

# THE FIFTEENTH AMENDMENT

*April, 1870*

## Days of Jubilee?

**Lancaster celebrates Black men  
who regained the right to vote**

*But the struggle took 30 years. The effort continues....*

**By Leroy T. Hopkins, Jr., PhD**

**President, African American Historical Society of South Central Pennsylvania**

**June 2020**


**IN COMMEMORATION - 150TH ANNIVERSARY—1870—2020**



# 1838: Pennsylvania State Constitution amended.

## Article III on voting rights read, in part:

*“In elections by the citizens, every white freeman of the age of twenty-one years, having resided in the State one year, and in the election district where he offers to vote, ten days immediately preceding such election, and within two years paid a State or county tax...shall enjoy the rights of an elector...”*

With this action men of African descent in Pennsylvania were deprived of a right that many had regularly exercised. The response was immediate. Some members of the Constitution’s Legislative Committee refused to set their signatures to the document on this exclusion, including State Representative Thaddeus Stevens of Gettysburg. Protest meetings were convened to petition the state legislature to remedy this wrong. Men from Lancaster County were involved in a number of those conventions, notably *Stephen Smith and William Whipper*, the wealthy Black entrepreneurs and clandestine workers on the Underground Railroad from the Susquehanna Riverfront community of Columbia. 



This publication commemorates some of the people of Lancaster County who endured generations of disenfranchisement, and who planned and participated in public demonstrations during the Spring of 1870 to celebrate the ratification of the 15th Amendment to the United States Constitution. The Amendment states:

*“The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of race, color, or previous condition of servitude.”*

Despite the amendment, by the late 1870s discriminatory practices were used to prevent Black people from exercising their right to vote, especially in the South. It wasn’t until the Voting Rights Act of 1965 that legal barriers were outlawed if they denied African-Americans their right to vote.



An important protest meeting was the convention held in Harrisburg in 1848. This was to be the only convention in which a number of Lancaster Countians attended such conventions. This movement began in 1830 when Bishop Richard Allen (1760-1831), founder of the African Methodist Episcopal Church in Philadelphia, called free Africans in the Middle Atlantic region to Philadelphia to strategize about how they could resist the growing racism and discrimination that threatened their existence in a country which they had not only helped to build but had also defended in the Revolution and the War of 1812.



Bishop Richard Allen  
1760-1831



Bishop Allen Bio

that Messrs. Wilson and Williams led similar lives. Telling their stories must remain a matter for another occasion...

Still, it is significant that despite their stations in life, Lancaster's representatives at the 1848 convention in Harrisburg were motivated to promote the common good by agitating for the right to vote.

The Lancaster delegation to the Harrisburg Convention of 1848 consisted of William Whipper, Leonard A. Williams, William H. Wilson, Washington Webster, and Robert Boston. Aside from Whipper, only the life of Mr. Boston has been the subject of recent research to build an historical record. Washington Webster was a laborer from Fulton Township and it is likely

## Whipper & Smith

Of the two, Smith had begun life as an indentured servant near Harrisburg, PA, a status created by the Gradual Abolition Act of 1780. It stipulated that the children of enslaved Africans born after March 1, 1780 could be required to serve a master/mistress

until they reached the age of 28. In his teens, he earned enough money to buy his freedom, established a business, and with Whipper, became two of the most successful and wealthy African Americans before the Civil War.

Less is known of Whipper's early life. At the age of about 34 he replaced Smith in their common lumber and freight enterprises in Columbia and became a pivotal figure in Underground Railroad activity there. For more information, click on the codes here.



1804-1876



1795(?) - 1873



Whipper Bio



Smith Bio

**NOTE: Given the scant information available about some people and events during this period, this document should be considered as an evolving effort in community history research. For example, space has been reserved to enable inserting images of people or places if discovered at a later date.**

Design and editing by Randolph Harris, consulting historian, Lancaster, PA & Archivist, African American Historical Society of South Central Pennsylvania.



# The Black People of Pennsylvania and the Right to Vote



## State Convention of 1848—A Bibliographical Note

By Maxwell Whiteman, 1970

“The first united effort of importance on the part of free blacks in the United States was the convention movement. Begun in Philadelphia in 1831 free black met annually for the next five years to discuss the best manner in which their conditions could be improved. The various state conventions that were held later stemmed from this initial start. In 1838 the so-called Reform Constitution of Pennsylvania dis-enfranchised the black citizens of the state. The right to vote which they had held for forty-seven years was no longer theirs. The black people were stung by this injustice. But they refused to surrender the idea of citizenship. As a result, they energetically set to work to regain the right to vote. In the coming decades they flooded the state with appeals, memorials, petitions and won innumerable whites to the support their cause.

Three years after they were deprived of the right of suffrage, the first state convention was held at Pittsburgh in the last week of August, 1841. One hundred and forty-seven delegates attended. Between that time and 1848 they organized an Association called "The Citizens Union of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Its purpose was to obtain for the colored people of the State all the Rights and Immunities of Citizenship." The Pennsylvania Blacks convened Harrisburg to pursue this object further, but their efforts were in vain.

A long and tragic war and a series of amendments to the Constitution of the United States were necessary to restore the franchise which was snatched from them. In 1870 the blacks of Pennsylvania returned to the polls. Not until 1873 did the state legislature draft a new constitution which eliminated the obnoxious restriction.”

Sources: Proceedings of the State Convention of the Colored Freemen of Pennsylvania, held in Pittsburgh, on the 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24th of August 1841 (Pittsburgh 1841) and Memorial to the Honorable the Senate and House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, in General Assembly met... (Phila., 1854). Reproduced from the copy in the Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

For a reproduction of the entire convention minutes, visit

[http://udspace.udel.edu/bitstream/handle/19716/17268/1848PA-State-Harrisburg\\_Minutes.pdf?sequence=3&isAllowed=y](http://udspace.udel.edu/bitstream/handle/19716/17268/1848PA-State-Harrisburg_Minutes.pdf?sequence=3&isAllowed=y)



# ***But who was Robert Boston?***

## ***Entrepreneur, civil rights activist, religious leader & Underground Railroad operative***

Robert Boston was born about 1815 probably in Lancaster. His parents were John and Sarah Boston, likely among the earliest members of Lancaster's Bethel A.M.E. Church. Both are buried in the cemetery adjoining the church. Robert took up the trade of barbering, likely by apprenticing with another African American barber. On December 20, 1837 he married Melesena Williams at Lancaster's First Reformed Church. In May of that same year he opened a shop on the East side of North Queen Street near Penn Square.

Around the time of the Harrisburg Convention, Boston was involved with Edward Rauch (1820-1902) and several others as part of a group in league with Abolitionist US Congressman Thaddeus Stevens ( 1792-1868) working as "freedom spies" to thwart the efforts of slave catchers from Maryland. ***See historical marker, next page.***

At some point in either the late 1850's or early 1860's Boston took on pastoral duties at Bethel A.M.E. Church. Rev. Thomas Henry acknowledged in his 1872 autobiography that in 1862 the A.M.E. conference appointed him to the Lancaster (Pa.) Circuit.

***"I found the church at Lancaster in a very bad condition. Through the exertions of Rev. Robert Boston, we got the church under a good slate roof. I found Rev. Mr. Boston to be a true and trustworthy brother."***

For more information, see ***"In Search of Robert Boston: Race and Resistance in Antebellum Lancaster County"***  
Journal of the Lancaster County Historical Society, No. 3/4, Winter 2010-2011.



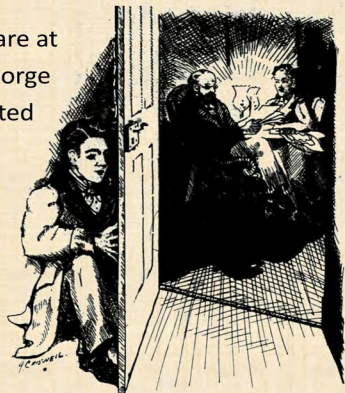
**Robert Boston**  
circa 1815-1888



# Lancaster's 'freedom spies' *circa 1850*

*Rauch, Boston help Thaddeus Stevens thwart slave catchers*

In an upper floor office across this square at No. 8 West King Street, the notorious George Hughes operated a business that supported bounty hunters who came here from Southern states tracking formerly enslaved Africans living and working in relative freedom in Lancaster City and the surrounding countryside. The secret work of Edward H. Rauch and Robert Boston illustrate how the Underground Railroad Movement operated across racial lines.



"Rauch spied on the slave catchers and never suspected."

Illustration from:

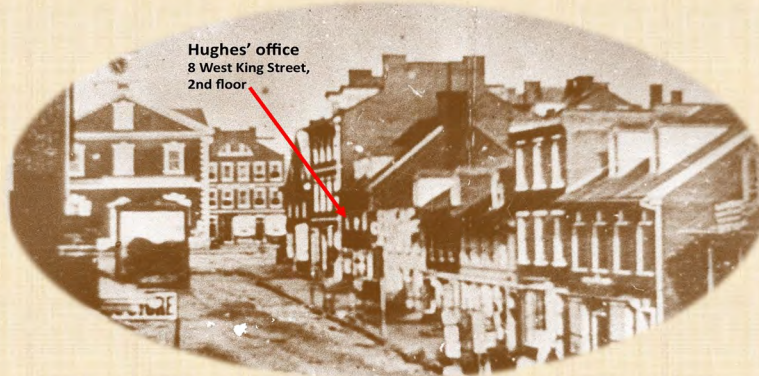
**"Secret six fought 'Man Stealers' from South - Stevens was an opponent of slavery as a young man"**

By H. Clifton Thorbahn, May 17, 1931  
LNP Media Group Inc.

(The Sunday News), Lancaster, PA



To read this 1931 news feature and other resources about this story, visit  
<https://www.lancasterhistory.org/learn/learning-tools/aah-markers/>



View of West King Street, circa 1845, looking east from the second floor of property at 17 West King Street. Reproduced from an Ambrotype print by Dr. William B. Fahnestock. Note Court House located on Center Square which was demolished circa 1851. Photo courtesy of LancasterHistory.org.



Thaddeus Stevens



Edward H. Rauch

Rauch and Boston spied on the slave catchers in league with Thaddeus Stevens (1792-1868), Lancaster County's U.S. Congressman. Together they worked to relay information to the anti-slavery politician, who lived one block south of Penn Square. With inside information, Stevens dispatched horsemen to warn Underground Railroad "Stationmasters" that bounty hunters were planning to raid a particular property. These actions show the extent to which Stevens and his "freedom spies" supported an extensive network of families who sheltered the formerly enslaved as they traveled through this area, or were living and working on farms in rural Lancaster County. A series of news accounts in 1883 first disclosed the details of these secret operations.



Historic Lancaster Walking Tour, Inc., a not-for-profit organization established in 1976 to commemorate the history of the City of Lancaster, provided the financial support for this display.



Research and design by the African American Historical Society of South Central Pennsylvania & LancasterHistory.org. December 2018.

 **LancasterHistory.org**

Stevens image from a print by John Sartain, 1867, courtesy of Thaddeus Stevens College of Technology, Lancaster, PA. Rauch photo courtesy of Dimmick Library, Jim Thorpe, PA.

This historical marker is permanently installed in front of the City of Lancaster Visitor Center, 38 Penn Square, Lancaster, PA 17603



## *Organizing the Equal Rights League in Pennsylvania*

**A**s a result of the various conventions held throughout Pennsylvania the Pennsylvania Equal Rights League was organized in 1864. As yet no record of involvement of Lancastrians have been discovered, except for William Whipper.

In 1866 Whipper was part of a delegation that appealed directly to President Johnson about extending the right to vote to African Americans. As a Southerner with traditional Southern antipathies towards people of color, Johnson proved to be unmovable on that question as he was on all questions of race.

Whipper's activism, his speeches at these conventions and his writings are acknowledged today as fundamental points of inspiration for the thinking and activism of some of the Civil Rights leaders of mid-20<sup>th</sup> Century America.



Read Whipper's remarkable essay,

***“Declaration of Sentiment  
Made to the world, by the Annual Convention  
of the Free People of Color, of the United  
States, held in the City of New York, in the  
month of June, 1834.”***

Written when he was just 30 years old.



**William Whipper**  
Later years

## *15<sup>th</sup> Amendment returns the Franchise*

**A**fter much agitation the U. S. Congress granted the right to vote in Washington, D.C. and in the territories to African American males on January 8, 1867. African American men gained the right to vote in the District despite the veto of its most powerful resident, President Andrew Johnson. The Republican-controlled senate overrode Johnson by a vote of 29-10 three years before a constitutional amendment granted the right to vote to all men regardless of race.



# DAILY EVENING EXPRESS.

Vol. XXVII---No 148.}

LANCASTER CITY, PA., TUESDAY, APRIL 26, 1870.

}Price Two Cents.

The Pennsylvania legislature adamantly refused to budge on its exclusion of black voters, but when the 15<sup>th</sup> Amendment was enacted by Congress, Pennsylvania was the 12th state to ratify it.

Ratification was completed by the end of March 1870 and William Nesbitt, president of the Pennsylvania Equal Rights League, urged the subsidiary leagues in 50 counties of the Commonwealth to celebrate on April 26 this remarkable second step after Emancipation to full citizenship.

There is as yet no record of a Lancaster County auxiliary to the Equal Rights League, but when a meeting was convened at Lancaster's Bethel A.M.E. Church to plan the celebration, Robert Boston was by then a clergyman at the church and was called to chair the meeting. At about the same time a planning meeting was held in Columbia.

*“And whereas, We recognize the hand of the Supreme Ruler of the Universe in bringing us out of human slavery and chattledom, and placing us upon the high platform of manhood—American citizenship—and equality before the law.”*

*Resolved by members of a planning meeting at Bethel African Methodist Church, Lancaster, PA April 20, 1870*

## LOCAL INTELLIGENCE.

**THE FIFTEENTH AMENDMENT:** A meeting of the colored citizens of Lancaster was held in the A. M. E. Church, Strawberry street, on Wednesday, for the purpose of making arrangements to celebrate the ratification of the Fifteenth Amendment, when the President issues his proclamation. Rev. Robert Boston was called to the chair, and Daniel Sweeney and Joseph Williams were appointed vice presidents, and J. H. Butler and John W. Waters, secretaries. On motion a committee was appointed to make arrangements for the celebration. The committee is as follows: Edward Harris, David Bryan, Wm. Thomas, B. Jones, Rev. R. Boston, Peter Hilyard, H. Reynolds, W. Wilson, D. Sweeney and A. Thomas.

Rev. R. Boston presented the following resolutions, which were read and unanimously adopted:

Whereas, we, the colored citizens of Lancaster, Pa., in unison with all others of our race throughout the United States, do hail with heartfelt gratitude to God, the giver of all good, the recognition of our rights by the Constitution of our country.

And whereas, We recognize the hand of the Supreme Ruler of the Universe in bringing us out of human slavery and chattledom, and placing us upon the high platform of manhood, American citizenship, and equality before the law. That we will ever venerate the means employed by an All-wise Providence in bringing about such favorable results; namely, the martyred President Lincoln, the Army and the Navy, and a wise Congress.

And whereas, It has been arranged by the National Executive Committee at Washington that the event of the issuing of the Proclamation of the Fifteenth Amendment by his Excellency the President of the United States, should be appropriately observed and celebrated by the colored people throughout the whole country by the suspension of all business upon that day, and to attend Divine services in their places of worship, for the purpose of prayer and thanksgiving to Almighty God, for his great mercies and goodness manifested to this our land and nation. Therefore—

Resolved, That we will suspend all business on that day, and will attend divine service; and that there shall be an appropriate discourse delivered, and prayer and thanksgiving rendered to Almighty God for past blessings, and invoke his blessings for the future.

Resolved, That we will have a procession in the afternoon of said day, and in the evening a public meeting in the church or Court House, where there will be speeches made to suit the occasion.

Resolved, That we will extend an invitation to our friends in the country, and all are invited to attend without distinction of color or former condition.

Resolved, That we look upon this event as the greatest and grandest epoch of American Independence, for only now is the nation free from oppression and slavery.

Resolved, That our never-ending gratitude is due to the abolitionists of the nineteenth century, for their labor and work of love in Congress, in State Legislatures and in public and private life—such as Stevens, Sumner, Wilson, Giddings, Kelley, Fremont, Butler, Garrison, Phillips, J. Mott and John Brown, and many others whom we cannot enumerate, who have all contributed to this grand epoch of American independence.

Resolved, That we will ever try to so conduct ourselves as to be worthy of the new relations which Providence has brought about, for we trust, the good of the whole country.

Resolved, That we will be identified with the party that has been our friend in the past—if they continue to be in the future—through whose efforts measures fraught with interest to our advantage have been carried through Congress and the several State Legislatures ratifying the Fifteenth Amendment, and to whom our unending gratitude is due.

Resolved, That in our opinion it would be becoming for every citizen to celebrate the event of the ratification of the Fifteenth Amendment by suitable demonstrations.

The meeting then adjourned.



**The Day of Jubilee—Celebration of the Adoption of the XVth Amendment.**

The colored population of this city and neighborhood is not large, and hence a civic display on an extensive scale could not reasonably be expected. Still, though small in numbers, they determined to give one day to jubilation over the event of their enfranchisement—to rejoice that their race has been delivered from the chains of bondage, and that this great country is now a land of freedom in fact as well as in name. They set apart this day for the celebration, and a more beautiful day never dawned in early spring. The sun rode the sky in unclouded splendor, and the soft air was laden with the fragrance of blossoms. For several weeks past the colored people have been preparing for the event—have collected money and expended it in decorations and to meet the incidental expenses, and they have done the best they could under the circumstances.

The American flag was displayed from the public buildings and the Republican newspaper offices of the city, and some few private places.

The religious exercises with which the festivities were commenced, were held in the African church, in Strawberry-st., commencing shortly after ten o'clock, this forenoon, Rev. T. A. Cuff, pastor of that church, opening by an invocation of divine blessing, after which the hymn—

"From all that dwell below the skies,  
Let the Creator's praise arise,"

was sung, the congregation standing. Joshua Potts then offered up a prayer, when the hymn "Before Jehovah's awful throne," was sung, at the conclusion of which Mr. Cuff read part of the 1st and 2d verses of the 15th chapter of Exodus, which he made the basis of an address on the object for which this day is celebrated. At the close of Mr. Cuff's remarks, Prof. J. P. Wickersham delivered an able and earnest address, in which he reviewed the causes which led to the adoption of the Fifteenth Amendment, concluding by giving the colored folks some wholesome advice as to their future conduct, that they may show themselves worthy of the great boon which has been bestowed upon them in endowing them with all the rights and privileges of American citizenship. Robert Boston here read from the last number of *Father Abraham*, an article entitled "Next Tuesday's Jollification." The Doxology was then sung, and the services closed with a Benediction from Rev. Mr. Cuff.

The procession was then formed on South Queen-st., opposite Middle, in the following order:

# DAILY EVENING EXPRESS.

Vol. XXVII---No 149.

LANCASTER CITY, PA., WEDNESDAY, APRIL 27, 1870.

{Price Two Cents.

On the "Day of Jubilee," as it was titled in some of the local press, a service was held at Bethel A.M.E. Church led by the pastor Rev. Cuff. About 300 persons assembled at the intersection of South Queen and Middle (now Howard Avenue) Streets and according to newspaper accounts marched along the main streets of the city to The Commons, an open field opposite the Locomotive Works in Lancaster's Northeastern ward.

The procession was led by Abraham Maxwell as chief marshal. Maxwell, a Civil War veteran and members of Bethel would later become the first African American market master at Central Market.

The Assistant Marshall was George Wells (1811-1881), a blacksmith by trade and the soon to become proprietor of the first Blacks-only hotel "The Sumner Hotel" on Howard Avenue. The aides to the marshals were: James Howard, Daniel Clark, Edward Mellon (sic), and William Jones. James Howard is likely the same person who led the African American delegation of Lancastrians at Thaddeus Stevens' funeral two years before.

Daniel Clark was likely identical to the man who served as 1<sup>st</sup> Sergeant in the 8<sup>th</sup> USCT regiment and was buried in Bethel's cemetery. Edward Mellon is likely a misspelling of "Millen". In 1910 Edward Millen was according to a business census conducted by a group in Harrisburg the largest African American property owner in Lancaster and the person who organized Stevens Greenland Memorial Cemetery after the cemetery next to Bethel A.M.E. became full. It is also likely the same Edward Mellon (sic) was, in February 1884, a pall bearer for Lydia Hamilton Smith, the long-time property manager and confidante of Republican Congressman Thaddeus Stevens.



## **Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church, Lancaster, PA**



Located on Strawberry Street at North Street. Established circa 1820. Originally known as Saint James African Church until about 1843, after which (1848) the congregation was chartered as The African Methodist Episcopal Church of the City of Lancaster. Following rebuilding of the church after a fire in 1879, the Church became known as Bethel AME. Photographer unknown. Courtesy of the Leroy T. Hopkins, Sr. & Mary Taft Hopkins Study Center of Bethel AME Church.



# *Hundreds march in a peaceful street demonstration*

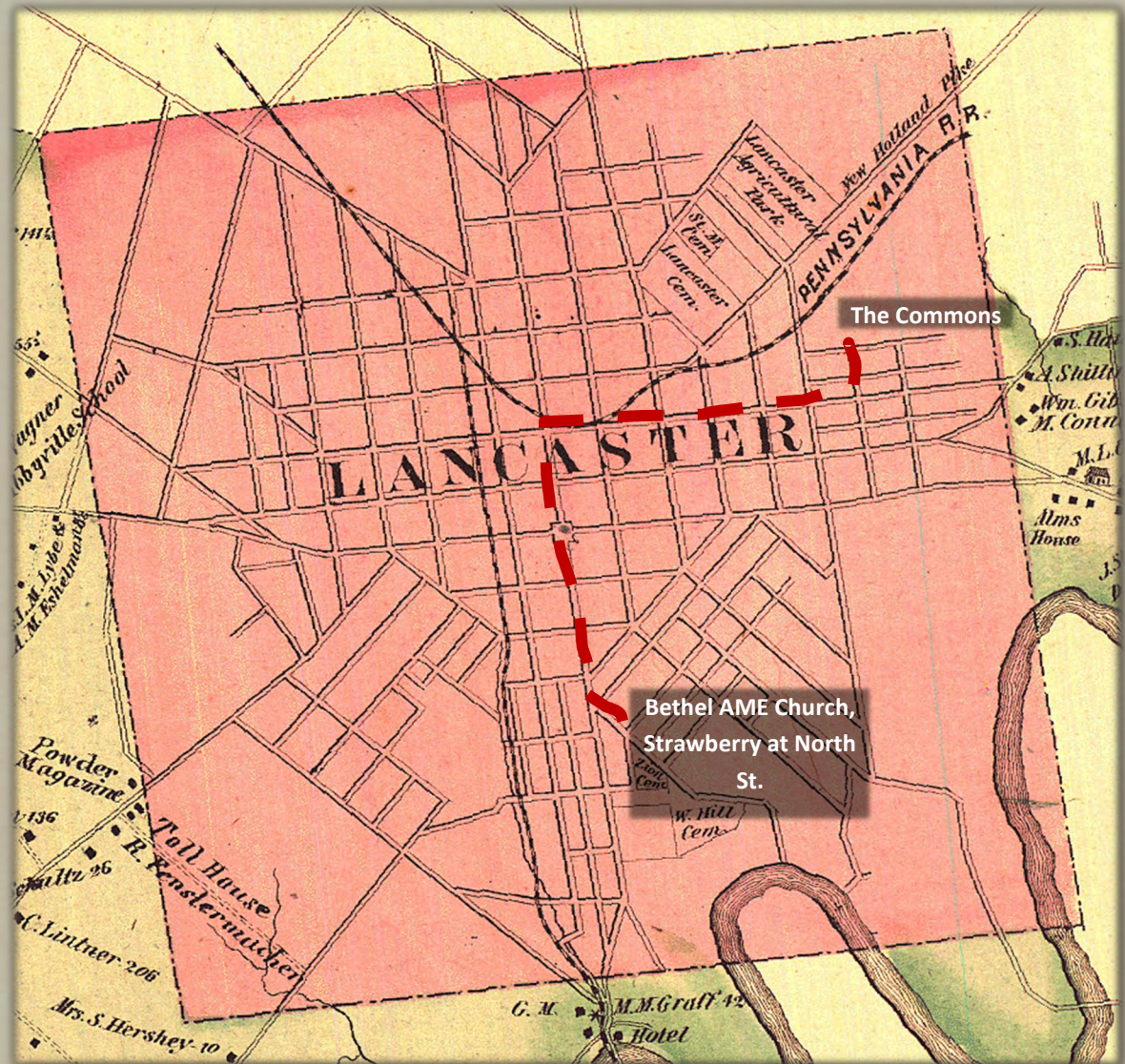
## LOCAL INTELLIGENCE.

### The Day of Jubilee.

THE CEREMONIES AT THE COMMON—  
SPEECHES BY ROBERT BOSTON, MAJOR  
REINOEHL, A. H. HOOD, ESQ., DR. GATCH-  
ELL, AND CAPT. RAUCH.

Our report of the proceedings yesterday  
concluded at the point where the procession  
passed this office on its way to the Common.  
After passing over the route marked down.

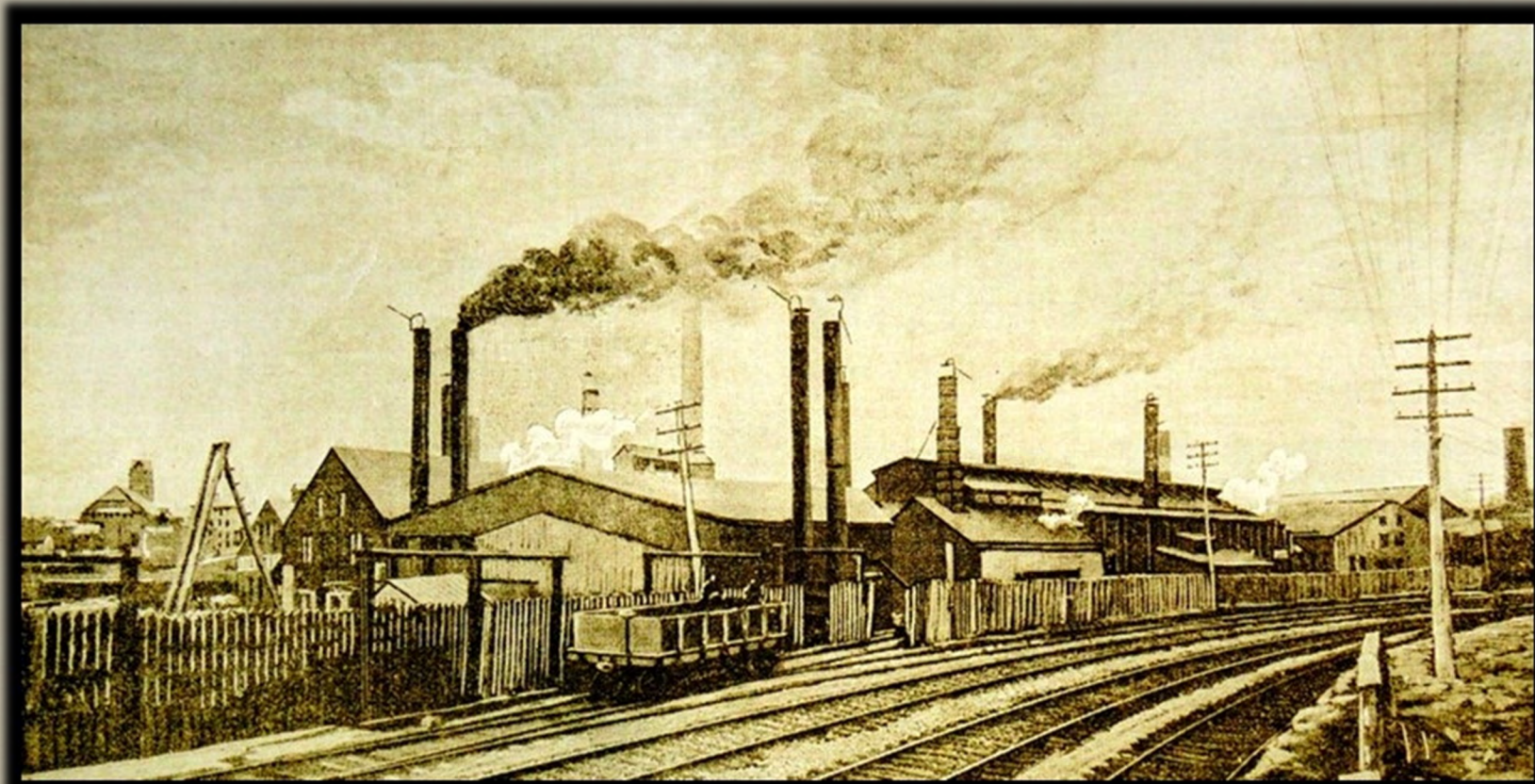
*Likely parade route from Bethel AME Church on Strawberry Street to "The Commons," an open space opposite The Lancaster Locomotive Works, a manufactory located between North Plum and Ann Streets.*



City of Lancaster, from *Everts & Stewart Atlas of Lancaster County*, 1875



## **Penn Iron Works, 1900—View Southwest at Walnut Street crossing**

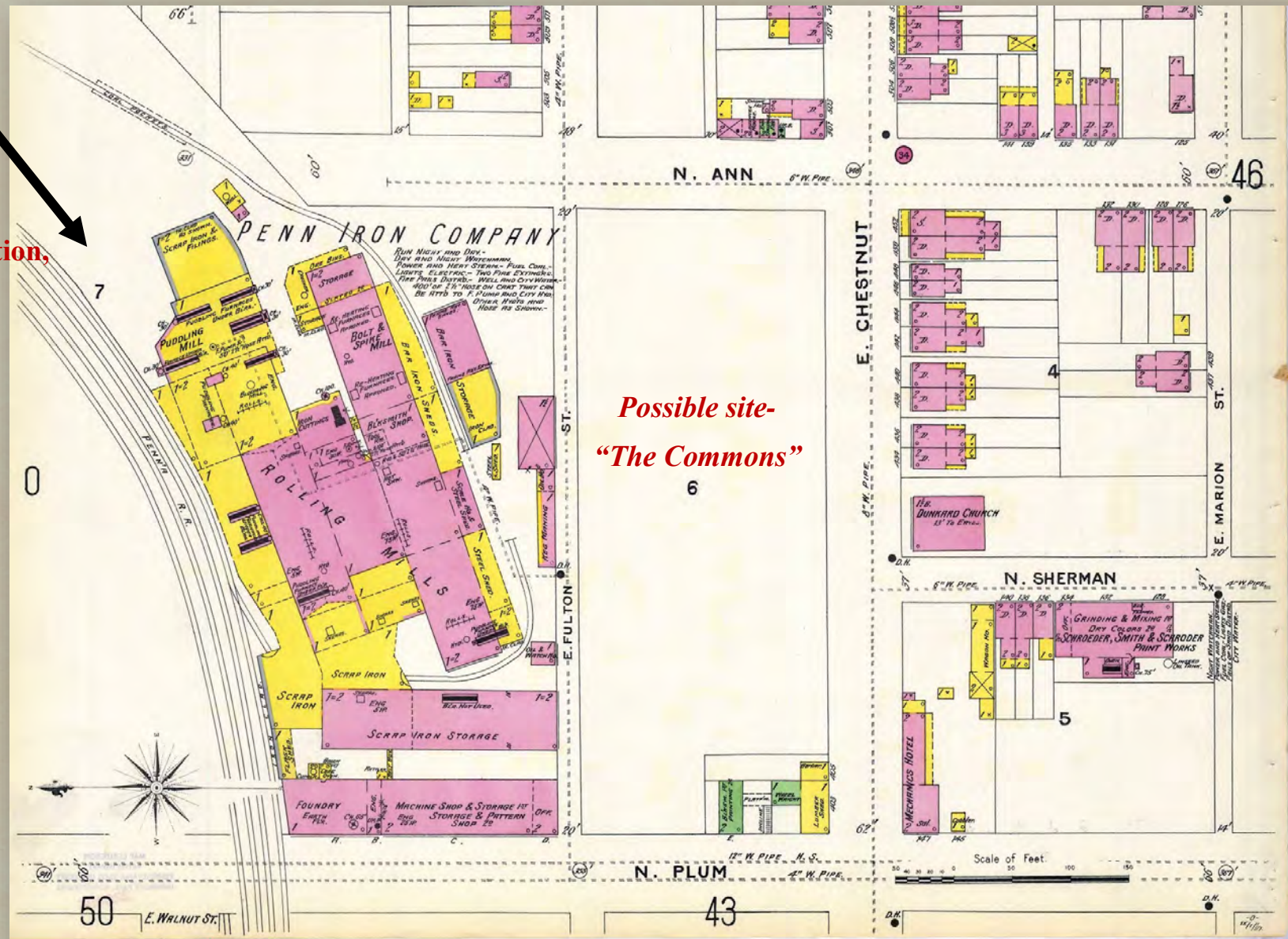


**Formerly Lancaster Locomotive Works, est. 1836, after regular freight and passenger service began in 1834 on the Philadelphia & Columbia Railroad through Lancaster City.**



# Penn Iron Co.—Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, 1897-Sheet 45, detail

View of  
illustration,  
Page 11





## *Representatives in the Jubilee from Southern Lancaster*

Along with the Lancaster group marched a delegation from Eden Township led by Joseph Wells, likely identical to the Joseph Wells who signed as a substitute for J. Pownall of Sadsbury Township and then served in Co. F of the 45<sup>th</sup> USCT during the Civil War. According to the newspaper accounts the Lancaster delegation numbered 65 men and boys and the Eden 38 men and boys preceded by the Stevens Drum Corps of Lancaster, a Black organization.

## *The revelations begin about Abolitionism and Underground Railroad work*

At the Commons the speakers were Rev. Robert Boston, Congressman O.J. Dickey, Thaddeus Stevens' successor, A. H. Hood, Esq., Dr. J.C. Gatchell, A.C. Reinoehl, and Pit Schwefflebrenner, the pen name for Edward Rauch, editor of the local PA German newspaper.

The importance of the franchise was the common key for the orations and Rauch added an interesting note alluding to his work on the Underground Railroad which he expanded on in later years in newspaper accounts, as previously mentioned. Rauch at that point admitted that he worked with Stevens and 5 men knew of his activity. A.H. Hood being one and Robert Boston another. This out-pouring of freedom contributed to increasing local news accounts and letters to the editor retelling stories of heroism and religiously inspired efforts by abolitionists and agents of the Underground Railroad. This work decades before was now no longer something to hide, or to fear legal reprisals.

## *Day of Jubilee in Columbia...*

**T**here is scant information available about the celebration in Columbia. Two notices from the **Columbia Spy** reprinted in the **Daily Evening Express** of March 31 and April 15, 1870 made reference to a celebration. The April 15 article mentions that the first "colored voters" were Jesse Martin, Caesar Caldwell, Benjamin Randalls, Tom Bessick, Edward Pleasant, William Baker, Alfred Hill, James Hollingsworth, and John Jones. This is probably a reference to the fact that before the general election a local election was held in Columbia.

Men who had paid property tax were eligible to vote. The Columbia names deserve future research. Thomas Bessick was identified by Samuel Evans as an effective agent of the Underground Railroad in Columbia and Bessick's descendants still live there. The name Pleasant harkens back to the group of manumitted Africans who arrived in Columbia from the Bacon Plantation near Richmond, Virginia, after 1819 and who built churches, schools, and businesses.



While little information is available on the celebration in Columbia it is significant that an unnamed number of participants came from the Conestoga Township area to join the celebrations. It is likely that the speeches given in Columbia mirrored those in Lancaster: giving thanks for divine guidance and speculation on what the newly enfranchised should do with their vote.

### *Black community support for Republican Party*

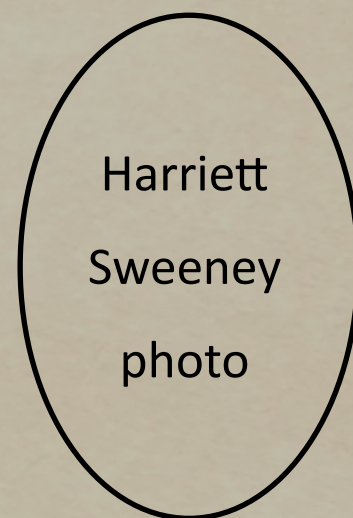
It was perhaps not accidental that meetings were held in August of 1870 and at Bethel A.M.E. Church Lancaster and in Columbia to discuss strategies to attract Black voters to the Republican Party. The meeting in Lancaster was covered more fully in the press and once again Robert Boston assumed a leadership position. The openly racist **Lancaster Intelligencer** describes the meeting thusly:

**“A political meeting of darkies was held last evening in the church in Strawberry Street which was attended by about one-half of the city n \_ \_ \_ \_ s , a few country Bucks, and Dr. Samuel J.C. Williams, late barber of this city, but now practicing Medicine in Williamsport.”**

This commentary demonstrated that even though the people of color in Lancaster and elsewhere could now legitimately be called African Americans, there was still a broad ocean of racism and discrimination which had to be navigated.

Perhaps the two most significant facts derived from this meeting are, first: the committee elected to form something like a political action committee: John Morgan (likely the John Morgan associated with the A.M.E. Church located near New Holland Avenue and Shippen Street ca. 1875) was elected president and the vice presidents were Dr. Sweeney and Samuel Dean; the aforementioned Dr. Williams was the secretary. The make up of this committee points to the future: women of color were not included in the 15<sup>th</sup> amendment.

Dr. Sweeney is undoubtedly Dr. Harriet Sweeney, the pow-wow doctor and philanthropist who had reportedly provided financial help not only to the small congregation in Conestoga but also in Lancaster and Marietta. The importance of including a woman is ignored by the newspaper.



Harriett  
Sweeney  
photo



The second takeaway from the meeting at Bethel is the set of resolutions presented by Robert Boston and adopted by the group. One resolution noted that a first opportunity to vote presented itself on August 27 in the primary election for Republican candidates for the October election. Two additional resolutions stated that the new voters will go and vote conducting themselves “soberly and orderly on that day, so that we may not disgrace ourselves.”

Further it was resolved:

*“That we will give our most hearty support to the Republican Party of our beloved Country, so long as it proves to be in the future as it has been in the past.*

*That in the future we will only support such candidates as are most favorable to our equal educational advantages, to the best of our belief; for we are equally taxed for school purposes. In Lancaster we have a separate primary school; and for white children there are in Lancaster primary, secondary and high schools. We cannot have equal education for our children as long as such a state of things exist.”*

After discussion the resolutions were adopted and a plan was in place that faced steep opposition in Lancaster of that day: education in Pennsylvania was not desegregated until the 1880's and obtaining wide support for the platform behind the resolutions would be a tall order. Equality was a goal but not yet in sight.

**-END-**

**Lancaster Intelligencer, April 6, 1870**

**The Next Step in the March to Negro Equality.**

On Friday night the negroes of Washington city serenaded Senator Sumner, who is recognized by them as the representative of the views of the Republican party. He made a speech in which he said :

It remains further that equal rights shall be secured in all the public conveyances and on all the railroads in the United States, so that no one should be excluded by reason of color. It also remains that you here in Washington shall complete this equality of rights in your common schools. You all go together to vote, and any person may find a seat in the Senate of the United States, but the child is shut out of the common schools on account of color. This discrimination must be abolished. All schools must be open to all without distinction of color.

That is the decree of the leaders of the Radical party. They have succeeded in clearing the way for the negro to the ballot-box by force and fraud, but he is a fool who supposes they will stop with the bare recognition of the right of the African to vote. By means of him they hope to be able to maintain their hold on the power they have so shamefully abused, and they will pander to all the prejudices of the black race to secure a monopoly of their votes. They have tried the temper of the white men of the North, and, finding them ready to submit to every species of exaction, they will not hesitate to advance step by step to the completion of their designs. In a little while we may expect to have Sumner's ideas of negro equality in the public schools and elsewhere enacted into a Federal law and enforced by the Federal courts. That is the next step to be taken in the march to negro equality.



# Credits & Acknowledgements

Cover: Adapted from *The Fifteenth Amendment*, published & printed by Thomas Kelly, 17 Barclay St., New York City, c1870. Sheet - 11.25" X 14.4" - Repository: Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division Washington, D.C. 20540 USA. Accessed June 10, 2020.

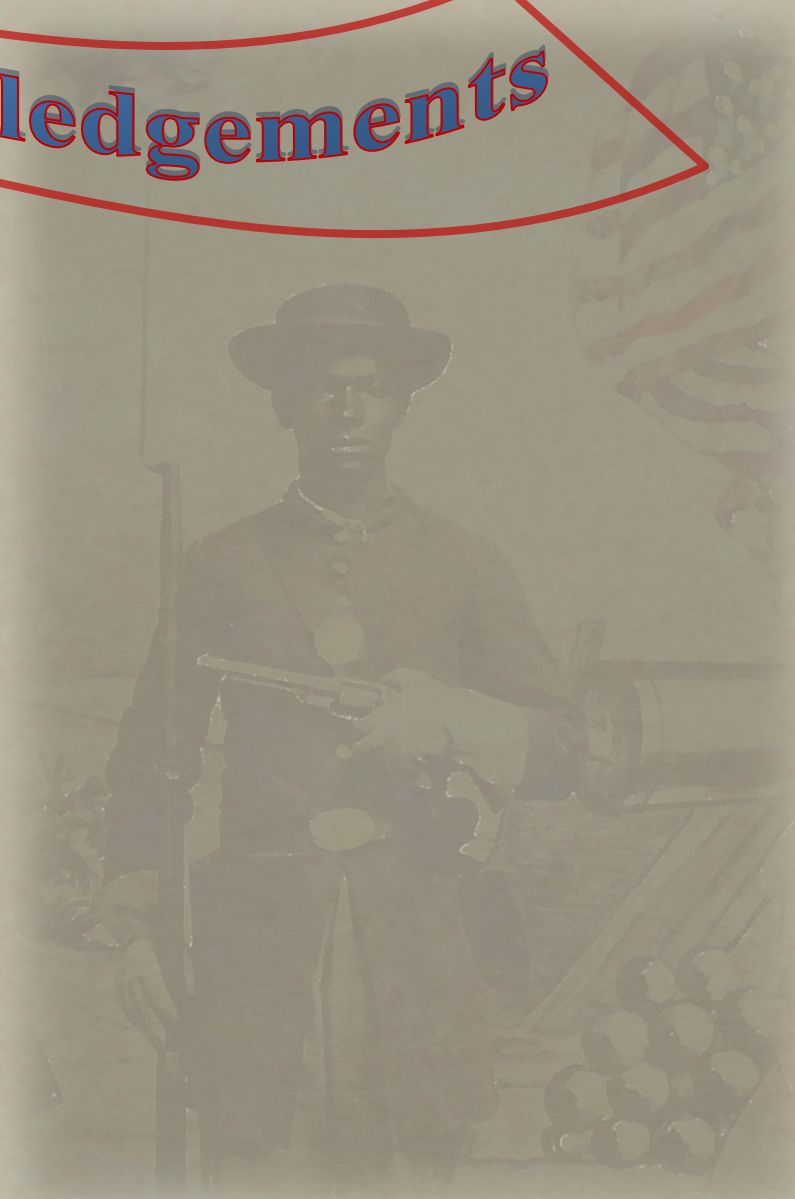
Page 2: William Whipper, circa 1835. Attributed to William Matthew Prior. Courtesy of Fennimore Art Museum, Cooperstown, NY. Accessed June 2, 2015: <http://collections.fenimoreartmuseum.org/items/show/193>

Stephen Smith, oil painting, collection of the Philadelphia History Museum at the Atwater Kent, early 1840s. Pendant portrait, 30X25" attributed to James Stidun or Stidum.

Bishop Richard Allen—From *History of the African Methodist Episcopal Church*, by Daniel Payne, Nashville, TN. Publishing House of the A. M. E. Sunday School Union, 1891.

Page 6 - William Whipper, later years, from *The Underground Railroad*, by William Still, Philadelphia, PA, 1872

Page 13—"Unidentified African American Soldier, Benton Barracks, St. Louis, Missouri, Library of Congress. Daguerreotype in frame. Photographed at the African American Museum of History and Culture, Washington, D.C., March 2017.





# Recommended readings...

## First Person Accounts/Autobiographies:

Authors/Editors include: William Whipper's 1871 letter to William Still, published by William Still, Philadelphia, PA, 1872.

## Newspapers and journal articles:

The Intelligencer Journal, Lancaster, PA; The Inquirer, Lancaster, PA; The Independent Whig, Lancaster, PA; The Herald & Examiner, Lancaster, PA; The Sunday News, Lancaster, PA; The New Era, Lancaster, PA; Journal of the Lancaster County Historical Society, Lancaster, PA.

## Books:

Fergus M. Bordewich, *The Underground Railroad Bound for Canaan – The Underground Railroad and the War for the Soul of America*, 2005.

Wilbur Siebert, *The Underground Railroad From Slavery to Freedom*,

Franklin Ellis and Samuel Evans. *History of Lancaster County, Pennsylvania with Biographical Sketches of Many of its Pioneers and Prominent Men*. Philadelphia: Everts & Peck, 1883.

John Hope Franklin, & Moss, Alfred A. *From Slavery to Freedom, A History of African Americans*, McGraw Hill, New York, New York, 1947. 9th edition 2010.

Robert C. Smedley, MD, *History of the Underground Railroad in Chester and the Neighboring Counties of Pennsylvania*, Lancaster, PA.: Office of the Journal, 1883.

Eric Foner. *Reconstruction: America's Unfinished Revolution, 1863-1877*. New York : Harper & Row, 1988. Print.

Leroy T. Hopkins, Jr., PhD. "Bethel African Methodist Church: Prolegomenon to a Social History," Journal of the Lancaster Historical Society, Vol. 90, 1986.

William J. Still, The Project Gutenberg E-Book of *The Underground Railroad*, 1872 by William Still. Released online March, 2005, [EBook #15263], accessed November through December, 2009.

## Other publications:

Randolph Harris. *"Thaddeus Stevens Home & Office"*: Application to National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom, 2011:

<http://undergroundrroriginspa.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/O.C.Kelley-AccountEscapeFromSlavery8-1848.pdf>

J. Elfreth Watkins, PE. *History of the Pennsylvania RR, 1846-1896*. Prepared for the Pennsylvania Railroad, 1896. Railroad Museum of Pennsylvania, Strasburg, PA.



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