NEGRO SETTLEMENT IN BRITISH COLUMBIA
1858 - 1871

by

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ABSTRACT

This is a study of the negro migration to British Columbia in the mid-19th century. It is the story of the early coloured pioneers who came to the colony from California to escape oppression. Here is a glance at the early history of the Canadian west coast from the standpoint of one of the many minority groups who once settled there.

The first of the negro immigrants arrived in Victoria, Vancouver Island in April of 1858, when the gold rush to the Fraser River was just beginning. While many preferred to try their luck at the diggings, others remained in the town where they prospered as merchants, barbers, restaurant and saloon keepers and ordinary labourers. Not wishing to live in segregation as they had been forced to do in California, they fitted themselves into the life of the settlement to a remarkable degree.

The coloured townspeople were particularly active in colonial politics, and when they voted en bloc, they could, and sometimes did control the outcome of elections, a situation which aroused antagonism toward them. Several negroes ran as candidates in colonial and municipal elections and one of them, Mifflin Wistar Gibbs was not only elected to the City Council, but later on leaving the colony became the first negro Judge in the United States and was eventually appointed United States Consul to Madagascar.

The first volunteer military unit on Vancouver Island, the Victoria Pioneer Rifle Corps was composed entirely of coloured men. After much discouragement at the hands of the whites, the negro soldiers disbanded, but at least they deserve the credit for being the first to volunteer and to prepare themselves for the defence of the colony.

Other important centers of negro settlement were on Salt Spring Island, where they established themselves as farmers and ranchers, and in the gold fields where they panned the bars of the Fraser River and the creeks of the Cariboo country. While it is doubtful if many became wealthy as miners, some became prosperous business men supplying the economic needs of the pioneer settlements.

The coloured people had not entirely escaped prejudice by their northward migration however, for it followed them from California on every gold rush steamer, and even the British settlers were not entirely blameless. Attempts were made in Victoria to segregate them in the churches and theatres, and to exclude them from the public bars. On Salt Spring Island the situation appears to have been somewhat different, for on the fringe of settlement, any neighbour, regardless of his colour, was a decided asset, and in the mining country men were generally judged by the amount of money in their pockets rather than by the colour of their skin.
By the mid-1860's the gold excitement had almost died away bringing a period of depression to Vancouver Island. In the United States the Civil War had come to an end and slavery had been abolished. Now it was no longer necessary for the coloured people to continue their self-imposed exile and many decided to return to the United States. As this movement progressed, the race problem in the colony diminished, and in time the fact that there had ever been an extensive settlement of negroes in British Columbia was forgotten.
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This is the story of a people, who because of persecution in the United States, decided to establish new homes under the British flag. It is the story of their migration from California and of their life in the colonies of Vancouver Island and British Columbia. The tale of the coloured migration is a very human one, and an attempt has been made to treat the subject not only in terms of cold facts and figures, but to recreate character and personality and to place them in their authentic setting.

For their assistance in the writing of this thesis, the author is indebted to the many coloured persons who gave him such a friendly reception and to the staffs of the Bancroft Library and of the Provincial Archives of British Columbia. Because of the constant interest of Miss Madge Wolfenden, Assistant Provincial Archivist, much material was made available which might otherwise have been neglected, and as the result of her welcome criticism and advice, many pitfalls were avoided. Thanks is also due to Dr. Walter N. Sage, Head of the Department of History, for reading and criticizing the manuscript, and to Dr. Gilbert Tucker for his valuable suggestions.

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J.W.P.
And the Lord said, I have surely seen the affliction of my people which are in Egypt, and have heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters; for I know their sorrows; And I am come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians; and to bring them up out of that land unto a good land and a large, unto a land flowing with milk and honey; ...

Exodus 3:7,8.
CHAPTER I

THE BACKGROUND OF SLAVERY

The migration of coloured people to British Columbia in the mid-19th century was only one small movement among many in the attempts of the American negroes to escape oppression and to improve their economic status. Almost all such schemes were destined to fail, as was the immigration to the British colony in many respects, for the opposing factors which had evolved over the centuries were much too powerful to be overcome in a few short years.

It is only by making a comparison with their past and by having some understanding of their problems however, that one can evaluate what the negro pioneers actually did achieve by coming to Vancouver Island. Only by a study of negro history does one find possible answers to such questions as: "How had their social and cultural level reached such a high state of development by the time of the northward migration?" "Why were they divided among themselves despite their common slave ancestry and their common purpose in coming to the Island?" "Why did they react as they did to their new environment?" Their background of slavery was ever present in British Columbia; they could not escape it. Not only was it responsible for their coming to the colony in the first place, but it was even to determine the duration of their stay, for after Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation and the end of the Civil War there was no longer any need to continue their self-imposed exile.

The history of modern slavery begins with the breakdown of feudalism and the rise of the towns. The accompanying commercial revolution placed trade and commerce in a leading position as the means by which a state could gain wealth and power. By the end of the 15th century, the Portuguese had discovered how important the trade
in African negroes could be as a means to this end, and soon the buying 
and selling of slaves became a part of the commerce of Europe. But the 
European economy was such that it could not absorb large numbers of negroes 
for white labour was plentiful and cheap and there was little place for 
black slaves in the merchant and banking houses that had recently become 
established. The discovery of America was the solution to the problem, 
for in the new world resources were great and labour was scarce.

Although the early Spanish, Portuguese and French explorers had 
brought negroes with them to America, the slave trade itself did not for-
mally begin until 1517 when Bishop Las Casas permitted each Spanish colonist 
to import twelve negro slaves. Las Casas, who became known as the "Apostle 
of the Indians", was convinced of the evil of using Indians as slave 
labour, so much so that in 1815 he returned to Spain to plead their cause. 
A commission was soon sent to Hispaniola to investigate conditions, but 
it proceeded too slowly and with too much caution for the Bishop's liking, 
so he returned once again to Spain in 1517 with his plan for colonizing 
the Indians and replacing them as labourers with negro slaves. His scheme 
ever succeeded and he lived to regret having instituted it.

As the plantations grew, so did the need for labour, and the Dutch, 
French and English took up the trade on a large scale. They transported 
the blacks under terrible conditions, for the more they carried on their 
small ships the greater were the profits. Death from disease and suicide 
was commonplace among the human cargo.

By the 17th century, Spain had lost her dominant position in the 
islands of the Caribbean, and Denmark, Holland, France and England having 
now acquired possessions there, attempted to get the greatest possible re-
turns from them by large scale agricultural developments. They used slaves
extensively on the tobacco plantations, and when tobacco dropped in value because of over-production, sugar cane was substituted and even more negroes were required to cultivate it. This condition existed until the early years of the 18th century when crops were becoming more expensive to produce because of soil exhaustion. But by this time attention was being directed to the North American colonies which were rapidly becoming of greater economic importance than the West Indies. Here was a new market for slaves, and in response to the demand, many were exported from the Caribbean islands.

In 1619 the first group of slaves on the mainland was landed at Jamestown, Virginia by a Dutch frigate, but it was many years before the white colonists were to realize the obvious advantages of negro slaves over Indian slaves or white labour. Indentured servants sometimes ran away and were difficult to recover; negroes on the other hand could always be recognized as slaves and were readily returned to their masters. Another advantage was that the use of negro slaves assured a permanent labour supply while the whites could leave their masters at the end of their period of indenture. In any case as time went on and the tobacco, rice and indigo plantations increased in size and numbers, there were not enough whites to fill the increased demand for labour; then negro slaves became a necessity.

In 1661 Virginia passed a law recognizing slavery and from then on the black population rose with astonishing rapidity, especially after England secured the monopoly of the slave trade by the Treaty of Utrecht in 1713. So many negroes were now introduced into the colony that they became a menace to the whites whom they frequently plotted to massacre. This fear of the negroes resulted in the infamous "Black Codes", 
the extreme forms of punishment used against them for even minor offences. Maryland soon followed Virginia in adopting slavery, then North and South Carolina did likewise, although the Quakers in North Carolina tried to discourage it. Finally, after frequent agitations by the colonists, Georgia lifted its restrictions against slavery in 1750.

In the southern colonies, slaves were needed on the plantations; in the middle colonies the economic situation was quite different for in New York and New Jersey the farms were small and the Dutch, Swedes and Germans were not interested in negro labour, slaves were more important here for their commercial value; in the New England colonies they were also of greatest importance as a commodity of trade, and the Puritans entered extensively into the business. Whether they actually believed it or not, the Puritan traders justified their actions by claiming that they were bringing a cursed people within God's grace. Conditions in the New England colonies improved considerably when the Quakers arrived early in the 18th century, for these people frequently educated negro children along with their own, and encouraged the coloured people to attend church and become converted. Life was easiest here for the negro for care was taken not to import too many slaves, and without the constant fear of insurrection there was little necessity for the whites to pass harsh "black" laws.

With the coming of the American Revolution many colonists began to oppose slavery actively, aware no doubt that while condemning England for her oppression, they too were oppressors. Some even blamed George III for the existence of the institution in America, and when Thomas Jefferson first submitted a draft of the Declaration of Independence to the Continental
Congress, it contained a section reprobating slavery. This had to be removed on the insistence of the southern delegates to the Congress however, for they realized that if it remained, once the colonies gained their independence there would no longer be any excuse for the continuance of the system. In the Revolutionary War negroes fought on both sides, although at first George Washington and his War Council decided to exclude them. This decision was reversed after Lord Dunmore, governor of Virginia, invited the slaves to join the British forces. Then Washington enlisted negroes, and many all black units were organized to serve in the Revolutionary armies.

After the war, perhaps because of the prevailing philosophy of freedom, laws were passed in some states liberating all negroes who had served in the army. The manumission of slaves now began on a large scale partly because so many owners no longer believed in the system. Societies were formed both during and after the Revolution to fight slavery, and some states now prohibited the trade entirely, while others erected high import duties against them. This movement was naturally strongest in the north and the most powerful resistance to it came from the south where the economy seemed to demand slave labour. At the Constitutional Convention of 1787, the fear of sectional strife which seemed to be rapidly developing resulted in the extension of the slave trade for another twenty years, although by the Northwest Ordinance slavery was to be prohibited in the lands to the northwest of the Ohio River.


The Industrial Revolution brought new prosperity to the southern states, for with the new methods of producing cotton textiles, agriculture shifted from the raising of rice, indigo and tobacco, to the more profitable crop of cotton. It was now cultivated so extensively that even more slaves were required, and the trade continued to flourish at the end of the 18th and beginning of the 19th centuries.

In the meantime the slaves in the Caribbean were rising in revolt. Insurrections broke out on the Island of San Domingo in 1791, and in 1794 Toussaint L'Ouverture led a negro uprising in Haiti. Such incidents had a great effect upon American slavery, for although the southern planters wanted more negroes, they were afraid to import them for fear of similar outbreaks. Movements for abolition now became more assertive and the numbers of slaves who attempted and succeeded in escaping rapidly increased. The Fugitive Slave Law passed in 1793 was an ineffectual remedy. By December 1805, anti-slavery groups had brought so much pressure to bear that a bill was introduced into the government prohibiting the trade after January 1, 1808. It became law on March 2, 1807, shortly after England had passed similar legislation, but it was never really enforced and the trade continued on just as large a scale if not quite so openly.

After the Revolutionary War, the coloured people, with the assistance of manumission and abolition societies in the New England and Middle Atlantic states, began to raise their own status in society. More were becoming educated in the north in contrast to the south where the education of negroes was discouraged. It was in their religious life that they gained their greatest independence and in 1794 they were able to organize their own Bethel African Methodist Church in Philadelphia, followed two
years later by the establishment of the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church. All negro fraternal organizations were also coming into existence, the most important being the negro Freemasons. Fifteen negroes had been initiated into a British army lodge stationed near Boston in 1775, and although they were rejected by the American Masons, they were accepted by the Grand Lodge of England in 1784.

During the first half of the 19th century large numbers of American negroes gained their freedom. Some were voluntarily released by their masters; others were able to purchase their liberty by doing extra work, and many of these eventually bought their parents, wives and children from slavery. The free mulatto population was also growing very rapidly and by 1850 it is estimated that there were 159,000 of them in the United States.

Higher institutions of learning such as Franklin, Rutland and Oberlin colleges opened their doors to the coloured people, and many educated and intelligent negroes began to make their appearance and to take their places as leaders of their race. There were negro as well as white abolitionists, and of these Frederick Douglass is regarded as being the most outstanding. During the ten years preceding the Civil War, the coloured people became more determined in their struggle, and to give force to their protests, in 1853 they formed their National Council of Colored People in Rochester, New York.

The division between north and south which had been apparent from the earliest years of the Union, became even more so as the 19th century progressed. The question of slavery was one of the major irritants, for so many northerners were giving shelter and assistance to escaped negroes,
that a great financial loss was being sustained by the southern planters. Hatred for the northern abolitionists was the logical outcome. By 1850 the intersectional conflict had become serious and it was realized that something had to be done immediately about the unsettled condition of the nation. The Compromise of 1850, an attempted solution, provided for the admission of California as a free state; New Mexico and Utah were to become territories without mention of slavery; a fugitive slave law was enacted; slavery was to be abolished in the District of Columbia; and Texas was to cede certain lands to New Mexico for which it would be compensated. Neither the abolitionists nor the slave owners were really satisfied however, and the anti-slavery people continued to help runaways, whose owners, with the assistance of the new Fugitive Slave Law were more determined than ever to get them back. The Compromise brought only a temporary lull, for in 1854 the conflict was brought into the open by the Kansas-Nebraska Bill, which organized the two territories of Kansas and Nebraska, allowing the settlers there to decide for themselves whether they would enter the union as free or slave. In Kansas the battle between the slaveholders and the anti-slavery faction was merely a prelude to a greater one, for the nation was marching steadily towards war. The Dred Scott decision of 1857, a victory for the south, was a step even closer. Scott, a Missouri slave had been taken by his master to live in free Illinois, but later when returned to Missouri, he sued for his freedom, claiming that residence on free soil had given him his liberty. The verdict of the court was that as the negro was not considered an American citizen he could not bring suit, but what disturbed the northern states was the decision of Chief Justice Roger B. Taney that Congress could not
exclude slavery from the territories and that masters were quite at liberty to take their slaves anywhere in the territories and still retain them in servitude. One of the last events leading to open conflict was John Brown’s raid on Harper’s Ferry. Violently opposed to slave-holding, he had the hopeless dream of attacking the slave owners in Virginia in an attempt to liberate their negroes, and to obtain arms and ammunition for this purpose, he and a few followers attacked the federal arsenal at Harper’s Ferry on October 16, 1859. After his execution for this rash act, John Brown was regarded as a martyr by the northern abolitionists, and the familiar "John Brown’s body..." became their battle hymn. The south was frightened.

In the election of 1860, Abraham Lincoln, the Republican candidate for the presidency was known to be opposed to the slave system, and when he was elected, the south regarded his party as being revolutionary and destructive. Lincoln had no intention of immediately abolishing slavery in the south however, in fact he could not have done so even if it had been his wish for it could only have been accomplished by an amendment of the constitution, an impossibility at that time. But by now the breach had become too wide and seven of the cotton states decided to secede from the Union. In February of 1861 they formed the Confederate States of America and elected Jefferson Davis as their provisional President. Four other states soon joined them and on April 12, 1861, Confederate guns opened fire on Fort Sumter in Charleston Harbour. The "Brothers' War" had begun.

With the advent of war many slaves escaped to freedom behind the Union lines, while others were taken as contraband by northern forces. Although these "contrabands" were given their freedom, no preparations had been made to care for them, and frequently they were forced to live
under far worse conditions than they had ever known in slavery. They were often so hungry and badly treated that private organizations such as the National Freedmen's Relief Association in Cincinnati, were established to care for them.

In the meantime Lincoln's movement towards emancipation was rapidly progressing. In 1861 he had believed that owners of emancipated slaves should be compensated by the government, and this was done in the District of Columbia in 1862 despite the opposition of the abolitionists. In June of the same year slavery was abolished completely in the territories, and in July it was proclaimed that all slaves should be free who were owned by disloyal masters behind the Union lines. Finally on January 1, 1863 came the great Emancipation Proclamation freeing all slaves held in any state in rebellion against the Union.
When Lee surrendered his army at Appomattox and victory was conceded to the north on April 9th, 1865, the United States entered upon their period of reconstruction. In the south, the program instituted by the Republican party was humiliating to the whites who found it difficult to think of the slaves as being free. By the 14th and 15th amendments, the negroes were placed on an equal footing with them, and even the most illiterate were given the vote. For a time many of the state legislatures were controlled by the negro electors and large numbers of coloured men even occupied minor official positions. While the majority were quite unfitted for such appointments, there were a few such as Jonathan Gibbs of Florida who were highly competent men. The white population would not long endure this power held by the negroes however, and the Ku Klux Klan was employed to terrify the coloured people to keep them away from the polls. Finally by 1877 the Democratic party had gained control of every southern state, bringing to an end the period of Republican reconstruction and its policy of negro rule.
CHAPTER II

THE MIGRATION

The simple heading "GOLD MINE FOUND", over a short paragraph in the San Francisco Californian announced to the world on March 15, 1848 that gold had been discovered in California. But scant attention was paid to the find at Sutter's mill on the American Fork, in fact a few weeks later, the rival California Star maintained that the whole affair was a hoax, a "supurb take-in as was ever got up to guzzle the gullible."

But Sam Brannan, owner of the Star was to regret this rash accusation published by his editor, for within a few hours, it was Brannan himself (May 29, 1848) who, waving a bottle, shouted at the top of his voice that it was "Gold! Gold! from the American River!!!" The rush had begun.

The news spread rapidly up and down the Pacific coast and as far as the Sandwich Islands, but the Atlantic seaboard was slow to become excited and refused to take the discovery seriously until December 7th, when Lieutenant Loeser of the Third Artillery arrived in Washington with his famous tea caddy. The 230 ounces of gold it contained was enough to infect the eastern states with gold fever, but as it was too late in the year to make the western trek, thousands passed the winter months in preparation for the journey to California in the spring and summer of '49.

The route chosen by these forty-niners was generally dependent upon their point of departure. Those who lived in the Atlantic states and were accustomed to sea voyages frequently sailed around South America.

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and up the west coast to California, but this way was long and expensive; a shorter and cheaper one was the Chagres River route across the Isthmus of Panama; some even combined the sea and land routes, voyaging as far as Texas or Mexico and journeying overland from there. Of the overland trails, the famous Oregon-California Road was the most heavily travelled, and those who used it reported that they were seldom out of sight of a wagon and that frequently the trains extended as far as the eye could see. The heavy traffic was the cause of many of the hardships that plagued these pioneers, for the dust raised was almost beyond endurance for animals and humans alike, and it was not long before large numbers of cattle died of starvation after the pasturage along the roadside had become exhausted. Almost the entire length of the 2,000 mile trail to California from Independence, St. Joseph, Council Bluffs and other starting points, was marked by a tragic debris—skeletons of animals, graves of humans, broken wagons and furniture and baggage jetissoned to lighten the load. All were mute reminders of the price that must be paid.

It was no uncommon sight to see individual negroes or even entire families of free-coloured people travelling to California by all these routes. Many free mulattoes, excited by dreams of wealth, had sold out small businesses in the east, and had invested their capital in covered wagons, supplies and mining equipment. Many of the negroes walking beside the wagons on the Oregon trail or travelling on the coastal steamers to San Francisco were being brought to the coast as slaves, or since California had by this time adopted a free state constitution, they were referred to as "indentured servants". The difference between the two was negligible. Few if any refugees from the slave states ever made their
way to the Pacific coast; it was too far from the southern plantations and the trip too arduous and dangerous. The "underground railway" leading to Canada was a much easier road to freedom.

The free mining population of California was opposed to slavery in any form and insisted on the continuance of an unrepealed Mexican law of 1829 by which slavery was forbidden in the territory. Some indication of public opinion towards slave labour, and in fact towards the coloured people in general, was expressed in the press as early as March, 1848:

Not a single instance of precedence exists in the shape of physical bondage of our fellow men....We desire only a white population in California; even the Indians among us, as far as we have seen, are more of a nuisance than a benefit to the country; we would like to get rid of them....in conclusion we dearly love the Union, but declare our positive preference for an independent condition of California to the establishment of any degree of slavery, or even the importation of free blacks.

With so much opposition to having any coloured element in the population, it is not surprising that when the constitutional convention sat in Colton Hall in Monterey in September and October of 1849, it adopted a free state constitution. The free miners, who had formed their own trade union, discussed at their meetings how the mines should be operated, and established certain regulations to which the entire mining community must adhere. This was the group that brought the strongest pressure to bear against any attempts at legislation favourable to negro slavery. It was claimed that the introduction of coloured people into the state, whether slave or free, would degrade labour; furthermore they would be impossible to assimilate and would prove a vicious and

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3 Eaves, op. cit., p. 8.
disorderly element in society which would almost certainly become a financial burden on the white community. To prevent such a condition, an amendment was suggested providing that "The Legislature shall, at its first session, pass such laws as will effectually prohibit free persons of color from immigrating to and settling in this State, and to effectually prevent the owners of slaves from bringing them into this State for the purpose of setting them free." After much debate, this amendment was lost by a vote of 9 to 33, the final blow against it being the announcement of a San Francisco delegate that his constituents were unanimously opposed.

This was not the end of the movement to exclude all persons of colour from the state, for the first governor of California, Peter H. Burnett was well-known for his hostile feelings towards negroes. When he served as a member of the Oregon legislative committee, he had introduced a bill intended to rid the state of free negroes and mulattoes by advocating that if they had not departed within a certain limited period, they should be flogged every six months thereafter until they did so. This act was never enforced, and later an amendment was introduced by Burnett providing that such coloured people should be hired out to persons who would guarantee to remove them from the state after the shortest period of service. This law was repealed however, in 1845.


5 Eaves, op. cit., p. 88.

Burnett's attempts to introduce similar legislation into California in his inaugural address of 1849 and again in 1851, proved just as unsuccessful.

The fears of the California miners and of the legislators who represented them were well-founded, as contemporary newspaper reports clearly indicate. Most of the southerners appear to have brought their slaves into the state as indentured servants who would not be entirely free until they had purchased their liberty with either money or labour. Naturally, not wishing to lose control of their slaves at the end of this period, masters began more openly to advocate that California become a slave state. Various arguments were put forward in favour of slavery, among which was the claim that negro labour was important to the economy of the state both in agriculture and mining. This was especially true in agriculture for it was said that white labourers could not stand the poison oak which was so prevalent there.

This pro-slavery group of southerners made little progress with their schemes, although their representatives in the legislature did succeed in passing in 1852 "An Act respecting fugitives from labor and slaves brought to this State prior to her admission into the Union." This law was almost identical to the one already passed by the federal government in 1850 when California had entered the Union as a free state.

8 Ibid., 1851, pp. 19-29, cited in Eaves, op. cit., p. 89.
9 See appendix "E". Statutes of California, 1852, "An Act respecting fugitives from labor and slaves brought to this State prior to her admission into the Union."
It provided that any owner or agent could recover a fugitive slave and that the negro could not give testimony in his own behalf. Anyone trying to protect the runaway was to be subject to a fine and imprisonment and if the fugitive were to escape from custody, the officer responsible must pay his value to the owner. The purpose behind this law was not to return refugees from the slave states, since they seldom if ever made their way to California, but to assist masters in removing their negro "servants" from the state. According to the interpretation previously given by the courts of California to the federal Fugitive Slave Law, such indentured servants could not be removed by force to another state.

Section four of the California law of 1852 was an effective remedy:

Any person or persons held to labor or service in any State or Territory of the United States of America, and who shall refuse to return to the State or Territory where he or they owed such labor or service, upon the demand of the person or persons, his or their agent, or attorney, to whom such service or labor was due, such person or persons so refusing to return, shall be held and deemed fugitives from labor within the meaning of this Act, and all the remedies, rights, and provisions herein given claimants of fugitives who escape from any other State into this State are hereby given and conferred upon claimants of fugitives from labor within the meaning of this section.

In an amendment, the time limit set for the recovery of fugitive slaves was one year, but this was later extended to 1855, at which time the law lapsed. Since the constitution of California provided that there should be no involuntary servitude within the state, masters could only reclaim "fugitives" to remove them from the state. Now indentured servants, who may have earned their freedom honestly enough, could be legally returned to their masters. The constitutionality of the law was tested in the well-known Perkins case. Perkins had brought three

10 See appendix "E", op. cit.
negro slaves to California in 1849 under the agreement that they were to work for their freedom. This they did, and were so successful that when they were arrested in 1852, they had saved four hundred dollars, and had a span of mules and a wagon. Now in conformity with the new legislation, they were returned once more to slavery in Georgia. After the passage of this law in 1852 until its expiration by limitation in 1855, and with the Perkins case as a precedent, there was not a negro who was brought to California as a "servant" who was not still a slave.

Most of the anti-negro laws in California were not unique to that state, but were merely copies of the "black laws" already enacted in the older states. One such law passed in 1850 provided that no black or mulatto person or Indian should be permitted to give evidence in a court of law against a white man. In 1852 an unsuccessful attempt was made to repeal this and in the following year a memorial from the coloured people was presented to the legislature praying that the Civil Practice Act be amended to allow them to testify. When it was presented in the Assembly, one of the members suggested that it be rejected by throwing it out of the window. The rejection was carried by an unanimous vote. Under such a law, the negro had little protection for his life, liberty or property, for almost invariably any injustice to which he might be subjected would be at the hands of white men and not men of his own race.

In his autobiography, Shadow and Light, Mifflin Wistar Gibbs, one of the leading coloured merchants of San Francisco at this period, gives a striking example of the legal position of the negroes, and what could


12 Ibid., vol. IV, p. lll.
and did happen because of it. An incident which Gibbs claims is typical once occurred when a well-known customer came into his store on Clay Street and asked to have a pair of boots put aside, saying that while he did not need them at the moment, nevertheless he would think about buying them later. A few minutes after his departure, his friend arrived and insisted on buying the same pair of boots. Although Gibbs, and his partner Peter Lester tried to discourage him, the white man refused to remove the boots, assuring them that he would explain the situation to his friend and that all would be well. The coloured men forgot the incident until a few minutes later when both the purchaser and would-be purchaser returned. With the foulest of language, the first customer assaulted Peter Lester. The proprietors of the store were helpless, for if either had put up any show of resistance, they could have been shot and there would have been no redress. Even if Lester had been murdered, Gibbs, an eye-witness, could have given no evidence in a court of law. There was no alternative to submission.

Naturally the feeling of injustice ran high among the coloured people for they owned and paid taxes on property valued at $5,000,000 yet did not have the legal protection that the whites took for granted. Some of the better educated were stubborn and would not meekly submit to oppression. As early as 1851, Mifflin Wistar Gibbs, Jonas P. Townsend, W.H. Newby and others published in the Alta California, a list of resolutions protesting against their treatment and attempting to get full rights of citizenship. In this same year some of the leading

14 Ibid., p. 49.
coloured men in San Francisco commenced publication of the *Mirror of the Times*, a journal dedicated to obtaining equal rights for all. Negro conventions were continually being held at Sacramento where memorials were drawn up to be presented to the legislature by white friends, but such complaints were generally completely ignored.

Another of the many grievances of the coloured people was the compulsory payment of the Poll Tax, the voter's tax in California. They did not object as long as they were to have the franchise, but whenever they tried to exercise that right they were driven away from the polls. By their refusal to pay this tax because they were disfranchised and denied the right of oath, Lester and Gibbs made a test case of the matter. The state retaliated by seizing enough of their goods to pay the tax and costs, but when the boots were put up for auction, there were no bidders and they were finally returned to the owners. When the sale was first advertised, Gibbs published a notice stating that even if their goods were taken every year, they would never pay the tax. This card had the desired effect, for as the coloured men later learned, a pro-negro southerner mingled with the crowd at the sale, telling them its purpose and advising them to give the goods a "terrible letting alone". The auctioneer, also friendly to the cause, offered the shoes, winked at the customers, and said "no bidders". This stand taken by Lester and Gibbs was one more step towards the emancipation of the coloured residents of California, for although the law regarding the Poll Tax was never repealed, they were seldom if ever again forced to pay it.

The early months of 1858 brought a series of events hostile to the interests of California's negro population, such as the case of the escaped slave boy Archy Lee, the exclusion of negro children from the public schools and the attempt to pass legislation prohibiting negro immigration entirely. These incidents culminated in the decision of several hundred coloured people to emigrate to the British colony of Vancouver's Island.

The case of Archy Lee, the last and most widely discussed of the California fugitive slave cases, aroused a great deal of controversy between the pro and anti-slavery groups. Archy, a nineteen year old slave, described as "a tolerable specimen of a young negro whose blood is not debased by an admixture of Anglo-Saxon stock," was brought to California in the spring of 1857 by his master Charles A. Stovall. Stovall claimed that he had come to California because of his delicate health and had not intended remaining in the state for more than 18 months, but he was prevented from leaving because his oxen were not in condition to cross the mountains again. He settled temporarily in the Carson Valley, but around October 2, 1857, he had taken Archy to Sacramento where the slave boy had been hired out while Stovall himself had opened and taught a private school. After two months the school failed, and Archy being taken ill was no longer able to work. Dogged by such misfortunes, Stovall decided to return to Mississippi and with this in mind the negro was placed on board a river steamer at Sacramento bound for San Francisco where he was to be placed in charge of an agent to be returned home. Before the steamer left however, the boy made his escape and hid in a negro boarding house. Stovall swore out a warrant for the

arrest of his slave, and a short time later Archy was captured and placed in the city prison until released on a writ of Habeas Corpus which a coloured friend, Charles W. Parker, the proprietor of the Hacket House had wasted no time in procuring.

The case now passed from the jurisdiction of the State Court into the hands of the United States Commissioner, George Pen Johnston, who was in Sacramento at the time, but who refused to give any decision until he had conferred with Judge McAllister of the U.S. Circuit Court in San Francisco. According to the interpretation of the federal Fugitive Slave Law in California, if a slave should escape from his master while they were merely travelling through the state and without any intention of taking up permanent residence there, then that slave must be returned to the master; if on the other hand the owner of the slave should take up permanent residence in California where slavery was forbidden, then the slave must be freed. Was Stovall merely passing through the state or was he a permanent resident? That was the question before the court. Judge Robinson's decision was that as the boy had not escaped into the state but had rather been brought there voluntarily and had then escaped, the Fugitive Slave Law of 1850 did not apply to him. By now the California law by which Archy could have been quite legally returned to his owner, had lapsed, and it was decided that Archy could not be taken out of the state by force. Unhappily for the negro boy, the Judge had made public what his decision would be, an hour before actually giving it, which was ample time for Stovall to obtain another warrant for the re-arrest of his slave on the very moment of the negro's release. Archy was promptly marched back to jail, and a writ produced which had

been issued by Justice Bidleman, bringing him to trial before the Supreme Court of California.

Judges Terry and Burnett now tried the case, and by ignoring the existing laws, decided in favour of the master, Stovall. It was already anticipated what the decision of ex-governor Burnett would be. He was a southerner and advocated slavery on every occasion, but his reasoning in this case was rather startling. As Stovall was in poor health and in poor financial circumstances, he said, and as this was the first case of its kind, the law would not be enforced this time. Judge C.J. Terry agreed, but both declared quite emphatically that this case was not to form a precedent. Needless to say the decision was ridiculed, and with much sarcasm it was suggested that in future when a law was broken for the first time, the defendant could not be punished if he were in poor health or bankrupt.

Stovall now concealed Archy, and it was some time before it was discovered that the boy was being held under lock and key in the San Joaquin County jail. The coloured people once again applied for a writ of Habeas Corpus, but before it could be served, the negro had been secreted elsewhere until March 4th when an attempt was made to take him on board the Orizaba bound for Panama. In the meantime a warrant had been made out against Stovall for kidnapping the negro, and armed with this as well as a warrant for the arrest of the slave, the deputy sheriff and two policemen from San Francisco sailed with the Orizaba until the ship was opposite Angel Island whence master and slave, accompanied by four companions set out in a small boat. When they boarded

19 Ex Parte Archy, 9, California Reports, p. 147.
the steamer they were taken into custody, but not before they had drawn pistols and had attempted some show of resistance. The return of the party to San Francisco stirred up considerable excitement in the city and the coloured population turned out en masse as a welcoming committee. Archy was the celebrity of the moment and the center of all attention while on his way once again to the city jail.

James Riker, the coloured man who had filed the writ of Habeas Corpus by which the boy had been arrested, had also laid the charge of kidnapping against Stovall, who he said had refused Archy his liberty. The coloured boy was a free man and not a slave, he claimed, and the white man had broken the laws of the state by keeping him imprisoned.

The day following the rescue, notices were posted throughout the city where all the negro residents would be sure to see them:

NOTICE

There will be a public meeting of the coloured citizens of San Francisco this (Friday) evening March 5th, at Zion M.E. Church, Pacific, above Stockton St., to commence at 8 o'clock.

Signed by a Committee.

Long before the appointed hour the church was filled, and the gathering was not entirely negro for there were many ardent abolitionists in the city who were always ready to champion the cause of the coloured people. The meeting was called to order, and the chairman advised his audience not to let the excitement of the moment lead to any rash measures which might eventually make their cause appear ridiculous. After several leading negro citizens had taken the platform and urged their fellows to
do nothing that might lose rather than add to the growing public sympa-
pathy towards Archy, an appeal was made for funds with which to carry on
the fight for the coloured boy. $150.00 was collected from the gather-
ing, and at the same time a committee of seven men and seven women was
appointed to canvass for further funds.

In mid-March the case continued, and although Judge Freelon dis-
charged Archy from arrest, he was immediately re-arrested by United States
Marshal Solomon. With this turn of events, the court was filled with
confusion, and as the boy was led away followed by an excited mob, several
negroes were arrested for assault and battery, although no attempts were
made to effect a rescue. Through his attorneys, Crosby and Tomkins,
Archy now started a counter suit against Stovall, claiming $2,500 damages
for assault and battery and false imprisonment. In the meantime the case
dragged wearily on and new evidence was introduced by Stovall's brother,
who swore out an affidavit stating that Archy had attacked a white man
in Mississippi, and had then escaped only to be recaptured in the
Territory of Nebraska. When examined on the witness stand however, he
changed his mind saying that he did not know whether Archy had run away
from Mississippi or not, as possibly he had left with the consent of his
master. Was the boy a fugitive slave or was he not, continued to be
the question until United States Commissioner, George Pen Johnston handed
down the final decision on April 6, 1858. According to Johnston the
case against the negro was not covered by either the letter or the spirit
of the Fugitive Slave Law, for the evidence clearly indicated that
Archy had voluntarily come to California with his master, who having

23 Ibid., April 6, 1858.
then gone into business proved that he was not merely passing through the state, but had taken up permanent residence there, and by hiring out the boy and collecting his wages, was practising slavery in the state of California. Archy went free and the case was concluded on April 14th, 1858.

The coloured people had at last won a victory in the courts of law, but there were other complaints for which there seemed to be no remedy. In February 1858, the Board of Education in San Francisco held meetings at which it was decided that no negro children should be permitted to attend the same public schools as white children, and those already in attendance were to be removed to a special school set aside for them. It was even suggested that the ruling should apply to those who were as little as one-eighth coloured. The Board was by no means unanimous in its decision however, for several members did not wish to exclude the daughter of Peter Lester who had been admitted to the High School by the examining committee. It was argued unsuccessfully that exceptions should be made in cases such as hers where coloured students were no darker in complexion than many of their white classmates.

The worst insult of all was Assembly Bill 339 which was introduced in March of 1858 by Assemblyman Warfield in an effort to drive all mulattoes and negroes from the state of California. Entitled "An Act to Restrict and Prevent the Immigration to and Residence in this State of Negros and Mulattoes" it proposed to transport out of the state all such persons who did not leave at once. The sheriff was to be authorized to hire them out "for such reasonable time as shall be necessary to pay the costs of the conviction and transportation from this State,

25 See page 61 for photographs of Peter Lester and his wife.
before sending such negro or mulatto therefrom." Furthermore, all coloured people were to be forced to register and those who did not do so were guilty of a misdemeanor as were also all white persons found guilty of bringing negroes into the state with the intention of freeing them. Fortunately the bill was contested, and one assemblyman, Charles E. De Long, rose and stated that the bill "...has become a stinking thing....I do not want to vote against a bill of this nature; but I cannot tolerate this proposition at all. I believe that a negro is a human being; I believe that, under the operations of this bill, negroes coming into this State may be made slaves for life. I am in favor of the passage of a bill which will properly restrict the immigration of negroes into this State, giving them due notice of its existence. If they come in after the passage of such a law, we may hang, or do any other reasonable thing with them (laughter); but I am most decidedly opposed to making slaves of them in this way. I consider this bill one of the most outrageous tyrannical propositions I ever heard of in my life." The bill finally passed both houses in spite of long and bitter opposition, but not being pressed, it did not become law. Such legislation would have prevented the coloured people of the state from purchasing members of their families still in slavery and bringing them to their new homes. In any case this law was felt to be quite un-

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27 Loc. cit.

necessary for during the previous year hardly twenty-four negroes had arrived in California from the free states, and these were among the most thrifty and industrious in the country, for only a select few could bear the expense or had the initiative to make the long and dangerous journey. At a meeting held in Zion Church on the day of Archy's release, it was declared that "...they [would] not be degraded by the enactment of such an unjust and unnecessary law against them by their own (American) countrymen," and the suggestion was put forth that they emigrate to Vancouver's Island or to Sonora in Mexico, for the purpose of founding a permanent home for themselves on the Pacific coast.

The following evening a second meeting was held at which Archy was presented, amid much cheering and speech-making, to an audience of five hundred people, and after it was announced that there was still a $400.00 deficit in the "Archy Fund," and that contributions would be in order, a hymn was sung especially for the occasion:

**THE YEAR OF ARCHY LEE**

Blow ye the trumpet! Blow!
The gladly solemn sound,
Let all the nations know
To earth's remotest bound
The year of Archy Lee is come,
Return, ye ransomed Stovall, home.

Exalt the Lamb of God!
The sin-atoning Lamb;
Redemption for His blood
Through all the land proclaim.
The year of Archy Lee is come,
Return, ye ransomed Stovall, home.

Ye slaves of sin and hell,
Your liberty receive;
And safe in Jesus dwell,
And blest in Jesus live,
The year of Archy Lee is come
Return, ye ransomed Stovall, home.

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29 Daily Evening Bulletin, April 15, 1858.
30 Loc. cit.
The gospel trumpet hear
The news of pardoning grace;
Ye happy should draw near
Behold your Saviour's face.
The year of Archy Lee is come,
Return, ye ransomed Stovall, home.

The money flowed in during the singing, and when contributions began to
abate another song encouraged further donations:

A SONG OF PRAISE

For the Benefit of Those Named Therein

Sound the glad tidings o'er land and o'er sea -
Our people have triumphed and Archy is free!
Sing, for the pride of the tyrant is broken.
The decision of Burnett and Terry reversed.
How vain was their boasting! Their plans so soon broken;
Archy's free and Stovall is brought to the dust.
Praise to the Judges and praise to the lawyers!
Freedom was their object and that they obtained.
Stovall was shown it was time to be moving;
He left on the steamer to lay deeper plans.
But there was a Baker, a Crosby, and Tompkins,
Before Pen Johnston and did plead for the man.

While the negroes were having their problems in California,
James Douglas, the governor of the British colony of Vancouver's Island
was also faced with a difficult situation, for he had been instructed
to provide accommodation for seven officers and thirty N.C.O.'s and men
who were coming to join a similar party from the United States for the
purpose of laying out a boundary line between the two countries. Un-
fortunately the Governor was forced to report to the Colonial Office
that there were no labourers available to construct a barracks:

I have moreover to communicate for your information that the
floating population of this Colony have, with very few ex-
ceptions, wandered off to the newly discovered gold diggings
at Thompson's River, and there will therefore be great dif-

32 Loc.:cit.
ficulty, unless the mines prove a failure, in engaging local white labor. Indian labourers can however be engaged in any number required though it would not be advisable to employ a large proportion of that class of labourers, as they are a rather unruly force, requiring very close and constant superintendence.

Douglas would undoubtedly receive the California newspapers and would be quite aware of the discontent among the negro population there. Here was a labour force available for the asking. Why not contact Captain Jeremiah Nagle, master of the ship Commodore, and ask him to extend an invitation to the coloured people to come to Victoria to establish their homes?

Jeremiah Nagle, a frequent visitor to Victoria and well-known to Governor Douglas, was in San Francisco at the time, so it comes as no surprise to find him at Zion Church when the coloured people assembled for their third meeting. Sitting on the platform with his maps and charts of Vancouver's Island, he was prepared to answer any questions that the would-be colonists might care to ask. The questions followed in rapid succession. What is the climate like? What degree of latitude is the Island? By whom is it governed locally? The captain had a ready answer for everyone, as he had recently received a letter from Victoria from a "gentleman in the service of the Hudson (sic) Bay Company of undoubted veracity" giving all the latest details. The gentleman was probably the Governor of the colony himself.

33 James Douglas to Benjamin Hawes, Esq., 7th April, 1858, in Vancouver Island Miscellaneous Letters, June 22, 1850 to March 5, 1859.

34 Daily Alta California, April 15, 1858.

35 References mentioning the fact that it was Governor Douglas who sent Captain Nagle to invite the negroes to come to Victoria are to be found in the Victoria Daily Press, Nov. 19, 1861; Letter signed "Monitor," and in Delilah H. Beasley, The Negro Trail Blazers of California, Los Angeles, California, 1919, p. 263.
Only one man had any objection to the choice of the Island as a future home. He did not think the climate would suit the physical constitutions of the coloured people; neither did he quite understand the methods employed by the Hudson's Bay Company nor whether their rule extended over the entire Island. He feared that the coloured people would not like the Company, and if the founding of a settlement was to become a necessity, he favoured Sonora in Mexico. If the object in going north was to hunt for gold rather than to found a permanent settlement, then he would have nothing to say in opposition. In reply, the chairman of the meeting said that they would discuss the advantages and disadvantages of the British possession first, and that they would consider the possibility of going to Sonora some other time. As pointed out in the Daily Alta California, Sonora would have been a very poor choice, for eventually it was almost certain to become an integral part of the United States and the pioneers who would go there first would be the same type as were already found in California. This being the case, the negroes would still have the same problems with which to contend.

The possibility of going to Central America had also been discussed, and a letter had been sent to General Bosques, the coloured president of the Senate of Panama, enquiring as to how the coloured people would be received there. His very favourable reply did not arrive until mid-July however, and by that time the decision had been made in favour of Vancouver Island, and in fact the first group of negro colonists had already arrived in Victoria.

36 Daily Evening Bulletin, April 17, 1858.
37 Daily Alta California, April 16, 1858.
38 Ibid., July 23, 1858.
Although the Daily Evening Bulletin predicted that nothing would come of these meetings held in the little church on Stockton Street, nevertheless on April 19th, the coloured citizens gathered once again to make further plans for the mass exodus, and to say good-bye to the advance party of sixty-five who had registered to leave the following afternoon on board the Commodore for the northern colony.

It was not only this handful of negroes who were to sail on the Commodore on April 20th, for such extravagant claims had been made in the press regarding the gold discoveries on the Fraser River, that the rush to the diggings was about to begin in earnest. Captain Nagle had given such exciting accounts of the wealth to be had that his vessel was overloaded with passengers bound for the mines.

By four o'clock in the afternoon on the day the steamer was to leave for Puget Sound and Victoria, Montgomery Street in San Francisco was as deserted as on a Sunday afternoon. The curious had been attracted to the Pacific and Folsom Street wharves where the ships Golden Age, Commodore and Columbia were all embarking passengers for the north. Representatives from the competing companies had stationed themselves at the heads of the wharves proclaiming the advantages of their own vessel and the disadvantages of the others. Orange and apple vendors, newsboys and book-sellers mingled with the crowd. Excitement increased as 5:30, the hour of departure approached. During the afternoon passengers had been squeezing their way on board the Commodore, dressed in the usual rough miner's garb and loaded with blankets, canteens, tin pots,

39 Although this may have been the number who registered, as reported in the Daily Evening Bulletin, April 21, 1858, probably only thirty-five actually sailed on the Commodore. This is the figure recorded in the diary of the Rev. Edward Cridge shortly after he visited the new arrivals in Victoria. The Daily Alta California, April 20, 1858 gives the highly exaggerated figure of 150.
miner's wash-pans, picks, spades, firearms, and some who had formed companies had even purchased whale boats which were stowed on the decks. A considerable crowd had been attracted all day by a map of the Fraser River posted on the starboard side of the after cabin. At 5:30 the gangplanks were hauled in, and as friends on the wharf shouted to those on board to "write sure," the Commodore drew away from the wharf and headed out to sea, carrying the first load of adventurers to the new El Dorado, and the first party of negro immigrants to Vancouver Island.

The San Francisco Daily Evening Bulletin carried a very touching and fitting editorial comment on the negro exodus:

All this puts one in mind of the Pilgrims, and the address of pastor Robinson, when those adventurers embarked for their new homes across the seas. When the colored people get their "poet", he will no doubt sing of these scenes which are passing around us almost unheeded, and the day when colored people fled persecution in California, may yet be celebrated in story. This is an important epoch for this class of our inhabitants. The sixty-five yesterday went off in the Commodore and are now pushing up towards the north, bearing their lares and penates to found new homes. It is said that if the attempt to make a settlement on Vancouver's Island should prove abortive, a number who favour P. Anderson's proposition for a settlement in Sonora, Mexico, will make an attempt in that direction. Whatever may be their destiny, we hope the colored people may do well.

With this advance party of negroes were Mercier, Richard and Moses, who had been appointed as a delegation to interview the Governor. Within two weeks after their arrival in Victoria, Mercier had returned to San Francisco, and at another meeting at Zion Church, read his report along with letters from the other members of the committee, to the excited gathering of three hundred and fifty persons. The report was more

40 Daily Alta California, April 21, 1858.

41 Daily Evening Bulletin, April 21, 1858.
than merely favourable, it was almost more than the coloured people could believe, for their persecuted race had been welcomed heartily to the land of "freedom and humanity" and their representatives had found themselves quite at ease in the presence of Governor Douglas, whose grace and dignity made the interview very cheerful and agreeable. The delegates reported that they could purchase land in the colony at the rate of twenty shillings per acre (actually this was an exorbitant price at that period), but that the down payment was only one fourth, and that the balance was to be paid in four annual instalments. Interest of 5% must be paid on the amount owing, but there was no tax on the land. They understood that anyone holding land after nine months had the right to vote, to sit on juries, and to be protected by all the laws; but before they could claim all the rights of British subjects, they must live in the colony for seven years and take the oath of allegiance. A letter was also read at this meeting from Wellington Delaney Moses, one of the Pioneer Committee, describing his adopted country in a highly commendatory manner:

To describe the beauty of the country my pen cannot do it. It is one of the most beautifully level towns that I was ever in.... I consider Victoria to be one of the garden spots of this world.... The climate is most beautiful; the strawberry vines and peach trees are in full blow.

...there are two churches and two schools. The Protestant school is taught by an educated Indian. All the colored man wants here is ability and money....it is a God-sent land for the colored people.

The negroes, excited over the prospect of their new home, held another meeting the following week, at which it was proposed to form a company of one hundred persons from among themselves, from which they

43 No tax was levied on real estate until 1860.
would choose nine to act as a Board of Managers, along with a President, Treasurer and Secretary. Members were to pay $25.00 each to the Secretary, which would be deposited in some bank by the Treasurer, and as soon as $2500.00 had accumulated, a ship was to be chartered, large enough to transport the entire party along with their household possessions and provisions. After their arrival in Victoria, the company would be dissolved and the individual settlers would then be on their own resources.

Before the meeting was adjourned, twelve resolutions were read, preceded by the following preamble:

Whereas, We are fully convinced that the continued aim of the spirit and policy of our mother country, is to oppress, degrade and outrage us. We have therefore determined to seek an asylum in the land of strangers from the oppression, prejudice and relentless persecution that have pursued us for more than two centuries in this our mother country. Therefore a delegation having been sent to Vancouver's Island, a place which has unfolded to us in our darkest hour, the prospect of a bright future; to this place of British possession, the delegation having ascertained and reported the condition, character, and its social and political privileges and its living resources. This mission in the highest degree creditable, they have fulfilled and rendered the most flattering accounts to their constituents in their report; in view of which it may be resolved as follows:

The resolutions themselves expressed appreciation for the work of the delegation to Victoria, for the kindness of the Governor, and for the friendly reception accorded them by the Reverend Edward Cridge. Once again any who wished to emigrate were advised to invest in land. It was also decided that copies of the resolutions should be distributed throughout the state for the signatures of any other negroes outside of San Francisco, who might wish to join the exodus. Upon arrival in Victoria it was resolved to avoid all social distinctions such as coloured churches, coloured schools and coloured associations such as they had

45 Daily Evening Bulletin, May 12, 1858.
been forced to adopt in the United States because of the prejudice against their race.

The day following this meeting, the African Methodist Episcopal ministers of San Francisco held their own convention at which the migration was discussed. They felt that just when they were asking themselves "Where shall we go?" God had himself come to their aid and had opened the door for them. It was resolved:

That in the opinion of this convention we deem it expedient to call upon our people throughout California in particular, and the Atlantic States in general, to save all the money they can and prepare themselves to emigrate to a country where the color of their skin will not be considered a crime and where they can in fine, enjoy all the rights and privileges which will alone make them a great and mighty people.

So began the movement that brought three or four hundred negro families to Vancouver Island. For many it was to become the scene of tragedy rather than the haven they had been led to expect; others prospered and were better able to establish themselves when they returned to the United States after emancipation; still others found the province entirely to their liking, and with their families spent the remainder of their lives there.

The genuine thankfulness of the coloured people toward their benefactors in the British colony was expressed in a poem by Priscilla Stewart, a California negress who regarded the invitation to Vancouver Island as having been extended by Queen Victoria herself:

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47 M.W. Gibbs, op. cit., p. 63.
A Voice From the Oppressed to the Friends of Humanity

Composed by one of the suffering class.
Mrs. Priscilla Stewart

Look and behold our sad despair
Our hopes and prospects fled,
The tyrant slavery entered here,
And laid us all for dead.

Sweet home! When shall we find a home?
If the tyrant says that we must go
The love of gain the reason,
And if humanity dare say "No".
Then they are tried for treason.

God bless the Queen’s majesty,
Her sceptre and her throne,
She looked on us with sympathy
And offered us a home.

Far better breathe Canadian air
Where all are free and well,
Than live in slavery’s atmosphere
And wear the chains of hell.

Farewell to our native land,
We must wave the parting hand,
Never to see thee any more,
But seek a foreign land.

Farewell to our true friends,
Who’ve suffered dungeon and death.
Who have a claim upon our gratitude
Whilst God shall lend us breath.

May God inspire your hearts,
A Marion raise your hands;
Never desert your principles
Until you’ve redeemed your land.

48 The colonies of Vancouver Island and British Columbia were not at this period part of Canada.

49 Delilah Beasley, op. cit., p. 263.
CHAPTER III

VICTORIA'S NEGRO COLONY

After the Commodore had set out from San Francisco on April 20, 1858, carrying several hundred miners bound for the gold fields as well as the small advance party of negroes on their way to establish new homes on Vancouver Island, it was discovered that there was a large number of white stowaways and rowdies on board, many of whom had no money and not the slightest intention of paying their passage. Fights were common occurrences among them, and trunks and supplies were frequently broken into. On occasion the trouble-makers made life unpleasant for the coloured passengers by kicking over their pans of food.

1 Daily Alta California, May 6, 1858.
On April 25th, the ship steamed into the harbour at Victoria, and so thankful were some of the negroes for their safe arrival that upon landing, they fell on their knees and asked blessings on this land of freedom. At first the townspeople were somewhat hostile towards the newcomers, who, armed as they were with revolvers and bowie knives, had the appearance of an invading army. Once the miners started spending their money freely however, the permanent residents regarded them with a more kindly eye, immediately raising the price of the foodstuffs stored in their larders. Almost at once the thirty-five coloured men formed a mess for themselves, settling temporarily at Laing's the carpenter's, where within an hour of their arrival they held a prayer meeting, singing hymns and thanking God for their health and safety.


3 In his despatch to the Colonial Secretary, Governor Douglas mentions the arrival of the Commodore, but makes no reference to the negro passengers on board. Douglas to Labouchere, May 8th, 1858, in Vancouver Island Letters to the Secretary of State, 10th Dec. 1855 to 6th June 1859:

On the 25th of last month the American Steamer "Commodore" arrived in this Port, direct from San Francisco, with 450 passengers on board, the chief part of whom are gold miners, for the "Couteau" country.

Nearly 400 of those men were landed at this place, and have since left in boats and canoes for Fraser's River.

I ascertained through inquiries on the subject that those men are all well provided with mining tools, and that there was no dearth of capital or intelligence among them. About 60 British subjects, with an equal number of native born Americans, the rest being chiefly Germans, with a smaller proportion of Frenchmen and Italians composed this body of adventurers.

4 Daily Alta California, May 6, 1858.
The following afternoon the Reverend Edward Cridge and his wife were drinking tea at the home of Mrs. Blinkhorn, and during the course of the conversation their hostess mentioned the arrival of the negroes the previous day, and of hearing them singing hymns and worshipping God. Cridge was naturally impressed, and the next morning paid them a visit. The coloured men were very pleased to receive him and readily told their life stories and spoke of the conditions in California that had forced them to leave. Edward Cridge was most friendly and promised to do everything possible to be of assistance to them.

Crowded steamers arrived every few days bringing more negro immigrants and miners from California. Other thousands of adventurers also arrived from Oregon, Washington, Minnesota and Utah. In four months it is estimated that 20,000 human beings from every level of society completely overwhelmed the few original inhabitants of the fur trading settlement. At the end of April, the town had presented a very picturesque and peaceful appearance, its stump studded fields dotted with simple white-washed cottages with crooked chimneys. Six weeks later the little settlement was hardly recognizable. New buildings, some little better than shanties, had been erected on the recently surveyed streets; tents of all shapes and sizes and of all materials were scattered about the outskirts and upon the hillsides and in the evenings the miners gathered before them, sitting around the campfires to talk and sing and reminisce. Coffee stands were everywhere, and Indians padded through the streets and encampments selling clams. Trade flourished in the boom town, and anyone who had brought extra supplies from California could readily

5 See appendix "C". Complete entries from the Cridge Diaries having reference to the arrival of the negroes.

sell them at many times their original value. The only stabilizing influence was the Hudson’s Bay Company whose prices were generally lower than those of the speculators. In the streets was the almost never ending din of construction work; new buildings appeared daily; the cost of labour mounted, and so did the price of town lots.

Following the advice they had been given before leaving California, many of the negro settlers invested in real estate with the fortunate result that some became comparatively wealthy when the gold-rush reached its peak and property in Victoria sold at a premium. The regulations governing the sale of land on Vancouver Island were explained by Governor Douglas in one of his despatches:

All public land in Vancouver's Island is sold by the Colonial Surveyor in the public offices of the Colony at the fixed Government price of 20 shillings an acre, and no change has up to this day, been made; neither has the Governor any authority to alter that standard price.

7 Cornwallis, op. cit., p. 291.
In no instance have Town or suburban lots been sold by the Colonial Government for the reason that the Colonization law of Vancouver's Island, provides that no grant of land shall contain less than 20 acres.

Tracts of different sizes have been offered for sale by individual proprietors of land in this Colony and the Hudson's Bay Company to meet the public demand, have sold a few suburban, and a great number of Town lots near Fort Victoria, where they hold about 1200 acres of land belonging to their Fur Trade concern. The Hudson's Bay Company have always sold suburban lots, consisting of 5 acres of land at the rate of £25 each lot; and Town lots measuring 120 x 60 feet, at first sold for £10-8-4, have now [October 1858] risen to £20-16-8 a lot.

As the population swelled and choice sites became scarce, speculation was inevitable.

Town lots 60 by 120 feet, that had been sold by the Company for fifty and seventy-five dollars, were resold a month afterwards at prices varying from fifteen hundred to three thousand dollars, and more. Amongst others, one half of a fifty dollar corner lot, the whole of which had been offered successively for 250, 500, 750, and 1000 dollars, and finally sold for 1100 dollars, was resold a fortnight afterwards, that is to say the half of it, for 5000 dollars. Old town lots, well situated brought any price, and frontages of 20 and 50 feet, by 60 deep, rented from 250 to 400 dollars per month.

When Mifflin Gibbs arrived from San Francisco in June of 1858, he intended to buy two or three lots which he had heard could be purchased for $100 each, but unfortunately that day had already passed. Now the land office was closed, not only because all the surveyed lots had already been sold, but because in the rush of purchasers the building had been so damaged that it was now in need of extensive repairs. In

8 Governor James Douglas to Sir E. Bulwer Lytton, Oct. 13, 1858, in Vancouver Island Letters to the Secretary of State, 10 Dec. 1855 to 6 June 1859.

9 Alfred Waddington, The Fraser Mines Vindicated, or The History of Four Months, Victoria, 1858, p. 19.
the meantime the earlier buyers who were the only ones with property
to sell, began asking highly inflated prices. The day after his arrival,
Gibbs paid $100 on account on a lot and house, the price of which was
to be $3,000, with $1,400 to be paid in two weeks and the remainder
within six months. Before buying the property he had carefully cal­
culated the cost of alterations, and the rental value once such changes
were carried out. By doing the carpenter work himself, the investment
proved a profitable one, for within twenty days he had not only supplied
accommodation for the firm of Lester and Gibbs, but had rented the re­
mainder of the property for $500 monthly.

If Gibbs' investment proved so profitable, when he was a relatively
late comer, how much more so must have been the purchases of the first
negroes who arrived when town lots were sold for $50.00 each, with a
maximum of six to a customer. Some of the coloured pioneers had even
built houses on their lands and rented them to the late arrivals, in­
cluding the Bishop of British Columbia himself.

- 0 -

THE NEGRO SOCIETY

The structure of the negro society in Victoria was very similar
to that of the white society and the one does not appear to have been
inferior in any way to the other. All types and classes were represented
in the negro community, ranging from the well-bred mulatto merchants,
some of whom had been educated in the north and had never known slavery,
to the sometimes crude and illiterate full blooded ex-slaves only re­

11 Columbia Mission, Occasional Paper, London, Rivington, June 1860,
p. 13.
cently released from servitude.

The places of birth of the negro colonists, were as diverse as their shades of colouring, and although the impression is that the majority were born in Missouri and Virginia, others came from the northern states, as well as from Scotland, Ireland, Liberia, Trinidad and Jamaica. One who said he was born in England, claimed that his father had fought at Trafalgar. Many who were British subjects by birth considered themselves somewhat superior to the American born negroes, and sometimes resented the attempts of the latter to become naturalized subjects of the Queen.

While many of Victoria's coloured colonists were of very limited intelligence, others were on the level of the best thinkers in the settlement, and on occasion proved themselves so by the eloquent speeches they made from the public platform; too often however their choice of language and subject matter were signs of mere affectation. Generally they were a quiet and reserved people, but perhaps as a reaction to their background of slavery, they could on occasion become overly familiar. A few affected such airs of dignity as to appear ridiculous, always addressing one another as "Mr." and whenever possible wearing black coats with gold studs and watch chains.

All degrees of morality were to be found in the community, for there were negroes who would not even attend the theatres because they were members of a church, and at the other extreme came the frequenters of the squaw brothels on Cormorant Street, who made and sold whiskey to

12 Colonist, Jan. 10, 1860.

the Indians, and were continually reported in the newspapers for being drunk and disorderly. As in any large community, the negro society in Victoria had its share of degenerate and criminal types, yet the crimes for which they appeared in police court during the period under consideration were not excessive in number and many were of a very minor nature. The impression is that their criminal record was no worse than that of the white population.

A large number of the coloured pioneers were mulattoes, and intermarriage between negroes and whites and negroes and Indians, produced an increasing partly coloured population in the town. Matthew Macfie comments on the various marital combinations to be found there:

Among the many remarkable matrimonial alliances to be met with, I have known Europeans married to pure squaws, Indian half-breeds and Mulatto females respectively. One case has come under my observation of a negro married to a white woman. A gentleman of large property, reported to be of Mulatto origin, is married to a half-breed Indian. From these heterogeneous unions, and from illicit commerce between the various races just enumerated, it is evident that our population cannot escape the infusion of a considerable hybrid offspring.

Interrmarriage does not appear to have been welcomed socially by either whites or blacks, and problems sometimes arose such as the following, which gives some insight into the character of the lower class negro:

A Rumpus Among The Negroes

Yesterday morning Timothy Roberts, a negro drayman, appeared in court to answer a charge of using disgusting language towards a buxom negress, named Elizabeth Leonard. Roberts came into court with his wife, a diminutive Irishwoman, who stood by her husband's side during the investigation, and prompted him occasionally as he made his defence.

14 See appendix "D". Table of punishable offences committed by negroes in Victoria, 1858-1871.

15 The term mulatto is here used to designate all persons of negro-white blood.

Mrs. Leonard said that last Sunday morning some of her chickens got over into Roberts' yard, and that R. wrung their necks, and used insulting language, calling her a "black ---," etc.

A witness, called to substantiate Mrs. L., testified that she saw Roberts twist the necks of the chickens, and Mrs. Leonard said to him, "That is an unliberal, unchristianized act." Roberts said, "Git out, you black ---," and told her to do something vulgar.

The Judge asked Roberts what he had to say for himself?

Roberts--You see, Judge, this 'ere woman, and all the other colored folks, is down on my wife because she's Irish. I can't help it because she's Irish--'tain't my fault. (Sensation in court, and slight hissing.) They calls my wife Irish, and keeps a using insulting language torrads [sic] her whenever she goes in the yard, and says I'm a nadgey-headed nigger.

Mrs. Roberts--Your honor, I want protection; but I suppose I must put up with undecent remarks because I lives in a low neighborhood. I am rebuked and reviled every time I go into the yard.

The Judge--Well, Roberts, you will have to find two sureties in £20 each to be of good behavior in future, or in default suffer one month's imprisonment.

The negro, closely followed by his white wife, was then led off to prison, grumbling at his hard streak of luck. We learn that he afterwards furnished the bonds and was set at liberty.

17

The coloured pioneers in Victoria fitted themselves into the life of their adopted community to a remarkable degree. They were particularly active in colonial politics and some even ran for public office. Their children were educated with the white children of the town, and some parents who were financially able, even sent their sons back to Oberlin, Ohio to attend school. An attempt at least was made to start a library, and to raise funds for it, an exhibition was given by the negro children in Pioneer Hall. There were even negro Masons in Victoria during the colonial period, and in 1871, M.A. Phipps was appointed District Deputy

17 Colonist, Sept. 20, 1860.

Grand Master of the coloured Masons of British Columbia. Throughout the period the negro colonists were kept well informed about conditions among their people in the United States by the two negro newspapers, the Elevator and the Pacific Appeal, both from San Francisco. Each had agents and correspondents in Victoria, New Westminster, and in the Cariboo.

- C -

OCCUPATIONS

The negroes who first arrived in the colony had no difficulty at all in finding employment, and when they visited the farms around the settlement, were quite pleased when they were well received and given all the milk they could drink to quench their thirst. Farm labour was scarce for the mines were proving too strong a lure for transient workers. Augustus Pemberton recorded in his diary the work done on his farm by coloured men during the weeks following the arrival of the first party:

April 29 - Three blk men commenced spliting (sic) rails $2.50 for 10 ft $3 for 15 ft per 100....
May  1 - Two blacks split rails today....
May  7 - Another blk man came to work.
May 12 - Blk man cleaned sheep fold.
May 13 - Two blks grubbed bushes per acre.
May 18 - Old black man repaired fence of the lawn.
May 19 - Old blk man absent.
May 21 - Two blkmen, 3-1/2 Indians, 1 boy, 1 woman shore 103 sheep and attended them.
May 22 - Paid the old Blkman $4.
May 25 - Sold a black hog to one of the black men for £4.... Lodged the £4 in store and drew $2 to pay black man 5 days work cutting sheep, etc.

19 Colonist, August 16, 1871.
Many who followed the rush northward found their gold not on the bars of the Fraser River, but in the town of Victoria itself, where they supplied some of the economic needs of the pioneer community. Merchants, artisans and labourers who had goods or services to sell found a ready market there, and consequently almost over night some of the negro colonists became established as prosperous business men. The barbering trade was almost monopolized by them, and there were also numerous farmers, draymen, carpenters, bakers, cooks and ordinary labourers.

Peter Lester and Mifflin Gibbs closed their store in San Francisco and established themselves as the first large merchant house in the colony outside of the Hudson's Bay Company. Their advertisements appeared regularly in the newspapers of the day:

LESTER & GIBBS,

DEALERS IN GROCERIES, PROVISIONS,
BOOTS, SHOES, &c.,

WHOLESALE & RETAIL

L. & G. HAVING PERMANENTLY ESTABLISHED themselves in Victoria, would respectfully call the attention of Families, Miners and the public generally to their very superior stock, to which they are receiving additions by every arrival.

N.B.-Consignments solicited, and attended to with promptness and despatch.

Nathan Pointer who had once operated the Philadelphia Store in San Francisco with Gibbs as his partner, opened one of the largest clothing stores in Victoria - open 6 A.M. to 10 P.M.

22 See appendix "A". List of names and occupations.

23 Victoria Gazette, March 22, 1859.
The first "lawyer" to advertise in the town was Joshua Howard, a negro from Virginia:

JOSHUA HOWARD

(Late of Botetourt County, State of Virginia,

Attorney and Counsellor at Law,

Copeland's Buildings,

Victoria.

Advice in Law, to the poor gratis.

Whether or not Howard had ever had any professional status in the United States is unknown, but his legal career in Victoria was short lived. In September 1858, he was himself taken into custody for trying to interfere with the police who were conducting a drunken prisoner to the cells. Joshua, thinking this a valuable opportunity for free publicity, behaved in such a manner as to attract a crowd, and eventually finding himself in police court with his would be client, was ordered to pay a fine of £5.

During the early summer of 1858, negroes were appointed as police in Victoria! This was a most surprising occupation, for they were now in a position of authority over the same white men who only a few weeks before had regarded them as the lowest element of the population of San Francisco. Governor Douglas was quite aware of this race conflict, and it is difficult to understand his reasons for policing the town

24 Victoria Gazette, July 28, 1858.

25 Ibid., Sept. 2, 1858.
with coloured men. Was he merely trying to show his authority? Was it his method of impressing upon the Americans that this was a British colony and not part of the United States? Whatever were his motives, the negro police did not long remain, for the white population would not tolerate them and they had to be withdrawn from service.

Wellington Delaney Moses, one of the Pioneer Committee sent with the first party to interview Governor Douglas, opened a barber shop shortly after his arrival. He remained in Victoria only until 1862 however, when he moved on to the Cariboo where he established a shop in Barkerville.

PIONEER SHAVING SALOON
AND BATH ROOM-
YATES STREET.
Above Broad, near the American Exchange,
Victoria.
This establishment, under the management of
W.D. Moses, will be opened on Thursday
morning, (July 29th).
Private Entrance for Ladies.

26 The question of who was responsible for the appointment of negro police is an interesting one. In E.O.S. Scholefield and F.W. Howay, British Columbia from Earliest Times to the Present, Vancouver, Chicago, (etc.), S.H. Clarke publishing company, 1914, vol. IV, p. 97, it is said that Augustus F. Pemberton appointed them, but he was not made Commissioner of Police until July of 1858, and the negroes were already policing the town in June. In Kinahan Cornwallis, op. cit., Cornwallis mentions seeing the newly appointed negro police, and as he left Victoria during the last week of June, 1858, they must have been appointed prior to that date. Such being the case, who else but Governor Douglas himself would have the authority to give them this position.

27 Victoria Gazette, July 29, 1858.
During the mid-1860's Moses' "Hair Invigorator" became a well-known product in the colony:

- MOSES HAIR INVIGORATOR -

To PREVENT BALDNESS, restore hair that has fallen off or become thin, and to cure effectually Scurf or Dandruff. It will also relieve the Headache, and give the hair a darker and glossy color, and the free use of it will keep both the skin and hair in a healthy state. Ladies will find the Invigorator a great addition to toilet, both in consideration of the delicate and agreeable perfume, and the great facility it affords in dressing the hair, which when moist with it, can be dressed in any required form, so as to preserve its place, whether plain or in curls. When used on children's heads, it lays the foundation for a good head of hair.

Prepared only by

W.D. Moses

At Randal Caesar's Barber Shop
Yates Street, next Hibben & Carswell.

Another unusual position filled by a negro in colonial Victoria was that of messenger in the government offices. Fielding Smithie was a very impudent young coloured man who was never regarded very highly by his fellow negroes. Once when sent with a message from the Governor to the Assembly, he boldly opened the gate and walked in among the members, something not even permitted white persons. In retaliation for being ordered outside he sent an unpleasant letter to Captain Doggett, the Clerk of the House, for which he later received a public reprimand. Undoubtedly his attitude aroused antagonism among the white citizens, and probably contributed much to the anti-negro feeling so prevalent at the time.

28 Colonist, Feb. 22, 1866.
29 Ibid., July 26, 1860.
RELIGIOUS LIFE

When the coloured people decided to come to Vancouver Island it was with the intention of becoming an integral part of the new community. They hoped to avoid all distinctions because of complexional differences, and with this in mind refused to form a separate church of their own. Their insistence on mingling as equals with white congregations caused a split in two of the churches where racial prejudice was so strong that there was a demand for segregation. Edward Cridge, who regarded all human beings as being equal in the eyes of God refused to have a negro gallery in his church however. On their arrival he had assured the coloured people that he would do everything he could to help them and now he would not go back on his word. It is not surprising then to note in his records the names of negro pioneering families who were pew holders in his church, as well as records of the baptismal, confirmation, and marriage ceremonies that he performed for them.

Many negroes brought letters of introduction from their pastors in San Francisco, and when the Reverend J.J. Moore, the negro minister from California visited Victoria in September 1858, he wrote to Edward Cridge giving a list of some of the coloured persons who wished to attend church in the colony:

Victoria, Sepr. 4, 1858

Rev. & dear friend

I hereby furnish you with the names of persons who wish to communicate at the Table of the Lord on To-morrow should they present themselves I think worthy.

30 See below, p.178.
Negro children attended Edward Cridge's Sabbath School, and after visiting it on Sunday, May 11, 1862, Charles Hayward, a citizen of Victoria, made the following entry in his diary: "Delightful weather - Visited by invitation the Sabbath School of Mr. Cridge - Was appointed teacher of first class of having in it 6 or 8 very intelligent boys three of them natives of Africa...."


32 Charles Hayward, Diary, p. 49. Transcript in B.C. Provincial Archives.
Willows to spend the afternoon in playing games, dancing, singing and speech making. In the evening after the picnic, the party would return for dancing in the hall of the African Rifles, the all-negro militia unit which had been founded in the colony.

Sometimes parties were given to raise funds for philanthropic purposes, such as the relief of the "contrabands" in the United States during the Civil War. Many of these liberated slaves were in a very pitiable state as little was being done to care for them. To try to help in some small way the coloured ladies of Victoria held a "donation party" on New Year's Eve, 1862-63, the time at which President Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation was to go into effect. The $150 raised at this party was sent to the Central Committee in Philadelphia for relief purposes. In April of the same year further funds were raised at a bazaar, at which music was played by an all-negro brass band. The proceeds were sent to Hannibal Hamlin, Vice-President of the United States, and were accompanied by the following letter:

Victoria, April 13, 1863

Sir:

By order of the Committee of Colored Ladies of the British Colony of Victoria (V.I.), please find inclosed a draft for £86 14s 9d, sterling on London, made payable to your order.

Please send it to Beaufort (S.C.) for the benefit of the contrabands. One of the reasons for sending this money to Beaufort is, its being the first place a colored regiment was formed, according to law. This money has been raised by and through the colored people of this place, and who are originally from the United States.

33 Daily Chronicle, Jan. 3, 1863.

34 Ibid., April 7, 1863.
We have also sent $170 to the City of Philadelphia for the same purpose, to be used there. You will please accept our thanks as a people for the great interest you have taken in the cause of humanity; and though many miles divide us from those who have the burden to bear in this great struggle for human liberty, our hearts are with you even unto death. Please acknowledge the receipt of this money through the New York Tribune.

EMILY ALLEN, President

Hon. Hannibal Hamlin

The following month, Peter Lester and some other coloured men sent another donation amounting to $152.00 to the Social, Civil and Statistical Association of Colored People of Pennsylvania.

On January 14th, 1863, it was decided to hold a celebration in honour of President Lincoln's recent emancipation of the slaves. Part of the program was to be a salute fired from Beacon Hill, and to make certain that this would be within the law, the coloured men first obtained permission from the Mayor and the Attorney General. That afternoon two hundred of Victoria's negro citizens assembled and fired fifty guns for the president and thirty-three for the Union. While they were marching down the hill again to finish their festivities with the usual banquet and ball, the navy, aroused by all the commotion, was making preparations to set out to sea in search of a non-existent vessel in distress. A week later, the three coloured celebrants who had fired the cannon, came before Judge Pemberton charged with disturbing the peace. They were informed that they ought to have known that Beacon Hill lay outside the city limits, and therefore was beyond the jurisdiction of the Mayor. Application should have been made to the Acting Colonial

35 Daily Chronicle, July 10, 1863.

36 Colonist, May 16, 1863.
Secretary who in turn would have notified the navy. The Judge enjoyed the humour of the situation and compared it to the old story of the hunter, who, not having had much luck, paid a stranger lounging at the gate of a farmyard for permission to shoot some of the ducks inside, only to learn after killing several that they had never belonged to the stranger in the first place. Pemberton released the negroes on payment of costs, saying that he had no desire to punish them as the coloured people were generally so well-behaved. He made it clear however that such things must be better regulated in the future as it would never do to have the navy say that when guns were fired after dark it was only the people of Victoria enjoying themselves.

The anniversary of Lincoln's emancipation proclamation was celebrated in grand style every year. The first time in 1864, the hall of the Rifle Corps was decorated with evergreens and on either side of the chairman were hung the Stars and Stripes and the Union Jack, while behind him was suspended a large banner carrying simply the word "Liberty". Two hundred guests sat down to the dinner, after which toasts were drunk to "West Indian Emancipation", "The Entire Slave Reform in America", "The Day we Celebrate", "John Brown the Hero of Harper's Ferry", and finally "The Press", in honour of the Evening Express which had proclaimed the celebration to be in bad taste.

The following year when another banquet was held for the same purpose, the Express still maintained that there should be no celebration in connection with Lincoln's name. It would be more in keeping to celebrate the West Indian emancipation it said, for the British had made a noble

37 Colonist, Jan. 16, 21, 1863.

38 Evening Express, Jan. 2, 1864.
sacrifice, while in the United States "There has been a constitution
abrogated, a people robbed of their rights and a fiendish war carried
on by which every principle of justice and humanity have been outraged.
We hope that the coloured population will abandon a celebration in future
in which they have not the sympathies of their fellow subjects."

THE ARRIVAL OF A FUGITIVE

Although the negro residents of Victoria today tell many stories
of the arrival of escaped slaves, the case of Charles Mitchell is the
only one for which there is documentary proof. Charles, the slave boy,
arrived as a stowaway aboard the Eliza Anderson in September 1860, and
although the captain tried to keep him prisoner, the coloured people
of the town soon heard the news and went immediately to Attorney-General
Cary, who in turn applied to Chief Justice Cameron for a writ of Habeas
Corpus. The sheriff found Charles in the lamp room of the ship, and
under protest from the captain brought him back to the court in Victoria.

The negro boy had been living with his master, Major J. Tilton,
in Olympia, Washington Territory, when somehow hearing of Vancouver
Island and its coloured colonists, he had stowed away on the mail ship
bound for Victoria. Charles was not discovered until the vessel was
far from port, and as Captain Fleming was not successful in inducing
passing ships to take his unwelcome passenger back to Olympia, there
was nothing he could do but carry the slave on to the British colony.

When the case came before the Supreme Court, Attorney-General Cary,
determined to set the boy free, cited many cases to prove that the juris-
diction of the court extended three marine leagues from shore, the sup-
posed distance of a cannon shot, and that the Eliza Anderson, tied to

39 Evening Express, Jan. 3, 1865.
the wharf certainly came within that distance. Besides, he added, "there stands the boy on British soil and having touched British soil he is entitled to the immunities of that act." Captain Fleming then rose and read the following protest:

United States Mail Steamship
Eliza Anderson
Victoria September 26th 1860

Whereas a Negro boy called "Charles" the property of James Tilton Esq of Olympia Washington Territory did on the 24th inst run away from his Master and secrete himself on board this vessel, and upon the fact being made known to the undersigned the said negro was placed in charge of one of the officers of the ship that he might be returned to his Master and whereas upon the arrival of the Ship at Victoria a writ of "Habeas Corpus" was issued by Chief Justice Cameron and placed in the hands of the Sheriff of Victoria who demanded of the undersigned the delivery of the said Negro and upon the refusal of the undersigned to deliver the Negro the said sheriff threatened to force open the room in which the Negro was confined on board of said vessel. Whereupon the undersigned to prevent the destruction of property and in all probability much bloodshed opened the door of said room and upon doing so the Sheriff took the Negro from on board said vessel.

Now therefore the undersigned protests against the whole proceedings as illegal and a breach of international Law, and demands the immediate delivery of the said Negro Charles that he may be returned to his Master.

John R. Fleming
Captain of U S M Steamship
Eliza Anderson

Sworn to and Subscribed
before me this 26th day of September AD 1860

George Pearkes
Notary Public

40 Victoria Weekly Gazette, Sept. 29, 1860. The precedent for this ruling was the case of Somerset v. Stewart, May 14, 1772, London, England. When Stewart tried to remove his slave, Somerset, from England, to sell him in Jamaica, Lord Mansfield ruled that as slavery did not exist in England, the negro was free as long as he was on English soil, and could not be removed from it by force.

41 MS in B.C. Provincial Archives.
Since Captain Fleming's attempt to recover the boy was unsuccessful, Captain James Tilton took the matter to the Acting Governor of Washington Territory:

Olympia, Ter. Wash.
Sept. 30th, 1860.

Hon. H.M. McGill
Acting Governor of W.T.

Sir:
As a citizen of the United States and of Washington Territory, I beg to call your attention to an act or acts of the British authorities of Victoria, Vancouver's Island, by which a slave boy belonging to my relative R.R. Gibson, of Talbot County, Maryland, and for the last 5 years hired and employed by myself, by arrangement with the owner, was taken from the Mail Steamer, plying between this port and all the ports of Pugets (sic) Sound.

On the 24th of Sept. the slave secreted himself on board the Mail Steamer "Eliza Anderson" and on the 25th as the steamer touched at port of Victoria, was boarded by the civil authorities there and the slave forcibly taken therefrom.

I therefore respectfully request that you bring the case before our Government at Washington City, to the end that the owner or (sic) the slave may have justice and the flag of our country be vindicated and relieved from the assumption of right of search, thus made and enforced in this case.

I am Sir,
Very Respectfully,
JAMES TILTON.

Despite this request, Charles was not recovered, and as far as is known remained in freedom under British law.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES

So far the negro colony in Victoria has been examined as a group, but certain individuals who rose to positions of prominence in the community are worthy of a more detailed study. Among these are Mifflin Gibbs and Peter Lester, leading merchants in the town, and Willis Bond the negro orator and house mover. Other families such as the Alexanders, the Barnsells, and the Spotts are of special interest because many of their descendants are still living in British Columbia today.

Mifflin Wistar Gibbs was by far the most outstanding of the early coloured pioneers, but as the following chapter is devoted entirely to his career, he will not be considered here. His partner Peter Lester was by no means as prominent in the community, although he did run as a candidate in one of the municipal elections, and both he and his wife are mentioned in the press occasionally for their philanthropic works. The Lesters came to Victoria during the summer of 1858, shortly after Gibbs had established the firm of Lester and Gibbs in the town. It may be remembered that it was their daughter who was excluded from the High School in San Francisco even though she could hardly be recognized as being coloured. The Lesters lived in one of the finer homes in Victoria on Vancouver Street, where Sarah Lester gave piano lessons.

- MUSIC -

S.A. Lester begs leave to announce that she will give instruction on the Piano. Residence Vancouver street, between Belot (sic) and Belcher.

November 4th

43 Victoria Gazette, Dec. 23, 1859.
Peter Lester and his wife.

One of the more distinctive personalities in Victoria during the later colonial period was the negro orator Willis Bond. Bond, who had been born a slave in Tennessee in 1824, and had come to Victoria in 1858, became well-known in the town as a local politician, auctioneer, orator, house-mover, and contractor. There was seldom any political question of importance on which he did not lecture, in fact he went so far as to build a lecture hall, conveniently located behind a bar of which he was also the proprietor. A huge man with a deep, booming voice, his humour was never failing, especially when called upon to defend himself in police court, as he was on frequent occasions. D.W. Higgins, one-time editor and proprietor of the *Colonist* and Speaker of the House in 1889, says of him, "He was one of the cleverest men white or black that I have ever met." Higgins had known Bond in San Francisco, where the latter, apparently having been brought into the state as a "servant" had earned enough money to buy his freedom. He followed the gold rush to the

45 Ibid., p. 46.
Fraser River and in July of 1858 was working at Yale with a Yorkshireman as a partner. By means of a ditch they were supplying water to the miners for the purpose of washing gold out of the bank in front of the town.

By 1861 he had returned to Victoria where his advertisements frequently appeared, announcing himself as a general contractor, engaged in "Raising or Removing buildings, making roads, blasting or quarrying stone, clearing land, etc." During the late 1860's many of the contracts for grading the roads in the town were given to him.

Bond, who was not of a retiring nature was continually becoming involved in one scrape or another. His appearances in police court were frequent and the charges against him were numerous and varied. He was accused of selling unwholesome food, of fighting and brawling in the streets, of owing money to his workmen, of obstructing Government Street for two days by leaving a house in the middle of it, and even of tearing down ex-councillor Copland's fence because of a difference of opinion.

The "Bronze Philosopher" was best known for his lectures, generally given in his Athenaeum Hall, an unplastered room which he had dedicated to the public for "literature, debating, public meetings, etc." He spoke on such topics as "Borrowing money for city purposes", "The advisability of uniting the offices of Mayor and Magistrate", and "The word

46 Higgins, The Mystic Spring, op. cit., p. 46.

47 Daily Press, Nov. 21, 1861.

48 See appendix "D". Table of punishable offences committed by negroes in Victoria, 1858-1871.

negro and its application". Bond always took sides in any local political contest and called public meetings to discuss such important questions in the colony as Free Trade and union with British Columbia. This question of union he debated with Major Downie, Bond taking the negative and Downie the affirmative side in the argument.

The negro orator seldom failed to entertain his audience, and perhaps that is why so many turned out to hear him. An amusing anecdote, told by one of Victoria's early citizens, would indicate that Bond was not always too certain about the meaning of the words he used. When James Anderson had refused to buy some manure from the would-be orator, saying that he could get all he needed from over the way for nothing, Bond replied "You don't get nothing for nothing, Mr. Anderson, depend upon it the owner of that manure will circumbent (sic) you, and in the long run you will find yourself defrauded." "You are a pessimist", said Anderson. "No, Sir, I ain't, I ain't", replied Bond. "What was that word Mr. Anderson, I would like to use it in my next speech?" And apparently he did, but with little concern for its proper meaning.

A very exciting time was had by both lecturer and audience alike when Bond decided to discuss whether or not the Mechanics' Institute should have government aid. Since negroes were excluded from the Institute, the coloured man was opposed to any financial assistance being given, and was determined to let the people of Victoria know of his opinion. Needless to say, the opposition was strongly represented among the 100 persons who gathered to hear him speak. Shortly after he started, the

50 Daily Chronicle, Jan. 14, 1865.

smell of something burning came from the stove. There was coughing and sneezing from the audience and then came the shout "Pepper on the stove!" followed by a rush for the stairs. Willis Bond was soon left alone, and refused to withdraw even when someone threw a package of fire crackers at him. After three quarters of an hour some of the audience returned and Bond once again too up his condemnation of the Institute, asking his listeners if they did not think that when the Governor heard of the commotion, he would be suspicious that something was "Rotten in Denmark?"

"There's something rotten in this room" came a reply, and more fire crackers went off. Bond tried to make an exit but was brought back, finally leaving when a package of cayenne pepper with fire crackers attached, was thrown into the center of the room.

In police court the big negro not only appeared as his own counsel, but on two occasions at least defended other coloured persons, one of whom was his own son, John, who had been arrested on a charge of horse stealing. The other negro was a small boy, Rufus Hall, who was accused of stealing a watch and some trinkets from a Chinaman. Proceedings of this case were reported in the Daily Chronicle:

Magistrate - Boy, are you guilty or not guilty?
Boy - (emphatically) Not guilty.
Policeman - Did you steal the watch?
Boy - Yes; I stole 'em (laughter).
Bond - I do not appear to defend this lad, but I doubt very much if he knows the meaning of the word stealin'; I would now ask the Chinaman what reason he has for supposin' the boy would steal.
Magistrate - He has pleaded guilty and I cannot reopen the case.
Bond - In that case I must make a suggestion to your Honor.
Magistrate - You made one this morning.

52 Colonist, March 26, 1867.
53 Daily Chronicle, June 23, 1865.
Bond - But now, your Worship, I see a thing which is positively a fact; this lad was brought here by a Southern gentleman who is now in British Columbia; now this Southern gentleman would know the boys brothers and sisters, mothers and fathers (great laughter) and I feel that if I could have time for communicatin' with this gentleman that I should feel excused for making myself obnoxious by standing up before this 'ere Court (laughter).

Magistrate - What's the meaning of obnoxious?
Bond - Offensive.

Magistrate - You are not at all offensive; you are a amicus curiae [amicus curiae] you made a good suggestion this morning about a convocation (laughter) of the colored people to consider this case.

Bond - I shall put forth my best endeavors to establish a Reformatory School. (Laughter).

The accused was remanded and a week later Bond informed the court that a lady had offered to take care of the boy, and that he personally would see that the young negro was removed to Salt Spring Island.

Judge Pemberton was not sympathetic and his decision was three months in jail or a fine of $10.00.

On December 22, 1892, Willis Bond died in Victoria, but he had lived such an active life in the town that his name is still remembered and many of the older residents today tell anecdotes about the negro orator and house-mover, who once lived at the corner of View and Quadra Streets.

Among the more prominent coloured citizens of Victoria today are the numerous descendants of Charles and Nancy Alexander who were married in Springfield, Illinois, on Christmas Day, 1849. Both were of mixed blood, Nancy's mother having been a negress and her father an Irishman, while Charles' mother was a negress and his father an Indian. Both the Alexanders were free negroes and had never been in slavery. They settled in St. Louis, Missouri where Charles operated a grist mill for sixteen years until 1857 when the gold mines of California proved too powerful.

54 Daily Chronicle, July 18, 1865.

55 Colonist, July 25, 1865.
an attraction. Then Alexander placed his wife and two children in a wagon pulled by a five-yoke bullock-team and along with four friends and a guide headed west by way of the Platte River, Sweet Water River, Pacific Springs, Salt Lake Road and Humboldt River road. The Indians were occasionally a menace, stealing the cattle and other possessions carried by the party. Charles Alexander was not long satisfied in
California, arriving as he did when there was so much discontent among the coloured people and when rumours of new discoveries were beginning to come down from the north. On July 1, 1858 he arrived at Victoria in the Oregon, and shortly afterward left for the gold country. In 1861 after having some success at the mines, he returned to his wife and children in Victoria where he worked at his trade as a carpenter at $6.00 per day. Eventually, having a growing family that finally numbered twelve children, he moved to Saanich where he remained as a prosperous farmer for thirty-three years.

Another familiar name in Victoria is that of the Spotts family. Fielding Spotts, a cooper by trade arrived in the town in 1859 and the following year was joined by his wife Julia and their two year old son Fielding William, who came from San Francisco. For a number of years the family lived at the north end of Salt Spring Island, but they also stayed for a time in Saanich, near Victoria, where Fielding constructed a cabin built entirely of hand hewn logs; dove-tailing and wooden plugs alone held the timbers together. Spotts became a school trustee in Saanich in the 1860's and inspected the school occasionally as is indicated by an entry in the South Saanich Public School Visitors Journal, dated as late as November 5, 1877: "Mr. Spotts paid school a visit and expressed himself as pleased with the progress of the pupils."

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56 Newspaper clipping (unidentified) based on an interview with Charles and Nancy Alexander in 1909. In possession of Barton Alexander, Victoria, B.C.

57 The Spotts cabin was given to the Saanich Pioneer Society in 1936 to be used as a museum, but when an attempt was made to remove it to the agricultural grounds in Saanichton, it was found to be in too advanced a state of decay and was demolished.

58 Visitors Journal, South Saanich Public School. In B.C. Provincial Archives.
Another member of the family, Mary Cecelia Spotts, wife of Charles Spotts (probably a son of Fielding and Julia Spotts) was the daughter of one of Victoria's pioneer tailors, T.W. Pierre, who had brought her to the colony from San Francisco when she was a very young child. According to family tradition she was educated at Angela College in Victoria.

The name of Barnswell is also a familiar one in Victoria. James Barnswell was born in Kingston, Jamaica and came to the colony via Cape Horn during the gold rush. Mary Barnswell, his wife was born at San Juan, Puerto Rico, on the estate of a sugar planter. When her father was killed in the rebellion there, Mary was brought to California, and in the 1880's to Victoria by Captain and Mrs. John Devreux.

Frank Skelton who was born in Orange County, Virginia, was brought to California by his parents in the 1840's. His father must have been prosperous, for Frank received an education from private teachers until the time when the Rev. J.J. Moore organized his school for coloured children. He followed the rush to British Columbia and after much success in the mines returned to San Francisco where he prospered as a dealer in new and second-hand furniture.

In 1853 two coloured sisters, Mary and Julia Hernandez arrived in California from Florida. Here they remained until the migration to British Columbia, when they went to the colony to work as cooks at $100 per week. They had brought with them their young niece, Emma, the daughter of James and Elizabeth Segee who were operating a laundry at

60 Colonist, Jan. 5, 1945.
James and Mary Barnwell
Marysville, California at the time. Emma remained in Victoria until after the Civil War, then returned to Marysville where she became the first coloured public school teacher in the town.

62 Beasley, op. cit., p. 122.

SOME REPRESENTATIVE COLOURED PIONEERS

Robert Clanton and his wife.
Mrs. John Thomas Pierre

Richard Stokes
CHAPTER IV

MIFFLIN WISTAR GIBBS

Tamatave, Madagascar, April 3, 1901 - the flags of the French residency and the foreign consulships were flying in honour of the occasion, for after almost four years of service the American consul was leaving for home. Expressions of regret at his departure such as the banquet given the previous evening by the German consul, were not mere empty diplomatic gestures, for this elderly gentleman was well liked and respected on the Island.

A group of well-wishers boarded the steamer with the departing American. "Judge," said a friend striving at last minute joviality, "don't be too sure of the meaning of the flags flying at your departure from Tamatave, for we demonstrate here for gladness, as well as for regret."

"Well," came the reply, "in either event I am in unison with the sentiment intended to be expressed; for I have both gladness and regret - gladness with anticipations of home, and with regret that, in all human probability, I am taking leave of a community from whom for nearly four years I have been the recipient, officially, of the highest respect; and socially of unstinted friendliness."

Respect and friendliness had sometimes been little-known in the life of this man, although frequently his personality and ability had won them from even the most reluctant. Here at least in Madagascar he had not been handicapped by prejudice because of his race, for Mifflin Wistar Gibbs, the American consul, was a negro.

The story of M.W. Gibbs records success seldom paralleled, for although one would not be greatly surprised to read of a white man rising from a very humble environment to the position of Judge and United States consul, the fact that he was of coloured blood makes his case almost unique. Gibbs was by far the most outstanding of the negro pioneers who settled in British Columbia, and is the only one whose life can be studied in detail, for one of the last accomplishments in a long and eventful career was the writing of his autobiography, *Shadow and Light*.

It was on April 17, 1823 in Philadelphia that Mifflin Wistar was born to Maria and Jonathan Gibbs, a Methodist minister in that city.
Until the age of seven, when he was enrolled in the Free School, the boy's life was quite uneventful, but then his father died and his mother could not afford to give him any further education. Instead, he went to work holding and driving a doctor's horse at a wage of $3.00 per month. Similar jobs were to follow, until he reached sixteen, when his mother insisted that both he and his brother become carpenters. Despite her failing health and her financial dependence on her sons, she realized how necessary it was for them to acquire a trade if they were ever to rise above the position of poor coloured labourers.

It was not unusual in those days for negroes to become skilled mechanics and tradesmen, for frequently in the southern states, a master would choose his most intelligent slaves and would teach them carpentering, blacksmithing, painting, boot and shoe making, coopering, and in fact any occupation that might make them more valuable in the event of re-sale, or more useful to himself on the plantation. Many owners would even permit such slaves to hire themselves out and with their earnings to buy their freedom. One such fortunate individual was James Gibbons, a fat, good-natured carpenter, who after buying his liberty had come north, and at the time when Mifflin and Jonathan Gibbs were growing up, was teaching his trade to coloured boys in Philadelphia. The Gibbs brothers became his apprentices and remained with him for a number of years.

It was during this time that Mifflin became aware of his lack of formal schooling and in an attempt to educate himself not only spent long hours in laborious reading, but also joined the Philadelphia Library Company, a group of intelligent coloured men who met to discuss the problems of their race. Jonathan Gibbs was more fortunate than Mifflin, for after both boys had been converted at a revival meeting, the Presby-
terian Assembly sent him to Dartmouth College, and on graduation he became a minister in Philadelphia.

Although young Mifflin had heard of slavery in his home, he first became really aware of the significance of the word in 1831 when the Nat Turner insurrection aroused excitement in the Philadelphia coloured community. Turner, a labourer in the woods during the week and a Baptist preacher on Sunday, had instilled in his negro followers the urge to revolt, and after arming themselves with stolen weapons they staged their insurrection in South Hampton, Virginia. Soldiers were despatched to put down the rising and Turner and a few henchmen fled into the swamp where they remained until the threat of starvation forced them to surrender. Stories such as this, as well as tales of fugitives and of families separated for ever on the auction block made a lasting impression on the mind of the boy, but he was twelve years of age before he was personally confronted by the fact that many of his race were treated little better than animals. His employer, a wealthy Philadelphia lawyer, owned a plantation and slaves south of the slavery line. One day he invited Mifflin to accompany him on the thirty mile journey to his farm in Maryland. The young coloured boy was excited by the prospect, for never before had he been away from Philadelphia. His pleasure did not last long however, for once across the border into slave country, he saw sights never to be forgotten. Gazing fearfully on gangs of negroes being lashed by overseers' whips, he turned to the white man:

"Who are these people?"

"They are slaves."

So these were slaves. He understood now the expression on his mother's face when she had talked to her neighbours about Nat Turner. Now he
knew the meaning of those guarded whisperings.

"Mifflin, how would you like to be a slave?" said the lawyer.

"I would not be a slave! I would kill anybody that would make me a slave!"

"You must not talk that way down here."

It was not long before there were equally frightening scenes in Philadelphia itself, where Pennsylvania Hall was razed because it was the meeting place of the anti-slavery people, and where the negro citizens were kept in a constant state of terror by the "Moyamensing Killers" who carried murder and the torch into their homes and churches. For several weeks at a time the coloured people of the city guarded their Bethel Church against hostile mobs, digging up the cobble pavement and taking the stones up to the gallery to be hurled on the attackers if necessary. And this was in a free state.

As a young man, Gibbs became an active agent on the "underground railway" of which Philadelphia, because of its position so close to the slave states, was a very important "station". The most interesting case in which he was concerned was that of William and Ellen Craft, whose oft-repeated story has become a tradition in negro history. One day, having been invited to a negro boarding house to meet these new arrivals from the south, Gibbs was surprised at being introduced to a young, fashionably dressed "white" man, accompanied by "his" slave, an equally young and handsome negro. The white man was of course Ellen Craft, and the slave, her husband, William. Having a very light complexion, her rôle had been an easy one, and both she and her husband

2 Gibbs, op. cit., p. 18.
had travelled first class throughout the entire journey with no questions being asked. Ellen Craft’s inability to write might have attracted attention, but she hid the fact by carrying her arm in a sling, and the signing of hotel registers was left to her husband. The couple temporarily settled in Boston, but the passing of the Fugitive Slave Law of 1850, compelled them to go to England where they were well received. After the Civil War they returned to Savannah, Georgia, where in 1871 Gibbs renewed acquaintance with them when he found that they were the host and hostess of a hotel at which he was staying.

Nightly in the northern border states, meetings were held by the coloured people, at which escaped slaves told their stories. This was part of a propaganda program anticipated to arouse anti-slavery sentiment, and frequently such eminent coloured men as Frederick Douglass, Henry Highland Garnet and Charles L. Remond would address the gatherings. It was in 1848 that Gibbs made his first appearance as an orator, and although his speech was an impromptu one, it was highly successful. The occasion was the monster meeting in Philadelphia Square to honour the Hungarian liberator, Louis Kossuth. The Liberty Bell was garlanded with flowers, and each nationality had erected a platform in the square provided with its own speaker. "Freedom" was the keynote of the meeting at which the negroes were unwelcome guests, for they alone had come uninvited. To them the inscription on the great bell, "Proclaim liberty throughout the world and to all the inhabitants thereof" was sheer hypocrisy. Taking advantage of the opportunity to plead their case, they used a dry-goods box as a platform and installed Gibbs on top of it. Here he made his debut as a public speaker and attracted a large and surprisingly tolerant and receptive audience.
It was the following year in 1849 that he began to speak in earnest against the institution of slavery, when he toured western New York state, with Frederick Douglass, the great negro emancipator. Gibbs had consented to accompany Douglass with great misgivings, for aside from receiving no payment for his efforts, except for donations received along the way, he was very conscious of his own inadequacy in the campaign. The two advocates for the coloured people frequently met with hostility and often when refused the use of churches and halls were forced to hold their meetings in stables and blacksmith shops where some listeners did not hesitate to throw eggs at them.

The tour over, Gibbs was left penniless and discouraged, but his secret formula when his spirits were lagging was to say to himself, "What! discouraged? Go do some great thing." New York at the time was being swept by the news of the gold discovery in California, so the "great thing" decided upon was a journey to San Francisco. Fortunately the young negro had a few friends who were able to finance his steerage passage, and so he sailed from New York, crossed the Isthmus of Panama and after several days on board the Golden Gate, arrived in San Francisco, where for the first time in his life, he was completely without friends and money.

Fortunately, immediately upon arrival he found lodgings at a hotel operated by a negro on Kearny Street; an unpretentious-looking building on the outside, but inside it was furnished with a well patronized faro table and bar. Over the bar hung a sign prominently displayed "Board twelve dollars a week in advance". After paying the drayman to bring his trunk from the ship, Gibbs had only a dime left, and with this he bought a cigar, deciding to let the future look after itself. Should

3 Gibbs, op. cit., p. 37.
he eat first and keep the manager in ignorance of his financial state until after the meal, or should he tell now and risk going hungry? The question was answered for him by the sound of the dinner bell and a cordial invitation to the table.

After dinner the immigrant wandered the streets of the town in an aimless search for employment. Repeatedly he was turned away and was about to give up when he came upon a house under construction. The contractor considered his request and decided that if the coloured man would work for $9.00 per day instead of the usual $10.00 paid the white carpenters, he could have a job. Gibbs hastily accepted, but what was a carpenter without tools. This problem was solved by a nearby merchant who offered him all he needed on credit. It was not long before the white carpenters discovered that the coloured man was working for a lower wage, and with a strike imminent, the contractor approached Gibbs with a plan: "I expect you will have to stop, for this house must be finished in the time specified; but if you can get six or eight equally good workmen, I will let these fellows go. Not that I have any special liking for your people. I am giving these men all the wages they demand, and I am not willing to submit to the tyranny of their dictation if I can help it." Gibbs was unable to find any other negroes to join him, so was soon hunting elsewhere for employment. One menial job after another eventually led to the position of porter and bootblack at the Union Hotel, and soon by careful management he had saved enough money to enter into partnership with another negro, Nathan Pointer, in a clothing store known as Philadelphia House. About a year later, he left

4 Gibbs, op. cit., p. 44.

Nathan Pointer and joined Peter Lester to form the firm of Lester and Gibbs, importers of fine shoes. Their shop at 636 Clay Street was well patronized, for they imported only the finest stock from Philadelphia, London and Paris, and as Lester was himself a bootmaker by trade, the business both wholesale and retail was a profitable one.

Throughout the years of his evolution from bootblack to businessman, Gibbs continued his struggle to get full rights of citizenship for himself and his fellows. As early as 1851, he and several other coloured men had published in the *Alta California* a protest against their disfranchisement and denial of the right of oath. This caused a considerable stir among the whites who had assumed that the negroes were contented with their position. This same group of coloured men began publication in 1855 of a newspaper, the *Mirror of the Times*, which advocated equality for all Americans regardless of colour. Gibbs was also a member at the several conventions held by the negroes at Sacramento during the 1850's, at which resolutions were drawn up to be introduced into the state legislature by white friends. He could never be accused of "Uncle Tomism", for he would not meekly accept white domination and was ever ready to fight whatever he considered to be injustices towards his race.

In April of 1858 the first group of coloured colonists left San Francisco for Victoria and it was Gibbs who made the farewell speech at their departure. On June 7th, according to a card published in the *Daily Evening Bulletin*, he himself embarked for Victoria, taking a large

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6 The only copy of the *Mirror of the Times* known to exist is in the California State Library at Sacramento.
stock of miners' outfits consisting of flour, bacon, blankets, picks and shovels and other items required in the gold fields. This load of goods he sold immediately on arrival at a handsome profit, and after sending to San Francisco for further supplies he set about finding a location for the Victoria branch of the firm. So well did their business prosper in Victoria that very shortly Lester and Gibbs closed out their store entirely in San Francisco.

The year following his arrival on Vancouver Island, Gibbs returned to the United States to marry Maria A. Alexander, a coloured girl from Kentucky who had been educated at Oberlin College in Ohio. Their honeymoon was the 4,000 mile journey back to Victoria where they settled in the fashionable James Bay district. Maria for some reason left the colony and returned to Oberlin in 1867, but her husband remained in British Columbia until 1870. Speaking of his wife in later years, Gibbs says, "I have had a model wife in all that the term implies, and she has had a husband migratory and uncertain." Their children, all born in Victoria and baptized in Christ Church, appear to have succeeded. Donald became a machinist, Horace a printer, Ida graduated from Oberlin College and became a teacher of English in a Washington, D.C. High School, while Hattie graduated from the Conservatory of Music at Oberlin and became a teacher of music at the Eckstein-Norton University at Cave Springs, Kentucky.

As one of the wealthiest negroes in Victoria, and having great

7 Elevator, Sept. 6, 1867.
8 Gibbs, op. cit., p. 63.
9 Baptismal Rolls, Christ Church. Photostat copies in B.C. Provincial Archives.
natural qualities of leadership, it was but a short time before Gibbs was accepted by both white and coloured people alike as one of the leaders of the community, and in fact was even elected to the city council. He was accepted and respected by all except for a few residents who were too blinded by prejudice to be conscious of his abilities. He was subjected to several unpleasant racial indignities during his first years in the colony, most spectacular being when a container of flour was thrown over him while he was attending a concert at the Victoria Theatre, and the refusal to admit him to the farewell banquet given for the departing Governor in 1864. In his autobiography, Gibbs chose to ignore all such unpleasant occurrences however, and to refer to the people of Victoria in only the kindest terms.

In November 1868, he commenced construction on his lot at 170 Government Street of what was to be the most modern and elaborate store in the town. Built to accommodate Victoria House, the dry-goods business operated by Findlay, Durham and Brodie, its well-advertised features included large mirrors, chandeliers, and highly polished counters of solid mahogany. The front of the store was very ornate, the woodwork being carved in imitation of bronze, and with display windows that extended almost from floor to ceiling. In January 1873, Denny, the manager of the store went into partnership with David Spencer, and they bought the business from its previous owners. Not until 1881 however did Gibbs finally sell the store to Denny, who in turn sold out to Spencer.

10 See below, p. 191.
11 Ibid., p. 201.
12 Colonist, March 23, 1869.
13 According to the Tax Rolls, City Hall, Victoria, B.C.
It was this little store, built by Mifflin Gibbs, that was to be the first of the great chain of David Spencer stores which became so well-known in British Columbia.

Another of Gibbs' business ventures was in the Queen Charlotte Coal Mining Company, an organization which had originally been formed in 1865, but which had remained dormant until 1869 when their engineer assured them that the coal deposits on the Queen Charlotte Islands could become a paying proposition. The mines looked promising at the time, for although there was a large output of bituminous coal at Nanaimo, it was anthracite coal that the Indians had discovered at Skidegate Bay when they had built a fire on a broken seam, and as anthracite burned with little flame, it was especially valuable for smelting purposes. After spending $60,000 to locate the paying deposits which were found on the east side of Seymour Mountain about a mile and a half from the shore at Anchor Cove, the company called for tenders for the construction of a short railway from the mines to the coast, and for a shipping wharf. Gibbs resigned as one of the directors of the company and submitted a bid, and although his tender was not the lowest, the contract was awarded to him. After obtaining a leave of absence from his position as city councillor, he set out for the Islands.

In January 1869, the Queen Charlotte Coal Mining Company chartered the Hudson's Bay Company steamer, Otter, and Gibbs, accompanied by fifty men, including labourers, blacksmiths, carpenters and a surveyor, sailed from Victoria for Skidegate harbour. The Queen Charlottes were inhabited by only a few tribes scattered along the coast, and as the Otter sailed up the Skidegate River to the company's quarters, it was followed by a

14 The David Spencer Company has since been bought out by the T. Eaton Company, Limited.
swarm of canoes, whose occupants quickly climbed on board to welcome the "King George's men". As far as the newcomers were concerned, the Indians were a peaceful people and readily assisted in unloading the vessel.

Once settled in his quarters, the new contractor made an inspection of the company's holdings. Volcanic eruptions had thrust veins of coal above the surface near Mount Seymour, and it was here, several hundred feet above sea level that the best paying vein was located. The task which Gibbs had undertaken was to build a railway over the most difficult grades to the sea. Three months, the extent of his leave from the City Council, was all that he had anticipated requiring to complete the project, but there were unexpected delays, for not only did it rain incessantly, but occasionally the Indians went on strike - not for more wages, but for more time. They were paid in tobacco for each bag of coal delivered to the ship, but they would not be hurried on the job.

Fourteen months after Gibbs' arrival on the Island, the railway was completed. It was built on two grades, the upper one coming about one third of the way from the mines and ending in a chute down which the coal was dumped to cars on the lower level which carried it to the loading dock. Throughout the period of construction, four miners had been at work on the coal vein, so as soon as the tracks were laid, the Otter was loaded and the first cargo of anthracite coal ever mined on the Pacific coast was shipped to San Francisco. As the company's superintendent now returned to Victoria, Gibbs assumed that position, but only remained until May of 1870, when he also left for Vancouver Island, preparatory to his final departure for the United States. The mine itself was abandoned in 1872 when the owners became dissatisfied with the returns from their investment.
After spending over ten years in Victoria, Gibbs was saddened at the thought of leaving, for the natural charms of the city had captivated him, its people had graciously accepted him, and his children had been born there. But he felt that it was now time to go home, and home was the United States where his family had already preceded him. The Civil War and emancipation made it no longer necessary to remain in exile, and he undoubtedly felt that there was a place for him in the reconstruction of the southern states, where his brother Jonathan had already become an important official.

Gibbs had made many friends during his twenty years on the Pacific coast, and among those he considered the most estimable was Philip A. Bell, editor of the Elevator in San Francisco. Bell was responsible for what was probably Gibbs' first serious attempt at journalism, for it was while serving on the Victoria City Council, that he was invited by the California editor to become his Victoria correspondent. At this request, Gibbs wrote a series of letters dealing with political and economic conditions in British Columbia, as well as the thorny question of confederation.

Among the persons of note that he met while in Victoria were Lady Franklin, wife of the Arctic explorer, and Schuyler Colfax, Speaker in the American House of Representatives. Lady Franklin landed at Esquimalt in 1861 still in search of information that might throw new light on the disappearance of her husband. It would be interesting to know why she took such an interest in the negro colonists, for not only does Mifflin Gibbs make special mention of her, but ten years after her visit, W.D. Moses also commented in his diary on the death of his friend Lady Franklin.

15 See appendix "E". Mifflin Gibbs' letters to the Elevator.
Schuyler Colfax, a close friend of Lincoln visited Victoria in the summer of 1865 and was met at the St. Nicholas Hotel by Abner Francis and Mifflin Gibbs, representing the coloured community. Colfax said that he felt honoured by their visit, and later when interviewed by the Daily Chronicle said that the address presented to him by the coloured committee was among the best that he had received on the coast. Colfax told Gibbs and Francis that he had always used his influence against slavery, but that he could not agree to giving the vote to all negroes as was demanded by certain sections of the population. The ability to read and write, he said, should be a basic qualification for the franchise. Gibbs was never in accord with this attitude, believing as he did that the vote was the right of every man regardless of his educational qualifications.

While still in Victoria, Gibbs had planned to go to the southern states to practise law, and with this in mind had read English Common Law under D.B. Ring, a barrister in the town. On his return to the United States he was then prepared to undertake further studies in the law department of an Oberlin, Ohio, business college. It is remarkable that he should attempt to begin such a career at fifty years of age, and even more remarkable that he should prove so successful at it. No doubt the example set by his brother Jonathan was a great inspiration, for he had become Secretary of the State of Florida during the period of reconstruction. After graduating from the Ohio business college, Gibbs visited his brother in Tallahassee where having been threatened by the Ku Klux Klan, the latter was living in the attic of his home surrounded by a small arsenal. Jonathan introduced his brother to Governor Hart, and although both promised their support should he decide

16 Victoria Daily Chronicle, July 29, 1865.
to remain in Florida, Gibbs decided not to do so, feeling that he would be profiting by his brother's success.

Before leaving Ohio on this tour of the south, he had been appointed a delegate to a convention of negroes being held in Charleston, South Carolina. Here he met several delegates from Arkansas who painted such an alluring picture of the advantages offered by that state, that he decided to settle there permanently. It was one Sunday morning in May, 1871 that he arrived, an absolute stranger in Little Rock, where he entered a law firm to continue his studies preparatory to being admitted to the bar. In 1872, in partnership with another lawyer, he opened his own office. From now on nothing could stop his progress, for the following year he was appointed County Attorney of Pulaski County, and shortly after was elected Municipal Judge by the people of Little Rock. This was a high honour, for the majority of the electors were white and not coloured. The election attracted considerable attention in the United States, for as far as was known, Gibbs was the first negro to hold such an office. In 1877 came his appointment by the President as Register (sic) of United States Lands in the Little Rock district, and finally he was made Receiver of Public Moneys.

Before deciding to make his home in the south, Gibbs had read widely on the subject of politics and politicians, and it is therefore not surprising that he played an active rôle in the political life of his state. As a supporter of General Grant he was elected at the Arkansas Republican State Convention in 1880 to be a delegate at the National Convention of that year, and as a souvenir of this occasion was given a bronze medal naming him one of the "historic 306" who tried unsuccessfully to nominate the President for a third term.
In October 1897, a telegram from Washington arrived in Little Rock for Judge Gibbs, bringing the news of his appointment as United States consul for the Island of Madagascar. On Christmas Eve, his friends gave him a farewell party and on January 1, 1898, he set sail in the Champagne on the first lap of a 10,000 mile journey to his new post.

Mifflin Wistar Gibbs had followed his own advice and "had gone and done great things". At times the obstacles in his way seemed almost insuperable, but perhaps the very fact that he was of coloured blood increased his determination to rise above his background of slavery. In writing of his life, he says "the portrayal might be of benefit to those who, eager for advancement, are willing to be laborious students to attain worthy ends." If one of the greatest values of historical biography is to give inspiration, then the story of Mifflin Wistar Gibbs has fulfilled its purpose.

17 Gibbs, op. cit., p. iii.
CHAPTER V

THE POLITICAL IMPACT

The colony of Vancouver Island was still in its infancy at the beginning of the gold rush, for hardly ten years had passed since it had been ceded by Royal Charter to the Hudson's Bay Company on condition that it form a colony there. Under the terms of the charter, the Company was to use the money received from the sale of lands and from the mineral deposits, less ten per cent, for improvements and colonization. If these conditions were not fulfilled, the Crown could demand the return of the land after five years, and when the right of the Company to exclusive trade terminated in 1859, the Crown could regain control by repaying the Company the total cost of its investment.

The government of the colony was to consist of a governor, a nominated council and an elected legislative assembly. While James Douglas, factor at Fort Victoria, was the Company's choice for governor, Richard Blanshard, an English lawyer, was selected by the home office. After a short and unhappy stay in the colony, Blanshard returned to England, but not before he had established some form of government by appointing James Douglas, John Tod and James Cooper as a provisional council. After Blanshard's retirement, Douglas, the senior man on this council, became governor, but it was not until 1856 that he was instructed to form the long awaited assembly. To do this he divided the colony into four

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1 Charter of Grant of Vancouver's Island to the Hudson's Bay Company, Dated 13 January 1849, in Miscellaneous Papers Relating to Vancouver Island, 1848-1863, pp. 13-16.
electoral districts, but there were so few persons outside of Victoria who had the necessary property qualifications for the franchise, that it was only in Victoria where there was any actual competition. In the other districts, the candidates merely took their seats upon nomination. This first legislative assembly of six members met on August 12, 1856, with Dr. J.S. Helmcken as speaker.

May 30th, 1859 was the date on which the Hudson's Bay Company monopoly was to expire, but the Company wanted to know its fate well in advance, and in an attempt to answer its enquiries, a select committee was set up in England in 1857. Twenty-four witnesses were examined to decide whether or not the monopoly should be continued, but something else had by this time entered into the question and was to be the deciding factor - gold had been discovered. Gold was first reported in the Queen Charlotte Islands in 1851, and in 1855 it was located on the Columbia River; by the end of 1857 excitement was rapidly growing and by the spring of 1858 the rush was on. The rule of the Company was over, but its influence was to be felt for many years to come.

Up to 1858 James Douglas was governor of the Island colony only, the mainland being outside of his jurisdiction. Now with the rush of miners to the gold fields, some authority was needed there, and the position of governor was offered to him on condition that he separate himself from the Company. Douglas accepted, and British Columbia came into being by an Act of Parliament in August 1858. This colony, which was still quite separate from Vancouver Island, was to include the territory bounded by the United States on the south, the Rocky Mountains

2 Report from the Select Committee on the Hudson's Bay Company; Together with the Proceedings of the Committee, Minutes of Evidence, Appendix and Index. Ordered, by the House of Commons, to be Printed, 31 July and 11 August 1857.
on the east, the Nass River and Finlay branch of the Peace River on the
north, and the Pacific Ocean on the west. The coastal islands were also
to be included with the exception of Vancouver Island itself. At Fort
Langley, on November 19, 1858, the official ceremony establishing the new
colony took place. Douglas swore in Matthew Baillie Begbie as Judge of
British Columbia, and himself took oaths of office; then he proclaimed
the end of the Hudson's Bay Company trading monopoly in the new colony.
Ordinances passed by Douglas and his officials were now valid, and English
law was to be in force.

Until March of 1864 James Douglas occupied his position of dual
governorship, a situation which aroused much discontent on the mainland
for the seat of government remained at Victoria, the capital of the sister
colony. Because of complaints, the treasurer and attorney-general moved
to New Westminster. Douglas was the sole law making authority however,
for although he had a council of sorts there was as yet no elected assembly.
Naturally the settlers on the mainland wanted the same representative
institutions that existed on Vancouver Island; as it was, they had no
voice in the affairs of government. Petition after petition carried
their grievances to the Crown, and eventually in May and June of 1863,
Governor Douglas was informed that the mainland colony would be enlarged
and would have a separate governor and legislative council. This council
would not be entirely representative however, for it was to consist of
one-third government officials, one-third magistrates from the colony
and one-third elected by the colonists themselves. The Duke of Newcastle,
who was now Secretary of State for the Colonies, felt that it would be
impossible to make it entirely representative owing to the nature of the
population which was continually on the move from mining camp to mining
camp. With the end of Douglas' term of office in 1864, the two colonies were given separate governors until 1866 when the Island and the mainland were united as British Columbia. It was during the years preceding this union, and in the Island colony only that the negro settlers were an important political factor. It was in Victoria alone that a large, clearly defined negro community existed and there they fought by political means to acquire all the rights and privileges that they considered to be theirs.

On Vancouver Island, the 1856 assembly continued in existence until 1859, and in January of 1860 a new fifteen-member assembly was elected. This was a turbulent election and it was the negro voters who made it so. There were four candidates competing for the two seats available for Victoria Town. George Hunter Cary, the Attorney-General and Selim Franklin, an auctioneer were supporting Douglas and the government party, while in opposition were Amor DeCosmos, editor of the Colonist, and Edward E. Langford, a farm bailiff of the Puget Sound Agricultural Company. Langford soon withdrew, leaving DeCosmos alone against Cary and Franklin.

According to the law of the colony at that time, only British subjects had the right to vote, and since there was no naturalization law on the Island this meant that one could not become a British subject there, but must have been born such or have become naturalized in Britain or in one of her colonies other than Vancouver Island. The majority of the coloured people, having been born in the United States, did not have the franchise. Cary and Franklin were quite aware of this, but very craftily suggested to the negro colonists that since, according to the Dred Scott decision, they were legally citizens of no country, they
could vote in the coming election by merely taking an oath of allegiance. Later Cary insisted that he had merely suggested to Mifflin Gibbs that the coloured men put their names on the voters' lists to test the question.

The franchise was regarded very highly by the negroes who saw in it a symbol of equality, and when it was offered to them by leading government officials, who were they to question it? Undoubtedly by getting all the coloured men out to vote, Cary hoped to secure the few good votes of those who were already British subjects. DeCosmos understood the strategy of his opponents and published a warning:

Our advice to the foreign portion is not to record a solitary vote....Hereafter when there is a naturalization law enacted, then will be the time to become British subjects, and till then naturalization will not be legal.

The system of elections in the colony was very imperfect and for this reason was the source of much discontent. In order to vote, one must first register as a voter, then, after the period of registration was over, a Court of Revision was held at which time objections could be raised to names on the list. Unqualified voters sometimes remained on the list merely because no one raised any objection to them, while others, who should have been left on, were sometimes struck off when they could not prove themselves to be British subjects.

In the case of the negroes, they were assured that it would be quite legal for them to register, and when they appeared at the Sheriff's Office to do so, their names were taken after they had taken an oath of allegiance, even though the legal period for registration had expired.

3 Colonist, May 21, 1861.
4 Ibid., Nov. 21, 1859.
Neither the sheriff nor the revisor objected to their registration, for both officials were friends of Cary. Although DeCosmos could have objected at this time he did not do so, apparently hoping for the negro vote himself. Some time before when there had been attempts to segregate the coloured people in one of the churches, he had championed them; now he probably expected the negroes to return the favour. Such was not to be however, for the eighteen negroes who voted, all registered for Cary and Franklin, and these were enough to defeat DeCosmos:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Candidate</th>
<th>Votes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cary</td>
<td>137</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Franklin</td>
<td>106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DeCosmos</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

On the evening following the election the coloured supporters of the government party held a "grand jollification" at the Pistol Gallery on Johnson Street to celebrate the successful return of their candidates. Selim Franklin was there with some of his friends and after Peter Lester had made a few introductory remarks, he thanked the negroes for supporting him. Then Mifflin Gibbs expressed the happiness of his people at having been given the political rights which had been denied them in a country calling itself free. "It is an ill wind that blows nobody good" he said, for the storm that had sent them from California to Vancouver Island was now enabling them to retaliate against those Americans and sympathizers who had been so ill-favoured towards the coloured people in the United States. He went on to say that England would find her new coloured colonists among her most loyal and devoted subjects who would be ever ready to bare their breasts against her enemies. By the next election he hoped 200 negroes would have the franchise instead of only

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5 See below, p. 178.

the twenty-five who had registered this time. There was further speech-making and then the meeting broke up with much hilarity after singing "Rule Britannia" and "God Save the Queen".

DeCosmos, knowing that he had been defeated by illegal votes was not going to accept the results of the election. But why, asked the Gazette, had not one of the opposition challenged the right of the coloured men to the franchise at the time of the registration? Had DeCosmos hesitated because he himself hoped for the negro vote?

No doubt "Shears", a correspondent to the Colonist, was quite right when he said that the negro voters were not in the least concerned about who was the best candidate, but merely asked themselves "Who is most friendly to the 'nigger', or who will promise most to the coloured man?"

In reply a negro correspondent countered by saying that his people asked only the political and religious equality granted by the British constitution. It was their right to decide who was the best candidate. Why should they vote for DeCosmos and his followers, who had referred to them in the press as "niggers" and "slaves"?

Immediately after the election, DeCosmos began proceedings to have the election lists investigated, but Governor Douglas refused to permit the examination of the poll books, and the matter was postponed for six months. When the complaint came before the election committee in

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7 Victoria Gazette, Jan. 9, 1860.
8 Ibid., Jan. 11, 1860.
9 Colonist, Jan. 12, 1860.
July 1860, they too refused to open the registration lists since they had been closed by the revising barrister. On hearing this decision, DeCosmos lost his temper and was only quietened by the threat of police action.

So many objections continued to be made however, that a Court of Revision was finally held in the Police Court rooms on March 11, 1861. Although most of the persons there were coloured, DeCosmos was present, determined that no negroes should be illegally registered this time. As had been predicted, the revising barrister found that twenty-four of the twenty-six coloured men who had voted were American negroes and not entitled to the franchise; the remaining two had been naturalized in Canada and had voted legally. The Colonist had the last word:

We held them to be aliens; treated them as such; warned them of the consequences of being made the tools of Cary & Co.; and after sixteen months from the time of our first warning they are told to their sorrow, by the very same party who deceived them, that their votes are illegal.

The election had at least proven the need of a naturalization law in the colony, and in May of 1861 when Attorney-General Cary held a meeting in the Lyceum to inform the public of his course of action in the legislature during the preceding months, he announced that it was his intention to introduce such a bill at the next sitting of the assembly:

We want an Alien Bill here, and to put an end to the miserable, disjointed state of the Colony, I shall introduce one at the next session, giving aliens nearly every privilege. (Applause.) We can't get along prosperously unless we admit to citizenship nearly every foreign resident in the Colony.

13 Colonist, March 23, 1861.
14 Ibid., May 21, 1861.
Once again the disputed election was brought up by the opposition in the audience and Cary was examined on the subject:

Mr. Nias - Why did you put 50 or 60 foreigners on the voters' list last year without an Alien Bill?

Mr. Cary - I told Mr. Gibbs (colored) that he had better put his name on the list and test the question as to whether they were entitled to vote.

Mr. Gibbs said Mr. Cary told him that colored people who had no political status in any other country had a perfect right to vote here on taking an oath of allegiance (Sensation.)

Mr. Cary - Didn't I tell you that you had better put your names on the list to test the question?

Mr. Gibbs - You might have done so - I don't remember. (Renewed laughter.)

On the following evening the opposition also held a public meeting for the purpose of reviewing the acts of George Hunter Cary as well as to organize a Reform Association. DeCosmos, the principal speaker of the evening, condemned the work of Cary, and when Wellington D. Moses, the negro barber, mounted the platform presumably in defence of the Attorney-General, the Colonist reported that no one would listen to him and that he was forced to withdraw. Regarding this statement, Moses wrote:

Victoria, May 23d, 1861.

Editor British Colonist:--

I see in your report of the meeting at the Lyceum on Tuesday night that I am represented as having mounted the stand in a contemptuous manner, as "a colored man named Moses and creating confusion."

Now, sir, you know me as well as you do any other man in the Colony. I was not the cause of the confusion, as you state. I was loudly called for and did not have the slightest motive in taking

15 Colonist, May 21, 1861.
any part in the meeting. I was called for at the meeting the night previous and declined speaking. It is not my desire to thrust myself upon any set of men or any society. On election day my vote will tell which side I am on. I will exercise it as an Englishman.

Respectfully, yours,

W.D. MOSES.

While it was now admitted that American born negroes could not have the same rights and privileges as British subjects, how about negroes who were British subjects by birth or naturalization, would they be given the same political rights as the whites? They had been permitted to vote; what would happen should one decide to run for office? The case of Jacob Francis was to be the test.

In the fall of 1861, a vacancy occurred in the Legislative Assembly and Jacob Francis, a negro born in England, advertised his intention of running as an independent candidate:

INDEPENDENT CANDIDATE

TO THE ELECTORS OF THE DISTRICT OF VICTORIA

Gentlemen,- Having been solicited by many of the voters of your District to come forward as a candidate for your suffrages, and as a vacancy has recently occurred I now beg to offer myself as a candidate to represent you in the House of Assembly.

Were I a member of the House of Assembly, I should devote all my energies in advocating wholesome laws, a liberal Incorporation Act, a Reform in the Courts of Justice and reduction of exhorbitant fees; a Bill for the easy and cheap recovery of small debts, repeal of the infamous Registration of Deeds Act and a better law in its place. In short I should endeavor to have no law on the Statute book that would not conduce to the safety and happiness of the country.

I should not do, what we as a people are accused of doing - attending solely to the advancement of our own class - but I should consult the interests of the country in general, and those of the District in particular.

16 Colonist, May 23, 1861.
If you do me the honor to return me you will find me up to my work, I was born in England, and have spent much time in the study of colonial political economy.

I have the honor to be,
Your obedient servant

JACOB FRANCIS

Probably as a joke and with no serious intention of seeing the negro elected, James Thorne mounted the steps of the Victoria School-house and nominated Francis as a candidate in the coming election, with J.D. Carroll, another prominent citizen as seconder. At the same time Joseph Trutch was also nominated, but as he was absent from Victoria at the time he was objected to because he would be unable to take the oath required by law, before the election. The objection was withdrawn before the poll however, and the nomination allowed to stand.

There were four candidates for the two available seats, and on the following day after the vote was taken, the returns were, Trimble 38, Trutch 36, Francis 11, and Young 4. Trimble and Trutch were the two members to represent Victoria District. Of the five coloured votes in the district, only two had been registered for Francis, and most of the whites who had voted for him admitted having done so for the purpose of "creating a row in the House of Assembly". But had Joseph Trutch been elected? In denying his right to the seat the Colonist and the Daily Press were for once in agreement. As Trutch was not even in the colony, he obviously could not have taken the required oath before the election, therefore he could not even be a candidate. While neither paper considered Francis a suitable representative, they upheld his

17 Victoria Daily Press, Nov. 12, 1861.
18 Colonist, Nov. 16, 1861.
19 Ibid., Nov. 18, 1861.
20 Loc. cit.
legal right to the seat in the assembly. Apart from the racial aspects of the case, it was a matter of principle and precedent. Was the law so arbitrary that it could be changed to suit the government in power? Could the government absolutely ignore its own laws?

Francis hired a lawyer and was determined to test the validity of the election. His petition was drawn up and presented, and it appeared very much as if the government was trapped by its own Franchise Act.

The Daily Press commented:

It may be objected that he wears his necktie in a peculiar manner - that he keeps a drinking saloon - or that he did not take his degree at Oxford - but we do not think the members will find such objections valid according to Blackstone or any of the other legal authorities of Great Britain.

The controversy created a great deal of excitement in the colony and rapidly became a race question. It was said that if Francis were elected, the House would be dissolved as the members were gentlemen and would not sit with negroes who were only fitted to be bootblacks.

They had to admit however that the negro had the necessary qualifications and that he was just as intelligent as many of the white members. Colour was the main objection.

The government was determined to reject Francis, and it was inevitable that some way should be found to do so. Trimble and Trutch were sworn in and took their seats, and an election committee was appointed to consider the petition and to decide whether or not the coloured man was to be substituted for Trutch. They found a loophole and the petition was rejected. The fault lay not in the content of the petition, which could

22 Ibid., Nov. 21, 1861.
23 Loc. cit.
not be disputed, but in the way the document was drawn up. It was objected to because there were erasures and interlineations, although these had been made before the paper had been signed. In the meantime the time limit for submitting the petition had expired, and Francis was not given an extension in order to have a new document drawn up. The committee had succeeded in its purpose and the case was closed.

As long as the negroes voted en bloc as they had in 1860, they were a political power in the community and were feared and fawned upon by local politicians. But they also had to accept unfortunate consequences, for by so doing they must always earn the enmity of the party they chose not to support. After the election of 1860 most of the negroes had been removed from the election lists, but by 1863 a naturalization law had been passed (Alien Act of 1861), and fifty-two coloured men owned a sufficient amount of property to permit them to vote. Once again Amor DeCosmos was a candidate in the coming election, and undoubtedly fearing a repetition of his previous experience with the negroes, he spent two 25 hours with Mifflin Gibbs, trying unsuccessfully to solicit his vote. Shortly after, when the coloured people held a public meeting to discuss the coming election, De Cosmos was present to try to make amends for his previous behaviour, but in spite of this, Willis Bond condemned him for what he had done in the past, accusing him of driving many coloured people to misery, destitution and death. When Gibbs took the platform, he was no more charitable towards DeCosmos than Bond had been. DeCosmos should be put on his good behaviour for three years before the coloured people would vote for him, Gibbs publicly stated. Then, he continued,

24 Colonist, Dec. 10, 1861.

25 Daily Chronicle, July 18, 1863.
"If you are elected we will see if your professions are sincere; if you are defeated, we will see how you behave yourself under the disappointment."

On election day the _Chronicle_ carried a reminder to the negro voters:

The colored voters will poll FIFTY-TWO VOTES. Whichever way their influence is cast today, so goes the election! The colored man who falters in the present emergency and votes for his arch-enemy will betray his race.

But the negroes paid little attention, for DeCosmos was elected by a safe margin. Not only did many coloured men fail to vote at all, but a few even voted for the "arch-enemy" himself. What had happened in the community since 1860? Perhaps some preferred to make a friend of the enemy. Since there was no secret ballot he would know how each had voted by merely consulting the poll books. Perhaps there were social or economic reasons why a few negroes gave him their vote. Did some realize the hostility aroused against them by bloc voting? In 1860, as far as the negroes were concerned, the main issue was their right to the franchise; but now they had the vote, and the very fact that they had been given this symbol of equality is a possible reason why some did not vote at all. When they did not have the vote, they wanted it; when it was finally given to them, they were no longer interested in making use of it. Whatever were the reasons why every negro elector did not turn out to the poll and vote against DeCosmos, the fact alone proves that the coloured community was no longer a political unity; no longer would the negroes blindly follow their leaders.

26 _Daily Chronicle_, July 18, 1863.

27 _Loc. cit._
In 1864 a seat in the assembly representing Victoria fell vacant and as in the other elections, the negro vote was once again something to bargain for. Franklin, Searby and Welch were the candidates this time, and Searby, fearing the popularity of Franklin, decided to try to win the support of the coloured electors. Candidate Searby, following the example already set by De Cosmos the previous year, visited Gibbs to solicit his vote and that of his followers.

Gibbs, who had political ambitions himself was annoyed by a law providing that only British subjects by birth and not by naturalization could occupy seats in the House of Assembly. As few except the coloured citizens of Victoria had become naturalized in the colony, this law seemed to be directed against them in particular and was a source of constant irritation to them. Naturally since they made up such a large proportion of the population of the colony and had to abide by its laws, they felt that they should have some part in making these laws, or at least have the privilege of putting up one of their own people as a candidate for the assembly.

At the last session of the legislature, the Honourable Mr. Ridge had introduced an Alien Bill (not to be confused with the Alien Act of 1861) which would have remedied the situation by giving naturalized subjects all the rights of British born subjects, after a residence of five years in the colony and after taking an oath of allegiance. Needless to say, the negroes would support the candidate who would vote for this bill. Searby, to win "60 colored votes" gave his promise. This was a most " unholy alliance" for a few years before, because of his prejudice, Searby had been one of those responsible for driving the coloured people out of the Rev. Matthew Macfie's church; furthermore when Gibbs had been
nominated for a seat on the Municipal Council, it was W.M. Searby who had publicly stated that he would refuse to sit on any board if the coloured man should be elected to it. Selim Franklin, on the other hand, who had won the negro vote in 1860 by assuring them that they had all the rights of British subjects, now refused them these rights by his failure to promise support for the Alien Bill. The question of whether or not he would vote for the Bill was put to Searby by Mifflin Gibbs, and their correspondence was published in the Colonist:

Victoria, V.I. Jan. 18th, 1864.

Mr. W.M. Searby- Sir:- Would you have supported Mr. Ridge's Bill for the naturalization of Aliens, as presented this session of the Legislative Assembly? - and will you support such a bill at any subsequent period should you be returned?

Very respectfully yours,

M.W. Gibbs.

Victoria, Jan'y 18th, 1864.

Mr. M.W. Gibbs- Sir- I am in receipt of your communication of this date asking me whether I should have supported Mr. Ridge's bill for the naturalization of aliens had I been in the Legislative Assembly, and whether I will support such a bill at any subsequent period. In reply I beg to say that I am prepared to vote for such a measure whenever it is introduced into the House of Assembly should I be elected.

I am, Sir yours very truly,

W.M. Searby.

These letters aroused the supporters of Selim Franklin, and from now on the Evening Express became violently anti-negro. It claimed that the Alien Bill would only be the means of enabling Lester and Gibbs to

28 Colonist, Jan. 19, 1864.

29 Loc. cit.
enter the Legislative Assembly of the colony. It was said that all the other aliens in the community remained loyal to their homelands and did not wish to give up their nationalities; most certainly they did not wish to meddle in the politics of a strange country and were quite content to live under the laws of the people among whom they had come to live. The negroes however owed loyalty to no country and for this reason it was claimed were the only alien group who had any ambitions to enter the parliament of the colony. But Englishmen would not be governed by negroes, the Express maintained, and furthermore they did not like to see one class of men banding together for political reasons.

We believe that on calm reflection their modesty will reassert its sway over their minds, and that, when this little temporary ebullition of ambitious yearnings has passed away, that they will be ready to acknowledge their own interests, and also the interests of the community are best served by leaving the legislation of the Colony in the hands of their English friends.

Here is genuine fear that negroes might get into the legislature and is indicative of the power still held by the coloured community. For two weeks the Evening Express did everything it could to discredit the negroes in the eyes of the whites, and to discourage them from voting.

A few days before the election, a political meeting was held in the Pioneer Hall where before a gathering of four hundred people of all races and political leanings, Mifflin Gibbs told the story of the "celebrated letters", of how he had told Searby that he would not vote for anyone who would not support the Alien Bill. Searby, he said, could not make up his mind on the question, but later had come back to say that he had read the bill and was willing to support it; he would also support common schools where all races would be treated as equals. Willis Bond as usual spoke to the gathering and injected a little humour when he

30 Evening Express, January 25, 1864.
31 Loc. cit.
announced that he would mention the good qualities of Searby and only the bad ones of his opponents. After pledging to support Searby, the meeting broke up.

The entire coloured population was by no means unanimous in this decision, for there was a small group of British-born Jamaican negroes who refused to join the American coloured people. Being British-born, they would not benefit by the Alien Bill and so refused to support it. One Jamaican wrote to the press giving his point of view, and in so doing aroused the hostility of the American negroes:

To the Editor of the Evening Express

Sir:- That question, the alien question, what a fearful bugbear it must be. I know of no question originated in Victoria, that created such bickerings among politicians of every creed and clergymen of every denomination. But it is as much a coloured question as an alien. Mr. Searby's friends and voters say, then why do you oppose it? your own interest. I am opposed also to the hypocrisy [sic] of his supporters. When I glance at their faces to see their boldness, duplicity and legerdemain manner of remonstrating for their pet candidate, I abhor the thing more. Who are these men? the very parties who banded themselves together most strenuously and bitterly in opposing Mr. Gibbs at the first Municipal election on no other grounds than being a man of colour. When I look at them coolly and calmly the remembrance of that piece of religious mockery! they aided a certain clergyman in carrying out that damnable doctrine of church proscription, which gives the infidel a chance to say religion is mere speculation and trade. Every true Christian points to that church with the finger of scorn, for while every other church's congregation is on the increase, it is only with its few hearers. My friends among the Aliens consider well, don't be too hasty, don't mistake a political and electioneering dodge for a philanthropic measure. I say friends, for I think I have some among you [sic] the Americans are opposed to the Bill for they are not wishful of seeing any coloured Aliens in the legislature. Readers don't misunderstand me, I do not believe the Englishman [sic] are all angels, for some of them oppose me as well as you, I say as far as I can see, whether you be a coloured Portuguese or a black Frenchman the same amount of animosity is advanced against us, it is enough to be coloured in these waters. But I say for all that, dare the man black or white to impeach the liberalty of the British Constitution, [sic] The only enemy is despotism. I feel the pangs of the white man's prejudice and for that reason I am diametrically opposed to the Alien Bill, [sic]

32 Colonist, Jan. 20, 1864.
My alien friends do you believe the fallacious argument of those two-faced gentlemen? Why those very men after Mr. Searby's return (no danger of that though) will prompt him to vote against any such question. You must pardon me, I cannot help it, it appears natural to me (or at any rate it is not acquired) I am doggedly arrayed against any foreigners assuming the reins of government. I was perfectly cautious on that question, but when I hear and see the hostilities it has created among the aliens, and the expressions they have given utterance to against the author of this and others, it tended to create an impassable gulf. But the course [sic] minded men I think ought to hide their diminished heads after the election.

Yours

J. CATHCART alias JAMAICA

The election campaign progressed, and the rumour was spread that should Searby be elected, he would try to create a Privy Council with Willis Bond at its head as a reward for his assistance. On the day of the election (January 27, 1864) there was a large turnout of coloured voters led by Lester, Gibbs and Bond, and by mid-day, it appeared as if they would succeed in putting Searby into the legislature. When the votes were finally counted however, the result was Franklin 181, Searby 174 and Welch 3. All the alien American negroes except three had voted for Searby, while the Jamaicans had voted for Franklin. It was the Jamaican vote that had given Franklin his majority.

Shortly after the election the American negroes held a meeting at Sam Ringo's saloon on Johnson Street; they wanted retribution and were determined to get it. The Jamaicans and the three American negroes who had voted with them were traitors, especially Cathcart who had damaged their cause by his letter to the press. Lester and Bond headed this meeting, for Gibbs was probably too wise a man to become involved in anything so radical. He must have been aware that his own people were

33 Evening Express, Jan. 22, 1864.
trying to deprive others of their freedom, for the purpose of the meeting
was to pledge all coloured citizens to boycott Cathcart's business, and
by so doing to attempt to starve him out of the community. Resolutions
were passed against him and the other "traitors" and in spite of the
feelings of one negro that it was wrong to condemn any British subject
for the way in which he voted, and who opposed the publication of these
resolutions, they appeared a few days later in the negro newspaper of
San Francisco, the Pacific Appeal.

With the publication of these resolutions, the Evening Express
commented that maybe now the people of Victoria would realize that the
negroes had been granted too many privileges, and that the only way to
put an end to their arrogance was to extend the period of residence
required for naturalization. This it proposed should be the test at the
next election.

So far the negroes have been considered in relation to colonial
politics only, but they also had a part to play in the municipal politics
of Victoria town. In 1862, a year in which racial prejudice was at its
height in Victoria, Mifflin Wistar Gibbs was nominated as a candidate
for the town council. It was admitted that he was a man of con-
siderable knowledge and experience, and well qualified for the position,
but he was coloured, and that was the greatest handicap of all. Never-
theless he had many friends, and when a meeting was held to hear all
the candidates speak, for the first time in Victoria, a negro speaking
from the public platform was listened to with respect and applause.

34 See appendix "F". Resolutions published in the Pacific Appeal.
35 Evening Express, February 25, 1864.
36 Victoria Daily Press, Aug. 11, 1862.
37 Ibid., Aug. 12, 1862.
While prejudice no doubt accounts for his defeat in this election, out of fourteen candidates, of which the top six were to be councillors, Gibbs came seventh at the poll and was defeated by only seven votes. In 1868, with the help of Dr. Helmcken, he was elected to the Victoria City Council to represent the James Bay district, a position which he retained until his departure from the town. A glance at the minutes of the City Council during those years proves that as chairman of the Finance Committee he was an important personage in the community, and was loudly acclaimed whenever he made a public appearance. On one such occasion when a meeting was being held in the theatre to discuss moving the capital back from New Westminster to Victoria, it must have been highly gratifying to Gibbs when the large and respectable audience loudly demanded a few words from him. He was led to the platform by Dr. Helmcken and after thanking the gathering for paying him such a tribute, he urged them to unite to accomplish their object.

The most important political issue in the colony in 1868 was the suggested union of British Columbia with the Dominion of Canada, a proposal which in spite of its allurements attracted much opposition. The advocates of union, formed the Confederation League which held its first meeting at Smith's Hall on May 21, 1868 with the purpose not only of having British Columbia enter the Canadian federation, but to obtain a government representative of the people to replace the one-man government with his staff of supposedly do-nothing officials. At this meeting a constitution was adopted and the following officers elected:

38 Colonist, January 8, 1867.
Branches of this League were established throughout the colony, and in August it was decided to hold a convention. It was to be held on September 14th at Yale, probably because an Agricultural Exhibition was to be held there at the same time and thus the delegates would be able to attend both. Among those elected to represent Victoria was Mifflin Gibbs, but as he was subsequently elected to represent Salt Spring Island, he withdrew as a Victoria delegate.

After the mid-1860's the coloured people in Victoria began to lose their identity as a pressure group. No doubt one reason for this was the rapidly diminishing negro population as the result of emigration. Naturally people who no longer intended making Victoria their permanent home would lose interest in the government of the colony. Now they were more concerned about conditions in the United States than in British Columbia. Although their influence after 1865 was little felt, their power before this date should not be underestimated. By voting illegally in 1860, they had hastened the passage of a naturalization law. Their frequent political meetings and gatherings had stimulated political interest in the colony, and finally their leader became one of the major figures in the municipal government of Victoria.
CHAPTER VI

THE VICTORIA PIONEER RIFLE CORPS

The years 1859 and 1860 were ones of growing tension between England and France, and the resulting fear of a French invasion aroused the English and stimulated the development of a "Rifle Movement" on a nationwide scale. Rifle corps were organized in every city and town, and it is estimated that over a hundred thousand young men became amateur soldiers. So many volunteered in fact, that at first there were not enough rifles for all, and some units had only broomsticks with which to drill. Even the shopkeepers made the most of the excitement and filled their windows with "rifle boots", "rifle hats", "rifle razors", and even "rifle gin".

It was not long before news of the movement reached Vancouver Island and was much publicized in the press of the colony. Concerned over the lack of adequate protection for the little settlement, the newspapers suggested that it was time to follow the example of the motherland. The idea of forming a volunteer military unit was not a new one in Victoria however, for Sheriff Heaton had already suggested it to Governor Douglas in August 1859. Although Douglas was agreeable at that time, nothing was done about the matter immediately, possibly because, as Heaton had pointed out, such a project would need some financial support from the government.

3 Ibid., June 25, 1860.
4 G. Heaton to Governor Douglas, August 15, 20, 1859. MSS in B.C. Provincial Archives.
Because of the constant danger of fire in the little town, a group of settlers organized a volunteer fire company patterned after similar companies in the United States, and with equipment purchased in San Francisco. When some of the negroes tried to join the brigade however, they were bluntly refused. In retaliation, the coloured men decided to form a rifle corps such as the newspapers had been advocating. They approached the Governor with their plan, but unlike the white citizens of the previous year, asked permission only and no mention was made of financial assistance. Governor Douglas was quite aware of the value of such a unit and readily gave his consent. So many troublesome Indians had moved into the region in recent months that he was pleased to have the coloured men prepare themselves just in case an emergency should arise in which their services might be required.

Recruiting started immediately, and by April of 1860, the Victoria Pioneer Rifle Corps had become a reality, although it was over a year later on July 4, 1861 before it was officially sworn in by Judge Cameron. At first the unit was composed of about sixty men, including one captain, two lieutenants, and one sergeant; but during the course of their existence this number diminished and the numbers and ranks of the officers who were elected annually, were never definitely fixed. None had had any previous military experience, but Governor Douglas co-operated in this respect by procuring a Drill Sergeant for them from whichever of Her Majesty's ships happened to be in port at the time.

5 Victoria Daily Press, July 3, 14, 1861.
6 Victoria Gazette, May 28, 1860. The Colonist, Sept. 20, 1861 gives the total number as 45.
The uniforms of the Pioneers were green with orange facings, and included white belts and shakoes. These outfits were made in England and as blanket cloth was frequently used for this purpose at that time, the story may be true that they were manufactured from Hudson's Bay Company blankets.

Almost immediately after the inception of their corps, the negro soldiers constructed a small drill hall at the upper end of Yates Street, which they later moved one block over to their lot on View Street. Here even the children played at being soldiers when their elders were not using it. When the weather was favourable, the Volunteers drilled in the open on a ten acre common on Church Hill, but Beacon Hill was their favourite ground for mock skirmishes and manoeuvres.

The greatest problem with which the coloured men had to contend was their lack of proper armament. As the colony owned no arms or ammunition of any kind, the Corps had to rely on a few old flintlocks loaned by the Hudson's Bay Company, but these, being too outdated and useless were soon discarded. Their appeal for more efficient weapons was relayed to the home office by Governor Douglas, who had already been informed in a despatch from Downing Street dated October 17, 1860 that he should encourage the formation of a volunteer force because of the growing Indian menace. In his reply, Douglas mentioned the existence of the negro unit and that he had given them every encouragement, but because of the smallness of the colonial revenue, had not been able to supply them with arms. He was certain that if Her Majesty's Government would send 500 stand of arms to the colony he could form a volunteer

7 Victoria Daily Press, Sept. 21, 1861. The Evening Express, March 14, 1864, describes the uniform as being blue with yellow facings.
corps that would be no discredit to the Empire.

The Governor anticipating that his request would be granted, assured the negroes that the British government fully appreciated their services and would not fail to provide them with proper arms. On the arrival of the Speedy in the spring of 1862, the colony received 29 cases of rifles and 250 barrels of ammunition and these were soon followed by 500 more rifles of a later design to be used by volunteer forces on Vancouver Island. Although the negro unit made application for some of these, it is very doubtful if they ever received any, for two years later they were still asking to be equipped with rifles.

In the summer of 1861, the negro unit was not the only volunteer corps in existence in Victoria, for a white corps, the Vancouver Island Volunteer Rifle Corps had by now come into being. Naturally the negroes wondered how the two units would combine in an emergency, and believing that the officer in command of the whites would also take charge of them, they suggested that they be allowed to take part in his election. Needless to say this plan was immediately rejected.

The coloured volunteers were highly regarded by many of the white residents of the colony who admired their enthusiasm and their interest in becoming efficient, or who disliked the white corps and the clique that had formed it so much that it gave them pleasure and a sense of revenge to flatter and praise the negro unit. Some distrusted the Vancouver Island Volunteers because it was suspected that the true motive behind their formation was a political one.

8 Governor Douglas to the Duke of Newcastle, Feb. 19, 1861, in Vancouver Island Despatches to the Secretary of State, 8th June 1859 to 28th December 1861, pp. 251-253.

9 Victoria Daily Press, May 2, 1862.
Although the V.P.R.C. was beginning to find itself in financial difficulties, nevertheless until the end of 1861, the negroes refrained from asking aid of the Governor. Funds were raised among themselves by holding small entertainments in their drill hall on View Street, and sometimes donations were received from the coloured ladies of the community. Such an uncertain income was hardly enough to be their main support however, and eventually they were forced to approach the government:

To the Colonial Secty.

of

V. I.

Sir

hearing that the sum of £250 have been passed in the estimates for the year for the different Volunteers corps of the colony -

I have the honor to apply to you, in behalf of the Volunteers Corps of colored men duly sworn in, and called the Victoria Poeneer [sic] Rifle corps for such portion of that sum as his excellency shall think fit to allow us.

I may be pardon for observing that this company has been regular and attentive in its drill and will be found wherever circumstances shall call for its employment fully as efficient in the field and second to none in steady loyalty to the flag which it has adopted as its own - trust that you will be so good as to lay this our respectful application before his Excellency and further our request by your favorable interest.

I have the honor to be your obedient humble servant.

Fortune Richard

Capt. of Victoria Rifle Corps.

In reply, on December 9, 1861, Governor Douglas authorized the payment of £45 to the Corps.

Colonist, Jan. 9, 1862.

MS in B.C. Provincial Archives.
In the spring of 1862, the Secretary of State for the Colonies, the Duke of Newcastle, requested that Douglas make a return of the Militia and Volunteer Corps then in existence in the colony. From this return, it is evident that the African Rifles were the only organization of this kind in Victoria, their white counterpart having disbanded after constant quarrelling among themselves. Not only did the negro soldiers give the Governor the information required for this statement, but they also submitted their financial report and asked for a government grant of $700.00 to be used for improvements to their armory. This latest appeal brought no response and it was the same the following year when again they asked financial assistance. If Governor Douglas was willing, apparently the Assembly was not. The V.P.R.C. was completely ignored, and while they had been designated the previous year in the Militia Return as the only military unit on the Island, in 1863, according to the Vancouver Island Blue Book, there were "No Militia forces in the Colony." As 1863 was a year of extreme anti-negro feeling in Victoria, perhaps that was the reason the government would not grant them any money; perhaps by refusing assistance it was hoped to discourage the negroes from maintaining their own little regiment.

In January 1863, the Corps acquired eight band instruments, and from among their members, the Victoria City Brass Band was organized. Their leader was a white man as was also their instructor, the bandmaster of the *Topaze*.

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13 See appendix "G". Memorial and financial statement from the V.P.R.C.
15 *Daily Chronicle*, Jan. 28th, 1863.
In May the coloured soldiers tried to replenish their funds by holding an entertainment in their hall, but this was not enough, and once again they wrote to the Governor telling of their problem. Once again nothing was gained by their letter and being now discouraged the Corps became inactive and according to the Daily Chronicle "went the 'way of all flesh' and became defunct." This statement was retracted the following day however, when the Chronicle announced that it had been requested to say that the Corps was still active.

Early in 1864 a controversy over the negro regiment revived it temporarily. Governor Kennedy was to arrive in the colony in March of that year to replace Governor Douglas who was retiring from office. Plans were started in February for his reception, and a committee was appointed to arrange for a welcoming parade. Lieut. R.H. Johnson, of the negro corps approached it with the suggestion that his unit should march in the procession, and this was favoured by Lieut. Verney as long as their uniforms and accoutrements could pass inspection. For the moment the coloured men seem to have been accepted, and planned to turn out in full dress under the command of a white sergeant. As yet however, the managing committee had not decided on what position they were to occupy in the parade.

The question of whether or not they should be in the parade at all, seems to have stirred up more excitement and controversy than the arrival

17 Daily Chronicle, Sept. 11, 1863.
18 Ibid., Feb. 26, 1864.
19 Ibid., Feb. 28, 1864.
of the new Governor itself. All those who disapproved were careful not
to base their objection on the ground of colour, but camouflaged their
prejudice with a variety of excuses. Captain Kennedy, they said, was
a military man and to him the negro soldiers were bound to appear ridi-
culous with all their military deficiencies. One correspondent to the
Daily Chronicle suggested, with much sarcasm, that it might be a good
plan to include the coloured men in the procession if only to amuse
Kennedy and put him in a good humour on his arrival. They might also
draw up an address asking His Excellency to take command of their corps,
which he would undoubtedly do. The writer continued by suggesting that
they make some show of military discipline however, and that the famous
order given to a Yankee Volunteer Corps should be repeated on this
occasion by posting the words "Umbrellas and cornstalks to the rear" in
front of the Pioneer Rifle Hall before the Corps turned out. If they
rigidly adhered to this rule and showed enough shirt collar in the front
ranks they could not fail to produce a most imposing effect.

In the meantime the negro soldiers went on with their plans, and
in preparation for the great day, wrote to the Colonial Secretary asking
for rifles with which to drill, and to carry in the parade. Since
they stressed the fact that they were already paying a drill sergeant
five dollars a day to train them, the rifles were forthcoming almost
immediately.

The controversy continued in the newspapers and the rumour spread
that even if they were barred from the procession, the negro regiment

20 Daily Chronicle, March 2, 1864.
21 R.H. Johnson, T.P. Freeman, N. Pointer, P. Lester to W.A.G. Young,
March 3, 1864. MS in B.C. Provincial Archives.
22 W.A.G. Young to Messrs. Richard H. Johnson, J.T. Dunlop, March 3,
1864, in Vancouver Island Miscellaneous Letters, March 24, 1863 to Sept. 20,
1864.
would persist in taking part, and would even equip themselves with ball cartridges to force the issue if necessary. This outrageous idea was of course immediately denied by the Pioneer Corps. Actually the feud was being carried on by two opposing white factions, and the negroes had little part in it. The supporters of Governor Douglas had already denied the coloured people the right to attend the farewell banquet being given for the retiring governor, yet they were doing everything possible to put the negroes in the procession welcoming Governor Kennedy. Undoubtedly by so doing they hoped to make the committee in charge appear ridiculous.

In rejecting the application of the negro regiment, the committee said that they had not done so because of prejudice. They had made their decision to have no military display, because the twenty-five or thirty men of the coloured unit would, according to custom, have taken the leading position in the procession, and it was feared that if this happened, the fire departments and other societies would withdraw.

The V.P.R.C. still continued to drill, and made a public announce ment that they would appear at the reception, not as rioters as some had suggested, but as peaceable subjects of Her Majesty. At the proper time they would report to the Marshal of the Day to be assigned their position in the parade. It was not until they had informed the committee of their plan that they were officially informed that they were not to participate.

All this publicity and excitement had at least put new life into the dying Pioneer Rifle Corps, for now the coloured soldiers began a

23 *Daily Chronicle*, March 5, 1864.


campaign for public sympathy and support. Their band paraded the streets in the evenings, and on March 14th, 1864, at a special ceremony to which the public was invited, the ladies of the negro community presented the Corps with a silk Union Jack. The unit was drawn up in two ranks in the area adjoining their hall, and Sarah Pointer came forward, after laying the handsomely embroidered colours across the drum, and read the following address:

Captain and members of the Victoria Pioneer Rifle Company, in behalf of the Ladies of Victoria, I present to you this flag. It affords us much pleasure so to do as we know your loyalty to this government is proverbial. The fostering care it has shown to the oppressed of our race, leaves us under many obligations to the sagacity and wisdom of her statesmen! Yet in this far distant Colony of Her Majesty's dominion we have many causes to complain. True you have not as yet been called on to rally under this flag for its protection; yet the war of complexional distinction is upon us, and is more ravaging to us as a people than that of Mars. But men, as long as this flag shall wave over you, you may rest assured that no man, or set of men, or nations, can successfully grind you down under the iron heel of oppression. Then soldiers, look up to this insignia of liberty, that has waved a thousand years over the battle and the breeze. In committing this color to your charge, we only hope that you will guard it well, and yourselves be untarnished as the color. It will inspire you in the hour of peril; it is a nation's proudest boast; "it's a terror to a foe, and a canopy of peace to a freeman".

Captain Johnson, sinking on one knee, received the flag, and after delivering it to the colour sergeants, replied that if it had not been for the interest always shown by the ladies, the Corps should have died long ago. When his speech was ended, the colours were furled, and led by the band the Corps marched through the main streets of the town.

Finally the day arrived when Governor Kennedy landed at Esquimalt (March 25, 1864) and was greeted by the welcoming parade at Victoria. Everyone who owned a uniform or could carry a banner seems to have been in the procession, but where was the most splendid assemblage of all,

26 Daily Chronicle, March 15, 1864.
the Victoria Pioneer Rifle Corps? Where were the African Rifles after all their drilling with their new rifles and with their splendidly embroidered flag? The committee had kept to its word, and the negro soldiers, instead of marching in the procession, paraded to the restaurant of one of their fellows on Beacon Hill where they held their own celebration. They were not to be outdone however, and a week later, preceded by their brass band, marched across the wooden bridge to the Legislative Buildings where they presented their own address to the Governor:

To His Excellency Arthur Edward Kennedy, C.B.

May it please your Excellency:—We, the members of the Victoria Pioneer Rifle Company, beg leave to express our thankfulness and gratification, at the safe arrival of your Excellency and family, and our unaltered devotion to the person and Government of Her most gracious Majesty Queen Victoria.

Our only regret is that in the general rejoicing over your Excellency's arrival we were precluded, on account of an anti-English [sic] prejudice against our color, of doing ourselves the honor as well as pleasure of taking part in the procession as a military company - a company whose highest aim is to be of service to Her Majesty and whose greatest privilege is to be her Majesty's most loyal subjects.

To your Excellency's predecessor, Sir James Douglas, is due the organization of this Company, which with all its imperfections, is at least the only representative of the British volunteer element in the Colony.

We hope under your Excellency's administration no occasion may arise requiring our military services; if, however the time should come when internal or external dangers should threaten the country, we hope to prove by deeds that the arms we carry are in no unworthy hands, and that the allegiance which we owe to her Majesty we are ready with our lives to pay.

It is to us a source of extreme satisfaction to know that your Excellency's opinions agree with that basis upon which the greatness of the British law is built - the non-recognition of distinction in

27 Major J.S. Matthews, "British Columbia's First Troops were Black," The Army and Navy Veterans in Canada, Convention Number, September 1934, pp. 39-40. Based in part on an interview with Samuel Booth, a former member of the Victoria Pioneer Rifle Corps.
class, creed, color or nationality - principles that found in your great Curran so eloquent an expounder in days gone by, and which have placed Great Britain in the van of liberty, Christianity and civilization.

We have the honor to be, sir,

Your Excellency's most humble and ob't servants,

(signed on behalf of the Company)

R.H. JOHNSON, Captain.

Governor Kennedy thanked them for their loyalty and said that while he had expected it from the inhabitants of Vancouver Island, he was glad the coloured residents were no exception. He was quite aware of the race problem which existed between the negroes and whites in the colony, and would do everything in his power to heal the breach existing between the two. He was accustomed to coloured people, the Governor continued, for the first colony to which he had been sent was the Gold Coast where three quarters of the population were negroes, and where his Chief Justice and even his clergyman had been black men. For this reason he could have no sympathy with those who were prejudiced because of colour, and he hoped that the negroes would be long suffering and forbearing, as he was sure that in time this race consciousness, which he understood had been imported from the United States, would disappear.

At this time another white volunteer unit was in the process of formation, but recruiting was lagging and one reason put forward for this was that these alien negroes held the right, since they were the oldest unit in the colony, to take precedence in any review and to hold the post of honour in any public demonstration or display in which military

28 Addresses Presented to His Excellency A.E. Kennedy, C.B., on Assuming the Government of Vancouver Island, [Victoria], n.pub., [1864], p. 17.

29 Daily Chronicle, March 31, 1864.
units might take part. The "loyal born British subjects" on the other hand would merely fill in the background. This right of precedence was denied by another, who said that according to custom, if a white and coloured regiment should be brigaded together, the white regiment always took precedence over the negro one. Probably to encourage the formation of the new white militia, the negroes were given no further official support.

They were not as yet discouraged to the point of disbanding however, for the month following the presentation of their address to Governor Kennedy, they held their fourth annual election of officers. However with the complete absence of any financial or moral support from the government, it is not surprising that attendance became irregular and drills infrequent. In May of 1865, the editor of the Colonist asked:

...what has become of the Pioneer Rifle Company, which at one time promised to become a very efficient and soldier-like body? Surely the enthusiasm and military ardor of our colored citizens has not all evaporated? The brave & warlike deeds of their countrymen in the ranks of the Federal armies should incite them to emulate so far as circumstances will permit, the patriotism of their American brethren.

The following day a direct reply came from a former captain of the Rifle Company:

Allow me to inform you Mr. Editor, with all respect, that their enthusiasm and ardor so far as this colony is concerned has evaporated. The mean and scandalous manner in which they were treated upon the advent of Governor Kennedy is still fresh in their minds. Having as much human nature under their dark skins as others of a paler hue, they cannot readily forget the snubbing they received on that occasion. Although being the first (as their name indicates) military organization on the Island, after having gone to great expense in purchasing land, building a hall, paying a drill master, and supplying themselves with uniforms, and al-

30 Daily Chronicle, March 25, 1864.
31 Ibid., March 27, 1864.
32 Colonist, April 6, 1864.
33 Ibid., May 8, 1865.
PRESENTATION OF THE COLOURS, MARCH 14, 1864.
though having taken the oath of allegiance to her Majesty, they were by a direct vote of a Committee (composed of British subjects) for His Excellency's Reception, prohibited from forming part of the procession to receive him. Nor is this all - there has ever been a studied effort to ignore their existence, to dampen that "ardor" and chill that "enthusiasm" for which you enquire. The Volunteer Rifles [white] though last in the field and well able financially to sustain themselves, have had a handsome sum voted them by the House of Assembly, the barracks given them for drill purposes, with every other stimulant necessary to foster efficiency. In a word, Mr. Editor, the authorities seemed ashamed of us, and we were disgusted with them...

It was now taken for granted that the Corps had passed out of existence, and in June 1866 the Colonial Secretary requested the return of the rifles borrowed for the reception of the Governor two years before. The rifles were immediately returned, and a caustic letter from Randall Caesar of the V.P.R.C. informed the government that the Corps had not disbanded, but because of so much discouragement they had not met for drill; furthermore their ranks had become depleted because of death and departure of many from the colony.

After such a proud beginning, this was a most ignominious ending for the negro unit. Perhaps they did appear awkward and ridiculous in their ill-fitting uniforms, but their enthusiasm and patriotism was worthy of some recognition at least, and confronted with so much discouragement, it is surprising that the Corps continued in existence as long as it did. The birth of the Pioneer Rifles had come about through the combination of jealousy, patriotism and love of display, but regardless of which

34 Colonist, May 9, 1865.


36 R. Caesar to W.A.G. Young, June 13, 1866. MS in B.C. Provincial Archives. (In R.H. Johnson correspondence file.)
motive was uppermost, Victoria's negro colonists deserve the credit for being the first to form a volunteer rifle company and to prepare themselves for the defence of the colony.

37 Colonel, Sept. 20, 1861, May 9, 1865.
CHAPTER VII

SALT SPRING ISLAND

By 1859 many of the miners who had stampeded to the Fraser River found themselves destitute, for they had gambled everything on the remote chance of striking it rich and had lost. Some were fortunate enough to make their way back to their homes in California and elsewhere, but others such as the Australians and Canadians had come too far to return so easily, and under no circumstances would the negro miners go back to the United States. Their only alternative was to go on the land, but in the Island colony, land was expensive and they were too poor to buy.

At the time of the gold rush, farm lands sold for £1.0.0 per acre, with a down payment of one quarter of the total price and the remainder being paid in annual instalments during the following four years. From the time of purchase 5% interest was added to the balance owing, and should the landholder be unable to keep up his payments, his homestead reverted to the Crown, and the money already invested by him was forfeited. These were harsh and unreasonable terms for the pioneers of Vancouver Island to encounter, when one considers that a very short distance away in Washington Territory, surveyed lands could be had at a quarter of the asking price in the British colony, with the added attraction that in the American territory the pre-emption law was in effect and unsurveyed lands could be occupied free of charge until the time of survey. As a result settlement on Vancouver Island was retarded
and many would-be colonists left the Island to take up lands on the American mainland.

It was only a matter of time before the discontent of the British colonists manifested itself and their feelings were voiced in a meeting held at the Colonial Hotel in June of 1859. The main arguments put forward by leading citizens was that cheaper lands would attract settlers and would also encourage those already in the country to remain. Otherwise the colony must face the danger of becoming depopulated. A five man committee was elected to draw up resolutions to be presented to the Governor, and these, along with a petition were read before a public meeting a fortnight later, at which fully three hundred residents of Victoria were present.

The outcome was that a few days later a small group of land-seekers who wanted to settle in the Cowichan Valley, gathered in the law chambers of John Copland and drew up a petition to be presented to the Governor telling of their desire to settle on the land subject to their occupying and improving it. A group of three then approached Governor Douglas requesting that the American system of pre-emption be adopted. A few months earlier Douglas had made his feelings quite clear on this subject in a letter to Sir E. Bulwer Lytton, in which he pointed to Oregon as a bad example, for there, he claimed it was almost impossible to find a clear title. Unfortunately many American settlers had perjured themselves by selling their claims after taking an oath to occupy and improve their pre-empted lands. The result was that the courts were overwhelmed

1 See appendix "H", Petition and resolutions regarding colonial lands policy.

2 Governor James Douglas to Sir E. Bulwer Lytton, Oct. 13, 1858, in Vancouver Island Letters to the Secretary of State, 10th Dec. 1855 to 6th June 1859.
with disputes over land titles, and the ensuing state of uncertainty and confusion was something that the Governor hoped to avoid on Vancouver Island.

The committee appointed to present the petition to Douglas requesting permission to settle in Cowichan, were refused lands there because they had already been surveyed and offered for sale. As an alternative the Chemainus lands were offered on very reasonable terms, for the Governor was willing that the settlers pay a down payment of one shilling per acre, and another shilling per acre every three months until £1.25 had been paid. The remainder to make up the £1.0.0 per acre demanded by the home government was to be paid by the end of the usual four year period.

Apparently this offer was acceptable, for on the morning of July 18th, a group of about thirty farmers set sail in the Nanaimo Packet to investigate the Chemainus lands, with a view to reporting their findings a week later to a committee of which John Copland was to be chairman. Copland in turn was to present this information before a public meeting to be held a few days later. All went according to plan and when the party returned, their report was made public. But it was not the Chemainus district that had interested them, rather it was a little unsurveyed island off the coast, named for obvious reasons, Salt Spring Island. They were so enthusiastic about its potentialities that twenty-nine settlers immediately applied through Copland for permission to take up land there, and almost at once this permission was given by the Land Office. Apparently the pressure of public opinion had by now changed the Governor's mind regarding pre-emption of unsurveyed lands, for in

3 Victoria Gazette, July 14, 1859.
the following letter the settlers were invited to take up lands and 
to pay for them only after a survey of the island had taken place.

VANCOUVER ISLAND COLONY
Land Office Victoria July 26 1859

To John Copland Esq.

Sir I acknowledge to have received from you the names of 29 
persons, list of whom is hereto annexed for whom you are agent 
and who apply through you for permission to settle on the unsur-
veyed lands of Tuan or Salt spring Island, their reason being 
want of funds to settle on surveyed lands elsewhere in which 
cases an immediate instalment is required, the permission asked 
for I am empowered to give and am further to state distinctly, 
that after the survey of the lands in question shall have been 
made, pre-emptive right in those of the number stated, who shall 
have effected most improvement in the way of Buildings, fencing 
or cultivation on any Government Section shall be recognised [sic] 
and that the sections shall be laid out continuously with and as 
portion of the same network which extends over the adjoining 
country of Cowichan. I am further empowered to delay the survey 
of that portion of Tuan Island on which these persons shall 
settle until the expiration of -- years or until requested at 
an earlier period to survey and issue Titles by the majority 
of the holders at the future time alluded to. Provided that 
as soon as the lands are surveyed, immediate payment at the rate 
and on the terms that shall then exist or immediate forfeiture 
of the same and improvements shall ensue.

Provided further that none of these persons shall occupy or 
allow other persons to occupy lands in any way improved, fenced 
or cultivated, or at any time occupied by Indians, which like-
wise would entail forfeiture similar to that above stated.

Provided lastly that Government will have the right to resume 
any portion of these lands required strictly for a Government 
purpose, such as Dockyard, Light-house, Church, School, Jail, &c, pay-
ing to the occupiers the actual value of improvements effected 
thereon.

(Sd) Joseph D. Pemberton

List of Settlers for whom Certificate Papers are wanted.

James Stephens
Edward Mallandaine
Thomas Henry Linieker [sic]
Edward Henry Linieker
William Isaacs
George Richardson
Armstad Buckner [sic]
E.A. Booth
James Chambers
James R. Gascoigne
George Kirkess
R.P. Dombrane
The prospective settlers wasted no time after receiving this notification, for the following day on July 27th, seventeen sailed from Victoria for Salt Spring, the second largest of the Gulf Islands.

Originally designated on a map published in 1854 as Chuan (or Tuan) Island, in 1856 it appears as Salt Spring, and a few years later when

it was surveyed the name became officially Admiral Island in honour of Rear Admiral Baynes, commander of the Pacific Station between 1857 and 1860. Regardless of its official name, the settlers always knew it simply as Salt Spring because of the springs of brine that existed at the northern end. Situated about fifty miles by water from Victoria, the island is about seventeen miles long and roughly nine miles across at its widest point. For the most part it is mountainous, but the valleys covered with leaf mould deposited by the alders and maples provided enough good farming land for the early pioneers.

When the first settlers arrived in mid-summer, they thought they had found a little paradise, for the natural resources of the place seemed to provide such a large portion of their needs. Trees were plentiful for the building of cabins and for fuel; wild strawberries, blackberries and cranberries were in abundance; there were many freshwater springs, and the trout streams and little lakes abounded in fish. In season there was never a shortage of blue and willow grouse, snipe and various types of water fowl. Black-tailed deer were common, and it was seldom that the farmers' larders could not be stocked with venison. If one's taste ran to sea food, the coastal waters could supply salmon, rock cod, black cod, and oysters. Clams could be dug almost anywhere along the shore, and more than once they proved the salvation of many settlers. But nature was not entirely kind to the pioneers, for panthers and grey wolves frequently depleted the farmers' flocks and live-stock. During the winter and spring of some of these early years provisions sometimes ran low when stormy weather prevented their transportation from Victoria in small boats or canoes; then the settlers were forced
to turn to clams for subsistence. But excellent crops of vegetables, corn and melons during the summers were some compensation, and eventually the farmers were able to grow their own wheat.

In 1859 no Indians were permanently encamped on the Island, although it was a regular stopping off place on their way to and from Victoria, as well as being a favourite fishing ground. In season they would come in large numbers to fish, scooping the herring out of the water with long paddles studded with nails. The clams were also an attraction, and during the late spring the natives would camp on the shores of Ganges harbour to dig and preserve them. This must have been a favourite spot for centuries, for in some places the clam-shell soil was several 5 feet deep.

Such was the Island and its inhabitants when the first group of seventeen white and negro settlers began to mark off their claims and construct their cabins. By the end of August 1859, almost all of the original twenty-nine applicants had chosen their lands, and thirty-two more had made application through John Copland, who inserted the following advertisement in the Victoria Gazette:

To Salt Spring Island Settlers

THE TWENTY-NINE PARTIES WHOSE names were on the FIRST LIST, are requested to call on the undersigned, - pay for the survey, - and get their names marked on the Plan, on or before SATURDAY NEXT, as those who have since received permission from the Colonial Surveyor will then proceed to choose their lots, from such as may remain on the Survey.

JOHN COPLAND, 
Sept. 19, 1859. 
Yates Street.


6 Victoria Gazette, Sept. 20, 1859.
In December there were fifty-six more applicants, for as favourable reports were brought back, more settlers wanted to take up free lands on Salt Spring. Most of them were recent arrivals from Canada and Australia, but many of Victoria's negro settlers were also listed among them. Who the first negro colonists were, it is impossible to say, for the majority of those who made application never actually went there, and Island tradition does not correspond at all with the scanty official records that do exist.

Settlement continued at a very favourable pace despite the constant threats of the Penalichar (probably Penalahats, a group of Cowichans) tribe, who did not hesitate to tell the new arrivals that the island was theirs and that Governor Douglas had "cap-swallowed" it. Most of the industrious settlers were well satisfied with their new surroundings, and went to work clearing, ploughing and fencing; the indolent few soon left the island and no longer being residents, relinquished their pre-emption rights.

As soon as they became established, many of the coloured farmers sent for their wives and children and for this reason, the numbers of negro colonists rapidly increased in proportion to the numbers of whites. Some indication of the large coloured population is given in the diary of the Reverend Ebenezer Robson, the first minister to hold services on Salt Spring. Robson visited Ganges Harbour in February 1861, and of it he says:

After breakfasting at Mr. L's I visited all the houses in the settlement save 3 There are in the settlement 21 houses on the same number of claims 4 of the houses inhabited by white people and the remainder by colored people. I preached in the house of

7 New Westminster Times, Sept. 24, 1859.
a colored man in the evening to about 20 persons all colored except 3 and one of them is married to a colored man....

Any outward evidence of racial prejudice was almost non-existent in the settlement except for the one instance recorded by Robson:

Mrs. Lenniker [sic] says Mr. L. nor herself will come to any meeting when the colored people associate with the white. poor woman she says some people might do it but she has been brought up so that she cannot - was the daughter of a church of England clergyman.

This was a rare case however, for most of the settlers were far too busy working their lands to be concerned about complexional differences. As time went on the differences in race became less marked, for whites married negroes, negroes married Indians, and several whites kept Indian common law wives. In time their offspring inter-married, and the Island became such a racial melting pot that discrimination because of colour could hardly flourish.

Ebenezer Robson recommended that a school house be built as soon as possible, and shortly a log cabin was constructed by the settlers for this purpose. Here John Jones, an educated coloured man taught for three days each week, the remaining three days he spent with the children at the north end of the Island. As far as is known, Jones was not paid by the government until 1869 when the first government operated school was

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8 Reverend Ebenezer Robson, Diary, Feb. 21, 1861. In B.C. Provincial Archives.

9 Ibid., Dec. 21, 1861.

10 Rev. E.F. Wilson, op. cit., p. 22.
opened in the settlement. Then the school trustees, one of whom was Abraham Copeland, a coloured man, wrote to the Colonial Secretary, suggesting that Jones, who held a first class teaching certificate from the State of Ohio, should continue in his rôle of teacher. His appointment was immediately approved, but he remained on the Island only a few years longer, for during the 1870's he returned to Oberlin, Ohio, taking with him one of the Harrison brothers, whose parents wished him to be educated there.

The religious needs of the early settlers on Salt Spring were adequately cared for, and not only did Ebenezer Robson make periodic visits, but the Bishop himself would sometimes go to the Island. Other Methodist ministers followed Robson, such as the Reverend Thomas Crosby and the Reverend Edward White, and in the mid-1860's W.S. Reece, a Church of England minister also began to make monthly trips to minister to the settlers.

The problem of communication was one of the greatest complaints of the Islanders who were not always satisfied with the efforts of the government at Victoria to improve the situation. There was no regular boat service with Vancouver Island and the quickest way to send a letter to Victoria was via New Westminster. Then there was the lack of roads on the Island itself as a further irritation, for although Governor Douglas had appointed three road commissioners in 1860, by 1862 the roads so desperately needed to connect the isolated communities were still nonexistent. Jonathan Begg, one of the road commissioners informed Douglas that the settlers could not build their own roads as they were

12 J.P. Booth, T. Griffeths (sic), Abraham Copland (sic), to the Colonial Secretary, Oct. 26, 1869. MS in B.C. Provincial Archives.

13 Interview with Ernest Harrison, Salt Spring Island, July 1, 1950.
too poor and needed every hour of their time to tend their farms in order to raise produce to sell at Victoria to pay for their pre-emption claims. Why not let the farmers partly pay for their lands by constructing the roads that were so badly needed, he suggested. Throughout the period, the settlers did act as road builders, but whether or not on the above basis is unknown.

This question of roads was one that sometimes caused friction among the early pioneers, for naturally every farmer wanted his home to be located on one. Such an incident occurred when Louis Stark, a negro farmer, requested that the government build a road from the small community in which he lived to the school house and boat dock at Ganges Harbour. He had already by his own efforts cleared one two miles long in that direction, but now found himself blocked by the claims of two other farmers. Could the government do anything to complete the remaining mile and a half? An agreement was shortly made with Stark to complete the road, and from this arose a quarrel that was even carried into the church on a Sunday morning. The details of this unhappy affair are related in a letter from Louis Stark to Joseph Trutch:

Salt Spring Island 1870

December 22

Mr. Trutch dear Sir I beg leave to say to you that I cut the timber on the road that I made agreement with Mr. Titus on Saturday this road laid out by a party of three and also by instructions in a letter received from Mr. Titus, 8th of September and it was on Saturday when Mr. Titus wish to know if that road line was settled between us I then and thir agreed to take it as it was the parties should have objected then and thir or hel thir peace this agreement and road is the work of Saturday I had cut the timber the length of the line before I received Mr. Morley's notice to leave of the work on Sunday morning Sirvis being about to close a party commenct to elect over-seers and to go and lay out the road that I had taken I Stated to

15 Louis Stark to B.W. Pearse, Sept. 15, 1870. MS in B.C. Provincial Archives.
the parties if tha from that meeting on Sunday appoint men to lay out a road for me to work I would have nothing to do with it unless it went on the same lines agreed on the parson cam down out of the pullpit and beged them do not be holding meetings on governent Buisness on the lords day the Sunday party lay out on the Sam line part of the way when in a half mile of the School house and Boat road they left the road and went to a mans Barn who have a road to his door for ten years loosing a quarter of a mile in this hort distance this Sunday Binss was all don and dated monday and now I am call on to acknolege an agreement that I had nothing to do with or loos the work that is don this road dont com to the mouth of the Boat road by fifty yeards whil the others coms in rang three or four hundred yeards I Beg leave Sir to make my gratefull acknolegment to you and mr Pirce for haveing don that which was fair and rite so fair as you knew and if i loos my labour predgerdis and unfair play is the caus and that too bad to describe the Sundy party road is a half moon circle from Creek to the Bairn that is the road tha is the road that I refuesd to cut it would be madness in me to ask governent to cut Sutch a road as that a Sentrel road is all that we ask for and let us make little roads and pigtrails to com to it by our own labour the road on the creek that was com plained of I would cut that as Both lay it out tho I recived no reply to that part I would be glad to no if mr morleys des sition is final Sir please except my pardon for trespassing on your pations so nutch I hope for the better I remain you obt Servent

louis Stark

The Islanders were always keenly interested in politics, and combined with the settlers of the Chemainus district were entitled to one member in the assembly. There is no record of any negro ever hav ing run for office, although it was once suggested that John Jones be nominated as a candidate. In 1868 the coloured residents did succeed in electing Mifflin Gibbs as their representative at the Yale Convention however.

"There is no law on Saltspring" was a common complaint among the early pioneers, and in the light of the frequent examples of lawlessness this was quite justified, for because of disinterest on the part of the government, the Island was inadequately policed and in consequence at

16 MS in B.C. Provincial Archives.
times became almost uninhabitable. Negroes and whites alike were responsible for many crimes but it was the Indians who were marked as the greatest offenders. They regarded it as their privilege to despoil the settlers whenever possible, and too often farmers would awaken to discover that their entire crops of turnips had been stolen and perhaps a few head of cattle missing. If a settler happened to be absent from home when a fleet of Indian canoes landed on their way northward, it was not unusual for his cabin to be ransacked and all his possessions stolen. After such occurrences the guilty parties were seldom if ever apprehended.

On more than one occasion the Indians terrified the pioneers by their inter-tribal wars, for the settlers were never certain that they themselves might not be drawn into the battle. After one such incident in the summer of 1860, Thomas Lineker, a white farmer at Admiralty Bay, wrote to the Governor describing the menacing situation:

Admiralty Bay,
Salt Spring Island,
July 9th, 1860.

To
His Excellency
James Douglass [sic] C.B.
Governor of Vancouver's Island.
&c. &c. &c.

Sir
At a meeting of the Settlers of this place I was deputed to address Your Excellency on the Subject of the Indians.

I beg therefore to acquaint Your Excellency that on the 4th of July last, at noon, a canoe with nine men, two boys and three women of the "Bella Bella" tribe came in here with a person named McCauley who had business with some of the Settlers. While he was talking with me, the Cowichians [sic] numbering some fifty, who were encamped here (& who on the arrival of the Bella Bellas manifested an unfriendly spirit, but afterward appeared friendly) commenced firing, a general fight Ensued which lasted about an hour, and ended in the Cowichians [sic] killing eight of the
other, and carrying off the women and boys as prisoners, this fight occurred so close to my house, that I sent my wife and family into the woods for safety, during the night one of the Bella Bellas came to me, wounded. I pointed out a trail which would lead him to the Northern part of the Island, hoping he might get away. I felt I could not give him shelter without being compromised in this murderous affair. Two men have just arrived here from the other side of the Island, who inform me that a week since some Northern Indians took two of another tribe out of their boat and cut their heads off.

The Indians have all left here, probably anticipating an attack in such an event we should be anything but safe, especially should they in any way molest the Settlers. We number here twenty six men, scattered over about two miles Square, considering their defenceless position the Settlers trust that Your Excellency will deem it expedient to afford them such protection as you in Your wisdom may think necessary,

I have the honor

to be

Your Excellency's obedient humble Servant

Thos H. Lineker.

The H.M.S. Satellite was immediately despatched to the Island, but aside from this, little further was done during the next decade to protect the lives of the pioneers.

Not only were the Indians guilty of thievery and of slaughtering one another, but on two occasions were accused of the murder of coloured settlers. In 1868 William Robinson, a most inoffensive negro farmer was found dead in his windowless log hut. This discovery was made by a visitor, who receiving no answer to his knock, removed some packing from between the logs, and through the opening saw the coloured man lying dead on the floor. Evidently he had been shot while eating his dinner. The murderer left no clue, but when someone remembered having seen the dead man in the company of an Indian a few days before, there was no doubt in anyone's mind as to the race of the guilty one.

17 MS in B.C. Provincial Archives.
A few months later another coloured man, Giles Curtis was also murdered, but in a more gruesome manner. On returning from church one Sunday morning, Howard Estes (some sources say it was Louis Stark, his son-in-law) found his rifle standing outside the door of his cabin, and upon entering came upon the body of Curtis, a gunshot wound in his temple and his throat gashed with a butcher knife. When an inquest was held, the verdict was that he had been murdered by unknown parties, but as usual the Indians, guilty or not, received the blame.

Such incidents following in rapid succession caused the settlers to become dissatisfied with the lack of official interest in their well-being. Many became so frightened by the prospect of being murdered that they gave up their claims and returned to more civilized parts of the country; others who were in need of hired help to develop their farms, found that labourers valued their lives too highly to risk setting foot on the Island. Dissatisfaction finally reached a point where it could no longer be restrained, and the Islanders threatened either to emigrate or to form a vigilance committee if a resident Justice of the Peace were not appointed to keep law and order. This aroused the authorities in Victoria and in the belief that Indians were responsible for these various crimes, H.M.S. Sparrowhawk cruised among the gulf islands in a vain attempt to locate the criminals. Indians were questioned and were even offered a reward of $250 if they would reveal the murderer of the coloured man.

While the search for the slayer of Curtis was continuing, an Indian was arrested and charged with the Robinson killing. Possibly for some personal motive another native of the same tribe decided to turn informer and told the police how fifteen months before, his fellow Chemainus,
Tschuanhuaset, had shot and killed the negro. The accused was readily found guilty by a jury too prone to regard every Indian as a potential murderer and despite the efforts of his tribe to establish an alibi and of a delegation of Songhees Indians who petitioned to have his sentence commuted, Tschuanhuaset was taken up the coast and was executed. Perhaps he was an innocent man. Some at least thought so, and one person felt strongly enough about the subject to condemn the system whereby one Indian had been found guilty merely on the word of another, and where the condemned man was tried before a jury quite ignorant of Indian ways. Perhaps the accuser merely bore a grudge and found this a convenient way of disposing of his enemy. In any case the law was satisfied and the case closed and forgotten.

Undoubtedly the Indians were responsible for many of the unsolved crimes on Salt Spring, but the coloured settlers were far from blameless. They were rough men, they had to be or they would never have come there in the first place. Violent hatreds sometimes developed among them, and one coloured farm hand even tried to burn down a fellow negro's barn. Another was imprisoned on a serious morals charge. The Island was a little world of its own, and the settlers being human, had all the normal virtues and failings.

The personal histories of most of the early Salt Spring Island coloured pioneers have been lost with the passing of time, except for the story of Louis and Sylvia Stark, which because of the comparatively recent death of Sylvia, can be reconstructed with some accuracy. Aunt Silvy, as she was generally called, lived to the estimated age of 106, and until the end of her life retained a remarkably clear memory, and was always willing to tell of her experiences. She had been born Sylvia Estes,
a slave in Clay County, Missouri, and as a child of nine, her job in the household was to care for her master's baby. She used to tell how even when she was "hot and cold and dizzy" with fever, she had to continue looking after the child. "Such things should not be," she is reported to have said, "a little sick girl to look after a big child like that!"

Generally life in slavery was not unpleasant for the Estes family for their master was a kind man, but it was only natural for them to yearn for freedom, for a slave considered himself to be only "half a man". Fortunately they were given this liberty when their master moved to California and permitted the slave father to purchase not only his own freedom, but also that of his wife, his son and little Sylvia. Soon Estes was able to establish his family on a small ranch where they stayed until they joined the negro exodus to the north.

It was in California that Sylvia met and married Louis Stark, a mulatto son of a southern slave owner. Stark had worked as a barber on the Mississippi River steamers before going to California. In 1860 with their three year old son Willis and with Sylvia's parents, the Starks boarded the Brother Jonathan and sailed for Vancouver Island.

Land, not gold was the attraction here, for Louis came not with mining equipment, but with ten or fifteen head of cattle, the first to be brought to Salt Spring, according to his wife. The family remained in Victoria only until Louis had investigated the Puget Sound area to find the best land for cattle raising. Salt Spring Island seemed to him the most satisfactory place, and after building a cabin there, he loaded his

18 Vancouver Daily Province, January 16, 1941, p. 16.
19 Colonist, March 1, 1895, p.2.
family and possessions on the schooner Black Diamond and sailed to the new homestead. Louis and a partner had already selected a claim on the mountainside overlooking Vesuvius Bay, and it was on the shores near the bay that the family landed with their goods. While her husband with an Indian helper hired for the purpose, packed their possessions to the cabin, Sylvia remained behind on the beach with her husband's partner and the Indian's squaw. Then occurred an incident which she never forgot. Suddenly out of nowhere came a canoe loaded with Indians, attracted by the pile of settler's belongings on the beach. Without a word the squaw disappeared into the woods, leaving the two coloured people to brave the situation alone. One of the natives made threatening gestures with a knife, but the negro stood without moving, and it was his brave attitude, according to Sylvia, that saved their lives. As quickly as they had come, the Indians returned to their canoes, and without molesting anyone continued on their way to Victoria.

In the autumn of 1861, on one of his visits to the Island, Ebenezer Robson visited the Starks, and according to a brief entry in his diary seems to have been favourably impressed by them:

...came up to Mr. Stark's. He met us at the landing. We found a pleasant and pious person in Mr. Stark's wife. They once were slaves in the Southern United States, that land of liberty. Mr. Stark bought himself for $1500. Mrs. S's father bought her. They were married in California. They came up to the Island 2 years ago & now they with their children 3 in number are living on their own farm. It is good land & they only pay $1 per acre for it. Mr. Stark has about 30 head of cattle. He sowed one quart of wheat near his house last winter and reaped 180 qts. in the summer. One grain of wheat produced 2360 grains on 59 branches. His turnips of which he has a large quantity are beautiful and large - Also cabbage etc. etc. His wife who was converted about 2 months ago filled my sacks with good things - 4 lbs fine fresh butter, 2 qt bottles new milk. Mr. Stark gave me some of his large turnips.


21 Ebenezer Robson, Diary, Sunday, Oct. 13, 1861.
The photograph of Sylvia Stark was taken by J. Wesley Miller in 1933. In a letter to the Rev. John Goodfellow, Princeton, B.C. Sept. 21, 1933, Mr. Miller wrote:

"I took three snapshots of Mrs. L. Stark, one of which is developed but not satisfactory. I hope to have something worth while in the other two. Though she is 96 years she had an apron on and was actually hoeing corn in the garden when I arrived. She wanted to be taken with the apron on for she said, "I want them to know I am a working woman." It was a delight to listen to her tell of the early days and I was particularly interested in her account of a vivid awakening of her religious faith as she turned to God in those trying days."

22 MS in B.C. Provincial Archives. Salt Spring Island file.
A few weeks later Robson once again stayed with the Starks, and he and Louis talked about slavery and the slave states. In his diary that night the minister made a further observation about his host and hostess:

Mrs. Stark is religious but Mr. Stark hasn't as much of it as he might have and yet there are worse men than him in the church.

All seems to have gone very favourably with the family on their farm on the side of "Stark Mountain" until after Giles Curtis was murdered, then they moved across to Ganges Harbour to begin anew. Stark wrote to the land agent Joseph Trutch explaining the situation:

Salt Spring Island November 3, 1869

Mr. Trutch land agent dear Sir I beg leave to inform you that I have been obliged to move my familyly from my claim as the Indians is daangers I cannot get any man to live on the place Since cirtice was killed for this cause I have comments improving a peace of land on the n.e. Side of gaingers harber and Joind on the South east end of david overtone claim thir is forty or fifty acures of this land near to other Settlers which I would be veary thankfull if you will record this to me and take one hundred acures from my old claim and record to me one hundred only until I can get a man on it

Louis Stark

For some reason, the Starks left Salt Spring in 1875 and took up land in the Cranberry district near Nanaimo. Here occurred a great family tragedy, for in the early spring of 1895 Louis was found dead at the foot of a cliff. Rumour had it that he had been murdered, and the family was always convinced of this, although from the nature of the wounds on the body it is possible that he had fallen over the cliff. Shortly afterward Sylvia returned to Ganges Harbour where she became the most celebrated personality on the Island - the matriarch of Salt Spring.

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23 Ebeneser Robson, Diary, Sunday, December 22, 1861.
24 MS in B.C. Provincial Archives.
25 Colonist, March 1, 1895, p.2.
Anyone arriving at Ganges Harbour on July 1st, a day of celebration in the community, would probably find a baseball game in progress in front of the school, and nearby a refreshment stand surrounded by a crowd of noisy, hungry children who have just taken part in the games. On looking further one might wonder at the tall, slim coloured man in the sun helmet, faded jacket and unpressed trousers, cheering at a home-run. He is quite old, at least in his eighties, and all the children know him. "That's Mr. Harrison, his picture was in the paper last week", they point to him and say. Ernest Harrison is the celebrity of the moment, for he is the last of the early negro pioneers. But there are other traces of the Island's unusual history, for under a makeshift awning sits a stout coloured woman wearing heavy gold ear-rings and eating ice-cream, and from across the way comes sauntering a negress with her French-Canadian husband, and dark skinned baby. Here one may see the last traces of life on the Island as it was.
CHAPTER VIII

IN THE GOLDFIELDS

If gold had not been discovered in British Columbia, it is very doubtful if the negro migration to Vancouver Island would have occurred, for there would have been no labour shortage in Victoria and Governor Douglas would have had little reason other than philanthropic for inviting them to come to the colony. It was because of gold and rumours of gold that their attention was directed northward.

The beginnings of the Fraser River rush of 1858 may be traced as far back as 1855 when gold was discovered on the Pend Oreille River. As it was not found there in large quantities, Angus Macdonald of Fort Colville suggested that the miners might have better luck farther up the Columbia. Many followed his advice and no doubt lured on by the unknown, began to penetrate into the interior of what was to become the colony of British Columbia. On March 1st, 1856, Macdonald wrote to James Douglas telling him of the existence of gold on the Columbia River within British territory, which information was relayed to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, the Right Honourable Henry Labouchere. As yet the mines had yielded very disappointing returns however, and Douglas hesitated to make any extravagant claims for them. Despite his caution, during the summer and fall of 1857, miners came in increasing numbers from Oregon and Washington Territories, and with them came a few French Canadians formerly employed by the Hudson's Bay Company. All made their way to the upper Fraser prospecting the rich bars that had formed at the forks of
the river. So well did they succeed in their operations that rumours of their good fortune laid the foundation for the excitement that was soon to follow.

By March of 1858, the news from the diggings had created much excitement on Puget Sound, so much so that on March 22, the Herald of Steilacoom put out an extra saying that miners on the Fraser and Thompson Rivers were making from $8.00 to $50.00 per day, and that the Indians were friendly. Within a week, mills were forced to shut down; soldiers deserted; sailors left their ships, and all the hands at the Bellingham coal mines quit work. By the end of April the rush from San Francisco had begun and all classes of society crowded vessels to three times their capacity, paying fares ranging from $60.00 for the "nobs" to $30.00 for the "roughs". During the spring and summer of 1858 it has been estimated that 23,000 made the trip from California to Victoria, while perhaps another 8,000 proceeded overland. Victoria was still far from the diggings however, for the Gulf of Georgia had to be crossed and the Fraser River ascended for a hundred miles and more. In the early stages of the rush there was no adequate transportation to the mines and hundreds made the crossing in hastily built small boats and canoes. These early arrivals found rich and easy diggings at Fargo Bar fifteen miles above Fort Langley and in the vicinity of Yale.

In spite of the report that the adventurers were the dregs of San Francisco, Governor Douglas commended the first arrivals for their good behaviour, although he was somewhat doubtful of the results of this indiscriminate immigration which he felt might bring in a foreign element with anti-British sympathies. In the meantime he took steps to ensure
law and order and his regulations regarding the mining of gold were strict. In December 1857 he had issued a proclamation stating that "all mines of gold whether on the lands of the Queen or of any of Her Majesty's Subjects belong to the Crown" and he required that miners take out licences before digging. The fee was to be ten shillings per month with the provision that it be increased if the mines proved of sufficient value; within a month this was raised to twenty-one shillings, but Douglas was never very successful in collecting it.

In the meantime the Indians were becoming more hostile, and in his despatch of April 6, 1858, the Governor reported that whenever anyone did make a promising discovery "They were quietly hustled and crowded by the natives, who having by that means obtained possession of the spot, then proceeded to reap the fruits of their labours." However, "they have on all occasions scrupulously respected the persons and property of their white visitors." In Douglas' opinion however, it was only a matter of time before serious trouble would develop.

The Governor had handled a difficult situation remarkably well and was commended for it by the new Colonial Secretary, Sir E. Bulwer Lytton, who, on July 1, 1858 issued instructions not to exclude Americans or other foreigners from the gold fields:

Under the circumstance of so large an immigration of Americans into English territory, I need hardly impress upon you the importance of caution and delicacy in dealing with those manifold cases of international relationship and feeling which are certain

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1 Governor Douglas to Right Hon. H. Labouchere, April 6, 1858, in Copies or Extracts of Correspondence Relative to the Discovery of Gold in the Fraser's River District, in British North America, presented to both Houses of Parliament by Command of Her Majesty, July 2, 1858, London, George Edward Eyre and William Spottiswoode, 1858, p. 10.
to arise, and which but for the exercise of temper and discretion might easily lead to serious complications between two neighbouring and powerful states.

Such was the situation when the first of the gold rush vessels, the *Commodore*, entered the harbour at Victoria on April 25th, 1858 and discharged its passengers, including the advance party of thirty-five negroes from San Francisco. Many of this first group of coloured men were satisfied to remain in the town, especially the older ones who would undoubtedly be unwilling to make the rigorous crossing to the Fraser River; but some of the younger men did continue on to the gold fields, and were among those, who during the first summer volunteered their services to construct a road up the Harrison River valley to the upper Fraser country. As soon as they learned that the government wished to construct a road connecting Harrison's and Anderson's lakes, a distance of eighty miles, many miners volunteered their services on generous terms, for aside from their food and transportation to the beginning of the road, they were to receive no other payment for their efforts.

Placer miners were always a very unstable group, packing up and moving overnight at the mere suggestion of better diggings ahead. The men who camped beside the Fraser bars in 1858 were no exception. A mother lode must lie farther up the river, they were certain of it, their reasoning being that since the gold found between Hope and Yale was very fine, the coarser particles must have already fallen out upstream. A few hardy individuals pushed on, and although Hope and Yale had been

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2 Sir E. Bulwer Lytton to Governor Douglas, July 1, 1858, in *Copies or Extracts of Correspondence Relative to the Discovery of Gold in the Fraser's River District of British Columbia*, *op. cit.*, p. 10.

3 Governor Douglas to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, Aug. 19, 1858, in *Vancouver Island Letters to the Secretary of State*, 10th Dec. 1855 to 6th June, 1859.
the center of activity in 1858, by 1859 the miners were above Lytton, probably in the vicinity of Lillooet; then on to Soda Creek, to Alexandria and finally up the Quesnel River to that fabulous country, the Cariboo.

It was not until 1860 that this area was really penetrated and one gold-bearing creek after another was discovered. The first of these was Keithley Creek, then in the fall of 1860, Antler Creek. There seemed to be no end of gold-bearing streams and the miners rushed from one to another in their frantic search. But the Cariboo still kept hidden its treasure until the spring of 1861 when William Dietz (Dutch Bill) and his party crossed Bald Mountain and came upon William's Creek, the richest stream of all. The most promising strike here was made on a swampy flat which had probably at one time been a lake bottom. Under these new conditions shaft mining was introduced for the first time in the colony bringing with it the need of capital and the formation of mining companies. The day of the individual miner had now come to an end for he had either to return to the shallow diggings, or hire himself out as a labourer to one of the companies.

As usual one of the greatest problems in the new fields was their inaccessibility, and so began one of the greatest engineering feats of that era, the building of the Cariboo road. Completed at a cost of little more than a million dollars it was the pride of the colony, and with its wayside houses twelve or thirteen miles apart, one could make the formerly hazardous journey in comparative ease.

Of all the thousands of men of every nationality who flocked to the Fraser and Cariboo diggings, the coloured miners represented only a very small fraction, yet the impression they made was far out of proportion to their numbers. It is doubtful if many became wealthy by
by panning the sands of the Fraser, but as in Victoria, some prospered
supplying the economic needs of the miners as bakers, restaurant keepers,
draymen, merchants and barbers. John Emmerson, an early traveller,
mentions meeting a coloured baker on his trip to Lillooet during the
summer of 1862:

As already stated, I reached Lillooet in a miserable predicament.
A bread baker (a man of colour) made me a cup of coffee with
bread and butter, for a quarter dollar, and gave me a piece of
cold mutton into the bargain and allowed me to sleep on his floor.

As already mentioned, Willis Bond and his partner had constructed a ditch
at Yale by which they supplied water to the miners to wash the bank in
front of the town for gold. In the Cariboo one of the better known
restaurant keepers was a mulatto known as Nigger Steele, and in Barker-
ville two of the familiar personalities were the negro barbers, Wellington
Delaney Moses and Isaac Dickson.

Most of the coloured men in the goldfields spent all their time
searching for gold however, and in 1863 of the ten men who were panning
on Horse Fly Creek, seven were negroes, and although they were quite
inexperienced, they managed to make about three to six dollars each per
day. Negro miners were early in the Cariboo, for by 1862 the "colored
man's house" on Bald Mountain had become a local landmark. On William's
Creek many negroes banded together to form mining companies to raise
sufficient capital to sink shafts, and it was one such company that be-
came involved in the most publicized mining legal battle of the
period, a case that made Judge Begbie very unpopular in the Cariboo.

4 John Emmerson, British Columbia and Vancouver Island, Durham,
England, W. Ainsley, 1865, p. 68.
5 Daily Chronicle, Sept. 19, 1863.
6 E.O.S. Scholefield and F.W. Howay, British Columbia from the
Earliest Times to the Present, Vancouver, S.H. Clarke Publishing
The dispute began in 1862 when the Aurora Company had staked off a claim on William's Creek with a 1400 foot frontage, but extending back an indefinite distance to the mountainside. It was not until 1864, after the discovery of pay dirt on their claim that they were ordered to stake it off, but then, finding that it was larger than they were permitted by law to hold, a sister company, the Borealis, was formed to claim the excess. Shortly however, due to some disagreement, the Borealis brought action against the Aurora Company and the latter was given six weeks by the court to mark off its claim. Since this was neglected before the expiry of the time limit, according to mining law, the land was now open to all comers.

The neighbouring claim belonged to some negro miners, the Harvey-Dixon Company, who took advantage of this opportunity to extend their holdings and stake off 400 feet of what had been, in name at least, the property of the Aurora Company. Now the negro Harvey-Dixon Company and the white Davis Company consolidated their claims, and being determined to retain the disputed land, decided if necessary to make a test case of the matter. Neither the Aurora nor the Borealis made another move for fourteen months, at which time the Davis Company made a strike. Then the Borealis miners took their claim to Gold Commissioner Cox, who ruled in favour of the coloured miners and their white partners. This was not to be the end of the affair however, for contrary to his ruling the Aurora Company sunk a shaft on what was now legally the Davis claim. With this the "negro-white" company appealed to "Judge" Cox, who once again ruled in their favour. The Aurora Company would not accept this decision however, and were determined much against Cox's wishes to take the case to the highest authority in the colony -
It was in May of 1866 that the Davis Company was informed that the matter was to go before Judge Begbie. The news stirred up considerable excitement on William's Creek, for other miners now began to wonder whether or not their own claims were safe. If they struck it rich, might not a neighbouring company try to take their claim? When Begbie handed down his decision they knew they would have their answer.

The Aurora Company sent a messenger to procure an injunction from Judge Begbie requiring the Davis miners to cease working the disputed lands. Begbie, who was located at Bridge Creek at the time, immediately sent an order to "Judge" Cox, telling him that as Deputy Registrar of the Supreme Court, he was to issue the injunction and to attach the seals of his court as the seals of the Supreme Court were in Begbie's broken-down wagon several miles beyond Bridge Creek. Cox's reaction to this order was soon made public:


Shortly after this ultimatum, Begbie arrived in Richfield, and after a jury had been chosen the case came to trial. The witnesses were questioned, and W.A. Farron, one of the white members of the Davis
Company said that when he had bought his share in the company in June 1865, he had had no idea that the claim was a disputed one, in fact he said that Hilton of the Aurora Company, thinking that the ground was worthless, had said "nobody but niggers would look for gold there."

After hearing the evidence, the jury returned its verdict:

1. The jury are unanimous in the opinion that the Aurora Company have failed to prove that the stakes of said Company extended over the 130 feet of ground.

2. The jury agree that the Davis Company did on the 12th of August, 1864, stake out the 130 feet of ground in question.

3. The jury are of the opinion from the evidence adduced that the Davis Company did not abandon the latter 400 feet, recorded 12th August, 1864, but that the said company have forfeited their title to the same by non-representation.

4. Seeing that the Aurora and Davis Companies have expended both time and money on said ground in dispute, the jury would humbly submit that the said ground be equally divided, giving one-half to each, of said ground unworked.

Such an agreement did not satisfy Begbie however, and he offered to act not as a Judge, but as an arbitrator, to come to an agreement satisfactory to both defendant and plaintiff. Both the Aurora and Davis people agreed, and when the case was once more heard before a crowded courtroom, the Judge gave his surprising decision. There was no evidence at all he said, to prove that the Aurora Company did not have the claim staked by the 8th of August 1864, the deadline set at that time. To prove this point he went on to say "the stakes are still standing there. I went on the ground myself and saw them a few days before the case came on in order to satisfy myself. I have not the slightest doubt that the stakes were put in by the 8th August." These were the words of a Judge who far from having entered the courtroom.

8 *Cariboo Sentinel*, June 18, 1866.
9 Ibid., June 21, 1866.
10 Idc.cit.
with an open mind ready to hear both sides of the argument impartially, had entered it with his decision already made. Begbie must have realized the weakness of his statement for even if the stakes did exist, there was nothing to prove that they had not been put into the ground the day before he had seen them. He went on to argue that it did not matter anyway, since everyone knew that the hill claim belonged to the Aurora Company and even if the land was not staked, the Davis Company had no right to claim it. Judge Begbie was a law unto himself and had totally disregarded the mining regulations of the colony.

When the Davis Company had made its so-called "jump" of the Aurora claim in August 1864, it had been an all negro company. Shortly after, some of the coloured shareholders sold out their interests to whites, so that at the time of Begbie's decision, of the eight shares in the company, five and three quarters were owned by whites, and two and one quarter by coloured men. Thus, reasoned Begbie, the negroes as members of the original company had known about the jump, while their white partners had not. On this he based his ruling. He added the 5-3/4 interests held by the whites in the Davis Company to the fourteen interests of the Aurora Company and divided the disputed ground into 19-3/4 equal shares; 5-3/4 to go to the Davis Company and 14 to the Aurora. The negro shareholders were to get nothing.

What a commotion this caused in the mining camp. Public opinion favoured the poor Davis Company and was hostile towards the wealthy Aurora & Borealis Company. In protest against this decision, several hundred miners from the neighbouring creeks collected in front of the Richfield Courthouse on Saturday evening, June 23, 1866 and held the
first public meeting ever to assemble in the Cariboo. Before the meeting was over, three resolutions were passed:

Resolved - "That in the opinion of this meeting the administration of the Mining Laws by Mr. Justice Begbie in the Supreme Court is partial, dictatorial and arbitrary, in setting aside the verdict of juries, and calculated to create a feeling of distrust in those who have to seek redress through a Court of Justice."

Resolved - "That this meeting pledges itself to support the Government in carrying out the Laws in their integrity and beg for an impartial administration of justice. To this end we desire the establishment of a Court of Appeal, or the immediate removal of Mr. Justice Begbie, whose acts in setting aside the Law has [sic] destroyed confidence and is driving labor, capital and enterprise out of the colony."

Resolved - "That a Committee of two persons be appointed to wait upon His Excellency the Administrator of the Government with the foregoing resolutions, and earnestly impress upon him the immediate necessity of carrying out the wishes of the people."

After passing these resolutions, a shout went up from the crowd for Frank Laumeister, a shareholder in the Davis Company:

"Mr. Chairman and Gentlemen" he said, "I have actually nothing to say. I am one of the victims and stand victimized. Judge Begbie granted us a jury to try our case, that jury was sworn in and rendered their verdict and I was satisfied they had done what was right. Judge Begbie however came out two days afterwards with a sort of revelation, he sent the jury's verdict overboard and instead of giving us half the ground as suggested by the jury he gives us just about a quarter. We were advised by our counsel, who is an honorable gentleman, that the Judge would decide as a friend between the parties, and he certainly gave us a sample of his friendship. He threw out our colored partners from any participation whatever in the ground, but these "darkies" shall not suffer any loss by me, if there is only a dollar comes out they shall have their pro-rata share."

After these few words, Laumeister was cheered and was nominated along with another to take the question at the expense of the gathering to

11 Cariboo Sentinel, June 25, 1866.
12 Loc. cit.
13 Loc. cit.
Arthur N. Birch, the Administrator of the Government at New Westminster.
To end the events of the evening, the gathering gave three cheers for "Judge" Cox, the British Colonist, the Chairman, the Secretary, the Cariboo Sentinel, and for Judge Begbie - three groans. Then they moved on the the home of "Judge" Cox, where they presented him with a gold-mounted walking stick.

Laumeister and his fellow delegate did actually reach New Westminster with their petition, but under no condition would Administrator Birch consider removing Judge Begbie. He did say however that the setting up of a Court of Appeal was under consideration as soon as the two colonies were united.

Was Begbie's justice tinged with racial prejudice? In his letter to the Sentinel, one of the negro miners concerned, questioned the rights of coloured men in the gold fields:

To the Editor of the "Cariboo Sentinel",

Sir,- Permit me to ask the following questions through your valuable paper.

First - Have we as colored men the right to pre-empt ground for mining purposes?

Second - Have we any rights in common with white men?

Third - Why were our interests taken from us and given to white men?

I bought my interest in the Davis co'y and expended $2,900 before I received one cent out of said claim, and the dividends I have received from said claim have been appropriated to pay my debts in this colony, but just at the time I was about to be rewarded, I have been deprived of that portion of the Davis claim which would pay. I have taken some pains to spread abroad the equality, we as colored men had, in the laws in an English colony, and am proud to say I have found no difference until now.

14 British Columbian, July 18, 1866.
Poor Marshall lost his life coming to Cariboo to look after his small interest in the Davis co'y, the only pittance he had left after 6 years hard work in this colony, and the only means of support for his family. His wife and four children are more in need of the money than those to whom it was given. There are about fifty colored men in and about Cariboo, the greater portion of whom are miners, and the quicker we know our position in this colony the better for us.

Respectfully yours

COLORED MINER.

"Colored Miner's" questions went unanswered, and although the Sentinel was sympathetic towards him, no law was higher than Judge Begbie's, and the case was considered closed.

As mentioned in the above letter, most of the negroes in the Cariboo were miners, and when they were not on the creeks or working their shaft diggings, they could generally be found in Barkerville, the metropolis of the district, which also had its small colony of permanent negro residents. Of all the Cariboo settlements that sprang up during the 1860's, Barkerville was by far the most prominent. In 1862 Van Winkle had come into being at the junction of Van Winkle and Lightning Creeks; shortly after in 1862 and 1863, Richfield assumed the leading position and throughout the entire period remained the administrative center, but by 1865 the wealth of William's Creek had made the name of Barkerville outstanding. By 1863 it had begun to develop into a town of rough wooden shacks built on posts along both sides of a rutted, muddy trail. Signs overhanging the irregular board sidewalks announced the various business being carried on - hotels, saloons, laundries, barber shops, and almost anything else that might be required in a primitive community where gold was plentiful. It

15 Cariboo Sentinel, June 25, 1866.
is impossible to say how many coloured people lived here permanently besides Wellington Moses and "Dixie" the barbers, and a few others who lost their homes when the town burned in 1868. There was a sufficient number at any rate to make it worth while for the Elevator of San Francisco to appoint one of them as its agent and correspondent, and this coloured newspaper could almost always be found on the table in the local reading room. There were few coloured women in the settlement, although the wife of Steele, the restaurant owner, lived there, and Maria Gibbs, the mother of Mifflin Wistar Gibbs, spent some time in the settlement with another of her sons.

As in Victoria, the coloured men of the Cariboo celebrated their day of emancipation, but at least on one occasion it was not an unanimous affair, for the admirers of Lincoln met and had speeches at the Parlor Saloon while those who favoured Jefferson Davis did the same in front of Isaac Dickson's barber shop.

Of the religious life of the negro miners very little is known. Probably it was almost non-existent as was usually the case in the mining camps, however one writer gives an indication that at least one unidentified negro tried to "save" his fellows. Sunday morning was just like any other morning in Cariboo, "The gold-worshipping miners" continue their search, while "Hard by can be heard a gentleman of African descent exhorting his brethren to turn from the error of their ways and follow meekly in the footsteps of their blessed Lord and Master who made so many generous sacrifices to purchase their redemption."

Considering conditions in the gold camps of the Cariboo, there

16 Cariboo Sentinel, Jan. 15, 1867.

17 Ibid., (Supplement), Aug. 12, 1865.
were surprisingly few crimes committed and most of the offences with which negroes were charged were either assault or drunkenness. Knives were sometimes drawn when tempers were aroused however, and even Moses and "Dixie" were known to use theirs on occasion. Judge Begbie made a report of one such case:

There has not been a single crime of violence committed in the Cariboo since my arrival in June last - till three days ago, when one nigger was so insulted by an allusion to the fact of his day before yesterday's breakfast being unpaid for, that he drew a knife and made 2 or 3 desperate stabs at the waiter (also a nigger). the pltf [plaintiff] and deft [defendant] were both among the blackest men you could see. The rascal might have committed murder - manslaughter at least - but luckily the waiter was the stronger of the two, and when the prisoner saw the blood flowing pretty freely he got frightened & tried to escape. It was the only case of stabbing that has occurred. The jury might very well have found a felonious intent which would have given him 10 to 15 years. They took the lighter view of the matter however - so I gave him 3 years.- He is a good cook, I believe, & Brew will find him useful at New Wr. [Westminster] in that capacity.

While this may have been the first knifing incident, there were more to follow, for "Dixie" the barber also carried a knife and so did his friend Rosario the Spaniard. Rosario wanted some money Isaac Dickson owed him, and when it was not forthcoming the two went up on the hillside behind the houses and drew their knives. They were separated by the constable and sent to their homes, but later in the day Dickson made another attack and this time both he and the Spaniard were arrested and appeared in the Police Court:

Mr. Cox - What have you to say to the charge Dixon?

Prisoner - What Mr. Fitzgerald has stated is nearly correct; when he told me to go home I went off; on my way home I met a carpenter named Bailey, who said to me, "hold on and take a drink;" we were coming up together on the sidewalk when this man came behind me, I felt a "lick" under the arm and then another on the back, and next found myself down on the road; Moses hauled me in.

18 Chief Justice M.B. Begbie to W.A.G. Young, Richfield, Sept. 20, 1863. MS in B.C. Provincial Archives. Chartres Brew was Chief Inspector of Police.
Mr. Fitzgerald - The prisoner had it in his power to stay in Moses' shop, and Moses even tried to keep him in.

Prisoner - I just wanted to look out to see that this man would not strike me with his knife.

Mr. Cox - I will put an end to the drawing of knives on this creek. I fine you $50.00, or in default six months' imprisonment, and you must find bail to keep the peace for six months. With respect to the Spaniard he has never been before the Court before.

Rosario - He (Dixie) owed me money and put me off from day to day for three weeks and has not paid me; I did not draw the knife, I only used my hands.

Mr. Fitzgerald - I am not sure that the prisoner had the knife drawn, I rather think not.

Isaac Dickson was the same coloured barber against whom a drunken miner from Hill's Bar had made an assault at Yale in 1858, starting the "Ned McGowan War", a well-known incident in British Columbia history. In Barkerville he regarded himself as a public character, and even appointed himself as the literary representative of the coloured population on William's Creek. "Dixie's" contributions to the Cariboo Sentinel, written in the usual phonetic spelling of the almost illiterate negro, give interesting sidelights on life in Barkerville during the 1860's.

Up the street from Isaac Dickson's "Shampooing Establishment" was the barber shop and general store of Wellington Delaney Moses, who was to become one of the better known figures in Cariboo life. Shortly after his arrival in Victoria in 1858, the negro barber had married Sarah Jane Douglas, another coloured immigrant. But apparently

20 F.W. Howay, Royal Engineers in British Columbia, Victoria, B.C., 1910, p.4.
21 See appendix "H". Isaac Dickson's letters to the Cariboo Sentinel.
their marriage was not a happy one, for in September of 1862, Sarah Moses tried to commit suicide by leaping off the Bath House steps into James Bay. Fortunately her screams attracted attention, and after being rescued she was confined in the debtors' prison until her release a few days later on payment of the cost of her arrest. The reason for this suicide attempt, she claimed, was the elopement of her husband with another woman. Whether or not this was the cause of his departure from the town, Wellington Moses from now on earned his living in the mining camps along the Fraser until he eventually established himself permanently in the Cariboo.

In Barkerville, Moses' barber shop was an important part of the community, for not only did he cut hair there, but also sold men's and women's clothes and bought and sold mining shares. His diaries and account books give an interesting picture of Cariboo life, for few persons of importance on the local scene escaped being mentioned. A few entries from these records will suffice to give some impression of the personality and activities of their author, as well as an intimate glimpse of life in the pioneer settlement:

Saturday, April 24, 1869
Fine weather and verry worm the laid a new sideworlk in front of Bank of B.N. America.

Monday, April 26, 1869
Morning cold and cloudy the express with P. Monnetta & Jullia arrive at 10 a.m. afternoon fine and worm in the cold and freese I bought 1-1/4 intres in Reed Co. for D F for sum of $150.00

22 Colonist, Sept. 23, 1862.

Monday, May 24, 1869

Morning cloudy and chilly Mr. Sterling bought out W. Berry in the Hurdie Saloon Jesse Price left for the lower countrey.

Tuesday, June 1, 1869

Fine clear and very warm day the floor for the New Express laid the woods over at Lake was on fire Mrs. Tracey bought the House of Paint shop she rened her saloon to Mrs. and Miss Funk.

Saturday, June 5, 1869

Fine warm weather the woods still on fire his Hon. Judge Beebe an suit arrive the where 2 fine horses got burn to death by the fire up Conklin gulch.

Monday, June 21, 1869

Weather Haissey smokey and very warm and close I was at Richfield to cut Judge Brew hair Mr. J. Teaney arrive on the creek.

Wednesday, June 23, 1869

Fine clear and pleasant midday very warm afternoon cloudy in the evening light rain. Mr. Sterling oppen a new idea the Hurdies playing cards a pass round Largar and drink to the tables....

Tuesday, June 29, 1869

Weather cloudy and very dark and smokey the Canand boys brough in thier long flag pole the Rev. Mr. Derrick had the Jurienim flower buded in his garden at the parsnage the first flower of the in this altitude. Mr. Sterling new americian flag arrive.

From his account books, one learns that Moses charged $1.00 for a haircut and had a standard rate of $3.00 per month for shaves. Such prominent names as Pattulo, Tolmie and Dr. Chipp appear in his records, as well as frequent references to Chartres Brew and Judge Begbie. His shop was a most unusual place for not only did he sell newspapers, medicines, collars, valentines, neckties, umbrellas, dolls, watches and his own "Moses Hair Restorer", but customers also deposited money with him for safe-keeping and some exchanged their farm produce for purchases. "Indian Charley" exchanged his labour for merchandise. "Gentle Annie", one of the Hurdies was one of Moses' customers, and the following is
probably her account:

1873 Miss Annie Jones

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<tr>
<th>July 15</th>
<th>Under Shirt</th>
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<tr>
<td>&quot;</td>
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<td>Cash Loan</td>
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|          | Ribben     | 5.50 |
|          | 27.00      |      |

| " 25    | Stage fair to Pearson | 6.00 |
|         | 33.00        |      |

| To Barnard Express | 8.00 |

| Black Shall | 11.00 |
| Money Purse | 2.00  |

| 54.00 |

Today in Barkerville the old residents still tell of Wellington Moses and the Blessing murder, an incident that occurred almost a century ago, and that resulted in the first public execution ever carried out in the district of Cariboo. James Barry, the murderer was hanged for the slaying of C.M. Blessing, and it was the evidence given by Moses the barber that partially led to his conviction.

In the fall of 1866 word was brought to Judge Cox that the body of a man had been found in the woods near Beaver Pass, a mile below Edward's ranch. The man had been shot from behind and while the body was too badly decomposed to be recognized, it was identified as that of C.M. Blessing from the clothing and contents of the pockets. No one appeared to know him however, until the coloured man, Moses, told his
In May of 1866, Moses and Blessing had left New Westminster on the same steamer and during part of their journey to Quesnelmouth, had been travelling companions. Here Moses decided to remain an extra day, and Blessing, who was impatient to be on his way, continued the journey in the company of a stranger, James Barry. The arrangement was that Moses would meet his friend once again at Van Winkle and the two would continue on together from there. Blessing was not at Van Winkle however, when the coloured man arrived, but the barber thought little of the matter until he later met the stranger, Barry, on William's Creek. "What did you do with my 'chummy'?' asked Moses. "Your 'chummy,' who was he?" replied Barry. "The man you left with that morning from Quesnelmouth." After a moment Barry said, "Oh! that coon, I have not seen him since the morning we left the Mouth, I left him on the road, he could not travel, he had a sore foot." Moses did not question him further, and in fact forgot the incident until he read in the Cariboo Sentinel about the discovery of the body. Then he hurried to the Magistrate, and James Barry just as hurriedly left town. Barry was overtaken however and was brought back to stand trial before Judge Begbie in the Richfield court house. The evidence against him was entirely circumstantial, such as the fact that he had given a nugget pin, formerly the property of the murdered man, to one of the hurdy girls. This nugget was easily identified by a man who had travelled up from San Francisco with Blessing, for the owner had carefully pointed out to him its strange resemblance to a human head. Little evidence

24 Cariboo Sentinel, Oct. 18, 1866.

25 M.B. Begbie, Notes of Evidence and Memorandum to Accompany notes, Ra. v Barry Trial for the murder of Charles Morgan Blessing, at Richfield, 1 July 1867. MS in B.C. Provincial Archives.
was offered in defence of the accused and he was finally condemned to death and was executed. In the meantime Moses had made certain that his friend Blessing would have a proper burial by collecting $94.50 from the miners to have a head board made for the grave and to have a railing placed around it.

In 1866, Barkerville experienced its greatest tragedy, for it was almost entirely destroyed by fire. John Anderson, the negro Cariboo correspondent for the coloured newspaper, the Elevator, wrote of the fire and of some of the negroes who lost their homes in it:

Barkerville, B.C. Sept. 22, 1868.

Mr. Editor:- Since I last wrote you, we have met with a serious calamity - Barkerville has been entirely destroyed by fire, and it has been a ruinous loss to many. It occurred on the 16th inst. The season has been very dry, and the wardens failed to have the reservoir back of the town finished. It has been long talked about, and it would have stopped the fire; but as we had no water the flames spread furiously from building to building and many who were near when the fire broke out were glad to escape without saving anything. Among the sufferers are our friends W.D. Moses, I.P. Gibbs and Miss Hickman. Mrs. R. Gibbs saved her things, but lost her house. I send by this mail a copy of the Sentinel, containing the particulars of the fire.

The weather is now unusually fine, and our enterprising folks have commenced building rapidly. Lumber has gone up from eight to twelve cents per foot. All well here and not discouraged.

Yours truly,

John Anderson.

It was about 2 P.M. on September 16, 1868 that the fire was first discovered in a saloon. By 5 o'clock almost every building in the town had been destroyed except for one saloon and Barnard's stables. Dally, a well-known photographer from Victoria had recently set up a

26 Cariboo Sentinel, Dec. 15, 1866.
27 Elevator, Oct. 23, 1868.
Barkerville before the fire.
Barkerville after the fire.
studio there, and although it was burned, apparently he saved enough equipment to take a picture of the town immediately after the fire.

While the Fraser River and the Cariboo are the most prominent names connected with gold in British Columbia, there was another rush, which because of its relative insignificance has now been almost forgotten. Yet the discovery at Leech River near Victoria is of great importance in the history of negro settlement in the province for so many coloured people were directly concerned with it. Samuel Booth, a negro from Victoria, found the "big nugget" that started the rush; R.H. Johnson, another coloured man built the Mount Ararat Hotel at the diggings to accommodate miners and travellers, and there were several all-negro companies in operation along the banks of the creek.

The discovery of gold on the Leech River may be traced back to the exploration project of Vancouver Island, undertaken by Governor Kennedy shortly after his arrival in 1864. He thought it disgraceful that no one had any idea about the true mineral, timber, and agricultural resources of the Island, for although the subject of exploration had often been discussed in the House of Assembly, nothing had ever been done about it. For this purpose the Governor suggested that funds be raised by public subscription and that he would contribute from funds at his disposal two dollars for every one collected from the people.

In the spring of 1864 the exploration party was sent out under Dr. Robert Brown as commander with Peter John Leech as lieutenant and astronomer. In July, Leech, who had left the main party with a few men to explore the Sooke River, reported the discovery of gold in the river, or rather in a tributary which was so small that it sometimes

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28 [Vancouver Island - Exploration 1864, Printed by authority of the Government, Harries and Company, Victoria, V.I. [1864], p. ii.]
dried up completely. Although there was much scepticism about this latest discovery, four coloured men, Samuel Booth, George Munro, John Tyrl and William Dyer, joined together to form the Industry Company. They journeyed up the Sooke River to the Leech River which had by now been named after its discoverer, and about half a mile up this smaller stream they began to prospect. Samuel Booth struck his pick into the slate rock on the right bank and found an oval shaped nugget about the size of a hen's egg. The "Industry" men hurriedly cut stakes to mark off their claim, and it was not long before other claims were staked from the point of their discovery down to the forks. Munro hurried back to the Gold Commissioner at the forks to get miners' licences, then he and Samuel Booth took the nugget and departed for Victoria to get provisions.

On the evening of August 3, 1864, the steamer Alexandria arrived in Victoria from Sooke bringing Samuel Booth and his nugget. The news
The Industry Company Claim - Where the "Big Nugget" was found.
spread rapidly about the town and Booth was besieged by an excited crowd shouting questions. Eventually he reached the Wells, Fargo & Co. express office where the nugget was displayed. Within a few days the streets of Victoria were almost deserted for so many had left for the diggings, and in the windows of some of the houses and shops, the absence of the tenants was explained by the simple note "Gone to Sooke".

The excitement was reminiscent of Victoria in the spring and summer of 1858. Loaded steamers made special trips to Sooke harbour carrying miners and merchants with their goods. R.H. Johnson, one time captain of the Victoria Pioneer Rifle Corps saw the possibilities of establishing a hotel there, and in October 1864, wrote to Henry Wakeford the Colonial Secretary, requesting an acre of land to be used for this purpose. The request was granted, and by February of the following year, the Mount Ararat hotel had been completed. It was a twelve room, handsomely furnished building which Governor Kennedy described in a highly complimentary fashion when he wrote in the visitors' book: "A.E. Kennedy dined, slept, and breakfasted; good dinner, wine, coffee, a clean and comfortable sleeping room. The whole arrangement of the house in all its departments is highly creditable to the proprietors. August 10, 1865." Beds and meals were 50¢ each.

Many coloured men from Victoria staked claims on the river, and besides the Industry Company there was also the coloured Pioneer Company. Willis Bond, the house-mover was on the creek and even Mifflin Gibbs visited the diggings. The excitement did not last long however, although in 1871 two negro miners were still prospecting on the river. Shortly

30 Evening Express, August 10, 1864.
32 Daily Chronicle, May 13, 1865.
33 Colonist, Aug. 30, 1871.
none remained to pan the stream save the Chinese. R.H. Johnson died in the late 1860's and never saw the Leech River become a ghost town and his Mount Ararat fall into decay.
CHAPTER IX

THE PROBLEM OF RACE

The major reason for the coming of the coloured people to Vancouver Island was to escape the prejudice and discrimination that was ever present in California, but escape was impossible for oppression followed them on every gold-rush steamer that arrived in Victoria from the south. Like an infectious disease it spread to such an extent that many of the British residents became more race-conscious than the Americans, and some of the coloured people even claimed that there was more prejudice against them in British Columbia than in many parts of the United States. In the goldfields and on Salt Spring Island there was seldom any outward manifestation of discrimination or prejudice, and the contrast between the attitude in these primitive settlements and the relatively well-established town of Victoria presents an interesting study to the student of racial problems.

In the history of early Victoria are to be found examples of all the basic reasons for racial antagonism - group consciousness, conflicting economic interests, the fear of racial contamination, differences in customs and tradition, and especially, conflicting political interests. All were major factors in the everyday lives of the negro residents in the colony.

When the first coloured people arrived in the spring of '58 at the beginning of the Fraser River excitement, they were received, according to Mifflin Gibbs, with a "frankness and cordiality so peculiarly British".

1 Victoria Gazette, August 28, 1858.
They were assured that their colour would never debar them from the same rights and privileges that the white colonists enjoyed. Then came the frenzy of the gold rush and the American invasion of the English community, bringing to the people of colour both wealth and isolation. As many of the new arrivals had come from the "cotton states" and had been educated to regard negroes as inferiors, it is not surprising that their views should be somewhat antagonistic towards Victoria's coloured colonists who were apparently enjoying the same privileges as everyone else, were the proprietors of flourishing businesses and the owners of a considerable amount of real estate which they sold at highly inflated prices to the newcomers.

The problem of race put in an early appearance in the town, for Kinahan Cornwallis, a visitor there during May and June of 1858 writes:

> I observed that the coloured people i.e. "niggers" collected here, many of whom were "real estate" owners, conducted themselves in a manner rather bellicose than otherwise which of course excited derision; and one of their number I heard attempted to take his seat with white people at a boarding house table in town, but was expelled in a manner as prompt and merciless as the style of doing the thing was ludicrous. The newly appointed police of the place were negroes, and consequently heartily despised by the Americans.

The hostility towards negro police forced the government to withdraw them after only a few weeks' service. On one occasion it was only by the action of Judge Pemberton, the Commissioner of Police, that a coloured constable was saved from being thrown into the harbour by a group of rioting miners.

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After a short period during which both sides regarded one another with suspicion, the inevitable conflict broke out in the church. The Reverend Edward Cridge had opened his church to the negroes, but it was not long before he received complaints from the Americans who resented the speckled appearance of the congregation. In August 1858, the Gazette carried a letter from a church-goer who complained that:

Last Sabbath was an unusually warm day. The little Chapel was crowded as usual with a "smart sprinkle" of blacks, generously mixed in with the whites. The Ethiopians perspired; they always do when out of place. - Several white gentlemen left their seats vacant, and sought the purer atmosphere outside; others moodily endured the aromatic luxury of their positions, in no very pious frame of mind.

He went on to suggest that the negroes be given a section by themselves "as is done in all respectable churches in the world" and then the American portion of the congregation would be much happier.

Edward Cridge refused to segregate the blacks in any way, his only reply being to lecture the congregation for their intolerance. As a result of this imagined insult, many whites now refused to attend his church, and those who did, crowded to the front in their attempt to separate themselves as much as possible from the negroes. Some tried to justify their action by saying that they considered it sinful to ignore the distinction that the Creator had made between the two races, for by mingling the sexes of both peoples promiscuously, they might fall in love, resulting in marriages which would cause the deterioration of the whites without elevating the negroes.

The Rev. W.F. Clarke and the Rev. M. Macfie, who were early in the

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4 Victoria Gazette, August 24, 1858.

1860's sent to the colony by the British Colonial Missionary Society had quite a difference of opinion over the negro question in their church. So wide did the breach between them become, that Macfie left his colleague and held his own services in the Eldorado Hall. Clarke refused to establish a "negro corner" while Macfie believed in segregation. The controversy became so heated that Clarke sent out a circular addressed "To all Impartial Men and Lovers of Right" in which he told of their conflicting ideas and of the stand which he was taking. The following Sunday, two-thirds of his congregation was coloured, the whites having migrated with Macfie.

The negroes had found another champion, but they did not long support him, for what they really wanted was to mingle with the "superior race" and to attend the more stylish church of the Rev. Edward Cridge. They considered themselves the "old families" and "monied aristocracy" in the colony and resented being driven out of their former place of worship by the new arrivals. When they stopped coming to the services held by the Rev. W.F. Clarke, being now deserted by both the oppressors and oppressed, he was released by the Missionary Society which was backing him. Of this incident the Bishop of Columbia wrote:

There has been a sharp contention on the question of colour; the Americans requiring that the coloured people should not be allowed to occupy the same place with them in worship. One Independent Minister Mr. McFye [sic], favoured their unchristian narrowness; another maintained the English principle, that there should be no difference in the house of God. He has, however, been thrown over by the Society in London who maintained him, the "British Colonial Missionary Society." Mr. Clark nobly upheld the Christian and English sentiment; but his patrons have decided against him, and he has to leave the place; he seems a very respectable man, too good for his employers.

6 Colonist, Oct. 21, 1859.
Clarke at least won a moral victory however, for when the Society more closely examined the question of the Vancouver Island "Negro pew", they unanimously adopted the following resolutions:

1. That this Committee never have sanctioned and never will sanction, in Churches wholly or in part sustained by the funds of the Colonial Missionary Society, the compulsory separation, in places of worship, of the colored races from the white population.

2. That on the receipt of letters from Vancouver's Island communicating the disagreement which had arisen between Messrs. Clarke and Macfie on this and other matters, there were circumstances which led to the desire to avoid, at the time, direct and authoritative interference on the subjects in dispute; certain pointed questions, however, were sent to Mr. Macfie under date of June 15 (prior to the agitation of the matter in the public press,) touching the arrangements adopted in his place of worship; on the receipt of the reply to which the whole question will be reviewed and definitely settled, in harmony with the preceding Resolution.

The Committee have just received a communication from Mr. Macfie, in reply to the queries above referred to, in which the following sentence is found in respect to the arrangements made in his place of worship:- "If Negroes were pleased to give their attendance, they would be expected to take one side of the building, where they would be welcome to any unoccupied place they might choose, and where they would always find a number of whites sufficiently indifferent to the prejudice to sit in proximity to them."

From this quotation it is evident that there is a part of the chapel from which the colored population are excluded. To this exclusion the committee object, as utterly at variance with the principles of the Christian religion, as well as contrary to the usages adopted by their agents in every part of the Colonial Empire where a mixture of the races is found.

This committee, therefore, resolves--That the above arrangement must be immediately discontinued, and freedom of access secured to every part of the building to all persons, without distinction of color. And that in the event of this requirement not being complied with, the connection of the Colonial Missionary Society with this Mission must cease and determine.

Signed by order of the Committee,

THOS. JAMES, Secretary,

Committee Room, October 24, 1860.

Half of the church-going colonists were coloured persons, and according to the Rt. Rev. George Hills, Bishop of Columbia, they were steady communicants and always ready to contribute to the church and other worthy causes. Nevertheless they seldom benefitted from the social life of the church, for according to a complaint in the *Colonist*:

> Every Sabbath the Rev. Mr. So-and-so gives out from his pulpit that the "ladies' sewing circle will meet at the residence of Mrs.--." The male and female members of the circle attend at the lady's house; but you never see a black face, nor even that of a mulatto, among their number.

Undoubtedly the coloured people were to blame for much of the antagonism aroused against them for they tended to flaunt their newly acquired privileges before the race-conscious Americans. They condemned everything American and hated some Englishmen merely because they had lived in the United States. Forgetting that several millions of Americans were sympathetic to their cause they alienated many of their liberal minded neighbours by their indiscriminate denunciation. Perhaps it would be expecting them to be more than human to react otherwise after being delivered from so much oppression which they associated with everything connected with the Republic. One writer says that "As a result of their wealth and new position in society it was not surprising that some, formerly habituated to servitude or reproached as representatives of a barbarous race, should on being delivered from the yoke of social oppression, fail to show much consideration for the prejudices of the whites. Many British subjects sympathized with the ideas prevailing in the United States respecting the social status."

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10 *Colonist*, Sept. 30, 1861.
isolated incidents in the behaviour of certain of the negro residents
which proved very distasteful to the whites, such as the shocking bru­
tality of a coloured drayman, who, after driving his horse into the mud,
is reported to have become so infuriated at being mired that he seized
a cart-rung and beat the animal's brains out. While it is true that
this was the action of but one individual, it was quite sufficient for
some to believe that all coloured people were equally brutal, and for
anti-negro sentiments to germinate.

Throughout most of these early years of negro settlement in Victoria,
the Civil War was being waged in the United States, and the sectional
conflict it aroused in the town added to the problem of race. Both the
north and the south were well represented among the white residents,
and especially after the beginning of the war, Victoria experienced an
influx of southerners who came to the colony either to escape conscription
or to use it as a base of operations in their plots to overthrow the
Republic. These people congregated around the Confederate Saloon on
Yates Street, where a Confederate flag, made by the southern ladies of
the community was ceremoniously raised and lowered each day. Their
attitude towards the coloured colonists may be readily understood,
especially after the negroes became a political power in the community.
Then the situation must have closely paralleled that experienced in the
south during the reconstruction period. Undoubtedly the feelings engendered
among the whites would be the same. While it might be expected that the
northerners would champion the negro cause, this was not always the case.
On one occasion at least the Union sympathisers must have become rather


hostile towards the negroes at Gibbs & Co.'s boot-black establishment on Government Street after the coloured men employed there rented the shop to a southerner for the purpose of erecting a Confederate flag on its roof. The occasion was the celebration of the coming of age of the Prince of Wales. The town was gaily decorated and there were to be horse-racing, parades and other amusements. As soon as the northerners saw the Confederate flag, they lowered all the American flags and refused to unfurl them again until the obnoxious Confederate one had been removed. Furthermore the American members of the fire-brigades refused to march in the parade because of the incident. Allen Francis, the American Consul, wrote to the Governor about the matter:

Consulate of the United States of America.
Victoria, V.I., Nov. 10, 1862.

To His Excellency Governor Douglas:

Sir:- In order to commemorate the day in honor of the Prince of Wales arriving at his majority, it was to be hoped nothing would occur to prevent the loyal citizens of the United States residing here from participating on the occasion; but the display of flags representing States in rebellion against the constituted authorities of the United States of America will deter its citizens from participating in the ceremonies.

With great respect for the day you celebrate, and highest regards for your Excellency,

I am, respectfully, your ob't serv't

ALLEN FRANCIS,
U.S. Consul.

Fortunately before there was any serious disturbance the flag in question was voluntarily lowered and was handed to a policeman who had been detailed to the spot. Although the boot-blacks were $40 richer, un-

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16 Colonist, Nov. 12, 1862.
doubtlessly they had done irreparable damage to the cause of the coloured people in Victoria, for feelings of hostility must now have been aroused among the northerners.

Conflicting political interests became one of the major causes of anti-negro sentiment in Victoria, especially after the notorious election of 1860 when the coloured people voted illegally for Cary and Franklin and by so doing defeated the opposition candidate, Amor DeCosmos. Up until this time DeCosmos had been very tolerant towards the negroes; he had opposed their segregation in the churches and had spoken of them in the highest terms. After the election his attitude changed, and letter after letter appeared in his newspaper, the Colonist, endeavouring to slur their characters. The editorials were equally spiteful and contained such epithets as - Englishmen are slaves to slaves - Negroes are aliens of the lowest type of humanity - a degraded race - ignorant of self-government, of British institutions. Revenge was not slow in coming after the election, and the veiled threat was all too apparent in the question, "What would be the daily receipts of the hundred and fifty coloured labourers, restaurant, store and shopkeepers of Victoria, were the patronage of the whites all withdrawn from them?" In a letter to the Gazette, a coloured man describes the behaviour of DeCosmos's supporters after the election:

On Saturday night the defunct candidate's supporters exhibited such hostile demonstrations against us, they are quite at variance since the close of the election, though they have never been otherwise; for why? For giving our votes to Cary and Franklin; one of the Cary's voters was ordered out of Carroll's Saloon on Yates Street, barely for looking in at a crowd of drinkers - Dr. T-- was chieftain of that party. Mr. Bayley has also asserted that not another colored man shall approach his saloon again;

17 See above, p. 92.
18 Colonist, July 26, 1860.
19 Ibid., Jan. 14, 1860.
(what a petty revenge,) I think he should be Americanized at once, I could have told him that his canvassing would be for nought, for my part I do not use the article he vends there....

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On the same day that the negro was ordered out of Carroll's Saloon, Carroll's bookkeeper entered the Mousquetaire Saloon and without provocation struck a coloured man with a stick. He claimed that it was a case of mistaken identity, but the incident was enough to start a brawl. Shortly after, another negro, William Bastion was charged the exorbitant price of fifty cents for a glass of beer at Carroll's place, but when he took the matter to court charging extortion, the case was dismissed.

When bartenders continued to refuse to serve negroes after the election controversy, a coloured man, Jacob Francis was determined to contest the issue and in April 1860 brought court action against a saloon keeper for refusing to sell him two bottles of champagne. The verdict returned by the jury avoided the real question involved however, by ruling that the house was an inn, and as Francis was not a guest, no injury had been sustained by him and no damages could be given.

Undoubtedly the saloon keepers were justified in keeping certain of the coloured men out of their bars, as under the influence of alcohol they were notorious for becoming rowdy and quarrelsome, and at this period there was so much to quarrel about. Their behaviour was certainly no

20 Victoria Gazette, Jan. 9, 1860.

21 Colonist, Jan. 10, 1860.


23 Victoria Gazette, April 23, 1860.
worse than that of many whites, but while such incidents were forgotten when the latter were responsible, when negroes were to blame, these occurrences became exaggerated in minds searching for an excuse for racial hatred.

In June of 1862 Jacob Francis made another foray into an American owned bar. This time he entered the Bank Exchange Saloon with three white companions and ordered drinks for all. The barkeeper served the "gentlemen" but Francis was left thirsty and annoyed. When he complained, he was told that negroes were not served in that place. A week later, Joe Lovett, proprietor of the saloon, found himself before Judge Pemberton, who ruled that in future no license would be granted to any saloon keeper who refused to serve anyone in the public bars, regardless of colour. He said that there was nothing to prevent proprietors from setting aside a private bar for those who did not wish to associate with the negroes.

In their struggle to gain equality in their political life, the negroes were blocked at every turn by the obstacle of prejudice. Eventually, if they had the necessary property qualifications and were naturalized British subjects, or British subjects by birth, they could be placed on the voters' lists. But when a coloured man proposed to run as a candidate for a seat in the legislature, that was quite another matter. Even though Jacob Francis was a British-born negro and was legally elected to a seat in 1861, since his opponent, Joseph Trutch should have been disqualified, an excuse was found to prevent him from entering the assembly. Furthermore, the law permitting only British subjects by birth to run as candidates for office was directed against the coloured people, for

24 Colonist, June 26, 28, 1862.

25 See above, p. 98.
they were virtually the only ones who were becoming naturalized, and they alone would be affected by such legislation. Regarding this state of affairs, a negro visitor to Victoria wrote to the Pacific Appeal in San Francisco that "Prejudice is too strong in Vancouver Island. We have brighter prospects of political elevation under our own government, than in any British colony on this coast."

It comes as no surprise to learn that the theatre was also the scene of racial friction and the only reason why such was not the case in 1858 when efforts were made to segregate the coloured people in the churches, was that theatres had not yet come into vogue in Victoria.

Saturday night was always a time of celebration in the boom town. Money was plentiful and so was liquor, and whenever the entertainment in the saloons became dull, there was always the Colonial Theatre up the street. If the play was bad the miners threw rotten eggs and onions at the performers, but even when it was good they generally threw them anyway. That particular Saturday evening in November 1860, rumour had it that there was to be some additional entertainment besides Miss Lulu Sweet who was to sing the latest popular song during the intermission, for the story was being circulated that the negroes were planning to force their way into the parquette of the theatre.

If he were to keep in business the manager of the Colonial Theatre had to cater to his white patrons and when they had objected to the mixing of negroes and whites, he had issued orders that only gallery seats were to be sold to the coloured folk, with the exception of course of Charlie Chinoople, steward of H.M.S. Topaze, who was a Bengalee and not an African negro. He could sit downstairs in the dollar seats if he wished. From


27 Lulu Island was named after Lulu Sweet who was a very popular entertainer on the Pacific coast.
then on the cashier carefully scrutinized the hands that came through the opening in the ticket wicket and those that were too dark in colour were given a closer examination. Gallery seats they could have, but the parquette was reserved for whites only.

Beatty, the assistant manager was determined to keep peace in the house at all costs for even the best of theatres did not enjoy a high reputation in those days. He remembered too well that unpleasant incident during the summer when a coloured man had forced his way into the parquette and had been met with a hail of rotten eggs from the gallery. As a precaution against further incidents, only a week previously the manager had refused admittance to a negro.

When James Stevens was not permitted to sit wherever he liked merely because he was coloured, the rowdier element among the negro population became incensed. Was this not the land where regardless of race or creed, every man was equal? They had left California because of incidents such as this, and were determined to endure such insults no longer.

It was nearing 7:30 on that eventful Saturday evening, and the curtain was about to rise on the first play, *Perfection*. The theatre was about two-thirds filled, and there was the usual babble of conversation. Some looked about uneasily. Would the negroes really try to take the theatre, or was that merely another wild rumour. So many stories circulated about the coloured people that it was difficult to know what to believe anymore. At that moment, John Wolfe, who was taking tickets at the entrance off the French Hotel alley, seemed to be having difficulty with one of the customers. Voices were raised in argument.

28 Colonist, July 31, 1860.
and a moment later Stephen Anderson, waving a ticket and followed by
Adolph Richards, another burly coloured man, forced their way into the
parquette and sat down. There were calls to put them out, and one of
the actors offered them each a dollar to leave. They refused, and when
attempts were made to force the issue, the fight was on. It was a
general free-for-all; actors rushed out from nowhere; balcony customers
crowded the stairs to get into the fight; women screamed and ran back­
stage, while many of the more timid males found refuge on top of it. The
confusion inside the theatre was the signal for negro reinforcements to
push their way in, as by this time the alley had become crowded with
negroes, Indians and whites.

Clubs in black hands were swung right and left, while one massive
coloured man brandished a chair from the orchestra to clear a path for
himself and his fellows. Another threw one of the camphene footlights
into the audience whence it was immediately returned, igniting his hair
and clothing. The burning wick of another overturned lamp started a
small fire on the stage and the cry of "fire" was added to the pandemonium.

By the time the police arrived, the coloured rowdies were in possession
of the theatre, but when Major De Courcy magistrate of San Juan Island,
appeared on the stage and advised them to leave, they obeyed without
argument while their leaders were marched off to the police station.
Several negroes now bought tickets for the gallery; the audience settled
down; the bloodstained curtain rose, and the play began.

This was not to be the end of the evening's excitement however, for
between acts of the second play, Rob Roy, a negro in the pit was attacked
with rotten eggs, and three more who were behaving rather suspiciously
were chased from the theatre by the police. One ran up Government Street,
dropping his revolver on the way, and was finally dragged squirming from
under one of the old buildings in the Fort yard.

Needless to say for the next week the riot was one of the major topics of conversation in the town. It was rumoured that the performance would be repeated the following Saturday with reinforcements from Salt Spring Island, New Westminster and the American side. Strange negroes began arriving in town during the next few days, but by Saturday the tempers of the coloured people had cooled down and there was no further disturbance.

Unfortunately this ill-advised demonstration built even higher the wall of racial prejudice, and the entire negro community suffered from the rash action of these few. Public opinion at the time considered the riot unjustified. The coloured men well knew that they would not be permitted to purchase tickets for the parquette themselves, and had probably had a white compatriot do it for them. They were also quite aware of what would happen when they did force an entry, as they had reinforcements waiting to come to their assistance. When they were refused admission, the blacks should have appealed to the law, but when heads are hot, actions are seldom rational.

The case came before Chief Justice Cameron the following week, and he had no more sympathy for the whites who had thrown missiles at the coloured men than he had for the negroes who had started the riot. Since there was not enough evidence to prove pre-meditation, the prisoners were found not guilty and were released.

This was not the last incident aroused by the question of where the coloured people should be permitted to sit in the theatre, for it occurred

29 *Colonist*, Nov. 6, 7, 8, 10, 13, 1860.
again in September of 1861 when a benefit concert in aid of the Royal Hospital was to be held at the Victoria Theatre. As all the most important people in town were to be there, surely in such a gathering no one would cause a disturbance; at least so though Mifflin Gibbs when he purchased tickets for himself, his wife, his friend Nathan Pointer, and Pointer's small daughter. He had heard rumours that an attack would be made on any coloured people who attended, but he was determined not to give way. Gibbs was especially interested in the success of the concert as the hospital was indebted to him to the amount of several hundred dollars.

The presence of the coloured party in the dress circle started considerable conversation in their vicinity, and before long they were requested to move to other seats. However, they were quite within their rights when they refused, as they had paid the price for their seats; and were sitting in the ones designated by their tickets.

The concert went on as scheduled, but without one of the performers, Emil Sutro, who on hearing that there were negroes in the dress circle, refused to play until they were moved elsewhere, and when they declined to do so, he left the theatre and went home. Just as the performance was drawing to a close, a pound of flour wrapped in newspaper burst like a bomb over the coloured people. Nathan Pointer made a motion towards a man named Ryckman who was standing nearby, intimating that he had thrown it, and Gibbs followed up by striking the man indicated. When reprimanded later in police court for his violence, Gibbs said that his wife was in a delicate condition at the time and that when she was covered with flour he had simply lost all control.

When the case came up in court the following week, Pointer swore that Ryckman had thrown the flour, but several white witnesses swore
that he had not. The whites shielded one another and as it could not be proven that any one of them was guilty, the only person to be punished was Gibbs, who was fined £5 for assault.

The incident stirred up controversy in the town, and many bitter words were said, not only by the negroes, but also by many whites who condemned their fellows for having any part in such a disgraceful affair. In an attempt to clear his name, Emil Sutro published a notice in the press:

**A CARD**

EDITOR BRITISH COLONIST:- My name having been mentioned in connection with the "Theatre Fracas" I wish to state what happened between Mr. Maguire, the leader of the orchestra, and myself. When I reached the theatre I learned that several colored people were occupying prominent seats in the dress circle, which caused considerable dissatisfaction to many English and American residents, preventing numbers from entering. I asked Mr. Maguire to request the colored audience to occupy the back part of the dress circle, or, if they refused that, to give them the use of a private seat where they could have amused themselves to their heart's content and given no offence to anybody. Under either of those conditions I was willing to play, and did not absolutely refuse. Mr. Maguire, after an interview with the parties, informed me that they were stubborn and would not budge an inch, to use their own expression. I refused then to play and left the theatre for home. The fire alarm called me out, but kept me only a few minutes in the street, when I returned to my rooms. In concluding I would remark that I do not believe in any amalgamation of white and colored people, nor that the latter should socially intermix with the former. No sensible person will object to the colored population being admitted to any public place of amusement; but let one part of the house, no matter which, be reserved for their particular use, - where people will never intrude upon their society. They form a distinct class, and enjoy their full rights as citizens; but let these "gentlemen" - if they claim to be gentlemen - not force themselves upon white society, where they are not desired, and are furthermore offensive to a majority of the residents of Victoria.

EMIL SUTRO

The following morning Sutro's "Card" was attacked by "An Offended Englishwoman" whose attitude towards the coloured people of Victoria

30 Colonist, Sept. 27, 1861.
was by no means in accord with his:

REPLY TO EMIL SUTRO

EDITOR BRITISH COLONIST:— On reading your Colonist of this morning I find a card published by Emil Sutro. Now, Mr. Sutro in his card puts forth two statements which required contradiction:

1st. That the colored people force themselves upon white society where they are not desired; and

2nd. That they are offensive to a majority of the residents of Victoria.

Now as regards the forcing themselves upon the "white society," allow me to say that they are as a class superior to many who composed the audience on the very night in question. Take for instance the unprovoked assault on those unoffending individuals. They have never forced themselves on society of any kind, and they have as much right, in a British Colony, to be seen and heard, as persons who are fortunate enough to possess a white skin. To say "They enjoy their full rights as citizens," is a flat contradiction of himself, for he says "they were requested to resign their seats," (although paid for) in favor of some white society. Which they very sensibly declined. Had they given an inch an ell might have been taken. As regards their being offensive to a large majority of the residents of Victoria, a very plain proof that they are not so is seen in the state of our churches, where nearly one-half of the congregations are colored. And on the night already referred to, I believe not one respectable person took part in the assault, which was as offensive to Englishmen as unwarrantable in an English Colony where all classes are truly free, and not so in name only. It would be well if Mr. Sutro would remember that he himself belongs to a much persecuted race which in some countries is a proverb and a by-word. Remembering this, his sympathies should have been with, not against the colored people.

All foreigners living on British soil should conform to British laws and customs, and not take upon themselves to dictate, and if they cannot endure the presence of a colored man or woman, let them by all means stay at home; they have full permission to do so, and not offend any one's eyes and ears by the disgraceful scenes alluded to.

AN OFFENDED ENGLISHWOMAN

As was to be expected, the editor of the Colonist had a few remarks to make regarding the "flour incident", however his editorial was tinged with prejudice, for while he admitted that the whites had committed a wrong by throwing the flour, he did not condemn them enough. At least

31 Colonist, Sept. 28, 1861.
so thought Mifflin Gibbs, who was still smarting from the insult when he wrote the *Colonist* condemning the attitude of its editor:

EDITOR BRITISH COLONIST:- The disgraceful proceedings of the rowdy element of the community on Wednesday evening having called forth editorial comments in your paper this morning, and being one of the parties assaulted, and hence immediately interested, I ask that you allow me space for a brief reply.

I have resided in this Colony for the space of three or four years, but never before visited a place of public amusement; but being interested in the success of the Hospital fund to the amount of several hundred dollars for provisions furnished the institution for the comfort and sustenance of Americans and others whom misfortune had overtaken; and further, knowing that it was to be under the patronage of distinguished officials and the best English society of the Colony, I went with my family, with no feeling than that I would be exempt from the barbarous and insulting behaviour that has characterized such places on former occasions - and for that purpose purchased tickets for the dress-circle. The public knows the rest; how my friend - against whose respectability and standing no exceptions can be taken - with his young daughter, myself and wife were covered with flour, the performers pelted with unsaleable fruit, and every effort made by the American rowdies to break up the entertainment.

Now, sir, what course have you taken with regard to this outrage? You meet a colored man on the street and denounce it as outrageous, the thing admits of no defence, the parties should suffer for it, &c, &c. Often have you repeated that equal intelligence, equal standing, in a British colony secures equal treatment - shame, shame, &c. You hasten to your sanctum (as some poor simple people thought) to indite "words that breathe and thoughts that burn" in vindication of outraged law. But lol visions of long advertisements and untold patronage from denizens of Wharf street dance and glisten; the palms of your hands suddenly expand and contract like a sunfish in greedy expectancy of the thirty pieces of silver.

You have little to say condemnatory, notwithstanding a great wrong has been committed calling for the condign punishment, you admit the wrong, and in the next breath palliate the offence and invite repetition by carping about "Caucasian and African," "deeply-rooted prejudice," "social equality," &c.

Is not British law and justice superior to the "deeply rooted prejudices," and Yankee notions that are racking that republic from centre to circumference. Social Equality! What has visiting a theatre to do with social equality. John Butts, ditto. [a notorious character] ergo - Butts and De Cosmos are on terms of social equality - fudge, the idea is too ridiculous for comment.

The fact is patent that you, occupying the position of an Editor, and in the face of your continual clamoring for the faithful and impartial administration of British law as affecting other topics, have
not only shirked your duty and proved yourself a trimmer for loaves and fishes, but have done worse. Instead of calling upon the authorities to have officers present to protect every man in the peaceful enjoyment of his rights, you wind up your article by advocating a course that would oppress and degrade a large and growing class of most loyal citizens. I have taken the oath of allegiance to Her Majesty's Government, paid the other day about $400 yearly taxes into the treasury, in return am I to be told by you that I shall be degraded on public occasions and proscribed to the Box, Parquette, or any other place, to please a few renegade Yankees, who, if they had a spark of patriotism about them, would be fighting their country's battles, and not be laying around here to save their hides and foment strife.

You say in your issue of this morning that it is your opinion that colored people will never be admitted into places of amusement on terms of equality. Yesterday, in conversation with a gentleman of my acquaintance, you offered to bet a thousand dollars that in two years time such a thing as proscription in a place of amusement on account of color would not be known, and people would laugh at the idea. How these opinions harmonize, I leave the more astute to determine; but in Yankee parlance, I suppose one was for Northern and the other for Southern consumption.

M.W.G.

In reply, the editor of the Colonist denied the charges directed at him in Gibbs' letter. Never had he said one thing on the street and the opposite in the newspaper, he claimed, and furthermore the idea of having officers to protect the coloured people was ridiculous.

The attack had certainly been a premeditated one, as it had been common talk among the whites that there would be plenty of onions thrown at the negroes that night, and attempts had even been made to bribe the artists not to appear. Felix Leslouis, a singer, admitted that he had been offered $50.00 to say that he could not sing to negroes, but he had refused the offer because he had given his promise to perform and would do so whether negroes were present or not.

32 Colonist, Sept. 28, 1861.
33 Loc. cit.
If Gibbs and his party had done as requested and had moved to other seats, the coloured people would have eventually found themselves in just as inferior a position as they had in California. He had fought for the privileges that they were enjoying, and was determined that none should be wrested from them.

After this incident, the negro colonists daily endured the silent insult of seeing placards posted on street corners to the effect that "colored people will not be allowed in any part of the building". Hereafter theatre play-bills advertised that they would be permitted to sit in the gallery only. The fact that they were being segregated because of their colour was irritating enough, but to be forced to sit in that part of the building where the lowest level of society was to be found was too degrading. They appealed to Governor Douglas:

To His Excellency
James Douglas C.B.
&c &c

Sir,
We the undersigned committee appointed by the colored people of this Colony, desire to memorialize your Excellency with reference to the gross insult and shameful proscription of places of public amusements by inserting upon hand-bills and posters, "Colored people not admitted to any part of the House except the Gallery."

Proscription solely on the ground of color, we believe to be an insufferable wrong, but the outrage is still more apparent, when it is known that the gallery is the only sole resort of the lowest order.

Coming to this colony to found our homes, and rear our families, we did so advisedly, assured by those in authority that we should meet with no disabilities political or conventional on the ground of color.

Your memorialists would submit that in point of sobriety, intelligence, and industry, as well as other requisites for good citizenship, they compare favorably with any other class; they are in possession of real estate to the amount of £50,000, which awaits taxation for the support of the Government. We are here investing our means, and zealously laboring for the well being of the colony, and are influencing large numbers of our class to do likewise, and desire to have our families untrammeled by the perpetuation of a mean and senseless prejudice against

color - a prejudice having no foundation that is honorable, and alone supported by the ignorance and brutality of the lowest order of society.

Earnestly deprecating all resorts to violence, desiring to be law-abiding, and feeling that the proscription practices to which we call the attention of your Excellency to be slanderous, and injurious to a large and respectable body of Her Majesty's subjects,—that they are inimical to the genius of British Law and world-renowned British sentiments. We therefore petition your Excellency to make such recommendations that will guarantee the rights of your petitioners in common with all other men.

And we your humble petitioners as in duty bound will ever pray.

Signed on behalf of Two Hundred and Sixty colored residents

Wellington D. Moses
Jacob Francis
F. Richard
Wm. Brown
Richard H. Johnson

The Governor received the deputation from the coloured community bearing this petition, and the matter was settled verbally so there is no record of his decision, however it would appear that Douglas was unable to remedy the situation as further theatre incidents were to follow.

On December 10, 1863, Alexander McCarthy appeared at the entrance to the theatre, and presented a ticket for the dress circle but was promptly refused admittance because of his colour. He then created such a disturbance that a police officer tried to eject him, and as he continued to make himself objectionable even after the manager had offered to refund the price of his ticket, he was marched off to the police station. When the case came up the next day, the lawyer for the coloured man tried to prove that as no law had ever been passed prohibiting negroes from sitting anywhere in the theatre, his client had the right to occupy the seat indicated by his ticket. The ticket was a contract he said, and the theatre manager had failed to fulfil his part of the agreement.

36 MS in B.C. Provincial Archives. Petitions 1864, July to Dec.
The Judge dismissed the charge of creating a disturbance, but the coloured man was fined for resisting an officer.

This was obviously another test of negro rights, and a few days later was followed by another incident when James Fountain, Fortune Richards, and Adolphus Calamandus Richards were refused admittance to the Colonial Theatre although they presented tickets which had been purchased for them by a white friend. The coloured men took the matter to court, and unsuccessfully began suits against the theatre manager for $500 each, which they claimed were the damages sustained by them when their tickets were refused.

A year later the negroes were aroused by a play-bill posted by the Victoria Theatre bearing the following:

N.B. The Undersigned, without intending the slightest offence to any of Victoria's residents, feels compelled, in this city of varied nationalities, and as conservator of the peace of his own establishment, to state that colored persons cannot be admitted into the Dress Circle or Orchestra Seats. Should they feel disposed to visit the Theatre, he will cheerfully fit up and comfortably furnish for them an eligible portion of the building; but he will not expose his audience to the disturbance and danger too likely to arise out of disputes about place, position, or precedence.

THOMAS WARD.

Governor Kennedy had by now succeeded Governor Douglas, and the coloured townspeople sent a deputation to him re-stating their old grievance and asking his help:

37 Daily Chronicle, Dec. 11, 12, 1863.

38 Ibid., Dec. 19, 1863.


40 Colonist, Oct. 6, 1864.
Oct.5/64

Unto His Excellency Arthur Edward Kennedy C B
Governor and Commander-in-Chief of the Colony of
Vancouver Island &c &c &c

The petition of the undersigned being colored residents of Victoria
Humbly Sheweth

That your petitioners emigrated to Vancouver Island in 1858,
under the auspices of the late Governor Sir James Douglas, C.B.

That your petitioners have adopted this colony as their home,
and have laid out their hard won earnings in the purchase of real
estate, and settled their families here.

That they did so, under the impression that British Law
recognized no distinction as to color, and that they would enjoy
all the privileges incident to British subjects.

That your petitioners feel aggrieved at the distinction made
in parties permitted to visit the public theatre.

Your petitioners therefore pray that
your Excellency would take the premises
into your consideration and grant such
relief to your petitioners, as in your
wisdom may seem most expedient.

And your Petitioners will ever pray &c

(Committee appointed on behalf of the Colored people)

Jacob Francis
E.B. Talloch
Thos. P. Freeman
Wm. Brown
Henry Plummer.

An immediate reply was forthcoming from the Acting Colonial Secretary:

Colonial Secretary's Office )
Victoria, 5th October 1864.)

Gentlemen - I am directed by the Governor to acknowledge the
receipt of your petition that he would relieve you
from certain disabilities imposed upon you on account of your

41 MS in B.C. Provincial Archives. Petitions 1864, July to Dec.
colour, and bringing a placard under his notice by the terms of which you are excluded from certain parts of the public theatre, and prescribing the conditions on which alone you will be admitted to any particular part of it.

While his Excellency regrets that he is unable to remove the invidious distinction thus drawn between classes of Her Majesty's subjects, he desires to assure you that he has no sympathy with those who would make creed or colour a barrier to any of Her Majesty's subjects attaining and occupying any social position to which their character and capacity may entitle them.

I have the honor to be, Gentlemen

Your obd't serv't
HENRY WAKEFORD
Acting Colonial Secretary

Messrs. Jacob Francis, and others.

The following year there was one more theatre disturbance when John Dunlop was refused entry to a benefit performance at the Victoria Theatre. After 1865 any outward indications of racial prejudice almost disappeared in Victoria, for by this time the tide of immigration had been reversed. Many negroes as well as white Americans began to return to the United States. The coloured people had by now been freed from slavery, the Civil War had come to an end, and a period of depression had descended on Vancouver Island, for the gold rush was over. For the first time theatre managers began to complain of having more seats than patrons, and one negro suggested that the reason for the financial failure of many of these race conscious establishments was the boycott supposedly imposed on them by the permanent residents of the town, who, whether they inwardly enjoyed mixing with the negroes or not, were proud of their British traditions and were ashamed of the injustice which had been done the coloured people.

42 Evening Express, Oct. 7, 1864.
43 Colonist, Nov. 23, 1865.
44 Loc. cit.
While the theatres segregated the negroes, at least they were permitted to attend if they so desired. This was not always the case with other social functions. Even when they tried to show their loyalty and appreciation to Governor Douglas in 1864, when he was leaving office, they received the usual rebuff. On March 10th of that year there was to be a grand banquet in the Theatre as a tribute to the retiring Governor, but when Lester and Gibbs applied for tickets, they were refused. This was a great injustice, and at least one high ranking Englishman publicly announced that if this was to be the case, he would refuse a ticket himself. There were two hundred persons present at the banquet and the ironical part of the evening was the toast to "The Foreign Residents of Victoria" proposed by D.B. Ring, the lawyer. "National prejudices were disappearing fast before the progress of civilization" he said, "and the world was rapidly progressing, freed from their retarding influences." Not only were the coloured people refused a share in the festivities bidding farewell to the old governor, but were also discriminated against in welcoming the new. A procession had been arranged to meet Governor Kennedy, in which the proudest possession of the negro community, the Victoria Pioneer Rifle Corps was not permitted to take part.

Other examples of discrimination were to follow such as on the 24th of May 1864, when there was to be a public subscription banquet to celebrate the Queen's birthday. Again, even those negroes who were British born were excluded, the weak excuse being that the American element was against it. Why the Americans should have the right to prevent British

45 Colonoist, March 10, 1864.
46 Ibid., March 11, 1864.
47 See above, p. 117
subjects from attending a British banquet celebrating the birthday of a British queen, defies an answer. It is probably closer to the truth to say that a few of the usually liberal-minded Englishmen had become infected with the germ of prejudice and were using the Americans as their excuse. One rejected negro complained, saying that even in the United States the Americans did not have so much authority, for in Washington, coloured men frequently attended the President's levees and other great functions.

Strange to say, although the negroes found themselves barred from white society, white men frequently attended negro parties and balls, but never with their wives. The white ladies of the colony never mixed socially with their dark sisters.

To sit on a jury was considered by the coloured colonists to be a very great privilege, for like the franchise it was another step towards their complete emancipation, a symbol of their equality. In Victoria a negro had been called to serve on the jury in 1860, apparently as a reward for having voted for Cary and Franklin in the notorious election of that year. Prejudice prevented any more negroes performing jury service until 1872, with the exception of the coroner's jury assembled in connection with the murder of the negro, Anderson. Finally in 1872, in answer to their petition, Dr. Ash presented a resolution in the House, asking the Governor to instruct the sheriff to place the names of the negro residents on the jury lists. The resolution did not pass at that time, but attention was at least directed towards the grievance, and eight months later the coloured people found members of their race called to

48 *Colonist*, May 23, 1864.

serve as jurors.

There were other minor incidents illustrative of racial prejudice almost too numerous to mention, such as the disbandment of a temperance society and of a literary society merely because they had inadvertently accepted the names of negroes on their membership rolls. The fact that the coloured Masons never met with their white brothers, and the refusal to permit negroes to join the fire brigades, are all evidence enough of discrimination. In the matter of education at least there appears to have been no segregation in the colonial schools. In fact when a mass meeting was held to discuss the opening of a non-sectarian public school in 1864, the comment of one man that he would like to see his children properly educated, separated from the blacks, was met with hisses, and the chairman warned him to make no further anti-negro comments.

Unfortunately the Utopian vision presented to the persecuted negroes in San Francisco had not entirely become a reality, for although they found themselves in a society giving them certain privileges they were also in a society that kept them in a state of isolation. Many of the barber-shops, bar-rooms, restaurants and hotels owned by Americans and some Englishmen were denied them, but in all fairness they had to admit that they were welcomed into some of the finest establishments in town where these were run by Englishmen, although almost invariably they were met with a certain air of condescension.

So far only Victoria's negro colonists have been studied with regard to their problem of race, for here was the largest centre of settlement and the natural place for racial conflicts to arise. But Salt Spring

50 Colonist, March 7, 21, Nov. 27, 1872.


52 Colonist, April 11, 1864.
Island had a large negro population and what of the miners at the Fraser diggings and in the Cariboo? Evidence of a race problem in any of these places is almost non-existent. On Salt Spring Island, the only incident so far encountered was the refusal of a white woman to attend religious meetings with the negroes; in general, however, there seems to have been an atmosphere of co-operation among the settlers although conflicts did arise of a non-racial nature. On the Island the bulk of the population was agrarian, and since all the farmers had a good market for everything they could produce, there was no economic competition. Whether they were black or white, all were carrying on the same struggle against nature, and their common fear of the Indians and the need of mutual protection tended to bind them together. A neighbour, regardless of his colour, was a decided asset.

Along the Fraser and in the Cariboo there is also little evidence of discrimination, and any unpleasant incidents that did occur took place during the very earliest days of the gold rush when the American rowdies first arrived at the diggings. Then "Dixie" the negro barber was assaulted at Yale merely because of the prejudice of a drunken miner from California, and a similar incident occurred when other Californians forcibly ejected some coloured miners from a squaw dance hall, an act for which they were later fined in court. In general, the words of the negro miner involved in the Davis-Aurora case in 1866 give an accurate description of conditions: "I have taken some pains to spread abroad the equality, we as colored men had, in the laws in an English colony, and am proud to say I have found no difference until now." Perhaps Judge Begbie's ruling in this case was the result of his own prejudice, but the majority

53 See above, p. 153.
of the white miners in the district were by no means in accord with him. Few were more highly regarded in Barkerville than Moses, the barber, and in his diaries there never occurs even the slightest complaint about his treatment at the hands of the whites in the community. In the Cariboo there was no political conflict such as existed in Victoria, and there was no serious competition between the races in their economic life. Coloured men worked side by side with white miners; they were in partnership in mining ventures, and negroes were employed as labourers by white mining companies. In the gold fields, with the exception of the Chinese, who never became an integral part of society, a man was judged by the amount of money in his pocket and not by the colour of his skin.

After the Civil War, racial conflicts seldom occurred in even the larger centers, such as Victoria, for by this time the gold excitement had come to an end and the American adventurers were returning to the United States as were also large numbers of the negro settlers. As the members of neither group considered themselves permanent residents in the colony, there was no longer any purpose in carrying on the conflict over equality. Perhaps throughout the early years of settlement, the coloured people had been using the wrong technique to achieve their ambitions. Their coercive tactics had only made the whites more hostile, and as Sydney Smith once said, "We cannot extort friendship from those whose regard we covet with a cocked pistol." Time alone was to be the solution, for with the departure of the Americans and the shrinkage of the negro population, the hostility between the races gradually diminished and the fact that such a situation had ever existed in British Columbia was forgotten.

54 Cited in Macfie, op. cit., p. 392.
APPENDIX "A"

PARTIAL LIST OF COLOURED IMMIGRANTS TO BRITISH COLUMBIA 1858-1871

(This list has been compiled from all the sources used in the preparation of this thesis.)

(A)

Abernethy, Robert - Baker.
Adams, Ben.
Addison, Patrick Jerome and wife - Farmer.
Alexander, Charles and wife (Nancy) - Carpenter and Farmer.
Allen, Edward.
Allen, Henry - Committed suicide in Cariboo, April 5, 1868.
Allen, William and wife (Emily).
Amby, Henry.
Anderson, George Henry - Farmer.
Anderson, Stephen - Miner.
Antoine,
Archer, John - Groceries and provision merchant.
Ashbury,
Augusta, Frederick Taliafera.

(B)

Bailey, Madison Fineas.
Baker, James.
Baldwin, John - Green grocer.
Banks, John - Blacksmith.
Barnswell, James and wife.
Barton, John Wm.
Bastion, William.
Berry, Hamilton.
Bond, Willis Carroll and wife - Contractor and house mover.
Booth, Samuel John - Caulker.
Bowen, William - Barber.
Bronen, Henry Holly - Cook.
Brown, William - Merchant.
Buhler, Asbury - Tailor, clothing and variety store.
Bulmer, and wife.
Bulow, and wife.
Burnside, Wm.
Butler, Mrs. Sarah J.

(C)

Caesar, Randall - Barber, proprietor of the Saucelito Baths.
Carter, George - Farmer.
Carter, Paris and wife - Grocer and debt collector.
Cathcart, J.
Charity, Cornelius Hamlin - Bootmaker.
Christopher, Augustus and wife - Porter.
Church, - Drowned in the sinking of the Brother Jonathan.
Clanton, R. and wife - Baker.
Gooness, Stacey.
Cooper, Ezekiel.
Copeland, Abraham and wife.
Cowen, Charles.
Cummings, Isaac.

(D)

Dendridge, John.
Deas, J.S. and wife - Tinsmith.
Decosta, John.
Dennis, George.
Dodd, Charles.
Dowdy, Elison - Painter.
Dunlap, S.
Dunlop, John Thomas - Livery stable.
Dyer, William Henry.

(E)

Edwards, John E. - Hair dresser.
Estes, Howard - Farmer.

(F)

Farrington, Stephen - Dairyman.
Felix, James.
Ford, and wife.
Forrester, Thomas & wife.
Fouchette, Fountain, James.
Fox, Archer - Barber
Fox, John Edward - Barber.
Francis, A.H. and wife - Groceries and provisions.
Francis, P.J.
Fredison, Daniel and wife - Farmer.
Freeman, Thomas Palmer and wife - Storekeeper.

(G)

Gant, William and wife - Teamster.
Gardner,
Gibbs, Mifflin Wistar and wife - Merchant.
Gibbs, I.P. and wife (Mary).
Gibbs, Maria.
Giscombe, J. (Jiscom ?)
Glasco, William and wife - Teamster.
Godfrey, Wm. and wife.
Gohagen, J.
Gohiggan, Isaac - Teamster.
Granton, Henry - Restaurant owner. Died May 13, 1864.
Grimes,
Hall, Rufus.
Halley, Robert - Miner.
Hamilton, Alexander and wife. - Came from Canada West. Died June 8, 1865.
Handy, Joshua - Restaurant owner.
Harrison, and wife.
Harvey, General.
Hawkins, Jack - Fell off Fideliter and drowned Sept. 19, 1866.
Hayes, Miss J.
Henderson, John.
Henry, John.
Hobbs, George Washington, and wife - Teamster.
Hoggan, George.
Horsley, Z. and wife.
Howard,
Hudson, and wife (Elizabeth).

(I)

Isaacs, William - Farmer.

(J)

Jackson, F. and wife.
Jackson, J.S.
Jackson, Kirke.
Jackson, Richard - Gardener.
Jackson, Stonewall.
Jackson, Thomas Henry - Drayman.
Jasper, John.
Jiscom, B.C.
Jiscom, John R.
Johnson, Isaac, B.
Johnson, Richard Henry.
Jones, Columbus and wife.

(K)

Keithley, and wife.
Kerr, William F.

(L)

Lee, Archie - Porter
Leonard, Edward and wife.
Lester, Peter and wife - Groceries and provisions.
Lester, Peter Jr. - Painter.
Lester, Sarah.
Lewis, John and wife - Porter.
Lewis, Joseph.
Lomax, and wife.
Lowe, Jacob.

(M)

Mabins, and wife.
McGee, Mrs.
Magee,
Mansell, James and wife.
Mathews, George Henry - Merchant.
Mathews, John Devine.
Mathews, T. Devine - Carrier.
McCarthy, Alexander.
Mercier,
Micherson,
Miller, William and wife - Saloon-keeper.
Milton, Burgess.
Mitchell, Charles.
Monet, Mathew, Fred. - Fruiterer.
Montero, J. and wife.
Morris,
Moses, Wellington D. and wife (Sarah) - Barber.

(N)

Newby, Aaron Lewis - Sailor.
Newel, R.

(0)

Ovelten, Jeff.

(P)

Page, and wife.
Perpeno, Henry - Gardener and brick maker.
Phelps, E.R. and wife.
Phillips, John.
Phipps, M.A.
Pierre, Thomas and wife - Tailor.
Plummer, Henry.
Pointer, Nathan and wife - Merchant, clothing store.
Popanice, Henry.

(R)

Ramsay, Samuel - Waiter.
Raymous, Sem - Minstrel.
Reed, William and wife.
Richard, Fortune - Ship carpenter, Farmer.
Richards, Adolphus Calmandus - Plasterer.
Riley, G.
Roals, Mrs.
Roberts, Timothy and wife - Teamster.
Robinson, Henry W. - Groceries and provisions, farmer.
Robinson, William - brick maker.

(S)

Sampson, James - Teamster.
Savage, and wife.
Scott, J.H. and wife.
Scott, James C. - Miner.
Scott Charles Humphrey - Grocer.
Scott, William Alexander - Barber.
Senasaul, S. and wife.
Sharp, Charles Henry and wife.
Shakespeare, Thomas.
Simpson,
Skank,
Smith, C.B.
Smithes (also Smithie), Fielding - Messenger.
Soule, Charles.
Spotts, Fielding and wife - Cooper, farmer.
Stepney, D.
Stevens, Edward.
Stevens, James and wife.
Stevens, S.
Stewart, and wife (Emma).
Stokes, Richard - Carrier.
Strong, Arthur and wife (Elizabeth).

(T)
Talloch, E.V.
Taylor, D.
Taylor, J.S. - Restaurant and saloon keeper.
Templeton,
Thomas, John.
Thomas, Mary.
Thorp, Charles H. - Ship carpenter.
Tilghman, Robert - Barber.
Tolson brothers.
Travers, Augustus - Porter.
Travis, and wife.
Trot,
Tulloch, E.V.
Tyrell, John W.

(U)
Upshur, John.

(V)

Valentine, John.

(W)
Waldron, and wife.
Warren, J.
Washington, George.
Washington, Henry and wife.
Washington, Thorenton - Carpenter.
Watson, Dan - Minstrel.
Wellington, J.
Weymss, "Snowball" and wife.
Wheeler, W. and wife.
White, William and wife.
Whitley, Stephen - Laundryman.
Wilby, William - Miner.
Williams, John.
Williamson, Robert H. - Blacksmith.
Williams, Samuel.
Wilson,
Woods,
Wyman,
Respecting Fugitives from Labor, and Slaves brought to this State prior to her admission into the Union.

The People of the State of California, represented in Senate and Assembly, do enact as follows:

SEC. 1. When a person held to labor in any State or Territory of the United States under the laws thereof, shall escape into this State, the person to whom such labor or service may be due, his agent or attorney, is hereby empowered to seize or arrest such fugitive from labor, or shall have the right to obtain a warrant of arrest for such fugitive, granted by any Judge, Justice, or Magistrate of this State, and directed to any Sheriff or Constable of this State, and when seized or arrested, to take him or her before any Judge or Justice of this State, or before any Magistrate of a County, City or Town corporate, and upon proof to the satisfaction of such Judge or Magistrate, either by oral testimony or affidavit, taken before and certified by any Judge or Magistrate in this State, or of any other State or Territory, that the person so seized or arrested doth, under the laws of the State or Territory from which he or she fled, owe service or labor to the person claiming him or her, it shall be the duty of such Judge or Magistrate to give a certificate thereof to such claimant, his agent or attorney, which shall be sufficient warrant for removing the said fugitive from labor, to the State or Territory from which he or she fled, and for using such force and restraint as may be necessary, under the circumstances of the case, to take and remove such fugitive person back to the State or Territory whence he or she may have escaped as aforesaid. In no trial or hearing under this Act shall the testimony of such alleged fugitive be admitted in evidence, and the certificate hereinbefore mentioned shall be conclusive of the right of the person or persons in whose favor granted, to remove such fugitive to the State or Territory from which he escaped, and shall prevent all molestation of such person or persons, by any process issued by any Court, Judge, Justice, or Magistrate, or other person whomsoever.

SEC. 2. Any person who shall knowingly and willingly obstruct, hinder, or prevent such claimant, his agent, or attorney, or any person or persons lawfully assisting him, her or them, from arresting such fugitive from service or labor, either with or without process as aforesaid, or shall rescue or attempt to rescue such fugitive from the custody of such claimant, his or her agent or attorney, or other person or persons lawfully assisting as aforesaid, when so arrested pursuant to the authority herein given and declared, or shall aid, abet, or assist such fugitive, directly or indirectly to escape from such claimant, his agent or attorney, or other person or persons legally authorized as aforesaid, or shall harbor or conceal such fugitive, shall for either of said offences, be subject to the fine of not less than five hundred dollars, and imprisonment not less than two months, by indictment and conviction before any Court of
Sessions of this State, or before any Court having criminal jurisdiction within this State, and shall moreover forfeit and pay by way of civil damages to the claimant of said fugitive, the sum of one thousand dollars, for each and either of said offences, to be recovered by action in any District Court of this State.

SEC. 3. It shall be the duty of all Sheriffs, Deputy Sheriffs and Constables to obey and execute all warrants and precepts issued under the provisions of this Act, when to them directed, and should any Sheriff, Deputy Sheriff, or constable refuse to receive such warrant or other process when tendered, or to use all proper means, diligently to execute the same, he shall on conviction thereof, by indictment, be fined in the sum of not less than five hundred dollars and not more than two thousand dollars, to the use of the County in which conviction is had, and removed from office, and shall be liable to the claimant in such damages as the claimant shall sustain by reason of said misconduct, and after the arrest of such fugitive by such Sheriff, or his Deputy, or Constable, or whilst at any time within his custody, should such fugitive escape by the assent, neglect or contrivance of such officer, such officer shall be liable, on his official bond to such claimant, for the full value of said fugitive in the State or Territory from whence he or she came.

SEC. 4. Any person or persons held to labor or service in any State or Territory, and who were brought or introduced within the limits of this State previous to the admission of this State as one of the United States of America and who shall refuse to return to the State or Territory where he, she or they owed such labor or service, upon the demand of the person or persons, his or their agent, or attorney, to whom such labor or service was due, such person or persons so refusing to return, shall be held and deemed fugitives from labor within the meaning of this Act, and all the remedies, rights, and provisions herein given to claimants of fugitives who escape from any other State into this State, are hereby given and conferred upon claimants of fugitives from labor within the meaning of this section; Provided, the provisions of this section shall not have force and effect after the period of twelve months from the passage of this Act.

SEC. 5. Nothing contained in this Act shall be so construed as to allow the claimant of any slave to hold such slave in servitude in this State after his reclamation under the provisions of this Act, except for the purpose of removing such slave from the State.

APPROVED, April 15, 1852
EXTRACTS FROM THE DIARY OF THE REVEREND EDWARD CRIDGE HAVING REFERENCE TO THE ARRIVAL OF THE NEGROES

Thursday, May 6, 1858

On Sunday Apr 25 the "Commodore" Capt. Nagle, arrived with 400 or 500 Emigrants from San Francisco, chiefly bent for the gold mines as Fort Colville. There were also 35 men of colour from the same place of different trades & callings, chiefly intending to settle here. On Monday (Apr. 26) drinking tea at Mrs. Blinkhorn's with my wife she (Mrs. B.) told us that on the precedg evening she was surprised at hearing the sounds of praise. They proceeded from the men of colour who had taken a large room at Laing's the Carpenter; & they spent the Sabbath Evening in worshipping the word of God. On the following morning I called on them. They appeared much gratified in my visit. I requested permission to ask them a few questions which they decidedly acceded to. I asked them what led them to leave San F. & Come to this place. One of them said "They sought the freedom to which they knew they were entitled in common with white men. Their evidence was not taken in a court of justice & they laboured under other forms of oppression. Another of them said the immediate reason was the intention of the Legislature of California to pass an act by which all the people of colour then resident in that state were to be registered descriptively and that they would be permitted to remain. But in case of any other persons of colour come then they were to be employed by the Sheriff in labour until they had earned sufficient money to defray the expence of their conveyance to the state which they were to name. In case of that State refusing to receive them the Sheriff himself was to choose the state "Thus" the speaker added, "If any of us have relatives however near or dear, resident in other states they are forbidden to come to us." They also told me that a deputation of three of their number had waited on the Governor who had given them a good reception and they were much encouraged by the statement he gave of the privileges they would here enjoy. They also said they did not intend to settle in a district but to settle wherever they saw an opening. They belonged to the American Wesleyan Episcopal Church. (One of their no. Handy called on me this morning May 6 handing me a collection book in which several ministers, among the rest Dr. Scott of S.F. signed their names stating he was authorized to make collections for building a Church for coloured people. This man informed me that it was announced expressly by their minister at S.F. a coloured man, the Rev. Moore that they did not intend to establish a distinct Church organization at Victoria but to join to some Ch. already in existence here.) After talking to them, both on this business & on spiritual subjects they asked me to pray with them which I did after they had sung the doxology, and I came away.

On Friday Apr. 30 about a dozen or 15 of them came to the prayer meeting. On Sunday May 2 about the same number came to church. I had previously told them they would be welcomed & accommodated.
This morning (as above noted) the man Handy called. He was styled the "Rev." in the book above alluded to. He said he was not ordained. He had exercised the office both of local and itinerant preacher in California. He was a slave in one of the eastern states and obtained his freedom when he was 21. He has one daughter, then about 14 old by a first wife; & 4 children by his present wife, who are now with Mr. Moore waiting to come - Mr. Moore also intends coming.

I feel this is a juncture of great importance and needs much wisdom and prayer on my part. May the Lord vouchsafe it!

Tuesday, May 18, 1858

Capt. Doane sent me the "Bulletin" (S. Francisco, containing the report of the deputation from the Coloured people to this place which was read at a public meeting at S. Fo. They spoke in very enthusiastic terms of their prospects here; they also mentioned in a very gratifying manner the visit I paid them. One of them said "At last I have found a home." One of them today said to Mr. Pemberton that he was 55 years old and this was the first time he had felt himself a man. The report was signed Mercier, Richard, Moses. The latter wrote a letter to Rev. Moore (their coloured minister at S.F., in which he spoke again of my visit.)

Wednesday, May 19, 1858

About 21 present [at prayer meeting] - 3 coloured men - Used the melodeon in the singing - A coloured man by the name of Papino (I think) called in the morning and shewed me a letter from their minister Mr. Moore; from which I perceived that he is very illiterate. The purpose of the letter was to ask him to purchase for him a piece of land - Papino called ostensibly to asking advice respecting an eligible sight. Perhaps he also thought he might enter into my service as he said that his employment had chiefly been service in gentlemen's families. He was born in Florida - he can hardly read his own name he said. He had got on by "wit" and not by education. He was converted under Mr. Moore's ministry a little more than a year ago. He expressed himself delighted by the reception they had met with here. He had joined with some others in forming a company for brick making.

Tuesday, May 25, 1858

Visited some of the coloured people 1. On top of the hill (1) Copeland has a wife and several children and grandchildren some in slavery in Virginia & Mississippi. Was born a slave in Virginia - His master was his father - (2) Richard (about 53 old I should think) has a wife & daughter 14 old whom he wishes to place at school (3) Williams (4) Papino (who called on me the other day) (5) Handy (ditto) (6) Archy, whose case made so much noise in S. Francisco lately. (7) a grandson of Copeland. 2. House lately occupied by Deans (1) Moses (whose letter to Mr. Moore of S. Fo. was printed in the Bulletin as above, - had lost his wife and children. (2) Davis, a very man, was married, is going to work at a new wharf at Esquimalt and to lodge at Parsons - I gave him some advice which he took well in to the temptations.
He said he would for the gold diggings. (3) Trot - unmarried. (4) Soulay a wife (I think in W. Indies - is going to the diggings - They all appeared much gratified at my visit.

Wednesday, May 26, 1858

Prayer meeting - there were 15 present besides our own family - including 2 or 3 men of colour. After prayer Mr. Moses introduced to me.

(1) Mr. Clark. Has a wife & 8 children in Kentucky in slavery. Is going to the gold mines in hopes of sufficient to purchase their freedom. He said he had never felt as he had felt since his coming here. He felt he was free, but he longed for his wife & children. (2) Abernethy - has a wife and four children in slavery, is going to the diggings to the same object. (3) Nehemiah - unmarried.

Clark said the Lord had brought about his own freedom; He had a strong expectation that he would bring about the freedom of his family. I said "I felt sure the system would fall." He agreed & said he hoped if by no other means the Lord would constrain the enslavers to liberate them as he constrained Pharaoh to liberate the children of Israel and he believed he would hear their groans.
APPENDIX "D"

SOME PUNISHABLE OFFENCES COMMITTED BY NEGROES

IN VICTORIA

1858-1871
## SOME PUNISHABLE OFFENCES COMMITTED BY NEGROES IN VICTORIA - 1858-1871

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Offence Charged</th>
<th>Punishment</th>
<th>Reference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A negro and a Kanaka</td>
<td>Aug. 1858</td>
<td>Suspected murder of a Chinaman.</td>
<td>No record.</td>
<td>Weekly Victoria Gazette, Aug. 28, 1858</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jacob Low</td>
<td>Sept. 1858</td>
<td>Assault.</td>
<td>Fine of $5.00 and costs.</td>
<td>Weekly Victoria Gazette, Sept. 18, 1858</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Henry Johnson</td>
<td>Sept. 1858</td>
<td>Stealing a cooking stove from an unoccupied house on Yates Street.</td>
<td>One month in jail.</td>
<td>Weekly Victoria Gazette, Sept. 25, 1858</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joseph Lewis alias Portuguese Joe</td>
<td>June 1859</td>
<td>Because of his general bad character he was suspected of murdering a policeman who was on the way to arrest him on a charge of stealing pigs from a farm in the vicinity of Craigflower.</td>
<td>Released. Charge not proven.</td>
<td>Weekly Victoria Gazette, June 4, 1859</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wyman</td>
<td>Sept. 1860</td>
<td>Sold bottle of whiskey to an Indian for a quarter. The Indian then killed a fourteen year old boy. The negro was committed as an accessory before the fact.</td>
<td>No record.</td>
<td>Victoria Gazette, Sept. 8, 1860</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Offence Charged</td>
<td>Punishment</td>
<td>Reference</td>
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<tr>
<td>Willis Bond</td>
<td>Apr. 1862</td>
<td>Non payment of wages to a workman.</td>
<td>Ordered to pay wages and costs.</td>
<td>Colonist, Apr. 3, 1862.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Archy Fox</td>
<td>July 1863</td>
<td>Assaulted another negro with an axe after a quarrel over an Indian squaw.</td>
<td>No Record.</td>
<td>Daily Chronicle, July 3, 1863.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Johnson</td>
<td>Feb. 1864</td>
<td>Supplied liquor to an Indian woman. His house on Cormorant Street was a resort for low characters and Indian prostitutes.</td>
<td>Fine of £50 or in default six months imprisonment.</td>
<td>Daily Chronicle, Feb. 18, 1864. Colonist, Feb. 19, 1864.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Offence Charged</td>
<td>Punishment</td>
<td>Reference</td>
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<tr>
<td>William Burnside</td>
<td>Feb. 1864</td>
<td>Charged with being a rogue and a vagabond. Lived with the Indians and made his living selling spirits to them. Continually fighting with the Indians and was a nuisance to the residents on Johnson Street.</td>
<td>Discharged for want of evidence.</td>
<td>Colonist, Feb. 24, 1864.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Willis Bond</td>
<td>Feb. 1865</td>
<td>Obstructing Government Street for two or three days with a frame building he was moving.</td>
<td>Fine of $25.00.</td>
<td>Colonist, Feb. 18, 1865.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Willis Bond</td>
<td>March 1864</td>
<td>Wilful damage to fence owned by ex-councillor Copland, to extent of £5.</td>
<td>Admitted to bail in sum of £30. Given three days in which to restore the fence or be fined $25.00.</td>
<td>Daily Chronicle, March 16, 21, 1864.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Francis H. Gardiner</td>
<td>Aug. 1865</td>
<td>Charged with stealing $2300.00 from Mme. Maitre whose store he was attending in her absence.</td>
<td>No Record.</td>
<td>Colonist, Aug. 2, 1865.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Samuel Williams</td>
<td>Aug. 1865</td>
<td>Loitering about the streets at unseemly hours for illicit purposes. Was overheard attempting to induce a sailor to desert from H.M.S. Service. Struck policeman on the way to jail.</td>
<td>Fine of $25.00 for assault</td>
<td>Colonist, Aug. 12, 1865.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Williams</td>
<td>Aug. 1865</td>
<td>Charged with Ah Lee, with being concerned with a number of Chinese and Indians in creating a disturbance on Cormorant St. Williams was also charged with assaulting Ah Lee.</td>
<td>No Record.</td>
<td>Colonist, Aug. 19, 1865.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Mr. Editor:- I wrote in my last that the people of this colony had reason to believe that the depression which had so long existed was being removed, and that henceforth they expected a steady improvement in their material interest. I feel that a truthful representation (though necessarily brief) of matters here will be acceptable to a number of your readers, many of whom are peculiarly interested in its prosperity. It is true business is but moderate, but our population has ceased to decrease, and hope and energy taken the place of the despondency so universal for some time past. That we have been badly governed and allowed a golden opportunity to flit away unappreciated we have been sadly conscious—when the old country, the Canadas and your own State poured their quotas of energy and muscle into this country, the red tape imbecility and onerous exaction of the government drove them away in disgust; hundreds of agriculturists seeking land to settle were treated with such nonchalance or charged such fabulous prices that they left to find among officials of more urbanity and attention, and on more liberal terms, the lands they fain would have settled upon here. Nature has been truly bountiful in giving us a glorious climate, and great sources of wealth in our forests of timber, our fisheries, extensive mines of coal of superior quality, stock ranges, and agricultural lands capable of immense yields. But the pertinent questions seem to be: What process of development is going on? how are these values being converted into cash or other necessaries? and what amount of ability, energy and success attend the effort? While the discovery and liberal product of gold is a great instrumentality for the purpose of suddenly peopleing a country, it is not an industry to be relied on for permanent prosperity; and therefore, while our yield of the precious metal for the past year was $250,000 more than any preceding twelve months, it is not upon that we base our opinion of the improved condition of the colony; for the first five years it was upon this uncertain and fluctuating occupation that the hopes and fears of the country were balanced—lucky strikes, followed by rash speculation with its attendant reaction; no other industries in opposition; the country was drained of its gold product for all the necessaries of life; no labor for the unsuccessful miner, he was compelled to depart. But now we have a different aspect—we have many other productive interests in successful operation. From carefully compiled statistics we learn that the yield of agricultural products of every description the past season exceeded by four fold that of any preceding year; that one coal mine (the Nanaimo) put out and exported $40,000 worth of coal more in 1867 than it did in 1866. We have also an anthracite mine which will be of great value not only to the owners and to the colony, but to the Pacific coast, it being the only anthracite mine yet discovered on this side of the continent. The company (of which the writer has been a director) has spent $60,000 already in its development, with a promise of excellent returns. Of coal there is an abundance, and it rivals in purity and density the celebrated Lehigh of Pennsylvania. One year ago it was a difficult matter
to induce an intelligent shipmaster to load his vessel with lumber or spars at Burrad [sic] Inlet; to-day seven large vessels are loading or preparing to load at the mills there for foreign markets, and as many more are on their way to take on cargoes—and it is safe to predict that the shipment of this one product during 1868 will exceed the combined shipments since the first stock of timber was felled at the Inlet. Our faith, therefore, in the present and future is, that we are no longer dependant [sic] upon a single industry, and especially one as uncertain as gold mining, for we have now in successful operation farms, breweries, stock ranges, distilleries, coal mines, lumber mills, foundries and factories all more or less remunerative.

Facts like these are of infinite advantage in forming an opinion, and are more to be valued for permanent results than the advent of thousands lured thither by an excitement which is but temporary. Matters look assuredly more hopeful here; and if we may judge the future by the cheering results of the last year, we need not hesitate to say that the future looks bright with promise.

In my next I shall have something to say about the political situation here— an element that has much to do with our material "make up," of the changes which are now imminent in our history and status. That done, by an easy stage, I can make the political situation in America the theme of a subsequent

BELL'S LETTER.

VICTORIA, V.I., B.C.,)
May, 1868.

MR. EDITOR:- The "political situation" here shall be the theme for this letter — for we too have a case for impeachment; but not, thank God! for the purpose of arraigning a recreant "Moses" for usurping power and prostituting the government in the interest of an oligarchy, intent on sustaining the cruel spirit and supreme meanness of negro slavery; for, criticise Old England if you will — and I own there is much for unfavorable criticism — but upon the great questions of human rights she is still head and shoulders above you, proclaiming and maintaining from her flag-staffs planted around the world, "Equality before the Law." — All honor to Old England.

With us it is not the head of the Government, but the system of Government itself— one that sits like a nightmare upon the energies of the people, and is totally unfitted for an intelligent community in the nineteenth century. It is governed from Downing street, with all the red tape circumlocution, "Tite Barnacle" incapability, official arrogance, and "How not to do it" capacity, that attaches to that venerable institution. The Governor is the personification of official imbecility, entirely secluding himself, and seldom allowing the people to come between "the wind and his nobility."
We have a legislature here, pretending to be a representative body, which is but a sham—two thirds of the members of which are paid officials, and vote the narrow policy of the Government. The Governor gets $23,000 a year, and a large staff of officials vote themselves salaries out of all proportion to the ability of the people to pay. The consequence is, objects of vital importance, such as education, internal improvements, immigration, and assistance in developing the resources of the country are quite ignored.

The popular remedy for this undesirable state of affairs is a cheap and responsible government; to economize, by reducing it numerically, or by increasing its efficiency; to have a responsible government by having a government of the people, for the people, and by the people.

During the progress of the discussion which the nature and attitude of the Government has evoked, several modes of relief and escape from the embarrassments of the "circumlocution office" have been more or less warmly espoused by the people of this colony; among them, none more prominent, two years ago, than annexation to the United States. It was urged with much force that the great wants of the country -- immigration, responsible government, and reciprocal trade--would find their fulfillment in such an alliance. All that seemed wanting was "the hour and the man;" the man was considered to be present in the lamented Leonard McClure, Esq., who died in your city a year ago, and at the time of his demise was employed on the editorial staff of the Times. He was a man of rare ability, and a terse writer; he labored assiduously to promote annexation, and his articles in the local paper here, of which he was editor, were noted for their force of logic and progressive tendency in the advocacy of it. But the hour was non est; for while annexation was quite popular with the masses, including all nationalities, and was freely and fearlessly discussed upon the forum and on the streets, I do not think that at any time a sufficient number of the wealthy and influential inhabitants of the Colony could have been induced to commit themselves to the scheme, which must have been the primary step before application to the British and United States Governments.

Among the elements of opposition to annexation may be ranked the official staff. This class of gentry, being in no way responsible to the people, and believing that by such an alliance they would find their occupation gone,, [sic] gave it no quarter--and the official element in a small community is not without considerable influence. Added to this is another class--acclass, too, possessed of the prestige and power that wealth bestows; very conservative and timid, cautious, self satisfied, and dreading innovation of all kinds, but especially Republicanism with its popular rule. Out of these two classes, and indeed sprinkled among the rank and file, you will have no difficulty in forming still another division of the opposition--men intensely British, men who can see little worth living for outside of the "tight little island" called England; who would rather see the country lapse back into a state of primeval simplicity --who would be willing to toil on through penury and want, with no prospect for themselves or education for their children, than that Britain should part (no matter how honorably) with any portion of her extensive domain. They are willing to suffer if they can add dignity and perpetuity
to monarchical institutions.

When you can't avoid it, suffering and dying may be the correct thing, but I certainly protest against it upon all other occasions; to do otherwise would exhibit a lack of what Emerson says the world most needs, "common sense." Besides, I have no very decided convictions of the impropriety of territory changing ownership; for I believe God gave man this beautiful earth to utilize and to be a source of untold blessings, and not to be locked up through the promptings of avarice or the clog of incapacity, and that with a due regard to acquired rights, lands should belong to those who by the accident of locality or superior ability can utilize it the most efficiently and produce the greatest development. But I fear my views on this matter will be considered rather latitudinarian, if not visionary, as it is not usually adopted, except in the case of Indians or other weak people, and then a regard for acquired rights is not always a prominent feature in the process of acquiring territory. Neither would I write slightingly of the feeling of loyalty—that attachment to the land of our birth, to the hearth of our fathers—an impulse that nerves the arm to strike, and inspires the soul to dare, and that brings to our country's altar all that we have of life to repel the invader of homes or the usurper of our liberties—that has given the world a Toussaint, a Washington, a Bozzaris, and will ever stand with "cloven helmet and crimson battle axe" in the van of civilization and progress.

But this feeling perverted, in some men permeates their every vein of government and finds its ultimatum in the conclusion that if government is despotic or inefficient it is something to be endured rather than to be removed. They seem impressed with the idea that the people were created for governments, not governments for the people. It has been said

"Our country's claim is fealty.
I grant you so; but then,
Before man made us citizens
Great nature made us men."

Men with essential wants and laudable aspirations, the attainment of which can be accelerated by the fostering care and enlightened zeal of a progressive government.

But I commenced this letter by promising to make the political situation the theme, but I fear I have wandered from the direct line I had marked out; so to return and to close I will only add that, admitting that a majority of the people and influence could have been obtained in British Columbia in favor of annexation, the consent of the Imperial Government could not have been obtained as subsequent developments in relation to the Dominion of Canada clearly indicate. Then, to confederation with the Dominion of Canada, I will next ask your attention. It is an Imperial as well as a Colonial measure, and highly popular here, as it is one upon which loyalty, utility and progress can hold sweet converse.

I know I have made this letter too long, and trust you will exclaim Multum in parvo at my attempt to put Canada from Atlantic to the Pacific in my next

BELL'S LETTER.
MR. EDITOR:— The colonization of British America, stipulated for in the charter to the Hudson Bay Co., two centuries ago, but never fulfilled, has for several years past occupied the leading minds of Great Britain and Canada, but with no definite policy as to the manner or means of obtaining that end. The vaunted rights of the company ever stood as a great "giant in the causeway." It was not to the interest of this fur catching monopoly to allow the introduction of an element that would straightway become a competition; and hence the intermediate country between here and Canada has remained in all its primeval simplicity for the graze of the buffalo and the tread of the hunter.

But the great principle of national centralization and fraternity now extant, which Prussia accomplished, and for which Italy yearns,—the union of people of a common heritage for purposes of progress and security—finds an echo here; and if it be true that the triumphs of peace are greater than those of war, we shall have reason to congratulate ourselves that the "change of base" sought for here will be at once bloodless and progressive; for if British Columbia shall become a portion of the Dominion of Canada, it will necessitate a great trunk road, a telegraph, and ultimately a railroad—instrumentalities which will solve the problem of colonization with mutual advantage to government and people.

The Imperial Government has given the Dominion a charter, entitled the "British North American Act," providing for the union of Canada, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick at once, and the admission of British Columbia and all the intermediate territory when desirable—British Columbia to be admitted upon joint addresses to the Imperial Parliament from her legislature and the legislature of the Dominion.

Over a year ago, our legislature (two thirds of which, as I stated in a former letter, was composed of appointed officials) voted resolutions in favor of immediate admission to the Dominion on "equitable terms." Whether they were impressed with the idea that confederation was so remote that they could safely throw this sop to the popular wish, and defeat it when it approached ratification, does not appear; but at the last session, a few months ago, when, in order to conform to the Imperial Act, it was necessary to confirm their previous vote, and also to stipulate terms and conditions,—we find these gentlemen of the "How not to do it" school voting against it, with no conflicting data to urge, but giving the very human reason that they were not fools enough to vote themselves out of office—thus presenting in a nutshell the rottenness of the present system. At the Fall elections, although the people have but a meagre representation, they intend that confederation

"Shall be the trumpet call,
If place men stand, or place men fall."

Without attempting even a synopsis of the "British North American Act," which would occupy too much of your space, and possibly fail to interest many of your readers, I would state that it differs from the
Constitution of the United States in several important particulars. It grants to the dominional, as well as the provincial legislatures, the "want of confidence" principle, by which an objectionable ministry can be immediately removed,—at the same time centralizing the power of the nation sufficiently to guard against the heresy of "State rights."

Among the terms, British Columbia stipulates for the assumption by Canada of the Colonial debt, amounting to £500,000, and the building of a wagon road across the country within two years. But the true and earnest friends of progress look deeper for substantial advantage than the ephemeral assistance of making a road or the assumption of a debt— for with confederation comes the abolition of the one man system of government, and in its place a responsible one, with freedom of individual action for enterprise, legislation to encourage development and assist budding industries, the permanent establishment and fostering of free schools, and the disbursement of the revenue according to popular will.

It has been truly said that "right is of no sect and truth of no color." The liberal ideas now struggling for utterance and ascendency under every form of human government, are not the exclusive property of any community or nation, but the heritage of human nature; and if your readers complain that I have written much that does not concern them, tell them that as the traveler occasionally ascends the hill to determine his bearings, refresh his vision and invigorate himself for greater endeavors, so may they by sometimes looking beyond the sphere of their own local activities obtain higher views of the breadth and magnitude of the principles they cherish, and learn that freedom's battle is identical and universal, and whether her sons fight to possess the ballot or abolish the relics of feudalism, the reflex influence of their example is mutually beneficial.

But to the new nation: Who shall write its rise, decline and fall? Springing into existence almost in a day, with four million of people, a population larger than the United States possessed when they commenced their great career, who shall correctly predict its future?

That the banner of the Dominion and the stars and stripes, linked and inter-linked, may go forward in healthful rivalry to bless mankind and hasten the day when from pole to zone men may exclaim, "The world is my country and all mankind my countrymen!" is the sincere desire of the writer of

BELL'S LETTER.

(Mifflin Wistar Gibbs Letters to Bell: The Elevator, May 8, June 26, July 31, 1868. In Bancroft Library, Berkeley, California.)
APPENDIX "F"

RESOLUTIONS PUBLISHED IN THE PACIFIC APPEAL

AFTER THE ELECTION OF JAN. 1864.

To the Editor Pacific Appeal:- Enclosed find resolutions passed at a public meeting held at Victoria, V.I. to take into consideration the acts of some of our colored brothers and ordered to be published in the Pacific Appeal.

Whereas we view with unfeigned regret and astonishment the course pursued by a certain class of colored men, calling themselves Jamaicans, or natural-born British subjects who banded themselves together, and in a body, on the 25th day of January 1864, (the day for the election of our member of Parliament to fill the vacancy made so by the resignation of the Hon. Mr. Ridge) and cast their votes for the illiberal candidate, by whose votes he was returned by 8 majority; and whereas by this act, the popular candidate, Mr. Searby, who had pledged himself to support the Alien Bill now before the House of Assembly, granting to aliens after 5 years residence, on taking the required oath of allegiance, all the rights of native Britons; and whereas the English colonists of Vancouver Island, in utter disregard of English law and English customs are making a vigorous effort to place the badge of complexional distinction upon the subjects of a darker hue, whether aliens or British born, thus preventing them, if possible, from participating either in making or administering the laws to which all classes are compelled to yield their passive obedience -

Therefore in public meeting assembled, numbering nearly one-quarter of the legal voters in the city of Victoria, be it

Resolved, That we view with sorrow and indignation any class of colored men that will in any community (particularly where the same disabilities equally oppress them) cast their suffrages or use their influence to curtail the right of any other portion of their fellow citizens.

Resolved, That so long as there can be found a country where party lines are drawn on account of complexion, or prejudice against a colored skin, just insofar must we consider it impolitic and unwise, and as but conniving at or helping the production of a cruel prejudice, equally as injurious to themselves as to the race they represent, for any portion of the colored people to throw their influence on the side of oppression to gratify sinister or other motives.

Resolved, That we consider the future well-being of our race in a great measure depends upon our unanimity and concert of action, considering at all time that civilly and politically the interest of one man is the interest of the whole, whether that colored man was born under an African, English or American sun, he is untrue to himself, to those he represents and to his God, when he refuses to use all the means at his command for the elevation of his race.
Resolved, That we, the colored voters pledge ourselves not to support any man or set of men who will proscribe us on account of our colour or place of birth.

Resolved, That we look upon any set of men who will vote against a measure for their own elevation as unfit for public or private association among men from any country or clime.

Resolved, That we appreciate our friends who so nobly advocated their rights as men at the polls, and could not be severed from their duty by a pecuniary or social interest.

A.H. Francis  
Samuel Serrington  
A.C. Richards  
Saml. Wilcox  
G.P. Riley  
Committee

(The Pacific Appeal, cited in the Evening Express, February 24, 1864.)
MEMORIAL AND FINANCIAL STATEMENT FROM THE V.P.R.C.

This Memorial from the "Pioneer Rifle Corps" to His Excellency Governor Douglas.

Humbly Sheweth.

That having been at a great expense, from the commencement of the formation of the Corps, to the present time, they humbly request that His Excellency, will be good enough to grant them, sufficient money from the sum voted in the Estimates, for this year, to carry out, the necessary alterations, and improvements to their Armory.

The size of the Building at present, used for a drill room is 20 x 60 Feet.

The Company propose to enlarge it, to 30 x 80 Feet, and to have it weather boarded, and hard finished. Also putting up a substantial Arm Rack &c &c.

The cost of these necessary alterations is estimated to be about Seven Hundred Dollars ($700.)

The Company have the honor to enclose, a statement of their affairs, to the 31st July, from the commencement, shewing they have spent themselves nearly $1400. less the $250 received from His Excellency.

They have now the honor to beg His Excellency to be kind enough, to take this into His early consideration, and grant their request.

Fortune Richard
Acting Secty.

William Brown
Capt.

(MS in B.C. Provincial Archives.)
Statement shewing the Receipts and Expenditures, of the "Pioneer Rifle Corps", since the formation to the 31st July 1862.

Receipts.

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<tr>
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Expenditure.

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<td>Stove, Fixtures &amp; Furt</td>
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<tr>
<td>Drill Sergeant Wages &amp;c</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost of Lot for the Hall</td>
<td>$365.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost of removing the Building</td>
<td>$100.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>$1385.75</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Victoria, V. I. 31st July 1862.

Fortune Richard                     William Brown
Acting Sectry                         Capt.
RESOLUTIONS AND PETITION PASSED AT THE LAND REFORM MEETING, JULY 2, 1859.

RESOLVED: That the history of nations, and the experience of ages, dictate a liberal encouragement of the art of agriculture, as the only sure guarantee of the enduring prosperity and wealth of a country.

RESOLVED: That the true policy as well as duty of government is to encourage agricultural pursuits above all others; to induce immigration to the country; to invite the hardy pioneer to occupy its territory; to furnish the actual settler cheap access to the soil - whereon to permanently invest his labor, and rear his home.

RESOLVED: That the practice of making the public lands a source of revenue is unwise and impolitic; that instead of attracting to, it repels population from the country; and that the better policy, grounded on the experience of new countries, is to donate the public domain to bona fide settlers rather than exact a high price with a view to revenue; that the taxable property of a country whose land system is liberal, so rapidly increases that it soon yields a revenue which far exceeds the proceeds of the sale of lands at any price.

RESOLVED: That in the opinion of this meeting, the public lands of this Colony which are held by the Crown, for the benefit of the people, if sold at all, to actual settlers, should not exceed in price $1.25 per acre, payable in five years - or such sum as would barely pay the expenses of survey.

RESOLVED: That in the opinion of this meeting, the departure of valuable immigrants from our shores in consequence of not being able to obtain agricultural lands, imperatively demands the adoption of a land system which would enable the pioneer to obtain land at once, on application in quantities not exceeding 100 acres.

RESOLVED: That a preference should be given to actual settlers in the choice of the public lands, surveyed or unsurveyed; that a land system should be adopted which should guarantee to them a preemptive right; and that they should have ample time to locate lands for permanent homes, by actual residence and progressive improvements, before they are offered in the market for general competition.

RESOLVED: That the petitions to the Governor and Council and to the House of Assembly, which had been read to the meeting be adopted.

The following is a copy of the petition to the Governor and Council. That to the Assembly is in the same tenor.

-----------
Your Petitioners, the undersigned, actual residents of this Colony, and deeply interested in its prosperity, having viewed with alarm the departure of many of Her Majesty's loyal subjects and others from this Colony to the neighboring republic; and having learned that their departure has been induced by the difficulty of obtaining agricultural lands at once, on application, and by not being obtainable on such terms as would afford equal encouragement to actual settlers in this Colony, as are offered in the neighboring republic; and believing that we shall lose many more of Her Majesty's loyal subjects and others whom it is desirable to retain, as well as induce those who are now on the way here or desirous of coming, to turn their attention to countries where greater encouragement is offered to agriculturalists; and persuaded that except the land system of the colony is materially modified, the prosperity and settlement of the country will be seriously retarded; and believing that the encouragement of agriculture is the surest way to secure the enduring prosperity of the country; and that a liberal land system is best calculated to rapidly populate the colony; and holding that the public lands are the patrimony of the people vested in the Crown for their benefit,—and presuming that your Excellency and the Honorable Council have at heart the well-being and prosperity of the country, and are desirous of introducing those changes which you may deem necessary to secure so desirable a result;-

Therefore, Your Petitioners would respectfully submit to your Excellency and the Honorable Council, that they humbly pray that the Crown lands of this Colony may be opened at once to actual settlers; that a preference may be given to them in the choice of the public lands, surveyed or unsurveyed, over capitalists; that they may be secured in a pre-emptive right; that the highest price of land to actual settlers may not exceed one dollar and twenty-five cents per acre or such price as will barely cover the expenses of survey; and that five years may be allowed for its payment; all of which is most respectfully submitted, hoping that it may please your Excellency and the Honorable Council to take this humble petition into your favorable consideration, and your petitioners as in duty bound will ever pray.

Victoria, July 2, 1859.

(Colonist, July 4, 1859.)
TO THE EDITOR OF THE 'CARIBOO SENTINEL.

It gives me much pleasure indeed to see gentleman of your cloth on Williams Creek this air season, an' hope, sir, de indefatitable enterprize an' de talent I see 'splayed in de columns ob yer valuable jernal will meet wid its juss rewad, dat is, dat de paper will pay big; for 'low me to tell yer, mister editor, its de times we's all arter in dis country, de boys dey says "its every man for hissel an' de debil for us all" in dis air country, but I hope, sir, de debil wont get you or de paper eider; but take de culed fren's advice 'bout looking arter No. 1.

I bleave, sir, I wont be disappoited in hopin yer a goin to stick up for wats rite an' on de squarr, an' gib eberything an' eberybody a rap on de knuckles dat's wrong an' not on de squarr; dont be scared, mister editor, to talk up to de boys, dey like it all de better for dat, juss like wat I see in de 'Spatch' bout a young geneleman dat walops him wife till she sing 'murder' an' runs 'way, nex day write him lobing 'pistle, 'claring she neber will be happy agin till 'longside ob her own dear Charley.

I dont dout, sar, de paper will 'tain heap dat's headifying an instructin to de miners ob dis country but dont flatter yerself, mister editor, dat de teaching will be all on your side ob de kitchin, an' emneting from yer own valuable resauces 'tirely, coss if yer does yer slip up on dat air 'rangment you got darn sight to larn from de poplation ob dis garden ob 'Lestials, Injuns, white men an culed genelman an darn sight to see dat'll sprise an' muse yer. Dere's de breed ob dogs dat habits dese regons, dey's a curiousity dey is demselves; nobody in dis worl eber seed sich a lot ob carnines togeder, or eber heerd sich a noise as dey makes; dey's de bery 'centrated ensense ob bliss dey is 'specially when dere's a muss 'mong 'em, dey seems to lib on musses, yet dey propgates offal fas. Arter de dogs dere's de udder animal dat puzzles me 'markable, de genelman dat goes round all de day wid de hans in de pocket an' puts on de frills, dont know how him lib, yet peers to get all de fat bones to pick, so, so some folks say him lib on BOOKS, on DECK, if dat de case him awful vegetarian, an' grate charity of Capin Cox to change him diet, an'Isennhim below. Dere's de style of pugilisticism in dis country, bery headfyin an' 'imusin; if eber you get in a muss, mister editor, neber tink to get out ob it on de squarr, if yer do yer gon in shure, pick up trifle like de axe, crowbar, or anyting ob dat sort dat's not too hard, dat's de style, if dere's noting ob dat kine round de boot berry good substube, or shub de tum into de corner ob his eye, and be sure de eye cums out 'fore de tum, den when its out kick it in 'gain wid de boot, dat de style Maris. Dere's de new 'scobery in de surgical
'fession dat oughter gain worl wide 'nown for de 'scoberer an' also de leder medal ob de inhumane sciety, de genelman dat vented de "gum boot gout," sar is wastin de valable time in Cariboo, 'fessin what he oughter be larnin in some counery more 'dapted for de study ob de biz; de 'spec-tacle youth oughter "trow fisick to de dogs," or quit for sum place where he cud larn someting ob de 'fession. Dere's de Dush gals, dey's purty smart gals, mister editor, to hold dere own in dis counry, poor gals, I hope dey may continy to do so; de stokeepers is offul down on 'em, coss dey krell all de dimes, bully for de gals, dey's on it, you bet, on de make I means, sar; de sloon keepers, dere offul down on de gals too, coss day draw de boys, and draw de dollars; but de sloon keepers oughter know dat de dance galls aluss took better dan anything else in Californey, de meenus man will spen a dollar for a dance, coss "him dearly lubs de lasses, C." I hear de boys say dere's to be a 'lection at de Mouth soon, I hope, sar, yer goin to put de bes man in, de culed genelman de best, but as de 'jority ob de boys is not culed genelman, best for de country's good to put in de white man, assiss de subjecs, mister editor, ob dis loyal counry to get good resprentive. Hopin dese few 'marks will fine yer well, an' rum for 'sertion in yer valable columbs,

I am yours in bruderly 'fliction,

DIXIE

P.S. I'd most forgot to add, on behaf ob de 'tilligent culed population on dis crek, days 'pointed me de litary cracker to sen 'butions to yer valable jernel.

- 0 -

Barkerville, June 24th, 1865.

TO DE EDITER OB DE CARIBOO SENTAL.

I's bery sorry indee, sar, dat any ob de contens ob my last 'pistle shud hab hurt de feelings ob any genelman whatsoever, or gib him 'noyance, an' humly ax pardon for de 'fence; but yer knows yerself, sar, its im-possible for publik carackers like us to keep rite en' up wid eberybody, in fac we doesn't 'temp anyting ob de kine, we says wat we tink good for de boys an' if dey gets dere back up at wat we gibs for advice we's bery sorry, dey oughter know dat de 'Sental' is aluss 'spected to do him dooty, dat is keep his weder eye open, and let dem know dat wishes to shirk his obseration dat him got weder eye, an' dat it is aluss open; shud de 'Sental' make mistake him alus willin' to 'polergise an' if I bluner in my las an' de genelman's 'feshnal stanin' is raily exaled 'bove any advice I offer, why ob cuss I 'polergises for my inserlance.

I don't tink Mr. Editer, dere is a more motly kermoonity in de worl dan ob Cariboo, war so mush ob de genwine dust and black san' is 'malignated an' passes at de same rate ob curncy, yet in dis same little kermoonity war equality is aluss sposed to lay on de same rok, an' war
no uppa streek effises, deres some foo bright specimens dat tinks deys
dayz from de uppa streek, an' dat de sack in which days 'posited 'tains noting
but black san', ob coss alus exceptin' derselves, dey knows eberyting an'
is smarter dan de balance. It's to some ob dese bright specimens I's
'bout to say a foo words, an' if de cap I's 'bout to 'factor fits any ob
de boys, de bes ting dey can do is to ware it widout saying a word, and
den praps nobody but derselves an' dere culed fren' will be any de wiser;
at de same time I kermends to dere notis de follerin' words:

"O, wad sum power de gify gib us,
To see us-selbes as udders see us."

De fus ob dese wiseakers is in de spirtooal line, and oughter be
"patching up his owl soul for heben," I mean he 'tend to de spirtooal
wants ob dose dat 'dulges in tangle-leg an rot-gut at two bits de drink,
an' neber open him out widout saying someting bery wity--wat him tinks
wity, but eberybody else bery dirty. I hab herd ob genelmen being ker-
mended to war a mustash for de durty words to wipe dere feet on, but
neber herd one dat 'quired one more dan him I's speakin on, an' tho' it's
in my line ob biz--its rader a delercat order to alisit--but I wud ceren-
ly like to sply de gent wid a gud stout article ob de kine. But dis genel-
man, like eberybody else, hab him good qualtys, an' deserbes de tanks ob
de leddies for his volunery an' gratutus saveses as night watchman durin
pas winter; no 'voted luber eber suffed more from cowl wile singeing
under winer ob his gal's chamer dan dis venable owl cuss las winter wile
watchin like a teef for de hoptunity to pilfa de fair name ob 'specable
women.

De nex foo 'marks I 'tends to 'dress to a son ob old Mars, but
weder a 'gitimate son or not is for dem to juge datd herd him yern ob
"akshun in de tented fiel." I hab red shakspuses yern ob de culed genel-
man ob Veners dat was tried for 'lopeing wid de owl genelman's darter,
an' when 'fore his noble massas towl a 'fecting story 'bout 'listing for
de army when him only seben year owl, but de hero ob my yern licks dat
ob Shaksusses all to fits for he must hab dun considable fitein 'fore
dat age, an' mus hab tuck de fiel at five at de bery les calkerlashun,
bese fiteing he mus hab undegon a pile ob grief from triles by coast-
mashal, vonce for useuping de comman' of a "tashment ob de army 'fore
'Bastapool an' puscribing doses to de Rooshans dat 'sisted materily in
de fall ob dat fortess an' for which owl Nick, de late Emprer, has long
'count gin him shud dey eber meet on de uder side ob Jordan; as a fren'
I advise my hero not to ware his medals when he croses de stream for fear
de owl genelman shud spot him.

I had considable more to say, Mr. Editer, but on secon' toat will not
trude more on yer valable spas at presen, an' specfly begs to 'scribe
myself, years,

DIXIE

P.S. Excuse me, sar, but I want to ax you solbe a problem for me. If de
tax ob only two hunred dollas de month is lebied on de hard-gudies, as
perposed by a loyal member ob de Gran' Jury, what shud be de tax on some
uder institootions.

(Cariboo Sentinel Supplement, June 12, July 1, 1865.)
# APPENDIX "J"

## POPULATION STATISTICS

### CENSUS OF VICTORIA AND VICINITY - 1868

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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>White Males</th>
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<td>Victoria West</td>
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<td>James Bay</td>
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<td>Lake District</td>
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<td>South Saanich</td>
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<td>North Saanich</td>
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<td>Metchosin</td>
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<td>Chinese</td>
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<td>Half Breeds</td>
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**Total**: 1682 1011 70 57

*Note: These figures do not include children.*

*(Colonist, Oct. 6, 1868.)*

### COLOURED POPULATION AS OF APRIL 1871

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<thead>
<tr>
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<td>New Westminster town &amp; district</td>
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*(Victoria Directory, 1871.)*
BIBLIOGRAPHY
BIBLIOGRAPHY

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The files of the newspapers listed below have been covered for the period 1858-1871 except where otherwise noted.

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Evening Express, Victoria, B.C.

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PERSONAL MATERIAL:

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Beasley, Delilah H., *The Negro Trail Blazers of California*, a compilation of records from the California Archives at the University of California in Berkeley; and from the diaries, old papers and conversations of old pioneers in the State of California, Los Angeles, California, 1919.


Emmerson, John, *British Columbia and Vancouver Island*, Durham, Wm. Ainsley, 1865.


Fictionalized stories of early Victoria and British Columbia, based on fact.


Fictionalized stories of early Victoria and British Columbia, based on fact.


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Anderson, James Robert, *Notes and comments on early days and events in British Columbia, Washington and Oregon, including an account of sundry happenings in San Francisco*, 1925.

Mallandaine, Edward, *Reminiscences*.

The author was an architect, a farmer, and editor of the First Victoria Directory.

J.S. Helmcken was a doctor in Victoria and the first speaker of the House of Assembly.

**DIARIES:**

Cridge, Reverend Edward.

Gerald, James F.

Hayward, Charles.

Moses, Wellington Delaney.

Pemberton, Augustus.

Robson, Ebenezer.

**RECORD BOOKS AND ACCOUNT BOOKS:**


**MANUSCRIPT LETTERS:**

**Chapter V - Mifflin Wistar Gibbs**

M.W. Gibbs to the Mayor and City Council of Victoria, Nov. 18, 1868. Requesting permission to remove the sidewalk in front of 170 Government Street where he intends to erect a building. In the letter files of the City Hall, Victoria, B.C.

M.W. Gibbs to City Council, Nov. 18, 1868. Requesting three months leave of absence from the City Council. In the letter files of the City Hall, Victoria, B.C.

**Chapter VI - Victoria Pioneer Rifle Corps**

G. Heaton to Governor Douglas, Aug. 15, 1859. Proposing the formation of a white Volunteer Corps.

Fortune Richard to the Colonial Secretary of Vancouver Island, c. Dec. 8, 1861. Requesting financial support for the coloured volunteers.
Capt. W. Brown to Governor Douglas, July 31, 1862. Memorial from the Pioneer Rifle Corps to the Governor enclosing the financial statement of the Corps.


Lieut. R.H. Johnson to Governor Douglas, June 19, 1863. If financial aid is not given, the Corps may be forced to disband.

P. Lester, Richard H. Johnson, Thos. P. Freeman, N. Pointer to the Hon. W.A.G. Young, March 3, 1864. The Pioneer Rifle Corps requests thirty rifles to be used in welcoming Governor Kennedy.


Messrs. Lester, Freeman, Pointer to W.A.G. Young, June 13, 1866. Acknowledges letter regarding return of the rifles and tells of the state of the Corps at the time.

Lieut. R. Caesar to W.A.G. Young, June 13, 1866. An officer of the Corps complains of lack of official support for the unit.

Thomas Deasy to Major J.S. Matthews, Sept. 1, 1934. An old resident tells the Archivist of the City of Vancouver of the Pioneer Rifle Corps and of the early negro police in Victoria.

Chapter VII - Salt Spring Island

Thomas H. Lineker to Governor Douglas, July 9, 1860. Reporting Indian troubles on Salt Spring Island.

Jonathan Begg to Governor Douglas, May 5, 1862. Regarding the construction of roads on the island.

School Trustees of Salt Spring Island, J.P. Booth, Secretary to the Colonial Secretary, October 26, 1869. Regarding the establishment of a public school with the coloured man, John C. Jones as teacher.

Louis Stark to Joseph Trutch, Nov. 3, 1869. Stark wants to move to another claim because of the Indian menace.

Colonial Secretary's office to J.P. Booth, Jan. 27, 1870. Approval of appointment of John C. Jones as school teacher.

Louis Stark to B.W. Pearse, Sept. 15, 1870. Disagreement over where the roads should be built on Salt Spring Island.

Willis Stark to Major J.S. Matthews, Oct. 20, 1934. Telling of his parents and of the early days on Salt Spring Island.
Chapter VIII - In the Goldfields

Chief Justice M.B. Begbie to W.A.G. Young, Richfield, Sept. 20, 1863.
Begbie reports a case of assault against a negro.

Richard H. Johnson to Henry Wakeford, Colonial Secretary, Oct. 3, 1864.
Johnson requests permission to take up an acre of land at Leech River
to erect a hotel for ladies and gentlemen.

Chapter IX - The Problem of Race

Wellington D. Moses, Jacob Francis, F. Richard, Wm. Brown, Richard H.
Johnson, to Governor Douglas, undated. Protest against proscription
in the theatres.

Jacob Francis, F. Richard, Wm. Brown, Richard H. Johnson to Governor
Kennedy, Oct. 5, 1864. Complaint about segregation in the theatres.

Office of Colonial Secretary to the coloured committee, Oct. 5, 1864.
Giving sympathy regarding the problem in the theatres, but can suggest
no remedy.

William Daniel Anderson to Major J.S. Matthews, Sept. 7, 1934, An old
resident tells of the early coloured police and of prejudice against
them.

INTERVIEWS WITH DESCENDENTS OF THE EARLY COLOURED PIONEERS:

Alexander, Barton, June 15, 1949. Victoria, B.C.

Alexander, Norman, July 10, 1949. Victoria, B.C.

Alexander, Mrs. Norman (nee Clanton) July 10, 1949. Victoria, B.C.

Harrison, Ernest, July 1, 1950. Ganges Harbour, Salt Spring Island, B.C.

(Names of other persons interviewed withheld by request.)
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Fuller, Edmund, A Star Pointed North, N.Y., Harpers, 1946.


Howay, F.W., Royal Engineers in B.C., Victoria, King's Printer, 1910.

Johnsen, Julia E., compiler, Selected Articles on the Negro Problem, New York, H.W. Wilson Co., 1921.


Walbran, Captain John T., British Columbia Coast Names 1592 - 1906, their origin and history, Ottawa, Government Printing Bureau, 1909.


**THESIS:**


Hill, Daniel C., *The Negro in Oregon, a Survey.* A thesis presented to the faculty of the Graduate School of the University of Oregon in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts, June 1932.


Ross, Margaret, *Amor DeCosmos, a British Columbia Reformer.* A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment for the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in the Department of History, University of British Columbia, April, 1931.

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Island Farmers Institute of British Columbia, *Salt Spring Island,* Colonist Press, Victoria, 1902.


**PERIODICAL ARTICLES:**


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Visitors' Journal, South Saanich Public School.

Questionnaire sent to Sylvia Stark, Ganges Harbour, Salt Spring Island, by John Hosie, Provincial Librarian and Archivist, March 1928.

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Affidavit signed by Captain John R. Fleming of U.S. Mail Steamship Eliza Anderson, demanding the return of the negro boy, Charles, dated Sept. 28, 1860. MS.

James Tilton to Hon. H.M. McGill, Acting Governor of Washington Territory, Sept. 30, 1860. In Washington Historical Quarterly, 1:71. Requesting that something be done to force the British authorities to return Charles, the slave boy.