The Lost Gospel

The Lost Gospel:
Christianity and Blacks in North America

By

Jerome Teelucksingh

CAMBRIDGE
SCHOLARS
PUBLISHING

The Lost Gospel: Christianity and Blacks in North America,
by Jerome Teelucksingh

This book first published 2010

Cambridge Scholars Publishing

12 Back Chapman Street, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE6 2XX, UK

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data
A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

Cover image courtesy of the Wellington County Museum and Archives, Ontario, Canada

ISBN (10): 1-4438-1635-3, ISBN (13): 978-1-4438-1635-9

Dedicated to the African Diaspora in the Americas

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

FOREWORD

Jerome Teelucksingh knows how to tell a story with passion and scholarly erudition. In a previous book, *Caribbean-Flavoured Presbyterianism* (2008), he explored the contributions of the Christian educational institutions – of which he is himself a beneficiary – in shaping post-independence Trinidad and Tobago. Now in *The Lost Gospel*, he has focused on the role of the churches in the education of Black Canadians, the development of their leadership and managerial skills, and the origins of Black Theology.

Dr. Teelucksingh does not underestimate or ignore the discrimination blacks experienced in Canada. He notes that prejudice was a determining factor in the decision, after emancipation in the United States, of many to return there, or to Africa. Those remaining in Canada formed numerous self-help organizations including vital Black churches that became the cultural, as well as spiritual focal points of their communities. Dr. Teelucksingh concludes that, by facilitating the assimilation of large numbers of escaped slaves to their new host society, the Christian churches enabled blacks to overcome the trauma and psychological damage of slavery and to adapt to Canadian society.

A young historian in the Department of History at The University of the West Indies, Dr. Teelucksingh captures voices of individuals and groups in a way that communicates a deep respect for the humanitarian efforts of Christians during the struggle against slavery. This study of the interconnection between religion and society recalls words of Joseph as he forgave his brothers, "even though you intended to do harm to me, God intended it for good, in order to preserve a numerous people … so have no fear" (Gen 50:20-21). In ways outlined in this fine study, we see how God provided for a people who, despised and denied fundamental rights, nonetheless overcame and prospered in a new land.

—Paul R. Dekar, Emeritus Professor,
Memphis Theological Seminary of the Cumberland
Presbyterian Church, Memphis, Tennessee.

PREFACE

I'm on my way to Canada,
That cold and dreary land,
The dire effects of Slavery,
I can no longer stand.

Old Master!
Don't come after me-
I'm going up to Canada,
Where colored men are free.

(*Voice of the Fugitive* 15 January 1851)

The history of Blacks departing the United States and settling in Canada is strikingly similar to that of other immigrants in Canada. By the mid-nineteenth century, Canada comprised numerous European immigrants. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the Scottish, Hungarians, Italians and Jews initially endured hostile treatment in Canada akin to the Blacks' experiences. These new settlers faced ethnic and religious discrimination and, like the Blacks, were able to overcome these social, religious and cultural obstacles. The European minorities left their homeland to escape poverty, religious or political persecutions; whilst the Blacks wanted to escape the curse of slavery and discrimination.

Despite the study's emphasis on fugitive Blacks and Christianity, it should be acknowledged that not all Blacks in Canada were fugitives. There were some whose guaranteed freedom in Canada did not merit the acceptance of religion or membership in a denomination. However, the work of the Church extended to all Blacks without taking into account their religious conviction. The journey to Canada meant physical freedom but also a liberating experience incorporating the psychological, spiritual and emotional being. The trauma of slavery was still fresh in the minds of many Blacks and many of the answers to their actions and responses can be traced to a violent past and being uprooted from their native Africa. Protestantism provided a much needed support for these refugees seeking spiritual salvation and physical protection.

One of the major objectives of this study is to demonstrate that the relationship between Blacks and religion was essential for their relatively

successful assimilation and socialisation in Canada. It also emphasises the work of the Protestant churches in such areas as education, leadership and organisation. A concerted effort was made to capture the voices from the various groups, societies and individuals who were not directly connected to the churches but were influenced by the wave of Protestantism sweeping across Canada in the nineteenth century.

The primary sources for this research included the McCurdy, Strachan and Abbott Papers at the Ontario Archives in Toronto, the Fred Landon Collection and the Canadian Black Studies Project at the University of Western Ontario. These sources provided an invaluable insight into the monumental and diverse contributions of the Protestant churches to the Black community. Useful research centres included the Ontario Black History Society, Shelburne County Genealogical Society, Dalhousie University, Black Cultural Centre for Nova Scotia, Public Archives of Nova Scotia, and the Black Loyalist Heritage Society.

The denominational resources included the United Church Archives at Victoria College and the Presbyterian Church Archives in Toronto. Additionally, the extensive Baptist collection at the Divinity College at McMaster University proved to be a rich reserve of data on the churches belonging to the Amherstburg Association. Such periodicals as the *Amherstburg Courier*, *Christian Guardian*, *Voice of the Fugitive*, *Provincial Freeman* and *Ecclesiastical and Missionary Record* were invaluable storehouses of missionary work in North America.

An explanation of the terminology used in this study will prove useful to the reader. The concept of 'religion' will be defined as the system of beliefs and practices linked to the spiritual nature of worship and having an influence upon the behaviour of individuals. Religion will be seen as a way of examining the relationship between the Black community and the host society. And, the terms 'Protestant' and 'Protestantism' refer to a particular religious orientation inclusive of such Christian denominations as Presbyterian, Methodist, Baptist, Church of England, African Methodist Episcopal (AME), British Methodist Episcopal (BME) and African Methodist Episcopal Zion (AMEZ) who were instrumental in the integration, education or isolation of Blacks. In this work 'Protestant churches' are classified into two groups- Black and White, but this does not necessarily imply two different denominations or practices. Instead the term is used to distinguish the racial composition of congregations and separate institutions.

The term 'enslaved' will refer to 'slaves'. And, 'Blacks' is used in reference to the fugitive and free Blacks from the United States who settled in Canada, and also those free Blacks in the United States. Also,

the term ‘Black church’ will be used to signify congregations/churches comprising Blacks. Similarly, the term ‘Whites’ will refer to persons of European descent residing in United States and Canada. Until 1841, the province of Ontario in Canada was known as ‘Upper Canada’ and the province of Quebec was referred to as Lower Canada. During 1841-1867, Upper Canada was known as Canada West and Quebec was identified as Canada East.

At times, this study will incorporate sociological, religious and anthropological concepts in exploring the socio-religious behaviour of Blacks. The use of the term ‘acculturation’ refers to the exchange of ideas, values, customs, objects and behavior between Blacks and Whites. Likewise, the terms ‘integration’ and ‘assimilation’ refer to the processes in which Blacks in Canada or United States acquired unique cultural features and penetrated social institutions of Whites. The concepts of ‘adaptation’ and ‘accommodation’ are used to signify changes made by Blacks in adjusting to a new host society. On the contrary, ‘segregation’ in some Protestant churches, schools and settlements described the separation of Blacks by voluntary or legal means in the nineteenth century.

The main areas of this study dwell on the church’s role in education, development of Black leadership, assimilation, theology and independence of Black churches. These themes will be used in reconstructing and investigating the socio-religious encounter between Blacks, from the United States, and Protestants who belonged mainly to the White churches in Canada.

In the Chapter 1 there is mention of early slavery in Canada and the importance of the Underground Railroad in rescuing free Blacks and the enslaved. Chapter 2 emphasised the schisms that emerged among Protestant churches in the United States due to the divisive debate over slavery. There is a concentration in Chapter 3 on the educational nature of the relationship between the Protestant Church and Blacks. This section of the book explored the pre-occupation with education which became the guiding concept in the lives of Blacks. One of the sub-themes is the problems facing Blacks in the public education system and the extent of tolerance at the Sabbath schools. As a result of the provision of educational services, the Protestant Church gained an image as a protector of the Blacks and thereby contributed significantly to their socialisation. In providing education for Blacks, the churches satisfied the educational needs of Blacks and thus provided the basis for a socio-religious relationship with Protestantism.

Chapter 4 focused on the development of Black leadership which involved the transfer of responsibilities and roles from Whites to Blacks.

This theme incorporated the nature and origins of Black leadership and the smooth transition from White to Black leadership. Furthermore, Black leaders extended their work to vigorous evangelistic programs which produced several mission stations that became new bases of religious influence. Chapter 5 explores the extent of the organisational ability of Blacks and the evolution of Black theology. A perusal of church records revealed that comprehensive attempts were made to build a financially and socially stable Black Church in Canada. The experiences of the enslaved and free Blacks in the United States continued to have a strong influence on their activities among the churches in Canada. Additionally, evidence of the association with White churches is seen in the structure and governance of the Black churches.

The final Chapter assesses the church's role in the segregation and assimilation of Blacks. Despite the development of Black leadership, the existence of segregated pews and burial plots indicated the racism in Canada. There is also an analysis of the extent and nature of segregation and assimilation in Canadian society. For instance, the existence of all-Black settlements contributed to the separation of Blacks from the rest of society.

Religion was a key factor facilitating integration, assimilation, adaptation and acculturation among the Blacks. The Wesleyans, Methodists, British Methodists Episcopalians, Baptists and Presbyterians were some of the Protestant denominations instrumental in forging a foundation for the transition to freedom. There will be an attempt to demonstrate the multifaceted role of Protestant churches as Blacks struggled to adapt to their new host society.

In the late twentieth century, the annual celebration of Black History Month coupled with the regular production of films, articles and books on Blacks are an indication of the keen appreciation of their historical presence in North America. An interesting phenomenon that arose in this research is the similarities amongst Black churches in the United States. There was considerable communication between Blacks and Whites which overshadowed the racial problems in society. Those persons interested in Canadian and United States History or sub-fields such as Africana Studies and Black Studies will particularly benefit from this attempt to highlight the religious aspect of the life of Blacks in Canada.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Firstly, I must express gratitude to God for allowing me the strength and wisdom to produce this scholarly work. Also I would like to thank the many librarians, archivists and researchers in Canada and the United States who assisted in locating microfilm, dissertations, articles and obscure books. During my stay in Ontario, the universities, Black societies and historical organisations have been very helpful in providing a suitable environment for research. These include the personnel at the University of Western Ontario Archives, Black History Society and the Metropolitan Library in Toronto.

A special word of thanks to my friends in Canada- the Ashbys and Mohans. They supported and believed in my dream of recording the history of Blacks and religion in Canada. I am grateful to Mrs. Maria Peter-Joseph, History Secretary at UWI and Albert Joseph for assisting with the formatting of the manuscript. Also, the advice of Professor Brinsley Samaroo must be acknowledged. Finally, and most importantly, I owe a debt to my family who provided me with emotional support throughout this research. They provided reassurance during a period of personal struggle as a young historian.

List of Abbreviations

AMEZ	African Methodist Episcopal Zion
AMA	American Missionary Association
AME	African Methodist Episcopal
AO	Archives of Ontario
AUBA	African United Baptist Association
BME	British Methodist Episcopal
CBA	Canadian Baptist Archives
PCA	Presbyterian Church Archives
SPG	Society for the Propagation of the Gospel
UCA	United Church Archives
US	United States

CHAPTER ONE

FLEEING CRUCIFIXION: MIGRATION TO CANADA

> All who are under the yoke of slavery should consider their masters worthy of full respect, so that God's name and our teaching may not be slandered (Timothy 6: 1).

The early enslaved persons were First Nations or indigenous peoples known as panis. In 1501, Gaspar Corte-Real, a Portuguese explorer, landed in Newfoundland. He subsequently captured and enslaved 50 native persons. Almost three decades later, in 1535, Jacques Cartier, a French explorer, captured 10 members of the Iroquois and carried them to be displayed in France.

One of the earliest known enslaved Blacks in Canada was Olivier Le Jeune in 1632. He was born in Madagascar, Africa and as a child was captured by the traders of the enslaved. Subsequently, Le Jeune was given to the Kirke brothers in Québec. In 1632 the Kirkes decided to sell him and depart for Britain. This action was prompted by the Treaty of St. Germain-en-Laye in which Québec was returned to France. The young slave was educated by Father Paul le Jeune of the Society of Jesus, who recounted, "…the other day I had a little Savage on one side of me, and a little Negro or Moor on the other, to whom I taught their letters."[1]

The Dominicans, Franciscans and Jesuits possessed enslaved persons and ensured they were well-treated. These religious orders neither condemned nor promoted slavery. By 1720, the clergy in New France owned 43 enslaved persons and this arose from the fact that, "Slavery was a social reality, and as such the church accepted it."[2] Even though the Roman Catholics condemned slavery they felt that persons who were slaves had experienced bad-luck.[3] Enslaved Canadians were fortunate that they were not harshly treated as their counterparts in the Caribbean and the United States. The Canadian economy did not depend on enslaved labour and thus their population remained relatively small.

There was an early Black presence in Nova Scotia. In a census of 1686 when the French possessed Acadia, a free Black resided at Cape

Sable near Yarmouth. He was identified as "la Liberté, le neigre" (Liberty the Black).[4] In the *Halifax Gazette* of 1752, there was an advertisement for Blacks to be sold to the public.[5] Likewise, in 1775, the *Nova Scotia Gazette and Weekly Chronicle* advertised "A lively, well-made, negro boy, about 16 years old."[6]

In Canada a few of the enslaved persons assisted in the fields but most served as household servants and resided with their masters. Some of the enslaved from Bermuda worked on fishing ships in Newfoundland in the late eighteenth century.[7] In Upper Canada during the 16th and 17th centuries, slavery was common. The enslaved were owned by many of the important British families. This occurred even after 1797, when Lieutenant-Governor John Graves Simcoe of Upper Canada outlawed importation of the enslaved into Upper Canada.[8] Even though slavery was not completely abolished, Canada was the first British colony to pass such a law against slavery.

The enslaved population in Canada gradually increased by the late seventeenth century. On 1 May 1689, Louis XIV allowed the enslaved from the Caribbean to be imported into New France, and in 1709 slavery in the colony became legal. The French needed enslaved persons due to the frequent shortage of labour.[9] The treatment of the enslaved was determined by the Code Noir even though it was never officially proclaimed in New France.[10] Robin Winks believed the enslaved of New France, especially the Blacks, were not severely treated, "They were, after all, expensive and intimately connected to the household as domestics."[11] Some of the enslaved were utilised in agriculture.

Some of the enslaved were even allowed, by the Church, a certain degree of equality as they could be baptized, married, participated in communion and buried under Christian rites. The scarcity of enslaved persons made them expensive commodities. Many attempted to escape to nearby forests or southwards into the Northwest Territory. There were also unpleasant instances as in Montreal in 1734, an enslaved girl, Marie-Joseph Angelique, burned the home of her mistress while attempting to escape. The fire spread and damaged almost half of Montreal. She was found guilty, tortured and hanged in downtown Montreal.[12]

Due to intermittent naval warfare, the risky routes were not used for shipping the enslaved to New France. Marcel Trudel estimated that by 1759 there were 3,604 enslaved persons in New France (1,132 were Blacks) whilst Robin Winks believed the colony had an enslaved population of 4,000.[13] In 1763, the Treaty of Paris resulted in France ceding her lands east of the Mississippi to Britain. The result of this land transfer meant English civil and criminal laws were adopted in Québec

and the enslaved were no longer protected under provisions of the Code Noir.

In the aftermath of the American Revolution of 1776, some American settlers opted to migrate with the enslaved, which they owned, to Canada.[14] These settlers eventually resided in areas in Nova Scotia such as Amherst, Liverpool and New Glasgow. The enslaved, belonging to the settlers, had a work regimen which included building ships, cutting wood and clearing fields. Often the enslaved in Canada were those who arrived with their masters. Rev. James Scovil and his family arrived in New Brunswick in 1788. His enslaved persons accompanied him to the province and he ensured they were well-treated after he died. Two of Scovil's servant boys (10 and 12 years old) were bequeathed to his wife, in a will which stated: "that at the age of 26 years they shall be set at liberty provided they do faithfully discharge the duties of servants until that period, and do appoint my son Elias Scovil, and my said wife, their overseers to see that they are reasonably treated."[15]

In Jamaica, in the British West Indies, the Maroons or runaway Blacks proved to be troublesome and a burden for the colonial authorities.[16] As a result, the Jamaican Legislative Council voted that the maroons be sent to exile. The Jamaican government obtained 5,000 acres of land and spent £3000 for buildings in Nova Scotia. Also, the Governor of Nova Scotia applied to the British government for assistance. In July 1796, in a historic trip, 550 Trelawny Maroons were deported to Nova Scotia. Britain agreed to provide an annual sum of £240 "to support a school, and to provide instruction for them in the principles of religion."[17] The moral and religious nature of the maroons proved to be a contentious issue, "They were not christians (sic), they had little idea of any kind of religion. They believed in Acompang, whom they called the God of Heaven. They had no marriage ceremony. A man had as many wives as he chose to support...."[18] Whilst in Nova Scotia, the maroons were exposed to education and religion. James Lockett in "The Deportation of the Maroons of Trelawney Town to Nova Scotia, Then Back to Africa," argued that the inability of the British to defeat the Maroons was one of the reasons why Britain decided to end slavery in 1833.[19]

Migration and Black Presence

Canada received an influx of Blacks as a result of earlier migrations following the American Revolution in 1776, War of 1812 and deportation from Jamaica.[20] On 19 October 1781 the defeat of Lord Charles Cornwallis at Yorktown created a dilemma for thousands of supporters of

Britain. Among those persons departing New York were a few thousand formerly enslaved Blacks who had been encouraged to leave their masters and pledge allegiance to Britain in the hope of attaining protection and freedom.[21]

Among the United Empire Loyalists of 1783, almost 10% were Blacks.[22] From 1782-1784, Nova Scotia welcomed the arrival of 3,548 free Blacks and from this total 1,521 were assembled together in Shelburne.[23] Most of the Black Loyalists were not church-going Christians and whilst enslaved in the United States they were deliberately denied religious teaching.[24] During this time 1,232 enslaved Blacks were sent to Nova Scotia, with 441 being shipped to New Brunswick and 26 for Prince Edward Island.[25] There was a considerable Black presence in Nova Scotian towns as Birchtown, Digby, Granville and Annapolis (see Appendices A and B). During the late 18th century, most of the Blacks had joined churches such as Christ Church in Nova Scotia. By 1798, Upper Canada had 40 Black settlements.[26]

Most of the historiography on Blacks in Nova Scotia mentioned Colonel Bluck as being in command of the "Black Pioneers."[27] Barry Cahill offered a revisionist viewpoint in "Stephen Blucke: The Perils of Being a "White Negro" in Loyalist Nova Scotia" and sought to clarify the misconceptions surrounding one of the province's prominent Blacks. Firstly, Captain Blucke was neither attached nor served as an officer in the "Black Pioneers" which was the only Black Loyalist provincial corps that provided regular military service. Blucke was secretary to the last British commandant of New York City- Brigadier-General Thomas Mulgrave, who had recently served in the West Indies. Cahill contended that Blucke was not a mulatto but "a full-blooded West Indian of African descent."[28] Additionally, Blucke was the only Black Loyalist who received a 200 acre grant of land.

The War of 1812 was the result of the British Navy capturing men and banned goods from United States ships. This coupled with the demands of "War Hawks" in the United States Congress, to conquer Canada, contributed to the United States Congress declaring war against Britain on 19 June 1812. By May 1814 a noteworthy number of Blacks in the North American colonies had voluntarily enlisted in the British forces. Correspondence from the British officers proved the previously enslaved persons had the ability to engage in warfare, "The new raised Black Corps the Colonial Marines gave a most excellent specimen of what they are likely to be. Their conduct was marked by great spirit and vivacity and perfect obedience."[29]

In the Rebellion of 1837, many Black Canadians who were free or refugees courageously defended the province.[30] They served as gunners, soldiers, informants and officers in independent units referred to as "Coloured Volunteers." The name was changed to "Coloured Corps" and they were attached to the Upper Canada militia until it was eventually disbanded in 1850. This division was one of the early instances of racial segregation in a public institution.

Among the early Black population in Upper Canada were men such as Richard Pierpoint (1774-1838) who was born in Senegal, Africa. At the age of sixteen he was captured, enslaved and shipped to New York in 1760 where he was sold to a British officer. Pierpoint (also known as Captain Dick) fought in the American Revolutionary War in a special corps known as the "Butler's Rangers." He also bravely fought in the War of 1812 as "the first colored man who proposed to raise a Corps of Men of Color on the Niagara Frontier…." And, almost a decade later in 1821 was described by N. Coffin, a high-ranking White militia officer, as "a faithful and deserving old Negro." [31]

On 21 July 1821, Pierpoint submitted a petition to Lieutenant Governor John Simcoe requesting a return to his native land of Africa. This was a request similar to one which resulted in the emigration of Blacks from Nova Scotia to Sierra Leone. The cost of such a venture would have certainly not appealed to colonial authorities and Pierpoint's request was rejected. Instead, Pierpoint and ten Black families were given land grants in Garafraxa (located on the outskirts of present-day Fergus). Pierpoint's leadership provided stability to the small community. Soon after his death in 1838, Scottish planters purchased the land and the Black families in Garafraxa gradually dispersed.

Free Blacks in Upper Canada included William Groat, born at Stoney Creek in 1820 and the Hisson family who settled in the Newmarket area during the early 1800s.[32] Wellington County had a rich history of Black settlements during the Loyalist era. Blacks, who mostly settled in the lower part of Peel Township in Wellington County, represented 10% of the total Loyalist emigration from the United States.

In 1833, one of the colonisation schemes propounded by Dr. Thomas Rolph, involved transplanting Blacks from Canada to the island of Trinidad, in the West Indies. But, after eight years of dilly-dallying the plan never bore fruit, mainly due to strong opposition from the Colonial Secretary. In 1844, an advertisement in the *Chatham Gleaner* encouraged Blacks from Upper Canada and Quebec to emigrate to another British West Indian island- Jamaica. By 1861 another proposal surfaced, encouraging the emigration of Blacks in Chatham to Africa and like

Rolph's plan, it never materialised. Such ideas stemmed from the belief that Canada was an inhospitable place for Blacks due to the cold weather and discrimination. The masterminds behind these grandiose schemes were neither segregationists nor biased against the Blacks but some were genuinely sympathetic to the misfortunes and treatment of the fugitives. These aborted ventures reflected the church's shortcomings in addressing the injustices faced by Blacks.

Other Blacks who adopted Canada as their home included Joseph Armstrong, an enslaved who was born in Maryland. In 1837, Armstrong escaped to Upper Canada, settled in Brantford and eventually moved to Peel Township where he began a life in agriculture. Also, there was Henry Lawson, originally from Ghana, West Africa, who was enslaved and made the trip across the Middle Passage. Lawson later toiled on a plantation in Virginia in the United States. He later escaped to Canada.[33] Likewise, John Jenkins, a 24 year old enslaved from Virginia, was a fugitive in Canada and later settled on Brock Road in West Flamboro.[34] Whilst in Canada he purchased, for $850 and $400, the freedom of his daughters who were enslaved in the United States. In 1844, Thomas E. Knox, a free Black from Pennsylvania, emigrated to Canada and established a farm at Queen's Bush settlement. Similarly, Joseph Mallott, an ex-enslaved person from Alabama, became a cook on a Mississippi riverboat which enabled him to purchase freedom. Mallott's migration to Bloomingdale in Woolwich Township was temporary because in 1835, following the birth of his son, his family relocated to Peel Township.[35] During the 1840s, Blacks in Garafraxa sold their land to incoming Scots and eventually dispersed.

Among the early Black families there was a considerable amount of internal migration in Upper Canada. In one instance, Blacks moved from Niagara to Grey County and Fergus but problems arose because they lacked registration papers. This forced some Blacks to become squatters whilst others moved to nearby locations. Evidence of the Black community that once existed in Grey County included the names "Negro Creek" and the small "negro lakes." Similar evidence of migratory patterns is evident in the history of the Durham Road community which survived until many Blacks moved to Collingwood to work in the shipyards during the 1890s.

There were isolated pockets of Blacks in the Artemesia Township in Priceville and there is also evidence that Blacks once existed in the small villages of Pamona, Latona and Yeoville.[36] Fugitive slaves in the Peel and Wellesley Townships comprised some of the first farmers in these districts and it was estimated that between 500 to 900 Blacks once inhabited this

region.[37] During 1860-1875, there were Blacks in Wallenstein, Yatton and Glenallan (in the lower part of Peel Township in Wellington County).[38]

In other areas of Canada there was a Black presence. For instance, during 1858-1859 some free Black businessmen from San Francisco migrated to Vancouver Island.[39] An estimated 5,000 Blacks settled in Québec during the nineteenth century with most arriving as freed Blacks after slavery ended in the United States.[40] It is difficult to trace the ancestry of these early Blacks. This is due to the fact that there was inadequate record-keeping and also some Blacks intermarried with the English, Americans, French, Irish and other Europeans who were among the pioneers of an emerging community.

Underground Railroad

During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, thousands of freedom-seeking enslaved persons and free Blacks from the neighbouring United States escaped via the loose, secret network known as the "Underground Railroad." James Holly, a Black abolitionist, perceived Canada as "a beacon of hope to the slave, and a rock of terror to the oppressor."[41] Those involved in the Underground Railroad were united by their hatred of slavery and courage to hide and assist fugitive Blacks. Railroad terms were successfully used to deceive and confuse the slave-masters and the public. The 'conductors' of the Railroad would have false compartments in carriages and wagons for escaping Blacks.[42] Cellars, farmhouses, secret passages, attics and churches were the 'stations' where abolitionists temporarily hid their 'passengers.' The 'passengers' travelled from such states as Kentucky, Indiana, Ohio, New York, Virginia, Maryland and Michigan. Those involved in the Railroad sang coded spirituals such as "Steal Away to Jesus" and "Wade in the Water, Children." Also, the song "Follow the Drinking Gourd" referred to the North Star and Big Dipper.[43] Among fugitive Blacks who faithfully served on this route were William and Ellen Craft, Lewis Hayden, William Wells Brown and Sojourner Truth.

Terminals for the fugitives included Niagara, Owen Sound, Collingwood, Oro, Sandwich, New Canaan, St. Catharines, Colchester, Buxton, Chatham, Dresden, Dawn, London, Brantford, Wilberforce, Amherstburg, Sarnia and Windsor.[44] Adrian in Michigan was one of the stops in the Underground Railroad from Ohio via Detroit to Windsor in Upper Canada. The newcomers were welcomed by 'freight agents' in Canada.[45] The extent of the religious faith of the enslaved is evident in their biblical associations which reflected the deeply religious nature of the

immigrant experience and the extent of suffering under slavery in the United States. They sought refuge in Upper Canada or "The Promised Land." Harriet Tubman, one of the charismatic conductors of the Underground Railroad was affectionately known as "Moses" to her people. Tubman rescued an estimated 300 enslaved persons during her 19 trips on the Railroad. Her threat to slavery was obvious as there was a hefty reward of $12,000 for her capture. Whilst in Canada, Tubman used the BME Church in St. Catharines as a place of worship and this venue was eventually adopted as the Canadian headquarters of the Underground Railroad.[46]

Supporters of this freedom route included the Baptists, Presbyterians, Quakers and Methodists. One of the conductors was "Aunt Laura" Haviland a Quaker missionary who also served as a teacher in the Windsor-based Refugee Home Society. Other Quakers who assisted were Thomas Garrett, Isaac T. Hopper and Lucretia Coffin Mott. The home of Abraham Shadd, in Philadelphia, served as a station on the Railroad. He also sold subscriptions of the abolitionist newspaper- the *Liberator*.[47] In Ohio, the home of Rev. John Rankin sheltered hundreds of fugitive Blacks. Furthermore, a Black, Rev. Henry H. Garnet, hid fugitive slaves in his church and home based in Troy, New York. Likewise, Rev. John T. Moore of the Wesley AME Church utilised his church as a temporary shelter for fugitives. Additionally, proactive individuals as Revs. Stephen H. Gloucester of the Central Presbyterian Church of Color, Daniel Scott of the Union Baptist Church and Walter Proctor of the Mother Bethel Church (AME Church) were linked to the Underground Railroad.[48]

By mid-nineteenth century the Detroit River which was used as a crossing by many Blacks, became increasingly associated with the biblical River Jordan. Under the protective umbrella of religion, the years in the wilderness of slavery would serve as a central force, a potent reminder to give thanks to God for deliverance unto the land of freedom.[49] The fugitives were able to appreciate Canada as a haven.

Josiah Henson, a slave, was born on 15 June 1789 on a farm in Charles County, Maryland, in the United States. He initially had a kind master, Dr. Josiah McPherson, who died and unfortunately Henson's new owner- Isaac Riley, was cruel. Henson became a Christian at eighteen years of age and in the mid-1820s was loaned to Riley's brother, Amos, in Kentucky. For three years, Henson worked in this state and eventually became a licensed preacher of the Methodist Episcopal Church. In 1829, he purchased his freedom but Riley intended to have him sold in New Orleans. In defiance of his master's plan, in October 1830, Henson, his wife and children escaped to Waterloo, Canada.[50]

Henson, as an agent of the Underground Railroad, assisted more than a hundred slaves from the United States to attain freedom in Canada. He was portrayed as the fictional character 'Uncle Tom' in Harriet Beecher Stowe's classic 1852 anti-slavery novel *Uncle Tom's Cabin*.[51] Interestingly, throughout this life, Henson denied he was 'Uncle Tom' but finally admitted this association, at ninety-three years of age, at a lecture at the Park Street Baptist Church in Hamilton. Henson, one of the best known enslaved fugitives had twelve children, and after his death in 1883, his home at Buxton, Ontario was transformed into a museum.

From 1815 to 1860 an estimated 80,000 enslaved persons escaped using the Underground Railroad with more than half fleeing to Canada.[52] The usefulness of the Underground Railroad may have been exaggerated. Most of the slaves escaped through paths along the East Coast or on boats rather than the Railroad routes. Secondly, the slaves who escaped, enjoyed a relatively privileged status and originated mostly from border states where slavery was less common.[53] In retrospect, the Underground Railroad could be deemed "an epic of American heroism."[54]

Apart from the horrors of the slavery system, there were certain political developments in the United States during 1850-1860 which served as an impetus for the migration of Blacks particularly through the Underground Railroad.[55] This meant that citizens were now forced to assist in the capturing of escaped Blacks or be liable to fines or imprisonment.[56] This 1850 Act amended the Fugitive Slave Act of 1793. The new act provided for the appointment of military commissioners to issue warrants for the assistance of citizens in the capturing of fugitive slaves. This endangered the freedom of the runaway Blacks in the free states and made Canada a possible haven.[57] Despite restrictions, almost a year after passage of the Act, the Detroit Vigilance Committee and the Cleveland Vigilance Committee assisted 2,500 Blacks to Canada.

A decline in membership was experienced among churches in the United States after the passage of the Act in 1850. Both Methodists and Baptist churches suffered from diminishing Black congregations as a result of mass departures.[58] Upon passage of the Act, the Colored Baptist Church at Buffalo recorded a loss of 130 members to Canada. Similarly, the Colored Baptist Church at Detroit suffered a loss of 84 members who fled northwards to Canada.[59] Many urban areas in the United States suffered and there was a considerably slow growth in the Black population.[60] By 1860 there was a considerable Black presence in communities in Canada West (see Appendix C).

During 1851-1853, Illinois, Indiana and Iowa passed legislation which persecuted Blacks for settling in these states. Other states as Michigan and

Wisconsin refused to grant voting rights to Blacks.[61] The Kansas-Nebraska Act in 1854 also jeopardised the status of Blacks and contributed to the prevailing pro-slavery sentiment.[62] Three years later, the Dred Scott decision sealed the fate of Blacks desiring freedom and social improvement. In the 1830s, Dred Scott, enslaved person, was the personal property of Dr. John Emerson of St. Louis (who later resided in Wisconsin). In 1846 upon his master's demise, Scott applied for freedom on the basis that his earlier residence in Wisconsin (which through the Missouri Compromise of 1820 had banned slavery from that area) and later in Illinois (slavery was barred from that territory under the Northwest Ordinance of 1787) guaranteed his status as a free person. The ensuing Supreme Court decision on 6 March 1857 declared the Missouri Compromise as unconstitutional and that the enslaved were "beings of an inferior order (with) no rights which white men were bound to respect."

The ruling of the Dred Scott case meant that Blacks were not recognised as citizens of the United States. Also, Blacks were not protected under the Fifth Amendment (Bill of Rights) which stated no person "...shall be deprived of life, liberty, or property without due process of law." Thus, by the late 1850s the migration to Canada became increasingly appealing to Blacks desiring freedom and protection from the clutches of slave catchers. Being a resident in Canada was no guarantee of safety. In 1853, in Elora there was a failed attempt by a man to capture two coloured boys to serve as enslaved persons in the United States.[63]

It is estimated that there were 5,489 fugitives in Canada West by 1848 and by 1852 there was a sizeable coloured population of 30,000 which included fugitives who came prior to 1830.[64] Some researchers have claimed that during 1800 and 1869, almost 30,000 fugitives arrived in Canada.[65] If they entered at a rate of 3,000 annually, then Upper Canada would have 18,000 fugitives –which was more than half of the 1852 census figure of Blacks in Canada.[66] One of the local newspapers reported that "hundreds of them have lately crossed over from Detroit to Windsor."[67] It is estimated that during the ten year period 1850 to 1860, approximately 15,000-20,000 fugitives entered Canada.[68]

Daniel Hill, using censuses and reports of the Anti-Slavery Society, contended that the population of Blacks in Upper Canada increased by 11,000 in a twenty-year period.[69] Despite discrepancies, there is a consensus that after the passage of the Fugitive Slave Law in 1850 the fugitive population in Canada underwent a dramatic increase. In 1850, the Black population in Upper Canada was estimated to be 25,000-30,000.[70] A newspaper suggested that after a decade the coloured population doubled to 60,000 in 1861 and comprised mostly fugitives.[71] This population spurt