As is perhaps appropriate for a study of migration, this book has traveled the longest road of any of my projects, and the debts incurred along the way are correspondingly numerous. I might not have tried to retool from a historian of alcohol and temperance into a student of African American migration had it not been for the example of my departmental colleague Gary Owens, who negotiated the transition from Tudor-Stuart history to modern Ireland with blazing success. For the methods and approaches used I credit most of the inspiration to the late Dick Alcorn. Dick not only helped to initiate me into quantitative analysis, but also accustomed me to thinking about towns and cities as parts of urban systems and taught me the importance of human mobility across the historical landscape. At about the same time as I was learning from Dick Alcorn, I read Lawrence Levine’s *Black Culture and Black Consciousness*. This pioneering work both revealed new possibilities in studying African American life at the grassroots and boldly proclaimed the centrality of agency in African American migration.

The route from inspiration to interesting and useful findings lay through numerous archives, and I would certainly have lost my way without the assistance of their custodians. I wish particularly to thank three guides who went out of their way to help: Nancy Turner, former curator of the Archives and Special Collections, Ball State University; Wilma Gibbs, archivist at the Indiana Historical Society and editor of *Black History News and Notes*; and Lena Calhoun at the Stark County District Library in Canton, Ohio, whose job description did not include enthusiastically providing crucial help to visiting researchers, but who did anyway. Mrs. Carrie Pope Banks in Champaign, Illinois, and Dr. Norma Snipes Marcere in Canton, Ohio, graciously consented to be interviewed.

Equally necessary to the success of this project was the diligent, efficient, and thoughtful work of my research assistants. The principal contributors,
who now know more than they ever wanted to learn about the vagaries of
the U.S. federal manuscript census, were Rebecca Surtees, Stacey Demay,
Shannon Stettner, and Jennifer Carson. Colin Fitzsimons drew the maps,
and Laura Wackman and Kirk Hammond also made significant contribu-
tions.

Long as it was, the road from initial questions to final manuscript would
have been even longer without the funding generously provided by the
Canadian people through the Social Sciences and Humanities Research
Council of Canada and the Faculty of Arts and Social Science of Huron
University College, and by the people of Indiana through an Indiana
Historical Society Director’s Grant. In addition, the Conference on Race,
Ethnicity, and Migration at the University of Minnesota furnished support
for travel to read a paper at that conference.

At the Minnesota conference and others where I presented work in
progress, discerning scholars did their best to keep me on the right track.
I would especially like to thank S. Charles Bolton, Marvin McInnis,
Kimberley Phillips, Spencer Crew, Felix Armfield, Joe Trotter, and Walter
Kamphoefner. Nelson Ouellet also gave me helpful feedback. Shirley
Portwood and Sundiata Cha-Jua invited me to their stimulating second
conference on African Americans in Illinois history, and I benefited both
from the opportunity to present preliminary findings and from the chance
to discuss my work with these pioneers in midwestern African American
community history. My always dependable critics in the American histo-
rians’ seminar at the University of Western Ontario read several papers
and chapters in draft; suggestions by Monda Halpern, George Emery, and
Margaret Kellow were particularly helpful. As I neared the end of the trip,
David Gerber and David Macleod read a very long manuscript in its entire-
ty and made many useful suggestions, as did Zane Miller and an anonymous
reader for The Ohio State University Press. At Huron University College,
Julie Bennett cheerfully provided crucial late-stage assistance with file
conversion. My wife, Susan, and my son, David, were tolerant of, and sup-
portive despite, long absences from home during research trips. If, despite
the guidance and assistance given by all these companions on the journey,
this traveler has lost his way, the responsibility is mine alone.

A portion of chapter 5 appeared in Ohio Valley History 6, no. 1 (Spring
2006), and is reproduced here by permission of the publishers, Cincinnati
Museum Center and the Filson Historical Society. Permission to quote
from oral history transcripts in their collections has been granted by the
Indiana Historical Society for the Martha Lattimore Papers; Professor
Rutledge M. Dennis for the Black Middletown Project; Archives/Special
Acknowledgments

Collections, Brookens Library, University of Illinois at Springfield, for the Oral History Collection; the Chicago History Museum; the Stark County (Ohio) District Library; the Western Reserve Historical Society for the St. James AME Church Oral History Project; and the Local History and Genealogy Department, Toledo-Lucas County Public Library.