This edition of James Theodore Holly's collected writings offers readers an introduction to the life and thought of one of the most notable African Americans of the 19th Century. Born to a free black family in the antebellum United States, James Theodore Holly became engaged early in life in the abolitionist cause. During the 1850s, he moved to Canada, where he distinguished himself as a writer/journalist, and emerged as a leading Black Nationalist and advocate of emigration by Black Americans. After migrating to Haiti in 1861 as the leader of an ill-fated colonization movement, he made history as the first person of African descent to become a regular bishop in a mainstream American religious denomination.

The study of Holly's writings helps enrich our understanding of the man and his transnational career in the United States, Canada, and Haiti. His Black nationalist writings, especially his defense of Haiti and his advocacy of mass colonization, show his internationalist vision. His late writings, in which he discussed race relations, imperialism, and economic justice, reveal his continuing interest in US society and his insight into the problems of Black Americans.

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Theodore Holly was born free in Washington DC in 1829.[1] His parents were two freeborn Washington natives, the shoemaker James Overton Holly and his wife Jane, both of whom were Roman Catholics. During his boyhood, Holly attended segregated schools in Washington and elsewhere. At the age of fourteen, he moved with his parents and two elder siblings to the city of Brooklyn. There he apprenticed in his father's cobbler shop and studied in the evenings with Rev. Felix Varela, a Cuban-born Catholic priest and journalist who encouraged the young Holly. (It would be interesting to know whether Varela's anti-colonial theology, for which he was later renowned, played a role in influencing Holly's mature thought). In his pamphlet "Facts About the Church's Mission in Haiti," reproduced in this collection, Holly later claimed that the Bible that Rev. Varela give him alienated him from the "unscriptural" ways of the Catholic Church, and led him to abandon his thoughts of entering the priesthood. While it is likely exaggerated to state that views of the Catholic Bible in itself dissuaded him from the priesthood, he abandoned plans to attend a Catholic seminary.

During the following years, the elder Holly died, and his shoemaking business was taken over by Holly's older brother Joseph C. Holly, who also became active as an abolitionist. By 1848, the young James was engaged as a clerk by the noted businessman and abolitionist Lewis Tappan. His brother Joseph's influence, added to that of Tappan, shaped his already burgeoning interest in antislavery. In 1850, with financial aid from Tappan. James T. Holly moved with his mother Jane and elder brother Joseph to Burlington, Vermont. Not only was

1 Although the birth in the District of Columbia is reported in antebellum census records, several later sources claimed Holly as born into slavery in Maryland. See for example Thelma Berkack-Boozer, "Slave, Scholar, Missionary, First Negro Bishop of Protestant Episcopal Church," *New York Amsterdam News*, August 13, 1930, p. 10.

Vermont far away from slavecatchers, but it had a reputation for racial equality —black Vermonter Alexander Twilight graduated from Middlebury College and been elected to the state assembly. Lemuel Haynes, an African American pastor of a white congregation in Rutland, was awarded an honorary masters' degree by Middlebury College in 1804.

Revolution vs. Emigration

Once in Burlington, the Holly brothers opened their own boot-making shop, and threw themselves into the turbulent waters of the abolitionist movement. During this period, the United States entered a period of crisis over slavery. The "half-slave, half-free" political system enshrined in the 1820 Missouri Compromise continued to wear down amid North-South competition for the nation's newly-conquered Western lands. Congress enacted a series of laws known collectively as the "Compromise of 1850" with the aim of preserving the union, but the fragile truce was swept away by the Kansas-Nebraska Act of 1854, enacted in the name of local sovereignty, which annulled the old Missouri Compromise line limiting slavery to Southern territories. Then in 1857, in the *Dred Scott* case, the U.S. Supreme Court not only declared that a slave was not a person under US constitution and had no rights that a white man was bound to respect, but asserted that no state could abolish slavery within its borders. By 1858, Abraham Lincoln would famously refer to the country as a house divided against itself. Just three years later, after Lincoln's own election as president, the conflict would break out into civil war.

During this period African Americans faced their own crisis. In the years after 1850 the institution of slavery, far from withering away under a generation of abolitionist attacks, became politically strengthened thanks to the

leaders of the South and their influence within the national Democratic Party. Worse, blacks faced imminent danger thanks to the Fugitive Slave Act, enacted by Congress as part of the Compromise of 1850. The law granted slave masters or their slavecatcher agents the right to take hold of blacks whom they claimed were their property, without due process, and further obligated local authorities to assist in removal. It thereby not only made life in the Northern states unsafe for escaped slaves but also for free blacks, who risked being kidnapped into bondage by unscrupulous whites who claimed them as their fugitive property. In response to the law, ten thousand or more blacks were forced to seek refuge in Canada, where they would be free from such peril. Moving North of the border, they crossed into Canada West and settled in borderland areas such as St. Catherine's, Chatham, Windsor, and Amherstburg. There they joined the thousands who had already arrived from the United States via the Underground Railroad.

Amid the difficult climate during these years, black abolitionists and their white allies kept up their activities as best they could, but faced understandable feelings of panic, frustration, weariness, and despair. Internecine conflicts broke out, and old colleagues sometimes divided. At the same time, members of the abolitionist movement at large were forced by circumstances into a radical questioning of their strategies and their future prospects. Gradual change or legal reform no longer seemed viable. Instead, many activists embraced or at least considered considered radical remedies such as rebellion or mass emigration.

The champions of armed revolt were attracted by John Brown, a white American who had earned a reputation in Kansas as a fierce opponent of slavery. He met with a number of black leaders in the US and organized a convention in Chatham, Ontario. In the end he secured little

in the way of concrete support (Only one black Canadian, Osborne Anderson, joined Brown at Harpers Ferry; Harriet Tubman, the famous "Moses" of the Underground Railroad, did promise to join him, but then fell ill). Yet if Brown's plans for his raid struck black leaders generally as rather visionary (and half-baked), such was the climate of despair that Brown got a respectful hearing from black leaders, and was not denounced by informers. Even Frederick Douglass, though he had grave doubts about the whole scheme, did not turn him in.[2] Clearly, his ideas about Revolution were not so far from the center of black radical thought in the period.[3]

Alongside against the idea of revolt there was consideration of a countervailing strategy: mass emigration. Free blacks had already been persuaded by the persistence of slavery, and by the passage of the Fugitive Slave Act in particular, to leave the United States. In addition to the estimated 10,000 blacks who settled to Canada during the 1850s, a number of notable black leaders, most notably Martin R. Delaney and Rev. Henry Highland Garnet, grew interested in Africa. Delaney wrote the influential 1852 book *The Condition, Elevation, Emigration, and Destiny of the Colored People of the United States*, advocating emigration, and in the later 1850s traveled on an exploratory visit to Africa to inquire about purchasing land for colonists. Garnet, who briefly relocated to England

2 Canadian Blacks, in particular, remained loyal to Brown's memory. After Brown's raid was put down and he was arrested, a group in Montreal organized a public meeting to raise funds for the families of those executed for their involvement in the raid. Samuel Gridley Howe, a Brown supporter who had fled from Boston to Montreal to escape repercussions following the failed raid, was roped into coming out of hiding and serving as chief speaker. (Ironically, it was Howe's wife Julia Ward Howe who later transformed the song "John Brown's Body" into the less militant and more Christian "Battle Hymn of the Republic.")

3 Or even arguably later —in 1964 the Black Nationalist leader Malcolm X founded an all-black civil rights organization, the Organization of African American Unity. When asked if he would accept any whites as members of the OAAU, he responded only semi-facetiously, "Maybe John Brown."

and then Jamaica in the wake of the 1850 Fugitive Slave Act, before returning to the United States, threw himself into the founding of the African Civilization Society to encourage development of a black Christian nation in Africa.

The efforts of Delaney and Garnet were shadowed by the continuing attempts of the American Colonization Society (ACS), a group composed largely of philanthropic white slaveowners, to encourage black settlement in the newly-independent African state of Liberia, founded by the Society a generation earlier. While a few leading blacks, notably Canadian/American journalist John Russwurm, did agree to resettle in Liberia, the efforts of the ACS to persuade blacks to accept transportation to Liberia threw discredit on the principle of African colonization. Frederick Douglass and others continually charged that the Liberian project was a ruse to rid the United States of free blacks, and that it was neither a possible nor desirable solution for the mass of those in bondage. Blacks, they insisted, had both a right and a duty to remain in the United States, which they had helped build. Even though Delaney and Garnet favored colonization of Africa by independent efforts, they shared Douglass's negative view of the ACS. In the end, few blacks resettled in Africa, either under the auspices of the ACS or independently.

Holly and Canada

It fell to the young James T. Holly to take up the mantle of colonization and ultimately to make it a reality. By 1850 the Fugitive Slave Act, plus his larger experience of racism, brought Holly to the conclusion, which he never abandoned, that Blacks had no future in the United States. Like Delaney and Garnet, he was attracted by the possibilities of emigration, and even engaged in public debates on the question with his brother Joseph, who fol-

lowed his hero Frederick Douglass in opposing all schemes to remove blacks from the United States. Strikingly, in order to secure passage outside the United States (or perhaps just to obtain the financial means to advance his education) in 1850 James T. Holly wrote to the hated American Colonization Society to propose that they sponsor his medical education so that he could serve in Liberia —a plea for assistance that was swiftly denied. Meanwhile, he accepted an invitation from Henry Bibb, an established abolitionist who had migrated to Ontario [then known as Canada West], to become a contributor to *The Voice of the Fugitive*, the fledgling newspaper Bibb and his wife founded with the idea of encouraging black settlement in Canada. Holly likewise joined Bibb in organizing an emigrationist convention of North American Blacks, which met in Toronto in September 1851. (According to one source Holly did not attend the conference in person, due to lack of funds for travel).

In his letters to *Voice of the Fugitive* during this period, Holly proclaimed that Blacks should flee the slave republic. In uncompromising language, he declared that even outside the South the nation stood condemned by its complicity with the institution of slavery, and nowhere offered equal citizenship rights to Blacks. However, Holly did not propose emigration to Liberia —notwithstanding his previous appeal to the ACS for funds, he denounced the Liberian project as the most "intolerable" of all emigration schemes because of the morally compromised nature of the Society's mission and directors. Nor did he advocate Haitian emigration at that time. Rather, he insisted that among all the potential areas for colonization by Black Americans —Africa, the West Indies or Haiti— Canada was far superior. The other places were located in tropical climates, and were too far away to act as havens for refugees or economic bases for colonization by freedmen. Canada, by contrast, was close enough for those of limited means to migrate, and its climate was

similar to that with which the slaves were familiar. Black resettlement in Canada, Holly asserted, would have "regenerative" powers, since once on Canadian soil refugees could attain freedom and rights to jobs and education. Their success would then act as "A beacon of hope to the slave and a rock of terror to the oppressor."[4] At the same time, because of Canada's very proximity to the United States, the refugees would stand as "a *black cloud* over this guilty nation" and thereby serve as an instrument of Divine Providence in working to strike down slavery.[5]

In 1852, James Theodore Holly and his new wife Charlotte (a Vermont-born mulatto) left Burlington and relocated to Windsor, directly across the Canadian border from Detroit. On an immediate level, Holly's change of residence served to eliminate any remaining vulnerability to false "rendition," although he continued to cross the border regularly into the United States. It also allowed him to push further the idea of mass Canadian resettlement. Once established in Windsor, Holly was invited by Henry Bibb to serve as coeditor of *The Voice of the Fugitive*. He worked with Bibb in launching the North American League, a group designed to unify Black leadership. Holly also supported the Refugee Home Society, a short-lived venture founded by Bibb in cooperation with Josiah Henson (the real-life model for Harriet Beecher Stowe's "Uncle Tom") dedicated to the raising of money to buy blocks of land for colonists and organizing settlement efforts.

In the service of his campaign, Holly threw himself into writing and lecturing. Most notably, in 1853 Holly

4 James Theodore Holly, *Voice of the Fugitive*, June 1851, cited in C. Peter Ripley, ed. *The Black Abolitionist Papers: Volume II, Canada, 1830-1865*, Chapel Hill, NC, University of North Carolina Press, 1986, p. 139, p. 138 n.

5 Letter, James Theodore Holly to Henry Bibb, May 1851, cited in C. Peter Ripley, ed. *The Black Abolitionist Papers: Volume II, Canada, 1830-1865*, p. 138 n.

organized a convention in nearby Amherstburg to support mass emigration. The committee report that he drafted for the convention, and which the delegates approved, starkly outlined the only available alternatives for Black Americans in the shadow of slavery: revolution or emigration. While revolution was more glorious, and a morally justified response to bondage, the objective conditions for a successful slave revolt in the United States did not exist. This left emigration as the sole solution. The report contended that the best choices for resettlement were Canada, the British West Indies or Haiti. Central or South America were also possible, but were less favorable alternatives (the Convention did not endorse any African colonization scheme). As previously, Holly stated that Canada was the preferred destination of migrants —in addition to repeating his previous arguments in favor of Canada, he noted that, by immigrating in large numbers, Blacks could encourage Canadian leaders to oppose pressures for annexation by Americans, or at least to continue to protect the rights of blacks if it should be absorbed.

At the same time, Holly spoke more positively of Haiti in his Amherstburg presentation than he had in his 1851 letters. Whereas previously he had dismissed the Black Republic as too distant and tropical for effective settlement, he now proclaimed that in the face of great-power imperialism and of freebooting by ambitious filibusterers, it was the duty of every colored man to sustain the national existence of Haiti. Holly noted that during the 1820s then-President Boyer had encouraged the immigration of black Americans, several thousand of whom had made the voyage, and suggested that large numbers of black Americans be once again induced to relocate there.[6]

6 In fact, the record of the black American emigration to Haiti was by no means uniformly positive. In 1824, the government of Haitian president Jean-Pierre Boyer announced an immigration movement. Boyer sent Jonathan Granville to the United States to offer black settlers transportation and homesteads in Haiti. Granville toured free black

In the period following the Amherstburg convention, Holly's position on Black emigration further shifted, and he ceased altogether speaking about Canada. Why did he sour on resettlement in Canada, to which he had devoted so much effort, after just one year or so of living in Windsor? Although the reasons for his disenchantment are not altogether clear, discrimination against the refugees appears to have been a central factor. Canada officially welcomed African American emigration from its Slave Republic rival, and white Canadians congratulated themselves on serving as a beacon of freedom. Black residents in Canada enjoyed civil rights such as voting and marriage rights. Once arrived, nonetheless, the exiles (like later generations of refugees) were too often looked down on by native-born Canadians as lazy and impoverished. They found access to property and decent jobs difficult to attain. Internal dissension among the refugees themselves also surely played a role. In 1853 Mary Ann Shadd Cary and Samuel Ringgold Ward founded a new newspaper, *The Provincial Freedman*, which rivaled the *Voice of the Fugitive*. Holly and Bibb claimed precedence, and publicly complained that the new newspaper cut into the already inadequate revenues of *Voice*.[7]

An additional element seems to have been the attitude of black Canadians themselves. One intriguing piece of evidence for this is the record of a petition by a "meeting of the colored people of Windsor", dated January 1854. The signers of the petition strenuously opposed a proposal

communities in the North. Up to 6000 Americans, according to some estimates, moved to Haiti. However, the differences in climate, language and religion proved increasingly difficult to overcome, and disease plagued the settlements. At least one-third of the settlers returned home within a year. Their complaints against Haiti led President Boyer to withdraw his offer of settlement subsidies.

7 "Refugee's Home Society," *Frederick Douglass's Paper*, reprinted in *The Liberator*, March 10, 1854, p. 3. Whether as a result of such rivalry or for other causes, Cary, for her part, remained an acerbic critic of Holly's subsequent projects.

by Holly that they join a North American Council of Negroes (presumably the already-established North American Association of Colored People). Although the Canadians stated in the petition that they sympathized with the plight of black Americans, they were "invested with the right of British subjects" and did not want to be associated with such a "distinctive nationality," since it might make things more difficult for them.[8] To Holly, who had hoped that Canadians would provide a bulwark of defense to black Americans and challenge the slave republic, such narrow-mindedness, especially from fellow blacks in his new hometown, likely did not endear Canada to him.

Holly and Haiti

In early 1854, shortly after issuing a proposal for a new National Emigration Convention to be held in Cleveland, Henry Bibb died suddenly, and *the Voice of the Fugitive* closed its doors. The young Holly not only lost his main source of employment, but his principal supporter and link to Canada. He attended the Cleveland Convention in place of his late partner. Instead of continuing to support resettlement in Canada, he attempted to obtain passage of a resolution endorsing mass emigration to Haiti. Although many delegates were apparently skeptical about the idea of Haitian colonization, Holly was named a Commissioner by the convention, for the purpose of exploring the possibilities of Haitian resettlement.

Why did Holly embrace Haitian emigration? Apart from the practical difficulties with the Canadian emigration project, Canada remained a white-dominated state where blacks were accepted on sufferance, if at all. Haiti, with its existing black government and history of nation-building, may have seemed a more attractive alternative.

8 "Opposed to Annexation," *The Liberator*, March 10, 1854, p. 3.

What is more, the Haitian project took on a religious as well as political dimension for Holly. During his time in Canada, Holly had grown increasingly interested in theology. Despite his Catholic upbringing, after migrating he joined the congregation of St. Paul's, an Episcopal church in Detroit, where he began studying for the ministry. While he later expressed, as mentioned, certain doctrinal differences with "unscriptural" Catholicism and denounced the papacy in bigoted terms, his theology remained "high Anglican" and close to Catholic practice. One can infer that Holly's marriage and unwillingness to embrace celibacy, and possibly his residence in an officially Anglican country, played a central role in his decision to turn to the Episcopal church —the most Catholic of the Protestant sects but one with married clergy. It is also quite possible that he was inspired by the example of Alexander Crummell, the New York-born black abolitionist and emigrationist who had been ordained as an Episcopal priest and who had arrived in Liberia in 1853 to develop that country and convert the natives to Christianity. Thus, intertwined for Holly with his interest in encouraging emigration to Haiti was the prospect that once there, the emigrants could develop an independent Black Christian nationality.

In 1855, Holly was ordained as a deacon in Detroit. Soon afterward, he traveled to New York to secure a commission from the Episcopal church's "Foreign Committee" as a missionary to Haiti for his upcoming trip. As a supplementary motivation (and also pretext) for his interest in encouraging emigration to Haiti, he expressed keen interest in performing missionary work within the Black republic. On July 31, 1855, Holly arrived in Haiti with the goal of collecting information and negotiating an emigration treaty on behalf of the National Emigration Board. He was unable to persuade Haitian officials, consumed with their own troubles, to endorse mass emigration or offer assistance as Boyer had done. Still, he was sufficiently impressed by what he saw that when he

attended the Second National Emigration Convention in Cleveland in 1856, he continued to endorse the Haitian option. He also applied to the Episcopal Church to open a mission. Since the Roman Catholic Church in Haiti had recently split from the Vatican, the Catholics would be less formidable competitors for converts there.

Holly determined not to continue his residence in Canada after completing his stay in Haiti. Cutting his ties with his colleagues north of the border, he left Windsor and moved his family to New Haven, CT. In 1856, following his ordination, he took up a pulpit in New Haven at St. Luke's Episcopal Church, and was employed as a schoolteacher in the city. (In addition to his wife and his mother, the Holly household included three children by 1860.) Meanwhile, he went on a lecture tour of Northern cities to propagandize for his Haitian venture. For example, shortly after his boat from Haiti arrived in New York, he addressed a YMCA audience on the subject "The Claims of Haiti for Civilization and Christianity at the hands of American Christians."[9] His lecture was ultimately published in book form in 1857 as *A Vindication of the Capacity of the Negro Race for Self-Government and Civilized Progress,* a text that remained Holly's major emigrationist publication.

As we can see, in the *Vindication* Holly argued that the great majority of whites, even those who described themselves as Christian philanthropists, propounded so firmly the inferiority of the black man that Blacks felt overwhelmed and began to interiorize that false belief. It was only by refuting such "vile aspersions and foul calumnies" that Blacks could regain their self-respect —and eventually throw off slavery. Holly asserted that such

9 "Brooklyn Items," *New York Daily Tribune*, September 22, 1855, p. 7. Although Holly was not yet ordained, he already styled himself "Reverend Holly," while in his travel manifests, he listed his occupation as "Minister of the Gospel."

racial pride could be demonstrated and instilled by the study of Haiti and of the Haitian Revolution:

> *[T]he Haytian Revolution is also the grandest political event of this or any other age. In weighty causes, and wondrous and momentous features, it surpasses the American revolution, in an incomparable degree. The revolution of this country was only the revolt of a people already comparatively free, independent and highly enlightened* [protesting over taxation]. *But the Haytian revolution was a revolt of an uneducated and menial class of slaves, against their tyrannical oppressors, who not only imposed an absolute tax on their unrequited labor, but also usurped their very bodies… Never before, in all the annals of the world's history, did a nation of abject and chattel slaves arise in the terrific might of their resuscitated manhood, and regenerate, redeem and disenthrall themselves; by taking their station at one gigantic bound, as an independent nation, among the sovereignties of the world.*

Holly proceeded to recount in rather simplified form the story of the Haitian Revolution, which he exalted as both an example of Divine Providence and as positive proof of the capacity of Blacks for self-government. Thus, for example, he extolled the initial passivity of the slaves and of Free People of Color in Saint-Domingue in the wake of revolutionary change in France as self-possession and wise patience rather than timidity, and noted that such qualities that were key to the later success of the revolution. In particular, he insisted that the action of the "sagacious characters" among the Free People of Color, who persuaded a liberal-minded slaveholder deputy to address the National Assembly in their favor, was a move of political wire-pulling that outdid any by the "old fogies of Tammany Hall —that junta of scheming politicians who governs this country by pulling the wires of party."

The bulk of Holly's exposition was devoted to the actions of Toussaint Louverture, commander of the slave revolt, whom Holly praised equally as divinely inspired and as a model revolutionary leader. Such homage to the Haitian revolution, and particularly to Toussaint, was not unique within Black circles. Yet Holly's zeal to rebut negative images of the Republic and of its inhabitants led him to take up the challenge of justifying post-revolutionary Haiti, which he characterized without irony as "the most astonishing evidence of the perfection the black race could make in the art of self-government." Even in a work of racial propaganda, this affirmation led him to some extreme conclusions. For example, Holly dismissed the endemic conflict between the dark-skinned majority and the mixed-race elite as "some slight manifestations of disorder." Haiti's experience of military takeovers and dictatorial rule he celebrated as part of a mix of republican sentiment and of the monarchical and aristocratic instinct. The latter, he claimed, was "an ancient traditionary(sic) predilection of the race derived from Africa [that holds] an imperious sway over the minds of this race of men who have such a keen appreciation of the beautiful." Holly concluded that the despotism of the few was preferable to despotism of the many, provided that a nation had a stable government. Haiti's stability, he insisted, was demonstrated by the fact that it had had only had eight rulers in the 50 years since independence, not only a better record of permanence than most Latin American nations, but fewer even than in the United States, where twelve presidents had occupied the chair of office! He added, furthermore, that the Fugitive Slave Act had demonstrated the absence of any true freedom in the United States, as compared to Haiti —if the Americans had half of the same love of liberty as did the Haitian Blacks, he insisted, all those who voted for that law would be summarily tried and executed for manstealing.

In 1858, at the last antebellum Emigration Convention, Holly once again proposed his Haitian emigration project.

This time, however, he encountered significantly greater opposition than in previous meetings, as a result of Henry Highland Garnet's and Martin Delaney's proposals for colonization of Africa. Delaney had explored the Niger Valley to identify particular sites, and made a powerful case for a return of an educated minority to build settlements.[10] Discouraged, Holly resigned from the emigration association, though he remained in contact with its other leaders. Instead, he explored other avenues for his project. He corresponded with Rep. Francis Blair of Maryland, a conservative Repubican, about securing federal government aid for Haitian emigration. Within the Church, he cofounded the Convocation of the Protestant Episcopal Society for Promoting the Extension of the Work Among Colored People, and pressed the Episcopal Church's Board of Missions to send him to Haiti as a missionary, though without mentioning that he intended to bring along a group of colonists.

In a set of articles, entitled "Thoughts on Hayti," that appeared in the New York-based *Anglo-African* weekly magazine in mid-1859, Holly propagandized anew for his goal. He repeated his previous arguments in favor of colonization, but also underlined Haiti's continuing role, as an independent nation, in demonstrating the equality of blacks, "Nay, may I not say, their absolute superiority to any other nation of men that have ever spring into existence." Because of this, Blacks everywhere had a special mission to maintain the independence of Haiti against foreign assault: "From this view of the matter, it may be seen that if Haytian independence shall ease to

10 In spite of their rival projects, Holly esteemed both Delaney and Garnet. In an 1861 letter, Delaney addressed Holly in warm collegial terms. Letter, Martin R. Delaney to James Theodore Holly, January 1861, cited in C. Peter Ripley, ed. *The Black Abolitionist Papers: Volume II, Canada, 1830-1865*, p. 437. Meanwhile, Holly was listed as a Vice-President of the African Colonization Society. "The Anniversaries," *New York Times*, May 13, 1859, p. 2.

exist, the sky of negro destiny shall be hung in impenetrable blackness; the hope of princes coming out of Egypt and Ethiopia soon stretching forth her hands unto God will die out; and everlasting degradation become the settled doom of this downtrodden, long-afflicted, and then God-forsaken race."[11] To deny the claims of Hayti was to go against God.

The New Haven Colony

During this time, events in Haiti itself changed the landscape for emigration. In 1859, following the overthrow of the dictator Faustin Soulouque, the self-styled Emperor Faustin I, the Haitian government abandoned its previous policy of discouraging immigration, and announced that it would encourage colonization by Black Americans. In early 1860, James Redpath, a British-born journalist and fiery abolitionist, was engaged by the Haitian government as commissioner of emigration in the United States, with a $20,000 budget. Redpath opened a pair of Haitian emigration bureaus, and succeeded in recruiting a number of other abolitionist stalwarts, including Henry Highland Garnet, the fugitive slave author William Wells Brown, and John Brown Jr. (son of the martyred anti-slavery radical who had raided Harpers Ferry the previous year) as emigration agents. Redpath's agents toured the United States and Canada, propagandized for Haiti,

11 James Theodore Holly, "Thoughts on Hayti," *Anglo-African Magazine*, May 1859, excerpted in C. Peter Ripley, ed. *The Black Abolitionist Papers: Volume V, The United States, 1859-1865*, Chapel Hill, NC, University of North Carolina Press, 1992, pp. 8-10. While Holly did not mention any specific threats to Haiti's independence, he was conscious that foreign powers had their eye on the island of Hispaniola on which it was located —the Spanish-speaking eastern portion of the island, which had won back its independence from Haiti in 1844 after being conquered earlier in the century, actually briefly returned to Spanish rule in 1861. He may also have feared a filibustering expedition like that of William Walker, the American adventurer who briefly seized power in Nicaragua in 1856-57.

and signed up candidates who would then be evaluated for Haitian government emigration assistance. Under Redpath's sponsorship, Holly toured the northeastern United States to attract colonists. Despite this official support, many black activists criticized the venture. Abolitionists James McCune Smith and J.W.C. Pennington charged that emigration was not a real solution to the problems of Blacks and that Redpath and his agents were providing an unrealistic picture of the true conditions in Haiti. (The Smith "gang" were so acerbic and telling in their criticisms in the *Anglo-African* magazine that in early 1861 Redpath purchased the *Anglo-African* and turned it into a propaganda organ for Haiti.) At the same time, Mary Ann Shadd Cary and Martin Delaney insisted that the direction of such an enterprise by a white man, whatever his professed support for abolition, implied Negro inferiority. Cary (who feared that Black colonists would leave Canada for Haiti) likened Redpath, whom she lampooned as "Blackpath," to the leaders of the American Colonization Society. Black abolitionist William P. Newman, hired by white Canadians to oppose the Haitian movement, was even less restrained in his criticism than Cary. Newman pointed out the absence of guarantees of economic equality and religious freedom for Protestants in the Black Republic, and charged that Redpath intended enslaving colonists to Roman Catholics. Still, after the capture of John Brown and the failure during the 1860 campaign of all major political parties, even the Republicans, to pledge themselves to abolish slavery, numerous blacks previously hostile to emigration began to soften their opposition —even Frederick Douglass succumbed to Redpath's blandishments and planned a trip to Haiti to examine the possibilities for colonization in April 1861, though the outbreak of the Civil War caused him to put off his voyage.

With encouragement from Redpath, Holly announced in 1860 that he would leave for Haiti the following year.

Inspired by the communitarian ideas of French socialist Charles Fourier, he proceeded to organize the "New Haven Colony" as a model emigrationist phalanx. Holly limited his society to fifty families and insisted that all workers be reliable self-supporting persons who could work as "industrial civilizers" in developing Haiti's economy and natural resources and building an independent black nationality. In May 1861, a few weeks after the outbreak of the U.S. Civil War, Holly sailed to Port au Prince with his mother, his wife and children, and an estimated 100 followers (as David Dean notes, while other black leaders spoke of leaving the United States but in the end chose to stay or return; Holly was the only prominent emigrationist who actually relocated definitively).

First Years in Haiti

The members of the New Haven Colony landed in the Haitian capital of Port au Prince in mid-1861. Holly, their leader, carried a letter from his bishop, Thomas Church Brownell, to Haitian President Fabre Geffrard, granting his consent to establish a mission in Haiti. He also announced the intent of all the colonists to become Haitian citizens. Holly's first public action, two days after arriving, was to celebrate in the National Palace the baptism of a baby born en route. Nonetheless, the first year in Haiti proved catastrophic for Holly and his followers. Although the colony enjoyed cordial support from President Geffrard, who granted the migrants control of his former residence (the mansion of a seized French plantation outside the city) and provided them with food, conditions were primitive and uncomfortable after those in the United States. The weather in Haiti was unpropitious over the following months, and disease proved devastating. Within six months almost half the members of the colony died of typhus or of tropical diseases such as yellow fever and malaria, including Holly's mother, his wife, and three of his five children.