

The Canadian Anti-Slavery Group

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that patronized slavery. Another speaker, James Lesslie, held that if the churches would do their duty, slavery would not exist a single day. Occasionally there was a spirit shown worse than apathy. "The Church," a denominational paper published at Toronto, held that Canadians were not under any obligation to denounce "compulsory labor," it was quite enough to stand by and welcome the slave when he came to Canada. *The Globe*, after ridiculing the citation of scripture to back up this view, remarked: "It is truly melancholy to find men in the nineteenth century teaching doctrines which are fit only for the darkest ages."

There were many others besides those mentioned who rendered good service to the abolition cause though there was no reward to any save the knowledge of deeds well done. The cause was not always popular and sometimes there was harsh criticism—yet this band of men and women worked on year after year, doing what they could and witnessing by their example their belief in the brotherhood of man. Most of them have been long forgotten, not even the names are remembered, the records of their deeds were never written, or if written have perished, but in the making free of a great people their part was not small. They made real and living the proud boast of Englishmen everywhere that bondsmen cannot breathe their air and remain slaves, and in doing so they were soldiers in a great fight, still going on, that aims to make all the world free and men everywhere brothers.

The Negro Migration to Canada After the Passing of the Fugitive Slave Act.

When President Fillmore signed the Fugitive Slave Bill on September 18, 1850, he started a Negro migration that continued up to the opening of the Civil War, resulting in thousands of colored people crossing into Canada and many thousands more moving from one state into another seeking safety from their pursuers. While the free colored population of the North increased by nearly 30,000 in the decade after 1850 the gain was chiefly in three states, Ohio, Michigan and Illinois. Connecticut had fewer free colored people in 1860 than in 1850 and there were half a dozen other states that barely held their own during the period. The three states showing gains were those bordering on Canada where the runaway slave or the free colored man in danger could quickly take refuge. It is estimated that from fifteen to twenty thousand Negroes entered Canada between 1850 and 1860, increasing the colored population of the British provinces from about 40,000 to nearly 60,000. The greater part of the refugee population located in the south-western part of the present province of Ontario, chiefly in what now comprises the counties of Essex and Kent, bordering on the Detroit River and Lake St. Clair. This large migration of an alien race into a country more

sparsely settled than any of the northern states might have been expected to cause trouble, but records show that the Canadians received the refugees with kindness and gave them what help they could. At the close of the Civil War many of the Negroes in exile returned, thus relieving the situation in Canada.

The Fugitive Slave Bill had been signed but a month when Garrison, in *The Liberator*, pointed out that a northward trek of free colored people was already under way. "Alarmed at the operation of the new Fugitive Slave Law, the fugitives from slavery are pressing northward. Many of them have been obliged to flee precipitately, leaving behind them all the little they have acquired since they escaped from slavery." The American Anti-slavery Society's report also notes the consternation into which the Negro population was thrown by the new legislation and from many other contemporary sources information may be gleaned showing the distressing results that followed immediately upon the signing of the bill. Reports were soon coming from Canada of the large number of arrivals there. Rev. Hiram Wilson, a missionary at St. Catharines, C.W., writing in *The Liberator* of December 13, 1850, says: "Probably not less than 3,000 have taken refuge in this country since the first of September. Only for the attitude of the North there would have been thousands more." He says that his own church is thronged with fugitives and that what is true of his district is true also of other parts of southern Ontario. Henry Bibb, in his paper, *The Voice of the Fugitive*, published frequent reports of the number of fugitives arriving at Sandwich on the Detroit River. In the issue of December 3, 1851, he reports 17 arrivals in a week. On April 22, 1852, he records 15 arrivals within the last few days and notes that "the underground railroad is doing good business this spring." On May 20, 1852, he reports quite an accession of refugees to our numbers during the last two weeks," and on June 17 notes the visit of an agent from Chester, Pa., preparatory to the movement of a large number of colored people from that place to Canada. On the same date he says: "Numbers of free colored persons are arriving in Canada from Pennsylvania and District of Columbia, Ohio and Indiana. Sixteen passed by Windsor on the 7th, and 20 on the 8th, and the cry is 'Still they come.'" The immigration was increasing week by week for on July 1, it was reported in *The Voice of the Fugitive* that "in a single day last week there were not less than 65 colored emigrants landed at this place from the south. As far as we can learn not less than 200 have arrived within our vicinity since last issue. Almost every issue of the paper during 1852 gives figures as to the arrivals of the refugees. On September 23 Bibb recorded the arrival of three of his own brothers, while on November 4, 1852, the arrival is recorded of 23 men, women and children in 48 hours. Writing to *The Liberator* of November 12, 1852, Mary E. Bibb said that during the last ten days they had sheltered 23 arrivals in their own home. The American Missionary Association, which had

workers among the fugitives in Canada, noted in its annual report from 1852 that there had been a large increase of the colored population during the year, while further testimony to the great activity along the border is given by the statement that the Vigilance Committee at Detroit assisted 1,200 refugees in one year and that the Cleveland Vigilance Committee had a record of assisting more than 100 a month to freedom.

The northern newspapers of the period supply abundant information regarding the consternation into which the Negroes were thrown and their movements to find places of safety. Two weeks after President Fillmore had signed the Fugitive Slave Bill a Pittsburgh despatch to *The Liberator* stated that "nearly all the waiters in the hotels have fled to Canada. Sunday 30 fled; on Monday 40; on Tuesday 50; on Wednesday 30 and up to this time the number that has left will not fall short of 300. They went in large bodies armed with pistols and bowie knives, determined to die rather than be captured." A Hartford despatch of October 18, 1850, told of five Negroes leaving that place for Canada; Utica reported, under date of October 2, that 16 fugitive slaves passed through on a boat the day before, bound for Canada, all well armed and determined to fight to the last; the Eastport *Sentinel* of March 12 noted that a dozen fugitives had touched there on the steamer Admiral, en route to St. John's; the New Bedford *Mercury* said: We "are pleased to announce that a very large number of fugitive slaves, aided by many of our most wealthy and respected citizens have left for Canada and parts unknown and that many more are on the point of departure"; The Concord, N. H., *Statesman* reported: "Last Tuesday seven fugitives from slavery passed through this place . . . and they probably reached Canada in safety on Wednesday last. Scarcely a day passes but more or less fugitives escape from the land of slavery to the freedom of Canada . . . via this place over the track of the Northern Railroad."

Dining Car Waiters Heroes in Train Wreck

(By Jimmie Smith)

Pacific Coast News Bureau.

Los Angeles. — Crashing through a steel bridge near Whitties, sixteen miles from here, into a stream known as Puente Creek, the crack Los Angeles Limited 63 hour train en route to Chicago, last night about 6.30 killed its engineer, Charles Ireland, and sent several of its passengers and crew to the hospital.

Paul W. Boe a white cook, is not expected to live and six other injured persons are recovering from more or less serious injuries.

One of the injured and confined to a hospital with crushed foot, is W. H. Bolden, one of the six colored waiters who manned the diner in which nine of the 17 passengers of the train were seated to an evening meal.

Five other waiters, A. E. Podd, Leroy Bird, Andrew Smith, George Riley and Walter Owens, are about

after their nerve racing experience of being imprisoned in a diner that plunged forty feet into the icy waters of a stream that raged with flood waters of a torrential rain that had fallen for two consecutive days, washing out bridges, flooding houses and breaking all rainfall records of Southern California of a decade.

The diner with its passengers and crew crashed through the centre of the bridge and landed in the middle of the stream to be almost completely submerged by the rushing waters. The locomotive turned completely over on its back, the tender climbed onto the engine and the baggage car piled up on the east bank of the stream. The pullmans that followed the diner stopped on the edge of the west bank.

Passengers and pullman porters were easily rescued but getting the diners and crew from the eating coach in some 12 feet of water was a herculean task and it was here that the waiters performed their heroic deeds by assisting in the saving of the nine passengers that included three women.

Dr. DuBois, editor of *The Crisis*, on his way to Los Angeles for a lecture, just an hour before the crash, passed over the wrecked bridge.

The loss to the Union Pacific railroad is estimated at \$150,000.00 and the dining car lies completely submerged by the flood that has risen several feet since the accident.

To Erect Monument In Negro's Memory

From British Columbia comes word of a splendid tribute to a man on the basis wholly of his service and not his race or color. Recently the Kiwanis Club of Vancouver voted to erect a monument to Joe Fortes a negro, who during his 26 years' residence at English Bay taught scores of children to swim and saved hundreds of others from drowning. When Fortes died in 1922 a leading citizen of Vancouver said of him: "British Columbia will not allow the memory of Joe Fortes' life of self-sacrifice to pass unnoticed. He was a man in every sense of the word."

Within 12 minutes after the passing of its resolution to erect a monument the Kiwanis Club raised \$1200 toward the fund.

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