

William Hardesty (1776-1846)

His mission, in the context of his time.

“The method of operating was not uniform, but adapted to the requirements of each case. There was no regular organization, no constitution, no officers, no laws or agreement or rule except the Golden Rule, and every man did what seemed right in his own eyes.”

- Dr. Isaac M. Beck, Ohio Stationmaster on the Underground Railroad

23 September 1667 Lawmakers in Jamestown, Virginia, declare: “WHEREAS some doubts have risen whether children that are slaves by birth, and by the charity and piety of their owners made partakers of the blessed sacrament of baptism, should by vertue of their baptism be made free ...” Baptism does not alter a slave’s status. “... masters, freed from this doubt, may more carefully endeavour the propagation of Christianity by permitting children, though slaves, or those of greater growth if capable, to be admitted to that sacrament.”

October 1670 Virginia law enacts “that noe negroe or Indian though baptised and enjoyed their owne freedome shall be capable of any such purchase of christians, but yet not debarred from buying any of their owne nation.”

1688 Four German Mennonites near Philadelphia publish a manifesto on slavery. Questions include: “If we are to 'do unto others as we would have them do unto us,' what message are we sending to God?” They present the document to Quakers in Dublin, Pennsylvania, who deem the matter “so weighty that we think it not expedient to meddle with it here.” The query is forwarded to a larger body of Quakers in Philadelphia, who declare it “a thing of too much weight for this meeting to determine.” The matter is offered for consideration to higher authority; the yearly meeting of Friends in Burlington, New Jersey. They quash the document. The Mennonite community is later referred to as ‘Poortown,’ when trade with the radicals is avoided.

1705 Virginia law stipulates “All servants imported and brought into the Country...who were not Christians in their native Country...shall be accounted and be slaves.” Slaves are henceforth considered their owner’s real estate and can be used for collateral in loans.

1 May 1743 John Wesley, an Anglican priest and English founder of the Methodist movement, dictates in *General Rules of the United Society* that, in addition to his rules, the golden rule applies to slavery: “it is certain that these rules forbade all slaveholding and, if honestly executed, would cut it up root and branch.”

1754 Philadelphia Quakers renounce slavery. Throughout the sect the practice continues.

1772 John Hagerty, who will be William Hardesty’s maternal uncle in four years, hears John King preach for a second time and forms a Methodist class in his Baltimore, Maryland home. Undoubtedly of Irish descent, Hagerty is fluent in German and English.

22 June 1772 Finding no law has ever permitted slavery in England, British Chief Justice Lord Mansfield orders the freedom of James Somerset, a colonial slave who has run away while he and his master are on British soil. Slavery is ruled illegal in Britain.

25 May 1774 Slaves and freemen, “brought hither to be made slaves for Life in a Christian land,” once again petition the colonial governor of Massachusetts to end their bondage. Prohibitions on forming family groups leave them unable to fulfill the Ten Commandments, and they are “rendered incapable of shewing our obedience to Almighty God.” They ask, “Members of the

Church of Christ, how can the master and the slave be said to fulfill that command to [*live in Brotherly – ed.*] Love?”¹ Four petitions fail.

1774 Wesley publishes *Thoughts upon Slavery*, and opposes every aspect of slave holding, declaring “men-buyers are exactly on a level with men-stealers.” He finds those who inherit slaves are sinning: “It cannot be, that either war, or contract, can give any man such a property in another as he has in his sheep and oxen. Much less is it possible, that any child of man should ever be born a slave. Liberty is the right of every human creature, as soon as he breathes the vital air; and no human law can deprive him of that right which he derives from the law of nature.”² He considers the rule of civil law: “But can law, human law, change the nature of things? Can it turn darkness into light, or evil into good? By no means. Notwithstanding ten thousand laws, right is right, and wrong is wrong still. There must still remain an essential difference between justice and injustice, cruelty and mercy. So that I still ask, who can reconcile this treatment of the Negroes, first and last, with either mercy or justice?”³

1775 Revolutionary pamphleteer Thomas Paine is one of ten at the first - mostly Quaker - meeting of the Society for the Relief of Free Negroes Unlawfully held in Bondage, held in Philadelphia’s Rising Sun Tavern. They convene four times, intent on preventing Dinah Nevill, purporting to be a free Mulatto, and her three children from being sold into slavery. A Virginian purchases Nevill: she and her family vanish from the north.

7 November 1775 Virginia’s royal governor Dunmore offers freedom to all male, rebel-held slaves willing to fight for the king. Runaways double the size of his army prior to the Battle of Great Bridge a month later. Thirty-six runaways are captured and ordered sold by Virginia’s revolutionary government. Eight hundred eventually serve in Dunmore’s Ethiopian Regiment. More than half die of fever, the rest are left to fend for themselves in New York when Dunmore returns to England on 14 August 1776.

1776 Over one half million colonials are estimated held in bondage. One in five are in South Carolina; Maryland and North Carolina enslave 155,000 in nearly even portions. Virginia is on par with New York and Georgia, holding 15 to 16,000 souls in captivity.⁴

8 or 12 April 1776 William Hardesty is born in Maryland, likely the third child born to Drusilla Hagerty (perhaps aged 20) and husband George Hardisty. The father is likely accompanying Rev. Francis Asbury, Wesley’s Superintendent of American Operations, in an itinerant preaching mission. Asbury, though a staunch loyalist, is having success spreading Methodism among patriot stock. “The people, used to ill-read services and dull-written sermons, flocked to hear these marvelous preachers who prayed without book and preached without manuscript; who went on horseback to the people instead of waiting for these to come to them; who lived on \$60 a year,” and never said a word about institutional church politics.⁵

4 July 1776 The Second Continental Congress reveals America’s Declaration of Independence. It contains the phrase, “... all men are created equal ... they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable Rights ...” including their personal liberty.

¹ *Collections of the Massachusetts Historical Society*, 5th ser. 3 (1877), pp. 432–433

² *The impending crisis of 1860: or the present connection of the Methodist Episcopal Church with slavery, and our duty in regard to it*, by Mattison, Hiram, 1859

³ United Methodist Church, Board of Global Ministries, reprint

⁴ *The African Repository*, Volume 25, by American Colonization Society, Washington, D.C., 1849, p334

⁵ *History of Maryland from the earliest period to the present day*, Vol. II, by John Thomas Scharf, pub John B. Piet, Baltimore 1879, p34

c1776 With concerted effort, Methodist leaders bring ‘the enjoyment of gospel blessings’ to souls in bondage. “These efforts added much to the labor of the preachers ... slaves were not permitted, on working days, to attend the public administration of the word in company with their masters; and hence the preachers devoted the evenings to their instruction, after the customary labors of the day were closed.” Slave owners’ reluctance is overcome when the Methodist Society’s mission is finished. “... the voice of the preachers was not heard in favor of emancipation, nor their remonstrances against the evils of slavery heeded, the voice of truth addressed to the understandings and consciences of the slaves themselves, and was often heard with believing and obedient hearts, and made instrumental in their deliverance from the shackles of sin and the bondage of Satan.” Those redeemed are entitled to the privileges of the church. On slaves: “... their behavior has generally been such as to insure the confidence of their masters and the protection of their civil rules, although they labored under the disabilities incident to a state of servitude,” wrote a Methodist historian prior to the Civil War.⁶

1776 Hearing an itinerant Methodist sermonize, Delaware slave ‘Negro Richard’ has a spiritual awakening. Emotionally adrift since his mother and three siblings were sold away, 17-year-old Richard finds security in Methodism. He begins evangelizing. Richard convinces his master, Stokeley Sturgis, to allow Methodist preachers onto the plantation. Rev. Freeborn Garrettson, a repentant former slave master who has also survived the loss of mother and sister, convinces Sturgis that slavery is evil. Under Garrettson’s supervision, Sturgis pens a formal, written agreement: Richard will not be sold for five years. He has that time to hire out his services and earn enough money to buy his freedom and that of his brother.

April 1778 Judge Thomas White of Kent, Delaware is arrested by Revolutionary soldiers and jailed for being a Methodist. The sect’s British roots have raised dangerous animosity among American patriots. Preachers are suspected of being Tory recruiters for the Crown: adherents are accused of being ‘torify’d.’ Unwilling to fight, Freeborn Garrettson is beaten in 1778 and would be jailed in Salisbury, Maryland in 1780.

14 May 1779 Asbury has for two years confined himself to a relatively small circuit in the Chesapeake region. The Delmarva Peninsula - of Delaware, Maryland, and parts of Virginia - becomes the proving ground for Methodism in America. Asbury writes, “He spake long, and much to the purpose,” after Rev. John Hagerty preaches on the new sect’s doctrine. Asbury confides, “I feel some fears lest the people should be offended against the truth, by any improprieties, or undue rashness of expression. But how can we please such as delight in their sins?”⁷ Methodist success in Delaware is reported: “The church grew rapidly, and meeting-houses soon began to spring up all over the county.”⁸

18 May 1779 Southern Methodist preachers assemble at Broken Back Church in Fluvanna, Virginia. For seven years a class leader, preaching to friends and family, Hagerty begins serving ‘on trial’ as an itinerant clergyman. At times referred to as ‘The High Priest’ on account of his tall stature, Hagerty is given the Berkley Circuit in what is now West Virginia. Hagerty and Richard Owens had pioneered in the area four years earlier, establishing a Methodist Class. There are a total of 49 preachers serving 8577 Methodists. Nearly 200 are on the Berkley Circuit.

⁶ *A History Of The Methodist Episcopal Church, Volume II*, by Dr. Nathan Bangs, Pub T. Mason and G. Lane, 1839.

⁷ *Journal of Rev. Francis Asbury: Bishop of the Methodist Episcopal Church, Volume I*, by Francis Asbury, Lane & Scott, New York, 1852, page 310.

⁸ *History of the state of Delaware, Vol. 2*, by Henry Clay Conrad, self-published, Wilmington, Delaware, 1908, page 606.

27 July 1779 George Hardisty dies. Asbury wakes at three a.m. near Kent, Delaware. He has spent the previous day writing letters. "I am much employed, but it is good to make the best of every moment, and carefully to fill up the space of time that may be lost. O! how precious is time! Our moments, though little, are golden sands. I preached a funeral sermon for our late friend and Brother Hardisty, to about one hundred people." Some were solemn, some affected. "The flux prevails," notes Asbury. Called dysentery today, the inflammatory disorder was common on slave ships. Besides widow Drusilla (about 23 years old), George leaves four children: Thomas (age 6), George, Jr. (4), and William (3) are known.

1 March 1780 With the Revolution raging and its outcome in doubt, Pennsylvania's legislature becomes the first in American history to attempt abolition. With Paine as clerk of the assembly, the Gradual Abolition of Slavery Act's preamble states, "We find in the distribution of the human species, that the most fertile as well as the most barren parts of the earth are inhabited by men of complexions different from ours, and from each other; from whence we may reasonably, as well as religiously, infer, that He who placed them in their various situations, hath extended equally His care and protection to all, and that it becometh not us to counteract His mercies." The Act, "shall not give any relief or shelter to any absconding or runaway Negro or Mulatto slave or servant, who has absented himself ... from his or her owner, master or mistress, residing in any other state or country." No slaves are freed. Children who would have otherwise been born into slavery are to be manumitted after 28 years' 'service.' They are 'liable to like correction and punishment' as is meted out to indentured servants. Slaves will get court protection, but are not allowed to bear witness against freemen. The law compensates those 'in whom ownership or rights to service are vested' ... if their slave is executed.

24 April 1780 Asbury publicly opposes all aspects of slavery, as does Methodism's formative General Conference of itinerant preachers, in Baltimore. Hagerty and Garrettson are admitted to 'full connection with the church' and made Assistants. Delaware slave Negro Richard is licensed to preach. The conference asserts, "... slavery is contrary to the laws of God, man, and nature, and hurtful to society; contrary to the dictates of conscience and pure religion, and doing that which we would not others should do to us and ours." Traveling preachers who hold slaves must promise to set them free.

11 June 1780 Massachusetts endorses a new constitution. It asserts, "All men are born free and equal," including slaves. Blacks have the right to vote.

c1782 Methodists license Negro Richard as an 'exhorter.' Working as a woodcutter, then bricklayer, and then moving about the countryside as a teamster in service to the Continental Army, the young slave continues evangelizing. Exhorters often testify to their personal conversion and rely less on sermons derived from Biblical scripture.

7 July 1782 Gathering beside a stream 'for want of a house,' after crossing and re-crossing Catoctin Mountain, Virginia, in heavy rain, Hagerty addresses about 300 people following a short Asbury discourse. "After preaching, we rode to the Branch; making a Sabbath-day's journey of nearly forty miles." A week later Hagerty is still with Asbury, who writes in his journal, "Since Thursday we have ridden sixty miles along incredibly bad roads, and our fare was not excellent. O what pay would induce a man to go through wet and dry, and fatigue and suffering, as we do? —souls are our hire."⁹

20 July 1782 Slaves rebel two hundred miles south of Hagerty and Asbury. They burn several

⁹ *Journal of Rev. Francis Asbury: Bishop of the Methodist Episcopal Church, Volume I*, by Francis Asbury, Lane & Scott, New York, 1852, p 448

buildings in Williamsburg, Virginia.

1783 Negro Richard's nearly constant labor provides - ahead of schedule - the \$2000 Sturgis requires to manumit him and his brother. Freed, Richard takes the surname Allen and sets out to find his family. The brothers never see their family again.

4 February 1783 England declares an end to hostilities in America.

7 October 1783 Virginia's House of Burgesses grants freedom to slaves who served in the Continental Army. Over time, populations of Blacks - freed as a result of service to either revolutionaries or colonial rule - will migrate with other veterans and Quakers into the frontier wilderness that will become Ohio.

30 April 1784 Methodists meet at Ellis' Preaching House in Virginia. Hagerty's wife Sarah will begin receiving compensation from the church while Hagerty serves in Trenton, New Jersey. The group strategizes about stretches in circuits where Methodism has difficulty taking root: "If you are obliged to make use of such-places, to get to more valuable ones, appoint no public preaching, but only meet society in the evening or speak to the black people." While passing through it seems wise to attend to captive audiences.

3 Nov 1784 The highly educated Rev. Thomas Coke arrives in New York to serve as Wesley's second Superintendent of American Methodism. He meets Asbury shortly after his arrival. Journals Coke: "He has given me his black (Harry by name), and borrowed an excellent horse for me."¹⁰ Asbury refers to Black Harry - Harry Hosier - as a traveling companion but employs the former slave as servant and driver. Says Coke, after hearing Hosier: "I really believe he is one of the best preachers in the world, such an amazing power attends his preaching, though he cannot read; and he is one of the humblest creatures I ever saw." Hosier was the first African to preach a Methodist sermon, and the first to preach to a White congregation. A contemporary reports, "He was unboundedly popular, and many would rather hear him than the bishops." Despite a subservient role, Hosier is known to draw larger crowds when he and Garrettson minister together. Says Garrettson, "The Quakers, bless their hearts, thought that since he was unlearned he must preach by immediate inspiration." Methodists never ordain Hosier. He likely dies an alcoholic twenty years later.

25 December 1784 The Methodist Episcopal Church is organized at a 'Christmas Conference' held at Lovely Lane Meeting House in Baltimore. Itinerant clergy elect Asbury and Coke as founding bishops. Hosier and Allen are present. Garrettson and Hagerty are ordained as Elders. Church rules prohibit "buying or selling of the bodies and souls of men, women, or children, with an intention to enslave them." Church members proven to have sold slaves shall be excluded from membership. A traveling preacher who becomes a slaveholder - by any means - shall 'forfeit his ministerial character' unless he emancipates the property 'conformably to the laws of the State in which he lives.' Unless state law forbids it, all Methodists are given one year to begin emancipating their slaves; all manumission, "to be completed in five to ten years, or leave the church." Those who own or traffic in slaves will not be allowed to join the Methodist Church.

9 April 1785 Bishops Asbury and Coke personally inform General Washington (four years prior to his election as President) of their opposition to slavery. Coke is stalked by an assassin - then violently threatened in Virginia - for equating slavery with injustice. Instead of accepting a bounty for giving Coke a hundred lashes with the whip, a local magistrate - after hearing the evangelist preach in a barn - emancipates his 15 slaves. A chain reaction ensues, wherein

¹⁰ *A History of the Origin & Development of the Governing Conference in Methodism*, by Thomas Benjamin Neely, Cranston & Curts, Cincinnati, 1892, p 254

perhaps an additional nine souls are freed from servitude.

Coke organizes church members in North Carolina to petition their legislature that manumission become legal. Failing, Coke returns to Virginia to lead calls for legislative change. This effort too is unsuccessful. Two counties set out indictments against him.

19 September 1785 In Frederick, Maryland, widow Drusilla Hardisty gives a final account of her husband George's estate. Given his dependence on contributions by parishioners, the estate was likely to be small. Given the length of time required to settle the estate, there may have been debts to settle. Drusilla is the mother of four children, one of which may have been born after George's death.

1786 Washington criticizes the activities of a reorganized Society for the Relief of Free Negroes. A fellow Virginia slaveholder has been forced to travel to Philadelphia to deal with "a vexatious lawsuit respecting a slave of his, which a Society of Quakers in the city (formed for such purposes) have attempted to liberate." The future president claims a desire to abolish slavery, but declares it would be "best accomplished through the legislative process."

1786 The Methodist Conference in Baltimore reiterates their founding principles: "We do hold in deepest abhorrence the practice of slavery; and shall not cease to seek its destruction by all wise and prudent means." The group then suspends church rules on slavery in Maryland. "We thought it prudent to suspend the minute concerning slavery, on account of the great opposition that has been given to it, our work being in too infantile a state to push things to extremity," noted Bishop Coke.¹¹

1786 Richard Allen, who has become a successful entrepreneur, begins preaching at St. George's Methodist Episcopal Church in Philadelphia. His segregated, 5am, Sunday morning prayer meetings, and his open-air proselytizing, attract a Black congregation to the largest Methodist Church in what had recently been the second-largest city in the British Empire.

12 September 1786 Drusilla Hardisty gives consent for two sons to be placed in indentured servitude. A contract binds George, Jr. (11) to Joshua Caton, a Maryland farmer who may be descended from the daughter of Charles Carroll, the only Catholic to sign the Declaration of Independence. Son Thomas (13) is bound to his uncle John Hagerty, 'husbandman and farmer,' and his wife Sarah. Hagerty is in the midst of serving two years as Presiding Elder in the New York Conference of Methodists. "While Brother Hagerty was preaching my heart burned within me, I longed so for souls to serve God," penned one convert in his journal. Son William (10) is not mentioned in this court record of Frederick, Maryland. It is not known whether the child was 'bound out' to labor for others ... not an uncommon solution for widows of low means.

26 February 1787 Wesley publicly supports British M.P. William Wilberforce in his crusade to abolish the slave trade.

23 April 1787 Philadelphia abolitionists reorganize as the Pennsylvania Society for Promoting the Abolition of Slavery, Relief of Free Negroes Unlawfully Held in Bondage, and for Improving the Condition of the African Race. With a Protestant majority, they elect former slave master Benjamin Franklin their President. While continuing to litigate cases, abolitionists take up Washington's suggestion and lobby the Pennsylvania legislature. The society funds free, segregated schools and helps former slaves develop social skills so they may better adjust to freedom. Franklin is dispatched across town, to advocate that the Constitutional Convention

¹¹ *Slave religion: the "invisible institution" in the antebellum South*, by Albert J. Raboteau, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1978, p 144

include provisions to abolish slavery in their final document.

13 July 1787 Congress establishes a Northwest Territory (including lands that would become Ohio). Territorial expansion will occur in new states, not by enlarging current boundaries. Though New York and New Jersey continue the practice, slavery is outlawed in the new territory. Some call this law the Freedom Ordinance.

22 August 1787 Marylander Luther Martin proposes framers of the Constitution consider taxing or prohibiting the importation of slaves, something the British had refused colonial government the power to do. Martin observes that, since five slaves are to be counted as three free men in the apportionment of Representatives, slave traffic will be encouraged. Perhaps concerned about putting down revolts, Martin reports that slaves “weaken a part of the Union other parts are bound to protect,” and declares slavery “inconsistent with the principles of the revolution, and dishonorable to the American character...”

“Religion & humanity have nothing to do with this question,” retorted South Carolinian John Rutledge. “Interest alone is the governing principle with nations. The true question at present is whether the southern states shall or shall not be parties to the Union. If northern states consult their interest, they will not oppose the increase of slaves,” pointing out that northern shippers who carry ‘these commodities’ will benefit. Connecticut delegate Oliver Ellsworth adds: “The morality or wisdom of slavery are considerations belonging to the States themselves.”¹²

23 August 1787 Virginian Colonel George Mason speaks during debate. He understands that resident, uncompensated labor inhibits skilled labor: “Slavery discourages arts & manufactures. (Slaves) prevent the immigration of Whites, who really enrich & strengthen a Country.” A slave owner not opposed to the institution, Mason moralizes on slave masters. Slaves, he said, “produce the most pernicious effect on manners. Every master of slaves is born a petty tyrant. They bring the judgment of heaven upon a country.” Another South Carolinian, Charles Cotesworth Pinckney, observes that “South Carolina and Georgia cannot do without slaves,” and that banning imports will disadvantage his constituents while benefiting Virginia, who “has more than she wants.” To ban imports would be to “exclude South Carolina from the Union.” Elbridge Gerry, from Massachusetts, tells the body it has no business regulating slavery, but sagely suggests, “... we ought to be careful not to give any sanction to it.”¹³

1787 Though it is not strictly church-affiliated, Wesley publicly encourages the formation of the Society for the Abolition of the Slave Trade, the first group to address abolition in Britain.

Spring 1788 Freeborn Garrettson becomes Presiding Elder for the church in New York and, with other young preachers, “entered into a work of revival that was spreading north through Westchester County.” It is the beginning of the Second Great Awakening. “Mr. Garrettson was assigned to this district with a band of young men, whom he sent out to find fields of labor, himself passing over the whole territory once in every three months, and putting in his own labor where it seemed most needed.”¹⁴

21 June 1788 New Hampshire ratifies the U. S. Constitution, making it the law of the land. The document does not mention slavery, an American institution then in effect for 168 years. Article I, Section 9 defers debate on the slave trade for twenty years. Article IV, Section 2 prohibits free states from imposing any law to prevent the recapture of persons ‘held to Service or Labour.’”

¹² *Debates in the Federal Convention of 1787* as reported by James Madison

¹³ *ibid*

¹⁴ *Bi-centennial history of Albany: History of the county of Albany, Volume 2*, by George Rogers Howell & Jonathan Tenney, pub. W.W. Munsell, New York, 1886.

Slave-catchers are granted license to operate in free states. “The Constitution affords effectual security to the owners of slaves. The States have a plenary power to make all laws necessary for the regulation of slavery, and the rights of slave owners, while slaves remain within their territorial limits,” observed Rev. Henry Bascom, prior to becoming a Methodist bishop and then President of Transylvania University. “Every Northern man, every abolitionist even, ... as a citizen of the United States, is a party in solemn and public treaty with every Southern man, every slaveholder ... not to disturb the right of property in this respect, nor in any way thwart the intended purposes of its constitutional guaranty.”¹⁵

The acceptance of slavery is integral to the compromising compact that establishes union.

1790 Congress selects Philadelphia to be the nation’s capital.

3 February 1790 In his last public act, Franklin, as President of the Pennsylvania Society promoting the abolition of slavery, petitions Congress. He seeks equal liberty for slaves. “The Christian religion teaches us to believe, and the political creed of Americans fully coincides with the position,” he testifies.

1791 Hagerty leaves itinerant ministry due to the ill health of his wife. He establishes himself as a Baltimore publisher and produces visual aids, including broadsheets like *The Tree of Life*; which graphically depict vices and virtues, so that illiterate souls may better receive instruction. He serves on the Methodist board that founds Baltimore Academy; likely segregated, but open to children of all faiths.

2 March 1791 Wesley, the founder of Methodism, dies in England as clerical governance emerges among American Methodists. In an era of unprecedented democratization, the new denomination excludes lay members from direct participation in their General Conferences. They are often closed-door affairs, open to itinerant clergy who select amongst themselves for clerical leadership. “As the young men began to be advanced to the executive offices, it was interesting to observe how the influence of power operated upon the minds of some, in transforming the simple, loving brother into a man of consequence; and how the presiding genius selected and moulded the subordinate agents and ministers of discipline,” noted a Methodist preacher, after making reference to Wesley’s preference for aristocratic over republican values. “The principles and the germs of a hierarchy were then incorporated in the very foundation of our primitive existence. Instances are not wanting in our recollection of early times, of highhanded measures over inferior preachers and societies, which would not now [*1821 – ed.*] be attempted, and if attempted, would not be submitted to, such as suspending preachers, tearing class papers, etc. The dictatorial manner in which some of these seconds and thirds in command ruled, furnished melancholy evidence of undefined power to supplant brotherly love, and proves undeniably that in our church there is no place to extol the primitive liberties. The choice of all executive men was then, as now, exclusively in the hands of the supreme head. The principles of the hierarchy as they were constituted in 1784, were, with a steady and undeviating hand, carried into practice, and guarded with the utmost vigilance.”

1 July 1791 Rev. Garretson writes from New York: “Albany still appears to be a poor place for Methodism.” He preaches at City Hall. The next day, “... he met a few friends in a private house and joined them into a society under the Methodist discipline.”¹⁶

¹⁵ *Methodism and slavery: with other matters in controversy between the North and South*, Henry Bidleman Bascom, print. Hodges, Todd & Prewitt, Frankfort, KY, 1845

¹⁶ *Bi-centennial History of Albany, Volume 2*, by George Rogers Howell and Jonathan Tenney, pub. W.W. Munsell, New York, 1886

22 August 1791 French-controlled territory borders the western United States. Inspired by the French Revolution, slaves rebel in Saint-Domingue (now referred to as the Republic of Haiti). Fear of insurrection spreads through slaveholding populations in the United States. Even non-slaveholders fear instability in the fledgling United States, as well as lament the cost of restoring order, should insurrection spread.

1792 At perhaps aged 16, William Hardesty is ‘received on trial’ into the Methodist Episcopal Church.¹⁷ This is likely to mean he (and a William Early¹⁸) begins a one- year probationary period to determine whether his work is suitable to church authorities. Writing of Bishop Asbury’s enjoyment in ‘watching souls coming to Christ,’ it is observed, “The Hardesty family was also brought in. Mr. Asbury preached the funeral of Father Hardesty in 1779. His son William was a traveling preacher in the Philadelphia Conference for several years.” The young Rev. Hardesty becomes one of 104 Methodist preachers in America.

June 1792 Directed by White leadership, and partly in response to Allen’s success at expanding African American membership, St. George’s Church physically segregate Black members. While they kneel during worship, White trustees try to manhandle Africans to less visible areas. Rev. Allen convinces Blacks to remain in their seats. A scuffle ensues. Black members walk out, depleting church membership by more than fifty percent. Some form an all-Black Episcopal congregation; few want anything to do with Methodism. “We had subscribed largely towards finishing St. George's Church, in building the gallery and laying new floors, and just as the house was made comfortable, we were turned out from enjoying the comforts of worshipping therein,” said Allen. “We then hired a storeroom, and held worship by ourselves. Here we were pursued with threats of being disowned, and read publicly out of meeting if we did continue worship in the place we had hired; but we believed the Lord would be our friend.”¹⁹ Allen rejects an offer to become the first African Episcopal priest, saying, ““I informed them I could not be anything else but a Methodist, as I was born and awakened under them.”²⁰

In addition to running his business ventures, Allen pours energy into the Free African Society he co-founded in 1787. Later described by W. E. B DuBois as “the first, wavering step of a people toward organized social life,” dues-paying members, mostly Black, provide material aid to the sick, widowed and jobless; Allen encourages marriage, family formation and an organized religious life. Philadelphia philanthropists decline to participate: they raise \$12-15,000 to relocate refugee slaveholders displaced by revolts in Saint-Domingue.

1792 William Hardesty is dispatched, in ‘traveling connection’ to evangelize along the rudimentary Wyoming Circuit (northeastern Pennsylvania, and reaching into the southern tier of New York), part of Garretson’s New York district. “The meetings of the Methodists were held in private or schoolhouses, and in barns or in the open air when the weather permitted.”²¹ Hardesty becomes the second itinerant pastor to ride this circuit, formed the previous year. While mostly engaging souls unfamiliar with his task, there are perhaps 100 Methodist members, about half in the Ross Hill class at Wilkes-Barre, which had formed about 1781. It is a tough

¹⁷ *A History Of The Methodist Episcopal Church, Volume IV*, by Dr. Nathan Bangs, Pub T. Mason and G. Lane, 1839

¹⁸ *Minutes of the Annual Conferences of the Methodist Episcopal Church 1773-1828*, Pub. Mason & Lane, 1840, p 44

¹⁹ *The Life, Experience, and Gospel Labours of the Rt. Rev. Richard Allen*, by Richard Allen, Martin & Boden, Philadelphia, 1833, p 14

²⁰ *Methodists and Revolutionary America, 1760-1800: The Shaping of an Evangelical Culture*, by Dee E. Andrews, Princeton University Press, 2000

²¹ *History of Luzerne County Pennsylvania*, H. C. Bradsby, Editor, S. B. Nelson & Co., 1893 (Chap XVI)

assignment, best suited to a single man. "Long rides, often scanty fare, small pay, preaching almost daily, large revivals, phenomenal camp meetings, comprise the history. If all its details might be known its record would be romantically glorious,"²² cites an area historian. Hardesty leads a class at what will become the Plymouth Methodist Episcopal Church in Luzerne County, Pennsylvania.²³ At the southernmost part of his circuit, Hardesty may be 100 miles north of the nation's capital in Philadelphia.

c1792 Garrettson travels along the Mohawk River as far as Utica, as well as along the Chenango and Susquehanna Rivers. He and Hardesty are in proximity; undoubtedly in close relationship.

February 1793 George Washington signs the Fugitive Slave Act. The law makes it a Federal crime to assist an escaping slave, and imposes a \$500 fine (equivalent to 26 ounces of gold). The Act makes every escaped slave a fugitive for life (unless manumitted by the owner). Slaves can be recaptured at any time, anywhere within the territory of the United States; along with any children subsequently born to fugitive mothers.

June 1793 French naval personnel and refugee slaveholders arriving from Saint-Domingue introduce 'Yellow Jack' to Philadelphia, the nation's capital and largest urban area. The acute, viral disease – also called Yellow Fever – causes jaundice, producing a yellow caste to the skin.

2-8 July 1793 Bishop Asbury rides the Wyoming Circuit, likely to observe Hardesty in the field. "We wrought up the hills and narrows to Wyoming," recorded Asbury, of environs near a place then called 'New Troy' ... at the confluence of Abraham's Creek and the Susquehanna. The men rode at night through what are today an approach to Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania. "We stopped at a poor house; nevertheless, they were rich enough to sell us a bushel of oats; and they had sense enough to make us pay well for them." A few miles downstream, "There was a great noise among the sinners," on Independence Day. There the Methodists "called a few people together from their work" to instruct the Plymouth class. "The inhabitants here are very wicked," said Asbury.²⁴ It may be that, during his tenure, Hardesty paid close attention to Benjamin and Gilbert Carpenter's water-powered mills at New Troy.²⁵

1793 A Methodist Conference, having no doubts as to his piety, gifts or usefulness, admits William Hardesty into 'full connection.'²⁶ John Hagerty and Freeborn Garrettson are two of 98 Elders present as Hardesty is ordained as a Deacon in the church.

August 1793 Revolutionary Benjamin Rush, a physician, advises all Philadelphians "that can

²² *History of the Wyoming Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church*, Chaffee, Amasa Franklin. New York: Eaton & Mains, 1904, page 24.

²³ *History of Luzerne County Pennsylvania*, H. C. Bradsby, Editor, S. B. Nelson & Co., 1893 (Chap XVI)

²⁴ *Minutes of the Cincinnati Annual Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church for the Quadrennium 1896-1899, Vol. XII*, Cincinnati Western Methodist Book Concern, 1899; pages 315-316. Reminiscence of Rev. Thomas H. Pearne, citing Asbury journals. Says Asbury of an 1807 visit without Hardesty: "Once more I am in Wyoming. We have wearied through, and clambered over, one hundred miles of the rough roads of wild Susquehanna! O the precipitous banks, wedging narrows, rocks, sidelong hills, obstructed paths and fords – scarcely fordable – roots, stumps, and gullies."

²⁵ *History of Luzerne County Pennsylvania*, H. C. Bradsby, Editor, S. B. Nelson & Co., 1893; page 36: "As early as 1780 or 1781 Benjamin Carpenter ... located on Abram's creek, at the lower end of the gorge where the creek breaks through the Kingston mountains. Here he built a gristmill." See also Borough of West Wyoming's post of 'The History of West Wyoming,' taken from the 1998 *West Wyoming Centennial Book*: "The area was actually called Carpenter's Mills, due to the mills Benjamin and his brother Gilbert owned along Abrahams Creek." "Gilbert Carpenter was also active in the early economic [growth] of the area. He was a devoted Methodist and eventually organized the Carverton Methodist Church," before the brothers moved to Ohio.

²⁶ *Minutes of the Annual Conferences of the Methodist Episcopal Church 1773-1828*, Pub Mason & Lane, 1840, page 48. (A William Early is listed with Hardesty.)

move, to quit the city." Panic ensues. The afflicted begin bleeding in the mouth and eyes. As the disease turns fatal they vomit black, congealed blood. City and Federal government collapse as all with means flee. Rush declares Africans immune from the pestilence and proposes barbaric treatment for the afflicted.

5 September 1793 "Two Negroes, former slaves, whom white men had been insulted in a house of God (St. George's Church) ... were now the first to show that fear could be conquered by the spirit of Christian love."²⁷ Reverends Allen and Absalom Jones (who has left Methodism for an Episcopal post) engage their Free African Society in ministry to all, without regard for race. Underprivileged Blacks see to orphans deserted by their families. They nurse many who perish. The economy collapses, yet coffin-making booms and good wages are paid for disposing of a mounting number of bodies.

10 September 1793 Washington departs the capital, to 'keep his wife safe.' He announces he will return in fifteen days. Mayor Mathew Clarkson, abandoned by his cabinet, remains among Philadelphia's unfortunates.

October 1793 Each day a hundred Philadelphians die in a most grotesque fashion. Hospitals refuse patients with fever. The almshouse overflows. Food grows scarce. African Americans heed the pastor's call, often moving into quarantined homes where they are physically confined: "The cases of the nurses, in many instances, were deserving of commiseration, the patient raging and frightful to behold," wrote Allen and Absalom. "Thus were many of the nurses circumstanced alone, until the patient died, then called away to another scene of distress, and thus have been for a week or ten days left to do the best they could without any sufficient rest, many of them having some of their dearest connections sick at the time, and suffering for want, while they have been engaged in the service of White people."²⁸

Andrew Hamilton's abandoned estate, Bush Hill, is commandeered. A barrelmaker and wealthy merchant erect 'Contagion City' there, just beyond the city's limits. The facility is overwhelmed: it is overcrowded and understaffed, a scene of unrelenting carnage in the guise of primitive medical care.

Armed patrols bar refugees from entering New York. Intent on preventing the spread of the fever, terrified rioters attack brothels over two nights. Magistrates declare 'boys, apprentices and Negroes as well as Sailors, formed a great proportion of the persons concerned' in the 'shameful' Wharehouse Riots.

November 1793 Frost makes dormant mosquitoes carrying the contagion. Gone two months, Washington returns to the capital. He takes up residence in nearby Germantown, Pennsylvania.

December 1793 Though he fled the city, publisher Mathew Carey rushes into print *A Short Account of the Malignant Fever, 1793*. Understanding Rush's pronouncement on race immunity to the fever to have been false, Carey writes, "The error that prevailed on this subject had a salutary effect; for, at an early period of the disorder, few White nurses could be procured; and, had the negroes been equally terrified, the sufferings of the sick, great as they actually were, would have been exceedingly aggravated." The tract goes through four editions worldwide, making Carey wealthy enough to start a profitable Bible printing business. He never fully recants charges that nurses extorted patients and plundered their homes. The document slurs Allen and Jones,

²⁷ *Bring Out Your Dead, the Great Plague of Yellow Fever in 1793*, John Harvey Powell, Philadelphia University Press, 1949, preface

²⁸ *A Narrative of the Proceedings of the Black People, during the Late Awful Calamity in Philadelphia*, Richard Allen & Absalom Jones, Wm. Woodward, Philadelphia, 1793, p 14

accusing them of profiting from their service.

1794 Reverends Allen and Jones publish a rebuttal, demonstrating in great detail how disenfranchised and impoverished free Blacks had performed selflessly and without compensation. Mayor Clarkson declares his “approbation of their proceedings, as far as it came within my notice.” The clergymen state, “We feel a great satisfaction in believing that we have been useful to the sick,”²⁹ and publicly thank the Presbyterian Doctor Rush for enabling them to help. Between four and five thousand – about one in ten of the city’s original population – have died, been carted away and buried. All races succumbed in equal ratios.

1794 Having been individually examined, along with all other Methodist preachers, Hardesty is judged ‘blameless in life and conversation.’ With Levin Moore, he is assigned the Calvert Circuit in Maryland. It is a plumb assignment: an area well-traveled by Methodists for twenty years; there are structures in place. In 1785 a chapel had been erected in what is now Friendship, Maryland. By 1789 the Calvert Circuit was thought to link the largest number of Methodists in any one circuit. There are ample funds to feed and support preachers. Nelson Reed is the presiding elder. Construction has begun on Federal City (which will become known as Washington, D.C.), across the river from the slave-trading center of Alexandria, Virginia.

4 February 1794 Revolutionary France outlaws slavery in its colonies.

May 1794 Allen’s altruism during the epidemic mollifies some, while St. George’s White elders threaten to disown the Black splinter group from Methodist connection. Ten Black Methodists join Allen in forming an independent congregation that adheres to Methodist teaching. “If you deny us your name, you cannot seal up the scriptures from us, and deny us a name in heaven,” Allen tells a St George’s elder. Allen’s followers sell subscriptions to raise money. “Dr. Rush did much for us in public by his influence,” says Allen. The former slave purchases a blacksmith shop and has it towed to a property he owns. With his own carpentry skills, Allen crafts a church.

29 July 1794 Asbury dedicates Allen’s church, which is the first in the Methodist denomination to attend first and foremost to the needs of African Americans. At the suggestion of an elder from predominantly White St. George’s, Allen’s Philadelphia congregation is named Bethel Methodist Episcopal Church, and will come to be known as Mother Bethel. There will be no White pastors, although church oversight remains in the hands of St. George’s White elders.

1795 William Hardesty becomes an Elder in the Methodist Episcopal Church. He is one of 125 bearing such title. With Joseph Rowen, and supervised by Elder John Merrick, Hardesty attends to the Bristol Circuit in Bucks County, Pennsylvania. Before returning to England at the outbreak of hostilities, British Army Captain Thomas Webb had preached here, along the banks of the Delaware River, as early as 1769. A regular circuit had begun in 1790. Circuit riders in this area generally meet in member’s homes. Though the Bristol Court House is employed for services, St Georges’ in Philadelphia is the nearest Methodist structure. There, in 1795, Rev. Allen opens a day school for sixty, non-White children. In 1804 Allen will found the Society of Free People of Colour for Promoting the Instruction and School Education of Children of African Descent.

1796 Coke & Asbury declare slave trafficking a crime. “It was, indeed, in some measure, overlooked in the Jews, by reason of the wonderful hardness of their hearts, as was the keeping of concubines and divorcing of wives at pleasure; but is totally opposite to the whole spirit of the Gospel. It has an immediate tendency to fill the mind with pride and tyranny, and is frequently productive of almost every act of lust and cruelty which can disgrace the human species.”

1 September 1796 President Washington presses Treasury Secretary Oliver Wolcott to enlist New

²⁹ *ibid*, pp 16 & 23

Hampshire's Collector of Customs, Joseph Whipple, in seizing Oney Judge. Since the age of ten, Judge has been one of his wife Martha's more than 150 dower slaves, "and was handy and useful to her, being perfect Mistress of her needle." Washington ends his request with, "...the ingratitude of the girl, who was brought up and treated more like a child than a Servant, ought not to escape with impunity if it can be avoided."³⁰

Whipple interviews Judge, who had, in May, fled the President's House in Philadelphia. Whipple ascertains Judge's 'complete thirst for freedom' and refuses the Chief Executive's personal request, suggesting he employ the courts. Judge subsequently offers to return to Mt. Vernon if guaranteed manumission upon her owners' deaths. Washington replies, in his own hand: "...it would neither be politic or just to reward *unfaithfulness* with a premature preference [*for manumission – ed.*]; and thereby discontent beforehand the minds of all her fellow-servants who by their steady attachments are far more deserving than herself of favor." Judge remains in New Hampshire.

20 October 1796 Every four years the Methodist Episcopal Church leadership meets in General Conference to govern the entire church body. This conference prohibits slaveholders from taking official stations in the church. All children born to church members' slaves are to be free from birth. The Church seeks to eradicate "this enormous evil."

Selling a soul requires excommunication; buying one requires a contract for manumission ... after 'the unfortunate' has 'worked out the price of his purchase.' People living under these conditions are called 'term slaves.'

Surviving records of quarterly meetings of the Dorchester Circuit, in Maryland, describe how one Methodist body fulfilled their charge. They rule:

3 March 1804 A parishioner buys 'Negro girl Chloe.' He remains in good standing by contracting to free the child in twelve years.

12 July 1805 'Negro man Roger,' purchased for \$318 at aged 25, is required to spend nine years in slavery before his Methodist master shall recoup his investment and free him.

14 March 1806 Ten-year-old James Viney (£123 paid for him and his 19-year-old brother Joseph) will slave nine years longer than his brother. Both boys are given terms that conclude when they reach 25 years of age, respectively.

5 September 1806 Peggy Turnbull purchases eight-year-old 'girl Sal' for \$85: the church rules Sal is to remain Peggy's personal property until she attains 21 years ... a church-approved sentence of 13 years and a rate of \$6.50/year.

1806 Sarah fetches \$50 ... at four years of age. The toddler is to remain in enslaved until aged 21 (17 years). Though she is 80 years old, a Methodist pays \$100 for Negro Alse: if she lived, she would have worked off her debt and been free to go at age 87.

Dorchester's quarterly meetings follow up on their rulings. On 6 August 1814, more than nine years after buying 16-year-old Ben for £75, and negotiating a contract that forced him to labor until age 25, Daniel Martin is called back before the body: Martin refuses to grant assurance of Ben's emancipation. Records indicate the conference 'refused to grant (Martin) license,' which likely indicates Martin had sought to become a Methodist pastor or lay leader.

1797 Evangelizing on plantations is paying off. Almost 60 percent of Methodist Episcopal

³⁰ *The writings of George Washington from the original manuscript sources*, ed. J. C. Fitzpatrick, U. S. Govt. Print. Offc., Washington, 1931

Church membership (2284 souls) in Delaware is ‘colored.’ More than five thousand African Americans in Maryland make up more than 40 percent of that state’s Methodist population. Pennsylvania lists 198 Methodists as colored. Nearly one fourth of the entire Methodist church’s American membership is African American.³¹

1797 Elder William Hardesty begins ministry in Talbot, Maryland. He, with John Falcom, serve a district overseen by Christopher Spry.

1798 William Hardesty follows Presiding Elder Spry to new ministry in Northampton (perhaps on Virginia’s eastern peninsula, known since 1662 as a homeland for free Blacks). He serves with Archibald Foster.

1799 Asbury brings Allen squarely into the fold. He ordains the former slave as Methodism’s first biracial deacon. Rev. Allen has prospered. He owns many Philadelphia properties and runs several enterprises: his chimney sweeps count George Washington as a client.

1799 William Hardesty remains in Spry’s district, but takes up the Caroline Circuit in Delaware with Deacon Caleb Kendall. A far less primitive assignment than the Wyoming Circuit, the 23-year old will be among structures built the year following his father’s 1779 death in those environs: Barratt’s Chapel (the oldest Methodist structure in existence, which migrated from interracial to segregated balcony seating at some point), Bethel Church, White’s Chapel, and Green’s Chapel at Canterbury.³² In William Hardesty’s era, a meeting is organized in Newark, Delaware. A house of worship is erected in Johnstown.

23 May 1799 Asbury returns a borrowed horse and attaches “brother” William Hardesty’s mount to his sulky. The bishop and pastor “wedge ourselves with all our baggage together,” and travel thirty miles in ‘excessive heat’ along the Susquehanna in Maryland. Five days later, at Dagsboro, Asbury apparently keeps the horse and puts Hardesty on a stage for Milford, Delaware.³³ Hardesty has been traveling as a preacher for seven years. If indentured by his mother, it may be that he has never known a home of his own.

September 1799 Oney Judge is a wife and mother in Portsmouth, New Hampshire. She is learning to read. Three months before his death, former President Washington once again seeks to bypass the provisions of the Fugitive Slave Law. He asks nephew Burwell Basset to kidnap Judge and the child they’ve never met. New Hampshire Senator Langdon forewarns Judge and foils the plot. Upon her death in 1802, all of Martha Washington’s slaves (including Martha’s Mulatto half-sister, Ann Dandridge Costin) are divided among four grandchildren. Judge outlives Martha Washington by 46 years. Because of the law, which George Washington likely signed in a private office barely a dozen feet from where Judge slept, Oney Judge lives out her days as a fugitive. She survives her husband and all her children.

9 November 1799 Telemaque, an African slave brought by his master from the West Indies, wins \$1500 in a Charleston, South Carolina lottery. He purchases his own freedom for \$600 but is unable to free his wife and children. He takes the name Denmark Vesey, opens a carpentry shop and joins the segregated Second Presbyterian Church. Vesey buys himself an English education.

30 December 1799 Exercising the Constitutional provision to seek redress of grievances,

³¹ *A History Of The Methodist Episcopal Church, Volume II*, by Dr. Nathan Bangs, Pub T. Mason and G. Lane, 1839: p 63

³² *History of the state of Delaware, Vol. 2*, by Henry Clay Conrad, self-published, Wilmington, Delaware, 1908, p 607

³³ *Journal of Rev. Francis Asbury: Bishop of the Methodist Episcopal Church, Vol. II*, by Francis Asbury, Bangs & Mason, New York 1821, p 345

Philadelphia Blacks petition Congress, still meeting in their city. They seek repeal of the Fugitive Slave Act and for all slaves' gradual emancipation. "We humbly desire you may exert every means in your power to undo the heavy burdens, and prepare the way for the oppressed to go free, that every yoke may be broken."³⁴ Petitioners insist that Blacks have a sacred and prophetic mission to save the republic from White America's racism. "In the Constitution, and the Fugitive bill, no mention is made of Black people or Slaves; therefore, if the Bill of Rights, or the declaration of Congress are of any validity, we beseech that, as we are men, we may be admitted to partake of the Liberties and inalienable Rights therein held forth, firmly believing that the extending of Justice and equity to all Classes, would be a means of drawing down the blessings of Heaven upon this Land."

Asserting that free Blacks lack standing as citizens, the nation's House of Representatives reject the appeal without considering its merit. The vote is 84-1.

Allen takes Wesley's 1774 position: "Give liberty to whom liberty is due, that is, to every child of man, to every partaker of human nature. Let none serve you but by his own act and deed, by his own voluntary choice. Away with all whips, all chains, all compulsion!" Allen contends most Whites have lost faith in true freedom; that Black Americans had become "the people on whom the great experiment in liberty depends."³⁵ He tells parishioners they have a duty to remind the majority of the inclusive dream, inspired by the Great Awakening.

16 May 1800 Hardesty returns to the Talbot, Maryland Circuit, where nearly half of church members are African American. Hardesty preaches at the Methodist's General Conference in Baltimore. "Negro slavery debated again today in Conference, but nothing done further than agreeing on drawing up an address to the State legislators. At night I heard Brother Hardesty preach on Psalm cxix, 126: "It is time for Thee, Lord, to work: for they have made void Thy law."³⁶ Wesley's scriptural notes reveal *his* doctrine regarding this passage: it is a call on God to 'put forth Thy power for the restraint of evildoers. The wicked have abrogated Thy law; have openly cast off its authority.' Hardesty may be trying to influence debate in favor of taking action against slavery. In 1800, William Hardesty will be recorded as the first Pastor at Lebanon Chapel, in the vicinity of Trappe, Maryland.

30 August 1800 Gabriel, a literate blacksmith owned by Virginian Thomas Prosser – and likely aided by two White co-conspirators - plots an armed revolt involving more than a thousand slaves in a complex scheme. Gabriel instructs his followers not to kill Quakers, Methodists or Frenchmen, whom he considered "friendly to liberty." The aborted uprising creates a Great Fear among slaveholders everywhere. Virginia Governor James Monroe and President Thomas Jefferson conspire to keep secret the participation of French revolutionaries. Trials ensue. Virginia pays over \$8900 in compensation to slaveholders for the 27 slaves executed, including Gabriel and his two brothers.

25 September 1800 Investigations reveal Gabriel as a 'serious student of the Bible.' An earlier death sentence had been converted to branding when he was able to quote scripture. Informants declare Gabriel drew inspiration from accounts of Israel's delivery from slavery. An Englishman later reports, "A lawyer who was present at their trials at Richmond informed me that, on one of them being asked what he had to say to the court in his defence, he replied, in a manly tone of

³⁴ Jones, Absalom, 1746-1818, "[Petition of Absalom Jones and Seventy Three Others]," in *Double Consciousness in the Early Republic: The Free Black Community in Philadelphia*, Item #26

³⁵ *Freedom's Prophet: Bishop Richard Allen, the AME Church, and the Black Founding Fathers*, Richard S. Newman, New York University Press, 2008

³⁶ *Centennial History of American Methodism*, by John Atkinson, Phillips & Hunt, New York, 1884, p 472

voice: ‘I have nothing more to offer than what General Washington would have had to offer, had he been taken by the British and put to trial by them. I have adventured my life in endeavouring to obtain the liberty of my countrymen, and am a willing sacrifice to their cause ...’³⁷

Late 1800 In an obvious response to Gabriel’s Uprising, it becomes illegal for Blacks to gather if no Whites are present in Georgia, then South Carolina. Virginia places restrictions on educating or allowing Blacks to hire themselves out.

4 September 1800 Maryland slave owners frequently advertise their dissatisfaction with Christianity’s effect on their chattel. In one edition of the *Maryland Gazette*, two runaways are sought: slave Jacob (35) “professes to be a Methodist, and has been in the practice of preaching nights;” and slave Dick (40) “He is a Methodist Preacher.”³⁸

2 Oct 1800 Liberal Methodist Benjamin Turner obtains a quick return on his investment when Slave Nancy delivers him a male child in Southampton, Virginia not long after her purchase at auction. The Turners become pleased later, when their Methodist congregation stops trying to “eradicate the peculiar institution and set about Christianizing the slaves for a better time ahead.” They encourage the child, Slave Nat to read the bible. Turner has likely fathered Nat by raping his enslaved mother.

20 May 1801 Asbury preaches to Hardesty’s parishioners in Maryland.

24 May 1801 Likely for ‘family concerns,’ William Hardesty (age 25) is ‘located’ by the church. He leaves itinerant ministry. Perhaps with Bishop Asbury officiating, Hardesty marries Lovice (age 18, later referred to as Lousia), daughter of Adam Knauf/Knouff/Knauff/Nauf/Knopf in Frederick, Maryland. Son Adam, named for his maternal grandfather, is born in Maryland the following year.

1802 Emancipationist members of a southern Methodist conference seek legislative change in South Carolina. A Charleston mob burns their antislavery literature.

20 May 1802 France removes sanctions against slavery in her colonies. Employing Polish mercenaries, Napoléon Bonaparte’s brother-in-law loses 50,000 men and 18 generals attempting to restore slavery in Saint-Domingue. French-born slave, Toussaint L’ouverture, Black author of the nation’s separatist constitution, is kidnapped after being lured to parley. He is returned to France and starved to death. Negotiations between Jefferson and Bonaparte conclude the following year ... resulting in the Louisiana Purchase.

12 Oct 1802 Congress authorizes “all male citizens of the United States who reside within the said territory to choose representatives” in forming the State of Ohio. It is likely that free Blacks go to the polls to choose convention delegates.

19 February 1803 Ohio enters the Union as a ‘free state.’ Ohioans show ‘tacit tolerance’ of slavery, however. “Numbers of slaves, as many as two thousand it was sometimes supposed, were hired . . . from Virginia and Kentucky, chiefly by farmers.”³⁹

25 March 1803 Parts of Jefferson and Washington Counties become Columbiana County, Ohio.

³⁷ *American Negro Slave Revolts* by Herbert Aptheker, Columbia University Press, New York 1943, p 226

³⁸ *Slave Religion: The "Invisible Institution" in the Antebellum South*, by Albert J. Raboteau, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1978, p 146

³⁹ *The Underground Railroad from Slavery to Freedom*, by Wilbur Henry Siebert, Macmillan, New York 1899, p 29

29 November 1803 Blacks will no longer be allowed to vote in Ohio. Instead of going out for referendum, Ohio's Constitutional Convention ratifies its own document. Thomas Jefferson is alleged to have penned a resolution to permit slavery in the new state. It fails by one vote. He later tells Congressman Jeremiah Morrow he regrets Ohio had not made slavery legal.⁴⁰ The constitution does not affirm any rights for African Americans; it is silent on segregating public education and militia service. Owners retain rights to all slaves in their possession. Indentured servitude remains, but the servant must be freed by age 18 if female, 21 if male, "unless such person shall enter into such indenture, while in a state of perfect freedom."⁴¹

1804 Buttressed by Cincinnati ordinances, Ohio begins its experiment in democracy by adopting a series of 'Black Laws,' to discourage African Americans and Mulattos from settling. It segregates those in residence. Legislation requires in-migrating Blacks to pay \$500 to the state as bail/bond – in advance – in the event they are jailed. To work lawfully, all Blacks are required to submit a certificate of freedom or obtain signatures of support from two White citizens. State laws prohibit Blacks from attending even segregated public schools, or receiving public aid of any kind. They cannot serve as witnesses against Whites; none may intermarry. Veterans may not join the militia.

1804 Second son Joseph is born to William and Louisa Hardesty, likely in Maryland. Louisa's father begins buying Ohio land for himself and others, along the best lane of egress ... the Native People's Great Trail (also seen as Tuscarawas Trail), connecting Maryland to the Great Lakes.

1 January 1804 Saint-Domingue, becomes the first independent nation in Latin America. Now an elective monarchy, the Empire of Haiti represents the only slave rebellion to culminate in independence. The 1805 constitution will bar Whites from owning land.

7 May 1804 The Methodist General Conference exempts clergy and church members in Georgia, Tennessee and the Carolinas from Wesley's prohibitions of slavery. This initiates a process of concession and compromise in the denomination. Methodist slave masters will allow slaves to purchase their freedom only when civil law permits.

25 January 1805 Third son John is born to the Hardestys; reportedly in the newly-formed county of Columbiana, Ohio. John's obituary later reports his parents, "were among the early pioneers of the eastern part of the territory (now state) of Ohio. In leaving the State of Maryland they left civilization behind them, but they took with them that true and self-denying principle of Christian faith so common with the professors of the Christian religion of the early settlers of the western continent, and planted it in the wilderness of ... Ohio." His father's house was the home of the missionary of the Cross: for years it was the only place of worship in the neighborhood.⁴²

January 1806 Jefferson refuses to recognize the Haitian regime. Instead, his administration imposes a trade embargo on the newly independent nation. On 17 October 1807 Emperor Jacques I is assassinated. Haiti devolves to tyrannical, militarily enforced rule. The island divides against itself for 50 years.

16 June 1806 Two hundred tents are pitched along the Dover Circuit in Delaware. William Hardesty preaches on the sixth day of a weeklong camp meeting. His sermon is based on Psalm 34v5: *Those who look to him are radiant; their faces are never covered with shame.* "There were

⁴⁰ *The Black Laws: Race and the Legal Process in Early Ohio*, by Stephen Middleton, Ohio University Press, Athens, 2005, p 37

⁴¹ *Slave Religion: The "Invisible Institution" in the Antebellum South*, by Albert J. Raboteau, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1978, p 146

⁴² *Porter County Vidette*, 22 August 1878, Volume 22, Issue Number 34, p 3, Columns 8 and 9

this day two hundred and sixty-four conversions and fifty sanctifications,"⁴³ or cleansings of the spirit. As the denomination matures, and congregants can afford to build physical structures, seating arrangements will bring racial conflict into sharp relief. Outdoor revivals allow races to mix more freely. Eleven hundred conversions to Methodism were reported during the week.

3 March 1807 Jefferson signs legislation prohibiting coastal slave trade and the importation of slaves into the U. S. The law becomes effective on 1 January 1808, the earliest date permitted by the Constitution. Overland importation of slaves - through Texas and Florida - rises, but does not match South Carolina's smuggling. Federal forces rarely intervene, even after making seaborne smuggling an act of piracy in 1820.

25 March 1807 Parliament abolishes the slave trade within the British Empire. The institution of slavery remains legal in the realm until 1833. In order to reduce a £100 per slave fine, captains of slave ships - when confronted by the Royal Navy - are known to simply jettison living cargo.

1808 The Methodist General Conference changes stance and "authorizes each Annual Conference (regional district) to form their own regulations, relative to buying and selling slaves." Church-wide, trafficking in - and ownership of - human beings becomes tacitly approved among Methodists. Bishops are authorized to ordain "colored persons, free or slaves, to the office of Deacon," but it is deemed unadvisable to publish the fact. Nine years later the policy is finally made public.

1808 A slave speculator brings a constable to the door of Bethel Church in Philadelphia. He has bought the rights to a fugitive slave and avers Rev. Allen has recently escaped. The speculator, under the provisions of the Fugitive Slave Act, orders the constable to lawfully seize the 20-year resident, so that he may sell his investment in the south. Allen sues for false accusation and perjury. Unable to make \$800 bail, the speculator is remanded to Walnut Street Prison. Allen, who has been helping fugitive slaves resettle since at least 1784, takes up the mission in earnest.

13 February 1808 Stark County, Ohio is formed from Columbiana.

1 Feb 1809 Asbury leads a Virginia Annual Conference. He observes that only three of the 84 preachers present are married. "The high taste of these Southern folks will not permit their families to be degraded by an alliance with a Methodist traveling preacher, and thus involuntary celibacy is imposed upon us. All the better," notes the unmarried cleric, "anxiety about worldly possessions does not stop our course, and we are saved from pollution of negro slavery and oppression." Lacking opportunities for social advancement, Methodist preachers cannot afford slaves. Asbury is discouraged by the slow growth in membership in this conference. He confides in his journal: "We are defrauded of great numbers by the pains that are taken to keep the blacks from us. Their masters are afraid of the influence of our principles." He privately explores church doctrine that classifies slaveholding as sin. "Would not an amelioration in the condition and treatment of slaves have produced more practical good to the poor Africans than any attempt at their emancipation?" Asbury's highest priority is saving souls. The only Methodist Bishop on American soil fears African Americans are unequipped to handle their freedom. "What is the personal liberty of the African, which he may abuse, to the salvation of his soul; how may it be compared?"⁴⁴

1810 For two years, Zanesville replaces Chillicothe as Ohio's capital city. This is one day's walk

⁴³ *Reminiscences, Historical and Biographical, of Sixty-four Years in the Ministry*, Henry Boehm, Carlton & Porter, NY 1866, p 149

⁴⁴ *The Heart of Asbury's Journal*, Ed. Ezra Squier Tipple, Jennings & Graham, Cincinnati, 1904, p 608

closer to the land Adam Knauff is paying taxes on ... in Columbiana County.

1811 Spain abolishes slavery in Florida.

December 1811 Following the birth of daughter Eliza (in 1806 or '08), William Jr. is born to William and Louisa Hardesty, perhaps in Lisbon, Ohio. William Jr.'s great-grandson (Paul Hardesty) will later report the cellar of William Sr.'s subsequent homestead to connect by tunnel to a nearby barn, and that Rev. William Hardesty gave refuge and direction to fleeing fugitive slaves. Barn scents confused tracking dogs.

18 June 1812 The United States declares war on Britain. As in the Revolution, Britain encourages defection by offering freedom to American slaves. Thousands fight. Many more simply slip away from their masters. Those who do not reenlist in British forces are resettled in Trinidad, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick Canada. Americans demand the slaves' return as part of postwar negotiations. Part of the \$1,204,960 Britain pays in reparations is to compensate slave owners for the loss of tens of thousands of slaves.

5 November 1812 Son George is the sixth child born to William and Louisa Hardesty.

1812 Membership in Bethel Church, the fastest growing congregation in Philadelphia, exceeds a thousand members. White Methodist elders repeatedly try forcing their way into the pulpit, as a show of legal possession. Just as often, Allen's supporters block the clerics' attempts, shouting down the intruders.

1813 Rev. William Hardesty has returned to ministry. He is stationed at Milford, in the Delaware District of the Methodist Episcopal Church's Philadelphia Conference. It is likely that he is preaching from a church pulpit and no longer riding a circuit. He is familiar with the territory: Milford was Hardesty's destination when Asbury retained his mount and put him on a coach in 1799. Hardesty preaches in the cradle where African American congregations are establishing independence for the first time. Blacks in Dover, Delaware withdraw from the Methodist Episcopal Church--but not from Methodism--to form an independent church, with the formation of what is today the African Union Methodist Protestant Church. Also near where Hardesty has located, Blacks; leaving Asbury Methodist Episcopal Church in Wilmington, Delaware; incorporate themselves as the Union American Methodist Episcopal Church.

1815 Louisa Hardesty's father, Adam Knauf, dies in Columbiana, Ohio. Her son Philip Willard is born 15 March, near Hanover, in Columbiana County. An 1872 biographical sketch of Philip Willard will report, "His father was a descendant of the Puritans, and his mother of the Huguenots. His paternal grandmother [Drusilla] was of Irish descent. She was the sister of the Rev. John Haggerty, of Baltimore, one of the first Methodist ministers on the continent."⁴⁵ Political diversity is tolerated in the Hardesty home. The Philip Willard sketch continues: "His father and brothers were of the old Whig party; but, when a boy, the subject of this narrative enlisted under the Democratic banner, and is and always has been a political lone star in a brotherhood of ten."

c1815 It is discovered that Black Methodists in Charleston, South Carolina have been pooling their money to purchase the freedom of enslaved congregants. Although Blacks account for 90% of Charleston's Methodist population, White church elders restrict Black autonomy and intercept all church receipts. Demonstrating the power of their position, White elders declare plans to desecrate an African American cemetery by constructing a Hearse House atop the graves. Under the leadership of Methodist Morris Brown, 4,000 souls leave segregated churches to meet in

⁴⁵ *History of Northwestern Ohio and History of Paulding County, Ohio*. Pub. H. H. Hardesty & Co., Chicago and Toledo. 1882

secret. Denmark Vesey (having parlayed lottery winnings and carpentry skills into a net worth amounting to thousands of dollars) exits the Presbyterian Church, where Blacks are taught St. Paul's admonition: "Servants, obey your masters."

June 1815 St. George's elders bring civil suit in a Philadelphia court. Blacks are not generally permitted to testify against Whites in either church or civic affairs. The court rules that White elders own Bethel Church. Not wanting the property, church leaders put it up for auction. Allen buys his church for the extraordinary sum of \$10,125. The Philadelphia Antislavery Society is listed along with Allen in the certificate that formally transfers ownership. The Society also defends Allen in a subsequent lawsuit by a St. George's minister who claims he retains a right to preach at Bethel. Courts grant Bethel complete autonomy. Allen continues to use the building to preach Methodist doctrine.

1815-1816 Parents to six boys and a girl, the Hardestys are beginning to breed a sizable work force. After raising a log cabin, Rev. William Hardesty builds a gristmill on the banks of Big Sandy Creek in east-central Ohio. He is following a model of drawing commercial success from the wilderness that he witnessed while preaching along the rugged Wyoming Circuit. It is the first grist mill in the county. Hardesty may not observe the Sabbath very strictly: "Mr. Hardesty took his surplus stock of mill products to Cleveland by wagon. It required a week to make the trip and sometimes a part or all of Sunday."⁴⁶

31 March 1816 Bishop Asbury dies in Virginia. He is buried in Baltimore.

9 April 1816 Allen invites all African American Methodist preachers from Middle Atlantic states to a conference. Four congregations from four states join to create the African Methodist Episcopal Church. Allen remains committed to Wesleyan practices, "for I was confident that there was no religious sect or denomination that would suit the capacity of the coloured people as well as the Methodist; for the plain and simple gospel suits best for any people, for the unlearned can understand, and the learned are sure to understand; and the reason that the Methodist is so successful in the awakening and conversion of the coloured people, the plain doctrine and having a good discipline." This is the first major religious denomination to form for sociological reasons, and not over theological differences. Allen is elected Bishop. Within ten years church membership will exceed 10,000 souls.

1 May 1816 Methodists hold their General Conference in Baltimore. After much discussion on the power of the episcopacy, two bishops are elected to replace Asbury. The committee on slavery reports "the evil appears to be past remedy," and that "they are constrained to admit that to bring about such a change in the civil code as would favor the cause of liberty is not in the power of the General Conference."⁴⁷

1816 Reverend William Hardesty is once again 'located' according to Church records.⁴⁸ He apparently assumes a non-itinerant preaching role, eventually forming his own Methodist class in Brown Township, in Stark (what is now Carroll) County, Ohio.

1817 Denmark Vesey becomes a Methodist 'class leader,' teaching scripture weekly in his South Carolina home.

9 September 1817 Five years after Yankee Thomas Rotch founds the village of Kendal (now

⁴⁶ *History of Stark County: with an Outline Sketch of Ohio*, W. Henry Perrin, Ed., Baskin & Battey, Chicago, 1881, page 476.

⁴⁷ *History Of Methodist Reform, Vol. I*, by Edward J. Drinkhouse, Norwood Press, Norwood MA, 1899

⁴⁸ *A History Of The Methodist Episcopal Church, Volume IV*, by Dr. Nathan Bangs, Pub T. Mason and G. Lane, 1839: a William HARDISTY was 'received 1792 and located 1816.'

Massillon, Ohio; eight hours - by foot - northeast of Hardesty's mill on the Big Sandy), the wealthy Quaker is active in what will one day be termed the Underground Railroad. Fellow pioneer Quaker, Jonathan Taylor – who has twice unsuccessfully petitioned the Ohio Assembly to abolish slavery – writes Rotch: “As respects our concern for the people of color, it is unpopular to make it more difficult for a claimant of a slave to obtain him. I have very little prospect of any thing favorable being done in that respect ... Let these things terminate at present as they may, I think it still remains obligatory on the Christian, and the Philanthropist, to patiently persevere in the cause of humanity, not alone from the motive of ameliorating the condition of a large portion of their fellow men; but also that they may be a means through the blessings of heaven ... being favoured on the offending inhabitants of this highly favored country.”⁴⁹

December 1817 Despite pledging to allow Whites to review financial records and participate in services, the South Carolina legislature refuses permission for the formation of an independent Black congregation in Charleston. Rev. Brown meets Bishop Allen in Philadelphia. Upon his return, and with Denmark Vesey's financial help, Charleston Blacks buy land and build Emanuel Church. They form a congregation within the African Methodist Episcopal denomination. More than a third of the 1400 members are arrested for disorderly conduct ... while at prayer at the new Emanuel Church.

June 1818 Black pastors from Philadelphia preach at Brown and Vesey's Charleston congregation. White authorities arrest 140 Methodist ministers and parishioners. They are jailed for violating state and local laws that prohibit religious gatherings of slaves and free Blacks without White supervision. A free man, Brown serves a month in prison rather than accept banishment from the state.

30 November 1818 Slave catchers continue abductions of free Black Ohioans. Six fellow Quakers ask Rotch to present a Memorial to Congress to abolish the Fugitive Slave Act, for its pernicious effect on free men, “... a number having been recently sold under that act; and also on account of kidnapping, which is increasing to an alarming degree, and probably if not arrested in its progress, will sweep off an abundance, if not all of those poor Creatures who have had their freedom secured.” The petition fails. Rotch continues defying the 1793 Fugitive Slave Act until his death in 1823.

March 1819 Catholic Roger Brooke Taney successfully defends Methodist pastor Jacob Gruber against charges that he intended ‘to unlawfully and maliciously incite the slaves at the camp-meeting to insurrection and rebellion in the State of Maryland.’ Gruber had evangelized to 3,000 in Hagerstown (including 400 slaves and their masters) that the enslaved “... were kept in dire poverty, treated worse than draft animals and kept from receiving some of life's basic necessities. Such was a perversion of the truth and against the Gospel because it took the very life away from those for whom Christ gave his life.” Taney acknowledges, “Mr. Gruber did quote the language of our great act of National Independence, and insisted on the principles contained in that venerated instrument. He did rebuke those masters who, in the exercise of power, are deaf to the calls of humanity; and he warned them of the evils they might bring upon themselves. He did speak with abhorrence of those reptiles who live by trading in human flesh, and enrich themselves by tearing the husband from the wife, the infant from the bosom of the mother ...” A three-judge panel, all slaveholders, acquit Gruber and establish free speech protections for religious expression.

Though he has already freed his own slaves, Taney will, as the nation's Attorney General, argue

⁴⁹ From source documents held in the Massillon Public Library, All copyrights reserved by them.

that African Americans have no political rights except what they enjoy at the mercy of Whites. He privately takes the position that the Declaration of Independence was never meant to apply to African Americans; they are not entitled to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.⁵⁰ As Chief Justice of the nation's Supreme Court in 1857, Taney rules Dred Scott, taken as a slave into the Northwest Territory, ineligible for citizenship. Ignoring that free Blacks had the right to vote in some states when the Constitution was ratified, his ruling denies Scott (and all African Americans) the right to vote or sue. His ruling upholds slave owners' property rights in their chattel.

7 Aug 1820 The population of free Blacks in Cincinnati stands at about 433 souls. According to census records, there are eleven males and two females at Hardesty's home place in Brown Township, Stark, Ohio.

1820 Georgia is the first state – since Virginia rescinded their provisions in 1782 – to require legislative approval for an owner to manumit his slave. Others follow. These laws, in part, are designed to prevent owners from abandoning injured or elderly slaves; but private manumissions between master and slave grind to a halt. Methodists in these states claim it is now against the law to free their slaves.

1820 White authorities close the Emanuel Church in Charleston when class leaders deny the Bible sanctions slavery or requires obedience. Vesey begins sermonizing on Biblical references to Moses leading the faithful from slavery to freedom.

21 July 1821 A year after his arrival in Leesburg (now Leesville), Ohio, pioneer merchant Jacob W. Millisack marries. His farm is 20 miles directly south of Rev. Hardesty – about six hours by foot – and will be known as a stop on the Underground Railroad. Millisack – like Hardesty – was orphaned by his father while very young. He is also a Methodist.

22 May 1822 After sons Thomas (1820) and David E. (1821), son Isaac is born to William and Louisa Hardesty. In a published history, Isaac will report of his father, “He was one of the pioneers of Eastern Ohio; a farmer, miller and merchant, and started the first mill in Carroll County. He was of Huguenot extraction, his grandfather having been expelled from France for his religious opinions.”⁵¹

18 June 1822 Denmark Vesey has chosen the 41st anniversary of French independence for a planned slave uprising in South Carolina. Mass hysteria results when the plot is exposed prematurely. More than 300 (including four of the governor's slaves) are arrested; 131 are tried; and 35, including Vesey, are hung for conspiracy to commit insurrection. Emanuel Church is burned down. Vesey's estate is valued at more than \$8,000.

c1822 Having been inherited by Turner's son Samuel, Slave Nat runs away from an overseer hired to increase production. To the dismay of fellow slaves, Nat returns a month later. He claims, “The reason of my return was that the Spirit appeared to me and said I had my wishes directed to the things of this world, and not to the kingdom of Heaven, and that I should return to the service of my earthly master.”

1823 Sited at 6th & Broadway, among African American inns and steamboat operations, Allen Temple Methodist Episcopal Church is founded in Cincinnati. The first pastor, Rev. James King,

⁵⁰ *The United States Supreme Court: the Pursuit of Justice*, by Christopher Tomlins (ed), Houghton Mifflin, Boston, 2005, Page 77

⁵¹ *Counties of Porter and Lake Indiana, Historical and Biographical*, ed. W. A. Goodspeed & Charles Blanchard, Chicago, Illinois: F.A. Battey, 1882

is a slave whose Lexington, Kentucky owner allows him to ‘hire his time’ that he spends in ministry. In 1824 the congregation joins Rev. Richard Allen’s African Methodist Episcopal denomination.

1823 Though construction materials are so scarce that men burn their eastern homes to collect and reuse the nails after migrating, construction begins on a brick home on Ohio’s timbered frontier. It is likely that William and Louisa’s final two children, Drusilla (1824) and Hiram (after 1824) are born at what will be called the Hardesty Homestead. (Image at conclusion.)

4 September 1823 William Hardesty’s uncle, Rev. John Hagerty succumbs to epilepsy at age 76. He leaves no children and outlives a second wife. Hagerty is buried with Asbury and other Methodist clergy in Mt. Olivet cemetery, which will become known in Baltimore as ‘Bishop’s Lot.’

October 1823 White rioters destroy the Methodist Chapel in Barbados. Upper class Barbadians have long suspected missionaries to be agents of the English Anti-Slavery Society. Methodist missionary Rev. William Shrewsbury and his pregnant wife flee for their lives to the island of St. Vincent. Says Shrewsbury from sanctuary: “Let no slave who is a Methodist be dishonest, or lazy, or impertinent; either in speech or in behavior; but let every one be sober, honest, industrious, and useful to his owner, even as we have taught you, both in public and in private, from day to day. And as to political matters, whether ye be bond or free, never meddle with them; but mind higher and better things - the things relating to God and eternity.”⁵²

1825 Called a ‘conjurer’ by Whites, Nat Turner has become plantation exhorter. “I began to receive the true knowledge of faith. And from the first steps of righteousness until the last, was I made perfect; and the Holy Ghost was with me,” Turner later informed his biographer.⁵³

Turner soon takes to both Baptist and Methodist pulpits in Southampton, Virginia. White overseer Ethelred T. Brantley, seeking redemption for his cruel treatment of slaves, asks Turner to baptize him. Having refused Turner these rites, Methodists also refuse to grant a Black man permission to baptize a White. The pair defies a crowd: Prophet Nat baptizes both himself and then Brantley in a pond.⁵⁴

1826 Scholey’s Green, Cincinnati’s first private school for African American children, is founded at 6th & Broadway.

1827 Financed by farming and a successful milling operation that Hardesty saw modeled in the hamlet of New Troy - on what was then Pennsylvania’s frontier - construction is completed on his residence.

11 January 1828 Canal fever burns: Ohio legislators give a charter to backers of the Sandy and Beaver Canal, a predominantly east-west watercourse proposed to connect the Ohio River (near Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania) with the north-south Ohio & Erie Canal.

March 1828 Ohio’s Supreme Court rules the exclusionary Black Laws are constitutional.

30 June 1829 Cincinnati begins to enforce their Black Laws with vigor. In the previous three years, Cincinnati’s free Black population had risen from 620 to 2,258 and – at nearly 25,000 souls – the town, becomes 8th largest in the nation. The Cincinnati Colonization Society had failed to convince many people of color to emigrate to Africa. Many free Blacks are reluctant to

⁵² *Parliamentary Debates, Volume 13*, by Thomas Curson Hansard, Parliament, London, 1826, p 1302

⁵³ *The Confessions of Nat Turner*, by Thomas R. Gray, Lucas & Deaver, Baltimore, 1831, page 9

⁵⁴ *Nat Turner*, by Terry Bisson, Chelsea House, New York, 1989, page 39

abandon those who remain enslaved. Cincinnati's large concentration of African Americans, just north of the Ohio River from slave states, permits escaped slaves to blend in. Wage disparities deflate White earnings for labor. A severe, summer drought has limited shipping, making jobs scarce.

Unable to post the exorbitant cash bond required by Black Laws, leaders ask for time to explore the possibility of resettling in Canada. They are given thirty days. A delegation is sent north, to determine feasibility of asylum. Amid rising tensions, about 400 souls leave town in the first two weeks of the moratorium.

12 August 1829 U.S. Secretary of State Martin Van Buren writes William Barry - the nation's Postmaster General - that he believes the federal government should negotiate for the recapture of runaway slaves in Canada.⁵⁵

13 August 1829 A mob of over 200 – predominantly Irish American, and ignited by unemployed dockworkers – loses patience. In an outburst of mayhem and violence, White rioters drive between 1,000 and 1,200 – about half of the total Black population, and those closest to destitution – from the town. The displaced flee without provisions into the Ohio countryside. Some scatter to other northern cities, others gradually filter back to their Cincinnati homes.

24 August 1829 Cincinnati Mayor Jacob Burnett frees ten African Americans his constables have detained. He fines eight Whites between fifty and one hundred dollars for their part in arson and beatings.

15 September 1829 President Vicente Guerrero emancipates all Mexican slaves by decree.

Late 1829 The Cincinnati delegation returns from Canada. Through them, Sir John Coleborne, Lieutenant Governor of Upper Canada (now Southern Ontario), declares, "Tell the republicans on your side of the line, that we royalists do not know men by their color. Should you come to us, you will be entitled to all the privileges of the rest of his majesty's subjects." Fund drives in distant churches help completely outcast persons and other Blacks to migrate to northern safety. Proponents of strict enforcement of Black Laws subsequently report they had driven off "the sober, honest, industrious, and useful portion of the colored population," which lessened "much of the moral restraint ... on the idle and indolent, as well as the profligate" among the rest.⁵⁶

1830 The census reveals six slaves remain in bondage in Ohio, all held from before 1803 statehood. Census records also indicate that, in addition to William and Louisa, the Hardesty household (in Brown Township, Stark County, Ohio) has a girl younger than five (likely Drusilla), two sons aged five to ten years (Hiram and Isaac), a son aged 10 to 15 years (David E.) two sons between 15 & 20 (Thomas & Philip Willard) and two sons (George and William, Jr.) between 20 and 30 years of age. Daughter Eliza (then aged 22-24) has married Frederick Crisman and left home. Sons Adam (28), Joseph (26) and John (25) have left home. They remain in the vicinity, likely having cleared land for their own farms.

26 March 1831 Bishop Richard Allen dies. "The Methodists were the first people that brought glad tidings to the colored people," he wrote, lauding an approach based on "spiritual and extempore preaching" and a missionary movement that encountered slaves confined to plantations.⁵⁷ Morris Brown succeeds Allen as Bishop of the African Methodist Episcopal Church.

⁵⁵ *The Black laws: race and the legal process in early Ohio* By Stephen Middleton, Ohio U Press, Athens, Oh, 2005
⁵⁶ *Cincinnati Gazette*, August. 17, 1829

⁵⁷ *Methodists and Revolutionary America, 1760-1800: The Shaping of an Evangelical Culture*, Dee E. Andrews, Princeton University Press, 2000

22 August 1831 Styled 'General Nat,' Turner takes inspiration from several celestial events to methodically fulfill prophecy he had originally conceived for 4 July, the 55th anniversary of American independence. Turner and four companions kill his current owner - the child Putnam Moore - and Moore's family. In a 48-hour period, that will come to be known as the 'Southampton Insurrection' of Virginia, 70 rebels kill 55 men, women and children.

30 August 1831 In Virginia's capital city, *The Richmond Enquirer* editorializes, "No black man ought to be permitted to turn a Preacher through the country. The law must be enforced or the tragedy of Southampton appeals to us in vain."

30 October 1831 Awaiting trial after his capture, Turner meditates on Christ's crucifixion. He admits to killing Margaret Whitehead and on 11 November, is hung, skinned, beheaded and quartered. The state of Virginia executes 55 others and (compensating all owners) banishes many more to the Deep South. In the ensuing hysteria, close to 200 Black people, the vast majority of whom did not rebel, are murdered by White mobs. Slaves as far away as North Carolina are accused of having connection with the insurrection, are subsequently tried ... and executed.

January 1832 Led by William and Mary College professors, the Virginia legislature opens debate on slavery, inquiring whether 'this supposed monstrous evil could not be removed from our bosom.' Deportation, emancipation through Federal assistance, and abolition are discussed over a period of two months. Debaters conclude, "Any scheme of abolition proposed so soon after the Southampton tragedy, would necessarily appear to be the result of the most inhuman massacre." Motions to ascertain the sentiments of constituents and other slaveholding states and to revisit the issue in a year, after "the excitement could be allayed and the empire of reason could once more have been established," are defeated. It is the majority opinion that further study might 'excite another rebellion.'⁵⁸

Legislatures across the South pass new laws banning education of slaves and free Blacks, restricting rights of assembly, and requiring White ministers to be present at Black worship services.

7 June 1832 William Hardesty continues to prosper. Not only do he and his sons include a sawmill among their enterprises, but Hardesty also begins reselling the rights to a new log-loading process; developed in Belmont, Ohio and patented only months earlier. (Image below.)

25 December 1832 Carroll County, Ohio is formed from parts of Columbiana and Stark Counties.

December 1833 The American Abolition Society is founded in Philadelphia.

1834 Merchant Jacob Millisack becomes actively identified with the antislavery movement. Abolitionists William Lloyd Garrison, Frederick Douglass and others of national prominence speak in meetings Millisack organizes in Leesburg, a day's walk due south of the Hardesty Homestead in Carroll County, Ohio. Between 1852 & 1864 Millisack will manage a Leesburg office of the American Anti-Slavery Society.⁵⁹

February 1834 Debates at Lane Seminary, Cincinnati lead antislavery advocates to repudiate colonization ... in favor of immediate abolition. Students work for social uplift within Cincinnati's Black community. Months later, trustees ban both colonization and antislavery societies from campus. Abolitionist students leave the school en masse.

⁵⁸ *Review of the Debate [on the abolition of slavery] in the Virginia Legislature, 1831-'32* by Thomas R. Dew, in *The Political Register, Vol. II*, Washington, 1833

⁵⁹ *History of Wapello County, Iowa* by Waterman, Harrison L., ed; S.J. Clarke Publishing Company, Chicago, 1914, page 381

1 August 1834 Parliament abolishes slavery in the British Empire. Within the month, Britain establishes apprenticeship programs and emancipates 800,000 slaves in the West Indies. The government pays out £20,000,000 to compensate 40,000 slave owners. Britain commits about 40% of annual expenditures that year to the endeavor.

November 1834 After Philadelphia investors refuse to participate, private subscribers – most living along the proposed route of the Sandy and Beaver Canal – raise two hundred thousand dollars. Hardesty is undoubtedly an investor and may have contracted to build the stretch of waterway passing his mills.

20 November 1834 Hardesty plats a town site he names Troy, perhaps after the village of New Troy he served while a young preacher on the Wyoming Circuit.⁶⁰ In 1869 Troy will become known as Malvern, in Carroll County Ohio. Coincidental to the birth of *his* first daughter, son John Hardesty is ‘awakened and converted’ at age 29.

1835 France frees more than 27,000 slaves in her remaining West Indian colonies.

Mid-1830's The Sandy & Beaver Canal locates a toll station where boats wait to navigate locks in Troy. Hardesty expands into mercantile trade. He builds a commercial building, still extant and lately referred to as the Kirkpatrick Building. A merchant as well as miller and farmer, it may be that Hardesty is also distilling alcohol and, contrary to Wesley’s instruction, operating a tavern.

23 April 1835 Modeled on the national, parent organization, the Ohio Anti-Slavery Society forms in Putnam, near Zanesville and midway between Troy and Cincinnati. Citizens from both Zanesville and Putnam clash in running street battles at the news.

In the coming year 328 new chapters of Anti-Slavery Societies organize themselves in the U.S. By the end of 1836, membership in the Ohio Anti-Slavery society will exceed ten thousand people. Membership becomes a crime in Kentucky, punishable by 20 lashes from the whip.

25 August 1835 As a located member of the Methodist Clergy, Hardesty is put on notice by Ohio’s Annual Conference. As regards abolitionists or anti-slavery societies, church elders proclaim, “... we hereby recommend to our junior preachers, local brethren, and private members within our bounds, to abstain from any connection with them, or participation of their acts in the premises whatever. That those brethren and citizens of the north, who resist the abolition movements with firmness and moderation, are true friends to the Church, to the slaves of the south, and to the Constitution of our common country; and that, to encourage inflammatory lectures by foreign agents, and sanguinary publications in favor of immediate abolition, is injurious to Christian fellowship, dangerous to our civil associations, unfavorable to the privileges and spiritual interests of the slaves, and unbecoming any Christian patriot or philanthropist, and especially any Methodist.”⁶¹ In Ohio as well as the deeper south, Methodism has repudiated the anti-slavery position of its founders.

22 January 1836 In an attempt to pacify civil unrest, Cincinnati citizens attempt to ban *The Philanthropist*, an abolitionist newspaper published by former slave owner James Gillespie Birney and printed by Mr. Pugh at 400 Pike Street.

12 May 1836 The Methodist General Conference is held in Cincinnati. Petitions from abolitionist clergy are not entertained. Bishops report, "from a calm and dispassionate survey of the whole

⁶⁰ *Carroll County: A Place to Call Home*, by Janice E. Lane, Arcadia Publishing, Charleston, South Carolina, 2003, p 41

⁶¹ *History Of The Great Secession From The Methodist Episcopal Church ...* by Charles Elliott, Swormstedt & Poe, Cincinnati, 1845, p 130

ground, we have come to the solemn conviction, that the only safe, scriptural and prudent way for us – both as ministers and people – to take, is *wholly to abstain* from this agitating subject." The body resolves, by a vote of 120 to 14, they are "decidedly opposed to modern abolitionism, and wholly disclaim any right, wish or intention, to interfere in the civil and political relation between master and slave, as it exists in slaveholding States of this Union."⁶² Church law will yield to civil law. Methodist pastors who address the Ohio Anti-Slavery Society are disciplined, and the body refuses Rev. Orange Scott's proposal to include the traditional phrase, 'Methodists are opposed to the evils of slavery' as a preface to their censure.

Opposition pieces by unreformed Methodists are printed in *The Philanthropist*: "We have descended from the high and holy ground where our fathers used to stand. We have accommodated and compromised away the greatest part of our former church regulations on slavery — and if we cannot say we are as much as ever opposed to the great evil of slavery now, where shall we be by the next General Conference?" asks Scott.

12 July 1836 Presses that reproduce *The Philanthropist* are disabled. Fifteen or twenty Cincinnatians steal into Pugh's office at night: they "... took the press to pieces and carried off parts of it, and destroyed the sheets of an impression of the paper which had been partly stricken off."⁶³

22 July 1836 *The Philanthropist* is back in operation in Cincinnati. A large, public meeting passes resolutions that threaten violence if the newspaper does not cease publication. "A committee is appointed to wait upon Mr. Birney and his associates, and request them to desist from the publication of their paper, and to warn them that if they persisted, the meeting could not hold themselves responsible for the consequences."⁶⁴

30 July 1836 A large mob of Whites converge on Mr. Pugh's press and "broke the windows and furniture, scattered the papers and books, and burned many of them, and took out the press, drew it down to the river, broke it to pieces and threw it into the stream. They then went to the houses of Birney and his friend Donaldson, with a view, apparently, of personal violence; but finding neither of them at home, they proceeded to several houses inhabited by coloured people, and tore them down."⁶⁵ Several families in the Church Alley section of Cincinnati are left homeless.

Late 1836 Many in Ohio favor cultivating commercial relationships with the South. The *Cincinnati Enquirer* confronts abolitionists: "There was a deeply indignant determination to hold these negro-stealers [*abolitionists – ed.*] and law-breakers to a rigid responsibility. It is high time. The relations and business interests of Cincinnati with the South demand this reckless spirit of fanaticism should be stayed. It is striking down the best interests of the city. It is sending elsewhere the trade and travel by which we should benefit; above all it is fomenting discord and hatred among members of the same great family."⁶⁶ Bearing no reflection on the term 'man-stealing,' employed by Wesley in 1774, 'Negro-stealing' is an indictment of the illegal behavior of aiding fugitive slaves in their escape.

1837 A young woman opens a private school for Black children in Zanesville, Ohio. Whites soon

⁶² *Debate on "Modern Abolitionism," the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, held in Cincinnati, May, 1836*, pub Ohio Antislavery Society

⁶³ *The life, travels, and opinions of Benjamin Lundy*, by Benjamin Lundy, Thomas Earle, pub Wm D. Parrish, 1847, p 288

⁶⁴ *ibid*, p 289

⁶⁵ *ibid*

⁶⁶ *Contested terrain: African American women migrate from the South to Cincinnati, Ohio 1900-1950*, by Beverly A. Bunch-Lyons, pub Routledge, London, p 111

“entered the building, destroyed the books and furnishings, and finally drove the institution from the town.”⁶⁷

Jan 1837 Lucius Matlack has been teaching Methodist doctrine for five years. For the past 12 months he has been, “visiting the poor and destitute in the alms house and suburbs of the city, and endeavoring to instruct them in the truths and consolations of religion.” Philadelphia’s Methodist leadership unanimously forwards Matlack’s name as one suitable for becoming a traveling preacher. Matlack joins 12 Methodists -volunteering to be their inaugural Secretary - as they found the Wesleyan Anti-Slavery Society in Philadelphia.

April 1837 Unable to pressure Matlack into withdrawing from the Anti-Slavery Society that is based on Methodist principles, the Philadelphia Conference do not ordain the long-term Sunday School Administrator. They deny him a preacher’s license ... for his radical, “modern abolitionism.”⁶⁸

Spring 1837 Nagging cash flow problems with the Sandy and Beaver canal are completely eclipsed by the ‘Panic of ’37.’ Construction halts: nearly two thousand laborers, mostly Irish immigrants, are laid off and must find work elsewhere. Share values collapse. Construction does not resume until the nation endures seven years of economic hardship.

31 August 1837 Bishop Elisha Hedding, who had presided over the 1836 General Conference in Cincinnati, invokes the Golden Rule to support slavery in addresses to New York Conferences. “...if one case can be found where a man may hold a slave, and by the civil law own him, and in that act obey this rule, then there may be ten such cases, or ten thousand. And that there are many such cases among our brethren in the southern states, I firmly believe.” He tells members, “Slavery is not condemned in circumstances where the best possible thing a man can do for his slave is to hold, protect, feed, and govern him. Will you say, ‘Undo every burden and let the oppressed go free?’ But the people I have described are not oppressed by their owners.” He contends slaveholders have always been members of the Methodist Church: “It is true when our Church was organized, some strong rules were made against slavery; but finding that they could not be enforced without doing more harm than good, the rules were suspended the same year; and I can not find that they were ever put in force.” The Bible condones slavery, he points out; and says founder John Wesley has been misunderstood: “For, after all he said against the slave trade, against the system of slavery as established by the British Government, and against men's holding slaves where the laws were such that they could put them away to the advantage of the slaves; he never said one word - that I can find - against the Christian man's holding his slave in circumstances where he could not put him away without injuring him.”

17 Sep 1838 Ohio Governor Joseph Vance, of the Whig Party, accedes to a request from Kentucky Governor Clark: he has Methodist preacher John B. Mahan seized and transported to Mason, Kentucky. Rev. Mahan - of Sardinia, Ohio, 200 miles southeast of Troy - is charged with aiding the escape of fugitive slaves. The law declares, "that if any person ... shall in any manner aid or assist such slave in making his escape from such owner or possessor to another state or foreign country, any person so offending shall, on conviction, be sentenced to confinement in the jail and penitentiary of this commonwealth a period not less than two or more than twenty years.” Hardesty, if also engaged in this activity, is similarly liable for felony conviction: “If any person shall be guilty of enticing any slave to abscond from the service of his or her owner, or possessor as aforesaid, or shall conceal any such runaway or absconding slave, knowing it to be such,

⁶⁷ *North of Slavery: The Negro in the Free States*, by Leon F. Litwack, University of Chicago Press, 1961

⁶⁸ *Narrative of the Anti-Slavery Experience of a Minister in the Methodist Church*, by Lucius Matlack, Merrihew & Thompson, Philadelphia, 1845, p 4

within this state, every person so offending, in addition to compensation to such owner or possessor, shall be liable to an indictment, or presentment of a grand jury, and on conviction, be liable to pay a fine of not less than fifty nor more than six hundred dollars."⁶⁹ Mahan, who has had bounties of up to \$2,500 offered in return for his assassination, is found not guilty after 10 weeks in jail. On 13 December, Vance is defeated in his re-election bid.

1839 The Philadelphia Conference once again unanimously denies Matlack ordination. Twice rebuffed, Matlack contributes his talents to Methodist pastor Orange Scott in Lowell, Massachusetts. The New England Conference ordains Matlack in 1840.

28 February 1839 A Kentucky delegation, charged with making ‘freedom in Ohio worse, if possible, than slavery on the other side of the river,’ arrives to remedy an exodus of slaves: the Ohio General Assembly responds by passing their 1839 Fugitive Slave Law. Current laws are found, “wholly inadequate to the protection pledged” slave owners in the Federal Constitution. Ohio localizes enforcement in non-jury, ‘summary’ processes. In courts, where Blacks are not permitted to participate, the testimony of claimants is deemed sufficient proof of ownership. High-profile kidnappings of free Blacks ensue, including that of a 14-year-old boy from his home. Abolitionists claim the law has created a ‘hunting field for slaves’ and the law is repealed 19 January 1843. The child is never recovered.

1 May 1840 The General Conference of Methodists, held in Baltimore, decree that it is unjustifiable for preachers to allow Colored Persons to give testimony in church cases against Whites where state laws prohibit it. The national body assents to forced labor in states and territories where laws do not permit emancipation. They wholly repudiate founding doctrine: holding slaves is deemed no barrier to becoming a minister or assuming higher office.

1 Jun 1840 Three slaves have remained in bondage since Ohio attained statehood thirty-seven years earlier. Census records place seven souls at the Hardesty Homestead: one is a boy younger than ten who is less likely to be a natural child than an orphan. With William and Louisa are likely Drusilla (16), Hiram (c 15) and two grown boys. Malvern’s population is 140 souls. Four Hardesty sons have their own households: William and Louisa’s grandchildren account for six of the 30 students in the local primary school.

Late 1840 White mobs threaten Black Cincinnati neighborhoods. For the first time, Blacks organize a defense and retaliate. The city’s Black Laws are brought back into effect. Hundreds of Blacks are arrested: runaway slaves are identified and returned to slave owners; free Blacks who resist re-imposition of the racist code are captured and sold into slavery.

November 1840 Whigs – likely including Rev. Hardesty – hold a slim majority (of 11) in Carroll County, Ohio. "The Abolition votes cast in this county on Tuesday last, amounted to about twenty ... We trust the Abolitionists will now see the folly of separate organization on their part for political purposes -- unless, indeed, Whig Abolitionists are determined to play into the hands of the Locofocos."⁷⁰ ‘Locofocos’ are anti-monopolists with origins in the Equal Rights Party: Whigs identified them with Democrats supporting Andrew Jackson. Whig Presidential candidate William Henry Harrison carries the state & the nation.

December 1840 Residents of Troy (in Miami County), Ohio virtually demolish a grade school, “all because a White man had undertaken to keep a school for the Black children in the

⁶⁹ *Trial Of Rev. John B. Mahan: For Felony; In The Mason Circuit Court*, by J. B. Reid, H. R. Reeder, Samuel A. Allet, Printer, Cincinnati, Ohio, 1838 p 3

⁷⁰ *Carroll Free Press, Vol.VIII, No. 1*, edited by J. Pearce

neighborhood.”⁷¹

May 1841 A free, African American is violently kidnapped while standing at a dock in Cincinnati. Abolitionists hurry across the Ohio River to seek help from the mayor of Covington, Kentucky. Unsuccessful, the man disappears into slavery in the Deep South.

6 August 1841 The *Cincinnati Enquirer* prints false reports of slave insurrection in Alabama & Mississippi. Propaganda alleges self-emancipated slaves intended to enslave their former masters, kill off the rest of the White population, and seize all property.

3 September 1841 A crowd of 200, mostly unemployed Irish Americans, led by boat hands and dockworkers suffering through a summer-long drought and resenting a resilient Black subculture, assemble at 5th & Market streets in Cincinnati. They march into ‘Little Africa,’ largely a ghetto of wooden shanties owned by Whites, on the city’s eastern edge. The mob swells to more than a thousand souls. For the first time, the African American community chooses a leader and organizes to defend their homes. Armed Blacks shoot into the advancing mob. White rioters unlimber a six-pound cannon and fire three times into the African American community. Martial law is declared. African Americans homes are broken open in different parts of the city: windows, doors and furniture are totally destroyed, including “... a shop on Columbia near Sycamore — the negro church on 6th street, and four or five houses near it — a small frame house near the synagogue on Broadway, and several houses on Western Row near the river.”⁷² Over several days city police confine more than 300 Blacks in open-air pens at Scholey’s Green. Upon their release, the city reports these detainees had been taken into protective custody.

5 September 1841 *The Philanthropist* press is destroyed for a third time in Cincinnati.

1842 Rev. William Hardesty donates land and contributes to construction of a Methodist house of worship. The brick structure is the first church built in the town of Troy, Ohio.

8 June 1843 Committed to Wesley’s position on slavery, frustrated that church-sponsored publications refuse their submissions, and tired of being silenced by bishops, anti-slavery Methodists rebel. The Wesleyan Methodist Connection of local churches forms at a Utica, New York conference. Twenty thousand members and 200 ministers depart the Methodist Episcopal Church.⁷³ Pastors Lucius Matlack and Orange Scott are proponents of new Northern denomination that equalized ministerial and lay representation in its governing bodies. Moral and social reforms are strongly emphasized; slaveholding and ‘involvement with intoxicating liquors’ are prohibited. Undoubtedly some of those Hardesty ministered to while on the Wyoming Circuit contribute to this new offshoot of Methodism.

1844 Edited by Alphonso M. Sumner, the *Disenfranchised American* begins publication as Cincinnati’s first Black-owned newspaper.

1844 Slave catchers, often operating in rings, abduct the fourteen-year-old son of free Black John Wilkinson in Georgetown, Ohio. Neighbors forty miles south of the Hardesty Homestead lose the child’s trail in Virginia.

1 May 1844 Delegates to the Methodist’s General Conference, held in New York, resolve that Georgian Bishop James Osgood Andrew desist from performing his duties as long as he owns slaves. Andrew is given four years to comply, as it is general custom for church officials to

⁷¹ Elyria Advertiser, as quoted in *National Anti-Slavery Standard*, 24 December 1840

⁷² *Cincinnati Daily Gazette*, September 6, 1841

⁷³ [*The impending crisis of 1860 : or the present connection of the Methodist Episcopal Church with slavery, and our duty in regard to it*](#) (by Mattison, Hiram, 1859) p 114

transfer ownership of their slaves to family members. The church divides over this censure. Bishop Bascom writes, "In the case of Bishop Andrew, we are compelled to see that the requirement of the late General Conference was both disallowed and held to be treasonable both by the laws and people of Georgia."⁷⁴ The Methodist Episcopal Church South forms over attempts to discipline Andrew: 350,000 members and 2000 ministers leave the church body.⁷⁵ Members of the rump Methodist Episcopal Church hold tens of thousands of slaves.

November 1844 The Baptist Church splits north and south. Northern congregations do not permit slaveholding by members or church officials.

1845 The Sandy & Beaver canal reaches Malvern. With the prevalence of African American mule tenders and dockworkers, canals are often a means of navigation and transportation among fugitive slaves. The northern terminus of the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal is a launching pad for slaves heading north. Based in Columbus, 'Father John' Malvin, a free, African American, Baptist preacher, has for four years smuggled slaves along the Ohio & Erie Canal on his boats *Grampus* and *Auburn*. Free Black boatmen in Virginia had long been suspected of aiding runaway slaves: legislation in 1836 effectively outlawed these 'underground agents of organized thieves,' by requiring them to provide certificates from "respectable White persons."⁷⁶

Bolivar, site of the Beaver & Sandy Canal Company headquarters, is about five and a half hours west of Troy, on foot. Family lore describes the burgh as a waystation preceding the Hardesty Homestead in fugitive slave migration. With business to conduct in Bolivar, suspicions raised by a conductor of self-liberated slaves might be lessened.

1845 Bascom, lead negotiator for the Southern faction of the Methodist Episcopal Church, writes of the church, "She found that, by trying to release the bodies of the slaves, she was hindered from using the means to save their souls, and that instead of removing their burdens, she was made the occasion of increasing them." In his 'protest of the minority,' Bascom hearkens back to Asbury's personal musing, "What is the personal liberty of the African, which he may abuse, to the salvation of his soul?" as if it indicated a position he held.

After courts divide Methodist Episcopal Church holdings, Northern conference members publicly advocate that the right to buy, sell and own slaves is protected under state and federal constitutions. Northern church leaders seek to prevent the 65-year-old denomination from being perceived as 'anti-slavery.'

8 May 1846 Rev. William Hardesty dies in Malvern, Ohio at age 70. Wife Louisa and twelve children survive him, Louisa by four years. Both are buried in the family cemetery, on a hill behind the Hardesty Homestead in Malvern. Local lore has it that the cemetery contains two unmarked graves; those of fugitive slaves who died in transit to Canadian freedom while in Hardesty's care.

7 April 1847 The pastoral address at the Methodist's Philadelphia Conference publicly states they are not abolitionists.

1847 Son John migrates west with wife Nancy Ringle and the first eight of ten children to be born to this union. He is a miller, like his father. John Hardesty is elected Justice of the Peace in

⁷⁴ *Methodism and slavery: with other matters in controversy between the North and South*, Henry Bidleman Bascom, print. Hodges, Todd & Prewitt, Frankfort, KY, 1845

⁷⁵ *The impending crisis of 1860: or the present connection of the Methodist Episcopal Church with slavery, and our duty in regard to it*, by Mattison, Hiram, 1859, p 86-87

⁷⁶ *Life in Black and White: family and community in the slave South*, by Brenda E. Stevenson, Oxford University Press, 1996, p 290

Porter, Indiana.

1848 Son George serves one term in the Ohio House of Representatives. He is one of 43 members to request a study. On 19 January 1849, abolitionist David Christy, in the Hall of Ohio's House of Representatives, delivers the report, 'An Outline of the Slave Trade, Emancipation, the Relation of the Republic of Liberia to England, & etc.' Never ordained, George preaches and contributes generously to the Malvern Methodist Church his father established. He and wife Hannah will adopt as many as three children.

7 October 1854 Son John, 'ever zealous in the cause of the Union and the maintenance of Constitutional liberty,' is elected County Commissioner in Porter, Indiana. He will serve through the outbreak of hostilities, until 1867. In addition to ten natural children, John and Nancy also 'take in' or adopt Michael Donnelly, who assumes the Hardesty surname.

1854 The Sandy & Beaver canal, fully operational for six years, fails. Son Adam, who has for seven years been a canal boatman, turns to farming. In his household is Henry Coty/Cota whose father drowned while working for the canal. Widow Cota indentures the child to Adam, much as Adam's father, Rev. William Hardesty may have been 'bonded out' by his mother. Adam is but one of four Hardesty siblings known to take in children from other distressed families.

1855 Looking back on Methodism's transitional values, an abolitionist pastor writes, "The general decline of the spirit of liberty that was witnessed in the community, was witnessed also in the Church, and the same moral lethargy and stupor came over them both. The influx of wealth, the erection of castes and aristocracies in society, that displaced simplicity and equality in the State, produced similar effects in the Church. The Church has seemed to embody elements of deterioration peculiarly her own. Her divisions into rival sects and theological schools have ensnared her; she has compromised her Christian principles, has neutralized, or withdrawn her testimony, and has faltered in her administration of discipline, to gain strength and numbers wherewith to carry on schismatic and polemic wars within her own bosom! When the Methodist testimonies against slavery were found to stand in the way of the comparative growth and prospective ascendancy of the Methodist sect, then the severity of Methodist discipline against slavery must be relaxed (so we have been told by the apologists of that policy) to propitiate the favor of slaveholders."⁷⁷

c1856 Church-based abolitionists report: "We have conversed with many, on their way to a land of freedom, and we give it as our deliberate opinion that three fourths of all the fugitives who pass over the eastern branch of the underground railroad, run away from Methodist masters in Maryland and Virginia,"⁷⁸

1856 Rev. Peter Cartwright reflects on the changing position of the Methodist Episcopal Church after Asbury's death in 1816: "...it is a notorious fact, that all the preachers from the slaveholding states denounced slavery as a moral evil; but asked of the General Conference mercy and forbearance on account of the civil disabilities they labored under, so that we got along tolerably smooth. Methodist preachers in those days made it a matter of conscience not to hold their fellow-creatures in bondage, if it was practicable to emancipate them, conformably to the laws of the state in which they lived. Methodism increased and spread; and many Methodist

⁷⁷ *Slavery And Anti-Slavery: A History Of The Great Struggle In Both Hemispheres*, by Rev. William Goodell, self-published, New York, 1853, p 137 & 138

⁷⁸ *The Impending Crisis Of 1860: Or The Present Connection Of The Methodist Episcopal Church With Slavery, And Our Duty In Regard To It*, by, Hiram Mattison, 1859, p 95

preachers, taken from comparative poverty, not able to own a negro, and who preached loudly against it, improved, and became popular among slaveholders; and many of them married into those slaveholding families, and became personally interested in slave property (as it is called.) Then they began to apologize for the evil; then to justify it, on legal principles; then on Bible principles; till lo and behold! it is not an evil, but a good! it is not a curse, but a blessing! till really you would think, to hear them tell the story, if you had the means and did not buy a good lot of them, you would go to the devil for not enjoying the labor, toil, and sweat of this degraded race ...”⁷⁹

1857 Seventy-seven years after the initial conference in Baltimore (attended by Hardesty’s uncle, Rev. John Hagerty), the northern rump of the Methodist Episcopal Church resolves, “we highly deprecate the agitation of the slavery question,” and “we will oppose with zeal any aggression which shall be attempted by the abolition agitations of the country.”

1867 Son Isaac Hardesty begins a 15-year stint as Union Township Trustee in Porter, Indiana. “He is a Republican, and has frequently addressed his community on important questions of government. He is also a Christian, though not connected with any church, and an earnest Sunday School Worker,” says an 1882 biographer.⁸⁰

1867 Thirty years after rejecting him for his ‘modern abolition,’ the Philadelphia Conference ordains Lucius Matlack as a Methodist preacher ... by unanimous vote.

1871 Having failed at newspapering in 1853, son Philip Willard Hardesty serves Paulding County Ohio as Senator in Ohio’s 60th General Assembly.

1889 Quakers interview an 89-year-old Jacob Millisack, the abolitionist who as a young man had been a Carroll County, Ohio contemporary of Rev. William Hardesty’s. “He then belonged to the Methodist Church, the Wesleyan branch,” they report. Originally opposed to slavery, Millisack says the sect “succumbed to the pro-slavery spirit.” Of fellow abolitionists, Millisack claims he “openly refuted, again and again, false charges brought against these earnest workers in the cause of freedom, by their ministers ...”⁸¹ Millisack is 92 when a biography of his son states “...and all this was at a time when mob law was prevalent over the land and indignation rife, with threats of eggs, brickbats and murder against these noble men and women of now immortal fame. For many years he cried out against the sins of the church, and labored zealously for its reform. He denounced unceasingly its sinful connection with slavery ... He believed the only salvation was in doing right.”⁸²

28 Aug 1963 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. declares, at the Lincoln Memorial, one hundred years following the Emancipation Proclamation: “When the architects of our republic wrote the magnificent words of the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence, they were signing a promissory note to which every American was to fall heir. This note was a promise that all men, yes, Black men as well as White men, would be guaranteed the unalienable rights of life, liberty,

⁷⁹ *Autobiography of Rev. Peter Cartwright, The Backwoods Preacher*, ed. Strickland, Methodist Book Concern, NY, 1856

⁸⁰ *Counties of Porter and Lake Indiana, Historical and Biographical*, ed. W. A. Goodspeed & Charles Blanchard, Chicago, Illinois: F.A. Battey, 1882, p 342

⁸¹ *Friends' Intelligencer, Volume 45*, Friends' Intelligencer Association, Philadelphia, 1888, p 660

⁸² *Biographical Record of Carroll County Ohio, containing Biographical Sketches of Prominent and Representative Citizens, and of Many of the Early Settled Families*, pub. by J. H. Beers & Company, Chicago, 1891, p 900

and the pursuit of happiness.”

“It is obvious today that America has defaulted on this promissory note insofar as her citizens of color are concerned. Instead of honoring this sacred obligation, America has given the Negro people a bad check; a check which has come back marked ‘insufficient funds.’ But we refuse to believe that the bank of justice is bankrupt. We refuse to believe that there are insufficient funds in the great vaults of opportunity of this nation.”

William Hardesty certainly capitalized on *his* opportunities.

S A W Y E R S
LOOK AT THIS!!

THE SUBSCRIBER having purchased the Right of Sinclair's improvement in the Head-Blocks of Saw-mills, for the counties of Stark, Portage and Tuscarawas, respectfully informs the public that he now offers the same for sale, by Township or Individual Rights. The above improvement having been thoroughly tested, is found so far to exceed the common plan, that the advantages arising therefrom are sufficient to defray the expenses of the improvement in one month's sawing. Its advantages are more particularly defined in the certificate which follows:

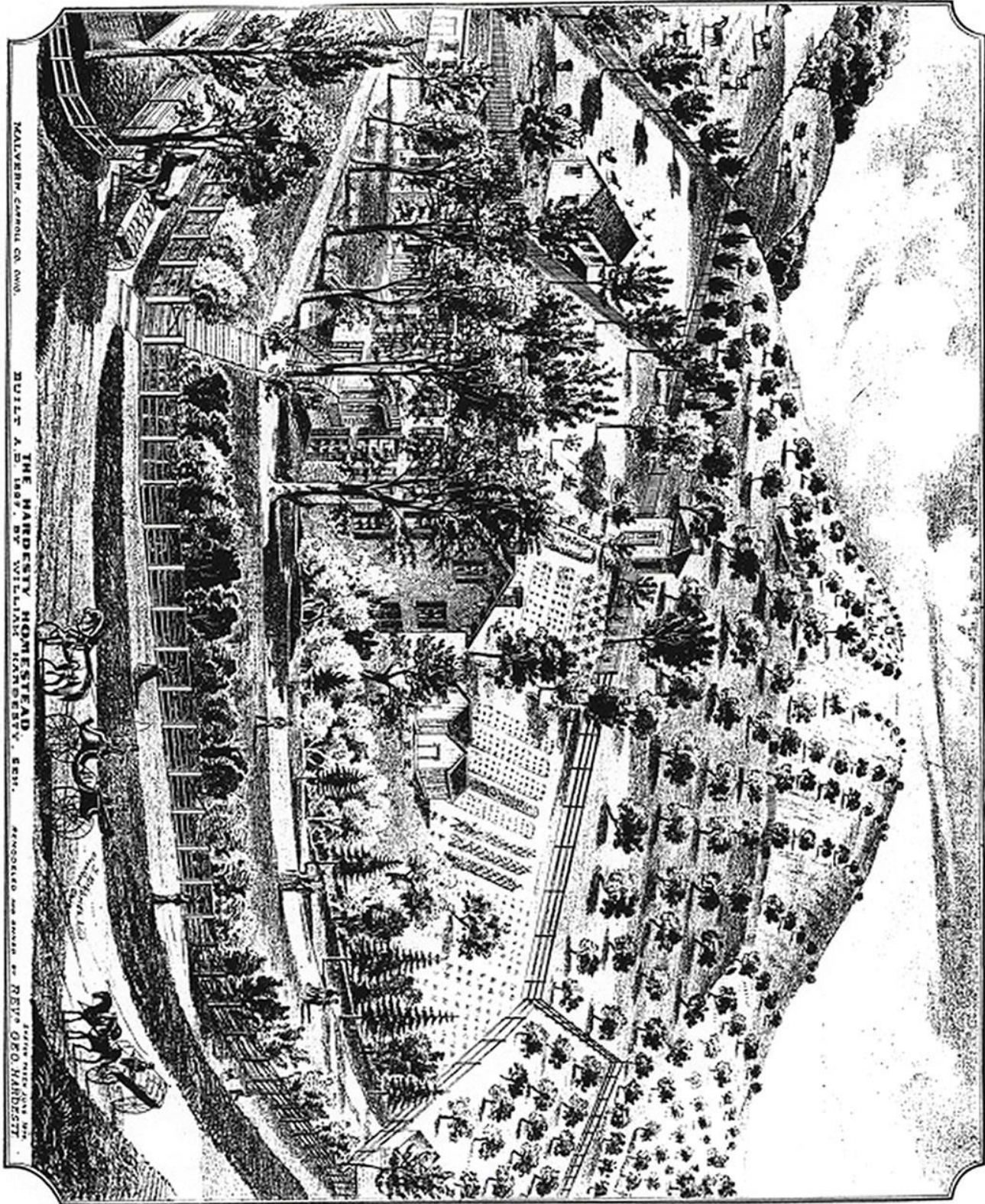
WILLIAM HARDESTY.

June 7th, 1832. 5-4f
Hiram Township, May 31st, 1832.

We the undersigned, having seen Sinclair's improvement in the Head-Blocks of Saw-mills in operation on William Hardesty's saw-mill, consider it superior to any thing of the kind we have ever seen. Its advantages are, 1st. A saving of about fifty feet of plank to the thousand from stumpshot. 2nd. The boards being sawed to an even thickness are more valuable, saving labor to carpenters in various kinds of work. 3d. The boards are free from fractures, occasioned by splitting them off with a wedge. 4th. A saving of time from not having to split and carry off the boards after the log is sawed, the carriage being ready for a log when the last board is sawed. 5th. The perfect manner in which the log is held, without the use of dogs, and the facility of shifting the same, are advantages of great importance.

Joseph Hardesty,	John Hardesty,
Isaac Thatcher,	J. B. Tidball,
Ezra Richards,	Lewis Vail,
Thomas Latta,	Alfred Taber,
Wm. Hardesty, jr.	James Beer.

Ohio Repository, 20 July 1832, p8



Artist J. Kirkbride depicted the property built by William Hardesty (1776-1846) in what is now Malvern, Ohio. The family cemetery at the crest of the hill is alleged to contain the remains of two fugitive slaves who were in Hardesty's care as they sought safety & liberty in Canada. Now apparently gone, Hardesty's brick outhouse (represented at the upper center of the image) did achieve some notoriety. The image is from an 1874 *Atlas of Carroll County, Ohio*, published by Hiram Hardesty, son of William Hardesty. It was likely Hiram's birthplace.

Hardesty Homestead