A DIFFERENCE OF PERSPECTIVE: THE BLACK MINORITY, WHITE MAJORITY, AND LIFE IN ONTARIO, 1870-1919

by

Colin Stephan McFarquhar

A thesis
presented to the University of Waterloo
in fulfilment of the
thesis requirement for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
in
History

Waterloo, Ontario, Canada, 1998

© (Colin McFarquhar) 1998

National Library of Canada
Acquisitions and Bibliographic Services
395 Wellington Street
Ottawa ON K1A 0N4
Canada

Bibliothèque nationale du Canada
Acquisitions et services bibliographiques
395, rue Wellington
Ottawa ON K1A 0N4
Canada

Your file Votre référence

Our file Notre référence

The author has granted a non-exclusive licence allowing the National Library of Canada to reproduce, loan, distribute or sell copies of this thesis in microform, paper or electronic formats.

L'auteur a accordé une licence non exclusive permettant à la Bibliothèque nationale du Canada de reproduire, prêter, distribuer ou vendre des copies de cette thèse sous la forme de microfiche/film, de reproduction sur papier ou sur format électronique.

The author retains ownership of the copyright in this thesis. Neither the thesis nor substantial extracts from it may be printed or otherwise reproduced without the author's permission.

L'auteur conserve la propriété du droit d'auteur qui protège cette thèse. Ni la thèse ni des extraits substantiels de celle-ci ne doivent être imprimés ou autrement reproduits sans son autorisation.

0-612-30628-3

Canada

I hereby declare that I am the sole author of this thesis.

I authorize the University of Waterloo to lend this thesis to other institutions or individuals for the purpose of scholarly research.

Colin McFarquhar

I further authorize the University of Waterloo to reproduce this thesis by photocopying or by other means, in total or in part, at the request of other institutions or individuals for the purpose of scholarly research.

Colin McFarquhar

The University of Waterloo requires the signatures of all persons using or photocopying this thesis. Please sign below, and give address and date.

Abstract

A Difference of Perspective: The Black Minority, White Majority, and Life in Ontario, 1870-1919
COLIN STEPHAN McFARQUHAR

This thesis examines the relationship between the black minority and white majority in the province of Ontario from 1870 to 1919. The central argument of the dissertation is that the province's black and white populations had vastly different outlooks on most issues that pertained to their interrelationship, and it was these different outlooks that made their relationship antagonistic. The thesis examines instances when blacks and whites cvame into conflict, as well as occasions when blacks caught the attention of the public. The thesis argues that this era was one of considerable continuity, and that there was little change in the black-white relationship during these years. This is demonstrated by illustrating how the African occupational structure changed very little throughout the era, and by noting that blacks protested their exclusion from certain jobs and their denied access to certain places throughout the entire period. Blacks believed they were entitled to a full range of economic and educational opportunities, and consistently attempted to obtain these rights through a wide range of tactics. Whites, on the other hand, argued that Africans were well treated in the province, and failed to understand many of their complaints. Whites often believed separate schools were reasonable and that whites should not be forced to interact with people they chose to ignore. Whites

believed, however, that blacks had a right to earn a living, and supported blacks when they felt these rights were being denied. Whereas white speakers at Emancipation Days argued that blacks had great opportunities in Canada, black speakers used the day to challenge whites to give them full equality, and to complain about the discrimination they were forced to endure. Whereas blacks protested against the colour line because they believed as citizens they should have the right to full equality, whites were uncomfortable with the colour line mainly because they believed it gave the country a negative image. Since the viewpoints between blacks and whites were so different, Africans often formed separate organizations to deal with the problems they faced, because they realized they could only gain success through their own efforts.

Acknowledgements

I was lucky to have Dr. James Walker as my supervisor. His vast knowledge about the history of Canadian race relations helped my research immensely. He subtly encouraged me to explore fresh and new areas of research, and to stay away from merely repeating what other scholars had already said. I know my dissertation is much stonger than it would have been without his assistance. I would also like to thank my other committee members (Dr. Allen Stouffer of St. Francis Xavier University, Dr. John Jaworsky, Dr. Keith Eagles, and Dr. Geoff Hayes of the University of Waterloo) for their helpful comments at the thesis defence.

I would like to thank the University of Waterloo's inter-library loan service for borrowing materials that I would not otherwise have been able to obtain. Much of the research was conducted at the Ontario Archives and the Metropolitan Toronto reference library. Staff at those institutions assisted me in the use of their materials.

I presented two conference papers at the Tri-University Conference, and feedback from those sessions introduced other ways to think about my sources. Informal questions and comments made by my fellow doctoral candidates at the University of Waterloo also helped the thesis. I would also like to thank Laurie Leclair, an historical researcher, for providing employment as a research assistant at a time when I was in need of both the financial

assistance and the experience the job provided.

I would also like to acknowledge my parents for their support while I was writing the thesis.

Table of Contents

Introduction 1

Prologue: The African Minority and the European Majority in Ontario Prior to 1870 23

Chapter One: African Settlement Patterns and Occupational Structure, 1870-1919 54

Chapter Two: The African Quest for Equal Employment Opportunities in Ontario 94

Chapter Three: Different Views on Equality: Blacks, Whites, and Separate Schools 132

Chapter Four: Different Perceptions of Life In Ontario: Blacks, Whites, and the Celebration of Emancipation Day 176

Chapter Five: The Colour Bar in Ontario 213

Chapter Six: Legal Issues, Crime, and the Courts 246

Chapter Seven: African Organizations, Collective Action, and Political Involvement From 1870 to 1919 275

Conclusion: Ontario's Black Minority and its White Majority From 1870 to 1919 311

Epilogue: The African Minority and the European Majority in Ontario in the 1920s 319

Appendix 1: Occupational Structure of Africans in Selected Ontario Cities in 1871 and 1881 328

Appendix 2: Occupational Structure of Africans in Selected Ontario Cities in 1881 and 1901 338

Bibliography 350

List of Tables

Chapter One: Part A

1	Percentage of Africans Residing in Selected Ontario Counties in 1871 and 1881	56
2	Number of Blacks Arriving in Ontario Since 1865 By County	59
3	Percentage of Employed African Males in Skilled and Semi-Skilled Work in Selected Towns in 1871 and 1881	61
4	Percentage of Employed African Females in Skilled and Semi-Skilled Work in Selected Towns in 1871 and 1881	61
5	Occupational Change for Male Africans Listed in Both the 1871 and 1881 Censuses for Selected Ontario Cities	62
6	Comparison of Occupational Status of Male Children and their Fathers in 1881 in Various Cities	64
7	Percentage of Employed Africans and Percentage of Employed Persons in Various Occupations in Toronto in 1881	68
8	Percentage of Employed Africans and Percentage of Employed Persons in Various Occupations in Hamilton in 1881	69
9	Percentage of Employed Africans and Percentage of Employed Persons in Various Occupations in Essex County in 1881	69

Chapter One: Part B

1	Percentage of Africans Residing in Selected Ontario Counties in 1881 and 1901	74
2	Number of Blacks Arriving in Ontario Since 1890 for Selected Counties	75
3	Comparison of the Percentage of Africans with at least one Black Neighbour for Selected Ontario Counties in 1881 and 1901	77
4	Percentage of Employed African Males in Skilled or Semi-skilled Work in Selected Towns in 1881 and 1901	78

5 Percentage of Employed African Females in Skilled or Semi-skilled Work in Selected Towns in 1881 and 1901 79

6 Median Income Levels of Male Africans (16 and over) in Selected Ontario Cities 81

7 Changes in Occupational Pattern from 1881 to 1901 for Employed African Males in London for Selected Occupations 85

8 Changes in Occupational Pattern from 1881 to 1901 for Employed African Males in Amherstburg for Selected Occupations 86

9 Changes in Occupational Pattern from 1881 to 1901 for Employed African Males in Hamilton for Selected Occupations 86

10 Changes in Occupational Pattern from 1881 to 1901 for Employed African Males in Windsor 86

11 Changes in Occupational Pattern from 1881 to 1901 for Employed African Males in Toronto 87

Chapter One: Part C

1 Percentage of Africans Residing in Selected Ontario Counties in 1901 and 1911 90

Chapter Three

1 Percentage of Black Children Attending School According to the 1881 Census for Selected Sub-districts (from age 6 to 16) 132

2 Comparison of Percentage of Africans Attending School versus Percentage of Total Population Attending School According to 1881 Census for Selected Counties (ages 4 to 19) 133

Chapter Five

1 Comparison of Percentage of Married Africans Who Were Married to a White Spouse According to the 1881 and 1901 Censuses for Selected Ontario Counties 215

Chapter Six

1 Percentage of People Charged with Various Crimes in Windsor who were African, 1876 to 1889 256

Introduction

The Ontario of the 1990s is a multiracial society. Since the liberalization of Canada's immigration policies in the 1960s, large numbers of visible minorities have entered the province from Asia, the Caribbean, and more recently Africa. Race relations has emerged as an important issue in Ontario over the past three decades as these newcomers have adapted to life in the province. Yet the presence of visible minorities in this province is not new. Ontario was never populated exclusively by people of European origin. The first residents were the various Indian groups, the First Nations, who resided in the province for centuries before the arrival of the first Europeans. When whites began to arrive in large numbers beginning in the late eighteenth century, they were accompanied by small numbers of Africans. By the late nineteenth century some Asians were also present, mostly from China. Indeed, by the early twentieth century Ontario had long been a multiracial society, even if visible minorities were few in number.

This thesis will examine the relationship between people of African and European descent in Ontario from 1870 until 1919. It is through these two groups that the significance of race can best be analyzed because whites had more in common with blacks than with either the province's indigenous peoples or the Chinese. Native Americans did not speak the same language as Europeans, and their culture was markedly different from that of whites. The Chinese who arrived in the province also spoke a different language, and

possessed a lifestyle very distinct from the white majority. Consequently, the relationships between native Americans and whites, and between Chinese and whites, may have been influenced by language and cultural considerations. Africans, on the other hand, spoke English just like whites, and were culturally much more similar to Europeans than either the First Nations or the Chinese. If "race" was of no significance in Ontario then the relationship between Africans and Europeans should have been no different than the relationship between any two groups of European immigrants. The fact that blacks had to deal with problems that white Ontarians did not face illustrates the extent to which the province was "race" conscious.

This dissertation is not a social history of the province's black community. That would be an entirely different, albeit equally worthwhile, topic. Nor is the author suggesting that the African experience was important only when blacks interacted with whites. Indeed, many aspects of life in the various black communities that developed took place without significant white involvement. The growth of the black church and the development of black organizations, although in some ways influenced by the surrounding white society, were in other ways autonomous to the African community. Blacks could choose their own preachers and establish their own associations without white involvement. Yet the relationship between blacks and whites was important because many elements of black life involved interaction with the white community. The fact that blacks were so visible in a colour-

conscious era meant that there was frequent conflict between the two races. This dissertation is an exploration of that interaction.

It would contribute nothing to scholarly knowledge simply to argue that racism was a fact of life in late nineteenth and early twentieth century Ontario, and that the problems that emerged between these two groups were simply a result of white racism, and the accompanying black reaction. Indeed, there is now a widespread acknowledgment that racism existed during this era. There was, at this time, a worldwide belief that there were distinct races that were inherently different, and that blacks were inferior to whites. Yet Africans did not simply react to white racism, but often pushed their own agenda in order to obtain what they believed were equal rights in the province. Whites, on the other hand, were not consciously trying to make life difficult for Africans, but were instead trying to treat blacks in a way that they believed was fair. Unfortunately, the two sides had vastly different views on what was fair. Blacks contended that they were being denied full equality, and they tried throughout the entire period under study to obtain what they believed was being unfairly withheld from them. Whites, on the other hand, reacted to these demands according to their own perceptions. Although they prided themselves on being tolerant, their view of what constituted full equality was not necessarily the same as blacks, and clashes were inevitable. The central argument of this dissertation is that Ontario's white majority and its black minority had vastly different outlooks on

most issues that pertained to their interrelationship, and it was these different outlooks that made their relationship antagonistic. Furthermore, since both sides believed that they were correct, and were being fair in their demands, mutually satisfactory solutions were difficult to obtain.

It would be impossible to examine every occurrence in which blacks and whites interacted during these years. Many of these instances have been lost to the historical record. The dissertation will instead examine a number of such occasions and will demonstrate what can be learned about the nature of the black-white relationship through these examples. In this way it will become clear how the majority and minority communities held different perspectives on a wide range of issues. The issues that have been chosen for study are those that were deemed important by the black community. In other words, the paper focuses on the problems Africans talked about, complained about, and protested against. They were conflicts that arose over concerns such as education, job discrimination, and access to public services. The approach of the paper is to compare the black and white viewpoints on these various subjects.

This period was chosen for research largely because little has been written on race relations during this era, despite the presence of a significant African minority. Since the secondary literature is slim, the dissertation relies heavily on primary source material. Some archival collections proved valuable, and information was also gleaned from sources as varied as education

reports, jail records, criminal indictment files, meeting minutes for black organizations, and municipal council minutes. Much of the information, however, came from two important sources. The first were the newspapers of the time. The second were the census rolls from the country's national censuses. The advantages and limitations of these sources will be discussed since they form such an important part of the paper.

Newspapers were an important part of late nineteenth and early twentieth century Ontario society. Newspapers were commonplace, and even smaller cities often had more than one. Many of these newspapers provided considerable coverage of local issues, and a careful study of the press provides information that cannot be obtained anywhere else. There are, however, some drawbacks to the use of newspapers. One major problem for the historian is determining where to begin the search. The use of newspapers involves a lot of labour-intensive research, as white publications generally devoted little space to issues related to blacks since they comprised only a small, and not especially powerful, proportion of the province's population. The task at times was like searching for the proverbial needle in a haystack. Furthermore, the researcher inevitably has to be selective in using newspapers. It would be almost impossible to read every line of every Ontario newspaper for a fifty year period. Consequently, a researcher must use educated guesses to determine where information is most likely to be found. When researching this thesis I used a number of tactics to economize the search. Newspapers published

in cities with large black populations, such as Windsor and Chatham, were studied more thoroughly than those in areas with small black populations. Another tactic used was to examine the papers more carefully during times when the black community was more likely to be discussed. For example, much information about Africans was obtained by examining the period around August 1 of each year, when Africans celebrated Emancipation Day, the largest black celebration of the year. Other fruitful times were during school controversies and criminal trials involving blacks. This selective approach to reading the newspapers meant that there were undoubtedly some controversies discussed in the press that I did not uncover.

Another disadvantage to newspaper research is that these publications were often quite subjective about what issues they chose to discuss. Some items captured the imagination of the press, and were dealt with in considerable detail. Other issues and controversies were largely ignored. Some matters of contention discussed in this thesis got considerable coverage in some papers, but were virtually ignored in others. Reading the newspapers gives the historian some idea of what was considered important by the newspaper publishers of the day, but it cannot be assumed that the same importance was attached to these issues amongst the public at large. Just because an issue was not discussed in the press of the day does not mean it was unimportant. Surely there were many controversies that were important to the people involved that were never reported. For this reason, it is important to use other

sources besides newspapers where possible.

Another problem with newspapers is the fact that files for some are incomplete, while others do not exist. This dissertation deals with the province as a whole, but there are more extant newspapers for some communities than for others. There are, for example, three surviving newspapers for St. Catharines in the early 1870s, but none for Windsor during this same period. Toronto had more newspapers than other cities, and developments there were more likely to be publicized. Another problem is that rural communities did not have newspapers, and less information can be gathered from these smaller centres. The thesis tried to cover the province as a whole, but source availability meant that some places inevitably got greater attention than others.

The greatest factor to consider is that most newspapers were written by whites for a predominantly white audience. Since this dissertation is trying to compare black and white views on a variety of issues, this is an obvious potential limitation. There were, in fact, three black newspapers in Ontario during the 1870 to 1919 era, but only one is in existence. The British Lion was a Hamilton newspaper that ran from the early 1880s into the 1890s (its exact dates are unclear), but no copies exist. Some editorials were reprinted in the Hamilton Spectator, so the historian can gain some sense of its editorial viewpoint, but only to a limited degree. The Missionary Messenger, the organ for the largest black church in the province, the British Methodist Episcopal denomination, was published in Chatham for more than

twenty years.[1] Copies of this paper do not exist either, although some clippings can be located in one archival collection.[2] A World War One era publication based in Toronto, The Canadian Observer, does exist and is helpful for obtaining a black perspective. Some American black newspapers, namely the Detroit Plaindealer of the late 1880s and early 1890s, also provided some limited coverage of issues related to blacks in Ontario. With these exceptions, however, most material had to come from the white press. This begs an obvious question: What can be learned about the attitudes of the black community through the white press? In fact, the white press does provide evidence of the black viewpoint. For one thing, blacks did sometimes write letters to the editors of newspapers, and this is one way to get an African opinion from a white source. Other times black speakers were quoted when delivering addresses at protest meetings, or celebrations. Despite this, one must keep in mind that the publishers controlled what appeared in their papers, and some viewpoints undoubtedly were never heard. Nevertheless, it is possible to use white newspapers to learn something about the black perspective, but it needs to be remembered that it is often the black perspective as interpreted by a white voice.

Another source used was the census, specifically those of

---

[1] Sheriff J.R. Gemmill, "Historical Sketch of the Press of Chatham," Kent Historical Society Papers and Addresses, vol. 2 (1915), p. 37.

[2] see Toronto Public Library, Baldwin Room, A.R. Abbott Collection.

1871, 1881, and 1901, the three available censuses for this period that listed people according to racial or ethnic origin. One might wonder why the census would be used in a paper that is restricting itself to the relationship between blacks and whites. Through the census one can learn a great deal about the African population, such as the size of the various communities, the occupational structure, birthplace, rates of intermarriage, and sometimes even income levels. Yet how is this relevant to race relations? The answer is that an important way to measure race relations is to compare the minority population with the majority population. If the African occupational pattern, for example, was the same as the white occupational pattern, that may suggest that blacks were being given full equality in the province. If the opposite was true, a different conclusion may be in order. Rates of intermarriage may also provide clues as to whether blacks and whites were coming together or drifting apart. The number of blacks who had white neighbours is also information that gives hints as to the overall relationship between the two races. Census data is a good source to use in conjunction with newspapers because while newspaper stories deal with unusual and noteworthy events, often involving high profile people, the census provides clues about the population as a whole. While newspapers are impressionistic, the census is conducted more scientifically. It should be noted, however, that the census is not perfect. The census takers relied on evidence provided by the people they enumerated, and some of this information was undoubtedly wrong. A person's race, for example,

could generate considerable confusion. It was discovered that some people, who were presumably of mixed racial origin, were listed as African in one census and as European in another. The census, however, provides the most detailed and thorough description of the people in the province. Its overall accuracy and thoroughness was evident in the fact that almost all the personalities discussed in the dissertation, from the most major figures to very minor ones, were listed in the census. The census also proved especially helpful in measuring change over time.

As mentioned above, little has been written about race relations in Ontario from 1870 to 1919. There is, however, a fairly large body of literature on the history of blacks in the province. A brief review of this material is necessary in order to place this dissertation in an historiographical context. Much of this literature has dealt with the Underground Railroad and the period prior to 1865. The best known early writer on blacks in the province was Fred Landon, a prolific writer who wrote countless articles on the subject. His articles were primarily based on white sources such as missionary and government reports. He tended to describe the fugitive slave experience in Canada in glowing terms. In a 1925 article he wrote that Canada had a harsh climate and occasional prejudice, but for former slaves "there was justice and opportunity and, above all, freedom." He mentioned that blacks had the same civil rights as whites and could participate in politics, and that jobs were also fairly plentiful. Landon blamed

the prejudice that did exist on "the nearby American influences."[3] In short, pre-Civil War Canada was a promised land for blacks. Landon praised the work of white abolitionists that assisted the black fugitives. In a 1924 article, for example, he credited the American Missionary Association, an American anti-slavery organization that sponsored missionaries in Canada, with improving the lives of the black population. He wrote that the "Canadian work was unattractive, unpromising ... and even hostile at times, but the representatives of the Association ... laid foundations upon which the present church life of the Canadian Negro is largely built." Landon disregarded the paternalism of many of the missionaries, and overemphasized the helplessness of the "destitute fugitives."[4] Another early writer, Ida Greaves, painted a less optimistic picture in her 1930 publication The Negro in Canada. She observed that blacks were not always welcomed in Canadian communities, and that they often had separate schools and "were sometimes refused accommodation in taverns." She perceptively summarized that while Canadians were against slavery they "had no interest in the future of the Negro as such, and the race found in Canada ... more subtle and pernicious forces of hostility than

---

[3] Fred Landon, "Social Conditions Among the Negroes in Upper Canada Before 1865," Ontario Historical Society Papers and Records, vol. 22 (1925), pp. 144, 146-147, 157.

[4] Fred Landon, "The Work of the American Missionary Association Among the Negro Refugees in Canada West," Ontario Historical Society Papers and Records, vol. 21 (1924), pp. 198, 200.

legal slavery."[5] The groundwork for a debate as to whether Canada was truly a 'promised land' for Africans had been laid.

This dispute continued amongst later writers. Victor Ullman wrote a biography in 1969 of the white abolitionist William King, who founded a settlement for fugitive slaves in Ontario called the Buxton settlement. This was the largest and most successful segregated community for blacks in the province. Ullman praised King, and argued that he "knew the Negro."[6] Ullman saw Canada as a better place for blacks than the United States, and wrote that throughout "Canada's history, the legal equality of Negroes has been proved in the courts, and at the ballot box." Edwin Larwill, a mid-nineteenth century anti-black Canadian politician, was seen by Ullman as "a displaced demagogue," someone who was out of place in Canada and who would have been more at home as a Governor in the American South.[7] By the 1960s, however, most historians seemed to acknowledge that blacks had been the victims of racism in this country. William and Jane Pease, in their 1963 work Black Utopia, which studied segregated black communities in the province prior to the Civil War, noted that Canada was not a promised land and that in Canada the "Negro suffered the same kinds of economic and

---

[5] Ida Greaves, The Negro In Canada (Montreal, n.d.), pp. 42-43.

[6] Victor Ullman, Look to the North Star: A Life of William King (Boston, 1969), p. 96.

[7] Ullman, Look to the North Star, p. 103.

social prejudice" as in the northern American states.[8] The existence of white prejudice was perhaps best outlined by Robin Winks in his comprehensive history of black Canadians, published in 1971 and entitled The Blacks in Canada. He noted that although Canada proved to be a safe haven from slave catchers, it was not a utopia in other senses. Blacks were often restricted to back galleries in churches, and segregated schools became common.[9] Jason Silverman's 1981 thesis on fugitive slaves in Canada confirmed Winks' findings. He argued that, although Canada provided a legal haven for former slaves, this "did not guarantee their assimilation into the mainstream of society."[10] The title of his dissertation, "Unwelcome Guests," succinctly summarized his view of the province's reaction to the black fugitives.

The above discussion explains only how writers have treated the white reaction to the fugitive slaves. It is also important to study the other side of the story: How have historians assessed black actions in Ontario? Alexander Murray's 1960 thesis entitled "Canada and the Anglo-American Anti-Slavery Movement" helped advance this question, and moved the discussion away from simply seeing blacks as passive recipients of charity and victims of

---

[8] William and Jane Pease, Black Utopia: Negro Communal Experiments in America (Madison, 1963), p. 9.

[9] Robin Winks, The Blacks in Canada: A History (Montreal, 1971), pp. 148-149.

[10] Jason Howard Silverman, "Unwelcome Guests: American Fugitive Slaves in Canada, 1830-1865," (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Kentucky, 1981), p. 47.

racism. By using two black newspapers published in the 1850s, the Voice of the Fugitive and the Provincial Freeman (the latter was 'discovered' by Murray) he was able to present the views and aspirations of the black community more clearly than previous writers. He noted that many blacks were active in abolitionist activities, and also observed that black fugitives developed opinions on many of the issues of the time, such as the merits of 'begging' for aid.[11] Robin Winks also devoted much space to evaluating how the black community responded to the problems they faced, focusing especially on the black reaction to racism. Winks was much more critical of the nineteenth century black community than Murray had been. He emphasized the divisions within the black ranks between new settlers and old settlers, and also showed how leaders of black settlements often fought.[12] He noted that black leaders never fought for equality but "preached doctrines of postponement, tactics of resignation, and morals of subservience."[13]

In 1971 Donald Simpson wrote a detailed study of Ontario blacks to 1870. He also argued that blacks faced great obstacles because of their slave background and the prejudice of white Canadians. Simpson also emphasized, however, that in spite of these handicaps "many Negro immigrants to Canada ... were able to become self-

---

[11] Alexander Lovell Murray, "Canada and the Anglo-American Anti-Slavery Movement: A Study in International Philanthropy" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Pennsylvania, 1960), passim and pp. 437-438.

[12] Winks, The Blacks in Canada, p. 143 and passim.

[13] Winks, The Blacks in Canada, p. 480.

sufficient economically and to make a contribution to Canadian society." He noted, as had Winks, the divisions within the black community but he differed somewhat from Winks in that he saw this as understandable and argued that "it was no more accurate to speak of the Negro than it was to speak of the white man." He also contended that white paternalism frustrated blacks and that "lasting success came only when the negroes themselves were involved in solving their own problems."[14] Simpson was somewhat critical of white missionaries such as Hiram Wilson and Isaac Rice, and more positive about black leaders like the newspaper editor Henry Bibb.[15] In this sense, he was following the arguments of Murray more than those of Winks.

James Walker's 1980 publication A History of Blacks in Canada added another perspective to the issue. While noting that segregation emerged because whites would not accept blacks, he also argued that a strong black community emerged that gave some benefits to the province's African population. Since most black communities had their own churches and schools with black leaders the "world was interpreted to the black community through black eyes." They developed a "self-sufficient community, in all but economic terms," and this community became "a sustaining force, a constant source of different and more positive signals than those

---

[14] Donald Simpson, "Negroes in Ontario From Early Times to 1870," (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Western Ontario, 1971), pp. 929-931.

[15] Simpson, "Negroes in Ontario From Early Times," pp. 560, 620, 833.

received from white society."[16]

Another interpretation emerged in 1981 with Daniel Hill's The Freedom Seekers. This study presented black settlement in nineteenth century Ontario in an optimistic light. He paid greatest attention to successful Africans who worked hard and made a successful life for themselves. While acknowledging that blacks faced problems in their new home, he also noted that "their many successes in the early periods of our history would not have been possible without cooperation between whites and Blacks."[17] He emphasized the whites who had helped blacks adapt to their new home, and showed the obstacles that could be overcome through cooperation between Africans and Europeans.

None of these writers dealt specifically with the 1870 to 1919 period, and most did not deal with it at all. Even those who did touch on this fifty year period did so in a very general manner. Yet the above mentioned works help to lay some of the important questions in terms of the relationship between blacks and whites in Ontario. With a few exceptions, it seems most writers no longer see the province as a promised land for Africans. Yet there remains a split as to how much cooperation existed between the two races, with Hill seeing a fair amount, and other writers like Winks seeing much less. Whether black institutions were at all

---

[16] James Walker, A History of Blacks in Canada: A Study Guide for Teachers and Students (Ottawa, 1980), pp. 139-140.

[17] Daniel Hill, The Freedom Seekers: Blacks in Early Canada (Agincourt, 1981), p. 109.

successful also seems open to debate.

Considerably less literature exists on the 1870 to 1919 period. Robin Winks has one chapter on this period in his groundbreaking book The Blacks in Canada. He had a pessimistic view of the period by arguing that it led to the nadir in race relations that occurred during World War One.[18] Yet Winks also perceptively noted "the formlessness of the racial barrier." He showed how blacks were sometimes discriminated against while other times they were not, without any apparent pattern.[19] One thesis that covers part of the period under study is Jonathan Walton's 1979 thesis entitled "Blacks in Buxton and Chatham, Ontario, 1830-1890." Walton painted a fairly rosy picture of the earlier period in these two communities. He argued that "prior to the Civil War blacks in Chatham could and did justifiably look upon their town as a better place for them to be."[20] Most blacks were "able to secure jobs, and engage in a reasonably broad range of activities."[21] After the war the situation deteriorated. By 1890, Walton observed, "Chatham could no longer be represented as a haven for blacks."[22] His thesis is significant because it sees the late nineteenth century being

---

[18] Winks, The Blacks in Canada, p. 313.

[19] Winks, The Blacks in Canada, p. 325.

[20] Jonathan William Walton, "Blacks in Buxton and Chatham, Ontario, 1830-1890: Did the 49th Parallel Make A Difference?" (Ph.D. dissertation, Princeton University, 1979), p. 254.

[21] Walton, "Blacks in Buxton and Chatham," p. 76.

[22] Walton, "Blacks in Buxton and Chatham," p. 207.

much different from the mid-nineteenth century for the province's black population. Walton made use of the 1871 census rolls, and his approach provided some suggestions for this dissertation, especially for analysing the census data.

Other articles that discuss this period have dealt with specific issues. Africans and crime is one subject that has produced a few articles. The Clara Ford case, a controversial 1893 trial where a black Toronto woman was accused of killing a young man from a prominent Toronto family, allegedly confessed to the crime, and then was discharged by a jury, has received scholarly attention. According to Carolyn Strange, the fact that Ford was both a woman and black helped gain her acquittal. Her "guilty" confession could easily be explained by the defence with the suggestion that "an ignorant woman of mixed blood was no match for the aggressive tactics of unchivalrous detectives."[23] The trial of a black American man who worked for a visiting circus and was tried and acquitted for a murder in Picton in 1903 has also generated an academic article. The victim was also a black American circus worker. Strange and Tina Loo note that the defendant was able to escape conviction because both the accused and the murdered were outsiders to the community, and that "as far as the good people of the county were concerned, the causes of this crime were as alien as its perpetrators: transient Black labourers from the United

[23] Carolyn Strange, "The Perils and Pleasures of the City: Single, Wage-Earning Women in Toronto, 1880-1930 (Ph.D. dissertation, Rutgers University, 1991), p. 113.

States."[24] Yet other studies show how harshly Africans convicted of crimes could be treated. Strange showed how David Hawes, a black porter who was convicted of the rape of a white woman in Toronto in 1901 on dubious evidence, received a maximum sentence and faced hostility from the press.[25] A broader study, written by Clayton Mosher, has indicated that blacks were more likely to be charged and convicted of crimes, and received harsher sentences when convicted.[26] The African experience in the military during World War One has also received some attention. James Walker discussed the poor treatment Africans received during World War One in a 1989 article. Blacks were usually rejected when they tried to enlist, and most of those who did serve were relegated to a labour battalion. Walker emphasized that by "their persistence in volunteering, their insistence upon the 'right' to serve," blacks and other visible minorities showed that they "had not been defeated by the racism of white society." Walker also noted that by treating blacks in this way white Canadians were simply

---

[24] Carolyn Strange and Tina Loo, "Spectacular Justice: The Circus on Trial, and the Trial as Circus, Picton, 1903," The Canadian Historical Review, vol. 77, no. 2 (June 1996), passim and p. 180.

[25] Carolyn Strange, "Patriarchy Modified: The Criminal Prosecution of Rape in York County, Ontario, 1880-1930" in Jim Phillips, Tina Loo and Susan Lewthwaite, eds. Essays in the History of Canadian Law, vol. 5 (Toronto, 1994), pp. 222-223.

[26] Clayton Mosher, Crime and Colour, Cops and Courts: Systemic Racism in the Ontario Criminal Justice System In Social and Historical Context (Final Report (Revised) Submitted to the Commission on Systemic Racism in the Ontario Criminal Justice System, n.d.), passim.

participating "in the Western ideology of racism," and that Canada's "recruitment policy and overseas employment were entirely consistent with domestic stereotypes of 'race' characteristics and with general social practice in Canada."[27] Calvin Ruck produced a book-length study on Canada's black battalion, noting the significant black contribution to the war effort, and that blacks viewed military service "not only as a right, but a responsibility."[28]

There has, however, been no study of the black-white relationship in general during these years. It is perhaps not surprising that historians have paid more attention to the period prior to 1865, because these years were very eventful for Ontario's black population. The years from 1870 to 1919 were, in many ways, considerably less volatile. No longer did Africans flood into the province to escape slavery, and many of these pre-1865 immigrants returned to the United States during these years. Furthermore, the presence of blacks in the province no longer generated as much public discussion as had been the case in earlier years. Politicians, newspaper editors, missionaries, and others who had devoted much energy to the fugitive slaves now turned their attention to other matters that seemed more important. Perhaps the

---

[27] James Walker, "Race and Recruitment in World War One: Enlistment of Visible Minorities in the Canadian Expeditionary Force," Canadian Historical Review, vol. 70, no. 1 (March, 1989), pp. 22, 25-26.

[28] Calvin W. Ruck, The Black Battalion- 1916-1920: Canada's Best Kept Military Secret (Halifax, 1987), passim and p. 7.

view that the period after 1865 was of lesser importance was expressed best by the historian Donald Simpson who noted that in Canada there were "few dramatic events in the area of black-white relations in the post-Civil War period." He further argued that "in terms of major events or critical political issues, there seemed to be a hiatus after the 1870s until the post-World War II period."[29] Yet even though Ontario's black population was less noticeable to most of the public, one should not interpret this to mean that Africans were any less active during this era. There continued to be a sizeable black population in the province, and the issues that emerged in their relationship with the surrounding population during these years were important in the overall development of the province's race relations. This era is particularly interesting because it was the black community alone that set the agenda, and consequently historians are provided with clues as to what Africans most desired and deemed most important in their Ontario home. This thesis will argue that many of the issues that emerged in the pre-Civil War era remained just as controversial in the post-bellum period, and that the years from 1870 to 1919 were not a hiatus. Africans continued to fight against discrimination at hotels and restaurants, continued to push to have their children admitted to common schools, attempted to obtain jobs in a wide range of occupations, and tried to protect fellow Africans who fled to Canada after facing threats in the

---

[29] Simpson, "Negroes in Ontario from Early Times to 1870," pp. 910, 913.

American south. Yet these subjects have received little scholarly attention. This dissertation hopes to begin to fill this void.

One final introductory comment needs to be made. People of African descent living in Canada have been referred to by several names over the years. Terms such as "Negro" and "coloured" are obviously antiquated and are not used in the thesis except in cases where contemporaries of the period are being quoted. This dissertation uses the terms "black" and "African" interchangeably. The term "black" needs no explanation, since it is used most frequently in the 1990s. "African" is less familiar, but in recent years variations of this term have become increasingly common, with many people in the black community referring to themselves as African-American, or perhaps African-Canadian. Since some personalities discussed in this dissertation are American while others are Canadian these labels would cause some confusion, and have been avoided. All blacks, however, trace their origins to Africa so the term "African" seems most suitable. Furthermore, it was the term used in the censuses of 1871 and 1881, and therefore adds some of the flavour of the period to the dissertation.

Prologue: The African Minority and the European Majority in Ontario Prior to 1870

European settlement of what is now the province of Ontario began in earnest in the late eighteenth century. It was at this same time that the African presence was first felt. Indeed, blacks and whites had been interacting for close to a century by the year 1870. It is therefore necessary that before this dissertation begin its analysis of the 1870 to 1919 period that it briefly outline the pattern of black-white relationships in these earlier years. From the beginning a distinct pattern emerged where blacks and whites viewed issues from different perspectives.

The first relationship between blacks and whites in Upper Canada was predominantly one between masters and slaves. The early white population of Upper Canada was composed primarily of Loyalists from the United States, who arrived after the American wars of independence. Some of these Loyalists possessed slaves, and brought them to Canada. In fact, approximately five hundred slaves came to Upper Canada with their Loyalist masters.[1] In the Niagara area alone there were over 300 slaves in 1791,[2] while many of the early settlers in the Kingston area were slave owners.[3] There were a number of slaves in southwestern Ontario, and one man,

---

[1] Walker, A History of Blacks in Canada, p. 20.

[2] Simpson, "Negroes in Ontario from early times to 1870," p. 10.

[3] Mrs. W.T. Hallam, Slave Days In Canada (Read Before the Women's Canadian Historical Society, Toronto, April, 1919), p. 4.

Matthew Elliott of Amherstburg, owned sixty slaves,[4] making him one of the few large slaveholders in the province. Early French settlers of the region also possessed slaves, as did several prominent citizens in the provincial capital of York. Slaves at York served mostly as personal servants.[5]

Many early white residents saw nothing wrong with slavery, and sincerely believed that they treated their slaves with kindness. Robert Gray, who at one point was Solicitor-General for Upper Canada, performed several acts of charity for his slaves. In his will he freed an old family slave named Dorinda Baker and left some money in a trust to provide for her welfare. While visiting Albany, he purchased Baker's mother Lavine for $50 with the promise that "she may work as much or as little as she pleases while she lives." He also gave 50 pounds and 200 acres to each of Dorinda's sons, John and Simon Baker.[6] John Clark, a Port Dalhousie slaveholder, noted in his memoirs that Sue, a former slave of his family, "gladly returned" during the War of 1812 when she had "become old and indigent," to live out her remaining days.[7] Other slaveholders also believed that their slaves were devoted to

---

[4] Walker, A History of Blacks in Canada, p. 20.

[5] Daniel Hill, "Negroes in Toronto: A Sociological Study of a Minority Group," (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Toronto, 1960), p. 15.

[6] "Robert Isaac Dey Gray," Dictionary of Canadian Biography, vol. 5 (Toronto, 1983), p. 389.

[7] "Memoirs of Colonel John Clark, of Port Dalhousie, C.W.," Ontario Historical Society: Papers and Records, vol. 7 (1906), p. 187.

them. An early writer on slavery claimed that when Loyalist slaves were given their freedom they often "begged to be allowed to stay in the household of those whom they loved to serve."[8]

Black slaves, however, did not necessarily see servitude as such a benign institution. The master-slave relationship was often a fractious one, and there is ample evidence of slave dissatisfaction with servitude. Although it is difficult to know what slaves living in Upper Canada thought of their masters, since records written by the slaves themselves are non-existent, their actions suggest that they did not always hold their masters in high esteem. Slaves responded to servitude, at least to some degree, in the same way as plantation slaves in the American south. Advertisements in newspapers attest to the fact that at least some ran away. In 1793 Thomas Butler, a Niagara resident, offered a five dollar reward for the return of "a NEGRO MAN servant named JOHN," and reminded the readers that "(a)ll persons are forbid harbouring the said Negro man at their peril."[9] James Clark, the father of John Clark mentioned above, advertised for a runaway slave, a girl named Sue, in 1795.[10] This was apparently the same woman who returned during the War of 1812, which suggests that their relationship was not always as good as Clark implied in his

---

[8] Hallam, Slave Days in Canada, p. 3.

[9] Upper Canada Gazette or American Oracle, vol. 1, no. 12 (July 4, 1793).

[10] Upper Canada Gazette or American Oracle, vol. 2, no. 37 (August 19, 1795).

memoirs. Other slaves tried to escape servitude in other ways. Richard Cartwright, a prominent member of Upper Canadian society, was a businessman, judge, politician, and militia officer. He also owned slaves at his Kingston estate. One of his slaves complained in 1787 to John Collins and William Dummer Powell, the two men appointed by Canada's governor Lord Dorchester to deal with unrest in the province,[11] that he was being "illegally detained as a Slave." Cartwright responded to this claim by writing his own letter to Collins and Powell, to justify the retention of his slave, that he had "every reason to believe that he was always legally a Slave."[12]

The historian Robin Winks has noted that, when it came to the treatment of slaves in Canada, "(t)here is far more positive evidence of humane treatment," than of acts of cruelty.[13] Indeed, cruel acts, such as beatings, were uncommon. However, slave owners who, at first glance, seemed kindly were actually often unpleasant to their slaves. The son of a slave owned by Peter Russell, an early Upper Canada politician, was sent to a small private school in York,[14] suggesting that Russell took a certain interest in the welfare of his slaves. In general, however, Russell's relationship

---

[11] Gerald Craig, Upper Canada: The Formative Years (Toronto, 1963), p. 11.

[12] Richard Preston, ed., Kingston Before the War of 1812 (Toronto, 1959), p. 121.

[13] Winks, The Blacks in Canada, p. 51.

[14] Edith Firth, ed., The Town of York 1793-1815: A Collection of Documents of Early Toronto (Toronto, 1962), p. xxiii.

with his slaves appears to have been a poor one, and he frequently tried to get rid of them. In 1801 Russell sent a letter to Matthew Elliott about his slave Peggy. He wrote that "Peggy, whom you were so good to promise to assist in getting rid of, has remained in Prison." The deal with Elliott, however, fell through and Russell was forced to keep her.[15] When one reads the correspondence of Elizabeth Russell, the sister of Peter Russell with whom he shared his home,[16] it can be seen why white slaveowners had problems with their slaves. Elizabeth Russell noted in 1806, after outlining a series of complaints about her black slaves, that "Peter ... is rather disgusted at the behaviour of some of the people. His wish is to sell his property and go home." Indeed, Elizabeth Russell frequently complained about her slaves, and wrote in her diary in 1806 that "they are certainly very dirty, idle and insolent."[17] In 1807 she wrote that "they are all a bad ungrateful set."[18] She noted that two of her young slaves were "very much addicted to pilfering and lying. But it is all owing to the bad example their mother sets them."[19] Such attitudes undoubtedly led to great friction, and helps explain the problems between Peter and Elizabeth Russell and their slaves.

---

[15] Firth, ed., The Town of York, p. 243.

[16] J.M.S. Careless, Toronto to 1918: An Illustrated History (Toronto, 1984), p. 29.

[17] Firth, ed., The Town of York, p. 259.

[18] Firth, ed., The Town of York, p. 265.

[19] Firth, ed., The Town of York, p. 260.

Slavery was beneficial in Upper Canada because it was a frontier, newly settled area with a great need for labour. In Upper Canada it was difficult to get dependable hired help, and many upper class people were unused to doing manual labour, making servants seem attractive. The abcve mentioned Elizabeth Russell complained in 1793 of "the high prices of ... (l)abour of all kinds, and the want of good servants. What do you say to the paying a woman from three and nine pence to four and ten pence a day."[20] Yet despite the shortage of labour slavery was short lived in the province. The late eighteenth century was a period in world history when slavery was falling out of favour, as abolitionist groups emerged to attack the horrors and moral wrongs of this institution and the accompanying trans-Atlantic slave trade. Indeed, the late settlement of Ontario meant that slavery never played as large a role in the province as it did even in other parts of Canada, such as Quebec and Nova Scotia. The province was only starting to be settled when Governor John Graves Simcoe introduced a gradual abolition of slavery in 1793, and the number of slaves steadily dwindled. The shortage of labour in the province, however, impeded Simcoe from his goal of eliminating slavery entirely. He received much opposition from several members of the government, and Simcoe admitted in a letter that opponents to the bill brought forward "many plausible Arguments of the

---

[20] Metropolitan Toronto Library, Baldwin Room, <u>Elizabeth Russell Papers</u>, draft letters from Elizabeth Russell to Mrs. Kiernan, 1792-1813, letter from York on January 26, 1793.

dearness of Labour and the difficulty of obtaining Servants to cultivate Lands."[21] In the end, the act freed no slaves, and was a compromise measure to appease the many prominent whites in the province, many of whom served in government, who possessed slaves. The act stated that those who were currently slaves could remain in this condition until death, that all children born to slaves after 1793 would remain as slaves until the age of 25, and that further slaves could not be brought into the province. Yet in another way the act impeded the freeing of slaves. If an owner chose to free a slave, he had to ensure that the former slave did not become a public charge. Those whites who opposed slavery, such as Simcoe, refuted the shortage of labour argument on the grounds that slavery was morally wrong. After the passing of the 1793 act Simcoe made a speech to both houses of the government of Upper Canada where he stated that slavery was an "unhappy condition which sound policy and humanity unite to condemn."[22] The fact that many whites continued to support slavery was evidenced in 1798 when a bill was introduced in the Legislative Assembly "to authorize and allow persons coming into this Province to settle to bring with them their Negro Slaves." The bill passed by an eight to four vote.[23] The argument was based on a scarcity of labour. The bill

---

[21] E.A. Cruikshank, The Correspondence of Liet. Governor John Graves Simcoe, vol. 2 1793-1794 (Toronto, 1924), p. 53.

[22] The Journals of the Legislative Assembly of Upper Canada, 1792-1804, vol. 1 (Toronto, 1911), pp. 42-43.

[23] The Journals of the Legislative Assembly of Upper Canada, 1792-1804, vol. 1, pp. 70-71.

then went to the Legislative Council where it was postponed for three months, never to be discussed again.[24] Blacks, however, had been left out of the discussion on how to abolish slavery. Their voice could not be heard in a society that regarded them as property. A pattern had begun where whites would act without any understanding of how blacks regarded an issue.

With the demise of slavery the next group of Africans to arrive in the province were fugitives from American slavery. Numbers were small in the early nineteenth century, but by the middle of the century they were arriving in significant numbers. After 1850 Africans began to flood into the province. In that year a Fugitive Slave Act was passed by the United States government with the avowed purpose of enabling southern slaveholders to reclaim former slaves who had escaped to the northern states. Other fugitive slave acts had been passed over the years, the first in 1793, but the 1850 act had more strength. This act enabled slaveholders to present their case to a judge with no jury. Furthermore, the judge received twice as much payment if he determined that the African should be returned to the slaveholder. The significance of the act was that the northern states no longer seemed safe to runaway slaves, and it became necessary for security reasons to cross the border into Canada. Even free blacks born in the north had reason to feel insecure, as there was always the chance they could be

---

[24] W.R. Riddell, "The Slave in Upper Canada," The Journal of Negro History, vol. 4, no. 4 (October, 1919), p. 384.

falsely claimed as fugitives and taken to the south.[25]

The African population in the province reached its zenith in the 1850s. Exactly how many blacks resided in the province is impossible to know. Neither the 1851 nor 1861 census has been judged by historians to have been particularly accurate.[26] Many historians place the number at about 40,000.[27] Contemporary observers often put the number even higher. More recently it has been noted that such estimates may be too high. Michael Wayne has argued that "historians have significantly overestimated the black population of Canada West in 1860, probably by 75 per cent or more."[28] Indeed, abolitionists likely inflated numbers to both promote their own efforts and to encourage others.[29] It would seem that William Wells Brown, an African who toured Canada West in 1861 to promote Haitian immigration, was closer to the mark when he stated that "(t)he colored population of the Canadas have been largely overrated. There are probably not more than 25,000 in both

---

[25] Leon Litwack, North of Slavery: The Negro in the Free States, 1790-1860 (Chicago, 1961), pp. 248-249.

[26] Winks, The Blacks in Canada, p. 234.

[27] Winks, The Blacks in Canada, p. 240.

[28] Michael Wayne, "The Black Population of Canada West on the Eve of the American Civil War: A Reassessment Based on the Manuscript Census of 1861," Social History, vol. 28, no. 56 (November, 1995), p. 470.

[29] See Winks, The Blacks in Canada, pp. 234-240 for a good discussion on how one must be careful with the estimates that have been given concerning the number of fugitive slaves who fled to Canada.

Provinces,[30] and by far the greater number of these are in Canada West."[31] As Michael Wayne notes, evidence from Benjamin Drew supports a smaller black population. Drew published The Refugee in 1856, and although he states in his preface that the black population was estimated by the Anti-Slavery Society of Canada in 1852 as thirty thousand,[32] his estimates for the size of the various black communities he visited fail to corroborate this claim. In fact, a totaling of these numbers does not even come close to a thirty thousand figure.[33]

Africans quickly developed a distinct settlement pattern, and concentrated themselves in certain parts of the province. Most settled in places close to the American border such as Windsor,

---

[30] The provinces referred to are Canada East (which became Quebec in 1867) and Canada West.

[31] C. Peter Ripley, ed., The Black Abolitionist Papers, vol. 2 Canada, 1830-1865 (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1986), p. 461.

[32] Benjamin Drew, The Refugee: or the Narratives of Fugitive Slaves in Canada (Boston, 1856), n.p.

[33] Drew's The Refugee argues that there were 2,000 blacks in the Chatham area (p. 234), 800 in Buxton (p. 291), 500 in Amherstburg (p. 348), 450 in Colchester (p.367), 350 in London (p. 147), 350 in Windsor and Sandwich (pp. 321, 341), 800 in St. Catharines (p. 18), 1,000 in Toronto (p. 94), 274 in Hamilton (p.118). This list does not include all black settlements in the province, but it does list most of the major ones. Furthermore, some of the above numbers are not much larger than those listed for the 1871 census, and a couple are actually smaller. This evidence offers support to Wells' contention that the number of blacks in the province in the 1850s may not have been as large as some have suggested. For a fuller discussion of this point and others related to the size of Canada West's black population see Michael Wayne, "The Black Population of Canada West on the Eve of the American Civil War," Social History, vol. 28, no. 56 (November, 1995), pp. 465-485.

Amherstburg, Chatham, and the Niagara region, with larger cities such as Hamilton, Toronto, and London also having sizeable black populations. Some settled in segregated black communities. The three largest were the Elgin settlement in North Buxton, south of Chatham; the Dawn settlement near Dresden, north of Chatham; and the Refugees Home Society in the Windsor area. Some parts of the province, on the other hand, had almost no Africans.

It became clear during these years that the majority white population and the minority black population viewed most matters in a different light. Whites dealt with the black influx in three ways. First, they believed the fugitives were downtrodden and backward and needed the assistance of white teachers and missionaries to adapt to their new home. Blacks, on the other hand, were more comfortable with their own community leaders, teachers, and preachers. They knew that the former slaves had a rich culture, and wished to preserve it. Secondly, whites believed blacks came to escape the horrors of the United States and to obtain the rights and freedoms they were entitled to, and duly granted, in Canada. Blacks also wanted rights and freedoms in Canada, but they also desired a full equality, and their definition of this full equality was not always the same as the white majority. Thirdly, whites reacted with some alarm to the growing number of blacks in the province and, perhaps more significantly, the fear that the numbers would grow even more in the future. Africans, on the other hand, demonstrated a tenacity to make the province their home.

As the number of Africans in the province grew, blacks increasingly established their own institutions. The first was generally a church, since religion played such an important role in the lives of the black community. In American slavery, religion was one of the few ways in which blacks could display some autonomy. Since slave masters believed religion emphasized subservience, they allowed their slaves to become Christians, and to attend church. Black preachers were permitted, and they developed a distinctive brand of Christianity which the fugitives brought with them to Canada. The fact that many white churches did not want black members, or would accept them only if they sat in separate pews, provided further impetus for the development of black churches. Many separate black Baptist and Methodist churches were in existence by the middle of the nineteenth century.[34]

By the mid 1830s anti-slavery sentiment was beginning to grow amongst whites in Upper Canada. One force that assisted this growth was the increasing number of fugitive slaves arriving in the province.[35] The most obvious way for abolitionists in Upper Canada to attack American slavery was to assist fugitive slaves who had fled to Canada. By proving that blacks could become respectable citizens, abolitionists believed that they could indirectly attack slavery. Missionaries were among the most active abolitionists, and were the whites that many of the province's blacks had the most

---

[34] Walker, A History of the Blacks in Canada, p. 108.

[35] Allen Stouffer, The Light of Nature and the Law of God: Antislavery in Ontario, 1833-1877 (Montreal, 1992), p. 47.

contact with. The problem was that missionaries held views on the former slaves that ran counter to those held by the Africans themselves. Whites who preached anti-slavery doctrines believed that slavery was an evil institution. Quite understandably, given this view, they believed that the former slaves needed great assistance to overcome this legacy. Given their understanding of the degrading nature of slavery, blacks could hardly be expected to overcome this legacy on their own. Several missionary organizations emerged in the province with the avowed intention of bringing blacks up to white standards. One such association was the England-based Colonial Church and School Society. Reverend Hughes, a missionary stationed in London, wrote from Canada in 1858 that "(g)reat allowances must be made for them [former slaves]. When they were in slavery everything was provided for them, and habits of self dependence are not soon formed."[36]

The largest missionary organization in the province was the non-denominational American Missionary Association, a religious organization that had been founded in Albany in 1846 devoted to abolishing American slavery.[37] Although its focus was in the United States, it also sponsored several missionaries and teachers in Canada West. These missionaries believed slavery had destroyed blacks. A writer in the American Missionary observed in 1846,

---

[36] Colonial Church and School Society, Mission to the Fugitive Slaves in Canada (London, 1859), p. 17.

[37] Landon, "The Work of the American Missionary Association Among the Negro Refugees in Canada West," Ontario History, vol. 21 (1924), p. 198.

after a trip to Canada, that "the colored inhabitants come fully up to my expectations with regard to ignorance, destitution, and all that can combine to make them a degraded people."[38] In 1861 the American Missionary Magazine noted that the "missionaries of this Society ... are sometimes shocked to see how far slavery has destroyed the moral character, and rendered almost unsusceptible of good, some of those who have been long subjected to its destructive influences."[39] Yet the missionaries were likely not shocked, despite these claims, by the perceived degraded nature of the former slaves. Their belief that slavery ruined people meant they would have expected the fugitives to have been in a bad physical, moral, and intellectual state. Upon making contact with the former slaves they would have looked for evidence of this degradation. The missionaries were therefore consistently pessimistic about the former slaves, and David Hotchkiss, a long serving white missionary in the province, observed in 1851 that "there is very little hope for the majority of those who have been raised in slavery, or even for those who have always been free." He contended that "the spirit of oppression and prejudice has degraded and ruined this people, their habits are formed and they are generally bad."[40] Hiram Wilson, another long serving

---

[38] American Missionary, vol. 1, no. 2 (December, 1846), p. 10.

[39] American Missionary Magazine, vol. 5, no. 4 (April, 1861), p. 80.

[40] Microfilm of the Canadian Files of the American Missionary Association Manuscripts, letter from David Hotchkiss to George Whipple dated November 19, 1851, FI-191.

missionary, wrote that, with some exceptions, "ignorance, bigotry, disunion, and ingratitude" were problems in Canada's black communities.[41] Furthermore, throughout their correspondence missionaries referred to blacks as "grown children."[42]

Black preachers did not take kindly to white missionaries. Since these preachers had much support in the African community, white missionaries often had difficulty finding opportunities to preach. The African Methodist Episcopal denomination, the largest black church in the province, was especially unreceptive to the missionaries. The white agents of the American Missionary Association complained as early as 1848, saying that the AME representatives "have strong prejudices against the whites and are doing much to keep up prejudice of color."[43] One missionary, Elias Kirkland, resigned in late 1852 because he had done so little preaching, writing in his resignation that "it is exceedingly trying to me to be sustained as a missionary and have no more to report than I have done for the last year."[44] Hiram Wilson also found his opportunities to preach curtailed in both Amherstburg and

---

[41] The Liberator, vol. 20, no. 31 (August 2, 1850).

[42] see for example Microfilm of the Canadian Files of the American Missionary Association Manuscripts, letter from Alex McArthur to Whipple dated May 15, 1852, FI-242.

[43] American Missionary, vol. 2, no. 4 (February, 1848), p. 31.

[44] Microfilm of the Canadian Files of the American Missionary Association Manuscripts, letter from Kirkland to Whipple dated November 2, 1852, FI-280.

St. Catharines.[45] Hotchkiss was unable to preach for nine months because no black congregation would hear him.[46]

Blacks did not want white preachers for two reasons. The first reason was that blacks wanted independence, and the right to listen to their own ministers. A meeting amongst a group of black settlers in the Windsor area in 1857 made the point that Africans "did not want white men to preach, nor white women to teach, neither them nor their children." They emphasized that they could manage their own affairs and that they had "come all the way from slavery to be free and we will be free, we have had white masters long enough."[47] A black minister from the AME church told a white missionary in 1855 that "white men have whipped, drove and robbed us long enough ... I am a progressive man; white men have had their heel on us long enough."[48] Joseph Mason, a black man, emphasized that blacks wanted all white agents to leave, that Africans were capable of performing all the tasks they did, and that they were frustrated that "whites were doing all they could to prevent their

---

[45] Microfilm of the Canadian Files of the American Missionary Association, letter from Hiram Wilson to Whipple dated December 16, 1850, FI-121.

[46] Microfilm of the Canadian Files of the American Missionary Association Manuscripts, letter from George Mason dated April 26, 1852, FI-237.

[47] Microfilm of the Canadian Files of the American Missionary Association Manuscripts, letter from Hotchkiss to Whipple dated August 25, 1857, FI-450.

[48] Microfilm of the Canadian Files of the American Missionary Association Manuscripts, letter from Hotchkiss to Whipple dated August 21, 1855, FI-385.

ever doing any thing."[49] When black and white abolitionists competed for influence in the black community, black leaders were usually victorious. Mason quickly gained influence in the New Canaan settlement near Amherstburg. While white missionaries complained about Mason, three blacks sent a letter to AMA headquarters arguing that "Mr. Mason is a man of honor and integrity giving general satisfaction" and further argued that "we considered him the only person that ever did us in the settlement any good as an abolitionist."[50] The other abolitionists had been white.

The other reason blacks did not want white missionaries was their condescending and paternalistic attitude towards the former slaves. In their quest to inculcate a "correct"[51] religion they encountered considerable opposition. White preachers did not like the more lively services blacks were used to, and were unimpressed by the behaviour of black congregations. Kirkland noted that it "is not pleasant to many of them to have the gospel plainly presented to their minds." Mary Teall exasperated in 1851 that it would have been "a thousand times better ... if they had never

---

[49] Microfilm of the Canadian Files of the American Missionary Association Manuscripts, letter from Hotchkiss to George Whipple dated August 15, 1851, FI-172.

[50] Microfilm of the Canadian Files of the American Missionary Association Manuscripts, letter from William Young, James Davis, and Reuben Strother dated July 3, 1851, FI-164.

[51] see for example Microfilm of the Canadian Files of the American Missionary Association Manuscripts, letter from Kirkland to Whipple dated January 26, 1851, FI-131.

heard of religion while in slavery."[52] When referring to Mason, Kirkland noted that he had "very little confidence in his religious principles."[53] Another missionary, Alex McArthur, who worked with fugitives in Ontario under the auspices of the Missionary Society of the Illinois Conference of the Methodist Church,[54] argued that former slaves needed an "intelligent Ministry" and that he did not want missionaries to "adopt the slang of the plantation, and the ranting style of the colored Methodist Ministers."[55] Yet this "ranting style" was exactly what blacks wanted to hear, and they knew they could relate to the former slaves in a way that whites never could. Bishop Walter Hawkins, a black minister active amongst the African population from the 1850s until the 1880s, understood that black preachers had an advantage over their white brethren. When speaking at an 1890 general conference of the Methodist church in Canada he summarized his life's work when he stated that: "I loved my dark brethren, and I went amongst them and did what you cannot do - I unlocked the door of their hearts

[52] Microfilm of the Canadian Files of the American Missionary Association Manuscripts, letter from Mary Teall to George Whipple dated September 23, 1851, FI-180.

[53] Microfilm of the Canadian Files of the American Missionary Association Manuscripts, letter from E.E. Kirkland to Br. Cowles dated June 30, 1851, FI-163.

[54] Winks, The Blacks in Canada, p. 207.

[55] Microfilm of the Canadian Files of the American Missionary Association Manuscripts, letter from Alexander McArthur to Whipple dated July 20, 1852, FI-257.

with a key which you could never get."[56] The "key" Hawkins possessed was his African heritage.

Black missionaries had considerably more success than their white counterparts, and white missionary organizations were more successful when they listened to the concerns of the African community. The Colonial Church and School Society decided in 1854 to establish a school for black fugitives in Ontario. Blacks in Toronto protested the plan at a September 1854 meeting. Blacks were upset because a report issued by the society had stated that blacks in Canada were "in the lowest state of ignorance of religion, and even of secular knowledge." A resolution at the meeting stated that such an assessment of the black community was "entirely untrue." They were also upset that the school would be restricted to Africans. They resolved that they would not support any institution that made "distinction on account of color," because it would "destroy the foundation of [their] liberties."[57] When the school opened in London in 1855 it was open to both whites and blacks. The Titre sisters, two black women, were hired as teachers, and the school enjoyed considerable initial success.[58] It is also noteworthy that Lewis Chambers, one of the few black

---

[56] S.J. Celestine Edwards, From Slavery To a Bishopric or the Life of Bishop Walter Hawkins (London, 1891), p. 159.

[57] Ripley, The Black Abolitionist Papers, vol. 2, pp. 300-302.

[58] Christopher Bruce Elliott, "Black Education in Canada West: A Parochial Solution to a Secular Problem, Rev. M.M. Dillon and the Colonial Church and School Society," (MA thesis, Wilfrid Laurier University, 1989), pp. 52-53.

missionaries working for the American Missionary Association in the province, had more success finding audiences for his sermons than his white counterparts. He wrote in 1862 that he had been in Canada for seven years, and had preached every Sunday except five, most of those weeks having been lost to illness.[59] Blacks also expressed their appreciation for Chambers' work as a teacher. In 1861, the officers, teachers, and members of the British Methodist Episcopal Church Sabbath School in London offered their gratitude to Chambers for his "unceasing dillegence [sic] and labours ... in their behalf."[60]

The second area of conflict concerned the African quest for equal rights. Upon their arrival in the province blacks tried to obtain full equality, but found this goal to be elusive. Education was the most controversial issue as blacks were often denied access to the regular schools. By the early 1840s places such as Hamilton and Chatham had separate schools for blacks.[61] Africans protested against forced segregation from the beginning using a variety of tactics. The blacks of Hamilton petitioned Sir Charles Metcalfe, the governor-general of the Canadas, in 1843. They complained that although they paid taxes they were still denied the right to attend

---

[59] Microfilm of the Canadian Files of the American Missionary Association Manuscripts, letter from Chambers to Whipple dated October 31, 1862, FI-675.

[60] Microfilm of the Canadian Files of the American Missionary Association Manuscripts, Presentation and Address of the BME Church Sabbath School of London dated April 4, 1861, FI-605.

[61] Hill, The Freedom-Seekers, pp. 150-151.

public schools. As a result of this pressure from the community they were allowed to attend the regular schools.[62] More often than not, however, blacks were frustrated in such attempts. Some Africans launched legal actions against the school boards. One such case involved Dennis Hill of Dawn Mills, who claimed to be one of the largest taxpayers in his school section.[63] He tried to have his children admitted to the common schools in April of 1853, but was refused. He took the school board to court, but lost.[64] Others protested separate schools by writing letters to newspapers. Lewis Chambers, a pastor of the British Methodist Episcopal Church, wrote to the <u>London Free Press</u> during the separate school controversy in that city in 1861. He noted that "we pay our school rates with the rest of the law-abiding citizens, and we are only enjoying our guaranteed rights.[65] The <u>Free Press</u>, however, supported separate schools because "the colored children will be freed from all remarks calculated to wound their feelings" and separation would remove the objections "entertained by many parents" about having "their daughters associate with colored children." In the views of the London paper, "we really believe it best for both, that the two races should be educated apart."[66] When George Stewart took the

---

[62] Ripley, <u>The Black Abolitionist Papers</u>, vol. 2, p. 97.

[63] Ripley, <u>The Black Abolitionist Papers</u>, vol. 2, p. 243.

[64] <u>Upper Canada Reports</u>, vol. 11 (Toronto, 1874), p. 579.

[65] <u>London Free Press</u>, July 27, 1861.

[66] <u>London Free Press</u>, August 6, 1861.

Sandwich school board to court in 1864 for refusing to allow his daughter to enter the common schools, the ruling noted that "(w)e do not question the sincerity of those who state their apprehension of the consequences of allowing colored children to enter the common schools."[67] A pattern had been established. While blacks argued that they should have equal rights as citizens, and that being forced to attend separate schools was not just, whites contended that segregated schooling was in everyone's best interests.

Some blacks accepted separate black schools as necessary for the time being, but they were also in conflict with whites because they insisted on having some control over these institutions. Blacks in Chatham were upset in the late 1850s when African teachers were dismissed and a white teacher hired in their place. They believed black teachers were better suited for their children.[68] Indeed, white missionaries establishing schools faced many problems. In 1856 the American Missionary Association's Hotchkiss noted that some blacks were upset when a teacher was appointed without consulting the blacks themselves, and complained that "some are opposed to any body's doing any thing at all for them."[69] A similar situation occurred in London when the settlers

---

[67] Upper Canada Reports, vol. 23 (Toronto, 1864), p. 638.

[68] Afua Cooper, "Black Teachers in Canada West, 1850-1870: A History" (MA thesis, University of Toronto, 1991), p. 59.

[69] Microfilm of the Canadian Files of the American Missionary Association Manuscripts, letter from Hotchkiss to Whipple dated May 2, 1856, FI-405.

wanted "the money placed in their hands" in order to employ who they wanted.[70] Active parents were referred to by one missionary as "vicious,"[71] rather than as parents who had an understandable desire to be involved in their children's education.

Education was not the only area of controversy. Blacks were not always admitted to places of public accommodation, on transportation, or to places of amusement. Blacks in St. Catharines in 1854, for example, protested when drivers of buses owned by two hotels refused to accept black passengers. They held a meeting and noted that "in this glorious land of Freedom ... man is man, without respect to the colour of his skin" and resolved that "we ... will not submit to degrading terms of service, nor see our brethren treated with indignity by public conveyances, or excluded therefrom, without showing a manly spirit of resentment." They further vowed not to continue as waiters at these hotels until management discontinued this discrimination. By such tactics blacks ended this practice in St. Catharines.[72]

Other efforts were less successful. When blacks tried to obtain equal rights, white society often resisted. A black woman was refused admission to a mineral bath at the Stephenson House in

---

[70] Microfilm of the Canadian Files of the American Missionary Association Manuscripts, letter from Hotchkiss to Whipple dated June 28, 1855, FI-380.

[71] Microfilm of the Canadian Files of the American Missionary Association Manuscripts, letter from Mary Teall to Brother Miner dated November 24, 1851, FI-198.

[72] Ripley, The Black Abolitionist Papers, vol. 2, pp. 297-298.

St. Catharines in 1867. The woman was the wife of Aaron Young, who worked as a barber at the Stephenson House. Aware of the discriminatory policies, he had sent his wife to the baths in order to challenge the rules.[73] The issue received considerable discussion in the press, but the policy was not changed. The St. Catharines Journal commended the proprietors by remarking that "the managers would be extremely foolish to allow any such person to bathe with the guests of the house ... for there are few who are willing to meet him [the Black] on terms of equality." The editorial continued that "(s)o long as the coloured man behaves himself in this country he will be respected, but when he presumes to dine at a public house, or to wash in the same bath as a white man, he is going a little too far."[74] In other words, blacks could expect to gain respect in their new home, provided they did not try to push themselves where they were not wanted. A consistent problem in race relations over the years was that whites saw nothing wrong with this position. Young eventually quit his job at the Stephenson House, and opened his own bath services.[75]

A striking example of white opposition to black fugitive slaves occurred when William King planned the Elgin settlement for fugitive slaves in Buxton. Many whites protested this settlement,

---

[73] Owen Thomas, Niagara's Freedom Trail: A Guide to African-Canadian History on the Niagara Peninsula (Thorold, Ont., 1995), p. 48.

[74] as cited in John Jackson and Sheila Wilson, St. Catharines: Canada's Canal City (St. Catharines, 1992), p. 181.

[75] Thomas, Niagara's Freedom Trail, pp. 49, 59.

and a mass meeting was held in Chatham on August 18, 1849. The address from the meeting began by noting with approval that slavery had been banished from the British Empire forever, and then emphasized that "(e)very member of the human family is entitled to certain rights and privileges, and no where on earth, are they better secured, enjoyed, or more highly valued, than in Canada." The address proceeded, however, to emphasize that nature had divided the human family "into distinct species, for good and wise purposes, and it is no less our interest, than it is our duty, to follow her dictates, and to obey her Laws." The address expressed great concern about the large number of Africans coming into the province, and especially regretted the establishment of the Elgin Association with "the avowed object ... to encourage the settlement in old and well established communities, of a race of people which is destined by nature to be distinct and separate from us." They reminded their audience that any settled township in the province would be alarmed by the introduction of "several hundreds of Africans" and the accompanying result of "their families interspersing themselves among them, ... their children mingling in their schools, and all claiming to be admitted not only to political, but to social privileges." The address concluded by noting that they had "no desire to show hostility towards the colored people, no desire to banish them from the Province," but simply desired that they "be separated from the whites, and that no encouragement shall hearafter [sic] be given to migration of the

colored man from the United States, or any where else."[76] The people who wrote the address saw no contradiction between saying they believed Africans were entitled to certain rights, but then suggesting they should not be allowed to settle near the white population.

The black perspective can be seen by a letter written "To the Colored Men of Kent and Essex" and published in The Chatham Chronicle about a month after the above address had been published. It noted the large numbers of Africans settling in southwestern Ontario, and invited "others of our color to come." The writer challenged blacks by writing:

> Brethren, Are we always to eat at the second table, are we always to be treated with scorn, contempt and ridicule, or shall we be known and felt, throughout the body politic, as a people who know their rights and dare maintain them.

The writer noted that while many whites wanted blacks "to be sent to a far off country" this would not happen without the agreement of blacks, which, the writer assured his readers, was not going to happen.[77] Blacks considered the province to be their home, and argued that they were entitled to the same rights. Edwin Larwill, an anti-black politician, was strongly and publicly against the proposed Buxton settlement. By uniting their vote, the large black population was responsible for defeating him in the next election.[78]

---

[76] The Chatham Chronicle, August 21, 1849.

[77] The Chatham Chronicle, September 18, 1849.

[78] Winks, The Blacks in Canada, p. 214.

Ironically, however, the fact that whites were so unreceptive to large numbers of blacks meant segregated settlements were desirable for many in the African community. Addresses like the one given by Chatham residents only served to make segregated communities more necessary. White Canadian prejudice coupled with the natural tendency for Africans to settle with people they were most comfortable with made segregated communities popular. Furthermore, they were places to adapt to Canadian life.

Whites believed blacks deserved equality in their new home. There was, however, a limit as to what they should expect. A Windsor Herald editorial in 1855 argued that "(w)e have no intention of applying a standard for the measurement of the qualities of colored people which will not equally apply to our own race." Yet it also suggested that, just as whites "who lose caste in society ... are tolerated, but avoided as companions," Africans and their supporters should recognize that former slaves should not be "introduced to the best portion of society as 'a man and a brother.'" They believed there was a double standard at work when "white men who fall below the common standard of intelligence seldom intrude themselves upon the observation of those of a higher grade" while "it is conceived that a negro is not in his true position unless he is placed at the 'top of the tree.'" The editorial concluded by offering some advice to the province's blacks. It wrote that "it will be to their interest to avoid the disturbance of prejudices which may exist to their disadvantage. If a certain locality is prohibited, let them avoid it." The

Herald warned that "if they endeavour to force themselves into positions where they are not wanted ... they may discover in the end that the privileges which they now enjoy will become forfeited."[79] Blacks had the right to vote and purchase land in the country, but they should be careful not to abuse these "privileges."

Blacks and whites had different views on what was meant by equality, and they had different opinions on the merits of black preachers and teachers. There were two ways in which they saw Canada in a similar manner, at least on a superficial level. They agreed in the first instance that slavery was an evil institution. Secondly, they believed that Canada was a land of freedom for former slaves, and that southern slaveowners should not be able to reclaim their escaped slaves. The province developed a reputation for refusing extradition attempts by American slaveholders. When Soloman Mosley fled to Canada from Kentucky in 1837, he was accused by his master of stealing a horse and was jailed in Newark. Niagara area blacks attacked the jail and freed Mosley.[80] White Canadians also supported Mosley and some sent a petition on his behalf to the Lieutenant-Governor.[81] In 1842, a fugitive slave named Nelson Hacket was extradited to the United States under orders from the Governor General. Public opinion in Canada did not

---

[79] Windsor Herald, November 3, 1855.

[80] Hill, The Freedom-Seekers, p. 94.

[81] Murray, "Canada and the Anglo-American Anti-Slavery Movement," pp.125-126.

approve, and from this time forward attempts by slaveholders to reclaim escaped slaves were unsuccessful.[82] Canada's reputation as a safe haven for runaway slaves reached its zenith in 1860 during the John Anderson case. Anderson, a fugitive from Missouri, had killed one of his master's friends while escaping servitude, and had then lived undetected for seven years in the province. He received considerable support from the white press, and after a complicated process was not returned to the United States.[83] It was reassuring for whites to know that their province was a better place than the United States, and that blacks could get the freedom and safety in Canada that could not be attained south of the border.

Blacks consistently paid homage to Britain for freeing its slaves throughout the empire, and for accepting fugitive slaves. This was generally done at the annual Emancipation Day celebrations that commemorated the ending of slavery in the British Empire in 1834. At the 1854 Toronto event blacks prepared an Address to the Queen thanking Britain for freeing the slave, noting "what a proud reflection it must be to your Majesty, to know that the moment the poor crushed slave sets foot upon any part of your mighty dominions, his chains fall from him."[84] Whites expected blacks to show gratitude to Britain. A St. Catharines newspaper, The Evening

---

[82] Winks, The Blacks in Canada, pp. 172-174.

[83] Hill, The Freedom-Seekers, p. 96.

[84] Ripley, ed., The Black Abolitionist Papers, vol. 2, p. 295.

Journal, expressed disappointment that the attendance was so small at the 1866 event. An editorial argued that:

> It was certainly a great boon to the colored man to emancipate him, and one would think that the most grateful emotions would swell his breast in acknowledgement thereof, but it seems that the Africans are so constituted that they cannot agree.[85]

There was a difference between blacks and whites, however. Blacks were also concerned with their adaptation to their new home. Africans sometimes used Emancipation Day events to protest that they were being denied full rights in Canada. A speaker at one event criticized those Canadians who deprived blacks of their privileges, and chastised newspapers for stirring up prejudice against Africans.[86] Whites, however, were primarily interested in expressing their opposition to slavery. White interest in blacks dwindled with the American Civil War and the freeing of the slaves. Indeed, those who supported anti-slavery did not necessarily believe in equality for Africans. Editorials in newspapers in the province did not support the efforts of the American Radical Reconstructionists in the United States in their efforts to give social equality to the former slaves in the years following the Civil War.[87]

It was Canada's role as a safe haven for fleeing slaves in the

---

[85] The Evening Journal, August 2, 1862.

[86] John McKivigan and Jason Silverman, "Monarchial Liberty and Republican Slavery: West Indies Emancipation Celebrations in Upstate New York and Canada West," Afro-Americans in New York Life and History, vol. 10, no. 1 (1986), p. 12.

[87] Stouffer, The Light of Nature and the Law of God, p. 212.

years prior to the American Civil War that gave the province its reputation as a "promised land," and a place that was a friend to the African people. After the end of the Civil War, however, a safe haven was no longer needed. Yet a significant African population remained. It is to this period that the attention of this dissertation is directed.

Chapter One: African Settlement Patterns and Occupational Structure, 1870-1919

Where did blacks live, and what types of jobs did they perform? Was there great change from 1870 to 1919, or did the status quo prevail? Answers to these questions can be obtained through a study of the national censuses of the period. These answers can, in turn, provide clues about black-white relations during these years.

Part A: 1870 to 1889

By the early 1870s, Ontario's African population was not as large as it had been in the 1850s. Furthermore, the number of blacks appears to have steadily dropped throughout the late nineteenth century. While there were 17,053 blacks recorded on the 1861 census rolls,[1] Canada's 1871 census, regarded as more accurate and reliable than other nineteenth century censuses,[2] reveals that

---

[1] Wayne, "The Black Population of Canada West on the Eve of the American Civil War," Social History, vol. 28, no. 56 (November, 1995), p. 467. This article notes that, although the published reports for the 1861 census list only 11,223 blacks living in Ontario that year, a study of the manuscript census rolls reveals a total of 17,053.

[2] Ontario Genealogical Society, Index to the 1871 Census of Ontario, Essex-Kent (Toronto, 1989). This publication noted that the "1871 returns appear to be the most complete and probably the most legible of the Canadian censuses. The returns are generally easier to read than the earlier ones, and in many parts of the province the spelling and handwriting in 1881 were far worse than they had been ten years earlier."

there were only 13,435 Africans living in the province that year.[3] By the 1881 census, that number had dropped to 12,097.[4] What is noteworthy, however, is the distribution of that population. An analysis of the 1871 and 1881 censuses reveals that, despite their decreasing numbers, blacks were not becoming more scattered in a geographic sense during this period, but instead continued to be concentrated in certain parts of the province. The majority of blacks resided in southwestern Ontario. In 1871 there were 3,270 Africans in Essex county, and another 3,461 in Kent county.[5] Together these two counties had 50.1% of the provincial black population. By 1881, Essex county had 3,202 blacks and Kent county had 3,118,[6] which together represented 52.2% of the provincial population. In other words, the black population had become slightly more concentrated in this region over that ten year period. As Table 1 demonstrates, there was little significant change in population distribution over this decade. Urban areas in southern Ontario such as London, Hamilton, and Toronto all contained a sizeable percentage of the African population in both 1871 and 1881, with Toronto and Hamilton both seeing an increase

---

[3] Census of Canada 1870-71, vol. 1 (Ottawa, 1873), p. 280.

[4] Report of the Census of 1881, vol. 1 (Ottawa, 1882), p. 296.

[5] Census of Canada 1870-71, vol. 1, pp. 251-252.

[6] Report of the Census of 1881, vol. 1, p. 294.

in their black populations by 1881.[7] A few predominantly rural areas, such as the counties of Welland and Bothwell, also had fair sized black communities throughout this period.[8] There were other Africans spread around the province, and almost every county had at least a few. The numbers, however, were generally quite small, especially in the eastern and northern parts of the province.

Table 1: Percentage of Africans Residing in Selected Ontario Counties in 1871 and 1881

County	% in 1871	% in 1881
Essex	24.3	25.8
Kent	25.8	26.5
Bothwell	4.1	4.3
Toronto	4.1	4.9
Hamilton	2.6	4.2
London	2.5	2.2
Welland	3.3	3.4
Lincoln	4.5	3.5

Note: Table includes all counties which included 2.5% or more of the province's Africans in either 1871, 1881, or both.

Source: Extracted from Census of Canada, 1870-71, vol. 1, pp. 252-280, and Report of the Census of 1881, vol. 1, pp. 262-296.

A study of the census demonstrates that at least some Africans continued to immigrate to the province from the United States even

[7] Hamilton's black population was 350 in 1871 and 505 in 1881, while Toronto had 551 Africans in 1871 and 593 in 1881. (Census of Canada 1870-71, vol. 1, p. 258 and Report of the Census of 1881, vol. 1, p. 282.)

[8] The African population in Bothwell county was 552 in 1871 and 525 in 1881, while Welland county had 444 blacks in 1871 and 411 in 1881 (Census of Canada 1870-71, vol. 1, p. 252 and Report of the Census of 1881, vol. 1, p. 292.)

after the end of the Civil War. It is impossible to know exactly how many Africans came to the province after 1865, but the 1881 census provides some clues. The year of arrival in Canada for the foreign born population was not listed in this census, but many black children under the age of 16 were listed as having been born in the United States. This suggests that these children and the rest of their families likely had arrived in the province within the previous sixteen years, or since 1865. Using this logic, it would appear that at least approximately 450 blacks emigrated to the province after the Civil War.[9] This number would appear to be the bare minimum number of arrivals in this period. Since there is no way of knowing from the census when single people, families without children, seniors, and families with young children arrived in the province (for example, one would not know whether two American born parents and an Ontario born child of 7 had emigrated before or after 1865), it would be reasonable to assume that some of them also arrived after 1865. Other Africans may have arrived after 1865 and returned to the United States prior to the 1881

---

[9] Ontario Archives, Microfilm of 1881 Census Rolls. The researcher examined the census rolls only for those areas where there was a substantial black population. For 1881, the areas examined were Essex county (Malden, Amherstburg, Anderdon, Colchester North, Colchester South, Sandwich West, Sandwich town, Sandwich East, Windsor Town, Maidstone), Kent county (Raleigh, Chatham, Chatham town), Hamilton, Toronto, London, Simcoe North (Collingwood), Welland (Stamford), Lincoln (St. Catharines), Wellington South (Guelph City), Grey North (Owen Sound), Brant South (Brantford City), and Bothwell (Camden, Dresden).

census.

What is noteworthy about these new arrivals is where they settled in Ontario. As can be seen by Table 2, the majority located in Essex and Kent counties. Over 350 located in these two counties. Chatham, Windsor, and Raleigh, places that had the largest black populations, received the most immigrants. Many places with relatively smaller black populations such as London, Brantford, Guelph, Owen Sound, and Collingwood received few reinforcements. The fact that immigrants continued to concentrate in southwestern Ontario suggests that many of the new immigrants had family or friends in the province, and settled near them rather than move further afield. It may also suggest that they were more comfortable settling in places where there was a significant black community. It is also worth noting that some families with large numbers of children had some listed as being born in each country, and sometimes Ontario born women had American born children. This trend was especially evident in the border city of Windsor, although it occurred in other places as well. This suggests that some people may have moved back and forth across the border on more than one occasion, and would explain why many, upon returning to Canada, would return to the place they formerly lived. Some of these people may have been returning soldiers and their American-born wives and children, as some Ontario blacks fought for the north during the Civil War. What is clear, however, is that new arrivals were following settlement patterns that had been established in the pre-civil war period. These new arrivals also

help explain why there had been a slight increase in the percentage of blacks residing in Essex and Kent counties from 1871 to 1881.

Table 2: Number of Blacks Arriving in Ontario Since 1865 By County

District	Sub-district	# of Black Immigrants
Essex	North Colchester	25
Essex	Windsor, Town	89
Essex	Sandwich*	39
Essex	Anderdon	15
Essex	Amherstburg	15
Essex	Maidstone	11
Essex	South Colchester	6
Essex	Malden	0
Kent	Chatham, Town	70
Kent	Raleigh	57
Kent	Chatham	29
Kent	Dover	5
Kent	Harwich	11
Hamilton	Hamilton	27
Toronto	Toronto	19
London	London	8
Simcoe North	Collingwood	0
Lincoln	St. Catharines	14
Brant South	Brantford, City	6
Welland	Stamford	5
Bothwell	Dresden	12
Grey North	Owen Sound	0
Wellington South	Guelph, City	0

* includes Sandwich East, Sandwich West, and Sandwich Town

The census is especially valuable for determining whether there was significant change over a period of time. One way to assess change is to examine the occupations performed by people, in order to see if there is continuity or discontinuity. The historian Jonathan Walton noted in his study of Chatham that whereas "45% of the employed black males held skilled occupations

in 1871, only 38% did so by 1882."[10] He also observed that the range of occupational choices gradually dwindled for Chatham's black community.[11] An examination of the 1871 and 1881 censuses, however, implies that the occupational pattern did not change much for blacks in other areas of the province. As Table 3 demonstrates, a study of Windsor, St. Catharines, Hamilton, Toronto, and Amherstburg suggests that the percentage of black men in skilled and semi-skilled occupations remained fairly constant over the period with the noted exception of Hamilton. In St. Catharines and Amherstburg there were slight proportional increases in the number of skilled or semi-skilled workers, while only Hamilton and Toronto registered decreases. The dramatic change in Hamilton is mostly explained by the reduced number of Africans listed as tobacconists in the 1881 census. In fact, while 17.4% of employed African males held this profession in 1871 only 5.2% did so in 1881. Toronto's much smaller change also can be attributed to the reduced number of tobacconists (from 3.9% to 0.5% of employed African males). The occupational range does not appear to have diminished over these years. In Windsor, for example, blacks were represented in approximately fifty occupations in both 1871 and 1881. In 1871 Africans in that city were employed in wide ranging and diversified occupations. There were African coopers, clerks, grocers, barbers, engineers, firemen, mailcarriers, fruit

[10] Walton, "Blacks in Buxton and Chatham," p. 257.

[11] Walton, "Blacks in Buxton and Chatham," p. 192.

store operators, and teachers. In 1881 the range was just as wide. There was at least one black bank manager, hotel keeper, varnish maker, gunsmith, musician, and doctor. It is more difficult to make definitive comments about the occupational pattern for African women. The census takers assumed that most married women during this era were housewives, so the column under occupation was usually left blank for black females. When they did work women tended to be mostly washerwomen, servants or house cleaners, although a number were in more skilled occupations such as dressmakers, weavers, or hairdressers. The small numbers make comparisons between 1871 and 1881 more difficult. As table 4 shows, however, more women were in skilled and semiskilled occupations in 1881 than they had been in 1871, although the Amherstburg number especially should be noted with caution since only about a dozen women in that town had occupations listed on the census rolls.

<u>Table 3: Percentage of Employed African Males in Skilled and Semi-Skilled Work in Selected Towns in 1871 and 1881</u>

Town/City	% of workers in skilled or semi-skilled occupations in 1871	% of workers in skilled or semi-skilled occupations in 1881
Amherstburg	27.9	33.0
Windsor	33.2	34.0
St. Catharines	21.4	23.2
Hamilton	69.1	49.4
Toronto	58.2	53.6

<u>Table 4: Percentage of Employed African Females in Skilled and Semi-Skilled Work in Selected Towns in 1871 and 1881</u>

Town/City	% of workers in skilled or semi-skilled occupations in 1871	% of workers in skilled or semi-skilled occupations in 1881
Amherstburg	8.3	45.5
Windsor	20.4	32.2
St. Catharines	41.7	40.9
Hamilton	37.0	47.0
Toronto	38.0	41.0

Many of the Africans listed in the 1871 census were no longer present by 1881. The people who were recorded in both censuses, however, tended to be listed in the same occupation both times, implying that there was not a great deal of individual upward or downward mobility during this decade. As can be seen by Table 5, the vast majority of persons performing unskilled occupations in 1871 were in similar jobs in 1881, while the same held true for those in skilled or semi-skilled occupations. When people switched occupations during this decade, it was usually either from one skilled job to another or from one unskilled job to another. In Windsor, for example, by 1881 one blacksmith had become a carpenter, one labourer had become a janitor, and one person who was listed as working in a fruit store in 1871 had become a stone mason by 1881. Only a small number of people had moved from skilled to unskilled occupations, or vice versa. This pattern held true throughout the province.

Table 5: Occupational Change for Male Africans Listed in Both the 1871 and 1881 Censuses for Selected Ontario Cities

City	# performing unskilled occupations	# performing skilled occupations	# performing skilled jobs in 1871 and	# performing unskilled jobs in 1871

	both times	both times	unskilled jobs in 1881	and skilled jobs in 1881
Windsor	25	14	0	2
Amherstburg	13	6	2	3
St. Catharines	20	5	0	1

It is perhaps not surprising that most people had not changed jobs over this ten year period. What needs to be considered, however, is the occupations performed by the children of these people. It has been argued that other immigrant groups in nineteenth century Ontario, such as the Irish, had upward occupational mobility for the second generation.[12] Ten years is not a long enough period to trace the occupational patterns of many children listed in the 1871 census, but those who had become adults by 1881, and had occupations listed, tended to have the same vocations as their fathers. Table 6 compares the occupations of the fathers in either 1871 or 1881 with the occupations of their sons in 1881 (females have been omitted because of their reported small numbers). As the table demonstrates, children of parents in lower skill occupations tended to perform unskilled jobs, while those with skilled or semi-skilled parents were more likely to receive higher skilled jobs. Often young males performed the same occupation as their fathers, but even when their vocation was different it was at a similar skill level. In Amherstburg, for example, two labourers had mariners for sons, while in Windsor a

---

[12] Donald Akenson, The Irish in Ontario: A Study in Rural History (Kingston, 1984), p. 338. Akenson writes that, for the Irish, "place of birth was more closely related to occupational success than was ethnicity."

labourer had a waiter for a son, and a rag roller's son was a drayman. Second generation blacks were not doing noticeably better in an economic sense than their parents, but they were not necessarily doing worse either.

Table 6: Comparison of Occupational Status of Male Children and their Fathers in 1881 in Various Cities

City	# of cases parents + children in unskilled occupations	# of cases parents + children in skilled occupations	# of cases parents in skilled + children in unskilled	# of cases parents unskilled children skilled
Windsor	6	3	2	2
Amherstburg	10	4	2	2
St. Catharines	8	3	0	1

What also needs to be considered, however, is how Africans were doing in comparison with the surrounding white population. Census data shows that Africans were consistently underrepresented in white collar occupations, and were consistently overrepresented in low-skill blue collar occupations. This pattern was evident throughout the province. It existed in places where blacks formed a comparatively large proportion of the population, such as Essex county, and in places where they made up a much smaller percentage of the population, such as Hamilton and Toronto. This pattern was evident in small towns, such as Dresden and Owen Sound, as well as in the big cities.

Tables 7, 8, and 9 are based on the 1881 census returns for Toronto, Hamilton, and Essex county. The tables illustrate the

extent to which the occupational structure of blacks differed from the remainder of the population in these three places. An examination of the tables suggests that a much higher percentage of black workers were employed as common labourers than was the case for the population as a whole. In Essex county, the fact that Africans were a more urban group than the population as a whole may account for some of the difference. Only approximately one-third of employed blacks were listed as farmers, while almost one-half of the total county population were farmers. Nevertheless, the fact that blacks were twice as common as labourers than the population as a whole is still quite striking. In the cities of Hamilton and Toronto black overrepresentation as common labourers was almost as pronounced, as can be seen by Tables 7 and 8. Blacks were almost twice as likely as whites to be labourers in Hamilton, and were 60 per cent more likely than whites to be labourers in Toronto. Furthermore, this pattern was not restricted to these areas. In London, for example, 29% of blacks were labourers, versus only 8% of the city population as a whole.[13] Other low-skill occupations tended to have African overrepresentation as well. As can be seen by table 7 blacks in Toronto dominated the whitewashing profession. Throughout the province, blacks were much more prevalent as laundresses than were whites. Since this was a profession dominated by women, it seems reasonable to conclude that

---

[13] 1881 Census of Canada, Microfilm of Census Rolls for London, and Report of the Census of 1881, vol. 2 (Ottawa, 1884), pp. 309, 315.

African women as well as men tended to be most common in low-skill jobs.

These tables also make clear that Africans tended to be somewhat underrepresented in more skilled blue-collar occupations. There were proportionately fewer black boot and shoemakers, and they were also less common as carpenters and joiners. It is, however, important to note that many Africans performed these occupations. There were also significant numbers of African dressmakers and milliners, and tailors and clothiers. Africans were certainly not restricted to low skill labouring jobs, but they tended to be more pronounced in this area and less common in more skilled work.

What is most striking from the tables, however, is the almost complete absence of blacks in white-collar occupations throughout the province. Africans were almost non-existent as commercial clerks in all three of the places represented in the tables. Of the 259 commercial clerks in Essex county, only 2 were black. The evidence was especially striking for Toronto, a city that had a large number of clerks. There were, in 1881, 2,363 commercial clerks in Toronto but only 1 was African.[14] Other white-collar professions also had few blacks. Africans were also almost non-existent as agents, accountants, and bookkeepers. There were also few black printers or publishers, and almost no African doctors or

[14] Report of the Census of 1881, vol. 2, pp. 294, 305.

physicians. Such staggering results can only indicate that such professions were virtually off-limits to Africans throughout the province at this time.

As the tables suggest, there were also other professions with proportionately few Africans. Blacks tended to be significantly underrepresented as merchants in all three places, although they were more black merchants than clerks or accountants. There were also few African machinists and mechanics. This pattern was not restricted to these three locations. There were no black clerks, merchants, or mechanics in either Dresden or Owen Sound, two smaller Ontario towns, although there was one black doctor in Dresden. There were also no African clerks, merchants, or engineers in St. Catharines, and just one clerk in Brantford.[15]

Besides low skill work, there was one other area where Africans were consistently overrepresented throughout the province. Many African men were barbers, and a significant number of black women were hairdressers. More than one-half the barbers and hairdressers in Essex county in 1881 were African, while such was the case for more than one-third in Hamilton, and almost one-quarter in Toronto. It was in this profession, more than anywhere else, where blacks were overrepresented. The barbers in these cities must have had a significant white clientele since the black population could not have supported that many barbers. In at least one independent business, the black community was prospering.

---

[15] Ontario Archives, Microfilm of 1881 Census Rolls, Dresden, Owen Sound, St. Catharines, and Brantford.

What is most clear from the tables is that the black occupational pattern was similar throughout the province. Africans were consistently almost non-existent in white collar occupations. It does not appear to have mattered whether they lived in large or small cities, or in areas that had significant or insignificant black populations. The African occupational pattern remained more or less the same. This finding is especially significant in the case of Toronto. Contemporaries of the era often argued that Toronto was different from other cities, and historians have echoed these sentiments.[16] Indeed, unlike most other parts of the province,[17] there were never separate schools for blacks in Toronto, and there had always been a few Africans in the city who had been quite prosperous. It would appear, however, that blacks were just as restricted in their range of occupational choice in this city as in the rest of the province.

Table 7: Percentage of Employed Africans and Percentage of Employed Persons in Various Occupations in Toronto in 1881

Occupation	% of employed blacks in this occupation	% of all workers in this occupation
Labourers	13.1	7.9
Barbers + Hairdressers	13.5	0.4

[16] As early as the 1850s this claim had been made by Rev. Samuel Ringgold Ward's Autobiography of a Fugitive Negro (London, 1855). The historian Daniel Hill noted that "(i)n Toronto ... Blacks met less prejudice since they represented little threat to white residents." (Hill, The Freedom-Seekers, p. 105.)

[17] Hill, The Freedom-Seekers, p. 158.

Laundresses	9.1	0.6
Commercial Clerks	0.4	7.4
Acct's + Bookkeepers	0.0	1.8
Engineers + Machinists	0.4	2.5
Merchants	1.1	2.8
Carpenters + Joiners	2.9	4.2
Boot + Shoemakers	1.5	2.6
Dressmakers + Milliners	3.3	4.2
Servants	8.0	10.4
Agents	0.0	1.0
Physicians + Surgeons	0.0	0.5
Tailors + Clothiers	3.3	2.8
Teachers	1.1	1.5
Printers + Publishers	0.0	2.6
Painter/Glaziers/ Whitewashers	6.9	2.1

Table 8: Percentage of Employed Africans and Percentage of Employed Persons in Various Occupations in Hamilton in 1881

Occupation	% of employed blacks in this occupation	% of all workers in this occupation
Labourers	18.2	9.9
Barbers + Hairdressers	9.5	0.5
Laundresses	5.9	0.4
Commercial Clerks	1.4	6.7
Acct's + Bookkeepers	0.0	1.4
Engineers + Mechanics	0.0	4.9
Merchants	1.4	2.2
Carpenters + Joiners	1.4	3.8
Boot + Shoemakers	2.3	1.9
Dressmakers + Milliners	7.7	3.7
Servants	11.4	8.8
Agents	0.0	0.5
Physicians + Surgeons	0.0	0.3
Tailors + Clothiers	3.6	5.7
Teachers	0.9	1.6
Printers + Publishers	0.0	1.3

Table 9: Percentage of Employed Africans and Percentage of Employed Africans in Various Occupations in Essex County in 1881

Occupation	% of employed blacks in this occupation	% of all workers in this occupation
Labourers	28.0	14.7
Barbers + Hairdressers	2.7	0.3

Laundresses	2.4	0.2
Commercial Clerks	0.1	1.7
Acct's + Bookkeepers	0.0	0.3
Engineers + Mechanics	0.5	1.1
Merchants	0.5	1.3
Carpenters + Joiners	1.7	3.2
Boot + Shoemakers	0.8	1.0
Dressmakers + Milliners	0.9	1.0
Servants	5.4	3.3
Farmers	33.3	48.8
Agents	0.1	0.4
Physicians + Surgeons	0.2	0.3
Tailors + Clothiers	0.0	0.8
Teachers	1.1	1.2
Printers + Publishers	0.0	0.3

Source: Extracted from Report of the Census of 1881, vol. 2, pp. 268-315.

Part B: 1890 to 1909

The fact that race consciousness was increasing can be seen through the 1901 census. Canada's first two national censuses, in 1871 and 1881, included the ethnic origin of each person, but there was no listing of race. The 1891 census included neither ethnic origin nor race, making it of less value for a study of the African community. It has been noted by other scholars that the primary purpose of the ethnic origin question in the 1871 and 1881 censuses was to determine the number of people in Canada who were of the two "founding races," English and French. This interpretation is confirmed by the fact that the 1891 census did not list ethnic origin, but instead had a column for people of French origin to so

denote themselves.[18] The 1901 census once again listed ethnic origin, but what made this enumeration different from the preceding censuses was that it also denoted race. In one of the first columns was a letter to describe each person's racial origin, a 'w' for white, a 'b' for black, an 'r' for red, and a 'y' for yellow. Attitudes towards race were clearly demonstrated in the instructions given to the enumerators. The directions stated that "only pure whites will be classed as whites; the children begotten of marriages between whites and any of the other races will be classed as red, black or yellow, as the case may be, irrespective of the degree of colour."[19] A single African ancestor, for example, was enough to exclude a person from being considered white. By emphasizing race so prominently in the census Canadian society was showing how it considered people of non-white races to be different, and in its directions concerning the offspring of mixed marriages it was showing how those people who were partly non-white could never be considered part of the white race.

This emphasis on race occurred despite the fact that there were fewer people of African origin living in Ontario in 1901 than there had been in over half a century. For Canada as a whole, however, considerably more visible minorities were present. By

---

[18] Jean-Pierre Beaud and Jean-Guy Prevost, "Immigration, Eugenics and Statistics: Measuring Racial Origins in Canada (1921-1941), Canadian Ethnic Studies, vol. 28, no. 2 (1996), p. 3.

[19] Report on the Fourth Census of Canada, 1901, vol. 1 (Ottawa, 1902), p. xviii.

1900 British Columbia had around 20,000 people of Asian origin.[20] This Asian presence may account for the heightened interest in race in the census. In Ontario, however, there were only 8,935 blacks in the province in 1901 according to the census, a significant drop from the 12,097 listed in the 1881 census. The 1901 census, however, underenumerated the number of blacks in the province because the published total refers to the number of people who identified themselves as African in the ethnicity category, rather than the number who were listed as black according to the racial category. (In the published reports there had also been a change in terminology. In 1871 and 1881 blacks were referred to as "African", but in 1901 they were referred to as "Negro.") Some blacks of mixed racial background did not identify themselves as African to the enumerators. William Peyton Hubbard and his family, for example, were listed in the census as English, not African, although they were listed as black according to the racial category. Hubbard at the time was serving as a Toronto alderman, and was one of the city's most prominent Africans. To be both English (or Scotch or Irish) and black was no contradiction in the eyes of Hubbard and many others. It was clearly a contradiction, however, in the eyes of those who designed the census. The directions made clear that "(a)mong whites" the tribal and racial

---

[20] W. Peter Ward, White Canada Forever: Popular Attitudes and Public Policy Toward Orientals in British Columbia (Montreal, 1990), p. 170.

origin should be "traced through the father,"[21] but by omitting non-whites the directions implied that Africans and Asians should be designated as Japanese, Chinese, or Negro, regardless of the ethnicity of the father. Despite this intent, in Toronto alone there were 99 people listed as black who had origins that were something other than 'African' or 'Negro,' demonstrating that some blacks saw their ethnic identity in a different way than the enumerators. Most of these people, such as the Hubbard family, lived in areas with few black neighbours and therefore likely identified less with the black community. A few blacks in other parts of the province also did not identify themselves as African, although the number of such cases was much smaller than in Toronto. Nevertheless, even when this underenumeration of Africans is taken into consideration it is still clear that the African population in the province had steadily dropped in the late nineteenth century.

The population distribution of the province's blacks remained similar from that of the 1881 census, suggesting that blacks were not becoming more integrated in the province, despite the fact most had resided in the province for many years and there were few new arrivals. As can be seen by Table 1, blacks were still concentrated in southwestern Ontario. In fact 53.5% of province's blacks resided in either Essex, Kent, or Bothwell counties (some boundaries had been redrawn with part of Chatham township now in

---

[21] Report on the Fourth Census of Canada, 1901, vol. 1, p. xviii.

Bothwell county). Most changes in black population distribution simply reflected changes in the province as a whole. The African population was becoming more urban, as was the case with the province's population as a whole. Whereas 31.9% of blacks in Essex county had lived in Windsor in 1881 that figure had risen to 41.3% by 1901.[22] Toronto was the only place that did not record a loss in its black population, and the percentage of blacks in Ontario who resided in Toronto jumped from 4.9% to 6.7%. In this sense blacks were just following the provincial trend as Toronto's population expanded from 86,415 in 1881 to 208,040 twenty years later.[23] Other large cities such as Hamilton and London continued to have significant African populations. The Niagara region also had a fair number of blacks, although a smaller percentage of the total than twenty years earlier.

Table 1: Percentage of Africans Residing in Selected Ontario Counties in 1881 and 1901

County	% in 1881	% in 1901
Essex	25.8	25.2
Kent	26.5	17.4
Bothwell	4.3	10.9
Toronto	4.9	6.7
Hamilton	4.2	5.0
London	2.2	2.2
Welland	3.4	2.1
Lincoln	3.5	2.2
Brant South	2.0	1.5
Grey North	0.9	2.4

[22] Report of the Census of 1881, v.1, p. 294 and Report on the Fourth Census of Canada, 1901, v. 1, p. 321.

[23] Careless, Toronto to 1918, p. 200.

Source: Extracted from Report of the Census of 1881, vol. 1, pp. 262-296 and Report on the Fourth Census of Canada, 1901, vol. 1, pp. 312-351.

According to the 1901 census the number of Africans arriving in the province in the 1890s were relatively few in number. The 1901 census, unlike the 1881 enumeration, listed the year each person arrived in Canada. Estimates of the number of arrivals in the 1890s are therefore more accurate than for earlier periods. Table 2 shows the number of Africans settling in selected Ontario counties during the 1890s. As was the case in earlier years, new African arrivals tended to settle in places with significant black populations, such as Windsor and Chatham. Few new arrivals moved to places with smaller blacks populations, and rural areas with large numbers of blacks, such as Raleigh, were no longer receiving reinforcements.

Table 2: Number of Blacks Arriving in Ontario Since 1890 for Selected Counties

District	Sub-district	# of black immigrants
Essex	Windsor	66
Essex	Amherstburg	6
Kent	Chatham	26*
Kent	Raleigh	3
Toronto	Toronto	38
Lincoln + Niagara	St. Catharines	6
Grey North	Owen Sound	2
London	London	0
Hamilton	Hamilton	11

* This number was probably higher. The enumerator for Chatham frequently did not provide the date of entry into Canada, and some of those with unlisted information probably arrived after 1890.

Census data for 1901 reveals that blacks were becoming slightly more integrated with the surrounding white community in terms of where they lived within cities. A comparison of the 1881 and 1901 censuses reveals that a greater percentage of Africans did not have a black neighbour in 1901 than had been the case twenty years earlier. It must be noted that census enumerators did not record the actual address, but they would proceed from one household to its immediate neighbour as they walked down the street. The order in which the households were listed on the census rolls therefore gives a fairly accurate indicator as to who was neighbours with whom. Table 3 compares, for the years 1881 and 1901, the percentage of Africans without black neighbours on either side of them. What is noteworthy, however, is that by 1901 the vast majority of blacks in regions with significant African populations, such as Chatham, Raleigh, and Windsor, still had at least one African neighbour. Despite fairly limited black immigration during these two decades Africans were still quite isolated. In places with smaller black populations, this pattern was somewhat less pronounced. Indeed, St. Catharines was a much more integrated city in 1901 than it had been twenty years earlier. (It should be noted, however, that the number of Africans in St. Catharines dropped quite dramatically during these years, from 336 in 1881 to just 177 in 1901. In other words, blacks in that city were not necessarily becoming more integrated, but were instead simply leaving town.) Nevertheless, since many Africans throughout the province were second generation Canadians it is revealing that

they were not somewhat more integrated in a geographic sense. Indeed, there is evidence to suggest that Africans were not always welcomed in white neighbourhoods. William Doston, for example, moved from Lansing, Michigan to Windsor early in 1893. The Canadian correspondent for the black Detroit newspaper The Plaindealer enthused over this new arrival, and wrote that "(w)e would like to see a few men like this gentleman settle here."[24] Evidently, some members of the city's white community were less thrilled with the newcomer. Upon arriving in Windsor, Doston purchased a residence on Windsor's Ouellette avenue, in what was known as an "aristocratic portion of the city." This action did not please the white residents of the street, and in the words of the Evening Record created "a furore." In the fall of 1893 Doston moved away from Ouellette avenue and instead built a "handsome brick residence" in another part of town.[25]

Table 3: Comparison of the Percentage of Africans with at least one Black Neighbour for Selected Ontario Counties in 1881 and 1901

County	% with black neighbours in 1881	% with black neighbours in 1901
Raleigh	79.6	73.4
Amherstburg	71.9	51.6
Windsor	79.3	72.0
Chatham	82.3	75.8
Owen Sound	15.4*	50.0
London	47.0	41.2
St. Catharines	63.7	28.6

---

[24] The Plaindealer, May 12, 1893.

[25] Evening Record, November 2, 1893.

* This number should be treated with caution. According to the 1871 census there were 147 blacks in Owen Sound, while the 1901 census lists 150. The fact that the 1881 census lists only 68 suggests that the enumeration for that year was incomplete.

Just as the African residential pattern had not changed significantly from 1881 to 1901, the same can be said for the occupational pattern. As had been the case in the 1870s and 1880s Africans by 1901 were still employed in a wide range of occupations. Some were in more skilled jobs, and others ran their own businesses. Windsor, for example, had one black hotel keeper and also one saloon keeper. There was at least one African in that city employed as a notary, an electrician, a varnish maker, a trading agent, a decorator, and a cabinet maker. Africans were, however, still more concentrated in low skill jobs. There was little change from 1881 to 1901 in terms of the number of African males employed in skilled and semiskilled work. As can be seen by Table 4 Hamilton recorded a slight increase in the number of Africans doing more skilled work, as did St. Catharines. Windsor, London, and Toronto recorded modest decreases. Amherstburg's drop was the only one that was somewhat dramatic, but the smaller population in the community makes the number less significant. Table 5 shows the pattern for African women, and notes that there were more unskilled women in 1901 than in 1881. The small number of recorded working women, however, makes these numbers less significant than those for men.

Table 4: Percentage of Employed African Males in Skilled or Semi-

Skilled Work in Selected Towns in 1881 and 1901

Town/City	% of workers in skilled or semi-skilled occupations in 1881	% of workers in skilled or semi-skilled occupations in 1901
Amherstburg	33.0	16.1
Windsor	34.0	29.2
St. Catharines	23.2	27.8
Hamilton	49.4	50.8
Toronto	53.6	51.9
London	42.0	37.5

Table 5: Percentage of Employed African Females in Skilled or Semi-Skilled Work in Selected Towns in 1881 and 1901

Town/City	% of workers in skilled or semi-skilled occupations in 1881	% of workers in skilled or semi-skilled occupations in 1901
Amherstburg	45.5	38.5
Windsor	32.2	23.4
St. Catharines	40.9	24.0
Hamilton	47.0	46.6
Toronto	41.0	32.6
London	33.3	6.7

The above tables suggest that there were considerably more skilled African workers in some cities than in others. These differences can be explained by the fact that each city was unique, and the jobs blacks performed varied according to the opportunities available. This fact should not be interpreted to mean that blacks were better off, relative to the white population, in some places than in others. There were more skilled workers in Hamilton because of the significant tobacco industry in that city. Amherstburg, on the other hand, had a large number of unskilled workers because the city had so many mariners. It was noticed in the previous section that the economic prosperity of Africans did

not vary significantly throughout the province, and that black prosperity was not related to the size of the community's African population. The same pattern can be observed from the 1901 census and is demonstrated through Table 6, which shows the average income earned by black males in selected urban areas. Generally income levels were similar. Cities with larger black populations, such as Windsor and Chatham, differed little in average income from cities where blacks made up significantly less of the population, such as London and Hamilton. Indeed, the table shows some variance in median income levels with Toronto's blacks somewhat more prosperous than those in other cities. Part of this difference can be explained by the fact that reported income earnings, irrespective of colour, were marginally higher in Toronto than in other parts of the province.[26] Another explanation for higher incomes in Toronto's black community was the presence of so many railway porters in that city. Portering was low skill work, but fairly well paying. Indeed, blacks were regarded by white society as suited for certain types of tasks such as labouring, portering, and other service jobs, regardless of where they lived, and it was these types of jobs that blacks were most easily able to obtain.

How did African income levels compare to those of the white population? Lack of data makes this question somewhat difficult to answer. The census reveals that the average wage of a male adult 16 years of age or older and working in a factory of some

---

[26] Michael Piva, The Condition of the Working Class in Toronto-1900-1921 (Ottawa, 1979), p. 51.

type was $347 per annum. Piece workers, those who worked outside establishments, earned considerably less.[27] These numbers obviously do not reveal an average for all workers, and many blacks, as has been noted, were in the service industries. Yet this number gives some sense as to how much people were earning in Ontario at this time, and by comparison the wages earned by blacks do not appear to have been overly low, and not out of line with the wages earned by white workers in lower skill jobs. Certainly black males earned considerably more money than white females. Females in factories earned only an average of $190 per year in 1901.[28] Where blacks fared poorly was in higher paid, more skilled jobs. Officers, managers, and other persons on salaries in Ontario manufacturing establishments earned on average (for men 16 and over) $845 per annum in 1901.[29] Blacks, as has been noted, were virtually non-existent in these jobs. Africans earned a decent living in the range of jobs they were able to obtain, but certain jobs were off limits for all but a few.

Table 6: Median Income Levels of Male Africans (16 and over) in Selected Ontario Cities

City	Median Income
Chatham	250
St. Catharines	300
Windsor	300

---

[27] Report of the Fourth Census of Canada, 1901, vol. 3 (Ottawa, 1905), p. xiii.

[28] Fourth Census of Canada, 1901, vol. 3, p. xiii.

[29] Fourth Census of Canada, vol. 3, p. xi.

Toronto	350
London	300
Amherstburg	250
Hamilton	320
Owen Sound	275

A more detailed examination of the African male occupational structure reveals some noteworthy changes over this twenty year period. Africans, as can be seen by Tables 7 to 11, were steadily losing their dominance of the barbering profession. This was true in all areas, although London and Hamilton witnessed especially sharp drops in the percentage of the number of Africans who were barbers. Amherstburg and Windsor also witnessed sharp declines. The decline was perhaps less evident in Toronto, but there was a drop in that city as well. The movement of Africans out of the barbering profession was not restricted to southern Ontario. There was a similar trend in American cities. A study of Cleveland noted that there was a drop in the number of black barbers by 1910,[10] and a study for Detroit shows a steady decline from 1870 to 1920, demonstrating that it was in the late nineteenth century that Africans were pushed out of the profession. This Detroit study observed that the "declining number of black barbers was due to increased competition from the foreign-born, the tightening color line in barbering, and discrimination against black barbershop owners." Technological changes in shaving meant barbers no longer had the stigma attached to them of being in a service occupation,

---

[10] Kenneth Kusmer, A Ghetto Takes Shape: Black Cleveland, 1870-1930 (Urbana, Ill., 1976), pp. 75-76.

and African barbers in Detroit found themselves reduced to a black clientele.[31] A similar trend appears to have been occurring in Ontario. In Toronto, with its 34 African barbers, blacks were clearly still cutting white people's hair, but in other parts of the province the situation was different. The fact that some hairdressers only cut white people's hair can be seen through a Chatham example. A black barber in that city was chastised in late 1889 by the Plaindealer for refusing to cut black people's hair, and relying instead on solely a white clientele. The report criticized the man and noted that no other race "would treat one of their race so low."[32] The barber, however, probably realized he could not serve both a black and white clientele and had little choice but to refuse blacks if he wanted to keep his white customers.

Tables 7 to 11 also demonstrate that Africans were not as prominent as carpenters and joiners or as boot and shoemakers in 1901 as they had been twenty years earlier, although these drops were generally not dramatic. There was also a drop in the number of African waiters in the province, especially in Toronto. In Ontario, the main growth area for black employment was as porters, and to a lesser degree as teamsters and drivers. Being a porter on a railway was often the best job a young African male could obtain. In short, Africans were moving from service jobs such as

---

[31] David Katzman, Before the Ghetto: Black Detroit in the Nineteenth Century (Urbana, Ill., 1973), p. 116.

[32] The Plaindealer, December 20, 1889.

waitering to other, less intimate, service jobs such as portering. For the white community portering jobs seemed appropriate for blacks because they believed they were suited to the distinctive black personality. A writer to Saturday Night marvelled at African porters when he noted "their inexhaustible stock of politeness and even temper," and wondered how they got these qualities "inside of their clothes without crowding out the rest of 'em." The writer noted that black porters always made themselves useful and agreeable, and because of their carefree ways "cared not a nap what came next."[33] Africans were, in this view, naturally suited to being porters. In truth, they were people who were simply providing the service they knew their employers and customers both wanted and demanded, and the service that would provide them with better tips.

Other things had not changed at all. As Tables 7 to 11 show, the percentage of Africans employed as labourers had not changed much during these years. Another continuity was that by 1901 Africans had still made no real inroads into white collar occupations. Blacks were still virtually non-existent as commercial clerks. Toronto had just four clerks by 1901, while Windsor had just three. There were no African clerks in London, Hamilton, or Amherstburg. Black dentists, doctors, lawyers, and other professionals were extremely rare in the province. When they did exist, such as the lawyer Delos Davis, they appear to have been

---

[33] Saturday Night, June 22, 1889.

accepted, but were regarded as exceptional. A reference in the Plaindealer concerning Davis noted that Canadians "are not only proud of him, but also make him something of a pet."[34] He was an unusual case, and no one appeared to anticipate large numbers of Africans breaking into the professions. Davis was quite successful, and had white as well as black clients.[35] According to an account written by his granddaughter Davis "established a lucrative practice with all classes of people in the County of Essex."[36]

In short, the African occupational structure had changed very little over these twenty years. The changes that occurred were caused by changes in the nature of certain occupations, rather than changes in the attitudes towards blacks. As the barbering profession became less of a service industry and more of a skilled job, the number of black barbers dropped. As portering and teamster jobs grew, blacks were hired because they were deemed suitable for these low skill jobs.

Table 7: Changes in Occupational Pattern from 1881 to 1901 for Employed African Males in London for Selected Occupations

Occupation	% employed in 1881	% employed in 1901
Labourers	35.8	32.1
Barbers	13.6	3.6
Commercial Clerks	0.0	0.0
Carpenters + Joiners	0.0	0.0

---

[34] The Plaindealer, May 15, 1891.

[35] The Daily Planet, August 3, 1897.

[36] Julius Isaac, "Delos Rogest Davis, K.C., " Law Society Gazette, vol. 24, no. 4 (1990), p. 291.

Boot + Shoemakers	0.0	0.0
Waiters	1.2	0.0
Cooks	0.0	3.6
Porters	3.7	3.6
Whitewashers	1.2	1.8
Teamsters + Drivers	0.0	14.3
Seamsters	6.2	0.0

Table 8: Changes in Occupational Pattern from 1881 to 1901 for Employed African Males in Amherstburg for Selected Occupations

Occupation	% employed in 1881	% employed in 1901
Labourers	22.7	28.7
Barbers	5.7	2.3
Commercial Clerks	0.0	0.0
Merchants	1.1	0.0
Carpenters + Joiners	3.4	0.0
Boot + Shoemakers	2.3	0.0
Waiters	2.3	0.0
Cooks	9.1	2.3
Porters	1.1	0.0
Whitewashers	1.1	0.0
Mariners	29.5	34.5

Table 9: Changes in Occupational Pattern from 1881 to 1901 for Employed African Males in Hamilton for Selected Occupations

Occupation	% employed in 1881	% employed in 1901
Labourers	25.5	23.0
Barbers	13.1	4.8
Commercial Clerks	2.0	0.0
Merchants	2.0	3.2
Carpenters + Joiners	2.0	1.6
Boot + Shoemakers	3.3	2.4
Waiters	7.2	3.2
Cooks	0.0	2.4
Porters	0.0	6.3
Whitewashers	4.6	6.3
Teamsters + Drivers	0.0	1.6
Plasterers	5.9	6.3
Tobacco work	5.2	11.1

Table 10: Changes in Occupational Pattern from 1881 to 1901 for Employed African Males in Windsor

Occupation	% employed in 1881	% employed in 1901

Labourers	39.9	40.8
Barbers	4.9	2.1
Commercial Clerks	0.4	1.1
Merchants	1.5	1.8
Carpenters + Joiners	3.0	1.1
Boot + Shoemakers	2.2	0.0
Waiters	3.4	4.9
Cooks	6.0	8.1
Porters	0.7	2.8
Teamsters + Drivers	1.1	6.3
Sailors + Mariners	5.2	2.5

Table 11: Changes in Occupational Pattern from 1881 to 1901 for Employed African Males in Toronto

Occupation	% employed in 1881	% employed in 1901
Labourers	18.8	14.4
Barbers	18.2	15.7
Commercial Clerks	0.5	1.9
Merchants	1.6	0.9
Carpenters + Joiners	4.2	0.5
Boot + Shoemakers	2.1	0.5
Waiters	10.9	1.9
Cooks	1.6	4.2
Porters	0.5	14.8
Whitewashers	7.3	1.9
Teamsters + Drivers	1.0	4.2

The most common occupation for black working women continued to be that of domestic service. The fact that there was often a shortage of people willing to take these jobs meant that it was one of the few occupations African women had a very good chance of obtaining. The shortage of domestics became so acute in Toronto that in 1901 consideration was given to importing black female servants from Barbados. The idea did not meet with approval when it was suggested at a meeting of some of the city's ladies at City Hall. One of the women had recently returned from Barbados, a trip that had led her to believe some blacks from that island would be

willing to come to Canada. She acknowledged that they would not do as much work as white women, but nor would they receive the wages white servants received.[37] Indeed, African domestics were not well paid. The median income average for a female black domestic servant in Toronto in 1901, according to the census, was $108. This was even low when compared with the wages other black working women in Toronto earned. Other black women who worked were generally employed as laundresses or hairdressers, and had a median income of $150.[38] Women who had the opportunity to take better jobs undoubtedly took them, since there was little that was attractive about being a domestic servant.

The suggestion to import servants was criticized by many of the ladies at the meeting. A Public School Trustee complained that their arrival would be "a degrading influence," and that it would be better to train poor white girls already living in the city. Another woman, who had lived in the south, remarked negatively on the "negro character," and another who had friends in the south said she was told that "negro servants are the curse of their lives." The idea was dropped with no action taken.[39] A Toronto World editorial a couple of days later argued that the "proposal ... will not meet with general approval." The editorial emphasized that if "the servant girl problem cannot be solved except at the

---

[37] The Globe, November 9, 1901.

[38] Ontario Archives, Microfilm of 1901 Census Rolls, Toronto City.

[39] The Globe, November 9, 1901.

risk of introducing a new race problem into Canada it had better remain unsolved." The newspaper then argued that the solution to the problem was to elevate the position of the domestic servant, rather than to "further degrad(e) the position." What was needed was to make "the servant girl's position as respectable as that of the waitress, the office or factory girl."[40] This editorial revealed two important points. The first was that immigrating blacks were seen simply as bringing a "race problem" into the country and were therefore not desired even when they provided an economic benefit. Secondly, it was also admitted that being a domestic servant was a low position, and making it more 'respectable' meant getting more 'respectable' women to perform the task. Left unsaid was the fact that black women were clearly not 'respectable.' In the view of the surrounding white community, blacks were best suited for menial and less worthy occupations.

Part C: 1910-1919

The number of Africans in Ontario continued to decline in the early twentieth century. There were, according to the 1911 census, only 6,747 blacks in the province that year,[41] a drop of more than 2,000 from 1901. The settlement pattern was the same as in previous years, however, as can be seen by Table 1. In 1911 54.5% of Africans resided in either Essex or Kent counties. In other

---

[40] Toronto World, November 11, 1901.

[41] Fifth Census of Canada, vol. 2 (Ottawa, 1913), p. 205.

words, the black concentration in southwestern Ontario, which had existed since the days of the Underground Railroad, was as strong as ever. Large cities such as Toronto, Hamilton, and London continued to have significant African populations, as did the Niagara region. Many Ontario counties, however, had almost no Africans. Carleton, Durham and Peterborough West were three Ontario counties with more than 20,000 residents, but not a single person of African descent.[42] Many other counties had very few Africans. Despite the fact that most Ontario blacks had resided in the province for a considerable number of years they were not very dispersed in a geographic sense.

Table 1: Percentage of Africans Residing in Selected Ontario Counties in 1901 and 1911

County	% in 1901	% in 1911
Essex, North	14.7	19.5
Essex, South	10.5	8.2
Kent, East	10.9	10.0
Kent, West	17.4	16.7
Toronto	6.7	6.9
Hamilton	5.0	4.3
London	2.2	3.2
Welland	2.1	4.1
Lincoln	2.2	3.2
Brant + Brantford	1.5	2.4
Grey, North	2.4	1.9

Source: Extracted from Report on the Fourth Census of Canada, 1901, vol. 1, pp. 312-351 and Fifth Census of Canada, 1911, vol. 2, pp. 204-253.

The 1911 census rolls are not available for public access.

[42] Fifth Census of Canada, 1911, vol. 2, pp. 211, 213, 239.

It is therefore not possible to provide a detailed description of the black occupational pattern for this year. City directories, however, are of some use. Although they do not provide listings according to race, it is possible to trace individual names from the 1901 census through later city directories. It would appear that the black occupational structure in the 1910s followed the same patterns that had existed since 1870. Africans were in a range of jobs, but this range was generally restricted to low skill and service occupations. In Windsor in 1911 there were several blacks labourers and teamsters, but there were also two listed as working for the Ford Motor Car company, and one was employed by Hiram Walker. Others were recorded as barbers, painters, contractors and carpenters.[43] The situation was similar in Toronto. Africans from the 1901 census that can be identified in the city directory a decade later were mostly employed in low skill jobs. African men were most commonly employed as labourers, porters, and teamsters. Others were employed in a wide range of occupations. There were African barbers, shoeshiners, postmen, waiters, and caretakers. Yet only one black clerk can be identified in Toronto, and doctors, lawyers, accountants, and other skilled white-collar jobs appear to have been without black representation in Toronto.[44] The same situation existed in Windsor.[45] This problem was

---

[43] Charlotte Bronte Perry, The Long Road: The History of the Coloured Canadian in Windsor, Ontario (1967), p. 33.

[44] The Toronto City Directory 1911 (Toronto, 1911), passim.

[45] Bronte, The Long Road, p. 33.

recognized by at least some people in the black community. J.R.B. Whitney, the publisher of The Canadian Observer, a black Toronto newspaper that ran from 1914 to 1919, wrote in 1918 that "(i)n Toronto ... we have not a doctor, dentist, or practicing lawyer. In Windsor we find conditions the same."[46]

There is, however, some evidence to suggest that the situation improved somewhat during World War One. Toronto was regarded as an especially promising place for employment. An editorial in The Canadian Observer argued that there were black "mechanics, engineers (electrical and steam), bookkeepers, stenographers, and many more doors would be thrown open if our boys and girls would equip themselves with trades and commercial education."[47] Whitney was likely accurate when he noted that more jobs were becoming available. The fact that many men were overseas meant employers had to be more flexible in whom they hired, and this worked to the advantage of Africans. In fact, the Canadian Observer noted that some whites were complaining "that men of color are filling the vacant jobs that the opposite races have left to serve the Empire." The Canadian Observer replied that these men were Canadian citizens, and therefore entitled to these jobs, and acknowledged that "the refusing of our men from enlisting in the army has opened many doors to them in the industrial realm."[48] Yet one should not

---

[46] The Canadian Observer, vol. 7, no. 11 (March 2, 1918).

[47] The Canadian Observer, vol. 6, no. 22 (November 3, 1917).

[48] The Canadian Observer, vol. 3, no. 24 (May 20, 1916).

paint too rosy a picture. As noted above, there were still no black lawyers or doctors. Furthermore, after the war any gains blacks had made disappeared. By 1919 The Canadian Observer had become disillusioned. An editorial noted that blacks were not usually being given an equal opportunity to obtain jobs they were qualified for. While acknowledging that there were "a number of broad enough people that are giving them such opportunities" it regretted that this "number is far too small to make general conditions of affairs be felt by our masses."[45]

---

[45] The Canadian Observer, vol. 10, no. 18 (April 12, 1919).

Chapter Two: The African Quest for Equal Employment Opportunities in Ontario

As was noted in the last chapter, the occupational structure for the black population was much different from that of the white population throughout the period from 1870 to 1919. Blacks and whites held very different views on the reasons for this state of affairs, and whether it was a problem. Africans, seeing limited job opportunities as a major grievance, continually fought for the right to be employed in any occupation they desired, and complained that they were being denied their fair share of public employment opportunities. Whites, while they had some sympathy for black concerns, sincerely believed blacks were naturally suited for certain jobs. Whites also empathized with employees who did not want to work with blacks.

As has been noted, few Africans were in the professions or in other white collar occupations throughout this period. Whites and blacks had different explanations for why this was the case. An 1877 editorial in the Missionary Messenger, the newspaper of the British Methodist Episcopal church, illustrated these different opinions. The newspaper lamented that "(w)e are systematically shut out from all those employments requiring education, mechanical skill or artistic talent; yet, in the face of all this, we are denounced as being indolent, unenterprising, improvident, and thriftless." The editorial further lamented that, as a result of black concentration in low skill jobs, "there are those who are

always ready to proclaim the inferiority of the race and their natural adaptability to servile occupations."[1] The irony of these criticisms was not lost on the editors.

A couple of examples illustrate why Africans perceived that they would have problems if they tried to obtain non-traditional jobs. The difficulties blacks faced entering professions can be seen through the experience of one of the province's first black lawyers, Delos R. Davis of Amherstburg. Davis was not, in fact, the first African lawyer in the province. That distinction belonged to a Jamaican-born man named Robert Sutherland, who had been educated at Queen's University, and began his career in 1855. No mention was made of his race in law society records,[2] and he appears to have entered the profession with no problems. Such was not the case, however, for Davis. He was born in Maryland, and came with his parents to Canada in 1850.[3] In the 1871 census he was listed as a school teacher living in Colchester,[4] but shortly thereafter he became a commissioner for taking affidavits. He desired to be a lawyer, but because he was black was unable to find an attorney or solicitor with whom to article. Sutherland had not

---

[1] Metropolitan Toronto Library, Baldwin Room, A.R. Abbott Papers, Scrapbook 2, folder 1, p. 40.

[2] Christopher Moore, The Law Society of Upper Canada and Ontario's Lawyers, 1797-1997 (Toronto, 1997), p. 177.

[3] Julius Isaac, "Delos Rogest Davis, K.C.," Law Society Gazette, vol. 24, no. 4 (1990), p. 295.

[4] Ontario Archives, Microfilm of 1871 Census Rolls, Colchester.

had this problem, but as a recent book suggests, Sutherland had "educational" and "social advantages," such as a university education, that Davis did not possess.[5] This episode reveals nineteenth century attitudes to the race question, and how such problems could be most easily resolved. The problem was not the legality of Africans becoming lawyers, as there was no formal restrictions against them. The problem occurred when Davis tried to get someone to train him, and thereby accept him as a social equal. The result, in the Davis case, was to come to a compromise which enabled Davis to become a lawyer, but also maintained the status quo in terms of racial interaction. The member of provincial parliament for his area, Hon. W.D. Balfour, introduced a special act to the legislature to admit Davis as a lawyer without the articling requirement, provided he passed an examination set by the Ontario Law Society. The bill was assented to on March 25, 1884. The act stated

> that in consequence of prejudices against his color ... he had not been articled to any attorney or solicitor or served under articles; that he had notwithstanding devoted himself to the study of law; and that in his opinion he had acquired such education in law as would enable him to pass the final examination prescribed by the Law Society.[6]

Davis was admitted to the bar on May 19, 1885. His son, Frederick Homer Alphonso Davis, also became a lawyer in 1900. They were the

---

[5] Moore, The Law Society of Upper Canada and Ontario's Lawyers, p. 177.

[6] Ontario Archives, Daniel Hill Black History Research Collection, Colchester Notes (B), F 1416.

only two African lawyers in the province prior to the 1920s.[7] The fact that a special bill was required in the provincial legislature to enable Davis to become a lawyer suggested that only the most determined, and perhaps fortunate, Africans could expect to get such occupations. It was hardly a level playing field for prospective black and white lawyers.

Africans often faced discrimination when they applied for certain jobs and when they tried to advance into better positions. The Albert Jackson case is an excellent example of the types of animosity blacks encountered in the workforce, and the ways in which they dealt with these problems. The episode also reveals much about white Ontario's attitude towards Africans. Albert Jackson was a black man who lived in Toronto and had been appointed by the federal government to be a letter carrier in that city. Jackson was not the first black letter carrier in Ontario. In the early 1870s there had been two mail carriers in Windsor and one in Hamilton.[8] When Jackson, however, arrived to work in May of 1882 he discovered that the other letter carriers refused to work with him. As had been the case with Delos Davis, the problem had arisen because he was unable to get anyone to train him, and this made it impossible for him to learn the job. In fact, each letter carrier individually refused to accompany Jackson so he could learn the

---

[7] Lance Talbot, "History of Blacks in the Law Society of Upper Canada," Law Society Gazette, vol. 24, no. 4 (1990), p. 66.

[8] Ontario Archives, Microfilm of 1871 Census Rolls, Windsor City and Hamilton City.

rounds. The next day he was instead appointed hall porter to replace a man who was in poor health, and this seemed to resolve the matter. The Jackson episode, however, generated considerable publicity in the Toronto newspapers in the days that followed. There were several editorials and many letters written by both black and white citizens. The incident seemed to galvanize the black community, and some letters were quite blunt. When a headline in the Daily Telegram referred to Jackson as "the objectionable African"[9] it unleashed a storm of protest. A.A. Russell, who was himself black, wrote in a letter published on May 20 that:

> It does not seem possible that a party of men could be so unmanly, so unjust, so unprincipled, so niggardly in their actions in this the 19th C, in one of the most enlightened, refined, and educated cities of the western hemisphere, to object to any gentleman working amongst them simply on account of colour.

Russell further argued, in response to allegations that the government appointment had been an "impolitic move," with the words, "how dare any impertinent man or men intimate that the Government has committed a gross injustice in appointing this gentleman as a carrier in this free country ... where all men are known by principle and ability and not by colour."[10] Charles Johnson, a Methodist minister from Hamilton who published a black newspaper called The British Lion, had a letter published in the Globe on May 22 where he wrote that:

---

[9] Daily Telegram, May 17, 1882.

[10] Daily Telegram, May 20, 1882.

> We feel much ashamed of these postmen ... We brand them as cowards- as men who would be concerned in robbing a man of all that is great and good, namely, his character. They are unworthy the name of Britons, and should not be allowed to disgrace Her Majesty.

Johnson further lambasted Jackson's colleagues when he wrote that "the disgraceful act of the letter-carriers of Toronto to their fellow-citizen Jackson will stand in history against every one of them as a lasting stigma."[11] In the views of both Johnson and Russell the actions of the letter carriers had been completely ill founded, and nothing could justify their actions.

Black opposition was not restricted to a few letters in the newspapers. The Jackson incident led to a mass meeting of blacks at a Richmond Street church. Those at the meeting made it clear they were not satisfied with Jackson's appointment as hall porter, a job they considered to be "menial." It also became clear at the meeting that there was some division in opinion as to whether aggressive letters, such as those by Russell and Johnson quoted above, were advisable. A resolution, representing one attitude, was proposed at the meeting that would denounce the letters written by Johnson and Russell "as too strong and liable to hurt the cause of the colored people." This resolution, however, was defeated which indicated that many in the black community concurred with a more aggressive approach, and also demonstrated that they were becoming impatient with their slow progress towards equal rights. The meeting denounced the conduct of the letter carriers, and

---

[11] The Globe, May 22, 1882.

established a committee to look into the matter. Those present also made it clear exactly what they expected from the province in which they lived. They emphasized that "we do not seek class legislation or desire anything other than in common with other classes of her majesty's subjects." In other words, they were only interested in getting what they believed were their full rights as citizens. They also made it clear that they wished to work with the surrounding white community and hoped to get support from them. The meeting resolved to "call most respectfully upon the christian community of Toronto and every right minded man to give us their sympathy and moral support."[12] In the views of those at the meeting, their requests were reasonable and fair, and they hoped others would see the situation the same way.

The episode generated considerable discussion amongst Toronto citizens for the next couple of weeks. Some black citizens were harassed by whites on the streets, and the Globe expressed concern that a race war might occur. In one case, a black barber on Yonge Street was insulted in his own shop by a man who claimed to be an official in the post office and therefore felt that he was entitled, in the words of the Globe, "to state his opinion on the subject of the appointment of coloured men to Government situations." In another incident, two blacks described as "respectably dressed coloured folks" were verbally assaulted by some white hoodlums. Luckily, the victims chose to ignore their

---

[12] Toronto World, May 30, 1882.

assailants and nothing came of the incident.[13] Another more serious incident occurred when a black man walking along a downtown street was teased by a group of young boys and responded by striking one in the face, and then kicking him while he lay on the ground. Fortunately, an employee of a nearby store intervened and prevented the situation from getting out of control.[14] Clearly, the tension that emerged over the Jackson episode was not restricted to the post office.

Some letters to newspapers used the Jackson controversy to expostulate views on the race question in general. Black writers noted the many significant accomplishments of Africans, both in the world and in Canada specifically. A black man named G.W. Smith, who was appointed to the committee to investigate Jackson's plight at the post office, remarked that Ontario had a black surgeon in the person of Dr. Augusta. He then noted that at the present time in Toronto "we have contractors for building, cabinet makers, blacksmiths and shoemakers, and in the neighbourhood of Ottawa can be found some well-to-do farmers who own and farm large tracts of land successfully." His letter concluded by pronouncing that such evidence proved that "we are capable of performing under the same circumstances that which any other race of people can perform, and that our race is no more confined to whitewashing than his is to

---

[13] The Globe, May 27, 1882.

[14] Evening Telegram, May 18, 1882.

the carrying of the hod."[15]

Smith also used the ancient Carthaginian general Hannibal as an example of a man who "merited both honor and respect among great men."[16] A white citizen, C. Pelham Mulvany, refuted this when he wrote that Smith's contention that Hannibal was a negro "will amuse those of your readers who have the slightest acquaintance with ethnology." Mulvany further argued that scientific evidence had proved black inferiority, that the African brain was much smaller than the European, and that the "negro facial angle is 'ape-like.'"[17] A black writer, John Jackson, replied that "brain weight as well as development of the head and refinement of features in the human family is greatly attributed to culture." Jackson further argued that whites should "give the colored men of this continent the same advantage and he will see, or his descendants, the perfect developments which he accuses him of not possessing."[18] Scientific theories that purportedly explained black inferiority were quite common in the late nineteenth century, but Africans such as Jackson refuted these theories when they were propagated in the press.

The Albert Jackson case is also important because of what it reveals about the white reaction when blacks tried to exercise

---

[15] Toronto World, May 30, 1882.

[16] Toronto World, May 30, 1882.

[17] Toronto World, May 31, 1882.

[18] Toronto World, June 1, 1882.

their right to equal opportunities in the province. Generally, most whites believed that Africans were entitled to their legal rights but also believed that they should not be forced to socially interact with them. Newspaper editorials tended to support Jackson. The first article about Jackson in the Daily Telegram was headlined "the objectionable African," and noted that all the letter carriers did not want to work with him.[19] Two days later, however, an editorial took a much different stance when it was argued that "the objection to the young man on account of his colour is indefensible. Coloured waiters serve meals at hotels, and coloured porters attend the Pullman cars. There is therefore no reason why coloured carriers should not deliver letters." The editorial further asserted that "(c)oloured people who pay taxes and obey the laws have just as much right to their share of what is going as people who are not coloured. The taxes are not made a penny less to a man because he happens to have a dark skin."[20] The Globe echoed these views and regretted that "in a community where professedly all enjoy equal rights before the law a body of otherwise intelligent and respectable men should pursue such a contemptible course towards a fellow official because his skin happens to be darker than theirs."[21] The Toronto World noted that "(a) black man ... makes a good citizen, and being a good citizen

[19] Daily Telegram, May 17, 1882.

[20] Daily Telegram, May 19, 1882.

[21] The Globe, May 23, 1882.

is as much entitled to a public office as a white man." Yet the editorial also contended that Africans did not always have to be accepted by whites. The distinction was that in "his legal and civil capacity a black man is any man's equal; in their social relations the white man is free, if he chooses, to treat the colored man as it pleases him."[22] The Daily Telegram concurred with these sentiments and argued that "(i)n private life men may choose their company, and if they do not like to mix with people of another colour they need not. In official life it is different."[23] As long as a job with the post office was considered in the public domain it was difficult to justify the refusal to allow Jackson to deliver the mail. Still, these comments in the newspapers were gentler in tone than the letters written by members of the black community like Russell and Johnson.

There were some white Ontarians who saw the matter differently. This incident allowed people the opportunity to vent their racism. Some correspondence to newspapers offered wholehearted support to the letter carriers. A letter to the Toronto World noted that an African makes "a useful servant, hotel waiter, barber, or Professor of Whitewashing," but argued that "there is a gulf fixed by nature between him and the true type of man," and that "those of us who would object to the presence of a negro on equal terms in our homes ... have certainly no right to

---

[22] Toronto World, May 25, 1882.

[23] Evening Telegram, May 26, 1882.

withhold our sympathy from ... the letter carriers of this city, upon their protest against a negro comrade being forced on them."[24] The Jackson episode illustrates what happened when Africans tried to cross unofficial boundaries and take jobs that were considered by many to be inappropriate for blacks. The fact that Africans believed they should have the right to perform any occupation meant that clashes such as the Jackson incident were to be expected, because the white attitude was that there were some obvious restrictions in terms of how much blacks should expect. Obviously, they were entitled to equal rights, but they would be equal rights as seen in the eyes of the white community. Even the editorials in support of Jackson acknowledged that whites should not be expected to socialize with them.

The African population did not give up in its quest to get Jackson delivering mail. A federal election campaign was under way at this time, and when the Conservative Prime Minister, John A. Macdonald, came to Toronto he was greeted by a number of citizens who insisted Jackson be put on the mail route. The Prime Minister responded by informing the deputation that Jackson would begin delivering mail immediately, an assertion that satisfied those present.[25] On June 2, Jackson was sent out with one of the carriers to learn his duties, and according to The Globe with "no objection

---

[24] Toronto World, May 25, 1882.

[25] The Evening Telegram, May 31, 1882.

being raised by any of the men."[26] Many leading black citizens, such as Charles Johnson in Hamilton, were strong Conservatives and keeping their support at election time was undoubtedly important to the Prime Minister. Indeed, the Jackson episode was used by the Conservative government during the 1882 campaign. The conservative Hamilton Spectator noted that "Jackson was appointed by the Government, and it was the Grit carriers, appointed in Mackenzie's reign, who refused to associate with him." According to the newspaper, Liberal canvassers had been telling "false stories" to black people about the episode. In fact, Jackson himself made an affidavit on June 10, 1882, where he stated that:

> I, Albert Jackson, a colored letter carrier in her Majesty's service, do hereby certify that I am now in the employment of her Majesty's government as a letter carrier, that I was appointed by the Government of Sir John A. MacDonald [sic], and that I received the greatest courtesy and consideration from the Government and my official supervisors.[27]

Nor was Jackson's tenure as a mail carrier short lived. He was still listed as a mail carrier in the 1901 census,[28] and apparently continued to deliver mail in Toronto until about 1918.[29] Furthermore, by the early 1890s, there were three black mailmen in

---

[26] The Globe, June 3, 1882.

[27] The Spectator, June 17, 1882.

[28] Ontario Archives, Microfilm of 1901 Census Rolls, Toronto, Centre District.

[29] Ontario Archives, Daniel Hill Black History Research Collection, Box 4, Toronto Notes (B).

Toronto,[30] so Jackson apparently set the stage for others to follow.

In this episode, Africans had been successful. Their request that Jackson be allowed to become a letter carrier had been heard. It had been the actions of the black community that had drawn attention to the situation, and they had used a variety of tactics to advance their cause. They had written letters to the newspapers, organized a mass meeting, established a committee, and finally met with the Prime Minister. The white reaction to their demands was also important. Although the mail carriers had been hostile and some letters to the newspapers had preached black inferiority, the consensus amongst many in the white community, judging by newspaper editorials, was that Jackson deserved to be a letter carrier. Africans had a right to earn a living, and that was what Jackson was trying to do. The letter carriers were not being forced to have a close, personal relationship with Jackson, so their opposition became difficult to justify. Furthermore, politics had helped the African cause. Africans in the province had equal political rights, and their votes were important at election time. Denying Jackson his job would have cost the Conservatives votes in the African community, and Macdonald knew this. Racial equality did not exist in many areas of late nineteenth century Ontario life, but politically a black man's vote was a good as that of a white man. The black and white community, however, had not necessarily seen the situation exactly the same

[30] Hamilton Spectator, July 17, 1890.

way. Africans believed they had the right to perform any job because they were equal citizens in the British Empire. The white community acknowledged that in this instance the black request was not unreasonable since Africans already cut white people's hair and carried their luggage. The white community was not promising to yield to black requests in all situations, nor was it acknowledging that blacks were poorly treated in the province.

Ontario's blacks were united in their belief that they deserved to have access to a full range of occupations. Yet there were differences of opinion in the black community as to how that equality should be achieved. A few Africans viewed economic opportunity in Ontario in a somewhat optimistic light. Anderson Ruffin Abbott, a Toronto-born black doctor who lived in southwestern Ontario for a number of years but returned to Toronto in 1890,[31] exuded some optimism that African economic opportunity was steadily improving. In an 1892 letter from Toronto he noted that blacks were "employed as tradesmen, mechanics, laborers; some are in the service of the government, and a few following professional pursuits, besides the usual quota of waiters, barbers, restaurant and boarding house keepers."[32] In an 1893 article he noted that "our schools, colleges and universities are becoming training schools for Afro-American youth ... All of our high and public schools, collegiate institutes, have representatives of the

---

[31] Hill, The Freedom-Seekers, p. 207.

[32] Baldwin Room, A.R. Abbott Papers, Loose Clippings, p. 5.

race in attendance; a few are employed as teachers."[33] Abbott, however, was unusually optimistic here, and most blacks did not see the situation as quite this encouraging. In fact, even Abbott was usually not quite this positive in his descriptions of life in Canada for Africans.[34] Charles Johnson, editor of the British Lion, took a much more hostile tone. He was upset that most blacks performed low skill jobs. Johnson argued that the only way to solve this problem was to develop an African aristocracy in Canada. Johnson wanted blacks to involve themselves in brokerage, banking, and commercial business. Johnson also took a very condescending and negative outlook towards the many blacks employed in menial occupations. An 1889 editorial observed that the British Lion "believes in negro aristocracy. Down with the common whites and cheap class of negroes who spend their time on Pullman cars, barber shops and dining rooms."[35] Johnson's hostility was also evident in an 1888 editorial when the editor noted that he "does not care a ----- for any man, white or black, who has not brains in his head, wealth in his pocket, and business qualifications."[36] Johnson did

---

[33] Baldwin Room, A.R. Abbott Papers, Scrapbook 2, folder 2, p. 141.

[34] When living in Chatham in the 1870s Abbott had been quite critical about the prejudice blacks faced. See, for example, Baldwin Room, A.R. Abbott Papers, Scrapbook 2, folder 1, pp. 33-35.

[35] British Lion editorial reprinted in The Hamilton Spectator, August 31, 1889.

[36] British Lion editorial reprinted in Hamilton Daily Spectator, July 25, 1888.

not want the African future in Canada to be restricted to serving whites. Yet his consistent attacks on blacks in non-prestige occupations did not endear him to many in the black community.

Jesse Gant, a Hamilton barber who had a somewhat antagonistic relationship with Johnson, had a different view. In fact, he wrote a letter to a Hamilton newspaper in 1895 criticizing Johnson. He argued that it was not right for him "to attack and abuse, without any cause, respectable, intelligent, hard-working and law-abiding citizens."[37] Gant also wanted blacks to have a full range of economic opportunity, but this did not mean people in other traditional black professions should be attacked. In fact, barbers and porters generally earned more money than most other people in the African community. Gant saw no need for an independent black aristocracy, and instead supported blacks who attempted to obtain jobs working with whites in non-traditional fields. He stood up for Martha Lewis, a black woman, in her efforts to become a police matron in Hamilton in 1896. The local branch of the Women's Christian Temperance Union had tried to prevent Lewis from being appointed because she was black, but the Police Commission hired Lewis anyway. Gant responded by commending the Police Commission and criticizing the WCTU by noting that they were "hide-bound, narrow but strong-minded prejudiced persons ... with the banner of Christianity and Love held high in one hand, looking for notoreity

---

[37] The Hamilton Spectator, March 25, 1895.

[sic] and name, and in the other, a large-sized club."[38]

Africans received few government appointments, and they often protested this state of affairs. The fact that blacks were able to vote in the Ontario meant that their protests could not be completely ignored: it was political pressure from Canada's Prime Minister that had enabled Albert Jackson to become a mail carrier in Toronto in the early 1880s. In December of 1889 there were no Africans holding government jobs in the city of Hamilton. After Christmas a "deputation of colored gentlemen" made a presentation to the Market, Fire and Police Committee recommending that a colored fire brigade be formed. They argued "that positions of public trust ... have not hitherto been awarded and distributed with regard to the colored people ... who ...are entitled to a fair share of the public trusts of the city." The petition then noted that in the United States blacks had performed public employment jobs "with credit and satisfaction," and argued that "if given a chance as firemen they will not be found wanting in courage or ability to perform the duties of the position." The petitioners argued that blacks held no positions of trust in the city despite being "a well-behaved and trustworthy class of men."[39] The idea received enthusiastic support from the Hamilton Herald, one of the local newspapers. In an editorial the newspaper acknowledged "that colored citizens are as much entitled to receive public positions

---

[38] Hamilton Public Library, Special Collections, Our Heritage: Scrapbook, vol. 4 (June 1988-Dec. 1989), p. 194.

[39] The Globe, December 26, 1889.

which they are competent to fill as are white men," but also noted "that his color is a bar to his getting a position among his white fellow citizens." A separate black fire brigade seemed, to the editors, a fair solution to the problem. In this way, "the white people can do justice to the colored class without creating discontent among themselves." It argued that, if Africans were entitled to a certain number of public positions, it was "much preferable" that these positions all be in one department rather than spread around. In other words "it would be more satisfactory to see a fire hall manned by a colored brigade than to see the same men scattered in other departments- one a policeman, one a letter carrier, one an assessor, and so on."[40]

Reaction to this idea was swift. An editorial in the Herald the next day noted that the idea has met "with general approval not only among the colored population, but among citizens generally." Yet the approval was not unanimous among the city's black community. Jesse Gant, the prominent Hamilton barber, wrote a letter to the paper attacking the idea. He argued that the colour line was being drawn, and that he was surprised that the Herald was supporting the idea. He wrote that it was not fair that all Africans who wished to hold office would have to be firemen rather than serve where they were most fitted. Gant argued that there was nothing wrong with blacks and whites working in the same offices, and that if one were to take a trip to Washington one would "find

---

[40] Hamilton Herald, December 26, 1889.

white and colored sitting and working side by side." Gant speculated that perhaps the real fear was "that the white and the colored might get along too well together," a development that would not please those supporting a colour line. Gant concluded his letter by emphasizing that there should be black police, government clerks, doctors, and firemen, but they should "mingle together" and "never draw the color line." The plan for a black fire brigade was something that would help only a handful of Africans. The Herald refuted Gant's argument that Africans would rather have appointments scattered through the various offices because, as an editorial explained, it is "a matter of fact that the colored people associate as far as possible among themselves." Gant's desire to intermingle, in the newspaper's opinion, was just an exception to the rule. The editorial argued that Gant did not speak for the African people, and noted that "they have their own social assemblies, they have their own churches, and members of their own race are their preachers." Therefore, the idea for a separate fire brigade was "the natural sequence of this gregarious instinct." The editorial concluded that this instinct was in no way "derogatory to the colored man," and that it was through this instinct that they would be most likely to work out their own salvation.[41]

Both Gant and George Morton, the African who led the effort to get the black fire brigade, claimed they had the support of the

[41] Hamilton Herald, December 27, 1889.

African population. Gant was certainly better known to the white community. He was well-known as a stylish dresser, and was also noted for his debating skills.[42] He frequently wrote letters to the editors of Hamilton newspapers on a wide range of subjects. When Lord Aberdeen visited Hamilton in 1890, shortly after the fire brigade controversy, Gant paid him a visit and presented a printed card that introduced himself as the "representative colored man of Hamilton."[43] The fact that Gant was recognized by the white community was evident in 1897 when he was part of the festivities held in the city to commemorate the sixtieth anniversary of Queen Victoria's reign.[44] Morton, on the other hand, received considerably less publicity in the press, and was therefore less known to the white population. Yet he appears to have been well regarded by the black community. He was active in the local A.M.E. church, and served as superintendent of the Sunday School.[45] Most in the black community supported Morton on the fire brigade controversy. Indeed, Morton believed Gant was unhappy only because he was not asked to be involved.[46] Gant, on the other hand, argued

---

[42] Colin Crozier, "Jesse Gant" in Dictionary of Hamilton Biography, vol. 2 (Hamilton, 1991), p. 55.

[43] Hamilton Spectator, September 19, 1890.

[44] Efa Etoroma, "Blacks in Hamilton: An Analysis of Factors in Community Building" (Ph.D. dissertation, McMaster University, 1992), p. 98.

[45] Hamilton Public Library, Hamilton Collection, Stewart Memorial Church: Scrapbook, vol. 1, p. 2.

[46] Hamilton Herald, December 27, 1889.

that most blacks were not represented by those who wanted "a colored fire company to be kept to themselves."[47] The fact that most blacks supported Morton's position is best illustrated by the fact that 27 leading members of the African community signed the petition to start a separate fire brigade.[48] Considering the fact that there were only 505 blacks in Hamilton according to the 1881 census, these 27 people and their families represented a significant percentage of the city's African population. There is no evidence that Gant spoke for anyone other than himself. Those who supported the separate black fire brigade believed Gant had selfish intentions. A barber from Dundas wrote a letter to the Herald noting that Gant "has always been a Jonah to any movement or organization the colored citizens of Hamilton have aspired to," and that the controversy about the brigade swirling in the newspapers could have been avoided if Gant had been chosen brigade chief.[49]

Gant did not endear himself to other Africans with a letter he wrote to the Spectator. In this letter he emphasized that he wanted "no more favors shown me than my white brothers," and he then noted that it was up to Africans to work hard in order to obtain the positions that were open to them. He argued that there were many "capable and trustworthy" Africans in the city who could

---

[47] Hamilton Herald, December 27, 1889.

[48] The Globe, December 26, 1889.

[49] Hamilton Herald, December 31, 1889.

fill good positions "if they only would put forth sufficient efforts to obtain then; so you see to a great extent it is their own fault." He further wrote that there were blacks in Hamilton who would be good firemen, but Gant optimistically contended that "if they put in their claims in proper form they will get the same consideration as their white brothers."[50]

Gant's argument that more effort by blacks was all that was required in order to be successful did not appeal to all members of the city's black community. This was made evident by George Morton's letter to the editor of the Herald the following day. The letter had two purposes. It thanked the newspaper for its editorial support of the black fire brigade, and then refuted the claim that blacks were drawing the colour line by requesting this brigade. He wrote that the "Caucasian draws the color line," and that he has "always drawn it." Morton argued that the "color line is drawn in public, in private, in pleasure, in business, in life, in death, in the busy marts of trade, and at the sacred altar." Morton understood the paradox of the African experience in Canada and observed that the African man's "grievances are not that his liberties are few. It is that ... his tenure of almost every public right is somehow mutilated by arbitrary discrimination against him." This discrimination was frustrating because it was an impediment, "not to the grovelings of his lower nature, but to the aspirations of his higher." To Morton and others in the black

[50] Hamilton Daily Spectator, December 26, 1889.

community the hope was to eventually have a time where nowhere would be tolerated "so stupendous a crime as a discrimination based on colour or race."[51]

The response to the request from the chairman of the committee was that Africans had the right to make applications for positions as firemen in the city, and he promised to consider their applications.[52] The black fire brigade did not materialize. At first glance one might think this was a case where the white population and the black minority agreed on the way to solve a problem. It is, however, important to note that the views of Morton and the editor of the Herald were very different. The Herald emphasized that Africans preferred to keep to themselves, and also realized that this would be a way to prevent discontent among the white workers. Morton's letter, on the other hand, emphasized that it was whites who prevented blacks from getting work, and there was nothing that could be done because, in Morton's words, Africans "are habilitated in a flimsy garment, which yields to the fierce blasts of prejudice and leaves us naked and exposed to the storms of race and color caste."[53] By uniting together and forming a black fire brigade they would not have to deal with prejudiced co-workers.

---

[51] Hamilton Herald, December 27, 1889.

[52] Hamilton Daily Spectator, December 25, 1889.

[53] Hamilton Herald, December 27, 1889.

Africans in Hamilton did obtain some public employment in the early 1890s as complaints persisted. The British Lion noted in the summer of 1890 that "Toronto has three negro letter-carriers, why should Hamilton be neglected?"[54] In early 1892 George Morton was appointed letter carrier, and Gant himself was earlier offered an office under the city government, but declined and remained a barber.[55] The British Lion, however, was not pleased with Morton's appointment, illustrating a split in the African community. An editorial asked "Who authorized the appointment of this man Morton as one of her majesty's letter carriers? The men who have used their influence in this direction are a dishonor to the Dominion." The editorial further argued that Morton's appointment was a "direct insult to the Queen, and every loyal British Canadian in Canada."[56] Johnson was upset with Morton's appointment because he was active in the A.M.E. church, an institution that Johnson continually attacked as an American association that was disloyal. In an 1890 letter Johnson had criticized the A.M.E. church for introducing "Yankee ideas," and accused the church of putting the idea into the heads of Africans that annexation to the United States would be a good thing. Johnson also criticized the church for not having a Canadian minister. Morton was listed as one of

---

[54] British Lion editorial reprinted in Hamilton Spectator, July 17, 1890.

[55] Hamilton Spectator, April 20, 1892.

[56] British Lion editorial reprinted in Hamilton Spectator, August 1, 1892.

the people giving "aid" to this "American movement."[57] Johnson continued his attack of the A.M.E. church in an 1892 editorial that asserted that "negroes who will sign off the Canadian rights of the Queen's Loyal British M.E. church in Canada for that of the American Philadelphia association ought to be driven out of the country, the cowardly scoundrels."[58] Yet the fact that the A.M.E. church in Hamilton prospered indicates that Johnson's views were not the same as other blacks in the city. Most Africans realized that the only way for them to succeed, as a race, in Canada was through their own efforts. It is for this reason that the separate fire brigade proposed by Morton seemed so attractive to most in the community. Many blacks recognized that they had to support their own enterprises in order to be successful. The Detroit Plaindealer's Chatham correspondent issued a challenge to blacks in March of 1893: "Patronize colored enterprize [sic]. Buy of colored grocers. Buy colored papers, and thus build your race up till they can give you as good service as the whites do." Furthermore, blacks had to retaliate, in an economic sense, against those who treated them unfairly. The correspondent told blacks to "Stay out of the white man's saloon if he wont [sic] let you in his hotel. Keep out of his kitchen if he wont [sic] let you in his parlor."[59] Another newspaper editorial, likely written by A.R.

---

[57] Hamilton Daily Spectator, February 15, 1890.

[58] British Lion editorial reprinted in Hamilton Spectator, August 2, 1892.

[59] The Plaindealer, March 10, 1893.

Abbott, echoed these themes. It argued that the "elevation of our race must come of our own efforts and individual enterprises. We cannot have merchants if we do not patronize shop keepers. We cannot have lawyers, doctors, and mechanics if we do not employ them." The editorial further echoed the views of the Plaindealer that blacks needed to be more discriminating about which businesses and individuals they supported, instead of patronizing "friend and foe alike." It frustrated the writer "to see the amount of money that the colored people of Kent put in the pockets of a certain class of men in Chatham, who entertain a bitter personal prejudice against them." The writer also criticized Africans for being so critical towards black businesses, arguing that "(d)istrust of our ability to do anything of ourselves is probably the most fruitful course of all our failures," and that black originated businesses were always subjected to "doubt, discrimination, and misconception." A black man, when he opened a shop, was "expected to keep a larger stock, sell his goods cheaper, and give longer credit than any one else." These double standards made it difficult for African businesses to succeed. Furthermore, the editorial argued that disparaging comments about new business endeavours were usually raised by blacks who had achieved some success, and thereby felt entitled to "throw cold water upon all those individual enterprises which contribute so much to our elevation as a people."[60] These views differed from the opinions

[60] Baldwin Room, A.R. Abbott Papers, Scrapbook 2, folder 1, pp. 70-71.

proffered by white politicians who urged blacks to qualify themselves for the positions that were available to them.[61] Many Africans realized that they had to create the positions on their own.

By the 1910s, blacks still faced discrimination in the workforce. The situation had not changed because white attitudes to black workers had not changed. There was still the potential for opposition whenever blacks were hired in non-traditional fields. As was discussed earlier, white mailcarriers protested the appointment of Albert Jackson as a Toronto letter carrier in 1882. A similar controversy occurred in Windsor in 1913. When Doran Dixon was appointed in May of that year 11 of the city's 13 white mailcarriers threatened to resign if he was hired.[62] A signed petition was then sent to the federal government protesting the hiring of Dixon.[63] Despite this opposition the federal member of Parliament for North Essex, Oliver Wilcox, stood by his decision and Dixon was given the job. According to a newspaper account there was "not the slightest friction between him and other members of the staff as the result of the recent agitation" when Dixon appeared for work.[64] The process that had dragged on for weeks in

[61] Several examples of white politicians urging blacks to qualify themselves for the many jobs that were available to them will be given in the chapter on Emancipation Day celebrations.

[62] The Evening Record, May 15, 1913.

[63] The Evening Record, May 16, 1913.

[64] The Evening Record, May 20, 1913.

the 1882 Jackson case was quickly resolved in 1913 to Dixon's advantage. As had been the case in the Jackson episode politics had played the most important role in giving Dixon his job. As was noted earlier blacks were still heavily concentrated in southwestern Ontario and their votes were important to political candidates. Wilcox had consistently supported black causes. In 1911 he had spoken out in the House of Commons in defence of Africans when there had been a protest against Oklahoma blacks moving to the Athabasca district of Alberta.[65] In 1913 he complained in Parliament when another member had used a racial epithet.[66]

The reasons Wilcox gave for appointing Dixon were similar to the justifications whites usually gave for supporting blacks in such circumstances, that they were citizens and entitled to their share of employment opportunities. Dixon noted that there were 250 government positions in Essex county in jobs such as customs, postmasters, mailcarriers, and caretakers of public buildings. Wilcox noted that "there resides in the county of Essex a large number of colored people" and that the "responsibility of citizenship and of the franchise has been extended to them, and they are entitled to the fair privileges that flow from it."

---

[65] Official Report of the Debates of the House of Commons of the Dominion of Canada, vol. 101, 1910-1911 (Ottawa, 1911), pp. 5941-5944.

[66] Official Report of the Debates of the House of Commons of the Dominion of Canada, vol. 111, 1912-1913 (Ottawa, 1912-13), p. 9491.

Wilcox argued that he intended "to see that they get that, and no more, and that is all they ask."[67] The fact that Dixon's appointment was regarded as reasonable by many in the white community can be seen by the comments of Saturday Night, a publication that was consistently hostile towards blacks. It commended Wilcox and argued that it was to his credit "that he decided to stand by the negro whom he recommended to the Post Master General as a suitable person to deliver mail." Its reason for supporting Wilcox was that there was not "the slightest necessity for drawing the color line, as there undoubtedly is in the Southern States." The article then noted that the "negro population of this country is dying out so rapidly, that only in the counties of Kent and Essex is it an important factor at all." The implicit suggestion was that the declining black population was not such a bad thing, and that there was no need to create problems where few existed. Assessing the situation, and emphasizing the importance of politics, Saturday Night correctly concluded that "(c)onsidering the numerical strength of the negroes on the Essex peninsula, it is dollars to doughnuts, that Windsor's negro letter carrier will stay on the staff."[68]

The African perspective on this issue was in some ways similar to that of the white community. Blacks, in the first instance, expressed their gratitude to Wilcox for appointing Dixon and

---

[67] The Evening Record, May 15, 1913.

[68] Saturday Night, May 24, 1913.

standing by the decision. The Good Government Club of Windsor, a black organization, held a well attended meeting where it passed a resolution commending Wilcox in his efforts to give recognition to blacks. The black minister E.E. Thompson wrote a letter to the Evening Record thanking Wilcox. He paid tribute to his "manly stand" and rejoiced that he "was not intimidated by the threat that 11 mail carriers would resign if young Dixon was appointed." He echoed Wilcox by noting that Dixon's "reputation and training" were as good as the other mailmen.

Yet Thompson's reasons for wanting Dixon to be a mailcarrier extended further than any white commentators on the subject. He argued that it would be "a mockery of human justice and Christian brotherhood to awaken ambition in the human breast to educate boys and girls for the higher callings, and to afford no opportunity or employment at work for which education fits them." Thompson then asked a rhetorical question: "If the chief incentive of education is destroyed can we expect people to pay the price of getting an education?" He noted that with no education "we have indolence, vice, crime, pauperism and a blight upon our country." Thompson outlined what blacks wanted by commending Wilcox for opening "the doors of opportunity to worthy colored people, not seeking special privilege for them, but giving them a square deal and an equal chance."[69] Thompson, by arguing that preventing Africans from obtaining good jobs would hinder black incentive to work, was

---

[69] Evening Record, May 19, 1913.

simply echoing the comments George Morton had made in 1889 in support of blacks being allowed to take jobs as firemen.

The fact that Dixon was able to keep his job, and that he received political support in the process, was obviously encouraging. In general, however, this episode revealed how little had changed. Dixon had still been forced to endure discrimination when he started to work, and had been required to get political help to keep his job. This incident could not have encouraged other blacks to try for such employment opportunities, unless they were prepared to deal with adversity that white employees were never made to endure.

Other complaints arose that blacks were being denied government jobs. Oliver Wilcox complained in Parliament on March 23, 1911 about the treatment accorded George Simpson of Toronto. Wilcox argued that Simpson "had passed a very difficult examination for a position in the Naval Department," but had not been "given the position to which his examination had entitled him." He had instead been "transferred to the Department of Agriculture." Wilcox also complained that he had heard that a black man who had applied for a job in the Census department had also been sent to the Department of Agriculture, and that Rev. Hackett, a bishop of the Episcopal Methodist church for Ontario, had been ejected from the House of Commons. Wilcox stated that these events, combined with the problems Oklahoma blacks emigrating to Alberta were having

at the Canadian border,[70] had led him "to the conclusion that the colour line was being drawn." He commended Africans by noting that since their emancipation during the Civil War "no race in the world has made greater moral and intellectual progress."[71] Although white Canadians who discussed racial issues expressed little concern about the integration of blacks into white society, they were generally against the colour line, which they regarded as an American evil. The Ottawa Evening Citizen argued that it "will be particularly unfortunate if the impression gets abroad that Canada is officially drawing the color line," something that the Citizen argued was "founded upon a wrongful assumption of social superiority and inherent intellectual qualifications." The newspaper emphasized that in Canada "we have no desire for such legacies written on the prejudice and ignorance of ancient or modern days." The same editorial quoted a New York Tribune article that discussed Canadian government policies such as the exclusion of American blacks and the tax on Chinese immigrants.[72] This was not the type of image the country wanted. Preventing blacks from working for the government was especially disturbing precisely because, in the words of the Citizen, "it is a matter which

---

[70] for a discussion of these problems see R. Bruce Shepard, Deemed Unsuitable: Blacks from Oklahoma Move to the Canadian Prairies in Search of Equality in the Early 20th Century Only to find Racism in their New Home (Toronto, 1997).

[71] Official Report of the Debates of the House of Commons of the Dominion of Canada, vol. 101, 1910-11, pp. 5941-5942.

[72] The Evening Citizen, March 10, 1911.

concerns the reputation of the Canadian people."[73]

Blacks had some presence in high profile, more prestigious jobs. Henry Weaver, an alderman in Chatham, was a police constable in that city during the 1880s and 1890s.[74] Another African, Peter Butler, served for many years on the police force in his native town of Lucan. Butler's grandfather, Peter I, had been one of the original settlers in the Wilberforce settlement which had been established north of London in 1829. He apparently was a man of considerable wealth as he had assets of $22,000 by the time of his death in 1872. His grandson was also well-to-do, and was the largest contributor in the district to victory loans during the two World Wars.[75]

Despite his wealth, however, Butler's experiences as a police officer demonstrated that race could become a factor if an African made enemies while working, as the efforts to remove Butler in early 1916 revealed. The alleged reason for requesting Butler's dismissal was that he was too zealous in arresting people. There was, however, another aspect to the story. Butler had written a letter to the chief of Ontario police in October of 1915

---

[73] The Evening Citizen, March 9, 1911.

[74] Ontario Archives, Criminal Assize Clerk: Indictment Case Files, 1891-1893, R.G. 22, Series 392, Box 90, George Freeman 1893 Murder File. This source contains a list of Chatham constables in 1893, and Weaver's name is on the list. Weaver is also listed as a 'constable' in Ontario Archives, Microfilm of 1881 Census Rolls, Chatham Town.

[75] Jennie Raycraft Lewis, The Luck of Lucan (n.p., 1967), pp. 9-10.

asking that the actions of C.W. Hawkshaw, who was the Police Magistrate at Lucan, be investigated. Butler stated that Hawkshaw had been giving him "a lot of trouble" ever since he had "arrested two gamblers," contrary to the wishes of Hawkshaw. Furthermore, Butler accused the Police Magistrate of stealing fish from a fish wagon. A London attorney named James McKillop refuted these charges, noting that Hawkshaw was "held in the highest respect in the community," and recommended that the Provincial Police not investigate the situation. McKillop stated that Butler had been a good constable for many years, but that "for sometime past there has been considerable feeling in the Village against Butler from the fact that he is a colored man."[76] Butler's complaints appear to have made him some enemies.

When Middlesex County council met in January 1916, however,the point that was emphasized was that white people objected to being arrested by an African. One councillor named John Morgan argued that 90 percent of the people wanted him fired, and complained that Butler had the habit of parading his prisoners down a London main street. Morgan argued that it was "galling in the extreme, for a white man to be thus brought in by a colored one." Another councillor, J.A. McIntyre, agreed with Morgan and stated that "(w)hite people will not be dictated to by colored people." The reeve of Lucan, Thomas Coursey, added that when Butler made arrests it was necessary for him to have four people assist him, because

---

[76] Ontario Archives, RG 4-32, 1915, Office of the Attorney General, File #1782 (P.E. Butler).

"the white men object so strenuously." Support for Butler at the meeting was lacking.[77]

A.J.E. Butler, a relative of the constable, responded with a letter to the London Free Press offering the other side of the story. He noted that while "a white man objects to a colored man arresting him" he reminded the readers that when London blacks had "asked for a constable in the city we did not get it." This apparent double standard was further noted by Butler when he wrote that "(i)f the citizens of London say they want colored loafers arrested they are arrested, but it is not published in the form of a kick of exceeding their duty on the part of London police force." For Butler there was a contradiction when "it is not right for a colored man to help to enforce a law, but his vote helps to make it." He argued that having the vote was a "great encouragement for a colored man to be a good loyal citizen," and the obvious implication was that if Africans could help enforce the laws this would also make them better citizens. Butler concluded his letter by emphasizing his Canadian heritage and reminded his audience that "(o)f course we were born here, and our parents came here in 1828."[78] Support for Butler also came from Whitney's Canadian Observer. An editorial complained that Butler had "received an unkind black eye and, in an underhand manner been dismissed from the police force ... ostensibly because of his color." The

---

[77] The London Advertiser, January 27, 1916.

[78] London Free Press, January 31, 1916.

editorial concluded with the hope that "a reconsideration will be next in order and the man allowed to remain at his post."[79] The London Advertiser ignored the racial component when assessing the situation. It wrote that "Middlesex councillors blame a constable because he is too keen to make arrests. Ought not the system of paying these men fees for each arrest receive most of the blame?"[80]

This incident demonstrated that Africans had to be careful not to make enemies while working. The fact that they were black could be used against them. In this case, however, Butler was able to keep his job, and he remained a Constable until 1936.[81]

When blacks did get more prestigious jobs, they faced greater challenges than their white counterparts. Their colour was used against them if problems arose. The Canadian Observer recognized this and wrote in an editorial that Africans should "conduct themselves" in a manner "that will be a credit to the Race." Blacks, the editorial emphasized, had to watch their steps because:

> Our conduct ofttimes has a great deal to do with our brother's welfare. And this applies more especially to those who occupy public positions. An error in your conduct or deportment, morally or otherwise, has an unfavorable bearing on other members of the Race in similar positions, and often causes them to be dismissed We know this should not be the case. If one member of the Race sins, all should not suffer for that lapse.[82]

In some respects, the views of The Canadian Observer were little

---

[79] The Canadian Observer, vol. 3, no. 10 (February 12, 1916).

[80] The London Advertiser, January 28, 1916.

[81] Hill, The Freedom-Seekers, p. 198.

[82] The Canadian Observer, vol. 5, no. 21 (May 5, 1917).

different than the speeches given by white politicians at Emancipation Day speeches. These speeches, as we will see in a later chapter, stressed that blacks should respect themselves and work hard to bring credit to the race. There was, however, one important way in which The Canadian Observer editorial differed from the advice given by whites at Emancipation Day. The newspaper complained about the double standard applied to blacks and whites. The fact that other blacks were punished for the errors of a few was obviously wrong in the eyes of the editors, as the last two lines of the above quote makes clear.

Chapter Three: Different Views on Equality: Blacks, Whites and Separate Schools

From the 1870s until the 1890s the most significant area of controversy between blacks and whites concerned black access to the common schools. Nowhere were Africans more persistent in their demand for equality than in education. In several parts of the province, especially southwestern Ontario and St. Catharines, blacks became increasingly impatient with the separate, and inferior, schools they were forced to attend. Many in the white community, however, viewed the situation differently and believed that African educational needs were being satisfactorily served through these separate schools. These different views would inevitably clash.

By the early 1880s, the majority of black children (from 6 to 16) were attending school. In this respect, they were no different from the province's white children. As can be seen by table 1, the percentage attending school varied somewhat throughout the province, but in most places at least half the children were students.

Table 1: Percentage of Black Children Attending School According to the 1881 Census for Selected Sub-districts (from age 6 to 16)

City	% of blacks attending school
Hamilton	50.0
Windsor	61.8
Chatham, Town	64.2
London	71.9
St. Catharines	54.8

Toronto	67.3
Amherstburg	72.4
Brantford	47.4
Dresden	59.1
Raleigh	63.2
Chatham	65.8
Colchester, North	63.0
Colchester, South	32.3

Africans, however, were somewhat less likely to attend school than their white counterparts. As can be seen by Table 2, a higher percentage of white children than black children attended school. The difference was most striking in Hamilton and in Essex and Kent counties, but was less noticeable in London and Toronto. Whereas both London and Toronto had integrated schools, separate schools for blacks were quite common in southwestern Ontario, and this may have been a factor in lower attendance for black children.

Table 2: Comparison of Percentage of Africans Attending School versus Percentage of Total Population Attending School According to 1881 Census for Selected Counties (ages 4 to 19)

County	% of blacks attending school	% of total population attending school
Hamilton	34.3	53.3
London	51.6	54.6
Toronto	47.1	50.5
Essex County	37.3	50.2
Kent County	42.8	54.0

Note: The age bracket of 4 to 19 was chosen because the only aggregate numbers available for school attendance are for the population as a whole, and do not take into consideration age. In other words, the percentages in column 2 are based on the assumption that all people attending school were within the 4 to 19 age bracket. Indeed, most students at this time were within this age bracket, but there were obviously a few exceptions. The numbers in column 2 are therefore slightly inflated. The number of people under 4 and over 19 attending school, however, appear to have been few in number.

Source: Extracted from Report of the Census of 1881, vol. 2, pp. 100-103, 116-119, 227-228.

Separate schools for blacks in Ontario were permitted according to the 1850 Separate Schools Act, and their legality had been upheld by court decisions. Not all Africans attended separate schools, and in places where the black population was very small separate schools did not exist. In other places with a significant black population, such as Toronto, separate schools were never an issue. There were also cases where blacks attended regular schools even when separate schools existed. In many cases, however, Africans were forced to attend black schools. Superintendent reports make clear that these schools were often inferior. Whereas common schools were usually made of stone, black schools were often made of log. The 1872 report for Essex North noted that "(t)wo of the (new) Schools are log; they have been built by coloured people, in a coloured School Section; it is as much as they could do."[1] The fact that even some new African schools were built of log illustrates how black schools differed from the common schools. By 1876 only about 15% of the common schools in the province were log buildings, and these were not new schools but older ones that had survived from an earlier era.[2]

Black schools were also inferior in other ways. The 1871

---

[1] Ontario Department of Education, Annual Report of the Normal, Model, High and Public Schools of Ontario for the year 1872 (Toronto, 1874), part 3, pp. 98-99.

[2] Robert Stamp, The Schools of Ontario, 1876-1976 (Toronto, 1982), p. 19.

report for Chatham noted that whereas one of the black schools had desks made of wood, in all the other schools the "frame work is constructed of iron."[3] It was also sometimes difficult to get qualified teachers for coloured schools. When a Chatham school in the early 1870s tried to hire a new teacher the superintendent reported that "although there were applicants, they withdrew their applications when they understood it was a coloured school." The school instead had to make do with a teacher that the authorities considered unqualified.[4]

Given these circumstances, it is not surprising that Africans fought so hard for integrated schools. Blacks used many different tactics in an attempt to get their children admitted to non-segregated schools. The degree to which black parents would fight for equality in education was made quite clear in St. Catharines in the early 1870s. Separate schools for blacks had been an area of considerable controversy in that city for some time. Since the 1850s, blacks had been attempting to integrate all the city's schools, but with limited success. In 1855, for example, after the St. Catharines school board had designated one school as the coloured school, blacks had responded by temporarily boycotting

---

[3] Ontario Department of Education, Annual Report of the Normal, Model, High and Public Schools of Ontario for the year 1871 (Toronto, 1873), part 3, p. 127.

[4] Ontario Department of Education, Annual Report of the Normal, Model, High, and Public Schools of Ontario for the year 1872, part 3, p. 111.

it.[5] By 1857 the upper grades had been opened to black children under the understanding that they be seated separately, but separate schools remained for the lower grades.[6] The controversy continued to simmer, and exploded in the early 1870s.

Many in the white community believed that a separate school for black children was appropriate, and sufficient for African needs. The Daily Times of St. Catharines, when noting in 1870 the consistently irregular attendance at St. Paul's Ward colored school, lamented that "(i)t is much to be regretted that the persons for whose benefit the Board of Trustees have established this school and furnished so excellent a teacher are not more anxious to avail themselves of its advantages."[7] These views were not shared by members of the African community who were considerably less impressed with the school. Hints of black dissatisfaction emerged at the 1870 Emancipation Day celebration in St. Catharines. A local black Baptist minister named Reverend Bonner began his speech by emphasizing that education and wealth were needed to make the black man and the white man equal. He then, however, denounced the St. Catharines Council and Trustee Boards "for the poor and mean provision made for the education of colored children." He argued that black children were treated

---

[5] Simpson, "Negroes in Ontario from Early Times to 1870," p. 841.

[6] Simpson, "Negroes in Ontario From Early Times to 1870," p. 842.

[7] Daily Times, July 30, 1870.

worse in St. Catharines than in any other Canadian city, and "urged his people to go to the polls to get their wrongs addressed."[8]

By January of 1871 the separate school controversy had reached its boiling point. Many in the black community attended a meeting early in that month with the objective of trying to get their children admitted to the same schools as the white children. The outcome of the meeting, in the words of the St. Catharines Evening Journal, was that the "colored people promise to be at the polls on Wednesday next, to assert their rights."[9] Bonner's threat of the previous summer was proving to be no bluff. Indeed, black parents had reason to be especially upset with the school situation in January of 1871, and to be confirmed in their long held views that integrated schools were preferable to separate schools. On the same day that the black protest meeting was reported in the press, another story mentioned the new school for white children that had been built in St. Paul's Ward. The report noted that there had just been "an official examination ... of this new school house, just finished by the builder."[10] This school had been in preparation for over a year. In fact, a newspaper report in December 1869 on the black and white schools of St. Paul's Ward illustrates the different ways in which black and white education were viewed by the surrounding white community. While the report

---

[8] Daily Times, August 2, 1870.

[9] Evening Journal, January 7, 1871.

[10] Evening Journal, January 7, 1871.

on the black school complained about irregular attendance by the pupils, the report on the white school lamented that "(m)uch inconvenience in managing the school is experienced on account of the noise on the street," but optimistically reported that the problem would be rectified "as the trustees are completing arrangements to erect a fine commodious school house in the Ward."[11] No plans were made to build a new school for the black children. The completion of this new school for white children in 1871 likely exacerbated the already tense situation.

As promised, black voters responded on January 11, 1871 by voting out Mr. Junkin, the incumbent school trustee. The Evening Journal report noted that the "colored people, almost to a man, voted against Mr. Junkin."[12] The town's newspapers were decidedly against the black community for this action. The Evening Journal stated that Junkin had "always been friendly disposed to them," and called their actions "black ingratitude,"[13] while the St. Catharines Constitutional noted that "circumstances operated against Mr. J., the most silly of which was, that he was so strongly opposed to admitting the colored children to the common schools, that Mr. Mills was certain to prove more friendly to them."[14] In fact, Mills was no more in favour of admitting blacks to the regular schools

---

[11] Evening Journal, December 23, 1869.

[12] Evening Journal, January 12, 1871.

[13] Evening Journal, January 12, 1871.

[14] St. Catharines Constitutional, January 12, 1871.

than Junkin had been, and Africans quickly realized their protest vote would not accomplish their desired goal.

When town council reconvened the next day, blacks pushed to be allowed into regular schools. Letters were read from David Baxter and 23 other black citizens requesting that they be allowed to send their children to the "public ward schools."[15] A couple of weeks later another petition was sent by Baxter and 20 others complaining about the coloured school and requesting the right to send their children to the Ward schools in which they lived. The petition was referred to a committee.[16] This action was clearly not satisfactory to many in the African community who were becoming impatient. The parents then decided to take a different approach. A week after their petition had been referred to a committee, the parents took their children to different ward schools throughout the town. In the words of the Daily Times, they "were politely informed that the teachers had no power to receive them against the wishes of the Trustees, to whom the applicants were referred." Many of the black children tried to gain admittance to the new St. Paul's Ward School, where upon being refused "a deputation waited on a lawyer for legal advice and assistance in the matter."[17]

This action received no support in the St. Catharines newspapers. The press seemed more concerned with the impact on

---

[15] Ontario Archives, St. Catharines, Lincoln County, Minute Books, 1855-1871, n.p. and Evening Journal, January 13, 1871.

[16] Evening Journal, January 24, 1871.

[17] Daily Times, January 31, 1871.

the white majority than the black minority. The Daily Times argued that "the two races cannot be educated under the same roof. The tone and feeling of this community is most determinedly hostile to anything of the kind." The editorial further argued that white pupils would leave if black children were admitted to the ward schools, and argued that "whatever be the legal 'rights' of the small minority, they can never hope to succeed in achieving their wishes, so long as the unconquerable prejudice against color continues to exist as it does here." Prejudice, it seemed, was a fact of life, and it was not reasonable to expect the white majority to have to suffer in order to accommodate demands from the black minority. The editorial emphasized that it wished to promote the "welfare and educational interests" of the town's Africans "by all possible means." It concluded by advising Africans "(a)s a friend ... to pause before going any further in a course that may eventually create a clamor that will deprive them of the legal technicality to which they cling with such injudicious pertinacity."[16] Indeed, the Daily Times was sincere in believing it was a friend to the black community, and its editorial policy was certainly more sympathetic than the hostile Evening Journal. Yet it did not see integrated schools as desirable at this time.

The editorial in the Evening Journal was stronger in its denunciation of the protest. It argued that it did not understand the protest, and wrote that a desire for education was not their

---

[16] Daily Times, January 31, 1871.

objective because "they have now and for years past have had an excellent school provided for their sole and exclusive use." White society, so it seemed, knew what was best for the Africans, and failed to understand why they were not satisfied. The editorial further contended that "British law and British justice have nothing to do with the merits of this case, for we know that the black people are not deprived of either." The editors emphasized that "if white people have a repugnance to mixing the races indiscriminately, they also have rights and justice which are entitled to consideration."[19]

Having been denied access to the regular schools, the next action was a boycott of the black school. An Evening Journal report commented "that ever since the colored people have got the idea beneath their wool that their children are just as good as those of the 'wite [*sic*] trash,' they have withdrawn them from the school set apart for their tuition, - all but one poor little piccaninny, who puts in an appearance each morning at the regular hour." The editorial further threatened that "even if the Court decides that they have a legal right to send their children to any public school ... the white people will object, and will make the schools altogether too warm for the comfort of the young Africans."[20]

---

[19] Evening Journal, January 31, 1871.

[20] Evening Journal, February 20, 1871.

This boycott, however, was long lasting. The 1871 census, conducted in the spring of that year, showed that only 18% of black children between the ages of 6 and 16 (20 out of 112) in the town of St. Catharines were attending school.[21] Amongst those boycotting were many who had been top students at the St. Paul's Ward Colored School including the children of the Sims, Grant, Graves, Cornish, Vina, Hutchison, Page, and Davis families.[22] Yet this boycott failed to accomplish anything as the common schools remained closed to African children. Public meetings, petitions to the board of trustees, bloc voting, and a city wide boycott had failed to accomplish anything. According to a letter written to the Daily Times, at least one black family left the country because of the school dispute. One woman had gone "off to Ohio to find a place where she can obtain for her children an education that is denied them in this land of British freedom."[23]

The problem could not hope to be rectified because the majority of the white residents saw the situation differently from the black population. The Africans, in the words of a newspaper editorial, wanted "equality with the whites," and this meant attending schools in the wards where they lived, and not being denied access to schools on account of their colour. The attitude

---

[21] Ontario Archives, Microfilm of 1871 Census Rolls, St. Catharines City.

[22] Ontario Archives, Microfilm of 1871 Census Rolls, St. Catharines City and Daily Times, August 1, 1870.

[23] Daily Times, May 15, 1871.

of at least some in the white community was expressed in a letter to the editor of the Evening Journal. It argued that the black request was an "intrusion on their part," as they had sufficient schools. It argued that "there cannot possibly be any cause of complaint on account of their being gathered together for the benefit of educational instruction."[24] The Daily Times, on the other hand, accused blacks of trying to break down "social barriers which have heretofore prevented the admission of the colored children to the public schools occupied by whites."[25] The white population believed the black population was being treated fairly, and that both sides were being best served by separate educational facilities. Blacks, on the other hand, realized that this was unfair treatment, and were determined to do something about it.

The only course of action left was the court system. Yet even in this approach the black community could not have been overly optimistic. In the Evening Journal of February 3, 1871 a letter had been printed that had been written by J. Gray Hodgins, from the Ontario Department of Education. In his letter to J.E. Cuff, the Chairman of the Board of School Trustees for St. Catharines, Hodgins wrote that the "judgment of the Court Queen's Bench Reports ... is strongly in support of the right to exclude the children of the coloured people from the Common Schools, where Separate Schools

---

[24] Evening Journal, February 2, 1871.

[25] Daily Times, January 31, 1871.

have been established for them."[26] The St. Catharines black community, however, had no other choice since all other approaches had failed. William Hutchison, an American-born labourer who was himself unable to write,[27] had been one of many black parents to have their children denied access to the common schools in late January. Hutchison's son Richard was 12 years old[28] and a good student. Richard had placed first in his class in arithmetic and third in reading during the previous academic year at the coloured school.[29] It was Hutchison who challenged the legality of excluding blacks from common schools, but it was really the African community as a whole that was taking on the school board. The case was heard in late May of 1871. Hutchison stated that he had taken his son to school on January 29 but had been refused admission by the teacher "on the ground of his color." He then approached the Board of School Trustees who also refused to admit him "on account of his being a colored child and the son of a negro." In court, Hutchison's lawyer argued that his client and other property owning blacks had paid taxes for the "ordinary common schools," and had never been directly taxed for the colored school. Furthermore, the lawyer argued that "for some time past one or more colored children

---

[26] Evening Journal, February 3, 1871.

[27] Ontario Archives, Microfilm of 1871 Census Rolls, St. Catharines City.

[28] Ontario Archives, Microfilm of 1871 Census Rolls, St. Catharines City.

[29] Daily Times, August 1, 1870.

had been admitted into and educated in one of the common schools." The defence countered by arguing that blacks had petitioned for a separate school in the mid-1840s and that the district council had passed a by-law placing the black population in a separate school division. The main thrust of the argument for the defence, however, was that the common schools were too crowded. The Chairman of the Board argued that if the separate school was closed and the black children were "forced into other schools, it would endanger the health of the children from their overcrowded state." The Local Superintendent of Schools, who also worked as a physician, echoed these claims and argued that placing black children in the common schools "would be attended with evil consequences from a sanitary point of view."[30]

The judge accepted the argument of the defence that there was "not accommodation for the applicant's son in the school in question," and refused Hutchison's request. The judge acknowledged, however, that overcrowding was the only grounds on which the application was refused. The separate school had been established in 1846, before the 1850 act that had authorized the establishment of such schools, and there was therefore no justification for refusing the child on the basis of his colour. The trustees were ordered to pay the costs of the application since they admitted that Hutchison's child had been refused because he

---

[30] Upper Canada Reports, vol. 31 (Toronto, 1872), pp. 274-276.

was black.[31] The legal system had proved disappointing to the black community because blacks were not allowed access to the common schools. The underlying reason was the refusal of white parents to allow large numbers of black children into the common schools. Overcrowding was merely a convenient excuse. The court ruling had done nothing to end separate schools, but had merely reinforced them.

Separate schools remained in St. Catharines despite the best efforts of the black community. White St. Catharines was not ready to admit blacks into common schools, and believed that separate schools were in the best interest of all concerned. Despite the apparent hopelessness of the situation, the black community continued to try to gain admission to the common schools. In response to this continuing protest, the School Trustees called a meeting with the black community in late July, but no Africans attended. Instead, a letter was left for the Chairman which reiterated African dissatisfaction with the separate school, and requested admission to the common schools in the wards in which they lived.[32] The anger of the community also was demonstrated when they decided not to have an Emancipation Day celebration in the city in 1871. On July 25 the Evening Telegram noted that the "aristocratic portion of the coloured population resident in St. Catharines will not celebrate the anniversary of West India

[31] Upper Canada Reports, vol. 31, pp. 278-279.

[32] Evening Telegram, July 25, 1871.

Emancipation this year ... but will show their appreciation of Yankee institutions and humbug by holding a pic-nic at Drummondville on the 8th of August."[33] The community followed through on its promise not to celebrate Emancipation Day,[34] although the celebration scheduled for August 8 did not occur either.[35]

Africans continued to push for integrated schools. Appeals to the school board continued until 1873 when the St. Catharines Committee on School Management reported that "mixing coloured and white children in (the) same classes would prove destructive to the efficiency of the schools."[36] Blacks failed in their quest to end segregated schools in St. Catharines in the early 1870s. It is not clear when segregated schools finally disappeared, although the declining black population in the city in the late nineteenth century likely made a separate school less practical. Even after the separate school closed, however, black and white children were educated in different classes and with different teachers for a time.[37] An historian has stated that separate schools existed in

---

[33] Evening Telegram, July 25, 1871.

[34] Evening Telegram, August 2, 1871.

[35] Evening Telegram, August 5, 1871.

[36] as cited in John N. Jackson and Sheila Wilson, St. Catharines: Canada's Canal City (St. Catharines, Ont., 1992), p. 182.

[37] Jackson and Wilson, St. Catharines: Canada's Canal City, p. 182.

St. Catharines until 1883.[38] The fact that integration was eventually achieved hardly enables one to consider the black protest successful. An entire generation of black children who had desired integration had been forced to attend separate schools.

Africans had been unsuccessful in their quest for integrated schools in St. Catharines because, despite their varied tactics, they had not received cooperation from the St. Catharines white community. Some whites had no sympathy for the black plight, saw them as ungrateful, and criticized Africans for making such requests in the first place. Others in the white community pretended to be more sympathetic, but still cautioned blacks not to make too many demands and to be happy with what they had. After all, whites had rights as well. In short, there was no real support from anyone in the white community, and the only difference was between those who rudely refused and those who politely refused the black request.

St. Catharines was not the only place where segregated schools were controversial. Windsor, with its large black population, had long had separate schools. J.L. Dunn, who was one of the more prosperous Africans in that community, led a challenge against separate schools in 1883. Dunn was the manager of the Windsor varnish works, and was referred to in the local newspaper as a "respectable colored man." In September of 1883, Dunn took his daughter to Public Central School, the closest school to where the

---

[38] Simpson, "Negroes in Ontario from early times to 1870," p. 844.

family lived, but the teacher refused to accept her, and told her father to make an application to the school trustees. Dunn left the school and told his daughter to stay until expelled. In fact, as reported in the press, "the plucky little girl refused to go." The issue was discussed at the next meeting of the school board. In 1883, Windsor's colored school was overcrowded. It was a two room school with about 60 lower level children in one room, and 12 to 15 higher level children in the other room. At the meeting, one trustee named McKellar suggested that the higher room in the coloured school be abolished and those students be permitted to attend the Central School. This suggestion elicited great shock from the other trustees who did not want their children to be sitting beside black children, and they accused McKellar "of trying to curry favor with the colored people."[39] With no resolution, Dunn took legal action, and claimed through his lawyer "that the real reason for not admitting his child to the school was that she is a coloured child."

The defendants, undoubtedly aware of the Hutchison case years earlier, were wily enough to refute such charges. They claimed that the girl's colour was not an issue and that she was refused because "there was not accommodation at the school," and because the application "was not made in the regular and proper way." Dunn had apparently not given notice of his intent to move his daughter to another school, required under public school regulations. The

---

[39] Archives of Ontario, Alvin D. McCurdy Papers, F 2076-14, Box 65, Scrapbook, p. 46.

judge ruled in favour of the Windsor Board of Education. He argued in his ruling that Dunn had not complied with the regulations, and that he was satisfied that "there was not accommodation." Furthermore, the judge argued that he did not think that the child "was refused admittance into the Public Central School on account of colour," nor did he think it had been proved "that this was assigned by the teacher or by the trustees as the reasons for such refusal."[40] Once again, the courts had failed blacks in their quest to receive an equal and integrated education. Considering the comments from the trustees at the board meeting noted above, which appeared in the newspaper, the judge must have been either quite naive or willing to look away from examples of racism in order to say that he thought race was not a factor in this case.

The hypocrisy of the Dunn case was not missed by some outside observers. The Globe noted in an editorial that it was "rather curious ... that the coloured girl was kept out, not because of her colour, but because there was no room." The editorial further argued that "(i)f it is a fact that there is no room, then it is the duty of the trustees to make more." The Globe accurately observed that "colour prejudice lies at the bottom of all the difficulty," and then went on to argue that "in this Canada of ours no one has a right to exclude any child from the Public Schools of the country on account of colour or caste." The newspaper then challenged those who were "haters of a coloured skin" to challenge

---

[40] The Ontario Reports, vol. 6 (Toronto, 1885), pp. 125-128.

the law on this point, and confidently noted that it would have a result that would not be "particularly satisfactory to those who believe in God's image in ivory and take no stock in God's image of ebony."[41]

The Globe, however, was being far too optimistic. In fact, the interpretation of the Separate Schools Act of 1850 had made it consistently clear that blacks could be forced to attend separate schools. Furthermore, challenging the law had repeatedly proved fruitless. Loopholes and excuses were consistently found in court challenges. The image that Canada's justice and legal system was free of racism, seemingly being suggested by the Globe, was simply a myth. It is worth noting that in the Dunn case, however, the defenders of segregated schools now chose to deny that the reasons were racial in origin, as had been the case in earlier years. The persistence of the black community's opposition to separate schools during these years led opponents of mixed schools to sidestep the issue rather than deal with it directly.

Indeed, there is evidence of black opposition to separate schools in most places where such schools existed. Black pleas for integration continually fell on deaf ears. Mrs. Levi Foster of Amherstburg, whose husband operated a livery establishment and ran stages between Amherstburg and Windsor,[42] sent a letter to the school trustees in 1871 requesting that her child be admitted to

---

[41] The Globe, October 23, 1883.

[42] Ripley, The Black Abolitionist Papers, vol. 2, p. 481.

the common school. Her husband received a terse reply stating that:

> The trustees are of the opinion that it is inexpedient to alter the present arrangement of the different departments inasmuch as the coloured dept. is sufficient for the wants of the coloured people supporters of the common school.[43]

Again, the white trustees argued that they knew what was best for the black population. They saw no need to change the system because the current system was already "sufficient." It was their view, not that of the petitioners, that mattered. Separate schools remained in Amherstburg. By the early 1870s separate schools had also become unpopular with Colchester's African population. The 1871's Superintendent's Report that the "coloured people appear now resolved to discontinue their Schools, and demand admittance into the neighbouring white schools."[44] The extent to which Africans were prepared to go to draw attention to their plight can be seen by the actions of Robert Thornton. In 1878 he voyaged to England carrying a protest to Queen Victoria concerning the school situation in Colchester Township.[45] Thornton argued that some black families were unable to send their children to any school, and that even in places where coloured schools had closed blacks were still

---

[43] as cited in Simpson, "Negroes in Ontario from Early Times to 1870," p. 576.

[44] Ontario Department of Education, Annual Report of the Normal, Model, High and Public Schools of Ontario for the year 1871, part 3, p. 101.

[45] Archives of Ontario, Alvin D. McCurdy Papers, F 2076-11-0-14, p. 15.

kept out of the common schools.[46] Although Thornton did not see the Queen he was able to draw attention to the school situation in the province.[47]

The fact that the presence of separate schools was a serious grievance was also demonstrated at the 1877 convention of Essex County black men. The first resolution passed at this meeting demanded

> a special enactment that will throw open the door of public schools in the Dominion to the admission of children of all classes, and that will inflict a fine or imprisonment, or both, upon any trustee, superintendent, or teacher that will refuse a child admission on account of its color; and upon any teacher who will refuse or neglect to teach a child on these grounds.

An editorial in the Messenger, when discussing the convention, explained why separate schools were so unsatisfactory. Why, it questioned, "should our children be compelled to pass by schools in the immediate neighborhood, and for the support of which our property is taxed, to go to schools set apart in a remote part of town?" The editorial then asked: "Is not the consciousness of mutual and physical inferiority implied in this restriction, sufficient to repress every manly aspiration in a boy of spirit?"[48] Separate schools, in the eyes of the black community, were inferior to common schools, and therefore unsatisfactory. Black children

---

[46] Winks, The Blacks in Canada, p. 375.

[47] Archives of Ontario, Alvin D. McCurdy Papers, F 2076-11-0-14, p. 15.

[48] Baldwin Room, A.R. Abbott Papers, Scrapbook 2, folder 1, p. 39.

would not be able to achieve their full potential in an environment where they were continually being reminded they were different, and inferior.

Even in places where separate schools were not present, segregation often existed. In the 1880s a teacher in Harrow lost her job because she tried to force integration. In that community, many whites had wanted separate schools, but the small size of the community made this idea impractical. Agitation occurred amongst the white parents which led to the idea of having the black children in classes by themselves. One teacher, Miss Patterson, refused to do this and lost her job as a result.[49]

A school picture for the Colchester No. 2 school in 1888 illustrates the extent to which segregation could be taken in Ontario's nineteenth century education system. The black teacher and six black students stood by themselves off to the side while the white teachers and pupils stood in front of the school house. A gap separated the two groups with the Africans looking quite isolated.[50] Colchester was not unique in this regard. The school picture for a Windsor high school in 1888 also showed the black children standing together, although they were not physically separated from the white children as in the Colchester picture.[51]

---

[49] Archives of Ontario, Alvin D. McCurdy Papers, F 2076-14, Box 65, Scrapbook, p. 265.

[50] Archives of Ontario, Alvin D. McCurdy Papers, F 2076-11-0-14, p. 18.

[51] Archives of Ontario, Daniel Hill Black History Research Collection, Windsor Notes (A), MU 9851.

Why were whites so adamant that blacks stay out of common schools? Superintendent reports provide clues as to why education was such a controversial matter. James Bell's report for Essex county emphasized that while "there is no animosity against the coloured people in the ordinary out-door business of life there is a deeply rooted prejudice against admitting them to a footing of equality in matters of a more strictly social nature." The report further noted that there could be grave consequences for whites who did not follow societal norms. Bell wrote that a "white man who should admit a coloured person to his table, or allow his children to sit beside a coloured child in School would by so doing exclude himself and his family from the society of white persons." He further argued that "(a) feeling so universal, so inveterate, cannot be ignored however much we deplore its existence. It forms ... a rule of action which no father of a family can reasonably be expected to set at defiance."[52] White parents, in other words, should not be blamed for refusing to let black children in their schools. Their actions were completely understandable. It was regrettable, at least in some ways, that prejudice existed, but it was a fact of life, and little could be done about it. Such views ensured that whites who discriminated did not need to feel guilty about their treatment of Africans. White society believed Africans had certain rights in Canadian society, but this did not mean that whites had to socialize with blacks or accept them as equals. It

[52] Ontario Department of Education, Annual Report of the Normal, Model, High and Public Schools of Ontario, part 3, p. 101.

was recognized that mixed schools would automatically lead to social interaction amongst the children, and that made many people in nineteenth century Ontario uncomfortable.

There were still separate black schools in southwestern Ontario in the early 1890s. Some people in the white community continued to insist on the continuation of these schools, often with a stubborn tenacity. To the black community, however, these schools continued to be a sign of inequality and a denial of their rights as Canadian citizens. The fact that separate black schools had been steadily dying out in the bordering American states during the late nineteenth century provided additional evidence that segregation was unacceptable. Detroit's public schools, for example, were integrated in 1871, a result of growing African protest and some favourable court rulings. Separate schools vanished from most other parts of Michigan at about the same time.[53] Cleveland, on the other hand, had integrated public education by the end of the 1840s.[54] A school desegregation law was passed in Ohio in 1887.[55] Yet separate schools still existed in parts of southwestern Ontario in 1890, and nowhere was their presence more of an issue than in Chatham where, despite continual opposition from the black community, forced segregation continued to thrive.

The separate black school in Chatham was generally referred

---

[53] Katzman, Before the Ghetto, pp. 87-90.

[54] Kusmer, A Ghetto Takes Shape, p. 16.

[55] David Gerber, Black Ohio and the Color Line, 1860-1915 (Urbana, Ill., 1976), p. 46.

to as the King Street school, as it was located on the corner of King and Princess streets. It was a brick building that had been built in 1872. Separate schools for blacks, however, had existed in Chatham since 1840 when a log building had been built for the use of the African community.[56] Africans had continually fought for access to the common schools, but were never successful. As had St. Catharines' blacks in the early 1870s, they used a variety of tactics to express their disapproval of separate schools. Some obtained their education elsewhere. According to a black Chatham resident, who wrote a protest letter to the Globe, many African children went to Toronto to be educated so that they could study together with white students.[57] Others, as noted earlier, simply did not attend school.

Protest meetings were another way in which blacks brought attention to their plight. An important meeting was held in May of 1884. Isaac Holden was the chairman, and he introduced W. Greyson, the editor of the Missionary Messenger, who spoke against separate schools. There were, in Greyson's view, several problems with such schools. One problem was that they were against the wishes of the "colored people", and he believed they were "contrary to the law of Canada." He also complained about the quality of the appointments at the school. He stated that the principal was very old and "not physically able to discharge the duties required of

---

[56] J. George Hodgins, The Establishment of Schools and Colleges in Ontario, 1792-1910, vol. 1, (Toronto, 1910), p. 185.

[57] The Globe, July 27, 1887.

him," and noted that his literary abilities were "twenty-five years behind the age." Another speaker, a boot and shoe manufacturer and dealer named Mr. N. Murray,[58] complained that parents were unable to send their children to the public school in the wards in which they lived and paid taxes, and were all forced to attend the one black school. He argued that it was a grave injustice that many "respectable families" that lived one or two miles away had to send their children past "schools in the streets and communities in which they reside, to an inferior school in the other end of the town." The meeting concluded by appointing a committee to prepare a grievance to present to school officials. A report on the meeting appeared on the front page of the Chatham newspaper giving prominent publicity to the event.[59]

A man named Senix Bannister used a different protest tactic. In September of 1887 he wrote a letter requesting a refund of his school taxes because his children had been refused admittance to a regular school.[60] The letter stated that:

> I beg to demand of your Board the sum of $3.85 school taxes ... on the ground among others that my children were peremptorily refused permission to the Forest (sic) street school in said town of Chatham, on the ground (I suppose) that they were colored.

Bannister further threatened to bring an action for damages unless his money was immediately returned, and also applied for a mandamus

---

[58] Kent County Directory 1880 (Chatham, 1880),p. 84.

[59] Chatham Weekly Planet, May 29, 1884.

[60] Gwendolyn Robinson and Jane Robinson, Seek the Truth: A Story of Chatham's Black Community (n.p., 1989), p. 113.

to compel the teacher and masters to admit his children. The press referred to the letter as an "eye-opener" to the members of the school board,[61] but nothing appears to have been done about it.[62]

In January of 1888, N. Murray, who had spoken at the 1884 protest meeting, moved at a school board meeting "that no child shall be refused admission to the public schools on account of race or color" and "that no teacher under this Board shall object to receiving said children in the school district they live in." Indeed, this request seemed quite modest. All the black community asked was that their children not have to cross town to attend school, but instead be able to enroll in the school closest to their residence. Most blacks lived near the black school, so this approach would not have led to massive numbers of blacks attending schools in predominantly white neighborhoods. This motion was defeated at the meeting, however.[63] At the February meeting, Murray moved a similar motion by arguing that no teacher should object to the "admission of any child, white or colored, in the schools of the board, district or school locality they reside in." The resolution was discussed briefly, but was left over for one month.[64] Complaints at school board meetings appeared to be going nowhere.

---

[61] Chatham Tri-Weekly Planet, September 7, 1887.

[62] The October school board meeting was discussed in the press, but there was no mention of Bannister's letter. See Chatham Tri-Weekly Planet, October 5, 1887.

[63] Chatham Tri-Weekly Planet, January 6, 1888.

[64] Chatham Tri-Weekly Planet, February 8, 1888.

In November of 1888 Murray complained again about blacks being forced to attend separate schools. He emphasized that Africans "were compelled to go to King st. school no matter in what part of the town they lived, and they had to get along with 'rejected' teachers."[65]

In the late 1880s Africans seemed no closer to integrated schools than before. It is noteworthy, however, that some whites supported integrated schools, and conceded that African complaints had some validity. Murray's proposals at both the January and February meetings were seconded and one Chatham newspaper, the Banner, was accused by the town's other paper, the Planet, of trying to stir up bad blood between the races by demanding equal treatment for blacks and whites in matters related to school.[66] At the November school board meeting two trustees agreed with Murray that something had to be done about the school situation. Mr. Jas. Holmes and Mr. Singer both agreed that "an injustice was done by treating King st. school as a colored separate school." The trustees argued that if Africans "were not offered educational facilities, but allowed to grow up on the streets, it need not be surprising if they contacted evil habits."[67] Left unsaid, but undoubtedly inferred, was the idea that these 'evil habits' could lead to problems for the community as a whole.

---

[65] Chatham Tri-Weekly Planet, November 21, 1888.

[66] Chatham Tri-Weekly Planet, February 3, 1888.

[67] Chatham Tri-Weekly Planet, November 21, 1888.

Yet these were minority views. Many other people in the white community continued to believe that separate schools were a good idea. A letter to the editor of the Planet from a Chatham resident argued that it was wrong to state that blacks are "illegally deprived of school privileges," and noted that the King street school had "an excellent playground and first class teacher."[66] An editorial in the Planet argued that separate schools were in the best interests of the blacks themselves. It stated that when "colored children are constantly brought into contact with white children and subjected to their taunts and slights the distinction is much more keenly felt than when they attend a school of their own." In this way they could be provided with "all their educational wants," while being defended "from daily insult." The editorial reiterated the same theme that was so common when matters relating to race were discussed in the press. It argued that it was possible to pass a law, but that a law could not enforce more than a "formal observence [sic] ... so far as social intercourse is concerned." The writer further contended that there was no law forcing separate churches, but most blacks attended them, and that "(t)hey are happier and freer by such arrangement." Indeed, the editorial believed separate schools were beneficial for all concerned. The paper also congratulated itself by stating that ever since its inception "it has constantly ... advocated their rights." It did admit that it was unfortunate that some children

---

[66] Chatham Tri-Weekly Planet, January 27, 1888.

had to pass other schools near their home to go to a school a long distance away, but prejudice was a fact of life.[69]

The separate school issue continued to fester. An Afro-American Union League was established in Chatham in early 1891 with the objective of securing for Afro-Canadians "all civil rights granted British subjects by the law." The intention was to establish branch leagues throughout the region, and the hope was that "every person of African descent will do all in their power to insure the better protection of their rights."[70] This league made clear its displeasure about a number of things, and forced school segregation was one of the most important. The fact that segregated schools were eliminated in Dresden in January 1891 showed the merits of protest, and increased dissatisfaction with the situation in Chatham. In Dresden, a mass meeting was held on January 26 to discuss the question of school amalgamation. The meeting was chaired by Mayor Sharpe, and after the discussion the vote revealed "an overwhelming majority in favor of amalgamation."[71] At the meeting one white speaker stated that black children "were untidy and did not go to school clean," but was refuted by the next speaker who noted that there was not a black child in the entire county who was as dirty and untidy as the person who just spoke.[72]

---

[69] Chatham Tri-Weekly Planet, February 3, 1888.

[70] The Plaindealer, February 27, 1891.

[71] The Plaindealer, February 13, 1891.

[72] The Plaindealer, March 20, 1891.

The success in Dresden was evidence to many in the black community of what could be accomplished through effort. The Chatham correspondent for the Plaindealer emphasized that "It now remains with the people. If they sit on the stool of do nothing they will remain just where they are, but if they will rise in their might and work with a will the evils of which they complain will soon disappear."[73] Despite the disadvantages Africans encountered in Ontario they had not given up. They believed that through a strong, united effort the remaining vestiges of racism and inequality could be eliminated. The supporters of the Afro-American Union League believed their success would be greater if they had the support from most of the black community, and although they recognized "there will be some kickers, some 'Judas' who will betray the race to their enemies," it hoped that their numbers would be small and "that the number who come out boldly for justice and right will be great."[74]

Success, however, did not come quickly. In December 1892 the Civil Rights League was again pressing the public school trustees for access to the common schools. A petition was presented requesting that "colored children be allowed to go to the school in the ward in which they live." The petition generated considerable discussion at the meeting. Seven voted against granting the permission, but three members voted in favour of

---

[73] The Plaindealer, March 20, 1891.

[74] The Plaindealer, February 27, 1891.

granting the request. One of the supporters, C.M. Cooper, was black, but the other two were white. One supporter, John Holmes, argued that black children "go to the Collegiate institute and the night school, and there is never any trouble." Singer, the other supporter, stated that he believed "all ratepayers should be treated alike." Those opposed to the motion stated that the issue needed to be studied further, and they should not take any action too quickly, and the matter should be placed in the hands of a committee. It was argued that if blacks were admitted to common schools, the King street school would have to be closed due to a lack of students. Dr. Radley, who opposed admitting black children into white schools, reiterated the comment made so frequently over the years that "the colored children now have a good school and good teachers." After the petition had been defeated, a delegation of blacks from the Civil Rights League asked for the opportunity to speak, which was granted. The chosen speaker, Mr. R.W.S. Johnston, emphasized that most black children in the city did not attend school, and that many simply had to walk too far. The speaker stated that they wished to resolve the matter amicably, but he also made the threat that "we have got the money to go to law with." He concluded by asking the members to "Place yourself in the same position as these poor children, and I think it would enlighten you as to what your duty is."[75]

---

[75] Chatham Daily Planet, December 8, 1892.

The main concern of the trustees seemed to be that allowing black children to attend the school in their ward would lead all blacks to abandon the King Street school and cause overcrowding in others. There was still a large enough African population in the city for parents to be worried about significant numbers of blacks being in the same class as their white children. A letter to the editor of the Chatham Daily Planet, by an African writer, refuted this view. He wrote that King Street school was the most convenient for most of the black children, and argued that these "parents would not think of sending them to any other school. It is convenience and not color that is sought after." The writer offered his assurances that he would continue to send his children to the King Street school, "so long as it has the class of teachers it has now and the Board will find this to be the sentiment of the right-minded colored people." Instead, the writer argued that whites living near the King Street school would send their children to that school and the writer contended that the "board may rest assured that the parents of colored children would see that their children treat the white children with the same respect as they themselves wish to be treated."[76]

The committee established to look at the co-education question reported at the next meeting that they were in favour of recommending that schools be opened to all children "without distinction of color." This report, however, was not adopted and

---

[76] Chatham Daily Planet, December 13, 1892.

the board decided to leave matters with the Inspector "to regulate and direct the attendance of all school children as may be in the best interests of the pupils and of the public."[77] This resolution, of course, left the situation as it had been, and resolved nothing. The discussion at the meeting followed the same pattern as the previous meeting. Those who supported leaving the situation as it was had two main arguments. First, they argued that it was too dramatic a change to make quickly, and secondly they noted that the current situation was satisfactory to all concerned. Mr. Wilson argued that "(h)armony now existed among all." He further contended that he "personally would never cause any wrong or injustice to be done to the colored race" and that he "always treated the colored people of Chatham as fellow citizens." Those who supported the resolution contended that Africans were not receiving equal rights. Singer argued that "we had no power through our inspector to send children from one end of town to the other on account of color." John Holmes challenged the members to just "come right out plain and say they did not want colored children to go to white schools." Cooper simply stated that he hoped blacks would take legal action to get access to the common schools.[78]

Africans continued to push for integrated schools in Chatham. They realized that in order to fully prosper in Canada they had to

---

[77] Chatham Daily Planet, December 21, 1892.

[78] Chatham Daily Planet, December 22, 1892.

be immersed with the surrounding population. An African who wrote a letter to the Plaindealer in January 1893 emphasized this point. The letter commended Mr. Shadd, the principal of the black school, for trying to abolish his own school, a tactic which would have cost him his job if he had been successful. Yet the writer noted that Shadd "sees, with other rising young men of our race, that our recognition depends largely upon our success to have a common interest, sympathy, and school with others."[79]

Two parents, Mrs. Hansboro and Mrs. Griffin, took their children to the nearest school, but were refused admission by the principal.[80] After this failure, the next tactic was to raise money to fight the Chatham school board in court. The Civil Rights League raised the money, and Africans in Chatham were encouraged to contribute to the fund in columns from the Chatham correspondent of the Plaindealer. In February, it noted the three types of Africans in the city. There were in the first instance those who "have sympathy for the efforts ... to do away with caste schools here. That's good." The second group included those who expressed the same desire "with a five dollar bill. That's better." The correspondent, however, criticized a third group who stay aloof from the cause, and exclaimed "Fie upon the black man who can spend any amount of money in a saloon ... and cries, 'no funds' when called upon to show his colors." The writer emphasized how

---

[79] The Plaindealer, January 20, 1893.

[80] Dawn of Tomorrow, May 6, 1927.

important it was for all blacks to contribute to the cause. The article noted that many Africans in Chatham shamed the whites of the city for permitting separate schools, but the writer chastised the black population of Chatham for allowing the situation to exist.[61]

Ultimately the threat of a lawsuit helped end separate schools in Chatham. The Kent County Civil Rights League gathered sufficient funds to take the case to court, and the school board backed down. The school board was advised by their solicitor that legal action was pending, and that they would no longer be able to prevent black children from attending ward schools.[62] The lawyer, Mr. Atkinson, informed the school board that no child between the ages of five and twenty-one could be discriminated against on the basis of colour, and he advised the board to reconsider their refusal to admit the black children who had applied.[63] Finally, in April 1893 the parents of black children accomplished their goal, something they had been wanting for more than twenty years. The children who had applied for transfers and admission to the various ward schools were admitted. The Plaindealer responded with the phrase "Well done young men."[64]

---

[61] The Plaindealer, February 17, 1893.

[62] The Plaindealer, March 17, 1893.

[63] The Plaindealer, March 24, 1893.

[64] The Plaindealer, April 14, 1893.

Yet the effort to achieve integrated schools in Chatham had been long and contentious. The historian Jonathan Walton, when discussing this episode, notes that "the school board's decision was courageous and unusual because it was not a reflection of the sentiments of the white majority."[85] One wonders, however, if the board really was courageous. The Civil Rights League was established in 1891 with the primary purpose of ending segregated schools, but it was not until April 1893 that they were actually integrated. The board hardly responded quickly, and tried to postpone dealing with the issue again and again. It was only when their lawyer suggested that they admit black children that they finally ended segregation. (It should, however, be noted that there is no guarantee the Chatham school board would have lost in court, for the legal system had consistently upheld the validity of separate schools.) Furthermore, there were several examples in Ontario and in the United States of cases where separate schools had been ended, such as Dresden in 1891, with considerably less animosity. The description in the Plaindealer for Dresden was that "in one night's legislation the people took a Christian view of the matter and with one strike wiped out separate schools."[86] Separate schools were, in fact, becoming somewhat anachronistic. What may be most striking about Chatham ending separate schools in 1893 was not that it happened so quickly, but that it took so long. Many

[85] Walton, "Blacks in Buxton and Chatham, Ontario, 1830-1890," p. 202.

[86] The Plaindealer, March 20, 1891.

in the white community had demonstrated remarkable stubbornness in holding out for such an extended period, and the fact that integration was accepted so reluctantly indicates that race feelings continued to run high in the city. Blacks in Chatham received some revenge when John Pratt was defeated in his bid to be reelected school trustee. Not only had Pratt been opposed to admitting blacks to the regular ward schools, it was also reported that he did not want them patronizing his ice cream saloon and restaurant either.[87]

Many people in Chatham opposed integrated schools, but these people were not always disliked by blacks. The eulogy offered by the Chatham correspondent of the Plaindealer in May 1893 on the death of Dr. Radley, who had consistently opposed allowing blacks into regular schools, is revealing. The report noted a dilemma concerning Radley. Although he "was an opponent of co-education of the races," it was also acknowledged that "few men would do you a kindness quicker than he," and that "we respected him as a man."[88] The different opinions on the necessity of separate schools was a philosophical difference. Many whites sincerely believed it was not in anyone's best interests that the races be mixed. These differences of opinion did not inevitably have to extend to personal dislike.

---

[87] The Plaindealer, April 7, 1893.

[88] The Plaindealer, May 12, 1893.

The presence of the Kent County Civil Rights League undoubtedly helped the cause since the organization had about 600 members.[69] Other pressures had been exerted on the school board as well. In January of 1893 a Chatham police officer had been killed by a black farmer named George Freeman who lived in Raleigh county. Freeman had been threatened with lynching by many in the white community, and this episode added to the already tense racial situation in Chatham. A letter to the editor of a local newspaper saw a connection between the Freeman incident and separate schools. The writer, who lived in North Buxton, saw the Freeman episode as a result of "the strenuous efforts put forward here to retard the intellectual progress of the colored man." The writer noted that ten years earlier the school section in the area where the Freemans lived had been laid out, but wealthy white people "who controlled the section kept back the opening of the school, and it was boldly talked that no school would be opened ... as long as a colored child of school age lived in the section." As a result, the wealthy parents sent their children into neighboring villages where their children were boarded while, in the view of the writer, "the poor whites had to suffer along with the colored ones" without proper schooling. The result was that "the state of affairs became deplorable and many cases of the animal nature cropping up can be pointed out." The letter concluded by criticizing Chatham, "a town that boasts of its fine churches, its great philanthropists and the

---

[69] Dawn of Tomorrow, May 6, 1927.

pure Christian atmosphere," for keeping blacks out of public schools "because it pleased God to make them of a different color."[90] The Chatham correspondent of the Plaindealer also linked the two issues by arguing that "(o)ne-fifth or probably less of the money lawyers will now get out of the unfortunate Freeman's would have opened them a way into the public schools years ago."[91] The newspaper was encouraging Africans to contribute money to the cause of fighting separate schools, but there also seemed to be an implicit assumption that better schooling for the Freeman family might have made this situation less likely to have occurred.

With the arrival of integrated schools in Chatham the question emerged as to whether Mr. Shadd should be able to continue as teacher. A meeting was held by the school board in June to discuss this matter. Many trustees spoke in favour of Shadd, noting he was a good teacher, but others opposed Shadd being rehired, primarily, they claimed, on the grounds of economy. In a close vote, it was decided not to re-engage Shadd.[92] Shadd, who had been a proponent of integrated schools, accepted that his fate was in the best interests of Africans. When told he would lose his teaching position he stated that "that shall not be a barrier to any people's progress."[93] Motions began to be raised at council

---

[90] Evening Record, March 3, 1893.

[91] The Plaindealer, February 3, 1893.

[92] Chatham Weekly Planet, June 8, 1893.

[93] Dawn of Tomorrow, May 6, 1927.

meetings to close King Street school entirely, and although these proposals initially failed the school was soon after closed. It was Cooper, the black representative, who pushed for the closing of the school at the February 1894 meeting. He argued that it "would prove to be to the educational interests of the city and would certainly be in the interest of economy." He further noted that "there was no reason that the colored children now attending the King st. school should not attend the regular ward institutions." The school was becoming small since neighbouring white children were not attending, and some blacks had left to go to other ward schools. In a sense, the King Street school was still a de facto black school since no white children had enrolled. By the summer of 1894, however, with few students, the school closed and the staff was dismissed.[94]

By the turn of the century separate schools for black children were almost non-existent in the province. Yet separate black schools still had some appeal for many in the white community. The Windsor newspaper noted in the summer of 1902 that there "has been considerable discussion of late among the ratepayers ... of establishing a colored separate school." The school never materialized. The newspaper report noted that although there had been a separate school for blacks before it had been "amalgamated with the general public school system at the suggestion of the

[94] Evening Record, July 20, 1894.

colored people themselves."[95] The fact that this issue continued to be discussed illustrates the extent to which blacks and whites had different opinions on the appropriateness of having separate schools.

The fact that separate schools steadily died out during the late nineteenth century does not mean white attitudes were becoming more favourable towards blacks. As education became more universal, it was more difficult to prevent blacks from attending school. The example provided by neighbouring states and the dropping African population in the province were contributing factors. How blacks fared in integrated schools is difficult to know. In 1906, however, some schools in the province were asked to assess their "colored children." The response was somewhat mixed. The Chatham school reported that its black pupils did as well as the white children, while the Windsor school said they compared unfavourably to whites in their capacities and attainments. The London school noted that blacks "(e)xcel in mechanical work" but are "inferior in reasoning," while the Windsor school noted that blacks were "good in memory but poor in reasoning." These conclusions fit the stereotyped generalizations of the time by arguing that blacks were more fit for mechanical tasks than intellectual pursuits. Such perceptions held by teachers likely discouraged many promising students. Perhaps more intuitive was a comment made by one unidentified person who noted

[95] Evening Record, August 5, 1902.

that:

> In regard to the average mental capacity of colored pupils it may be stated that there are two factors that should be taken into consideration in making a comparison with the white pupils and that is: That the white child has always the incentive of gain before him and a wide prospect of advancement in business and social life. The colored's child promises (sic) in this respect is limited and not altogether reassuring.[96]

Blacks could see that their job opportunities were limited. An integrated school system did not lead to equality in other parts of life.

---

[96] Baldwin Room, A.R. Abbott Papers, Notebooks, v. 5.

Chapter Four: Different Perceptions of Life in Ontario: Blacks, Whites, and the Celebration of Emancipation Day

Ontario's white community did not see race relations as a serious problem in the years from 1870 to 1919. Whites generally believed that blacks were well treated in the province. Many Africans, on the other hand, recognized that they were not receiving equality. These different views can be seen especially clearly through a study of Emancipation Day celebrations in Ontario. Emancipation Day was the most important annual event for the province's African population. This event was celebrated each year on August 1 to commemorate the act of the British government in abolishing slavery throughout its colonies in 1834. Festivities in Upper Canada occurred as early as 1835, when a celebration was held in St. Catharines.[1] From this time until well into the twentieth century celebrations were held in several parts of the province including Chatham, Windsor, Hamilton, Toronto, and St. Catharines, as well as in many smaller centres. Africans from around the province traveled many miles to attend these events. Many blacks came from neighbouring American states as well.

Although the nature of the celebration varied from place to place and from year to year, the events usually consisted of a parade, picnic, sports events, and an evening dance. A significant part of the day occurred when prominent members of both the black

---

[1] McKivigan and Silverman, "Monarchical Liberty and Republican Slavery," Afro-Americans in New York Life and History, vol. 10, no. 1 (1986), p. 9.

and white communities gave speeches. Amongst the white speakers were politicians such as the local members of the federal and provincial parliaments, the mayor of the host city, and aldermen. Black community leaders, such as ministers of black churches, would also speak and, because large numbers attended these celebrations, this gave members of the black community their best opportunity of the year to address others of their race.

The opening speeches delivered at these events were generally given by representatives of the host cities, such as mayors and aldermen. These talks were primarily designed to welcome those attending, both those who were resident in the host city, and the many who arrived from out of town. Mayor Little of London pronounced at the 1896 event that the "citizens of London were always glad to welcome the colored citizens from other places,"[2] while in 1893 Mayor Martin in Chatham emphasized that "the welcome of Chatham's citizens is extended to the colored visitors."[3] Mayor Ribble of Dresden stated at the 1901 celebration in that city that he hoped the celebration would be continued, and "that the number to attend would grow greater each year."[4] Indeed, the fact that large numbers of guests from throughout the province and from the United States attended these events meant that the city could gain significant exposure, and economic benefits, from the day's

---

[2] Daily Free Press, August 4, 1896.

[3] Chatham Daily Planet, August 2, 1893.

[4] Chatham Daily Planet, August 5, 1901.

activities. After welcoming the guests, white politicians tended to emphasize the bravery and courage demonstrated by the British in liberating the slaves.[5] At the 1889 event in Chatham, for example, Mayor Malcolmson commended the Emancipation Act, and applauded the famed British abolitionist William Wilberforce for his efforts.[6] Most speeches tended to be short and uplifting, although there were exceptions. Mayor McLellan of Hamilton spoke twice at the 1891 celebration. He made a brief speech of welcome during the afternoon celebration at Dundurn park, then spoke again at the conclusion of the evening program by reading a "long essay on the history of slavery and its abolition," a paper that took nearly half an hour to read to a restless audience. The newspaper report observed that by reading this essay he had shown "bad judgment and worse taste" by so inflicting the weary people, and that "(f)ew of the people heard it and fewer still wanted to hear it." The predominantly black audience was not interested in hearing a lengthy lecture on slavery from their white mayor, but instead a cry was heard that Professor Gant, the black barber who was also a noted orator, give a speech, but he declined.

Generally, introductory speeches praised the Africans and the country as a whole, and failed to dwell on areas of controversy. An example of the rosy picture painted by these speakers was McLellan's 1891 address where he stated that "Whether a man is

---

[5] Baldwin Room, A.R. Abbott Papers, Scrapbook 2, folder 1, p. 17.

[6] Chatham Tri-Weekly Planet, August 2, 1889.

black or white, it makes no difference; if we do right in the sight of God, we will be all right."[7] Mayor Martin of Chatham noted in his 1893 speech, which occurred shortly after schools in that city had been integrated, that "we are all on the same footing. We have the same schools and churches, and no longer is that heinous line drawn between the races."[8] That same year, two white politicians in Windsor, the federal member of parliament William McGregor and the former member of provincial parliament Pacaud, made speeches advising blacks "to respect themselves" and to "prepare themselves for the positions that were open to them." They argued that by doing this blacks could gain the support and respect of the white population.[9] Chatham's Police Magistrate Houston also placed the onus on Africans to gain acceptance in Canadian society. He told his audience that "(t)he more you honor yourselves the more others will honor you." He then told blacks to "Live down all prejudice against you and strive to act so that you need never be ashamed of your conduct."[10] The onus appeared to be on blacks to prosper in Canada, and the speeches did not suggest that white society had to make any changes to enable blacks to gain full rights. The speakers implied that if Africans worked hard, they would be successful. White politicians frequently lauded the Emancipation

---

[7] Hamilton Spectator, August 4, 1891.

[8] Chatham Daily Planet, August 2, 1893.

[9] The Evening Record, August 2, 1893.

[10] Chatham Daily Planet, August 2, 1893.

Act, and while W. Hall, the Conservative candidate for West Kent, acknowledged in 1897 that emancipation "was but a simple act of justice," and that Africans had since proved themselves as worthy and loyal as whites, he also emphasized that these facts should not in the least detract from the virtue of the act.[11] In other words, the argument that the British had simply done what was right and therefore need not be commended was insufficient, and that the act needed to be celebrated.

Another theme of white speakers was to praise blacks and acknowledge the significant strides they had made in Canadian society. Communities often had especially successful Africans who had obtained positions normally held by whites. The people held out for praise were usually doctors, lawyers, or aldermen. Mayor Smith of Chatham observed in 1899 the advances that had been made by blacks, and noted that their ability and industry had been "shown in the confidence placed in them by the people since they had been elected to the council and to the board of health." Smith then singled out the former Chatham alderman Henry Weaver as "a good representative of the thrift and intelligence of the race."[12] Smith also boasted in a moment of civic boosterism that Chatham was "the most cosmopolitan city in Canada."[13] At the 1897 Chatham event, Hall commended the black barrister Delos Davis. He stated

---

[11] Daily Planet, August 3, 1897.

[12] Daily Planet, August 2, 1899.

[13] Evening Banner, August 2, 1899.

that Davis wears "the robe of a barrister, with honor to himself and the profession he adorns," and that "his services were sought by both white and colored clients."[14]

Black speakers also used Emancipation Day speeches to praise Great Britain, the British empire, and Canada. Isaac Holden, a prominent black citizen of Chatham, used part of his 1882 address to expound on the philanthropy of William Wilberforce and his contemporaries.[15] In 1889 he stated that he was proud to be a citizen of the province and that he "would not be found ungrateful or lacking in loyalty if called upon to prove it."[16] In the 1886 celebration in Hamilton, Rev. J.A. Johnson of the African Methodist Episcopal church of that city praised the important personalities that had produced freedom for the black race.[17] Rev. Walter Hawkins, at the 1871 celebration, praised British and Canadian freedom, and according to a newspaper account spent considerable time discussing "the progress of our country."[18] Emancipation Day was regarded as an important day because it was a time to remember those who had made freedom possible. Reverend A. Brown of the British Methodist Episcopal church urged blacks at the 1883 Toronto celebrations to continue to hold the first of August as a day of

---

[14] Daily Planet, August 3, 1897.

[15] The Globe, August 2, 1882.

[16] Chatham Tri-Weekly Planet, August 2, 1889.

[17] Hamilton Daily Spectator, August 3, 1886.

[18] Chatham Weekly Planet, August 3, 1871.

remembrance and thanksgiving.[19]

Many of the speeches given by blacks, at least those reported by the mainstream press, tended to be uplifting. These discourses encouraged others of their race to work hard in order to be successful. It was often emphasized that individual success would benefit the black race as a whole. Isaac Holden, at the 1871 celebration in Chatham, outlined black accomplishments in Canada, and urged young black men "to strive and become merchants of the first rank."[20] Holden noted in his address to the 1882 celebration that his people should "make the best of themselves, and lose no opportunity to cultivate all the humanities, that their race might prove they were worthy the freedom given them."[21] A speaker from a black lodge, Elder Masterson, expressed similar views at the 1885 celebration in London. He urged "his hearers to united, harmonious action in order to advance the welfare of the African race." He further argued that knowledge and education were the keys to success, and that through these means blacks "would soon prove to the world they were as capable of progress as any other race on the globe."[22]

These examples, however, represent only one side of the African attitude towards Emancipation Day. Others in the black

---

[19] The Globe, August 2, 1883.

[20] Chatham Weekly Planet, August 3, 1871.

[21] Toronto World, August 2, 1882.

[22] The Globe, August 4, 1885.

community disliked Emancipation Day celebrations, and wanted them to cease. One such person was Anderson Ruffin Abbott. Abbott was the first Canadian-born black doctor, and had served with the northern army during the Civil War. He had been born in Toronto, but lived in Chatham during the 1870s, where he was quite active in the community. Among other things, he served for a while as the President of the Chatham Literary and Debating Society.[23] In October of 1873 he wrote a letter to the Missionary Messenger where he stated that "I am of the opinion that it is unexpedient [sic] to further celebrate the liberation of the slaves in the West Indies, and I am confident that this opinion is entertained by a large number of our people, as is evinced by the discontinuance of this celebration in many important places." Abbott admitted that even when he was a child he "instinctively shrank from the celebration of this event," and that he remained uncomfortable about celebrating an event which marked a period in the history of African peoples "fraught with the deepest humiliation." He also disliked many of the speeches that were given at the events. He commended the speaker at the 1873 celebration at St. Catharines because he had stepped away from "the rut of the cruelly-downtrodden-poor-negro themes of the First of August." What especially seemed to bother Abbott, however, was his sense that the event only engendered "a feeling of enmity between the two

[23] Hill, The Freedom-Seekers, pp. 206-207.

classes, which should not be in this counrty."[24] Reminding Africans of their previous low position as slaves and reminding whites of their role in keeping them in servitude hardly seemed, at least in the eyes of Abbott, subjects to continually discuss.

Abbott continued these thoughts in an 1874 letter. He argued that by celebrating Emancipation Day Africans were classifying themselves "as a singular people, characterized by not very enviable antecedents," and that furthermore the event fostered "those invidious distinctions, which militate against ... harmonious co-operation with other classes in all that pertains to the glory and prosperity of our common country."[25] Abbott did not like Africans being regarded as different from other Canadians, and since Emancipation Day emphasized these differences, he was strongly opposed to it.

In 1874 Chatham did, in fact, cancel its Emancipation Day celebration and instead held a Reform demonstration. The purpose of the demonstration was to condemn the Conservative party and support the Reform party, which had gained power in the province in 1872 after a long period of Conservative rule. The de facto purpose, however, appeared to be to provide opportunities for Africans to air a number of grievances. One speaker, Mr. Jones, referred to the daughter of a man who had helped defend the

---

[24] Baldwin Room, A.R. Abbott Papers, Scrapbook 2 folder 1, p. 17.

[25] Baldwin Room, A.R. Abbott Papers, Scrapbook 2, folder 1, p. 31.

province during the 1837 rebellion. This woman had been refused soda water at a "refreshment room" in Chatham because she was black. In another case, two men had been refused for the same reason. The men, however, had been brought before the Police Magistrate "on a charge of disorderly conduct because they had remonstrated against such distinction being made." What had especially drawn the ire of the speaker was what had happened in court. The soda water man admitted that he refused to sell the beverage to the men because they were black, but instead of being reprimanded the Magistrate bound the two black men to keep the peace for twelve months.[26] Abbott also spoke at the Reform demonstration. He emphasized the need for change when he said:

> (L)et me say to any colored man who is satisfied with his status in this country, who feels that he is justly dealt with, who experiences none of the ascerbity [sic] of invidious distinctions on account of color, who thinks that things are well enough as they are, why let him vote the Conservative ticket.[27]

The speakers disliked the Conservative party because the Tories had failed to acknowledge that Africans had genuine grievances. Under the Reformers, on the other hand, Abbott acknowledged that some of these complaints had been addressed. Twelve black Justices of the peace had been appointed, and blacks were now sitting on the Grand Jury. There was still much progress to be made, however, and the cancellation of Emancipation Day and its replacement with a

---

[26] Baldwin Room, A.R. Abbott Papers, Scrapbook 2, folder 1, pp. 45-46.

[27] Baldwin Room, A.R. Abbott Papers, Scrapbook 2, folder 1, pp. 34-35.

demonstration was designed to address some of these problems. Abbott outlined many of these grievances in a lengthy speech. He noted that blacks had received anonymous letters intimidating them from settling in certain places, that they had been prevented from entering "places of public entertainment," and "refused the privilege of riding in public conveyances." Furthermore, some Africans had seen their homes surrounded by mobs, and Abbott reminded his listeners how their "mothers, sisters and daughters have been insulted on the streets." Abbott concluded his speech on an optimistic note by saying that these evils were disappearing, but there was a clear challenge to the audience to ensure that progress continued to be made.[28]

Letters of opposition to Emancipation Day were frequent in Chatham throughout the 1870s. An 1876 letter to the Chatham Banner, written by E.C. Cooper, the President of the Chatham Literary Society, emphasized that Africans were unhappy with the poor treatment they were receiving in Chatham. Cooper noted that blacks visiting Detroit "can and do go to the first hotels in the City," and that when there receive the same treatment as the other guests. He also noted that when he visited Windsor he ate "at a first-class restaurant amongst white gentlemen and ladies." The situation was much worse in Chatham. The writer noted that "when our friends from Detroit or elsewhere come to our town, there is but one Hotel at which they can or ever could get accommodation."

---

[28] Baldwin Room, A.R. Abbott Papers, Scrapbook 2, folder 1, pp. 33-34.

He argued that if Chatham had an Emancipation Day and blacks came to celebrate they would find that "there is but one place where any of them could get a glass of soda water or a dish of ice-cream, unless they would go out of doors and eat or drink it."[29] Simply put, the writer did not want a celebration to take place in Chatham where the lack of black rights would be a source of embarrassment to the local African population.

An 1879 editorial in the Missionary Messenger outlined additional problems with Emancipation Day. The editorial argued that African concerns should be directed towards the present, where significant problems existed, rather than bemoaning the past. It argued that "(w)hat we have to contend for now is the obliteration of class distinctions, based on the color of the skin."[30] It was time to stop celebrating the past, especially since there were so many other problems that had to be solved. Self congratulatory speeches at Emancipation Days would not solve any of these problems.

One consistent viewpoint that emerges from critiques of Emancipation Day was the contention that Africans should be looked upon the same way as their white brethren. Why were Africans expected to be so thankful for their freedom, while no such expectation was placed upon white minority groups? Cooper, in an

---

[29] Baldwin Room, A.R. Abbott Papers, Scrapbook 2, folder 1, pp. 12-13.

[30] Baldwin Room, A.R. Abbott Papers, Scrapbook 2, folder 1, p. 47.

1876 letter to the editor of the Chatham Banner, argued that there was no more reason for blacks to celebrate Emancipation Day than for the Irish to celebrate the Irish Emancipation Bill of 1829. He further argued that if Irishmen were told that they owed their current position "to the liberality and justice of the British people" Irishmen throughout the world would "receive it as an insult."[31] It especially irked members of the African community when blacks were criticized in the local press for not celebrating Emancipation Day in 1877. An article in the Chatham Planet had rhetorically asked:

> Do our colored friends forget that to British liberality and regard for justice they owe their present disenthralled position? It is an anniversary that should be dear to every lover of liberty and the day ought to be handed down, and its memory cherished.[32]

Nowhere were the different opinions on Emancipation Day better illustrated than here. So far as the Planet was concerned it was the responsibility of the black community to pay homage to the British, who had freed them and given them a good life in Canada. Emancipation Day should be, in this view, a day of celebration, and the fact that Africans may still have had complaints about their Canadian home was never considered. A member of the African community responded to this view by asking, "(i)s it the duty of the colored people of Canada to celebrate the day?" He further

---

[31] Baldwin Room, A.R. Abbott Papers, Scrapbook 2, folder 1, pp. 12-13.

[32] Baldwin Room, A.R. Abbott Papers, Scrapbook 2, folder 1, pp. 10-11.

argued that "if it is a day that should be dear to every lover of liberty, what did the editor of the Planet do on that day to hand down its memory?"[33] If this day was so important, surely it was the responsibility of all Canadians to celebrate the event, not just members of the African community. This double standard was obvious to at least some members of the black community, but apparently not to whites.

The letter writer also believed that Africans should not be expected to be more grateful for the freedom they discovered in Canada than any other group of people. While acknowledging that blacks owed Canadians gratitude for protection from the tyranny of slave masters, the letter also pointed out that "this country is an asylum [for] all those who find their aspirations curbed by proscriptive legislation." The letter pointed out that the person chastising blacks for not being thankful enough to British justice "is as much indebted to the Canadian people for the liberties he enjoys as much as any one else."[34]

Not all blacks boycotted Emancipation Day. Many used the opportunity to draw attention to the many problems blacks experienced in Canada. Even those Africans who made speeches that were generally positive and uplifting would often acknowledge that Africans still had not achieved equality in their Canadian home.

[33] Baldwin Room, A.R. Abbott Papers, Scrapbook 2, folder 1, pp. 10-11.

[34] Baldwin Room, A.R. Abbott Papers, Scrapbook 2, folder 1, pp. 10-11.

In his 1871 speech at the Chatham celebration, Holden confidently asserted that Canada would eventually "be free of all embarrassments, and that a man would be a man," implying that colour would be of no consequence.[35] These comments suggested, however, that prejudice was a problem, and that blacks acknowledged that they had not yet achieved equal citizenship rights. Other speakers at the celebration were less subtle. Some of these critics were American blacks. The fact that many Americans came to the celebrations meant that the relative merits of Canada and the United States generated discussion. One American speaker, Mr. Richards[36] of Detroit, criticized Chatham for the presence of separate schools for blacks, claiming that none existed in Detroit, the last having disappeared within the past two or three years. Another African-American at the 1871 event who reprimanded Canada's treatment of blacks was Isaac Holden's brother, a Cleveland attorney, who "claimed that the American Government was today far in advance of the Canadian, both socially and politically." He stated that "there was to-day more prejudice in the Province of Canada, two to one, than there was in the United States." These comments appear to have generated considerable debate amongst the audience. According to a newspaper report, many found Holden's views "too radical," and Hawkins, a black minister who spoke after

---

[35] Chatham Weekly Planet, August 3, 1871.

[36] Richards was a customs inspector in Detroit and has been described as a "leading black politician" in that city. He was active in having separate schools abolished in Detroit. (Katzman, Before the Ghetto, pp. 4, 85).

Holden, commented "sharply on the speech of his predecessor." Others who were present, however, saw some validity to these criticisms, but optimistically argued that "only a little more time was required to bring those things to the requisite standard in Canada."[37] These comments, however, represented a challenge to the province, and suggested that there was more to Emancipation Day than celebrating the past. It was also a black request that something be done to combat racism and discrimination.

Speeches given by blacks became more critical in later years. By the 1890s, speeches by Africans praising Britain, Canada, and the British Emancipation Act became less common, and complaints by Africans about life in Canada more frequent. It is these speeches that are most revealing of the African attitude. They were often speeches of protest, filled with demands that Africans be granted equal rights. The white press often failed to print excerpts from speeches delivered by Africans, often devoting more attention to the words spoken by white politicians.[38] Consequently, in many cases it is unknown what black speakers said at these events. When speeches were quoted in length they were very different in nature from those of white speakers. Black speakers often repeated the complaints that had been made at celebrations in the 1870s and 1880s. Many of the requests for change were presented in a polite fashion. Rev. R. R. Ball, a black minister from Toronto, spoke at

---

[37] Chatham Weekly Planet, August 3, 1871.

[38] see for example Daily Planet, August 3, 1897.

the 1896 celebration in London. After stating that the main cause of Emancipation Day was "to let the world know that we are a grateful people," and to try "to enthuse into the hearts of our own people love of country," Ball then went on to say that "we, as a race, have not equal rights with our white folks." He emphasized that a black man "has not an equal chance with the white men in obtaining work or position." He concluded by saying that while "Canada has given us a home ... we want her to give us bread. We are willing to stand the test and prove ourselves qualified to fill any high and honorable positions."[39] At the 1897 event in Chatham the Rev. B.B. Johnson of London spoke, and by tracing the history of his race from the abolition of slavery to the present he noted that the course of Africans had been steadily upwards. Yet he also noted that their progress was not yet complete. Johnson noted that blacks would never be satisfied "until they had representatives in the White House and in the Canadian house of parliament."[40] The editor of a black Detroit newspaper, the National Independent, argued at the 1893 event in Chatham that blacks should strive to raise themselves, but also challenged white men "to set aside all prejudice and put colored as well as white men into places of trust and offices of emolument, and so aid them in [their] effort to rise."[41] At the same event the black minister Rev. Josephus

---

[39] Daily Free Press, August 4, 1896.

[40] Daily Planet, August 3, 1897.

[41] Chatham Daily Planet, August 2, 1893.

O'Banyoun began by thanking the mayor for his generous welcome, and then noted that the "deeply rooted prejudice which had so long held the race back from progression had many years ago received its death-blow, but was dying with serpent-like slowness." The tone of O'Banyoun's remarks differed from the speeches given by white politicians that emphasized the importance of Africans taking advantage of opportunities. In O'Banyoun's view, it was white prejudice that had held the African race back, and even though prejudice was dying he contended that it had not been entirely eliminated. O'Banyoun's speech contained a subtle challenge to the surrounding white community.

Some speeches delivered by blacks at Emancipation Days were anything but subtle. The 1891 event in Chatham took place in an atmosphere of considerable turmoil as blacks were in the process of attempting to gain admission for their children to the common schools. Speakers at the event were forbidden to even discuss the subject of emancipation. The chair of the event was the president of the Civil Rights League, and the first speaker was R.L. Holden, who was vice-president of the organization. After outlining the genesis of the Civil Rights League, he outlined the many grievances in the Chatham black community. He noted that black children had to go to the far end of town and attend a separate school because they were denied access to all other schools. He then stated that blacks rarely served on juries, and that they were not able to obtain hotel accommodation, and that the only places blacks received equality in public houses was at the bar, "where a colored

man could drink all the whiskey he pleased." Holden then complained that Africans could not get soda water at one of the fountains in town. Holden asserted that a black man "was just as patriotic, just as willing to die for his country, as a white man and his citizenship should be as fully recognized." The next speaker, Mr. Garrison Shadd of Raleigh, stated he was opposed to annual Emancipation celebrations, which he referred to as "giving thanks for nothing." The last speaker, the Rev. O'Banyoun, also complained about life in Canada and "the social and educational ostracism to which his people were subjected." In O'Banyoun's view what was not needed was any race legislation, but instead enforcement of the laws that already existed. O'Banyoun emphasized that if "these laws had been carried out this gathering wou'd [sic] not be necessary."[42]

Black speakers did not restrict their criticisms to white Canadian society. They often chastised their fellow Africans. Garrison Shadd, falling into the same stereotyped generalizations as many white speakers, noted that his audience "read and think too little and laugh too much." He encouraged the listeners to read the newspapers and acquaint themselves with current events. He noted that "some of you will spend enough on to-day's celebration to supply you with several papers for a year." Like other speakers, Shadd urged Africans to improve themselves by education. O'Banyoun also stressed education and encouraged Africans to store

[42] Chatham Tri-Weekly Planet, August 5, 1891.

their minds "with literature past and current." Holden also encouraged Africans to improve themselves and concluded his talk by encouraging his people "to neglect no legitimate means of self-improvement" and to be "model citizens, and fully avail themselves of all educational advantages within their reach."[43]

Complaints about life in Chatham did not end when schools were integrated in 1893. The speeches at the 1899 celebration in many ways echoed those of earlier in the decade. Thomas Taylor, the first black speaker, noted the efforts of "three colored secret societies to celebrate emancipation day," and noted that this disproved the statement made by some in the white community that "the colored people are not taking care of themselves."[44] The next speaker, Rev. Hackley, noted the irony in celebrating Emancipation Day, a day to honour their freedom. He rhetorically asked his black audience if they were "free to go everywhere," and whether they enjoyed "all the privileges of other taxpayers." Hackley then outlined the grievances Africans still had with life in Chatham. He asked "What has the negro of Kent county done that he is unable to go into the ice cream parlor? What has he done that he should be so ostracized from restaurants?" Hackley emphasized that he blamed neither Canada nor Queen Victoria for this state of affairs, but issued a challenge to his listeners that the problem be rectified by stating that he believed "that there is religion and

[43] Chatham Tri-Weekly Planet, August 5, 1891.

[44] The Daily Planet, August 2, 1899.

brotherhood enough in Chatham to stamp it out."[45] Hackley complained that "(a) man is put to shame when in company with a mother or brother, visiting him from the south ... he enters a restaurant and asks for ice-cream or cream soda and is refused."[46]

Sometimes statements intended as compliments were not appreciated by blacks, and Emancipation Day proved an opportunity to voice displeasure. Reverend Hackley was unhappy with a statement made by a Canadian writer in a Detroit newspaper just prior to the 1899 Chatham event. The writer, apparently with the objective of offering praise, wrote that the Canadian black "is a sober orderly citizen who votes as his convictions lead him."[47] In contrast, he wrote that blacks in the American south were "ravishers," while those in the northern states were "presumptuous."[48] This assertion, Hackley noted, was a credit only on the surface and was in fact "a sham and slur."[49]

The white attitude towards Emancipation Day was much less complex. Editorials about Emancipation Day in Ontario newspapers usually commented favourably on the proceedings and sometimes commended the progress of the black race in the province. The Globe commented in 1882 that a "more orderly celebration was never

---

[45] The Daily Planet, August 2, 1899.

[46] The Evening Banner, August 2, 1899.

[47] Daily Planet, August 2, 1899.

[48] Evening Banner, August 2, 1899.

[49] Daily Planet, August 2, 1899.

held in Chatham,"[50] and the Toronto World lauded Ontario's blacks following the 1883 event by arguing that Emancipation Day demonstrated "the fitness of the colored race for all the freedom and the privileges enjoyed by white men." The editorial further referred to the "material prosperity which the colored people showed," and confidently asserted that "(n)owhere on this continent are there a superior class of that race." The Toronto World also congratulated Canada by saying that "nowhere have they [blacks] a fairer chance in the struggle of life."[51] The Hamilton Spectator commented on the 1878 celebration in that city by noting that "the colored people of this city have reason to congratulate themselves upon the manner in which the 44th anniversary of British West India Emancipation was celebrated yesterday."[52] When the events were free of problems the press praised Africans for their good behaviour. In 1884 the Spectator observed that the "day was observed very quietly and orderly, and in this respect an example was set."[53] The Hamilton Spectator observed after the 1891 celebration in that city that "(n)o more cheerful, orderly or well-mannered crowd ever gathered within the gates of Dundurn."[54] The Globe commended the 1892 event in Toronto organized by the Order of Oddfellows by

---

[50] The Globe, August 2, 1882.

[51] Toronto World, August 3, 1883.

[52] The Spectator, August 2, 1878.

[53] Hamilton Daily Spectator, August 2, 1884.

[54] Hamilton Spectator, August 4, 1891.

noting that they "comported themselves in a most orderly, well-behaved manner, the majority of them being as respectably dressed and well-behaved citizens as any in Toronto."[55] In 1903 the Chatham Daily Planet wrote that the "order maintained during the entire day was perfect,"[56] while the Evening Record noted, during the 1900 celebration in Windsor, that "outside of a little 'loud' language the crowd behaved well."[57]

Sometimes compliments fell into stereotyped generalizations, such as that of the happy-go-lucky African who enjoyed life. The Chatham Daily Planet wrote after the 1901 celebration that "those who celebrated did so in a happy manner which is characteristic of the colored people."[58] London's Daily Free Press noted in 1896, under the headline 'Happy Colored People,' that it was "even a happier throng of colored people than was gathered in the same grounds a year ago."[59] When problems did occur at events, the white media often blamed the handful of whites who attended. The Hamilton Spectator lamented in 1891 that during the evening celebration "small knots of white toughs were allowed to engage in horseplay and disturb the proceedings at their will." The newspaper suggested that there should have been a police presence

---

[55] The Globe, August 2, 1892.

[56] Chatham Daily Planet, August 4, 1903.

[57] Evening Record, August 2, 1900.

[58] Chatham Daily Planet, August 2, 1901.

[59] Daily Free Press, August 4, 1896.

to halt these people.[60] When discussing the large gathering at Sandwich in 1895 the Evening Record noted that "(t)he only scrap known to have taken place at the springs yesterday was between two white men belonging to Detroit, who were only continuing an old feud."[61] The white press did not, however, use Emancipation Day to write editorials to discuss problems faced by the African community, such as white prejudice. It is, of course, not surprising that the white press failed to discuss such matters because they did not believe that blacks were the victims of prejudice in Canada.

The traditional way of celebrating Emancipation Day was falling into disfavour by the 1890s, and some observers noted a lack of interest. The Empire, writing in 1894, argued that "the celebration has fallen into disuse, not because the day is forgotten but because it revives memories of a time when servitude was the degrading badge of the coloured race, a time better buried with the past and forgotten."[62] The Chatham Daily Planet accounted for decreased attendance at the 1901 event in Windsor by noting that many older residents who had relatives among the slaves liberated in 1838 had passed away, as had former slaves from the American south who regarded the day with great excitement. The newspaper observed that the "younger generation is gradually

---

[60] Hamilton Spectator, August 4, 1891.

[61] Evening Record, August 4, 1896.

[62] The Empire, August 1, 1894.

drifting away from the old-time custom."[63] Indeed, the nature of the African population was changing and fewer people would relate to a celebration commemorating the end of slavery. Some reporters commended the changed nature of the black population. The Globe noted in 1892 that younger Africans were much different than their seniors and that they possessed "none of the characteristics, either ill-speech or deportment, for which the old time colored man is famous."[64] It is understandable that the younger generation would feel less strongly about slavery since with each passing year it was more and more remote. Yet despite the claims quoted above, Emancipation Day continued to be celebrated throughout the 1890s and into the twentieth century and did not seem to decline in attendance numbers, especially when one considers the gradually decreasing numbers of blacks living in Ontario. Attendance at events fluctuated from year to year and place to place, but the fact that the event was still popular can be seen by the descriptions for the 1907 and 1909 events in Sandwich, both of which were described as having approximately 10,000 persons in attendance, considerably more than had attended celebrations in that city in the 1890s.[65]

What was perhaps changing was the nature of these celebrations. In Windsor, this transformation had begun by the

---

[63] Chatham Daily Planet, August 2, 1901.

[64] The Globe, August 2, 1892.

[65] Evening Record, August 2, 1907, and August 3, 1909.

early 1890s when two competing celebrations took place in the city. In 1895, for example, the one celebration consisted of speeches by the mayor and prominent members of the city's black community, such as the African Alderman Robert Dunn. While the one event was more cerebral, the celebrants at the competing event had, in the words of the press, "a first class time." At this event there were no speeches, "but there was a balloon ascension." The fact that there was some animosity between the two groups was noted in the local newspaper. Celebrants for both events arrived from out of town and "separated on their arrival into two well defined streams which regarded each other askant and apparently with some degree of contempt."[66] The next year those who celebrated in the more traditional manner headed to London, while the less cerebral celebrants stayed behind in Windsor. Rival celebrations carried on, at least intermittently, for many years.

Did Emancipation Day celebrations bring blacks and whites together, or did they push them further apart? Whites who spoke at events emphasized that whites as well as blacks should participate. During Chatham's 1892 celebration Mr. Campbell, the local MP, argued that the anniversary of Emancipation should be "a red letter day not alone with the colored people, but among all British subjects who loved the British constitution."[67] At the 1893 celebration, Chatham's Mayor Martin noted that he was pleased to

---

[66] The Evening Record, August 1, 1895.

[67] Chatham Daily Planet, August 2, 1892.

see so many whites present "for he believed they too should celebrate the 1st of August."[68] At the same event Chatham's Police Magistrate Houston contended that "(t)his is a day which I believe should be celebrated alike by white and colored."[69] At the 1899 event in Chatham Mayor Smith repeated this theme when he stated that Emancipation Day "should not only be celebrated by the colored people but by the white."[70] African speakers also encouraged white participation, but less regularly than their white counterparts. The general conductor of the 1902 event in Chatham, T.S. Gains of Detroit, announced in an interview with the Chatham Planet that "a general invitation is extended to all the white people as well as the members of the colored race, to attend our banquet and dance to-night. It is their celebration as well as ours."[71]

Yet references to whites by black speakers were rare. The events and sports competitions were aimed at the black population, but whites were not always excluded. The baseball game was frequently between two black teams, but sometimes, such as in Chatham in 1903 it involved a black team playing a white team.[72] Likewise, at the 1907 event the tug-of-war competition was between

---

[68] Chatham Daily Planet, August 2, 1893.

[69] Chatham Daily Planet, August 2, 1893.

[70] Evening Banner, August 2, 1899.

[71] Chatham Daily Planet, August 1, 1902.

[72] Chatham Daily Planet, August 4, 1903.

10 white men and 10 black men.[73] Races were held at the 1891 event in Hamilton and the Herald noted the attendance of some professional white sprinters. The white professionals won most of the prizes and the press report noted that "their presence was not relished by several of their darker and less speedy associates."[74] Often, however, the sports events were reserved for black contestants, and the baseball game featured two black teams.[75] Yet even when events were reserved for black contestants exceptions could be made. The rules stated that the fat man's race at the 1905 Chatham event was reserved for African contestants only, but when the committee observed the disappointment on the face of Mr. White, a Chatham barrister, whose only drawback for the competition was that he was white, it decided to open the race to any fat man. Mr. White was victorious.[76]

Indeed, there were always some whites in attendance at the festivities. In rare cases, in communities where the black population was smaller, whites even dominated. In the 1881 event in Welland, the Globe reported that during the speeches "(t)here were probably one thousand persons present, ... mostly white

---

[73] Chatham Daily Planet, August 2, 1907.

[74] Hamilton Herald, August 4, 1891.

[75] In Chatham, for example, the baseball game featured two black teams in both 1902 and 1907. Chatham Daily Planet, August 2, 1902 and Chatham Daily News, August 1, 1907.

[76] Chatham Daily Planet, August 2, 1905.

people."[77] Chatham, with its large black population, also had whites attending the event. Newspapers frequently mentioned the racial make-up of the crowd. After the 1882 event it was noted that "(t)he citizens of Chatham, irrespective of colour, turned out to honour the celebrations."[78] After the 1889 celebration it was noted that "(t)he day throughout was a most pleasant one, in which not only the colored, but the white, citizens took a lively interest."[79] The press account about the 1905 event in Dresden noted that as far "as the spirit of the celebration is concerned, there was no distinction in race."[80] The Daily Free Press described the 1896 London event as "several hundred rejoicing colored people and as many interested white spectators."[81] The press account of Toronto's 1892 Emancipation Day, when discussing the evening promenade and cake walk, noted that many guests were present, "both white and colored."[82] Likewise, the 1901 Chatham event had "a mixed crowd of white and colored people."[83] In other cases, however, the crowd appears to have been predominantly black. Celebrations after the turn of the century seem to have been less racially mixed,

---

[77] The Globe, August 2, 1881.

[78] The Globe, August 2, 1882.

[79] The Globe, August 2, 1889.

[80] The Chatham Daily News, August 2, 1905.

[81] Daily Free Press, August 4, 1896.

[82] The Globe, August 2, 1892.

[83] Chatham Daily Planet, August 2, 1901.

although some whites still attended. This especially appears to have been the case for Windsor's celebration. Press accounts mentioned the many Africans attending, but made less mention of a white presence. For the 1904 event it was noted that "the colored population of Windsor and vicinity, assisted by numerous friends from Detroit, congregated at Lagoon Park to the number of several thousand."[84] For the 1905 event it was reported that "5,000 representatives of the land of Dixie were present at Lagoon Park,"[85] and in 1909 it was estimated that there were about 10,000 people present, "among whom was a sprinkling of whites."[86] The celebrations in the Windsor area, with its large black population, appear to have had a mostly black audience.

Even when whites attended Emancipation Day events there was a certain degree of separation between the races, and this trend seemed to grow over the years. Emancipation Day tended to push blacks and whites apart as much as it brought them together. Although some press reports suggested whites and blacks celebrated together, such as a report from the 1914 Windsor event which noted that "(h)undreds of white people were on the grounds and enjoyed themselves as much as the colored folks,"[87] other reports painted a different picture. This separation can be illustrated by a 1911

---

[84] The Evening Record, August 2, 1904.

[85] The Evening Record, August 1, 1905.

[86] The Evening Record, August 3, 1909.

[87] The Evening Record, August 4, 1914.

headline in a Windsor newspaper entitled "'Nosey White Trash' Peeped in Windows." The headline was in reference to the grand ball where many whites had placed chairs and boxes against the windows and had peered in at the celebrants.[88] The same thing occurred at the 1912 event. Blacks in attendance proceeded to a curling rink for dancing, while outside "were numerous bunches of 'palefaces' peeping in the windows."[89] Many of the problems at these events involved fights between whites and blacks. At the 1914 event The Evening Record noted that of the eight men arrested seven were white. It further observed that "(i)n every fight or argument, a white man was directly concerned, and in the majority of them the colored man was on the defensive side."[90] After the 1913 event the newspaper noted that the "only trouble during the entire evening cannot be laid at the doors of the colored people. A number of white persons stood outside and made things unpleasant for the celebrants."[91] When the crime was more serious, the reaction of the white press was different. Charles Hurst, a black porter, killed a white miller, Thomas Brown, after an altercation on the evening of Chatham's Emancipation Day celebration in 1911. Crowds of whites gathered after the incident, and threatened to lynch Hurst, but luckily "(s)aner minds prevailed." The Planet

---

[88] The Evening Record, August 2, 1911.

[89] The Evening Record, August 2, 1912.

[90] The Evening Record, August 4, 1914.

[91] The Evening Record, August 2, 1913.

wrote that "Thomas Brown ... was brutally done to death ... by a colored man, who beat him over the head with a blunt instrument till he fell unconscious."[92] The newspaper also referred to him as a "crude colored man."[93] Hurst was convicted of manslaughter on October 11, 1911.[94]

After 1900, gambling became a prominent component of many celebrations in Windsor. A newspaper report for the 1900 event noted that "gambling fakirs and watermelon stands attracted bigger crowds than the sports." The report also noted that the scheduled speech makers failed to appear.[95] After the 1901 celebration the Evening Record noted that the celebration had been "a decided success in point of numbers and its many attractions," but also expressed regret about the presence of "fakirs who pushed their callings." The report also noted that "(s)weatboards and nearly all kinds of gambling devices were running full blast, and one daring individual had his game running on the main street." It concluded by noting that many citizens of Sandwich were indignant and believed such activity had disgraced the town.[96] Gambling was almost non-existent at the 1902 event, with a police presence ensuring total obeyance, but by 1905 the gambling concern was such

---

[92] The Planet, August 2, 1911.

[93] The Planet, August 3, 1911.

[94] Ontario Archives, Criminal Assize Clerk: Indictment Case Files, 1898-1911, R.G. 22, Series 392, Box 68.

[95] Evening Record, August 2, 1900.

[96] Evening Record, August 3, 1901.

that Mayor Mason summoned the event's chief master and the police chief and issued orders that no gambling would be permitted. The police were told to arrest every man who attempted to set up gambling operations.[97] The edict was only partially successful. The newspaper acknowledged that "(e)ven the staff of constables could not be expected to quell the sporting blood of the colored folks." Gambling was especially common in the evening hours.[98] The nature of the event had changed over the years. Although speeches were usually still given, the object of the day for most appeared to be enjoyment. Whereas many events prior to 1900 had been protest demonstrations, the newspaper description of the 1904 Windsor event noted that "(e)verybody seemed to be happy and enjoying himself immensely,"[99] while the event of 1905 was "one of merriment" where "the colored aggregation forgot their troubles while celebrating." The purpose of the event "was to have a good time, regardless of expense."[100] Earlier events had been celebratory as well, but they had been mixed with sincere offerings of thanks to Britain for abolishing slavery, and had been combined with speeches that challenged white society to end acts of discrimination. In the twentieth century, emancipation day was instead mostly a party, and it was a party intended largely for the

---

[97] Evening Record, July 31, 1905.

[98] Evening Record, August 2, 1905.

[99] Evening Record, August 2, 1904.

[100] Evening Record, August 1, 1905.

black population.

The changed nature of Emancipation Day celebrations bothered some Africans. The trend to drinking and gambling was especially worrisome. By the 1910s some members of the black community were sufficiently disenchanted by the nature of these celebrations to request that they be cancelled. One of the critics was E.E. Thompson, the pastor of Windsor's First Baptist Church. In a 1910 letter to The Evening Record he wrote that "the annual observance of the great ... day of my race does more harm than good." He noted that it was a "sad spectacle to see the publicity given to the selling and use of intoxicating drinks." While he acknowledged that the black race are "a pleasure loving and good natured people," he also argued that "we should not be encouraged to indulge in those things which bring a loss of self respect and make a scar on our morals." Instead, in Thompson's view, Emancipation Day should consist of "strong speeches and addresses in which high ideals, thrift, honesty, and all that makes for Christian citizenship are proclaimed."[101] In February of 1912 a delegation of blacks sent a communication to Sandwich town council protesting Emancipation Day. The communication came from the colored Ministerial association of Windsor, Amherstburg, Detroit, and vicinity. They asked that council use its power to prevent Emancipation Day celebrations from occurring in Sandwich because it had "degenerated into a day of debauchery and gambling." They

---

[101] Evening Record, August 3, 1910.

were supported by a former Sandwich councillor, Marcellius Montier, who addressed the meeting and supported the request "for the sake of the good name of the town and law abiding and respectable colored citizens." Council, however, was not empowered to directly eliminate the festivities and instead decided to notify the management committee of the event that every person attending the event must obey the law or face immediate arrest, and that council did not "approve of the way the celebration had been conducted during the past few years."[102] Council's action evidently had little effect because the celebration occurred as usual and an Evening Record editorial complained that although those organizing the festivities "had the chance this year to purge the demonstration of the undesirable drinking and gambling features ... they neglected to do so." The editorial then suggested the changes that were needed to make the event better. The newspaper argued that blacks "bring their race into disrepute by turning the demonstration into a jamboree offensive to the better class of Negroes and disgraceful to the community." It suggested that "leading colored citizens" should be "induced to take charge ... of this annual celebration" in order to improve its character. This advice was little different than what Thompson had suggested a couple of years earlier in his letter to the editor, and the concerns were the same as those expressed by blacks who tried to cancel the 1912 event. In short, these ideas for change were being

[102] Evening Record, February 27, 1912.

taken from black community leaders, and were not being invented by the editors of the Evening Record. There was one piece of advice in the editorial, however, that was directed to the white readers. Whites, it was argued, had to assist blacks. It was noted that "white people emancipated the colored race" and that "(t)hey should not be backward in assisting the Negroes to rise to a higher standard of citizenship." It argued that blacks should be encouraged "to honor themselves by winning the honor of others." In a final word of advice to the white population the editorial noted that "(w)e cannot live to ourselves alone; we have a duty encumbent [sic] upon us to help our fellow man, regardless of race, color or creed."[103] This example shows that a certain paternalistic, missionary impulse, such as had existed in the 1850s when fugitive slaves flooded into the province, still prevailed towards Africans.

One of the reasons the 1912 Sandwich emancipation day had not been cancelled was due to opposition from some councillors, who argued that the event brought much money to the town and should not be discontinued.[104] Likewise, when the event became too expensive opposition to Emancipation Day developed. At the 1913 event the mayor of Sandwich, E.H. Donnelly, was angry with event organizers for refusing to pay for the extra constables that were sent in response to the problems that had occurred the previous year. The

---

[103] Evening Record, August 3, 1912.

[104] Evening Record, August 2, 1912.

organizer, Zack Jackson, emphasized that he had never agreed to pay for the extra police. Donnelly refused to introduce the speakers and stated that he would do all in his power to stop future events.[105] Despite Donnelly's threats, there was another celebration in Sandwich in 1914.[106] These examples demonstrate that for the white community their opinion on the appropriateness of Emancipation Day celebrations was often guided by economic considerations. Black leaders, on the other hand, were more worried about the impression being presented to the outside world.

---

[105] Evening Record, August 2, 1913.

[106] Evening Record, August 4, 1914.

Chapter Five: The Colour Bar in Ontario

Ontario never had a formal colour bar as did, for example, the American South. No laws prevented intermarriage between the races, nor were blacks always barred from white hotels and restaurants, or systematically restricted to certain seats on city buses. Africans theoretically had full legal rights, meaning they could serve on juries, and join the military to fight in wars. In fact, however, it was often difficult for blacks to do any of these things. Blacks saw their denial of such rights as unjust, but whites did not generally believe they were doing anything inequitable or unethical by trying to limit social relations between people of African and European descent.

Interracial marriage was a subject of considerable controversy wherever blacks and whites came into contact. There was a strong belief in the nineteenth century that races were inherently different, and racial intermarriage frequently elicited a negative reaction. Michigan, for example, had a statute prohibiting intermarriage until 1883.[1] Ontario was not immune to these views. In 1860, when a black missionary in Chatham named Rev. Thomas Pinckney had married a white missionary woman there was a strong reaction from the city's white community. Some wanted legislation passed to prevent such unions, and distributed handbills to promote the idea. A law was never passed barring intermarriage, but the

---

[1] Katzman, Before the Ghetto, p. 91.

pressure was such that Pinckney and his wife were forced to resign as missionaries.[2]

Despite such views, some interracial marriage occurred throughout nineteenth century Ontario. The census provides some answers as to how many blacks had white spouses. As Table 1 shows, the number of blacks who intermarried varied from community to community. Perhaps not surprisingly mixed marriages were more common in places where blacks made up a smaller percentage of the population, such as Toronto and Hamilton. They were less frequent in places where blacks made up a greater percentage of the population, such as Raleigh and Windsor. The vast majority of married blacks, however, had black spouses, suggesting that there were forces working against intermarriage. It is also noteworthy that the number of intermarried couples did not increase over the last couple of decades of the nineteenth century. In fact, evidence from the census suggests that the number of blacks married to white spouses actually declined somewhat from 1881 to 1901. As Table 1 demonstrates, Raleigh, Chatham, Amherstburg, and Toronto all showed significant declines. The drops in Windsor, Hamilton, and London were more moderate, but were declines all the same. In the area of intermarriage whites and blacks were not coming closer together in early twentieth century Ontario. In fact, it seemed that they were moving further apart.

---

[2] Robinson and Robinson, Seek the Truth, p. 4.

Table 1: Comparison of Percentage of Married Africans Who Were Married to a White Spouse According to the 1881 and 1901 Censuses for Selected Ontario Counties

District	% intermarried in 1881	% intermarried in 1901
Windsor, City	9.8	8.7
Hamilton, City	17.9	16.2
London, City	9.6	9.4
Toronto, City	21.5	12.7
Chatham, City	13.6*	4.5
Raleigh	5.6	2.2
Amherstburg	8.3	2.1
Owen Sound	28.6	19.0
St. Catharines	10.7	7.4

* This number should be treated with some caution. The 1881 census lists a large number of African women married to non-African men. Most interracial marriages during this period involved black men and white women. One suspects that many of these cases involved men who were of mixed African and European origin and identified themselves, like Toronto's William Hubbard in 1901, by their European ancestry instead of listing themselves as African. Consequently, a number of these couples listed as intermarried were probably, in fact, both black (at least they were black in the sense that people who were the result of mixed marriages were considered by contemporary society to be black). Chatham was the only city, however, where evidence appeared suspicious.

Most Africans who commented on intermarriage spoke against the idea. There were, however, some exceptions. Anderson Ruffin Abbott, who had a white wife, saw nothing wrong with mixing the races. When discussing blacks in the American South, Abbott wrote that the absorption of the African race seemed "the manifest destiny of the Southern negro." He further noted that "(i)t is just as natural for two races, equally conditioned and living together on the same soil to blend as it is for the waters of two rivers tributary to each other to mingle." He concluded by

observing that the absorption of the African race had been going on for more than two centuries "despite hostile public sentiment."[3] On another occasion Abbott wrote that through "the process of absorption and expatriation the color line will eventually fade out in Canada."[4]

Abbott's views were not shared by others in the African community, and most blacks seemed to oppose mixed marriages. Indeed, some blacks could be quite vociferous in their comments about Africans who intermarried. One such person was Charles Johnson, the editor of the Hamilton based black newspaper The British Lion, who argued that "Negroes who will marry white women can never be received in the best society of negro aristocracy," and urged that a stop be put to those in the African community "who will go in search of white women for wives instead of respectable ladies of their own race."[5] In another more aggressive editorial he threatened that the "negro aristocracy will bar out every negro who seeks to bring his white wife among the better class of negro society."[6] In Johnson's view, not only would the white wives of black husbands "be barred out from high-toned negro society," they

---

[3] Baldwin Room, A.R. Abbott Papers, transcription, vol. 2, p. 49.

[4] as cited in Keith Henry, Black Politics in Toronto Since World War I (Toronto, 1981), p. 39.

[5] British Lion editorial reprinted in Hamilton Spectator, August 31, 1889.

[6] British Lion editorial reprinted in Hamilton Daily Spectator, July 25, 1888.

would also be "ignored by the Anglo-Saxon race."[7] Johnson wanted an independent black aristocracy to emerge in Canada because he believed this was the only way for Africans to escape employment in menial occupations and instead receive jobs in a full range of livelihoods. Intermarriage was not, in his view, in the best interests of the black population. Those individuals would be shunned, and it would hamper the growth of an independent black aristocracy.

While Johnson opposed intermarriage on questions of principle, others in the black community simply stated that it was something they did not want. This view was expressed at the 1891 Emancipation Day celebration in Chatham. The black speaker R.L. Holden used his speech to emphasize that blacks were entitled to full rights in Canada. Holden then noted that some in the white community believed that if blacks received the right to attend the same schools, serve on juries, and stay in the same hotels the result "would be the intermarriage of the races." To this, Holden replied "White friends ... we are not so uneasy on that as you are," and then noted "(t)he danger is not imminent." The reaction from the mostly black audience was one of laughter.[8] Augustus Straker, an American black lawyer, expressed similar views at a convention of black Masons that was held in Chatham in 1889. He stated that he "neither desired, nor advocated, intermarriage," but

---

[7] British Lion editorial reprinted in Daily Spectator, July 17, 1890.

[8] Chatham Tri-Weekly Planet, August 5, 1891.

instead wished for "recognition on the ground of manhood."[9]

Nothing made white society in Ontario as uncomfortable during these years than the whole question of sexual relations between the races. The extent to which interracial mixing was seen as undesirable by the white community can be seen by some private comments made by a Hamilton hotel proprietor. It was not unusual for Africans to be refused accommodation during this era, and on Christmas day 1889 a hotel on the Hamilton mountain had denied a room to two guests, described as "a burly negro and ... a rather prepossessing white woman." The proprietor, in discussing the incident with some friends, stated that not only did he refuse the request but "of course ... got very angry." In fact, he contended that he had never been so angry in his life, and admitted that he had wanted to throw the man "over the mountain brow."[10]

Why were whites so hostile towards intermarriage? They saw the situation very differently from their black compatriots, and opposed intermarriage for very different reasons than blacks. Unlike Abbott, whites did not see the merging of the black and white races as a manifest destiny, and they certainly did not see the two races as "equally conditioned." Magazines and newspapers of the era stressed the importance of the purity of the white race. An article in Maclean's Magazine in 1911 argued that blacks would not likely assimilate, and that they "would leave a 'tinge' of

[9] Tri-Weekly Planet, August 30, 1889.

[10] Hamilton Herald, December 31, 1889.

coloured blood in the 'Ultimate Canadian Race'- 'a race which should be bred from the best 'stock' that can be found in the world.'" In a 1900 issue of The Canadian Magazine a writer discussed the dangers of the "dilution and contamination of national blood," and warned that if blacks were permitted to enter Canada women in the country would become victims of their lust.[11] In short, whites did not want intermarriage because they believed it would be combining their superior race with one that was inferior.

White Ontarians also opposed suggestions that were periodically made in political circles that Jamaica and the West Indies be incorporated into Canada. A Toronto newspaper, The Empire, noted in 1888 that "(f)ew Canadians will be found willing to admit that the stability of our Confederation cannot be obtained unless we annex those southern islands peopled by negroes." The newspaper further noted that this "is the first time such a proposition has been made, and we hope it will be the last." More specifically, the editorial contended that "(t)here is no necessity, for increasing present complications, or adding 'the negro question' to all the other 'questions' that we have to deal with at home."[12] This view did not change over the years. In 1919 an article in The Canadian Magazine suggested that Canadians would not want blacks as "equal partners in Confederation," and

---

[11] as cited in Colin Thomson, Blacks in Deep Snow (Don Mills, 1979), p. 21.

[12] The Empire, May 21, 1888.

"certainly would not approve of Blacks sitting in Parliament."[13]

Nothing alarmed whites more than the perceived threat that black men posed to white women. Yet, ironically, the 'right' to intermarriage was what least concerned most blacks. Access to schools, restaurants, and equal job opportunities were much greater concerns. The fears of whites that most black men were anxious to acquire white wives were largely unfounded. Blacks wanted equality with the white race, but as Holden noted, this did not mean they wanted to marry them.

Since the colour line in Ontario was always informal, whites could not stop intermarriage. In this sense they were no more powerful than blacks, although whites could make life unpleasant for intermarried couples. Abbott wrote in 1906 that, when he went to church, he many times had "occupied a whole pew while pews near by were crowded - especially if I were accompanied by my wife."[14] An informal colour line existed for all blacks in Ontario, however. Africans faced many types of discrimination, and were quite frequently denied access to hotels and restaurants. Blacks protested such discrimination, just as they complained about segregated schools. In 1886, Aaron Hardy took a morning train from Windsor to Essex and decided to have breakfast at a local hotel's restaurant. Upon entering the dining room he was told by the proprietor it was full, even though he noted that the room was "not

---

[13] as cited in Thomson, Blacks in Deep Snow, p. 22.

[14] Baldwin Room, A.R. Abbott Papers, scrapbook 2, folder 4, p. 541.

... over half full." After mentioning this to the owner, Hardy was then told that he could be served if he waited until the others had finished their meals. Not having time to wait, Hardy left the restaurant. In response to this discrimination he wrote a letter to the Windsor newspaper outlining his experience. Hardy lamented that he thought that "Canada was a country where the colored man had equal rights with all, but I find out it is different when he enters a country hotel." In his letter to the paper Hardy noted that he intended "to bring an action against him at once."[15] Hardy, however, never pursued the matter.

A more highly publicized incident occurred in Toronto in 1888 when Charles Johnson was refused admittance to the Queen's Hotel in that city. As mentioned previously, Johnson lived in Hamilton and published the black newspaper The British Lion. Johnson's views were well known in the white community, and the Hamilton Spectator noted that he was "a strong advocate for the advancement of his race above the occupations of the menial," and that he viewed mixed marriages "with righteous disfavor." Johnson was apparently very loyal to both Canada and Great Britain, and used his newspaper, according to the Spectator, "to create in the mind of the black man, an enduring loyalty to Britain."[16] Johnson appears to have been a somewhat eccentric individual. His hobby was astronomy, and he held unusual views on the subject which he

---

[15] Alvin D. McCurdy Papers, F 2076-14, Box 65, Scrapbook, p. 154.

[16] The Hamilton Spectator, December 29, 1892.

propagated by delivering lectures throughout Canada and the United States. He contended that the earth did not revolve around the sun, but that it was the sun that moved.[17] He also believed that the sun was only fifty miles from the earth rather than 93 million miles, as most astronomers claimed. He believed the earth was not round but instead had four corners. Johnson's astronomical views generated comments, often sarcastic, from newspapers as far away as New York.[18] Clearly, Johnson was not immune to getting himself publicity. Indeed, he was unpopular with many in the black community for his lectures, and the Detroit black newspaper the Plaindealer referred to him as a "monumental fraud."[19] In August of 1888 Johnson asked for a room at the Queen's Hotel and was told there was none available. He then ordered dinner for two, but the request was refused. Finally, according to a Hamilton newspaper, Johnson was told that "the presence of colored people would be offensive to other guests." Johnson then went to a lawyer and requested that action be taken against the proprietors of the hotel.[20] Johnson claimed $5,000 in damages.[21] As with Hardy, publicity in the newspapers and threatened legal action were the preferred responses to prejudice.

---

[17] "Charles Augustus Johnson" in Dictionary of Hamilton Biography, vol. 2 1876-1924 (Hamilton, 1991), p. 80.

[18] Hamilton Spectator, August 1, 1881.

[19] The Plaindealer, September 27, 1889.

[20] Hamilton Daily Spectator, August 22, 1888.

[21] Hamilton Daily Spectator, August 23, 1888.

The reaction of the Ontario press reveals much about the white nineteenth century attitude towards race. The most negative, and outwardly racist reaction, came from Saturday Night magazine. This journal interpreted the incident as an attempt by blacks to force themselves upon whites in a social setting. The editor had no sympathy whatsoever for Johnson, who was described as a "professional colored" man who made his living out of his colour by finding it expedient periodically to be removed from places where he was not wanted. The writer argued that he would not care to share his "bed and board" with Johnson, but also argued that he had no prejudice "against the negro race." He further argued:

> Many a kind old colored 'mammy' have I known in the Southern States, and recollections of hot biscuit and fried chicken, accompanied by the jokes and jollity of Aunt Chloe, endear to my memory the good-natured and generous people who have come up through so much tribulation to a freedom which should always have been theirs, but for which, owing to their years of servitude, so many of them are ill-prepared.

The article then gave a good description of what Africans should expect in Canada. It argued that in Canada there was "no active prejudice against the colored race," and that blacks met "with sympathy rather than surliness." Yet Africans should know not to push themselves on whites in social matters. The writers observed that:

> none of them [Africans] are ever affronted on account of their complexion, except when they forget that no well-bred person will endeavour to force himself into a place where he is not wanted. Self respect teaches all of them, with possibly here and there an exception, that while their color is no disability it is no recommendation, and that those who are desirous of obtaining notoriety by exciting affronts are deserving

of every rudeness they receive.[22]

It is revealing that the editors of Saturday Night believed blacks faced no prejudice in the country. In their view, there was nothing unreasonable about expecting Africans to stay out of places where they were not wanted. This example illustrates the different views on what constituted equality. What was blatant racism to the black community was seen as reasonable and appropriate by some in the white community.

The blunt and hostile view held by Saturday Night, however, was not typical. Most newspapers took a considerably more balanced view on the matter. Although most acknowledged that blacks had certain legal rights that should not be denied, there was also a general consensus that it was quite legitimate to prohibit Africans from interacting with whites in social settings. The Hamilton Spectator noted this dilemma in an editorial on the Johnson incident. The newspaper contended that "(o)f course the Queen's people are wrong. A hotel has no right to refuse accommodation to a man, be he white, black, red, blue, green, piebald or variegated." The editorial, however, also acknowledged that "the hotel man is placed in an awkward fix. If he entertain [sic] colored people, some prejudiced white people will object, and refuse to patronize his caravansary." The Spectator offered a solution. It suggested that if "a few hotel people were made to pay heavily for the privilege of excluding colored people, it would

---

[22] Saturday Night, vol. 1, no. 39 (August 25, 1888).

soon become the fashion to ignore the prejudices of fastidious drummers and other over-nice hotel guests."[23] In the view of the Spectator, what the hotel did was wrong, but understandable given the feelings that existed at the time. The Globe, on the other hand, had no sympathy whatsoever for the Queen's hotel. It viewed the public's attitude towards visible minorities in a considerably more optimistic light. The newspaper wrote that because "of the unanimous disgust expressed by every Torontonian consulted by the Globe with reference to the matter, we say this city must not be held in the least accountable for the conduct of the Queen's proprietors." The editorial further contended that "We do not believe the guests of the Queen's would have objected in the least to the admission of the Rev. Mr. Johnson. Had any of them done so, they and not he should have been made to give way." The Globe then applauded Johnson's legal action against the hotel and suggested a "public subscription to pay his costs" would be a good idea, "especially as it would assist to relieve Toronto of the odium that the offensive courses of the Queen's people may draw on the city."[24] Both the Globe and Spectator implied that legal action was the way to deal with the matter. In this respect, both were being overly optimistic. Courts were not striking down segregation, but were often reinforcing it. One such instance was reported in the Thorold Post in October of 1885. In this case a woman named Mrs.

---

[23] Hamilton Daily Spectator, August 23, 1888.

[24] The Globe, August 22, 1888.

Madden had brought action against a roller rink for refusing her admission. She had laid damages at $1,000, but the case was dismissed and the judge gave a verdict "for the defendant with costs."[25]

The proprietors of the hotel, upon hearing of Johnson's charge of discrimination and threatened legal action, justified their actions by claiming that Johnson was a 'professional beggar.'[26] Mr. McGaw of the Queen's hotel, in an interview with the Toronto Mail, emphasized in his defence that he constantly employed about thirty Africans at his hotel. According to McGaw, this meant he employed more African men than anyone else in the city. Apparently, in McGaw's view, this meant he should not be seen in a bad light in the black community. McGaw also argued that Johnson did not have any luggage with him when he requested accommodation, but was merely seeking notoriety because he knew he would be refused. McGaw never denied that his hotel did not permit black guests, but he noted that anyone who required a room and had the necessary money "need not want, as there were dozen of other hotels in the city that would be only too glad to furnish it."[27] McGaw seemed to think there was no real problem because Johnson could have easily gone to another hotel, and was therefore guilty of

---

[25] Ontario Archives, Daniel Hill Black History Research Collection, Box 3, St. Catharines (A) (photocopy from the Thorold Post of October 9, 1885.

[26] Hamilton Daily Spectator, October 13, 1888.

[27] Toronto Mail, August 23, 1888.

creating unnecessary trouble. The point for Johnson and other Africans was that equality demanded that they have access to all places, just like the white population.

Johnson requested financial assistance from the community to fight his case, and asked the Hamilton Spectator to start a subscription to aid him. The newspaper declined, and in a sarcastic explanation wrote that "recent remittances for subscriptions have so filled the Spectator's large vault that we really have no available room in which to store the catch that would come pouring in were we to open a subscription list at this office."[28] This comment implies that there was no widespread support for Johnson's case. The newspaper's refusal to support Johnson can also be explained by the fact that the editors clearly believed his action was a publicity stunt, and noted immediately after the incident that Johnson had struck a "scheme which will not only give him the notoriety he loves, but, possibly the money that does not come amiss to him."[29] How much money Johnson raised is unclear. At some point, however, he decided not to press charges as the Spectator noted that, after beginning the lawsuit and collecting some money, he backed out.[30]

Other blacks who fought the colour line also received little support from white Ontario. In 1887, an unfortunate incident

---

[28] Hamilton Spectator, September 6, 1888.

[29] Hamilton Daily Spectator, August 23, 1888.

[30] Hamilton Spectator, August 31, 1889.

occurred at a professional baseball game between the Toronto team and the visiting Syracuse club. Both teams were members of the International League, a minor league. By 1887, a small number of black players were in the league, although none played for either Toronto or Hamilton, the two Ontario cities with teams. One of the African players was a pitcher for the Syracuse Stars named Robert Higgins, who made his first start on a May afternoon in Toronto. The Syracuse team was riddled with dissension, and when the players were forced to play with an African teammate, it only added to the turmoil.[31] The players performed very poorly the day Higgins pitched. They made 14 errors, and when Toronto players tried to steal bases the Syracuse infielders dropped the ball. The result was a 23 to 8 victory for the Toronto team. Higgins, however, according to the Toronto World account, "retained control of his temper and smiled at every move of the clique."[32] The World referred to the game as "disgraceful baseball" and "a most disgusting exhibition,"[33] while the Toronto Evening News stated that "the exhibition was simply sickening." The News further stated that "the Stars should be thoroughly ashamed of themselves for yesterday's sorry exhibition."[34] Yet subsequent newspaper articles

---

[31] Jerry Mallory, "Out at Home" in John Thorn, ed., The Armchair Book of Baseball II (New York, 1987), p. 274.

[32] Toronto World, May 26, 1887.

[33] Toronto World, May 26, 1887 and as cited in Mark Ribowsky, A Complete History of the Negro Leagues (New York, 1995) p. 28.

[34] Toronto Evening News, May 26, 1887.

demonstrated that Toronto baseball writers were not always sympathetic to black players, and often failed to condemn the colour line. The Toronto World noted the next day that anti-black feeling in the league was "known to exist" and that it may again "unexpectedly come to the front."[35] In an article in mid-June the World took an ambivalent stance on the issue when it wrote that the presence of black players in the league "has not been productive of satisfactory results, and good players as some of them have shown themselves it would seem advisable to take action of some kind, looking either to their non-engagement or compelling the other element to play with them."[36] Either option, it seemed, would be preferable to the current situation. In July of 1887 the league held meetings in Buffalo and resolved to sign no more black players. Those teams that had African players voted against the resolution while those without black players, including the Toronto and Hamilton representatives, favoured it.[37] The World was unsympathetic to the plight of the black players, and a few days after the resolution was passed noted that Frank Grant, the black Buffalo second baseman and one of the league's best players, was "no longer playing the game of his life."[38] A couple of days later

---

[35] Toronto World, May 27, 1887.

[36] as cited in Mallory, "Out at Home" in Thorn, ed., The Armchair Book of Baseball II, p. 278 and Toronto World, June 16, 1887.

[37] Ribowsky, A Complete History of the Negro Leagues 1884 to 1955, p. 32.

[38] Toronto World, July 21, 1887.

the World refuted a Newark newspaper's editorial supporting black players. The Newark paper had argued that if any "colored man is refused a position in the International League on account of his complexion he can make things very warm for the league." The World disputed this argument by claiming that there "is no Federal or any other law compelling the league to engage colored players ... You can't compel a club to engage you as a ball player, whether you are white or black."[39] The fact that there were no black players on the Toronto team undoubtedly was a major reason for the Toronto press failing to take a stand against the colour line. Newspapers in American cities that had black players tended to oppose the colour bar in baseball.[40] If Toronto had employed Africans local newspapers would have likely argued that their presence was more evidence of the types of opportunities blacks could obtain in Canada that were denied them south of the border. Yet it also illustrates the reluctance consistently shown by white Ontario to force whites to accept blacks when they did not want them, either in schools, hotels, restaurants, or as baseball players.

Africans also faced discrimination on public transportation. This issue had existed in the 1850s, and emerged again in the 1870s. The victim in an 1871 episode in Chatham was not an African, however, but an Indian. Albert Anthony attempted to board

---

[39] Toronto World, July 23, 1887.

[40] David McDonald, "Jim Crow Comes North" in William Humber and John St. James, All I Thought About Was Baseball: Writings on a Canadian Pastime (Toronto, 1996), p. 203.

a hotel bus, but was told by the driver that he could not enter because the driver had to take another person to a different part of town. Anthony then noticed, however, that the driver took another passenger who arrived after him. He then asked him "why he would not allow him to get in" and was told that the boss would not like it. Anthony then boarded another bus and sat down, but was then told by the driver that "we do not allow colored people to ride in this bus." When Anthony refused to leave the driver took the horses off the bus and left the Indian sitting on the bus. Anthony had told the driver that he was not colored, and asked the driver to prove it. This question elicited little response. This episode came to public attention when Anthony wrote a letter to the Chatham Weekly Planet in August. Since Anthony seemed to be asking for nothing more than the right to take a bus, the newspaper found it easy to support him. The editor replied to his letter by asserting that "we say most unhesitatingly and emphatically that we do not think he was treated justly."[41] This incident appears to have upset some in the black community because, by late September, relations between the buses and the black community had become quite tense. A rumour circulated that Africans were planning to gather at the Chatham railway station to attack the buses. Isaac Holden, the prominent Chatham black citizen, was rumoured to be leading the hostility. Holden quickly responded to these accusations, and refuted the charge in a letter to the Chatham

[41] Chatham Weekly Planet, August 10, 1871.

newspaper:

> I am as the people of this town and county well know, a peacable [sic], law abiding citizen, and if those who circulate such falsehoods could say as much for themselves truthfully, they would not be out at the GWRR station ... with clubs and other weapons ... swearing they would kill any d-n niggers they could catch out there.[42]

No reports followed that suggested any type of violence occurred at the train station.

For many Africans, the discrimination they faced in day to day life was perhaps the most frustrating aspect of life in Ontario. Discrimination was especially common is places of public entertainment. Establishments used a variety of tactics to keep Africans away. The proprietor of the British American Hotel in Windsor ordered his staff to add twenty-five cents a drink to any black customer who entered. Another proprietor in the same city had the habit of grabbing a bottle when black men entered his establishment, and then ordering them to 'git.' Confectioners in Windsor also developed the habit of charging exorbitant prices to blacks during the summer months for soda water and ice cream.[43] Anderson Ruffin Abbott noted in the first decade of the twentieth century that discrimination was most evident in theatres and churches. He noted that he always ordered theatre tickets by the telephone, because if he bought them in person he was placed in a seat where there was nobody nearby. He noted that if he entered

---

[42] Chatham Weekly Planet, September 28, 1871.

[43] Evening Record, December 17, 1902.

a church where he was not known he was often placed in a vacant pew. He acknowledged that it was only in places where he was not known that he was so "shabbily treated,"[44] implying that it was possible for an African gentleman to be treated with respect. But this acceptance apparently had to be earned while for whites it was automatic. Sometimes, whites would support the black cause, especially if it suited their interests. The minister of a Toronto church chastised his congregation for not sitting near blacks. While delivering a sermon on the universal brotherhood of man, he noted that when "a poor colored brother comes in to the church, it's wonderful how far people will get away from him." At the morning session in that particular church, a newspaper account had noted that "a rather poorly dressed negro sat in a pew about half way to the front, and nobody sat near him." The minister used this example, and concluded his sermon by arguing that "God does not want us to talk to him as a Father until we recognize and treat all men as our brothers."[45] Yet such support from whites was not the norm.

Blacks tried a variety of tactics to challenge the colour bar. In 1912, three African men entered the Princess theatre in Windsor and refused to sit in the section set aside for black patrons. They exchanged words with the proprietor, and were ejected by the police. One of the men threatened to sue the theatre proprietors,

---

[44] Baldwin Room, A.R. Abbott Papers, scrapbook 2, folder 4, p. 541.

[45] Toronto Daily Star, July 16, 1906.

but appears not to have.[46] Indeed, black spokespersons consistently tried to get Africans to fight for their rights. The Canadian Observer, a black Toronto newspaper published during World War One, argued that the present was the time to fight for these rights. It noted in a 1915 editorial that in the "great city of Toronto" prejudice was "creeping in" and that theatres were "setting aside special seats, or in other words, the balcony for the colored patrons." In addition "the best hotels" were "turning a deaf ear to a would-be colored guest." Whitney concluded his editorial by arguing that "if we do not awaken to the sense of claiming our just rights now, the time ... will come when we have the self-same thing to encounter as exists across the border."[47] This discrimination, as has been noted, was not new. Blacks had frequently been made to sit in special seats and denied hotel accommodation throughout the time they had lived in the province, and Whitney would have been aware of the racial climate in which he lived. His purpose in implying that the problem was getting worse was to try and urge other Africans to action. Furthermore, there was a belief that the war would make the world a better place for African people and it was therefore a good time to correct the inequities that had existed for so long. In early 1918, Queen's university refused to admit black students into its medical program, ostensibly because some patients did not want to be treated by blacks and the

---

[46] The Evening Record, August 5, 1912.

[47] The Canadian Observer, vol. 2, no. 10 (August 14, 1915).

university could not find places to give these students the required clinical instruction.[48] The Canadian Observer protested the situation by asking "Is not the faculty of Queen's powerful and influential enough to see that adequate clinical instruction is given the graduates?"[49] What especially bothered the newspaper, however, was the apparent apathy of the black community. It noted that, despite the presence of many African organizations throughout the country, "we have yet to receive the first letter from any of these organizations in protest against the insult meted out to us."[50]

The white perspective on discrimination can be illustrated through an anecdote. An incident occurred in 1887 on a steamer which was transporting a black bishop, who had preached in Chatham, back to Detroit. A bishop, who was "aged," stepped into a cabin to escape the chilly air and proceeded to take a seat. At this point he was viewed with "indignant eyes" by a number of ladies. The ladies then left the cabin but were chastised by a fair-skinned African who had witnessed the incident. A lively discussion ensued between the parties, and one man wondered what the uproar was over since "he was only a nigger." What is most revealing, however, is the approach taken by the Chatham newspaper in reporting on the incident. It criticized those present for this "very unchristian

---

[48] The Canadian Observer, vol. 7, no. 7 (February 2, 1918).

[49] The Canadian Observer, vol. 7, no. 7 (February 2, 1918).

[50] The Canadian Observer, vol. 7, no. 13 (March 16, 1918).

act" and thought it awful that a "Christian gentleman" should be treated in such a manner. Yet the report acknowledged that there would inevitably be prejudice in a community "against the indiscriminate mixing up of the two races." The writer did not excuse the actions of the passengers. The report seemed to suggest, however, that the white ladies were not wrong for being prejudiced against blacks but for the inconsiderate way in which they had treated this old man.[51]

Whites could also justify the colour bar because blacks had so many institutions of their own. Despite the declining African population, black churches were still in existence in the early twentieth century despite the declining number of blacks in the province. Many had small congregations because some Ontario blacks were Baptists while others were Methodists. Furthermore, there were some divisions within the Methodist church, as there existed both British Methodist Episcopal and African Methodist Episcopal churches. A letter from a black resident of Essex county to the Amherstburg Echo around 1904 reveals how at least some blacks wanted to alleviate this problem. The letter writer, N.S. Powell, bemoaned the fact that there were three black Methodist churches and one black Baptist church in the Colchester area alone. He suggested that blacks should come together, because if "the colored people in this place were all in one church they could not do more than take care of that and support a pastor." Powell never even

[51] Chatham Tri-Weekly Planet, September 21, 1887.

addressed the possibility of joining white churches in his letter.[52] The Canadian Observer made a similar observation in 1918. It was noted that "(w)e have two Methodist bodies among the Race in Canada. Why not one? ... Would it not be of greater benefit to the Race to be more united, especially in the spiritual welfare of the Race?"[53] Again, there was no mention of joining white churches. Yet despite the fact blacks and whites often attended different places of worship, the relationships between these different churches were often quite cordial. When the AME church in Hamilton re-opened in 1908 the minister acknowledged the financial assistance of the city's white population who had "responded in no mean way to the appeals made." A white Presbyterian church, for example, presented chandeliers as a gift.[54] On special occasions whites attended events at black churches. One black Chatham resident remembered that concerts given in blacks churches in that city were well attended by whites.[55]

Black Masonic organizations were also common throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The fact that black members did not always receive equal rights in white lodges

---

[52] Ontario Archives, Hiram Walker Collection, photocopy of Amherstburg Echo, ca. 1904.

[53] The Canadian Observer, vol. 7, no. 10 (February 23, 1918).

[54] Hamilton Public Library, Hamilton Collection, Stewart Memorial Church: Scrapbook, vol. 1, p. 8.

[55] Ontario Archives, Daniel Hill Black History Research Collection, Box 2, Chatham Notes (A), recollections of Edwin Bassett Jones.

perpetuated segregation. An undated letter (written sometime in the late nineteenth century) from a black Canadian man emphasized, in reference to lodges, that "(t)here are no organizations in the country in which the color line is so distinctly drawn or the separation of the races more manifest." The letter then noted that if blacks were going to "make use of the machinery of these organizations, it must be upon terms of perfect equality. ... When this is impractical we can organize among ourselves."[56] Consequently, separate lodges prevailed. The presence of these separate black organizations like churches and lodges helped confirm the opinion held by many whites that blacks preferred to be amongst their own people, especially for social purposes. Indeed, blacks often were more comfortable in their own organizations, especially if they could not receive full equality in white institutions. Unfortunately, separate organizations helped whites justify an informal colour bar.

Another aspect of the colour bar that bothered Africans was the fact that they were frequently denied the opportunity to do their share of public duty. Many in the black community were bothered by their consistent omission from serving on juries. In 1872 in Chatham a complaint was sent to a newspaper by a member of the black community. The writer noted that "of the 500 colored residents of Kent, many of them large land-owners, only two have been selected as jurymen in the course of twenty years." An

---

[56] Baldwin Room, A.R. Abbott Papers, scrapbook 2, folder 1, pp. 12-13.

incident in 1872, outlined in the letter, explained why this may have been the case. When a black juror took his seat at a trial that year the other jurors, all white, left the box "and were only induced to remain in his company under absolute compulsion."[57] The black experience on juries followed the pattern of so many other aspects of African life in the province. There were no formal restrictions against blacks serving on juries, but in practice they rarely served because it was the easiest way to avoid problems. The 1877 convention of African men in Essex county also complained about the denial of jury service, and passed a resolution requesting that jurors be "selected as provided by law," and that "the practice by which we are deprived of our right to sit upon the jury by a fraudulent manipulation of the assessment roll" be discontinued.[58] These pleas appear, however, to have fallen on deaf ears, as Windsor blacks voiced similar frustrations in the early 1880s. Although they had been showing up for jury selection, none were ever being summoned for service. Consequently, a convention had been called to discuss the matter. A letter written to the editor of the Essex Record summarized their concerns. The writer emphasized that "the citizen of African descent has the same inalienable right as any other subject of her Majesty," and then sarcastically noted that "(s)urely there are some colored men that are capable of judging right from wrong." It had been suggested

[57] Chatham Weekly Planet, April 11, 1872.

[58] Baldwin Room, A.R. Abbott Papers, Scrapbook 2, folder 1, p. 39.

at the convention, apparently by some "white friends," that since Africans were never being selected for jury service the province should allow black jurors to try black suspects "as it is a natural thing for any man to wish that part if not all of the jury to pronounce upon his conduct ... be his own countrymen."[59]

For blacks in Ontario, the most disappointing incident occurred during World War One. Blacks believed the war would be their opportunity to prove themselves as full citizens in Canada, and would lead to equality of the races. Whitney's Canadian Observer certainly believed that the world would be a better place at the end of the war. A 1915 article stated that it hoped for an allied victory, and that after the war there would be "a well balanced recognition of all races regardless of color or creed."[60] An editorial later that year argued that, while blacks currently enjoyed "the freedom that exists under the British Flag, which is second to none in the world," there were still "a few causes for complaint." The Observer confidently asserted, however, that these causes for complaint "will be entirely wiped out of existence by the end of the present war, if not before."[61] Another editorial wrote that the "Canadian Observer believes that we are living in a period that is going to revolutionize conditions in favor of the

---

[59] Archives of Ontario, Alvin D. McCurdy Papers, F 2076-14, Box 65, Scrapbook, p. 45.

[60] The Canadian Observer, vol. 1, no. 4 (January 2, 1915).

[61] The Canadian Observer, vol. 2, no. 6 (July 17, 1915).

race."[62]

Blacks believed that one way to achieve full equality was to participate fully in the war effort. Many members of Ontario's African community were anxious to serve when war broke out. Indeed, blacks had been active participants in earlier military conflicts involving Canada. A black company had helped protect the American frontier from invading Americans during the War of 1812, and many blacks had helped defend the government from the William Lyon Mackenzie led rebels during the rebellion of 1837.[63] In World War One selection of recruits lay with the individual military units, and they were free to accept and reject whom they pleased. There was no specific policy concerning the enlistment of Africans.[64] Clearly, however, most blacks were being rejected on racial grounds as, from early in the war, Africans complained about being refused the opportunity to serve. In November 1914 a black from Buxton named Arthur Alexander wrote to Sir Sam Hughes, the minister of Militia and Defence, asking why blacks were not being allowed to enlist.[65] Alexander was informed that recruits were

---

[62] The Canadian Observer, vol. 4, no. 14 (September 9, 1916).

[63] Hill, The Freedom-Seekers, pp. 114, 118.

[64] James Walker, "Race and Recruitment in World War I: Enlistment of Visible Minorities in the Canadian Expeditionary Force," Canadian Historical Review, vol. 70, no. 1 (March, 1989), p. 3.

[65] Walker, "Race and Recruitment in World War One," Canadian Historical Review, vol. 70, no. 1 (March, 1989), p. 5 and Calvin Ruck, The Black Battalion-1916-1920: Canada's Best Kept Military Secret (Halifax, 1987), p. 8.

selected by the local commanding officers and that headquarters did not interfere with these selections. In 1915 George Morton, the black Hamilton postal worker who had been active in trying to establish a separate black fire brigade in that city in 1889, wrote a letter to the Minister complaining about the situation. A number of blacks in that city had attempted to enlist but, according to Morton, had been turned down solely on account of their race, "this being the reason given on the rejection or refusal card issued by the recruiting officer." In Morton's letter to the Minister he noted that Africans were "humble, but ... loyal subjects of the King." He then noted that blacks "should be permitted in common with other peoples to perform their part and do their share in this great conflict."[66] Indeed, this example illustrates the historian Calvin Ruck's contention that many blacks "viewed military service in wartime not only as a right, but a responsibility."[67] Full equality meant sharing all benefits and responsibilities equally, and Morton wrote that "our people ...are most anxious to serve their King and Country in this critical crisis in its history."[68] Yet Morton's request went nowhere, and the reply from Acting Adjutant General W.E. Hodgins stated that there were no restrictions against "coloured men who possess the necessary qualifications," but also noted that final approval of any man

---

[66] Barbara Wilson, ed., Ontario and the First World War 1914-1918: A Collection of Documents (Toronto, 1977), pp. 166-167.

[67] Ruck, The Black Battalion, p. 7.

[68] Wilson, ed., Ontario and the First World War, p. 167.

rested with the officers of each unit.[69] Since the vast majority of units did not want black recruits there was little chance for blacks to serve.

The other option was to form a platoon of black soldiers. Throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth century a separate but equal approach had been a proposed solution whenever whites were unwilling to accept blacks as co-workers. Separate black platoons were by no means new either. Richard Pierpont had formed a company of blacks for the War of 1812, and Josiah Henson commanded a group of black volunteers during the rebellion of 1837.[70] James Whitney decided to raise a black platoon during World War One, and used his newspaper to raise recruits. Whitney himself favoured the war effort and wanted Canadians to give their full support. His newspaper supported conscription[71] and early in the war argued that "(t)he government should have the homes of every one of the enemy that is residing in our country searched, also their places of business."[72] The Canadian Observer urged Africans to support the war effort in every way possible, and encouraged its African readers to provide potatoes for those who had family members fighting in the war.[73] Yet Whitney was not giving into the

---

[69] Ruck, The Black Battalion, p. 8.

[70] Hill, The Freedom-Seekers, pp. 114, 118-122.

[71] The Canadian Observer, May 26, 1917.

[72] The Canadian Observer, January 23, 1915.

[73] The Canadian Observer, January 16, 1915.

colour line by trying to get this battalion. He was by no means suggesting that all blacks should be forced to join his battalion, and thereby be prevented from joining all others. This view was made clear in a May 1916 editorial where he noted that while "a colored battalion, officered by colored men, would be of credit to the race and country," it should not be established "under the conditions that men of color are to be ostracized from other battalions, any more so than the Irish or Scotch would be ostracized from battalions that were not Irish or Scotch." The editorial challenged white society to "Give us a 'Colored Battalion' and erase the 'color line' that apparently exists in many of the present battalions, so that the race may have free sway to join as other citizens whatever battalion they might choose."[74]

The African perspective of free choice was not held by white society. In fact, not only were blacks rejected when they applied at the regular battalions, but Whitney's scheme developed problems as well. He discovered that no battalion commander was willing to receive a black platoon, and in March 1916 was told to stop recruiting.[75] Eventually a black construction battalion was formed made up of the country's black recruits, and it did labouring tasks throughout the war. Blacks in Ontario, however, showed some reticence to sign up for this black battalion. Captain W.A. McConnell, who came to Ontario to help with the recruitment effort,

---

[74] The Canadian Observer, vol. 3, no. 22 (May 6, 1916).

[75] Walker, "Race and Recruitment in World War I," Canadian Historical Review, vol. 70, no. 1 (March, 1989), p. 10.

observed that blacks were reluctant to join, apparently because many had been turned down in earlier efforts to enlist in regular units because they were black.[76] In the end, 350 blacks were recruited in Ontario, a number below expectations.[77] The war proved to be disappointing for blacks. They had hoped to achieve equal opportunity through military service, but instead found themselves in a subordinate position. The war experience, which Whitney had hoped would bring blacks full equality in Canada, had simply reminded Africans of their inferior position.

[76] The Globe, September 12, 1916.

[77] Wilson, ed., Ontario and the First World War, p. cix.

Chapter Six: Legal Issues, Crime, and the Courts

A study of legal issues, crime, and the courts is especially useful for revealing white attitudes towards blacks. Like any other ethnic group, some blacks had problems with the law during these years. Some charges were serious, and others trivial. White police officers and judges seemed to see blacks in two ways. Sometimes their perceived peculiarities were laughed at. At other times they could be viewed as a serious threat. Blacks, on the other hand, wanted to have as little to do with the courts as possible. Black leaders only asked that Africans on trial be treated the same as any other group of people. Often, however, race became an issue, at least in an indirect sense, when Africans faced serious charges.

In one legal case, however, black and white Ontarians saw the situation the same way, at least on a superficial level. The province, even after the demise of American slavery, was still seen as a safe haven for Africans fleeing wrongful treatment in the United States, especially in the southern states. Prior to the Civil War there had been many attempts by southern slaveholders to extradite runaway slaves who had committed 'crimes' and fled to Canada. Most of these attempts had failed. In 1888, the Adam Morse case generated considerable attention in the black Canadian community and from the white Canadian press. Morse was a black man from Georgia who had an altercation with a train conductor in that state. Morse's son had been travelling by train and had been given

a shaking by a conductor named Bourbee because he, apparently, was impudent and refused to sit down and behave. When he got home, the boy told his parents what had happened. His father, after hearing the story, then went to the conductor's house with the intent, according to his wife, of discussing the matter. An altercation ensued whereupon Morse hit the conductor several times with a stick. Morse was arrested but released on bail. After threats were made to lynch Morse, he jumped bail and went initially to Rochester, and then after his whereabouts were discovered to Toronto. On April 27, 1888 the Toronto police received a telegram stating that there was a "warrant and requisition for Adam Morse, alias Spencer H. Haines, colored, aged 35." Morse was arrested, and a Savannah detective came to Toronto with a warrant charging Morse with attempted murder, an extraditable offense.[1]

The case went to Judge McDougall, who ruled in June of 1888 that Morse should be returned to the United States. Morse was a man the black community rallied around, and most of the white media seemed to sympathize with him. Even Saturday Night, a publication that was never particularly compassionate towards blacks, argued that it was "gratifying to know that he (Morse) will not be surrendered without a further struggle."[2] The Toronto Evening Telegram noted that public sympathy lay with Morse and argued that he seemed "to be an inoffensive man who was provoked to justifiable

---

[1] Toronto Public Library, Toronto Star Scrapbooks, Toronto Historical Series, vol. 1, p. 45, and The Globe, June 16, 1888.

[2] Saturday Night, vol. 1, no. 28 (June 9, 1888).

violence in defense of his own son who was brutally maltreated by a ruffian." The paper further argued that "(h)is crime was that being black he dared to assert his manhood by standing up for his own child against one of the white sovereigns of Georgia." The image of Canada as a safe haven, and of the United States as a place where Africans could not expect justice, was made especially clear when the editorial argued that Canadian courts should provide the justice that Morse "cannot hope for in that land of the free where the prejudices of the white citizens are a law unto all on the wrong side of the colour line."[3] Other newspapers echoed these sentiments. The Globe feared southern justice and referred to the "chain-gang and bloodhound treatment to which the fugitive will probably be submitted in Georgia." The newspaper concluded that "he will not get a fair trial in Savannah"[4] and argued that Morse was "nothing worse than an ignorant man who ... sought to obtain by rough means, out of Bourbee's hide, the satisfaction which Southern Courts will not give to a negro who attempts to prosecute a white man."[5] Only the Toronto Mail cast doubts on the advisability of freeing Morse by noting in an editorial that "(i)t may be that the black citizen of Georgia is exposed to the unfriendly prejudgment of his white fellow citizens in a case of assault upon a white man; but that is a predicament for which the

---

[3] The Evening Telegram, May 28, 1888.

[4] The Globe, June 7, 1888.

[5] The Globe, June 8, 1888.

treaty makes no provision."[6] The Morse episode was an incident that united the black and white populations of the province. A letter from the Women's Christian Temperance Union rhetorically asked "Shall we let the name of our one fair and godly city be stained by delivering Morse over to his blood-thirsty persecutors?"[7] The Globe challenged its readers by writing "(l)et money be subscribed and every thing possible done to save the man from extradition."[8] Blacks throughout the province were aware of the case, and Rev. W.J. Butler, pastor of the African Methodist Episcopal church at Chatham, stated that he hoped the case would be contested through the Canadian courts. Butler further noted that the blacks of Chatham as well as many whites in that town felt very strongly on the subject.[9]

Luckily for Morse's supporters all was not lost. Morse's extradition was conditional upon the Savannah detective signing some depositions, which he had left Toronto without doing. Judge McDougall twice set dates for the detective to come to Toronto to deal with this matter. Both times he failed to appear. After the second time, on June 22, 1888, McDougall freed Morse. The defence contended that they had been notified by the prosecutors that the case would be dropped if they agreed to pay the expense of the

---

[6] Toronto Mail, June 15, 1888.

[7] The Evening Telegram, June 26, 1888.

[8] The Globe, June 8, 1888.

[9] The Globe, June 8, 1888.

prosecution. The defence had been unable to raise the money, but when the judge heard that this offer had been made he allowed Morse to go free. The Evening Telegram cheered that the "freedom that blesses all citizens of Canada knows no colour line. It is the equal inheritance of all, and we are glad that the country that has shielded so many of his race has been the secure retreat of Adam Morse."[10] It was easy for Canadians to support Morse because his case reconfirmed that Canada was a safe home for Africans wrongly treated in the United States.

The interracial support for Morse was evident at the mass meeting held in celebration of his release at the Queen Street Baptist church. The Evening Telegram reported that "two thirds of the crowd were white people" and that "many prominent citizens were in the audience."[11] The meeting was chaired by George Simpson, who was quite prominent in the black community. Two resolutions were passed at the meeting. The first stated that they wished to emphasize "the great blessings ... we enjoy in the possession of our liberty, in the enjoyment of our rights under laws which are at once the safety and the glory of our land." The second resolution paid homage to those who had helped Morse. The editor of the Telegram, John Ross Robertson, was mentioned specifically "for the unsolicited way in which he came to our rescue when we were in great straits, and generously furnished funds to bring

---

[10] The Evening Telegram, June 22, 1888.

[11] The Evening Telegram, June 26, 1888.

witnesses from Georgia." The resolution also thanked the Globe's editor John Cameron for offering to pay any amount in the event Morse got bail, and also commended Senator John Macdonald for offering money "towards starting Mr. Morse to life again in this country." The resolution concluded by recognizing "to the fullest extent the great and universal sympathy manifested by all classes of citizens, not only in feeling, but in contributing so freely to much needed funds."[12] Indeed, many people could feel quite proud of themselves over the entire Morse episode. The Globe wrote that "Morse owes his release to those Canadians who exerted themselves to embarrass his prosecutors," and then stated that "(i)t is to be hoped he will justify the exertions made here in his behalf by good and industrious conduct in this community."[13] Morse lived in Toronto for approximately two years before returning to the United States.[14]

Blacks and whites had not necessarily seen the Morse episode the same way. For blacks, Morse was a member of their community who had been treated unjustly. For whites, it was an opportunity to be self-congratulatory, and to compare their country favourably with the United States. Indeed, this episode is mostly useful for what it reveals about white Ontario attitudes. The Morse episode brought back memories of the Underground Railroad, and the many

---

[12] The Globe, June 26, 1888.

[13] The Globe, June 23, 1888.

[14] Baldwin Room, A.R. Abbott Papers, Loose Clippings, pp. 2-3.

runaway slaves who found legal safety in Canada. The incident helped keep alive the myth that Canada was a better place for blacks than the United States. Left unsaid was the view that if Canada was a better place for blacks, perhaps it was also a better place in general.

Some African Canadians encountered problems with the law during these years. In this sense, they were no different than many other Canadians who encountered similar problems. Yet because blacks were more visible they often stood out in the courtroom, more so than white Canadians. In some parts of the province there was a perception that blacks committed proportionately more crimes than their white counterparts. The fact that this view existed can be illustrated by a comment made by J.B. Brown, an African who lived in Chatham, in 1871. Brown admitted that there "may possibly be ... more crime and disorder among the colored people in proportion to number than among the whites," but stated that if this was so it could be "attributed in good measure to their former condition."[15] An analysis of jail records suggests that blacks may have been arrested more frequently than whites, at least in some places. The Windsor jail records for 1876 to 1889 show that 21.9% of people charged with crimes were of African origin.[16] According to the 1881 census, only 15.2% of Windsor's population was black,

---

[15] Chatham Daily Planet, August 17, 1871.

[16] Ontario Archives, Windsor Jail, Jail Registers, 1876-1894, RG 20-103-1-2.

while just 6.7% of the population of Essex county was black.[17] Since the Windsor jail held people committing crimes throughout the county, Africans were decidedly overrepresented in the county jail, in fact approximately three times so. Africans also appear to have been overrepresented in Hamilton, although to a lesser extent than in Windsor. A total of 2.1% of persons committed to jail were African[18] while, according to the 1881 census, only 1.4% of the city's population was black.[19] In Toronto, on the other hand, the 'colour' column on the jail record was not always completed. From October 1880 to September 1882, however, 0.5% of those who were incarcerated were black[20] while, according to the 1881 census, Africans comprised 0.7% of the population.[21] Black underrepresentation in crime in Toronto was recognized by people in the African community. Anderson Ruffin Abbott noted in 1875 that "Toronto may fairly claim to be fortunate in her colored citizens. As a rule, they are a well-behaved, law-abiding class, and very few of the chronic crooks of the city are recruited from

---

[17] Report of the Census of 1881, vol. 1, p. 91.

[18] Ontario Archives, Hamilton Jail, Jail Registers, 1876-1883, RG 20-72-1, MS 2750, Hamilton Jail, Jail Registers, 1887-1893, RG 20-72-1, MS 2751. The years for which jail records are available for Hamilton are 1876 to 1883 and 1887 to 1889. The percentages for Hamilton include these years only.

[19] Report of the Census of 1881, vol. 1, 79.

[20] Ontario Archives, Toronto Jail, Jail Registers, 1880-1882, RG 20-100-1.

[21] Report of the Census of 1881, vol. 1, p. 73.

their ranks."[22]

Why were Africans arrested so much more frequently than whites, especially in a city like Windsor? This is a difficult question to answer, but it is clear that the degree to which blacks were charged with criminal offenses varied considerably according to the crime. Table 1 lists various crimes for the city of Windsor, and notes the percentage of those arrested for each crime who were black. What is most striking is the large number of Africans arrested for prostitution and keeping or frequenting houses of ill fame. Admittedly, there were not large numbers of arrests in these categories over the years, but it is remarkable that most of those charged were African. Furthermore, even those white people charged with keeping or frequenting houses of ill fame were usually arrested during the same raids that captured Africans. This pattern of vigilance towards black moral crimes does not appear to have been restricted to Windsor as 21 Africans were arrested in Hamilton between 1876 and 1889 for keeping or maintaining disorderly houses.[23] This trend continued in later years. When a Hamilton man pressed street-walking charges against a black woman in 1912 he asserted in court that "(t)here's a colony of these coloured women in town, and all they do is walk the

---

[22] Daniel Hill Black History Research Collection, Box 4, Toronto Notes (B).

[23] Ontario Archives, Hamilton Jail, Jail Registers, 1876-1883, RG 20-72-1, MS 2750 and Hamilton Jail, Jail Registers, 1887-1893, RG 20-72-1, MS 2751.

street."[24] This evidence suggests that blacks were watched more closely than whites, and therefore arrested more frequently. A scholar has noted that, when arrested for these crimes, blacks received harsher sentences. According to Ontario jail records from 1892 to 1929 blacks charged with public order offenses received, on average, jail sentences of almost one month more than did the population as a whole. The same writer has argued that black women charged with prostitution related offenses were treated especially severely by the courts.[25] Indeed, this evidence reveals more about white attitudes and fears than black activities. As has been noted, there was much opposition in the white community to social interaction with blacks, and there was a constant latent fear of intermarriage. Newspapers sometimes encouraged police to pay more attention to areas with black prostitutes. In 1871 the St. Catharines Journal encouraged the police to "take the trouble to patrol Geneva street after nightfall" because in this location was a "gang of dissipated colored boys with white and black prostitutes, [who] make right hideous with their vile language and insulting conduct to people who pass along."[26]

Table 1 also reveals that Africans were proportionately very overrepresented on charges of larceny and assault. They were,

---

[24] as cited in John Weaver, Crime, Constables, and Courts: Order and Transgression in a Canadian City, 1816-1970 (Montreal, 1995), p. 115.

[25] Mosher, Crime and Colour, Cops and Courts, p. 115.

[26] Evening Journal, June 30, 1871.

however, much less overrepresented on charges of drunkenness and vagrancy. Black drunks and vagrants were obviously not threats to the morals of white Canadian society in the way that prostitutes were, and police may not have been as vigilant in enforcing these crimes. This lax attitude is evident in an 1893 report in the Evening Record. The story noted that "John Levei, colored, was drunk yesterday afternoon. He was allowed to go."[27]

Table 1: Percentage of People Charged with Various Crimes in Windsor who were African, 1876 to 1889

Crime	# people charged	# Africans charged	% of those charged who were African
Larceny	550	173	31.5
Assault	223	82	36.8
Vagrancy	248	33	13.3
Drunkenness	788	113	14.3
Prostitution	12	7	58.3
Keeping house of ill fame	16	12	75.0
Frequenting house of ill fame	28	25	89.3

Source: Ontario Archives, Windsor Jail, Jail Registers, 1876-1894, RG 20-103-1-2, MS 2797.

Newspapers of this era devoted considerable space to court cases, and an examination of the way in which cases involving blacks were reported reveals much about white Ontario's attitude towards its African minority. When Africans were charged with crimes, the press often emphasized the fact they were 'coloured,'

[27] Evening Record, July 7, 1893.

often in the headlines. When the crimes were not particularly serious, blacks often appear to have been regarded by police, judges, and newspapers writers alike as objects of humour. In fact, Colonel George Denison, who served as Toronto's police magistrate for many years, noted in his recollections that "(t)he negroes ... were a source of amusement in the court because of their many peculiarities."[28] The alleged African habit of head butting was often mocked in the newspapers, such as an 1881 incident where two members of the Oddfellows Lodge in Toronto had threatened each other.[29] In St. Catharines, with its large black population, newspapers frequently referred to charges against blacks. One 1872 account sarcastically referred to "a coloured female who has been endeavouring to store her mind with information at St. Thomas' Ward School." She had been accused by her teacher "with being saucy and rebellious" and had been fined $1 and costs. The article further noted that the "evidence went to show that the presence of coloured children in our coloured schools[30] is very demoralizing."[31]

---

[28] Colonel George Denison, Recollections of a Police Magistrate (Toronto, 1920), p. 39.

[29] Denison, Recollections of a Police Magistrate, pp. 44-45.

[30] This must be an error, and the writer may have meant 'common' schools. As we have seen, the 'coloured' school in St. Catharines was in St. Paul's Ward. It is interesting that the newspaper used this opportunity to emphasize once again that blacks should not be in school with whites. Africans were, as discussed earlier, trying to gain access to common schools in St. Catharines at this time.

[31] Evening Journal, May 17, 1872.

When the crimes were more serious the reaction of the white community could be quite strong. An incident that occurred in Windsor in 1884 aroused the city's white population. A girl, in the company of a white man, had allegedly been attacked from behind by two black men and, according to the newspaper account, been "taken into the nursery garden near the road and brutally outraged." The girl told her mother, who was apparently so upset that she did not tell the police until the following day. A black man named Sam Merriman, who had been arrested for petty offenses before, was charged, along with an Indian who was suspected of being his accomplice. This led to a strong reaction in the community, and a newspaper report noted that "when it was known that the two prisoners were in the lock-up ... threats were made to take them out of jail and string them to a lamp post."[32] Luckily, this threat was not followed through, and Merriman instead went to trial. He was found guilty of rape and robbery and sentenced to 20 years in jail at the Kingston Penitentiary.[33] He served approximately ten years of the sentence before being pardoned in the mid-1890s.[34]

Black personalities who discussed the justice system during this time saw the situation in a different way than their white

---

[32] Ontario Archives, Alvin D. McCurdy Papers, F 2076-14, Box 65, Scrapbook, p. 120.

[33] Ontario Archives, Windsor Jail, Jail Registers, 1876-1894, RG 20-103-1-2.

[34] The Evening Record, July 21, 1899.

counterparts. Africans wanted to be treated with the same respect as everyone else, and recognized that often they were not. This desire was quite evident over a controversy that followed an incident that happened at an 1871 Emancipation Day celebration. Although many of these events, especially in the nineteenth century, appear to have been free of problems, occasional incidents occurred. At the event in Chatham that year, a drunken black man had been charged with assault. The incident had occurred at a bar, where the young man had assaulted the innkeeper by smashing one of his windows, and had then struck him a blow on the arm with a bar-room stool. The controversy occurred after the man had been arrested and brought to court. The Police Magistrate, upon addressing the prisoner, appeared to make negative comments on all blacks by saying they (Africans) were getting "too fractious and impudent." A letter appeared in a Chatham paper, written by J.B. Brown, that argued that the magistrate's comments had done "great injustice to the peaceable, law-abiding portion of the colored citizens of Chatham." The magistrate had also, according to Brown, "threatened to inflict the severest punishment the law would allow whenever one of them was brought up for trial." Such comments seemed grossly unfair to Brown, and undoubtedly others in the black community, and his letter outlined exactly what Africans expected from the Canadian justice system. Brown wrote that "(a)ll we ask is equality before the law, nothing more, and if we transgress the law we expect to be punished by the law the same as any other class of persons." It is worth noting that Brown in no way defended the

prisoner, and admitted that he deserved to be punished severely.[35] What bothered him was painting the whole community in a negative light because of the actions of a few people. This was not true equality because such statements were not made about the white majority when they were charged with crimes. African spokespersons were not trying to defend blacks who committed crimes. Anderson Ruffin Abbott, for example, referred to blacks in Toronto who got into trouble with the law as "white sheep," and called Doc Sheppard, an African who had been arrested about 50 times, "a troublesome citizen."[36]

Not all blacks, however, viewed the Canadian justice system in a negative light. William H. Johnson, a Woodstock resident, noted proudly that "the law of Great Britain protects all men alike let them be black or white." Johnson acknowledged that "(t)here are just as mean people here against the colored race as there are in the South, but they are afraid of the law." He passionately wrote that "(b)efore Great Britain would allow her loyal people to be treated like they are in the South she would bath Canada in blood."[37] In fact, Johnson's enthusiasm for Canada was such that he wanted "all Afro-Americans to come to Canada the land of the free; where they will live happy and enjoy freedom."[38] The Chatham

---

[35] Chatham Weekly Planet, August 17, 1871.

[36] Daniel Hill Black History Research Collection, Box 4, Toronto Notes (B).

[37] The Plaindealer, February 7, 1890.

[38] The Plaindealer, January 31, 1890.

correspondent of the Plaindealer also praised Canadian justice. The correspondent wrote that "(r)espectable, well behaved, independent colored men can live in Chatham without the slightest injustice being ever offered them." The writer further contended that "(e)very man gets even justice here, black and white. The records of the courts will bear me up in this." The writer argued that only those who go around "with an excuse on his face for being black, that feels there is injustice in everything that the white man does here."[39] Why were Johnson and the Plaindealer's Chatham correspondent so positive towards the Canadian justice system? In both cases, they were comparing Canada favourably with the United States. The Plaindealer's comments had come in response to an article on British prejudice that had appeared in a black Indianapolis newspaper. The article had painted Chatham in a negative light, and this had angered the Chatham correspondent.[40] Johnson, on the other hand, had a deeply-rooted anti-American sentiment. He wrote, for example, that he did not want Haiti annexed to the United States "while my people are treated in the South like they are now."[41] Johnson later wrote an essay telling the horrors of American slavery. The tract was quite sensationalistic with descriptions of rapes, floggings, and

---

[39] The Plaindealer, March 10, 1893.

[40] The Plaindealer, March 10, 1893.

[41] The Plaindealer, January 31, 1890.

mutilations.[42] Blacks in Ontario faced problems, but many continued to view the province in a better light than the United States. The views of Johnson and the Chatham correspondent were mostly influenced by their negative opinion of the United States.

It was the perception of the white community, however, that was crucial when blacks were tried for serious crimes. Three of the most controversial were the 1893 Freeman case which occurred near Chatham, the 1895 Clara Ford case in Toronto, and the 1901 David Hawes case in Toronto. All three of these cases related in some way to the question of sexual relationships between Africans and Europeans. The white perception of interracial sex was the important factor in the outcome of all these cases.

The Freeman incident occurred in January 1893. Robert Rankin, a white Chatham police officer, was allegedly attacked and murdered by three members of the Freeman family, a black family living on a farm near Chatham. The problem began when charges were laid against George Freeman for having relations with a white girl, who was alleged to have been thirteen years old (at the trial members of the Freeman family claimed she was actually 16 or 17). George Freeman had previously received threats for having this girl in his house. Some mill hands had allegedly said they were going to tar and feather him.[43] The girl had given birth to a child. When this

---

[42] Winks, The Blacks in Canada, p. 291.

[43] Ontario Archives, Criminal Assize Indictments, County Middlesex, Case Files, 1891-1893, R.G. 22, Series 392, Box 90, p. 14.

information became public knowledge, a county constable named McDonald, along with a friend, had gone to arrest him. The subsequent court case demonstrated that McDonald and his friend had been quite deceptive about their purposes when they went to visit the Freeman farm. They had apparently knocked on Freeman's door, which was opened by Freeman's wife. The police stated that their sled had broken down, and asked if the woman's husband would help fix it. When George Freeman approached the door, he was jumped by the two men. Freeman claimed he had been hit on the head and the police had tossed him around.[44] In this tussle McDonald and the other man fled. The men mentioned nothing about an arrest warrant, or what their real purpose in visiting had been. The next day McDonald returned with two Chatham police officers, Rankin and Dezelia, to arrest Freeman. Freeman claimed at the trial that he believed they were going to murder him,[45] a not unrealistic assumption given the events of the day before. There were conflicting reports at the trial as to what happened. Dezelia claimed that both he and Rankin had their police uniforms on, and that upon arriving at the Freeman home George Freeman threatened to shoot them. Dezelia claimed he said "we are not going to hurt you. Reason for a moment and we wont [sic] hurt a hair of your head." Then he alleged that George Freeman began shooting. Freeman, on the other hand, claimed that he had no idea they were

---

[44] Ontario Archives, Criminal Assize Indictments, County Middlesex, Case Files, 1891-1893, R.G. 22, Box 90, pp. 4-5.

[45] The Daily Free Press, October 7, 1893.

constables, and that the men started chasing after him. He claimed that he heard someone yell "shoot" and that he only started shooting after he had been shot at.[46] It was in the ensuing melee that Rankin had been killed. George Freeman escaped, while a number of blacks were arrested. The newspaper account stated that without the presence of "a large posse of constables ... the whole lot of prisoners would have either been lynched or riddled with bullets."[47]

Some members of the white press used the incident to congratulate Canadian love for law and order. The Hamilton Spectator, after noting that a constable had been murdered in a "most atrocious manner by a mob of negroes," wrote that armed men from Chatham had gone to the murder scene and arrested some of the murderers and delivered them safely to jail. The article noted that this incident showed that the love for law and order in Canada "is very great," and wondered in "how many of the States of the great American union ... would such a thing be possible."[48] The initial press comments on the suspects were not favourable. The Evening Record wrote that while George Freeman had an "intelligent appearance," the fact that he did not have "much of the moral

---

[46] Ontario Archives, Criminal Assize Indictments, County Middlesex, Case Files, 1891-1893, R.G. 22, Series 392, Box 90, pp. 1, 38-39.

[47] The Evening Record, January 25, 1893.

[48] Hamilton Spectator, January 26, 1893.

element in his composition is phrenologically indicated."[49] The black Detroit newspaper The Plaindealer saw the situation somewhat differently. It chastised Patrolman Dezelia for calling George Freeman an "infernal black liar" and a "cowardly cur." Dezelia had then allegedly referred to the family collectively as a "gang of black liars." All of these comments were made by Dezelia while the Freemans were behind bars. The Plaindealer accused Dezelia of being a coward, for running when his partner was in trouble, and only bragging to the prisoners when jail bars were between them. The newspaper correspondent then suggested that "(w)ith good councillors at the head of the town the public should hear more of the affray than 'Pete' cares to tell before it proceeds to hang the 'desperadoes.'" The Plaindealer correspondent also criticized those who gathered around the jail threatening to lynch the Freemans. It was noted that they were "of the lowest class, with a few would-be Southerners." Yet the article also chastised blacks who refused to help the police, and noted that those "who refused to offer assistance to the authorities and pleaded 'family ties' as an excuse deserve nothing but censure."[50] Some types of assistance, however, were not commendable in the eyes of the Plaindealer. A black woman sent a letter to the policeman Dezelia warning him that she had overheard three drunk black men making preparations to attack the police officer "in some dark place."

---

[49] The Evening Record, January 27, 1893.

[50] The Plaindealer, February 3, 1893.

The writer stated that she did not know who the men were, and refused to sign her name to the letter "for fear my people might find it out."[51] The letter was published in Chatham and Windsor newspapers, and the Plaindealer correspondent wrote that "(i)f a colored girl did write the letter ... and her identity is discovered she should be frowned out of all respectable society."[52] Such rumours could only cast suspicion on all Africans, the majority of whom appear to have assisted the police in their efforts in this case. In fact, it was Isaac Holden, one of Chatham's black aldermen, who had moved at a city council meeting that "Council grant Two hundred Dollars to the widow of the late Robert Rankin, who lost his life in the endeavour to arrest one George Freeman."[53] It is also noteworthy that the Plaindealer argued that the people who refused to assist the authorities during the Freeman case were the same people who would not support the Civil Rights League, a black organization devoted to fighting discrimination, "and yet are always grumbling at their treatment at the hands of the whites."[54] While most in the black community assisted the authorities, many also provided support to the family to ensure they received a fair trial. Mass meetings were held by Rev. J.C. Richards, the president of the Civil Rights League. The

---

[51] The Evening Record, March 2, 1893.

[52] The Plaindealer, March 10, 1893.

[53] Ontario Archives, Chatham, Kent County, Council Minutes, 1892-1896, p. 107.

[54] The Plaindealer, February 3, 1893.

aim was to ensure that they "received British justice."[55] Whereas whites seemed quick to convict Freeman, many blacks expressed concern that he receive a fair trial.

The public outcry from the white community was based on the fact that a black man had had sexual relations with a white girl. A newspaper account noted that it was when news leaked "that it was a white girl" that "the whites of Chatham were terribly stirred up" and talks of lynching arose.[56] The Evening Record noted that "the story of her ruin erected the most intense indignation throughout the settlement."[57] If the girl had not been white it seems unlikely that feelings would have run so high, or that the arrests would have been carried out in such a deceptive manner. Furthermore, the County Constable Macdonald was the deputy jailor of the county jail, and he had a reputation for making things unpleasant for African prisoners.[58]

During the actual trial it was only towards the end of the case that the race factor was mentioned, and it was the defence that chose to refer to it. They did not argue that the police were unfairly focusing on blacks, and did not suggest they would have treated the situation any differently if the person they were

---

[55] Dawn of Tomorrow, May 6, 1927.

[56] Baldwin Room, A.R. Abbott Papers, Scrapbook 2, folder 2, p. 197.

[57] The Evening Record, January 25, 1893.

[58] Baldwin Room, A.R. Abbott Papers, Scrapbook 2, folder 2, p. 197.

arresting had happened to be white. Instead, defence lawyer Osler referred "to the debt that the whites owed to the blacks for long years of oppression and slavery." Furthermore, he commended "the noble manner in which Ontario had recognized them as men, and asked in view of the recent barbaric state of the race that the jury's view of their acts be tempered with mercy."[59] The prosecutor, on the other hand, responded by asking the jury "to place the prisoners on the same footing as white men." In other words, all men were to be equal before the law. Judge Falconbridge, in his charge to the jury, sided with the prosecution, and reminded the white jury that the prisoners "are people of another race and color from yours and mine," and told them to show no "sympathies for them on the one hand, or any prejudice or dislike against them on the other hand." The judge stated that they should be treated the same as if "belonging to the Canadian race [sic]."[60] Race would not be allowed to be a factor in the verdict, even though it had been a factor in bringing the whole unfortunate episode about in the first place. In the end, George, Alexander, and William Henry Freeman were found guilty of manslaughter, while the fourth accused, Lemuel, was found not guilty of being an accomplice. They were sentenced to jail "for the term" of their natural lives.[61] The Freemans received some support in the press following the verdict.

---

[59] Daily Free Press, October 7, 1893.

[60] Daily Free Press, October 9, 1893.

[61] Daily Free Press, October 9, 1893.

The deceptive nature of the arrest had become clear during the trial, and the London Advertiser, while suggesting a lighter sentence might have been in order, noted that the "Freeman young men were not criminals by instinct, but were guilty of their crime in a fit of passion, superinduced by the belief that one of their number was being hardly dealt with and that resistance ... was warranted." Furthermore, the Freemans had been "honest, hard-working, inoffensive citizens."[62] This belated support, however, was of little help to the Freemans.

A truly bizarre case occurred in Toronto in 1894. Frank Westwood, the son of a prominent Toronto family, was murdered. Before he died he was able to give police a description of his assailant, whom he described as a dark complexioned man with a moustache who was wearing a hat.[63] A suspect emerged named Clara Ford, a black seamstress, who often attended the theatre to watch melodramas where the heroine would dress in men's clothes and shoot the villain.[64] When arraigned in a police court Ford pleaded guilty, but later recanted when the case went to trial. Ford's initial explanation for killing Westwood had been that he had taken `improper liberties' with her, and she had responded by going to

---

[62] as cited in Chatham Weekly Planet, October 19, 1893.

[63] Carolyn Strange, "The Perils and Pleasures of the City: Single, Wage-Earning Women in Toronto, 1880-1930," (Ph.D. thesis, Rutgers Univ., 1991), p. 108.

[64] Hector Charlesworth, Candid Chronciles (Toronto, 1925), p. 242.

his house and shooting him.[65] In the trial held during the spring of 1895 Ford's lawyers had her take the stand where she denied committing the crime, and said she did not know Westwood. Ford had gained many sympathizers during the trial, and much applause greeted the announcement that she was 'not guilty.' Yet the most revealing comment was made by the Judge when he accepted the Jury's verdict. He stated that he was not surprised by the verdict and noted that "(f)or your sake I am glad that the jury have cleared, not only your good name, but the good name of the young man who was shot."[66] The fact that the son of a prominent Toronto family would have been harassing a poor black woman, especially if that harassment had been sexual, was something that made late nineteenth century Ontario very uncomfortable. Ford had claimed in her initial defence that she was a 'wounded woman,' but many in the media found the claim that she was assaulted inconceivable. The Empire, for example, found it difficult to believe that the "supposed insult" offered by Frank Westwood "was anything more than 'a passing remark.'"[67] Letting Ford go was the most beneficial way to resolve the case. In this way there was no possibility that Westwood had been fraternizing with a poor working woman of another race. In criminal cases, as in other areas of life, support from the community at large was necessary for blacks to succeed. Ford,

---

[65] Strange, "The Perils and Pleasures of the City," p. 109.

[66] Toronto World, May 6, 1895.

[67] as cited in Strange, "The Perils and Pleasures of the City," p. 111.

unlike other blacks accused of serious crimes, had that support.

The David Hawes case involved the alleged rape of a 17 year old girl. Hawes was an Ottawa resident who had been employed as a railway porter for six years.[68] He was accused of raping the girl, who had been a passenger, at Union Station. The story, however, had been refuted by several people, and a physician had found no marks or bruises on the girl's body.[69] Furthermore, no one had heard the girl call for help.[70] Hawes' lawyer believed his client had a potentially strong case, and wrote that he was convinced, after making enquiries at Union station, that "if the prisoner were able to continue the enquiries himself ... he would be able to discover ample evidence for his defence."[71] In the end, however, Hawes was found guilty, and the judge "remarked that it was the meanest kind of conduct he had ever heard of and one of the worst cases he had ever known."[72] He was sentenced to ten years, and the News noted that he was lucky to receive such a sentence which, "if it had occurred in the Southern states, he would undoubtedly have been tried very summarily and suffered immediate

---

[68] Ontario Archives, Criminal Assize Clerk: Indictment Case Files, 1900-1903, R.G. 22, Series 392, Box 263.

[69] Strange, "The Perils and Pleasures of the City, p. 260.

[70] Carolyn Strange, "Patriarchy Modified: The Criminal Prosecution of Rape in York County, Ontario, 1880-1930" in Jim Phillips, Tina Loo and Susan Lewthwaite, eds., Essays in the History of Canadian Law, vol. 5 (Toronto, 1994), pp. 222-223.

[71] Ontario Archives, Criminal Assize Clerk: Indictment Case Files, 1900-1903, R.G. 22, series 392, Box 263.

[72] Toronto World, November 12, 1901.

death at the hands of an angry mob."[73]

When Africans were alleged to have committed violent crimes the fact that they were African was often emphasized in the newspaper descriptions. Titles such as "Negro Threatened Life of White Woman," "Negro Knife Brandisher Gets Jail Sentence," and "Killed By Negro" were some of the headlines that graced early twentieth century Ontario newspapers.[74] A recent work dealing with blacks and crime has argued that blacks who victimized whites in crime were treated more severely than other criminals.[75] Given these types of headlines, this finding does not seem surprising. Yet the white press also offered sympathy when blacks were attacked by whites. After a white man attacked a black woman in Chatham in 1905, for example, a Chatham newspaper headline read "Cowardly Assault on Lone Colored Woman."[76] A 1913 incident, however, suggests that blacks had a more difficult time appearing in the victim role. When a 13 year old African boy, an American employee of a visiting circus, drowned in a river in Chatham the newspaper headline announced "Little Colored Boy Drowned When Two Men Rocked Boat." The story referred to the incident as "unfortunate and distressing" and related that two white employees of the circus had

---

[73] as cited in Strange, "Patriarchy Modified" in Phillips, Loo and Lewthwaite, eds, Essays in the History of Canadian Law, vol. 5, p. 223.

[74] The Evening Record, February 24, 1912, October 18, 1911, and The Hamilton Spectator, August 2, 1911.

[75] Mosher, Crime and Colour, Cops and Courts, p. 150.

[76] Chatham Daily News, July 17, 1905.

rented a canoe, and noticing the black boy standing on the shore, asked him to join them. The boy was unable to swim, and with the apparent intent of frightening him, one man jumped out and began rocking the canoe, while bystanders on the shore encouraged the men to dump the boy into the water. The boat then tipped, and the "jokers" realized that the boy was in trouble. They tried to save him, but failed.[77] The two men were apprehended, but quickly acquitted of any blame whatsoever, and the death was ruled an accident.[78] Yet the initial press report had painted a picture of considerable negligence on the part of the men, and it is striking that the Planet was so quick to drop the matter with no additional commentary. The fact that all involved in the case were Americans may have been a factor. Two historians who dealt with another case, in which one black circus labourer murdered another in Picton in 1903, argued that since these circus employees came "from outside their community," white residents of the town did not feel responsible for the incident, and did not criticize the acquittal of the accused.[79] A similar feeling may have existed in Chatham. Yet one wonders if the death of a white boy at the hands of black men would have elicited greater reaction.

The perception of the white community was the crucial factor when blacks were involved in legal issues. Morse was a victim of

---

[77] The Planet, June 27, 1913.

[78] The Planet, June 28, 1913.

[79] Strange and Loo, "Spectacular Justice," The Canadian Historical Review, vol. 77, no. 2 (June, 1996), p. 184.

American injustice, and therefore entitled to support. Hawes, on the other hand, was a threat to white women while the contention that Ford may have had a relationship with a member of a prominent white Toronto family seemed too extreme to be believed. Police tightly enforced black crimes such as prostitution which were deemed a threat to white society's standards, but worried less about African drunks. The black perception on legal issues, on the other hand, was less important because they possessed little power in this area.

Chapter Seven: African Organizations, Collective Action, and Political Involvement From 1870 to 1919

Both individually and collectively blacks were able to successfully adapt to life in Ontario. On the one hand, African organizations emerged largely because blacks saw the world in which they lived in such a different manner than did their white counterparts. These organizations provided considerable comfort to the black population. On the other hand, individual blacks who wished to thrive in white Ontario society, in either an economic or political sense, had to be careful not to propagate views that were not acceptable to the white community in which they lived.

One area where some individual blacks achieved considerable success was in municipal politics. African men, when Canadian citizens, were entitled to vote, and in cities with large black populations white politicians worked hard to win the African vote. The late nineteenth and early twentieth century also witnessed the presence of a number of black political candidates. These politicians were well accepted by the white community, but rarely dealt with race related issues while on city council.

There was a plethora of black aldermen during these years. Chatham had two African representatives. Isaac Holden served during the late 1800s, and Henry Weaver was in office from 1891 to 1893, and again from 1895 to 1898.[1] William Hubbard had a long run

[1] Robinson, Seek the Truth, p. 68.

as alderman in Toronto. He was first elected in 1894 and won his next thirteen elections.[2] Windsor was a city that had an especially large number of black politicians. In fact, the city had a stream of black aldermen from the late 1880s until the early twentieth century. The first was James Dunn who served from 1887 to 1888.[3] As was discussed in an earlier chapter, Dunn had been active in trying to eliminate separate schools for black children in the city, and had gone to court in 1883 in an unsuccessful attempt to gain access for his daughter to the common schools. He died in 1889, but a succession of other black representatives followed. Peter Barnes served from 1890 until 1892.[4] Robert Dunn, the brother of James, had the most successful political career, which he began in 1893. Dunn lost in the 1894 election, when another African, a merchant named Lawson was elected, but Dunn then served in 1895 and 1896, in 1899, and again from 1902 to 1903. Isaac Nolan was also an alderman in Windsor, serving in 1913 and 1914. When these representatives were discussed in the local press the fact that they were African was only occasionally noted, and the minute books for city council did not refer to them as black. This marked a striking contrast to the way Africans who were charged with crimes were referred to in the newspapers, where the

---

[2] Hill, The Freedom-Seekers, p. 217.

[3] Ontario Archives, Windsor, Essex County Minute Book, 1885-1892, pp. 255, 353.

[4] Ontario Archives, Windsor, Essex County, Minute Book, 1885-1892, pp 660, 70, 226.

fact they were black was often mentioned quite prominently.

The black vote was particularly important in a city like Windsor, where Africans were a large enough component of the population to potentially affect the outcome of an election. In 1892 and 1893 Mayor Fleming had been elected with small minorities, and according to an African writing to the Evening Record "in each case the colored vote held the balancing power."[5] Mayors recognized the importance of the black vote, and after the 1896 election the Evening Record reported that Mayor Mason, who had received support from the African community, thanked blacks at his victory speech "from the bottom of his heart for their noble support."[6] The importance of the African vote meant that rallies and meetings were sometimes held for the black community. In 1895, for example, an election rally was held at a black Baptist church.[7]

White politicians in Windsor assumed that Africans would vote as a group, and this helps to explain why candidates often campaigned so hard for the black vote. In this way, Africans were treated no differently than other ethnic groups. When they were given favours, the politicians expected to be repaid. Supporters of Dr. Aikman, a candidate in the 1886 election, were puzzled as to why Aikman had not received better support in the black community since it was he who had "first employed colored laborers

---

[5] The Evening Record, January 10, 1894.

[6] The Evening Record, January 7, 1896.

[7] The Evening Record, January 7, 1895.

in town contracts."[8] In at least one instance, a white politician went too far when making public assumptions about the black vote. John Harmon, a candidate for the 1894 election, boasted that he controlled 200 African votes.[9] After this comment appeared in the press, blacks made it clear that he did not. Zack Jackson, who played a prominent role organizing Windsor's Emancipation Day celebrations, commented the next day that "Harmon don't control the colored vote no mo."[10] An editorial in the Evening Record wrote that they were "not surprised that our colored citizens are indignant that any man should presume to represent that he controlled the colored vote." The editorial further argued that it "was an insult to their intelligence for Ald. Harmon to say that two hundred of them would do as he told them." A letter in the same edition from an African ratepayer stated that Harmon did not control the African vote, "which will be found out on the first Jan. at five o'clock." The Evening Record had its own agenda in the entire episode. It wanted to vote out the current administration and in a none too subtle editorial asserted that "our colored ratepayers have to bear their share of the burden of taxation and they have intelligence enough to see how the money of

---

[8] as cited in Patrick Brode, High Victorian Windsor: Essays on Windsor and Area: 1880-1895 (Windsor, 1994), p. 13.

[9] Evening Record, December 28, 1893.

[10] Evening Record, December 29, 1893. Ontario newspapers of this era often used stereotyped black English when quoting Africans, so it is not clear whether Jackson actually spoke this way.

the ratepayers has been squandered this year."[11] Harmon lost in his bid to retain his seat as alderman.

The tension between Harmon and the black community did not end following the 1894 election. Harmon returned as alderman in 1895 and got into a controversy during that summer's Emancipation Day celebrations. Prior to the event Harmon made a motion at a council meeting that the mayor should be empowered to welcome the "crowd" coming to celebrate Emancipation Day. The tone of this invitation upset both Dunn and a white alderman named Shepherd who believed the term 'crowd' implied disrespect to the visitors, and wanted the resolution amended to have "a more respectful expression."[12] Harmon would not accept the change, and according to the newspaper account the "suggestion met with only derision."[13] Dunn responded to Harmon's refusal by withdrawing from the meeting. The Evening Record supported Dunn's stand and contended that he was "justly indignant at the gratuitous insult put on the colored people by alluding to them as a 'crowd.'" The newspaper report further noted that since Harmon would not make any change "the insults went into the city records."[14] In fact, the insult did not go into the city records because the minute book from the meeting simply noted that "the Mayor, be requested to welcome the visiting Colored United

---

[11] The Evening Record, December 30, 1893.

[12] The Evening Record, August 1, 1895.

[13] The Evening Record, July 30, 1895.

[14] The Evening Record, August 1, 1895.

Order of Oddfellows and Knights Templar, to this city," making no mention of 'crowd.'[15] Yet the African community could not know what was in the official minute book, and knew only what was in the newspaper, and this incident built on the hostility directed towards Harmon when he claimed to control their votes. His comment was still an issue when the next election occurred, and he ran in a different ward. At election time the Evening Record noted that Harmon's "affections were waning last summer when he voted for Mayor Mason's motion ... describing the 1st of August emancipation gathering as a 'crowd.'"[16] Running in a different ward failed to help Harmon's cause, however, as he was unsuccessful in Ward Two.[17]

African aldermen did not generally concern themselves with matters relating to race during council meetings. Dunn's comments concerning the welcome blacks received for the 1895 Emancipation Day celebrations was one of the few times issues relating to the black community were discussed. They dealt with the same issues as other aldermen such as water supply, sewers, and finances. Nor did they always rely on support from the black community to obtain office. A clear example was Toronto's black alderman William Hubbard. Hubbard was a fair skinned African, who was first nominated in December of 1892. In his nomination speech he made no mention of race, but instead concentrated on condemning the

---

[15] Ontario Archives, Windsor, Essex County, Minute book, 1892-1899, p. 372.

[16] The Evening Record, December 16, 1895.

[17] Evening Record, January 7, 1896.

management of the city's waterworks department, and criticizing the single tax system.[18] Newspapers discussing his nomination also ignored his race. The Evening Telegram introduced him "as a good man and a heavy property owner."[19] The paper also noted that he was a Conservative, and that he "has ideas, the ability to express them and the courage to stand by the city every time."[20] Hubbard failed in his first attempt for public office, but was elected in his second attempt in January 1894. The Star simply noted that he "attends the English church and runs a livery stable."[21] Other references to Hubbard throughout his political career made little mention of race, but concentrated on his abilities. Hubbard's support from newspapers was based on his politics and his record as alderman, not his race. In 1896 the Globe described Hubbard as "an uncompromising advocate" of the public interest, and noted that he is "a plucky fighter" and "an excellent speaker."[22] There is little evidence that Hubbard concerned himself much with issues related to the black community, but he did make some efforts to help other minorities in Toronto. He took steps to defend Chinese laundrymen from being forced to pay high taxes, and in 1898 was among a group sending a communication to Toronto City Council

---

[18] The Globe, December 27, 1892.

[19] The Evening Telegram, December 31, 1892.

[20] The Evening Telegram, December 29, 1892.

[21] The Evening Star, January 3, 1894.

[22] The Globe, December 31, 1896.

asking that steps be taken to prohibit attacks being made on the Jewish religion by a person who was discoursing on the subject on the public streets.[23] Hubbard's involvement in race issues appears to have been more symbolic than anything. When, for example, the renowned American black Booker T. Washington gave a talk at Massey Hall in December of 1902 it was Hubbard who presented him with a gift on behalf of the Musical and Literary Society of Toronto, which was composed entirely of blacks.[24] Hubbard was successful and had longevity in his political career, even serving as acting mayor when called upon. Yet his claim to fame was not based on racial issues, and a biography on Hubbard has noted that "he did not view himself as, or feel it necessary to emphasize that he was, a representative of his race, and apparently was not treated as such."[25]

In order for Africans to be successful in occupations that were outside the traditional range of jobs they performed it was necessary for them to be accepted by the white community. In order for these aldermen to survive politically they had to have good relations with the surrounding white society. Hubbard was well connected with the white community. He corresponded with prominent

---

[23] Ontario Archives, Daniel Hill Black History Research Collection, Box 4, Toronto Notes (B).

[24] City of Toronto Archives, Hubbard Collection, Box 1, File 2, Item 1.

[25] Stephen Hubbard, Against All Odds: The Story of William Peyton Hubbard: Black Leader and Municipal Reformer (Toronto, 1987), p. 125.

white people such as Sir Adam Beck and Goldwin Smith, but there is less evidence of much contact with members of the black community.[26] In fact, he lived in a part of town with few Africans, and according to the 1901 census he had no black neighbours at that time.[27] In a 1970s interview, his granddaughter admitted she had no memory of Emancipation Day celebrations, suggesting it was not something her family celebrated. She noted that with "Grandpa's being in the Council ... we were oriented not to the black part of the family but to the white surrounding community."[28] Dunn, Lawson, and Weaver did have black neighbours and lived in areas with a large black population, but they also appear to have had a good relationship with the surrounding white community. Robert Dunn must have had a certain city-wide popularity since he entertained thoughts of running for mayor for the 1897 council. According to a newspaper account there was a "seductive popular demand that he 'go up higher,'" and Dunn planned to run until deciding against the idea at the last minute.[29] Henry Weaver appeared to be accepted in Chatham society. A white speaker at the 1897 Emancipation Day celebration in Chatham rhetorically asked "(w)ho in Chatham does

---

[26] City of Toronto Archives, William P. Hubbard Collection, passim.

[27] Ontario Archives, Microfilm of the 1901 Census Rolls, Toronto West, Ward 4.

[28] Ontario Archives, Daniel Hill Black History Research Collection, Box 4, Toronto Notes (B), interview with Margaret Hubbard Smith.

[29] The Evening Record, December 30, 1896.

not know and appreciate the valuable services to the city of our eminent fellow-citizen, Ald. Henry Weaver."[30] The community seemed to see Weaver with a sense of pride, and Chatham's mayor in 1899, when commending the great progress of blacks, asked rhetorically "can any one compare with our own great Henry Weaver!"[31]

The fact that black aldermen received much support from the surrounding community is most evident in the fact that some whites must have voted for them. In 1896, for example, Dunn received 219 votes,[32] and there could not have been that many eligible African voters living in his ward. More revealing, however, is the fact that both Lawson and Dunn were, at one time or another, part of the Citizen's Ticket in that city.[33] This ticket was composed of aldermen endorsed by a committee of Windsor's citizens and recommended to the electors as worthy of support. Most of these people were elected into office, and since it was a citizen's ticket many white and black people would have taken the committee's suggestion and voted the entire ticket. This implies considerable white support for black candidates like Dunn and Lawson when they were on the ticket. The popularity of Lawson among at least some whites can also be demonstrated by the fact that, after being left off the ticket for the third ward in 1895, he was "urged" to be a

---

[30] Daily Planet, August 3, 1897.

[31] Evening Banner, August 2, 1899.

[32] The Evening Record, January 7, 1896.

[33] The Evening Record, December 23, 1893, and December 12, 1895.

candidate in the fourth Ward. He initially consented, but in the end decided not to run.[34] Newspapers also often supported black candidates. In 1893 Lawson, for example, was regarded by The Evening Record as a "merchant and a careful representative."[35]

A perception did exist, however, that black politicians existed for the black voters. The fact that an unofficial black candidate had emerged to represent the African voters in Windsor can be seen by the actions of the Citizen's Committee when preparing the Citizen's Ticket for the 1896 election. In early December the committee held a meeting to announce the ticket. The committee had delayed the selection "of a colored candidate" until this meeting, and called upon an African named Davidson, who was an elder of the BME church, to make a nomination. Davidson nominated Robert Dunn, but this elicited some negative reaction from those at the meeting because Dunn had supported a controversial sewer project the previous year. Peter Barnes, the former alderman, responded by stating that Dunn was the unanimous choice of the Independent Political Club, and that if his name was not accepted the club would oppose the entire ticket. Dunn appears to have been the choice of the African population, and Barnes then complained that "white people were grinding the ccolored (sic) race and keeping them under their heel and ignoring them." This comment angered others at the meeting, who argued that blacks were not

---

[34] The Evening Record, December 19, 1895, and December 30, 1895.

[35] The Evening Record, December 23, 1893.

being ignored. Cleary, the chair of the meeting, noted that "(i)t was surely no insult to the colored people to put any of them on the ticket," implying his support for Lawson, the other potential black candidate. A black speaker then critiqued Barnes' speech and said good things about Lawson. Ultimately, Dunn's name was accepted for the ticket, and another speaker, Dr. Cruickshank, concluded by saying that he "hoped that some day he would have the unspeakable pleasure of voting for a colored mayor."[36]

Despite the assumption that blacks voted as a bloc, there is some evidence to suggest that they did not. The fact that Lawson and Dunn both had African supporters at the above-mentioned meeting suggests there was at least some division in the community, even if the majority appeared to support Dunn. Both Dunn and Lawson had been on the ballot for the 1894 election, and Lawson received considerably more votes than Dunn.[37] In that election, some blacks who voted for Lawson may not have voted for Dunn since the vote difference was so great (voters elected three aldermen per ward). This result implies that just because a candidate was black it did not necessarily mean that he would get the entire African vote.

To what extent were these black aldermen representative of other Africans in late nineteenth and early twentieth century Ontario? They were definitely much more wealthy than most Africans. Hubbard was a prosperous enough man that he could be

---

[36] The Evening Record, December 12, 1895.

[37] The Evening Record, January 2, 1894.

described in the 1901 census as "living on own means."[38] The Dunns ran a successful varnish works business in Windsor, while Chatham's Henry Weaver had, according to the 1901 census, annual earnings of $2,500. By way of contrast, no other member of the city's African community had earned more than $900.[39] Isaac Holden was listed in the 1880 Chatham city directory as the proprietor of the City Flouring Mills, a manufacturer of patent process flours, and as a commission merchant.[40] These aldermen were all quite light in complexion. James and Robert Dunn had a mixed racial background. Their paternal grandmother had been a slave in the United States, while their grandfather had been a white slaveowner.[41] Not only was their father of mixed racial origin but their mother must also have been very fair because she was referred to as a 'creole' in the 1871 census,[42] a designation rarely used. Weaver also appeared quite light in pictures.[43] In fact, it is revealing that neither Weaver nor Isaac Holden were designated as 'coloured' according to

---

[38] Ontario Archives, Microfilm of 1901 Census Rolls, Toronto West, Ward 4.

[39] Ontario Archives, Microfilm of 1901 Census Rolls, Chatham City.

[40] Kent County Directory 1880 (Chatham, 1880), p. 70.

[41] Ontario Archives, Daniel Hill Black History Research Collection, Windsor Notes (B).

[42] Ontario Archives, Microfilm of 1871 Census Rolls, Windsor Town.

[43] The Planet Souvenir Edition (Chatham, Ont., 1904), p. 45.

the 1880 Chatham city directory.[44]

The extent to which Africans shared the political views of black aldermen is difficult to determine. It is revealing, however, that black aldermen did not generally give protest speeches at Emancipation Day celebrations. Some speeches in Chatham in the 1890s, as has been shown, were fairly hostile and critical of the racism that pervaded the city. These speeches were not delivered by Alderman Weaver. His involvement in celebrations more often involved leading the City Band.[45] When the former Windsor alderman Peter Barnes chaired the speeches at the 1897 celebration in that city he spoke much more favourably of the actions of the white community than other black speakers had at other celebrations. Barnes told his listeners that they "should thank God for their freedom and that they were British subjects," and he then gave whites credit for what they had done for blacks by opening the schools and colleges to them. In Barnes' view British soil was great "because it was once the only place where they were free from oppression."[46] If aldermen had taken positions that were too radical it would have been much more difficult for them to have survived politically. They had to have views that were similar to their constituents, and in terms of race issues

---

[44] Kent County Directory 1880, pp. 70, 103. Most directories in Ontario did not list race. The exceptions were a few Chatham directories in the 1880s.

[45] Chatham Daily Planet, August 2, 1892.

[46] Evening Record, August 3, 1897.

they had to be different from many other blacks, who often had a less favourable view of the way in which they were treated in the province.

Nevertheless, despite being fairer than many Africans these aldermen were considered to be black, and never attempted to deny their race. The success of these men proved that it was possible for blacks to succeed in Ontario. Hubbard, for example, was dark enough that Abbott observed that he "did not enjoy the meretricious advantage of being able 'to pass for white.'" For Abbott, Hubbard's success proved that "it is not necessary for the Afro-American to sever his affiliation with his own race in order to keep in touch with the white race and succeed in life."[47] The success of people like Hubbard was also significant in that he did not rely on African votes to be elected, as he was a candidate in a predominantly white riding. Abbott saw Hubbard's success as "an indication of the revolution that is taking place in public sentiment towards the colored man and of the rapid progress the race is making all along the line." Writing in 1898, he believed Hubbard's success would not have been possible ten years earlier. Indeed, Hubbard was not the only African elected to office by chiefly white constituents at this time. Burr Plato was elected to Drummondville's council before the turn of the century by his white neighbours.[48] Yet it is worth considering whether there

---

[47] Baldwin Room, A.R. Abbott Papers, Loose Clippings, p. 4A.

[48] Hill, The Freedom-Seekers, p. 211.

really was a change in public sentiment towards Africans and whether blacks really were making great strides because of the success of aldermen like Hubbard. It is true that there was a steady stream of black aldermen in Windsor from the late 1880s until the early twentieth century, but municipal politics was not a glamorous occupation, and aldermen were not usually paid. Furthermore, there had been a few black politicians in the province in the mid-nineteenth century, so blacks in municipal politics were not new. To say that there was a revolution in public sentiment towards Africans appears to have been overly optimistic. There had been prosperous Africans in Toronto in the 1850s such as James Mink, who ran stagecoaches between Toronto and Kingston, and even Abbott's father who bought and rented offices and properties.[49] The optimism expressed by Abbott is somewhat puzzling, but it has been noted that Abbott found Toronto's environment more hospitable than the situation in Chatham where he had lived in the 1880s.[50] This may account for his more increased optimism. In fact, black aldermen were accepted by the white community, the white press, and the other aldermen because they posed no real threat. These aldermen were not particularly radical, and they did not push race concerns upon the other members of council. They also did not make whites feel guilty about their treatment of Africans. Furthermore, in Windsor an unofficial token black alderman to

---

[49] Hill, The Freedom-Seekers, pp. 206, 208.

[50] Walton, "Blacks in Buxton and Chatham, Ontario," p. 208.

represent the sizable African population in that city perhaps reinforced the division of the races that still prevailed in social and economic settings. It is most important to note that these aldermen were politicians who just happened to be of African origin. Their public views were little different from their white colleagues, and it was for this reason they were able to succeed. As has been demonstrated, blacks and whites viewed issues relating to race very differently. If race issues had been discussed with any regularity at council meetings, it would have been much more difficult for African aldermen to have succeeded.

Yet these politicians obviously had some influence in the black community, and were seen as representatives of the black population. It was Henry Weaver who made the application for the use of Chatham's Tecumseh Park for the Emancipation Day celebrations in 1893.[51] It was Isaac Nolan, the former alderman, who was asked in 1915 if blacks in that city would be willing to organize a company for a World War One military battalion. Nolan rejected the suggestion because some blacks had already attempted to enlist and been refused.[52]

White Ontario's perception of who the black community leaders were was not always shared by blacks. Indeed, blacks who praised Great Britain, Canada, and whites in general seemed to get more media attention than those who were more critical, and often

---

[51] Ontario Archives, Chatham, Kent County, Council Minutes, 1892-1896, p. 167.

[52] The Evening Record, November 16, 1915.

received opportunities to represent their race at important celebrations. William Mallory, a Hamilton black, was appointed marshall for the day when the Prince of Wales visited Hamilton. Mallory was a former slave who worked to elevate his race, and he consistently looked at Canada in a positive light. He argued in his autobiography that "the colored man, by honesty, industry and sobriety, combined with self-respect, may hold up his head and move on terms of equality with the white people in this fair country of Canada."[53] The view that the province was a good place for Africans who were willing to work was undoubtedly pleasing to the white community, since such views echoed those expressed by white speakers at Emancipation Day celebrations. Yet whether Mallory was seen as a representative of the black community by Hamilton's Africans is more debatable. George Morton, who attempted to establish a black fire brigade in 1889, seemed to be more respected amongst Hamilton's blacks. It was Morton, for example, who chaired the 1884 Emancipation Day celebrations in Hamilton,[54] an event of considerable importance to the African community. In 1887 the Queen of England celebrated her Jubilee, and a representative from Toronto's black community was invited to attend. Captain R. Carter, a long time black resident of the city, was considered the likely candidate. Some of the city's black population held a

---

[53] photocopy of Col. William Mallory's Escape from Slavery in Ontario Archives, Daniel Hill Black History Research Collection, Hamilton Notes (B), p. 19.

[54] Hamilton Daily Spectator, August 2, 1884.

meeting and decided that it would not be advisable to send Carter to England to represent Toronto's blacks. Carter responded by delivering a lecture entitled "Our Queen and Country." Of the fifty people attending the talk, forty-seven were white. The newspaper report noted that in his speech "(e)very sentence breathed loyalty to his Queen and his country." The purpose of the meeting was to produce a petition asking that Carter be sent to England.[55] A couple of days later it was reported that Carter would go to the Jubilee celebration,[56] but one can only conclude that it was largely his support in the white community, rather than amongst blacks, that had enabled him to go. The fact that Carter had support in the white press is evidenced in the fact that the Toronto Evening News wrote that it hoped that "the rumour that our distinguished fellow-citizen Capt. Carter, will receive the honor of knighthood during his contemplated visit to England, is correct."[57]

It was black organizations that were most representative of the black community. The fact that blacks frequently viewed issues in a different light from their white compatriots meant that many independent black associations developed over the years. Such organizations existed throughout the period under study, and took a variety of forms. Literary associations, for example, were quite

---

[55] Toronto Evening News, June 8, 1887.

[56] Toronto Evening News, June 10, 1887.

[57] Toronto Evening News, June 16, 1887.

common by the late nineteenth century. The 1887 constitution of the Buisy (sic) Gleanors of Amherstburg noted that the club held weekly meetings which consisted of "recitations, essays and select readings,"[58] while the Frederick Douglass Self Improvement Club, with a club motto of "Lifting as we climb," was an organization for "respectable girls."[59] The Maple Leaf Club was established in Chatham in 1895 for young black men under the age of forty-five. The club, which did not allow gambling, swearing or smoking, aimed to "cultivate the highest traits of character among the members."[60] These were moderate, apolitical organizations, with largely social functions.

Other organizations had purposes that were less social, and more protest oriented. Some were designed to draw attention to the discrimination blacks faced. The Colored Men of Essex, for example, held a convention in 1877. At this meeting they emphasized that they were not receiving equality in Ontario. An editorial in the Missionary Messenger summarized some of the complaints that had been made. The convention had argued that "(h)owever much we may be regarded theoretically, as being on a footing with other classes; there is no disputing the fact that there are certain disabilities we labor under not common to other

---

[58] Ontario Archives, Alvin D. McCurdy Papers, F 2076-9-0-2, No. 48.

[59] Ontario Archives, Alvin D. McCurdy Papers, F 2076-9-0-3, No. 48.

[60] Ontario Archives, Daniel Hill Black History Research Collection, Chatham Notes (A).

classes." Amongst these disabilities were denied access to common schools, omission from jury service, and an unfairly low share of the public work. Africans had come to realize that they alone would have to solve these problems, and the convention, according to the Messenger editorial, "is an indication that there is a growing disposition among us to resent our wrongs, and to vindicate our claims ourselves." The growing impatience of Africans was noted when it was contended that:

> We have waited too long for some favorable change in the tide of affairs to bring to us that which we can attain only by our own exertions. Other classes in this country are too busy with their own interests to pay much attention to our appeals.

The Missionary Messenger also expressed the disappointment blacks felt about life in the province. The editorial concluded by noting that Africans "came here under the impression that British laws and the magnanimity of the British people would secure to us the same rights and privileges accorded to other classes." Instead, however, it was argued that they had found "a prejudice and class-hatred to contend with as implacable as that from which we have just fled."[61]

A number of political organizations emerged in the black community, and they were especially prevalent in the 1910s. These associations were based on the assumption that blacks had to unite to look after their own concerns. One such group was the Good Government Club of Windsor, founded by that city's black voters at

[61] Baldwin Room, A.R. Abbott Papers, Scrapbook 2, folder 1, pp. 39-40.

a meeting in the local AME church in October of 1911. Its avowed purpose was to bring the black vote together "for the best interests of the colored population." A need for this type of organization emerged because some black voters resented the tactics of some of the city's white politicians. In municipal, provincial, and federal elections there had been efforts to swing the black vote and there had been charges of corruption. The purpose of the Good Government Club was to enlighten the black voters on the campaign issues, in order that they could cast an "independent ballot, without any assistance, persuasion or coercion on the part of enthusiastic workers of any of the political parties." The Good Government Club would provide a counter influence to those who were simply trying to buy their vote. Amongst those on the executive were two former aldermen, Robert Dunn and William Lawson.[62] At a meeting just prior to Christmas, the club endorsed a ticket for the January 1912 election.[63] The club also helped blacks register for upcoming elections. The club did not restrict its activities to political concerns. Speeches were sometimes delivered such as a November 1911 talk about the importance of unity in the black community.[64] By December of 1911 there were about one hundred members in the Good Government Club.[65]

---

[62] The Evening Record, October 24, 1911.

[63] The Evening Record, December 23, 1911

[64] The Evening Record, November 25, 1911.

[65] The Evening Record, December 11, 1911.

A similar organization emerged in Toronto. Whitney's _The Canadian Observer_ consistently urged black unity, and just prior to the 1915 municipal elections in Toronto a mass meeting was called by Whitney for the black citizens of that city. The purpose of the meeting was to stir up political interest amongst blacks. In an editorial Whitney emphasized the importance of unity, and stressed the "untold benefit" that would occur "as soon as the politicians realize your power as voters, while each man separate from the other in his own little sphere carries but a very little weight with the politician." Whitney urged that a permanent organization of a Colored Men's Political Club of Toronto be created.[66] What emerged instead was the Canadian Civic Association, dedicated to the "betterment of the colored citizens of Toronto" in order "that they may take advantage of the opportunities which lay before them."[67] This organization did a variety of things. For one thing, it urged blacks to support the war effort.[68] A second function involved the presentation of papers at meetings. President J.H. Lewis, for example, presented a paper at a 1915 meeting bemoaning the lack of young black businessmen.[69]

Many other black organizations emerged during the war years. In fact, one of the main purposes of Whitney's newspaper,

---

[66] _The Canadian Observer_, vol. 1, no. 4 (January 2, 1915).

[67] _The Canadian Observer_, vol. 1, no. 12 (February 27, 1915).

[68] _The Canadian Observer_, April 3, 1915.

[69] _The Canadian Observer_, vol. 1, no. 21 (May 1, 1915).

especially during its first couple of years, was to encourage the formation of organizations to "promote the welfare of the race generally."[70] By July of 1916 the Canadian Observer was able to note that "since the first issue of the Observer several organizations have been started throughout Canada, endeavouring to aid the advancement of the Race, and assist in maintaining the present good will that exists between the two Races."[71] In 1917 an editorial argued that the time had come "when we as a Race of People, should be getting together and reviewing matters pertaining to our welfare as a race ... We have not sufficient numbers in the various communities to attract attention."[72] Blacks had to unite together to solve their problems because others could not be expected to do it for them.

The idea that blacks needed their own separate organizations was expressed particularly clearly by the Coloured Literary Association of Toronto, which was established in 1919. The rhetoric of this group was somewhat more aggressive than previous black associations. At the inaugural meeting it was stated that blacks were not getting a fair deal in Canada.[73] The President, Dr. Dottin, noted at the organizational meeting that those present, all

---

[70] Canadian Observer, December 8, 1917

[71] The Canadian Observer, vol. 4, no. 5 (July 8, 1916).

[72] The Canadian Observer, vol. 6, no. 10 (August 11, 1917).

[73] Ontario Archives, Multicultural History Society of Ontario, reel 376, Universal African Improvement Association Records, Meeting Minutes of April 27, 1919.

who had been invited to join, were there for the purpose of "considering ways and means for combatting the evils and other impediments that were thrown in our people's way." The association's objective was to deal with political and economic questions that were important to the African community, to educate blacks on the laws that governed the country, and to assist them in obtaining legal advice when necessary.[74] What was most emphasized was that blacks had to help each other. When a question of law arose that affected any one person in the black community it was considered to be something that was of concern to all blacks. What was most important was that blacks be independent, and look after their own interests. Dottin noted in a speech that "(o)ther races are looking out for themselves first and will never help us. We are not getting a square deal, so we cannot afford to be hospitable outside of our own."[75] It emphasized that the race must stand together or fall apart, as there were powers laid against them. This organization was different from the Good Government Club in that it kept its meetings private, and was therefore not discussed in the white press. The Coloured Literary Association also had a more radical spirit. Dottin noted that although he was "with law and order" he also "believed in a

---

[74] Ontario Archives, Multicultural History Society of Ontario, reel 376, Universal African Improvement Association Records, Meeting Minutes of April 20, 1919.

[75] Ontario Archives, Multicultural History Society of Ontario, reel 376, Universal African Improvement Association Records, Meeting Minutes of April 27, 1919.

rebellious spirit when it was for good," and pointed to the Bolsheviks in Europe as a group that had done something radical.[76] Yet in other ways the association was simply following the spirit of previous African organizations. Blacks throughout the period under study had stated that they were not receiving a fair deal, and had emphasized the importance of united action to achieve their just rights. The earlier literary tradition was quite prominent as well, as the group held debates at its meetings on a wide range of subjects, such as the merits of blacks entering the farming profession.[77]

Collective black action was especially useful when Africans thought they were being mocked. Indeed, other things bothered Africans besides being denied jobs and being refused service because of their colour. They were understandably sensitive when they felt their were being made fun of, or when their history was being told in a one-sided or false manner. These were concerns that whites usually failed to appreciate. In the early 1840s Toronto's black community protested against circus performers from the United States who presented Africans in a degrading way. Over thirty people signed a petition to the city's mayor on July 20, 1840 asking him to prevent such plays in the future because these

---

[76] Ontario Archives, Multicultural History Society of Ontario, reel 376, Universal African Improvement Association Records, Meeting Minutes of April 20, 1919.

[77] Ontario Archives, Multicultural History Society of Ontario, reel 376, Universal African Improvement Association Records, Meeting Minutes of May 25, 1919.

performances, "by turning into ridicule and holding up to contempt the coloured population, cause them much heart-burning and lead occassionally [sic] to violence."[78] A similar petition, led by Anderson Ruffin Abbott's father Wilson Abbott, was presented in April of 1843, asking that the circus only be licensed on agreement that they not perform "Negro songs."[79] In 1866, Africans in Hamilton white-washed the minstrels pictured on billboards that were advertising an upcoming minstrel show.[80] Anderson Ruffin Abbott, in an 1873 letter, commended the Plantation Jubilee Singers who were performing in Toronto, and hoped that they would "drive out of competition those vulgar and idiotic burnt cork representations which, to our shame be it said, have been too much patronized, and which, too long misrepresented the African character."[81] Black protests sometimes led to apologies from the white community. In June 1887, the Hamilton Spectator made several derogatory comments about two black baseball players. George Stovey was a pitcher and Fleetwood Walker a catcher for the Newark team of the International League, and were referred to as a "coon battery" by the Spectator when the Newark team visited Hamilton.

---

[78] Ontario Archives, Daniel Hill Black History Research Collection, Box 4, Toronto Notes (A).

[79] Ontario Archives, Daniel Hill Black History Research Collection, Box 4, Toronto Notes (B).

[80] A. Jeffers Toby, Hamilton: A Black Perspective (Hamilton, 1991), p. 34.

[81] Baldwin Room, A.R. Abbott Papers, Scrapbook 2, folder 1, p. 73.

Alluding to the fact that many blacks held occupations as whitewashers the reporter noted that, if both Walker and Stovey had played in the game, "(t)here is good ground for the suspicion that it is a case in which two blacks would have made a white-wash. Anyhow, it is generally admitted that the colored pop. have a monopoly on the calcimine business." When referring to Walker, the "coon catcher," the newspaper noted that "(i)t is insinuated by envious compeers that in early life he practised on hen roosts until he got the act of foul-catching down fine."[82] The next day the Spectator, in response to a "natural and very just complaint" from a member of the black community, apologized for the comments, noting that they were "contributed items" that "got into the paper without being edited."[83]

Few things, however, upset the black community as much as the 1915 movie "The Birth of a Nation," and few other examples illustrate so clearly the different ways in which blacks and whites could view an issue. The showing of this film in Toronto in September 1915 was a major event. It was held over for two extra weeks, and drew huge crowds. The Toronto newspapers raved about the movie. The Toronto World referred to it as a "marvelous film spectacle,"[84] and called it a "magnificent revelation of picture

---

[82] Hamilton Daily Spectator, June 9, 1887 and William Humber, Diamonds of the North: A Concise History of Baseball in Canada (Toronto, 1995), p. 143.

[83] Hamilton Daily Spectator, June 10, 1887, and Humber, Diamonds of the North, p. 143.

[84] Toronto World, September 28, 1915.

drama of the future."[65] The Evening Telegram also referred to it as a "magnificent revelation of picture-drama,"[66] while the Toronto Daily Star called it "an extraordinary and altogether remarkable spectacle." The Globe happily noted that "(d)espite great opposition the play has never been suppressed, but has met with the approval of censor boards, Judges, Municipal authorities, publicists, editors and clergymen everywhere."[67] Africans viewed the movie in a considerably different light, and an effort was made to prevent the film from being screened in Toronto. Whitney and his newspaper The Canadian Observer were involved in these efforts. In an editorial his newspaper stated that the movie "must be stopped in Canada if she is to remain worthy of the British flag." The movie, which had been so praised in the white Toronto press, was described as "a deliberate and skilful bit of treachery," and Whitney argued that the movie "teaches to hate, as well as despise."[68] Another opponent of the movie was Rev. A.W. Hackley of the A.M.E. church. He noted that there were several reasons to protest the film, but argued that the main reason was that "it engenders race strife" and "in unmodified form ... is not good for any race to see."[69]

---

[65] Toronto World, September 25, 1915.

[66] Evening Telegram, September 27, 1915.

[67] The Globe, September 20, 1915.

[68] The Canadian Observer, September 18, 1915.

[69] Toronto Daily Star, September 17, 1915.

Africans used the same types of tactics that had been used in previous protests. A mass meeting was held at a BME church in Toronto to discuss how to prevent the movie from being screened in the city. One of the speakers was Whitney who "outlined reasons for appealing to the Race as a mass."[90] On September 17 a group representing the city's black population, and led by the recently retired alderman William Hubbard, met with Albert Newman of the Ontario Motion-Picture Theatre Inspection Office and asked that features in the film objectionable to Africans be removed. It was argued that blacks were depicted in a way that "did not rebound to their credit."[91] The fact that Hubbard was involved shows the extent to which the black community collectively opposed the movie. As alderman, Hubbard had not generally concerned himself with matters related to race. Nothing came of this meeting, and the film made its Toronto debut on September 20, 1915. No demonstration took place to protest the film, but a number of African men and women were at the Royal Alexandra Theatre, where the film was being screened, with the intention, according to a newspaper account, of seeing for themselves how the African race was portrayed. A censor named George Armstrong attended the opening as did the previously mentioned Albert Newman, who was part of a board to whom appeals against the rulings of the Censor Board could be taken. Both noted that they were impressed with the

---

[90] The Canadian Observer, September 18, 1915.

[91] Evening Telegram, September 18, 1915.

production and had "failed to find anything that was uncalled for by the story of the play or unjustified by historical fact."[92] Blacks attending the film, however, held a different view. After watching the movie a deputation visited Ontario's Premier Hearst with their complaints. After a consultation with Newman it was decided to alter two scenes. A scene showing a black man chasing a white girl was shortened, as was the scene depicting a "mulatto" lieutenant-governor in the company of a woman.[93] Still, the Premier had not gone far enough to satisfy the city's blacks. The September 25 edition of The Canadian Observer noted that some scenes had been removed by the Premier,[94] but the fact that this was not enough can be seen by comments made in the paper later in the year. When blacks in Windsor successfully suppressed the film in that city an editorial noted that "Toronto tried hard to do the same, but was not successful."[95]

Whites showed little sympathy for the protest. The Toronto Star noted in passing that "(s)o far as can be learned the only opposition which has arisen to the 'movie' ... comes from the colored population." The article further quoted someone identified only as a prominent member of the Red Cross as saying that "(a)ny offence it could give to the colored people must surely be slight."

---

[92] Toronto Daily Star, September 21, 1915.

[93] Toronto Daily Star, September 22, 1915.

[94] The Canadian Observer, September 25, 1915.

[95] The Canadian Observer, December 11, 1915.

W.E. Cuthbert, a representative of the Royal Alexandra Theatre argued that the delegation opposing the film were "misinformed" and that the film in no way cast "an unfavorable light upon the present-day negro." Cuthbert further defended the film by noting that some of the film was "devoted to the present-day negroes, showing their schools, industries, etc, and how it would be hard for the South to get along without them."[96] White newspapers did not support black protests of the film. The Evening Telegram, in its article following the inaugural showing, stated the objections were unfounded, and noted that the preface to the second part of the film that "the play referred to no race or people of to-day" was "answer enough" to the protests. The article further argued that it was as "foolish for the enlightened colored people of the twentieth century to feel themselves brothers of those depicted of Civil War times as it would be for Darwin to consider himself a fit companion for a monkey."[97] The Toronto Star also defended the movie in an editorial. It argued that "The Birth of a Nation ... is not a defence of slavery, but an attack upon the method of reconstruction adopted after the war." It encouraged its readers to regard the movie as "an artistic production."[98] In fact, the white community seemed more concerned about other aspects of the film than how it depicted blacks. Armstrong, the head of the

---

[96] Toronto Daily Star, September 15, 1915.

[97] The Evening Telegram, September 21, 1915.

[98] Toronto Daily Star, September 27, 1915.

censor board, seemed more worried about whether the film, which depicted great battle scenes, was appropriate to show to a country at war than he was about the racial angle. When justifying the film he noted that it dealt with a period of history in the United States with which "neither England nor Canada had any part."[99] Besides cutting two scenes after the first showing in response to black protests, the censors also cut a trench warfare scene regarded as "too realistic at present for Canadian audiences,"[100] with the war taking place overseas.

One of the most significant signs of collectivity in the black community during the World War One years was the black newspaper, The Canadian Observer. It was written for a black audience, offering advice and encouragement on the one hand, and leading black protests on the other. Believing that the war would make Canada a better place for Africans, the newspaper was filled with articles outlining the great opportunities that existed for blacks in war-time Canada. A 1916 editorial observed that many "manufacturers are seeking colored men, and many new jobs are opening to them." It urged blacks to learn a trade, "while opportunities are afforded you."[101] A 1917 editorial noted that "(g)reater opportunities are at our doors than ever before, therefore, 'watch your step' and be sure that you don't pass by an

---

[99] Toronto Daily Star, September 15, 1915.

[100] The Evening Telegram, September 21, 1915.

[101] The Canadian Observer, vol. 3, no. 26 (June 3, 1916).

opportunity to improve your mental and financial condition." It noted that "industries are on the alert, for the efficient individual."[102] This argument was echoed by a 1918 editorial that stated that industrial opportunities were opening "that have heretofore been closed to members of the Race."[103] The newspaper also argued that there were great chances in business, and that more blacks should pursue these opportunities. An editorial contended that "(a)s long as you produce something that is in demand ... you will get the patronage of the people. You don't have to rely upon members of your Race for support. Those of the other race will patronize you here."[104]

Although there was some disillusionment at the end of the war, it was coupled with continued optimism. Whitney's Canadian Observer, which had previously argued that the war was the time for blacks to achieve full equality, made similar arguments in 1919. There was a belief that they were entering a reconstruction era, and that 1919 could be a watershed moment. The Canadian Observer urged blacks to unite at this time because it was their best opportunity. An editorial noted that if "we let the year of 1919 pass without getting our focus together we are going to have cause to regret in years to come." This was the time because the "general public is in an absorbing condition and the brotherly

---

[102] The Canadian Observer, vol. 5, no. 6 (January 20, 1917).

[103] The Canadian Observer, vol. v, no. 25 (June 8, 1918).

[104] The Canadian Observer, vol. 5, no. 22 (May 12, 1917).

spirit is swaying more now than it has in years past, and now is the time for us to grasp the opportunity in building up our Race."[105] Yet this optimism was coupled with a certain amount of disillusionment. In April of 1919 the newspaper asked whether blacks would "have to return to their former positions, or will they be given an equal opportunity with other Races in filling positions that they are qualified for?" The editorial then asked "(i)f they [blacks] are good enough to fight and die with, why are they not good enough to live and work with in this great democracy of ours?"[106] There was, however, a certain amount of irony in this statement. The actions of the white Canadian military throughout the war had suggested that they did not believe that blacks were good enough to fight and die with, especially considering the fact that most had been relegated to a labour battalion. Whitney, given his failed efforts to raise black troops, was obviously aware that his editorial was overly optimistic. His editorial was an effort to urge his countrymen, both black and white, to a more racially tolerant society. Despite the disappointments of the war years, Whitney was not prepared to give up on the future. Nor was Whitney alone. The topic for discussion at the second meeting of the Coloured Literary Association of Toronto was "The Negro and the New Reconstruction." Donald Moore, one of the members of the club,

---

[105] Canadian Observer, vol. II, no. 6 (January 18, 1919).

[106] Canadian Observer, vol. 10, no. 18 (April 12, 1919).

stated that "(i)t is time ... for us to do great things."[107] These people were just following the pattern of other Africans for the previous half century. Despite continuing problems there was always a belief that the future could be better.

---

[107] Ontario Archives, Multicultural History Society of Ontario, reel 376, Universal African Improvement Association Records, Meeting Minutes of May 4, 1919.

Ontario's Black Minority and its White Majority From 1870 to 1919: Conclusion

Ontario's white majority never truly understood the concerns of its black minority. This lack of understanding was a consistent theme throughout the entire period under study. As a result, the relationship between blacks and whites was inevitably more one of conflict than of cooperation.

Little changed over this fifty year period because the underlying attitudes did not change. Africans believed they had a right to equality in the province, and continued to press for these rights. Whites, on the other hand, had a different perspective. They believed blacks were being well treated, at least in most cases, and had no reason to be dissatisfied.

This dissertation has attempted to illustrate these divergent perspectives by analysing a number of episodes where blacks and whites came into conflict during these years. The different views can be seen especially clearly through a comparison of speeches made by blacks and whites at the annual Emancipation Day celebrations. Blacks used the opportunity to protest against the discrimination they faced in the province, and to encourage their white listeners to grant blacks true equality. Whites, on the other hand, did not even recognize that there was a problem. They used Emancipation Day as an opportunity to commend blacks for the progress they were making, and to congratulate themselves for freeing blacks from slavery.

By the early 1870s blacks recognized that segregated schools were not acceptable. Some blacks had tolerated separate schools in earlier years, but such advocates were almost non-existent in the 1870 to 1919 period. Africans believed that full equality meant that they should have the right to send their children to the school closest to where they lived, and not be forced to send them to a separate school in another part of town. Whites, on the other hand, believed that blacks were provided with schools that were in their best interests, and had no reason to complain. Keeping black and white children separate was, in their view, the best way to avoid potential problems for both groups.

Africans argued that they were capable of doing any job that whites could do. They also believed that they were entitled to their fair share of public positions. They believed they should not be denied employment simply because white co-workers refused to work with them. Whites believed blacks were naturally suited for certain types of jobs. They argued that black men made good porters, and that black women made good domestic servants. They did acknowledge, however, that blacks were entitled to earn a living. Whites sometimes supported individual blacks, such as the letter carriers Albert Jackson and Doran Dixon, in their quests to obtain jobs. Yet whites also sympathized with people who did not want to interact too closely with blacks. As with schools, they believed that there were fewer problems if blacks and whites were kept separate as much as possible. Blacks and whites both saw some merit to separate but equal job opportunities, such as Hamilton's

black fire brigade, but they supported the idea for different reasons. Blacks believed they were a temporary measure to avoid white prejudice, with the hope that in the future this prejudice would disappear. Whites, on the other hand, argued that they were a good way to keep apart two groups of people who were naturally different.

Blacks and whites also disagreed in their views on discrimination. Although blacks frequently avoided establishments where they knew they were not welcomed, they believed they should have the right to go anywhere they pleased. They wanted access to hotels, theatres, restaurants, and public transportation. Nor did they approve of being seated separately at such places. Whites sometimes sympathized with blacks who were denied access on account of their colour. Yet they also believed that blacks should not force themselves where they were not wanted. The fact that blacks had their own clubs and social organizations meant that whites were able to argue that blacks preferred to socialize with other blacks.

The fact that blacks lived with racism on a daily basis meant that they understood racism in a way that whites never could. They were angry when the criminal acts of a few led white society to make disparaging remarks on all Africans. They felt it was unfair when the poor performance of one African in a job hurt the chances of other blacks being hired for the same tasks. Whites, on the other hand, frequently stereotyped blacks. Their manner of speaking was often mocked in the newspapers, and judges at trials involving blacks felt free to chastise the entire African community

when sentencing one person.

The underlying attitudes towards blacks were the same throughout the province. Census data confirms this argument. Blacks performed the same types of occupations throughout Ontario. They were consistently overrepresented in low skilled labouring jobs, and underrepresented in high skill and professional jobs. This was true in large cities, small cities, places where blacks made up a significant percentage of the population, and places where blacks made up a much less significant percentage of the population. This suggests that economic factors did not play a vital role in determining what jobs blacks received. Nor did the job pattern for blacks change over time. The three censuses examined (1871, 1881, and 1901) suggest that blacks performed the same types of occupations throughout the period. Attitudes, not economics, determined the African occupational pattern.

The African understanding of equality was the correct interpretation. The benefit of historical hindsight makes that conclusion obvious. Yet it must be remembered that the period from 1870 to 1919 was a much different era than that of today. Indeed, the whole concept of "race" is almost anachronistic in the late twentieth century because it is now believed that distinct human "races" do not exist. Africans and Europeans are not distinct enough to be considered as separate races. It is also now accepted by almost everyone that one "race" of people is not intellectually or culturally inferior to another. People in today's world who propagate the theory that there is a dominant "race" are attacked,

and branded as racists. Yet the ideas of these same people would have met with considerable approval in late nineteenth and early twentieth century Ontario. To suggest that blacks and whites were the same would have met with derision. It must be remembered that whites who kept black children out of schools, or did not want to work with them, or did not want to share a hotel with them, were not inherently evil people. Given their understanding of race, and their desire to see a prosperous future for their province, it is not surprising that they would think the way they did. Furthermore, the fact that blacks had their own separate churches, political and social organizations, and many other separate institutions meant that whites were able to argue, with some conviction, that blacks preferred to be separate from whites. The fact that blacks formed these separate organizations as a result of white prejudice was conveniently forgotten, or in the case of many whites not even known. Whites could also take comfort in the fact that the treatment of blacks was much worse in other places. When examples of lynchings in the American south were described in the local newspapers, Ontarians could state with considerable sincerity that their society was a much kinder place for blacks.

Yet some blacks were successful in integrating in the surrounding white world. Some, albeit very few, became doctors, lawyers, or police officers. Whites could justify their presence by downplaying the significance of their race, or ignoring it altogether. It is no accident that when black politicians were discussed in the newspaper their race was usually not mentioned.

Indeed, identifying black municipal politicians often proved to be a difficult task since so little mention was made of their race. Yet blacks who achieved these higher positions had to be careful not to make too much of the fact that they were black.

Throughout this era it was blacks who brought their demands to whites, and it was whites who reacted to these demands. Since blacks were only a small part of the population, and since their numbers were not growing during these years, whites mostly ignored their presence. Africans were able to pursue their own agenda. One conclusion to be drawn from this dissertation is that blacks did not passively accept discrimination. They continually tried to achieve equality with a wide range of tactics. Mass meetings, the formation of organizations, letters to newspapers, political action, and legal action were just some of the things blacks did to try and achieve their goals. Robin Winks has written that "(t)ime and again Negro leaders preached doctrines of postponement, tactics of resignation, and morals of subservience."[1] This criticism, however, tells only part of the story. Blacks could be quite forceful, and very unified, when dealing with issues that galvanized the community. In both St.Catharines in the early 1870s and in Chatham in the early 1890s a significant majority of the black population supported the quest for integrated schools. Many blacks also gathered behind people like Albert Jackson and Samuel Morse. They also launched strong community protests against the

---

[1] Winks, The Blacks in Canada, p. 480.

playing of "The Birth of a Nation." These were all protests by the black community, without any significant support, at least in the early stages, from whites. Africans in these cases made it clear that they desired immediate action, and were by no means promoting postponement. There were obviously many other cases when there was some disagreement among blacks as to what approach was most useful, and may lead people to criticize them for being divisive. Whether separate institutions were a good or bad idea was one subject that generated debate. Yet any community will have disagreements, and all people can never be expected to hold the same opinions.

Despite the fact that it was blacks who led the protests, they could only be successful if they obtained at least some tacit support from the white community. It was an era when whites were in the majority, and they held the ultimate power. Whites gave blacks support when they accepted that there was validity to their complaints. Blacks who were denied jobs because co-workers refused to work with them often succeeded in the end when the dispute became public. The fact that some whites supported Chatham blacks in their quest for integrated schools, but failed to support those in St. Catharines, was a significant factor in leading to integration in Chatham in 1893. In the early 1870s, whites in St. Catharines were not ready to accept integrated schools, so the quest failed. Charles Johnson, in his attempt to gain admittance to the Queen's hotel, also failed. Whites believed that he was simply trying to get himself ejected from the hotel to draw attention to its racist policies, and therefore offered him little

sympathy.

Africans did as much as they could to improve their position in Ontario society given the attitudes of the time. If this dissertation is correct, that underlying attitudes and differences of opinion were the root cause of the conflict, how much more could blacks have achieved? Whites had a way of looking at the world, and it was a view that did not change over these years. It was a view that made the granting of true equality for blacks impossible because whites believed blacks already had equality. After all, they were able to work and go to school, and possessed full legal and political rights. Nothing that Africans said or did was going to change the white viewpoint, despite the fact that blacks faced much opposition whenever they tried to exercise their full rights.

Epilogue: The African Minority and the European Majority in Ontario in the 1920s

As the post-war era began, blacks had every reason to feel disillusioned. For years they had tried to achieve full equality in the province, but had found that goal to be elusive. Although Canada had fought a war to make the world safe for democracy, black Canadians were still treated as second class citizens. The situation did not get any better in the 1920s. Africans continued to find themselves in a subordinate position, and white beliefs in the desirability of a white Canada intensified.

In many ways, 1919 did not mark the end of an era. The developments of the 1920s followed naturally upon what had happened in earlier years. What had changed by 1920, however, was the nature of the black community itself. Throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth century the vast majority of Ontario's blacks had been born in either Canada or the United States. A handful of West Indian blacks had been trickling into the province since the late nineteenth century, but these numbers were small. By World War One, the West Indian presence was somewhat more pronounced. It was after the war, however, that these numbers greatly expanded. During World War One, hundreds of West Indians were brought into the east coast of Canada to replace Cape Breton miners who had joined the army. After the war, when veterans reclaimed their jobs, many of these people went to

Ontario, especially Toronto.[1] In fact, while the black population of the province as a whole stagnated, the number of Africans in Toronto jumped from 468 in 1911 to 1,236 in 1921. Many of these newcomers came from British West Indian islands like Jamaica.[2] Census numbers verify the increased West Indian presence in the province. There were only 863 people born in the West Indies[3] living in Ontario in 1911, but by 1921 this number had risen to 1,812.[4]

West Indian blacks came from a different background than those who had come from the United States in the nineteenth century. Whereas black Americans had always been a racial minority, those from the West Indies came from societies where they were in the majority. They were often critical of the discrimination they faced in Ontario, and developed organizations that were separate from those that had been established by the native born blacks. The result was a split between two distinct African communities. There had always been some divergence of opinion between separate groups of blacks, but this split was different in that it was based on origin. West Indian born blacks supported Marcus Garvey's

---

[1] James Walker, The West Indians in Canada (Ottawa, 1984), p. 8.

[2] Wilson Head, The Black Presence in the Canadian Mosaic (Toronto, 1975), p. 14.

[3] Census figures do not list these numbers by race, so it is impossible to know how many of these people were African.

[4] Fifth Census of Canada, 1911, vol. 2, (Ottawa, 1913), p. 442 and Sixth Census of Canada, 1921, vol. 2 (Ottawa, 1925), p. 382.

Universal Negro Improvement Association, while Canadian born blacks supported their own organization, the Home Service Association.[5] The fact that Garvey opposed mixed marriages undoubtedly alienated his organization from the many prominent Toronto blacks who had a mixed heritage.[6] On the other hand, established members of the Canadian black community were often not well liked by the West Indian newcomers. By the 1920s the Hubbard family was not popular with members of the West Indian community. Harry Gairey, a West Indian immigrant, observed in his reminiscences that there was a social division among blacks, and that leading families like the Hubbards, Simpsons, Taylors, and Lightfoots would socialize amongst themselves, and not with some of the other blacks. He complained, for example, that he never saw the Hubbards at any of the dances he attended. Gairey also criticized the Home Service Association. He argued that the organization was "based on colour," and that "the fairer you are, the more acceptable you become."[7] Gairey was not alone in sensing tension in the African communities. One black women observed that in the 1920s "Toronto had a lot of prejudice amongst Blacks themselves ... and mostly it was based on colour."[8] James Jenkins made an effort to bridge the gap. Jenkins lived in

---

[5] Henry, "Black Politics in Toronto Since World War I," p. 4.

[6] Winks, The Blacks in Canada, p. 415.

[7] Donna Hill, ed., A Black Man's Toronto 1914-1980: The Reminiscences of Harry Gairey (Toronto, 1981), p. 14.

[8] Dionne Brand, ed., No Burden to Carry: Narratives of Black Working Women in Ontario 1920s-1950s (Toronto, 1991), narrative of Bee Allen, p. 115.

London and was the publisher of the Dawn of Tomorrow, a black newspaper that was first issued in 1923. He formed the Canadian Association for the Advancement of Coloured People with the purpose of uniting all black organizations under one umbrella group. In a 1924 editorial he argued that "whether we are from the remotest islands of the South Seas, from the heart of the West Indies, from Canada, the States, or from heaven, we are members of a common race," and then emphasized that "while we are standing still fighting over creeds ... other races have risen beyond these arbitrary dividing lines and are forging ahead."[9] Yet one organization could not bring all blacks together.

Black organizations of the 1920s were built on the ideas of earlier associations. They realized that blacks had to unite to be successful, and there was a desire for black supported businesses. The Dawn of Tomorrow argued in 1927 that too many blacks "are content to help build big business enterprises for other races in which their sons and daughters can never expect to find employment." The editorial further noted that Canadian blacks "fail to see that as the years go by the sphere of our industrial opportunities becomes more narrow."[10] Earlier, a writer from St. Catharines suggested that members of the black community each donate one dollar to help set up a company where black help alone would be employed. The idea was to produce a chain of black

---

[9] The Dawn of Tomorrow, vol. 1, no. 43 (May 10, 1924).

[10] The Dawn of Tomorrow, vol. 1, no. 6 (August 18, 1923).

enterprises.[11] The 1920s witnessed a variety of such efforts. The Toronto Negro Business League was commended by the Dawn of Tomorrow in 1924 because it dealt "with every question from a standpoint of good to the entire race and to the community at large." The newspaper also congratulated the J.T. Bishop Co-operative Company of Windsor. This company was formed with the intention of establishing a chain of businesses throughout the province with the purpose of creating positions for black men and women in real estate, groceries and dry goods. The Dawn of Tomorrow saw these efforts as a "growth of race consciousness."[12] The newspaper also applauded people such as Richard Ball who operated one of the largest passenger boats in Toronto with an entirely black crew. The paper observed that "this is what we call making good for himself and making positions for the race."[13] The newspaper also encouraged its readers to patronize its advertisers. It noted, in bold print, that "profits for these firms means employment for our people, employment for our people means prosperity for our race."[14]

Blacks had good reason for wanting to establish their own businesses in the 1920s. Job prospects were poor, and blacks were restricted to certain occupations. Harry Gairey tried to obtain a variety of jobs, but became a railroad porter because it was the

---

[11] The Dawn of Tomorrow, vol. 1, no. 7 (August 25, 1923).

[12] The Dawn of Tomorrow, vol. 1, no. 27 (January 19, 1924).

[13] The Dawn of Tomorrow, vol. 2, no. 33 (May 2, 1925).

[14] The Dawn of Tomorrow, vol. 1, no. 6 (August 18, 1923).

only job he could get. He wrote that he knew "it was no use to butt my head against a stone wall; I'd have a railroad job and I'd make the best of it." He noted that Eaton's and Bell telephone were amongst the places not hiring blacks.[15] Another man, his wife remembered in later reminiscences, had "graduated as an auto mechanic but ... they weren't hiring black auto mechanics." He instead took a job shining shoes at Union station because he did not want to be a porter.[16]

Equally frustrating was the fact that blacks, beginning in the 1920s, were getting a smaller range of jobs on the railroads, the occupation that had traditionally hired most black males. Black porters had been predominant on the railroads since the arrival of the Pullman service from the United States beginning in the 1880s. Some blacks also performed jobs such as working the dining cars, but beginning in 1926 they were restricted to portering. This made black advancement almost impossible, as porters were placed in a lower classification for seniority purposes, and it was established that employees could only advance within the category in which they were hired.[17] Other forces hurt black opportunities on the railroads. Some white politicians, such as Toronto MP Tommie Church, requested that white soldiers

---

[15] Hill, ed., A Black Man's Toronto, pp. 7-9.

[16] Brand, ed., No Burden to Carry, narrative of Bee Allen, p. 114.

[17] Agnes Calliste, "Sleeping Car Porters in Canada: An Ethnically Submerged Split Labour Market," Canadian Ethnic Studies, vol. 19, no. 1 (1987), pp. 2-3.

returning from the war should get jobs as porters, waiters, and cooks on the railroads, apparently without concern for the people who already held these jobs.[18] Women who worked faced similar problems as they found themselves restricted to being domestic servants. One woman observed that in 1920 "You couldn't get any position ... other than housework, because even if the employer would employ you, those that you had to work with would not work with you."[19] The Dawn of Tomorrow lamented in 1929 that in the previous decade six black girls had finished commercial and business courses in London, and one had finished at the top of her class. However, "after repeated attempts to find work here ... they were forced to seek and find employment across the border."[20] Blacks complained that they were not being treated fairly, but failed to get much support from whites. The Dawn of Tomorrow blamed whites for the problems blacks faced. It complained that whites, after bringing blacks to the New World as slaves, "even now refuse to give their offspring an economical and an industrial opportunity. You have erected insurmountable barriers between them and success."[21]

Blacks continued to protest the same types of things that they had fought against in previous years. W.V. Franklin, a Kitchener

---

[18] The Dawn of Tomorrow, vol. 1, no. 47 (June 7, 1924).

[19] Brand, ed., No Burden to Carry, narrative of Violet Blackman, p. 37.

[20] The Dawn of Tomorrow, vol. 1, no. 16 (January 26, 1929).

[21] The Dawn of Tomorrow, vol. 4, no. 4 (June 25, 1927).

resident who was refused service in a London restaurant, instituted proceedings against the proprietor.[22] In 1925, Dr. George Morrison, a black Toronto doctor, and two fellow doctors visited Hamilton and were refused lunch service. They filed a complaint against the restaurant, and the Dawn of Tomorrow wrote that "we stand solidly behind them to the limit of our influence and finances ... Such occurrences as this emphasize the necessity of united endeavour on the part of the coloured people."[23] Yet neither Franklin nor Morrison were successful in their cases. In fact, Morrison and his party were accused by the Justice of being "sensitive, looking for trouble, and with a chip on their shoulders."[24] In Franklin's case the judge ruled that a restaurant-keeper did not have to provide service because an unlimited number of licenses could be granted by municipalities to restaurant keepers.[25] Implicit was the view that Franklin could have gone somewhere else, so his rights were not being denied.

Blacks also continued to protest white insensitivity. The Dawn of Tomorrow complained when a racial slur was used at a sing-a-long at the Canadian National Exhibition.[26] The newspaper also protested

---

[22] The Dawn of Tomorrow, vol. 1, no. 29 (February 2, 1924).

[23] The Dawn of Tomorrow, vol. 3, no. 2 (August 1, 1925).

[24] The Dawn of Tomorrow, vol. 3, no. 23 (March 20, 1926).

[25] Edward Brown, ed., The Ontario Weekly Notes (Toronto, 1924), pp. 65-66 and James Walker, "Race," Rights and the Law in the Supreme Court of Canada: Historical Case Studies (n.p., 1997), pp. 150-151.

[26] The Dawn of Tomorrow, vol. 2, no. 12 (September 27, 1924).

a <u>Saturday Night</u> article discussing the multicultural nature of Toronto schools which included pictures of representatives of different immigrant groups. Whereas the caption underneath the picture of the Polish boys noted that they were "two fine intelligent boys ... who would seem to be most desirable in Canada," the commentary on the black child stated that "the negro type is here presented and he does not appear to be a very promising one." <u>The Dawn of Tomorrow</u> responded angrily to this article and noted that many readers had argued that it was a "purposeful attempt to cast aspersions upon the colored people of Canada," and an effort "to show the Negroes are undesirable citizens." The editorial charged that the writer deliberately picked the worst possible black child for the picture in order to make the race look bad.[27] This was the type of racial discrimination that only members of the black community could understand.

In short, blacks and whites did not come closer together during the 1920s. This decade instead saw the continuation of patterns that had been in existence for over half a century.

---

[27] <u>The Dawn of Tomorrow</u>, vol. 4, no. 5 (July 30, 1927).

Appendix 1: Occupational Structure of Africans in Selected Ontario Cities in 1871 and 1881

Note: These tables include all persons listed as "African" according to the ethnicity category in the 1871 and 1881 censuses.

Table 1: Occupational Structure of Amherstburg Male Africans in 1871 and 1881

Unskilled Jobs

Occupation	# (1871)	% (1871)	# (1881)	% (1881)
Labourers	42	48.8	20	22.7
Mariners	16	18.6	26	29.5
Farmers	3	3.5	4	4.5
Servants	1	1.2	1	1.1
Porters	0	0.0	1	1.1
Whitewashers	0	0.0	1	1.1
Waiters	0	0.0	2	2.3
Gardeners	0	0.0	2	2.3
Choreboys	0	0.0	1	1.1
Butchers	0	0.0	1	1.1
Total	62	72.1	59	67.0

Skilled and Semi-skilled Jobs

Occupation	# (1871)	% (1871)	# (1881)	% (1881)
Carpenters	6	7.0	3	3.4
Cooks	4	4.7	8	9.1
Masons	3	3.5	0	0.0
Clerks	1	1.2	0	0.0
Barbers	2	2.3	5	5.7
Clergymen	2	2.3	1	1.1
Shoemakers	2	2.3	2	2.3
Stewards	1	1.2	0	0.0
Teachers	1	1.2	0	0.0
Grocers	1	1.2	0	0.0
Millers	1	1.2	0	0.0
Seamsters	0	0.0	4	4.5
Painters	0	0.0	1	1.1
Nurses	0	0.0	1	1.1
Engineers	0	0.0	1	1.1
Plasterers	0	0.0	1	1.1
Constables	0	0.0	1	1.1
Merchants	0	0.0	1	1.1
Total	24	27.9	29	33.0

Table 2: Occupational Structure of Windsor Male Africans in 1871 and 1881

Unskilled Jobs

Occupation	# (1871)	% (1871)	# (1881)	% (1881)
Labourers	104	38.4	107	39.9
Mariners	23	8.5	14	5.2
Draymen	9	3.3	7	2.6
Servants	3	1.1	3	1.1
Whitewashers	4	1.5	3	1.1
Waiters	7	2.6	9	3.4
Porters	1	0.4	2	0.7
Lumbermen	1	0.4	0	0.0
Washing	1	0.4	0	0.0
Water Carriers	1	0.4	0	0.0
Gardeners	3	1.1	1	0.4
Deckhands	1	0.4	1	0.4
Ostlers/Hostlers	1	0.4	3	1.1
Farmers	9	3.3	11	4.1
Farm Labourers	2	0.7	1	0.4
Drivers/Hackmen/ Teamsters	4	1.5	3	1.1
Rug Packers	1	0.4	0	0.0
Hucksters	2	0.7	1	0.4
Sleeping Car Conductors	2	0.7	0	0.0
Bricklayers	2	0.7	0	0.0
Choreboys	0	0.0	1	0.4
Sawyers	0	0.0	1	0.4
Hiremen	0	0.0	1	0.4
Rag Rollers	0	0.0	1	0.4
Errand Boys	0	0.0	1	0.4
Janitors	0	0.0	1	0.4
Paper Hangers	0	0.0	1	0.4
Foremen	0	0.0	1	0.4
Laundrymen	0	0.0	2	0.7
Wood Cutters	0	0.0	1	0.4
Total	181	66.8	177	66.0

Skilled and Semi-skilled Jobs

Occupation	# (1871)	% (1871)	# (1881)	% (1881)
Carpenters	12	4.4	8	3.0
Barbers/Hairdressers	9	3.3	13	4.9

Coopers	4	1.5	1	0.4
Mail Carriers	2	0.7	0	0.0
Cooks	9	3.3	16	6.0
Clerks	5	1.8	1	0.4
Grocers	6	2.2	1	0.4
Masons	3	1.1	4	1.5
Engineers	5	1.8	4	1.5
Blacksmiths	3	1.1	2	0.7
Firemen	3	1.1	8	3.0
Fruit Store/Storemen/ Storekeepers	3	1.1	0	0.0
Ministers	4	1.5	7	2.6
Merchants	3	1.1	4	1.5
Bookkeepers	1	0.4	0	0.0
Plasterers	3	1.1	3	1.1
Apprentices	4	1.5	0	0.0
Painters	1	0.4	1	0.4
Shoemakers	4	1.5	6	2.2
Elders	1	0.4	0	0.0
Agents	1	0.4	0	0.0
Varnish makers	1	0.4	2	0.7
Printers	1	0.4	0	0.0
Stewards	1	0.4	0	0.0
Doctors	1	0.4	2	0.7
Bank Managers	0	0.0	1	0.4
Hotel Keepers	0	0.0	1	0.4
Dealers/Traders	0	0.0	4	1.5
Gunsmiths	0	0.0	1	0.4
Musicians	0	0.0	1	0.4
Total	90	33.2	91	34.0

Table 3: Occupational Structure of St. Catharines Male Africans in 1871 and 1881

Unskilled Jobs

Occupation	# (1871)	% (1871)	# (1881)	% (1881)
Labourers	86	61.4	50	52.1
Servants	6	4.3	3	3.1
Drivers/Teamsters	1	0.7	2	2.1
Ostlers/Grooms	2	0.7	1	1.0
Hucksters	1	0.7	0	0.0
Porters	2	1.4	3	3.1
Sailors	2	1.4	0	0.0
Waiters	9	6.4	5	5.2
Carters	1	0.7	0	0.0
Caretakers	0	0.0	1	1.0
Night Watchmen	0	0.0	1	1.0
Butcher Boys	0	0.0	1	1.0

Gardmen	0	0.0	1	1.0
Farmers	0	0.0	5	5.2
Total	110	78.6	73	76.8

Skilled and Semi-skilled Jobs

Occupation	# (1871)	% (1871)	# (1881)	% (1881)
Barbers	13	9.3	11	11.5
Blacksmiths	4	2.9	1	1.0
Dealers	1	0.7	0	0.0
Saloon Keepers	3	2.1	0	0.0
Seamsters	1	0.7	3	3.1
Ministers	1	0.7	1	1.0
Cooks	1	0.7	1	1.0
Painters	1	0.7	0	0.0
Carpenters	4	2.9	3	3.1
Coopers	1	0.7	0	0.0
Shoemakers	0	0.0	1	1.0
Storekeepers	0	0.0	1	1.0
Total	30	21.4	22	23.2

Table 4: Occupational Structure of Hamilton Male Africans in 1871 and 1881

Unskilled Jobs

Occupation	# (1871)	% (1871)	# (1881)	% (1881)
Labourers	17	15.5	39	25.5
Waiters	4	3.6	11	7.2
Whitewashers	4	3.6	7	4.6
Cabmen	1	0.9	0	0.0
Hucksters/Peddlers	3	2.7	0	0.0
Bricklayers	1	0.9	4	2.6
Carters	1	0.9	0	0.0
Farmers	2	1.8	1	0.7
Messengers	1	0.9	2	1.3
Servants	0	0.0	9	5.2
Clothes Cleaners	0	0.0	1	0.7
Gardeners	0	0.0	2	1.3
Caretakers	0	0.0	1	0.7
Sailors	0	0.0	1	0.7
Total	34	30.9	78	50.6

Skilled and Semi-skilled Jobs

Occupation	# (1871)	% (1871)	# (1881)	% (1881)

Barbers/Hairdressers	16	14.5	20	13.1
Tobacconists/ Cigar Makers	19	17.3	8	5.2
Plasterers	8	7.3	9	5.9
Shoemakers	6	5.5	5	3.3
Tailors	6	5.5	4	2.6
Coopers	1	0.9	0	0.0
Clergymen	2	1.8	3	2.0
Cooks	3	2.7	0	0.0
Stone cutters	1	0.9	1	0.7
Bookkeepers	1	0.9	0	0.0
Masons	3	2.7	0	0.0
Innkeepers/ Saloon Keepers	2	1.8	1	0.7
Carpenters	1	0.9	3	2.0
Food Cutters	1	0.9	0	0.0
Mail Carriers	1	0.9	0	0.0
Waggon Makers	1	0.9	0	0.0
Brokers	1	0.9	2	1.3
Printers	1	0.9	0	0.0
Saw Sharpeners	1	0.9	0	0.0
Wood Dealers	1	0.9	0	0.0
Seamsters	0	0.0	3	2.0
Blacksmiths	0	0.0	3	2.0
Merchants	0	0.0	3	2.0
Clerks	0	0.0	3	2.0
Moulders	0	0.0	1	0.7
Tanners	0	0.0	1	0.7
Pattern Fitters	0	0.0	1	0.7
Brickmakers	0	0.0	2	1.3
Restaurant	0	0.0	1	0.7
Rope Makers	0	0.0	1	0.7
Storekeepers	0	0.0	1	0.7
Total	76	69.1	76	49.4

Table 5: Occupational Structure of Toronto Male Africans in 1871 and 1881

Unskilled Jobs

Occupation	# (1871)	% (1871)	# (1881)	% (1881)
Labourers	26	17.0	36	19.4
Servants	4	2.6	4	2.1
Whitewashers	9	5.9	14	7.3
Waiters	13	7.8	21	10.9
Billposters	1	0.7	0	0.0
Farmers	1	0.7	0	0.0
Sailors	1	0.7	1	0.5

Laundresses/Washers	2	1.3	0	0.0
Railroad Employees	1	0.7	1	0.5
Expressmen/Messengers	1	0.7	2	1.0
Porters	2	1.3	1	0.5
Butlers	1	0.7	0	0.0
Woodcutters	1	0.7	0	0.0
Bellboys	1	0.7	2	1.0
Hostlers	1	0.7	1	0.5
Teamsters/Coachmen	0	0.0	2	1.0
Peddlers	0	0.0	1	0.5
Carters	0	0.0	1	0.5
Scullery boys	0	0.0	2	1.0
Total	65	41.8	89	46.4

Skilled and Semi-skilled Jobs

Occupation	# (1871)	% (1871)	# (1881)	%(1881)
Barbers/Hairdressers	28	18.3	35	18.2
Machinists	2	1.3	1	0.5
Shoemakers	8	5.2	4	2.1
Carpenters	7	4.6	8	4.2
Tobacconists	6	3.9	1	0.5
Saw Filers	1	0.7	1	0.5
Clothiers/Tailors	1	0.7	1	0.5
Grocers	5	3.3	1	0.5
Painters/Colourers	2	1.3	5	2.6
Upholsterers	1	0.7	1	0.5
Seamsters	3	2.0	3	1.6
Cooks	3	2.0	3	1.6
Stewards	1	0.7	0	0.0
Builders	1	0.7	0	0.0
Bakers	1	0.7	1	0.5
Finishers	1	0.7	0	0.0
Wireworkers	1	0.7	0	0.0
Clergymen	3	2.0	1	0.5
Tanners	1	0.7	0	0.0
Brickmakers	1	0.7	0	0.0
Weavers	1	0.7	0	0.0
Broom Makers	1	0.7	0	0.0
Moulders	1	0.7	4	2.1
Cabinet Makers	1	0.7	0	0.0
Physicians	1	0.7	0	0.0
Music Teachers	1	0.7	0	0.0
Musicians	2	1.3	0	0.0
Merchants	1	0.7	3	1.6
Restaurant	1	0.7	0	0.0
Cookshop	1	0.7	0	0.0
Saw Frame Makers	1	0.7	0	0.0
Druggists	0	0.0	1	0.5
Plasterers	0	0.0	4	2.1

Apprentices	0	0.0	2	1.0
Clerks	0	0.0	1	0.5
Dentists	0	0.0	1	0.5
Caterers	0	0.0	1	0.5
Basketmakers	0	0.0	2	1.0
Dealers	0	0.0	2	1.0
Tinsmiths	0	0.0	5	2.6
Shipwrights	0	0.0	1	0.5
Blacksmiths	0	0.0	1	0.5
Storekeepers	0	0.0	3	1.6
Roofers	0	0.0	1	0.5
Jockeys	0	0.0	1	0.5
Wellsinkers	0	0.0	1	0.5
Dyers	0	0.0	2	1.0
Dining room keepers	0	0.0	1	0.5
Total	89	58.2	103	53.6

Table 6: Occupational Structure of Amherstburg Female Africans in 1871 and 1881

Unskilled Jobs

Occupation	# (1871)	% (1871)	# (1881)	% (1881)
Labourers	2	16.7	2	18.2
Charwomen	2	16.7	1	9.1
Servants	7	58.3	3	27.3
Total	11	91.7	6	54.5

Skilled and Semi-skilled Jobs

Occupation	# (1871)	% (1871)	# (1881)	% (1881)
Grocers	1	8.3	0	0.0
Cooks	0	0.0	2	18.2
Seamstresses	0	0.0	1	9.1
Weavers	0	0.0	1	9.1
Dressmakers	0	0.0	1	9.1
Total	1	8.3	5	45.5

Table 7: Occupational Structure of Windsor Female Africans in 1871 and 1881

Unskilled Jobs

Occupation	# (1871)	% (1871)	#(1881)	% (1881)

Occupation	# (1871)	% (1871)	# (1881)	% (1881)
Washerwomen	31	57.4	16	18.4
Servants	8	14.8	32	36.8
House cleaners	1	1.9	9	10.3
Farmers	1	1.9	0	0.0
Labourers	1	1.9	0	0.0
Waiters	1	1.9	0	0.0
Housekeepers	0	0.0	1	1.1
Housegirls	0	0.0	1	1.1
Total	43	79.6	59	67.8

Skilled and Semiskilled Jobs

Occupation	# (1871)	%(1871)	# (1881)	% (1881)
Cooks	3	5.6	2	2.3
Dress Makers	3	5.6	6	6.9
Weavers	2	3.7	2	2.3
Seamstresses	2	3.7	6	6.9
Sewing	1	1.9	0	0.0
Hair Dressers	0	0.0	4	4.6
Storekeepers	0	0.0	3	3.4
Teachers	0	0.0	2	2.3
Grocers	0	0.0	1	1.1
Bonnet Bleachers	0	0.0	1	1.1
Milliners	0	0.0	1	1.1
Total	11	20.4	28	32.2

Table 8: Occupational Structure of St. Catharines Female Africans in 1871 and 1881

Unskilled Jobs

Occupation	# (1871)	% (1871)	# (1881)	% (1881)
Servants	13	54.2	9	40.9
Washerwomen/ Laundresses	1	12.5	3	13.6
Waitresses	0	0.0	1	4.5
Total	14	58.3	13	59.1

Skilled and Semiskilled Jobs

Occupation	# (1871)	% (1871)	# (1881)	% (1881)
Seamstresses	3	12.5	0	0.0
Hairdressers	2	8.3	1	4.5
Dressmakers	3	12.5	3	13.6
Cooks	2	8.3	3	13.6

Nurses	0	0.0	2	9.1
Total	10	41.7	9	40.9

Table 9: Occupational Structure of Hamilton Female Africans in 1871 and 1881

Unskilled Jobs

Occupation	# (1871)	% (1871)	# (1881)	% (1881)
Servants	11	40.7	16	24.2
Washerwomen	6	22.2	12	18.2
Charwomen	0	0.0	2	3.0
Housekeepers	0	0.0	1	1.5
Workwomen	0	0.0	2	3.0
Factory hands	0	0.0	1	1.5
Labourers	0	0.0	1	1.5
Total	17	63.0	35	53.0

Skilled and Semiskilled Jobs

Occupation	# (1871)	% (1871)	# (1881)	% (1881)
Seamstresses	4	14.8	3	4.5
Shoemakers	1	3.7	0	0.0
Innkeepers	1	3.7	0	0.0
Refreshment Saloon	1	3.7	0	0.0
Grocers	1	3.7	0	0.0
Cooks	1	3.7	2	3.0
Dressmakers	1	3.7	17	25.8
Tailoresses	0	0.0	4	6.1
Teachers	0	0.0	1	1.5
Music Teachers	0	0.0	1	1.5
Tobacconists	0	0.0	1	1.5
Barbers	0	0.0	1	1.5
Storekeepers	0	0.0	1	1.5
Total	10	37.0	31	47.0

Table 10: Occupational Structure of Toronto Female Africans in 1871 and 1881

Unskilled Jobs

Occupation	# (1871)	% (1871)	# (1881)	% (1881)
Servants	22	43.1	18	21.7
Laundresses/				

Washerwomen	8	15.7	25	30.1
Charwomen	0	0.0	4	4.8
Labourers	1	2.0	0	0.0
Waitresses	0	0.0	2	2.4
Total	31	60.8	49	59.0

Skilled and Semiskilled Jobs

Occupation	# (1871)	% (1871)	# (1881)	% (1881)
Dressmakers	6	11.8	7	8.4
Grocers	2	3.9	0	0.0
Tailoresses	3	5.9	8	9.6
Cooks	1	2.0	7	8.4
Music Teachers	1	2.0	0	0.0
Teachers	3	5.9	3	3.6
Hair Dressers	1	2.0	2	2.4
Seamstresses	3	5.9	4	4.8
Milliners	0	0.0	2	2.4
Nurses	0	0.0	1	1.2
Total	20	39.2	34	41.0

Appendix 2: Occupational Structure of Africans in Selected Ontario Cities in 1881 and 1901

Note: For 1881, these tables include all persons listed as "African" according to the ethnicity category in the census rolls. For 1901, these tables include all persons listed as "black" according to the racial category in the census rolls.

Table 1: Occupational Structure of Amherstburg Male Africans in 1881 and 1901

Unskilled Jobs

Occupation	# (1881)	% (1881)	# (1901)	% (1901)
Labourers	20	22.7	25	28.7
Mariners	26	29.5	30	34.5
Farmers	4	4.5	4	4.6
Servants	1	1.1	4	4.6
Porters	1	1.1	0	0.0
Whitewashers	1	1.1	0	0.0
Waiters	2	2.3	0	0.0
Gardeners	2	2.3	0	0.0
Choreboys	1	1.1	0	0.0
Butchers	1	1.1	0	0.0
Farm Labourers	0	0.0	9	10.3
Stablemen	0	0.0	1	1.1
Total	59	67.0	73	83.9

Skilled and Semi-Skilled Jobs

Occupation	# (1881)	% (1881)	# (1901)	% (1901)
Carpenters	3	3.4	0	0.0
Cooks	8	9.1	2	2.3
Barbers	5	5.7	2	2.3
Clergymen	1	1.1	3	3.4
Shoemakers	2	2.3	0	0.0
Seamsters	4	4.5	0	0.0
Painters	1	1.1	0	0.0
Nurses	1	1.1	0	0.0
Engineers	1	1.1	2	2.3
Plasterers	1	1.1	0	0.0
Constables	1	1.1	0	0.0
Merchants	1	1.1	0	0.0
Quarrymen	0	0.0	1	1.1
Clerks	0	0.0	1	1.1
Weavers	0	0.0	1	1.1
Agents	0	0.0	1	1.1

Teachers	0	0.0	1	1.1
Total	29	33.0	14	16.1

Table 2: Occupational Structure of Windsor Male Africans in 1881 and 1901

Unskilled Jobs

Occupation	# (1881)	% (1881)	# (1901)	% (1901)
Labourers	107	39.9	116	40.8
Mariners	14	5.2	7	2.5
Draymen	7	2.6	6	2.1
Servants	3	1.1	4	1.4
Whitewashers	3	1.1	1	0.4
Waiters	9	3.4	14	4.9
Porters	2	0.7	8	2.8
Gardeners	1	0.4	0	0.0
Deckhands	1	0.4	0	0.0
Hostlers	3	1.1	1	0.4
Farmers	11	4.1	5	1.8
Farm Labourers	1	0.4	2	0.7
Teamsters	3	1.1	18	6.3
Hucksters	1	0.4	0	0.0
Errand Boys	1	0.4	0	0.0
Choreboys	1	0.4	0	0.0
Sawyers	1	0.4	0	0.0
Hiremen	1	0.4	0	0.0
Rag Rollers	1	0.4	0	0.0
Janitors	1	0.4	4	1.4
Paper Hangers	1	0.4	0	0.0
Foremen	1	0.4	0	0.0
Laundrymen	2	0.7	1	0.4
Woodcutters	1	0.4	0	0.0
RR Employees	0	0.0	3	1.1
Herders	0	0.0	2	0.7
Stevedores	0	0.0	1	0.4
Livery Stable	0	0.0	1	0.4
Housemovers	0	0.0	1	0.4
Unloads boats	0	0.0	1	0.4
Butlers	0	0.0	1	0.4
Scavengers	0	0.0	1	0.4
Valets	0	0.0	1	0.4
Lumber Cullers	0	0.0	1	0.4
Hod carriers	0	0.0	1	0.4
Total	177	66.0	201	70.8

Skilled and Semi-skilled

Occupation	# (1881)	% (1881)	# (1901)	% (1901)
Carpenters	8	3.0	3	1.1
Barbers	13	4.9	6	2.1
Coopers	1	0.4	0	0.0
Cooks	16	6.0	23	8.1
Clerks	1	0.4	3	1.1
Grocers	1	0.4	0	0.0
Masons	4	1.5	3	1.1
Engineers/Mechanics	4	1.5	2	0.7
Blacksmiths	2	0.7	0	0.0
Firemen	8	3.0	6	2.1
Ministers	7	2.6	5	1.8
Merchants	4	1.5	5	1.8
Plasterers	3	1.1	4	1.4
Painters	1	0.4	0	0.0
Shoemakers	6	2.2	0	0.0
Varnish makers	2	0.7	1	0.4
Doctors	2	0.7	0	0.0
Bank Managers	1	0.4	0	0.0
Hotel/ Saloon keepers	1	0.4	2	0.7
Dealers	4	1.5	0	0.0
Gunsmiths	1	0.4	0	0.0
Musicians	1	0.4	1	0.4
Decorating	0	0.0	1	0.4
Butchers	0	0.0	1	0.4
Seamsters	0	0.0	1	0.4
Stone casters	0	0.0	2	0.7
Agents	0	0.0	2	0.7
Cabinet/File makers	0	0.0	2	0.7
Electricians	0	0.0	1	0.4
Notaries	0	0.0	1	0.4
Carpet layers	0	0.0	1	0.4
Botanists	0	0.0	1	0.4
Basketmakers	0	0.0	1	0.4
Paper hangers	0	0.0	2	0.7
Wood	0	0.0	1	0.4
Hand factory	0	0.0	1	0.4
Mfg	0	0.0	1	0.4
Total	91	34.0	83	29.2

Table 3: Occupational Structure of St. Catharines Male Africans in 1881 and 1901

Unskilled Jobs

Occupation	# (1881)	% (1881)	# (1901)	% (1901)

Labourers	50	52.1	17	31.5
Servants	3	3.1	1	1.9
Teamsters	2	2.1	3	5.6
Ostlers	1	1.0	0	0.0
Porters	3	3.1	4	7.4
Waiters	5	5.2	3	5.6
Caretakers	1	1.0	0	0.0
Night Watchmen	1	1.0	0	0.0
Butcher boy	1	1.0	0	0.0
Gardmen	1	1.0	0	0.0
Farmers	5	5.2	2	3.7
Farm Labourers	0	0.0	2	3.7
Bath Attendants	0	0.0	1	1.9
Gardeners	0	0.0	4	7.4
Washing	0	0.0	1	1.9
Groomers	0	0.0	1	1.9
Total	73	76.8	39	72.2

Skilled and Semi-skilled Jobs

Occupation	# (1881)	% (1881)	# (1901)	% (1901)
Barbers	11	11.5	2	3.7
Blacksmiths	1	1.0	0	0.0
Seamsters	3	3.1	2	3.7
Ministers	1	1.0	2	3.7
Cooks	1	1.0	3	5.6
Carpenters	3	3.1	1	1.9
Shoemakers	1	1.0	0	0.0
Storekeepers	1	1.0	0	0.0
Masons	0	0.0	3	5.6
Watch makers	0	0.0	1	1.9
Plasterers	0	0.0	1	1.9
Total	22	23.2	15	27.8

Table 4: Occupational Structure of Hamilton Male Africans in 1881 and 1901

Unskilled Jobs

Occupation	# (1881)	% (1881)	# (1901)	% (1901)
Labourers	39	25.5	29	23.0
Waiters	11	7.2	4	3.2
Whitewashers	7	4.6	8	6.3
Bricklayers	4	2.6	0	0.0
Farmers	1	0.7	0	0.0
Messengers	2	1.3	5	4.0
Servants	9	5.8	0	0.0

Clothes Cleaners	1	0.7	0	0.0
Gardeners	2	1.3	2	1.6
Caretakers	1	0.7	0	0.0
Sailors	1	0.7	0	0.0
Porters	0	0.0	8	6.3
Peddlers	0	0.0	1	0.8
Teamsters	0	0.0	2	1.6
Huxters	0	0.0	1	0.8
Hotel employees	0	0.0	1	0.8
Shippers	0	0.0	1	0.8
Total	78	50.6	62	49.2

Skilled and Semi-skilled Jobs

Occupation	# (1881)	% (1881)	# (1901)	% (1901)
Barbers	20	13.1	6	4.8
Tobacconists	8	5.2	14	11.1
Plasterers	9	5.9	8	6.3
Shoemakers	5	3.3	3	2.4
Tailors	4	2.6	1	0.8
Clergymen	3	2.0	2	1.6
Cooks	0	0.0	3	2.4
Stone cutters	1	0.7	0	0.0
Innkeepers	1	0.7	0	0.0
Carpenters	3	2.0	2	1.6
Brokers	2	1.3	0	0.0
Storekeepers	1	0.7	0	0.0
Seamsters	3	2.0	0	0.0
Blacksmiths	3	2.0	0	0.0
Merchants	3	2.0	4	3.2
Clerks	3	2.0	0	0.0
Moulders	1	0.7	0	0.0
Tanners	1	0.7	0	0.0
Pattern fitters	1	0.7	0	0.0
Brickmakers	2	1.3	0	0.0
Restaurant	1	0.7	0	0.0
Rope Makers	1	0.7	0	0.0
Brush makers	0	0.0	1	0.8
Chimney sweeps	0	0.0	1	0.8
Clothiers	0	0.0	1	0.8
Letter carriers	0	0.0	2	1.6
Iron workers	0	0.0	1	0.8
Vocalists	0	0.0	1	0.8
Printers	0	0.0	2	1.6
Smelters	0	0.0	3	2.4
Stove polishers	0	0.0	3	2.4
Coachmakers	0	0.0	1	0.8
Shippers	0	0.0	1	0.8
Firemen	0	0.0	1	0.8
Fruit Growers	0	0.0	1	0.8

Polishers	0	0.0	1	0.8
Builders	0	0.0	1	0.8
Total	76	49.4	64	50.8

Table 5: Occupational Structure of Toronto Male Africans in 1881 and 1901

Unskilled Jobs

Occupation	# (1881)	% (1881)	# (1901)	% (1901)
Labourers	36	18.8	31	14.4
Servants	4	2.1	4	1.9
Whitewashers	14	7.3	4	1.9
Waiters	21	10.9	4	1.9
Sailors	1	0.5	1	0.5
RR Employees	1	0.5	0	0.0
Messengers	2	1.0	4	1.9
Porters	1	0.5	32	14.8
Bellboys	2	1.0	2	0.9
Hostlers	1	0.5	0	0.0
Teamsters	2	1.0	9	4.2
Peddlers	1	0.5	1	0.5
Carters	1	0.5	1	0.5
Scullery boys	2	1.0	0	0.0
Caretakers	0	0.0	6	2.8
Laundrymen	0	0.0	1	0.5
Farm Labourers	0	0.0	1	0.5
Farmers	0	0.0	1	0.5
Choppers	0	0.0	1	0.5
Pantry-men	0	0.0	1	0.5
Total	89	46.4	104	48.1

Skilled and Semi-skilled Jobs

Occupation	# (1881)	% (1881)	# (1901)	% (1901)
Barbers	35	18.2	34	15.7
Machinist	1	0.5	3	1.4
Shoemaker	4	2.1	1	0.5
Carpenters	8	4.2	1	0.5
Tobacconists	1	0.5	1	0.5
Saw filers	1	0.5	0	0.0
Tailors	1	0.5	0	0.0
Grocers	1	0.5	0	0.0
Painters	5	2.6	5	2.3
Upholsterers	1	0.5	0	0.0
Seamsters	3	1.6	4	1.9
Cooks	3	1.6	9	4.2

Bakers	1	0.5	0	0.0
Clergymen	1	0.5	4	1.9
Moulders	4	2.1	0	0.0
Merchants	3	1.6	2	0.9
Druggists	1	0.5	0	0.0
Plasterers	4	2.1	5	2.3
Apprentices	2	1.0	1	0.5
Clerks	1	0.5	4	1.9
Dentists	1	0.5	1	0.5
Caterers	1	0.5	1	0.5
Basketmakers	2	1.0	0	0.0
Dealers	2	1.0	1	0.5
Tinsmiths	5	2.6	4	1.9
Shipwrights	1	0.5	0	0.0
Blacksmiths	1	0.5	0	0.0
Storekeepers	3	1.6	0	0.0
Roofers	1	0.5	0	0.0
Jockeys	1	0.5	2	0.9
Wellsinkers	1	0.5	0	0.0
Dyers	2	1.0	0	0.0
Dining room keepers	1	0.5	2	0.9
Hair spinners	0	0.0	1	0.5
Hotel clerks	0	0.0	1	0.5
Paper hangers	0	0.0	3	1.4
Letter carriers	0	0.0	3	1.4
Handymen	0	0.0	2	0.9
Glass workers	0	0.0	2	0.9
Tanners	0	0.0	1	0.5
Cabinet makers	0	0.0	2	0.9
Musicians	0	0.0	1	0.5
Customs officials	0	0.0	1	0.5
Publishers	0	0.0	1	0.5
Bicycle Mfg	0	0.0	1	0.5
Electroplates	0	0.0	1	0.5
Policemen	0	0.0	1	0.5
Stenographers	0	0.0	1	0.5
Electricians	0	0.0	1	0.5
Photographers	0	0.0	1	0.5
Conductors	0	0.0	2	0.9
Butchers	0	0.0	1	0.5
Total	103	53.6	112	51.9

Table 6: Occupational Structure of London Male Africans in 1881 and 1901

Unskilled Jobs

Occupation	# (1881)	% (1881)	# (1901)	% (1901)
Labourers	29	35.8	18	32.1

Sawers	1	1.2	1	1.8
Farmers	2	2.5	0	0.0
Whitewashers	1	1.2	1	1.8
Porters	3	3.7	2	3.6
Carters	1	1.2	0	0.0
Bricklayers	2	2.5	0	0.0
Railway Employees	6	7.4	0	0.0
Gardeners	1	1.2	0	0.0
Waiters	1	1.2	0	0.0
Teamsters	0	0.0	8	14.3
Draymen	0	0.0	2	3.6
Grooms	0	0.0	1	1.8
Hostlers	0	0.0	2	3.6
Total	47	58.0	35	62.5

Skilled and Semi-skilled Jobs

Occupation	# (1881)	% (1881)	# (1901)	% (1901)
Barbers	11	13.6	2	3.6
Polishers	1	1.2	0	0.0
Masons	2	2.5	0	0.0
Plasterers	3	3.7	1	1.8
Tailors	2	2.5	0	0.0
Ministers	3	3.7	2	3.6
Policemen	1	1.2	0	0.0
Blacksmiths	1	1.2	0	0.0
Engineers	1	1.2	0	0.0
Painters	1	1.2	1	1.8
Finishers	1	1.2	1	1.8
Seamsters	5	6.2	0	0.0
Coopers	1	1.2	1	1.8
Jockeys	1	1.2	0	0.0
Cooks	0	0.0	2	3.6
Stove cleaners	0	0.0	1	1.8
Smelters	0	0.0	1	1.8
Bakers	0	0.0	2	3.6
Cigar Makers	0	0.0	4	7.1
Machinists	0	0.0	1	1.8
Basket Makers	0	0.0	2	3.6
Totals	34	42.0	21	37.5

<u>Table 7: Occupational Structure of Amherstburg Female Africans in 1881 and 1901</u>

Unskilled Jobs

Occupation	# (1881)	% (1881)	# (1901)	% (1901)

Labourers	2	18.2	0	0.0
Charwomen	1	9.1	0	0.0
Servants	3	27.3	6	46.2
Washing	0	0.0	1	7.7
Janitors	0	0.0	1	7.7
Total	6	54.5	8	61.5

Skilled and Semi-skilled Jobs

Occupation	# (1881)	% (1881)	# (1901)	% (1901)
Cooks	2	18.2	1	7.7
Seamstresses	1	9.1	2	15.4
Weavers	1	9.1	0	0.0
Dressmakers	1	9.1	0	0.0
Agents	0	0.0	1	7.7
Nurses	0	0.0	1	7.7
Total	5	45.5	5	38.5

Table 8: Occupational Structure of Windsor Female Africans in 1881 and 1901

Unskilled Jobs

Occupation	# (1881)	% (1881)	# (1901)	% (1901)
Washerwomen	16	18.4	37	34.6
Servants	32	36.8	39	36.4
House cleaners	9	10.3	0	0.0
Housekeepers	1	1.1	0	0.0
Housegirls	1	1.1	0	0.0
Labourers	0	0.0	4	3.7
Janitors	0	0.0	2	1.9
Total	59	67.8	82	76.6

Skilled and Semi-skilled Jobs

Occupation	# (1881)	% (1881)	# (1901)	% (1901)
Cooks	2	2.3	7	6.5
Dress Makers	6	6.9	7	6.5
Weavers	2	2.3	0	0.0
Seamstresses	6	6.9	2	1.9
Hairdressers	4	4.6	2	1.9
Storekeepers	3	3.4	0	0.0
Teachers	2	2.3	0	0.0
Grocers	1	1.1	0	0.0

Bonnet Bleachers	1	1.1	0	0.0
Milliners	1	1.1	0	0.0
Missionaries	0	0.0	1	0.9
Sewing	0	0.0	3	2.8
Nurses	0	0.0	1	0.9
Upholsterers	0	0.0	1	0.9
Hand-factory	0	0.0	1	0.9
Total	28	32.2	25	23.4

Table 9: Occupational Structure of St. Catharines Female Africans in 1881 and 1901

Unskilled Jobs

Occupation	# (1881)	% (1881)	# (1901)	% (1901)
Servants	9	40.9	6	24.0
Laundresses	3	13.6	7	28.0
Waitresses	1	4.5	0	0.0
Charwomen	0	0.0	1	4.0
Labourers	0	0.0	1	4.0
Housekeepers	0	0.0	2	8.0
Messenger	0	0.0	1	4.0
Attendants-Baths	0	0.0	1	4.0
Total	13	59.1	19	76.0

Skilled and Semi-skilled Jobs

Occupation	# (1881)	% (1881)	# (1901)	% (1901)
Hairdressers	1	4.5	0	0.0
Dressmakers	3	13.6	2	8.0
Cooks	3	13.6	1	4.0
Nurses	2	9.1	0	0.0
Ball Tenders	0	0.0	1	4.0
Milliners	0	0.0	1	4.0
Scribeswomen	0	0.0	1	4.0
Total	9	40.9	6	24.0

Table 10: Occupational Structure of Hamilton Female Africans in 1881 and 1901

Unskilled Jobs

Occupation	# (1881)	% (1881)	# (1901)	% (1901)
Servants	16	24.2	13	22.4

Washerwomen	12	18.2	16	27.6
Charwomen	2	3.0	1	1.7
Housekeepers	1	1.5	0	0.0
Workwomen	2	3.0	0	0.0
Factory hands	1	1.5	0	0.0
Labourers	1	1.5	0	0.0
Scrubbing	0	0.0	1	1.7
Total	35	53.0	31	53.4

Skilled and Semi-skilled Jobs

Occupation	# (1881)	% (1881)	# (1901)	% (1901)
Seamstresses	3	4.5	0	0.0
Cooks	2	3.0	1	1.7
Dressmakers	17	25.8	8	13.8
Tailoresses	4	6.1	9	15.5
Teachers	1	1.5	1	1.7
Music Teachers	1	1.5	2	3.4
Tobacconists	1	1.5	3	5.2
Barbers	1	1.5	0	0.0
Storekeepers	1	1.5	0	0.0
Vocalists	0	0.0	2	3.4
Pianists	0	0.0	1	1.7
Total	31	47.0	27	46.6

Table 11: Occupational Structure of Toronto Female Africans in 1881 and 1901

Unskilled Jobs

Occupation	# (1881)	% (1881)	# (1901)	% (1901)
Servants	18	21.7	28	31.5
Laundresses	25	30.1	26	29.2
Charwomen	4	4.8	1	1.1
Labourers	0	0.0	1	1.1
Waitresses	2	2.4	0	0.0
Housekeepers	0	0.0	3	3.4
Wood Pickers	0	0.0	1	1.1
Total	49	59.0	60	67.4

Skilled and Semi-skilled Jobs

Occupation	# (1881)	% (1881)	# (1901)	% (1901)
Dressmakers	7	8.4	13	14.6
Tailoresses	8	9.6	1	1.1

Cooks	7	8.4	4	4.5
Music Teachers	0	0.0	2	2.2
Teachers	3	3.6	0	0.0
Hair Dressers	2	2.4	0	0.0
Seamstresses	4	4.8	4	4.5
Milliners	2	2.4	0	0.0
Nurses	1	1.2	1	1.1
Musicians	0	0.0	1	1.1
Phrenologists	0	0.0	1	1.1
Confectioners	0	0.0	1	1.1
Flower	0	0.0	1	1.1
Total	34	41.0	29	32.6

Table 12: Occupational Structure of London Female Africans in 1881 and 1901

Unskilled Jobs

Occupation	# (1881)	% (1881)	# (1901)	% (1901)
Laundresses	8	44.4	6	20.0
Servants	4	22.2	20	66.7
Housekeepers	0	0.0	1	3.3
Messengers	0	0.0	1	3.3
Total	12	66.7	28	93.3

Skilled and Semiskilled Jobs

Occupation	# (1881)	% (1881)	# (1901)	% (1901)
Hairdressers	1	5.5	1	3.3
Organists	1	5.5	0	0.0
Dressmakers	2	11.1	0	0.0
Milliners	2	11.1	0	0.0
Cooks	0	0.0	1	3.3
Total	6	33.3	2	6.7

Bibliography

Primary Sources: Manuscript Collections

City of Toronto Archives

William P. Hubbard Collection.

Hamilton Public Library, Special Collections

Our Heritage: Scrapbook, vol. 4 (June 1988-Dec. 1989).

Stewart Memorial Church: Scrapbook, vol. 1.

Metropolitan Toronto Library

Toronto Star Scrapbooks, Toronto Historical Series, vol. 1.

Metropolitan Toronto Library, Baldwin Room

A.R. Abbott Papers.

Elizabeth Russell Papers.

Ontario Archives

Daniel Hill Black History Research Collection.

Chatham, Kent County, Council Minutes, 1892-1896.

Criminal Assize Clerk: Indictment Case Files, 1891-1893, R.G. 22, Series 392, Box 90.

Criminal Assize Clerk: Indictment Case Files, 1898-1911, R.G. 22, Series 392, Box 68.

Criminal Assize Clerk: Indictment Case Files, 1900-1903, R.G. 22, Series 392, Box 263.

Hamilton Jail, Jail Registers, 1876-1883, R.G. 20-72-1.

Alvin D. McCurdy Papers.

Microfilm of the Canadian Files of the American Missionary Association Manuscripts.

Microfilm of 1871 Census Rolls, Amherstburg, Anderdon, Camden, Chatham Township, Colchester, Dover, Hamilton, Maidstone, Malden, Owen Sound, Raleigh, St. Catharines, Sandwich East, Sandwich Town, Sandwich West, Toronto, and Windsor.

Microfilm of 1881 Census Rolls, Amherstburg, Anderdon, Brantford City, Camden, Chatham, Chatham Town, Colchester North, Colchester South, Collingwood, Dover, Dresden, Gosfield, Hamilton, Harwich, Kingsville, London, Maidstone, Malden, Owen Sound, Raleigh, St. Catharines, Sandwich East, Sandwich Town, Sandwich West, Tilbury West, Toronto, and Windsor.

Microfilm of 1901 Census Rolls, Amherstburg, Chatham City, Hamilton, London, Owen Sound, Raleigh, St. Catharines, Toronto, and Windsor.

Multicultural History Society of Ontario, reel 376, Universal African Improvement Association Records.

Office of the Attorney General, R.G. 4-32, 1915, File #1782.

St. Catharines, Lincoln County, Minute Books, 1855-1871.

Toronto Jail, Jail Registers, 1880-1882, R.G. 20-100-1.

Hiram Walker Collection.

Windsor, Essex County Minute Books, 1885-1892.

Windsor, Essex County Minute Books, 1892-1899.

Windsor Jail, Jail Registers, 1876-1894, R.G. 20-103-1-2.

Printed Primary Source Material

Brand, Dionne, ed., No Burden to Carry: Narratives of Black Working Women in Ontario 1920s-1950s, Toronto, 1991.

Brown, Edward, ed., The Ontario Weekly Notes, Toronto, 1924.

Clark, John, "Memoirs of Colonel John Clark, of Port Dalhousie, C.W," Ontario Historical Society: Papers and Records, vol. 7

(1906), pp. 157-193.

Colonial Church and School Society, Mission to the Fugitive Slaves in Canada, London, 1859.

Cruikshank, E.A., The Correspondence of Liet. Governor John Graves Simcoe, vol. 2 1793-1794, Toronto, 1924.

Denison, Colonel George, Recollections of a Police Magistrate, Toronto, 1920.

Dominion Bureau of Statistics, Census of Canada 1870-71, vol. 1, Ottawa, 1873.

-----, Fifth Census of Canada, 1911, vol. 2, Ottawa, 1913.

-----, Report of the Census of 1881, vol. 1, Ottawa, 1882.

-----, Report of the Census of 1881, vol. 2, Ottawa, 1884.

-----, Report of the Fourth Census of Canada, 1901, vol. 1, Ottawa, 1902.

-----, Report of the Fourth Census of Canada, 1901, vol. 3, Ottawa, 1905.

-----, Sixth Census of Canada, 1921, vol. 2, Ottawa, 1925.

Drew, Benjamin, The Refugee: or the Narratives of Fugitive Slaves in Canada, Boston, 1856.

Edwards, S.J. Celestine, From Slavery To a Bishopric or the Life of Bishop Walter Hawkins, London, 1891.

Firth, Edith, ed., The Town of York 1793-1815: A Collection of Documents of Early Toronto, Toronto, 1962.

Hill, Donna, ed., A Black Man's Toronto 1914-1980: The Reminiscences of Harry Gairey, Toronto, 1981.

Kent County Directory, 1880, Chatham, 1880.

Official Report of the Debates of the House of Commons of the Dominion of Canada, vol. 101, 1910-1911, Ottawa, 1911.

Official Report of the Debates of the House of Commons of the Dominion of Canada, vol. 111, 1912-1913, Ottawa, 1912-13.

Ontario Department of Education, Annual Report of the Normal, Model, High and Public Schools of Ontario for the year 1871, Toronto, 1873.

-----, Annual Report of the Normal, Model, High and Public Schools of Ontario for the year 1872, Toronto, 1874.

Ontario Genealogical Society, Index to the 1871 Census of Ontario, Essex-Kent, Toronto, 1989.

Ontario Reports, vol. 6, Toronto, 1885.

Planet Souvenir Edition, Chatham, 1904.

Preston, Richard, ed., Kingston Before the War of 1812, Toronto, 1959.

Ripley, C. Peter, ed., The Black Abolitionist Papers, vol. 2 Canada, 1830-1865, Chapel Hill, N.C., 1986.

Toronto, City of Toronto 1911 Directory.

Upper Canada Government, The Journals of the Legislative Assembly of Upper Canada, 1792-1804, vol. 1.

Upper Canada Reports, vol. 11, Toronto, 1874.

Upper Canada Reports, vol. 23, Toronto, 1864.

Upper Canada Reports, vol. 31, Toronto, 1872.

Ward, Samuel Ringgold, Autobiography of a Fugitive Negro, London, 1855.

Wilson, Barbara, ed., Ontario and the First World War 1914-1918: A Collection of Documents, Toronto, 1977.

Primary Sources: Newspapers and Periodicals

Advertiser, London.

American Missionary Magazine.

Canadian Observer, Toronto.

Chronicle, Chatham.

Constitutional, St. Catharines.

Daily Planet, Chatham.

Daily Star, Toronto.

Daily Telegram, Toronto.

Daily Times, St. Catharines.

Dawn of Tomorrow, London.

Empire, Toronto.

Evening Banner, Chatham.

Evening Citizen, Ottawa.

Evening Journal, St. Catharines.

Evening News, Toronto.

Evening Record, Windsor.

Free Press, London.

Globe, Toronto.

Herald, Hamilton.

Herald, Windsor.

Liberator, Boston.

Mail, Toronto.

Plaindealer, Detroit.

Saturday Night, Toronto.

Spectator, Hamilton.

Upper Canada Gazette or American Oracle, York, Upper Canada.

World, Toronto.

Secondary Sources: Books

Akenson, Donald, The Irish in Ontario: A Study in Rural History, Kingston, 1984.

Brode, Patrick, High Victorian Windsor: Essays on Windsor and Area: 1880-1895, Windsor, 1994.

Careless, J.M.S., Toronto to 1918: An Illustrated History,

Toronto, 1984.

Charlesworth, Hector, Candid Chronicles, Toronto, 1925.

Craig, Gerald, Upper Canada: The Formative Years, Toronto, 1963.

Gerber, David, Black Ohio and the Color Line, 1860-1915, Urbana, Ill., 1976.

Greaves, Ida, The Negro in Canada, Montreal, n.d.

Head, Wilson, The Black Presence in the Canadian Mosaic, Toronto, 1975.

Henry, Keith, Black Politics in Toronto Since World War I, Toronto, 1981.

Hill, Daniel, The Freedom-Seekers: Blacks in Early Canada, Agincourt, 1981.

Hodgins, J. George, The Establishment of Schools and Colleges in Ontario, 1792-1910, vol. 1.

Hubbard, Stephen, Against All Odds: The Story of William Peyton Hubbard: Black Leader and Municipal Reformer, Toronto, 1987.

Hubbard, William, Diamonds of the North: A Concise History of Baseball in Canada, Toronto, 1995.

Jackson, John and Wilson, Sheila, St. Catharines: Canada's Canal City, St. Catharines, 1992.

Katzman, David, Before the Ghetto: Black Detroit in the Nineteenth Century, Urbana, Ill., 1973.

Kusmer, Kenneth, A Ghetto Takes Shape: Black Cleveland, 1870-1930, Urbana, Ill., 1976.

Lewis, Jennie Raycraft, The Luck of Lucan, n.p., 1967.

Litwack, Leon, North of Slavery: The Negro in the Free States, 1790-1860, Chicago, 1961.

Moore, Christopher, The Law Society of Upper Canada and Ontario's Lawyers, 1797-1997, Toronto, 1997.

Pease, William and Jane, Black Utopia: Negro Communal Experiments in America, Madison, 1963.

Perry, Charlotte Bronte, The Long Road: The History of the Coloured Canadian in Windsor, Ontario, 1967.

Piva, Michael, The Condition of the Working Class in Toronto- 1900-1921, Ottawa, 1979.

Ribowsky, Mark, A Complete History of the Negro Leagues, New York, 1995.

Robinson, Gwendolyn and Jane, Seek the Truth: A Story of Chatham's Black Community, 1989.

Ruck, Calvin W., The Black Battalion- 1916-1920: Canada's Best Kept Military Secret, Halifax, 1987.

Shepard, R. Bruce, Deemed Unsuitable: Blacks from Oklahoma Move to the Canadian Prairies in Search of Equality in the Early 20th Century Only to find Racism in their New Home, Toronto, 1997.

Stamp, Robert, The Schools of Ontario, 1876-1976, Toronto, 1982.

Stouffer, Allen, The Light of Nature and the Law of God: Antislavery in Ontario, 1833-1877, Montreal, 1992.

Thomas, Own, Niagara's Freedom Trail: A Guide to African-Canadian History on the Niagara Peninsula, Thorold, Ont., 1995.

Thomson, Colin, Blacks in Deep Snow, Don Mills, 1979.

Toby, A. Jeffers, Hamilton: A Black Perspective, Hamilton, 1991.

Ullman, Victor, Look to the North Star: A Life of William King, Boston, 1969.

Walker, James, A History of Blacks in Canada: A Study Guide for Teachers and Students, Ottawa, 1980.

-----, "Race," Rights and the Law in the Supreme Court of Canada: Historical Case Studies, n.p., 1997.

-----, The West Indians in Canada, Ottawa, 1984.

Ward, W. Peter, White Canada Forever: Popular Attitudes and Public Policy Toward Orientals in British Columbia, Montreal, 1990.

Weaver, John, Crime, Constables, and Courts: Order and Transgression in a Canadian City, 1816-1970, Montreal, 1995.

Winks, Robin, The Blacks in Canada: A History, Montreal, 1971.

Secondary Sources: Articles

Beaud, Jean-Pierre and Prevost, Jean-Guy, "Immigration, Eugenics and Statistics: Measuring Racial Origins in Canada (1921-1941), Canadian Ethnic Studies, vol. 28, no. 2 (1996), pp. 1-24.

Calliste, Agnes, "Sleeping Car Porters in Canada: An Ethnically Submerged Split Labour Market," Canadian Ethnic Studies, vol. 19, no. 1 (1987), pp. 1-20.

Crozier, Colin, "Jesse Gant," Dictionary of Hamilton Biography, vol. 2, Hamilton, 1991, p. 55.

Gemmill, Sheriff J.R., "Historical Sketch of the Press of Chatham," Kent Historical Society Papers and Addresses, vol. 2 (1915), pp. 30-37.

Isaac, Julius, "Delos Rogest Davis, K.C.," Law Society Gazette, vol. 24, no. 4 (1990), pp. 293-301.

Landon, Fred, "Social Conditions Among the Negroes in Upper Canada Before 1865," Ontario Historical Society Papers and Records, vol. 22 (1925), pp. 144-161.

-----, "The Work of the American Missionary Association Among the Negro Refugees in Canada West," Ontario Historical Society Papers and Records, vol. 21 (1924), pp. 198-205.

Mallory, Jerry, "Out at Home" in Thorn, John, ed., The Armchair Book of Baseball II, New York, 1987, pp. 262-285.

McDonald, David, "Jim Crow Comes North" in Humber, William and St. James, John, eds., All I Thought About Was Baseball: Writings on a Canadian Pastime, Toronto, 1996, pp. 199-205.

McKivigan, John and Silverman, Jason, "Monarchial Liberty and Republican Slavery: West Indies Emancipation Celebrations in Upstate New York and Canada West," Afro-Americans in New York Life and History, vol. 10, no. 1 (1986), pp. 7-18.

Riddell, W.R., "The Slave in Upper Canada," The Journal of Negro History, vol. 4, no. 4 (October 1919), pp. 372-395.

Strange, Carolyn, "Patriarchy Modified: The Criminal Prosecution of Rape in York County, Ontario, 1880-1930" in Phillips, Jim; Loo, Tina; and Lewthwaite, Susan, eds., Essays in the History of Canadian Law, vol. 5, Toronto, 1994, pp. 207-251.

Strange, Carolyn and Loo, Tina, "Spectacular Justice: The Circus on Trial, and the Trial as Circus, Picton, 1903," The Canadian Historical Review, vol. 77, no. 2 (June 1996), pp. 159-184.

Talbot, Lance, "History of Blacks in the Law Society of Upper Canada," Law Society Gazette, vol. 24, no. 4 (1990), pp. 65-70.

Walker, James, "Race and Recruitment in World War One: Enlistment of Visible Minorities in the Canadian Expeditionary Force," Canadian Historical Review, vol. 70, no. 1 (March 1989). pp. 1-26.

Wayne, Michael, "The Black Population of Canada West on the Eve of the American Civil War: A Reassessment Based on the Manuscript Census of 1861, Social History, vol. 28, no. 56 (November, 1995), pp. 465-485.

"Charles Augustus Johnson, Dictionary of Hamilton Biography, vol. 2, Hamilton, 1991, p. 80.

"Robert Isaac Dey Gray," Dictionary of Canadian Biography, vol. 5, Toronto, 1983, pp. 388-389.

Secondary Sources: Theses, Dissertations, and Unpublished Papers

Cooper, Afua, "Black Teachers in Canada West, 1850-1870: A History." MA thesis, University of Toronto, 1991.

Elliott, Christopher Bruce, "Black Education in Canada West: A Parochial Solution to a Secular Problem, Rev. M.M. Dillon and the Colonial Church and School Society." MA thesis, Wilfrid Laurier University, 1989.

Etoroma, Efajemue, "Blacks in Hamilton: An Analysis of Factors in Community Building." Ph.D. dissertation, McMaster University, 1992.

Hallam, Mrs. W.T., Slave Days in Canada (Read Before the Women's Canadian Historical Society, Toronto, April, 1919).

Hill, Daniel, "Negroes in Toronto: A Sociological Study of a Minority Group." Ph.D. dissertation, University of Toronto, 1960.

Mosher, Clayton, Crime and Colour, Cops and Courts: Systemic Racism in the Ontario Criminal Justice System In Social and Historical Context (Final Report (Revised) Submitted to the Commission on Systemic Racism in the Ontario Criminal Justice System, n.d.)

Murray, Alexander Lovell, "Canada and the Anglo-American Anti-Slavery Movement: A Study in International Philanthropy." Ph.D. dissertation, University of Pennsylvania, 1960.

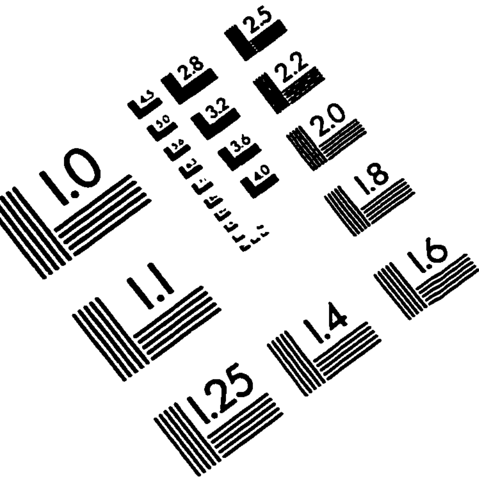
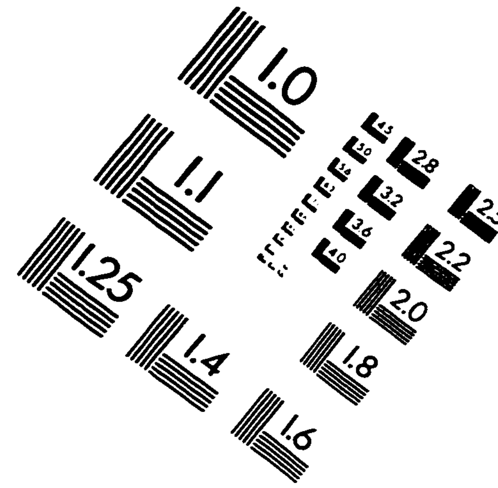
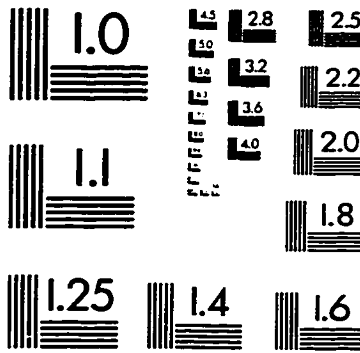
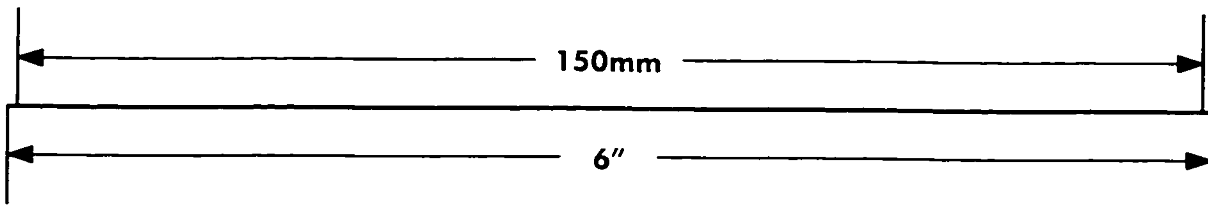
Silverman, Jason Howard, "Unwelcome Guests: American Fugitive Slaves in Canada, 1830-1865." Ph.D. dissertation, University of Kentucky, 1981.

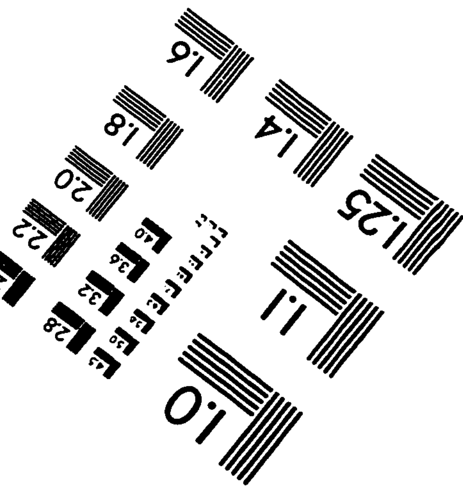
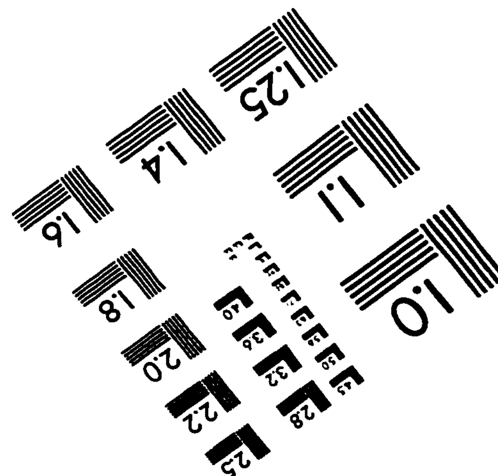
Simpson, Donald, "Negroes in Ontario From Early Times to 1870." Ph.D. dissertation, University of Western Ontario, 1971.

Strange, Carolyn, "The Perils and Pleasures of the City: Single, Wage-Earning Women in Toronto, 1880-1930." Ph.D. dissertation, Rutgers University, 1991.

Walton, Jonathan William, "Blacks in Buxton and Chatham, Ontario, 1830-1890: Did the 49th Parallel Make A Difference?" Ph.D. dissertation, Princeton University, 1979.

IMAGE EVALUATION TEST TARGET (QA-3)

APPLIED IMAGE . Inc
1653 East Main Street
Rochester, NY 14609 USA
Phone: 716/482-0300
Fax: 716/288-5989

© 1993, Applied Image, Inc., All Rights Reserved