THE CABIN CREEK SETTLEMENT:
THE HISTORICAL STUDY OF A BLACK COMMUNITY
IN RANDOLPH COUNTY, INDIANA

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE HONOR'S PROGRAM

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AUGUST 20, 1971
I recommend this thesis for acceptance by the Honors Program of Ball State University for graduation with honors.

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Department of _____________

Date
PREFACE

The Cabin Creek settlement has been such an interesting topic to study. Perhaps I feel this way because in actuality, I am part of the settlement (or at least what is left of it). The research I have done is a mere scratching of the surface—there is much, much more "digging" to do. I hope, however, that my collection of facts, feelings and opinions will be accepted as a sincere effort to be an amateur historian and a graduating Honor's student.

I would like to express my sincere appreciation to Dr. Bert Anson who was so helpful and understanding as I prepared this paper. I am certain he thought many times I would not finish this thesis, but nothing could stop me after setting its completion as my main goal.
INTRODUCTION

In our present society, we have commonly stereotyped the black man as a product of the post-slavery South who came North to find a new way of life. On finding the "milk and honey" North not too receptive to dark-skinned immigrants, the black man turned to the cities where he became part of the lower class labor force, living in the crowded inner-city dwellings collectively called ghettos. Of course this is no myth or legend; truth can be found by just visiting any large city. But there are exceptions to this stereotype and Cabin Creek is a good example.

The Cabin Creek settlement is one of a few black rural communities in Indiana that came into existence during the early 19th century. For example, there was Weaver near Marion in Grant County and within Randolph County there were two others besides Cabin Creek: Snow Hill and the Greenville settlement. For the most part, the other settlements have all but vanished--leaving only cemeteries and reminiscing old-timers who tell of the olden days. But Cabin Creek is unique in that it is still an entity today, although in modified form. There are still nine black families in the Cabin Creek area--seven attending the African Methodist Episcopal church near Modoc.

One must wonder about the old Cabin Creek settlement. How did the blacks come to the area and most of all, why? Were they freemen or runaway slaves? What motivated them to
come to Indiana? Were there outside white influences? All these questions are typical of the mystery behind the history of the Cabin Creek settlement and within this paper, I will attempt to answer them. But caution must be observed when dealing with such a topic. Little written information can be found and tracing the genealogy of blacks is very difficult due to the lack of personal records. Much information, however, can be found by just talking to older members of the community who remember conversations of parents and grandparents. Often, much has been forgotten but what can be pieced together is of great value. Within this paper I have attempted to put together a collection of facts from books and articles, interviews and some common knowledge I have from being a former member of the black Cabin Creek area. I only hope it will answer some of the basic questions one may have about black rural settlements in the North in general, and specifically about Cabin Creek.
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CHAPTER I
INDIANA IN 1825

According to Tucker's *History of Randolph County*, the first black settlers came to Cabin Creek around 1825. Much had happened in the Northwest Territory by that date. As early as 1746 there had been blacks in this area. The French, at a post on the Wabash River called Vincennes, had a group of forty white men and five Negro slaves. Later, more slaves were brought by the French to Vincennes and also to the larger settlements of Kaskaskia and Cahokia which were in the Illinois country to the west.¹

Slavery, however, was prohibited in the area with the Northwest Ordinance adopted by the Continental Congress in 1787. Article VI of the Ordinance stated:

'\textit{There shall be neither slavery nor involuntary servitude in the said territory, otherwise than in punishment of crimes, whereof the party shall have been duly convicted.}'²

But slavery continued in Indiana for many years. Those Negroes and their children that were already in the territory remained as slaves until Indiana became a state. Interpretation of the Ordinance was such that slaves were known to be

²Ibid., 5.
prohibited from being brought into the territory but to counteract this, long-term indenture servitude was made lawful.\(^3\)

There were also free blacks in the Northwest Territory and their number increased due to manumissions and expiration of indentures. Some who had been emancipated in other states or territories also made their way to Indiana. Other Negroes came as slaves with their masters and were freed on arrival. But as free Negroes came, many whites began to protest. Even those who were anti-slavery in their views were also anti-Negro. As a result, attempts to exclude Negroes from the territory legally became common. One such attempt occurred in 1813 when a petition was sent to Congress in hopes of preventing blacks from settling. But neither that effort or other similar efforts were successful in securing legislation that would bar blacks from coming into the Territory.\(^4\)

There were definite pro-slavery feelings within the state, especially in Knox County where Vincennes was located and also in the Illinois counties to the west. At one time this pro-slavery faction had political control of the legislature and the first governor of the territory, William Henry Harrison, was considered an ally of this group. They tried to persuade Congress to amend the Northwest Ordinance so that slaves could be brought into the area on a limited-number-per-year basis. Although unsuccessful in all attempts, they were compensated somewhat through the indentured servitude system which often differed little from slavery.\(^5\)

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\(^3\)Ibid., 7.

\(^4\)Ibid., 19-20.

\(^5\)Ibid., 7-8.
The extinction of any possible adoption of slavery came with the writing of the Indiana state constitution in June, 1816. A portion of The Bill of Rights read as follows:

'There shall be neither slavery nor involuntary servitude in this State, otherwise than for the punishment of crimes, whereof the party shall have been duly convicted, nor shall any indenture of any negro or mulatto hereafter made and executed out of the bonds of this State be of any validity within the State.'

However, slavery still lingered on in some places. In 1820, the Federal Census showed 190 slaves remaining in the state and as late as 1830, 32 slaves were reported in the local census of Vincennes and Knox County although the Federal Census of 1830 registered only three. Many blacks, although legally free, remained with their old masters because they didn't know of or care for any other way of life. Others, unaware of their legal status as freemen, remained in bondage due to ignorance of the law.

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6 Ibid., 23.
7 Morton M. Rosenberg, The Politics of Pro-Slavery Sentiment in Indiana, 1816-1861, 7.
8 Thornbrough, op. cit., 30.
CHAPTER II
THE COMING OF THE SETTLERS TO CABIN CREEK

The Cabin Creek settlement was located in the Southwest part of Randolph County, embracing Nettle Creek, West River and Stony Creek townships. If one were attempting to locate the area today, a trip from Modoc to Farmland on State Road #1 while observing the farm land on both sides of the highway would give one a general indication of the extent of the settlement.

Cabin Creek from which the settlement was named is a stream running south as a tributary of White River. The stream was so named because settlers noticed Indian cabins on the banks of the creek and someone cried, "Let us call the stream 'Cabin Creek.'" The name then was adopted to describe the black settlement which laid south and west of the stream.

The Cabin Creek area was swampy, poorly drained and undesirable to the white settlers. Blacks, then, came to the area, cleared the land and used different techniques of dredging and draining to make the land suitable for the raising of crops. They were, to say the least, quite successful and quite prosperous.  

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9E. Tucker, History of Randolph County, 92.
Another natural phenomenon that made the Cabin Creek settlement unique was the Fallen Timber wilderness which extended across southwestern Randolph County. In 1824, a tornado struck this area and caused enormous trees to make an impassable cluster of timber. The tall trees were as much as three feet in diameter and were described as far exceeding the trees in the area today. At any rate, the Fallen Timbers wilderness, stretching from horseshoe bend southwest across the county, became an ideal hiding place for fugitive slaves as well as criminals.\textsuperscript{11}

Although the Fallen Timbers wilderness was an advantage to those in hiding, the incoming settlers found it to be a great disadvantage. Many of the first white settlers who came to Randolph County were members of the Friends or Quaker Church. They came primarily from North Carolina and Virginia during the first forty years of the 19th century and were part of the "great folk movement" of southern Friends to Ohio and Indiana. By the time the migration was completed, North Carolina, which had been the center of the Society of Friends in the South, was drained of its Quaker inhabitants and the center of Orthodox Friends in the United States had moved from Philadelphia to a town called Richmond on the Whitewater.\textsuperscript{12}

There were three main motives that served as the moving force in bringing the Quakers to the eastern Indiana area and

\textsuperscript{11}Ibid.

\textsuperscript{12}Bernard Knollenberg, Pioneer Sketches of the Upper Whitewater Valley: Quaker Stronghold in the West, 18-19.
to Randolph County. First of all, most were disgusted and antagonized with the institution of slavery. They wished not to rear their families in the slavery environment since they believed that all men were created equal.¹³ Bordon Stanton, a Quaker who moved to the Northwest Territory along with other North Carolina Friends wrote in 1800:

"For several years . . . (we) had some distant view of moving out of that oppressive part of the land, but did not know where until the year 1799; when . . . some traveling Friends . . . thought proper to propose . . . whether it would not be agreeable to best wisdom for us unitedly to remove northwest of the Ohio river,--to a place where there were no slaves held, being a free country."¹⁴

Another reason for the migration of Friends was for health reasons. An example was Aaron White who made the move from North Carolina to the Whitewater Valley in hopes of finding a more healthful place for his ailing wife. The third and probably most common reason for migrating to the west was the hope of economic betterment.¹⁵ It is no secret that the lands of the Southern planters had become non-productive due to continuous planting of soil-destructive crops. A move to virgin areas would certainly be more profitable.

The migration of Friends from North Carolina and Virginia to the upper Whitewater reached its peak around 1830.¹⁶

¹³John L. Smith and Lee L. Driver, Past and Present of Randolph County, 669.
¹⁴Knollenberg, op. cit.
¹⁵Ibid.
¹⁶Ibid., 62.
vastness of the migration should not be underestimated. By 1820, approximately 20,000 Friends had traveled west of the Allegheny mountains. At one counting, one hundred wagons per day were counted as moving through Richmond on the National Road West.\footnote{Errol T. Elliott, Quakers on the American Frontier, 82.} The following statistics (which are incomplete) may give some incite into the numerical significance of the migrating North Carolina Friends:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dates of Migration</th>
<th>Name of Meeting</th>
<th>Number Leaving</th>
<th>Meeting Laid Down</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1801-1807</td>
<td>Bush River, S. C.</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>Laid Down</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1796-1837</td>
<td>Cane Creek, N. C.</td>
<td>156</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1800-1843</td>
<td>Contentnea, N. C.</td>
<td>111</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1799-1840</td>
<td>Core Sound, N. C.</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>Laid Down</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1806-1860</td>
<td>Deep River, N. C.</td>
<td>89</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1802-1860</td>
<td>Dover, N. C.</td>
<td>71</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1824-1848</td>
<td>Hopewell, N. C.</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>Laid Down</td>
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<tr>
<td>1805-1812</td>
<td>Jack Swamp, N. C.</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>Laid Down</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1802-1825</td>
<td>Mount Pleasant, Va.</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>Laid Down</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1801-1860</td>
<td>New Garden, N. C.</td>
<td>195</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1305-1815</td>
<td>Piney Grove, S. C.</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>Laid Down</td>
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<tr>
<td>1802-1830</td>
<td>Piney Woods, N.C.</td>
<td>29</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1802-1860</td>
<td>Rich Square, N. C.</td>
<td>31</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1831-1839</td>
<td>Spring, N.C.</td>
<td>22</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1795-1850</td>
<td>Springfield, N. C.</td>
<td>150</td>
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<tr>
<td>1812-1835</td>
<td>Sutton's Creek, N.C.</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>Laid Down</td>
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<tr>
<td>1803-1854</td>
<td>Symon's Creek, N. C.</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>Laid Down</td>
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<tr>
<td>1801-1822</td>
<td>Westfield, N. C.</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>Laid Down</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wrightsboro, Ga.</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>Laid Down</td>
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The typical pattern of the earlier settlers was to migrate first to a well-known Friends settlement in Ohio, then move on to the frontier. By the 1820's, the Whitewater meeting was so
well known that immigrants went directly to that area. Most North Carolina settlers came from the Quaker strongholds in Guilford and Randolph Counties which are located in the north central part of the state. Other Quakers came from the north coastal counties of Perquimans and Pasquotank. The migrants were well-equipped with horses, wagons, furniture, and a few thousand dollars in cash from the sale of their previous property.\(^{19}\)

In Randolph County, there were several Friends meetings, one of which was called Cabin Creek but was commonly known as Cedar. Established in 1834, it was located three miles southwest of Farmland. In 1843, during the split of the Slavery and Anti-Slavery Friends, the Cabin Creek meeting went Anti-Slavery and continued as such until it disappeared a little later. A new meeting was established in 1860 and was called Cedar.

Another Friends meeting located near the Cabin Creek settlement was called Popular Run. Organized in 1846 after the "separation", the Popular Run church was established five and one-half miles southwest of Farmland. Three different church buildings have been constructed to serve these Quakers. The first meeting house was of logs and was abandoned by 1856 when a newer structure was built. By 1883, another church had been completed and since then, the building has been remodeled.\(^{20}\)

\(^{19}\)Knollenberg, op. cit., 62.

\(^{20}\)Smith and Driver, op. cit., 675.
The question of slavery was a violent and divisive topic among Quakers in Indiana. Most Friends felt that the traditional view of not owning slaves should strictly be adhered to but the majority were opposed to any violent course of abolition. But the minority of Quakers who were strongly anti-slavery became a powerful group and split with the Orthodox Indiana Yearly Meeting in 1843.21

The year before this division came about, an interesting incident took place in Richmond, Indiana. Henry Clay, "the Great Compromiser" and a statesman from Kentucky was on his way from a reception in his honor at Dayton and another to be held at Indianapolis. The Quakers were almost solidly Whig because of the party's economic policies and the Whitewater counties of Union, Henry, Randolph and Wayne were populated by many Friends. This Whig stronghold in Indiana could not be ignored by Clay, so he arranged a stop over in Richmond so that his Whitewater admirers would have a chance to display their enthusiasm for the great U.S. statesman who would be running for President in 1844.22

There was a feeling that an incident might occur since the anti-slavery factions were opposed to Clay because of his feelings on slavery. There was a rumor that a petition might be presented to Clay which would have something to do with

21Knollenberg, op. cit., 75.
22Ibid.
slavery. The Wayne County Recorder expressed the hope that such a move would not be taken. On September 21, 1842, the Recorder had stated, "'Mr. Clay comes here as an invited guest and under such circumstances it would be a breach of hospitality, and an insult to beset him with a Petition of such a character. After his return home, we have no objection how many petitions are sent to him.'"^{23}

The great day finally came. On October 1, 1842, Clay was met at the Indiana-Ohio state line by a large concourse of Hoosiers who formally welcomed him into the state. Thomas G. Noble served as the Grand Marshal for the reception which proceeded to Richmond. As reported, the pageant was a spectacular affair. A little over-enthusiastic account said there were 802 carriages and approximately eight thousand people. In the afternoon, Mr. Clay addressed the crowd—giving a plain talk with the people on his own political views and those of the Whig party. The speech apparently received great applause and cheering but then the abolitionists made their move. Hiram Mendenhall, it was announced, wished to present a petition to Mr. Clay. Mendenhall was a strongly anti-slavery man living in Randolph County near the Cabin Creek settlement.^{24} He confronted Clay with the following petition signed by two thousand persons:

'To Henry Clay.—We the undersigned citizens of Indiana, in view of the declaration of rights contained in the character of American

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^{23} Ibid., 77.
^{24} Ibid., 76.
Independence, in view of that justice which
is due from man to his fellow man; and in view
of those noble principles which should charac-
terize the Patriot; the Philanthropist and the
Christian; ask you, most respectfully to 'un-
loose the heavy burdens,' and that you let the
oppressed under your control, who call you
master go FREE. By doing so you would give
'liberty to whom liberty is due,' and do no
more than justice to those under your charge,
who have long been deprived by you of the
sacred boon of freedom; and set an example
that would result in much good to suffering
and debased humanity, and do an act altogether
worthy of a great and good man.25

who were the signers of the petition? No one exactly
knew for sure. The Free Labor Advocate and Anti-Slavery
Chronicle stated simply that they were citizens of Indiana. The
Centerville paper said that the petition had originated with
the Abolitionists but was circulated by the Democrats who signed
their names in order to embarass Mr. Clay. All sources agreed
that at least one third of the signatures were those of Negroes,
most likely those residing in Cabin Creek near the residence of
Hiram Mendenhall.26

Mr. Clay responded to the petition with tact and calmness.
He also assumed that many of the signers had been Democrats and
not Abolitionists. He said that slavery was an evil put upon
the colonies by Great Britain but he denied that the signers
of the Declaration of Independence had intended the document to
be interpreted as a declaration of equality and freedom for
slaves. He went on to say that his slaves were well fed and

25 Ibid., 77.
26 Ibid., 78.
treated and he paid tribute to the Friends in the audience who he thought Mr. Mendenhall should attempt to imitate. They were, he said, meek and gentle people who were opposed to slavery but were not willing to follow in the paths of the abolitionists who accomplished nothing more than vulgar and contemptuous acts which would not speed the end to slavery by any means. Reports conflicted on Mendenhall's apparent behavior during Clay's responsive deluge. One source said he was poised and calm while another stated he "writhed his severe castigation as on a bed of coals, and had more of the gallows look about him than any white man we ever beheld before."27

The reports of the incident, although definitely biased, showed not only that the anti-slavery movement existed in the Whitewater Valley but also showed the depth which it had reached. Handing a controversial petition to a nationally-known politician was quite a feat in those days. Today we think nothing of a demonstration against even the President of the United States, but in 1842 surely such an incident had a jarring effect not only on those who were present but also on those who later heard about it.

That Hiram Mendenhall was a Randolph County resident living near the Cabin Creek settlement is also of significance. It gives a concrete bit of evidence in proof of the generally accepted premise that the blacks who settled Cabin Creek did so near and among Quakers because of the protection the Friends might give them against being captured by man-stealers who would sell them into slavery.

27Ibid., 79-80.
The Quaker influence, then, is of utmost importance when attempting to discover the basic reasons behind the establishment of rural black settlements in Indiana. The Quaker migration from the Southern border states of Virginia and North Carolina brought the Society of Friends to the land of the Whitewater Valley as well as elsewhere in the Midwest. With them, they reportedly brought either slaves or manumitted free men who had once been their property. In some instances these former masters assisted the blacks in becoming self-supporting farmers. In the Cabin Creek settlement, one must assume that this was also the case. The early settlers were, for the most part, free men who came also from North Carolina and Virginia. To "make it" on such a long journey took some assistance from friendly whites and the Quakers provided this needed aid.

Thus, the free black came West with the help of the Quakers, but there were certain factors that motivated them to leave their homes. The plight of the slave in the South was considered many times as "hell on earth," but the freeman's life was not much better. Those free blacks who settled in Indiana from North Carolina and Virginia were many times escaping the unendurable restrictions imposed upon them in those states.

One can examine the state of North Carolina between 1820 and 1850 from which many Quakers as well as freemen emigrated to escape the numerous restrictions placed on free blacks. Free-men were never welcomed in North Carolina as in many other

Southern states, because of a constant threat that free blacks would 'stir up' discontent among the slaves which could possibly lead to insurrections. In 1831, after the Nat Turner insurrection in Southampton County, Virginia, the feeling for repressive measures became even more widespread.

In 1826 a law was passed prohibiting free Negroes from entering North Carolina. Any free Negro who entered the state was to be informed of the 1826 law and if he did not leave within twenty days he could be fined five hundred dollars. Failure to pay this fine within the prescribed time would render him liable to be held in servitude for a period of not more than ten years. A person who had served his time on such a conviction could be retried and convicted again if he failed to leave the state within thirty days. Five hundred dollars was again fined to anyone who brought free Negroes into the state. The Negroes could be arrested and jailed for vagrancy.29

A master could emancipate a slave over fifty years of age providing he paid five hundred dollars bond to assure the former slave's good conduct. Slaves emancipated under any other conditions were forced to leave the state within ninety days and were to never return. If this regulation was violated, upon conviction, the slave could be sold at a public auction and his new owner was to hold him for the rest of his life as a slave.30

The purpose for the above restrictions is apparent: The state of North Carolina wanted only slaves and no free blacks. If a slave was manumitted and unaware of the law, he could be re-enslaved.

30Ibid., 38.
In 1831, the North Carolina state legislature passed a law prohibiting all persons from teaching slaves to read or write, an exception being the use of math figures. The penalty for doing such differed between the races. Whites were fined between one hundred and two hundred dollars or imprisoned. Free blacks were imprisoned, fined or whipped (not more than thirty nine lashes) according to the discretion of the court. 31

Other laws prohibited the marriage between free Negroes and whites and slaves and free Negroes. A free Negro was not allowed to peddle outside the county limits and within the county he had to have a court issued permit. Slaves and free Negroes were both restrained from preaching by another 1831 legal provision. In 1835, an act was ratified which excluded all Negroes from voting. It declared that "all free white men of the age of 21 years who shall have been in residence of the State one year" shall be eligible to vote." 32

By these laws, the free Negro in North Carolina led quite a restricted life. Other regulations also existed. If a Negro's freedom was questioned, he had the burden of providing the proof. He was not allowed to own a gun, a mare, a dog or any intoxicating liquor. A pro-slavery white would have to be present before he could hold a meeting. Permission had to be secured from the government before he could move to another county. 33

Restricted in private property, mobility, marriage, education, and watched constantly for fear of wrong-doing, it is no wonder

31 Ibid., 40.
32 Ibid.
33 Lyda, op. cit., 18.
the free Negro wanted to leave North Carolina. Similar laws in Virginia and other Southern states made migration to the Northwest Territory a heaven-sent alternative.

Proof of their freedom was usually brought by free Negroes in the form of highly treasured documents called "free papers" of which the following is an example:

State of North Carolina, County of Randolph SS. 34

Be it known to all persons whom this may concern that George Evins, a free person of color, has signified unto us, the undersigned, two of the justices of the peace for the county aforesaid, that he has an intention of moving his family to the state of Indiana, which consist of himself, his wife, Mary, and three children all boys, Henry, Eli, and John Columbus. This may certify that the said George Evins and family are free born. The occupation of the said Evins is that of manual laborer and shoemaker. We have been well acquainted with the said Evins and family and they bear the character of industrious and respectful. As to the moral character of the said Evins, we know of nothing but what would entitle him to the confidence and respect of any neighborhood in which he may choose to reside.

In testimony of the above, we set our hands and seal the 8th day of October, 1834.

John D. Brown, J.P.
H. Moffath, J.P.

With their newly acquired free papers, the blacks prepared for the long journey to Indiana. To speculate as to the route of travel that these settlers used to make their way to the Cabin Creek settlement, is at the most, guess work. But by studying the patterns of Quaker travel, one might come to something of a valid conclusion on how the free Negroes migrated.

34Ibid., 19.
The principal routes used by the Quakers in the early 1800's were:

1) Great Emigrant Road - Philadelphia to Cincinnati and Louisville
2) National Road - Cumberland to Illinois
   (See map in Appendix)

The usual instructions given to a free Negro preparing for travel was first of all to start North in the fall of the year to take advantage of the natural foods available at that time such as paw paws, nuts, fruits, etc. The fall of the year was also advantageous because it was usually dry, was not too cold and was generally thought of as being the healthiest time of the year to travel. The Negroes were usually cautioned to stay on the high land until they reached the Ohio River. From there, they were to follow the streams north and possibly seek the aid of the Quakers and other sympathetic whites. Similar instructions were given to runaway slaves who later helped populate the rural settlements.

The course of travel of the free Negro, then, coincided with the routes of the Quakers. But blacks, unaccompanied by whites, had to be very discreet when traveling for fear of being captured by man-stealers who could sell them back into slavery. Those who chose to make the trip had to be in good health and had to have a great deal of desire for a new life.

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35Elliott, op. cit. (map)
36Personal interview with C.E. Charles
Perhaps one could make an accurate assumption in saying that the blacks who migrated to Cabin Creek and similar settlements were quite industrious and determined or in other words, were the "cream of the crop."\textsuperscript{37}
CHAPTER III

ASPECTS OF THE CABIN CREEK SETTLEMENT

The first black settlers to come to Cabin Creek were primarily from North Carolina and Virginia. The majority, however, between 1825 and 1850 were from North Carolina, specifically from Guilford County. One may recall that almost all the Quakers from Guilford County migrated to the Whitewater Valley during this same time period. Between 1850 and 1865, few black settlers came to Cabin Creek, due primarily to the adoption of the exclusion article in the Constitution of 1851 and maybe moreso to the Fugitive Slave Law passed in 1850 as a result of the Compromise of 1850.38 The settlement declined after the Civil War as many of the settlers moved to urban areas. The twentieth century, especially during the 1930's and 1940's, saw a revival within the settlement as new families, unrelated to the older settlers, came to the disappearing Cabin Creek community. These families came from various areas—most migrating from the South to a near-by Indiana city such as Muncie or Richmond. From there they came to Modoc and its surrounding areas and purchased farms. (These recent inhabitants will be discussed in more detail later.)

Many of the early settlers were mulattoes, being perhaps

the son or daughter of a slave master. Some, however, married whites and moved to the settlement to escape possible persecution from those opposed to such a marital union. The 1850 Census provides two examples. In Stoney Creek Township, a Willis Dolby, a farmer of 21 years in age and a mulatto, was listed as the head of the household and under his name was Cela Dolby, 17 years in age and white. One can suspect that they were husband and wife; he was born in North Carolina while she was born in Indiana. Another example is that of Ambrose and Susana Chavers, also from Stoney Creek Township. Ambrose was 36 years in age, a mulatto and a farmer. His wife was 35 and white. She was born in Tennessee while his place of birth was North Carolina. They had four children: Stephen, 10; John L, 6; William H., 5; and Josiah, 4.39

Whereas there were nearly 100 families in the Cabin Creek settlement at its peak, one can get a general picture of the settlers by closely studying a few families. The author has chosen three families: the Scott's, Stafford's and Ladd's. Two reasons can be given for choosing these particular families. First, all three families have descendants who still live in the general area. Secondly, the families are interrelated due to marriage.

The Scott family can be traced back to Robert Scott who was born a slave in Guilford County, North Carolina in 1770. He was emancipated in 1779, and on reaching manhood, married

39U.S. Census of 1850, Stoney Creek Township, Randolph Co., Indiana.
Amy Robbins. They had a total of 12 children, nine living to an adult age. Robert Scott migrated to the Whitewater Valley in 1821 and settled in Wayne County. In 1832, he moved to the Cabin Creek settlement in Randolph County where he purchased a farm of 80 acres. He died in 1848 at the age of seventy-eight. 40

Of his twelve children, three were to also come to the Cabin Creek area from North Carolina. One of the tree was Martin Scott. Martin was born in Guilford County, North Carolina, in 1800. A farmer by trade, he came to Cabin Creek in 1827 and settled in Nettle Creek Township. 41 He had a total of ten children, seven of them being as of 1850 Census Eliza A., 26; Mahala, 10; Giles L., 8; Marion, 7; Lyda, 6; and Richard Y., 5. He was a member of the Baptist church and was known to be a Republican. He died in 1883. 42

Another son of Robert Scott who came to Cabin Creek was Greenberry Scott. Born in North Carolina, he later came to Nettle Creek Township. 43 He married a girl from Virginia by the name of Rachel and they had a total of ten children, two of them being as of the 1850 Census Sylvester, 5; and Pervinaway, 2. 44

The third son was James Scott who was born in Guilford County, North Carolina, in 1814. He traveled with his father from North Carolina to Wayne County, Indiana. In 1832, at the age of 18, he came to Cabin Creek where in about five years he

40 Tucker, op. cit., 140.
41 Ibid.
42 U.S. Census, 1850.
43 Tucker, op. cit.
44 U.S. Census, 1850.
married his first wife, Hannah Demory, also a native of North Carolina. They had a total of fourteen children, eight of them being as of the 1850 Census Eleazer, 13; Levi, 11; Anderson, 8; Rachel, 8; Anaia, 6; Sarah, 5; Ary, 3; and Gilyard, 1. James' second wife was Cassaline Cox who was born a slave in Frankfort, Kentucky, in 1829. A Civil War widow, she came in 1865 to Troy, Ohio, where she resided for four years. In 1870, she married James Scott, who was much her senior. She had 5 children by her previous marriage. James Scott had a farm of 120 acres and he, like his brother Martin, was a Baptist and a sound Republican.

The descendants of James Scott are the ones most notably remembered since the decline of Cabin Creek. Eleazer Scott, born in 1837, was well known for his grocery store located on the first crossroad going North past where the A.M.E. church stands today. The location is still known as Scott's Corner even though the land is no longer owned by the Scott family. The house still stands where Eleazer Scott transacted his business. Although Cabin Creek was never a town as such, the presence of a grocery store gives one an indication that the community was significantly close-knit to want to provide goods and services for the other inhabitants. This is also shown in the U.S. Census of 1850 where three of the black settlers listed blacksmith as their occupation while one listed shoemaker.

Elazor's wife was named Kissiah and she was born in 1844 and died in 1895 at the age of 41.

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45 Tucker, op. cit.
46 U.S. Census, 1850.
47 Tucker, op. cit.
48 U.S. Census, 1850.
Another son of James Scott was Arie (or Ary) who was born in 1847. He married Martitia E. Barter and they had a total of three children, the youngest being Bessie who was born in 1892 in Henry County, near Blountsville. She came to the Cabin Creek area in 1901 at the age of nine. Presently, she is the only descendant of the original Cabin Creek settlers who is still living in the area where her numerous ancestors once lived. She married John Reed of Richmond and since his death in 1954, she has resided on a 40 acre farm approximately 1/16 of a mile from where the A.M.E. church is presently located. 49

It is much more difficult to trace the Ladd family since all family members are either deceased or have left the area. According to the U.S. Census, 1850, the Ladd family came from North Carolina and settled in Nettle Creek and West River Townships. 50 Those Ladd's listed in the 1850 Census are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>West River Twp.</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Place of Birth</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sarah Ladd</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>North Carolina</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Martha Ladd</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>North Carolina</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benjamin Ladd</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>North Carolina</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nettle Creek Twp.</th>
<th>Place of Birth</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Washington Ladd</td>
<td>North Carolina</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emily Ladd</td>
<td>(wife, from Virginia)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eli Ladd</td>
<td>North Carolina</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eliza Ladd</td>
<td>(wife, from Indiana)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isaac M. Ladd</td>
<td>Indiana</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Etticio P. Ladd</td>
<td>Indiana</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

49 Personal interview, Mrs. Bessie Reed, Modoc, Indiana, January, 1971.
50 U.S. Census of 1850, West River and Nettle Creek Townships, Randolph Co., Indiana.
51 Ibid.
One could speculate and say that Martha Ladd was the mother of Sarah, Benjamin, Washington and Eli Ladd. Washington Ladd was the father of Samuel Ladd, who was born in 1865 and later married a girl by the name of Leacy H. Stewart. She was born in 1875 in Grant County near Marion. They had three children, one of which was John Ladd. John Ladd was born in 1874 and in 1916 he married Mildred Hansard who was born in Cadiz, a small community located about 7 miles west of New Castle in Henry County. Her parents were John D. Hansard and Stilla Williams Hansard. Besides Mildred they had another child named Eugene. John and Mildred Ladd had three children, two girls and a boy: Anna, who died in 1962; J. C. who was born in 1921 and is presently in the State Hospital in Richmond; and Mary Ladd Bragg who was born in 1918, lived for many years in Fountain City and who now resides in Richmond, Indiana. (Mrs. Bragg had two daughters. Diane, the younger of the two, graduated from Ball State in 1969.)

The Stafford family like the Ladd family can be traced back to the 1850 census of Nettle Creek Township which records the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Place of Birth</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jeremiah Stafford</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>North Carolina</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amy Stafford</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>Virginia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Henry R. Stafford</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>Indiana</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>George W. Stafford</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Indiana</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Martin A. Stafford</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Indiana</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harriett E. Stafford</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Indiana</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John W. Stafford</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Indiana</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rufus Stafford</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Indiana</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sarah A. Stafford</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Indiana</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jeremiah Stafford</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Indiana</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

52 Information received July 9, 1971, from Mrs. Mildred Ladd, 31 S. 14th St., Richmond, Indiana.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Betsy Stafford</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>North Carolina</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perry Stafford</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>North Carolina</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maniah J. Stafford</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>North Carolina</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meriditte Stafford</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>Indiana</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elizabeth Stafford</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>North Carolina</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is through the name of Perry Stafford that the present Stafford family can be traced. Perry Stafford, like the other Stafford's listed, came from North Carolina. He married a woman by the name of Elizabeth Ward who was of Cherokee descent and who was born and raised near the Greenville settlement. From that marriage, they produced one child, that being Emmanuel Crawford Stafford. By a succeeding marriage, Perry Stafford had two girls and one boy. The boy, Jimmy Stafford, later became a resident of Cabin Creek and formed a dry goods business in Modoc with the help of Lihue Gillium. Jimmy later left the area in 1902 to set up a similar business in Indianapolis.

Emmanuel Stafford, however, was to have a different career. His father, Perry, was a horseback fur buyer and had to spend much time on the road. One day he came home only to find Emmanuel out in the snow with a bad case of the whooping cough. This was apparently before Perry's second marriage and he was concerned that his child was not getting proper care. But again he had to leave home to make a trip to the Economy Tannery. While he was there selling hides, he made inquiries to see if anyone would be willing to take in a child to raise. John and Nancy Charles seemed quite willing so they took Emmanuel in and raised him to the age of twenty-one. Their farm was located just north of the Randolph-Wayne County line.

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53U. S. Census, 1850.
On reaching the age of twenty-one, the Charles' gave Emmanuel a horse and buggy and he came to Cabin Creek. Within a year, he had married Emily Barber. Emily was the daughter of Monroe Barber and her sister, Martitia, married Arie Scott and they became the parents of Bessie Scott (Reed). Emmanuel's marriage served to produce two children: Eldo and Bertha Stafford. Emmanuel's second wife was Adeline Stewart, sister of Leacy Ladd (Sam Ladd's wife). Adeline's mother was Martha Jane Cobb and was a native of Darke County, Ohio. Her father, Constantine Stewart (better known as "Con"), was from North Carolina and came along with many others of the Stewart family to the Weaver settlement near Marion in Grant County. Martha Jane and Con had thirteen children, one of them being Adeline Stewart.

Adeline and Emmanuel Stafford produced five children: Marie, Paul, Glenn, Gueal and Martha. Glenn was born in 1900 and also remained in the Cabin Creek area to make his home. In 1921, he married India Perkins and she gave birth to three boys and two girls: James, Robert Lowell and Willodean Marie who all reside in Richmond; Madonna Irene who resides in Chilsey, Michigan; and Glenn Eugene who resides in Dayton. 54

Although there should be many other families discussed here, much more research will have to be done before this can be accomplished. However, there are some individuals who were outstanding community members and who should be mentioned.

John Demory was one of the first settlers to come to the Cabin Creek area and although he stayed only a short time (moving

54 Personal interview, Mr. Glenn Stafford, 1214 South L St., Richmond, Indiana, August, 1971.
later to near Winchester), he should be remembered as a respected black farmer of Randolph County. He was born a slave in Guilford County, North Carolina, the son of a Frenchman and a light mulatto. In 1801, John married Sarah Robison who had received her freedom at the age of 18 through the last will and testament of her owner. Although John was still a slave, they kept their own household and had a total of eleven children.

As a slave, John served as a personal body servant to his master and although his duties were light, he became tired of bondage and yearned for freedom. He then decided to escape. On stealing away from the plantation, he was soon followed by a posse of men who tracked Demory down and apprehended him. After binding him in ropes, the captors started back to the plantation. After a while, they decided to stop to rest and to prepare a meal. While they were busy with camp duties, a man by the name of William Knott cautiously went to Demory and cut the ropes. Once again free, John took great precautions. To throw the bloodhounds off his scent, he swam a millpond and waded for miles up a stream. He then hid in the woods until he thought it would be safe to proceed on his journey.

On making a successful trip to Randolph County, he became an industrious worker and was listed as one of the first blacks to come to the Western part of Randolph County which was soon to be Cabin Creek. He later established a home near Winchester and sent for his wife, Sarah, and their children. One child, William, did not come with Sarah but went on to lead quite an exciting life before finally coming to Randolph County. John
Demory prospered throughout his years in Randolph County and died in 1860 as a respected farm owner. 55

Another interesting individual was John Roberts of Nettle Creek Township who was elected Assessor of that township in 1830. He was the first black Assessor in Randolph County and was possibly the first black county official in Indiana. He ran against three preachers and when declared defeated by three votes, he contested the election. On a recount, it was found that he had won by one vote. Many white persons were aroused at having a Negro in such an office; Nettle Creek was known to have a strongly Democratic electorate. But in 1880, there were 45 black electors in Nettle Creek—a sizeable number who wanted representation. Roberts was a competent official and as summed up by E. Tucker, "has performed his official duties with dignity and intelligence, and no citizen finds any ground of reasonable objection to the work he has accomplished for the public." 56

Assessor Roberts is the only Cabin Creek settler who became a public official. There were few, if any, politicians or professional people. Most were just one or two generations from slavery and farming the land was their chief occupation. Even in recent years, those blacks coming to the area are not highly educated.

The many settlers that came to Cabin Creek made religion an important part of the community. One account said that after the A.M.E. church had been organized, settlers were so interested in attending church that they would walk as much as four miles

56 Tucker, op. cit., 140.
at night carrying hickory torches to provide light. Ministers were known to walk from Richmond, Indiana (a good 30 miles) to Cabin Creek to preach for as little as $1.25. This seems to show quite a large amount of dedication on the part of the settlers as well as the ministers.

There were two churches established in the Cabin Creek settlement. One was the Regular Union Baptist Church and the other was the African Methodist Episcopal Church.

The Regular Union Baptist Church was started in 1843 by Rev. Samuel Jones of Mercer County, Ohio. Rev. Jones preached in a log schoolhouse located in Nettle Creek Township near where the Baptist Cemetery is today (about 1/8 mile north of the A.M.E. Church). The original members of the Baptist Church were Stephen Patterson, Isom Davis, Mr. and Mrs. James Scott and Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Robinson.

Between 1860 and 1865, a meeting house was built near the sight of the old school house. The church, along with other Baptist churches in black settlements, formed an association which included: Newport (Fountain City), Greenville settlement, one in Grant County (Weaver) and one in Rush County.

At one time there were 35 members, but after 1865 the church began to have financial difficulties. However, in 1873, it was reorganized with seven members and by 1882, there were nine members who are as follows: Mr. and Mrs. James Scott, Mr. and Mrs. William Shoecraft, Reuben Means, Eliza Scott, Rachel Sawyer,

Susan Amanda Wood and Keziah Scott. The preachers at the church have been as follows: Samuel Jones, John Jones, Lee Van, Reuben Means and Unis B. Plans. 58

The African Methodist Episcopal Church was first organized in 1833, and the meetings were initially held at the meeting house located southeast of the Popular Run Friends' meeting house (near the present sight of the A.M.E. cemetery approximately 3 miles north of the church). The first meeting house was closed in 1865 and the members then worshipped in the schoolhouse. 59

In 1880, plans were made for the construction of an A.M.E. Church. The land was donated by Peter Ladd. The following is a sequence of minutes from the building committee meetings:

February 8th 1880

The official board met at bro. C.H. Smothers.
Meeting opened by prayer offered by Elder Smith.
After transacting the official business of the Church, bro. I.M. Ward urged the election of trustees and the building of a church and all present gave their hearty consent after which Elder Smith proceeded to nominate ten persons for the trustees. A motion to adjourn. To meet at the call of the Elder carried.

S. Wood, Sec.

March the 8th A.D. 1880
Bethel Church, Cabin Creek, Ind.

There was a meeting called by Elder Smith for the electing of Trustees. Meeting opened by prayer, the Elder in the Chair. C.H. Smothers Secretary. The following named persons was Elected as trustees--C.H. Smothers, Solomon Wood, Burrel Perkins, John Watkins, J.H. Roberts--was duly Elected (and their names was recorded at the County Seat as prescribed by law). The meeting adjourned. To meet March the 16th 1880.

C.H. Smothers, Sec.

58 Tucker, op. cit., 135.
59 Ibid.
March 16th 1880

The Trustees and Members met according to previous arrangements. On motion C.H. Smothers was chosen as permanent Chairman and S. Wood Sec. pro tem. The minutes of the previous meeting was read and adopted after which the Chairman gave an explanation about the different committees that should be appointed. On motion C.H. Smothers was elected Treasurer. S. Wood offered a resolution that we build a house 28 x 38, ceiling 14 ft., 1 double door, 1 center aisle 4 ft., 1 aisle 2 ft. on each side of the building, 3 windows on each side, an transient over the door, altar 8 x 12, plain inside work to be ash with oil finish. the resolution offered was received by unanimous vote. A motion by S. Wood that a contracting committee be elected. Carried. The following named persons was nominated by the Chairman and elected--S. wood, I.M. Ward and J.H. Roberts. A motion by I.M. Ward that C.H. Smothers, J.H. Roberts and S. Wood be elected to select ground to erect the church. Carried. A motion by S. Wood. The following named persons was chosen as Soliciting committee--John Watkins, Mary J. Ladd, Mariah E. Stafford, Manerva J. Moore, David T. Stafford, R. Cotman, Emily Barber, Anna Weaver, Mariah Watkins, Martha Demory, Margaret Watkins, I.M. Ward, S. Smith, R. Ladd. A motion by S. Wood. The meeting adjourned. To meet at the call of the Chairman carried.

S. Wood, Sec. pro tem

March the 29th 1880

The Trustees met to transact ... business as might come before the house. Elder Smith in the Chair. J. H. Roberts, Secretary. The report from the contracting committee was received and approved. A motion by S. Wood that C.H. Smothers be associated with the present contracting committee. Carried. A motion by C.H. Smothers that we proceed at once to contract with builders. Carried. A motion by S. Wood that the Chairman have the power to call the Trustees together or received any moneys from the Solicitors and release any from duty he thinks proper. Carried. A motion by C.H. Smothers that a collection be raised to buy a book for secretary and one for treasurer. Carried. Raised 57 cts., previous meeting 60 cts. total $1.17. Applied for books. Adjourned. To meet again at the call of the Chr.

J.H. Roberts, Sec.
May the 1st 1880

The Trustees and members met at the call of the Chairman to hear the report of the building committee. The minutes of the last meeting was read and adopted. The contracting committee made the following report.

We the contracting committee beg leave to submit the following report too the Chairman and building committee that we contracted with Mr. Osborne to build our Church as stated heretofore, that he completes it by the 1st August, that we furnish $47.72 ft. of Lumber, $1.25 per hundred to be deducted from the whole $780.00 and the balance in three payments. One third when house is enclosed, one third in one year and one third in two years at 8 per cent Interest.


The report of the contracting committee was received and adopted. Adjourned. To meet at the call of the Chairman.

J.H. Roberts, Sec.

May 22nd 1880

At a call meeting by the president for the Solicitors to report. The following named Solicitors were present--I.M. Ward, C.H. Smothers, S. Wood, David A. Stafford, John Watkins, Mary J. Ladd. Received of Mary J. Ladd six dollars. A motion that Mary J. Ladd be allowed $1.20 for traveling expenses. Carried. Received of Peter Ladd three dollars. Received of John Watkins 25 cts. A motion by S. Wood that all persons indebted to the A.M.E. Church pay all or part of their indebtedness against the 10th of July. Carried. A motion to adjourn. To meet July 10th.

J.H. Roberts, Sec.

Cabin Creek Ind. July 30th

At a call meeting by the president of the building committee. The minutes of the last meeting was read and adopted. A motion that the Solicitors report and pay over to the Secretary and he to the Treasurer. Carried. Received of Margaret Watkins fifteen dollars I.M. Ward, general ct. gent., three dollars and seventy five cents, Mary Ladd-one dollar.
The following named persons paid on their subscription—Solomon Wood $8.18 in lumber, C.H. Smothers $5.00 hauling stone, I.M. Ward $27.70 in lumber, Burrel Perkins $7.08 in lumber, Peter Ladd $3.00 hauling, Geo. W. Hill five dollars. Total amount raised $71.96.

Cabin Creek July 2nd 1881

Pursuant to the call of the president of the Building committee and Trustees of Bethel A.M.E. Church in order to settle with Mr. Osburn, the Builder of said Church Building.

Mr. Osburn agreeing to pay for what lumber or other material so furnished.

Total cost of church building $780.00
Burrel Perkins was allowed 7.03
S. Woods " " 4.20
I.M. Ward " " 23.44
D. Stafford " " 2.00
J. Watkins " " 8.00
Edward Bowlin " " 9.00
Peter Ladd " " 4.25
C.H. Smothers " " 23.66 (minus 3 for Brick)
Total allowed 81.63

Also had Paid Mr. Osburn July 17th, 1880 cash $20.00
" " " Mr. Osburn Sept. 2nd, 1880 " 49.00
" " " Mr. Osburn Jan. 29th, 1881 " 105.00
" " " Mr. Osburn July 2nd, 1881 " 14.00
Total cash Paid up to settlement $269.63

Interest occurred of 1st Payment - $5.39 was put in notes that was given.
Leaving an indebtness $516.21. That is to be paid in two payments $258.13 each interest 8 percent.

J.H. Roberts, Sec. 60

After the church's completion, regular worship began in the new building. The church had a membership of 30 as of December, 1903. The following is a list of those members plus the officers and teachers of the church.

60 Original Secretary's Book of Cabin Creek A.M.E. Church, 1-5.
Sunday School Board
Dec. 6, 1903 Officers and Teachers

Rev. B. F. Coleman, Pastor
Supt. - Mrs. Iemie Smothers
Asst. - Mr. Charles A. Moore
Sec. - Miss Celestia Smothers
Asst. - Miss Sarelde Ladd
Librarian - Master James Moore

Teachers
Mrs. C.H. Smothers
Mrs. Kizach Stafford
Mrs. Alma Gilliam

Scholars
Samuel Ladd
David Stafford
Marie Stafford
Allan Moore
Lorraine Scott
Bessie Scott
Ashley Ladd
Alfred Moore
Pearl Gilliam
Dessie Outland
Almeda Moore
Lonnie Outland
Charles Hall
Lundy Sawyer
William Hill
Willie Scott
James Scott
Paul Stafford
Glen Stafford
Emma Moore
Johnnie Ladd
Ethelyn Smothers

A typical Sunday at the A.M.E. Church differed little then than from today. Sunday school began at 10:00 A.M. and usually by 11:15 church services were underway. To give one an idea of Sunday school or Sabbath School activities, here is the Secretary's minutes of October 11, 1903.

\[\text{Ibid.}, 16.\]
Report of Bethel A.M.E. Sabbath School

Oct. 11, 1903

Sabbath School met at ten o'clock opened by singing no. 45.
Prayer by the Subt. (superintendent)
The Lord's Prayer was repeated by the school.
Classes formed for class study.
No. of scholars in class A (adult) 3 col. 7 cts.
   Mr. C.H. Smothers (teacher)
No. of scholars in Normal class 3 col. 6 cts.
   Mrs. Allie Gilliam, Teacher
No. of scholars in Willing workers 5 col. 3 cts.
   Mrs. Jennie Smothers, Subt. Teacher
No. of scholars, officers and Teachers pres. 11

No. of visitors 2
Total collection 16 cts.

Jennie Smothers, Subt.
Celestia Smothers, Sect. 62

The ministers serving the A.M.E. Church in the Cabin Creek community have been many. Perhaps the most well known was William Paul Quinn who helped to advance the Western extension of the A.M.E. Church including Cabin Creek.

Quinn was born around 1800 in Calcutta, India, and was of Negro and Hindu parentage. His father, a wealthy mahogany dealer, banished and disowned Quinn when he advocated religious views that differed from Hinduism. He was influenced by a woman missionary of Quaker faith who came from England to India. Acquiring a hatred for war and drunkenness, he came to America by way of Gibraltar and Sheffield, England. Quinn had an outstanding appearance. Having a rugged physique, he was tall and stood erect. His facial features included full eye brows, piercing eyes, an aquiline nose, a firm mouth, and shapely chin. In other words, his appearance reflected that of an almighty

Ibid., 40.
Hercules whose task was to conquer the frontier as a preacher. Quinn was present at the time of the organization of the A.M.E. Church and was one of the first four members. He was the first circuit riding preacher and in 1836, Morris Brown commissioned him to go west and build up the church. In doing so, he was the first to mount a horse and cross the Allegheny Mountains for the A.M.E.'s. Present when the Western or Ohio Conference was organized in 1830, he went on to be the first preacher in the Cabin Creek A.M.E. Church organized a circuit which included the Greenville and the Snow Hill settlements. Quinn was quite successful in his endeavors and was elected Bishop and served in that capacity until his death in 1873. He was put to rest in Richmond, Indiana, and his tombstone bears the simple inscription: PAUL QUINN, 1800.63

Another important aspect of the Cabin Creek settlement was education. The Cabin Creek settlers often came from areas where free blacks were not allowed to attend school and slaves, as in North Carolina, could not be tutored. Slave owners realized that the black masses in servitude and those that were free, if educated, could become a problem. Hence, many of the settlers plus runaway slaves that stayed within the community were illiterate. In 1850, out of the 362 inhabitants in the settlement, 78 were over 20 and unable to read or write. But for the most part, those who had little or no education saw the significance of providing schooling for their children.

This can be shown somewhat by noting that in 1850, 69 children of school age had attended school within that year.  

The Quakers were again a source of assistance to the black settlers when it came to education. As in other black rural communities in Indiana, the Friends helped the blacks to establish their own schools mostly by providing books and recruiting teachers. At one time there were three school districts and three school houses within the settlement but by 1832, there was only one school house. The schools were apparently established with the help of the New Garden Quarterly Meeting of Friends. Mrs. Bessie (Scott) Reed's present homeplace was the location of one of the school districts. In fact, a portion of her house was the old school to which was added the frame of the Barber's house.

The Cabin Creek settlers also had the opportunity to receive higher learning with the founding of the Union Literary Institute in 1849. Located in the northeastern portion of the county near Spartanburg, the school was founded by Anti-Slavery Friends with the cooperation of other denominations. The constitution for the institute was drawn up in 1846 at the Friends meeting house in Newport. Its specific purpose, as stated in the document, was to provide higher learning specifically

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64 U.S. Census, 1850.
65 Thornbrough, Since Emancipation, 49.
66 Tucker, op. cit., 134.
67 Levi Coffin, Reminiscences, 171.
68 Personal interview, Glenn Stafford.
in the branches of science for those who due to the Indiana laws, were unable to benefit from public school education. Article VIII of the constitution placed emphasis on the disallowing of discriminatory practices. "There never shall be tolerated or allowed in the Union Literary Institution, its government, discipline or privileges, and distinction on account of color, rank or wealth." 69

The school operated on the manual training plan where students worked so many hours a day to pay their expenses. For many years the school house was a frame building but by 1860, a new brick building was completed. The school's enrollment reflected the service it rendered to blacks. In 1849, a total of 230 students had enrolled since the school opened; 165 of these students were black. Of the 131 enrolled in 1850, 97 were black. The fifties saw a decline in the enrollment and by 1863 there were only fifty. Toward the later years of the school, the entire student body was black.

Two outstanding men served as principal of the institute. One was Ebenezer Tucker who was principal twice--from 1846-1855 and again from 1873 to 1879. The other was a black Cabin Creek resident by the name of Samuel Smothers. Smothers was principal of the school in the early sixties but he left his school duties to join the Union Army. After the war, he became a A.M.E. minister and was quite successful as a revivalist. 70 Most likely

70 Ibid., 174, 176.
many Cabin Creek settlers, throughout the years, attended the
school. Only two, however, are known to the author. They
were Celestia Sawyer, wife of Lundy Sawyer, and Martha Weaver,
daughter of Jesse Weaver.\textsuperscript{71}

Perhaps the most fascinating and well-known aspect of the Cabin Creek settlement was its involvement in the Underground Railroad. The earlier settlers were known to be freemen or newly emancipated slaves. Many of the later settlers, however, were runaway slaves who came to Cabin Creek seeking a hiding place and sought the seclusion and protection of the settlement, later becoming farmers themselves. A controversy has developed as to the number of slaves that actually went to Canada and stayed there. One source stated that very few slaves went to Canada for two reasons: 1) there was a lack of job opportunities 2) the climate was not to their liking. Percentage wise, four fugitive slaves settled in the Northern states to one who went to Canada. It is true also that many came back from Canada who had ventured there.\textsuperscript{72} Thus the most probably place of settlement for slaves was in rural black communities where they could "blend in" with the other inhabitants.

Aid for the runaway slave became the function and goal of the Underground Railroad. There are some frequent misconceptions about the Underground Railroad and its relationship to the Cabin Creek area. First of all, many stories tell of

\textsuperscript{71}Personal interview, Glenn Stafford.

\textsuperscript{72}Personal interview, C.E. Charles.
the numerous hiding places found in houses supposedly used as depots in the Underground Railroad. This may have been true in many areas, but for the most part, in the Cabin Creek vicinity the activities that took place were done openly. In other words, the community was sufficiently close-knit and trustworthy. Another misconception is that the Quakers were the only religious group that assisted the blacks not only in the Underground Railroad but in other ways as well. This is not true. In the Cabin Creek area, there were Methodist and also Presbyterians who were staunchly anti-slavery. An example would be Daniel Worth, a Methodist preacher who lived at Horseshoe Bend. Mr. Worth believed that slavery was a terrible evil that was impover­ishing the South. He thought that besides being immoral, it was also economically nonprofitable. People who were forced to work did not work very hard. As a minister he continuously preached against slavery.73

A third misconception is a rather surprising one. Although the Quakers and other groups did numerous good deeds for the black man, there were some instances of injustice. Just as a group of people cannot be stereotyped as bad, neither can a group be stereotyped as good. There are individuals within all groups that deviate from the norm. Within the Cabin Creek community, these "deviates" took advantage of the runaway slaves that came to them seeking shelter and protection. Sometimes a white farmer would "give" the slave an amount of uncleared land, telling him that the land would be his if he prepared it

73Personal interview, C.E. Charles.
for planting. The slave, so happy to have his own property, would industriously clear the land. Upon completion, the farmer would then inform the slave that his master was on the way and that it would be best for him to leave. The farmer, then, would have his land cleared for no cost. How often such exploitation occurred is not known but it happened frequently enough to stir resentment among the black settlers.74

To attempt to discuss the Underground Railroad without mentioning Levi Coffin would be a gross error. Coffin, the President of the Underground Railroad, was born in 1789 at the New Garden Meeting House, Guilford County, North Carolina. He was a descendent of Tristram Coffin who was one of the original purchasers and early settlers of Nantucket Island. Before teaching school, Coffin studied and worked on his father's farm. He and his wife, Catherine White Coffin, came to Newport (now known as Fountain City), Indiana, in 1826—a year after his parents. Teaching no longer was his profession. He turned instead to the mercantile business and opened up a general store. However, even the store was not his chief concern. He had settled on upper Nolands Fork along with other North Carolina Friends. The make-up of the community was ideal for his new activities in the Underground Railroad.75 Levi Coffin's House, fittingly called the Grand Central Station of the Underground Railroad, was the central point of three primary

74Personal interview, Mr. Glenn Stafford.

75Knollenberg, op. cit., 66.
routes used leading from the Ohio River to Canada. (see Appendix for map)

There are numerous episodes that can be recalled in relating the work of the Underground Railroad which began about 1831 in the Cabin Creek community. The stories are reminiscent of black folktales told in the Old South. There is suspense, drama and excitement and justly so. Whenever man is escaping bondage, he is flirting with the threat of being caught and punished. Hence, even though the stories may sound like folklore, there is little exaggeration.

Before discussing any episodes, one man in particular should be mentioned who was of assistance to the Underground Railroad. John Fairfield, a native of Virginia, had a dispute with his older brother over the treatment of animals and slaves. When his older brother mistreated a horse, John, fed up with his brother's activities, came West. He settled in the Cabin Creek community and opened up a store on Barrack's corner. But he was not sincerely interested in the store. He became more interested in slave stealing. Many of the black farmers had large farms and raised quite a bit of money. Quite a few still had family members in slavery in the South. They would hire Fairfield to go South and retrieve their relatives. He would do so by first "hobnobbing" with the planters, all the while planning the escape with the slaves. Sometimes as many as twenty slaves would be rescued and brought to Cincinnati. There contacts could be made with the Underground Railroad to proceed North. Fairfield lost his life just prior to the Civil War in an uprising in Tennessee which came about when he and some
slaves were hunted down and killed by slave hunters.\textsuperscript{76}

An exciting episode of the Underground Railroad in the Cabin Creek settlement was the Wilkerson girls incident. Two slave girls had escaped from their home of bondage in Tennessee via the Southern Underground Railroad. Their grandparents and other relatives lived in Cabin Creek and kept the girls after their long, dangerous journey. They thought that their master would not be able to find them but they were mistaken. He came North to Richmond, Indiana, supposedly to buy some cattle. Actually he had sent out spies to different neighborhoods, Cabin Creek included, in search of the girls. The spies were successful in locating the girls' whereabouts and upon telling the master, he immediately thought they were under his power since they were not far away. He obtained a search writ, organized a group of ruffians from Richmond and Winchester and rode out to Cabin Creek. On reaching the settlement, the armed men surrounded the cabin belonging to the grandparents of the Wilkerson girls. Immediately, a boy, noticing the strangers, rode out to sound the alarm so that others in the community might be informed of the situation. The people in the community always banded together in protecting the fugitives whenever a slave-hunter came searching. The men were greeted at the doorway of the cabin by the grandmother (the grandfather being away from home) who had seized a corn-cutter and was ready to cut the first person in two who would attempt to enter the house. Quite a crowd

\textsuperscript{76} Personal interview, C.E. Charles
gathered as the news spread. The uncle of the two girls went to stand by his mother as did several others. The uncle was an intelligent man of fair education and he demanded that he be allowed to read the writ. Upon studying it, he tried to find every flaw. He declared that the writ did not give them authority to search the house since Indiana law did not say that human beings were property unless proven to be such which was very difficult to do. He continued to prolong the argument with the men while inside the cabin some interesting events were taking place. Blacks were permitted to pass back and forth inside the house as the uncle discussed the writ with the men. The girls were dressed in men's clothes and left the house right under the nose of their master. They were taken to a secluded spot and put on horses which were occupied with light, capable riders. In the mean time, the uncle waited until the girls were a safe distance, then appeared to be a little more compromising with the men. On consulting his mother, he allowed them to search the cabin. To the anger of the master, no girls were to be found. The girls were taken to the Newport community where Levi Coffin and his wife took care of them. They were fed and given girl's clothes. The outwitted master hadn't given up yet. Word was received that he was coming to Newport since he had failed to find the girls in Cabin Creek. The girls were hid between the straw and feather ticking of a bed in the Levi Coffin house. However, they continuously giggled about their experiences, and finally had to be separated by placing one in another bed. The slave-hunters never made it to the Coffin home. They were so threatened by Newport citizens, that they
left the town without attempting to find the girls. The Wilkerson sisters were sent on to Canada where they arrived safely.??

Another episode of the Underground Railroad involved Hugh Botkin and his family. Hugh Botkin was a white farmer of the Methodist faith and he often aided slaves who came out of Fallen Timbers, which was an excellent hiding place. He would direct them either to Cabin Creek or to the Greenville settlement near Spartanburg. Jim was a runaway slave who was hired by Mr. Botkin during the corn harvest. He was a favorite of the Botkin children who came to his aid at the right time. They were having a party for Jim when they heard a knock on the door. It was a stranger, and sensing it was Jim's master, the children shielded Jim, got the window open and Jim left, disappearing into the night. One of the children, Jesse, was offered $50 if he would tell the master where Jim had went. Jesse contemplated the offer, fifty dollars being quite a bit of money in those days. He finally said no but often told people he could have been rich at one time in his life.78

There are probably numerous episodes that could be told here that would reflect, as the two above, the determination on the part of the fugitives to remain free and the sympathy and aid received by the runaways from both whites and blacks. Slave-hunters were not popular people in the Cabin Creek area--to say the least!

77Coffin, op. cit., 170-177.
78Personal interview, C.E. Charles.
With the settlement of ex-runaway slaves, the Cabin Creek community reached its peak in population in 1850. There was little growth between 1850 and 1860 due to strict fugitive slave laws; thus, after 1850, the community began to slowly decline as the following chart demonstrates:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TOWNSHIP</th>
<th>1850</th>
<th>1860</th>
<th>1870</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nettle Creek</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>154</td>
<td>149</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West River</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stoney Creek</td>
<td>144</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Totals</strong></td>
<td><strong>362</strong></td>
<td><strong>360</strong></td>
<td><strong>235</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

At one time it was said that a person could walk from Jordan's corner south of Modoc to the bridge at Farmland without stepping off property that belonged to black individuals. This is far from an exaggeration. The settlement was known to be at least seven miles long and two miles wide when at its peak. Settlers purchased plots from 40 or 80 all the way up to 160 acres. Cabin Creek was a thriving community. The question essentially is--what happened?

There are several factors to consider in attempting to analyze the decline of Cabin Creek. First of all, the Civil War along with the Emancipation Proclamation did away with the need for black slaves to find places to hide and settle. Blacks supposedly now had the protection of the law. Secondly,

79Taken from U.S. Censuses of 1850, 1860 and 1870.