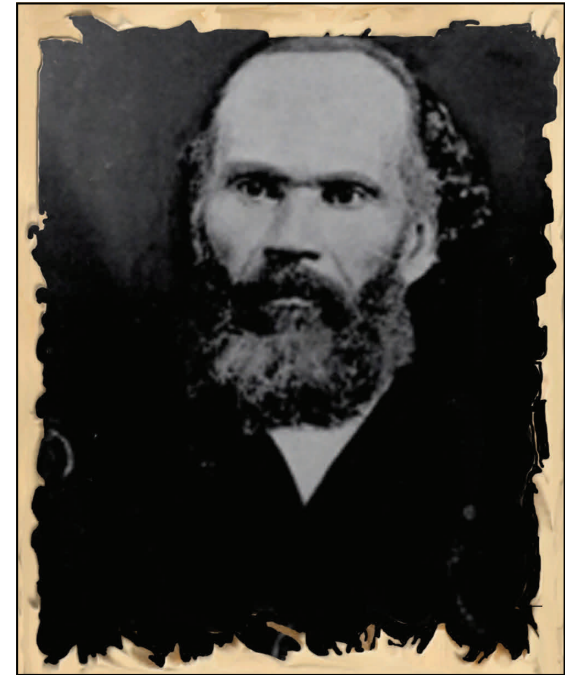


The Shadd Family Album

Abraham D. Shadd



Abraham and Harriet Shadd's Home



Harriet P. Shadd



Well hello there.

Come on in and join us for dinner. I was just laying the table, and we have plenty of room, and lots to eat. I always cook a big afternoon meal. Just a habit I guess.

We've had such a large family with our 14 children, and before we came here to Buxton, we always had a couple of young lads who took their meals with us too. They were apprentices with my husband Abraham in his shoemaking business. And then, Abraham brought so many of the people he met with, home with him too.

Lord! We used to have so many guests. Our home was always 'abustle with chatter! My! My! My! Those days were something to remember! Happy days they were, but sometimes frightening too! You know we did all we could to help runaways when we lived in Wilmington, but there were people living there who held slaves. Delaware's still a slave state you know, and it was a risky business for a black man or woman to be caught helping fugitives. I remember when Sam Burris got caught helping some poor runaways. The authorities arrested him and he spent over a year in jail, before he even went to trial. Then when they found him guilty of doing what we *all know* was the right thing, they put him up for sale as *a slave* – and him a free man, *all his life*. All of us who were working to help end slavery, put our money together, and one of the white abolitionists used it to buy Samuel.

Now Mr. Thomas Garrett, he gave most of the money. He was one of the "friends" in Wilmington. You know the "friends" don't you? Quakers - Well Mr. Garrett was a friend- in more ways than one. That man sure did a lot for our people. We were all so upset that time he lost all his belongings for helping fugitives. But do you know what that saintly man said, even after he had lost everything. He said, ***"Thou has left me without a dollar,....I say to thee and to all in this court room, that if anyone knows a fugitive who wants shelter....send him to Thomas Garrett and he will befriend him."*** Our people surely did love and respect that man.

Abraham and I had our first five children when we lived in Wilmington. We had good friends and neighbours there, and family too. Abe

and I - we weren't wealthy people, but we had all we needed, and some might even say we were well off. I don't know about that but I know we had most all we needed,---- except good schools for our children.

Oh they got some schooling, but we wanted better for them. But then Abraham got more involved with Mr. Garrison, You know Mr. Garrison, that abolitionist who tells things just like they are, and riles up those southern slave-holders. Then he started selling Mr. Garrison's newspaper and other Anti-Slavery newspapers and going all about for meetings. He went to that meeting in Philadelphia when they started the Anti-slavery society. You know, there was so much agitation about that meeting that they locked the church doors so no one could come in while they were meeting. They were afraid of a riot and violence. Next thing you know the authorities in Wilmington started keeping an eye on us. Our neighbours even told us they thought someone was watching our house.

Well we decided it was time to move to Pennsylvania, - where there is no slavery allowed. We moved over to West Chester. It's not that far from Wilmington so we were still able to keep in touch with Mr. Garrett. He sent us some of his packages, (that's what we called the fugitives) and we helped them make their way to our friend Mr. William Still in Philadelphia.

We had 9 more children while we were in West Chester. Those young uns' got a fine education in Pennsylvania. Abe set up his shoemaking business in our home at the corner of Gay and Market Street, right in the centre of town, and we had a small farm just outside of town too, where we raised animals, and grew a garden. We had the two properties, and Abe and the boys would make lots of trips to and from the farm. That made it a lot easier to move our packages and keep them out of sight. We didn't have nearly as much trouble moving them on as we had in Wilmington. We were only about 30 miles from Philadelphia, so we had a handy location, and we could move a lot of packages on their way to freedom.

When our two oldest girls grew up they left West Chester and went out to teach. We needed teachers for the children of the free people of colour. – Mary Ann went back to Wilmington to teach, and Elizabeth went to Trenton, – in New Jersey. We sure hated to see our girls leave home, but we knew they were needed. Elizabeth married a fine young man – George Shreve, and settled down there in Trenton and it wasn't long before Abe and I had some grandchildren. Now our Mary Ann, there was no settling her down with a man. That girl was so feisty. Got some of that from her father. But Abe knew how to hold his tongue. Not our Mary Ann. She acted like she believed she could change things for our people all on her own. Before we could turn around she had up and come to Canada West to start a school for the children of the fugitives who made it to freedom. But that was later- after the Fugitive Slave law was passed.

My Abe, he kept working in every way he could to help end that awful institution of slavery. It seemed he never got tired of going to meetings, and going out raising money for the cause. People looked up to him though. They stopped to listen when he gave his opinion. Abe was always telling folks that we need to be watching how the settlements in Canada were faring. I think maybe he suspected that we would be living here some day. Then in 1850 I think it was, they passed that law that took away *all* our rights. It was that law I just told you about - they called it the Fugitive Slave Law, but it was about us free people of colour too. It said we were no more citizens of that United States than the cow you milked last night. It seems like no matter what a person of colour was accused of, they was just guilty. Couldn't say a thing in our own defense. And it got to be so we didn't even feel safe in our own home. Didn't matter that we had been free all our lives, and our parents and grandparents before us. Slave catchers could just nab anybody, and the judge got paid more to decide you were a runaway, than if he decided you were legally free. And on top of that we weren't even be allowed to speak up for ourselves. Abe and I got so we never stopped worrying- oh! not so much about ourselves- but our children- We couldn't

even imagine having to see one of our children sent into slavery. Why I believe we would both have chosen to die first!

So we finally made the decision to just leave the United States and make our future in Canada. You see Canada is a British colony, and all its citizens have the *protection* of the law. Slavery has been outlawed here for a long time, and on the streets here people of colour can walk without fear. But I guess I don't need to tell *you* that!

We thank the Lord that we didn't have to come here as fugitives like you did, But still, it was a big move.

But then lots of our family came along to Canada with us too. All our children including our daughter Elizabeth and her husband George and all our grandchildren came to Buxton, and some of Abe's family have come. He's helped a lot of our family and friends sell their property in the United States, and buy land here in Canada. There are others still coming. They'll be here as soon as their property sells.

It's kinda quiet out here in the bush, but we're better off than most who come here to Buxton. Our place has a lot of cleared land and a large house, and some good out buildings. Some folks have to clear enough land to build a cabin before they can even start to build a home. And they have to work long enough to make money for a down payment and tools first. So Lord knows I can't complain!

We've met a number of people here in Buxton who we have helped to find freedom. Say! You look familiar- I do believe I remember you passing our way. Weren't you with that young girl Charity Richardson – Didn't we take you on to William Still's place in Philadelphia?

You sit on down here now and while we're eating you can tell me all about the rest of your journey and how you're making out here in Buxton. You come on and sit right down here next to me.

Abraham and Harriet Shadd Statistics

Name : Abraham Doras Shadd

Date Born: March 2, 1801

Died :Feb 11, 1882

Siblings: Elizabeth, Gabriel Jackson, Hans, Jeremiah, William, Charles, Francis, Elizabeth, Mary, Isaac, Jacob, Amelia, Andrew, Absalom

Married: Feb 6, 1824

Wife: Harriet Parnell

Date Born: Nov. 20, 1807

Died : Nov 3, 1883

Siblings: None

Occupation: Homemaker

Children: Mary, Elizabeth, Harriet, Isaac, Amelia, Joseph, Emmeline, Garrison, Sarah, Ada, Abraham W., Eunice, Gerrit (all born in U.S.)

In: Wilmington, Delaware

In: Raleigh Township

Religion: Unitarian

Occupation: Shoemaker, Farmer

Came to Buxton Settlement: 1852

Residence In Buxton: 7th Concession

In : Wilmington, Delaware

In: North Carolina

In: Zenia, Ohio

Religion: Unitarian

Came to Buxton Settlement: 1852

Residence In Buxton: 7th Concession

**** Son Abraham W. fought in Civil War; several of his children returned to United States following the war. Abraham and Harriet, along with many of their children remained in Buxton. Abraham was one of first persons of colour elected to public office in Canada, elected to Raleigh Township Council.*

SHADD #1 (SCHADT)

HANS (Hessian) To Elizabeth Jackson (free)
HANS 1756

JEREMIAH
 TO
 2. AMELIA CISCO

Provided by Buxton National Historic Site & Museum

1. AMELIA

