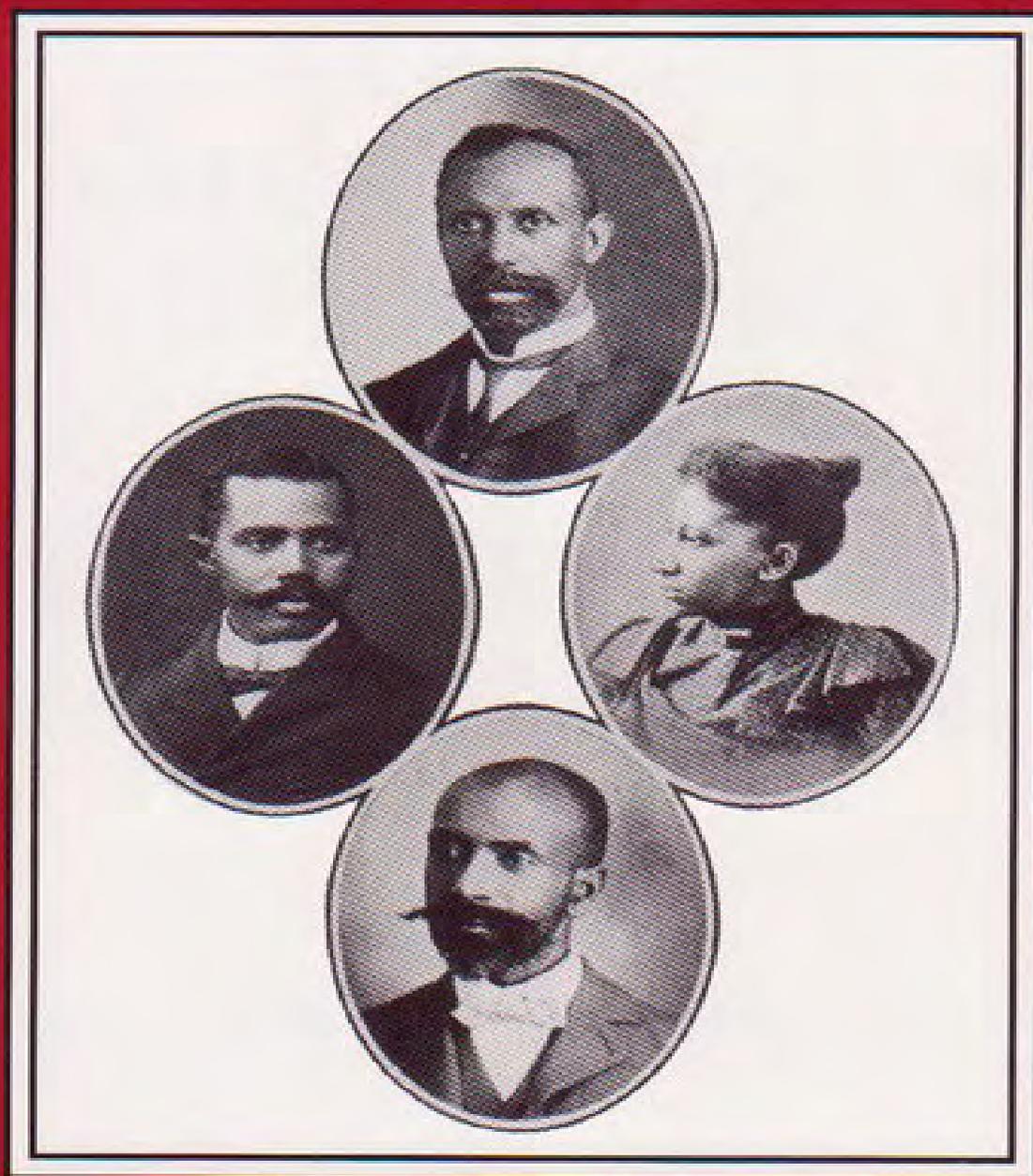


A HISTORY OF AFRICAN
AMERICANS OF DELAWARE
AND MARYLAND'S EASTERN
SHORE



Carole C. Marks, Editor

**A HISTORY OF
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MARYLAND'S EASTERN SHORE**

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A History of African Americans of Delaware and Maryland's Eastern Shore

Edited by Carole C. Marks

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PREFACE

You hold in your hands an important book—a document that restores an important but little-known part of our American heritage. Within these pages are stories of bravery, determination, principle and struggle, and we all benefit from the effort that brings to light valuable information on the history of African Americans in our region.

This book shares the truths of a group of Americans, truths that have only recently found their way into our history books. The individuals whose lives and contributions are chronicled here have surely helped shape our country—both in slavery and in freedom.

All of us owe a debt of thanks to the Christian Council of Delaware and Maryland's Eastern Shore and The Speer Trust Commission of New Castle Presbytery for their determination to celebrate the contributions of persons of color and for its decision and commitment to publishing this book.

Dr. Carole Marks has ably assembled this book. The Director of the University of Delaware Black American Studies Program since 1994, she has brought to the task a personal commitment and a reputation as a respected scholar. Dr. Marks has written several articles and made presentations on the topic of the black underclass and the work of black women, and she is the author of a book, *Farewell, We're Good and Gone: The Great Black Migration*. Certainly, her participation ensured the fine range of contributors who are featured in this book, several of whom are members of the University of Delaware faculty and staff.

Our thanks are due to all the participating scholars for enlightening us with their chapters. My advice to you is, "Take this book, read, and learn." We cannot hope to change the future until we have an appreciation for what came before us. This book is an important aid in what is certainly the chief struggle facing our nation "learning to live together, to" as the Greek philosopher Aeschylus so eloquently said "make gentle the life of this world."

I recall the words of the late Robert F. Kennedy, who was asked to talk after the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. He said, "We can, perhaps, remember, if only for a time, that those who live with us are our brothers, that they share with us the same short moment of life, that they seek, as do we, nothing but the chance to live out their lives in purpose and in happiness, winning what satisfaction and fulfillment they can. Surely this bond of common faith, this bond of common goal, can begin to teach us

something."

A History of African Americans in Delaware and Maryland's Eastern Shore eloquently captures the spirit of this bond of common faith and common goal and it certainly teaches us something, something very important indeed.

David P. Roselle

President

University of Delaware

INTRODUCTION

"Delaware like Gaul is divided into three parts, counties, if you will, or as wits have it, two counties at high tide, and three at low."

Alice Dunbar-Nelson

"An old and rich country, Maryland -fit for kings, and slaves-the lush riches of the country had been owned by the most regal wealth and worked by a subject people."

Earl Conrad

In January 1994, my phone rang. The pleasant, voice belonged to Beth Doty of the Christian Council of Delaware and the Eastern Shore. She asked if the Black American Studies program at the University of Delaware could write a history of African Americans in the region to be used in local schools and churches. My first response was that this must already have been done. I checked. It had not, and so this project was born.

Our intent is to reveal the long neglected and ignored history of a people who fought against incredible odds merely to be left alone to live, work, and raise their families. Many heroic lives are portrayed in this volume. And questions are raised about what might have been if these struggles were directed against poverty, disease, and ignorance instead of discrimination.

Delaware

Alice Dunbar-Nelson, wife of black poet laureate Paul Lawrence Dunbar gives us an interesting point to begin looking at Delaware. In the fall of 1924, she published an article in the journal, Messenger, about Delaware for a series called, "These Colored United States." The article, "Delaware-A Jewel of Inconsistencies," was remarkably flattering. "The Negro in Delaware," wrote Dunbar-Nelson, "believes in his diamond state, and loves it, prospers when it prospers, sorrows when it is sad, and is loyal to a degree that is fine." In fact, Dunbar-Nelson found it "irritating" that the black population was so loyal.

She had a point. The Delaware that Dunbar-Nelson described in 1924 hardly invited such loyalty. Wilmington, for example, had a population of 110,000 with 11,000 blacks. However, no black policemen, firemen or lawyers lived in the city. "Delaware is the only state in the Union," Dunbar-Nelson wrote, "where a colored man may not practice law. There is no law against it, merely custom and maneuver." While there were no separate street

or railway cars or waiting rooms, Dunbar-Nelson observed, "restaurants and soda foundations, except in rare instances, will not serve Negroes," and theaters will admit them only occasionally to the gallery. She concluded, "Delaware is a state of anomalies, of political and social contradictions. Still, there are few states where the relations between the races are more amicable." She supports this claim by suggesting there is, "never a public movement of any sort that does not have on its committee the names of one or more Negro citizens of good standing, and colored men and women are always consulted in all matters of public interest."

Delaware's mixed roots explain some of the anomaly. Balanced between the North and the South, it had a well-defined system of segregation and discrimination but one without extreme expression of race prejudice. There was, according to Dunbar- Nelson, only one lynching, for example. "Delaware is located on the periphery of the Old South, and that fact is central to understanding the state's past. Even today the southern mystique continues to cast a spell over the culture and thought patterns of many of its residents," wrote Bill Williams in the introduction to his recent study, *Slavery and Freedom in Delaware, 1639-1865*.

In over 300 years of residency, blacks have established themselves as a vital and integral part of the state. Black labor- both slave and free-was essential to its economic development. But, dependence on black labor was itself problematic. Coercive labor laws discussed by both Dalleo and Amuti (in this volume) suggest some of the tensions within this relationship. The need to maintain the labor force, Williams suggests, "was balanced by the growing white fear of what was proportionally at least, the largest free African American population in the United States."

Politically, with a voting strength of over 13,000, Dunbar- Nelson argued that blacks were able to exercise something of a balance of power-to represent the deciding factor in a close election. In the elections of 1922, she points out the black electorate "punished" Caleb Layton, a Republican who had voted against the Dyer anti-lynching bill and helped return Democratic Senator Bayard, a Democratic Congressman and elected a Democratic majority in the General Assembly. "They had not originally intended to do as much," she contended, "but the insistence of Republican leaders that the Negro did not know how to scratch (split) the ticket so angered Negroes that they did not scratch the ballot but voted solidly Democratic." Suffrage worker Florence Bayard Hilles, daughter of Thomas Bayard and sister of the Senator,

added more irony to the situation when she observed, "The Democratic party was afraid to give the colored women the vote for fear of simply doubling the Republican vote, and the first time the party has been in power for a generation it was swept in by these same colored women, who rose in their righteous wrath against the traditions of their men."

Blacks were not only important to the state's economic and political development, but to its folklore and mythology as well. Dunbar-Nelson speaks of a huge black man, for example, "who suddenly appeared, no one knew from where, at the Battle of the Brandywine, a battle that was going badly for the American troops." This "Black Sampson," as she calls him, "nonchalantly went through the British lines, mowing down the redcoats as if they were so much wheat." According to the legend, his courage won the battle. His story found a place in the hearts of the black school children of her day.

Black Delawareans, serving as the conscience of the state, were also active participants in struggles to eradicate injustice and bigotry. Beginning with religious leaders Richard Allen and Absalom Jones, who in 1800 introduced legislation in the United States House of Representatives to abolish slavery, continuing with the five "mighty oaks" in Gibson's article, to Louis Redding and Herman Holloway in the Newton/Carey article, and to the present with the political leadership of Henry, Scott, Plant, and Sills.

Maryland

Historically, the Eastern Shore of Maryland has had an unsettled relationship with the rest of its state, including numerous proposals for its secession. By contrast, it has had a social and cultural attachment to Delaware of long standing. As early as the 1750s, Maryland planters began to move into Delaware's unsettled regions in search of additional land, creating a common heritage and a common history.

The Eastern Shore, like Delaware, has had a troubling history in regard to its black population. Both states were part slave, part free. Both experienced a shift to grain crops which reduced the reliance on slave labor, but did not eliminate it. Both sent large numbers of soldiers to defend the Union even as slaves were held. Delaware was one of the largest stations of the Underground Railroad. Maryland, whose slavery was often described as mild in comparison with its southern neighbors, was by contrast home to some of the most famous and daring slave escapes.

Like Dunbar-Nelson, Theophilus Lewis, journalist and theater critic, wrote about his state, Maryland, for "These Colored United States." In 1923, his comments were equally laudatory. "When it comes to locating a commonwealth richer in high ideals, fine spirit, and pep and go, you will find precious few states that outclass the old Panhandle," he wrote. While much of his commentary applied to the Western rather than the Eastern Shore, he encompassed all when he observed, "There are still points of friction between the races, I admit, but their number is constantly diminishing." Lewis praised the economic accomplishments of Maryland's leading black citizens. He admired, as well, the political savvy of a population able to repeatedly elect political representatives. He was concerned, however, that Maryland school children lacked general knowledge of Black history and, in particular, of Maryland Black history. Of its most famous citizen, Frederick Douglass, he wrote, "Do the histories we buy for our colored schools tell all about me, so little black Marylanders can be inspired by his example and emulate me? I'll tell the world they do not."

Ironically, William Williams made a similar point in his recent volume, written some 75 years later. "In 1984," he observed, "while writing a short history of Delaware, I noticed how little had been published on the state's African-Americans or on black-white race relations. Since then, not much has changed." He points out further that Delaware's records on the black experience in slavery and freedom are not numerous, detailed, or complete because the small number of slave holders produced an even smaller number of record keepers: slave units were small and less likely to be written about, and once free, blacks held little interest for literate whites and literate blacks were few in number. Consequently, we are forced to reconstruct a history without a detailed written record.

Like Williams and Lewis, we seek to fill this void. With this volume of articles on the history of Blacks in Delaware and the Eastern Shore we intend to reveal more of a neglected aspect of the region's history—the contributions of African-Americans. Each chapter explores a range of experiences with an eye toward examining themes of persistence, courage, and invention. It celebrates Aunt Sallie Shadd, who is said to have invented ice cream, and Harriet Tubman, who not content to free herself, slept by day and explored the marshes by night, mapping escape routes so that others might be free. It celebrates lesser knowns as well. It celebrates those, who through it all remain loyal to a region that has always received more than it has given.

We have not attempted to write a definitive history. Rather, this volume is a first step to explore the past from several perspectives. We have tried to be inclusive, but of course, many more stories need to be told. We hope you will take up where we left off. The articles are provided on computer diskette and may be added to or edited as necessary. We welcome your additions and your input-this is a first edition.

In part one, we begin with an historical overview painted with a broad brush. James Newton chronicles a brief history of the area from 1639 to the present. Carol Hoffecker and Annette Woolard explore black women's contributions from slavery to the present. James Newton and Harmon Carey examine seven men whose lives and work, from slavery to the present, made a difference to the state. Clara Small studies abolitionists, free blacks, and runaway slaves on the Eastern Shore. She asks the question: if slavery was so mild, why is it home to many of the most celebrated escapes? Margaret Andersen views letters from the Freedmen's Bureau in an effort to understand what happened on the Eastern Shore following the end of slavery. Finally, Judith Gibson investigates the accomplishments of five black educators who, "because of their interest, concern and commitment provided African American youth a quality education during those years of segregation and exclusion."

Part two contains four previously unpublished research articles from area scholars. These selections reflect a variety of historical methods from archival document analysis to the analysis of census data to oral history. The first article examines the lives of free blacks in Wilmington during the period before the Civil War. The second compares employment patterns of black and white immigrant workers in 1850, 1880, and 1910. The third analyzes education and employment from 1950 to 1990 in Delaware and the Eastern Shore. Two chapters in this book view the civil rights years through the eyes of two of its leaders, Littleton Mitchell and William Furrowh, followed by an article about Hansford C. Bayton, the ebony entrepreneur.

We offer this book most of all because it is a history that is forgotten; a history that somehow has not yet made it to the shelves of our public libraries and into the collective memories of our citizenry. We would like to thank many people for helping to make this project possible. The Christian Council of Delaware and the Eastern Shore, with special thanks to Beth Doty and Pat McClurg; The Speer Trust Commission of New Castle Presbytery which made an exception to fund an "academic" project which we are very glad

they did; Gail Brittingham who coordinated all correspondence and submissions and typed every draft; Ray Wolters and Howard Johnson who read and commented upon the papers; and, the various offices and departments of the University of Delaware that carried us through at the end.

Carole C. Marks

Director and Professor, Black American Studies University of Delaware

PART ONE

THREE DELAWARE COLORED MEN ABLY FIGHT FOR UNCLE SAM



CORP. LEWIS S. ROBSON.

WM. MATTHEWS.

CORP. RAYMOND CORNISH

HOME SOON, HE THINKS.

Corporal Lewis R. Robson, Co. D, 313th Labor Br. (picture on this page), writes to his aunt, Mrs. Susan L. Robson, 912 Walnut street, that he expects to be able to see her soon.

BELONGS TO ONLY NEGRO ARTILLERY IN THE WORLD

From Dienloward, France, under date of December 8, Musician William A. Matthews, Jr., of Headquarters Company, 349th F. A. Band (picture on this page), writes to his brother that he expects to be home soon. He tells of Norman Scott being in hospital and of Horace Dumpson's death. He also says Joseph Hudson, Steven Reynolds and "Pewee" Williams were in hospital but that Reynolds

and Williams were getting well. He points out that this artillery brigade (167th F. A. Brigade) which includes the 349th, 350th and 351st field artillery regiments is the only negro artillery the world has even seen and it made a record to be proud of. It is attached to the 92nd, "Buffalo" Division. He says Clarence Ridgely played in the all-star football team in a game the day he writes.

FIRE REGIMENT'S FIRST SHOT.

Corporal Raymond Cornish, Battery A, 349th Field Artillery (picture on this page), writes to his mother that he is proud he got a chance to get to the front and that he was the first gunner of his regiment to fire a shot. He sends to his mother a handkerchief from France as a memento of the war.

"Three Colored Men"

Undated Newspaper Clipping Courtesy of Historical Society of Delaware-
Military Collection

BLACK AMERICANS IN DELAWARE: AN

OVERVIEW

James E. Newton University of Delaware

The history and life experiences of black Americans has been long neglected and continues to provide important opportunities for research. In his pioneering work on blacks in American history, George Washington Williams, a minister and America's first significant black historian, wrote in 1882, "I have tracked my bleeding countrymen through the widely scattered documents of American history...."¹ Anyone attempting research on the history of black Americans in Delaware and the Eastern Shore certainly find Williams' comments appropriate. The purpose of this essay is to provide a general overview of the historical experience of African Americans in Delaware. A chronological pattern has divided the discussion into four historical periods: 1639-1787; 1787-1865; 1865-1930; and 1930 - the present.

In the Beginning: 1639-1787

The history of the black population in the English colonies in North America began in 1619 with the sale of 20 servants to settlers in Jamestown. Delaware's first settlers were the Swedes and the Dutch. In their quest for power, the Dutch took over from the Swedes, but in 1664, were driven out of Delaware by their colonial rivals, the English. Historical documents record the first black in Delaware territory was Anthony, who was captured by the skipper of the Grip in 1638. In 1639, "Black Anthony" was delivered to Fort Christina and nine years later served as special assistant to Governor Printz.

In 1721, an estimated 2,000-5,000 slaves lived in Pennsylvania and the three lower counties on the Delaware (New Castle, Kent, and Sussex). Possibly 500 of this number resided in the three lower counties. Most of the slaves and free blacks in the three lower counties worked as farm laborers or as domestic servants. European indentured servants could not supply the demand for labor, so the difference was made up by slaves. Well-to-do planters in Kent County (e.g., Nicholas Loockerman, John Vining, and Dr. Charles Ridgely) owned large numbers of slaves.

Some slaves were trained for jobs other than farming or domestic service. In 1762, John Dickinson, one of Delaware's most prominent revolutionary statesmen and a Quaker, in advertising his plantation for rent, mentioned that the renter might secure the services of slaves trained as tanners, shoemakers, carpenters and tailors as well as in farm work, providing that they were

treated kindly. Other slaves were trained as foundry men. Advertisements of runaway slaves from the lower counties reported some who knew how to play the violin and to read and write.

The socialization of blacks was controlled in Delaware by an act of 1700 entitled, For the trial of Negroes. This policy marked 150 years of discriminatory legislation. Blacks were given more severe penalties than whites for certain crimes, prohibited from carrying weapons or assembling in large numbers, and were subject to special court procedures. Later laws placed even greater restrictions on them by prohibiting voting, holding office, giving evidence against whites, and banning mixed marriages. On the eve of the American Revolution, so many slaves resided in the colony that some inhabitants feared an insurrection. The General Assembly passed an act in 1773 raising the duty to 20 pounds for bringing an individual slave into the Lower counties with the explanation that numerous plots and insurrections in mainland America had resulted in the murders of several inhabitants.

The best estimates are that the three lower counties contained 2,000 blacks in 1775, with each county containing approximately one-third of the total. In view of the great increase of black inhabitants by 1790, the figure may be underestimated.

The General Assembly, in 1775, attempted to prohibit both the import and export of slaves, but Governor John Penn vetoed the measure. The Constitution of 1776 provided that "No person hereafter imported into this state from Africa ought to be held in slavery under any pretense whatever, and no Negro, Indian or mulatto slave ought to be brought into this state for sale from any part of the world." In spite of this clause, some blacks were illegally sold or kidnapped, and farmers who owned land on Maryland's Eastern Shore were entitled, with court permission, to take slaves across the border. Later legislation severely punished kidnappers and tried to ensure that slaves were not sold out of the state or brought into it.

During the American Revolution, the black population of Delaware made a great contribution to American victory as toilers of the soil and in general services. Delaware blacks served as express riders, supervisors of horses, and teamsters. Others showed their loyalty by paying taxes in bushels of wheat for the support of the army, just as their white neighbors did.

In his formative years, African Methodist Episcopal Bishop Richard Allen, of Kent County, aided the American cause by driving a salt wagon from Lewes. Perhaps some of his cargo reached Washington's army.

Delaware Quakers, inspired by Warner Mifflin of Kent County, began to free their slaves in 1775. Many followed their example. John Dickinson manumitted more than a score of slaves of his St. Jones' Neck estate in Kent County in 1777. Dickinson also provided education for his slaves' children.

Another revolutionary leader of Kent County, Caesar Rodney, arranged for the manumission of his slaves in his will at his death in 1784. In spite of such efforts, the census of 1790 listed 8,887 slaves and 3,899 free blacks.

Statehood to the Civil War: 1787-1865

When the new federal constitution was completed in September 1787, it was sent to the states for approval. Delaware was the first state to take action. On December 7, 1787, at a state convention in Dover, the new constitution was unanimously ratified making Delaware the first state to join the Union.

Statehood in Delaware, like other states, raised several serious questions about slavery, colonization, manumission, and the legal status of free blacks in the state. Although state law forbade the sale of slaves out of the state, efforts to transport them for this purpose illicitly continued at the end of the 18th century. Occasionally, free blacks were kidnapped and sold as slaves.

Freedmen found it wise to deposit apprentice and freedom papers with the Pennsylvania Abolition Society in Philadelphia.

Some Delawareans were interested in manumission, but only if the freedmen returned to Africa. In 1827, the Wilmington Union Colonization Society petitioned the legislature for approval of such an objective. The Assembly passed a resolution approving the goals of the Society.

Wilmington blacks took a different view of colonization. At a meeting in 1831, they expressed the opinion that colonization was not in the best interest of the black race and was at variance with the principle of civil and religious liberty. They also saw it as incompatible with the spirit of the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution.

Delawareans, mostly Quakers, organized the Delaware Society for Promoting the Abolition of Slavery in 1788. About the same year, the Delaware Society for the Gradual Abolition of Slavery was also formed. These societies did outstanding work in protecting free blacks from kidnapping and in encouraging slave owners to free their slaves. However, there were other forces attempting to keep slaves in bondage. The most notorious slavenapper was Patty Cannon who, with her son-in-law Joe Johnson, ran a tavern on the Delaware-Maryland line in Sussex County. She

had been accused of kidnapping blacks for sale to slave traders and of murder. She was under indictment for her notorious activities when she died in jail at Georgetown in 1829.

Support for Delaware's black populace was best exemplified through Thomas Garrett, a Wilmington businessman and Quaker. In a letter to a New York state abolitionist in 1858, he claimed to have aided 2,152 blacks escape (by the time of the Civil War, the figure was over 2,700). In 1848, he was fined \$5,400 for assisting runaway slaves. His property was sold at a sheriff's sale. Later, with the aid of friends, he successfully re-established himself in business.

Black abolitionists also aided members of their race in escaping. Abraham D. Shadd, a Wilmington shoemaker, was active in the Underground Railroad and in working for black rights. Samuel Burris, of Kent County, was a black conductor on the Underground Railroad. Jailed in Dover for his activities and sold

into servitude, he found-to his pleasant surprise-his Quaker friends had arranged to buy his time. Famed heroine Harriet Tubman, known for her Underground Railroad activities, frequently led slaves to freedom from the Eastern Shore of Maryland. She and Garrett formed one of the most successful teams on the Underground Railroad.

The number of slaves in Delaware decreased rapidly from almost 9,000 in 1790 to half that number in 1820. By 1860, the number had decreased to 1,798. The usual explanation given is humanitarianism and religious feeling, abolitionist efforts, and runaways. In reality, Delaware farmers found it cheaper to hire free black labor than to keep slaves. Furthermore, Delaware, the most northern of the slave states, had no great crop of tobacco or cotton to be looked after during all seasons of the year. The land was wearing out, and state law forbade the sale of slaves out of state. Thus, slave owners could not benefit from breeding slaves as in a state like Virginia.

By 1860, slavery was extinct in Wilmington and disappearing in lower New Castle County. Even in Sussex County, the ratio of free to slave was one to three, but the General Assembly hesitated to take the final step. The Friends of Abolition almost succeeded in 1847, but one vote kept them from success.

How slaves were treated depended upon the whim of their owner. Mary Parker Welch, in her reminiscences of slavery in Delaware, paints mostly a pleasant picture of slave life in Sussex County. She knew of slaves who had

purchased their freedom and later owned small farms and cottages. But, even Mrs. Welch told of whippings, illegal sales to slave traders for sale outside of the state, and the separation of families.

Some masters treated their slaves kindly. At the death of his father, John M. Clayton, later a distinguished Senator, bought the family slaves at a sheriff's sale with the understanding that they would be freed as soon as the money he had borrowed for that purpose was repaid.

Such an episode can be counterbalanced with tales of cruelty. John Hawkins, for example, in the 1830s, unsuccessfully petitioned the courts to prevent the sale of his children into the deep South. Solomon Bayley was a Delaware slave sold illicitly to a Virginia owner. He managed to escape and return to Delaware, where he eventually succeeded in buying not only his own freedom, but that of his wife and children. Levin Tilmon was born a slave but later became free and was indentured as an apprentice. He describes vividly hardships of both slaves and free blacks in his narrative published in 1853. William Still's compilation of narratives of the Underground Railroad is full of stories of whippings, separation of families, and mistreatment.

Prior to the Civil War, free blacks suffered from many legal discriminatory practices. They needed passes signed by white men to leave the state, and if they were absent more than six months, they could not return. Free blacks from other states were not permitted to move to Delaware.

Laws became noticeably stricter after the 1831 Nat Turner Insurrection in Virginia. Several petitions requested that the General Assembly provide even stricter regulations on the mobility of free blacks. Although free blacks resented these laws and petitioned against them, their efforts were to no avail.

Free blacks in the decades before the Civil War began to acquire property and gained some degree of economic security. While this was true in all counties, it was especially so in Wilmington, where county tax records show that a number of blacks owned their own homes and occasionally other buildings. While most of the blacks in the state outside of Wilmington engaged in farming or domestic service, those in Wilmington earned their living in a variety of ways. The City Directory of 1845 lists 26 occupations in which blacks found employment (see Dalleo in this volume).

The black population in Wilmington believed that education was an important tool for improving their lives. The Quakers opened a school for blacks in 1798, and in 1816, the African School Society opened another. A survey in 1837 found that this school was the only one in operation at the

time. However, a Quaker philanthropist left money in his will for the opening of two schools in Kent county. Three or four Sunday schools provided elementary instruction in reading and writing. Free blacks were frequently apprenticed to learn a trade. Usually the boys were instructed in farming, and the girls in household work. Occasionally, boys were apprenticed to carpenters, blacksmiths, and shoemakers.

Delaware blacks were also attracted to religious observances. In the early part of the 18th century, slaves and freedmen attended white churches but were relegated to sitting in the gallery (as at Barratt's Chapel). Many blacks were attracted by the lively services of the Methodists and attended meetings of that denomination more than any other.

Harry Hosier, known as "Black Harry," was a traveling companion of Francis Asbury. In 1781, he preached a sermon at Barratt's Chapel in Kent County on the barren fig tree: "The circumstance was new, and the white people looked on with attention." Hosier became well-known along the eastern seaboard, preaching for more than 30 years. Dr. Benjamin Rush, of Philadelphia, once declared that, allowing for his illiteracy, Black Harry was the greatest orator in America.

The first black church in Delaware was Ezion Methodist Episcopal Church which was established in Wilmington in 1805 when the black members of the Asbury Methodist Church withdrew and erected their own building with the aid of white contributors. Resenting white control of their services, however, the bulk of the members of Ezion Methodist Episcopal Church withdrew in 1813, under the leadership of the Reverend Peter Spencer and William Anderson and formed the Union African Methodist Episcopal Church (UAME). Under the guidance of the Reverend Spencer, the church grew rapidly. By the time of the death of the "patriarch" in 1843, the congregation consisted of more than 1,200 members in several states.

In the decades before the Civil War, humanitarian feelings, the efforts of abolitionists, and the failure of some planters to run their plantations profitably resulted in a great increase in the number of free blacks. On the eve of the Civil War, in a white population of 90,589, black inhabitants were distributed as follows:

COUNTY	SLAVES	FREE	TOTAL
New Castle	254	8,188	8,442
Kent	303	7,271	7,524
Sussex	1,341	4,370	5,711
Total	1,798	19,829	21,677

When the Civil War began, blacks were not accepted into the Union Army, but this policy changed in 1862. Eventually, 1,400 black men from Delaware served. Some enlisted, some were drafted, and others were hired as substitutes by men who did not wish to serve in the army.

During the War, President Lincoln wished to experiment with compensated emancipation in Delaware as a way to end slavery in the nation. He conferred with Representative George P. Fisher, in 1861, about this possibility. Fisher and Nathaniel B. Smithers of Dover, a Republican politician who later became a Congressman, drew up a plan to compensate owners and to abolish slavery completely in the State by 1872. However, a poll of the members of the Assembly revealed the measure would fail by one vote.

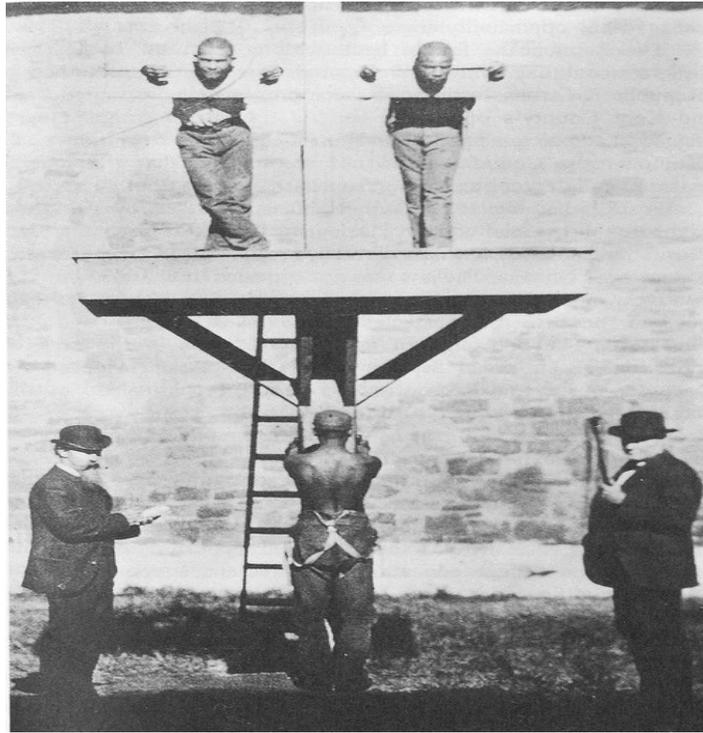
While Lincoln's 1863 Emancipation plan freed the slaves in the rebellious states, those in border states like Delaware were not affected until the passage of the Thirteenth Amendment in December 1865. Delaware slaves were finally free.

Civil War to the Depression: 1865-1930

Following emancipation, the Delaware Legislature began to place even more limitations on African American citizenship. Politicians lost no time in forging an anti-black agenda, especially the Democrats who did not favor emancipation. As Governor Saulsbury said in his inaugural address earlier in the year, the true position of the Negro was as a subordinate race excluded from all political and social privileges. The Democratic legislature, in 1866, resolved that blacks were not the political or social equal of whites. These statements were probably typical of how many white Delawareans felt on the racial issue and were similar to those expressed in the Southern states. The legislature soon found ways to prevent blacks from exercising full citizenship. These measures were so successful that Ku Klux Klan activities in Delaware, during this time, were limited.

Freedmen anticipated they would have full rights but soon found the period after the War was a time for frustration and disappointment. "White or black"

was the political issue of the Reconstruction period, the Delaware Gazette in Wilmington declared. The Democrats wasted no time using the race card whenever the opportunity arose.



Whipping Post, c.1880
New Castle Jail Courtesy of Historical Society of Delaware

The Republicans fought back with no success. In 1867, a Congressional Committee investigated whether the state had a "Republic." Strong testimonies were presented indicating Sussex and Kent County's opposition to ". . . Negro suffrage, Negro education and Negro political and social equality." In spite of such testimony, the Committee did not recommend that the federal government intervene as it did in some areas of the South.

Fearful that the 1875 Civil Rights Act passed by Congress might establish social equality, Delaware legislators passed a "Jim Crow" law (1875), which virtually made black Delawareans second-class citizens. The law was not appealed until 1963.

Delaware blacks achieved little during the first 10 years of their freedom

because of obstacles raised by prejudice and the legislature. The only sign of any progress was in the area of education. Educational opportunities for blacks widened in Delaware during the Reconstruction period, in part aided by the activities of the Freedmen's Bureau. In addition, the work of the Delaware Association for the Moral Improvement and Education of the Coloured People was invaluable.

Nothing was done about higher education until 1891, when the provisions of the federal second Morrill Act resulted in the founding of Delaware State College (now Delaware State University). For many years, it provided opportunities for both secondary and college education. Facilities and support from the state were, at first, inadequate. The dominant personality during the first 25 years of existence was Dr. William C. Jason, its second president, who assumed the task of developing "the college as an instrument for the upgrading of the Negro in Delaware."

Economically, blacks remained at a disadvantage, as studies of Dr. Jerome Holland, former president of Delaware State College, and Dr. Harold Livesay revealed. Dr. Livesay found blacks remained at the bottom of the economic ladder between Reconstruction and World War II, being virtually excluded from white collar jobs. In 1940, 70 percent of all blacks employed were either laborers or domestic servants, compared with 12 percent of the white working force. Blacks held about 75 percent of all menial jobs in the state in 1940. The development of a small middle class in Wilmington, including an increasing number of black teachers was the only encouraging sign. But, such factors as discriminatory hiring practices, segregated labor unions, and an inadequate school system made progress difficult.

Social and political discrimination against blacks seriously restricted any advancement. A famous U.S. Supreme Court decision in 1880 ruled that William Neal could not stand convicted of rape and murder because blacks were excluded from jury duty. As a result, Moses America, a black man, was summoned to jury duty in 1881, but blacks were not freely called thereafter. Blacks were also excluded from the practice of law. Black firemen and policemen were still not hired. In 1893, George Tilghman, a grocer, became a bailiff in the City Council.

A political breakthrough came in 1901, when Thomas E. Postles, a Wilmington laborer and small businessman, became a member of City Council. To Wilmington blacks he was a hero, and a political club was named after him. He was re-elected in 1905. At a political rally at Bavarian

Park on Dupont Street in 1906, William Trusty, President of the Postles Club, said, "This organization intends to battle for the benefit of the Negro until the last Negro in Delaware dies, if need be." Postles' successor was John O. Hopkins, a druggist, who served on the Council for 32 years.

Downstate a breakthrough came in 1901, the same year that Postles began to serve on the City Council, when John Barclay was appointed by Governor Hunn as a janitor in the State House. Although it was a menial job, it was the first time a black served in any capacity in a state administration.

The climax of this frustrating period of disappointment came in 1903, when under the excitement of a sermon preached by the pastor of Olivet Presbyterian Church, members of the community broke into the workhouse. They dragged out George White for lynching. White was a black man accused of rape and murder. The press was unanimous in denouncing the affair, and the racist minister was later driven out of town.



A chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People was organized in Wilmington in 1915. Its first success was in persuading the City Council to pass an ordinance banning moving pictures "likely to stir up bad feelings between the races." This ordinance prevented the showing of "The Birth of a Nation," which presented blacks in an unfavorable light during Reconstruction. Since then, the organization has worked for fair employment, housing, integration of schools, and remains the major agency to fight the battle for civil rights.

Delaware blacks served their country in World War I, though they faced discrimination within the armed services. An estimated 1,400 blacks from the state served, including five officers. The Norman D. Scott post of the American Legion was named for a black casualty who belonged to the James Reese European band.

Although he fought to make the world safe for democracy, the returning veteran did not find a different world than he had left. During the next 20 years, he faced economic, social, and political discrimination. When the Works Progress Administration (WPA) studied blacks in the 1930s, writers found that a "color line" existed, especially in the southern part of Delaware. White Delawareans below Wilmington claimed they had no objection to associating with blacks as long as they "stayed in their place," but, in reality, there was little association between the races except at the bottom levels of both groups or by wealthy whites who employed servants.

In northern Delaware, blacks were granted theoretical equality, though there was little intimate or general association with whites. Blacks could sit anywhere in public conveyances and patronize public libraries and parks, but they were excluded from theaters, restaurants, and hotels. They had their own schools and usually attended services in their own churches. Overall, black Wilmingtonians had more freedom than fellow blacks in southern Delaware.

When Mrs. Dunbar-Nelson wrote "Delaware: A Jewel of Inconsistencies," in 1924, she saw some encouraging signs such as the appearance of black physicians, dentists, pharmacists, and members of the Wilmington Board of Education, Board of Health, and City Council. Blacks also served on the Republican State Committee. She was disappointed that practically all state and county offices were closed to blacks, except in a menial capacity.

Modern Times: 1930 to the Present

During the Depression, blacks were in a desperate plight. The old adage-

the last to be hired, and the first to be fired-applied. WPA investigators estimated that 60 percent of employable blacks lacked visible means of support, another 20 percent were employed on work relief, and the remaining 20 percent worked as farm laborers and domestics. Small businessmen suffered greatly from the Depression. The only bright feature was the gains made by the professional classes.

During this time, blacks rarely advanced politically. An exception was William W. Coage, son of a businessman who operated a stage line from New Castle to Wilmington. A graduate of Wilberforce University in 1899, he received an appointment as a clerk in the Census Bureau in Washington, D.C., in 1900, with the aid of Senator Henry A. DuPont. Coage was the first Delaware black ever to receive such a federal post. From 1902 to 1924, he followed a business career, but in 1924, he was appointed a member of the U.S. Commission to investigate conditions in the Virgin Islands. A year later, he became Second Deputy Recorder of Deeds in Washington, D.C. In 1930, he was appointed Recorder.

In 1930, 60 out of 100 blacks were gainfully employed. Of these, 21 were in agriculture, 20 in manufacturing and mercantile industries, 12 in transportation, six in fishing, one in mining, one clerical and 33 in personal and domestic service. Blacks owned or were tenants of 827 farms. The two largest classes in which blacks worked were in domestic service or road construction. Few labor unions admitted blacks, and their wages as laborers or domestic servants were low.

Because of the Depression, it is not surprising that black residents began to support Democratic candidates rather than those of the "party of Lincoln." Numerous black children bore the given name of Franklin Delano Roosevelt.

In World War II, more than 4,000 blacks served in the armed forces and a few received commissions as officers: five in the Army; one in the Air Corps and three as warrant officers. Blacks were not yet admitted to the Delaware National Guard. Four young women served in the Women's Army Corps. Later, black inhabitants served in the Korean and Vietnam Wars.



Portrait of a Young Boy
Chalfont Collection Courtesy of Historical Society of Delaware

The returning veterans from World War II found no warmer welcome than after World War I. Although 15,000 blacks could vote, they did not organize and made little impact on legislation or in receiving jobs. When Pauline Young wrote her pioneer history of blacks in Delaware in 1947, she found few black officeholders except in menial jobs—none in the legislature or in white collar jobs in county or state offices, and practically none on state boards. Two blacks served on Wilmington City Council, but few were employed in city offices. The same kind of social discrimination that prevailed in the 1920s and 1930s continued to be practiced, but eventful changes were anticipated.

Strong national leadership under Dr. Martin Luther King and others, along with an energized local leadership, provided the impetus for black socialization in Delaware. In 1950, *Who's Who in Colored America* included ten Delawareans: from Wilmington, Dr. Conwell Banton, well-known physician in the fight against tuberculosis; Reverend A. R. James, clergyman; Dr. T. F. Jamison, dentist; G. A. Johnson, school principal; Pauline A.

Young, librarian and author; and from Delaware State College, Miss T. E. Bradford, T. R. Moses, C. W. Pinckney, and H. D. Weaver, college professors, and from Laurel, J. R. Webb, school principal. This list was far from inclusive. It might have mentioned Dr. Jerome Holland, former head of Delaware State College in the 1940s, who went on to become the head of Hampton Institute (VA), a representative to the United Nations and Ambassador to Sweden, or Mrs. Dorothy Banton, wife of the distinguished physician Conwell Banton, who did so much for teenagers at the Kruse School, or members of the Henry family in Dover, distinguished in medicine, dentistry and pharmacy. Dr. William Henry served on the Dover School Board and as a trustee of Delaware State College. It might have included the distinguished lawyer, Louis Redding, who began his battle on behalf of desegregation in the schools in 1950, or his brother, J. Saunders Redding, who wrote the widely known book, *On Being Black in America*, in which he described in a moving way his childhood in Wilmington, or Edward Loper, an outstanding artist and interpreter of the Delaware scene.

Changes influenced by black leaders began to occur about the time of World War II. The first basketball game between a white and black school took place in 1942, when Wilmington Friends School played Howard High School. The first black member of the legislature, William J. Winchester, a Republican, was elected in 1945. Paul Livingstone became the second member in 1952. Salesianum High School opened its doors to five black students in 1950. In the next few years, the integration of the YMCA (1951), black members of the National Guard (1951), and the opening of the Hotel DuPont to black citizens (1953) occurred.

In education, the University of Delaware opened its doors to black students in 1948. Louis Redding filed a suit on behalf of black children in Claymont and Hockessin in 1950 for admission to the white public schools on the grounds that facilities for black children were inferior. As a result, Chancellor Collins J. Seitz ordered desegregation. The case was then appealed to the United States Supreme Court. Delaware was one of five defendants in *Brown v. Board of Education*. In 1954, the Supreme Court ordered desegregation. Wilmington schools began to comply in that year as did Dover, but in other parts of the state, progress was slow. In Milford, efforts by the National Association for the Advancement of White People headed by Bryant W. Bowles, an ardent desegregation opponent, along with others, hindered the process of desegregation. Louis Redding filed suit in 1957 for the admission

of black children in seven downstate schools, and Chief Justice Leahy of Delaware ordered desegregation to begin by fall. Through appeal, the decision was not put into effect until 1959. Since then, all schools have become integrated, but in 1975, a court order provided that New Castle County schools should be integrated on a county-wide basis, as the Wilmington schools were mostly attended by black students and county schools by white students.

Peaceful progress in solving problems relating to civil rights was rudely checked in 1968 by riots and disturbances in Wilmington. The nation was shocked in April 1968 by the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King. As a result, disturbances broke out in many cities, including Wilmington. Rioting, looting, and sniping occurred in an area bound by Fourth Street, Washington Street, Ninth Street, and Interstate 95. Mayor John Babiarez placed the city under a 6:00 p.m. curfew and banned the sale of liquor and firearms. Governor Charles Terry called in the National Guard to keep order. Scores of people were injured, and many were arrested for violating the curfew, looting, and sniping. This outbreak lasted about 10 days before calming down. Governor Terry was criticized for keeping the National Guard on duty in the city for months, and this decision contributed to his defeat in the November election.

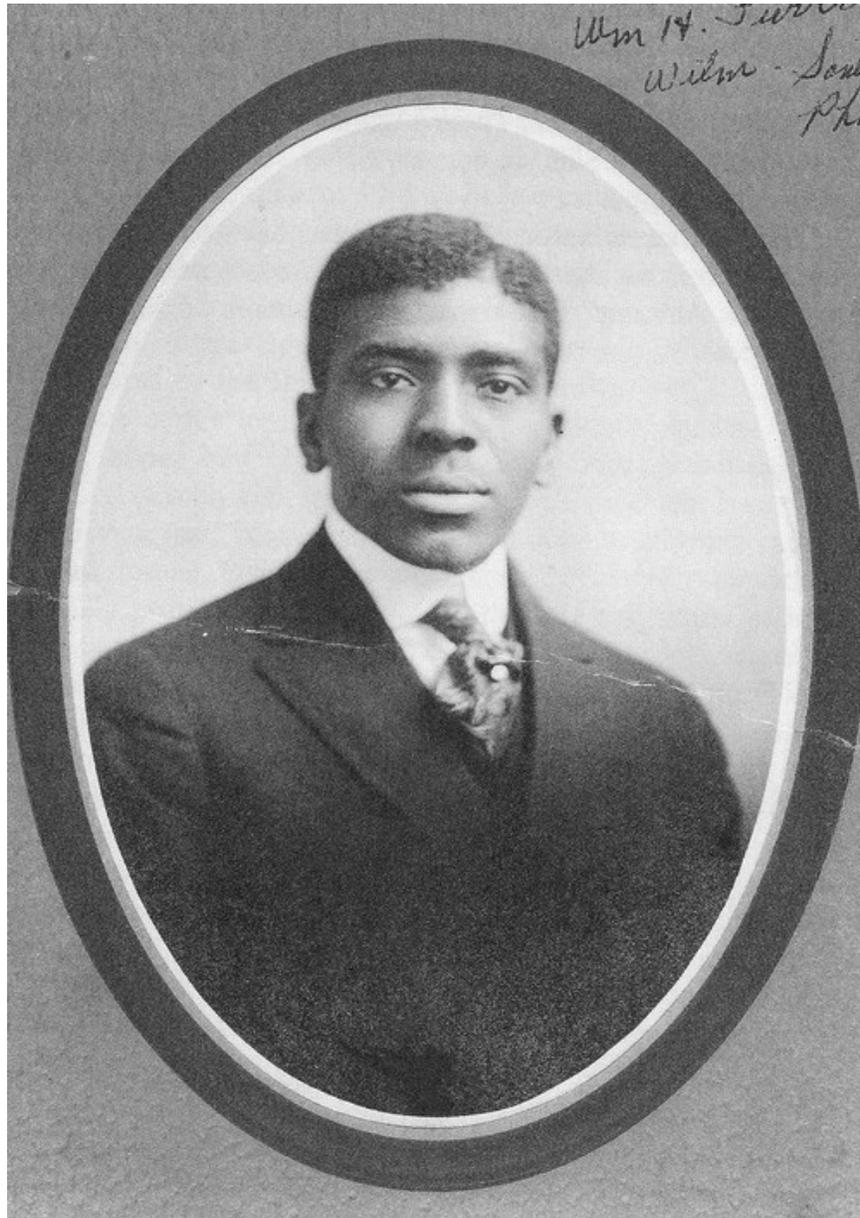
This affair merely pointed out that blacks in Wilmington were so frustrated by the slow pace of progress that they struck out in blind rage at the loss of Dr. King-the national leader who had offered hope. Four New Castle County representatives in the General Assembly reflected this attitude in a statement issued at the time, saying that "Not enough has been done to alleviate causes of poverty, despair, discrimination or unrest." They recommended the Assembly prohibit discrimination in the sale and rental of homes, establish a State Department of Housing, and improve recreational facilities. Within a few years, federal funds were provided for improved housing, though many problems remained unsolved.

Since World War II, Wilmington has increasingly become a black city. In 1970, 40 percent of the population was black, a significant increase (40 percent) in the number of blacks residing in the city since 1960, while the white population in that decade decreased by 36 percent. Wilmington had a population of 80,000, consisting of 45,000 whites, 35,000 blacks, and 1,300 Hispanics. In 1940, the city reached an all-time high total population of 112,000, which has declined since that time. These changes were

accompanied by the movement of many white inhabitants to the suburbs, making New Castle County one of the most rapidly growing counties in the nation; by the majority of black students in public schools; by an increasing number of employees of the city, county, and industry being black, and by the struggle of the downtown area to improve its facilities in view of the competition with suburban shopping centers and malls.

From the 1970s to the present, blacks in Delaware have made moderate progress. While much can be attributed to individual successes, it nonetheless provides the stimulus for group advancement. The history of the group has been like a seesaw, a host of highs and lows. However, as economic gains increase and opportunities are presented, there are hints of optimism for Delaware's black populace. The inauguration of Wilmington's first black mayor, James Sills, in January 1993 served as one of the biggest signs of hope.

The black contribution to the state has been phenomenal and most recognize that the ebony inhabitants have come a long way since "Black Anthony" first arrived on the shores of the Delaware River in 1639.²



William Furrowh
Furrowh Collection Courtesy of Historical Society of Delaware

Beautiful People:

William Furrowh

Black pride, black activism, and black anger are generally associated with the young. But a 78 year old man living in Baynard Apartments, William Furrowh, proves it's not age that counts-it's feelings and concern.

Mr. Furrowh is a repository of black history in Delaware, with a remarkable memory for events and details, but he is also thoroughly aware and alert to everything that is going on today.

He was deeply involved in the Marcus Garvey movement in the -20s. He picketed Woolworth's in the Civil Rights movement of the -50s and -60s. He's a member of Julian Bond's Southern Poverty Law Center, the NAACP and many other groups today.

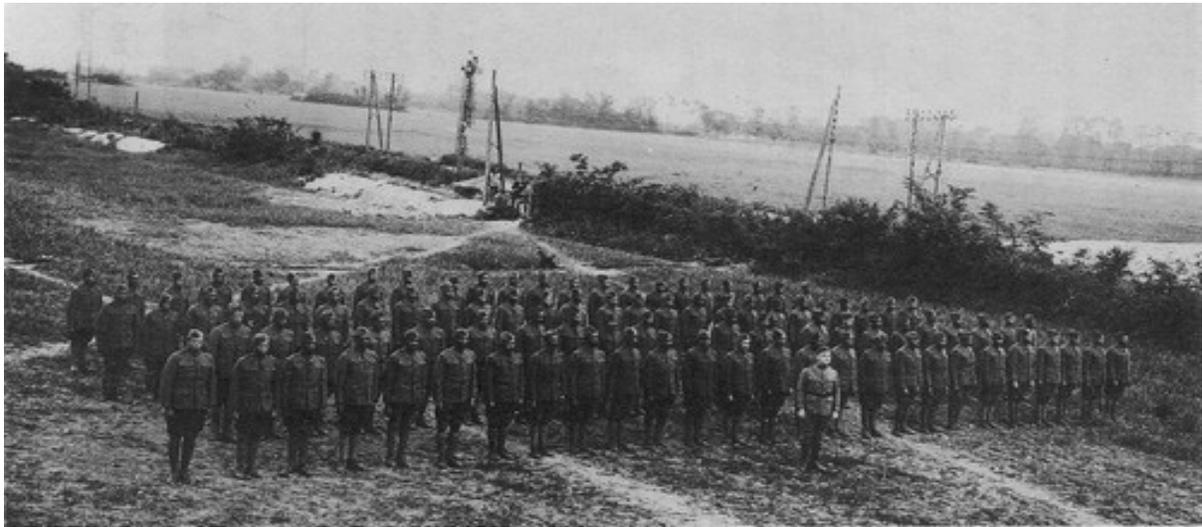
Speaking in a firm voice that frequently rose with indignation or emotion, William Furrowh recently told Together his fascinating story.

Turning Point

Born in Wilmington just before the tum of the century, he attended Howard High School, then dropped out and was drafted into the army in World War 1. That was the turning point of his awareness. In France, he became interested in black history through his contacts with Algerian and Moroccan troops-and he suddenly realized that he had not been told the truth about blacks in school.

In angry tones he said, "They led us to believe that African blacks were savages. They pictured black women with rings through their noses. They never taught us about our contributions to America. Frederick Douglass, Paul Lawrence Dunbar and Booker T. Washington were the only black names they ever mentioned, and they didn't tell us much about them."

After returning from the war with several medals and a newly discovered awareness of his history and background, Furrowh finished school at the Universal Negro improvement Association Seminary in New York.



Private William H. Furrowh with his unit in France during WWI
Military Collection Courtesy of Historical Society of Delaware



Furrowh Collection Courtesy of Historical Society of Delaware

Black Moses

The UNIA was Marcus Garvey's organization. Garvey, called the Black Moses, was a black nationalist who dreamed of a new beg in Africa and created the first mass movement of black Americans.

Furrowh reamed to Delaware to organize a division of the UNIA that he recalls had between 300 and 400 members. Nationally the movement attracted about a million followers.

Furrowh the Garvey movement has been interpreted too simply as a "Back to Africa" movement. His interpretation is that Garvey urged his supporters to get a "Good education, even at Yale and Harvard, and then, since a good education could not get a black a good job in America, then go back to Africa and work with our people."

Regardless of the interpretation, very few blacks went back to Africa as a

result of Garvey's movement. Garvey founded the Black Star Line, with three ships, for the purpose of carrying blacks to Africa. However, the dream did not become a reality. The company folded and Garvey was convicted of mail fraud, then pardoned and deported to his birthplace, Jamaica.

There are various viewpoints about Garvey, with some blacks supporting, and some opposing, what he tried to do. William Furrowh is a supporter, and he is very bitter about what happened to Garvey.

He said, "We got tripped by politics, because the white power structure was afraid of Garvey and didn't want to lead his movement. The money we had collected got ripped off. Then they jailed Garvey on a technical mail fraud charge that was a setup. He was framed. Garvey never stole a penny." 'While he was involved in the movement, Furrowh worked as a boilermaker for the Pennsylvania Railroad. In 1965 he was retired after 39 years of service. During this time, he was involved in family life, too. He and his wife raised three children, and he now has three grandchildren.

When the Garvey movement dwindled away, William Furrowh's activism remained, and he has several mementoes of his efforts.

He has a merit certificate for his efforts in a NAACP membership drive conducted in 1955, handed to him personally by Dr. Ralph Bunche at special ceremonies. He has a certificate of appreciation for service to Community Action of Greater Wilmington in signing up people for Operation Medicare Alert. He is involved in several veterans organizations and is a member of Bethel Church.

"I'm in and out, always active in something," he says.

No Separatist

We asked Mr. Furrowh how he views today's scene in racial progress and relations. Despite his active role in the Garvey movement, which many see as a separatist movement, Furrowh emphatically denies that he is a separatist.

"I don't believe in separation," he said, "because I've been a victim of that. I want what every human being wants, and we blacks have got to fight to get it. But not among ourselves. We've got to stop fighting among ourselves. And we've got to support the black movement, financially and in other ways."

Furrowh has seen and learned a lot in his 78 years; enough to have acquired the wisdom to make one last observation:

"Nothing is permanent except change."

Together, May 1974, pp. 4-5.



August Quarterly, 1954

Bill Frank Slide Courtesy of Historical Society of Delaware

BLACK WOMEN IN DELAWARE'S HISTORY

Carol Hoffecker

University of Delaware

Annette Woolard

Historical Society of Delaware

In 1740, a ship bearing African people who had been sold into slavery docked at New Castle, Delaware. Among the frightened Africans who huddled together and were held in place by iron shackles was an 18 year old girl. Like the others on board, she knew no English, and we have no record of her African name. In America, she was called Betty. Betty was one of hundreds of Africans who were transported to America in the 1600s and 1700s to become slave laborers in the little colony then known as the "Three Lower Counties of Delaware."

Betty was probably sold to a farmer who set her to work with a hoe, a farm tool widely used in both America and West Africa. Betty and other African-born people plowed, weeded, and harvested crops for their masters. She may have lived in a small log cabin, in a barn, or in the attic or cellar of her master's house. Little by little, Betty learned English from hearing her master and his family talk and by listening to other African people who had lived in America for a longer time. Aside from the record of her sale, we know nothing about Betty's life in Delaware. She may have borne children whose descendants are living in the United States today.

The story of Betty demonstrates our difficulty in recapturing the lives of Delaware's first women of African heritage. The records of their hard-pressed

lives are scarce. We know of no African women in Delaware until the 1650s when the colony was ruled by the Dutch. We know that in 1664, just before the English captured the colony, the Dutch sent 38 African men and 34 African women to Delaware. This is an important piece of information because it shows that the Dutch were not just sending African men to the colony to do heavy work but were also sending women. The women could do both farm and household labor and become the mothers of the next generation of slaves.

During the years from 1700 until the outbreak of the American Revolution in 1775, many slave families were formed in Delaware, but the white people who ran the colony did not recognize legal marriages among their slaves. Slave couples were often owned by different masters and visited with one another infrequently. It was difficult to sustain family life under these conditions, yet many slaves managed to do so. Kinship was the primary tie that bound people together in African societies as well as in those of the whites. The law against black men having sex with white women was very severe, but no punishment for white men who forced black women to have sex with them existed. All children of female slaves were enslaved like their mothers, regardless of the race or status of their fathers.

Young black girls learned to work in the fields alongside other slaves. Often, they performed the dangerous job of cleaning dirt and weeds from the tip of the plow as it moved through the ground. Slave girls also learned household chores such as spinning flax into linen thread, weaving, making clothing, cooking, and caring for babies and sick people. The names of some of Delaware's slave women have come down to us through legal records such as wills or deeds of sale. In addition to Betty, other common slave names were English names such as Maria, Grace, and Rebecca as well as names that recall African languages such as Serena, Jints, Ummi, and Hara.

In 1776, Delaware declared its independence from England and adopted a new state constitution that banned the importation of more slaves into the state. A few years later, the Delaware legislature passed a law that banned the sale of Delaware slaves outside the state. These laws did nothing to end slavery, but they did halt its growth and stopped the importation of more Africans into Delaware. The ringing endorsement of liberty and equality in the Declaration of Independence, together with the religious beliefs of the Quakers and Methodists, led some masters to free their slaves. By the 1790s, Delaware had two classifications of people of African descent: slaves and

free blacks. Slaves continued to live at the whim of their masters. In 1781, a woman named Sabrina was publicly whipped to death by her master at Wilmington's Christiana Bridge. The master was charged with manslaughter but was acquitted. Incidents like this one met some thoughtful white people against slavery. Although manumissions continued, some whites stubbornly defended the "peculiar institution."

Among the growing number of free blacks, most women were employed as household servants or washer women and received low wages. Yet, despite these heavy burdens, a few free black women emerged from poverty to achieve education and success. Betty Jackson, a black woman from Chadds Ford, Pennsylvania, established a tea room on French Street in Wilmington, Delaware, where she sold cakes, fruit, and desserts to wealthy people for their parties. Her son, Jeremiah Shadd, was a butcher, well-known for his ability to cure meat. His wife, known as Aunt Sallie Shadd, achieved legendary status among Wilmington's free black population as the inventor of ice cream. The story was that the butcher Jeremiah purchased Sallie's freedom. Like other members of her family, she went into the catering business and created a new dessert sensation made from frozen cream, sugar, and fruit. Dolly Madison, the wife of President James Madison, heard about the new dessert, came to Wilmington to try it, and afterward made ice cream a feature of dinners at the White House.

Whether the Aunt Sallie Shadd story is true or only a pleasant legend, it is an indisputable fact that Mary An Shadd, a later descendant of the Shadd family, who was born in Wilmington in 1823, became an important teacher, newspaper publisher, and crusader for the abolition of slavery. She was probably the first black woman in America to publish her own newspaper. The daughter of Abraham Shadd, a free shoemaker and abolitionist leader, Mary An attended a school in Wilmington which had been founded in 1816 by the city's Quakers to educate free blacks. After completing her education at a boarding school in West Chester, Pennsylvania, she returned to Wilmington to teach in the Quaker school for blacks. She later taught black students at schools in Pennsylvania and New York state. She wrote a book entitled, *Hints To The Colored People of the North*, in which she urged black people to transcend the legal impediments and racial prejudice that held them in poverty through hard work and thrift. She also warned her readers against imitating white peoples' conspicuous consumption of luxury goods. In 1850, when the federal government adopted the infamous Fugitive Slave Law,

Mary Ann Shadd went to Canada where she established an abolitionist newspaper called the Provincial Freeman. After the Civil War, when she was 60 years old, she earned a law degree at Howard University in Washington, D.C., and set up a law practice to assist black people to receive their rights.

By 1840 only 13 percent of Delaware's black residents were held in slavery. Although the number of slaves continued to decline, some masters still tenaciously held to their legal right to own other human beings. Free blacks like Abraham and Mary Ann Shadd joined societies that urged the abolition of slavery and assisted runaway slaves to escape to the North. Delaware shares the Delmarva Peninsula with Virginia and Maryland, which were also slave states. Slaves escaping from the southern part of the Peninsula usually came north through Wilmington on their way to the free state of Pennsylvania. Among the escaping slaves who followed this route was the legendary Harriet Tubman.

Harriet Tubman was born into slavery on Maryland's Eastern Shore in about 1821. In 1849, she escaped from her master's farm and set out for freedom. Traveling at night and hiding by day, she followed the Choptank River to the Delaware border. In Delaware, she was assisted by fellow blacks and by Quakers in towns and farms along the way. Those who assisted escaping slaves came to be known as "conductors" on the "Underground Railroad" of safe trails that led to freedom. Harriet established an especially significant friendship with one of her conductors, Thomas Garrett, a Quaker iron merchant in Wilmington.

After she had reached free land in Pennsylvania, Harriet decided she should go back down through Delaware to Maryland to guide her family and other fellow slaves to freedom. Showing remarkable courage and religious faith, Harriet Tubman made 19 trips into slave territory and conducted over 100 people to free land. To avoid detection, she used a variety of routes, which took her through many Delaware communities including Camden, Dover, Blackbird, Middletown, New Castle, Laurel, Milford, Millsboro, Seaford, Smyrna, Delaware City, and Wilmington. Probably no one knew Delaware's geography better than Harriet Tubman! Her map was not on paper but in her' head. She was adept at disguise and despite the zealous efforts of law men and slave catchers, neither she nor any of the people she led were ever captured. Harriet Tubman became the most famous and admired figure on the Underground Railroad throughout the nation. She was known as the Moses of her people.



Harriett Ross Tubman

Art excerpt from "From Slavery to Calvary " by Roy H. Hickman,
Delaware Prison Arts Program

In 1861, many of the slave states seceded from the United States. They feared that slavery might be made illegal and formed the Confederate States of America. Delaware and Maryland, although they permitted slavery, remained loyal to the United States, and many black men from Delaware fought in the Civil War which followed. Within months of the 1865 Union victory in the Civil War, the 13th Amendment of the U.S. Constitution ended slavery throughout the remaining slave states, including Delaware. Attention now focused on providing education and job opportunities for black people. A group of black and white people in Wilmington founded the Association for the Moral Improvement and Education of the Colored People in 1866. The Association opened schools throughout the state where black children and adults could learn to read and write. In Dover, an organization of black residents built a school on their own. Many of the teachers in these schools were young black women who had been trained at schools in Philadelphia or Baltimore.

Some white people, especially in rural areas, opposed the education of blacks because they feared the loss of cheap labor and did not wish to accord blacks the respect that education confers. Black teachers were targets of this resentment. It took a great deal of courage for a black woman to become the sole teacher of blacks in a rural community. Black teachers were constantly threatened with violence. A teacher named Sarah Owens was assaulted in Georgetown by ruffians who threw rocks at the windows of the house where she was living. A school in Slaughter Neck was burned and one teacher became insane and had to return to the North. But, the overwhelming desire of

Delaware's black population to learn kept most teachers at their tasks. The Association provided the first chance for education that Delaware's black population had outside of Wilmington. In 1875, 10 years after the Civil War ended, the Delaware Legislature finally agreed to establish state-funded schools for its black citizens, financed by a special school tax that only blacks would pay. Since most black families were very poor, their schools and teachers' salaries were inadequate, but heroic black women continued the work of teaching their fellow blacks, who had so long been denied education.

The two most important institutions in the lives of Delaware's black people during the late 19th century and early 20th century were their churches and schools. Women played important roles in both but, whereas men were usually the leaders in church affairs, women often occupied leadership roles in the schools. The most significant female black leader in Delaware in those years was Edwina Kruse, the principal of Howard High School in Wilmington.

Born in the West Indies, Edwina Kruse came to Delaware in 1870 as one of the young teachers employed by the Delaware Association for the Moral Improvement and Education of the Colored People. In 1876, she was named principal of Howard School in Wilmington, the Association's largest school. The school was named for General O. O. Howard who headed the federal government's Freedmen's Bureau, which funded the building. In 1891 Howard became the first black high school in the state.

Poorly financed and segregated though they were, Delaware's black schools provided unusual opportunities for black educators. Further South, black education hardly existed, while north of Delaware, where blacks and whites attended integrated schools, black teachers were seldom hired. Edwina Kruse took advantage of Delaware's unique situation to build an excellent teaching staff at Howard. Alice Baldwin came from Cambridge, Massachusetts, to head Howard's teacher education program. Alice Dunbar-Nelson of New Orleans, Louisiana, the widow of famed poet Paul Laurence Dunbar, and a published author in her own right, held a graduate degree from Columbia University. She was head of the school's English Department.

Alice Dunbar-Nelson's niece, Pauline A. Young, who attended Howard and later served as the school's librarian, described Edwina Kruse as an "efficient, severe, responsible and ever conscientious teacher and citizen of Wilmington." Miss Kruse was a leader among Wilmington's small but proud and energetic black middle class. She helped organize the Delaware State

Federation of Negro Women's Clubs. The clubs worked to secure more opportunities for black women and girls.

One of their goals was accomplished in 1920 when the Negro Women's Clubs founded the Industrial School for Girls to help young women who had gotten in trouble with the law to learn honest occupations. The Industrial School was one of the first black-controlled corporations in Delaware. Alice Dunbar-Nelson left her teaching post at Howard High School to head the new school. A few years later, the Industrial School was renamed the Kruse Industrial School, in honor of the role Edwina Kruse played in founding it.

Howard teachers were also leaders in many other social and political causes. Emma Belle Gibson Sykes was born in Christiana, Delaware, in 1885 but later moved to Wilmington and married dentist George Sykes. Mrs. Sykes was very active in local politics as a campaign volunteer for the Republican party. Over the years, she held several paid political jobs in Wilmington and New Castle County, including Register of Wills. Mrs. Sykes also worked in the Women's Suffrage Movement. Until 1920, American women could not vote in elections and "suffragists" campaigned for many years to win that right of citizenship. Along with many other women, Emma Belle Gibson Sykes marched in "suffrage" parades and worked to convince male legislators to grant women the basic right to vote and to have a voice in their government.

Blanche Stubbs, the wife of Wilmington doctor J. Bacon Stubbs, was another teacher who worked for Women's Suffrage. Mrs. Stubbs served as the head of the Equal Suffrage Study Club, a group of African American women who favored women's right to vote. In 1914, Stubbs marched in Delaware's first "suffrage" parade in Wilmington and was mentioned by a local newspaper as a leader in the movement.

Stubbs was involved in the Thomas Garrett Settlement House as well. The Garrett House, named after Harriet Tubman's friend and fellow conductor on the Underground Railroad, was founded in 1911 by the City Federation of Colored Women. Blanche Stubbs served as president of the Federation and Director of the Settlement for many years. The Garrett Settlement House offered classes to black adults and children and included a kindergarten, as well as recreational activities.

Black women played a lead role in founding and running Delaware's first branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People—the NAACP—in Wilmington in 1912. Edwina Kruse and Alice Baldwin were

among the founders. Elizabeth Williams America, a hairdresser, served as the branch's first president. Alice Dunbar-Nelson served as the group's secretary for many years. She was succeeded by Alice Baldwin who took on that task for at least a decade. In its first 20 years, the NAACP took on many causes, winning some and losing others. One focus of the group was the bias in Delaware courtrooms against African Americans. There were no black lawyers, judges, or jury members and, more often than not, African Americans involved in criminal cases and civil suits lost in court. The NAACP set out to make judges and state officials aware of the inequality. In at least two cases involving black women who had complaints against their white, male employers, one in Kent County and one in New Castle County, the Wilmington branch of the NAACP succeeded in forcing the courts to hear the women's complaints. Alice Baldwin later reported to the NAACP national office in New York City that both women lost their legal suits, but the NAACP felt they had achieved a small victory by at least forcing the two employers to go to court.

The Wilmington NAACP was particularly worried about the legal rights of African American women who worked. Black women, more often than white women, needed to work to earn a living. Employers usually hired black men only for the lowest paying jobs in business, industry, and in private homes. So, black women worked to help support, feed, and clothe their families. Yet, like black men, black women were usually hired only for low- paying jobs.

The census of 1900, for example, revealed that, of the roughly 2,000 black women in Wilmington who were employed, more than three of every four were household servants. The next largest employment group were laundresses. Only a small number held higher paying industrial or teaching jobs. While it is also true that the majority of white women who worked outside their own homes were employed in unskilled, low-wage jobs, a somewhat higher proportion of their number held skilled jobs in industry or taught school.

The situation had not changed very much 50 years later. A report made in 1950 by two professors at Delaware State College showed that over half of working black women still worked as household servants. Other jobs that had opened to women over the years such as secretaries, store clerks, government workers, skilled industry workers, and even office and business managers, were not often available to African Americans. Most black women who needed to work still found jobs as household workers. Women who were

lucky enough to go to college or to receive professional training had only two likely career choices-teaching or nursing. Only a handful of black women in Delaware could find employment in these fields.

Nursing could be a particularly frustrating line of work for black women. Like doctors, nurses wanted to help people feel better and stay healthy, but black nurses faced many obstacles in caring for their patients. In Delaware, hospitals discriminated against African Americans by separating black and white patients; in addition, black patients often received care only after all white patients had been treated. Until the 1940s, no hospitals in Delaware would hire black doctors or nurses. Even once the ban was lifted, white patients would refuse to be treated by a black professional. So, African Americans most often worked in private practice or with government health clinics, frequently going to the homes of their patients. Many of the patients were poor and suffered health problems due to poor diets, stress, exhaustion, and untreated diseases. Many could not afford to see a doctor or a nurse unless they were very sick. Also, there just were not enough doctors and nurses willing to treat poor and black patients. Another Delaware State College report in 1956 pointed out there was only one black doctor, one dentist, and a handful of nurses below the Chesapeake and Delaware Canal. In New Castle County, there were several black doctors and nurses, but most practiced in the city of Wilmington. They worked longer hours for less pay than most white doctors and nurses.

Jane Mitchell, a registered nurse and a native of Claymont, reamed to Delaware with her husband in 1945 after World War II had ended. She had earned her nursing degree at Provident Hospital in Baltimore, a well-known teaching hospital for African Americans. Mitchell had trained in a hospital and wanted to be a hospital nurse but, because of her color, she could not get a job in her home state. For a few years, Mitchell worked in a Philadelphia hospital, but in 1949 she became the first African American nurse to break the color barrier in Delaware when she was hired at the new Governor Bacon Health Clinic in Delaware City.

Some white nurses protested Mitchell's hiring, and her years at Governor Bacon were not easy ones. White patients sometimes shrank from her caring touch, and her colleagues did not include her in their social life. Still, black patients at the hospital were grateful to have a sympathetic nurse, and other black nurses across Delaware cheered her on. Most importantly, she loved the work. After several years, Mitchell left Governor Bacon to work as a nurse at

Delaware State Hospital outside of Wilmington, and she eventually became Director of Nursing there. In her position, she was able to and promote the nurses she supervised without regard to race and color but on the basis of and dedication. It pleased her to encourage deserving black nurses and to make sure they received the consideration she had not received in her younger years.

If there were color barriers in health care when Jane Mitchell started her career in 1945, there were also color barriers in education. Delaware ran a segregated public school system, which meant that the state required by law that black and white children go to separate schools. The law also required that these schools be "separate but equal," but, in fact, black schools throughout Delaware received fewer state funds and less official attention than white schools did. These schools were usually older and less well equipped than white schools. Indeed, black schools often received secondhand books, desks, and chairs whenever white schools got new ones. African Americans knew this was not fair, but they worked to make the black schools as good as they could be. Howard High School, following the path set by Edwina Kruse, was still one of the best schools in the region; but, except for Howard, Brown Vocational High School in Wilmington, a private high school run from the Delaware State College Campus in Dover, and in the 1950s a new school in Georgetown, there were no other high schools anywhere in Delaware for African Americans. The state also failed to provide school bus service for black students or schools, although white children could ride buses if they needed transportation. This practice made it hard for African Americans in Delaware to get a high school education outside Wilmington or Dover. Young African Americans from all over the state sometimes traveled to one city or the other and lived with relatives or friends in order to go to school. Many thought the laws would never change, but in 1954, they did.

In that year, the Supreme Court of the United States agreed to rule upon a group of lawsuits brought by the National Office of the N.AACP in four different states and the District of Columbia. In each case, lawyers from the NACP argued that separate white and black schools should be ended, or desegregated, because the segregated black schools were never equal to the white schools. Two of the desegregation cases heard by the U.S. Supreme Court were from Delaware.

The lawyer for the NACP cases in Delaware was an African American

man named Louis L. Redding, the first black lawyer in Delaware. His clients, the first citizens who sued to desegregate the schools, were two black school girls and their mothers. Shirley Bulah was an elementary school student in Hockessin. She and her mother Sarah went to Louis Redding and asked him to force the state to let Shirley ride on a school bus that passed the Bulah's home each day. But the Bulahs quickly agreed with Redding that it would be better to end the unequal system of separate schools. Soon after, Ethel Louise Belton, a high school student from Claymont, and her mother Ethel, also sought out Redding, to come forward to sue to end legal segregation. Louis Redding and his clients won their cases in the Delaware courts and, in 1954, the United States Supreme Court also ruled in favor of desegregation, thus ending "separate but equal" education all across America.

In Delaware, Louis Redding's two sisters, both of whom were school teachers, became two of the first black teachers to teach white students. Lillian Redding Bailey worked with black and white special-needs children at the Mary C. I. School in Wilmington. Gwendolyn Redding left her long-time teaching job at Howard High School to teach at P.S. duPont High School, one of the biggest and best-equipped public schools in Delaware. These women were good teachers, and they helped prove, along with many others, that African Americans could teach white children well, just as white teachers could teach black children.

The school desegregation case was a big victory in the effort by African Americans to win the same civil rights that white Americans enjoyed. There was still much work to be done, however. In Delaware, as in other states, the laws still allowed business owners to refuse to serve black customers, and many employers still hired African Americans only for low-paid jobs or not at all. Part of the fight for civil rights would go on in the courts but, while working for that, the NAACP and other groups also decided to try to change peoples' minds one step at a time by showing them how discrimination hurt people and business. Al across America, African Americans organized to protest unequal treatment.

In Delaware, the Wilmington Branch of the NAACP often led this effort, but there were also strong NAACP branches in Milford and Dover, and a growing unit in Sussex County. During much of this work, a woman, Pauline Young, was the state president of NAACP branches in Delaware. She was a popular and beloved leader who had given much of her life to the study of African American history. Miss Young had started the library at Howard

High School in the 1930s and served as the school's first librarian. In 1947, she wrote the first study of black history in Delaware, "The Negro in Delaware, Past and Present," which was published in the book *Delaware: A History of the First State* by Henry Clay Reed. Pauline Young had grown up with the Wilmington NAACP. Young's aunt, Alice Dunbar-Nelson, had been a founder of the Wilmington branch and one of its first secretaries. Pauline Young had taken the job of secretary in 1930 and had continued to serve the branch for many years.

Even into her 80s, Pauline Young remained an active member of the NAACP and was a leader in preserving black history. Her collection of newspaper articles and other histories can now be found in the Pauline A. Young Memorabilia Room at the Howard Career Center in Wilmington.

Pauline Young was not the only woman involved in the NAACP's civil rights work in the 1950s and 1960s. African Americans fought for equal rights through sit-ins at restaurants that did not serve them, formed picket lines at stores or businesses that would not hire or sell to them, and marched along public streets to show strength, solidarity, and determination to finally be heard, noticed, and treated with respect. Black women in Delaware participated in the protests, taking the same risks that men did, and developing strategies to make people listen to their cause. In fact, Littleton Mitchell, Pauline Young's successor as president of the Delaware State Conference of the NAACP, has frequently acknowledged the crucial role played by Delaware women in the civil rights movement. He has credited a few of his female colleagues in particular. Dorothy Oliver of Ellendale, a day care provider by profession, served as treasurer of the NAACP and made sure the funds were there when needed. Dr. Mary C. Baker of Dover, as chairman of the education committee, represented the NAACP and the interests of minority students at State Board of Education meetings. Mitchell also credited Ruth Kolber, a white woman, of Wilmington as "A main ingredient in the NAACP."

In Delaware, black women have always been leaders in the fight for equal rights for African Americans and in the struggle to provide health care, opportunity, and education to African American children and adults. As a result of their hard work, more opportunities became available in the 1950s, 60s, and 70s, and black women have also taken advantage of these new opportunities in education, politics, business, law, and in every other profession.

In 1952, Golden Wilson of Wilmington began a pathbreaking career in law enforcement. She started as a school crossing guard, but Wilson wanted to be a police officer even though Wilmington had never had a female police officer. Golden Wilson worked her way up to meter maid and eventually to the police academy. She became Wilmington's first female police officer and retired in 1977 as a sergeant.

Dr. Ruth Laws was born in North Carolina and came to Delaware after she had earned a doctorate degree in education from New York University in 1936. She made a big difference in public education in her new home state. Dr. Laws taught in Wilmington for many years. She became state supervisor of Home Economics in 1966 and later State Director of Adult and Continuing Education. She also helped develop the Head Start Program in Delaware. Eventually, Dr. Laws became a Vice President at Delaware Technical and Community College. She has received many awards for her work and serves as a role model for other women in the education field.

Another role model is Dr. Hilda A. Davis. Dr. Davis also came to Delaware as an adult, after receiving her Ph.D. in English at the University of Chicago. In 1965, Dr. Davis became the first African American to earn a full-time teaching job at the University of Delaware in Newark. During her years at the University of Delaware, she helped found the University Writing Center and participated in other educational and political causes.

Many women have served the state by their official and unofficial social work with the poor, with young people, and with the elderly. Annie Brown King came to Wilmington after World War II and worked at St. Matthew's Episcopal Church to help young people find jobs and recreational outlets. In the 1970s, Delawarean Lula Mae Nix received national attention for her work counseling troubled young women. She became the first director of the Office of Adolescent Pregnancy Programs in the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare in Washington, D.C. Reverend Dr. Jymmie McClinton, of the Star of Bethlehem A.U.M.P. congregation in Belvedere, founded an inmates Friends Group to deliver food and counseling to Delaware prisoners. Arva Johnson, a Wilmington native, became one of the first African American administrators in Delaware's state government, working in Urban Affairs under Governor Russell Peterson. Johnson, who graduated from Boston University and earned a master's degree from Howard University, also became the first African American to serve on the Board of Trustees at the University of Delaware. African American women have

blazed a trail in politics and the law as well. Beatrice Patton Carroll, a graduate of Wilmington's Howard High School and Howard University, became interested in politics in 1960 when John F. Kennedy ran for president. Besides work in social and civic groups, she has been a frequent political campaign volunteer during the 1970s and 80s and the only female to run for Mayor of Wilmington. Reverend Grace Batten of the Mount Zion Holy Episcopal Church in Milton became interested in politics as well. She was elected to the Milton Town Council in 1982. In 1994, she became Delaware's first female black mayor. Paulette Sullivan Moore became Delaware's first black female lawyer in 1977. Judge Haile L. Alford became the first black female judge in 1992.

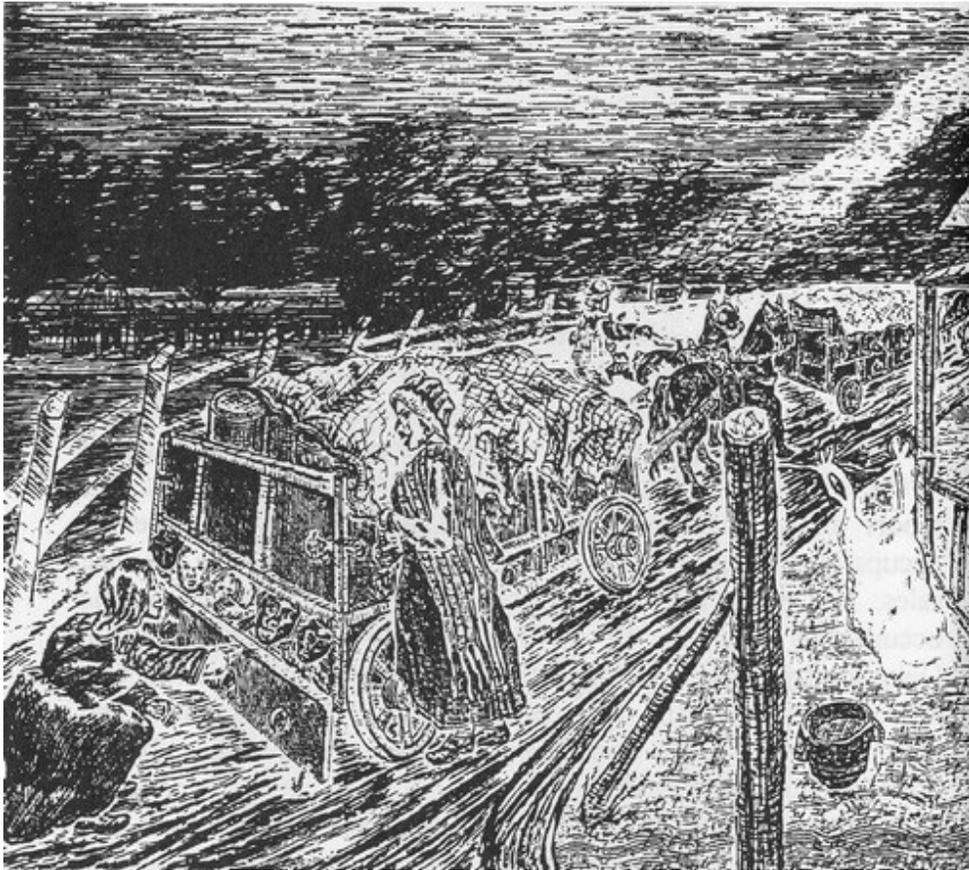


Unidentified Sorority Women c. 1950
Courtesy of Historical Society of Delaware

The Delaware State Report of 1956 showed few career opportunities outside of domestic service, teaching, and some unskilled labor jobs for African Americans, particularly for black women. By contrast, the United States Census Report for Delaware for 1990 shows only two percent of working black women engaged in the lowest-paid household service work. At the same time, the report shows African American women represented in every occupational category—from executive, managerial, office, clerical, sales, and manufacturing. To be sure, there are still specific occupations for which there were no black women listed in Delaware by 1990, including architect, firefighter, and veterinarian. Moreover, traditionally male fields remain dominated by men, and the numbers suggest that black women have greater difficulty breaking into these fields than do white women. Still, the progress made since 1956 is undeniable and encouraging. After over 250 years of history in Delaware, African American women should expect the

chance to use their skills, to express their interests, and to shape their communities in visible ways.

In large measure, the progress has come about because black women have worked to create their own opportunities. It is not possible to note all achievements of women in Delaware who have worked to bring about a truly democratic America. Many of the women noted in this essay, however, have broken race and gender barriers once thought immovable. In doing so, they have created a better chance for the women who will follow them. It will be up to today's students to create even more opportunity for the children of tomorrow.



Slaves escaping in a wagon.

Art excerpt from "From Slavery to Calvary" by Roy Hickman, Delaware
Prison Arts Program

ABOLITIONISTS, FREE BLACKS, AND RUNAWAY SLAVES: SURVIVING SLAVERY ON MARYLAND'S EASTERN SHORE

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"The peculiar institution" known as slavery varied according to time and place, and its intensity was dependent upon regionalism, political, and religious factors. Social factors such as the temperament of overseers, slaves, and owners-those "gentlemen of property and standing" -were also important. Slavery was not consistent nationally, regionally, or even on a statewide

basis. Maryland, a border state, known as "the middle temperament" and "the middle ground," was no exception. The Eastern Shore in the 1840s and 1850s, just prior to the Civil War, is the classic example of inconsistencies in policies regarding slaves and the institution of slavery.

Maryland's Eastern Shore has been at odds with the remainder of the state since its inception. Historically, there have been numerous proposals for it to secede. But, it was not until the 1850s that it became apparent that "there were, in effect, two Marylands: one founded upon slavery and the other upon free labor."³ Most of the counties on the Eastern Shore occupied an intermediate position, of slave and free, much like that of Maryland within the Union. The Eastern Shore was "neither as slave and black as southern Maryland nor as free and white as northern Maryland." Just over 20 percent of its people were slaves and just under 40 percent were black.⁴

In this paper, I examine representatives from three groups of people who lived on the Eastern Shore and fought against slavery: Quakers or members of the Society of Friends, a religious group, free blacks and fugitive slaves. Each in different ways struggled to dismantle the peculiar institution in an area where there were as many anti-slavery residents as there were pro-slavery supporters.

The influence of Quakers was quite evident in the area. Visibly active in the anti-slavery movement, they abhorred the institution, openly professed their belief in its abolition, and actively worked to achieve that end despite danger to themselves and their families. Evidence indicates that some Quakers were active in the Underground Railroad movement.⁵

There are, for example, hundreds of substantiated instances in which Quakers assisted in slave escapes. One particular instance involved Arthur Leverton, the son of the late Jacob Leverton, and a suspected abolitionist from Dorchester County, who had attempted to help a husband, wife, and their four children escape. The fugitives were betrayed, the children returned to the owner, and the parents sold. Leverton, who had been implicated in the escape attempts was given "a warning to leave the state, or lynching would be his portion." He took the hint and, when the mob assembled, he was out of their reach. His property was sold, and his wife and 8 or 10 children made to follow him.⁶

The presence of a large anti-slavery constituency should have hastened the institution's demise, but the influence of Quakers rapidly waned from 1840 to the 1860s. This loss of influence was due to: (1) the emigration of members

to the city and the west; (2) prohibition of slave owning by members; (3) the rigid code of behavior demanded of Friends; and (4) the widespread appeal of Methodism to the people of the Eastern Shore. On the surface, these factors appear isolated, but the reality is that they are interrelated.

When Maryland Quakers emigrated to the city or moved west, they abandoned many of their former beliefs and ideas, the prohibition against slaveholding and their abhorrence of the institution. Records also show that even some people who were brought up within the Society of Friends slipped into the practice of holding slaves in bondage. A disproportionate number, it is revealed, had their membership taken away for slaveholding. For others, the existence of slavery around them was the impetus to move out of their communities and into non-slaveholding areas like Ohio, Indiana, and further westward. Unrelated to the slavery question, others were disowned for various practices, such as for marrying non-Quakers, for swearing, disorderly company, gambling, neglect of meeting, drinking, and for selling whiskey. These membership losses further lessened the group's influence. Finally, many other Friends voluntarily asked to have their membership dropped as they accepted "Methodism when it swept through the Delmarva Peninsula." ⁷

Free Blacks

There was a sizeable free black population which resided on the Eastern Shore, a population that included both ex-slaves and free born. Their situation was precarious by the presence of slave catchers like Patty Cannon. Free blacks lived with constant fear of being re-enslaved. The horrors of separation were always present because as many as 80 (slave) traders, full or part-time, operated on the Eastern Shore during the last years of the (slave) market. Local "newspaper editors (even) assured their readers editorially that no stigma would be attached to out-of-state sales." ⁸ Free blacks also lived in fear of being suspected of having rendered assistance to fugitives.

The classic example of this kind of treatment is that of Daniel Hubbard, who was a victim of mob violence following the Leverton incident. A free black, Hubbard was described as

... an industrious and peaceable resident of (Dorchester) the county, who for thirty-two years, has paid annually for his wife, and also for his children as they grew old enough to work, they being slaves for life. He (Hubbard) received a message that they (the members of the city and also the mob) had

authority from the Governor, to do what they

pleased with any concerned in the escape or harboring of runaways, and there was a party of fifty, which could be increased to five hundred, who were ready to carry him to Cambridge, and hang him merely on suspicion. 1

Daniel Hubbard was forced to escape to Philadelphia to save his life, but he always stated he knew nothing of the fugitives,

. . . and never desired to, as it has been his aim, through life, to avoid interfering in such cases, which may be inferred from his never having tried to effect the escape of any of his own family . . . He was nicely fixed on a farm in Dorchester County and had a family, besides being a carpenter and millwright.

He valued his property at about \$1,300, but it would all be insufficient to pay for his poor wife, three grown children, and one grandson, seven years of age; if their owner will be willing to sell them. . . .⁹



Patty Cannon

Courtesy of Historical Society of Delaware

This was a clear instance of a man trying to keep his family intact who was forced to flee the county to save himself. There may have been other forces operating in his case that encouraged the mob to attack him, despite the fact he had been a peaceful resident of Dorchester County all his life. Some of those factors may have included the jealousy and envy of a successful black man operating profitable businesses in the county, or the desire to take his valuable land or assume control of the businesses.

The trial and imprisonment of the Reverend Samuel Green is another example of injustice suffered by free blacks. The circumstances surrounding Green's life give indication of the manner in which Maryland slaveholders dealt with anyone who threatened the future of slavery.

Samuel Green lived in Dorchester County, and was enslaved for 30 years. A religious man, he was manumitted five years after his master's death in 1831. Similar to Frederick Douglass, Green, while enslaved, learned to read and write. A blacksmith by trade and also a Methodist preacher, Green purchased his wife Kitty and freed her immediately. Even though he could not free his children, "He passed on to them his love of freedom." ¹⁰ Reverend Green's son, Samuel Jr., also a blacksmith, was influenced by Harriet Tubman to escape to Canada in 1854. Married and the mother of two children, Reverend Green's daughter was sold to a slaveholder in Missouri and was never heard of again.

Reverend Green visited his son in Canada in 1856 and was suspected of having helped his son and other slaves to escape. Upon his return in April 1857, Reverend Green "was arrested and taken from his home." He was charged with

. . . possessing a volume of Uncle Tom's Cabin, a map of Canada, several schedules of routes to the North, a railroad schedule, and a letter from his son in Canada, detailing the pleasant trip he had, the number of friends he met with on the way, . . . and concludes with a request to his father, that he shall tell certain other slaves, naming them, to come on, which slaves, it is well known, did leave shortly afterwards, and have reached Canada.¹¹

The mere possession of these items put him in violation of the Act of 1841, Chapter 272 of the laws of Maryland, which stated that

... if any free Negroes or mulatto knowingly have in his or her possession

any abolition handbill, pamphlet, newspaper, pictorial representation or other paper of an inflammatory character, having a tendency to create discontent amongst or stir up to insurrection the people of color in this state, he or she shall be deemed guilty of felony, and upon conviction shall be sentenced to undergo a confinement in the Penitentiary of this State for a period of not less than ten nor more than twenty years. ¹²

After two weeks, Reverend Green was found guilty of the charges against him and was confined to 10 years in the Maryland State Penitentiary (located in Baltimore). Due to the character of Reverend Green, some whites wrote to the Governor of Maryland requesting a pardon. However, many slaveholders residing in Green's community wrote to the Governor stating that slaves were leaving in numbers prior to Green's arrest, and that blacks were scarce. Before that letter was delivered, a large number of slaves escaped from Cambridge.¹³ Apparently, fear of reprisals against them did not deter many slaves from escaping.

Local slaveholders suspected Samuel Green, even while imprisoned, to have taken part in the escapes, especially because they believed all fugitives had passed immediately by Green's home, which stood near the road leading from Cambridge to Delaware. Planters of Dorchester County, fearful of this intelligent, articulate, and free black, sought his removal from the community. The slaveholders needed a scapegoat because they viewed themselves as benevolent owners whose slaves would be foolish to flee. They could not accept the idea that slaves disliked their situations and sought freedom without some push from an outside agency. In the final analysis, they had no case against Green. In effect, "They imprisoned a man for a decade for having in his possession a book that most people in the nation had read with sympathy-something no one (really) considered an offense."

Having served five years of his sentence, Green was "released from prison in April 1862, and was pardoned on condition that he leave the State within sixty days." ¹⁴

Fugitives

If the plight of free blacks was tenuous, the fate of slaves was unimaginable. The presence of Quakers and abolitionists led to the perception that slavery was very mild in Maryland. As Frederick Douglass stated in his autobiography, *My Bondage and My*

Freedom, "It is generally supposed that slavery, in the State of Maryland, exists in its mildest form, and that it is totally divested of those harsh and terrible peculiarities, which mark and characterize the slave system, in the southern and south-western states." ¹⁵ Yet Douglass points out, even here there are certain secluded and out- of-the-way places . . . seldom visited by a single ray of healthy public sentiment,-where slavery, wrapt in its own congenial, midnight darkness, can, and does develop all its malign and shocking characteristics, where it can be indecent without shame, cruel without shuddering, and murderous without apprehension or fear of exposure. ¹⁶

We are left to ask if slavery was mild in Maryland-especially on the Eastern Shore-why was this area the location of some of the most famous slave escapes and rescues? In this section, I will explore the lives of three who stole their way to freedom. Two of the most famous who stole themselves were Harriet Ross Tubman and Frederick Douglass, from Dorchester and Talbot Counties, respectively. Harriet Ross Tubman was born in 1821 in the area of Bucktown and at an early age experienced the forced separation of family members and the brutality of slavery. She was not a particularly capable house slave and, as a child, she was injured while trying to prevent the capture of another slave, which caused her to suffer from narcolepsy for the remainder of her life.¹⁷

At the age of 28, Tubman learned that she and other members of her family were to be sold and transported to the Deep South. At this time, Harriet had been married for five years to John Tubman, who was a "free black." Harriet had a tender heart and loved John Tubman, but the thought of being sold led her to thoughts of escape.

She was not the typical slave, as she had been fortunate enough to have known both her parents, Ben Ross and Henrietta Green, ¹⁸ and to have been in their presence throughout most of her life. It was that time with her parents that gave her knowledge of the swamps and the wisdom of various treatments and cures for certain diseases. Therefore, when she heard of her impending



sale to the Deep South, she decided to leave.

Harriett Ross Tubman
J.B. Leib Photo Company

She wanted her brothers to accompany her, but they were so frightened of the consequences of being caught they turned back. Harriet returned with them. However, the return was only temporary until another opportunity to escape presented itself. In attempting to escape, she was fully aware of the possibility of not seeing her parents, siblings, friends, and even her husband.¹⁹

Tubman had worked in the fields and even in the lumber mill with her father. Though she was small in stature, she was stronger than any man.²⁰ Upon escaping, she utilized the knowledge and skills she had acquired while working outside in the lumber mill, planting and plowing the fields, working in the woods, swamps and marshlands, and in the trapping of small animals for food and sustenance. She also had the benefit of the medicinal cures that had become second nature to her.²¹

Even though she had been successful in escaping to the North, she was still not completely free as long as her relatives were still in bondage. She was also insecure because of the passage of the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850²² which gave all fugitives and free blacks a great degree of apprehension. With this new law, slave catchers operated openly, not just in the South, but in the North where fugitive slaves, and free blacks, considered to be suspect or who fit a certain description, were retrieved. The Fugitive Slave Law strengthened a previous law by adding provisions that placed cases under Federal supervision, gave \$10 for each arrest that sent a slave back to his or her owner and imposed fines on those who aided fugitives.

Even more importantly under this law, "Blacks were no longer safe anywhere in the United States, not even in the North, because they could be arrested as suspected runaways by the accusation of any white person." Therefore, the recapture of fugitives and the selling of family members in the South were important concerns for Harriet. She was also concerned because a Maryland state wide convention in the mid-summer of 1850 called for, among other things, the re-enslavement of free Negroes?²¹ These practices were a clear indication that slavery was not declining in the area.

Repeatedly risking capture, Tubman returned to the South to liberate over 300 slaves. She worked to relieve the suffering of others and spoke out

against injustices. After 1857, she began addressing anti-slavery conventions and developed her association with John Brown. She was privy to Brown's plans for Harpers Ferry, as Brown hoped Harriet would be chief guide to the North for the slaves he freed.²² A bright spot for her, in June of 1857, was that she was finally able to free her parents.

Tubman risked her life to carry out her goals, determined to help others to "Live free or die." Throughout the course of the Civil War, she served as a Union spy, nurse, cook, and the liberator of over 756 slaves on a military campaign in Cumbohee, South Carolina, without losing a person?⁵ Even after the conclusion of the war, she continued her crusade to improve the lives of others and to fight against injustice. She understood that the real battle for freedom had not yet been won.

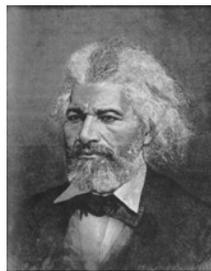
A second Eastern Shore slave of significance was Frederick Augustus Bailey Douglass. Born in Tuckahoe, Maryland, in Dorchester County, he experienced forced separation from family members and the horrors of slavery at an early age. One of his first memories and the horrors of slavery at an early age. One of his first recollections was witnessing "Old Master" whipping Aunt Hester. Despite these cruelties, Frederick Douglass was, "not mistreated by Aaron Anthony," his first master. But, he experienced the harshness of slavery from the hands of overseers and others who worked for Anthony and Frederick's other masters, or slave breakers, such as Edward Covey.

The Lloyd Plantation, the "home plantation" of Colonel Edward Lloyd, on the Eastern Shore was one of those "secluded, dark, out-of-the-way places" Douglass mentioned in his autobiography. It was the site where Douglass witnessed, "The cruelty and barbarity of master, overseers, and slave drivers," despite the claims of slaveholders in the local newspaper that

. . . there was no portion of the entire South where slaves met with more humane treatment than upon the Eastern Shore of Maryland, and there existed between master and slave that feeling of mutual confidence which is always to be found in those communities where the evil influence of abolition or its emissaries does not make itself felt.²⁶

Unlike Harriet Tubman, Douglass was without the benefit of a family structure to encourage him and sustain his spirit. He experienced the hardships of being appraised upon the death of his master, in the same manner, but with lesser value and even lesser regard than the livestock and cattle. Douglass was, however, fortunate by having been selected to

accompany his second master's child to Baltimore as a playmate and servant. This move opened up an entirely different world to him. It was the first time Frederick slept in a bed and ate a proper supper at a table. Frederick also had the opportunity to achieve the unthinkable for a slave-to learn to read and write, which was prohibited by law. The mere rudiments were all that Douglass needed, and he took those opportunities to learn. He understood that knowledge was power, and he used that knowledge to help himself and others. Unlike Harriet Tubman, Douglass had the benefit of being literate, so he could much more easily survive in unfamiliar surroundings.



Frederick Douglass
Courtesy of United States Department of the Interior

Douglass was also fortunate to have the benefit of a trade, as a caulker, giving him a source of income in Baltimore. As a caulker, he could hire himself out, although the proceeds went to his owner. Therefore, it was not surprising that his owner, Thomas Auld, wished him to learn a trade and emphasized that if Frederick behaved himself, "He would be emancipated at the age of 25." Learning a trade provided an opportunity for him to meet free blacks and other slaves in similar circumstances, which convinced him he should free himself. It was that strong resolve that helped to sustain him, when he chose to escape from his owners. The desire for freedom was not new to Douglass. He was acutely aware of other slaves who had stolen themselves from the plantation-such as "His Aunt Jenny and Uncle Noah, his mother's sister and Aunt Katy's brother, who had run away and reached freedom in the North." 27

Once Douglass gained his freedom, he could not remain free and not think of the plight of others. Fortunately, his gift of oration was recognized, and he became a lecturer for an abolitionist society and worked diligently to make the world aware of the conditions of slavery. Many audiences did not believe

him, so he was forced to reveal his true identity and the location of his enslavement. This revelation was a potential danger to his continued freedom. Thomas Auld made no effort to recapture him, but the threat was always there. While touring Europe on the anti-slavery circuit in 1846, friends and admirers collected the sum of \$711.66, made the necessary arrangements, and Frederick Douglass officially became a free human being in the eyes of the law.²³

Upon his return to the United States, he again wrote about his life and the horrors of slavery. He became an advisor to Presidents; was a friend to Harriet Tubman, John Brown, and many prominent others; the major recruiter for the famed 54th Massachusetts; a newspaper publisher; the Register of Deeds for the District of Columbia; President of the Freedmen's Bank;⁹ and minister to Haiti. But, of all of his triumphs, the memories of his enslavement on the Eastern Shore made an indelible impression on his life. Douglass was so influenced by slavery that he spent the remainder of his life trying to eradicate it and any other form of injustice.

The third Eastern Shore slave was the Reverend Henry Highland Garnet, an American Presbyterian minister and abolitionist who proved to be much more radical than Tubman and Douglass. Garnet was "Born a slave at (East) New Market, Maryland (in Dorchester County) and escaped to the North in 1824." ³⁰ Very little is known about his early years, except that he was the grandson of a Mandingo chieftain. When he was 10, Garnet was reportedly taken to freedom by his father under the pretense of "driving his covered wagon to a funeral and succeeded in carrying his family and a few friends to Wilmington, Delaware, and freedom." ³ⁱ The family eventually settled in New York.

Garnet entered a New York African School-one of the first public schools for blacks in the United States. He received the early sting of racism at the age of 19 (when), he journeyed to Canaan, New Hampshire, to study at a summer session of the Canaan Academy. He had been invited by the principal to attend the school, but his studies were cut short by the violent reaction of the Canaan townspeople, who destroyed the school. Garnet was also educated at Oneida Institute where he established a reputation as a good debater and was known as an eloquent, but fiery orator. This transplant from the Eastern Shore became a school teacher who taught at the first public school for blacks in Troy, New York. He simultaneously served as "the minister of a white Presbyterian congregation in Troy." ²⁴²

As a minister of the gospel and as a private citizen, Garnet openly protested the institution of slavery and the injustices associated with it. In 1837, Garnet, other abolitionists, and a massive meeting of young Negro men met in New York and protested against a stipulation passed by a state constitutional convention decreeing that before a Negro could vote he had to own \$250.00 worth of landed property. In 1840, he "attended a statewide convention in Albany, where he served as one of the secretaries of the Convention (which) drew up an address to the colored people at the commonwealth calling upon them to press for the ballot.' By 1840, he had become a militant and wore a pistol. At the same time, he had become one of the foremost ministers in New York City. In 1840, at the age of 25, this young "fire brand," along with William G. Allen, edited the *National Watchman*, an abolitionist newspaper. He also gained prominence for a hard-hitting anti-slavery address delivered before the American Anti-Slavery Convention. 34

His speech attacked slavery to such an extent that he attracted the attention of all other abolitionist societies. He became one of the prominent Negroes in the movement and a speaker for several of the societies. By 1840, Garnet was one of eight Negro clergymen numbered among the founders of the American and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society. Occasionally, Garnet, Frederick Douglass, James W. C. Pennington, Martin R. Delaney, and other "black abolitionists, all fugitive slaves from Maryland, journeyed to England, Scotland, France and Germany . . . where they were instrumental in linking up the humanitarian movement in Europe with movements in America.'

Garnet also delved into politics, with the hope of improving the lot of the slave and free black, but by 1843 Garnet denounced anyone, black or white, who did not share his antislavery sentiments. In August 1843, "at a national convention for black men in Buffalo, Garnet delivered the most forthright call for a slave uprising ever heard in antebellum America." ²⁵ In his speech, "An Address to the Slaves of the United States," he stated

. . . that there was little hope of obtaining freedom without some shedding of blood. . . . Brethren, arise, arise. Strike for your lives and liberties. Now is the day and hour. Let every slave throughout the land do this and the days of slavery are numbers. Rather die free men than live to be slaves. Remember that you are four million. Let "our" motto be: Resistance! Resistance!
RESISTANCE! 37

After the passage of the Fugitive Slave Law of 1850, Garnet, and many other fugitive blacks and abolitionists, felt it was unsafe to remain in America so, in 1850, he, along with many of his compatriots in similar circumstances, returned to England.

In 1858, with the demise of the National Emigration Convention, Garnet became the founder and president of the African Colonization Society. In that year, he embraced emigration as a possible solution to the problem of race in America. His rationale was that he saw no future for blacks in the United States. He believed that he, "would rather see a man free in Liberia than a slave in the United States, . . . and favored colonization to any country that promised freedom and enfranchisement to the Negro." 38

Despite the ardent efforts of abolitionists (black and white), within and without the state, the increasing number of free blacks who worked to abolish the system, and the large number of slaves "who stole themselves," slavery in Maryland just prior to the Civil

War showed little or no signs of decline. Slaveholders and their supporters continued to exert a great deal of money and effort to punish those who interfered with their property, no matter how slight the purported infraction may have been. Even into the year 1865, many Eastern Shore slaveholders still retained their slaves and took extra precautions to prevent their escape. Maryland was not covered by the Emancipation Proclamation, since it was not a state in rebellion, and slaveholders were not required to free their slaves. It was not until passage of the 13th Amendment in 1865 that slavery would end. This substantiates the fact that slaveowners in Worcester, the easternmost county in the State, were still adamant about the retention of their slaves and the preservation of the institution. If the descriptions presented above are characteristics of slavery that is temperate, or mild, then just how cruel and inhumane was slavery in the other states?

DIAMONDS OF DELAWARE AND MARYLAND'S EASTERN SHORE: SEVEN BLACK MEN OF DISTINCTION

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In his classic book, *From Slavery to Freedom*, historian John Hope Franklin observed that near the end of the 18th century, it had become apparent to many blacks "that they would have to secure for themselves a measure of dignity and fulfillment in an atmosphere calculated to keep them in subservience. To many it appeared that, if they were to enjoy the fruits of the American dream, it would be through their own separate institutions. Thus, one result of this search for intellectual and spiritual independence was the creation or organization of separate, all-black avenues of self expression."

This observation by Franklin is clear evidence that the essential call for black leadership was underway. For many, it was a time to rid the nation of the evils of slavery and allow blacks to pursue their dreams.

Black Americans have consistently developed a cadre of homegrown leaders—men and women nurtured in local communities with a mission to assist their brothers and sisters to improve social, educational, and spiritual lives. For many, overcoming the obstacles of racism and discrimination was just part of the territory or, as some would say, merely "business as usual."

Several outstanding black men who served as leaders from the pulpit in Delaware were Richard Allen, Absalom Jones, and Peter Spencer. There were also exemplary leaders from business, politics, medicine, and education. This paper provides profiles of Delaware and Maryland's Eastern Shore Black Men of Distinction from the early 19th century to modern times. A brief description of each leader is presented: Absalom Jones (1746-1818), a Delaware native from Sussex County who distinguished himself as a religious, civic, and community leader; Reverend Peter Spencer (1782-1843), father of the Black Independent Church Movement in Delaware, Abraham D. Schadd (1801-1882), 19th National Negro Convention delegate, businessman, and abolitionist; William Julius "Judy" Johnson (1900-1989), Delaware's "Folk Hero of the Diamond"; Dr. Samuel G. Elbert (1865-1939), pioneer physician, civic, and community leader; Louis L. Redding (1911-1998), Delaware's first black lawyer and champion of civil rights; and

Herman Holloway, Sr. (1922-1994), Delaware's pioneer black political leader.

Absalom Jones (1746-1818) Religious, Civic, and Community Leader

Whenever the name of African Methodist Episcopal Bishop Richard Allen is mentioned, the name of Absalom Jones is likely to follow. A close friend and associate, Absalom Jones is also heralded as "one of America's most distinguished clergyman." Absalom Jones was born a slave in Sussex County, Delaware in 1746. Although born in Delaware, at age 15, Jones was sent by his master to work in a shop in Philadelphia. A diligent individual, Jones worked in the shop during the day and attended a Quaker school at night to gain a basic education. Young Jones eventually saved enough money to purchase his own freedom as well as his wife's.

Historian Carol V. R. George, in "Segregated Sabbaths," described Jones as ". . . essentially a quiet, peaceful man, a committed churchman whose intuitive skill in diplomacy prevented angry confrontations." Unlike Allen, whose aggression sometimes brought on conflict, Jones displayed "tact in social relations." The apparent differences in personality probably served Allen and Jones well in their pastoral, civic, and community partnerships.

In 1787, the year Delaware ratified the United States Constitution, Jones and Allen walked out of St. George's Methodist Episcopal Church when they were asked to interrupt their prayers and move to the rear of the gallery. Their refusal to accept second-class status in the church ultimately led to the founding of the Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church (AME) in 1794. Allen became the first bishop of the branch of Methodism. The development of Methodism amongst blacks in the Delaware and Pennsylvania region is sometimes referred to as "the cradle of black religious freedom," due to the efforts of Allen and Jones.



Absalom Jones
Photo courtesy of James E. Newton

The quiet leadership of Absalom Jones has gone unnoticed by many historians who often fail to mention his outstanding deeds. In 1794, Jones became the founder and pastor of St. Thomas Protestant Episcopal Church. In addition, Jones has the distinction of being the first black ordained minister in America (in the Protestant Episcopal Church).

One of his most significant achievements was the organization of the Free African Society, a society led by both Allen and Jones. According to Harry Richardson, in *Dark Salvation*: "In the terrible yellow fever epidemic of 1793 in Philadelphia, which killed hundreds, Jones and Allen worked together heroically to tend the sick, bury the dead, and render all possible service to the victims, most of whom were white. They were commended by the mayor of the city for their work."

Although Allen remained a Methodist and Jones became an Episcopal minister, they remained close friends throughout their lives. Their alliance as religious, civic, and community co-workers allowed them to work effectively for the advancement of African Americans. The Allen and Jones team is one of the most effective black leadership duos found in American history.

In 1818, at the age of 71, native Delawarean Absalom Jones passed on his baton of leadership. His legacy was that of an effective, quiet leader. He will be remembered as church founder, co-leader of the Free African Society, and committed to a better way of life for his fellow blacks as well as all Americans.

Peter Spencer (1782-1843) Church Founder, Businessman, and Educator

Peter Spencer is heralded as the father of Delaware's Independent Black Church Movement. Spencer's biographer, Lewis V. Baldwin, informs us that:

"The literature on Peter Spencer is amazingly scarce. Despite his tremendous importance as a church leader and founder, he has been almost totally ignored by sincere and proven scholars who have spent most, if not all, of their lifetime recounting the history of religion in America."

It is only in the past decade that Spencer is beginning to gain the attention of scholars. The accounts of much of his life are scant, but the evidence attests to his abilities as an organizer and leader. While Richard Allen's church was generally viewed as the founder of the first black Methodist denomination (incorporated in Philadelphia on April 9, 1816), the Spencer church—the African Union Methodist Protestant Church laid its claim years earlier on September 18, 1813. Thus, Spencer is one of the key figures in the history of African Methodism.

Born a slave in Kent County, Maryland in 1782, he was set free when his

master died. During the early 1800s, Spencer took up roots in Wilmington where he received a basic education and found some financial success as a mechanic.

Spencer had a high regard for marriage. His wife Anne, previously married, was from Lancaster, Pennsylvania. He raised two stepdaughters, provided well, and directed their educational pursuits. In the Spencer home, industry and thrift were key values.

A well-known figure in Wilmington's emerging black community, he was affectionately called "Father Spencer." Aside from being a devoted family man, he was also a "father figure and friend to numerous blacks in Wilmington."

Several personal qualities gave Spencer the requisites necessary for effective leadership: he was versatile, persuasive, a gifted teacher, and an efficient mechanic by trade. And, he had studied law and was able to assist his people in legal matters. His integrity and intellect also gave him credibility.

In the area of education, Reverend Spencer provided blacks in Wilmington with a valuable service. A strong believer that education was the responsibility of black leadership, Spencer provided "hands-on" training in teaching the illiterate to read and write. His role as an educator has often been ignored. For Reverend Spencer, education and religion were "twins" -with instruction the key to ethical principles. Spencer understood then that knowledge was power.



August Quarterly, 1964

Bill Frank Slides Courtesy of Historical Society of Delaware

Although Spencer distinguished himself as an astute businessman, educator, and mechanic, he is best known for his work as a church founder and organizer. In 1813, after rejecting white clerical domination and control, Father Spencer established, in Wilmington, the first independent black church

denomination- the Union Church of Africans-presently known as the African Union Methodist Protestant (AUMP).

Father Spencer inaugurated the tradition of establishing the last Sunday in August as a time for a general reunion and religious revival-popularly known as "August Quarterly" -the day of jubilation. It originated in 1814 and is Delaware's oldest folk festival. It is also one of 19th-century America's few black religious festivals. Black workers, slave and free, were given time off to attend the festivities. The occasion served as a "homecoming" for many from the neighboring states of Maryland and Pennsylvania. The celebration included preaching, singing, dancing, and offered opportunities to worship, meet friends and relatives, and commemorate the founding and founder of African Union Methodism.

In the quest to uplift his people, Reverend Spencer left a legacy of high ideals and devotion. In keeping with his mission as leader of his people, Spencer engaged in a host of pro-black activities, including his support of the Underground Railroad in Delaware under the helm of station master Thomas Garrett. It is reputed that Spencer's church was involved in the network to assist runaway slaves. During the August Quarterly, slaves "used the Mother Church as the starting point for escape to all points North."

Spencer, along with other black leaders such as Abraham Schadd, was a leader in the movement to oppose the American Colonization Society's effort to get blacks to return to Africa. It is generally believed that without the strong opposition from Spencer and his forces, the colonization scheme would have met with little, if any, resistance. Spencer's standing in the community suffered from this action, but he continued to speak out against all forms of injustice.

On July 25, 1843, Peter Spencer died in Wilmington, Delaware. His final words were, "The battle is fought and the victory is won." Newspaper accounts all revealed a reverent respect for the legacy he left behind. The July 28, 1843, issue of The Delaware State Journal wrote the following:

Died in this City on Tuesday last, Rev. Peter Spencer (colored) aged 61 years, and six months. He bore an excellent character, and was extensively known as the most active and influential minister of the Union Church (colored) in this City, branches of which are spread throughout several of the surrounding states. His death has produced a vacancy, and it will be difficult to find any person who will fill his station with the industry, ability and

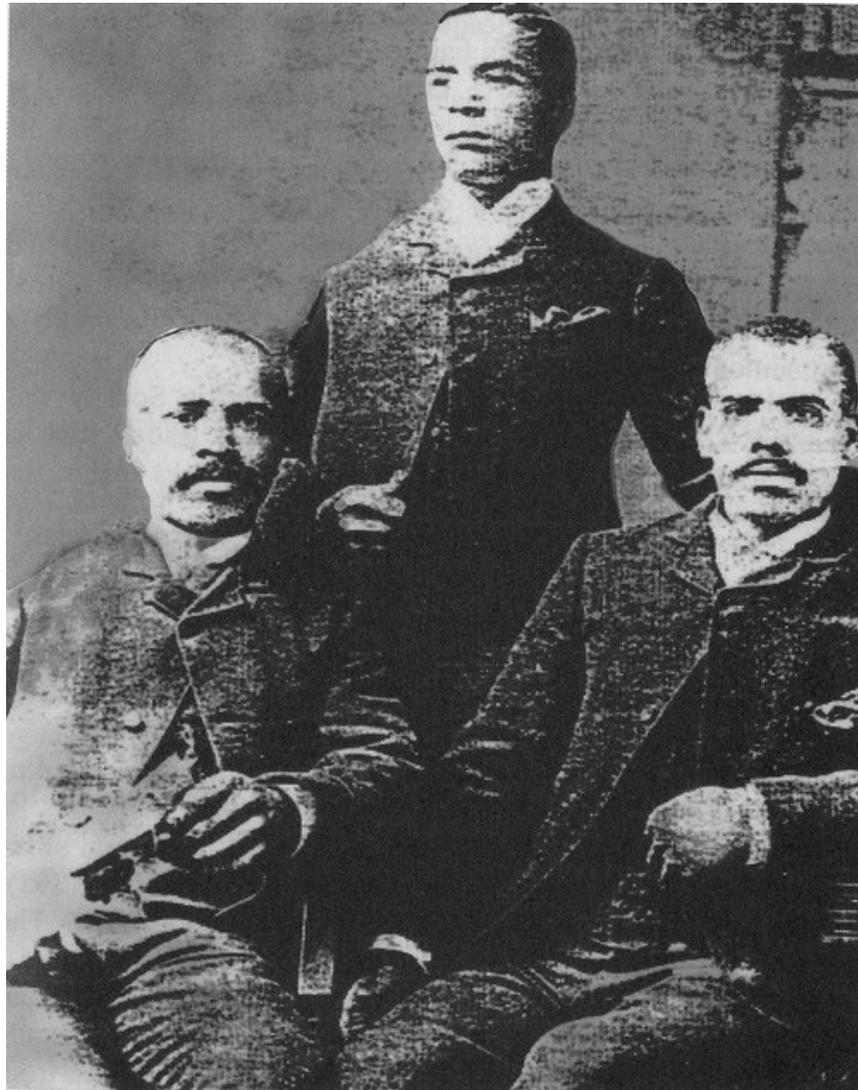
influence which he did.

During his lifetime, Father Spencer organized 31 churches and several schools. He left a legacy to be envied by all. His character, temperament, and commitment to his church were the hallmarks of a man with a vision.

Abraham D. Schadd (1801-1882) Abolitionist, Businessman, and Community Organizer

Abraham D. Schadd was one of Delaware's most significant black leaders of the 19th century. The Schadd family represents one of the premier black families of Delaware. Daniel Hill, in *The Freedom Seekers*, reports that the family descended from Hans Schadd who was born in Cassel, Germany, about 1725. Hans served in Braddock's army in 1755 and ultimately settled in Westchester (now West Chester), Pennsylvania. His grandson, Abraham D. Schadd, was probably born in Mill Creek Hundred in 1801. He was a staunch black abolitionist dedicated to ending slavery. Abraham Schadd was the father of 13 children and earned a successful living as a shoemaker, a trade he learned from his father. He acquired property in Wilmington, which reflected his business skills.

In the 1830s, blacks hosted several national conventions to protest racism and repression. At the first convention held on September 30, 1830, in Philadelphia, Richard Allen presided. Forty delegates from nine states attended. Abraham Schadd was the Delaware representative. The major purpose of the convention was to establish a colony for blacks in Canada. Following the first convention, the National Negro Convention was established. Schadd met with convention leaders as Delaware delegate in 1830, 1831, and 1832.



Abraham Schadd's Son Garrison's Children
(Abraham's Grandsons) Photo courtesy of James E. Newton

As an anti-slavery critic, Schadd made his views known and became a subscription agent for William Lloyd Garrison's antislavery newspaper, *The Liberator*. Schadd also served as a delegate to the American Anti-Slavery Society (1835, 1836). A clear indication of his commitment and leadership, Schadd was elected president of the National Convention in 1833. As president of that body, he emphasized education, thrift, and hard work to improve the conditions of blacks.

In 1816, soon after the American Colonization Society was organized, Abraham Schadd joined with other black leaders such as William Anderson and Peter Spencer to organize forces against the "colonization scheme."

In 1836, Schadd was living in West Chester and was taking "an active role in Underground Railroad activities," working in concert with the local Quakers.

In 1851, Schadd, with his 13 children, relocated to North Buxton in Ontario, Canada, where he purchased 200 acres of land in a black communal settlement. He remained there, an active Mason, civic, and community leader, and in 1858 he was elected to the Raleigh Township Commission.

The life Abraham Schadd led became a model for several of his children. His oldest daughter, Mary Ann Schadd (1823-1893), became well-known as an educator, lawyer, and journalist. The Delaware born heroine attended a Quaker-based school in West Chester, Pennsylvania and later became an instructor for black youth in Wilmington. Several other members of the Schadd family excelled: I. D. Schadd served in the Mississippi Legislature from 1871-1874; Abraham W. Schadd was a graduate of Howard Law School; Garrison Schadd became a wealthy farmer; and Emaline Schadd became a professor at Howard University.

He and the other leaders saw no need to go back to Africa since Africans had aided in the building of America by "the sweat of their brow." They had as much right to stay in America as other immigrants. In July 1831, the anti-colonization black leaders alerted the black citizens to stay in Delaware until circumstances improved.

By the time of his death in 1882, Abraham Schadd had presented himself as an imposing force against the evils of slavery. He could look back at himself and his work as a black abolitionist, Underground Railroad supporter, Delaware's delegate to National Negro Conventions, President of the National Convention for the Improvement of Free People of Color, pioneer in black settlements in Canada, civic leader, and entrepreneur. His legacy and perseverance were passed on to his family. His deeds and actions for fellow humans entitle him to be ranked among the top black leaders of the 19th century.

Dr. Samuel G. Elbert, Sr. (1865-1939) Doctor, Businessman, Civic, and Community Leader

One of the first African Americans to open a medical practice in the State

of Delaware to serve blacks was Dr. Samuel G. Elbert, Sr. On November 7, 1865, he was born on a farm near Chestertown, Maryland. He received an early education in the primary schools of Chestertown and later entered the pre-medical program at Howard University in Washington, D.C. In 1891, he graduated from the Howard Medical School. For advanced study, Dr. Elbert pursued post-graduate medical courses at the University of Pennsylvania and received a degree in 1894. At the turn-of-the-century Elbert ventured to Wilmington and established his practice, serving the African American community.

The city of Wilmington and Elbert proved to be a good match. According to Harold Livesay, Wilmington had attracted a colony of educated, prosperous blacks who had developed a successful way of life. They owned property, maintained a high standard of living, sent their children to Sunday School, high school, and out-of-state colleges. Since the color line was drawn for all blacks, they were restricted in any meaningful participation in the social or political arena. Such restrictions allowed them to assume leadership in the black community. Dr. Samuel G. Elbert became one of those leaders, devoting much of his time to the advancement of education for blacks.

Between 1927 and 1931, Dr. Elbert served as a member of the Wilmington Board of Education. An astute businessman and civic leader, he also made his presence felt in the area of politics. As a lifetime Republican, Dr. Elbert embraced the party of Lincoln and remained an active member. In his first attempt at public office, he ran for city councilman of Wilmington (1909) and lost as the Democrats swept to victory. Active in city and state affairs, Elbert was delegate from Delaware to two national Republican conventions.

As a devoted public servant with an eye for black education, Dr. Elbert became the first black member to serve on the Board of Trustees of the State College for Colored Students at Dover, Delaware (now Delaware State University). Dr. Elbert served on the board for 15 years, from 1918-1933. Dr. Elbert's efforts, along with W. C. Jason, Delaware State's president, were productive enough to keep the college intact during its formative years.

Dr. Elbert's leadership and concerns about black mobilization went beyond Delaware. He was actively involved with national black movements, especially the National Negro Business League, founded by Booker T. Washington in 1900. The League's purpose was to stimulate the development of black business enterprises. One of the League's 22 local chapters was established in Wilmington, Delaware. Ownership, technical assistance,

business planning, and profitable operations were the key goals of the organization. According to League records, in 1906, at the sixth annual meeting, Dr. Samuel G. Elbert was elected second vice president.

Through his connections with Washington, Elbert was able to arrange a two-day tour of Delaware for the educator. Speeches in eight sites throughout the state were planned, including a special train for the tour from the Pennsylvania Railroad. A host of prominent African Americans from Philadelphia, New York, and Washington, D.C. were assembled for the tour. Site visits on the first day (July 3, 1910), included Washington speaking in New Castle, Newark, and Wilmington. Second day visits on July 4, 1910, took place in Milford, Dover, Clayton, and Middletown. Records indicate that this was the only time the famed president of Tuskegee Institute visited Delaware.



Samuel G. Elbert

Photo courtesy of James E. Newton

Washington's visit was no small matter. As a moulder of public opinion amongst white power brokers, Washington's views would serve as a strong testing ground for Delaware, a state whose position on issues pertaining to race needed "sensitive prodding," one of Washington's strongest assets.

At the close of the tour, an informal reception was held at the residence of Dr. and Mrs. Elbert, located at Eleventh and King Streets. A Wilmington Morning News reporter (July 5, 1910) describes the reception:

A party arrived shortly after 8 o'clock last evening and continued from then until an early hour this morning. The dining room was tastefully decorated for the occasion and covers were laid for fifty guests. As the guests gathered around the festive board, Wright's orchestra concealed behind an immense bank of palms, furnished music of a patriotic order. Short talks were made by

those present, and the evening was enjoyably spent.

In the July 5, 1910 issue of the Evening Journal, Booker T. Washington comments about his Delaware tour:

"I am greatly pleased and surprised in many ways. The Negroes are enjoying a great deal of prosperity here, although their spheres of action are perhaps not so diversified as further South. I am also much pleased with the school system. Delaware has a better school system for the negro than any other Southern State,-if Delaware may be called a Southern State. But what pleased me most is the friendly attitude among the white people, shown not only to the speeches of those who have introduced me but by the white people in the audiences. All that I have seen has encouraged me. I wish to say now how deeply obligated I am to Dr. S. G. Elbert and the other members of the Business Men's League for the kind reception they have given me, and their efforts to make my stay here a pleasant one."

Washington's praise of Delaware was reflected in Dr. Samuel G. Elbert's life in action and distinction. There is no better evidence of his influence than his son, Dr. Samuel G. Elbert, Jr., who also became one of the leaders in the medical field for the black community, practicing at his office on French Street for more than two decades. The venerable Dr. Samuel G. Elbert, Sr. had a profound influence, especially in the city of Wilmington, where he resided. His commitment to black education, civic pride, and business organization all attributed to his success as an effective community leader.

William Julius "Judy" Johnson (1900-1989) Delaware's Folk Hero of the Diamond

William (Judy) Johnson was one of baseball's all-time greats, a product of the old Negro Leagues, and a legend in his time. To most Delawareans, he is a genuine folk hero, in the same tradition of the magnetic and controversial Jack Johnson, the calm but swift Joe Louis, and the "steel driving" John Henry.

Judy Johnson was born October 26, 1900 in Snow Hill, Maryland. Around 1905, his parents moved to Wilmington, Delaware, where he spent most of his youthful years rushing to get his chores done, so he could play baseball. Johnson's own recollection is that he "played baseball morning, noon, and night." Sometimes he and his teammates would pack up their equipment and walk miles to play games at sites in Buttonwood (New Castle), Eden Park, and Marshallton. As a youngster growing up in Wilmington, he had the

occasional opportunity to play football and baseball on integrated teams.

Because Judy's father was a licensed boxing coach, he obviously preferred boxing to baseball. But he realized his son's love and passion for the game and provided the necessary encouragement for development.

By his late teens, Judy had already been in the lineup of the Madison Stars of Philadelphia, a semi-pro outfit, and the Chester Giants. He made his professional baseball debut playing for the Hilldale (Upper Darby) baseball team, a charter team of the Negro Eastern League in 1922. Hilldale made it to the first Negro League World Series against the Kansas City Monarchs in 1924. Hilldale lost, but Johnson led his teammates with a batting average of .341. And, until 1929 he had more hits than any batter in the American Negro League. In 1925, however, Hilldale won the series assisted by the ample hitting of Johnson.



William Julius "Judy" Johnson
Courtesy of Ellen Rendle

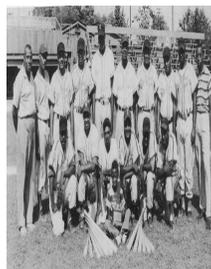
Johnson remained key to the Hilldale team until he departed in 1929 to manage the Homestead Grays (1930) and the Darby Daisies (1931). Between 1932 and 1937, the Pittsburgh Crawfords benefitted from Judy's excellent fielding, consistent hitting, and all-around sportsmanship.

The Sunday afternoon baseball game in Delaware's black community was a familiar sight, and it became common tradition that immediately following

church, mothers and daughters, fathers and sons, young and old alike, would come well-prepared and anxious to cheer on their favorite team and players. Judy Johnson was a favorite, and his feats on the field became legendary to many of the fans. Although the tradition has decreased in fervor, there are still many black Delawareans who remember those who couldn't wait for "the season" to open and to don their uniforms for a Sunday afternoon game of "stick ball."

The former great Negro League infielder was signed as an assistant coach by the Philadelphia Athletics in February 1954. The first of his race to serve in this capacity for a major league baseball club, Johnson assisted veteran Eddie Yost in coaching first basemen and pitchers. As a scout for the A's, he missed the chance to sign future home run king Hank Aaron from the Cincinnati Clowns because of club finances. In scouting for the Milwaukee Braves, Johnson signed Bill Bruton, who later became his son-in-law. Additionally, he also served as scout for the Philadelphia Phillies.

Although a major portion of his time on the diamond was spent playing for such teams as the Madison Stars, the Chester Giants, and the Pittsburgh Crawfords, Judy-like many all-time Negro greats-"never received a chance to compete in the higher echelons of the game." Nine years after Johnson stopped playing, Jackie Robinson became the first black player to compete in the major leagues, when he became a member of the Brooklyn Dodgers in 1947.



Milford Yanks, c. 1950

Courtesy of Historical Society of Delaware

At age 75, Judy Johnson achieved his greatest ambition-to be inducted into baseball's Hall of Fame at Cooperstown, New York. Izzy Katzman, staff correspondent for the Evening Journal, comments on the February 10, 1975 event:

The one-time great third baseman from Marshallton, Del., was voted into baseball's Hall of Fame by the Negro Baseball Selection Committee. The committee selects players from the old Negro leagues era before the major league color line was broken by Jackie Robinson in 1947.

Judy is the sixth player to be selected by the Negro Committee. Others chosen, in the order named, were Satchel Paige, Josh Gibson, Buck Leonard, Monte Irvin and James (Cool Papa) Bell.

Delawareans recognize the importance of the contribution of Judy Johnson and pay tribute to his legacy-on the field and off. His consistent performance in the old Negro League was sufficient enough to pave the road for future players such as Jackie Robinson, Roy Campanella, and Jim Gilliam.

William (Judy) Johnson was the first Delawarean to enter baseball's Hall of Fame. He was loved and respected in the community where he lived. His triumphs in life and on the baseball field made him a legend in his own time.

William Julius "Judy" Johnson died in Marshallton, Delaware in 1989. The field at the home of the Blue Rocks baseball team at Frawley Stadium (named after the former Mayor of Wilmington) is known as Johnson Field. A statue in his honor is also at that location. He will always be fondly remembered as "Delaware's Folk Hero of the Diamond."

Louis L. Redding (1911 -1998) Champion of Civil Rights

There is probably not a man, woman, or child in Delaware who has not heard of the deeds of Louis L. Redding, who could easily be identified as "Mr. Civil Rights" of Delaware.

Mr. Redding's fight for the rights of African Americans in the First State is a tribute to his commitment to change the lives and opportunities of those who had for so long been treated as second- class citizens.

At the age of 28, Redding became Delaware's first black lawyer. A graduate of Wilmington's Howard High School, Brown University, and Harvard Law School, he was equipped with the skills necessary to practice law. He was also a product of "The Reddings," an upwardly mobile, middle class black family, whose father, Lewis Alfred, taught his eldest son to fight back. The family included Jay Saunders Redding, college professor and famed writer and author of No Day of Triumph. His sister, the late Gwendolyn Redding, has a legendary reputation as a serious English teacher at Howard High School.

Louis L. Redding, the first of five children, was born in 1911 in

Wilmington, Delaware. His father, Lewis, a graduate of Howard University, relocated to Wilmington to earn enough to support a family. As one of four black postal carriers in Wilmington, the elder Redding was able to provide for his family. Louis' father was a community leader in Wilmington, serving as Secretary of the NAACP, Trustee of Bethel Church, and member of the Board of the Layton Home. Growing up in a mixed neighborhood with strong middle-class values of education and thrift probably served Louis well in his later legal barriers toward equity in education and opportunity.

In 1949 (20 years after becoming a lawyer), Louis was finally included as a member of the Bar Association. Redding, like most young lawyers, had aspirations of working in a city law firm. But, fate took another turn. Delawareans today profit because of Louis L. Redding's decision to return to Delaware and unlock the doors of inequality and opportunity. For Redding, it was no easy task. He was isolated and alienated from the legal community. Redding was unwilling to allow his three daughters to grow up in a segregated society and attend segregated schools, so he chose to take up residence in nearby Pennsylvania.

Comments have always been offered about Redding's demeanor. He presented himself in a dignified fashion. News Journal columnist Laurie Hays found him charming, witty, and kind. Others suggested that he was detached and aloof. Another observation was that Redding had ". . . a low tolerance for fools." Whatever his personal traits, it is clear that in the area of civil rights, he earned the utmost respect from his peers and fellow citizens. Advocating school integration to end racial disparities in education, Redding served as legal council for the plaintiff in the first school desegregation case in Delaware. And, he argued successfully before the Supreme Court, the Delaware case in *Brown versus the Board of Education*.



Louis L. Redding
Courtesy of James E. Newton

In 1949, students at Delaware State College applied for admission to the all white University of Delaware. They were rejected on the basis that Delaware State was provided for colored students. The students took the case to Louis L. Redding, the lone black lawyer at the time. Redding, with the aid of NAACP Assistant Special Council Jack Greenberg, argued *Parker v. University of Delaware* (1950). Vice-Chancellor Collins Seitz, after

considering the evidence, ordered the University of Delaware to open its doors to the plaintiffs. Delaware did not appeal the decision. The University of Delaware became the first state-supported institution in America to be desegregated at the undergraduate level-by law.

Louis L. Redding, committed to the task of school racial integration, and at great personal and professional sacrifice, became Delaware's foremost advocate of civil rights.

The leadership exemplified by Redding in the area of civil rights is a milestone in American history. For his vision of a true democracy, embracing equality of opportunity, citizens throughout Delaware and the nation are beneficiaries of his commitment. Louis L. Redding's return to Wilmington changed the populaces' attitude toward racial injustice forever. He will be forever remembered for his role as Delaware's Champion of Civil Rights.

Herman Holloway, Sr. (1922-1994) Dean of Delaware's Black Politicians

Herman Holloway Sr. has come to be known as the "Dean of Black Politicians in Delaware." It is an appropriate title for a man who spent more than 30 years as a public servant in the State Legislature, having served as a State Representative and a State Senator.

Herman Holloway, Sr., a Democrat, championed the poor and the downtrodden. An effective orator, his skills of persuasion served him well. His legacy of leadership in the area of social services for Delawareans is unparalleled.



Herman M. Holloway, Sr.
Photo courtesy of James E. Newton

On February 4, 1922, Herman M. Holloway, Sr. was born to William and

Hennie Holloway. Young Holloway grew up in Wilmington attending parochial and public schools. As an athlete, he excelled in basketball and football at the all black Howard High School, the only black secondary school in Delaware at the time. Following graduation from high school, he attended Hampton Institute for one year.

Like many young men, Holloway embarked on many different jobs before settling on his chosen path. Known for his political savvy and ability to handle himself (in his earlier years, he was known as "Knockout" for his boxing prowess and "Cool" for his basketball handling skills), Holloway worked his way through a number of occupations: bar and grill operator; school district maintenance supervisor; Wilmington police officer; Boy Scout coordinator and aide in the General Assembly. Unsatisfied with the several jobs he undertook, Holloway decided to try his hand at politics. At age 23, in 1945, Holloway was defeated for a seat on the Wilmington City Council. In 1963, he was elected to serve out the unexpired term of Paul Livingston in the Delaware House of Representatives. One year later, in 1964, Holloway became the first black elected to Delaware's State Senate from the Second District of New Castle County. Since 1964, Holloway has been returned to office at every election. (In 1996, Margaret Rose Henry became the first African American woman to be elected to Delaware's State Senate).

Although elected to the Senate with the help of the Democratic Party, Senator Holloway established himself as an "independent" legislator. During his 29 years in the legislature, Holloway often went against his party on racial and civil rights issues and even supported Republicans for office. Although some of these actions placed him in what he called "hell catching" positions, many observers understood that Holloway was an astute politician. Accomplished at the art of "wheeling and dealing" in back rooms, he knew how to use the leverage he had as an "independent." These skills and his ability to articulate his position placed Holloway in the center of many legislative battles.



Howard High Library

Sanbom Collection Courtesy of Historical Society of Delaware

One of the hallmarks of Senator Holloway's legislative career occurred in 1965 when he introduced Senate Bill 128 (an Open Housing Bill) and later supported Senate Bill 358, which called for open transactions on all housing sales. Holloway stirred the public conscience on housing and supported the bill with rigorous debate. Although it was defeated, the December 9, 1965, News Journal reported that Holloway, "held the spectators spellbound with a plea for passage of Senate Bill 358." His words were a reminder to the Senate: "While there is discrimination in housing against Negroes in Delaware, the military cemeteries and foxholes in Vietnam are fully integrated with Negro and White soldiers." Eventually, an open housing bill was passed in 1968.

Holloway managed, through longevity and negotiation, to become a major player in Delaware's political circles. By 1988, he was the most tenured legislator in the Delaware Assembly. No other legislator elected in the nation (at any level of government) had more continuous service than Senator Herman Holloway, Sr. of Delaware.

In the area of social legislation Holloway has no peer. Over his 31 years as Delaware's legislator, Holloway served on numerous committees: Adult and Juvenile Corrections; Children, Youth, and Family; Joint Finance Committee; Labor and Industrial Relations; and Revenue and Taxation to list a few.

Holloway's service was exhaustive. He was chairperson on the Senate Committee on Health, Social Services, and Aging for 16 years. He was a member of Delaware's Interstate Cooperative Commission, the Human Resource Task Force, and the Eastern Region of the National Legislator Conference.

Senator Holloway's biggest victories were in the form of his socially progressive legislation. The Public Accommodations Act was passed in 1963, barring racial discrimination in public accommodations. In his belief that he was "the representative for all the people," Holloway's legislation provided for the broadest range of human and social services-disabilities, medical and educational programs, opportunities and benefits for women, adult protective services, effective child support collection, opportunities for the disadvantaged and poor, child protective services, and a host of other human needs.

"The Senator," as he was oftentimes endearingly referred to, did not, as

many observed, limit his compassion to the legislation. Several stories attest to his personal sacrifice and concern for fellow citizens. Holloway never lost his touch with the common folk.

One story reveals that Holloway was late to his own swearing-in ceremony because he was busy helping a lady get her money back from a grocery store owner who had sold her some tainted pork chops. Another episode found Holloway in the hospital being treated for lung cancer and demanding a limousine come get him to cast his vote on a desegregation agreement that was one vote short. Such actions earned him great respect.

While Holloway had his critics throughout his legislative career, his accomplishments, in the long run, outweighed any limitations. Delaware State College (now Delaware State University) awarded him an Honorary Doctor of Law degree in 1969. In 1972, the Georgetown Branch of Delaware Technical and Community College awarded him an Honorary Associate's Degree of Applied Science. The Delaware Chapter of the National Caucus and Center for Black Aged honored him for Outstanding Service in 1990. And, numerous other agencies have lauded Holloway for his contributions in making a difference in the lives of all Delawareans.

Senator Holloway was also active in civic affairs. He was a member of Mount Joy United Methodist Church; a Past Worshipful Master of Union Lodge #21 Prince Hall Masonic Order; member of the Board of Managers of the Walnut Street YMCA; member of the historic Monday Club, Inc. of Wilmington; and founder and President of the Citizens Political Issue League of Delaware.

A strong family man, Holloway was married to the former Miss Ethel Johnson of Wilmington. The marriage produced five children—three daughters and two sons. Herman M. Holloway, Jr. developed his father's knack for politics and was first elected to the State House in 1978 and was re-elected in 1980 and 1982.

On March 14, 1995, Herman M. Holloway, Sr. died of lung cancer at the age of 72. He will be remembered for the pivotal role he played in the state's passage of Civil Rights legislation and his efforts to bring Delaware's human service into the modern age. The State Health and Social Services Building on DuPont Highway has been named in his honor. A portrait of the Senator by African

American artist, Simmie Knox, now hangs in Legislative Hall in Dover. Senator Herman M. Holloway, Sr. in his pioneering efforts has increased

black participation in the mainstream. As we move toward the year 2000, it would bode Delawareans well to follow the example of Senator Holloway—a man whose leadership enhanced the life of the entire citizenry of Delaware.

Conclusion

In conclusion, these seven leaders took on the mantle of leadership and distinguished themselves. That there were others worthy of inclusion in this essay, there is no doubt. However, the seven men presented here all possess qualities of discipline, order, focus, good character, and a compassion for their fellow human beings. These attributes are the basic qualities of leadership. Their legacies are still with us today. Through character, courage, and commitment, they were able to make their mark as "Diamonds" of Delaware and Maryland's Eastern Shore: Seven Black Men of Distinction.



DISCOVERING THE PAST/ CONSIDERING THE FUTURE: LESSONS FROM THE EASTERN SHORE

Margaret L. Andersen University of Delaware

In Octavia Butler's science fiction novel, *Kindred*,^[26] the main character, Dana, travels through time to the early 19th century and to the Eastern Shore of Maryland where her ancestors are slaves. Dana's experience reveals the life faced by her great grandparents. Through their lives, the novel exposes part of the history of American race relations. Twentieth century students do not have the superhuman abilities of this fictional character, nor do they typically employ the literary imagination of science fiction writers to describe the past. However, attempting to reconstruct the history of racism, especially from the perspective of Black Americans, may make one wish for these supernatural powers. Historical records have largely overlooked the experience of Black Americans, particularly from their own point of view.

Despite these gaps, understanding the past provides clues for changing the future. By studying African American history, students can learn new ways to confront racism-to recognize it when it occurs, to think about its consequences (for both people of color and whites), and to change how people behave and think. This paper explores the racial history of one part of the Delmarva Peninsula-the Eastern Shore of Maryland-with the purpose of understanding how this history has led to contemporary patterns of race relations in the area.

To the contemporary visitor, the Eastern Shore of Maryland is a prosperous and alluring area. Fictional accounts of the Eastern Shore, such as James Michener's *Chesapeake* or John Barth's *Sabbatical*, make it seem a genteel land, rich in historical past, but also intriguing in its present. Here, wealthy classes cruise on lavish yachts, stately mansions recall traditions of the past, and quaint, small towns suggest tranquility in contemporary life. If approached by water, the privacy of secluded coves of the bay also promises that the Eastern Shore provides retreat from the noise, pollution, traffic, and fast-lived pace of nearby metropolitan areas.

Yet, there is a dual reality here-one hidden in small, all black hamlets that do not, in many cases, even appear on road maps and do not front the bay waters, as do the privileged acres of the rich. The dual reality is perhaps no

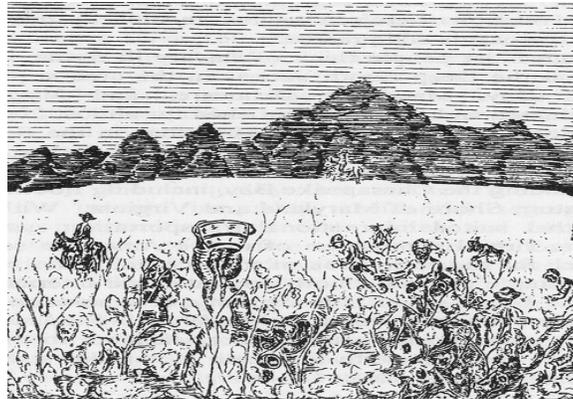
better described than by Frederick Douglass, himself a slave 150 years ago on the estate of Edward Lloyd, the Eastern Shore's largest slaveholder. The sailing ships that contemporary visitors today covet and admire were, to Douglass, symbols of the oppression of black people. Standing on the shores of the Chesapeake, he wrote, "Those beautiful vessels, robed in white and so delightful to the eyes of freemen, were to me so many shrouded ghosts to terrify and torment me with thoughts of my wretched condition."²⁷

To this day, the inequality that marked the region's past persists in the income inequality, residential segregation, and different life opportunities for most whites and blacks. Talbot County (the wealthiest of the nine counties on the Eastern Shore) has a population of 30,353 persons (18 percent of whom are black) and is reported to have over 200 millionaires.²⁸ In Kent County, where this research took place, the 1989 median income for white households was \$31,382. For black households, \$19,850—only 63 percent of white median income. Inequality between whites and blacks in this county is further demonstrated by the skewed character of income distribution. In 1989, 22.4 percent of black families in Talbot County and 16.4 percent in Kent County lived below the federal poverty line, compared to 3.2 percent of white families in Talbot County and 5 percent of white families in Kent County. In the same year, 28 percent of black households in the county had incomes of less than \$10,000 per year, compared with 12 percent of white households.²⁹

Less than 100 miles from metropolitan Philadelphia, Baltimore, and Washington, D.C., the region seems like an anachronism in that the yachts, fashionable shops, and luxury automobiles seen there are clearly symbolic of contemporary class relations, but the juxtaposition of rurally segregated black communities and paternalistic relations between whites and blacks evoke a strong feeling that the past is still present.

Although most people think of slavery in terms of big cotton plantations in the Deep South, it was in the area surrounding the Chesapeake Bay—Maryland, Delaware, and Virginia—where slavery originated and where it flourished for almost 200 years prior to the development of big cotton plantations in the South. Before 1790, when the cotton industry in the Deep South began to boom, two-thirds of the U.S. slave population was concentrated on the lands surrounding the Chesapeake Bay, including tidewater Virginia and the Eastern Shore of Maryland and Virginia.³⁰ With waterfront properties that suited international transportation systems of the time and the virtual elimination of native American societies, this area was

rich for the cultivation of tobacco and, later, wheat; these became the staple crops for both domestic and international trade. The labor of black slaves, the majority of whom on Maryland's Eastern Shore were imported from the West Indies,³¹ was central to this growing trade. So important was black labor to this economy, Maryland was the first state to create formal laws distinguishing indentured servants and slaves (in 1660).³²



Slaves in a cotton field.

Art excerpt from "From Slavery to Calvary " by Roy H. Hickman,
Delaware Prison Arts Program



Cotton Gin

Art excerpt from "From Slavery to Calvary" by Roy H. Hickman, Delaware
Prison Arts Program

How does the racial history of this region inform us about the present? Like knowing the biography of a good friend, understanding the present means knowing the past. Through the 17th century, slavery on the Eastern Shore remained on a small- scale. Not until 1685 were slaves imported to the Eastern Shore in substantial numbers; most planters during the seventeenth

century owned relatively small amounts of land. During the 17th century, those who rose to affluence were the white men who combined planting with other profitable pursuits-merchandising, money lending, land speculation, law, manufacturing, and commerce. ³³

Throughout the 18th century, a society based on a plantation economy crystallized on the Eastern Shore, creating a small elite of white merchant-planters, a large class of modestly well-off white householders, a geographically mobile class of poor whites, and enslaved black laborers. Even so, the plantation system on the Eastern Shore never reached the same proportions as it did in the antebellum South. As late as 1790, the peak of slave society in Maryland, less than three percent of Talbot County slaveowners had more than 20 slaves, whereas 25 percent of southern slaves lived on plantations of 50 or more. ³⁴ Thus, slavery in Maryland through the 18th century can be characterized as domestic, not plantation slavery-the distinction being that slave families lived in close proximity to white families and large plantations were the exception rather than the rule. Rates of manumission (i.e., freeing slaves) in Maryland were also relatively high compared to other slave states and the state of Maryland contained a larger proportion of free blacks than any other slave state except Delaware. ³⁵

Frequent periods of economic depression on the Eastern Shore brought more than usual impoverishment to slaves and free persons in the area. The relative isolation of the region also fostered more severe treatment of slaves than in some other areas of the country. Historical records also indicate that free blacks were sometimes materially worse off than slaves, although these claims are suspect, coming as they do from the records of slaveowners.

Historical records also indicate that runaway slaves from the Eastern Shore constituted a large proportion of those who escaped on the Underground Railroad, ³⁶ although accurate estimates of runaways are impossible to make. Slaves themselves perceived that their fate would be worse further south, at least as evidenced by the accounts of runaways who report fleeing when they thought they might be sold further south. Slaves' fears of the Deep South stemmed primarily from their fear they would be further separated from family members. They also recognized that being sold south was the owner's ultimate threat, and they feared the unknown.

At the end of the Civil War, black Americans on the Eastern Shore faced the social and economic problems that persistent racism presented. There was a strong "color line" between blacks and whites. The previous system of a

slavery-based economy was thrown into disarray, but new patterns quickly emerged that perpetuated a racially oppressive system of labor, solidified racial segregation, and instigated new forms of racial violence. The Freedmen's Bureau played a critical role in this newly emerging social order.

Re-Constructing African American History

Reconstructing the history of African Americans and other oppressed groups, however, has been difficult because of large gaps and omissions in the historical records. The historical record that has been left (in the form of letters, official records, and other documents) is one largely written by white Americans. Whites had access to education, and, therefore, to literacy. It is through the papers of white elites that much of what is known about slavery and the history of race relations has been constructed. Some of the largest collections of documents about the Eastern Shore, for example, are the letters and papers of the most prosperous slaveowners in the region. Supported by the development and evolution of African American studies, historians and other scholars have, however, worked hard to locate other historical records that can also be used to understand history as it was experienced by African American people.



Plantation

Art excerpt from "From Slavery to Calvary" by Roy Hickman, Delaware Prison Arts Program

Some of these historical materials reveal the live experience of racism.

Personal documents like letters and diaries give contemporary people a feel for the past that is rarely created through less personal historical archives. Such records, especially when written by ordinary people, also reveal African American resistance to racial oppression. These revelations can inspire contemporary visions for social change.

This paper is based on letters collected in the Freedmen's Bureau papers, collected in the National Archives in Washington, D.C. and available for public examination. (The National Archives is a public resource housing many of the nation's most valuable documents. Anyone can use these archives, although it takes some training and experience to know how to do so.)

The Freedmen's Bureau letters can be used to understand what happened in the United States following the end of slavery. At this time, one form of society was being replaced by another, as social institutions that had been built on slavery were being re-created to accommodate newly freed people. What happened to black people during this period is important to understanding the transition to new forms of racism that characterize the 20th century.

The Freedmen's Bureau letters are also one of the few primary records of African American experience in the Reconstruction period. Organized by state, they include letters to and from the Freedmen's Bureau between 1865 and 1869. For this research, I read letters from the state of Maryland, including all letters to and from the Eastern Shore region (1,127 letters). These letters reveal, often in graphic terms, the problems experienced by black men and "109 women following slavery. They also provide evidence of the beliefs blacks and whites had about each other. Although most of the letters were written by Freedmen's Bureau agents, most of whom were presumably white, some were written by black women or men seeking assistance from the Bureau. Reading these letters is a deeply moving experience, hard to recapture in print, although perhaps one example illustrates how poignant the letters can be: August 25, 1864

Mr president It is my Desire to be free. to go to see my people on the eastern shore. my mistress wont let me you will please let me know if we are free. and what I can do. I write to you for advice. please send word this week or as soon as possible and oblidge.

Annie Davis³⁷

These letters provide a compelling portrait of the lives and struggles of

newly freed African American men and women on the Eastern Shore and allow us see the transformations in race relations that followed the Civil War.

The Freedmen's Bureau in an Age of Conflict

When it was first established, the Freedmen's Bureau was encouraged both by abolitionists and by industrial leaders of the cotton industry who had been hostile to abolition. ³⁸ Despite its image as a social welfare agency for newly freed black people, the Freedmen's Bureau was meant to facilitate the transition from slavery to freedom and to restore the southern economy and the North's supply of cheap and abundant cotton. As one scholar has concluded, the "Freedmen's Bureau became the chief instrument for organizing a system of contract labor that reduced the Black population of the South to a state of virtual peonage."³⁹

Although the Freedmen's Bureau served dominant economic interests, it was the only federal agency to which newly freed Black people could turn for assistance following slavery. Agents in the Bureau, perhaps like their contemporary counterparts in social service agencies, were, for the most part, probably well-intentioned people who saw themselves as working on behalf of newly freed black women and men. The agents, however, were not immune from the racial attitudes that permeated U.S. society; their attitudes affected their understandings of the needs and problems of black people, resulting in their promoting a system of labor that recreated patterns of racial inequality that have characterized the Eastern Shore ever since.

Despite these beginnings, the Freedmen's Bureau was the only Federal agency to which blacks could turn for social and economic assistance. Although the Bureau was intended to be a military agency where black soldiers could settle claims for bounties and pensions due them, the Bureau's activities extended to a wide range of other social and economic assistance.

In Maryland, the Bureau's activities fell into seven major areas:

- claims for the payment of military bounties and pensions;
 - investigation of illegal child apprenticeships;
 - negotiation of contract labor;
 - establishment of education for freed men and women;
 - investigation of incidents of racial violence;
 - requests for reuniting families separated by slavery and the Civil War; and,
 - miscellaneous complaints brought to the Bureau by black citizens.
- Agents of the Bureau, many of whom were former soldiers or officers,

varied greatly in their commitments to black emancipation and their sympathies for the plight of black persons. Often with evangelical zeal, agents saw themselves as teachers and disciplinarians; their racism is often evident in their recorded images of black people as unreliable, indolent, childlike, and needing governance by whites. In writing about the Freedmen's Bureau schools, for example, agents seemed more concerned with the moral influence of the schools than with what schools taught and their impact on black literacy. More than anything, Freedmen's

Bureau agents wanted order and peace. As one reports, "I learn from reliable sources that the moral effect of the Bureau in the State and the occasional visits of its officers through the counties have done much more towards preserving harmony and preventing abuses than we had anticipated." Another agent, reporting from Easton, described a school with nearly 100 children in attendance and two female teachers and seemed pleased to see, "scholars very obedient, attentive, and learning their lessons well."

Despite their expressed support for Freedmen's Bureau schools, in the agents' eyes, the schools were primarily supervisory. In fact, the Bureau provided only partial support for schools, because it had limited funds for education and relied on local benevolent organizations to organize and finance the schools. As a consequence, black people themselves sometimes paid the salaries and provided board for teachers.

Much of the Bureau's work was in response to racial violence, common on the Eastern Shore. Incidents of violence against black teachers, for example, were common on the Eastern Shore, indicative of the threat that education for blacks posed to the system of racism. Educated people are more likely to have the skills to organize for change: denying people an education or creating conditions that make getting one difficult, are ways that dominant groups control others. Agents of the Freedmen's Bureau were frequently called to the Eastern Shore to investigate reports of violence. Reports like this are common in the letters:

"I arrived at Easton May 1 (1866) at 12 o'clock. The Court being in Session the Town was full of People from the surrounding Country. From their conversation among themselves and with me, I found nearly all bitterly opposed to the Government By Reason of the Release of their Slaves and very much prejudiced against every person who takes an Interest in the Wellfare of the unfortunate inoffensive col d Race. The col d People to whom I applied for Information are afraid to speak or complain, for fear of being

murdered in open Day. I went to the Judge of the Court, to ascertain what Steps had been taken to arrest the murderer of Ed. Sherwood col d who was shot and instantly killed on Sunday last, while quietly

walking to Church, and was informed that James Kent Harper (Son of Dr. Harper of Easton Md.) and late a Rebel Soldier, has been indicted by the Grand Jury for this murder and that efforts were made by the Sheriff to arrest him. But I also ascertained that the Murderer remained undisturbed in town until Monday, when he publicly left on his father's horse. I would respectfully recommend that the Governor of Md. be requested to offer a suitable Reward for his Arrest."

In another incident, an agent reports:

"I proceeded on the 13 th of June [1866] to the town of Galena, Kent County, Md., arrived at that place on the 14th, called on the Justice of the Peace of that section, Mr. John T. Hurtt, informed him of my business, exhibited to him the sworn statement of Nicholas Brown, David Tilson, and other colored citizens of the town of Galena, to the effect that they had been generally maltreated and abused by the white inhabitants of that town and more particularly by one George Christfield, Andrew Christfield and others. I asked the Justice whether he was willing to prosecute the white offenders against the law, named in the affidavits and see that the colored complainants had the full enjoyment of the rights conferred upon them by an act of Congress, more commonly called the "Civil rights bill". Mr. Hurtt assured me that he would give them now, or at any time, a fair impartial trial, that he however had not been practising the custom to have colored persons appear before him as witnesses, unless they were parties themselves in the offense committed, that he only knew of the "Civil rights bill" by hearsay, of its contents he knew nothing whatever and requested me to furnish him by letter with a copy of the act."

In this letter, the agent goes on to report:

"In Chestertown, the better class of citizens, although they are strongly prejudiced against the colored race, seem disposed to treat them fairly and kindly, but there is a class of young men from 16-20 years old generally, in Chestertown and vicinity, who without any provocation

whatever, will kick, beat, and abuse every colored boy or man coming near them, without being interfered with in the least by either authorities or citizens. I witnessed with my own eyes and ears two cases of this kind, one of these I will state briefly as it conveys a fair illustration of the anti-negro

rowdydom practiced in that section of the Country: A number of young men were standing in front of the barroom in the basement of the principal hotel, when a whitehaired old colored man walked along the street, he was hailed by the party with: Hold on you old nigger where are you going to and other questions having stopped him, he was repeatedly asked what his business was, he answered he was going to see his son, one of the party asked him who his son was and he answered that his son was living at a certain place, and that he had been in the army, that was sufficient cause to punish the old man and one of the rowdies struck him over the head and kicked him, meanwhile the white spectators laughed in chorus; such expressions as: -I'll lay him low', -he ought to be killed', -nigger son-of' and others are very common with that class of rowdies! In Galena it is worse than in Chestertown for the colored people, they are abused and maltreated wherever met, although respectable white persons never molest them, every Saturday night they have a niggerhunt in Galena and woe to the poor colored girl, boy, or man who is observed on the street after 6 o'clock p.m.!"

Conditions were so bad in this region of Maryland that in 1866 the Assistant Commissioner reported that in "the seven lower counties where much bad feeling exists, and frequent complaints are received of outrages and atrocities without parallel committed against the Freedmen. In many instances where officers have been sent to investigate complaints in the counties mentioned, the complainants will make no charge, fearing personal injury from their oppressors so soon as the officer has left the vicinity."

Black citizens feared reprisals if they reported complaints to the Freedmen's Bureau. When they did bring complaints or try to settle claims, the Bureau, overwhelmed by paperwork and with inadequate personnel and financial resources, often could not settle the claims before them. Even when Bureau agents pursued complaints, their usual recourse was to bring the matter before civil authorities who routinely violated federal law by refusing to comply with federal civil rights legislation. Bureau agents were obviously frustrated by the obstacles placed in the way of their work by local courts. In several incidents, Bureau agents brought charges against local justices who had refused (in violation of the 1866 Civil Rights Bill) to hear testimony from "colored witnesses." In January 1867, the Maryland state legislature passed an act prohibiting the testimony of "colored persons," in direct contradiction to Federal law. Many of the letters in the Freedmen's Bureau documents record the frustration of Freedmen's Bureau agents who routinely had their

cases dismissed by grand juries or local judges. One agent of the Bureau was so frustrated by local authorities that he reported that when crimes by whites were brought to trial, the magistrate was in sympathy with the accused and dismissed the case or set bail so low, "as to practically make such cases a farce, and they are virtually at liberty to commence their crimes with increased relish." Sometimes, agents were determined to exercise justice but were subject to orders from above that diminished their ability to act. The case of Alcida Francis Warner illustrates this situation well. On June 12, 1866, Alcida Warner, a 13 year old black child, wrote: "On the 27th day of May 1866, while coming from Blusall's house in Maryland Heights where I was "employed as a servant, on my way home to my mother's house in Sandy Hook, Maryland, I was waylaid by one John Kellum (white), my person most brutally mutilated and violated and my life threatened if I divulged his name." When the case came before Justice Watkins of Sandy Hook, he refused to hear the complaint and wrote to Freedmen's Bureau agent Robinus:

"In my reply to you as requested in the first place, the girl is not a competent witness and if there had been only the state's evidence I would have had him arrested but you know it is my bound duty to avoid all cost from the state. I have even felt with regret the awful condition of the colored people but I cannot find anything in the law to justify an issue."

Watkins still refused to hear the case, and Inspector Robinus arranged for a second justice of the peace to issue charges against Kellum for assault and rape. Kellum was arrested, but when he appeared in court, again before Justice Watkins, Watkins said he would not take the evidence of a colored person. Watkins was subsequently arrested by a U.S. Marshall and the Grand Jury of the U.S. District Court heard the testimony of Inspector Robinus. The newly-appointed district attorney, however, insisted on bringing the case not before the district court, but before the U.S. Circuit Court some months hence. In the meantime, Inspector Robinus, who had diligently pursued the case, was ordered to report to Charleston, South Carolina and, subsequently, the case disappeared from the Freedmen's Bureau records.

The frustration of Bureau agents in dealing with local courts is especially apparent in their investigations of illegal child apprenticeships. Following slavery, slaveowners found other ways to hold black laborers—one of which was child apprenticeships. Letters in the archives of the Freedmen's Bureau indicate that a majority of former slaveowners held several bound minors. Owners virtuously expressed the belief that they were protecting the children,

and the apprenticeships were for the children's own good. A Centreville planter kept one boy, in his words, because, "his mother is not qualified to take care of him for she is very worthless herself and the boy is very small and not large enough to be worth any wages." He paid wages to her other boy and even made the claim that "they would have all been dead this day had it not been for me." Yet, an agent of the Bureau wrote, "It is a noticeable fact that these philanthropists only bro't forward for binding such children as would be of service to themselves and children below 11 years of age were left to the tender mercies of their parents"

Children were a form of cheap labor for former slaveowners- cheaper than even the meager wages paid to adults. Girls were also paid less than boys-an early example of gender discrimination coupled with racial discrimination. The Bureau recorded the wage rate on the Eastern Shore as:

"Harvest hands: \$2-2.50 per day: Field Hands \$15 to \$20 per month. House servants (female) from \$6 - \$8 per month. Minor boys from 12 to 14 years of age \$50 per year clothing and subsistence. Girls of same age: \$25 per year clothing and board."

In cases where the Freedmen's Bureau tried to return apprenticed children to their parents, owners sometimes demanded the parents pay for the "trouble" they had gone to in keeping the child.

Black parents brought numerous complaints to the Freedmen's Bureau that their children were being illegally bound to former owners. In Maryland, the number of apprenticeships tripled in the years following the Emancipation Act. In 1867, 4,212 apprentices were identified by the Bureau in Maryland. Bureau agents clearly saw the practice as illegal and immoral but were greatly hampered in their efforts to free the children by the practices of local courts. The Assistant Commissioner of the Bureau in Maryland wrote,

"...A large majority of the complaints received refer to the illegal apprenticing of colored children, until they are eighteen and twenty one years of age, which is in fact a phase of slavery. No language can be too strong in condemnation of this evil. Parents are deprived of those who are able and willing to support them while children are denied the blessings of education and doomed to spend long years in toil and servitude without an adequate compensation. In most cases this is done in compliance with legal forms, but there is every reason to suppose from statements made by parents that misrepresentation and threats have been used to compel their attendance at Orphan's Court which attendance considered equivalent to their consent and

in many cases not even the attendance of the parent was considered necessary to sanction the compact."

Children could not be legally apprenticed without the consent of parents, but former owners threatened parents who sought the return of their children. In one case, found in these letters, Harriet Johnson, a black mother, demanded the return of her 13-year-old daughter, Adeline Waters who had been a slave to William Stevens.



Woman by Window

Art excerpt from "From Slavery to Calvary" by Roy H. Hickman, Delaware Prison Arts Program

Mrs. Stevens told her if she, "would pay two hundred dollars for the child she could have her and not otherwise." According to Harriet Johnson's affidavit before the Freedmen's Bureau,

" ... [she] appeared before the Orphan's Court of Kent County at the time the child was to be bound out and stated to the Orphan's Court that she objected and would not consent that her child should be bound out by the court to Mr. Stevens-that the Orphan's Court paid no regard to the objections of this deponent but proceeded to bind her said daughter out to Mr. Stevens without the consent of this deponent and against her express objections-that about a week after her child was bound out to Mr. Stevens aforesaid-this deponent called upon Mr. Stevens in relation to her child and Mr. Stevens became very much excited and in an angry and excited manner swore and declared to deponent that if she gave him any trouble about her daughter that this would be too hot to hold her-adding to the declaration a wicked oath.

This violence on the part of Mr. Stevens alarmed deponent and she was afraid to take any steps toward obtaining her child until she was informed by some white persons that it was not lawful for Mr. Stevens to hold her child in any such manner."

The court informed William Stevens on July 25, 1866 that affidavits and complaints had been entered against him, but Adeline Waters was not returned to her mother until Christmas 1867.

The Freedmen's Bureau routinely had to send second and third inquiries for the release of illegally bound children and threatened owners with legal suit if the children were not returned to their parents. Owners typically claimed the children were free to leave but did not want to; or, the owners claimed the parents were mentally or financially incompetent to raise the child. Occasionally, the Bureau complied with the owner and allowed the apprenticeship to stand, but in most cases, the Bureau took the position that, "It is our duty to insist upon the unqualified restoration of those children to their mother. We are determined to aid the parents of bound children and prevent any advantage being taken of their ignorance."

In 1868, a U.S. Circuit Court in Baltimore declared involuntary apprenticeships unconstitutional, based on the Thirteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, which defines blacks and whites as equal citizens, entitled to the same protections and provisions for security. While Maryland agents of the Freedmen's Bureau had previously been frustrated by the obstinacy of local authorities and former slaveowners to terminate child apprenticeships, they were now optimistic about the elimination of this practice and were especially persistent in pursuing cases of illegal apprenticeships. The Freedmen's Bureau in Maryland was terminated in 1868 by order of the Secretary of War. When the Maryland Bureau closed in 1868, 145 cases of forced apprenticeships had been brought to the Bureau that year. Sixty- one of these cases were still pending when the office closed.

Conclusion

The letters of the Freedmen's Bureau reveal the violence, oppression, and frustrations for black people that followed slavery and emancipation. This period in history ushered in new forms of race relations, but ones that mirrored race relations in slavery: exploitation of black labor, residential segregation, poor education, and reign by terror. Many of the separate black towns that now mark the Eastern Shore of Maryland were established at this time. Former slaveowners sometimes built housing for black workers on the margins of their property. These communities became the home for several generations of black families-many of whom continue to live in these segregated, rural communities.

What lessons do we learn from examining the Freedmen's Bureau? Here we see well-intentioned white people often frustrated by the action of others, and black people who, with no other recourse, had to rely on their limited resources to seek social justice. In the face of overwhelming oppression, they worked hard to provide education, shelter, and community for their children. The racial norms of the time would seldom have allowed well-meaning whites to form alliances with black Americans and certainly many, perhaps most, white people conformed to the racial prejudice and actions of the time. One wonders if the moral fervor that

Freedmen's Bureau agents brought to their jobs had been used to create a racially just society, if rather than working to re-create a disrupted social order, Reconstruction might have ushered in a more racially just world.

In the end, the Freedmen's Bureau and those who worked within it helped to reinstate a system of racial inequality that still characterizes race relations on the Eastern Shore. Had more white people challenged the status quo and made alliances with black men and women, perhaps the future would have been different. Maybe that is the lesson learned from these documents: Rather than recreating the injustices of history, people can use their human skills and spirit to organize for racial justice. No doubt, just as those who now work in social service organizations are often frustrated by bureaucratic procedures, lack of resources, and the attitudes and actions of those in power, the Freedmen's Bureau agents were frustrated by the intransigence of racism. But, throughout history, people have challenged the social systems that rob people of human dignity and human rights; the long history of the civil rights movement is proof of this. The story of the Freedmen's Bureau is not a complete history of this place or time. We do not see in these letters how black people organized over the years to challenge the racism they confronted. Nor do we see the work of whites who have allied themselves with progressive causes. By learning more about the conditions under which people have organized for change and seeing the transformations in race relations over time, we can find models for future actions.



Three boys with musical instruments, c. 1894.
Photo by J. Paul Brown for Chalfont Courtesy of Historical Society of Delaware

MIGHTY OAKS: FIVE BLACK EDUCATORS

Judith Y. Gibson University of Delaware

Five Delaware citizens Edwina B. Kruse, Alice Dunbar- Nelson, Dr. W. C. Jason, Pauline A Young, and George A. Johnson for a period of almost 100 years (1866 to 1959) directed and shepherded the education of African American youth in Delaware. Their contributions were without equal. Indeed, it was only because of their interest, concern, and commitment that many African American youth were well-educated during those years of segregation and exclusion. More than anything, these "mighty oaks" teach us that individuals can and do make a difference.

That education for all children in the state of Delaware was less than exemplary in the late 19th and early 20th centuries is indisputable (Reed, 1947; Livesay, 1968). As Livesay has suggested, "Negro education

constituted one of the most disgraceful chapters in Delaware history." But, even in the worst of times, there were those who were determined that the education of black children would not be neglected.

Education of the colored citizens of Delaware was first directed by white missionaries. In 1801, the Friends Abolition Society in Wilmington established a school for the education of blacks and people of color. Approximately 20 pupils attended this school and learned reading, writing, and arithmetic. The first teacher was a member of the society. Later, in 1816, a Negro teacher was employed. By 1850, there were 187 colored students in Delaware schools, and by 1860, colored students numbered 250 (Dunbar-Nelson, 1924).

Prior to 1866, there were seven schools for colored people in the state: one at Newport, one at Odessa, two at Camden, and three in Wilmington. In that year, a group of illustrious white gentlemen created the Delaware Association for the Moral Improvement and Education of the Colored People, which was later renamed the Delaware Association for the Education of Colored People. This benevolent society, aided by contributions from the Freedmen's

Bureau, other citizens, and foreign contributions, accumulated funds to pay teachers' salaries and materials to build schools. Within a year, the number of schools for colored youth had increased to 15.

Seven of the schools were located in New Castle county and the remainder evenly divided between Kent and Sussex Counties. They had a combined enrollment of 700 pupils (Reed, 1947; Livesay, 1968).

According to Livesay, the end of the Civil War and the emancipation of slaves (1863) had not meant the beginning of educational opportunity for black citizens in Delaware. For 10 years, a battle was waged in the state legislature by blacks and sympathetic whites to provide schools for black children. Not until 1875 was state aid finally allocated. In that year, the general assembly of the state enacted legislation that taxed colored citizens for the support of their own schools. This legislation, however, only partially satisfied the funding necessary to support teachers' salaries and to maintain schools. The good colored citizens of the state had to provide all other funding themselves. With a combination of state support and private resources, 43 Negro teachers were employed in 1890 (Livesay, 1968).

Edwina B. Kruse, Alice Dunbar-Nelson, Dr. W. C. Jason, Pauline A Young, and George Anderson Johnson were all imported from other states. Delaware's history of educational neglect for its black citizens made it

inevitable that when hiring was finally done, jobs would go to outsiders. Despite not being native Delawareans, each of the "mighty oaks" took up the challenge with zeal. Each engendered in their students a love of learning, academic excellence, and belief in the race. Each sought to instill in their students an understanding that they could compete favorably with white citizens. Not only did these individuals master the art of academic excellence and transfer it to their students, but each was also a visionary of the time, promoting a positive role of people of color in the United States.

Edwina B. Kruse

Edwina B. Kruse was born in Puerto Rico in 1848 of a German father and Cuban mother. The record of her life is chronicled in unpublished papers located in the University of Delaware Morris Library, Special Collections. Her life and contributions can be found in the collection entitled *This Lofty Oak*, an unpublished manuscript written by Alice Dunbar-Nelson.

According to Dunbar-Nelson, Kruse came to the United States in 1852. Her mother died in 1857 and her father in 1862. Following her father's death, she arrived in "that damned border state" in 1864, where she established schools in southern Delaware. The Delaware Association is attributed with bringing from Connecticut to Delaware this young woman, Edwina B. Kruse, whose duty it was to establish schools in the rural districts. According to unpublished documents, she established schools in the lower two counties. Eventually, in 1867, a school for colored children was started in Wilmington. She came to Wilmington as a teacher at the school, and later, she became its principal. This school, named Howard for General Oliver Otis Howard, superintendent of the Freedmen's Bureau, was located at Twelfth and Orange Streets. For many decades, it was the only high school for colored citizens in the state of Delaware. In fact, the state of Delaware gave new meaning to the words, "boarding school" as the colored residents of all three counties were obliged to attend Howard if they wished to complete a high school education. Students from the lower two counties resided with family, friends, or teachers while attending Howard High in New Castle County. At times, pupils resided with the principal.

Edwina B. Kruse was educated in Massachusetts and at Hampton Institute and became principal of Howard School in 1881 (although some city records do not list her as principal until 1883). Edwina Kruse was attributed with bringing it from the lowly primary school to the academically excellent

school that it became during the 30 years of her leadership. Some believed that Miss Kruse changed the school merely to make it more closely resemble those in which she had been taught. But, her responses to those challenges reflected a philosophy of education that was uniquely her own. When asked for example, "Why do we have drawing, just because they have it in Massachusetts?" she replied, "We are going to have the best of everything." At a time when resources for African American children were low and expectations for them even lower, this was a bold and courageous stance.



Edwina B. Kruse
Courtesy of James E. Newton

Edwina Kruse's dream for the black students of Delaware was a classical education, offered by teachers who had the best preparatory education-that is, a New England education. She understood that well-trained students had a

much better chance of finding employment. She also thought that a cluster of well-trained individuals within the community could help the entire community advance. Toward that end, she envisioned not only a grand high school but also a pharmacy, a health center, a teachers' home, and a home for the elderly within the community. She is credited with the belief that, "...the school is for the betterment of the children, not for the convenience of the teachers." Her qualities included a love for knowledge, orderliness, organizational skills, thoroughness, a love for academic excellence, and an appreciation for culture.

Stories abound regarding the nature of the courses offered at Howard. The curriculum was demanding, with extensive and compulsory academic courses. Classes contained small numbers of students so that individual attention was *derigueur*. According to Reed, the course of study at Howard High School was exemplary. This fact is confirmed by the matriculation of Howard High School graduates at numerous colleges and universities throughout the nation. Miss Kruse is also said to have spent her own inheritance to further the education of deserving Howard graduates at schools such as Lincoln University, the University of Pennsylvania, and Drexel University.

To Kruse's tribute, of the seven students in the class of 1916, one graduated from college and two from normal school. Of the nine graduates of 1917, five entered colleges outside the state and two continued in the normal department at Howard School. The class of 1918 had 12 members: one graduated from college; five attended Howard Normal; and one West Chester Normal. Other Howard students and graduates of this era are Dr. F. Douglas Stubbs, graduate of Dartmouth College and Harvard Medical School, member of the U.S. Chapter of the International College of

Surgeons, staff member of the Philadelphia General Hospital and the Douglass Hospital of Philadelphia; Thomas A. Webster, graduate of Lincoln University; J. Saunders Redding, Brown University graduate, author and professor of English at Hampton Institute, and later at Brown; Louis L. Redding, graduate of Harvard Law School and Delaware's first black attorney; Laurence T. Young, graduate of Ohio University and Chicago Law School; Pauline A. Young, graduate of the University of Pennsylvania and Columbia University (teacher, then librarian at Howard High); Winder L. Porter and his brother William, both graduates of the University of Pennsylvania; their brother Luther J. Porter, valedictorian of his Howard

graduating class, a University of Pennsylvania graduate, and a teacher at Howard High for 30 years; Katherine Porter who graduated from Oberlin; and Dorothy P. Street who earned her undergraduate degree from Temple University and her graduate degree from Fisk.

Edwina Kruse also followed through on her dream to establish a home for the elderly in Wilmington. She founded the Sarah Ann White Home for the aged at 822 French Street, which later (1915) was consolidated with the Layton Home for Colored People. Lincoln University conferred upon Miss Kruse the first honorary degree of doctor of laws that it presented to a woman (Young, 1947).

Dunbar-Nelson wrote, in the January 9, 1926 edition of the Pittsburgh Courier,

"Speaking of the unobtrusive woman who does things without undue hooting through the megaphone, I am reminded of Edwina B. Kruse, of Wilmington, Delaware.

She was educated in New England, and came to Delaware to teach in the "down state" schools for colored children.

It was not long before she was in Wilmington, in a two teacher school, under a white principal. How she became the principal of that school; how it grew from a two room primary to a two story grammar school; how it was named after Gen O. O. Howard, who came to dedicate it; how it grew to be an accredited high school, with a faculty from the best universities in the country, and graduates figuring on the roster of colleges north, south, east and west deserve recognitions. Miss Kruse is retired now on a pension, and a male principal carries on the work which she set so firmly on its feet, but ever and anon a group of teachers or old grads of the school make loving pilgrimage down to 206 East Tenth Street, where she has reigned in her home for so many years, and carry her a tribute for the work she has done. For nearly half a century colored Wilmington meant Howard High School, which gathered under its wings one of the finest little groups of intellectual men and women in the country-all due to the careful culling and pruning of the doughty principal. To have raised the intellectual standard of a community is no small task, but when you add to that, the enduring monument of a splendid school, and the education of thousands of boys and girls, you have an achievement well worth while and a life that has been finely worth living."

According to Dunbar-Nelson, Kruse is remembered for ". . . the intransigent place she made in the souls and hearts and imaginations of the

thousands and thousands, who in life loved and hated, feared and revered, shrank from and adored, but never ignored her."

Alice Dunbar-Nelson

Not surprisingly, one of the teachers at Howard High School is responsible for much of the information regarding Edwina Kruse. That teacher is the venerable Alice Dunbar-Nelson.

Alice Ruth Moore was born in 1875 in New Orleans, Louisiana, where she graduated from Straight College (now Dillard University). She also studied at Cornell University, where she earned a master's degree. She took additional courses at Columbia and at the University of Pennsylvania. During her lifetime, she was a teacher, journalist, speaker/lecturer, administrator, author, poet, and political activist. She was truly a renaissance woman. She was married three times during her life to Paul Laurence Dunbar, noted poet; Henry Arthur Callis, founder of the Alpha Phi Alpha fraternity, a graduate of Cornell, a teacher at Howard High School, and later a medical doctor; and Robert Nelson, journalist and Pennsylvania State Athletic Commissioner.

Dunbar-Nelson wrote for the Washington Tribune a column entitled, "As In A Looking Glass." For the Pittsburgh Courier, she wrote, "From A Woman's Point of View," which later became "Une Femme Dit."

Her books include *The Goodness of St. Rocque and Other Stories*, and *Violets and Other Tales*; part of her Cornell master's thesis was published in *Modern Language Notes* in April 1909. Dunbar-Nelson also wrote an unpublished manuscript entitled *This Lofty Oak* about the life of Edwina B. Kruse, principal at Howard High School in Wilmington, Delaware.

Dunbar-Nelson was a woman of strong convictions. She spent a great deal of her time addressing the woes of the world. In fact, she was secretary of the Peace Committee of the American Friends Service Committee. She was dismissed from her position of 18 years as teacher and head of the English department at Howard High School, by principal Ray Wooten, due to her absence from Social Justice Day in Marion, Ohio in September 1920. Mr. Wooten, a new principal, did not approve her absence from class and summarily dismissed her for, "political activity and incompatibility." His decision was upheld by the central administration.

Dunbar-Nelson pursued each of her interests with fervor. That she was an outstanding English teacher is an understatement. Her papers provide evidence of her philosophy of education and also very detailed outlines of the

course of study for first-, second-, and third-year English courses at Howard High School. For example, first year, first term students studied the following classics: Irving's Sketch Book, Coleridge's Ancient Mariner, and Kingsley's Old Testament Narratives. For rhetoric, Howard High freshmen studied Scott and Denney's Elementary Composition. Poems freshmen memorized included Lincoln's Gettysburg speech; Wordsworth's Sonnet on Milton; "The Holy Supper" from The Vision of Sir Launfal, "He Prayeth Well" from The Pilgrim's Progress, Up From Slavery, Robinson Crusoe, Uncle Tom's Cabin. Those venerated classical works were followed in subsequent years by The Odyssey, Lady of the Lake, Idylls of the King, Twelfth Night, As you Like It, Julius Caesar, Beowulf (in translation), and Macbeth; then works by Spenser, Chaucer, Milton, and Macaulay. You might question whether there was inclusion of works by people of color in the curriculum. One of the finest legacies of Howard High School is that it succeeded in integrating across the curriculum classical educational objectives and the study and appreciation of works by and about people of color. For example, in *The Dunbar Speaker and Entertainer* (1920), Dunbar-Nelson provides a variety of poetic and prose selections. In the forward by Leslie Pinckney Hill (president of Cheyney), he states: "Colored boys and girls have not been reading about heroic black warriors and statesmen, martyrs and saints, They do not ponder enough the pages of the black man's romance written by the black novelist. They have not stored their minds with the poetry that has sung its way out of the black man's sorrow and travail and made a place for itself among the lasting monuments of the world's music." Dunbar-Nelson's *Speaker* was one of her successes in addressing the issue of a classical education with a multicultural perspective.



Alice Dunbar-Nelson
Courtesy of James E. Newton

In addition to the classic works of literature and works of people of color, Dunbar-Nelson also required her students to be knowledgeable of current affairs and to participate in oratorical contests. Not only did she prepare her students to think critically and to speak in an articulate manner, but she also was one of the teachers who made famous the programs and graduation celebrations for which Howard High was renown. In fact, after Dunbar-Nelson was dismissed from Howard High, she returned to attend a class night (program). Anna Broadnax, Latin teacher and a graduate of Oberlin College, created the program. Dunbar-Nelson writes in her diary, ". . . had to tell Anna the exercises were good. They were awful." That she expended so much time and energy on her plans, her teaching, and the critique of the results is not unusual, as she wrote in her diary that ". . . the highest mission of an ordinary mortal [is the] teaching of English."

(Hull, 1984)

For seven of her years at Howard, Dunbar-Nelson also served as director of the summer sessions for colored teachers at Delaware State College (now Delaware State University). It was here that her path crossed with that of Dr. W. C. Jason, another visionary educator in the state. Dr. Jason wrote of Dunbar-Nelson in a poem, "The Three Graces," ". . . One deals in art and literary grace, doth as a princess reign . . . Her name is Alice and her hair is red, for convention not a hoot does she care; but you may bet your life, when all is said, She's got the goods-let those who doubt, beware.!(1915)

Dr. W. C. Jason

Delaware State College was created under the provisions of the second Morrill Act, 1890, and chartered by the state of Delaware in 1891. Its original name was State College for Colored Students, and it opened its doors to students in 1892. A Negro man was selected to serve as the second president of the college, Dr. William C. Jason, Sr., a Methodist preacher of the Delaware Methodist Episcopal Conference. He served as president for 28 years, from 1895 until 1923. Dr. Jason is remembered for his contributions of making Negro youth in Delaware aware of the opportunity for higher education; for hiring Alice Ruth Moore Dunbar-Nelson to conduct the summer school for Negro teachers; his lobbying the state legislature for funding to operate Delaware State College and the summer school; and, finally, in improving the quality of the faculty at the College. Pauline A. Young stated that Dr. Jason was "expected to build academic and industrial

agricultural curricula simultaneously, without adequate funds, staff, or physical plant." (Hoffecker, 1973)

In spite of the obstacles, Dr. Jason's goal was to enhance the educational standards of the student body and to recruit extensively in Wilmington where he found students of distinction-namely, Howard High School graduates. He is attributed with providing black schools in Kent and Sussex counties with their first highly qualified teachers. To his credit, in 1950, the William C. Jason Comprehensive High School was opened in Georgetown to fill the educational vacuum for blacks in lower Delaware. The school was funded through a bequest of the late H. Fletcher Brown who stipulated in his will that, "\$250,000 of his estate be given to help build a Negro high school somewhere in the lower part of the state." Emily Morris, a 1952 Jason graduate said of the school which closed in 1965, "Everybody at Jason counted: secretaries, custodians, teachers, students. Everybody came to the faculty meetings, students, too-and had input about how the school should be run." Those sentiments are reflective of one of the first teachers at Jason High School, Fred. T. Johnson, a Howard High and Indiana University alumnus who favorably compares Jason Comprehensive High and Howard High. This school, named in honor of Dr. William C. Jason, was a living legacy of his commitment to prepare Negro youth for the future and to stress the values of strong character and morality.



W.C. Jason

Courtesy of James E. Newton

Pauline A. Young

The Dunbar-Nelson tradition in Delaware has many tentacles. Not only did Dunbar-Nelson teach at Howard High School so did three members of her family: Leila Moore Young, her sister; Henry Arthur Callis, her second

husband; and Pauline A. Young, her niece, who was first a teacher and then the librarian at Howard High.

Pauline A. Young, born in Medford, Massachusetts, was a modern day version of her famous aunt, Alice Dunbar-Nelson. According to Yancey, Pauline, in her 20s, "embodied all the attributes of the -roaring twenties" (an era characterized by short skirts, far-reaching social changes, and gaiety). Following her father's death, Pauline, her brother, sisters, and mother came to Wilmington, Delaware to live with Dunbar-Nelson. Miss Young attended Howard School from kindergarten through graduation from high school. She matriculated at the University of Pennsylvania and returned to teach at Howard High School. She completed her graduate degree in library science at Columbia University and became the celebrated librarian at Howard. Prior to teaching at Howard, she worked on the press staff at Tuskegee Institute, Alabama. One story indicates that she returned to Wilmington driving a "Model A" Ford.

Miss Young served as teacher and librarian at Howard for 30 years. When she retired, she became a volunteer in the Peace Corps where she was responsible for enhancing the library system in Jamaica. She was a world traveler. She saw Jesse Owens in Berlin in 1936, as he made world history in track and field events. Her other foreign trips included Egypt and the former Soviet Union. She not only was a teacher and librarian, but she also was an historian, writer, lecturer, organizer, community leader, humanitarian, and above all, an individualist. When she was a young woman, she took flying lessons. During her long lifetime, she was a very active member of the NAACP both on the local and national levels. She marched with Martin Luther King, Jr. on the famous Selma to Montgomery, Alabama march. She was a prolific writer. Her "Letters to the Editor" were well-known. One of her mottoes was, "Question everything!" She lived that credo in word and deed. In addition to her daily letter writing, she also authored numerous articles. Miss Young wrote, "The Negro in Delaware: Past and Present," a chapter in Reed's history of Delaware, which in 1947 was the first comprehensive history of blacks in Delaware.



Howard High School Exterior with Students on Playground, c. 1931
Sanborn Collection Courtesy of Historical Society of Delaware

Like her aunt, she was a member of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority. She was one of the charter members of Gamma Chapter at the University of Pennsylvania. Miss Young was honored by many organizations, but one of her proudest moments was the renaming of the library at Howard as the Pauline A. Young Memorabilia Room. That she catalogued and saved every item relating to black history is known and revered throughout the state. She turned the library at Howard into a veritable sanctuary of black history. At her home, in Arden, she continued to save every bit of paper created about and by black people. Her home became an oasis for writers and scholars who wished primary documents and stories about Black history. Like Edwina Kruse, her home was also a place where former Howardites stopped to chat-a-chat that usually lasted for hours.

Miss Young was one of the persons Wilringtonians knew to contact whenever one needed information. If she could not provide the answer, true to her profession, she knew exactly where to send the researcher. Only once did her memory fail her! She was a contestant on a game show, "Tic-Tac-Dough". Old Mother Hubbard did not come to her mind when asked in the

category of nursery rhymes, "Who went to the cupboard to find her old dog a bone?"

One should not infer from that example that Miss Young, the inveterate bachelorette, knew little about children. One of her friends was planning a cross country trip with an infant girl. She was expressing dismay about diapers. Miss Young told her friend not to worry as the pharmacy sold a product called "Chux" - disposable diapers. This incident happened in 1944.

George Anderson Johnson

Illiteracy among school-age Negroes by the time the First World War began was, for all practical purposes, eliminated, according to Livesay. Due to the beneficence of Pierre S. duPont, 86 Negro schools were built between 1922 and 1928, at a personal cost of more than 5 million dollars. Mr. duPont had made the offer to finance schools for Negro youth in 1917. However, he made it conditional upon the enactment of a new school code which would relieve the unjust tax burden on Negroes, equalize teachers' salaries in white and Negro schools, and ensure the new schools, once built, would be properly staffed and maintained. It took four years to overcome the resistance of the downstate legislators to this program. They and their constituents had little interest in Negro education and saw the proposed schools as an added tax burden.

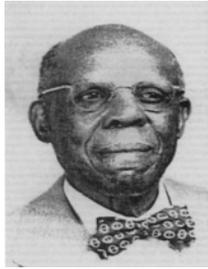
In 1924, George Anderson Johnson was hired as principal of Howard High School. According to Howard graduate and former teacher, Mr. Luther J. Porter, Mr. Wooten left-reportedly after having resigned, and Mr. Johnson was hired following a national search. Mr. Johnson, the son of a slave, was born in Shelby County, Kentucky on April 22, 1889. He moved from Kentucky to Bloomington, Indiana to live with his father. Howard High School, a symbol both of black achievement and racial isolation, was described by Johnson, principal from 1924 until 1959, as a disgraceful firetrap in the early 1920s. His complaints prompted Pierre S. duPont to donate nearly one million dollars to build a new building which was completed at Thirteenth and Poplar Streets, in 1928. Upon the completion of the building, Mr. Johnson diligently selected staff and the school became fully accredited by the Middle States Accreditation Association in 1930. Through the years, Howard High School has become nothing less than a legend for

Delaware blacks. There may be as many explanations for the legend of

Howard High School as the school has graduates, but one man whose influence is acknowledged by most is former principal George A. Johnson.

George A. Johnson, a black man, graduated from Indiana University in 1915 and received a master's degree from Columbia University in 1925. He was the epitome of the learned scholar who is a leader, teacher, and humanitarian. He was concerned with the welfare of the students and teachers, and his philosophy of education was based upon all children's receiving a fine education. He understood the intrinsic value of young black people's being taught by those of their own race who were themselves achievers. His philosophy of education also included teachers' being scholars and actively remaining life-long learners. For example, he learned to speak German in college and remained fluent by conversing with German immigrants who lived near his home in Stanton.

Johnson surrounded himself with intelligent and skilled faculty who had earned degrees from the Pennsylvania State University, University of Pennsylvania, Massachusetts School of Fine Arts, Lincoln University, Hunter, Cheyney State Teachers College, Radcliffe, Bowdoin College, Rutgers University, Howard University, Cornell, and Oberlin. Howard High School graduates will never forget Pauline A. Young, Nellie B. Taylor, C. Gwendolyn Redding, Lillian Spencer Mayo, G. Oscar Carrington, Millard Naylor, Arleon Bowser, Alice Dunbar-Nelson, Etta J. Woodlin, Natalie H. Cross, George T. Whitten, Pauline Coleman, James A. Gardiner, Sadie T. Jones, Luther J. Porter, Margaret J. Gardiner, George L. Johnson, Yvonne Jensen, and Anna F. Broadnax, a Phi Beta Kappa graduate of Oberlin. Impressive as the list of faculty, the roster of graduates reads like a "Who's Who in Black America." The outstanding faculty at Howard High took an interest in the students and became an integral part of their lives. When Howard High graduates stand to proudly sing their alma mater, the words, "Dear Howard, thy sons and thy daughters are here to give thee great praise as thy due," the alumni recognize the faculty as teachers, parents, and role models who provided for them both a haven and an inspiration. Over the years, enrollment at Howard flourished. In 1930, the staff consisted of 27 teachers and the principal, with 68 students in the class of 1931 and 82 students in the graduating class of 1934. In that year, the total enrollment was 476 pupils in grades seven through 12. By 1947, student enrollment at Howard was 1,079, of which 449 were senior high school students (Young, 1947).



George Anderson Johnson
Courtesy of Judith Y Gibson

Mr. Johnson, who was known as a strict disciplinarian with a liberal sense of humor, guided the faculty and students in a fatherly manner. Alumni report that although their school facility may not have remained state of the art, the quality of their education was excellent. Students knew they could go anywhere from Howard as their teachers were the best. In fact, George M. Chappell states, ". . . uniquely blessed with the combination of good staff, good facilities, and adequate funds, Howard overcame many of the bonds of discrimination to allow Black students the opportunity of an education equal to or better than their white counterparts."

Johnson's vision was to improve the school facility itself, a goal which was realized with the gift from Pierre S. duPont, to increase the academic achievement of its students, and to foster an environment in which each student could attain his or her potential. Mr. Johnson was regarded as a staunch proponent of athletics. He was revered as an even more forceful champion of academic excellence. He also felt music held a primary role in uplifting people. As a result, Howard High became a center for cultural events for the community. In addition, Johnson supported and fostered the faculty's philosophy that Howard High School was the venue for each student's achieving the status of full citizenship; that the school should contribute to the political and social life of the community by providing educational experiences in democratic living; that those educational experiences could be fostered through activities such as student council, assemblies, athletics, glee clubs, and inter-school gatherings; and, the school

should cooperate with such organizations as will help pupils attain full citizenship: the NAACP, YMCA, YWCA, churches, and scouts.

During his tenure as principal, Johnson was known to talk frequently about his college alma mater, Indiana University. In fact, he was responsible for sending many Howard graduates to IU, including his own four children. In 1968, Indiana University conferred upon him its Distinguished Alumni Service Award which

reads,

"We honor a devoted alumnus whose professional and personal life has been dedicated to public school education. As teacher and high school principal he inspired young people to study hard, think quietly, talk gently, and act frankly." Every child became as his own; for each he nurtured the parents' hope of success in school, college, and life. Aware that, "slavery is but half abolished, emancipation is but half completed while free men are left without education, he has successfully labored to raise the standards of the secondary schools in which he served to prepare students academically equipped to compete with their peers in their advanced studies. Always ready to assist his alma mater, he has sent many of his best qualified students to her halls of learning, has helped revitalize the Alumni Club in his community, and holds the record in his class of 1915 for the most descendants to have graduated from Indiana University. Knowing that education is a refuge in adversity, he has dedicated his time in retirement to helping society's failures return to group living as worthwhile citizens; and, his standing is high in the minds of all the members of his community. A grateful University recognizes his long service with pride and affection."

During Johnson's 35 years as principal, Howard High was increasingly well-known for its academic excellence, its athletic prowess, and its musical and cultural programs and achievements. It is fitting to share a few words of the late George A. Johnson. These quotations are taken from a presentation before the Wilmington Principal's Association of which he had been president, just before his retirement in 1959. He states,

"Last year in Milwaukee I made the assertion that racial integration should proceed with a fair degree of smoothness, due to the fact that groundwork through human relations had been laid over a period of years. Many of my listeners were skeptical and challenged those remarks. Today, 68 percent of our public school pupils attend integrated schools."

"Allow me to give a little background. Twenty years ago Wilmington, like

most southern cities, (having legal segregation in its public schools), by custom and tradition followed the regular pattern. Children were born in different hospitals, they later attended separate schools. Their relatives were and still are being buried in separate cemeteries-complete separation of the living, the educable, and dead from the cradle through the schools to the grave."

"Our schools were receiving the inertia of poor relationships. Our Howard High School could not borrow a football field from its own public school system upon which to play other Negro schools. Too, our team was tabooed from passing through a certain section of the town to get to a public park to practice. The school principals of Negro schools were denied the privilege of attending commencement exercises and other activities in other Wilmington Public Schools. . . Our Howard faculty set forth objectives for our school. Now to implement those objectives! We realized that the universal language was to be music, that the most democratic practice in America was demonstrated through athletics. With this in mind when we sought a music director, we carefully chose the best available. With an improved choir and a splendid marching band, we began to accept invitations to civic activities. Many otherwise intelligent people believe all Negroes are musical, that they can sing. That in its entirety is not true. Today, we cannot begin to accommodate the demands in the city and county for appearances from our music department."

"Simultaneously with our advent in music came the adventure in athletics, and with it the precarious game of football. We started with a scheduled game with a parochial school. This occasioned a very vigorous protest to the newly-appointed superintendent. The basis of complaints were that it was against tradition and would surely lead to a race riot. The game was played! It was largely attended. It was fiercely but cleanly contested and ended in a 7 to 7 tie. The next year because of the demand from the student body of two public schools, games were scheduled with their respective teams. The aforementioned parochial school which was also on the taboo (list) with other public schools used the Howard High School bridge of logic to play other public schools. It was shown that the ruling "public schools of the city should play nothing but other public schools" had been invalidated since Howard was a public school."

Ever the tactful diplomat, Mr. Johnson continued:

"I would say in fairness to our colleagues of Wilmington that our

administration and principals are themselves loyal to the best traditions of education. Without their sympathetic and understanding attitudes, the whole advance in the relationship of schools and even the process of racial integration itself would, in my opinion, have been difficult. While no administrators or principals have been crusaders, they have in many instances realized, that with world conditions as they are, any steps toward -one nation, under God, indivisible . . . - would not only be in harmony with what should be our goal, but would present a better picture of Americans at home and abroad. Ever mindful of the biblical injunction, -Let him not boast who putteth on the saddle as one who taketh it off,' I should say that 68 percent of Wilmington's children who are exposed to integration are just as happy as the remaining 32 percent who, for reasons of residence and previous condition, have not participated in this new experience."

In conclusion, as one reflects upon the lives of these five exceptional educators, one notices common threads. Each held education in very high esteem. Each exhibited respect, understanding, commitment, and positive regard for people of color. In return, they were heralded by students, faculty, and the black community as individuals who could be trusted to provide a positive and nurturing learning environment. In regard to Howard High School, students, faculty and parents knew the children had a right to attend, but the students were proud to attend Howard. For almost 100 years, Howard High School, with good teachers, good facilities, and adequate budgets produced well-educated students who went to the finest schools and competed with the best. Moreover, during Howard's resplendent years, it was the center of the community, its pupils and their families paid homage to it, and its graduates were honored to be part of it.



Howard High School

PART TWO



Hootenanny

Art excerpt from "From Slavery to Calvary" by Roy H. Hickman, Delaware
Prison Arts Program

THE GROWTH OF DELAWARE'S ANTEBELLUM FREE AFRICAN AMERICAN COMMUNITY

Peter T. Dalleo Wilmington, Delaware

Free African Americans had a long and important history in Delaware before the Civil War. Although openly discriminated against, free people of color, as individuals and in groups, actively expressed their opinions on contemporary issues. They petitioned the state demanding action on abolition, emigration, and education. They sought religious freedom and fairness in labor practices. Their voices spoke passionately about their sense

of justice, independence, and desire for equality. When the white majority responded to their growing numbers by passing harsh, restrictive legislation, free blacks throughout the state nonetheless found ways of creating economically and socially viable families and communities. Throughout the first half of the 19th century, Wilmington's free blacks developed into the largest African American community in the state and eagerly accepted a leadership role in the struggle for equal rights.

Early on, the number of free blacks in the state grew representing the vast majority of Delaware's African American population and a significant portion of the total state population. By 1790, Kent County registered 2,570 free African Americans, compared to New Castle's 639, and Sussex's 600. During the early 1800s, opposition to slavery led slaveholders to increase the numbers of those who were given their freedom. As a result of that trend, half of the black population, or 13.5 percent of the total state population of 1,800, consisted of free blacks. By 1810, Delaware supported a larger proportion of free people in its African American population (76 percent) than New York (63 percent) or New Jersey (42 percent). By the 1830s, population shifts led to the largest African American population settling in New Castle County. In the 1840s and 1850s, Wilmington, bolstered by migration from the southern counties, sustained a free African American population that numbered over 2,000 inhabitants. Increasingly more blacks became free, not so much from having been freed as from being born free, of free parents. Sussex alone retained a comparatively large population of slaves; the numbers in Kent and New Castle County decreased. By 1840, Wilmington held only 15 slaves; by 1850, none. By the eve of the Civil War, free blacks represented 92 percent of the total African American population and 18 percent of the total state population. Only 1,798 slaves remained in the state in 1860, while freed blacks numbered nearly 20,000.

As the size of the free African American population grew, Delaware's legislature enacted increasingly harsh legislation to restrict their political and economic progress. These laws typified those of slave states in the Upper South where free outnumbered non-free blacks. In these states, fears developed among the white majority that the growing presence of free blacks would cause problems. William Yates, an African American minister who visited the state in the late 1830s, described this situation as the "mark of the beast," (i.e., the mockery of freedom that burdened Delaware's African American populace). "They are truly neither slaves nor free; being subjected

to the disabilities and disadvantages of both conditions; and enjoying few of the benefits of either"⁴⁰

Of course, even free African Americans risked the threat of being grabbed by slave catchers, or arrested, because, although they were free, they were thought to be slaves. One of the most notorious of the slave catchers was Patty Cannon. She lived four miles west of Seaford, on the Sussex border with Maryland. The presence of such gangs meant that free African Americans lived in a constant state of fear that they or members of their families would be sold into slavery. The kidnappers found that taking free blacks had far fewer consequences than seizing those who were slaves.

In this period before the Civil War, legislators passed a range of acts designed to prevent African Americans from achieving equality. For example, free blacks, although they paid taxes, could neither vote nor testify in a courtroom against whites. There were few schools available for their children. In 1821, the state passed a law that denied state aid for the education of free blacks. In 1826, a law was passed requiring free African Americans to carry identity papers at all times signed by an authorized white person. A few years later, a law was passed denying them the right to bear arms, although in 1835, that law was amended to allow for annual registration. As of 1839, only free African Americans could be sold if convicted of a crime. In 1845, they were banned from buying or selling alcohol.

The Delaware legislature also passed laws that restricted the size of gatherings of free blacks as well as their movement in and out of state. As of 1832, it was illegal for more than 12 free blacks to hold a meeting past 10 p.m. in winter without three respectable whites present. A series of laws minimized the amount of time blacks could spend away from Delaware. An act in 1811 reduced the time away from two years to six months; in 1849, to 60 days; and in 1863, to five days. Only sailors and watermen were exempted. By 1849 it was illegal to be unemployed while poor, and the state held the power to sell anyone judged such into servitude. The law also allowed authorities to bind out only African American children. The presence of such legislation made life extremely difficult for free African Americans.

The attitude of the majority population toward free blacks is also revealed in unsuccessful legislation. In 1792 and 1852, attempts were made to prohibit free blacks from buying land. The attempts failed, although they received substantial support in the legislature. So too, did endeavors by abolitionists in

1832, 1837, and 1851 to repeal earlier laws which allowed the sale of Delaware's slaves out of state. Abolitionists had also introduced legislation to abolish slavery, hoping they would succeed because Delaware was one of the few slave states in which the legislature was not dominated by slaveholders. They failed. The closest the state came to passing abolition was in 1847 when the Delaware House of Representatives voted for an act to abolish slavery-the Senate vetoed the act.



Maryland Historical Society
Drawing of a Plantation

Free persons of African descent in Maryland found life very difficult for there were many laws to hamper them, too. All too often, free blacks were kidnapped and sold into slavery again. Then too, they were abused in business, had property damaged, and generally were harassed at every turn. Even so, the Maryland black progressed, letting his determination and hard work speak for him. Schools were set up in the early 1800s in Baltimore for adult free blacks and later, for a few of the black boys. A Catholic organization also started a school to educate black

girls.

Understanding why a majority of whites in Delaware backed or at least did not oppose such legislation is a complex matter. There were whites like Thomas Garrett, a Quaker, who opposed slavery and was active in the abolitionist movement. Beginning with the post-Revolutionary period on, private owners in Delaware had freed 76 percent of the slave population. In 1840, the Delaware Supreme Court ruled that color was not a presumption of slavery—a very progressive position for that time. Yet, it seems the case that many felt that blacks were inferior and only useful as laborers or family servants and not social equals. These political, economic, and social obstacles to equality did not go unchallenged. Free blacks actively used the existing legal system to fight for their rights and sometimes went outside of it. The free black population understood the oppressive nature of slavery and supported the abolition movement in a number of ways. Some chose to sign petitions advocating abolition, which circulated during the first half of the century. Abraham Doras, a well-respected Wilmington barber who died in 1825, felt seriously enough about the movement to will \$100 to the local abolition society. Solomon Bayley, a former Kent County slave, travelled to Wilmington to cooperate with abolitionists who published his dramatic story in which he passionately portrayed his road to freedom. An 1849 petition from Kent County reveals that African Americans were also well aware that much of the discrimination against them was based on color: "We are free men yet we are guilty of a Skin A thing That was not in our power to controleye it was the will of him who made us To be his accountable creation."⁴¹

African Americans petitioned various levels of government on a variety of issues. When necessary, they even used the courts. Numerous individuals addressed the topics of personal freedom and economic discrimination in their appeals. To explain his thinking about using the legal avenues open to him, Solomon Bayley wrote: "I thought where the law made liberty the right of any man, he could not be wrong in trying to recover it."⁴² He threatened to take his master to court for transporting his family out of state and immediately selling them on arrival in Virginia. His firm stance led to an out-of-court settlement and an arrangement to buy his freedom over time. Bayley later purchased the freedom of his wife, Thamar, and his children, (Spence,

Margaret, and Leah). Many others, when their masters violated the law, successfully petitioned the courts to achieve what was rightfully theirs. In one such case, Noah Burton contested a former employer's claim that because he was illiterate, he could not have kept accurate accounts over a three year period of what he was owed and, therefore, should not be paid. The court, however, accepted the validity of Burton's "notched stick" evidence on which he recorded dates, type of work, and amount of money owed by different cuts on the stick. As a result, Burton won his case.

The presence of free African Americans in the state was so feared that in the 1820s an African colonization effort was begun, which proposed sending thousands of free blacks to Liberia. In Wilmington, an organization called the Union Colonization Society called for the removal of "free negroes and mulattoes" as essential for the state's white inhabitants. The state legislature supported the statement. But, there was tremendous opposition from some segments of the free black population. In the late 1820s, according to one Sussex County farmer, the free blacks and most of the slaves in Dagsboro Hundred opposed it. In 1831, Wilmington's Abraham Shadd, a shoemaker, William S. Thomas, a former teacher, and Peter Spencer, a minister, crafted one of the most telling statements about black thought on the subject. The proclamation openly declared that free blacks belonged in the United States and with proper support could become productive citizens:

Africa is neither our nation or home. . . . That our degraded condition . . . cannot be bettered by removing the most exemplary individuals of color amongst us. . . . Our highest moral ambition should be to acquire for our children a liberal education, give them mechanical trades, and thus fit and prepare them for useful and responsible citizens. ⁴³

Shadd, nearly 20 years later, moved part of his family to Canada. Among them was his daughter, Mary Ann, a teacher who became an even more adamant proponent of integration and the first black woman to edit a newspaper, *The Provincial Freeman*. She eventually returned to the U.S. where she became involved in the women's movement.

Education was yet another area where free blacks pressed for equality. As early as 1801, the editor of the *Mirror of the Times* boasted about the civility of the city's free black population but bemoaned the regrettable lack of educational opportunities for them. In succeeding decades, some African American parents sent their children to schools backed with funding from Quaker and other religious groups. Many others were not as fortunate. As

members of Wilmington's Quaker-based African School Society explained in a 1843 petition to the state:

There are several hundred of colored children in this City, who, being excluded from the benefit of our free Schools, remain in great measure dependent on charity for the means of obtaining the first rudiments of education, or they must otherwise grow up neglected and debased, forming a noxious mass in the midst of our population. ⁴⁴

Others in the African American community refused to leave their hopes solely in the hands of educational reformers such as the African School Society. Instead, they taught their children themselves or petitioned public authorities for relief. For example, in October 1846, Wilmington's City Council minutes contain a request by William Saunders, a barber, and other African American residents who asked, "for an appropriation for the education of their children...." ⁴⁵ The following summer, Daniel Baily and other ministers of the different congregations of color in this city submitted a similar demand.



Underground Railroad Station
Art excerpt from "From Slavery to Calvary " by Roy H. Hickman,
Delaware Prison Arts Program

Unfortunately, the decade of the 1850s brought harsher not less restrictive legislation. The severity of the 1850 laws, including those that specified the time that free African Americans would spend away from Delaware, not surprisingly, drew the organized attention of many throughout the state. Wilmington's free blacks were particularly active. In 1853, larger in number and stronger in voice, the city's African American community spoke out as evidenced by the 221 signatures from Wilmington and New Castle County

attached to a petition condemning the new legislation. Among the city signees, in addition to the names of many laborers, are those of barbers such as Benjamin Sharper, John Gray, Jesse Jones, blacksmith Michael Sterling, minister Moses Chippey, tailor Robert Graves, members of the Underground Railroad, mason Comegys Munson, and brickmaker, Henry Craig, Jr. According to an earlier petition they asked:

to exempt free people of collar in perticular to establish our freedom which we have occasion to pass or Travel from This State to any other as for instance... to the city of Philadelphia]. .. By Steem boat or Stage, we have been exceedingly anoyd And put to very considerable inconvenience and eaven competed to Leave the boat and thereby entirely defeated from accomplishing our just and lawful business because we have not a certificate from some White person.... This we believe to be a great grievance &nd unjust. ... We pay our Taxes Every year for support of government. Then why may we not be permitted to pass our travel from This State to any other in pursuit of our just and Lawful business. ⁴⁶

Undoubtedly, the most dramatic way in which Delaware's free Mrican Americans exercised their sense of justice, and the one which continues to capture public attention today, is their role on the Underground Railroad. The secret nature of this daring enterprise makes it unlikely that historians will ever be able to

determine with any exactness how many of Delaware's black population-free and unfree-were active participants or for that matter fled from the area. Yet more than enough evidence exists to argue that the support of the African American community throughout the state was essential to its success. Lewes, Camden, Frederica, Dover, Blackbird, Middletown, St. George's, Odessa, New Castle, and Wilmington are among those places that functioned as stations along the escape route. Quakers, especially Wilmington's Thomas Garrett, and outsiders such as Harriet Tubman are deservedly credited with operating or using the Railroad. Many others risked their own freedom and safety. Most of the African American names we know are from the Wilmington area "conductors:" Comegys Munson, mason, Henry Craig, brickmaker; Severn Johnson, oysterman; Jane Morris, the 50-year- old woman who worked in Garrett's household; and Joseph Walker, originally from the West Indies, a laborer. Among those who also deserve attention are Joe Finney of Kent County who was part of an organized network of small craft that operated in small inlets near Little Creek and may have carried

away dozens of runaways to freedom. These free black men and women built the groundwork for their late antebellum successors such as Samuel D. Burris, a school teacher near Camden, and William Brinkley who also operated in the southern counties. Nor should the focus on individual efforts deflect our attention from those made by larger groups such as church members who sometimes sang songs such as "Swing Low Sweet Chariot" or "Go Down Moses" to alert an entire congregation to the movement of fugitives. Although most runaways came from out of state, Delaware's slaves also fled from servitude. After all, according to African American William Still, who ran a station in Pennsylvania and knew many of Delaware's covert operatives, the First State's free and unfree African Americans were "wide awake to escape."⁴⁷ Newspapers ranging from the Mirror of the Times to the Delaware Gazette and the Delaware State Journal contain ads about runaway slaves from

Delaware. Although advertisements suggest that some headed for local destinations, it is probable that a number of them successfully fled north. For example, information continues to surface about escapees such as the Delawarean named Mott who, once out of the state, established himself as a minister in New Jersey. In the 1840 and 1850 federal censuses, the Reverend Mott listed New Jersey as his birthplace. Only after the Civil War did he feel secure enough to admit the truth. There are also a few complicating instances of runaways from other states who, once in Delaware, remained there with new identities, employment, and lives until discovered by the authorities.

In the struggle to achieve greater recognition for their claims against injustice, Wilmington's free black population also extended its links to neighboring Philadelphia to participate in regional and national activities such as the Methodist Conference, or the AntiSlavery Society, or the National Convention for the Improvement of Free People of Color. Wilmingtonians interacted with those who had Delaware connections such as Samuel Cornish. Born free in Delaware, Cornish moved to Philadelphia and then to New York; he eventually became a Presbyterian minister and the editor of the first black paper in the United States, the Freeman. Unfortunately, segregationist practices supplemented religious observances. For example, not many blacks became Quakers and, although the Methodists accepted larger numbers, in churches or at camp meetings, free and unfree African Americans were relegated to stands, pews, or balconies in the back during services.

Despite living in a state of poverty or semi-poverty, free African

Americans found ways to survive and build a future for themselves and their families as they became an essential aspect of the economic growth of the state. Although the majority population could not grasp the preference of many free blacks to select when, where, for whom, and for how long they would toil, whites admitted that without the contributions of blacks, the Delaware economy would not have prospered. In both rural areas and Wilmington, most free African Americans found work as laborers. On occasion, they also agreed to work on grand projects such as the building of the Chesapeake and Delaware Canal.

Although the percentage of skilled workers in Wilmington declined from 14 percent in 1814 to six percent in 1860, many of its black inhabitants followed the city's tradition of skilled African Americans (see Table I). For example, in the 18th century, Gabriel Jackson, a free black, was the only man to build a brig on the Brandywine. By the 1850s, families such as the Sterling's boasted a father and son as blacksmiths. Michael Sterling's shop on East Fourth Street supported a family of five in a home on Walnut Street. In 1850, at the age of 62, he held real estate valued at \$2,000; by 1860, it had grown to \$3,000. The life of Robert Graves, a signer of the 1853 petition, exhibits upward mobility. He began as a waterman in 1845 but five years later was a shopkeeper with real estate valued at \$650. By 1860, Graves by then a 40-year-old with a tailor shop, owned real estate valued at \$4,000. Calep Milbourn, one of Delaware's few African American cabinetmakers, made a living fashioning items which appear in inventories of African American inhabitants—bedsteads, bureaus, tables, and chairs. He also made something that they all needed sooner or later—coffins.

By 1850, almost five percent of the city's free African Americans held real estate in Wilmington, with a total value of \$42,596. The range for individuals ran from \$100 to \$6,000. Amelia Shadd (75) owned \$6,000 followed by widow Elizabeth Eves (80) and the blacksmith Michael Spencer with \$2,000 each. Grocer Absalom Williams was next in line with \$1,400. Most laborers fell into the \$200 to \$300 range. Ten years later, Wilmington's African Americans held real estate worth \$66,925 and personal worth of \$27,375. Most of the city's free blacks lived in frame houses although, by mid-century, city laws required new buildings of brick. Although not many inventories from African Americans have survived, the following inventories found in the Delaware State Archives offer some idea of the level of material culture in their community:

Inventory Joseph Pindergrass, January 19, 1843	
Goods and Chattel	
1 tinfoil stove	\$3.00
1 horse	14.00
1 horse cart	6.00
1 old poplar table	.50
1 old bureau	1.00
1 bedstead, bed, bedding	5.00
8 old windsor chairs	2.00
1 grind stone & hangings	1.50
1 looking glass	.25
1 shovel	.25
Total	\$38.50

Inventory of Nathaniel Robinson, January 17, 1860	
Cash	\$2.04
Clock, looking glass & pictures	4.25
3 tables, 1 settee, 12 chairs & stand	8.95
3 feather beds, 2 pair bedsteads & bedding	18.50
A lot of dishes & ware	3.52
Rocking chair, and a lot of old chairs	1.25
3 bushels of shells & water vases	1.50
Waring [sic] clothes & bureau latch	12.00
A lot of old carpet & old rags	2.00
Checkings	2.00
Saws, old iron	3.00
Total	\$72.51 [¢]

African Americans in both the city and in southern communities apparently took advantage of maritime opportunities. In Wilmington, jobs held by free blacks included a bargeman, boatman, fishermen, seaman, stevedore, waterman (to which we can add master of a vessel), and an unspecified activity related to oysters. African Americans near places such as the Indian River or Assawoman Bay in Sussex County, employed canoes, bateaux, "saltwater rowboats," and simple handnets to catch migratory fish such as herring and shad, or they dug for oysters and raked for clams. The

1860 Census includes a group of 67 free African American sailors in Milford, Milton, Lewes, Seaford, and Laurel. Such an interest in maritime jobs may help to explain why Milton was an exception to the general rule that skilled African Americans declined in number during the first half of the century. In 1850, ten percent of the town's free black population was skilled; in 1860, 22 percent were.

Table I: Occupations of African Americans in Wilmington in 1845 and in 1857⁴⁸

1845	woolpicker	mason
barber		match maker
blacksmith	1857	minister
brickmaker	barber	morocco dresser
carpenter	bargeman	moulder
carter	blacksmith	ostler
chimney sweep	boarding	oysters
cooper	boatman	painter
cordwainer	brickmaker	pedlar
ditcher	cabinetmaker	porter
domestic	carpenter	seaman
farmer	cartman	seamstress
fisherman	clothier	scavenger
gardener	dining saloon	shoemaker
grocer	domestic	stevedore
huckster	ditcher	steward
laborer	driver	tailor
mantuamaker	engineer	tanner
mason	farmer	teacher
ostler	fisherman	teamster
porter	foreman	trimmings
soap boiler	gardener	waiter
tanner	grain measurer	washerwoman
teacher	helper	whitewasher
waiter	hodman	wood sawyer
waterman	hostler	
whitewasher	laborer	

Newspapers contain enough notices about fatal accidents involving Wilmington's inhabitants to conclude there were definite dangers associated with water-related occupations. An 1825 issue of the Delaware Gazette describes the death of Allen Anderson who, while setting sail on a trip from Philadelphia to Wilmington, fell overboard and drowned. In 1848, the Blue Hen's Chicken noted deaths by drowning of John Gordon, a hand on a pilot boat, and, in a separate incident, John Pindergrass, a cook on board a cutter, who mysteriously disappeared from his vessel and was later found floating in the Christiana River. African American sailors who ventured away from Delaware waters also assumed political risks. In 1848, Jesse Mode, captain of an all black crew out of Wilmington, ventured to Swan Creek in Maryland to pick up a load of logs for a Pennsylvania buyer. Because Maryland law required at least one white man on board a vessel manned by blacks, Mode and his crew endured arrest, imprisonment and a fine. Only the intercession of Thomas Garrett secured their release.

Unlike those in rural agricultural areas, African American women in towns and cities generally took domestic jobs. Nonetheless, the 1845 Wilmington Directory lists only two women with occupations (wool picker and washerwoman) and over 40 widows. It is likely that many of the latter worked as domestic servants or took in washing or sewing. Free, black Wilmington women certainly had a tradition of finding their economic niche. In the 18th century, Mrs. Betty Jackson gained renown for her tea parties, which she held for the city's elite on a platform in a willow tree that could be reached from the second-floor balcony of her home. Her sons, Gabriel Jackson and Jeremiah Shad prospered as a boatbuilder and as a butcher. There is also Aunt Sally Shadd, whom some claim introduced Delaware and the nation to ice cream, and Mrs. Green, who ran a Wilmington boarding house and the anonymous sellers of cakes and other foodstuffs whom passengers patronized at railroad stops. By 1859, three African American women operated a dry goods shop, "Brown & Hartley," out of their home on East Third Street.

Many of Wilmington's free African American population came from the southern counties where most employment was linked to agriculture. Around 1860, about 10 percent in Kent and Sussex were tenant farmers; most of the remainder were temporary farm laborers who worked on the growing and

harvesting of crops such as corn, wheat, and foodstuffs. Tenant farmers might work one or two fields, have a garden for personal use, a pasture for a cow, and possibly a woodlot; they raised little or no surplus. In unique environments such as the Cypress Swamp in Sussex, free blacks took jobs related to the timber industry such as cutting down trees, driving yokes of oxen, and reworking logs into lumber and shingles. Those who did not have land might own oxen, which they could rent out for cultivating fields, hauling wood and bark, or moving buildings. Court records of Noah Burton's, "notched stick account," ⁴⁹ illustrate the types of activities he undertook to earn a living:

1 day working in garden; self.....	\$.75
Work by self and boy50
Getting hay on marsh	5.00
1 day going after oxen.....	.75
3 days work of boy, at 25.....	.75
3 stacks of hay at \$2.00.....	6.00
2 days going after hay; self and boy.....	1.75
1 ½ days hauling drift from sea shore75
1 day's work on cape75
½ of an ox hide	1.40
Hire of oxen.....	4.00
1 day's work of self and Jacob Wessels	1.50
1 day's work of self and another.....	1.50
	\$25.40

Some free African Americans left Delaware to seek opportunities elsewhere. In the late 18th and early 19th century, former slaves such as Absalom Jones and Richard Allen went to Philadelphia for religious reasons; Solomon and Tamar Bayley of Kent County relocated to Liberia to settle there as farmers. Peter Laws of Smyrna went to Haiti to pursue economic ventures. Members of the Shadd family left the city in the 1830s for Pennsylvania; then in the 1850s, went to Canada to seek political freedom.

Among the more interesting emigrants is William Spencer Anderson, son of Wilmington brickmaker, Daniel B. Anderson. In 1852, 20-year-old William, then a barber from Burlington, New Jersey, left for Africa as an emigrant. In Liberia, he joined a relative, J. M. Richardson of New York, who

owned a farm on the St. Paul's River and traded with the local Africans. When his uncle drowned, Anderson inherited his plantation. William decided not to engage in trading and instead concentrated on growing sugar. In the early 1860s, he returned to Wilmington to exhibit some of his products and to bring his sister, Harriet, who had taught briefly at the Female African School, her husband Gerald Rollins, and their son back to Liberia. By 1869, Anderson's involvement in politics gained him a seat in the Liberian House of Representatives and an appointment as Speaker of the House. As a government officer, he headed up an exploration of the interior to develop new commercial outlets with indigenous Africans and later became a member of a loan-negotiation team in London. Unfortunately, one year after visiting his parents in Wilmington in 1871, on his return to Liberia, Anderson died of a gunshot wound in Liberia caused by a rival sugar planter and political opponent.

Most free African Americans, especially in the southern counties, however, found it difficult to leave their impoverished setting. Although a few received something akin to "freedom dues" when manumitted, even tenant farming kept them at a subsistence level. In rural areas, most free blacks lived in one room houses 15 feet wide and 18 feet long, with a shingle roof, brick chimney, two windows, and a pine floor. They normally owned cooking utensils, some hand tools, and perhaps some furniture, which consisted of pine beds, tables, chests, stools, or chairs. A few, according to one

long-time Sussex County resident, were able to make a comfortable living from their work and gained the respect of the white populace. Even fewer were true success stories.

Although they could not become doctors and lawyers, some African Americans found other ways to accumulate significant amounts of material wealth. Among the latter are tenant farmers such as the Francisco brothers, who in the late 18th and early 19th century built up their livestock herds in Kent County to earn nearly \$10,000, which they used to move to Ohio. Levin Thompson, of Sussex County, displayed a great deal of creativity and business acumen while earning his fortune. By the time of his death in 1816, Levin was among the top five percent of assessed property owners there. By then, he was wealthy enough to loan money to his white counterparts for interest. Born to a family of Maryland, free blacks, Thompson started with a farm of 200 acres, which he expanded into the ownership of 428 acres of

farmland near Laurel and 135 acres of cypress timberland in Dagsboro Hundred. He also owned a gristmill and sawmill on Trussum Pond as well as woolen cloth spinning wheels and looms. Thompson provided housing near his mills for 30 free blacks. The inventory from Thompson's estate includes a carriage, an old walnut table, Windsor chairs, a decanter set with tumblers, and some silver items.

On a less prosperous but noteworthy level were those whose efforts earned them livings comparable to artisans in the majority population. For example, Absalom Gibbs, a mechanic who built a significant number of homes in Camden, in 1835 held property in Murderkill Hundred worth \$1,115. Elisha Prettyman, a carpenter in Milton, supported a family of five. By 1860, he owned \$2,000 in real estate and another \$500 in personal property.

The presence of such individuals facilitated economic development throughout the state. Outside of Wilmington, villages such as Leipsic supported only two or three families of African American laborers and a few free blacks who worked as domestics for local families. But, elsewhere, a few individuals emerged whose entrepreneurship, creativity, or longevity had a substantial impact. For example, members of the Boyer family continuously inhabited Polktown, a part of Delaware City, from the 1820s onward. Charleytown, near what became Townsend, received its name after a free African American, Charles Loyd. In Sussex County, Jake "Jigger" Bell, referred to some as the state's first black developer, owned land near current day Lewes. He created "Belltown" by selling lots to fellow African Americans and also donated a plot to the church.

Meanwhile, Wilmington's African American population continued to grow steadily. By 1850, it supported the largest urbanized African American community in the state. Because of the greater availability of jobs in the city when compared to the countryside, women usually outnumbered men by a few hundred persons.

1 day working in garden; self.....	\$.75
Work by self and boy50
Getting hay on marsh	5.00
1 day going after oxen.....	.75
3 days work of boy, at 25.....	.75
3 stacks of hay at \$2.00.....	6.00
2 days going after hay; self and boy.....	1.75
1 ½ days hauling drift from sea shore75
1 day's work on cape75
½ of an ox hide	1.40
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1 day's work of self and another.....	1.50
	\$25.40

Even though in the two decades prior to the Civil War, one cannot identify a specific section of Wilmington as being inhabited exclusively by African Americans, they solidified their presence in areas known as "Bull Hill," "Whiskey Bridge," part of "Love Lane," and "Hedgeville."

Wilmington's free blacks proved to be very socially active. One way we know this is through news items appearing in the Blue Hen's Chicken, a Wilmington newspaper. Francis Vincent, its editor, was interested in including a variety of information on the free African American community prior to the Civil War. Vincent's reporting gives us a window of the important institutions, economic activities, and forms of discrimination faced by its members. The Blue Hen's Chicken mentions a number of mid-century social organizations. For example, three temperance unions attracted 200 members; the Masonic Lodge, 50; the Odd Fellows Lodge, 40; and, a secret society called the "Queer Fellows," an undetermined number. Other lodges in which African Americans participated included Unity 711, Covenant No. 876; Phoenix No. 894; Good Samaritan of Pennsylvania; Star of Bethlehem 897, and the Grand Chapter. All these groups used the large brick building at the southeast corner of Sixth and Walnut Streets as a meeting place. The Chicken also contains a vivid description of the October parade held to dedicate the Odd Fellows Hall, which reveals a strong connection to free blacks in Philadelphia:

Dedication of the Colored Odd Fellows Hall in Wilmington.-- On Friday

last., 6th, inst., a large number of colored Odd Fellows, from Pennsylvania, met those of our city to dedicate a large new brick Hall, just erected at the S. E. Comer of Sixth and Walnut streets. They paraded through the different streets of our city, to the number of several hundred, extending (two abreast) upwards of two squares, with a fine band of music, banners and all the imagination of the order. They were all shades of color, from the darkest African to the lightest mulatto. They were much admired for their good conduct, and very civilly and kindly treated by our citizens.⁵⁰

Wilmington's African American barbers, who provided a service and a political rallying point for the free black citizens, also offered a social outlet. For example, on one occasion the barbers sponsored a trip with a band to Penns Grove, New Jersey.

It is also obvious that the free African American community in Wilmington valued the family as a social institution. Although difficult to maintain under slavery because owners determined the fate of their property, unfree blacks did what they could to develop a sense of family, which included extended kinfolk. Increased manumissions benefited African Americans, but even then, many families that had been split up during slavery, were never reconstituted or were delayed from doing so by conditional manumission terms. Once freed at least they could marry, chose their own name, and name their own children, all of which allowed for the development of nuclear families and extended families. An 1839 visitor from the Colored American to Wilmington commented that, "a large number of families live in their own houses and upon their own grounds."⁵¹ In the 1850s, Wilmington had a higher percentage of two parent African American households than rural areas in which female households represented a greater percentage of the population. In the city, even when parents came from neighboring states such as New Jersey, Pennsylvania, or Maryland, their children usually were born in Delaware. Many named children after themselves, and many families had at least one older parent living with them. There were also a number of children of single women living in white households. Although that circumstance may have weakened family ties, it may have also expanded a family's earning power. While creating an environment for the growth of families, many African Americans realized that legislative backing in the form of the legal right to own property and the exercise of rights to defend it also offered them some security.

Perhaps the strongest, most visible and most viable social institution of the

Wilmington African American community was the church. The emergence of an independent black church movement involved not only some of Delaware's better-known African Americans such as Richard Allen, Peter Spencer, and Absalom Jones, but also involved less recognized figures such as Isaac and Betsey Carter near Odessa or Solomon Bayley of Kent County. As these people moved toward religious independence, they exhibited passion, enthusiasm, energy, and organizational skills, which, in turn, helped to develop an inner spirituality and the courage to voice concerns about injustice.

Free and unfree African Americans gravitated toward Methodism more than any other religion. During the late 18th and much of the 19th centuries, Methodists offered more integrated services (e.g., although neither allowed blacks to speak from the pulpit or be ordained, free blacks had permission to hold class meetings on main floor). Some such as the Carters, opened homes to members from both races, but more commonly, all black services were held in their own homes or outdoors. Bayley took his preaching skills to Liberia when he emigrated.

In the 1790s, two former slaves, Richard Allen of Kent County and later Absalom Jones of Sussex, created all black congregations in Philadelphia. By 1816, Allen cut all ties with white Methodism and founded the African Methodist Episcopal Church, which by 1843, branched out to include 31 congregations in Pennsylvania, New York, New Jersey, and Delaware. Jones's congregation retained links with the Protestant Episcopal Church and its white denomination.

Meanwhile, events in Wilmington created yet another independent African American church. Peter Spencer, another former slave, led a dramatic challenge to the local Methodists after they banished blacks to the balcony. He created a new all black congregation, Ezion Geber, still under the direction of a white pastor. When the pastor ignored the wishes of the congregation and the Board in 1813, Spencer broke away altogether to create the African Union Church, the branches of which remained oriented to communities in New Castle County.

As a result of natural growth and disagreements within the Wilmington religious community, by early 1850s African Americans in Wilmington had a choice among five independent churches. By the end of the Civil War, eight such churches had been formed. One enduring feature of their religion is manifested in what became known as the "Big Quarterly" or "August

Quarterly" .⁵² This annual folk festival, created in Wilmington by Peter Spencer, ostensibly commemorated the founding of the above-mentioned Union Church. Although it too was effected by internal bickering, especially in the 1850s, the Quarterly turned into a rallying point for thousands of free and unfree inhabitants and visitors from the Delmarva Peninsula. During this festivity, Wilmington attracted visitors from Maryland, Virginia, and lower Delaware as well as from Pennsylvania and New Jersey. Offshoots were held in places that ranged from Glasgow to Delaware City. Participants attended the Quarterly for personal religious reasons or to participate in the general conference of the congregation. Social activities that ranged from family reunions to arranging a marriage or to enjoy the music, good food, and excitement attracted participants. When Peter Spencer died in 1843, the Quarterly also served as a means of acknowledging his leadership.

In spite of their active defense of rights and vigorous social activity, African Americans in Wilmington still encountered difficulties common in an urban environment. By far, consumption was the greatest killer of free blacks followed by pneumonia. In

when cholera struck the city, 22 African Americans, almost one-third of the dead, succumbed to that disease. Included among the victims were 70-year-old Nathan Brown, Henry Miller, and James Ricketts as well as 95-year-old Esther Howell.

Crimes of the day, sometimes linked to racism, featured drunkenness, fighting, spousal abuse, burglary, and theft. For example, the Wilmington constabulary was accused of being excessive in its enforcement of runaway laws. Some violent incidents where drunken whites beat up individuals such as Comegys Munson or got into a scrape with James Hinson and "old man" Veazey, can be attributed to racial differences. So, too, were the situations where young white "bucks" and "dandies" harassed African American women by following them home and verbally assaulting them. But, others are not as easy to categorize. For example, in 1848 the Blue Hen's Chicken reported four separate incidents in which white mobs destroyed housing inhabited by free blacks. Although it is likely that racism contributed to such violence, the fact that the houses were also used by both whites and blacks for illegal activities such as prostitution must be considered. Certainly such activity could escalate racial violence, as noted by the editor who admonished the authorities to do something or, "none of the houses inhabited by colored people will be safe" ⁵³ Nor is it certain that the destruction of African

American builders Henry Wilson's and Nathaniel Robinson's newly erected housing was racially motivated. There were, however, accusations that free blacks caused some of the fires that burned down white-owned property.

There are also instances of black-on-black violence linked to drinking, abuse of spouses, and fighting. Sydney Caldwell, a woman, was angry enough to take out an ad in the *Blue Hen's Chicken* to accuse a black man of attacking her. Some free blacks remained cognizant of the potential harm that misbehavior meant for their community. For example, in 1848 and 1849, the *Chicken* published a series of anonymous, "By Gumbo," letters to the editor, which were critical of the poor behavior of some of his fellow African Americans. In 1849, one individual, who identified herself as, "A BLACK FEMALE," responded and chastised him about his generalizations and lack of respect for those in the free African American community who behaved properly and castigated him for writing articles, "beneath the dignity of a gentleman." ⁵⁴

Conclusion

Despite their unique situation that exposed them to political, economic, and social discrimination, free blacks played an important role in the development of Delaware. Many who had been slaves enjoyed their new status of freemen but found that harsh laws restricted their advancement. Nonetheless, historical evidence reveals not only how loudly their voices and actions opposed such obstacles but the many accomplishments achieved by them. Notable among these efforts was Wilmington's free African American community. By the antebellum period the city's free blacks had built not only the largest African American community in the state but also a very active leadership role in the fight against inequality. Wilmington's free blacks took advantage of the town's diversified economy and opportunities to organize political and social groups to address issues such as abolition of slavery, lack of educational and economic opportunities, and equal treatment before the law. Although some chose to leave the state to seek success elsewhere, many remained to build families, churches, and participate in social activities, which fostered community growth. In this milieu, many free blacks, despite impoverished conditions, achieved a modest amount of material wealth-and a few, outright success.

BLACK LABOR IN WILMINGTON, DELAWARE: BLACK OCCUPATIONAL MOBILITY FROM 1850 TO 1910

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Introduction

This study explores black occupations in Wilmington, Delaware, and the impact of European immigration on the mobility of black workers in the city at three specific times in the city's history: 1850, 1880, and 1910. The geographic location of Wilmington and the ratio of its black and white immigrant populations during the mid-19th to early 20th centuries offer a unique opportunity to assess occupational mobility and labor competition between the two groups. Wilmington's demographic composition differed from other northern cities, such as Philadelphia and New York, in that free blacks formed a significant proportion of its unskilled, low-wage labor force during the 19th century. The high percentage of free blacks in Wilmington was due, in part, to the voluntary manumissions of slaves by the Quakers.

During the 19th century, the percentage of free blacks in Wilmington fluctuated: 17 percent in (1845), 10.5 percent (1860), and 15 percent (1880). The immigrant population fluctuated similarly, from 18.9 percent (1860) to 13 percent (1880). Throughout the early and mid-19th century, free black workers dominated the unskilled, low-wage labor market in Wilmington. Federal Censuses and Wilmington business directories prior to 1850 show that European immigrants did not initially displace black workers. During this period, black workers competed alongside European immigrants and were occasionally employed in skilled occupations. But, by 1880, the large number of immigrant workers with declining job skills, began challenging black workers for employment in occupations considered traditionally black. Black workers began to experience a series of displacements, or "evictions," from certain occupations and industries.

Wilmington: An Overview of the Economy

Wilmington, a manufacturing city 27 miles south of Philadelphia, was from 1850 to 1910, the only city in an otherwise rural state (Hoffecker, 1974b). The city is situated between two rivers, the Brandywine and the

Christina and was dominated by industrial manufacturing from its early days. The Brandywine, with its many falls, provided water power as early as 1740 for the flour and grist mills along its banks. "Shipbuilding and cooperage, closely linked to the milling and shipping business, became important to the town's economy."(Hoffecker, 1974, p. 7)

By 1800, a number of mills, including several flour and cotton mills, had been established along the Brandywine. (Heite, 1988) The extent of flour manufacturing in the region was noted by James Tilton who found that, "Delaware had the largest and most perfect manufacturing of flour, within a like space of ground, known in the world." (Tilton cited in Reed, 1947, p. 421) During the early part of the 19th century, industrial production continued to be essential to Wilmington's economy. The vigor of the economy could be seen in the profusion of factories and shops in the city.

Wilmington's long history of industrialization, ready sources of skilled and semi-skilled labor as well as its nearness to the natural resources of coal and iron ore facilitated the city to become the headquarters for a variety of other industries during the first half of the 19th century. (Hoffecker, 1974b) By 1850, the city of Wilmington had, "several cotton mills, a match factory and a fertilizer plant" The most significant industries in Wilmington's economy from 1840 to 1880, in terms of both employment and investment, were shipbuilding, railroad car construction, foundry work, leather tanning, and carriage making. (Hoffecker, 1974, p. 19) Peripheral industries such as leather tanning and carriage making later developed into important industries. (Schreuder, 1988; Hoffecker, 1974b)

Industrial activity, which had been focused on industries along the Brandywine River during the early part of the 19th century shifted to the Christina River toward the end of that century. The Christina River, with its relatively deep harbor, became the center of shipbuilding and metal working industries as a number of internationally known companies had established their headquarters in and around it by 1860. (1)

Companies continued to be attracted to the Wilmington area and numerous products appeared in the national and international market which were made there during the late nineteenth century. Among them were, "machine tools; sashes, doors, blinds; commercial fertilizers; newel posts; morocco-making machinery; candy and cracker manufacturer; . . . the making of twine; the famous Diamond Matches; all kinds of engines, boilers, steam- pumps, and brass castings." (Hancock, 1947, p. 428)

The importance of a particular industry to a city's economy is often reflected in the number of workers employed in that industry. Table 1 illustrates the rise and decline of Wilmington's industries over a 40 year span. The table is particularly illustrative of the rise of two of Wilmington's most important industries in the late 19th and early 20th centuries: leather tanning and car manufacture. In 1860, leather tanning and car manufacture occupied fourth and 10th places with respect to the number of workers employed. By 1880, both leather tanning and car manufacture began to employ significant proportions of Wilmington's labor force, with leather tanning employing the second-highest number of workers in the city followed by car manufacturing. The number of workers for both industries continued to increase significantly in the next two decades. By 1900, car manufacturing, which had employed only 14.2 percent of workforce in 1880, employed more than 28 percent of Wilmington's working population, a percentage greater than any other single industry in the city.

Skilled workers were an essential element of the economy in Wilmington since colonial times. An abundant supply of skilled labor associated with the metal working and shipbuilding industries, as well as machinists, foundry men, millwrights, and others was within easy reach of the city (Hoffecker, 1974b). Nearly all of the major companies operating in Wilmington during the mid- to late- 19th century required a predominantly skilled labor force; yet only one or two firms were diversified enough to employ unskilled workers.

Table 1
Ten Leading Industries by Number of Workers in Wilmington, Delaware for 1860, 1880, and 1900

Industry	1860	Industry	1880	Industry	1900
Cotton Goods	1,109	Shipbuilding	1,454	Cars	2,897
Shipbuilding	558	Leather	914	Leather	2,454
Carriages	523	Cars	860	Foundries	2,009
Leather	384	Foundries	779	Iron & Steel	1,327
Machines	325	Iron & Steel	610	Hosiery	470
Boots and Shoes	307	Cotton Goods	469	Carpentry	199
Car Wheels	200	Carriages	384	Bakeries	160
Iron & Steel	193	Brickmaking	234	Carriages	176
Cooperage	170	Paper/Printing	230	Shipbuilding	176
Cars	<u>100</u>	Carpentry	<u>105</u>	Printing	<u>162</u>
Totals	3,939		6,039		10,030

Source: Hoffecker, Carol. (1974) Wilmington, Delaware. Appendix, p. 167; U.S. Census, 1860, Manufactures, pp. 53-54; Tenth Census of the United States, 1880, Statistics of Manufactures, Vol. 2 pp. 444-451; Twelfth Census of the United States, 1910, Statistics of Manufactures, Vol. 8, pp. 112- 113.

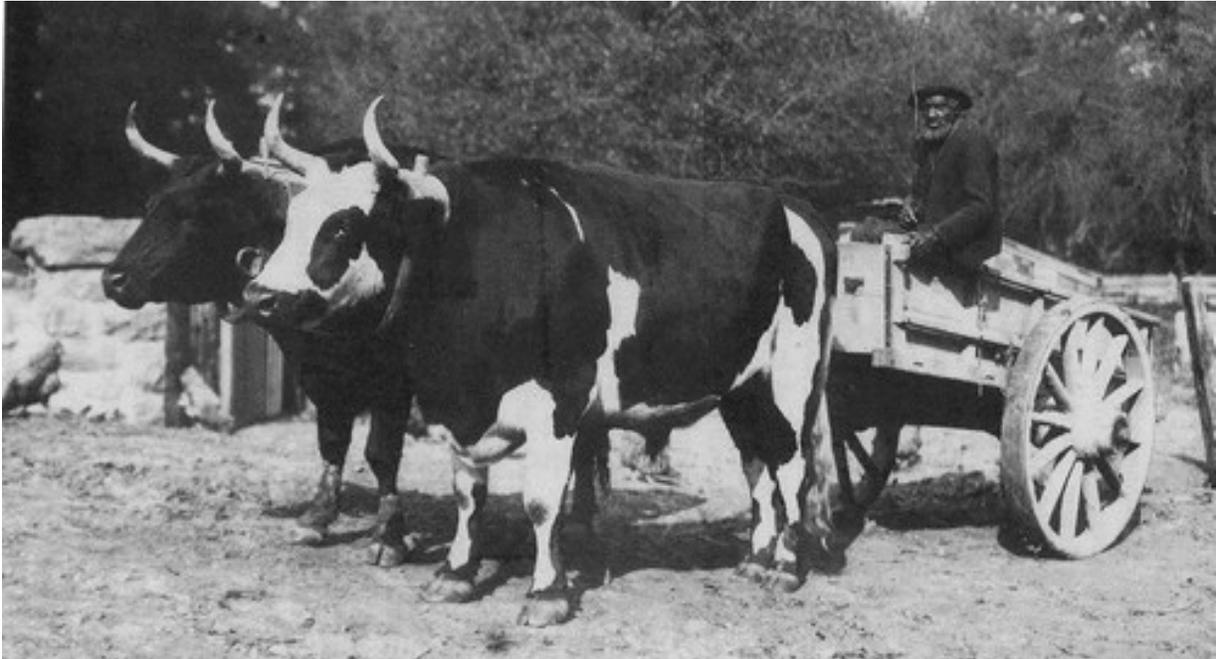
By the late 1890s, Wilmington began to experience a gradual decline in many of its established industrial firms. Succumbing to the "merger and acquisition mania" sweeping through America, several industries in Wilmington were either merged or acquired by other companies. Drexel and Company bought Jessup and Moore in 1901, and Bethlehem Steel Company bought Harlan and Hollingsworth in 1902. (Hancock, 1947) Several leather firms were consolidated after the Depression of 1893. (Hancock, 1947, p. 430)

Yet by 1910, Wilmington began to experience new growth in its industrial sector. The number of firms increased as did the number of persons employed in the manufacturing sector. Capital investment in manufacturing rose steadily. The number of establishments decreased from 262 in 1899 to 245 in 1904. By 1909, it rose again to nearly the same level as in 1899. The number of persons employed in the manufacturing sector and capital invested in

manufacturing underwent similar changes. By 1904, the number of workers employed in manufacturing had fallen by four percent, while the total dollars invested in manufacturing rose by 25 percent. The number of workers employed in manufacturing rebounded slightly in 1909, as the total capital invested continued to grow significantly.

The presence of free blacks in Delaware during the late 19th- and early 20th centuries has been documented by numerous historians (Munroe, 1957; Hiller, 1965; Livesay, 1968; Hancock, 1968; Dean, 1970; Hoffecker, 1974). A number have specifically focused upon the occupations of Wilmington blacks during this same period (Pizor, 1969; Heite, 1988; Catts, 1988), while others documented the economic decline of blacks in Wilmington after the Civil War (Munroe, 1957; Livesay, 1968; Hancock, 1968).

Catts (1988), in his study of slaves, free blacks, and French Negroes in colonial Wilmington, notes that, although slaves were most often employed in domestic household work, they were employed by their masters in other non-agricultural pursuits, and may have even been selected by their masters for their skills and adaptability. Black slaves filled jobs in northern cities ranging from "merchants' and shopkeepers' helpers to blacksmiths, coopers, teamsters, and draymen." (Catts, 1988, p. 41) Even though the majority of their jobs were classified as manual labor, there were a number of blacks working as craftsmen and artisans, makers, sea captains, oystermen and watermen. (Catts, 1988) Pizor (1969) states that blacks were employed, up to the Civil War, in a number of skilled occupations. Among the occupations represented in the 1845 directory were ship's engineers, carpenters, masons, blacksmiths, tanners, and cordwainers. The greater majority of black workers were employed as general laborers, but several black skilled workers were listed in the 1845 Wilmington business directory. From 1860 to 1880, black workers continued to be employed in such low-wage occupations as general laborers, hostlers, draymen, hackmen, and livery workers. Even by 1890, when black workers began, "entering new areas of employment and getting more of a foothold in jobs that had formerly employed only a few of their race, the majority of them were still employed as low- wage general laborers." (Pizor, 1969, p. 4)(2)



Ox Drawn Cart, c. 1900
Courtesy of Historical Society of Delaware

Livesay sums up the economic status of Delaware's black population, saying that, throughout the period from the end of the Civil War to the Second World War, the Negro was totally excluded from all white collar jobs, and his share of skilled and semi-skilled positions decreased. . .the significant majority of Delaware Negroes was locked in a rigid employment pattern kept static by discriminatory hiring policies in public and private employment, segregated labor unions, and a wretched school system. (Livesay, 1968, p. 102)

Disenfranchisement, Union Exclusion and the Black Worker in Delaware

Two avenues of economic and social mobility were open to blacks in 19th century Wilmington: politics and education. These two avenues were closed when Delaware's pro-southern Democratic party gained control of the

Legislature in the 1870s. Hoffecker's work (1974a) on blacks in late 19th century Wilmington clearly cites political exclusion as the reason for their lack of economic mobility. The Assessment and Collection Laws of 1873, enacted by the Delaware Legislature, restricted black eligibility to vote. With no effective political organization to protect

their interests or sufficient black political leadership to organize them, gains made by blacks during the early part of the 19th century were eliminated.

Livesay, like Hoffecker (1974b), relates black socioeconomic decline in Delaware during the latter half of the 19th century to the political atmosphere in the state following the Civil War. The ratification of the Fifteenth Amendment and the threat of potential black voters registering as rival Republicans, prompted Delaware's pro-southern Democratic party to enact a series of laws which would effectively negate the black vote. As enacted, the Assessment and Collection Laws of 1873 was a means of assessing property and establishing voter eligibility. There was no specific terminology in the law which advocated the disenfranchisement of black voters but, due to the manner in which the laws were interpreted, most of the black population and many other white Republicans were not able to vote.

The operation of the Assessment and Collection Laws was very different from its original intent. Under the provisions of the assessment act, assessors and poll tax collectors were required to sit for a period of one to three days in a public place in their respective districts for the purpose of collecting taxes, adding to or correcting assessment lists. First, the selection of a public place was left to the discretion of collectors and assessors, who often selected places as far from black residential areas as possible. Assessors and collectors would often absent themselves from this public place without notice and were noted for employing various delaying tactics in the assessment and collection of taxes owed by black property owners. One of the provisions of the law made it mandatory for property owners to appear before the assessor with an affidavit confirming identity sworn by another property owner in the county. Black property owners, in particular, found securing an affidavit confirming their identity difficult for it was rare for blacks to own property in the late 19th century. Even when a black property owner managed to have his affidavit accepted by the assessor, his name could still be omitted from the tax lists. Some assessors were careless, either conveniently forgetting to enter the name or entering in the wrong assessment record, so when a black

property owner subsequently appeared before the tax collector to pay his tax, it was refused on the grounds that the property owner had not been properly assessed or was recorded as delinquent and was struck from voter registration lists. Black property owners were also omitted from tax lists because of the illiterate assessors and collectors. Names written on the assessor's list were often misspelled, and the wrong or misspelled names placed on the receipt. In these instances, the tax collector refused to accept the assessment, believing the receipt to be fraudulent. The practice of eliminating names of property owners from voter registration lists was rife from about 1870 to 1900 when the Democratic party controlled politics in Delaware. Thus, an assessor or collector with Democratic sympathies was often able to drop most black taxpayers and many white Republicans from the tax and voter registration lists without serious repercussion.

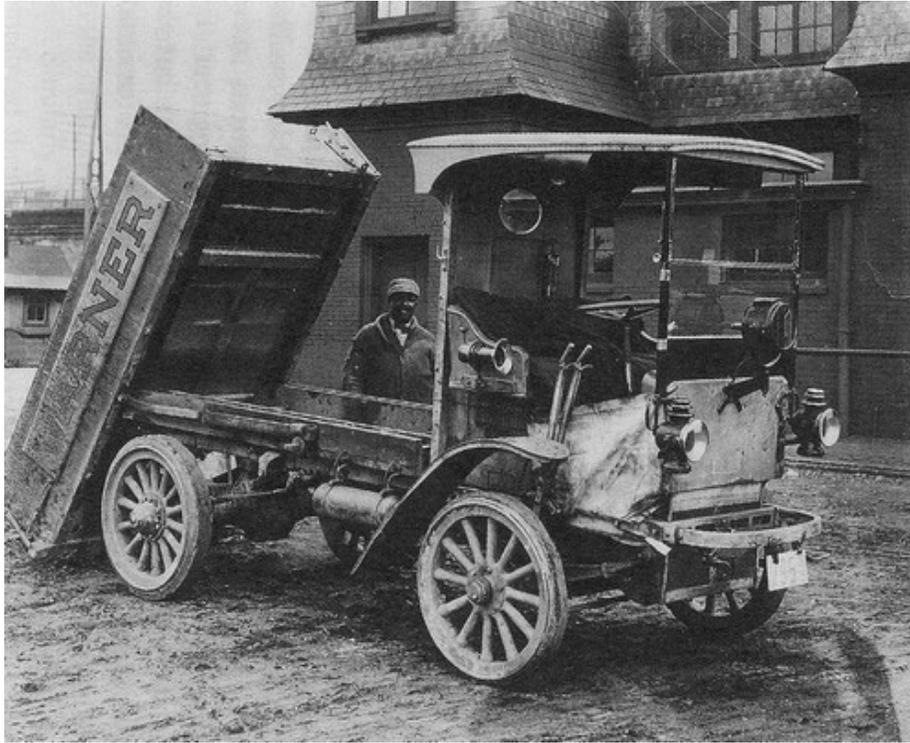
The remedy provided by the law, applying to Levy Court to have one's name added to the tax lists, was of little use. Members of the Levy Court, particularly those with Democratic party loyalties, would refuse to hear assessment appeal cases and members of the Court, "would find numerous duties to perform and adjourn unexpectedly." (Hiller, 1965, p. 60) Subsequently, black property owners, dropped from the assessment lists, found themselves disenfranchised with no legal recourse.

Another factor in the decline of black social and economic progress during this period was the policy of legislated discrimination. Various statutes and resolutions enacted during the 19th century in Delaware limited the social and economic progress of the black population. As early as 1811, the entry of free blacks into Delaware was prohibited; free blacks from Maryland were allowed to come into the state but reside in only New Castle and Kent counties. To control the flow of black labor out of the state during the agricultural harvesting seasons, the state legislature in 1845 enacted a supplement to the 1811 law, which made free blacks leaving Delaware for a period longer than 60 days ineligible to reenter the state. Delaware laws also proscribed who might serve as master to an apprentice. A law enacted in 1861 forbade black youths from seeking apprenticeships with black artisans; they could only apprentice themselves to white artisans. The law further distinguished the master/apprentice relationship requiring black apprentices to serve in the capacity as servants as well as apprentices. The rejection by the General Assembly of the Fourteenth Amendment, granting universal suffrage to blacks, led to a series of revisions in the assessment and collection

laws which were designed to further disenfranchise black voters.

A number of factors can be attributed to the decline in black social and economic status in late- 19th century Wilmington, but one factor-limited union participation-greatly influenced the numbers of black workers entering industrial employment. In the late-19th and early-20th centuries, union membership was the primary means of securing industrial employment. Immigrants were participants in the unionization movement, but most black workers were barred or forced to form their own unions. Many national unions adopted policies that discriminated against blacks seeking union membership and entry into union-sponsored apprentice programs.

This exclusion and segregation by the unions initiated a vicious cycle of under-employment for black workers. Without union representation, black workers lacked the leverage to force employers to accede to their labor demands. Black workers settled for whatever jobs were available to them, usually unskilled, low- wage, low-status jobs. Labor unions, composed of members of skilled trades, considered the masses of black unskilled laborers as competitors willing to undercut their wages and thus were not interested in extending them union membership. This cycle was so effective in retarding black occupational mobility that by 1910, most black workers were employed in two sectors: in the professional sector in occupations such as doctors and clergymen (catering primarily to the black population) and in the domestic and personal services sector in occupations such as laborers and servants. The continued arrival of similarly skilled or unskilled immigrant groups during the late-19th and early-20th centuries limited the numbers of blacks entering the skilled and semi-skilled occupations and this persisted until the cessation of European immigration in 1924. Thus these factors-limiting black access to unions which was the initial step to industrial employment as well as specific discriminatory laws-shaped the economic and social opportunities available to Delaware's black population until well into the 20th century.



Warner Company Dump Truck
Markel Collection Courtesy of Historical Society of Delaware

Employment Comparisons: 1845, 1850, 1880, and 1910 ***Wilmington: 1845***

The Wilmington Directory for 1845 establishes a baseline for constructing Wilmington's antebellum occupational structure. The directory contained two sections. In the first section, white workers were listed alphabetically and included within the listing is a street address and an occupational title. Black workers were listed separately in the second section entitled, "Colored Inhabitants," which included street addresses and occupations. The limitations of the directory data did not permit the determination of nativity of those in the directory.

The 1845 Wilmington Directory listed occupations for 1,703 persons (276 black and 1,427 white workers). These occupations are grouped into six broad industrial sectors: agriculture, personal service, manufacturing (representing craft/trade occupations), professional services, trade, and transportation. Fifty-seven percent of the black workers listed in the directory

were employed in personal service occupations as general laborers, while the remainder worked as porters, waiters, and barbers. In the manufacturing sector, blacks were employed in various jobs, among them brick makers, cordwainers, potters, coopers, and blacksmiths. Black workers in the professional service occupations were represented by two individuals: a teacher and an engineer. By contrast, white workers were employed in all six sectors but the largest percentages were employed in manufacturing, professional, and trade industries.

Wilmington: 1850

An analysis of data from the 1850 Wilmington Census reveals distinctive changes in the economy as well as in occupational classifications. Craft occupations such as cooperage, milling (four and grist milling), basketmaking, tailoring, and candlemaking, which were reminiscent of Wilmington's pre-industrialization period, were losing importance. Occupational titles in the 1850 data set also clearly identified future industries in Wilmington and revealed a growing class of iron founders and workers, machinists, molders, shipbuilders, and workers employed in the leather tanning industry.

Occupational data for 1850 was obtained for 995 heads of household (400 blacks and 595 immigrants). Each household head was assigned to one of five broad occupational classes. Occupations within the agricultural sector were nonexistent in the city of Wilmington by 1850 and were not included in the analysis.

Compared with other groups, black workers in Wilmington were employed primarily in the domestic and personal services sector. In fact, black general laborers continued to be the largest group among the domestic and personal service workers. Only Irish immigrants were employed in the domestic and personal services sector in comparable numbers. According to the 1850 data set, blacks were not employed in professional service occupations. The three remaining sectors, manufacturing, trade and transportation, employed limited numbers of black workers (two percent and seven percent each for trade and transportation, respectively).

By contrast, Wilmington's European immigrant population was an occupationally diverse group. Three ethnic groups formed the major immigrant population in 1850: Irish, English, and German. Because Irish immigrants were the dominant ethnic group in Wilmington, their appearance

throughout the occupational structure is not surprising. Wilmington's Irish-born population was employed at all occupational levels but were of greatest concentration in the domestic and personal services sector as low-wage, general laborers. In addition, Irish immigrants were the largest ethnic group in the craft/trade, retail, and manufacturing occupations.

Similarly, immigrants from Britain, Scotland, and Wales were employed throughout all sectors and at all occupational levels but were of greatest concentration in three sectors: manufacturing, transportation industries, and in the professional services as clerks and teachers.

Immigrants from Germany and German-speaking areas were employed in small numbers throughout all sectors but were particularly concentrated in the craft occupations in the manufacturing and trade sectors. Table 2 shows the number and percentage by industrial sector for Irish, English, and Germans immigrants and blacks living in Wilmington in 1850.

Wilmington: 1880

Although the number of black workers in the labor force increased, their occupational distribution in 1880 remained the same as it had been in 1850. The 1880 Wilmington Census data set contains 1,929 head of households (590 black and 1,339 immigrant) representing approximately 10 percent of the city's labor force.

Major gains were made by black workers in only one sector: domestic and personal services. In addition, black workers within the domestic and personal services sector began to diversify. In 1850, the majority of black workers employed in the domestic and personal services industry were general laborers but, by 1880, a number of additional occupational choices appeared in the data set: hod carriers, servants, day workers, coachmen, cooks, and washwomen.

Black workers in the manufacturing, mining, and mechanical sector experienced a similar stagnation. Although the number of blacks employed in the manufacturing sector increased, they were still employed at the lowest unskilled levels within that sector (i.e., foundry and rolling mill workers). Numerical gains in the number of black workers employed in the transportation and trade sectors were made between 1850 and 1880 (from 14 to 44 percent) but, like the manufacturing sector, the gains were at the lowest levels within these sectors (drivers, workers, carters, hostlers, liverymen, peddlers, hucksters, and dealers). In the transportation sector, black workers

were employed as teamsters, and one was employed as a barge captain. By 1880, only six black heads of household reported employment in the agriculture sector. Unlike in 1850, blacks were slowly moving into professional occupations, appearing in the 1880 data set in various clergy positions (minister, preacher, and sexton). The remaining professionals were engineers and teachers.

Table 2
Industrial Concentration of Selected Ethnic Groups
by Number and Percentages, Wilmington, 1850

	Total Ethnic	Black	% Total	Irish	%Total	England	%Total	German	%Total
Manufacturing	364	7	2	178	49	102	28	76	21
Personal Svcs.	536	289	54	209	39	21	4	11	2
Prof. Svcs.	39	0	0	27	69	7	18	4	10
Trade	41	3	7	25	61	8	20	4	10
Transportation	15	2	7	7	47	5	34	2	7
Group Totals	995	301	70	446	265	143	104	97	50

Sources: Seventh Census of the United States: Manuscript Schedules for Wilmington, Delaware, 1850; Classification of industries adapted from Olzak (1992), pp. 292-294; Figures given include only heads of household. Percentages reflect only proportion of selected ethnic groups in labor force. Employment in the agricultural sector was negligible in Wilmington by 1850. Agricultural-related occupations were omitted from the table.

.Although much of Wilmington's total population growth resulted from natural increase and internal regional migration between 1850 and 1880, Federal census statistics indicate that over 5,600 immigrants were living in the city in 1880. Three ethnic groups continued to dominate the immigrant population of Wilmington. Irish immigrants were again the largest ethnic group in Wilmington in 1880, as they were in 1850. The growth of the Irish immigrant was impressive, as Irish heads of household accounted for 58 percent of all immigrants in Wilmington. Immigrants from England were second, representing 17 percent of the total immigrant heads of household. German immigrants formed the third largest immigrant ethnic group in Wilmington, representing five percent of Wilmington's immigrant population. Other ethnic groups appeared in the 1880 census for the first time. Among these new ethnic groups were immigrants from Italy, Hungary, Poland, and Russia.

Distinct ethnic employment concentrations were seen in 1880. The Irish, as the largest immigrant group, were distributed throughout Wilmington's occupational structure but were the largest ethnic group employed in

manufacturing and personal services industries. In the trade industries, the Irish were the largest proportion of that sector, with 43 percent of their number employed in various retail occupations. More than 25 percent of Irish tradesmen were engaged in either tavern or hotel keeping. Tavern- and saloon-keepers were the largest single occupational category within the trade sector. Irish immigrants were employed in other retail occupations, forming more than 48 percent of all dealers, hucksters, grocers, and peddlers within that category.

English immigrants who were distributed throughout the occupational strata in 1850, were, by 1880, heavily concentrated in manufacturing occupations. Occupations within the trade industry were second only to manufacturing in the number of English immigrants employed as butchers, grocers, merchants, and dealers of various and sundry items. A small number of English immigrants were employed in the transportation sector as conductors and railroad engineers; as managers and repairmen in the telegraph industry; and, in the maritime construction industry, as ship carpenters and builders. In professional service occupations,

English immigrants were employed in the public service positions as county collectors, engineers, and policemen.

Wilmington's small German-speaking population was employed in various craft occupations in the manufacturing sector. Three sectors-personal services, professional services, and transportation-employed few German immigrants. A number of immigrants from German-held and German-speaking areas of Europe appeared in the 1880 census. For the most part, these immigrants were employed in the same type of craft occupations as immigrants from Germany, but immigrants from Baden, Prussia, and Wurtemberg worked in a variety of occupations in the personal services industry.

The small number of immigrants from France, Hungary, Norway, Sweden, and Switzerland were employed in a variety of occupations in the manufacturing sector. Immigrants from Italy and Poland were the exceptions. Italian immigrants concentrated in the trade industry, and the single Polish immigrant recorded in the 1880 data set was employed in the personal services industry.

Wilmington: 1910

Wilmington's industrial workplace was transformed between 1880 and

1910. The national tendency towards merger and consolidation, industrial concentration, and bureaucratization of businesses was evident in Wilmington by the end of the century. These changes profoundly affected the size and nature of the city's occupational structure.

The 1910 Wilmington census data set shows a greater diversity of occupational titles than the 1880 Wilmington census. Several occupational titles shifted sector classifications, and other occupational titles, which were in the 1880 data set, disappeared completely. A large part of the reshuffling of occupational titles was due to the reclassification efforts by the Census Bureau.

The 1910 Wilmington census contained 7,465 heads of households (2,012 blacks and 5,453 white immigrants) for whom data was collected concerning nativity, age, marital status, occupation, employment status, and level of literacy. The analysis of the 1910 Wilmington data shows that black workers continued to lag behind immigrants in occupational mobility. Numerical gains were made in all sectors, but, as in 1880, the greatest gains were in the lower status occupations of the unskilled/menial service sector. Black workers were employed most often in two sectors: as high white-collar professionals and as blue-collar semi-skilled workers. The two lowest categories, semi-skilled/service workers and unskilled/menial service workers, contain almost equal numbers of immigrants and black workers.



**Herbert Julian with his airplane, c. 1931
Sanborn Collection Courtesy of Historical Society of
Delaware**

White immigrants, by contrast, were employed throughout the occupational strata and were no less than 90 percent of high white-collar and low white-collar occupations. The single exception was among high white-collar professional occupations where white immigrants were more than 75 percent.

Literacy Among Blacks in Delaware, 1850-1910

Another factor which might explain differing rates of socioeconomic progress and occupational achievement among ethnic and racial groups is literacy rates. Literacy and occupational achievement are linked in the immigrant community, where higher levels of literacy generally confer a higher occupational status. As early as 1844, nearly 200 black schools were established throughout the United States through the assistance of benevolent associations, religious organizations, cultural clubs, and literary societies. The common goal of these schools was to provide education and training to all who desired it. The response to the establishment of these schools promoting literacy among the black population was overwhelming, and the evidence could be observed in the rising number of persons employed as teachers in black communities. Smith (1972) estimated that approximately 24,000 blacks were employed as teachers in the southern states by the time of the 1890 federal census.

Migration into northern, urban areas sharpened the desire for education and occupational opportunity among the black population. Census data show that by 1910, approximately 72 percent of the Delaware's black population between the ages of six and nine were attending school, compared to 75 percent for native-born whites and 65 percent for foreign-born whites. Even greater, were the number of black children between the ages of 15 and 20 attending school. Twenty-five percent of black children between the ages of 15 and 20 attended school, compared to less than 4 percent of foreign-born whites of the same age range. Black school attendance figures for both age groups were much closer to native-born white rates than to foreign-born school attendance rates (Hoffecker, 1974, p. 90). In Wilmington, census data indicates an increase in black literacy from 41 percent in 1850 to over 74 percent by 1910 (see Table 3). These high literacy rates were achieved despite increasing prejudice and legal restrictions that undermined educational efforts in Delaware.

The higher literacy rate, however, did not benefit black workers. In fact, higher literacy levels among Wilmington's black population from 1850 to 1910 seemed to have had a minimal effect on upward occupational mobility.



**Wilmington Postal Employees, not dated.
Sanborn Collection Courtesy of Historical Society of
Delaware**

For certain occupations, literacy was an absolute requirement. For example, all black professionals (e.g., physicians, clergy, and engineers) in Wilmington were literate as well as the majority of black merchants and dealers. The exception to this correlation between literacy and higher occupation status was in the personal services sector. Part of the failure to link literacy and occupation in this sector may have been the sheer size of the domestic and personal services sector. But how does one explain that the occupational sector with the greatest number of workers, the majority of whom had average-to-high literacy rates were also employed in occupations which held the lowest status and the least occupational mobility? The literacy rates for 1910, when compared to 1850 and 1880, indicate an increase of black workers in all sectors, yet the largest group of literate black individuals were still employed in the personal services sector.

Even when nativity was compared to occupation and literacy levels, native black laborers formed the largest proportion of all black literate laborers. Table 3 shows levels of literacy for black heads of household in Wilmington

from Federal Manuscript Census Schedules for 1850, 1880, and 1910. Table 4 takes into consideration the segmentation and diversification of the labor force by 1910 and shows the distribution of literate blacks ranked by skill and status.

Census Year	Total Number of Blacks in Data set	Number of Literate Blacks	Percentage of Literate Blacks
1850	400	165	41
1880	682	352	51
1910	2,007	1,495	74

Conclusion

This study explored black occupations in Wilmington, Delaware, and the impact European immigration had on the mobility of the native black workers in the city at three specific times in the city's history: 1850, 1880, and 1910. Based on available data from Wilmington business directories and Federal Manuscript Censuses, it was determined that before 1850, black workers in Wilmington were employed alongside native whites and European immigrants in a number of skilled occupations. But, after black workers, despite their nativity and high literacy rates, were at a severe disadvantage when competing with European immigrants for industrial employment. In most cases, black occupational choices in Wilmington, relative to that of immigrant workers, remained constant and, in some cases, were in a total decline.

Black Literacy Levels by Number and Percentage for Heads of Household in Wilmington, Delaware 1850, 1880, and 1910

Census Year	Total Number of Blacks in Data set	Number of Literate Blacks	Percentage of Literate Blacks
1850	400	165	41
1880	682	352	51
1910	2,007	1,495	74

Between 1850 and 1910, a period during which northern industrial cities were transformed by massive industrial expansion, which stimulated an equally massive migration of European immigrants, black workers were systematically denied the opportunity to participate in America's industrial expansion. Black workers, resident in America long before European immigration began, should have been able to partake of their share of occupational opportunity. Instead, their occupational history after the Civil War was marked by the establishment of job ceilings and evictions from numerous industries.

The decline in black occupational opportunity was partly due to competition with European immigrants after 1880. European immigrants, at the outset of the study period, were competitors with blacks in the skilled, semi-skilled, and unskilled occupations but, through discrimination and a series of legal restrictions imposed on blacks, these immigrants experienced greater upward mobility than blacks.

Numerous legal restrictions affected black workers in ways which diminished their economic and political power. In Delaware, the legislature restricted the rights of free blacks to migrate in and out of the state, to assemble for religious and political activities, and even regulated the process of binding apprentices with regards to free blacks. During the late-19th century, the reign of the Democratic party over Delaware politics seriously retarded black socioeconomic and occupational progress. In particular, the adoption of poll tax legislation in 1873 by a mostly Democratic legislature further disenfranchised black voters. The misinterpretation of the Assessment and Collection Laws of 1873 gave undue authority to local tax assessors and collectors and worked to the disadvantage of black property owners and taxpayers. The actions of the assessors and collectors, in an attempt to

prevent blacks and some white Republicans from registering to vote, effectively made it difficult to have their names included on eligible voter lists. Thus disenfranchised, blacks were not able to exercise considerable political power.

Membership in a craft or trade union, the traditional avenue of entry for most native-born whites and immigrants into skilled trades and industrial employment, was not extended to black workers. A number of unions adopted white-only charters or included clauses in their charters that made racial identity a condition of membership. Thus barred from joining these unions, and often forced to form all black unions, black workers were effectively shut off from accessing the traditional avenues to industrial employment. Apprenticeship programs, the means by which industrial knowledge and training was acquired during the late-19th and early-20th centuries, were not available to the majority of black workers.

For Wilmington's black population, education was a means of lifting them out of the lowest occupational levels. Young (1947) notes the phenomenal growth of Delaware's black educational system during the late-19th century. Hoffecker (1974) indicates that black children attended school in greater percentages when compared to foreign-born whites. Despite literacy rates exceeding immigrant literacy rates, black occupational choices remained stable or in many cases declined.

The effects of these legal and societal restrictions were so pervasive that, by 1910, the majority of Wilmington's black workers were employed in two categories: as professionals in high white-collar occupations catering to a black clientele and as unskilled laborers in blue-collar occupations. The greatest tragedy of this situation is that, had all things been equal, black workers would have been better off. Black workers, residing in Wilmington before and during its period of industrial expansion, should have been in line to receive their "piece of the pie" alongside European immigrants.

Notes:

Notable companies such as Harlan & Hollingsworth, Pusey & Jones, the Lobdell Car Wheel Company, and Jackson & Sharp were representative of the railroad car and iron merchant ship construction companies that had established a presence in Wilmington by the middle of the 19th century (Hoffecker, 1974b).

Catts lists an assortment of trades and skilled occupations practiced by black artisans in colonial Wilmington: shoemakers, tanners, barbers, carters,

blacksmiths, and coopers. The maritime industry was the largest employer of slaves and free blacks in many northern colonial seaport towns. In Wilmington, blacks worked in Wilmington's maritime industry as ropemakers.

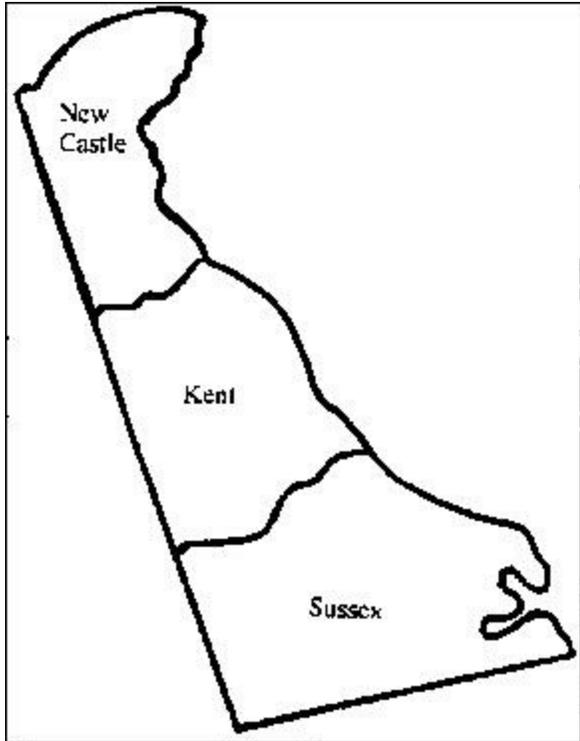
SOCIOECONOMIC CHANGE: A COMMUNITY IN TRANSITION

Theodore J. Davis, Jr.
University of Delaware

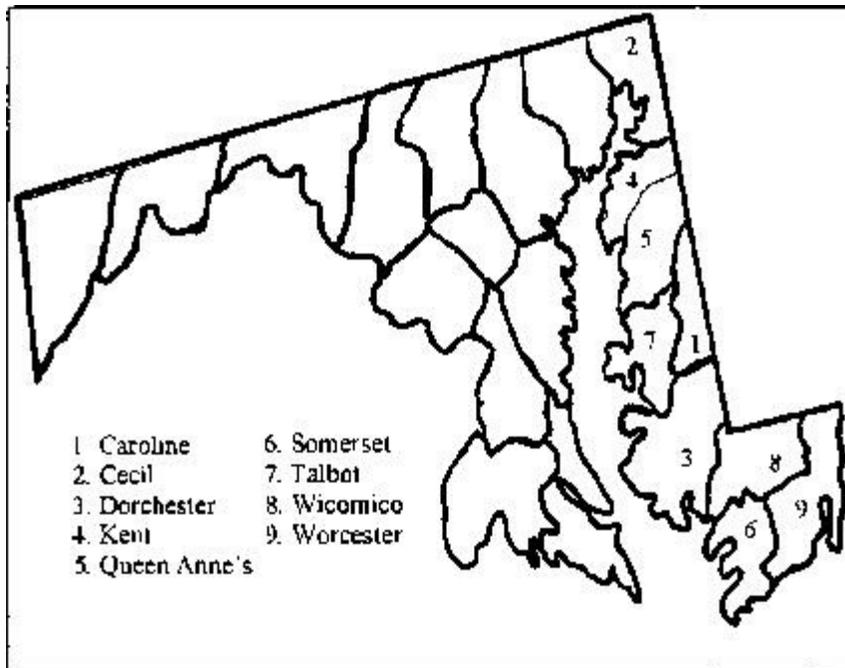
"The story of Negro economic progress in Delaware between 1865 and 1915 is quickly told: there was none,"[17] wrote Amy Hiller in an historical study of blacks in 1968. She indicated further that little economic progress was achieved between 1890 and 1940.

"The Negro was on the bottom of the economic ladder, and his position did not improve significantly until World War H. Throughout the period from the end of the Civil War to the Second World War, the Negro was totally excluded from all white collar jobs, and his share of skilled and semi-skilled positions decreased." (pp. 102)

Since that time, doors to greater social, political, and economic opportunities have been opened for blacks creating improvements in the quality of life for some and a decline for others. One consequence of these recent changes is that black communities across the country have found themselves in a state of transition. While blacks have seen improvements in educational, income, and occupational opportunities, questions remain about the improvements relative to the white community. For example, blacks still lag far behind whites in educational, income, and employment attainment. To further complicate matters, the black population has become less socially, politically, and economically similar. For the first time in American history, blacks are becoming a population divided by class.



Delaware Profiles



Maryland Profiles

The socioeconomic transition for black populations in Delaware and the Eastern Shore is very similar to the national pattern. Some sectors of the black population are much better off than others. Overall, in the end of the century, the socioeconomic progress of blacks in Delaware and the Eastern Shore is measurably greater than it was in the early 1900s.

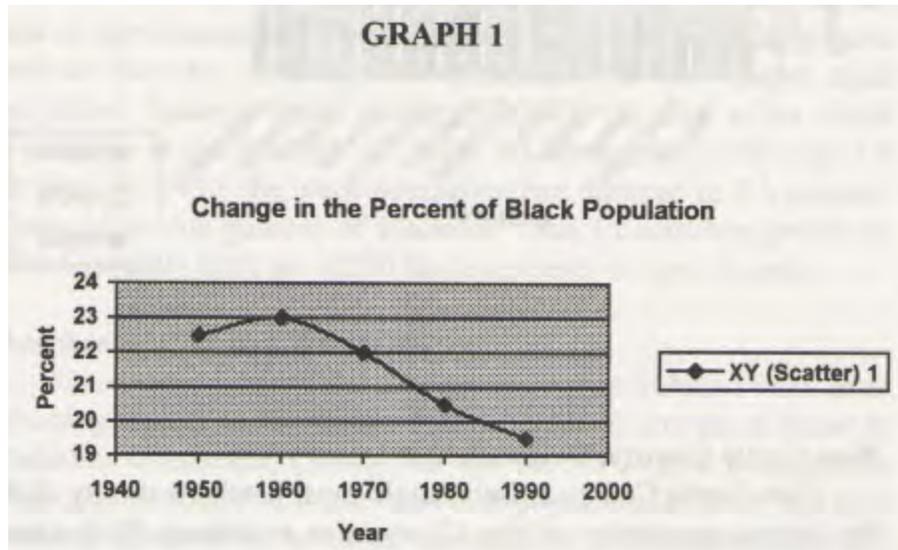
The objective of this chapter is threefold: first, to profile the current socioeconomic status of the black populations in Delaware and the Eastern Shore; second, to examine the socioeconomic transition of black communities in the various counties since the end of World War II; and the third to examine the extent to which there are similarities and differences in the current socioeconomic status of black and white populations.

In Delaware, the units of analysis will be its three counties in Delaware: Kent, New Castle, and Sussex. In Maryland, the units will be the nine Maryland counties with shore lines (or partial shore lines) east of the Chesapeake River known as the Eastern Shore of Maryland. These nine counties include Caroline, Cecil, Dorchester, Kent, Queen Anne's, Somerset, Talbot, Wicomico, and Worcester. To paint a portrait of the socioeconomic transition that has occurred within the black population over the last 40 years, educational and income development, poverty, and labor force changes will be examined.⁵⁵

Demographic Analysis and Trends Since 1950

In 1990, the size of the population in the Delaware and Eastern Shore counties ranged from 17,842 to 441,946. The average county contained 84,161 residents, which is an increase from 45,022 in 1950. In 1990, the size of the black population ranged from a low of 4.5 percent to a high of 38.2 percent as shown in Graph 1. Between 1950 and 1990, the average county's black population declined by 3.2 percent. In 1950, the average county's black population was 22.5 percent compared to 19.3 percent in 1990. The largest decline in the black population occurred between 1970 and 1980.

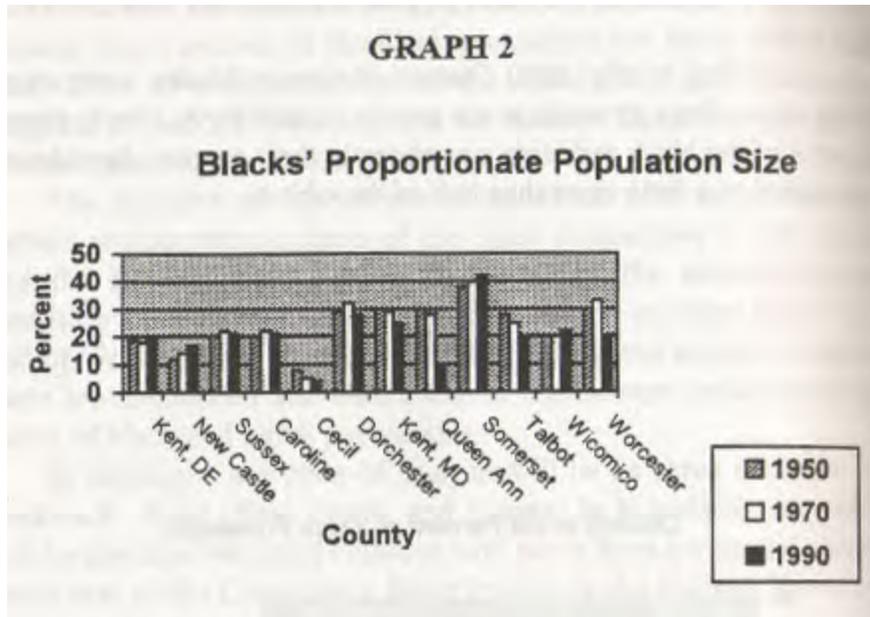
According to the 1990 Census, Delaware blacks were more likely than whites to reside in the county of their birth. Nearly three- fourths of the black residents were born in their county of residence compared to a little more than half of the whites.



Below is a brief description of demographic trends for each of the twelve counties.

Kent County, Delaware

Kent County is located in central Delaware. In 1990, Kent County had the third largest population of the twelve counties examined. Between 1950 and 1970 the size of the black population declined by 2.2 percent. However, it increased by 2.7 percent between 1970 and 1990 (see Graph 2). In 1990, the black population in Kent County was three times larger than it was in 1950.



New Castle County, Delaware

New Castle County is Delaware's most northern county. It has the largest population of the 12 counties examined. With almost one-half million residents, this county was also the most urban. It experienced the greatest increase in size of the black population since 1950 as shown in Graph 2. In 1950, the size of the black population was 11.8 percent. By 1990, the black population had increased to 16.4 percent. In 1950, there were 25,739 blacks in the county. By 1990, the number had increased to 72,834.

Sussex County, Delaware

Sussex County is the southemost county in Delaware. It is the only county in Delaware to experience a decline in the size of the black population since 1950. In 1950, the size of the black population was 17.9 percent. By 1990, the size of the black population had declined to 16.7 percent. Since 1950, the actual number of blacks in the county has grown by less than 8,000.

Caroline County, Maryland

Caroline County is the only county on the Eastern Shore of Maryland to be landlocked. Caroline County had the smallest black population of the 12 counties. In 1990, only 2,933 of its 27,035 residents were black. The black population declined from 18.9 percent in 1950 to 16.5 percent in 1990 as

shown in Graph 1.

Cecil County, Maryland

Cecil County is the northernmost Maryland county on the east side of the Chesapeake. It is bounded on the north by Pennsylvania and on the east, by Delaware. Although it is the second most populated Eastern Shore county (71,347), the size of its black population is the smallest. In 1950, the black population was 7.8 percent. By 1990, the black population had declined to 4.5 percent. Since 1950, the number of blacks in Cecil County has grown by 634. Currently there are 3,240 black residents in Cecil County.

Dorchester County, Maryland

Dorchester County is the home of Harriet Tubman who, after escaping slavery to the North, returned and led groups of slaves to freedom. Dorchester County has the second largest proportional black population. The size of the black population in 1990 was 27.9 percent. Since 1970, however, the black population has decreased (see Graph 2). While the county's population has increased by 2,421 persons since 1950, the black population has increased by only 733 persons.

Kent County, Maryland

In 1990, Kent County had the smallest population (17,842) of the 12 counties. The actual number of blacks in the county declined by 27 since 1950. The black population has declined from a high of 26.1 percent in 1950 to 19.8 percent in 1990 (see Graph 2).

Queen Anne's County, Maryland

Queen Anne's County was named in honor of the British sovereign who ruled in the early 1700s. The total population in Queen Anne's County grew from 14,579 in 1950 to 33,953 in 1990. However, during this 40 year period, the actual size of the black population has declined (by 29 persons). In 1950, there were 3,868 blacks in the county. By 1990, the number of blacks in the county had dropped to 3,839. The size of the black population declined from 26.5 percent in 1950 to 11.3 percent in 1990 (see Graph 2).

Somerset County, Maryland

Somerset is one of the southernmost counties on the Eastern Shore. It has

the second smallest population. In 1950, the total population in Somerset County was 20,745. Between 1950 and 1990, the county's population grew by only 2,695. The size of the black population grew from 7,326 in 1950 to 8,943 in 1990 (an increase of 1,617). Somerset County is one of the few counties on the Eastern Shore to have experienced an increase of the black population since 1950 as shown in Graph 2. In 1950, the black population was 35.3 percent. By 1990, the size of the black population had increased to 38.2 percent.

Talbot County, Maryland

Because of the flow of the county's many rivers and the Chesapeake Bay, it is believed that this county has the longest shoreline of any county in the U.S. The total population grew by 57 percent between 1950 and 1990. In 1950, there were 19,428 residents of Talbot County and by 1990, there were 30,549. The county's black population grew by only 4 percent during the same period. In 1950, there were 5,264 blacks living in the county compared to 5,502 in 1990. The size of the black population declined from 27.1 percent in 1950 to 18.0 percent in 1990 (see Graph 2). The greatest decline of the black population (3.3 percent) occurred between 1980 and 1990.

Wicomico County, Maryland

Wicomico County is located near the center of the Eastern Shore. Salisbury, the largest city, is located in Wicomico County. The size of the black population in the county was growing at a faster rate than the population as a whole. Between 1950 and 1990, the size of the general population grew by 87 percent (from 39,641 to 74,339). The size of the black population during the same period grew by 98 percent from 8,372 to 16,573. Despite the overall growth in the number of black residents, the black population has changed only slightly from 21.1 percent in 1950 to 22.3 percent in 1990.

Worcester County, Maryland

Worcester County is the only county in Maryland to border the Atlantic Ocean. The total population in 1990 was 35,028 compared to 23,148 in 1950. The number of blacks in the county has grown by less than 400 since 1950. There were 7,094 blacks residing in the county in 1950. By 1990, the number of blacks in the county had increased to 7,467. The percentage of the county's

black population has declined from a high of 34 percent in 1960 to a low of 21.3 percent in 1990. The largest decline in the size of the county's black population occurred between 1970 and 1980 (a decline of 6.4 percent).

In summary, the size of the average county's population has grown by 87 percent since 1950. Growth in the size of the black population was greater than that of the white population in only four of the 12 counties examined. Three of the four counties with the largest growth in the black population had small to medium size cities. This pattern of decreasing population size suggests a trend of migration of blacks from the rural areas to the more urban areas.

Education

Blacks in the United States have made tremendous gains educationally since the 1950s. In 1950, the average black person in the United States over the age of 25 had less than 6.9 years of school and only 13.2 percent were high school graduates. The percentage of blacks with four or more years of college was a dismal 2.2 percent. However, since the 1954 Supreme Court decision and passage of the Civil Rights legislation of the 1960s, blacks all over the United States have experienced dramatic increases in the level of educational attainment.

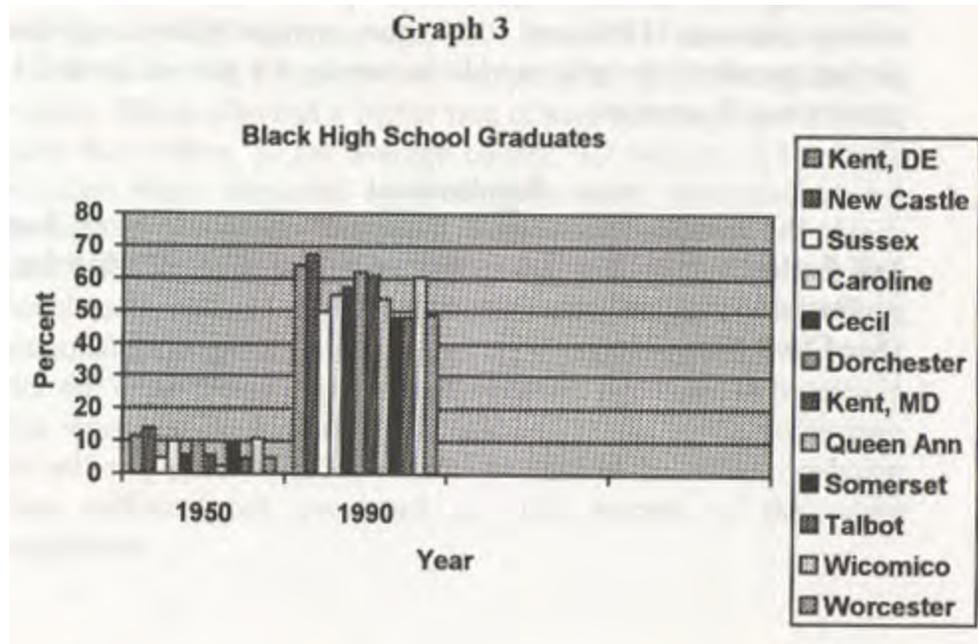


Delaware State College students outside building, c. 1900

Courtesy of Historical Society of Delaware

In 1990, 53.8 percent of the black population over the age of 25 in the county were high school graduates. The percentage of black high school graduates range from a high of 67.5 percent in New Castle County, Delaware (above the national average of 63.0) to a low of 45.5 percent (below the national average) in Sussex County, Delaware. The data show the black population in counties with small-to-medium size cities had a larger percentage of high school graduates in 1990 than more rural counties, suggesting a relationship between the percentage of black high school graduates and urbanization.

Although black populations in some counties had a higher percent of high school graduates than others, the fact remains that since 1950, the percentage of black high school graduates has increased dramatically in all counties (see Graph 3). The greatest increase in the percentage of black high school graduates between 1950 and 1990 occurred in the counties of Kent, Delaware (from 11.4 to 64.0 percent), New Castle (from 13.9 to 67.5 percent), Cecil (from 5.8 to 57.3 percent), Queen Anne's (from 2.5 to 53.8 percent), and Wicomico (from 10.8 to 60.5 percent). In these five counties, the percentage of black high school graduates increased by 50 percent or more. At the other end of the spectrum, the rate of increase in Somerset County was less than 40 percent (from 10.9 percent in 1950 to 48.0 percent in 1990).



One fact remains consistent, the percentage of black high school graduates in the twelve counties was significantly lower than the percentage of white high school graduates. The gap between black and white high school graduates was approximately 21 percent. The smallest high school graduation gap was between the black and white population in Kent, Delaware (11.1 percent), while the largest gap was between the black and white populations in Talbot County (34.5 percent).

The growth in the percentage of blacks with "some college" (one to three years of college) or college educated in these counties has also increased significantly since 1950. In 1990, 21.2 percent of the black population had some college experience. In 1950, only 1.3 percent of the black population had "some college." By contrast, 39 percent of the white population had "some college" in 1990. This rate was 17.8 percent higher than the percentage with college experience among the black population.

In 1990, Kent and New Castle counties in Delaware had the largest percentage of black college graduates, 11.0 and 12.1 percent respectively. Kent and Worcester counties in Maryland had the smallest percentage of black college graduates, 2.1 and 2.9 percent respectively. The percentage of college-educated blacks in the average county was 6.5 percent compared to 17.7 percent for whites. Between 1950 and 1990, the average increase in the percentage of college educated blacks rose by 4.4 percent, from 2.1 percent to

6.5 percent.

Employment

In the average Delaware and Eastern Shore county, more than half the black population was employed in one of three industries: professional or related services, manufacturing, or retail. (See Chart 1.)

Chart 1
BLACK/WHITE INDUSTRY OF EMPLOYMENT
BY COUNTY AVERAGES

Percentage of Whites as County Average	Occupation	Percentage of Blacks as County Average
20.6	Professional and Related Services	22.7
14.5	Manufacturing Sector	21.9
17.7	Retail	12.2
5.8	Farming/Agriculture	3.6
4.3	Transportation	3.9
2.1	Communication & Public Utilities	1.6
6.3	Banking/Insurance	2.5
0.9	Private Household	2.2
10.4	Construction	6.7
6.2	Public Administration	6.2
11.2	Other	16.5

There were some notable differences between black and white workers in 1990. On average, 75.4 percent of the blacks were employed by the private sector compared to 71.9 percent of the whites. Blacks also had a higher rate of employment in government jobs than whites. In the average county, 7.7 percent of the black workers were employed by local government compared to 6.4 percent of the white workers. A higher percentage of both black and white workers were employed by state government rather than local and federal government. The percentage of the black populations employed by the state was 9.5 compared to 7.2 percent for the white population. Perhaps the most significant difference in the work classification of blacks and whites was in the percentage of self-employed. In 1990, only 3.3 percent of the

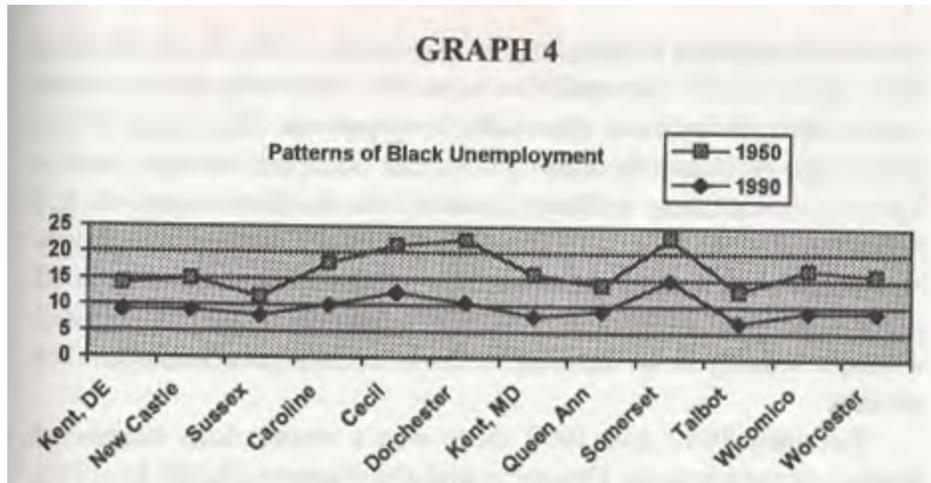
black population was self-employed compared to 10.2 percent of the white population.

Comparisons between blacks and whites in the industry of employment masks the employment differences between the two races. There are several indicators that shed light on labor differences between blacks and whites. One indicator is unemployment. In 1990, the average rate of black unemployment was 9.8 percent. There was double-digit unemployment for the black populations in the counties of Cecil (12.8 percent), Dorchester (10.8 percent), Queen Anne's (11.3 percent), and Somerset (16.4 percent) (see Graph 4). Talbot County had the lowest rate of black unemployment at 6.4 percent. The remaining counties had black unemployment rates between 7.9 percent and 9.4 percent.

What was truly ironic was that the black unemployment had increased noticeably since 1950. In 1950, the average rate of unemployment among black populations was 6.2 percent, even in the face of greater educational advancement. Between 1950 and 1990, the average rate of black unemployment increased by 3.6 percent. As shown in Graph 4, between 1950 and 1990 Dorchester was the only county in the sample where the actual unemployment rate among blacks declined (by 1.1 percent).

Despite a high rate of unemployment for the black population, the rate of unemployment for the white population in 1990 was relatively low at 3.3 percent. The white unemployment rate did not exceed 5 percent in any of the 12 counties examined. There were three counties that had white unemployment rates above four percent: Cecil (4.3 percent), Dorchester (4.2 percent), and Somerset (4.7 percent). Talbot County had the lowest rate of unemployment (1.6 percent) for its white population.

The counties of Kent (Delaware), New Castle, Kent (Maryland), and Queen Ane's had a white unemployment rate between 2.0 and 2.9 percent. While the counties of Sussex, Caroline, Wicomico, and Worcester had a white unemployment rate between 3.0 and 3.9 percent.



Occupation

In order to assess occupational transition since 1950, each job type was divided into five groups: upper white-collar, lower white-collar, upper blue-collar, lower blue-collar, and farm/agriculture. All managerial and professional specialty occupations were categorized as upper white-collar. Lower white-collar occupations included technical, sales, and administrative support occupations. Upper blue-collar occupations included craftsman, and lower blue-collar occupations included operatives, private household, service, and laborers. Those in the farm/agriculture category included farmers and farm laborers.

In 1990, 11.5 percent of the black population was employed in an upper white-collar occupation, and 18.6 percent in lower white-collar positions. As expected, the highest percentage of the black population employed in upper white-collar positions was in New Castle County. The proportion of black workers employed in upper white-collar occupations in Kent (Delaware), Caroline, Cecil, Queen Anne's, Somerset, Talbot, and Wicomico counties ranged from 10 to 15 percent. Only 5.6 percent of the employed blacks in Kent County, Maryland were employed in upper white-collar positions. Eight to 9 percent of the black workers in Sussex, Dorchester, and Worcester Counties were employed in upper white-collar positions. The percentage of blacks employed in lower white-collar positions ranged from a high of 33.4 percent in New Castle County to a low of 12.5 percent in Dorchester County.

In the average county, nearly two-thirds of the black workers were employed in blue-collar occupations. Of those, 80.9 percent were employed

in lower blue-collar occupations. The range in the percentage of blacks in upper blue-collar occupations went from a high of 16.9 percent in Kent County, Maryland, to a low of 8.4 percent in Talbot County. The range for blacks employed in lower blue-collar positions went from 61.6 percent in Talbot County to 39 percent in New Castle County. In 1990, the percentage of the black workers employed in farm/agriculture occupations averaged 3.8 percent.

Between 1950 and 1990 there was a tremendous change in blacks' occupations in Delaware and the Eastern Shore. In 1950, the percent of blacks employed in upper white-collar occupations was 4.2 percent. During the 40 year period, the percentage of black workers employed in upper white-collar positions changed by 7.3 percent. The greatest change during this period was in the percentage of black workers employed in lower white-collar positions. In 1950, 1.3 percent of the black population was employed in a lower white-collar occupation. By 1990, the percentage had increased to 18.6.

The percentage of black workers employed in upper blue-collar positions increased by 9.2 percent between 1950 and 1990, while the percentage of blacks in lower blue-collar positions actually declined by 13.8 percent during this period. The largest change in the occupation of blacks was in the percentage employed in farm/agriculture. In 1950, 23.7 percent of the black population was employed in farming/agriculture. By 1990, that percentage declined to 3.8 percent.

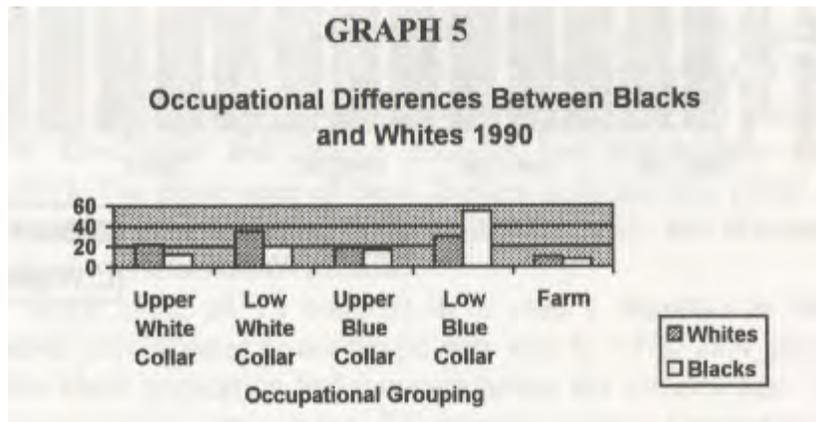
Despite the tremendous change in occupations since 1950, a better indicator of the improvement in blacks' occupational patterns is a comparison of occupational differences between blacks and whites in 1990. In 1990, the difference between the percentage of blacks and the percentage of whites employed in upper white-collar positions was 12.3 percent (see Graph 5). Similarly, the average difference between the two populations in lower white-collar occupations was 12.6 percent. The smallest average difference between the two groups in 1990 was in the percentage of blacks and whites employed in upper blue-collar (3.7 percent difference) and farming/agriculture (1.1 percent difference).

The greatest occupational difference between the black and white populations was in the percentage of the respective populations employed in lower blue-collar occupations. While slightly more than half (53.5 percent) of the black workers were employed in lower blue-collar positions, slightly less

than one-fourth (23.3) of the white population was similarly employed (30.2 percent difference).

Income

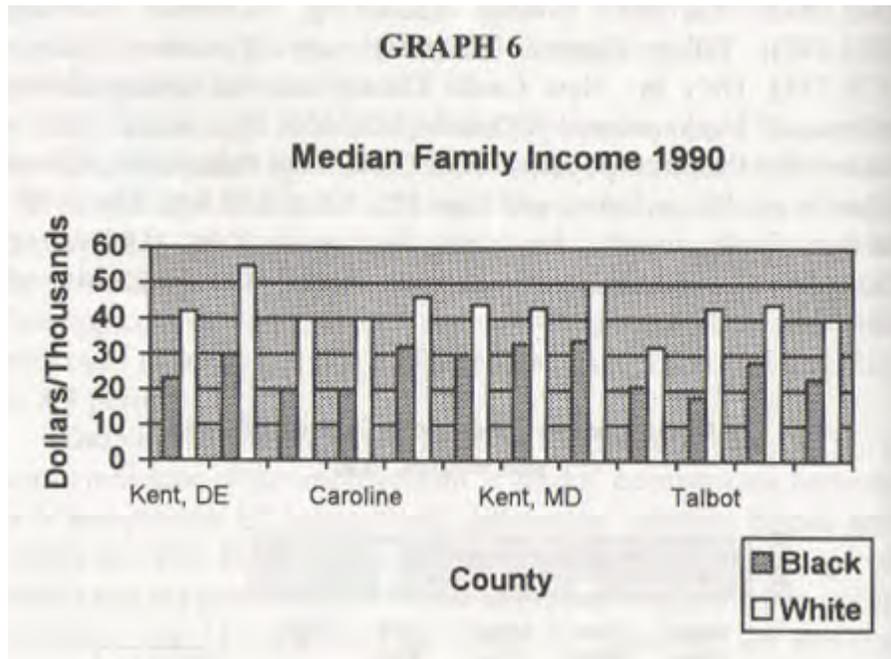
In 1990, the national median family income for the black population was \$23,550. The median family income for black populations in Delaware and the Eastern Shore was \$816 higher than the national median income. The black population in five of the 12 counties had a median family income that was lower than the national median family income for blacks: Sussex County (\$19,934); Caroline County (\$20,037); Somerset County (\$22,446); Talbot County (\$19,493); and Worcester County (\$20,741). Only in New Castle County did the median family income of blacks exceed \$30,000 (\$30,165). The median family income for the black populations in Cecil, Kent (Maryland), Queen Anne's, and Wicomico ranged from \$26,719 to \$27,946. The 1990 median family income for black families in Kent (Delaware), Dorchester, and Somerset counties ranged from \$22,446 to \$24,755.



In 1950, the median family income for black populations was \$1,110. The black population in New Castle County had the highest median family income (\$1,661), while the black population in Caroline County had the lowest median family income (\$845). The median family income for black populations in Kent (Delaware), Dorchester, Queen Anne's, Somerset, Talbot, and Worcester counties was less than \$1,110, while black populations in Sussex, Cecil, Kent (Maryland), and Wicomico counties had incomes above the median.

Although the average median family income for black families increased

by more than \$23,000 between 1950 and 1990, the income gap between black populations and white populations remained significant (see Graph 6). The 1990 median family income for the black population was \$24,366 compared to \$38,687 for the white population. Another way to think about this income gap is that black families made \$0.63 for every \$1.00 made by white families.



The greatest difference in median family income between black and white families was in Talbot County. In Talbot, the median family income for the black population was \$19,493 compared to \$42,921 for white families. The smallest gap in median family income between the black and white population was in Somerset County where the difference was \$6,013.

Despite significant income differences between the black and white populations, there is one statistic that suggests progress. Since 1950, the percentage of black families with incomes at or above the national median has grown significantly. In 1950, only

percent had incomes above the national medium. By 1990, this figure had risen to 31.3 percent. In both 1950 and 1990, New Castle County had the largest percent of black families with incomes in the mid-to-upper income categories (8.0 percent in 1950 and 42.8 percent in 1990). In 1990, slightly less than 25 percent of the black families in Dorchester, Somerset, Talbot, and Worcester counties had incomes above \$35,000. In Sussex, Caroline, and

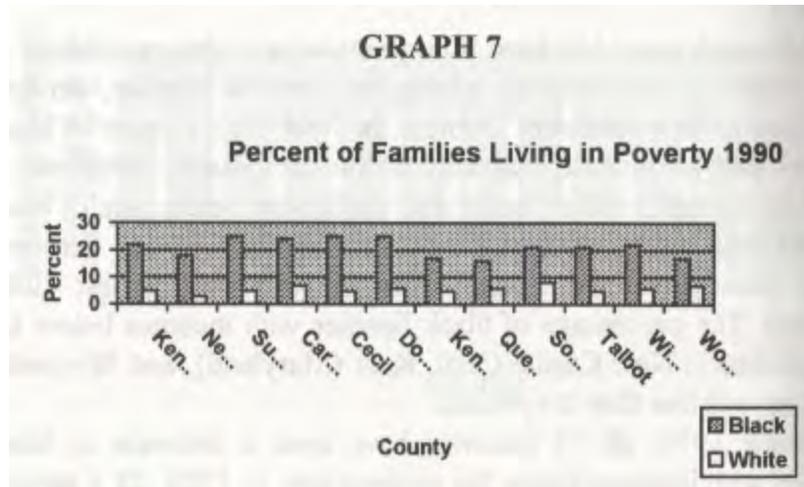
Wicomico, 25.1 to 30 percent were in this income group. Anywhere from 34.1 percent to 36.3 percent of the black families in Kent (Delaware), Kent (Maryland), and Queen Anne's counties had incomes at or above the national median.

Poverty

Although there has been a large increase in the percentage of black families with incomes above the national median, poverty continues to be a persistent problem. In 1990, 20.6 percent of black families had an income that was below the poverty threshold of \$13,359. Queen Anne's County had the lowest percentage of black families with incomes below the poverty line in 1990 (15 percent), while Dorchester and Sussex counties had the highest (25.0 percent). The percentage of black families with incomes below the poverty line in New Castle, Cecil, Kent (Maryland), and Worcester counties was less than 20 percent.

Since 1970, all 12 counties have seen a decrease in black families with incomes below the poverty line. In 1970, 28.4 percent of the black population had incomes below the poverty line. The 1990 average poverty rate was 7.8 percentage points lower than the 1970 figure. Between 1970 and 1990, some counties experienced significant decreases in the percentage of black families with incomes below the poverty line, while other counties experienced modest changes. For example, during this 20-year period, the decline in the percentage of black families impoverished in Queen Anne's, Somerset, and Worcester counties was greater than 10 percent. On the other hand, the decline during this same period was less than five percent in Kent (Delaware), Sussex, Dorchester, and Kent (Maryland).

The difference in the percentage of black families and white families living in poverty was evident as shown in Graph 7. In 1990, only 4.9 percent of the white families were living in poverty. The average difference in the percentage of black and white families impoverished was 15.9 percent. The difference in the percentage of black and white families impoverished in Sussex County was 20.2 percent. The difference was equally high in Kent County (Delaware-16.1 percent), Caroline County (18.3 percent), Dorchester County (19.8 percent), Talbot (19.2 percent), and Wicomico (16.7 percent). The smallest difference in the percentage of black and white families impoverished was in the counties of Kent (Maryland-11.4 percent) and Queen Anne's (11.1 percent).



Conclusion

There have been profound changes in the socioeconomic development of black populations in Delaware and the Eastern Shore since 1950. However, a question still remains whether these absolute changes have improved the quality of life for blacks. The data presented in this paper show that significant educational, income, and occupational differences continue to exist between the black and white populations in these counties.

The demographic trends suggest that a larger percentage of whites than blacks are moving into Delaware and the Eastern Shore. Most of the blacks in these counties are lifelong residents. What we were not able to ascertain in this study are the socioeconomic characteristics of the blacks who are remaining in the county relative to the those who are leaving. If the blacks who are migrating out of these counties (especially the rural counties) are better educated and more upwardly mobile than those remaining or migrating into the county, than the quality of life for the black population in general will continue to be stagnant well into the 21st century.

The data suggest that black populations in these counties may become victims of a changing labor market in the 21st century. The data also suggest that a relationship exists between black unemployment and changing occupational patterns. Since 1950, the black unemployment rate in the average county had increased by more than 3 percent. As the demand for agricultural and manufacturing workers in these counties decreased, the black unemployment rate appears to increase. The data presented confirm that in 1990, blacks were under-represented in the higher occupational status

occupations where jobs are expanding and over-represented in the lower status occupations that are decreasing. There is no indication of this pattern reversing itself.

A large income gap continues to exist between blacks and whites. In 1950, blacks in Delaware earned 47 cents for every dollar earned by whites. In Maryland, in 1950, black families earned 50 cents for every dollar earned by whites. In 1990, the income differences between the races had decreased slightly to 62 cents in Delaware and 70 cents in Maryland. All counties have seen a significant increase in the percentage of black families with income above the national median (31.3 percent for the average county). However, the percentage of black families living in poverty remains around 20.6 percent.

In summary, the key findings of this study are (1) black populations in urban areas have a higher level of socioeconomic development than those in rural areas; (2) there have been absolute changes in each county's black population's socioeconomic development since 1950; and (3) white populations continue to have significantly higher levels of socioeconomic development than the black populations.

This study was a statistical inquiry of socioeconomic trends in black communities in Delaware and the Eastern Shore. It was not designed to answer the why questions. For example, this study does not answer the question of whether there has been real improvement in the quality of life for black populations since 1950. Furthermore, it does not answer the question of why education, income, and occupational differences continue to exist. Clearly, as we move toward the 21st century, the timing is right to begin to research these questions and to develop practical policy solutions.

INTERVIEW WITH LITTLETON MITCHELL

Conducted by Sidney Jacobs University of Delaware

Jacobs: We would first like to know a little about you as a person. Where were you born? Something about your family, brothers and sisters, and things of that sort.

Mitchell: I was born in Milford, Delaware-the son of Littleton V. Mitchell and Helen A. Mitchell. I had two sisters and a brother, and there are only two of us that are now living. My father and mother are both deceased. I lived in Milford until the 8th grade. I had to go to Howard High School to get further education.

Jacobs: Why did you have to go to Howard High School?

Mitchell: Because there was not any further education for black students in the State except at Howard High School. Or, if you had the money, you could go to Delaware State College where they had the 9th through 12th grade. Howard High School was the only high school in the state of Delaware for black students.

Jacobs: What first attracted you to a career in civil rights? Was there an individual you admired? An event(s) that made you angry?

Mitchell: I was not attracted to the civil rights-I was placed in a chapter of the NAACP at the age of 12. I was forced to go to youth meetings by my mother and, therefore, I grew up within the NAACP in a very small area of Milford. And, when I got to Wilmington, my Aunt continued me in the NAACP at the high school. The high school suggested it to me. So, I've been involved in it all my life.

Mitchell: They would suggest it by having NAACP people come to the school and talk, not by sponsoring NAACP youth or anything like that. But, they had motivating people, black people, coming in and talking, telling you what was happening. What was not happening and telling you the problems-suggesting what we could do when we got our education.

Jacobs: Were there any events that made you angry?

Mitchell: Sure, when I went downtown in Milford. I had to say "Sir" before I could get waited on in the stores. We never got to see Santa Claus because Santa Claus went to the volunteer firehouse, and blacks weren't allowed in there. When we went to baseball games, we had to sit down beyond the third base area, sort of out in left field on the line. So there were many things. When we went to the movies, we had to sit upstairs way up

there in the back of the balcony. Our whole life was made that way-to grow up angry.

Jacobs: You mentioned to me a few months ago about not addressing you as "Sir." Is there a relationship to this?

Mitchell: Yes, that's right-I hate the word "Sir." I hated it when I was in the service and I told the guys, "Don't say Sir to me. Say Sir when you see the Major and Colonel around, otherwise you just say Lieutenant to me-don't say Sir." I hate "Sir" because I would not get waited on. I went downtown in Milford-not just me, any black person. Adults had to as well. When I walked up to the counter and said, "I want one-half a pound of pork chops." The man would look at me and say, "What?" He'd look at me and I'd say, "Please." He'd say, "What else?" I'd say, "Sir, may I have a half-pound of pork chops, please?" "Sir" was the way they made us-placed us in a demeaning manner. They were above us, so we had to say "Sir." If I had the opportunity, I would do other things- break their windows and do everything else.

Mitchell: Yes. We were playing marbles-my friends and I were playing marbles one day and the Mayor of Milford ... we were in the driveway on the ground playing marbles. The Mayor drove his car up and all of a sudden stopped right in front of us and yelled, "You niggers get out of the way." I went over, got a brick and said, "You say that again and I'll throw this through your windshield." Of course, I thought I was standing there with my boys in back of me. And I said, "I dare you to say that again. Say it again and I'll throw this right through your windshield." He didn't say anything, he said, "Get out the way." Then I said, "Just say it one more time." I just happened to look around and there was nobody back there. I remember that so very much-one of them is dead now, the other two are still alive. And he said, "Well, I said get the hell out the way." I took the brick, threw it right through his windshield and took off.

Jacobs: Did he report this?

Mitchell: If he did, I don't know anything about it because I was scared to death. I knew when I got home. This is Milford, I know this man's gonna come to my house, and I was gonna catch it. Nothing happened. He didn't do anything. His name was Prettyjohn-he had a drugstore, he was the Mayor of the town. He never forget me, though. He said to me one time, "I have never forgotten you. You threw that brick through my windshield. I guess I deserved that for what I said."

Jacobs: He said that?

Mitchell: Yes, years later. "I guess I deserved that for what I said." Then I told him, "I've never liked you since, and I don't like you today."

Jacobs: Tell me about the lady you mentioned that attracted you to the NACP. She was a white woman?

Mitchell: Yes. She did talk with me. She was a member of the Wilmington branch, and she orchestrated what we should do and how we should do it. She was very active in that branch. The Wilmington branch was white and black together and there were white officers in the branch. I know-Buzz Ware was white-it was together. So, when we had marches for housing it was white and black in it. It wasn't just one group.

Jacobs: You said that you had different opinions.

Mitchell: We did. There were strong opinions-there were people who were dissatisfied and left, but they were individuals and not groups. Most of the people, when we made a decision, accepted it. The community accepted it.

Jacobs: You mentioned that one person said you all should leave or disband.

Mitchell: There were two-a doctor and a teacher. The teacher stood up and said, "You shouldn't do this-this is disgraceful." I didn't say anything to her-it was a woman, and I would not say anything to her. But with that doctor-I told him what was going to happen to him if he stayed there.

Jacobs: We talked about being part of a cause and feeling that you have to make sacrifices for the cause. Dr. King had mentioned in one of his speeches that if a person was not willing to die, then his life is not worth living. Did you feel that way?

Mitchell: Not to be killed. When you're the age that I was-most of us-it doesn't bother you. You don't even think about it. I knew I could be killed. I know that. I know I'd been threatened. I know that when I came home at night and did not call Jane to tell her I was at a meeting that would be over at 8

o'clock and I'd get home at 10 o'clock-she'd be angry- she'd be upset.

Jacobs: Did you ever think it's time to stop now-it's time to get out?

Mitchell: People who are stopped never had a commitment. People who stop never want to be treated equally. People who stop don't have respect for themselves. How are you going to stop doing something to get people to respect you? Leadership in the NACP came about with that-Roy Wilkins, and others-Thurgood Marshall, Dr. Benjamin Mays, Dr. Mordecai Johnson, Dr. James Nabritt, Spotswood Robinson, Jack Greenberg, Louis L. Redding-not

to mention my teachers in high school. Not to mention my mother. They didn't say stop.

Jacobs: You didn't worry about not getting a promotion?

Mitchell: I didn't have an agenda that I was looking for a job. I remember one time a guy down here took a gun out and pulled it twice in my belly-but it didn't go off

Jacobs: This was an altercation about what?

Mitchell: It wasn't an altercation. I saw a pheasant about four or five miles down there. I thought I'd bring the pheasant back for the kids. I locked my car. A few minutes later I saw this man around my car. I said, "Hey, what are you doing?" He said, "What are you doing here?" I said, "None of your damn business what I'm doing here. You get away from my car." He looked at me and said, "You're that Mitchell with the big mouth. Somebody needs to close your mouth." Pulled a gun out and clicked it twice, but it didn't go off I knocked it out of his hand and kicked him in his private parts.

Jacobs: This is totally contradictory to the non-violence that Dr. King . . .

Mitchell: You never heard me say I wasn't violent. I've never said I was non-violent.

Jacobs: You are saying you were fighting for equality for everything?

Mitchell: Everything-going into the toilets, going into everything-migrant labor, movies, everything. Eating- couldn't buy a house-everything.

Jacobs: Why couldn't you buy a house?

Mitchell: They wouldn't sell you a house where you wanted to buy it-even if you had no debts and could afford to. You could not go to get the money for a loan. Let me tell you something. You ever heard of redlining? Redlining is when you couldn't live outside a certain district. And, real estate dealers were the ones that were doing it. When you look at real estate, real estate dealers selected where blacks were going to live.

Jacobs: What was the attitude of the white business and religious community to your struggles? Did you have white supporters? Detractors?

Mitchell: Yes, we had white supporters. Now that wasn't (the) white community. It was individual whites. Wasn't white businesses, wasn't DuPont. You know what DuPont did one time? DuPont's offered to sponsor our budget for \$28,000. Our budget was \$28,000. They were going to give us our budget for that year. But DuPont wouldn't hire a Dr. Davis, who had a Ph.D. in chemistry-in the laboratory. And, we said if we take their money we're obligated to them and they know it. There are two things they'll do-

they'll get us in a pigeonhole where we get their money and get obligated and because of that won't criticize them. We didn't take the money.

Jacobs: When you were picketing, you had a couple of detractors. Were they coming from all different walks within the black community?

Mitchell: No, let me tell you. Detractors, for the most part, were educated blacks, like the doctor and the teacher I mentioned. A doctor and a teacher. We had educated blacks who were satisfied. They were afraid. "If they don't want us to go in their place, we shouldn't go there," they would say. There were others like this man I told you about, who was an educated man. He was not stupid. There were people who didn't want to push it. Anybody who said I want to be treated like everyone else is pushing it. People are still pushing it.

Jacobs: Your leadership came through what segment of black America?

Mitchell: All segments-they weren't all college graduates, some weren't even high school graduates that were involved with us. They worked in a myriad of places. They worked in the steel mill. There were women who worked day-work-it was a myriad of people together doing the job.

Jacobs: So you didn't have class antagonism then?

Mitchell: No, there wasn't any class antagonism. I take it back, yes, there has always been class antagonism. There was a time when Howard University only wanted people that were lighter than me. There was a time when people who were light were given a preference. I wasn't one of them, but people thought I was good-looking enough to be one. We've had that-we've had people in the state who wanted to be Indians, people who wanted to be Moors. Yes, it's there but it never interfered with our NACP. It didn't come in a mix and say-"Oh, he's this color, that color, class, he's a college professor, he's a president of a church." No, that didn't come in. That comes after.

Jacobs: Just to clarify, you said something about the Moors in the state of Delaware. What do you mean by the Moors?

Mitchell: The Moors are a group of people that live down in Cheswold. There was a piece in the paper about them just last week. They lived in Cheswold, and they considered themselves Moors. So, they weren't Negroes-they were really light, fair hair (some of them). The Nanticokes lived down in Millsboro. When they were Nanticokes, they had an Indian school, down there in Millsboro, that went to the 7th grade. After 7th grade where did they go? They couldn't go to a white school because the white school wouldn't accept them. There was only one place to go-Delaware State College. After

they went to Delaware State College what happened? They got integrated. There's still a group of Indians there. I knew one who was a Chief called George Clark-he was a mortician then. His son now, I think, is the Chief of the Nanticokes there.

Jacobs: What was the attitude of the local media to your organization?

Mitchell: They printed what we were doing. However, the newspaper was controlled by Christiana Securities. Christiana Securities was a DuPont Company. I didn't know what kind of control they had until I tried to get into the newspaper. There was a DuPont in the legislature, and he and two downstate men wanted to put in a law that said any female with more than two children should be sterilized-and that was wrong. They wanted it to effect those on welfare. I called Clarence Mitchell who was our Washington Representative in the 102nd Senate and said, "I want you to look up this DuPont." The other one was Donald Isaac, and the other was George Robbins of Milford. He looked up and found all three of them were getting subsidies from the government for not planting potatoes-for not planting something. And I found that out- got it secretly from Clarence Mitchell. So, I took it to the newspapers, but they would not print it. Ask Norm Lockman about it. Norm Lockman was an intern there. And the one who came here to my home to find out about it was Jay Harris. Jay Harris is now the editor of a newspaper out in California. Jay Harris wrote it up. He said, "Litt, have you got the evidence." I said, "Here it is." Gave him a copy of it-they would not let him print it in the newspaper. Donald Isley, George Robbins, and I forget which DuPont it was. So you see, the media did have control because it was a particular family-Republicans. Now anything that was derogatory about Republicans you didn't get in that newspaper.

Jacobs: Did you get sympathetic coverage?

Mitchell: One of my friends-I mean close friends-was Bill Frank. Bill Frank was a columnist and a reporter. And, he would go with me and write up on it. And what he wrote was accurate. I knew other reporters who were there, but Bill Frank was really my support. I'd call up, tell him where I was going-he'd go with me.

Jacobs: What input did national events (boycotts, sit-ins, Martin Luther King, etc.) have on local activities? Did national actions increase tensions?

Mitchell: Yes, we did both. It had an effect upon us because we would react with it-if there was a boycott. We had a boycott right here. Nationally, Woolworth's was boycotted. We boycotted Woolworth's. People were not

always sympathetic with us, but they were in other areas. I was skiing up in Vermont. Went to the Five & Ten in Vermont, looked out and there was a bunch of girls picketing-DON'T EAT IN WOOLWORTH'S-THEY DO NOT SERVE NEGROES. They were all white from Bennington College. I was astounded. Saturday morning and I went up there and I said, "Are you all doing this? If you're going to do it, can I walk around with you?" They said, "Yes." I'm up in Bennington, Vermont on this main street that's got this Woolworth store. I had on my ski pants because I was going skiing, and I got in the line and marched around with them for about 15 minutes. It was happening all over, not just here, but all over.

Jacobs: Did you keep in contact with people in other states? Did you have some sort of communication system set up?

Mitchell: We had a system-the State Conference president of New Jersey, State Conference president of Pennsylvania, State Conference president of New York-we all knew each other. We said we were going to boycott certain areas in the state- New Jersey, Pennsylvania and New York-were going to come down in busses. The business people got afraid and said no. We said we're not responsible for what people do when they come here. That was open invitation saying you might have your business tore up.

Jacobs: So you kind of used that as leverage?

Mitchell: Oh, yes indeed. We used everything we could get as leverage. Yes, we worked together in those states, especially New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania. It was called the Tri-State.

Jacobs: Was there a relationship between the civil rights organizations and the student population-high school and college?

Mitchell: Not in Delaware, there weren't very many college students, except at Delaware State College. And the President of Delaware State College did not want the NACP on campus. He told me that because we wanted a chapter at Delaware State. Wes Hopkins' son was going to be the president, and I talked to Dr. Mishoe. He said we would like to have a chapter but take it off campus. He told me that.

Jacobs: Was the NACP affiliated with other colleges in other states?

Mitchell: Yes. You take down South, they were really affiliated. That's where it started. They were affiliated in the South- always have been. They weren't always affiliated in the North. But when we had students hold a sit-in at the Hollywood Diner in Dover, Mishoe was going to kick them out of Delaware State College if it hadn't been for Louis L. Redding. It was black

and white that sit-in from Delaware State. We had white teachers down there who had joined the students.

Jacobs: Why did the president take this position?

Mitchell: He didn't want to upset the white people who were giving him money for the school. That's my interpretation of it. His donors were upset because of my attitude, because I wouldn't take ... I wouldn't bend and say "okay, let's do this." Like half a loaf of bread is better than none at all. Not when you're talking about equality, not when you're talking about democracy, not when you're talking about self-respect -not half a loaf of bread is better than none at all--I'm going to get it all, or I'm not going to get none.

Jacobs: What was the relationship between the civil rights organizations and the University of Delaware?

Mitchell: The University of Delaware was not going to have the NACP there either. In fact, I was barred from the University of Delaware. I was barred from speaking at the University of Delaware. Dr. Perkins was president. I used to go over with several of the professors to speak at their psychology classes and their sociology classes-especially a Dr. Lincoln. Dr. Lincoln called me one time and said, "Litt, I've got good news and bad news, I'm gonna give you the bad news first. The bad news is Dr. Perkins said you cannot be permitted to speak on campus at the University of Delaware." And I said, "For what?" He said he didn't say why. "The good news-neither can Ted Kennedy, neither can Mark Hatfield, neither can Julian Bond-you're in good company." I said, "Would you all let that be known-put it in the newspaper so that I can be identified with those guys." There were a number of incidents happening over there. Football players, white and black, they wouldn't let them stay together. An African girl came to the University and some of the white daughters of the white family that brought her over were not allowed to room with her. She was in a room for three by herself

Jacobs: Did the students have concerns that were different from civil rights leaders?

Mitchell: Remember there were very few students (black) at the University of Delaware. Students at Delaware State had already done a sit-in. There were not a lot of them doing it, but the feeling was there. University of Delaware had very few, if any, who could or would. They were so few they couldn't do anything.

Jacobs: With these students at Delaware State, did you have any kind of generation gap?

Mitchell: No. Everything was happening-people were sitting-in, people were marching-so they would do what they could. Many times the man down there didn't want them to do things-they were risking getting put out of school for it.

Jacobs: Did some people see you as militant?

Mitchell: I would have no disagreement with that. You're militant any time you go against the establishment. All right then, I'm militant. I've even been called a Communist before.

Jacobs: You've been called a Communist?

Mitchell: Yes, a rabble-rouser. Also been told I don't do nothing for black people. It's happened.

Jacobs: What does it do to your social stock when someone labels you a rabble-rouser?

Mitchell: Delaware State labeled me a rabble-rouser because I said if Delaware State can't be accredited, then we need to put Delaware State with the University of Delaware-then we'll get accredited. That wasn't well received because nepotism was running rampant around Delaware State. That was in 1975-those people didn't want anything to do with me. There are people still down there that hardly speak to me because of that.

Jacobs: The students used sit-ins. Did you have the same tactics?

Mitchell: These kids went into Hollywood Diner-the Hollywood Diner down there didn't want to serve you, though the one in Wilmington would. Down there they wouldn't serve you- they had them arrested. They found Dr. Mishoe was going to throw them out of school. We made sure that he didn't.

Jacobs: So you all had pretty good communications with the students?

Mitchell: The students that were involved.

Jacobs: Did you know when they were going to boycott?

Mitchell: Yes, we had people all lined up to arrange bail. But, they didn't put them on bail. They let them out on their own recognizance. Always had people lined up to arrange bail in case anything went wrong.

Jacobs: What role did politicians play in the civil rights years? Were they sympathetic or hostile? Was there a difference between Republicans and Democrats?

Mitchell: Politicians were sympathetic-Republicans and Democrats. They were both sympathetic. We had people down in the legislature that worked with us. We had one guy who was a Republican down in the legislature and he and I had a heck of a rapport. See, we lived off the beaten trail, Route 13

was it, Route 9 was country then in the 50s and 60s. In the '60s I was State President. He'd come up to me and say, "Litt Mitchell, I can't get that caucus to do such and such a thing. We've got to do something." I'd say, "Okay, how about I call the newspaper." I could call up the newspapers and get anything. "Ray, I'm calling the paper, telling them you're not doing anybody any good. That'll get their attention. We're going to suggest that you not cooperate with the caucus." Then I'd criticize him in the paper. I'd get all kinds of comments- "What are you criticizing Ray Evans for, he's the only crack we've got down there." They didn't know what Ray and I were doing. Ray would go back in the caucus and say, "Look what you've done to me, look what you're doing to me. This man (Litt) isn't going to get me elected. You better come on and let me get my stuff." Ray would use that thing and go back and get the stuff done. He and I never told anyone about it. Ray Evans and I worked that to a tee. The lady that was Executive Director of Human Relations-LaJuan Pitts- we worked that kind of thing too. I'd call her Aunt Hattie-"You ain't nothing but an old Uncle Tom" Ray and I'd get together and laugh about that. Nobody, not even my family, knew what we were doing.

Jacobs: How did you establish this relationship with Ray?

Mitchell: We knew each other just by working in the NAACP. He was in the NAACP, he worked with us. He had an alcohol beverage store, and he donated to the NAACP. He was very sympathetic and worked with us. But, he was Republican, and he was one of the few down there. We did have some others down there who didn't work with us too well. They worked with us but only up to a certain point because they were under the control of the bosses. There was Dolan, who was the Democratic boss, and he didn't want blacks doing anything unless he said so. Generally, they were good to us.

Jacobs: How did you establish a relationship with Bill Frank?



Littleton and Jane Mitchell

Photo by Jack Buxbaum Courtesy of University of Delaware

Mitchell: Bill Frank wrote that I was complaining about the migrant laborers and how they were treated. Bill Frank wrote an article saying I didn't know what I was talking about, so I called him up. I said, "Put your money where your mouth is. Get down here and go with me. You go with me and let's see what you find." He went with me. From that time on Bill Frank and I were close as anybody could possibly be. Anything

wrote and asked him to write about he wrote. He always wrote positive-everyone of them. There's another reporter. I made a statement that a certain governor made a racist decision. He asked me why I called the governor racist. I said, "The thing you don't do is read what I say-don't read what you think I said." He said, "Can I come down and talk with you?" I said that you can be the nicest person in the world, but you can make a racist decision. "You're right Litt, I didn't read what you said." The-problem is I know what I'm saying, and I say it in a way that I know and mean. You take it another way and, therefore, you've adopted something I didn't say. One thing about the media-I've always tried to be factual, truthful and always had something that was going to happen to someone else--not to me. It was about people.

Jacobs: What were the most important events that happened in Delaware?

Mitchell: I can't delineate-there's so many of them. University of Delaware, 1954 decision, where we had a riot in Milford- all of this.

Jacobs: In 1954 you had a riot in Milford?

Mitchell: Sure. Milford, Delaware, had riots because they integrated the schools there. That is the only place in the. country that had riots because of the 1954 decision. The '54 decision was getting off in May. In September, there were riots in Milford because they integrated that fast. My mother had a shotgun behind her door. Kids in cars would come up in the black neighborhood and throw bottles at doors, in windows.

That was it. I heard a man at the University of Delaware say Delaware was integrated without problems. Where was he? Where did he get his information? They had the biggest riot in Milford you could think of

Jacobs: Was the 1954 decision considered the beginning of the civil rights years?

Mitchell: No-so many people demanded civil rights over the years. It started long before 1954.

Jacobs: What about the court decision involving the University of Delaware? Were there sit-ins and demonstrations?

Mitchell: No. Louis L. Redding went to court and got that done. There were no sit-ins or demonstrations-and nobody paid him. He got no money for it. He did it on his own.

Jacobs: What do you see as the great achievements of the civil rights years?

Mitchell: Getting equality in all facets of our society-public accommodations, housing, living where you want to-all those things. Also

riding anywhere you want on a bus or train. Being able to get some jobs.

Jacobs: Failures?

Mitchell: Yes-of blacks to really get prepared to go in and take the jobs. Young blacks getting prepared so that when the doors open, they can run in. Youth are not getting involved like we would like them to be-to take over. We need a continuum. Not necessarily doing exactly what we did, but making sure it continues. That is not happening. We did not insist that the youth le and become involved in what we are doing. We have no youth groups in the State now. Where is the leadership going to come from?

Jacobs: Who are the heroes? Are there Delawareans like Rosa Parks?

Mitchell: Yes, Louis L. Redding. Every single person in Delaware ought to know about him. Every child. Not just black, not just white. They should know that every time they are in school, sit in a restaurant, are at a hotel-it is because of Louis Redding. He got no money. Used his own. He beat five Georgetown lawyers who picked up \$500,000 to represent the State to preserve segregation. Louis Redding picked up nothing.

Jacobs: What's left?

Mitchell: We must develop leadership that will be astute and attentive to the needs of the people in the State. The needs are a little bit different now, but they are in some ways the same. The more things change, the more they remain the same. Prejudice is still here-it is just more subtle.

Jacob: What, if anything, can students do to make things better?

Mitchell: Three things. Look at the way folks are treated. Be sensitive to the way people treat and respect you. And listen to those who have come before.

Jacobs: Thank you, Mr. Mitchell.

Introduction to Hansford C. Bayton

In this study of the black community of Detroit in the early part of this century, historian David Katzman observed that "whites perceived blacks as an inferior caste unfit to interact with under most circumstances." Much the same could be said of the history of race relations in Delaware and the Eastern Shore of Maryland. Yet here (as we see in this volume) as there, there existed an ambivalence in relations between the races, with shining moments of respect and civility interspersed with the more familiar refrain of fear and loathing. Much has improved in the intervening years. Still, at times we seem to travel in great circles. In 1947, nine years after "Judy" Johnson stopped playing, Jackie Robinson was chosen the first African American hired to play in professional baseball. He played for the Brooklyn Dodgers. In the summer of 1997, when the Los Angeles Dodgers celebrated the fiftieth anniversary of that event the team had exactly the same number of African American players as they had in 1947—one. As we march toward the millennium, one can not help but wonder "how long?" -in the words of the old spiritual, how long before a better world emerges.

In assembling this collection of articles in 1996 and 1997, I observed that we were "exploring a range of experiences with an eye toward examining themes of persistence, courage and invention." I mentioned that we considered the contribution a first step as there were many stories left untold. Since its publication I have received a number of wonderful suggestions for inclusion in a second volume, a volume with time and funding we may yet pursue. They reminded me most of all how exciting and liberating was the exercise of searching for roots.

One communication that I received affected me in a personal way and is included next in this volume. It was written by William J. Bray, Jr., a teacher of history who lives in Virginia. Like many already in our collection, it tells the tale of a black steamboat captain, with little formal schooling but a lot of nerve, who ran a successful river boat operation across the Chesapeake for a number of years. He ran this business during a time when many blacks could not vote, had no standing in court, little chance of receiving bank loans or other signs of worth considered part of the basic rights of citizenship by much of affluent, white America. Captain Hansford Bayton's tale was not one of victory, however. Three times he set out to restore his business after his boats were destroyed under suspicious circumstances. Finally, he was too old and

sick to try again. Though I never knew him, I can not help thinking that Captain Hansford Bayton, "the ebony entrepreneur" would consider it a kind of victory to be included in this volume, as would his daughter Julia, the little girl with solemn expression and determined eyes in the family portrait. Hansford Bayton was my great-grandfather and Julia Bayton Banks, the little girl in the picture, my grandmother. In searching for regional roots, I was introduced to some of my own. It is perhaps in small discoveries like these that we go forward.

Dr. Carole Marks Director and Professor University of Delaware

Ebony Entrepreneur: Captain Hansford C. Bayton By William J. Bray, Jr.

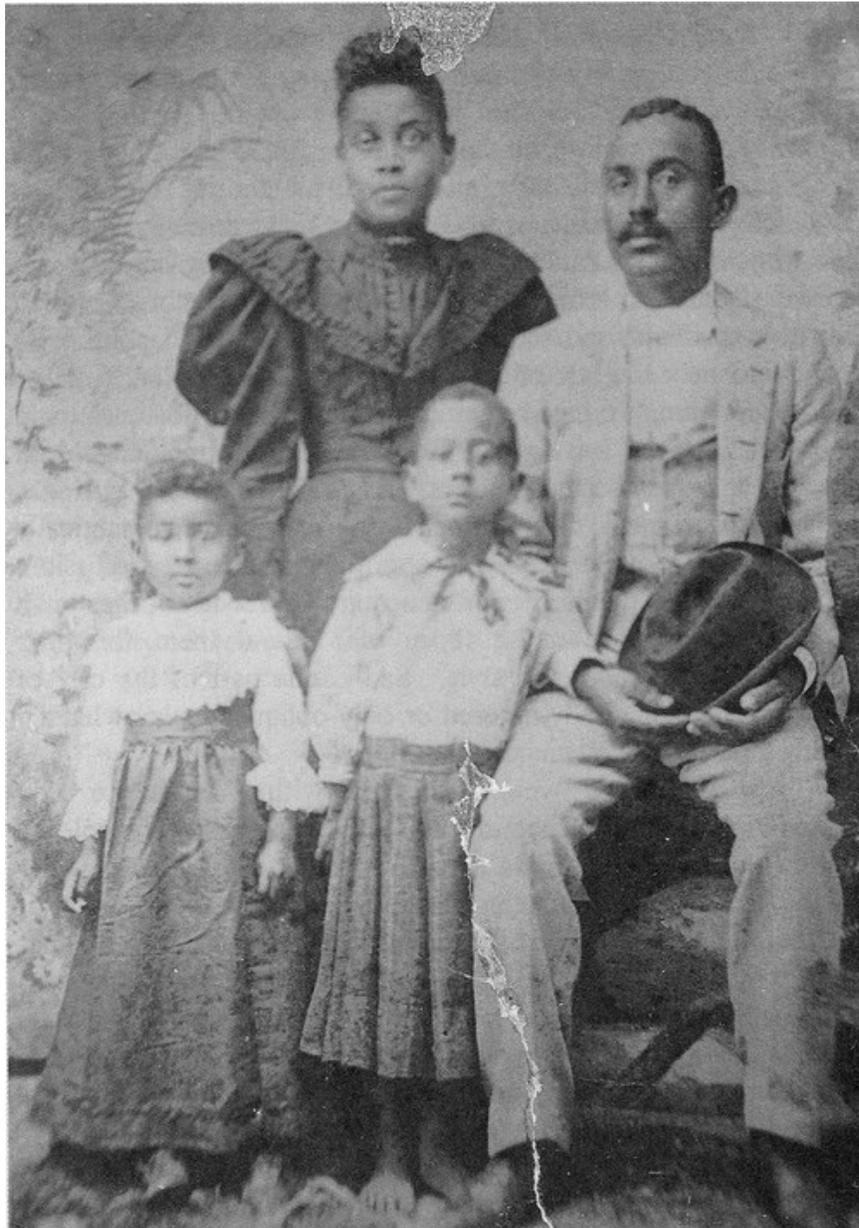
The history and lore of the steamboat era in the Chesapeake Bay region are filled with many colorful figures and types: courageous captains or mates who trod the decks through wind and wave to guide their boats to safe harbors, performing heroically in the face of disaster; reckless engineers immortalized for daring to push their machinery to the edge of destruction - and sometimes beyond- to milk the last ounces of power to win a race; ruthless entrepreneurs who created their own companies, fortunes, and empires, battling and buying their way to the top through cut-throat competition; shady seedy gamblers who could win or lose fortunes on a single card hand; beautiful belles and their beaux romantically dancing away the night as part of a moonlight pleasure excursion. Even the steamers themselves often acquired personas of their own and loyal followings among those who knew them for their legendary grace, beauty and style. Sadly, one part of the cast of characters is either totally ignored or only obliquely acknowledged as being a part of the steamboat era.

African-Americans were connected with Chesapeake Bay steamboating from its inception and played a significant role as crew members or passengers aboard virtually every Bay steamer until the demise of steamboating in this century.

Nevertheless, for most of the nearly 150 years of Bay steamer history, prevailing prejudice and stereotypical perceptions relegated black men and women to menial roles and a nearly separate existence aboard ship. This was especially true in the nineteenth century due to rigid social and legal codes that existed both before and after the Civil War.

In the ante-bellum period many African-American "employees" aboard the steamers were slaves, owned by the company, the boat's officer, or other individuals connected with the company. This form of employment, for example, was the most common on the Weems Line's boats. Other boats employed free blacks for minimal wages, while occasional steamers would employ a mixture of free and slave labor. The latter arrangement normally would have been frowned upon by the white southern society as a potentially dangerous or volatile condition because of the perceived threat of free black

influence in the midst of slaves. Nevertheless, dependence upon chain of command, the self-contained nature of nautical employment, and the need for teamwork in the face of shared dangers presented by the elements, all combined to create a sense of community among those employed aboard regardless of individual status. A Chesapeake Bay steamboat crew was a reflection of the larger society, while at the same time existing as a community unto itself, and bound by the sometimes conflicting rules that governed both.



Captain Bayton, his wife Virginia, and his two oldest children, John and

Julia.

Courtesy of Captain Bayton's great-granddaughter, Julia Sullivan-Johnson

It was an unspoken rule to the white patrons of steamers that most blacks employed aboard and also black passengers would remain faceless and nameless. This was facilitated by the design of the steamers with separate quarters and accommodations for passengers and crew of the two races. Rooms that had to be used in common, such as the dining saloon, would either be used on different schedules or were roped off to provide the separation required by custom and by law. Despite the artificial barriers created aboard, the many roles blacks filled made them indispensable to the efficient running of any steamboat. Generally, black crew members fell into two categories: service or light labor, and heavy manual labor. In the service category were the stewards and stewardesses who were on call around the clock to see to the comfort and material needs of passengers. The sumptuous meals that were legendary aboard most Chesapeake steamers often were prepared by black cooks and usually were served by black waiters. In the heavy manual labor category were several groups: the firemen responsible for shoveling tons of coal into the boiler furnaces, and the ones whose lives were most endangered by any mishaps to the machinery; the deckhands, frequently referred to as "roustabouts" or "stevedores" responsible for the loading and unloading of freight, livestock, wheeled vehicles, and other assorted cargo, a backbreaking job that could be dangerous at times; the occasional black helmsman responsible for steering a steamer under the guidance of a mate or pilot. Baggage-masters, frequently black, were responsible for stowing on board the luggage, trunks, and other personal effects brought onto a steamer by passengers but generally too large or bulky to go into a stateroom or sleeping compartment. Of all the black crew members, usually the stewards and stewardesses were the only ones with frequent enough contact with travelers to be recognized by name or face. For example, a newspaper reported that "...a comfortable state room [was] put...at my disposal by that aristocratic and well-bred attache of the boat, "Arthur" [Jackson] who... is as well known as Captain [Noah] Fairbanks. ...That person who could not feel at home with [list of officers]...to say nothing of Arthur, and Richard Hill, the stewards, must, indeed, be hard to please.

The unspoken rule that black crew members and passengers would be

faceless and nameless was especially true of newspaper coverage of steamers. Ante-bellum steamer advertisements and articles usually listed the captain's name with the boat so that the two became nearly synonymous. Articles frequently named the clerk (the equivalent of a purser) and/or first mate, and occasionally the chief engineer. Needless to say, all of these officers were white. On those rare occasions when a black crew member was mentioned in print, if the slant of the article was positive, then the wording usually was condescending in tone and implied that the crew member was an exception to the rule. And it nearly always pointed out his race: "Robert Brown (colored), ...baggage master on the Lancaster ...died of congestive chill Saturday morning while the steamer was aground in the Rappahannock River. "Bob' was well known and much respected by the traveling public, as he was always polite and looked to their pleasure and comfort." Even in the sympathetic reporting of tragedies involving blacks, i.e. death by falling overboard and drowning, the implication intentionally created for the reader's mind was that the death could have been avoided were it not for carelessness and stupidity. If the slant of the article was negative, then the writer would spare no energy in a vituperative account that promoted and reinforced prevailing stereotypes and prejudices.

"The indiscriminate mixture of race in the saloons of the steamers on this river is justly a source of universal complaint. The bare presence of the Negro might be endurable if he were made to behave himself when thrust into the company of ladies and gentlemen...and...[not] be an annoyance to all around them."/div>

"When the steamer Matililda reached Port Royal...the upper saloon was invaded by a number of Negro men and women, who engaged in the most boisterous conversation and noisy romps, greatly disturbing the passengers, many of whom had retired to their staterooms. Their conduct was so unbecoming that they were reprovved by one of their number, and told that people would think that they were all drunk..."

As could be expected given the nature of the times, negative articles were in far greater proportion to positive articles. Any disruptive behavior among black crew members or passengers was duly reported-fights (if knives were involved, the incident was euphemistically called a "cutting scrape"), drunkenness, rowdiness or boisterousness, thefts, assaults, insubordination, labor trouble- complete with names of all persons involved. Such accounts always left the impression that disruptive elements were tempered when

white authority appeared in the form of the boat's officers or local law enforcement officials:

"On Tuesday night, on the steamer Westmoreland...a shooting affair took place between John Warren, waiter, and Ambrose Taylor, deckhand, in which Warren was badly wounded by a pistol shot....[details of the shooting followed] Taylor was handed over to the authorities at Merry Point. Both parties are colored...." It is unfortunate that biased reporting left the perception that such behavior could or should be expected from black crew members and passengers. A comparison with steamers from other regions of the country in which whites were predominant as employees and passengers undoubtedly would reveal that such behavior could occur on any boat of any company regardless of the race of the individuals involved.

Despite the oppressive and nearly insurmountable obstacles thrown in their path by the greater society, some African-Americans in the post-Civil War period gained genuine recognition in their connection with steamboats. Although positive recognition as an employee aboard a boat owned by a company dominated by white owners was hard to achieve, real opportunity came with steamer companies, or aboard individual steamers, that were operated by black capitalists in the Chesapeake Bay region. Aboard such steamers the majority, if not all, of the crew was black, including the officers, and the opportunities for advancement were greater because of the ownership being black as well. Although such companies or steamers were never numerous, they did exist, and they sometimes provided competition to the larger, more established companies. The people who owned and operated these companies or steamers were trying to carve out their fair share of the American Dream, and in many instances they substantially succeeded. As with anyone in the transportation field, they also took on great risks, including the risk of financial failure. One such businessman, who was a pilot, captain, steamboat owner, and founder of a small steamer line on the Rappahannock River, represented the growing entrepreneurship of the small but influential black middle class that emerged during and after Reconstruction.

Hansford C. "Hanks" Bayton was born on October 10, 1863, in Essex County, Virginia, to the union of an unknown Rappahannock Indian and Julia Holmes, and was named after his maternal grandfather, Hansford Holmes. Julia later married Arthur Bayton, who raised Hansford as his own son. The early years of Hansford's life probably were spent on a farm called "Cherry

Hill," near present-day Dunnsville. "Cherry Hill" was owned at that time by Rev. Peter Ainslie II, a Disciples of Christ minister. Doubt exists whether Rev. Ainslie actually owned the Bayton family, because census and court records do not reveal such ownership. At some undetermined time after the war, the Bayton family moved to Tappahannock, county seat of Essex County, and by 1870 Arthur Bayton owned a house and a lot in the town on Duke Street. Family oral tradition says that Arthur was a cabinet maker. Being a skilled craftsman would have made Arthur of great value to his community and probably gave him some degree of mobility and a greater sense of independence and self-worth. Arthur and Julia's strength of character allowed them to give their children encouragement and confidence in their own abilities. This, combined with a strong religious background and a sincere work ethic, provided the Bayton children with a stable and positive home environment.

As a child, Hansford Bayton was enrolled in school in Tappahannock. This was a standard fact of life for all the children in the Bayton household. Because neither parent could read, they demanded school attendance by their children so they would have a wider range of opportunities as adults. All of the Bayton children acquired at least a primary education, and Hansford's youngest brother, George, earned a medical degree through Howard University. It is unknown whether Hansford went beyond the primary grades. Another fact of life for the Bayton children was hard work. Starting at a very young age, Hansford and his brothers helped their father farm land which he owned outside of Tappahannock. Undoubtedly, it was this hard physical labor as a youth that convinced Hansford that he wanted employment in another field that afforded him the degree of independence he sought. By the mid-1880s Bayton was earning a living as an oysterman, and by 1890 he was a fish and oyster dealer.

As an adult, "Hansford was a handsome man, [of] medium brown complexion, tall, stocky build, [and] stood very erect. He had a very pleasing personality, [was] very talkative, [and] humorous. " He was very hard-working in any endeavor he tried, and possessed a trait many successful entrepreneurs have""the willingness to gamble financially to improve his fortune. His only vices were his pipe and cigars, and using alcohol only on special family celebrations or holidays. He was a frequent churchgoer, attending the Berean Baptist Church his father had helped to establish in Tappahannock during the 1870s. At one point he was the superintendent of

the Sunday school of his church. On August 16, 1886, Hansford married Virginia Banks and they began a long life together, filled with many children. As he entered adulthood, Bayton was ready to take a vital role in family, church, and community matters.

It is evident that Bayton was an active participant in civic affairs in Tappahannock, because in 1891 he was chosen by the Essex County Electoral Board to serve as an election judge for the Tappahannock precinct, a position he held for the next six years. The following year he was elected to fill a vacancy on the town council. As Arthur was already a councilman, both father and son were involved in decision making for Tappahannock. When the Virginia General Assembly passed a law giving Tappahannock a new town charter in February 1894, Bayton was chosen by the legislators to serve on the new council. He continued in that capacity until his resignation two years later, due to a new business endeavor requiring a move to another locale.

In August of 1984, Bayton helped organize a festival or fair for the blacks of Essex and surrounding counties. The county fairgrounds were rented, and scheduled activities included races, tournaments, and baseball games. The fair was a great success. Newspaper coverage of the fair is the first discovered mention of Bayton as "Captain." This would indicate that he already had gained some notoriety as a waterman and businessman in Tappahannock. It is evident that his oyster and fish business was quite successful, and it was in his connection with the water trades that he would soon expand and make a name for himself.

A fellow council member, Walter E. Dillard, was the owner of a thriving lumber mill and house carpentry business. Sometime early in 1895, Dillard began construction of a small steamboat along the Tappahannock waterfront. Named the Owen Dillard (his wife's maiden surname was Owen) the vessel was completed by September of 1895. It was a propeller-driven, coal-burning, steam tug, ten net tons, 39 feet long, 10.7 feet wide, and with a depth of

feet. She was officially listed as a passenger vessel with a crew of two. It is probable that Bayton had at least partial ownership of the Owen Dillard and without question he was in command of her from the beginning. The second member of the crew probably was his younger brother, James A. Bayton.

Dillard and Bayton tried that fall to secure some arrangement whereby they could earn a profit from operating the steamer. They proposed to place her on

a daily passenger and freight route between Layton's Wharf and Fredericksburg but received no encouragement from Fredericksburg businessmen. They even had to cancel an excursion trip from Tappahannock to Fredericksburg in October because of steam leakage in the boiler. This minor problem soon was repaired, and within a few month good news from farther down the river offered Bayton a business opportunity he could not pass up and the opportunity to buy out Dillard's interest in the steamer.

The residents of communities in Lancaster County long had been dissatisfied with their mail service. Mail normally arrived via a long, tortuous route down the length of the Northern Neck from Fredericksburg, using roads that were of poor quality. This meant that mail and newspapers frequently were several days or even weeks old when received. This resulted in lost business opportunities and a general feeling of isolation for residents of Lancaster County. To compound this situation, residents of Middlesex County, just across the river, enjoyed same-day mail and newspaper service from Richmond because of a railroad stretching into the Middle Peninsula. To remedy their isolation and the loss of business, Lancaster citizens desired a steamboat mail rout to connect the two sides of the Rappahannock River. Captain Bayton approached the leading citizens of both counties with a proposal to provide the desired service, and the offer was accepted.

Captain Bayton traveled to Washington D.C., early in 1896 to apply for the mail contract for the route. The contract was granted in May and service officially began June 16, 1896. The route was from White Stone, by way of Irvington, Weems, and Millenbeck, to Urbanna, a round trip of about sixteen miles. The Owen Dillard made this trip six days a week, "leaving White Stone at 7 and arriving in Urbanna at 11:30 where it remained until 2, returning to White Stone at 6." [v1] Captain Bayton received \$1, 500.00 per annum from the government for carrying the U.S. mail. In addition, the Bayton brothers also established a growing passenger, freight, and excursion business that brought further income to their partnership. Thus began a service that would last for thirteen years, and the route established commonly became known as "Bayton' s Line." Bayton moved his family to White Stone later that summer and settled into a rented home until his business picked up and a more suitable homesite became available.

It is evident that late in 1896 the United States Post Office advertised for bids for postal routes. Records indicate that the Baytons were underbid by Austin Martin for the White Stone- Urbanna route, and that Martin's service

began on July 1, 1897. It is probable that the Baytons were subcontracted by Martin because the Owen Dillard continued on the route for the four years of Martin's postal contract. In July of 1897 Merry Point, on the Corrotoman River, was added to the route a stop between Weems and Millenbeck, increasing the distance of the line to 27.5 miles.



Bayton family home, Lawson's Bay Farm, in White Stone, Virginia.
Photo by William J. Bray, Jr.
This view was taken in 1988.

One incident in March 190 Cj clearly demonstrated just how much Lancaster and Middlesex counties depended upon the service provided by the Baytons. 'While only a short distance from Urbanna on the daily run, one of the boiler plates ruptured, blowing a hole in the boiler and rendering the Owen Dillard nearly inoperable. Fortunately, the hull of the steamer was undamaged, and with a little difficulty she reached the wharf in Urbanna Creek. There she was tied up while the boiler was sent to Baltimore for repairs. Wild rumors circulated among the lower river that the steamer had been sunk by a boiler explosion. The temporary removal of the steamer

resulted in mail, freight, and passengers being carried by sailboat. Contemporary newspapers complained of the unreliability of the sailboat in maintaining a time schedule, and of the disruption to the regular service to which the citizens of the two counties had grown accustomed. The boiler soon was repaired, re-installed, and service was restored, much to the relief of the communities served by the line.

In 1901 government mail contracts again were awarded to the lowest bidders, and James Bayton was the successful bidder for the steamer route. Captain Bayton successfully bid on a star route that connected with the steamer. In this time period, Ottoman and Moran, two wharves along the Chesapeake River, were added to the route as postal stops. Also, Bayton bought a 169-acre tract called Lawson's Bay Farm near White Stone. The large, two story frame farmhouse on the property was on a bluff overlooking the broad expanse of the Rappahannock River and a small tributary called Hughletts Creek. This was the family's home for the next fourteen years and was a visible symbol of the success and wealth acquired by Captain Bayton through his steamer service. That same summer, Captain and Mrs. Bayton had rental cottages built near the beach on the Lawson's Bay property to serve as a camp ground and summer resort for blacks of the Chesapeake Bay region. As part of the rental fee, Virginia Bayton would provide meals for the guests.

White Stone Beach was opened in 1902 as a resort property, and a new wharf was built. The mail was switched from River

View wharf, where the Owen Dilard had stopped for years, to the new wharf. In June of that year, the steamer lost her propeller and had to be towed to Weems for repairs. Within two weeks she was pulled up on a marine railway and a new propeller was installed. During the two weeks his steamer was laid up, Bayton had to subcontract the mail route to Captain H.C. Willing, owner of a small, twin-screw launch called Jumbo.

It is evident that for the next three years the freight and mails increased in volume, and the passengers increased in numbers, resulting in the Owen Dilard being strained beyond its capacity to meet the needs of the route. To solve the problem, Captain Bayton decided to have a larger steamer constructed. He discussed with several of the leading white citizens of White Stone and Irvington the advantages of increased freight and mail service with Urbanna. Finally, he convinced Dr. William J. Newbill, L.C. Thomas, and others to back him financially in the project.

Bayton contracted with W.F. "Fred" Ward of Urbanna to build the hull of the new steamer, and construction began in the spring of

He also contracted with the Marine Railway, Machine and Boiler Works of Baltimore to provide the engine and boiler at a cost of \$5,000. A contemporary newspaper described the machinery as consisting of "triple-expansion engines equal to 125 horsepower and a steel Scotch boiler tested to 160 pounds pressure, "vll expected to drive the vessel at a speed of 13 miles an hour. The hull was launched on October 14, 1905, with the usual ceremonies. Miss Ethel Newbill of Essex County was the sponsor for the launch, and she christened the steamer Dr. W.J. Newbil, in honor of her uncle.

The hull was towed to Baltimore, where the machinery was installed during the winter. Her trial trip was made February 1,

and everything was satisfactory. When completed, the Dr. W.J. Newbil was listed as a screw steamer, 94 gross tons, with a freight capacity of 300 tons. She was 78 feet long, 18.2 feet wide, had a depth of 7.9 feet, and she was fitted with two saloons, one of which served as a mailroom. Total cost of the Newbil was \$22,000. Her gleaming coat of white paint and her external appearance made her a smaller version of the larger Bay steamers that plied the Rappahannock. Captain Bayton, with his brother

James as chief engineer, hired at least six crewmen besides themselves, one of whom, Harris Davis, was the assistant engineer. All of the crew were black. The Owen Dillard became a spare boat for emergency use and for excursions.

The Newbill was a tremendous success from the outset, and the increased freights and passengers brought additional income to the Baytons. In May of 1906, the Newbill was chartered by Rev. Wright of Tappahannock, for an excursion to Fredericksburg. The excursionists, from several black churches in Essex County and Tappahannock wanted to witness the closing exercises of the black high school in Fredericksburg, which several of their children attended. This also gave Captain the opportunity to show off his new steamer along the entire length of the river and encourage future charters by other parties. During October 1906 there was a captains and mates strike against the Maryland, Delaware and Virginia Railway Company, owner of the large steamers that operated between Baltimore and Fredericksburg. All of the & V steamers were tied up as the strike lengthened. Along the Rappahannock, wharves were piled high with freight waiting to be shipped, and residents were alarmed. The Fredericksburg Business Men's Association was

concerned at the loss of trade from down river, so a transportation committee contacted Captain Bayton. A proposal was made to charter the Dr. W.J. Newbill for the duration of the strike. Bayton would run a thrice-a-week route between Tappahannock and Fredericksburg, charging the same passenger and freight rates as the regular steamers. He made one trip from down river and was full to capacity with passengers and freight going both ways. The strike had given Captain Bayton the opportunity to make quite a profit; however, the strike ended on October 12 and the charter for the Newbill was withdrawn.

For the next year, the Newbill continued on its daily mail route and Captain Bayton enjoyed such prosperity that many considered him to be wealthy. His family had continued to grow with the addition of more children. The Lawson's Bay property had been decreased in size with the sale of eighty-seven acres in 1903, but the remainder was still an incredibly beautiful plot of land. Homestead exemption deeds of the period showed Bayton to be a man of more than average means in terms of property both personal and

real estate. Captain Bayton had become a respected fixture in his community.

In the summer of 1907 Captain Bayton performed an act of heroism that further added to his stature in the eyes his community. A popular activity of the religious-minded people of those times was to attend one of the many religious camp grounds offered by most Protestant denominations. Near Weems, Virginia, was located Wharton Grove Camp, one of the most well known Baptist camps in the Chesapeake region. The wharf at Wharton Grove would be crowded with hundreds of vessels of every description, while thousands of the faithful were in attendance to hear preaching by some of the leading ministers of the day. One family in attendance was the family of John M. Gressitt, well-known grain merchant of Baltimore, who had commercial ties with farmers of the Rappahannock River. While the family was on the Wharton Grove wharf, Gressitt's daughter, Mary, slipped and tumbled into the stream. Captain Bayton was there and immediately dove to her rescue, saving the young girl from drowning. A thankful Gressitt family recovered their daughter, and in gratitude nominated Captain Bayton two years later to receive a medal from the Carnegie Hero Fund. Though turned down by the judges of the award, Bayton still was viewed as a hero to many for his prompt action in saving a life.

By the Fall of 1907, 44 year-old Hansford Bayton had reached the high point of his life. Successful businessman, steamer owner, and government employee, owner of one of the finest small farms along the Rappahannock River, a fixture in his community, and a loving husband and father, Captain Bayton was living the American dream in spite of prevailing prejudices of his time. Nevertheless, events soon transpired that would leave Bayton with financial woes that would plague him the rest of his life.

On Sunday, November 15, 1907, while resting at her wharf in Carters Creek the Dr. W.J. Newbill mysteriously caught on fire, burned to the waterline and sank. The 37 passengers aboard escaped without injury. The official inquiry by the government found that the fire had started in the cooking compartment of the steamer and had advanced too rapidly to be extinguished. Had it been an accident, or was it arson as the family suspected. No culprit was ever identified, but it is possible that someone who was jealous or resentful of Captain Bayton's success decided to destroy the steamer out of spite. The Newbill was a total loss and was not insured. Bayton still had most of the mortgage on the vessel to pay off, and now had a drastically reduced capacity to finance the debt. The Owen Dillard was placed back on the mail route, but her size limited the ability of Captain Bayton to make a substantial profit from her operation.

For two years he struggled to make ends meet. To make matters worse, he lost the postal contract for the White Stone- Urbanna route, when Bayard Lee Simmons underbid him. Records do not reveal if Simmons subcontracted the route to Captain Bayton. Then disaster struck for the second time. On September 15, 1909, the Owen Dillard caught on fire and was destroyed in Urbanna. Captain Bayton was beached and without a ship to command for the first time in fourteen years. The White Stone- Urbanna route fell into other hands at that point and continued until the 1930s. Bayton's financial struggles continued for the remainder of his life, though he did acquire other boats (including yet a third, the Grace, that was destroyed by fire) and established another mail, freight, and passenger route between Morattico and Tappahannock in 1917. This service continued until poor health forced his retirement in 1926. Years before, his financial losses resulted in the sale of the Lawson's Bay property to satisfy debts still remaining from the destruction of his two steamers.

Having grown old and infirm, Captain Bayton and his wife moved to Baltimore to live with a married daughter, Julia Banks. It was there that on

July 27, 1927, Hansford C. Bayton died from complications of a stroke suffered ten days earlier. It had been his wish that after his death his remains should be interred in the family plot in Tappahannock. Two days later, Bayton was on a steamer for the final time, as that was the means employed to take his remains to Tappahannock. As the boat steamed up the Rappahannock, it glided past familiar shores along the route that as a young man he had established with his brother between White Stone and Urbanna. As it continued up river, the steamer retraced the stops Captain Bayton made in his later years on the Morattico- Tappahannock mail route. When his coffin was unloaded upon the long pier at Tappahannock, Hanks at last was returned to the scene of his childhood and young adult days. His remains were carried to the family plot and the funeral service was attended by a large assemblage of family and friends.

The many roles filled by Captain Hansford C. Bayton during his lifetime were a remarkable testimony to the character of the man. Farmer, politician, local government official, federal government employee, businessman, waterman, pilot, steamer captain, and steamboat owner-he was all these things and more. The success, leadership, and business acumen of men such as Captain Bayton, despite the obstacles thrown in their paths by the larger society, paved the way for sweeping social changes in the lifetimes of their children and grandchildren. Surely the history of steamboats in the Chesapeake Bay region was enriched by their efforts to provide service to their communities.