

## Overview

### **Fugitive Slaves in Michigan's History**

This unit is designed to supplement Pre-Civil War High School U.S. history units, as well as High School Civics units. Michigan's role in the abolition movement is buried in the overall national story, so this pulls our story back out. The unit is designed to take approximately one week, but design can be adjusted accordingly. Depending on the ability of the class or students, Parts 1- 3 might work well in pairs or small groups.

**Items for reference:** Map "Underground Railroads in Michigan" and Fugitive Slaves in Michigan-Timeline of Events.

Have students review the map and Timeline. The timeline will help students get a sense of events in Michigan against National events they are studying.

#### **Part 1 – Document Analysis**

Have students analyze the Michigan Territorial and State Laws (Appendix A). They are to fill in the Document Analysis sheet (Appendix B) for each law. Note: Laws are always difficult to read and understand. Let students know that a general understanding of what is being said will serve their overall purpose.

#### **Part 2 - 1807 Fugitive Slave cases in Michigan**

Have students read the two cases Justice Augustus Woodward presided over in 1807 (Appendix C), and fill in the worksheet that accompanies it (Appendix D). Discuss summaries.

#### **Part 3 – Blackburn case 1833**

Have students read the articles on the Blackburn and Crosswhite cases as well as the Letter from the Attorney General of Upper Canada, then go over the discussion points. By the time of the Crosswhite case, it is 60 years past the Northwest Ordinance and attitudes are changing. Students should begin to discuss how those attitudes are changing and how these things will fit into their answer in Part 4.

#### **Part 4 – Written Response**

Students are to answer the following in an appropriate length to be determined by the instructor:

*How did Michigan's attitude on the issue of fugitive slaves change over time, how did laws, court decisions and the actions of Michigan's citizens help define the state's stance over time, and how does all of this compare to what is going on in the national political landscape?*

### Fugitive Slaves in Michigan's History

During the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Michigan's stance on slavery and runaway slaves was sometimes difficult to determine. On one hand, as a territory and a state, slavery was illegal unless you were a British subject living here in 1794 when Jay's Treaty was negotiated. On the other hand, there were Territorial and State Acts limiting the rights of free blacks and fugitive slaves, and court cases where fugitive slaves were returned to a life of servitude.

Michigan's location near Canada made it a popular destination for runaway slaves. There were multiple routes on the Underground Railroad that ran through the southern part of the state. Michigan's Underground Railroad stories document the lives of African Americans who escaped enslavement in rural and urban communities in states including Missouri, Tennessee, Louisiana, Arkansas, Virginia and Mississippi. A large number of them ran away from Kentucky by themselves, in pairs and in groups of acquaintances or families

Antislavery activists used many strategies, including public demonstration, challenging and changing the laws, forming antislavery organizations or religious congregations, holding public meetings, and speaking and writing against slavery. Through religious and/or political affiliations, European American and legally free and formerly enslaved African American women and men in Michigan often knew each other. They provided safe places for African Americans who escaped slavery, food and sometimes clothing. They helped create opportunities for the formerly enslaved to start new lives in Michigan in tolerant communities.

While black and white communities did not always live side-by side, they sometimes joined together to resist attempts of "slave owners" to take formerly enslaved women and men back into slavery. In several cases, they provided defense and protection against the men and women who claimed ownership over African Americans who had escaped to Michigan. Their tactics included confrontation, legal battles, writing and speaking about slavery and the need to end it, publishing the *Signal of Liberty*, and passing P.A. 162, the Personal Freedom's Act, in 1855.

The documents in this unit highlight Michigan's history in regards to slavery and fugitive slaves. As the political landscape of the nation changed in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, so did Michigan's approach to dealing with fugitive slaves and the people who pursued them.

## Fugitive Slaves in Michigan's History – Standards

### High School Social Studies Grade Level Content Expectations – History

P2 – Inquiry, Research, and Analysis – critically examine evidence, thoughtfully consider conflicting claims, and carefully weigh facts and hypotheses.

F2.1 – Describe the major trends and transformations in American life prior to 1877.

9.3.1 – Compose a persuasive essay on public policy issue and justify the position with a reasoned argument based on historical antecedents and precedents, and core democratic values or constitutional principles – Civil Rights.

### High School Social Studies Grade Level Content Expectations – Civics

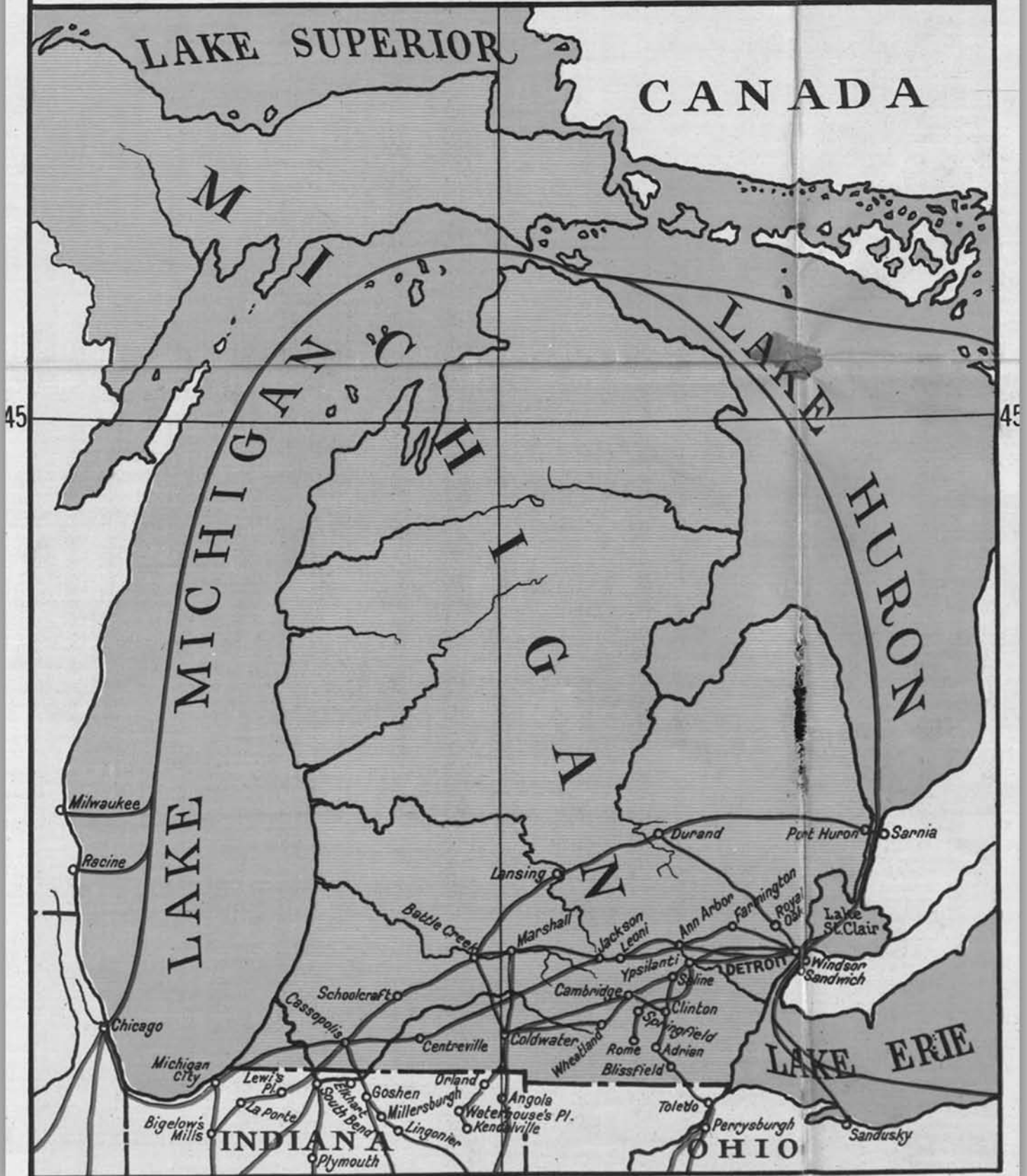
5.3.1 – Identify and explain personal rights (e.g., freedom of thought, conscience, expression, association, movement and residence, the right to privacy, personal autonomy, due process of law, free exercise of religion, and equal protection of the law).

5.3.9 – Use examples to explain why rights are not unlimited and absolute

5.4.1 – Distinguish between personal and civic responsibilities and describe how they can sometimes conflict with one another.

# d "UNDERGROUND RAILROADS" IN MICHIGAN

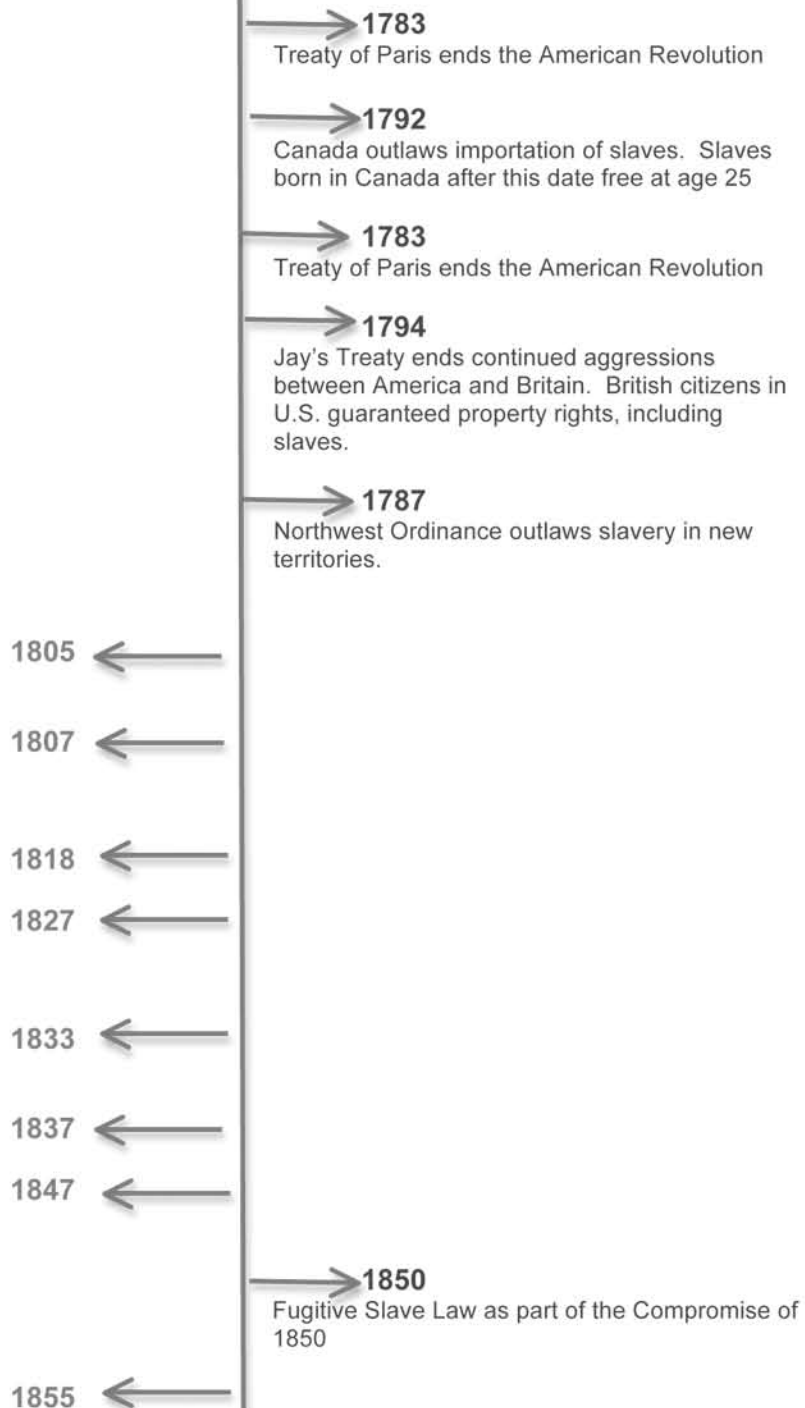
or  
Routes Followed to Canada by Escaped Slaves



## Fugitive Slaves in Michigan - Timeline of Events

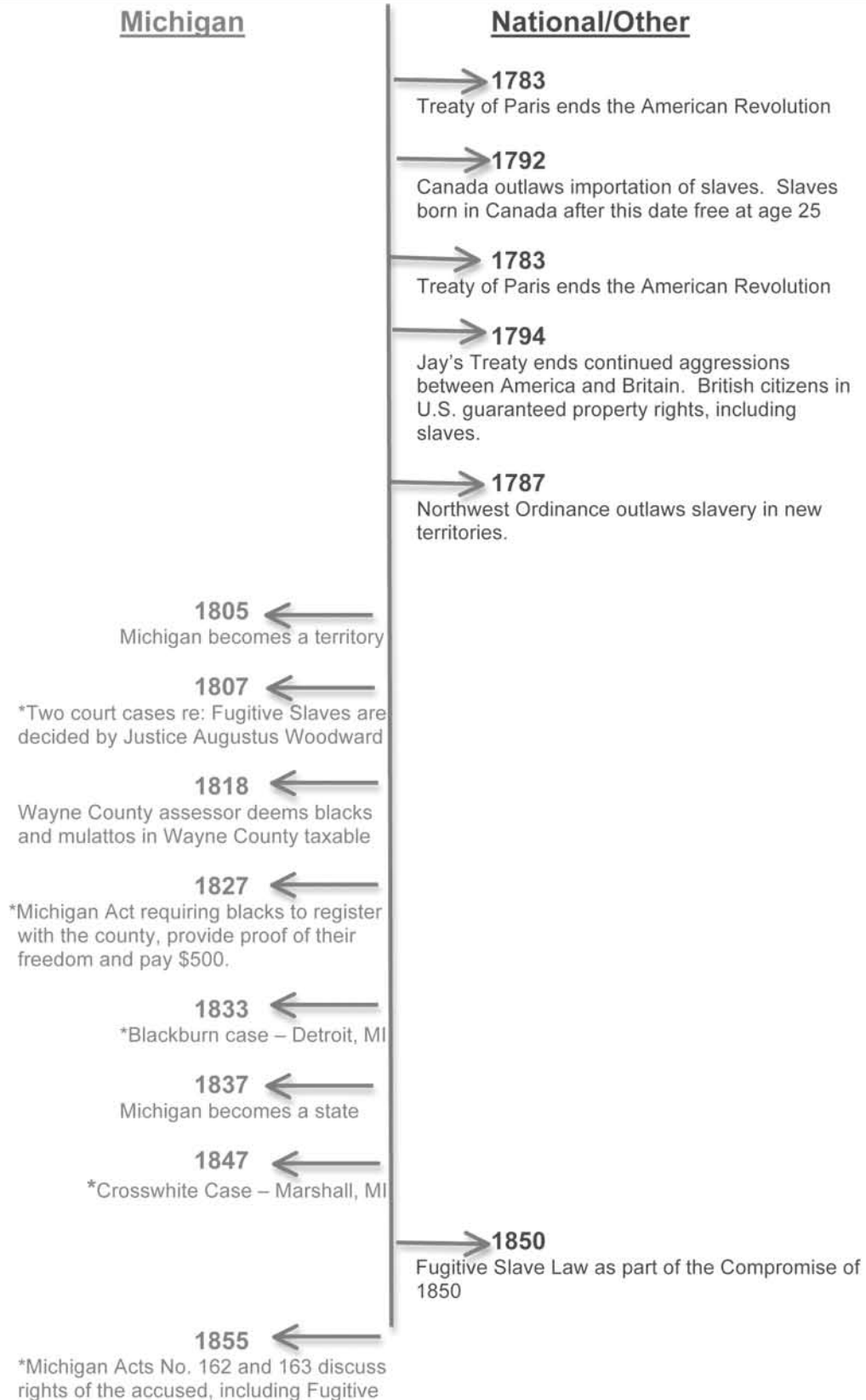
### Michigan

### National/Other



# Fugitive Slaves in Michigan - Timeline of Events

\* indicates a topic with supporting documents/reading included.





**1827.** ties; which oath may be administered by any justice of the peace of said county.

Approved April 13, 1827.

AN ACT to regulate Blacks and Mulattoes, and to punish the Kidnapping of such Persons.

Black or mulatto to produce certificate of freedom before permitted to settle.

SECTION 1. *Be it enacted by the Legislative Council of the Territory of Michigan,* That from and after the first day of May next, no black or mulatto person shall be permitted to settle or reside in this Territory, unless he or she shall produce a fair certificate, from some court within the United States, of his or her actual freedom, which certificate shall be attested by the clerk of said court, and the seal thereof annexed thereto by the said court.

Those now in the Territory to enter their names in county clerk's office, which shall be evidence of freedom.

SEC. 2. That every black or mulatto person, now residing in this Territory, shall, on or before the first day of January next, enter his or her name, together with the name or names of his or her children, in the office of the clerk of the county court, in the county in which he, she, or they reside, which shall be entered of record by said clerk, and thereafter the clerk's certificate of said record shall be sufficient evidence of his or her freedom: *Provided,* That such black or mulatto, at the time of making such registry, shall have been born in this Territory, or produce a fair certificate, as aforesaid, of such freedom, which shall be deposited in the clerk's office; and for every entry and certificate, the person obtaining the same shall pay to the clerk twelve and a half cents: *Provided, nevertheless,* That nothing in this act contained, shall bar the lawful claim to any black or mulatto person.

Proviso—must be native or bring certificate.

Clerk's fees.

Proviso—lawful claims not infringed.

Fine for hindering owner of a slave from obtaining said slave.

SEC. 3. That if any person or persons shall harbor or secrete any black or mulatto person, the property of any person whatever, or shall in anywise hinder or prevent the lawful owner or owners, from retaking and possessing his or her black or mulatto servant or servants, such person shall, upon conviction thereof before any justice of the peace in the county, be fined in a sum not less than ten, nor more than fifty dollars, at the discretion of the court, one half thereof for the use of the informer, and the other half for the use of the township where the offence shall have been committed, excepting in the county of Wayne, where the same shall be appropriated as is provided for in the fifth [eighth] section of this act.

Colored person's certificate to be recorded.

SEC. 4. That every black or mulatto person who shall come to reside in this Territory, with such certificate as is required in the first section of this act, shall, within one year, have the same recorded in the clerk's office in the county in which he or she means to reside, for which he or she shall pay to the clerk twelve and a half cents, and the clerk shall give him or her a certificate of such record.

Fees of clerk therefor.

Person claiming black or mulatto, on application and proof of property before

SEC. 5. That in case any person or persons, his or their agent or agents, claiming any black or mulatto person that now is, or hereafter may be, in this Territory, may apply to any justice of the

county court, or justice of the peace, and shall make satisfactory proof that such black or mulatto person or persons is or are the property of him or her who applies or for whom application is made, the said judge or justice is hereby empowered and required, by his precept, to direct the sheriff or constable to arrest such black or mulatto person or persons, and deliver the same to the claimant or claimants, his or their agent or agents, for which service the sheriff or constable shall receive such compensation as they are entitled to receive in other cases for similar services.

1827.

a justice, to have precept issued, etc.

SEC. 6. That no black or mulatto person shall be permitted to emigrate into and settle within this Territory, unless such black or mulatto person shall, within twenty days thereafter, enter into bond, with one or more freehold sureties, in the penal sum of five hundred dollars, before the clerk of the county court of the proper county, in which such black or mulatto person may wish to reside, to be approved of by the clerk, conditioned for the good behavior of such black or mulatto person, and moreover, to pay for the support of such person, in case he or she should thereafter be found within any township in this Territory, unable to support him, her or themselves; and if any black or mulatto person shall migrate to this Territory, and not comply with the provisions of this act, it shall be the duty of the overseers of the poor of the township where such black or mulatto person may be found, to remove immediately such black or mulatto person, in the same manner as is required in the case of paupers; and if such black or mulatto person should return, such black or mulatto person shall be proceeded against as is provided for in the "Act for the punishment of idle and disorderly persons."

Black or mulatto to enter into bond in twenty days after settling for good behavior, and for his or her support.

Overseers to remove those not complying.

If they return, how punished.

SEC. 7. That it shall be the duty of the clerk before whom such bond may be given, as aforesaid, to file the same in his office, and give a certificate thereof to such black or mulatto person; and the said clerk shall be entitled to receive the sum of one dollar for the bond and certificate aforesaid, on the delivery of the certificate.

Bond to be filed, and certificate thereof given—clerk's fees therefor.

SEC. 8. That if any person, being a resident of this Territory, shall employ or counsel any such black or mulatto person, as aforesaid, contrary to the provisions of this act, any person so offending shall forfeit and pay, for every such offence, any sum not exceeding one hundred dollars, the one half to the informer, if he shall prosecute for the same, and the other half for the use of the poor of the township in which such person may reside (excepting in the county of Wayne, where the same shall be paid into the county treasury, and be appropriated for the purchase of lands, and the erection of poor-houses on the same), to be recovered by action of debt, before any court having competent jurisdiction: *And moreover*, Be liable for the maintenance and support of such black or mulatto, provided he or she shall become unable to support themselves.

Penalty for employing or counselling black or mulatto contrary to this act—how recovered and applied.

SEC. 9. That if any person or persons, under any pretence whatsoever, shall, by violence, fraud, or deception, seize upon any free black or mulatto person, within this Territory, and keep or detain such free black or mulatto person in any kind of restraint or con-

Punishment for seizing, detaining and attempting to carry away blacks or mulattoes, contrary to law.



**1827.** finement, with intent to transport such free black or mulatto person out of this Territory, contrary to law, or shall, in any manner, attempt to carry out of the Territory any black or mulatto person, without having first taken such black or mulatto person before some judge of the circuit or county court, or a justice of the peace of the county wherein such black or mulatto person was taken, agreeably to the provisions of the act of Congress in such case made and provided, and there prove his right to such black or mulatto person, every such person so offending shall be deemed guilty of a misdemeanor, and on conviction thereof, before any court having competent authority to try the same, shall be sentenced to hard labor in the penitentiary, for any space of time not less than one, nor more than ten years, at the discretion of the court.

District attorneys to prosecute violations of this act.

SEC. 10. That it shall be the duty of the district attorneys of the respective counties to prosecute all violations of this act, when thereunto required, and to be entitled to the same compensation, in the manner provided for in the act to prevent gaming.

Approved April 13, 1827.

#### AN ACT to deliver up Fugitives from Justice.

SECTION 1. *Be it enacted by the Legislative Council of the Territory of Michigan,* That the Governor of this Territory shall have power, and he is hereby authorized, at his discretion, on requisition being made by any government, or its ministers or officers authorized to make the same within the jurisdiction of which the crimes hereinafter mentioned shall be charged to have been committed, to deliver up to justice any person who, being charged with murder, forgery, larceny, or other crime, which, if committed within this Territory, would, by the laws of this Territory, be punishable by death, or confinement at hard labor, committed without the jurisdiction of the United States, shall seek an asylum in this Territory, to the end that such person may be transported out of this Territory to the place where such crime shall have been charged to have been committed: *Provided, however,* That this only shall be done on such evidence of criminality as, according to the laws of this Territory, would, in the opinion of the Governor, justify the apprehension and commitment for trial of such fugitive from justice, or person so charged, if the offence had been committed within this Territory: *And provided further,* That the expense of apprehending and delivering such person shall be borne and defrayed by those who make the requisition and receive the fugitive.

Governor authorized to deliver up persons charged with crimes.

Proviso—evidence of criminality to be furnished.

Proviso—expense to be paid by those requiring the fugitive.

Approved March 12, 1827.

[ No. 162. ]

AN ACT to protect the rights and liberties of the inhabitants of this State.

SECTION 1. *The People of the State of Michigan enact,* That <sup>Duty of prosecuting attorney.</sup> it shall be the duty of the prosecuting attorneys within their respective counties, whenever any inhabitant of this State is arrested or claimed as a fugitive slave, on being informed thereof, diligently and faithfully to use all lawful means to protect and defend every such person so arrested or claimed as a fugitive slave.

Sec. 2. All persons so arrested and claimed as fugitive slaves, shall <sup>Habeas corpus and trial by jury.</sup> be entitled to all the benefits of the writ of habeas corpus and of trial by jury.

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## LAWS OF MICHIGAN.

Appeal allowed.

Sec. 3. If such writ of habeas corpus shall be sued out in vacation, and if, upon the hearing of the same, the person imprisoned, arrested, or claimed as a fugitive slave, shall not be discharged, such person shall be entitled to an appeal to the circuit court for the county in which such hearing shall have been had, on furnishing such bail, and within such time as the officer granting the writ or hearing the case shall judge reasonable and proper.

Court to direct trial by jury.

Sec. 4. The court to which such appeal is taken, and any court to which a writ of habeas corpus in behalf of any such person claimed or arrested as a fugitive slave is made returnable, may and shall, on application of either party to such proceedings, allow and direct a trial by jury on all questions of fact in issue between the parties in the matter aforesaid; and the taxable costs of such trial shall be chargeable to the State, whenever the same would be otherwise chargeable to the person arrested or claimed as a fugitive slave.

Costs, how charged.

Not to be imprisoned in jail, &amp;c.

Sec. 5. No person arrested and claimed as a fugitive slave shall be imprisoned in any jail or other prison in this State; and any person having the care or control of any jail or prison, and knowingly permitting the imprisonment of such alleged fugitive slave therein, shall be subjected to the payment of a fine of not less than five hundred nor more than one thousand dollars.

witnesses, testifying to facts directly tending to establish the truth of such declaration, pretense, or representation, or by legal evidence equivalent thereto.

Sec. 9. No declaration, pretense, or representation, that any person is or was an apprentice for a fixed term of years, or owes or did owe service merely as such apprentice for such fixed term, shall be deemed prohibited by this act; and no such declaration, pretense, or representation, that any person is or was such an apprentice for such fixed term, or owes or did owe service merely as such an apprentice for such fixed term, shall be liable to any penalty under this act.

Claim of person as apprentice, &c., not within this act.

Sec. 10. All acts or parts of acts conflicting with the provisions of this act are hereby repealed.

Acts repealed.

Approved February 13, 1855.

[ No. 163. ]

AN ACT to prohibit the use of the common jails and other public buildings in the several counties for the detention of persons claimed as fugitive slaves.

SECTION 1. *The People of the State of Michigan enact*, That section one of chapter one hundred and forty-eight, title twenty-eight of the revised statutes of one thousand eight hundred and forty-six, be amended so as to read as follows:

Sec. 1 chap. 148 R. S. amended.

"Sec. 1. It shall be the duty of the sheriffs of the several counties of this State to receive into their respective jails and keep all prisoners who shall be committed to the same, by virtue of any civil process issued by any court of record instituted under the authority of the United States, until they shall be discharged by the due course of the laws of the United States, in the same manner as if such prisoner had been committed by virtue of process in civil actions issued under the authority of this State; and every such sheriff may receive to his own use such sums of money as shall be payable by the United States for the use of the said jails: *Provided*, That nothing in this or the next succeeding section contained shall be construed to authorize or require any sheriff or other officer to receive into or detain, or permit

Duty of sheriffs to take & keep prisoners, &c.

Not to receive person claimed as fugitive slave.



any person to receive into or detain in any of said jails or other public buildings, any person claimed as a fugitive slave: *And provided fur-*

Prohibited from recovering fugitive.

*ther,* That every sheriff or other officer or keeper of a prison is hereby peremptorily prohibited from receiving or detaining or permitting to be received or detained in any such jails or other public buildings any such fugitive slave as aforesaid; every sheriff or other officer or keeper of a prison who shall offend against the last preceding provision of this section shall be liable to an indictment for a misdemeanor, and upon conviction thereof shall pay a fine of one thousand dollars, and be imprisoned in the county jail one year."

Penalty for disobedience.

Sec. 1 chap. 171 of R. S. amended.

Sec. 2. Section one of chapter one hundred and seventy-one, title thirty-two of the revised statutes of one thousand eight hundred and forty six, be amended so as to read as follows:

How jails shall be used, &c.

"Sec. 1. The common jails in the several counties in the charge of the respective sheriffs, shall be used as prisons:

1. For the detention of persons charged with offences, and duly committed for trial;

2. For the detention of persons who may be duly committed, to secure their attendance as witnesses on the trial of any criminal cause;

3. For the confinement of persons committed pursuant to a sentence upon conviction for an offence, and of all other persons duly committed for any cause authorized by law; and the provisions of this section shall extend to persons detained or committed by the authority of the courts of the United States, as well as the courts and magistrates of this State: *Provided,* That nothing in this section contained shall be construed to require any such sheriff to receive or detain in any such jail any person claimed as a fugitive slave."

Proviso.

Sec. 3. This act shall take effect immediately.

Approved February 13, 1855.

**Written Document Analysis Sheet**

Date of document:

Author or creator of document:

For what audience was this document written:

Document information (there are many possible answers)

1. List three things the author said that you think are important.
2. Why do you think this document was written?
3. What evidence is in the document helps you know why it was written?
4. List two things the document tells you about life in Michigan at the time it was written.
5. What unanswered questions remain after reading this document?



One of the important matters that disturbed the new territory was the question of slavery. The ordinance of 1787 prohibited slavery in all the territories northwest of the Ohio river. The treaty of 1794 with England provided that the property of British residents in the territory should be respected and protected. Slaves, both Panis (Indian) and negroes, were held in Detroit and in Sandwich on the Canadian side of the Detroit river. The Canadian slaves were constantly escaping, crossing the river and claiming protection of our laws.<sup>11</sup>

In 1807, a wealthy Englishman living at Sandwich,<sup>12</sup> Richard Pattinson (or Patterson, as his name appears in the records) had two negro slaves, Jane and Joseph, who crossed the river and remained in Detroit. Pattinson, through his relative and attorney, Elijah Brush, applied for a warrant to apprehend these slaves in order to return them to their owner. The circumstances of the case and the social standing of the complainant gave the matter more than usual prominence and in his opinion Judge Woodward devoted much time and study to the subject. The decision of the case against Mr. Pattinson and Mr. Brush and in favor of two unknown negroes, who had no representative in court to plead their cause, was somewhat unpopular, though certainly conformable to law. The motion of Brush was denied upon the ground that our laws regarded no property in slaves except in the case of British settlers as provided in the treaty of 1794, and the negroes were permitted to remain here, free.

At about the same time four other negroes, Elizabeth, James, Scipio and Peter Dennison, applied for a writ of habeas corpus to be freed from the restraint of their owner, Catherine Tucker.<sup>13</sup> It seems that Mrs. Tucker lived in Detroit and that she was a British subject and was one of those to whom the treaty of 1794 guaranteed protection in person and property. The laws of Canada granted freedom to all slaves after a certain period of servitude which in this case had not yet elapsed. Judge Woodward drew a distinction between this case and that of Pattinson and refused to grant the writ, authorizing the retention of the slaves under the provisions of the treaty. These decisions attracted considerable attention throughout the "state," and were commented on by many of the leading papers at that time.

## Part 2 Appendix D

### 1807 Michigan Court Cases regarding Fugitive Slaves

Read the descriptions of the two court cases in 1807 that Justice Woodward presided over and fill in the sheet below.

#### Denison vs. Tucker

Summarize the case:

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Habeas corpus was cited in this case and its how the Denisons were able to appear in front of a judge to argue their case. How did they use habeas corpus in this case?

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What was Justice Woodward's decision and why did he make this decision?

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#### The Pattinson/Elliott case

Summarize the case:

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What was Justice Woodward's decision and why did he make this decision?

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## Part 3

### Blackburn and Crosswhite Incidents – Discussion points

**Blackburns:** Detroit, MI 1833

After reading the background on the case and the analyzing the document from the Canadian government, look back at your analysis of Michigan's Laws.

Why won't Canada give up the Blackburns?

Which part of Michigan's Laws does Canada cite and why do they (Canada) consider it a problem?

**Crosswhites:** Marshall, MI 1847

After reading the background on the incident, think about how the reaction of the people of Marshall was the same and/or different from the people of Detroit in 1833. What do these similarities/differences say about Michigan's attitude towards slavery and slave hunters coming into Michigan?

This letter is transcribed and edited from an original document dated 1833. (?) indicate words or phrases which cannot be clearly read from the original document.

Lieutenant Colonel Kowan  
Secretary to his Excellency the Lieutenant Governor

Attorney General's Office  
12<sup>th</sup> July 1833

Sir,

I have the honor to return the various papers relating to the subject of the Requisition from the acting governor of Michigan demanding that Thornton Blackburn and others who are stated to have fled from the Justice of that county, and taken refuge within this Province and now in custody at Sandwich should be given up upon which His Excellency required my opinion whether the Law of this Province authorized him in complying with such demand or not.

Since though limited in their authority to enforce the provision of the Act as against fugitives from foreign states by the condition above mentioned viz. being satisfied that the evidence would warrant commitment for Trial. Yet in coming to that conclusion, they are I think bound to hear not ex parte evidence alone, but matter explanatory to guide their Judgment for even though satisfied with their authority so to do, they are not required "to deliver up any person so charged if for any reason they shall deem it inexpedient so to do."

viz=in other  
words or namely

In the present case I think the evidence on path becomes extremely important. The case appeared to be this. Two coloured persons, name Thornton, a man and his wife were claimed as slaves on behalf of some person in the State of Kentucky, that they were arrested and examined before a magistrate at Detroit, and the claim adjudged by such magistrate to have been made out. And he in accordance with the Law of the United States, made his certificate and directed them to be delivered over as the personal

property of the clamant in Kentucky that the sheriff took them into custody in consequence, and that then one of them (the man) was on the point of being removed from prison in order to be restored to his owner he was with circumstance of considerable violence, rescued and escaped to this province. There appears to be error in the deposition, accompanying the requisition. The wife of Thornton is there charged to have been one of the person assisting in the riot and rescue, whereas it appears that previous to the day of her husband's rescue, she had allude the jailor in disguise and was then within this province. She therefore does not appear to come within this class of offenders, which the Act contemplated viz., "Malefactor who having committed crimes in foreign counties have sought an asylum in this province."

Upon this view of the case and considering that His Excellency in council can only restore fugitives charged upon evidence of crimes which if proved to have been committed in this Province would subject the offender to "Death, corporal punishment by pillory, or whipping or by confinement at hard labor" and considering this as a (?) Act, which must not be strained beyond the literal import toward those against whom it is intended to operate. The result is this: that as our Law recognizes no such custody as that of a agent acting under a warrant for removing a fugitive slave to the Territory from which he fled – this is an offence which could not be committed within this Province in any case, and therefore that his excellency in council not by the Act of this Province, either required or authorized to deliver up the person demanded.

I have the honor to be

Robert Jameson

Attorney General



# DEFENDING Fugitive Slaves

**M**ichigan was a favorite destination for escaped slaves because slavery did not exist here. Even so, escaped slaves were not always safe in Michigan. The U.S. government had laws that said escaped slaves must be returned to their masters. These laws also forced ordinary citizens to capture runaway slaves.

As Michiganians learned more about the horrors of slavery, they took action to make sure that slaves were not sent back to their masters. They felt that if slaves reached Michigan, they should be allowed to stay. When slavecatchers came north to take fugitives back to their masters, some Michiganians disobeyed the law and protected runaways.

In the spring of 1831, Thornton Blackburn and his wife, Lucie, escaped slavery

in Kentucky. In Kentucky, Thornton and Lucie had been owned by different masters and lived separately. The couple came to Detroit and began a new life together. Thornton was a mason, a man who makes things out of brick and stone. Since Detroit was growing quickly and needed new buildings, he had plenty of work. Lucie may have worked, but the record is unclear. She probably made dresses, cleaned laundry, ironed, worked as a hairdresser or in childcare.

Shortly after the Blackburns arrived in Detroit, Thomas Rogers, a white Kentuckian who had known Thornton, happened to be in Detroit. The two men recognized each other and talked. Thornton told Rogers that his owner had given him his freedom. Thornton thought he had avoided trouble. He was wrong. Rogers returned

to Kentucky and later told Thornton's owner that the Blackburns were in Detroit.

The master acted, and the Blackburns were arrested and placed in the Detroit jail. A judge ruled that Thornton and Lucie were to be returned to Kentucky. The Blackburns had many friends, both black and white. They were angry with the judge's decision and planned to keep the Blackburns from being sent back to slavery.

One of Lucie's friends visited her in jail. Secretly, the two women exchanged clothes. Lucie walked out of the jail, while her friend took her place. By the time the jailer noticed the switch, Lucie was safely in Canada.

To keep Thornton from being sent back to Kentucky, an angry mob armed

Illustration by Elisa Chavarri