Many Paths in Freedom:
Border-Crossing Black Americans after the Underground Railroad

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Introduction:
Between the Underground Railroad and the Great Migration

Mifflin Wistar Gibbs recalled his return to the United States with ambivalence.

Born free in Philadelphia, Gibbs had sought his fortune among the 49ers in California, before fleeing to Victoria, British Columbia, to escape the hardening racial attitudes in the wake of the *Dred Scott* decision.

Content and prosperous, Gibbs nevertheless was enthralled by the Emancipation Proclamation, the defeat of the Confederacy, and the promise of Reconstruction.

In 1870, he decided to return south.

"En route my feelings were peculiar," Gibbs recalled. "A decade had passed, fraught with momentous results in the history of the nation. I had left California disfranchised and my oath denied...I had left politically ignoble; I was returning panoplied with the nobility of an American citizen."[1]

Canada has been understood as a Promised Land for tens of thousands of slaves, escaping via the Underground Railroad. Yet discrimination often awaited African North Americans, those men and women redefined by having spent time in both in the United States and Canada.

After the Emancipation Proclamation, at least 15,000 Black Americans returned to the United States. Would the promise of equal rights hold in the United States, for those born enslaved, those fugitives for freedom, and those who returned to work for its promise?

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Most people know about the Underground Railroad.

But many of those who escaped to Canada moved back to the United States during or after the Civil War.

Almost no one knows that story.

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In the years prior to the abolition of slavery in the United States, tens of thousands of enslaved African Americans used a secret system of routes to make painstaking, dangerous journeys from slavery to freedom, often stopping, at least temporarily, in northern states.

[1] Mifflin Wistar Gibbs, *Shadow and Light: An Autobiography with Reminiscences of the Last and Present Century* (Washington, D.C.: n.p., 1902), 109-110.

Between 20,000 and 60,000 freedom seekers took the Underground Railroads—or made their own paths. But they could not stay safe in Pennsylvania, Massachusetts, New York, Ohio, Michigan, Indiana, or Illinois. In the 1850s, the Fugitive Slave Law and the *Dred Scott* decision made all U.S. states vulnerable, while crossing into Canada brought far more protections.

And almost nobody knows what happened beyond freedom, after these Black North Americans escaped to Canada–and found that racism and discrimination were also present in this supposed Promised Land.

This book tells the story of African North Americans who returned to the U.S. during and after the Civil War, in the years of Reconstruction and then Jim Crow. It changes our understanding of the Underground Railroad by changing the endpoint. It explores the full lives of those who had escaped for freedom and who then came back to the United States.

In the years after slavery, Black Americans and Black Canadians created a way out of no way—opening new careers, going new places, setting up new institutions, rebuilding and growing their networks based on family ties, church affiliations, and fraternal organizations. These Black border-crossers lived on both sides of the Great Lakes, in cities throughout the Northeast, in the Pacific Northwest, and in California. And they paved the way for the Great Migration.

How did time in Canada change the lives of these Black North Americans, from all over the continent, moving across the U.S.-Canada borders in the emancipation generation? And why has this history—well-preserved by descendants, and actively sought out by Black community historians—remained unknown for so long?

This period saw rapid, unexpected, and often unpredictable shifts in politics, economics, and culture. Black Americans were told, by the *Dred Scott* decision, that they had no chance at citizenship or equal rights—and then their advocacy, the fighting of the Civil War, and the legislation and constitutional amendments of the Reconstruction Republicans overturned those assumptions. And then Reconstruction's promises fell apart, under the assault of white supremacist backlash. By the time the U.S. Supreme Court re-approved explicit discrimination, in *Plessy* v. *Ferguson*, racial segregation was the norm in all sections of the continent, including Canada. In the second half of the nineteenth century, owning rural land and running a prosperous farm seemed the most likely guarantee of a stable home life for Black families—until railroad

monopolies, financial panics, and newly credentialed professionals helped shift investment to cities and new technologies.

Black North Americans, during and after the U.S. Civil War, crossed the U.S.-Canada borders, for political rights, for economic opportunities, for community. Black settlements in Ontario, Nova Scotia, and British Columbia were deeply connected to Black communities all along the southern edge of the Great Lakes—in Michigan, Illinois, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and New York—but also to Black communities in San Francisco and Portland, in Washington, D.C., and Tennessee, and Alabama, and Mississippi.

The Underground Railroad was a refuge, but not an end. Arrival in the "Promised Land" was only a beginning. So too, looking backward, it was not merely the fact that Chicago and Detroit and New York and Los Angeles existed that drew Black southerners north and west during the Great Migration. Free Black communities, augmented by the arrival and accomplishments of these Black North American border-crossers, meant that there was a secure and prosperous Black community to join, with housing to rent and churches to attend and businesses to trust and professionals to rely on.

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In explaining her approach to her award-winning epic *The Warmth of Other Suns*, Isabelle Wilkerson wrote that it was "three projects in one," as she sought to "convey the intimate stories of people who had dared to make the crossing," alongside "the important questions of demographics, politics, economics and sociology."[2] She wrote that "I wanted capture the vastness of the phenomenon by tracking unrelated people who had followed the multiple streams of the Great Migration over the course of the decades that it unfolded."[3] We have been inspired by her moving and powerful book, and so we have approached this complex, vast history that precedes the Great Migration by a generation in a similar way.

The book is structured around the experiences of five Black North American families who crossed and re-crossed the U.S.-Canada borders, under the shadow of slavery, during and after the Civil War, and then as they sought a chance to be completely free, on their own terms, in the decades that followed. Individual lives don't have arguments. In fact, they can help break up history that has become too generalized, or too caricatured. Microhistories of individuals and

[2] Isabelle Wilkerson, *The Warmth of Other Suns,* "Notes on Methodology," p. 540.
[3] Wilkerson, 540.

families "offer particular gifts to historians' study of the African American past," Kendra Taira Field writes, "allowing scholars to sidestep threadbare binaries…, contributing instead to a more intimate, complex, and complete historiography of African-descended peoples."[4]

The book is centered around five families, but we have also included telling moments from the life stories of many other Black border-crossers, as these individual and family efforts to find a path in freedom coalesced into patterns. This history describes the lives of a generation, revealing an unknown chapter of U.S. history. They demonstrate the power of thousands of people, acting independently but forming the largest voluntary migration of Black people before the Great Migration and in the shadow of the Underground Railroad.

The history of Black peoples has been made and unmade in "unfinished migrations," as historian Rashauna Johnson has called them.[5] In this era, she notes, "there was no single transition from slavery to freedom, nor was there a single Great Migration."[6] In the search for sources, the Canadian Black Studies scholar Katherine McKittrick offers a stark warning: "Black livingness is unmeasurable," she writes. "Our despair and our heartbreak and friendships and ways of loving and moving, are tethered to a dehumanizing system of knowledge, a monumental story."[7] But, she says, we must "honor and study, imperfectly, our collaborative efforts to seek liberation."[8]

Men, women, and children crossed the U.S.-Canada borders easily enough, but their history is often divided by the border. Who can Buffalo claim, and who St Catharines? Who is the pride of Detroit and who is the hero from Windsor? For example, Jimi Hendrix was born in Seattle in 1942. His father Al had been born in 1919 in Vancouver. Jimi's grandmother Nora was of Black and Cherokee ancestry; his father Ross was the son of a Black woman and a white man.

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[4] Kendra T. Field, "The Privilege of Family History," *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 127, No. 2 (June 2022)https://doi.org/10.1093/ahr/rhac151 p. 605; see also Kendra Taira Field, *Growing Up with the Country: Family, Race, and Nation after the Civil War* (New Haven, CT, 2018).

[5] Rashauna Johnson, "From Saint-Domingue to Dumaine Street: One Family's Journeys from the Haitian Revolution to the Great Migration," *The Journal of African American History* Volume 102, Number 4, (Fall 2017), 427. See also Kendra Field, "Introduction: African American Migration and Mobility After the Civil War, 1865–1915." *The Journal of African American History* Vol. 102, No. 4 (Fall 2017): 421-426; Ira Berlin, *The Making of African America: The Four Great Migrations* (New York: Penguin Books, 2014); Carter G. Woodson, *A Century of Negro Migration* (Washington: Association for the Study of Negro Life and History, 1918).

[6] Rashauna Johnson, "From Saint-Domingue to Dumaine Street: One Family's Journeys from the Haitian Revolution to the Great Migration," *The Journal of African American History* Volume 102, Number 4, (Fall 2017), 427. Also quoted in Field's introduction.

[7] Katherine McKittrick, *Dear Science and Other Stories* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2021), 186. Thanks to Jessica Marie Johnson's Twitter feed for the reference.

[8] Katherine McKittrick, *Dear Science and Other Stories* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2021), 187.

Each had been born in the United States in the decades after the Civil War, and had moved to Vancouver to seek new opportunities; their son had done the same, moving south to Seattle. As a child, Jimi spent time living with his grandparents in Vancouver.[9] Both cities have claimed some of Jimi Hendrix's fame—need we adjudicate who has it right?

Residents of these borderlands know this is silly: living in a border region means a productive interchange across rivers and lakes, over bridges and through tunnels. But local histories are often more territorial. And immigration historians know how often that movement can mean both opportunities and lost connections—places where people lose touch, and history lived in one location becomes disconnected from how and where the story continues.

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Just as there are multiple U.S.-Canada borders, so too there are multiple U.S.-Canada Black communities, not only now but also in the nineteenth century. Popular imagination goes immediately to those who were enslaved in the U.S. South, to fugitives seizing their own freedom and then aided to safety in Canada along the Underground Railroad. But many Black Canadians in the mid-nineteenth century had arrived two generations before, with Loyalists evacuated from the newly independent United States. Some were Black families freed for aiding the British against the colonists, but more were the enslaved property of white Loyalist families. While some escaping fugitives had help, others simply came north alone. Many Black North Americans sought out new opportunities in cities such as Toronto, London, Windsor, and Chatham, or in settlements created by Black and white abolitionists in Buxton, and Dresden, Ontario. The Black community in Victoria, on Vancouver Island, in what would become part of British Columbia, came almost all at once, from gold-rush California. But others were seemingly alone: W. S. Barnett, for example, a lumberman and a Baptist, who is listed in the 1861 census as the only U.S.-born person of color in Compton, Quebec, about 30 miles north of the border with New Hampshire.[10]

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[9] Harry Shapiro and Caesar Glebbeek, *Jimi Hendrix: Electric Gypsy* new and improved ed. (1995; New York: St. Martin's Press, 1990), 3-10.

[10] Karolyn Smardz Frost and David W. States, "King's College, Nova Scotia: Direct Connections with Slavery," report for *King's College and Slavery: A Scholarly Inquiry,* (September 2019) https://ukings.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/KingsSlaverySmardzFrostStates.pdf; Crawford Kilian, *Go Do Some Great Thing: The Black Pioneers of British Columbia* 2nd ed. (1978; Burnaby, BC: Commodore Books, 2008); Rudolph M. Lapp, *Blacks in Gold Rush California* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977); Stacey L. Smith, *Freedom's Frontier: California and the Struggle over Unfree Labor, Emancipation, and Reconstruction* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2015); 1861 Canadian census. Found via Barry Christopher Noonan, comp., *Blacks in Canada 1861,* (Madison, WI, 2000), p. 478.

In saying this book is about what happens after the Underground Railroad, we mean that primarily as a marker of time: what happened after President Abraham Lincoln declared that the American Civil War would be a "new birth of freedom," not merely a restoration of what had been before?[11] Rather than focus solely on the Underground Railroad "passengers" and "conductors" and their antebellum acts of heroism—stories that are worthy of praise, but also frequently told and retold—this book wants to ask about after the era of the Underground Railroad, because this equally fascinating period is often ignored. This book links the history of the Reconstruction-era United States with the experience of Black families in Confederation-era Canada, expanding and uniting African North American history.

We have a picture of an elderly but still fierce Harriet Tubman, in front of her New York home after the turn of the twentieth century. Why did a woman who escaped slavery on Maryland's Eastern Shore, who returned there to free friends and family, and who established herself in a house in St Catharines, a lakeside city in Canada, just north of Niagara Falls, end up moving to Auburn, New York—in 1859? Why does Mary Ann Shadd Cary, born free in Delaware and influential in Windsor and Buxton, Ontario, stake her claims after the Civil War in Washington, DC? Why does Mifflin Gibbs leave the prosperity and political influence he found in Victoria, British Columbia, to seek his fortune in Florida and Arkansas? Why does Anderson Abbott leave his comfortable life in Toronto for a second, less successful career in Chicago?

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The stories of Black North Americans told here show that they were a vanguard, a leadership cadre that shaped the years between the Civil War and the Great Migration. Black North Americans appear throughout the Black history of the United States in this era, but they have not been identified that way. They were no longer foreign transplants but local leaders, from the church to the bank to the factory and the newspaper. Documenting their leadership will transform our understanding of African American life between the end of Reconstruction and the Great Migration.

Cross-border migrants created and seized opportunities not otherwise available. Such a transformative moment leads to a lot of firsts. Given the long history of enslavement and restriction in the centuries before emancipation, the Black firsts of the emancipation era represented the long-delayed recognition, the long-delayed accomplishments, of Black people

[11] Abraham Lincoln, Gettysburg Address, 1863.

who had not received the opportunity to be recognized for their efforts and ingenuity. These firsts are worth noting as the most striking among many examples of Black leadership, Black talent, and Black ingenuity in the face of obstacles. These border-crossing Black North Americans seem to represent a leadership cohort that has not been noticed in Black history to date.

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These Black North Americans defined success on their own terms, whether they were fighting for freedom, advocating to create multiracial democracy, working for economic prosperity, or building community. These men and women held patents and hosted cousins as they attended school. They filed lawsuits and desegregated Ford Motor Company. They held political office in Mississippi and Alabama, and they bought property in Oregon. They opened banks in Chicago, ran a publishing house in Nashville, preached temperance on a world tour, and gathered a community of friends and relatives in Warren, Michigan.

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These Black border-crossers shaped African American history and culture, drawing on the traditions and lessons of Black resistance during enslavement and the Civil War to open up opportunities during Reconstruction and the years that followed.

Their story deserves to be placed among the great turning points in African American history.

1-05 Shot in a Carriage

Escaping was always dangerous. It was always touch-and-go. If the escape failed, punished was guaranteed; death or permanent disfigurement was possible. The violence of slavery, and the trauma, was so extreme that all of the enslaved wished for freedom. Some made the attempt even though they knew the odds were against them. Many died trying.

And, despite the risks, some were able to escape.

While the Binga brothers found money to provide a way out of slavery, Garland H. White had to rely on friends and the resources of Underground Railroad activists to attempt his escape from enslavement in Washington, D.C., his enslavement to a Member of Congress.

And his first attempt ended in a hail of gunfire.

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We have no known image of Garland H. White.

White was born enslaved in Hanover County, Virginia, about 1829, the son of Nancy and Madison, presumably themselves both enslaved as well.[12]

Garland White was sold in Richmond as a child to Robert Toombs, a planter's son from Georgia who attended the University of Virginia Law School. Toombs, upon his return to his home state, soon gained election to the Georgia House of Representatives, and then, in 1845, to the U.S. House. Toombs represented Georgia in the U.S. Senate beginning in 1853.[13]

Without any say in the matter, Garland H. White grew up in the homes of Robert Toombs. White was separated from his family, dragged from Virginia to Georgia, and then back and forth from Washington.

But Garland White yearned to seize his freedom.

On August 8, 1850, Garland, enslaved to Toombs, and a man named Allen, who was enslaved to Alexander Stephens (the other U.S. Senator from Georgia), were in a carriage driven by William L. Chaplin, a founder of the Liberty Party and a brave member of local Vigilance Committee and Underground Railroad networks.

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[12] "Biographical Note," https://dlg.usg.edu/collections/dlg_zlrt/toombs-bio Parents' names from 1860 marriage certificate in Chatham, Ontario, and 1865 account in *Christian Recorder,* both below.

[13] "Biographical Note," https://dlg.usg.edu/collections/dlg_zlrt/toombs-bio; Michael Chesson, "Toombs, Robert Augustus (02 July 1810–15 December 1885)," *American National Biography,* (1999), https://doi.org/10.1093/anb/9780198606697.article.0400991

Just as they crossed from the District of Columbia into Maryland, the carriage was stopped by an armed posse, who rammed a fence post through the spokes of the wheels and shot into the carriage. Garland and Allen were both injured, and Chaplin was beaten and arrested. Garland White escaped on foot, but after a few days he turned himself in and returned to enslavement.[14]

Garland White's return to enslavement must have involved increased strictures on his movement. We have no records of what Garland White faced when he was returned to Senator Toombs, nor do we know how he spent his time.

But we do know how the experience of slavery changed in the United States in these years. The 1850 Fugitive Slave Law spurred many white officers into acting to enforce slavery, to avoid fines and criminal punishments. The idea that popular sovereignty would help solve the question of slavery's evolution was shown to be a farce, as dueling camps in Kansas fought over that state's future. And, in March 1857, the *Dred Scott* decision suggested that Black Americans could not hope for a chance for citizenship, freedom, or rights within the United States.[15] After hundreds of years of slavery shaping all aspects of the formation of the United States, Black and white antislavery activists had created some rays of hope in the nineteenth century. But the slaveholders who controlled Congress and the courts were determined to stamp out the possibility for change.

An 1857 D.C. newspaper listed a letter waiting for Garland H. White at the post office. But we do not know if he was able to retrieve it. Or if he could read it unassisted if he was allowed to get it.[16]

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The *Dred Scott* decision was a great victory for slaveholders, who felt emboldened to bring those they held in bondage on summer vacations in New York, or to compel labor in the

[14] Underground Railroad Network to Freedom plaque, "William L. Chaplin Arrested!" in downtown Silver Spring, Maryland, accessed via https://www.hmdb.org/m.asp?m=109230

[15] For key events in the runup to war, see James M. McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom: The Civil War Era* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988); Don Edward Fehrenbacher and Ward McAfee, *The Slaveholding Republic: An Account of the United States Government's Relations to Slavery* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001); Adam Arenson, *The Great Heart of the Republic: St. Louis and the Cultural Civil War* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2011).

[16] *The States,* October 24, 1857. Thanks to Guylaine Petrin for this source.

mines of California.[17] Those who opposed slavery despaired, but many felt compelled to act—whether enslaved Black men and women seizing their freedom, or politicians such as Abraham Lincoln, who advocated for changes in legislation and policy.

John Brown, in contrast, thought it was time to end the reign of slavery by force. To bring that plan to fruition, he met, in secret, with Black and white abolitionists, seeking support and funding. And so it was that, in 1858, John Brown came to meet with Black border-crossers in Chatham, Ontario.

In January 1858, John Brown spent three weeks in Rochester, New York, staying in Frederick Douglass's home, meeting with Susan B. Anthony and other local progressives.[18] Brown described his plan, to bring revolution down the Appalachian Mountains, into the South; he sought funds to buy weapons and to train those willing to join his mission. Brown spent the time in Rochester drafting a "Provisional Constitution and Ordinances for the People of the United States," for the liberated people and territory he hoped to create.

In April, John Brown crossed over to St. Catherines, a lakefront city 15 miles northwest of Niagara Falls, accompanied by Jermain W. Loguen, who had escaped slavery in Tennessee and was serving as an A.M.E. Zion minister and a key "conductor" on the Underground Railroad. In St. Catharines, John Brown met with Harriet Tubman. Her expertise on the ways to move and in and out of the reach of slaveholders undetected could help Brown strengthen his plans.[19] John Brown also had his Provisional Constitution printed in pamphlet form, by William Howard Day. Day, born free in New York, was an Oberlin graduate who had edited a Black-owned newspaper in Cleveland before leaving for Buxton and Chatham in 1856. In 1858, Day was in St Catharines to prospect opportunities to found another Black newspaper.[20]

By meeting with Douglass, Loguen, Tubman, and Day, John Brown was getting feedback on his plan from leading Black abolitionists on both sides of the U.S.-Canada border. But Brown also sought formal political backing for his plan. For that, he went to Chatham.

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[17] For these examples, Stacey L. Smith, *Freedom's Frontier: California and the Struggle over Unfree Labor, Emancipation, and Reconstruction* (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 2013); Karolyn Smardz Frost, *Steal Away Home: One Woman's Epic Flight to Freedom--and Her Long Road Back to the South* (Toronto: HarperCollins, 2017).
[18] dann j Broyld, *Borderland Blacks: Two Cities in the Niagara Region During the Final Decades of Slavery* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2022), 77-81.
[19] Broyld, 133-135.
[20] "William Howard Day," *Encyclopedia of Cleveland History,* https://case.edu/ech/articles/d/day-william-howard and Broyld, 134.

On May 8, 1858, Brown convened what he called a Constitutional Convention, to explain his plan and to seek formal ratification. Brown and a dozen followers from North Elba, New York, met with around thirty Black North American leaders from Chatham, Buxton, Ohio, and Michigan. In attendance were established leaders, including William Lambert and Rev. William Charles Munroe of Second Baptist in Detroit, Martin Delany, Rev. Thomas Stringer of Buxton, and James "Gunsmith" Jones, who had bought his freedom in North Carolina, received an Oberlin education, and become a gunpowder manufacturer in Chatham.[21] While the gathering was all men, Mary Ann Shadd Cary gave lectures decades later on "John Brown and His Times," with her notes indicating "How I knew. What can be proven….To whom he came – where he went."[22] Cary's husband and brother were among the attendees, so she was well-positioned to know about the secret proceedings. Osbourne Perry Anderson, another Oberlin graduate, was a printer in Chatham, who enthusiastically endorsed Brown's plan.

According to the minutes that Osbourne Perry Anderson later printed, Martin Delany opened the gathering, endorsing John Brown's plan. Thomas Kinnard, of Cleveland, stopped the proceedings to insist on an oath of secrecy, which was then administered. The Provisional Constitution was then read, beginning with its preamble:

> "Whereas slavery, throughout its entire existence in the United States, is none other than a most barbarous, unprovoked, and unjustifiable war of one portion of its citizens upon another portion--the only conditions of which are perpetual imprisonment and hopeless servitude or absolute extermination--in utter disregard and violation of those eternal and self-evident truths set forth in our Declaration of Independence;
>
> "Therefore, we, citizens of the United States, and the oppressed people who, by a recent decision of the Supreme Court, are declared to have no rights which the white man is bound to respect, together with all other people degraded by the laws thereof, do, for the time being, ordain and establish for ourselves the following

[21] Osborne P. Anderson, *A Voice from Harper's Ferry: A narrative of events at Harper's Ferry* (Boston: Printed for the author, 1861), 10, 13. For more on "Gunsmith" Jones, see elsewhere in the book. For delegates' cities, West Virginia Archives and History, "Chatham Convention Delegates," 2015 John Brown online exhibition, https://web.archive.org/web/20150530005001/http:/www.wvculture.org/history/jbexhibit/chathamdelegates.html

[22] "John Brown and His Times," Mary Ann Shadd Cary Papers, Howard University, folder 23.

> Provisional Constitution and Ordinances, the better to protect our persons, property, lives, and liberties, and to govern our actions."[23]

In forty nine articles, the Provisional Constitution laid out the plan for a replacement government, with many of the same offices as the United States, and with "our flag shall be the same that our fathers fought under in the Revolution," but with the express purpose of ending slavery, and seeking out "men of integrity, intelligence, and good business habits," including "teachers, chaplains, physicians, surgeons, mechanics, agents of every description, clerks, and messengers" to aid with the cause.[24] After meeting all day Saturday, taking off Sunday for the Sabbath, and then meeting into the afternoon on Monday, May 10, those who approved of the Constitution signed their names, more than forty in all.

In the year of planning and preparation that followed, John Brown sent his second-in-command, John H. Kagi, back to Great Lakes to recruit participants. "In the month of August, 1859, John Brown's Agent spent some time in Canada," Anderson later recalled. "He visited Chatham, Buxton, and other places, and formed Liberty Leagues, and arranged matters so that operations could be carried on with excellent success," and "he [Kagi] then proceeded to Detroit, where another Society is established."[25] Yet the 29-year-old Osbourne Perry Anderson was the only resident of Canada to join Brown's raid—and the only Black member of the raiding party to survive.[26]

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Garland White had failed in his first escape, and he was returned to the strictures of slavery. Yet, despite the tightening nooses all around him, White was able to cultivate a religious network. In September 1859, Garland White was able to earn a certificate from local ministers, who attested that "that Garland the bearer a colored man belonging to Mr. Robert Toombs, having been duly recommended by the society of which he is a member, and having been

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[23] Anderson, 10, and *Provisional Constitution and Ordinances for the People of the United States,* as printed in *Report of the Select Committee of the Senate Appointed to Inquire into the Late Invasion and Seizure of the Public Property at Harper's Ferry* , Report No. 278, Senate, 36th Cong., 1st Sess., 1860, accessed at https://archive.wvculture.org/history/jbexhibit/chathamconventionmason.html

[24] *Provisional Constitution and Ordinances for the People of the United States,* Articles 46 and 16.

[25] Anderson, p. 21.

[26] Anderson, *A Voice from Harper's Ferry.*

examined by us concerning his gifts grace and usefulness, is judged by us to be a proper person to be licensed, and is hereby authorized to preach the Gospel."[27]

Still enslaved, Garland White had been endorsed as a minister. This suggests that, by 1859, he had at least some ability to read and write, and that he was granted some opportunity to engage with the larger community of free and enslaved Black people in the nation's capital. And White again used this opening to attempt escape, this time successfully.

John Brown spent September 1859 living at a rented cabin in Maryland, four miles north of Harpers Ferry, gathering supplies and exhorting the small cadre of men who had followed him to spark a revolution. On the night of October 16, 1859, Brown led his men south into Virginia, cutting the telegraph wires, stealing a sword and pistols once owned by George Washington, and alerting those enslaved on local plantations that the planned to begin their liberation. Brown and his men convinced the single armory nightwatchman to hand over the keys, and they occupied the armory without incident.[28]

A regularly scheduled train from Wheeling to Baltimore passed through Harpers Ferry every night, in the early morning hours. Brown and his men forced it to stop, and John Brown spoke to the conductor and the passengers, before it continued on its way at daybreak. Why Brown did this is a mystery, but the train was able to reach a working telegraph station and sound the alarm. Thus, by midday, Virginia authorities had Brown and his men surrounded; President Buchanan sent in the Marines to help regain control. John Brown held the armory and its weapons, but he could not reach the enslaved people which he had hoped to liberate.

John Brown's raid ended in a hail of gunfire, in the middle of the street.

On October 18, Robert E. Lee led the Marines who recaptured the armory, taking the wounded John Brown into custody.

John Brown's raid brought the nation's political tensions to a fever pitch. Senator Robert Toombs, who enslaved Garland White, later described it thus: "John Brown made a raid on Virginia. He went with torch and rifle, with the purpose of subverting her government, exciting

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[27] Certificate, signed Sept. 12, 1859, by three clergymen Clark, Pierce, and Christian, and on Sept. 27 by three others, Colby, Wooten, and Strather, in Garland H. White, Compiled Service Record, RG 94, U.S. National Archives. Also quoted and discussed in Miller, 204.

[28] Events recounted in Anderson, *A Voice from Harper's Ferry;* Tony Horwitz, *Midnight Rising: John Brown and the Raid that Sparked the Civil War* (New York: Henry Holt, 2011);
David S. Reynolds, *John Brown, Abolitionist: The Man who Killed Slavery, Sparked the Civil War, and Seeded Civil Rights* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2005); and Louis DeCaro Jr., *Freedom's Dawn: The Last Days of John Brown in Virginia* (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield, 2015).

insurrection among her slaves, and murdering her peaceable inhabitants; he succeeded only in committing murder and arson and treason."[29] In contrast, the antislavery writer Martha Griffith said that "If Brown is hung the gallows will be as sacred as the cross," a phrase that Ralph Waldo Emerson would repeat and newspapers, North and South, would reprint, over and over.[30] John Brown was tried and sentenced to death, and hanged December 2. For his last testament, he wrote that "I John Brown am now quite *certain* that the crimes of this *guilty, land: will* never be purged *away;* but with Blood."[31]

In Canada, the *St. Catharines Journal* argued that "Brown was too hasty, otherwise the insurrection would have been far more formidable than it was." If the raid had found more success, "thousands of refugees now in Canada would have proceeded to the scene of hostilities," the *Journal* wrote.[32] But, as things stood, freedom under Queen Victoria's protection, in Canada, felt far more secure.

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In either 1859 or 1860, Garland White was able to escape from Senator Robert Toombs. We do not know the details. Perhaps White hid them, as many did, to protect those who sought freedom after he did, and to protect anyone who helped him from retribution. As Frederick Douglass noted, in his best-selling *Narrative,* "were I to give a minute statement of all the facts [of my escape], it is not only possible, but quite probable, that others would thereby be involved in the most embarrassing difficulties." And "such a statement would most undoubtedly induce greater vigilance on the part of slaveholders than has existed heretofore among them; which would, of course, be the means of guarding a door whereby some dear brother bondman might escape his galling chains."[33] Some of those who liberated themselves went on to give the particulars in the decades after the Civil War. But Garland White did not.

We do know that Garland White made his way to Canada. In November 1860, he married Georgiana Williams, in Chatham, Ontario, and they are listed in the 1861 census in Chatham,

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[29] **Robert Toombs's Speech to the Georgia Legislature, Nov. 13, 1860, as reprinted** in William W. Freehling and Craig M. Simpson, *Secession Debated: Georgia's Showdown in 1860* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), accessed at https://web.archive.org/web/20230624043655/http://civilwarcauses.org/toombs.htm/

[30] For Griffith as the source, see John Stauffer and students, "Concord Transcendentalists and the Legacy of John Brown," Houghton Library, Harvard University online exhibition Boston's Crusade Against Slavery, 2018, https://library.harvard.edu/sites/default/files/static/onlineexhibits/emancipation/case71.html

[31] Reprinted in Horwitz, *Midnight Rising,* p. 256. Italics in original, as underlining; we can remove if we want.

[32] *St. Catharines Journal*, November 3, 1859, as quoted in Broyld, 136.

[33] Frederick Douglass, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*, Chapter 9, accessed at https://www.gutenberg.org/files/23/23-h/23-h.htm

living with the U.S.-born Parker family.[34] In October 1861, "Under the protection of her most gracious Majesty Queen Victoria," Bishop Augustus R. Green—another Virginia-born minister then living in Canada, leading a breakaway set of British Methodist Episcopal churches—wrote "to certify that Rev. Garland White is appointed to the pastoral charge of the London [Ontario] Mission," to help extend his reach there.[35] Garland and Georgiana White welcomed their daughter Anna in 1862.[36]

Garland White has escaped enslavement in Washington, D.C., with a chance for a new life of freedom in Canada. Senator Robert Toombs, his enslaver, also escaped the United States, as the American Civil War began, resigning in order to serve as the Confederacy's first Secretary of State. Ex-slaves and enslavers both sought to transform the United States from outside its borders.

4-03 Ejected from Government

Isaac Shadd had come from Canada to Mississippi, and quickly risen from a bookkeeping job to being elected to the Mississippi House of Representatives, and then as Speaker of the House. His wife Amelia Freeman Shadd was serving as a local school principal, their teenage son Charlton was praised in the July 1873 *Vicksburg Herald* for "an original oration, which possessed a good deal of merit."[37]

Isaac Shadd and his family were part of a cadre of Mississippi's Black leaders during Reconstruction, determined to seize the Civil War as a new birth of freedom, and to establish a new chance for liberty and justice for all. Both Black Americans and Black Canadians played important roles in the effort to turn the U.S. South into a more complete democracy, fulfilling the

[34] 1860 Chatham marriage license index, and 1861 Canada census. See Miller, 204n11. Thanks to Guylaine Petrin for the marriage license.
[35] Appointment papers by Bishop A. R. Green, BME Conference, October 23, 1861, as copied in Garland White CMSR, https://www.fold3.com/image/263479485/white-garland-h-30-page-1-civil-war-service-records-cmsr-union-colored-troops-26th-30th-infantry PDF p. 41. Thanks to Guylaine Petrin for information on Green.
[36] 1870 US Census.
[37] Clippings and information on Pat and Mel Oakes, "Isaac D. and Amelia Freeman Shadd," https://www.patandmeloakes.com/PatandMelOakesFamilySite/IDandAmeliaFShadd.html and *The Vicksburg Daily Times* January 2, 1872, p. 2. For oration, *The Vicksburg Herald* July 12, 1873, p. 4. See also DeeDee Baldwin, "Isaac D. Shadd," *Against All Odds: The First Black Legislators in Mississippi* http://much-ado.net/legislators/legislators/f-d-shadd/ ; *New National Era* (Washington, District of Columbia) April 16, 1874, p. 1.

promise of the 13th, 14th, and 15th Amendments to the Constitution, active in a multiracial Republican Party that was committed to giving rights to Black residents. But there were also white southerners, many of them unrepentant ex-Confederates, who were determined to prevent these changes. Whether riding with the Ku Klux Klan at night or simply advocating for "a white man's government," as the Democratic Party did, these white southerners sought to set politics and social relations back as they had been, by any means necessary.

The rise of Black politicians might have seemed sudden. Their loss of power was even more quick and tumultuous.

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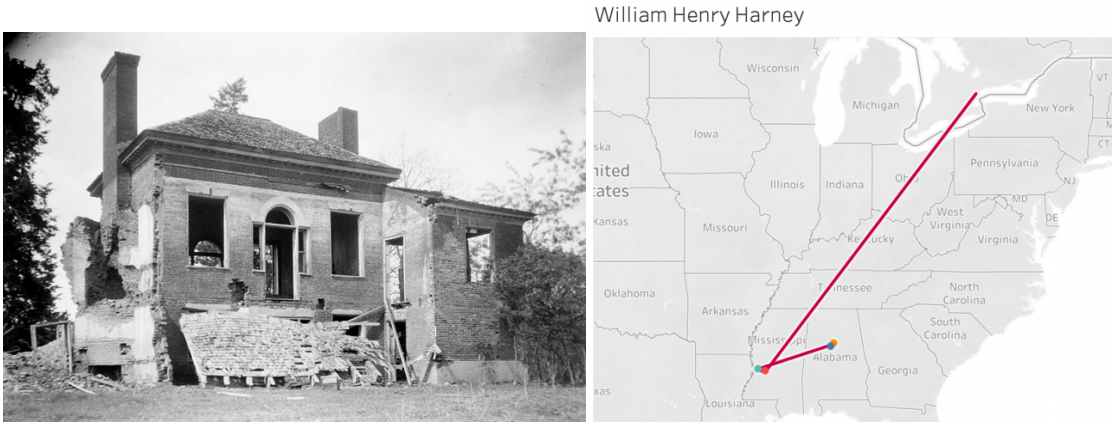
In fall 1874, Democrats waged a fierce campaign of voter suppression throughout the state of Mississippi. Bringing Reconstruction and Black political participation to an end was the goal. Rifle clubs and Red Shirt militias roamed the streets, intimidating Black voters to prevent their participation.



"Our sheriff is an alien," a letter to the editor complained on December 5, 1874, in Hinds County, Mississippi.[38] It charged that he was "an unnaturalized Canadian negro, who carpet-bagged here from Canada a few years since, and is fast growing rich, while we are getting poor."[39]

[38] S., and Correspondence of the Gazette. "The Situation the Remedy." *Hinds County Gazette*, December 16, 1874. Nineteenth Century U.S. Newspapers, link.gale.com/apps/doc/GT3017125191/NCNP?u=nysl_me_manhat&sid=bookmark-NCNP&xid=2d50af7a Accessed 6 Jan. 2022. 1861 census. Thanks to Guylaine Petrin for mentioning Harney to me.

[39] S., and Correspondence of the Gazette. "The Situation the Remedy." *Hinds County Gazette*, December 16, 1874. Nineteenth Century U.S. Newspapers, link.gale.com/apps/doc/GT3017125191/NCNP?u=nysl_me_manhat&sid=bookmark-NCNP&xid=2d50af7a Accessed 6 Jan. 2022. 1861 census. Thanks to Guylaine Petrin for mentioning Harney to me.

The complaint might apply to Isaac Shadd, but here it was about William Henry Harney Jr., born in Toronto, to parents who had fled North Carolina and Virginia.[40] With Shadd's, Harney's political career would collapse in the crucial moment of Reconstruction's defeat in the state of Mississippi.

William Henry Harney, was the second of six children and the eldest son, born in 1843. He was listed in the 1861 Toronto census as a chair maker. Harney's siblings trained as teachers, dressmakers and tailors—respectable professions, in a family that held prominence in Toronto.[41] Like the Abbotts or other Black Canadians who had found a sense of comfort and maybe even prosperity north of the border, William Henry Harney could have stayed in Ontario, making a life for himself and his family. In the 1871 Ontario census, a decade later, William Henry Harney was listed as a cabinetmaker.[42] But, in reality, he was thousands of miles away, in Mississippi.

As Isaac Shadd gained election in Davis Bend, near Vicksburg, William Henry Harney sought to run for the state legislature from Hinds County, Mississippi. But the *Hinds County Gazette* wrote in 1871 that Harney "was found…ineligible, as a subject of Queen Victoria's dominions, and only a few months in the United States." The next year, in neighboring Warren County, Mississippi, Harney was naturalized as a U.S. citizen. Like Shadd, Harney quickly dedicated himself to Republican Party politics, in the Black Belt, hundreds of miles southwest of where his forebears had been enslaved.[43]

In the 1872 election, Harney was appointed a clerk for a railroad election in Edwards, Hinds County, Mississippi—a small role, but a foot in the door of party influence and patronage. "At the general election, in November, 1873, W. H. Harney was elected sheriff of Hinds County for the constitutional term commencing on the first Monday in January, 1874," explained the Mississippi Supreme Court case, *State* v. *Harney*, that came out of what followed. At that time, Harney swore to bonds, both as sheriff and as tax collector. This was state law, to financially ensure that he personally would be held liable for any embezzlement of public funds as "sureties

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[40] S., and Correspondence of the Gazette. "The Situation the Remedy." *Hinds County Gazette*, December 16, 1874. Nineteenth Century U.S. Newspapers, link.gale.com/apps/doc/GT3017125191/NCNP?u=nysl_me_manhat&sid=bookmark-NCNP&xid=2d50af7a Accessed 6 Jan. 2022. 1861 census. Thanks to Guylaine Petrin for mentioning Harney to me.

[41] 1861, 1871, and 1891 censuses.

[42] 1871 census.

[43] *Hinds County Gazette,* November 8, 1871, p. 1, accessed at Nineteenth Century U.S. Newspapers, link.gale.com/apps/doc/GT3016975438/NCNP?u= nysl_me_manhat&sid=bookmark-NCNP&xid=502e10ec. Accessed 24 Jan. 2022; 1872 naturalization for Harney.

for a balance of unpaid taxes due the State collected by Harney during his term of office," the Court explained.[44]

This was standard practice. But, in the decade that followed, opponents of Republican rule would make Harney and his allies pay.

The defeat of Reconstruction began with local government elections. Even small roles came with at least some authority. Judgement calls about what would be enforced, which infractions would be pursued, which overdue taxes would be given a payment plan, and which could result in seizure or debt peonage, could shake a local community. To those white southerners coalescing again in the Democratic Party, even these small advantages could be used to cause tumult, first for Republican officials at the local level, and then throughout the state. The success, by the end of 1875, in overthrowing duly elected Republicans in Mississippi became known as the Mississippi Plan: a combination of threats of violence, bribes for willing voters, and a flurry of legal and extralegal challenges to the legitimately elected Republican officials.[45]

An 1874 article in the *Hinds County Gazette* issued a warning: It called out Harney and other Black officeholders by name, asking them to "place their race on a proud eminence, bring peace and quiet to the county, and restore confidence between the taxpayers and the non-taxpayers, between the laborers and the landholders," implying each of these conflicts should be seen in racial terms.[46] Challenging local officials—and especially their tax-collecting capabilities—would prove telling.

Harney was sheriff of Hinds County, which meant that he was charged with providing security for a large Republican Party election rally scheduled for September 4, 1875, in Clinton, Mississippi. It was being held on the grounds of a former plantation destroyed by U.S. troops during the Civil War. Because of threats and incidents at earlier Republican rallies, Harney and his team of deputized constables were enforcing a no-firearms, no-liquor policy for the rally. And things started well: There was a parade, and a barbecue, and music playing.

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[44] Fisher, Geo. W. "Railroad Election." *Hinds County Gazette*, February 14, 1872. Nineteenth Century U.S. Newspapers, link.gale.com/apps/doc/GT3016976413/NCNP?u=nysl_me_manhat&sid=bookmark-NCNP&xid=09c8fd76. Accessed 24 Jan. 2022; *State* v. *Harney,* Mississippi Supreme Court, April 1880, p 875.

[45] See Melissa Janczewski Jones, "Thawing Frozen History: The Clinton Riot of 1875," published by Mississippi History Now, an online publication of the Mississippi Historical Society http://mshistorynow.mdah.state.ms.us/articles/399/the-clinton-riot-of-1875- from-riot-to-massacre (published September 2015)

[46] "The Proper Spirit in Louisiana-Worthy of Imitation in Mississippi," *Hinds County Gazette* (Raymond, MS, United States) Volume 31, Issue 2, September 30, 1874. "county" silently capitalized.

But then, as the Republican program of speeches began, young white men from the Democratic Club of nearby Raymond began heckling the speakers. The deputized men found some hecklers had guns and whiskey, and the police urged them to abide by the rules or face arrest. As the young men continued to cause a disturbance, the Republican speaker paused and said that he wished all would remain peaceful. A white heckler yelled back "Yes, if you will stop telling your damned lies."[47]

When a deputy went to arrest the man, the heckler called out to the other Raymond Democratic Club members. The reaction was fast: As a Black elected official later told investigators from the U.S. Senate, bullets "rained in there just like rain from heaven." Eight people were dead—three white and five Black, among them some of the Republican officials.[48]

The crowd frantically streamed away from the gunshots, with woman grabbing their children. A number of Black families did not go home, but hid out in the woods and swamps, afraid of what would follow. The attack sparked days of white supremacist violence in Hinds County. White terrorists burned Black homes and searched for Black families hiding in the woods, leading to the deaths of 50 Black residents of all ages. Hundreds of Black refugees from the rural sections of the county poured into Jackson, the state capital, to seek safety. Black militias were hastily organized and marched out toward Clinton. But this only brought about a greater ire from the violent white Democrats. It fed into their claims that Black Republicans would not allow a peaceful election or transfer or power.[49]

On September 5, 1875, the day after the shots fired at the rally, Harney organized a protective patrol. "Several innocent, unarmed, and peaceable colored citizens were shot down within the town limits yesterday morning," Harney reported the next day, and "detached squads of white men were scouting through the country, murdering and driving the colored people from their homes." Harney wrote to the Republican governor that "I find it utterly impossible to keep the peace, and cannot summon a posse sufficiently numerous to successfully arrest and bring in these bands that are now prowling around the country between Clinton and Raymond and Clinton and Jackson." After another report of violent attacks reached him as he wrote, Harney

[47] Jerri Bell, "Clinton Massacre Of 1875: Four Days Of Violence Ushered In 'Mississippi Plan' To Halt Black Vote," *Mississippi Free Press* August 4, 2021 https://www.mississippifreepress.org/14364/clinton-massacre-of-1875-four-days-of-violence-ushered-in-plan-to-halt-black-vote/
[48] Bell, "Clinton Massacre Of 1875."
[49] Bell, "Clinton Massacre Of 1875."

emphasized that "The colored people are unarmed and defenseless. As the peace-officer of the county, I appeal to your excellency to use what means there is at your command to stop this slaughter of an innocent and defenseless people. I am powerless to stay the carnage, and no man knows where it will end if your excellency cannot give aid to a death-stricken people." In the weeks that followed, white terrorists assassinated the Black leaders of militia units.[50]

This had all occurred in the runup to the general election. Isaac Shadd faced a similar experience: On October 12, 1875, Shadd was standing outside a friend's house in Vicksburg on a Tuesday night when his two companions were each shot multiple times.[51]

On Election Day, November 2, 1875, white men stood with guns outside polling places throughout Mississippi. In the town of Aberdeen, they tore down a bridge between a Black neighborhood and its polling place. Whites told their Black employees that anyone who voted Republican would lose their job. And so, on an Election Day filled with intimidation, white Democrats "redeemed" Hinds County, Mississippi, in the aftermath of what became known as the Clinton Massacre.[52]

When white southerners rose up, Isaac Shadd lost his seat in the legislature. Thomas Smallwood lost his assessor's role.[53] But William Henry Harney's misfortune was greater, as the Hinds County sheriff when these white residents decided to violate the laws. The fight to keep Reconstruction alive involved federal oversight on such local atrocities. In 1876, the United States Senate held extensive hearings on the violence in Mississippi. But the local newspaper, controlled by Democrats, crowed at how they had defeated both the governor, who they called

[50] Harney's letters to both Ames and to other Mississippi Republicans, including the attorney general and the sitting U.S. senator, were used by opposite sides in arguments over who was to blame for escalating the violence. Harney, September 6, 1875, letter to Gov. Adalbert Ames, reprinted in George Sewall Boutwell and US Senate Select Committee to Inquire into the Mississippi Election of 1875, *Mississippi in 1875: Report of the Select Committee to Inquire Into the Mississippi Election of 1875* Volume 2, p. 40-41; Harney letter to attorney general, reprinted in *InterOcean,* quoted in John S. McNeilly, "War and Reconstruction in Mississippi, 1863-1890," in *Mississippi Historical Society Publications* (Oxford-Jackson, 1898-1925), Centenary Series, II (1918), p 391-2, and Bell, "Clinton Massacre Of 1875."

[51] *Vicksburg Herald,* October 14, 1875, as quoted on Pat and Mel Oakes, "Isaac D. and Amelia Freeman Shadd," https://www.patandmeloakes.com/PatandMelOakesFamilySite/IDandAmeliaFShadd.html

[52] Bell, "Clinton Massacre Of 1875."

[53] "Multiple News Items." *Hinds County Gazette,* December 18, 1872. Nineteenth Century U.S. Newspapers, link.gale. com/apps/doc/GT3016976258/NCNP?u=nysl_me_manhat&sid=bookmark-NCNP&xid=74675544. Accessed 6 Jan. 2022.

"the decapitated carpet bagger," and "W.H. Harney, (colored c.b. [Canadian born]), late (defaulting) Sheriff of Hinds County."[54]

About that defaulting part: After their intimidation-filled elections, the rowdy white Democrats of Raymond now ran Hinds County. Harney had lost of course, but the "redeemers" went further, cynically suing Harney, under the terms of the bonds he had taken out to ensure good government. They claimed that Harney had collected taxes but had not deposited the funds—and so he should be personally liable for the amount, which ran into the thousands of dollars. The case was considered in the county, and then appealed to the Mississippi Supreme Court, which noted that "the pleadings are very confused and complicated,…extending over two hundred pages." The Court concluded that Harney's bond made him liable until the county treasury had its money. Remarkably, one of Harney's sureties "paid every cent, some seventeen thousand dollars," as the newspaper ruefully noted. But the court case continued to dog Harney and sully his reputation.[55]

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The men and women who had tied themselves to Reconstruction and the promise of equality for Black and white Americans were defeated by the resurgent white supremacists of the South. But that does not mean that they gave up their efforts to advocate for Black residents, or to seek prosperity for themselves and their neighbors. In the late nineteenth century, the federal government still could serve as a patron to Black advocates. In the late 1870s, Isaac Shadd's family moved to Greenville, Mississippi, a smaller town upriver in Washington County, where his brother Abram lived. There Isaac returned to work in printing, and Amelia and their son Charlton worked as teachers. Isaac ran for office again, unsuccessfully, and then he accepted an appointment as the U.S. Mail agent for the stretch of the Mississippi River above Vicksburg.[56]

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[54] *Mississippi in 1875: Report of the Select Committee; The Clarion-Ledger* (Jackson, Mississippi) May 17, 1876, p. 2. "county" silently capitalized.

[55] *State* v. *Harney,* Mississippi Supreme Court, April 1880, pp. 875, 887; *The Clarion-Ledger* (Jackson, Mississippi) August 11, 1881, p. 3.

[56] Pat and Mel Oakes, "Isaac D. and Amelia Freeman Shadd," https://www.patandmeloakes.com/PatandMelOakesFamilySite/IDandAmeliaFShadd.html ; 1880 census; *The Weekly Democrat-Times* (Greenville, Mississippi), January 18, 1879, p. 4; *The Daily Commercial Herald* (Vicksburg, Mississippi) March 24, 1896, p. 4. Charlton and Amelia are hard to track after 1880; it seems Charlton went north to Ohio, and married there; there is also an indication he returned to Mississippi in the 1890s, and had a second marriage to a Black schoolteacher back near his parents' home. Marriage records for Charlton Shadd 1881 (Ohio) and C. T. Shadd 1896 (Mississippi), Ancestry.com

In the 1880s, Isaac Shadd founded the Shadd Training School and Industrial College in Vicksburg, to help educate Black children. The school's name suggests that he was following precepts similar to those of Booker T. Washington at the Tuskegee Institute, founded in the same decade. In 1889, Isaac Shadd was again elected, to the board of aldermen in Greenville. When he died in 1896, his obituary ran in the white-run papers of Vicksburg and Greensville, noting that he had been "one of the best known figures among the prominent negroes of the reconstruction period," and that "he stood high in colored Masonry, being Grand Master of the order."[57]

William Henry Harney—vilified, defeated, prosecuted—was also remembered by his Republican friends, however. In 1879, he received a $900-a-year job with the U.S. Postal Service, overseeing mail on the rails between Vicksburg and Meriden, Mississippi. In 1880, he was appointed supervisor for the census precinct in the town of Edwards, where he resided. In 1886, Harney was granted relief from the earlier decision, and he also returned to politics, albeit at the lowest level, as an election clerk. But Harney's name remained a watchword for local Democrats. In 1888, when a split among the Democrats might have allowed a Republican to again win, the newspaper warned that "W. H. Harney, negro ex-sheriff," and others would return "the gallant old county of Hinds…to the wicked embraces of the carpet-baggers, scalawags, and blackliners." In 1891, Harney held a job with the Mississippi River Commission. In 1900, he has left the state, and he was a post-office clerk, in Bessemer, Alabama, just outside of Birmingham. Until the end of his life, Harney dedicated himself to Republican Party politics in the South. His death in 1907, at the age of 64, was noted in an article that said he left a vacancy on the local Alabama district Republican Party executive committee.[58]

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[57] Pat and Mel Oakes, "Isaac D. and Amelia Freeman Shadd," https://www.patandmeloakes.com/PatandMelOakesFamilySite/IDandAmeliaFShadd.html ; 1880 census; *The Weekly Democrat-Times* (Greenville, Mississippi), January 18, 1879, p. 4; *The Daily Commercial Herald* (Vicksburg, Mississippi) March 24, 1896, p. 4; Alphonse Heningburg, "The Relation of Tuskegee Institute to Education in the Lower South," *The Journal of Educational Sociology* Vol. 7, No. 3, Negro Education (November 1933): 157-162. Clippings on Pat and Mel Oakes, "Isaac D. and Amelia Freeman Shadd," https://www.patandmeloakes.com/PatandMelOakesFamilySite/IDandAmeliaFShadd.html and *The Daily Commercial Herald* (Vicksburg, Mississippi) March 24, 1896, p. 4.

[58] June 1879 Railway Mail Service list of federal employees, p. 36; *The Clarion-Ledger* (Jackson, Mississippi) June 2, 1880, p. 3; *The New Mississippian* (Jackson, Mississippi) February 16, 1886, p. 2, and *The Clarion-Ledger* (Jackson, Mississippi) November 17, 1886, p. 4; *Mississippian* (Jackson, Mississippi) July 11, 1888, p. 2; 1900 census; 1903 list of federal employees for postal clerks, p, 419; July 1891 Mississippi River Commission list of federal employees, p. 444; *The Birmingham News* (Birmingham, Alabama) March 19, 1904, p. 12, and *The Birmingham Times* (Birmingham, Alabama) August 23, 1907, p. 4.

Harney's last years, and his last service to the Republican Party, was in the same Birmingham district where Martin Luther King. Jr., would advocate for desegregation and be arrested to further the cause, writing one of his most famous letters from the city's jail. From Canada to Mississippi: whether it was William Henry Smallwood, William Henry Harvey, or Isaac Shadd and family, the shifts of political power were sudden, from a moment of Black political opportunity to a harsh rejection and the need to build again.

5-04 Real Estate and Banking

Working for money is an honest living. But noted wealth comes from when the money can make the money, in real estate or in finance. The extended Binga family prospered from that knowledge, from the Gilded Age until the start of the Great Depression.

While Anthony Binga Sr. and Anthony Binga Jr. saw the church as their calling, their son and brother William Binga was working as a barber in Detroit, next to the H.R. Andrews Rail-Road Hotel—a prime location for the most profitable of Black occupations in antebellum America. Being a barber was an intimate, high-status job, cutting hair, shaving beards, and doing what we would now consider primary healthcare and minor medical procedures. Going to the barbershop meant entering into the conversation among prosperous men in the community—white and Black, young and old. The mixture of health, appearances, and conversation were key to why barbers were influential community members, often turning their profits into other ventures. Often housed in hotels, barbers served locals and visitors, and hence they were often the first to know about news and gossip that might shape the community.[59]

In the 1880s, after more than three decades as a barber, William Binga built the first of two seven-unit rowhouses, available for Black residents to rent, that became known as Binga's Row. The story-and-a-half slant-roof buildings, clad in wood boards, were tenements. They were crowded, extremely modest dwellings, with windows only in the front and three or four rooms

[59] 1852 Shove's Detroit Directory via Ancestry.com; on the hotel, "Andrews Railroad Hotel," Burton Historical Collection, Detroit Public Library, https://digitalcollections.detroitpubliclibrary.org/islandora/object/islandora%3A149457 For the prosperity of Black barbers, Douglas Walter Bristol, *Knights of the Razor: Black Barbers in Slavery and Freedom* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009).

inside. But they were a space of first (or last) opportunity for Black residents unable to afford more elaborate dwellings and shut out of some neighborhoods by racial discrimination.[60]

"I used to own a good deal of property," Adelphia Binga, William's wife, proclaimed in 1889. "I owned and rented houses in Detroit & Windsor." Adelphia worked as a midwife and herb doctor as well as managing the family's real estate holdings, in both ways complementing her husband's businesses. The Bingas were known to allow tenants to stay in their dwellings throughout the winter, even if they had stopped paying. But the Bingas also let the properties deteriorate; in the 1890s, when residents of the Row sought help from the United Community Services, their residence was described by case workers as a "hovel."[61]

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William and Adelphia Binga's children extended their parents' economic ventures, seeking to coax money out of investments.

Moses William Binga was the eldest of their children; he worked as a barber and then as a hostler, moving locomotives in the railyard. But M. William Binga, as he fashioned himself, set his sights on the power of invention: After he married and moved to Cincinnati, M. William Binga invented a combination street sprinkler, which he patented in 1879.[62]

Martha Binga, his sister, worked first as a seamstress, while living with her parents. With her second husband, John Randolph Winchester, she moved to Chicago, where she worked as a fortune teller and published a book and magazine with recipes, household tips, and horoscopes. But then John and Martha opened a real estate brokerage firm and a loan office, and then Martha became the first Black woman to found an establishment agency in Chicago, assisting more than seven thousand job seekers in 1900. Martha maintained her fortune-telling business above the real-estate offices; she persevered in the work for close to thirty years, even after the tragedy of

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[60] C. Rae White, "Celebrating Black History 2018: My Amazing Ancestors." *Life is Good* blog, February 16, 2018, https://stylesource01.wordpress.com/2018/02/16/celebrating-black-history-2018/ and "Binga Row," March 27, 2011, https://stylesource01.wordpress.com/2011/03/27/binga-row/

[61] Adelphia Binga quoted in *St. Paul Daily Globe,* February 10, 1889, p. 12, in White, "Binga Row," March 27, 2011, https://stylesource01.wordpress.com/2011/03/27/binga-row/ For hovel, case #252 in United Community Services Records, Walter P. Reuther Library, Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs, Wayne State University. See also David M. Katzman, *Before the Ghetto: Black Detroit in the Nineteenth Century* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1973), p. 77.

[62] White, "Celebrating Black History 2018," and M. William Binga, "Improvement in street-sprinkling apparatus," 1879, https://patents.google.com/patent/US217843A/en

her son shooting and killing her husband.[63] And she had the chance to work closely with her brother, Jesse.

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Jesse Binga, the youngest and ultimately most famous child of William and Adelphia Binga, was born in 1865 in Detroit. Later accounts made it clear his successes were specifically *not* because of any educational advantages. Even when he became "the richest man in the town," he was "exposed"—in a public speech about a great "'man who has did'"—as someone who "didn't know his verbs."[64]

Jesse Binga began his career assisting his parents and trying out work as a barber. On April 14, 1885, Jesse Binga—listed as a barber, and only twenty-two years old—married Frances Scott, age 21, from Ontario. Frances Jane Scott, the eldest daughter of two Black North Americans who had escaped to Chatham, Ontario, had been living in Detroit, but there is no listing of an occupation or whether she was in school. In the late 1880s, as his parents' health failed, Jesse Binga was bequeathed one of the Binga Row tenement buildings to own and manage. Presumably, the modest tenements could both give the young couple somewhere to live and an income on which to build a life. But there is also evidence that the marriage was rushed: Bethune Binga, the child's son, was born in Detroit in July 1885—just months after their marriage in April.[65]

And, it seems, Jesse Binga also quickly abandoned his wife and son. In 1891, the five-year-old Bethune is living with his mother's family, the Scotts, in Chatham. Bethune Binga spent his entire childhood in the Scott household, and spent his very long life—he died at 99 years old, in 1984—living in Chatham, Ontario, working as a carpenter and then enjoying decades of retirement near his children and extended Scott family. Bethune Binga named a son Jesse in 1923, near the height of his father's fame on the other side of the Great Lakes—but we have no evidence on whether they were in touch.[66]

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[63] White, "Celebrating Black History 2018," and Martha M. Winchester biography on *Find a Grave* https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/98753834/martha-m-winchester with primary documents added by C. Rae White.

[64] *The Pittsburgh Courier* July 15, 1950, p. 14.

[65] 1881 Canada census; April 1885 marriage license, Wayne County, Michigan, via Ancestry.com; Bethune Binga birthdate in 1886 baptism record and on 1920 marriage license of Bethune as well as his grave https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/142778412/bethune-devile-binga

[66] 1891, 1901, 1911, 1921 Canada censuses; voter lists 1940s-1970s; Bethune Binga https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/142778412/bethune-devile-binga ; obituary for Jesse C. Binga (1923-2003), *The Province,* Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada, January 4, 2004, p. 130.

Binga struck out west, trying to turn a profit, first as a barber and then as a real estate speculator. Jesse Binga was the reason his parents moved to St. Paul, Minnesota, in the late 1880s, where they prospered and bought more real estate, but where he remained restless. The 1890 census is missing for all of the United States—the individual-level records were lost in a fire in 1921—but Jesse Binga also seems to be missing from any records or newspapers from the era; a former barber and real-estate man wasn't noteworthy enough for newspapers, wherever he went in those years. Some later sources say he had bought land near Pocatello, Idaho, though he didn't stay there; some say he was in Chicago by 1893, and there to stay.[67]

Jesse Binga would become the most successful Binga of his generation, a leader of Black Chicago who welcomed in the Great Migration. And his successes would continue the family business: making sure their money could make money, in real estate and banking.

[67] Carl R. Osthaus, "The Rise and Fall of Jesse Binga, Black Financier." *The Journal of Negro History* Vol. 58, No. 1 (1973), 40; White, "Celebrating Black History 2018." For Binga in Idaho and elsewhere in the West, Trevor Goodloe, "Jesse Binga (1865-1950)," March 23, 2008, *BlackPast.org* https://www.blackpast.org/african-american-history/binga-jesse-1865-1950/