

1803. Bringing Slaves to Geneva, New York

Source: Kathryn Grover (1994). *Make a Way Somehow, African-American Life in a Northern Community, 1790-1965* (Syracuse University Press), 17.

This is a family oral history passed from generation to generation. George W. Nicholas wrote down the story as told by his uncle in 1873.

“We left Hampstead (the name of the plantation in Stafford County Va) on Sunday, October 21st 1803 ... There were two stage coaches with four horses each, a driver and a postillion riding one of the leaders, a “coachee” with four horses, driver and postillion. The two stages were made at Hampstead by their own workmen (slaves) from timber cut on the place, the hubs of the wheels from locust trees near the house and after their arrival at Geneva, they were sold to Levi Stevens and ran on stage line from Albany to Geneva. In the first stage were Mrs. Jane L. Rose (my grandmother) and (her sons) Gavin Lawson Rose, John N. Rose and Henry Rose in the arms of his colored nurse, Phillis Kenny (afterward Phillis Douglas and died on the Carter Road). In the other stage were Mrs. Lawson (mother of Mrs. Nicholas and Mrs. Rose) Aunt Peggy (Miss Margaret Rose, a sister of Mrs. Lawson) and their maid Susannah Dunkinson (colored). In the “coachee” were Mrs. Anne Nicholas (my grandmother) her children, Ann (afterwards Mrs. Abm. Dox) Susan (afterward Mrs. Orin Clark) Jane, George and Robert C. in arms of his colored nurse Alice Bowman; Judge Nicholas, Mr. Rose (my two grandfathers) George H. Norton (a nephew of Judge Nicholas and afterward father of Rev. John N. Norton and Rev. George H. Norton) were on horse back with two led horses. Mr. Gavin Lawson (my great grandfather) and Gavin Lawson Nicholas (who gave me these details) were in a phaeton with two horses and a driver. Four, four horse wagons for the colored people and their baggage came with about seventy five colored people directly over the Alleghanies [*sic*] in charge of Col. John Fitzhugh. The men and the women, who were able, walked; the invalid women and small children rode in the wagons. They went about half a mile together, then the whites turned to the right, and the blacks to the left and did not meet again until they met in Geneva (New York) about the middle of November. The whites came by Albany, the blacks directly north thru Pennsylvania. They had had parties here for two years previously raising crops and making preparations.