A CENTURY OF NEGRO MIGRATION

CARTER G. WOODSON

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Negro Migration

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TO MY FATHER

JAMES WOODSON

WHO MADE IT POSSIBLE FOR ME

TO ENTER THE LITERARY WORLD

It must be kept in mind that, in 1918, migration was, to whites, a problem on both ends. Blacks seemed, to most whites, to be choosing city life with no thought as to how they would live there, swelling the rolls of charity and, even worse, competing with whites for jobs. Agricultural interests, on the other hand, needed blacks to remain in the rural South to provide the labor. In their frustration, white social scientists and commentators typically described the seeming constant movement of African Americans as an almost instinctive wanderlust to which newly freed blacks readily succumbed. For them, black movement from one place to another was the product of little more than the allure of the fast and easy life of the city and the impulse to shirk industrious agricultural life.

The greatest contribution of Carter Godwin Woodson's *A Century of Negro Migration*, in this context, was the simple assertion that African Americans, in choosing to move, acted out of premeditated self-interest, the classical economic definition of rational subjectivity. Woodson brought to light the contemporary causes of migration, and showed that black movement was historically rooted. What white economists, employers, and landholders saw as wanderlust, we recognize today as discernible historical patterns of movement. Thousands of people, Woodson argued, moved from the South to the North or West from farms to towns (or simply to other farms) for more or less the same reasons. Later historians, taking cues from economists, have tended to divide these reasons into pull and push factors. Better wages offered by the owners of factories, mills, mines, and plantations; better educational opportunities; the chance to own land; and the general prospect of realizing autonomy constituted pull factors. Push factors included forced labor; state repression and informal (though eerily pervasive) antiblack violence; denial of rights; and declines in crop yields or the revenues therefrom.

For his part, Woodson did not make too fine a distinction. To him, black movement historically resulted largely from white hostility combined with the emergence of opportunity in other lands. It was more than apparent to Woodson that the beginning of black movement in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries arose from changes in "the policy of the commonwealths towards the Negro." These, of course, dealt with the nature of racial slavery: whether it would be retained or discarded in the various states and the degree to which blackness itself would could be assumed as a marker of servility. The decisions that the state legislatures executed, fixing slavery and proscribing the rights of free blacks, would make "one section of the country more congenial to the despised blacks than the other" (page 1). Yet as blacks were pushed out of the South, they were pulled to Ohio, Michigan, Illinois, Kansas, and elsewhere by the promise of a better life and a more tolerant environment (page 27). The case was similar during and after Reconstruction. The "Exodus during the World War" (the title of Chapter VII), was precipitated by pull factors (the need for industrial labor in cities), but Woodson disagreed with academics who downplayed black persecution, the always present push factor that kept blacks searching for any opportunity to leave their situation (page 169).

Push and pull factors all would have been mutually related for Dr. Woodson, yet what his analysis of black migration emphasized was the social and political dynamics of race relations. Throughout *A*

Century of Negro Migration, Woodson held up white philanthropy, tolerance, and enlightened self-interest as the frequently determining factors in black migration. The Quakers, who had taken a dim view of the peculiar institution in the late eighteenth century, and officially forbade its members from its traffic in 1818, emerge in Woodson's narrative as laudable friends of the Negro. Northern philanthropists with a mind toward social experimentation, and who occasionally granted tracts of land to free blacks before the Civil War, also appear in Woodson's text as the counterpoints to the regimes of slavery and repression of free blacks found in the South. In the post-Civil War era, Woodson saw a distinct difference between the true gentlemen of the South and the rabble whom Woodson blamed for anti-black sentiment.

There is no denying that Woodson's historical focus on race relations stemmed from present concerns. He wrote *A Century of Negro Migration*, after all, with the gnawing cognizance of the rising animosity of whites toward blacks. Poor white enmity he took for granted, but was concerned that the "representative" white men, the better class, were beginning to share in this antipathy. It was vitally important for him, therefore, to set straight the record on allegations of black perfidy and pauperism. Readers may wonder at the lengths to which Woodson went to prove black industry and acquisitive behavior (especially in Chapter V, "The Successful Migrant") until they remember that he was working against a tide of scholarship that declared that blacks had seldom been able, even with the assistance of whites, to keep "themselves above want" (page 81) and thus had been a drain on public funds and (through diseases of poverty) public health. Woodson's assault on this thesis was dual. On one hand, he reminded the reader that at hand was a population of people who had come "up from slavery" (with all of the ideological connotations the allusion to Booker T. Washington entails) and who had managed, with a great deal of overall success, to establish themselves in their new homes. On the other hand, he called attention to the formal and informal mechanisms of white supremacy as factors that had mitigated against black elevation. These mechanisms included, of course, slavery and the restriction of free blacks, but also extended to episodes to racial violence and to the exclusion of blacks from the economic sphere.

Black racial and class formation, for Woodson, progressed to the degree to which blacks could successfully live with whites and share resources. Animosity between the two was forever driven by economic circumstances. It is telling, however, that he, like so many of his contemporaries, framed such competition in language that invoked the social Darwinist "struggle for life" (page 83). The relationship between black and white peasants or proletarians would always be characterized by competition—for jobs, services, and institutions—in what amounted, for Woodson, to a zero-sum game. In those towns where black settlement arose suddenly and without an adequate social service infrastructure, the failure of blacks to adapt and of whites to welcome them could be expected. In effect, the races would find themselves regarding each other only as competitors.

Despite Woodson's racial Malthusianism and his pessimism regarding the tolerance of working-class whites, his view of racial struggle and competition had room for amicable reconciliation between whites and blacks. An integral part of Woodson's rhetorical project was the claim that the two races could "reach the advanced stage of living together on the basis of absolute equality" if only the artificial barriers to black progress could be removed and if competition were not intense (pages 82, 83). Specifically, low population density and large resources were best suited for race relations. Accordingly, Woodson offered his own version of Frederick Jackson Turner's frontier thesis: "It was in the West where [African-American] men were in position to establish themselves anew and make of life what they would" (page 91). Similarly, Woodson hoped that the World War I migration would siphon off some of the African Americans in Southern counties where they outnumbered whites, thus reducing "the fear of *Negro domination.*" Once this had been accomplished, whites would perceive a

decreased need for "the expensive precautions ... taken to keep the Negroes down" and the "terrorism incited to restrain the blacks from self-assertion" (page 183, italics not mine).

Competition, exacerbated by black migration, contributed to the deterioration of race relations in the United States, but Woodson clearly stated the desirability of a critical mass of settlers to keep black communities viable. This led Woodson to the ironic conclusion that in those states which in the 1830s and 1840s had curtailed the entry of free blacks, the existing black population was afforded the opportunity to thrive in the ecological balance, to accumulate wealth and standing without the aggravating conditions of continuing migrant arrivals. At the same time, he applauded the arrival, during the First World War, of blacks to the North where previous settlers, heretofore "scattered ... in such small numbers," had been unable to unite and organize for social betterment and rights (pages 172–73, 180–81).

Writing well before the historiographical shifts of the 1960s, Woodson showed little interest in working-class culture. There are ample clues, however, that Woodson viewed racial-class formation transpiring in the crucible of economic competition. In one of the more keen insights of the book, foreshadowing the current vogue in "whiteness studies," Woodson notes that it was more than unfortunate that many white Northern communities exhibited race prejudice precisely when blacks had been "converted to the doctrine of training the hand to work with skill." White workers' animosity toward blacks went hand-in-glove with the former's quest, during the second quarter of the nineteenth century, to make "more dignified" skilled labor (page 83). Thus Woodson includes trade and labor unions in the list of institutions that actually mitigated against black workers' progress (pages 172, 190–91). Where blacks were not locked out of certain trades, as in Cincinnati after 1840, they quickly produced an artisan class with the resources to purchase real estate and support an entrepreneurial class (pages 92–95).

Woodson had good reason to distrust the labor movement, which for the most part excluded Negroes of any skill or occupation. Yet Woodson, writing during the First World War, was against unions for other, philosophical, reasons as well. His vision of ideal race relations was the model, espoused by so many Southern accommodationists, of the identity of interests (Woodson, on page 18 called it a "community of interests") between black labor and white capital. African Americans ought to align themselves not with white laborers (who were properly viewed as competitors), but with the racially moderate class of "intelligent whites" (page 184) upon whom the leadership of the New South was, hopefully, to fall. "Organized labor," therefore, was antithetical to black progress because it was "opposed to the powerful capitalists, the only real friends the Negroes have" (page 191). Throughout *Century of Negro Migration,* Woodson showed little sympathy for a vision in which black and white workers could live cooperatively. It was, after all, the "shiftless poor whites" (page 177) who initiated, in Woodson's view, so much violence against blacks. When not rioting or lynching, this class of whites actively worked to suppress black competition. If the more enlightened and educated (Woodson attributed white "barbarism" to their lack of schooling) white merchants and capitalists could only manage to keep a rein on the white mobs, and to relax many of the restrictions on black Americans, they would find that blacks would be willing to provide the steady and reliable work force needed in Southern agriculture.

Readers should pay particular attention to Woodson's discussion of the Reconstruction period and after, as it is here that Woodson constructed his narrative of the formation of the classes of African Americans that were to be seen in American cities in 1918. In keeping with his overall view of the dynamics of race relations, Woodson viewed Emancipation as the introduction, after a period of

"confused migration" (page 117), of hundreds of thousands of blacks into competition with whites. A~~s in Chapter V, it was crucial for Woodson to show in his discussion of postslavery blacks patterns~~ of black industry and thrift. He admitted that many of the freedpeople, "in their crude state," believed that freedom "meant idleness and freedom from restraint." As a consequence, he lamented, "there developed such undesirable habits as deceit, theft and licentiousness to aggravate the afflictions of nakedness, famine and disease" (page 104). Yet Woodson took to task many of the early twentieth century white historians who exaggerated black idleness and vagrancy as a cause of black migration. Prodigious migration was the result not of an inherent disinterest in work or settled life, but, quite the contrary, an intense desire to reconstruct lives that had been disrupted before and during the Civil War, and "an urgent need to escape undesirable conditions" created by whites (page 121).

Moreover, while Woodson conceded that many recently freed blacks "did less work than laborers in the North," he strategically argued that a lax work ethic was characteristic of the South in general, and that "a river should not be expected to rise higher than its source." He also reminded his readers that formerly enslaved African Americans had been a people heretofore given no positive incentive to work and acquire—the two characteristics thought most befitting for a people whose citizenship was much in question. The postslavery labor regimes in many parts of the South were little better in that regard. Sharecropping and usurious credit structures served not only to deprive blacks of their earnings, but also to encourage blacks to be "extravagant and unscrupulous," since they were convinced that they would never climb from under the heap of debt. "Although not exactly slaves, they are yet attached to the white people as tenants, servants or dependents" (pages 153, 168). It was no wonder, therefore, that so many African Americans nevertheless had rather quickly "acquired the idea of ownership, and of the security of wages" (page 115). Now, in the postwar years, Woodson strongly advised the better class of property-owning whites that the black labor force they needed could be convinced to remain in the South only when antiblack violence and exclusion from many forms of economic life had ended.

Readers hoping to find in *A Century of Negro Migration* a complete, or even thoroughly workable analysis, of black migration will come away disappointed. The aspects of black migration left out of Woodson's book could fill, and have filled, several books. His nearly complete inattention to black women, for example, stands out as much as his frequent conflation of "manhood" with the race's "growing consciousness of rights, and [blacks'] readiness to defend them" (page 116). Readers should not dismiss such turns of phrase as merely "indicative of the times" any more than they should accept, for example, such apologies for the United States's "founding fathers'" views on race. Woodson's elisions on the matter of black women emerge, I suspect, partly from his project of establishing, contrary to much of the white early twentieth-century scholarship, the stability of black families. Many whites (and blacks, too, for that matter) took mobile or economically, politically, or sexually assertive black women (in essence, *visible* black women) as evidence of what was frequently referred to as the lack of "family sentiment" (sufficient patriarchy) among blacks. Yet, as historians since have shown, women, particularly at the turn of the century, were often at the fore of black migration. Before the Great War, when industrial labor was still closed to black men, but domestic service positions were opening to black women, we find the migration of thousands of black women on their own (unmarried or leaving husbands behind) to cities. By 1905, in fact, their numbers had grown so large as to attract Kelly Miller's attention to the problem of what he described, in an article in *The Southern Workman*, as "Surplus Negro Women." Woodson's focus on the successful establishment of stable black families and settlements (almost immediately after emancipation, Woodson quotes a Union Army officer on page 110, families "were established by themselves. Every man took care of his own wife and children") that grew into communities stood out amidst scholarship that emphasized

that migration led to black urban social disorganization. This is an important point, and Woodson's failure to provide further evidence on this point does not seem that egregious compared to slanders made against black families on much flimsier grounds. The reader nonetheless must wonder how much of Woodson's emphasis on stable conjugal relations is a family romance held up for the introduction of emerging black proletarian and bourgeois classes: race- and rights-conscious New Negroes.

Similarly, Woodson's fealty to the "identity of interests" philosophy, even then, was more a political strategy than an analytical thesis. Although the massive antiblack violence of the "Red Summer" of 1919 had not yet occurred, Woodson must have witnessed with great consternation the riots of Wilmington, North Carolina (1898); Atlanta, Georgia (1906); Springfield, Illinois (1908); an East Saint Louis, Illinois (1917). The "better class" of wealthy whites probably were not direct participants in these pogroms, but their complicity in race baiting is well documented. Contrary to Woodson's assertions in 1918, the evidence suggests that public lynchings, which escalated after Reconstruction, were attended by middle-class whites as well as the uneducated rabble upon whom Woodson places the blame. Moreover, the less spectacular, though no less dramatic, campaigns of race baiting and revocation of rights since the 1880s should have indicated to Woodson that such commonality between blacks and wealthy whites was a bargain needed by the former, but undertaken only at the convenience of the latter. As such, the idea of a New South constructed with the cooperation of blacks and enlightened whites, as even students just beginning their explorations in United States history will recognize, was politically unviable, even naive.

Why, then, read *A Century of Negro Migration?* As I stated above, this book stood as a counterpoint to the tidal wave of scholarship that addressed the Negro Problem. Woodson took African Americans less as an adjectival modifier of "Problem," and more as conscious historical actors negotiating circumstances largely not of their own making. This is a position we take for granted today, being the beneficiaries of a revolution in which Carter Woodson played a very large part: the professionalization of African-American history and the creation of a place within the academy for black historians. Yet *A Century of Negro Migration* must be seen, at the very least, as an implicit answer to many of the assumptions that framed popular discussion of the Negro Problem. The central argument, that blacks bid farewell to their homes for concrete and understandable reasons, imparts to his subjects a humanity and rationality that white historians had been unwilling to confer. The emphasis on race relations, and its attendant emphasis on the bargains to be struck between blacks and enlightened whites, thus emerges as a hopeful solution to what appeared to his contemporaries as an intractable problem.

Those who are familiar with the historiography of slavery and black migration will note the sophistication of Woodson's methodology and his adherence to historiographical principles. Woodson's nineteen-page bibliography and the copious footnotes found throughout the text are a testimony to Woodson's erudition and view of historiography as a collective enterprise. *A Century of Negro Migration* draws on a wealth of sources, in many cases confirming or discarding various these based on thoughtful consideration of the evidence. The breadth of Woodson's sources also reveals his investment in the promotion of black history and black historians: a number of his citations come from fellow black historians and from the *Journal of Negro History*, which he himself had recently founded (borrowing against his own life-insurance policy to finance its first issue). In both method and sources, *A Century of Negro Migration* stands in contrast to much of the work that had been written by less skilled white historians, whose conclusions derived largely from their own speculations and biases, and who had no investment at all in the development of black history as a disciplinary field.

Unfortunately, much of the appearance of Woodson's balanced analysis derived from his selective distinction of the intelligent, virtuous, and industrious from the ignorant, vicious, and slothful, usuall on a class basis. In our current age—alternately called late modern or postmodern—to say that Woodson was more "objective" than his white contemporaries is to make the not insignificant observation that his work was more professional and less racist than the prevailing historiography. Y to appear balanced, Woodson selectively ceded certain arguments to the Negro's detractors. These emerge primarily as admissions (followed by tempered condemnations) of black vice and other mora failings. In this sense, he was no different than most of his fellow exponents of race uplift, who, in th spirit of the "community of interests" contract and the racialized social gospel, largely assumed the virtuous intentions of educated whites and blacks, but argued that the masses were left to prove their own "usefulness," a term of which Woodson was particularly fond.

The usefulness, in another sense of the word, of *A Century of Negro Migration*, is therefore as a primary source, not as secondary literature. Perhaps readers will decide that it belongs as much in the literature on black political thought as in the historiography of black migration, which has grown in sophistication as to make *A Century*'s shortcomings very evident. This, of course, takes nothing away from Woodson. He would, I am certain, be pleased to note that his book came early in the evolution o a field which continues to produce wonderful fruit. As we read and reread *A Century of Negro Migration*, it is Woodson's vision of the future, as much as of the past, that we should keep in mind.

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PREFACE

IN treating this movement of the Negroes, the writer does not presume to say the last word on the subject. The exodus of the Negroes from the South has just begun. The blacks have recently realized that they have freedom of body and they will now proceed to exercise that right. To presume, therefore, to exhaust the treatment of this movement in its incipiency is far from the intention of the writer. The aim here is rather to direct attention to this new phase of Negro American life which will doubtless prove to be the most significant event in our local history since the Civil War.

Many of the facts herein set forth have seen light before. The effort here is directed toward an original treatment of facts, many of which have already periodically appeared in some form. As these works, however, are too numerous to be consulted by the layman, the writer has endeavored to present in succinct form the leading facts as to how the Negroes in the United States have struggled under adverse circumstances to flee from bondage and oppression in quest of a land offering asylum to the oppressed and opportunity to the unfortunate. How they have often been deceived has been carefully noted.

With the hope that this volume may interest another worker to the extent of publishing many other facts in this field, it is respectfully submitted to the public.

CARTER G. WOODSON

WASHINGTON, D. C.,
March 31, 1918.

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CHAPTER I

FINDING A PLACE OF REFUGE

THE migration of the blacks from the Southern States to those offering them better opportunities is nothing new. The objective here, therefore, will be not merely to present the causes and results of the recent movement of the Negroes to the North but to connect this event with the periodical movement of the blacks to that section, from about the year 1815 to the present day. That this movement should date from that period indicates that the policy of the commonwealths towards the Negro must have then begun decidedly to differ so as to make one section of the country more congenial to the despised blacks than the other. As a matter of fact, to justify this conclusion, we need but give passing mention here to developments too well known to be discussed in detail. Slavery in the original thirteen States was the normal condition of the Negroes. When, however, James Otis, Patrick Henry and Thomas Jefferson began to discuss the natural rights of the colonists, then said to be oppressed by Great Britain, some of the patriots of the Revolution carried their reasoning to its logical conclusion, contending that the Negro slaves should be freed on the same grounds, as their rights were also founded in the laws of nature.[1] And so it was soon done in most Northern commonwealths.

Vermont, New Hampshire, and Massachusetts exterminated the institution by constitutional provision and Rhode Island, Connecticut, New Jersey, New York and Pennsylvania by gradual emancipation acts.[2] And it was thought that the institution would soon thereafter pass away even in all southern commonwealths except South Carolina and Georgia, where it had seemingly become profitable. There came later the industrial revolution following the invention of Watt's steam engine and mechanical appliances like Whitney's cotton gin, all which changed the economic aspect of the modern world, making slavery an institution offering means of exploitation to those engaged in the production of cotton. This revolution rendered necessary a large supply of cheap labor for cotton culture, out of which the plantation system grew. The Negro slaves, therefore, lost all hope of ever winning their freedom in South Carolina and Georgia; and in Maryland, Virginia, and North Carolina, where the sentiment in favor of abolition had been favorable, there was a decided reaction which soon blighted their hopes.[3] In the Northern commonwealths, however, the sentiment in behalf of universal freedom, though at times dormant, was ever apparent despite the attachment to the South of the trading classes of northern cities, which profited by the slave trade and their commerce with the slaveholding States. The Northern States maintaining this liberal attitude developed, therefore, into an asylum for the Negroes who were oppressed in the South.

The Negroes, however, were not generally welcomed in the North. Many of the northerners who sympathized with the oppressed blacks in the South never dreamt of having them as their neighbors. There were, consequently, always two classes of anti-slavery people, those who advocated the abolition of slavery to elevate the blacks to the dignity of citizenship, and those who merely hoped to exterminate the institution because it was an economic evil.[4] The latter generally believed that the blacks constituted an inferior class that could not discharge the duties of citizenship, and when the

proposal to incorporate the blacks into the body politic was clearly presented to these agitators their anti-slavery ardor was decidedly dampened. Unwilling, however, to take the position that a race should be doomed because of personal objections, many of the early anti-slavery group looked towar colonization for a solution of this problem.[5] Some thought of Africa, but since the deportation of a large number of persons who had been brought under the influence of modern civilization seemed cruel, the most popular colonization scheme at first seemed to be that of settling the Negroes on the public lands in the West. As this region had been lately ceded, however, and no one could determine what use could be made of it by white men, no such policy was generally accepted.

When this territory was ceded to the United States an effort to provide for the government of it finally culminated in the proposed Ordinance of 1784 carrying the provision that slavery should not exist in the Northwest Territory after the year 1800.[6] This measure finally failed to pass and fortunately too, thought some, because, had slavery been given sixteen years of growth on that soil, i might not have been abolished there until the Civil War or it might have caused such a preponderanc of slave commonwealths as to make the rebellion successful. The Ordinance of 1784 was antecedent to the more important Ordinance of 1787, which carried the famous sixth article that neither slavery nor involuntary servitude except as a punishment for crime should exist in that territory. At first, it was generally deemed feasible to establish Negro colonies on that domain. Yet despite the assurance of the Ordinance of 1787 conditions were such that one could not determine exactly whether the Northwest Territory would be slave or free.[7]

What then was the situation in this partly unoccupied territory? Slavery existed in what is now the Northwest Territory from the time of the early exploration and settlement of that region by the Frenc The first slaves of white men were Indians. Though it is true that the red men usually chose death rather than slavery, there were some of them that bowed to the yoke. So many Pawnee Indians becam bondsmen that the word *Pani* became synonymous with slave in the West.[8] Western Indians themselves, following the custom of white men, enslaved their captives in war rather than choose the alternative of putting them to death. In this way they were known to hold a number of blacks and whites.

The enslavement of the black man by the whites in this section dates from the early part of the eighteenth century. Being a part of the Louisiana Territory which under France extended over the whole Mississippi Valley as far as the Allegheny mountains, it was governed by the same colonial regulations.[9] Slavery, therefore, had legal standing in this territory. When Antoine Crozat, upon bein placed in control of Louisiana, was authorized to begin a traffic in slaves, Crozat himself did nothing to carry out his plan. But in 1717 when the control of the colony was transferred to the *Compagnie de l'Occident* steps were taken toward the importation of slaves. In 1719, when 500 Guinea Negroes wer brought over to serve in Lower Louisiana, Philip Francis Renault imported 500 other bondsmen into Upper Louisiana or what was later included in the Northwest Territory. Slavery then became more an more extensive until by 1750 there were along the Mississippi five settlements of slaves, Kaskaskia, Kaokia, Fort Chartres, St. Phillipe and Prairie du Rocher.[10] In 1763 Negroes were relatively numerou in the Northwest Territory but when this section that year was transferred to the British the number was diminished by the action of those Frenchmen who, unwilling to become subjects of Great Britai moved from the territory. [11] There was no material increase in the slave population thereafter until th end of the eighteenth century when some Negroes came from the original thirteen.

The Ordinance of 1787 did not disturb the relation of slave and master. Some pioneers thought tha the sixth article exterminated slavery there; others contended that it did not. The latter believed that

such expressions in the Ordinance of 1787 as the "free inhabitants" and the "free male inhabitants of full ~~size" implied the continuance of slavery and others found ground for its perpetuation in that~~ clause of the Ordinance which allowed the people of the territory to adopt the constitution and laws of any one of the thirteen States. Students of law saw protection for slavery in Jay's treaty which guaranteed to the settlers their property of all kinds.[12] When, therefore, the slave question came up in the Northwest Territory about the close of the eighteenth century, there were three classes of slaves: first, those who were in servitude to French owners previous to the cession of the Territory to England and were still claimed as property in the possession of which the owners were protected under the treaty of 1763; second, those who were held by British owners at the time of Jay's treaty and claimed afterward as property under its protection; and third, those who, since the Territory had been controlled by the United States, had been brought from the commonwealths in which slavery was allowed.[13] Freedom, however, was recognized as the ultimate status of the Negro in that territory.

This question having been seemingly settled, Anthony Benezet, who for years advocated the abolition of slavery and devoted his time and means to the preparation of the Negroes for living as freedmen, was practical enough to recommend to the Congress of the Confederation a plan of colonizing the emancipated blacks on the western lands.[14] Jefferson incorporated into his scheme for modern system of public schools the training of the slaves in industrial and agricultural branches to equip them for a higher station in life. He believed, however, that the blacks not being equal to the white race should not be assimilated and should they be free, they should, by all means, be colonized afar off.[15] Thinking that the western lands might be so used, he said in writing to James Monroe in 1801: "A very great extent of country north of the Ohio has been laid off in townships, and is now at market, according to the provisions of the act of Congress.... There is nothing," said he, "which would restrain the State of Virginia either in the purchase or the application of these lands."[16] Yet he raised the question as to whether the establishment of such a colony within our limits and to become a part of the Union would be desirable. He thought then of procuring a place beyond the limits of the United States on our northern boundary, by purchasing the Indian lands with the consent of Great Britain. He then doubted that the black race would live in such a rigorous climate.

This plan did not easily pass from the minds of the friends of the slaves, for in 1805 Thomas Brannagan asserted in his *Serous Remonstrances* that the government should appropriate a few thousand acres of land at some distant part of the national domains for the Negroes' accommodation and support. He believed that the new State might be established upwards of 2,000 miles from our frontier.[17] A copy of the pamphlet containing this proposition was sent to Thomas Jefferson, who was impressed thereby, but not having the courage to brave the torture of being branded as a friend of the slave, he failed to give it his support.[18] The same question was brought prominently before the public again in 1816 when there was presented to the House of Representatives a memorial from the Kentucky Abolition Society praying that the free people of color be colonized on the public lands. The committee to whom the memorial was referred for consideration reported that it was expedient to refuse the request on the ground that, as such lands were not granted to free white men, they saw no reason for granting them to others.[19]

Some Negro slaves unwilling to wait to be carried or invited to the Northwest Territory escaped to that section even when it was controlled by the French prior to the American Revolution. Slaves who reached the West by this route caused trouble between the French and the British colonists. Advertising in 1746 for James Wenyam, a slave, Richard Colgate, his master, said that he swore to a Negro whom he endeavored to induce to go with him, that he had often been in the backwoods with h

master and that he would go to the French and Indians and fight for them.[20] In an advertisement for a mulatto slave in 1755 Thomas Ringold, his master, expressed fear that he had escaped by the same route to the French. He, therefore, said: "It seems to be the interest, at least, of every gentleman that has slaves, to be active in the beginning of these attempts, for whilst we have the French such near neighbors, we shall not have the least security in that kind of property."[21]

The good treatment which these slaves received among the French, and especially at Pittsburgh the gateway to the Northwest Territory, tended to make that city an asylum for those slaves who had sufficient spirit of adventure to brave the wilderness through which they had to go. Negroes even then had the idea that there was in this country a place of more privilege than those they enjoyed in the seaboard colonies. Knowing of the likelihood of the Negroes to rise during the French and In dian War, Governor Dinwiddie wrote Fox one of the Secretaries of State in 1756: "We dare not venture to part with any of our white men any distance, as we must have a watchful eye over our Negro slaves, who are upward of one hundred thousand."[22] Brissot de Warville mentions in his *Travels of 1788* several examples of marriages of white and blacks in Pittsburgh. He noted the case of a Negro who married an indentured French servant woman. Out of this union came a desirable mulatto girl who married a surgeon of Nantes then stationed at Pittsburgh. His family was considered one of the most respectable of the city. The Negro referred to was doing a creditable business and his wife took it upo herself to welcome foreigners, especially the French, who came that way. Along the Ohio also there were several cases of women of color living with unmarried white men; but this was looked upon by the Negroes as detestable as was evidenced by the fact that, if black women had a quarrel with a mulatto woman, the former would reproach the latter for being of ignoble blood.[23]

These tendencies, however, could not assure the Negro that the Northwest Territory was to be an asylum for freedom when in 1763 it passed into the hands of the British, the promoters of the slave trade, and later to the independent colonies, two of which had no desire to exterminate slavery. Furthermore, when the Ordinance of 1787 with its famous sixth article against slavery was proclaimed, it was soon discovered that this document was not necessarily emancipatory. As the right to hold slaves was guaranteed to those who owned them prior to the passage of the Ordinance of 1787 it was to be expected that those attached to that institution would not indifferently see it pass away. Various petitions, therefore, were sent to the territorial legislature and to Congress praying that the sixth article of the Ordinance of 1787 be abrogated. [24] No formal action to this effect was taken, but the practice of slavery was continued even at the winking of the government. Some slaves came from the Canadians who, in accordance with the slave trade laws of the British Empire, were supplied with bondsmen. It was the Canadians themselves who provided by act of parliament in 1793 for prohibiting the importation of slaves and for gradual emancipation. When it seemed later that the cause of freedom would eventually triumph the proslavery element undertook to perpetuate slavery through a system of indentured servant labor.

In the formation of the States of Indiana and Illinois the question as to what should be done to harmonize with the new constitution the system of indenture to which the territorial legislatures had been committed, caused heated debate and at times almost conflict. Both Indiana [25] and Illinois[26] finally incorporated into their constitutions compromise provisions for a nominal prohibition of slavery modified by clauses for the continuation of the system of indentured labor of the Negroes hel to service. The proslavery party persistently struggled for some years to secure by the interpretation the laws, by legislation and even by amending the constitution so to change the fundamental law as t provide for actual slavery. These States,however, gradually worked toward freedom in keeping with the spirit of the majority who framed the constitution, despite the fact that the indenture system in

southern Illinois and especially in Indiana was at times tantamount to slavery as it was practiced in parts of the South.

It must be borne in mind here, however, that the North at this time was far from becoming a place of refuge for Negroes. In the first place, the industrial revolution had not then had time to reduce the Negroes to the plane of beasts in the cotton kingdom. The rigorous climate and the industries of the northern people, moreover, were not inviting to the blacks and the development of the carrying trade and the rise of manufacturing there did not make that section more attractive to unskilled labor. Furthermore, when we consider the fact that there were many thousands of Negroes in the Southern States the presence of a few in the North must be regarded as insignificant. This paucity of blacks then obtained especially in the Northwest Territory, for its French inhabitants instead of being an exploiting people were pioneering, having little use for slaves in carrying out their policy of merely holding the country for France. Moreover, like certain gentlemen from Virginia, who after the American Revolution were afraid to bring their slaves with them to occupy their bounty lands in Ohio, few enterprising settlers from the slave States had invaded the territory with their Negroes, not knowing whether or not they would be secure in the possession of such property. When we consider that in 1810 there were only 102,137 Negroes in the North and no more than 3,454 in the Northwest Territory, we must look to the second decade of the nineteenth century for the beginning of the migration of the Negroes in the United States.

CHAPTER II

A TRANSPLANTATION TO THE NORTH

JUST after the settlement of the question of holding the western posts by the British and the adjustment of the trouble arising from their capture of slaves during our second war with England, there started a movement of the blacks to this frontier territory. But, as there were few towns or cities in the Northwest during the first decades of the new republic, the flight of the Negro into that territory was like that of a fugitive taking his chances in the wilderness. Having lost their pioneering spirit in passing through the ordeal of slavery, not many of the bondmen took flight in that direction and few free Negroes ventured to seek their fortunes in those wilds during the period of the frontier conditions, especially when the country had not then undergone a thorough reaction against the Negro.

The migration of the Negroes, however, received an impetus early in the nineteenth century. This came from the Quakers, who by the middle of the eighteenth century had taken the position that all members of their sect should free their slaves.[27] The Quakers of North Carolina and Virginia had as early as 1740 taken up the serious question of humanely treating their Negroes. The North Carolina Quakers advised Friends to emancipate their slaves, later prohibited traffic in them, forbade their members from even hiring the blacks out in 1780 and by 1818 had exterminated the institution among their communicants.[28] After healing themselves of the sin, they had before the close of the eighteenth century militantly addressed themselves to the task of abolishing slavery and the slave trade throughout the world. Differing in their scheme from that of most anti-slavery leaders, they were advocating the establishment of the freedmen in society as good citizens and to that end had provided for the religious and mental instruction of their slaves prior to emancipating them.[29]

Despite the fact that the Quakers were not free to extend their operations throughout the colonies, they did much to enable the Negroes to reach free soil. As the Quakers believed in the freedom of the will, human brotherhood, and equality before God, they did not, like the Puritans, find difficulties in solving the problem of elevating the Negroes. Whereas certain Puritans were afraid that conversion might lead to the destruction of caste and the incorporation of undesirable persons into the "Body Politick," the Quakers proceeded on the principle that all men are brethren and, being equal before God, should be considered equal before the law. On account of unduly emphasizing the relation of man to God, the Puritans "atrophied their social humanitarian instinct" and developed into a race of self-conscious saints. Be lieving in human nature and laying stress upon the relation between man and man, the Quakers became the friends of all humanity.[30]

In 1693 George Keith, a leading Quaker of his day, came forward as a promoter of the religious training of the slaves as a preparation for emancipation. William Penn advocated the emancipation of slaves, that they might have every opportunity for improvement. In 1695 the Quakers while protesting against the slave trade denounced also the policy of neglecting their moral and spiritual welfare.[31] The growing interest of this sect in the Negroes was shown later by the development in 1713 of a definite

scheme for freeing and returning them to Africa after having been educated and trained to serve as missionaries on that continent.

When the manumission of the slaves was checked by the reaction against that class and it became more of a problem to establish them in a hostile environment, certain Quakers of North Carolina and Virginia adopted the scheme of settling them in Northern States.[32] At first, they sent such freedmen to Pennsylvania. But for various reasons this did not prove to be the best asylum. In the first place, Pennsylvania bordered on the slave States, Maryland and Virginia, from which agents came to kidnap free Negroes. Furthermore, too many Negroes were already rushing to that commonwealth as the Negroes' heaven and there was the chance that the Negroes might be settled elsewhere in the North, where they might have better economic opportunities.[33] A committee of forty was accordingly appointed by North Carolina Quakers in 1822 to examine the laws of other free States with a view to determining what section would be most suitable for colonizing these blacks. This committee recommended in its report that the blacks be colonized in Ohio, Indiana and Illinois.

The yearly meeting, therefore, ordered the removal of such Negroes as fast as they were willing or as might be consistent with the profession of their sect, and instructed the agents effecting the removal to draw on the treasury for any sum not exceeding two hundred dollars to defray expenses. An increasing number reached these States every year but, owing to the inducements offered by the American Colonization Society, some of them went to Liberia. When Liberia, however, developed into every thing but a haven of rest, the number sent to the settlements in the Northwest greatly increased.

The quarterly meeting succeeded in sending to the West 133 Negroes, including 23 free blacks and slaves given up because they were connected by marriage with those to be transplanted. [34] The Negro colonists seemed to prefer Indiana.[35] They went in three companies and with suitable young Friends whom were executed powers of attorney to manumit, set free, settle and bind them out.[36] Thirteen carts and wagons were bought for these three companies; $1,250 was furnished for their traveling expenses and clothing, the whole cost amounting to $2,490. It was planned to send forty or fifty to Long Island and twenty to the interior of Pennsylvania, but they failed to prosper and reports concerning them stamped them as destitute and deplorably ignorant. Those who went to Ohio and Indiana, however, did well.[37]

Later we receive another interesting account of this exodus. David White led a company of fifty-three into the West, thirty-eight of whom belonged to Friends, five to a member who had ordered that they be taken West at his expense. Six of these slaves belonged to Samuel Lawrence, a Negro slaveholder, who had purchased himself and family. White pathetically reports the case of four of the women who had married slave husbands and had twenty children for the possession of whom the Friends had to stand a lawsuit in the courts. The women had decided to leave their husbands behind but the thought of separation so tormented them that they made an effort to secure their liberty. Upon appealing to their masters for terms the owners, somewhat moved by compassion, sold them for one half of their value. White then went West and left four in Chillicothe, twenty-three in Leesburg and twenty-six in Wayne County, Indiana, without encountering any material difficulty.[38]

Others had thought of this plan but the Quakers actually carried it out on a small scale. Here we see again not only their desire to have the Negroes emancipated but the vital interest of the Quakers in success of the blacks, for members of this sect not only liberated their slaves but sold out their own holdings in the South and moved with these freedmen into the North. Quakers who then lived in free States offered fugitives material assistance by open and clandestine methods.[39] The most prominent

leader developed by the movement was Levi Coffin, whose daring deeds in behalf of the fugitives made him the reputed President of the Underground Railroad. Most of the Quaker settlements of Negroes with which he was connected were made in what is now Hamilton, Howard, Wayne, Randolph, Vigo, Gibson, Grant, Rush, and Tipton Counties, Indiana, and Darke County, Ohio.

The promotion of this movement by the Quakers was well on its way by 1815 and was not materially checked until the fifties when the operations of the drastic fugitive slave law interfered, and even then the movement had gained such momentum and the execution of that mischievous measure had produced in the North so much reaction like that expressed in the personal liberty laws, that it could not be stopped. The Negroes found homes in Western New York, Western Pennsylvania and throughout the Northwest Territory. The Negro population of York, Harrisburg and Philadelphia rapidly increased. A settlement of Negroes developed at Sandy Lake in Northwestern Pennsylvania [40] and there was another near Berlin Cross Roads in Ohio.[41] A group of Negroes migrating to this same State found homes in the Van Buren Township of Shelby County.[42] A more significant settlement in the State was made by Samuel Gist, an Englishman possessing extensive plantations in Hanover, Amherst, and Henrico Counties, Virginia. He provided in his will that his slaves should be freed and sent to the North. He further provided that the revenue from his plantation the last year of his life be applied in building schoolhouses and churches for their accommodation, and "that all money coming to him in Virginia be set aside for the employment of ministers and teachers to instruct them." In 1818, Wickham, the executor of his estate, purchased land and established these Negroes in what was called the Upper and Lower Camps of Brown County.[43]

Augustus Wattles, a Quaker from Connecticut, made a settlement in Mercer County, Ohio, early in the nineteenth century. In the winter of 1833–4, he providentially became acquainted with the colored people of Cincinnati, finding there about "4,000 totally ignorant of every thing calculated to make good citizens." As most of them had been slaves, excluded from every avenue of moral and mental improvement, he established for them a school which he maintained for two years. He then proposed to these Negroes to go into the country and purchase land to remove them "from those contaminating influences which had so long crushed them in our cities and villages."[44] They consented on the condition that he would accompany them and teach school. He travelled through Canada, Michigan and Indiana, looking for a suitable location, and finally selected for settlement a place in Mercer County, Ohio. In 1835, he made the first purchase of land there for this purpose and before 1838 Negroes had bought there about 30,000 acres, at the earnest appeal of this benefactor, who had travelled into almost every neighborhood of the blacks in the State, and laid before them the benefits of a permanent home for themselves and of education for their children.[45]

This settlement was further increased in 1858 by the manumitted slaves of John Harper of North Carolina.[46] John Randolph of Roanoke endeavored to establish his slaves as freemen in this county but the Germans who had settled in that community a little ahead of them started such a disturbance that Randolph's executor could not carry out his plan, although he had purchased a large tract of land there.[47] It was necessary to send these freemen to Miami County. Theodoric H. Gregg of Dinwiddie County, Virginia, liberated his slaves in 1854 and sent them to Ohio.[48] Nearer to the Civil War, when public opinion was proscribing the uplift of Negroes in Kentucky, Noah Spears secured near Xenia, Greene County, Ohio, a small parcel of land for sixteen of his former bondsmen in 1856.[49] Other freedmen found their way to this community in later years and it became so prosperous that it was selected as the site of Wilberforce University.

This transplantation extended into Michigan. With the help of persons philanthropically inclined

there sprang up a flourishing group of Negroes in Detroit. Early in the nineteenth century they began to acquire property and to provide for the education of their children. Their record was such as to merit the encomiums of their fellow white citizens. In later years this group in Detroit was increased by the operation of laws hostile to free Negroes in the South in that life for this class not only became intolerable but necessitated their expatriation. Because of the Virginia drastic laws and especially that of 1838 prohibiting the return to that State of such Negro students as had been accustomed to go North to attend school, after they were denied this privilege at home, the father of Richard DeBaptiste and Marie Louis More, the mother of Fannie M. Richards, led a colony of free Negroes from Fredericksburg to Detroit.[50] And for about similar reasons the father of Robert A. Pelham conducted others from Petersburg, Virginia, in 1859.[51] One Saunders, a planter of Cabell County, West Virginia, liberated his slaves some years later and furnished them homes among the Negroes settled in Cass County, Michigan, about ninety miles east of Chicago, and ninety-five miles west of Detroit.

This settlement had become attractive to fugitive slaves and freedmen because the Quakers settled there welcomed them on their way to freedom and in some cases encouraged them to remain among them. When the increase of fugitives was rendered impossible during the fifties when the Fugitive Slave Law was being enforced, there was still a steady growth due to the manumission of slaves by sympathetic and benevolent masters in the South.[52] Most of these Negroes settled in Calvin Township in that county, so that of the 1,376 residing there in 1860, 795 were established in this district, there being only 580 whites dispersed among them. The Negro settlers did not then obtain control of the government but they early purchased land to the extent of several thousand acres and developed into successful small farmers. Being a little more prosperous than the average Negro community in the North, the Cass County settlement not only attracted Negroes fleeing from hardships in the South but also those who had for some years unsuccessfully endeavored to establish themselves, in other communities on free soil.[53]

These settlements were duplicated a little farther west in Illinois. Edward Coles, a Virginian, who in 1818 emigrated to Illinois, of which he later served as Governor and as liberator from slavery, settled his slaves in that commonwealth. He brought them to Edwardsville, where they constituted a community known as "Coles' Negroes."[54] There was another community of Negroes in Illinois in what is now called Brooklyn situated north of East St. Louis. This town was a center of some consequence in the thirties. It became a station of the Underground Railroad on the route to Alton and to Canada. As all of the Negroes who emerged from the South did not go farther into the North, the black population of the town gradually grew despite the fact that slave hunters captured and reenslaved many of the Negroes who settled there.[55]

These settlements together with favorable communities of sympathetic whites promoted the migration of the free Negroes and fugitives from the South by serving as centers offering assistance to those fleeing to the free States and to Canada. The fugitives usually found friends in Philadelphia, Columbia, Pittsburgh, Elmira, Rochester, Buffalo, Gallipolis, Portsmouth, Akron, Cincinnati, and Detroit. They passed on the way to freedom through Columbia, Philadelphia, Elizabethtown and by way of sea to New York and Boston, from which they proceeded to permanent settlements in the North.[56]

In the West, the migration of the blacks was further facilitated by the peculiar geographic conditions in that the Appalachian highland, extending like a peninsula into the South, had a natural endowment which produced a class of white citizens hostile to the institution of slavery. These mountaineers coming later to the colonies had to go to the hills and mountains because the first comers from Europe

had taken up the land near the sea. Being of the German and Scotch-Irish Presbyterian stock, they had ideals differing widely from those of the seaboard slaveholders.[57] The mountaineers believed in "civil liberty in fee simple, and an open road to civil honors, secured to the poorest and feeblest members of society." The eastern element had for their ideal a government of interest for the people. They believed in liberty but that of kings, lords, and commons, not of all the people.[58]

Settled along the Appalachian highland, these new stocks continued to differ from those dwelling near the sea, especially on the slavery question.[59] The natural endowment of the mountainous section made slavery there unprofitable and the mountaineers bore it grievously that they were attached to commonwealths dominated by the radical pro-slavery element of the South, who sacrifice all other interests to safeguard those of the peculiar institution. There developed a number of clashes in all of the legislatures and constitutional conventions of the Southern States along the Atlantic, but in every case the defenders of the interests of slavery won. When, therefore, slaves with the assistance of anti-slavery mountaineers began to escape to the free States, they had little difficulty in making their way through the Appalachian region, where the love of freedom had so set the people against slavery that although some of them yielded to the inevitable sin, they never made any systematic effort to protect it.[60]

The development of the movement in these mountains was more than interesting. During the first quarter of the nineteenth century there were many ardent anti-slavery leaders in the mountains. These were not particularly interested in the Negro but were determined to keep that soil for freedom that the settlers might there realize the ideas for which they had left their homes in Europe. When the industrial revolution with the attendant rise of the plantation cotton culture made abolition in the South improbable, some of them became colonizationists, hoping to destroy the institution through deportation, which would remove the objection of certain masters who would free their slaves provided they were not left in the States to become a public charge.[61] Some of this sentiment continued in the mountains even until the Civil War. The highlanders, therefore, found themselves involved in a continuous embroglio because they were not moved by reactionary influences which were unifying the South for its bold effort to make slavery a national institution.[62] The other members of the mountaineer anti-slavery group became attached to the Underground Railroad system, endeavoring by secret methods to place on free soil a sufficiently large number of fugitives to show a decided diminution in the South.[63] John Brown, who communicated with the South through these mountains, thought that his work would be a success, if he could change the situation in one county in each of these States.

The lines along which these Underground Railroad operators moved connected naturally with the Quaker settlements established in free States and the favorable sections in the Appalachian region. Many of these workers were Quakers who had already established settlements of slaves on estates which they had purchased in the Northwest Territory. Among these were John Rankin, James Gilliland, Jesse Lockehart, Robert Dobbins, Samuel Croahers, Hugh L. Fullerton, and William Dickey. Thus they connected the heart of the South with the avenues to freedom in the North.[64] There were routes extending from this section into Ohio, Indiana, Illinois and Pennsylvania. Over the Ohio and Kentucky route culminating chiefly in Cleveland, Sandusky and Detroit, however, more fugitives made their way to freedom than through any other avenue,[65] partly too because they found the limestone caves very helpful for hiding by day. These operations extended even through Tennessee into northern Georgia and Alabama. Dillingham, Josiah Henson and Harriet Tubman used these routes to deliver many a 'Negro from slavery.

The opportunity thus offered to help the oppressed brought forward a class of anti-slavery men, wh~~went beyond the limit of merely expressing their horror of the evil. They believed that something~~ should be done "to deliver the poor that cry and to direct the wanderer in the right way. "[66] Translatin into action what had long been restricted to academic discussion, these philanthropic workers ushere in a new era in the uplift of the blacks, making abolition more of a reality. The abolition element of the North then could no longer be considered an insignificant minority advocating a hopeless cause but a factor in drawing from the South a part of its slave population and at the same time offering asylum to the free Negroes whom the southerners considered undesirable.[67] Prominent among those who aided this migration in various ways were Benjamin Lundy of Tennessee and James G. Birney, a former slaveholder of Huntsville, Alabama, who manumitted his slaves and apprenticed and educated some of them in Ohio.

This exodus of the Negroes to the free States promoted the migration of others of their race to Canada, a more congenial part beyond the borders of the United States. The movement from the free States into Canada, moreover, was contemporary with that from the South to the free States as will b evidenced by the fact that 15,000 of the 60,000 Negroes in Canada in 1860 were free born. As Detroit was, the chief gateway for them to Canada, most of these refugees settled in towns, of Southern Ontario not far from that city. These were Dawn, Colchester, Elgin, Dresden, Windsor, Sandwich, Bush, Wilberforce, Hamilton, St. Catherines, Chatham, Riley, Anderton, London, Malden and Gonfield.[68] And their coming to Canada was not checked even by request from their enemies that the be turned away from that country as undesirables, for some of the white people there welcomed and assisted them. Canadians later experienced a change in their attitude toward these refugees but these British Americans never made the life of the Negro there so intolerable as was the case in some of th free States.

It should be observed here that this movement, unlike the exodus of the Negroes of today, affected an unequal distribution of the enlightened Negroes.[69] Those who are fleeing from the South to-day ar largely laborers seeking economic opportunities. The motive at work in the mind of the antebellum refugee was higher. In 1840 there were more intelligent blacks in the South than in the North but not so after 1850, despite the vigorous execution of the Fugitive Slave Law in some parts of the North. While the free Negro population of the slave States increased only 23,736 from 1850 to 1860, that of the free States increased 29,839. In the South, only Delaware, Maryland and North Carolina showed a noticeable increase in the number of free persons of color during the decade immediately preceding the Civil War. This element of the population had only slightly increased in Alabama, Kentucky, Missouri, Tennessee, Virginia, Louisiana, South Carolina and the District of Columbia. The number free Negroes of Florida remained constant. Those of Arkansas, Mississippi and Texas diminished. In the North, of course, the migration had caused the tendency to be in the other direction. With the exception of Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont and New York which had about the same free colored population in 1860 as they had in 1850 there was a general increase in the number of Negroes in the free States. Ohio led in this respect, having had during this period an increase of 11,394.[70] A glance a the table on the accompanying page will show in detail the results of this migration.

STATISTICS OF THE FREE COLORED POPULATION OF THE UNITED STATES

| State | Population |

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