Martin Robison Delany

Activist and physician Martin Robison Delany (May 6, 1812-January 24, 1885) was an African-American who was born free in Charles Town. In 1822, the Delany family was forced to flee for violating a Virginia law forbidding the education of blacks. The family settled in Chambersburg, Pennsylvania.

In 1831, Delany moved to Pittsburgh. He studied medicine as an apprentice under Dr. Andrew N. McDowell and became his medical assistant. From 1843 to 1847, Martin Delany founded, edited, and published the *Mystery*, an abolitionist newspaper. He shut down the *Mystery* to become co-editor of Frederick Douglass's newspaper, the *North Star*. After attending Harvard Medical College in 1850, Delany returned to Pittsburgh and opened a medical practice.

The 1850 Fugitive Slave Act inspired Delany to publish *The Condition, Elevation, Emigration, and Destiny of the Colored People of the United States*, in 1852. Working with the Underground Railroad, he moved to Chatham, Canada. In 1858, he aided John Brown in convening the Chatham Convention. Afterward, he explored the Niger Valley region of Africa as a possible site for African-American emigration.

In 1861, Delany published *Blake: or, The Huts of America*, a fictional work detailing the horrors of slavery. In February 1865, he was commissioned as a major in the U.S. Colored Troops. He was the only African-American Civil War officer to be given a field command. He died in Wilberforce, Ohio.

Written by Joseph Bundy

Sources


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Read Martin Robison Delany from The West Virginia Encyclopedia

Answer the following:

1. Where was Delany born a free man?
2. Why was he forced to flee Virginia?
3. After studying under Dr. Andrew N. McDowell, what did Delany become?
4. Delany published Mystery which was what kind of a newspaper?
5. What was the name of Frederick Douglas's newspaper?
6. What medical school did he attend?
7. What inspired Delany to publish several books?
8. He moved to Canada to work with what?
9. Who did he aid that later was involved in his famous raid?
10. Why did he explore the Niger Valley of Africa?
11. What rank was he commissioned as in the U.S. Colored Troops?
12. What distinction did he receive as the only African-American Civil War Officer to be given what?