



# **A Fluid Frontier: Slavery, Resistance, and the Underground Railroad in the Detroit River Borderland (Great Lakes Books Series)**

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As the major gateway into British North America for travelers on the Underground Railroad, the U.S./Canadian border along the Detroit River was a boundary that determined whether thousands of enslaved people of African descent could reach a place of freedom and opportunity. In *A Fluid Frontier: Slavery, Resistance, and the Underground Railroad in the Detroit River Borderland*, editors Karolyn Smardz Frost and Veta Smith Tucker explore the experiences of the area's freedom-seekers and advocates, both black and white, against the backdrop of the social forces—legal, political, social, religious, and economic—that shaped the meaning of race and management of slavery on both sides of the river.

In five parts, contributors trace the beginnings of and necessity for transnational abolitionist activism in this unique borderland, and the legal and political pressures, coupled with African Americans' irrepressible quest for freedom, that led to the growth of the Underground Railroad. *A Fluid Frontier* details the founding of African Canadian settlements in the Detroit River region in the first decades of the nineteenth century with a focus on the strong and enduring bonds of family, faith, and resistance that formed between communities in Michigan and what is now Ontario. New scholarship offers unique insight into the early history of slavery and resistance in the region and describes individual journeys: the perilous crossing into Canada of sixteen-year-old Caroline Quarlls, who was enslaved by her own aunt and uncle; the escape of the Crosswhite family, who eluded slave catchers in Marshall, Michigan, with the help of others in the town; and the international crisis sparked by the escape of Lucie and Thornton Blackburn and others.

With a foreword by David W. Blight, *A Fluid Frontier* is a truly bi-national collection, with contributors and editors evenly split between specialists in Canadian and American history, representing both community and academic historians. Scholars of the Underground Railroad as well as those in borderland studies will appreciate the interdisciplinary mix and unique contributions of this volume.

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