

KENTUCKY'S

BLACK

HERITAGE

THE ROLE OF THE BLACK PEOPLE
IN THE HISTORY OF KENTUCKY
FROM PIONEER DAYS TO THE PRESENT.

A Supplement to Current Texts
on Kentucky History

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Introduction

Black men and women of Kentucky have a proud heritage. Although most of Kentucky's first Blacks came to the State as slaves, those slaves worked with their white masters to make the wilderness a home. The gracious hospitality which is a hallmark of Kentucky depended as much upon the labor of countless slaves as on any other single factor. The thoroughbred horses which symbolize Kentucky in the minds of many Americans were trained and groomed by Blacks and, in the early days of racing, steered to victory by black jockeys. Mammoth Cave was first explored and mapped by a black Kentuckian. Black laborers have worked alongside white laborers to develop Kentucky's major exports—tobacco and coal. Black artists, writers and professional men and women, by overcoming tremendous barriers, have achieved notable success in their fields. Black men and women, from the early pioneer heroes through the civil rights activists of today, have fought against discrimination and segregation and worked for equal opportunities for all.

The history of black Kentuckians has too long been ignored or misrepresented by general textbooks about Kentucky. The publication of KENTUCKY'S BLACK HERITAGE was undertaken by the Kentucky Commission on Human Rights and its Kentucky Black History Committee, in response to a 1970 Kentucky General Assembly resolution directing State agencies to disseminate information about Kentucky History, so that young people of both races could have the opportunity to learn about the history of Kentucky's black citizens.

Kentucky's BLACK HERITAGE, which is the first survey on this subject developed for junior high school students for use in the classroom, describes and examines the developing role of Kentucky's black citizens from the early eighteenth century, when Black settlers came to Kentucky with Daniel Boone, to the exciting events of the sixties in this century.

The book has two basic purposes:

1. To give young black students knowledge of the role played by black Kentuckians in the development of Kentucky so that they may possess a sense of pride in their heritage.
2. To give young white students an accurate understanding of the problems faced by Blacks and of the creative role black people have played in the State's History.

While, in recent years, there has been increased awareness of the value of incorporating black history studies into the school curriculum, it must be emphasized that a knowledge of black history is equally important in the white community as it is in the black community. Since the escalation of racial tensions is one of the major problems facing our country today, it is most urgent that history books contribute to understanding between races. The elimination of racial discrimination requires an informed awareness of the historical facts concerning the exploitation of black people and the methods used to deny them opportunities.

If history is taught so that students will understand the present through knowledge of past events, then this purpose can be realized only if textbooks and classroom presentation accurately describe the events and conditions of the past. To omit or misrepresent certain aspects of history (such as cultural pluralism and the role of the black people) will result in a distorted picture of both the past and the present.



THE EARLY EXPLORERS OF MAMMOTH CAVE INCLUDED MANY BLACK MEN. In 1845, one black slave, Stephen Bishop, published one of the earliest and most complete maps of the cave. In the pre-Civil War period, two black brothers, Matt and Nicholas Bransford, also helped in the exploration of Mammoth Cave. The sketch above, published in a 1871 newspaper, shows William Garvin, the black guide, with the lanterns used in early cave explorations.

In accordance with the guidelines established by the Kentucky Black History Committee, KENTUCKY'S BLACK HERITAGE was designed for use by the seventh and eighth grade students as a supplement to existing texts on Kentucky history. It is recommended that the materials contained in the book be incorporated into the regular history program to expand and enrich student awareness of aspects of Kentucky history which have previously been neglected.

Teachers and students are invited to join with the Kentucky Black History Committee in the exciting project of writing the history of black people in Kentucky. KENTUCKY'S BLACK HERITAGE will give a general view of the black role in Kentucky history. But there is a much fuller story to be written and you can help in that writing.

What do you know about black people in your community? Where do they live? How long have they lived there? Were their ancestors slave or free Blacks? Can you discover one new fact about the black people you know best? If so, send us a paper about what you have learned. Perhaps your discovery will be a part of the next book written about Kentucky Black History.

Please read this book with a questioning mind. Ask yourself if events really happened the way they are described in the book? Do the facts that are presented here agree with what you already know? Readers are encouraged to send suggestions and ideas for improving KENTUCKY'S BLACK HERITAGE to the Kentucky Commission on Human Rights. A form for this purpose has been placed at the back of the text.

It is the hope of the Committee that the publication of KENTUCKY'S BLACK HERITAGE will assist and encourage in the development of history programs which will, perhaps for the first time, tell the whole story of the tremendous odds overcome by black Kentuckians in their determined effort to contribute to the growth and development of their State.

Unit One

The Slavery Period--1770-1860

Blacks were among Kentucky's very first settlers. Some of the earliest recorded deeds of frontier heroism in Kentucky were performed by black men. Black and white men worked together to make the wilderness a home. Some black men made significant contributions to this task. A Black made the gunpowder used in the early fort at Boonesborough. Another black man there taught his neighbors how to cultivate watermelons.

Some of those early black settlers entered the state as free men and women; others came to the state as slaves. Not all slaves were field hands or house servants. Many were skilled craftsmen—blacksmiths, shoemakers, and carpenters. Others were engaged as accountants, seamen, cooks, and surveyors. Many slaves and free Blacks attended school or learned to read and write through private instruction from their masters or from other Blacks.

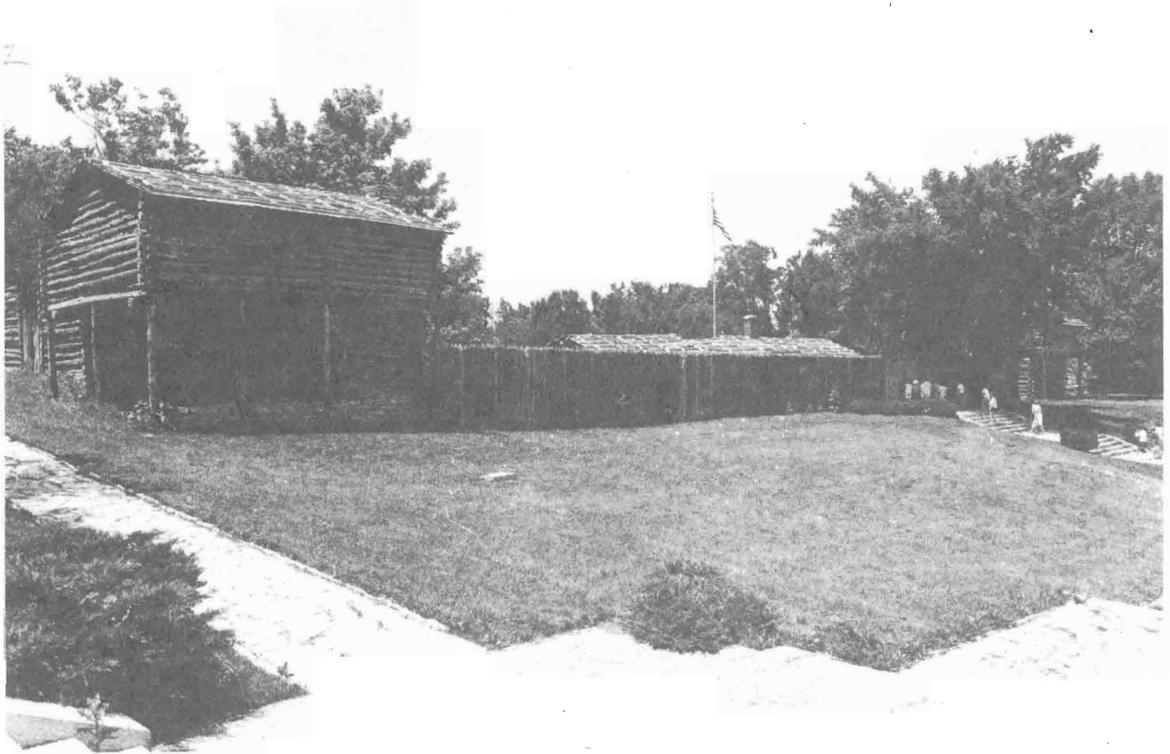
The institution of slavery was a cruel and inhuman system. Slaves had no legal rights. Under law, slaves were regarded as property who could be bought and sold by their masters and subjected to harsh punishments.

Slaves could not openly oppose slavery because they would be punished. So they showed how much they hated the system by running away. Many Kentucky slaves fled north to freedom. Many faced recapture by returning to Kentucky to guide their families and friends to freedom. Many others stayed in Kentucky but sheltered and protected those fugitives who were fleeing northward.

Many white citizens opposed slavery. They freed their own slaves and tried to convince others to do the same. They tried to get the General Assembly to abolish slavery throughout Kentucky. The attempts to rid the state of slavery through legal means always ended in failure.

Chapter One

Early Settlers



HARRODS FORT, the first permanent settlement in Kentucky, had Blacks among its early settlers. A reproduction of Harrods Fort (pictured above) can be seen at Pioneer Memorial Park.

The rustle of leaves and the crackling of dry timber indicated that someone was coming along the old Indian trail. At the crest of the hill, a low-hanging branch was pulled back and two faces, one white and one black, looked down over the endless rolling hills that were to become the land called Kentucky. The Appalachian barrier had been penetrated and the westward march of the settlers into Kentucky had begun.

We do not know that a black man accompanied the first white man to penetrate the Kentucky wilderness. We are not certain who the first trailblazer

was. There is a strong possibility, however, that Blacks came with, or even before, the first white men to enter Kentucky.

Many free black men lived in the eastern foothills of the Appalachians. Some of these men may have explored the mountain passes. A few Blacks lived with the Cherokee and Chickasaw Indians who roamed the Appalachian forests. Blacks traveled with some of the French and Spanish priests who were among the earliest white men to explore the Mississippi River Valley. Any of these Blacks may have entered Kentucky before 1775.

Black Settlers Came with Boone, 1775

A black man and a black woman were members of one of the first groups that Daniel Boone led into Kentucky. Another member of that group, Felix Walker, kept a diary of the trip. He described the courage of the black members of the party:

“A sad reserve overtook us two days after, on our way to Kentucky River. On the 25th March, 1775, we were fired on by the Indians, in our camp asleep, about an hour before day. Captain Twetty was shot in both knees, and died the third day after. A black man, his body servant, killed dead; myself badly wounded; our company dispersed One of our men, who had run off at the fire of the Indians on our camp, was discovered peeping from behind a tree by a black woman belonging to Colonel Callaway, while gathering small wood. She ran in, and gave the alarm of Indians. Colonel Boone instantly caught his rifle, ordered the few men to form, take trees, and give battle. And not to run till they saw him fall. They formed agreeably to his directions, and I believe they would have fought with equal bravery to any Spartan band ever brought to the field of action, when the man behind the tree announced his name, and came in.”¹

This group proceeded to the Kentucky River and founded the station of Boonesborough. In May, 1775, an assembly was convened consisting of eighteen members and a speaker (or Governor) Colonel Richard Henderson. They passed several laws for the regulation of the community. Thus, black slaves were a part of one of the earliest communities organized in Kentucky.

Blacks in Kentucky's First History Book

In Kentucky's first history book, written by John Filson in 1784, black men appear in two different Indian raids. In May, 1782, an Indian party assaulted Ashton's Station, killed one man and took a black prisoner. Upon discovering the raid, Captain Ashton pursued and overtook the raiders, and in the ensuing battle killed eight and wounded four Indians.

The following October, Indians entered the cabin of Settler Woods in the Crab Orchard District where Mrs. Woods and her daughter, Hannah, were protected only by a lame black slave. While one Indian fought with the slave, Hannah seized the axe and decapitated the assailant. The slave and Mrs. Woods managed to bar the door just as neighbors, hearing the commotion, came to drive the Indians away.

Harrods Fort

In 1777, Captain John Cowan made a list of the number of settlers living in Harrod's Fort.² He recorded:

Men in Service	81
Men not in service	4
Women	24
Children above ten years old	12
Children under ten years old	58
Slaves over ten years old	12
Negro children under ten years	7

Total 198

Thus, black people made up about ten per cent of the population of this important early Kentucky settlement.



AN ARTIST'S CONCEPTION OF CATO WATTS Louisville's first black resident.

Louisville

Louisville began as a tiny fortress on Corn Island, just above the falls of the Ohio River. In December, 1778, the island settlers moved their fort to the mainland where Louisville now stands. To celebrate their first Christmas in that new home, the settlers entertained a boatload of French traders at a feast and dance. Music for the festivities was provided by the fiddler, Cato, a black slave of one of the settlers.

Revolutionary War

During the Revolutionary War, the British controlled four forts to the north and west of Kentucky. General George Rogers Clark and a band of less than 200 soldiers made their headquarters in Kentucky at the falls of the Ohio. In the spring of 1778, these troops started on the Northwest Campaign. By February, 1779, General Clark and his men had captured all four forts and imprisoned the British Commander, General Henry Hamilton.

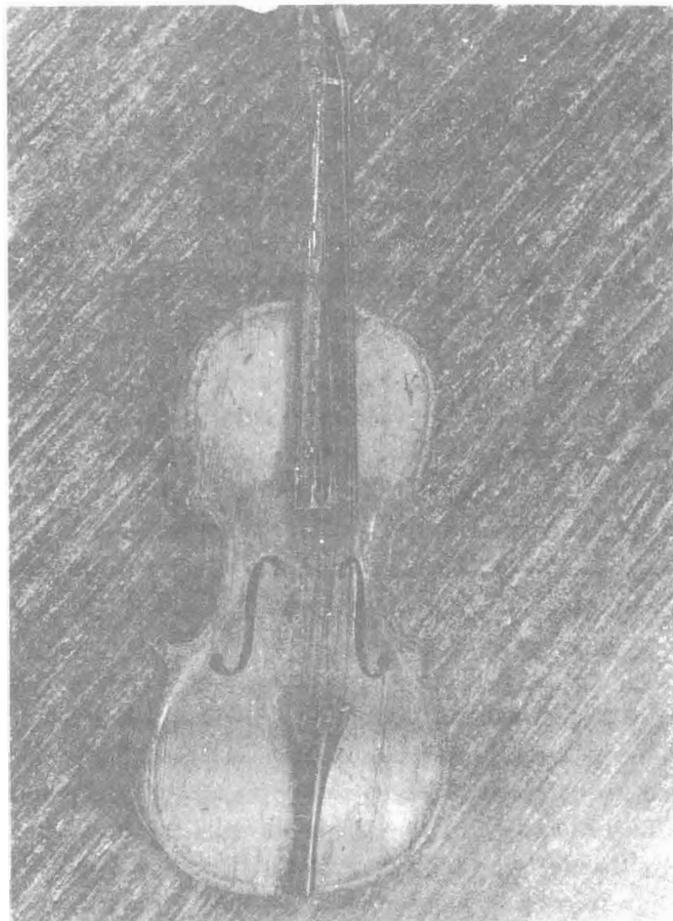
Reports written by men who took part in this campaign tell us that there were a few black soldiers with the American troops. Whether these Blacks were slaves is not clear and not particularly important. The hardships of blazing a trail through the wilderness had to be shared by all those present, black or white. The credit for their amazing victories must also be shared by the black and white members of General Clark's band.

In 1779, when General Hamilton was imprisoned at the Falls of the Ohio, he noted that the settlement was made up of eleven families, four bachelors, and one black slave.

Monk Estill

One of the most famous black frontiersmen was Monk Estill. On March 20, 1782, a group of Wyandot Indians raided Estill's Station and tomahawked the daughter of one settler. They captured Captain Estill's slave, Monk, an intelligent, powerfully-built young man.

With a hastily gathered force of settlers, Captain Estill overtook the Indians at Little Mountain (near



THE VIOLIN PLAYED BY CATO WATTS at Louisville's Christmas celebration is on display at the Filson Club.

present-day Mount Sterling). As the battle began, Captain Estill heard Monk call from inside the Indian camp, "Don't give way, Massa Jim, there's only about twenty-five of the red-skins, and you can whip 'em."³

Some of the settlers did give way, however, and those who remained suffered a terrible defeat. Thirteen of the settlers, including Captain Estill, were killed. In the confusion of battle, Monk escaped from the Indians and carried a wounded survivor most of the twenty-five miles back to Estill's Station.

Captain Estill's son granted Monk his freedom in recognition of his courageous actions. The black man remained at Estill's Station where he proved to be a most valuable citizen. Having learned how to manufacture gunpowder, Monk supplied both Boonesborough and Estill's Station with powder made from saltpeter he found in a cave in Madison County.

Richard Hind

Another free Black, Richard Hind, was a respected pioneer at Boonesborough. An inventive farmer, Hind experimented with new crops. He is credited with being the first person to cultivate watermelons in Kentucky. Hind's Bend on the Kentucky River was named for this black pioneer.

1790 Census

By 1790, when the first United States census was taken 12,430 slaves and 114 free Blacks lived in Kentucky. Seventeen per cent of the state's population was Black. Only about one-fourth of Kentucky's white families held slaves and most of these families held less than five slaves each. The typical Kentucky slaveholding family kept a cook and a farm laborer and perhaps one or two young slaves to groom the horses or help with housekeeping chores.

Farms raising wheat, oats, corn and livestock were worked by slave labor. After the land had been cleared, larger farms developed, needing more slaves to raise tobacco and hemp.

Only a very few farms in southwestern Kentucky ever raised cotton. In most of the state, the climate was just too cold for cotton culture. For this reason plantations with large numbers of slaves were very rare in Kentucky. Even as late as 1860, there were only five families in the state that held over 100 slaves.

The black population was very unevenly distributed across the state. The fertile bluegrass area in the center of the state and the rich flatlands of the Tennessee River in the southwestern part of the state had the best farmland. The percentage of Blacks in these areas was high. In contrast, the population of the eastern Kentucky mountains where farms were small and hilly was never more than five per cent black.

Summary of Chapter One

Black men and women were among Kentucky's earliest settlers. The pressure of frontier life required great efforts by both races. In a small settler's cabin there was always more work to do than people to do it. Black and white hands together cut the timber and cleared the fields and built the cabins. Black as well as white men and women distinguished themselves in heroic acts to protect their families.

Two important facts should be stressed: 1) Although most early Blacks in Kentucky were slaves, from the beginning, some of Kentucky's black settlers were free. 2) Throughout the pre-Civil War period, more than three-fourths of Kentucky's white families did not hold slaves.

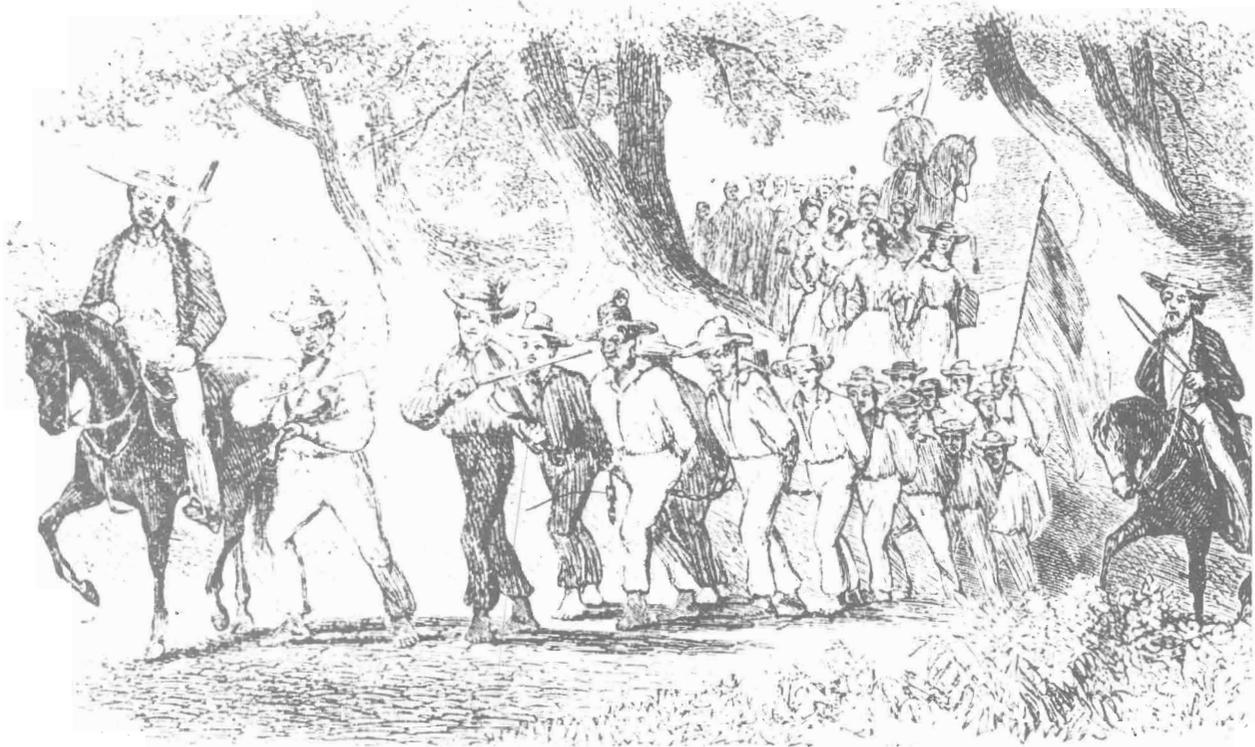
¹Felix Walker, "Diary," published by his brother in *DeBow's Review* of 1884, quoted in Thomas D. Clark's *Bluegrass Cavalcade* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1956), p. 7

²Quoted in J. Winston Coleman, Jr. *Slavery Times in Kentucky* (Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press, 1940), p. 3

³*Ibid.*, page 7

Chapter Two

Slavery in Kentucky



A GROUP OF SLAVES, HEADED FOR THE SOUTHERN MARKET, was seen passing through Bourbon County, Kentucky, by the Reverend James Dickey about 1822. This illustration of the Coffle gang based on his description, appeared in an early anti-slavery book.

Perhaps the best way to understand the slave code of Kentucky would be to imagine yourself living under its provision. If you were a slave in Kentucky, you would be considered solely the property of your master, and completely under his control.

Imagine what it would be like to be taken away

from your parents, to be sold or traded. You might never see them again, or even know where they were. You would have to work all day, every day except Sunday. Your time was not your own. Wandering by yourself in the woods or fields, you might be picked up as a runaway and be beaten for trying to escape.

Work Rules

Your master controlled your time. You worked as many hours as he demanded. If you had free time and wanted to work for someone else, this was not allowed without your master's consent. It was common, however, for him to let you work for another person. If you were a skilled carpenter, for example, your owner might "hire you out" to his friend who was building a house. But the law provided that the master kept the wages you earned this way.

Travel Regulations

Your movements were under your master's control. You could not leave his land without a written permission slip stating your destination and your time of return. You were not allowed to remain on another's premises for more than four hours unless you were waiting for your master's grain at a local mill or attending church on Sunday. You could not buy or sell anything without your master's permission slip; if you were caught doing this you could receive up to ten lashes from a whip.

Education

As a slave in Kentucky, you would have had one advantage that slaves in states farther south did not share. Kentucky law permitted slaves to learn to read and write. So you might have been taught to read and write by your master or mistress. They might even have allowed you to attend one of the few schools taught by free Blacks in Kentucky. Or you might have been taught to read the Bible in a church-sponsored Sunday school.

Marriage

If you married another slave, the law did not recognize that marriage as valid. Your owner could

L. C. ROBARDS,
DEALER IN NEGROES,
LEXINGTON, KY.

PERSONS wishing to Buy or Sell Negroes, will, at all times, find a market for them by calling at my **NEW JAIL**, a few doors below the "Bruen House" on Short street.

N. B. The highest cash price will be paid for Young and Likely Negroes.

July 2-51-y

break up the marriage at any time or even force you to live with someone of his choice. If a slave couple had children, they belonged, legally, not to the couple but to the woman's owner. The owner could discipline your children, or beat your children, or sell your children to anyone he chose. You would be powerless to defend your own children.

Punishment

For breaking any of these rules, you could be punished by public whipping. Many a Kentucky town had a public whipping post prominently located on one of the busy streets so that it would serve as a warning as well as a place of punishment. The law provided the required number of stripes (strokes of the whip) for various kinds of crime.

Slave owners so feared the possibility of slave insurrections that slaves involved in riots, unlawful assemblies, or seditious speeches would be punished with as many as thirty-nine stripes. For arson or robbery, the slave could receive 200 stripes—inflicted on different days. For burning public buildings, conspiring rebellion, attempted murder and rape, the punishment was death.

Advertisements for runaway slaves in Kentucky newspapers describe the cruel punishments many slaves received.¹ Pierce Griffin, of Shelbyville, advertised for his slave Charles, who had "lost several of his fore-teeth, and has considerable marks of the whip on his seat." Joseph McClaskey lost Bob, "little cross-eyed, bandy-legged and much scarred with the whip." Charles, who ran away from Harrison Cooksey, "will no doubt show the marks of a recent whipping, if taken."

Some slaves were even branded with hot irons. The keeper of a slave jail in Lexington caught a mulatto woman with a "Brand on the cheek, forehead, and breast resembling the letter 'H'." Another slave in the jail was a "stout black boy, Mose, who has a burn on his buttock from a red hot iron in the shape of an 'X' and his back is much scarred with the whip."

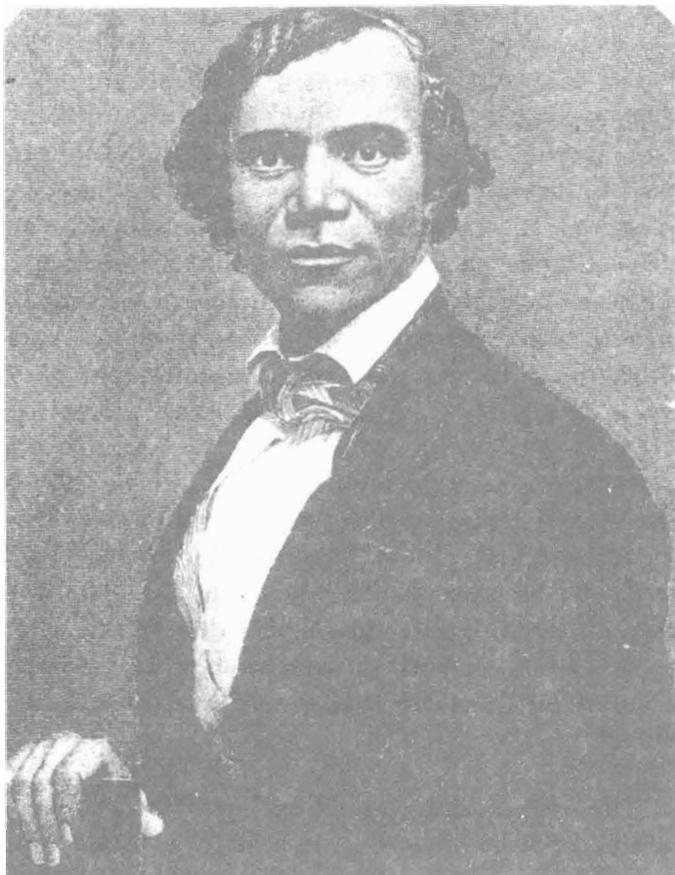
The rules and regulations described above governed the slavery system in Kentucky. Would you have liked to live under such a system? How do you suppose you might have reacted to these rules? Can you imagine what slavery did to the men and women who were forced to live as slaves?

Henry Bibb

One such man was Henry Bibb. Born in Shelby County in 1815, Henry Bibb was the son of a slave mother and a white father whom he never knew. While he was still quite young, he was taken from his mother to be hired out to a neighboring farmer in order to pay for the education of his master's son.

As he grew older, he was hired out to a number of different people. While working for a man in Oldham County, he met and fell in love with Melinda, a slave belonging to William Gatewood. They were married and Bibb was sold to the Gatewoods. After a few years, which were highlighted by the birth of his daughter, Henry Bibb decided to flee from slavery.

Melinda was afraid to accompany him so Bibb promised to return for her after he found the way north to freedom. He made his way to the Ohio River and bought passage on a steamer going to Cincinnati. Since his skin was very light and he was wearing fine clothes, no one suspected he was an escaping slave. He made his way north to Perrysburg, Ohio, where he spent the winter.



ESCAPED SLAVE, HENRY BIBB, founded a colony for other black escapees in Canada.

Returning south for Melinda the following spring, Henry Bibb was captured and sold to a Mississippi cotton planter. Once again he escaped. Upon learning that Melinda had given up ever seeing him again and was living with another man, Henry Bibb returned to the north to help other escaped slaves.

As a lecturer for the anti-slavery society, he traveled across Michigan and Ohio telling about the evils of slavery as he knew it. After the 1850 Fugitive Slave Act was passed by the United States Congress, fugitive slaves found it dangerous to remain in northern states because they might be recaptured and returned to their masters in the south.

So Henry Bibb, and his wife, Mary, whom he had married in 1847, went to Canada where he supervised the development of a colony for other escaped slaves. While in Canada, Henry Bibb received a letter from his former owner, William Gatewood. In his answer to that letter, Bibb summed up the worst aspects of slavery:

“You may perhaps think hard of us for running away from slavery, but as to myself, I have but one apology to make, which is this: I have only to regret that I did not start at an earlier period To be compelled to stand by and see you whip and lash my wife without mercy when I could afford her no protection, not even by offering myself to suffer the lash in her place, was more than I felt it to be the duty of a slave husband to endure while the way was open to Canada. My infant child was also frequently flogged by Mrs. Gatewood, for crying, until its skin was bruised and literally purple. This kind of treatment was what drove me from home and family to seek a better home for them.”²

Slave Trading

To be sold south was the fear of many Kentucky slaves. For Kentucky had a surplus of slaves; there were more slaves than there were jobs for them to do. Further south, in Alabama, Louisiana, and Mississippi, large cotton plantations developed. Since land was very cheap in those areas, the amount of cotton that might be raised on a given plantation depended mainly on the number of slaves the planter had to work his fields. By buying more and more slaves, the planters could raise more and more cotton.

After 1808, the plantation owners could no longer buy slaves who were imported from Africa because in that year, the United States Congress outlawed the African slave trade. So the planter was willing to pay high prices for slaves from other states. Kentucky and Virginia became famous as "slave-breeding" areas where men and women were sold on the open market much as fine Kentucky horses are sold today.

\$1,200 to \$1,250!



THE undersigned wishes to purchase a large lot of NEGROES for the New Orleans market. I will pay \$1,200 to \$1,250 for No. 1 young men, and \$850 to \$1,000 for No. 1 young Women; in fact, I will pay more for likely Negroes than any trader in Kentucky. My office is adjoining the *Broadway House*, on Broadway street, Lexington, Kentucky, where I, or my agent, can always be found.

July 5-80-3m WM. F. TALBOTT.

WANT ADS such as this appeared frequently in Kentucky newspapers, indicating that the New Orleans-Kentucky slave trade was a prospering business.

Slave-dealing firms in both Louisville and Lexington bought slaves from individual owners or at auctions. These slaves were kept chained in slave pens until there were enough captives to make up a southern shipment. Some groups were marched south to be sold at Memphis; far more were transported by steamboat down the Mississippi River to Vicksburg or New Orleans. The trade was very profitable. The firms of Hughes & Downing in Lexington, for example, made a profit of over \$3,000 in 1844, during its first year of operation.

As early as 1822, the Reverend James H. Dickey, described this procession of slaves headed for the southern market. "Having passed through Paris, in Bourbon County, Kentucky, the sound of music, (beyond a little rising of ground) attracted my attention. I looked forward and saw the flag of my country waving. Supposing I was about to meet a military parade, I drove hastily to the side of the road; and, having gained the top of my ascent, I discovered, I suppose, about forty black men, all chained together after the following manner: Each of them was handcuffed, and they were arranged in rank and file.

"A chain perhaps forty feet long, the size of a fifth-horse chain, was stretched between the two ranks, to which short chains were joined which connected with the handcuffs. Behind them were, I suppose, about thirty women, in double rank, the couples tied hand to hand. A solemn sadness sat on every countenance, and the dismal silence of this march of despair was interrupted only by the sound of two violins; yes, as if to add insult to injury, the foremost couple were furnished with a violin apiece; the second couple were ornamented with cockades; while near the center waved the republican flag, carried by a hand literally in chains."³

Why Slaves Were Sold

Some slaves were sold south because they had been disciplinary problems to their Kentucky owners. A far greater number of slaves, however, found themselves in the steamboat for New Orleans simply because they were victims of circumstances.

Many events led to the sale of a family's slaves. The crops of the owner were destroyed by blight and creditors demanded money he could raise only from the sale of his slaves. A wealthy man died leaving no heirs to inherit his "property." The slaves on a small plantation had many babies one year and by the next year there were too many mouths to feed. A black boy was sold to pay for the college education of his young white master.

Whatever the reasons, such sales resulted in husbands and wives being separated and children being torn from their parents. Although thousands of black people were subjected to cruel and humiliating indignities on the auction block, the slave trade prospered.

Blacks Resist Slavery

Many slaves refused to submit passively to their degrading status. Often they ran away. (The fugitives will be discussed in Chapter 3). Sometimes they organized revolts against their masters.

In a study of slave revolts for which there is recorded evidence, Herbert Aptheker lists ten instances of organized defiance in Kentucky between

1810 and 1860. Between Greenup and Vanceburg, for example, in August, 1829, a gang of slaves had been shackled two by two and were being marched south to be sold down the river. They secretly filed their chains and, at a given signal, overpowered and killed two of their drivers. A third overseer escaped and summoned the authorities who recaptured the rebellious slaves.

Another group of slaves who were on their way to be sold in New Orleans revolted in 1826. Seventy-five slaves on a ship headed down the Mississippi took control of the ship and guided it to the Indiana shore. The escapees left the ship and fled northward, but they were pursued almost immediately by Kentucky authorities. Most of the Blacks were recaptured. Five of the leaders were hanged and the others were again taken south for sale.

It is hard to discover how many such revolts occurred. If a group of slaves successfully defied their masters, the masters often did not publicize the fact for fear that other slaves might also try to revolt. If a slave revolt was unsuccessful, the master might punish those who were involved and not tell anyone about the attempt.

Individual Acts of Resistance

Rather than organizing revolts, some slaves revolted against slavery through individual actions. Historians have noted a few such actions; it is probably safe to assume that there were many more that were never recorded.

A slave named Emily belonging to the abolitionist Cassius Clay is said to have poisoned his son. A notoriously brutal white woman, Mrs. Carolina Turner, was choked to death by a slave she was flogging. The slave was hanged for his deed.

Another Kentucky slave, a carpenter who heard he was to be sold south, cut off one of his hands so that he could no longer ply his trade. In Covington, a father and mother who were being held until a shipment was ready to go down the river agreed to "send the souls of their children to Heaven rather than have them descend to the hell of slavery."⁴ After killing their own children, the parents committed suicide.

Brutal as these acts may seem, they were desperate acts of desperate people. Any picture of slavery, to be a realistic picture, must include some mention of these horrors.

A LARGE NUMBER
OF
NEGROES
WANTED!

The undersigned wishes to purchase throughout the year, a large number of

SOUND & HEALTHY
Negroes
OF BOTH SEXES.

FOR which the **HIGHEST PRICE IN CASH** will be paid at his Jail, opposite the County Jail, Short Street, Lexington, Ky., where either himself or his Agents L. C. & A. O. Robards, at all times may be found.

Any letters addressed to me concerning negroes, shall have prompt attention.
Dec. 16-25 6mo. R. W. LUCAS.

BUILDING LOTS FOR SALE!

THOSE splendid **BUILDING LOTS**, on **Broadway**, on each side of the residence of C. C. ROGERS, Esq., are offered for sale.

NOTICE.

THE business connection between myself and Messrs. L. C. & A. O. ROBARDS, having been discontinued, notice is hereby given that they are no longer my Agents.
JOS. H. NORTHCUTT.
October 21, 1859-9-tf

Negroes Wanted.

THE undersigned having entered into Partnership under the firm of

NORTHCUTT, MARSHALL & CO.,

For the purpose of dealing in Slaves, and will transact business at the house lately occupied by Jos. H. NORTHCUTT, on East Main Street, Lexington, nearly opposite the Woolen Factory of Messrs. Thompson & Van Dalsem. They wish to purchase a large number of

NEGROES, OF BOTH SEXES,

And will pay the highest prices offered in the market. Persons at a distance having Negroes for sale, and finding it inconvenient to bring them to the city, will please address us by mail.

JOSEPH H. NORTHCUTT.
SILAS MARSHALL.
GEORGE S. MARSHALL.
Oct. 21-9-tf

Summary of Chapter Two

Kentucky slaves lived a strictly regulated life. The law regarded them as property, not persons. As property, they could be bought and sold by their masters and subjected to very cruel punishments. They could be hired out to other persons needing their services but the wages for those services were paid to the slave's master, not the slave.

Since Kentucky had a surplus of slaves and states farther south always could use more slaves for the cotton plantations, a flourishing trade of selling Kentucky slaves in southern markets developed. Blacks feared being sold down the river where working conditions were generally even harsher than those in Kentucky.

Blacks resisted slavery in a number of ways. Some slaves over-powered and killed their masters. Others

fled to the north. Still others found slavery so intolerable that they committed suicide rather than continue under such an inhuman system.

The best way to summarize slavery in Kentucky may be through the words of an ex-slave. Sarah Jackson was allowed by her master to leave Kentucky and move to Canada. When interviewed there, she said, "It is a great heaviness on a person's mind to be a slave. It never looked right to see people taken and chained in a gang to be driven off. I never could bear to see my own color all fastened together to go to such a place as down the river. I used to go in the house and shut myself up. I did not know how long before it would be my own fate . . . I am better here than I was at home,—I feel lighter,—the dread is gone. I have a sister and brother in slavery in Kentucky. I intend to send my children to school." ⁵

¹The following quotations all appeared in Kentucky newspapers between 1830 and 1851 and are quoted in Coleman, *Slavery Times in Kentucky*, pp. 246-247.

²Henry Bibb, *Narrative of the Life and Adventures of Henry Bibb, an American Slave*, (Published by the author, 1849), pp. 175-178. (This book and many other early slave narratives are available at many Kentucky libraries on microcards issued by the Lost Cause Press.)

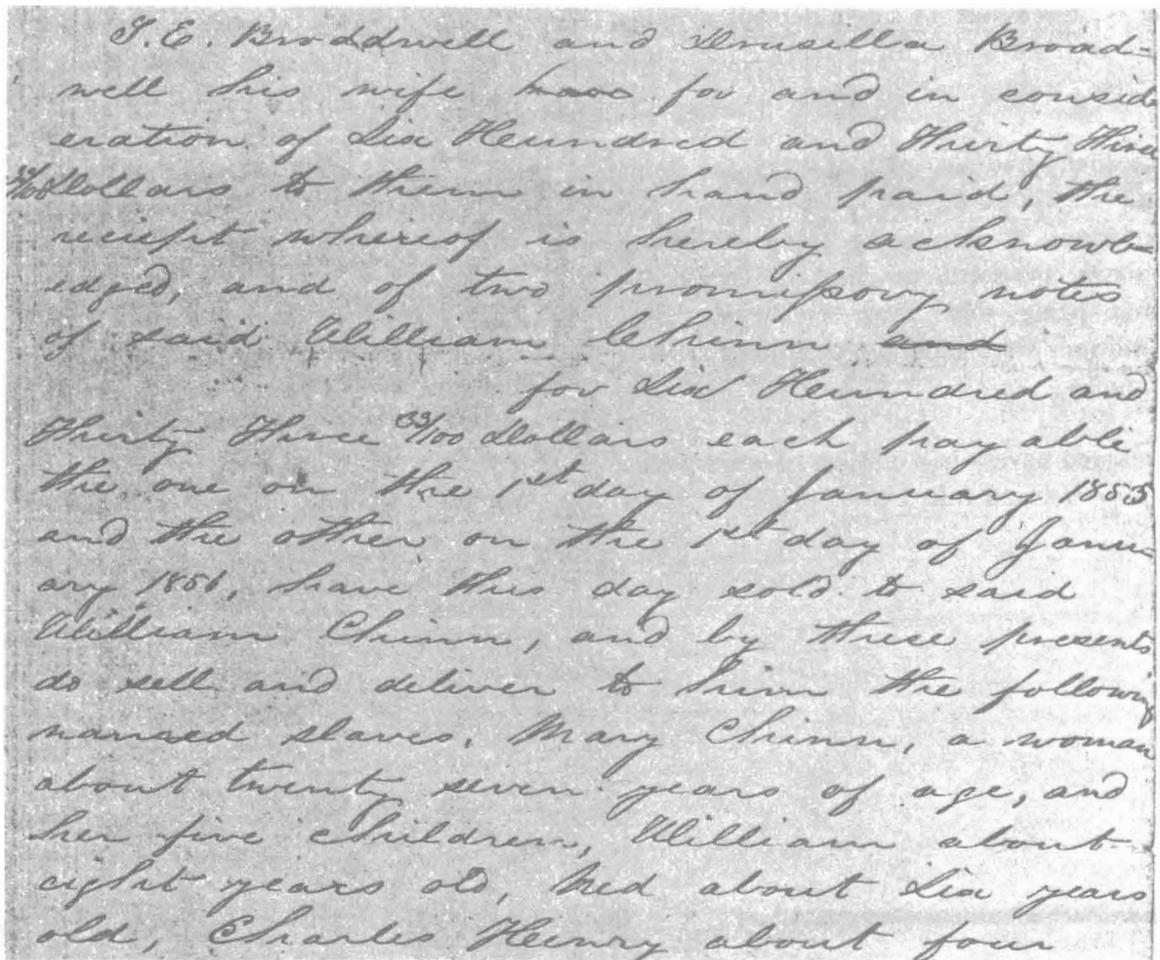
³Quoted in Coleman, *Slavery Times in Kentucky*, p. 145

⁴*Ibid.*, page 269.

⁵Benjamin Drew, *The Refugee: or the Narratives of Fugitive Slaves in Canada* (Boston: John P. Jewett, 1856, Reprinted for Basic Afro-American Reprint Library, Johnson Reprint, 1968), p. 179.

Chapter Three

Free Blacks



J. C. Broadwell and Annabella Broadwell his wife have for and in consideration of Six Hundred and Thirty Three Dollars to them in hand paid, the receipt whereof is hereby acknowledged, and of two promissory notes of said William Chinn and for Six Hundred and Thirty Three Dollars each payable the one on the 1st day of January 1855 and the other on the 1st day of January 1856, have this day sold to said William Chinn, and by these presents do sell and deliver to him the following named slaves, Mary Chinn, a woman about twenty seven years of age, and her five children, William about eight years old, Ned about six years old, Charles Henry about four

SOME SLAVES, WHOSE MASTERS ALLOWED THEM TO "HIRE OUT" THEIR TIME, WERE ABLE TO SAVE ENOUGH MONEY TO PURCHASE THEIR FREEDOM. William Chinn, a Louisville Black who worked as a caterer, bought his own freedom and later was able to buy his wife and children out of slavery. The rare document recording this sale (pictured above) has been preserved by Chinn's grandson, G.D. Wilson of Louisville.

From Kentucky's earliest days, there were free Blacks as well as slaves living in the state. There were 144 free Blacks in Kentucky in 1790. This number had increased to 10,684 in 1860. Some of these people were slaves who had been granted their freedom by Kentucky masters. Others came into the state as free men or were born to free parents.

Slaves who were freed by their masters were given

certificates signed by the master and the county official who issued the certificate. These "free papers" were very important. Blacks were generally assumed to be slaves or runaways unless they could produce their free papers. Kentucky history contains several examples of free Blacks who were sold back into slavery because their free papers had been destroyed.

Where Freedmen Lived

Because of the possibility of being kidnapped and sold back into slavery, most free Blacks chose to live in the larger towns where their freedom was not so noticeable.

Jegle's *Louisville Directory* of 1845 listed the slave and free population of the city by wards. As you can see, both slave and free Blacks lived throughout the city. They were not concentrated in any one area.

Ward	White	Slave	Free Blacks
1	3225	249	21
2	3448	289	37
3	5323	599	63
4	5178	636	75
5	6035	685	122
6	3745	875	102
7	2718	504	79
8	2930	219	61

Occupations

Many free Blacks were skilled craftsmen, working as barbers, carpenters, shoemakers, tailors, and cabinet makers. Others worked as draymen, carriage drivers, and grooms for horses. Both free Blacks and slaves worked in some of Kentucky's earliest industries: rope factories in Louisville and Lexington, the iron works of Bath County, the salt works of Clay County, and the iron and lead mines of Caldwell and Crittenden Counties.

Riverboat commerce provided employment opportunities for both slave and free Blacks—stevedores to load the boats, cabin boys and waiters to serve the passengers, and stokers to feed the steam engine its coal.

Some free Blacks ran their own businesses. For example, Robert Boyd, a Kentucky freedman, invented a corded bed. He moved to Cincinnati where he set up a factory employing twenty-five men to

build these beds. A Lexington free Black invested in real estate. In 1830, he held property that was worth \$20,000.

Some free Blacks were engaged as clergymen and teachers. The Reverend Henry Adams was a free Black who became pastor of the Louisville Fifth Street Baptist Church in 1839. In 1841, he opened a black school at that church. In Lexington, George Dupee, minister of the Pleasant Green Baptist Church, received his freedom in an unusual manner—his congregation bought him. Hearing their preacher was to be sold, a delegation from the church asked a white minister, the Reverend William Pratt, to buy Dupee for them. They repaid Pratt on the installment plan. Each Monday morning members of the faithful congregation delivered the Sunday offerings to Pratt until the entire sum was paid.

Aaron Siddles

One Kentucky free Black was Aaron Siddles. He had been a slave who had been bought by a trader to be sold down the river. He escaped and persuaded a white man, Timothy Guard, to buy him for \$1,000. Aaron Siddles explained the arrangement:

“I had a previous understanding with Guard, that if he bought me, I was to have a chance to buy myself. He gave me a paper signed before witnesses, that I was to be free, when I paid him \$1,600. He also gave me papers stating I was allowed to trade for myself: if I would not pay, he would, and if anyone would not pay me, he would compel them. I went to work as a steward of a steamboat. At first, I got \$35 a month, which raised till I got \$100 a month. I paid off Guard between six and seven years after; still remained on the boats, and, in all, I worked eleven years with one man at \$100 a month.”¹

Although he had a good job and had lived in Kentucky for many years, Siddles found that living as a free Black in a state that had so many slaves was just too nerve-racking. He was always afraid that he might be captured and sold back into slavery. So he finally left Kentucky and moved to Canada where he could live free from fear in one of the many colonies established by Blacks from the United States.

Free Blacks Owned Slaves

Many free Blacks in Kentucky were slave-owners. However, the slaves they owned were not slaves in the traditional sense but rather members of their own families whose freedom they had purchased from a white master.

The 1830 census lists 107 Kentucky free Blacks who owned slaves. Most of these Blacks listed only one or two slaves. None held more than Jerry Allen of Fayette County who listed nine slaves.

Why didn't these free Blacks just free their family members after they bought them? One reason may have been financial. In order to have the free papers written, a small fee had to be paid by the slaveholder. The free Black who had saved all his money to buy his wife may not have had even the little extra money needed to have her papers signed and witnessed. Or perhaps, the black father felt that he could more adequately protect his children against the danger of re-enslavement if he actually owned those children.

In 1850, a Kentucky law was passed which stated that any Black who was freed by his master had to leave the state. Then black slaveholders had to list their families as slaves so that they might remain in Kentucky. This practice led to some interesting situations, such as that of a free black woman who

bought her husband. If he wanted to go out at night, he had to have a pass signed by his wife (who legally was his master), stating where he was to go and when he was due to return home.

Laws Governing Free Blacks

Kentucky laws were stricter for free Blacks than for whites. The free Black was not allowed to hold slaves other than his own relatives; nor was he allowed to hold any white person as bondsman. A 1798 statute allowed the free black householder to keep one gun, powder and shot to protect his home in case of Indian attack. But if he were caught carrying a gun in the streets, he was subject to a five dollar fine.

Some punishments were more severe. He was subject to the death penalty for burning public buildings, tobacco houses, warehouses, or stables; for conspiring rebellion; or for rape of a white woman. If he were convicted of keeping a disorderly house or loitering about without visible means of support, he could be sold into servitude for not less than two nor more than ten years. Although in most other cases he was subject to the same punishments as a white man, the punishments the black man actually received were frequently more severe than for whites committing the same kinds of crimes.

GEORGE W. (PAPPY) DUPEE, born a slave in Gallatin County in 1826, was bought out of slavery by the congregation of Pleasant Green Baptist Church in Lexington. In 1858, Dupee became pastor of Washington Street Missionary Baptist Church in Paducah where he served for thirty-nine years.



Kentucky never prohibited educating either free Blacks or slaves (as did most southern states). Kentucky's first Constitution contained no provisions that would prevent the free Black from voting.

However, the 1799 Constitution did ban voting by free Blacks. Kentucky free Blacks were allowed to own property and to buy, sell, or otherwise dispose of that property.

Summary of Chapter Three

Many free Blacks lived in Kentucky during the slavery days. In 1860, five per cent of Kentucky's black population was free. These Blacks lived daily with the fear that they might be sold back into slavery. To prevent this, they took special care of their free papers.

Free Blacks engaged in a variety of occupations.

Some were paid excellent wages. Some owned property. Some even held title to members of their own families. Many attended schools which were taught by other free Blacks.

These black men and women were justly proud of their status as free Blacks of Kentucky.

¹ Drew, *The Refugee: or the Narratives of Fugitive Slaves in Canada*, p. 271

Chapter Four

Attempts to Abolish Slavery



CASSIUS MARCELLUS CLAY, SR.

Throughout the history of slavery in Kentucky, there were responsible individuals and groups that urged the abolition of the dreaded institution. As early as 1788, the Baptist General Committee of

Virginia, which at that time included Kentucky, recommended that its members “make use of every legal measure to extirpate this horrid evil from the land.”¹

Anti-Slavery Baptist Churches

In 1792, the first anti-slavery Baptist Congregation was organized in Woodford County. By 1807, twelve Emancipation Baptist Congregations with about 300 members joined together to form an association known as the Friends of Humanity. These church members did not hold slaves themselves, vowed to purchase slaves only in order to set them free, and pledged to work for the eventual complete emancipation of the Negro race in America.

Presbyterian Church

The first anti-slavery tract in Kentucky was written by the Reverend David Rice in 1792. This Presbyterian minister, who was often called the father of the Presbyterian Church in Kentucky, preached eloquently about the injustices of slavery.

In 1794, the governing body of the Presbyterian Church in Kentucky resolved that slaves belonging to members of that body should be taught to read the scriptures and prepared for freedom. Two years later, the same body urged the immediate emancipation of all slaves who had been thus prepared and urged continued education for others. Church leaders apparently took the latter admonition seriously for, in 1826, church leaders reported that fifteen schools for Blacks had been established.

Kentucky Abolition Society

There is evidence that two abolition societies had been organized in Kentucky before 1797 but we have no record of their activities. In 1807, the Kentucky Abolition Society was organized by many of the same people who were members of the Friends of Humanity. This society was active in advertising the evils of slavery and urging emancipation.

In May, 1822, the society established in Shelbyville one of the first anti-slavery newspapers in the United States. *The Abolition Intelligencer and Missionary Magazine* was edited by the Reverend John Finley Crowe. The paper was published monthly for one year when it was forced to stop publication for

lack of sufficient funds. This paper never had more than 500 subscribers. With the death of this newspaper, interest in abolition in Kentucky decreased and, by 1827, only eight abolition societies were left in Kentucky with a combined membership of about 200 people.

These early Kentucky societies generally proposed to end slavery through legislation as had already been done in most of the northern states. Slaves would be free gradually, perhaps in five or ten years. This would enable the slave, through education, to prepare for his freedom. The slaveholder would be paid by the state for the loss of his slaves.

The Kentucky Colonization Society

“What would become of the black man once he was granted his freedom?” This was the question many of the early abolitionist societies refused to answer. Much of the literature they published indicated that they assumed that he would not remain where he was; but where he would go was never very clearly defined. One group in Kentucky did have an answer to that question. The Kentucky Colonization Society was organized in order to raise money to send black men back to Africa as colonists.

The first Kentucky chapter of the American Colonization Society was formed in 1823. By 1829, Kentucky boasted a statewide organization which was described as one of the most active in the United States. Many of the state’s most outstanding citizens were members of this group. Henry Clay was a national president of the organization. Most of the members were slaveholders themselves and, hence, the organization’s emphasis in Kentucky was upon removing emancipated slaves to Africa rather than upon the emancipation itself.

The dreams of colonization always exceeded financial realities. In 1833, the Kentucky society collected \$1,137—enough to send about 45 freedmen to Liberia, West Africa, at the going estimate of \$25 per passage. Kentucky’s slave population was 165,000. When we subtract these 45 from the 165,000 slaves that remained in Kentucky, we can see what a tiny effort this was. The wonder is that such important citizens championed this cause for such a long period of time.

Later schemes were proposed for setting aside pieces of land in the United States—perhaps an area in the Louisiana Purchase or a part of Texas—to be used exclusively for black colonization. In 1865, the Kentucky Senate passed a bill instructing Congress to set aside a territory for colonizing the Blacks, but this proposal never gained widespread support. Most of the state’s newly freed slaves considered Kentucky their home. They were no more interested than their white neighbors in moving to the wilds of Texas.

Political Efforts to Abolish Slavery

Kentucky’s first Constitution, in 1792, legalized slavery. According to this Constitution, the legislature could not free the slaves without obtaining the consent of the slaveholders and paying them for this property loss. Immigrants could not be prohibited from bringing their own slaves into Kentucky.

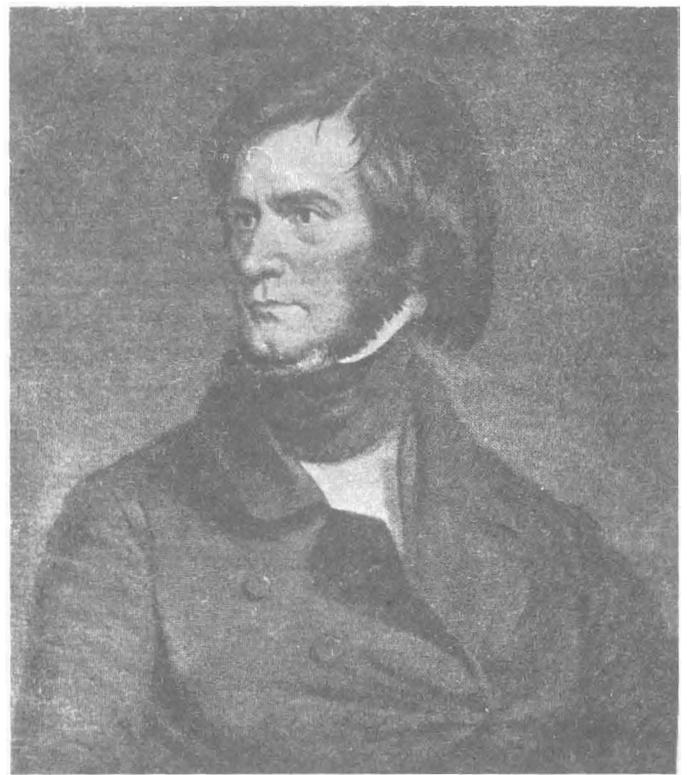
This Constitution did give the General Assembly the power to make slaveowners treat their slaves with humanity. The Assembly could require the owner to provide adequate food and clothing and could forbid injurious physical punishments.

The Breckinridge Plan

One of the foremost anti-slavery workers in Kentucky, Robert J. Breckinridge, thought of an imaginative way to abolish slavery without changing the Kentucky Constitution which said that slaves couldn’t be freed without the consent of their owners:

The General Assembly could pass a law saying 1) No slaves from other states could be imported into Kentucky. 2) All children born to Kentucky slaves after a certain date would be born free, not the property of their mother’s master. Thus a man’s slaves would remain his property (which complied with the Constitution); but the children of those slaves would be free. With the passage of one generation, slavery would disappear in Kentucky.

In 1831, forty-eight important slaveholders met with Breckinridge in Lexington and pledged to free all the future offspring of their slaves when those children reached the age of twenty-one.



ROBERT J. BRECKINRIDGE

The Non-Importation Act

In 1833, the first step of the Breckinridge plan, a non-importation act, was finally passed by the Kentucky General Assembly. It provided that any person who should import a slave from another state or should buy or sell any slave he knew was imported would be fined \$600. This act did not prevent people who immigrated into Kentucky from bringing their slaves with them, but it did say that they must pledge not to sell those slaves.

Anti-slavery forces were jubilant with the passage of this act. James G. Birney, an ex-slaveholder who published an anti-slavery newspaper, hailed Kentucky “as the best site in our whole country for taking a stand against slavery.”² Lewis Tappan, one of the most noted emancipationists in the country, predicted that the next General Assembly would abolish slavery in some way.

However, the next General Assembly refused to deal with the slavery issue squarely, and instead debated the possibility of calling a constitutional convention. In 1837, the General Assembly called for a convention but the voters rejected this call by a solid majority.

The Constitutional Convention of 1849

Since the General Assembly did not pass step two of the Breckinridge plan, anti-slavery forces began to push for a constitutional convention. Slavery could be abolished by a new constitution. Finally, in 1848, a constitutional convention was called.

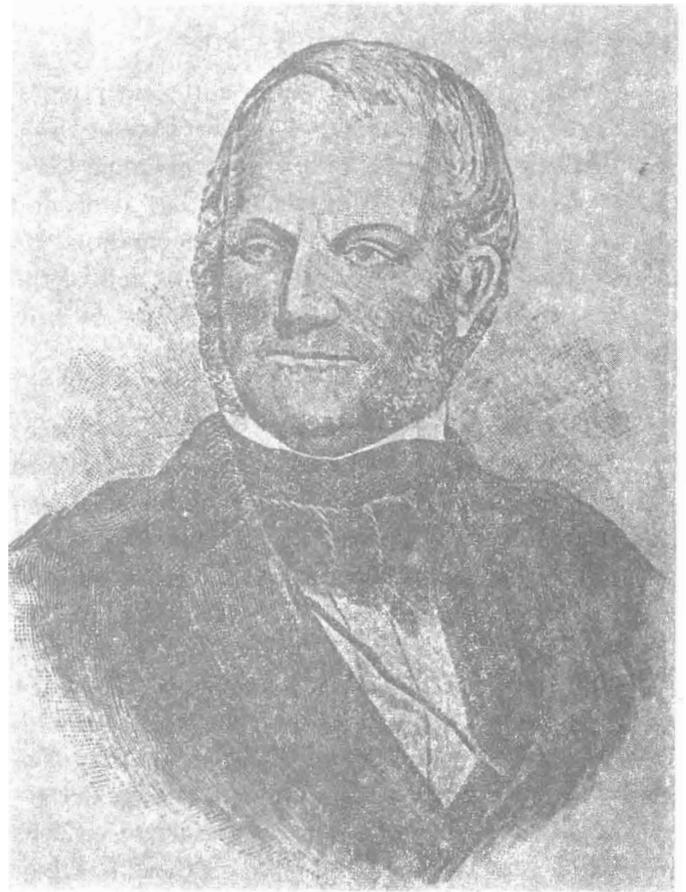
People who opposed slavery began to make plans to elect delegates who would write an anti-slavery constitution. Emancipation meetings, composed of many of the leading men of both political parties, were held in Louisville. Committees were appointed for forming plans for the coming elections. Some newspapers, including the *Louisville Courier* and the *Western Kentuckian*, came out for emancipation.

Speaking against slavery, U.S. Senators Henry Clay and J.R. Underwood, church leaders like the Rev. Robert Breckinridge and the Rev. John G. Fee (founder of Berea College), and local citizens led by the fiery tempered orator Cassius M. Clay toured the state urging citizens to elect convention delegates who opposed slavery. They fought a losing battle, however, against candidates who had been active in local politics for many years. When the votes were cast, none of the anti-slavery delegates had been elected. The new constitution which the elected delegates drew up in 1849 contained almost the same provisions regarding slavery that had been in the 1799 constitution.

In a sense, Kentucky's 1849 constitutional convention marked the end of peaceful attempts to abolish slavery in the state. If a state like Kentucky, in which less than twenty per cent of the population held slaves, chose not to do away with the injustice of slavery in a peaceful manner, then perhaps the problem of slavery could not be solved peacefully.

James G. Birney

Among the most vigorous opponents of slavery in Kentucky was James G. Birney, a slaveowner who had been born in Kentucky, moved to Alabama, and returned to Kentucky in 1833. He settled on a farm near Danville, immediately freed all his slaves, and began to urge other slaveholders to do the same.



JAMES G. BIRNEY

In March, 1835, he organized the Kentucky Anti-Slavery Society that became part of the American Anti-Slavery Society of which William Lloyd Garrison was the most famous member. With Garrison's support, Birney planned to publish an anti-slavery newspaper, *The Philanthropist*, in Danville.

Public opposition to Birney's plan was swift and loud. Threats against the life of the printer who was going to print the newspaper finally frightened him so much that he secretly sold his print shop and left town. The postmaster at Danville declared he would not accept copies of *The Philanthropist* for mailing.

Finally, in desperation, Birney moved to Cincinnati where he was able to publish his paper without continual fear of mob violence.

Cassius Clay

Another attempt to publish an anti-slavery newspaper in Kentucky was made by Cassius Clay in 1845. Son of the wealthy slaveholder, General Green Clay, Cassius Clay held slaves of his own but dedicated himself to the cause of gradual emancipation. He loved a good fight and was ever ready to defend the anti-slavery cause with flamboyant oratory or with dueling pistols or his famous bowie knife.

Clay knew what opposition the publication of *The True American* would encounter. So he fortified the printing shop with iron doors and placed two loaded cannons at the head of the stairs facing the door. Then, in June, 1845, he issued his first edition.

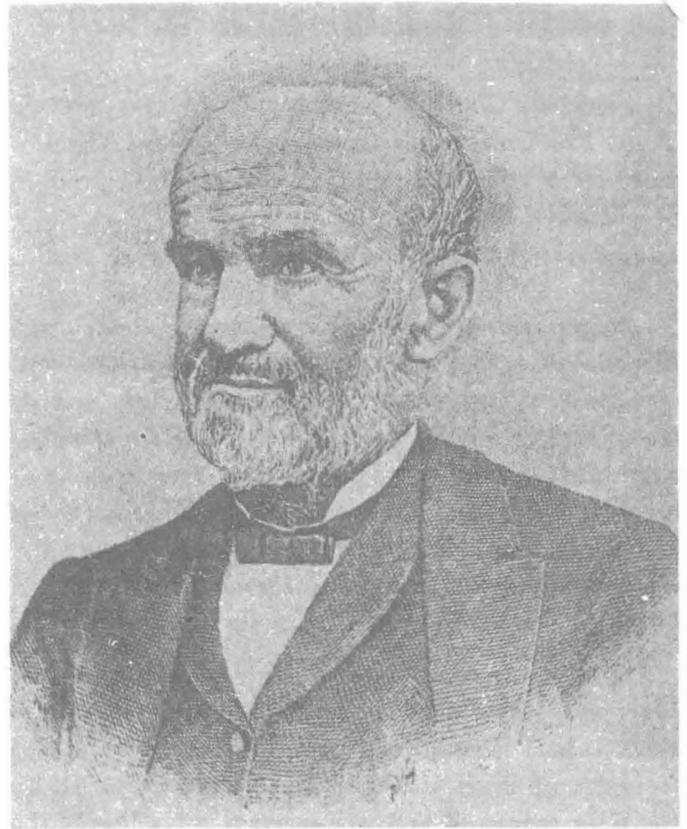
Publication continued until August 18, 1845. On that day, while Clay was sick in bed with typhoid, Judge George R. Trotter of the Lexington police court ordered the presses impounded. A large delegation of some of Lexington's most important citizens dismantled Clay's presses and shipped them to Ohio.

That night, jubilant over the destruction of Clay's newspaper, masked "black Indians" roamed the streets of Lexington, whipping, beating, tarring & feathering numerous colored persons.³ Mob rule seemed to be in control in Kentucky.

Although *The True American* was silenced before its voice could have much effect in Kentucky, another of Cassius Clay's actions was to have a very great effect on the history of Blacks in Kentucky. In 1858, Cassius Clay gave a piece of land to the Reverend John G. Fee who planned to establish a school based upon abolitionist principles.

The Reverend John G. Fee

John Fee was a young idealist who felt that men would live as brothers if they were taught about brotherhood from an early age. He began teaching and putting his theories into practice in District School Number 16 in Madison County. To persuade Fee to stay in the area, Clay gave Fee land on which to build a home within ready proximity to District School Number 16. Later, a neighbor of Fee's



JOHN G. FEE

donated an additional ten acres. On this, Fee "chopped out a project of a school" and this slab schoolhouse was the first building of what was to become Berea College. The first students were young white boys from nearby towns and farms but Fee hoped eventually to include blacks in the classes as well.⁴

He was not able to do so before mob rule intervened. The John Brown raid upon Harper's Ferry, Virginia, in 1859 so frightened Kentucky slaveholders that they feared a similar raid might happen in their state. And they feared that John Fee and his abolitionist teachers might lead such a raid.

So an armed mob of Kentucky citizens visited Fee and his teachers and warned them that their lives would be in danger if they didn't leave the state within ten days. Unwilling to risk the lives of the families of the teachers and knowing that a school could not operate effectively under the threat of mob violence, Fee ordered the school closed. The abolitionist colony moved back across the Ohio River to Cincinnati in December, 1859.

Summary of Chapter Four

Opposition to slavery existed in Kentucky from the state's earliest days. Church leaders and political leaders both spoke against the dreaded institution. Although never more than twenty per cent of Kentucky's citizens held slaves, the power and influence of those slaveholders was so great that legal

attempts to end slavery always failed.

Among the famous Kentuckians who opposed slavery were the Reverend David Rice, the Reverend Robert J. Breckinridge, James G. Birney, Cassius Clay, and the Reverend John G. Fee.

¹Quoted by Asa Earl Martin, the *Anti-Slavery Movement in Kentucky Prior to 1850* (Louisville: Standard Printing, 1918), p. 19.

²*Ibid*, p. 102.

³August 20, 1845 entry in the diary of a young Transylvania University law student, J.E. Kenton. Quoted in Coleman, *Slavery in Kentucky*, P. 312.

⁴William Goodell Frost, *For the Mountains*, (Revell: Louisville, Ky., 1937), Chapter 5, p. 60.

Chapter Five

The Underground Railroad



ONE LINK IN THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD SYSTEM WAS THIS UNDERGROUND TUNNEL at the rear of the Carneal House in Covington. In this recent photograph of the tunnel, Mrs. Annie Hargraves (right) shows Mayor Claude E. Hensley and her daughter, Mrs. Beatrice Yelder, a book containing an account of her grandmother's escape from slavery.

Many Kentucky slaves felt that they could not live under slavery and chose to risk their lives to escape from servitude. They left their familiar homes, often with little more than the clothes on their backs, and traveled northward into completely unfamiliar territory.

Numbers of unknown people must have helped

the escaping slave. Probably other slaves on the farm concealed his absence for a short time in order to give him the chance to get as far away as possible. He must have had to ask for directions somewhere along the way. Some boat operators must have "looked the other way" as an extra Black came on board to cross the river.

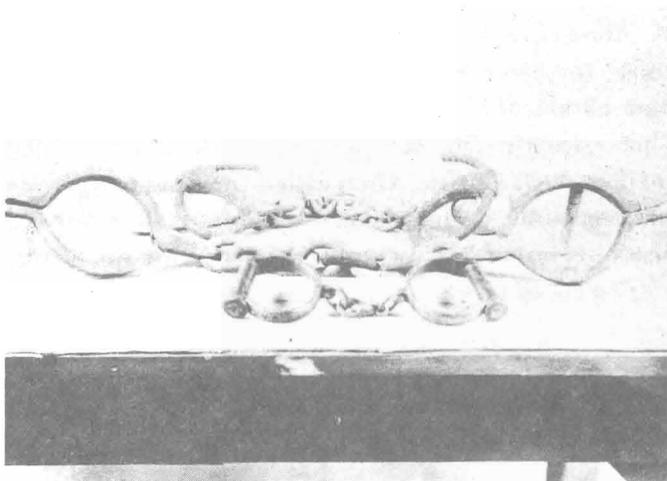
How They Escaped

One of the most unforgettable scenes in *Uncle Tom's Cabin* is the picture of Eliza, with her child on her back, desperately making her way across the frozen Ohio River toward freedom. However, few people realize that this is a description of an actual event. Harriet Beecher Stowe had heard Dr. John Rankin tell of a cold winter's night when just such a mother and her child crossed the ice from Kentucky to the Rankin home on a bluff overlooking the Ohio River.

Not all slaves were forced to such desperate measures to escape; some light-skinned slaves such as Henry Bibb were able to simply put on the fashionable clothing of their white masters, buy steamship tickets, and ride across the Ohio to freedom. Others took less comfortable routes. Joseph Sider was an Indiana peddler who made regular trips into Kentucky. His wagon was constructed with a hollow space under the boxes in which he kept his wares. On his return to Indiana he often carried black men hidden in that compartment.

Calvin Fairbanks abducted the Stanton family—mother, father, and six children—from the neighborhood of Covington, Kentucky, by packing them in a load of straw.

Once twenty-eight Blacks from Boone County, Kentucky arrived in Cincinnati just before daylight. For their own safety, it was necessary to convey them



IMAGINE WEARING THESE CHAINS.

farther north almost immediately. A number of carriages were procured and a solemn funeral procession with men and women hidden in the black drapes of mourning was soon on its way north to freedom.

There are several instances recorded where the son of a wealthy planter, rebelling against the system in which he was raised, would make the trip to Cincinnati, or Evansville, or Columbus, attended by a number of slaves, and would return home alone.

Since anyone who helped a fugitive slave was subject to criminal punishment, those people who did so kept no records so we know very little about them. Once the slave got across the river to Ohio, Illinois, or Indiana, however, he often found members of the Underground Railroad.

The Underground Railroad

The Underground Railroad was made up of families and individuals who believed that slavery was such an evil institution that they were morally justified in assisting slaves to escape. Gradually, as one such person contacted another, this Underground Railroad grew to be a whole network of people who were willing to move slaves from one community to another.

In the early days, some slaves simply escaped to free states and set up residence in communities far from the slave state border. But a strict Fugitive Slave Act was passed by the United States Congress in 1850. This act enabled the master to reclaim his escaped slave from any free state in which he found the fugitive. As more and more masters sent agents northward with descriptions of their escaped slaves, fugitives began to realize their best chance for freedom lay across the border in Canada.

Freedmen's Colonies in Canada

Whole colonies of ex-slaves sprung up in Canada. One such colony, the Refugees' Home, near Windsor, Canada was organized by a former Kentucky slave, Henry Bibb. The company bought a large tract of land with contributions from anti-slavery groups in the United States. Each black family that settled at Refugees' Home received twenty-five acres of land. Five acres were given to the family without charge for

living on this land. They bought the other twenty acres for \$2.00 per acre in nine annual payments. The community established schools and churches and maintained a stock of supplies of immediate necessities for escaped fugitives.

How the News Spread

How did Kentucky slaves learn of the Underground Railroad? Soldiers returning from the War of 1812 probably brought the first news that Canada was a haven for escaped slaves because slavery had been abolished in England and all of her colonies. When the loss of slaves became more widespread, the owners themselves spread the news. By warning the slaves of the dreadful cold of Canadian winters and the hardships of a trip to that far border, they inadvertently were distributing information about that land.

Once he had made his way northward, the Kentucky fugitive often took work in a northern city, saved some money, and then returned to Kentucky to lead his wife or family to safety. One such person was a woman named Armstrong who escaped with her husband and one child to Canada in 1842. Two years later, she returned to Kentucky disguised as a man. Hiding near a spring, where her children were accustomed to get water, she was able to give instructions to five of them, and the following night they all left for an underground station at Ripley, Ohio. These returning slaves were a great source of information to others who dreamed of the possibility of escape but had not dared to try.

Probably the most typical pattern, however, was for a black man to flee across the river and contact a northern Black, trusting this contact for information as to routes further north. Unfortunately, some Ohio Blacks betrayed fugitives and sold the information of their whereabouts to pursuing masters.

Number of Escapees

No one knows exactly how many Kentucky slaves took the Underground Railroad to freedom. Since harboring an escaped slave was a federal offense, those who aided the slaves rarely kept records. Estimates vary widely. Senator Polk of Missouri in a speech before the Senate in 1861, estimated that

\$150 REWARD.
RANAWAY from the subscriber, on the night of Monday the 11th July, a negro man named
TOM,
about 30 years of age, 5 feet 6 or 7 inches high; of dark color; heavy in the chest; several of his jaw teeth out; and upon his body are several old marks of the whip, one of them straight down the back. He took with him a quantity of clothing, and several hats.
A reward of \$150 will be paid for his apprehension and security, if taken out of the State of Kentucky; \$100 if taken in any county bordering on the Ohio river; \$50 if taken in any of the interior counties except Fayette; or \$20 if taken in the latter county.
July 12-84-tf B. L. BOSTON.

SOME MEN MADE A LIVING HUNTING FOR LOST SLAVES like Tom and returning them to their owners for the reward.

Kentucky lost \$200,000 annually in the form of escaped slaves. In 1850, Congressman Atchison of Kentucky claimed that her citizens lost slaves to the value of hundreds of thousands of dollars.

On the other hand, the U.S. Census reports that only 96 slaves escaped from their Kentucky masters in 1850 and only 119 slaves escaped in 1860.

One Quaker, Daniel Osborn of Alum Creek, Ohio, did keep a record of those fugitives passing through his neighborhood. A few pages of that record, from April 14 to September 10, 1844, have been preserved. In that length of time he listed forty-seven runaways—all but three of whom came from Kentucky. There were about fourteen initial stations leading to different trails north along the Ohio River similar to that at Alum Creek. If we assume that they each had about the same amount of traffic, we might estimate that about 600 slaves left Kentucky each summer. This estimate fits the testimony of another Ohio Quaker, Levi Coffin, often called the President of the Underground Railroad, who reported that for 33 years his home in Cincinnati received and aided over 100 escapees yearly.

Those Who Aided Escapees

Some Kentuckians, white and black, were willing to face possible imprisonment in order to aid fugitive slaves. John Mason, a fugitive slave from Kentucky, over a period of 19 months, escorted 265 other slaves to a northern Underground Railroad station run by a

black minister, the Reverend W.M. Mitchell. Mason was finally captured and sold south but within two years, he wrote Mitchell that he had again escaped and was living in Hamilton, Canada.

A Black named Elijah Anderson was described as the general superintendent of the Underground Railroad system in northwestern Ohio. He began his work before the enactment of the Fugitive Slave Law of 1850 and continued until he was arrested and confined in the state prison at Frankfort. He claimed to have piloted over 1000 fugitives to freedom.

Another Black who led others to freedom was Ben, a slave who escaped from his Kentucky master. According to an article in the *Louisville Democrat*, October 27, 1857, Ben kept helping his former master's slaves escape. His efforts in behalf of others finally led to his capture. Ben "fought with the desperation of a man who had once tasted the sweets of liberty" but those who captured him were too strong. He was overpowered and re-enslaved.

Wash Spradley, a black man living in Louisville helped the escape of many of his race. A directory of the names of Underground Railroad operators lists the Reverend John Grigg Fee, John S. Fee, and a man listed only as Jones.

Calvin Fairbanks was a white man who regularly helped Kentucky slaves across the Ohio River. In September, 1844, he and a young Vermont school-teacher, Miss D.A. Webster, who was teaching in Lexington, concealed three slaves—Lewis Hayden, his wife, and their ten year old boy—in a carriage and drove to an underground railroad depot in Hopkins, Ohio. When the two teachers returned to Lexington, they were arrested, tried, and convicted of helping a fugitive escape. Miss Webster was pardoned by the governor but Fairbanks served almost five years of a fifteen year sentence before he, too, was pardoned by Governor John J. Crittenden.

Less than two years later, he was again arrested for aiding the escape of Tamar, a young black woman belonging to A.L. Shotwell of Louisville. In 1853, he was again sentenced to a fifteen year term in the Kentucky state prison where he remained until he was pardoned by acting Governor Richard T. Jacob in 1864.

Calvin Fairbanks could take pride in the slaves he helped escape. Mr. Hayden became a respected citizen of Boston, and helped organize a vigilance committee to protect the refugees that were settling in the city. In time, Hayden served in the Massachusetts state legislature. His wife, who survived him, willed an estate of about five thousand dollars to Harvard University to provide scholarships for deserving black students.

William Wells Brown

William Wells Brown was born in Lexington, Kentucky in 1814. His mother was a slave who told him his father was a white slave-owner. He escaped in 1834 to Ohio where he became active in the anti-slavery movement. In 1849, he was sent as an American representative to a Peace Congress in Paris. He remained abroad in England and France for the next five years.

To tell others of his life as a slave, he wrote the *Narrative of William W. Brown, a Fugitive Slave* in



WILLIAM WELLS BROWN, a fugitive slave from Kentucky, became the foremost black author of his day and a leading opponent of slavery.



SLAVE QUARTERS

1847. This early book demonstrated his ability as a writer. He wrote several more books and became the foremost black author of his day. Although he wrote both novels and plays, his most important books were histories such as *The Negro in the American Rebellion, His Heroism and His Fidelity*, published in 1867. This book has been reprinted and is available today.

Josiah Henson

Another Kentucky Black who chose freedom with his feet was Josiah Henson. Henson, his wife and

two children escaped to Canada where he learned to read and write. He returned to Kentucky many times to lead other fugitives to the north. In one two week period, he led thirty Kentucky escapees to Toledo, Ohio.

Henson often spoke at northern abolitionist meetings. After one such engagement in 1850, he was introduced to the sister of one of the Boston abolitionists, Edward Beecher. That sister was Harriet Beecher Stowe. Many people believe that when she wrote *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, Harriet Beecher Stowe used Josiah Henson as the model for Uncle Tom.

The Henson family became important citizens of Dresden, Canada where Josiah Henson helped to organize the British and American Manual Labor Institute for Negro children, one of the earliest industrial schools on the continent. When the Institute needed additional funds, Henson traveled to England where he raised \$1,000 for the project.

He also enlisted in the Canadian army, becoming the captain of the Second Company of the Essex Colored Volunteers. In the Canadian rebellion of 1837, Henson's company helped to defend Fort Malden from December, 1837 until May, 1838.

Summary of Chapter Five

The history of the slave escapes in Kentucky indicates that many black men and women were so discontented with slavery that they were willing to face the risk of journeying into the unknown rather than live under slavery. They escaped in many different ways by themselves and with assistance from many different people. Many of those who escaped returned to Kentucky to lead other members of their families and friends to freedom.

Among the famous slaves who escaped from Kentucky were: Henry Bibb, Lewis Hayden and his family, William Wells Brown, and Josiah Henson and his family. Among those who helped slaves escape were: John Mason, Elijah Anderson, Wash Spradley, John Grigg Fee, John S. Fee, Calvin Fairbanks, and Miss D.A. Webster.

Unit Two

The Civil War And Its Aftermath-- 1860-1890

The Civil War divided Kentucky as it did the nation. Some Kentucky sons joined the Union Army; others joined the Confederate Army. Both Presidents—Abraham Lincoln and Jefferson Davis—were born in Kentucky.

Kentucky remained in the Union. However, since the Emancipation Proclamation of 1863 abolished slavery only in the Confederate States, Kentucky also remained a slaveholding state. Kentucky Blacks both slave and free, enlisted in military units and fought bravely for the Union cause. Some Kentucky slaves were able to obtain freedom for themselves and their families under a federal law granting freedom to slaves enlisting in the Union Army.

One of the two states where slavery continued after the War, Kentucky resisted efforts to abolish the institution of slavery through legislative action. The Kentucky General Assembly also refused to ratify the Thirteenth, Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments to the Constitution. When the Thirteenth Amendment abolishing slavery throughout the United States became the law of the land in December, 1865, Kentucky slaveholders had to submit to this national law.

After the slaves were freed, the General Assembly passed many laws regarding the freedmen. In general, these laws simply gave the freedmen the same rights that white men had. However, two rights—the right to testify against white men in State courts and the right to serve on a jury—were denied Kentucky Blacks. Continuous pressure from black citizens and the determination of the federal government to allow Blacks to testify in Federal courts finally gained for Kentucky Blacks the right to testify and serve on juries in State courts.

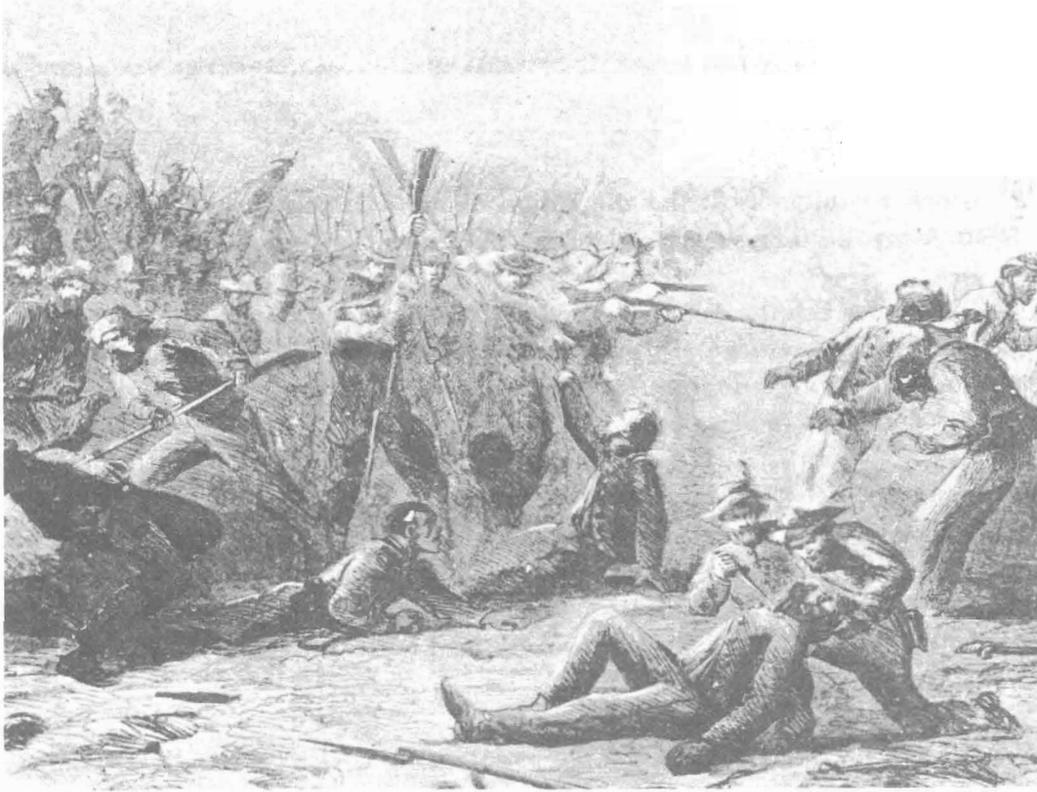
In the violent period following the Civil War, many Blacks were the victims of mob terrorism. While the State officially condemned such activities, authorities seemed unable to prevent the terroristic tactics. Many black families left isolated farms and moved to the relative security of the city during this period.

The Freedmen's Bureau in Kentucky gave advice and assistance to the newly freed Blacks. Both the Bureau and local communities opened schools for Blacks. Black students of all ages showed their hunger for learning by attending these schools in spite of great difficulties.

The Fourteenth Amendment to the Constitution stated clearly that Blacks were full citizens of the United States. The Fifteenth Amendment extended them the right to vote. Black citizens took this right seriously. They formed political organizations and cast their ballots with great dignity. Kentucky Blacks protested to the Governor, the General Assembly, and even to the United States Congress when their rights were threatened or abused.

Chapter Six

The Civil War



THE HORROR OF THE FORT PILLOW MASSACRE was illustrated by this sketch for *HARPER'S WEEKLY* magazine, April 30, 1864.

President Lincoln felt he must have Kentucky as a Union state in order to fight the Civil War. Let's look at a map of Kentucky and see if we can figure out why. From Kentucky, fighting forces could be sent down the Mississippi and up the Tennessee and Cumberland Rivers to attack the Confederacy.

Lincoln waited until Kentucky had declared

herself a part of the Union to issue the Emancipation Proclamation. He knew that Kentucky slaveholders had power beyond their number in the Kentucky legislature. If he had issued the Emancipation Proclamation at the beginning of the war, the angered slaveholders might have swung the state into the Confederate camp.

The Emancipation Proclamation

The Emancipation Proclamation issued in 1863 declared that slaves in the Confederate states were free. However, since Kentucky was still part of the Union, the Emancipation Proclamation did not free Kentucky slaves.

Kentucky slaveholders were angry. They had accepted the Civil War as a war to save the union, not as a war to free the slaves. Slavery would continue in Kentucky, they vowed.

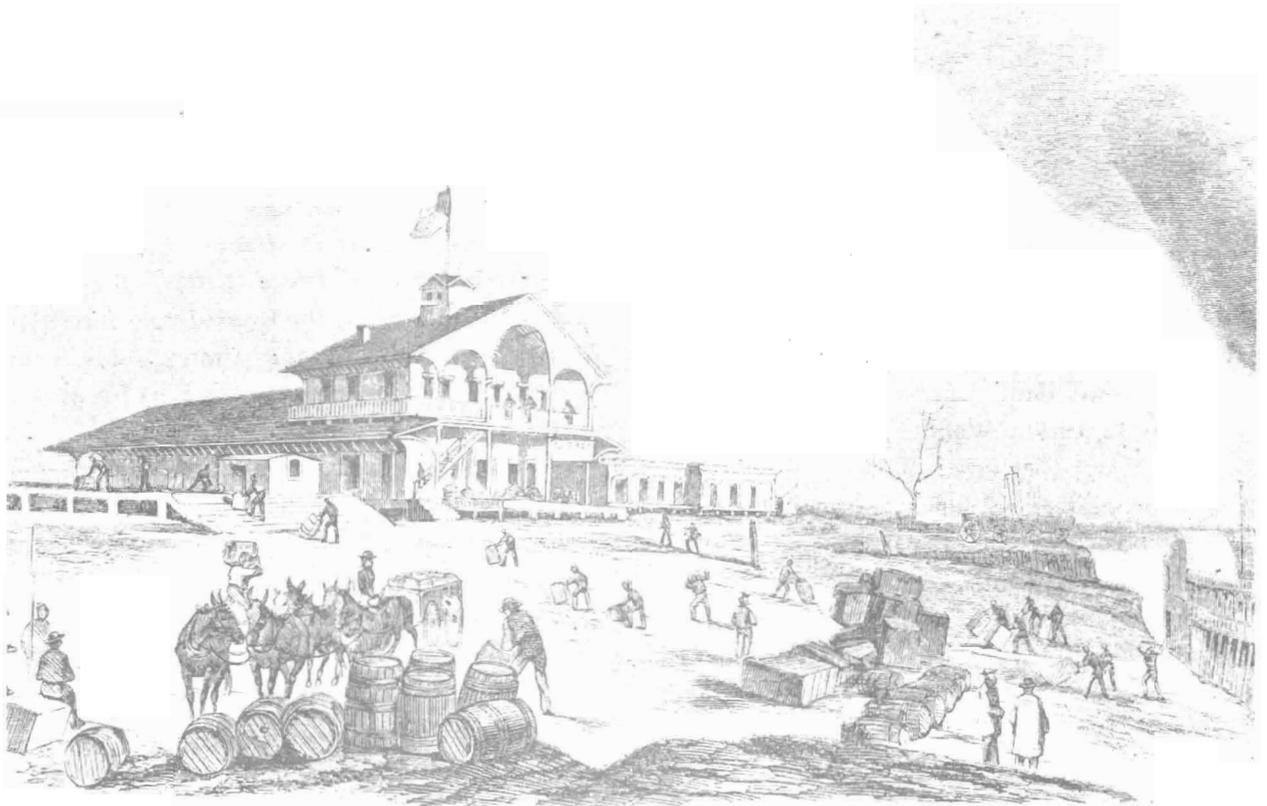
Blacks in the Union Army

The policy of Union Army commanders at the beginning of the war was to return to their masters fugitive slaves who fled to the army for protection. This policy was initiated so as not to offend

slaveholders in neutral border states. As the war progressed, many soldiers were killed and replacements were necessary. Commanders, desperate for troops, could not afford to reject the numbers of black men who wanted to have a part in the battle for their freedom.

At first, Blacks were used behind the lines—to dig trenches, haul supplies, rebuild damaged railroads—to do the heavy, dirty work and thereby free more soldiers to fight. In the heat of a battle, separating the laborers from the fighters became difficult, and many a black man took the rifle from a wounded comrade and thus became an “instant soldier.”

By 1864, Army policy had changed. Black troops were actively recruited by many states to fulfill their assigned quotas of men. Black soldiers were generally segregated in “Colored Regiments” commanded by white officers. Although Army policy by this time



EARLY IN THE CIVIL WAR, BLACKS WERE USED TO TRANSPORT SUPPLIES TO THE TROOPS. This 1862 picture shows supplies being unloaded and stored at General Grant's Grand Depot at Columbus, Kentucky.

called for equal pay for black soldiers, in practice, they generally received lower wages. One Massachusetts black regiment voted to serve without pay rather than to accept a pay scale that paid black soldiers less than white soldiers.

Kentucky Blacks Enlist

Black Kentuckians were eager to enlist in the Union Army; but state authorities made it very difficult for them to do so. Kentucky would not accept black recruits in state regiments.

However, recruiters from other states attempted to enlist Kentucky Blacks in their colored regiments. Criticizing these states for trying to find “shelter from duty behind the free Negro population of Kentucky,” Governor Bramlette vowed that Kentucky would rather fill her quotas with white men than enlist Blacks.¹

Rejected by the State regiments, black Kentuckians enlisted directly in Union Army regiments. They enlisted in amazing numbers. United States War Department statistics list 23,000 black volunteers from Kentucky. The final report of the Adjutant General of Kentucky in 1867 stated that 25,438 black soldiers from Kentucky had enlisted in fifteen infantry regiments, two cavalry regiments and four heavy artillery regiments. Comparing this number to the total black population of Kentucky in 1860 which was 236,137, we see that over 10 per cent of all Kentucky Blacks served in the Union Army. Using figures from the same sources for Kentucky’s white population, we find that 7 per cent of Kentucky whites served in the Union Army.

This high percentage of black volunteers is even more amazing when we remember that 95 per cent of Kentucky’s Blacks in 1860 were slaves and many slaves were prevented by their masters from enlisting. Some masters even sent their slaves, under guard, out of the state so that they would not be forced to serve in the army.

Slaves did use enlistment as a means of obtaining their freedom. In February, 1865, when Major General John M. Palmer became commander of the military district of Kentucky, he announced that he would use black enlistment as a means to free as

many Kentucky slaves as possible. A federal law provided that any slave who enlisted received his freedom and that of his wife and children. The General sent black soldiers dressed in their fanciest uniforms to black homes to attract recruits. Many Blacks did enlist at Palmer’s urging but when they returned to their masters to claim freedom for their wives and children, the masters refused to recognize the federal law and claimed the federal government had no right to confiscate the “property” of loyal citizens.

Despite these handicaps, black troops distinguished themselves valiantly on the field of battle. Casualty rates were higher for black than for white soldiers. Some Confederate units killed Blacks rather than take them prisoner. The most dreadful example of this policy happened at Fort Pillow, Tennessee, about sixty miles south of Kentucky on the Mississippi River.

Fort Pillow Massacre

Fort Pillow was held by Union troops—about 200 white Tennessee volunteers and 400 black troops all under the command of Major Booth. On April 12, 1864, Confederate troops under the command of General N.B. Forrest attacked the Fort, killing Major Booth. After a fierce battle, the Union forces surrendered. Then the Confederate forces slaughtered large numbers of the Union soldiers and many citizens who had come to the Fort for protection.

An account of the massacre appearing in *Harper’s Weekly*, April 30, 1864 said, “Both white and black were bayoneted, shot, or sabred: even dead bodies were horribly mutilated, and children of seven and eight years, and several Negro women killed in cold blood.” Yet even the news of this terrible crime did not stop Kentucky Blacks from enlisting in the army.

Isaiah Cass

One young black soldier from Kentucky was Isaiah Cass. Cass worked in Woodford, Kentucky.



THE ENTRANCE OF THE FIFTY-FIFTH MASSACHUSETTS COLORED REGIMENT INTO CHARLESTON on February 21, 1865, is illustrated by this early news sketch.

Since there was no Kentucky Regiment which he could join, in May, 1863, he signed up to fight with the Fifty-fourth Massachusetts Infantry, possibly the most famous black fighting force in the Civil War.

As a member of Company C, he was sent to South Carolina. In April, 1865, Cass was wounded in a battle near Boykins Mills, South Carolina. He recovered and was discharged after the war in Beaufort, South Carolina.

After the War

On April 9, 1865, Lee surrendered to Grant at Appomattox Courthouse: the war was finally over. But the Kentucky slave was still not free.

Kentucky (with 200,000 slaves) and Delaware (with less than 2,000 slaves) were the two states in which slavery as an institution continued after the Civil War. Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation had

freed all slaves in the states that had fought against the United States: but Kentucky had remained loyal to the U.S. and hence, Kentucky slaves were not included in that proclamation. Most of the other border states had abolished slavery through legislative action or constitutional amendments by the time the war had ended; but Kentucky slaveholders clung to the institution of slavery.

In both 1864 and 1865, bills to abolish slavery came before the General Assembly. Both years the abolition bills were defeated. Governor Thomas E. Bramlette, Kentucky's wartime governor, urged that Kentucky legislators abolish slavery and, at the same time, demand that the federal government pay the slaveholders for the slaves they lost. Even this program of compensated emancipation was rejected by the legislators.

In January, 1865, a few months before the end of the Civil War, the United States Congress passed the Thirteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution. It provided:



CIVIL WAR SLAVE PENS

“Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, except as a punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted, shall exist within the United States; or any place subject to their jurisdiction.”

This amendment had to be ratified by two-thirds of the states before it became law. In February, 1865, when the amendment was presented to the Kentucky General Assembly, the lawmakers refused ratification by a vote of 21 to 13 in the Senate and 56 to 28 in the House. Many other states, however, did ratify the amendment. On December 18, 1865, the Secretary of State announced that the necessary number of states had ratified the Thirteenth Amendment. Kentucky's slaves were free at last.

Although freedom for Blacks was finally official, both traditional discrimination and new legal restrictions reminded the black man that most whites did not acknowledge his status as a first class citizen.

For example, after 1866, black soldiers were excluded from serving in the regular Army by a

Congressional Act which authorized the formation of four regiments for black enlisted men—the Ninth and Tenth Cavalry and the Twenty-fourth and Twenty-fifth Infantry.²

Sergeant Brent Woods

During the Indian campaigns, (1866-1891) soldiers in these black regiments demonstrated patriotism and courage. Of the 419 Congressional Medals of Honor awarded for bravery during the Indian Campaigns, thirteen were earned by black soldiers. Among these thirteen black heroes honored by Congress was Kentucky's only black recipient of the Medal of Honor, Sergeant Brent Woods of Pulaski County.

In 1894, Sergeant Woods was awarded the Medal of Honor for saving the lives of his comrades and a group of white civilians during a skirmish with Apaches in 1881. Sergeant Woods, left in charge of company B of the Ninth Cavalry, rallied the 17 black cavalrymen under his command and led the civilians to safety. Fighting his way to a high ridge, he

conducted a one-man war on the Indians. After being wounded in the arm, Sergeant Woods still held his ground and continued his attack until the Indians mounted their horses and retreated.

Describing Sergeant Woods' performance, one of the white cowboys saved by the Sergeant's actions said, "If it had not been for him none of us would have come out of that canyon."³

Summary of Chapter Six

An important element in President Lincoln's early Civil War strategy was his desire to keep Kentucky and the other Border States in the Union. Kentucky continued as a slave state throughout the war. This had two important effects: (1) the State would not enlist black troops, and (2) many slaveholders kept their slaves out of the army.

In spite of these difficulties, ten per cent of Kentucky's black population enlisted in the Union Army. This number is especially high considering the fact that Blacks were actively recruited only during the last two years of the war.

Kentucky was one of only two states where

slavery continued after the Civil War. The Kentucky legislature refused to abolish slavery. Kentucky black soldiers who had fought for freedom for all Blacks had to wait eight months after the end of the war before they saw slavery finally abolished by the Thirteenth Amendment to the Constitution.

Black soldiers who wanted to continue in military service were transferred into the segregated units created by a Congressional Act. Sergeant Brent Woods of Pulaski County who served in the segregated Ninth Cavalry during the Indian Campaigns, became the first black Kentuckian to receive the Congressional Medal of Honor.

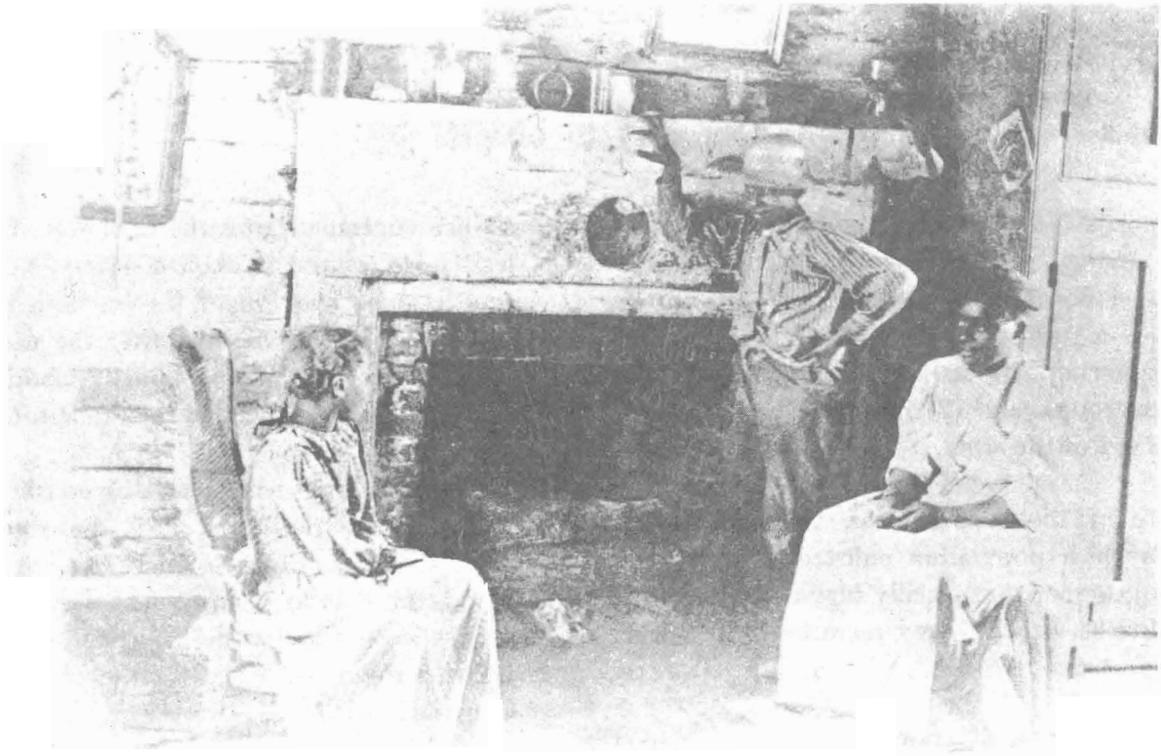
¹Thomas E. Bramlette, letter from Governor Bramlette to Captain Cahill dated December 14, 1863 in Governor's *Letter Book*, January 1864, Quoted in the W.P.A. writers project, *Military History of Kentucky*, Military History of Kentucky (Frankfort, Kentucky: State Journal, 1939), p. 204

²Irvin H. Lee, *Negro Medal of Honor Men* (New York: Dodd Mead, 1967), p. 57

³*Ibid.*, p. 77.

Chapter Seven

The Freedmen



MANY FREEDMEN CONTINUED TO LIVE IN THE SAME QUARTERS THEY HAD OCCUPIED BEFORE THE WAR. This rare picture, taken in 1868, shows freedmen living in the former slave quarters.

Try to imagine being a Kentucky slave in December, 1865. On December 17, you were the property of your master. You did what he told you to do, lived on his land, and were provided with clothing and food by that master.

On December 18, you were free. You could travel anywhere in the State or out of the State. You could choose the kind of work you would like to do. You could find members of your family who had been separated from you and live with them. You could buy your own farm and raise your own crops and profit from your own labor. Imagine the plans and hopes and dreams that were in the minds of Kentucky's 200,000 freed slaves on that joyous December day.

The realities of the situation were less joyous, however. Few slaves had any money. Some had only one change of clothing. The places where they lived belonged to their former masters. In order to continue to live there, the freedmen would have to arrange a contract with the former master. Perhaps the freedman would work for the former master a certain number of hours to pay for the use of the cabin. Bargaining with a former master who felt that he had just lost several thousand dollars worth of valuable "property" was not easy.

Many ex-slaves could not read or write or, at best, just barely. The rights of citizenship which legally belonged to all black men were not recognized by many white men who persisted in thinking of the freedmen as property.

The Freedmen's Bureau

To help the ex-slave deal with the many problems that confronted him, the United States government established the Freedmen's Bureau. Bureau offices were established in several Kentucky cities. Emergency food and clothing supplies were distributed. Schools for freedmen were established in several Kentucky towns by the Bureau. Officers of the Bureau gave the newly freed Blacks advice on their rights as citizens.

Many Kentucky citizens who had owned slaves resented what they called the "interference" of the Freedmen's Bureau. Jefferson C. Davis, who became Assistant Commissioner of the Bureau in charge of Kentucky in 1866, also assumed command of the United States military forces within the State. Ex-slaveholders saw this development as an attempt to enforce federal government rulings upon the state's population with the power of United States troops. They called upon the Kentucky legislature to draft state laws regarding the freedmen so that the federal troops would be removed.

Rights for Freedmen

The 1866 Kentucky General Assembly passed several laws concerning the newly freed Blacks. In most cases, black citizens were given the same rights white citizens held.



GENERAL OLIVER O. HOWARD, national director of the Freedmen's Bureau, visited Berea in 1898. In the picture above, General Howard is indicated by the arrow.

Marriage

A marriage law was passed. All the former slaves who had not been able to be legally married were now given that right. Those who had been married as slaves could register that marriage in order to make it legally binding. Married couples (and single freedmen) could hold property and their children could inherit that property.

Apprenticeship

In Kentucky, many young slaves, boys and girls just into their teens or younger, had been sold away from their parents. Once freed there was no one legally responsible for them. The General Assembly provided that these young people could be apprenticed to craftsmen who would agree to teach the apprentice a trade and supply his food, clothing, and lodging.

The apprenticeship period lasted only until a boy was twenty-one or a girl was eighteen. The supervisor could either teach the former slave to read and write and do simple arithmetic or else pay him \$100 at the end of the apprenticeship period. If there was a relative who was willing to assume responsibility for the child, Kentucky courts consistently held that the relative, rather than a former master, would be the child's guardian.

Working Agreements

Many freedmen simply stayed with their former masters and received a nominal wage. The General Assembly provided that Blacks could make contracts with white persons and that the same legal provision would apply to both races. Many contracts were made on a yearly basis—the former slave would work for an employer for one year for a specified wage.

In rural areas, the share-cropping system developed: the freedman worked land held by his former master with tools and seed which were furnished in return for a share of the crop. In many areas, Freedmen's Bureau representatives examined the contract which the black man made in order to protect his interests; but white employers resented

this interference and often refused to contract with any Black who involved the Freedmen's Bureau. So very often, the black man remained under the economic control of his former master.

Rights Denied Black Men

Although Kentucky black citizens were free, three important rights were still not theirs: the right to testify in Kentucky courts against white persons, the right to serve on juries, and the right to vote.

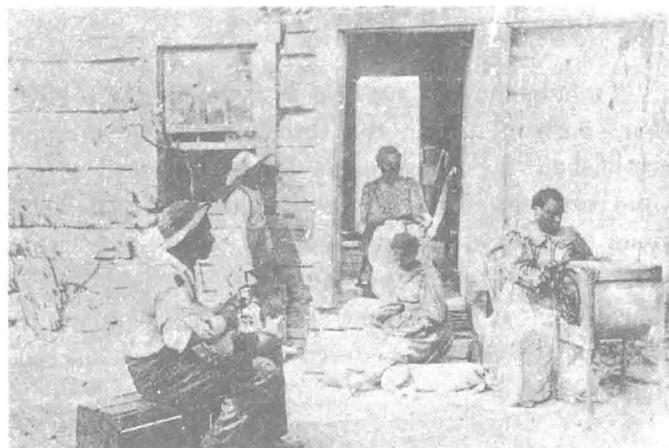
Obtaining Testimony Rights

The Kentucky legislature in 1866, granted the black man the right to sue a white person by affidavit—that is, the black person could present a written statement charging the white man of a crime against him. However, the black person could not take the stand and actually testify against the white man.

On the other hand, the United States government, in the 1866 Civil Rights Act, provided that Blacks did have the right to testify against white men in court. Since the Kentucky law did not allow Blacks to testify in Kentucky courts, cases involving Blacks were transferred to the United States District Courts where Blacks could testify.

In the confusing period that followed, Blacks and whites felt the inconvenience of such a system. The U.S. District Court was in Louisville. If cases had to be tried there, a long trip from another county was often involved. Lawyers familiar with federal court proceedings had to be hired at additional expense. Sometimes a Black's testimony was necessary to a white man's case. A Black, for example, saw and could identify the white man who robbed a bank. And yet, under Kentucky law, his testimony could not be heard in Kentucky courts.

Black leaders protested this inequity. Petitions were sent to the United States Congress in June, 1867, by black Kentuckians complaining that they "were denied redress in courts for crimes committed against them because they had not the right to testify to the court."¹ Convening in Lexington in November, 1867, the Negro Republican Party adopted a resolu-



EMANCIPATION DID NOT IMPROVE THE ECONOMIC STATUS OF MOST KENTUCKY FREEDMEN. In rural areas, some former slaves became sharecroppers. In urban areas, some freedmen worked as servants for their former masters.

tion which requested the right to testify in all courts of the Commonwealth. When a bill granting Blacks the right to testify failed to pass the Kentucky Senate in 1871, a group of black citizens of Fayette County formed the Fayette County Justice Association to aid black people to get their cases to federal courts where they would get a fair hearing.

Gradually three different groups began to favor black testimony in Kentucky courts for very different reasons:

(1) One group, including most black and some white citizens, favored black testimony because they felt that all citizens, regardless of color, were entitled to this right.

(2) Another group, made up mostly of lawyers and judges, favored it because the process of transferring all cases involving Blacks to federal courts was so inconvenient and expensive.

(3) A third group consisted of white racists who felt that they could "control" the Blacks better in local courts with local judges and juries.

Together these groups produced enough votes to pass a black testimony bill. In January, 1872, the Kentucky General Assembly granted black men the right to testify in Kentucky courts in cases involving white men.

One year earlier, in 1871, two black lawyers, George A. Griffiths and Nathaniel Harper, were



WILLIAM H. STEWARD was appointed a letter carrier in the Louisville post office, becoming the first black man in the State to hold such a position in 1876. In 1882, Steward was elected by his co-workers, mostly white men, to be their representative at the National Letter Carriers Association.

admitted to practice law in the courts in Louisville. The right to serve on a jury came later. Not until 1882 did the Kentucky General Assembly pass a law enabling black men to serve on juries.

The Foster Family

The reason that testimony rights for Blacks were so important becomes very apparent in the tragic

story of the Foster Family. On August 29, 1868, in Lewis County, two young white men, George Blyew and John Kannard, rode up to the cabin of a black man named Jack Foster. These men overpowered and killed Foster, his wife, and her mother, a poor old woman who was totally blind. Hidden inside the cabin was a thirteen year old daughter who saw this awful sight. She recognized and could identify the two men.

Kentucky authorities caught the young men but since the witness was black, she could not testify against them in Kentucky courts. So the case had to be transferred to federal courts. But federal courts couldn't try a murder case so the men were tried for violating the civil rights of the black family.

The case, *Blyew v. United States*, eventually was appealed to the United States Supreme Court. It was an important test case for it was the Supreme Court's first ruling on the Federal Civil Rights Act of 1866. The Court decided upon a narrow interpretation of the Act. In 1872, for very technical reasons, the Supreme Court decided that the case could not be tried in federal courts.

By that year, Kentucky had passed the black testimony law, so Blyew and Kennard could be tried in Kentucky courts. Otherwise, after the Supreme Court's ruling, there would have been no courts in Kentucky which any murder case where a Black was the only witness against a white person could be tried.

Summary of Chapter Seven

Freedom brought great joy to Kentucky Blacks. Freedom also posed many problems. How could the freedmen get food? Where would they live? For whom would they work? How much would they be paid? In the first years of freedom, the Freedmen's Bureau helped Kentucky ex-slaves resolve some of these problems.

Although the 1866 legislature, in general, made Blacks subject to the same laws that already applied to white citizens, three specific rights—to serve on juries, to testify against white men in state courts, and to vote—were denied black Kentuckians. The right to testify was finally won in 1871; the right to serve on juries was obtained in 1882. The right to vote will be discussed in Chapter Nine.

¹*Lexington Observer and Reporter*, June 29, 1867, cited by Cyrus Baldwin King, "Ante-Bellum Free Negroes as Race Leaders in Kentucky and Virginia during Reconstruction," (Unpublished M.A. Thesis, Department of History, University of Kentucky, 1949), p. 37

Chapter Eight

Education After the Civil War



IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE CIVIL WAR, JOHN G. FEE RE-ESTABLISHED HIS SCHOOL AT BEREA, which was the first Kentucky school to enroll both black and white students. This picture of white and black Berea students was taken about 1887.

Imagine the educational problems that had to be faced when the Thirteenth Amendment freed 200,000 slaves in Kentucky. Black men and women of all ages, many of whom were totally dependent on their masters for food and clothing, now were on their own. Most of the freedmen could not read or write; many had been separated from all other members of their families who might otherwise have

furnished some sort of advice and counsel.

For years, the slave had been taught to serve his master without question. To teach this former slave that he was now a free man, with certain rights guaranteed him by the very legal system that only a year before had held him in bondage, was a gigantic task.

Early Schools for Freedmen

Among the first to begin this task were private church and benevolent groups. In Louisville, in 1865, for example, two churches—St. Mark's Episcopal Church on Green Street and the Jackson Street Methodist Episcopal Church opened schools for Blacks. The following year, William H. Gibson reopened a school for Blacks that he had begun in 1848 at Quinn Chapel AME Church. In 1868, St. Mark's High School for Negroes was incorporated. The next year, the Roman Catholic Church established St. Augustine's Church and School for Negroes, taught by the Sisters of Charity.

The Freedmen's Bureau reported 15 schools in operation in Kentucky in 1866. By 1869, this number had grown to 354 day and night schools with 377 teachers serving 15,022 pupils: 170 Sunday schools with 993 teachers serving 11,244 pupils; and 4 high schools with a total of 912 pupils. These were mostly one-room, one-teacher schools that operated only about three months of the year.

Public Schools

The black man's eager desire for education was one factor that helped speed the development of a public school system for all Kentucky's children. Before the Civil War, Kentucky did not have an effective system of public schools for white children. After the war, the freed Blacks were eager for an education. Many Blacks were willing to work all day and then attend school in the evening. Others walked long distances in order to attend a Freedmen's Bureau school. Seeing the black man's desire for education, state authorities began to work on a system of public schools for all Kentucky children.

At first, the black schools were under separate provisions. The first black education bill was passed immediately after the war in 1866, but its provisions for financing and building black schools were so vague that very few schools were established. Schools for white children were also suffering under the same kind of administrative and financial difficulties.

Not until 1874 was a comprehensive public school system for black children established by law. Funds for these schools were provided by taxes on

property held by Blacks (even their dog license fees went into this fund), fines or penalties collected from Blacks, and any federal school funds which might be made available for black education.

The county school commissioner was to appoint school trustees who were empowered to erect school houses, employ teachers, and contact black students. Black schools in the country had to be at least one mile from schools for white children; in the city, schools for the two races had to be separated by at least six hundred feet.

An 1883 act of the General Assembly combined the black and white school funds into one fund which was to be distributed with no distinction on account of race. This provision was written into the state constitution in 1891. The constitution, also clearly states that white and black children should attend separate schools.

After the passage of the 1883 act, many districts that had not already done so established schools for black children.

Most black schools had buildings and equipment that were inferior to those provided for white schools. Black teachers' salaries were lower than those of white teachers. The one-room, many graded schoolhouse was common for black students.

Regardless of these inequalities, Kentucky black students attended school in ever-increasing numbers. How effective these schools were can be seen in the reports of the United States Census. In 1890, fifty-six per cent of Kentucky's black population could not read and write; by 1910, only twenty-eight per cent could not read and write.

Higher Education

In order to train teachers for the black schools, the Kentucky legislature, in 1886, established the State Normal School for Colored Persons at Frankfort. This was the first state-supported institution of higher education for Blacks. It began as a combined school, including elementary, secondary, and what we would call today, junior college students.

Since this school received its financial support from the state legislature every two years, the President of the school had to present requests for

funds to the legislature's budget committee. With no Blacks in the General Assembly, there were no legislators to aggressively defend appropriations to a black college. So the school's budget requests were often cut.

In 1890, the United States Congress amended the Morrill Act to provide land grant funds specifically to black colleges that taught agriculture and industrial arts. Anxious to take advantage of these available funds, the General Assembly, in 1892, provided that a department of agriculture and mechanic arts be added to the State Normal School curriculum.

Kentucky State College

The School was now known as Kentucky State Normal and Industrial Institute. (The name of the school was changed many times: for simplicity, henceforth, it will be referred to as Kentucky State College.) Tuition was free to any resident of the state, but students who entered the teacher training course were asked to sign a pledge that they would teach in Kentucky schools for a period of twice the number of years spent at the college.



JOHN H. JACKSON

The early presidents of the college—John H. Jackson, James E. Givins, James S. Hathaway, Green P. Russell, and Francis M. Woods worked under discouraging conditions. When Jackson first arrived at the college, there were 55 students doing elementary work. His first task was to raise the academic level. Buildings had to be built with meager state-provided funds.

One additional problem was that the President of Kentucky State College was appointed by a Board named by the Governor. So when a new Governor was elected, he often selected a new Board which appointed a new President. Since there were very few jobs in the state to which Blacks could be appointed, the Presidency of Kentucky State was often used to reward a loyal black politician who had campaigned hard for the man who was elected Governor.

In 1929, Dr. Rufus B. Atwood was appointed President of Kentucky State. Convinced that the President of a college should not be involved in partisan politics, Dr. Atwood refused to campaign for any candidate for Governor. This refusal, plus his very obvious capability, won him support from both Democratic and Republican Governors. He remained as president for over thirty years.

An able school administrator, Dr. Atwood revised the curriculum and improved the physical plant. Although he was amazingly adept at finding new sources for funds, he still faced shortages. Faculty salaries, for example, were low. In 1932, Dr. Atwood hired Henry Arthur Kean as football coach.

“Henry Arthur Kean became to Kentucky State and the Negro in general, what Knute Rockne was to Notre Dame and the Catholics. He loved the game of football, and he knew how to get the best out of the boys who were playing the game, too,” stated Dr. Atwood. The Kentucky State College team dominated black football for the next ten years. They were National Negro champions four times and Midwestern Athletic Association champions for ten straight years. But in 1943, Tennessee State College offered Kean a salary of \$10,000. Since he was making only \$3,300 at Kentucky State, Kean could not afford to pass up this offer. And Kentucky State lost one of its most beloved faculty members.

Although the college had offered a four year program for several years, not until 1931 was



HENRY ARTHUR KEAN

Kentucky State accredited as a four year college by the Southern Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools. At this time (the first year the Association began accrediting black colleges) it was given a "B" rating, which meant that all four years were acceptable but a few shortages existed. In 1939, Kentucky received an "A" rating.

In the early 1950's Kentucky State desegregated by accepting white students. Today the school is open to all—Black and white. Whites comprise 30% of the student body and 30% of the faculty members. The college attracts state employees and Frankfort teachers through summer and Saturday classes in business secretarial skills, and education. Kentucky State's library has developed a fine collection of Afro-American materials. A Black Studies Institute held on campus in the summer of 1970 attracted students from many parts of the United States.

Berea College

After the Civil War, close on the heels of Confederate troops retreating from the Lexington area came the abolitionist educator, John G. Fee. Re-establishing the school which he had founded in 1855 in Berea, Kentucky, he opened its door to Black as well as white students. Thus, in 1866, Berea became the first Kentucky school with both black and white students. The first catalogue listed 187 students, of whom 96 were Blacks.

This early school was what we would call today a high school. In 1869, a college department was added. By 1881, 280 black and 122 white students attended Berea which was to remain for many years one of two interracial colleges in the South.

Receiving some financial support from the American Missionary Association, Berea especially aimed to educate the needy and deserving students. One of America's most famous black historians, Carter G. Woodson, attended Berea. A 1892 graduate of Berea was James Bond, the first director of the Kentucky Commission on Interracial Cooperation. He arrived at the school leading a calf to pay his entrance fees. The grandson of James Bond is Julian Bond, a Legislator in the Georgia General Assembly.

A Kentucky law passed in 1904 which will be discussed in a later chapter forced Berea to end its interracial admissions policy and the school was closed to black students until 1950.

Simmons University

In 1879, the General Association of Colored Baptists in Kentucky opened a school which ultimately became known as Simmons University. This Louisville school included both high school and college courses and, eventually, post-graduate work in law, medicine, music and theology. First director of the school was Elijah P. Marrs, an ex-slave from Shelby County who had been taught to read by his master.

Dr. W. J. Simmons became President of the college in 1880. Under his direction, the college became an important institution of higher education for Kentucky Blacks. After his retirement, the school was named Simmons University in his honor.

Among the members of the first class to be graduated from the college department in 1886 was Dr. C.H. Parrish, who became President of the university in 1916 and served until 1930.

In 1931, the property at Seventh and Zane Avenue on which the college was located was sold to the University of Louisville for the establishment of Louisville Municipal College. The Municipal College assumed the role Simmons had played as the principal institution of higher education for Blacks in the City



WILLIAM J. SIMMONS

of Louisville, and Simmons continued principally as a theological training school.

Louisville Municipal College

A political agreement led to the development of Louisville Municipal College. In 1920, a bond issue to provide \$1,000,000 for expansion of the University of Louisville was before the voters. Black taxpayers demanded some assurance that a provision would be made for the higher education of Louisville Blacks. A committee including outstanding black leaders such as A.E. Meyzeek, Wilson Lovett, William Warley, J.A.C. Lattimore, and Bishop George C. Clement asked the University of Louisville Board of Trustees to announce that some of the bond funds would be used for black education. Receiving no such assurances from the Board, the black leaders led a campaign against the bond issue which was defeated.

A second bond issue was prepared in 1925. This time the Board made specific promises to include a college for Blacks in the proposal. With the enthusiastic support of black leaders, the bond issue passed. Louisville Municipal College enrolled its first class of 83 students on February 9, 1931, becoming the third

municipally supported liberal arts college for Blacks to be established in the United States.

During its second year of operation, the college was accredited as a standard four year college by the University of Kentucky. Eventually the institution offered evening classes and summer school with work leading to BS and BA Degrees. The Municipal College continued until 1951 when the University of Louisville opened all its divisions to black students.

Normal Schools

In order to train black teachers, three normal schools were founded—one in Lexington, Western Kentucky Normal School at Paducah, and Eckstein Norton Institute just outside Louisville.

These were short lived institutions. Eckstein Norton closed when Lincoln Institute was established. The school in Paducah became Western Kentucky Industrial College in 1929. In 1938, the program was transferred to Kentucky State at Frankfort. After that time the buildings were used by the Western Kentucky Vocational School to provide vocational training such as carpentry, barbering, and tailoring.



JAMES BOND, with his wife and two sons.



DR. CLARENCE TIMBERLAKE, a president of the West Kentucky Vocational College in Paducah from 1948 to 1957, has been called the "Father of Industrial Education" in Kentucky. In 1926, Dr. Timberlake sponsored the first bill appropriating funds for vocational education. He also established the first Federal Loan Organization in Kentucky to help black farmers in Western Kentucky.

In 1949, Dr. Timberlake was appointed to the State Textbook Commission. As the first black member of this Commission, he succeeded in the adoption of a black history text to supplement U.S. histories used in Kentucky schools.

While working for the adoption of black history texts for Kentucky's schools, Dr. Timberlake emphasized that "It is exceedingly bad for the white child as well as the Negro child when books are written with such prejudice that he is deprived of knowing the part played by all people in the development of our present culture."

Summary of Chapter Eight

Earliest schools for Blacks after the Civil War were established by private religious groups and the Freedmen's Bureau.

By 1883, a workable plan for public schools for all Kentucky children had been established. Many local communities established public schools for black children even prior to that date. Usually, however, these schools were inferior to the schools established for white children.

The first institution to provide higher education for black students was Berea which opened its college department in 1869. In 1879, Simmons University

opened and in 1886, Kentucky State College became the first state-supported institution of higher education for Blacks in Kentucky. One of the earliest municipally supported colleges for Blacks in the United States was Louisville Municipal College which opened in 1931.

From 1869 until 1904, Kentucky's Berea was the only integrated institution of higher learning in the state and one of the two integrated colleges in the entire South. Even Berea bowed to segregationist pressure in 1904 when the Day Law outlawed integrated education in Kentucky.

Chapter Nine

Black Citizens



THE REVEREND S. E. SMITH of Owensboro served as a delagate to three consecutive National Republican Conventions, beginning in 1884.

Kentucky black citizens were not hesitant about asserting the rights they had won in the Civil War. Blacks formed a number of political organizations

directly after the war to press for progress for black citizens.

Republican Party

Abraham Lincoln was a Republican as were the Congressional leaders who pressed for passage of the Thirteenth, Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments to the Constitution. So most black Kentuckians pledged their political allegiance to the Republican Party.

Even before they were able to vote, black Kentuckians organized a Negro Republican Party. This group held its first Convention in Lexington in November, 1867.

William F. Butler of Jefferson County was chosen President; Henry King, Gabriel Burdette, C. Clarke, Elijah Greene and E. Red, Vice Presidents; R.T.W. James of Frankfort, Secretary; Henry Scroggins of Lexington, Corresponding Secretary; and Bartlett Taylor, Treasurer.

In his opening address, Butler stated: "First we have the cartridge box, now we want the ballot box, and soon we will get the jury box. As we go boxing our way along. I don't mean with our fists, but by standing up and demanding our rights. We went out and fought the battles of our country, and gained our liberties, but we were left without means of protecting ourselves in the employment of *that liberty*. We need and must have the ballot box for that purpose. I stand here for universal suffrage for rebels as well as black men. I'm not afraid of rebels voting if you give us the same weapon of dissent."¹

This convention adopted resolutions requesting the right to testify in state courts, the right of suffrage, and the right to receive fair treatment and decent accommodations on all common carriers. The convention also asked that the Freedmen's Bureau remain in Kentucky until the state passed laws that could sufficiently protect the freedmen.

When the Republican State Convention met in Frankfort in March, 1868, Blacks tried unsuccessfully to be seated on the floor of the convention. But in March, 1872, after the Fifteenth Amendment granted Blacks the right to vote, black delegates were seated on the floor of the Republican State Convention.

The Right to Vote

The right to vote was granted to Kentucky's black citizens in 1870 by the Fifteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution. This amendment stated that the right to vote could not be denied or abridged on account of race or color. When it was presented to the Kentucky General Assembly for ratification, it was rejected by the House 80 to 5 and by the Senate 27 to 6.

Once this amendment became the law of the land, the state of Kentucky took no further actions to prevent Blacks from voting. Business and industrial leaders were agitating for an end to the hostilities and unsettled condition that had prevailed since the beginning of the Civil War. A return to a more stable atmosphere was needed for the development and expansion of commerce and industry. To oppose the federal government on the issue of black suffrage would simply prolong the unsettled conditions and engage the state in another struggle it had little hope of winning.



J. ALLEN ROSS OF FRANKFORT was the secretary of the National Negro Democratic Executive Committee and served as State organizer for the Democratic Party in Kentucky. Before becoming involved in politics in his native state, Ross lived in Mississippi where he had been elected sheriff of Washington County and a State Legislator on the Republican ticket.

Democrats Controlled Kentucky

In Kentucky, in 1870, the Democratic Party was in control. Governor Stevenson was a Democrat. The majority of members of the General Assembly were Democrats.

These Democrats did not try to keep Blacks from voting because they did not think there were enough black voters to change the election results. In 1868, Governor Stevenson won with 114,412 votes over R.T. Baker's 25,734 votes. He had a majority of 88,678 votes. Even if all Kentucky's 35,000 black voters voted Republican, the Democrats could carry the state by at least 45,000 votes. So on a state-wide basis, Blacks in Kentucky were not prevented from voting as were some Blacks in states farther south.

Local Attempts to Restrict Black Voting

In some Kentucky counties and some cities, however, Blacks made up as much as forty per cent of the population. In these areas, the black vote combined with the votes of the white Republicans could elect candidates. For this reason there were some local and county-wide efforts to restrict the black man's right to vote in those counties with a sizeable black population.

Many cities amended their charters in 1871 to require payment of a poll tax before voting.

Since the Fifteenth Amendment would not take effect until March 30, 1870, Lexington moved the elections for city-wide offices to February, 1870 and lengthened the term of office to three years, thus providing the city with a three-year respite from the inevitable black vote. Paris and Nicholasville amended their city charters, leaving the black areas outside the city limits.

In Danville, city regulations provided that anyone owning property in the city could vote in city elections. After trying unsuccessfully to have bank stock or cemetery lots classified as property that would entitle one to vote, a clever group of Democrats bought a lot and divided it into ribbon strips four inches wide. These were sold to Democrats in

the surrounding county, keeping the bills of sale secret until election day. Republicans complained bitterly of fraud but to no avail.

The following year the city charter was amended to classify cemetery lots as property and to provide that only those who had owned property in the city for at least three years could vote. The outcry against this fraud was so loud, however, that the following month, March, 1871, the General Assembly amended the charter again to provide a twelve-month residential requirement instead of the previous three-year's requirement.

Such maneuvers to exclude black voters were confined to a relatively few communities. Most Kentucky communities accepted black voting with ease. Kentucky Republicans, because theirs was the minority party and needed votes, worked hard to enlist black voters as Republicans and to organize local Black Republican clubs. Kentucky Democrats largely ignored the black voters. In campaign speeches, Kentucky Democrats blamed the Republicans for the end of slavery and all the new rights given to the black man and urged all "true white southerners" to vote against "Black Republicanism."

Black Voters Cast Their First Ballots

Blacks were first able to vote in Kentucky local and county elections in August, 1870. There is no evidence that black voters were warned not to vote by the night-riding mobs. Some black voters were questioned extensively at the polls, kept waiting in line for long periods of time, or forced to produce tax receipts. In general, however, Kentucky black voters were able to cast their first ballots without interference.

The voting was described by the August 8, 1870 *Cincinnati Daily Commercial*, which usually tended to be critical of Kentucky politics. "There was a wholesome respect for the law, and a resigned spirit of obedience to existing statutes. Various dodges were resorted to to keep the blacks from the polls, but there were few instances where a colored vote was rejected, when it was apparent that the voter was in all particulars qualified."



ELIJAH P. MARRS fought for freedom on the battlefield, in political conventions, and as an educator. In 1864, when Shelby County was threatened by Confederate soldiers, Elijah P. Marris, then a slave, mustered a company of twenty-seven men, armed them with clubs, and as their captain marched his company to Louisville to enlist in the Union Army. He served as sergeant of Company L, Twelfth United States Heavy Artillery during the Civil War.

After Emancipation, Marris was a delegate to Kentucky's first political convention in 1869 and was appointed to the convention's committee on resolutions. He was also a member

In 1879, Elijah P. Marris became the first president of the Kentucky Normal and Theological Institute, which later became Simmons University.

Congressional Elections, 1870

Blacks in Kentucky voted again in November, 1870, to elect members of the United States Congress. Large numbers of Kentucky Blacks voted and the number of votes the Republican candidates received increased amazingly. The Republican vote in the Seventh District, for example, jumped from 2,373 in 1868 to 10,916 in 1870. But the Democrats were still stronger. The Democratic candidate in the Seventh District won with 14,312 votes.

Democratic candidates were elected to each of the nine Congressional seats. The black vote almost produced a winner in the Eighth District. Out of 24,000 votes cast in that district, the Democratic candidate won by a majority of only 18 votes.

Statewide Elections, 1871

Kentucky Republicans hoped that the black vote would enable them to elect a Republican Governor in 1871. As a candidate, the Republicans nominated John M. Harlan, a popular Kentucky leader. Harlan stumped the State, speaking before black audiences, urging black leaders to encourage all black voters to vote on election day.

Vote they did, as the figures indicate. Harlan polled 52,000 more votes than had the Republican nominee for Governor in 1868. Even assuming that all of Kentucky's 35,000 black voters had voted for Harlan, he must have attracted 17,000 additional votes from white Kentuckians to show such strength. In other words, white voters did not leave the Republican party when the black voters joined it.



GEORGE W. GENTRY, a Stanford attorney, was a delegate to several Kentucky State conventions.

Republicans did win six seats in the legislature from counties that were over 30 per cent Black. However, Democratic strength was still overwhelming. Even though Harlan polled 52,000 new votes, the Democratic candidate, Preston H. Leslie, defeated Harlan by over 35,000 votes. Harlan, after being defeated in his bid for Governor, became a Justice of the U.S. Supreme Court in 1877. As Supreme Court Justice, Harlan earned the reputation of being an outspoken advocate of equal rights for all citizens.

Subsequent Elections

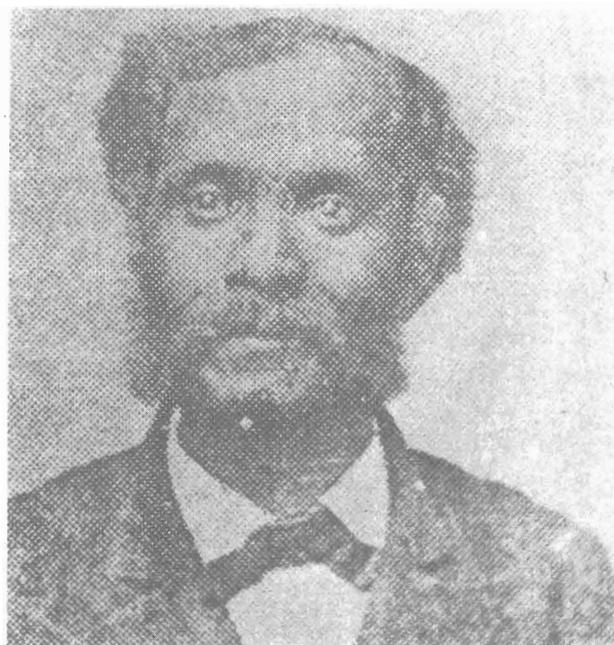
The first elections in which Kentucky Blacks voted set the pattern for state elections for the next forty years. Black citizens voted generally for the Republican candidates; and the Republican candidates rarely won the elections.

Although poll taxes were used in some local communities to keep Blacks from voting, such illegal methods as “grandfather”² clauses and literacy tests (widely used in the deep South as late as the 1960’s), did not develop in Kentucky. This was probably because there were not enough black voters to defeat Democratic lawmakers already in office.

As many Democrats had predicted, the solid black block vote for the Republican Party gradually broke down. Some Blacks began to look to their former masters for political guidance. Others became disenchanted with the Republican Party because the party did not run black candidates for office on the Republican ticket.

Nathaniel R. Harper

One prominent black Republican leader was Nathaniel Harper of Louisville. Harper came to Louisville after the Civil War in 1869. He was one of the first black lawyers in the city and was admitted to practice law in the city courts in 1871. He became Kentucky’s first black judge in 1888 when he was asked to preside as judge by Judge R.H. Thompson.



HONORABLE NATHANIEL R. HARPER, who won the fight for mixed juries before Jefferson Circuit Court in 1886, was the first black judge appointed in Kentucky.

In 1895, Louisville Republican leaders chose Harper as their candidate for state representative from the Tenth Ward. Statewide Republican leaders, however, objected to having a black man on the ballot. So these leaders changed the procedure for choosing the party candidates for representative. Before that year, party leaders in each district chose the candidate from that district, as the Tenth Ward leaders had chosen Harper. In 1895, however, the Republican Convention voted to choose all the candidates by a vote of the total convention. And thus, a white man was chosen to be candidate from the Tenth Ward.

Harper was hired to make campaign speeches throughout the State for a Republican ticket that had no black candidates. That year, because of a split in the Democratic Party, a Republican, William O. Bradley, was elected Governor. Bradley appointed Harper Commissioner of the Bureau of Agriculture, Labor and Statistics of the Colored People of the State. The story of Nathaniel Harper indicates that the Republican Party of that period was willing to appoint but not to elect black candidates to public office.

Summary of Chapter Nine

Black Kentuckians took their responsibilities as citizens very seriously. They organized political clubs to press for equal rights under the law.

The Fifteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution gave black Kentuckians the right to vote. In 1870, there were about 35,000 eligible black voters in Kentucky, most of whom joined the

Republican Party. Black Republican Clubs worked to encourage all Blacks to vote.

Blacks were not prevented from voting in Kentucky as they were in other states. However, the Republican Party did not encourage black candidates to run for office. Black men were welcomed as voters but not as candidates.

¹ Paris *True Kentuckian*, December 3, 1867, cited by King, "Anti Bellum Free Negroes as Race Leaders," p. 39

²White Voters, who would have been disqualified by literacy or property requirements along with black voters, were allowed to vote if the white voters could show that members of their families had voted before the Civil War.

Chapter Ten

Protection from Mob Violence



IN THE VIOLENT PERIOD FOLLOWING THE CIVIL WAR, black people were often the victims of severe beatings just as they had been in slavery days.

During the Civil War, Kentucky was a very divided state with some Kentuckians fighting for the North and some for the South. Both armies made drives into the State. Some Kentucky cities were held first by the Union Army, then by the Confederate Army, and then by the Union Army again.

Civil War Raiders

In these confusing years, bands of raiders

developed. A group of men in Lexington, for example, might have sympathies for the Union cause. When the Confederate Army was occupying Lexington, these men could harass that Army by sneaking up to the horse corrals at night and stealing the horses the Confederate soldiers used. Such raiders often wore masks so that they could not be identified.

Even after the war ended, these bands continued to use their wartime tactics of night raids upon

poorly protected individuals. The masked raiders soon found that black people were most vulnerable to their attacks. Law enforcement officials often overlooked the black community's pleas for help.

Some men simply took pleasure in frightening innocent black citizens. Other mobs wanted to drive the Blacks out of certain areas. Still others wanted to keep Blacks from going to school or from certain jobs the white men wanted.

Violence Against Freed Blacks

Knowing how much of this masked violence occurred is difficult. Many Blacks were probably too frightened to report such raids or did not know to whom they might report them. Freedmen's Bureau officials in some areas reported many cases of violence.

Peter Bonesteel, a special investigator with the Freedmen's Bureau, who toured Kentucky in 1866, sent a horrifying report to Washington listing the following outrages: 23 cases of most severe and inhuman whipping of men, 4 of beating and shooting, 2 shot and wounded, 2 of robbing and shooting, 3 of robbing, 5 men shot and killed, 4 beaten to death, 1 beaten and roasted, 3 women assaulted and ravaged, 4 women beaten, 2 women tied up and whipped until insensible, 2 men and their families beaten and driven from their homes and their property destroyed, 2 instances of the burning of dwellings, and 1 of inmate shot. Of these victims, 12 men were Union soldiers and 2 women the wives of Union soldiers.

An old history of Kentucky written by Lewis and Richard H. Collins describes other crimes committed against black citizens between 1866 and 1873. A black man, his wife, and daughter were hanged for allegedly poisoning a neighbor's well. Twelve laborers who lost their jobs at the iron works because Blacks would work for lower wages attacked a boarding house and wounded several of its black residents. All the members of one black family were murdered with a hatchet.

Even white men were not immune from this terrorism. A white Shelby County Ku Klux Klansman

who testified against some of his co-conspirators was taken from jail and lynched by a mob. In another raid, night riders drove a black couple from their home and killed a white man who tried to protect the couple.

Warnings such as this one sent to Mrs. L.A. Baldwin who taught in a freedmen's school in Bowling Green were used to frighten whites who helped the freedmen:

KU KLUX KLANS!

Blood! Poison! Powder! Torch!
Leave in five days or hell's your portion!

Rally, Rally, watch your chance,
First blood, first premiums K.K.K.
If ball, or torch, or poison fails,
The house beneath you shall be blown
to hell, or move you.¹

Post-War Governors Oppose Violence

The Freedmen's Bureau took stern measures against the mobs. The Bureau was a federal agency and had United States Army troops under its command. On March 1, 1867, Brevet Brigadier General Sydney Burbank, who headed the Kentucky Bureau, ordered the U.S. troops in Kentucky to arrest the raiders whenever possible and confine them to military prisons.

In December, 1867, when it was announced that the Freedmen's Bureau would be withdrawn from Henderson and Daviess Counties, a mob rode across that area warning all Blacks that they, too, must leave the area before February 20, 1868. White owners who rented tenements to Blacks were warned that any still occupied after the same date would be burned. Frightened Blacks crowded into Owensboro, Henderson, and smaller towns along the river. Because of these conditions, the order withdrawing the Freedmen's Bureau was rescinded and its agents remained in the area to protect Blacks from the threatened raids.

Each of Kentucky's post-war Governors declared his opposition to the tactics of the night-riders.

As early as 1867, Governor Thomas E. Bramlette sent a special message to the General Assembly calling the lawmakers' attention to the outrageous murders committed by a group of outlaws called the Rowzee Band in Marion, Boyle and adjoining counties. Though he requested both the power to offer ample rewards for the capture of the regulators and additional powers for state authorities to pursue them, the General Assembly granted him only the power to offer rewards up to \$500 for the capture of the raiders.

In October, 1867, Governor John W. Stevenson sent state troops to Mercer County to maintain order and protect the citizens from mob violence. In 1869, he again sent troops to the area composed of Boyle, Garrard, and Lincoln Counties in the center of the State. He vowed he would never hesitate to send troops "whenever it becomes necessary for the arrest and bringing to justice of all those who combine together, no matter under what pretense, to trample the law under their feet by acts of personal violence." 2

In 1871, Governor Stevenson urged the General Assembly to pass a bill which outlawed the carrying of concealed weapons. The General Assembly passed the bill on March 22, 1871. Fines ranging from \$25 for the first offense to \$400 for subsequent convictions, jail terms from thirty days to six months were provided. The steep increase in the fines for second offenders shows that this bill was specifically directed against those who made a habit of lawlessness.

In 1872, the newly elected Governor Preston H. Leslie also requested additional powers to rid the State of the night-riding mobs. "When men organize themselves into vigilance committees, clans or leagues, . . . with the avowed or practical purpose of taking the law into their own hands, to inflict punishment upon any member of the community who may be obnoxious to them, they become themselves the most dangerous class of lawbreakers." 3

The General Assembly responded by passing one law that provided for fines and imprisonment for anyone trying to intimidate a voter. Another law established fines and jail terms for anyone convicted of sending intimidating letters or notes.

Local officials who did not prosecute such offen-

ders could be removed from office and fined or imprisoned. The Governor was authorized to offer rewards of up to \$500 for information about such threatening letters.

William H. Gibson, Sr.

One black man who became a central figure in a dispute about law enforcement which ultimately involved even the President of the United States was William H. Gibson, Sr.

Gibson was a free Black who came to Kentucky as a teacher in 1847 and opened his own school in Louisville. There he taught both slave and free Blacks. When the Civil War began, William Gibson became a recruiting sergeant for the 54th Massachusetts regiment. He recruited more than one hundred Kentucky Blacks who enlisted in the Massachusetts regiment because Kentucky regiments did not enlist black soldiers.

In 1870, Gibson received a federal appointment to be the United States Mail agent on the train between Louisville and Lexington. News that there was a black agent on the train spread.

On January 25, 1871, a group of white men attacked, but did not seriously injure, agent Gibson as the train stopped to collect mail at the North Benson Depot in Shelby County. Governor Stevenson ordered an immediate investigation of the incident and asked the legislators for the power to send state troops into the area without a request from local authorities.

The United States government sent soldiers to guard the mail train. Armed with muskets, these soldiers rode with agent Gibson in the mail car and appeared at the door of the car at each station where mail was collected. Rumors of further violence caused cancellation of mail service between Louisville and Lexington on March 3, 1871.

In a special message to Congress on March 23, 1871, President Ulysses S. Grant told of the danger to the mail service in several states. He asked for increased federal powers to combat lawlessness in states where local authorities were unable to control the outlaws.

At the same time, the General Assembly of Kentucky passed the measure that banned the carrying of concealed weapons. This bill specifically stated that it was the duty of local officials to arrest each violator. If a local sheriff refused to apprehend such violators, the sheriff could be fined \$100.

Thus, state authorities were more able to deal with violations of the law in areas where local law enforcement agents were hesitant to arrest the law-breakers. The federal soldiers were taken off the train and agent Gibson continued as mail agent without further harassment.

However, the legislature refused to pass a law that would allow state troops to enforce the law in counties that did not request their aid. So black citizens appealed to the federal government.

Black Citizens Petition Help of Congress

On March 27, 1871, six black citizens—Samuel Damsey, B. Smith, B.T. Crampton, Henry Marrs,

Henry Lynn, and N.N. Trumbo—presented a petition to the United States Congress on behalf of the Colored citizens of Frankfort and vicinity. Part of the petition read:

“We would respectfully state that life, liberty and property are unprotected among the colored race of this state. Organized Bands of desperate and lawless men mainly composed of soldiers of the late Rebel Armies, armed disciplined and disguised and bound by Oath and secret obligations, have by force terror and violence subverted all civil society among Colored people . . .” the petition then listed 64 cases of racial violence that had occurred in Kentucky between 1867 and 1869.⁴

However sympathetic the United States Congress was to the distress of the Kentucky Blacks, it had little power in the area of local law enforcement. But by presenting their plight to the federal government, Kentucky Blacks did create more political pressure within the State to end the lawlessness. Mob violence directed against Blacks decreased noticeably after 1871.

Summary of Chapter Ten

In the violent period following the Civil War, black citizens were especially subject to the terrorism inflicted by night-riding bandits. The Freedmen’s Bureau agents and the Governors of Kentucky used both soldiers and state guard to pursue the mobsters.

Laws passed by the General Assembly established a basic structure for combating the terroristic tactics. The Governor was given the power to offer rewards and to send troops into an area with a request for aid

from local officials. A means of punishing local authorities who refused to enforce the law was provided. Certain specific acts such as carrying concealed weapons or intimidating voters were defined as criminal activity.

Local law enforcement officials, however, were often reluctant to protect black citizens. There was so much violence that black citizens finally petitioned the U.S. Congress for protection.

¹U.S., Congress, House of Representatives, Freedmen’s Affairs in Kentucky and Tennessee, *Special Report of Brevet Major General Carlin*, Executive Document No. 329, 40th Cong., 2nd Sess., [Ser. Set. No. 1346] (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1868), p. 19

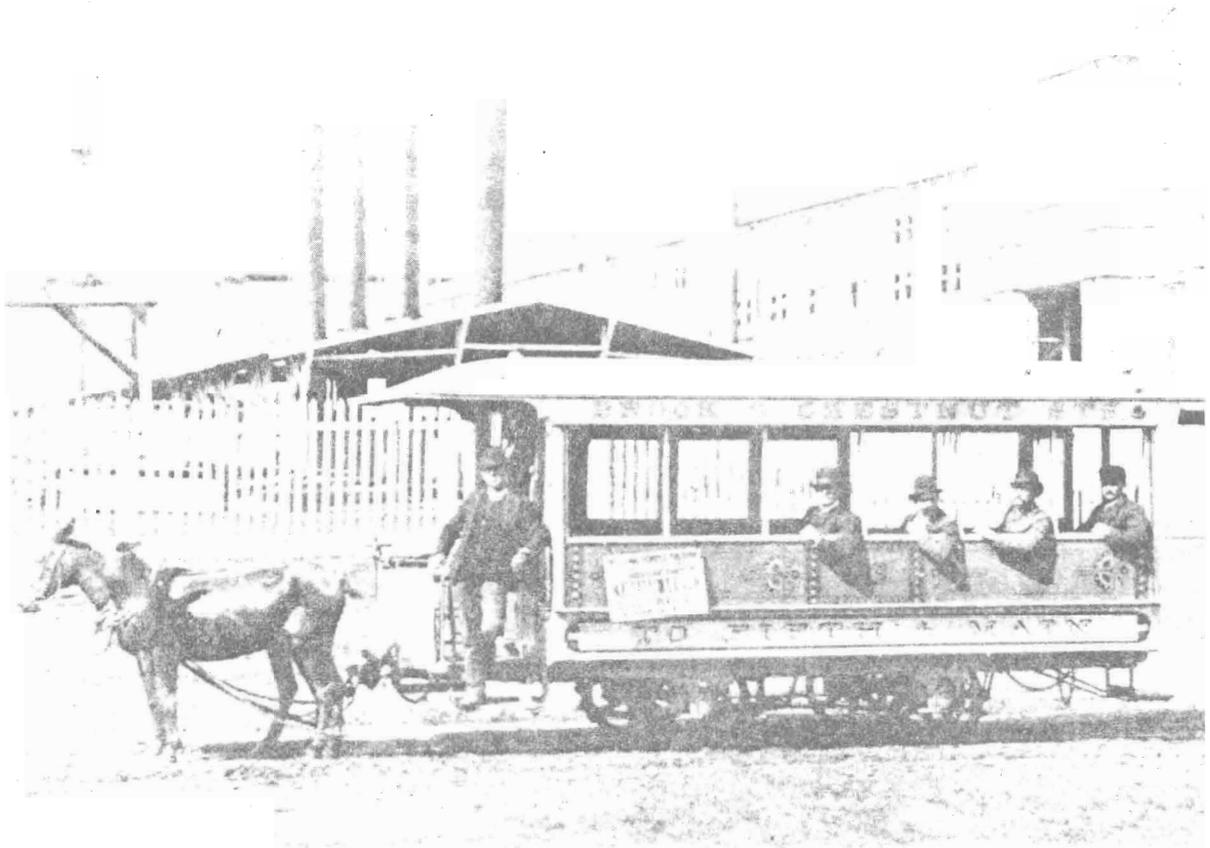
²Kentucky General Assembly, Senate, *Kentucky Senate Journal*, 1870. (Frankfort: The Kentucky Yeoman Office, 1869), p. 30

³ Kentucky General Assembly, Senate, *Kentucky Senate Journal*, 1872. (Frankfort: The Kentucky Yeoman Office, 1871), p. 27

⁴Petition reprinted in Joanne Grant’s *Black Protest: History, Documents, and Analyses, 1619 to the Present*, (Greenwich, Conn: Fawcett Publications, 1968) p. 154-156

Chapter Eleven

Early Black Protest Movements



ONE OF THE EARLY MULE-DRAWN STREETCARS which were integrated by an 1870 sit-in. Notice the platform on the front where black men were expected to stand.

Black protest movements are not strategies created by the Blacks of the 1950's, as Kentucky black history amply demonstrates. The thirty-year period just after the Civil War saw a number of protest movements organized by black Kentuckians.

As we have already studied, black conventions

complained about the lack of protection from mob violence and the inability of Blacks to testify in Kentucky courts against white citizens. Petitions signed by black citizens were sent to Kentucky Governors, to the State legislature, and even to the United States Congress.

Louisville Streetcar Sit-in

One early protest involved the Louisville streetcars. Three different streetcar companies operated under charters from the city in 1870. Each company made its own regulations regarding Blacks. Black women were allowed to sit inside the coaches by all three companies. Black men were required to stand on the platform outside the coach on some lines and excluded altogether on others.

In October, 1870, black leaders decided to test the legality of these restrictions. They organized a public rally at Quinn Chapel, AME Church, followed by a peaceful march to the streetcar stop where three respectable black businessmen—Horace Pierce, Robert and Samuel Fox—paid their fares, boarded the car, and sat down. The driver ordered them to move outside and, when they refused, called other drivers to his assistance and forcibly ejected the customers. At this action, the black crowd was indignant and began hurling stones and mud at the car. Police arrived shortly and scattered the crowd.

Next morning, the three men sued the Central Passenger Railroad Company for damages. Since, as Blacks, they were not allowed to testify against the white conductor in state courts, they demanded that their case be heard in federal court where Judge Bland Ballard presided. Judge Ballard decided that a public carrier is obliged to carry customers who pay the same fare under the same circumstances, and awarded damages of \$15.00 to the Blacks.

Once the judgment was made public, black men moved to test its validity. They paid their fare, boarded and sat inside streetcars at many different stops on the line. Reactions of the individual conductors varied. Some simply stopped their cars and black and white men faced each other in silence. Others forcibly ejected the unwelcome passengers. One young Black, Carey Duncan, proved his faith in passive resistance by refusing to move or to defend himself. He was dragged from the car and beaten by neighborhood "toughs."

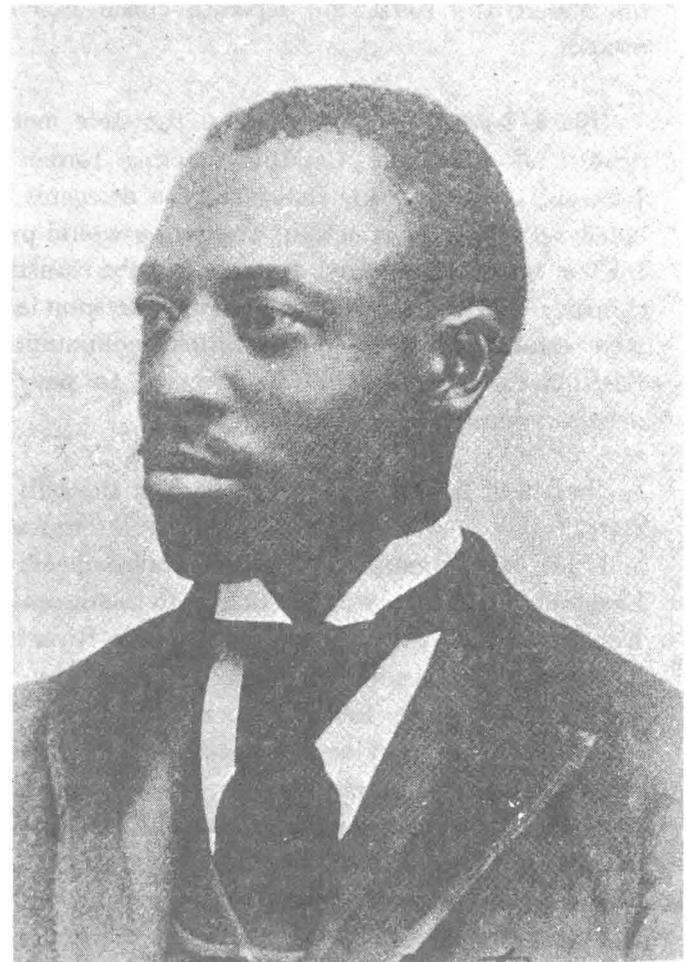
As the violence increased, city officials met with streetcar company presidents to find a solution. Faced with the determination of the black leaders and the inflexibility of the federal court ruling, and anxious to prevent further damage to streetcars, the streetcar presidents capitulated. They agreed that all

passengers could ride seated inside the coaches. From that time onward, the city streetcars remained unsegregated.

Anti-Separate Coach Movement

Having learned that positive, direct action was able to prevent segregation in the Louisville streetcars, black leaders were equally as aggressive on a statewide basis when an attempt was made to segregate interstate railroad coaches.

In December, 1891, a bill was introduced into the Kentucky General Assembly to require separate coaches for white and black travelers on interstate railroads. Hoping to defeat the bill by immediate action, black leaders from across the state met and appointed a committee to appear before the Governor to ask him not to support the bill. Professor C.C. Monroe of the State Normal School in Frankfort was elected chairman and C.H. Parrish of Louisville chairman of the committee on resolutions.



C. C. MONROE, first Kentuckian to speak out against Jim Crow coaches, was removed from his teaching position at Kentucky Normal School because of his role in the anti-separate coach movement.



MRS. L. M. SNEED OF LOUISVILLE AND MISS LENA B. TIBBS OF DANVILLE were members of a statewide delegation of women who went to Frankfort to protest the separate coach law. Other black women in this delegation included Miss Mary V. Cook of Bowling Green, Miss Lizzie E. Green of Frankfort, and Miss M. E. Britton of Lexington.

On January 29, 1892, these men appeared before the joint railroad commission of the Senate and House. Even the women got into the action; a delegation of black women protesting the bill visited the General Assembly. All the efforts were fruitless; on March 15, 1892, the separate coach bill was passed.

Black leaders from throughout the state met in protest at the State Capitol. Electing Jordan C. Jackson, of Lexington, chairman, the delegates decided upon a plan of action. The group would press for an immediate court decision on the constitutionality of the bill. Committees of correspondence were established in various Kentucky communities. Each black family would be assessed to pay the necessary legal defense funds.

Less than a year after the passage of the bill, the court test was ready. The Reverend W.H. Anderson and his wife boarded an L&N Railroad car in Evansville, Indiana, with a ticket to Madisonville, Kentucky. When the train crossed the Ohio River into Kentucky, the Andersons were requested by the conductor to move to the “black” car. When they refused to move, they were forcibly put off the train at Henderson, Kentucky. There they bought two more tickets to Madisonville, boarded the next train and sat in the “white” section. Again, they were asked to leave but refused and were put off at Robards’ Station. Then, they filed suit against the L&N Railroad for \$15,000.

The case was heard in U.S. District Court in Owensboro. On June 4, 1894, Judge John W. Barr

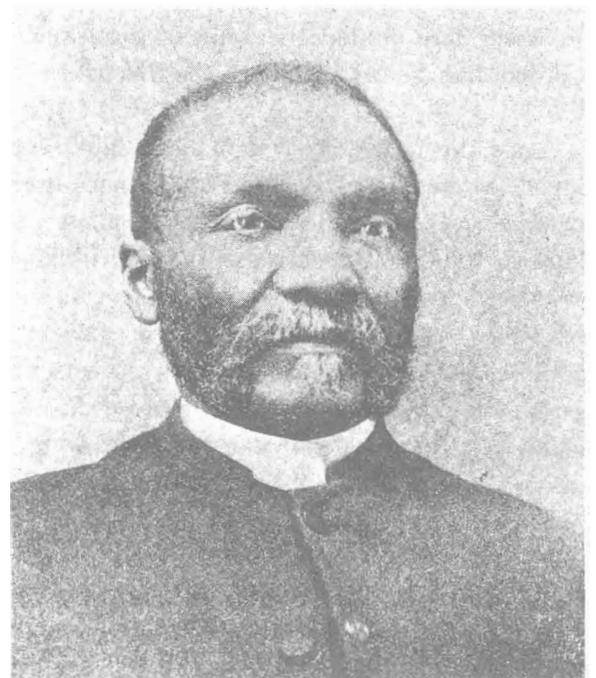
announced his decision that the Kentucky statute was unconstitutional because it attempted to regulate interstate commerce, a function of government plainly reserved to the United States Congress. Kentucky black leaders were jubilant; they had won a great victory.

Plessy v. Ferguson

Their victory was short-lived. For in May, 1896, in the *Plessy v. Ferguson* decision, the United States Supreme Court ruled that state laws requiring segregated railroad cars were indeed constitutional as long as the facilities provided were “separate but equal.”

This case was one of many civil rights cases in which Justice John M. Harlan from Kentucky disagreed with the majority of the Supreme Court.

“The thin disguise of ‘equal’ accommodations for passengers in railroad coaches will not mislead anyone, nor atone for the wrong this day done,” objected Harlan. “The arbitrary separation of citizens on the basis of race, while they are on a public highway, is a badge of servitude wholly inconsistent with the civil freedom and the equality of the law established by the Constitution. It cannot be justified upon any legal grounds.”¹



REVEREND W. H. ANDERSON tested the constitutionality of the separate coach act of Kentucky by bringing suit against L&N Railroad.

Regardless of Harlan's objections, the damage was done. The *Plessy v. Ferguson* decision opened the door to another means by which black citizens could be denied full and equal participation in American society. Once segregation of railway coaches had been declared legal by the Supreme Court, then segregation of public buildings, schools, parks, and other means of transportation became possible. The bright hopes for full citizenship which had inspired Kentucky black citizens during the first years after the Civil War disappeared when the Supreme Court condemned Blacks to a separate but equal existence.

Charles Henry Parrish, Sr.

One of the many active black citizens of this period was Charles H. Parrish, Sr. Parrish was born in Lexington in 1859, the son of slave parents. His father was a teamster; his mother was a seamstress. His mother's master taught him to read.

Parrish was only six years old when Kentucky slaves received their freedom so he was able to attend one of the public schools established in Lexington for the freedmen. Encouraged by his teachers to continue his education, Parrish moved to Louisville to enroll in



REVEREND C. H. PARRISH



J. H. LOTT, black attorney of the legal team which handled Anderson's suit against L&N Railroad challenging the separate coach law. Senior counsel for the case was John Feland, a white attorney from Owensboro.

the Louisville Normal and Theological Institute (which later became known as Simmons College).

Since he had little money, Parrish had to work to pay for his living expenses while he attended school. Although a college degree seemed an almost impossible goal for this former slave, Parrish continued his double program of work and study until 1886 when he finally received his B.A. degree. He was twenty-seven years old.

After he was graduated, Parrish received a call to become Pastor of the Calvary Baptist Church in Louisville. He also served as professor of Greek at his former college. Although still a young man, he was elected delegate to the Republican State Convention, the Colored Educational Convention of 1884 and the National Convention of Colored Men which was held in Louisville in 1883.

When Blacks met in Frankfort to form the Anti-Separate Coach Movement, they elected Parrish chairman of the very important resolutions committee and sent him to meet with the Governor as a spokesman for the black citizens of Kentucky.

As Blacks were increasingly excluded from political circles in Kentucky, Parrish turned his leadership ability to religious and educational matters. He became President of Eckstein Norton College—a boarding school that trained young black men to be

teachers in Kentucky's new schools for Blacks. In 1918, Dr. Parrish became President of Simmons University and continued as its president until 1931.

His prominence as a church leader became worldwide. In 1923, he was one of the American delegates to the Baptist World Alliance Meeting in Stockholm, Sweden. There he was named to the executive committee of the Baptist World Alliance. He was one of only two black men on the eight-member committee.

Summary of Chapter Eleven

Throughout this period of the Kentucky black man's first years of full citizenship, he was quick to organize in committees and convention and to stand up and demand the rights that were his. He was not reluctant to approach the Governor or the General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Kentucky, even though he knew that these bodies were controlled by Democrats who were often unsympathetic to his requests.

In two specific cases, the desegregation of the Louisville street cars and the Anti-Separate Coach Movement, black leaders organized protests that included the use of passive resistance and court orders to gain their goals. One of many active black citizens

of the period was the Reverend Charles Henry Parrish, Sr.

The stereotype of the black man during Reconstruction is that of a poor freedman in tattered clothes, homeless, ignorant, wandering from place to place in search of some kind of occupation. It must be emphasized that there is another side to this picture. The Kentucky Reconstruction picture shows educated black men meeting, selecting officers, making speeches, visiting the Governor, calling upon members of the General Assembly, even petitioning the United States Congress to gain those rights for which they too had fought as Union soldiers. These were proud citizens with great faith in the democratic processes and legal institutions of their day.

¹*Plessy v. Ferguson*, 163 U.S. 537, at 562, (1896).

Unit Three

The Development of Segregation

--1890-1930

The period from 1890 to 1930 was a discouraging one for Kentucky's black citizen. After the Civil War, black men and women had been motivated by the hope that after they were educated, employed and settled in a community, they would take their places as full citizens in Kentucky. By 1890, Blacks began to see that the majority of whites did not share this hope.

The United States government, which had pressed so strongly for Civil Rights for Blacks immediately after the Civil War, had turned its attention to other issues. In 1896, the highest court in the land dynamited the black man's dream of an equalitarian society by declaring that states which required black citizens to ride separate railroad cars were not discriminating against those Blacks.

With the legal approval that this Supreme Court decision implied, Kentucky lawmakers began to require the segregation of many other aspects of public life. Public education was already segregated; but the Kentucky General Assembly declared that even private schools had to be segregated. Railway cars were segregated; then the waiting rooms in the terminals also became segregated. City and state parks were reserved for "white only" or for "colored only." Labor union locals, which had originally organized on an integrated basis, divided into segregated units.

While the Supreme Court Decision had stipulated that segregated facilities should be "separate but equal," in most Kentucky communities the black facilities were not equal to those provided for whites. Black parks were smaller and had fewer recreation facilities than the white parks. Black teachers were paid lower salaries than white teachers with the same qualifications.

Reminders of their separate but unequal status confronted Kentucky's black citizens in almost every aspect of their lives. Not only were Blacks denied equal facilities in education and public accommodations, but they were also denied access to housing and high paying jobs.

As legal segregation became more widespread, Blacks began to realize that they would have to organize to protect their own rights. Various local movements found coordination in two national organizations, the NAACP and the Urban League. The Kentucky Negro Education Association campaigned to assure black children of the best possible education. The Commission for Interracial Cooperation worked on bridging interracial barriers.

This kind of cooperation achieved a major victory in 1917. When the Louisville Board of Aldermen tried to require residential segregation, black leaders were able to fight this law all the way to the Supreme Court. Their efforts were successful. The Supreme Court declared that such attempts to segregate housing were unconstitutional.

After World War I, lynchings and other forms of violence against Blacks increased. However, the Ku Klux Klan did not become a major force in the State, because of the determination of Kentucky's officials to enforce the law.

Although several prosperous black-owned businesses were established in the early Twentieth Century, the majority of Kentucky's black people worked as laborers or farmers. Because of the lack of economic opportunities in Kentucky and the desire to escape Kentucky's legal segregation, many Kentucky Blacks migrated to northern cities.

Chapter Twelve

Beginnings of Segregation



THIS 1929 PHOTOGRAPH shows that Louisville's buses were not segregated.

During slavery times, close physical relationships existed between Blacks and whites from childhood through adulthood. White children on country farms often found their only playmates in the nearby slave quarters. As the maids and servants of the white mistress, black women were frequently responsible for the upbringing and moral education of white children.

The races worked together on common tasks. The master and his slave worked together in the fields to

bring in the harvest. In the kitchen, the mistress and her housemaid together preserved the fruits of that harvest. Slaves traveled with their masters on public conveyances and stayed with their masters in public inns. A picnic in the park often meant a black man came along to carry the picnic basket and the black cook spread the bountiful provisions she had prepared earlier. But the relationship was always an unequal one—the master gave the orders and the slave followed them.

Housing Segregation Traditional

During this pre-Civil War period, slaves' quarters were on the same land, often in the very building where the white family lived. While Blacks were excluded from participating as equals in the activities of whites, urban slaveowners especially did not have the space to isolate their Blacks from the rest of the neighborhood. In the cities, black people lived on alleys behind their masters' houses in small shacks or cabins. So traditionally, there was a kind of layer cake pattern of segregation in Kentucky's cities.

The Layer Cake Pattern

After the Civil War, the traditional slave quarters became freedmen's neighborhoods. Many former slaves simply stayed in their present homes and continued to work for the family to whom they had belonged in exchange for a salary. Rural slaves became sharecroppers, farming a part of the master's farm in return for a share of the crop.

The residential patterns of many of today's Kentucky towns reflect the layer cake pattern of segregation. Hopkinsville, for example, has several streets where the big houses on the streets are occupied by white people and the smaller houses on the back streets and alleys are occupied by Blacks.

The Ghetto

But in some outlying areas, the activities of masked raiders and Ku Klux Klansmen terrorized rural Blacks and forced them to leave their homes and crowd into the cities where they felt there would be safety in numbers. Most slaves had few possessions; even their clothing technically had belonged to their masters. So these refugees did as all poor immigrants to American cities have done, congregated in the poorest section of the city among people of their own kind. However, once there, it was difficult to move out of such neighborhoods.

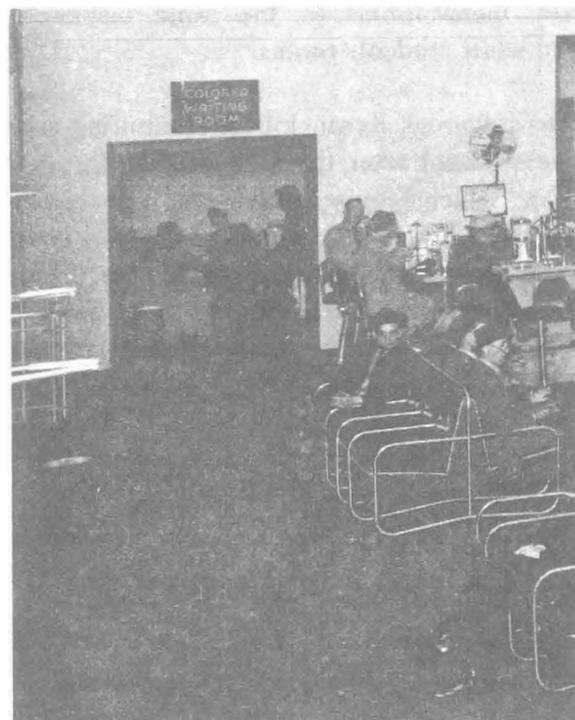
Members of other refugee groups—the Germans, or the Irish, or the Italians—found that if they

worked hard, learned to speak English without an accent, bought some new clothes, and saved their money, they could eventually move out of the slums and be accepted in a new neighborhood. But the black man with an outstanding education who worked hard and accumulated great wealth found he was still barred from certain neighborhoods only because of the color of his skin. Thus, segregated housing continued in a new form—that of the ghetto.

Development of Legal Segregation

How did traditional segregation become segregation by law? A modern historian, C. Vann Woodward, has traced the development of segregation laws in the South, in *The Strange Career of Jim Crow*. Most such laws, he states, were not enacted immediately after the Civil War but developed much later in the first two decades of the Twentieth Century. This was certainly true of Kentucky.

As late as 1900, Kentucky law contained very few provisions for segregation. Education was segregated. Coaches on railroad cars were segregated by state law. Most state institutions—the House of Reform,



A COLORED WAITING ROOM for black passengers is shown in this photograph of a Louisville railroad station.

mental hospitals, tuberculosis sanatoriums, the School for the Blind—were segregated. But there were no state laws segregating parks, places of amusement, libraries, welfare institutions, hospitals, or places of employment.

This does not mean that such places were not segregated. Sometimes local city ordinances prohibited use of such facilities by both races; but often the force of custom alone was strong enough to segregate an institution. Blacks simply “knew their place.”

This lack of statewide laws requiring segregation was to prove fortunate as the Black’s drive for civil rights became a reality. Local communities with large black populations could desegregate specific institutions without waiting for a more conservative state legislature to pass desegregation laws.

In many areas, as Blacks began to press for equal treatment, they found no laws ever existed to exclude them. In Louisville, for example, once the decision to desegregate the General Hospital School of Nursing had been made, authorities found there was no regulation (either on the part of the hospital or on the part of the city) to prohibit placing black and white girls in the same dormitory. And so, the School of Nursing simply accepted black applicants and assigned them rooms in the same manner they assigned white students rooms.

Two infamous Kentucky laws requiring segregation were passed after the turn of the century. The Day Law, which required segregated private schools was passed in 1904. In 1914, the Louisville Board of Aldermen passed an ordinance designed to enforce segregated housing. Since both these laws were ultimately tested in the Supreme Court, we should study them in more detail.

Segregated Education

Since the Civil War, Berea College had been the only College in Kentucky where Blacks and whites attended school together, but even this integrated institution was unable to survive the intensified racial bigotry of the early Twentieth Century. Visiting Berea in 1904, Representative Carl Day was shocked by the sight of black and white students mingling as equals.



SEWING CLASS AT BEREA

He returned to Frankfort and introduced a bill that would prohibit all desegregated schools in Kentucky. The bill was passed by overwhelming majorities in both the House and Senate.

The Day Law

The Day Law provided: (1) that private educational institutions could not be desegregated, and (2) that any institution that taught both races could do so only at campuses separated by at least 25 miles. Thus, Berea would have to either change its policy of teaching blacks and whites together or else pay a fine of \$1,000 plus \$100 for each day it maintained desegregated education. Students who attended the integrated institution and faculty who taught in it were also subject to daily fines.

Berea leaders were incensed and immediately instituted proceedings to have the Day Law declared unconstitutional. Students who attended Berea were there on a voluntary basis, argued the college, and these students had chosen an integrated institution. The State could neither deny these students’ right to attend an integrated college nor dictate admissions policy to a private institution which received no state money.

The Kentucky Court of Appeals disagreed. Berea had no inherent right to teach in Kentucky; it taught under articles of incorporation issued by the State so the State could define the conditions under which it could teach. In the opinion of the Court, the Day Law was not discriminatory because it applied equally to both races—whites were not allowed to attend black institutions either.

The Kentucky Court did rule that the requirement for twenty-five miles between campuses was unreasonable and invalid, but in all other points upheld the law.

In 1908, the case finally came before the U.S. Supreme Court. That court upheld the Kentucky Court's decision that the State could require a private institution to segregate its students. Only two Justices dissented. Justice John M. Harlan, himself a Kentuckian, declared forthrightly that the statute was "cruel . . . and . . . inconsistent . . . with the great principle of the equality of citizens before the law."

"Have we become so inoculated with prejudice of race that an American government, professedly

based on the principles of freedom, charged with the protection of all citizens alike, can make distinctions between such citizens in the matter of their voluntary meeting for innocent purposes simply because of their respective races?" he asked, but his was only one voice against a prevailing tide.

The Lincoln Institute

Having lost its court fight against the Day Law, Berea College chose to remain an institution dedicated primarily to the education of white southern mountain students. However, since some of its endowment had been raised from people interested in supporting black education, President William G. Frost and the Board of Trustees felt a continuing obligation to provide for black education.

Hence, in 1906, the President and his board joined with two Berea black graduates, Dr. James Bond and Kirke Smith, to raise \$400,000 to establish a private school for Blacks. Gifts of all sizes (from \$200,000 from Andrew Carnegie to a few pennies from a school child) poured in.



THE BEREA FOOTBALL TEAM posed for this picture about 1900.

In less than three years, the necessary funds had been raised. A board of trustees was incorporated. Land was purchased near Shelbyville and, in 1911, the cornerstone of the first building was laid. The first President of Lincoln Institute was the pastor of the Berea Union Church, Reverend A. Eugene Thomas; and the school's faculty was composed of teachers of both races.

In 1912, the Lincoln Institute began to write a new chapter in the story of black education in Kentucky. Students came for all over Kentucky to live on its beautiful campus; day students from nearby Shelbyville and Louisville also attended. Dr. Bond became the financial agent of the new school. Kirke Smith became the Dean of Instruction and Students. In the beginning there were more white than black teachers. Gradually the Institute attracted more and more capable black teachers.

In 1935, Dr. Whitney Young became its president. Like so many other institutions, the Lincoln Institute was hard hit by the depression. Sources of endowment funds disappeared: students had no money to pay for their education. But Dr. Young and his staff were determined not to let the Lincoln Institute die. Agreeing to give up their regular salaries for a percentage of whatever funds could be procured, groups of teachers canvassed the State to tell Lincoln Institute's story, search for new applicants to bolster a sagging enrollment, and encourage contributions from people throughout the State.

The generosity of a wealthy Lexington Black, however, probably saved the school. In his will, William Henry Hughes left Lincoln Institute \$10,000. Important as this gift was to the financially troubled school, another bequest in the will had more far-reaching consequences for Lincoln Institute.

William Hughes' will established a trust fund of almost \$100,000, the income of which was to be used each year to provide scholarships, "one-half for white persons and the other half for colored persons."

This generous action was used as a talking point by Dr. Young and his teachers. They encouraged men of good will of both races to contribute to the education of Kentucky's black youth with generosity like that of William Hughes. In nickels and dimes, as well as larger contributions, Kentuckians responded

to their request. Lincoln Institute received the financial support necessary to continue its work.

Education at Lincoln

The grounds of the Institute contained a farm where modern methods of agriculture were taught to rural youth while they raised most of the provisions for the school tables. Girls were taught home economics as well as algebra and boys woodworking as well as classical English. The Institute became one of the first schools in the country to establish a course in maintenance engineering.

Education students from Kentucky State College received their teacher training experience at Lincoln; white students from the Southern Baptist Seminary prepared for work in foreign missions in an on-the-job training program at Lincoln. Over half of the Lincoln Institute students went on to higher education; often to schools outside Kentucky since their educational opportunities within Kentucky were so limited.

Contracts with Local School Systems

In 1941, the Kentucky General Assembly passed a law requiring that local boards of education must provide all students living within their districts with the opportunity to acquire a high school education. If a local board did not operate high school facilities for all students, it could fulfill its legal obligation either by transporting students to a nearby school system or by paying their tuition and board expenses.

Since half the counties in Kentucky did not provide high school facilities for Blacks, this law enabled Lincoln to make contracts with local boards of education to provide high school services for their black students.

Received State Support

After a fire destroyed the boys' dormitory at Lincoln, the State Legislature was persuaded to appropriate State funds for Lincoln Institute under a contract arrangement between Lincoln and the State Board of Education.

In 1947, Lincoln Institute became a public school supported by the State of Kentucky. The property and buildings were deeded to the State with the stipulation that they always be used for educational purposes. The school operated as a State high school until 1965 when the desegregation of public schools throughout the State made the maintenance of a separate school for black students unnecessary.

The Lincoln Institute officially closed. The next year a new school opened on the Lincoln Ridge grounds for bright but disadvantaged young people from throughout Kentucky. Despite the fact that it was hailed by educators throughout the country for its imaginative educational program on an integrated campus, the new school was forced to close in 1970 because the Kentucky legislature cut its funds out of the State budget. Many educators both white and black, felt that the same fear of interracial education which produced the Day Law in 1904 was the real reason for the closing of the Lincoln School in 1970.

Residential Segregation

On May 11, 1914, the Louisville Board of Aldermen passed an ordinance that was designed to enforce residential segregation. The ordinance provided that if the majority of residents upon a given city block were white, only white families might use or occupy homes on that block; or if the majority of

residents were black, only black families might use or occupy homes there.

The Louisville Ordinance

Carefully designed to be in accord with the "separate but equal" principle, the ordinance placed the same restrictions of Black and white. It did not apply to residential uses prior to its passage. Blacks or whites could buy property anywhere—but they could not live on their property if that property were on a block where the other race predominated. If the law were allowed to stand, soon the city would be divided into "black blocks" and "white blocks" and segregation of the races would be almost complete.

Black leaders and some white leaders were dismayed by the passage of this ordinance. On June 2, a mass rally was held at Quinn Chapel to raise money to bring a test case into court. Local NAACP President Dr. C.H. Parrish invited national officers, Chapin Brinsmade and Dr. Joel Spingarn to speak at the rally. These speakers pledged national support in testing the legality of the block law.

Buchanan V. Warley

The test case was carefully prepared. Robert Buchanan, a white man, sold a lot from a block on

At the turn of the century, Frankfort officials attempted to stop the congregation of the First Baptist Church from constructing a new church building (pictured below at left).



The city ignored the petition of the Church trustees for a building permit. Then, when excavation was begun without a permit, the contractor, the Church trustees, and laborers were arrested, taken to court, and fined. To obtain fines in this case, the city council had passed a new ordinance.

Determined to build a new church, the trustees obtained a temporary injunction to prevent the city from interfering with the construction of a house of worship. In 1903, Judge James E. Cantrill dissolved this injunction, declaring that "a Negro church is a 'nuisance' per se."

The trustees took the case to the Court of Appeals where, in 1904, the decision was reversed and a perpetual injunction was granted by Judge Settle. In ruling on the case, the Court stated, "It would be strange indeed, to find it announced in the law books or declared by any court of final resort, that a beer garden or dance hall may exist in a city, yet a brick, fireproof church may not be erected therein . . ."

which there were eight white and two black residents to William Warley, the black editor of *The Louisville News*. In the sales agreement, William Warley stated that he was buying the lot with the intention of erecting a house for himself and his family and that he would not pay for the lot unless he had the right to occupy that house. Of course, under the Louisville law, he couldn't live there, So when Warley did not pay for his lot, Buchanan sued him.

Thus the case was one in which the white man claimed the Louisville law was unconstitutional because it interfered with his right to sell his property. The case went before a local court where the judge held that the law was constitutional and that William Warley did not have to pay for the lot because of the clause in the sales agreement.

Buchanan appealed to the Kentucky Court of Appeals where he received the same judgment. Then Buchanan took his appeal to the U.S. Supreme Court. One of his lawyers for the appeal was Moorfield Story, the National President of the NAACP.

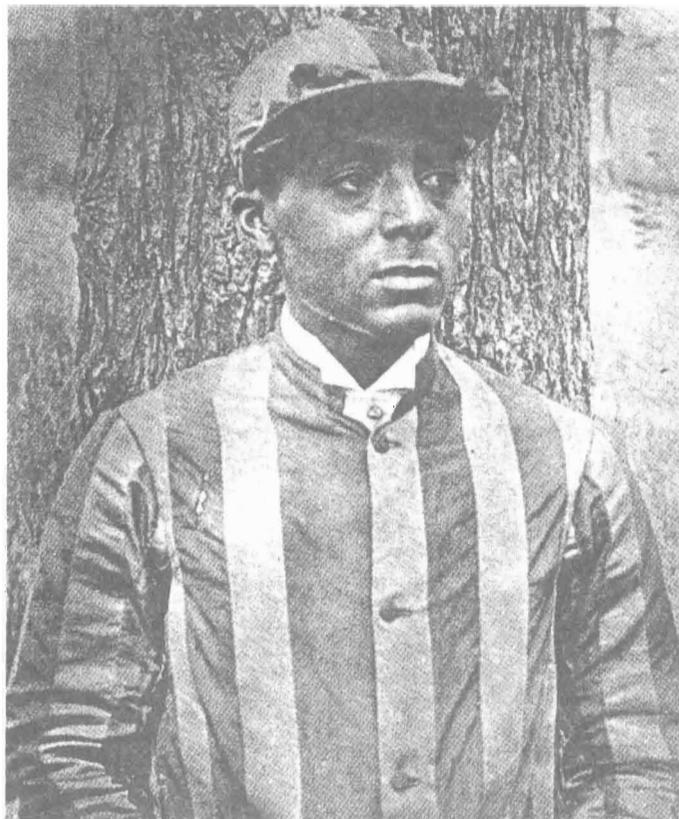
In a historic decision, the Supreme Court, in 1917, reversed the decisions of the lower courts and declared that the Louisville ordinance was indeed unconstitutional. The Fourteenth Amendment of the

Constitution guarantees the right of any person to acquire and own property without discrimination because of his race. It also guaranteed the right of a man to sell his property to whomsoever he might choose. The Louisville law restricted, because of race, Buchanan's right to sell his property—thus the law was unconstitutional. And probably no one was happier about the decision than William Warley, the black man who had just "lost" his case before the Supreme Court of the United States!¹

Civil Rights Strategy

The techniques used by Kentucky Blacks to defeat the Louisville residential segregation ordinance were used again and again in the next 30 years to eliminate the discriminatory restrictions under which they lived.

Black leaders picked an issue which could be fought in the courts. They raised money to pursue the case through donations from local Blacks. They enlisted the support of church leaders who probably were most able to communicate with large groups of people. They enlisted as much local white support as possible. (Buchanan was a white man; the attorneys



ISAAC MURPHY, first jockey to ride three Kentucky Derby winners: Buchanan (1884), Riley (1890), and Kingman (1891).

Of the first 28 winning Derby horses, 15 had black jockeys. The eleven black jockeys who won the Derby during these years included one triple-winner (Murphy) and two double-winners (Willie Simms and James Winkfield). Winkfield, whose second victory was in 1902, was the last black jockey to win the Derby. Since 1911 no black jockeys have participated in the Kentucky Derby.

who pressed the case to the Supreme Court were white men.) They appealed to the national office of the NAACP for legal advice.

Once the case had been decided, they consolidated their gains. Through the entire process, they waited with amazing patience. *Buchanan v. Warley* took three years. Many of the later civil rights battles took many more years.

Movie Theaters

In another move against Louisville segregation in

the early 1920's, black leaders protested the "Peanut Galleries" where Blacks were obligated to sit in downtown movie theaters when they paid the same price for tickets that white patrons paid. A committee was formed which organized a boycott of the theaters by Blacks. The committee enforced discipline by publishing in the newspaper the names of those who broke the boycott. Their efforts were successful in forcing the closing of the "Peanut Galleries." However, the victory was one of principle only, for now Blacks were not allowed to attend downtown theaters at all.²

Summary of Chapter Twelve

The pre-Civil War society in Kentucky was a far more integrated society in some respects than was Kentucky society of 1910, although separation of the races was traditional in this society.

Laws which made the separation of the races mandatory were passed after the Civil War. Most of these statutes were passed in the period between 1890 and 1910. Thus, post Civil War legislation and pre-Civil War tradition kept the black man from enjoying his new freedom and rights as a citizen.

Two laws were far-reaching in their effects. (1) The Day Law, passed in 1904, banned desegregated private education in Kentucky. This law remained in force until 1950. This law did have one beneficial effect for black Kentuckians: it led to the development of an excellent school for Blacks called Lincoln Institute. (2) The Louisville housing ordinance was designed to eventually segregate all housing within the city. Black leaders waged a successful campaign to have this ordinance declared unconstitutional by the United States Supreme Court.

¹W. F. Woolsey, "Equality: Struggle of Louisville Negroes isn't new; it began dramatically over 50 years ago," *Louisville Times* September 25, 1971, p. 8.

²*Ibid.*, p. 8

Chapter Thirteen

Organizations to Aid Blacks



SEWING CLASSES were among the recreational and educational programs offered by Settlement Houses in Louisville.

The Anti-Separate Coach Movement in Kentucky had failed in its attempt to eliminate segregated railway cars but many other problems faced Kentucky Blacks that might be solved through group activity. The plight of urban Blacks, for example, was beginning to attract attention.

In 1890, 28% of Kentucky's Blacks lived in urban areas (the U.S. Census defines urban areas as cities with 2,500 or more inhabitants.) In 1900, 35% of Kentucky's Blacks lived in urban areas. For 1910, the figure was 41%. This shift of the black population

from rural to urban areas continued throughout the Twentieth Century, so that by 1960, 71% of Kentucky's Blacks lived in cities.

Those Blacks who moved to the city found that city life was different from country life. Children who could be left unsupervised to fish in country streams or roam the hills and meadows could not be left alone in the city. Problems of poor sanitation and uncleanness multiplied in the city. Farmers needed vocational training in the skills of the industrial society.

Settlement Houses

Reacting to the plight of these urban Blacks, some church groups established settlement houses in urban areas. The programs offered by these houses varied according to the needs of the neighborhood: child care facilities, recreational programs for young people, vocational and personal hygiene training, and literacy education were some of the programs offered.

In 1898, the Presbyterian Church began such a program at the Hancock Street Chapel in Louisville. Plymouth Settlement House on West Chestnut Street in Louisville, sponsored by Plymouth Congregational Church, opened its doors in 1917. These efforts reached only a small percentage of the urban Blacks. The need for a unified effort of the entire community soon became apparent.

National and Regional Organizations

Two national organizations developed to deal with these problems—the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, and the Urban League. A third organization, the Commission for Interracial Cooperation, operated primarily in the South.

The NAACP

In 1908, Springfield, Illinois was the scene of a bloody race riot. Describing the “reign of terror” that he found in Lincoln’s home town, William English Walling, a white journalist from Kentucky, aroused public indignation. Conscience-stricken people wrote to him asking what could be done to prevent such racial conflict. Black leaders such as Ida Wells Barnett, William L. Buckley, the Reverend Francis J. Grimke, and W.E.B. DuBois joined with white supporters including Jane Addams, Lincoln Steffens, and Lillian D. Wald to call for a national conference to discuss Walling’s “appeal to citizens to come to the Negroes’ aid.”

This conference recommended the formation of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People with a professional staff, committees for investigation and legal aid, and a publicity department. Publication of the NAACP monthly

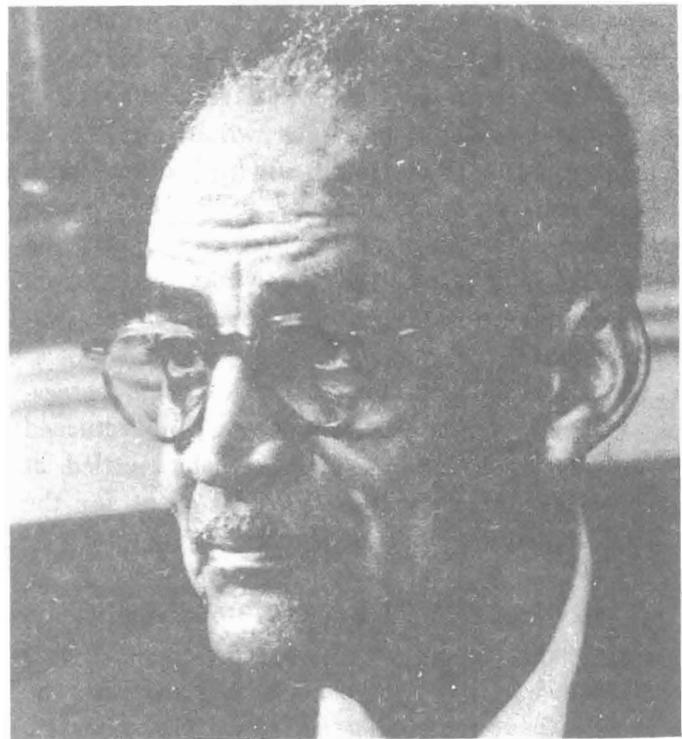
magazine, *The Crisis*, edited by W.E.B. DuBois, began in 1910.

Local chapters sprang up. Kentucky’s first was founded in Louisville, in 1914. The Paducah Chapter was organized in 1927. Chapters in Bell County and Central City received their charters in 1939. During the forties, twenty-five new chapters in various Kentucky cities and counties were formed. Today there are over forty NAACP Chapters in the state.

The Urban League

In 1911, leaders of various groups working on the problems of city Blacks met in New York City to form a National League on Urban Conditions Among Negroes. A Kentuckian, Eugene Knickle Jones of Louisville, soon became the chief executive of the Urban League (as this organization came to be called) and served in this position for over forty years. From 1961 to 1971 another Kentuckian, Whitney Young, Jr., served as National Director of the Urban League.

Dedicated to working chiefly for better employment opportunities, improved housing conditions, and educational and vocational programs directed



EUGENE KNICKLE JONES, who served as chief executive of the Urban League for over forty years, became Advisor on Negro Affairs of the U.S. Department of Commerce under President Roosevelt.

toward urban Blacks, the Urban League set up local chapters in many cities. These chapters were organized on an interracial basis and included business, civic, and labor leaders on their boards. One of the first local chapters in the United States was organized in Louisville in 1920. Kentucky's only other Urban League was formed in Lexington in 1966.

Commission on Interracial Cooperation

In response to the increased racial violence that followed World War I, southern leaders began to explore ways of interracial communication. Out of this search grew the Commission on Interracial Cooperation.

This organization enrolled both white and black citizens in training programs and educational seminars. While not attacking segregation, the Commission did press for equal justice for all citizens, equal participation in government welfare programs, and an end to lynching.

James Bond

Director of the Commission in Kentucky was the Reverend James Bond. Born as a slave in Whitley County during the Civil War, James Bond was only a toddler when Kentucky slaves were freed. His mother was determined that her sons would receive an education and sent both James and his brother Henry to Berea for high school and college. In 1892, James Bond received a Bachelor of Science degree from Berea; in 1895, he received his divinity degree from Oberlin Seminary.

After serving as Pastor of the Howard Congregational Church at Nashville, Tennessee, Bond returned to Kentucky in 1906, and eventually settled at Simpsonville where he was financial agent for the newly founded Lincoln Institute.

When World War I broke out, Bond volunteered for the Chaplain's Corps but was rejected because of his age. He was fifty-five years old. Eager to serve, he worked with young soldiers as YMCA Camp Service Director at Camp Taylor, near Louisville. The YMCA Camp Service program provided counseling, recreation and entertainment, and emergency assistance for the young men in the camps.

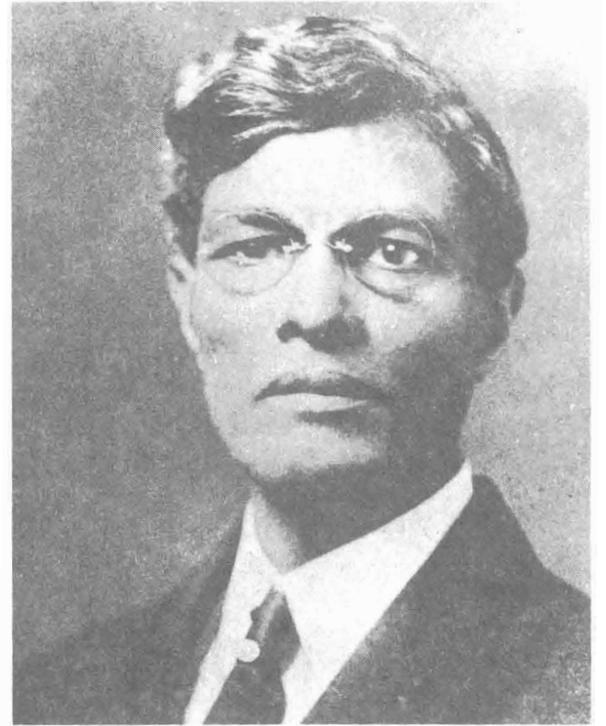
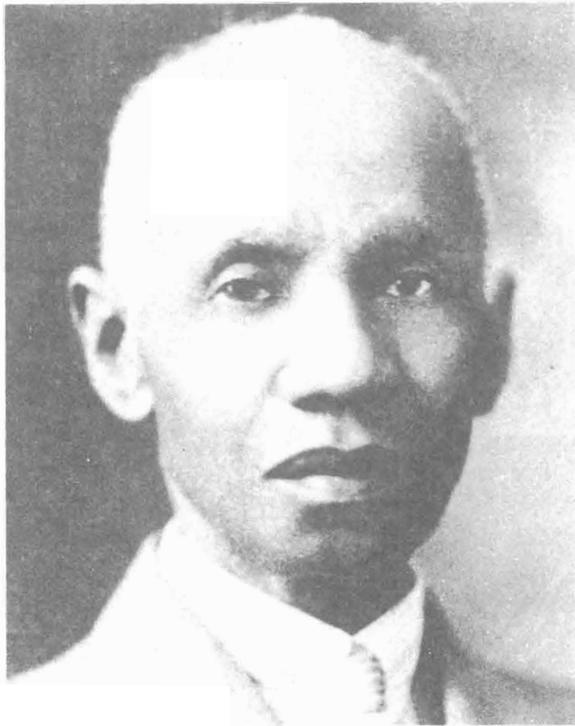


DR. JAMES BOND

After the war, Bond was appointed Kentucky Secretary for the black YMCA's. At the same time, he served as Kentucky Director of the Commission on Interracial Cooperation. In both capacities, he toured the State, urging local citizens to establish programs promoting interracial communication and cooperation. For many black and white Kentuckians alike, these meetings provided their first opportunity to meet and discuss mutual problems in an interracial setting. The Southern Regional Council of Atlanta, and its affiliate the Kentucky Council on Human Relations are modern-day successors to the Commission.

Local Institutions

Black Kentuckians had already recognized some problems that could be solved through joint efforts. In Louisville, for example, in 1877, a group of Blacks organized the Colored Orphans' Home which was maintained for many years by donations from the black community. The St. James Old Folks Home was incorporated in 1887 by many of the same black citizens. This home provided care for old and infirm Blacks who had no one else to care for them.



CO-FOUNDERS OF LOUISVILLE'S RED CROSS HOSPITAL Dr. W.T. Merchant and Dr. Ellis D. Whedbee.

Red Cross Hospital

Because black doctors were not able to treat patients at any of the public or church-sponsored hospitals in the city, in 1899 a small group of black physicians led by Dr. W. T. Merchant and Dr. Ellis D. Whedbee established Red Cross Hospital in Louisville.

Among the doctors who assisted in the founding was Dr. William H. Perry, Sr. who was the first black physician to secure his license by passing the Kentucky State Board of Medical Examiners (1908). Prior to that time, physicians had qualified through apprenticeship.

During its first years, the Red Cross Hospital was

supported almost entirely by money raised within the black community. Later some white citizens saw the necessity for hospital care for Blacks and contributed to the hospital.

The hospital was originally located in a two-story frame building on Sixth Street between Walnut and Liberty. In 1905, this hospital was moved to its present location at 1436 South Shelby Street. A brick structure was built in 1912. Since that time, several new additions have modernized the old structure.

In addition to caring for patients, the Red Cross Hospital provided training programs for black nurses and doctors. Patients from many communities in Kentucky that did not provide hospital facilities for Blacks received care at Red Cross Hospital.

Summary of Chapter Thirteen

During the early years of the Twentieth Century, many groups organized in order to help black citizens achieve equality of opportunity. Kentuckians figured prominently in the development of the two most famous national organizations, the NAACP and the Urban League.

Black citizens also organized local institutions to care for those in need. In Louisville, for example, Blacks organized an orphans home, an old folks home, and a hospital.

Chapter Fourteen

Economic Life



"Quite a variety of machinery has been tried for hemp breaking, together with Dutch, Irish, and Natives, but a stout Negro man, with a good hand brake, a fair task before him, and prompt pay for his overwork, now has a decided preference, if not a complete monopoly," advised a Kentucky farmer in 1859. While few slaves in Kentucky worked cotton fields, many Kentucky slaves and some free Blacks worked growing and curing hemp. Using the hand brake, this man is cracking the outer shell of the hemp stalk to remove it from the inner fibers which are used to make rope. This same tool was used in both the 19th and 20th Century.

Great changes had taken place in the economic life of Kentucky Blacks by the turn of the century. Kentucky's black population had decreased substantially. It was rapidly becoming an urban rather than a rural population.

New industries were developing in Kentucky. Many black men who had worked on small farms found jobs in these new industries. Labor unions began to organize some black workers.

Population Changes

Each census from the Civil War until 1950 showed that the percentage of the total population that was black decreased. In 1860, Kentucky's population was 20.4 per cent black; in 1950, it was 6.9% Black. Many factors account for this decline:

(1) The lure of better jobs in northern industries, especially in the developing automobile industry during the first decades of the twentieth century, attracted many black men to northern cities.

(2) Kentucky lacked educational opportunities for Blacks. Only two four-year colleges were open to Blacks in Kentucky. Graduate courses for Blacks were unavailable in the State. So some of Kentucky's most gifted black students left the State to pursue their education elsewhere and never returned.

(3) Black teachers found that salaries in Kentucky were lower than those in some other states. Kentucky public schools at this time had a double wage scale for teachers: the black teacher was paid about twenty per cent less than the white teacher for doing the same job.

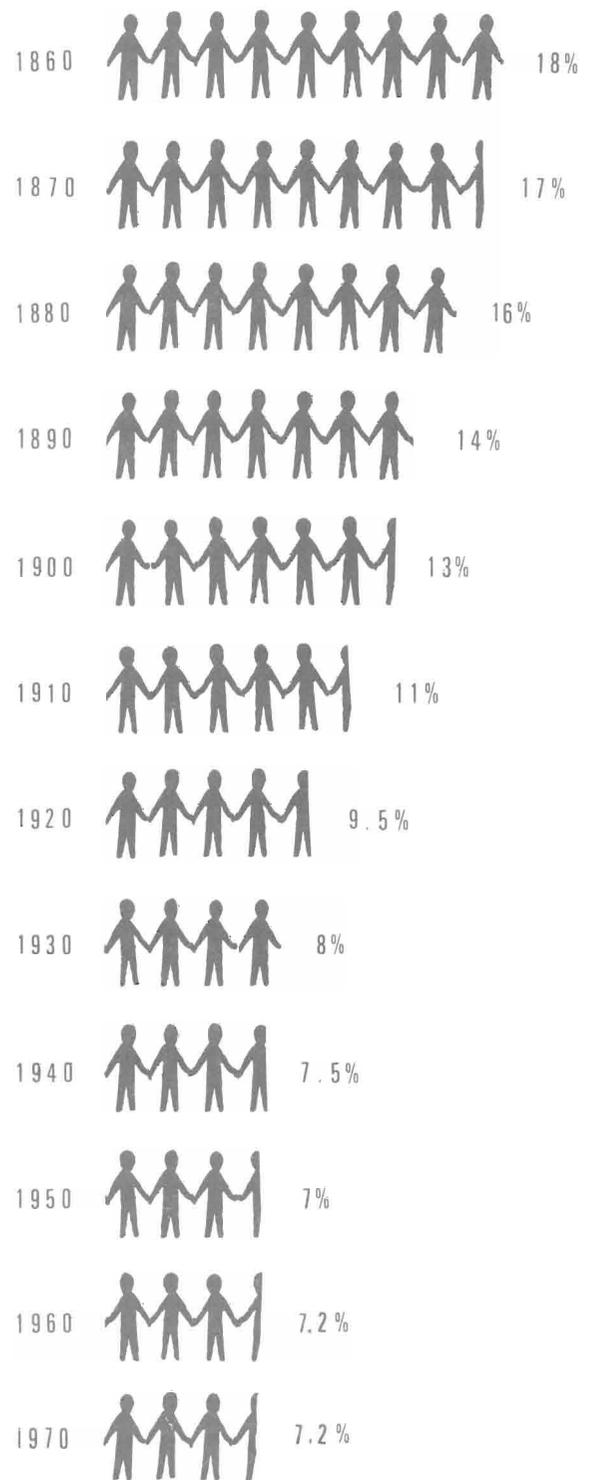
(4) The indignity of legal segregation led many Blacks to leave Kentucky for northern states.

Kentucky's black population began to change from a rural to an urban population at the turn of the century. In 1890, 72 per cent of Kentucky Blacks lived in the country or in towns of less than 2,500 people. By 1910, only 59 per cent lived in rural areas.

Most black farmers had farms that were smaller than those of their white neighbors. However, a high percentage of Kentucky Blacks owned their farms. Over fifty per cent of the land farmed by black Kentuckians was owned by Blacks. Only Virginia and Oklahoma had higher percentages of black farm ownership.

Occupations

The 1910 Census lists the major occupations of black males ten years of age and over. Only 35 per cent of the employed males were agricultural workers. About 23 per cent worked as laborers in



THIS CHART, BASED ON U.S. CENSUS FIGURES FOR 1860 THROUGH 1970, illustrates that the percentage of black Kentuckians in relation to whites in the State's population steadily declined between 1900 and 1950. (Each figure on the chart represents 2% of the State's total population.)

Notice the dramatic decrease in the percentage of Kentucky Blacks in the early years of the Twentieth Century when many black families left the State.

Between 1900 and 1950 the black population of Kentucky also decreased numerically while the white population increased. By 1950, the number of blacks residing in the State had dropped to 202,000 less than at any time since the Civil War.