

Thomas and Sarah Stoop House
Chapman Avenue
Auburn, New York 13021

Significance: Home of African Americans from Eastern New York

Thomas and Mary Stoop represent those African Americans, probably born into slavery themselves, who migrated to Auburn from eastern New York, not to escape slavery but to find a congenial neighborhood in which to live, work, and raise their children. They arrived in Auburn by 1854, for on July 22, 1854, the *Auburn Daily Advertiser* noted that Mr. Thomas Stoop had been appointed chair of a meeting held on July 10 to plan a celebration for August 1, 1854,

a day on which 800,00 souls were set at liberty in the West Indies by the British Government; and in view of this, Auburn intends manfully to show to the world her warm attachment to so holy and noble a cause; and I speak the sentiments of the citizens generally, when I extend a most cordial invitation to the Empire State, to marshal her sons and daughters in innumerable busts throughout the length and breadth of her borders; and the appointed time crowd every avenue and thoroughfare that shall lead safely to the Queen City of the Empire State. Our brethren from the East and the West, from the North and from the South, will also expect to be heard from. Come one, come all.

John H. Freeman, General Secretary

On August 1, 1854, the *Auburn Daily Advertiser* reported that “the colored people had made extensive calculations on a good time today in honor of the West Indian Emancipation, but just as their procession had got fairly under way, with banners and music their ardor was somewhat dampened by sudden showers. They left the streets and assembled at Stanford Hall. Addressed delivered by Frederick Douglass of Rochester, Mr. Loguen of Syracuse. Day ushered in by ringing of church bells and firing of cannon.”¹

The 1855 census listed the Stoops as a family of six. Thomas Stoop (age 52), laborer, born in Ulster County, lived with his wife, Sarah A. (age 29), born in Orange County, with their children John (age 5), Mary (age 4), Freeman (age 2), and Martha (age three months), all born in Cayuga County. The census taker left the column for “color” blank for Thomas and Sarah but noted “B” for “Black” for each of the children.

They were ambitious and quickly began to acquire property. They settled first in the older residential area on the north side of town. They bought a small piece of land on Division Street in May 1854, and by 1855, they had constructed a board house worth, according to the 1855 census, \$100. The 1857 Auburn city directory listed Thomas Stoop at 64 Division Street, on the site of the house below.² In 1859-60, the Stoop family was living, according to the city directory, at 35 Washington Street.

In 1860, Thomas Stoop (now age 57), laborer, and Sarah Stoop, a domestic (age 32), had five children: John (10), Mary (9), Freeman (7), Martha (5), and Anna (3). Of this whole family, the census taker labeled only the youngest children, Martha and Anna, as Black. All the rest were left blank in the space for “color.”

By 1865, the Stoops now listed their ages as 40 (Thomas) and 36 (Sarah). Thomas was a “team labor”, and Mary (age 14) was a grandchild rather than a child. Of the older children, only Freeman (age 12) and Martha (10) still lived at home, but a new baby, Jemima (six months) had been born. The family now lived in a frame house worth \$400. The census listed them in the Town of Fleming.

¹ Transcription by Sheila Tucker.

² See transcript of deed by Tanya Warren, attached.

In a deed recorded March 6, 1869, Thomas and Sarah Stoop bought a piece of land on the north side of Cornell Street (now Chapman Avenue) near South Street, between land owned by Noah Clark and Seth Watkins, both European Americans, with free access to a well on the west side of the property. This was land newly-opened for sale to working-class families, both white and black, by Abijah Fitch, abolitionist and Underground Railroad supporter, near Harriet Tubman's property. Many freedom seekers bought land farther west on Cornell Street, at the corner of Garrow Street. Harriet Tubman's niece-in-law, Eliza Stewart Parker, and later another niece, Margaret Stewart Lucas, also purchased land on the south side of Cornell Street, very near the Stoop house, in this mixed-race neighborhood.



Clark, John S., "Plot of the Lands as Conveyed by Abijah Fitch on Garrow and Richardson Farms, Auburn, N.Y." A.C. Taber, Surveyor, September 1868. Cayuga County Clerk's Office.

Thomas Stoop [Stup]'s land is noted on Lot 1 at bottom of map.

In 1870, Thomas (age 67), listed his occupation in the census as laborer, and Sarah (age 42) listed hers as keeping house. They lived here with their children, John (20), a laborer, Mary (19), Anna (13), Jemima (6), at school, and Eliza (10 months). They were now listed again in Auburn.

In the 1880 census, Thomas and Sarah Stoop were no longer listed. Mary (perhaps formerly listed as Sarah) Stoop, now 51, was a washerwoman, head of a household living at what was then 53 Cornell Street with John, her son, age 27, working in a machine shop, Eva, age 24, a daughter; and Jemima, a daughter, age 16, at school.

Uncertain whether any current building is the same house owned by Thomas Stoop.

LAST NAME	FIRST NAME	Town	YEAR	Property	REAL-\$	MISC.
Stoop	Thomas	Auburn	1869	Thornton Ave.	225	First entry-previous residences-Division St. and Fleming.
Stoop	Thomas	Auburn	1870	Cornell-residence	250	
Stoop	Thomas	Auburn	1871	Cornell-residence	200	
Stoop	Thomas	Auburn	1872			no entry
Stoop	Thomas	Auburn	1873	Cornell-residence	150	
Stoop	John	Auburn	1874	Cornell-residence 22 Cornell-house	350	No more Thomas
Stoop	John	Auburn	1875		350	last Stoop entry

**Deed: Henry B. Fitch to Thomas Stoop
6 March 1869****City Deed Book 125, pp. 202-204**

City of Auburn, NY

Cayuga County Records Retention

Abstract-TLW

Indenture made 6 March 1869 between Henry B. & Adelia Fitch of Auburn and Thomas Stoop of Auburn, for \$700.00 do grant, etc. all that land in Auburn described as: Beginning at the SE corner of a lot sold to Noah P. Clark on the North side of Cornell St. and running thence northerly 2 chains, 50 links to the lands of Seth Watkins, thence easterly parallel with Cornell St, 1 chain and 1 link more or less, to the west line of lands of Thomas Shea, thence southerly along the land of said Shea 2 chains, 50 links to the North line of Cornell ST. thence westerly along the north line of said street 1 chain to place of beginning. Reserving the right to the owner or occupant of the land of Seth Watkins, a right of way along the east line of said lot, 12 ½ feet wide. Said Watkins to keep and maintain proper gates on each end of right of way and to keep same closed when not in use as against their own acts. Also the right to use & to have free access to the well which is upon the west line & jointly upon this & the lot next west adjoining. The repairs of said well are to be equally borne by both parties. Said Stoop is to build the fences upon the west line.

With all the appurtenances, etc.

Signed by the Fitch's

Also:

Deed: Sarah Ann Stoop and Thomas Stoop to Henry B. Fitch

6 March 1869

Page 203 of same Book

This indenture between (said parties) for and consideration of the sum of \$200.00 have sold and by these presents doth grant...all that parcel of land, situate in Auburn on the South side of Perrine St. (formerly Ellen St.), near Division St, described as follows:

Being part of the original Lot #46 of the Town of Aurelius, now Auburn, commencing in the center of Perrine St. (formerly Ellen St), at the NE corner of a lot of land now or formerly owned by Benjamin Rice, running thence South along the East line of said Rice's land, 10 rods, thence east parallel with Perrine St. 4 rods, thence northerly parallel with the west line of said lot 10 rods to the center of Perrine St. thence

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westerly along the center of Perrine St. 4 rods to place of beginning, containing 40 rods of land. A strip of 1 ½ rods across the North line of said lot being for the purpose of a street to be kept forever open for that purpose, it being a part and parcel of Perrine St. This deed is intended to convey that parcel of land, conveyed by Deed dated 13 April 1854 of Joshua Goodrich and wife to Sarah Ann Stoop, said deed being recorded 13 May 1854, Book 88 of Deeds, page 154. With all the Appurtenances, etc. Signed by the hands of Sarah Stoop and Thomas Stoop.

Mortgage Deed Abstract

Thomas Stoop to Henry B. Fitch

6 March 1869

City of Auburn, Cayuga County, NY

Mortgage Book 73, page 325

This indenture made this 6th day of March 1869 between Thomas Stoop of the City of Auburn and Henry B. Fitch of the same place in consideration of the sum of \$450 have sold, etc. all that tract of land situate in the City of Auburn bounded and described as follows: Beginning at the Southeast corner of a lot sold to Noah P. Clark on the North side of Cornell Street and running thence Northerly 2 chains, 50 links to lands of Seth Watkins; thence Easterly parallel with Cornell Street 1 chain, 1 link more or less to the West line of lands of Thomas Shea; thence Southerly along the land of said Shea 2 chains, 50 links to the North line of Cornell Street; Thence Westerly along the North line of Cornell St. 1 chain to place of beginning. Reserving the right to the owners or occupants of the land of Seth Watkins a right of way along the East line of said lot 12 ½ feet wide. Said Watkins to keep and maintain proper gates on each end of right a way and to keep same closed when not in use as against their own acts and also the right to use and to have free access to the well which is upon this and the next lot West adjoining. The repairs of said well to be equally born by both parties. This grant is intended as a security for the payment of \$450 being part of the purchase money in payments of \$100 annually together with interest semi-annually on all sum or sums unpaid according to the condition of a bond this day executed and delivered by the said Thomas Stoop to the party of the second part. (Payment details follow)

Signed by the hand of Thomas Stoop

Research and transcription by Tanya Warren

Swart House
12 Chapman (Cornell Street)
Auburn, New York

Significance: Home of freedom seeker



In 1887-88, the Auburn city directory listed Sarah Swart, widow of George Swarts, living at 12 Cornell Street. Thornton Newton, a freedom seeker from Maryland. Worked at 12 Cornell and lived across the street at 20 Cornell Street.³

³ Property research by Tanya Warren.

Parker-Stewart House
20 Chapman Avenue
Auburn, New York 13021

Significance: Home of freedom seekers and Harriet Tubman's great-nieces and nephew



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February 2, 2005

This house, built in 1899, represents the continuing importance of community, both to Harriet Tubman and to the many freedom seekers who settled in Auburn, as their children and grandchildren found jobs, bought property, and raised their own families in Auburn. Clarence "Dye" Stewart, lived here at 20 Chapman Avenue from 1899-1904. Although he was not born in slavery himself, Dye Stewart was the grandson of Harriet Tubman's brother John Stewart, who escaped with Harriet Tubman from slavery in Dorchester County, Maryland, in December 1854.

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John Stewart was one of only two of Tubman's siblings who moved with her to Auburn, and Dye Stewart remained close to Tubman until her death in 1913. He was at Harriet Tubman's bedside when she died.

After John Henry Stewart, son of Tubman's brother, John, died in 1880 or 1881, his widow, Eliza Stewart, married Alfred Parker. They moved to this house, where Eliza Stewart Parker apparently kept a boarding house for family and friends, many of whom were freedom seekers from Maryland. This house at 20 Chapman Avenue is associated with the descendants of John Stewart, Tubman's brother, including Tubman's grand nieces and nephew (Dora, Gertrude, and Clarence "Dye" Stewart), as well as with other freedom seekers who lived here as family members or boarders, including some of Tubman's old neighbors from Maryland, including Georgie Thompson, a freedom seeker and widow of Philip (whom city directories record as living here in 1885 and 1892-97), Albert Stewart (1888-89), Alfred L. Winslow (1887-88), and Thornton Newton, (1887-88).

Thornton Newton listed his birthplace in census records as Virginia. He had boarded with Tubman when he first arrived in Auburn in the early 1860s. By 1870, he had married a woman named, Priscilla, who listed her birthplace as Canada, and they were living in Owasco. In 1880, Priscilla and Thornton lived at 12 Cornell Street, down the street from this house. According to the 1887-88 city directory, Thornton Newton had moved to 20 Cornell Street, but he worked at 12 Cornell Street. When Harriet Tubman was trying to prove her identity, in order to get her Civil War pension, Thornton Newton was one of those who witnessed her documentation.⁴

Alfred L. Winslow was the son of Catherine Stewart (Jane Kane), who had escaped with Harriet Tubman and her three brothers on Christmas Eve, 1854. She had then married Tubman's oldest brother, Ben Ross. When he changed his name to James Stewart, she changed hers to Catharine Stewart. Their son, Elijah Stewart, lived at 29 Union Avenue (now Richardson Avenue). After James Stewart's death in St. Catharine's, Ontario, Catharine Stewart married Albert Winslow, and in 1887-88, their son, Alfred Winslow, lived in this house at 20 Cornell Street. (Alfred Winslow may actually be the same person listed in the 1880 census as Albert Winslow, eleven years old, a student, living at 29 Union Avenue, with his half-brother Elijah Stewart.)⁵

Alfred L. Winslow thus lived with his cousins—Gertrude, Dora, and Clarence—as well as his Aunt Eliza Stewart Parker. They all lived just down the street from their cousin Margaret Stewart Lucas, who lived at 30 Cornell Street.

Dye Stewart lived in this house at 20 Cornell Street from 1899-1904. For a time, Clarence "Dye" Stewart followed his father's occupation as a coachman. He married as his first wife, Lena, and for a time, they lived at 68 Garrow Street, still standing on the southeast corner of Garrow and Chapman Avenue. When Lena Stewart died, Dye Stewart moved in with his aunt and uncle, at 64 Garrow Street. When he married a second time, Pearl Reed, he moved to ? Parker Street, a house that is also still standing.⁶

Tax assessments suggest that this house was constructed in 1899, the same year that the Parker-Stewart family moved here.

⁴ 1865 and 1870 census; Larson, *Bound for the Promised Land*, 278.

⁵ Thanks to Kate Clifford Larson for sorting out this genealogy.

⁶ Auburn City Directory, 1896-97, listed him as a coachman. Genealogical research by Judy Bryant.

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**Tax assessments for Parker-Stewart House
20 Cornell (Chapman) Avenue**

LAST NAME	FIRST NAME	Town	YEAR	Property/Lot #	REAL-\$
				18, 20 Cornell-vacant	
Belt	Isaiah	Auburn	1885	lots	200
Belt	Isaiah	Auburn	1885	24 Cornell-lot & cellar	100
Parker	Alfred	Auburn	1899	20 Cornell-house & lot	900
Parker	Alfred	Auburn	1900	20 Cornell-house & lot	900
Parker	Alfred	Auburn	1901	20 Cornell-house & lot	900
Parker	Alfred	Auburn	1902	20 Cornell-house & lot	900
Parker	Alfred	Auburn	1903	20 Cornell-house & lot	900
Parker	Alfred	Auburn	1904	20 Cornell-house & lot	900
Parker	Alfred	Auburn	1905	20 Cornell-house & lot	900
Parker	Alfred	Auburn	1906	20 Cornell-house & lot	900

Sources:

Larson, *Bound for the Promised Land*

1870, 1880 census

1887-88, 1896-97, 1899, 1904 city directories

Judy Bryant oral tradition, genealogical research

Email from Kate Clifford Larson'

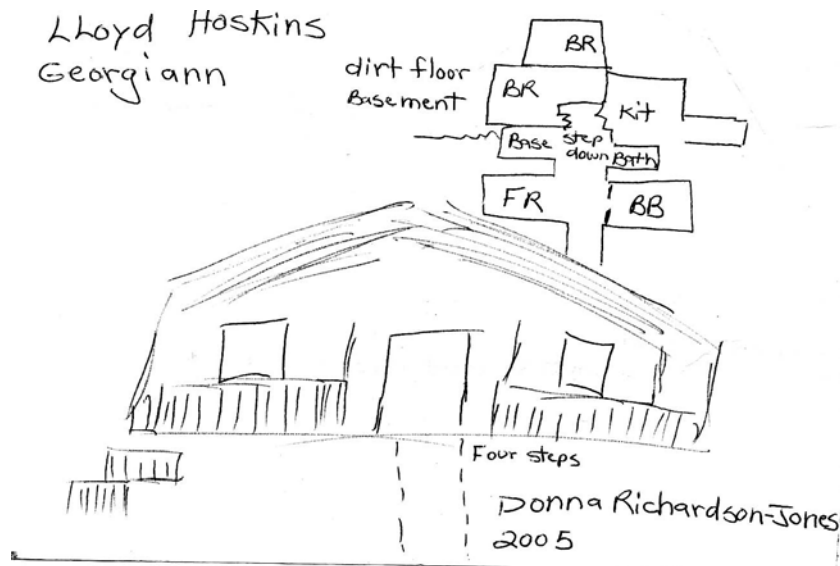
Property and genealogical research by Tanya Warren.

Site of Stewart-Lucas House
Now Oak Creek Town Homes (Historic 30 Cornell Street)
Auburn, New York 13021

Significance: Home of one of Harriet Tubman's nieces (perhaps her daughter)

At her core, Harriet Tubman was a caregiver. Her home was constantly full of people, some of them related to her and some not. She took care of anyone who needed help, especially the very old and the very young, including one adopted daughter, Gertie, who joined the household at birth in 1874; one great-niece, Eva Katherine Helena Harriet, whom everyone called Katy Stewart and who lived with Harriet from 1889, when her mother, Helena (Indian wife of her nephew, John Isaac Stewart) died in childbirth; and one great-nephew, Harkless Bowley. As far as we know, however, Harriet Tubman never had any children of her own. The one possible exception was Margaret Stewart Lucas, probably another niece of Harriet but possibly her daughter.

After Margaret Stewart married Henry Lucas, they lived in a house at 30 Cornell Street, now on the site of the Oak Creek Town Homes, for many years. This house was torn down in the early twenty-first century, but Donna Richardson-Jones, descendent of Margaret Stewart Lucas, made this sketch of it in June 2005.



Margaret Stewart was born in Maryland in October 1850.⁷ She may have been the daughter of Harriet Tubman's brother, Benjamin Ross (James Stewart), and an unknown first wife. If so, she was probably the younger sister of Ann Marie Stewart Elliott, who married Thomas Elliott and lived at 31 Union Avenue in Auburn until her death sometime before 1880. This is supported by Margaret Stewart's daughter, Alice Lucas Brickler, who remembered that Maria Elliott "was m

⁷ 1900 U.S. Census.

mother's elder sister and Mary Gaston [Gaskins] always called my mother Aunt Maggie (much to my father's disgust)."⁸

Alice Lucas Brickler, who was thirteen years old when Harriet Tubman died, recounted the story that Harriet Tubman had kidnapped her mother from Maryland, when Margaret was eight or nine years old. About all Margaret Stewart remembered of her childhood home was that she had a twin brother, they had never been slaves, and that the family had "a pair of slick chestnut horses and a shiny carriage in which they rode to church." When Harriet visited them, sometime before 1862, "she fell in love with the little girl who was my mother," and "when her visit was ended, she, secretly and without so much as a by-your-leave, took the little girl with her to her northern home."⁹

In the early 1860s, Harriet Tubman, about to begin her career as a scout in the U.S. Army, was in no position to take care of a little girl. She entrusted her to the care of Lazette Worden. Lazette Worden spent much time with her sister, Frances Seward (wife of William Henry Seward, Senator from New York State and soon-to-be Secretary of State under Abraham Lincoln). Frances Seward raised Margaret, Alice Brickler recounted, "not as a servant but as a guest within her home. She taught Mother to speak properly, to read, write, sew, do housework and act as a lady. Whenever Aunt Harriet came back, Mother was dressed and sent in the Seward carriage to visit her. Strange to say, Mother looked very much like Aunt Harriet and there was hardness about her character in the face of adversity that must have been hereditary."¹⁰

As a girl, Margaret Stewart lived with Harriet Tubman "when Aunt Harriet was at home," and she was proud "to the point of being snobbish." She used to tell a story about herself, which her daughter later recounted. "In appearance she was short and plump, light brown with long thick Negroid hair. There was a relative living at the home at this time who disliked Mother very much and whenever Aunt Harriet was out of hearing she used to call Mother a 'pumpkin-colored hussy.' Ha, ha," wrote Brickler.¹¹

For many people, it seems entirely out-of-character for Harriet Tubman to have kidnapped Margaret Stewart from her parents. That incongruity, plus the striking physical likeness between Margaret and Harriet, has prompted speculation that Margaret Stewart may, in fact, have been Harriet Tubman's birth child. If so, noted Catharine Clinton, "taking Margaret would have been a recovery rather than an abduction. Several puzzle pieces might then fit into place, including Harriet's decision to return again and again to Maryland. . . There is of course no proof to substantiate this scenario, just a circumstantial timeline and some comments handed down in

⁸ Alice Lucas Brickler to Earl Conrad, 23 April 1940, Earl Conrad-Harriet Tubman Collection, Schomburg Center, New York Public Library, reprinted in Jean M. Humez, *Harriet Tubman, The Life and the Stories* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2003), 271.

⁹ Alice Lucas Brickler to Earl Conrad, 14 August 1939, reprinted in Humez, *Harriet Tubman*, 269.

¹⁰ Kate Larson noted that Margaret Stewart went first to live with Lazette Worden, based on a letter from Martha Wright, *Bound for the Promised Land*, 196; Alice Lucas Brickler to Earl Conrad, 14 August 1939, reprinted in Humez, *Harriet Tubman*, 270.

¹¹ Alice Lucas Brickler to Earl Conrad, 23 April 1940, reprinted in Jean Humez, *Harriet Tubman*, 271.

family lore.” Yet, suggested Kate Larson, “such a scenario provides one of the few logical explanations, if not the only one, for Tubman’s ‘kidnapping’ Margaret from her home.”¹²

Whatever the circumstances of Margaret Stewart’s birth, she grew into a successful and by all accounts happy adult. In 1872, she married Henry Lucas, twenty-two years old, born in Virginia, at the Central Presbyterian Church in Auburn, the same church that Harriet Tubman and her parents regularly attended and where Harriet Tubman and Nelson Davis were married. Henry Lucas listed his occupation as laborer in the Auburn city directory of 1878-79, and his address as Cornell n. South. By 1887-88, he was working at the City Club at 158 Genesee Street, probably as a caterer.

When the census taker came down Cornell Street on the seventh day of June, 1900, Henry and Maggie Lucas were both forty-nine years old. Henry worked as a steward. The city directory listed his workplace as the Auburn City Club. Maggie worked as a cook, perhaps at the same place. They had had seven children, but, according to the 1900 census, only three were living. Margaret D., born in 1882, and Alice H., born in October 1897, were the only children at home in June 1900, but the city directory of that year also listed Della M., a student at CGS [?] and Helen M., student, living at home, making four living children. Allen H. Lucas, perhaps a brother of Henry, was living around the corner at 58 Garrow Street.¹³

The Lucas family was living at 30 Cornell Street. Although many African Americans lived farther west on Cornell Street, the nearest neighbors of the Lucas family were first or second-generation English or Irish-Americans. They owned their home free of any mortgage.

The Lucas home was just a short walk from Harriet Tubman’s home, and Alice Lucas Brickler often visited Tubman with her mother, bringing Tubman candy, which she loved. After 1910, Tubman could no longer walk, and Alice Lucas was surprised one day, having wandered off to pick some flowers, to hear a slithering sound in the grass and then to discover that “it was Aunt Harriet, flat on her stomach and with only the use of her arms and serpentine movements of her body, gliding smoothly along. Mother helped her back to her chair and they laughed. Aunt Harriet then told me that that was the way she had gone by many a sentinel during the war. Seeing the swaying grass, she was mistaken for an animal or in the dim flicker of the camp fire, she appeared as a small shadow.”¹⁴

On June 14, 1914, Alice Lucas unveiled a bronze tablet, paid for by contributions from the people of Auburn, both black and white, to recognize Harriet Tubman’s “unselfish devotion to the cause of humanity.” Booker T. Washington gave the main speech, and the tablet was placed in the Cayuga County Courthouse, as a permanent reminder of one of Auburn’s most remarkable--and certainly most famous--citizens.¹⁵ By 1929, Margaret and Henry Lucas were living at 77 Fitch Street. Margaret Lucas died May 19, 1930.¹⁶

¹² For further discussion of this, see Kate Clifford Larson, *Bound for the Promised Land*, 196-202; Catharine Clinton, *Harriet Tubman: The Road to Freedom* (New York: Little, Brown, and Co., 2004), 117-123.

¹³ *Auburn City Directory* (Auburn: Alonzo P. Lamey, 1900).

¹⁴ Alice Lucas Brickler to Earl Conrad, 28 July 1939, reprinted in Kate Larson, 288.

¹⁵ Kate Larson, *Bound for the Promised Land*, 289-90.

¹⁶ Gladys Stewart, [Manuscript Census of African Americans in the City of Auburn], 1929, in possession of Judy Bryant; Kate Larson, *Bound for the Promised Land*, “Ross-Stewart Family Tree,” after 295.

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