



**Comment
And
Opinion**

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Blacks and the 2010 Midterms: A Preliminary Analysis

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What follows is a brief review of some of the available evidence on what transpired on November 2, 2010, when the Democrats lost their majority in the US House of Representatives and at least 19 state legislative chambers, maintained control in the US Senate, and lost several important gubernatorial elections. The black vote was critical to the outcome of some closely contested elections, but not enough in many more. In particular, this review will focus on the behavior and significance of African-American voters in the 2010 midterm elections; and the changing numbers and profile of black candidates for both federal and statewide office, as well as their performance at the polls.

Black Voter Turnout in the 2010 Midterms: National

National turnout in the 2010 midterms is up slightly from 2006. The Committee for the Study of the American Electorate estimates that 90 million total voters turned out on November 2, and overall turnout increased slightly from 40.8 percent in 2006 to 42.0 percent in 2010. Black voters turned out at slightly higher rates than in 2006, reflecting the overall small secular increase. According to exit polls, the black share of the 2010 vote was 10 percent [Table 1]; the black share was also 10 percent in the 2006 midterms. This is a smaller percentage than in the 2008 presidential election when it was 13 percent, but presidential and midterm elections are not comparable, and further, 2008 was the first time an African American was a major party nominee for president. Thus, on balance, there is no evidence of a decline in the black vote nationally, but rather, black turnout appears to have increased slightly from the previous midterms.

Black Share of the Total Electorate			GROUP	Congressional Vote 2006		Presidential Vote 2004		Congressional Vote 2010	
2006 %	2008 %	2010 %		Dem %	Rep %	Obama %	McCain %	Dem %	Rep %
10	13	10	Total Black Population	89	11	95	4	90	9
5	5	4	Black Men	87	13	95	5	84	14
6	7	6	Black Women	91	9	96	3	93	6

SOURCE: Edison/Mitofsky Exit Polls

The Committee for the Study of the American Electorate also reports that the Republican vote in 2010 increased 2.1 percentage points from 2006, and the Democratic vote declined 4.7 percentage points.

Black Voter Turnout in the 2010 Midterms: the States

While black turnout nationally increased slightly between 2006 and 2010, the magnitude of black turnout across the country varied significantly from state to state [Table 2]. Our understanding of the total picture on black turnout - at least at this time - is made more difficult because there were several states with large black populations where state-specific exit polls were not conducted, including Alabama, Georgia, and Maryland. Black turnout information for these states will not be available until the US Census Bureau releases its report on Registration and Voting from the November 2010 CPS,

Table 2. The Black Vote by State, 2006-2010 (Selected States)

State	BVAP (%)	Black Share of the Total Vote: Exit Polls			Total Vote Turnout			Black Partisan Vote			
		2006 (%)	2008 (%)	2010 (%)	2006 (%)	2008 (%)	2010 (%)	Democrat		Republican	
								Gov	Sen	Gov	Sen
California	6.4	5	10	9	38.4	51.2	n/a	77	80	21	17
Delaware	19.6	n/a	17	22	45.5	63.0	47.3	-	93	-	6
Florida	14.7	14	13	11	38.4	56.5	39.5	92	76	6	4
Illinois	13.8	10	17	19/20 ¹	41.0	57.1	42.9	90	94	10	6
Indiana	8.1	n/a	7	12	36.6	58.8	37.5	-	82	-	14
Kentucky	7.1	n/a	11	6	40.2	61.4	42.4	-	86	-	13
Louisiana	30.6	n/a	29	24	27.7	68.0	37.4	-	86	-	11
Missouri	10.4	13	13	13	49.7	64.2	44.0	-	92	-	5
Nevada	8.3	6	10	6	36.8	52.8	41.3	86	78	10	11
New York	14.8	10	17	18	35.2	51.5	32.5	93	94 (s:90)	6	6 (s:7)
Ohio	10.6	12	11	15	47.2	68.7	43.4	90	85	8	9
Pennsylvania	9.6	8	13	9	43.6	60.8	41.1	91	92	8	7
Texas	11.6	8	13	13	32.3	48.8	32.3	88	-	11	-

Information on the black voting-age population and 2009 total turnout is from the U.S. Census, Current Population Surveys, 2008. The black share of the total vote for 2006 and 2008 are from the Edison-Mitofsky consortium exit polls. Total turnout figures for 2006 and estimated turnout figures for 2010 are from the Committee for the Study of the American Electorate. 1. According to the exit polls, black voters represented 19 percent of the total votes cast for governor and 20 percent of the total for U.S. Senator.

which is likely to be at least a year hence.

There were several states where the exit polls indicate that black turnout increased substantially. However, in some of these states, nonhispanic white support went so strongly for the opposing side, that the black vote was not determinative. Given the small increase in the black vote nationally, but large increases in the black vote in some of the largest states, black turnout was certainly flat or declined significantly in some states.

While black turnout nationally increased only modestly, black turnout in 2010 was strategically effective in a few places, although not enough in others. There were large and impressive increases in black turnout in California, Delaware, Illinois, New York, Ohio, Texas, and perhaps Indiana; there were small increases in Pennsylvania and Nevada. Turnout was flat but strong in Missouri. For Indiana, there is no 2006 data to use as a comparison, but the black share of the state vote was higher in 2010 than it was in 2008, a banner year for black turnout. Finally, there was a significant decline (about 21 percent) in the black share of the state vote in Florida—from 14 percent in 2006 to 11 percent in 2010.

It is important for the narrative of the 2010 midterm elections to examine where black voters were a critical factor in the outcome of the elections. Strong black turnout in New York, California, and Delaware certainly contributed to a strong Democratic showing in those states. In New York, black voters increased from 10 percent of all voters in 2006 to 18 percent in 2010, and in California (where the Democrats won all of the top offices) the black share of the vote nearly doubled from 2006 with the black share increasing from five to nine percent; in Delaware, where the black share of the vote was at an all time high at 22 percent, the Democrats held the US Senate seat of Vice-President Biden and picked up a seat in the US House. The increase in black turnout in Nevada also contributed to Senate majority leader’s Harry Reid’s re-election, and while there were no exit polls in Connecticut,

the Democrats held retiring Senator Chris Dodd's seat, and took over the Governor's office; the GOP candidate for governor was leading until the results from Bridgeport, which has a large black population, were counted.

Probably the two states most emblematic of 2010 for black voters were Illinois and Ohio. Black turnout in Illinois was spectacular for a midterm election. The black share of the total vote in Illinois increased from 10 percent in 2006 to 19 percent in 2010 (20 percent in the US Senate contest). At the top of the ticket in Illinois were competitive US Senate (President Obama's seat) and Governor races. According to the exit polls, in the US Senate race, the Democratic Alexi Giannoulias received 31 percent of the white vote and lost a very close race to Republican Mark Kirk. In the Governor's race, Democrat Pat Quinn received 33 percent of the white vote and won a close race. Thus, due to a strong black turnout, a Democrat is elected governor with only one-third of the white vote, and a Democrat loses a close race for the US Senate despite a strong black vote because he could not manage to win the votes of even one-third of whites.

Ohio was another state where the black vote increased significantly, increasing from 12 percent of all voters in 2006 to 15 percent of all voters in 2010. However, the statewide Democratic candidates did not receive the support of enough white voters to win. Ted Strickland, the Democrat's candidate for governor, received only 38 percent of the white vote, and thus, despite a strong black vote, he lost a close election.

There were other states where a solid black turnout was insufficient to change the outcome because the Democratic candidate failed to get enough white support to emerge victorious. Pennsylvania Democratic US Senate candidate received solid black support but his 43 percent white support was insufficient to win in a very close election. Democrat Robin Carnahan had even stronger black support in her US Senate run in Missouri, but she failed to get even one-third of the white vote.

The narrative of US House races was very similar. The Democrats lost over 60 seats in 2010, including more than a dozen in districts with a significant black vote. In districts with at least 10 percent black voting-age population, the Democrats lost seats in Alabama (1), Arkansas (2), Florida (2), Louisiana (1), Maryland (1), Mississippi (2), Ohio (2), South Carolina (1), Tennessee (1), Texas (1), and Virginia (2). However, Democrats held on to House seats in such districts in North Carolina, Ohio, and Virginia, and picked up seats in Delaware and Louisiana (New Orleans).

A Perspective on 2010 and 2012

The results of 2010 Midterms--held during a period of severe economic downturn--were a repudiation of the party in power, the Democrats, as is always the case during periods of economic distress. Turnout was about 42 percent versus about 60 percent in 2008. There were 29 million people who voted for President Obama in 2008 who did not turn out in 2010. The exit polls suggest that the people who voted in 2010 - much older and whiter than the electorate in 2008- liked the Republican party no more than the Democratic party. The Republicans gained control of one branch of the federal legislature in Washington; they do not control the federal government. There is another important datum from the 2010 elections that has been little noted: many of the gains that the Republicans made were by the slimmest of margins in US Senate races, Governor's races, and US House races. Every year that passes, the US population becomes less white, with the white working class especially in decline. The winning Republican US Senate and Governor candidates will not be on the ballot in 2012, when the composition of the electorate will be quite different than it was in 2010, but all of the newly elected Republican US House members will be on the ballot--and an improved economy and a different electorate could easily change the new status quo.

African-American Voters: Partisan Direction in the 2010 Midterms

Across the country, the black vote in US House elections was 90 percent Democratic and nine percent Republican [Table 1]. There again was a gender gap among African-Americans in 2010 with black women (93 percent Democratic vs. six percent Republican) voting more Democratic than black men (84 vs. 14 percent). The black vote in 2010 was three-to-two female to male as has been the case in many recent elections.

As expected, there was no partisan shift toward the Republican party given their attacks on President Obama, who remains exceptionally popular with African-Americans. There were very few individual Republican candidates who fared better with black voters than the black population’s partisanship would anticipate [Table 2]; the GOP’s two losing candidates at the top of the ticket in California, Meg Whitman (21 percent) and Carly Fiorina (17 percent) were the only Republicans who garnered above average support from African-Americans.

Black Candidates for Statewide Constitutional Office in 2010

There were 16 black candidates who sought statewide constitutional office in 2010 [Table 3a], six women and ten men. The 16 candidates included 15 Democrats, and one Republican. Of the 16 black candidates for statewide office, eight were winners--seven Democrats and the lone Republican.

State	BVAP (%)	Office	Black Nominee(s)	Vote
AL		State Auditor	Miranda Joseph (D)?	38
CA		Attorney General	Kamala Harris (D)>	n/a
CT		Treasurer	(x) Denise Nappier (D)>	54
DE		Treasurer	Chip Flowers (D)>	51
FL		US Senator Lieutenant Governor ¹	Kendrick Meek (D)? Jennifer Carroll (R)>	20 49
GA		US Senator Secretary of State	Michael Thurmond (D)? Georganna Sinkfield (D)?	39 39
IL		Secretary of State	(x) Jesse White (D)>	70
IN		Secretary of State	Vop Osili (D)?	37
MD		Lieutenant Governor ¹	(x) Anthony Brown (D)>	56
MA		Governor	(x) Deval Patrick (D)>	48
NM		Treasurer	(x) James Lewis (D)>	54
OH		Lieutenant Governor ¹ Treasurer	Yvette McGee Brown (D)? Kevin Boyce (D)?	47 40
SC		US Senator	Alvin Greene (D)?	28

(x) Incumbent 1. Governor and Lieutenant Governor run together on the same ticket.
> Won ? Lost

Among the Democratic statewide nominees, the most prominent victors were Massachusetts Governor Deval Patrick, re-elected to a second term; this is the first time a black governor has been re-elected. Also re-elected was Maryland Lieutenant Governor Anthony Brown, and in a first, Republican Jennifer Carroll was elected the Lieutenant Governor of Florida. Other noteworthy firsts

Table 3b. Statistical Profile, Black Major Party Nominees for Statewide Office, 2010

Democrats		Republicans	
Won (N) (%)	Lost (N) (%)	Won (N) (%)	Lost (N) (%)
7	8	1	0
46.7	53.3	100.0	0.0

were the election of Kamala Harris to be California Attorney General, and Chip Flowers was elected Delaware’s Treasurer, the first time a black candidate won statewide office in Delaware. Finally, long-time officeholders Illinois Secretary of State Jesse White, Connecticut Treasurer Denise Nappier, and New Mexico Treasurer James Lewis were returned to office.

Black Candidates for Federal Office in the 2010 Midterms

In 2010, there were 63 black candidates for federal office, 60 for US House seats and three for US Senate seats [Tables 4, 5, and 6]. This was an increase from 56 in 2008 and 57 in 2006. The 2008-2010 increase included six more Republicans and one additional Democrat; the 48 Democratic candidates equals the all-time high.

Of the 48 black Democratic nominees in 2010, 37 were black incumbents and 11 were challengers or running for open seats. For the first time since 1994, two Republicans were elected to the US House; Tim Scott was unopposed in SC-1 and Alan West defeated incumbent Ron Klein in FL-22. The remaining 13 Republican candidates all were defeated. The number of black women among the Democratic nominees equalled the previous record (17) and more were victorious than ever before (15). No incumbent CBC member ran unopposed in 2010, a first since the Joint Center began tracking black candidates in 1990. There were also a record number of black-white contests in the 2010 midterms (44).

The outcomes of the 2010 midterms for black federal candidates were generally favorable [Table 6], with all black incumbents re-elected, and several new black members elected to the US House. Black membership in the US House will be at an all-time high in the new congress with 44 black members, 42 U.S. Representatives and two Delegates. As noted above, there will be two new black Republicans in the US House. Representative-elect Cedrick Richmond (D-LA-2) represents an additional black Democrat in the US House, and four black freshman Democrats are replacing CBC members who retired, lost in the primaries, or ran for other office: Terri Sewell (AL-7), Karen Bass (CA-35), Frederica Wilson (FL-17), and Hansen Clarke (MI-13).

Winning black Democrats who faced opposition averaged 72.6 percent of the vote, while the one winning Republican with opposition received 54.0 percent. The six losing black Democratic candidates averaged 33.7 percent of the vote, while the 13 losing black Republican candidates averaged 27.8 percent.

The State Legislatures’ Post 2010

The Democrats took a very severe beating at the state legislative level, losing at least 675 seats and legislative control in at least 19 chambers nationwide. In several states with significant black populations, the Republicans control both chambers of the state legislature as well as the governor’s office. These states include Alabama, Georgia, Florida, Michigan, Ohio, Pennsylvania, South Carolina and Texas. This of course will be very painful during the upcoming redistricting process. About the only favorable circumstances for the post-2010 redistricting are in California and Connecticut, where the Democrats control the entire process, and Virginia, where the Democrats control the state senate; in the previous redistricting, the Republicans controlled the entire process in Virginia. Two

Table 4. Statistical Profile of Black Major Party Nominees for Federal Office, 2000-2010

	Democrats										Republicans										Total				
	2000 N %	2002 N %	2004 N %	2006 N %	2008 N %	2010 N %	2000 N %	2002 N %	2004 N %	2006 N %	2008 N %	2010 N %	2000 N %	2002 N %	2004 N %	2006 N %	2008 N %	2010 N %							
Total	46 100	45 100	47 100	48 100	47 100	48 100	24 100	10 100	15 100	9 100	9 100	15 100	70 100	55 100	62 100	57 100	56 100	93 100							
Incumbents	37 80	34 76	38 81	39 81	41 87	37 77	1 4	0 0	0 0	0 0	0 0	0 0	38 54	34 62	38 61	39 68	41 73	37 59							
Challenger Open Seat	9 20	11 24	9 19	9 19	6 13	11 23	23 96	10 100	15 100	9 100	9 100	15 100	32 46	21 38	24 39	18 32	15 27	26 41							
Women	15 33	13 29	16 34	17 35	16 34	17 35	8 33	3 30	5 33	4 44	2 22	2 13	23 33	16 29	21 34	21 37	18 32	19 30							
Men	31 67	32 71	31 66	31 65	31 66	31 65	16 67	7 70	10 67	5 56	7 78	13 87	47 67	39 71	41 66	36 63	38 68	44 70							
Maj.-Min. District	29 67	30 67	31 66	37 77	30 64	32 67	12 46	4 40	5 33	3 33	4 44	9 60	41 60	34 62	36 58	40 70	34 61	41 65							
Maj.-White District	17 33	15 33	16 34	11 23	17 36	16 33	12 54	6 60	10 67	6 67	5 56	6 40	29 40	21 38	26 42	17 30	22 39	22 35							
White Opposition	22 48	30 64	22 47	23 48	25 53	38 79	8 33	5 50	6 40	3 33	2 22	5 33	30 43	35 64	28 45	26 46	27 48	44 70							
Black Opposition	16 35	5 11	9 19	8 17	7 15	9 19	16 67	5 50	9 60	6 67	7 78	9 60	32 46	10 18	18 29	14 26	14 25	18 29							
Unopposed *	8 17	10 22	16 34	17 35	15 32	1 2	0 0	0 0	0 0	0 0	1 7	8 11	10 18	16 26	17 28	15 27	21 1								
House Candidates	45 98	44 98	45 96	45 96	45 93	45 94	23 96	10 100	13 87	8 89	9 100	15 100	68 97	54 98	58 94	54 95	54 96	60 95							
Senate Candidates	1 2	1 2	2 4	2 4	2 4	3 6	1 4	0 0	2 13	1 11	0 0	0 0	2 3	1 2	4 6	3 5	2 4	3 5							

other things are working in the Democrats' favor: most of the population growth in the country is from minority groups and the Democrats control the Department of Justice (unlike post-2000).

The Congressional Black Caucus in the 112th Congress

Except for the two newly elected black Republicans, all CBC members are Democrats, and since the Democrats lost control of the US House, the loss of CBC status and power is enormous. The CBC is losing three full committee chairmanships, and more than a dozen subcommittee chairmanships in the 112th Congress; and of course with these losses go concomitant losses in staff positions. While the black membership in the U.S. House is at an all time high, black influence there has been truly diminished. As has happened in the past when the Democrats lost the majority in the House, CBC members are going to have to work with the White House and supportive US Senators to advance the legislative priorities.

Table 5. Statistical Profile of Results for Black Major Party Federal Nominees, 2010

	Democrats		Republicans		Total	
	Won (N) (%)	Lost (N) (%)	Won (N) (%)	Lost (N) (%)	Won (N) (%)	Lost (N) (%)
Total	42	6	2	13	44	19
Incumbents	37	0	-	-	37	0
Challengers/Open Seats	5	6	2	13	7	19
Women	15	2	0	2	15	4
Men	27	4	2	11	29	15
Majority-Minority District	32	0	0	9	32	9
Majority White District	10	6	2	4	12	10
White Opposition	32	6	1	4	33	10
Black Opposition	9	0	0	9	9	9
Unopposed ^H	1	0	1	0	2	0
House Candidates	42	3	2	13	44	16
Senate Candidates	0	3	0	0	0	3
Average Vote	N = 42 72.6	N = 6 33.7	N = 2 54.0	N = 13 27.8	N = 44 72.2	N = 19 29.8

H Unopposed or no major party opposition in general election. Average vote is for candidates with opposition. Totals include two delegate races in D.C. and the American Virgin Islands.

U.S. House of Representatives					
District	BVAP (%)	Democrat	Dem Vote (%)	Rep (Vote)	Republican
AL 7	57.8	>Terri Sewell	72	28	<u>Carol Chamberlain</u>
AR 2	17.4	Joyce Elliot	38	58	<u>Tim Griffin</u> >
CA 9	24.5	>Barbara Lee ¹	83	12	<u>Gerald Hashimoto</u>
CA 33	29.6	>Karen Bass	86	14	<u>James Andion</u>
CA 35	35.0	>Maxine Water ¹	79	21	<u>K. Bruce Borwn</u>
CA37	24.7	Laura Richardson ¹	69	23	Star Parker
CO 7	5.4	>Ed Perlmutter ¹	53	42	Ryan Frazier
D.C.	55.7	>Eleanor Holmes Norton ¹	90	90	<u>Marjorie Reilly Smith</u>
FL 3	45.1	>Corrine Brown ¹	63	63	<u>Michael Yost</u>
FL 17	51.3	>Frederica Wilson	-	-	Unopposed
FL 22	24.6	<u>Ron Klein</u> ¹	46	46	Allen West>
FL 23	46.2	>Alcee Hastings ¹	79	79	<u>Bernard Sansaricq</u>
GA 2	40.9	>Sanford Bishop ¹	51	51	<u>Mike Keown</u>
GA 4	48.8	>Hank Johnson ¹	75	75	<u>Lisbeth Carter</u>
GA 5	51.0	>John Lewis ¹	74	26	Fenn Little
GA 13	37.3	>David Scott ¹	70	30	<u>Mike Crane</u>
IL 1	63.2	>Bobby Rush ¹	80	16	<u>Ray Wardingly</u>
IL 2	59.4	>Jesse Jackson, Jr. ¹	80	14	Isaac Hayes>
IL 7	55.9	>Danny K. Davis ¹	81	16	<u>Mark Weiman</u>
IL 10	6.7	Dan Seals	49	51	<u>Bob Dold</u> >
IN 7	26.7	>Andre Carson ¹	59	38	Marvin Scott
LA 2	59.3	>Cedrick Richmond	65	33	<u>Anh "Joseph" Cao</u> ¹
MD 4	55.3	>Donna Edwards ¹	84	16	Robert Broadus
MD 5	28.7	>Steny Hoyer ¹	64	35	Charles Lollar
MD 7	57.0	>Elijah Cummings ¹	75	23	<u>Frank Mirabile</u>
MI 13	57.9	>Hansen Clarke	79	19	<u>John Hauler</u>
MI 14	58.9	>John Conyers ¹	77	20	<u>Don Ukrainec</u>
MN 5	10.2	>Keith Ellison ¹ (DFL)	68	24	<u>Joel Demos</u>
MS 2	58.9	>Bennie Thompson ¹	62	37	Bill Marcy
MO 1	45.8	>William Clay, Jr. ¹	74	24	<u>Robyn Hamlin</u>
MO 5	21.8	>Emanuel Cleaver ¹	53	44	<u>Jacob Turk</u>
NJ 10	54.3	>Donald Payne ¹	85	13	<u>Michael Alonzo</u>
NY 6	51.1	>Gregory Meeks ¹	85	15	<u>Asher Taub</u>
NY 10	60.0	>Edolphus Towns ¹	91	7	<u>Diana Muniz</u>
NY 11	56.8	>Yvette Clarke ¹	90	10	<u>Hugh Carr</u>
NY 15	30.5	>Charles Rangel ¹	80	10	Michel Faulkner
NC 1	47.6	>George K. Butterfield, Jr. ¹	59	41	<u>Ashley Woolard</u>
NC 12	41.9	>Mel Watt ¹	64	34	<u>Scott Cumbie</u>
NC 13	25.2	> <u>Brad Miller</u>	55	45	Bill Randall
OH 11	51.6	>Marcia Fudge ¹	82	18	<u>Matt Brakey</u>
PA 2	56.5	>Chaka Fattah ¹	89	11	<u>Rick Hellberg</u>
SC 1	18.6	Unopposed	-	-	Tim Scott>
SC 6	53.5	>James Clyburn ¹	63	36	<u>Jim Pratt</u>

Table 6. Black Major Party Nominees for Federal Office, November 2010					
U.S. House of Representatives					
District	BVAP (%)	Democrat	Dem Vote (%)	Rep (Vote)	Republican
TN 9	55.1	>Steve Cohen ¹	74	25	Charlotte Bergmann
TX 9	36.5	>Al Green ¹	76	23	<u>Steve Mueller</u>
TX 18	40.3	>Sheila J. Lee ¹	70	27	<u>John Faulk</u>
TX 22	9.1	Kesha Rogers	28	69	<u>Pete Olson</u>
TX 30	41.0	>Eddie B. Johnson ¹	76	22	Stephen Broden
VA 3	52.7	>Robert Scott ¹	70	27	Chuck Smith
V.I.	61.4	>Donna Cristensen ¹	n/a	n/a	Vince Danet
WI-4	27.8	>Gwen Moore ¹	69	30	<u>Dan Sebring</u>
U.S Senate					
State	BVAP (%)	Democrat-%	Independent -% Vote	Republican-% Vote	
FL	14.7	<u>Kendrick Meek-20%</u>	<u>Charles Christ-30%</u>	.MArio Rubio-49%	
GA	29.2	Michael Thurmond-39%	n/a	Johnny Isaacson ¹ -58%	
SC	26.0	Alvin Greene-28%	n/a	Jim DeMint ¹ -62%	

William G. Allen in Britain

By Marika Sherwood

William Allen was among the many free African Americans who made their way to the United Kingdom in the first half of the nineteenth century to escape conditions in the US. He was probably best educated, and one of the few who settled in England permanently. Many African Americans – especially the temporary residents, the visiting lecturers, - found a superficial acceptance in the UK, but William Allen's life demonstrates that this was only on the surface, and that the situation for Blacks deteriorated as the century advanced. A man with his education, and teaching as well as writing experience, should not have found it difficult to earn a living. That he did, and that he and his family probably spent many years in penury, demonstrates the superficiality of English politeness to people with a darker skin.¹

Early life in the North America

Born in about 1820, William was the son of a free 'mulatto' mother and a Welshman. His parents died when he was young and he was adopted by a 'relatively well-to-do' Black family.² Through contacts with Federal troops stationed near his home following Nat Turner's Revolt, he learned some French and German. An excellent scholar, his schoolmaster at the local elementary school sought the financial support of wealthy abolitionist Gerrit Smith³ to finance William's further education.

With this support, William enrolled at the Oneida Institute in New York state. This multi-racial school was a hotbed of abolitionist activity.⁴ On graduation in 1841 he taught primary or 'common school' in Troy, NY and co-edited abolitionist Henry Highland Garnet's *National Watchman* and participated in the Black National Convention movement. In 1847 he moved to Boston, began a clerkship in a legal firm and gave lectures as part of the anti-slavery anti-racial prejudice movement. To aid his audiences, he published a booklet of speeches by famous Blacks to which he added biographical sketches and an introduction.⁶ He also served as the secretary of the Boston Coloured Citizens Association.

Probably because of his political enthusiasms, Allen left Boston to become a lecturer of Greek Languages and Literature, and 'Belles Lettres' at the Central College, McGrawville, NY.⁵ Founded in 1849 as an inter-racial, co-educational, anti-slavery college, the College also advocated women's rights. Though devoted to his teaching, Allen found time to continue his political activism. His speech on 'Orators and Orations' was published in two abolitionist weeklies. At a meeting of the School's Dialectic Society on 22 June 1852 he attacked the neutral stance on slavery taken by Lajos Kossuth, the visiting exiled Hungarian freedom fighter touring the US to seek support for his cause.⁷ He became a correspondent in *Frederick Douglass' Paper*, which, for example, published his thoughts on *Uncle Tom*, the recently published book by Harriet Beecher Stowe.⁸ His commentary concludes with: 'Let us take this to our hearts, at least, that slavery is a national sin, and nations are not fixed facts, but are continually, though maybe slowly, passing away'.⁹

In 1853 Allen's comfortable life came to an abrupt halt. While on a lecture tour in upstate New York, he had met Mary, the daughter of Rev. King, an abolitionist, who was about to join the College. They fell in love and announced their intention to marry. While the Revd. King did not object, the rest of the family did, as did the local villagers. Mary had to literally run for her life, as did William. With the aid of friends they married in New York on 30 March 1853. In a letter to Gerrit Smith from Boston, dated 9 April, Allen advises his benefactor that he and his wife are leaving that day on the 'packet ship *Daniel Webster* for Liverpool... Mary is in excellent health and spirits and begs to be remembered to yourself and Elder Stowe with most affectionate regards'. Allen signs the letter 'in haste, but ever gratefully.' Evidently Gerrit Smith had continued to support Allen, and now also his wife.

A new life in Britain, 1853 - 1859

William and his wife Mary arrived with introductions to some of the abolitionists in Britain. Gerrit Smith had written to veteran anti-slavery campaigner Joseph Sturge ¹⁰ that he took 'great pleasure in introducing to you my much esteemed friend, Professor Wm. G. Allen. I know him well, and know him to be a man of great mental and moral worth, I trust, in his visit to England, he will be both useful and happy'.¹¹ But Sturge was not hopeful of the Allens' being able to secure a living in Britain, as he told Gerrit Smith:

In the Spring of last year William G Allen called upon me¹² with a letter of introduction from thee and I afterwards saw both him and his wife living in London. He told me that he intended to remain in England and to lecture on literary and philosophical subjects and I afterwards found from a circular in which he had introduced a short paragraph from thy letter and a few lines from me.... [I]f I had known that he was dependent upon his lectures I should have I think considered his coming here an unwise step and encouraged his early return... but I gave him a note to one of the Secretaries of the Anti-Slavery Society in London that he might have some advise with them... I [received] the enclosed note and my object in sending it to thee is that thou mayest see the position he is in, and if thou has any influence with his friends and relatives in the United States I think it would be a kindness to him and his wife if they could encourage him to return...as I expect his reliance upon the proceeds from lecturing here and an agency to the Ladies Anti-Slavery Society shd not be realized. I think he is a well-meaning man of good abilities...but...I believe some part of what he got last winter arose from a benevolent feeling towards him and his wife.

(Unfortunately the enclosed letter by Allen has not been preserved.)²³

The Anti-Slavery Society had indeed taken Allen under its wing. He was introduced at the Society's Annual General meeting held in June 1853. The *Anti-Slavery Advocate* in its July issue described him as a 'gentleman of colour...pleasing, with an intelligent countenance.' (p.76) The story of the Allens' marriage was recounted and it was announced that Allen intended to earn his living by lecturing.

We learn more of the Anti-Slavery Society's meeting at Exeter Hall from a letter in *Frederick Douglass' Paper* of 10 June 1853 by William Wells Brown, the African American anti-slavery activist then touring Britain. The meeting had attracted some 5,000 people, many of whom had come, Brown believes, to see Harriet Beecher Stowe. (Her book, *Uncle Tom's Cabin* had become a bestseller. ¹⁴) The packed meeting had been chaired by the Earl of Shaftesbury; Mrs Stowe arrived escorted by the Duchess of Sutherland.¹⁵ As the customs of the time did not permit women to speak from platforms, Mrs Stowe sat in the audience; Brown found her husband's speech disappointing and he despairs 'of anything being done by clergymen'. Perhaps he meant White ones, as he deems the speech of the African American Rev. Samuel Ward as the best of the evening. Brown notes that 'Professor Wm. G. Allen and lady and Wm. and Ellen Craft' are in the audience, as well as White American abolitionists.

William Lloyd Garrison, another leading American abolitionist, had introduced Allen to British chartist and abolition campaigner, the Wesleyan George Thompson.¹⁶ Allen described his and his wife's visits to Thompson's home in a letter published in *The Liberator* on 22 July 1853. In this he also depicts their experiences:

'Old England' is a wonderful country... The English people – there is nobility in their hearts and dignity in their bearing... [I]n Englishmen [there is] the entire absence of prejudice against color. Here the colored man feels himself among friends; people who when they treat him well, do it not in the patronising spirit, but in the spirit rightly appreciative of the doctrine of human equality. Color claims no precedence over character.

[T]he marriage of two respectable persons, one of whom should be white and the other colored, passes as a matter of course in England... This state of things, of course, evinces that prejudice against

color is entirely a local feeling, generated by slavery. (p.116)¹⁷

In this letter Allen also mentions that he and the Rev. Samuel Ward, the visiting Black abolitionist, had been invited to a party given by the Prussian Ambassador at his residence in Hyde Park. He had spent time with visiting American abolitionists, and with the Unitarian abolitionist, James Estlin. Mrs Stowe, the Rev. Ward and William Wells Brown had been drawing large audiences to their lectures, Allen recounts. But all was perhaps not well between Allen and Ward. In a letter to Gerrit Smith, Allen writes that:

Ward is very successful in his mission. I can do nothing at present for the College. The missions of Mrs Stowe and Ward were cognate of mine and have as a matter of course taken precedence... Mr Sturge and other such men, for the above and additional reasons, advised me not to attempt the agency.

While we do not learn the nature of this 'agency'¹⁸, it is clear that Allen is being pushed into the background by the presence of Harriet Beecher Stowe, a (White) celebrity.

While waiting for the end of the lecture tours of Ward and Stowe, Allen wrote *The American Prejudice Against Color: an authentic narrative*, showing how easily the nation went into uproar, which was published simultaneously in London, Edinburgh & Dublin in 1853. It tells his history as a 'quadroon' in the US and of how he met Mary King, a student in the college where he was teaching. Her father and sister gave them their blessing, but her brothers and step-mother were virulently opposed to their engagement. They stirred up public resentment, which escalated first into public denigration - a 'murderous outrage' - in the press; and then in the gathering of a 'band of several hundred armed men...to kill or drive out a single individual' - ie himself.(pp.69-70) He fled, as had Mary.

It is not known how successful this small book was; how much it aided the Allens; or whether it was sold at the meetings Allen was shortly to begin addressing.

Though initially the Allens stayed close to central London, by January 1854 they were living in suburban - and much cheaper - Clapham.¹⁹ It is possible that they moved there with the aid of George Thompson, whose recommendation, printed in the Preface of Allen's book, is from Clapham. Dated 25 August 1853, Thompson hopes that Allen will 'meet with ample encouragement from the friends of abolition throughout the United Kingdom, to whose sympathy and kindness I would earnestly recommend you and still more your heroic and most estimable lady'.

In Clapham, Allen wrote in a letter printed in *The Liberator* in July 1853, that they lived 'in a sweet little cottage and my wife is as happy as she can be...'

The dear friends whom we have made in this country have been exceedingly kind... [We] like London... companionable - prejudice against color being a thing entirely unknown in the glorious isle.

He mentions that they had been invited to the 'house of a gentleman, a man of wealth - retired from business.' The children of their host were at the gathering; the host's son introduced the Allens to his wife, 'a bona-fide colored lady'. This perspective, that there was an 'entire absence of prejudice against color.... Color claims no precedent over character' must have been a great relief to the Allens.²⁰ But this positive assessment of Britain did not last long.

In this letter Allen also relates that he had been

spending a few weeks in the provinces. My lectures were enthusiastically received, and the warmest welcomes were extended to us. I say us - for although my wife was not with me, yet the

resolutions passed in the meetings invariably included both. At nearly every meeting either the mayor of the city or some member of parliament presided.

Allen was also broadening his interests. In this same letter to Gerrit Smith he states that

the subject of Penal Reformatory Schools is now beginning to excite much interest in this country and I have embarked in the agitation thereof. I am countenanced and greatly aided in this matter by the Honorable Lady Byron.²¹

Allen is clearly very happy to have found a 'reliable vocation' (ie paid employment) which 'renders me practically useful to the British public, and at the same time elevates me into a position at once respectable and influential.' This work, which might have included also lecturing for the moral reformatory school movement, did not, he noted 'debar [him] from lecturing upon slavery'.²² He also hoped, before returning to America, to spend 'a year or two in study in one of the German universities'.²³

But all did not go well with Lady Byron. We do not know what happened; all we have is a somewhat misogynistic letter from Allen to Alexis Chamerovzow, the Secretary of the Anti-Slavery Society dated 11 July, apologising for not having repaid the £15.50 he owed. This was due to his

misfortune to get entangled in business matters not with men but with women. {unreadable} has undoubtedly told you about that affair with Lady Byron. I am very sorry but do try to think of me as well as you can. The £15.50 will come to you as soon as possible.²⁴

Allen apparently commenced his lecture in the northern counties, beginning in Leeds in November 1853. The Leeds Anti-Slavery Society advertised the lectures in the *Leeds Intelligencer* of 26 November:

PROFESSOR ALLEN, a coloured Gentleman, from America, to Deliver a course of THREE LECTURES in the stock Exchange Room, Albion Street, on the following subjects:-
FIRST LECTURE, Tuesday, November 29th, 1853, on 'American Slavery, and prejudice against Colour.' The Mayor in the Chair.
SECOND LECTURE, Thursday, December 1st, 'The Social and Political condition of the Free Coloured People in the Northern States of America.' The Rev. Wm. Sinclair, M.A. in the Chair.
THIRD LECTURE, Monday, December 5th, 'The Probable Destiny of the Coloured Race.' Edwd. Baines, Esq. In the Chair.
Admission to each Lecture, 3d. Reserved Seats, 6d.
Doors open at Seven to commence at Half-past.

The report of his talks in the *Leeds Intelligencer* tell us much about attitudes towards Black people at the time, as it implies that Allen's accomplishments were at least partly due to his White heritage:

The professor, who is a mulatto, while possessing many of the characteristics of the negro race, has yet much that proclaims the admixture of the blood of the white man, and is gifted with a full, sonorous voice, perfectly correct enunciation, and an easy flowing style.

At the final meeting Edward Baines, who chaired, proclaimed his response to Allen and other Blacks of his class:

in England [we] receive gentlemen of colour, who come here with testimonials of character showing that they are gentlemen, scholars and Christians...and receive them in our houses and mingle with them at public meetings and treat them as in every whit on a perfect equality with ourselves.

How true was this in the early 1850s? Or was it only those involved in anti-slavery work who felt this way? What of 'gentlemen of colour' without testimonials, or the more numerous 'non-gentlemen' –

how did Baines and his peers respond to them? There is insufficient research in the UK on the lives of Black residents in the Victorian era. But it must be noted that some ten years later there was a pro-slavery lobby in England at the time of the Civil War in the US²⁵ and Allen himself by then had become critical of British attitudes.

In his first Leeds lecture Allen fully described life under slavery for both women and men, and argued that life for free Blacks was very problematic not only because of restrictive laws, but because 'slavery had led to prejudice against colour'. He named a 'galaxy of geniuses who had been of African blood, to prove that where the opportunity was given there was no inferiority exhibited by the men of African descent'. In the US prejudice was diminishing, due to 'the American people feeling the force of a world's indignation'. Mrs Stowe had helped ignite this, while Douglass and the rise of other Blacks demonstrated that 'now has the star of our hope risen above the horizon'. He 'called upon the people of England to aid in the good work of destroying slavery in the United States.'

The second lecture was devoted to 'the free coloured people of the northern states of America'. He outlined the degrading and highly restrictive laws against free Blacks, the threats of re-enslavement, and the protests mounted against these by African Americans and their supporters. Given half a chance, Blacks could and did succeed – for example, Dr Smith 'who obtained his diploma at the University of Glasgow'.²⁶ The Rev. W. Sinclair, who had chaired the session added that 'he could not but think the Christian church had fallen short in this respect: for if the churches of America had spoken out as they should have done, the result would have been different.'

In his third lecture, 'The Destiny of the Coloured Race', Allen displayed the prevalent ignorance of the history of Africa and its civilisations:

The future history of the African race would not be marked by the same degree of grandeur and glory which was destined to mark the history of Europeans. The African developed in his nature more of the moral than the purely intellectual superiority; and in his social and religious tendencies he might safely be classed at the head of the races... Then again the African had a decided facility for music...and was also poetical, extremely so... [T]he traits which the African exhibited in a state of barbarism he would exhibit, but in a greater perfection, when developed.

Allen then went on to deal with the future of African Americans, who would all, eventually, be emancipated; this would require 'agitation, not only in America but in this country especially'. Being returned to Africa was out of the question as Blacks were 'getting gradually Anglo-Saxonised' and such mixed-race people could not possibly be forced to move to Africa. He was opposed to the proposals of the Colonization Society, for the most prescient of reasons: it wanted to:

get the free coloured people out of America to Liberia [so that] the country may be developed in order that its resources might be poured into the lap of America.

Asked if the freed slaves would continue 'their present occupations', in a long and tactful response Allen replied that:

all the slaves would desire, if paid for their labour, to remain [in America]. Of course, if the present oppressive spirit of the slaveholder continued, he could not tell what the result would be...

Allen concluded by stating that:

since he had been in England he had found friends and not enemies, and learnt that in this country they respected a man for his worth, if he had any, and not according to the colour of his skin.

At the end of the series, a resolution was passed expressing 'abhorrence at the whole system of slavery (and) prejudice'; and it was affirmed that William and his 'truly heroic wife have a large claim on our sympathy'.²⁷

Allen's next stop was the Mechanics Institute at Bradford and then Newcastle and South Shields.²⁸

The still-birth of their first child found Allen rushing back to London. Mary recovered sufficiently for William to be back on the road by May 1854, to lecture in Halifax and Edinburgh, at Dr. French's Church. It is possible that it was at least partly due to Allen's two lectures that the Edinburgh Anti-Slavery Society was formed a couple of months later.²⁹

Allen was in London for the Anti-Slavery Society Annual meeting; this time not as a member of the audience, but sitting on the platform. In his address he concentrated on the extension of slavery in the US to Nebraska, and demanded that 'slavery should be swept away entirely'. Black Americans were constantly belittled by Whites, he said, but the 'coloured people of the Northern States presented themselves to the world in an attitude which claimed its respect and admiration'.³⁰

The December 1854 *Anti-Slavery Advocate* noted that Professor Allen had been lecturing in the London areas of Deptford, St John's Wood, Hackney, Sydenham, Southwark and Harrow; also in Bury, Manchester, Miles Platting, Harpenley and Pendleton. 'Many are interested in his lecture on the History, Literature and the Destiny of the African Race. In print he will enter more fully into the subject than is possible in two lectures.'

Is it possible that in his travels Allen had met Richard Webb, the *Advocate's* publisher? Certainly it seems that he intended to publish an extended version of his lectures. Sadly, he seems not to have been able to accomplish this.

In January 1855 the Allens returned to a more central London location.³¹ Had they also stayed at Mr. Thompson's, 11 Union Grove, Wandsworth Road, where Allen asked the Anti-Slavery Society to forward for his mail? 'Clapham had been too far out of town,' he wrote to Louis Chamerovzow, and they not only wanted 'a more central location' but also 'cheaper lodgings'. Yes, he would be happy to lecture in Camberwell.

Some incomplete correspondence indicates that Allen still had not repaid all his debt.³²

Clearly life was proving problematic for the Allens. While it is possible that Allen extended the range of his lectures, to earn a living as a peripatetic lecturer was clearly proving impossible. One problem he might have faced is indicated in the comment of Mr Baines, the chairman at Allen's final lecture in Leeds, who clearly had no idea of his own racism:

[T]he last specimen of the African (Mr. Ward) who appeared in Leeds gave them such an overpowering sense of the energy of the blood that was within him. But what he was struck with in Professor Allen was the singularly calm, sedate and reflecting tone of his address.³³

Perhaps such a quiet manner, especially in contrast with more flamboyant presentations, did not guarantee large and returning audiences. It is also likely that enthusiasm for the emancipation of African Americans was diminishing: even George Thompson, who had been a popular lecturer on the anti-slavery circuit, found in the mid 1850s that 'there was not enough anti-slavery work in Britain to keep him in pocket money'.³⁴ Certainly, if the admission fee charged in Leeds was the standard price, William and Mary could not have done more than scrape together an insufficient living.

Ireland 1855 - 1860

In Peter Ripley's *Black Abolitionist Papers* it is suggested that the Allens went on 'an Irish tour to rejuvenate a flagging anti-slavery interest'.³⁵ They arrived in Ireland in 1856, and stayed till about 1860. Did they go under the aegis, or at least at the suggestion of the Anti-Slavery Society? Did they go to give a series of talks and then decide to settle there? It is possible that the initial invitation had come from the relatively newly formed Cogler Anti-Slavery Society, at whose meeting in June 1855 Allen was the featured speaker. Had Allen received such a welcome there that he decided to move to Ireland? Or was it Richard Webb who suggested that the Allens should move to Ireland?

An itinerant life must have become increasingly difficult with the birth of children. And Allen needed to find some permanent occupation: after all, there are only so many places where the same person can give anti-slavery or even more broadly themed lectures! Especially when, as indicated previously, the lectures tended to be more academic than the fiery denunciations of others such as William Wells Brown or Douglass.

As William used Richard Webb's address for his mail, we can safely assume that the Allens must have been supported one way or another by Webb. Richard Webb was a Quaker, a printer and anti-slavery activist, who was also the founder/editor of the journal *Anti-Slavery Advocate*, published in Dublin.³⁶ Webb was steeped in anti-slavery: he had corresponded with and hosted Frederick Douglass when he arrived in Dublin in 1845 and had then published Douglass' autobiography, with a second edition in 1846.³⁷

Certainly one way that Webb supported William and Mary and their children was by publishing *The African poets, Horton and Placido*, with an introduction by Professor Allen. How many copies were sold is not known. There is no trace, so far, of Allen being involved in the Irish equivalent of the education movements which had employed him in England. Nor do we have any comments by him on the horrific living conditions of the poor in Ireland. Did he perhaps feel he could not criticise English imperialism?

From an 1858 letter to Gerrit Smith, we learn that Allen was in Cork, without Mary.³⁸ Written in response to correspondence from Smith, Allen explains that 'to support an increasing family and to maintain even a show of independence...absorb nearly the whole of my energies.' They had been in Dublin for two and a half years and Allen had been 'endeavouring to establish [himself] somewhat in the line of my old vocation, tuition in the higher departments of learning.' His earnings as a tutor were not meeting his 'family's wants and expenses', especially as his wife had been seriously ill. However, he was also lecturing, and was confident of 'even great success'. The Allens now had two children, Patrick aged two and a half, and Julia Maria, nine months old; they were expecting their third child. Clearly Smith had asked him to return to America, but Allen said that he did not wish to expose his family to the racism there despite the fact that his initial enchantment with Britain was diminishing: writing of the 'Indian difficulties', he says that

barbarously as the Indians have acted, the British have quite equalled them, and I, at least, can't help hoping that the upshot of the matter will be to teach this fiery white race that they are not to go all over creation robbing and slaying with impunity "the blacks", and that in the most contemptuous spirit; and all under the guise and in the name of Christianity and Civilization!³⁹

I think this statement indicates that Allen's views – and his experiences – of the United Kingdom had changed. He now recognises the horrors of British imperialism as manifested in the putting down of the 1857 uprising in India. And he also acknowledges that when it comes to matters of empire, Indians and Africans face the same fate: they are all 'blacks' to the British. Had Allen by now also experienced what it could mean to be a 'Black' in the UK?

This was the second time that the city of Cork had offered hospitality to Black anti-slavery campaigners: Frederick Douglass had achieved great success there in 1845. William wrote to Smith when he spent 'three months in the City of Cork', and

was the guest of the Mayor of the City, who would hardly permit me to leave. They [the Mayor's family] became greatly attached to me and really shed tears on my leaving.⁴⁰

John Francis Maguire, his host, was not only the mayor, but the founder and editor of the *Cork Examiner*, founder/ president of the Sick Poor Society, a nationalist, the author of a number of books including one advocating women's rights, and a future MP.

But the Allens were not doing well. Their daughter Harriet Aurilla was born sometime in 1858, and according to his letter to Gerrit Smith in May 1859, they were expecting another child.⁴¹ Allen was much concerned about the rapid increase in his family as he confessed to Smith that 'under our present circumstances [it] naturally occasions us considerable anxiety. We would like it if our future were more satisfactorily defined.' Though Allen told Smith that they were all in good health, he also says that Mary and the children were 'trying what value there is in a change of air, in a little country town, a few miles from Dublin.' They were lodging with a Mrs Heroris at Saul Street, Downpatrick. The focus of the letter is William's need for help. Very reluctant to approach his patron, he encloses a note from Webb, attesting to the fact that he had done his best to 'be the architect of his own fortune'. Though he 'had labored hard and [they] had lived carefully and economically', his 'income [had] not kept pace with expenses'. Allen pleads for support to buy a house, as living in lodgings, he believes, is the reason that he had not been

in a position to command that success in teaching that otherwise I could have done. We need therefore not a "home", but a place in which I can conduct my classes, etc.; and more suited to the manner of such things in this country.

As this letter is written from Leamington Spa in England, was Allen again on a lecture tour? All we know is that he tells Smith that in four weeks he expects to 'return to Ireland and then take my family back to Dublin'. In a postscript regarding the death of 'our esteemed and beloved friend Joseph Sturge', whom he had seen a few days ago, Allen adds:

the weak, the afflicted, the outcast, the prisoner, the oppressed, have lost a true friend... I have seen him twice since I have been in the country. I was never in Birmingham.⁴²

Again, Allen reflects on the British attitudes to those of African descent:

there is a great need of colored men of the right sort in this country. There is none of the American prejudice against color here, but there is a far lower appreciation of the Negro and Colored races as such: the people of this country have never been accustomed to contemplate the African race in any other light than that of Slavery and consequently they never associate with the race the ideas of intellectual capacity, education and refinement. There's no wonder, of course, in all this, but it is certainly true that the people need to be educated up to a "higher level" with regard to the African race. I have perhaps been in a better position than any other colored man that has ever been in this country to judge rights of the people; and you may take it as my deliberate conviction that half a dozen colored men of the right stamp in this country would be a powerful anti-slavery instrumentality.... I feel satisfied that I have been enabled to do some good in this country for my race...

(What is tragic, though William Allen could not foresee this, is that though now there are many

'colored men of the right sort' in the UK, the general population is probably just as ignorant about Africa and as caustic about Africans' 'capacities' as they were in Allen's day, and notions about slavery still influence White attitudes.)

We do not know why the Allens left Ireland. We can only presume that William had to confront the realities of not being able to earn enough to support his growing family there.

London – c. 1860-1869

There is no information regarding the Allens' decision to return to England, or when they returned, or how William earned a living for his ever-growing family.

That they were back in London in 1862, we learn from Allen giving the address at the farewell meeting for John Anderson on 22 December.⁴³ Anderson, a fugitive slave, had arrived in England in 1861. He was welcomed by the Anti-Slavery Society at a meeting in Exeter Hall, where a support committee under Harper Twelvetrees was established. After encouraging Anderson to undertake a speaking tour, the committee decided to send him to be educated at the British Training Institute in Corby, Northants. The London Emancipation Society decided to help him emigrate to Liberia, where he could become 'independent and respectable'. At the meeting at Shirley's Hotel in Queen's Square, London, Allen said:

Africa could only become great again by the capacity of Africans to make her so. They ought not to complain of the blows they received, but gather strength to prevent them... Depend upon it, Africa has a glorious future before her... I rejoice in Liberia... [M]ust not forget to pay a passing tribute to Hayti. Here was a nation of Africans in the western world that had already illustrated the highest qualities of statesmanship and military genius... The continent of Africa, its magnificent country, its in-numberable and splendid aboriginal races... It is on this account that I feel a peculiar interest in Liberia.⁴⁵

On 2 July 1863 the Anti-Slavery Society held a meeting, perhaps to advertise the Allen's future role; Harper Twelvetrees, philanthropist, manufacturer and abolitionist presided. The July 1863 Anti-Slavery Reporter reported that

For ten years Professor Allen has struggled manfully to obtain an independent livelihood, gaining the confidence of all with whom he has been in contact. At length Mr Twelvetrees, whose benevolence ever assumes a practical character, combining with a few other persons, recently issued a brief appeal [for] £100 for the purchase of the goodwill of a school... Called the Caledonian Training School. Professor Allen was installed on 19 June...[This] offered an excellent opening to launch Professor Allen on a career of usefulness, in an occupation most congenial to his mind and habits.'(p.154)

But the Caledonian School did not survive. We learn of its demise from a letter written on 21 April 1869, from Downham Road, Islington, which was not the address of their school.⁴⁶ It is not in William's writing. Is it in Mary's? The letter enclosed a testimonial from Chamerovzow and asks the recipient to see the Anti-Slavery Reporter of June 1853 for:

my history...and my autobiography, extensively circulated more especially among the Society of Friends... had purchased a school in Islington six years ago...150 pupils...conducted up to a recent period with much success... I have, I am happy to say, the entire confidence of both parents and pupils in this community... This very success has been the means of placing me in a very awkward, perplexed – even embarrassed position... Certain schoolmasters in this locality, not influenced by a spirit of honorable competition, but by a spirit not usually supposed to exist among Englishmen, resolved to put down my school. They could not disperse my pupils nor draw them into their own schools, but they did succeed in inducing the landlord to compel me to put the school out of the house and this

after I had gone to much expense in fitting up the house for school purposes. I have therefore been compelled to unite my school with a friendly Academy.

Allen goes on to explain that he had to do some repairs to his house after he had been evicted. The fees in his school, which had been 'small, and could not be otherwise for the character of the neighbourhood', had barely supported his wife and seven children, and paid the wage of an assistant teacher. Saving anything had not been possible, and what he had earned in the combined Academy had not covered his expenses. 'So Mrs Allen is proposing to establish a school for girls... She is a white person... She called upon a few Friends... and they advised us not to borrow but to endeavour to raise the amount required (£150) from a few friends.' They had managed to find suitable accommodation the previous August and now had thirty pupils and hoped to be 'entirely' self-supporting in about three months. But now they were behind with the £9.15s quarterly rent which had been due in March: they had received some help towards this; could Miss Edwards also help?

His son Patrick, now aged fourteen, Allen adds, is working with Cassell, the well-known publisher, while his oldest daughter, aged 12, is assisting in the school.⁴⁷

Just how difficult it must have been to write such begging letters, and that his displacement in Islington might have been due to racism, is evident in the concluding paragraph of Allen's letter:

I deplore the circumstances which have placed me at this disadvantage, but I cannot change my colour to please those who have thus placed me. And I would not do so if I could.

Among the previous donors listed in this letter are three members of Parliament: C. W. Buxton, W.E. Forster and S. Morley.

Miss Edwards forwarded this letter to Chamerovzow, asking if the Allens were 'a suitable case for assistance.' Another recipient of this plea, Algernon Peckover of Wisbeach, also forwarded it to the Anti-Slavery Society Secretary for comment. Unfortunately the replies have not been preserved. But what is in the file is a printed, undated testimonial by Chamerovzow:

... have known the lady and her husband since their arrival in this country and can testify to their uniform, honorable and deserving conduct, as also to the independence which has characterised their endeavours to obtain a livelihood and to maintain and educate their young family.⁴⁸

That Allen did not give up lecturing, and that he was incensed by the rising tide of social Darwinism and eugenicism, we learn from a very brief statement in *The Anthropological Review* of April 1868:

In October last a coloured gentleman, Professor Allen, delivered two lectures on 'The Negro Race' in the Vestry Hall, Bow... In the course of his remarks he controverted the views put forth respecting the Negro by some members of the Anthropological society, which he stigmatised as 'foolish, not to say, blasphemous, theories'. The lectures were well attended and much applauded. (p.224)⁴⁹

How very sad that he had no effect on the Society – and how marvellous that those who attended supported his views! The Royal Anthropological Society had been established in 1863; its founder, James Hunt, believed in racial hierarchies and espoused eugenicist notions of racial degeneracy'.⁵⁰

After 1869

There is no information on the Allens' lives for the next ten years. Did Mrs Allen's attempt to run a school succeed? If it did, was that because she was a White woman? Did William have to avoid being seen in public with his wife in order not to jeopardise the school? But from the one extant letter from

this period, it appears that the Allens again fell on hard times. On 8 April 1878 William Allen wrote to F.W. Chesson, who had replaced Chamerovzow at the Anti-Slavery Society:

You'll be glad to know that your letter to Mr Cheetham, Heywood, Lancs, was mostly effective as he has responded £5, a donation which, under the circumstances, was very useful... Has any more transpired regarding our friend from Barbados? ⁵¹

From this we learn not only that the family continued impoverished, but that William's involvement with the Anti-Slavery Society continued. What form this took is not revealed in the Society's papers.

How did the Allens survive between 1878 and 1887, our final glimpse of William's life? With the support of their children? In August of that year there is an account of a 'party of coloured singers, late of the Pennsylvania Jubilee band' who gave a concert in the Wesleyan Chapel in Strood, a small town in Kent, about 30 miles south-west of London, and

A cultured address on the characteristics of his race was given by Prof. Allen, who adds to pride of past negro history unbounded faith in their future influence of the world's events.⁵²

There was another concert in the Methodist Hall:

the in interval was admirably filled with the most excellent address from Professor Allen, on 'The characteristics of the Negro race', who, in the course of his remarks, said that from a religious, social and humorous point of view the negro race had before them a grand and glorious future; that the black people were not created by the great God for th white man to shoot at; that, when the negro race were fully developed, fully civilised, they would exhibit to the eyes of the world, by their intensity of religious and social feelings, combined with their great intellectual power, what a man should be. He gave many illustrations which clinched the nails he had driven in. He said that "good humour was the juice of the brain", which the negroes had an abundance of, as evinced in their modes of salutation when they met each other. That, by and by, as the negro's mind developed, it should be shown that they had a glorious future.⁵³

From Strood the singers moved further into rural Kent to give concerts in the town of Faversham and the village of Boughton. These were advertised as 'Slave Songs, Quaint Slave Melodies, and Camp Meeting Shouts, Addresses on Slave Life, &c.' There is no mention of 'Prof. Allen' in the reports of the concerts, though presumably it was he who gave the 'addresses on slave life'.

As the concerts were free, and the 'Collections to defray Expenses' were to be shared with the Continental Sunday School Mission Fund, neither the singers nor the ageing William could have made much of a profit, even if their accommodation was free.⁵⁴ How very sad, that this highly educated man, even now when compulsory education had been introduced, could not apparently find more regular and appropriate employment. Had the situation of Black people in Britain deteriorated even further? According to historian Douglas Lorimer,

at least until the 1860s, Englishmen responded to the social rather than the physical attributes of black residents...they were prepared to accept black gentlemen as gentlemen...[But] a change in attitude occurred... Blacks were identified by their race and history with servitude and savagery.⁵⁵

The 1881 Census had found the William, described as 'Professor of Music & Elcn' (elocution?) and his wife Mary (no occupation given) living in Rackham Street, London, a street which no longer exists. Their children are listed as: Julia, Dublin-born, aged 23, 'Teacher of Music & Elcn (Music)'; the occupation of Harriett, aged 22 and Mary, aged 19, both Dublin-born, is given as 'Berlin Wool Worker (Fancy)'; Hoxton-born William, aged 12 (who might have died in 1883), and Islington-born Helen, aged 8 were 'scholars'.⁵⁶ There is no mention of Patrick – had he left home? Married? We do not know.

The remaining Allen family do not appear at this address in the 1891 Census.

William Gustavus Allen died in the 'Paddington district' of London, 'aged 62', in 1888.⁵⁷

References

1. A very recent book on the theatre of great relevance is Waters, Hazel. *Racism on the Victorian Stage: Representation of Slavery and the Black Character*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007. See also Marsh, Jan (ed). *Black Victorians: Black People in British Art 1800- 1900*, Aldershot: Lund Humphries 2006.
2. The early history of Allen is taken from: Blakett, R.J.M. William G. Allen: the forgotten professor. *Civil War History*, 26(1), 1980, pp.39-52; William G. Allen. www.genealogyforum.rootsweb.com (multiple dates of retrieval); Quarles, Benjamin. Ministers Without Portfolio, *Journal of Negro History*, 39(1) January 1954, pp.27-42; and Elbert, Sarah (ed)., *American Prejudice Against Colour*. Northeastern University Press, 2002.
3. Gerrit Smith was in correspondence with British abolitionists such as Joseph Sturge and William Clarkson.
4. For Oneida see Sernett, Milton C. *Abolition's Axe*. Syracuse University Press, 1986.
5. Email from Saray Ebert, 14/1/2004
6. Wheatley, Banneker and Horton, 1849. There are no copies of this available in the UK.
7. Kossuth was well received in the USA, even given a Congressional Banquet. That he did not attack slavery, though he had been instrumental in ending serfdom in Hungary, provoked many abolitionists, including William Lloyd Garrison, to attack him. Allen's letter on Kossuth was published in *The Liberator* on 9 January 1852. It is reprinted in Woodson, Carter G. (ed). *The Mind of the Negro as Reflected in Letters Written During the Crisis 1800-1860*. New York: Negro Universities Press, 1969, pp.288-290.
8. Allen wrote a total of five articles for *Frederick Douglass' Paper*, which was the 1851 amalgamation of Douglass' previous paper, *The North Star*, and Gerrit Smith's *Liberty Party Paper*. *The Star* had been started with funds raised in Britain, which were partly used to purchase a printing press. Douglass' freedom had been purchased with £700 raised in Britain in 1846.
9. Remarks on Uncle Tom's Cabin by Allen, William G. *Frederick Douglass' Paper*, 20/5/1852 URL: <http://jefferson.village.virginia.edu:1852/utc/responses>.
10. Joseph Sturge, a Birmingham Quaker corn merchant had been an active, and radical abolitionist since 1826; and he was a key figure in the Central Negro Emancipation Committee. Also a peace campaigner, a Chartist and involved in the Compete Suffrage Movement, Sturge was instrumental in founding the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society and in organising the Society's Anti-slavery conventions of 1840 and 1843. Sturge visited Jamaica to gather evidence on apprenticeship (published as *The West Indies* in 1837). There he bought the freedom of James Williams, took him to England, published his life story - Williams, James. *A Narrative of Events, Since the First of August, 1834, by James Williams, an Apprenticed Labourer in Jamaica*. London, 1837 - and used it to press for the abolition of apprenticeship. Sturge also visited the USA and published his account - Sturge, James. *A Visit to the United States in 1841*, Boston 1842. Had he met Gerrit Smith on that visit? He was a friend and working colleague of Thomas Clarkson, whose father had founded the Peace Society which Sturge had joined. See Bolt, Christine. *The Anti-Slavery Movement and Reconstruction: a study of Anglo-American co-operation 1833/1877*, Oxford University Press, 1969., and Gibson Wilson, Ellen. *Thomas Clarkson: A Biography*, London: Macmillan, 1989.
11. This excerpt from the introductory letter is printed in Allen, William G. *The American Prejudice Against Color - An Authentic Narrative, Showing How Easily The Nation Got - Into An Uproar*. London, Edinburgh & Dublin, 1853.
12. Allen and his wife called on Sturge in Birmingham on their way to London from Liverpool where their ship had docked according to *The Liberator*, 22/7/1853.
13. Syracuse University Archives, Gerrit Smith Collection, box 35L: Joseph Sturge to Gerrit Smith 9/8/1854
14. In Scotland, the proposal by the Glasgow Emancipation Society to collect a penny from every reader resulted in £1,930 being sent to the USA. (Bolt, ref. 10, p.13)
15. Samuel Ringgold Ward, in his Autobiography of a Fugitive Negro mentions the 'unprecedented influence of Uncle Tom's Cabin' and the many aristocrats attending anti-slavery gatherings - Ringgold Ward, Samuel. *Autobiography of a Fugitive Negro*. London: John Snow, 1855. This did not at all mean that Britain was prejudice-free: see, for example, Lorimer, Douglas A. *Colour, Class and the Victorians*. Leicester University Press, 1978.

16. Thompson was a powerful orator, addressing anti-slavery meetings around the country. He had visited the US in 1834-5 in order to collect information for use in the British campaigns. See Bolt, ref 10.
17. This letter is reprinted in Carter G. Woodson, ref. 7, pp.284-287.
18. Syracuse University: Gerrit Smith Papers, Allen to Smith, 24 January 1854; the address is 14 Union Road. Allen asks Smith to reply to him care of the Anti-Slavery Office at 27 New Broad Street, London.
19. Their address had been 26 Swinton Street, off Gray's Inn Road.
20. Blackett, ref. 2, p.48.
21. Lady Byron, the poet's estranged wife, had attended the 1840 London World Anti-Slavery Congress, where she had met the anti-slavery campaigners William Lloyd Garrison and Charles Lenox Remond from the USA; she was a subscriber to Douglass' North Star - see McFeely, William S. *Frederick Douglass*. New York: W.W. Norton & Co, 1991. She was had 'sponsored two runaway slaves' (The Crafts) and had funded a reformatory school in Bristol run by Mary Carpenter, who had also supported the anti-slavery movement, but 'felt strongly that [such] enthusiasm should not muffle social injustice at home'. See Normington, Susan. *Byron and his Children*. Stroud: Allen Sutton 1995, p.182; and Manton, Jo. *Mary Carpenter*. London: Heinemann 1976, pp.76, 124.
22. Garraty, John Arthur. and Carnes, Mark C. (eds). *American National Biography*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999, pp.346-7.
23. Ripley states that he had obtained an MA degree, but does not give the university or the source for this information - see Ripley, C. Peter (ed). *The Black Abolitionist Papers: The British Isles, 1830-65*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1985, p.358.
24. Rhodes House Library: Mss Br. Emp. s.18 c27 Anti-Slavery Papers, Chamerovzow, folio 39, Allen to Chamerovzow 11/7/1854.
25. Some details of this support for the Confederates is in my book *After Abolition: Britain and the Slave Trade Since 1807* - Sherwood, Marika. *After Abolition: Britain and the Slave Trade Since 1807*. London: IB Tauris, 2007; and also in an earlier but somewhat fuller account in Sherwood, Marika. *Perfidious Albion: Britain, the USA and slavery in the 1840s and 1860s. Contributions to Black Studies, 13/14* 1995/6 (published 1999).
26. The reference is to James McCune Smith, who attended the University of Glasgow in Scotland, gaining his bachelor's degree in 1835, a master's degree in 1836, and his medical degree in 1837.
27. *Leeds Intelligencer*, 3 & 10/12.1853. My thanks to Suzanne Grahame for sending me copies of this.
28. *Anti-Slavery Reporter*, January 1854; *Anti-Slavery Watchman*, #3, January 1854, p.83; there is a brief review of *American Prejudice Against Colour* on p.79.
29. *Anti-Slavery Advocate* June and August 1854; Blackett (1980) p.49.
30. *Anti-Slavery Reporter*, June 1854. The Crafts, who had also sought refuge in Britain, and William Wells Brown were also at the AGM.
31. 5 Wakefield Street, Regent's Square, off Gray's Inn Road.
32. Rhodes House Library: Mss Br. Emp. s.18 c27 Anti-Slavery Papers, Chamerovzow, folio 39, Allen to Chamerovzow 4/1/1855.
33. *Leeds Intelligencer*, 10/12/1853.
34. Temperley, Howard. *British Antislavery 1833 – 1870*. London: Longman, 1972, p.239. This is an excellent source on anti-slavery and the devastating sectarianism within the movement.
35. Ripley, ref. 23, p.332.
36. *The Advocate* was also sold in England and Scotland. On Webb, see Riach, Douglas C. Richard Davis Webb and Antislavery in Ireland. In: Perry L. and Fellman, M. (eds), *Antislavery Reconsidered*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1979.
37. Webb and Douglass did not get on - see McFeely, ref. 21, pp.120-123.
38. Gerrit Smith Papers, Allen to Smith, from Cork, Ireland, 23 February 1858. The only address I have for the Allens is 1, Longwood Avenue, Portobello, Dublin.
39. This refers to what is usually called the 'Indian Mutiny', that is the uprising of some in India against British rule.
40. See ref 38, Allen to Smith from Leamington, England, 14 May 1859. Unfortunately the Leamington papers held at the British Library are so disintegrated that they cannot be read.
41. Ibid.
42. We do not know if this contradicts Sturge's statement quoted earlier that he had met with Allen; perhaps this was not in Sturge's home in Birmingham.
43. *Anti-Slavery Reporter* July 1863 p.154.

44. My thanks to Carolyn Abel of the Northamptonshire Black History Project. The London Emancipation Society was formed in 1859, as a result of visits by a number of abolitionists from the USA, which had reignited anti-slavery interests. Sadly there is no biography of the remarkable Harper Twelvetrees, who organised lectures, concerts and religious services in the hall he built next to his factory, and supported 'literary and mechanics' institutes providing education to his workers and other East End residents.
45. Twelvetrees, Harper and Anderson, John. *The Story of the Life of John Anderson*, London: W'm Tweedie, 1863. The proceeds from the sale of this book were given to Anderson.
46. Rhodes House Library: Mss Br Emp s.19, Anti-Slavery Papers: letter to Miss Edwards, in the Alexander Sterry Papers.
47. A letter of enquiry to Cassell drew no response.
48. Rhodes House Library: Mss Br. Emp. s.18 c37 Anti-Slavery Papers, f.118. Testimonial for Mrs William G. Allen.
49. My thanks to Caroline Brassey for a copy of this report . On the Society, see Rainger, Ronald. Race, politics and science: the Anthropological Society in the 1860s. *Victorian Studies*, 22(1), Autumn 1978, pp.51-70.
50. See, for example, Sherwood, Marika. Race, Empire and Education: Teaching Racism. *Race & Class*, 42(3), 2001, pp.1-28.
51. Anti Slavery Society Papers, C.124, Chesson files, f.42, Allen to Chesson 8/4/1878; their new address was 57 Treverton Street, Ladbroke Grove Road, Notting Hill. See also Blackett, R. William G. Allen. *Civil War History*, 26, March 1980, pp.39-52.
52. *Chatham and Rochester Observer*, 16 July 1887. My thanks to Sandra Fowler, who found this and the other Strood references while going through this newspaper searching for references to Black peoples.
53. *Chatham and Rochester Observer*, 13 August 1887. The group had also given a concert at the Borstal Institute, where 'Allen gave, as usual, a lecture on the negro and his habits'. *Chatham and Rochester Observer*, 23 July 1887.
54. We do not where they stayed in their travels. *Faversham News and East Kent Journal*, 10 & 19 September 1887. I have not been able to locate any further information on this band. Beth Howse, the Special Collections Librarian at Fisk University could not find any mention of William Allen in the jubilee Singers materials held there. (Email 23 Feb., 2004.)
55. Lorimer, ref. 15, p.203.
56. They clearly moved a number of times. In 1874, they lived in Islington; in 1978 in a boarding house in Notting Hill, a west London suburb. It is from here that Allen's last preserved letter was written
57. My thanks to Guy Grannum of The National Archives for the dates of 'William G.' and his son's deaths. (Email 27 Feb. 2007)