

**William R. Smith and Eliza Smith House**  
**Victor Road**  
**Town of Macedon, New York**

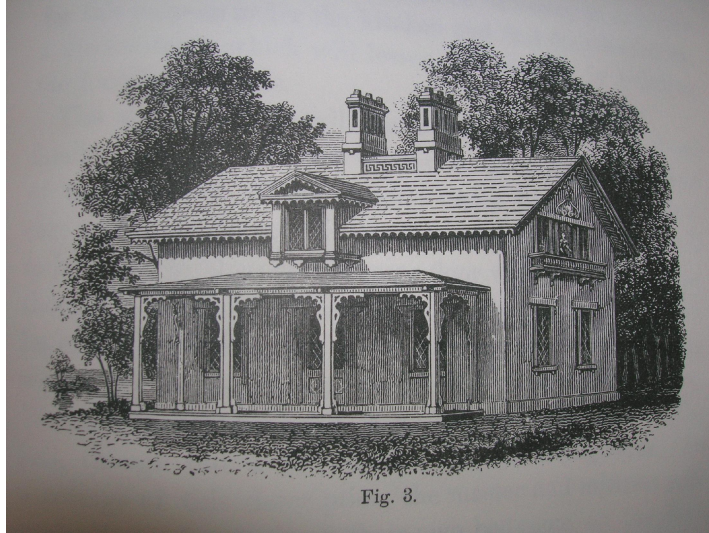
**Significance:** Home of major abolitionists, Quakers, and Underground Railroad supporters. William R. Smith helped organize the New York State Anti-Slavery Society in 1835, supported the Liberty League and Gerrit Smith for president and was nominated for Governor of New York in 1852. At least one of the Edmondson sisters, rescued from capture aboard *The Pearl* in 1848) lived with the Smith family. William R. Smith was a leader in the campaign to rescue William Chaplin (Underground Railroad activist and editor of the *Albany Patriot*) from jail in Maryland in 1850. The Smiths mortgaged their house to help pay bail for Chaplin. They moved to Wilmington, Delaware, about 1852, where Smith edited an abolitionist newspaper called *The Statesman*.



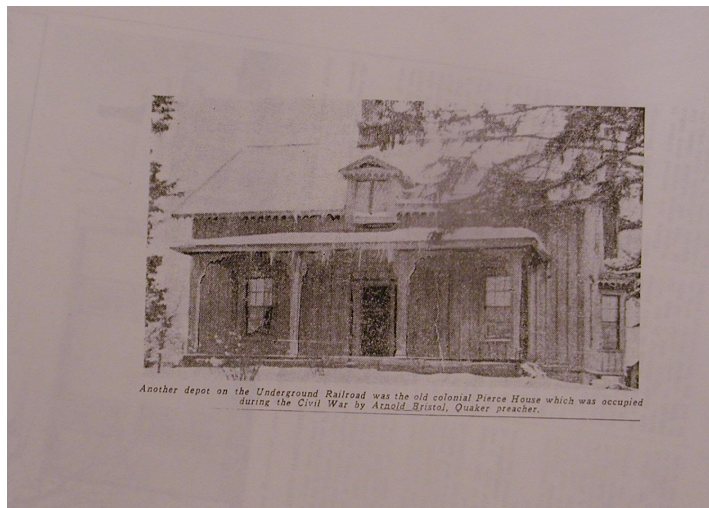
March 28, 2008, Looking southeast



Summer 2007, Looking south



Andrew Jackson Downing, *Victorian Cottage Residences*  
(New York: Dover, 1981), orig. published 1842.  
Design I, "A Suburban Cottage for a Small Family," 26-39.



William R. and Eliza Smith House, c. 1930  
Newspaper clipping, Courtesy Helen Burgio, Macedon Town Historian





Cazenovia Convention, August 1850

Gerrit Smith in center.

Edmondson Sisters (who stayed with William R. and Eliza Smith)  
in bonnets and plaid dresses.

Seated at table, from left:

J.C. Hathaway of Farmington, Theodosia Gilbert, Frederick Douglass

From Milton Sernett, *North Star Country* (Syracuse, 2003).

Original in Madison County Historical Society

**Description.** This small three-bay Gothic cottage, with six-over-six window sashes and gable parallel to the street, stands in virtually original condition in a rural area on the south side of Victor Road. Its Gothic trim with board and batten siding, simple bargeboards, double windows in the gable ends, dormer window, and porch that extends across the north façade (retaining its original supports) reflect the influence of architect Alexander Jackson Downing. In 1842, Downing published in *Cottage Residences* a design for “A Suburban Cottage for a Small Family.” This book went through at least eight more editions by 1873. As a nurseryman, Smith may well have known Downing personally.<sup>1</sup>

**Significance.** William R. Smith, a nurseryman by trade, was one of the core abolitionists and Underground Railroad supporters associated with Quakers of Farmington Monthly and Quarterly Meetings of Friends. The *History of Wayne County*, published in 1874 while Smith was still alive, included William R. Smith as one of those who kept an Underground Railroad safe house, working with Samuel Cuyler and Captain H.N. Throop of Putneyville, Griffith Cooper of Williamson, and Dr. Cook of Sodus in transporting slaves to freedom.<sup>2</sup>

Beginning at least in 1848, the Smiths were connected to an Underground Railroad

<sup>1</sup> Andrew Jackson Downing, *Victorian Cottage Residences* (New York: Dover, 1981), orig. published 1842. Design I, “A Suburban Cottage for a Small Family,” 26-39.

<sup>2</sup> *History of Wayne County, New York* (Philadelphia: Everts, Ensign, and Everts, 1877), 195.

Sites Related to the Underground Railroad, Abolitionism, and African American Life, Wayne County

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operation associated with William L. Chaplin, corresponding editor of the *Albany Patriot*, in Washington, D.C. In 1849, the Smith family hosted Mary and Emily Edmondson, captured in Chesapeake Bay aboard the *Pearl* in 1848, after their father (with the help of Chaplin and Henry Ward Beecher's congregation at Plymouth Church in Brooklyn) bought their freedom. With other Quaker women, Smith's mother, Hannah Comstock Smith set up a school in Macedon/Farmington for African American women that became the model for Myrtilla Miner's school in Washington, D.C. (See Hamblin-Hathaway School and House).

Chaplin was captured in 1850 during the escape of two men enslaved by southern Congressmen. Smith, along with his father Asa B. Smith and J.C. Hathaway of Farmington, helped raise \$20,000 to pay his bail. According to Josiah Henson, freedom seeker from Maryland and model for Uncle Tom in *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, William R. Smith mortgaged his property to help pay for Chaplin's bail. Smith did indeed mortgage his house in 1852. Shortly thereafter, he moved to Wilmington, Delaware (where Thomas Garret kept a major Underground Railroad safe house). There, Smith edited an abolitionist newspaper called *The Statesman*.

## Discussion

William R. Smith came by his abolitionist and Underground Railroad sympathies naturally, for his parents were both lifelong abolitionist activists. He was born about 1810 to Asa B. Smith and Hannah Comstock Smith. He married Eliza Wright (born December 21, 1808) on September 9, 1832, and the family had four children: Hannah (born in 1835); Eliza Bell (born December 26, 1836); Emily (born January 5, 1839); and Alfred (born 1848).<sup>3</sup>

Smith's grandfather, his mother's father, was Darius Comstock (1768-1845), a Rhode Island-born Quaker. Darius Comstock became President of the Ontario Manumission Society, chartered by the State of New York in 1812 to help "those who are illegally held in slavery to the attainment of their personal liberty, and to assist in the education of people of color, whether free or enslaved." Many Quakers (along with a few non-Quakers) served as officers, including Darius Comstock, President; his brother Otis Comstock, Treasurer; and Welcome Herendeen and John Pound, Directors. In 1815, with the help of Darius Comstock, freedom seeker Austin Steward escaped from slavery in Bath, New York. Steward lived with Otis and Amy Smith Comstock, Darius's brother and sister-in-law, in Macedon, New York, for four years. When Steward opened a store in Rochester about 1819, the Comstocks supplied him with farm products to sell.<sup>4</sup>

Darius Comstock and his family later moved to Palmyra, where they were associated with Palmyra Meeting of Friends, a preparative meeting of Farmington Monthly Meeting. Darius Comstock became a contractor on the Erie Canal in 1825, where he (and his Irish laborers) helped Joseph Pickard, a local barber, escape capture in Lockport, New York. One account reported that Darius Comstock, with his brother, was "extensively known as a defender of the fugitive slave from the clutches of the slave-hunter."<sup>5</sup>

<sup>3</sup> James E. Hazard Index to The Records of New York Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends <http://mulberry.swarthmore.edu/~eevans1/fhlresults.php>; Smith genealogy by Charles Lenhart.

<sup>4</sup> "Ontario Manumission Society," *Laws of New York*, 1812, Chap 229, noted on website, Preston Pierce. The Ontario Manumission Society was probably a branch of the New York Society for Promoting the Manumission of Slaves, founded in 1785 by twelve Friends and six others. Darius Comstock and his brother Otis were born in Providence County, Rhode Island, in 1768 and 1770. They came to Farmington from Adams, Massachusetts in 1789-90 with their parents, Nathan and Mary Staples Comstock, part of the first group of white families to settle in the Phelps Gorham Purchase in western New York. After his marriage, Darius Comstock moved to Palmyra, New York, and was part of Palmyra Preparative Meeting of Farmington Monthly Meeting of Friends. From genealogy of Comstock Family prepared by Charles Lenhart.

<sup>5</sup> "Fugitive Slave Case, Lockport, New York, 1823," *Staats' Lockport City Directory for 1868-69* (Lockport: M.C. Richardson, 1868), 42, from Christopher Densmore, "Underground Railroad in Western New York," "The Circle Association's African American History of Western New York state 1770 to 1830,"

Darius Comstock later moved to Adrian, Michigan, where he was Trustee of the Woodstock Manual Labor Institute, a biracial school for both blacks and whites. When Comstock died on June 2, 1845, Prier Foster, General Agent for the Institute, wrote to the *National Anti-Slavery Standard* that the death of Darius Comstock, “friend and benefactor,” was an “irreparable loss” not only to the Woodstock Institute but also to the “colored population of our country at large.” “He was worthy of the title universally accorded him - a title more honorable than that of Bishops, Kings or Lords – ‘The Poor Man's Friend.’ The colored people - the poorest of the poor - will reverence his memory, and his name shall be sweet in the mouths of their children.”<sup>6</sup>

William R. Smith's parents, Hannah Comstock Smith (Darius Comstock's daughter) and Asa B. Smith carried on the tradition of active work on the Underground Railroad. Asa B. Smith, along with several other local Quakers (including J.C. Hathaway, Lorenzo Hathaway, R. Hathaway, and William R. Smith from Farmington-Macedon and more than twenty people from Palmyra) signed the call to the organizing meeting of the New York State Anti-Slavery Society, to be held in Utica on October 21, 1835. He helped organize the Wayne County area for Gerrit Smith's project to give land to African Americans. He signed antislavery petitions in 1845, rejecting annexation of Texas as slaveholding state, and in 1850, opposing slavery in the District of Columbia. President of the Jan. 1838 Great Western NY A S Convention at Rochester. He made speeches and pleas to the mob at the Walworth Baptist church during a formative mtg. of a new AS Soc. in March of 1838. Donated \$25.00 to the NYS A. S. Soc. as an incentive for a \$100.00 pledge, (July-Aug NYS A. S. Soc. Treasury Fund records). Officer at the Anniversary Convention of the NYS A. S. Soc. in NYC in Sept 1839. President of the NYS A. S. Soc. Convention held at Waterloo, NY on Feb 25-26 of 1840. Chosen as Business Cmte. member for the Western NYS A. S. Convention at Farmington in March of 1840. Chairman/VP of the Western NYS A. S. Soc. annual mtg. held at York, Livingston, NY on 28 Oct 1840. By the 1840s, he was a supporter of the Liberty Party. In 1846, Asa B. Smith ran on the Abolition ticket for 7th District Senator in New York State. Hannah C. Smith was one of five local women (including Phebe Hathaway, Maria E. Wilbur, Anna P. Adams, and Cassandra Hamblin) who started a school for Mary and Emily Edmondson, rescued from slavery after the capture of the *Pearl* near Washington, D.C.<sup>7</sup>

William R. Smith's first documented abolitionist act, at age 25, was to sign, with his father, the call to the organizing meeting of the New York State Anti-Slavery Society in October 1835.<sup>8</sup>

William R. Smith, along with his father Asa B., made speeches and pleas to the mob at the Walworth Baptist church during a formative mtg. of a new AS Soc. in March of 1838. [Write this up. Notes from our database: Chosen as business cmte member of the June 1838 Wayne Co. A. S. Soc. mtg in Palmyra. Secretary of the Auburn, NY A. S. Convention, July of 1839. Wrote a lengthy article in Friend of Man, Feb. 2, 1840 concerning Abolitionist roles. Chosen as Secretary of the Waterloo NYS A. S. Convention of Feb. 1840. Active participant and treasurer at the March 1840 Western NYS A. S. Soc. Convention at Farmington. Member of Exec. cmte at the Western NYS A. S. Soc. Annual mtg at York, Livingston, NY 11 Nov. 1840. Member of the Christian Anti-slavery Convention held at Auburn on June 23, 1841 and signed the published call for attendees in FOM.]<sup>9</sup>

<http://www.math.buffalo.edu/~swww/0history/1770-1830.html>.

<sup>6</sup> Prier Foster to *National Anti-Slavery Standard*, July 1, 1845, published October 9, 1845.

<sup>7</sup> “To the Friends of Immediate Emancipation in the State of New York,” *Liberator*, October 3, 1835 (5:40); *Friend of Man*, December 20, 1837 v. 2, #27; January 24, 1838; March 22, 1838; August 15, 1838; September 25, 1839; March 11, 1840; April 1, 1840; November 11, 1840 *Cayuga Republican* July 4, 1832; *Clyde Eagle*, October 17, 1846; Gerrit Smith Collection, Syracuse University; Antislavery petition, National Archives, LC Box 137; Antislavery Petition, 1850, “Macedon's Inhabitants against Slavery in D. C.” National Archives, HR31A-G4.1; Giles B. Stebbins to *National Anti-Slavery Standard*, January 6, 1845, published January 16, 1845; *North Star*, October 26, 1849.

<sup>8</sup> “To the Friends of Immediate Emancipation in the State of New York,” *Liberator*, October 3, 1835 (5:40).

<sup>9</sup> *Friend of Man*, December 20, 1837 v. 2, #27; March 22, 1838; July 18, 1838; July 3, 1839; March 4, 1840; March 11, 1840; April 1, 1840; November 11, 1840; April 27, 1841; *The North Star*, September 5, 1850; Gerrit

In 1839, he (along with his Farmington-Macedon neighbors J.C. Hathaway, Daniel Robinson, and Esek Wilbur and William O. Duvall of Port Byron, New York) sent a letter to William Lloyd Garrison, editor of the *Liberator*, protesting the exclusion of women delegates from a recent antislavery convention in Albany. “While woman's heart is bleeding, Her voice should ne'er be hushed,” they argued, “and shame should mantle the cheek of that man who could so far forget that his mother was a woman as to use his influence to paralyze her energies or abate her sympathy in the least degree in the cause of crushed and bleeding humanity.” Although they supported political action, they also respected the decision of anyone who chose to withhold support from a system of government that was “fundamentally wrong.”<sup>10</sup>

By the late 1830s, the antislavery movement was splitting into two camps: one which opposed political action, associated with William Lloyd Garrison, and the other associated with those who advocated an antislavery political party. Garrisonians also strongly supported the right of abolitionist women to speak and organize. The dominant view among historians has been that political abolitionists opposed the rights of women. In central and western New York, however, a large group of abolitionists advocated both women's rights and political action. Among them was William R. Smith.

This “third way” became a crucible for the early woman's rights movement. Key woman's rights advocates from the Farmington-Macedon area (including Maria E. Wilbur, wife of Esek Wilbur) attended the first woman's rights convention in Seneca Falls in 1848. Others (including J.C. Hathaway) attended the first national convention held in Worcester, Massachusetts, in 1850.<sup>11</sup>

Check:

- 1) list of attendees at 1835 Utica meeting.
- 2) AS petitions, Farmington M.M.

In 1845, William R. Smith (and his father Asa B. Smith) took part in a meeting of the Western New York Anti-Slavery Society, held in the orthodox meetinghouse and then in the Methodist Church (perhaps the Wesleyan Methodist Church). The meeting highlighted the conflict between political abolitionists, including William R. Smith, who believed that the Constitution was an anti-slavery document, and the Western New York Anti-Slavery Society (affiliated with the American Anti-Slavery Society), which argued that the Constitution was a pro-slavery document and abolitionists had no choice but to advocate either “peaceful dissolution of the Union or the Abolition of Slavery.” Both William R. Smith and Asa B. Smith defended the Constitution against the arguments of their neighbor and fellow Quaker J.C. Hathaway; reformer Giles B. Stebbins, a recent resident of the utopian community at Sodus Bay; J.B. Sanderson, African American abolitionist lecturer; and William Wells Brown, African American lecturer employed by the Western New York Anti-Slavery Society. Giles B. Stebbins noted that “William R. Smith, an advocate of the Third party views, made some remarks, which I am sorry to say were not characterized by the fairness and candor, which had marked all the remarks of the preceding speakers, on both sides.” Smith “seemed to travel out of his path to throw an unnecessary odium on the advocates of Disunion, by adverting to the difference between Old and New Organizations, in a manner calculated to throw blame on the Old Organization alone, and also to advert in an unmanly way upon “those of transcendental philosophy, who sit at the feet of M. W. Chapman’ &c, &c.”<sup>12</sup>

Smith's advocacy of political abolitionism and the anti-slavery character of the U.S. Constitution placed him firmly in the company of political abolitionists such as Gerrit Smith, wealthy reformer from Peterboro, New York; William Goodell, former editor of the *Friend of Man* (the New York State Anti-Slavery paper); James C. Jackson, abolitionist lecturer and editor; and William

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Smith Papers, Syracuse University; Antislavery petition, National Archives and Records Administration, LC Box 137.

<sup>10</sup> “A Voice from New York,” *Liberator*, October 4, 1839.

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<sup>12</sup> Giles B. Stebbins to *National Anti-Slavery Standard*, January 6, 1845, published January 16, 1845.

Sites Related to the Underground Railroad, Abolitionism, and African American Life, Wayne County

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Chaplin, corresponding editor of the *Albany Patriot*, nominated for Lt. Governor of New York State in 1846 by the abolitionist Liberty Party. By 1846, this group began to discuss withdrawing from the abolitionist Liberty Party to form a new political party.

Called the Liberty League, this party advocated a wide variety of reforms, as well as equal inclusion of women and men. On June 8, 1847, the Liberty League met at Macedon Lock, New York (probably now called simply Macedon). Unlike the Liberty Party, which advocated only one idea—the abolition of slavery—the Liberty League took a stand on all major issues, including an immediate end to the Mexican War, and end to tariffs and all restraints on trade, free settlement of public lands, exclusions from office of slave owners and anyone who advocated liquor licenses, and the land reform measures of a group called the National Reform Association. The Liberty League viewed itself as a permanent party, advocating “the TRUE and the RIGHT,” and “THE PROTECTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS.” They insisted that the Constitution was an antislavery document, and they wanted to use it for the “widest, sternest, deadliest war against slavery.”<sup>13</sup>

William R. Smith was one of the vice-presidents of this convention. The official paper of the Liberty League was the *Albany Patriot*, edited by William Chaplin, who was then in Washington, D.C., part of a major Underground Railroad network. The Liberty League nominated Gerrit Smith for President in 1847. In the coming years, William R. Smith, William Chaplin, and Gerrit Smith would be inextricably bound together in several major abolitionist and Underground Railroad events.

Liberty League supporters changed their name several times over the next few years. By 1852, it again called itself the Liberty Party. Meeting in Syracuse in September, it asserted that “the Liberty Party cannot consent to fall below, nor, in any degree, to qualify, its great central principle, that all persons - black and white, male and female - have equal political rights, and are equally entitled to the protection and advantages of Civil Government.” It nominated William Goodell for President and William R. Smith, Farmington Quaker, for Governor of New York State.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> William Goodell, *Address of the Macedon Convention* and Gerrit Smith, *Letters of Gerrit Smith* (Albany: S.W. Green, 1847); *National Era*, June 24, 1847.

<sup>14</sup> “National Liberty Party,” Gerrit Smith Broadside and Pamphlet Collection, Syracuse University, <http://library.syr.edu/digital/collections/g/GerritSmith/482.htm>.



Some of the most dramatic and nationally significant Underground Railroad events were yet to come, challenging the ability of Farmington Quakers to meet the needs of freedom seekers and their helpers and thrusting local people into the very heart of national debates about slavery and abolition, into debates in Washington, D.C., itself. On April 13, 1848, a ship called the *Pearl* was captured in Chesapeake Bay with eighty people on board—three whites (Captain Edward Sayre, Daniel Drayton, who had chartered the ship, and the cabin boy) and seventy-seven African American freedom seekers. All African Americans were sold into slavery. Most were never heard from again. Two teenage girls, however, Mary Edmondson and Emily Edmondson, became celebrities when their father Paul Edmondson successfully raised funds, with the help of antislavery agent William Chaplin and Henry Ward Beecher of Plymouth Church, Brooklyn, to buy them out of slavery.<sup>15</sup>

Upon their release from slavery, the Edmondson sisters came to the Farmington-Macedon area, probably living with William R. and Eliza Smith. The 1850 census listed a 26-year-old woman, a “mulatto” named Sarah Chaplin, born in “Merryland,” living in the household of William R. Smith. Was this one of the Edmondson sisters, living under a pseudonym? The census reported no comparable sister living anywhere else in the area.

Under the mentorship of local Quaker women, including Hannah C. Smith, William R. Smith’s mother, the Edmondson sisters went to school, probably the select school known locally as the “Bird’s Nest” operated by Cassandra Green Hamlin. On October 26, 1849, the *North Star* published a “Circular Of the Provisional Committee, for the Promotion of Education among the Colored People, in such of the Slave States are, or may be accessible.” Five women signed the Circular. Four of them—Phebe Hathaway, Maria E. Wilbur, Anna P. Adams, and Hannah C. Smith—were Quakers affiliated with Farmington Monthly Meeting and one—Cassandra G. Hamblin, born a Congregationalist in Sennett, New York, had come to Farmington as a widow with two young children and two years later, in 1851, married John Bolles Hathaway, a local Quaker. Cassandra Hamblin served as Secretary of the Committee. “The Edmondson Sisters, Mary and Emily, you know by reputation,” read the Circular.

Their brief history is singular and affecting. It is enough to say, that they were for seven months in the hands of slave-traders, in Washington, Baltimore, Alexandria, and New Orleans - that their virtuous and christian character afforded them a shield of complete defence - That by a rare impulse of social sympathy, twenty-two hundred and fifty dollars were raised for their redemption! They are of a good family - are now in this neighborhood, under the most favorable circumstances to be thoroughly taught, possessing highly respectable capacities, with most exemplary industry, and a rare deportment for propriety; they are anxious to acquire information that will, in every way, render them competent and effective, as teachers and examples among their people in the District of Columbia. This Committee propose to take charge of them - to advise them, and to raise whatever means may be required in the course of their education. Others of equal promise will, no doubt, soon offer themselves. Indeed, we are well informed, that any number of persons adapted to the object we have in view, can at any time be selected at Washington or Baltimore.<sup>16</sup>

The Edmondson sisters accomplished their goal. From Farmington-Macedon, they went to New York Central College, a biracial college that admitted both men and women students, in McGrawville, and then, under the sponsorship of Harriet Beecher Stowe, author of *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*, they went to Oberlin College. Mary died at Oberlin in 1853, of tuberculosis, but Emily went to Washington, D.C., to teach at Myrtilla Miner’s school before her marriage. Myrtilla Miner, from Madison County, New York, opened a school for young women of color in 1851, shortly after visiting Macedon. On July 31, 1851, she

<sup>15</sup> For more on the *Pearl*, see Stanley Harrold, *Subversives: Antislavery Community in Washington, D.C., 1828-1865*. (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2003), 116-145; Josephine Pacheco, *The Pearl: A Failed Slave Escape on the Potomac* (Chapel Hill and London: University of North Carolina Press, 2005).

<sup>16</sup> *North Star*, October 26, 1849.



wrote from Macedon, that she intended to begin her school in September, with the support of men such as Samuel J. May, Unitarian minister from Syracuse, William L. Chaplin (who had been in Farmington that fall), and William Smith.<sup>17</sup>

William R. Smith was also a key player in the effort to free William Chaplin, the man responsible for hiring the *Pearl* and helping to raise money for the Edmondson sisters' freedom. Chaplin was editor of the *Albany Patriot*, the official paper of the Liberty League. The *Patriot's* earlier editor, Charles Torrey, had died in a Maryland prison for his work assisting freedom seekers, and Chaplin was inspired to continue his work, probably funded in part by Gerrit Smith. Daniel Drayton never betrayed William Chaplin, and after the failure of the *Pearl* rescue, Chaplin redoubled his efforts to get people out of slavery. As historian Stanley Harrold argued,

No white person active against slavery in Washington during these years more willingly exposed himself to physical, mental, and emotional stress than Chaplin. Following the capture of the *Pearl*, he increased his already impressive engagement with desperate African Americans in the city and its vicinity. . . . He became—with the possible exception of Bigelow—the most active white conductor of the area's underground railroad.<sup>18</sup>

On August 10, 1850, William Chaplin himself was arrested and imprisoned in Rockville, Montgomery County, Maryland, as he was helping two men—enslaved by Robert Toombs and Alexander Stephens, prominent Georgia congressmen—to escape from slavery in Washington, D.C. Chaplin faced lengthy imprisonment unless his bail of \$20,000 could be raised. Abolitionists went immediately to work. Farmington-Macedon abolitionists took a leadership role in securing Chaplin's release. Immediately Joseph C. Hathaway of Farmington, with Theodosia Gilbert, visited Chaplin in jail in Maryland. On August 21, 1850, abolitionists held a convention that included between thirty and fifty fugitive slaves and from 1500-2000 others at Cazenovia, New York. Among them were the Edmondson sisters (who sang), Frederick Douglass, Gerrit Smith, J.C. Hathaway, and William R. Smith.<sup>19</sup>

A famous daguerreotype of the convention, taken by Ezra Greenleaf Weld, abolitionist Theodore Weld's brother, captured one of the few contemporary images of these reformers.

The convention appointed a committee chaired by James C. Jackson of Glen Haven, with Samuel J. May and Charles A. Wheaton of Syracuse, Secretaries, and Gerrit Smith, Treasurer, to raise funds for Chaplin's release. William R. Smith, a member of the Chaplin committee, traveled with the Edmondson sisters, freedom seeker James Baker, Samuel J. May, and others, holding meetings in small towns across central New York, to raise money for Chaplin's release.<sup>20</sup>

William R. Smith, Asa B. Smith, and J.C. Hathaway did more than give speeches on Chaplin's behalf. Josiah Henson, the prototype of Uncle Tom in *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, noted that the Smiths mortgaged their farm to help pay Chaplin's bail. "The Hathaways, benevolent Quakers of Farmington, New York, Asa B. Smith, and William R. Smith, his son, of the same town, paid the bail," noted Henson, "which they desired Mr. Chaplin to forfeit, as they knew that the result of a trial would be that he would be hung. I will here add that the Smiths had to sell their farms, and were pecuniarily ruined for the time, and it is with pleasure that I make this record of their generosity in the Anti-Slavery cause." In fact, William R. Smith, although not Asa B. Smith, did mortgage his farm

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<sup>17</sup> Josephine Pacheco, *The Pearl: A Failed Slave Escape on the Potomac* (Chapel Hill and London: University of North Carolina Press, 2005); Myrtilla Miner to the Family of Mr. Peter Robertson, Friendship, N.Y., July 31, 1851, Plainfield, New Jersey, Collection, Clements Library, University of Michigan. <http://www.clements.umich.edu/womened/PlainNJFriendsRead.html>.

<sup>18</sup> Stanley Harrold, *Subversives: Antislavery Community in Washington, D.C., 1828-65*, 154.

<sup>19</sup> *North Star*, September 5, 1850. For details of Chaplin's arrest and rescue, see Stanley Harrold, *Subversives: Antislavery Community in Washington, D.C., 1828-65*, 146-73.

<sup>20</sup> *North Star*, September 5, 1850.

in 1852.<sup>21</sup>

In 1851, Smith held the copyright on (and most certainly also wrote) a pamphlet called *The Case of William L. Chaplin, being an Appeal to All Respecters of Law and Justice*. At a time of heightened national tensions over the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850, Smith defended Chaplin's attempt to help people escape from slavery in Washington, D.C., with two radical arguments. Chaplin was innocent both because slavery was not legal in the District of Columbia, and also because "Congress has no power to legalize slavery anywhere." As to the legality of slavery in Maryland, Smith sarcastically insisted that

in our travels through Maryland, we always take care never to carry with us either a Bible or the Declaration of Independence, let they might be deemed by some zealous prosecuting officer, magistrate, or judge "of an inflammatory character." Nor shall we, in the present pamphlet, presume to drop the most distant hint that slavery in the State of Maryland is not the most entirely legal and thoroughly blissful and desirable state ever known or heard of. No wise and prudent man, in the face of such penalties, would venture to maintain that two and two make four.<sup>22</sup>

By 1854, William R. Smith had moved to Wilmington, Delaware, home of one of the Underground Railroad's most active workers, Quaker Thomas Garrett. Whether Smith moved to Wilmington specifically to assist with Underground Railroad work is unknown, but that is certainly a clear possibility. Garrett worked closely with Harriet Tubman, and it is possible, even likely, that Tubman used the Farmington route.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Josiah Henson, *Uncle Tom's Story of His Life. An Autobiography of the Rev. Josiah Henson, From 1789 to 1876*, ed. John Lobb (London: Christian Age: 1876), 152-53. <http://docsouth.unc.edu/neh/henson/henson.html>. The story may (or may not) be more complicated than this. Ralph Volney Harlow, one of Gerrit Smith's biographers, does note that William R. Smith lost his house over Chaplin's bail but thinks that William R. Smith may have committed Gerrit Smith to paying more of Chaplin's bail than Gerrit Smith had intended. Volney Harlow, *Gerrit Smith, Philanthropist and Reformer* (New York: Henry Holt, 1939), 290-95.

<sup>22</sup> [William R. Smith], *The Case of William L. Chaplin, being an Appeal to All Respecters of Law and Justice* (Boston: Chaplin Committee, 1851), 10-12. Samuel J. May Anti-Slavery Collection, Cornell University, <http://dlxs.library.cornell.edu/cgi/t/text/text-idx?page=simple&c=mayantislaavery>.

<sup>23</sup> Deed, William R. Smith, 1854, Ontario County Clerks Office.

**Primary Documents Relating to William R. Smith, Eliza Smith, and William Smith's  
parents, Asa B. Smith and Hannah Comstock Smith**

from the *Liberator* and *North Star* (Accessible Archives database of African American Newspapers,  
*The Friend of Man* (Cornell University), and *Washington Post*, with genealogy by Charles Lenhart  
Chronological Order

**Collection:** The Liberator

**Publication:** THE LIBERATOR

**Date:** October 4, 1839

**Title:** A VOICE FROM NEW-YORK. TO WILLIAM LLOYD GARRISON

**Location:** Boston, Massachusetts

A VOICE FROM NEW-YORK.

TO WILLIAM LLOYD GARRISON: *Dear Brother*— Deeply interested in the anti-slavery enterprise, and wishing with thousands of others, to see it advance to a speedy, yet peaceful triumph, we cannot but feel a deep solicitude in regard to the principles which are acted upon in carrying it forward. Having in the humble sphere which Providence has assigned us, endeavored to throw our influence in favor of the emancipation of our outcast and down-trodden brethren, we feel it not only our right, but our duty to say, that we consider the position assumed by some among us, whom we respect and love, as of dangerous tendency. The chief glory of the cause in which we are engaged, has in our estimation consisted in this fact, that it recognized the essential equality of *man*, and that in proportion as it brought men and women within its influence, it cut them loose from all those prejudices which a false and sectarian education had thrown around them, enlarged their feelings, brought into active exercise their nobler powers, and made them sensible that in man there was a dignity and worth which proved the divinity of his origin. Up to the present time, the anti-slavery platform has been thought of sufficient breadth to hold all those who would give their hearty assent to the proposition, that 'American slavery is a *sin* and ought to be immediately abolished.' But 'coming events, which cast their shadows before,' would seem to admonish us, that henceforth its dimensions are to be circumscribed in such a manner as to push off one half of the community who have ever been found the most active and efficient friends of the *slave*. We are not among those who wish, now that God has given us a little strength, to cast off those, who in hours of gloom and peril stood side by side with us and cheered us on by their prayers and alms, kept our sympathies in activity by their thrilling eloquence and heart stirring appeals, and held up our hands in the day of battle, that victory might be ours, and that mothers in slavery might know the blessings of liberty; no, never— for 'While woman's heart is bleeding, Her voice should ne'er be hushed,' and shame should mantle the cheek of that man who could so far forget that his mother was a woman as to use his influence to paralyze her energies or abate her sympathy in the least degree in the cause of crushed and bleeding humanity. The action of the Albany Convention, in excluding women, has been the occasion of much painful reflection. It has given to that Convention a partizan character. It shows, as by sun-light, that sectarianism is creeping upon us, and that it requires all our vigilance and strength to keep it out. The moment it is admitted, that a committee, appointed to call a Convention for the purpose of discussing the best means of hastening the overthrow of slavery, are justified in calling a packed Convention, in refusing to recognize regularly chosen delegates from anti-slavery societies, because, forsooth, they have so worded the call, (and that too without authority,) that, technically speaking, they might say that women were not free *men*, then sectarianism reigns triumphant, and the progress of this cause is much retarded. Your vigilance in this matter is very gratifying to us, and our ideas of the wrongfulness of the course pursued by the committee are, we are happy to find, in accordance with those so ably expressed by yourself. While we look upon it as an important part of our enterprise to

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'preach deliverance to the captive' at the ballot-box, and contend that no abolitionist can consistently cast his vote for a pro slavery candidate, we feel bound to admit, that it is the right of every man to withhold his support from, and participation in any system of government which he believes to be fundamentally wrong, without disqualifying himself from a full right to membership in the anti-slavery ranks; and that to urge the contrary doctrine is a direct violation of the rights of conscience which should ever be held inviolate. In conclusion, let us say, be wise,&#151 be of good cheer, and fearless in the discharge of duty&#151 for 'truth is mighty and will prevail'&#151 and he that is true to her cause will meet a rich reward. We enclose money for one copy of 'the Liberator' to each of us, to be directed as follows: J.C. HATHAWAY, *Farmington, Ontario County*, N.Y. WM. O. DUVALL, *Port Byron, Cayuga County*, N.Y. DANIEL A. ROBINSON, *Farmington, Ontario Co.* N.Y. **WILLIAM R. SMITH**, *Macedon, Wayne County*, N.Y. ESEK WILBUR, *Farmington, Ontario County*, N.Y.



**Collection:** The Liberator

**Publication:** THE LIBERATOR

**Date:** March 13, 1840

**Title:** From the Friend of Man. MACEDON, 2 mo. 21st, 1840.

**Location:** Boston, Massachusetts  
the Friend of Man.

From the Friend of Man.

MACEDON, 2 mo. 21st, 1840.

W. GOODELL: The remarks of our dear friend Gerrit Smith, in the last 'Friend of Man,' in relation to the course pursued by Henry C. Wright and James C. Jackson at the Bloomfield convention, are in my opinion, quite uncalled for. Much do I hope that the ill success of a favorite measure has not influenced his judgment or given point to his expressions. I am by no means committed to 'Non-Resistance' principles, and should deeply regret their being introduced as such into any anti-slavery meeting; but with all deference to the superior penetration of our friend, others as well as myself were unable to see when and where the question was referred to, except in his own speech. The main point of Myron Holley's argument was, that *voting* or political action was a moral duty, obligatory upon *all*; and that of course, *all* were deeply responsible for the discharge of this duty in relation to slavery. To me this doctrine was altogether new; and I was therefore quite prepared for the sound and logical argument of H.C. Wright, showing that the abstract question of the duty of every man to act politically, was not originally taken into consideration, and of course, the discussion upon this precise point was out of place. Nothing is more certain than that the abolitionist who refuses to remember the slave when at the polls is guilty of gross hypocrisy; and it is equally clear, that to decide that all *shall* go to the polls, is a question as foreign to our organization as infant baptism or transubstantiation. It would be a glaring infringement of the rights of conscience, and an unjust attempt to narrow the limits of our noble anti-slavery platform, which hitherto has been thought sufficiently broad, to contain all of whatever creed, who believe that we ought to labor for the immediate and peaceful abolition of slavery. The remarks of H.C. Wright were strictly confined to this point, except when he urged abolitionists who went to the polls *never* to forget the slave, and rather than vote for a pro-slavery candidate, to 'use for ballots slips of paper inscribed with such abstractions as 'holiness,' 'justice,' or 'mercy,' And does this 'seem to be trifling with men's religious sense of the duty of voting?' How differently we thought from this, when Gerrit Smith's ballot of 1838, consisting of a question or an 'abstraction' from the Bible, was published in almost every anti-slavery paper with high commendation. That the presence of our friends Jackson and Wright contributed not a little to the final decision of the convention on this question, I fully believe, for without some counter influence, few minds could have resisted the eloquence and argument in favor of political organization; and I very much doubt whether the Arcade meeting would have taken the course it did, had not the support been chiefly given to one side of the subject. Could the simple question be to-day presented to the abolitionists of western New York, our friend would be perhaps surprised to find himself in a very lean minority.

Thy sincere friend, **WILLIAM R. SMITH**.

P.S. I leave my friend James C. Jackson to defend himself from charges preferred against him of a more personal nature, fully believing however, that his course here will not lessen him in the esteem of his numerous friends.

**Collection:** African American Newspapers

**Publication:** THE NATIONAL ERA

**Date:** October 28, 1847

**Title:** Periodical Catalogue of Fruit and Ornamental Trees and Plants,

**Location:** Washington, D.C.

*Periodical Catalogue of Fruit and Ornamental Trees and Plants, cultivated at the Macedon, Wayne county, New York, Nursery.* Our friend, **William R. Smith**, proprietor of the above nursery, has sent to us his catalogue for 1847 and 1848. This catalogue is not cumbered, as too many are, with a large list of untried and inferior quality of fruit trees - Mr. Smith having rigidly adhered to the rule, to offer nothing to the public that he has not himself tried and found to be of a superior quality. N.

**Collection:** African American Newspapers

**Publication:** THE NATIONAL ERA

**Date:** October 28, 1847

**Title:** MACEDON NURSERY. Catalogues of this establishment are now in

**Location:** Washington, D.C.

MACEDON NURSERY. Catalogues of this establishment are now in readiness. The descriptions of the fruit, flowers, &c., are prepared with great care, from personal examination. Many new and excellent varieties have been proved, some of which are now offered for sale. The apple trees are of good size, and embrace a large number of the finest kinds. The pear trees are mostly small, but the selection of proved fruits is not surpassed by any other. The peach trees are beautiful, and present an admirable succession for ten weeks. Plums, Apricots, Nectarines, Filberts, &c., mostly of good size. Hardy ever-blooming roses! a new thing under the sun. These roses are at the present moment exciting more interest among European fanciers than all other varieties. They are very large, double, and of brilliant colors. For detailed information, refer to the catalogue. **WILLIAM R. SMITH**. Macedon, Wayne co., N.Y., 10th mo., 1847.

**Collection:** African American Newspapers

**Publication:** THE NORTH STAR

**Date:** September 5, 1850

**Title:** -----

**Location:** Rochester, New York

Cazenovia Convention. -----

The meeting of fugitives from Slavery and their friends held in Cazenovia, New York, 21st and 22d day of August, 1850, commenced by appointing Samuel J. May, as temporary Chairman, and Samuel Thomas, Jr., as temporary Secretary.

Samuel Wells, J.W. Loguen, Charles B. Ray were appointed a Committee to nominate officers for the Convention. Gerrit Smith, Mary Springstead, James Baker, Fordyce Rice, Caroline Brown were appointed the Business Committee. The following resolution, offered by James C. Jackson, was adopted.

"Whereas William L. Chaplin is, contrary to the laws of God and man, suffering imprisonment; and whereas the litigation, and various measures, which, we trust will result in his liberation, and in the establishment of righteous principles, will require the expenditure of large sums of money: Resolved, therefore, that this Convention proceed to appoint a Committee, to be entitled "The Chaplin Committee," whose business it shall be to adopt such measures, as they shall judge fit to effect his liberation, and promote the cause of law and justice; and that, for the purpose of supplying themselves with means for accomplishing these objects, we advise them to raise, within thirty days, twenty thousand dollars."

The following person were appointed to nominate a "Chaplin Committee." Joseph C. Hathaway, *William R. Smith*, Eliza *Smith*, Eleazer Seymour, James C. Jackson.

Mrs. F. Rice, Phebe Hathaway, and Louisa Burnell were appointed to nominate a committee of females, whose duty it should be to obtain by contributions of ten cents each sufficient means to purchase a silver pitcher and a pair of silver goblets and a gold medal with appropriate inscriptions thereon - to obtain the same, and to present them to William L. Chaplin, as a testimonial of the high regard of the friends of the slave for his distinguished services in the cause of humanity. (The names of the persons composing this Committee will appear in our next.)

The following persons, being nominated for the officers of the Convention, were appointed. Frederick Douglass, President.

Joseph C. Hathaway, Francis Hawley, Chas. B. Ray, Chas. A. Wheaton, Vice Presidents.

Charles D. Miller, and Anne V. Adams, Secretaries.

Letters from S.R. Ward, Wm. Goodell, and Wm. H. Burleigh were read.

On motion of Mr. Loguen, a Committee were appointed to report an address or addresses from the fugitive slaves. This Committee consisted of J.W. Loguen, James Baker and E.L. Platt.

Joseph C. Hathaway gave a deeply interesting account of his and Miss Theodosia Gilbert's late interview with Mr. Chaplin in the jail of the city of Washington. Mr. Chaplin was not armed, and had no suspicion, that the persons in his carriage were armed.

Mr. Loguen reported two addresses from the fugitive slaves - one to the slaves, and the other to the Liberty Party. After an extended discussion upon the former, they were both adopted.

The following persons, being nominated, were appointed to constitute the Chaplin committee: James C. Jackson, Joseph C. Hathaway, Samuel J. May, Charles A. Wheaton, G.W. Clark, Wm. R. Smith, George W. Lawson, Cyrus P. Grosvenor, G.W. Johnson of N.Y.; Francis Jackson, John G. Whittier of Mass.; Silas Cornell, Thomas Davis of R.I.; C.D. Cleveland, E.M. Davis of Pa.; C.C. Foote of Mich.; Hon. J.R. Giddings of Ohio; Hon. G.W. Julian Ia.; Hon. C. Durkee, Wis.

The series of 17 resolutions, reported by Gerrit Smith as Chairman of the Business Committee were after much discussion adopted.

A contribution was then called for to meet the expenses incurred in visiting Mr. Chaplin, and

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in other matters connected with his case. The sum of \$168 79 100 was raised in answer to this call.

Vote of thanks to Mrs. Wilson for the use of her grove.

Each session of the Convention was opened with prayer: and George W. Clark and the Edmonson sisters, who were once in slavery, favored the Convention with occasional songs.



**Collection:** African American Newspapers

**Publication:** THE NORTH STAR

**Date:** September 5, 1850

**Title:** -----

**Location:** Rochester, New York

Circular from the Chaplin Fund Committee. -----

*Believers in Jesus Christ - Lovers of Impartial Liberty - Human Men and Women - to you we appeal!*

CAZENOVIA, Aug. 22, 1850.

WILLIAM L. CHAPLIN, a native of Massachusetts, long a resident of the State of New York - the accomplished gentleman, the ripe scholar, the upright statesman, the whole-souled philanthropist, the sincere, practical christian; William L. Chaplin is imprisoned at the city of Washington, the Capital of our Republic, charged,

*First*, With having assisted certain enslaved fellow-men in their attempt to escape from bondage; and *Secondly*, With an assault upon those who arrested him, with an intent to kill them.

For these alleged offences, he is now held in "duress vile" by the Police of the District of Columbia, and also under a requisition of the Governor of Maryland.

Now be it known to all men, that he did not commit the second offence named above. At the time of his seizure he had no weapon of violence about his person, nor does he ever wear any; neither did he know that his companions were armed; much less did he counsel them to make resistance. All this we know and do affirm. He was ignorant too of the character of the persons who seized him. No warrant for his arrest was announced. A band of men, like ruffians, in the darkness of night came upon him, on the highway, and the first salutation he received was a savage yell, and a blow that felled him senseless to the earth. When he recovered from the shock, he was in the hands of four stout men, and therefore powerless.

The persons who were with Mr. Chaplin, made an effort (unhappily without success) to save themselves from the monsters who would return them into slavery. But no one, of either party, was seriously injured, unless it were the self-sacrificing Chaplin. He was severely bruised by the ruffians who captured him.

The other charge, *that he helped men in their attempt to escape from slavery*, if true, should fix upon his good name the stigma of no crime, unless it be a crime to act in obedience to the command of Christ, to follow the example of the good Samaritan.

Chaplin has the heart of a man, quickened by the spirit of "the Son of man." He was in that bad region of our country which is infested by the worst of robbers, where men and women are often found stripped, not so much of their raiment, as of all the rights of human beings; wounded, many of them in their persons, but all of them in their feelings, in the tenderest relations of life; and left with not indeed so much as half of what constitutes the true life of men. Surely, if the poor traveller between Jerusalem and Jericho was to be pitied, and his relief attempted, notwithstanding the dangers of the place, much more, every Christian must allow, should we attempt (at any hazards to ourselves) the rescue of a fellow-man, who is subjected to the terrible wrong of American slavery. W.L. Chaplin, if he has done all that the charge alleges, has done no more than the good Samaritan would do; and for this we honor, we love him. To deliver him from confinement, therefore, as soon as possible, that he may renew and redouble his generous exertions in the cause of suffering humanity, we feel ourselves impelled by the highest sense of duty, and the deepest feelings of sympathy with him, and brotherly kindness to all men. We call upon all, who have any love of christian heroism, to help us. The last man who should be kept in confinement, or subjected to any disabilities in our country, or in our world, is the man who is ever ready to spend his time, his strength, his all, to break the yoke of the oppressor, and set the captive free! Such is the man who is

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imprisoned in the jail of the United States!!

We plead, we insist, we demand, that his prison door be thrown open, not so much for his sake (for we know he counts it joy to suffer in the cause of humanity) as for our own sakes, that we may quicken our own and each other's love of liberty, by doing honor to his exalted spirit of self-sacrificing philanthropy.

We came to this Cazenovia Convention that we might congratulate some of the many in this region, who have escaped from a worse than Egyptian bondage, and advise with them and their friends, as to the obligations that rest upon us in regard to the millions of our countrymen, who are longing to be likewise free. There have been with us about fifty fugitives; but the fugitive's bravest friend has not been here; and we have almost forgotten the fifty who are safe, in our concern for the one who is left behind in the churches of those who have no respect for the rights of colored men, or of the colored men's friend.

The story of Chaplin's capture has been told us by a devoted fellow-laborer; and most of the time of the Convention has been given to the consideration of his case. We were shown that the expenses, already incurred in his behalf, the legal processes to which we may be obliged to resort, and the services of the ablest counsel, will demand of his friends an amount not less than *twenty thousand dollars*. But what is that for us to pay, if those in our country, who profess to love the practical application of the principles of christianity, will give their due proportion? No one would be impoverished; nay, all would be enriched; for whatever is given, in such a cause as this, is so invested as to yield an incomparably better interest than any soulless corporations pay. Let, then, the rich men give their hundreds, and the poor widows their mites, that all may share in the joy of Chaplin's deliverance; and that the people of our land and other lands may know, that there are many thousands in this Republic, who will not bow the knee to Baal, but respect and love the *Liberator*, although he be chained in a dungeon, for more than the *Oppressor* of our fellow-men, though he walk at large in the palace of our nation.

What is to be done for Chaplin, must be done quickly. A generous contribution, and a more generous subscription were made by the members of the Convention just closed. And a large Committee were appointed to hasten with this appeal to all the good and true, and urge you to respond at once to this demand upon your purses. Give freely. Give without delay. Measure your contributions by your abilities, and both the amount and the readiness of your gifts by the Golden Rule - that there may be nothing wanting to show the respect that is due to our brother, and to defend him triumphantly against all legal and illegal tyranny.

The following well known men, are the Chaplin Fund Committee, by appointment of the Cazenovia Convention: James C. Jackson, of Scott, Cortland County, N.Y.; Joseph C. Hathaway, of Farmington, Ontario County, N.Y., Frederick Douglass and George W. Clark, of Rochester; Charles A. Wheaton and Samuel J. May, of Syracuse; George Lawson, of Oriskany, Oneida County, N.Y.; **William R. Smith**, of Macedon, Wayne County; G.W. Johnson, of Buffalo; Cyrus P. Grosvenor, of McGrawville, N.Y.; William Harned, 15 John St. New York City; Joshua R. Giddings, Ashtabula, Ohio; S.P. Chase, of Cincinnati, Ohio; George W. Julian, of Indiana; Charles Durkee, Southport, Wisconsin; James H. Collins, Chicago, Illinois; Charles C. Foote, Commerce, Oakland County, Michigan; Francis Jackson, Boston; John G. Whittier, Amesburg, Mass.; Silas Cornell and Thomas Davis, Providence, R.I.; Julius F. Lemoyne, of Washington, Penn.; E.M. Davis and C.D. Cleveland, of Philadelphia; Samuel Fessenden, of Portland, Maine; Rowland T. Robinson, Ferrisburgh, Vt.; Ednah D. Thomas, Aurora, Cayuga Co., N.Y.; Rev. John Todd, D.D., Pittsfield, Mass.

To either of these persons, you may commit our donations or subscriptions of money, and they will account for them to the Treasurer of this Fund. Through either of these persons, also, you may transmit directly to our beloved Chaplin, any tokens of your regard.

James C. Jackson is the Chairman of this Chaplin Fund Committee; Charles A. Wheaton and Samuel J. May, of Syracuse, are the Secretaries; Gerrit Smith is the Treasurer; and to them, in connection with their colleagues named above, the Convention have seen fit to entrust the management of the defence of Chaplin, and the expenditure of the funds that shall be committed to

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them for that purpose, of all which a full report will be given in due season.

JAMES JACKSON, Chairman CHARLES A. WHEATON, SAMUEL J. MAY, Secretaries.

**Collection:** African American Newspapers

**Publication:** FREDERICK DOUGLASS PAPER

**Date:** April 15, 1852

**Title:** CONSTITUTION OF THE NEW YORK STATE ANTI-SLAVERY SOCIETY.

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**Location:** Rochester, New York

CONSTITUTION OF THE NEW YORK STATE ANTI-SLAVERY SOCIETY. -----

This Society shall be called the New York State Anti-Slavery Society.

Its object shall be, the Abolition of Slavery by the *promulgation and practice* of the following truths:

1st. Slaveholding is, in its own nature, sinful, and ought to be immediately and unconditionally abandoned. It is a crime, to be treated like other crimes. 2d. It is morally wrong to apologize for slaveholding, or to vote for slaveholders or their apologists, or for those who will not use their powers for the abolition of slavery.

3d. It is morally wrong to support religious teachers who apologize for slaveholding, or who neglect to bear testimony against it.

4th. It is impossible that slaveholding can be either sanctioned by the Divine law, or be made legal by any human Governments, Constitutions, Statutes, or Judicial decisions, agreeable to that well-known and fundamental maxim of common Law, recognized by the Supreme Court of the United States, and the Court of Kings Bench in England, that, "enactments contrary to *fundamental morality*, are *void*."

5th. Prejudice against color is wicked. - The colored man is entitled to all the rights, privileges, and eligibilities of the white man, and all proposals for removing the former out of the country, are as absurd and impertinent as would be similar proposals for removing the latter.

6th. Distinctions on account of color in religious assemblies, are preposterous and wicked.

7th. Distinctions on account of color in religious assemblies, are preposterous and wicked.

7th. All persons, without distinction of sex or color, who assent to these truths, and act under their guidance, shall be entitled to membership in this Society, by enrolling their names, and contributing annually to its funds. 8th. The officers of this Society shall be a President, Vice President, Recording and Corresponding Secretaries, Treasurer, and an Executive Committee to discharge the customary duties of such officers, and to be elected annually.

9th. The executive committee shall consist of thirteen, of whom the President, Secretaries, and Treasurers shall be members ex-officio, five of whom shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business. 10th. The Society invites and recommends the formation of County, Town, City, and Village Societies in all parts of the State on the principles of this Society and auxiliary to it.

OFFICERS. PRESIDENT. GERRIT SMITH. VICE PRESIDENTS,

WM. H. CHILDS, Niagara Falls,

GEO. W. JOHNSON, Buffalo, JOSEPH PLUMB Lodi, GEO. THAYER, Livonia, A.N. COLE, Belfast, JOHN THOMAS, Syracuse, C.V. COVERT, Farmersville, P.C. SCHUYLER, Ithaca, **WM. R. SMITH**, Macedon, AUSTIN WARD, Holland Patent, C.O. SHEPARD, Arcade, WM. H. TOPP, Albany, SAMUEL THOMAS JR., Cazenovia, DR. MCCUNE SMITH, New York, LEONARD GIBBS, Union Village, HUGH SMITH, Perch River, NODIAH MOORE, Champlain.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE.

JAMES SPERRY, Henrietta,

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STEVEN COOK, Rochester, DANIEL ANTHONY, " LEVI REUBEN, " LLOYD SCOTT, " OVID MINER, " ALVIN INGERSOL, " MRS. CAROLINE WRIGHT, " MRS. JANE GIFFORD, " GEO. W. CLARK, *Recording Secretary*. FREDERICK DOUGLASS, *Corresponding Sec.* GEO. A. AVERY, *Treasurer*.

**Collection:** African American Newspapers  
**Publication:** FREDERICK DOUGLASS' PAPER  
**Date:** July 16, 1852  
**Title:** ADDRESS  
**Location:** Rochester, New York

*ADDRESS To Abolitionists, in respect to the case of*

WILLIAM L. CHAPLIN. The undersigned were appointed by a meeting, called by the Executive Committee of the New York State Anti-Slavery Society, to take measures to relieve the bail of W.L. Chaplin in the District of Columbia. It is known to abolitionists, and to the public generally, that Mr. Chaplin was, in September, 1850, brought before Judge Cranch, on a writ of *habeas corpus*, and was required to give bail in the sum of six thousand dollars, for his appearance at the Fall Term of the Criminal Court. It is known too, that David A. Hall, Selby Parker and William Blanchard signed the bail bond for Mr. Chaplain; but it is not known, perhaps, that David A. Hall consented to stand as Mr. Chaplin's bail, on the express understanding that he should be indemnified against loss; and that five thousand dollars were placed in Mr. Hall's hands, at the time, to secure him to that extent. - By this arrangement, William L. Chaplin was released from prison in the District of Columbia; and would have returned to the North, to the peace of himself and the joy of his friends, but for the monstrous requisition of Governor Thomas, and the still more monstrous compliance with that requisition by Judge Cranch. Instead of being released by his bail, he was handed over to a more relentless and hopeless captivity in Rockville, Montgomery County, Md., where he was threatened with a fate as melancholy and dreadful as that of the lamented TORREY. His case excited the deepest interest; and never did the friends of any man stand more firmly, nor labor more faithfully, and unceasingly, than did Chaplin's friends for his release. At the first announcement of Chaplin's arrest and imprisonment, that great-hearted philanthropist of Peteroboro immediately placed his draft for \$5,000, in the hands of a distinguished Senator in Washington, to be used in any manner in which it could be serviceable to Chaplin. Loans were effected in New York, on the credit of the abolitionists of the country. The deep interest in Mr. Chaplin's case at the time justified the belief that any amount of money could be raised necessary to bail him in Md.; but, at that time, abolitionists had not fully comprehended the depths of wickedness, nor the pitiless malice, and deadly hate of the slavepower. In Maryland, *nineteen thousand dollars* were required as bail. The announcement of this exorbitant, and enormous sum, would have disheartened many others, and led them to give up the case as hopeless. But, the friends of Mr. Chaplin persevered, in order to free Chaplin from the murderous grasp of his captors. By contributions, loans and donations taken up in different parts of the country, the sum of fourteen thousand dollars was raised. This accomplished, and it did seem impossible for the friends of Mr. Chaplin to obtain more. The case appeared hopeless. Whatever was done, must, necessarily, be done speedily. There was no time to appeal to any friends of the slave at the North. Any delay must have been fatal to the prospects of Mr. Chaplin. In this state of the case, two friends of the then imprisoned man hurried off to Washington, to see David A. Hall, in the hope and for the purpose of obtaining the \$5,000 which had been placed in his hands, as bail in the District of Columbia. Mr. Hall generously, trustfully, and at considerable inconvenience, handed over the \$5,000, with the understanding that he should be indemnified against loss should Chaplin not appear. At that time it was confidently asserted that Mr. Chaplin would meet his trial in the D.C. The money was taken to make up the bail of *nineteen thousand dollars* in Maryland, and William L. Chaplin was released. His trial came on in Md., and the bail of \$19,000 was forfeited, and David A. Hall is now held in the District for \$6,000, a responsibility which he assumed, in the belief that the abolitionists of the North, would stand between him and all harm. Now, the question is, shall the honor of Abolitionists be sacrificed? shall David A. Hall, or any one or two individuals, be made to bear this heavy loss? Every feeling in the heart of a true abolitionist will say, No! David

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A. Hall must not suffer this loss. - His confidence in the honor of abolitionists must be justified, and the amount of Chaplin's bail in the District of Columbia must be raised. To this work, with what ability we can command, we shall devote ourselves, and appeal cheerfully, (notwithstanding the obvious disadvantage under which our cause labors,) to our anti-slavery friends and brethren for their aid and co-operation. LINDLEY MURRAY MOORE. SAMUEL D. PORTER. JAMES SPERRY. *WM. R. SMITH*. ASA. B. SMITH. OVID MINER.

**Collection:** African American Newspapers  
**Publication:** FREDERICK DOUGLASS' PAPER  
**Date:** July 16, 1852  
**Title:** MONROE COUNTY A.S. CONVENTION  
**Location:** Rochester, New York

# MONROE COUNTY A.S. CONVENTION.

Pursuant to a Call of the Executive Committee of "The New York State Anti-Slavery Society," the friends of freedom, from different parts of the County, met in Convention on Monday, July 5th, to organise (or re-organize) the above named Society. Lindley Murray Moore was chosen Chairman, *pro tempore*; and Prof. L. Reuben, Secretary. The first hour of the session was occupied by several gentlemen in a free interchange of views, as to the present position, encouragements, and wants of the cause. When, on motion of Frederick Douglass, it was resolved, unanimously, that we form a County Anti-Slavery Society, on the basis of the State Anti-Slavery Society. On motion of Geo. W. Clark, a committee of three was appointed to nominate officers for the ensuing year. Ovid Miner read, for the consideration of the Convention, the following resolutions, which were acted upon separately, and unanimously adopted: 1. Resolved, That, with the present recurrence of our nation's birthday, we profess anew our father's faith, "that all men are endowed by their Creator with inalienable rights, among which are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness;" and that we here record the unfaltering purpose to devote ourselves as freemen and Christians to the practical establishment of this doctrine thro'out our country and the world. 2. Resolved, That the experience of many years has fully demonstrated the fact that constitutional and Christian liberty cannot dwell with American slavery; since 1. Slavery cannot allow, with safety to itself, the proclamation of a pure Christianity in our midst; nor 2. Permit a Christian sympathy in behalf of our most wronged countrymen; nor 3. Allow the unimpaired exercise of the sacred right of petition; nor 4. Leave to us the fundamental rights of personal liberty, in the trial by jury, and the writ of habeas corpus. Hence, we are compelled to see, that either the Christian Church must separate itself entirely from slavery, or become hopelessly corrupt; and constitutional liberty for white men must be lost, or slavery be abolished. 3. Resolved, That the political platforms, recently laid by Whig and Democratic parties at Baltimore, declaring the usurpations of the slave power a "finality," are as futile as they are base; as false to every idea of true democracy, as they are infidel to the God of the oppressed; and that these party principles, if carried out, can achieve nothing, but to postpone the hopes of peaceful emancipation, and thereby increase the probabilities of a bloody Exodus to the slave. 4. Resolved, That the great want of our father-land, is a Christian Ministry and Christian Churches, that show themselves anointed of Christ, by faithfully proclaiming His good news to the poor, healing for the broken-hearted, and liberty to the bruised of this Republic - a pure and undefiled religion, that prayerfully seeks the liberty of colored Americans, as well as that of the Magyar; that toils, for our own enslaved heathen, as well, as for heathen abroad. 5. Resolved, That we approve the formation of the New York State Anti-Slavery Society, and cordially accept its Constitution, as a just, needed, and comprehensive statement of truth and duty; that we hereby pledge ourselves, as we may be able, to urge the attention of the people in every part of Monroe County to this subject; and that we hereby affectionately invite our fellow-citizens of other counties, by the circulation of tracts and papers, by the voice of the living lecturer, by the re-establishment of the anti-slavery concert of prayer, &c., to engage in the same work of faith, and labor of love. . . . *William R. Smith*, of Macedon, was introduced to the Convention, who made some remarks upon the Chaplin bail case, but spoke specially in relation to a pledge of six thousand dollars made to the bail in Washington. This amount, the bail, by a recent decision of the courts of the District, were now *compelled* to pay. He thought that it was the duty of abolitionists to see that the bail was indemnified against any loss. Gerrit Smith had just made a donation of two thousand dollars, and he hopes the friends of the slave would take such action as they thought best in the premises. Wherefore, the following committee of six was

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appointed, who were charged with the duty of raising funds for the deficiency in the Chaplin bail: Samuel D. Porter, Treasurer; Ovid Miner, L.M. Moore, Rochester; James Sperry, Henrietta A.B. Smith, and W.R. Smith, Macedon. On motion, Resolved, that the proceedings of this meeting be published in *Frederick Douglass' Paper* and *National Era*. Adjourned. Our meeting was one of much interest, and hope-inspiring for the future.

**Collection:** African American Newspapers

**Publication:** FREDERICK DOUGLASS' PAPER

**Date:** July 23, 1852

**Title:** LETTER FROM GERRIT SMITH, ESQ., TO WM. R. SMITH

**Location:** Rochester, New York

LETTER FROM GERRIT SMITH, ESQ., TO WM. R. SMITH.

***WILLIAM R. SMITH*** : MY DEAR SIR: - The unhappy Chaplin affair is, again, upon us. - In addition to several thousand dollars expended in agencies, lawyers fees, &c., &c., we paid \$19,000 to indemnify Mr. Chaplin's bail in Maryland. We are, now, called to pay \$6,000 to idemnify his bail in Washington. If the men of Washington, who with such rare kindness and generosity, became Mr. Chaplin's bail, are suffered to lose by that kindness and generosity, it will be very disgraceful to the abolitionists. Considering that Mr. Chaplin visited Washington contrary to my advice, and that I paid in the Maryland case about \$10,000, I feel, that I suffered much more than my full share of the loss in that case. The Washington case, is now, to be provided for. I am willing to lose 2,000 in it; and hence, I have, this evening, enclosed my draft for that sum to D.A. Hall, who is one of the bail. I trust, that the friends of justice will promptly make up the remaining \$4,000. I am robbed of these \$12,000. I have been robbed of a great deal from time to time, in the sums, which I have felt myself morally compelled to pay in the purchase of the liberty of slaves. I greatly needed all this money to expend in other directions - for the cries of our wronged humanity come up from numerous directions. Nevertheless, I am consoled by the reflection, that I was better off without this money than they, who got it from me, were with it. The robbed may feel very sore under his losses: but still he is better off than the robber. With great regard, Your friend, GERRIT SMITH. PETERBORO, June 16th, 1852.

**Collection:** African American Newspapers  
**Publication:** FREDERICK DOUGLASS' PAPER  
**Date:** October 1, 1852  
**Title:** SYRACUSE AND THE FINALITY  
**Location:** Rochester, New York

#### SYRACUSE AND THE FINALITY.

The old parties ordained at Baltimore, that, with their consent, there should be no more agitation of the slave question. The Whigs declared in their platform that they would "discountenance," and the Democrats declared in *theirs* that they would "*resist*" any agitation of that subject. It happens that the city Government of Syracuse is in the hands of the democrats, and they in council assembled adopt their platform as a rule of action in regard to the Jerry Rescue celebration. In the last session of that council, they adopt the following preamble and resolution: Aid. Pope in behalf of the Mayor, presented the following preamble and resolution which was adopted: Whereas, on the 1st of October last, a law of the United States was trampled on and the Government of our Country set at defiance in this city by a mob. And whereas, certain of our citizens in conjunction with others, propose to celebrate the Anniversary of that event, which in the opinion of this Common Council will be disreputable to our city and dangerous in its tendency, therefore, Resolved, That we solemnly advise the projectors of the proposed celebration to desist from a course fraught with such *dangerous consequences*, and earnestly recommend our fellow citizens generally, to abstain from all participation in these or any other proceedings of a like character. There is no doubt but our city fathers intended the people should think there was great significancy in the terms of the above resolution; and that they should give up the contemplated celebration in regard to "dangerous consequences." Whether they intend to head a mob to put an end to the celebration and stop discussion of the slave question, and thus carry out *literally* the pledge of their party made at Baltimore, we don't know. Time will show how they carry out such an intent if they have one. Their pledge is "to resist." We will see if they will resist with force. But whether they resist with force or not, we regard this act of the Common Council as an audacious outrage and usurpation. - The members of that council have the right, as individuals, to cherish any sentiments they please; but, in an official capacity, to interfere, by *recommending*, even, that the people stifle their convictions and sympathies, is an unbecoming usurpation. Another fact in this connection we would note. The Reverend Mr. Ashley of the Episcopal Church in this city, just before the above action of the Common Council, was pleased to preach a sermon in defence of the Fugitive Slave Law, and in denunciation of the rescue of Jerry and the contemplated celebration of that deed of Glory. Thank God he is the only minister of this city who has dared take side against God in this matter! Whether there was any connection between the action of that priest, and the action of our city authority, we cannot say. But we do say, that we regard the sermon of the Priest only as a *ruse* to get popularity with political rowdies, and the action of the Police, also, as a ruse to save the character of the Democracy with their masters at the South. What the Whigs would do in the same case we will not predict; but we will say that we expect our great festival will be unharmed and undisturbed by proslavery priests or demagogues. The people will be in council. This Mr. Ashly

H. Tiffany, of Palmyra; Nelson D. Young, of Marion; Gideon Henderson, of Rose; D. Hitchcock, of Galen, were appointed a committee to submit business for the consideration of the meeting. The committee on business made their report, which was accepted - and the following resolutions were considered and adopted: Resolved, That the Free Democracy of Wayne County cordially respond to the nomination of John P. Hale for President, and George W. Julian for Vice President, made at Pittsburgh on the 11th of Aug. last, as also the platform of principles there adopted. We regard the Candidates as also standard bearers, worthy of the vote of every friend of freedom. Resolved, That we proceed to organize this County, by the appointment of a Central Committee of three for the County, and a committee of one for each town for correspondence.

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Resolved, That this meeting select one person from each Assembly District, to represent the Free Democracy of this County at the State Convention, to be held at Syracuse on the 29th, for the purpose of nominating State officers. Resolved, That we recommend an efficient organization for each town - also that the next County Convention be composed of at least five delegates from each town. Resolved, That we recommend *Frederick Douglass' Paper* to the patronage of the Free Democracy of our County. Agreeably to the second resolution, Samuel C. Cuyler, of Williamson; E. Manly, of Marion; and George G. Jessup, of Palmyra, were appointed a Central Committee. *Town Committee.* - **Wm. R. Smith** of Macedon; Elijah Eldridge, of Williamson; J.W. Shearman, of Ontario; C.B. Wade, of Williamson; M.B. Russel, of Marion; J.C. Gallup, of Palmyra; James H. Reeves, of Arcadia; Jesse Knight, of Sodus; Abram Knight, of Galm; S. Hough, of Lyons; W. Lovjoy, of Rose; George Cnadee, of Savannah; L. Soule, of Butler; S. Wells, of Wolcot. Agreeably to the third resolution, Samuel C. Cuyler, of the Western Assembly District, and W. McKoon of the Eastern, were appointed delegates to the State Convention, who were empowered to appoint their substitutes. Voted, That the proceedings be published in *Frederick Douglass' Paper* and the *National Era*. Adjourned to meet at the call of the Central Committee. WM. McKOON, *Chairman*. GEO. C. JESSUP, *Secretary*.

**Collection:** African American Newspapers  
**Publication:** FREDERICK DOUGLASS' PAPER  
**Date:** October 15, 1852  
**Title:** LIBERTY PARTY NATIONAL CONVENTION,  
**Location:** Rochester, New York

For Frederick Douglass' Paper. LIBERTY PARTY NATIONAL CONVENTION,

*At Syracuse, at the Wesleyan Church, Sept. 30th, and Oct. 1st, 1852.* Informal meeting for free conversation, at 7 o'clock, A.M., Sept. 30th, J.C. HARRINGTON, of Oswego county, was chosen Chairman; J.R. Johnson, Onondaga county, Secretary. Prayer by G.G. Ritchie. After free comparing of views, the house was filled up, and the colloquial convention was discontinued. The Convention resolved unanimously, that "the officers of the informal convention, be the officers of the National Liberty Party Convention." A Business Committee was appointed, consisting of GERRIT SMITH, W.W. Chapman, H.D. Pinney, Antoinette L. Brown, Mrs. Sophronia Woodruff, Samuel Wells, Wm. Shapcott, and J.W. Loguen. While the Committee were out, remarks were made by F. Hanley, J.C. Jackson, and others. Adjourned to 2 o'clock, P.M. At 2 o'clock, P.M. Convention re-assembled. Prayer by Samuel Wells, of Peterboro, Madison county, S. Dutton, of Delaware county, and Frederick Douglass, of Monroe county, were chosen Vice-Presidents; and James Gregg, of Wayne county, Secretary. Frederick Douglass introduced CAPT. DANIEL DRAYTON, who was earnestly greeted by the Convention; in this greeting were evidently combined, joy and sorrow, tenderness, gratitude and home for the heroic sufferer, and *holy* anger against slavery, and benevolent indignation towards all its supporters, in church and State, North and South. Capt. Drayton was in feeble health, and made but few remarks. Nor did he need to multiply words. All seemed to feel that *his* DEEDS were enough to give his few words the deepest pathos, and the strongest emphasis. Capt. Drayton said, in substance, "For aiding some of my fellow beings to escape from slavery, I was imprisoned four years and four months, wanting seven days. I can give no detail of my sufferings during the first part of my imprisonment. My persecutors said that they had no personal feelings against me; what they wanted was, to make such an example of me as to deter others from doing as I had done. I was offered ONE THOUSAND DOLLARS cash if I would turn State's evidence for the purpose of affording testimony against certain other persons; and I was assured that this payment would be but a trifle compared with what would be afterward forthcoming. I spurned their offers. I owe my liberation from prison to the influence of the principles of the Liberty Party." The Business Committee being now prepared to report, the chairman, Gerrit Smith, read the following resolutions: (By some misfortune these have been lost from the table, and will be forwarded as soon as found. The reiteration the Liberty Party doctrines.) Samuel Wells introduced the following resolution which was accepted as a part of the report, and was immediately taken up and discussed: Resolved, That we now proceed to nominate candidates for Presidency and Vice-Presidency of the U. States. Earnest and friendly discussion was sustained by W.W. Chapman, F. Hanley, S. Wells, Asa S. Wing, and Miss Brown. Mr. Wing would act wherever he could carry out the principles of the Liberty Party. In sustaining HALE and JULIAN, he felt that he was sustaining those great principles. He would entertain no unkind feeling toward those who differed from him. He honored those members of the Liberty Party who would make a distinct nomination if they could not trust Hale and Julian. They owed it to themselves to do so. Wm. H. Topp, of Albany, said that he came to this city as a delegate to the Free Democracy Convention. He was for adopting this resolution, and then proceeded to nominate Hale and Julian. (Much laughter.) In this case the Liberty Party do not disband. Mr. Topp pleasantly added: "I am for practical arrangements for doing good. - I honor Gerrit Smith as much as a man can, and have some ideas of his own. (Applause.) Let us unanimously nominate JOHN P. HALE and GEORGE W. JULIAN, and march forthwith into the Free Democracy Convention, and with that body form one united front, imparting joy to all the friends of freedom, and terror to all its foes." (Great cheering.) The fifth resolution adopted. In the sequel, the Convention nominated

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WILLIAM GOODELL, of New York, for President, and S.M. BELL, of Virginia, for Vice-President. Adjourned. J.C. HARRINGTON, *Ch'n*. J.R. JOHNSON, JAMES GREGG, *Sec's*. The National Liberty Party Convention having adjourned, there was immediately organized a State Committee. The same officers retained, except G.G. Ritchie was chosen Secretary, in place of J.R. Johnson, who resigned. ELECTORS. *Cattaraugus* - Wm. Shattuch. *Monroe* - Alex F. Case. *Ontario* - Dennis Pennel. *Seneca* - Darius Skidmore. *Cayuga* - Wm. Shapcott. *Onondaga* - A.C. Luther, C.A. Hammond, J.W. Loguen. *Oswego* - Hiram Gilbert, J.B. Edwards, Horace N. Gilbert. *Jefferson* - Joel A. Hubbard, Julius K. Bartlett, Joseph Osborne. *Oneida* - Philo Z. Gates, Stephen S. Purdy, Harvey F. Guthrie, Austin Ward. *Madison* - Otis Simmons, Samuel Wells, Allen Kingsbury, Stafford Green. *Cortland* - E.F. Simmons. *Herkimer* - Zenas Brackett. *Fulton* - Abel S. Leaton. *Warren* - Dr. Pritchard. *Chenango* - C.W. Chapman. *Greene* - J.H. Stedman. *Albany* - John Rogers. *Rensselaer* - James W. Fleck. *Livingston* - Jonathan Kingsbury, B.L. Steadman. *Wayne* - Horace Simmons. *Fifth Ward, New York* - J. McCune Smith. *Tioga* - David Elmore *Electors at Large* - Wm. Shattuch, J.K. Bartlett *For Governor* - **Wm. R. Smith**, of Wayne *For Lieutenant Governor* - J. Preston Mann, of Jefferson. *For Canal Commissioner* - C.A. Wheaton, of Onondaga. *For State Prison Inspector* - Geo. Curtiss, of Oneida. *State Committee* - W.W. Chapman, of Minetto; J.C. Harrington, and Samuel Wells. *National Committee* - Wm. Shapcott, Auburn, N.Y.; Antoinette L. Brown, Henrietta, N.Y.; Jas. Gregg, Pultneyville, N.Y. Adjourned *sine die*. After the adjournment, a popular convention was organized, and the large audience was most ably and eloquently addressed by Frederick Douglass, Rev. Luther Lee and Clark. Their speeches were characterized by great clearness firmness and ability and were often cheered by the large assembly in a most enthusiastic manner. IRA H. COTTE, *Cha'n*. JAMES GREGG, G.G. RITCHIE, *Sec'y's*. Inasmuch as it was reported, and by some believed, that George Curtiss, of Utica, is receiving rent for one or more buildings occupied for the sale of intoxicating liquors, the Liberty Party met in state Convention at the Congregational Church, at Syracuse, October 1st, at 9 o'clock, A.M., and organized by appointing Wm. W. Chapman, of Oswego, Chairman, and A.C. Luther, of Syracuse, Secretary. Prayer by Samuel Wells, of Madison. A discussion arose, in which W.W. Chapman, S. Wells, O. Simons, William P. Green, C.H. Hammond, and A.C. Luther participated; when a motion was unanimously carried to strike out the name of George Curtiss, who had been nominated for State Prison Inspector, and insert the name of WILLIAM SHAPCOTT, of Auburn, Cayuga Co., in his stead, when the following resolution was passed: Resolved, That the State Committee be empowered to supply the place of any others who may be found recreant to principles by the names of men true to the principles of a "Righteous Civil Government." The Convention adjourned. WM. CHAPMAN, *Cha'n*. A.C. LUTHER, *Sec'y*. SYRACUSE, Oct. 1st, 1852.



**Collection:** African American Newspapers  
**Publication:** FREDERICK DOUGLASS PAPER  
**Date:** August 27, 1852  
**Title:** CONVENTION OF FREEMEN. -----  
**Location:** Rochester, New York

CONVENTION OF FREEMEN. -----

Pursuant to notice, the friends of freedom in the Western Assembly District of Wayne County, N.Y., held a meeting on Friday August 20th, at Marion, to confer together with reference to their duty (as freemen and friends of their country's truest interest) in the approaching election. The meeting was organized by the appointment of Amasa Stanton, President; John Reynolds, and Asa B. Smith, Vice Presidents; George G. Jessup, and C.B. Wade, Secretaries. S.C. Cuyler, J.M. Osborn, Elijah Eldridge, Asa B. Smith, and James Gregg, was appointed a committee to draft resolutions. A communication from *William R. Smith* was presented by S.C. Cuyler, and read. The Convention then adjourned to two o'clock, P.M. Met at 2 o'clock. The committee on resolutions presented the following: 1. Resolved, That we greatly rejoice that the leading political parties of the country have been forced to leave their hiding places, under cover of which, during past years, they have been able, though with unheard-of hypocrisy, to profess any opinions that might promise success, or adjure any principle that might threaten loss of votes to their candidates. 2. Resolved, That the speeches of prominent men in those parties, the character and letters of their Presidential candidates, and above all, the unequivocal avowal of principles contained in the platforms of their National Conventions, fully establish the position, that at the coming general election, there will be but one issue before the American people, and that is SLAVERY. 3. Resolved, that every intelligent man who casts a vote for General Winfield Scott, or for General Franklin Pierce, does so with the full understanding, on his part, that he votes for the perpetuity of that bill of abominations, known as the Compromise Bill. By that vote, he will virtually pledge himself to become the bloodhound of the slaveholder, and to resist or discountenance the agitation of questions inseparable from human freedom. 4. Resolved, That Civil Government, to be true to every man's inalienable rights, must aim to protect man in all his inalienable rights. 5. Resolved, That Civil Government, to be true to itself, must protect its subjects from the matchless crime of licensing dram-shops. 6. Resolved, That the position of these parties, leaves Christians no alternative but abandonment of Christianity, or abandonment of parties. The above resolutions was accepted by the Convention. . . .

Voted, the proceedings of the Convention be published in the Wayne County papers, and *Frederick Douglass' Paper*. On motion, the convention adjourned, to meet at Williamson, Thursday, September 2d, 1852, at 10 o'clock, A.M. C.B. WADE, *Sec'y*.

**Collection:** African American Newspapers

**Publication:** FREDERICK DOUGLASS PAPER

**Date:** September 30, 1853

**Title:** WASHINGTON, August 22, 1853. TO *WILLIAM R. SMITH*: DEAR SIR:

**Location:** Rochester, New York

WASHINGTON, August 22, 1853.

TO *WILLIAM R. SMITH*: DEAR SIR: - It is a long time since I have addressed you on the subject of our most unfortunate recognizance for W. R. Chaplin. The executions as you are aware, were long since issued against the bail; but hitherto, by the personal favor and kind indulgence of the district attorney, chiefly on my account, a sale of property has been delayed. In the mean time the payments that have been made are as follows:

This leaves a balance due on the judgement of \$2,325, and the United States Attorney has just called to say, as he does peremptorily, that it must forthwith be paid. He says that position is such as to demand this course of him. With every disposition to deal as kindly as he can with me, as well as the other gentlemen of the bail, he is compelled to do his duty. He deems it essential to his reputation, that he should leave no duty of his position unfulfilled. He will not be charged with neglect; and though I admit, and am grateful for his indulgence hitherto, yet I cannot deny that he gives strong reasons of the stringency he now threatens. It is not pleasant to have one's property taken for the default of another at any time; but you will understand why particularly in my case, this is a hardship, since I so strenuously resisted and deprecated my present position. It was only, as you will remember, on your engagement to hold them harmless, that I surrendered my defensive armor. I have, therefore, the right to look to you for relief. You will see how urgent the case is I may, for a few days, stave off a sale but cannot do so long. Let me hear from you with a little delay as may be. Mr. Blanchard may have a little sum in his hands to apply this case, but not much.

Yours respectfully, D. A. HALL.

**Collection:** African American Newspapers

**Publication:** FREDERICK DOUGLASS PAPER

**Date:** September 30, 1853

**Title:** WILMINGTON, Delaware, 9th month, 4th, 1853. DAVID A. HALL: DEAR

**Location:** Rochester, New York

WILMINGTON, Delaware, 9th month, 4th, 1853.

DAVID A. HALL: DEAR FRIEND: - I am quite unable to reply to thy letter to the 22nd ultimo, in such manner as to afford satisfaction to either of us, and I may fail to convince thee, that my present inability, to meet the deficit of the bail forfeited by William L. Chaplin, admits of justification. Sad, as would be such a conclusion, I should not greatly wonder at it, and can only trust to time, to rove the sincerity and earnestness, with which I have labored to redeem a pledge made with too much confidence in human depravity. It is not necessary to dealt the efforts in this direction, but is will be sufficient to say, that with the cooperation of some devoted friends, steps were taken to raise money for this object, in ever place in this country in Great Britain, which seemed to promise success. But the entire withdrawal of the individual principally interested in the matter, after less than three months exertion, has rested as a millstone upon the undertaking. Forgetful of the fact, that the appeal was made on behalf of the suffering bail, the community has replied practically, and by words, that "he who deserts his own cause can have not claim for assistance." From time to time, persons of talent and experience, and have for months together, devoted themselves to this object. A large number of circulars, setting forth the peculiar circumstances in the case, have been addressed to persons distinguished for intelligence and liberality, and were republished and circulated in Great Britain. These efforts however proved so unavailing that is was obviously improper to continue them except through the agency to the press. For some months past it has been apparent that I must rely upon my own resources to raise the amount, for notwithstanding the devotion and liberality of many of friends, and in particular the munificence of one, the balance in area was large. As is well known to several persons, a prominent object in my removal to this place, was to engage in a pursuit, which promised to afford the means of liquidating the debt due the Bail, from W. R. Chaplin. With my limited means, however u have nor resources, except what are necessary to the support of the business, and it is utterly out of my power to meet the claim of \$2, 335. Whatever my anticipation may be, I dare not speak of the future. I can only refer to the past, which I humbly trust will exonerate me from censure, except perhaps for my too easy credulity. - I regret the necessity of writing in this manner; but the notoriety of the transaction, and the position in which I am placed appear to require it. In conclusion, I can say no less, than that I shall spare no effort, to save from loss, those agents whose generosity placed them in a position so undesirable. To pure the matter in its true light before the public, I shall send thy letter with my reply to Frederick Douglass Paper.

Thy sincere friend, *WILLIAM R. SMITH*

**Collection:** African American Newspapers

**Publication:** FREDERICK DOUGLASS PAPER

**Date:** June 30, 1854

**Title:** THE STATESMAN. -----

THE STATESMAN. -----

It is proposed to issue a Semi-Weekly Newspaper bearing the above title, at Wilmington Delaware, early in June next. This Journal will be devoted to the interests of the PEOPLE. Its highest ambition will be to speak truthfully on their behalf. With them have originate those political and social reforms upon which the safety of Government and the promotion of morality so largely depend. Upon their intelligence and integrity, republican Institutions, must rely for preservation. . . .

The question most prominently before the people of Delaware at the present time is that of "A PROHIBITORY LIQUOR LAW." To secure the passage of this in its most effective form, . . . to make it in short, the LAW OF THE PEOPLE, this paper will devote its untiring energies. . . . It is not to be understood, however, that "THE STATESMAN" will be exclusively devoted to the support of Temperance. On the contrary, its main will be to discuss fearlessly all question of general interest and advocate such measures as appear calculated to promote the prosperity of the State. In particular, the result of much experience and observation will be directed toward a practical consideration of our agricultural necessities, and by constant correspondence with men intelligent upon the subject, it is hoped to make the paper a pleasure and a necessity to the FARMING COMMUNITY. To the MECHANIC whose daily toil contributes so largely to the wealth and comfort of others, without always returning corresponding reward to himself, the paper offers its free and heartfelt sympathy. It whatever tends to ameliorate his condition, whether by the aid of science, which diminishes the severity of labor while it enhances its value by the advocacy of Institution which bring intelligence and social advantages more within his reach, or by efforts to render him more comfortable and inviting, it will be a privilege no less than a duty, to furnish such information as Art and Philanthropy have his own to be suited to the demand. On the subject of EDUCATION, it is gratifying to observe the increasing tendency toward the widest possible diffusion of its benefits. It is an obvious duty to aid, and encourage this feeling, until every child in the State, however humble his circumstances, shall by a thorough mental training, be qualified to fill any position demanded by his talents and his industry. To MEN OF BUSINESS the paper hopes to make itself acceptable, not only as an advertising medium, because of the extensive circulation it anticipates, but also because it will labor to developed our industrial resources, advocate in enlightened attention to Internal Improvements, and seek to turn into domestic channels, a proper portion of that tide of wealth which is constantly rolling by us. As a FAMILY PAPER it is hoped that by care in the selections, to encourage a feeling which will not be satisfied with the uninstrusive and frivolous reading, so prevalent and so destructive of sound literary taste, and refined moral perception.

JAMES F. HEYWARD, WILLIAM R. SMITH. Wilmington, May 20, 1854.

This is a story about William R. Smith's daughter, Eliza Bell Smith (Bennet), although the writer mixes up William R Smith's father, Asa B. Smith as the father.

Charles Milliken, *A History of Ontario County and its People* (New York: Lewis Historical Publishing Co., New York, 1911), 195.

At the February, 1853, term of the Oyer and Terminer, Asa B. Smith was indicted with William R. Smith and Thomas Wright For kidnapping his own daughter, Eliza Bell Bennett, who was claimed by one Addison J. Bennett to be his wife, and the case was sent to the court of Sessions for trial. Another indictment Against the same parties was found at the April term of the court of Sessions, in the same year, for assault and battery upon Addison J. Bennett and Eliza Bell Bennett. Both indictments were based on the same transaction.

The facts were, in substance, that Bennett, a young man of little education and no refinement, was a farm hand working by the month for Asa B. Smith, a well-to-do farmer and member of the Society of Friends – commonly called Quakers – residing in the town of Macedon, whose daughter, an innocent simple-minded girl, about sixteen years old, kept in child-like ignorance of nearly everything outside the monotony of home life on her father's farm, became impressed with what she thought was manliness and worth in the person of this hired man, who had acquired much influence over her, unsuspected by her parents.

One Sunday, or First Day, as the friends call it, the parents went to meeting, leaving their daughter at home. Bennett induced the girl to with him in a buggy to some magistrate or preacher and get married promising to bring her directly back home to her parents. On the return of the parents, they learned that Bennett had driven away with their daughter. The three men who were indicted started after Bennett and the girl, and soon met them, when the father and one of the other men jumped from their carriage and seized Bennett's horse and with threats to Bennett, the father took his daughter from Bennett's buggy, and, putting her into their carriage, drove home. Bennett, being determined to regain his wife, her father sent her to Philadelphia, to be kept by some of the Society of Friends of his acquaintance and placed in school. It having come to the knowledge of the father that Bennett had learned where his wife was, she was sent to England, where she became an educated and accomplished lady.

The indictment for kidnapping was quashed on the day following the indictment for assault and battery, and the parties, being immediately tried on the latter indictment and found guilty, were fined \$100 each. There was much about this trial that was sensational and the court room was crowded during the five days that it lasted. Jacob P. Faurot was District Attorney. Mr. Husbands of Rochester and Henry O. Chesebro of Canandaigua appeared for the defendants.

Bennett was persistent, and commenced a civil action against the same defendants for loss of services of his wife, alleging the kidnapping, etc. In aggravation. This was tried in February, 1854, and resulted in a verdict in Bennett's favor for \$1,250. Joshua A. Spencer, of Utica, and S.V.R. Mallory of Canandaigua, two very able lawyers, were for the plaintiff. Worden and Chesebro were for the defendants. This trial lasted two days, and the public interest in it kept up.

Note: Eliza Bell Smith Bennet apparently divorced Addison J. Bennett and remarried Thomas Swayne, Apr 12, 1858 at Yellow Springs, Ohio (Where Antioch College is located founded by Horace Mann in 1852).

**Memorial to Honor Girls Who Inspired 'Uncle Tom's Cabin'**

November 12, 2007

ALEXANDRIA, Va. (AP) - Development is progressing for a five-story office building in Old Town Alexandria that was once the site of a notorious slave jail.

A plan will be unveiled this week for a memorial there that will recognize the lives of two African American girls who helped change American history. The teenage girls from Maryland, Emily and Mary Edmonson, were held in a pen on that site in 1848 after they and 75 others tried to escape slavery on a boat. After hearing their story, Harriet Beecher Stowe wrote "Uncle Tom's Cabin," which shocked audiences around the world and helped shift U.S. Attitudes toward slavery.

District-based developer Carr Properties is calling the building Edmonson Plaza after the girls. The developer plans to pay for the memorial.

Carr decided that that while some people knew what the site used to be, most did not know the connection to "Uncle Tom's Cabin." The developers hope their efforts help bring the story out of obscurity.

*Information from: The Washington Post*

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<http://www.wtop.com/?nid=600&sid=1290687>



*Descendants of Asa B. Smith*

Prepared by Charles Lenhart

1 **Asa B. Smith** b: Abt 1788 in \*> Berkshire, Adams County, Massachusetts d: 1863 in - "Probable" date for this/an Asa B. Smith) -likely Minnesota Attended 1: May 12, 1835 New York City Anti-Slavery Society Convention Attended 2: Bet. Oct 21 - 22, 1835 Utica, New York Anti-Slavery Convention Attended 3: Jun 24, 1853 dated "Frederick Douglass's Paper" that the New York State Temperance Society held its annual meeting in Rochester, New York "last Week." Asa B. Smith was noted as attending. As was Daniel Anthony Jr. Religion: Aug 23, 1832 Orthodox Quaker Note 1:: Oct 19, 1833 President of the "Farmington Temperance Society" with J.C. Hathaway as Sec'y. Significance: Abt 1850 Credited as having with given Myrtilla Miner the suggestion of starting a school for blacks in Washington, D.C.

. +**Hannah Comstock** b: Feb 04, 1792 in #/AsaBSmith) Farmington, Ontario County, New York m: Nov 03, 1808 Father: Darius Comstock Mother: Phebe Smith d: Aft. 1863 in (family moved west) Religion: Aug 23, 1832 Orthodox Quaker Significance 1: Hannah was said to be the 'first white girl born in the town.' (likely means Farmington) - see Welcome Herendeen for 1st white child (& male) in Farmington.

.. 2 **William R. Smith** b: Abt 1810 in New York State (as stated in the 1850 census) - most likely in the town of Macedon, Wayne County d: Dec 27, 1880 in Newcastle, Placer County, California (NE of Sacramento) Attended 1: Apr 15, 1852 NYS Anti- Slavery Society Convention - with Gerrit Smith President & 17 Vice Presidents which included WM. R. SMITH, Macedon Residence 1: Macedon, Wayne County, New York Residence 2: Dec 26, 1854 Wilmington, Delaware Residence 3: 1861 Winisheek (= Winneshiek County/ Decorah is county seat) MM Iowa Significance 1: a documented UGRR agent

..... +**Eliza Wright** b: Dec 21, 1808 in Ireland (as stated in the 1850 census) m: Sep 07, 1832 Father: John Wandesford Wright\* Mother: Eliza Bell\* d: Sep 11, 1879 in <\*> Oakland, Alameda County, California

..... 3 Hannah Smith b: 1835

..... 3 [1] **Eliza Bell Smith** b: Dec 26, 1836 in Macedon, Wayne County, New York

..... +**Addison J. Bennett** b: 1829 in New York m: Abt 1853 Father: Moses Bennett Mother: Edith Unknown

..... \*2nd Husband of [1] **Eliza Bell Smith**:

..... +**Thomas Swayne**\* m: Apr 12, 1858 in Yellow Springs, Ohio (Where Antioch College is located founded by Horace Mann in 1852) Father: Thomas Swayne\* Mother: Eliza Smith\*

..... 3 **Emily Smith** b: 1839 in #^WRSmith)\*> Jan. 5, 1839 in Macedon, Wayne County, New York d: Jan 14, 1914 in <\*> San Pasqual, San Diego County, California

..... +**Edward Webb**\* b: Feb 14, 1825 in #/WRSmith)<\*> Wilmington, New Castle County, Delaware m: Nov 25, 1856 in <\*> Yellow Springs, Ohio (Where Antioch College is located founded by Horace Mann in 1852) Father: Benjamin Webb\* Mother: Katherine Jackson\* d: Jun 22, 1900 in <\*> New Brighton, Santa Cruz County, California

..... 3 **Alfred Smith** b: 1848