

WORKING TOGETHER:
AFRICAN AMERICAN MIGRATION AND SETTLEMENT
IN INDIANA COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA

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This historical study of African American migration and settlement in Indiana County, Pennsylvania, begins with an overview of the larger patterns of African American migration and then narrows its focus to explore settlement in Indiana County. On the national level, there will be an exploration of the early roots of African American migration during the slave era, the major migratory movements and some of the institutions that subsequently formed.

The local story begins with an overview of African American settlement, first in Pennsylvania and then in Indiana County. Keeping in mind that family is a significant component in both the national and local stories, the next task is to track the settlement of local families through the communities, churches and other organizations that they established. The individual and family stories which are included in the appendix contain

personal recollections from the living as well as facts pieced together from a variety of historical documents.

These stories illustrate the adaptations and changes within the local African American family, but also reflect the experiences of other migrants as they assimilated into a new environment. The circumstances that influenced individual and family migration were different and, in the end, these factors may have had the greatest impact on the success and permanency of relocation.

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CHAPTER I

EARLY AFRICAN AMERICAN MIGRATION

Any history involving the United States must be in at least some way the story of migration, for the bulk of the present day population are migrants or the sons and daughters of previous generations of migrants. Although they are sometimes overlooked, migrants to America do include African Americans¹ who, for the most part, initially migrated unwillingly in large numbers to North American shores. Later, they left the Southern fields where their ancestors toiled by the thousands for the factories, mines and mills of the North. While the massive international migration that brought a wide variety of ethnic groups to America took place in the early years of the twentieth century, even as we near its close, migration is still as American as Levis or the Statue of Liberty. As Lady Liberty herself is a migrant of an earlier generation, there is little wonder that migration or relocation within the United States has become as natural as breathing. In recent years particularly,

¹The terms African American, African, Negro, and Black will be used interchangeably when contextually appropriate throughout the course of this paper. In addition, all terms referring to race and region will be capitalized.

it is the rare American who grows up, spends his² days and dies on the "family homestead".

African American migration and settlement in Indiana County, Pennsylvania, is in many ways common to other groups throughout history who traveled to new homes, but there are other elements which are unique to the local area. Gunnar Myrdal suggests:

When only a single community can be studied it should not be assumed to be typical nor should the question of its uniqueness or typicality be ignored. Rather, the investigator must attempt to place it in the Southern scene, or in the American scene, or even in the whole Western Civilization scene, by comparing it with the average and range in many significant respects.³

By this Myrdal reinforces the need to first gain a comprehension of migration patterns in general in order to understand them on a specific level. In turn, it is also important to determine how migration to Indiana County fits into the larger historical framework of African American migration and settlement.

Therefore, following an overview of the larger patterns of African American migration, the focus of this thesis narrows to settlement in Indiana County. On the national level, there will

²The usage of masculine pronouns such as he, him and his will indicate both male and female when contextually appropriate.

³Kenneth L. Kusmer, A Ghetto Takes Shape: Black Cleveland, 1870-1930 (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1976), xiii.

be an exploration of the early roots of African American migration during the slave era, the major migratory movements and some of the institutions that subsequently formed. The local story begins with an overview of African American settlement first in Pennsylvania and then in Indiana County. Keeping in mind that family is a significant component in both the national and local stories, the next task is to track the settlement of local families through the communities, churches and other organizations that they established. Individual and family stories are included in the appendix and contain personal recollections from the living as well as facts pieced together from a variety of historical documents. These stories illustrate the adaptations and changes within the local African American family, but also reflect the experiences of other migrants as they assimilated into a new environment. The circumstances that influenced migration were different and, in the end, these factors may have had the greatest impact on the success and permanency of relocation.

William Petersen, whose major work Population⁴ is a classic text in demography, classifies migration patterns in terms of

⁴William Petersen, Population, 3rd. ed. (New York: McMillan Publishing Co., Inc., 1975).

primitive, forced, impelled, free and mass migration. Primitive migration, he explains, takes place as the result of ecological factors. This type of migration is more than just the wandering of primitive peoples; rather, it is movement because of the deterioration of the physical environment. Irish immigration to the United States in the years following the Great Famine is one illustration of this type of migration. In other circumstances, however, primitive migration may be embedded in the culture itself or within the values of a group of people. For some people, home is temporary and portable. Some Australian peoples, for example, have no word for "home" in their language, and in desert Arab culture it is traditional to feel contempt for the more comfortable Arab living in the city.⁵

The next two categories, which Petersen labels forced and impelled migration, have common elements but they are distinctive in terms of individual choice. In impelled migration, the individual retains at least a small degree of decision-making capacity, but in forced migration persons have no power to decide whether or not to move. We can see the

⁵William Petersen, "A General Typology of Migration," American Sociological Review 23 (1958): 259-261; Petersen, Population, 319-321.

differences between these types of migration in the examination of Jewish migratory movement during the years of the Holocaust. Between the years of 1933-1938, the use of anti-Semitic laws and actions encouraged or impelled Jewish migration from Nazi territory. In 1938-1945, however, people of Jewish heritage no longer maintained any choice in leaving their homes. The Nazis herded those who remained into cattle trains and forcibly took them to concentration camps en masse.⁶

Another example of forced migration took place just a few years later in 1948. In 1947, Pakistan gained its independence from British rule and by 1951, an estimated sixteen million people had moved between India and Pakistan. Between 1951 and 1961, an additional 800,000 people migrated from India to Pakistan; however, this was not a casual movement. During the separation of Pakistan from India and the subsequent migratory movement, Hindus and Muslims alike slaughtered those of opposite religious backgrounds, often as individuals or groups fled from the homelands where they and their ancestors had dwelled peaceably for centuries.⁷

⁶Petersen, "General Typology", 261-263; Petersen, Population, 321-323.

⁷Donald N. Wilbur, Pakistan: Its People, Its Society, Its

Petersen's final categories of free and mass migration are more interrelated. In free migration, the individual's choice is central. Free migrants are the adventurers or pioneers. Once settled into new areas, these migrants communicate their experiences to those at home and often help finance the journey for their family and friends. Free migration tends to be limited, but in the appropriate social and economic climate, this type of migration can be the precursor to a larger group movement. When this movement reaches the proportions in which a large segment of the population relocates, it becomes known as mass migration.⁸

African American migration patterns fall into several of the above-defined categories at one time or another. Initially, migration from Africa was forced as landowners, particularly those in the South, found slave labor to be necessary for agricultural production and for maintaining a wealthy lifestyle standard for themselves. In subsequent years, forced migration continued as the domestic slave trade functioned to meet localized labor demands. At this that, most free migration took

Culture (New Haven: HRAF Press, 1964), 51.

⁸Petersen, "General Typology", 263; Petersen, Population, 323-326.

place via the Underground Railroad to Northern free states and Canada. Following Emancipation, however, factors such as the establishment of the sharecropping system, Jim Crow laws and violent acts toward individuals or families tended to force or impel movement once more.

As mentioned earlier, there was a trickle of free migrants from the South since slavery's earliest days, but when wartime economies and northern factories finally provided tangible opportunities, Southern African Americans responded eagerly and a mass migration erupted. This is not to say that the migrants easily or happily left their homes, nor that they never intended to return. Even the most successful migrants kept some emotional, social and cultural ties to the places they left behind while they established their family and built a community in their new homes.

Their African ancestors, who were among the earliest arrivals in the United States, may have had more difficulty in maintaining these ties. While some initially came as indentured servants like their White counterparts, others came as slaves. It was perhaps Lucan Vasquez de Ayllon who brought the first Africans to the colonies in 1526. Numbering approximately one hundred, they arrived at a colony which may well have been the

later site of Jamestown, Virginia. The transatlantic slave trade had officially begun, however, in 1517 when Spain sought to encourage migration to its New World possessions by granting the right to loyal settlers to own up to twelve Black slaves. As a result, there were slaves in the Spanish colony of St. Augustine, Florida, from its initial days in 1565. The slave trade gained its greatest foothold in 1619 when a Dutch man-of-war brought twenty Africans captured from a Latin American slave ship to Jamestown, Virginia.⁹

These early captive arrivals and those that followed initially received the same indentured status and a seven year labor contract as their White counterparts. Upon completion of the contract, they acquired the liberties and privileges of the "free laboring class", including the right to own property. Under this system, some of these unwilling migrants obtained property and prospered to the point of owning servants themselves. As the plantation system evolved and labor needs

⁹Daniel M. Johnson and Rex R. Campbell, Black Migration in America: A Social Demographic History (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1981), 7-8; Harry A. Ploski and James Williams, eds., The Negro Almanac: A Reference Work on the African American. 5th ed. (Detroit: Gale Research, Inc., 1989), 1433; Alton Hornsby, Jr., The Black Almanac: From Involuntary Servitude (1619-1860) to a Return to the Mainstream (1973-1976)? (Woodbury, N.Y.: Barron's Educational Series, 1977), ix.

increased, however, it was not long before it became obvious that using indentured servants or enslaving Native Americans simply would not meet labor needs fully. The availability of indentured servants depended largely upon economic conditions elsewhere and Native Americans too easily returned to their tribes when the opportunity arose.¹⁰

As a result, in the mid-1600's, Africans ceased to arrive as indentured servants and became "chattel property". They no longer received a seven-year contract; slavery was perpetual and passed on through the mother. This practice further entrenched the institution by continuing to enslave the children of slave women even when the father was a White man or a free Black man. This insured that children sired by the master would remain his possessions, although this practice ran counter to English tradition, where the child's status followed that of the father.¹¹

Enslaving Africans in this way soon proved to be a logical and efficient solution to the labor problem in the United States and the New World as a whole. Although there were the

¹⁰Ploski and Williams, Negro Almanac, 1435; Hornsby, Black Almanac, x; Johnson and Campbell, Black Migration, 8.

¹¹Ploski and Williams, Negro Almanac, 4135; Hornsby, Black Almanac, xi.

logistical problems of transportation and some moral issues to contend with, slavery was largely a practical decision as the supply of indentured servants had dried up. The fact that Black runaways could be detected more easily than others was only an added incentive for using Africans. The slave trade also proved to be a lucrative business for some, so lucrative in fact that the cargo aboard slave ships soon came to be known as "black gold".¹²

There is no way to determine with any reasonable accuracy how many Africans came to the New World as the result of this forced migration. There is even less data to determine how many lost their lives on each leg of the journey, but most sources report that approximately ten to fifteen million found their way to the New World as a whole. The real center of the slave trade was in tropical America, particularly Brazil, the Caribbean coast and islands, while the United States was only a marginal recipient of five or six percent. This amounted to the United States importing only 475,000-570,000 Africans, as North American slave owners tended to focus more on encouraging the

¹²Johnson and Campbell, Black Migration, 8-9; Ploski and Williams, Negro Almanac, 4135; Langston Hughes and Milton Meltzer, A Pictorial History of the Negro in America. 3rd rev. ed. (New York: Crown Publishers, Inc., 1968), 12.

slave family toward reproduction rather than importation to fulfill their own labor needs. This practice also provided additional chattel for the domestic trade.¹³

Although African migrants did not always come to North America in exactly the same way, there were common characteristics among their experiences. Their migration often began with tribal wars and capture and included a march to the coast, the slave ship experience and a "seasoning process" in the West Indies. Tragically, many died throughout all stages of this process. Although mortality rates varied with the route and length of the voyage, the care and treatment slaves received and the outbreak of epidemics, experts estimate that fifteen percent died of disease during the Middle Passage and another thirty percent died during the three month seasoning period in the West Indies. Many Africans who began the trip did not finish it and those who did complete the journey still had many adjustments to make.¹⁴

Once in the United States, the life of the slave was still

¹³Johnson and Campbell, Black Migration, 9; Philip D. Curtin, The Atlantic Slave Trade: A Census (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1969), 89.

¹⁴Ibid., 275-276; Ploski and Williams, Negro Almanac, 1433.

tenuous as slaves had few if any rights because of slave codes. Many crimes or code violations drew capital punishment while lesser offenses could bring whipping, maiming or branding. A White man could not necessarily kill a slave with impunity, but the consequences were much less severe. Each slave's experience was different, but generally speaking, domestic and urban slaves received more humane treatment than field slaves. Those from border states and the North also tended to experience greater freedom and opportunities than those in the Deep South. No slave, however, was safe from economic conditions or personal whim that could bring about sale or trade to a less fortunate condition.¹⁵

For some slaves born abroad, importation from Africa was only the beginning of their forced migration experience. The Northern colonies did not have the same labor needs as the Southern colonies did, so slavery in the North never played the same role that it did in the South. This was largely because Southern colonies cultivated tobacco and rice and developed the plantation system which required a large labor force. In the late 1700's, there were a series of inventions which mechanized

¹⁵Ibid., 1436; Hornsby, Black Almanac, xi-xii.

the textile industry located primarily in the North, but in the South cotton became king with Eli Whitney's invention of the cotton gin. This only served to tighten the bands of slavery. In 1803 alone, not more than ten years after the invention of the cotton gin, landowners brought 20,000 slaves to Georgia and South Carolina to work in the fields.¹⁶

The British abolished the Atlantic slave trade in 1808, so it was the domestic slave trade which then bore the burden of providing a labor force for agricultural development in the South. By 1815, the internal slave trade had become one of the country's major economic activities. At the slave block there was no regard for any familial or personal needs of the slave. Traders separated parents, children, brothers, sisters and sexual partners by the score; as slaves could not legitimately marry, there was no importance attached to these familial ties. There was no one "slave block", but rather a variety of ways to engage in the trade of human goods. Some farm-supply businesses took on a "line" of slaves; auctioneers sold them among other personal property; organizations disposed of them by lottery or an individual planter cutting back on operations would advertise

¹⁶Hughes and Meltzer, Pictorial History, 16-17.

his slaves for sale.¹⁷

As the need for slave labor decreased with economic shifts, some owners advertised and sold their slaves to eager recipients in the deeper South. The shift in demand for slave labor occurred not only as the result of the increasing demands of slave labor in other regions, but also because of the progressive soil exhaustion in tobacco and older cotton regions like Virginia. Between 1830 and 1860, Virginia led in the internal slave trade with the exportation of nearly 300,000 slaves. In fact, the domestic trade was so profitable in Virginia that the state's delegates to the Constitutional Convention opposed foreign slave trade, most likely because they wanted to increase the market value of their own slaves.¹⁸

These agricultural shifts created large scale internal migration between states in addition to the smaller scale movement in cases where owners sold slaves to settle debts or estates. In some cases, plantation owners reared slaves expressly for the purpose of domestic trade. In other cases, the sale of a rebellious slave into the Deep South was for

¹⁷Johnson and Campbell, Black Migration, 22.

¹⁸August Meier and Elliott Rudwick, From Plantation to Ghetto. rev. ed. (New York: Hill and Wang, 1970), 54-55.

punishment or discipline. Rather than submit to this type of forced migration, some chose to migrate on their own; they ran away. A few runaways, such as Harriet Jacobs,¹⁹ hid close by to be near family or friends; others ventured to safer, freer places. Another smaller number of slaves built "free" or "maroon" communities in the swamps and mountains of the South or took up residence with Native Americans such as the Seminoles in Florida.²⁰

It was perhaps the most adventurous of these slave migrants who chose to travel on the Underground Railroad and follow the North Star to the free states or Canada. Like many other free migrants, most runaways were young men between the ages of sixteen and twenty-five. Even so, the most famous traveler and conductor on the Underground Railroad was a woman. Her name was Harriet Tubman, but some called her "Moses" in memory of another leader who guided his people out of slavery to freedom thousands of years earlier. Tubman escaped from slavery when she was

¹⁹Jacobs relates her experiences in Harriet Jacobs, Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl (Cambridge: Harvard University, 1987).

²⁰John W. Blassingame, The Slave Community: Plantation Life in the Antebellum South (New York: Oxford Press, 1972), 110-111; Hughes and Meltzer, Pictorial History, 32; Blassingame, Slave Community, 119-121.

about twenty-five, but often ventured back to the South to take others to the North. In the end, she led over three hundred slaves to freedom, including her own aging parents.²¹

The Underground Railroad network itself consisted of secret railway stations from Wilmington, Delaware, all the way to the Great Lakes. The stations provided shelter in barns, cellars, churches, woodsheds and caves as well as food and warmer clothing. The actual means of transportation varied, but it was not uncommon for slaves to walk or be transported from one station to another in wagons with false bottoms. The runaways and conductors alike had to be cautious, for unfortunately there were spies and opportunists within the system and bigotry existed even among the conductors.²²

Just as traitors plagued the larger organization, there was apparently a traitor on the local level as well. Sadly enough, the local traitor was not just a traitor to the organization, but also to his race as he was a Black man who had never been a slave. In 1899, without calling the man by name, A.T. Moorhead, Jr. wrote that the local organization had been suspicious of

²¹Ibid., 113; Charles L. Blockson, The Underground Railroad in Pennsylvania (Jacksonville, N.C.: Flame International, 1981), 58; Hughes and Meltzer, Pictorial History, 129.

²²Ibid.

this man for quite some time and after spending time and money to verify his betrayal, the organization summarily dismissed him.²³

Other forms of prejudice and discrimination were also problems even among those who aided the fugitives. Sometimes a runaway slave was barred from entering a house or was relegated to eating in a certain area. Businessmen and white churches as a whole also failed to look favorably upon such efforts and gangs often terrorized abolitionists. Nevertheless, the proverbial train rolled on.²⁴

Anti-slavery activities in Pennsylvania had long been of major importance, so there is little wonder that Pennsylvanians played a key role in the Underground Railroad network. The network was loosely organized but provided a system of escape nonetheless for runaway slaves. Many homes throughout Pennsylvania, including several in Indiana County, acted as "stations" where slaves could receive refuge before moving to the next place. This system was born of necessity and received much of its impetus from the Black population, but in many

²³Clarence Stephenson, "County Blacks Aided by White Friends," Indiana Gazette, February 16, 1985.

²⁴Blockson, Underground Railroad, 5.

cases, both Black and White Pennsylvania residents worked together to assure safe passage to the fugitive.²⁵

Black agents in the state of Pennsylvania included William Still of Philadelphia, Richard Henderson of Meadville, Maggie Palms of Gettysburg and Daniel Hughes of Williamsport. Their white allies included Lucretia Mott, J. Miller McKim and the well-known John Brown. Brown had many followers including an Indiana County man named Albert Hazlett. Hazlett was born September 21, 1837, and he fought with Brown in Kansas, Nebraska and Missouri. Hazlett was also a participant in the unsuccessful attempt to free the slaves at Harper's Ferry, Virginia, on October 16, 1859, and followed his captain, Aaron D. Stevens, to the gallows. Stevens' fiancée arranged for the burial of both men in Eagleswood, New Jersey.²⁶

The primary anti-slavery activity in Indiana County, however, occurred on the Underground Railroad at stations located in Mechanicsburg, Dixonville, Indiana and Blairsville.

²⁵Charles L. Blockson, Pennsylvania's Black History (Philadelphia: Portfolio Associates, Inc., 1975), 1-2.

²⁶Afro-American Historical and Cultural Museum, Of Color, Humanitas and Statehood: The Black Experience in Pennsylvania over Three Centuries 1681-1981 (Philadelphia: Eleazar Associates and Co., Ltd., 1981), 15; Acker Petit, "The Forgotten Man of John Brown's Raid," Pittsburgh Press, July 12, 1953.

Allegedly, James McMasters in Pittsburgh forwarded fugitives to John Graft²⁷ in Blairsville, who then put them in the care of the group led by Dr. Robert Mitchell and James Moorhead. From Indiana, they went to George Atcheson in Cherry Tree, to Garrett Smith in New York state and on to Canada from there. While some local families were hostile to runaways, others enthusiastically offered their assistance and the local depot is reputed to have helped over four hundred slaves escape to freedom.²⁸

Active local agents included Dr. Robert Mitchell, John Graft and James Moorhead, the editor of the anti-slavery newspaper, The Clarion of Freedom. Mitchell's son, Robert Jr., James Hamilton, Hon. Joseph Campbell, John Allison, Sr., Alex McMullen, John Lytle, James Hamilton, John Adair, A.C. Hall, John Ewing, J.R. Smith, John and Alexander Sutor and William Banks were also active participants. Others who provided support and supplies included Jonathan S. Agey, John B. Allison, esq., an anonymous woman who lived on Water Street and Mrs. William Houston who hid her contributions from her husband to

²⁷Graft is also spelled Graff.

²⁸"Steiner-Wadding Store Replaces Famous Old Mitchell Homestead," Indiana Evening Gazette, May 1, 1947; Larry Rellick, "Dr. Robert Mitchell and the Underground Railroad," Contact, April 17, 1974.

shield him from the penalties of the Fugitive Slave Law.²⁹

Dr. Robert Mitchell was one of the more prominent local figures. He resented slavery even during his childhood in West Virginia and was an abolitionist by the time he entered college. He even changed his religious affiliation from Presbyterian to Associate Presbyterian (later United Presbyterian) when they refused to ban slaveholders from taking communion. He came to Indiana in 1811 after he graduated from Philadelphia's Jefferson Medical College. He married Jane Clarke of Pittsburgh on April 6, 1823, and received Dr. French's library, office furniture and equipment when the elder doctor passed away. Mitchell's house at 527 Philadelphia Street³⁰ served as a terminal point in the Underground Railroad. He also owned a farm nine miles east of Indiana and he is credited with the founding of Diamondville. At his farm there was a small cabin which his tenant, John Shields,³¹ kept supplied for runaways. There runaways could also

²⁹Blockson, Underground Railroad, 101; Clarence Stephenson, "Underground Railroad Ran Through Indiana," Indiana Gazette, June 23, 1984; J.T. Stewart, Indiana County Pennsylvania: Her People, Past and Present, 3 vols. (Chicago: J.H. Beers and Co., 1913), 191-195.

³⁰Steiner's Grocery Store is currently located here.

³¹Stephenson states Mitchell's tenant was also known as Josiah Shields, esq.

work for Mitchell on a temporary basis if necessary. Mitchell served two terms in the Pennsylvania General Assembly beginning in 1827 and as an associate Judge for five years until 1841.³²

Mitchell's activities finally attracted national attention in 1845 when Garrett Van Metre³³, the owner of runaway Anthony Hollingsworth, came to look for him³⁴ and two other Virginia runaways, Charlie Brown and Garret Harris³⁵. The three initially came to Indiana about mid-April 1845³⁶ and hid in the graveyard near Silas M. Clark's house (now Memorial Park). They were cold, hungry and exhausted when Brown went to the Clarion office

³²Blockson, Underground Railroad, 101; Frances Strong Helman, "History of Indiana County," in Sesquicentennial Celebration of Indiana County: A Presentation to the People of Indiana County (Indiana, PA: Indiana County Sesquicentennial Association, 1953), [22]; Rellick, "Dr. Robert Mitchell"; "Steiner-Wadding"; "New Steiner-Wadding Store Built on One of Indiana's Historical Landmarks," [Indiana Evening Gazette], ca. 1947.

³³Rellick gives his name as Jarret Van Meter.

³⁴Stephenson contends that Van Metre was not present, but had given a power of attorney to the slave catchers. This is consistent with Larry Gara's implications in his book The Liberty Line: The Legend of the Underground Railroad (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1961) that the master coming to retrieve his slave is one of the myths of the Underground Railroad.

³⁵Stephenson names him Jared Harris in another article.

³⁶The author of "New Steiner-Wadding Store" proposes that the date was 1844.

at South 6th and School streets looking for James Moorhead. Instead, they found his twelve year old grandson, Alexander T. Moorhead, who reproved Brown for his boldness. But that contact did serve to get them a meal at James Moorhead's house in spite of his wife's protest, a supply of food and a person to take them to their hiding place.³⁷

By the time the slave catchers arrived, the three were working on the farm of James Simpson near Home, Pennsylvania.³⁸ When Van Metre and the two slave catchers named Cunningham and Tilden located the fugitives, two of them fled. After a struggle, however, Cunningham and Tilden captured Hollingsworth and took him to a room at the Indiana House Hotel, which was owned by county sheriff David Ralston and located on Sixth and Philadelphia Streets.³⁹ The capture aroused community interest and it was not long before a crowd gathered on Philadelphia

³⁷Stephenson, "Underground Railroad"; "New Steiner-Wadding Store".

³⁸In his article, "It Seemed As Though Indiana Would Riot," Indiana Gazette, August 18, 1984, Clarence Stephenson states that the place was Phillips Mills or what is now Homer City, Pennsylvania, and implies that Hollingsworth was working there alone.

³⁹Penn Furniture was situated in this site for many years; the Dollar Bargain Store is currently located there.

Street.⁴⁰

As the news of the capture went throughout the county, more men came in by horseback and even people who were not openly supportive of the abolition of slavery were outspoken in their protest against this "outrage on humanity". One group began to shout: "Down with the man-hunter!" Another group continued: "Tear the house down over his head and set the man free!" Sheriff Ralston tried to intervene and ordered the crowd to disperse, but they paid no attention to him. Dr. Mitchell finally succeeded in quieting the crowd, but vigilant watchers still remained.⁴¹

Acting on the advice of his friend William Banks, an abolitionist and attorney, Mitchell filed a writ of habeas corpus on behalf of Hollingsworth and Banks presented the petition to the court. Henry D. Foster and Archibald A. Stewart of Westmoreland County represented the slave catchers and the Honorable Thomas White presided over the case. The basis of the writ was that there was no evidence to prove that slavery legally existed in Virginia. On these grounds, Hollingsworth

⁴⁰Blockson, Underground Railroad, 101-102; Stephenson, "It Seemed"; Clarence Stephenson, "Freeing of Black Slave by Judge Drew Cheers," Indiana Gazette, September 15, 1984.

⁴¹Stephenson, "It Seemed".

could not be claimed as Van Metre's personal property. Judge White granted the petition and directed the sheriff to release Hollingsworth from custody while outside the men cheered and the ladies waved their handkerchiefs. As a result, Hollingsworth returned to the Mitchell farm a free man for the time, but he always stood in peril of being recaptured.⁴²

Van Metre did not accept the loss of his personal property graciously nor did he forget the doctor's actions; in 1847, Van Metre brought a suit against Mitchell. Judge Robert C. Grier heard the case in Pittsburgh, and after it lingered in the United States Circuit Court until 1853, Grier awarded Van Metre five hundred dollars plus court costs, amounting to over five thousand dollars. This legal action forced Mitchell to sell a portion of his pine forest to pay court expenses, but even this setback did not deter him from his efforts for the Underground Railroad. One source states that he was the only person in the entire state of Pennsylvania ever convicted of aiding runaway slaves. After the trial was over, Mitchell asserted: "I'll do it again if they take every dollar I have," and he faithfully

⁴²Blockson, Underground Railroad, 101-102; Stephenson, "It Seemed"; Stephenson, "Freeing".

continued his anti-slavery efforts until his death⁴³ in April of 1863.⁴⁴

Even though Indiana County was well over the Mason-Dixon line, fugitives from slavery had to be ever vigilant. There is some conflict about the date⁴⁵, but there is no doubt that the slave catchers made another attempt to reenslave Anthony Hollingsworth and his two friends. By this time, the Indiana County Underground Railroad had lost some of its secrecy. After his trial, Hollingsworth took refuge with some other slaves at a site near Clymer. The neighbors were well aware of the location and neighborhood youth frequently gathered there to hear the stories and experiences of the escaped slaves. By September, two other fugitives joined Brown, Harris and Hollingsworth at their cabin.⁴⁶

The next attempt to recapture the fugitives brought eight

⁴³Rellick lists Mitchell's death as April 1862, but most sources say 1963.

⁴⁴Blockson, Underground Railroad, 102; Helman, "History", [22]; Clarence Stephenson, "Slavery Becomes Issue Following Indiana Episodes," Indiana Gazette, November 24, 1984; Rellick, "Dr. Robert Mitchell".

⁴⁵Some sources indicate this occurred in 1845; others, in 1847.

⁴⁶Clarence Stephenson, "He Was So Scared He Had A Purple Color," Indiana Gazette, October 13, 1984.

slave catchers and four local men including the sheriff to apprehend them. They arrived at the cabin just before daylight carrying clubs and broke down the door with a log. Charlie Brown fought valiantly, but finally he and the two newest fugitives were recaptured, taken back and sold further South. Harris and Hollingsworth, however, fought off the slave catchers and escaped capture, but realized that they would be safer elsewhere. Harris went to live with a friend near Pittsburgh and Hollingsworth fled to Canada, where he settled in (Windsor) Stratford, became a barber and joined the Church of England.⁴⁷

The Fugitive Slave Act permitted the recapture of fugitive slaves, but even free Blacks had to be ever vigilant. It was not uncommon for abductors to take them to the South and sell them as slaves as well. There is one abduction tale about a local free Black man from the West Lebanon area whose mother, Ellen Carroll, died in 1890 at a reputed age of 106. Allegedly, her son went to work one day in the fields for a local farmer and never returned. Locals wholeheartedly believed that the "snatchers" had gotten him.⁴⁸

In addition to these narrative accounts of Underground

⁴⁷Ibid.; Stephenson, "Slavery Becomes".

⁴⁸Stephenson, "County Blacks".

Railroad activity in Indiana County, there is also some census data that indicates local activity. The documentary evidence is sketchy, but some of the travelers on the Underground Railroad may have returned to Indiana County to reside when the danger of capture passed. The 1870 census of Indiana County only indicates that some Southern born Blacks settled locally. The 1880 census, however, introduces us to the Boyer family, whose children's birthplaces suggest familial ties to the Underground Railroad system.⁴⁹

Anderson Boyer, a forty-four-year-old farm laborer and teamster in Burrell Township (Blairsville area) and his parents were all born in Virginia. Mary, his twenty-six-year-old wife who kept the house and reared their three children, was born in Kentucky, as were her parents. Their children, eight-year-old William, three-year-old John and one-year-old Mary, though, had probably never set foot in the South as they were born in Ontario C.W. (Canada West). While this is not conclusive evidence of the extent or even the existence of the Underground Railroad in Indiana County, it does support other narrative

⁴⁹United States, Department of the Interior, Bureau of the Census, "Ninth Census, 1870: Indiana County"; United States, Department of the Interior, Bureau of the Census, "Tenth Census, 1880: Indiana County", 130.5.

evidence. Without some prior contact or knowledge of Indiana County, it is doubtful that a family would have such an affinity for rural life in Southwestern Pennsylvania that they would leave Canada to pursue the opportunity.⁵⁰

The Boyer family, however, was not alone in the quest for new opportunities following the Emancipation Proclamation, which became effective on January 1, 1864. After Emancipation, some slaves stayed on their master's land, but others did not. Those who left may have moved only to the next plantation or nearby settlement, but even if they moved only locally, that action itself permitted them to prove to themselves and their former owners that they now controlled their own labor and family life. The physical act of moving asserted their freedom in a tangible way and supplied a viable avenue for testing the true meaning of Emancipation.⁵¹

The decision to leave or to stay was never an easy one for African Americans. In slavery, leaving meant running away, and it was a lifetime commitment. Later migrants most likely suspected as much. Both slaves and later freedmen were for the

⁵⁰Ibid.

⁵¹Afro-American, Of Color, 79; James R. Grossman, Land of Hope: Chicago, Black Southerners, and the Great Migration (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1989), 21.

most part a landless people in terms of property ownership; however, working the land brought a familiarity and emotional bond that was not often broken easily. The decision to leave was difficult, but even this difficulty could not forestall migration altogether. Perhaps it was the ties to the land and family that influenced those who chose to remain in the South and depend upon the hope of Reconstruction. Others could not help but yearn for better yet undiscovered opportunities, and so they bade good-bye to their family and friends and ventured to the North and to the West.

The stream of migration out of the South at this time, however, was only a trickle compared to the flood of later migrants. Early post-Civil War migration peaked about 1870 and the principal relocators to the North were those from the border states, Virginia in particular. Locally, this was true as well since a high percentage of those born out of state in both the 1870 and 1880 censuses were from Virginia. In fact, much of the growth in Northern cities prior to 1910 was from border states, as the Cotton States of the deeper South tended to exchange population among themselves. The freed slaves living in the Deep South simply lacked the means and the vision for such a journey. At that time, they were more focused upon the

possibility of change in the region and the hope that they could obtain land of their own.⁵²

The more significant movement out of the South that occurred in this era was westward in what came to be known as the "Kansas Fever Exodus". The movement began in the spring of 1879 and grew quickly, drawing participants from Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, Georgia and South Carolina. It was unique in several ways. First, it was a direct rural-to-rural migration while later movements tended to be more rural-to-urban. Second, it took on a religious and somewhat political meaning for the participants. It was a social movement and these migrants became known as the "Exodusters".⁵³

This movement is also noteworthy because of the level of organization and because there were leaders. Two of the key

⁵²Johnson and Campbell, Black Migration, 46; Sonya Stewart, "Unto Us A Child Is Born: A Demographic Study of the African American Community in Indiana County from 1850-1880," 1992, Unpublished manuscript, Tables 24-25; Thomas Jackson Woofter, Jr., Negro Migration: Changes in Rural Organization and Population Belt of the Cotton Belt (New York: Negro University Press, 1920), 170.

⁵³Grossman, Land of Hope, 23; Joe William Trotter, Jr., "Black Migration Studies: The Future," conclusion in The Great Migration in Historical Perspective: New Dimensions of Race, Class and Gender (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991), 150; Arna Bontemps and Jack Conroy, Anyplace But Here (New York: Hill and Wang, 1966), 58-59.

leaders were Benjamin "Pap" Singleton and Henry Adams. Singleton, the self-styled "Moses of the Colored Exodus", was born a slave in Nashville, Tennessee, in 1809. In later years, he often boasted: "I am the whole cause of the migration. Nobody but me". He also asserted that he led 82,000 Blacks out of the South, a boast that seemed to grow with his age.⁵⁴

While Singleton's declaration of the number of migrants to Kansas in his day is certainly an overestimation, census data does indicate a notable increase in the Black population of Kansas throughout the course of two decades. In 1860, there were 627 Blacks living in the state of Kansas. By 1880, there were 43,100 as the result of migration and natural increase. Since not all migrants remain permanently in their new location, we can expect that the initial migration to Kansas during this time exceeded the final population difference of 42,373. One source states more conservatively that approximately 60,000 Blacks relocated to Kansas at this time. For many of these migrants, however, Kansas was not the Promised Land that they had hoped for. Disillusioned, they returned to the South or moved on to other states where they could find land or gainful

⁵⁴Ibid., 54-58; Johnson and Campbell, Black Migration, 53.

employment.⁵⁵

There was no single reason for this exodus, but rather several contributing factors. The push factors included the nature of and the corruption within the credit system of Southern landowners, low cotton prices, crop failure and a lack of political and civil rights. The pull factors included rumors of free land and money in Kansas, as well as special rates and transportation provided by railroads and steamship companies. Although "Pap" Singleton would never have admitted it nor fully believed it, in retrospect, we can see that the leaders of the movement did not cause the migration. In reality, they simply helped to facilitate this early social protest movement that actually took on the form of physical movement.⁵⁶

When the hopeful migrants reached Kansas, many of them arrived impoverished and with no visible means of support. Their survival depended upon the efforts of organizations such as the Kansas Freedman's Relief Association. The native White people of Kansas were for the most part favorably disposed toward the "Exodusters" and initially assisted as they could in relief efforts, but overall they lacked the resources necessary

⁵⁵Ibid., 52-53.

⁵⁶Ibid., 53-54.

to deal with mass migration. In response, some Kansas towns discouraged Black settlement altogether by passing "sundowner ordinances". These ordinances stated that Blacks could not remain overnight within their town limits. In spite of this, Blacks bought farms or homesteaded, settled in towns and cities and built their own communities. The all-Black towns of Baxter Springs, Nicodemus, Morton City and Singleton are a tribute to their determination.⁵⁷

The migrants who successfully relocated were not the only ones who ultimately benefitted from their efforts, as the mass outmigration from the South left those behind in a better bargaining position. This, of course, displeased White planters immensely, and some attempted to stop the heavy outmigration through blockages, threats and violence. One particularly moving incident involved a man who earned enough money to purchase a lot, built a cottage and saved one hundred dollars. He temporarily returned from Kansas to retrieve his family when a group of Whites seized him, cut off both of his hands, threw them in his wife's lap and then challenged them: "Now go to

⁵⁷Ibid., 55.

Kansas and work!"⁵⁸

With every migration, there is a counter stream, but the size of the counter stream back to the South during the Kansas migration was small. If the above-related incident was in any way representative or typical of the treatment returning migrants received, there is little wonder that many "preferred death on the cold Kansas prairies to a retreat to the balmy Southland". Overall, it appears that this movement was a fairly efficient one, but it pales in comparison to what would follow.⁵⁹

⁵⁸Bontemps, Anyplace, 65.

⁵⁹Johnson and Campbell, Black Migration, 56.

CHAPTER II

THE GREAT MIGRATION AND ITS AFTERMATH

The next mass migratory movement of the African Americans is commonly known as the Great Migration and, along with the Civil War and Emancipation, it is perhaps one of the most significant events in their history. As recounted in the previous chapter, Black movement from the South in the late 1870's was westward, but in the 1890's, there was a perceptible northward shift. By then, some Blacks who were born in freedom began to leave their native regions for the cities of the Northeast. Some historians date the beginning of the mass migration to the North from 1915 while others choose 1916. In either case, during this era the stream from the South became a surging tide and would continue on deep and strong through World War I and into the 1920's.⁶⁰

While the Great Migration is mostly considered to be an African American achievement, it is important to remember that

⁶⁰August Meier and Elliott Rudwick, From Plantation to Ghetto, rev. ed. (New York: Hill and Wang, 1970), 213; Peter Gottlieb, Making Their Own Way: Southern Blacks' Migration to Pittsburgh, 1916-1930 (Urbana: University of Chicago Press, 1987), 1; Audrey Olsen Faulkner et al., When I Was Comin' Up: An Oral History of Aged Blacks (Hamden, Conn.: Archon Books, 1982), 13.

migration of this time was also a part of a broader worldwide pattern of urbanization. Traditional agricultural economy was fading and a technological revolution was underway. Around the globe, industrial technology was advancing. As it did, the call issued forth for a labor force to fill the jobs that the new technology created. People everywhere answered the call, hoping that it meant a better life for them, and perhaps more importantly, for their children. The dream of land subsided; the quest for jobs began.⁶¹

Urbanization and "Northernization" did not happen in one fell swoop. In the United States, initial migration and population shifts were not South to North or even rural to urban. Often the first move of African Americans from the open country, farm or plantation was to a rural village or small town. Others moved from rural agricultural pursuits to rural industrial opportunities. All in all, the movement did not begin as a field to factory movement, but rather from field to field, field to mine or mine to mine. Because of ties to the

⁶¹Gottlieb, Making Their Own, 220; Joe William Trotter, Jr., "Black Migration Studies: The Future," conclusion in The Great Migration in Historical Perspective: New Dimensions of Race, Class and Gender (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991), 150.

land, the absence of marketable skills or a lack of vision and financial means, many times a rural people chose to remain rural.⁶²

This is not to say, however, that they did not move at all. Many migrated within their state or county of origin as the opportunity presented itself or crop failure and other natural disasters necessitated the move. Prior to World War I, most Black Southerners who relocated did so within their home counties or sought agricultural opportunities in Florida, the Mississippi Delta, Kansas, Arkansas, Oklahoma, Texas or parts of Alabama and Georgia. Again, this was not solely an African American phenomena, as both they and Southern Whites initially left rural areas and agricultural pursuits at approximately the same rate and for the same economic motivations.⁶³

Unfortunately for most, land ownership and the independence

⁶²Thomas Jackson Woofter, Jr., Negro Migration: Changes in Rural Organization and Population Belt of the Cotton Belt (New York: Negro University Press, 1920), 123.

⁶³James R. Grossman, Land of Hope: Chicago, Black Southerners, and the Great Migration (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1989), 68; James R. Grossman, "The White Man's Union: The Great Migration and the Resonance of Race and Class in Chicago, 1916-1922," in The Great Migration in Historical Perspective: New Dimensions of Race, Class and Gender, ed. Joe William Trotter, Jr., (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991), 85; Meier and Rudwick, Plantation, 214.

it promised remained elusive. A minority abandoned their fruitless dreams and headed for Southern cities. African American migrants included a strong representation of women, as many of the job opportunities were for domestics. Between 1900 and 1910, there was a significant population increase of Blacks in Southern cities, and Northern cities experienced an increase as well. The Black population of Birmingham, for example, increased by 215% and Atlanta, by 45%. New York City's Black population also expanded by 51% and Philadelphia and Chicago by over 30%. Even so, in 1910, African Americans were still predominantly Southern (90%) and rural (75-80%).⁶⁴

It was World War I that finally provided the opportunity which many Black Southerners sought. It changed the small drift out of rural areas which characterized the post-Civil War era into a significant movement. The war produced an economic boom that opened up many employment alternatives, particularly in Northern industry. Prior to 1914, the large numbers of immigrants arriving from Europe provided employers with a labor force which they considered preferable to hiring Blacks. The outbreak of the war in 1914, however, brought this practice to a

⁶⁴Grossman, "White Man's Union," 85; Meier and Rudwick, From Plantation, 213-215; Woofter, Negro Migration, 92.

screeching halt. It both cut off the stream of immigrant labor from Europe and created a vacuum in Northern factories. When confronted with the loss of their traditional source of labor, Northern employers had to seek out alternatives that they had previously considered to be unacceptable. These alternatives included both White women and Black Southerners. Even if the positions were at the bottom of the ladder of opportunity, out-of-work Southern Blacks were only too happy to fill them. The cash wages offered in Ford's factories were a potent lure to a group of people who rarely if ever saw actual currency under the sharecropping system. Thus, Black expansion began to exceed that of any other immigrant group.⁶⁵

While World War I industry did provide new opportunities previously unknown to Southern Blacks, this factor alone did not send them trekking North. Every person who left the South behind was motivated by a set of circumstances peculiar to himself. In some cases, the pull factors held less significance than the push factors; in others, the pull was irresistible.

⁶⁵Grossman, Land of Hope, 13-14; Arna Bontemps and Jack Conroy, Anyplace But Here (New York: Hill and Wang, 1966), 159; Ibid., 291; John E. Bodnar et al., Lives of Their Own: Blacks, Italians, and Poles in Pittsburgh, 1900-1960 (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1982), 29.

The improved economic circumstances were not the only motivation to seek greater wealth and opportunity in an urban center. The overt or covert persecution of Southern Blacks was sometimes enough to tip the scales in favor of starting over in the North. There were factors each individual had to consider, and when they weighed them, the decision often was to leave their old lives behind.⁶⁶

These decisions and the movement they created during the World War I years most likely resulted from patterns initiated earlier. The push factors were numerous. Certainly hostile race relations, riots, mob violence, night terrorism, lynching, police brutality, Jim Crow laws and disenfranchisement were motivating factors enough, but economic crisis impacted as well. The cotton market suffered from the ravages of the boll weevil and there was massive flooding in Alabama and Mississippi in 1915. Blacks also found themselves dislocated in Southern agriculture as the work relegated to them was seasonal and marginal in nature.⁶⁷

⁶⁶Bontemps and Conroy, Anyplace, 10.

⁶⁷Darlene Clark Hine, "Black Migration to the Urban Midwest: The Gender Dimension, 1915-1945," in The Great Migration in Historical Perspective: New Dimensions of Race, Class and Gender, ed. Joe William Trotter, Jr. (Bloomington: Indiana

C. Otis, a resident of Ithaca, New York, acknowledges the influence of the push factors upon migrants without minimizing the pull of higher wages in the North. He does note, however, that wages have always been higher there. From his point of view, it appears that the freedom offered by Emancipation was not sufficient. His opinion, which was published in the New York Tribune, offers an explanation for northward migration:

Here is why he [the Negro] leaves the South: Unjust treatment, failure to secure a square deal in the courts, taxation without representation, denial of the right to vote thru (sic) the subterfuge of the white primary, no representation in any form of government, poor schools, unjust pay for and division of crops, insulting of women without any redress, and public torture. The Negro longs for free air, happiness and all that goes to make for a full and free citizenship--and that brings him North.⁶⁸

Other writers explain migration patterns differently.

Clyde Kiser proposes that the massive Black migration began not as a reaction to political oppression nor even as the movement of an exceptionally motivated "talented tenth". Instead, he

University Press, 1991), 139; Daniel M. Johnson and Rex R. Campbell, Black Migration in America: A Social Demographic History (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1981), 85; Shirley Ann Moore, "Getting There, Being There: African-American Migration to Richmond, California, 1910-1945," in The Great Migration in Historical Perspective: New Dimensions of Race, Class and Gender, ed. Joe William Trotter, Jr. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991), 115.

⁶⁸C. Otis, "Why They Come North," Opportunity 1 (September 1923): 283.

asserts that in an attempt to supplement the family income, individuals just gradually moved in wider and wider geographical circles. This occurred as one or more family members migrated temporarily to seek work when agricultural income fell short of meeting basic material needs. These short-term absences permitted the rest of the family to remain intact at home and served a dual purpose. First, they supplied necessary additional income. Second, this type of travel provided them with a vision of other possibilities beyond farming by familiarizing Blacks with the wage income system.⁶⁹

Obtaining a vision beyond farming was a vital step, for in the rural South, farming as an occupation implied sharecropping. Many Blacks worked in this system, which produced a cycle of poverty and oppression rather than moving them toward the eventual possibility of land ownership. Black rural residents commonly became tenants or landless farm laborers. Tenant farming assumed several forms, which varied mainly in the level of control the tenant possessed over his own labor and that of his family. While cash renting afforded the tenant the most control, it was still possible for the unscrupulous landowner to

⁶⁹Bodnar, Lives of Their Own, 31.

manipulate the books and demote the tenant to the less lucrative share renting or share cropping. The unmotivated tenant could shortchange a landlord by not producing an adequate crop following an advance of land, seed and clothing; however, it was more often the landlord who shortchanged the tenant, for he had the law on his side as well as other forms of power and coercion. It was a criminal offense for the tenant to leave the contract while he was in debt, and so even following Emancipation, landowners could practically enslave their labor force once again through debt peonage.⁷⁰

It was nearly impossible to make any money sharecropping and living conditions were deplorable. As could be expected, migration from farm to farm was common. The typical sharecropping family would move early in the year to a primitive two or three-room cabin on a new plantation. The cabin rarely had plumbing, electricity or insulation, and the only heat came from a woodburning stove. During the winter, the cold air crept in through the cracks and usually the roof leaked. Living space was tight and families often slept two and three to a bed. Socialization frequently was limited to family or the plantation

⁷⁰Faulkner, When I Was, 212; Woofter, Negro Migration, 70-72; Ibid., 85-86.

and education ended at the eighth grade. Students were often behind their age-appropriate grade level, and if they had texts at all, they were tattered leftovers from White schools. The planter frequently shut down the school when there was field work to be done and some children only received instruction when it rained during the four-to-five-month school year.⁷¹

With every move came the search for an end to the cycle of debt. In the end, those who left farming behind tended to be motivated by a combination of factors, which they often summarized as "bettering my condition". While a few migrants may have fit the stereotypical migrant who left his fields half-plowed, more often the decision took place within the context of community discussion in church or other popular gathering places. In fact, migration was of such great interest at this time that migration clubs formed to take advantage of discounted railroad fares. When employment opportunities became available and Northern industries began to send recruiters to small Southern towns, there is little wonder that many African

⁷¹Nicholas Lemann, The Promised Land: The Great Black Migration and How It Changed America (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1991, 17-18.

Americans stood ready to go.⁷²

Leaving the sharecropping system which had been a way of life for many could be frightening at first, and yet, at the same time, a welcome relief. In the long run though, for those who pursued rural industry instead of urban opportunities, it may have been a painful disappointment. They broke free from the pitfalls of agricultural sharecropping, only to find themselves working in an "industrial sharecropping" system.⁷³ Now, instead of being advanced seed and land by a named landlord, they could find themselves advanced provisions and a place to stay by a faceless company. The debt cycle operated in much the same way, and it was not long before they "owed their soul to the company store". The control over their own labor was still lacking and the dishonest bookkeeper could just as easily exploit them. In addition, racial persecution and fear did not disappear; it only took on a more subtle or different form.

The experiences of urban and rural migrants differed, but in general, few migrants were welcomed with open arms. In 1917,

⁷²Grossman, Land of Hope, 6; Grossman, "White Man's", 87-88; Faulkner, When I Was, 214.

⁷³This author must give credit here to Keith Mangus who coined this phrase and assisted in developing the concept.

there were race riots in Philadelphia and Chester, Pennsylvania, as well as East St. Louis, Illinois. The riots in East St. Louis were the most serious racial incidents of the early twentieth century and ended with the death of at least thirty-nine African Americans. Similar riots occurred over twenty times in the "Red Summer of 1919" in Washington, D.C.; Elaine, Arkansas; Longview, Texas; and Chicago, Illinois. Those Blacks who dared to "invade" White areas were subject to attacks upon their person in addition to violence directed toward their property. Their homes were potential targets for stoning or bombing by those who wanted them to leave.⁷⁴

The Black family also experienced difficulties from within. There was a high incidence of female-headed households and matrifocal families. Whether or not the pattern had African roots, it certainly was a legacy of the plantation. Relationships on the plantations had been difficult and marriage was often a bitter disappointment. One woman recalls: "There was no till death do you part." Her best explanation for the failure of these marriages was the unflagging pressure of poverty and the "no-goodness" of most men, which included their

⁷⁴Meier and Rudwick, Plantation, 217-220.

drinking, violence, unreliability and infidelity.⁷⁵

Unfortunately, these patterns persisted under the conditions of urban life. When migrants moved into the cities, it was easier for women to obtain and hold jobs than for men. Women tended to secure work as domestic servants, which was steadier, and in some cases, higher-paying employment than that of their male counterparts. In a society where men feel responsible for the support of their family, Black men understandably often felt inadequate. As a result, separations were frequent and there were many households where the mother or grandmother was the central figure.⁷⁶

Another problem migrating families faced was housing. Working class housing was notoriously bad. As it was, Blacks and Whites competed for limited housing, but housing for Black workers worsened during the rapid in-migration. Even when a family could afford to purchase a home, White realtors as a rule refused to sell homes to Black people in White neighborhoods and White property owners formed associations to keep Blacks out. Pittsburgh tended to differ from this trend, at least in the early years. In 1907, there were small areas where Blacks lived,

⁷⁵Ibid., 231; Lemann, Promised Land, 33.

⁷⁶Meier and Rudwick, Plantation, 231.

but no extensive Black neighborhoods. Blacks resided in certain localities, but they were not segregated. This did not mean that there were no exclusively Black streets, but more often there would be a row of three to seven houses where Black people lived while White people inhabited the rest of the street.⁷⁷

After 1915, however, the influx of Black migrants changed the structure of the Black community in Pittsburgh. If categorized on the basis of income and occupation, most migrants occupied the middle or lower socio-economic groups. As migration continued, this part of the population swelled enormously. The migrants found themselves at a distance from both the skilled and unskilled wage earners as well as from the elite by their recent arrival in the city, their lack of education and their rural background. Some migrants came from cultured urban or landowning rural families, but the housing shortage forced them to take up residence among an unstable lower class. Under these conditions, Pittsburgh Blacks easily ignored the newcomers' backgrounds and aspirations.⁷⁸

If the migrants did not come because a job awaited them,

⁷⁷Gottlieb, Making Their Own, 69-70; Meier and Rudwick, Plantation, 217-218; Gottlieb, Making Their Own, 67.

⁷⁸Ibid., 187.

once settled in, the next step was to find one. Since there was a war going on, the military was a possibility, but African Americans faced an extensive amount of discrimination there. They could serve in the Navy, but only as "mess boys". The Army accepted them as enlisted men, but recruits found it nearly impossible to get promoted or receive a commission. The Marines flatly refused to admit them. For those who sought employment in the city, there were unfair hiring practices to face. This was also true for those who sought rural industrial opportunities, and there was often violence as well, particularly if they began work as strikebreakers. For those who were miners, there were other unique day-to-day hazards, which included the toll of the heavy work upon their bodies, black lung (miner's asthma), explosions and slate falls. Thus, even if for different reasons, Black workers and their families continued to live with the ever present fear of loss and death.⁷⁹

When they arrived in Northern cities, few migrants brought much with them in material wealth, but there is little doubt

⁷⁹Meier and Rudwick, Plantation, 218; Joe William, Trotter, Jr., "Race, Class, and Industrial Change: Black Migration to Southern West Virginia, 1915-1932," chap. in The Great Migration in Historical Perspective: New Dimensions of Race, Class and Gender (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991), 60.

that they brought a good deal in terms of cultural wealth. One of their cultural treasures was their ability to cope with adversity. Another valuable resource they frequently utilized was a strong network of friends and kin. While men could gradually work their way North city by city doing odd jobs, women usually travelled the entire distance in one trip. Women also tended to have a relative or fictive kin waiting to assist them in the process of securing housing and employment. If an entire family chose to migrate, there were other options. Some sold what they owned to pay for the trip; some secured their belongings with neighbors or relatives; others simply abandoned their property and personal belongings and left. Another typical way to resolve the problem of raising capital was to have one family member go North and later send for the others. This was and continues to be a popular vehicle for family migration.⁸⁰

These family ties that influenced the journey to the North were also the ties that carried migrants back to the South. These trips home were a prominent feature of the Great Migration. Homesickness and loneliness routinely combined with

⁸⁰Hine, "Black Migration", 131; Grossman, Land of Hope, 105.

a variety of other factors to necessitate interstate travel. Migrants returned to their former homes when they fell ill, when they lost their jobs or when they faced intense hostility from Whites; but, even more often they made the trip South to maintain emotional and social connections with their original communities. Often, these trips were regularly scheduled events that coincided with the Christmas holidays, the lay-by period in cotton cultivation, church revivals, barbecues, family reunions, homecomings and community celebrations.⁸¹

After a while these trips became second nature. This was also true of other migrant groups. European immigrants found the Atlantic no great barrier to such journeys home, and Appalachian Whites who settled in industrial areas also visited their previous homes with frequency. For migrants from the South, the restrictions of distance and cost were of minor significance and if their community of origin was within a day's journey of their new home, it was no great imposition to shuttle

⁸¹Peter Gottlieb, "Rethinking the Great Migration: A Perspective from Pittsburgh," in The Great Migration in Historical Perspective: New Dimensions of Race, Class and Gender, ed. Joe William Trotter, Jr. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991), 73.

back and forth for regular and frequent visits.⁸²

In addition to the pleasurable social aspects of seeing family and acquaintances, there were other reasons for the visits as well. Some men used the trips to their former homes to seek a suitable life partner. In the cities, eligible men far outnumbered the available women, and in addition, single Southern males often found it difficult to relate to women in the North. Their lack of education, the rough work they did and their strange speech and dress patterns did not endear them to many Northern-born Black women. In turn, they found that the expectations of those women just as unappealing; so, many opted to marry former sweethearts or other Southern women. Their unwillingness to irrevocably abandon the South also manifested itself in food preferences and preparation styles, the reliance upon folk remedies and superstitions, religious practices, games, family structure, social networks and music, most notably the blues. By their conscious or unconscious participation in these traditions, Southern Black migrants forged their own

⁸²Earl Lewis, "Expectations, Economic Opportunities and Life in the Industrial Age: Black Migration to Norfolk, Virginia," in The Great Migration in Historical Perspective: New Dimensions of Race, Class and Gender, ed. Joe William, Trotter, Jr. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991), 31.

community identity separate from both Whites and indigenous Blacks.⁸³

Black migrants undoubtedly benefitted from the support of their new community, but while family members of other ethnic groups could assist directly in job procurement, Blacks could usually only point their friends and relatives in the right direction. Kin and community, however, could and did assist in other ways. They offered advice in dealing with public officials, supplied funds, served as guides about the city and took others in as lodgers whether they needed the rent money or not. Where government assistance fell short, established families in the community met the needs of newer migrants out of personal and social obligation.⁸⁴

These same types of networks also benefitted those who relocated to rural areas. Black working class kin and friendship networks were especially important to the generation of Southern Black workers that emerged in the coal industry in the World War I era. Although there was public and private coercion to relocate, most migrants moved voluntarily and then

⁸³Gottlieb, Making Their Own, 188-189; Hine, "Black Migration", 134.

⁸⁴Bodnar, Lives of Their Own, 73; Grossman, Land of Hope, 133.

urged others to join them. The U.S. Attorney for the Southern District of Alabama investigated this phenomenon and discovered that at least ten percent of those who left the state had returned, but half of these returnees only came back for relatives and friends. It is ironic that coal companies actually hired recruiters to do exactly what the workers willingly did themselves. Family also influenced career choices of the generation that followed, and it was not at all uncommon for a father to pass his trade on to a son without consideration or room for discussion. Sons simply began mining and contributing to the family coffers when they came of age.⁸⁵

Once several families had established themselves in a new community, the re-creation of other institutions was inevitable. Religion was a particularly important African American institution, and it was not long before the rural Black Baptist church transformed itself into urban store-front evangelical churches and sects. The religious frenzy of Sunday worship spiritually and emotionally transported many communicants to another time and place. In this setting, they could briefly forget the realities of their daily lives. Church services and

⁸⁵Trotter, "Race, Class", 49-58.

activities benefitted the migrants by making the "settling in" process a little easier, but they also had some drawbacks. Too often many churches chose to address spiritual interests alone rather than community, social or welfare activities, thereby limiting the church's potential role as a source of support.⁸⁶

Nonetheless, Black churches continued to play an important part in the lives of Black workers between 1915 and 1950. In addition to providing socialization, another role the church filled was to provide a forum for ambitious men of humble origins who wished to develop their leadership talents. As a result, throughout the course of time the church did become more politically and socially active. Leadership development, however, was not without personal cost. While some churches could afford full-time pastors, other churches could not afford this option or did not desire it. As a result, the leaders of the latter group became bi-vocational either willingly or by default to make ends meet. Area industrialists supported church establishment⁸⁷ because they hoped it would encourage migrants to

⁸⁶Meier and Rudwick, Plantation, 230-231; Bodnar, Lives of Their Own, 199.

⁸⁷It appears that the church also supported the industry that provided sustenance for their congregants. August Meier and Elliott Rudwick in Black Detroit and the Rise of the UAW (New

remain and continue to supply them with a permanent force of cheap, unskilled laborers.⁸⁸

In addition to the church, other institutions such as the National Urban League and the press also played an important role in migration, settlement and adjustment. Articles in newspapers such as the Chicago Defender often assisted people in making arrangements for employment and accommodations before they left their Southern homes. Once in the North, other articles encouraged them to behave differently by leaving their plantation habits behind and assuming an attitude of equality. The National Urban League, founded in 1911, assisted in much the same way although its approach was more gradualist and conciliatory. One of its key roles, however was to act as a strong advocate for employing Black workers.⁸⁹

While the press and the National Urban League primarily

York: Oxford Press, 1979) note that the Baptist Ministers Conference went on record in support of both Ford and the AFL.

⁸⁸Dennis Clark Dickerson, "Black Workers and Black Churches in Western Pennsylvania 1915-1950," in Blacks in Pennsylvania History: Research and Educational Perspectives, ed. David McBride (Harrisburg: Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, 1983), 51; Meier and Rudwick, Plantation, 230; Dickerson, "Black Workers", 56-57.

⁸⁹Bontemps and Conroy, Anyplace, 161-174; Meier and Rudwick, Plantation, 222-223.

aided migrants to the city, the organization that serviced a broader African American population was the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). The NAACP, which had its roots in the Niagara Movement, began to organize in January 1909 when a group of Black intellectuals merged with a group of White liberals and socialists including Dr. Harry Moskowitz, Mary White Ovington and William English Walling. A public campaign that began symbolically on Lincoln's Birthday then drew the support of a larger group which included African American leaders such as W.E.B. Dubois, Ida Wells Barnett, W.L. Buckley, Rev. Francis J. Grimke and Mary Church Terrell. Over sixty people signed the Lincoln Day Call to pledge their support toward the creation of an organization to serve as a watchdog for the rights of people of color. Thus, on February 12, 1909, the NAACP was founded.⁹⁰

Since its inception, the NAACP has given a voice to those who had no voice and steadfastly struggled against discrimination and civil rights violations. Through the years the NAACP has been present when needed, whether in the

⁹⁰"NAACP: In The Beginning," Crisis 101 (January 1994): 28; Gregory Freeman, "NAACP's Tireless Breakthroughs," Crisis 101 (January 1994): 4.

courtroom, at the ballot box or in the streets. The people who formed the initial core of the group were socialists and intellectuals; however, the organization quickly found a home among the common people. Membership fees were low enough to include even the least fortunate, and even in the 1990's, one can join the organization for only ten dollars per year. Locally, the NAACP has often played a supportive role in both the effort to assure civil rights as well as educating the community in regard to racial issues.⁹¹

In the years following the Great Migration, the role of the NAACP and the other organizations that formed during this time would only increase since the stream of migration did not end following World War I. Rather, the stream narrowed and then surged again as it meandered through significant historical events such as the Great Depression, World War II and the turmoil of the 1960's. The patterns of movement, the push and pull factors and the difficulties and adjustments, in reality, changed very little and history tended to repeat itself with minor modifications. The children of former migrants now made up the faces of the indigenous African American community and

⁹¹Ibid.

the organizations they established only provided a stronger community for later migrants.

One of the more striking changes in the migration patterns between the 1930's and the 1940's though was in the motivations and attitudes of both the migrants and the general public. Migration in the Depression era of the 1930's was predominantly negative; migrants who sought to escape from poverty and misery caused serious public concern. By the 1940's, however, the nation as a whole was recovering financially and the public viewed migration as something more positive. Migrants of this era relocated expecting better wages, steadier employment and the acquisition of a higher level of skills. This time the public generally approved.⁹²

There were some promising New Deal programs, but in the end, although some Blacks did benefit, most fell short of achieving full racial equality. Those which most affected young African Americans were the 1933 Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) and the National Youth Administration (NYA). Although CCC camps were segregated in the South and some parts of the North, they were fairly well integrated in the New England states and

⁹²Howard B. Myers, "Defense Migration and Labor Supply," Journal of American Statistical Association 37 (March 1942): 69.

operated with a minimum of discrimination. Some of the residual discriminatory practices, however, included Blacks staying in CCC camps longer than Whites, slow movement to administrative positions and a restricted African American enrollment of only ten percent. In spite of these problems, participants in the program did receive some income and job experience. New Deal programs that were of considerably less assistance included the Federal Employment Relief Administration (FERA), the National Recovery Act (some said the acronym NRA stood for "Negro Ruined Again"), the Works Progress (Projects) Administration (WPA), the Agricultural Adjustment Authority (AAA) and the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA).⁹³

Migration during the World War II era reflected many of the earlier circumstances of World War I, but now there was an important additional incentive--Executive Order 8802. President Franklin D. Roosevelt issued this order and established the Committee on Fair Employment Practices in June 1941 following pressure from A. Philip Randolph and the March on Washington Movement. This order opened up jobs in the defense industry to African Americans, which in turn spurred migration to both

⁹³Leslie H. Fishel, Jr., "The Negro in the New Deal Era," Wisconsin Magazine of History 84 (Winter 1964-65): 113-115.

Southern and Northern cities where there were defense plants. Western Pennsylvanian towns and cities which experienced an increase as a result included Pittsburgh, Johnstown and Washington. Sadly though, in spite of the improvements in hiring practices, Blacks were still subject to the familiar policy of being the "last hired, first fired".⁹⁴

After the war years of the 1940's and into the 1960's, African Americans continued to leave the land for city life. Thousands of Southern farms vanished, causing approximately three and a half million Blacks to venture North. In spite of this social upheaval and revolutionary changes in civil rights during the 1950's and 1960's, factors influencing migration did not change significantly. Integration of buses, schools and lunch counters perhaps gave Southern Blacks an increased sense of dignity and self-worth, but it did little to feed their hungry children. In the aftermath of mechanized farming, jobs were hard to obtain and government assistance inadequate. At the very least, employment, job training and welfare benefits were more readily available in Northern cities. There were other attractions in Northern Black communities not even

⁹⁴Johnson and Campbell, Black Migration, 102-103.

imagined in the rural sharecropping South, including amenities such as sidewalks and sewers.⁹⁵

While "northernization" once again played a key role in the African American movement, this was also a time of continued urbanization. In 1960, more than two-thirds of the Black population resided in metropolitan areas, with more than half living in central cities. By 1970 though, seventy-four percent of the total African American population lived in metropolitan areas, with fifty-eight percent claiming the central city as their home. As rural and Southern migrants filled the cities, Whites and middle-class Blacks alike fled to the suburbs. What they left behind were structurally and socially deteriorating neighborhoods, a shrinking tax base and the roots of what William Julius Wilson termed the "ghetto underclass".⁹⁶

⁹⁵Carol Stack, All Our Kin: Strategies for Survival in a Black Community (New York: Harper and Row, 1974), 1; Robert Coles, The South Goes North (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1971), 20; Ibid., 551; Ibid., 4.

⁹⁶Johnson and Campbell, Black Migration, 152-155; William Julius Wilson, The Truly Disadvantaged: The Inner City, the Underclass and Public Policy (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1987), 6-8.

CHAPTER III

AFRICAN AMERICANS IN INDIANA COUNTY

The effect of this outmigration from urban areas is particularly pronounced in Pennsylvania cities such as Pittsburgh and Philadelphia. African American communities in Indiana County share a portion of these social ills, including poverty and inadequate housing, but overall they have fared much better. This is possibly the result of a more integrated community and a less burdened social service system. In order to place these problems in the proper historical framework, it is necessary to explore the movement of African Americans first to Pennsylvania and then to the more rural area of Indiana County.

Just as African Americans were among America's first settlers, they too have been present in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania from its earliest colonial days. Some came as indentured servants while others came as slaves of the Quakers who settled in Pennsylvania. Penn himself brought slaves with him, but freed them in 1701.⁹⁷ Pennsylvania claimed 1,000 slaves

⁹⁷Penn's final will does not mention any slaves.

in 1700, 2,500 in 1725 and 6,000 in 1750. Slaves and free Blacks made up about five percent of the population in 1725, but their numbers were insignificant when compared with the Southern colonies, where slaves often outnumbered Whites. Slaves in Pennsylvania mostly came from Africa via the British West Indies, where they underwent the "seasoning process", and they generally arrived through the port of Philadelphia. Their purchase price was approximately forty pounds sterling, but slavers would take grain or lumber in trade as well.⁹⁸

Large plantations in Pennsylvania were rare, and the majority of slaveholders owned only a few slaves. Slaves generally stayed in their master's home and were well fed and decently clothed, many times being treated as members of the family. Slaves who worked in the fields generally co-labored with their masters. Some slaves tended to domestic obligations, others were skilled craftsmen or worked in industry such as iron manufacturing.⁹⁹

In spite of the liberal conditions of slavery in

⁹⁸Ira Brown, The Negro in Pennsylvania History (University Park, Pa.: The Pennsylvania Historical Association, 1970), 1-2; Charles L. Blockson, Pennsylvania's Black History (Philadelphia: Portfolio Associates, Inc., 1975), 116-117.

⁹⁹Brown, Negro, 1-2.

Pennsylvania, in 1700, the Pennsylvania Assembly passed a "black code" designed to assist in returning fugitives to their masters. Africans found "footloose and idle" became slaves once again. In addition, they were not allowed to purchase liquor and they had no right to trial by jury. They could not go more than ten miles from their master's home without permission; they had to be home by 9PM; and they could not meet in groups of over four people. These discriminatory practices applied to all Blacks, whether slave, indentured or free, and in 1725, the Assembly also outlawed interracial marriage.¹⁰⁰

Fortunately, there were some strong anti-slavery sentiments in Pennsylvania, particularly from the Quakers. This paved the way for the Pennsylvania General Assembly to become the first to commit itself morally and legally to the emancipation of slaves. They passed an Act of Gradual Abolition in 1780 which stated that all children born to slaves would become free at age twenty-eight. The law also required that all masters register their slaves with the courts; those not registered by November 1, 1780, would go free. At the same time, the "black codes"

¹⁰⁰Ibid., 2-3.

which prohibited interracial marriage were repealed.¹⁰¹

Following this act, slave population figures declined steadily across the Commonwealth. In 1790, there were 3,737 slaves; in 1800, there were 1,706; in 1810, 795; in 1820, 211; and in 1840, only 64. In all likelihood, the law simply enhanced voluntary manumission, and by the year 1850, there were no slaves recorded in the census of the Commonwealth. Those who remained enslaved following the act mostly lived in Southwestern Pennsylvania, where the Quaker influence was the weakest.¹⁰²

Simultaneously, as could be expected, the free African American community experienced a steady growth. Pennsylvania had approximately 6,500 free Blacks in 1790. This grew to 38,000 in 1830 and climbed to 57,000 by 1860, which established Philadelphia as the home of the largest and wealthiest African American community in Pennsylvania. While only two percent of the state's total population was African American, as a group, they constituted four percent of Philadelphia's population. Pittsburgh's African American community numbered several

¹⁰¹Ibid., 6-8; Afro-American Historical and Cultural Museum, Of Color, Humanitas and Statehood: The Black Experience in Pennsylvania over Three Centuries 1681-1981 (Philadelphia: Eleazar Associates and Co., Ltd., 1981), 39.

¹⁰²Brown, Negro, 8.

thousand at that time, but there were fewer than two hundred living in Indiana County.¹⁰³

The identity of the first African Americans to arrive upon the scene in Indiana County remains unknown, but it is certain that those who came in the early years were not the doctors, lawyers, politicians, poets, writers, publishers or athletes that W.E.B. Dubois labeled the "talented tenth". Instead, these residents were individuals whose accomplishments went unrecognized for the most part as they raised families, worked hard to earn a living, paid taxes and fought wars or sent their children to do so.¹⁰⁴

One account of African American settlement in Indiana County suggests that the Adams family brought two slave families to Indiana with them, but granted them their freedom when they did not need slaves. The story continues that the freed slaves did not wish to leave, so they stayed in small cabins nearby. Another related local tradition holds that during the Revolutionary War a slave named John Harvey was driving a wagon

¹⁰³Afro-American, Of Color, 47; Brown, Negro, 37; Sonya Stewart, "Unto Us A Child Is Born: A Demographic Study of the African American Community in Indiana County from 1850-1880," Unpublished manuscript, 1992, Table 1.

¹⁰⁴Afro-American, Of Color, 102.

somewhere in the East (perhaps Bucks or Mifflin County) when he found a wounded officer named Adams. Harvey hid Adams in a barrel in his wagon and subsequently killed British officers with Adams' sword when they tried to search the wagon. Allegedly, Adams was so appreciative that he purchased Harvey and brought him to Indiana County when he relocated in the 1790's. The now-legendary sword remains with Harvey's descendants in the McClurkin family.¹⁰⁵

Although Harvey is credited by local tradition with being the pioneer of Black migration to Indiana County, he may have had other more ordinary, less heroic contemporaries. General Charles Campbell, who settled along Blacklick Creek at "Campbell's Mill" about 1772, claimed the ownership of a fifteen-year-old male and a forty-year-old female slave in 1780. The 1790 census listed him as owning three slaves, but in 1800, his household only included two "Colored" persons and no slaves. We can surmise from this that he most likely freed his slaves,

¹⁰⁵Clarence Stephenson, "County Historian Clarence Stephenson Starts Writing Account of Our First Black Settlers," Indiana Gazette, January 26, 1985; "At Chevy Chase-Indiana County Black History Topic of Meet," Indiana Evening Gazette, December 15, 1978; "Stephen Foster Inspired to Write Favorite Songs By Samuel Williams, Indiana's Escaped Slave from Kentucky," Indiana Evening Gazette, July 10, 1944.

but they continued to live with him. Josian Copley, who knew the Campbell family, recalled that Campbell had "one life slave, a faithful woman who seemed to be content with her lot in life."¹⁰⁶

In 1810, the date of the initial Indiana County census, there were only fourteen African Americans living in the county. All of them lived in Blacklick Township and in White households. Throughout the early part of the 1800's, the majority of Indiana County's Black residents continued to live in the Southern part of the county. In 1820, fifty-four Blacks lived in Conemaugh and Blacklick townships, but only seven in other parts of the county. The Black population had grown to 108 by 1830, but this was a relatively young population and only three people were over the age of fifty-five. From 1850 through 1880, Burrell, Conemaugh and White Townships, which include the towns of Blairsville, Saltsburg and Indiana, respectively, consistently had the highest concentrations of African Americans.¹⁰⁷

Total population figures during these early years appear to have peaked at 252 in 1850 and then declined sharply to 186 in

¹⁰⁶Stephenson, "County Historian".

¹⁰⁷Stephenson, "County Historian"; Stewart, "Unto Us", Tables 2-5.

1860 and to 181 in 1870. By 1880, however, the African American population was again on the rise and there were 223 African Americans in Indiana County. It is possible that the drastic population loss between 1850 and 1860 resulted from The Fugitive Slave Act of 1850, which allowed slave owners to retrieve runaway slaves. As mentioned in the earlier account of the Underground Railroad, slave catchers routinely visited Indiana County to search for runaways, and it is certainly possible that both fugitive and free Blacks felt that they would be safer in other places.¹⁰⁸

Such slave-catching practices may have also affected how many Blacks reported their Southern birth to the census taker or even spoke to the census taker at all. In the four censuses between 1850 and 1880, eighty-two to ninety-five percent of Black Indiana County residents claimed Pennsylvania as their birthplace. By 1870, however, seventeen listed Virginia and nine listed Maryland as their birthplace. This indicates either a migration from border states following the Civil War as discussed earlier or a more accurate listing of birthplace once

¹⁰⁸Ibid., Table 1.

the danger of reenslavement had passed.¹⁰⁹

While the end of the Civil War released a wave of northward migration and opportunities for some, the war itself also provided certain opportunities for others. Although African Americans were not initially welcomed with open arms in the military, many served with distinction during the Civil War. Those from Indiana County who joined the United States Colored Troops included Thomas Clark, Alexander Kelly, Samuel McClellen and George Brunson.¹¹⁰ In fact, both Brunson and Kelly received the Congressional Medal of Honor for exemplary military service.¹¹¹

For a variety of reasons including age and gender, others

¹⁰⁹Ibid., Tables 22-25.

¹¹⁰This name is also spelled Bronson.

¹¹¹Afro-American, Of Color, 15; William Mausteller, "Grave Marked, But Sgt. Kelly is Unknown Soldier," Pittsburgh Press, May 27, 1990; "Indiana County Has New War Hero," Greensburg Tribune-Review, May 27, 1990; "Civil War Soldier Honored With Medal," Indiana Gazette, October 9, 1990; William Mausteller, "2 Grave Plaques Revive Echo of Glory," Pittsburgh Press, September 30, 1990; David I. Minkow, "Heroes' Relatives Sought," Pittsburgh Post Gazette, October 8, 1990; "For a hero," Pittsburgh Press, November 11, 1990; "Ex-countian Medal of Honor Winner in 1865," Indiana Gazette, December 31, 1990; United States, Department of the Army, Public Information Division, The Medal of Honor of the United States Army ([Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1948]), 173-174; Irvin H. Lee, Negro Medal of Honor Men, 3rd ed. (New York: Dodd, Mead and Co., [1969]), 32-33.

could not take advantage of such opportunities, and one of the most significant problems that early African Americans in Indiana County faced was a lack of financial resources. In 1850, the community corporately possessed only \$4200 in real property. By 1860, the value of real and personal property totalled only \$29,405¹¹² and then dropped to \$26,420 in 1870. Interestingly enough, between 1850 and 1860 a woman owned the highest-valued property. Heston (Ester) George's property, which was worth \$1000 in 1850, increased in value to \$10,000 by 1860, at which time she also owned valuable personal property. Of even greater interest is the shift in racial identification as her wealth increased. When she owned \$1000 in 1850, she was listed as Black, but when her holdings increased to \$10,000¹¹³ in 1860, she was listed as Mulatto. In Latin America, people say that money "lightens the skin" which means that in a society with a hierarchy based on skin color, money moves a person up the social ladder. Perhaps this is the case in nineteenth

¹¹²Stewart, "Unto Us", Table 31.

¹¹³This could be attributed to census error, but other courthouse documents reveal that Ms. George left a sizable estate, so \$10,000 may be an inflated but not an unbelievable figure.

century Indiana County as well.¹¹⁴

With the exception of Esther George, Black women overall had little real or personal property, but this is hardly surprising considering that it is generally occupation which creates wealth. No women in the 1850 census had any listed occupation and those listed in subsequent years were either domestics or engaged in "pink collar" work. Throughout these years, women worked as servants, washer women, cooks or keeping their own house, but by 1880 one woman had become a hairdresser. In these years, men's work was more diverse, but choices were still limited by a lack of skills or education. Most were laborers, farmers and coal miners, but there were also barbers, draymen, hostlers, tanners, wagon drivers, blacksmiths, boatmen, salt boilers, cooks, hotel porters and stable boys. Farming was most likely an avocation for many, but it had become a less popular primary occupation as more opportunities became available.¹¹⁵

In the early years, occupational choices available to African Americans were somewhat limited because of a lack of education. Literacy rates for adults and school attendance for

¹¹⁴Ibid., Tables 30-32.

¹¹⁵Ibid., Tables 33-36.

children of school age both reflect this. In 1850, only sixty-five percent of the total adult population was literate, but this fell to fifty-two percent by 1880. Females outperformed males in 1850, but by 1880 their literacy rate was cut almost in half. Since either full-time or part-time farming was a way of life for many, school attendance was also sporadic. Only one-third to one-half of all school aged children five to eighteen attended school in these years and by 1880, female school attendance dropped so low that more than twice as many females stayed home went to school. This drop may have been the result of the immigration of families from the South who had little exposure to formal education. It is likely that newer families placed less value on school attendance than the more indigenous community.¹¹⁶

The family, however, was undoubtedly valued equally by both the indigenous community as well as the new arrivals, as community and family were often one in the same. Throughout the early years, there were both African American headed families and individuals living with non-related Whites in a hotel or in a domestic work setting. Culturally, though, even the African

¹¹⁶Ibid., Tables 42-43.

Americans who lived with non-related Whites were not totally isolated, as often family or other Blacks lived nearby.

Although Blacks were integrated into the community on other levels, Black families often clustered together geographically, sometimes even living next door. Individuals who lived with Whites were somewhat more isolated. Some may have been in the local area only for work and by the time the ten years elapsed between censuses, their names had disappeared altogether and were replaced by others.

Integration not only took place on a community level, but on a more intimate level as well. As early as 1850, there were two White women who married and had children with African American men. In 1860, there was one White woman caring for a one-year-old Mulatto child, but the census lists no father in the household. In 1870, both Charles Southren and Jonathan Johnston had White wives, and in 1880 one Black woman, Mary Sutherland, had Mulatto children and a White man named Nathan Landis was married to a White woman who had two Mulatto children. In 1880, William Carter, Alex Thompson, Thomas Clark and James George also had White wives, but Margaret Donahey is the only African American woman in the census married to a White man. Interestingly enough, she and her husband lived with his

family.¹¹⁷

In the early years, it appears that race relations in the established communities were relatively integrated and harmonious.¹¹⁸ Following the Civil War, however, there appears to have been an increase in racial problems and a growing economic disparity for African Americans in Indiana County. Some of this growing intolerance is evidenced in the following newspaper accounts. In May 1878, when Indiana Borough authorities razed an "ark" in Indiana that was occupied by Blacks, they were "invited to find quarters somewhere else" or "have the rafters tumbling down upon their head". On April 23, 1887, there was a notice in the Blairsville Enterprise which offered to bind out the housekeeping services of young Black girls to anyone in need of these services. Later, in June of

¹¹⁷Sonya Stewart, comp., "Extracts from U.S. Census, 1850-1880," Unpublished manuscript, 1992; United States, [Department of the Interior], Bureau of the Census, "Seventh Census, 1850: Indiana County"; United States, [Department of the Interior], Bureau of the Census, "Eighth Census, 1860: Indiana County"; United States, Department of the Interior, Bureau of the Census, "Ninth Census, 1870: Indiana County"; United States, Department of the Interior, Bureau of the Census, "Tenth Census, 1880: Indiana County".

¹¹⁸There is little evidence to directly substantiate this conclusion; however, the fact that there were interracial marriages, Black membership in White churches and complimentary obituaries for many Black residents lead toward this conclusion.

1890, twenty-five Blacks arrived from Harrisonburg, Virginia, to begin work at the Blacklick Manufacturing Company, but by June 11, the newspaper noted they were returning to Virginia as they most likely had been threatened.¹¹⁹

Tensions between the established White community and immigrants only continued to increase as more people of ethnicity settled in the county. Antagonism was directed toward African Americans, but also at Catholics, Jews and foreigners. As the result of these tensions, Ku Klux Klan members from Johnstown and Latrobe made inroads into Indiana County and began organizing in March 1922. Recruiters asked prospective members if they were one hundred percent American and requested that they fill out a card with their personal history. If three "brothers" subsequently approved the application, the recruit paid a six dollar initiation fee and gained admittance to the Klan.¹²⁰

While Klan members supposedly espoused "Americanism", they were, in reality, simply against ethnic diversity and they made

¹¹⁹Clarence Stephenson, "Indiana Area Blacks Battle For Civil Rights," Indiana Gazette, June 8, 1985.

¹²⁰Clarence Stephenson, Indiana County 175th Anniversary History: 1866-1988, vol. 2 (Indiana, Pa.: Halldin, 1989), 510; "Ku Klux Klan Branch to be Formed Here," Indiana Evening Gazette, March 12, 1922.

their presence known in a variety of ways. In 1919 or the early 1920's along the road from Clymer to Indiana, there was a sign believed to have been erected by the Ku Klux Klan that threatened Black travelers. The sign, in effect, read that any Black person caught going past the sign would never leave. Another one of the Klansmen's favorite methods of making their presence known in the community was to burn a cross on a hill near the town and leave Ku Klux Klan literature near the spot. They also attended the services of local Protestant churches in hoods and robes and contributed sums of money to the ministers. Some ministers such as Rev. F.A. Edmond of the Marion Center M.E. Church and Rev. W.T. Merrick of the Indiana Christian Church were either members or at least sympathizers to their cause.¹²¹

Klan activity in Indiana County peaked during 1924 and 1925 even though there were reports of cross burnings preceded by explosions in Indiana, Marion Center, Clymer, Cookport and Blairsville from 1924 to 1928. During the latter part of 1924, Klan officials bought the Guthrie farm located about three miles

¹²¹Stephenson, "Indiana Area Blacks"; Bob Goodlin, "The Ku Klux Klan in Clymer," in The Clymer-Cherryhill Story, ed. Clarence D. Stephenson (Indiana, Pa.: Park Press, 1953), 142; Stephenson, Indiana County History, vol. 2, 510-511.

south of Indiana. At the farm they held a Klan wedding and an August picnic that reportedly nearly 20,000 attended, but their success was short-lived. They were to dedicate their newly completed building on August 27, 1925, but before that could happen, it was destroyed by fire. It was this incident coupled with the National Grand Dragon's conviction for second degree murder within the year which signaled the beginning of the end for the above-ground Ku Klux Klan in Indiana County.¹²²

Although information concerning settlement during the early 1900's is scarce, there are some local families whose matriarchs and patriarchs came during this time. It is likely that many others who came to find employment helped to establish organizations, but when they relocated in subsequent years they left no family behind. It was perhaps during the 1930's and into the 1940's that the Chevy Chase community formed. While the formation of this community was positive, there were still problems to contend with. Those who left the South left lynching and much of the fear behind, but they still had to

¹²²Clarence Stephenson, "KKK Left Impression on County," Indiana Gazette, May 10, 1986; Clarence Stephenson, Indiana County 175th Anniversary History: The Indiana County Reader, vol. 3 (Indiana, Pa.: Halldin, 1979), 458-460, Stephenson, Indiana County History, vol. 2, 513.

contend with discriminatory practices which ranged from segregated and unequal housing and employment opportunities to being denied service in certain restaurants and bars. They also faced the possibility of being rejected as candidates for financial loans or for certain educational programs in school.¹²³

These discriminatory practices continued into the 1950's and 1960's in Indiana County. On a national level, these were turbulent times and throughout the country, as Blacks and concerned others fought to obtain civil rights, some sacrificed their lives. Indiana's struggle was less dramatic and also a much more integrated effort. An example of this integrated effort can be seen in the actions of Indiana State Teacher's College president, Willis E. Pratt, who took steps to rectify the discriminatory practices of local barbers. On October 13, 1959, President Pratt wrote to the Indiana Borough Chamber of Commerce. In his letter, he advocated for the college's six male African American students with a thinly veiled threat of establishing a campus barber shop if this matter was not properly resolved. Mr. William Ingersoll of the Chamber of

¹²³Mary Harris, interview by author, 14 December 1995, Indiana, Pa.; Alfonso Embry, interview by author, 31 August 1995, Indiana, Pa.; Lucille Gipson, interview by author, 12 November 1995, Indiana, Pa.

Commerce responded to President Pratt's letter by November 1959, but it apparently was not a satisfactory response. Pratt then contacted the Barber's Association and wrote to at least one barber who was not a member of the Association. The final outcome of this effort was that Black college students presenting their identification cards would receive service.¹²⁴

During these years, another type of discrimination emerged following the construction of a pool at Mack Park. In 1959, four African American youth ranging in age from six to fifteen who applied for membership to the swimming club were denied. The facility had a policy that banned Blacks since its opening in the 1950's, but Blacks were not the only ones excluded. The son of Puerto Rican Army sergeant Arturo Alayon was also denied entrance to the pool, even as the guest of another member. When confronted, the man in charge of the pool replied: "That boy is Puerto Rican, and all Puerto Rican [sic] are mixed with Negroes. If I admit him to swim in the pool, I am going to lose many customers". One White Indiana resident who was in her late teens and lifeguarding at the pool that summer vividly remembers

¹²⁴William Roy Hetrick, "A Study of the Evidences of Discrimination Against Negroes in Indiana, Pennsylvania" (M.A. Thesis, Indiana State College, 1962), 50-53.

what she heard the alleged response was from one of the Mack Foundation Board members when the issue of interracial membership arose. The Board member stated that "they would sooner fill the pool in and plant petunias than allow Blacks to swim in it".¹²⁵

By 1962, the Black population of the Indiana area included thirteen individuals living in the borough of Indiana and 210 in Chevy Chase. While these Blacks were few in number, several members of the community at large felt that their civil rights were important. On July 4, 1964, twelve local men, including four ministers, quietly demonstrated at the J.S. Mack Community Center to protest the racial restrictions of the swimming club. They carried signs which called for equality as they marched in front of the pool entrance. During either this incident or during another incident of picketing, the Mack Foundation closed the pool and employees were advised in advance that they should not report to work to avoid any potential violence.¹²⁶

No community protest through the years, however, served to move the Board to change their policy, so in December 1965, four

¹²⁵Ibid., 33-34; Judy Hegner, interview by author, 28 August 1995, Indiana, Pa.

¹²⁶Hetrick, "Study", 22; "Demonstrate at Mack Park," Indiana Evening Gazette, July 6, 1964; Judy Hegner, interview.

hundred and fifty citizens published a full page advertisement entitled "Toward a Better Indiana". In it they stated that the community swimming pool operated on a "Whites only" basis and they requested that those in charge make it available to all. In this advertisement, they also recommended improvements in minority employment and hiring practices. They even threatened that "local public bodies" would build their own public swimming pool. This however never came to pass and the Mack Park pool remained segregated. In April 1968, community members organized the Indiana County Improvement Association with the intention of providing "open recreation for all people" and resolved to initiate a boycott of the pool at the J.S. Mack Community Center by summer. Finally, the Mack Foundation Board backed down and agreed to process applications for the 1969 season "without regard to race, creed or color". Chances are, however, this change came about less as the result of a change of philosophy than as the result of Mr. Mack's death.¹²⁷

In the decade of the 1960's, the pool was not the only place where Blacks faced discrimination. In a series of experiments, a social studies graduate student and his Black

¹²⁷Stephenson, "Indiana Area Blacks"; Ruth Newhill, interview by author, 12 January 1996, Indiana, Pa.

assistants found that as a whole, forty-one percent of area businesses had some discriminatory practices. Taverns discriminated the most at a rate of seventy-five percent, while there was no discrimination found in retail stores. The Human Relations Committee was formed in 1964 to combat the areas in which Blacks still faced discrimination in the community. Its purpose and policy was:

To foster goodwill and cooperation among various racial, religious and ethnic groups. To bring people who are concerned about human relationships into association for the purpose of promoting full and equal opportunity for all citizens in all areas of life. To help persons of all races and creeds gain deeper understanding and respect for one another through educational endeavors and group activities.¹²⁸

After initially holding meetings at the home of Esko and Ruth Newhill, the Committee changed their locale to Lefty Raymond's Restaurant, various homes, the Health Center on North Fifth Street and the First Baptist Church. Following the construction of the Chevy Chase Community Center, it became their regular meeting location. Membership was interracial and many members also belonged to the NAACP. University personnel also played a pivotal role. Past presidents include: Luella Redd and Rev. Harold Liphart (1965-67), Rev. Harold Liphart

¹²⁸Hetrick, "Study", 36; Human Relations Committee, Indiana County, Records, [1964-1984].

(1967-71), Dan Shively (1971-74), Dr. Francis McGovern (1975-76), Ned Anderson (1976-77), Benjamin Miller (1977-1979), Dr. Al Novels (1979-81) and Mrs. R.D. Williams (1982-1983).¹²⁹

The Human Relations Committee emphasized the importance of education, and during its active years they sponsored a Speaker's Bureau and funded scholarships for over thirty-four individuals. The organization remained active for almost twenty years until attendance at meetings started to decline significantly around 1984. Although they are presently inactive, it still continues to use organizational funds to award scholarships.¹³⁰

In addition to the struggle for admission to Mack Park and the formation of the Human Rights Committee, the national civil rights movement also served to influence and inspire community involvement in Indiana. On March 14, 1965, Bishop William G. Connare conducted a mass in which he declared that: "We must give the Negroes the full rights of American citizenship" as "racism is a violation of the moral law of God". The following day, several hundred people marched down Philadelphia Street to honor the memory of James J. Rebb, a minister slain in the civil

¹²⁹Mary Harris, interview; Human Relations Committee, records.

¹³⁰Ibid.; Ruth Newhill, interview.

rights rally in Selma, Alabama. Undoubtedly, those who participated in this march recognized the profound sacrifices of those struggling against racism in the South and that their local struggle required no less resolution and perseverance.¹³¹

¹³¹Stephenson, "Indiana Area Blacks".

CHAPTER IV
LOCAL AFRICAN AMERICAN
COMMUNITIES AND INSTITUTIONS

Resolution and perseverance manifested themselves differently in each individual. Such differences can be traced to the individual's experiences with discriminatory practices and the effects that they had on him. In turn, these depended in part upon the era in which they or their ancestors arrived and where they lived. One of the earliest African American communities to form in Indiana County was in Blairsville. Even from the earliest years, it had one of the largest African American populations and it was also one of the places where they settled together in close proximity.¹³²

The town of Blairsville was named after John Blair of Huntingdon, who was the president of the company that formed to build a toll road between Huntingdon and Pittsburgh. It was James Campbell and Andrew Brown, however, who owned the land that was auctioned off in lots beginning January 11, 1818. In the early days, Blacks bought land and tended to cluster on the

¹³²Ruth Miller, interview by author, 4 January 1996, Blairsville, Pa.

west side of Market Street near the river. The property values there were low because the lots were subject to flooding, and because flooding was such a problem there are currently no structures left in the area at all.¹³³

The experiences of early Black settlers in Blairsville varied. One Blairsville newspaper reports that in 1835, seventeen-year-old, Betsy Lear, a "Yellow Bound Girl" with a child, ran away from Samuel Crow and he offered a six-cent reward for her return. In another issue, William Lawson offered a five-dollar reward for the return of Charles Jones, also seventeen. He described Jones as "yellow" and "marked with small-pox, but thick-set and strong". Also in 1835, during a fight in Blairsville, a Black man named Jones killed another Black man, Robert Herrin. Jones was convicted of second degree murder and sentenced to serve twelve years in the Western Penitentiary. It is unknown if this was the Charles Jones mentioned above or another man.¹³⁴

Socially, other Blacks appear to have been fairly well

¹³³Isabel McAnulty Williams, "Blairsville: A Place of Consequence," Indiana County Heritage 10 (Winter 1985): 7; Ruth Miller, interview.

¹³⁴Clarence Stephenson, "County Historian Clarence Stephenson Starts Writing Account of Our First Black Settlers," Indiana Gazette, January 26, 1985.

integrated into the Blairsville community, and some Black families even attended White churches. There were other occasions, however, when they still came together within their own community. One such occasion was in 1861. Before slavery was abolished, Blacks of Indiana County celebrated the August 1 anniversary of the abolition of slavery in the West Indies with the hope that it would extend to the United States. The Blairsville community celebration was held at Shorter's Grove near Blairsville. Not long after, two local Black men from Blairsville, Samuel McClellen and George Bronson, fought in the Union army in the effort to put an end to slavery altogether.¹³⁵

In addition to Blairsville, another other area where Blacks tended to cluster was on the hill north of Indiana in White Township just over the borough border. To the right of the highway heading north is some of the most expensive real estate in the area, known as Country Club Estates, where the residents enjoy their posh houses, duplexes and condominiums in relative isolation and peacefulness. On the other side of the road, however, life is not so luxurious. To the left is the community of Chevy Chase, which residents often abbreviate as "Chase".

¹³⁵Clarence Stephenson, "County Blacks Aided by White Friends," Indiana Gazette, February 16, 1985.

Although Chevy Chase is a predominantly White community filled with many deteriorating structures, it is also the location of the largest African American residential community in Indiana County.

Chevy Chase was not initially destined for this role. Originally Dr. Dodson, the Bryans and Adda Elkins owned the land. It was set aside to replicate the aristocratic Chevy Chase of Maryland and Washington D.C. and was named accordingly. During the Depression, however, the bottom fell out of the real estate market, and many were forced to sell their land at a loss. Even those who could afford to keep their property sold it anyway because of the sudden class change within the neighborhood. There were several unsuccessful attempts by Chevy Chase residents to have the community annexed as part of the Borough. This never took place, however, as it would have most likely produced a financial liability rather than a gain.¹³⁶

Chevy Chase did not have street lights, paved roads, a sewage disposal system or a playground for their children even

¹³⁶Ralph Stone, "A Social Picture of Chevy Chase, Indiana County," Unpublished manuscript, 1960, 1-2. While Stone's paper is informative, it is also obviously biased and narrow in places, so this researcher regards even the apparently factual information with caution.

as late as 1960. Issues of community concern at that time were the accumulation of garbage by McCreary's Garbage Disposal and the mistreatment of community children in school. Use of leisure time mostly consisted of hunting in the wooded areas beyond Chevy Chase or socializing at Sadler's Bar or the Elks, both located in Chevy Chase. In March 1967, the Chevy Chase Community Action Council was organized to initiate programs to control rats and obtain a sewage system and fire hydrants for their community, but another of their significant achievements through the efforts of residents of both the Chevy Chase and Indiana communities was the development of a recreation park now known as Kennedy-King Park. There were initial delays as some of the property titles were difficult to search, but by May 1968, the work was underway. The first weekend that May, volunteers from Chevy Chase, IUP's Kappa Sigma Fraternity and Sigma Kappa Sorority, the White Township Lion's Club, the Indiana Department of Recreation and the Indiana Fire Department pooled their labor and resources to clear the park site located on Josephine Avenue. Following this successful venture, the Chevy Chase Community Action Council planned to build a ball park, a playground and a community building.¹³⁷

¹³⁷Ibid., 10; "Joint Operation To Clear Chevy Chase Park

In October 1970 the Council launched the campaign to build a community center for educational, cultural and recreational events. Lyman Connor was the chairman of the Council as they sought to acquire capital to proceed. Two hundred and eighty people attended the interracial fundraising dinner and Indiana County Judge Edwin M. Clark commented: "Any community willing to help themselves ought to be helped by others." Construction of the center began with the ground-breaking on April 5, 1971, and lasted almost six years.¹³⁸

This project gave the people of the Indiana area another opportunity to work together toward a common goal. The Indiana Rotary Club provided the "seed money" to get it started; a federal grant supplied \$50,000; and contributions of funds and labor came from the entire community. Aid came from other sources as well including local banks, businesses and industries, IUP students, the Rotary Club, the Army Reserve, churches and other organizations. Connor's involvement with the

Site," Indiana Evening Gazette, May 6, 1968; "Chevy Chase Park Site Cleared," Indiana Evening Gazette, May 6, 1968; "Chevy Chase Recreation Area," Indiana Evening Gazette, June 27, 1968; "No-Tax-Boost Budget Approved-Township Reviews Chevy Chase Park," Indiana Evening Gazette, March 29, 1968.

¹³⁸Clarence Stephenson, "Indiana Area Blacks Battle For Civil Rights," Indiana Gazette, June 8, 1985.

State Health Department helped in the beginning, but in the end, it was the cooperation between Blacks and White leadership that facilitated fund-raising. Connor felt that "out of the construction of this building came friendship and contacts with people who resided outside the community of Chevy Chase." The center was dedicated on June 15, 1976, although the building was not dedicated until March 24, 1977, and there is a portrait of Connor hanging in the center's library to recognize his role in its completion.¹³⁹

In spite of this positive interracial cooperation, one way Blacks retained a separate racial identity was through the establishment of Black churches. Although some Blacks chose to worship with their White neighbors and friends, others preferred to organize their own churches. In the 1840's two African Methodist churches were organized, and an 1855-1856 map indicates that there was a third "African church" east of Saltsburg. There is no further information about this congregation though and it most likely did not last long. The first African Methodist group met as early as September 1842 in

¹³⁹John Como, "Looking Back: Black Residents Reflect on Life in Indiana," Indiana Gazette, February 27, 1994; Stephenson, "Indiana Area Blacks".

Blairsville Borough's log school house.¹⁴⁰ They paid rent for this privilege and the arrangement continued for many years. In fact, once the Blairsville community erected new public schools and church buildings, the African Methodist church used the log schoolhouse almost exclusively. The Indiana County Atlas of 1871 even labels this structure as the "African Zion Church".¹⁴¹

The first pastor of the Blairsville AME Zion Church was circuit preacher Rev. G.W. Terry of Johnstown. In addition to their regular meetings, the Blairsville AME church also sponsored camp meetings. One meeting which was sponsored by the church and ministers began on August 24, 1854, near the farm of Abner Willets about three miles from Blairsville. There was another camp meeting in the same location beginning September 10, 1857, and others took place in 1858 and 1861. Abraham Johnston, David Brown, Gerry Bronson, Braxton Jackson and John W. Smith were trustees of the church when construction began. On August 30, 1873, they purchased a lot from Samuel and Mary B. Dixon on North Liberty Street and built a one-story frame building. On June 16, 1887, Mr. Jackson and his wife were to

¹⁴⁰There is a picture of this structure available at the Indiana Historical and Genealogical Society.

¹⁴¹Stephenson, "County Historian".

lead a cake walk at an AME Zion Festival, but they were indisposed and a Johnstown couple took the cake.¹⁴²

By 1906, the church was experiencing problems as the result of delinquent taxes. Wilbur P. Graff paid the taxes and held the title, but after his death, his son, Paul, made a quit-claim deed on July 27, 1953. By late 1952, the congregation had erected a new sixty by forty foot brick structure on East Campbell Street, and as a memorial to their earlier days in the log cabin, Thomas Patterson made a chair out of one of the logs and placed it in the church. This building still stands, but by the mid-1980's, the congregation had disbanded and the Second Baptist Church of Blairsville congregation had purchased their building.¹⁴³

The other AME congregation organized in 1844, not long after the Blairsville congregation formed. They met in White Township and were known as The African Methodist Church of Indiana, but they did not have a building. The pastor at that time was Rev. Nelson Williams and the trustees were Abraham Johnston, James Robinson and John Clark. By 1859, they had

¹⁴²Ibid.; Stephenson, "Candidate Refuses to Debate Black Man," Indiana Gazette, April 27, 1985.

¹⁴³Ibid.

obtained a building but also experienced financial problems. They announced in the Indiana Weekly Register that they had paid \$400.25 toward their building but still owed \$79, and they made a plea to the "sympathies of the public, hoping that they will excuse our boldness" for the remainder. In 1899, they did receive financial assistance from the Indiana community, but in the end, it does not appear that they were successful in keeping the building.¹⁴⁴

The St. James AME Zion Church was organized in 1925 and may have had its origins in this earlier congregation. They initially worshipped in the Indiana Courthouse but their building is now located on the corner of Water and North Second streets in Indiana. In their earliest days, they elected Philip Evans (Chairman), Nathan S. Jennings (Secretary), Robert Allen (treasurer), W.M. Colover and Benjamin James as trustees. When they bought the forty by one-hundred and forty foot lot from Robert Milligan of Pittsburgh's East End, there were two individuals who made especially generous donations. One man put up one-fourth of the money and another woman gave one-eighth of the purchase price. Work on the building began immediately

¹⁴⁴Stephenson, "County Historian"; Stephenson, "Candidate".

following the lot purchase, and F.S. Stumpf and Sons were the contractors and builders. On January 17, 1926, the congregation held their first service in their new building, which seated about eighty people. The laying of the corner stone and dedication was scheduled for later that spring.¹⁴⁵

In response to a newspaper appeal, Mrs. Adda P. Elkin donated a piano to the church and the Curry Run Presbyterian Church donated a pulpit made in 1846-47. The Painter's Union offered their labor at no charge to paint the church and in May 1956, church members once again received help from the greater Indiana community to help beautify their church. During their "Clean Up" week activities, the Indiana Jaycees and the Indiana Painter's Union painted the entire outside of the church in one hour and twenty minutes. Local merchants donated the paint and volunteers further beautified the church by planting Christmas tree seedlings.¹⁴⁶

Their building has since been updated with vinyl siding,

¹⁴⁵"Negroes' Chapel To Be Dedicated," Indiana Evening Gazette, January 16, 1926; "Colored Form New Church Here," Indiana Evening Gazette, November 16, 1925.

¹⁴⁶Stephenson, "Candidate"; "Negroes' Chapel"; "Church is Given A Piano," Indiana Evening Gazette, November 18, 1925; "Beautify Church in 80 Minutes," Indiana Evening Gazette, May 14, 1956.

and Rev. Kenneth L. Copeland from Pittsburgh is currently the pastor. His dress is liturgical and the choice of hymns traditional, but African culture is reflected in both the way in which the congregation sings and also in the African kente cloth that adorns the podium and the altar. There are White faces in the congregation from time to time, but the church is a strong center of the African American community and draws together Blacks from many parts of the county. The congregation also strongly supports the activities of the NAACP through funding for special projects and memberships.¹⁴⁷

The Black Baptist churches are also strong community centers, but they started later since migrants from the South formed their initial congregational base. Most likely, it was not until the numbers of Southern African American migrants increased that there were enough people to warrant the construction of Baptist churches. The formation of the Second Baptist Church of Blairsville coincides with the Great Migration as it originated in 1917. In that year, with a Sunday School Book from Alabama as a guide, Mr. and Mrs. Henry English and Mr. and Mrs. Forte Johnson held Sunday School and Prayer service on

¹⁴⁷St. James AME Zion Church, Church bulletin, September 10, 1995.

Sunday afternoons in the English's home. When J.T. Davis, minister of the Regular (White) Baptist Church in Blairsville, heard about these services, he assisted by arranging for their meetings to be held in the YMCA building.¹⁴⁸ Later, the group rented the upper level of the south corner building located on East Lane and Wynn Street. Services continued there until they built a structure on East Lane in 1918.

Over the years, the following pastors served the church: Rev. T.J. Hall, Rev. B.S. Mason, Rev. Tate, Rev. Meadows, Rev. Crouch, Rev. Radford, Rev. Dennis, Rev. E. Johnson, Rev. Moore, Rev. P.H. Booker, Rev. C.L. Pollard, Rev. Wylie Seals, Rev. R.I. King, Rev. O'Neil Samuel and Rev. Ronnie C. Morris. Through the years, the church licensed Lucius Wilson, Fortie Johnson, Ira Neal, Denny Claycomb, Hubert Gibson and Henry Brantley to preach. Initially, the church was a member of the Association of the Pennsylvania Convention and later became a member of the Union Baptist Association of Pittsburgh. The Union Baptist Association later merged with the Allegheny Baptist to form the present Allegheny Union Baptist Association.

While Rev. Meadows was pastor, the church paid off the

¹⁴⁸This building is no longer standing.

mortgage. During Rev. Booker's thirteen year pastorate, the congregation raised the building three feet, installed an extra choir stand and added a concrete basement, kitchen, restrooms and other facilities as well. During Rev. Pollard's tenure, they remodeled the inside of the church. In 1976, under the leadership of Rev. Wylie Seals, they installed new carpet and a public announcement system and remodeled the store room and the pastor's study; in 1981 and 1982, they added a new roof. In 1982, Rev. R.I. King became pastor, and in 1985 the church purchased the former AME Zion Building on Campbell Street. Rev. King established new ministries within the church and obtained a reinstatement with the Allegheny Union Baptist Association and the Blairsville Ministerial Alliance. In 1989, through the Central Baptist Church of Pittsburgh, Rev. O'Neil Samuel began to serve as pastor, and in April 1995 Rev. Ronnie C. Morris succeeded him to become the present pastor.¹⁴⁹

Only a few years after the Second Baptist Church of Blairsville was established, the Indiana community began to organize a Baptist church of their own. In 1926, Reverend Jordan D. McCreary dreamed of building a church so that his

¹⁴⁹"History of Blairsville Second Baptist Church," Unpublished manuscript, [ca. 1995].

children, their children and the community would have a place to worship. Prior to the construction of the Beulah Baptist Church, the fledgling group held its services at the Widdowson Gospel Hall. When they were able to build, Reverend McCreary's grandsons, Willie J., Lawrence D. and James P. Culliver, laid the building foundation and Mr. Green of Blairsville, Mr. Runt Wadding and Mr. Mickles (both of Indiana) did the carpentry work. The building was finished in 1928 and Rev. McCreary's granddaughter, Mrs. Martha Martinis, named the church Beulah Baptist.

The ministers who served are as follows: Rev. Jordan D. McCreary (founder), Rev. Reed, Rev. Wilson, Rev. Johnson, Rev. Bibbs, Rev. Davis, Rev. Cleveland Holifield, Rev. Wilson, Rev. Matthew Tissinger (1964-1990) and Rev. Homer E. Woody, Jr. (1990-Present). Under the leadership of Rev. Cleveland Holifield, the church paid off the mortgage which was held by Samuel McCreary, the son of Rev. McCreary, with funds donated by Mr. Alexander Stewart (the father of Jimmy Stewart). Deacon John L. Harris organized the first choir and the Beulah Baptist Church became a Corporation in 1948.¹⁵⁰

¹⁵⁰Beulah Baptist Church, "1993 Homecoming Service August 15, 1993, [pamphlet]".

The Beulah Baptist Church Missionary Circle officially organized on May 2, 1954. It was then called the Willing Workers Club and its purpose was to help the sick and the needy. The pastor and the first lady at that time were the Rev. Evans Harris and his wife, Elizabeth. The original slate of officers were Nettie Wilson (president), Aslee Lumpkin (vice-president), Vater Blevins (secretary), Inell Steward (treasurer), Jessie McCreary (Bible class teacher), Helen Sadler (chaplain) and Edna Perry (sick committee). Other members included: Mary Harris, Bertha Ford, Lucille Gipson, Ella Clemons, Minnie Watkins and Georgia Griffin.¹⁵¹

Mrs. Corrie Toney Wilson later served as President until she moved to Johnstown in the late 1970's. Mary Harris then took her place and served in this position until the early 1990's. In 1995, the slate of officers were Lucille Gipson (president), Stella Scholfield (vice-president), Birttie Clemons (recording secretary), Connie McCreary (treasurer), Marlene Embry (sick committee) and Alicia Woody (chaplain). Other members include: Joan Clemons, Bertha Ford, Pinkie Brown, Mary Harris, Vater Blevins, Colleen Hoyle, Ella Clemons, Helen

¹⁵¹Beulah Baptist Missionary [Society], A Cookbook of Treasures ([Indiana, Pa.: Beulah Baptist Church, n.d.]), C.

Sadler, Jane Harris, Donna Williams and Virginia Buggs.¹⁵²

In addition to Beulah Baptist Church, there were two other churches that formed in the Chevy Chase community. In the 1960's, there were two churches in Chevy Chase affiliated with the Church of God Under Christ. Today, only one of those congregations remains, the Faith Temple Church of God in Christ. Rev. Stanford Webb, Jr. is the pastor and the church is well-integrated although still predominantly Black. Faith Temple is also closely affiliated with the NAACP and occasionally lends the use of its building for NAACP programs and activities.¹⁵³

The NAACP has traditionally welcomed church involvement because even from its earliest days they frequently utilized church facilities and resources as meetings rotated from place to place. NAACP activity began in Indiana County in 1934, but died out in the early 1940's. Benjamin Hopkins, who was a coal miner from Lucernemines, served as president at that time and May Patterson of Blairsville was the secretary. Later, in the early 1960's the Indiana-Blairsville Branch was organized, but it lost its charter in the 1970's when membership declined.

¹⁵²Mary Harris, interview by author, 14 December 1995, Indiana, Pa.; Beulah Baptist Missionary [Society], Cookbook, D.

¹⁵³Stone, "Social", 8.

Shirley Sadler-Reeder was a key person during a reactivation of the local Indiana Branch from 1976-1980. The branch had been recruiting members since October 1975, but they held their first meeting at the Chevy Chase Community Center on April 10, 1976.¹⁵⁴

Matthew Moore, Western Sectional Director, attended and appointed the following officers: Shirley Sadler-Reeder (president), Lyman Connor (vice president), Charles Sadler (treasurer), Doris Barkley (secretary), Lucille Gipson (freedom fund chairperson) and Helen Sadler and David Barkley (active membership chairman). At that initial meeting, they were encouraged to recruit 100-150 new members, but over 200 names of both Black and White Indiana County residents appear on the list of the charter fund drive. Memberships cost four dollars for adults and two dollars for youth, although the bank balance for the fledgling group usually remained between \$100-200. At the meetings they addressed issues such as job discrimination, membership and organizational voting as well as community and

¹⁵⁴National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, Indiana County Branch, "Ninth Annual Freedom Fund Banquet: 1865-1995: How Far Have We Come, September 16, 1995"; Mary Harris, interview; National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, Indiana County, Branch Records, [1970-1979].

campus involvement.¹⁵⁵

The current local NAACP Branch was reactivated in 1986 through the efforts of Charles Stokes and succeeded the former Indiana-Blairsville Branch. Shirley Sadler-Reeder became president once again, and at this time, the Branch petitioned the National NAACP for a slight name change and became the Indiana County Chapter. Helen Brandenburg (a.k.a "Sissy Redd") served as secretary; Lillian Jennerson (Clemons) was treasurer; and Nell Webb chaired the membership committee. Since there is no recognized voting until a chapter reactivates, Charles Stokes appointed these officers on an interim basis so that the Branch could apply for a charter. The first elected officers were Shirley Sadler-Reeder (president), Ed Ruffner (vice president), Mary Catherine Kendrick (secretary) and Lillian Jennerson (Clemons) (treasurer).¹⁵⁶

Shirley Sadler-Reeder continued to serve as president until

¹⁵⁵National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, "Ninth Annual Freedom Fund Banquet"; National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, Indiana County, Branch Records, [1970-1979].

¹⁵⁶[National Association for the Advancement of Colored People], Pennsylvania State Conference of NAACP Branches, "60th Anniversary Historical Celebration, [October 28, 1994]"; Charles Stokes, interview by author, 12 August 1995, Indiana, Pa; Como, "Looking Back".

1988. Charles Stokes assumed the office in 1989 and currently holds this position. Ed Ruffner served as vice president from 1987-1988 followed in 1989 by the current vice-president, Patricia A. Holmes. Lillian O. Jennerson (Clemons) was treasurer from 1986-1988; Ron Smith held the position from 1989-1990; and Charles W. States has served from 1991 to the present. Mary Catherine Kendrick served as secretary from 1987-1988 until Cynthia Hutchins took over from 1989-1992. Reed Booth served as recording secretary both in 1988 and 1993 until Sonya Stewart, who currently holds this position, became acting recording secretary in April of 1993. The branch divided secretarial duties beginning in 1989 when Curtis Randolph assumed the position of corresponding secretary for that year. In 1990, Sandra K. Williams, who currently holds the office, began her tenure.¹⁵⁷

¹⁵⁷National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, Indiana County Branch, "First Annual Freedom Fund Banquet, November 14, 1987"; National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, Indiana County Branch, "Second Annual Freedom Fund Banquet: Growth With Unity, October 8, 1988"; National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, Indiana County Branch, "Third Annual Freedom Fund Banquet: Working in Harmony, September 30, 1989"; National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, Indiana County Branch, "Fourth Annual Freedom Fund Banquet: Putting Our Energy into the Future, September 29, 1990"; National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, Indiana County Branch, "Fifth Annual Freedom

Today, the revitalized Branch serves many functions. One of its key roles is to safeguard education both by being a visible community force and also by awarding scholarships to area youth. Sadly, Shirley Sadler-Reeder passed away in 1995 and so, to honor her efforts, the annual scholarship award given to graduating seniors is now known as the Shirley Sadler-Reeder Memorial NAACP Scholarship. The current Branch began awarding scholarship monies in 1988 and past recipients include Brian Hunter (1988), Adrien Embry and Gary Peoples (1989), Daniel Holtz (1990), Carla Terry (1991), Autumn Embry (1992), Ronald Reeder, Jr. (1993), Angel Woody (1994) and Rasheeda Jones (1995).¹⁵⁸

The majority of the Branch's scholarship and general operating funds are raised through the annual Freedom Fund Banquet. This tradition began on November 14, 1987, at the Best Western University, but now banquets are usually slated for the

Fund Banquet: Turning Dreams into Reality, September 28, 1991"; National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, Indiana County Branch, "Seventh Annual Freedom Fund Banquet: NAACP Reflections [Upon] Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow, September 25, 1993"; National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, "1991 Second Quarterly Pennsylvania State Conference of the NAACP, April 13, 1991".

¹⁵⁸Dr. Walter G. Kealey to Lee Edwards et al., 17 February 1996.

last Saturday of September each year. It is usually held at the Best Western University Inn, but some banquets have been held at the Rustic Lodge and Elks Lodge as well and there are plans to utilize facilities at the Holiday Inn for future functions. The banquets, which feature a speaker, awards and entertainment, provide members the chance to don African clothing, celebrate African heritage and socialize.

Those members who make a special contribution to the Branch may be asked to serve on the executive board. Some of the past and present executive board members include Carolyn Fisher, Iris Holtz, Nell Webb, Beatrice States, Daniel Stephens, Marianne Sadler, Stanford Webb, Jr., Ronald Smith, David Williams, Gretchen Schmidt, Helen Brandenburg, Marsha Casses, Joan Clemons, Lillian Jennerson (Clemons), James Johnson, Margaret E. Jones, Bernard McCreary, Geraldine Redd, Hilda Richards, Sandra Williams, Debra Clemons, Mary Harris, Patricia Holmes, Kathleen Redd, Rev. Homer Woody, Jr., Pinkie Brown, Cynthia Hutchins, Charles States and Dr. Walter Kealey. Members also have the opportunity to serve on various committees including political action, labor and industry, press and publicity, finance, membership, communications, legal redress, youth works, education, religious affairs and housing committees as well as

ad hoc committees for special events such as Martin Luther King Day, Black History Month and the sponsorship of a Christmas family.¹⁵⁹

The Indiana County NAACP is unique in that it is more racially integrated than many other branches. In 1994, the local branch had 112 members, which included thirty-four Whites. One of the tasks of the local Branch members is to continue to address racial issues in Indiana County. In 1996, one of the pressing issues is the antiquated all-White male Borough police force. The NAACP has worked in conjunction with the Borough Police to reduce racial tensions and officers have gone through ethnic intimidation classes, but unfortunately, they still tend to stop more Black people than White people for alleged violations. Other discrimination issues in the community at large are both subtle and overt. Overt racism is apparent in

¹⁵⁹National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, "First Annual Freedom Fund Banquet"; National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, "Second Annual Freedom Fund Banquet"; National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, "Third Annual Freedom Fund Banquet"; National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, "Fourth Annual Freedom Fund Banquet"; National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, "Fifth Annual Freedom Fund Banquet"; National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, "Seventh Annual Freedom Fund Banquet"; National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, "1991 Second Quarterly".

the four cross burnings in Indiana County over the past five years which remain unsolved. Another more subtle incident involves an African American man who ran for the school board in 1993 and lost although he has multiple degrees and was clearly more qualified than his opponents. This result raises the question whether race rather than ability determined the outcome. Recently, however, there was a major political victory for the NAACP and the entire minority community when an African American, Yvonne Redd, ran for a seat on the Indiana Borough Council and won.¹⁶⁰

¹⁶⁰Como, "Looking Back"; Charles Stokes, interview.

CHAPTER V
AFTERMATH AND CONCLUSIONS

Accomplishments such as Redd's political victory are encouraging to the African American community, which has grown slowly but steadily throughout the last decades. The established residential community of Chevy Chase regularly has population changes as families grow through natural increase or decrease when families or family members relocate for better employment opportunities. The segment of the African American community which has experienced a steady increase, however, is within the university community. Indiana University of Pennsylvania (IUP) has been an important catalyst in African American population growth, particularly in the years since it began to actively recruit African American students. In the fall of 1995, there were 634 African American attending Indiana University of Pennsylvania.¹⁶¹

The EOP/ACT 101 Program has played a key role in the growth of the African American community at IUP. ACT101, passed by the

¹⁶¹The Office of Institutional Research and Planning at Indiana University of Pennsylvania, Indiana, Pa., provided this information.

Pennsylvania State Legislature in January 1971, assisted economically and academically disadvantaged Pennsylvania students in obtaining a higher education. The EOP (Educational Opportunity Program) originated in January 1972 to serve students who also needed academic assistance but who did not meet the financial guidelines or the residency requirements of ACT101. In 1984, the Learning Center was established to serve all students, thereby making the EOP Program unnecessary, and by 1985 the EOP Program was phased out entirely. Today, only the ACT101 Program remains. Since recruitment for the ACT101 program takes place throughout the state in both rural and urban areas, it benefits economically disadvantaged Whites as well as many minority students. When the recruitment area is in the Reading-Lancaster area, many Puerto Rican students respond; however, urban areas such as Pittsburgh, Philadelphia, Harrisburg and Erie draw a large African American response and a subsequent increase in the population.¹⁶²

Undoubtedly, recent African American migrants are attracted by the educational opportunities at IUP rather than the employment opportunities which attracted migrants of previous

¹⁶²The Learning Center at Indiana University of Pennsylvania, Indiana, Pa., provided this information.

generations. Both recent and previous migrants, however, share some parallel experiences. As in earlier years, many recent migrants have been short-term residents and initially had little in common with the established community. Like the Southern migrants who recreated a vital part of their culture through the establishment of churches, some of the newer migrants have established their own church, Victory Christian Assembly. This church has an urban rather than a Southern style of worship and is a place where some African American students can reestablish some of their former culture.

Another parallel experience of these migrants is their settlement intentions. Many migrants of earlier generations lived in boarding home and hotels as they and did not plan to remain in the area permanently. Likewise, most of the students who attend IUP have little thought of remaining in Indiana, even from the beginning of their academic career. But, in the end, some do find employment, organizational ties or even interpersonal relationships which serve to anchor them to the established community. While initial ties to the community may be tenuous, after a marriage or several years of community participation, a more complete integration into the established Black community is inevitable.

Overall, migration to Indiana County is in some ways analogous to shellfish washing up on a beach. If the tide that brought them there was work, then some remained only briefly and left with the next stronger tide. Others may have ridden in on that same tide, but found something special about the place upon which they were cast. They found a reason to dig into the sand and stay and the tide that comes and goes no longer threatens to carry them away with it. Now, tides of military service, college or better employment opportunities often take their children and grandchildren for a while or for a lifetime.

The community that now remains behind and the earlier established communities all parallel and deviate from national patterns. In the analysis of a community, Myrdal admonishes: "When only a single community can be studied it should not be assumed to be typical nor should the question of its uniqueness or typicality be ignored." One of the areas where typicality and uniqueness collide and appear to contradict each other in Indiana County is in the realm of race relations.¹⁶³

Whether representative of other rural counties or not, conclusions about Indiana County may be similar to those of Ira

¹⁶³Kenneth L. Kusmer, A Ghetto Takes Shape: Black Cleveland, 1870 - 1930 (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1976), xiii.

Brown when he writes:

There seem to have been two conflicting trends in the history of Pennsylvania's relation to its Negroes: on one hand, enslavement, degradation, and discrimination; on the other hand, emancipation, elevation, and equalizing...All told the story of the Negro in Pennsylvania history would seem to be a good illustration of the complexities, ambiguities, and contradictions with which life and history are filled.¹⁶⁴

From census data and narrative accounts of the Underground Railroad, it appears that there was a high degree of racial mixing on a community level as well as on the more intimate family level of interracial marriages. Other examples of interracial cooperation include efforts during the 1950's and 1960's to obtain access to business and recreational activities for all Indiana County residents. Throughout the country, civil rights activity has traditionally had its share of White supporters, but in Indiana County, this support has been atypically high in both membership and leadership. While active, the Human Relations Commission had a large amount of White support and drew many members from the university community. Even today, the local NAACP chapter has one of the highest percentages of White membership in the state, with just

¹⁶⁴Ira Brown, The Negro in Pennsylvania History (University Park, Pa.: The Pennsylvania Historical Association, 1970), 60-61.

less than half of the local leadership positions being filled by Whites.

In spite of this, race relations also have a history of being characterized by tension, threats and violence. Since these same responses were also directed toward other ethnic groups when they migrated to Indiana County en masse and began to compete for jobs, it may well be that economic factors and fear impacted more upon negative race relations than deep-seated hatred or racism. As a group, African Americans were an easy target for persecution as they were quickly identified with their group through skin color, even if they are culturally and socially integrated into the community as a whole. When African Americans arrive in small numbers to a new area, there may be less economic strain and resulting fear since families or individuals assimilate more quickly into the prevailing culture of the native group. During times when African Americans arrived from similar areas as a larger group, however, migrants were better able to maintain some of their own culture which may have increased fear and racial tensions.

In spite of the negative reactions of some, Blacks and Whites often mixed freely and intermarried throughout the years. In the 1960's, it was not uncommon to see White women and Black

men together.¹⁶⁵ In 1960, there were at least ten interracial couples living in Chevy Chase and mixed marriages were common and more accepted than in the community at large. Also at that time, White women often danced with Black men and vice versa at the Elks Club. One member, Fred Johnson, observed: "In Chevy Chase, a man is treated as a man regardless of color; in Indiana, a White man is treated as a man, but a Colored man is treated as an animal."¹⁶⁶

An area in which Indiana is typical of national patterns is in the area of housing and employment. Large numbers of migrants arriving at one time tended to create competition in these areas. Housing opportunities for Indiana County Blacks, particularly in the community of Chevy Chase, unfortunately parallel national trends in that they often live in substandard structures. Those seeking housing within the larger community may face discriminatory practices from time to time as well, but living circumstances are improving with the construction of more government subsidized units throughout the county. In addition, on-campus African American students at IUP have housing

¹⁶⁵This gender-race match is also nationally the most common.

¹⁶⁶Ralph Stone, "A Social Picture of Chevy Chase, Indiana County," Unpublished manuscript, 1960, 7-9.

opportunities congruent with those of their White counterparts.

In the 1990's, with many mine and factory closings, there are few employment opportunities in Indiana County for all residents, but hit hardest are often African Americans who are limited by an inadequate educational background, a lack of influential ties or lingering attitudes of prejudice. While some African Americans have successfully obtained professional positions with companies such as Penelec or at the university as the result of regular hiring practices and Affirmative Action, others, like many other residents of the county, are limited to minimum wage drudgery. While the accumulation of wealth typically has been rare for African Americans and most local Blacks have not deviated from this pattern, Esther George's achievements stand out as an exception. In the mid-1800's she was the wealthiest African American in the county and her wealth surpassed that of most White men as well.

Perhaps one of most important as well as typical ways in which African American settlement in Indiana County parallels national settlement is in the establishment of churches and the NAACP. These were important institutions of support for migrants, and in Indiana County their dates of establishment are one of the few ways in which we know that the Great Migration

reached the rural county. Both the Second Baptist Church of Blairsville and the Beulah Baptist Church in Chevy Chase were established during the years when migration would have become significant enough to warrant a new congregation. The development of the NAACP may similarly indicate that by the 1930's race relations became a significant enough area to warrant its existence.

Unfortunately, these observations are mostly speculative as there is much information missing in the data currently available to the researcher. One of the challenges in researching migration of the early 1900's is that migrants of that era are either deceased or they relocated without leaving family members behind. Those who are still living only recall selected incidents and provide only a thumbnail sketch of their own lives and contribute little to the history of organizations. These difficulties require the researcher to rely on limited primary sources and published material as little emphasis has been placed on the preservation or acquisition of local African American history in both the White and the African American communities.

Areas which would benefit from further study include both family and organizational histories. Most certainly, when

researching African American history, primary materials are more limited than those of the larger community. With continued effort, however, there is no doubt that many genealogies and life accounts would tie together to create a clearer picture of life in the earlier decades of the twentieth century. There are also many courthouse and tax records still to be examined as well as census material from 1890 and on. The census also holds the potential of comparison between African Americans, other ethnic groups and the larger White community. In addition, there are other organizational records in existence that are yet to be unearthed, organized and processed.

In conclusion, Ira Brown notes that "in spite of the handicaps which have faced them over the years, Pennsylvania Negroes have risen to the highest levels of achievement in such diverse fields as sports, the arts, scholarship and politics". Indiana County natives who achieved national recognition include James Nance and William Julius Wilson. Nance was an NCAA wrestling champion at Syracuse and also contributed to the sport of football as a fullback at Syracuse before playing with the Boston Patriots. Wilson, who originally hails from Blairsville, Pennsylvania, is a well-known scholar, author and professor of Sociology at the University of Chicago. Both Nance and Wilson

are among the "talented tenth" and have progressed far from the fields and mines where their predecessors if not ancestors spent much of their lives.¹⁶⁷

Shirley Sadler-Reeder, the now-deceased charter president of the current NAACP branch, was another high achiever, even if less well-known. She faced the challenges of growing up as an African American in Indiana County yet firmly believed that African American achievement was possible when she commented:

The economy is making things tough and when times get tough, it gets tougher for minorities. It is time we all understand we can't live without each other. It is not just Blacks or Whites out of work, but Americans out of work. We can't solve the problems by fighting each other. We need to get back to strong family values, with people taught to respect each other, for our society to have a chance to survive".¹⁶⁸

¹⁶⁷Brown, Negro, 60-61; Charles L. Blockson, Pennsylvania's Black History (Philadelphia: Portfolio Associates, Inc., 1975), 8.

¹⁶⁸John Como, "Looking Back: Black Residents Reflect on Life in Indiana," Indiana Gazette, February 27, 1994.

APPENDIX A

HISTORICAL FAMILY SKETCHES

Included in this appendix are facts and life accounts of individuals and families who are no longer living. Some only passed through Indiana County as they sought greater opportunities while others settled more permanently. Melissa Fay Greene in her book Praying for Sheetrock writes:

After the fact, historians may look back upon a season when a thousand lives, a hundred thousand lives, moved in unison; but in the beginning there are really only individuals, acting in isolation and uncertainty, out of necessity or idealism, unaware that they are living through an epoch.¹⁶⁹

The earlier text elaborated upon some of those occasions when many lives moved in unison, both on the national as well as the local level. These stories narrow the focus to individuals who helped shape an era, but undoubtedly failed to recognize their importance.

James Arms

James Arms, who lived in Burrell Township, apparently drove

¹⁶⁹Melissa Fay Greene, Praying for Sheetrock (Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, Inc., 1991), ix.

over the end of a culvert bridge between Smith's Station and Black Lick after getting coal at Smith's Coal Bank in February 1887.¹⁷⁰

Andrew Armstrong

Andrew Armstrong came to Saltsburg around 1812 and operated a ferry there from 1816-1817. He had a daughter, Mary. She married John Taylor, who had arrived in Saltsburg around 1817 or 1818. Three of their sons, Harrison, Thomas and James Taylor, served in the Civil War for three years.¹⁷¹

Nancy Armstrong

In 1850, Pennsylvania born Nancy Armstrong and Solomon Kelly both lived with Dr. Robert M.S. Jackson (White). At twenty-two, as she was literate and listed as "in school", she may have been studying medicine under the doctor.¹⁷²

¹⁷⁰Clarence Stephenson, "Candidate Refuses to Debate Black Man," Indiana Gazette, April 27, 1985.

¹⁷¹Clarence Stephenson, "County Historian Clarence Stephenson Starts Writing Account of Our First Black Settlers," Indiana Gazette, January 26, 1985.

¹⁷²United States, [Department of the Interior,] Bureau of the Census, "Seventh Census, 1850", 71.5.

John Binbridge

John Binbridge was born in the state of Indiana, but in 1850, at age twenty-seven, he was literate and living in Blairsville Borough with George Cunningham (White).¹⁷³

David Blaine

David Blaine who was twenty-two in 1850. He was born in Pennsylvania and living in Wheatfield Township with William and Maria Jones and their seven children.¹⁷⁴

George Bronson

George Bronson died March 10, 1862 at age 85.¹⁷⁵

Tom Bronson

Tom Bronson was a hero in 1892 when he saved his employer, Isaac Wynn, from certain death in the heating chamber of a brick kiln. Bronson's efforts were not forgotten. In 1845, after Wynn had died, his daughter, Mrs. George W. Craven, donated a forty-acre farm near Connelsville to the National Achievement

¹⁷³Ibid., 70.

¹⁷⁴Ibid., 117.5.

¹⁷⁵Stephenson, "County Historian".

Clubs for use as a summer camp for Black children.¹⁷⁶

Benjamin and Elizabeth Brunson

Benjamin Brunson was a twenty-six-year-old "coal digger" living in Blacklick Township in 1850. He and his twenty-four-year-old wife, Eliza, were both born and raised in Pennsylvania and illiterate. They had five children when the census taker came by that year including: George (9), John (7), Lewis (5), Margaret (3) and Benjamin (2). All were born in Pennsylvania and none were in school.¹⁷⁷

James Brunson

Twelve-year-old James Brunson was separated from his family and living with a White man named Robert McConnell in Blacklick Township in 1850. He was born in Pennsylvania but did not have the opportunity to attend school.¹⁷⁸

Jane Butler

In 1850, Pennsylvania born Jane Butler was fifty years old

¹⁷⁶Stephenson, "Candidate".

¹⁷⁷United States, 1850 Census, 145; Ibid., 152.

¹⁷⁸Ibid., 145; Ibid., 152.

and living with John A. Jamison II (White) in Indiana Borough. No occupation is listed for her, but she was most likely a live-in housekeeper.¹⁷⁹

Maria E. Chase

In 1850, Maria was thirteen years old and living with a boatman, James Roberts, and his wife Ann in Blairsville. She was born in Pennsylvania and in school. Mary J. Chase, possibly her eighteen year old sister, was living with a White woman named Marilla Barnes nearby.¹⁸⁰

Mary J. Chase

In 1850, Mary J. Chase was eighteen and living in Blairsville Borough with a White woman named Marilla Barnes. Andrew Taylor, a thirteen-year-old Black male also lived there. Mary was born in Pennsylvania and literate. Thirteen-year-old Maria E. Chase, possibly her sister, lived nearby with James and Ann Roberts.¹⁸¹

¹⁷⁹Ibid., 2.5.

¹⁸⁰Ibid., 73.5; Ibid., 75.

¹⁸¹Ibid.; Ibid., 73.5.

Solomon and Rachel Chase

In 1850, fifty-seven-year-old Solomon Chase was a Blacksmith who owned \$300 worth of real estate in Wheatfield Township. He and his forty-seven-year-old wife, Rachel, had a seven-year-old son, Solomon, Jr. Solomon, Sr. was born in Maryland, but Rachel and Solomon, Jr, were both born in Pennsylvania.¹⁸²

James and Susannah Clark

James Clark and Susannah Virginia Smith were married in January 1862 by the Rev. Nelson Williams, one of the sponsoring pastors of the 1858 camp meetings.¹⁸³

Thomas Clark, Sr.

In 1850, Thomas Clark was a seventy-seven-year-old farmer in Green Township. He was born in Maryland and married to forty-five-year old Margaret who was a White woman from Virginia. They had six Mulatto children, all born in Pennsylvania. They were Thomas, Jr. (23), John (21), William (19), Margaret (18), Robert (15), and James (12). Thomas, John

¹⁸²Ibid., 119.5.

¹⁸³Stephenson, "County Historian".

and William were also farmers and Thomas and John were illiterate.¹⁸⁴

Richard and Maria Davis

In 1850, Richard Davis was illiterate, but a successful barber nonetheless who owned \$500 worth of real estate. He and his wife, Maria, lived in Indiana Borough and had four children, William (6), Rachel (5), Richard (2) and a one month old boy named Bazel. All of the family was born in Pennsylvania.¹⁸⁵

Elias Deemer

Mr. and Mrs. Elias Deemer drowned on January 26, 1860, while they were attempting to walk across the river on the ice near Saltsburg.¹⁸⁶

Andrew and Nancy Dennis

In 1850, thirty-year-old Andrew and twenty-three-year-old Nancy Dennis were living in Wheatfield Township with a White

¹⁸⁴United States, 1850 Census, 43.5.

¹⁸⁵Ibid., 4.

¹⁸⁶Clarence Stephenson, "County Blacks Aided by White Friends," Indiana Gazette, February 16, 1985.

woman named Mary Lindsay, although Andrew was considered to be head of the household. Both were born in Pennsylvania and illiterate. Dennis was a laborer and owned no real estate of his own.¹⁸⁷

Elizabeth Diamond

Elizabeth Diamond was a twenty-two-year-old Mulatto born in Pennsylvania. In 1850, she lived with and possibly worked for a White man named James M. Stewart in Indiana Borough.¹⁸⁸

Linus and Susanna Fry

Thirty-year-old Linus and his twenty-seven-year-old wife, Susanna, were the only African Americans living in Centre Township in 1850. They were Mulatto and had a two-year-old daughter also named Susanna. Linus was from Virginia although both Susanna's were born in Pennsylvania. He worked as a laborer and he and Susanna were both illiterate.¹⁸⁹

Dennis Gains

¹⁸⁷United States, 1850 Census, 99.5.

¹⁸⁸Ibid., 6.5.

¹⁸⁹Ibid., 138.5.

When Dennis Gains died on February 8, 1865, it cost his family \$119.15 to bury him and settle his estate. Dennis bought a piece of land in Conemaugh Township on October 13, 1821, and spent his life farming it and building a family with his wife, Sarah. They had at least five children together: Mariah, Jane, Sarah, Dennis, Jr. and Helen. Dennis's wife, Sarah, was Mulatto; her mother was foreign born and most likely White. Dennis too was light-skinned and often the tax recorder failed to even list him as "colored" at all. By 1860, his son, Dennis Jr., had taken a woman named Charlotte as his wife and, in subsequent years, they had children whom they named Charles, Anna, Sarah, Thomas, Joseph and James.

When Dennis, Sr. died, his wife, Sarah, renounced her right to his property in deference to her son, Dennis. Some of the personal property Dennis, Sr. left behind as artifacts of his life as a farmer including a bay mare, a gray horse, a sorrel mare, a plow, a mattock, a winnow mill, an old stove, a "cubbord" and a table. Sarah continued to live with her son, Dennis, but by 1880, Sarah was gone and Dennis was either widowed or divorced. Only his sons, Joseph and James, lived with him and they had a white live-in servant, Lavinia Miller,

to help them with the household chores.¹⁹⁰

Matilda George

Matilda's mother, Esther (Heston) George, may have been unable to read or write, but that did not prevent her from wielding her influence as the wealthiest African American in Indiana County in the last half of the nineteenth century. She and all of her children were born in Pennsylvania and they lived on a farm in Blacklick Township. Her children's father, who was a White man, was not present in the household in 1850. Her money may have affected her social standing in the White community as well for when she owned \$1000 worth of property in 1850, the census taker listed her as Black. When her holdings increased to \$10,000 in 1860, however, the census taker indicated that she was Mulatto.

Esther George died in December of 1865, leaving behind a sizable estate totalling \$5,212.90 for her children and grandchildren. It is difficult to determine her age as she is

¹⁹⁰Indiana County, Registrar and Recorder, Deed Book, vol. 5, page 6, 1821; Indiana County, Registrar and Recorder, Will Book, vol. 3, page 191, 1865; Indiana County, Registrar and Recorder, Record of Accounts, Vol. 4, page 80, 1866; Indiana County, Registrar and Recorder, Inventory and Appraisement File, G#60, 1865.

listed as 60 in the 1850 census and as 76 in the 1860 census. Through the years, various family members and others lived on the family farm. Her daughter, Mariah (Maria) George Armes preceded her in death, so Mariah's children, Margaret, Edward and Julia M. Armes, divided their mother's share which was \$744.70. Matilda, who was probably the youngest, had five other brothers and sisters still living at the time of her mother's death. They included John George, James George, Julia George Chambers, Jane A. George Newman and Nancy E. George McGinity. Julia married Mark Chambers; Jane married John Newman; Mariah (Maria) married James Armes and Nancy married James McGinity.

Matilda paid taxes on her share of her property inheritance and lived with her unmarried illiterate brother, John, who farmed the land until he was nearly blind. Matilda was also illiterate and never married, but she was not without the comfort of family. Throughout the years, extended family members lived with her and her brother, John. In 1850, grandchildren Jacob (8) and John (3) George lived with her as well as twenty-year old George Glasgow. After her sister Mariah's death, James Armes and the children moved into the George household and helped John work the farm.

In later years, when Matilda was forty-seven, family

members had moved out and left her and John (then seventy-one and almost blind) alone. In response, they then hired nine year old Elizabeth Ford to live with them and assist with their daily living activities. Even though other family members no longer continued to live with Matilda, many still lived in the Burrell Township area. Tragically, she died on March 4, 1912, when her clothes caught on fire. Her brother, John was eighty five at the time of her death and she was hailed as "one of the most esteemed Colored residents of this place".¹⁹¹

Robert Gilbert

Mr. Gilbert suffered a curious death when he burned to death in a small outhouse near Judge White's residence at North Ninth Street and Croyland Avenue.¹⁹²

Gabriel and Harriet Harvey

In 1850, Gabriel Harvey was an illiterate laborer, but he owned real estate worth \$100. He and his wife, Harriet, who was

¹⁹¹Indiana County, Registrar and Recorder, Orphan's Court Docket, vol. 7, page 225, 242, 1865; Indiana County, Registrar and Recorder. Record of Accounts, vol. 4, page 112, 1865; Stephenson, "Candidate"; United States, 1850 Census, 152.5.

¹⁹²Stephenson, "Candidate".

also illiterate, lived in the Borough of Indiana and at that time, they had five children named Gabriel (13), John (10), Ann (8), Calvin (5) and Samuel (1). John and Ann attended school. All were born in Pennsylvania and possibly related to the earlier African American migrant, John Harvey. A few years later, in 1853, one of Harriet's good cows was killed by a pack of dogs.¹⁹³

John Harvey

John Harvey, the slave who allegedly began Black migration to Indiana County, may have been the slave of Gawin Adams. Adams was a captain during the Revolutionary War in Bucks County and settled near Indiana County in 1790. Local tradition holds that during the Revolutionary War, Harvey, a slave, was driving a wagon somewhere in the East (perhaps Bucks or Mifflin County). Harvey found wounded officer named Adams¹⁹⁴ and hid him in a barrel in his wagon and subsequently killed British officers with Adams' sword when they tried to search the wagon. Allegedly, Adams was so appreciative that he purchased Harvey

¹⁹³United States, 1850 Census, 3.5; Stephenson, "County Blacks".

¹⁹⁴Some sources suggest that the officer may have been McLain or Stewart.

and brought him to Indiana County when he relocated in the 1790's. The now-legendary sword remains in with Harvey's descendants in the McClurkin family. Harvey's daughter or granddaughter, Sidney Harvey, married the locally renowned "Black Sam" Williams.¹⁹⁵

Hary and Phoeba Jackson

In 1850, thiryt-four-year old Hary and his thirty-three year old wife, Phoeba, were living in the borough of Blairsville with their five children, William (15), George M. (14), John (11), Sarah (7) and Joseph (3). The oldest four were in school and Hary and Phoeba were educated at least to literacy. All were born in Pennsylvania and Hary was employed as a drayman.¹⁹⁶

James Jackson

The marriage of James Jackson and Jenny Smith, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Pete Smith, did not appear to be altogether successful. One night Jackson "filled himself overflowing with

¹⁹⁵Stephenson, "County Historian"; "At Chevy Chase-Indiana County Black History Topic of Meet," Indiana Evening Gazette, December 15, 1978; "Stephen Foster Inspired to Write Favorite Songs By Samuel Williams, Indiana's Escaped Slave from Kentucky," Indiana Evening Gazette, July 10, 1944.

¹⁹⁶United States, 1850 Census, 72-72.5.

bad whiskey...and...fell to work beating his wife in a shameful manner." Furthermore, "her yells of murder could easily be heard two squares. This is not, it appears, the first time..."

According to letters published in the Indiana Progress on February 6, 1879, Jackson was a slave who fought in the Civil War. The published letter was a challenge for a debate between Black Republican Jackson and a Greenback Labor Party speaker. Frank Smith, who was the spokesman for the Greenback Party declined to debate the "ignorant `nigger' named Jackson" and the Greenbackers ignored later published letters and poems. It is possible that the letters were not written by Jackson at all but were a part of a Republican scheme to harass the Greenbackers. In 1883, there is a Rev. James Jackson of the ME Zion Church, but it is not known if this Mr. Jackson is the former aspiring politician.¹⁹⁷

Edward and Nancy Johnson

Edward and Nancy Johnson left Norfolk, Virginia, for Indiana sometime before 1890 to obtain employment and Johnson was hired by Mrs. Harry Hitchcock to work as a gardener for her

¹⁹⁷Stephenson, "Candidate".

father, Judge Harry White. The Johnson's lived in a stone house in White's Woods where their son, Harry Hitchcock Johnson, was born in 1890. Harry, who may have been the only African American from Indiana County to enlist for service in World War I, was assigned to the 505th Engineers and served in France at Meuse-Argonne, Belleau Woods as well as other places. Edward Johnson died on February 2, 1942.¹⁹⁸

Lewis Johnson

Lewis Johnson, Sr. arrived in Blairsville in 1825 and married Jane Bronson, the daughter of George Bronson, in 1828. Lewis Johnson was a coal miner and worked in the mines for about forty years. Lewis and Jane had a son, also named Lewis, who served for three years in the Union Army. Either father or son was reputed to have been the operator of an Underground Railroad station and was involved in the following incident in 1856. That year, a Mr. Stump of Virginia persuaded Peter Heck, a tailor from Uniontown, to go to Blairsville with him in search of a fugitive slave. Supposedly, Stump had seen the man hiding in Lewis Johnson's house. They found the alleged fugitive

¹⁹⁸Ibid.

standing in the door of a store and the plan was for Heck to grab him and Stump to come and help him. The plan failed when the man threw Heck into the street instead and Blacks and Whites alike came to his rescue. Stump and Heck fled with an angry mob in hot pursuit. Thankfully for Stump and Heck, George Wilkinson (the high constable) and Chester Davis (the mayor) intervened and the tailor pledged that he would "never more pursue a fugitive slave north of the 40th degree, so help me Andrew Jackson". The date of this account by Heck and another newspaper account on March 31, 1858, do not exactly match, but the news account gives the alleged fugitive's name as Newton.¹⁹⁹

Abraham and Sarah Johnston

In 1850, Abraham Johnston was a thirty-five-year-old farmer living in White Township some miles east of Indiana with his twenty-eight-year-old wife, Sarah, and their children, James A. (8), Dennis (6), Harriet A. (4) and Jonathan (1). In May of 1845, an old store journal credits him for \$1 for "makin 200 nails" and another on April 4, 1846 indicates he bought "one bay mair" for \$20. In 1850, his property was worth about \$800 and

¹⁹⁹Stephenson, "County Historian"; Stephenson, "County Blacks".

his son, James, attended school.

Abraham was a trustee of the Indiana African M.E. Church and in 1860, some Southern slave catchers obviously believed him to be a part of the Underground Railroad. In June of that year, a posse of nine began asking a White man named Jonathan Agey where Johnston lived. Agey foresaw trouble and immediately went to alert Johnston. Upon arriving at Johnston's home, the posse insisted that they wanted to conduct a search of Johnston's property for stolen goods, but Agey and Johnston refused. One of the posse members held an unarmed Agey at gunpoint, but Agey did not back down and the man eventually left. Abraham Johnston later moved to Cokeville near Blairsville and served as a trustee of the Blairsville AME Church and superintendent of the Sunday School before he died on August 17, 1882,²⁰⁰ at about age 72.²⁰¹

John Jones

In 1850, forty-year-old John Jones was living in Wheatfield Township with seventy-five-year-old Martha (most likely his

²⁰⁰Another source gives his death date as August 27, 1882.

²⁰¹United States, 1850 Census, 22.5; Stephenson, "County Blacks".

mother) and two-year-old Catharine. He worked as a laborer and was literate as was Martha. All were born in Pennsylvania. William and Maria Jones who may have been related lived close by.²⁰²

William and Maria Jones

Forty-four-year-old William and thirty-nine-year-old Maria Jones were living in Wheatfield Township in 1850 with their children Margaret (19), Eliza (16), Jesse (14), William (9), Calvin (5), Daniel (4) and Lewis (2). William was a laborer and owned no property, but all were born in Pennsylvania. Both parents were literate, but none of the children were in school. Twenty-two year old David Blaine also lived with them. John Jones, who may have been related, lived nearby.²⁰³

Alexander Kelly

Alexander Kelly died on June 19, 1907, and was buried in Single Grave No. 13, Division 3 in St. Peter's Cemetery in the 6900 Block of Lemington Avenue in the East Liberty section of Pittsburgh. His grave is marked by an eroding government-issued

²⁰²United States, 1850 Census, 117.5; Ibid., 119.5.

²⁰³Ibid., 117.5; Ibid., 119.5.

headstone and his wife, Victoria, who died May 1898, lies beside him in unmarked Single Grave No. 14. There they are among the anonymous dead, but in life, Alexander Kelly received one of the nation's highest military honors.

Kelly was a First Sergeant in Co. F. of the United States Colored Troops during the Civil War. He received the Congressional Medal of Honor on April 6, 1865, for his actions at Chapins Farms, Virginia, during a battle on September 29, 1864. The citation reads that he "gallantly seized the colors which had fallen near the enemy's line...raised them and rallied the men at a time of confusion and in a place of the greatest danger". During the two-day battle outside Richmond, Virginia, Union Brigadier General Benjamin Franklin Butler championed the use of the Black troops. The inexperienced 4th and 6th United States Colored Troops fought against 1,800 Confederate soldiers. In the early-morning fog, the Confederates fired into them and moved in for close combat. It was then that light-skinned, five foot, five inch Kelly rallied the men, urging them on even though the final toll of dead and wounded would finish the 6th as a fighting unit. Finally, after a very long forty minutes, three more regiments of Black Troops came to their aid and they forced the Confederate troops back to Fort Gilmer. The Union

Army took Ft. Gilmer on the second day with a loss of 1,732 Black soldiers and 1,559 White ones.

Ironically, this hero signed up only as a "substitute volunteer" for his drafted brother, Joseph Kelly, of Allegheny County. Alexander was born about 1838. By 1850, it appears that the family was orphaned and living with an uncle in Conemaugh Township. Thirty-two-year-old David Kelly is listed as head of the household in the census and twenty-eight-year-old Nancy is most likely his wife. Alex's siblings included David (20), Mary (21) Isriel (18), Joseph (16), Elias (14) and William (10). All of the children were born in Pennsylvania and in 1850 both David's are working as "salt boillers" and Isriel, Joseph and Elias are "cole diggers". William and Alexander are in school. By 1860, all the children had grown up and left the area. When Alexander enlisted for a three year stint in the Union Army on August 19, 1863, he was living in "Coultersville", was single and a coal miner. Alexander later married on July 30, 1866, in a Baptist Church at Hollidaysburg by the Rev. A.H. Taylor, but he and his wife had no children although they did raise some foster children.

Not long after his valiant efforts, Kelly was discharged from the Army on September 20, 1865, at Wilmington, North

Carolina. He apparently lived in Coultersville following his discharge, but moved to Pittsburgh's East End in 1892 where he took a job as a night watchman in a livery stable. It is unknown if Alexander received any injuries or to what extent, but one completed form for the Bureau of Pensions stated that his permanent marks included a hole in his cheek, a lump between his eyes on his forehead and a scar on his back. He received a pension of \$8 a month, but a few months prior to his death on February 16, 1907, he began receiving \$12 monthly. Heroes such as Kelly are entitled to a Medal of Honor tombstone from the Veteran's Administration, but since they are unable to locate any family members, another individual or volunteer group would have to pay to honor this most deserving Indiana County son.²⁰⁴

Solomon Kelly

Solomon Kelly was a Mulatto born in Pennsylvania. In 1850, he and another young Black woman, Nancy Armstrong, were living in the Borough of Blairsville with Dr. Robert M.S. Jackson, possibly studying under him as they are listed in the census as

²⁰⁴William Mausteller, "Grave Marked, But Sgt. Kelly is Unknown Soldier," Pittsburgh Press, May 27, 1990; United States, 1850 Census, 310.5.

literate and "in school".²⁰⁵

John and Catharine Lindsay

In 1850, thirty-five-year-old John and thirty-two-year-old Catharine Lindsay were living in Wheatfield Township with their children Peter (10) and Mary (5). They were all born in Pennsylvania. Both parents were illiterate and neither child was in school.²⁰⁶

Samuel McClellen

Samuel McClellen was born in Blairsville in 1843, the son of Miles McClelland and Isabella Hunter. Miles had been a slave, but Isabella was a free Black. Samuel was a Civil War veteran and served in Co. F., 32nd Regiment, U.S. Colored Infantry from February 24, 1864 through May 29, 1865. He died in Blairsville on February 27, 1913.²⁰⁷

Aurelius S. McClurkin

When Aurelius McClurkin served in the Navy in 1953, he

²⁰⁵Ibid., 71.5.

²⁰⁶Ibid., 101.5.

²⁰⁷Stephenson, "County Blacks".

received a commendation from Navy captain John B. Taylor, commanding officer of the heavy cruiser USS Baltimore, after he spent fifteen straight hours repairing the main circulation pumps.²⁰⁸

Harry McClurkin

In January 1877, a White man named Samuel McClurkin resigned his position as a teller at the Farmer's Bank and later moved to Pittsburgh. His resignation came in the midst of a scandal reported in the August 23, 1877, issue of the Indiana Progress. During that week, apparently Mattie Williams, who was the first custodian of the bank where McClurkin worked, swore that Mr. McClurkin was the father of her unborn child. Mattie was the daughter of Sam Williams and descended from Indiana County's Black founding father, John Harvey. McClurkin was exonerated by the court in early September, and not long after, Mattie gave birth to her son on October 9, 1877. She named him Harry Samuel McClurkin. She may to have married Mr. McClurkin, but he abandoned her and a mob went after her. When the social pressure became too much to bear and when her stepmother refused

²⁰⁸Stephenson, "Candidate".

to help her, she fled the area leaving her son in the care of Hannah Robinson. Mattie may have later married a Mr. Stern.

Harry married Mary Louise Baker and had six children including Margaret, Annie, Eunice, Samuel I., Mary (Marry) Alice, and Harry, Jr. Margaret first married Mr. Buggs and then Jack Irwin. Annie died at an early age. Eunice married Earl M. Webb and Mary Alice married John Groomes. Their son Samuel I. McClurkin was born on February 21, 1908. He married Edna I. Dressler, daughter of Harry and Anna Young Dressler. Edna was born on September 21, 1913, in Tremont and was most likely White. Samuel's wife, Edna, was a housewife and later a custodian for the Kuzneski Agency. Their home was located at 340 Philadelphia Street and the McClurkin's were members of the Indiana Free Methodist Church for a while, but Mrs. McClurkin later attended services at the First Christian Church. They also had a son, Harry, and two daughters, Anna Louise McClurkin Clawson and Edna Belle McClurkin. At the time of Samuel's death, on March 17, 1976, two of his sisters had already passed away, but his brother, Harry S. McClurkin, Jr. was living in Nevada, his sister, Vireus (Margaret) Irwin was living in Pittsburgh and his other sister, Mary Alice Groomes, lived in Indiana. His son, Harry, lived in Johnstown and his daughters,

in Pittsburgh. Edna Belle graduated from Indiana High School in 1976 and worked at Hardee's at the Indiana University of Pennsylvania campus. In 1979, she was to be wed to 1969 Homer City graduate, Domenick A. Bruno in February 1980, but either the marriage failed or never took place in the first place, for she later married David Ruffner. Edna died on December 1, 1988. At that time, Harry still lived in Johnstown, but Anna Louise had moved to Apollo and Edna Belle, to Indiana.²⁰⁹

James McGinty

On May 10, 1858, James McGinty faced a near death experience. He had not been feeling well for several days when he experienced a seizure, something like epilepsy. Everyone thought he was dead and began preparations for burial, but in less than an hour, he showed signs of life. Those present took restorative measures and he revived and was reported to be "well and lively".²¹⁰

²⁰⁹"At Chevy Chase"; Clarence Stephenson, "Sam Williams: Memorable Black Countian," Indiana Gazette, March 30, 1985; "Obituaries," Indiana Evening Gazette, March 18, 1976; "Obituaries," Indiana Gazette, December 2, 1988; "Engagements," Indiana Evening Gazette, February 15, 1979; "Stephen Foster".

²¹⁰Stephenson, "County Blacks".

David and Percilla Roberts

David was twenty-six and a coal digger like his neighbor, Ben Brunson. He was illiterate, but his twenty-four-year-old wife, Percilla, was not. His six-year-old son, James, was in school and he also had two other sons, Jacob (4) and Lewis (2). They were all born in Pennsylvania and living in Blacklick Township in 1850.²¹¹

James and Ann Roberts

In 1850, twenty-three-year-old James was a boatman in Blairsville Borough. He and his twenty-two-year-old wife, Ann, appear to be rearing thirteen-year-old Maria E. Chase. James was illiterate, but Maria was in school. All were born in Pennsylvania.²¹²

"Aunt Hannah" Robinson

Hannah Robinson's birthdate and birthplace are unknown but some believed her to be more than one hundred-years-old when she died on January 18, 1892. Her obituary, however, reports that she came to Indiana with the James P. Carter family from

²¹¹United States, 1850 Census, 145.

²¹²Ibid., 73.5.

Kentucky prior to the Civil War, but the 1850 census lists a Hannah Robinson born in Pennsylvania living in Armagh Borough with a White man named Daniel Imcom. This young woman is literate and most likely worked for Mr. Imcom.

Hannah later raised Harry McClurkin and then lived with Harriet Smith for many years. Smith was the widow of Pete Smith, who had been a teamster twenty-five years before. There are no documented connections to James Robinson, but it appears they were born approximately the same time.²¹³

James Robinson

James Robinson, who was born about 1794, strongly believed that there was a time when his people would be able to vote. From 1856 to 1859, he regularly attempted to vote. Everyone smiled when he laid his ticket down on the table and then walked away declaring: "Folks, the time's coming when our people will vote." He did not live to see this come to pass, however, as he died on March 18, 1860 when he was about sixty-six, some twenty years before the Constitution gave Blacks the right to vote. People described his as thrifty, industrious and reliable, but

²¹³Stephenson, "Candidate"; United States, 1850 Census, 127.5.

he was apparently good humored as well. When he was the victim of a mischievous prank of someone removing a large quantity of firewood from his property, the local papers stated that "Jimmy desires to have it returned as soon as convenient". He owned property on Water Street and was a trustee of the Indiana AME church. He also had at least one daughter, Eliza, who married Thomas Clark, but died at age twenty-one, about a year after her father passed away.²¹⁴

James and Lavina Robinson

In 1850, James and Lavina Robinson were both thirty-five and had started their family. They were Pennsylvania born and lived in Indiana Borough. Their children were William (14), Ann E. (7) and a one-year-old daughter named Martin S. Robinson. James and Lavinia were illiterate, but William and Ann attended school.²¹⁵

Catherine Shorter

In 1850, Catharine was a three-year-old toddler born in

²¹⁴Stephenson, "County Historian"; Clarence Stephenson, "Indiana Area Blacks Battle For Civil Rights," Indiana Gazette, June 8, 1985.

²¹⁵United States, 1850 Census, 5-5.5.

Pennsylvania living in Indiana Borough with the family of John G. Coleman (White).²¹⁶

John Shorter

John Shorter, who was most likely a slave, was said to have been over one-hundred-years-old when he died in April 1877. He lived in White Township , possibly near the Indiana Foundry Company, when his son, John Wesley Shorter, was born in 1832.

John Wesley Shorter (better known as Wes) operated a barber shop in the basement of the Indiana Hotel and later in the Wissell block opposite the hotel. In October 1877, he had the distinction of being drawn for the United States jury, at the sitting of the Supreme Court, which was then in session in Pittsburgh. He was the first African American in the state to have such an honor. He also served at least two terms as a member of the Executive Committee of Home Organization.

Wes had lived to be ninety-years-old when he met with a tragic accident on September 21, 1922. He was living with his sister, Mrs. Sarah Plater, in Salem, Ohio, at that time when a car hit him as he walked along the road. The accident fractured

²¹⁶Ibid., 4.5.

his skull, broke his legs and he died within minutes without regaining consciousness. He also had another sister, Mrs. Amy Lewis.²¹⁷

Thomas and Ellen Sillison

Thirty-three-year-old Thomas Sillison was a barber in Blairsville Borough and owned \$600 in real property in 1850. He and his twenty-seven-year-old wife, Ellen, had started their family which thus far consisted of Henry (7) and Elizabeth (5). While Thomas was born in Virginia, his wife and children were born in Pennsylvania. Both parents were literate, but young Henry was in school.²¹⁸

Lydia Slater

In 1850, twenty-four-year-old Lydia Slater and her four-month-old daughter lived with her White employer, William Lanson, in the borough of Blairsville. She was literate and both she and her daughter had been born in Pennsylvania.²¹⁹

²¹⁷Stephenson, "County Historian"; "Wes Shorter Killed," Indiana Progress, October 4, 1922; "[Mr. J. Wesley Shorter,]" Indiana Progress, October 18, 1877.

²¹⁸United States, 1850 Census, 73.

²¹⁹Ibid., 66.

Peter and Harriet Smith

In 1850, Peter was a sixty-year-old laborer living with David Wilson (White). David owned the property in Brush Valley Township, but Peter was the head of the household. He and his thirty-five-year-old wife, Harriet, had four children including Ann (14), Ellen (5), Virginia (4) and Louisa (3). Both parents were illiterate and none of the children were in school. All were born in Pennsylvania. Pete was teamster. Their daughter, Virginia, who may have also been known as Jenny Smith married Jim Jackson. In later years, "Aunt Hannah" Robinson lived with Harriet.²²⁰

Joshua and Isabella Stafford

In 1850, seventy-nine-year-old Joshua and his fifty-six-year-old wife, Isabella Stafford, lived in Indiana Borough. They were Pennsylvania born, but illiterate and owned no real property. Their neighbors were Samuel and Sidney Williams.²²¹

Charles Sutherland

²²⁰Ibid., 97.5; "At Chevy Chase"; Stephenson, "Candidate".

²²¹United States, 1850 Census, 9.5.

Twenty-six-year-old Charles Sutherland was born in Pennsylvania, literate and living with a White man named Charles Gompers in Indiana Borough in 1850.²²²

Andrew Taylor

In 1850, Andrew Taylor was thirteen-years-old and living with a White woman named Marilla Barnes in Blairsville Borough. Another young Black woman, eighteen-year-old Mary J. Chase, also lived with them. Andrew was born in Pennsylvania, but not attending school. He was possibly the son of Henry and Jane Taylor who lived with a White merchant named Jacob Summers.²²³

Henry and Jane Taylor

In 1850, the Taylor family lived in Blairsville Borough with White merchant, Jacob Summers. Their oldest son, thirteen-year-old Andrew, was possibly living with a White woman named Marilla Barnes. Their other sons included Thomas (12), Lillason (9) and John (4). All were born in Pennsylvania. Henry was a laborer and illiterate. Thomas and Lillason were in school.²²⁴

²²²Ibid., 4.5.

²²³Ibid., 75; Ibid., 77.5.

²²⁴Ibid., 77-77.5.

Daniel Vant

During the Civil War, Daniel Vant served as General Grant's hostler and was in daily contact with him. After the Civil War, he lived in Indiana and worked in the junk business. He had the reputation as "perhaps the most well-known resident of Indiana" when he died on April 18, 1916.²²⁵

Samuel W. and Sidney I. Williams

Sidney I. Harvey, who was either the daughter or granddaughter of the sword-wielding John Harvey, married Samuel W. "Black Sam" Williams, an illiterate Black man twelve years older than her and together they purchased a piece of property in Indiana Borough's East End from Mary W. Williams on May 2, 1848. The property was valued at \$200 in the 1850 census. Their first child, Mary, was born about the time that they purchased the property and Isabella was born in 1850. Sidney was Mulatto and her children, Mary E., Isabella, Sarah C., Samuel, Levinia (Lomenia) and Martha were all considered to be Mulatto as well.

²²⁵Stephenson, "Candidate".

Sam worked as a laborer, a hostler at a hotel and a hood carrier and he had a strong melodious singing voice which he put to good use as he pushed his wheelbarrow to the railroad station early in the morning to assist passengers with their luggage. His marriage to Sidney obviously was not ideal. Sam was most likely an alcoholic and his exploits often found their way into the local news. In June of 1863, it appears that Lavina confronted Sam about his drinking habits and "waywardness". It resulted in a long, loud and furious battle of words, but no injuries. One of Sam's more printable statements was "It's a purty note dat a man wuf as much as I am-owns a house an got money in de bank-must be ruled by a sett uv women". In May 1864, a currier at Cochran's Hotel assaulted Sam one day and fired a pistol at him the next. Sam retaliated by throwing an axe at Scott and Scott ended up in jail. Then in December 1872, it appears that he found himself in trouble once again when he took possession of a lawyer's office and had to be forcibly removed after milder measures failed. In the end, he had to pay a fine and was discharged. By 1870 they were living apart and Sam had custody of Levinia and Martha.

Sam owned \$1000 worth of property in 1870, but when he died on November 27, 1879, and was buried in Oakland Cemetery, his

personal estate was insufficient to pay his debts and so his possessions were ordered to be sold. His widow (possibly a second wife) received \$74.30 of his personal property and \$225.70 from the \$455.31 raised by the sale. Among his other personal property, Sam left behind a hog, horse, wagon, harness, shovel, bucket, wheelbarrow, crock and some potatoes, apples and beets, all of which the auctioneer sold to the highest bidder. At least one other African American, Daniel Vance,²²⁶ was present at the sale and he bought nine dollars worth of boards (lumber). Following Sam's death on November 26, 1879, at age 68, Mrs. Williams lived with her brother, William Patterson and his family.

In spite of these brushes with the law, Sam endeared himself to the larger Indiana community, and following his death, a nostalgic editorial appeared in the Indiana Progress which praised his sense of humor , his physical strength and, of course, his fine singing voice. In local folklore, Sam Williams looms large, perhaps larger than Williams was in reality, but that is how legend generally operates. Although the census lists his birthplace as Pennsylvania, the legend maintains that

²²⁶This could be Daniel Vant.

Sam escaped from slavery at a Kentucky plantation and came to Indiana sometime before the Civil War. His plantation sweetheart, Nellie Gray, had been sold to a Louisiana owner and he twice attempted to return her to Kentucky. For these efforts, they whipped him severely and the lash blinded him in one eye. In spite of his efforts, Nellie Gray returned to Louisiana and Sam could never forget the sorrow in his heart. With his love gone and after he had received a severe whipping, Sam decided to run away. He headed North with two female slaves and swam the Potomac with them on his back.

When he arrived in Armagh, Pennsylvania, Judge Thomas White gave him shelter and food. One of his hiding places was at the White's Old Stone House north of Indiana. He decided to stay, married Sidney and worked for various families including Attorney William Stewart. Supposedly, Stephen Foster was related to Mrs. Stewart and came to Indiana for a visit several times a year. During those times he listened to the laments of Williams in song and was inspired to write the songs "Darling Nellie Gray", "Old Dog Tray" and "Jeannie with the Light Brown Hair". Local folklore credits Sam Williams for the inspiration of some of Stephen Foster's songs, but this has not been substantiated and there is no solid evidence that Foster ever

visited Indiana.²²⁷

John Wilson

In 1850, John Wilson was sixteen and living with a racially mixed family in Wheatfield Township. John was also racially mixed and born in Pennsylvania, but not in school.²²⁸

Elias Woods

In Conemaugh Township, Pennsylvania, there was quite a stir at Elias Woods' home in May of 1870. Commotion was not unusual in his household since there were already a dozen people living together, but this special event was the birth of his grandson, Harry. Elias's son, Sylvester, married Martha the previous July and they had not delayed in starting their family. By the time

²²⁷Indiana County, Registrar and Recorder, Deed Book, vol. 17, page 491, 1848; Indiana County, Registrar and Recorder, Will Book, vol. 4, page 597, 1879; Indiana County, Registrar and Recorder, Orphan's Court Docket, vol. 11, page 129, 1880; Indiana County, Registrar and Recorder, Orphan's Court Docket, vol. 11, page 149, 1880; Indiana County, Registrar and Recorder, Record of Accounts, vol. 7, page 545, 1880; Indiana County, Registrar and Recorder, Record of Accounts, vol. 8, page 307, 1880; Indiana County, Registrar and Recorder, Inventory and Appraisement File, W#93, 1880; "At Chevy Chase"; United States, 1850 Census, 9.5; Stephenson, "Sam Williams"; "Stephen Foster".

²²⁸United States, 1850 Census, 99.5.

his grandson was born in 1870, Elias Woods was fifty²²⁹ and had lived a hard life. He was born in Maryland²³⁰ and did not receive education sufficient to enable him to read or write with any proficiency.²³¹ In 1860, he lived in Saltsburg and some called him a loafer. At that time, he owned no property, but he had a wife and five children to feed and clothe. By 1870, he moved to Conemaugh Township and gained employment as a laborer. His family continued to grow and sometime after the arrival of his grandson upon the scene, the Woods family moved to Philadelphia Street in West Indiana Borough where Elias got a job as a hostler. This may have been an overall improvement for the Woods family, but by 1880, tragedy had struck Elias'

²²⁹The 1870 manuscript census lists Elias Woods as 35, but we can assume that this is incorrect as the 1860 census lists his age as 40 and the 1880 census, as 59. Other family members' ages are consistent throughout the census years.

²³⁰Elias Woods was born in Maryland according to the 1860 census though the 1870 and 1880 census list him as born in Pennsylvania. This researcher proposes that Maryland is correct for two reasons. First, the census taker writes Maryland as the place of birth in the first census where Elias Woods' name appears and second, because it seems that many census takers had the habit of placing ditto marks to indicate Pennsylvania as place of birth for an entire page, leaving a large margin for hasty errors.

²³¹The 1860 census lists Elias Woods simply as illiterate; however, the 1870 census states that he could not write (ability to read is missing) and the 1880 census lists him as unable to read nor write.

seventeen year old daughter, Edith; she had gone insane. Elias was transient and moved frequently for much of his life, but eventually bought a piece of property in Center Township in April 1894 from B. James Stafford. About 1900, he moved to Blairsville and later to Jeanette, Pennsylvania, where he lived for about a year before he died on August 10, 1910. People believed that by that time he was about one hundred years old.²³²

Vincent Yellets

It was a coal mining accident which caused Vincent Yellet's death on November 16, 1911. The Blairsville Courier also praised him as "honest, upright and industrious" and as "one of the town's most highly respected Colored residents".²³³

²³²United States, [Department of the Interior], Bureau of the Census, "Eighth Census, 1860: Indiana County"; United States. Department of the Interior, Bureau of the Census, "Ninth Census, 1870: Indiana County"; United States, Department of the Interior, Bureau of the Census, "Tenth Census, 1880: Indiana County"; Indiana County, Registrar and Recorder, Deed Book, vol. B-59, page 421, 1894; Stephenson, "Candidate".

²³³Ibid.

APPENDIX B

LIFE ACCOUNTS

While the life accounts included in the previous section concern African Americans who are no longer alive, the historical sketches included in this section chronicle the life stories and issues of the living. This data comes from interview material as well as published and documentary sources. These accounts are admittedly limited in scope, however, they do add significantly to our knowledge about the ways in which members of the present African American community came to Indiana County in addition to highlighting their struggles and achievements.

Lyman "Red" Connor

A portrait of Lyman Connor hangs in the library of the Chevy Chase Community Center. It recognizes both the dedication of the center on June 15, 1976, as well as Connor's role in the its completion. Connor had already played a pivotal role in the movement that resulted in water and sewage development and improved streets in the Chevy Chase community when he chaired the Chevy Chase Community Action Council in October 1970. They

then launched a campaign to build a community center for educational, cultural and recreational events. Connor felt that "out of the construction of this building came friendship and contacts with people who resided outside the community of Chevy Chase". The building was finally dedicated on March 24, 1977 and at the ceremony, Lucille Gipson recognized the special efforts of Mr. Connor. She recalled the "times when Mr. Connor could be found working alone laying blocks for the floor" and "while some people thought the center could never be constructed, Mr. Connor never lost faith in its realization".

Lyman Connor, who was born in 1926, relocated to Indiana from Pittsburgh in 1957. At that time, he was a supervisor for the Pennsylvania Department of Health and served Indiana, Armstrong, Jefferson and Clarion counties but later served as associate dean of admissions at IUP for twenty years, retiring in 1991. When he was looking for a place to purchase a house, all the realtors brought him to Chevy Chase, which was stereotyped as a Black community. He has no regrets about that, however, and comments: "Things aren't perfect yet, but they are one hundred percent better. People only hold bigoted thoughts in their minds as long as they maintain a distance. Once you meet someone and get to know each other, you start judging

people on an individual basis rather than as a group or by the color of their skin."²³⁴

Alfonso Embry

Alonzo and Stella Felker Knaff's first children were twin girls whom they named Mary and Martha. At fifteen, Mary married Dodge Embry and gave birth to their first son on June 3, 1926. She named him Lofonzo, a derivative of her father's name, but during his school days in Johnstown, Lofonzo became Alfonso. Although Mary and Dodge were living in Harveyton, Kentucky, at the time of Alfonso's birth, Mary had been born in Oliver Springs, Tennessee, and Dodge, in Lincoln, Alabama. It was not long, however, before Dodge ventured out of the South altogether to look for work. His brothers, Doc and Jerry, were working in Brenizer, Pennsylvania, and he joined them there. Dodge may have possibly come to Pennsylvania as a strikebreaker, but when he found steady work, he sent for his wife and son. After living in Brenizer, they moved back and forth between Johnstown and Ernest before finally settling in Ernest. Mary's brothers,

²³⁴John Como, "Looking Back: Black Residents Reflect on Life in Indiana," Indiana Gazette, February 27, 1994; Clarence Stephenson, "Indiana Area Blacks Battle For Civil Rights," Indiana Gazette, June 8, 1985.

Clyde and Audrey also came to Ernest in the 1930's, but they returned to Kentucky within a few years.

With the passing years, the family continued to grow and Mary bore a total of eighteen children. Eight lived to adulthood; another eight were stillborn; and two, Fannie Mae and Margery, died of pneumonia when they were young. Alfonso's living brothers and sisters include Estella Embry Scholfield, Eleanor Jean (Doris) Embry Naylor Gibson, Margaret Embry Peoples, William (Wallace) Embry, Grace Embry Peoples, Lera Embry Veney and Geraldine Embry Redd. As a child, Alfonso's Uncle Clarence Knaff, Grandmother Knaff and cousin, Edward Asbury, also lived with his family.

With a family this size, it is not surprising that Dodge had to make many sacrifices just to meet the family's basic needs. There was never anything left over after the bills were paid and luxuries were non-existent. During much of Alfonso's childhood, Dodge was a coal miner for the R & P Coal Company in Ernest. The company paid him thirty-six cents for each ton of coal he mined, but on the days he had to do preparatory work, he did not make anything. There is little wonder that Alfonso's dreams of studying dentistry went unfulfilled. There were few Black colleges at that time, but living in a coal mining town

limited the opportunity to get information about college or scholarships even further.

Alfonso's dreams, however, were not the only ones that were quashed by difficult economic circumstances. Dodge himself was particularly talented in baseball. The Black Leagues wanted him to play, but unfortunately he had to refuse because of family obligations and because he could not be as mobile as the League's schedule required. Instead, Dodge spent his life working in the mills of Johnstown and the mines of Ernest. Mary also worked—first at IUP Sportswear and then later at a nursing home owned by Bea States.

While coal mining in Dodge's era was particularly dangerous and back breaking work, the company did provide some benefits for its workers. One of the amenities they supplied was a church open to all workers. Because Whites were welcomed more readily at other local churches, however, the company church in Ernest was predominantly African American. A Black woman named Mrs. Hicks was the minister and Alfonso and his family attended Sunday School there.

As mentioned earlier, the Embry family tended to move back and forth between Ernest and Johnstown as work was available. During one move back to Ernest, however, Alfonso elected to stay

with his Uncle Jerry and Aunt Alice Embry instead so that he could graduate from Johnstown's Franklin Borough High School. Alfonso's parents were particularly insistent that he graduate from high school. In 1944, he did just that, and so, he recently attended his class's fiftieth reunion.

There was one particular incident in high school that Alfonso and his classmates remembered with laughter when the program required all of the past class presidents to speak. There were only two African Americans in Alfonso's graduating class, but in 1941, Alfonso, by a twist of fate and a little help from the guys in the wood shop, won the election for the class presidency. One of his teachers, Mr. Wissinger, however, let him know in no uncertain terms that it was not his desire for Alfonso to be president, and in six months, there would be another election. Sure enough, there was and Alfonso was voted out with no mention of his fleeting tenure in office recorded in the year book.

Although the most common career destination for his Black peers was the mill or the CCC camp, Alfonso found his first job at the Super Tire Company in Johnstown and worked there as a tire recapper and vulcanizer. He also worked at Bethlehem Steel in Johnstown before moving to Ernest later in the 1940's. In

Ernest, he followed in his father's footsteps which inevitably led to the mines. In the 1960's, he worked for Brodsky's Scrap Metal and McCreary Tires, but later return to the mines of Lucerne, Elderton (Jane Mine), Saxonburg and New Kensington.

While working in the mines, much of the racial prejudice was unspoken, but still quite evident. On Safety Day at the mines, for example, the workers brought food to share, but Alfonso was never told to bring anything to contribute. In addition, there were few White men that would drink out of the same water bucket as a Black man. Although Alfonso recalls few problems with his coworkers, there were times when racial tension burst to the surface in off-color jokes or in the use of the word "nigger". On one occasion, when a man called him an "African violet", Alfonso would have fought him, but the other man would not fight. Typically these men did not want to fight, but just seemed to want to show off in front of the others.

Circumstances outside of the mines often were not much better. In the 1940's, travelling always held its difficulties, if not risks. In 1944, Alfonso, Dodge and Uncle Doc attended a funeral in Lincoln, Alabama, and returned to Pennsylvania by bus. Then Blacks could only ride in the back seat of the bus. If the bus was not crowded, they could also sit in the back

aisle seat, unless a White person sat across from them. On the trip home, the three Embry men changed buses in Birmingham, Alabama, but found that the restroom designated for their use was filthy. They also discovered that they could not get anything to eat as there were too many White people waiting to be served.

Since they were changing buses, they waited outside with the other Black travellers. For practical reasons, it was necessary for them to do this, for when the bus boarded, the driver called out the number of "Colored" seats available and usually only a few could get on each bus. On that day in Birmingham, there were about twenty-five to thirty Black people waiting to board the bus. Doc reasoned that there would be almost no possibility that there would be three seats available on the same bus, and so, he urged Dodge and Alfonso to go on ahead. As the driver got off the bus and saw the crowd, he remarked: "Look at the shines and look at the shines", referring to the sea of Black faces which "shined like black shoe polish" or "like a nigger's heel". The use of words like "snowflakes", "stardust" and "pickaninny" and remarks such as: "It must be getting to rain; here comes some dark clouds" were also commonplace, but no less painful. During that time, Alfonso

found these expressions as well as the term "Black" offensive; he preferred simply to be called "Colored".

Alfonso's Uncle Doc was a Christian man who never cursed, but even he was moved to anger at such an overt racial comment and called the man a "son of a bitch", under his breath of course. By chance, Alfonso and his father did get a seat on the bus, but the trouble was just beginning to brew. When they got out of the bus for a reststop in Decatur, Alabama, Alfonso started to go in the depot door when an old Black woman stopped him. He then saw the "White's Only" sign, but saw no sign for "Colored". The old woman directed him around to the side and when he didn't see any door, she responded that there "ain't no door". Right by the soda machine, however, there was a small wood covered window that lifted up. Alfonso raised it and saw no one but Black women working in the kitchen. He asked for a sandwich, but again there was no time to fix him anything to eat as too many White people were waiting.

Alfonso had no choice but to make do with a soda from the machine, and by the time he finished it, the driver announced the bus. When he reboarded, the driver demanded: "Was you on this bus, boy?" Alfonso didn't answer, so the driver got loud and repeated himself. He finally said, "Yeah," failing to

include the customary title of sir. The driver told him that did not "sound so good coming from a Colored man". When Alfonso told him to kiss his ass, the driver ordered him off the bus; Alfonso refused. After his father reasoned with him, however, he agreed to leave the bus. When they got off the bus and Alfonso saw his father close a knife, he realized what would have happened had the confrontation turned violent.

In another place and time, Alfonso's anger and frustration did erupt into violence. He stopped at a restaurant near New Kensington, Pennsylvania, and asked for a cup of coffee. The man there told him: "We don't serve Colored here", but added that if Alfonso had a tin can, he would sell him some coffee. At that point, Alfonso became so angry that he struck the man, knocking him to the floor, and when the man got up, he hit him again. He knew that the police would arrest him if he stayed to make his point any further, so he left before he got caught. In the end, he "didn't get the coffee, but got the satisfaction".

Restaurants in Indiana, particularly in Alfonso's earlier years, had similar policies. In the 1940's and 1950's many restaurants, such as the Capitol Restaurant, would not serve people of color, but there were others that did. The Moore Hotel (located on the corner of 8th and Philadelphia where

Sgro's presently stands), the Spaghetti House, the Indiana Hotel, La Prima's and a diner known as the Coney Island (near Stewart's Hardware) served Blacks, but at least one may have had a subtle racial policy. In the Spaghetti House, Blacks received their drinks in glasses with gold rings around the rim and no Whites drank from these glasses. Some bars openly refused to sell liquor to Blacks; so, as a result, some light-skinned individuals like Alfonso's cousin, Ophelia (Phyllis) Thornton, derived amusement from "passing" to purchase alcohol. When she confessed her heritage and questioned the bar's racial policies, however, they often disbelieved that she was even Black.

These were the conditions Alfonso faced as a young adult, but throughout his lifetime, personally and socially, things would change. On March 20, 1950, Alfonso married Isabelle Margaret Johnson also known as "Popsicle" or "Mutt". Prior to her marriage to Alfonso, Isabelle had a child, Otis "Stoodie" Stratford, Jr., to Otis Stratford, Sr., but she and Alfonso had nine children together. They are Carolyn Lee Stratford Embry Fisher, Virgil Embry, Dodge Embry, Lugene Embry Clemons, Pamela Embry Powell, Dion Michael Embry, Alfonso Embry, Jr., Kenneth Howard Embry and Deneen Embry Allen.

To accommodate his own growing family, Alfonso bought the

property at the bottom of the hill on Fairview Avenue and moved to Chevy Chase with Isabelle in the 1960's. He built a foundation there and they lived in it until 1964, when he decided that it was time to put a top on the house. He went to First National Bank (now NBOC) to apply for a loan, but when he heard no reply from the bank, he went back to investigate. He spoke with bank officer, Jacque Horvath, who told him that the loan had been denied. Alfonso was particularly upset about this because some of his coworkers had bragged about borrowing sums as large as \$25,000 from that bank for building their houses while he was only asking for \$7000.

He proceeded to express his displeasure at this inequity, and the longer he talked, the louder he got. He asserted that he was tired of being thrown off buses and tired of being told what he could and couldn't do. He continued on telling the bank officer about coworkers who had obtained larger loans and said that he just "wanted to live like a White man". He reminded the officer that he had to repay the loan, for if he failed to do so, no other Black man would ever get a loan, and he did not want the whole race damned because of his actions. To quiet him down, the officer agreed to take his application before the Board again. This time, within two days, they approved the

loan. At one point, Alfonso managed to get a peek at the loan application and in the space allowed to explain the reason for the loan, the bank officer had written: "He wants to live like a White man". So he did, and so did others in his community.

Sadly, Isabelle passed away on August 1, 1970, but seven years later on August 26, 1977, Alfonso remarried. His new wife was Lydia Marlene Clawson, more commonly known as Marlene. Although their life together for what is approaching twenty years has been rewarding, it was not without its difficulties, for Marlene, like her daughters-in-law, Paula (Colesar) Stratford, Linda (Hartman) Embry and Cindy (Smith) Embry is White.

Marlene graduated from Indiana High School in 1964 and worked at a number of places including Robert Shaw, Season-All, IUP Campus Sportswear, the Indiana Hospital, the Holiday Inn and even as a waitress at the Knotty Pine Inn. When Marlene married Alfonso, she lost contact with many friends and family members, including her own father. She made the necessary sacrifices though and faced the challenging task of rearing Alfonso's children still living at home, but had no children with Alfonso. The Embry's as a couple have experienced few incidents of racial hatred, but on one occasion, children threw rocks at Marlene's

car and called her a "nigger lover".

Alfonso has now lived in Chevy Chase for over thirty years and is one of the patriarchs of the community. Although he has relatives spread throughout many states, most of his immediate family live in Chevy Chase, Indiana or the Lucernemines area, and so he has frequent contact with them. In fact, much of the Black Chevy Chase community is made up of the Embry and Clemons families. Only one daughter, Deneen, lives at a distance, in San Francisco, California.

The ways in which Alfonso has strived to make a difference in his community include serving on the board of directors at the Chevy Chase Community Center and membership in the NAACP. In February 1994, he was a featured speaker at a Black History Month presentation at the Chevy Chase Community Center and brought applause and cheers with his life reflections. He has also been a member of the Beulah Baptist Church since approximately 1966, but has attended services since around 1936; Marlene joined him there in 1977. He has held the position of church treasurer since 1991 and often leads the way in construction and maintenance projects. In spite of his strong commitment to his community and the church, on several Sundays during the warmer months of the year, his face is noticeably

absent from the congregation. On these days, he is taking a break from it all, worshipping in the peaceful, quiet chapel of his boat, and one can only hope that there is a good catch that day.²³⁵

Lucille Bowens Gipson

When Isom Bowens met Mandy Judge in a class where she taught in Prattville, Alabama, she already had a daughter named Sally by Willie Woods. It was not long though before Mandy and Isom married and began a family together. On June 27, 1905, their daughter Rosella was born followed by Isador on September 1, 1906. They had another daughter, Juanita, and then on October 26, 1911, Lucille was born. Mandy, unfortunately, was not destined to witness much of Lucille's early life as approximately one year and one baby later, she died of eight day pneumonia. The baby was named Hattie May, but she died young, possibly of the same ailment as her mother.

Lucille was born with a mole on her back similar to that of

²³⁵Alfonso Embry, interview by author, 31 August 1995, Indiana, Pa; Marlene Embry, interview by author, 31 August 1995, Indiana, Pa.; National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, Indiana County, "Black History Month Program, February 27, 1994 [pamphlet]".

her father and Grandfather Bowens. She also had deformed feet; however, she eventually outgrew much of that problem. She lived mostly with her grandparents, Paulie and Mose Judge, until she reached school age, and in addition to Lucille, the Judge's also reared several White children. Later, Lucille returned to live with her father who had taken a new wife, Emma Barkins. Emma had been a girlfriend of Isom's before he met Mandy and the children called her "Mama Emma". Isom had no children with Emma, but she had a son of her own and Isom had three daughters and a son to another woman named Nellie Jefferson. Growing up in Prattville, Alabama, Lucille shifted back and forth between relatives as they needed her to work, and so, she spent her childhood with Grandpa Phil Bowens, Grandma Paulie Judge, Aunt Rethi Bowens and Uncle Boy (Early) Bowens.

Although Isom was a sharecrop farmer and sharecropping conditions were far from ideal, the family never went hungry. In fact, they often had enough to share with others, even their White neighbors. Sometimes they would even have to throw meat away because it was so old that it went bad. They had a smokehouse where they cured meat, and then kept the meat in a tin-lined pit nearby which they covered with about a hundred pounds of ice topped off with straw, hay and corn shucks. The

family also kept cattle, chickens and goats and raised watermelons, peanuts, sweet peas, crowder peas, blackeye peas, whiporwhil (a brown and white speckled pea), millet and sugar cane. They made their own brown sugar and syrups from the millet and sugar cane, so they only had to buy staples like white sugar and coffee.

Lucille was seven years old when she started working outside the home by doing housework for a White woman named Mary McLeod Smith. She also did domestic work for other members of this Smith family including a woman named Queenie Smith. As a young person, Lucille wanted to be a school teacher like her mother and have a family with ten children, but she lacked the opportunity to fulfill both of these dreams. She initially went to a Lutheran school for two years and then an eight room school called North Highland School in Prattville. Educational opportunities were limited and she only remained in school long enough to complete the third grade.

About 1926, when she was fifteen, Lucille had a child to James Hollins who later died in Selma, Alabama, in the 1930's. She named her son Isom Hollins after her own father, Isom Bowens; however, Lucille ran away from home to Joffrey,

Alabama,²³⁶ after she had her baby. She lived there for eleven months with Mary and Charles Smith, a childless Black couple. She finally returned home, but continued to work for Mrs. Smith. Lucille was the only one of her sisters to work outside the home as a child and adolescent, but is very proud that she always worked and made it on her own.

Lucille married Salone Gipson in 1944. She knew him since she was a child when they used to go to church and school together and remembers that even as a child they used to play they were married. She became reacquainted with Salone when a boyfriend brought him to her house for tea and cookies. Three years later they began to live together. Salone was married at the time, but eventually got a divorce and married Lucille.

Lucille was living with her grandfather Mose Judge when Salone first came to live with them. Mose received Judge as a last name because he did yard work for a judge following the Emancipation. Lucille was particularly fond of Mose and they shared the distinction of having six fingers on each hand. Mose was born in Africa and came to the United States as a slave in

²³⁶The spelling of this town is uncertain.

one of the last slave shipments.²³⁷ He was separated from his mother who may have been named Mandy the same as Lucille's mother. Mose lived for a while with Lucille's older sister, Rosella, and he had a bed near a window. People would come by to talk and give him tobacco. Mose liked to curse and took an occasional shot of whiskey, but often woke up in the morning loudly singing "Amazing Grace". When Mose died in Prattville, Alabama, the doctor estimated that he was approximately one hundred and three.

During her childhood, Lucille also lived with her other grandfather, Phil Bowens; he had a mixed ancestry of African, Native American and Jewish. Phil had eleven children by his wife who was named Minerva or Rose and had one child by a woman named Tottie. He may have been born in one of the Carolinas, but died in Prattville where he cut wood and made charcoal for a living. As a result of the Bowen's mixed racial heritage, Lucille's father, Isom a.k.a Paul Bowens, was a light-skinned man.

Not long after they married, on May 3, 1945, Lucille and Salone Gipson came to Indiana when Salone's brother and his

²³⁷Mrs. Gipson says that the trader's name was Will Howard Smith.

wife, Charles and Helen Sadler, were going to have a baby. The Gipson's decided to stay and lived in Chevy Chase ever since. They joined the Beulah Baptist Church on July 19, 1945, where Salone served as a deacon and Lucille acted as mother of the church for eleven years. Being church mother involved duties such as preparing communion. Presently, she is President of the Missionary Society, attends Sunday School and assists as needed.

Late in 1945, with the help of a White man named Mr. Frye who knew a little bit about carpentry, Salone and his brother, Charles, built a house next door to the Sadler's. Later, in the 1950's, the Gipson's built a house across the street from the Sadler's on Josephine Avenue where Lucille now lives. They also eventually bought a piece of rental property adjacent to this which formerly belonged to a Mr. Jones, a coal miner in Ernest.

When the Gipson's first moved to Indiana, their son, Isom Hollins, had to go to Indiana High School for six weeks before school officials could verify that he was qualified for the tenth grade. He did well in school, however, and participated in football and track then later joined the army. He married Marie Johnson and had six children, but when they later divorced, she married Fred Devoe and had three children with him. As the result, most of Isom's children replaced their last

name of Hollins with Devoe.

From when they arrived in 1945 to 1947, Salone worked in the coal mines. He then worked at McGill Motors for a while before he bought a truck in the 1950's and began working for himself, first buying and selling junk, and then hauling garbage. In 1964, he got a job at PennDot operating trucks and snow plows and worked there for fifteen years before retiring in 1979. Lucille worked as a cleaning woman at the five and ten from about 1946 to 1951 before she began doing domestic work for the Leonard and Anita Brody family. She stayed with them for thirty-seven years and then worked for fourteen years as an outreach worker and homemaker with Aging Services, Inc. The Gipsons had lived in Indiana for most of the forty-eight years they were married when Salone died on February 2, 1992.

Mrs. Gipson has no blood relatives in Indiana, but has included Al and Arlene Novels and their children in her "family". Although she is older than Arlene's mother, Arlene takes the place of the daughter that she didn't have and provides her with grandchildren locally. She visits with other family members mostly when funerals require her to travel; however, her grandson, Michael Hollins (Devoe) from Louisville, Kentucky, pays her an occasional visit and she keeps in touch

with others by telephone.

Through the years, she has stayed active in both Chevy Chase and the greater Indiana community. She served on the Board of ICCAP for 18 years and did volunteer work with senior citizens. She is one of the founders of the Chevy Chase Community Center and was part of the movement which resulted in improved streets and water and sewage development for the community. She is a member of the NAACP, the Evergreen AARP, the Indiana Hospital Auxiliary, the Indiana Genealogical Society, the Marigold Society, the Indiana Garden Club, the Cancer Society Board and the Scholarship Board for the Human Relations Commission and has received many awards and plaques to acknowledge her participation in these volunteer activities. She also quilts to "keep her company" and enjoys sharing her finished quilts with family and friends.

While through the years Lucille found that Indiana had its own type of racial prejudice, she notes that in earlier years White people in the North just tended to stay away from Blacks and keep interactions to a minimum. In the South, Blacks and Whites interacted more, but "You was a nigger and that was it". The term "nigger" was used constantly in conversation and a White person had no qualms about saying: "I have a nigger

working for me" no matter what the race of those present. Blacks had to ride in the back of buses and had few rights. Black women had even fewer rights and Lucille's father always warned her to stay away from White men because they would only use her. In the South, if a White man wanted a Black woman, he may offer her husband a certain position in the fields. This way the White man would know the whereabouts of the man so that he could have his wife. If the husband found out, he may kill the White man, but more often the violence ran the other way.

As a rule of thumb, a Black man could be severely beaten or killed for even talking to a White woman. In the early 1940's, there was a young man from Lucille's church who lived in Sandtown, near Millbrook, Alabama, whose family would never forget this rule. The young man went into a store to buy a bag of potato chips and supposedly slipped a note to a White girl that was in there. Later on, three to four men came to his house on the pretense that they wanted him to do something for them. When he put on his shoes and bent over to tie the laces, the men told him that he did not need to since he would be back shortly. The only part of him to return though was his bloody clothes which they threw on his mother's porch as they told her the approximate location where they had thrown his mutilated

body in the river. They killed him, cut off his genitals and suffered no consequences. The police, who may have even been in on the killing, were of no assistance and buried the young man without even letting his own grieving mother see the body.

In spite of the injustices that she witnessed in her life, Lucille tries to keep a positive attitude. She stated in a recent newspaper interview: "A lot of Blacks go around with chips on their shoulders because they know what their grandparents went through, but that's over and done. You make your own life. Kindness, hard work and honesty goes much further than going around with a chip on your shoulder." This philosophy is the result of wisdom from many years of living and seems to have worked for her. It is also sound advice for the generations who follow.²³⁸

Mary Harris

Mary Harris was born on August 17, 1915, in Greeneville, Tennessee, but grew up in Chattanooga, Tennessee. Her father, William Burns Barkley, was from Virginia and her mother, Bertrum Horton Barkley was from East Tennessee. Her father went by the

²³⁸Como, "Looking Back"; Lucille Gipson, interview by author, 12 November 1995, Indiana, Pa..

name of Burns and spent his career cooking for the Brown family. He would also mow their lawn and travelled with them when they went on trips with the Shriner's. When Burns married Bertrum, he already had two children, George and Ellen Barkley, but together he and Bertrum had eleven other children including Arthur B., Charles, William, Geneva, Pearl, James, Jeanette, Walter, Maxine, Mary and Eleanor. Mary's parents could not afford to provide very much for their children, but they never went hungry. Burns saved money by raising his own food and often had bell peppers or tobacco for market. Bertrum did not work outside the home for many years, but began to do domestic work around 1927 when she and Burns separated. It was a peaceable separation and the two remained friends, so the children maintained contact with their father even after he moved to Chuckie, Tennessee.

As Mary was among the youngest of the children, she never knew her grandparents, where they were from or much about them. There were no White people in her immediate family, but Mary believes that some of her ancestors were Native Americans. Her father's sister, Hester Ernest, was light-skinned and often passed as White. As a result, when she travelled by train from Champagne, Illinois, she was seated in the White section. She

requested a seat in the Black section, but her request was denied. Aunt Hester not happy with this decision, especially since she had no desire to take advantage of her light pigmentation by "passing".

Of all the children, Mary is the only one still living. George married a woman named Pauline and they lived in Chuckie, Tennessee. Ellen lived in Champagne, Illinois. The twins, Arthur B. and Charles, died when they were young and William never married. Geneva married four or five times; her last husband was Mr. Price and they lived in Cleveland, Ohio. Pearl married Willie "Jack" Lowery. James married a woman named Mary and they lived in Chattanooga. Jeanette married Andrew Scott. Walter lived in Chattanooga and was the playboy of the family who never married. Maxine, who was born on May 31, 1911, married Carl Tolliver. Eleanor married Ben Austin and lived in Chattanooga.

As a child, Mary received her education at the Main Street School in Chattanooga, Tennessee, to the eighth grade and had few dreams other than to be a wife and mother. Mary met Edward James Harris while he was visiting Chattanooga and working as a

chauffeur for "people on the mountain".²³⁹ They met through her brother William and since Mary was only fourteen years old, they ran off to Georgia to get married. When Mary married Edward in the 1930's, she moved to Vandergrift (Pine Run), Pennsylvania, and lived with her in-laws, John and Lizzie Tillman Harris. She also lived in Pine Grove, West Virginia, Indiana, Lucerne and Ernest with them as coal mining work was available. During these early years, two men, Willie Creighton and Hugh Johnson, also lived with them. The family collected no money from them, but they helped out with chores to earn their keep.

Edward's family members were no strangers to relocating as Lizzie was originally from Meridian, Mississippi, and John, from South Carolina. Edward was born in Carbon Hill, Alabama, on September 10, 1909. When Mary and Edward moved to Chevy Chase in the 1930's, there were no streets and no street lights. There was also no city water; rather, they had wells with pumps in the house. There were only about eight to ten houses there at that time and the people who lived in town called it "the wilderness". Mary and Edward finally bought the piece of property where Mary now lives on August 13, 1957.

²³⁹This mountain was Lookout Mountain.

Mary and Edward had ten children together. William, who is not married, was born in 1931. Birttie was born in 1933 and married Gerald Clemons. John L. was born in 1935 and married Arizona Young (deceased). Marva was born in 1937 and first married Lawrence Ford and then James Coleman. Walter was born in 1939 and married Mary E. Sullivan. Robert was born in 1940 and he married Laquita. Her son Eugene, who is deceased, was born in 1942 and married Jane Veney. Phillip R. was born in 1945 and married Patricia Hicks. Her youngest daughters did not live past early childhood. Elizabeth Carol was born in 1949 and only lived a few hours; Yolanda Martine lived from February to November of 1951.

Mary joined the Beulah Baptist Church in the 1930's. She served first as Vice President and then as President of the Missionary Society from the late 1970's to the early 1990's. Her in-laws also attended church there and her father-in-law, John Harris, organized the choir and taught singing at Beulah. Edward was a miner and belonged to the UMWA when John L. Lewis was president. Mary recalls that Lewis was for equal rights for all. When there was no work available in the mines, Edward would do janitorial work and he was also licensed to put fireworks off at the fair. Edward played baseball along with

Dodge Embry as number twenty-five on Ernest Gray's team and is well remembered by those who watched him play. Mary worked for two weeks at the Fair Rest Home on the top of Vinegar Hill in Indiana in 1938 to hold a job for a friend, but began working steadily after her husband passed away in 1961. She worked in Indiana's Downtown G.C. Murphy's from 1963 to 1968 when she retired on disability. She started work as a matron who cleaned restrooms and dusted, but advanced to being a saleslady by the time she retired. In 1968, Mary began seeing Ernest Williams and they presently live together.

One of the incidents of discrimination that Mary recalls during the 1930's involved one of her White friends who was married to a Black man. When the White woman became sick, she sent for help with an agency, but when they found out that her husband was Black, they refused to help her stating that they did not place White maids in Black homes. Another incident involved her daughter, Berttie. When Berttie was in high school she was doing well in her bookkeeping and accounting classes, but in her senior year, the school switched her to Practical Arts. They alleged that the change was to assist her in obtaining a job once she graduated, but Berttie's wishes were

not considered in the matter.²⁴⁰

Helen and Charles Sadler

Helen Pinkard and Charles H. Sadler were married on May 29, 1939, and have eight children including Charles, Jr., Barbara Jean (Mrs. Harry) Walker, Lawrence, Clarence, Deloris (Mrs. Frank) Barkley, Ted, Sandy and Shirley (Mrs. Ronald) Reeder. Shirley Sadler-Reeder is now deceased, but the rest of their children live in Indiana and in 1996, the Sadlers had twenty grandchildren and twelve great grandchildren. Mr. Sadler, who was born in 1911, is a native of Alabama. He came to Lucernemines in 1939 to join his Uncle Hodo who worked in the mines there. He knew he "didn't want to work in the mines, and at first wanted to go back home because it was tough to get a job. People did not want to hire a Black man. You didn't get much in the South, but Whites gave Blacks jobs there". He finally did find a job at the Indiana Normal School washing pots, worked there from six to eight months and managed to save \$160. Since he lived in Chevy Chase, he decided to open a salvage business there. Later, he expanded the salvage business

²⁴⁰Mary Harris, interview by author, 14 December 1995, Indiana, Pa.

and opened Sadler's Used Cars Garage.

He was also at one time the proprietor of Sadler's Restaurant from 1952-1963, which was the only privately-owned bar/restaurant in Chevy Chase. Known as Charley to his patrons, Mr. Sadler operated his bar in spite of public resistance. Some claimed that there would be racial problems and that "his place would be torn apart in two weeks", but this was not the case. Instead the bar attracted customers from all walks of life, ranging from college professors to coal miners to truck drivers. Business primarily operated without incident and he rarely had to request that customers leave for causing racial problems. Through the years, the Sadlers financial influence has only continued to grow. In 1994, they owned rental property including seventeen houses.

Even though the Sadlers experienced success within the business community, at times they were still plagued with discrimination because of their color. Their son, for example, could not join the high school football team because of the coach's prejudice. In spite of any difficulties they experienced, Mr. Sadler commented in a recent news article: "Indiana has been good to us. We made a good living, have lots of friends and we have no regrets about staying and planning to

live the rest of our lives here".²⁴¹

Charles T. Stokes

As a young man, Charles Theodore Stokes (better known as Chuck), wanted nothing more than to be a football player or the first Black cowboy on TV. This has not yet come to pass, but perhaps in the meantime, he has made a more significant contribution to the community where he lives. Mr. Stokes presently serves on the Board of Directors at the Open Door (1995-1997 term), the Mayor's Task Force for Racial Equality (since 1991), the ACT101 Board at IUP (since 1990) and the Equal Opportunity Employment Commission for the Pennsylvania Electric Company. He served as Vice President of Head Start from 1990-1993 and presently sits on the Chevy Chase Community Center Board with a tenure on this board since 1992.

Chuck is not a native to the Indiana area; rather, he was born in Greensburg on July 12, 1946, the first child of Ida (Smith) and Charles L. Stokes. He had five brothers and sisters and grew up in the Scottdale and Connellsville area. His parents were both born in Pennsylvania (his mother in Mt.

²⁴¹Como, "Looking Back"; Ralph Stone, "A Social Picture of Chevy Chase, Indiana County," Unpublished manuscript, 1960, 6-7.

Pleasant and his father in Greensburg); however, all of his four grandparents migrated from Virginia. His parents separated when he was eight years old, and all six children lived with his mother. One of the financial sacrifices that his mother made which he remembers most vividly was her buying a trombone for two hundred dollars when he wanted to play in the band. Unfortunately, this burning desire lasted only about eight months. He was, however, active in sports and lettered all three of his high school years on the Scottsdale High School football team.

He graduated from high school in 1965, and at nineteen, he began working in the US Steel's Clairton Coke Works in Clairton, Pennsylvania, where his father worked. He served in the Army and was stationed in Germany from 1965-1967. When he finished his tour of duty, he returned to the mill where he worked until he was laid off in 1983. In 1985, he began working for Penelec as an electrical operator at the Keystone plant in Shelocta and so, he moved to Indiana. His brother, James, who had previously attended classes at IUP, also came to Indiana for work, but left after two or three years. Chuck lived in Chevy Chase for about six months when he first arrived, but now lives on the west end of Indiana.

Once in Indiana, he set about reactivating the local NAACP branch. His previous involvement with the NAACP included serving as Youth Coordinator of the Clairton Branch in 1973 and as President of the Clairton Branch from 1977-1983.²⁴² In 1982, he founded the Western Pennsylvania Consortium of NAACP Branches and served as the chairman until 1985. Under his leadership in 1983, the Consortium sponsored a "Kennywood Day" to encourage African American socialization among various communities in Western Pennsylvania. The annual celebration is known as the "African-American Picnic". He also filled the position of youth director for the Johnstown Branch in 1985 and has served as a State Board member of the NAACP since 1984. He has been the Indiana Branch NAACP president from 1989 until the present time and recently, he was elected to the Pennsylvania State Conference Board in addition to receiving a nomination for NAACP State Board vice presidency.

On March 10, 1990, the NAACP Consortium recognized his efforts by sponsoring their fourth annual roast in his honor. His parents, Ida and Charles Stokes, attended and the roasters included individuals from his community, family, co-workers and

²⁴²The Clairton Branch deactivated in 1976-1977. Mr. Stokes was a key figure in its reactivation.

members of the Indiana and Clairton Branches as well as the Consortium. Proceeds from the banquet were used to promote racial harmony and equality.

Although today he is an important role model to budding African American leaders, one of the difficulties he faced as he formed his identity in school was that he was "programmed to believe anything positive was White". He is especially concerned for the future of the children growing up in the small community of Chevy Chase as there is an elevated level of drinking and drug usage stemming from a lack of employment opportunities for young people graduating from high school. He firmly subscribes to Jesse Jackson's slogan of "Keep Hope Alive", for he believes that without hope there is no future.

Chuck has three children-Yolanda Redrick, Holly Stokes and Kenon Stokes. Yolanda, born in 1969, lives in New York and works at Canon Computers. Holly, born in 1970, lives in Clairton and is the mother of twins. Kenon, born in 1974, is currently living with his father and working at Intersearch until he goes to serve in the military. Chuck's ties to Indiana are tentative and revolve primarily around his job at Penelec. His roots are still in Clairton, and there he maintains his membership at the Morning Star Baptist Church.

In spite of his ardent involvement with community and NAACP activities, it is with regret that Mr. Stokes acknowledges that there is still a need for the existence of the NAACP. He recognizes that "overcoming racism and bigotry is tough because the national media shows the blacks at two extremes, either as successful entertainers and athletes, or as poor people in the ghettos and criminals". He would like nothing better than to see the NAACP close its doors since a final deactivation would mean that its mission was finally fulfilled. Then, people of all races would be living and working together in harmony; the struggle would finally be over; and the dream, a reality.²⁴³

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²⁴³National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, Pennsylvania State Conference of NAACP Branches, Consortium Minutes; "Annual Fund-Raiser," Indiana Gazette, March 12, 1990; Charles Stokes, interview by author. 12 August 1995, Indiana, Pa; Como, "Looking Back".

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