

black slavery in michigan

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No part of the American nation before the Civil War, free or slave, remained untouched by the influences of the peculiar institution. Understandably, historians intent on building a general theory of American slavery have rarely looked above the Mason-Dixon line; yet, many questions can be answered by focusing on slavery rooted in other than southern economic, political or social institutions.

This paper on Black slavery in Michigan is an attempt to study a different kind of American slave experience. At the least, frontier slavery in Michigan was less varied, less complex and less malevolent than that of the American South. At the most, the small size of the frontier population, free and slave, the simpler and more stable economy, and the more clearly defined social order should allow the historian to isolate the economic and social influences on slavery as an institution. Similarly, other local case studies of slavery outside of the South should be pursued with the intent of reconstructing the institutional framework within which slaves lived and toiled. It is only with such unique, odd-shaped pieces that the whole jigsaw puzzle can be constructed.

Slavery in Michigan, an unusual and little-known institution, is the history of bondage checked and restrained by social and economic factors. Originally an Indian institution, Michigan slavery was forged as a European institution under the protection of the Catholic Church of New France. Large slaveholdings were uncommon, and the predominance of individual fur trappers and family farmers placed the master-slave relationship on a personal and intimate level, closer to the relationship of farmer to hired man or *habitant* to *engagé* than to that of owner to bondsman. As a result, Michigan Black slaves, rather than accepting their status, energetically sought to eliminate all vestiges of servility.

I came to Michigan in 1824, Vermont-born Henry Chipman explained, seeking "the education of my children beyond the influence of slavery." Gustave De Beaumont, the companion of Alexis De Tocqueville, was similarly impressed with Michigan, placing it not among "the supposedly free states [where] the Negro . . . is a free man in name only"

but with the western area, the refuge “where Europeans have never penetrated.” Beaumont’s account of the United States, unlike Tocqueville’s *Democracy in America*, was offered in fictional form and the plot of his novel, *Marie*, reached a climax in the wilderness of Michigan, beyond the area of slavery.¹

Both Chipman and Beaumont had been deceived. By 1831 when Beaumont and Tocqueville visited Michigan, slavery in frontier Michigan had long since passed its centennial among Europeans and it probably had existed for a millenium among the native Indians. Regardless of whether the garrisons at Michilimackinac and Detroit flew the Fleur-de-lis, the Union Jack or the Stars and Stripes, slavery persisted, finally disappearing when Michigan became a state in 1837.

Slavery in Michigan and throughout the old Northwest preceded Europeans. It was an Indian institution founded on the assumed right of the victor to sell captives taken in war. Eighteenth-century Jesuits and explorers witnessed slavery and were themselves occasionally enslaved. The close relationship throughout New France of the French and the Indians, and later the British and the Indians, made European involvement in slavery inevitable.²

Throughout its history the French transplantation of feudalism in the colony of New France was plagued with a manpower shortage. The fur trade further inhibited the French attempt at grafting feudalism onto the New World by draining off one-third of the adult males into the frontier beyond the discipline of society. The growth of English colonies to the south and the success of the Caribbean plantation system led Northern colonial administrators to turn to slavery as the remedy for New France’s labor scarcity. In 1688 Governor de Denonville urged King Louis XIV of France to authorize the importation of Negro slaves. The Parisian officials eventually agreed: the “*Ordonnance au sujet des Negres et des Sauvages appeles Panis*” of 1709 established slavery in New France, declaring, in effect, that all Negroes and *Panis* (Indians) held as bondsmen were legally enslaved. But the plantation vision never became a reality and apparently no Africans were imported into Canada. Except for slaves brought by Loyalists after the American Revolution, Indians and not Europeans were the source of nearly all the slaves in Canada.³

During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, soldiers, Jesuits, *voyageurs* and *habitants* regularly bought slaves from the Indians. The *Panis* or Indian slaves purchased had been captives of war, whereas the Blacks had been captured by the Indians in forays against outlying Southern plantations or against frontier settlements containing slaves. Many of the mid-eighteenth-century raids against the transAppalachian frontier settlements had been encouraged by the government, whether French or British, and in numerous instances soldiers accompanied the pillaging Indians. The raids were actually policing missions designed to keep settlers out of Indian territory and thus to preserve the ever uneasy

peace between the Whites and Indians and to protect the fur trade. Although many of the slaves had been purchased by military officers and Jesuits from the Indians, nearly all the slaves in the Michigan region were held by *habitants* at Detroit, the largest town west of the mountains, or by *voyageurs* out of Michilimackinac, "the grand depot of the trade of the North-west."⁴

The settlement in northern Michigan on the straits of Mackinac, or later on Mackinac Island, was little more than a trading post for *voyageurs* or fur trappers and traders from Montreal and Detroit. Few non-Indians lived there permanently, and the garrison, under both the French and the British, rarely numbered more than the commandant and a handful of men. Since it was the gateway to the northwest, however, nearly all fur trappers passed through the post regularly.⁵

Michilimackinac slavery differed dramatically from bondage in other areas of the continent. The structure of royal decrees and law that sheltered slavery was of little relevance to the Indian or fur trapper who wandered about in the American interior. It was the trapper's will, and not the King's ordinance, that made slavery. The King's decree of 1709 establishing slavery was irrelevant; slavery began in some remote time and place when a sixteenth-century trapper, probably in need of labor and companionship, purchased a slave from the Indians. The trapper's conduct was guided by his conscience, and the slave and his master had to make peace with themselves and their God but rarely with their King.

As Frenchmen, the trappers and slaves were also Roman Catholics. But the religious ties were closer and stronger than the bonds of nationality because the church followed master and slave into the wilderness whereas the crown did not. This was as important to the slave as to the trapper, for although the secular law showed little concern for the bondsmen, all men were equal in the eyes of the church.

A 1724 ordinance of Louis XV required only that all slaves be educated and baptized in the Roman Catholic faith, but the registers of St. Anne's at Michilimackinac and of parishes elsewhere indicate that slaves regularly received other sacraments as well. The church, in claiming and protecting the soul of the slave, reduced the absolute control the master could exercise over his servant. Slaves were born, baptized, confirmed, married and interred within the realm of the church. At baptism godparents were designated for slaves as for others of the faith. The godparents of slaves were always free persons and their presence potentially conflicted with the master's theoretically unchecked power over his bondsmen.⁶

Not only did the church's concern for the slave and his soul lessen the rigors of the slave's life, but slavery as a fur trapper's institution was also more benevolent than the more commercial institution of the American South. Nearly all slaveholders out of Michilimackinac held only one bondsman, and there is no evidence of holdings beyond one family.

The necessities and personality of the fur trapper more than anything else determined the slave's treatment; but although the personalities of fur trappers differed sharply, the nature of the fur trade required that a slave be treated more as a fellow *voyageur* than as a slave.⁷

Fur trapping lent itself badly to the traditional master-slave relationship. *Voyageurs* had only each other's companionship for months on end. One man's misstep, either among threatening Indians or in dangerous rapids, could mean the death of all. The essential hostility and antagonism of a master-slave relationship was simply too risky for frontier life. With each man dependent upon the other, the opportunities for defiance were too great. Like the *voyageur*, the more common independent trapper also treated his slave benevolently.

In taking on a slave, the lone *voyageur* probably sought companionship as well as additional labor. The slave thus become something other than a slave, perhaps a servant, possibly a companion. As was true of the *voyageurs*, few slaves ever became traders, although many rose to the rank of interpreters or subordinate traders on a salary. In any event, the frontier slaves of northern Michigan and the surrounding areas escaped the curse of self-deprecation and despair that stigmatized the Southern plantation slave. Michilimackinac's Indian and Negro slaves were Catholic servants and *voyageurs*.⁸

Michilimackinac's population was transient; few trappers had permanent homes, and traders like John Askin lived in Detroit or Montreal. In contrast, Detroit was a stable but expanding frontier town. The settlement on both sides of the Detroit River extended outward from Fort Ponchatrain and the government trade store on the river bank. Of more importance than the fort or the store was the growing community of French Canadian farmers, *habitants*, who laid out narrow rectangular farms, mostly on the northern side of the river. The colony grew steadily but slowly, numbering more than two thousand by 1780. Growth was restrained by the drain of manpower into the fur trade and the absence of any large hinterland. The local harvest supported the garrison at Fort Ponchatrain and supplied the fur trappers but it yielded no surplus for export. The limited market, as well as the general organization of New France society, ensured that the small family farm would be the basic unit of production.⁹

Slavery was as common among the *habitants* at Detroit as it was among the *voyageurs* who passed through the post at the straits of Mackinac. At Detroit, slavery was more prevalent among the settlers north of the river (the present city of Detroit) than among the French south of the river (the present Windsor) or at Fort Ponchatrain. In 1760, when there were sixty-two slaves in Detroit, thirty-nine of the 230 *habitants* held slaves, but nearly one-fourth of the eighty-four *habitants* north of the river were slaveholders. [See table.] In 1779, sixty-six of the 189 families held bondsmen; three years later eighty-four of the 321 *habitants*

SLAVEHOLDING IN DETROIT: 1760, 1779, 1782¹¹

Slaves Held	1760						1779						1782					
	Owners			Slaves			Owners			Slaves			Owners			Slaves		
	Number	Percentage	Cumulative percentage															
1	26	66.7	66.7	26	41.9	41.9	33	49.2	49.2	33	23.4	23.4	42	50.0	50.0	42	23.3	23.3
2	7	17.9	84.6	14	22.6	64.5	18	26.8	76.0	36	25.5	48.9	22	26.1	76.1	44	24.5	47.8
3	4	10.3	94.9	12	19.4	83.9	5	7.5	83.5	15	10.6	59.5	8	9.5	85.6	24	13.3	61.1
4	--	--	--	--	--	--	6	9.0	92.5	24	17.0	76.5	3	3.6	89.2	12	6.7	67.8
5	2	5.1	100.0	10	16.1	100.0	1	1.5	94.0	5	3.6	80.1	3	3.6	92.8	15	8.3	76.1
6	--	--	--	--	--	--	2	3.0	97.0	12	8.5	88.6	1	1.2	94.0	6	3.3	79.4
7	--	--	--	--	--	--	1	1.5	98.5	7	5.0	93.6	3	3.6	97.6	21	11.7	91.1
8	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	2	2.4	100.0	16	8.9	100.0
9	--	--	--	--	--	--	1	1.5	100.0	9	6.4	100.0	--	--	--	--	--	--
Total	39			62			67			141			84			180		

held slaves. As befits an agricultural system where the predominant unit of production was the family farm, there were few large slaveholders in the area. Although William Macomb, a wealthy Detroitier, held twenty-six slaves at his death in 1796, and Matthew Elliott, a United Empire Loyalist from Virginia, attempted unsuccessfully to establish a Southern-style slave plantation near Amherstburg, large slaveholdings were the exception, not the rule, in the Detroit region.¹⁰

In Detroit as in Michilimakinac, the church helped to mitigate the potential harshness and severity that the bondsmen faced. The parish of St. Anne's at Detroit was protector of both slave and *habitant*, but the family farm and the large number of small slaveholdings were more important factors in this regard. These three elements—the church, the family farm and the absence of large slaveholdings—helped to transform the Negro slave, in effect, into a servant or *engagé*. The church sought to educate the unfortunate Blacks and this lifted many above drudgery. The frontier slave could be expected to live with his master and his master's family; few slaveholders could afford the luxury of separate quarters, especially for one or two slaves. Large holdings or the ownership of a slave family might necessitate a separate dwelling, but the census schedules reveal that this was rare. Masters were *habitants*—not overseers or absentee owners but farmers who worked alongside their slaves or hired men. The hiring out system, occasional voluntary manumissions, the special privileges granted to slaves, their relatively unrestricted freedom of movement as well as the ease with which many were able to escape, all testify to the *habitants'* trust of, and fellowship with, their slaves.¹²

With about three hundred slaves in Detroit in 1796, slavery in Michigan was at its zenith when Detroit and Michilimackinac were transferred from the British to the Americans. Thereafter, the institution declined rapidly. The Northwest Ordinance of 1787 had prohibited the extension of slavery into the triangle bordered by the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers, but this ban was interpreted as a bar to bringing into the region additional slaves while leaving existing bondsmen enslaved. The embargo was strengthened as well as extended in 1793 when the assembly and council of Upper Canada, the central government administering Detroit, prohibited the importation of slaves and provided for the gradual abolition of slavery in the province. As the result of treaty protection, however, slavery persisted. The principle that property in Negro slaves remained inviolate had been established in the 1760's when the territory northwest of the Alleghenies was ceded by the French to the British. The 1760 Articles of Capitulation, providing for the surrender of Montreal to General Amherst; the Treaty of Paris of 1783, ending the American Revolution; and Jay's Treaty of 1794, ceding the Northwest posts to the United States, all protected slavery. The result was that slavery south of the Detroit River (Canada) continued

until the 1833 Imperial Act abolished slavery in the British Empire, and slavery north of the Detroit River (Michigan) continued until it was abolished by the state's first constitution, adopted in 1835.¹³

Voluntary manumissions and the occasional escape of slaves to Canada supplemented the law in sharply reducing the number of slaves in nineteenth-century Michigan. The 1810 census recorded twenty-four slaves in Michigan Territory, including seventeen in Detroit. The 1820 census recorded none although slaves are known to have been held in the territory at the time. The 1830 census enumerated thirty-two slaves in Michigan Territory, but only one is definitely known to have been within the present boundaries of Michigan; the remainder were in counties now part of the state of Wisconsin. On the eve of Michigan's entry into the union as a state, on the eve of the abolition of slavery within its borders, there were three slaves in Michigan—two in Monroe County and one in Cass County.¹⁴

To say that slaves in Michigan were treated benevolently is not to say that slavery was a benevolent institution. It was not. An indication of this is that slaves sought release from bondage in all manner of ways. Fugitive slaves from Canada were common in Detroit just as runaway slaves from Michigan often found freedom on the other side of the Detroit River. Enlistment in the militia or army of the enemy was a certain means by which American and Canadian slaves could gain their freedom. Bondsmen also found sanctuary locally among sympathetic territorial residents and others entered the courts in quest of freedom.

With good reason, slaveholders in Detroit lived in fear that their slaves would run away. In August 1807, James May's slave ran away, and the slaveholder warned his friend John Askin that Askin's slave George was also on the verge of fleeing. Six years later Askin lost his slave Madelaine when she found employment on a Great Lakes' boat. She was not the first slave Askin had lost to the lakes. Refugees from slavery in Michigan could find ready employment in Canada as well as on the lakes, while fugitives from Canada, and an occasional escapee from Kentucky, found security in Detroit. The law and the popular mood protected the slaves from return. Once a slave crossed the international boundary line, he could not be extradited. Furthermore, Detroiters at the turn of the nineteenth century had little sympathy for slave hunters and oftentimes harassed them in their search for fugitives. In one instance, in 1806, a mob attacked an overseer and "covered the side of his face with tar, and part of his hat with tar and feathers, and deprived him of his wig, contrary to the laws and treaties of the United States."¹⁵

War and the threat of war also proved advantageous to slaves. During the American Revolution, the *Chesapeake* crisis of 1807, and the War of 1812, slaves and free Blacks were recruited by both sides. Since the use of Blacks in arms, whether free or slave, was a risk few American govern-

ments were willing to assume at that time, the use of Negroes as soldiers in the Detroit-Windsor region reflected the relatively high status that Negroes had achieved in the community. In return for their military service, slaves received their freedom as well as the usual veterans' benefits. After the American Revolution, for example, two Black ex-slaves and ex-soldiers formerly of Butler's Rangers received land grants in the Detroit area.¹⁶

Despite the ease with which a slave could escape, not all bondsmen sought their freedom in this way. Through *habeas corpus* proceedings some slaves attempted to gain their release in the courts. The Supreme Court of the Territory of Michigan was generally unsympathetic to slaves seeking their release and lamented having to order the emancipation of unlawfully held slaves. One Hannah, "A Negro Woman," and Thomas, "A mullatto boy," were released from custody in 1809 and declared "free persons, and not slaves." In another case a year earlier, two fugitive slaves from Canada had been released. Negroes, however, were generally unsuccessful in suing for their freedom. The landmark case was *In the Matter of Elizabeth Denison, Et. Al.* in 1807, in which Justice Woodward, citing the provisions of Jay's Treaty, ruled that the four slaves of Catherine Tucker—Elizabeth, James, Scipio and Peter Denison—had been legally enslaved.¹⁷

Although the Denisons lost their case, there was nothing unusual about their decision to sue for their freedom given the conditions of slavery in eighteenth and nineteenth-century Michigan. What was unusual about slavery in Michigan was its effect on the personality of the Negro. The Sambo image, the childlike obedience of the plantation slave, was uncommon in Michigan. Neither the fugitives from slavery nor the petitioners in court could be counted among the submissive slaves. Nor were they Samboes who armed themselves in 1828 to free some detained fugitive slaves. Nor could the Sambo image be found among the ex-slaves and free Blacks who freed the Blackburns from the Detroit jail in 1833, wounding the sheriff, laying siege to the city and threatening to burn it to the ground.¹⁸

Although an occasional slaveholder beat his slaves and used force to control his bondsmen, the "massa" image was as foreign to Michigan as was the Sambo image. The fur trapper, in search of companionship and labor, was no massa. Neither was the *habitant* who shared his table and shelter with his slave. When a slaveholder attempted to assert his position through the use of the lash in 1807, the slave Nobbin responded not with submissiveness but by running away. James May, the slaveholder, urged some friends to intercede and use their "influence in persuading him to return to his duty and to behave himself better in future in that case I will pledge myself not to lay the wait of my finger on him."¹⁹

In reality then, Michigan's slaves, like the slaves in New France, were treated more as servants or hired men than as slaves. The Catholic

Church, the most important institution among Europeans in the area until the nineteenth century, the predominance of small, individual production units in the economy, and the hostility of most Detroiters to the institution of slavery all undermined the potential dependence and submissiveness of slaves. Thus it was not surprising that in 1806, a year after fire had completely destroyed frontier Detroit, some slaves as well as free Blacks received grants of land when the city land was redistributed.²⁰

Understandably, Michigan Blacks, free and slave, were not unaffected by their status in eighteenth and early nineteenth-century Michigan. Because of the emphasis on equality rather than on servility, the example of independence rather than of submission and the sympathy of many whites, the nineteenth-century Michigan Negro fought for his rights and sought his freedom and equality as quickly and as fiercely as anyone in Michigan society did. Rather than producing a group of docile, obedient Blacks who accepted the deprecatory White view of the Negro, Michigan slavery had the opposite effect. Because of the protection afforded by the church and their relationship with the *voyageur* and *habitant*, Michigan Negroes believed in their own value, their own status. Treated as equals in the eighteenth century, Michigan Negroes in the nineteenth century, free and slave, were unwilling to submit to any other condition.

That Blacks comprised the Detroit community at every stage from village to metropolis could not be ignored by Whites, and if the White community sought to define the acceptance of Blacks in White terms, Blacks would have no part of it. The record of the pre-Civil War Black community, of ex-slaves and pioneers alike, was one of unceasing militancy in securing political, social and economic rights. The free Black resistance from the 1830's onward to segregation, discrimination and fugitive slave laws would parallel the earlier slave resistance to servitude, and this parallel illustrates the inheritance of the free generation of Blacks in Michigan from their ancestors in servitude. Thus slavery in Michigan, unlike slavery in the American South, laid the foundation for a sensitive and militant Black community that unceasingly fought for political, economic and social equality throughout the nineteenth century.²¹

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footnotes

1. Chipman to Josiah Dunham, July 21, 1827, Clarence Edwin Carter, *The Territorial Papers of the United States*, X (Washington, D.C., 1943), 1112; Beaumont, *Marie, or Slavery in the United States*, trans. by Barbara Chapman (Stanford, Calif., 1958), 72, 132, 134.

2. Ernest J. Lajeunesse, ed., *The Windsor Border Region* (Toronto, 1960), lxvii. Father Pierre Roubaud described slaves taken as booty at the capture of Fort William Henry "Account of Father [Roubaud], October 21, 1757," Reuben Gold Thwaites, ed., *The Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents . . .*, LXX (Cleveland, 1900), 90-203. Explorer-fur trader Alexander Henry described his own enslavement at Michilimackinac in the 1760's in his journal. Milo M. Quaife, ed., *Alexander Henry's Travels and Adventures in the Years 1760-1776* (Chicago, 1921), 89-103.

3. *Panis* is used here as a synonym for Indian slave or in some cases, an Indian ex-slave. Sigmund Diamond, "An Experiment in 'Feudalism': French Canada in the Seventeenth Century," *William and Mary Quarterly*, Third Series, XVIII (January, 1961), 30; David B. Davis, *The Problem of Slavery in Western Culture* (Ithaca, New York, 1966), 125-6; Jacques Viger and L. LaFontaine, *De L'Esclavage en Canada, Memoires de la Societe historique de Montreal*, I (1859), 1-5; T. Watson Smith, *The Slave in Canada, Collections of the Nova Scotia Historical Society*, X (1899), 20, 23.

4. Lajeunesse, ed., *Windsor Border Region*, lxvii. See William Renwick Riddell, *The Life of William Dummer Powell* (Lansing, 1924), 27, 164n, for a typical example of a frontier raid that netted slaves.

5. The registers of the parish church of St. Anne at Michilimackinac comprise virtually a history of the community. They have been translated and printed in State Historical Society of Wisconsin, *Collections*, XVIII-XIX (1909-1910).

6. B. A. Hinsdale, *The Old Northwest* (New York, 1888), 347-348. For slavery and the Roman Catholic Church, see Chapter V, "The Church and Its Negro Communicants in Colonial Cuba," in Herbert S. Klein, *Slavery in the Americas: A Comparative Study of Cuba and Virginia* (Chicago, 1967), 87-105.

7. This paragraph is based on the St. Anne's registers and impressions formed from published fur trappers' journals.

8. Kenneth W. Porter, "Negroes and the Fur Trade," *Minnesota History*, XV (December, 1934), 426; Jacob Burnet, *Notes on the Early Settlement of the North-Western Territory* (Cincinnati, 1847), 283n.

9. Almon Ernest Parkins, *The Historical Geography of Detroit* (Lansing, 1918), 55ff; Floyd Russell Dain, *Every Home a Frontier: Detroit's Economic Progress 1815-1825* (Detroit, 1956), 123.

10. Arthur Raynond Kooker, "The Antislavery Movement in Michigan, 1796-1840," Ph.D. thesis, University of Michigan, 1941, 15; Lajeunesse, ed., *Windsor Border Region*, civ.

11. Eighteenth century slaveholding in Detroit:

Date	Total population excl. slaves, soldiers	Habitants	Slaves	% Slaves of Population
1706	518	144	45	8.7%
1750	450	.....	33	7.3
1760	.....	230	62	....
1765	739	.....	60	8.1
1773	1282	.....	75	5.9
1778	2017	.....	127	6.3
1779	1776	289	141	7.9
1780	2032	394	175	8.6
1782	2012	321	180	8.9
1796	.....	.....	c300	....

Sources (for both the above and references in the text): 1706: Evarts B. Greene and Virginia D. Harrington, *American Population Before the Federal Census of 1790* (New York, 1932), 190; 1750: Lajeunesse, ed., *Windsor Border Region*, 54-56; 1760: "Liste du habitant du Detroit au nord de la Riviere . . ." [1760], photostat in Burton Historical Collections, Detroit Public Library; 1765: Greene and Harrington, *Population Before 1790*, 191; 1773: Lajeunesse, ed., *Windsor Border Region*, 82; 1778: Michigan Pioneer and Historical Society *Collections*, IX (2nd ed., Lansing, 1908), 469 (hereafter cited as *MPHSC*); 1779: *MPHSC*, X (2nd ed., 1908), 311-326; 1780: *MPHSC*, X, 446; 1782: *MPHSC*, X, 601-613; 1796: Estimate in Nelson Vance Russell, *The British Regime in Michigan and the Old Northwest, 1760-1796* (Northfield, Minn., 1939), 127.

There are discrepancies between the population schedules and the totals listed at the end of the census for slaves in 1779 and 1782. The 1779 census enumerated 141 slaves although the final summation listed 138. In the 1782 census 180 slaves were enumerated, one more than the final tabulation of 179. I have computed the number of slaves from the population schedules.

12. Thwaites, ed., *Jesuit Relations*, LXX, 233; (A slave, Hector, ran the *Oakland Chronicle* for a time), J. A. Girardin, "Slavery in Detroit," *MPHSC*, I (1877), 416.

13. Governor St. Clair, the first Governor of the Northwest Territory, resolved the ambiguity in the sixth article of the Northwest Ordinance of 1787 by ruling that although the act had prohibited the extension of slavery to the territory, it did not interfere with slavery then existing. St. Clair to Luke Decker, October 11, 1793, in William Henry Smith, *The St. Clair Papers* (2 vols.; Cincinnati, 1882), II, 318-319. See also Raymond V. Phelan, "Slavery in the Old Northwest," *State Historical Society of Wisconsin Proceedings 1905* (1906), 252-255. The abolition of slavery in Upper Canada had been the special project of the first Lt. Governor,

John Graves Simcoe. "The Journals of the Legislative Assembly of Upper Canada, 1792-1804," *Sixth Report of the Bureau of Archives for the Province of Ontario, 1909* (Toronto, 1911), 42-43; William Renwick Riddell, "Slavery in Canada," *Journal of Negro History*, V (July, 1920), 317-320. When Montreal was surrendered General Amherst permitted the vanquished to retain their Negro slaves. Marquis de Vaudreuil a M. de Belestre, commandant du Detroit, September 9, 1760, Viger and LaFontaine, *L'Esclavage en Canada*, 9. William Renwick Riddell, "Interesting Notes on Great Britain and Canada with Respect to the Refugees: Jay's Treaty and the Negro . . .," *Journal of Negro History*, XIII (April, 1928), 186. The provision of Jay's Treaty also proved troublesome; the issue was settled by Justice Woodward in his decision, *In the Matter of Elizabeth Denison, Et. Al.* (1807), in which he ruled that under the provision of Jay's Treaty, "slaves living on May 31, 1793, and in the possession of settlers in this Territory on July 11, 1796, continue such for life; children of such slaves born between these dates continue in servitude for twenty-five years; children of such children, and all born after July 11, 1796, are free from birth." William Wirt Blume, ed., *Transactions of the Supreme Court of the Territory of Michigan 1805-1814* (2 vols.; Ann Arbor, 1935), I, 320. The provision, "Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude shall ever be introduced into this state . . .," was the first article adopted at the first constitutional convention held in Michigan. Harold M. Dorr, ed., *The Michigan Constitutional Convention of 1835-1836: Debates and Proceedings* (Ann Arbor, 1940), 135.

14. Historical Records Survey, Michigan, "History of the Negro in Michigan," [1940], typewritten copy in the Michigan Historical Collections, Ann Arbor, Michigan, II; U.S. Census Office, *Third Census* (Washington, D.C., 1811), I, 88; *Census for 1820* (Washington, D.C., 1821), I, 41; Elizabeth Taft Harlan et al., *1830 Federal Census: Territory of Michigan . . .* (Detroit, 1961), 2, an analysis of population schedules reprinted there; House of Representatives, 24th Congress, 1st Session, *Document No. 8* (December 10, 1835), 23.

15. May to Askin, August 2, 1807, Quaife, ed., *Askin Papers*, II, 561-563; Askin to John B. Askin, October 26, 1813, *ibid.*, 772; Augustus B. Woodward to James Madison, July 18, 1807, Augustus Woodward Papers, Burton Historical Collections, Detroit Public Library; "In the Matter of Matthew Elliott," Blume, *Transactions . . . 1805-1814*, II, 270.

16. Ernest Green, "Upper Canada's Black Defenders," Ontario Historical Society, *Papers and Records*, XXVII (1931), 365, 368f; James Askin to Charles Askin, August 18, 1807, Quaife, ed., *Askin Papers*, II, 566; "List of Disbanded Troops . . . Detroit, 15 December [1788]," Lajeunesse, ed., *Windsor Border Region*, 170. The use of black and slave troops at the time of the *Chesapeake* crisis created a minor stir in Detroit. See Justice Woodward's resolutions and the Committee's response in *MPHSC*, XII (n.d.), 462-473.

17. "In the Matter of Hannah, A Negro Woman, and Thomas, a mullatto Boy (1809)," Blume, *Transactions . . . 1805-1814*, I, 186-187; "In the Matter of Elizabeth Denison, Et. Al (1807)," *ibid.*, 319-320. In 1821 a fugitive from Kentucky was denied a writ of *habeas corpus*. William Wirt Blume, *Transactions of the Supreme Court of the Territory of Michigan 1815-1824* (2 vols.; Ann Arbor, 1938), II, 270.

18. "Deposition of Thomas C. Sheldon," February 8, 1830, Carter, *Territorial Papers*, XII, 129; Eliza B. Mason to Catherine A. Mason, July 20, 1833, Eliza B. Mason to Catherine A. Mason, July 27, 1833, John Mason Papers, Burton Historical Collections.

19. May to Askin, August 2, 1807, Quaife, ed., *Askin Papers*, II, 561-563.

20. M. Agnes Burton, ed., and Clarence M. Burton, comp., *Proceedings of the Land Board of Detroit* ([Detroit], 1915), 3-6, 20, 44n, 172, 207n, 231.

21. For the nineteenth-century Detroit Black community see David M. Katzman, *Before the Ghetto: Black Detroit in the Late Nineteenth-Century* (New York, 1971).