

## "Reign of Terror Among the Colored People of Chicago,"

Janesville (WI) Daily Gazette, April 10, 1861

<https://stampedes.dickinson.edu/document/janesville-wi-daily-gazette-reign-terror-among-colored-people-chicago-april-10-1861>

### Reign of Terror Among the Colored People of Chicago.

[From the Chicago Tribune.]

The United States Marshal and his standing advertisement that he has fully equipped his office in this city with fellows of the right kidney, and is now willing to answer all orders, and catch all runaways, guaranteeing promptness and dispatch in so doing, has created a wonderful state of feeling among our colored citizens, to which we have before referred. In saloons and bar-rooms about town, the zealous federal officer is praised, but good men and humane men hang their heads, republicans finding this one consolation in the matter, just this that the Marshal does well to choose his tools from the party that has always kept blood-hounds in leash, ready at the slave-driver's beck and bidding. No republican has yet, we believe, received an appointment of the marshal.

There has been an immense state of excitement among the colored people, generally as a class our most quiet citizens, and the actual presence of numerous slave-hunters in town, and the knowledge that several writs were in officer's hands, has created a perfect stampede among the numerous fugitives resident here. Within the week ending with Sunday last, nearly *three hundred* people of color, from this city, have sought refuge in Canada. We give the above figure on the best authority, as the outside limit, for the reason that the number is greatly exaggerated by rumor, and accounts rife about town.

And, indeed, this is no inconsiderable number to have left one community within a week for a new home and liberty in the Queen's dominions. Many of them had been for years resident among us, and not a few were comfortably maintaining themselves in vocations useful to community.—Some of them had here secured by their industry homes of their own, and were living rebukes on the libel that these people "cannot take care of themselves." But the fate of the Harris family was too marked and too recent, and the marshal and his assistants, and bogus police officers quite too eager at man-hunting, and so the stampede began. Many were able to pay their own way to a land of freedom. Still more were aided by the charitable to the means requisite for their transportation to Canadian soil.

All through last week they left in parties of from four to twelve or fifteen, quietly, and without attracting attention. These went by the regular trains, and generally at second class fares. There was however a large share of those for whom an early departure was deemed prudent who were still in town when the week closed. A party of thirty were concealed for several days in the hold of a schooner, whose destination was the other side of the lake, but which was wind-bound in this harbor. Sunday came and found upwards of one hundred pressing and anxious to go, for whose transportation, ate in the week, preparations were made on the contract with the Michigan Southern railroad, to take them through to Detroit in freight, caboose cars, at an average of \$2 a piece.

Sunday was made memorable by such an exodus as no city in the United States ever saw before. While the church bells were calling our congregations to praise and prayer, the same was the signal for a great gathering at the Baptist church on the corner of Buffalo street and Edina Place, most remarkable in its character. The house, a neat structure erected by our colored residents, was densely packed. The services were impressive and deeply affecting. The occasion was to be the farewell of the one hundred and fifteen who were to leave by the train at 6 P. M. for Canada. That quarter of the city is largely inhabited by colored residents, on Edina Place and Buffalo street, and these were out in full force. The peculiarly demonstrative characteristics of the race had their full measure of display. They wept, they embraced one another, prayed together, sang together, and passed from house to house, giving words of parting. Many of the better class brought from their homes provisions for the store of these poor pilgrims, many little trinkets and keepsakes were exchanged, and God bless you's and good byes—very like white folks, under similar circumstances, and at Delft Haven it might have been nearly the same, very like indeed.

The Michigan Southern train was to leave at 6 P. M., the regular passenger train with the four chartered freight cars attached, and in these latter, as the hour of parting drew near they commenced stowing them-

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elves. Each car was supplied with a cask of water and substantial provisions, boiled beef, hams, beans, bread and apples. Some of the party were old, but most of them were young men in their prime, as the class obviously most likely to run the risk of fleeing from slavery. There were quite a number of young families going to save the children from sharing the fate of a slave mother.

One poor woman, for whom writes, it was known, were made out some days since, was brought down on a mattress, on a dray, dangerously ill, but determined to brave all for freedom. A sick child was conveyed in the arms of its father. The women, many of them, were weeping among the crowd of lookers-on. Quite a number of liberty-loving Germans did not scruple to show their sympathy, and declaim against the whole thing.

The train started, and the poor people were gone, and by this present writing are on Canadian soil, beyond the reach of nigger-hunters. There will scarcely be any difference of opinion in our community as to the propriety of this movement, but the origin and kind of sentiment is widely diverse. While the humane and right-minded will be glad that these are removed beyond the grasp of and collision with an odious law, there will be those of that class who believe that there is something malarious in the presence of free niggers, creating an atmosphere in which pork and beef cannot be cured and packed, and cereals and groceries sold, and these will breathe freer since this hegira, in the removal of so many of the dreaded objects from our midst.

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