

7-1-2013

A Child of the Atlantic: The Maine Years of John Brown Russwurm

Carl Patrick Burrowes
Pennsylvania State University-Harrisburg

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.library.umaine.edu/mainehistoryjournal>



Part of the [African American Studies Commons](#), [Social History Commons](#), and the [United States History Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Burrowes, Carl Patrick. "A Child of the Atlantic: The Maine Years of John Brown Russwurm." *Maine History* 47, 2 (2013): 162-189. <https://digitalcommons.library.umaine.edu/mainehistoryjournal/vol47/iss2/2>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by DigitalCommons@UMaine. It has been accepted for inclusion in Maine History by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@UMaine. For more information, please contact um.library.technical.services@maine.edu.



John Brown Russwurm was the son of a white American father and a black Jamaican mother. His father recognized him as his son and later gave the boy his surname, an unusual step for a white father with a mixed-race son in nineteenth-century America. From I. Garland Penn, *The Afro-American Press and Its Editors* (Springfield, MA: Willey & Co, 1891), p. 24.

A CHILD OF THE ATLANTIC: THE MAINE YEARS OF JOHN BROWN RUSSWURM

BY CARL PATRICK BURROWES

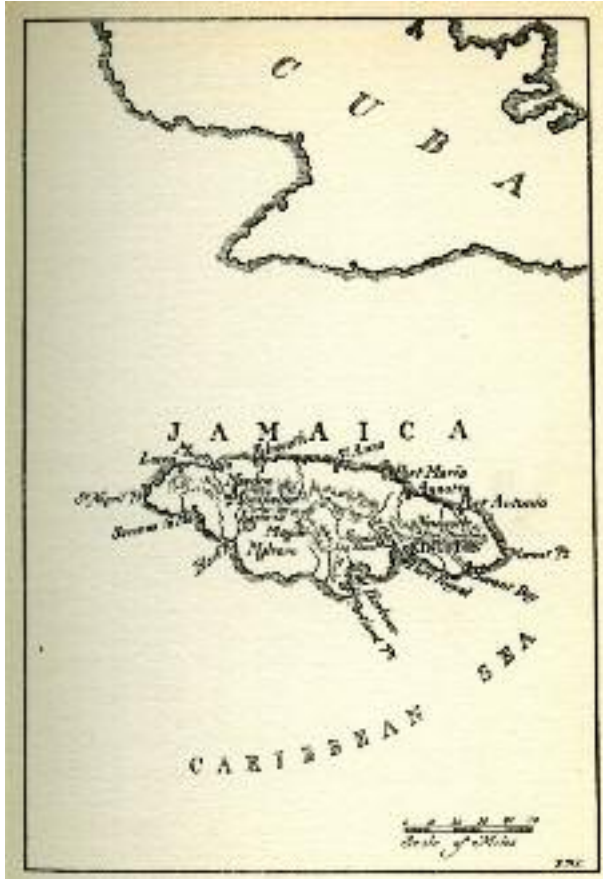
*Celebrated in life as co-founder of America's first black newspaper, John Brown Russwurm was the embodiment of an Atlantic Creole. Born in Jamaica to a white American father and a black Jamaican mother, as a young man Russwurm moved to North America. Throughout his teens and twenties, his "home" was southern Maine, and he was given a good secondary education there. After finishing school, Russwurm taught in several black schools in Philadelphia, New York City, and Boston. It was in these cities that he came into contact with America's free black leaders, some of whom supported the movement to colonize black Americans in West Africa or Haiti. After teaching for several years, he returned to Maine to attend college, and, in 1826, he became the first African American to graduate from Bowdoin College. By the time he graduated from college he had become a staunch supporter of the colonizationist movement. Initially he hoped to settle in Haiti, but, when that fell through, he moved across the Atlantic to the West African nation of Liberia, a settler colony for American blacks. In light of Russwurm's transnational background, his ultimate relocation to Africa was a logical extension of his life's trajectory. The author is an associate professor in the School of Humanities at Pennsylvania State University-Harrisburg. This article is part of his research on trans-Atlantic communication networks among nineteenth-century blacks. His most recent publication is "Tradition of Dissent: West Indians and Liberian Journalism, 1830-1970," *Ecquid Novi: African Journalism Studies*, vol. 33, no. 2 (2012). He may be reached at cpburrowes@mac.com.*

JOHN BROWN RUSSWURM was born to a white American father and a woman of color in the racially stratified town of Port Antonio in Portland Parish on the island of Jamaica, then Britain's most profitable colony.¹ By the age of thirty, he had already carved several niches for himself in the historical record. A man of color, he earned a college degree from Bowdoin College in 1826, at a time when college attendance was unusual even for white men.² Two years later, he co-founded *Free-*

dom's Journal in New York City, the first African-American newspaper.³ In 1829, to the disappointment of many in the burgeoning abolitionist movement, Russwurm emigrated to Liberia, a colony for free black Americans implanted in West Africa by the American Colonization Society (ACS), an association of powerful white politicians and clergy. In Liberia, he first served as superintendent of schools before founding the colony's first newspaper, the *Liberia Herald*. He later became the first governor of Maryland in Africa, a neighboring colony supported by the Maryland State Colonization Society, an ACS auxiliary.

There are few scholarly works on his life and the sketchy details of his early years have fueled rich speculation.⁴ Yet, because of Russwurm's controversial public profile, high level of education, and engagement in journalism, documentary sources on his life are more extensive, well preserved, and accessible than for most antebellum free blacks. As a young man, Russwurm spent five years in Portland and North Yarmouth, both of which were connected to the larger Atlantic world. After receiving a good secondary education in several Maine academies, he moved to other urban centers in the northeastern United States, where he taught in various schools for African American children. As a teacher in Boston, New York, and Philadelphia, Russwurm moved in prominent free black circles and was undoubtedly influenced by the ideas of his colleagues. After teaching for several years, Russwurm returned to Maine and attended Bowdoin College, where he was received with mixed emotions by his white classmates.

Historian Paul Gilroy has argued that we should think of "the Atlantic as one single, complex unit of analysis in ... discussions of the modern world." This approach, he noted, breaks with "the dogmatic focus on discrete *national* dynamics which has characterized so much modern Euro-American cultural thought." The application of such a transnational perspective is especially relevant when studying Russwurm, whose life began in Jamaica and ended in Liberia, with extended periods spent in Portland, Boston, and New York City. He was the embodiment of an Atlantic Creole, as defined by historian Ira Berlin: familiar "with the commerce of the Atlantic, fluent in its new languages . . . intimate with its trade and cultures, [and] cosmopolitan in the fullest sense." As historian Elizabeth Bethel noted, Russwurm "brought an implicitly transnational identity and consciousness to his editorship of the paper."⁵ Maine was part of this larger Atlantic world and Russwurm's experiences – both good and bad – in Maine and several urban centers in the Northeast helped him develop into a free black leader in the United States, and ultimately, a leader of the colonizationist movement.



John Brown Russwurm was born at the dawn of the nineteenth century in Port Antonio, which is located in the northeastern corner of the island of Jamaica. Jamaica was then a British colony known for its coffee and sugar production. From John Henderson, *Peeps at Many Lands: Jamaica* (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1909), p. vii.

Jamaica Background

At the dawn of the nineteenth century, Portland Parish, in the British colony of Jamaica, was home to 415 whites and 180 free coloreds, living amidst 67,771 acres of coffee and sugar worked by 7,600 African-descended slaves, ninety percent of them laboring on sixty-six large plantations. In this context, the status of “people of color” – the usual designation for persons of mixed racial identification – was precarious. The

main town of the parish, Port Antonio, was second only to Jamaica's capital, Kingston, in ship traffic annually. It was there that John Brown Russwurm was born on October 1, 1799.

For many years of his early life, the man now known as John Brown Russwurm bore the name "John Brown," which carefully obscured his paternity. Although information on his mother is scarce, she was likely a free woman of color and a Creole, meaning she was probably of mixed African and European descent.⁶ If John's mother was free, his white slaveholding father might have lived openly with her and the child, as was the custom in Jamaica. He likely formed a deeper bond with them than would have been possible in the more restrictive context of the United States, where such unions were either illegal or heavily frowned upon. "It is probable," one observer wrote of early nineteenth century Jamaica, "that nineteen-twentieths of the white males have their brown or black mistresses, either free or otherwise, by whom they generally have children, who, if born slaves, are often manumitted." During a visit to Portland Parish in 1803, Lady Maria Nugent, wife of Governor-General George Nugent, remarked on the paucity of white women in the parish.⁷

John Brown's father first entered the historical record as a resident of a property called "Fair Prospect" in Priestman's Bay, Portland Parish, in 1806, when he was called for jury duty in the Courts of Quarter Sessions and Common Pleas at Morant Bay. His occupation was listed as "esquire." In the Jamaican context, "attorney" was sometimes used interchangeably with a manager, to whom was entrusted the care of a large plantation by an owner living in Great Britain. Attorneys were so called because their control of plantations rested on the basis of legal powers of attorney, but such persons often had other employment, such as in trade, law, or medicine. One source called the law "perhaps the most lucrative [profession] of any in Jamaica," especially if the attorney possessed a "name...interest, friends, and connexions"⁸

Leaving behind a period of life that remains shrouded in mystery, Russwurm's "child of color," at age seven, was sent to school in Quebec, Canada, using the name John Brown. That was 1807, the year the last slaves were legally imported directly from Africa to Jamaica, giving rise to heightened expectations of emancipation among the 319,351 slaves on the island. During the previous Christmas season, Portland Parish and neighboring St. George Parish, in particular, had been affected by "a spirit of disaffection and insurrection" that the governor mainly attributed to "Creole Negroes" from Haiti. This instability could have precipitated the child's departure, especially if his "Creole" mother was from

the community upon which suspicion had fallen. Having a mother or maternal relatives who were culturally French would also help to explain why John went to Quebec, rather than to the United States or English-speaking portions of Canada. By leaving Jamaica to acquire a Western education, Russwurm was entering a world from which his mother was effectively barred on the basis of her gender and color.⁹

The Russwurm Men Move to Maine

By 1812, Russwurm's father, John, moved to Portland, then the capital of the Maine district of Massachusetts, in an attempt to recover his failing health. Almost immediately after relocating he was engaged as a merchant and had acquired a seventy-five-acre farm, running from Ocean Street to Morrill's Corner, in the nearby neighborhood of Back Cove, now known as the Woodfords district. The fact that Russwurm was able to establish himself as a trader in this new location, even while in poor health, suggests that he probably had prior contacts in Maine. His move to Portland may well have been precipitated by the outbreak of political tensions between America, his home, and Britain, his host, but the resultant economic downturn would have contributed, if his business in Jamaica had involved representation of Maine traders and ship owners. In 1807, an embargo imposed by the U. S. government on intercourse with Britain and, by extension, its colonies, led almost immediately to devastating consequences for the local economy in Portland, Maine, dependent as it was on the Anglo trade. By the end of the year, bankruptcy had struck several persons "whose credit until then had been unlimited" and eleven commercial houses, including the largest ship owners.¹⁰

There were elements of this town that would have reminded him of the parish he had just left, including their names, size, maritime orientation and pan-Atlantic character. The 7,169 residents of his new home included many sailors, some of whom were proudly designated as "master mariners," as well as a few who were born in England, Scotland, and Cuba. "Regardless of what was to be a Maine boy's occupation or profession," one historian has noted, "an indispensable part of his upbringing was a voyage or two in the West India trade."¹¹ Among Portland records of this period, two often-repeated entries were "lost at sea" or "died abroad."

The waterfront in Russwurm's new home was reminiscent of Jamaica. According to one observer, Portland's waterfront "resounded with the song of Negro stevedores," whenever "a cargo of coffee or molasses



The Russwurm family home, 238 Ocean Avenue, Portland, Maine, where John lived intermittently between 1812 and 1827. The building is listed on the register of the National Trust for Historic Preservation. Photo by Carl Patrick Burrows.

came alongside a wharf or when lumber was being loaded aboard.” Laboring along side these dockworkers were black sailors whom one historian has described as “politically astute and worldly,” bearers of a black diasporic consciousness. These “black Jacks,” numbering upwards of 100,000 annually, were prominent on quays around the Atlantic. The 366 Portland residents of African descent were labeled in the federal census of 1810 as “all other persons except Indians not taxed,” but in local directories they were designated almost equally as “blacks” or “people of color,” with a smattering of references to “African,” “negro,” or, in one case, “stolen in Africa when very young.” They constituted only five percent of the population, but that was a higher proportion than in most New England towns of that size and almost twice the ratio of whites to blacks in Portland Parish, Jamaica. The diversity of Portland’s population obviously impressed native-son Henry Wadsworth Longfellow who wrote, “I remember the black wharves and the slips/And the sea-tides tossing free/And Spanish sailors with bearded lips.”¹²

The emergence of Portland, Maine, as a maritime center occurred

rapidly, from having no locally owned vessels in 1787 to registered ships of over 35,512 tons in 1811. These ships were engaged in trade mainly with the West Indies, especially Cuba. In the 1820s, Portland was the premier entry point for goods from Havana, outstripping Boston, New York, and Philadelphia. Coffee, which was especially valued given its price in relation to its small volume, had been supplied mainly from Haiti until instability stemming from the revolution of 1791-1803 led to the emergence of Jamaica as a center of production and exportation. Trade with the West Indies was risky, due to piracy as well as seizures precipitated by the Napoleonic wars, but shortages engendered high profits, until the outbreak of renewed Anglo-American hostilities. Trade between the two regions consisted of rum, sugar, coffee, and molasses, in exchange for fish and forest products from Maine, including two-masted schooners. That the elder Russwurm's business in Jamaica had involved representing Portland merchants is suggested by an advertisement, which was published by his former partners while he was winding down his business on the island, which offered for sale "white and pitch pine Boards, Plank and Scantling," all mainstays of the Maine trade.¹³

On March 4, 1813, about a year after settling in Maine, John's father married Susannah Waterman, a widow in her early twenties with three children of her own. Susan, as she was widely known, was born in 1788 in Weymouth, Massachusetts, and at the age of eighteen married James Humphrey Blanchard, also of Weymouth. The couple moved to North Yarmouth, Maine, and soon welcomed three children into their family. Six years into their marriage, James died in Montreal in February 1812, leaving Susan with an infant, two toddlers, and no real property.¹⁴ Marriage to Russwurm would dramatically change the fortune of the young widow. In July 1814, she gave birth to her fourth child, Francis Edward Russwurm, at Westbrook, which was then a part of Portland. Another major development occurred when her husband, "while laboring under a severe and protracted illness," informed her that he had a mulatto son living in Canada. As Susan remembered years later, she agreed for the boy to be adopted into the family, and they immediately sent for John.

Adolescent Years

Russwurm's mulatto son must have arrived in Maine from Canada in late 1814 or early 1815 because, according to his stepmother, "Mr. R. lived several months after John came home." In April 1815, John's father, John R. Russwurm, died at the age of fifty-three.¹⁵ Although the records are silent on why Russwurm's father assumed the unusual degree of re-

sponsibility for his black son's welfare, his conduct may have been fueled in part by the "crisis of conscience" regarding slavery that opened up in Western societies prior to the revolutions in America, France, and Haiti.¹⁶

The death of John's father left the sixteen-year-old doubly desolate in a new environment and among people he had met only months before. According to his stepmother, John was left "entirely in my care, with a small legacy, which, I intended he should make use of to finish his education." The settlement of his father's estate, for which a \$30,000 executor's bond was posted, would languish from June 1815 through September 1818, driving home to John just how isolated and vulnerable he was.¹⁷ After a protracted legal case, Susan inherited the Back Cove farm and other property, but most of John's legacy was lost due to what his stepmother described euphemistically as "difficulties." For the next two years, John continued living with her family, while attending school half-time. Despite the supposed racial liberality of New England, Susan learned quickly that it was "rather difficult at that time to get a colored boy into a good school where he would receive an equal share of attention with white boys, and this I was very particular should be the case."¹⁸

It was in the aftermath of these legal and psychological setbacks that John decided to visit Jamaica in hope of securing support for his education from his father's friends. It was a decision probably riddled with ambivalence. On the surface, John was firm enough in his conviction that he could turn away his stepmother's imputations against the trip. But at the subconscious level, he must have been anxious about the risky sea trip and about severing his ties to Susan and her children, who were his only familiar anchors in his unsettled world. So emotional was the scene on the day of his departure that his stepmother would vividly recall more than three decades later "the sorrow he expressed at parting with my children, particularly his infant brother." In the midst of this difficult parting, Susan proposed that they return home and search, instead, for a good man to serve as John's guardian, but the youth insisted on leaving. "If I was a white boy," he reportedly said, "I would never leave your family, but I think it is best for me to go," a comment tinged with a racial consciousness fueled perhaps by the differential disposition of his father's estate.¹⁹

If John's visit to Jamaica occurred two years after his father's death, as his stepmother recalled, then it would have been in 1817, and probably sometime around September 14, when the Portland Post Office advertised the presence of a letter addressed to John that had not been re-

tried.²⁰ If he had hoped his visit to Jamaica would be a retreat into a womb of warmth and security, he found a world unlike that which he remembered. John wrote his stepmother a “sorrowful” letter from Jamaica informing her that his father’s friends, from whom he had hoped to secure support, had died. His disappointment must have been profound because he left Jamaica soon thereafter – even before the arrival of her letter urging him to seize the first opportunity to return to Maine.²¹

A few weeks after sending her reply to John’s letter from Jamaica, Susan received word that he was back in Portland. John returned to find his Maine family reconfigured, along with his place in it, for in his absence Susan had wed William Hawes in May 1817. Susan and her new husband received word on a Saturday night that John was back in Maine, but he seemed unwilling to return home without an invitation from Hawes himself. They awoke very early the next day, after a sleepless night, and sent a man to Portland, “with strict orders not to return without John, and before 9 o’clock, he arrived,” Susan recalled. “I was much relieved, and the children as much rejoiced.”²²

Born in Dorchester, Massachusetts, Hawes settled in North Yarmouth, Maine, where he managed a papermaking business. Susan and her children from previous marriages, including her stepson John, initially lived in Hawes’s home in North Yarmouth, a coastal town twelve miles north of Portland. In 1810, the population of the village stood at 3,295, with several black families having become established in the fast-growing community. Located near where the Royal and Cousins rivers empty into the Atlantic, the coastal village was heavily dependent on maritime activities, including shipbuilding and the sea trade. In the summertime, its wharves were lined with sloops and schooners that typically took on lumber, potatoes, and hay. In the warmer months, many of the town’s young men “followed the sea” as mariners, and while at home in the winter some would teach navigation classes at the fulling mill. Like Portland, a considerable amount of the exports from North Yarmouth went to the West Indies.²³

The Hawes family home stood near the corner of Main Street and the road to Portland. Within a year, the family moved to the larger Back Cove farm in Portland once owned by John’s father. This move was probably necessitated by the expansion of the family, which consisted of two children from William’s previous marriage, Susan’s three children by Blanchard, John and his half-brother Frank, along with the parents and new-born Marcia Scott Dunlap Hawes. William and Susan Hawes together eventually had six other children. Despite the inevitable tensions

that must have arisen among siblings from four different unions and the challenges of keeping thirteen children clothed and fed, John's stepsister recalled, "All lived as one family, pleasantly with each other. I never knew father or mother to strike one of the children: a mild reproof was the only punishment."²⁴

The paper mill that employed William Hawes stood on the banks of the Royal River, at the second falls and on the eastern side, and specialized in wrapping, sheathing, and writing paper. Built in 1816 by George and Henry Cox, who were from Hawes's hometown, Dorchester, it was sold by them in 1821 to William R. and Calvin Stockbridge. Susan and William asked Calvin to serve as John's guardian, a request he accepted, "after some deliberation." The Stockbridge brothers, who came from a family dating back to the Mayflower, were "the mainstay" of the local Baptist church and, unlike Susan and her husband, had large real estate holdings going back several generations.²⁵

Although a businessman, Calvin gave more of his time, energy, and finances to religious matters. His "religious character," according to a nephew, "was strong and prominent, and his interest in missions, at home and abroad, was unlimited." In 1819, he was a delegate from North Yarmouth to the Maine Constitutional Convention in Portland. When several Free and Accepted Masons of North Yarmouth formed the Casco Lodge in 1821, he and John's stepfather, William Hawes, were among the members.²⁶ Unusual for whites of his day, Calvin was also an early supporter of Paul Cuffe, a Quaker of mixed black and Native American ancestry, who, in 1811, led one of the most significant black emigrationist efforts. In April 1814, Stockbridge trekked 176 miles from North Yarmouth to Cuffe's home in Westport, Massachusetts, to ascertain the motives of the black Quaker, glean information about Africa, and explore sources of support for poor emigrants. During that visit, as recorded by the black whaler, Stockbridge further informed Cuffe "that in his neighborhood there are famelyss of Colour that offers them Selves as Candates [*sic*] for Africa by the names of [left blank] also a School-master by name of William Jenkes of Bath a Congregatonal minister and a proffesor of the wanted languages."²⁷

In 1819, with assistance from Stockbridge, John entered Hebron Academy, a college preparatory school established fifteen years earlier. In 1805, one year after the academy was established, the textbooks included, among others "such Greek and Latin Authors, as students are usually examined in to obtain admission at the Universities." The rules during this period called for students to be warned against "the vices of

Sabbath breaking, profane swearing, lying, stealing, quarreling, gaming, cruelty to the brute creation, and all manner of indecency and wickedness, whether in word or behavior.” The facilities included a three-story frame house, where as many as forty out-of-town students would stay. By the time of John’s admission to Hebron, one of his neighbors in the village of North Yarmouth was attorney William Barrows, Jr., son of Hebron’s founder.²⁸

Russwurm’s schooling was scuttled months after he enrolled when the original academy building, which doubled as a church, was destroyed by fire. The timing of this fire might have seemed suspicious, in light of destructive actions directed against other New England schools that admitted blacks, but John, in a June 1819 letter to a friend, considered “[the fire] as the judgement [*sic*] of Heaven,” not for racial discrimination, but for “their treatment of the few independent souls who resided with them during this past year.” Adjusting to the setback caused by the fire, Russwurm reported to “Friend Otis” that he had spent the last academic quarter studying under Shubael Tripp, a Baptist minister and teacher at Newfield Village, Maine. He was now back in North Yarmouth reciting his lessons “at six O clock every morning to Lawyer Mellen” and planning to complete his two remaining months of studies at Gorham Academy, with support from his guardian, Calvin Stockbridge.²⁹

Russwurm’s years in Maine were spent in a Baptist milieu: the marriage of his stepmother and her husband, Hawes, had been performed by the Reverend Otis Briggs, pastor of the local Baptist church, his guardian was a local leader of the denomination, and the residents of Hebron consisted almost entirely of Baptists and Free Baptists. If his letter about the fire at the academy was a reliable indication, however, he seems to have developed an affiliation with the Quakers, who constituted about twenty-eight percent of Portland’s residents. The letter was addressed to “Friend Otis,” mentioned “Friend Clark,” and expressed felicitation to “all the members of the Society with whom I am acquainted.”³⁰ His reference to “independent souls” suggests he saw himself as embodying an unpopular intellectual perspective, which, in light of his Quaker rhetoric, might have reflected a sectarian cast.

Russwurm’s transition to manhood came at a time of tumultuous changes in Maine, which lost seven percent of its population to Ohio, due to an unusually severe winter in 1816-17. Two years later, a drive was launched to elevate the district into a state. Writing to a first cousin in Tennessee in July 1819, Russwurm, already showing a keen interest in

politics at the age of twenty, predicted that “Maine will doubtless be separated [from Massachusetts] though not without some opposition” from the Federalists. Given the growing national agitation around the issue of slavery, statehood for Maine would not be granted by Congress until 1820, and then only on the condition that a slaveholding state, Missouri, be admitted at the same time.³¹ This compromise by national leaders on the matter of slavery would emerge as a major issue against which Russwurm would campaign as editor of *Freedom’s Journal* (1827-1829).

Beyond Maine

Russwurm’s hope of completing his studies at Gorham was dashed when his guardian was unable to provide funds for his tuition. Urged to teach for a while, he left the familiar towns of Maine for Philadelphia, New York, and Boston. It was in these cities that he came into contact with the country’s free black leaders, whose thoughts and actions were often intended to benefit people of African descent throughout the broader Atlantic world.³² At the beginning of the nineteenth century, each of these cities had at least one school organized or supported by a variety of free black mutual-aid societies.³³ Leaving home in late 1819, Russwurm’s first stop was likely Philadelphia, where a black school had been established one year before.³⁴ The Pennsylvania Augustine Society for the Education of People of Color opened in 1818 in the A. M. E. Bethel Church, with guidance from local free black men. Leaders of the Augustine Society included Reverend John Gloucester, president, and James Forten, vice president. Both men had helped in 1787 to organize Philadelphia’s Free African Society, whose members pledged to “support one another in sickness and [provide] for the benefit of their fatherless children.”

Philadelphia had a thriving free black community. A fourth-generation Pennsylvanian, Forten was both the leading sail-maker in the city, with black and white craftsmen in his employ, and a leader of the free black community. Forten was a leader in the abolitionist movement. He also initially supported the colonization movement in its infancy but ultimately rejected the idea that African Americans settle abroad. One recent arrival to Philadelphia among the Augustine Society leadership was Samuel Eli Cornish, secretary. Born to a free family in Sussex County, Delaware, he moved to Philadelphia in 1815. Trained for the ministry by Reverend Gloucester, Cornish gained practical experience filling in for his mentor who was dying of tuberculosis. Cornish would later found

the nation's first black newspaper, *Freedom's Journal*, with Russwurm, in New York City. He was also an influential abolitionist. Headed by Prince Saunders, the city's first black school was shuttered a few years later, when its principal left town. Unlike Forten, Saunders was an emigrationist. He later himself moved to Haiti.³⁵

In the wake of the school's closure, Russwurm apparently moved to New York City, by July 1820, when a series of announcements began appearing in a Philadelphia newspaper giving notice of uncollected mail in his name at the post office.³⁶ Cornish also relocated to that city, where by 1821 he had established the New Demeter Street Presbyterian Church. In New York, the African Free School opened in 1798, with funding from white philanthropists. Although the New York Manumission Society operated the school, the black community, which numbered 10,000 in 1820, provided critical support through various self-help organizations.³⁷

In 1822, Russwurm was hired as instructor of advanced students in the African School of Boston, where he remained for two years. Started in 1798, the school was maintained in the home of Primus Hall until 1806, when it was moved to the African Baptist Church on Belknap Street, led by the Reverend Thomas Paul. From 1818 to 1835, the school met in a portion of Reverend Paul's basement and all of the teachers were white — except Russwurm.³⁸

Russwurm's ability to move from one city to another was facilitated by a thickening web of ties between free black leaders along the Atlantic rim, including Russwurm's birthplace of Port Antonio, as well as his later places of residence in the United States — Portland, Boston, Philadelphia, and New York. One important institutional link was the black branch of the universal fraternal organization known formally as the Ancient Free and Accepted Masons. The first African-American Masons were fifteen Bostonians, led by Prince Hall, a minister, who were initiated during the Revolutionary War by Irish troops in the British Army. Black Masons projected a more glorified African past based on certain elements of Masonic lore, especially rituals and symbols drawn from ancient Egypt and veneration of King Solomon, with his Biblical link to Sheba, Queen of Ethiopia.³⁹

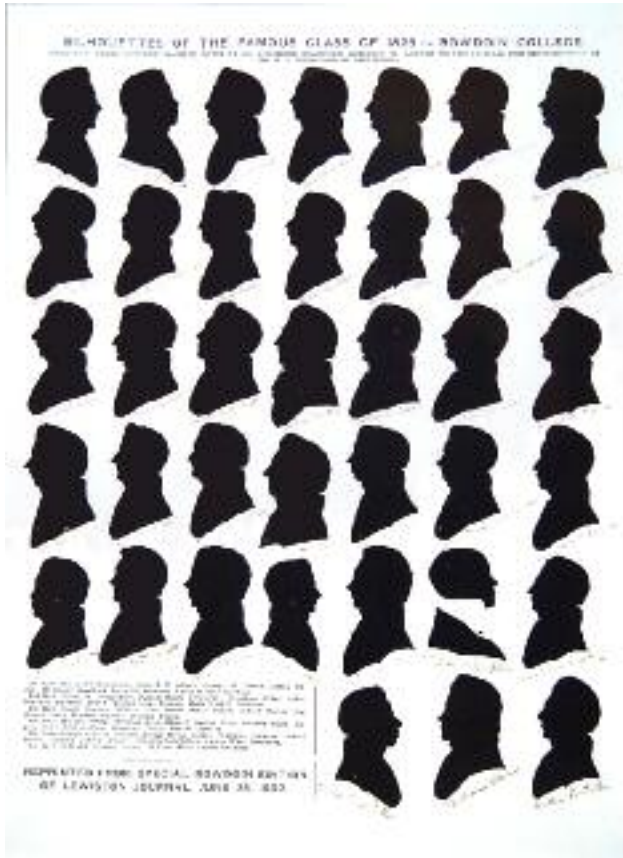
Another link among free black leaders in all three cities, several of whom were Russwurm's associates, was a shared interest in emigration to either West Africa or Haiti. During Russwurm's time in America, many blacks identified themselves as primarily belonging to a Diasporic African nationality as was reflected in the names given to their institu-

tions, such as the African Methodist Episcopal Church (created in 1787), the African Free School of New York (1787), and the African Baptist Church of Richmond (1841). In the wake of the American War of Independence, even free blacks came to be disenfranchised as citizenship in the new republic was increasingly confined to white men. As early as 1788, Prince Hall and other black Bostonians had formally but unsuccessfully petitioned the Massachusetts General Court for help in relocating to Africa. In 1815, Reverend Paul and Saunders traveled to England to solicit the support of prominent English abolitionists for education and missionary work in Africa. Due in part to this effort, their names became “household words” in Massachusetts as advocates of black emigration to Africa. Saunders’s interest in the colonization of African Americans outside the United States was deepened through the influence of Paul Cuffe, an African-American trader and whaler, to whose daughter he was engaged.⁴⁰ Despite his high level of education, Russwurm saw a future of discrimination ahead of him, even in the “free” states of the North.

As the question of emigration was being agitated, Russwurm, now master of the African School in Boston, was near the center of the maelstrom, given his multiple ties to many leaders of the movement. His stepmother was probably alluding to the likes of Reverend Paul and Saunders when, recalling John’s experience in Boston, she said, he “had many warm friends among the most respectable and intelligent in the city.” While Russwurm was in Boston, some who knew him well, including his stepmother and perhaps his guardian Calvin Stockbridge, “advised him at the time to go to Liberia, but he firmly declined doing so, until he had taken his degree.”⁴¹

Bowdoin and the Transition to African Colonization

After a delay of five years, John was finally able to resume his education in 1824, when he gained admission to Bowdoin College. This resumption came “at length” through Russwurm’s “own exertions, with some help from others.”⁴² His contribution consisted mainly of savings from his \$400 annual salary in Boston.⁴³ The major cost per semester for attending the college, as recalled by one of his schoolmates, was \$8 for tuition, \$3.34 for chamber rent, and \$1.11 for sweeping and bed-making, as well as other expenses that included fines for such infractions as unnecessary walking on the Sabbath. Perhaps because he was given credit for his previous teaching experience, Russwurm was admitted into the college as a junior in September 1824. Bowdoin was emerging as one of the most important small New England colleges, graduating future U.S. President



Silhouette pictures of the Bowdoin College class of 1825, which included Nathaniel Hawthorne and Henry W. Longfellow. Russwurm graduated from Bowdoin a year later in 1826. Maine Historical Society Collections.

Franklin Pierce in the class of 1824, as well as novelist Nathaniel Hawthorne and poet Henry Wadsworth Longfellow. The college was modeled after Harvard in all respects, from the curriculum through the choice of textbooks to architecture. His admission might have been assisted by a recommendation from Moses Emery, a Bowdoin graduate who was headmaster at Hebron Academy during John's brief tenure.⁴⁴

As would be expected, the arrival of a student of color into this privileged environment fueled considerable controversy. Based on an interview with a faculty member who was present, an unnamed writer reporting ten years later on the changed racial climate of Maine noted that Russwurm's admittance was greeted by a "great outcry" from other stu-



Russwurm attended Bowdoin College in the 1820s. He was one of the few black men to attend a college or university in the antebellum period. Russwurm was not only Bowdoin's first black graduate but also one of the first African Americans to have earned a college degree anywhere in the United States. From Nehemiah Cleaveland and Alpheus Spring Packard, *History of Bowdoin College with Biographical Sketches of Its Graduates, from 1806 to 1879, Inclusive* (Boston: J. R. Osgood & Company, 1882), frontispiece.

dents. They were determined not to “have anything to say to him, or even stay their terms out” unless he was expelled. The storm passed “after a while, owing chiefly to the manliness of Professor [Parker] Cleaveland,” a renowned and beloved lecturer in chemistry and mineralogy. Initially, Russwurm commuted nineteen miles from North Yarmouth to Brunswick but, the account continued, “he could never get admission into a stage coach; and frequently lost days therefore, waiting for good weather on his way back to his studies.” He eventually settled into classes but not into the campus residence hall with other students. Schoolmate Horatio Bridge recalled, “He lived at a carpenter’s house, just beyond the village limits, where [Nathaniel] Hawthorne and [I] called upon him several times, but his sensitivity on account of his color prevented him from returning calls.” Unacknowledged in Bridge’s explanation was the part played by white students in isolating their black schoolmate.⁴⁵

Bowdoin’s curriculum included solid geometry, Latin, Greek, and philosophy, with explorations of William Paley’s *Evidences* and John Locke’s *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*. The school day began at 6 a.m. with prayers and then first recitations, both before break-

fast. Midday recitations were held at 11 a.m., followed by work in the library, which closed at noon. Extracurricular activities were few, consisting mainly of the meetings and programs of two rival literary societies, the Athenians and the Peucinians. In 1824, Russwurm was invited to join the Athenians to which he replied, "with alacrity I accept your kind invitation."⁴⁶ Schoolmate Horatio Bridge recalled John as "a diligent student, but of no marked ability."⁴⁷ An unnamed writer, drawing on the recollection of a professor, characterized the black student as "good in practical mathematics, surveying, &c; not in metaphysics."⁴⁸

The many challenges Russwurm had endured in pursuit of an education finally paid off on September 6, 1826, with his graduation from Bowdoin. The commencement crowds had grown too large for any building on campus to accommodate, so a platform was erected in an open field. Local peddlers and merchants, selling everything from pies and gingerbread to root beer and alcoholic beverages, had prepared for the throng of customers by erecting colorfully decorated booths along the edge of campus.⁴⁹ The ceremonies featured the awarding of the Bachelor of Arts degree to thirty-one candidates, along with ten master's and twenty-one medical degrees. Twenty-four undergraduate students presented orations on a range of topics, including "The Influence of Natural Scenery Upon Character," "English Literature during the Reign of Queen Anne," and "The Principle of Association as a Source of Happiness." Selected as one of the commencement speakers, Russwurm chose to focus on "The Condition and Prospects of Haiti."⁵⁰ This was a controversial choice given the strained U.S. relationship with Haiti following the Haitian Revolution. Following the overthrow of the French colonial regime by Haiti's slave majority, the U.S. government refused to recognize the new black nation diplomatically and at times imposed an economic embargo. White supremacists, especially southern slaveholders, feared the presence a country run by ex-slaves who had rebelled against their masters.⁵¹

According to one observer, Russwurm appeared "dreadfully frightened a few moments before he went on the stage," facing, as he was, "the beauty and fashion; the prejudice and the power of New England's representatives." Regaining his composure "after a hurried breath or two," he went on to win over the audience. Russwurm began with the premise that the prosperity of nations was bound to "rise and fall, flourish and decay," a cyclical view of history that was widely held. However, in contrast to the dominant racist ideology of a differentiated scale of humanity arrayed by color, he insisted on a universal, unchanging human na-

ture, "whether placed under the torrid suns of Africa or in the more congenial temperate zone." This universal impulse made it both inevitable that "degraded man will rise in his native majesty and claim his rights" and equally "vain to stem the current" of black liberation, a claim likely to have unsettled conservative members of the audience.⁵²

In what was perhaps the riskiest portion of his speech, Russwurm sought to address the anti-white violence of the Haitian Revolution. In his view, the "cruelties inflicted by the French on the children of Haiti have exceeded the crimes of Cortes and Pizarro."⁵³ He reminded his audience of the "indisputed fact" that 16,000 Haitians had died "who have been hunted with bloodhounds, who have been threatened with auto-de-fé, whose relations and friends have been hanged on gibbets before their eyes, and who have been sunk by hundreds in the sea." In his view, any cruelties committed by the Haitians in the course of the war were purely "retaliatory" and were "compelled" upon them by the bloody "policy pursued by the French commanders."

Only "one who is more than human" could "exercise kindness toward such mortal enemies." He rejected the pacifism of the Quakers as well as the turn-the-other-cheek theology specifically urged upon blacks by conservative clerics.⁵⁴ He added dismissively, "remind me not of moral duties, of meekness and generosity." Haitians "know too well by their past misfortunes, by their wounds, which are yet bleeding, that security can be expected only from within themselves," he said, echoing the approach in self-reliance embodied in the free black mutual-aid societies of Philadelphia, New York, and Boston.

For Russwurm, the central lesson of the Haitian Revolution was the salutary effect of liberty on individuals and society. In other words, "once Freedom struck their astonished ears, they became new creatures, stepped forth as men, and showed to the world, that though slavery may benumb, it cannot entirely destroy our faculties." Where "servitude and ignorance" had once "oppressed" the faculties of Haitians, by securing their independence, "they have acquired a new existence; their powers have been developed." Eliding over the coup against King Christophe and the robbery of Prince Saunders, who was visiting the black nation, Russwurm claimed, "in no country are the rights and privileges of citizens and foreigners more respected, and crimes less frequent."

Alluding to the *Haitian Papers* published by Prince Saunders ten years earlier, he averred, "their state papers are distinguished from those of many European courts only by their superior energy and nonexalted sentiments." Even the feudal pretensions of the late Henri Christophe,

the self-proclaimed king, were offered as evidence the “Haitian government has arisen in the neighborhood of European settlements.” In a line that would likely have elicited laughter, if not applause, he noted, Christophe “had almost as much foppery, almost as many lords and ladies of the bedchamber, and almost as great a proportion of stars and ribbons and gilded chariots as those of his brother potentates in any part of the world.”

Although Russwurm evoked Europe as the standard against which Haiti would be measured – both in its accomplishments and failings – the implications were clear for slaveholders and their sympathizers in America: the Haitians were “determined to live free or die gloriously.” Even more ominous was his claim that all attempts to repress the “principle of liberty,” which was implanted in the human “breast” by the “God of nature,” are “as fruitless as would be the attempt to extinguish the fires of Etna.”⁵⁵ He predicted for Haiti “a career of glory and happiness” and a rapid advance “in all the arts of civilization,” but these were contingent on the maintenance of a “free and well-regulated government” and conditions “favorable to trade and commercial enterprise.”

The speech was delivered, according to one observer, in a “full and manly tone of voice, accompanied with appropriate gestures.” In the course of the address, Russwurm was interrupted by two or three rounds of applause. One attendee pronounced it “a literary performance so novel under all its circumstance,” noting it was better received than “any other exercise of the day.”⁵⁶ It was certainly better received by the press, which did not mention the other readings and rhetorical exercises. On September 12, 1826, extracts of Russwurm’s address were published in the Portland *Eastern Argus*, whose editor, Seba Smith, took a particular interest perhaps because he was married to a native of North Yarmouth and had himself graduated from Bowdoin eight years earlier. Over the following two weeks, the *Argus* accounts of Russwurm’s graduation and his sensational address were reprinted in at least eight newspapers throughout New England and as far away as Reading, Pennsylvania. The *Boston Commercial Gazette* added to its report on Russwurm, “he belongs to this city.”⁵⁷

As one of a handful of African Americans with both a college education and widespread regional publicity from his speech, Russwurm soon found himself at a professional crossroads, facing options in widely scattered corners of the Atlantic world. He was likely already a committed emigrationist due to the influence of free black mentors like Prince Saunders, as well as ACS supporters like his guardian Calvin Stockbridge

and some Bowdoin faculty. In a letter to a cousin in January 1826, months before graduation, he wrote, "If not particularly invited by the Haytian Govt then, I shall study Medicine in Boston previous to an emigration to Hayti."⁵⁸ Even the *Argus* report on his graduation noted, "He intends, as we are informed, to settle in Haiti."

Two and a half months after his well publicized address, the ACS secretary, Ralph R. Gurley, sent a letter to Russwurm's Boston address offering a position in the colonial government of Liberia. The letter arrived while the addressee was away for several weeks. After receiving it, Russwurm immediately shared its content with "distant" but unnamed associates and solicited their advice. Their response, he reported in a letter to Gurley, was "that *at present*, it would not be advisable to accept the liberal offer of your Board of Managers." Of the persons consulted, the only one named in the letter, perhaps because he was known by both men, was Calvin Stockbridge, "whose views are considerably altered, since his address to you."⁵⁹

Russwurm ruled out the ACS offer "at present" but after serving as editor of *Freedom's Journal* for two years he reinitiated communication with Gurley regarding emigration to Liberia. In January 1829, he informed the society's secretary that his view of colonization had "*materially* changed" and he was now willing to emigrate. He was prepared, he informed Gurley, to accept a position "in any business for the performance of which you may deem me qualified."⁶⁰ By the 1830s, he had cut such a broad swath across the black Atlantic that the Maryland State Colonization Society, which had appointed him governor of its colony, confidently predicted that future generations would "resort with profit to . . . records of Governor Russwurm's life for the most admirable examples of prudence, wisdom, and integrity."⁶¹ His rise in government in Africa, at a time when leadership opportunities were mainly closed to blacks in North America, even in abolitionist organizations, helped build support for black office holding in the United States. Russwurm remained in Liberia until his death on June 9, 1851.

Conclusion

John Brown Russwurm's story vividly illustrates the complex and contradictory nature of America's antebellum racial landscape. In a series of moves that were unusual for that period, Russwurm's father – a former slaveholder – gave the boy his last name, acknowledged his paternity, and provided funds for a quality education. The degree of caring reflected in these acts suggests that the elder Russwurm had previously

enjoyed close ties with the boy and his mother. The support provided by his stepmother and guardian in Maine, both of whom were white, contrasted sharply with the racially motivated rejection he experienced upon enrolling at Bowdoin College and his exclusion from full citizenship, given his bi-racial background. The juxtaposition of nurturing and rejection experienced in Maine prepared him for leadership, yet propelled him to exercise his skills elsewhere, first among blacks in the northern United States and ultimately in Liberia.

Even as an adolescent, Russwurm perceived himself as set apart from his peers, not due so much to the color of his skin, but because he possessed an “independent soul.” Although raised in a thoroughly Baptist milieu, he demonstrated very little interest in religious matters, focusing instead on historical, sociological, and political analyses rooted in a secular, Enlightenment perspective. His independent streak – evident in his bold commencement speech on Haiti at a time of national paranoia regarding the black republic – would continue in his adult years with his role in launching America’s first black newspaper and his collaboration with the much-maligned ACS. His mediatory role, whether as interpreter of black interests to white society through *Freedom’s Journal* or as administrator of a black colony established by a white organization, was one for which he had been prepared through his intimate contacts with whites.

Russwurm’s favorable disposition toward emigration flowed naturally from his international socialization. After all, he was an embodiment of the Atlantic world, from his German-American father and Creole Jamaican mother through his childhood in Quebec to his days in Portland, North Yarmouth, Boston, and New York, all with significant ports and traffic in global information. What began as a latent cosmopolitanism received reinforcement from older associates who had an active interest in black colonization, notably Calvin Stockbridge and Prince Saunders. When his Bowdoin commencement address on Haiti failed to gain the attention of the Haitian government, Russwurm shifted, not from abolition to colonization, but within emigrationism from Haiti to Liberia. In opting for emigration, Russwurm was acting on the basis of a principle he had enunciated at Bowdoin – that statehood invigorates those faculties once benumbed by slavery.

NOTES

1. A “free child of color” named John Brown was baptized on June 20, 1807, in Portland Parish, Jamaica. See Portland Parish Registers I, 1804-1825, p. 10, from Church of Latter

Day Saints Family History Library, FHL Intl. Film No. 1291709. The fact that his baptism occurred on a Saturday and was the only one recorded for that day suggests the child was baptized hurriedly, in preparation for departure to Canada.

2. Faustine C. Jones-Wilson, Charles A. Ashbury, Margo Okazawa-Rey, D. Kamili Anderson, Sylvia M. Jacobs, and Michael Fultz, eds., *Encyclopedia of African-American Education* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1996), p. 431.

3. Early Lee Fox, *The American Colonization Society, 1817-1840* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1919; reprint, New York: AMS Press, 1971); Floyd J. Miller, *The Search for a Black Nationality: Black Emigration and Colonization, 1787-1863* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1975); and P. J. Staudenraus, *The African Colonization Movement, 1816-1865* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1961).

4. The only scholarly works on his life are William M. Brewer, "John B. Russwurm," *Journal of Negro History* 13 (October 1928): 413-422; Amos J. Beyan, *African American Settlements in West Africa: John Brown Russwurm and the American Civilizing Effort* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005); Winston James, *The Struggles of John Brown Russwurm: The Life and Writings of a Pan-African Pioneer, 1799-1851* (New York: New York University Press, 2010).

5. Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993), pp. 15, 6; Ira Berlin, *Many Thousands Gone: The First Five Centuries of Slavery in North America* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998), p. 17; Elizabeth Raub Bethel, "Images of Hayti: The Construction of an Afro-American *lieu de memoire*," *Callaloo* 15, no. 3 (Summer 1992): 827-841.

6. Bee, "An African Governor from the State of Maine," *Portland Transcript*, September 16, 1848; Sarah Elizabeth (Hawes) Cutter, "The Hawes Family," *Old Times: a magazine devoted to the preservation and publication of documents relating to the early history of North Yarmouth, Maine* 6, no. 2 (April 1882): 843; Nehemiah Cleaveland and Alpheus Spring Packard, *History of Bowdoin College with Biographical Sketches of Its Graduates, from 1806 to 1879, Inclusive* (Boston: J. R. Osgood & Company, 1882), p. 352; James Hall, "Monument to Governor Russwurm," *Maryland Colonization Journal* n.s. 6, no. 22 (March 1853): 350-352.

7. Gad J. Heuman, *Between Black and White: Race, Politics, and the Free Colored in Jamaica, 1792-1865* (Oxford, UK: Clio, 1981), p. 13; John Stewart, *A View of the Past and Present State of the Island of Jamaica* (Edinburgh: Oliver & Boyd, 1823), p. 333; Frank Cundall, *Lady Nugent's Journal: Jamaica One Hundred Years Ago. Reprinted from a Journal Kept by Marie, Lady Nugent, from 1801 to 1815, issued for Private Circulation in 1839* (Kingston: The Institute of Jamaica, 1907), p. 97.

8. *Royal Gazette* (Kingston, Jamaica), December 6, 1806. For the role of attorneys, see Stewart, *A View of the Past*, pp. 183-84, 198.

9. Frank Cundall, *Biographical Annals of Jamaica* (Kingston: Institute of Jamaica, 1904), p. 53; Eyre Coote to William Windham, January 9, 1807, Jamaica. CO137/118, Colonial Office Correspondence, National Archives, Kew, United Kingdom. Information on the gender distinction in treatment of coloreds is taken from Stewart, *A View of the Past*, p. 335.

10. J. T. H., "Memoranda: Russwurm Family," *Old Times* 5, no. 4 (Oct. 1881): 782, de-

scribed Russwurm as a “merchant in Portland” and dated his arrival in Maine to 1812. The reference to a “75-acre” farm is from H. E. H., “John Brown Russwurm: A Credit to Two Races,” *Hebron Semester Magazine*, Fall 1974, 10-11, while the “Ocean Street to Morrill’s Corner” description is provided by W. W. Clayton, *History of Cumberland Co., Maine, with Illustrations and Biographical Sketches of Its Prominent Men and Pioneers* (Philadelphia: Everts & Peck, 1880), p. 386. For the approximate period of Russwurm’s arrival, also see: Hall, “Monument to Governor Russwurm,” p. 350; and Cutter, “The Hawes Family,” 844. Information on the embargo is from the following sources: William Willis, *The History of Portland, from 1632 to 1869* (Portland: Bailey & Noyles, 1865), pp. 554, 633-635; William Hutchinson Rowe, *The Maritime History of Maine* (Freeport, ME: Bond Wheelwright, 1966), p. 84; William Goold, *Portland in the Past* (Portland, ME: B. Thurston, 1886), pp. 420-429; William Darby, *Darby’s Edition of Brookes’ Universal Gazetteer; or, a New Geographic Dictionary* (Philadelphia: Benjamin Weaver, 1823), pp. 574-575, 826.

11. Rowe, *Maritime History of Maine*, p. 97.

12. Rowe, *Maritime History of Maine*, p. 113; W. Jeffrey Bolster, *Black Jacks: African American Seamen in the Age of Sail* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997), pp. 1-6, 38-39; Willis, *History of Portland*, p. 554; William Darby, *Darby’s Edition of Brookes’ Universal Gazetteer*, p. 243; Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, “My Lost Youth,” in *The Complete Poetic Works of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1919), p. 194.

13. Willis, *History of Portland*, pp. 456-457, 560; John Neal, *Portland Illustrated* (Portland, ME: W. S. Jones, 1874), p. 104; Rowe, *Maritime History of Maine*, pp. 100-104, 110, 115-117; *Royal Gazette* (Kingston, Jamaica), July 4, 1812, p. 14; *Royal Gazette* (Kingston, Jamaica), July 11, 1812, p. 5; *Royal Gazette* (Kingston, Jamaica), July 18, 1812, p. 25; *Royal Gazette* (Kingston, Jamaica), August 15, 1812, p. 13; *Royal Gazette* (Kingston, Jamaica), August 22, 1812, p. 9.

14. Cutter, “The Hawes Family,” pp. 841-844.

15. Cutter, “The Hawes Family,” pp. 841-844; Hall, “Monument to Governor Russwurm,” p. 350; William B. Jordan, Jr., *Burial Records, 1717-1962, of the Eastern Cemetery, Portland, Maine* (Bowie, MD: Heritage Books, 1987), p. 120.

16. David Brion Davis, *The Problem of Slavery in Western Culture* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1966).

17. Legal document, June 14, 1815, relating to the bonding of Daniel Fox for \$30,000 as executor of the estate of John Russwurm, John Fox Papers, Fox 5, Correspondence, January-June 1815, Maine Historical Society (hereafter MHS), Portland; Nathan Goold, Genealogies of Portland Families, unpublished scrapbook compiled 1895, typed and indexed by Virginia T. Merrill, 91-93, MHS; N. M. Fox, *A History of That Part of the Fox Family Descended from Thomas Fox of Cambridge, Mass.* (St. Joseph, MO: Union Printing Co., 1899), pp. 37-38.

18. “John Russwurm’s Will,” *Gazette of Maine* (Portland), May 22, 1815, p. 4; “John Russwurm’s Will,” *Gazette of Maine* (Portland), February 3, 1818, p. 4; “John Russwurm’s Estate,” *Gazette of Maine* (Portland), August 25, 1818, p. 4; Hall, “Monument to Governor Russwurm,” p. 350.

19. Hall, “Monument to Governor Russwurm,” p. 350.

20. "Advertisements," *Eastern Argus* (Portland), October 14, 1817, p. 3.
21. Hall, "Monument to Governor Russwurm," p. 350.
22. Hall, "Monument to Governor Russwurm," p. 351.
23. Cutter, "The Hawes Family," pp. 841-844; N. T. True, "North Yarmouth," *Old Times in North Yarmouth, Maine* 2, no. 4 (October 1, 1878): 274-282, especially 276. See also Joseph Stockbridge, "The Stockbridge Family," *Old Times in North Yarmouth, Maine* 6, no. 1 (January 1, 1882): 806-809; Timothy Dwight, *Travels in New England and New York* (London: William Baynes and Son, 1823), 2:197; Joseph Stockbridge, "North Yarmouth," *Old Times in North Yarmouth, Maine* 5, no. 1 (January 1881): 607-611.
24. Cutter, "The Hawes Family," pp. 841-844, especially 844; True, "North Yarmouth," p. 274.
25. Cutter, "The Hawes Family," p. 843; William Hutchinson Rowe, *Ancient North Yarmouth and Yarmouth, Maine, 1636-1936* (Yarmouth, ME: n. p., 1937), pp. 303-306, 323; Hall, "Monument to Governor Russwurm," p. 351; Stockbridge, "The Stockbridge Family," pp. 808-809; Mary B. Woods, "Academy Catalogue, 1841," *Old Times in North Yarmouth, Maine* 5, no. 3 (July 1, 1881): 722-724; Samuel Dorrance Seabury, "North Yarmouth Academy," *Old Times in North Yarmouth, Maine* 2, no. 4 (October 1, 1878): 271-274.
26. True, "North Yarmouth," p. 276; Stockbridge, "The Stockbridge Family," p. 808; Rowe, *Ancient North Yarmouth*, pp. 199, 341-347.
27. Paul Cuffe's Log, April 22, 1814, Old Dartmouth Historical Society Library, New Bedford, Massachusetts; Rosalind Cobb Wiggins, ed., *Captain Paul Cuffe's Logs and Letters, 1808-1817: A Black Quaker's "Voice from within the Veil"* (Washington: Howard University Press, 1996).
28. Harold E. Hall, *History of Hebron Academy, Hebron, Maine, 1804-1972* (Hebron, ME: Hebron Academy, 1979), pp. 4, 8, 17, 18, 26; Harold E. Hall to Robert M. Cross, July 2, 1965, Box 1, Folder 6, John Brown Russwurm Collection, Special Collections and Archives, Bowdoin College Library (hereafter BCL).
29. John B. Russwurm to John Otis, June 22, 1819, Box 1, Folder 1, John Brown Russwurm Collection, BCL; H. E. Mitchell and B. V. Davis, comp., *The Town Register: Acton, Shapleigh, Parsonsfield, Newfield, Lebanon, 1907* (Brunswick, ME: H. E. Mitchell Co., 1907), p. 49. References to attacks on other black students in New England are from the following sources: Edmund Fuller, *Prudence Crandall: An Incident of Racism in Nineteenth-Century Connecticut* (Middlebury, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1971), pp. 57-64; Philip S. Foner and Josephine F. Pacheco, eds., *Three Who Dared: Prudence Crandall, Margaret Douglass, Myrtilia Miner – Champions of Antebellum Black Education* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1984), pp. 13-30.
30. John B. Russwurm to John Otis, June 22, 1819, Box 1, Folder 1, John Brown Russwurm Collection, BCL. For the Baptist influences see James J. Humphrey, "Baptist Church Papers," *Old Times in North Yarmouth, Maine* 6, no. 1 (January 1, 1882): 809-812; Baptist Church, *Origin and Progress of the Baptist Church in Yarmouth, Maine* (Portland, ME: B. Thurston, 1861), pp. 8-9; Cutter, "The Hawes Family," p. 841; George J. Varney, *A Gazetteer of Maine With Numerous Illustrations* (Boston: B. B. Russell, 1881), pp. 34, 277-278.

31. Varney, *A Gazetteer of Maine*, p. 57; John B. Russwurm to John S. Russwurm, July 19, 1819, Box 2, Folder 7, John Sumner Russwurm Collection, Tennessee State Library and Archives (hereafter TSLA), Nashville.
32. Hall, "Monument to Governor Russwurm," p. 351.
33. On black mutual-aid societies see Susan Greenbaum, "A Comparison Between African-American and Euro-American Mutual Aid Societies in 19th Century America," *Journal of Ethnic Studies* 19, no. 3 (Fall 1991): 95-119, especially 100-101; Robert Harris, "Early Black Benevolent Societies, 1780-1830," *Massachusetts Review* 20, no. 3 (Autumn 1979): 603-628.
34. William Crowell, et al., *Report of the Primary School Committee on the Petition of Sundry Colored Persons for the Abolition of the Schools for Colored Children* (Boston: J. H. Eastburn, 1846), pp. 16-19; Henry Barnard, *Special Report of the Commissioner of Education on the Improvement of Public Schools in the District of Columbia* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1871), p. 357.
35. Prince Saunders, *An Address Delivered at Bethel Church, Philadelphia; on the 30th of September, 1818, Before the Pennsylvania Augustine Society....* (Philadelphia: Joseph Rakestraw, 1818); Julie Winch, *A Gentleman of Color: The Life of James Forten* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002); David E. Swift, "Black Presbyterian Attacks on Racism: Samuel Cornish, Theodore Wright and Their Contemporaries," *Journal of Presbyterian History* 51, no. 4 (Winter 1973): 433-470; Henry C. Silcox, "Delay and Neglect: Negro Public Education in Antebellum Philadelphia, 1800-1860," *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 97, no. 4 (October 1973): 444-464; Prince Saunders, *A Memoir Presented to the American Convention for Promoting the Abolition of Slavery, and Improving the Condition of the African Race, December 11th 1818* (Philadelphia: Dennis Heartt, 1818).
36. "Advertisement," *Franklin Gazette* (Philadelphia), July 6, 1820, p. 4; "Advertisement," *Franklin Gazette*, August 2, 1820, p. 3; "Advertisement," *Franklin Gazette*, August 18, 1820, p. 3; "Advertisement," *Franklin Gazette*, August 21, 1820, p. 4.
37. Charles C. Andrews, *The History of the New-York African Free Schools* (New York: Maylon Day, 1830); Reprint, New York: Negro Universities Press, 1969); Harris, "Early Black Benevolent Societies," pp. 615-616; John L. Rury, "The New York African Free School, 1827-1836: Conflict Over Community Control of Black Education," *Phylon* 44, no. 3 (1983): 187-197, especially 187-189; Craig Steven Wilder, "Black Life in Freedom: Creating a Black Civic Culture," in Ira Berlin and Leslie M. Harris, eds., *Slavery in New York* (New York: The New Press, 2005), pp. 215-237; Donald R. Wright, *African Americans in the Early Republic, 1789-1831* (Arlington Heights, IL: Harlan Davidson, 1993), pp. 198-201; Daniel Perlman, "Organizations of the Free Negro in New York City, 1800-1860," *Journal of Negro History* 56, no. 3 (July 1971): 181-197.
38. For the history of the African School, see John M. Wightman, *Annals of the Boston Primary School Committee from its First Establishment in 1818 to its Dissolution in 1855* (Boston: George C. Rand & Avery, 1860), pp. 69-71, 94-95; Crowell et al., *Report of the Primary School Committee*, pp. 16-19; William Minot, *Address Delivered at the Dedication of the Smith School* (Boston: n. p., 1835), pp. 1-2, 5; S. N. Dickinson, "Public Schools in Boston – Smith School," *Boston Almanac for the Year 1849* (Boston: B. B. Mussey & Co., 1849), p. 65.

39. Joseph A. Walkes, Jr., *Black Square and Compass: 200 Years of Prince Hall Masons* (Richmond, VA: Macoy Publishing and Masonic Supply, 2006), pp. 11-12, 26-30; Erik Hornung, *The Secret Lore of Egypt: Its Impact on the West*. Translated from the German by David Lorton (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2001), pp. 116-127; Julie Winch, "The Leaders of Philadelphia's Black Community, 1787-1848" (Ph. D. dissertation, Bryn Mawr College, 1982), p. 122; William H. Grimshaw, *Official History of Freemasonry Among the Colored People in North America* (New York: Broadway Co., 1903; reprint 1969), pp. 110-112.
40. Paul Cuffe to Peter Williams, June 14, 1816, vol. 3, Paul Cuffe Manuscript Collection, New Bedford Free Public Library, New Bedford, Massachusetts; Daniel Coker, *Journal of Daniel Coker, A Descendant of Africa* (Baltimore: Edward J. Coale, 1820), p. v; Peter Williams, *A discourse delivered on the death of Capt. Paul Cuffe, before the New-York African Institution, in the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, October 21, 1817* (New York: B. Young and Co., 1817), pp. 9-16; "Negro Petitions for Freedom," *Collections of the Massachusetts Historical Society*, 5th Series, vol. 3 (Boston: Massachusetts Historical Society, 1877): 436-437; Lorenzo J. Greene, "Prince Hall: Massachusetts Leader in Crisis," *Freedomways* (Fall 1961): 238-258; Arthur O. White, "The Black Leadership Class and Education in Antebellum Boston," *Journal of Negro Education* 42, no. 4 (Autumn 1973): 509; Bethel, "Images of Hayti," pp. 827-841, especially 831.
41. Minot, *Address Delivered at the Dedication*, pp. 1-2, 5; Hall, "Monument to Governor Russwurm," p. 351.
42. Cleaveland and Packard, *History of Bowdoin College*, p. 353.
43. Wightman, *Annals of the Boston Primary School Committee*, pp. 69-71, 94-95; Crowell et al, *Report of the Primary School Committee*, pp. 16-19; "A Coloured Graduate," *Western Recorder* (Utica, NY), October 17, 1826, p. 168.
44. Horatio Bridge, *Personal Recollections of Nathaniel Hawthorne* (New York: George P. Harper & Bro., 1893), p. 39; Lawrence Thompson, *Young Longfellow, 1807-1843* (New York: Octagon Books, 1969), p. 23.
45. "Progress of Opinion," *Farmer's Gazette* (Barre, MA), May 15, 1835, p. 1; Bridge, *Personal Recollections*, p. 30.
46. Thompson, *Young Longfellow*, pp. 30-31, 35; John B. Russwurm to J. B. Sawyer, October 30, 1824, John Brown Russwurm Collection, BCL.
47. Bridge, *Personal Recollections*, p. 30.
48. "Progress of Opinion," *Farmer's Gazette* (Barre, MA), May 15, 1835, p. 1.
49. "A Coloured Graduate," *Christian Watchman* (Boston), September 28, 1826, p. 174. The date of the commencement is taken from Stevens W. Hilyard to Charles S. Brown, July 26, 1963, Box 1, Folder 6, John Brown Russwurm Collection, BCL.
50. "The Condition and Prospects of Hayti," John Brown Russwurm Collection, BCL. For an early printed copy of the speech, see "At the Late Commencement at Bowdoin College the following Young Gentlemen Received the Degree of Bachelor of Arts," *Eastern Argus* (Portland), September 12, 1826, p. 2. For a more recent reprinting of the speech see Philip S. Foner and Robert James Branham, eds., *Lift Every Voice: African-American Oratory, 1787-1900* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1998), pp. 101-103.

51. For the international consequences of the Haitian Revolution and the response of the U.S. government see, for example, Gordon S. Brown, *Toussaint's Clause: The Founding Fathers and the Haitian Revolution* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2005).
52. "Progress of Opinion," *Farmer's Gazette* (Barre, MA), May 15, 1835, p. 1; "Bowdoin College," *Eastern Argus* (Portland), September 12, 1826, p. 2.
53. This reference is to Spanish conquistadors Hernán Cortés de Monroy y Pizao, who led the conquest of the Aztec Empire, and Francisco Pizarro González, who conquered the Inca Empire and established Lima, Peru.
54. Leonard P. Curry, *The Free Black in Urban America, 1800-1850* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), p. 177; Sterling Stuckey, *Slave Culture, Nationalist Theory and the Foundations of Black America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), pp. 3-97; Vincent P. Harding, *There is a River: The Black Struggle for Freedom in America* (New York: Vintage, 1983), pp. 52-74.
55. Mount Etna, the largest active volcano in Europe.
56. "Bowdoin College," *Eastern Argus* (Portland), September 12, 1826, p. 2; "Progress of Opinion," *Farmer's Gazette* (Barre, MA), May 15, 1835, p. 1.
57. "Bowdoin College," *Eastern Argus* (Portland), September 12, 1826, p. 2; [Anniversary], *Boston Commercial Gazette*, September 14, 1826, p. 2; [Among the graduates], *National Gazette* (Philadelphia), September 12, 1826, p. 1; [Commencement], *Connecticut Courant* (Hartford), September 25, 1826, p. 3; [Among the graduates], *Norwich (CT) Courier*, September 27, 1826, p. 3; [Among the graduates], *Berks and Schuykill Journal* (Reading, PA), September 30, 1826, p. 2; "Bowdoin Commencement," *Portsmouth (NH) Journal of Literature and Politics*, September 30, 1826, p. 1; "A Coloured Graduate," *Christian Watchman* (Boston), September 28, 1826, p. 174; "A Coloured Graduate," *Western Recorder* (Utica, NY), October 17, 1826, p. 168.
58. John B. Russwurm to Col. John S. Russwurm, January 9, 1826, Box 2, Folder 7, John Sumner Russwurm Collection, TSLA.
59. John B. Russwurm to Rev. Ralph R. Gurley, February 26, 1827, Letters Received, 1827, the Records of the American Colonization Society, Library of Congress (LOC), Washington. Emphasis added.
60. John B. Russwurm to Ralph R. Gurley, January 26, 1829, Letters Received, 1829, the Records of the American Colonization Society, LOC.
61. *Liberia Herald* (Monrovia), March 6, 1830. On the colonization of Maryland in Africa see Penelope Campbell, *Maryland in Africa: The Maryland State Colonization Society, 1831-1857* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1971); Richard L. Hall, *On Africa's Shore: A History of Maryland in Africa, 1834-1857* (Baltimore: Maryland Historical Society, 2003).