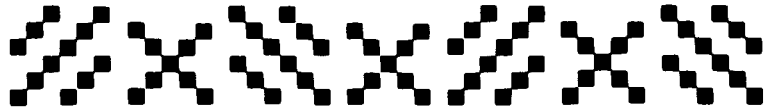


A Rural Black Settlement in St. Joseph County, Indiana, before 1900

*Frederick A. Karst**



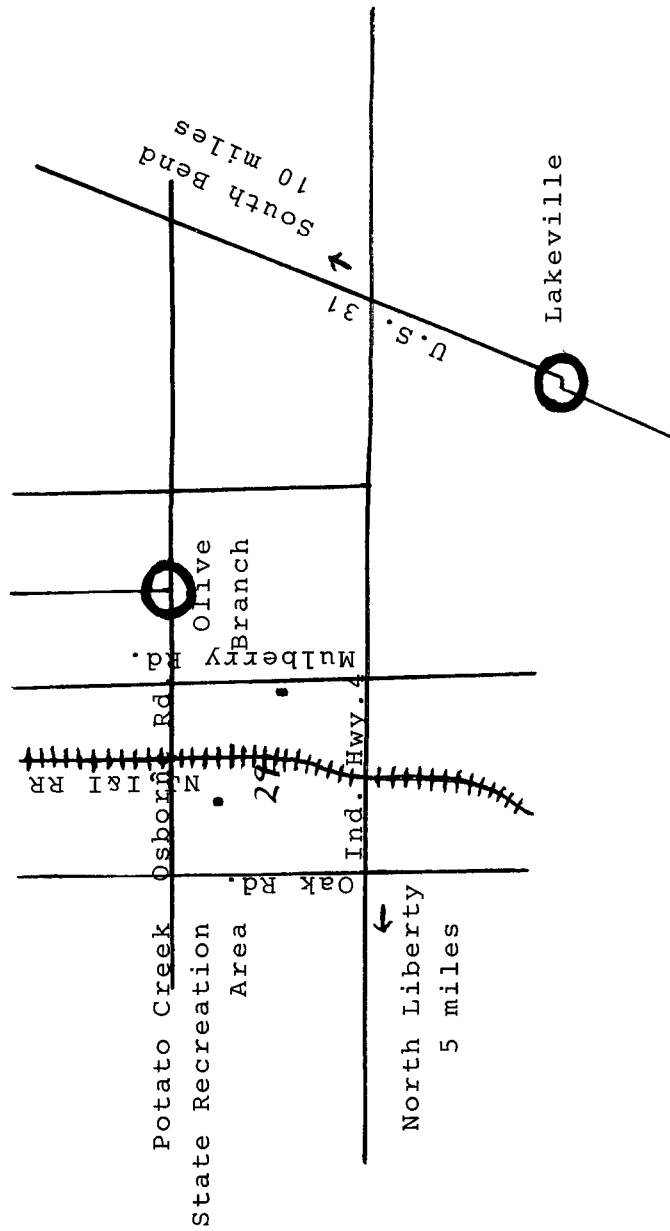
Late in the summer of 1834 Samuel Huggart, a Negro who had been born in Virginia and had resided in Ohio for several years, arrived at the United States land office in La Porte, Indiana, to buy a tract of virgin land in St. Joseph County.¹ Although Indian title to most of the land in northern Indiana had been removed by 1834, the main body of Indians had yet to depart the state, and settlement in the area was just beginning.² Huggart was a member of a pioneer family that was to attain prominence in the county and form a nucleus for a small Negro settlement in Union Township northwest of Lakeville. The settlement disappeared in the 1890s, and its existence was lost sight of until recently rediscovered through conversations with descendants of pioneers and confirmed by census data and other records.

Traditional black history in St. Joseph County refers only to a handful of itinerant black visitors and household servants who reached the county in the 1830s but did not stay. According to these accounts, the earliest known Negro settler, a horse doctor, arrived near the end of that decade; the first documented purchase of land by a black in South Bend, the county seat and principal city, did not take place until 1849; and not

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¹ "La Porte Cash Certificate Number 2986," Records of La Porte Cash Entries, Records of the Bureau of Land Management, Department of the Interior, Record Group 49 (National Archives, Washington); Deed Record Book V, pp. 621-22, St. Joseph County Recorder's Office, County-City Building, South Bend, Indiana; obituary of Andrew Huggart, South Bend *St. Joseph Valley Weekly Register*, October 12, 1881.

² John D. Barnhart and Donald F. Carmony, *Indiana: From Frontier to Industrial Commonwealth* (4 vols., New York, 1954), I, 212-13; Logan Esarey, *A History of Indiana: From Its Exploration to 1850* (3rd ed., 2 vols., Fort Wayne, 1924), I, 272, 374, 377-85; see also Bert Anson, *The Miami Indians* (Norman, 1970), 177-212.



LOCATION OF BLACK SETTLEMENT, UNION TOWNSHIP, ST. JOSEPH COUNTY

Map prepared by Frederick A. Karst.

until 1858 did any black settler arrive who was to erect a building and leave a permanent imprint.³ However, investigation in county records and in manuscript federal census schedules, as well as conversations with older residents of St. Joseph County, reveals the existence of the Huggart family in Union Township prior to the 1850s. During the 1860s and 1870s additional families arrived to form a small rural enclave of blacks east of the Potato Creek State Recreation Area. The settlement continued to grow steadily almost until the onset of its disintegration in the early 1890s.⁴

The black community, populated chiefly by light-skinned Negroes of southern origin, reached its maximum size about 1880 when twenty-eight "mulattoes" were counted in the United States census.⁵ Curiously, although no evidence exists to show it was anything more than coincidence, the settlement was a mile from a sawmill at Olive Branch operated by the county's foremost abolitionist, Solomon W. Palmer.⁶ The area settled by the blacks was heavily wooded and more hilly than most land of the county.

³ See, for example, Martha Merrill, "St. Joseph County's Black Pioneers: A Survey," *The Old Courthouse News*, III (Fall, 1969), [3-13]; Buford F. Gordon, "The Negro in South Bend: A Social Study" (South Bend, 1922), [5-13]. Charles C. Chapman & Co., pub., *History of St. Joseph County, Indiana . . .* (Chicago, 1880) contains helpful information about the Huggarts but fails to identify their race.

⁴ U.S., Seventh Census, 1850, population schedules for St. Joseph County, Indiana (National Archives Microfilm Publication No. 432, roll 171), p. 144; U.S., Eighth Census, 1860, *ibid.*, (National Archives Microfilm Publication No. 653, roll 295), p. 120; U.S., Ninth Census, 1870, *ibid.*, (National Archives Microfilm Publication No. 593, roll 360), pp. 31-32; U.S., Tenth Census, 1880, *ibid.*, (National Archives Microfilm Publication No. T-9, roll 309), vol. XXX, pp. 8-9, 14.

⁵ U.S., Tenth Census, 1880, population schedules for St. Joseph County, Indiana (National Archives Publication No. T-9, roll 309), vol. XXX, pp. 8-9, 14.

⁶ Solomon W. Palmer had bought the sawmill on January 28, 1861. Deed Record Book AB, pp. 425-26, County Recorder's Office, County-City Building, South Bend. Esse B. Dakin, who wrote about the Underground Railroad in the St. Joseph County area, claimed that Palmer frequently noticed "fugitives dodging about in the underbrush" near the mill and once helped three escaping slaves to reach safety in Michigan. Writing late in the nineteenth century, she also claimed that Palmer had been an admirer of John Brown and had exchanged letters with him. Palmer had also been one of the parties in the famous South Bend fugitive slave case. Esse B. Dakin, "The Underground Railroad in St. Joseph County," comp. by Helen Hibberd Windle (South Bend, 1939), 9. A copy of this work is in the South Bend Public Library and is based on a paper written and read before the Northern Indiana Historical Society in 1899. For the South Bend fugitive slave case see Emma Lou Thornbrough, *The Negro in Indiana: A Study of a Minority* (Indiana Historical Collections, Vol. XXXVII; Indianapolis, 1957), 112-14; and Chapman, *History of St. Joseph County*, 618-26.

Who and what sort of people were these black settlers on the northern Indiana frontier? What can be said of race relations among the nineteenth-century pioneers in St. Joseph County? Was the settlement a historical curiosity or does it have some significance for black history in Indiana? These are some of the questions which need to be answered from the meager records and from the recollections of a few persons who have knowledge of the black community from their parents. The task is made more difficult by the fact that the black families who resided in Union Township have died out or their descendants dispersed.

The settlement began with Samuel Huggart, who applied for a patent for eighty acres of land at the La Porte Land Office on September 11, 1834.⁷ Then thirty or thirty-one years old, Huggart had traveled from Montgomery County, Ohio, where he had settled when his family moved north.⁸ He paid \$100.00 or \$1.25 an acre for his land, described as the east half of the northwest quarter of section 29, township 36, north of range 2 east; and the patent was issued March 20, 1837, with the approval of President Martin Van Buren.⁹

Huggart's antecedents in Virginia had apparently taken their name from an early white family that settled on the Big Calpasture River there. The white Huggarts owned plantations in the vicinity of Deerfield, Augusta County, Virginia. The family was founded in that area by Thomas Huggart, whose brother James bequeathed some "negros" to his wife Agness in his will, probated February 19, 1767. Thus, this family defi-

⁷ "La Porte Cash Certificate Number 2986," Records of La Porte Cash Entries, Record Group 49; Deed Record Book V, pp. 621-22, County Recorder's Office, County-City Building, South Bend. There are variations in the spelling of the surname. The early spellings generally are "Huggart," although later members of the family used "Huggard." The La Porte Land Office functioned from 1833 to 1839, at which time it was moved to Winamac. Barnhart and Carmony, *Indiana*, I, 288.

⁸ The figure for Huggart's age is based upon information on his gravestone in the Porter Cemetery, St. Joseph County. The cemetery, now surrounded by the Potato Creek State Recreation Area, is the burial place for members of the black settlement.

⁹ Huggart paid the minimum price for the minimum amount of land which could be purchased as established by the federal land law of 1820. Barnhart and Carmony, *Indiana*, I, 226. The entire black settlement was confined to one section of land, a square mile, now bounded on the north by Osborne Road, on the south by Indiana Highway 4, on the east by Mulberry Road, and on the west by Oak Road, the latter being the eastern limit of the state recreation area. A railroad track, the New Jersey, Indiana, & Illinois, was laid through the section before the opening of the line in 1905. The patent giving the location of Huggart's land is recorded in the National Archives and in the St. Joseph County Recorder's Office. See notes 1 and 7.

nitely did own slaves, probably including the forebears of the black pioneers who made their way to northern Indiana.¹⁰ By 1810 Moses Huggart, Samuel's father, was listed in the United States census as the head of a household consisting of seven free nonwhite persons in Rockbridge County, Virginia.¹¹

At least several years passed after Samuel obtained his land patent before he actually settled in Indiana. He was not listed in the state until the 1850 census, in which he was recorded as residing in the same household as his brother Andrew, who became the most prominent of the black pioneers. Andrew was reported to have arrived in St. Joseph County in the fall of 1848,¹² and Samuel could have come at the same time. By 1852 Samuel was serving on a committee of the Sumption Prairie Baptist Church which was making plans for a new place of worship.¹³ His land patent was certified by the General Land Office in Washington in 1853, and in 1858 he deeded half of his interest in the farm to Andrew.¹⁴ With Samuel's death at the age of sixty-eight on December 21, 1872, Andrew obtained sole ownership of the farm.¹⁵

Andrew Huggart, described in an obituary as the first black person to seek public office in St. Joseph County,¹⁶ was

¹⁰ George W. Diehl, genealogist for the Rockbridge County, Virginia, Historical Society, to Frederick A. Karst, June 26, 1975. Diehl states that James Huggart's will, written February 11, 1767, is in Will Book 4, p. 30, Staunton, Augusta County, Virginia.

¹¹ U.S., Third Census, 1810, population schedules for Rockbridge County, Virginia (National Archives Microfilm Publication No. 252, roll 70), p. 395.

¹² U.S., Seventh Census, 1850, population schedules for St. Joseph County, Indiana, p. 144; South Bend *St. Joseph Valley Weekly Register*, October 12, 1881.

¹³ Chapman, *History of St. Joseph County*, 698.

¹⁴ Deed Record Book V, pp. 621-22, County Recorder's Office, County-City Building, South Bend. The certification perhaps was required to show evidence of Samuel's ownership since he did not settle on the land immediately and may not have had the patent in his possession. The commissioner of the General Land Office certified it was a "true and literal exemplification."

¹⁵ Gravestone in Porter Cemetery. Andrew obtained sole ownership of the farm through a succession of quit claim deeds filed by Samuel's other heirs who resided in Ohio and Iowa. Deed Record Book 55, p. 142, County Recorder's Office, County-City Building, South Bend; Deed Record Book 57, pp. 90, 142, *ibid.*

¹⁶ South Bend *Tribune*, October 1, 1881. An extensive search has failed to determine what office was involved. Andrew Huggart almost certainly was not a nominee for any county post. He may merely have "run for office" as constable or some other township position in a township caucus. The Huggarts probably were Republican in politics, as evidenced by the attention given to Andrew's death in the Republican press. Andrew's son Samuel won one dollar in gold in a South Bend *St. Joseph Valley Register* subscription contest in 1880. The *Register* was a strong Republican voice. South Bend *St. Joseph Valley Register*, November 3, 1880.

born in Virginia in 1816. As a young man he learned the shoemaker's trade. At the age of twenty he moved to Dayton and later to Miami County, Ohio. In 1839 Andrew married Jane Clark, a native of Amherst County, Virginia, which adjoins Rockbridge County along the crest of the Blue Ridge. Her paternal grandfather was said to have been a fifer in the Revolutionary War.¹⁷ The couple's first three children—Wesley, Mary, and James—were born in Ohio, and the remaining two—Sarah and Samuel—were born in Indiana.¹⁸

Andrew prospered at farming in the Hoosier State and in 1863, with his brother Samuel, purchased an additional eighty acres of land adjoining the original Huggart tract. Wesley bought forty acres from his parents and uncle in 1865, and James bought a similar-sized farm from Andrew and Jane eight years later.¹⁹ Although his principal livelihood was farming, Andrew occasionally worked in the winter at his original trade, repairing shoes for his neighbors. Having joined the Baptist church in Lancaster, Ohio, he, too, became a member of the church at Sumption Prairie, three miles northwest of the Huggart farm.²⁰ The esteem in which he was held by his neighbors was reflected in his selection as superintendent of a union Sunday school at Olive Branch—a position he held for many years.²¹ The Huggart children also attended a largely white school at Olive Branch.²²

¹⁷ Chapman, *History of St. Joseph County*, 957. The Clark surname may have derived from a white family which played an important role in Amherst County's history. Jane Clark's family could have been granted its freedom by the white Clarks—possibly in return for service in the war—and thus followed the common practice of taking the same name as their former owners. George W. Diehl to Frederick A. Karst, June 26, 1975.

¹⁸ Chapman, *History of St. Joseph County*, 957. U.S., Seventh Census, 1850, population schedules for St. Joseph County, Indiana, p. 144; U.S., Eighth Census, 1860, *ibid.*, p. 120.

¹⁹ Deed Record Book AG, p. 188, County Recorder's Office, County-City Building, South Bend; Deed Record Book 34, p. 303, *ibid.*; and Deed Record Book 52, p. 214, *ibid.*

²⁰ Chapman, *History of St. Joseph County*, 957. The site of the church, which disappeared long ago, is marked by remnants of its cemetery, now on the Floyd Downhour farm, 63068 Pine Road, South Bend.

²¹ South Bend *St. Joseph Valley Weekly Register*, October 12, 1881. The area in St. Joseph County known as Olive Branch was named for a United Brethren church which has long been located there, although the church originated immediately north of Lakeville. Andrew's and Jane's children later became active in this church. Interviews with Lydia Mae Easterday, November, 1975.

²² U.S., Seventh Census, 1850, population schedules for St. Joseph County, Indiana, p. 144; interviews with Lydia Mae Easterday, November, 1975, and Charles Bowers, November 10, 1975. The last school building at Olive Branch, constructed in June, 1890, now serves as a shed on a farm near its original

In addition to church activities and school attendance something of the Huggarts' lifestyle can be inferred from the building that was probably the farmhouse erected by the family after they settled in St. Joseph County in 1848.²³ When built by the Huggarts, it is probable that the house had four large rooms, two on the first and two on the second floor, plus a cellar and attic. A corner of the ground-floor room may have been partitioned off as a kitchen. The barn was beside a long lane leading into the farm, and there was also a smokehouse among the original buildings. Another Huggart house lay farther from the road along the same lane.²⁴ The second house was on the farm of Wesley or James. All of the improvements on the original eighty acres were on the east half of the farm, which possibly contained still another house described as "four acres & appurtenances" and occupied by Andrew's and Jane's daughter Sarah.²⁵

The most widely known of the black settlers after the Huggarts was Benjamin Bass, who purchased 120 acres adjacent to the Huggart property in 1860.²⁶ Bass, born in 1801 in Guilford, North Carolina, had first settled in Terre Haute, Indiana, before coming to St. Joseph County.²⁷ He bought an

location. School attendance for black children was permitted but not required in pre-Civil War Indiana. Although a few white schools allowed blacks to attend, most did not, and separate black schools were few in number. In 1869 the Indiana General Assembly made official provision for the education of black children and made the property of black as well as white owners subject to the school tax. Thornbrough, *Negro in Indiana*, 160-82, 323-24. See also Indiana, *Laws* (special session, 1869), 41.

²³ The current owners of the building, Mr. and Mrs. Martin E. Wagner, 23598 Osborne Road, have built a new home nearby and use the old farmhouse for grain storage. When the Wagners installed central heating in the house after buying the farm in 1965, bulges in the floor were found to have been caused by stumps left from the woods and protected by the house built over them. Interview with Mrs. Martin E. Wagner, November, 1975.

²⁴ Interview with Anna Anderson Graf, November 14, 1975. Mrs. Graf was one and one half years old when her parents bought the farm from Andrew Huggart's heirs. Her parents also sold lots in South Bend to relatives of the black pioneers. Deed Record Book 93, pp. 492, 555, County Recorder's Office, County-City Building, South Bend.

²⁵ Will Book 5, Box 12, pp. 120-22, County Clerk's Office, St. Joseph County Courthouse, South Bend.

²⁶ Deed Record Book AB, p. 190, County Recorder's Office, County-City Building, South Bend. Although Article XIII of Indiana's Constitution of 1851 prohibited further black immigration into the state, the law was apparently not systematically enforced. Thornbrough, *Negro in Indiana*, 65-73.

²⁷ Obituary in South Bend *Tribune*, February 12, 1891. The surname "Bass" frequently appeared in lists of free Negroes in both North Carolina and in black settlements in Indiana. The largest black settlements in the western part of Indiana in the early nineteenth century were in Vigo County. Thornbrough, *Negro in Indiana*, 33, 51.

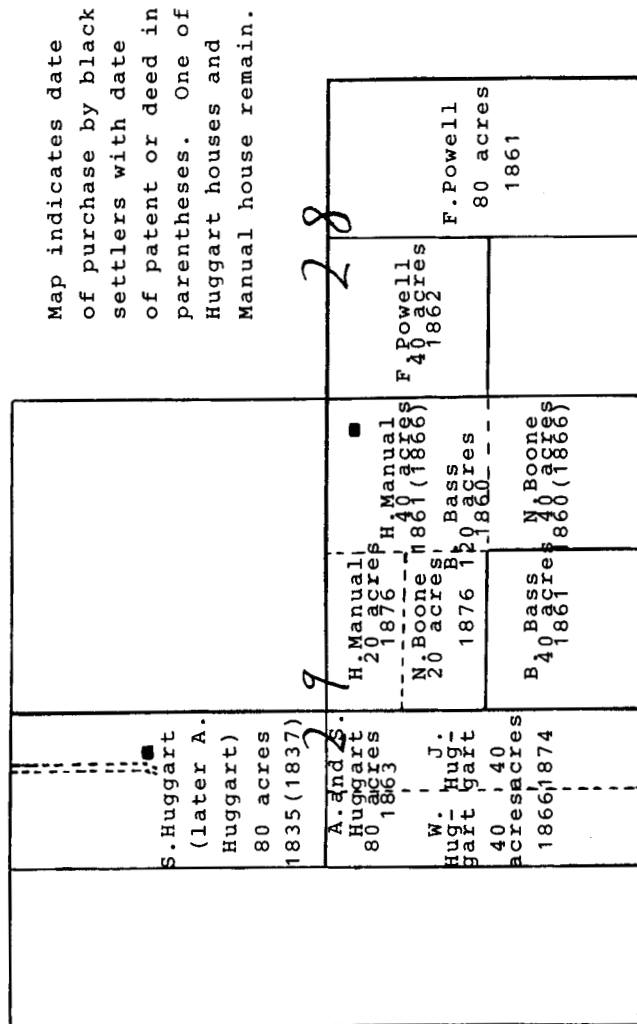


RECENT PHOTOGRAPH OF LOG HOUSE BUILT BY HARDY MANUAL

Courtesy Frederick A. Karst.

additional forty acres in Union Township in 1861, and he also acquired land elsewhere in St. Joseph County and in Cass County, Michigan. Although his first wife, Dila, is buried in the Porter Cemetery, it is not clear how long he lived in Union Township, where he never was counted in a census. He disposed of much of his land shortly after buying it, including parcels he sold to two other blacks, Noah Boone, in 1860, and Hardy Manual, in 1861.²⁸

²⁸ Deed Record Book AA, p. 566, County Recorder's Office, County-City Building, South Bend; Deed Record Book AB, p. 414, *ibid.*; Deed Record Book AC, p. 21, *ibid.*; Deed Record Book 34, p. 359, 376, *ibid.* Will of Benjamin Bass, Will Book 6, pp. 439-43, County Clerk's Office, St. Joseph County Courthouse. Manual had been a carpenter in South Bend before moving to Union Township at about the age of thirty. He built a log house on a high point on one of the hills where it remains on the farm of Mr. and Mrs. Evan Easterday, 65551 Mulberry Road. In recent years it has been used as the evaporator house for a maple syrup camp. It may be the only recognizable log building of early construction still in use in St. Joseph County. Manual served as a trustee of the Olive Branch church in 1880, and his second wife was born a Bass. Chapman, *History of St. Joseph County*, 952; St. Joseph County Marriage Records, Book 11, p. 351, County Clerk's Office, St. Joseph County Courthouse; gravestone in



SECTIONS 28 AND 29, TOWNSHIP 36, RANGE 2 EAST
UNION TOWNSHIP, ST. JOSEPH COUNTY

Map prepared by Frederick A. Karst.

Most of the black settlers in Union Township, like Bass, derived from North Carolina, the birthplace of Bass' wife, Dila; Boone's wife, Zipporah, and Manual.²⁹ The Huggarts were exceptions. Another exception was black landowner Farrow Powell, who came to South Bend in 1858 from South Carolina. Powell purchased land adjoining the settlement although he did not live in Union Township himself. He bought his first parcel of property in the township in 1861, and the following year he bought a second piece of acreage from Palmer.³⁰

Life for the blacks in Union Township was apparently typical for the pioneer period in Indiana. Following the custom of the times, they probably shared threshing, butchering, and other farm work with their neighbors, most of whom were white. They frequently took meals at the homes of these neighbors whom they entertained in turn at their homes.³¹ The blacks' style of farming in all likelihood included the cultivation of general crops and raising of livestock, which practice was common in St. Joseph County during the mid-nineteenth century. The Huggart farms, at least, also included two apple orchards.³² While frontier life was harsh, it did include some amenities. The personal property of Dila Bass, for example, included a bedstead, featherbed, pillows and bolster, a drop-leaf table, and a rocker chair.³³

By 1880, when the black settlement was at its peak,³⁴ some of the residents had already moved to South Bend. Benjamin

Porter Cemetery. The Manual and Bass families shared the same lot in the cemetery. Boone and Manual each bought forty acres from Bass in 1861 and another twenty acres in 1876, although in the latter case not directly from Bass. Deed Record Book AB, pp. 199, 516, County Recorder's Office, County-City Building, South Bend; Deed Record Book 34, pp. 359, 376, *ibid.*; Deed Record Book 56, pp. 344, 505, 517-18, *ibid.*; Deed Record Book 64, p. 505, *ibid.*; Deed Record Book 73, p. 433, *ibid.*

²⁹ U.S., Tenth Census, 1880, population schedules for St. Joseph County, Indiana, pp. 8-9, 14.

³⁰ Deed Record Book AD, p. 344, County Recorder's Office, County-City Building, South Bend. Powell became well known in South Bend, where some of his descendants still reside.

³¹ Interviews with Lydia Mae Easterday, November, 1975, and Charles Bowers, November 10, 1975. These friendships continued long after the Huggarts and other black settlers moved to South Bend. Several persons recall being taken as children to visit them at their homes in the city.

³² Interview with Charles Bowers, November 10, 1975.

³³ Will of Benjamin Bass, Will Book 6, Box 20, pp. 439-43, County Clerk's Office, St. Joseph County Courthouse.

³⁴ The twenty-eight "mulattoes" counted in the 1880 United States Census were in six households headed by (1) Samuel Huggart (nephew of the original Samuel), (2) Wesley Huggart, (3) Efferson Manuel, (4) Andrew Huggart, (5) Noah Boone, and (6) Hardy Manual. The other residents were: (1) Rosella, Samuel's wife; (2) Addie, Wesley's wife; their children, Andrew, Lottie, Frederick, and Ora; and James Gilder, single and a laborer, born in New York, his



GRAVESTONE OF ANDREW AND SAMUEL HUGGART
PORTER CEMETERY

Courtesy Frederick A. Karst.

Bass was retired, and James Huggart had found work as a teamster.³⁵ An aging Andrew Huggart was suffering from a protracted ailment diagnosed as "dropsy of the heart,"³⁶ and he died on Friday, September 30, 1881.³⁷ With his death the blacks began moving to South Bend at a quickened pace, and the end of the settlement was near.³⁸

Huggart's will divided the remaining portion of his farm between his son, Samuel; his daughter, Sarah Manuel, and his grandson, Lorenzo Boon, subject to occupancy by his wife for the remainder of her life and to the exception that Sarah Manuel was given the right to continue to occupy the four acres on which she resided.³⁹ Jane, Andrew's wife, died on January

father having been born in New York and mother in England; (3) Sarah, Efferson's wife (daughter of Andrew and Jane Huggart) and their children, Sylvester and James; (4) Jane Huggart; (5) Zipporah Boone and their children, James, Melvin, Abigail, Rachel, Curtis, Melvina, Wyatt, and a six-month-old son; (6) Jeanette Manual and Robert, an adopted son born in North Carolina. U.S., Tenth Census, 1880, population schedules for St. Joseph County, Indiana, vol. XXX, pp. 8-9, 14. The occurrence of the names "Manuel" and "Manual," "Boon" and "Boone" could indicate a relationship between the families although none has been established. An 1880 St. Joseph County directory placed property values for Andrew Huggart, eighty acres, at \$2,030; Hardy Manual, sixty acres, \$1,350; and Noah Boone, sixty acres, \$1,200. G. F. Alward, comp. and pub., *St. Joseph County Directory for 1880, embracing a complete alphabetically arranged list of the tax payers of the city of South Bend and the various Towns and Townships in the County* (South Bend, 1880), 33-35.

³⁵ Timothy G. Turner, ed. and pub., *Turner's Directory of the Inhabitants, Institutions and Manufactories of the city of South Bend, Indiana* (South Bend, 1880), 39, 90.

³⁶ Obituary in *South Bend Tribune*, October 1, 1881. Huggart's condition would at the present time probably be diagnosed as congestive heart failure.

³⁷ St. Joseph County newspapers paid tribute to Huggart: "He was a good man, beloved and respected by all his neighbors, and had many friends in this city." *South Bend St. Joseph County Register*, October 12, 1881. "He was one of the most industrious and conscientious men we have ever met and so thoroughly honorable that it was a pleasure to know him and be his friend." *South Bend Tribune*, October 1, 1881. These words presumably are those of Alfred B. Miller, the *Tribune's* first editor. Older residents of Union Township still echo such sentiments about the Huggarts. The *South Bend Evening Register*, October 1, 1881, also carried details of Andrew's death and funeral.

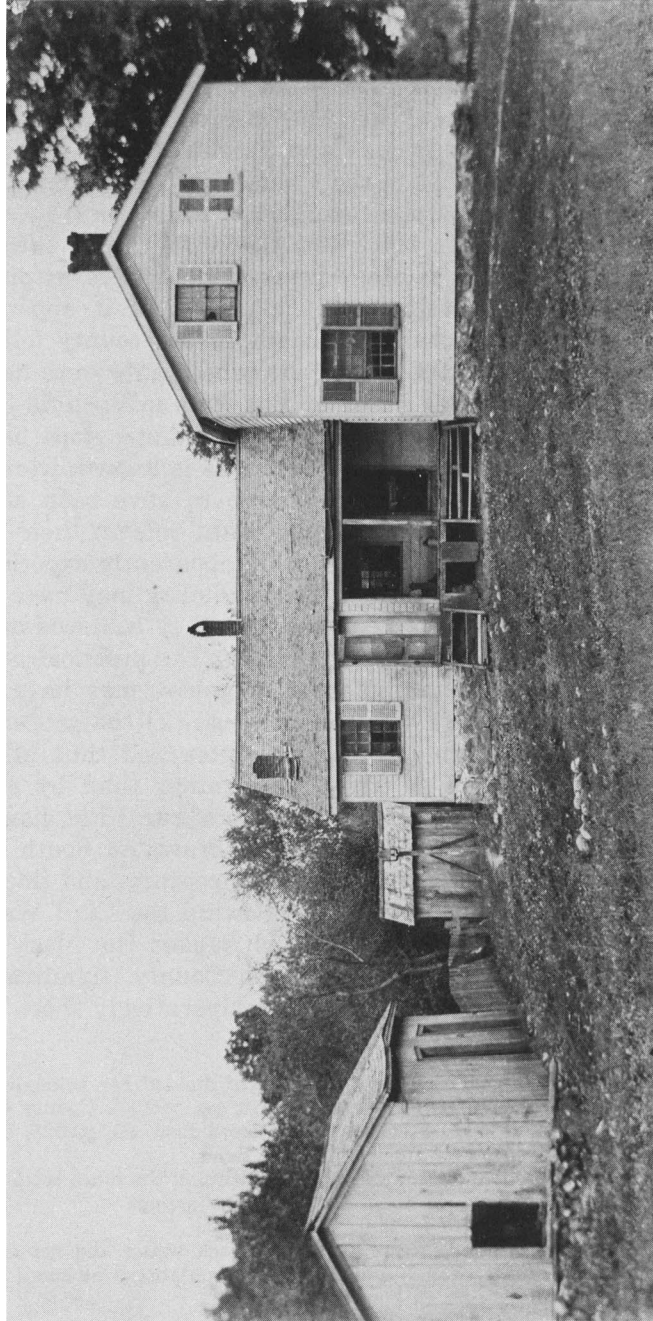
³⁸ Manual and his wife, Jeanette, sold out in 1885 to George Feagler, whose granddaughter now lives on the farm. Noah and Zipporah Boone sold in 1888 and James Huggart in 1887. Wesley moved to South Bend about 1890. Deed Record Book 73, p. 437, County Recorder's Office, County-City Building, South Bend; Deed Record Book 78, p. 322, *ibid.*; Deed Record Book 76, p. 20, *ibid.* The index to deeds in the St. Joseph County recorder's office lacks a proper record of Wesley's sale of his farm.

³⁹ The will was dated October 23, 1875, and a codicil September 8, 1881, three weeks before Andrew's death. Will of Andrew Huggart, Will Book 5, Box 12, pp. 120-22, County Clerk's Office, St. Joseph County Courthouse. The will did not mention Wesley or James, to whom Andrew had previously sold farmland.



SAMUEL HUGGARD, SON OF ANDREW AND JANE HUGGART,
HIS WIFE ROSELLA AND SON CLARENCE
c. 1890

Courtesy Charles Bowers.



HOME OF SAMUEL HUGGARD, SON OF ANDREW AND JANE HUGGART

Courtesy Mrs. Evan Easterday.

28, 1890, and on September 23, 1893, the Huggart heirs sold the original eighty-acre farm to Lars and Nicoline Andreasen.⁴⁰ Among those signing the deed was the younger Samuel, whom Andrew had intended to remain on his farm and work it, which he did for a few years. When the last of the Huggarts left Union Township, their friends and neighbors held a sad but festive farewell gathering in their honor, in character with the life they had shared as pioneers.⁴¹

St. Joseph County's black settlement in Union Township was seemingly typical of other black communities in pioneer Indiana. The fact that it was rural and that it apparently preceded permanent urban settlement in the county followed the general pattern in the state.⁴² Its inhabitants were natives or descendants of persons whose origins were in Virginia or the Carolinas, although several made intermediate stops on the way to Indiana. The inhabitants, so far as is known, were free before the Civil War. Family ties seem to have been strong, and religious practice played a significant role in their lives. The black residents of Union Township apparently experienced very little racial discrimination. Respectability may have been a factor in the degree of acceptance that they achieved and in their influence on the larger community. The practical advantages of cooperation among pioneer neighbors may have been another. Perhaps a third was the small size of the settlement, which posed no economic threat to whites and thus allowed residents to be judged as individuals rather than by stereotypes.⁴³ Despite the seeming advantages of rural life, however, members of the black settlement were drawn to South Bend during the last decade of the nineteenth century, and this, too, was typical of black communities following the Civil War.⁴⁴

Indeed, it is this typicality which makes the black community in Union Township, St. Joseph County, significant in Indiana history. It was small; it was comparatively short lived;

⁴⁰ Gravestone in Porter Cemetery. Jane's will divided her belongings between Wesley and James. Will Book 6, Box 19, pp. 292-93, County Clerk's Office, St. Joseph County Courthouse. Deed Record Book 93, p. 523, County Recorder's Office, County-City Building, South Bend.

⁴¹ Interview with Charles Bowers. The friendship of the black settlers and their neighbors apparently did not extend to intermarriage.

⁴² Thornbrough, *Negro in Indiana*, 133.

⁴³ Serious discrimination, according to one black writer, did not exist in South Bend before World War I, and the black population was small in the same period. Gordon, "Negro in South Bend," [17].

⁴⁴ Thornbrough, *Negro in Indiana*, 206.

its most prominent individuals were not well known outside the county. Its pattern of existence follows that attributed to black—and, in large measure, to white—rural communities of the period.⁴⁵

⁴⁵ It could also be noted that the settlement's leading figure, Andrew Huggart, was highly regarded by his contemporaries outside the black enclave. The same might be said of Benjamin Bass. The extent to which they were accepted might also be considered significant.