

Transcription of Margaret Cadham's presentation to the BME Church

Oliver Purnell (Parnell) a softspoken, wonderfully kind man- came into my life at a very early age – in fact can't remember when Oliver was not there.

He came from slavery through the Underground and landed on the American side of the Upper River – he then swam the Upper River pushing a small trunk until he reached Canada ; after walking as far as Drummondville he came to my grandfather's home, the one I still live in on Culp Street – my great uncle John Allen Orchard hired him and after Mr. Orchard's death, my father Joseph Gibbons Cadham – who had lived with his uncle from the time he was six years old – he married my mother (Mary Wilcox Cadham) – when I was old enough Oliver was always there and became my great friend.

He would never cross the bridge to the US. You could never convince him he would not go back to slavery.

The picture, the only one we have was taken by Mr. England a photographer on Main Street. Jack Shea who worked in my father's office met us on the street and had this photo taken.

Oliver died September 17 1906 the result of tetanus – leaving his wife Matilda, his daughter Marjorie Lawson and a grand daughter Mildred Lawson – we always kept in touch with them as long as they lived.

Hope the BME church would like to have this picture of Oliver as he gave the property for the building of the church.

Picture and story presented to Pastor and members of Nathaniel Dett Memorial Chapel, BME Church, Sunday September 25, 1988