

Thornton and Lucie Blackburn: From Kentucky to Detroit

Description: Karolyn Smardz Frost is the author of *I've Got a Home in Glory Land* which is the story about Thornton and Lucie Blackburn. Thornton and Lucie met in Louisville, both enslaved, and fell in love. They escaped from Louisville in 1831 to Detroit and lived there for two years when slave hunters located, re-captured and arrested the couple. Lucie escaped her imprisonment by changing her disguise with a visitor. On the day before, Thornton, who was shackled, bound and heavily guarded, was to be returned to Kentucky, but the Detroit community rose up in protest and 400 men stormed the jail to free him. Thornton escaped to Canada to be reunited with Lucie. This protest is known as the first race riot in Detroit and resulted in the formation of the first Riot Commission in the U.S. In Louisville there is a historical marker on Main Street and 4th which observes the Blackburn escape.