

“Shall Woman’s Voice Be Hushed?”: Laura Smith Haviland in Abolitionist Women’s History

by
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In September of 2010, residents of southeastern Michigan gathered at the Lenawee County Historical Museum for a lecture on locally renowned Underground Railroad “conductor” Laura Smith Haviland. The next weekend at a nearby annual art festival, Haviland was a focal point in a dramatic, if exaggerated, historical performance in which she was portrayed as freeing thousands of slaves and facing off a pack of hungry wolves while en route to Canada.¹ A commissioned portrait of Haviland—elderly, wise, and gracefully holding a bouquet of roses—hangs in the Michigan Women’s Historical Center and Hall of Fame in Lansing.² In the state of Michigan, Laura Haviland is a heroic character subject to the excesses of legend. In the historical literature on antislavery women, however, Haviland has been largely overlooked.

In this article, I explore Laura Haviland’s activism in relation to the historiography of abolitionist women. I consider reasons Haviland failed to become a person of interest in the literature until very recently, even as the scholarly scope widened in the 1990s and early 2000s to include women who had been marginalized from the dominant narrative of antislavery politics. Additionally, this work suggests that an examination of Haviland’s actions and social networks illuminates the regional particularity of Midwestern women’s antislavery culture as well as the transnational character of Great Lakes abolitionism.

¹ Haviland’s life was also reenacted in a “Historical Day” at the Adrian Woman’s Club in 1948. “Aunt Laura Haviland Episodes Depicted Before Woman’s Club,” *Adrian Daily Telegram*, December 1, 1948, Laura Haviland Vertical File, Bentley Historical Library, Ann Arbor, MI (LHVF, BHL).

² Haviland’s portrait is reproduced in Emily Ann Dietrich, “Laura Smith Haviland Emancipator,” in Rosalie Riegle Troester, ed., *Historic Women of Michigan: A Sesquicentennial Celebration* (Lansing: Michigan Women’s Studies Association, 1987), 24-39, 24.

Haviland's Place in Abolitionist Women's History

Born in Ontario in 1808, Laura Smith married Charles Haviland at the age of seventeen.³ In 1829 the couple's extended families, then situated in New York, moved en masse to Michigan Territory to access "the advantages of cheap land."⁴ After settling in the forested Raisin River valley, the Smith-Haviland families founded the first Quaker meeting in Michigan.⁵ Haviland soon met Elizabeth Chandler, an anti-slavery poet and recent immigrant from Philadelphia. Linked by their northeastern, middle-class backgrounds that characterized many of southern Michigan's first white immigrants, Haviland and Chandler became close.⁶ In 1832, Chandler convinced Haviland to join her in forming The Logan Female Anti-Slavery Society.⁷ After Chandler's sudden death in 1834, Haviland continued to organize against slavery.⁸ She persuaded her family to leave their Quaker church to join the radical Wesleyan Methodist denomination, which sanctioned anti-slavery rhetoric as well as action.⁹ She co-founded, with her husband and her

³ Haviland, *Life-Work*, 9-10; Anthony Patrick Glesner, "Laura Haviland: Neglected Heroine of the Underground Railroad," *Michigan Historical Review* Vol. 21, No. 1 (1999): 19-48, 24-25.

⁴ "Report of Annual Meeting of 1878: Aunt Laura Haviland," Michigan Pioneer and Historical Collections Vol. II, 424-426, History of Laura Smith Haviland and Family File, Laura Haviland Box, Lenawee County Historical Society Museum, Adrian, MI.

⁵ Mildred E. Danforth, *A Quaker Pioneer: Laura Haviland, Superintendent of the Underground Railroad* (New York: Exposition Press, 1961), 23-25; Adda Dilts, "Aunt Laura Haviland," *Michigan Heritage* (Autumn 1971): 1-7, Adda Dilts Vertical File, BHL, 1; Carol E. Mull, *The Underground Railroad in Michigan* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland and Co. Inc., 2010), 22.

⁶ Malcolm J. Rohrbough, *Trans-Appalachian Frontier: People, Societies, and Institutions, 1775-1850* Third Edition (Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 2008), 336-338; Ogg, *Old Northwest*, 97, 172-174. For more on Elizabeth Chandler, see Blanche Glassman Hersh, "'Am I Not a Woman and a Sister?': Abolitionist Beginnings of Nineteenth-Century Feminism," in Lewis Perry and Michael Fellman, eds. *Antislavery Reconsidered: New Perspectives on the Abolitionists* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1979), 252-283, 255-258; Margaret Hope Bacon, *Mothers of Feminism: The Story of Quaker Women in America* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1986), 101.

⁷ Haviland, *Life-Work*, 24; Glesner, "Laura Haviland," 28-29.

⁸ Chandler's antislavery poetry was published after her death as *The Poetical Works of Elizabeth Margaret Chandler. With a Memoir of her Life and Character* (Philadelphia: Benjamin Lundy, 1836). "Hazelbank: Elizabeth Margaret Chandler," Anti-Slavery Box, Underground Railroad Movement folder, LHSM. Letters of Benjamin Lundy, 1835-1837, about the difficulty of finding a publisher for Chandler's work during a period of negative popular opinion toward abolitionists, can be found in the Chandler Papers, BHL.

⁹ Haviland, *Life-Work*, 24, 26; Glesner, "Laura Haviland," 29-30; Charles Lindquist, *The "Heavenly" Mrs. Haviland*, Seeds of Time No. 8 (Adrian, MI: Lenawee County

brother, an interracial, co-educational school based on the Oberlin College model.¹⁰ Under Haviland's oversight, the Raisin Institute would become a safe space for African American fugitives from slavery and a magnet for black settlers in Michigan.¹¹ In the 1840s and 1850s, Haviland traveled regularly from Michigan to Ohio, from Ohio to Michigan, and from Michigan to Canada, assisting slaves in escapes, teaching African American students, and making public anti-slavery speeches. She was active in meetings of the Michigan Antislavery Society and published radical writing criticizing the U.S. government and claiming "hope for reformation only in REVOLUTION."¹² When at home on her farm, she received "frequent calls from fugitives in flight for freedom, whose claims were second to none other" and earned the title "superintendent of the Underground Railroad."¹³

Haviland's radical actions on behalf of runaway slaves led a white Tennessean to announce a reward for her capture in 1847. Like African American abolitionist Harriet Tubman, Haviland was sought dead or alive, with a price placed on her head of \$3,000.¹⁴ Haviland became so well known among enslaved blacks in Kentucky that a jailer threatened her arrest in 1851 when she visited her fellow abolitionist, Calvin Fairbank, in a Louisville jail.¹⁵ According to the officers, Haviland was "dangerous," given the "electric shock, upon those slaves at the sight of

Historical Society, 2001), no pagination; Bacon, *Mothers of Feminism*, 94; For more on the schism in the Quaker Church in the 1820s and 1840s see Nancy A. Hewitt, "The Fragmentation of Friends: The Consequences for Quaker Women in Antebellum America," in Elisabeth Potts Brown and Susan Mosher Stuard, eds., *Witnesses for Change: Quaker Women over Three Centuries* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1989), 93-108; Haviland, *Life-Work*, 13-15.

¹⁰ Haviland, *Life-Work*, 42, 161; Lindquist, "Heavenly" Mrs. Haviland; Raisin Institute was also called Graham Town because of Haviland's insistence that the students eat bread made from graham flour. Fields, "'Aunt Laura's' Verse," *Adrian Daily Telegram*, LHVF, BHL.

¹¹ Haviland, *Life-Work*, 28, 153; Gesner, "Laura Haviland," 31; Stephen Decatur Helms to Silas Y. Helms, September 7, 1844, Carol Mull personal collection, Ann Arbor, MI; Laura S. Haviland to Sister Sojourner, January 12, 1866, *Narrative of Sojourner Truth*, Introduction by Nell Irvin Painter (NY: Penguin, 1998), 200-201.

¹² Washington, *Sojourner Truth's America*, 284; Haviland, "For Frederick Douglass' Paper: Calvin Fairbank."

¹³ Haviland, *Life-Work*, 152, 150; Mull, *Underground Railroad in Michigan*, 160.

¹⁴ Haviland, *Life-Work*, 56-57; Margaret Washington, *Sojourner Truth's America* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2009), 284.

¹⁵ Calvin Fairbanks, Letter from Calvin Fairbanks, November 13, 1851, *Frederick Douglass's Paper*, reprint, *Liberator*, December 12, 1851; Laura Haviland, "For Frederick Douglass' Paper: Calvin Fairbank," *Frederick Douglass's Paper*, November 30, 1854.

her.”¹⁶ Again, as in Tubman’s example, Haviland seems to have earned the designation “Moses” from at least one member of the Michigan African American community. When she conversed with a black man on the street in the 1880s, he congratulated her on her good health at age eighty-one, but added that this was “nothing strange, The Lord always takes good care of all his Moses.”¹⁷ While Harriet Tubman stands alone in her awe-inspiring tenacity and remarkable success at aiding fugitive escapes, Haviland is similarly unique among white women abolitionists for her independence and boldness of action.¹⁸

Haviland became a staunch advocate for African American freedom and rights, especially in the years following the Civil War. As she traveled the Midwest displaying slave irons that she had recovered from a Louisiana plantation, her fame spread among northern whites. Her dramatic autobiography, *A Woman’s Life-Work: Labors and Experiences*, would see five additional editions after its initial publication in 1881.¹⁹ In the text, she proclaimed her support of “all reforms” that would “cleanse the muddy waters” of America’s unequal society.²⁰

¹⁶ “Statement of Laura S. Haviland,” in Calvin Fairbank, *Laura Smith Haviland, Rev. Calvin Fairbank During Slavery Times* (Chicago: R. R. McCabe & Co., 1890) 183-208, 203; Haviland, *Life-Work*, 93-104.

¹⁷ Haviland, *Diary*, June 19, 1890, Lenawee County Historical Society Museum, Adrian, MI (LHSM).

¹⁸ Catherine Clinton likewise singles Haviland out among white women abolitionists and compares her to Tubman. Clinton, *Harriet Tubman: The Road to Freedom* (New York: Back Bay Books, 2004), 72-73.

¹⁹ Julie Roy Jeffrey, *Abolitionists Remember: Antislavery Autobiographies & the Unfinished Work of Emancipation* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2008), 131.

²⁰ Laura S. Haviland, *A Woman’s Life-Work: Including Thirty Years’ Service on the Underground Railroad and in the War*, 5th edition (Grand Rapids, MI: S. B. Shaw Publisher, 1897), 556, Clements Library, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI. Haviland’s autobiography was first published as Laura S. Haviland, *A Woman’s Life-Work: Labors and Experiences of Laura S. Haviland* (Cincinnati: Walden and Stowe for the author, 1881), in 1881 and 1882. A third edition with a new preface was titled *A Woman’s Life-Work: Including Thirty Years’ Service on the Underground Railroad and in the War* (Chicago: 1887). A fourth and fifth edition with this same title included yet another new preface, expanded chapters, and additional letters and poetry (Grand Rapids: 1897). Unless otherwise noted, citations in this article are drawn from a reprinted version of the 1881 edition by HardPress Publishing, 2006, HardPress.net.



Laura Smith Haviland with slave irons.

Source: Photographs, Box 1, Laura S. Haviland Papers, Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan.

At the 1892 Columbian Exposition World's Fair in Chicago, Haviland was designated the "Mother of Philanthropy."²¹ On Michigan Day at the Fair, she shared the stage with Frederick Douglass and was described by a woman in the crowd as "the well known worker for the Emancipation of Slavery."²² Haviland died in Grand Rapids, Michigan, in 1898, one year after the final edition of her autobiography was released.²³

Despite her prominence in the late nineteenth century and a two-decades-long florescence of historical work on abolitionist women beginning in the 1990s, Laura Haviland has received limited scholarly attention.²⁴ In the 1990s and early 2000s, even as the historical literature on antislavery women expanded beyond a focus on middle class white reformers to recognize the contributions of African American and "ordinary" women abolitionists, Haviland scarcely garnered more than a few mentions.²⁵ Notable among these is Julie Roy Jeffrey's (1998) pointed description of Haviland as "one of the more extraordinary white female abolitionists connected with the Underground Railroad in the

²¹ Haviland, *Life-Work*, 5th edition, 625. The poem, titled "To Aunt Laura," was written by Charles Brownell, Haviland's son-in-law, and records the "Mother of Philanthropy" as "a name given her by Pres. [Thomas] Palmer, Michigan Day at the World's Fair, when introducing her."

²² Hubert Bancroft, *The Book of the Fair* (1893), Paul Galvin Library, Digital History Collection, <http://Columbus.glit.edu> (accessed October 31, 2010). Bancroft mentions Haviland's prominence and that Michigan Day was September 13. Diary of Catherine Ferry Haviland at the Columbian Exposition, book 5, September 15, 1893, Shiawassee County Historical Society, Owosso, MI, <http://members.bellatlantic.net/~vze2scqk/b5.html> (accessed October 31, 2010). Catherine Haviland does not claim a blood relationship to Laura Haviland.

²³ "Noble Life Ended," no title, April 20, 1898 and "Aunt Laura Dead," no title, no date, LHVF, BHL; Haviland, *Life-Work*, 5th edition, 555.

²⁴ Mildred E. Danforth, *A Quaker Pioneer: Laura Haviland, Superintendent of the Underground Railroad* (New York: Exposition Press, 1961). Danforth's research process is described in her query letters to Oberlin College. Mildred E. Danforth to The Register, Oberlin College, June 2, 1958 and Mildred E. Danforth to Donald M. Love, Secretary of Oberlin College, August 1, 1958, Oberlin College and Conservatory Archives, Oberlin, OH.

²⁵ Alma Lutz, *Crusade for Freedom: Women of the Antislavery Movement* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1967), 18. Blanche Glassman Hersh, *The Slavery of Sex: Feminist-Abolitionists in America* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1972), 132, 145, 183. See, for instance: Shirley J. Yee, *Black Women Abolitionists: A Study in Activism, 1828-1860* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1992); Jean Fagan Yellin and John C. Van Horne, eds., *The Abolitionist Sisterhood: Women's Political Culture in Antebellum America* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994); Jacqueline Bacon, *The Humblest May Stand Forth: Rhetoric, Empowerment, and Abolition* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2002).

Midwest.”²⁶ Since 2008, a handful of excellent scholarly books have addressed Haviland’s activism and literary production. Julie Roy Jeffrey’s *Abolitionists Remember* (2008) analyzes the rhetorical dynamics and public reception of autobiographies by Haviland and other abolitionists in a post-Reconstruction moment when the cause of black freedom had lost popular support. Margaret Washington’s *Sojourner Truth’s America* (2009) describes Haviland’s work at the Freedmen’s Hospital in Washington, DC, and her friendship with Sojourner Truth. Kimberly Warren’s study of black and Indian education in Kansas, *The Quest for Citizenship* (2010), describes Haviland’s relief work with freed people there. Finally, Stacey Robertson’s *Hearts Beating for Liberty: Women Abolitionists in the Old Northwest* (2010) draws on Haviland’s educational activism and independent work as an Underground Railroad operator to paint a composite picture of Midwestern women’s antislavery culture.²⁷ These treatments are all highly valuable, yet they amount to just a small fraction of published work on abolitionist women.

I suggest that Laura Haviland’s persistent absence (or diminished presence) in the historical literature stems from three historiographical blind spots. A first may well be regional bias. Traditionally, antislavery studies have focused on the Northeast, with monographs, biographies, and edited collections tending toward profiles of Bostonians, Philadelphians, and New Yorkers. Perhaps emblematic of this pattern is Jane Pease’s and William Pease’s *Bound with Them in Chains: A Biographical History of the Antislavery Movement* (1972), in which Maria Weston Chapman is deemed “The Boston Bluestocking” in the title of the chapter devoted to her.²⁸ As the only woman profiled among ten reformers in this early work, Maria Chapman Weston’s representation perhaps helped to set in motion a familiar type in the study of women abolitionists: the white upper middle class reformer from New England.

²⁶ Julie Joy Jeffrey, *The Great Silent Army of Abolitionism: Ordinary Women in the Antislavery Movement* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998), 185. Anna Speicher also dedicates a paragraph to Haviland in Speicher, *The Religious World of Antislavery Women: Spirituality in the Lives of Five Abolitionist Lecturers* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press), 177.

²⁷ For books that address Haviland see Stacey M. Robertson, *Hearts Beating for Liberty: Women Abolitionists in the Old Northwest* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010); Carol E. Mull, *The Underground Railroad in Michigan* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland and Co. Inc., 2010); Washington, *Sojourner Truth’s America*; Kim Cary Warren, *The Quest for Citizenship: African American and Native American Education in Kansas, 1880-1935* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010).

²⁸ Jane H. Pease and William H. Pease, *Bound with Them in Chains: A Biographical History of the Antislavery Movement* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1972), 28-59.

Haviland lived most of her life in the rural Midwest, which, until Stacey Robertson's groundbreaking book, had not been viewed as a primary site of women's antislavery activism. Perhaps this is why Beth Salerno's otherwise comprehensive study, *Sister Societies: Women's Antislavery Organizations in Antebellum America* (2005) neglected to include the Logan Female Antislavery Society in a chronology of women's antislavery organizations. The Logan Society was founded in the same year as the earliest organizations listed by Salerno (the Female Antislavery Society of Salem (MA) and the Providence Female Antislavery Society (RI)), yet Midwestern women's organizing is described by Salerno as derivative of Eastern efforts and gathering steam a decade later.²⁹ New England abolitionists themselves, who produced a plethora of primary documents, may have contributed to this northeastern bias. According to Blanche Hersh, New England reformers held up New England, and especially Boston ("the birthplace of liberty") as the natural home of abolitionism in their writings, which would become important primary source material for numerous historical works.³⁰

A second blind spot is likely the literature's focus on organized political groups and social events, such as women's anti-slavery societies and fairs. An irregular participant in large anti-slavery associations, Haviland is easily lost within this interpretive framework.³¹ First and foremost, she was an educator. Throughout her life, she launched and conducted several schools across the Midwest and Canada: two in Ohio for escaped slaves and free blacks, three in Michigan for blacks, whites, orphans, and indigent girls, and one in Ontario for former slaves.³² Her

²⁹ Beth A. Salerno, *Sister Societies: Women's Antislavery Organizations in Antebellum America* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2005), Table A—Female Antislavery Societies by Year of Founding, 165, 142-143. In her text, but not in her tables, Salerno mentions a Raisin, MI, society, likely Chandler's and Haviland's, as dating to 1834, 143. Mason, xxxiii, 394, note 49; Haviland, *Life-Work*, 24; "Chronology," Jean Fagan Yellin and John C. Van Horne, eds., *The Abolitionist Sisterhood: Women's Political Culture in Antebellum America* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994), xv-xviii. Lutz, *Crusade*, 17-18.

³⁰ Hersh, *Slavery of Sex*, 122-123.

³¹ Robertson, *Hearts*, 172.

³² In 1867 Haviland brought fifteen homeless orphans back to Michigan with her and reestablished Raisin Institute as an orphanage. She had sold the land to the Freedmen's Aid Commission with the agreement that the orphanage would be continued for the poor and the children of soldiers. However, the Commission sold the buildings and made plans to close the "asylum." Haviland fought to keep the orphanage open and returned from her travels to serve as its matron at no pay. Constantly anxious about a lack of funds, she and her staff cared for "three hundred little homeless waifs." Haviland, *Life-Work*, 291, 245, 282, 294; "A Call—Mrs. Laura Haviland," *Coldwater*

first school, the racially integrated Raisin Institute, was founded in 1837 and remained open until 1861, when seventeen of its students left to fight for the Union in the Civil War.³³ At the age of eighty-four Haviland took over a class for American Indian boys in Michigan when their former teacher refused to stay on because of the boys' race. She noted in her diary the progress of the boys and the areas in which they bested white pupils.³⁴ Teaching was Haviland's strongest weapon in the battle against the injustices of slavery, color prejudice, and poverty. But although Haviland directed her primary energies toward education, I would argue that she was more active in political organizing than has previously been realized. In addition to her work in the Logan Female Antislavery Society, Haviland paid dues to the statewide Michigan Anti-Slavery Society and proposed a resolution supporting the religious freedom of members to the organization's bylaws.³⁵

A third historiographical blind spot results from Haviland's marginal role in the organized movement for women's suffrage. The set of abolitionist women who later became women's rights activists have traditionally received the lion's share of scholarly attention in the abolitionist literature. Blanche Hersh coined the term "feminist-abolitionists" to describe her subjects in her foundational work, linking those two identity categories in her conceptualization and in the scholarship that followed. Indeed, as Nancy Hewitt has argued, "[f]eminist scholars have . . . selectively recovered the history of female antislavery activism, highlighting those individuals and organizations who made the transition from the battle against racial inequity to the struggle for sexual equality." Jeffrey has seconded this point, adding that

Republican, September 11, 1869, History of Laura Haviland File, LHSM; Miller, "Aunt Laura," 208. Later Haviland lobbied the state legislature to open a public school. Through a protracted political struggle, she was instrumental in having a state industrial school for girls established in Coldwater, MI, in 1871. Haviland intended for the school to support poor and orphaned girls in the wake of the closure of Raisin Institute. She worked there for two years as a seamstress and nurse. Haviland, *Life-Work*, 292-94.

³³ Raisin Institute had seen financial difficulties over the years, and at the time of its closing the school was deeply in debt.

³⁴ Haviland, *Diary*, January 29, 1892, February 13, 1892, January 31, 1891, and February 2, 1891.

³⁵ Harriet deGarmo Fuller Papers, Vol. 3, contributors' list taken at 1853 Michigan Anti Slavery Convention at Adrian, Oct 23, 1853 (Laura Haviland: \$1), Vol. 4, Constitution and Bye Laws of the Michigan Anti Slavery Society, Clements Library, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI (CL). Haviland's Resolution #8: "That we meet here upon the Anti Slavery platform of broad and universal freedom and as such we know no sect or party. But cordially greet every friend [sic] of the slave. However widely, we may differ in our religious views," was adopted; see Vol. 4.

attention to abolitionist women in women's history "tended to center on the small number of radical women who became feminists."³⁶ Haviland was not a central figure in the national women's movement and has therefore been excluded from narratives that adopt a feminist-abolitionist frame, yet she was a greater supporter for women's rights than scholars have appreciated. Late in her life, Haviland worked as a temperance movement lecturer and expressed support for women's suffrage in diaries, personal letters, and expanded editions of her autobiography.

As Jacqueline Bacon has argued, "recovering the voices of marginalized abolitionists" depends on our willingness to discern and disrupt the "story" of that movement as constructed by fellow historians. In so doing, we have the potential to create new narratives that can shape "alternative histories of the abolition movement."³⁷ Haviland's example, I propose, offers just such a "new narrative" that highlights the existence of a Midwestern women's abolitionist culture as well as a transnational Great Lakes antislavery network.

A Transnational Great Lakes Abolitionist Network

When Laura Haviland traveled across the Midwest into Canada, sometimes on foot or by wagon and sometimes by boat, she helped to shape a Great Lakes transnational network of antislavery activists. Her participation in this network highlights the mobile, multiracial band of resisters positioned across the Great Lakes borderlands of Michigan, Ohio, and Ontario.³⁸ A recent and productive turn in the study of

³⁶ Hersh, *Slavery of Sex*, viii. Nancy A. Hewitt, "On Their Own Terms: A Historiographical Essay," in Yellin and Horne, eds., *Abolitionist Sisterhood*, 23-30. Julie Joy Jeffrey, *The Great Silent Army of Abolitionism: Ordinary Women in the Antislavery Movement* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998), 2.

³⁷ Jacqueline Bacon, *The Humblest May Stand Forth: Rhetoric, Empowerment, and Abolition* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2002), 15.

³⁸ For more on the Old Northwest as a borderlands region, see the 2001 overview of the borderlands phenomenon in historical study by John A. Mears. Mears writes that: "The United States and Canada share a boundary line that stretches across the entire continent . . . Patterns of interaction between peoples living in the Detroit-Windsor area resemble those between peoples in the environs of El Paso-Ciudad Juarez in many respects. Yet scholars in the United States have paid comparatively little attention to the borderlands separating the two countries." Mears, "Analyzing the Phenomenon of Borderlands from Comparative and Cross-Cultural Perspectives," paper presented at "Interactions: Regional Studies, Global Processes and Historical Analysis," Library of Congress, Washington DC, February 28-March 3, 2001, <http://historycooperative.org/proceedings/interactions/mears.html> (accessed August 7, 2010).

American women's abolitionism has broadened the geographical framework beyond U.S. national boundaries to consider transatlantic influences and networks.³⁹ Haviland's transnational travels and alliances across the Great Lakes point to the possibility of yet another analytical rubric with the potential to enrich this field of study.

The Great Lakes region was key to abolitionist struggles in the middle decades of the nineteenth century because of its location on two politicized borders between the U.S. and British-controlled Upper Canada (or Canada West) and between the slave state of Kentucky and the free state of Ohio.⁴⁰ The winding rivers and ample lakes that characterized upper-Midwest geography also marked the boundaries of the borderlands region and became the physical markers, routes, and symbols of Underground Railroad activism. The Old Northwest Territory was host to a "multitude" of Underground Railroad "lines," rendered more effective by "a length of frontier greatly increased by the sinuosities of the rivers."⁴¹ Traversing the Ohio River, "an organizing feature of western geography," inspired hope in thousands of fugitives, while the Detroit River represented "one more river to cross" for many—the final leg on the long journey of self-liberation.⁴² As the settlement that flanked that last river, Detroit became the major port of exit for runaway slaves from the United States before and especially after Great Britain abolished slavery in its Canadian territories and the rest of the Empire in 1833.⁴³ Although America and Britain had made their formal peace in the Treaty of Ghent in 1814, the water-bound border between the two nations' territories was continually troubled in

³⁹ For instance, see Kathryn Kish Sklar and James Brewer Stewart, eds., *Women's Rights and Transatlantic Antislavery in the Era of Emancipation* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007); Alison M. Parker, *Articulating Rights: Nineteenth-Century American Women on Race, Reform, and the State* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2010).

⁴⁰ Jacqueline L. Tobin with Hettie Jones, *From Midnight to Dawn: The Last Tracks of the Underground Railroad* (New York: Anchor Books, 2008), 5; Bordewich, *Bound for Canaan*, 114; David M. Katzman, "Black Slavery in Michigan," *American Midcontinent Studies Journal* xl (fall 1970): 56-66, 61-62.

⁴¹ Wilbur H. Siebert, *The Underground Railroad from Slavery to Freedom* (New York: Arno Press and the New York Times, 1968), 134.

⁴² Perkins, *Border Life*, 46; Tobin and Jones, *Midnight to Dawn*, ix.

⁴³ Fergus M. Bordewich, *Bound for Canaan: The Underground Railroad and the War for the Soul of America* (New York: Harper Collins, 2005), 257, 113-114; Siebert, *Underground Railroad*, 135, 146-147; Charles Lindquist, *The Underground Railroad in Lenawee*, *Seeds of Time* No. 14 (Adrian, MI: Lenawee County Historical Society, 2005), 5.

the abolitionist era by the open contestation of its symbolic meaning and the defiant border crossings of fugitive slaves and their allies.⁴⁴

Born in Ontario and a long-time resident of Michigan, Haviland was well situated to travel this transnational circuit and she took ample advantage of her experience to straddle this multinational terrain. After the U.S. Congress passed the Fugitive Slave Law in 1850, making assistance to runaways a crime punishable by imprisonment and seizure of property and enforceable by local authorities in the North as well as the South, the political and personal stakes for attempting to circumvent U.S. jurisdiction by crossing the border increased.⁴⁵ Haviland's perspective, though, was that God did not sanction ill-begotten boundaries. "I see no geographical lines drawn in my Bible," she once said to fellow abolitionist Levi Coffin in a statement that perhaps summarized her defiant viewpoint.⁴⁶

In 1852, while on a visit to Detroit and Canada, Haviland met with her associate, Henry Bibb, a fugitive slave from Kentucky and black liberation organizer in Detroit, Toronto, and the settlements of Canada West. Bibb urged Haviland to open a school for runaways outside of Windsor, Ontario. He was asking on behalf of the Refugee Home Society, a joint transnational venture between the Canadian Fugitive Union Society that Bibb had helped to found and the Michigan Anti-Slavery Society. The Refugee Home Society purchased Canadian lands to sell to former slaves, and it was on these lands that Haviland opened her school.⁴⁷ She later returned to Michigan to resume her work as an Underground Railroad activist.

During successive visits to Canada in the years after her sojourn there, as well as through letter writing, Haviland sustained the social ties that she had formed with black Canadian residents. In the 1850s she traveled to Windsor with two of her daughters to attend an August 1 celebration in honor of West Indian islanders' emancipation from British slavery.⁴⁸ At age eighty, Haviland wrote a three-page letter to

⁴⁴ Helen Hornbeck Tanner, ed., *Atlas of Great Lakes Indian History* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1986), 120.

⁴⁵ Baud, "Comparative History of Borderlands," 214, 220.

⁴⁶ Fairbank and Haviland, "Statement of Laura S. Haviland," *Rev. Calvin Fairbank*, 197.

⁴⁷ Tobin and Jones, *Midnight to Dawn*, 77-96, 128; Bordewich, *Bound for Canaan*, 380-388; Henry Bibb, *Narrative of the Life and Adventures of Henry Bibb, An American Slave*, in Yuval Taylor, ed., *I Was Born a Slave: An Anthology of Classic Slave Narratives* (Chicago: Lawrence Hill Books, 1999), 1-103.

⁴⁸ Haviland, *Life-Work*, 118-119.

Louisa Hamilton Ross, the eldest daughter born on free soil of one of the first families Haviland had aided in their escape.⁴⁹ Other abolitionists in Haviland's Midwest network renewed or maintained links with former fugitives in Canada as well, often in her company. In 1854, when Levi and Catherine Coffin traveled to Canada with Haviland, they enjoyed reacquainting with "[h]undreds who had been sheltered under our roof and fed at our table, when fleeing from the land of whips in chains."⁵⁰ Calvin Fairbank, the jailed abolitionist whom Haviland had visited in Kentucky, also traveled to Windsor in 1862 and spent time with a woman and child whom he had helped to escape.⁵¹ When Haviland attended the fiftieth wedding anniversary celebration of her daughter Esther in 1896, Ella Williams, a former slave whom Haviland had helped escape to Canada in 1853, returned from Ontario to prepare a "sumptuous repast" for the occasion.⁵² Together with black and white compatriots in the movement, Haviland shaped a functional and sustained network of activists and former slaves that spanned the border between the US and Canada.

A Midwestern Women's Abolitionist Culture

In the 1890s, when she appeared to others as a celebrity guest at her daughter's Chicago anniversary party, Laura Haviland was an experienced veteran of the Underground Railroad and progressive reform movements. Fifty years earlier, however, she had been an untested middle-aged woman who faced a life-altering trauma. She was thirty-six in 1845, the year that an "inflammatory erysipelas" epidemic hit her settlement, taking the lives of her husband, parents, and youngest child.⁵³ When Haviland became head of a large household after the death of her husband and father, she faced skeptical scrutiny from influential men in her community. Haviland planned to take over the farm and "do the best [she] could with it." Her household was deeply in debt, however, and one of her creditors advised her to find a man to manage her affairs. Despite her great anxiety, Haviland retained control of her family's farm and school in a society that disavowed and largely curtailed women's financial independence. She learned firsthand, amidst "responsibilities . . . so great" and "burdens so crushing," about the

⁴⁹ Haviland, *Diary*, March 1, 1890, LHSM.

⁵⁰ Coffin, *Reminiscences*, 150-151.

⁵¹ Fairbank and Haviland, *Rev. Calvin Fairbank*, 150.

⁵² "Golden Wedding Bells: Grandma Haviland Attends her Daughter's Golden Wedding," Haviland Genealogy, History of Laura Haviland File, LCHM.

⁵³ Haviland, *Life-Work*, 29-32.

unjust legal and social constraints placed on women. Through her independence after her husband's death and her widening scope of dissident action thereafter, Haviland challenged those gender conventions in a series of dramatic moves. It was as a self-described widow that she began her most active period of Underground Railroad work.

In the wake of her family tragedy, a powerful dream, and the sudden arrival of a fugitive slave named George Taylor at her doorstep, Haviland committed fully to abolitionist activism.⁵⁴ She believed that her dreams were prophetic, informing her of things to come, offering personal guidance, and providing information that could aid fugitive slaves.⁵⁵ Trusting that God would protect her in what she viewed as a divinely inspired mission, Haviland increased her Underground Railroad activities, left her farm and youngest children in the care of her oldest children, and began not only to house fugitives, but also to guide them across vast Midwestern distances. In the decade following her husband's death, she abandoned her "own sweet home" for months and years at a time.⁵⁶

Haviland's actions during this period of her life challenged normative gender conventions in mainstream society as well as in antislavery circles.⁵⁷ In one incident, she learned that slaveholders were traveling to Michigan to capture their former slaves, the Hamilton family, who were then living in a cabin on the Haviland farm. Haviland helped Elsie Hamilton and her children hide. Then, accompanied by her son and an African American student from Raisin Institute, Haviland traveled to a Toledo hotel to intercept the slaveholders. She left the young men in the lobby of the hotel and entered the slaveholders' room alone to uncover and disrupt their plot. Realizing that they would not recapture their former property because of Haviland's actions, the slaveholders followed her back to Michigan by train and threatened her with a gun. By her own account, Haviland responded: "I fear neither

⁵⁴ Haviland, *Life-Work*, 35; Glesner, "Laura Haviland," 32; Donald M. Scott, "Abolition as a Spiritual Vocation," in Lewis Perry and Michael Fellman, eds., *Antislavery Reconsidered: New Perspectives on the Abolitionists* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1979), 51-74.

⁵⁵ Haviland, *Life-Work*, 29-32. For Haviland's dreams, see 27-28, 33, 40, 71-72; Sarah H. Bradford, *Harriet: The Moses of Her People* (New York: 1886), 92, 114, 118; Clinton, *Harriet Tubman*, 29-30.

⁵⁶ Haviland, *Life-Work*, 32-34, 80.

⁵⁷ Ellen DuBois, "Women's Rights and Abolition: The Nature of the Connection," in Lewis Perry and Michael Fellman, eds., *Antislavery Reconsidered: New Perspectives on the Abolitionists* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1979), 238-251.

your weapons nor your threats; they are powerless. You are not at home—you are not in Tennessee.” Word of the altercation spread, and forty men gathered at the next train station to defend Haviland and the fugitives. Later, Haviland told the story in a local schoolhouse to a “standing room” only crowd, followed by a lecture from Elijah Brownell, a locally renowned antislavery speaker. Community members raised a collection to pay Haviland’s expenses for the trip to Toledo and “took measures for securing the safety of the hunted family.”⁵⁸ Haviland’s bold behavior in the Hamilton case—her entrance into the hotel room of male strangers alone, her verbal jousting with assailants, her impromptu public speech to a mixed-sex crowd—all dramatically defied expectations for women.

During a long visit with Levi and Catherine Coffin in Cincinnati, Haviland again engaged in behavior that defied gender roles both inside and outside of abolitionist circles. Though much of her work during her Ohio sojourn fit a normative notion of abolitionist women’s activities (mending clothing for fugitives, teaching school for African American girls, and nursing the sick), Haviland’s lone rescue mission into Kentucky dramatically violated even abolitionists’ more liberal gender norms.⁵⁹ Haviland is one of two white women known to have traveled into the South to aid escaping slaves, and she is the only white woman to do so according to her own, singled-minded plan.⁶⁰ Posing as the light-skinned black aunt of an enslaved woman named Jane White, Haviland attempted to help Jane reunite with her husband, John White, who had already fled. The mission failed, however, and both husband and wife were captured. This outcome devastated Haviland but did not deter her from the cause.⁶¹

⁵⁸ Haviland, *Life-Work*, 46-53.

⁵⁹ Haviland, *Life-Work*, 75, 78, 80, 81, 90.

⁶⁰ Jeffrey points out that in passing for black on an Underground Railroad mission, Haviland “revers[ed] the pattern” of black fugitives passing for white as a means of escape. Jeffrey, *Abolitionist’s Remember*, 126. The other white woman who crossed into the South to aid a fugitive slave was Delia Webster, who worked with abolitionist Calvin Fairbank in executing his plan. Webster was originally from New England and a graduate of Oberlin College. For more on Webster see Delia Ann Webster, *Kentucky Jurisprudence: A History of the Trial of Miss Delia A. Webster* (Vergennes, VT: E. W. Blaisdell, 1845); Frances K. Eisan, *Saint or Demon? The Legendary Delia Webster Opposing Slavery* (NY: Pace University Press, 1998); Randolph Paul Runyon, *Delia Webster and the Underground Railroad* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1996). For Haviland’s remarks about Webster see Haviland, *Life-Work*, 97. See also Clinton, *Harriet Tubman*, 68, 72-73; Bordewich, *Bound for Canaan*, 208-211.

⁶¹ Haviland, *Life-Work*, 66-73; Coffin, *Reminiscences*, 216-222; Glesner, “Laura Haviland,” 40; Siebert, *Underground Railroad*, 171-172.

As a group, white women abolitionists were criticized and even attacked by members of the general public for behaving in ways deemed unfeminine. Public speaking in particular was a controversial and even dangerous activity for abolitionist women, who often lectured as part of organized tours to avoid the risks associated with lecturing alone as female speakers.⁶² In this context, Haviland's actions constituted an extreme and outright rejection of conservative as well as more progressive gender roles at the time. Haviland believed that her unusual behavior was guided and protected by God, and she once attributed her sense of self-respect as a woman to her Quaker background.⁶³ To a large part, then, Haviland's willingness to violate gender conventions stemmed from her faith and Quaker traditions. Due to a doctrinal belief that spiritual enlightenment was no respecter of sex, Quaker women tended to enjoy more flexible domestic arrangements with their husbands than did other women. Quaker women could become ministers at home and freely serve as itinerant preachers abroad, traveling with other women, speaking in public, and sometimes leaving their children behind to answer God's call.⁶⁴ Haviland did all of these things and more, preaching the human rights of slaves with a missionary zeal even after she had joined the Methodist Church. Later in life, she returned to her childhood denomination and recommitted to the Quaker church.

While religious faith clearly played a key role in Haviland's motivation, her unconventional behavior was likely also influenced by her location in the Midwest. In her study of Midwestern settlers, Nicole Etcheson describes the expression of a regional gender identity in the early 1800s, writing that Western men saw themselves as "manly" in comparison to Easterners, and that Western women were viewed as "straightforward" in contrast to "the Eastern coquettes."⁶⁵ Similarly, in his study of the Michigan borderlands, James Schwartz sees gender role

⁶² Michael D. Pierson, *Free Hearts, Free Homes: Gender and American Antislavery Politics* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003), 13.

⁶³ In an 1868 letter Haviland objected to being referred to as "Miss" by her male correspondent despite her maturity and status as a widow. She attributed her protest to her "Quakerish prejudice, against prefixing signatures with Mrs." Laura S. Haviland to Rev. George Whipple, June 4, 1868, AA/2, Laura Smith Haviland Papers, BHL. In 1872 Haviland left the Wesleyan Methodists and rejoined the Quaker Church. Lindquist, "Heavenly" Mrs. Haviland.

⁶⁴ Bacon, *Mothers of Feminism*, 2, 24-29, 101; Sandra Stanley Holton, *Quaker Women: Personal Life, Memory, and Radicalism in the Lives of Women Friends, 1780-1930* (New York: Routledge, 2007), 4, 9, 11, 53.

⁶⁵ Etcheson, *Emerging Midwest*, 9-10.

deviation as normative in the territory, influenced by both rustic settler life and the example of Native American residents. Women in Michigan, according to Schwartz, “defied male authority, rejecting the traditional female roles of wife and mother” at least into the 1820s. “The hybridized boundaries laid out in Michigan therefore looked different from those in the East,” Schwartz writes, “engendering a local culture that embraced behavior, such as granting women a degree of autonomy and power that would have been frowned on in the East.”⁶⁶ Michigan’s geographical location on the remote, northern edge of the country, together with its slow population growth, produced an identity of independence, directness, and fortitude for women as well as men. As Stacey Robertson has argued, this frontier characteristic affected the regional culture of abolitionism. Midwestern women, Robertson writes, challenged slavery in “a distinctively western tradition,” building a “rustic,” “solid” movement that was “characterized by pragmatism, cooperation, and political savvy.”⁶⁷ Antislavery work, for which women traveled, organized others, and discussed the moral dimensions of politics, in turn reinforced the regional characteristic of gender experimentation. When Haviland journeyed far and wide, often alone or in the company of black men and women, she behaved in ways permitted to an extent by Quakerism, but further authorized and even necessitated by a regional version of abolitionism.

In the public culture of Michigan, Haviland also found broad support for her antislavery views. Due to her early organizing with Elizabeth Chandler, the Quaker town of Adrian in Lenawee County was a hot spot of abolitionist awareness and political activism. Settlers in Adrian communicated frequently with residents of Ann Arbor in Washtenaw County, also in southeastern Michigan, where the Michigan State Anti-Slavery Society was founded in 1836. By the 1840s, the Ann Arbor-based *Signal of Liberty* newspaper publicized abolitionist news and political opinions in support of the antislavery Liberty Party.⁶⁸ Legal precedent undergirded this culture of radicalism that fostered the work of Haviland and her compatriots.

The Northwest Ordinance of 1787 that governed Michigan Territory prior to statehood had outlawed human bondage. While

⁶⁶ Schwartz, *Conflict on the Michigan Frontier*, 4, 11.

⁶⁷ Robertson, “Strength that Union Gives,” 70, 300-302.

⁶⁸ Charles Lindquist, *Adrian: The City That Worked* (Adrian, MI: Lenawee County Historical Society, 2004), 33; Charles Lindquist, *The Underground Railroad in Lenawee*, *Seeds of Time* No. 14 (Adrian, MI: Lenawee County Historical Society, 2005), 2-3; Mull, *Underground Railroad in Michigan*, 42, 49.

significant loopholes allowed previous French and British settlers to retain slaves of both African and Native descent, and permitted residents to transport “indentured servants” into the area, the directive of the ordinance that “there shall be neither Slavery nor involuntary Servitude” set the tone for liberatory possibilities. The Michigan Constitution of 1835 likewise outlawed slavery.⁶⁹ In her autobiography, Haviland emphasized her sense of regional identity with regard to human rights, referring with pride to Michigan antislavery laws and claiming an antislavery public culture for the state that had an African American population of 293 by 1830.⁷⁰

After the Civil War, Haviland entered a broader circle of women activists that included Northeastern women and began to produce published works that analyzed gender and power. In the 1860s she was stationed at the Freedmen’s Hospital in Washington, DC, where she worked alongside her old associate from the antislavery lecture circuit, Sojourner Truth.⁷¹ The two women became close, and on one occasion jointly navigated an altercation with a streetcar driver who refused to allow Truth to ride.⁷² In 1866 Haviland wrote a letter to Truth addressed to “Sister Sojourner” in which she told Truth about her planned return to Washington and expressed to her friend, “Oh, how I want to know how you are getting along.”⁷³ It was most likely through

⁶⁹ Quoted in Cayton and Onuf, *Midwest*, 15; 9, 15-17; Katzman, “Black Slavery in Michigan,” 61-62; Ogg, *Old Northwest*, 180-183; Schwartz, *Conflict on the Michigan Frontier*, 41.

⁷⁰ Haviland, *Life-Work*, 53, 54, 64. The laws she pointed to were Personal Freedom Acts passed in 1855 that strengthened the state’s Constitutional initiative by requiring officials to “diligently and faithfully use all lawful means to protect and defend” persons “arrested or claimed as a fugitive slave” and prohibiting officials from using “the common jails and other public buildings . . . for the detention of persons claimed as fugitive slaves.” Michigan Personal Freedom Acts 162 and 163, February 13, 1855. No. 162 AN ACT to protect the rights and liberties of the inhabitants of this State. No. 163 AN ACT to prohibit the use of common jails and other public buildings in the several counties for the detention of persons claimed as fugitive slaves, http://www.michigan.gov/dnr/0,1607,7-153-54463_18670_44390-160662--,00.html (accessed September 11, 2010); James Oliver Horton and Lois E. Horton, *In Hope of Liberty: Culture, Community and Protest among Northern Free Blacks, 1700-1860* (Oxford University Press, 1997), 104.

⁷¹ Haviland, *Diary*, April 27, 1891, LHSM; Washington, *Sojourner Truth’s America*, 273, 284, 326, 365.

⁷² *Narrative of Sojourner Truth*, Introduction by Nell Painter (New York: Penguin Books, 1998), 124-26; Laura S. Haviland, “The Assault on Sojourner Truth,” September 25, 1865, *National Anti-Slavery Standard*; Washington, *Sojourner Truth’s America*, 326-327.

⁷³ Laura S. Haviland to Sister Sojourner, January 12, 1866, *Narrative of Sojourner Truth*, 200-201.

Truth that Haviland made connections with national women's rights organizers. That same year Haviland wrote a letter to abolitionist Amy Post on behalf of Truth, offering an update on Truth's frail health and asking Post to contact Truth's daughter. Haviland signed this letter "Yours for Universal Suffrage," indicating, as Margaret Washington has pointed out, Haviland's support for women's voting rights as an equal priority with black men's suffrage.⁷⁴

Haviland's published autobiography, unpublished letters, and heretofore uncited personal diaries reveal an intersectional racial and gender analysis as well as her support of radical feminist aims. Her writings indicate that, unlike many white women abolitionists, Haviland refused to avoid the reality of miscegenation during slavery. In the 1880s, her written work repeatedly recorded black women's sexual exploitation. Her autobiography recounted such episodes in detail, and her reports from Kansas professed that "tens of thousands [of freedpeople] are also descendants of the purest Caucasian blood of England, France, and every other nationality in the catalogue of nations."⁷⁵ During the late 1880s and 1890s, when Haviland was living again in Michigan, she became a staunch temperance advocate and lectured for the Women's Christian Temperance Union. She tied alcohol consumption to the abuse of women and kept a close accounting in her diary of murders of women by their spouses in her home state. At the same time, she monitored the national struggle for women's voting rights, keeping a record in her diary of state-by-state advances. Amidst her women's suffrage notes in the "cash account" and "memoranda" pages at the end of her diary, Haviland had begun to write a "History of Ancient Women."⁷⁶ Later editions of her published autobiography clearly supported Haviland's belief in women's rights to voice political views, organize, and vote. She returned to the poetic words of her deceased friend and antislavery compatriot Elizabeth Chandler to ask, "shall women's voice be hushed?" In answer to this question, Haviland

⁷⁴ Laura Smith Haviland to Amy Post, February 22, 1866, Rush Rhees Library, Rare Books and Special Collections, University of Rochester, Rochester, NY; Washington, *Sojourner Truth's America*, 336.

⁷⁵ Haviland, *Life-Work*, see for instance Rachel Beach's story, 68-70, Sarah's story, 78-79, and Haviland on "amalgamation" in the South, 99; Haviland, "Circular," August 22, 1880, Elizabeth Comstock Papers, Newspapers and clippings relating to Kansas Freedman's relief (1881-1882), Box 1, Folder 39, CL.

⁷⁶ Lindquist, "Heavenly" Mrs. Haviland; Haviland, Diary, May 24, 1891; Memoranda, Cash Account, LHSM. Haviland also discusses women's political gains and her views on temperance in later editions of her autobiography: *Life-Work*, 5th ed., 555, chapter xxi.

proffered a resounding “No!” Her writings publicized “women’s gains” and pressed women to join in the urgent work of aiding “the long and sorely oppressed descendants of Africa . . . upon which the blight and mildew of slavery still rests.”⁷⁷ With passion and urgency, in a late nineteenth century era when general public support for abolitionist values had waned, Haviland hailed the rights of blacks, women, Native Americans, and the poor, praising “every onward march of reform . . . in which women are taking higher, broader ground.” She found a wide audience among Midwestern readers in particular, who, by all indications, still “embraced the history of the Underground Railroad.”⁷⁸

Laura Smith Haviland, appropriately called a “Pilgrim” by Sojourner Truth, stands out as a maverick among abolitionist women.⁷⁹ She frequently traveled alone, confronted male slaveholders, made public speeches, and guided fugitives across international borders. Haviland’s neighbors “thought she was crazy” and passed down disparaging stories to their grandchildren about “little darky heads peering from the one upper window in the little attic” of her log house.⁸⁰ Haviland’s transgression of gender roles over the course of a lifetime contributes a robust, concrete example to the study of Midwestern women’s antislavery culture, and indeed, of Midwestern gender ideology and practice in the nineteenth century. Finally, and just as importantly, Haviland’s centrality to international, interracial networks signals a need for greater attention not only to Haviland as a movement figure, but also to the Great Lakes as a transnational site of abolitionism.

⁷⁷ Haviland, *Life-Work*, 5th ed., 494, 555; Haviland, “Circular,” August 22, 1880, Elizabeth Comstock Papers, Newspapers and clippings relating to Kansas Freedman’s relief (1881-1882), Box 1, Folder 39, CL.

⁷⁸ Jeffrey, *Abolitionists Remember*, 228.

⁷⁹ Haviland, *Diary*, April 27, 1891, LHSM

⁸⁰ “Aunt Laura Haviland,” Michigan Pioneer and Historical Collections, and “Grandma’s Story: Laura Haviland and the Slaves,” *The Courier*, October 12, 1903, History of LH File, LHSM.