

A detailed historical map of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, serves as the background for the title. The map shows the city's layout with numerous streets, the Allegheny River, and the Ohio River. The title is overlaid on the map in a large, bold, serif font. The words "BLACK PITTSBURGH'S" are in a smaller, white, serif font, while "STRUGGLE" is in a much larger, bold, white, serif font. Below "STRUGGLE" is the subtitle "TO MAINTAIN CITIZENSHIP RIGHTS," in a white, serif font. The years "1790-1838" are in a bold, red, serif font. The author's name "By Fidel M. Campet" is in a white, serif font.

BLACK PITTSBURGH'S STRUGGLE

TO MAINTAIN CITIZENSHIP RIGHTS,

1790-1838

By Fidel M. Campet

Less than 100 miles north of the Mason-Dixon line, Pittsburgh's location at the head of the Ohio River and its proximity to Southern border states placed it in a strategic position for a burgeoning black freedom movement. While this movement was constrained and facilitated by larger developments, black activists in the region established organizations, formed strategies to challenge the slave system, and built a community in the process. In part, these efforts were influenced by black elite leaders and their sympathetic white allies. Writing in 1833, community leader Lewis Woodson argued that "our forefathers were brought up in abject bondage...and were deprived of every means of moral improvement. In this condition, they were liberated."¹ However, their efforts also relied on everyday black men who participated in the movement in myriad ways and who are rarely mentioned in the historical record.² Though they left few written materials, black workers built on a legacy of community development and struggle in Pittsburgh to maintain their citizenship rights in the 1830s when hostile forces sought to disfranchise them.³ An analysis of what records are left enhances the understanding of the Northern black freedom movement by expanding the number of actors, from community leaders to everyday people, who sought to preserve the voting rights of black men during the early 19th century.⁴

From the late 18th century to the early decades of the 19th century, a number of forces shaped the development of Pittsburgh. Proximity to waterways, capital investments, ideologies involving westward expansion, wars, and migration contributed to the growth of the city. While the Appalachian Mountains created a barrier between Pittsburgh and the more mature industrial and commercial enterprises on the east coast, other geographical conditions permitted merchant and industrial capitalists to shape the economic development of the region, as they used the area's rivers to access raw materials and deliver finished goods to markets. As the city developed into a commercial hub with an industrial core, its population grew from 7,248 residents in 1820 to 46,601 in 1850.⁵ By the 1850s, Pittsburgh was an established manufacturing base regionally and globally connected through commodities, markets, and people. African Americans constructed their experiences within this larger context and framework.

Prior to and during the Iron City's ascendancy, African Americans migrated to the region, encountered discriminatory obstacles,

and built community institutions. From the colonial period into the Revolutionary years, free blacks and slaves entered the Ohio River valley as workers, soldiers, and servants.⁶ By 1820, there were only nine slaves in Pittsburgh and none a decade later.⁷ While slavery did not contribute heavily to the growth of a black community in Pittsburgh, in-migration and natural increase did. With the help of census records, the ebb and flow of the black population can be traced from the turn of the 19th century into the 1860s. In 1790, there were 10 African Americans residing in Pittsburgh and a decade later the black community was composed of 100 persons. In 1810, the black population increased to 185 and continued its growth to 293 in 1820, 472 in 1830, 714 in 1840, and 1,959 in 1850.⁸ Only during the 1850s did the black population decline significantly due to the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850. This law encouraged a climate of fear where slave catchers and other opportunists had greater legal leeway to kidnap free and escaped African Americans and sell them south. As the decade marched on, the black population declined from 1,959 to 1,154, but it

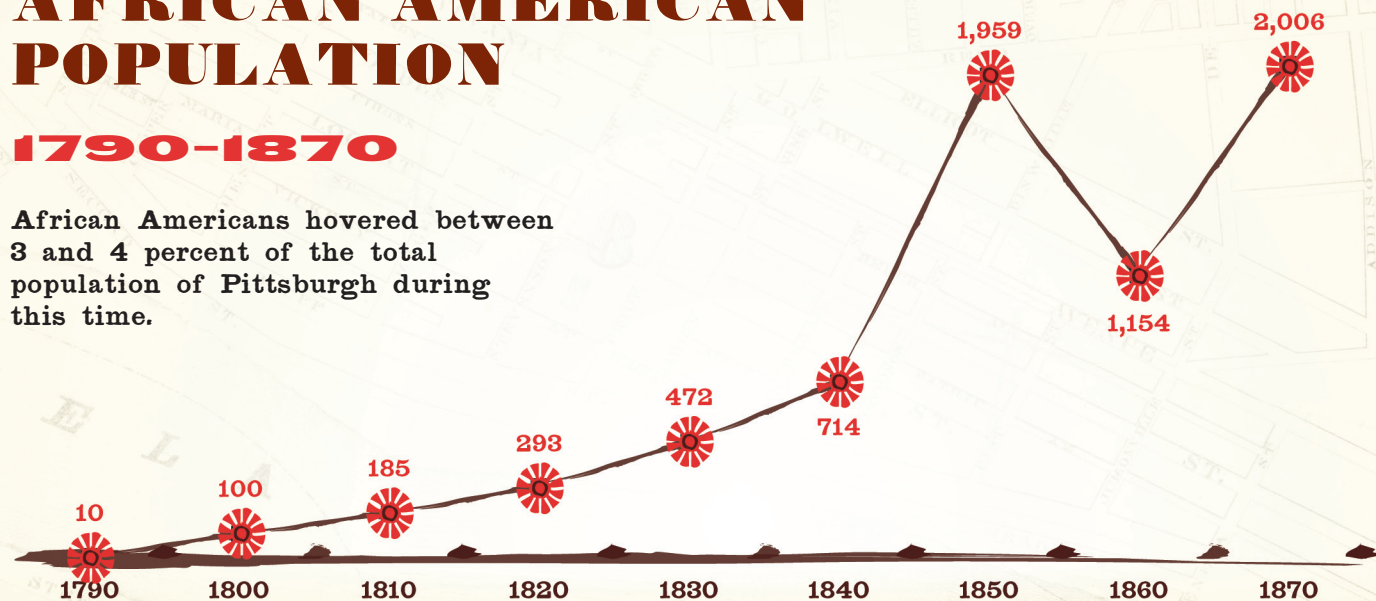
rebounded to 2,006 by 1870. While the 1850s marked a period of decline both numerically and proportionately, the percentage of African Americans typically hovered between 3 and 4 percent from the 1790s into the 1840s.⁹

The tax records documented by City Collector Thomas Dickson provide additional data to examine the diversity of the black community in Pittsburgh. Dickson, a city tax collector for one year, a grocer, and an elder in the First United Presbyterian Church, noted the occupation, color, tax paid, and site of residency for Pittsburghers during the 1836-37 tax year.¹⁰ Although his sympathies towards African Americans remain uncertain, he did offer tax records for the petition sent to the State Constitutional Convention challenging disfranchisement.¹¹ In his tax book notations, he identified 46 black Pittsburghers. While this may seem like a small number (6.5 percent of the city population) compared to the larger black population that approached 714 in 1840, it does provide a snapshot of the early community by identifying where African Americans lived, what they did for a living, and what they paid in taxes.¹² Since only men

PITTSBURGH'S AFRICAN AMERICAN POPULATION

1790-1870

African Americans hovered between 3 and 4 percent of the total population of Pittsburgh during this time.



paid these taxes, the data collected by Dickson is gender biased.

Though this data set presents limitations in identifying members of the larger community, it does illuminate the status that these taxpayers held. Since taxpayers were men, they represented community members who achieved a degree of status through their work and voting status. These men worked in prestigious occupations and a handful became entrepreneurs in the service and beauty industries.¹³ Persons who worked as barbers and waiters worked in elite white establishments, provided services to the black community, earned high incomes, and established themselves as community leaders. Lewis Woodson, a barber, operated a chain of barbershops in leading hotels such as the Anderson, St. Charles, and Monongahela House. He also pastored in the community's oldest and most prestigious church—the Bethel African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church. Since the church could not afford to pay him enough to live on, Woodson “shaved and pomaded the Thaws and the Nevilles to supplement” his income.¹⁴ Woodson's contemporary John Vashon owned a bathhouse and worked as a barber in his own business—Shaving, Hair Dressing, and Fancy Establishment.¹⁵ John Peck also worked as a barber, designed wigs, and led several community institutions. Similarly, but working as a waiter, John Turfley eventually became a successful contractor and builder.¹⁶ These successful individuals were not representative of the larger community, as there were far more African Americans near the bottom of the occupational ladder.

The majority of black men worked in common labor occupations, and, while they were often relegated to the cellar of the job market due to discrimination and exclusion,

their work also opened other opportunities for distinction.¹⁷ These included other barbers and servants, as well as river workers and people Dickson identified as “colored men.” It remains uncertain what Dickson meant by “colored man,” but it is probable that many of these were common laborers. The majority of black workers (70 percent in 1850) worked in common labor (janitors, day laborers, porters, and draymen) and in a variety of other occupations in the maritime (stevedores, roustabouts, stewards, and deckhands) and service (servants, waiters, and laundry workers) industries.¹⁸ Black men who worked in these occupations also secured status through their work.¹⁹ More specifically, men working on the river shared a form of masculinity of either a “rough-and-tumble” type, especially for deck and waterfront hands, or a “respectable brand” for cabin and service workers.²⁰

Though it appears that the majority of the black population did not pay taxes and thus could not vote, a number of workers


did, which brought them a degree of status within the community. This right in the civic arena created distinction within the community where some could vote and others could not. River workers characterized a group that gained status in both the civic and occupational realms. They paid taxes and gained access to the voting booth, and as we have seen also secured a degree of status due to occupations. These various forms of status that unfolded in the community are crucial to understanding how work and expressions of masculinity shaped emergent leaders—both the highly visible and the obscure.

At the same time that the Dickson records illuminate the occupation and status of taxpayers, they also indicate what wards these residents lived in.²¹ The residency of taxpayers adds another layer of analysis to reveal patterns between occupation, amount of tax paid, and sites of settlement. Indeed, well-to-do black families lived and conducted business at various addresses in the present day Golden Triangle.²²

Persons who worked as barbers and waiters worked in elite white establishments, provided services to the black community, earned high incomes, and established themselves as community leaders.

In the 1830s, Pittsburgh's business owners included African Americans such as John Peck, who is listed in the *Pittsburgh Almanac* as an “Ornamental Hair Worker.”

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JOHN PECK,
Ornamental
Hair Worker,
AND
Ladies' Hair Dresser,
92 & 94 FOURTH ST.



Eyre Crow's print for *The Illustrated London News* shows a black barber with his white customers, perhaps much like John Vashon's or Lewis Woodson's barbershops would have looked like.

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Of the 46 African Americans recorded, only five resided in the West Ward located closer to the confluence of the rivers. In this neighborhood lived community leaders such as Benjamin Richards, Elias Richards, John B. Vashon, and Hudson Vashon.²³ Located north of the West Ward and along the Allegheny River, the North Ward was the site of residency for another group of community leaders composed primarily of waiters and barbers, who numbered 23.9 percent of black taxpayers. Here lived community leaders John Peck (barber), Jesse Wells (waiter), and Alfred Smith (waiter). The latter went on to accumulate a substantial amount of wealth by 1850. In general, black residents in the North Ward paid 50 cents in city and 15 cents in poor taxes, which was twice as much as others living in the area of greatest black settlement—the East Ward, described as “Hayti.”²⁴ Located next to Grant’s Hill, the

East Ward contained the largest proportion of African Americans in the city. In this ward, Dickson noted the occupation of the 26 African Americans or 56.5 percent of the 46 taxpayers either as “colored men” (14 or 53.0 percent of 26) or workers on the river (7 or 26.9 percent of 26).²⁵ The remaining five were a wire worker, an heir, a barber/cook, another barber, and a doctor.²⁶ Thus this particular neighborhood was composed primarily of workers who usually paid half of the taxes (usually 25 cents in city and 8 cents in poor taxes) than persons located in the North Ward. Located along the Monongahela River, the South Ward had four black residents, which included two “colored men” and two river workers. The site of residency and tax paid illuminates the spatial organization of the early black community and how it was segmented along lines of occupation and income.

Although the community was segmented along these spatial, occupational, and social lines, the black community in Pittsburgh, as elsewhere, encountered an array of constraints as a whole that limited equality. Pittsburgh blacks may not have suffered under a legal status of bondage with limited physical and social mobility, but they faced other de-facto obstacles in the public sphere. African Americans and whites worshiped in differing churches, buried their kin and family in segregated cemeteries, and watched theatrical performances and ate from separated sections. African Americans were also excluded from public education until 1838, and faced a prejudicial policing and judicial system.²⁷ Other organized efforts called for the emigration of free blacks from the United States. Established in 1816, the American Colonization Society (ACS) formed auxiliary organizations and

AFRICAN AMERICAN TAXPAYERS

1836-37

North Ward

Total African American tax payers: 11

Here lived community leaders John Peck (barber), Jesse Wells (waiter), and Alfred Smith (waiter). In general, black residents in the North Ward paid 50 cents in city and 15 cents in poor taxes.

East Ward "Hayti"

Total African American tax payers: 26

Composed primarily of workers who usually paid 25 cents in city and 8 cents in poor taxes

14 "colored men"

7 river workers

1 wire worker

1 heir

1 barber/cook

1 barber

1 doctor

West Ward

Total African American tax payers: 5

In this neighborhood lived community leaders such as Benjamin Richards, Elias Richards, John B. Vashon, and Hudson Vashon.

South Ward

Total African American tax payers: 4

2 "colored men"

2 river workers

chapters across the nation during the 1820s and '30s. In Pittsburgh, local white elites composed of businessmen, influential church members, industrialists, landed interests, and newspaper editors formed a local ACS chapter in 1826 and remained active into the 1830s.²⁸

In addition to facing organized calls for the deportation of free blacks, African Americans lived with the specter of being kidnapped and sold into southern slavery, as well as violence from their neighbors. In several instances during the 1830s and 1840s, violence broke out between black and white residents. When a white mob threatened the black community in 1834, the mayor called on a white militia to disperse

the mob, and five years later another similar episode unfolded. Besides small skirmishes, instances of large-scale violence rarely occurred due to concerted efforts between city officials and black leaders.²⁹

In response, African Americans formed a number of organizations that incorporated the larger population and thereby helped the community as a whole move towards social equality. Affluent African Americans emerged as leaders and helped form community institutions such as a cemeteries, militias, and newspapers. In addition, the community organized a moral reform and literary society, four benevolent societies, and, with women

in the lead, its own Temperance Society in 1835.³⁰ African Americans contributed to the construction of another community pillar—the church. As early as 1800, African Americans formed the Bethel AME Church that by the mid-1830s had 250 congregants. Described by contemporaries as "a substantial brick building ... valued at ten thousand dollars," this church represented one of the many established by the 1840s. By this time, African Americans had built an additional five churches of Protestant denominations and continued to expand the type and number of religious institutions.³¹

Along with these communally owned structures, black leaders, in collaboration

with sympathetic white elites, addressed black exclusion from publicly funded education by purchasing a lot and building for \$1,800 in June 1833. In the transaction, the sellers specified that the land and building be used and occupied by the African Education Society “as a place for the instruction of young persons of color ... and also as a hall for meetings of the Society to transact their business and for worship on the Sabbath.”³²

In addition to using the school for educational, religious, and commercial purposes, African Americans also formed a number of business establishments that catered to the white population but were primarily dependent on black patronage. The average citizens involved in these entrepreneurial and occupational groups later emerged as community leaders.³³ While the black leadership typically represented certain occupational groups (barbers, caterers, servers, ministers, and business persons), black workers also played an integral part to community development where they contributed their financial resources into community institutions. The Thomas Dickson tax records reveal that black workers were taxed a similar rate and at times even higher than persons engaged in community leadership. This suggests black workers potentially used their excess monies towards larger community projects even though they rarely appeared in the written record. In the tax records compiled by Dickson, he described 20 black taxpayers (40.8 percent) as either a “colored man” or “colored labor,” both of which probably signified a common laborer, an unknown occupation, or perhaps someone in the maritime or service industries. Another eight (16.3 percent) worked in the river. This group represented the bulk of the community and some were taxed at similar or higher rates as others who worked in the barbering and service trades.³⁴

These community institutions not only promoted self-help, but also served as

platforms to form alliances with sympathetic whites to attack slavery. One method involved establishing close ties with sympathetic white elites such as Jane Grey Swisshelm, Neville B. Craig, and a paradoxical relationship with Charles Avery. Another approach included participation in anti-slavery societies. Formed in 1833, the Pittsburgh Anti-Slavery Society included white and black elites. In all, the organization counted 180 members. Using an ideology of black uplift through education, the Society envisioned this strategy would dissipate white prejudices.³⁵ With black leaders such as Lewis Woodson and John B. Vashon in the organization, the Society adopted a constitution that forwarded these ideals. It sought to abolish slavery, “not by exciting the slaves to vindicate their rights by physical force, but by appealing to the consciences and interests of the masters, [and] by correcting public opinion” through black education and work skills acquisition to reverse prejudices. This two-pronged approach appealed to Christianity and benevolence as when the organization supported the

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Charles Avery was a Pittsburgh entrepreneur who used slave-picked cotton in his Eagle Cotton Works factory. After experiencing a change of heart, he sought to help end slavery and promote religious and educational opportunities for African Americans.

HHC Museum Collection, 86.1.132, gift of Wilbur C. Douglas.

foundation of a Manual Labor School or Institution for the benefit of free blacks.³⁶ In addition, the Society also hosted meetings and fundraisers, distributed pamphlets, solicited donations and subscriptions for its literature, and sponsored lectures.³⁷

While the organization primarily focused its efforts to end southern slavery, it did so without addressing the civil rights of African Americans in Pittsburgh. This position in turn dissuaded many African Americans from actively participating in anti-slavery organizations. Indeed, as the disfranchisement movement quickened during 1837, the Western District of the Pennsylvania Anti-Slavery Society primarily focused on internal business matters. However, it “voted that a Memorial be sent to the State Convention respecting the alterations of the Constitution so as to secure trial to all persons chained as slaves.” Moreover, as ratification of the constitution approached, the organization “resolved that a Counter Memorial to the State Legislature be prepared against the appropriation of Funds to support the Col. Society.”³⁸ Although these petitions supported the larger black freedom movement, it illustrated the limits of the Society’s approach as it remained silent in the face of a statewide disfranchisement movement.³⁹

At the same time that African Americans and sympathetic whites called for an end to slavery, others operated clandestinely in the Underground Railroad. While early studies of the Underground Railroad focused on the benevolent activities of white elite supporters, such as Quakers, recent scholarship on the topic have revealed the crucial role African Americans across the class spectrum played in developing the movement and encouraging

whites to join.⁴⁰ With Pittsburgh located at the beginning of the Ohio River and nearby land routes close to Southern border states, the region became a magnet for runaway slaves who were able to hide in black neighborhoods and tap community networks. Indeed, the Southwestern Pennsylvania region included a number of stops on the Underground Railroad where a cross-section of the community participated.⁴¹ One such stop was John Vashon's Shaving, Hair Dressing, and Fancy Establishment, which not only served as an intelligence hub, but also as a place of refuge for runaway slaves. George White apprenticed at Vashon's shop following his successful escape, and worked with him for over two years. It must have been horrifying, however, when White's old master, Mr. Rose, stopped by the shop during a visit to the North and recognized his former slave. Vashon successfully negotiated for White's freedom by paying Rose \$200 to prevent his apprentice from being re-enslaved.⁴²

Networks along the Underground Railroad included water-based routes as well. At the same time that the advent of the steamboat fueled economic growth in the region, it also shaped the freedom movement. Black workers—and more specifically river workers—played a crucial role in securing the freedom of slaves. These workers, free

and slave, not only contributed to a pan-Mississippi world by connecting Northern black communities with their Southern counterparts in both urban and plantation settings, they used these waterways and steamboats as vehicles of freedom.⁴³

Pittsburgh served as one of those stops along the Mississippi River valley from the 1820s onwards, where local African Americans formed connections with others outside the region.⁴⁴ Indeed, Allen Sidney, a former slave, recounted how his work on steamboats not only facilitated connections between the North and South but also how it served as an opportunity for many, including himself, to escape from slavery. During his work, Sidney met an abolitionist in Cincinnati who arranged for his escape. Said Sidney: "When I got to Pittsburg[h] I saw the other abolitionist, and I left the boat. He had a one-horse wagon filled with straw, and I got under the straw."⁴⁵ While Sidney's recollections focus on the activities of white abolitionists, he and the abolitionist probably had also secured the assistance of

other black river workers for the escape plan.

While it is unclear who these boat workers were and their degree of involvement assisting runaway slaves, we can posit that they and other everyday persons played an integral part in this network and in other civil rights activities. Drawing from records compiled by city tax collector Dickson, a variety of names can be added to the list of those who aided the black freedom movement, whose work spanned the occupational spectrum. Established black residents such as James McKnight, Edward Robinson, Robert Burke, E. B. Armstrong, Elijah Collins, Washington Hunter, George Robinson, and Charles Tibbs all worked in some capacity with river traffic and possibly assisted fugitive slaves by providing material assistance (food, clothing, shelter) or introducing them to community networks.⁴⁶

Dickson's tax record also illuminates the important role the black community played in the face of the 1837 disfranchisement movement. While studies of this project have highlighted the important political processes

Black men working on the river shared a form of masculinity of either a "rough-and-tumble" type, especially for deck and waterfront hands, or a "respectable brand" for cabin and service workers.

Steamboats and river travel gave African American men opportunity for work, as well as a chance to rescue fugitive slaves seeking freedom in the North.

HHC Detre L&A General Print Collection.



THE BURNING OF THE STEAMERS RIVER QUEEN AND ALBEE, AT PITTSBURGH, PA., SUNDAY, SEPT. 10.—FROM A SKETCH

John Vashon ran a barbershop and a public bathhouse, which is listed in 1839 as "opened for the season."

HHC Detrie L&A.

and black reaction to disfranchisement, they also overlooked the participation of hundreds of everyday black activists.⁴⁷ Considering that from 1790 up until 1838, males over the age of 21 who had resided in the state for two years and had paid county or state taxes were eligible for the franchise, black men had the theoretical right to vote. According to the "Pittsburgh Memorial," and Thomas Dickson, people who paid city and poor taxes were eligible to vote.⁴⁸ Through his bookkeeping, Dickson allows researchers to place black taxpayers into two major segments: one representing primarily working class occupations and the other the elite and middle class leadership of the community. These reflect general divisions within the community in terms of occupation, site of residency, status, and amount of tax paid. Although this heterogeneous sample of the community had several differences, they all were eligible for the franchise and thus had a vested interest in maintaining it.⁴⁹

This cross section of the community had a direct interest in preserving the franchise. Ten people mentioned in the Dickson tax records personally signed the 1837 Pittsburgh petition calling for an end to the disfranchisement movement. These included both community leaders and persons that contributed in the background. Leaders such as John B. and Hudson Vashon and John Peck (all barbers) signed the petition and paid city and poor taxes. Other signers representative of the black middle class also paid taxes and included Zelicher Newman (barber), Sam Bailey (waiter), Edward Parker (waiter), and Sam Reynolds (barber). Only two people worked in industries outside barbering and waiting and they were Robert Bailey (black laborer) and Othello Darsey, who was described as a "colored man."⁵⁰ The others were probably eligible to vote and thus probably had an interest in maintaining the franchise considering that Dickson mentioned that, in

addition to the petitioners, another 100 men paid a poll tax, which probably included the various people he identified as "colored man" or "colored labor."⁵¹

Though challenges to stop the disfranchisement movement eventually failed, the black community in Pittsburgh continued to struggle to secure their citizenship rights. In January 1841, John Peck and others met at the Bethel AME church and organized the first convention of black Pennsylvanians in Pittsburgh the following August. While the black leadership formed other organizations and movements, the larger community remained active. As the old guard continued participating in race advancement organizations, a younger generation of activists emerged such as John B. Vashon's son George.⁵² Organizational structures further facilitated this transition. Formed in July 1838, the Juvenile Anti-Slavery Society bridged generational divides and prepared the young generation for the battle against slavery.⁵³ At the same time that a new generation of activists emerged, the population increased during the

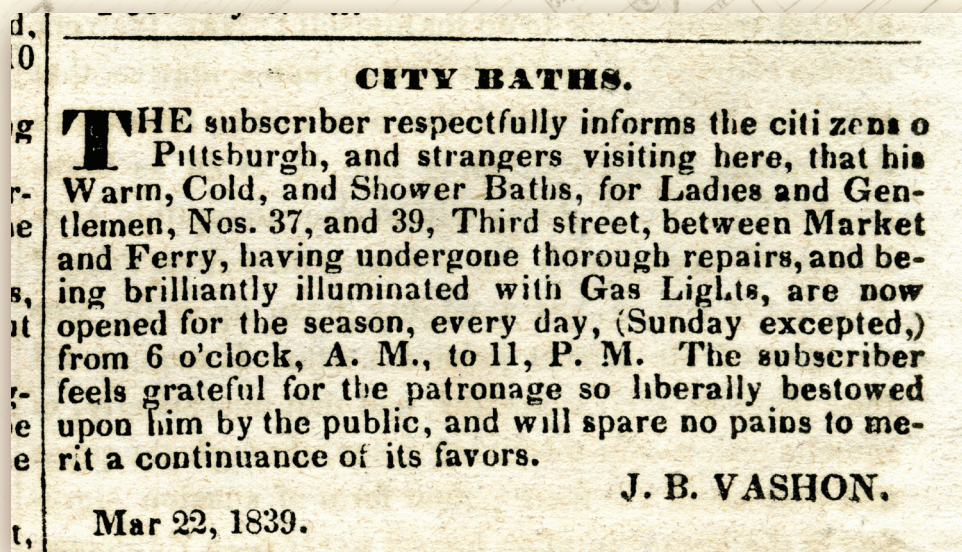
1840s, bringing in a new corps of persons that worked in the background to both end slavery and secure citizenship rights.⁵⁴ While they left few written records, the Dickson records identify some of these residents who were integral to the black freedom struggles. Their efforts illuminate how everyday persons struggled to maintain and advance black citizenship rights.

Fidel M. Campet is a historian of 20th century America, with specialization in the African American urban experience.

¹ Douglas W. Bristol, Jr., *Knights of the Razor: Black Barbers in Slavery and Freedom* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 2009), 98.

² While this essay focuses on men and voting rights, it does not suggest that women did not partake in the movement. They, as with a number of their male counterparts, worked in the background and supported the larger community in other ways that fail to appear in the written record.

³ The movements to disfranchise black Pennsylvanians were attributable to links between politics, power, and discrimination and the question of citizenship. White officeholders and political candidates wanted to circumvent a black block vote that could swing elections and thus undermine one of the organizing tenets of Jacksonian Democracy—white supremacy and white male suffrage. In fact, Democratic



John Vashon's Shaving, Hair Dressing, and Fancy Establishment was not only an intelligence hub, but also as a place of refuge for runaway slaves.

candidates in Bucks County (PA) attributed their loss to the black swing vote and easily convinced a judge to support disfranchisement. Leon F. Litwack, *North of Slavery: The Negro in the Free States, 1790-1860* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1961), 75-77, 84-87. For Jacksonian Democracy and white supremacy, see: David R. Roediger, *The Wages of Whiteness: Race and the Making of the American Working Class* (New York: Verso, 1991).

⁴ Several recent studies of black life in the urban north have developed from focusing on elites to integrating the contributions of the larger community. James Horton and Lois Horton, *Black Bostonians: Family Life and Community Struggles in the Antebellum North* (New York: Holmes and Meier, 1979); Gary Nash, *Forging Freedom: The Formation of Philadelphia's Black Community, 1720-1840* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988); Joe William Trotter Jr., *River Jordan: African American Urban Life in the Ohio Valley* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1998); Leslie M. Harris, *In the Shadow of Slavery: African Americans in New York City, 1626-1863* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003).

⁵ Richard Wade, *The Urban Frontier: The Rise of Western Cities, 1790-1830* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1959), 161-197; U.S. Department of State, *Census for 1820* (Washington: Gales & Seaton, 1821), 72; U.S. Department of the Interior: Census Office, *The Seventh Census of the United States: 1850* (Washington: Robert Armstrong, 1853), 158.

⁶ Sydney Taylor-Brown, "The Negro on the Frontier (1750-1815)," 5 February 1940 in *The WPA History of the Negro in Pittsburgh*, ed. Laurence A. Glasco, 35-41 (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2004); Janet L. Bishop, "In the Shadow of the Dream: The Black Pittsburgh Community, 1850-1870" (undergraduate paper, Department of History, Princeton University, 1982), 18-22.

⁷ Clarence Rollo Turner, "Black Pittsburgh: A Social History, 1790-1840. A Census Compilation" (paper prepared for the Urban Historians' Group, University of Pittsburgh, March 1974), 2.

⁸ Ann Greenwood Wilmoth, "Pittsburgh and the Blacks: A Short History, 1780-1875" (Ph.D. diss., Pennsylvania State University, 1975), 9-11.

⁹ Turner, "Black Pittsburgh: A Social History," 2-3; R. J. M. Blackett, "'... Freedom, or the Martyr's Grave': Black Pittsburgh's Aid to the Fugitive Slave," *Western Pennsylvania Historical Magazine* 61 (April 1978): 124-126.

¹⁰ Biographical information on Dickson is from the finding aid for the collection. See: <http://digital.library.pitt.edu/cgi-bin/f/findaid/findaid-idx?c=hswead;cc=hswead;q1=thomas%20dickson;rgn=main;view=text;didno=US-QQS-MFF126> (accessed 2 September 2011).

¹¹ "Memorial of Pittsburgh's Free Citizens of Color," *The WPA History of the Negro in Pittsburgh*, ed. Glasco, 367.

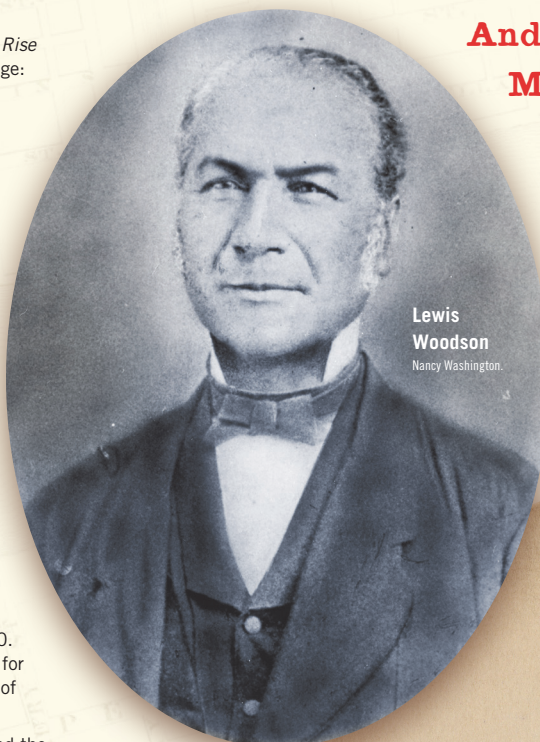
¹² Since Dickson classified residents as black, there is probably a degree of error since some African Americans were unable to self-identify. Because of their light complexion, for example, John B. and Hudson Vashon were identified as barbers with no racial identifiers. Pittsburgh Tax Book, c.1836-1837, 72-73, Folder 1 "Tax Book (Pittsburgh, Pa.) c1836-1837," Papers of the Dickson Family, 1836-1925, MFF# 126, Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania. Hereafter Dickson Records.

¹³ For occupations in the food and beauty industry being considered prestigious, see: Juliet E. K. Walker, *The History of Black Business in America: Capitalism, Race, and Entrepreneurship* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1998), 103-111; Bristol, *Knights of the Razor*.

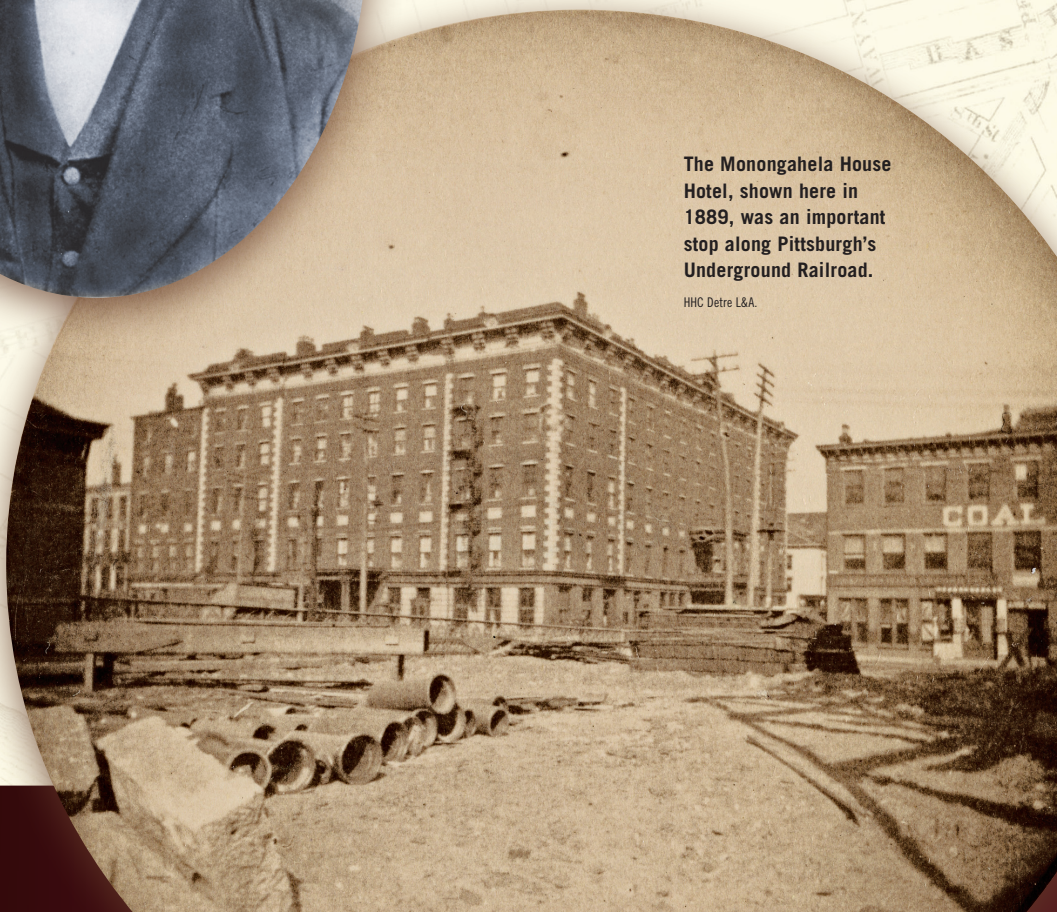
¹⁴ "Church, School, and Press," *The WPA History of the Negro in Pittsburgh*, ed. Glasco, 232.

¹⁵ William J. Switala, *Underground Railroad in Pennsylvania* (Mechanicsburg, PA: Stackpole Books, 2001), 85.

Lewis Woodson, pastor of the Bethel African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church, operated a chain of barbershops in leading hotels such as the Anderson, St. Charles, and Monongahela House. Since the church could not afford to pay him enough to live on, Woodson "shaved and pomaded the Thaws and the Nevilles to supplement" his income.



Lewis Woodson
Nancy Washington.



The Monongahela House Hotel, shown here in 1889, was an important stop along Pittsburgh's Underground Railroad.

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While they left few written records, the Dickson records identify some of the residents who were integral to the black freedom struggles. Their efforts illuminate how everyday persons struggled to maintain and advance black citizenship rights.

¹⁶ Sydney Taylor-Brown and Abram T. Hall, "The Early Community (1815-1861)," *The WPA History of the Negro in Pittsburgh*, ed. Glasco, 79-81; Laurence Glasco, "Taking Care of Business: The Black Entrepreneurial Elite in Turn of the Century Pittsburgh," *Pittsburgh History* 78 (Winter 1995/96): 178.

¹⁷ Laurence Glasco, "Double Burden: The Black Experience in Pittsburgh," *City at the Point: Essays on the Social History of Pittsburgh*, ed. Samuel P. Hays, 70-73 (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1989).

¹⁸ Taylor-Brown and Hall, "The Early Community (1815-1861)," 54; Glasco, "Double Burden: The Black Experience in Pittsburgh," 70-71; Trotter, *River Jordan*, 29.

¹⁹ In particular historical moments, black men constructed manhood and expressed masculinity in particular social, political, economic, and cultural contexts through a variety of vehicles including occupation, community participation, and military service among other methods. Darlene Clark Hine and Earnestine Jenkins, eds. "Manhood Rights": *The Construction of Black Male History and Manhood, 1750-1870*. Vol. 1 of *A Question of Manhood: A Reader in U.S. Black Men's History and Masculinity* (Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 1999), xv-xvii, 1-58. For masculinity and work, see: W. Jeffrey Bolster, "'To Feel Like a Man': Black Seamen in the Northern States, 1800-1860," *Journal of American History* 76 (March 1990): 1173-1199; Paul A. Gilje and Howard B. Rock, "'Sweep O! Sweep O!': African-American Chimney Sweeps and Citizenship in the New Nation," *William and Mary Quarterly* 51 (July 1994): 507-538.

²⁰ Thomas C. Buchanan, *Black Life on the Mississippi: Slaves, Free Blacks, and the Western Steamboat World*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004), 53-80.

²¹ Pittsburgh was divided into four wards and either identified through numbers or cardinal directions. The First Ward was also referred to as the West Ward, the Second as the South Ward, the Third as the East Ward, and the Fourth as the North Ward. For ward boundaries, see: Darlington Maps, "Map of Pittsburgh and its environs" (DARMAP0577) 1935, available at: http://images.library.pitt.edu/cgi-bin/i/i/image/image-idx?rgn1=darlm maps_su;med=1;q1=Allegheny%20County%20%20Pa.;size=20;c=darlm maps;back=ba ck1346756500;subview=detail;resnum=18;view=entry;lastview=thumbnail;cc=darlm maps;entryid=x-dar map0577;viewid=DARMAP0577.TIF (accessed 2 September 2012).

²² Taylor-Brown and Hall, "The Early Community (1815-1861)," 79.

²³ Pittsburgh Tax Book, 33, 60, 72-73, Dickson Records.

²⁴ Pittsburgh Tax Book, 139, 141, 228-278, Dickson Records; Wilmoth, "Pittsburgh and the Blacks," 203; Taylor-Brown and Hall, "The Early Community (1815-1861)," 80.

²⁵ Although Matthew Bartholomew is simply described "colored," he also worked as a cook on the river. See: Wilmoth, "Pittsburgh and the Blacks," 203.

²⁶ Pittsburgh Tax Book, 135-215, Dickson Records.

²⁷ Taylor-Brown and Hall, "The Early Community (1815-1861)," 61-62.

²⁸ Pamela Annette Smoot, "Self Help and Institution Building in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, 1830-1945" (Ph.D. diss., Michigan State University, 1998), 33-35; Wilmoth, "Pittsburgh and the Blacks," 33-37.

²⁹ Taylor-Brown and Hall, "The Early Community (1815-1861)," 61-62; Wilmoth, "Pittsburgh and the Blacks," 23-25, 152-156, 187-188.

³⁰ A number of black elites emerged as major players in the historical record. They included Owen A. Barrett, Julien Benoit, Henry M. Collins, Martin R. Delany, Charles and Benjamin Harris, John Peck, John B. Vashon, and Lewis Woodson. Taylor-Brown and Hall, "The Early Community (1815-1861)," 55-61; Wilmoth, "Pittsburgh and the Blacks," 16-22; Glasco, "Double Burden," 71; Smoot, "Self Help and Institution Building in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, 1830-1945," 66, 74-75.

³¹ Committee of the Pittsburgh Memorial, "Memorial of the Free Citizens of Color in Pittsburgh and its Vicinity Relative to the Right of Suffrage," *Pittsburgh History* 80 (Fall 1997): 110; Trotter, *River Jordan*, 42; Smoot, "Self Help and Institution Building in Pittsburgh," 21-22, 42-56.

³² Indenture from the Trustees of the Methodist Church of Pittsburgh to Trustees of the Pittsburgh African Education Society, recorded 10 September 1833, Allegheny County Recorder of Deeds DBV 45, p. 275-277, Department of Real Estate, Allegheny County Office Building.

³³ Smoot, "Self Help and Institution Building in Pittsburgh," 22-30, 57-66.

³⁴ Pittsburgh Tax Book, Dickson Records.

³⁵ Avery was a member of the ACS but also promoted black education and established Avery Institute that later became Avery College. Wilmoth, "Pittsburgh and the Blacks," 26-29.

³⁶ Pittsburgh Anti-Slavery Constitution, 1831, 1-3, Box 2: Folder 5 "James H. Senior - Anti-Slavery Society - Constitution," Papers of the McClelland Family, 1821-1977, MSS #66, Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania. Hereafter McClelland Papers.

³⁷ Minutes of the Executive Committee of the Western Pennsylvania Anti-Slavery Society, 1841, 4-5, 9-14, 34, 45, Box 3 "Minute Book: Western Pennsylvania Anti-Slavery Society, 1841-1845," McClelland Papers.

³⁸ 6 June 1837 minutes; 30 November 1837 executive committee minutes, Folder 1, Pennsylvania Anti-Slavery Society, Western District Minutes, 1837-1838, MFF # 197 Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania.

³⁹ Wilmoth, "Pittsburgh and the Blacks," 26-29.

⁴⁰ Katherine DuPre Lumpkin, "'The General Plan was Freedom': A Negro Secret Order on the Underground Railroad," *Phylon* 28 (1st Quarter 1967): 63-77; Keith P. Griffler, *Front Line of Freedom: African Americans and the Forging of the Underground Railroad in the Ohio Valley* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2004).

⁴¹ Wilbur H. Siebert, "Light on the Underground Railroad," *American Historical Review* 1 (April 1896): 455-463; Edward Raymond Turner, "The Underground Railroad in Pennsylvania," *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 36 no.3 (1912): 309-318.

⁴² Switala, *Underground Railroad in Pennsylvania*, 85.

⁴³ Buchanan, *Black Life on the Mississippi*, 19-51, 101-122.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 49-50, 120.

⁴⁵ John W. Blassingame ed., *Slave Testimony: Two Centuries of Letters, Speeches, Interviews and Autobiographies* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1977), 521-528.

⁴⁶ Pittsburgh Tax Book, c.1836-1837, 114, 123, 136, 141, 148, 169, 204, 215, Dickson Records.

⁴⁷ Litwack, *North of Slavery*, 75-77, 84-87; Eric Ledell Smith, "The Pittsburgh Memorial: A Forgotten Document of Pittsburgh History," *Pittsburgh History* 80 (Fall 1997): 106-108; Eric Ledell Smith, "The End of Black Voting Rights in Pennsylvania: African Americans and the Pennsylvania Constitutional Convention of 1837-1838," *Pennsylvania History* 65 (Summer 1998): 279-299; Smoot, "Self Help and Institution Building in Pittsburgh," 37-38.

⁴⁸ See "Statement F" in: Committee of the Pittsburgh Memorial, "Memorial of the Free Citizens of Color in Pittsburgh," 111.

⁴⁹ Pittsburgh Tax Book, Dickson Records.

⁵⁰ Committee of the Pittsburgh Memorial, "Memorial of the Free Citizens of Color in Pittsburgh," 109-110; Pittsburgh Tax Book, 72, 73, 143, 153, 194, 229, 266, 267, Dickson Records.

⁵¹ Committee of the Pittsburgh Memorial, "Memorial of the Free Citizens of Color in Pittsburgh," 111.

⁵² Smith, "The End of Black Voting Rights in Pennsylvania," 296.

⁵³ C. Peter Ripley, et. al., eds., *Witness for Freedom: African American Voices on Race, Slavery, and Emancipation* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1993), 107-108.

⁵⁴ Smoot, "Self Help and Institution Building in Pittsburgh," 40-42; Blackett, "'... Freedom, or the Martyr's Grave'" 127-134.