnati about eleven on Sunday morning – too late for the stage that day; but having found some friends, we hid ourselves until Monday evening, when we re-commenced our long and toilsome journey, through mud, rain, and snow, towards Canada. We had increased our distance about 100 miles, by going out of our road to get among the Quakers.

During our passage through the woods, the boy before referred to was taken alarmingly ill, and we were compelled to proceed with him on our backs; but finding this mode of conveying him exceedingly irksome, we constructed a kind of litter with our shirts and handkerchiefs laid across poles.

By this time we got into the state of Indiana, so that we could travel by day as long as we kept to the woods. Our patient continued to get worse, and it appeared, both to himself and to us all, that death would soon release him from his sufferings. He therefore begged to be left in some secluded spot, to die alone, as he feared that the delay occasioned by his having to be carried through the bush, might lead to the capture of the whole company.

With very considerable reluctance we acceded to his request, and laid him in a sheltered place, with a full expectation that death would soon put an end to his sufferings. The poor fellow expressed his readiness to meet the last struggle in hope of eternal life. Sad, indeed, was the parting; and it was with difficulty we tore ourselves away. We had not, however, proceeded more than two miles on our journey, when one of the brothers of the dying man made a sudden stop, and expressed his inability to proceed whilst he had the consciousness that he had left his brother to perish, in all probability, a prey to the devouring wolves. His grief was so great, that we determined to return, and at length reached the spot, where we found the poor fellow apparently dying, moaning out with every breath a prayer to heaven. Words cannot describe the joyfulness experienced by the Lightfoots when they saw their poor afflicted brother once more; they literally danced for joy.

We at once prepared to resume our journey as we best could, and once more penetrated the bush. After making some progress, we saw, at a little distance on the road, a wagon approaching, and I immediately determined to ascertain whether some assistance could not be obtained. I at length circumvented the road, so as to make it appear that I had been journeying in an opposite direction to that which the wagon was taking. When I came up with the driver, I bade him good day, and after a little conversation I discovered that he was a Quaker, and not unfriendly to the slave. I therefore plainly told him our circumstances.

He at once stopped his horses, and expressed his willingness to assist us. I returned to the place where my companions were in waiting for me, and soon had them in the presence of the Quaker. Immediately on viewing the sufferer he was moved to tears, and without delay turned his horses' heads, to proceed in the direction

of his home, although he had intended to go to a distant market with a load of produce for sale. The reception we met with from the Quaker's family overjoyed our hearts, and the transports with which the poor men looked upon their brother, now so favorably circumstanced, cannot be described. We remained with this happy family for the night, and received from them every kindness. It was arranged that the boy should remain behind until, through the blessing of God, he should recover. We were kindly provided by them with a sack of biscuit and a joint of meat, and once more set our faces in the direction of Lake Erie.

After proceeding some distance on our road, we perceived a white man approaching, but as he was traveling alone and on foot, we were not alarmed at his presence. It turned out that he had been residing for some time in the South, and although a free man, his employers had attempted to castigate him; in return for which he had used violence, which made it necessary that he should at once escape. We traveled in company, and found that his presence was of signal service to us in delivering us out of the hands of the slave-hunters who were now on our track, and eagerly grasping after their prey.

We had resolved on reaching the lake, a distance of forty miles, by the following morning; we, therefore, walked all night. Just as the day was breaking, we reached a wayside tavern, immediately contiguous to the lake, and our white companion having knocked up the landlord, ordered breakfast for six.

Whilst our breakfast was in course of preparation, we dozed off into slumber, wearied with our long-continued exertion. Just as our breakfast was ready, whilst half asleep and half awake, an impression came forcibly upon me that danger was nigh, and that I must at once leave the house. I immediately urged by companions to follow me out, which they were exceedingly unwilling to do; but as they had promised me submission, they at length yielded to my request.

We retired to the yard at the side of the house, and commenced washing ourselves with the snow, which was now up to our knees. Presently we heard the tramping of horses, and were at once warned of the necessity of secreting ourselves. We crept beneath a pile of bushes which were lying close at hand, which permitted a full view of the road. The horsemen came to a dead stop at the door of the house, and commenced their inquiries; my companions at once recognized the parties on horseback, and whispered their names to me. This was a critical moment, and the loud beatings of their hearts testified the dreadful alarm with which they viewed the scene. Had we been within doors, we should have been inevitably sacrificed.

Our white friend proceeded to the door in advance of the landlord, and maintained his position. He was at once interrogated by the slave-hunters whether he had seen any negroes pass that way. He said yes, he thought he had. Their number was demanded, and they were told about six, and that they were proceeding in the direction of Detroit, and that they might be some few miles on the road. They at once reined their horses, which were greatly fatigued, through having been ridden all night, and were soon out of sight.

We at length ventured into the house, and devoured bread in an incredibly short space of time. After what had transpired, the landlord became acquainted with

our circumstances, and at once offered to sail us in his boat across to Canada. We were happy enough to have such an offer, and soon the white sail of our little bark was laying to the wind, and we were gliding our way, with the land of liberty in full view. Words cannot describe the feelings experienced by my companions as they neared the shore – their bosoms were swelling with inexpressible joy, as they mounted the seats of the boat, ready, eagerly, to spring forward, that they might touch the soil of the freeman. And when they reached the shore, they danced and wept for joy, and kissed the earth on which they first stepped, no longer the SLAVE – but the FREE.

After the lapse of a few months, on one joyous Sabbath morning, I had the happiness of clasping the poor boy we had left in the kind care of the Quaker, no longer attenuated in frame, but robust and healthy, and surrounded by his family. Thus my joy was consummated, and superadded was the blessing of those who were ready to perish which came upon me. It is one of the greatest sources of my happiness to know, that by similar means to those above narrated, I have been instrumental in delivering 118 human beings out of the cruel and merciless grasp of the slaveholder.

Mr. Frank Taylor, the owner of the Lightfoots, whose escape I have just narrated, soon after he missed his slaves, fell ill, and became quite deranged; but, on recovering, he was persuaded by his friends to free the remainder of the family of the Lightfoots, which he at length did; and, after a short lapse of time, they all met each other in Canada, where they are now living.

I did not find that our prosperity increased with our numbers. The mere delight the slave took in his freedom, rendered him, at first, contented with a lot far inferior to that which he might have attained. Then his ignorance led him to make unprofitable bargains, and he would often hire wild land on short terms, and bind himself to clear a certain number of acres; and by the time they were cleared and fitted for cultivation his lease was out, and his landlord would come in, and raise a splendid crop on the new land; and the tenant would, very likely, start again on just such another bargain, and be no better off at the end of ten years than he was at the beginning.

Another way in which they lost the profits of their labor, was by raising nothing but tobacco, the high price of which was very tempting, and the cultivation of which was a monopoly in their hands, as no white man understood it, or could compete with them at all. The consequence was, however, that they had nothing but tobacco to sell; there was rather too much of it in the market, and the price of wheat rose, while their commodity was depressed; and they lost all they should have saved, in the profit they gave the trader for his corn and stores.

I saw the effect of those things so clearly that I could not help trying to make my friends and neighbors see it too; and I set seriously about the business of lecturing upon the subject of crops, wages, and profits, as if I had been brought up to it. I insisted on the necessity of their raising their own crops, saving their own wages, and securing the profits of their own labor, with such plain arguments as occurred to me, and were as clear to their comprehension as mine. I did this very openly; and, frequently, my audience consisted in part of the very traders whose inordinate profits

upon individuals I was trying to diminish, but whose balance of profit would not be ultimately lessened, because they would have so many more persons to trade with, who would be able to pay them a reasonable advance in cash, or its equivalent, on all their purchases.

The purse is a tender part of the system; but I handled it so gently, that the sensible portion of my natural opponents were not, I believe, offended; while those whom I wished to benefit saw, for the most part, the propriety of my advice, and took it. At least, there are now great numbers of settlers, in this region of Canada, who own their farms, and are training up their children in true independence, and giving them a good elementary education, who had not taken a single step towards such a result before I began to talk to them.

While I remained at Colchester, I became acquainted with a Congregational missionary from Massachusetts, by the name of Hiram Wilson, who took an interest in our people, and was disposed to do what he could to promote the cause of improvement which I had so much at heart. He co-operated with me in many efforts, and I have been associated with him from 1836 to the present time. He has been a faithful friend, and still continues his important labors of love in our behalf. Among other things which he did for us then, he wrote to a Quaker friend of his, an Englishman, by the name of James C. Fuller, residing at Skaneateles, New York, and endeavored to interest him in the welfare of our struggling population.

He succeeded so far, that Mr. Fuller, who was going on a visit to England, promised to do what he could among his friends there, to include them to aid us. He came back with fifteen hundred dollars which had been subscribed for our benefit. It was a great question how this sum, which sounded vast to many of my brethren, should be appropriated. I had my own opinion pretty decidedly made up, as to what it was best for us all to do with it. But, in order to come to a satisfactory conclusion, the first thing to be done was to call a convention of delegates from every settlement of blacks that was within reach; that all might see that whatever was decided on, was sanctioned by the disinterested votes of those who were thought by their companions best able to judge what was expedient.

Mr. Wilson and myself called such a convention, therefore, to meet in London, Upper Canada, and it was held in June, 1838. I urged the appropriation of the money to the establishment of a manual-labor school, where our children could be taught those elements of knowledge which are usually the occupations of a grammar-school; and where they boys could be taught, in addition, the practice of some mechanic art, and the girls could be instructed in those domestic arts which are proper occupations and ornament of their sex. Such an establishment would train up those who would afterwards instruct others; and we should thus gradually become independent of the white man for our intellectual progress, as we might be also for our physical prosperity. It was the more necessary, as in many districts, owing to the insurmountable prejudices of the inhabitants, the children of the blacks were not allowed to share the advantages of the common school.

There was some opposition to this plan in the convention; but in the course of the discussion, which continued for three days, it appeared so obviously for the



advantage of all to husband this donation, so as to preserve it for a purpose of permanent utility, that the proposal was, at last, unanimously adopted; and a committee of three was appointed to select and purchase a site for the establishment.

Mr. Wilson and myself were the active members of this committee, and after traversing the country for several months, we could find no place more suitable than that upon which I had had my eye for three or four years, for a permanent settlement, in the town of Dawn. We therefore bought two hundred acres of fine rich land, on the river Sydenham, covered with a heavy growth of black walnut and white wood, at four dollars the acre.

I had made a bargain for two hundred acres adjoining this lot, on my account; and circumstances favored me so that the man of whom I purchased was glad to let me have them at a large discount from the price I had agreed to pay, if I would give him cash for the balance I owed him. I transferred a portion of the advantage of this bargain to the institution, by selling to it one hundred acres more, at the low price at which I had obtained them; and thus the school has three hundred acres of as fine land, and as well situated land, as Canada can show, at a very moderate cost.

In 1842, I removed with my family to Dawn, and as a considerable number of friends are there about me, and the school is permanently fixed there, the future importance of this settlement seems to be decided. There are many other settlements which are considerable; and, indeed, the colored population is scattered over a territory, which does not fall short of three hundred miles in extent, in each direction, and probably numbers not less than twenty thousand persons in all. We look to the school, and the possession of landed property by individuals, as two great means of the elevation of our oppressed and degraded race to a participation in the blessings, as they have hitherto been permitted to share only the miseries and vices, of civilization.

My efforts to aid them, in every way in my power, and to procure the aid of others for them, have been constant. I have made many journeys into New York, Connecticut, Massachusetts, and Maine, in all of which States I have found or made some friends to the cause, and, I hope, some personal friends. I have received many liberal gifts, and experienced much kindness of treatment; but I must be allowed to allude particularly to the donations received from Boston – by which we have been enabled to erect a saw-mill, and thus to begin, in good earnest, the clearing of our lands, and to secure a profitable return for the support of our school – as among those which have been most welcome and valuable to us.

I could give here a great many particulars, which would amuse and interest the reader, if they did not instruct him. But it is better not to indulge the inclination; and I will conclude my narrative by simply recording my gratitude, heartfelt and inexpressible, to God, and to many of my fellow-men, for the vast improvement in my condition, both physical and mental; for the great degree of comfort with which I am surrounded; for the good I have been enabled to effect; for the light which has risen upon me; for the religious privileges I enjoy, and the religious hopes I am permitted to cherish; for the prospects opening to my children, so different from what they might

have been; and, finally, for the cheering expectation of benefiting not only the present, but many future generations of my race.

P.S. – Having devoted my time and attention, as well as so much of my worldly substance as I could spare, to the well-being of my suffering fellow countrymen, there yet remains one other object dear to my heart, which I am anxious to see accomplished. It has been a matter of grief to me, when I have seen in our various meetings several hundreds congregated together, amongst whom scarcely a single individual could read a single syllable; and, I have, therefore, resolved to use every effort to obtain for them the blessings of education. We have now established at Dawn, Upper Canada, schools of instruction, which greatly need assistance, and it is intended that any profits arising from this publication shall go to the support of this worthy object. [...]

#### [THE BRITISH AND AMERICAN INSTITUTE]

The Institute at Dawn was commenced about ten years ago, with a view of elevating the colored population, then rapidly increasing in number, by a sound and scriptural education, without, at the same time, excluding either white people or Indians from its benefits. The colored population I Canada West was then, and is now, composed almost entirely of fugitive slaves and their offspring.

The land purchased for the Institute, and properly vested in Trustees, is about three hundred acres in extent, lying on both banks of the River Sydenham, a fine stream, which is navigable, for vessels of three hundred tons burthen, from Lake St. Clair to the Institute, and thence to all the American markets. It is, therefore, admirably situated for commercial as well as other purposes, and will, no doubt, hereafter be a township of considerable importance.

Log buildings and school houses, such as the people were able to build with their own hands, have been erected at Dawn, and about one hundred acres of the land cleared, for the supply of grain, vegetables, &c., required by the Institute; and this has been done by persons who have been already educated there, or are now receiving instruction. It has been an object from the beginning, of those who have managed the affairs of the Institute, to make it self-supporting, by the employment of the Students, for certain portions of their time, on the land; and this mode of operation will be a permanent feature in its proceedings.

Besides the buildings already named, a Saw Mill, driven by steam, has been erected at a considerable expense, for cutting planks, logs, posts, &c., which is found to act admirably well, and to be of great service to the neighboring settlements. It is proposed to add a Grist Mill, as soon as means can be found, for the use of the Institute and neighborhood, inasmuch as, at present, great difficulty exists in procuring supplies of flour without traveling over bad roads a distance of twenty miles to obtain it.

Three loads of lumber, cut by Students and friends from the Institute, have already been shipped from Dawn, two of which were sold in the city of Boston, and one in the city of New York, and the funds received, after payment of expenses, applied to the liquidation of the debts contracted by the Institute.

The Trustees, however, find themselves embarrassed in various ways by the pressure of remaining debts, and feel that it cannot realize the objects for which it was originally intended, nor meet the increasing demands for instruction, unless they erect a building capable of containing one thousand persons, which can be occupied during the week as a School, and on Sundays for religious worship. To accomplish these several objects will require a sum of £2,000.

Another prominent feature of the Institute has been to afford a temporary shelter to Fugitive Slaves, until they could be placed out upon the wild lands in the neighborhood to earn their own subsistence. Many of these poor creatures arrive destitute of means, and often in want of suitable clothing, and these, as far as possible, have been supplied to them. Since the passage of the Fugitive Slave Bill, by the Congress of the United States, they have arrived in large numbers at the Institute, and have been drafted off among their brethren who had been previously settled, and who are now making every effort and sacrifice to meet their very destitute circumstances.

Notwithstanding the serious difficulties the Trustees of the Institute have had to contend with, the results have been, upon the whole, satisfactory. The number of adult Students who have been under a course of instruction on its premises, has ranged from fifty-six to one hundred and sixteen; but besides these, there have been classes of children – colored, white, and Indians – who have been under the care of the Teachers. The number of Teachers has varied according to circumstances, but the actual number engaged has been four males and two females.

Among those who have been educated at the Institute, ten are now laboring in various districts as Teachers themselves, and three of these are preachers of the Gospel. The Trustees are anxious, as far as possible, to prepare young men and women of intelligence and religious principle to superintend Schools, being persuaded that the best way of elevating the large mass of illiterate persons who come amongst them, will be by imparting to them a good education, and by a proper course of training to help them to throw off the habits engendered by the cruel and demoralizing system of slavery.

Should their present appeal be successful, it is their intention to have a separate Normal School, for the proper training of young women, on the opposite side of the river to that where the present School-house stands, on property belonging to the Trustees. The necessity for these schools is, unhappily, great at present, inasmuch as the Common Schools, established and supported by the local Legislature, are proscriptive in their character – the colored people and the Indians being practically excluded from them.

It is a pleasing circumstance that, out of a population of between three and four thousand colored people, residing in the settlements surrounding the Dawn Institute, not one colored person has been sent to gaol for any infraction of the laws during the last seven years.

The Trustees of the Institute have requested its old and tried friend, and their much esteemed fellow-laborer, Mr. JOSIAH HENSON, to proceed to England for the purpose of collecting funds to pay off debts which have been unavoidably contracted,

and to carry into effect the intended improvements, rendered absolutely necessary to meet the growing wants of the population now rapidly accumulating in Canada West.

### **“False and calumnious”<sup>182</sup> (1852)**

#### **A meeting was held to vindicate Henson’s reputation and clarify his position regarding the Dawn Institute.**

At a meeting of the Dawn Institute Committee, held at 18, Wood-Street, July 5, 1852, Rev. Thomas Binney in the Chair.

Rev. Edward Matthews, one of the American Free Baptist Mission, accompanied by his brother, attended and was heard in support of his statement, that the Rev. Josiah Henson is not the duly accredited agent of the Dawn Institute; and also in relation to an address dated Bristol, March 26 1842, and signed Edward Mathews.

Rev. Josiah Henson and Mr. Scoble were also present, and were heard in reply.

Mr. Mathews having declared that he had nothing further to say, it was unanimously resolved “That this Committee do adjourn unto the 12<sup>th</sup> instant, to consider what resolutions it will be their duty to publish as the result of their investigation.”

At an adjourned meeting of the Dawn Institute Committee, held at Wood-Street, July 12, 1852, the Rev. Thomas Binney in the Chair, it was resolved “That, after careful consideration of the documents produced by Mr. Mathews, and of the facts which were ascertained at their last meeting, this Committee is of the judgment, that the Rev. Josiah Henson is the duly accredited agent of the Dawn Institute, and that the charges which have been so assiduously circulated in this country against his reputation are false and calumnious, deserving the severest reprobation of Christians of every name.”

It was resolved furthermore:-

“That, inasmuch as Mr. Mathews, after close questioning, was constrained to admit, that what purported to be a resolution of a public meeting at Chatham, Canada West, in condemnation of Mr. Henson, is a forgery, such resolution never having been passed at all; and, inasmuch as Mr. Mathews has been forced to admit, moreover, that since he knew the said resolution to be a forgery, he has still circulated it, this Committee feels itself bound, sorrowfully, but most distinctly, to express not only their severest condemnation of such an infamous attempt to ruin the character of Mr. Henson, but also their surprise that any religious institution should identify itself with men who, under the pretext of sympathy with the Fugitive Slaves, are so seriously threatening to bring the efforts of their real friends into disrepute.”

It was also resolved:-

---

<sup>182</sup> From Dawn Institute Committee. (1852, July 24). At a Meeting [Advertisement]. *Bristol Mercury and Western Counties Advertiser*, p. 4.

“That these Resolutions be advertised in the *Morning Advertiser*, the *Patriot*, the *British Banner*, the *Nonconformist*, the *Evangelical* and *Baptist Magazines*, and also in such American publications as may be deemed desirable.”

T. BINNEY, Chairman.

### “In self-defense”<sup>183</sup> (1852)

THE COMMITTEE claiming to be the DAWN INSTITUTE COMMITTEE  
and the Rev. Edward Matthews.

Some resolutions of the above Committee, signed “T. Binney,” having been published in the *Bristol Mercury*, of the 24<sup>th</sup> instant, I feel it my duty, in self-defense, to make the following statement:-

The Committee state my having admitted that “what purported to be a resolution of a public meeting at Chatham, Canada West, in condemnation of Mr. Henson, is a forgery, such resolution never having been passed at all,” and proceed to say that, in consequence of my having circulated the said resolution, they felt bound “to express their severest condemnation of such an infamous attempt to ruin the character of Mr. Henson,” and conclude by professing their regret that the American Baptist Free Mission Society should identify itself with men who, under the pretext of sympathy with the Fugitive Slaves, are so seriously threatening to bring the efforts of their real friends into disrepute.

I acknowledge, through inadvertency, I did distribute, at most, some six or eight of my circulars after hearing from Canada that one of the resolutions, reprinted in them from American papers, was not official, and I hesitate not to express my regret; but I have done nothing calculated to deceive, and I would ask whether truth and justice did not require of the Committee, who have condemned me in such unmeasured terms for having republished this one informal resolution, to have admitted that *all the others*, denying Mr. Henson’s authority to collect funds for the Dawn Institute, were *undisputed*? And, while censuring me for circulating in this country the proceedings in Canada, was it not due to candour and to my character that they should now have concealed the fact, that with every copy of the statements I put forth, Mr. Scoble’s denial of their authenticity was also transmitted? On the *same* page I gave the statements from Canada with Mr. Scoble’s counter-statements, leaving the public to decide the merits of the question; and English people have yet to learn how the odium which the Committee have sought to cast upon me can establish Mr. Henson’s authority to collect in the face of undisputed resolutions, passed at Chatham, denying him such authority.

Oxford, July 29, 1852.

EDWARD MATHEWS.

---

<sup>183</sup> From Mathews, E. (1852, July 31). The Committee claiming to be the Dawn Institute Committee [Advertisement]. *Bristol Mercury and Western Counties Advertiser*, p. 5.

### **“No agent at all”<sup>184</sup> (1852)**

Sir – The February number of the *British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Reporter*, which has just been received at these rooms, contains a statement to the purport that a certain Josiah Henson is the only accredited agent for the British American Institute, at Dawn, Canada West. Will you allow me the privilege of saying, through your columns, to the British friends of the slave, that Mr. Henson, so far from being the only accredited agent, is no agent at all?

The conduct of the secretary of the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society, in reference to this affair, is, to use the kindest language possible, truly surprising, and has, I regret to say, alienated from him the feelings of many active and prominent abolitionists in the United States. The institute is in the possession of this society, and it is the intention to keep it, at least for the present.

The only person in England who has any rightful authority to act on behalf of the institute is the Rev. Edward Mathews, a gentleman whose unwavering attachment, for many years, to the cause of the slave, and whose personal sacrifices and sufferings in that cause ought to commend him to the hearts and sympathies of all the friends of the slave in Great Britain.

In consequence of the very singular conduct of the secretary of the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society, the board of trustees of this society have ordered the preparation of a statement of facts in relation to the institute at Dawn, to be laid before the British public. That statement<sup>185</sup> is now in course of preparation, and may be expected soon.

I remain, sir, yours, very respectfully,

Geo. G. Ritchie

Corresponding Secretary

American Baptist Free Mission Society's rooms,  
38 & 40, Genesee-street, Utica, New York, March 1, 1852.

### **“Agent of the Free Mission Baptists”<sup>186</sup> (1853)**

*The following statement in regard to the action of the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society is from the correspondent of the Wesleyan. [...]*

The Rev. Edward Mathews, the Agent of the Free Mission Baptists, came to this country [England] to give information on the slavery question and to collect funds for the Dawn Institute, of which his society was, at that time, the tenant. To his surprise he was coldly received by the Secretary, and, to his further astonishment, he found Mr. Josiah Henson raising money for the same benevolent object, professedly. He of course complained to Mr. Scoble, but that gentleman at once became a partisan of Mr. Henson's and, without instituting proper inquiry, published in the Reporter that he alone was entitled to collect money for the Institute in question. This

---

<sup>184</sup> From We have been requested. (1852, July 31). *Bristol Mercury*, p. 8.

<sup>185</sup> I've been unable to find this statement.

<sup>186</sup> From ANTI-SLAVERY IN ENGLAND. (1853, October 1). *Anti-Slavery Bugle*, p. 2.

extraordinary conduct, added to other circumstances, further alienated the affections of many Abolitionists from the society. But, happily, Mr. Scoble resigned his important office, and made the way for one who possesses, I believe, a more Catholic anti-slavery spirit, better tact, a keener perception of his duties, and a milder temper. I refer to Mr. L. A. Chamerovzow.

The advent of Mr. Chamerovzow as a leader of the great anti-slavery party in this country, was most opportune, and so far he has surpassed my most sanguine anticipations. But, while he has stilled the storm of passion, and silenced the voice of slander, he has not, nor can yet, organize the scattered anti-slavery forces, nor make us all of one mind as to the various parties in the United States and as to the best modes of action in opposing the formidable curse of chattel slavery. But I think he will succeed in bringing about something like union, and in adopting judicious and energetic measures.

### An “interesting incident” at Niagara<sup>187</sup> (1851)

**This tale was told to the writer by a “Mr. Francis” acting as agent for the Dawn Institute.**

We have just had a call from Mr. Francis, a venerable and intelligent colored man, who is now acting as the agent for the Dawn Institute, Canada West.

On his journey thither, he spent a few hours at Niagara Falls, where the incident we are about to relate occurred. One of our [U.S.] high-born slaveholders, accompanied by his wife and children, and having with him that almost indispensable appendage to such a family, a female ‘chattel,’ was spending a few days, merrily, no doubt, at that place. Wishing to have a view of the magnificent cataract from the British side, he ventured upon the dangerous experiment of taking his ‘chattel,’ in company with his family, on British soil.

By some strange if not inscrutable agency, whether the birds of the air, or the grass beneath her feet whispered it, we know not, the ‘chattel’ became aware that she no longer breathed the *free* air of ‘the model republic,’ a secret which she kept with singular wisdom, until ‘the time for action arrived’; her master, desirous to visit the battle ground, and see the very spot ‘where the Yankees flogged the English,’ dismissed his family, accompanied by the ‘chattel’ to the American side, while he gazed on Brock’s Monument and other famous sites in that vicinity.

The slave safely deposited the family, it seems, at the ‘Cataract’; this done, she made her way to the ferry, took the small boat, and a few noble strokes of the ferryman’s oars brought her in safety over the turbid waters to the Canada shores; she speedily made her way to the door of a respectable colored man, where she was immediately received, sheltered and protected.

The master soon obtained intimation of her flight, and ascertained her new abode; and with all the brazen effrontery of a southern slave-driver, he proceeded to the house and demanded an interview with her. The woman very wisely preferred

---

<sup>187</sup> From AN INTERESTING INCIDENT. (1851, September 5). *The Liberator*, p. 4.

that the interview should be held with a partition between, he upon the ground beneath, she at the window above.

*Slaveholder* – “Jane, what has prompted you to this behavior?”

*‘Chattel’* – “I wanted my freedom, sir.”

*Slaveholder* – “Have I not always treated you well? What should induce you now to leave me?”

*‘Chattel’* – “I want to be free, sir.”

*Slaveholder* – “Come, Jane, none of this foolishness; you must go back with me, and you might as well go back first as last, for go back you shall.”

*‘Chattel’* – “Well, indeed, I ain’t going back, that’s a fact.”

*Slaveholder* – “What do you think will become of your children?”

*‘Chattel’* – “What will you do with my children? God only knows. I ‘spect you’ll do with ‘em just what you’ve done with my other children – sell ‘em. My going back won’t make no difference, and I ain’t going back.”

Finding the woman wholly intractable, the slaveholder began now to curse and rave like a madman. He cursed the abolitionists, he cursed Canada, he cursed the British, and finally he cursed the Queen. The crowd that stood around listened patiently to his cursing, until the profane wretch cursed the British Queen, when a burly Englishman stepped up, and suiting the action to the word, said to the infuriated blasphemer, “Say that again, and I’ll knock your teeth down your throat.” It was fitly spoken and worked like a charm. The slaveholder came to his senses; thinking discretion the better part of valor, he smothered his rage, and like a naughty boy when snubbed effectually, shut his mouth and shrank away from the crowd, amidst jeers of derision, leaving his ‘chattel’ in the uncontested enjoyment of the rights and dignity of virtuous womanhood. We shall oppose the annexation of Canada to the United States for some time to come.

### John Brown and the Dawn Institute<sup>188</sup> (1855)

We [...] recommend the simple narrative<sup>189</sup> of John Brown, the fugitive slave. [...] John [Brown] was “raised on Betty Moore’s estate, in Southampton county, Virginia.” His mother belonged to Mrs. Moore, but his father was owned by a planter in the neighborhood. [...] His object was to go to England [to gain his freedom], which he imagined was not very far off. [...]

After enduring great hardships and privations, such as few men could have survived, he at length reached one of the stations of the “Underground Railroad,” the name which is given to a secret – and, we may add, safe – system of transit organized by the abolitionists for the conveyance of fugitive slaves to Canada. [...]

He made his way to the Dawn Institute, at Dawn, Canada West, where he helped to saw the walnut timber which was sent to the Great Exhibition in 1851.

---

<sup>188</sup> From NARRATIVE OF A RUNAWAY SLAVE. (1855, April 14). *Morning Chronicle* (London), p. 7.

<sup>189</sup> *Slave Life in Georgia: a Narrative of the Life, Sufferings, and Escape of John Brown, a Fugitive Slave, now in England*. Edited by L. A. Chamerovzow, Secretary of the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society. London: 27, New Broadstreet. [Reference at the top of the original article.]



Displeased with the manner in which the affairs of the Dawn Institute were managed, he left that place sooner than he intended, and in the last week of July, 1850, sailed from Boston to Liverpool, where he arrived on the 10<sup>th</sup> of August.

Since his arrival in England, Brown has been principally employed in delivering lectures upon the slave system, and giving a history of his life. He now proposes to return to Canada, for the purpose of inducing his colored brethren there to assist him in carrying out a scheme of raising free-labor cotton in India or Australia. By that means he hopes to do something towards striking a blow at the very root of American slavery. He expects to raise the requisite funds by the sale of his book. We trust he will not be disappointed.

## The Refugees' Home Society

### "No more begging for farms or clothes"<sup>190</sup> (1852)

A meeting of the colored citizens of Windsor (Canada West) and vicinity, was held in the barracks in that place, on the evening September 27, to inquire into the grievances of fugitives, against almoners of donations received from the United States; and to take measures to put an end, if possible, to the *begging system*, so far as it can apply to them.

Mr. Peter Poyntz was called into the Chair, and Elisha Robinson and Mary A. Shadd were appointed Secretaries.

Mr. Thomas Jones then presented the following preamble and resolutions, which, after full discussion – Messrs. Jones, Reynolds, Williams and others in favor, and Messrs. Bibb, Holley, Mrs. Bibb, and a gentleman (name unknown), against – were unanimously adopted.

Whereas, we live in a country in which equal rights are enjoyed by men without regard to complexion, and in which, men who are willing to work can thereby get ample means of support; and

Whereas, there are systematized and extensive movements now being recommended to the philanthropic in the United States and elsewhere, purporting to be necessary because of the ignorance and destitution existing among us (principally refugees from American slavery, now loyal subjects of Her Majesty's Government), thus holding us up before the world as a class of improvident, thriftless and imbecile paupers; therefore,

1. Resolved. That we have reason to thank God for the impartial character and administration of the laws of this our adopted country, and for the easy conditions offered to us, in common with other settlers, to appropriate the soil to our comfort and support.

---

<sup>190</sup> From NO MORE BEGGING FOR FARMS OR CLOTHES FOR FUGITIVES IN CANADA. (1852, October 15). *The Liberator*, p. 3.

2. Resolved, That we desire only our true character of responsible men, willing and determined to support ourselves; and determined to oppose, to the extent of our ability, the practice of begging for farms, clothes, &c., for us.

3. Resolved, That in common with Christians everywhere, we would, when expressing hostility to begging, discriminate in favor of begging for gospel and educational purposes; but should friends persist in raising funds in our name, for other than the purposes above mentioned, we hope it will be to aid those noble abolitionists who have been despoiled, by the courts of the United States, for helping fugitives to a land of liberty.

4. Resolved, That we do not regard the Refugees' Home Society as a benevolent institution, designed to benefit a formerly down-trodden people, but as an exceedingly cunning land scheme, the continuance of which, by giving fresh impulse and a specious character to the begging system, will materially compromise our manhood, by representing us as objects of charity, injure seriously the character of this country, and tend to the pecuniary advantage of its agents, and theirs only.

5 – Resolved, That though we sincerely thank those who have, from time to time, send money and clothes to help the escaped fugitive from American slavery, and support him till he can get work, we would advise them to discontinue such aid in our behalf, as we can seldom get clothes or money from many of those with whom they are deposited.

Voted. That the proceedings of this meeting be sent to the *Globe*, in Canada, and to the anti-slavery papers in the United States.

On motion, the meeting adjourned.

### **“Aid to fugitives in Canada”<sup>191</sup> (1852)**

A letter has been received from a lady in the southerly part of Worcester county, which commences as follows:-

“Dear Sir – There is, in the *Liberator* of Oct. 15<sup>th</sup>, a formal statement, from a body of fugitives in Canada West, that they neither need nor desire assistance from the people of the United States. Will you, sir, inform me if that statement expresses the true condition of those unfortunate people?”

In the absence of Mr. Garrison, to whom the letter was addressed, we reply as we can to the above request. We do not profess to have such full and reliable information of the condition of all the fugitives in Canada, as will enable us to speak with entire sincerity. But we do not believe that the article in question (which purports to be the proceedings of a meeting of colored citizens in Windsor, Canada West) is to be regarded as the voice of the fugitives in Canada in general.

In the first place, it is not likely that the colored people of a single town, and that one of the larger business places, situated, too, at the extreme western border of the territory where the fugitives reside, can speak on a subject of this kind for the whole of them. We must remember that careful and well-informed persons state that

---

<sup>191</sup> From M. (1852, October 29). AID TO FUGITIVES IN CANADA. *The Liberator*, p. 2.

the entire number of fugitives in Canada cannot be much short of *thirty thousand*. We must remember that the greater proportion of these are scattered about in the agricultural districts, where the compensation for labor is much smaller than in the larger towns, and where it must require some little time for fugitives, arriving without a cent in the world, and poorly clad, to get a footing and a fair start. If every human beings can be reduced, by utter destitution of all earthly conveniences and comforts (to say no more), to a situation where the aid of the benevolent or the more favored is imperatively demanded, the newly arrived fugitives in Canada must be in that situation. They have indeed left *all* for liberty.

In the second place, we have had for years, and still have, the assurance of many persons in Canada, candid and competent judges, to the effect that very many of the fugitives in Canada are in great and sometimes extreme need of a little timely aid. Sickness comes upon them after their long and perilous flight, and they must look to others for the aid they then require. We need not task imagination one jot to be convinced that it is not possible that very many of the fugitive slaves in Canada, as they arrive there, and for some time after, must stand greatly in need of such help as the people of New England, New York, Ohio, and other Northern States, can well afford to give.

We are no advocates of indiscriminate alms-giving. We know that the best way to help people is to get them to help themselves. But there are those, and especially such as have been plundered and cheated all their lives, as the slaves have emphatically been, who need to be placed in a situation where they *can* help themselves. A little aid, if timely, will generally be sufficient. Clothing, and the means of procuring a tolerable shelter, are what is most needed in such cases.

We confess, however, that we greatly like, and applaud, the *spirit* of the Windsor meeting, and of the resolutions passed by them. It is manly, and cannot fail to ensure respect. We rejoice to see men, who have been long depressed and enslaved, rising up in the full consciousness of their manhood, and in a noble self-reliance (which is the surest trust in God), resolving that they will not be dependent on any charitable donations or fruits of begging, but will maintain themselves and theirs by their own strength, capacity and industry. Still, such men, in their comparative strength, ought not to forget those whose weakness, whose new arrival in a strange land, and whose utter destitution of every earthly good, forbid them at once to assume this independence and this tone of confidence. Peradventure, they should rather remember that they were themselves "bondmen in Egypt," were delivered and rescued by a mightier arm than theirs, and their own rough way made somewhat smoother and their burden lighter, by the sympathy and aid of friends and brethren. We fear that the too positive and sweeping language of their resolutions may do an injury and a wrong to many a needy sufferer among the Canada Refugees.

There is one point in the resolutions to which we must ask the especial attention of the officers and members of the Windsor meeting. They advise all persons to discontinue their donations in behalf of the fugitives in Canada, because, they say, "We can seldom get clothes or money from many of those with whom they are deposited." In the name of all who desire to aid the fugitives in Canada, we wish to

know, *who these persons are*. We call upon the officers of the Windsor meeting to inform us who they are. We wish to avoid those in future, if there are such, who cannot properly be trusted with the distribution of articles entrusted to them for the fugitives. If we have been deceived in those whom we have heretofore confided in, we ought to know it, and our Windsor friends will be doing a kindness and a duty to us, and to their fugitive brethren, by giving us the facts in the case. We speak for many others beside ourselves. – M.

### **“The cause of justice demands an explanation”<sup>192</sup> (1852)**

Windsor (Upper Canada), Oct. 27, 1852.

Dear Mr. Garrison:

There are some things connected with the Windsor meeting, reported in the *Liberator* of Oct. 15, which ought to be known. The cause of justice demands an explanation.

It is stated that the resolutions were discussed by Messrs. Jones, Reynolds, Williams and others, in the affirmative, and Bibb, Holly, and Mrs. Bibb, in the negative. So far as my own name goes, it is utterly false. I neither spoke for nor against them.

I need not tell you, that I am opposed to begging. You know my sentiments on that subject; but to those who are not acquainted with me, I refer to an article of mine in the Ohio A. S. *bugle*, under date of March, 1851. I am, however, decidedly opposed to the resolutions which appeared in the *Liberator*, especially the following:-

“That, in common with Christianity everywhere, we would, when expressing hostility to beggars, discriminate in favor of begging for gospel and educational purposes; but should friends insist on raising funds in our name for other than the purposes above named, we hope it will be to aid those noble abolitionists, who have been despoiled by the courts of the United States, for helping fugitive to a land of liberty.”

My objections are based on the following: That they would discriminate in favor of begging for gospel and educational purposes. As nearly all the imposition which has been palmed off on the good and benevolent in the United States, in behalf of the fugitives in Canada, has been done under this head, such a resolution is only giving a new license to beggars. What has Isaac J. Rice been begging for these many years? Has it not been for gospel purposes? For what purpose have his agents crossed Lake Erie so many times? Have not Elder Carter, William Jones, and others, traversed the remotest East and West, for gospel and educational purposes?

It is evident that John Jackson must have had a mesmeric foretaste of this very resolution, when he obtained an agency for what is termed the Canada Seminary. It was called the ‘Industrial Association’ of Canada; and at a still earlier date it was called a ‘Church’. There are many individuals now being sustained under this shield, who are doing nothing for the comfort or elevation of this long despised

---

<sup>192</sup> From Bibb, M. E. (1852, November 12). REFUGEES’ HOME. *The Liberator*, p. 3.

and persecuted people; yet they are daily employed in writing to friends abroad to sustain them in propagating the gospel among the fugitives.

We saw and knew all this months ago; so did many devoted friends who have visited the Canadas during the last two or three years. We repudiate the begging system, and advise all persons in the States not to give to traveling agents, or even to persons now resident in the Province, unless they are known to them. It is not enough to commend one to public confidence, that they are teaching or preaching in Canada. Well has the Editor of the *Bugle* said, the friends know not what to do. It is known by all, that cases of destitution will occur where arrivals amount to eight and twelve per day, as has been the case within the last ten days. During this time, there have been at our house twenty-three, and at Malden twenty.

It was in view of the above facts that the Refugees' Home was started, to enable them to procure a small portion of land at government price; and that this small price even, may be spent for the elevation of themselves and their children. My friend, you will at once see that this places every recipient on an independent basis, in spite of the efforts of an individual to strike at the 'Home'. The opposition is raised, because craft is in danger. It is for this reason that the chain of ingenuity has been stretched to its utmost.

The first objectionable feature presented was that it was complexional; second, it should extend its benefits to *free persons*. Such weighty arguments show from whence they come. First, the whites have never any where encountered the same obstacles to self-elevation and wealth as have the colored people, or those identified by birth with the American slave. Secondly, any person, who has enjoyed freedom all his life-time, should be able to buy from government, at their price and on their terms.

Another objection from the same source is, that the quantity of land is too small. How does this strike you? Can an industrious man make a living (as we Yankees say) on twenty-five acres, within four or six miles of a good market? More might be said in this connection. I think you are satisfied that the subject has two sides to it, at least.

In great haste,  
MARY E. BIBB.

### **“You have been wrongly informed”<sup>193</sup> (1852)**

Windsor (Canada West), Nov. 23, 1852.

To the Editor of the *Liberator*:

Dear Sir – In your paper of [Oct.] 29th, you were pleased to ask certain questions for the information of the friends of the fugitive, which we [the officers of the Windsor meeting] will endeavor to answer to the best of our ability. You further say: “We do not believe the article in question (which purports to be the proceedings of a meeting of the colored citizens in Windsor, Canada West) is to be regarded as the voice of the fugitives in Canada in general.” The reasons given, at length, for so

---

<sup>193</sup> THE OFFICERS OF THE WINDSOR MEETING. (1852, December 10). AID TO FUGITIVES IN CANADA. *The Liberator*, p. 3.

thinking, are the legitimate conclusions to be drawn from the information you have received; but, Sir, we think you have been wrongly informed, in some respects.

1. The resolutions passed at that meeting express the voice of nine-tenths of the fugitives in Canada, and therefore can be said to express the “general” sentiment. Of the thirty thousand colored people in this Province, several thousand have never been slaves, and yet there is greater unanimity on all questions affecting them, as *freemen*, here, than persons here will admit, whose interest it is to conceal the real sentiments of the people.

2. The friends of the fugitives, who live in large towns, inevitably recommend the agricultural districts, as the certainty of a profitable and prompt return for labor is in favor of those districts, and if persons are industrious, there is nothing to prevent their getting a footing and a fair start, in a very short time. Did space permit, some interesting facts may be given of the prices paid laborers, at present, in the agricultural districts.

3. Canadians are generally benevolent, and although there is much destitution among newly arrived refugees, both from the far South and the victims of the Fugitive Law who have to leave the North without previous notice, their wants are met by the fugitives and friends generally, and in a short time they answer, in turn, to the appeals made by those of more recent arrival.

Of the many persons who have come to the country since the passage of the Fugitive Law, *few* have been helped from the profuse liberality of friends in the States. Every almoner acting singly, or not answerable to an association, is an umpire as irresponsible, in his own estimation, as is a Commissioner appointed to decide in a slave case; and in giving his decision as to the claims of a fugitive on his stock of clothing, money, &c., often acts with as little justice. In such cases (more frequent than otherwise), the fugitive is sent away empty, his wants to be met by other fugitives.

4. Windsor is a *small village*, situated in a well cultivated agricultural district; and the meeting in question was acknowledged by all, to be the largest ever held within doors by colored people. The town of Sandwich, three miles distant, and the country around Sandwich, are well represented. The fact that in this district the effects of begging, both in the operation of the Refugees’ Home, and the distribution of old clothes, are painfully visible, had due weight with the meeting, and we trust it will have with the friends in New England, after they shall have become acquainted with them in detail, and especially the Fugitives’ [sic.] Home.

Fugitives say their opinions should be regarded a little, seeing they are the ones to be benefited, and are generally opposed to the scheme; and much indignation is felt that one man, purporting to be of their number, should endeavor, by all the arts at his command, to prevent their voices being heard on the question.

Meetings have often been held to discountenance begging. The people of the county of Kent, in several places, have said, “No more clothes.” In Colchester, Amherstburg and other places in this county (Essex), they have said the same. In Colchester, they were unanimous against the system, the favorable notice of the Refugees’ Home in the report by Mr. Thompson, being merely the opinion of Rev. G.

Thompson, that is, not at all connected with their meeting. In the town of Chatham there has also been an outspoken expression of hostility to the Home, and the feeling increases with a true understanding of the scheme.

The meetings noticed above have been given to the public through anti-slavery papers in the States, but such meetings are seldom reported in the paper printed here, and said to be the "Voice of the Fugitive," the interests of that "organ" being in another direction. If noticed at all, they are given so unfairly and untruthfully as to mislead the public, as was the report of the Windsor meeting as given in it. However, the people are animated by the right spirit: and, in order that the benevolent everywhere may know their real sentiments on old clothes policy and the Refugees' Home, they purpose holding a Convention the next year (due notice of which will be given), to which the friends are respectfully asked to send one of their number, that there may no longer be doubts as to their true views.

5. The conduct of almoners was pretty freely spoken of when discussing the resolutions against more clothing, &c., as well those of our immediate neighborhood (the Rev. H. Bibb and lady), as of persons at a distance. On the strength of information previously obtained from Mr. Bibb and wife, and from sources upon which we could rely, the conviction of the utter uselessness of such deposits, in many other localities, was manifest; and the testimony of recently arrived destitute fugitives in this district, to the difficulties and humiliation endured by them when applying for aid – the great waste of clothing sent here from being suffered to mold, or appropriated to private uses, or given to fugitives, as best suits their interest or inclination, made the steps taken necessary, in order that the donors be enlightened and the fugitives benefited.

As the *Voice of the Fugitive* has given a description of the Windsor meeting which is not at all true, but which, being copied in anti-slavery papers, is calculated to injure the people here, we are constrained, by its course, to state facts in relation to it, that we did not think proper to embody in the published minutes, thinking that the short-comings of one, so eager in word to be classed with the exposers of "iniquity" as is the senior editor of the *Voice*, would, if concealed, save the colored people from much disgrace.

What of confusion there was in the meeting was caused by the Rev. gentleman himself, assisted by his wife and the junior editor. Mr. B., in the true style of a despotic son of the South, after having *commanded* the reading of the resolutions, insisted, then and there, on taking the names of the officers, preparatory, he said, to their prosecution for holding what he was pleased to call an "illegal meeting". He also took a copy of the resolutions, in order that the agents of the Refugees' Home and almoners might have materials with which to work against the framers of the same. The people were told by the younger editor that they should "answer elsewhere"; and when reminded that he was disturbing the meeting, and might have to go out, unless more observant of others' rights, like a chivalrous Kentuckian, Mr. Bibb "motioned," and called out, "I dare you to do it."

Fearing that the resolutions would disappear mysteriously, as did one passed against the Refugees' Home at a previous meeting (and which, by the way, was never alluded to in the *Voice*), and was published from memory, a refugee, but a few days

from the South, and who had been refused clothing on the plea that there *was none*, until informed that he was known to, and recommended by a celebrated abolitionist, took charge of the resolutions; but being assured of an existing copy, promptly gave them back to the meeting. For a time, the scene presented could only be equaled, probably, by the U. S. Congress; but after the people could be assured that their meeting was lawful and proper, namely, to subserve their best interests by exposing iniquity they proceeded in good order, and ratified, by an unanimous “Aye,” the resolutions discussed.

To those likely to form a wrong idea of the meeting, from the statement made that the officers could neither read nor write, we would say, that each officer reported can read and write a little; at least, it was not found necessary for other persons to prepare and report the proceedings. The reason given by the editor, to persons who visited him to ask why he gave a false report, was, that it was in his “interest to make it look as bad as possible.” The *Voice of the Fugitive* is not the voice of the colored people of Canada. Few patronize it at all. Its “position” is calculated to create a spirit of caste where there is none worthy of consideration, as well as to injure their character, and to shower abuse prodigally upon them when not willing to submit to the editor’s dictation. The trite saying, that “things will do for negroes that will not do for white men,” is without force in its application to colored men in Canada, too. Character, weight, ability, are needed in a journal proclaiming to be the voice of fugitives, in view of the glorious prospects before them as Her Majesty’s *freemen*, but, unfortunately, that paper gives feeble evidence of any one of the three.

#### THE OFFICERS OF THE WINDSOR MEETING.

### “A long array of appalling facts”<sup>194</sup> (1852)

Mr. Garrison – From your kindness to myself while in Boston, as well as from your interest in the fugitives in Canada, I am persuaded you will give me a hearing in their behalf. I have carefully examined the article in the *Liberator* of Nov. 22d [sic.]<sup>195</sup>, and this is the sum of the whole: “The resolutions express the views of the great body of fugitives – such are the facilities for a livelihood in Canada, that new comers not only supply their own necessities, but are able in a short time to take care of others – that from the profuse liberality sent to Canada from the States, *few* fugitives have been benefited, the almoners taking the lion’s share – the great waste of clothing from being left to mold – the assault upon Henry Bibb and wife, and the pernicious influence of the Refugees’ Home Society.”

Now, these are grave charges, affecting not only the interests of thousands in Canada, but the reputation of many in Michigan and elsewhere, who were supposed

---

<sup>194</sup> From Foote, C. C. (1852, December 24). THE COLORED PEOPLE IN CANADA – DO THEY NEED HELP? *The Liberator*, p. 3.

<sup>195</sup> The *Liberator* was published on November 5, 12, 19 and 26, 1852. I was unable to find an article in November that fit the description; this letter appears to reference the letter from the Officers of the Windsor Committee published in the issue of December 10.



to be quite respectable people, until these “resolutions” and affirmations informed the world to the contrary. It will be well, therefore, to look into the statements.

And first, as to their *origin*. There is a small faction of colored persons, in and about Windsor (*most of whom* have never been slaves), from whom proceeds most of this newspaper opposition. And now let us look at the truthfulness of the Windsor resolutions. The affirmation that the resolutions express the voice of nine-tenths of the fugitives in Canada is only an assertion without evidence, an assertion that has been contradicted by a public meeting of the fugitives, and by the fact that as fast as “the Home Society” can furnish homes, the people receive them with all joyfulness.

The next affirmation, that “the new comers” move with such rapid march towards wealth, from much destitution, that in a short time they answer to appeals made by others for help, appears too ridiculous to deserve an answer. Do you send hundreds of *white* families and persons to Canada with not a shilling in their pockets, or clothes enough on their backs to keep them warm, and see if there would be no need of help! Why did the Boston people send *ten thousand dollars* to the fire-stricken people of Montreal, last summer? and the New Yorkers twice as much more? and the Philadelphians as much more? Is *fire* worse than SLAVERY? or does slavery better qualify people for successful labor than freedom? Wonderful people are these fugitive brothers of ours, surely!

But, alas! This beautiful vision seems to stand contradicted by a long array of *appalling facts*. Last winter, HIRAM WILSON (whose name will go down in posterity as a sweet odor in connection with the wrongs of the fugitive) wrote thus: “Many are now reduced to very great distress. I have taxed my frail powers to the utmost in affording relief to the poor, and succor to the friendless. My wife and others have been with me till we are all nearly prostrated. For three weeks I have been incessantly on the move for the relief of the poor; the calls at our mission house are numerous, and some of them affecting in the extreme.”

There lies before me a whole printed page of heart-rending accounts of suffering, for the relief of which this dear servant of God was obliged to run into debt hundreds of dollars. Mary Teal (the successor of Fidelia Coburn Brooks, who came to the grave<sup>196</sup> from her hardships in Canada), says, “Children have traveled a hundred miles through the forest to get books and clothes, and I have been under the painful necessity of sending them empty away, having nothing to give”! Mr. May says – “There has been a great deal of destitution and suffering, in some cases *absolute starvation*.” Now, if a resident of Canada might be so occupied in writing “resolutions” and letters as to be a stranger to all these facts, that is quite possible; and that such a resident would be quite as useful out of as in Canada, is equally possible.

Another charge, not to be overlooked, is that “*Few* persons have been helped from the profuse liberality of friends in the States”!!! “*EVERY* almoner acting often with as little justice as a slave catching commissioner”! Here is robbery and fraud on a large scale – sufficient to consign a score or two of persons to the penitentiary,

---

<sup>196</sup> Fidelia Coburn Brooks was among the first teachers at the Dawn Institute. She died in Sierra Leone in 1850, on a trip taken after her marriage to a missionary named Brooks. A public letter she wrote in 1846 is transcribed elsewhere in this collection.

embracing every missionary and nearly every teacher in Canada; for, be it known, that Mr. Bibb has not even *heard* of a hundredth part of the “profuse liberality”, that has reached Canada. I have sent hundreds of dollars there (two hundred at one time from my own people), that Henry Bibb never heard of. What are we to think of the *credulity* of persons sending broadcast such sweeping, such *foul* slanders? You will have your thoughts, and I will have mine.

Now, a word about the “waste of clothes from being suffered to mold.” This has been true in a few, and but a few cases. Nor was any one at fault for this waste. The donors directing their gifts to no one in particular, or their arrival not being known, they have remained in a damp place until injured.

Not very trivial (unless it be from its source) is the assault upon Mr. and Mrs. Bibb. From one of the oldest and most influential abolitionists in Detroit, I have just received a letter, containing the following:-

“Of — — I know nothing, but have heard her spoken of repeatedly as a *special opponent of Mr. Bibb*. That there is any just ground for this opposition, I have not been able to learn, although I have frequently made particular inquiry. That much that is charged against him is *false*, I have no doubt.”

The person bearing this testimony in favor of Mr. B., the late Mayor of Detroit, (Mr. Chandler) says, “No man in this community enjoys the more perfect confidence of our entire population than he.” Suppose, now, Mr. Bibb’s paper is patronized by “but few” of a people, the best of whom “can read a little”? It would be a curiosity to know whose paper *is* taken by these people. The colored people in the States can read a good deal, and yet S. R. Ward complained that they scarcely patronized his paper at all. Frederick Douglass makes the same complaint. But who supposed that this neglect constituted these editors greater sinners than those eighteen on whom the tower in Siloam fell! Suppose, too, that many fugitives are hostile to Mr. and Mrs. Bibb; they have been so to many other of their friends. A public meeting in Canada once passed a resolution to whip one of their teachers, who was then wearing her life out for them. All this proves – whatever you choose to have it, of course.

Having been frequently in the communities where Mr. and Mrs. Bibb have resided since their removal to Canada, I feel bound to say, they stand as high in the estimation of, and are looked up to more by the refugees than any other persons in the community. Last summer, during the prevalence of the cholera, I spent a short time in Windsor, and during my stay there, Henry Bibb and wife were thronged with applications for aid and counsel. From morning to night, and in the night, they were on the move to meet these calls; to get a doctor – to provide watchers – to get a coffin – to send somebody to dig the graves – and *to bury the dead*. For all these works, the people looked to them, as children to parents; and they performed them, too. (The truth is, “George Harris,” of “Uncle Tom’s Cabin,” never went to Africa, or, if he did, he has come back to Canada.)

Why the assault is made upon this Society, you will be at a loss to know. Scarcely was it in existence, ere — — was writing “bitter things” against it. At first, her objections were confined to the sixth article of the Constitution: “The Society shall give deeds to none but landless refugees from American slavery.” The presence

of this article is the source of opposition from the *free* colored people. There are two other objections that may be mentioned here: the smallness of the appropriation (twenty-five acres), and the withholding from the settler power of transfer for fifteen years. The objectors would have *fifty* acres assigned to each family, and expose the recipient to the wiles of “land sharks” the moment he gets possession of his new home!

Look now at the propriety of siding these people at all. How largely the Bible dwells on the *duty* of siding the poor! And if these people are not poor, then *none are poor*. If charity should not be extended to *these*, then *there should be an end to charity*. How readily will you, and all persons who have not an “axe to grind,” pronounce him the best helper of the poor, who puts them in the way of helping themselves! Such a HELPER is the Refugee Home Society. Let me read to you a few testimonials in its behalf:-

“If this effort shall be successful, more will thereby have been done for the colored people than could be done by sending clothes and money for a score of years.” Rev. George Whipple, Secretary of the American Mission Society.

“I am prepared to hail with joy unspeakable the movement which contemplates the purchase of lands in Canada for the settlement of the poorer share of them who have no homes of their own.” Rev. Hiram Wilson, more than fifteen years in Canada.

“I have no doubt your plan of providing a home for the fugitive is deserving of much encouragement.” Rev. Dr. Willis, President of the Anti-Slavery Society of Canada.

“Least of all would I discountenance a generous co-operation with and liberal giving to such a Society as the Refugee Home Society. I believe that Society to be aiming in the right direction. It promises more for their permanent good and future elevation than any other that has yet been started. Let me say more explicitly, if I can, that I cordially recommend the project of the Refugee Home Society to the generous assistance of all who wish to befriend the fugitive in Canada.” Rev. Samuel J. May.

Your readers have not forgotten the high commendation Mr. May gave to Rev. Mr. King, of the Elgin Settlement, and the success of *his* Refugee Home enterprise. Just about three years ago, Mr. R. was himself a slaveholder. He emancipated his people, and went with them to Canada, and settled them and others on fifty acre farms – the settlers paying in time for the whole. His experience and testimony are therefore invaluable. Of the first, I will give out a single line – “*The settlers are exceeding our most sanguine expectations.*” Of our work he says – “The friends in the United States can provide homes for the fugitives by purchase of crown lands and holding them in trust for them (i.e., until we give the deeds). I perceive by the papers that you are endeavoring to raise a fund for that purpose. I hope you will be successful. There are some fine tracts of government land that can be easily obtained now, but in a few years it will be difficult to obtain them. I trust the friends of the colored race will not lose the favorable opportunity of securing them.”

I might add a long list to these testimonials, from missionaries now in Canada, and from philanthropists who have visited that country; but if these grumblers will not hear these, neither would they be persuaded though all the world should testify.

Who are the officers and managers of the Society thus commended? The President, Rev. H. D. Kitchell, stands at the head of the Congregational ministry of Michigan. On the Executive Committee are three wholesale merchants, four or five practical farmers, three editors, one lawyer and one “gentleman.” Messrs. Hallock, Holmes and Garners, and the Messrs. Powers (members of the Society of Friends) have stood in the front of the reformers of Michigan from the first; and, Heaven helping them, they will go forward in this good work, until thousands of happy homes shall be secured for these sable exiles, and hundreds of schools welcome their now free children. Shall the steam-ship arrest its career for the small fry that may chance to cross its track? So as GOD is mightier than steam, shall He work out this great good to these His ignorant and long-abused ones. And let these opposers, who are seeking “bad eminence” for themselves, “take heed lest haply they be found fighting against God!”

Yours fraternally,

C. C. FOOTE.

Philadelphia, Dec. 14<sup>th</sup>, 1852.

P. S. The people of Boston and “the region round-about” have contributed nearly five thousand dollars to the Canadian Refugee Home Society. The publisher of *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* gave us one hundred dollars, and the authoress has promised an annual contribution of one hundred dollars. C. C. F.

### “Truth is mighty and will prevail”<sup>197</sup> (1853)

Mr. Garrison: The incomparable letter of Rev. C. C. Foote has been given to your readers; but, as truth is mighty and will prevail, there is no reason to fear that the real friends of the colored race will be slow to award their due to those “tall beggars,” who live by misrepresenting the condition of fugitives, after this matter shall have been thoroughly sifted, and the glaring falsehoods and sophistry resorted to, to sustain a rotten institution, fairly set forth.

I can claim no consideration from you on the score of personal acquaintance, whatever; but as the authorized representative of a large body of fugitives, some of whose names I herewith send, I trust that you will open your columns, that something may be said in answer to the letter referred to.

The article in *THE LIBERATOR* of November 22 [sic.], 1852, is truthful in every particular enumerated, and, moreover, Rev. C. C. Foote’s letter does not disprove anything therein contained; but, with wonderful ingenuity, a strange medley of false statements, curious comparisons, stale recommendations of the Fugitives’ Home by gentlemen who have never examined the scheme in working order, cant, and *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*, is made to pass muster before an intelligent community. Did Mr. Foote learn of the “small faction of colored persons in and about Windsor (most of whom have never been slaves)” from personal observation, or from the *Voice of the Fugitive*? The entire statement is *false*, as the author of it knows, if he knows

---

<sup>197</sup> From Shadd, M. A. (1853, March 4). *THE COLORED PEOPLE IN CANADA – DO THEY NEED HELP?* *The Liberator*, p. 4.

anything of the population and state of things here; but as he speaks without qualification, he must take the award the public will give him. It would be a difficult matter to find twenty families originally free in this township; and at the meeting here, not five were represented; but there was a *crowd* of fugitives. The assertion that the resolutions express the voice of nine-tenths, could not be contradicted by a single meeting; if it could, will Rev. Mr. Foote please tell at what time it was contradicted, and where the meeting was held? Since the formation of the Refugees' Home Society, there has not been a meeting held in its favor in Canada.

How does Mr. Foote know that the "new comers" are not, by their own industry, enabled in a short time to help others? Does he know any thing of the value of labor in this country, and the ease with which it may be had? If he is acquainted with the facts, then his attempt to make the truth appear ridiculous, is ridiculous enough, surely. It is well known here that the emigration of fugitives by families is the exception, not the rule, and, as a consequence, there are more persons able to work. But I will give authority on this point that, may be, Rev. C. C. Foote will not despise.

"Work *can be had* by all who are willing to work, and the lazy deserve not encouragement in their laziness." – *'Globe' of Toronto.*

"I attended a large meeting, \* \* \* and was pleased to see and hear so many ministers and people express themselves very decidedly in detestation of the (begging) scheme. At a public meeting in New Canaan, there was a unanimous voice in condemnation of the whole system." – *Rev. G. Thompson.*

"I have traveled from New York to Florida, and I have seen no land where I can get a living as well as here. We cannot hope to have *union* among us here, until this begging system is stopped. It causes more ill-feeling and division than anything else. *Every time you beg, you curse God, who has given you this good land.* \* \* \* If you will do yourselves any good, buy your own land, settle down, and make homes for yourselves." – *Reported by Rev. G. Thompson.*

Does it look reasonable that this speech would have been made, if these things cannot be done? Who helped that flourishing community of refugees? They distinctly say this begging has been "a curse instead of a blessing." "Numbers of men have got rich on it, and above work." The beggars did not help them – they were a curse; then they must have helped themselves, assisted at first by friends around them, and at times, too, when it was more difficult for fugitives to get employment than now. Fugitives, at one time, were known to go back to slavery from this country, because it was found difficult to get either shelter or work, at first; but who has heard of a recent case of the kind? *At this season*, as many passengers of the underground railway as can come, can get, without difficulty, from seven shillings to one dollar a day, or from ten to fourteen dollars per month, along the entire frontier.

"Let us compare the following settlements with the whites: Colchester, New Canaan, Malden, Gosfield, Sandwich, Queen's Bush, Dawn, Chatham, and Raleigh, which is called the Elgin settlement. In all of the above, we know that our people are owners and tillers of the soil, many of whom possess from ten to two hundred acres of land, and whose money goes freely, every year, for the support of government, &c. In addition to this, they are supporting schools, churches and temperance societies,

quite as numerous as our ‘decent white brethren’; and *nine-tenths* of these persons are refugees from Southern slavery, who commenced here in the forest, without a cent of capital with which to help themselves.” – *H. Bibb’s review of the Larwill letter, Feb. 25, 1851.*

In commenting on the proceedings of a meeting held in Ann Arbor, Michigan, the *Voice* of May 20, 1852, says, among other things:-

“The man (Wm. Luaney) has recently taken an agency under the latter, to help the *poor, starving fugitives* in Canada. \* \* \* \* \* All of the enlightened portion of the colored population of Canada West have uttered their protest against it (the begging). No people ever was or will be respected or elevated, who do not respect themselves more than to become public beggars, or who will even consent to *live on the charities of others*, sooner than work for their living. \* \* \* In cautioning the public against these men, we had occasion to say, that ‘there was no suffering among this people,’ or that all who would work would make a good living, and we now re-affirm the same thing.” – *H. Bibb.*

But to the inquiry, “Does slavery better qualify people for successful labor than freedom?” the fugitives answer: No, sir: therefore, in refusing your homes, they prefer British Liberty to a degrading serfdom under the Refugees’ Home Society.

The comparison of the sufferers by fire in Montreal, and the allusion to hundreds of *white* families, seem like straining a point; the cause is in a sad plight that requires such a far-fetched effort. Mr. Bibb says:-

“But these beggars, who, like drowning men, are ever ready to catch at straws, seized upon this part of the sentence (referring to the absence of suffering), and put a false construction upon it. Show us a community where there is a considerable number of inhabitants, be they white or black, in this Province or the States, and we will show some of the number who have not all the necessaries of life, and yet they have generally too much self-respect to send out beggars.”

Then maybe the destitute and starving of the large cities of the United States not be deprived of comforts, or the cause of the Southern slave hindered, by the unnecessary and unrighteous diversion of thousands of dollars into the coffers of the Refugees’ Home Society, as the foregoing testimony of its Corresponding Secretary conclusively shows they would be. Singular people are these begging “brothers of ours, surely”!

Of the appeals made by almoners, it may be said that the “doctors do not agree,” when at home, as to their necessity. The honesty of nearly every prominent almoner in Canada has been questioned by Henry Bibb and wife, when talking of them, among whom are Revd’s Hiram Wilson, Wm. P. Newman, Isaac J. Rice, E. E. Kirkland, D. Hodgkiss, and a host of smaller names I do not remember. Mrs. Bibb gave *one* dollar for a copy of I. J. Rice’s miserable circular, in order that what she designated his “lies about destitution” might be exposed. That children have been sent a long distance for books and clothes, there is no doubt; persons who have lived in the country twenty years – owners of well-cultivated farms, have asked for clothes after having heard they *were here*, and should they send their little ones, the children would find the journey more comfortable and less dangerous, if made through the

forest, than on an open road. However, persons who do know of our forests, doubt this new version of "The Babes in the Woods."

Had Mr. Foote looked at the November letter carefully, he would see, that quotations he makes do not agree with the original exactly; but he can have the full benefit of his construction, for fugitives think that it is not that many almoners have not deserved the penitentiary, [but] that they have not been sent there. The Rev. gentleman's testimony as to the money sent, and also to the *poor* fugitive boxes being sent away to this cold country in their own care only, is matter of especial thanks. He cannot find fugitives in this section of Canada, who ever got any of the money sent.

Mr. Bibb says to them, he never received "a cent" for them from the States; and of the boxes, our merchants say, that as the boxes come directed to him, they keep them in their storehouses until called for *by him*, except those he brings over. It is true that boxes consigned to almoners have been stopped by other almoners, but the result has been, they "got by the ears;" hence quarrels among the missionaries.

It is not true, however, that no one is at fault for "the waste". I will tell the story out now, and the Rev. C. C. Foote may disprove it, if he can. The moldy clothes in this region are those kept in Henry Bibb's stable, consisting of new shirts, good coats, new caps, and other good and bad articles for men, women and children. The chickens have roosted on them, his horses have walked on them, and some are kept there wet and frozen in boxes. Is no one at fault?

Mr. Bibb says the friends give him full power to give or not. What greater power has a Commissioner? Should he think a man applying is not a fugitive, though he be destitute – should the fugitive say he drinks on his arrival, he need not give. As some destitute persons have the misfortune to have been born free, and as not one fugitive in twenty knew anything about a Temperance Society before starting North, and as there is no inconvenience in having boxes of valuable clothing, etc., come – but, over all, as almoners of that class are irresponsible, the lower animals may use them, but "poor humanity" may not. Mr. Thomas Henning, of Toronto, intimates, in a published letter, that "persons of whatever complexion" need aid at times. That does not mean white and black, and the intermediate shades of complexion, by our almoners; does it mean horses and chickens?

If the Home Society cannot furnish homes faster than the people receive them, or can be persuaded into settling on their lots, the more need that Mr. Foote and the other gentlemen begging for it should stop their operations. I visited the Refugees' Home recently; I know who are settled thereon – how many there are, and what they think of it. From them I learned that the Constitution of the Society had been *read* to them by "quite respectable people in Detroit" as it is not – or rather, was not read to them as it *is*. Had they understood it, the few men of good character connected with it would not have meddled with it. Where are the points of comparison between this abortion and Mr. King's settlement of *respectable* persons, promiscuously *free* and *slaves*?

Would the benevolent believe, that of twenty-one months the Society has had authorized agents out on its mission, but *seven* families have settled on the land; and *so eager* are they to get lots, that the *Voice of the Fugitive* has actually advertised

lots as ready, although but twelve persons have been cajoled into taking lots at all; and some of these have declared they will give them up!

I repeat, that at the public meeting which authorized this reply, fugitives from off the "Home" and from different parts of the county were present, *all* of whom expressed themselves opposed to the "Home," and as relieved from all doubts as to the evils inseparable from this begging, when such a resort may be had to further that object by such means as the letter under consideration. The most of those whose names appear below are but a small portion of those who attended the meeting, but who left before the proposition to take names was made.

Very respectfully, sir,

MARY A. SHADD.

Windsor, C. W., Jan. 12, 1853.

#### MINUTES

A mass meeting of the colored people was held in this place (Windsor, C. W.) on the evening of January 11<sup>th</sup>, 1853, to express more fully their views of the Refugees' Home, and to consider, especially, the recent letter of Rev. C. C. Foote, an agent of the Refugees' Home Society. Samuel Green, of the Refugees' Home, was appointed Chairman, George Williams, Assistant, and Wm. P. Francis, Secretary.

The object of the meeting having been stated, Messrs. Jacob Jones, Coleman Freeman, Samuel Green, George Wilson of the R. H. S., Robinson Bush, Rev. Talcot of Amherstburg, D. Johnson, and others, expressed themselves, forcibly, against the Refugees' Home Scheme, and Mr. Foote's letter, and the following resolution and motions were carried without a dissenting voice:-

Whereas, the Rev. C. C. Foote, an agent of the Refugees' Home Society, has, in taking exception to an authorized statement made by persons here, uttered foul slanders against us, by representing us as in leading-strings to Henry Bibb and wife, and as eager to settle on the Refugees' Home; therefore,

Resolved, That as we have heretofore done, we will use all honest means to prevent our brethren from being deceived in regard to the Home, and ask that the friends of our "race" will discountenance Mr. Foote's operations, because not tending to our benefit, or wanted by us.

Voted, That Mary A. Shadd reply to said letter in behalf of the people.

Voted, That we hold meetings often, and otherwise be vigilant to prevent the success of the species of oppression shadowed forth in the Refugees' Home Scheme.

The most of the following names were given as evidence that there was no "clique" of free persons; and as it was a late stage of the meeting, many having retired, it was

Voted, to increase the list hereafter.

Samuel Green, R. H. S.	Wm. Willis,
George Williams,	John Garner,
Thomas Dolston,	Leonard Strander,
Robinson Bush,	Wm. Nelson,
David Johnson,	Thomas Jones,
Henry Blackstone,	Jacob Jones, <i>free</i> ,



Ralph Carter,	Delilah Jones,
Coleman Freeman, <i>free</i> ,	Emeline Jones,
Oliver Thurston,	Amelia Gasaway,
Richard Bush,	J. T. Jackson,
James Tyner,	James Watson,
Thornton Smith,	Charles Elliott,
Peter Stokes,	Amistead Marshall,
John Hogan,	Lucy Ward,
Henry Keyes,	Wm. Walker,
Wm. Keyes,	Martha Smith,
Thomas Brown,	John Woodson,
Louis Ford,	Jesse Rucker,
Peter Poyntz,	Peter Locke,
Elisha Robinson,	Wyley Reynolds, <i>free</i> ,
John de Baptist,	Mr. Newman.
Anselm P. Wilburn,	

SAMUEL GREEN, *Chairman*,  
 GEORGE WILLIAMS, *Assistant Ch'n*.  
 WM. P. FRANCIS, *Sec'y*.

### “Highly useful and philanthropic”<sup>198</sup> (1853)

Mr. Editor: As your columns have been generously opened to the considerations of questions respecting the condition of fugitives in Canada, you will permit me also to occupy a space in your valuable journal, in relation to the controversy about the Refugees' Home Society. I wish to examine the subject calmly and impartially; nevertheless, I will assure you in the outset, that my deliberate convictions are, that this Society is a highly useful and philanthropic organization. I shall therefore proceed, by answering some of the prominent objections that are used against it, in numerical order.

1<sup>st</sup>. “It is but a continuation of the disgraceful begging operations that have been carried on in the States, in the name of the colored people of Canada, by itinerant adventurers, whereby they feel themselves disgraced, by being represented as a lot of destitute paupers.”

The individuals who formed this Society deplored the abuses arising from the hordes of itinerant beggars, who, on their *individual* responsibility, thronged the States, collecting contributions in old clothing and food for fugitives in Canada, and soliciting donations for churches and schools, always *to be* established among them; yet they were, at the time, deeply impressed with the *undoubted necessities* of the thousands who come penniless to these shores, often in the most inclement season of the year, and without that experience which a life of *self-dependence* begets, and which is so necessary in a state of civil freedom.

---

<sup>198</sup> From Holly, J. T.. (1853, March 4). THE REFUGEES' HOME SOCIETY. *The Liberator*, p. 4.

They desired to put a stop to the abuses they deplored, but without cutting off the aid of the benevolent from the real necessities of the refugees. To solve this problem, they thought that if a *favorable* chance was given to the fugitives to get comfortable though humble homes of their own, in the midst of which a school-house for educational purposes should be erected, they would thus be placed in a position independent of the *further* charities of their friends, in such minor matters as clothing and food, which they could then easily procure for themselves.

Thus an attempt – I hope a *successful* one – has been made to *systematize* the benevolence of interested philanthropists, and to preserve them from the wiles and impositions of *irresponsible* beggars. In these days, when so much was said in favor of “systematic benevolence” in sustaining all other objects by voluntary contributions, certainly no one will deny the wisdom of its application in the case of aiding the American refugees in Canada. In reply to the latter clause of the objection under consideration, I will admit that it is degrading to have agents begging for such an *insignificant* object as old clothing, both on the part of those who give, as well as those who receive; but I am as fully convinced, on the other hand, that it is praiseworthy for philanthropists to assist men, who have been robbed by slavery of all their earnings, to get homes and an education for their children, and that it would be equally praiseworthy in those thus benefited to be grateful for such extraordinary favors, and to show their appreciation of the same by improving the opportunity to do so.

2d. “It discourages self-reliance on the part of the fugitives.”

This would be true, if the Society *did not impose conditions*, along with the favor it extends to them, whereby their *individual* thrift and industry are called forth, in order to preserve the possession of their homes.

3d. “It ought to be extended to the free-born as well as the slave-born colored people who come to Canada to settle, or else an invidious distinction will be engendered between them.”

This plea might be enlarged on, and poor white abolitionists, who might choose to come and settle among the fugitives, included in the sphere of the Society’s operations; and we might still go on, extending the principle, on some analogous considerations, until “all the world and the rest of mankind” were included; and the Refugees’ Home Society would thus become, from a simple benevolent association, an imperial court, for the arbitration of the destinies of the world. And if it possessed this universal spirit like the American government, it might extend the “area” of benevolence still further, by *re-annexing* the objects of charity in the various places of the solar system and their adjacent satellites.

Some of the best reformers of the day, indeed, urge the *natural* (not the donated) right of every man to a farm or home of his own, and I pray and labor for that day to come; but this is not an age for Utopian projects. Reform, when present in its simplest and most feasible shape, may be realized on a partial scale in the present. With this reformers must be content, accepting it as the pledge and basis of the future. The Refugees’ Home Society, therefore, very wisely contemplates the accomplishment only of a project that can be made feasible to the intelligence and

philanthropy of the times, though it be but the beginning of a great reform. That the free-born colored people would be envious of the assistance thus extended to their more unfortunate brethren, most of us whom have spent the prime of their lives in slavery, is to argue a narrow-mindedness which I believe is characteristic of the most of them who will come here to settle. Probably those who urge this objection do not consider that the extension of the same gratuity to free-born men, would be a greater depreciation of that spirit of "self-reliance" urged in the first objection.

4<sup>th</sup>. "No distinctive settlements of the colored people, apart from the whites, ought to be established here, where all are equal before the law."

While a community of civil right may *equally* comprehend all who may be within the sphere of its jurisdiction, there will be a diversity of social affinities in every community. The French Canadians, and the old country and American settlers, and their descendants, are two grand divisions of such affinities in this Province, aside from the minor subdivisions of rank peculiar to each. Nevertheless, it is desirable that *color* should be eradicated as a basis for the social distinctions of *rank*; but this will be done by the colored man himself, when in a state of freedom, after he becomes *thoroughly* educated, and the *personal* sense of slavery shall be lost in a free-born generation of descendants, in political contact with other classes.

5<sup>th</sup>. "Twenty-five acres is not enough land for a man or family to make a living."

This, I think, will sound strangely in the ears of thrifty New Englanders, especially when he hears that the land is of a very superior quality compared with his own rugged soil. This idea arises in part from the improvident manner that Western agriculture is generally conducted. May not the refugees effect a reform in this respect? And if it be really too small, will not this fact be an incentive to the settlers to endeavor to get more land, as soon as possible, by their own individual exertions, and thus the spirit of *self-reliance* be still further developed by this "restrictive condition"?

6<sup>th</sup>. "The restriction, preventing a man from selling his land for the period of fifteen years after he receives it, is despotic."

If the Society *compelled* men to take its land on these conditions, and at the same time *prevented* them from obtaining land elsewhere, then the term might be fitly applied to the Society; but so long as it has not the power to do either, it is an unreasonable allegation. The objects, therefore, that the Society had in view, were – first, to establish a permanent little homestead for each family, at least, until the children were reared up to be of some help to themselves, despite of the probable improvidence of fathers; and, in the second place, to ensure the philanthropic contributors to this project that their benevolence should not go to naught, by being stripped out of the hands of the *inexperienced* refugees by cunning land-sharks.

Now, Mr. Editor, I suppose the question very naturally arises in your mind: "How is it that a party of persons intended to be benefited, resident in the vicinity of the Society's central operations, oppose its objects and measures?"

Allow me, in the first place, to inform you that this opposition was not commenced, nor is it sustained at the present time, by those *intended to be benefited*. The prime movers in this antagonism are either *free-born* persons or fugitives who

have acquired property, and are therefore disqualified to receive a benefice from the Refugees' Home Society.

In the second place, I assure you, sir, that it is not from any practical demonstration yet of the evil tendency of these objects and measures, that this opposition is kept alive by those who so *gratuitously* interest themselves; for the Society has just commenced the *permanent* distribution of the land to settlers, and there was no *permanent* occupation on the land until *after* this opposition commenced, although some persons had been allowed to go upon the land, with the assurance of a permanent occupancy, as soon as the Society had completed its arrangements for the same.

Thus you see, dear sir, that all the denunciations of the evil workings of the Society have been merely conjectural predictions, without the least shadow of proof. But why has this party been around thus to oppose an immature and incipient benevolent operation? This is the pointed question, and I wish I could leave a satisfactory answer here, and drop my pen; but as an impartial recorder, I feel compelled to go on and state the truth.

Several individuals of influence and intelligence attended the meeting of the Refugee Home Society held August 25<sup>th</sup>, 1852, in the city of Detroit, at which meeting the Constitution was finally adopted. They dissented, no doubt conscientiously, from some of the minor provisions of that Constitution, and some of them expressed that dissent there. Those objections were thoroughly discussed on the spot, and the majority of that meeting of well-trying friends of the slave were not convinced of the utility of changing those provisions. But nevertheless, the whole Constitution was left open for alteration or amendment, by a specific article in itself, whenever a specified majority of the *contributors* to the Society may find it advisable to do so. Those, therefore, who adopted the Constitution, did not claim immutability or infallibility for their Constitution, but left it open for improvement under the suggestions of all good and earnest men who would unite with them for the accomplishment of the great object in view. But those individuals were not content to avail themselves of this last proviso, and they left the meeting with the *privately* expressed determination to raise the standard of opposition.

Within two or three days, a meeting of the fugitives was convened surreptitiously in the Barracks of Windsor, at night, and those individuals referred to above harangued the meeting, in *total* denunciation of the Society; but not content with that, they used that means so effective among an impulsive crowd – the argument of the demagogue. They were told that the Society proposed to re-enslave them on a small scale, by a fifteen years' servitude, before they acquired possession of their land, and urged those who had just come from the shambles of American slavery not to enter into this *Canadian servitude*. The project was called a cunning land scheme, for the benefit of the prime movers therein, into whose possession they averred the land would ultimately fall, *after the fugitives had prepared it to* [sic.] *their hands*. Reflections were thus cast upon the purity of motives and integrity of character of the gentlemen who conduct the Society; and the colored men who were identified with them were placed in the light of traitors to the cause of their race.

With such appeals to the passions of an impulsive and unreflective people, bearing then the smart of the slave-driver's lash on their scarred flesh – coming as it did from a man of such gigantic proportions as S. R. Ward, Esq., and reiterated by Rev. A. McArthur, and Miss M. A. Shadd – you must know the impossibility of those who had been placed under the ban of secret enemies to the fugitive to vindicate *there* the Society to the satisfaction of all, and to calm the turbulent passions thus aroused.

The writer was present at that ever-memorable meeting, and in a few words he took occasion to tell those assembled, prior to the adoption of a batch of denunciatory resolutions, what he now again reiterates, “That neither a meeting of excited factionists, nor any other set of men swayed by their prejudices and passions, rather than their reason, can decide in anticipation in relation to the future effects of measures necessarily so complicated; and that the practical workings *alone* must demonstrate to the world its advantages and disadvantages.”

The Society has since commenced practical operations by purchasing and surveying their lands into lots for settlers. Seven or eight have received lots, and erected log cabins thereon, and taken possession of the same. Others, who have the manliness to withstand the brow-beating of this clique of inveterate opposers, go one by one to apply to the Executive Committee for lots. Nevertheless, the success of the enterprise has been retarded among the fugitives by this opposition. But time rolls on – these angry passions must subside before the demonstration of facts, and the Refugees' Home Society will (in my opinion) be triumphant, and come out of the crucible of this trying ordeal so much the brighter.

I predicate this opinion upon the success that has attended a similar movement conducted by Mr. King at Buxton, and against which some of the same objections can be urged as against the Refugees' Home Society. But any one who publicly opposes the Elgin Association knows that it will be at the hazard of his or her standing for common sense, in the estimation of the anti-slavery public, especially in Canada.

J. THEODORE HOLLY.

Windsor, C. W., Jan. 15, 1853.

### “A good meeting – one of the right sort”<sup>199</sup> (1853)

South Hingham, March 20, 1853.

Friend Garrison:

Mr. George Needham, an agent of the Refugees' Home Society in Canada, addressed the people of this town twice last Sunday. The object was to obtain funds to aid the fugitives through the systematic operations of this Society. It would be needless to repeat the plan of operation of this Society, as a correspondent in your paper of March 4th has given, perhaps, a very correct idea of it. There are but few persons, I think, who examined the two communications of that date, but saw plainly to which the truth belonged.

---

<sup>199</sup> From Cushing, J. (1853, April 15). REFUGEES' HOME SOCIETY. *The Liberator*, p. 3.

It seemed to me at the time, from the communication of Mary A. Shadd, that Henry Bibb and wife opposed the Society, and thought that aid was not needed for the fugitives. But Mr. Needham informs us that Mr. Bibb is an active member and Corresponding Secretary of the Society, and that these sentiments of Mr. Bibb were expressed before the organization of the Society, and were only meant to apply to individuals soliciting aid upon their *own* responsibility – much of the funds raised in this manner having been, in different shapes, misapplied.

It is much to be regretted that a system of operations so eminently beneficial to these fugitives should meet with opposition from any body. Here in the United States we expect it.

At the meeting here, the old fogies stayed away, as usual; but we had a good meeting – one of the right sort. A collection of \$8.88 was taken, in aid of the Society's operations.

Very truly,

J. CUSHING.

### **“We believe them to be benevolent”<sup>200</sup> (1853)**

We are requested to notice the proceedings of a meeting, held at Sandwich, Canada West, March 20th, under the auspices of Henry Bibb, J. T. Holly and others.

The main object of this meeting seems to be to endorse “The Refugees’ Home Society” – to sustain Mr. Bibb, and the *Voice of the Fugitive* – to denounce Mr. Ward and his friends, and to condemn the proposal to establish another paper, to be devoted to the interest of the colored people.

We give place (as requested) to the resolutions adopted on the occasion:

Resolved, that as we believe “Union is strength,” and that it is the only way for our elevation, we do not sympathize and have not participated in the discussions, strife, and personal envy that have been fomented, by a faction in the village of Windsor, under the cover of opposition to the Refugees’ Home Society, and we therefore deprecated and condemn their proceedings as highly injurious to our cause.

Resolved, That we regard the Refugees’ Home Society, the Elgin Settlement and the Sandwich Institute, from their similarity of design, as occupying common ground; and we believe them to be benevolent in their objects and aims for the elevation of the colored people in Canada, salutary in their operations, and deserving the sympathy and support of all well-wishers of humanity.

Resolved, That the *Voice of the Fugitive* was the first standard unfurled on the free soil of Canada, specially devoted to the anti-slavery cause, at that trying hour, when the atrocious Fugitive Slave Bill was scattering confusion and dismay over the colored population of the United States: and that it is in charge of a noble and well tried Refugee from American Slavery, and that it has been a faithful exponent and monitor of their interest, and is therefore worthy of the support of the colored people and their friends.

---

<sup>200</sup> From REFUGEES’ HOME SOCIETY. (1853, April 22). *The Liberator*, p. 1.

Resolved, That as the *Voice* is not as extensively patronized as its merits demand, there is no necessity for another paper devoted to the interests of the colored people of Canada, and therefore, the rival paper about being established to supersede or divide the interest of the *Voice*, especially as it is the creation of the factionists alluded to above, is unworthy of the support of the well-wishers of our race.

Resolved, That the collection and distribution of old clothing should be discouraged, as discreditable to the self-respect of the colored people, except in the special case of newly arrived fugitives destitute of decent apparel, and that donors of these charities should deposit them with such persons on whose judgments they can rely for a judicious distribution of the same.

Resolved, That the circumstances of many of the colored people in Canada are not such as place them above the need of assistance; but on the contrary, there is a necessity for aiding them to obtain permanent homes and for religious and educational purposes.

Resolved, That the delegates be furnished with statistics of the churches, schools and Temperance Society, among the colored people of this country-seat to be reported to the Convention.

Resolved, That the Chairman and Secretary for this meeting be a committee to collect these statistics forthwith and furnish the same to the delegates; and publishing a copy of them, with the proceedings of this meeting, in the *Voice*.

Resolved, That the *Boston Liberator*, *F. Douglass's Paper*, *Am. Baptist*, *Pa. Freeman*, *Telegraph* and *Temperance Journal*, and other anti-slavery papers, be requested to notice the proceedings of this meeting.

### **“Bickering between different religious creeds”<sup>201</sup> (1857)**

On Little River, opposite the residence of Mr. Mahoney, the Church and School house erected by the Refugees' Home Society, were burned on Saturday, the 26th ult. Fortunately the wind was in the right direction for diverting the flames from the premises of Mr. Mahoney, or that gentleman might have suffered considerable loss. It is supposed that the frequent bickerings between different religious creeds has led to its destruction.

### **“Very difficult of fulfilment”<sup>202</sup> (1860)**

#### **THE REFUGEE HOME SOCIETY**

The society bearing this name is the principal association in Essex county for the attempted settlement of escaped slaves. Its professed object is “to assist the refugees from American slavery to obtain permanent homes in Canada, and to promote their moral, social, physical and intellectual elevation.” Under the regulations of the society no land is sold or deed given to any person who is not an escaped slave from one of the States of the Union. Membership is gained in the society

---

<sup>201</sup> On Little River. (1857, July 16). *Weekly Spectator* (Hamilton), p. 1.

<sup>202</sup> From The Refugee Home Society. (1860, January 14). *Detroit Free Press*, p. 1.

by annual subscription, and provision is made for the formation of other societies auxiliary to this.

The society was established in 1852, and its directors are mixed American and Canadian. The land owned by the association is about two thousand acres, principally located in the townships of Sandwich and Maidstone, from seven to seventeen miles distant from Detroit. It is divided into farms or lots, of about twenty-five acres each, which are sold subject to pretty stringent regulations. The price paid by the company was about two dollars per acre, and their sales are made according to the value of the lots, although the original proposition was to sell at the price of cost and expenses, as in the Elgin Association.

A contract is given to the purchaser, hampered with conditions that it is difficult and very rare for the colored settler to carry out, and by the rules of the association the property reverts in case of defalcation, the vacation of the land, or the extinction of families. The latter is by no means a rare occurrence; for want and cold and vagrancy make sickness and death common among the negroes. The by-laws require that no timber shall be chopped or removed until after the first payment shall be made on the land, that no dwelling shall be erected less than ten feet high or containing less than two rooms, and that no liquor shall be manufactured or sold on the settlement. Any violation of these regulations forfeits all claims of the settler to his lot.

It is a noticeable fact that, although the society has been in operation seven years, only one person has received a deed of his land, and he is a man who had quite a little amount of money in his possession when he purchased.

As the company claim to have over eighty old settlers on their lots, it would appear that the requirements of the contract given preliminary to a deed are very difficult of fulfilment. Indeed, there is some question, I believe, as to the validity of the title given by the society. The deed I have alluded to is granted to a negro named Thomas, and is signed by Horace Hallock and E. C. Walker, of Detroit, as trustees. It contains many stringent conditions, crippling to the interest of the purchaser, amongst which is the following:

“Provided always, and these presents are upon the express condition, that the said Thomas shall not sell, exchange, convey or assure the said land and premises, or any part thereof, to any person or persons whomsoever, within the period of four years from the date hereof. And further, that he, the said Thomas, shall not sell, exchange, convey or assure the said land or premises, or any part thereof, to any person or persons whomsoever, save to a refugee from American slavery. And it is hereby expressly agreed and declared that, immediately upon the breach of either of the above conditions, the said land and premises shall become forfeited, and shall revert unconditionally to the said parties of the first part.”

It will thus be seen that the society keeps a keen eye on the profits of reversions, which are likely to compensate eventually for the slow payment received from the settlers.

It is evident from its character that this American-British Abolition Land Association is in effect, if not directly, a part and parcel of the underground railroad,



as charged by *The Detroit Free Press*; for it offers special inducements to slaves of the United States to escape from the South to the British possessions in Canada. It will be seen also that as a speculation it is not entirely destitute of Yankee shrewdness. Not only are the land purchases likely to eventually yield a good profit, but year after year the society, in the garb of charity and philanthropy, goes begging abroad, and never returns without well-filled pockets. The Rev. C. C. Foote, of Canada, the general agent of the society, is a sturdy beggar, and has within a few days past been plying his vocation in Philadelphia and other cities, soliciting aid for the society, and boasting of its connection with old Osawatomie Brown. As the directors of the "Refugees' Home" deny that their association is actually the grand western depot of the underground railroad, it is difficult to tell what they do with the funds they thus extort from the charitable. They certainly do not [act as the] society professes to be, and to make the settler "self-supporting".

The really charitable should look into these facts thoroughly before they yield to the importunities of the men who are constantly appealing to them so pathetically on behalf of the "poor slaves." So far as the "poor slave" on the Refugee Home Society's lands is concerned, it would be a mercy to send him back to a careful master and a southern home. Half clad and half starved, he ekes out a sort of existence by petty larceny committed upon his neighbors who chance to have anything to lose. He is a burden to the community, and no help to himself or to anybody else – unless, indeed, it may be considered a useful service to be played off as a "decoy duck" to attract the dollars out of the pockets of charitable men [and] into those of the British-American abolition speculators in Canadian lands.

### John Anderson, Fugitive Slave

**John Anderson was once enslaved in Missouri. He escaped to Canada, and during his flight killed a slave owner who tried to re-enslave him. After a few years of free life in Canada, he confided his secret to a friend, who betrayed his confidence. A slave-catcher was sent from the United States to retrieve him – not just as a fugitive slave, but as a murder, who could be extradited. The court of the Queen's Bench at Toronto agreed to the extradition, despite the fact that Anderson's act, while murder according to Missouri law, was considered justifiable self-defense under British (and therefore Canadian) law. People sympathetic to Anderson appealed his case to Britain, and the higher courts there issued a writ of *habeas corpus* for Anderson. This was seen by some in Canada as unwarranted interference in colonial affairs. The requested extradition was eventually denied on a technicality, and Anderson made his way to Britain. Once there, a charitable committee raised money for him, housed him from a year, and then sent him to Liberia on Christmas Eve, 1862.**

## “Differences in the administration of justice”<sup>203</sup> (1861)

It is almost impossible to foresee the complications which, humanly speaking, may arise out of the present division in the United States. The Union, in its Federal aspect, was the connecting link between our American cousins and ourselves. Of the domestic laws of the several States we had no judicial knowledge; of the municipal law administered in their several jurisdictions, even on matters wherein the States were agreed, we were not able to exercise any criticism, any more than Americans were bound to recognize the differences in the administration of justice in England and Scotland. The only law by which, as nations, we were mutually bound was the Law of Nations, and such solemn acts of procedure as were agreed upon between the two Governments. But the inevitable tendency of any attempt at reciprocal action in jurisprudence between two States, in which the conditions of citizenship are not common, has been painfully illustrated by a case which has just been adjudicated upon by the Court of the Queen’s Bench in Toronto. It has been judicially decided by that Court that a person named Anderson must be given up by the Canadian authorities to the State of Missouri, from which he escaped.

Anderson was a slave in Missouri; he “made tracks” for Canada. Whilst flying from bondage he crossed the estate of a Mr. Digges, who stopped and questioned him as to the object of his journey. Digges having reason to suspect that Anderson was escaping from his owner, attempted to take him into custody, but the slave, knowing well the fate which was in there for him on his restoration, stood on the defensive, and rather than allow himself to be taken, stabbed Mr. Digges to the heart. He pursued his journey and safely landed in Canada, where he pursued an industrious occupation for his livelihood. He was discovered, and claimed by the State of Missouri under our treaties of extradition, not as an escaped slave, but as a murderer.

If he was a murderer, he came within the operation of the treaty. But the question of murder is one not so easily decided; mere killing is not murder. It has long been held by English law, that if a person assail another, and is killed in self-defense by the party attacked, it is not murder, nor even man-slaughter if the person assailed had reason to believe or suspect that his life was in danger. The whole question is one which cannot, perhaps, be decided by the narrow rules of the common law of England and America.

If we hold, as most undoubtedly we do, that every man has a right to freedom and liberty to go hither and thither without let or hindrance, then it is impossible that we can recognize the attack upon Anderson by Digges as any other than such as justifies the assailed in turning upon his assailant in self-defense. Anderson’s natural rights as a man were in peril. The only way of escaping the peril appeared to him to be by killing or disabling his opponent. His opponent knew he had a desperate man to deal with, for he had summoned his own slaves to his assistance, and, unfortunately, he was hurt to death.

---

<sup>203</sup> From It is almost impossible. (1861, January 4). *Morning Chronicle* (London), p. 4.

It is not even asserted that Digges had any authority to arrest Anderson. Digges was not an officer of justice, and held no warrant to arrest him. For aught he knew, it might have turned out that Anderson was a free negro, entitled to travel as he was found doing. What Digges did, he did under an implied warrant of the law of Missouri, the mere municipal law of that State; and even granting that Anderson did kill Digges in such a way as to make the act murder by the law of Missouri, the question for us to consider is, whether it was a killing which comes within the meaning of a felonious and intentional killing as we define murder to be.

Clearly, unless it is murder according to the mutual definition of English and American law, no extradition treaty can apply. American law defines such an act to be murder; English law calls it justifiable homicide, because we know no condition precedent in the relation of the accused as slavery, and can only regard the attack upon him as unjustified to the extent of permitting him to strike in self-defense to the extent of killing the assailant.

Chief Justice Robinson, at Toronto, does not seem to be impressed with the spirit of Mansfield, who, when he had the negro Somerset before him, declared in a sentence which expanded English Common Law into a guarantee for human freedom, that no slave could tread on English ground. The Chief Justice seems unable to get rid of the narrow fetters of the Consolidated Statutes of Canada; he adopts the accusation of murder as if it were proved. His colleague, Mr. Justice M'Lean, differs from his chief, and he goes to the depositions taken before the justices of the peace, and can there find no charge even of murder. The only evidence given of murder is by an officer from Howard county, Missouri, who did not see the transaction, and has only been sent to Canada because he knew Anderson, and could relate conversations with Digges before death. Whatever statements were made by Digges are not proved to have been made in the knowledge of approaching death, but are simply conversations which may amount to no more than falsehoods. The evidence is entirely hearsay, a quality of evidence of which English law is naturally and justly jealous. A son of Digges declines to swear that Anderson is the man who stabbed his father, although he was present when his father was stabbed. Anderson is about the height of the man who stabbed the father, but that is all the boy can prove.

Mr. Justice M'Lean, in terms which prove he is a descendant of Mansfield and Denman, refuses to concur in the rendition of Anderson. Unfortunately, Mr. Justice Burns supports the views of his chief, and so at present, subject to an appeal, Anderson is ordered to be given up by the authorities of Howard county, in the State of Missouri, to be tried by a jury composed of slaveholders; and in the present excited state of the public mind in the United States there is little doubt that the offence of killing Digges will be construed as murder.

Behind this legal outline the real story comes out. Poor Anderson, a slave from his birth, arrived at manhood the "property" of one Moses Burton. Anderson married a slave on a neighboring property, and had one child. Burton sold Anderson to another person at a distance far apart from wife and child. As Mr. Justice M'Lean well put it, can it surprise any one that the slave should seek to escape from so degrading a condition? Digges had no interest in Anderson; he was simply moved by the common

feeling which binds slaveowners together, and he forfeited his life in an attempt to deprive another of that which is dearer still than life – liberty. We deplore his fate, but can scarcely drop a tear of sympathy for a trespasser on the rights of man.

Mr. Justice M'Lean holds that Anderson was justified in killing Digges in Missouri, as he would have been had he lived in Canada, and he indignantly spurns the notion that Missouri definitions of murder are to be received into British jurisprudence. This is language worthy of a British judge, and we are glad to find on the Canadian bench at least one representative of the glorious doctrines which have made our laws the admiration of all justice-loving people. We refuse to hold or accept any property in man; it is unknown to any law that anyone can do so. We hold that liberty is the right of the meanest of God's creatures, and that for the preservation of the right to freedom every one is armed with the power to fight, or even kill, in self-defense.

Happily, the question will be determined by a higher tribunal, of which one capable of expounding the law, which is, above all, mere statute law – Henry Brougham – is a member. The Judicial Committee of the Privy Council will eventually determine a question which goes to the very foundation of all liberty. Anderson was not a murderer; he simply took the life of an antagonist seeking to deprive him of his liberty, which he had the right to do, and we entertain little doubt that the law of England will be construed in such a way as to preserve the lives of slaves from judicial murder in Missouri or elsewhere.

Meanwhile, this is one of the transactions which Mr. Buchanan stigmatizes as filling the hearths and homes of the Southern States with dread, and for which he calls upon the people of the States to humiliate and fast before God, in order that the Union may be preserved. There may be need of fasting, castigation, and prayer, but the necessity for it is to be found in that condition of things which tramples upon the rights and deprives millions of human liberty. Any national humiliation which stops short of confession that "God hath made of one blood all the nations of the earth" is a mockery and an insult to Heaven; if that truth be confessed, then the solution of American troubles is not to be found in an opposition to secession.

A recognition of the rights of God's creatures will cause the friends of liberty to rejoice that slavery is about to draw a cordon round itself, beyond which the fugitive will be safe. Such a sanctuary, we thought, existed in Canada; we believe it does, and we look with confidence to the decision of the Privy Council to establish it to the confusion of slaveholders and the satisfaction of all lovers of freedom. Mr. Buchanan appeals to Heaven, and calls for penitence and prayer; both are much needed, but we are not quite sure that either will be received as an acceptable service. For us it is to know that we have in our keeping many hundreds of fugitives who have won their freedom by justifiable if unfortunate acts. Their liberty forms a precious trust, and our honor is involved in its due fulfilment of obligations which the laws of nature and the laws of England agree are sacred.

## Anderson's life in Canada, and betrayal<sup>204</sup> (1863)

The following reading, from Anderson's biography, explains how some of the situations mentioned in the previous article came to pass.

### PROCEEDS TO CHICAGO

After various adventures [in Anderson's escape from slavery,] he overtook some teams which were on the way to a place called Rock Island, and being permitted to mount one of them he reached the town that evening. The next day he hired himself to a barber, though quite ignorant of the art of shaving any one besides himself, but stayed with him only two days, and then started for Chicago, his fare being paid by a society of abolitionists. In Chicago, Anderson lived for three weeks with another barber, and then left for Windsor, Upper Canada, where he safely arrived.

### ANDERSON BENEATH THE BRITISH FLAG

Anderson reached Windsor in the month of September, 1853, and obtained employment as a laborer on the Great Western Railway of Canada, on that part of the line lying between Windsor and Chatham, and was paid at the rate of about seven shillings per day; his work consisted in laying "ties" for the rails, and the job lasted six or seven weeks.

During the month of October, he got a friend to write two letters to his wife in Missouri, one of which he sent to the care of Tomlin, his wife's father, and the other to a free colored man, of the name of Allen, following the trade of a shoe-maker, in the town of Fayette; the information in both letters was the same – to the effect that he had got safely to Detroit.

When he had finished his job upon the railway, he returned to Windsor; with his earnings he purchased himself some clothes and entered the institution of Mr. William Bibb – a fugitive slave, who had established a school – resolving to devote one half of his time to his education, and the other half to manual labor, and thus be able to support himself and attend school at the same time. He found in a lady of the name of Evelyn a very kind friend; she was a widow, and obtained her living by teaching.

This lady sent for Anderson to inform him that a letter had arrived in Windsor, stating that his wife and children had reached Detroit, and were waiting for him. Mrs. Evelyn read the letter to him, and told him it was her belief that it had been sent to decoy him across the river into the state of Michigan, and that if he crossed he would, in all probability, be seized and carried to Missouri. Mrs. Evelyn advised him to leave the institution, to remove to Chatham, and the better to avoid detection, to assume another name. He acted according to this counsel; and making up a small bundle of clothes, and leaving his trunk under the care of a Mrs. Jackson, immediately started for Chatham, which place was sixty or seventy miles from

---

<sup>204</sup> From Anderson, J. & Twelvetrees, H. (Ed.). (1863). *The story of the life of John Anderson, the fugitive slave*. London: William Tweedie.

Windsor; he avoided the high road, and walked as far as Belle River, where he took the railway cars for Chatham.

This change of residence took place in the second or third week of April, 1854. In Chatham he took another name. In Missouri he had always been called Jack, in Windsor he went by the name of John Anderson, but in Chatham he became James Hamilton. This was the name of a colored man – like himself, a fugitive – who resided in the town, and who was old enough to pass for his father.

In Chatham, Anderson went to wood chopping, by the “cord,” for which he was paid at the rate of three and sixpence per cord, and he could do on an average two cords a day. He had not been many weeks in Chatham before a rumor spread among the colored people of the place, that certain parties were on the look-out for him, and that a reward had been offered for his apprehension. The report alarmed him, and he deemed it advisable to go to a lawyer, and tell him in what way he had made his escape from slavery, and at the same time, take his advice as to the course he should pursue. Having related to him all the facts of the case, the lawyer told him he had better leave the neighborhood, and again change his name, for though his enemies might not be able to “get him,” they might give him a “heap of trouble.”

It is difficult in the absence of reliable information, to furnish any connected account of the proceedings of Anderson during the five following years of his residence in Canada. He has stated that he traveled from place to place, and pursued various employments, until having learned the trade of a mason and plasterer, he settled down in the town of Caledonia, where he became the owner of a house. With this brief notice of his first six years of freedom, we proceed to record those events in his history, which excited so much public attention, and made his name so widely known.

#### ANDERSON'S CONFIDENCE IS BETRAYED

About the commencement of the year 1860, Anderson was imprudent enough to mention, in confidence, to a person of the name of Wynne, with whom he was at the time on terms of intimate friendship, the facts connected with his escape from slavery, including his encounter with Diggs [sic.]. Wynne, in retaliation for some offence given him by Anderson, reported what he had heard to a Justice of the Peace of the name of Mathews, who, upon the information thus furnished, caused the fugitive to be arrested. It is believed that he (Mathews) further communicated the fact of Anderson's capture to the friends of the deceased Diggs.

After several weeks' imprisonment – no witnesses appearing, Anderson was released. But on the 30th of April, and only three days after his discharge, he was again arrested on the information of a man of the name of Gunning – a detective police officer, and professional slave-catcher, who came over from Detroit, in the State of Michigan, and deposed on oath, that he “verily believed Anderson had willfully, deliberately, and maliciously murdered Diggs, on the 28th of September, 1853.”

After some additional weeks' imprisonment, Anderson was again set at liberty through the interposition of legal aid; but the man Gunning did not abandon his intention of procuring his extradition. Accordingly, on his return to the United States, Gunning applied himself to the obtaining of evidence from Missouri in support of his

original charge, and returning with witnesses, Anderson was once more arrested, and brought up for examination.

The case was gone into on the 27th of September, when there appeared as witnesses, against him, William C. Baker, of Howard County, Missouri; also, two sons of the deceased Diggs; also a lawyer of the name of Holliday; also a constable of the name of Hazlehurst, and finally, a slave called Phil. The evidence of these witnesses having been taken, Anderson was committed to the common jail of Brantford, "to be there safely kept, until he should be delivered by due course of law." The warrant was dated the 28th of September, and was signed by Mathews and two other Justices of the Peace.

There appears to have been an immediate application by Anderson's prosecutors to Washington, as on the 2nd of October, the Secretary of State, General Cass, addressed a letter to the British Minister, requesting her Majesty's government to issue up the necessary warrant to "deliver up the person of John Anderson, otherwise called Jack, a man of color, charged with the commission of murder in the State of Mississippi." There was an important omission in this official requisition. John Anderson was described simply as a *colored man* and not as a *slave*; and, therefore, a piece of property. This omission might have been attended with serious if not fatal consequences, as the proceedings, both at the British Embassy at Washington, and at the Foreign and Colonial offices in London, were based upon the presumption that Anderson was a free man, and that he was charged with the crime of murder in the capacity of a free man.

At a later date, April 8th, 1861, Lord Lyons, in a dispatch to Lord John Russell, says – "When I dispatched the requisition for the surrender, to Canada, I was not aware that John Anderson had been a slave, or that there were any peculiar circumstances in the case."

Lord Lyons, on receiving the requisition of General Cass, transmitted it to the Foreign Office in London, and on the 22nd of October, 1860, Lord John Russell requested the Secretary of State for the Colonies "to take the necessary steps for complying with the application should there be no objection thereto." Accordingly, on the 27th of October, a dispatch from the Colonial office, and a letter from the Foreign Office, went out to Canada, instructing Sir Edmund Head "to take such measures as were authorized by the laws of Canada, for the extradition to the authorities of the State of Missouri, of the person of John Anderson, otherwise called Jack, charged with commission of murder in that State."

### **"Their lordships' intervention"<sup>205</sup> (1861)**

The case of John Anderson, the fugitive slave, now a prisoner in the gaol of Toronto – a case which was productive of a great degree of excitement in the United States of America, and of the deepest sympathy in his behalf in the public mind in England, was on Tuesday brought under the consideration of the Judges of the Court

---

<sup>205</sup> From JOHN ANDERSON THE FUGITIVE SLAVE. (1861, January 19). *Wells Journal*, p. 4.

of Queen's Bench, sitting at Westminster Hall, for the purpose of ultimately procuring by their lordships' intervention, and the exercise of the high powers vested in them, his liberation from the custody in which he is held, and the freedom from slavery which he sought when he fled into Canada, and claimed the protection of the British flag. The judges present were Lord Chief Justice Cockburn, Mr. Justice Crompton, Mr. Justice Hill, and Mr. Justice Blackburn.

Mr. Edwin James, Q.C., with whom were Mr. Solly Flood and Mr. Gordon Allan, said he had been instructed at the instance of Lewis Alexis Chemerovzow, Secretary to the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society, to apply to the court to exercise the power vested in it, to issue a writ of *habeas corpus*, commanding the Governor of the province of Canada, and the sheriff and gaoler of the city of Toronto, to bring up to this court the body of John Anderson, now illegally imprisoned in that city, that he might be set at liberty upon cause shown.

The great point in the case was this: Anderson, a considerable time ago, sensible that he was a "slave," and anxious to emancipate himself, fled, in hope of escaping. He was pursued, and finding himself close run, he turned upon one of his pursuers and slew him. Having got to Canada – a British possession, and sensible that "when a slave sets his foot on British ground he is free," he claimed his freedom. He was received in the colony, and resided for a considerable time under the auspices of the British flag. Ultimately the American Government, under the Extradition Act, claimed him.

The case came before the Court of Queen's Bench at Toronto, in the form of an application for a *habeas corpus*, and two of the learned judges of that court decided against the application and refused the rule, on the ground that a charge of "murder" was involved, and hence the application to this – the Imperial Court of the Empire – for a writ of *habeas corpus* to bring up the body of the slave. The question is a deeply interesting one. He asked their lordships to include the Governor of the province in the writ, under the authority of what was known as the St. Helena case. The affidavit on which he moved was founded upon the precedent of the Canada case, and it was sworn by Mr. Lewis Alexis Chamerovzow, of 37, New Broad-street, the Secretary to the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society.

(The learned gentleman then read the affidavit. In its first paragraph Mr. Chamerovzow swore that John Anderson, a British subject domiciled in the city of Toronto, was now illegally detained in the gaol of the city as a prisoner, without even having been legally accused of any crime, or legally tried or sentenced for the commission of any crime known to the law of the province of Canada, or any other part of her Majesty's dominions, and in the second paragraph it was sworn that the case was of the greatest urgency, and that unless redress was speedily effected, John Anderson's life was exposed to the greatest danger.)

In moving for the writ, all he had to do was to satisfy the court that it had the authority to issue it; for he had no doubt, under the peculiar circumstances of the case, their lordships would not hesitate to exercise their authority if they only once came to the conclusion that the power was vested in them. Mr. James then proceeded at great length to contend that in any part of Her Majesty's dominion – more



especially where the laws which governed those dominions emanated from Her Majesty in England, the writ of *habeas corpus* lay at any part of the Queen's dominions.

Having cited a number of authorities, the Lord Chief Justice observed: "The question is, has this court the power to issue the writ in cases where there is one independent legislature and one independent judicature? The case of the Isle of Man is certainly in great favor."

Mr. James: "Yes, my lord, there are local courts; yet it has been decided at all events since the passing of the act of George III, which vested the island in the King of England, that this court has the power to issue the writ of *habeas corpus* there. Likewise in the St. Helena case, the writ of *habeas corpus* was granted by this court."

The learned counsel then proceeded to argue at length that the existence of a local judicature did not abridge the prerogative rights of the Crown of England, and their lordships represented the Crown of England.

The Lord Chief Justice: "If our writ should be treated with contempt, as an interference with the local powers, it would be a very serious matter. What means have we of enforcing our authority?"

Mr. James: "By attachment."

Mr. Justice Hill: "To whom would the attachment issue?"

Mr. James: "It would be for the Governor to execute the writ."

Mr. Justice Hill: "Suppose he refused to do so?"

Mr. Justice Compton: "Have you considered whether an indictment would lie for refusing to obey such a writ?"

Mr. James: "Canada is a British possession, and the persons to whom the writ is directed are British subjects. The same objection would have been applicable in the Isle of Man and Jersey cases."

Mr. Justice Blackburn: "Hardly in the Isle of Man, but it might in the Jersey case."

Mr. James submitted that on the authority of the Isle of Man and the Jersey cases, the writ ought to issue, and, after some further observations, concluded a long, able and learned argument by expressing the hope that their lordships would exercise the power that was decidedly vested in them, by directing the writ to issue, and thus vindicate the authority of the Crown and the law on the subject.

Their lordships then retired to their private room to consider their judgment, and, after an absence of twenty minutes passed in conference, returned to the court.

The Lord Chief Justice then delivered the following judgment: "We have carefully considered this matter, and the result of our anxious deliberation is that we think the writ ought to issue. We feel sensible at the same time of the inconvenience that may result from the exercise of such an authority. We feel sensible that it may be thought inconsistent with that higher degree of colonial independence, both legislative and judicial, which has been happily brought into effect in modern times. At the same time, in establishing local legislation and local judicial authority, the Legislature of England has not gone so far as expressly to abrogate any jurisdiction which the courts of Westminster Hall might possess with reference to the issue of the

writ of *habeas corpus*. And we find that the existence of the jurisdiction in these courts has been asserted from the earliest times, and exercised down to the latest. We have it upon the authority of Lord Holt, of Lord Somers, of Blackstone, and of Bacon's 'Abridgment,' that these writs have been issued and are to be issued into all the dominions of the Crown, wherever a subject of the Crown is illegally imprisoned. And not only have we this authority in theory, but we have the practical application of the doctrine down to modern times. The more remarkable cases are the instances where the writ of *habeas corpus* was carried into the Isles of Jersey and Man, and to St. Helena. All these are in very modern times. We find it there asserted not only as a matter of agreement, but carried into effect as a matter of practice – that even where there is an independent local judicature, the writ of *habeas corpus* may issue. We think nothing short of a legislative enactment would suffice to deprive us of the authority which was conferred upon us for the protection of the liberty of the subject. We feel, therefore, we should not be doing right, under the authority of the precedents cited, if we refused to issue the writ, and on those grounds we direct that the writ do issue.”

Writ issued accordingly.

The decision of their lordships was received with manifestations of applause in a crowded court, indicating the sympathy felt in favor of the escaped slave.

### **“A final decision”<sup>206</sup> (1861)**

A final decision in the Anderson fugitive slave case was given at Toronto on Saturday. The court sustained the decision of the Court of the Queen's Bench on the question of law, and was unanimous in discharging the prisoner, on a technicality.

Anderson is, therefore, set at liberty. Great joy is manifested at this result, especially among the colored population.

### **“The Anderson extradition case”<sup>207</sup> (1861)**

Anderson, a slave escaping from service in Missouri, killed a white man who attempted to arrest him. Reaching Canada, a requisition was made for his delivery, under the treaty requiring murderers to be surrendered mutually to the two Governments. A question was made in the Canada Court whether Anderson, having slain Digges in the attempt to gain his personal freedom, was a murderer within the meaning of the treaty and the laws of England. Pending the trial of this question a man named Chamerrazow [sic.], Secretary of an Abolition Society, made application to the Court of Queen's Bench in London, for the discharge of the negro, setting forth on oath that Anderson was a British subject. Objection was made to the jurisdiction of this court, but it assumed to act in the case.

The Toronto *Globe* says:

---

<sup>206</sup> From THE ANDERSON EXTRADITION CASE. (1861, February 20). *Lancaster Examiner*, p. 2.

<sup>207</sup> From THE ANDERSON EXTRADITION CASE. (1861, April 1). *Oregon Statesman*, p. 2.

“The issue of the writ of *habeas corpus*, in the case of Anderson, by the English Court of Queen’s Bench has fallen like a bombshell upon the community. There was an unwillingness to credit the telegraphic account; but the arrival of the detailed report of the case yesterday set all doubt at rest. Probably no similar attempt has been made within our day to encroach on the liberty of a free people. Canada, a great self-governing community with a commercial tonnage more than twice as large as that of France, is compared to the Isle of Jersey and the Isle of Man, neither of which has a population larger than that of Toronto. The precedents quoted are well enough for a crown colony: it happens that Canada possesses a Court of Queen’s Bench, expressly vested with powers co-ordinate with those of the Queen’s Bench in England; and if that Court can be ignored and set aside by an imperial tribunal, where is the guarantee for our liberties? If the judiciary branch of our government be trencched upon in this summary manner, who is to guarantee the executive and legislative functions of the government from invasion?”

Anderson was discharged by the Canadian court, on the ground that the indictment charged him only with a “felonious killing,” and not with murder, the term used in the treaty with the United States. The Canadian abolitionists ask for a settlement of the principle that English law recognizes it as no crime for a slave to free himself by force, and that escaping thither his extradition shall be tried upon the English definition of murder, and not upon that of a slave-holding territory.

On this subject the Montreal *Gazette* says:

“Anderson is discharged upon a technical flaw in the warrant. The principle that we do not, cannot, and never will recognize the slave code – nay, so far as our Courts have gone, its recognition has been declared to be a duty imposed on British subjects in Canada? We were degraded in the eyes of the civilized world by the interpretation which the law officers and the Judges put upon the treaty; that degradation has not been removed. Anderson, it is true, has been released; but proceedings may be recommended in Missouri to-morrow which will lead to his being again arrested ten days or a fortnight hence. And by the new light which recent discussions have thrown upon their course, the prosecutors may be enabled to make sure of their victim next time. For it has become established as the law of Upper Canada, at least that he who strikes a manly blow to rescue himself from slavery is no longer safe there. Upper Canada is no longer a safe refuge for the slave who has fought his way to freedom! This is a bitter humiliation to a notion [sic.] of freemen. This conduct of the Judges looks too like a contemptible evasion of a great public duty. What need was there for these quibblings about technicalities? Why evade a decision upon the merits?”

## “Anderson makes a speech”<sup>208</sup> (1861)

Anderson, the fugitive slave, whose case has excited so much interest, made a speech at a public meeting in Montreal on Tuesday evening, the 26th instant. One of the papers describes him as follows:

He is a middle-sized, cheerful-looking man, wears a whisker, and from his dark olive complexion it is evident that there is a considerable share of white blood in his veins. Apparently much amused at the task of speech-making, he began by saying he felt somewhat confused at being called on for the first time to address an audience.

Rev. Dr. Wilkes requested Anderson to answer a few questions relative to his history, for the information of the audience, and for the purpose of eliciting any thing he might have forgotten in his narrative. Anderson consented.

To Dr. Wilkes – “I served the slave-master who sold my mother, for fifteen years after that event. My master’s wife was a Kentuckian, and a gentle, kind woman, and after her death I was worse treated. She influenced her husband favorably. (Applause.) I never had a chance to learn to read in my boyhood. I attended the Methodist Church, but worshipped in a different building from my master. Could not tell exactly why my master began to treat me ill. He blamed me for ‘taking’ things, and I got stubborn. I was married when twenty-four years of age, but it did not last long. (Laughter.) My master would get his ropes to tie me when I wanted to see my wife; then I would resist, when he would go for his gun to shoot me. Was sold for \$1,000 to a man who treated me very well, but wanted me to take another wife. I at last made up my mind to leave slavery and go to Canada.”

Question from one of the audience – “I would like to know whether Anderson prefers being a free colored man to being a slave in the Southern States.”

Anderson – “Well, I think I would rather be in prison all my life in Canada than be in slavery.” (Applause.)

To another – “I had a desire to learn, but thirty-nine lashes is the punishment inflicted for reading a book.”

## “It was a justifiable act”<sup>209</sup> (1861)

### **Once in England, Anderson continued to make public speeches.**

A meeting of the inhabitants of Marylebone, [England,] convened for the two-fold purpose of raising funds for the benefit of Anderson, the fugitive slave, who has recently arrived from Canada, and for his kinsmen, of Hamilton, Canada West, to aid them in erecting a church and school, took place at Portman-hall, Carlisle-street, Portman-market, on Wednesday night, the Rev. Dr. Burns in the chair. The Rev. T. M. Kinnaird, minister of the colored population of the British Methodist Episcopal

---

<sup>208</sup> From The Fugitive slave Anderson Makes a Speech, and Relates His Experience. (1861, April 4). *Cincinnati Daily Press*, p. 1.

<sup>209</sup> ANDERSON, THE FUGITIVE SLAVE. (1861, June 23). *Lloyd’s Weekly London Newspaper*, p. 7.

Church of Hamilton, Canada West, first addressed the meeting, dwelling upon the evils of slavery in America.

John Anderson, who was received with great and prolonged cheering, said, in a modest delivery:-

“Mr. Chairman, ladies, and gentlemen: I am somewhat bashful, not being used to appear before the public. I only want to state a few words how I got along among slave-owners (hear, hear). How I escaped from bondage was, I had to cut and run, and in my flight, I’m sorry to say, I had to fight and shed blood. I don’t like to shed blood (cries of ‘You did right.’) That is what is called fighting in retreat in war, I believe (hear, hear). I assure you I am very sorry to have done what I did. I tried to evade my pursuer, to avoid killing him, and I told him beforehand what I would do if he continued to follow me – that I would slay him. But he persisted in following me for two or three days longer, and said he would not leave me, and I slayed him (loud cries of ‘Bravo,’ and ‘You did right.’) I went to my wife; I had a young wife and sick child at the time. I then had to fight with cold steel. I am, indeed, my brothers and sisters, very sorry for having done so; but I had a good cause, and it was my last resource to avoid being retaken into bondage. I certainly would have escaped, if I could, without killing the man. I was then a Christian man, and I hope I am now (cheers, and loud cries, ‘It was a justifiable act’). I had a narrow escape, and but for England I feel I should never again have been free.”

The rev. chairman thought, if there was any kind of war that was right, he must fully endorse the opinion so loudly expressed in the meeting, that John Anderson did perfectly right (hear, hear). “Does our fugitive friend look like a murderer? (no, no.) In no other country in the wide world, besides England, would the same excitement, trouble, and interest be evinced on behalf of a simple fugitive colored man (cries of ‘Hear’ from Anderson and others).”

The Rev. Mr. Horne next spoke, and contended, amidst continued applause, that had he been in Anderson’s place, Anderson’s conduct would have been his. Under the circumstances, he did perfectly right to kill or die.

Mr. Horner announced that a monster meeting was appointed to be held at Exeter-hall on the 2nd July on behalf of Anderson. A vote of thanks to the rev. and learned chairman, a collection, and the sale of Anderson’s card photographs were offered for a shilling; but so great was the enthusiasm that, notwithstanding an admission fee to the hall had been charged, and the majority of the purchasers, who were very numerous, were of the poorer class of the community, something above the shilling was invariably insisted on being paid.

### **“To purchase his wife and children”<sup>210</sup> (1861)**

An appeal to the public is now being made by some philanthropic gentlemen in London, who have formed themselves into a Committee for the purpose of assisting Anderson, the Fugitive Slave, who now seeks a refuge on the shores of England.

---

<sup>210</sup> From Anderson, the Fugitive Slave. (1861, August 3). *The Cambridge Independent Press*, p. 5.

Anderson, an intelligent man, is anxious to obtain the means of education, and he is also deeply solicitous to purchase his wife and children, who still remain in slavery, who in the present disturbed state of Missouri, might probably be bought with greater ease and for a smaller sum. In addition to the accomplishment of these objects, the Committee are desirous to establish Anderson in some suitable business where he may obtain a livelihood, whereby it is hoped that his subsequent career would make him an honor to his race.

### **From England to Liberia<sup>211</sup> (1863)**

During the remainder of the time that Anderson resided at Corby [England,] his progress in his studies was satisfactory to the Committee, and it is pleasing to remark that his conduct and deportment secured him the respect and esteem of those with whom he was brought into contact. It was intended that Anderson should reside with Mr. Pool for a period of twelve months; and as the period drew near for his removal from Corby, the Committee had many anxious consultations as to the course which his future life should take. In this emergency the Committee were indebted to F. W. Chesson, Esq., the esteemed honorary secretary of the London Emancipation Society, for suggesting that the Negro Republic of Liberia would furnish unequalled opportunities for Anderson's prosperity and social advancement, and for kindly securing the co-operation of Gerald Ralston, Esq., the Consul-General of the Republic in England.

After full consideration of the matter, it was ultimately resolved to recommend John Anderson to go out to Liberia; and Mr. Ralston having kindly made known the facts of the case to the Directors of the African Royal Mail Steam Ship Company, of 70, Great Tower-street, the Board, in the most handsome manner, announced, through their secretary, Duncan Campbell, Esq., their willingness to grant Anderson a free passage to Liberia.

The recommendation of the Committee having been conveyed to Anderson, with information as to the peculiar advantages which he would possess in the Republic, he decided to act upon it, and it was arranged that he should sail in the "Armenia," on the 24th of December. It was also notified by Mr. Ralston that the Liberian Government would make Anderson a special grant of land on his arrival in the Republic, so that he would at once become a landed proprietor and have a stake in the welfare of his adopted country – a generous concession which was highly valued.

---

<sup>211</sup> From Anderson, J. & Twelvetrees, H. (Ed.). (1863). *The story of the life of John Anderson, the fugitive slave*. London: William Tweedie.

## The final letter<sup>212</sup> (1863)

**I found no record of John Anderson after this notice – or of his wife and children, who may have remained in Missouri. The United States would abolish slavery in December, 1865.**

It will be remembered that this celebrated negro sailed for the Republic of Liberia in December last, and those who took an interest in his welfare whilst he was in this country will be glad to know that Mr. Harper Twelvetrees has received a letter from him, dated Sierra Leone, January 13th, in which he expresses the greatest hopefulness with regard to his future prospects, and his belief that he will be able to make his way to Liberia.

## From Nova Scotia to Sierra Leone

**In 1792, over a thousand free black people, including Black Loyalists and former slaves, migrated from Nova Scotia to Britain’s new African colony of Sierra Leone.**

**“An English settlement on the coast of Guinea”<sup>213</sup> (1786)**

**Years before the emigration from Nova Scotia to Sierra Leon, a group of 700 black Londoners considered a similar journey.**

The last objects of distress and misery who attracted the attention of the late Mr. Hanway, were the Black People, in and about London, of whom 700 were starving in the streets. These wretches had been brought here chiefly as seamen, to navigate English ships from the East and West Indies; and when the ships were discharged, the poor men were turned adrift, to get home as they could. By Mr. Hanway’s interposition, a subscription was set on foot for sending them to Africa, of which country many of them are natives. They are now embarking on board two ships in the River Thames for Sierra Leone, an English settlement on the coast of Guinea, where they will be encouraged to settle.

**“His Lordship advised them not to go”<sup>214</sup> (1786)**

We hear that some of the leaders of the hundred poor Black who had signed an engagement to go to a Free Settlement on the coast of Africa, submitted the new system, intended for their government in Ethiopia, to the consideration of the Right Hon. Lord George Gordon, and requested his advice and opinion upon the subject, before the sailed from England. His Lordship advised them not to go; and pointed out

---

<sup>212</sup> From JOHN ANDERSON, THE FUGITIVE SLAVE. (1863, February 17). *Western Morning News* (Plymouth, England), p. 4.

<sup>213</sup> From Sunday and Tuesday’s Posts. (1786, November 23). *Bath Chronicle*, p. 2.

<sup>214</sup> From We hear. (1786, December 18). *Public Advertiser* (London), p. 4.

to them the various miseries, rebellions, calamities, and final loss of liberty, which had uniformly attended the settlement of foreign colonies by the different nations of the earth, who had not yet themselves incorporated the law of God into their own establishments. In consequence of this, four hundred of them declined the embarkation, and came on shore again. Thus the Sierra Leone expedition is delayed for the present.

Three large ships are prepared, it is true, and amply supplied with provisions, clothing, and every other necessary; also engineers, surveyors, ecclesiastics, schoolmasters, midwives and surgeons; but the poor Blacks prefer liberty with poverty, and nakedness instead of clothing, rather than submit to the plan intended for their government, when they arrive on the Grain Coast. The fact is, there are very few now left aboard, except such decoy Blacks as are paid by government to go out with enormous salaries. The expenses to the nation are said to have already exceeded twenty thousand pounds.

A system of fines and forfeitures, for the most trivial offences, is one part of the police intended; a tenth part of the profit of their working days to be appropriated to religious uses, is another; besides one Chaplain of the established church of England to every hundred Black families, with a glebe allotted to him, till they are numerous and rich enough to receive and entertain Bishops, is a third; and a Penitentiary House of Correction (or French Maison de Force) to be strongly fenced with palisades, ditch and parapet, on the Duke of Richmond's plan, having all its defenses reversed or facing inwards, for the secure confinement of officers and contumacious persons, to be divided into compartments, is a fourth regulation which alarms the poor Ethiopians. It seems there is no law to compel them to embark, or to detain them aboard, to be transported to a military government, like the White Felons to New Norfolk.

### **“Strange anecdotes”<sup>215</sup> (1786)**

December 21. We hear from authority, that one of the decoy blacks has been hired to entice his brethren to Sierra Leone, at the extravagant price of 108l. a year, and that he is also to return to London, at the end of four months after their embarkation, in the Belisarius and other ships, if he does not choose to stay at Sierra Leone. This ill-colored transaction has got wind among the unsuspecting Ethiopians; and it occasions a sort of embargo, at present, on the sailing of the black fleet.

Besides the murmur which this unsavory negotiation raises among the blacks themselves, their white friends begin to threaten Mr. Irvine, and the Committee, with the law of man stealing, or kidnapping. “He that stealeth a man, and selleth him; or if he be found in his hand, he shall surely be put to death.” These poor people communicated some strange anecdotes of Lord George Gordon, their lawyer and counselor, respecting the arts used to convert and prevail on black leaders to adopt,

---

<sup>215</sup> From Foreign Intelligence. (1787, March 9). *Independent Gazetteer*, p. 2.



patronize, and even preach up the colonial system of the Pettites [sic.] to possess the land of Ethiopia.

### **“A meeting of West India Planters and Merchants”<sup>216</sup> (1791)**

Yesterday, at the London Tavern, a meeting of the West India Planters and Merchants, trading to the West India Islands, was held, Lord Penryhn in the Chair. This meeting was convened by public advertisement, to take into consideration the establishment of a Colony at Sierra Leone, on the coast of Africa. From this place it is, that a large proportion of the slaves sent to the West India Islands are obtained. The consequence of a Colony being formed there, would be an additional difficulty in obtaining slaves from thence. It was therefore determined by the Meeting, to adopt the most likely means of opposing this measure. Another reason assigned for the necessity of any Colony being formed there, is, that the climate of the West India Islands, and of Sierra Leone, are so much alike, that it is thought sugar plantations might, with as much success, be cultivated in the latter place as in the West Indies, by which their trade would be materially injured.

### **“Free settlement on the coast of Africa”<sup>217</sup> (1792)**

The SIERRA LEONE COMPANY, willing to receive into their Colony such Free Blacks as are able to produce to their Agents, Lieut. Clarkson, of his Majesty’s Navy, and Mr. Lawrence Hartshorn, of Halifax, or either of them, satisfactory Testimonials of their characters (more particularly as to honesty, sobriety, and industry) think it proper to notify in an explicit manner upon what terms they will receive at Sierra Leone, those who bring with them written certificates of approbation from either of the said Agents, which certificates that they are hereby respectively authorized to grant or withhold at discretion.

*It is therefore declared by the Company,*

That every Free Black (upon producing such a certificate) shall have a grant of no less than Twenty Acres of Land for himself, Ten for his wife, and Five for every child, upon such terms and subject to such charges and obligations (with a view to the general prosperity of the Company) as shall hereafter be settled by the Company, in respect to the grants of lands to be made by them to all settlers, whether *Black* or *White*.

That for all stores, provisions, &c. supplied from the Company’s warehouses, the Company shall receive an equitable compensation, according to fixed rules, extending to the Blacks and Whites indiscriminately.

That the civil, military, personal and commercial rights and duties of Blacks and Whites, shall be the same, and secured in the same manner.

---

<sup>216</sup> From WEST INDIA PLANTERS. (1791, May 19). *Caledonian Mercury*, p. 3.

<sup>217</sup> From Sierra Leone Company. (1792, February 4). FREE SETTLEMENT on the COAST of Africa. *Philadelphia Inquirer*, p. 1.

And for the full assurance of personal protection from slavery to all such Black Settlers, the Company have subjoined a copy of a clause contained in the Act of Parliament, whereby they are incorporated, viz. – “Provided also, and be it further enacted, that it shall not be lawful for the said Company, either directly or indirectly, by itself or themselves, or by the agents or servants of the said Company, or otherwise howsoever, to deal or traffic in the buying or selling of slaves, or in any manner whatsoever to have, hold, appropriate, or employ any person or persons in a state of slavery, in the service of the said Company.” [...]

N. B. For the convenience of those who are possessed of property which they cannot dispose of before their departure, the Company will authorize an Agent, who, on receiving from any proprietor sufficient power for that purpose, shall sell the same for his benefit, and remit the purchase money (through the hands of the Company) to such proprietor at Sierra Leone.

### **“Joyous feelings”<sup>218</sup> (1792)**

At a late Patriotic meeting in Ireland, their sentiments on the Slave Trade were thus strongly, though quaintly marked. Their toast was – “The cause of all who are *persecuted* because they are *black*, and *blackened* because they are *persecuted!*”

A clergyman, who is a native of the island of Jersey, and a person of an independent income, has made a voluntary offer to officiate as a chaplain in the new settlement at Sierra Leone, free of expense.

At Halifax, no less than twelve hundred free Blacks, collected from New Brunswick, and the out-ports of the Province, embarked in fifteen vessels belonging to the Sierra Leone Company, for the purpose of returning to their native country. Nothing could be in stronger contrast than the joyous feelings of these poor people, to sensations which are usually felt on what is called the Middle Passage.

### **“On their passage from Nova Scotia”<sup>219</sup> (1792)**

The Sierra Leone Company’s ship the Harpy, which sailed from the Downs on Wednesday last, had on board the Council and other Officers of the Company, with their wives and families, and some English settlers, bound directly for the New Colony; and we hear, that there are now on their passage from Nova Scotia to the same place, under the conduct of Lieut. Clarkson, upwards of 1000 free Blacks, who are expected to prove useful settlers there. The Harpy is the fourth ship already sailed from London in the Company’s service. Amongst other persons sent out are some experienced Managers and Overseers, who immediately on their arrival [are] to set about the cultivation of sugar, as well as of other articles to which the soil and climate may appear favorable.

---

<sup>218</sup> From LONDON. (1792, April 19). *Derby Mercury*, p. 1.

<sup>219</sup> From The Sierra Leone Company’s ship. (1792, January 6). *Evening Mail* (London), p. 3.

### **“Under the protection of the Company”<sup>220</sup> (1792)**

One ship has sailed, and another is setting out from Bristol for the new settlement of Sierra Leone, on the coast of Africa. They are loading with all kind of implements for building, and with tools for carpenters, joiners, blacksmiths, and other trades, as well as with instruments for cultivating the ground, which is represented as remarkably fertile. In each ship are accommodations for 40 or 50 artificers and husbandmen, who are going to settle in the country under the protection of the Company.

It is supposed that by the beginning of the ensuing year, the Company will have 2000 acres planted with sugar canes. The natives of the country are to be engaged to work for hire, and to the people who go out from hence tracts of land are to be assigned. Every man is to have twenty acres; if he has a wife, he is to have ten more; and for each child an additional five acres.

### **“All in good health”<sup>221</sup> (1792)**

A letter was yesterday morning received in town from Sierra Leone, giving an account of the safe arrival there of the Company’s ship Harpy, and other ships, which sailed from England about the beginning of the year, as well as of the fleet from Nova Scotia, with upwards of 1100 free Blacks, all in good health.

### **“Some degree of sickness”<sup>222</sup> (1792)**

By letters received on Tuesday by a Bristol ship from Sierra-Leone, dated March 26, it appears, that the council and servants of the Sierra Leone Company, with the assistance of the free blacks arrived from America, were proceeding with the utmost diligence in the clearing of land and the building of houses, but that they were fearful of their not being all provided with any complete accommodations on shore before the first rainy season.

Some degree of sickness had prevailed amongst the free blacks, of whom some had died of a fever during the passage from America.

Mr. Clarkson, the Superintendent, had been ill also at the same time, but had gradually become better. From a want of fresh provisions and sufficient accommodations on their arrival, the recovery of such as had been sick had been a little retarded; on the whole, however, the colony was in a very tolerable state of health, and (except the death of the chief physician, which was not imputed to the climate) no mortality or material sickness among the persons who went from England had, by the last accounts, been experienced. The climate, on the other hand, was described at that time as more salubrious than had been expected. Some delay in beginning to clear and build on the spot which the Council pitched upon, had been

---

<sup>220</sup> From Thursday’s Post. (1792, January 28). *Jackson’s Oxford Journal*, p. 2.

<sup>221</sup> From Saturday’s and Wednesday’s Mails, inclusive. (1792, May 12). *Newcastle Courant*, p. 2.

<sup>222</sup> From By letters received. (1792, May 23). *Evening Mail* (London), p. 4.

occasioned by a palaver, or general meeting, of all the surrounding Chiefs, which lasted some days; but their united consent was obtained, and the dispositions of King Naimbanna have appeared throughout to be extremely friendly.

**“But alas! It is all show!”<sup>223</sup> (1792)**

*Extract of a letter from the Rev. Mr. Gilbert, who sailed in the first ship from England for Sierra Leone in Africa.*

We arrived all safe and well, after a passage of six weeks from England, on the 26th of February, in the river Sierra Leone. Nothing can be more beautiful and luxuriant than the face of the country; it looks like an English pleasure-ground of the most elegant sort, diversified with hills and vales, and richly planted with the most beautiful trees and shrubs. But alas! It is all show! and the eye is the only sense which is gratified with all this luxuriance and variety.

The inhabitants, indolent by Nature, and the influence of the climate, apply themselves to nothing but the cultivation of a little rice, just enough for their own consumption. They have nothing to sell us, but now and then a wild animal, which they kill in the woods, and a little fruit, chiefly pines, oranges and limes that grow wild, and in no great plenty. All, in short, was in a state of Nature when we came here.

Since then we have bargained with the natives for a piece of land. Twelve hundred black people from Nova Scotia have joined us, and a large town is already to be seen on a spot of ground which a month ago was covered with wood. Our present houses, it is true, are rather to be called wigwams, but these are only intended to cover us from the inclemency of the approaching rainy season. By this time next year, I hope there will not be a family here that will not have a commodious wooden house, with a large and well-furnished poultry-yard and garden. This time will be sufficient, if we keep our health, and the people are industrious, to put our infant settlement into a state of comfort and plenty.

Till then, indeed, much hardship will be endured, from the want of good accommodations, and a plentiful supply of fresh meats and vegetables. But black people are hardy, and inured to want. A few temporary houses, which we brought from England in frames, will lodge most of the whites, and the others must take refuge in the ships for the rainy seasons. The fish they will be able to catch, and the occasional supply of fresh meat and fruits they happen to get from the woods, will, I hope, keep them in tolerable health, till they can put themselves on a better footing.

For my part, I hope to escape the worst of the scene, having still a determination to revisit Old England by the first ship that shall leave the place after Mr. Horne’s arrival. I hope he is sailed long before this, and in a few days I shall begin to look out for him. The Lord prosper him, and bring him hither in safety!

As far as I can at present see, I shall feel it my duty to return to this country, with my dear boy, after a short visit to England. I have no reason to doubt, that, by

---

<sup>223</sup> From Rev. Gilbert. (1792, June 29). *Chester Chronicle*, p. 4.

the time of my return, the colony will be in a settled and a very flourishing condition, so that nothing necessary to the ease and comfort of life will be wanting to us; and as for the climate, with lodging and diet suited to it, and a few other easy precautions, there is, I am sure, nothing to be apprehended from it.

In the rainy parts of the year it will be cool enough to require a fire; and in the hot season, the air is so perpetually fanned by pleasant breezes in the day, and so refreshed by copious dews in the night, that it is seldom close or oppressive (though the thermometer generally stands at about 90 degrees in the shade, and 110 in the sun) except for two or three hours in the morning; and even then it by no means equals, in the disagreeable impression it makes upon the body, the heat which I have frequently felt for days together in England, in summer weather. I now wear at all times a flannel waistcoat under my shirt, and find it very comfortable in absorbing that moisture which would otherwise be extremely disagreeable, and might be pernicious to health, by exposing the body to be frequently chilled.

### **“A direct contradiction”<sup>224</sup> (1792)**

The Sierra Leone Company have just received dispatches from this new settlement, of a most agreeable nature, and which are a direct contradiction to some unfavorable reports that have been lately in circulation.

The settlers from England were arrived in perfect good health, and were well received by the natives – so much so, that one of the most powerful Kings in the neighborhood had made proposals to live amongst them.

The country had been surveyed, and was found in general well suited for the produce of coffee and cotton, and some parts for sugar; and there is every reason to hope and believe, from the account received, that the settlement will answer the end proposed by those who have embarked in the undertaking – which is to promote the civilization, as well as the commerce of Africa.

### **“No doubt of their accomplishing this object”<sup>225</sup> (1792)**

*July 9, 1792.*

On Saturday arrived the Sierra Leone Company’s ship *Felicity*, Capt. Moxey from Sierra Leone, bringing advices of the 24th of April.

The fever which the free Blacks had brought with them from Nova Scotia, and which had also carried off several of them after their arrival in Africa, appeared to be entirely stopped and the whole Colony was in remarkable good health. One white man only besides the physician had died, and neither of these deaths could be attributed to the climate.

Some of the natives appeared at first to doubt the peaceable intentions of the Company and they had not yet lent any material assistance to the Colony, but the settlers were so numerous and so industriously disposed as not to be dependent upon

---

<sup>224</sup> From SATURDAY’S POST. (1792, July 7). *Jackson’s Oxford Journal*, p. 3.

<sup>225</sup> From SIERRA LEONE HOUSE. (1792, July 11). *The Times* (London), p. 3.

them. A more friendly disposition had also begun to show itself and the good offices of King Naimbanna had been exerted in favor of the Company.

From the beginning of March when the fleet of transports from Nova Scotia arrived, to the date of these dispatches, the settlers had been busy in clearing the land and erecting a temporary town to serve for their shelter and accommodation during the rainy season, which was expected to set in this year more early than usual, and there was no doubt of their accomplishing this object in due time, but the progress of the Colony in other respects, had not in this short period of seven or eight weeks been considerable.

The son of a neighboring chief has come over in the *Felicity* for education in England.

From the steps they have hitherto been able to take, it appears that coffee and cotton may in most parts be cultivated, and sugar also in several places; they have discovered a large quantity of rich iron ore with a fine soft stone, which by its quality of resisting heat is peculiarly adapted to building furnaces.

### **“Freighted with all kinds of merchandise”<sup>226</sup> (1792)**

Sunday sailed from Plymouth to Sierra Leone, the *Samuel* and *Jane*, *Hall*, and the *York*, *Hebden*; on board of the latter ship is the Rev. Mr. Horne. They are freighted with all kinds of merchandise, and stores for erecting habitations.

### **“They have nothing to eat”<sup>227</sup> (1792)**

A letter from Sierra Leone has been received, which paints in the most melancholy colors the state of the settlement. It mentions that three parts in four of the Whites are dead, and half the Blacks; that they have nothing to eat, nothing to cover them; that they are devoured by reptiles and insects; that the soil is indifferent; that there are no sugar-canes, no fruits, no vegetables; and that unless the remaining inhabitants are immediately removed, they must perish.

### **“The most melancholy accounts”<sup>228</sup> (1792)**

On Friday a packet [arrived] from Sierra Leone, which brings the most melancholy accounts from this new settlement. So dreadful a mortality has prevailed, that upwards of two hundred white persons have died since the last accounts were received. Numbers of the blacks have also fallen sacrifices to the inclemency of the climate. The natives, although not at open war with the settlement, are far from being friendly to it – they never omit an opportunity to plunder, and have committed daring outrages.

---

<sup>226</sup> From LONDON. (1792, August 9). *Bath Chronicle*, p. 2.

<sup>227</sup> From BATH. (1792, August 23). *Bath Chronicle*, p. 3.

<sup>228</sup> From LONDON. (1792, August 25). *Jackson's Oxford Journal*, p. 1.

### **“Sickness and mortality”<sup>229</sup> (1792)**

On the 17<sup>th</sup> inst. arrived the Sierra Leone Packet, bringing dispatches dated the 1st of July.

It appears that the rains began to set in about the latter end of May, and that a considerable degree of sickness and mortality had prevailed, chiefly occasioned by the insufficiency of the temporary houses, which could not be completed before the rains set in. The soldiers and the lower order of white people suffered more particularly, through irregularity, and the want of fresh provisions, the sailors excepted, who, by being accommodated on shipboard, were in good health. In all, about 35 white persons have died, of which 14 were soldiers. The whole number of white persons who have gone to the colony (sailors included) are upwards of 200.

Two gentlemen who had been named on the Council, are returned to England, on account of ill health, and one or two other passengers.

Of the blacks from Nova Scotia a considerable number have fallen sick, and many have died, but the number of sick was decreased.

The colony were in anxious expectation of the arrival of the Company’s ship York, as many deaths were owing to want of accommodations on shore.

### **“Greatly exaggerated”<sup>230</sup> (1792)**

Having noticed a paragraph in your last paper concerning the Colony of Sierra Leone, I beg leave to say, that being intimately connected with the Directors of that Company, and having seen the last dispatches from that place, I am enabled to aver that one part of your paragraph relating to the mortality is greatly exaggerated, and that the rest of it is totally unfounded.

The mortality that has happened has been among the lower class of the people, and by no means owing to the climate, but to their own improper conduct. There is but one officer under the Company dead, and it is well known that his death, which was soon after his arrival, was owing to his own intemperance.

As to the rest of the officers and people that were at Sierra Leone when the dispatches came away, there were none that wished to return to this country. They had passed through part of the rainy season, were perfectly satisfied with the climate, nor were they in the least intimidated by the mortality that had taken place, because they knew the chief cause of it, and had sense and prudence enough to avoid it. As to provisions, they have as much as they can require for months to come, and with respect to vegetables, one paragraph in a late private letter from thence says, “We have this day had for our dinner as many French beans as we could eat.”

I do not know from what motive your account was published<sup>231</sup>, but the effect is bad; it serves to make those people who may have friends there unhappy without

---

<sup>229</sup> From SIERRA-LEONE HOUSE. (1792, August 30). *Bath Chronicle*, p. 4.

<sup>230</sup> From W. S. (1792, August 30). To the PRINTER of the BATH CHRONICLE. *Bath Chronicle*, p. 4.

<sup>231</sup> *The account came to us through a channel too respectable for intentional misrepresentation.* [Note in the original.]

cause, and also to abuse the benevolent views of the Company, who are satisfied with the accounts they have received from the colony, excepting only as to the mortality, which the Directors with others sincerely regret. The prospects held out to them are very flattering, and the difficulties that have occurred have been no more than from the nature of the concern they had reason to expect.

W. S.

### **“Misery, diseases and death”<sup>232</sup> (1792)**

What I saw with my own eyes, I must believe. The letter from Sierra Leone, in the hands of one of the first merchants of the city of London, contained so many circumstances as to the wretched state of the colony, and so desponding as to the writer’s hopes, that I entertain no doubt of the truth of the paragraph I sent to you. W. S. in your paper of the 30<sup>th</sup> of August informs you that the officers and people were so perfectly satisfied with the climate, that none wished to return. I aver, on the contrary, that the writer of the letter in question declared to his correspondent his firm resolution of quitting so abhorred a region; and says, in express terms, that the Directors have much to answer, in having deluded so many people.

Before others are entrapped to encounter misery, diseases, and death in its most frightful form, it is necessary that these facts be enquired into, and the public satisfied. I shall be in Bath in less than a month, and if W. S., the champion of the Leone Company, will in the mean time produce documents to you to disprove the misrepresentations of the letter-writer, I shall willingly retract; if not, I shall not only adhere to my opinion, but treat the directors and their *puffers* as the deceivers of my countrymen. “Magna est veritas et prevalebit.”<sup>233</sup>

### **“The ferocity of the natives”<sup>234</sup> (1792)**

Besides famine and pestilential climate, the settlers at Sierra Leone have to encounter the ferocity of the natives, who are determined, if possible, to extirpate our enterprising countrymen in that quarter.

### **“Not the least reason to believe”<sup>235</sup> (1792)**

A paragraph having appeared in some of the papers, said to have arrived from Sierra Leone by way of France, stating, “that in consequence of some disagreement between the settlers and the natives, the latter under the command of King Jemmy, a neighboring Prince, had attacked the settlements, and murdered Mr. Clarkson, the Governor, and most of the Council, together with a great number of the settlers, the survivors of whom had been obliged to escape to Bans Island for protection, after

---

<sup>232</sup> From C. (1792, September 13). FOR THE BATH CHRONICLE. *Bath Chronicle*, p. 4.

<sup>233</sup> Latin for “Great is truth, and it prevails.”

<sup>234</sup> From Friday’s Post. (1792, September 29). *The Ipswich Post*, p. 2.

<sup>235</sup> From LONDON. (1792, November 3). *Jackson’s Oxford Journal*, p. 2.



having witnessed the total destruction of the town of Sierra Leone by the ferocious natives,” it is necessary to declare, that (in order to prevent the unpleasant effects it might have upon the minds of the friends and relatives of the gentlemen resident at the new colony) from the latest accounts received at the Sierra Leone House there is not the least reason to believe that any such event can have taken place.

### **“Of the most flattering nature”<sup>236</sup> (1792)**

Accounts from Sierra Leone, of the most flattering nature, were yesterday received at the Company’s House in Laurence Poultney Lane. They were brought by the Duke of Savoy, a ship chartered to carry out stores to the settlement. The sickness, which had been fatal to so many at the commencement of the rains, had entirely ceased, and trade and plantation were making rapid progress. Those, on the contrary, who are interested in the result of the enterprise to Bullam, will be concerned to hear that that plan is entirely defeated. The principal part of the colonists have been massacred by the natives; and those of them who remained alive took refuge among their countrymen at Sierra Leone. Mr. Dalrymple, their Governor, is returned to England by the vessel which brought this intelligence. The Government of Sierra Leone received the unfortunate adventurers with much humanity, and a vessel is fitting out there to bring them back to this country.

Bullam is an island at the mouth of the Gambia, upon which the natives of the opposite shore have, from time immemorial, made their annual plantations of rice. Considering, therefore, the arrival of the new settlers as an unjust intrusion upon their natural rights, a dispute arose, which has exhibited the above melancholy issue.

### **“Recovering from all the difficulties”<sup>237</sup> (1792)**

By dispatches from Sierra Leone, dated September 10, brought by the Calypso belonging to the Bullam Company, it appears that the Colony at Sierra Leone were recovering from all the difficulties with which they had to struggle, and which had been much aggravated during the rainy months.

The health of the Colonists, but more particularly of the Nova Scotia Blacks, was improving, the building of public works were proceeding, a greater degree of order as well as internal harmony was introduced, and the full establishment of the Colony was not questioned. The Company’s ship York, of 1200 tons, had just arrived, carrying out Lieutenant Dawes, the Assistant Counsellor to Governor Clarkson, as well as the Chaplain to the Settlement, and a Schoolmaster. The institution of schools, the establishment of an hospital or dispensary, the regular distribution of the lands, and the formation of a more complete and permanent town, were beginning to be entered upon. The Company’s Mineralogist had set off upon an expedition into the country, and the Botanist was pursuing his researches. The free Black inhabitants of Granville Town (who went from England five or six years ago) had

---

<sup>236</sup> From SIERRA LEONE. (1792, November 10). *Jackson’s Oxford Journal*, p. 2.

<sup>237</sup> From SIERRA LEONE HOUSE. (1792, December 4). *The Times* (London), p. 3.

been united in some measure with the Nova Scotia Blacks. The natives continued perfectly friendly, and often flocked to Free Town, though no regular trade with them had been opened, nor had any material advantage been yet derived to the Company from their labor.

No great supply of fresh provisions had yet been procured, but many fowls had been sent both from England and Tenerife, and the increase of them was remarkably rapid.

The attention of the Governor and Council had been so much confined to the immediate wants of the Colony, and the Company's ships had from various causes been detained so much at Sierra Leone, that no African produce had been collected, nor any general trade to Sierra Leone as yet begun; but the arrival of the York, as well as a Commercial Agent, would facilitate the Colony's progress in this respect. The rains had not entirely ceased, but they proved upon the whole much less severe than was expected, and the climate (notwithstanding the great number of deaths among the Whites) was thought upon the whole to be quite as good as that of other uncleared and unimproved tropical countries. The soil, where it had been cultivated, proved in general extremely productive.

### **“Health of the Nova Scotia blacks was much improved”<sup>238</sup> (1793)**

Saturday last advices were received at the Sierra Leone House from that settlement, dated Oct. 20, giving a favorable account of the further progress of the colony. An amicable meeting, or palaver, had been held with the chiefs on the subject of the distribution of the lots of land, of which a regular survey was begun. The rains had ceased, and the health of the Nova Scotia blacks was much improved. It appears also by the returns, that the mortality among them had not been so very great as was apprehended, only 98 American blacks having died from the time of their landing to the 20th of October; the number of them remaining alive was 1026; somewhat more than 60 white appear in all to have died, the chief of whom were of the lower order living on shore. The Company's accountant, who returned on account of his health, died on his arrival.

### **“The new settlers are very unhealthy”<sup>239</sup> (1793)**

This evening arrived here the ship Samuel and Jane, Captain Hall, from *Sierra Leone*, after a passage of 8 weeks. By this ship we are sorry to find, that the new settlers are very unhealthy.

---

<sup>238</sup> From Friday and Saturday's Posts. (1793, January 10). *Bath Chronicle*, p. 1.

<sup>239</sup> From FALMOUTH. (1793, March 1). At a meeting. *Edinburgh Advertiser*, p. 4.

## “Our thanks are due to the directors”<sup>240</sup> (1793)

At a meeting of the Society instituted in Newcastle, for the Abolition of the SLAVE TRADE, held at Turner’s, on Tuesday, March 26th, 1793, Letters from the Durham Committee, the Rev. Thomas Clarkson, Granville Sharp, Esq. &c. &c. having been read, RESOLVED,

That we renew and confirm the Resolution of the General Meeting at the Guildhall, on the 8th day of Feb. 1792, “That the trade for slaves upon the coast of Africa, is subversive of the principles of humanity and religion, annually destructive of the lives of thousands of our fellow creatures, and productive of much misery to the multitudes who survive.”

That we renew and confirm the Resolutions of the 12th April last, “That the proposal of a *gradual* abolition is by no means a compliance with the general wishes of the people, so strongly declared in their numerous petitions to Parliament;” and “That we cannot but entertain the most distressing apprehensions of redoubled cruelties and ravages on the coast of Africa, during the interval in which the Slave trade shall thus be suffered to continue.”

That these opinions were not hastily formed, without examination, or adopted in consequence of any sudden impulse of enthusiastic zeal, or popular ferment; but were the result of much careful and patient enquiry; and that every thing we have since heard confirms us in our former sentiments and apprehensions.

That though we had earnestly desired the immediate abolition of this disgraceful traffic, yet we were disposed to acquiesce in the Resolutions which passed the House of Commons during the last Session, in the hope that they would speedily have received the sanction of every branch of the legislature. We observe, however, with much concern, the appearance of fresh and powerful opposition, in both Houses of Parliament: But we have that confidence in the goodness of our cause, which assures us that it must finally triumph over all opposition.

That in the mean time we think it expedient and seasonable to declare ourselves ready to concur, with all the friends of this great cause, in firm and constitutional measures (in case of any unforeseen occasion) for effecting the destruction of a traffic, which is a reproach to human nature, and a disgrace to our country, such as nothing less than an *immediate* abolition can effectually wipe away.

That it must give the highest satisfaction to every benevolent mind, to learn that permanent associations of great respectability are forming in so many of the neighboring towns. That the Committee be directed to correspond and act with all such societies for promoting the laudable purposes of their Association.

That we receive great satisfaction in the information which has now been read respecting the prosperous state of the settlement at Sierra Leone; and that our thanks are due to the directors of that company for their laudable and honorable exercise.

---

<sup>240</sup> From Doubleday, R. (1793, March 30). *Newcastle Courant*, p. 1.

That the thanks of this Society be given to William Wilberforce, Esq. for his continued exertions in this great cause; and to all the Members who have acted with him; particularly to those who have voted for an immediate abolition.

That these Resolutions be signed by the Chairman, and published in the Newcastle papers, the Star, the London Chronicle and the General Evening Post.

Signed,

ROBERT DOUBLEDAY, Chairman.

### **“In a flourishing state”<sup>241</sup> (1793)**

By authentic accounts from Sierra Leone, we learn that that settlement has now surmounted its difficulties, and is in a flourishing state. Of 1130 Nova Scotia blacks landed a year ago, 1032 remain after all their sickness, and are now seasoned: On the 1st of January there were none materially sick. They employed themselves partly in cultivating and clearing the lands allotted to them and partly in building their new town; which will be ready before the next rains. In order to obtain a communication with various parts, they have cut roads through the woods of 20 feet wide, amounting in all to 31 miles; made almost entirely by the axe. Their produce of cotton, with that from the Company's lands, will form a decent exportation next year. They have planted, besides Indian corn, rice, and canes. The Company's lands are cultivated entirely by free *Africans*, who offer themselves in abundance, work well, and were well pleased with twelve shillings a month. There is a Sunday's school for grown settlers, and others every day for children. Sunday is well observed, and public worship regularly attended.

The ship which brought this account, had on board ivory, gum, camwood, and wood for ship's knees [sic.], &c. of which there is great abundance.

### **“A fair prospect of success”<sup>242</sup> (1793)**

At the General Court of Proprietors of the SIERRA-LEONE COMPANY on the 28th of last month, the Chairman made a very full report on the subjects of the health of the colony, and of the progress hitherto made by them in cultivation, civilization and commerce. It appeared from this report, that on the 31st of Dec. when Mr. Clarkson, the Governor, left the colony, the inhabitants (including both officers and settlers) were in a good state of health, those who had been ill having pretty well recovered their strength and spirits; and by the Governor's account there was not at that time in the colony one person to be considered as dangerously ill. The houses of the settlers had been finished; they had received a part of their allotments of land; a course of industry was opened to them; and, being now seasoned to the climate, there was every prospect of their enjoying health to pursue it. The number of deaths at the colony was to be attributed more to the imprudence of individuals, and a want of

---

<sup>241</sup> From Thursday's and Friday's Mails. (1793, March 30). *Newcastle Courant*, p. 4.

<sup>242</sup> From SIERRA-LEONE. (1793, April 11). *Bath Chronicle*, p. 2.

necessary nourishment and accommodation, than to any particular insalubrity of the climate.

With respect to cultivation, it having been found that the lands on the Bullam shore (being the opposite side of the river to the settlement) furnished a soil better calculated for various purposes of planting, in particular that of the sugar-cane; that they were easily to be cleared, being chiefly covered with underwood only, abounding with fresh water, and the chiefs having property therein being willing to dispose of it, the Governor had caused a portion of land about a mile square to be procured of those chiefs, and Mr. Watt, the principal manager, had been employed in forming the same into a plantation, and had procured several of the native Gromettas to work with him as free laborers, at the rate of four bars each per month (being from 12s. to 14s.) he finding them with provision. They had made some progress in the planting of sugar-canec, and intended likewise to apportion some parts of those lands for cotton and grain, and had a fair prospect of the whole turning to good account. Another manager was about to establish a cotton plantation on the settlement side of the river, and it was expected that the settlers also would lose no time in setting about the cultivation of their own allotments as independent farmers. In September last a detachment from the laborers had cleared a piece of land under the direction of Mr. Aszelius (a very celebrated botanist), they had fenced it in, and prepared for the reception of seeds and plants. This garden is now in the neatest order; European plants, as well as some of Sierra-Leone, and other tropical climates, are sown it. [sic.]

In the object of civilization, it appeared too that the Company had a fair prospect of success, the natives of the surrounding districts being all upon the best terms with the colony, in the habits of constant intercourse, and universally desirous of sending their children amongst them for instruction in the duties of Religion, and the arts of civilized life.

In the way of trade, little had hitherto been effected, as well owing to the necessary engagements of the generality of the servants of the Company, in providing for the accommodation and wants of the colony, as to the ignorance and bad conduct of the person sent out as a commercial agent, in whose disposition, as well as capacity, the Directors had been disappointed. A Gentleman, however, was now sent out who was well versed in the trade of the country, and it was the determination of the Directors to use every rational means of prosecuting a regular plan of commerce in the neighborhood of the colony, and extending it gradually to the interior country.

### **“The mortality there was shocking”<sup>243</sup> (1793)**

The [British] House [of Commons] then resolved itself into a Committee, and Mr. Wilberforce moved for “Leave to bring in a Bill to prevent the subjects of this country from supplying with Slaves Foreign Countries.”

Mr. Cawthorne opposed the motion.

---

<sup>243</sup> From HOUSE OF COMMONS. (1793, June 1). *Newcastle Chronicle*, p. 4.

Mr. East was of the opinion, that the motion should be more explicit. He moved that the words "*and make indemnification to those carrying on that Trade*" should be added. He thought it extremely severe that no indemnity should be given to those concerned in the Trade, and who had acted under the sanction of repeated Acts of Parliament. He conceived that Gentlemen should extend their humanity to their fellow subjects at home, and not by one stroke ruin them forever. He pressed Mr. Wilberforce to know if he intended in the Bill to indemnify the persons to whom he had alluded.

Mr. Dent was convinced that the present measure was adopted at this late period of the Session, merely to keep the ferment alive, and to procure Petitions next Session for a total Abolition. This was the trick of the business, and he therefore cautioned Gentlemen to be watchful, and on their guard. Why, he asked, did Mr. Wilberforce and his Friends not look at home for objects deserving of relief, and not take a six months voyage where their interference was not required? He requested the House to contemplate the mischiefs that had arisen at St. Domingo, in consequence of this mischievous zeal for Reform, and to recollect the riots in Jamaica. He asked Mr. Pitt if the Revenue was in that state, that it was prepared to lose the islands, the Taxes arising from which formed so considerable a part of the Revenue. With respect to the cruelties said to be practiced on the Negroes, we may look at home, and see worse in the army, for it was usual to see Drummers flogging, to qualify them for doing their duty with a cat and nine tails. He cautioned Gentlemen how they encouraged the present rage for Reform. He next proceeded to exculpate Captain Kimber, whose actions, he said, were grossly misrepresented in the House, and recommended to Mr. Wilberforce to recollect the Commandment, "*And do unto all men as he wished to be done by.*"

Mr. Wilberforce said that he was struck with the force of the quotation, and would consider it accordingly; and thought that if it had made the same impression on the Hon. Member, that he would not negative the Motion. He expected that the less that could be said on the subject, the more would be said against the persons with whom it originated.

Mr. Cawthorne defended his friend Mr. Dent; for his own part he would act agreeable to what had been recommended to Mr. Wilberforce, and he would act towards the negroes as he would wish to see them act towards him. He would take them from a land of slavery and bring them to a land of liberty. *A loud laugh.* He said that Mr. Wilberforce should consider the fate of his project at Sierra Leone. The mortality there was shocking; there were but two people alive in the settlement, which was over-run with *Republican Beetles*, and which the curiosity of the Hon. Gentleman, he hoped would prevail on him to go and see. This intelligence, he asserted, he had from a person just returned, and who had been sent thither by Mr. Wilberforce.

Mr. Wilberforce declared, though such conversation was foreign to the subject, yet lest the Relatives of those who had gone out to Sierra Leone should be alarmed, he thought it his duty to state there was no foundation for the report. The settlers, as

was expected, had some difficulties to encounter, it was true; but at present the settlement was in a flourishing condition.

After a few words from Mr. Smith, in corroboration of what had been said by Mr. Wilberforce, and a short observation from Lord Sheffield, the House divided. Ayes, 51. Noes, 24. Majority for leave to bring in the Bill, 27.

### **“Disagreeable accounts”<sup>244</sup> (1793)**

The Orpheus brings disagreeable accounts of the settlements at Sierra Leone. There is no probability whatever of its ever answering the intentions of the gentlemen who set it on foot, but, on the contrary, will prove a burying-ground to almost every European adventurer, without in any shape benefiting the unhappy sons of Africa.

### **“Extremely friendly”<sup>245</sup> (1793)**

Wednesday the Sierra-Leone Company’s ship Amy arrived at Spithead with a cargo of African produce, consisting chiefly of camwood, ivory, gum, pepper, hides, and bees-wax. She also brings some passengers. The dispatches are dated the 14th of June, and mention that the rains had set in several weeks before, but that the colony continued to be in very good health. The colonists were all put in possession of small lots of land, and a new town, on a more regular and extended scale, was begun to be built. Between 200 and 300 Nova-Scotians were usually at work for the Company, and a large party of natives continued to work at the plantation begun by the Company on the opposite side of the river, where the soil proves extremely fruitful, and the experiments in sugar, cotton, &c. appeared to be very promising.

The native chiefs and people continued to be extremely friendly, and some of them, on the occasion of some vessels appearing which were mistaken for French privateers, came down to offer their assistance in protecting the colony.

The Company’s schools are regularly attended by 300 children, many of whom are natives.

### **“Go on and prosper!”<sup>246</sup> (1793)**

Having received some particulars respecting the settlement of *Sierra Leone* from unquestionable authority, we present them to our readers, with a conviction that they will afford the highest satisfaction to every one interested in the undertaking, as well as to all who are not averse to the discontinuing of the traffic in the human species.

The colony is now in the second year of its existence. So little reason is there to complain of the unwholesomeness of the country, even in the present state of

---

<sup>244</sup> From PORTSMOUTH. (1793, August 14). *Evening Mail* (London), p. 4.

<sup>245</sup> From Friday and Saturday’s Posts. (1793, August 22). *Bath Chronicle*, p. 1.

<sup>246</sup> From Having received. (1793, October 28). *Gloucester Journal*, p. 3. Includes the continuation in the issue of Nov. 4, p. 3., and the conclusion in the issue of Nov. 11, p. 4.

cultivation, that all the deaths of whites and blacks from June 1792 to June 1793 have been only seventeen; and it is not to be doubted, that as its culture extends, the salubrity of the climate will be increased. *Free Town*, the new built residence of the settlers, is abundantly ventilated and refreshed, both by land and sea breezes. A great deal of ground has already been cleared, and part of it is planted with English wheat, which bore a promising appearance when the last advices came away. Maize, potatoes, and other excellent vegetables were growing with every prospect of success. The bread fruit trees, of which his Majesty has been pleased to present the Company with some plants, and which are now on the way to Africa, will in all probability succeed equally well.

Several places of public religious worship have been erected; one is of the church of England, two of the congregation of Wellesley, two of the Baptists. Every person is at liberty to adopt the mode of devotion most agreeable to his conscience.

Six of the public preachers are Blacks. They are men of exemplary lives, and are possessed of no common share of eloquence. It is intended to prevail on them as soon as it is convenient, and their places in the colony can be properly supplied by others, to remove themselves, as missionaries, into some of the villages of the natives, who have manifested a desire to be instructed in the manners and religion of the settlers. Schools are opened both for the children and adults of the colony; of the former, not less than three hundred and twenty are receiving education; and so generally is useful knowledge diffusing itself, that in the next twelve months, 'tis most likely that every colonist will be enabled to write and read.

Store-houses, piers, wharfs, &c. have been constructed. A Botanic garden is established, under the direction of Professor Aszelius of Upsal, a disciple of the great Linnaeus. He finds that almost half the vegetables of the country are new to Botanists, and that numbers of them are useful in medicine and in dyeing. Among the trees, it is the *Teak* wood, the timber of which is of the highest value in ship-building, because iron will not corrode it, nor will the worm touch it. Some of the Sierra Leone trees grow to an astonishing size; one of them measured 67 feet in girth. The Company have already built one vessel of twenty tons burthen; and called her the Alpha, with the Teak wood. Iron is to be met with in immense quantities; there are mountains of ore several miles in extent. Stone and marble are also in plenty.

The reputation of the colony has spread itself far up the country, and has excited the curiosity of many distant chiefs, so as to induce them to visit Free-town. The impression which the sight of the town in general, the piers, the wharfs, the public buildings, the schools, the gardens, the labor, and manners of the settlers, made upon them, may in some measure be judged of, by their desiring permission to leave their children to be educated in the schools of the Company. One Chief lately came down in his canoe, and brought his five children to one of the seminaries. He promised to send a monthly present of rice, and offered the Company all the advantages of trade which his territory afforded, and any quantity of land, and other encouragement, in case they should wish to make a settlement there.

Every colonist has a garden, and is now in possession of pigs and poultry. Though the settlement has so lately commenced, yet the ship *Ami* [sic.] lately arrived



in the port of London, from Sierra Leone, with a cargo valued upwards of three thousand pounds, consisting of cam-wood, ivory, Malagretta pepper, ox hides, gums, &c.; and the Sierra Leone packet is shortly expected home with an equally valuable lading.

The influence of the Company in the abolishment of the Slave Trade, is already so powerful, that the great slave factory at Ben's Island, which has subsisted fourscore years, and which has under it many other factories on the coast, and in the interior part of the country, is now likely to abandon its trade in slaves, and to be applied by the proprietors to other purposes. The number of ships employed in the Slave Trade, is daily diminishing, and an abhorrence of it is spreading among the Chiefs.

Opposite to Sierra Leone is the Bullam Coast. Its soil has been found so extremely fertile, that Mr. Watt, one of the Company's officers, a man of great abilities, and of an enterprising and persevering mind, has been induced to set about cultivating a spot there, one square mile in extent. He has resided upon it ten months, and has so far accomplished his purpose, that he has sugar canes, and other useful vegetables, in a thriving condition. He has sent for cotton seeds and coffee berries, as well adapted to the soil. Though he is the only white on that coast, he has met with every civility from the natives, and has found no difficulty in hiring laborers among them, of whose working and behavior he keeps a daily account, which he transmits to the Council once in every month. The wages given to all the laborers employed under the Company, are twelve shillings per month, and their rice. They have hitherto been paid in goods; but the Company have lately sent out a coinage, in order to try if any new advantages will accrue from making the payments in money. The coinage is silver and copper. The former in pieces called dollars, in value about four shillings and ten-pence; of copper in pieces called cents, each of the value of one hundredth part of a dollar.

There are smaller silver pieces, worth 50 or 20 cents. The device of the coin is on one side a Lion, in allusion to the name of the settlement, and the reverse is the hand of a white man and a black man in conjunction.

The police of Free-town is extremely simple; a code of laws has been sent from England. Every family has a house; and the houses are divided into tens; every ten families once a year choose a superior out of themselves, who is called a *Tything-man*; he is the Magistrate for the settling of all disputes, and the correcting of petty offenders within his tything. If a question arises of too great importance or difficulty to be decided by the single Tything-man, he calls in nine other Tything-men; in case they cannot satisfactorily terminate the affair, it is referred to the Governor and Council with a black jury, and their decision is final. Such, however, is the authority and management of the Tything-men, that very few cases have lately come before the Supreme Judicatory.

Of the friendship of the neighboring natives to the settlement, numerous instances may be adduced, but the following single anecdote is sufficient evidence: Two vessels, suspected to be French privateers, appeared off the coast. The settlers, to the number of five hundred, got under arms. As soon as the approach of the enemy

to the colony was [illegible] amongst the natives, seven chiefs, with some thousands of followers, came down to render it assistance.

From this sketch, somewhat may be learned of the condition of this infant colony, as it stood on the 30th of June last; and, when we reflect that the objects of the establishment are the propagation of order, of cultivation, of useful arts, and of a pure system of faith and morals through the vast regions of Africa; the extending of the commerce, and the increasing of the wealthy of the British Empire, and the honor of the British name, and lastly, the gradual, peaceable, and effectual abolition of a traffic offensive in its nature to God and man, we cannot but say to the conductors of the enterprise, *“Go on and prosper!”*

### **“The death of Prince Naimbana”<sup>247</sup> (1793)**

Last week arrived from Sierra-Leone, the *Felicity*, Capt. Wenham, with a cargo of wax, camwood, &c. The dispatches by this ship contain very flattering accounts of the health of the colony, and of its progress in commercial pursuits; but we are very sorry to add that they bring also an account of the death of Prince Naimbana, who died on the evening of his arrival at Sierra Leone, of a putrid fever, contracted on shipboard, in the course of his passage from this country. This amiable young man had been for some short time in England under the protection of the Sierra Leone Company. He possessed a most excellent understanding, a disposition earnest in the pursuit of knowledge, and great facility in receiving instruction. His mental acquirements, during his stay in this country were the subject of much admiration, and his easy address and suavity of manners endeared him to all those to whom he was introduced. He had imbibed, and he professed to the last moment of his existence, the strongest attachment to the principles of the Protestant Faith, and by his will (made in the beginning of his illness) he earnestly requested his relations to set their faces against the Slave Trade, and to befriend the Sierra Leone Company to the utmost of their powers.

### **“Well inured to the climate”<sup>248</sup> (1794)**

Information was on Monday received at the Sierra Leone House, of the progress of the Colony at Sierra Leone, the 20th of December last.

The natives continue perfectly friendly; the neighboring Chiefs showed every desire of being connected with the Company; some had sent their children to be educated at Sierra Leone, and many others proposed to send them in the ensuing dry season. The rainy season had passed over without any considerable mortality; and the Nova Scotia Colonists had maintained their health, and appeared to have become well inured to the climate.

---

<sup>247</sup> From LONDON. (1793, December 30). *Gloucester Journal*, p. 3.

<sup>248</sup> From The Sierra Leone Settlement. (1794, February 20). *Derby Mercury*, p. 1.

The trade was become much more brisk; the cultivation was advancing both in the colony and parts adjacent – and there appears to have been no difficulty in procuring the native laborers.

The rice, cotton, and other articles in the Company's plantations, thrive exceedingly, the sugar-cane excepted, which had been hurt by the white ants. The schools of the Company contained between 300 and 400 children, chiefly Nova Scotians, who appeared to have made fully as much improvement as is common in European Schools under similar circumstances. The colony had gradually improved in order, and appeared to be advancing in every respect.

An unfortunate fire, however, had accidentally happened on board the Company's Storeship, York, by which she was entirely consumed, together with all such articles as happened to be then on board, of which the value, if estimated at prime cost, might be about 8000l. or 9000l., several thousand pounds thereof being African produce, which was on the point of being sent to England. The whole loss, including the value of the ship, and the estimated profit and charges to be added to the prime cost of the goods, is computed by the Governor and Council, on a rough calculation, to amount to between 14,000l. and 15,000l.

It does not appear that the colony would be reduced to any material distress through this unfortunate accident, ad some months' provisions remained in the colony; and all the Company's ships in Africa had been recently loaded with goods, and sent down the coast: the loss to the company is therefore the only consideration of importance.

A former account mentioned the death of the son of the late King Naimbanna, two days after his return from England to Sierra Leone. A hasty and superstitious suspicion respecting the cause of his death occasioned a Palaver, or Council of the Natives, which terminated in the most honorable and satisfactory manner, the Chiefs renewing their assurances of wishing to continue in friendship with the Company.

### **“An intention of murdering the Government and Council”<sup>249</sup> (1794)**

On Friday the 20th of June last, the free blacks of the colony of Sierra Leone formed themselves into a body, with an intention of murdering the Governor and Council, and taking possession of the settlement, with stores and property on it; fortunately they had no guns or ammunition, by which they were prevented from carrying their intentions to any effect; the riot lasted from the Friday until the Tuesday following, during which time the whole of the white people were under arms in the Government house, round which cannon were placed.

On Tuesday they became more quiet, on account of a proclamation from the Governor, assuring them that whoever chose to return to Halifax, might dispose of what property they had, and that a vessel should be ready to convey them in a month; but all who chose to stay should have no further cause of complaint, as every thing should be altered to their wishes.

---

<sup>249</sup> From Wednesday's Post. (1794, October 18). *Ipswich Journal*, p. 4.

Their complaint was, that when they were brought from Halifax they were promised that every thing should be made as comfortable to them as possible, and that all articles brought out of England should only have an advance of 10 per cent., instead of which there was an advance of 200, and upon some articles 300 per cent. The blacks were therefore determined to put an end to such extortion in future, by doing themselves justice.

### **“They destroyed Sierra Leone”<sup>250</sup> (1795)**

Intelligence was received this morning, from Africa, that a French man of war of 64 guns, two frigates and two brigs, arrived on the coast on the 18th of December; they destroyed *Sierra Leone*, *Bance Island*, and from thence going down the coast burnt and plundered every ship they met with.

### **“His vengeance should be confined to the British”<sup>251</sup> (1795)**

Capt. Telford, of the *Harpy*, arrived at Kinsale, in the *Flora*, an American schooner, from *Sierra Leone*, confirms the account already given. He says, that when the French squadron destroyed the settlement of Sierra Leone, the settlers, to the amount of about 1300, were left without provisions or necessaries, except such as could be obtained from natives.

The following particulars respecting the above Settlement may be depended on. On the 28th of September, a French squadron, composed of the *Experiment* of 50 guns, and 500 men; *Vigilance*, of 24 guns, and 300 men; *La Felicite*, of 20 guns, and 280 men; *La Pervie*, of 18 guns, and 220 men, and *La Mutine*, of 12 guns, and 180 men, approached the town, under English colors, and, unmolested, drew up before it in such a manner as to command every street and alley in it, when they hoisted their own colors, and commenced a heavy cannonade. The inhabitants, unable to resist so formidable a force, struck their flag; but two of the frigates, regardless of this submission, continued their fire for nearly two hours after, raking every street with grape-shot. The French then landed, and began to plunder such houses as remained standing, and which the owners had abandoned, and were preparing to involve the whole town in one blaze, when several of the free American blacks returned into it, to solicit the preservation of their dwellings. The French Commander granted their request, observing that his vengeance should be confined to the British settlers, and then ordered the church, the Company’s warehouses, and the houses of every English person to be set on fire.

After this, one of the frigates proceeded up the River to the Island of Banca, which they attacked for two days without success, the garrison of the fort making a resolute defense; on the third day, however, a second frigate arrived to the assistance of the first, when the inhabitants having withdrawn the whole of their property from the town, the garrison of the fort retired.

---

<sup>250</sup> From LONDON. (1795, February 7). *Jackson’s Oxford Journal*, p. 2.

<sup>251</sup> From Yesterday at noon. (1795, February 9). *The Times* (London), p. 2.

The French continued at Sierra Leone till the 23d of October, during which time they wooded and watered, but never proceeded into the country, nor injured the plantations. They took with them or destroyed 11 vessels belonging to the Company, 10 of them from London, and proceeded down the coast, with intent to serve in like manner all the British, Dutch, and Portuguese settlements. The Isle of Bourbon was their place of destination.

On their departure, the settlers, who had lived in the woods, under tents, &c. returned to the town.

We are happy to add, that during this attack, on our part only two men were killed, and five wounded.

### **“The distresses of the Colony”<sup>252</sup> (1795)**

The distresses of the Colony at Sierra Leone were extremely great on the departure of those who last came from thence; the season being at that time remarkably sickly, and all the medicines having been carried away or destroyed. Of the sailors who were landed, about eighty perished for want of proper accommodation, as well as medicine and sustenance. The Nova-Scotia settlers, however, suffered little, though many of the Company’s servants suffered much in their health from ill treatment and exposure; but only two or three of them have died.

The Governor and Council mention that their distresses had much abated a few weeks after the departure of the French squadron; that a vessel also had arrived from England, which had furnished them with many necessary articles, and that a sufficient supply of rice was then in the Colony: That the health of the Company’s servants was improving, and that at the time when they were stripped of their arms and ammunition, and every other necessary, no want of order had prevailed. They were in full expectation, that if the Company should send them out the proper supplies, the Colony would recover [from] this misfortune. The Nova-Scotia settlers being all on the land, which proved more fruitful than expected, they were able to support themselves, and they had a quantity of stock on their farms.

### **“Amounts to 40,000l.”<sup>253</sup> (1795)**

The Sierra Leone Company have received advice, that the damage sustained by the attack of the French on that settlement amounts to 40,000l. besides the buildings destroyed.

### **“Materially recovered”<sup>254</sup> (1795)**

On Monday last dispatches were received from Sierra Leone, dated the 14th of March, by which it appears that the colony had materially recovered from the effects

---

<sup>252</sup> From Earl Howe. (1795, February 14). *Jackson’s Oxford Journal*, p. 1.

<sup>253</sup> From Advice is received. (1795, March 2). *Caledonian Mercury*, p. 3.

<sup>254</sup> From LONDON. (1795, June 6). *Newcastle Courant*, p. 2.

of the late depredations of the French, although no supplies had since that time arrived from England. A cargo of necessaries had, however, been purchased from an American ship which called there. Great and successful exertions had been made by the settlers in opening and cultivating new farms, as well as in pushing their trade with the neighboring parts. A Delegate from the Society of the Friends of the Blacks in Rhode Island (a black man of intelligence) had arrived at Freetown, with whom it was agreed, that about 10 or 12 free black families from Rhode Island should be permitted to emigrate to Sierra Leone, proper testimonials of their character being given. The Company's ship the *Amy* was met at sea within two days' sail of Sierra Leone, which carried out a supply of necessaries and several passengers, among whom was Mr. Dawes, who is returned to the Colony as Governor.

### **“Sierra Leone continues to flourish”<sup>255</sup> (1795)**

The Colony of Sierra Leone continues to flourish notwithstanding the numerous accidents which have happened to it. Advices were received on Tuesday last, which convey to the Directors the pleasing assurance of its security as low as their date (the middle of April), and every hope of its future success. The mortality so fatal to the white people in the Company's service has been entirely overcome; no death had happened, nor were there any symptoms in the colony which could give the medical men reason to apprehend any danger.

### **“English vessels laden with slaves”<sup>256</sup> (1795)**

By accounts from Rochefort dated the 25th ult. We learn, that the Experiment frigate arrived in that harbor the preceding evening from a long cruise on the coast of Africa. She had in company with her six rich prizes which made a narrow escape from the English cruisers off the coast of France. The Experiment belonged to the small squadron that demolished the settlement of Sierra Leone, since when they attacked 71 English vessels laden with slaves, all of whom, in number *Seventeen Thousand!* they liberated, and destroyed the vessels. The accounts add that the mischief done must be an irreparable loss to the dealers in human flesh!

### **John McGregor on black immigration to Nova Scotia<sup>257</sup> (1832)**

**This article presents the experience and opinion of one writer, but a writer who served as a politician<sup>258</sup> in Prince Edward Island and Britain, published the article**

---

<sup>255</sup> From Friday's Post. (1795, July 25). *Ipswich Journal*, p. 2.

<sup>256</sup> From Saturday & Sunday's Mails. (1795, August 13). *Derby Mercury*, p. 2.

<sup>257</sup> From MacGregor, J. (1832, December 6). EMANCIPATION of the NEGROES. *The London Morning Post*, p. 1. The following passage is an extract from Volume 2, Chapter XIV of *British North America*, by John MacGregor (1797 – 1857).

<sup>258</sup> High Sheriff of Prince Edward Island from 1822-1823 and MHA for Georgetown from 1824 – 1826. After returning to England in the 1830s, he worked for the Foreign Office and served on the Privy Council Committee for Trade. He also was elected Member of Parliament for Glasgow, and served in

**in a book on British North America, had his work “read before the select Committee on Slavery,” and was reprinted without comment in prominent newspapers, including the *London Morning Post*.**

The negro slaves who were brought to the province from the United States at different times were, whenever they chose, liberated, and after the American Revolution some hundreds of freed negroes emigrated to Nova Scotia. The mistaken philanthropy of the Sierra Leone Company caused the removal of 1,196 of these people, in 1792, at extraordinary expense, in sixteen vessels, to Africa; 65 of them died during the voyage, and many of the remainder became victims to a climate not congenial to them, although it was naturally so to their ancestors; the rest became turbulent and ungovernable.

Some time after three ships with the rebellious Maroons of Jamaica arrived at Halifax. Great but unsuccessful efforts were made to settle these people in the province. For some time their labour at the fortifications and their obedience to authority, while well fed and clothed, occasioned them to be considered rather an acquisition than a burthen<sup>259</sup> to the Colony. They were afterwards enrolled as a militia corps, and in a warm climate would have made good soldiers, as they were passionately fond of arms.

It was also attempted to convert them to religion, in which, however, there does not appear to have been the least progress made; a plurality of wives, or rather women, and the African burial ceremonies, they declared they would never abandon; and in short they only listened to the ministers of religion with contumely<sup>260</sup>.

Two or three hard winters, however, produced sulky discontent among them, and they evinced a determined reluctance to work for themselves. Although they were fed and housed without working, and allowed to indulge themselves in their accustomed sensuality and card-playing, the spring only brought about fresh murmurs and complaints, alleging that the various engagements intimated to them on leaving Jamaica were disregarded; and after costing the island of Jamaica 47,000*l.*, and the British Government 10,000*l.* annually for some years, they were, in 1800<sup>261</sup>, also removed to Sierra Leone.

The folly of making Nova Scotia a rendezvous for freed negroes was not yet, however, completed. While a British squadron was blockading the American coast in 1815 some hundreds of negroes fled from their masters, and were received by the English Admiral, who sent them to Halifax. These people became idle vagrants rather than stationary settlers. Although lands were laid out for them, and tools, implements of husbandry, and rations were provided for them during winter by the

---

that role from 1847 to 1856, when he fled to France in the wake of a scandal involving the Royal British Bank, of which he was chairman.

<sup>259</sup> An old spelling of ‘burden’.

<sup>260</sup> Contempt and dismissal.

<sup>261</sup> The newspaper reads 1830, which I have replaced with the ‘1800’ printed in *British North America*. The transportation took place by 1802 at the latest.. “The next resolution would be for a sum of 5,903*l.* to provide for the expence of carrying a certain number of Maroons from Halifax, to the settlement of the Sierra Leone Company.” IMPERIAL PARLIAMENT. (1802, June 15). *London Morning Post*, p. 2.

Government, they became sulky and discontented. They thought that to be free meant to be idle; in fact, to live without working.

A few of them stole off to the United States; 90 of them were removed at the public expense to Trinidad; and, as if nothing else were wanting to crown the folly of this most absurd philanthropy, one million [dollars] (I believe the sum is correct, but I speak from memory) was granted to the United States as a compensation for these negroes. The Americans themselves sneer at this ultra-stretch of English generosity, and it has actually gone a great way to strengthen the common impression among them that there is nothing too unreasonable to ask of or with which to gull honest, credulous, kind-hearted John Bull<sup>262</sup>.

Slavery does not exist in Nova Scotia<sup>263</sup>, and the number of freed negroes may be equal to 3,000. Of these part came originally from the West India Islands, others are the residue of those from the United States, and the remainder were born in the province. A settlement was laid out for them at Hammond Plains, and another at Prescot, both in the neighbourhood of Halifax, and every facility afforded them by the Provincial Government, yet they are still in a state of miserable poverty,, while Europeans who have settled on woodlands under circumstances scarcely so favourable thrive, with few exceptions.

There are at Halifax, and in most of the country settlements, several negroes who live as domestic servants among the inhabitants, and in this condition they are generally industrious, obedient, and well provided with food and clothing. We find them also on board the ships as sailors, but more frequently as stewards and cooks. There are not probably ten exceptions to be found among all the negroes in the province who are their own masters that are not indolent, improvident, miserable, and ragged. They gather wild fruits in the summer, which they sell in the Halifax market, and in the winter they bring in brooms, which they dispose of for rum and what food they can get. They seem inclined indeed to do anything, and even meet starvation in the face, rather than cultivate the ground with patient industry. They think the return for their labour too slow, too distant to wait for, until the seed they sow produce a crop.

Whether their wretchedness may be attributed to servitude and degradation having extinguished in them the spirit that endures present difficulties and privations in order to attain future advantages, or to the consciousness that they are an unimportant and distinct race, or more properly to the fact that they find it more congenial to their habits to serve others, either as domestic servants or labourers, by which they make sure of the wants of the day, certain it is that they prefer servitude, and always live more comfortable in that condition than they do when working on their own account.

Thirteen years after they were settled at Hammond Plains I had the opportunity of knowing their condition. It was wretched in the extreme; the grown up

---

<sup>262</sup> A symbol of Britain, similar to “Uncle Sam’ for the U.S.

<sup>263</sup> It had existed in the past. See the section of this collection titled ‘Slavery and Law’ for examples. For a published overview, see Whitfield, H. A. (2010). Slavery in English Nova Scotia, 1750 – 1810. *Journal of the Royal Nova Scotia Historical Society*, 13, 23 – 40.



and the aged in rags, and the children nearly naked. Their habitations, destitute of furniture or common necessaries, were also unfit to defend them from the inclemency of winter.

To a man unacquainted with our possessions abroad it might be difficult to account for the poverty-stricken and unhappy condition of these unfortunate beings. To me the causes of their penury and misery were distinct and evident. The surrounding settlements, though the lands of which were not originally of better, and in some cases not of equally good, quality to that occupied by the negroes, were cultivated by emigrants, who arrived in the Colony from time to time with nothing but their industry to acquire the means of living. They received no public assistance, and they had all to pay some pounds before they secured titles to the lands on which they settled; yet I found these people, with very few exceptions, in comfortable circumstances, with their houses commodious and conveniently furnished, their farms well cultivated, themselves and their tables well supplied with excellent food, their moral character correct, their attention to public worship regular, and the instruction of their offspring attended to.

What, then, has secured to them all these blessings? Neither more nor less than persevering industry and good management. Then to what are we to attribute the penury and the misery of the freed negroes of Nova Scotia, to whom the Legislature have yearly afforded assistance, and to whom the blessings of religion and the benefits of education<sup>264</sup> have been as fully extended as to the other inhabitants of the province? To no cause but the absence of steady, well-directed industry and judicious management<sup>265</sup>.

We then come to inquire, how does it arise that the free negroes are an indolent, improvident class of men? To account for this fact we have only to reflect that man, in order to husband and manage the fruits of his labour, as well as to regulate his moral conduct, must be trained from infancy by example and education so as to render such a course of life natural and desirable to him, and by which means alone he will be prepared in due season to act prudently or wisely on his own responsibility.

The previous life of the negro is so very different from that of Europeans that, even when in Africa in his freest state, it would require the operations of useful and liberal instruction more than one generation to adapt him for acting according to his own free will with the steady industry, good management, and discretion necessary

---

<sup>264</sup> According to historian S. Morton, Halifax restricted the access of black citizens to education, at times forbidding schooling beyond the age of seven, and preventing black Nova Scotian women from receiving training that would qualify them to teach. Nineteenth century black Nova Scotian communities found a number of ways around these policies, such as sending their children to Boston to be educated, or creating their own adult night schools. For more details, see Morton, S. (1993). *Separate Spheres in a Separate World: African-Nova Scotian Women in late-19th-Century Halifax County. Acadiensis, XXII(2)*, 61-83.

<sup>265</sup> For another perspective, see Whitfield, H. A. (2002). "We Can Do As We Like Here": An Analysis of Self Assertion and Agency among Black Refugees in Halifax, Nova Scotia, 1813 – 1821. *Acadiensis, XXXI(1)*, 29-49.

to render his condition equally happy with that of the husbandmen and artisans of Europe, or of their descendants settled in America.

It is far from my wish, in making these observations, to inculcate the revolting doctrine that slavery is the most happy condition in which negroes can live; but all my observations in our Colonies have led me to conclude, unbiased by prejudice or by interest, that the attempts hitherto made to render the freed negroes more happy or more virtuous than they were as slaves have been unsuccessful, and that, unless the West India negroes be gradually prepared for personal liberty, they will, on obtaining their freedom, become objects of much greater commiseration than they are now in a state of bondage, and the history and present condition of the freed negroes of Nova Scotia fully substantiate these assertions.

## Appendix: Jamaican Maroons and Nova Scotia

### Overview and background<sup>266</sup> (1927)

**Note: This article was written by a 20th-century author sympathetic to the British, and at times makes use of harmful language and stereotypes common in the 1920s.**

When Jamaica was conquered in 1655, the Spaniards possessed fifteen hundred African slaves. These, when their masters surrendered, retreated to the mountains, from which they made frequent descents to rob and otherwise molest the English planters of the island. To these were given the name of Maroons. For a number of years they harassed the island and robbed the plantations, costing the government two hundred and forty thousand pounds in the endeavor to suppress their raids and punish the perpetrators. Their attacks became so frequent and destructive, that the troops were called out to capture them. The Maroons, familiar with the recesses of the mountains, retired into a cavern, inaccessible to the soldiers, and there defied their pursuers. In December, 1795, forty chasseurs arrived from Havana at Montego Bay, with about a hundred Spanish dogs, or bloodhounds.

Whether the planters actually intended to make use of them in capturing the Maroons, is not certain: but such tales of the ferocity of these animals were carried to the hunted free-booters, that fearing the dogs might be let loose upon them, they determined to surrender<sup>267</sup>. When they were once fairly captured, the government decided to remove them all from Jamaica. Accordingly in June, 1796, three transports, the *Dover*, the *Mary*, and the *Anne*, having on board six hundred<sup>268</sup> Maroons, sailed for Halifax, Nova Scotia. They arrived at that port on 22nd or 23rd July, after a voyage of six weeks from the West Indies. They were well provisioned and had abundant clothing. An allowance of twenty-five thousand pounds was given by the government of Jamaica for the purpose of settling the negroes in Nova Scotia.

The Duke of Kent, who was commander-in-chief at Halifax at the time of their arrival, was greatly interested in them, and went on board the transports to inspect the fierce bandits who had caused so much terror and inflicted so much loss in the island of Jamaica. The Maroons received him, all dressed in neat uniforms, with a guard of honor and martial music. He found them a much finer class of men than the ordinary negroes. They saluted him with much respect, and in every way tried to show their appreciation of his visit. They addressed him as "Massa Prince" and "Massa King's Son," evidently understanding the honor due to royalty. Their fine appearance and evidence of great strength, pleased the Duke so much, that he at once offered them work on the new fortifications then being erected on Citadel Hill.

---

<sup>266</sup> From History of the Township of Preston. (1927, December 15). *Evening Mail* (Halifax), p. 2. Includes the continuations on December 22 and 29.

<sup>267</sup> See extracts from R. C. Dallas' *History of Nova Scotia*, Vol. III, pp. 155-157. Also Haliburton's *Historical and Statistical Account of Nova Scotia*, Vol. II, pp. 282-291. [Note in the original.]

<sup>268</sup> Murdoch says the number was 500, Haliburton says "about 600". [Note in the original.]

They immediately declared themselves not only willing to labor for the King, but also to give their services without payment. Prince Edward gladly accepted their work, but insisted on their receiving compensation, agreeing to give them ninepence a day, besides provisions, lodging, and clothing. Sir John Wentworth, in a letter<sup>269</sup> dated 25th July, 1796, informed the Duke of Portland of the arrival of the Maroons with their superintendents, Messrs. W. D. Quarrell and Alexander Ochterloney<sup>270</sup>. These gentlemen were appointed by Lord Balcarras, principal commissary and deputy for the Maroons, and the money appropriated by the government of Jamaica for the support of these negroes, was entrusted to them for expenditure.

The whole body was soon quartered in temporary homes. They set to work with right good will on the fortifications then in progress. The new lines of the Citadel were built with rapidity, and the Maroon Bastion remains to this day [1927] as a monument of their industry and skill.

The Duke of Portland in replying to the governor, issued instructions to settle them permanently in the country, if it could be done without injury to the colony. The Maroons were first quartered two miles from Halifax; and several estates in Preston, about five miles from the town, were purchased for their settlement. The cost of these lands and the buildings required, was estimated at three thousand pounds sterling. The title was vested in the government of Jamaica. Sir John Wentworth suggested the escheat of another large tract of land – 16,000 or 18,000 acres – about four miles further in the country, in order to grant it for the use of the Maroons. He asked for an annual grant of two hundred and forty pounds, to be applied in providing religious instruction and a school for their benefit. He said it would reclaim them to the Church of England, and disseminate Christian piety, morality and loyalty among them.

He sent an order to England for many things they required, among which were “forty gross of coat, and sixty gross of vest; white metal muttons, strong; device – an alligator holding wheat ears and an olive branch; inscription – Jamaica to the Maroons, 1796.” According to Sir John, these people were healthy, peaceable, orderly and inoffensive, and highly delighted with the country. “About fifty of them,” he says, “slept in my outhouse on the farm, where I am often without a sentry or even locking a door or window.” He writes that he expects them to have comfortably settled in Preston in the autumn, and that he is satisfied that they will be healthy and prosper in this climate, as they will have plenty of food, raiment and fuel.

By the month of October, they had removed to the locality provided, and were lodged in the huts or small houses which had been built for them.

Benjamin Gerrish Gray was appointed chaplain and teacher of the Maroons in the fall of 1796. Sir Jon Wentworth wrote on 20th September, 1796, that Mr. Gray was to be ordained on the following Sunday by the Bishop of Nova Scotia; he had received a good education in England, and was amiable, discreet and patient. “The shell of a large house (afterwards known as Maroon Hall), nearly central in the settlement, is ordered to be made convenient for a chapel, and the second Sunday in October I shall open the church by attending divine service therein.”

---

<sup>269</sup> A number of Wentworth's letters are transcribed below.

<sup>270</sup> Often spelled “Ouchterlong” in 18th-century records.

Sir John at first thought very highly of the Maroons, and in the letter just quoted he says, that in conversing with the best informed and most sensible among them, he could not discern any malice or revenge in their sentiments, but rather they regretted their war with the people of Jamaica and felt that they were only attending to self-preservation in acting as they did. "They express to me," he says, "no other anxiety but their fears of being removed. Nothing would create such distress among them, as to carry them to Sierra Leone, nor could they be prevailed upon by any persuasions to return to Jamaica." In the same letter, written on 20th September, he says, "the Maroons are all settled in comfortable, good houses; they are remarkably clean in their persons, houses, clothing and utensils, and are very healthy." Provisions were weekly served to them. They were expert in cutting wood, and in providing the winter's fuel. Proper clothing was then being prepared for them.

At the time of their settlement Sir John instituted a small court to be held by the two commissaries, to try small offences, at which should always be present three Maroon captains.

The Assembly of Jamaica expended forty-one thousand pounds in transporting and settling the Maroons in Preston. The winter of 1796-97 was very severe. Heavy snow-falls blockaded the roads and almost filled the woods where the Maroons had their houses. Accustomed always to a genial climate, the cold and privation told terribly upon the colony. The months of the following spring were colder and more backward than any since the settlement of Halifax. The depressing weather made the already discontented Maroons more so, and they clamored to be removed to a warmer country. They much desired to be sent as soldiers to the Cape of Good Hope and to India, and to be allowed to take their wives and children with them. "Give us," they said, "arms and ammunition, and put us on the shore there, and we will find room for ourselves." That is, as Sir John Wentworth said, they would murder and plunder all the inhabitants, if they could only live in the woods all the year round.

When the summer came with returning warmth and comfort, they grew more reasonable and contented. About this time an alarm was caused in Halifax by the approach of a French squadron under command of Admiral Richery. The Maroons were enrolled in the militia. Many of them obtained commissions and were very proud of their rank. Among them Colonels Montagu and Johnson, Majors Smith and Bailey, were long remembered for their love of dress and arrogant bearing. Several others were ranked as captains and lieutenants; and all were equally vain, and ambitious to be regarded as great men. Many of them were tall and finely made, with intelligent features and expressive eyes; very different from the ordinary Africans with whose appearance we are familiar. Polygamy was practiced among them. Major Smith was the happy possessor of four wives. Three of them presented him with sons on the same day<sup>271</sup>. The fourth was the best looking and his favorite. At a ball given at Maroon Hall, to which the Black officers were invited, Major Smith appeared with his most admired wife dressed in fantastic attire. Both were the source of great amusement to the other guests.

---

<sup>271</sup> In the *History of Our Village, The Provincial*, vol. I, Mrs. Lawson stated that the three children were born in the same month. [Note in the original.]

When in the spring of 1799, Captain Solomon, father of the late George Solomon, Esq., of Lunenburg, daily mounted guard to keep in check the insubordinate Maroons, Montague and Smith always appeared in blue and scarlet uniforms with high cocked-hats and gold lace, and in every way endeavored to personate the appearance and authority of the British office.

The chaplain and schoolmaster who were appointed to look after their religious training and secular education, found their duties neither easy nor successful. Their salaries amounted to two hundred and fifty-three pounds sterling per annum, besides a glebe-house and separate houses on the estate.

The Maroons were very ignorant of the English language, and neither understood nor listened to a sermon; and in spite of their Christian instruction, they refused to abandon their habits of polygamy.

The winter of 1797-98 was a repetition of the previous one, bitterly cold with heavy snow-drifts. Their firewood was consumed, their potatoes frozen, and their ranks thinned by consequent illness and death. When spring came, disheartened by the cold and hunger of the past winter, they refused to work and gave all the trouble they could to those in charge of them. The pleasure that had been felt at the establishment of so fine a body of men in the township, gave way to fear that it might prove a calamity. Some of the more refractory ones were removed to the vicinity of Bedford Basin, and the overseers in Preston were notified to withhold provisions from those who refused to work. This order brought them to submission, and in June, one hundred and eight men were again at the labor appointed for them.

The cost of providing for the Maroons had been so great, that Sir John Wentworth had applied to the Governor of Jamaica to remit additional funds for their maintenance until they could support themselves. This led to a disagreeable contest between the governor of Nova Scotia, the Assembly of Jamaica, and the ministry in England. The Duke of Portland, secretary for the colonies, supported Sir John Wentworth in his demand, and declared that the island of Jamaica was bound to submit to the claim and repay the expenses incurred in Nova Scotia. The legislature of Jamaica would not yield to this decision, and the altercations between the two colonies led to a misunderstanding between Sir John Wentworth and Colonel Quarrell. The governor accused the latter of fostering insubordination among the Maroons and endeavoring to weaken his authority over them. The result of the difficulty was that Colonel Quarrell resigned his commissary-ship and returned to Jamaica, where a remuneration was voted to him for his services to the island<sup>272</sup>. Mr. Ochterlony was left in charge; but Sir John having stated that he also fomented discord and discontent among the Maroons, he was removed in 1797, and Captain Alexander Howe of the Royal Nova Scotia Regiment was appointed to take charge.

Philophilus Chamberlain must now appear on the scene. [...] The township of Preston had been laid out by him, and [...] he had given it the name by which it was thenceforth to be known. Mr. Chamberlain was born at Northfield, Massachusetts, in 1737. He took his degree at Yale College, and was appointed a minister of the

---

<sup>272</sup> Sir John at first praised, and then disapproved of both the negroes and their agents. Quarrell had been described as a sensible, well-bred gentleman. [Note in the original.]

Congregational Church in Connecticut. Previous to the American Revolution, he opened a private Latin school in Boston, Massachusetts. This school was advertised in the Boston Chronicle of 5th September, 1768. His commission as a militia officer is dated at New York, being signed and issued by Governor Guy Carleton, who was commander-in-chief of His Majesty's plantations from the Floridas to the Canadas. Being one of the Loyalists at the time of the revolution, he and his wife and children emigrated to Nova Scotia in 1783 on board the transport Nancy. He was made a deputy-surveyor under the Hon. Charles Morris, and subsequently a magistrate of the county. Immediately after his appointment by the crown as a land surveyor, he laid out the township of Preston, and settled a number of militia men who came with him from New York, as well as [...] Germans and soldiers [...], on lands granted him by the government. He himself also went to Preston to reside, and remained there until his death. In Sir John Wentworth, Mr. Chamberlain had always a warm friend, and it is said that he was also related to him by blood.

On 9th July, 1798, Capt. Alexander Howe was removed, and Chamberlain was appointed to superintend the Maroons. He also had charge of their religious training. Besides being their minister, he conducted a school and taught the children and such others of the negroes as were willing to be instructed. Mr. Chamberlain died at Preston on 20th July, 1824, in his eighty-eighth year.

Mr. Chamberlain was not inclined to speak as favorably of the new colonists as Governor Wentworth had at first done. He said, "they worshipped false gods, and knew nothing whatever of Christianity, on their arrival in Nova Scotia." He represented them as the personification of arrogance, and cruel in the extreme. Those who were in positions of authority were tyrannical to the men under them, and at the least offence would whip them unmercifully. They had stipulated with the Jamaican government to be allowed to continue the same harsh discipline they had always practiced among their Maroon subordinates, as well as their right to entire maintenance in Nova Scotia, before they would evacuate their mountain stronghold in that island. (Compare this statement with the articles of peace entered into on 21st December, 1795, between the Maroons and Gen. Walpole.)<sup>273</sup> To these articles Walpole had to add a secret one, promising that the Maroons should not be sent out of Jamaica; and to this he was obliged to accede on his oath<sup>274</sup>. Now, mark it was a violation of Walpole's promise that the negroes were transported to Nova Scotia. Walpole is free from blame. He was disgusted with the Jamaica Assembly's action, and with becoming dignity refused a sword which was voted to him for his service.

During their residence in Nova Scotia, these restless negroes were constantly relapsing into idleness and discontent. Their complaints were frequent and loud against the dullness and poverty of their homes in Preston. One complained that he had not a well-furnished house and cellar to exercise hospitality with; another that his farm would not produce yams, bananas, coconuts or cayenne pepper; another that there were no wild hogs in the woods to hunt; and so on through all the grievances

---

<sup>273</sup> See Murdoch's *History of Nova Scotia*, vol. III, p. 156. [Note in the original.]

<sup>274</sup> Extracts from Dallas's *History of the Maroons*, in Murdoch's *History of N. S.*, vol. III, p. 156. [Note in the original.]

that ignorance and arrogance could suggest. Their habits were vicious, and their determination was to set aside the restraints of authority. Cock-fighting, cards, smoking, and going to town were their favorite amusements. All these helped them to pass through the summer with comparative content.

The winter of 1798-99, however, was even colder than the preceding ones. The fall of snow was the heaviest ever known in Nova Scotia. The Maroons were housed, fed and kept warm during the inclement weather; but their number diminished, the weakly ones dropped off, and the churchyard on the hill began to fill with their graves. Mr. Chamberlain taught the children, and still held Sunday services among them; but they made little progress in Christianity. They allowed their children to be baptized, but their marriages and funerals were conducted in their own fashion with strange ceremonies. They continued refractory and rebellious, and were a dead weight on the governor's hands. The expenses attending their maintenance was ten thousand pounds a year; and the return, constant anxiety and annoyance.

In April, 1779, the Maroons at Preston having evinced a mutinous disposition, Sir John Wentworth sent Capt. Solomon, Lieut. Muller, and fifty men there, of the Royal Nova Scotia Regiment, and posted them near the settlement. Sir John complained that some person from Jamaica had poisoned the minds of the Maroons, inducing them not to go to church on Sunday – giving them feasts, liquor, horse-races and cock-fights on that day – telling them that the King paid everyone for going to church, and that they were cheated out of their pay by Sir John<sup>275</sup>.

At last, at their own earnest entreaties and to save the province from greater loss, it was resolved to send them to Sierra Leone, the authorities there being ready to receive them. On 20th January, 1800, Sir John Wentworth writes that a Mr. Ross was living at Maroon Hall, endeavoring to give the negroes good impression of Sierra Leone, whereto he was to accompany them. On 23rd February, he writes, that “the Maroons are all ready to embark at an hour's notice, except two families who say they have engaged with Mr. (William Cottnam) Tonge, and will stay with him.” “Neither Mr. Tonge nor the Maroons,” continues Sir John, “shall be suffered to frustrate my instructions to send them all to Africa.”

These people had arrived at Halifax in July, 1796. In August, 1800, they left for their new home, lessened in numbers and not improved by their four years' residence in Preston. Five hundred and fifty-one left on the *Asia* for Africa. All were in good health except three. Many of the negroes regretted leaving the place, and all professed gratitude. It is said that four had deserted in order to remain in the province, but there is no record of their names and subsequent fate.

The Maroons reached their destination in October, after an expenditure of forty-six thousand pounds by the island of Jamaica and after a greater outlay by the British government. After they arrived at their destination, they assisted the government in suppressing an insurrection among the negroes of the place. About two years after, they were the subject of a report made by a committee of the English House of Commons. Their conduct and character was much praised. They were spoken of as active and intrepid, as prodigal of their lives, confident of their strength,

---

<sup>275</sup> *History of N. S.*, vol. 11, p. 177. [Note in the original. 11 is possibly a typo for II.]



proud of the character of their body, and fond, though not jealous, of their independence. This is very different from their disposition as manifested in Nova Scotia.

### **A supporter of slavery on the Maroons<sup>276</sup> (1796)**

**This article presents the view of a member of the British Imperial Parliament on the Maroon war and its aftermath. At the time, slavery was legal in the British Empire.**

Friday the [British] House of Commons resolved itself into a Committee of Supply. [...] Mr. Fox said, that he understood that General Walpole<sup>277</sup>, a gentleman of undisputed merit, but with whom he had not the honor of a personal acquaintance, had delivered it as his opinion, that after the termination of the Maroon war, we had not adhered to our engagements. He wished to know if this were true, and how far Great Britain had pledged herself in her treaty with the Maroon people.

Mr. Bryan Edwards<sup>278</sup>, after some apologies for trespassing upon the time of the Committee, allowed Gen. Walpole to be a man of infinite merit, though he differed from him in opinion. The Maroons were originally descendants of Spanish negroes, and from 1655, when the island of Jamaica was ceded to England, to 1739, were a wild atrocious people, in the constant practice of harassing and murdering the British settlers. At length a treaty was made with them, whereby they enjoyed a limited degree of liberty, subject to the Governor.

In 1760, Mr. Edwards said he first became acquainted with them, when a party came down to Montego Bay, where they got intoxicated and stole two pigs from a poor man. This was the origin of the war. The thief was found and tried, and ordered to be whipped at the cart's tail; when the Maroons instantly took up arms, and sent a message to Montego Bay, informing the inhabitants that they would come and burn the habitations. The people of Montego Bay accordingly prepared for their defense, and sent for assistance to the Governor, who readily dispatched 80 horse. The Maroons then wished to treat, but wanted a greater portion of land, and then promised to punish the offender. In the mean time, they had provided arms and ammunition, and had set fire to several plantations.

At last a treaty was made, the terms of which were, that the Maroons should immediately surrender their arms, ask the King's pardon on their knees, and deliver up the runaway slaves. A week, nay a month elapsed, and they fulfilled not the conditions. They were then sent round to Fort Augusta Assembly, where the Assembly desired to know if they had surrendered according to the treaty, and

---

<sup>276</sup> From Sunday's Post. (1796, October 29). *The Ipswich Journal*, p. 1.

<sup>277</sup> Major-General George Walpole (1758 – 1835) was the officer in charge of dealing with the Maroon uprising of 1795. He would serve as a Member of Parliament for Derby from 1797 to 1806.

<sup>278</sup> Bryan Edwards (1743 – 1800) was a Member of Parliament for Grampound, Cornwall, from 1796 to 1800, and an outspoken supporter of the slave trade. The constituency of Grampound was dissolved in 1821 on the grounds of excessive corruption.

understanding they had not done so, it sentenced them to be transported from the country.

This Gen. Walpole considered too severe, and imagined that their ignorance had claim to some indulgence. The rest of the island, however, thought otherwise, and when it was remembered that they had carried out an unprovoked rebellion, and murdered women and children indiscriminately, Mr. Edwards wished to know, if they were fit subjects for lenity.

The Assembly had been both fearful and cautious of misrepresentation in this country, and, having provided them bountifully with clothing, a sum of 25,000l.<sup>279</sup> to purchase them lands in North America, whither to make a useful yeomanry, the Maroons went away perfectly satisfied, as he had been informed on the preceding night, by a gentleman who had conversed with them the day before they sailed.

He thought it hard to answer every objection that might be offered<sup>280</sup>. The original question put to him was, whether we had violated the treaty; and now he was asked, whether the war might not have been prevented, if the Maroons had been instructed? He believed it might, but [...] there would have been some difficulty, however, in the attempt to instruct them, for their language is a mixture of African and Spanish, and the clergyman who should have ventured to instruct them, would have found it hard work to have made them understand him; and he supposed no clergyman would like to live among them.

He had heard of speculative propositions; the moment an African ship arrived with slaves at any of the islands, for a clergyman to take a pail of water and baptize them all; and this mode of instruction was of the same description. Such also was the proposition of Negro Marriages; when, for his part, he thought the negroes had miseries enough to cope with already, without the miseries of a wife. Besides, they indulged in polygamy, and to be deprived of it they would imagine themselves subject to the greatest hardship tyranny could inflict. Mr. Edwards begged to be understood in saying this, that he was not an advocate for polygamy, for he frankly owned himself content with one woman.

To return, however, to the difficulty of instructing the Maroons; there was another circumstance he had not mentioned. The Maroons were cannibals, and would you feed a clergyman to cannibals? “Why, Sir, (said he,) they would eat him up.” Mr. Edwards said, that the children of Maroons had also been taken by the planters to be instructed, and rewards offered to the Maroons themselves, to come and settle with them, but in vain.

Gentlemen, fresh from reading, might entertain ideas of the case of putting their eccentric speculations into practice; but in general they ought to be content to take men as they find them. The resolution<sup>281</sup> then passed, and the house adjourned.

---

<sup>279</sup> Adjusting for U.K. inflation, this is about £3,025,000 in 2020, or about \$5.2 million CAD.

<sup>280</sup> This appears to be a reply to a question that was not recorded.

<sup>281</sup> Presumably the original resolution on expences which the Committee had been convened to discuss, and to which the discussion of the Maroon war was a side-bar. From an earlier, omitted passage: “The total number of men wanted for the service of the ensuing year he computed at 195,674, the total expences of which he reckoned at 5,190,751l.”

## Letters on the settlement of Maroons in Nova Scotia<sup>282</sup> (1797)

### No. 1

Extract of a LETTER from Sir John Wentworth, Lieutenant Governor of Nova Scotia, to the Duke of Portland; dated Halifax, Nova Scotia, 23d July 1796.

Yesterday Mr. Quarrell arrived in the Dover Transport; the other transport arrived the 21<sup>st</sup> instant, with all the Maroons in good health, and as I am informed very quiet and orderly. It is agreed that these people remain on board the transports in this harbor, until His Majesty's pleasure is communicated respecting them.

### No. 2

Copy of a LETTER from Sir John Wentworth to the Duke of Portland; dated Halifax, Nova Scotia, 25<sup>th</sup> July 1796.

Halifax, Nova Scotia,  
25<sup>th</sup> July 1796.

My Lord Duke,

I beg leave, with great deference, to represent that this afternoon an arrangement has been concerted with His Royal Highness Prince Edward, to relieve the Maroons from their confinement on board ship, by employing them voluntarily, as laborers on the fortifications erecting here, at nine pence per diem; provisions, lodging, and clothing being found [for] them. The proposed pay is adequate, and the whole will be comfortable to them, while a saving will be made in transport hire and labor. Probably about one hundred and fifty men will engage, and thereby release some of the inhabitants to assist in the harvests and other civil occupations, which are now much distressed for want of hands.

The greatest care will be taken to preserve peace and good order among these people; who seem perfectly well disposed, insomuch as there is not any cause to apprehend the least inconvenience, but on the contrary, that very salutary effects will be derived from this measure, which, His Royal Highness being now much engaged, desires me to represent; and that he will particularly report to your Grace by the Hussar Frigate, expected to sail from hence with a convoy in less than three weeks.

I am, &c.

(Signed) WENTWORTH.

### No. 3

Extract of a LETTER from Sir John Wentworth to the Duke of Portland; dated Halifax, Nova Scotia, 13<sup>th</sup> August 1796.

The Maroons are now lodged about two miles from this town, with tolerable convenience to themselves – separate from the inhabitants, and well supplied with

---

<sup>282</sup> From Wentworth, J. (1797). *Extracts and copies of letters from Sir John Wentworth, lieutenant governor of Nova Scotia, to His Grace the Duke of Portland : respecting the settlement of the Maroons in that province*. London.

provisions and such clothing as is most immediately necessary, and to be procured here. This is done by my advice, and under daily inspection, by William Dawes Quarrell, and Alexander Ochterlony, Esquires, who came with them as Principal and Deputy Commissary appointed by Lord Balcarres, and supplied with a credit of twenty-five thousand pounds, Jamaica currency, by that government, for the uses of these Maroons; which is applied accordingly as occasion demands. These gentlemen are exceedingly interested in behalf of the Maroons; judicious, discreet, prudent, and attentive to every thing that may promote their welfare. By my advice and information they purchased several estates within five miles of this town, whereon there are houses and lands cleared for cultivation; which, with eight or ten more which we can erect immediately, will commodiously and warmly lodge them for the ensuing Winter, and before any cold weather can trouble them.

These tracts are contiguous, and will comprise upward of three thousand acres, and with the buildings and repairs necessary, will cost about three thousand pounds sterling. As it abounds with wood, both for fuel and timber, a saving will occur in those, and in house rent, of more than two thousand pounds sterling, before May next; and an exorbitant advance in the price of fuel prevented in the town, should their residence here require a supply. To-morrow I have recommended to begin removing some families on to their respective habitations, and intend to have the whole of them settled by Michaelmas; by which means they will be prepared to cultivate their lands to effect the next year. This estate bounds on one end upon a pleasant fishing harbor, where fish may be easily caught every day in the year, of the best kinds, and of seventeen different sorts.

These people express great delight in the country, and the prospect of being settled in it. They are perfectly quiet, orderly, and peaceable, and I have not a doubt that they will be more happy than ever they were in Jamaica; they declare to me daily, that they are sure all their sorrows and misfortunes are at an end.

From long experience in New England, where the Winter is more severe than in Nova Scotia, I am satisfied there need not be any apprehensions entertained of this climate injuring them. If they are well fed, warmly clothed, and comfortably lodged, I have always found Negroes directly from the hottest coasts of Africa, have grown strong and lusty in the Winter, and that they did not suffer by it. I have had many instances of this fact, enough to establish it, and to leave me not a fear of success in this case, if the articles I have recommended to be imported from England for their use, can be had here in November next.

No. 4

Copy of a LETTER from Sir John Wentworth, to the Duke of Portland; dated Halifax, Nova Scotia, 20<sup>th</sup> September 1796.

Halifax, Nova Scotia, 20<sup>th</sup> September 1796.

My Lord Duke,

With the utmost deference I beg leave to acknowledge the honor of Your Grace's letter No. 18, dated Whitehall, 15<sup>th</sup> July 1796, signifying to me His Majesty's most gracious and beneficent commands, for the comfortable settlement and support of the Maroons; also enclosing Lord Balcarres's correspondence for my information.

His Majesty's pleasure for the preservation of these people, having been also communicated in Your Grace's preceding dispatches, and the season admitting of no delay, we diligently pursued necessary means, which I had the honor to report to Your Grace No. 28 (duplicate herewith), which I am happy to find exactly fulfil Your Grace's instructions. I have therefore now to add, that these people are all settled in comfortable good houses. On the 18<sup>th</sup> instant I personally inspected them, examined every family with particular attention, inquired into all their wants, explained to them His Majesty's commands in their favor, and the obligations which resulted on their part to be faithful, loyal, peaceable, sober, and industrious subjects: Which they perfectly understand, and I am persuaded they will honestly perform, with quite a few deviations as we should find in an equal number of more enlightened white people, from any part of Europe or America, and far more easily reformed. They are remarkably clean in their persons, houses, clothing, and utensils, and very healthy. Some few have died of disorders and debility contracted on board ship; more have recovered, and still more been born.

Provisions are served to them weekly, of the best quality and ample quantity, with which they are unexceptionably satisfied. Being expert in cutting wood, they are providing Winter's fuel from their own lands; many families have a sufficient quantity brought to their doors; the rest will soon be equally prepared, which also facilitates their next year's planting. Proper clothing is daily making and issuing in such manner as to meet the climate, until this article can be fully completed by the arrival of those necessaries which the Commissioner wrote for, on my recommendation, by the Hussar Frigate.

At the meeting of the 18<sup>th</sup> instant some arrangements were directed for their internal good order and peaceable demeanor – the declared, well-understood, and entirely acceptable basis of which is, gratitude to the King for benefits and protection extended to them, and obedience to the laws – modifying these regulations so as to lead them gradually into the general operation of the laws of the Province. The principles of these rules are, that all small offences are to be openly tried before Mr. Quarrell and Mr. Ochterlony, in the presence of at least three Maroon captains; and if fully proved, the offender [is] to be delivered over to them, informing them what would be the sentence of the law if the case arose between white men, explaining the good that they might expect from adopting the same.

As their former habits led to severe punishments, I have directed that those of any cruel proportion should be suspended, until the case was reported to me by the Commissioners and the captains who were at the trial. In my intercourse with them on this subject, they earnestly expressed their wishes to be instructed in our religion, and to have their children taught to read and write; from whence the happiest consequences may be expected. Mr. Quarrell and Mr. Ochterlony fully coincide with me; and I have appointed the Reverend Benjamin Gerrish Gray, who is to be ordained next Sunday for a Country Parish, which, at my request to the Bishop of Nova Scotia, I prevail on him to exchange. This gentleman had a good education in England, is amiable and conciliating in his manners, discreet, patient, and ingenious, and peculiarly accomplished for this very laborious and difficult duty. The shell of a large house nearly central in the settlement, is ordered to be made convenient for a chapel; and the second Sunday in October I shall open the church by attending divine service therein.

In the correspondence enclosed to me, I find some few Maroons remarked for less favorable consideration. This might have been expedient had they remained in Jamaica, but it would not be advisable here. I have conversed with these, and others the best informed and most sensible among them, and cannot discern any malice or revenge in their sentiments; that they in fact regretted the War, and thought themselves pursuing self-preservation only. In these communications, they mention the Spanish dogs as objects of terror, from the wonderful representations of them; but that they had never suffered by or even seen them. Indeed, I rather think they are now ashamed at having been frightened by them, and that they would now be esteemed a ridiculous scarecrow.

The government of Jamaica having granted a liberal sum for the removal, and to commence the settlement of the Maroons, and appointed Mr. Quarrell, Commissary, and Mr. Ochterlony, Assistant Commissary, to superintend these benevolent intentions, it appeared to me expedient that the expenditure should be transacted by them, and the monies requisite also drawn for them on the agent of the island, whereto they were authorized, and a proper credit, as I understand, lodged with Messrs. Millegan and Mitchell in London.

This mode appears to embrace the objects of Your Grace's instruction on that point; and therefore will be continued until Your Grace may be pleased to direct me otherwise, or these funds are expended. In such necessity, due care shall be had in drawing conformable to those directions. Probably this may not soon happen, as I believe the government of Jamaica are fully and generously disposed to render the Maroons happy in any other country. Among other reasons for this opinion, is the judicious choice of Mr. Quarrell and Mr. Ochterlony, to accompany and superintend the interests of these poor people. I cannot do adequate justice to the affectionate zeal, unwearied assiduity, great judgment, and perfect disinterestedness, which these gentlemen invariably exert, under my immediate and hourly observation, to effect the excellent intentions of their constituents; insomuch that I have not a doubt the truly humane wishes of His Majesty's government herein will be fully accomplished; and that whatever causes may have removed them into this Province, their increased

happiness will surely be the effect. They daily become more sensible of it, and express to me no other anxiety than their fears to be removed. Nothing would create such distress as to carry them to Sierra Leone; nor could they be prevailed on, by any persuasions, to return to Jamaica.

I humbly confide in Your Grace's great goodness to excuse so long a detail, which arises from a dutiful solicitude to fulfil the Royal Commands, in a case entirely new, and comprehending all the interests of such a numerous body of people; which will be best promoted by informing Your Grace of their precise and actual situation.

I have the honor to be, &c.

J. WENTWORTH.

No. 5

Extract of a LETTER from Lieutenant Governor Sir John Wentworth, Baronet, to His Grace the Duke of Portland; dated Halifax, Nova Scotia, 24<sup>th</sup> September 1796.

The Maroons are much attached – [they] are impressed with hatred to the French. Although they may hence be safely trusted, yet their wives and children, to whom they are extremely attached, being pledged for their fidelity, they will be advantageously employed more immediately under my own inspection, and with a company of riflemen, who are equal to either Maroons or Indians in the woods and difficult rocky country.

No. 6

Extract of a LETTER from Lieutenant Governor Sir John Wentworth, Baronet, to His Grace the Duke of Portland; dated Halifax, Nova Scotia, 8<sup>th</sup> October 1796.

The Maroons are daily progressing in preparations for the Winter. Their conduct still continues to be much better than could be expected; with very little exception, it is quite meritorious. They will be decidedly good men against any enemy. I am persuaded they are attached to me; and that they are fully convinced, not only their comfort, but also their future views and military credit, depend on their obedience and affection to His Majesty's government.

No. 7

Copy of a LETTER (No. 33) from Sir John Wentworth to the Duke of Portland; dated Halifax, Nova Scotia, 29<sup>th</sup> October 1796.

Halifax, Nova Scotia, 29<sup>th</sup> October 1796.

My Lord Duke,

I beg leave most respectfully to acknowledge the honor of Your Grace's letter, No. 19, which will be partly obeyed in my letters Nos. 28, 29, 30 and 31.

It is incumbent on me to observe, that I am still fully persuaded that the climate of this country will be found healthy and comfortable to the Maroons, if they are well fed, comfortably lodged and clothed, and proper attention exercised toward

their gradual instruction in the habits of industry, and prudent use of their benefits; of all which they are perfectly capable.

The case of the Negroes removed to Nova Scotia in the Year 1783 was entirely different from that of the Maroons: Nevertheless, upon examination it will be found, that the result incontrovertibly justifies my expectations with respect to the climate upon the Maroons.

The Negroes brought toward Autumn into this Province from New York, and other more southern climates, were slaves suddenly emancipated from masters, whose essential interest it was to suppress and extinguish every idea of providing for themselves, or having any property. With these habits they joined the arm in its several departments, where obedience and provided subsistence were still united – here they gathered more dissoluteness than economical discretion. At the general removal of British subjects in 1783 to Nova Scotia, the Justice of the British government refusing to leave these poor people to the resentful and probable severe treatment of those into whose unlimited power they would revert if they remained in the United States, they were conveyed hither. At the same time an influx of many thousands of His Majesty's loyal subjects also arrived; all were to be located, and provision made for their settlement. The approaching winter excited apprehensions, and universal competition to provide places and lodgments.

The government here not having had much experience in settling inhabitants in a new country, which requires that sort of local knowledge derivable from experience only, were embarrassed in the midst of their endeavors and exertions to accommodate the people; of course the black people, unequal to solicit and manage as the white people did, and habitually less considered, they had not as much attention as otherwise they might have had, and which was more necessary for them for the causes before suggested; it therefore resulted, that they were located, and without proper method. The ample provisions, and some clothing and necessaries which were afforded to them by the justice and benevolence of Great Britain, became the instruments of their idleness and dissipation, instead of the basis and means of their industry and comfort. Thus circumstanced, they progressed slowly in social economy; yet during the effervescence and circulation of money caused by so great an accession of people, all possessing some, and many considerable property, the Negroes found employment and support. But this state of things subsiding sooner than was foreseen, and no arrangement taken to lead into employment, both white and black people felt the inconvenience; many of the former quitted the Province, which the black people could not do, and they became much impoverished.

In this situation the sublimest charity discovered their distress, sympathized in their sorrows, and, from undoubted and excellent motives of humanity, extended a generous and liberal relief to their sufferings.

Unfortunately, however, their distresses were imputed to the only cause which had really been friendly to them, *viz.* the climate; in which they were still healthy, although poor, and almost naked. The zeal and affection which their calamitous case had excited, overlooked this positive features, and they were most of them removed, with every possible care and comfort, to Sierra Leone, where, I believe, the greatest



kindness has been continued to them. Yet many more of those have died, in proportion to their numbers, than of those who remained here. These have almost struggled through their difficulties, employments having been encouraged for all orders of people: the black people have partaken of its uses, and daily growing into habits of managing and providing for themselves, they are now just as happy and comfortable as any other people of the same occupations in the Province – they are as robust and healthy, and have as many and as fine children as the other inhabitants; and, with the exhibition of some moderate occasional aid, where circumstances may arise to require relief (possibly to the amount of five or six hundred pounds per annum for three years to come) I verily believe more real benefits would be derived to the cause of humanity, than from all the expense that has been incurred for the settlement of those sent to Sierra Leone.

Since my appointment to this government, I have taken care that they are equally protected and encouraged as other His Majesty's subjects; and slavery being almost exterminated here, distinctions naturally painful to these people are gradually dying away. In the Royal Nova Scotia Regiment under my command, there are many who act as pioneers, and are good men. A company of those residents in and near the town are attached to the First Battalion of Halifax Militia, an able, daring, and faithful body of men.

At Digby, on the Basin of Annapolis, in my official progress last Autumn to examine the local circumstances of the inhabitants and country, I was received by the Regiment of Militia, and on my departure attended by a company of black men, well armed, of decent and orderly deportment, and of as good able stature and countenance as any other men. Some few of them were badly clothed, owing to unavoidable misfortunes, which might have been relieved at eighty guineas expense, and every family made quite happy. In every part of the Province where they are scattered, I have seen them, and never fail to enquire minutely into their circumstances. They often lament the want of clothing, or the want of a cow, or some other particular comfort; but I never, in any one instance, have heard them complain of the climate.

The care of the Maroons is far different, and more desirable than those people have experienced. These are liberally provided with every necessary to render the climate particularly salutary to them. They have zealous and kindly disposed Commissaries residing with them, wholly devoted to supply their wants, to remedy and relieve the difficulties that must be expected to occur in removing to a new country; in changing the manners of war and hunting for those of peace and patient industry; and in submitting to be considered without terror, or the self-importance derived from it. Means of instruction and moral and religious improvement are provided and perseveringly applied to these, which is most of all others to be relied upon for their civilization, and social as well as religious interests.

I cannot but foresee that some difficulties and inconveniences may frequently arise; and that patience, vigilance, perseverance, and discretion, must be exercised in the progress of their settlement, and that it will continue to be a source of increased care and attention to me; but as it is an object highly interesting to so important a

part of His Majesty's dominions as the island of Jamaica, and more especially and above all other considerations, it being His Majesty's most gracious commands to pay every care and attention to the comfort and preservation of these people, I shall continue most dutifully to exert every possible diligence and ability to effect the Royal Commands, which Your Grace has been pleased to signify to me; and I have not a doubt but with as much success and happiness to the people as those most interested for their welfare will reasonably expect can ever be communicated to that number and description.

All of which is most humbly submitted, with the utmost deference, hoping for Your Grace's favorable consideration, and representation for His Majesty's condescending gracious approbation.

I have, &c.

(Signed) J. WENTWORTH.

No. 8<sup>283</sup>

Extract of a LETTER from Sir John Wentworth, Bart., to the Duke of Portland; dated Halifax, Nova-Scotia, 7th May 1797.

Mr. Quarrell, Commissary for settling the Maroons in this Province, has communicated to be a letter he has received from Earl Balcarres, accompanied by a copy of a Resolution of the House of Assembly of Jamaica, providing for the expense of this measure until July next, and limiting the subsequent to ten pounds sterling per head; that is to say, men, women, and children; which will be very insufficient for the purpose. It is my duty humbly to represent to your Grace, that a larger sum will be indispensably necessary for their aid and support, from July 1797 to July 1798; and to entreat your Grace's instructions to me hereupon.

Mr. Quarrell intends proceeding to England on his own private affairs in August next. He is fully sensible, that the sum proposed by the House of Assembly in Jamaica, is greatly inadequate; nor will it be possible for them to remain in this Province without a more ample and continued support, which must be dispensed to their various cases and wants, with an ability and knowledge derived from experience; the want of which will delay the good effects intended, although resulting from an upright exercise of the best intentions, and zeal in their interests.

They have not yet overcome the apprehensions caused by the extreme, rigorous, and unusually long Winter, and backward Spring, which has only this day given any pleasant warmth; and both together have been near three months longer than has been known since the settlement of Halifax in the year 1749. Added to this, they unfortunately got an idea among them of being embodied as soldiers for the Cape of Good Hope, and India, with their women and children, where they say, "Give us arms and ammunition, and put us on shore, we will make room for ourselves;" that is, they would murder and plunder the inhabitants, if they could only live in the woods all the year round. These impressions, for the present, a little unhinge their good

---

<sup>283</sup> From here on the letters are from a second publication, *Papers relative to the Settling of the Maroons in His Majesty's Province of Nova Scotia*, printed in February, 1798.

dispositions to labor, but I trust will subside by degrees. They still attend public worship on Sundays; and, twice a week, they go to the clergyman for explanations and instructions on the service of the preceding Sunday; and the children [are] constantly at school, learning to read and write with decency and diligence. I am therefore induced to entreat your Grace's favor toward the support of the missionary or chaplain, and schoolmaster, amounting in the whole to two hundred and forty pounds sterling per annum. These gentlemen have faithfully and usefully performed their duty, and continue resident therein, notwithstanding the apprehensions naturally excited by such a people.

No. 9

Extract of a LETTER from the Duke of Portland to Sir John Wentworth, Bart., dated June 1797.

I have attentively considered the several circumstances you have stated relative to the Maroons, and can easily conceive that the singular length and severity of the late winter, joined to the delusive hopes, very improperly held out to them, of serving as a Corps at the Cape of Good Hope, instead of preparing them for a Mode of Life so different in all its functions from that to which they have been accustomed, must have made an impression on their minds extremely unfavorable to the plan laid down of their becoming gradually domesticated in the settlement allotted to them. The first thing therefore to be done, is to set them right in regard to the strange and irregular notions which have been insinuated amongst them, of serving at the Cape, and distinctly and unequivocally to explain to them the conduct they must pursue, and the duties they are on their parts to perform within the Colony, to render His Majesty's great benevolence to them, effectual to the ends and purposes for which it is intended.

With respect to the expense which may be incurred on their account until such time as they are able to provide from themselves (which you will endeavor of course to effect in the least possible space of time), the amount of it must be defrayed by the Island of Jamaica, conformably to the intention, originally expressed by its Legislature at the time the Maroons were sent to Nova Scotia: should the Commissary therefore, who is now resident within your Province for the purpose of defraying those expenses, and attending to the management of the Maroons, be withdrawn, you are to take especial care that, previous to his departure, a proper arrangement be made for defraying the expenses of the Maroons; as no part of the charge on their account, can possibly be borne by this country.

No. 10

Copy of a LETTER (No. 45) from Sir John Wentworth to the Duke of Portland; dated Halifax, Nova Scotia, 2d June 1797. (Two enclosures.)

Halifax, Nova Scotia, 2d June 1797

My Lord Duke,

In a meeting I had with the Maroons, on the 28th May, they generally expressed to me their Apprehensions of the Severity they had experienced of this climate, the last Winter and Spring; which has indeed been much longer and more rigorous than has been known since the settlement of Halifax in the year 1749. Notwithstanding which, they have suffered less sickness than the white inhabitants of the Province, in proportion to their respective numbers; and do, at this day, exhibit great health and strength, beyond any other people, as there are now only one dangerous, and one invalid case, among five hundred and thirty-two persons, and the former an old complaint, deemed incurable in Jamaica; which is more fully explained in the letter, herewith enclosed, from Dr. Oxley, surgeon of His Majesty's late 96th Regiment, who had the care of them in Jamaica and on their passage to this place, and at my request still continues to live with them as their physician, being a prudent well-disposed man, eminent in his profession, kindly attached to these people, and better acquainted with their constitutions, habits, and dispositions, than any other man; and therefore is and can be peculiarly useful to them: Which he consents to pursue, with such duty and zeal towards His Majesty's service, that I humbly hope it will recommend him to your Grace's favorable consideration, in his solicitation to be confirmed in the rank he held in the late 96th regiment.

Impressed with fears of this climate, and that subsistence must hereafter be obtained by labor, and encouraged with expectations, evidently suggested to them, that they would be removed into some other country, where their valor would make them happy and great, if they would say they were dissatisfied here and wished to be removed into a warm country; they very naturally have expressed such sentiments to me, and I promised to transmit their request, as in the enclosed Paper No. 2, for His Majesty's pleasure thereupon. As I am perfectly satisfied that these people have suffered no real detriment from the climate; that they are, and will be, as comfortable, and in due time as fully satisfied as they ever can or will be in any country where war, hunting, and uncultivated modes of living [are] not their whole object; and that they would not now have made any request, had it not been for injudicious suggestions; I convinced them of the wisdom of trying another year, when their wishes might be more reasonable and merit some consideration. This was unanimously approved, and I trust by that time will produce the best effect.

In the mean time we are assiduously preparing more houses and other conveniences, which it was impossible to prepare last season, and of course they were less accommodated than we intended.

It is with great pleasure that I beg leave, with the utmost deference, to assure your Grace that these people continue to behave quietly; are sensible that they receive every kindness from Government and from the inhabitants here; and declare a full confidence in me, and the greatest affection and attachment. And also, that I do not find any just cause to alter my former sentiments and expectations regarding their residence in this country, although in the progress of their civilization and settlement, frequent obstructions and difficulties must be expected to arise, which must be combated by prudence, patience, disinterestedness, and firm perseverance.

Upon this conference, and on every other intercourse, I have made it an indispensable preliminary, that they should faithfully and cordially conform to whatever may be His Majesty's Commands; which they readily agree to.

Since my last dispatch (No. 44) Mr. Quarrell, who has the welfare of the Maroons much at heart, and kindly co-operates with me for their true interest and happy establishment in this country, has communicated instructions he has received from the Legislature of Jamaica, to convey all the property appropriated by them for settling the Maroons, to His Majesty for that purpose, on the 23d July next, when he proposes to sail for England, and to commit the whole Trust to my direction, until His Majesty's pleasure is further signified. It is unavoidably necessary that I should therefore administer this important charge accordingly. I have hereupon conferred with Mr. Ouchterlong, who was Deputy Commissary, and has qualifications to be useful; who consents to remain with them, and faithfully and cordially to sue this utmost endeavors to do away with any improper ideas that may have arisen, and to carry my directions into effect; in which case I may represent his services, with a just hope that they will be graciously considered.

I have the honor to be, &c.

J. WENTWORTH

([Enclosed paper] No. 1. In Sir John Wentworth's [letter] of 2d June 1797.)

Maroon Town, 31st May 1797.

Sir,

I find it unnecessary to make a particular review of the Maroons, to answer your enquiries respecting their condition as to health. There is one woman only, whose situation is dangerous, and she has been ill long before she left Jamaica, or I had any concern with them; one boy is also in an invalid state, and some few of the very old have rheumatic complaints, which the increasing warmth of the Summer will relieve. To speak in general of them at this time, I can venture to pronounce them as healthy as any set of people on Earth. On their first landing in July last year, we met with many losses, principally owing to their long confinement on board of the ships, and the badness of the water about the Blue Bell, occasioned by the great drought at that time. On their removal here, they in general recovered fast, but some far gone, dropped off, mostly old [individuals]. They continued very well until February and March, when we had much sickness, chiefly pleurisies and sore throats, but from which most of them recovered. Our decrease in the whole is 19, allowing for the children born; and there is the greatest probability in a few weeks, that the excess will be 10 or 12, thirty-two women now big with child. I would, with your permission, recommend inoculation in the end of the year, and previous thereto, during the summer months, frequent sea-bathing.

I have the honor to be,

&c. &c. &c.

JOHN OXLEY.

([Enclosed paper] No. 2. In Sir John Wentworth's [letter] of 2d June 1797.)  
To Colonel Montague James, and Captain Smith, in behalf of and for the Maroons,  
now residing at Preston, in the Province of Nova Scotia.

Whereas from misinformation, and want of sufficient experience in the climate and manner of industry, and providing support for numerous families in this country; and having been much terrified and alarmed with the length and extreme severity of the last Winter, from whence apprehensions have arisen among you and your people, that you cannot inhabit this country with any comfort to your families, and are therefore desirous that the same should be represented to His Majesty, together with your request to be removed to some warmer country; but that you will further represent your wishes on this day twelvemonth, viz., on the 28th day of May in the year 1798, to be then transmitted, with all possible dispatch, to be laid before His Majesty for His Royal will and pleasure thereupon, that if it should be commanded to remove the Maroons from this country, there may be time to accomplish such commands before the then ensuing Winter: I will on my part write by the Princess Royal Packet, now in this harbor, and represent the requests of the Maroons for His Royal consideration: On the other part, you and each of you, are to continue to exert your best endeavors to cultivate and improve the buildings and estate whereon you now reside and occupy, and that you will faithfully obey and execute my orders and directions in all things.

(Signed) J. WENTWORTH

Preston, Nova Scotia,  
28th May 1797.

No. 11

Copy of a LETTER (No. 49) from Sir John Wentworth, Bart., to the Duke of Portland; dated Halifax, 10th July 1797.

Halifax, Nova Scotia, 10th July 1797.

My Lord Duke,

In the dispatch (No. 45) I had the honor to represent to your Grace, that I had arranged with Mr. Ouchterlong, Deputy Commissary of Maroons, to remain with them another year: But finding that the benefits contemplated, towards encouraging industry and other interior regulation among them, have not been produced, nor now are reasonably expected from his assistance; I have prevailed on Mr. Quarrell to postpone his intended voyage to Jamaica for some time, and to continue his good offices among these people; which he has benevolently consented to, as he is humanely interested for the welfare and happy settlement of the Maroons in this province. Other views and objects having been evidently entertained since Christmas last by Mr. Ouchterlong, has in some measure retarded the progress that might otherwise be obtained, and which we concur in opinion will proceed better when Mr. Ouchterlong is removed from them. They still continue to be quiet and orderly. Buildings and other necessaries for their comfort are preparing. One family of twenty-

eight persons, led by a noted Captain, removes this day to a separate estate, at his own earnest request, to settle for life; and I have several other similar applications, which will be acceded to, and, except a very few families, will probably be soon followed by the remainder.

I have, &c.

(Signed) J. WENTWORTH.

No. 12

Copy of a LETTER from Sir John Wentworth, Baronet, to his Grace the Duke of Portland; dated the 12th August 1797. (Two enclosures.)

Halifax, Nova Scotia, 12th August 1797

My Lord,

With the utmost respect I beg leave to acknowledge the honor of your Grace's letter (No. 25) dated Whitehall, 12th June 1797. In obedience to your Grace's commands, I shall embrace an early opportunity to inform the Maroons, that they are no longer to expect or look forward to a removal from this Province. This decision will soon eradicate the erroneous impressions which have been introduced amount them by persons, evidently desirous of getting possession of these poor people for the sake of the means afforded for their support and settlement. From this source are the letters from hence secretly written to Major General Walpole, and others, of unfelt distresses which the writers taught the Maroons to complain of, and afterwards exaggerated in their description, far beyond any resemblance. It would too much trespass on your Grace's highly-important time, to delineate the unworthy practices used to dissatisfy and makes these people complain of the climate, and to persuade them that a Memorial to Government would be readily acceded to, and unknown advantages would result to them. With such people it is in vain to reason. In compassion, therefore, to these prejudices, to their ignorance, and to their future comfort, I transmitted their petition; finding they had been entrusted to refer themselves to a determination from the King as a final rule, which they promised to embrace.

As soon as the Commission of Mr. Quarrell and Mr. Ouchterlong determined, I immediately appointed Captain Howe, of the Royal Nova Scotia Regiment, to take charge of the Maroons, and to conduct their business, under my instructions, in all things. Lieutenant General His Royal Highness Prince Edward having arranged Captain Howe's regimental duty into that precinct, at my request, as he is peculiarly qualified for that service, and is aided therein by his military authority. I cannot better describe this gentleman's character, than is done by Mr. Quarrell's Letter, No. 1; nor the state of the Maroons more exactly than in Captain Howe's answer, No. 2; herewith enclosed: Both which were entirely without my knowledge, until handed to me by Mr. Quarrell. From the time Captain Howe went to, and Mr. Ouchterlong left them, they are giving up the foolish ideas that had in some degree retarded their progress in cultivation and settlement, notwithstanding some letters received from London, the 7th instant, by those who had promised to remove them, written with

lamentably misguided zeal, and from motives of humanity were soon and secretly conveyed to them. Mr. Ouchterlong in a few days departs from this country; and I am convinced the people themselves will be not only more happy and comfortable, but rejoice in this absence.

Before Mr. Quarrell departs, I shall take care to obtain from him every measure in his power, that the Island of Jamaica shall continue to provide for the expense of settling and establishing the Maroons as long and as amply as their circumstances may fairly require. He concurs fully in the justice and wisdom of such arrangement, and does not admit a doubt but that the Government there will still provide for this measure, which is of such essential service to the credit, safety, and value of property of the island, and which they themselves proceeded upon of their own accord, and without any previous communications or notice whatever.

By some mistake, Mr. Quarrell's late bill, as Commissary in behalf and on account of the Island of Jamaica, on Messrs. Milligan and Mitchell of London, are returned protested, as they had required ninety days more than the usance of the bills. To remedy this, and still cause the expenditure to be carried on, some account of and from the grants made by the Island of Jamaica, a considerable part of which is yet undrawn when these bills are paid, I have endorsed Mr. Quarrell's bills, amounting to £6,050 4s. 7d. sterling; and I have promised that in case of refusal at Messrs. Milligan and Mitchell's, they might be presented for payment at His Majesty's Treasury. Without this mode of credit, Mr. Quarrell could not fulfil his engagements, nor carry on the daily subsistence and necessaries of the people, and I must have been indispensably obliged to have provided for the emergency, conformable to your Grace's instructions on their arrival here. I have every reason to believe that these bills will be duly paid. It is, however, a great discredit and considerable loss to the island, that bills due and drawn on their account should be protested.

As the whole expenditure will now pass under my own control and direction, I shall not fail to have it done in the fairest and most distinct manner, and, expressly, solely upon the account of the Island of Jamaica, whereto accounts shall be carefully transmitted, and also copies for your Grace's information.

I have the honor, &c.

(Signed) J. WENTWORTH.

([Enclosed paper] No. 1. In Sir John Wentworth's [letter] of the 12th August 1797.)

Dartmouth, 8th August 1797

Dear Sir,

As I have some regard for your opinion respecting the settlement of the Maroons in Nova Scotia, I take the liberty of offering to your consideration some queries, which, I must candidly tell you, I wish to transmit with your answers to England, if you will permit to me. When it is known the charge of the Maroons is in your hands, under the general direction of Sir John Wentworth, the public of Jamaica, and those concerned therein resident in England, will learn with pleasure it is in the



hands of a man of no inconsiderable knowledge of the world, but more particularly of Nova Scotia and Jamaica, where a great portion of your life has been spent; and that particularly from your long residence in the latter, and knowledge of a considerable part of the Maroons and the Maroon Country, you reasonably may be supposed to have as great an influence over them as most men can have; besides the further advantages looked for from your having settled farms from the woods here, and, I learn, as competent as any man in this Colony, as a cultivator, your situation as a respectable and useful member of the Legislature, and many other considerations, enable me with pleasure to mention your name among those, to many of whom you are no stranger, and announce your taking upon yourself an office, which I do not flatter you in saying there is no man here fit for but yourself.

Q. 1. Is it your opinion that the Maroons can be settled and disposed of in Nova Scotia?

Q. 2. Is the climate less tolerable to those than other Blacks?

Q. 3. Does it appear they can and will work, if encouraged?

Q. 4. What appears to have influenced them against settling and providing for their own comfort?

Your answering the above after due deliberation, and permission to forward the same with this to Mr. Sewell, our Agent, will greatly oblige

Yours, &c.  
(Signed) W. D. QUARRELL.

([Enclosed paper] No. 2. In Sir John Wentworth's [letter] of the 12th August 1797.)

Maroon Hall, 9th August 1797

Dear Sir,

Having been honored with your letter of the 8th instant, I thank you for the good opinion you express of my capacity to execute the important trust to which I have the honor to be appointed by his Excellency Sir John Wentworth. No doubt my local knowledge of this country, and acquaintance with the situation of the Maroon Settlements in some parts of Jamaica, and a general knowledge of that island, will be of essential use to the service in which I am employed (I hope) for the benefit of the Maroons. I have the satisfaction to tell you, I have reason to think I possess a considerable portion of the confidence and regard of the Maroons entrusted to my care: I shall use neither, but for their benefit and happiness.

The confidence his Excellency Sir John Wentworth has reposed in me, on this and many other occasions, will from principles of gratitude to him, as well as a regard for my own honor, stimulate every faculty I possess to meet his wishes and gain his approbation of my conduct, with respect to the objects to be pursued. I have lively hopes that those concerned for the interests of the Island of Jamaica, will have no cause to disapprove his Excellency's good opinion of my zeal, in the exertion of my best abilities for the interests I am appointed to support.

Your queries I will answer with candor, and from the best opinion I have been able to form. TO your first, *"I am of opinion that the Maroons can be settled and*

*disposed of in Nova Scotia.*” Occasional gifts of warm clothing and shoes for a few years, provisions for a limited time, and an extension of this indulgence in particular cases, with all farming and gardening utensils, will naturally be supposed requisite: It would be so, go where they would. It is not in the first, second, or *third* year, that men with large families of small children, without funds, can support themselves and families in any new country, however great their industry. It will take considerable time before all their necessary wants can be supplied from their own labor, however prolific the soil. Lands can be procured in this Province, of excellent quality, and in any quantity, by grant, escheat, or light purchases; and there is no doubt in my mind, that with the above aids, they would be comfortably settled and disposed of in Nova Scotia.

Many Black people are now in this country, well settled, and living at their ease, with their families, on their own lands, with large stocks of cattle, who began thirteen years ago with nothing but their own labor, and an allowance of provisions from His Majesty for a limited time, to depend upon. Others residing in the towns, or in the country, occupied as servants or laborers, under mild servitude and liberal wages (indeed higher than in any other part of the world).

The influence of Thomas Peters among the Black people who came to this Province at the close of the last war; the attachment of the Blacks to the whole extent of their families, impelling them to act together, and even to consider as one family those who came from the same country or province; an injudicious and unjust mode of assigning them their lands; the *whole management* of them throughout the Province on their first arrival in this Colony, by the several agents employed by the Loyalists, together with the great advantages and allurements held out to them by the [Sierra Leone] Company, were the real causes of so many removing to Sierra Leone: The removal did not arise from *any other causes*. I was employed by the late Governor Parr, to assist their removal from the County of Annapolis, and was perfectly well acquainted with their motives. Many of these unfortunates, I am afraid, repent leaving this country, even though they labored under some disagreeable circumstances with respect to their lands. This much I say on this subject, to show that the removal of these people did proceed, not from the difficulty of settling and disposing of them in this Province, but the neglecting to do it *properly, with other causes*.

To your second query – I cannot suppose that this climate can be *“less tolerable to the Maroons than to any other Blacks.”* – Many of the Blacks now settled here, came from the warm sultry climates of Virginia, the two Carolinas, Georgia, and the two Floridas. It is well known that the heat of these countries is as intense, and in some places as continued, as it is in Jamaica in its warmest parts. Those people here enjoy perfect health, are industrious, hardy, and frugal, and now form, in many parts of this Province, the principal sources for labor and improvement.

In think, that in a little time the Maroons will bear this climate *better than other Blacks*. Except three months in the year, which may be made very tolerable to them by warm houses and large fires, I do not think the difference of the climate greater between the mountains of Jamaica and Nova Scotia, for nine months of our

common seasons, than it is between the mountains and Kingston, Spanish Town, Old Harbor, Withy Wood, Savana-la-mar, and the sea-coast of Saint Thomas in the East. I have been in the Blue Mountains (and at some of the Maroon towns, when I have for many days been glad of the comfort of a warm fire during the day and night, and several warm blankets on my bed). At Mr. Waller's at Cold Spring, and at Chester Vale, two miles beyond it, chimneys are in the houses as they are here<sup>284</sup>. That this climate is not injurious to their health, is evident from their present situation, none being (as I understand) ill, but such as brought their disorders with them. The deaths that have happened in this Province among the Maroons, has been owing to a long passage; the number of births lately, has nearly made the number equal, and in a few weeks will probably exceed the number embarked at Jamaica. These are circumstances, Sir, that may be better known to you than myself; but among so many people in their native climate, old and young, I never saw, in any part of the world, more health and less disease.

Your third query I can answer from experience, "*that they will work if encouraged.*" A proof is, that I have, on application, given papers to a great many who have engaged themselves to labor for several gentlemen at Halifax, by the week, and by the month. Many are employed about the country, and get high wages for clearing land, making hay, driving carts, and various other labors. I find no difficulty to get as many Maroons to labor as I want, at very low wages, to make bricks, dig cellars, carry stones, hoe potatoes, make hay, or do any thing I direct them to do. The industry of the women, boys, and girls, in gathering strawberries and raspberries, has been unremitted. They carry them to Halifax, with a certainty of selling them at a good price there, by making money to supply themselves with many comforts, not provided for by the establishment.

Many of the men are anxious to have their portion of land laid out for them, that they may know *their own labor* will be for their *own* future benefit; and have themselves adopted an idea, that negro yams (their favorite food) will grow as it does in their settlements in Jamaica, among their early Indian corn, a hint I mean to improve, and to forward which, his Excellency Sir John Wentworth has sent to Jamaica for half a ton of those yams, to get into the seed and try the experiment.

The first object in my view, after coming on the 22nd July, was, by the Governor's desire and approbation, to give instructions to a surveyor, for the purpose of laying out lots for the Maroons, so far as the land purchased was good, assigning the worst and least cultivatable for common pasture, to which purpose it is very competent. But the rains have been so incessant ever since, that I cannot carry this measure into effect, maybe for some days.

Some families that have planted potatoes about their houses, have kept them in good order, and almost all the families have tolerable cabbages growing, and express sorrow that they had not this Spring made their gardens more extensive,

---

<sup>284</sup> European vegetables grow on the mountains of Jamaica, back of Cold Spring, in as high perfection as ever I saw in any climate; viz. carrots, parsnips, beets, potatoes, cabbage, lettuce, &c. &c. and also very fine apples, with which I have seen trees loaded particularly at Mr. Smith's Mountains. [Note in the original.]

seeing the great profit made by their productions at Halifax Market, and they not able to avail themselves of it, from their want of timely exertion.

The cause of their not setting out with a good inclination to work, was not certainly from incapability on their part; but most undoubtedly from some influence, which taught them to expect advantages from such backwardness, to promote either their own general views, or perhaps the particular ones of the most *designing* among them. The arrival of the Maroons in this country, after a long voyage, sickly, driven from the place of their nativity; no preparation for their immediate reception; sudden purchases obliged to be made to procure houses habitable for them; *every thing* at first conspired, with the longest and severest Winter known in this country within the memory of Man, to hurt and depress the prospects before them.

They now see we have our share of warm, and a long continuance of comfortable weather; preparations making, as fast as possible, for their accommodation, by the erecting of six large commodious houses, and a well-planned large school house for them. These attentions will cheer their future hopes, and give every reason to expect, that the experience of this year will excite them to labor for themselves hereafter; every propensity to which I shall endeavor to promote, by the assignment of lands, example, and instruction.

Your fourth query – “*What appears to have influenced them against settling and providing for their own comfort?*” can better be answered by those who were in the habit of being with them from their arrival, and observing the conduct of your assistant towards them, to the day that I took possession of my charge: I can repeat nothing but from hearsay, and that I would not choose to do.

The first time I ever saw the Maroons, and the only time previous to my coming here to attend you for one week, before the 22nd July, was in your company, sometime in April last, when Colonel Leonard was also here. The Maroons then (*I believe by a delegate*) expressed great dissatisfaction at the coldness of the Winter, and also laid some stress on the little probability there was before them, to maintain their families by their labor, particularly such as had *three or four wives with children by each*. These were the only *specific reasons* assigned. All the rest only went to general objections to any cold climate, and a wish to be removed to a warm one. They had not then experienced a Summer here; they had not seen Indian corn come to perfection; they had not an idea the cold weather was ever to cease; in short, it appeared to them, that no place or situation in the habitable globe, was what they meant except a return to their own country under the Capitulation. When they were told that was never by them to be looked for, they then expressed a wish to go to any country of a similar climate with the one they had left. Their reasons, their arguments, and opinions, appeared to me to have been long studied. And they were all collected in a body at the house, that they might have an opportunity of expressing them before the then company, for (to me) some latent purpose. This observation struck me, and I believe one or two other gentlemen at the same time.

I also know, that one or two families who did work by planting potatoes, &c. at Cold Harbor, have told me, that they had made themselves obnoxious to some of the leading people among the Maroons, and that they had been much discouraged and

severely treated by Mr. Ouchterlong; and that much discouragement was thrown on their exertions, by knowing that Mr. Ouchterlong did not wish they should work.

The disposition I find in the Maroons, so far as I can judge, indicates a practicability which may, and I hope will be guided to useful labor. Many have a turn for trade, and practice it among themselves. Many of the younger part are disposed to go into service by the month, but none are inclined to separate from their families, or be at any distance from the main body of their people.

I have the honor to be, with the greatest regard,

Dear Sir,

Your most obedient humble servant,

(Signed) ALEX<sup>R</sup> HOWE.

No. 13

Extract of a LETTER from Sir John Wentworth to the Duke of Portland; dated Halifax, Nova Scotia, 4th November 1797. (One enclosure)

The Maroons improve in their conduct; and I trust will gradually forget the impressions made on their inexperienced and violent minds by interested and ill-disposed persons. They are healthy and increase, as appears by the physician's report<sup>285</sup> herewith enclosed. Nor have they a single complaint to offer. Those that were taught to them heretofore, now diminish; and the mild pleasant weather of this Autumn satisfies them that they can be comfortable. It is much to be regretted that the island of Jamaica has not taken effectual measures for payment of the bills drawn by Mr. Quarrell for their support. The bill-holders decline consenting to his return to Jamaica, and the refusal of his draft has so effectually suspended his credit, that he could not obtain any money or supplies for them, neither would any person take his bills on any terms. I have therefore been unavoidably necessitated to conduct this service, and draw bills on Messrs. Milligan and Mitchell, on account of the island of Jamaica, referring them, in case of difficulty, to the Lords Commissioners of His Majesty's Treasury. By this mode, the island will pay in the first instance, and according to their engagements, or be ultimately responsible for it. Mr. Quarrell feels himself much injured by the dishonor to his bills, and still more so in the consequent detention from his affairs in Jamaica.

---

<sup>285</sup> This report is a table labeled "A RETURN of sick and number of Maroons, from the 1st October to the 1st of November 1797," and is bafflingly incomplete. The entire information included is as follows: It names two sick individuals, and their complaints. John Linton, "consumptive and sick before he came to Nova Scotia," and Bessy Sewell, "scrofulous swellings in the neck, and consumptive". It cites two figures: "Total in hospital – 2" and "Increase in births since last return – 5". There is a *blank* column titled "Dead," and a line entry reading "Total number of Maroons," with no number attached to it. The table is signed by "John Oxley, Surgeon". My source is a contemporary transcription; it's possible the manuscript included the now-missing information.

## General Walpole on the Maroons<sup>286</sup> (1798)

GENERAL WALPOLE, stated, that he had been entrusted with a command against the Maroons, which he discharged with fidelity, little suspecting that he should have been made the instrument of one of the grossest violations, for which any country had ever reason to blush. It was from the reliance the Maroons had upon him, and an assurance that the word of the King was inviolable, and dared not be infringed, that they consented to the treaty. The treaty however had been violated, and that gallant people had been made the victims of the offended pride and jealousy of the island of Jamaica. To deny the assertions that had been made in the paper published in Jamaica, to call for proofs to show that the Maroons had acted up to the treaty, and that in no instance they had been guilty of the excesses imputed to them, were the motives for bringing this motion before the House [of Commons of the British Parliament]. It was not his intention now to enquire into the reasons of commencing the war with them, but he would assert that the general causes were a justifiable resistance to an unprovoked aggression.

As a people, they were naturally attached to their rights. Resistance with them was not an act of prudence, but of necessity. It was more than probable that Jamaica dreaded the effect which the example of a free people, existing in the island, might have on their slaves. At the commencement of the Maroon war, Jamaica was at the plenitude of her means, and she evinced what was the usual concomitant of wealth – folly. The Maroons, he contended, had made peace with sincerity. The treaty consisted of three articles: 1. That they should on their knees beg the King's pardon. 2. That they should repair to the old town, or Montego Bay, and settle wherever the Government directed. And 3. That they should surrender the runaway slaves. In his opinion there was not the least military necessity that they should surrender at discretion.

The Hon. General here entered into a detail of the circumstances that attended their surrender, and the exertions he made to have the treaty fulfilled, from which he inferred that it was the determination of the Government to extirpate the Maroons, to whom the word of the King had been pledged, and yet they were condemned on *ex post* evidence, without being heard, and sacrificed to the lock-up mystery of a chamber! Such was the case, and such the justice of the House of Assembly of Jamaica.

He then moved, that the House resolve itself into a Committee on Friday seven-night, to take into consideration the proceedings held as to the negotiation entered into between Major General Walpole, and the Maroons at Trelawney town, in December 1795.

Mr. DUNDAS adverted to the proceedings on this subject last year, when the Hon. General disavowed any intention to interfere with the conduct of the Assembly in Jamaica, provided the Maroons were properly attended to in their banishment, and as the greatest attention had been paid to render their situation comfortable, the

---

<sup>286</sup> From BRITISH PARLIAMENT. (1798, May 5). *Caledonian Mercury*, p. 2.

object of the present motion was incompatible with that disavowal, and had a direct tendency to interfere with the internal Government of Jamaica. He was at a loss to know how the House was to proceed if the motion should be adopted. Were they to call the House of Assembly to the bar on Friday next, and to proceed to an investigation of their conduct? It would be an idle and nugatory proceeding. If the object was to ameliorate the situation of the Maroons, in this point of view it would be equally ineffectual, because the utmost care had been used to preserve their habits, their religion, and to furnish them with every thing that could conduce to the comforts of them and their families. He then read extracts from papers published in Jamaica, in vindication of the conduct of the Government at Jamaica; and declared, that it was obvious from the date of the treaty and surrender of the Maroons, that the infraction was on the part of the Maroons.

Mr. TIERNEY said, with respect to the motion, nothing had been said in answer to the main point. To him it appeared fit and proper that an enquiry should be instituted, that it might be seen where the blame lay.

Mr. SEWELL entered into a vindication of the conduct of the Assembly, who were actuated by motives of policy, justice, and humanity. [sic.]

Mr. BARHAM opposed the motion.

A division took place, where there appeared in favor of the motion – Ayes 5, Noes 34.

### **Preston in the late 19th century<sup>287</sup> (1863)**

Although direct and encouraged emigration from the mother country to this [Province of Nova Scotia] is a scheme something new to us, the formation of settlements is by no means so. We have had four within the last twelve years – the Sherbrooke and Dalhousie (military settlements), Hammond's Plains and Preston (black settlements). That at Sherbrooke was formed in 1816, when the officer whose name it bears was the Lieutenant Governor of the Province. It was principally composed of disbanded soldiers from Nova Scotia and Newfoundland regiments, which were reduced in this country. The Dalhousie settlement was laid out two or three years after, under the auspices of our present Governor-in-Chief, on the disbandment of the 98th regiment, which also took place here. The settlers at both received great encouragement from Government. For eighteen months or two years provisions were gratuitously furnished them and their families, and many of them became out-pensioners of Chelsea Hospital.

The settlements of Hammond's Plains and Preston that I believe I have denominated "black settlements" are composed of the negro slaves which were carried off from the coasts of the southern States during the last American war, by Sir Alexander Cochrane, and made a present by that Admiral to the province of Nova Scotia. (It may be here mentioned by way of parenthesis, that these are the gentry for whom John Bull has lately paid to the United States the good round sum of

---

<sup>287</sup> From Harris, H. B.. (1863). EMIGRATION TO NOVA SCOTIA. *Western Morning News* (Plymouth, England), p. 4.

thousands by way of indemnification – such was the decree of the mighty Autocrat of the North, the President’s firmest but most distant ally.) These poor shivering devils have striven hard with the barrenness of the soil and the inclemency of the climate, and it would be an injustice were I not to add that they are a quiet, industrious, and sober race.

I must remark, by the way, that it is in their own fault (or rather the fault of designing and mischievous people for ill-advising them) that they are not in a climate more genial to their birth and habits. When the abduction (or whatever name you please to give it) took place, and no remedy could be applied, Government determined on sending them to Trinidad, made most liberal arrangements for the purpose, allotted them portions of land in the island, and hired vessels for their conveyance. Before, however, this beneficial measure could be accomplished, the idea got among them (or rather, was circulated, as I before observed) that they were to be sent back to their old masters, or landed in some part of the West Indies where they would again become slaves. The consequence was that very few of them would embark, and here they remain to this day, a burden on the community at large.

It is hardly known how these poor creatures manage to subsist, especially at Preston, where the land is much worse than at the other settlement. In the summer you may see them by dozens in Halifax, having come eight or ten miles to sell a few berries, the produce of the woods, or tubs and brooms of their own make, on which traffic they mostly depend. Their distress is, however, so well known here that charity is administered to them with an open hand, otherwise their lot would be deplorable indeed.



## Appendix: From Slavery to Apprenticeship in Jamaica

### “An interesting correspondence”<sup>288</sup> (1828)

An interesting correspondence is published in the *National Intelligencer*, between the British and American Governments, relative to a proposal of the latter for a mutual surrender of all slaves and apprentices absconding to and from Canada, the West Indies, &c.; also, for the mutual restoration of deserters from the respective armies and navies, as well as the mercantile marine of the two countries. The principle of the application, it appears, was not objected to by the British Government, and the expediency of such an arrangement was admitted. It was urged, however, by Mr. Huskisson that the giving back of slaves, would be an unpopular measure with the British public, particularly that part of it which adopts the views and sentiments of anti-slavery societies.

### “After the rebellion in Jamaica”<sup>289</sup> (1835)

Antecedent to, and after the rebellion in Jamaica of 1832, a feeling, too deep to be removed by the persuasions of their best friends, took possession of the negroes – it was their firm conviction that the King had ordered their fetters to be struck off – that instructions to that effect were actually in the Island – but that the planters, resolved upon perpetuating slavery, had prevented the benevolent intentions of the Sovereign from being carried into effect. The discontent created by this, and by some unwise clauses in the Assembly’s Act of 1831, led to a wider breach between the masters and their slaves, than had probably existed since the dreadful year [that saw the end of the Second Maroon War], 1796. In consequence, some bold spirits encouraged their companions in slavery to make the rising of 1832, and had this not been met in its outset, by the strongest measures, and the most determined and anxious vigilance on the part of the Executive not only the island of Jamaica, but the whole of our West India possessions, would have been delivered over, a prey to the fiercest anarchy and the most deplorable excesses.

As it was, many of the negroes, who had served as little else than tools in the hands of certain desperate men of the same origin with themselves, expiated their errors in the field, with arms in their hands, and a great many more, after undergoing military trials in the face of their brethren, on the public scaffold. Though quelled at so great a sacrifice of human life, and the destruction of property to an extent little, if anything, short of one million and a quarter currency, the embers of revolt and disaffection lay smoldering, and a favorable moment only was wanting to fan them into a fierce and unsubduable fire.

It is probable that the knowledge of this circumstance had as much to do, as the rooted antipathy entertained by Britons to slavery in the abstract, in carrying

---

<sup>288</sup> From An interesting correspondence. (1828, December 29). *Montreal Gazette*, p. 3.

<sup>289</sup> From LITERATURE. (1835, October 3). *Montreal Gazette*, p. 2.

through Lord Stanley's Act of Emancipation [of 1833]. As many are still ignorant of the principal features of that measure, we think it right to state them here in brief.

By the Imperial Act, amended by the Jamaica Assembly, slavery was abolished. A state of apprenticeship was substituted, to endure for four years for negroes employed as house-servants – for six years for those employed as field-laborers; all children (not destitute) were declared free at once; all negroes were entitled to freedom who had been with their owners' consent brought to Great Britain; negroes were entitled to demand a valuation of the unexpired term of their apprenticeship, and on payment of the award, to be set free; field-punishment was abolished; female apprentices were exempted from flogging; the judicial authority over negroes was transferred from local to special magistrates, appointed by the King; the power of corporal punishments was taken from masters and their agents; labor was limited to forty-five hours a week, except in certain emergencies: four and a half of the forty-five hours subsequently allotted to the cultivation of the negro's grounds; the master was bound to maintain his negroes as heretofore; no apprentice [was to] be taken off the island, or to be separated from his wife or child in removing him from one plantation to another; every Saturday to be allotted to the negro; Sunday markets to be abolished.

### **“The bitterness of the apprenticeship system”<sup>290</sup> (1834)**

The following information relative to the working of the *West India Slave Emancipation Act*, has been received by a late arrival from New York.

#### LETTER FROM JAMAICA

By the packet ship John W. Cater, Captain Crane from Kingston, we have advices from Jamaica to the 18th ultima – ten days later than before received. Some collision was apprehended between the Governor, the Marquis of Sligo, and the insular legislature. It had been removed, however, principally, by the judicious concessions of his Excellency, and entire harmony restored between the Executive and Legislative branches. In the opening message of the Governor, [...] he had expressed a hope and confidence that happy results would flow from the act of emancipation. That part of the message was discussed by [...] others, who, whatever they might *hope*, did not seem to feel warranted in expressing a confidence of the kind suggested by his Excellency. The following is an extract from the *Address of the Assembly*:-

#### EXTRACT FROM THE ADDRESS OF THE ASSEMBLY

When your Excellency took leave of us in the month of July last, we earnestly joined your Excellency in the hope, that the slaves in gaining their freedom, would also have gained the virtue of freemen, and have lost the vices of slaves – this, however, was but a hope, not sufficiently strong to dispel those gloomy anticipations which had taken in possession of our minds, with regard to the great change in the state of the laboring population; and which have been most painfully realized. We

---

<sup>290</sup> From LETTER FROM JAMAICA. (1834, November 21). *The British Whig* (Kingston), p. 2.

regret to say that neither in the present state, nor in the future prospects of the colony, can we see any cause of congratulation, but the contrary!

It is true that no blood has been shed, but the reluctance shown by the negro population to labor, even during the limited legal hours – their almost universal refusal to work their own time for wages – their daily increasing insubordination, and impatience of restraint, all combined, too plainly show that neither property nor life can be long safe, unless speedy and effective remedies are applied. These remedies, we are convinced, can only be found in an efficient magistracy and energetic enforcement of the law, whereby the emancipated slaves may be made sensible, that although the domestic authority of the master no longer exists, another power of control has been substituted, sufficient to maintain order, and enforce the performance of their duties. Unless this is done, we can contemplate no other result than increasing disorder, the abandonment of cultivation, and the speedy involvement of the colony in anarchy and destruction.

#### REPLY OF THE GOVERNOR

That I did express a hope, and that I do still feel a confident expectation, that the negroes, on acquiring their freedom, would also gain the virtues of freemen, and lose the vices of slaves, is most true; but it could not, I think, be supposed, that I ever expected them in the short space of three months to recover from the effects of so many years of slavery. That the negroes have shown much reluctance to labor, I freely admit; but it may be expected, that availing themselves of their newly acquired freedom, they should be unwilling voluntarily, to perform those services, which they had previously done only from coercion. It is to be hoped that a gradual melioration in this particular, may be effected, and that they may be brought into more industrious habits. At all events, however, I entirely coincide with you, that until those habits have been acquired, there is an absolute necessity for an efficient magistracy, and the due enforcement of the laws, so that it may be generally known that control still exists although in different hands. My anxious attention shall be directed to this subject.

From the proceedings before the Stipendiary Magistrates, who are judicial officers sent out from England, clothed with powers to decide between the late *masters* and their present *apprentices*, it is very evident that the island is very far from having settled down into a state of tranquility. The blacks are an indolent race, and now that they are freed from the lash of the overseer seem determined to labor or not, according as they please.

In the debate before referred to, Mr. Hyslop said that he was satisfied the apprenticeship system *would not work well*, and Mr. Leslie remarked it was true as stated in His Excellency's speech, that "no blood had been spilt," but would he venture to say that property had not been materially depreciated?

Mr. Grosset remarked – It had been said that free labor was preferable to the slave, now the apprentice. The operation of the act was not what could have been expected: for after the most mature deliberation the act was in itself defective, and could not be acted upon in a beneficial manner: Mr. Grosset, proposed that for the further safety and security of the island four ships should be sent out to be anchored

off the several harbors of the island, and save the expense of houses of Correction by placing delinquents in them.

Mr. Watkins observed that the people of the island had for 3 months tasted the bitterness of the apprenticeship system, and although he was the prophet of evil at their last meeting, yet his prophecy had been fulfilled. His statements had jarred upon the ears of members, yet time had proved their truth. He hoped the system would not be persevered in; it would cripple the resources of the island and prevent their further development. It was a measure based in perfect ignorance of the principles of human nature, and in ignorance of the local habits and customs of the people. It was an apprenticeship to idleness, instead of inuring the people to the proper enjoyment of freedom. It was training them to habits of indolence, & to disobedience of authority.

Mr. Davis did not despair of beneficial results from the apprenticeship system, and he rather attributed the mischief that had been experienced to the wicked interference of persons who traveled about the country for the purpose of inflaming the minds of the apprentices, than to a defect in the law. He would therefore propose as a remedy that a severe penalty should be imposed upon persons guilty of such conduct.

Mr. Barclay said, he could not help expressing his solemn conviction that, after a short experience of the manner in which the present system had been managed it would eventually bring the whole fabric of society about their ears. In his travels throughout the country, he observed a general sulkiness, and indisposition to law. The apprentices had tried their power – they had discovered that there was no authority in readiness to check them. Unless means were provided for their protection, the foundations of society must fall to their case. 'Twas absurd to blame the Stipendiaries; their number was inadequate to such a vast extent of country.

In a subsequent debate, on the 17th, Mr. Batty spoke of the critical situation in which the island was now placed, by the conduct of the negro population. It was notorious that the small portion of labor prescribed by law for the apprentices to perform was not even done; they most shamefully evaded it, and did not turn out at the hours appointed by law; in fact, they did just as they liked, and worked as they pleased; they defied their masters, and set their authority at defiance.

All the speakers seemed to admit that other provisions are necessary to secure the peace and safety of the island than those that are placed at the disposal of the Stipendiary Magistrates. A stronger police is said to be required, and it is contended that the mother country ought to sustain the additional expense, inasmuch as by the act [of] emancipation it had created the necessity for the burden.

There were a variety of minor regulations respecting the jurisdiction of the special justices, the classification of apprentices, and the imposition of fines and punishments for specified infractions of the law. But the grand features of this Act are, that slavery is to be abolished, not nominally, but virtually, in the year 1840; that the power of adjudicating between master and apprentices is consigned to

persons specially appointed, and supposed to be disinterested judges; and that the power of inflicting arbitrary punishment is taken away from the overseers.

For carrying this law into effect, the sum of £20,000,000, as compensation for the ultimate loss of slave labor, was awarded by the British Parliament to the planters. Large as this sum undoubtedly is, it cannot repay the planters for the loss which they must sustain, by the damage done to their property, consequent on the emancipation of the negroes. It would have been wise, however, if, instead of attempting to impede the operation of the apprenticeship system, the masters had set themselves seriously to work, to conciliate the negroes, and assist in altering their moral character, so that, when completely released from bondage, they might not rush into the wild excesses, but pass, by an easy and natural transition, to the enjoyment of freedom.

While the Marquis of Sligo, and the stipendiary magistrates, directed all their energies, to bring a knowledge of the new law home to the black population – the planters, by their conduct, produced a state of things nearly akin to that which preceded the revolt of 1832. Upon the plea, that they could not receive the same advantages from the labor of apprentices, which they had been accustomed to derive from slaves, they curtailed the negroes of many allowances and gratuities, which they had long enjoyed. This, added to other causes of offence, seriously endangered the peace of the island. From that period, too, [...] the attorneys and overseers came into constant and angry collision with the stipendiary magistrates. So great, indeed, are the difficulties which these gentlemen have to contend with, in the discharge of their laborious duties, that it has lately become a question whether it would not be better to hasten the period of complete emancipation, rather than permit the present miserable state of things to continue.

### **“Circumstances calculated to humiliate”<sup>291</sup> (1837)**

On Monday evening, a very numerous and respectable meeting was held in the Bath Saloon, Glossop-road, to hear a lecture by George Thompson, Esq., the advocate of the oppressed negroes, on the condition in which they are now placed. There was also present Dr. Palmer, whose name will be familiar to our readers as one of the stipendiary magistrates of Jamaica, who, by his adherence to justice, and his refusal to be, as too many of his brethren were, the mere whipping men of the planters, became deeply obnoxious to them, and as much beloved by the negroes. He was dismissed from his office by the governor of the island, on the charge that he had “administered the law in the spirit of the English abolition act;” and strange to tell, his dismissal was sanctioned by the Colonial Office at home. The large and elegant Bath Saloon was crowded to suffocation, and the staircase and the doors were besieged by hundreds who could not obtain admission.

Dr. Favell introduced Mr. Thompson to the meeting.

---

<sup>291</sup> From THE WRONGS OF THE NEGROES. (1837, September 30). *Sheffield Independent*, p. 4. I also seamlessly include material from the article immediately following on the same page, titled PUBLIC MEETING, which contains more information given by Dr. Palmer.

Mr. THOMPSON remarked that they were met under circumstances calculated to humiliate, to mortify, and to embarrass them. They had to contemplate the failure of their plans, the misappropriation of their money, the weakening of their national influence; and they had to commiserate the condition of 750,000 human beings, in that condition of slavery from which the people of England did suppose they had delivered them. He was not prepared to say that the negroes were in every respect as badly off as before, still less, that in general they were worse off. As it respected religious opportunities and the means of acquiring knowledge, many of them were more favorably circumstanced. He was not there to make out a case against the planters for the gratification of any personal feeling; on the contrary, he believed they had acted no worse than other men would have done under similar temptations. [...] In reference to this island [of Jamaica], he mentioned the case of the owners of an estate, who, twelve months after the passing of the abolition act, told Mr. Buxton these facts:-

For several years before, he [the owner] had lost by his estate, several hundreds a year. Out of the twenty millions [paid to slave owners for their "loss"], he received a sum for his slaves which far more than compensated him for his losses, and he immediately let his estates for three years, at a rent of £1000 for the first year, £1200 for the second, and £1500 for the third. After he had closed with these terms, he was applied to by another party, who would have given him £2000 a year, for ten years. Well, therefore, might he say that the abolition act worked well for them, and demonstrated the folly of the government in giving the planters twenty millions to do that which, in fact, was a great benefit to themselves.

Mr. Thompson called upon the meeting to look back at the last few years. Five years ago, the friends of the negro were exerting themselves to excite the public feeling, by diffusing information on the subject of slavery. In 1833, the reformed parliament met, many of its members being pledged for abolition. The tables of the House groaned under the weight of petitions, and one was presented signed by the females of Great Britain, to the number of 187,000. In January of that year, 339 delegates from all parts of the kingdom met on this subject in London. They had an interview with Lord Stanley, who promised that the measure of government should be "safe and satisfactory; safe," he said, "to the colonies, and satisfactory to you."

In the speech of Lord Stanley, proposing the emancipation bill, Lord Stanley declared the intention to be, to make the negroes free. If, then, it appeared that the apprenticeship was but another word for slavery, they had been mocked and plundered; their twenty millions had been thrown away; and England was still a slave-holding nation. But the negro was now in a changed position as to the nation.

The people said, before, they had no share in the guilt of making him a slave. The planters offered for twenty millions, to give up the key of his dungeon. The offer was accepted, and the price was paid. But the negro still found himself in the house of bondage. If, then, the key would not work, they must throw it away and get another; or they must apply a little legislative oil; if these failed, they must adopt the last resource, and take off the lock.(Loud cheers.)

Mr. Thompson then went on to show from the act, that it declared the slaves “to all intents and purposes free, and discharged them from all manner of slavery.” The people had fulfilled their part. The money was paid, and no power could ever recover it. They did not want it. They never grudged it; but they wanted the thing which they bought. [...] They had given the measure a fair trial for three years, and now they had learned the distressing fact that the negro was still a slave. They had their work to do over again. Again they must rally the moral energies of the nation, nor pause till their hands were free from the blood of the negro. But they were often told it was only for three years longer, and then the negroes would be free. It was not so. Thousands ought to be free on the 1st of August, 1838, who would be detained in slavery by chicanery till 1840; and by that time, if the colonists were left alone, they would have made such preparations by vagrant laws, police regulations, &c., that the condition of the negroes would still be as bad as now.

And if it were only for three years, who was prepared to take the responsibility of three years’ oppression, three years’ unpaid labor, and therefore robbery; three years of torture at the treadmill, insult and proscription? What would they think of three years’ fever, or three years’ toothache, or three years’ of commercial panic, or three years’ bondage for their fathers, their mothers, their wives, and their children? For a time, he begged to make way for his friend, Dr. Palmer, who had resided 22 years in Jamaica, having been 10 years a local magistrate, and since August 1834, nearly to the time of his leaving the island, one of the special magistrates. [...]

Dr. PALMER was greeted by the meeting with loud cheering. He appeared, he said, in the simple character of a witness, to point out how the abolition act had worked in the islands. He had ever been opposed to any modification of slavery. While slavery was to be continued, let it remain *pure*. It was incapable of amendment, and therefore the friends of the negroes erred in making any change, till they entirely set the slaves free. By any measure that restricted without destroying the planters’ power, the planters were excited to regain that power, and for that purpose, they inflicted more cruelties on the negroes, than they would otherwise have devised.

Before this act came into operation, the planters had many meetings to devise the means to frustrate its provisions, and they found means so to distribute the hours of labor, as to deprive the slaves of the opportunity of cultivating their provision grounds. The law forbids the working of the negroes more than 45 hours in the week; and where they have to raise their own food, they were to be allowed 4½ hours more. It was a fact little known here, that the Jamaica apprentices received no wages for their five day’s labor, and no food, and the planters contrive by their mode of apportioning the time, and by defrauding the negroes, through their having no time pieces, to work for them 50 or more hours a week. The planters therefore, having got their 20 millions, still get as much labor as they had before, and no longer pay even the trifling expenses they were before subject to.

Under the name of indulgences, they withheld from the negroes the necessaries of life, which they had formerly to provide. The negroes used to have six salt herrings a week, which was so necessary to keep them in health, and that so accorded with the masters’ interests, that no legislation was needed on the subject. Yet in the

workhouse code, it provided that imprisoned slaves should not have six herrings a week, but seven. This showed the necessity of the allowance; yet under the plea that it was indulgence, and not required by the law, the herrings were now withheld.

He did not mean to say, that all the evils of slavery remained; but under the present system, he maintained that there was more real misery and more oppression than were customary in slavery. Some of the greatest evils of slavery were removed; but correspondent evils of equal magnitude had taken their place.

The present system was one of extreme privation, and of the severest coercion. Admitting that fewer lashes were inflicted now than formerly, they were ten times more severe. The thirty-nine lashes of slavery were comparatively trifling punishment. After it, a slave was required to proceed to his work, and was able to do so. Now, thirty-nine lashes were a matter of life and death; and he had met with many individuals, who, by a smaller number, had been ruined for life. The planters had an indirect influence over the mode of punishment. Though the sentences were by the magistrates, the lashes were inflicted by the master's drivers, or by persons in the houses of correction, under their control. The cats that were used tore the flesh to pieces. [...] To show the present practice as to flogging, Dr. Palmer read a circular issued by Sir Lionel Smith, last May. It was to this effect:-

“The governor having observed the severe effects produced, not by the illegal application of the lash, but by its use after previous floggings, repeats his injunction that the use of the lash be restricted to offences of disgraceful and aggravated nature, and on no account be repeated till the offenders have entirely recovered from previous floggings; and that in all cases the apprentices shall be perfectly cured before they are removed from the hospitals, or required to resume their labor.”

This proved the increased severity of the punishments; that floggings were repeated before the apprentices were recovered; that they were flogged for trivial offences. One of the most common offences with which the negroes were charged was insolence, which meant any thing at which a planter might choose to be offended. [...]

During slavery, it was customary for the old, the infirm, or the disabled, to be exempt from labor. But when the British public had bought their freedom, they were dragged out again, and required by their masters to do work of which they were quite incapable. He mentioned the cases of two poor paralytic and old women, who had thus been treated. For one of them, when he had exerted himself in vain to obtain redress, her fellow-apprentices subscribed to buy her freedom. Before the abolition of slavery, she had not been required to work for seven or eight years; yet when the nation had paid her ransom, she was required to work again, and the attorney of the estate had the conscience to take from the poor apprentices no less than £7 5s. 10d., to buy her exemption. Her owner was Alderman John Atkins, once Lord Mayor of London, who now had that ill-gotten gain in his possession.

Dr. Palmer went on to show how the colonists had evaded the law as to the flogging of the negroes, and especially of the women in the tread-mills; and he described those horrid instruments of torture, the Colonial tread-mills. [...] He stated, the mothers of families were the most ill-treated of all the apprentices. [...]



Mr. THOMPSON again briefly addressed the meeting, explaining that the position and character of the generality of the special magistrates, exposed them in a peculiar manner to the seductions of the planters. In explanation of the condition of the women and children, who are peculiarly the object of the planters' ill-treatment, Mr. Thompson stated that the act left the burden of maintaining the free children entirely upon their parents, but there was this provision, that if the parents could not maintain them, they might apprentice them to the planters for 21 years. The object of the planters was, therefore, to coerce the people into doing this, but to the honor of the negroes he said it, that so determined were the poor negroes, that their children should not be brought into bondage, that only about 12 children out of the whole negro population of Jamaica, had been so apprenticed. [...]

[MORE DETAILS FROM DR. PALMER]

Dr. PALMER said<sup>292</sup> – [...] Before we condemn the planters, we must prove that they have violated faith. I come at once to the heart of this subject. The law of 1833 enacts the principle of freedom. It lays the negro under certain obligations for a limited time, but declares that in every other respect he shall be a free man. He is required to labor for his former owner so many hours per week, and is entitled to receive from that master, the same amount of food, raiment, care, and attention, the same support in old age and sickness, as when he was a slave. For a certain amount of labor now, he was to receive the same support as in slavery.

Unfortunately, the imperial parliament left the carrying out of the act, and the settlement of many legal points, to the colonial legislature. This was a fatal error. It could not be expected that men who for years had been opposed to any mitigation of the condition of the slave, should be suddenly changed in mind, and rendered desirous of improving the slaves' condition. Although the act was gilded by a splendid bribe of twenty millions, the planters clung to the power they were about to lose. In framing their local acts, they took care to prevent the operation of the principle of freedom, so far as concerned the welfare and interests of the latter.

I will give one or two specimens of their frauds. In the imperial act, it is provided that no punishment shall be inflicted but by the authority of the special magistrates. It forbids the planters to punish [apprentices] themselves. These provisions were literally copied into the 24 clauses of the Jamaica act; but, in the 39th clause, authority was given to the planters to put any apprentice in the dungeon for 24 hours, for any offence, or for any thing which a planter might deem an offence, thus abrogating both the letter and the spirit of the 24th clause. This 39th clause has been made one of the most fearful instruments of cruelty. It might seem a slight thing to put a negro (for planters make a wide distinction between negroes and whites) into confinement for 24 hours; but after this law had passed, the planters, finding that through it their revenge might have vent, put the dungeons into such a state as to make them places of torture. They made them small, often under ground, dark, solitary cells, with not even a board to lie down upon. There the negroes were confined, not only in Jamaica, but, I believe, in every other colony, without a particle

---

<sup>292</sup> The material from here on is from a similar public meeting, reported on the same page of the newspaper, the following day.

of food. Negroes were frequently incarcerated immediately after they had finished their work at night, when they were wet, weary, and hungry, for some trifling offence, committed during the day, or for no offence at all. On the charge of looking cross or sulky, man or woman, boy or girl, might be thrust into one of these dungeons, and kept there 24 hours; and if they happened not to have had food since the morning, the period of their starvation was thereby extended to 36 hours. These cells were in constant use among the planters, and they made them, by all the means they could devise, places of torture. One of them, which I inspected, was 5 feet long by 4½ feet wide. I found three apprentices crammed into that place, where they were half suffocated. When a negro applies to a special magistrate for redress, the magistrate is obliged, unless he is prepared to undergo the pains and penalties of unpopularity with the planters, to dismiss the negro, by telling him he deserved it.

The 11th clause of the imperial act declares, that the same amount of food, &c., allowed to the negroes during slavery, should continue to be given them by the masters. This looks honest. The law enacts, that all the allowances, maintenance, support, clothing, and medical attention, considered to be necessary, or ordered by the slave law, heretofore in force, shall be continued. The planters passed the clause in the same way, but they knew well that the slave law was silent on the subject. The colonial legislators never considered it necessary to enact that the planter should provide what was necessary for the health of his slave. It was always considered that self interest was sufficient security for that. But, when the slaves became apprentices, the planters turned round upon them and said, as the slave law was silent on the subject, they were not bound to continue those allowances, which they had known to be necessary, and had therefore given during slavery. Thus the negro was deprived of what was essential to his health: the small pittance of salt provision which the planter had been accustomed to give him. The six herrings a week were now withheld, the farmer continuing to exact nearly the same amount of labor as before, though he had received compensation from the nation.

The spirit of the law was habitually and grossly violated. It was intended that apprenticeship should be a mitigation of slavery, and that its severer features should be removed; that the negroes should be governed by equitable regulations, not by brutal coercion. What did the planters do? In the time of slavery, the colonial legislatures thought 39 lashes sufficient to support the planter's authority, and they were therefore limited by law to 39. He did not mean to say that no more than 39 lashes were given; 3, 4, or 500 were frequently given, but those were breaches of the law. Yet the apprentices were now liable by law to receive 50 lashes. The old slave code was frequently denounced as too sanguinary, even for slavery, yet it only contained two clauses authorizing as many as 50 lashes; and in this apprenticeship law, which was to have been an amelioration of the old, there were seven clauses authorizing 50 lashes. For all minor offences a magistrate was formerly empowered to inflict 30 lashes, or 3 months' imprisonment; yet now the number of lashes was raised to 50, and many of the special magistrates, who were at first sent out by the government, seemed to delight in going to the extreme of the punishment. It appeared as if they wished to acquire popularity by showing that [they] were willing to give the

50 lashes. All the popular magistrates were in the habit of resorting to the full amount on the most frivolous pretexts.

In the construction of the law, the grossest abuses have been perpetrated. It contained nothing to prevent the planters from recalling the old and crippled negroes, who, under the slave code, had been exempted from work, or who had been exempted by usage, or the restraints of decency. Under the new system, however, the planters insisted on their right to drag out to work every individual of whatever sex or condition. Some who had been exempted as cripples, for 15 or 20 years, and some females exempted as being the mothers of 10, 12, or 14 children, all these under the apprenticeship system were again required to work.

The planters laid down the principle, that wherever the law was silent with regard to a privilege, it should be construed in favor of slavery. The principle of the abolition act was, that the negroes should be considered as free, but the planter said, that though the negro was entitled to such rights as were specifically mentioned in the abolition act, in other respects he was to be considered as a slave. They found that the abolition act was silent upon a number of particulars, on which the framers never could have considered it necessary to legislate.

Thus, while a gang was at work, the masters used to find a cook to prepare their provisions, in order that they might be able to continue at their work without being interrupted by cooking. Legal provisions on this subject would have required a minuteness of legislation, that would have made the law contemptible; but the planters said, that as the law did not require them to provide cooks, each negro, though working the whole day, must cook his food in the time allowed him to eat it. This contemptible proceeding was a source of considerable irritation to the apprentices, who had always been accustomed to have cooks, water carriers, and nurses allowed them.

It was necessary that every gang, while at work, should be supplied with water, and an old woman usually attended upon them with a pail of water and a calabash, from which each negro might take a draught when he required it. This was no very great indulgence, yet it was withheld as a means of torturing the people. It could be for no other purpose; for instead of the privation increasing the quantity of work done, it would rather have the effect of diminishing it. The planters said, the law did not require them to find water carriers, and not only did they refuse to supply the negroes with water, but they rigorously prevented them, even though they were dying with thirst, from leaving their work for a moment to obtain it.

They found out too, that there was no provision in the law, allowing the negroes to leave their work in a tempest. This was always done during slavery; but now, the planters said, they were entitled to their pound of flesh, and would have it. Under no circumstances, would they permit them to retreat from a deluge of rain. Even the mothers working with their infants strapped upon their backs, were not allowed to leave the field, though drenched with rain. In a vast number of instances, they had even refused to allow the mothers to run from the field for a moment, in order to leave their children in a place of shelter. They insisted on their remaining in the field, whatever might be the state of the weather.

The planters said, too, there was no provision in the law requiring them to find nurses for their children. During slavery, there were attached to the different gangs one or more old women, who were incapable of labor, who used to sit by the fire with the cook, and take care of the infants, while the mother was at work. When, however, the new law came into operation, the masters refused to allow nurses, unless the negroes would pay for them in extra labor.

All these things combined, greatly irritated the minds of the negroes. They knew the exertions that had been made by the people of England, and they were surprised to find that the law which had been thus obtained, actually inflicted upon them evils of a new character. They were not flogged by their masters in the same way as formerly, but they suffered coercion and privations which left their condition in no material respect better than it was before.

Another gross evasion of the law was practiced. The imperial act provided that every apprentice desirous of purchasing his release, should have the opportunity of doing so, at a fair price. The planters, however, defeated this intention, by enacting that in the valuations to be made, two local magistrates should be pitted against the special magistrate. These two were always planters, and in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, were interested in increasing the value<sup>293</sup> of the apprentices, on the principle of “tickle me, and I’ll tickle you.” Fraud in their valuations was carried to an enormous extent.

I will give one instance. Charles Gray was a blacksmith at Fort Stewart, St. George’s. He was a member of a Baptist Church, and had married a free black woman, who was also a member. In January, 1834, he was desirous of purchasing his freedom. His master offered to make him free for £50 currency. Gray considered the price too high, and determined to wait till the approaching change should enable him to obtain his freedom on easier terms. In the following August, the apprenticeship act came into operation, when, being a non-*praedial* slave, he would have to serve a four years’ apprenticeship. He applied to a special magistrate, named White, to be valued, supposing, that as his master had only asked £50 before he had received from England £45 or £50 of compensation, he should be able to buy off his four years’ apprenticeship on very easy terms<sup>294</sup>. He was valued by White and two local magistrates, at no less than £120<sup>295</sup>. Being, of course, unable to meet the demand, he remained in servitude; but from that moment he was the object of the overseer’s

---

<sup>293</sup> “[D]uring the six months from the 31st May to the 30th of November, 1836, 581 apprentices purchased the remaining term of their apprenticeship at a cost of £18,217 16s. 2d., an average of £31 7s. 1d. During the existence of slavery, and for several years previous to the passing of the abolition act, the average price of negroes did not exceed [...] £50. If we add to the £31 7s. 1d. the average rate of the [government] compensation [for the loss of slaves], it will be seen that the masters have been benefited rather than injured by the abolition of slavery.” JAMAICA. (1837, December 23). *Sheffield Independent*, p. 3.

<sup>294</sup> A rough, back-of-the-envelope estimate using modern methods: Taking the £50 as the capitalized value of a lifetime of service, and using the 6% interest per year usual at the time as the discount rate, the implied value of a year of service is £3. The present value of four yearly payments of £3, given a discount rate of 6% per year, is about £10.40.

<sup>295</sup> Taking £120 as the present value of four years of service, and using the 6% per year discount rate common at the time, the implied value of a year of service is about £34.63.

strong dislike and unceasing persecution. In January, 1836, poor Gray being weary of his life, and having, in conjunction with his wife, scraped together about £80, applied to another special magistrate (White having been dismissed) named Fishburn. The magistrate at first told him that he could not be re-valued. Having been once valued at £120, he must pay that or serve out his apprenticeship. Thus, after having served 18 months of his apprenticeship, he was asked the same sum for his freedom as at the commencement. On this, Gray applied to a gentleman named Stern, on whose representations the magistrate consented to a re-evaluation; but he said the master was entitled to a fortnight's notice, and this was given according to law. In the meantime, the overseer, irritated that Gray should again attempt to gain his freedom, trumped up an idle charge against him and dragged him before Fishburn, who sentenced him to the workhouse to work in chains for a month, though he knew that in a fortnight or less the man was to be free. He was sent to the workhouse, was chained, put in the penal gag, was severally flogged by the driver, and when he came out was re-valued at the sum of £86 13s. 4d. The money was paid, and he became a free man. [...]

I will now enumerate those evils of the present system which, in the aggregate, have caused more suffering than was general under the old system:

1. The distribution of the hours of labor.
2. The want of food.
3. Frauds.
4. The treatment of the sick.
5. The treatment of the mothers of young children.
6. The severity of the punishment.

[...] [I will begin] with the distribution of the hours of labor. The planters are entitled, by law, to 45 hours' labor a week, out of which they are bound to give the negroes four hours and a half, or half a day, to cultivate their provision grounds. The first object with them was, to cheat the negroes of their half-day. One of the planters declared to me, twelve days after the new law came into operation, that by hook or by crook, they must have the half-day out of the negroes. To make them give it up, he would take away their nurses, their field cooks, & their water carriers.

The planters soon found the means to effect their purpose. The law stated that the day's labor should be nine hours, and that there should be five working days. Sunday had formerly been the slaves' market day, but the markets were changed by law to Saturday, which was given to the slaves, in order that they might not be compelled to desecrate the sabbath. But the planters considered this appropriation of the Sabbath to any other purpose than labor, a mere waste of time. The first object was to make the people work five whole days, instead of having, as by law allowed, one half-day to cultivate their grounds. During the time of slavery, they had one day in a fortnight for the purpose, besides Sunday; but the new law gave them one day in a fortnight, besides Saturday. The planters, however, said they would give them an hour a day, which, as the provision grounds were frequently five, ten, and sometimes fifteen or twenty miles from the place of their work, was completely useless to them. It was a cruel mockery, yet it received the sanction of the executive, and was not done

away with by the Colonial office. [...] The planters were allowed to establish the eight hours' system, instead of working the people nine hours a day and giving them the alternate Fridays. In the time of slavery, the negroes had three days a fortnight to supply themselves and families. Under the new law, they have but two days, Sunday being no longer reckoned as a working day.

The people of England never designed that the negro should be compelled to desecrate the Sabbath, yet, as an apprentice, he has but two days to provide for himself, where, as a slave, he had three. But even of this time he is frequently deprived. The planters trump up charges of deficient work, which the magistrates consider to be substantiated if they are supported by the opinions of the neighboring planters, and the unfortunate slaves are frequently mulcted of 6, 10 or 12 alternate Saturdays; thus the solitary day allowed them to cultivate their ground is taken by the planter, and the negroes are reduced from the three days a fortnight, which they had while slaves, to one day a fortnight. To this condition a great proportion of the negroes have been reduced.

From this cause arises the second evil I have enumerated, the want of food. The explanation I have already given, shows how it operates upon the negroes. In one day a fortnight, it is quite impossible for them to supply their wants, and keep up the cultivation of their grounds. [...] Provisions have risen in some instances 200 per cent. and others 300, thus injuring not only the negroes, but all the poorer classes of the colony. The markets were formerly supplied with ground provisions by the surplus produce of the slave population. When the negroes were allowed time to cultivate their grounds, they not only supplied themselves, but had a surplus to send to market. Now they have no surplus, they have not sufficient for their own support, and misery and starvation prevail among them. Yet this is in a country that teems with fertility, where a man need only plant to be sure to reap.

The negroes were early made aware that this would be the effect of the eight hours system, and they refused to submit to it. Coercion was resorted to and carried to a fearful extent. More punishment and severity were caused by their resistance to this scandalous injustice during the first year of apprenticeship, than by all other causes put together. Entire gangs are now living from hand to mouth, or endeavoring to obtain their sustenance from wild fruits. [...] At Barnes's Penn, the male apprentices, for resisting this system, were severely flogged, and the women were compelled to work in chains. [...] For the last twenty years of slavery, chains had been abolished on the estates as too degrading, and had been confined to the houses of correction. Yet, under this new act, penal gangs, working in chains, were to be found upon the estates in almost every part of the island, and men, women and children might be seen working for their masters chained like felons. After this law had been in operation six months, it was abolished by the Government. While it was in operation, it was used to an extraordinary extent. [...]

Why did the planters prefer the eight to the nine hours a day? They knew that the negroes had no means to calculate exactly the lapse of time, and that they could easily make them work more than the eight hours, as in fact they did make them work nine, ten, eleven, twelve, and in one instance thirteen hours. This last case was

on the estate of a man named Giles. [...] Giles contrived to defraud his apprentices, by extending their labor from day-break in the morning till six or seven o'clock at night. [...]

The frauds practiced on the negroes were the 3d evil in this catalogue. In crop time, which lasts four or five months in the year, the planters require about 20 hours extra work in each week. It was necessary for them to purchase this, and they have purchased it. As to the terms, a variety of arrangements have been made. In the parish of St. Thomas, in the East, the negroes have been coerced into giving up their half Friday, and 20 hours' a week extra labor in crop time, for which they just receive the allowance of slavery. In one estate [...] [the planter] had made a bargain to pay them for the extra labor of crop time, according to the amount of sugar they produced. This seems fair; but when examined, it is found, that supposing them to make all the sugar he requires, they can only earn 1s. 9½d. currency each, per week, or 1s. 0½d. sterling.

In the 4th place, is the treatment of the women and children. On the Mount Pleasant estate, St. Thomas in the Vale, was a poor woman who had the misfortune to have twins. Still she was required to do her full amount of work. For some time she worked with both her children on her back, and afterwards with one. Her master was frequently applied to, but would make no alteration. At length he agreed to let her work for herself on paying him 20s. a month. But the woman was quite unable to do this, and at the same time maintain her family. To pay this rent, she sold her hogs, her fowls, her furniture, till she was quite destitute. At last she was a month in arrear, and offered the last 5s. she had, in part payment. This was refused, and she was ordered to pay the whole, or go again to her field labor. She refused, and was brought before me for punishment. I, however, dismissed the case, and ordered the overseer to provide for her.

[CONTENT WARNING – GRAPHIC PHYSICAL ABUSE BELOW]

On the 2nd September, 1836, a woman brought to me her daughter, aged 11 or 12 years, to complain. The facts, as stated in their depositions, were these; they had both belonged to a Dr. Ball, but some time ago he sold the mother, retaining the child, thus separating them. The girl bore on every part of her body the marks of cruel punishment; her shoulders and back were a mass of lacerations, and on her head was a very severe wound. These were the results of the ill-treatment of Dr. and Mrs. Ball. One night she was preparing Mrs. Ball's supper. Her mistress accused her of intending to steal meat, and thrust a burning stick in her face, making a severe wound that left a scar. Another time, Mrs. Ball seized her by the throat, dashed her head against a post, and then nearly strangled her. On another occasion, her master knocked her down stairs, beat her with his fists, and broke a stick over her head. One day her mistress asked her where a piece of candle was, and on her answering that it was burnt, Mrs. Ball gave her a severe cut on the head with a carving knife. The knife fell, and when the girl stooped to pick it up, her mistress struck the carving fork into her head. Her clothes were saturated with blood, and her mistress compelled to wash them. As she had no others, she had to go the rest of the night naked. The occasion, however, of her running away, was a very severe beating her master gave her with

the handle of his hunting whip. I felt this was not a case in which it would be of any use for me to inflict the £5 penalty. I therefore sent the girl to the workhouse, to be protected from her master, and transmitted the affidavits to the Attorney-General, requesting him to institute proceedings.

The answer I got was, that the state of felling at the time was such, that it would be impossible to obtain a verdict against him. The father of the child was free, and he requested that she might be given up to him. I gave an order for the purpose. He took the girl into the country, and there I hope she is yet. Dr. Ball afterwards asked me, what I had done with his runaway apprentice, and said, he would have swinging damages against her father for harboring her. If he should persevere, I have no doubt a jury will grant heavy damages, and that the poor father will be ruined. I do not, by this detail, mean to intimate that every white man and woman are like Dr. Ball and his wife. But I detail it to show what can be done under the present system with impunity, and this is not at all a solitary case of the kind.

Dr. Palmer concluded with begging the meeting to be content with nothing less than the removal of every vestige of bondage, and with an apology for having occupied so much time. He was listened to with attention too intense for much cheering, but was loudly applauded when he sat down.



## Appendix: Indentured Apprenticeship in Canada

Though apprentices were not slaves, neither were they entirely free, in the pre-Confederation period. Their “masters” had certain rights over them, including the legal right to retrieve them if they tried to run away. “The original design of apprenticeship [...] was to instruct and find employment for the apprentice, while the master guaranteed to find him all necessaries as a remuneration for this services for seven years”<sup>296</sup>.

### Eber Welden and Pierre Agie, runaways<sup>297</sup> (1792)

#### *Twenty Dollars Reward*

Ran away from the Subscriber on Sunday the 7th instant, a Mulatto apprentice about nineteen years of age, and about 5 feet 9 inches high, a shoe-maker by trade, [who] had on when he went away a brown Surtout coat, a jean coat and leggings, a pair of boots and a new coarse hat.

Also a Canadian man about twenty-six years of age, much marked with the small-pox, [who] speaks broken English, [and] had with him a brown surtout coat, a brown coat and striped vest; he is a tanner and currier by trade. Whosoever apprehends the above mentioned men, and delivers them at Montreal, or to the Subscriber at Sault au Recollet shall receive the above reward and all reasonable charges, paid by

JOHN TEEPLE.

*N.B.* The apprentice’s name is Eber Welden, and the Canadian, Pierre Agie.

### John Larkin, indented apprentice<sup>298</sup> (1809)

#### EIGHT DOLLARS REWARD

Absconded from the service of the subscriber, on Tuesday the 10th inst. JOHN LARKIN, an indented apprentice, about nineteen years of age, of a spare make and fair complexion, very much freckled, wears short hair; had on when he went away, a short dark colored cloth coat and pantaloons, and striped waistcoat. All persons are forbid harboring the said apprentice, as they will incur the penalty and rigor of the law; and any person securing the said apprentice so as his master may get him again, shall receive the above reward of eight dollars and all reasonable charges paid.

CHARLES ARNOLDI.

---

<sup>296</sup> WEAVERS’ MEETING. (1830, March 12). *Coventry Herald*, p. 2.

<sup>297</sup> From Teeple, J. (1792, October 18). Twenty Dollars Reward [Advertisement]. *Montreal Gazette*, p. 3.

<sup>298</sup> From Arnoldi, C. (1809, January 16). EIGHT DOLLARS REWARD [Advertisement]. *Montreal Gazette*, p. 3.

## Samuel Ray, indented apprentice<sup>299</sup> (1810)

### FIVE SHILLINGS REWARD

Ran away from the subscriber on the 17th instant, *Samuel Ray*, an indented apprentice to the joiner business, about 18 years of age, about five feet three inches high, of a slender make, grey eyes & yellow complexion, speaks English and French; had on when he went away grey nankeen short coat, yellow, waistcoat and black trousers; it is supposed he went on board of a ship for Quebec. All persons are hereby forbid to give him credit on my account. Whoever shall harbor the said apprentice will be dealt with according to law. Any person or persons that will bring back the said apprentice shall receive the above reward.

JOHN ROBERTSON.

## Two apprentice shoemakers<sup>300</sup> (1811)

**This case is reminiscent of the tale of the elves and the shoemaker: “Two little elves assisted a poor shoemaker by doing his work for him during the night. The shoemaker sat up one night to watch the elves, and when they came he found they had no clothes. The shoemaker’s wife made them little caps, jackets, trousers and stockings; the shoemaker made them a little pair of shoes and left them on the bench at night. The little elves were overjoyed and danced and sang: “What spruce and dandy boys are we, No longer cobblers will we be.”<sup>301</sup>**

Ran away from the subscriber on the 24th ultimo, JEAN BTE. BEAUSETTE, an indented apprentice to the shoemaking business, about 17 years of age, fair complexion, dark eyes and short black hair – had on when he went away a dark colored short coat, a fearnought surtout with a silver hook and chain and Suwarrow [sic.] boots – any person who will apprehend the said apprentice and lodge him in any of his Majesty’s jails, will receive a handsome reward.

AMABLE GAUDRI.

Ran away from the subscriber on the 24th ultimo, JEAN BTE. SANDERS, an indented apprentice to the shoemaking business, about 18 years of age, fair complexion, blue eyes and fair hair – had on when he went away a short blue jacket, and a black silk handkerchief round his neck. Any person who will apprehend the said apprentice and lodge him in any of his Majesty’s jails, will receive a handsome reward.

JOHN GREEN.

---

<sup>299</sup> From Robertson, J. (1810, July 23). FIVE SHILLINGS REWARD [Ad.]. *Montreal Gazette*, p. 5.

<sup>300</sup> Gaudri, A. & Green, J. (1811, March 25). Ran away from the subscriber [Advertisement]. *Montreal Gazette*, p. 2.

<sup>301</sup> From TWO LITTLE ELVES. (1903, December 2). *Victoria Daily Times*, p. 2. It was traditional to give apprentices a suit of clothes upon their “graduation”. By giving them clothes as a kindness, the shoemaker’s wife inadvertently signaled that their apprenticeship was over, freeing them from their unpaid labor. (The version in the *Victoria Daily Times* optimistically concludes with the sentence, ‘And the shoemaker always prospered.’)

## Pierre La Rue, indented apprentice<sup>302</sup> (1824)

### RUN AWAY

From the subscriber, PIERRE LA RUE, an indented apprentice – all persons are forbid harboring or employing the said apprentice. ONE PENNY reward is hereby offered to any person who will bring him to the subscriber's store.

WILLIAM GALT.

## Mary Finlay, apprentice servant<sup>303</sup> (1830)

TEN DOLLARS REWARD – Deserted the service of the undersigned on the 26th inst. (supposed to have gone to Montreal), MARY FINLAY, an apprentice servant, aged about fifteen years. All persons are hereby forbidden to harbor, engage, or countenance the said apprentice, under the penalties of the law; and the above reward will be paid to any person that will give such information as will lead to the arrest and commitment of said apprentice. She has light brown hair, is of a fair complexion, has a slight scar on the side of her face, and at her departure, wore a printed cotton frock and straw bonnet trimmed with fancy ribbon.

JOHN M'GILLIVRAY

## Samuel Styles, “good-for-nothing” apprentice<sup>304</sup> (1835)

RUNAWAY APPRENTICE – Whereas, on Sunday evening last, about ten o'clock, SAMUEL STYLES, my lawful apprentice, did leave my home and employment, this is to give notice to forbid any person from giving him any encouragement or employment, as by so doing they will be subject to the usual penalty of the law. The said STYLES had on when he left, a grey coat, dark trousers and fur cap, is about five feet five inches high, pock-pitted in his face, and when he speaks, his mouth stands all awry. Whoever will bring this good-for-nothing back to his said master, shall receive a reward of a Brummagem-halfpenny. [sic.]

RICHARD HOWSE, *Copper Smith*.

---

<sup>302</sup> From Galt, W. (1824, September 8). RUN AWAY [Advertisement]. *Montreal Gazette*, p. 2.

<sup>303</sup> From M'Gillivray, J. (1830, September 30). TEN DOLLARS REWARD [Advertisement]. *Montreal Gazette*, p. 3.

<sup>304</sup> From HOWSE, R. (1835, January 10). RUNAWAY APPRENTICE [Advertisement]. *Montreal Gazette*, p. 3.

## Thomas Donalds, indented apprentice<sup>305</sup> (1847)

Whereas, THOMAS DONALDS, an indentured apprentice, has absented himself from me without any just cause or provocation, I hereby forbid any person or persons from harboring or trusting him on my account, as I will not be responsible for any debts of his contracting; and any person employing him, will be prosecuted according to law.

ROBERT BRASH, *Blacksmith, Portsmouth.*

## A tongue-in-cheek Proclamation<sup>306</sup> (1837)

**The following sarcastic declaration highlights some of the issues which caused friction between apprentices and their masters.**

### PROCLAMATION

Kingston, Upper Canada

Terence O'Shaughnessy, *the Editor of the British Whig, by the grace of his own assumption, Sovereign Lord and Dictator of all Matters, Persons, & Things, in and about the good and loyal town of Kingston.* To all advertisers in, subscribers to, and readers of the British Whig, and all others to whom these Presents may come, greeting:

WHEREAS it has been represented to us, that certain wicked and impudent young fellows, to wit, certain clerks, warehouse-men, apprentices, shop-men, shop-boys, &c. in this our loyal and well-behaved town, have arrogantly assumed unto themselves the title and designation of the "Young Men of Kingston," and who not having the fear of US before their eyes, but being instigated by the Devil or Dirty Jack, have, without asking our permission, as in duty bound, presumed to dictate to their Masters, the hours at which the said Masters shall close their shops and warehouses, in order that the said clerks, warehouse-men, apprentices, shop-men, shop-boys, &c. may be permitted to bestow more of their time to the cultivation of such arts, sciences and graces as shall fit them for the 'BAR & PULPIT' & it has also been represented to us, that the aforesaid Masters, albeit bearing the reputation of men of sound sense and discretion, have promised to comply with the orders of the said young men, to wit, the said clerks, warehouse-men, apprentices, shop-men, shop-boys, &c. and some of them have actually obeyed the said orders.

AND WHEREAS it has been further represented, that the above recited graceless proceedings on the part of the said young men, to wit, the said clerks, warehouse-men, apprentices, shop-men, shop-boys, &c. have been originated by certain calculating Yankees, for the purpose of propagating and disseminating in this our loyal town, the pernicious, treasonable and democratical doctrines of Atheism, Republicanism and Revolution, those said doctrines being now openly preached and

---

<sup>305</sup> From Brash, R. (1847, April 16). NOTICE [Advertisement]. *British Whig*, p. 3.

<sup>306</sup> From O'Shaughnessy, T., & BLACK JACK. (1837, March 22). PROCLAMATION. *British Whig* (Kingston), p. 1.

promulgated in a certain Religious and Political Debating Conventicle in town, y'clept "*the Kingston Young Men's Association.*"

AND MOREOVER, it has alarmingly been made manifest to our apprehension, that should the aforesaid clerks, warehouse-men, apprentices, shop-men, shop-boys, &c., be permitted to shorten the hours of business that evil will accrue to themselves, inasmuch as having more idleness upon their hands, part of them will be induced to pass their time in the rooms of the aforesaid demoralizing religious and political debating conventicle, to the serious endangerment of their souls and loyalty; and the other moiety, in all human probability, will pass their leisure hours in taverns and oyster shops, or in taking evening "Rides upon the Railroad," to the serious endangerment of their bodies and reputations.

NOW KNOW YE, in order to guard against these apprehended evils, WE, with the advice and consent of our well-beloved brother and Counselor, Terence O'Shaughnessy, Esq. do ORDER and COMMAND, that from this time henceforth, all shops and warehouses be closed at those hours only which their respective proprietors may themselves select. And this do ye, under pain of incurring our sovereign displeasure.

IN testimony whereof, WE, have caused these our Letters to be made Patent, and the Great Seal of our Office to be affixed thereto – Witness, our trusty and well-beloved Terence O'Shaughnessy, Esq. at the office of the British Whig, Kingston, this eleventh day of March, one thousand, eight hundred and thirty-seven.

T. O'SH. *Fighting Editor.*

By Command of the Editor, BLACK JACK, *Carrier.*

### Prince Edward Island's new Act regarding apprentices<sup>307</sup> (1845)

**This Act was intended to address deficiencies in prior Acts, and is therefore an example of what was considered up-to-date<sup>308</sup> (and humane?) legislation at the time.**

*Passed April 17, 1845*

I. Whereas The Acts now in force regarding apprentices, contain no sufficient enactments for their security, and are in other respects defective: Be it enacted, by the Lieutenant-Governor, Council and Assembly, that the Act of the eighth year of the reign of his late Majesty King George the Fourth, entitled *An Act for regulating Apprentices*, and the Act of the fifth year of the reign of Her present Majesty Queen Victoria, entitled *An Act to amend the Act now in force relating to Apprentices, and to repeal a certain Act therein mentioned*, and also the act of the third year of the

---

<sup>307</sup> From *The acts of the General Assembly of Prince Edward Island.* (1845). Charlottetown: James Douglas Haszard.

<sup>308</sup> New Brunswick had in place a similar statute in 1854, with the most notable difference being a clause requiring that "Every master ship builder shall employ in his ship yard at least two apprentices, being British subjects, each not less than fifteen years of age, and indented for four years at least, to learn the art of ship building". From the *Revised Statutes of New Brunswick*, 1854, Chapter 134.

reign of Her present Majesty, entitled *An Act to amend the Act now in force, regulating Apprentices, repealed by the last hereinbefore mentioned Act*, be, and they are hereby repealed.

II. And be it further enacted, that it shall be lawful for any parent or parents, guardian or guardians, to bind out as an apprentice, any child of any age, as an indentured servant to any tradesman, artisan, or farmer, for a period not exceeding the time when such child shall attain the age of twenty-one years.

III. And be it further enacted, that any infant of the age of twelve years, may be lawfully indentured to any tradesman, farmer, or other, by his or her own consent, if such infant have no parent or guardian within the Island, until such infant attain the age of twenty-one years, provided that every such indenture shall be entered into by the respective parties, in the presence of and with the consent of two Justices of the Peace, each of whom shall sign the said Indentures, which shall be equally binding as if they had been signed by the parent or guardian of the said infant: Provided that any two Justices acting in this behalf, may if they think fit, and in like manner, indent such infant for a shorter period than his or her attaining the age of twenty-one years.

IV. And be it enacted, that all infants of the age of sixteen and upwards, having no parents or guardians within the Island, may lawfully indent themselves to service to any tradesman, farmer or other, until he or she shall attain the age of twenty-one years, by Indenture under Seal, and shall be fully bound thereby.

V. And be it fully enacted, that every Indenture entered into as aforesaid, shall contain a stipulation on the part of the master or mistress, his or her executors, administrators or assigns, to cause the indentured child to be taught reading, writing and the common rules of arithmetic.

VI. And be it further enacted, that whenever it shall be made to appear to any two of Her Majesty's Justices of the Peace either upon the oath of any one or more credible witness or witnesses, or from a certificate under the hands of any eight or more respectable housekeepers residing in any town, or royalty, or township, within this island, that any mendicant child between the ages of two and twelve years, being an orphan, or whose parent or parents shall have abandoned the care of such child, and shall have left this Island under such circumstances as to such Justices shall be deemed a final departure therefrom, and that such a child hath been in the habit of soliciting alms, or receiving charitable contributions or allowances regulated by any charitable association, or being supported by any sums voted by the Legislature of this Island, and hath not otherwise means for his or her necessary permanent support, that then and in every such case, it shall be lawful for such Justices to indent any such child as aforesaid, until the age of twenty-one years, or for any less term in the discretion of such Justices, and upon such terms as may be agreed upon between the master or mistress and the said Justices, to any tradesman, farmer or any other person in manner hereinbefore described. Provided that every indenture so to be made, shall contain a covenant or stipulation on the part of the master or mistress, his or her executors, administrators or assigns, to cause the indentured child to be taught reading, writing, and the common rules of arithmetic.

VII. And be it further enacted, that in all actions at law or suits of enquiry arising out of any breach of the conditions of any indenture entered into in manner aforesaid in behalf of any pauper, orphan, or abandoned child, such actions or suits shall be brought in the name of the two Justices, their executors or administrators, who have been parties to the indenture as aforesaid, and such apprentice, with the permission of the court in which such suit or action shall be brought, shall be allowed to sue *in forma pauperis*.

VIII. And be it further enacted, that if any apprentice indented by virtue of this Act, shall desert or without leave absent himself or herself from the service of his or her said master or mistress, or otherwise misconduct himself or herself, then it shall and may be lawful for any Justice of the Peace to issue his Warrant on the application, on oath, of the master or mistress of such apprentice, for his or her apprehension, which warrant so issued, it shall be lawful for any constable or constables to whom it may be addressed to execute in any county of this Island, notwithstanding it may have been issued by one of Her Majesty's Justices of the Peace not qualified in the county where its execution may be required; and on such apprentice being brought before such Justice, he shall upon the evidence on oath of the said master or mistress, or of any other person, either order him, or her, to return to the service of such master or mistress immediately, or commit the said apprentice to the common jail of the county wherein such master or mistress resides, there to remain for any term not exceeding two calendar months, with or without hard labor (if a male), for any part of such time, and to require such apprentice thereafter to return to the service of such master or mistress, as he may in his discretion adjudge, and to continue to fulfil the conditions of the Indenture, and the Justice's and officer's fees of proceeding in every such case against any apprentice, shall be paid by the parent or guardian of such apprentice, and shall and may be recovered by Warrant of distress, or such other usual process as the case may require.

IX. And be it further enacted, that any person or persons willfully harboring an apprentice deserting or being absent without leave from his or her master's or mistress's service, or shall in his or their house, suffer or permit any apprentice to play at cards, dice, or any other unlawful game, or therein to be engaged in any unlawful employment, or who not being licensed to retail spiritous liquors, shall suffer any such apprentice to sit drinking in his or her house, or give him or her, or suffer to be given to him or her, any intoxicating liquors, each and every person so offending, shall forfeit and pay for every such offence, any sum not exceeding five pounds, to be recovered with costs before any one of Her Majesty's Justices of the Peace for the county wherein the offence may have been committed, on the oath of any one or more credible witness or witnesses.

X. And be it further enacted, that if any parent or guardian becoming bound for any apprentice, shall willfully represent, that such apprentice is younger than his real or true age, every such parent or guardian shall forfeit and pay for every such offence, any sum not exceeding twenty pounds, the said sum of twenty pounds to be recovered in Her Majesty's Supreme Court of Judicature, by Bill, Plaint, or Information; and if not more than eight pounds, before any Court of Commissioners

for the recovery of small debts, for the county where such parent or guardian shall reside, or before any two of Her Majesty's Justices of the Peace, for the same County, in the like manner as small debts are now recovered, on the oath of one or more credible witness or witnesses.

XI. And be it further enacted, that it shall be lawful in all cases of complaint against a master or mistress, by an apprentice, or his or her parent or guardian, on the ground of ill usage, neglect, or inability to instruct, or lawfully to maintain, lodge or clothe any such apprentice, for any one of Her Majesty's Justices of the Peace, having jurisdiction, to summon the master or mistress of such apprentice, to appear before any three of Her Majesty's Justices of the Peace, in order that such complaint may be investigated, who shall (if the master or mistress being lawfully summoned, do not appear) proceed to adjudicate thereon in his or her absence, and it shall and may be lawful for the said three Justices to cancel any Indentures between any such apprentices and their master or mistress, proof being made on oath of continued ill usage on the part of such master or mistress, or of his or her neglect or inability to instruct or duly and lawfully to maintain, lodge or clothe any such apprentice as the case may be.

XII. And be it further enacted, that if it shall be made to appear to such three Justices, that any premium has been paid with any such apprentice, or any wages be due, or clothing unprovided, according to Covenants contained in any Indenture entered into and produced before such Justices, together with sufficient evidence, on oath, respecting any matters of account, or provision which may be in dispute, it shall and may be lawful for such Justices to include, in any Order for the canceling of any such Indentures, an order for the equitable restitution of the whole or part of any such premium or payment of any sum that shall appear a just equivalent for any clothing, provision, or any other necessary, to which the said apprentice shall appear, by Covenants of the said Indenture, to be entitled, and not to have received.

XIII. And whereas it may seem just to the three Justices acting under the authority of this Act, to order, in certain cases, the person to whom any complainant may be indented, to receive such indented person back into their houses, if such person has been compelled by any master or mistress to leave the same: Be it enacted, that in such Order, a clause directing such amount *per diem*, to be paid to such apprentice, his or her parent or guardian, as shall seem reasonable for the maintenance, as well during the time such apprentice shall have been compelled to be absent from the house of such Master or Mistress, previous to the hearing of any complaint before such Justices, as subsequent to the making such Order; and such Order shall set forth the amount *per diem* which shall accrue in case of a continued refusal to admit such apprentice.

XIV. And be it further enacted, that all Orders so made, shall be returned under the hands and seal of the two Justices so adjudicating as aforesaid, into the Prothonotary's Office of the Supreme Court of this Island, for the county, where such Justices reside, there to be filed, and such orders so made, shall not be quashed for want of form; but only, if they contain any thing repugnant to the plain meaning of this Act, or the Indentures on which they are founded, and the said Supreme Court,



is hereby authorized and empowered to hear the said Appeal, and to quash or vary the said Order of the said Justices, with or without Costs, as it shall seem just and equitable, and to award judgment, and grant execution, in the usual and customary manner, to the party or parties in whose favor the same shall be determined by the said Court.

XV. And be it further enacted, that if any master or mistress, against whom any such Order as aforesaid shall be made, shall be dissatisfied therewith it shall be lawful for such master or mistress to give notice of his or her intention to Appeal against such Order to the next sitting of Her Majesty's Supreme Court of Judicature; and provided that such notice be given in writing to either of the two Justices, whose hands and seals are set to such order, within four days after the delivery thereof; and provided also, that security be entered into within such period, to the satisfaction of such Justices by the Appellant, and one other sufficient surety, by Recognizance, in such amount as they may deem necessary for the due prosecution of the said Appeal; then and in such case, the operation of such Orders shall be suspended.

XVI. And be it further enacted, that either one of such Justices aforesaid, shall return the Recognizances so entered into the Prothonotary's Office of the Supreme Court for the county, who shall file the same, together with the Order of the said Justices as aforesaid, and in case the conditions thereof be not complied with, then the said Recognizances shall be forfeited by the order of the Court, without further proof or application, and the said Court shall, and it is hereby authorized, to grant execution against the said parties so bound in the said Recognizance for the amount of such sum as shall have been ordered to be paid by the said Justices, together with reasonable costs to be taxed in the usual and customary manner.

XVII. And be it further enacted, that in case the Order remain uncompiled with, it shall be lawful for the Justices aforesaid, to issue a Warrant of Distress for the amount so ordered to be paid as aforesaid, from time to time, against the Goods and Chattels of the Party against whom such Order shall have been made; and if no Goods and Chattels can be found wherein to levy, then it shall be lawful for the said Justices to commit the party or parties to the jail of the county, for a period (if the sum to be paid shall not exceed forty shillings) of one month; and if above forty shillings, and not exceeding three pounds, for the space of three months; and if for any sum above three pounds, and not exceeding five pounds, for the space of five months, and if for any sum above five pounds, and not exceeding eight pounds, for the space of six months.

### **“An apprentice is a servant”<sup>309</sup> (1847)**

Mr. Smith (Frontenac) has brought in a bill “better to enforce the fulfilment of engagements between master and servant.” The principle of this bill is good enough; but it does not go far enough. It provides punishment for the servant who neglects his master's work without cause, but it says nothing about the master who turns his

---

<sup>309</sup> From Our Correspondent's Letter. (1847, June 29). *The British Whig*, p. 2.

servant away without cause or wages, much too often the case in Canada. Another defect in the bill, is its silence respecting apprentices. An apprentice is a servant, but a servant is not often an apprentice; and in the hands of ignorant magistrates, it will be impossible to carry out the real intentions of Mr. Smith's bill, unless he better define what he means by "servant". We cannot avoid remarking that this constant legislating of the wealthy against the poor, in bills like the above, is gradually destroying the free and happy character of Canada, and rendering it more and more like tyrannical Europe. Still, Mr. Smith's bill may be a useful one, if he treat rich and poor alike.

### **"A word to apprentices"<sup>310</sup> (1847)**

BY ONE OF THEMSELVES<sup>311</sup>

The past season has been a very extraordinary one to boys of our class; scarcely a week has passed over without us hearing of some two or three apprentices running away from their masters' employ, and going either to Oswego or Rochester. Within the last three months, there have been no less than forty to my knowledge; and I am inclined to think that by this time the markets for such arrivals is pretty near glutted. Now, I should imagine that in such a place as Rochester the journeymen of the different trades, would surely adopt some measures for protecting themselves from such an infringement of their rights: however, this is not to my present purpose.

When an apprentice has made up his mind to leave his master's service, it is not until he has been some three or four years at the business, whatever it may be, at which time he is allowed to associate with journeymen, and be more in their company than formerly, and from them inspires notions of the immense amount of injustice which is done to him, which at a former time would never have been noticed at all. After these notions are engendered, every trivial act or word having a tendency to anything like command, is set down as direct tyranny, and borne in mind for a long time after, perhaps until a repetition of the same thing, and thus each one is cherished up carefully in the mind, until these imaginary acts of tyranny accumulate into a huge mass, which is daily stirred up by a casual remark of some *jour*, after the apprentice has recounted over to him all the tyranny he has been subjected to, exaggerated of course, to the effect that he wouldn't stand it, and that he never was used so. The latter remark the journeyman may make in all good honesty, for ten chances to one he was used in precisely the same manner as the apprentice has been, but it never entered into his head to run away, and consequently he had not made a "mountain out of a mole hill," as the apprentice had done.

A second thing is the receipt of a letter from some apprentice who has run away, and is now working at a greatly reduced rate of wages in some of the frontier towns of the land of liberty (but of this anon). The aforesaid letter states that the writer is at work and doing well; that there is plenty of work &c., and that if he feels

---

<sup>310</sup> From ONE OF THEMSELVES. (1847, September 22). A WORD TO APPRENTICES. *The British Whig* (Kingston), p. 3.

<sup>311</sup> This may have been written by a former apprentice and current master of apprentices.

dissatisfied where he is, he had better come over. The consequence of which is, that an apprentice, tries by dint of great exertion to muster about three or four dollars, takes perhaps, a few of his clothes, and hies him away to the glorious land of liberty, filled with “Fond hope, bright dreams,” which in the end turns out to be literally so, and on awakening from these dreams finds himself where he wished to be, with, perhaps, a dollar at the very most in his pocket, barely sufficient to support him for two or three days.

The friend who had written the letter is called upon, and is found working for less than half the sum which he would have received from his former master, had he remained with him and served out the remainder of his time, say nine months, or a year at the farthest; for the idea of running away never enters into their heads until about this time, for they know that then they possess a sufficient knowledge of their trade to get work, by offering their services at a greatly reduced rate of wages, to the no small detriment of the journeymen; and, as a matter of course, it is the interest of the employer to get his work done as cheaply as possible.

The apprentice then upbraids his friend (?) for deceiving him, and receives for answer that he considers it good enough, and indeed a great deal better than being subjected to the tyranny of (mentioning his former employer’s name, and of course, coupling it with an oath). After a while the other begins to think so too, and for a very good reason; he is out of funds and eagerly seizes the first chance of employment which offers. The person who employs him, will of course know that he is no journeyman, and that he is a runaway apprentice, therefore he will not make an agreement with him for any length of time, and he can thus be turned away at any hour that may suit his employer: he gets the name of having been a runaway apprentice, and should he stay in the same town for years, he will scarcely be able to get employment as a journeyman.

So much for the other side, now for something about this. When an apprentice runs away his name is generally advertised in the newspapers with an accompanying illustration of a figure with a stick and bundle. (I presume this was designed before there were such things as steamboats, and would in future recommend such advertisements to be head[ed] “sailed away” or “steamed away”.) Surely such a thing would be enough to prevent any young man from returning to a place where he had been denounced as a person who had broken a solemn promise (at least I know I would); and the only term that can be given to this running away is voluntary banishment from, perhaps, their birth place and friends.

## The Apprentices: A Montreal comedy<sup>312</sup> (1859)

Though fiction, this was written expressly for a Canadian newspaper, and sheds light on contemporary stereotypes regarding apprentices and masters.

*(An Interlude written for the Montreal Gazette.)*

SCENE THE FIRST – NOTRE DAME STREET, MONTREAL

*Enter and meet – BOB, a grocer's apprentice, and DICK, an apothecary's. They stop and stare at each other.*

Bob – Ah! Dick, is that you?

Dick (archly) – I think so. Perhaps that may be you, Bob?

Bob (in the same tone) – Probably. Where are you going?

Dick – Where I go every day; to old GRINCHUCKLE, who thinks every now and then that he is going to die, though he is generally as merry as a tipsy monkey. I have a draft and a box of pills for him. But, what's that you are carrying there?

Bob – As you see, a bottle-basket. It holds half a dozen of what my boss calls "prime cognac, lately imported from France," but what I call "Hatchett's high-wine transmogrified." It is for the Reverend Mr. Swill, whom "the *spirit* moveth" oftener than a Quaker.

*(They laugh.)*

*BOLUS, Dick's master, appears at a side-scene and listens.*

Dick (to Bob) – Well, what are you going to do with yourself to-night? We shut up at eight.

Bob – So do we. What do you say to oysters and hot Scotch at "The Fountain"?

Dick – I'm agreeable.

Bob (assuming a foppish air) – So am I, I flatter myself; at least, the girls seem to think so.

Dick (looking towards the side-scene) – Oh! the d——l, there is old BOLUS.

Bob (looking up the street) – Oh! my stars, there comes old FIG!

*(They run off.)*

*Enter BOLUS and looks after them, shaking his cane.*

Bolus – Oh! you young rascals, and you particular scoundrel Dick. I'll let your master know, Mr. Bob, how you go on his errands. Luckily, here he comes.

*Enter FIG.*

Why Fig! what do you think I overheard just now?

Fig – How should I know? What was it?

Bolus – My rascal Dick and your scoundrel Bob have just agreed to have oysters and, what they call, "hot Scotch" to-night at "The Fountain." I wonder where the money is to come from?

Fig – "Come from"! – from our customers to be sure, over our counters.

Bolus – Well then, we must counterplot them and counteract their scheme – (he! he! he!) They cannot go there before eight – we will be there a quarter of an hour

---

<sup>312</sup> From *The Apprentices*. (1859, December 31). *Montreal Gazette*, p. 2.

sooner, get into a box, call for something to drink, close the curtains, and see and hear all they do and say. If we catch them at anything, we will break every bone in their skins.

Fig – Very good – but what if they get into a box not near enough to ours?

Bolus – We'll bribe the waiter to put them in the next one.

Fig – Ay! that will do. Well, good bye! till three-quarters past seven, at "The Fountain." "Oysters and hot Scotch" indeed! You shall have your bellies-full of something else, my jokers!

SCENE THE SECOND – THE COFFEE ROOM OF "THE FOUNTAIN"

*The Waiter in attendance.*

*Enter BOLUS.*

Bolus – Waiter! has Mr. Fig been here?

Waiter – No, Sir, not this evening.

Enter FIG.

Bolus – Ah! here he is. Fig! let us speak to the waiter. By the bye, how much shall we give him?

Fig – Say half-a-dollar. Here is my trente-sous! (*Gives him one.*)

Bolus – Waiter! come here!

Waiter (*coming to them*) – Yes, Sir.

Bolus – Two young scamps, our apprentices, are to be here to-night, to have oysters and punch. You may know mine by his impudent stare–

Fig (*interrupting him*) – And mine by his mischievous grin.

Bolus – You must put them in the box next to ours, so that we may hear all they say. Here's something for your trouble. (*Gives him the half-dollar.*)

Waiter – Thank you, gentlemen! I shall do so. But what box will you take for yourselves?

Bolus – That one with the curtains, exactly opposite. You must leave with us, however, something to drink, to pass the time until those scamps come.

Waiter – What will you have, gentlemen? We have some of Ball's bottled ale.

Bolus – No, no! (*Aside* – I sold the Coculus Indicus and Grains of Paradise to put in it.) Malt liquor does not agree with our stomachs. What kinds of spirits have you?

Waiter – "Prime cognac lately imported from France." We got it from Mr. Fig here.

Fig – (*Aside* – The deuce! my own manufacture.) It is excellent, but we do not like brandy. What else have you?

Waiter – "Thynn's Liverpool whiskey." We got it from Jolly & Company.

Bolus – (*Aside* – Yes! and I sold them the creosote to counterfeit the peat-reek.) No, no! my good lad, we are too old stagers to like "*thin*" potatoes. (he! he! he!) Have you nothing else?

Waiter – We have Campbellton whiskey, from Hutchinson's, the grocer.

Bolus – Aye! that will do. (*Aside* – I sell him nothing: the fellow's too honest.)

Fig – Well, let us have two tumblers of hot toddy. Quick! those scamps will be here before we are ready. Come, Bolus, let us ensconce ourselves. (*Exit waiter.*)

(*They enter the box and sit down.*)

*Re-enter Waiter, with the two glasses of toddy and a pair of candles on a tray, and lays them on the table.*

Bolus – Oh! the deuce! candles will never do; take them away. (*Waiter takes them away.*) Now, draw the curtains.

(*Waiter draws the curtains and leaves.*)

SCENE THE THIRD – A PUBLIC STREET: A DARK NIGHT

*Dick and Bob, hurrying on in opposite directions, knock against, without recognizing, one another.*

Dick – D—n you, Sir! What did you knock up against me for?

Bob – And d—n you, Sir! What did *you* knock up against me for?

Dick – You shall meet me to-morrow morning at six o'clock, with pestles – pistols, I mean.

Bob – A fig for your pistols – I shall reduce your *spirit* below proof to-morrow, my chap! Your card!

Dick – (*Aside* – What the d—l does he mean by asking me for my card? However, he shall have one.) There it is. (*Hands him a card.*) Now, your card!

Bob – (*Aside* – What the deuce shall I do? I once heard a gentleman in a quarrel ask for the other's card, and I thought it was right for me to do the same. However, he shall have old Fig's. Perhaps he may lose it.) There it is. (*Hands him a card.*)

(*They retire, each to a lamp, and read the cards.*)

Dick (*reads*) – “Abraham Fig, Grocer,” – hum – “East and West Indian Produce,” – hum – “Family Flour, in bags of 14 lbs. each.” Why, this must be Bob.

Bob (*reads*) – “Benjamin Bolus, Chemist, Druggist and Pharmaceutist,” – hum – “Prescriptions carefully made up,” – hum – “Bermuda Arrow-root, Bear's Grease, Turkish Sponges, Patent Medicines,” – hum. Why, this must be Dick!

(*They return, approach, and recognize each other.*)

Bob – Is that DICK?

Dick – Certainly it is. Is that BOB?

Bob – To be sure it is. So you, Dick, are the fellow who spoke so *dic*-tatorially to me!

Dick – And you, Bob, are the fellow who *bob*-bed up against me!

Bob – Well, that's all over; let us shake hands! (*They shake hands.*) I was going to “The Fountain.” So were you, I suppose. How are you off for cash?

Dick – I have five trente-sous and a quinze-sous; it was all I could manage to take – old Bolus seemed to be watching me all the time.

Bob – I have only a dollar. Old Fig was so much on the spy, that I couldn't have contrived to get even it, if he had not gone into the back store with a customer.

Dick – We've quite enough. (*Reflectively.*) It must be confessed, however, that we're somewhat of rogues.

Bob – *You* are, for you get your money by *pill*-age; I am not, for I get mine by *till*-age.

(*They laugh.*)

Dick – Well, now for “The Fountain's” oysters and hot Scotch.

*(They take each other's arm and walk away.)*

SCENE THE FOURTH – THE COFFEE-ROOM OF “THE FOUNTAIN”

*Enter Dick and Bob, strutting.*

Dick – I say, waiter!

Waiter *(starting up and going to them)* – Sir.

Dick – Half a hundred of cold oysters (New York), and as many stewed oysters (Bucktouche) for this gentleman and me. In the meantime, while you are getting them, bring us something to drink.

Waiter – What will you please to have, gentlemen – bottled ale?

Dick – Oh! the devil! no! *(Aside to Bob)* – Our drugs and water.)

Waiter – We have got some excellent port, which we had from Mr. Fig.

Bob – Never mind the port! *(Aside to Dick)* – The port which we manufactured out of the pipe of logwood-juice that you sold us.)

Waiter – We've got some capital sherry and Madeira, too, which we got from Mr. Fig.

Bob – *(Aside to Dick)* – And which Fig got from Humbug & Co.'s manufactory of *foreign* wines.) What whiskey have you?

Waiter – Thynn's Liverpool, from Jolly & Co., and Campbelltown, from Hutchinson's, the grocer.

Bob – The Campbelltown, by all means, cold without. But, first of all, show us into a box.

*(They are shown into a box next to that in which are BOLUS and FIG, and sit down on opposite sides of the table. The waiter enters with a decanter of whiskey, a jug of cold water, and two tumblers, on a tray, lays them on the table, and goes away.)*

Bob – Come! fill your glass, Dick; I'll give you a toast.

*(They fill their glasses.)*

Dick – Well, what is it?

Bob – May old Nick fly away with old Bolus!

Dick – I'll drink it with all my heart. May old Nick fly away with my boss, old Bolus!

*(They drink the toast.)*

*(Bolus puts his head out of the next box, and shakes his fist vehemently.)*

Dick – Now, Bob, I'll give *you* a toast. May Beelzebub stick his fork into old Fig, and toss him into the fiery gulph of perdition!

Bob – With all my soul. A benevolent and poetic toast! May Beelzebub stick his fork into my boss, old Fig, and toss him into the fiery gulph of perdition!

*(They drink the toast.)*

*(Fig puts his head out of the next box, and shakes his fist vehemently.)*

Dick – If it wasn't for one thing, I'd quit my d——d old rascal. *(Affects to sigh.)*

Bob – What is that?

Dick – Can you keep a secret?

Bob – Like the grave. Try me?

Dick – Well then – *(He simpers and affects to look discreet)* – but, really, men of honor are silent on such subjects.

Bob – Pooh! – nonsense! – come! out with it, Dick! you know I shall never tell.  
(*Bolus and Fig put their head out of the box and listen eagerly.*)

Dick – Well, then, you must know that my mistress looks at me in a very curious way when old Bolus is not by. Last Sunday in particular, when I was dressed for church, she smiled at me, and said: “Why, Dick, you are quite a beau! the women at church will look at you instead of at their prayer-books.”

Bob – ‘Pon my word, that was a pretty strong hint of what she thought of you herself.

Dick – Wasn’t it? – But the best is to come. That night, after old Bolus had gone to bed, where he was snoring so loud as to be heard all over the house, cautious footsteps, along the passage outside my room, caught my ear. I listened with all my might, when, just at this moment, old Bolus, who had been cramming his guts too much at supper, called out in his sleep, “murder! fire! thieves!” The footsteps retreated, and I heard no more. It is easy enough to guess whose the footsteps were. To be sure, the next day, he scolded the servant girl for having stolen down stairs to see her lover the night before; but that was all a blind, I have no doubt.

Bob – No doubt. A curious adventure – not exactly like one I’ve had, but pretty much of the same kind. You must know that Madam Fig has a great liking for Thynn’s whiskey, which she can’t get at without my knowledge. The way she manages is this: She comes down after the shop is shut up and Old Fig is in bed, steals a bottle of the real stuff, empties it into a jar which she keeps in a hiding place, and gets me to fill the bottle with Campbelltown, and put tin-foil over the cork, so as to look pretty much as before. When she was making me assist her, in her whiskey-enterprise, in the store, last night, after old Fig had gone to bed, three sheets in the wind – seeing that I looked hard at her while she was uncorking Thynn, she said to me: “Bob, why do you stare at me? Every one loves something; I love whiskey; and you, I suppose, love pretty women, young as you are.” And, with that, she gave me such a look! I am not vain – (*he throws down his eyes and endeavors to look modest*) – but she has struck me as intending to give a hint that I might make love to her myself. I was so surprised, and indeed, flustered, that I did not make love to her then; but I’ll be hanged if I don’t, next time.

Dick – Do so. Let us begin at once, and see which will first adorn the forehead of his boss, so that his rib may call him truly “*my deer*.” (*He puts his forefingers to his forehead, in imitation of horns.*)<sup>313</sup>

Bob – Agreed. (*Waiter enters with the oysters.*) Now for a good belly-full!

(*Bolus and Fig rush out of their box, and each seizes his apprentice by the collar.*)

Bolus – That you shall have! There’s “oysters and hot Scotch” for you. (*He pummels Dick unmercifully.*)

Dick (*writhing*) – Oh! Lord – Oh! Lord – what I said was in a joke.

Bolus – Well, here are dry blows for your dry jokes!

Fig (*to Bob*) – And here’s your share of the entertainment. *Horned* animals are dangerous things, you see. (*He beats Bob unmercifully.*)

---

<sup>313</sup> Horns are the traditional sign of the cuckold.



Bob (*writhing*) – Oh! my! – Oh! my! – What I said was only in fun. I'll never enter the box of a coffee-room again!

Fig – No, unless you want your ears *boxed*.  
(*Exeunt omnes, Bolus and Fig belaboring Dick and Bob, who keep crying out for mercy.*)

SCENE THE FOURTH – BOLUS'S SHOP, CLOSED

Dick *behind the counter* – *Enter* Mrs. Bolus; *she advances close to* Dick.

Mrs. Bolus – So my “footsteps caught your ear,” did they? No, but my fingers do. (*She pulls his ears violently.*) Take that! you miserable abortion! (*Dick roars. She goes out, and leaves Dick sobbing and rubbing his ears.*)

SCENE THE FIFTH – FIG'S SHOP, CLOSED

Bob *seated pensively there* – *Enter* Mrs. Fig, *who goes up to* Bob.

Mrs. Fig – So, “I struck you as intending to give a hint to make love to me,” No, but I strike you, to give you a hint to tell no more lies about me, you miserable piece of anatomy! (*She beats him severely, and goes out, leaving Bob blubbering.*)

SCENE THE LAST – THE COFFEE-HOUSE OF “THE FOUNTAIN”

Bolus *and* Fig *there*.

Bolus – Waiter! how much do we owe you for the whiskey we had the other night, and for the disappointment we caused you in the “oysters and hot Scotch” of those youngsters?

Waiter – A shilling for the two glasses of whiskey, Sir; and let us say half a dollar for the disappointment. The oysters were eaten by persons who came afterwards.

(*Bolus and Fig pay, each one [shilling] and nine-pence. The Waiter thanks them, and retires.*)

Bolus – Well, Fig, how does Master Bob behave himself?

Fig – Admirably; the lesson he has got seems to have quite reformed him. And how goes it with Dick?

Bolus – Just as well. (*He turns towards the audience.*) Our “Apprentices,” at their first appearance, have, no doubt, exhibited many defects; but they are not incapable of amendment, and hope for the indulgence of a benevolent public.

(*Exeunt.*)

FINIS

## Appendix: Naval Impressment

### “Dragged into bondage”<sup>314</sup> (1849)

The British navy, upon the testimony of able British writers, is often manned, in no small proportion, by “slaves” – seized at their own doors, and dragged into bondage with not less violence than is employed, in capturing the African, on the coast of Guinea.

This practice is commonly called *impressment*, and by those who have discussed its legality and propriety, the “*anomaly*.” *Anomaly* with a vengeance, in a land, whose boast it has been, that the slave’s fetters fell, the moment his foot touched British ground! To understand this subject correctly, it is necessary to know something of this practice. It is nowhere *directly* supported by statute. Nearly 150 years ago, that very learned lawyer, Sir Michael Foster, showed that impressment, having long existed in the realm, was part of the Common Law; and that the King, in time of need, had a right to the services of all his subjects. The *legality* of the transaction, probably brought little consolation to the poor fellow, seized, in the very midst of his family, and dragged forcibly on board a man of war.

There is a statute, providing, that, if any waterman of the Thames shall hide himself, when a commission for impressment has issued, he shall be liable to heavy penalties. This beats Africa; for, whenever the press gang is at hand on the Guinea coast, the poor negro may hide himself with impunity, *if he can!*

This most miserable and cruel mode of recruiting the British Navy has been condemned by naval officers of the highest rank, by Nelson, by Collingwood. It brings together a mass of strange materials, men of all professions, compelled against their wills, to take the risk of being shot; drawn from their cobblers’ stalls, and flower gardens, and livery stables; and heartily wishing the King and the service at the Devil. For it is an error to suppose, that *seafaring* men alone, are liable to impressment.

In a letter of April 23, 1808, to Lord Mulgrave, Lord Collingwood says – “*I have got a nursery man here from Brighton. It is a great pity they should press such a man, because, when he was young, he went to sea for a short time. They have broken up his good business at home, distressed his family, and sent him here, where he is of little or no service. I grieve for the poor man.*”

According to Lieutenant Tomlinson, the press gangs in England, in 1756, amounted to 3000 men; and, according to Steel’s Lists there were, in 1814, 45 stations, under the management of 25 captains and 49 lieutenants.

In 1810, Admiral Patten published his *Natural Defence of the Insular Empire, &c.* On page 30, he speaks of the injurious interference of Parliament with “*that discipline, which is to reconcile and keep in order seamen collected by violence, and consequently in the habit of deeming both mutiny and desertion as privileges, attached to their situation.*”

---

<sup>314</sup> From SIGMA. (1849, November 22). RUM AND THE CAT. *Evening Transcript* (Boston), p. 1.

It is quite edifying to listen to the politic defense of this species of man stealing – “It is known, and has long been a subject of regret, that the mode of manning the fleet forms an *anomaly* in the constitution of our free government; but, so much have imperious necessity and long usage sanctioned the practice, that the most violent reformers and outrageous philanthropists have carefully abstained from bringing a subject of so delicate a nature into public discussion.” Lond. Q. Review, Vol. IV, p. 329.

It is not less amusing to listen to the strain of affected regret, for the hardships endured by those who are impressed. After defending the practice, on the old grounds – *usage* and *necessity* – a writer in the London Quarterly, in 1833, Vol. 49, p. 499, remarks – “The real and distressing hardship is when Jack is seized by a press gang in the bosom of his family; it is in cases of this kind that the odium against impressment is excited, the act of dragging men away, amid the cries of women and children creates dissatisfaction and disgust in all who witness the transaction. (It is possible!) This worst part of the practice may, however, and it is hoped, will be discontinued, in the event of another war.” [...]

Enlightened Englishmen fee, as they ought, in regard to this abomination; and some of them speak out, and spare not – “Would any man stay a single hour in a ship, to which he has been carried by force, like a slave – in which he has the sweepings of our jails for his companions – where his pay is only the third part of the sum he could earn, if he were at liberty – and where he is subjected to a system of flogging, that is scarcely surpassed, by the whippings to which the West Indian slave is exposed, except that it is carried into execution, under the formalities of law?” Ed Review, Vol. 41, p. 173.

### “Compared impressment to slavery”<sup>315</sup> (1834)

#### IMPRESSMENT OF SEAMEN [IMPERIAL PARLIAMENT]

Mr. Buckingham rose for the purpose of making his promised Motion with respect to the Impressment of Seamen; [...] In the last Session of Parliament the Noble Lord the Chancellor of the Exchequer had expressed his surprise at his (Mr. Buckingham’s) having compared impressment to slavery. On mature deliberation he was thoroughly confirmed in the sentiments which he expressed on the occasion alluded to.

What were the characteristics of slavery? A slave was torn from his native country, his family, and his friends, subjected to a servitude which he detested, coerced by the lash, and if he attempted to escape, visited with the punishment of death.

If such were the characteristics of the slave, so were they that of the impressed sailor. The sailor, like the negro, was dragged from his family, and his home; the sailor, like the negro, was thrown into a condition of abject servitude; the sailor, like the negro, was subjected to the caprice of his superiors; the sailor, like the negro, was

---

<sup>315</sup> From IMPERIAL PARLIAMENT. (1834, March 5). *Morning Chronicle* (London), p. 2.

liable to be shot if he deserted from the ship to which he had been compulsorily attached. If these were facts – and it was impossible to deny them – what difference was there between the sailor and the slave?

Yes; one difference there might be – that to the mind of the mariner who called himself, or who had been taught to call himself a free-born Englishman, the stigma would be much more painful than to that of the negro, accustomed to slavery and suffering, and to whom no change could materially increase his sense of degradation. If such was the result of comparison between two individuals at a former period, how much more striking must it be at the present moment?

Before the abolition of slavery in the West Indies, it had been maintained that sugar could not be cultivated except by compulsory labor. The resolution, however, to which Parliament had come, on the suggestion of his Majesty's Government, proved their opinion, that negroes not in slavery might, nevertheless, be induced, by just payment, to undertake the labor which had been hitherto performed by slaves. Was that coercion which had been destroyed in the West Indies to be continued in the navy? He hoped not. He hoped that in twelve months from the present day people would wonder why the barbarous practice of impressment had been so long continued.

It had been asserted that seamen had not complained of the practice, and that they did not entertain any aversion to it had been inferred from the absence of those Memorials and Petitions in which other classes of his Majesty's subjects were accustomed to state their grievances. But let the House consider the difference between seamen and other classes of men.

In large counties thousands of yeomen might be assembled by the Sheriff, in order to express their opinions upon any great popular question. But with the exception of men-of-war, seamen were shut up in very small bodies. If, in a man-of-war, they were to carry to the first Lieutenant their wish to assemble for the purpose of framing some resolution expressive of their opinion upon such a topic as impressment, it was easy to guess what kind of answer they would receive from him. Merchant vessels seldom carried more than 30 or 40 men. When sailors came ashore the enjoyments which naturally followed the hardships of a long voyage, occupied their whole time, and rendered them utterly forgetful of all other considerations. So, therefore, the absence of all Petitions or Memorials upon the subject from the sailors, did not justify any one in imputing to them that they disregarded its evils and injustice.

In the year 1750<sup>316</sup>, however, a Memorial from the seamen was presented to the Crown, through the medium of the Duke of Cumberland, which expressed, not

---

<sup>316</sup> From the same year: "Last week one Hannah Snell, born at Worcester, who was seven years in a marine regiment by the name of James Gray, went to the East Indies in Admiral Boscawen's Squadron, and was at the siege of Pondicherry, presented a Petition to his Royal Highness the Duke of Cumberland, praying some provision might be made for her now she is discharged from the service. His Royal Highness referred her petition to General Fraser, to report it to him; and make a suitable provision according to her merit. It seems her sweetheart being impressed into the marine service, she put on men's clothes, and entered in the same regiment, went to the East Indies in the same ship with him, and was his mess-mate while he lived (he dying in the voyage) and was a servant to one of the Lieutenants. She behaved with great intrepidity as a sailor and soldier, and her sex was never

merely their abhorrence of the practice of impressment, but their conviction that practice defeated the end which it had in view. The seamen of Shields, also, being the crews of a large number of coasting vessels, had come to resolutions on the subject quite as unequivocal. There could be no doubt, indeed, that the feeling of abhorrence entertained by mariners towards the practice of impressment, was as strong as it was possible to conceive.

Great stress had, nevertheless, been laid on two points; the legality, and the utility of the practice. To those who held that the practice was legal he would, in the first place, say that that was no reason why the law should not be changed. The law was continually undergoing alteration on other subjects by the introduction into that House of new Bills, and why not on this subject? But he further maintained that even the legality of the practice might be question. Lord Camden, no mean authority on such matters, had challenged the whole profession of the law to prove the legality of impressment. Lord Mansfield had declared that it was only a usage which in clear cases of State necessity might be resorted to, but that it was not sanctioned by law. In addition to these authorities there unfortunately existed cases of individuals who had resisted being impressed, and who had shot some of the Press Gang, and yet who, on having been tried for murder, were acquitted on the ground that any man had a right to defend himself from impressment.

A case had happened at Hull, of which he believed an Honorable Member of that House had been an eye witness. A whaler just returned from the South Seas, being about to enter the Humber, his Majesty's ship the Rover chased, boarded, and took possession of her. The crew of the whaler, however, full of ardor and expectation of returning to their native land, and raging at the disappointment to which they saw they were about to be subjected, after having confined their captain in his cabin, in order that he might not interfere with, or be implicated in their proceedings, armed themselves with spears, lances, harpoons, and other weapons, and killed two of the man-of-war's men before they were overpowered.

For this offence several of them were tried at the York Assizes; and although the Judge endeavored to convince the Jury that his Majesty's Government could be upheld only by the practice of impressment, and although he endeavored strongly to stimulate their loyalty on the occasion, a verdict of acquittal was returned, and there were several days of rejoicing at York in consequence.

Another well known case was that of a press gang who boarded a vessel in Dover roads, not being accompanied by the person who had the press warrant. In the scuffle one of the gang, named O'Callaghan, was shot by the crew of the merchantman, several of whom were tried for murder; but the jury found them guilty only of manslaughter, notwithstanding the judge, Judge Foster, had strongly charged them against the prisoners, observing that the state had a right to obtain the services of its subjects by any means, in cases of insurrection or invasion.

Who denied it? In cases of invasion or insurrection, men of every class would be liable, as he was sure they would be anxious, to share in the defence of the country.

---

discovered by either her sweetheart or any of her comrades, till she made the discovery herself by the above-mentioned Petition." Thursday's Post. (1750, June 22). *Derby Mercury*, p. 4.

But would any one say that there was no distinction between a condition of things such as that, and the introduction of the practice of impressment in a time of profound peace?

After adverting to the opinions which Benjamin Franklin had published on the subject, the Honorable Gentleman proceeded to state that when the great Lord Chatham brought in a Bill to register the navy, he expressed himself in the strongest terms against the practice of impressment, declaring that although in the event of sudden invasion or insurrection, it was justifiable, yet that in all other cases, until every other measure for manning our ships had been tried in vain, it was contrary to the law of England. It was declared by Magna Charta [sic.] that no man could be punished with outlawry except after a trial by jury. Lord Coke had declared that the King could not send any man even to Ireland without the sentence of a Court of Law. If not to Ireland, so not to any other place. But it was contended that the practice of impressment was one of the usages of the King's prerogative from time immemorial. It seemed, however, that that prerogative had been surrendered; for in the reign of Charles the Second two Bills of a temporary nature had been brought in and passed to remove any doubts which existed on the subject. Those acts having expired, and no subsequent act of a similar nature having passed, it might be said that the pre-existing doubts revived.

There was another view of the subject that deserved attention. Cases had occurred in which press-gangs had killed seamen – in which the officers of press-gangs had shot seamen – and yet although the men were killed, Juries would not find the persons who killed them guilty of murder. Thus it appeared that although there was killing on both sides, yet there was no murder. The party assailing killed some of those who they attacked, yet there was no murder; the party resisting killed some of their assailants, yet there was no murder. Why, at that rate, a thousand men might be slaughtered on both sides, and no single person found guilty of murder. If there were no reason but that, it would, in his opinion, be quite sufficient for referring the subject to the consideration of a Committee, in order that they might inquire whether a man might be killed without the commission of murder: and if so, when, where, and how (hear, hear, hear!).

Having shown that the legality of [impressment] was, to stay the best of it, doubtful, he would proceed to show the inefficiency and inutility of the practice. Even so long ago as the time of Sir Robert Walpole, that statesman, in giving his opinion of imprisonment, dwelt not so much on the cruelty and oppression of the practice, of which, however, he did not entertain the least doubt, but on the fact that it was not productive of the advantage which it had in view. Undoubtedly that was the case.

Suppose a war was to suddenly break out or any case of emergency, such as that of an expected invasion or insurrection. The Lords of the Admiralty would, of course, order ships at Portsmouth and Plymouth to be fitted out, and Captains and other officers would be sent to superintend their equipment; boats would be manned by such vessels as had crews, and would be sent on shore for the purpose of impressment; they would be sent on shore at dusk, not during daylight, because in the latter case, the sailors would have the opportunity of escaping.

Now supposing that there were 20,000 men at either of the ports, at Portsmouth or Plymouth, any naval officer would be aware that the press-gangs would not experience any difficulty in catching a thousand of them, by scouring the streets, or searching the taverns and brothels; but the 19,000, alarmed by the fate of their comrades, would in the morning make their escape. They would put off their tarry jackets and black silk handkerchiefs, disguise themselves as carters or ploughmen, and get away into the country as fast as possible. Even those who did not succeed in achieving that object, would, nevertheless, in most circumstances, be able to conceal themselves; for it was honorable to the humanity of the people, male or female, that when a man presented himself at a door with a press-gang at his heels, that door was never shut against him (hear, hear, hear!).

Now, was it possible to conceive any practice so calculated to excite universal abhorrence towards those who were engaged in it, and universal sympathy towards those who were its victims? It was well known by all those who resided in seaports, that the great mass of inhabitants made common cause with the seamen on such occasions. After the first haul, therefore, no more seamen could be obtained in a similar manner. Not being able to obtain seamen, the gangs began to impress landsmen. It might be said that a landsman might have his remedy against this in a Court of Law. But how was it possible for a carpenter or a blacksmith suddenly seized, confined on board the tender, and then sent off to the East or West Indies, to bring the transaction into a Court of Law? To such a man, the remedy afforded by the Court of Law was a mere nullity.

Having impressed as many Englishmen as they could, the gangs next began to impress foreigners. One of the late causes of the dispute which had occurred between this country and the United States, was that we impressed Americans under pretense that they were English counterfeiting to be so. It was well known during the last war there were on board our ships many *bona fide* American citizens, who were compelled to fight against their own country, because the British officers either did not believe, or would not believe, that they really were Americans. On the other hand, many of our best sailors went to other countries – to France, to Russia, to America – and helped discipline the Navies of those Powers. It was well known that in the last war Commodore Decatur declared that he had not the Captain of a gun who was not an Englishman. The bargemen of his ships – the picked men of the crew – were also generally Englishmen; and thus in time of war was the strength of our enemies increased by British seamen chased from our own shores by the practice against which his motion was directed.

After the streets of our seaports had been scoured first for seamen, then for landsmen, and afterwards for foreigners, the prisons were resorted to, and criminals were sent on board our men of war to add to the difficulty of keeping their crews in a proper state of discipline and subordination. Well did those who were acquainted with the subject know the difficulty which in many cases the Captain of a man of war had to preserve discipline and order, either in the moment of battle or in that of storm; well did they know how his difficulties and his responsibility were frequently increased by the wretched and unwilling crew placed under his command.

There was an additional argument on this subject. It might be supposed that if the system of impressment were not beneficial in any other respect, it must at least be economical; but what would the House say, when they were told that Admiral Patten, a man whose character was well known to the naval profession, had declared that 15,000 impressed seamen deserted in the short period of twenty-five months! Lord Nelson also (a name which ought never to be mentioned in conjunction with naval subjects except with the greatest reverence), in a memorial which he presented to Lord St. Vincent, stated the number of deserters in a given time to have been 42,000, and estimated the loss to the country at the rate of twenty pounds per man, amounting in the whole to 840,000*l*! Lord Nelson could have no motive for exaggeration; but even if he had somewhat exaggerated, the evil was still enormous.

Now, if half that sum – if a quarter of that sum – had been devoted to the better payment of the men, and to affording them a just recompence for their services, who could doubt that these 42,000 sailors would rather have remained on board his Majesty's ships than have deserted for the purpose of going to merchantmen? To the cruelty – to the illegality – and to the inefficiency of impressment, was to be added its expense.

Lord Nelson, in his memorial, stated, in addition, that it was utterly impossible to prevent the men who had deserted from leaving England; and that not a convoy sailed from the Channel that did not carry away a thousand of them. He (Mr. Buckingham) himself commanded a merchant ship during the war, and he well recollected the impossibility of openly obtaining English sailors, excepting those who were either too old or too young to be in danger of impressment. The consequence was, that he was obliged to ship French, Spanish, Dutch, Italian, Swedes, Danes, &c.; so that among thirty or forty men there were natives of eight or ten different countries. These men were paid at the rate of 4*l*. 10*s*. and 5*l*. a month, at a time when no English sailor could venture to come openly forth, and enter among his crew. He never had any scruple, however, and, under similar circumstances, he never should have any scruple, to conceal twenty or thirty English seamen in his hold, who, when the vessel had reached the open sea, and they were in no further danger, came upon deck, breathed the free air, and worked their passage out to America, or elsewhere, never to return to their native country (hear, hear!).

But two days ago he had received a letter from a friend at Liverpool, who informed him that, when in 1832 a fleet was under equipment for the purpose of going to the Scheldt, the Admiralty sent a cutter to Liverpool to obtain men. His correspondent offered the Admiralty to provide a thousand able-bodied seamen, if they would consent to give the men two months' pay in advance, as was the usage on board merchantmen. He received a very courteous answer from Mr. Barrow, thanking him for his offer, but adding that they could obtain a sufficient number of men without acquiescing in it. The result, however, was, that the cutter, with forty-five men on board, lay for a considerable time in the Mersey, and obtained only twenty or thirty seamen, although many hundreds were ready to enter, provided they could have obtained the advance which it was the usage to give in the merchants' service. Had that advance been accorded, the expense of sending round the cutter with the forty



men would have been saved. Let them hold out inducements similar to those held out by the merchants, and Government would obtain men as readily as the merchants obtained them.

Did they not all remember when the agents of Don Pedro and Don Miguel came into the Thames and the Mersey, & got as many men as they liked? Sailors have no dislike to danger or fighting; on the contrary, they preferred rough weather and hard knocks to calm and quiet. They liked to meet either the tempest or the enemy (hear, hear, hear!). Service in the navy would become most popular if the seamen were allowed a little time in rotation to visit their families, if a provision were made for their old age, and if they were released from those dreadful punishments which were among the consequences of the present system (hear!).

Great stress was laid upon the necessity of retaining the power of impressment, in order to provide for any sudden emergency. With reference to that question, he had read with great interest what was reported to have fallen from a Noble Lord yesterday in another place. That Noble Lord had declared that he entertained no indisposition whatever to inquire into the means by which the evils of impressment might be mitigated without, however, altogether giving up a practice to which, in a moment of sudden danger, the country might be indebted for safety.

He (Mr. Buckingham) was not Utopian enough to contend that cases might not arise in which all law must be set aside for the service of the public; but that did not justify the habitual violation of the law. The Habeas Corpus Act had occasionally been suspended, but it had only been suspended. He would not think of sheltering seamen from the liability which, in times of great public danger, they must share in common with all other classes of his Majesty's subjects. He agreed with another Noble Lord in thinking that it might be eligible to declare that, in a case of emergency, an Order in Council might enforce impressment, under certain limitations.

There was an additional argument which he which he wished to state to the House. Since the practice of impressment had been discontinued, in consequence of the peace, the country had been making great progress in improvement. It was very pleasant to look back and contemplate the advance in knowledge of many classes of the people. Did the House suppose that sailors had stood still, and that they alone were, in point of information, where they were twenty years ago (hear, hear, hear!)? They were now in a period of profound peace, when such a change as the one now proposed could more safely and more advantageously be made; and sure was he, that if it were not made, when a war should break out the odious system would not be endured, but would be resisted even to the death. He, for one, would do so (hear, hear!). He said it advisedly – he would resist impressment to the death. Liberty was a part of his birth-right – it was a part of his very existence – he had as much right to it as the King himself, and that right he would maintain and defend. But what a mockery of liberty was this, when a man could be forced against his will from his home, his family, and friends, and afterwards, should he attempt to rejoin them, be shot for desertion (cheers)! [...]

The mercantile navy, it was well known, was the nursery for our seamen, and it might ever continue to be so. His plan was, that sailors should be well protected,

and the navy rendered as attractive as possible, so as to make interest and duty go hand in hand together (cheers). They never found any difficulty in procuring seamen for the merchant service, and why should that differ from the King's? Let them have a registry – let them grant a limited time of service – make their men comfortable, and allow a bounty, and the old system would never again be required in this country (cheers). He knew that if seamen were properly provided, they had a high sense of duty; none were more willing to perform it, and to perform it well; each man took his turn with alacrity if there was only fair play and strict impartiality (hear, hear!).

### **“A round-about and wasteful method”<sup>317</sup> (1848)**

The shipowners have ingeniously enough contrived to spread a belief that the question of National Defence is more than intimately connected, is identical, with the repeal of the Navigation Laws [...] and that the present system of making the commercial navy a “nursery” for the royal navy, is a round-about and wasteful method of attaining the desired object; besides leading to, and legalizing, outrages on liberty and property, which no well-constituted Government shall allow.

The chief national advantage of these laws is stated to be their tendency to multiply seamen for the press-gang to seize upon; and, with the view of insuring a plentiful supply at all times, the shipowners are required to be constantly adding to their stock, whether it be sufficient for their own wants or not. [...] They are obliged, by law, to take about ten thousand new apprentices annually, on an average; and one marked effect is, that the able seaman, finding his wages lowered by this forced competition, or being discharged to make room for the apprentices, goes into the service of a foreign nation, or quits in disgust. The ship-owners are agreed that their ships are worse manned by reason of this law; and that, when the emergency actually arises for which the system is set on foot, their entire trade is frequently suspended and deranged.

Mr. Dunbar says: “In the last war we had not men sufficient to bring our ships in; for you impressed every man that you could lay hold of.”

Mr. Young, “Towards the conclusion of the late war, there was scarcely an able seaman left in the whole mercantile marine of this country; the whole of them having been absorbed into the British navy: protections even to apprentices were, I believe, on three several occasions withdrawn.”

Now let any one consider the enormous evil and monstrous injustice of such a system, simply as regards the ship-owner. There is no time when able seamanship is so necessary (to guard against capture, and the necessity of taking refuge in hostile ports) as during war; and competition under reciprocity treaties or in free ports would be in full activity. Looking at impressment, therefore, simply as it affects commerce and pecuniary interests, it is difficult to exaggerate its almost ruinous results; but when we come to consider it with reference to the immediate sufferers, the seamen, no terms of reprobation are too strong.

---

<sup>317</sup> From The shipowners. (1848, March 18). *Morning Chronicle* (London), p. 5.

The reason, the notorious reason, why the Royal Navy is constantly in want of men, is the lowness of the pay; and the reason for not raising the pay is, that when the men are indispensable, they may be seized. We deny that any case of necessity can justify the seizure of a man's person in this manner; and no one in his senses will contend, that the necessity, contemplated by the framers of such maxims of public law, can fairly be said to have arisen so long as the thing needed can be had by paying the market price for it in due season.

### Naval desertion at Halifax<sup>318</sup> (1807)

**Andrew Belcher is mentioned elsewhere in this collection as the captor of a prize ship. Here, we see he also took a hard line against naval deserters.**

Halifax, June 26

#### PUBLIC MEETING

The merchants and other inhabitants of this town, having met at the court-house yesterday, to devise and adopt the best measures for preventing desertion from His Majesty's ships, &c. on this station – and considering the marked attention shown to the trade of the Province by the Commander in Chief, the Hon. Vice Admiral Berkely – It was determined that a sum of money should be raised, and a Committee appointed, to receive subscriptions – to offer bounties and rewards; and take such other steps as may be deemed most effectual.

“We, the committee appointed by the merchants and others, inhabitants of Halifax, to discourage and prevent desertion from His Majesty's ships on the Nova Scotia station, hereby give notice, that a reward of *Ten Guineas*, will be paid to any person or persons, who shall inform and prove to conviction, against any person who shall harbor, or conceal, or encourage or otherwise be assisting any of the seamen, belonging to any of His Majesty's ships, on this station, in deserting from their respective ships, after this notice; and they likewise offer a reward of *three Guineas*, for any or every Deserter from His Majesty's Navy, who shall be taken up and delivered to any of His Majesty's officers, or lodged in any of the gaols in this Province.”

*Andrew Belcher*

*John Payor*

*James Forman,*

*Charles R. Prescott,*

*James Fraser.*

#### *Reward of Seventy-four Dollars*

A reward of ten guineas to any person or persons who shall inform, and prove to conviction, against any person who shall harbor, conceal or encourage, or otherwise be assisting, any Seaman or Marine belonging to any of His Majesty's Ships on this

---

<sup>318</sup> From PUBLIC MEETING. (1807, July 16). *Evening Post* (New York), p. 2.

station, in deserting from their ships – and a reward of three guineas, for any Deserter from His Majesty’s Navy who shall be taken up and delivered to any of His Majesty’s Officers or lodged in one of the gaols of this Province – and a further reward of £8 sterling, will be paid for each Deserter, by the Naval officer of His Majesty’s dock-yard at Halifax, upon producing a certificate of the delivery of such Deserter to and of His Majesty’s Officers.

#### NOTICE

Whereas many seamen have been conveyed away from this port, by the coasting vessels and shallops, and information of FIVE DESERTERS having been secreted and taken away last week, by a shallop or schooner bound to *Malagash* – This is to caution all masters of shallops and casting vessels, as well as others, that the Commander in Chief has given directions to press every man found on board any shallop or vessel which harbor or conceal any Deserter from His Majesty’s ship – and a reward of 13 Guineas, will be given to any person who shall inform, and prove to conviction, against the owner or the master of the *Malagash*, vessel, said to have taken away the Deserters above mentioned by application to the Naval Officer of His Majesty’s dock-yard.

## Appendix: Joseph Brant

**Joseph Brant was a Mohawk leader, military ally of the British, diplomat and slave-owner. Brantford, Ontario, is named after him. The story of one of his slaves, Sophia Pooley, is included elsewhere in this collection.**

### **“To rouse up the Six Nations to war”<sup>319</sup> (1776)**

The 21st of May, Col. Guy Johnston, with the two Indian chiefs that he brought over with him last summer, is to sail in a packet from Falmouth to New York: His errand is, if possible, to rouse up the Six Nations of Indians to war, and also the Canadian Indians, against the Colonies. He is to make his way as soon as he can into the Indian country: The Indians with him, are called in English, Joseph Brant and Jacob Hill. They are by some suspected to be insignificant bastards of the late Sir William Johnston, but Col. Johnston brought them here under the title of important chiefs of the Six Nations.

### **“Under the independent command of Capt. Joseph Brant”<sup>320</sup> (1778)**

*Extract of a letter from a gentleman at Albany dated August 22, 1778*

We are in daily expectation of further insults from the savages of the wilderness; they appear to be collecting in large parties, and determined in their measures. Col. John Wheelock, accompanied by Major Clyde, and a small number of men, as a reconnoitering party, at the request of General Stark, has penetrated the Indian country to the enemy’s lines at Unadilla<sup>321</sup>, above fifty miles south west of Cherry Valley. His business was to view the nature and situation of the country, and, if possible, the strength and designs of the enemy. It was a necessary, though hazardous enterprise.

He is now returned and brings the following intelligence, viz.: That the number of the enemy Indians and Tories is about 1000 men, under the independent command of Capt. Joseph Brant: That they expect us to attack them; but if not, are determined on a vigorous and fatal attack upon some part of the frontiers of Mohawk River: That there are from two to three hundred men about the mouth of Unadilla River; but their chief place of rendezvous is at Onoughquago: That the Indians are rather disaffected to Butler and that he is not at Unadilla, but in some part of the western country: That some of Butler’s party have joined Capt. Brant: That Brant’s party are in high spirits, eager for action, and that he conducts his affairs with as much secrecy as possible: That scouting parties from the enemy are continually out, especially up the Susquehanna; and a rambling guard from Flax Island, in the Susquehanna River, by which means the inhabitants and refugees are environed, and think themselves entirely secure.

---

<sup>319</sup> From PHILADELPHIA. (1776, October 1). *Pennsylvania Packet*, p. 3.

<sup>320</sup> From HARTFORD. (1778, September 8). *Hartford Courant*, p. 2.

<sup>321</sup> Referred to as Tunadill and Tunadilla in the original.

**“Joseph drew them into an ambuscade”<sup>322</sup> (1778)**

*Extract of a letter from Quebec, dated July 8*

Though some of our troops have been employed with Savages, yet I cannot think they have been employed to the best advantage; fifteen hundred, or two thousand Rangers, with half the number of Savages, divided into small parties, to scour the frontiers of the New England Settlements, not to kill any but such as are found in arms, would have an effect scarcely to be conceived; and had General Carleton’s opinion on this head been adopted, General Burgoyne and his army had never suffered disgrace. A party of Savages, commanded by one Joseph Brant, a civilized Indian, have lately been on an expedition to the Mohawk River. After they had done much mischief, a party of Rebels was sent out after them, but Joseph drew them into an ambuscade, and killed or took prisoners all the party, except three: He brought in five prisoners, and 300 scalps: Not a person was killed or hurt but such as was found in arms.

**“Col. Brant, with a number of Indians”<sup>323</sup> (1778)**

In a letter from New York, dated Oct. 19, 1778, is the following remarkable paragraph: “We learn by a person of credit, that Col. Brant, with a number of Indians and friends to government, has lately made an attack on the settlements near Esopus, burnt Marble-Town, and carried off a large number of disaffected persons to their head-quarters, at Ononquachge on the Susquehanna, to which place Col. Butler had drove the cattle and other stores from Wyoming. That this maneuver had thrown the Whigs in that country into the greatest consternation and despair: Our informant also says (what we hear from other quarters) that the people in general are very discontented with the French Alliance, and are justly apprehensive that it will certainly lead to the subordination of their country to France, the loss of their liberties, and the certain introduction of Popery.”

**“Has done every thing that has been done”<sup>324</sup> (1778)**

*Extract of a Letter from Quebec, Oct. 16*

You will no doubt, as usual at home, be misled, and attribute the present conduct of the Indians to Colonel Butler; but believe me, he is incapable of acting in so spirited a manner.

Joseph Brant the Indian, who was in England in the year 1775, has done every thing that has been done, and has wrote a complaint to the Commander in Chief against Butler, whose greatest service to the public will be to enrich himself; but Joseph is really a fine fellow. You may speak of your Howes, Carletons, or Burgoynes;

---

<sup>322</sup> From Saturday’s Post. (1778, September 29). *Leeds Intelligencer*, p. 2.

<sup>323</sup> From In a Letter from New-York. (1778, December 3). *Public Advertiser* (London), p. 4.

<sup>324</sup> From LONDON. (1778, December 4). *Public Advertiser* (London), p. 2.

General Joseph Brant is the man who will be entitled to the gratitude of Old England; when the three former will, I hope, for ever remain buried in Oblivion.

I am told there are orders gone to Colonel Balton at Niagara to give Joseph Brant every possible support and assistance, without paying any regard to what may be said by Colonel Butler.

### **The attack on Cherry Valley<sup>325</sup> (1778)**

From an officer who was in the fort at Cherry Valley, Nov. 11th, when it was attacked, we have the following account, viz.:

On Saturday night 8th November, an express arrived from Fort Stanwix, informing that an Oneida Indian had acquainted them that he sat in Council in the Seneca country with the Six Nations, and other tribes, and that they had concluded to attack Fort Alden, in Cherry Valley. On Sunday morning a sergeant and 12 men were sent on the road by Beaver Dam, towards the enemy, to continue five days; another scout with a non-commissioned officer and five men were sent on the road to Springfield, to continue four days: These two roads being the only avenues from the enemy's country to this place, except an old Indian path which had been neglected by us; at the same time we sent by the same roads scouts in the morning, which returned at night.

On Wednesday the 11th, it rained very hard, the enemy came by the above-mentioned path, passed by two houses, and lodged themselves in a swamp a small distance back of Mr. Wells's house, head-quarters. [At] half-past eleven A.M. Mr. Hamlin came by and discovered two Indians, who fired upon him and shot him through the arm; he rode to Mr. Wells's and acquainted the Colonel, the Lieut. Colonel, Major and Adjutant, being present. The two last (the house at this time being surrounded by Indians) go to the fort through their fire; the Colonel was shot near the fort.

The enemy, 800 in number, consisting of 500 Indians commanded by Brant, 50 regulars under Capt. Colville, and another Captain with some of Johnson's rangers, and above 200 Tories, the whole under Col. Butler's command, immediately surrounded the fort, excluding several officers who were scattered out of the garrison and had gone to dinner; they commenced a very heavy fire on the fort, which held three and a half hours, and was as briskly returned; they were so near as to call to the fort and bid the damned rebels surrender, which was answered with three cheers and a discharge of cannon and musketry. At four P.M. the enemy withdrew. Capt. Ballard sallied out with a party, which the enemy endeavored to cut off, but were prevented by a reinforcement; the next day they made it their whole business to collect horses, cattle and sheep, which they effected, and at sunset left the place.

On Friday morning the fort was reinforced by 800 militia. The enemy killed, scalped, and most barbarously murdered 32 inhabitants, chiefly women and children, also Col. Alden, and the following soldiers of his regiment, viz. Robert Henderson,

---

<sup>325</sup> From BOSTON. (1778, December 19). *Pennsylvania Packet*, p. 2.

Gideon Day, Thomas Sherridan, Pelletiah Adams, Simeon Hopkins, Benjamin Worcelly, Thomas Holden, Daniel Dudley, Thomas Knoles and Oliver Deball. The following officers were taken prisoners, viz. Lieutenant Colonel Stacey, Lieut. Aaron Holden, Ensign Garret, surgeon's mate, Francis Souza de Bierre, and 13 privates.<sup>326</sup>

### **Defeating Washington's brigades<sup>327</sup> (1779)**

A Person lately arrived from the Northward reports, that two Continental Regiments or Brigades, sent by Mr. Washington to check the progress of the refugees and Indians in this Province, by the excellent disposition and contrivance of Captain Joseph Brant, had been defeated.

### **"An ambush concerted by Capt. Joseph Brant"<sup>328</sup> (1779)**

*Sept. 1.* The following accounts have been brought to us from the rebel country, that a large detachment of their troops, under Messrs. Clinton and Poor, on their march to join Gen. Sullivan, had fallen into an ambush concerted by Capt. Joseph Brant, and were totally defeated; and that of the Elizabeth-town brigade of Gen. Maxwell, which consisted of 320, upwards of 200 had been killed or wounded; it is said the latter met with their fate on the Wyoming side.

### **"Entirely destroyed"<sup>329</sup> (1780)**

On Thursday Sir John Johnson, Butler and Brant, made a descent on Schoharie, which they entirely destroyed, with the grain, forage, &c. A prisoner who was taken, says they are 485 strong, that they had with them only two or three Seneca Indians, and that the Cahugas had returned without leave; that they had a brass grass hopper, a three pounder and a four pound cohorn.

From Schoharie they proceeded up the Mohawk river, destroying as far up as Stone-Arabia. A letter from Cagnawaga [Kahnawake] gives the agreeable account of our people's coming up, attacking and compelling them to cross the river, leaving their prisoners, plunder and baggage behind.

---

<sup>326</sup> After much thought, I have omitted the concluding paragraph of this account, which includes brief but graphic descriptions of infanticide and the mutilation of corpses.

<sup>327</sup> From Extract of a Letter from New-York, Nov. 25. (1779, January 2). *Jackson's Oxford Journal*, p. 3.

<sup>328</sup> From C. AMERICA. (1779, October 23). *Ipswich Journal*, p. 2.

<sup>329</sup> From FISH-KILL. (1780, October 31). *Pennsylvania Packet*, p. 3.



### **“Shared in the glory of this conquest”<sup>330</sup> (1780)**

*New York, Sept. 23.* By a person of good reputation, and perfectly intelligent, just arrived from the Northward, we are informed that about a fortnight ago Fort Stanwix, after having been five or six weeks closely invested, was taken by 600 British troops, commanded by a Lieutenant-Colonel, supposed to be of the King’s or 8th regiment: Our faithful friend, Capt. Joseph Brant, with a party of Indians, shared in the glory of this conquest. The Indians have laid waste the whole country, the Tory houses excepted, down to Schenectady, where some rebels are throwing up works to oppose the progress of the British troops and our Indian allies; the rebel women and children have retired to Albany, where, from a conscientiousness of their unprovoked persecutions and murders, terror and jeopardy prevail even to distraction.

### **“The infamous Captain Brant”<sup>331</sup> (1781)**

Accounts from Albany, which may be relied on, say, that the infamous Captain Brant, with about two hundred Indians, Tories &c. having a design of surprising Fort Schuyler, under the command of Colonel Willet, marched from Canada for that purpose; but Colonel Willet having information in time, formed an ambush some distance from the fort, and sent a sergeant with a few men out, who on the appearance of Brant and his gang fired, and then ran for the fort; the enemy pursued in disorder, and so completely fell in the ambuscade that they lost eighty four men on the spot, in killed and taken. The rest fled with the utmost precipitation.

### **“United with them in the same sentiments, and opinion”<sup>332</sup> (1785)**

Very recent accounts from Kentucky confirm the reports hitherto received from that quarter, that the Six Nations have expressed the greatest dissatisfaction of the late treaty. The Indians allege that the British Officer at Niagara and Detroit informed them that our Commissioners imposed on them in asserting that those lands were ceded to us [the U.S.] by the British, and that we were to take possession of the above-mentioned posts. That the celebrated and noted Brant had arrived from England, who united with them in the same sentiments, and opinion.

In consequence of this information, a council was held at the Shawenese Town, where several other tribes, besides the Six Nations, assembled, the result of which we are unable precisely to ascertain and determine, but, as two chiefs, viz. Cornplanter and another, with thirty warriors, have since been at Fort Pitt, and presented the papers exchanged at the treaty, to Colonel Harmer, our commanding officer there, it is conjectured and reasonable to suppose, their intentions are hostile and unfriendly. Col. Harmer, after having had a talk with them, declined receiving their papers, and observed that those persons gave them such intelligence with a view

---

<sup>330</sup> From AMERICA. (1780, November 20). *Caledonian Mercury*, p. 2.

<sup>331</sup> From Philadelphia. (1781, August 2). *Pennsylvania Packet*, p. 3.

<sup>332</sup> From PHILADELPHIA. (1785, August 22). *Hartford Courant*, p. 3.

to excite their jealousy, and to make them uneasy, and that they were enemies both to them and to us.

The Indians said they always understood that the lands contracted for by the Commissioners from Pennsylvania, were to be set apart and considered as Hunting-ground for both parties, and not to be surveyed and the trees spotted for the purposes of settlement and cultivation. They likewise observed, that as only a few of their chiefs were at the treaty, they had not been fully and regularly represented. In some of their late drunken frolics they have also declared that they had never been conquered, and would not give up their lands: They seemed the more inclined to believe the stories imposed on them by the British Emissaries and Incendiaries, because we had not taken possession of Niagara and Detroit, agreeably to the representations of our Commissioners.

### Countering Brant's influence<sup>333</sup> (1785)

*The following is the purport of a conference between Colonel Josiah Harmer, and Captain Obeil, Chief of the Seneca Tribe, with two other chiefs, and about twenty warriors of the same tribe, held at Pittsburgh, about the middle of July last:*

On the arrival of Captain Obeil, with two other chiefs and about twenty warriors from the Seneca nation of Indians within a short distance of Fort Pitt, two runners were dispatched to apprise the commandant of their coming, on which Colonel Harmer was sent for to Fort M'Intosh, by express, and came to Fort Pitt next day. The day following the chiefs were informed, by an interpreter, that Colonel Harmer was ready to confer with them, and they accordingly attended about ten o'clock – when Keyashuta and a principal warrior of the Senecas, named All-face, spoke on matters of little import.

Captain Obeil then spoke – saying, he wished first to make an apology for, or rather to justify his conduct, with respect to the engagement he had solemnly entered into with the commissioners for Indian affairs, at Fort Stanwix, for the speedy delivering up [of] all prisoners which were amongst his people, declaring that he had done all in his power, considering the inclemency of the season. That when he had returned from the treaty, he had found all his chiefs and warriors out hunting, so that he could receive no assistance from them in the business, and that the snow was so deep, it was with infinite labor he had been able of himself to collect, and send in, about thirty of our people; to this he added, that he had now brought with him three more, two of which were gone to their friends, and showed the third, which was a girl about six or seven years old, whom he had taken, he said, when she had but two teeth, and his wife had reared it up.

He then showed the articles of the treaty which had been ratified at Fort Stanwix, and acknowledged them, calling upon Colonel Harmer to do the same: This done, he demanded them back, saying the Commissioners had directed him to keep them, and show them to his young men; that he had formerly shown them to his

---

<sup>333</sup> From Philadelphia, Sept I. (1785, October 15). *The Times* (London), p. 3.

people, and they believed them; but that a Captain Brant was now amongst his people, and had told them, that the thirteen fires (meaning the United States) had told them lies, and had cheated them out of their lands; and that the Great King over the water had never ceded these lands to the United States. Which language, he said, had created great uneasiness among his young men, insomuch, that they had charged him with having betrayed their interests, in granting their lands, to the United States, and that they had threatened him exceedingly in consequence of it.

He added, that he was sorry to declare, that if Colonel Harmer or some of the great men at Pittsburgh did not give from under their hands, that what had been done at Fort Stanwix, by the commissioners, &c. was just, and that the stories propagated to invalidate their proceedings were lies; he would be obliged to give up the papers which he had received from the commissioners, [and he would go] back to his people.

The council was adjourned until next day, when Colonel Harmer met the chiefs, and informed them that he had considered all which they had told him yesterday, and was well satisfied with their conduct, but that the delivering up the articles of the treaty held at Fort Stanwix, was neither necessary nor admissible, as all which the commissioners had told them was truth, and that which Brant, and other emissaries from the British, had told them were lies, and desired that no confidence should be placed in what those people told them, and that a want of it, in what had been told them by the commissioners, would inevitably be attended with the most fatal consequences to them all. This was subscribed to, and delivered by Colonel Harmer to Captain Obeil, who signified his entire approbation of it, saying, he would show this to his young men, and if they did not believe him, then he would go to Detroit and make liars of the British themselves.

### **“Forming a confederacy”<sup>334</sup> (1785)**

A quarrel between the United States and the Aborigines of North America is, if the American prints may be depended on, now unavoidable, and the confederacy of the savage tribes of Indian Chiefs become general; we may therefore soon expect to hear of war being carried on with all its horrors. It is asserted that the whole number of warriors that can be furnished by the Indian nations united, amounts only to between fifty-eight and fifty-nine thousand men; and though from their desultory method of carrying on war, by making incursions in small parties where they are least expected, and the celerity of their motion, they may protract the contest for a considerable time, they must sink at last. To support them may be thought in the interest of Great Britain, but how far her Ministers may think it expedient to assist them openly, in the present critical situation of affairs, is not for us to determine. One thing is certain, that if they do not mean to lose every foot of ground yet retained on that continent, means must be used to prevent the total extirpation of those tribes, who, in case of an attack on any of our settlements, will be found a very useful ally,

---

<sup>334</sup> From Universal Register. (1785, November 30). *The Times* (London), p. 2.

as the United States would be obliged to retain a great part of their forces at home, if they did not want to see their back settlements a scene of blood and devastation.

The Sachem, who is now forming a confederacy among the American Indians to check the encroachments of the New States, is called Joseph Brant. He is a warrior of the Mohawk tribe, one of the celebrated Five Indian Nations, that formerly were the most powerful in that country. He was educated under Sir William Johnstone, understands English, and is tolerably versed in the learning of Europe. He was in England in 1775, and on being asked his opinion on the propriety of employing Indians against America, he dissuaded Administration from it; because, he alleged, if they were once excited, it would not be easy to allay them; and by their mode of carrying on the war, their undistinguished ravages would be destructive to friends as well as foes. He conveyed these ideas by a strong metaphor in the Indian style, asking the Minister if he wished to destroy the property of some of his enemies in London, whether he would set fire to their houses when the wind blew strongly from the North East? He was notwithstanding an active partisan under Sir John Johnstone, and distinguished himself at the siege of Fort Stanwix, as well as in many actions in concert with Colonel Butler.

### **“The celebrated King of the Mohawks”<sup>335</sup> (1785)**

*Extract of a letter from Salisbury, Dec. 12*

Monday last Col. Joseph Brant, the celebrated King of the Mohawks, arrived in this city from America, and after dining with Col. De Peister, at the head quarters here, proceeded immediately on his journey to London. This extraordinary personage is said to have presided at the late grand Congress of confederate Chiefs of the Indian Nations in America, and to be by them appointed to the conduct and chief command in the war which they now meditate against the United States of America. He took his departure for England immediately as this assembly broke up; and it is conjectured, that his embassy to the British Court, is of great importance. This country owes much to the services of Col. Brant during the late war in America. He was educated at Philadelphia, is a very shrewd intelligent person, possesses great courage and abilities as a warrior, and is inviolably attached to the English nation.

### **“Presented to the Queen”<sup>336</sup> (1785)**

Col. Joseph Brant, an Indian chief, belonging to the Six Nations, was presented to the Queen<sup>337</sup> in the habit of his country.

---

<sup>335</sup> From Extract of a Letter from Salisbury. (1785, December 14). *The Times* (London), p. 3.

<sup>336</sup> From Saturday's Post. (1785, December 22). *Derby Mercury*, p. 1.

<sup>337</sup> Queen Charlotte, wife of George III.

### **“Visited several noblemen’s seats”<sup>338</sup> (1786)**

On Thursday last Col. Joseph Brant, Chief of the Six Indian Nations, was honored with permission to view Windsor Castle, and afterwards visited several noblemen’s seats in Berks and Bucks.

### **“Peace with America”<sup>339</sup> (1786)**

The following speech was received in this town from the Indian Chief, Cornplanter, addressed to General Butler, dated at Venango, August 5, 1786, which is couched in the following manner:

I have been at New York at the treaty, and have returned to this place; you told me that I should make peace with the back Indians, for which I shall do all in my power; it has now been seventeen days since I held a council at Buffalo Creek, with the Shawanese, Wiandots, Munsees, Delawares, Cherokees, and Chippawas, but as they requested another council might be held when the leaves get red on the trees at the Shawanese towns, when they would let us know their minds; if they are not peaceable, we the Six Nations will endeavor to make them so. The treaty at the Shawanese towns will be held in two weeks from this date. I have now been all round, and am quite tired; I was used very well, and have done all in my power to make peace. While the treaty was holding a captain John [sic.] Brant, an Indian, came from England, and told us that the English had made a peace with America, and if the Indians [were] not peaceable they must put up with the consequence.

CORNPLANTER.

### **“To counsel and try to pacify the Indians”<sup>340</sup> (1786)**

Personally came before me, the subscriber, one of the justices of the peace in and for the Westmoreland and commonwealth of Pennsylvania, John James, and being duly sworn on the holy evangelists of Almighty God, faith, that he left Detroit on the 19th of September last past; that this deponent saw a certain colonel Joseph Brant, with about 60 Mohawk Indians, on the month aforesaid, leave Detroit, and it was reported their business was at the Shawanese towns, there to counsel and try to pacify the Indians in that quarter; and this deponent heard it reported that about 100 scalps had been brought into the Shawanese towns last summer. Sworn before me this 9th day of October, 1786.

---

<sup>338</sup> From LONDON. (1786, January 10). *Belfast Mercury*, p. 1.

<sup>339</sup> From PITTSBURGH. (1786, August 29). *Pennsylvania Packet*, p. 3.

<sup>340</sup> From PITTSBURGH. (1786, November 8). *Freeman’s Journal*, p. 3.

### **“Behaved with much generosity”<sup>341</sup> (1786)**

Yesterday a letter arrived here from Detroit, who reports that Col. Logan, who marched from Kentucky, with about 850 men, attacked the Shawanese towns, burnt five villages and killed ten men, five of whom were the chiefs of that nation, and made prisoners of upwards of thirty women and children.

That on the news of this affair reaching Detroit, the British were thrown into some confusion, and sent out McKee, Elliott and Brant to enquire into the circumstances – that Brant was active and behaved with much generosity, in saving sundry whites from being killed, and getting them sent safe out of the Indian country.

### **“The most friendly disposition”<sup>342</sup> (1790)**

Yesterday afternoon [April 28, 1790] his excellency the governor [of New York], accompanied by the hon. Ezra L’Hommedieu and Richard Varick, Esquires, returned to this city [of New York] from Fort Stanwix, having, with the other commissioners, completed a treaty with the Onondaga and Cayuga nations of Indians. We are happy to have it in our power to assure the public, from the best authority, that their negotiations terminated to the perfect satisfaction of the commissioners, and that every cause of uneasiness has been removed from the minds of the Indians, and harmony and friendship with them fully restored and established.

The Sachems and chief warriors of those nations, particularly those who reside at Buffalo Creek, and who had not attended at the last two treaties, very generally attended at this; and with the greatest unanimity and apparent satisfaction, ratified and confirmed the deeds of session [sic.] and former agreements which their respective nations had entered into with the state.

Captain Brant and Captain Daird of the Mohawks, and many of the most distinguished characters of other nations also attended the treaty, and their conduct and behavior on this occasion evinced the most friendly disposition, and afforded the commissioners the strongest assurances of their good will and attachment.

### **“Colonel Brant, with about 40 chiefs”<sup>343</sup> (1791)**

Saturday last arrived here [Quebec] (accompanied by Sir John Johnston) colonel Brant, with about 40 chiefs, &c. deputed from the confederated western nations of Indians, to represent to government their situation with regard to the United States of America, in the war now carrying on betwixt them.

Sunday they were admitted to a public conference at the castle, in which they complained of encroachments on their territories, prayed for the interposition of the British government to accommodate their differences with the States, &c. After having explained the objects of their mission, they were referred to next day (Monday)

---

<sup>341</sup> From CARLISLE. (1786, December 13). *Pennsylvania Gazette*, p. 3.

<sup>342</sup> From NEW-YORK. (1790, July 22). *Maryland Gazette*, p. 2.

<sup>343</sup> From QUEBEC. (1791, October 5). *Philadelphia Inquirer*, p. 2.

to receive his lordship's reply. In which, he promised on his arrival in Great Britain, faithfully to represent their situation to His Majesty, and said he would be happy to contribute all in his power to effect the restoration of peace on solid and advantageous terms.

**“I hope I will answer the good purpose”<sup>344</sup> (1792)**

**A letter written by Joseph Brant.**

Sir, the law passed by Congress on the 22nd July last, to regulate trade and intercourse with the Indian nations, shows a desire in them to have justice done the Indians, that with the assurance I have had of the good disposition of the President of the United States towards us induces me to address you on the subject.

Collecting all your council fires, and uniting them in one I hope will answer the good purposes to which they seem to aim, and establish that friendship which we have long wished to effect upon principles of mutual justice; the number of council fires which has since the year 1784 been kindled in our country, has kept our heads in a state of intoxication, at none of which we have had a full representation, and although your present mode of treating with us may prevent such abuses as have been practiced from being exercised in future by your citizens, yet if partial representations are still received from our people, I am afraid it will fail of effecting that happy end which our mutual interest requires: it is difficult for us to prevent individuals from addressing you with assumed powers, which they have no right to, if such meet encouragement, harmony cannot be established with permanency. Obiel (or the Cornplanter), a Seneca chief, I understand has lately imposed himself on the President of the United States, as a representative of the Five Nations, he not being empowered by them. I am ignorant of his business, but it has been or any one of them suggested to me, that amongst other things he has complained of a deception upon the nations in the purchase of the Genesee country in which I feel myself particularly called upon to contradict, in vindication of my own character as well as in justification of the purchasers.

Influenced by bribes and other selfish views, in Fall 1787 he prevailed on the chiefs who were sent to Canadasigo [sic.] to cover up the council fire kindled there by Mr. John Livingston to lease the whole of the Five Nations country, for a consideration of 20,000 dollars subject to an annual rent of two thousand dollars, and it was with the utmost difficulty that the united efforts of the Five Nations were able to remove that lease from off one half of the country in Spring 1787, at which time Mr. Phelps came with authority from the state of Massachusetts, and agreed with the chiefs in a very full council for a tract of land on the Genesee river, the price of which the chiefs requested the Rev. Mr. Kirkland, Col. Butler and myself would determine, which was done on these principles, viz.: That the whole country in place of twenty was worth thirty thousand dollars, consequently Colonel Livingston, should pay fifteen thousand dollars and one thousand annually. Mr. Phelps having about one

---

<sup>344</sup> From Brant, J. (1792, February 10). *General Advertiser* (Aurora), p. 1.

third of the remainder it followed, of course, that he should pay five thousand dollars, and we fixed the annual rent at five hundred; the writings were then drawn and explained by Mr. Kirkland in full council and agreed to without a dissenting voice. They were afterwards lodged with Col. Butler at Niagara, where they remained till the time of payment, the year following, and no dissatisfaction appeared amongst our people, until they assembled at Canadacgue [sic.] to receive the money, when Obiel demanded ten thousand dollars; he was, however, opposed by all the chiefs except the Senecas, to whom he belonged, and finally gave up on the point and received the money.

I presume it must from these circumstances appear as extraordinary to every man of sense, as it does absurd to me, that the man who was the sole instigation of the country being first sold, or leased for 20,000 dollars in a clandestine manner, should afterwards object to the same sum when agreed upon openly and fairly in full council for two thirds of it; it clearly evinces that self interest was too predominant with him, and his not being bribed in this as he was formerly by the leases, must be the cause of this extraordinary conduct in him. Should individuals or parties without the concurrence of the whole meet encouragement, the Five Nations cannot be happy among themselves, nor can that harmony subsist between them and their neighbors as might be produced by a general representation of the causes of uneasiness where there is any; which has long been the united wish of the nations.

I have the honor to be,

Your most obedient humble servant,

(Signed) JOSEPH BRANT.

### **“Do not disturb them”<sup>345</sup> (1792)**

The Christian Indian congregation who were settled near the Susquehanna, and afterwards at Muskingum, after suffering much uneasiness of mind from the jealousies and suspicions of the various nations of wild Indians in the vicinity of, and at enmity with the United States, agreed in April last to remove to Retrench river, which empties itself above Detroit into lake St. Clair. By accounts from this religious congregation (who in respect to war are Quakers in principle) their troubles have been chiefly owing to a demand made upon them by the wild Indians to become a party in the general league against the United States, in which they declare they will not join, or have any thing to do.

The Indian nations (says an authentic narrative from that quarter) were never unanimous in all their wars before; every one that has a brown skin will assist to defend his country, and every Indian is forced to appear whenever it comes to a battle. When the several hostile nations of Indians insisted upon the Christian Indians joining them in the war, Col. Joseph Brant, a Mohawk, made the following address to council:

---

<sup>345</sup> From NEW YORK. (1792, October 12). *Vermont Gazette*, p. 3.



“Why should we force the believing Indians to join in the war? There are even enough without them, who do it willingly. What! Could a handful of believing Indians help us much in war?! They have something else wherewith they are occupied, of which we know nothing. They have the word of God, and will live and do according to that: let them act thereby, and do not disturb them; they are in the right way, and have chosen the better part: it is to be wished that we altogether would make this our chief concern. Look out a place for them where they can be for themselves – the time may come that we shall bring our wives and children in safety. If the believing Indians have a safe place, we can in time of need take our refuge with them; they would at least leave a place for our women and children near them, where they could plant and preserve their lives.”

### **“Now their king of kings”<sup>346</sup> (1793)**

We hear from Niagara by Mr. Hathaway who left there on the 23d of April, that the Indians had sat in grand council for a number of days, and had concluded their business the day before he came away. The council consisted of the Six Nations together with the Delawares and several other nations who reside upon the shores of the western lakes. In their debates many of the chiefs discovered much natural eloquence, their gestures were strong yet expressive, they spoke very loud in general, and some of them very lengthy; the Farmer’s Brother, a Seneca chief, spoke almost three hours in one harangue.

The final result was peace generally: they unanimously agreed to meet the Americans in the grand convention, that is about to be holden in June next, on the south side of Lake Erie; and for the purpose of making the peace more permanent and extensive, they have appointed Brant, who is now their king of kings, to go and convene all those tribes who live to the northwest of Lake Ontario. He accordingly the day after set out for that purpose: it cannot be doubted, but that all those northern Indians, are fully determined upon peace, and will do every thing in their power to effect the same; their situation, if nothing else, compels them to be at peace with the people of the States; they live so contiguous to us, that if occasion required we might with the greatest ease extirpate them from the face of the earth.

### **“From Captain Brant to Cornplanter”<sup>347</sup> (1794)**

Mohawk Village, 30th May, 1794

My dear friend,

I have just received your message of invitation to attend a council at Cataragaras, which I am much obliged to you for, but am exceeding sorry to hear of the loss of our friends the Delawares at Venango. I am much alarmed to hear of the people of the United States being in possession of Presqu’isle, on Lake Erie. My

---

<sup>346</sup> From Bennington. (1793, May 10). *Vermont Gazette*, p. 3.

<sup>347</sup> From Brant, J. (1794, June 21). True Copy of a letter from Captain Brant to Cornplanter. *Pittsburgh Gazette*, p. 2.

friend, I have every thing fresh in my mind of our last council at Buffalo Creek, which was agreed upon, and that all business of any consequence should be done at that place, in which case I cannot think of deviating from it. I don't think the Great Spirit from above would prosper our proceedings if we should, under what we have already done, except there should be a great change in our present situation of affairs. My friend, I would wish that we should consider seriously, that it is certainly the best for us to support what we have done a few days ago at our council fire at Buffalo Creek, in which case I would wish to meet you with the rest of our friends the chiefs in a few days at the above mentioned place, as we have received a message from our brethren the western Indians, which requires to be delivered there. The bearer of this will deliver you strings of Wampum to confirm what I have already said.

From your friend,  
JOS. BRANT.

### **“On a visit to the President of the United States”<sup>348</sup> (1797)**

On Wednesday evening arrived in town, on a visit to [George Washington,] the President of the United States, the famous Mohawk Chief Colonel Joseph Brant, and the Seneca Chief Cornplanter.

### **“Among us we have no prisoners”<sup>349</sup> (1801)**

*The following is the copy of a letter said to have been written by the celebrated Captain Brant, an Indian Chief.*

My dear Sir, your letter came safe to hand. To give you entire satisfaction, I must, I perceive, enter into the discussion of a subject on which I have often thought. My thoughts were my own, and being so different from the ideas entertained among your people, I certainly should have carried them with me to the grave had I not received your obliging favor.

You ask me, then, whether in my opinion civilization is favorable to human happiness? In answer to the question, it may be answered, that there are degrees of civilization, from cannibals to the most polite of European nations. The question is not, therefore, whether a degree of refinement is not conducive to happiness, but whether you, or the natives of this land, have obtained the happy medium.

On this subject, we are at present, I presume, of very different opinions. You will, however allow me, in some respects, to have had the advantage of you in forming my sentiments. I was, Sir, born of Indian parents, and lived while a child among those whom you are pleased to call savages. I was afterwards sent to live among the white people and educated at one of your schools. Since which period I have been honored much beyond my deserts by an acquaintance with a number of principal characters both in Europe and America. After all this experience, and after every exertion to divest myself of prejudice, I am obliged to give my opinion in favor of my own people.

---

<sup>348</sup> From On Wednesday evening. (1797, February 24). *Independent Gazetteer* (Philadelphia), p. 3.

<sup>349</sup> From The following. (1801, December 1). *Vermont Journal*, p. 2.

I will now as well as I am able, collect together and set before you some of the reasons that have influenced my judgment on the subject now before us. In the government you call civilized, the happiness of the people is constantly sacrificed to the splendor of the empire; hence your codes of criminal and civil laws had their origin, and from hence your dungeons and prisons. I will not enlarge on an idea, so singular in civilized life, and perhaps disagreeable to you – [I] will only observe, that among us we have no prisoners; we have no pompous parade of courts, we have no written laws, and yet judges are as highly revered among us as they are among you, and their decisions as much regarded. Property, to say the least, is as well guarded, and crimes are as impartially punished. We have among us no splendid villains above the control of our laws. Daring wickedness is here never suffered to triumph over helpless innocence. The estates of widows and orphans are never devoured by enterprising sharpers. In a word, we have no robbery under the color of law. No person among us desires any other reward for performing a brave or worthy action but the consciousness of having served his nation. Our wise men are called fathers, [and] they truly sustain that character; they are always accessible. I will not say to the meanest of our people, for we have none mean but such as render themselves so by their vices.

The palaces and prisons among you form a most dreadful contrast. Go to the former places, and you will see perhaps a *deformed piece of earth*, assuming airs that become none but the Great Spirit above. Go to one of your prisons; here description utterly fails! Kill them if you please, too by torture; but let the torture last no longer than a day. Those you call savages relent; the most furious of our tormentors exhausts his rage in a few hours, and dispatches the unhappy victim with a sudden stroke. Perhaps it is requisite that incorrigible offenders should sometimes be cut off; let it be done in a way that is not degrading to human nature. Let such unhappy men have an opportunity by the fortitude of their deaths of making an atonement in some measure for the crimes they have committed during their lives.

But for what are many of your prisoners confined? For debt! Astonishing! And will you ever again call the Indian nations cruel? Liberty to a rational and intelligent being as much exceeds property, as the light of the sun does that of the twinkling star. But you put them on a level, to the everlasting disgrace of civilization! I knew, while I lived among the white people, many of the most amiable contract debts, and I dare say with the best intentions; both parties at the time of the contract expected to find their advantage. The debtor we will suppose by a train of unavoidable misfortunes fails; here is no crime or even a fault; and yet your laws put it in the power of creditors to throw the debtor into prison and confine him there for life! A punishment infinitely worse than death to a brave man! And I seriously declare that I had rather die by the most severe torture ever inflicted on this continent, than languish in one of your prisons a single year.

Great Spirit of the universe; and do you call yourselves Christians?! Does then the religion of him whom you call your Savior inspire this spirit and lead to these practices? Surely no. It is recorded of him, that a *bruised reed* he never broke. Cease, then, to call yourselves Christians, lest you publish to the world your hypocrisy.

Cease, too, to call other nations savages, while you are ten fold more the children of cruelty than they.

**“They never make a prisoner a slave”<sup>350</sup> (1754)**

**The following account corroborates Brant’s statements in the above letter. Although Joseph Brant owned at least three slaves, one of them, Sophia Pooley<sup>351</sup>, was adopted into his family, and later sold as an indentured servant for seven years, to protect her from the abuse of Brant’s third wife. Pooley was free at the expiry of her indenture.**

The Five Nations have such absolute notions of liberty, that they allow of no kind of superiority of one over another, and banish all servitude from their Territories. They never make a prisoner a slave; but it is customary among them to make a compliment of naturalization into the Five Nations; and, considering how highly they value themselves above all others, this must be no small compliment. This is not done by a general Act of the Nation, but every single person has a right to do it, by a kind of adoption.

The first time I was among the Mohawks, I had this compliment from one of their old Sachems, which he did, by giving me in his own name, Cayenderongue. He had been a notable warrior; and he told me, that now I had a right to assume to myself all the Acts of Valor he had performed, and that now my name would echo from hill to hill all over the Five Nations. As for my part, I thought no more of it at that time, than as an artifice to draw a belly-full of strong liquor from me, for himself and his companions; but when about ten or twelve years afterwards, my business led me again among them, I directed the interpreter to say something from me to the Sachems; he was for some time at a loss to understand their answer, till he had asked me whether I had any name among them: I then found that I was really known to them by that name, and that the old Sachem, from the time he had given me his name, had assumed another to himself. I was adopted, at that time, into the Tribe of the Bear, and for that reason, I often afterwards had the kind compliment of “Brother Bear.”

The hospitality of these Indians is no less remarkable, than their other virtues; as soon as any stranger comes, they are sure to offer him victuals. If there be several in company, and come from far, one of their best houses is cleaned and given up for their entertainment. Their complaisance, on these occasions, goes even farther than Christian civility allows of, as they have no other rule for it, than the furnishing their guest with every thing they think will be agreeable to him; for this reason some of

---

<sup>350</sup> From Colden, C. (1754, August 27). The Five Nations. *Leedes Intelligencer*, p. 1. This is an extract from a larger work, published as *The history of the Five Indian Nations of Canada, which are dependent on the province of New-York in America, and are the barrier between the English and French in that part of the world*. (1755). London: Lockyer Davis. The author is Cadwallader Colden (1688-1776).

<sup>351</sup> Pooley’s account is among those included in ‘A North-Side View of Slavery’, elsewhere in this collection.

their prettiest girls are always ordered to wash themselves, and dress in their best apparel, in order to be presented to the stranger, for his choice; and the young lady, who has the honor to be preferred on these occasions, performs all the duties of a fond wife, during the stranger's stay: but this last piece of hospitality is now either laid aside by the Mohawks, or, at least, they never offer it to any Christian. This Nation indeed has laid aside many of its ancient customs, and so likewise have the other Nations, with whom we are best acquainted; and have adopted many of ours; so that it is not easy now to distinguish their original and genuine manners, from those which they have lately acquired; and for this reason it is, that they now seldom offer victuals to persons of any distinction, because they know, that their food and cookery is not agreeable to our delicate palates. Their men value themselves, in having all kind of food in equal esteem. A Mohawk Sachem told me with a kind of pride, that a Man eats every thing without distinction, bears, cats, dogs, snakes, frogs, &c., intimating that it is womanish to have any delicacy in the choice of food.

I can however give two strong instances of the hospitality of the Mohawks, which fell under my own observation; and which show, that they have the very same notion of hospitality, which we find in the ancient poets. When I was last in the Mohawks' Country, the Sachems told me, that they had an Englishman among their people, a servant who had run from his master in New York. I immediately told them that they must deliver him up. "No," they answered, "we never serve any man so, who puts himself under our protection." On this I insisted on the injury they did thereby to his master; and they allowed it might be an injury, and replied; though we never will deliver him up, we are willing to pay the value of the servant to the master. Another man made his escape from the Gaol of Albany, where he was in prison on an execution of debt; the Mohawks received him, and, as they protected him against the Sheriff and his officers, they not only paid the debt for him, but gave him land, over and above sufficient for a good farm, whereon he lived when I was last there. To this it may be added, all their extraordinary visits are accompanied with giving and receiving presents of some value; as we learn likewise from *Homer* was the practice in old times.

Polygamy is not usual among them; and indeed, in any Nation, where all are on a par, as to riches and power, plurality of wives cannot well be introduced. As all kind of slavery is banished from the countries of the Five Nations, so they keep themselves free from the bondage of Wedlock; and when either of the parties becomes disgusted, they separate without formality or ignominy to either, unless it be occasioned by some scandalous offence in one of them. And in case of divorce, the children, according to the natural course of all animals, follow the mother. The women bring forth their children with as much ease as other animals, and without the help of a midwife, and, soon after their delivery, return to their usual employment. They alone also perform all the drudgery about their houses; they plant their corn and labor it, in every respect, till it is brought to the table: They likewise cut all the fire-wood, and bring it home on their backs, and in their marches bear the burdens. The men disdain all kind of labor, and employ themselves alone in hunting, as the only proper business for soldiers. At times, when it is not proper to hunt, one finds the old

men in companies, in conversation; the young men at their exercises, shooting at marks, throwing the hatchet, wrestling, or running, and the women all busy at labor in the fields.

On these occasions, the state of *Lacedaemon* ever occurs to my mind, which that of the Five Nations, in many respects, resembles; their laws, or customs, being, in both, formed to render the minds and bodies of people fit for war.

**“The least that ought to be paid for a Prisoner”<sup>352</sup> (1754)**

**As a counterpoint to the above, this account, from the same period, suggests that the Kanien’kehá:ka (Mohawk) of Caughnawaga (Kahnawá:ke) at least occasionally took prisoners and traded slaves with Europeans.**

In *January*, 1753, four of our *Indian* Traders, *viz.* *Alexander M’Genty, Jabez Evans, David Hendricks* and *William Powell*, were taken trading on *Kantuqui* River, near the *Ohio*, by a Party of *French Indians*, called the *Cagnawagas*, who plundered them of Goods to the Value of several Hundred Pounds, and carried them to *Canada*; where they were made Slaves. But acquainting the Mayor of *Albany* with their miserable Situation, by a Letter which he communicated to this Government, Measures were taken to procure their Release. The *Indians* at first demanded a *Negro* Boy for each of them, or as much Money as would buy one; but at length were prevailed on by the Commissioners of *Indian* Affairs at *Albany*, to take less; tho’ the whole paid them, with the Charges, amounted to *Seventy-two Pounds, Five Shillings* and *Three Half-pence*, for the four Prisoners, which Sum has been repaid by this Province. However, the *Indians* it seems pretend not to be satisfied; and Col. *Myndert Schuyler*,<sup>353</sup> one of the *Albany* Commissioners for *Indian* Affairs, who transacted this Matter with them, received lately the following Letter from the Chief of that Nation on the Subject, *viz.*

(Copy LITERATIM<sup>354</sup>.)

Au Sault S. Louis, a 14 Juin, 1754.

*Je te prie, mon Frere Anangarondon, de faire Attention a tous vos Messieur sur se que je n’est point eté satisfait du Prisonnier que je vous est remy a Aurange Lanné derniere. Mes jeunes Gens me dise tous le Jour qu’il ne sont poin conten de votre Fasson Dagir, et qua lavenir ils namenneron plus les Hommes vivans, puis quon ne leur donne pas Seulement de quoy avoir un petit Escalve Sauvage. Tu cest, mon Frere, que je n’est pas eu que quatrevingt dix Livre de notre Argent. Je charge Montandre de cette Commission, il texpliquera mes Sentimens en te remettan ma Lettre. Le moins qu’on paye un Prisonnier cest Quatre Cent Livres. Faits faire [illegible] a ceux qui ont [illegible] fortes d’Affaires antre les mains, sans quois je ne*

---

<sup>352</sup> From PHILADELPHIA. (1754, August 15). *The Pennsylvania Gazette*, p. 2.

<sup>353</sup> Myndert Schuyler (1672 – 1755) was twice mayor of Albany.

<sup>354</sup> I have refrained from correcting any of the errors in the French text. It is transcribed as it was printed in the newspaper.

*repon poin des Evenement qui pourrois arriver a lavenir lorsque mes jeunes Gens feron des Prisonnier.*

O'NONRAGUITE.  
Chef du Sault St. Louis.

Translated into *ENGLISH*.

*Falls of St. Louis, June 14, 1754.*

I pray thee, brother *Anagarondon*<sup>355</sup>, to acquaint the Gentlemen, that I have not been satisfied for the Prisoners that were delivered to you at *Albany* last Year. My young Men tell me every Day that they do not like your Management, and that for the future they will bring no living Prisoners, since they do not receive as much for one of them as will buy a little Slave. You know, my Brother, that I had only ninety Livres of our Money. I charge *Montandre* with this Commission, who will explain my Sentiments to you, when he delivers this Letter. The least that ought to be paid for a Prisoner is 400 Livres<sup>356</sup>. Let those that have the Management of these Sort of Affairs, give due Attention to this: Otherwise I will not answer for what may happen hereafter, when my young Men make Prisoners.

ONONRAGUIETE,  
*Chief of the Falls of St. Louis.*

By this insulting Letter from a People with whom this Province has not had the least Difference, to whom we have never given the least Occasion of Offence, we may see the Contempt in which we are held by the Savages; who not content with plundering our People of their Goods with Impunity, propose to make Slaves of all of us they can catch, or to have a Sum for each sufficient to purchase a Slave, otherwise threatening they will not be at the Trouble of saving our Lives. If they are suffered to go on in this Manner, and to make a Trade of catching our People, and selling them to us again for 400 Livres per Head, it may in time cost us more to satisfy the Demands of that Handful of Barbarians, than would serve to defend the Province against all its enemies.

### **The death of Joseph Brant<sup>357</sup> (1808)**

DIED – [...] At his seat at the head of Lake Ontario, the terrific and much celebrated Indian, Col. Joseph Brant. He departed this life, after a short illness, much regretted by the Six Nations, of whom he was Chief.

---

<sup>355</sup> Anagarondon, *is Col. Schuyler's Indian Name*. [Note in the original.]

<sup>356</sup> *About Twenty Pounds Sterling*. [Note in the original.]

<sup>357</sup> From DIED. (1808, January 11). *North Star* (Vermont), p. 3.

## Appendix: The legend of Minnie Mink

**A folk tale goes as follows: Minnie Mink, a quadroon heiress from Toronto, marries a white man; her dowry is her weight in silver. Her husband pockets the money then takes her on a trip south, where he sells her into slavery. Minnie's father eventually redeems her with the help of a British government official, but it's all for naught. Unable to return to respectable life, she goes back to the States and dies under an alias in Chicago, having spent her last years in poverty and vice.**

**The tale of Minnie Mink is one of the better-known urban legends of Toronto, and the wealth of details included in the legend have led many to mistake it for truth. Thanks a 2016 investigation<sup>358</sup> by Guylane Petrin, we can trace the evolution of the story.**

**“A \$30,000 wife”<sup>359</sup> (June 30, 1880)**

**It all began with two stories published in Chicago newspapers on the same day. The first was in the *Telegram*. Notably, the author does not explain how they verified their sources, and hand-waves away a 10-year discrepancy in ages between Nellie Jones and Minnie Mink.**

On the 13th day of June, less than three weeks ago, the following item was made the subject of the police report usual in cases of accident or sudden and mysterious death:

“At 11 o'clock this morning Officer F. O. Taylor, of this station, was informed that an old negro woman was lying dead at her residence, No. 64 School Street. The officer investigated the complaint, and found lying dead on a bed at the above number a negro woman named Nellie Jones, 36 years old, who has resided alone in said building for several months. The officer also ascertained that Dr. Adams had been attending her. The officer called at Dr. Adams' residence, No. 253 West Madison Street, and was informed that the woman had been suffering for the past seven days with diphtheria, and gave a certificate to that effect. The woman was walking around the house at 7 o'clock a.m., and it is supposed that she died about 8:30, as the body was cold at 11 o'clock a.m. As she appeared to have no friends to take charge of the body, the County Undertaker has been notified to do so, and personal effects of the dead woman to the value of \$50, consisting of two beds and old furniture, are now in his charge.”

So read the report, and the representatives of the city press made a two-line item<sup>360</sup> of a piece of news crowded out of lengthy mention by reason of its ordinary

---

<sup>358</sup> Petrin, G. (2016). The Myth of Mary Mink: Representation of Black Women in Toronto in the Nineteenth Century. *Ontario History*, 108(1), 92–110. <https://doi.org/10.7202/1050613ar>

<sup>359</sup> From A \$30,000 WIFE. (1880, June 30). *Chicago Telegraph*, p. 4.

<sup>360</sup> Reported in the *Telegram* as follows: “Yesterday morning about 11 o'clock Nellie Johnson, a negro woman, was discovered lying dead at No. 64 School street. Dr. Adams, of No. 253 West Madison street, reported that she had been suffering from diphtheria, and that was the cause of her death. The County



import and from the fact that more important subjects of politics and crime were just then exciting the community. A reporter for the *Telegraph*, however, receiving an intimation that there was much more in the history of the dead woman than the Coroner's investigation had revealed, spent a day in ferreting out the particulars of the case. These grouped together and fully verified, connect the woman calling herself Nellie Jones, with events which some twenty years since electrified all reading America<sup>361</sup> with their strangeness, being written up not only in American but in foreign journals. There are hundreds of people in Chicago who will readily recall the events alluded to, when it is stated that Nellie Jones was no other than Minnie Mink, the daughter of Joseph Mink, a negro, who previous to the [U.S. Civil] War was perhaps the wealthiest colored man in North America.

In the year 1859 this man owned and operated over 200 miles of stage routes in the city and vicinity of Toronto, Canada. In addition to this he owned an extensive omnibus line in the city and a well-equipped livery stable. He had a brother George, at Kingston, who was also engaged in the livery business, and who was at one time an aspirant for Aldermanic honors. Both were superior representatives of their class, socially and in point of wealth, Joseph being reputed to be a millionaire. Those who remember him, however, and those who attended the same school with his daughter, estimate his wealth variously as reaching from \$50,000 to a million of dollars. At all events he educated his daughter at the best of schools, and in addition to other property owned a fine residence, where he lived, at Richmond Hill, a fashionable suburb of Toronto.

In 1858 [his daughter] Minnie was 22 years of age, a quadroon<sup>362</sup>, possessed of fine scholastic attainments, and very pretty in feature and form. During the early portion of that year it was very generally known that Mink's fortune was open for division to the first white man of respectability who would wed his daughter. In fact, the old man publicly stated that at the consummation of such a marriage he would pay the sum of \$30,000 to the venturesome bridegroom.

Even in those days, and in free, liberal Canada, miscegenation was scarcely sanctioned in legal and social circles. However, a Yorkshire cabman, named James Andrews, who had become acquainted with Mink, proposed for his daughter's hand, and was accepted, married her in excellent style and [was] paid over (some say the full amount stated, others the sum of \$1,000) and became domiciled at the elegant family mansion on Richmond Hill.

At the time the singular circumstances of the marriage formed the theme of considerable comment in the current public prints. Less than a year later, however, the affairs of Andrews and his wife glided into a series of circumstances forming one of the most stupendous sensations of the day. He evidently tired of his quadroon bride, and either squandered the money and employed her marketable value in the

---

undertaker has been notified to take charge of the remains." THE CITY. (1880, June 14). *Chicago Telegraph*, p. 4.

<sup>361</sup> Neither I nor Guylane Petrin found any trace of this story in the international press before 1880.

<sup>362</sup> One-quarter Black.

slave states to replenish his depleted purse, or was practical enough to effectually rid himself of her and pay the expenses of the experiment at the same time.

A few months after their marriage he proposed a trip to the States, the tour extending south of Mason and Dixon's line, and actually sold his trusting and beautiful wife to a Virginia planter for the sum of \$1,500. From that day until the present time nothing more has been heard of Andrews. The intelligence of the perfidy of his son-in-law soon reached the ears of Mink. Through Sir Henry Bulwer, brother of the eminent English novelist<sup>363</sup>, and at that time British consul<sup>364</sup> in Norfolk, Mink redeemed his child and took her home again. Her experience had been a sad one, however, and she became restless, ran away to Elmira, N. Y., led a life of recklessness, and finally drifted into life among the unfortunates in the great cities.

The Grand Trunk Railway<sup>365</sup> broke up her father's stage line business and he lost the greater portion of his fortune. Minnie finally went to Chicago, and took up her abode on School Street, where she took in washing and eked out a miserable living in poverty, intemperance and ill-health. Surely in all the range of romance there is no fiction which possesses the strange interest and singularity of detail as the story of Minnie Mink's career.

The age of the woman as stated in the police report is about ten years out of the way. About a year since she was concerned in a case where \$500 was taken from a German and hidden in an old can under her house.

### **“Buying experience”<sup>366</sup> (1878)**

#### **This incident in the life of Nellie Jones became attached to Minnie Mink.**

He loved his money and likewise his fun. With fun, money disappears rapidly, sometimes with his knowledge, but mostly without it. He had no confidence in savings banks, and depositors, and consequently carried his wealth in a purse, attached to a string which encircled his neck and hung next to his flesh. His name was Herman Stoltz, of 54 Wells Street, and he had \$500 in that purse.

About a week ago he paid a visit – an unlucky one – to the dive of a notorious colored wench at 64 School Street. He went out after some beer, and came back and showed how securely he carried his money. She asked him to buy some oysters. They went to a Randolph Street Saloon, where he got a gold eagle exchanged, the bartender retaining \$18 of it. They went back to School Street again, where he remained for some time. After a while she went out after some beer, he furnishing the money. She came back with the beer and two men. He drank some of the beer, and in a few minutes was insensible. The next morning someone picked him up outside of her door.

---

<sup>363</sup> Edward George Earle Lytton Bulwer-Lytton (1803 – 1873), at that time Secretary of State for the Colonies, and most famous today for his purple prose, including the sentence “It was a dark and stormy night.”

<sup>364</sup> Surprising if true, as in 1858-59 Bulwer-Lytton had his hands full (as Colonial Secretary) with the colonial implications of the Fraser River gold rush in what is now British Columbia.

<sup>365</sup> Incorporated in 1852.

<sup>366</sup> From BUYING EXPERIENCE. (1878, November 7). *Chicago Telegraph*, p. 4.

He told the police Tuesday morning. Detectives Shea and Keating arrested her in the afternoon for robbing him of \$500 in gold. She gave the name of Nellie Jones, but denied having any knowledge of the robbery.<sup>367</sup>

### **“A remarkable career”<sup>368</sup> (June 30, 1880)**

**The second of the June 30 stories was published in the *Chicago Times*. It’s possible the same reporter wrote both, or, given the difference in style, it may be the case that two reporters spoke to the same informant.**

Readers of the *Times* will remember that, something over two weeks ago, Officer Taylor, of the West Madison Street Station, found a negress named Nellie Jones dead, on a miserable cot in a hovel at No. 64 School Street, and that her body was turned over to the county undertaker and buried in Potter’s Field. The alias “Nellie Jones” completely disguised a woman with a remarkable history, and a diligent *Times* reporter succeeded in unearthing the more striking figures of her life.

Years ago, perhaps in the early part of 1850, James Mink, a colored man, educated above the average, started a line of stage coaches in Canada, and also opened a livery stable at Toronto. Fortune smiled on his efforts, and before long he could count his gold by the hundred thousands. He lived in a beautiful suburb called Richmond Hill, and, with a wife and daughter, then about fifteen years of age, was as happy as a monarch. His daughter, Minnie, a prepossessing girl, was given the best education the land could afford, and at the age of twenty there were few so accomplished as she. Highly educated colored men being few in Canada, the father conceived the notion of marrying his daughter to a white man; and, knowing that no Caucasian under ordinary circumstances was willing to take a negro for a wife, the old gentleman offered as an inducement the sum of \$20,000, to be paid to any respectable white man who would accept the hand of his daughter. Among those to hear of the offer was one James Andrews, an Englishman, who at that time, 1857, was driving a cab at Kingston, and, being possessed of a fair education and genteel appearance, presented himself before the father and asked the hand of his daughter. He was accepted, was married the following year, and received the full amount offered by Mr. Mink. He suggested a wedding trip to his wife’s home in Virginia, and, well prepared for a long bridal tour, they set out together. All went pleasantly until Norfolk was reached, and here the unfeeling husband deliberately sold his wife to a planter for \$1,500, and putting that and his original present together, sailed away to the old country.

---

<sup>367</sup> A follow-up paragraph was published the following day: “The two men who assisted the colored wench Nellie Jones in drugging and robbing Herman Stoltz of \$500 were arrested yesterday by Detectives Shea and Keating. They gave the names of Owen Cauley and James Manning, and are identified as old offenders. The officers recovered \$220 of the stolen money. Manning’s girl, Mattie Cole, has also been arrested.” THE CITY. (1878, November 8). *Chicago Telegraph*, p. 4.

<sup>368</sup> From A REMARKABLE CAREER. (1880, July 2). *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, p. 6. (Petrin, 2016) notes that this was originally printed in the *Chicago Times* on June 30, 1880.

After many months the old father in Toronto was made aware of the fact that his daughter had been sold as a slave in Norfolk, and proceedings were commenced to recover her. Sir Henry Bulwer, at that time British Consul at Norfolk, was successful, after infinite trouble, in securing her release, returning the planter his \$1,500. She reached home broken-hearted, weary, and suffering in mind and body, and for many weeks was confined to the house. As soon as she was able to move she left home and visited Elmira, N. Y., where she remained for some time, seeming to have lost all love for home and its surroundings.

About this time the Grand Trunk Railroad, pushing its way through the Dominion, broke up the stage line, and one misfortune after another gradually reduced the old man until there remained but a few thousand dollars. Minnie became wayward, it is claimed, and, being unusually beautiful for a colored woman, was able to get along very easily. She floated about from one city to another under the alias of Nellie Jones, finally bringing up on the West Side [of Chicago], taking a small cottage and paying for it by doing laundry work. It was here that she died. The daughter of wealth, the slave, the pauper.

Once she came to the notice of the police. It was when she was induced to “squeal” on some parties who had robbed a German of \$500, and she revealed the hiding place of the stolen sum. That, so far as known, constituted her criminal career. She was good-looking, even in her old age, [and] was very light-colored, with regular features and pearly teeth. She was pleasant in demeanor, and in her conversation showed her superior education. Her neighbors “always though there was something strange about Miss Jones,” but they never penetrated her secret.

### “A dusky story”<sup>369</sup> (July 1, 1880)

**The following day, the Chicago Tribune published this piece, debunking the articles. While many of article’s statements are dubious, it’s true that the real Mary “Minnie” Mink married William Johnson in 1852.**

The death, some two weeks since, at No. 64 School Street, of a very commonplace colored woman of questionable repute, going by the name of Nellie Jones, was made the occasion yesterday morning of the republication in a morning paper of a very old story. The story itself, though antiquated, is not a bad one, and the idea of creating a new heroine for it in the person of the unfortunate woman who was buried at the county’s expense a fortnight ago, and dishing it up as something fresh as well as romantic, was not devoid of ingenuity.

The role which the deceased resident on School Street was made to play was that of Mrs. Minnie Johnson, a very respectable colored lady who, after an eventful career, died in St. Joe, Mich., some seven years ago, and whose son and husband are still alive, and who will doubtless object stoutly to the memory of their respected relative being tainted by the slur cast upon it by the story published yesterday. Mrs. Johnson was the daughter of a wealthy colored stagecoach-driver, of Toronto, Can.,

---

<sup>369</sup> From A DUSKY STORY. (1880, July 1). *Chicago Tribune*, p. 8.

who at the time she reached marriageable age had amassed a fortune of from \$130,000 to \$150,000.

The daughter had been well educated, and it was the father's ambition to marry her to a white man of respectability. As an inducement to such a match he offered to dower the daughter with the weight in silver of herself and husband, a tempting offer which was accepted by a Kingston, Canada, hack-driver named James Andrews. The couple were married, and the old man was so pleased with his white son-in-law that he made the dower a clear \$20,000, which was considerably more than if the weight-in-silver idea had been adhered to.

Andrews proved to be a spendthrift, and, the fortune which his wife brought him being soon wasted, he hit upon the extraordinary device of inducing her to accompany him on a trip to the Southern States, where he sold her to a Southern planter at New Orleans for \$1,000. This fact became known to Old Mink, and a movement for the release of the young woman was set on foot, and, after some trouble, Sir Henry Bulwer, English Minister at Washington, succeeded in securing her return to her parents.

Some time after her return to Toronto she married<sup>370</sup> a young colored man named Johnson, with whom she subsequently came to this country, the family finally settling in St. Joe, Mich., where she died, as already mentioned. At the time of her death she was a noble-looking lady, much loved by her friends, and known to be a church member of very high standing. She left a son, who is now employed on one of the western branches of the Northwestern Railroad.

So much for the real heroine of the romantic story published in a paper yesterday. The Nellie Jones who died two weeks since, and who was resurrected for the purpose of posing as lay-figure in the revival of the Minnie Minks romance, was first known to the colored people of Chicago as a Mrs. Hencricks, who, after the death of her husband in Haiti some years ago, married a man named George Wells, who separated from her and went to live at Penn Yan, New York State, where he resides at present. After this separation she led a dissolute life, and, altogether, she was the wrong sort of person to confound with the Toronto stage-driver's daughter.

The true story of the latter was told to a *Tribune* reporter yesterday evening by Mr. W. H. Smith, of NO. 40 Fourth Avenue, who is a native of Toronto, Canada, and who, while there, was intimately acquainted with the Mink family. It was in the home of his cousin, Nathan Lynch, of St. Joe, Mich., who is at present head cook of the steamer Sheboygan, that the worthy lady died.

---

<sup>370</sup> "In this city, on the 7th instant, at the residence of the bride's uncle [George Mink], by the Rev. Mr. Wilkinson, Wesleyan Minister, Mr. Wm. Johnson to Miss Mary Mink, daughter of Mr. James Mink, all of this city." MARRIED. (1852, October 14). *The Globe* (Toronto), p. 495.

## “Old story revived”<sup>371</sup> (July 2, 1880)

**The Toronto Mail printed its own version of the story on July 2, 1880. It was reprinted nearly verbatim in various Canadian newspapers that month, including Kingston’s *British Whig* on July 3.**

There are many people in the city who remember old Joseph Mink, a colored man, who, before Upper Canada could boast of a railway, owned and managed a line of stages running from Toronto throughout the country. He once kept a hotel and livery stable where the post office now stands and afterwards removed his stables to Queen Street, opposite Bay Street, Toronto. From his business he amassed a large fortune, and was looked upon as the wealthiest colored man in America. He had a brother George, at Kingston, who was also engaged in the livery business, and who was at one time an aspirant for aldermanic honors. Both were superior representatives of their class, socially, and in point of wealth, Joseph being reputed to be a millionaire. Those who remember him, however, and those who attended the same school with his daughter, estimate his wealth as variously reaching from \$50,000 to a million of dollars. At all events, he educated his daughter at the best of schools, and in addition to other property, owned a fine residence, where he lived at Richmond Hill.

In 1858 [his daughter] Minnie was 22 years of age, a quadroon<sup>372</sup>, possessed of fine scholastic attainments, and very pretty in feature and form. During the early portion of that year it was very generally known that Mink’s fortune was open for division to the first white man of respectability who would wed his daughter. In fact, the old man publicly stated that at the consummation of such a marriage he would pay the sum of \$30,000 to the venturesome bridegroom.

Even in those days, and in free, liberal Canada, miscegenation was scarcely sanctioned in legal and social circles. However, a Yorkshire cabman, named James Andrews, who had become acquainted with Mink, proposed for his daughter’s hand, and was accepted, married her in excellent style and [was] paid over (some say the full amount stated, others the sum of \$1,000) and became domiciled at the elegant family mansion on Richmond Hill.

At the time the singular circumstances of the marriage formed the theme of considerable comment in the current public prints. Less than a year later, however, the affairs of Andrews and his wife glided into a series of circumstances forming one of the most stupendous sensations of the day. He evidently tired of his quadroon bride, and either squandered the money and employed her marketable value in the slave states to replenish his depleted purse, or was practical enough to effectually rid himself of her and pay the expenses of the experiment at the same time.

A few months after their marriage he proposed a trip to the States, the tour extending south of Mason and Dixon’s line, and actually sold his trusting and

---

<sup>371</sup> From OLD STORY REVIVED. (1880, July 3). *British Whig* (Kingston), p. 4. Originally published in the *Toronto Mail* on July 2, and reprinted as late as July 15 in the *Clinton Era* (Clinton, Ontario).

<sup>372</sup> One-quarter Black.

beautiful wife to a Virginia planter for the sum of \$1,500. From that day until the present time nothing more has been heard of Andrews. The intelligence of the perfidy of his son-in-law soon reached the ears of Mink. Through Sir Henry Bulwer, brother of the eminent English novelist<sup>373</sup>, and at that time British consul<sup>374</sup> in Norfolk, Mink redeemed his child and took her home again. Her experience had been a sad one, however, and she became restless, ran away to Elmira, N. Y., led a life of recklessness, and finally drifted into life among the unfortunates in the great cities.

The Grand Trunk Railway<sup>375</sup> broke up her father's stage line business and he lost the greater portion of his fortune. Minnie finally went to Chicago, and took up her abode on School Street, where she took in washing and eked out a miserable living in poverty, intemperance and ill-health.

On the 13th of June, says the Chicago Telegraph, the police authorities of that city were informed that an old negro woman was lying dead at No. 64 School Street. The woman had been seized with diphtheria, and had died after a short illness. The remains were buried at the city's expense. She had given her name as Nellie Jones to the doctor who attended her. A reporter for the Telegraph worked up the case, and by some means not mentioned discovered that the dead negro woman was Minnie Mink, the colored heiress who was sold into slavery.

### **“The Mink Family”<sup>376</sup> (July 31, 1880)**

**In late July, a correspondent claiming to have information from the Mink family wrote to the *Toronto Mail* with a correction. While there are some factual inconsistencies (Mary Mink's wedding took place at her uncle's house, not her groom's), this account is probably closer to the truth than earlier ones. The version reproduced here was printed in the *British Whig*.**

Some time since we reprinted a very romantic statement about the Mink family. It was good reading, but it seems to have been fiction from beginning to end, as a correspondent to the [Toronto] *Mail* goes to show. We submit the recital of facts, endorsed by Mr. John George, of Wolfe Island, who was intimate with the woman's relations, and the ups and downs of the Minks:

“Sir – Under the heading of ‘An old story revived,’ in your issue of yesterday, appears a romantic story regarding the Mink family. The romance hinges on the life and death of Minnie Mink, and it is strange that the part relating to her marriage and being sold into slavery by her husband should not have been long ago exploded,

---

<sup>373</sup> Edward George Earle Lytton Bulwer-Lytton (1803 – 1873), at that time Secretary of State for the Colonies, and most famous today for his purple prose, including the sentence “It was a dark and stormy night.”

<sup>374</sup> Probably no earlier than 1860, as in 1858-59 Bulwer-Lytton had his hands full (as Colonial Secretary) with the colonial implications of the Fraser River gold rush in what is now British Columbia.

<sup>375</sup> Incorporated in 1852.

<sup>376</sup> From THE MINK FAMILY. (1880, July 31). *British Whig* (Kingston), p. 3.

appearing as it does to contain not one particle of truth. Her tragic death, as related by the Chicago papers, is also probably a myth.

“Mink’s name was not (as you have it) Joseph, but James, although he was occasionally called Joe. He had but one daughter, named Mary (or, as she was known, Minnie), who for about five years taught Sunday school in Toronto, in the Baptist church on the corner of Queen and Victoria streets. Minnie did not marry (as you have it) one Joe Anderson, a Yorkshire cabman. She married a man of her own color named Wm. Johnson, who was a bartender in a King Street saloon, and subsequently he assisted his father-in-law in the management of his livery stable. The marriage ceremony was performed by a Wesleyan clergyman in Johnson’s own house, which he had taken and fitted up, and which stood on Queen Street East, near where the present House of Providence is located. Johnson and his wife afterwards removed to the Western States, where she died about five years ago. This may seem a rude assault upon an old cherished tale, nevertheless the groomsman who officiated at the wedding of Johnson, and others of Johnson’s and Mink’s friends and acquaintances, still reside in Toronto, and it is to them that I am indebted for the foregoing facts. In short, Minnie Mink did not marry one Andrews, she was not sold into slavery, she did not lead a loose life, neither did she die the other day in Chicago.”

Mr. George considers the story about Miss Mink very ridiculous. She was unusually smart and intellectual, and not one that could be easily duped by designing persons. She was the only one educated in the family, and free from the failings attributed to her by a western journalist. She died five years ago in Canada, and not a month ago at Chicago.

### From “Landmarks of Toronto”<sup>377</sup> (1894)

**Guylaine Petrin (Petrin, 2016) suggests the author “must have known it was not true, but it was simply too juicy to be omitted.”**

From about 1841 to 1845 one of the most popular and well-patronized inns in Toronto, especially well favored by country folk, occupied the ground at the head of Toronto Street, which is now taken up by the post office. It was a frame building, and connected with it were stables quite extensive for that day. Its proprietor was a colored man by the name of James Mink, who retired from the business with a fortune.<sup>378</sup> On the Tonawanda reservation of Indians in New York State is a chieftain who is the possessor of wealth and a pretty and accomplished daughter. Unwilling to marry her to one of his red brethren, he has caused the statement to be circulated that a fertile farm of generous acreage is to be the Indian maiden’s dowry whenever a pale-face of standing and character may win her hand.

---

<sup>377</sup> From Robertson, J. R. (1894). *Landmarks of Toronto*; a collection of historical sketches of the old town of York from 1792 until 1833, and of Toronto from 1834 to 1893. Toronto: J. Ross Robertson. Written (or edited?) by John Ross Robertson (1841 – 1914).

<sup>378</sup> James’s brother, George Mink, obtained a license for Kingston’s Telegraph Inn in 1861, in addition to running his own mail and omnibus routes.



Somewhat similar was the desire of Mr. Mink, who offered to give \$10,000 to any respectable white man who would wed his daughter. Miss Mink did, it was said, find a white man who married her, and they made their wedding trip to the Southern States, and, with a villainy that we are pleased to say characterizes few white men, sold his bride into slavery and abandoned her. Through the efforts of Mink's friends in Canada, and the payment of a large sum of money, Miss Mink was freed and brought back to Toronto, and lived for years with her father in the old home on the hill, on the east side of the Don and Danforth Road.

### “Reminiscences”<sup>379</sup> (1895)

#### **R. F. Easson embellished the tale for a collection of reminiscences of old Toronto.**

Mr. Mink had a daughter who was black, very black, but a pleasant-faced buxom young woman. She dressed in a quiet, genteel manner, and had a decidedly ladylike appearance on the streets. It would do no violence to perfect taste to say that she was [of] “good form,” and as she majestically sailed along the fashionable thoroughfares, her style and figure and general get-up excited favorable comment. Her pedal extremities were not fashioned after the humpy, expansive plantation pattern, but were trim and shapely. Her voice – a characteristic of many of her race – was musically low and sweet. There was nothing *spirituelle* or flimsy about Miss Mink. She was natural, substantial and solid, fond of show, and ambitious.

Thinking it would improve her social status, her father stated openly that he would give a large sum of money to any well-behaved and otherwise suitable white man who would marry her. By-and-bye an attractive and speculative young man, who meant business, came along from the other side and laid siege to the heart of Miss Mink and to her father's purse. The young lady was not long in capitulating, and the marriage took place without delay.

The newly-married couple took an extended trip into the States, gradually going south, and when the enterprising but unprincipled villain arrived in South Carolina he cruelly sold his young, simple and confiding colored wife into slavery. Of course, this happened a great many years before the immortal Lincoln issued his proclamation declaring the slaves in the States to be free men. Miss Mink – if I may still so call her – being young, well-educated and good-looking, brought a large sum of money.

Her father was betimes apprised of the dastardly trick that had been played upon himself and his daughter, and took immediate steps to repurchase her and bring her back to Toronto. Poor old Mr. Mink had to pay dearly for the coveted but doubtful honor of having a white man for a son-in-law. The adventurer made well out of the speculation, for he not only got the dower that went with his wife, but the sum he realized on her sale.

---

<sup>379</sup> From Easson, R. F. (1895, September 3). REMINISCENCES. *The Globe* (Toronto), p. 2. By Robert Farmer Easson (1837 – 1927).

## “The colored citizens of Toronto”<sup>380</sup> (1914)

**Shortly before her death, Canadian artist Agnes Dunbar Chamberlin shared memories of George Mink and the gossip surrounding his family with the Women’s Canadian Historical Society of Toronto. In this version, George is said to be Minnie’s father, not her uncle.**

Many papers have been read to this Society on many subjects, events and people connected with Old Toronto, but none about a class who were of considerable importance, not only at election times, but during the spring cleaning of our homes. I mean the people who call themselves the “colored inhabitants of Toronto.” And nothing struck me more forcibly upon my return to Toronto after being away for over twenty years than the almost total absence of blacks.

### [AN EMANCIPATION DAY PARADE]

Elizabeth Street, Centre, Chestnut, Teraulay, in fact all the streets between University Avenue – then known as Park Lane – and Yonge Street, north of Osgoode Hall, were all “black”. There were some notable people amongst them, too, in the [eighteen] fifties. The first time I especially noticed them was when they were celebrating “Emancipation Day” – a long procession of carriages with flags flying drawn by one, two, four, and in one instance eight horses, and filled by gaily-dressed, smiling colored people. It was, I am told, the anniversary of the passing of the Bill in England for the emancipation of the slaves.

### [GEORGE MINK]

In the first carriage drawn by eight horses was George Mink, who owned and drove, or had driven for men, all the stages in Upper Canada. He had put in a lower tender<sup>381</sup> than William Weller, whose father was the original of Dickens’ “Sam Weller.” William was an Englishman of the time-honored type of John Bull. He had owned and driven the stages and carried the mails for us as long as I can remember. I am, however, wandering from his successor, George Mink. He was a very rich man, and I think his wife must have been a white woman, for his only and much-loved daughter was what was called “a yellow girl,” and yellow she was most decidedly, something of the shade of yellow ochre. This was the only time I saw her in her

---

<sup>380</sup> From Chamberlin, A. D. (1914). THE COLORED CITIZENS OF TORONTO. *Transactions of The Women’s Canadian Historical Society of Toronto*, 8, 10-15. Written (as Mrs. Agnes Dunbar Chamberlin) by Agnes Dunbar Moodie Fitzgibbon Chamberlin (1833 - 1913), daughter of renowned pioneer Susanna Moodie. This article, unlike others in the same issue of the *Transactions*, is undated, may have been published posthumously. Multiple secondary sources list her date of death as May 1, 1913, and the location as Toronto, but I can find no grave site, and no record of her death in contemporary newspapers.

<sup>381</sup> “We understand that the recent Advertisement of the above Mail Contract [Kingston and Montreal], produced Tenders from the following parties: George Mink, Hiram Weeks, Bowen & Greenwood, Isaac Ross. Mr. Mink’s Tender, being the lowest has been accepted, and the Contract has been signed by himself and Sureties, two gentlemen of wealth belonging to Kingston.” Kingston and Montreal Mail Contract. (1853, August 16). *The British Whig* (Kingston), p. 2.

father's carriage, dressed most gorgeously, and she really was a very handsome woman.

The gossips said (for this I have no personal knowledge) that Mink had said he would give his daughter \$5,00 if she married a white *man* and \$10,000 if she married a white *gentleman*. The poor girl did neither. She married a man of color, but not very pronounced color. George Mink was furious, refusing to give her anything; whereupon the husband, who had probably married her for her money, took her down South and sold her. Poor old Mink was broken-hearted. He dare not go to the States to buy her back, as he was a runaway slave himself, but he sent someone who bought her back for \$3,000. I do not remember what became of the old man,<sup>382</sup> as "Weller" was the successful tenderer for the stages and carriage of mails the next time they were to be re-let.

[RICHARDSON, THE "SPRING WATER ICE MAN"]

In the second carriage came an equally well-known black – Richardson, the "Spring water ice man". He also made a fortune. He owned land among the hills near Davenport, and made a number of tanks into which he conducted a spring. When full they were allowed to freeze solid. The ice was taken out and they were filled to freeze again. I believe he supplied the whole city; I do not remember getting ice from anyone else. He also had a daughter, of whom he was very, very proud, especially of her education. He said she wrote "a most bookful hand, to be sure she could not read it herself, but it was wonderful to look at."

[LEMON JOHN, ALIAS THE REVEREND JOHN STOKES]

Then followed the perhaps best-known man in Toronto. He described himself as "Lemon John on weekdays and the Reverend John Stokes on Sundays."

When I saw him first as "Lemon John," he carried a small tin pail and was calling "Lemon ice cream! Lemon ice cream!" The children ran to ask for coppers, and the coppers evidently paid him, for shortly afterwards, he carried tow buckets, with "Lemon ice cream and vanilla, too!" for his cry. John had a very good voice and was witty also. He varied his call, taking notice of anyone at a window. A neighbor of mine was much annoyed at his calling down "Come down, Sal" – a common expression of his; but her name happened to be Sarah, and her brothers both named her "Sal". It was some time before she could be pacified. If the children took saucers out with their coppers or pennyworth, he would give them a spoonful and then say, "Are you a good girl? Did you know your lessons to-day?" – and if the answers were in the affirmative he would say, "Well, I'll allow I'll give you a little more to-day."

John's next appearance was with a wheelbarrow and eventually with a handcart. Then I lost sight of him. He was probably lost sight of because we moved further west in Toronto, as I remember him on Jarvis Street, with a covered car and white horse.

One day the children had been promised if they were very good and made no noise to disturb their mother, who was ill, that when Lemon John came they should

---

<sup>382</sup> George Mink died in 1873. As late as 1864 he was running the Kingston to Longboro mail route six times a week. (Quebec *Documents de la session*, 1865, Vol. 2, p. 122).

have an extra treat. As my window was open, I heard the following conversation. He was telling my husband that he intended to go to Haiti, that there was opening for "*intelligence there*," and enlarged more fully on the possibilities. Mr. FitzGibbon said, "By Jove, John, I have a good mind to go there myself, if it is as you describe it."

"Oh, sir, but *you* could not hold land or an appointment without you were married to a colored person."

"Then it would not do, as I have a wife already!"

"But, sir," said John, "if you should have the misfortune to lose your present good lady, *then* you might marry a colored person!"

It was a common saying that at an election the candidate who secured Lemon John's support was sure to get in. He spoke well, and all the blacks (there were then large numbers) would vote as he told them.

#### [ANOTHER INCIDENT]

Another incident connected with the blacks in those early days occurs to me. We have moved into a new house, and the man who had promised to come and cut up the firewood disappointed us. The children were crying for their tea; my husband was not home. I suggested that the nurse might try and cut a little, but this she pretended she could not do. I went out to do it myself. I dare say I made a poor attempt at it, but was so intent on the effort that I did not hear anyone come into the yard, and was rather startled by a voice saying, "If you will allow me, ma'am, I think I could do it better." I looked up, to see a *very* black man standing beside me.

Of course I gladly gave him the saw. He cut up a quantity, and when I asked what I should pay him, he raised his hat and said: "Nothing at all, lady. It is a little service any gentleman would do for a lady." I was always sorry that I did not ask his name, for it was a courteous act, whether he was black or white.

As the new house was on what was then called Avenue Street, now College Street, we were near the headquarters of the blacks. We employed them in various ways.

There was a natural refinement in their manners and language. I never had to reprimand woman or boy for saying anything before the children that was not delicate. Very often their language is flowery and their speech absurdly affected.

#### [BRIDGET AND GEORGE]

For a long time we employed a black woman [Bridget] as laundress and her son [George] to clean boots and peel potatoes. As everything went on satisfactorily I never asked who did the work, till one day I heard George making a bargain with the cook that if she would peel the potatoes he would iron so many shirts or do so many yards of crochet for her; and on making inquiries I found George did the fine work and Bridget did the dirty work, and, in addition, he could do all kinds of fancy work, especially crochet edging for trimming.

A short time afterwards I heard George speaking very indignantly to Bridget.

"What are you going to leave for? You never had a cross word spoken to you in this house." And the reply: "Well, I haven't any fault to find, but you are going, so I'll go, too – it would be such fun to see the mistress trying to do the work herself."

“That you will never see, for if I lose ten places I will never leave this house till I see the mistress suited.”

I should explain that during the summer George got high wages on board the steamers, in winter taking lower wages in private houses. He kept his word. I sent Bridget away, and then George’s talents showed themselves. He did everything – cooked, scrubbed, was parlor maid, waiter, and would have been chambermaid had I allowed him.

He certainly had the artistic taste; his kitchen showed it. He polished the tins till they shone like silver, had a peculiar way of ornamenting them by twisting his thumb to make patterns on them; even the covers of the blacking boxes, well-polished, were hung in patterns on the walls. The china on the kitchen dresser was arranged in the same way; this was nearly his undoing, for the cook I engaged only stayed one day. He was giving a finishing touch to his tins, and she said:

“Who will brighten those tins when you are gone?”

“I guess you will now and then have to give them a *rub*,” he answered.

She said no more, but went to her room, put on her bonnet, and left. I never saw her again.

The next one I engaged, George came to me and said:

“I guess, missus, I better not make the tins so bright this time!”

One day my little boy, aged three years, was beating George. I told him he was a naughty boy.

“Oh, please do not correct Marsa James, he is not a bad boy; he’s only so glad he’s alive!”

George Williams must be an old man now, but whatever his after life, I know he has been faithful and true in whatever state of life he has been called upon to fill. His mother told me the reason he was her darling.

“You see, lady, I was Miss Eliza’s slave, and when she got married old massa gave me to her, but she had to promise I was to be free whenever I wanted to leave her. I never wanted to leave Miss Eliza till she got married a second time. He was a northern gentleman, and so cruel to all the slaves. Miss Eliza wanted me to go then, but my husband was a slave on the old plantation and all my children were slaves. But I bought them all. I worked the skin off my hands washing for white trash to earn money. I bought seven. My husband ran away and got safe to Canada.<sup>383</sup> Then I said to Miss Eliza I would take my freedom, and came here. You ask why George is my pet. I worked hard for the other boys, but George, he was *born free*, and he does not seem exactly the same.”

This was just after the publication of Mrs. Harriet Beecher Stowe’s “Uncle Tom’s Cabin” [in 1852,] and everyone was interested in the slaves.

You can understand that it hardly needed Lemon John’s eloquence to make them loyal to the British flag.

---

<sup>383</sup> John Graves Simcoe, the first Governor of the Upper Province, came straight from discussions in England on slavery and anti-slavery, and secured that one of the first Acts passed in his Legislature in Upper Canada should be an Anti-Slavery Act. Thus the British flag in this Province has never floated over legalized slavery. [Note in the original.]

Another colored man who was whitewashing for me, and had been in Toronto only a few weeks, told me of hardships, and hair-breadth escapes in getting to Canada, and ended by saying, naively:

“You know, missus, I used to think that all white people were bad, but after the Underground Railway<sup>384</sup> helped me so much I began to think that some white folks were as good as the colored.”

[MRS. D’ORSAY]

Another notable character among the colored citizens was Mrs. D’Orsay. She was a handsome, clever woman, who had known and was known and respected by all the best people in the Toronto of her day, but she had no interest in Emancipation Day and its procession. “She was bawn free.” She was devoted to her husband, who died after a lingering illness. When friends went to sympathize she loved to tell how, as he grew weaker, “he grew beautiful-er and beautiful-er every day, and when he died he was as sweet as a rose!”

A rumor got around that Mrs. D’Orsay herself had passed away. Many notes of condolence, wreaths for her loss, and other tokens of respect reached her. These were a great joy to her. “Twasn’t given to everybody to receive their own funeral wreaths nor to know what her friends thought of her after she’s gone!” And the fat, kindly woman shook with the joyous laugh of satisfaction.

She is gone now; with the changing population, the district that had been a home of freedom to the runaway slave, has gradually altered its complexion and the colored citizens have been much reduced in numbers.

### “The smartest man in creation”<sup>385</sup> (1861)

**In a 2016 paper,<sup>386</sup> Guylaine Petrin argued that this work of fiction was the source of many details in the “Minnie Mink” narrative, and that it was itself inspired by two articles: the account of the anonymous “livery-stable keeper” in “The exiled negroes in Canada” (1857), transcribed elsewhere in this collection, and the final article in this appendix, below.**

The smartest chap by a long chalk that ever I knew was Haman S. Walker, who was raised in Massachusetts, but had gone down to settle in Virginny. Haman had a bit of plantation, where he made show of growing cotton; but that wasn’t by any means the way that he grew his dollars. He did a good streak of business, I can tell you, in the [slave] and horse line, for he was a prime judge of flesh; and once or twice every year he went through the country, picking up bargains and selling again at a profit. He didn’t need to look twice at cattle to know their real value to a cent;

---

<sup>384</sup> There was an organization in the Northern States known as “The Underground Railway,” which helped runaway slaves to reach Canada. [Note in the original.]

<sup>385</sup> From Aytoun, W. E. (1861). *Norman Sinclair*. Edinburgh and London: William Blackwood and Sons. Written by William Edmonstoune Aytoun (1813 – 1865).

<sup>386</sup> Petrin, G. (2016). The Myth of Mary Mink: Representation of Black Women in Toronto in the Nineteenth Century. *Ontario History*, 108(1), 92–110. <https://doi.org/10.7202/1050613ar>

and as for cleaning and currying them up for sale, there wasn't the like of him throughout the whole of the confederation. I've known him pass off a sixty-year-old [slave] for forty-five, and get the sound price for a brute that was a regular roarer. Haman it was that painted the donkey black and white, and sold it to the Philadelphia Zoo. Gardens as a zebra.

Wall, Squire, two years gone by, business was rather slack down in Virginny. It was one of those uneasy times when folk are timersome to sell, and buyers are as skeary as buffaloes in a clearing. [Slaves] wouldn't move no how, and horses were at a nominal quotation. So Haman, who knew as well as most men that time was the Delaware for dollars, moves up a bit to the north, by way of spying if anything could be done thereabouts; for, thinks he, there must be a lot of runaway [slaves] caved up in these parts, and who knows, if I swear stiff enough, that I mayn't pick up a specimen for nothing? However, he soon found that two could play at that game, for there were a lot of chaps, a'most if not entirely as 'cute as himself, prowling about the prisons, and rapping out affidavits of ownership to every likely [black person] as thick as cadoodle bugs in a sugar-barrel.

Well, when Haman saw that no good was to be done among the New Yorkers (for there are a plaguy lot of onnatural citizens up there that hold shares in the Underground Railway), he notioned that he would take a cast over the frontier, and try to strike trail in Canada. I expect, however, that he was clean too well roused up to show himself in his own character, for there weren't many loafers in the States that didn't know Haman, and the bare report that he was in the country would have cleared the district of [black people,] as fast as the Unitarian congregation dispersed when a skunk got into the chapel.

So first he gets hold of a razor and shaves himself as clean of hair as a terrapin (for Haman commonly wore a beard that might have broke the heart of a billy-goat), then he rigs himself out from head to foot like a Methodist parson, with green barnacles, a white choker, a broad-brimmed hat, mits without ends to the fingers, and a genuine sanctified umbrella, such as them critters always carry, with half the whalebone broken. Oh, he was a lovely disciple, was Haman! The very sight of him was enough to convert a whole biling of sinners. He had a knack of groaning so loud, that I'm blessed if he didn't give you a pain in your bowels; and he spoke in a choking kind of way, as if he had swallowed a force-pump and kept the nozzle in his case.

Wall, he crosses the frontier and comes to Toronto, where the people don't think they are as soft as steeped donuts, though, I guess, they are confoundedly mistaken. He walks up to the biggest hotel he could see, and into the bar, where a weakish-looking chap was serving out the liquor.

"Young man," says Haman, says he, "will you oblige a suffering laborer in the vineyard with a brandy cocktail?"

"What name, sir?" said the help, looking somewhat bumbazed; for, as I hinted, Haman wasn't exactly the kind of looking man you would like to take bitters with before breakfast.

"I am known to the brethren," says Haman, turning up his finger, "as the Reverend Issachar Quail, a poor but parseverin' pilgrim in the great cause of

Abolition. I was raised in Louisiana, called in Tennessee, and tarred and feathered on account of my principles no later than three months back, at New Orleans; may the devil gouge my persecutors!”

The young help bangs up like a gosling at the sight of the corn-basket.

“Here’s glory!” shouts he, and he rings a bell like mad; whereupon the landlord and a dozen whacking [black] waiters, every one of whom had bolted from their lawful owners, came tumbling in; and if they didn’t make a saint of the Reverend Issachar when they heard how he had been handled by the down-south Philistines, there ain’t no alligators in Arkansas.

Oh, they a soft set, these Canadians! Darn me if I don’t think a States baby could find out the blind side of the ‘cutest of the lot, and thread him like a needle. They took for gospel every word that Haman uttered, and a’most boohooded at his animated description of the tortures he had undergone for the sake of the affected [black people]. When he saw that they swallowed the tarring and feathering as oily as a gin-sling, he thought it safe to put on more steam and go ahead; so he told them that he had been twice hung up, and once roasted alive, not to speak whippings, skinnings, and suchlike small mishaps, which were as common as his daily bread. If he had pretended to have been clawed to death by wild cats, I do suppose they’d ha’ believed him. You may guess that they couldn’t make enough of such a glorious victim of unnatural persecution as the Reverend Issachar Quail, so they gave him free quarters in the hotel, stowed him in the best room, crowded him with victuals, juiced him up with liquor, and allowed him an unlimited credit for roosterskirts at the bar.

But it didn’t stop there; for the soft-heads must needs have a public meeting of sympathizers to welcome the interesting stranger; so they held a kind of tea-drinking, with prayers and speeches; and Haman he gives them such an account of his persecutions as frize up the marrow in the women’s bones, and set them a-sobbing as though they had been troubled with the hiccup. Of course such virtue couldn’t be allowed to go without some kind of reward; and you may guess how Haman grinned in his heart as he pocketed a heavy bag of dollars, which the sisterhood had subscribed as a small recompense for his sufferings.

Among the foremost of the women folk that came down with the rowdy was a slapping black wench called Indolence Bungo, the daughter of old Daddy Bungo, a thriving horse-dealer, who had been located at Toronto for some thirty years. Daddy was raised in a plantation somewhere down south, but had taken to his heels and absquatulated without leave, about the time that he cut his wisdom-teeth. He got safe to Canada; and being a thundering tall [man,] as strong as a buffalo, he managed to work his way from one thing to another till he owned the biggest stable in the place, and was worth a deal of money. His daughter, Indolence, was a grand specimen of the [black woman], evidently intended by nature to hoe canes, and feed upon yams and salt-fish. Haman no sooner set eye upon her than he priced her at eight hundred dollars, and I calculate he was not likely to be far wrong in his reckoning. She was as fat as a porcupine, large-lipped, well-ballasted, and showed a figurehead like the Hottentot Venus. I guess she was as powerful a [woman] as ever tied a red handkerchief over wool.



Wall, it wasn't in nature that Haman could see such a valuable article as that without vicious notions about a deal.

"You tarnation fine cow," thinks he to himself, "wouldn't I jest like to have the selling of you at New Orlines? I'd make you useful in your generation, I would, instead of letting you loaf about in lace and satins, and hiding your hoofs in silk stockings. You'd look pretty in a blue petticoat, picking cotton! And if that hide of yours were only barked a little, you'd be as active as a squirrel in a nut bush!"

That was what Haman thought, but he didn't say it no how. He squeezed Indolence by the fist, and told her he would mention her in his prayers, which, you may be sure, was a great comfort and satisfaction to the poor deluded [woman]; and he announced his intention of calling next day on Daddy Bungo. Indolence went home as pleased as a cat with a new collar; and though she was not altogether a handy gal with her needle, began to work a pair of embroidered slippers for the Reverend Issachar Quail.

Next day Haman looks in upon Daddy, whom he found down in the stables watching his helps who were rubbing down the horses, and swearing away at a rate that might wake the thunder. Haman saw with half an eye that it was no use trying the evangelical dodge with Daddy, so he quietly pocketed his barnacles and mits, stowed away his umbrella behind a pail, and went up to the old horse-dealer.

"Morrow, Mister Bungo," says he; "glad to see you looking so well, sir. I heerd a good stock about your horses, and I want to see them a bit."

Daddy looked quite puzzled-like.

"You're very good, sir; but I do not know you. Whom have I the honor to address, sir?"<sup>387</sup>

"My name," said Haman, "is Issachar Quail. I have a kinder notion you may have heerd of it afore."

At this Daddy snorted.

"Yes, Master Quail, I have heard of you before, sir. You are the man that my daughter Indolence gave ten dollars to yesterday for helping [slaves] to run away. You are not wanted here, sir! This is a free country, where every man has his liberty and does as he likes. I say, you, Jake! You, pick up the halter, or I'll whip the liver out of you, you damn dirty black scoundrel."

"That, I notion, is a real stupendous horse, now," said Haman, pretending to think that Daddy was quite pleased at the visit. "I reckon that 'ere animal would go over a snake-fence like greased lightning."

"I have to inform you, sir, that all my horses are of first-chop quality, sir. But what the devil does a parson know about a horse?"

"Maybe more than you are aware of, old [man]," quoth Haman. "I guess, now, that 'ere bay mare has been down on her knees; that 'ere colt has a splint on his near fore-leg; and this horse has a touch of thoroughpin and the hicksies."

"Eh, Gor! What's that?" sings out Daddy. "You are no parson; you're an Obeah man! How come you to know that, sir, ah?"

---

<sup>387</sup> The original has Daddy and Indolence Bungo's lines written phonetically in a strongly accented broken English. I have silently replaced them with the nearest equivalents in standard English.

“I guess there’s tricks in all trades,” replied Haman, “and though I be a parson to-day, maybe I may have a deal with you for a bit of sound horseflesh to-morrow. So shut up your ivories, old [man], and let’s go and liquor.”

“You’re a very clever man, sir – very clever!” said Daddy, who, you see, Squire, was clean taken in by Haman’s cool owdacity. “You are no parson, sir; that’s all gammon. Very glad to see you in my house; you walk this way.”

I guess it wasn’t long afore Haman made himself at home at Daddy Bungo’s. It’s a pity if he didn’t cast gravel in the eyes of the old [man], till he made him believe that he was the cleverest chap on the face of the whole airth – and Haman wasn’t very short of it either; but he did more than that, for he persuaded him that he was a right good friend of his’n, and as upright a character as ever mixed a ball. As for Indolence, the black wench could not think enough of that blessed Issachar. He sat with her all mornin’, squeezing her big hand, and administering spiritual consolation; and it was beautiful to see them going together to a revival meeting – he stalking along in black and white, like a penguin on the beach, and she ogling him with her saucer eyes, as fond-like as a Frenchman is of oysters. In less than no time he had wormed out of Daddy the whole of his previous history. He knew the plantation where he was raised, the name of his owner, and the year and day when he absquatulated; and Haman wasn’t the man, as you shall presently hear, to let that information grow rotten for want of use. Then he knew to a dollar how much Daddy had saved, for the stupid old [man], when he was juiced up, would tell anything; he also knew what was the value of his stable; in short, he had an entire and thorough knowledge of the whole concern.

So, one morning, when he saw that he had brought old Daddy up to the scratch, and crammed him choke-full of sawder, “Mister Bungo,” says he, “I swear this is a pleasant location of yourn, but it won’t do for me to remain here loafing, with my hands in my pockets, when it’s positively raining dollars elsewhere. I have a notion to drop the parson for a bit, and go down to the States with some horses on speculation. Now, I’ll you what it is, old [man]. That ‘ere daughter of yourn, Miss Indolence, is as likely a gal as I ever sot eyes on. She’s a burning beauty, that’s a fact; and if she is agreeable, I don’t see any reason on airth why she should not become Mistress Quail. If you were to marry her to any chap in Toronto, you’d have to come down, I guess, with an almighty heap of dollars, which ain’t as pleasant as pumpkins. Now. I’m a reasonable man, and if you let me have a span of horses with your daughter, we’ll cry quits, and I’ll marry her off-hand; so say the word, and it’s a deal!”

Daddy did not come into the thing just at once; for, though a [man], he had some kind of natural affection, and was right sorry to part with his daughter. But Indolence no sooner heard that she had a chance of reposing upon the bosom of that blessed Issachar, than she became as wild as a prairie mare, vowed that if she had not her own way she would swaller poison, and gave old Bungo no rest day or night till he consented. I guess theirs was a slap-up wedding. All [the community] was in an uproar, and Indolence shone out like a red-hot rainbow. Hanam alone took things quietly; but you may suppose he was not without a kind of deep satisfaction at the thought of so beautiful a sell.

I daresay now, Squire, you think that Haman would be in a right hurry to turn his bargain to the best account, and that he put up Indolence for auction at the very first mart he reached in our free and enlightened States. You're wrong. He was a good bit of a tender-hearted fellow was Haman, and he didn't wish to make her squeak afore the appointed time; besides, he knew well that she wasn't in any kind of training for the cane-fields, and was too unhandy for house-work, so that he could not get anything like the price for her which he was fully determined to have. Sold she should be; that was a settled point from the first minute that he sot eyes on her: but he didn't want to be harder on the poor black wench than was needful, and beyond that, he saw his way to a right good deal without putting her up to the hammer. So he contented himself in the meantime with selling the span of horses, for which he got awful prices; and took the heifer down with him to Charleston, treating her with all matter of fixings, and never once hinting at the cowhide. He was a real agreeable chap, was Haman, I can tell you; and it's odds if Indolence didn't worship him as devoutly as her mother worshipped Mumbo-Jumbo.

Well, they had not been at home for two days, before Harman brings to the house a tall wiry chap, with whom he had many a deal already, Judge Cyrus J. Flinter, as 'cute a hand as ever sat on the judgment-seat in his shirt-sleeves. Indolence was quite in glory at getting a visit from a man of such high distinction as the Judge; she showed her white teeth, chuckled, and goramightied, and wriggled about like a bass on a fish-spear. The Judge, he takes a long look at her through his glasses, and then says to Haman:

"All right, Squire," says he. "You're a lucky man! It ain't every one that can show a beauty like that. I would be mighty onreasonable if I did not go in to your tarms."

"Say no more, Judge," quoth Haman, "here's the paper ready; and I guess I may jest at once sign and seal. Indolence, my canvass-backed duck, look smart and fetch me the ink."

Indolence did that; and also, to show her devotion to Haman, mended the pen, which was blunt as the wits of a Blue-nose. Haman signed the paper, handed it to the Judge, and then said:

"Indolence, my beauty, I'm obliged to go this afternoon on some tarnation business to Washington. As you would be lonely-like here, Judge Flinter has been good enough to ask you to his house. So you'll jest go with him now, old gal, and you needn't mind taking any things with you. Now hand me these rings, my dear; I want to get them matched at Washington."

"God almighty, Issachar!" says Indolence, "I must have another set o' clothes. I am nohow fit to go to Master Judge's without them."

"Wall!" drawled the Judge, "I guess you might allow her a change."

"Darn me, if I do!" says Haman; "you'll see that, Judge; and Indolence, I'll trouble you for your keys. There's a pesky set of [people] hereabout, whose fingers are as sticky as molasses; and I've no mind that the ametheests Daddy Bungo gave you should go astray. So – goodbye to you, old gal, till we meet again."

That was the last parting of the spouses.

About ten days after this interview, Daddy Bungo, when superintending the grooming of his horses, and swearing awfully at his [black] helps, Jake and Juba, had a letter put into his hands which he could no more read than a shark can the name of a vessel that is painted on her stern.

"This comes of that damned education!" says Daddy. "Why tach piccaninnies to write? It's very hard to have all this bother."

However, he took the letter, and crossed to the hotel, where he knew he would find some Toronto lawyer who would read it to him for the matter of a cocktail.

The lawyer put on his spectacles, and began to read aloud, but before he had got over six words he gave a whoop like a wild Injun:

"Fire and blazes!" says he, "this is the deepest dodge that ever was heard on."

"What do you mean by dodge, sir?" says Daddy.

"[Zounds!] that *is* sharp practice, and no mistake," says the lawyer.

"I don't understand you, sir," says Daddy; "you read that letter to me, sir, or I'll think you not able."

"Tain't just the kind of letter, Mister Bungo," says the lawyer, "adapted for general circulation, and I guess you would hardly thank me if I were to read it at the bar. So, if you please, sir, we'll step over to my office, and I'll let you know all about it."

And a very nice letter it was, as you may conceive. I got a copy of it at the time, for the Abolitionists made an awful row about the matter, and printed a statement of the case; and I guess it ran somehow thus:-

MR. BUNGO – Sir, – This is to inform you that I have purchased a black slave calling herself Indolence Bungo, aged 25, sound in limb and wind, no marks, white teeth, and likely for domestic work, from Haman S. Walker of Charleston. Said Indolence Bungo describing herself as your daughter, I have to state that I am willing to allow you to purchase her freedom, for the sum, which is the lowest I can take, of 1,800 dollars, money to be paid down here at Charleston. If I do not hear from you within three weeks from this date, I shall put her up for public auction, as I do not want such an article for myself, and her keep is expensive.

Yours,

CYRUS J. FLINTER.

"God almighty!" shouted Daddy Bungo. "That's not my daughter! She's a married woman. Who is that Walker?"

"That's explained in the postscript," said the lawyer, and he read—

P.S. – For your better information, I may state that Haman S. Walker above referred to, was, I am given to understand, known in Toronto by the name of Issachar Quail.

It's no use trying to describe the scene that followed. Daddy howled like a wolf in a trap, or a Methody minister when he gets on the subject of brimstone; hopped

around the room like a ball of Injun rubber, tore out his wool by handfuls, and upset the ink over bundles of papers, for which he had afterwards to pay considerable smart-money to the lawyer. It's my belief that, but for a bottle of brandy which the lawyer happened to have in his desk, he'd ha' gone stark staring made, and they must have clapped a strait-jacket on him. As it was, they had to send for Jake and Juba to carry him home, which they did with great difficulty, for he bit viciously, and kicked as hard as a mustang.

There was not help for it; so he had to draw all his ready-money out of the bank, and with it started for Charleston, thinking he was safe enough, for he had been thirty years and more in Canada, and had certificates from the first chop-men in Toronto as to his character and occupation. When he gets to Charleston he goes direct to Judge Flinter's, who was quite cool and pleasant-like, and said he was real sorry to have given him the trouble of coming so far.

"Fact is," said the Judge, "I wasn't quit sue about the gal's being your daughter, for Haman is an almighty deep file, and it ain't a'most possible to fix him. I s'pose," says he, "it wasn't a lie of Haman's that the gal was born afore you bought your freedom?" and he squinted at Daddy Bungo like a rattlesnake.

"No, sir," says Daddy, "that's no lie." But he felt particularly uncomfortable, and his knees began to fail him.

"Wall, in that case," said the Judge, "you jest step into that 'ere room, and see if it be your daughter. She's been well cared for; corned to the lips, I can tell you, and I'll charge nothing for her feeds. I'm apt to be soft in these matters, but I hope for a blessing; so get through it, will you, as smart as you can, for I may chance to be wanted in court. There's some talk of lynching a [black person] this afternoon."

You may guess that the interview between Daddy Bungo and Indolence was very short. Heaven knows what they'd not have given to be set down safe in Toronto.

"All right?" said the Judge.

"Yes, sir, all right. That's my daughter," said Daddy. "There are the dollars. Where is the paper?"

"Here it is," said the Judge. "But we need a witness," and so saying he rang a hand-bell; the door opened, and Haman S. Walker appeared.

"Good morning, Daddy Bungo!" says he, as cool as a block of Wenham Lake ice.

"You damn villain!" shouts Daddy, up to the point o' bursting.

"You tarnation [scoundrel]!" says Haman, hitting him a whack with a supple-jack across his cucumber shanks, which made him dance like a dead frog at the touch of a galvanic battery – "You tarnation [scoundrel], do you dare to speak in that way to your owner? Darn me, if I haven't a strong mind to give you ten dozen of the cowskin."

"What's that you say, you damn scoundrel? I'm a free Canadian – I am a British subject – I'll write to the Governor, sir, and make a civil war! You're no owner of mine. I'm a horse-dealer in Toronto."

Haman, with some self-control, did not apply the supple-jack at this second provocation.

“Bungo,” says he, “you stupid old [man], don’t make the game worse for you than I like; for I’m a quiet and reasonable kind of man, and am disposed to let you off easy. I’ve bought you. I guess you may remember telling me the plantation from which you absquatulated; and as you were long wiped off the books as a bad debt, I bought you for twenty dollars. Here are the papers, old [man], and you’re my [slave] now. The Judge here sacks two hundred dollars as commission on the sale of Indolence; and I’ll trouble you to make up three thousand dollars to buy your own freedom, else Jake and Juba will have the letting-out of all the horses in Toronto. It ain’t no use your making a row about it, for I know to a cent what you’re worth in the world, and I reckon I am uncommon liberal in not piling you altogether. Daddy Bungo! – if a [black man] ever can be a Christian, you ought to remember me in your prayers.”

The upshot of the matter was that Daddy Bungo had to put his mark to a letter directing the Toronto lawyer to sell off his stock; and, till the money was paid, he and Indolence were handsomely boarded by the Judge at the rate of two dollars a day. Now, that’s what I call smartness. I guess you’ll allow that no Britisher ever born could hold a candle to Haman S. Walker, who, besides a handsome subscription, got a black wife and a span of horses, and sold them both, and his father-in-law into the bargain.

### “More kidnapping”<sup>388</sup> (1853)

**This story is probably apocryphal.**

The recent Harvey case, which created no little excitement in this city some weeks since, has been followed up by one of even greater atrocity in Toronto. It appears, as we gather the particulars from our Toronto exchanges, that a dashing young negro from the United States came over to Toronto and married the daughter of a respectable colored citizen, but receiving no money with her as he expected, he went off to the Southern States and there sold his wife into slavery. The villain’s pretext was that he had rich relations in the South, and the unsuspecting wife thus permitted herself to be inveigled into the kidnapper’s snare and became the dupe of his treachery. The father of the young woman is now left to find his daughter, and probably will have to purchase her in the slave market of the South.

---

<sup>388</sup> From MORE KIDNAPPING. (1853, March 24). *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, p. 2. Originally printed in the *Hamilton Spectator* on March 19. I am indebted to Petrin’s 2016 article for locating this version.