# Section 4: New Nation, 1783-1827

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The Struggle for Emancipation and Citizenship, 1783-1827 by Alan Singer

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## Additional Documents Available on the Internet
1786-1801. New York State Bans the Slave Trade 1820. New Lots Census Data
1790-1860. Population of Kings County 1824-1873. Slave Owning Families Among the Founders of Kings County Banks
1796. Emancipation of Preter Williams 1827. Freedom’s Journal Opening Editorial
1797 - 1827. Complaints Investigated by the New York City Manumission Society
1797. Samuel Miller , Immorality of Slavery 1827. William Hamilton, Emancipation Address
1799. Gradual Abolition Act 1827. James McCune Smith Describes the Manumission Day Parade
1800-1801. Journal of Dr. Samuel Thompson
1800-1819. Long Island Manumission Papers
1800 – 1824. Slave Owners in Huntington and Babylon
1804-1862. Population and Import of Slaves into Cuba
1808 (A) Peter Williamson Abolition of the Slave Trade
1809-1814. Long Island Bills of Sale and Lease
1809. William Hamilton to the NY African Society
1809. Joseph Sidney Discusses End of the Slave Trade
1810-1861. United States Presidents on the Slave Trade
1811. Black Suffrage in New York
1811-1819. Brooklyn, New York Indentured Servants
1813. George Lawrence on the Abolition of Slave Trade
1817. Gradual Manumission in New York State
The Struggle for Emancipation and Citizenship, 1783-1827

During the American Revolution, New Yorkers fervently debated the implications of enslavement in a society founded on the propositions that “All men are created equal” and are endowed with “inalienable rights.” In 1777, John Jay, who headed the New York City delegation to the state Provincial Congress, unsuccessfully lobbied for an emancipation act. At the state’s first Constitutional Convention, a majority of the delegates voted for a clause guaranteeing gradual emancipation. Gouverneur Morris wrote a statement supported by thirty-one of the thirty-five delegates that declared “Every human being who breathes the air of the state shall enjoy the privileges of a freeman.” Despite these lofty pronouncements, the legislature refused to act during the war and ultimately decided only to support manumission for enslaved Africans who had fought for independence against the British. However, in 1785, it did vote to outlaw the slave trade in the state and in 1788, to declare free any enslaved African sold in New York.

After the American Revolution, the abolitionist movement in New York City and State included many prominent leaders of the new nation. The Society for Promoting the Manumission of Slaves was headed by John Jay and Alexander Hamilton. It purchased the freedom of persons held in bondage and founded the African Free School. Jay, Hamilton and Aaron Burr, helped win near thirty three dozen legal cases in defense of the freedom of Black New Yorkers threatened with kidnapping and being sent to the south as slaves. Among the members of the society were former local slave owners and slave traders, including representatives of the Livingston family.

According to the 1790 federal census, about one third of New York County’s Black population was free, but only twenty percent in Westchester and less than five percent in Kings County. In 1799, under the leadership of Governor John Jay and Aaron Burr, the state legislature approved a plan for the “gradual emancipation” of the remaining enslaved African population of the state. Black female children born in 1799 or after would automatically become free at the age of 25. Black male children would become free at the age of 28.

With the passage of a gradual emancipation act, the slave system in the state slowly moved towards dissolution. The Albany town council banned the beating of enslaved Africans for violating the night time curfew. New York City officials denied use of city jails to hold slaves. According to the 1810 federal census, only 1,446 men, women, and children in New York County remained enslaved, about 16 percent of the county’s African American population. In 1817, the state legislature voted that all enslaved Africans would be freed in 1827. By 1820, almost 85 percent of African Americans in New York City and Kings County were free. On July 4, 1827, New York’s African American community and its supporters were finally able to celebrate the state’s Emancipation Day. However, emancipation did not mean full citizenship. In 1821, a New York State Constitutional Convention voted to limit the right to vote to African American men who owned at least $250 in property.

Blacks were also becoming a greater presence in upstate New York, especially along the canal routes. In his autobiography, Austin Steward described being brought as a slave from Virginia to New York. He finally secured his freedom and settled in the Rochester area. Solomon Northup wrote about growing up as a free Black youth in Essex and Washington Counties and working on the Champlain canal system.

This period also saw the emergence of important African American institutions in New York state. In 1796, Black congregants in New York City formed an independent Zion Church. The New York Manumission Society established African Free Schools and they were later supported by the municipal government and the state legislature. Graduates of African Free Schools, including Henry Highland Garnet, Alexander Crummell, and James McCune Smith, became prominent community leaders, especially in the struggle for Black civil rights and for the abolition of slavery in the United States. Seneca Village, in an area that is now part of Central Park in New York City, emerged as a largely Black community. Freedom’s Journal, the first African American newspaper published in the United States, started production in New York City in March 16, 1827. – Alan Singer
AIM: How did the institution of slavery influence the authors of the Federal Constitutional Convention?

BACKGROUND: The United States Constitution is often described as a “bundle of compromises.” In this lesson students will discuss whether the compromises on the issue of slavery were appropriate or necessary for the creation of a new nation. Students will interpret different points of view regarding slavery at the Convention.

DO NOW: Read the data on the charts below and answer the follow up questions.

MOTIVATION: Have you every been part of a compromise decision? What was it? Why was compromise necessary? Were there other alternatives? What are the pros and cons of compromises?

ACTIVITIES:
1. Class will answer the do now question using the chart. The whole class will discuss the states with the highest and lowest slave population and how their interests were reflected in their objectives at the Convention.
2. Working in small groups or pairs, class will interpret primary source quotes written around the time of the Convention. Students will answer the follow up questions. Students will share responses with the class. Class will discuss the arguments presented at the Convention and the strength of the arguments will be discussed.
3. Whole class will read a quote by Benjamin Franklin. Whole class will discuss his position on the document.
4. Was compromise the best option at the Constitutional Convention? Students will write a persuasive paragraph from the point of view of either a Southerner or Northerner at the Constitutional Convention. In the paragraph students must take a position and take on the persona of a Southerner or Northerner. In the paragraph students must mention their state of origin and their opinion on the issue of slavery and the Constitution.
5. Students will present their paragraphs to the class in debate form. Debate will be followed up with a reflection.

SUMMARY QUESTION: Was compromise on slavery and the slave trade the best or only option at the Constitutional Convention?

HOMEWORK/APPLICATION: The founders decided to compromise on many issues when the U.S. Constitution was drafted and signed. Write a persuasive paragraph from the point of view of either a Southerner or Northerner at the Constitutional Convention. In the paragraph mention your state of origin and your opinion on the issue of slavery and the Constitution. Explain why you believe you opinion is valid and whether or not compromise was the best option, remember to provide support for your arguments. What alternatives did the Southerners have? What alternatives did the Northerners have? Explain these options in a well developed persuasive paragraph. These paragraphs will be presented to the class in a debate.

Lesson developed by Michelle Vevante
AIM: How did the institution of slavery influence the authors of the Federal Constitutional Convention?

### A. Federal Census of 1790 and Slavery

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Total Population</th>
<th>Enslaved Population</th>
<th>% Enslaved</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Connecticut</td>
<td>237,946</td>
<td>2,764</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delaware</td>
<td>59,096</td>
<td>8,887</td>
<td>15.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Georgia</td>
<td>82,548</td>
<td>29,264</td>
<td>35.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maryland</td>
<td>319,728</td>
<td>103,036</td>
<td>32.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Massachusetts</td>
<td>378,787</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Hampshire</td>
<td>141,885</td>
<td>158</td>
<td>Less than 1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Jersey</td>
<td>184,139</td>
<td>11,423</td>
<td>6.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New York</td>
<td>340,120</td>
<td>21,324</td>
<td>6.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Carolina</td>
<td>393,751</td>
<td>100,572</td>
<td>25.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pennsylvania</td>
<td>434,373</td>
<td>3,737</td>
<td>Less than 1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rhode Island</td>
<td>68,825</td>
<td>948</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Carolina</td>
<td>249,073</td>
<td>107,094</td>
<td>42.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Virginia</td>
<td>691,737</td>
<td>292,627</td>
<td>42.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Questions**
1. Which state had the largest slave population? Which state had the smallest?
2. What percentage of the population of New York State was enslaved?
3. Which states would most likely favor counting slaves for calculating representation in the government?

### B. Gouverneur Morris and the Battle over Slavery at the Constitutional Convention

“The admission of slaves into the Representation when fairly explained comes to this: that the inhabitant of Georgia and S.C. who goes to the Coast of Africa, and in defiance of the most sacred laws of humanity tears away his fellow creatures from their dearest connections & dams them to the most cruel bondages, shall have more votes in a Gov’t. instituted for the protection of the rights of mankind, than the Citizen of Pa. and N. Jersey who views with a laudable (admirable)horror, so nefarious (evil) a practice.”

**Questions**
What is Gouverneur Morris point of view about counting a state’s slave population toward representation in government? Do you agree or disagree? Explain.

### C. Viriginans Petition to Protect Slavery (1784)

“Some men of considerable weight to wrestle from us, by an Act of the legislature, the most valuable and indispensable Article of our Property, our SLAVES by general emancipation of them. . . . Such a scheme indeed consists very well with the principles and designs of the North, whose Finger is sufficiently visible in it. . . . No language can express our indignation, Contempt and Detestation of the apostate wretches. . . . It therefore cannot be admitted that any man had a right...to divest us of our known rights to property which are so clearly defined.”

**Questions**
1. What are the petitioners protesting against?
2. In your opinion, do they have valid arguments? Explain.

### D. Benjamin Franklin comments on the Constitution (1787)

“For when you assemble a number of men to have the advantage of their joint wisdom, you inevitably assemble with those men, all their prejudices, their passions, their errors of opinion, their local interests, and their selfish views.”

**Questions**
1. According to Franklin, what advantages did the framers bring to the Convention?
2. Based on this quote, why were they unable to resolve their disagreements about slavery?
AIM: Where did New York’s “Founders” stand on the abolition of slavery?

[Middle level student can use the edited composite activity sheet. Regents level students can use the individual activity sheets for each of the three “founders.”]

BACKGROUND: During the American Revolution, New Yorkers fervently debated the implications of enslavement in a society founded on the propositions that “All men are created equal” and are endowed with “inalienable rights.” In 1777, John Jay, who headed the New York City delegation to the state Provincial Congress, unsuccessfully lobbied for an emancipation act. At the state’s first Constitutional Convention, a majority of the delegates voted for a clause guaranteeing gradual emancipation. Gouverneur Morris wrote a statement supported by thirty-one of the thirty-five delegates that declared “Every human being who breathes the air of the state shall enjoy the privileges of a freeman.” Despite these lofty pronouncements, the legislature refused to act during the war and ultimately decided only to support manumission for enslaved Africans who had fought for independence against the British. However, in 1785, it did vote to outlaw the slave trade in the state and in 1788, to declare free any enslaved African sold in New York. After the American Revolution, the abolitionist movement in New York City and State included many prominent leaders of the new nation. The Society for Promoting the Manumission of Slaves was headed by John Jay and Alexander Hamilton. It purchased the freedom of persons held in bondage and founded the African Free School. Jay, Hamilton and Aaron Burr, helped win nearly three dozen legal cases in defense of the freedom of Black New Yorkers threatened with kidnapping and being sent to the south as slaves. Among the members of the society were former local slave owners and slave traders, including representatives of the Livingston family.

DO NOW: Review the Declaration of Independence.

MOTIVATION: The Declaration of Independence states that “All men are created equal.” How can a nation based on this statement have slavery?

ACTIVITY: Where did New York’s “Founders” stand on the abolition of slavery?
Students will be split up into 3 groups. Each group will read and answer the questions to a different handout, A. Gouverneur Morris, B. Alexander Hamilton, C. John Jay
Students will discuss their readings with the class using their answers as discussion points.
The class will compare and contrast Morris’ views with Hamilton’s views. They will then debate how they think each man would have reacted to the Gradual Abolition Act.

KEY QUESTIONS:
How do the views of Gouverneur Morris compare with those of Alexander Hamilton and John Jay?
Why do you think many people supported the idea of gradual abolition?
What problems did people fear would occur with immediate emancipation?
How do you think Morris and Hamilton reacted to the Gradual Abolition Act?
What evidence have you found that John Jay was an influential figure in the development of the United States?
Do you believe that John Jay believed in the principles stated in the Declaration of Independence and the U.S. Constitution? Why or why not?
Do you think that John Jay’s ownership of slaves hurt his argument for abolition?
Was John Jay a moral politician or a political opportunist?

SUMMARY QUESTION: Why did these early leaders of New York State oppose slavery?

HOMEWORK: Pretend you are a resident of New York State in the year 1799. Write a letter to your Senator expressing your views on the Gradual Abolition Act. Be sure to state your reasons for your ideas.

APPLICATION: Pretend you are about to address the influential politicians of the early 19th Century. Write a speech describing your feelings on John Jay and his positions on slavery.

Lesson developed by Diane Maier
Where did New York’s “Founders” stand on the abolition of slavery?

A. **Gouverneur Morris**: Gouverneur Morris was born in 1752 on his family’s Morrisania estate in what is now the Bronx. His family was politically influential and wealthy. His mother owned enslaved Africans and his half-brother was a signer of the Declaration of Independence. From 1775 to 1777, Morris represented Westchester County in New York’s Revolutionary Congress and he helped draft the first New York State Constitution. At the state’s Constitutional Convention, he proposed a motion, which was defeated, to abolish slavery in New York.

Motion proposed by Gouverneur Morris at the New York State Constitutional Convention, 1777.

“The rights of human nature and the principles of our holy religion call upon us to dispense the blessings of freedom to all mankind. . . . It is therefore recommended to the Legislatures of the State of New York to take measures consistent with the public safety for abolishing domestic slavery.”

B. **Alexander Hamilton**: Alexander Hamilton was born on the island of Nevis in the British West Indies in 1757. As a child and young man, he witnessed the brutal system of slavery on the sugar plantations. During the Revolutionary War, Hamilton argued that Africans had the same natural abilities as Europeans and that slaves should be recruited as soldiers and given “their freedom with their muskets.”

Letter from Alexander Hamilton to John Jay, President of the Continental Congress, March 14, 1779.

I believe we should “raise two, three or four battalions of negroes; . . . I have not the least doubt, that the negroes will make very excellent soldiers, with proper management. . . . I mention this because I frequently hear it objected to the scheme of embodying negroes that they are too stupid to make soldiers. . . . I think their want of cultivation . . . joined with the habit of subordination which they acquire from a life of servitude, will make them sooner become soldiers than our White inhabitants. . . . It should be considered that if we do not make use of them in this way, the enemy probably will. . . . I believe this will have a good influence upon those who remain, by opening a door to their emancipation.”

C. **John Jay**: In 1777, John Jay led an unsuccessful effort to include the abolition of slavery in New York State’s first Constitution. Jay was an advocate for black education and in 1787, he helped found New York’s African Free School. In 1799, Governor John Jay signed into law a measure providing that from July 4th of that year, all children born to slave parents would be free (subject only to apprenticeship) and that slave export would be prohibited.

John Jay on Manumission, 1780.

“Till America comes into this Measure [abolition], her prayers to Heaven for Liberty will be impious…This is a strong expression, but it is just. Were I in [the] Legislature I would prepare a bill for the Purpose with great Care, and I would never cease moving it till it became a Law or I ceased to be a member. I believe God governs this world, and I believe it to be a Maxim in his as in our Court that those who ask for Equity ought to do it.”

Questions
1. Why did Gouverneur Morris believe that slavery should be abolished?
2. How does Alexander Hamilton believe African Americans can help the Revolutionary cause?
3. What problems does he see in recruiting them?
4. John Jay says that “those who ask for Equity ought to do it.” In your opinion, what does he mean?
5. In your opinion, how did the War for Independence advance the battle to end slavery?
A. Gouverneur Morris Denounces the “nefarious institution” (1777-1787)


Gouverneur Morris was born in 1752 on his family’s Morrisania estate in what is now the Bronx. His family was politically influential and wealthy. His mother owned enslaved African and his half-brother was a signer of the Declaration of Independence. Gouverneur Morris became a leader of the new nation despite losing a leg in a carriage accident as a young man. He graduated from Columbia University (then known as King’s College) in 1768 and became a lawyer. From 1775 to 1777, he represented Westchester County in New York’s Revolutionary congress (1775-77) and he helped draft the first New York State constitution. At the state’s constitutional convention, he proposed a motion, which was defeated, to abolish slavery in New York. He served in the first New York state legislature and the Continental Congress, where he signed the Articles of Confederation. In 1779, Morris relocated to Philadelphia and he represented Pennsylvania at the Federal Constitutional Convention.

At the Constitutional Convention, Gouverneur Morris was on the committee that prepared the final draft of the Constitution and he opposed constitutional protection for slavery, the slave trade and the three-fifths compromise. Morris described slavery as a “nefarious institution. . . . The curse of heaven on states where it prevailed” and argued that Congressional representation should be based on “one for every 40,000 free inhabitants.” Morris later moved back to New York City, traveled in Europe as a diplomat and merchant, was elected to the U.S. Senate, helped found the New-York Historical Society in 1804 and served as the founding chairman of the Erie Canal Commission. He died at Morrisania in 1816 and was buried at St. Ann's Episcopal Churchyard, in the Bronx.

1777. Motion proposed by Gouverneur Morris at the New York State Constitutional Convention

“And whereas a regard to the rights of human nature and the principles of our holy religion, loudly call upon us to dispense the blessings of freedom to all mankind; and inasmuch as it would at present be productive of great dangers to liberate the slaves within this State: It is, therefore most earnestly recommended to the future Legislatures of the State of New-York, to take the most effectual measures consistent with the public safety, and the private property of individuals, for abolishing domestic slavery within the same, so that in future ages, every human being who breathes the air of this State, shall enjoy the privileges of a freeman.”


“He never would concur in upholding domestic slavery. It was a nefarious institution. It was the curse of heaven in the States where it prevailed. Compare the free regions of the Middle States, where a rich & noble cultivation marks the prosperity & happiness of the people, with the misery & poverty which overspread the barren wastes of Va. Maryd & the other States having slaves. Travel thro’ the whole Continent & you behold the prospect continually varying with the appearance and disappearance of slavery. The moment you leave the E. Sts. & enter N. York, the effects of the institution become visible, passing thro’ the Jerseys & entering Pa. every criterion of superior improvement witnesses the change. Proceed southwdly & every step you take thro’ the great region of slaves presents a desert increasing, with the increasing proportion of these wretched beings. The admission of slaves into the Representation when fairly explained comes to this: that the inhabitant of Georgia and S.C. who goes to the Coast of Africa, and in defiance of the most sacred laws of humanity tears away his fellow creatures from their dearest connections & dams them to the most cruel bondages, shall have more votes in a Govt. instituted for the protection of the rights of mankind, than the Citizen of Pa. and N. Jersey who views with a laudable horror, so nefarious a practice. ... He would sooner submit himself to a tax for paying for all such negroes in the U. States, than saddle posterity with such a Constitution.”

Questions
1. Why does Morris want to abolish slavery? What are the origins of his ideas?
2. In your opinion, does Madison agree or disagree with Morris? Explain.
B. Alexander Hamilton Proposes Recruiting Enslaved Africans as Soldiers (1779)

Sources: http://www.spartacus.schoolnet.co.uk/WWhamiltonA.htm
http://c250.columbia.edu/c250_celebrates/remarkable_columbians/alexander_hamilton.html
http://xroads.virginia.edu/~CAP/ham/hamback1.html

Alexander Hamilton was born on the island of Nevis in the British West Indies in 1757. As an adolescent and young man, he witnessed the brutal system of slavery on the sugar plantations and slave resistance. Hamilton moved to New York City in 1772 where he attended King’s College (Columbia University). In 1776, Hamilton joined the Continental Army and became the aide-de-camp to George Washington. During the Revolutionary War, Hamilton argued that Africans had the same natural abilities as Europeans and that slaves should be recruited as soldiers and given “their freedom with their muskets.” After the war, Hamilton studied law, served as a member of the Continental Congress and the New York State Assembly and co-authored The Federalist Papers. Although Hamilton served as an officer of the New York Manumission Society, he favored compromise with the South on issue of slavery to strengthen national union. George Washington appointed Hamilton as Secretary of the Treasury in the first federal government. In 1804, Hamilton fought a duel with Aaron Burr in Weckauken, New Jersey. Hamilton was shot and died the next day. He is buried at Trinity Church in Manhattan.


Col. Laurens, who will have the honor of delivering you this letter, is on his way to South Carolina, on a project, which I think, in the present situation of affairs there, is a very good one and deserves every kind of support and encouragement. This is to raise two three or four battalions of negroes; with the assistance of the government of that state, by contributions from the owners in proportion to the number they possess. If you should think proper to enter upon the subject with him, he will give you a detail of his plan. He wishes to have it recommended by Congress to the state; and, as an inducement, that they would engage to take those battalions into Continental pay.

It appears to me, that an expedient of this kind, in the present state of Southern affairs, is the most rational, that can be adopted, and promises very important advantages. Indeed, I hardly see how a sufficient force can be collected in that quarter without it; and the enemy’s operations there are growing infinitely serious and formidable. I have not the least doubt, that the negroes will make very excellent soldiers, with proper management. . . . I mention this, because I frequently hear it objected to the scheme of embodying negroes that they are too stupid to make soldiers. This is so far from appearing to me a valid objection that I think their want of cultivation (for their natural faculties are probably as good as ours) joined to that habit of subordination which they acquire from a life of servitude, will make them sooner become soldiers than our White inhabitants. Let officers be men of sense and sentiment, and the nearer the soldiers approach to machines perhaps the better.

I foresee that this project will have to combat much opposition from prejudice and self-interest. The contempt we have been taught to entertain for the blacks, makes us fancy many things that are founded neither in reason nor experience; and an unwillingness to part with property of so valuable a kind will furnish a thousand arguments to show the impracticability or pernicious tendency of a scheme which requires such a sacrifice. But it should be considered, that if we do not make use of them in this way, the enemy probably will; and that the best way to counteract the temptations they will hold out will be to offer them ourselves. An essential part of the plan is to give them their freedom with their muskets. This will secure their fidelity, animate their courage, and I believe will have a good influence upon those who remain, by opening a door to their emancipation. This circumstance, I confess, has no small weight in inducing me to wish the success of the project; for the dictates of humanity and true policy equally interest me in favour of this unfortunate class of men.

Questions
1. What is Hamilton proposing? Why is he proposing it?
2. What opposition does he anticipate to this plan?
C. John Jay, African Americans and the Gradual Manumission of Slavery (1777-1819)


John Jay was born in New York City in 1745 and raised on the family farm in Rye, New York. In 1774 he a prominent member of the New York Committee of Correspondence and he attended the First Continental Congress. During his long political career, John Jay drafted the first New York State Constitution, was President of Continental Congress (1778-79), First Chief Justice of United States (1790-95), and Governor of New York State for two terms (1795-1801). John Jay’s father, Peter Jay, was one of the largest slave owners in New York. However, John Jay became a leading advocate of manumission. Although he owned slaves himself, Jay claimed that “I purchase slaves and manumit them at proper ages and when their faithful services shall have afforded a reasonable retribution.” In 1854, Horace Greeley wrote that John Jay “more than to any other man,” should be credited with “ the abolition of Negro bondage in this [New York] state.” John Jay led an unsuccessful effort to include the abolition of slavery in New York State’s first constitution. In 1785, he was a co-founder of the New York State Society for Promoting the Manumission of Slaves and he served as its president. In 1799, Governor John Jay signed into law a measure providing that from July 4th of that year, all children born to slave parents would be free (subject only to apprenticeship), and that slave export would be prohibited.

1777. John Jay on the New York State Constitution: The other parts of the Constitution I approve, and only regret like a Harvest cut before it was ripe, some of the grains have shrunk. . . . I should also have been for a clause against the continuation of domestic slavery and the support and encouragement of literature (literacy); as well as some other matters tho[ugh] perhaps of less consequence. Tho[ugh] the birth of the Constitution is in my opinion premature, I shall nevertheless do all in my power to keep it alive. . . .

1780. John Jay on Manumission: Till America comes into this Measure [abolition], her prayers to Heaven for Liberty will be impious…This is a strong expression, but it is just. Were I in [the] Legislature I would prepare a bill for the Purpose with great Care, and I would never cease moving it till it became a Law or I ceased to be a member. I believe God governs this world, and I believe it to be a Maxim in his as in our Court that those who ask for Equity ought to do it.

1784. John Jay in papers manumitting an enslaved African named Benoit: The Children of Men are by Nature equally free, and cannot without Injustice be either reduced to, or held in Slavery.

1788. John Jay on the Federal Constitution: [T]hey who know the value of liberty, and are blessed with the enjoyment of it, ought not to subject others to slavery, is, like most other moral precepts, more generally admitted in theory than observed in practice. This will continue to be too much the case while men are impelled to action by their passions rather than their reason, and while they are more solicitous to acquire wealth than to do as they would be done by. . . . When it is considered how many of the legislators in the different States are proprietors of slaves, and what opinions and prejudices they have imbibed on the subject from their infancy, a sudden and total stop to this species of oppression is not to be expected.”

1819. John Jay on the prohibition of slavery in new territories: “Little can be added to what has been said and written on the subject of slavery. I concur in the opinion that it ought not to be introduced nor permitted in any of the new States; and that it ought to be gradually diminished and finally abolished in all of them. To me the constitutional authority of the Congress to prohibit the migration and importation of slaves into any of the States, does not appear questionable.”

Questions
1. What does John Jay do to oppose slavery?
2. What are Jay’s chief argument against slavery?
AIM: Why did some New Yorkers view abolitionists as a threat to the nation?

BACKGROUND: Blacks were also becoming a greater presence in upstate New York, especially along the canal routes. In his autobiography, Austin Steward described being brought as a slave from Virginia to New York. He finally secured his freedom and settled in the Rochester area. Solomon Northup wrote about growing up as a free Black youth in Essex and Washington Counties and working on the Champlain canal system. This period also saw the emergence of important African American institutions in New York state. In 1796, Black congregants in New York City formed an independent Zion Church. The New York Manumission Society established African Free Schools and they were later supported by the municipal government and the state legislature. Graduates of African Free Schools, including Henry Highland Garnet, Alexander Crummell, and James McCune Smith, became prominent community leaders, especially in the struggle for Black civil rights and for the abolition of slavery in the United States. Seneca Village, in an area that is now part of Central Park in New York City, emerged as a largely Black community. Freedom’s Journal, the first African American newspaper published in the United States, started production in New York City in March 16, 1827.

DO NOW: Make a list. How do you think the abolition of slavery in the new nation would have affected the history of the United States?

MOTIVATION: After 9/11, some Americans were prepared to limit personal freedom to protect liberty. Would you be able to support something that you felt was morally wrong because you thought it was in your own best interest? Explain.

ACTIVITY: Read and discuss the speech “Abolition: A Threat to the American Way of Life”.

KEY QUESTIONS:
Why did some Americans believe the emancipation of African Americans would lead to disaster for the nation?
Suppose all enslaved Africans were freed at the start of the new nation by the Constitution, what do you think would have happened to them? to the country? What problems do you think would have emerged?

HOMEWORK/APPLICATION: Pretend you just heard this anti-abolition speech. Write your own speech in response. Be sure to refer to specific details from “Abolition: A Threat to the American Way of Life.”

Lesson developed by Diane Maier
Was the Abolition of Slavery in New York a Threat to the American Way of Life?

Directions: This article was printed in a New York City newspaper in 1785. The author describes the problems he thinks will develop if slavery is abolished in New York. Read the article and answer the questions that follow.

1. “To deny that all men are born free, is contrary to the principles of our independence without doubt, or to disfranchise citizens and not allow them a representation; . . . it was done to preserve the liberty of the state; . . . it is better that an individual should suffer an inconvenience, than a community at large.”

2. “It would be greatly injurious to this state if all the Negroes should be allowed the privileges of white men, unless there could be derived some possible means consistent with liberty, to separate them from white people, and prevent them from having any connection or intercourse with them.”

3. “[I]f they are emancipated on any other terms, it must be evident to the most common understanding, what will be the consequence in a short time; besides the shame we should most inevitably incur from a mixture of complexions, and their participating in government,. . . still greater consequence is to be dreaded, which is a total subversion of our liberties.”

4. “[T]hey, in combination with their friends the Quakers, would give every assistance to our enemies, as we have already experienced their fidelity [loyalty] in the late contest [the American Revolution], when they fought against us by whole regiments, and the Quakers at the same time supported every measure of Great-Britain to enslave us.”

5. “Those pretended supporters of liberty [the Quakers] now preach up, let us emancipate the slaves, conceiving it more for the benefit of their souls to have the negroes now set at liberty, than they thought it just that white people should have had it in the year 1776 and 1777. Their motives are obvious; for the moment the period of the emancipation of negroes arrives, it will cause them, with others who wish to join them, to have a greater influence in the government, which the Quakers as well as some others, fervently wish for.”

6. “If they were free and on equal footing with us. God knows what use they would make of their power; a very bad one I fear.”

Questions
1. Why does the author believe New York has the right to limit the rights of some of its citizens?
2. What does the phrase mean “it is better that an individual should suffer an inconvenience, than a community at large”?
3. Do you agree or disagree with this statement? Explain.
4. Why does the author complain about the Quakers?
5. What does the author fear will happen if African Americans receive the same rights and privileges as White Americans?
6. Pretend you are an abolitionist in New York in 1785. Write a letter to the newspaper responding to this article.
AIM: How did conditions change for New York’s African American population after the passage of the gradual emancipation act?

BACKGROUND: According to the 1790 federal census, about one third of New York County’s Black population was free, but only twenty percent in Westchester and less than five percent in Kings County. In 1799, under the leadership of Governor John Jay and Aaron Burr, the state legislature approved a plan for the “gradual emancipation” of the remaining enslaved African population of the state. Black female children born in 1799 or after would automatically become free at the age of 25. Black male children would become free at the age of 28. With the passage of a gradual emancipation act, the slave system in the state slowly moved towards dissolution. By 1820, almost 85 percent of African Americans in New York City and Kings County were free. On July 4, 1827, New York’s African American community and its supporters were finally able to celebrate the state’s Emancipation Day. However, emancipation did not mean full citizenship. In 1821, a New York State Constitutional Convention voted to limit the right to vote to African American men who owned at least $250 in property.

DO NOW: Read passage from the Gradual Emancipation Act of 1799.

MOTIVATION: What would you expect to happen in New York State as the gradual emancipation act begins to come into affect? Why??

ACTIVITIES:
- Students are given the documents containing the map and the population statistics. They are to answer the questions for the map and then create a bar graph with the population statistics.
- Once the students display their graphs, the class can be lead in a discussion on the impact of this emancipation law and its importance.

SUMMARY: Look at your do now question, does what you have discovered today coincide with what you originally answered? Is anything different?

HOMEWORK: Write an newspaper editorial discussing the effects of the emancipation act.

APPLICATION: What role do you feel New York played in the emancipation effort?
1799. Gradual Abolition Act

*Be it enacted...* That any child born of a slave within this state after the fourth day of July next shall be deemed and adjudged to be born free: *Provided nevertheless.* That such child shall be the servant of the legal proprietor of his or her mother until such servant, if a male, shall arrive at the age of twenty-eight years, and if a female, at the age of twenty-five years.

**Question**
When will people actually begin to become free?

**Task 1. New York State Slave Holding (1790)**


**Key: Households that own Slaves**

- **More than 33%**
- **Between 20% and 33%**
- **Between 10% and 20%**
- **Fewer than 10%**

**Questions**
1. According to this map and the map key, where were the majority of enslaved Africans located in New York State?
2. In your opinion, why did the majority of enslaved Africans live in these areas?

**Task 2. The Impact of New York’s Gradual Emancipation Law**

Use the data in this chart to create a BAR graph illustrating the change in the status of Africans in New York from 1790 to 1840.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Free Black Population of New York State</th>
<th>Enslaved Population of New York State</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1790</td>
<td>1,036</td>
<td>2,056</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1800</td>
<td>3,333</td>
<td>2,534</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1810</td>
<td>7,470</td>
<td>1,446</td>
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<tr>
<td>1820</td>
<td>10,368</td>
<td>518</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1830</td>
<td>13,976</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1840</td>
<td>16,358</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
AIM: What was the life like for enslaved Africans in on Long Island at the start of the new nation?

BACKGROUND: It is difficult to construct the history of ordinary people from the distant past, whether they were free or slave. This lesson uses a series of documents to establish what life was like for enslaved Africans on Long Island during the last decade of the 18th century and the early decades of the 19th century. Dorcas Freeman was born in 1774, the property of James Horton, and lived in Southold, New York along Peconic Bay. When she died in 1879, her obituary was printed The Christian at Work. Venture Smith was born in African, enslaved as a boy, and transported to Barbados. He was shipped to Rhode Island and sent to Fisher’s Island, off of the coast of Long Island. When he was twenty-two years old, he married and attempted to escape from bondage. He eventually surrendered to his master, but was permitted to earn money to purchase his freedom and the freedom of his family. He published his memoirs in 1796. Jonathan Baxter and Dr. Samuel Thompson were slaveholders who kept journal entries on the work of enslaved Africans on their farms. Miscellaneous legal papers also tell part of the story of slavery on Long Island.

DO NOW: Make a list of at least FIVE things about yourself you would include if you were writing the history of your own life. Explain why you would include this information.

MOTIVATION: As historians, how can we learn about the lives of ordinary people from the past? What artifacts and written material might survive? How can we learn about Africans enslaved in New York at the start of the new nation?

ACTIVITIES:
The class will be broken into an even number of groups. Half of the groups will be given the “Narrative of the Life and Adventures of Venture Smith”. The other half will be given the obituary of Dorcas. Both groups will read their document and answer the questions that follow.
The entire class will discuss the documents and then come up with FIVE important aspects of Venture Smith and Dorcas’ life that each one should be remembered by.
Journals and Bill of sales give clues to African life on Long Island

SUMMARY: What types of lives did enslaved Africans live on Long Island? Should enslaved Africans only be remembered for being slaves or for their accomplishments in life?

HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENT: Look at an obituary page from a recent newspaper. Explain how this obituary is similar/different from the story of Dorcas obituary. Why do you think they are similar/different?

Lesson developed by Rachael Ingberman
A. Dorcas Freeman. An Obituary by the Rev. Epmer Whitaker, D.D.  

A. It was in March 1774, that Dorcas was born, of pure African blood, the property of James Horton, and she died near the end of March, 1871, beloved and revered by all who knew her, and greatly lamented by the large circle of her neighbors, as well as by her kindred, and the First church of Southold, whereof she was a member, and in which, for the seventy-two years of her full communion therein, she had been a polished stone of the spiritual temple, a pillar of strength and of beauty.

B. The man who was her legal owner at her birth, and as long thereafter as he lived, was the eldest son of Deacon James Horton. The latter was the youngest son of Barnabas Horton, who became one of the founders of the Church and the Town of Southold in 1640. Barnabas built the west part and Jonathan the east part of the old Horton House, which has recently become famous throughout the United States. They were in a new country in their day, and they did not a little to make new laws. The former was often a member of the Legislature of the Colonies of New Haven and of Connecticut; and the latter built an addition to his dwelling in order to provide a Court House for Suffolk County. They were in no bondage to mere precedent and uniformity; and so, in the face of the custom of Old England, Barnabas Horton bequeathed his homestead to his youngest son – not to the eldest. In this matter the spirit and example of the Hebrew patriarch Jacob doubtless wrought more or less in the heart and soul of the Southold patriarch. Jonathan’s son James lifted up his eyes and looked toward the south, where he saw that a neck of fertile land thrust itself into the fruitful and sparkling waters of the beautiful Peconic Bay. This neck is now the rich and pleasant School District of Bay View. It is the southern part of the old parish of Southold.

C. One of the most characteristic features of her long life was her deep religious experience. In the years of her early womanhood, this was marked by some of the peculiar physical manifestations that were common in various parts of our country, especially beyond the Alleghanies and south of the Ohio river, at the beginning of the present century. On the 12th of February, 1869, she gave me an intensely interesting recital of her marvellous experiences one day in the Summer of 1799, while walking in company with another young woman, the mother of two of the present Trustees of the First church, from her home in Bay View to the village of Southold, a distance of nearly two miles. Her appreciation of God’s love and grace became so overpowering that she could not proceed. Her bodily strength suddenly gave way. She was prostrated upon the ground, as though overmastered and overwhelmed by an irresistible flood of light. In her own expressive language she said: “When that lift struck me, it took all my strength away, I could not even sit up.” In the course of an hour or two, her bodily strength returned, and she proceeded on her way with her beloved companion, Miss S.W. The fervor of her religious devotion never ceased throughout her long life, and for a considerable period after she had reached fourscore years and ten she was regular and faithful in her most hearty participation in public worship – a spiritual, intelligent heavenly-minded, joyful Christian.

Questions
1. Who was Dorcas Freeman?
2. Why is James Horton mentioned in this article?
3. Who wrote this obituary?
4. What do you learn about Dorcas Freeman from her obituary?
5. In your opinion, would this story have been similar or different if it had been told by Dorcas herself? Explain.
B. Narrative of the Life and Adventures of Venture Smith (1796)

Source: “North American Slave Narratives, Beginnings to 1920” at the “Documenting the American South” website of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, docsouth.unc.edu.

A. [M]y master sent me to live with one of his sisters until he could carry me to Fisher’s Island [on Long Island Sound], the place of his residence. I had then completed my eighth year. After staying with his sister some time, I was taken to my master’s place to live. I was pretty much employed in the house, carding wool and other household business. In this situation I continued for some years, after which my master put me to work out of doors. After many proofs of my faithfulness and honesty, my master began to put great confidence in me. My behavior had as yet been submissive and obedient.

B. Some time after, I had another difficulty and oppression which was greater than any I had ever experienced since I came into this country. For my master having set me off my business to perform that day and then left me to perform it, his son came up to me in the course of the day, big with authority, and commanded me very arrogantly to quit my present business and go directly about what he should order me. I replied to him that my master had given me so much to perform that day, and that I must faithfully complete it in that time. He then broke out into a great rage, snatched a pitchfork and went to lay me over the head therewith, but I as soon got another and defended myself with it, or otherwise he might have murdered me in his outrage. He immediately called some people who were within hearing at work for him, and ordered them to take his hair rope and come and bind me with it. They all tried to bind me, but in vain, though there were three assistants in number. I recovered my temper, voluntarily caused myself to be bound by the same men who tried in vain before, and carried before my young master, that he might do what he pleased with me. He took me to a gallows made for the purpose of hanging cattle on, and suspended me on it. I was released and went to work after hanging on the gallows about an hour.

C. After I had lived with my master thirteen years, being then about twenty-two years old, I married Meg, a slave of his who was about my own age. . . . At the close of that year I was sold to a Thomas Stanton, and had to be separated from my wife and one daughter, who was about one month old. . . . About a year and a half after that time, my master purchased my wife and her child for seven hundred pounds old tenor.

D. I hired myself out at Fisher’s Island, earning twenty pounds; thirteen pounds six shillings of which my master drew for the privilege and the remainder I paid for my freedom. . . . In October following I went and wrought [worked] six months at Long Island. In that six month’s time I cut and corded four hundred cords of wood, besides threshing out seventy-five bushels of grain, and received of my wages. . . . I returned to my master and gave him what I received of my six months’ labor. This left only thirteen pounds eighteen shillings to make up the full sum of my redemption. My master liberated me, saying that I might pay what was behind if I could ever make it convenient, otherwise it would be well. The amount of the money which I had paid my master towards redeeming my time, was seventy-one pounds two shillings. Being thirty-six years old, I had already been sold three different times, made considerable money with seemingly nothing to derive it from, had been cheated out of a large sum of money, lost much by misfortunes, and paid an enormous sum for my freedom. My wife and children were yet in bondage to Mr. Thomas Stanton. I worked at various places, and in particular on Ram Island, where I purchased Solomon and Cuff, two sons of mine, for two hundred dollars each. I . . . redeemed from slavery, myself, my wife and three children, besides three Negro men.

Questions
1. Who was Venture Smith?
2. Why is Fisher’s Island mentioned in this article?
3. Who wrote this story?
4. What do you learn about Venture Smith from this narrative?
5. In your opinion, would this story have been similar or different if it had been told by one of Smith’s “masters”? Explain.
C. Reconstructing the Life of Enslaved Africans on Long Island

1. Excerpts from the Journal of John Baxter, a Long Island Slave Owner (1790-1800)


October 2, 1790: Helped Old Mink in the Morning with a Jah of hay from the Island.
July 19, 1791: Went a fishing with John Stoothoff, Taaf and Old Mink.
August 12, 1791: Johannes Lott in the Neck Sold all his Negroes.
August 19, 1791: Old Mink went to ride shingles from Brooklyn for Stephen Lott.
August 28, 1791: Old Mink began to move Salt hay.
November 9, 1793: The Negroes got their new shoes.
October 5, 1794: Our wench Dian brough forth a Negro boy called Joe.
January 29, 1795: Wrote a bill of sale for Mrs. Gerrett the French Ambassador’s Lady concerning A Negro wench that she brot [sic] from the Estate of R. Voorhees, deceased. Sarah sold for 70 [pounds].
June 9, 1796: Old Mink gone to a Burying at Garret Wyckoff.
July 28, 1796: Old Mink helped Peter Lake to Dig his Cellar.
September 2, 1796: Met in town with the Militia Officers about the orders of training our blacks.
January 2, 1797: Old Mink Got Badly burnt at Sarah Wyckoff.
April 17, 1797: A Court in Flatbush 4 Negroes tryed for stealing foul from Water Berrie and Peter Wyckoff at Guanus [sic].
April 18, 1797: Taaft, the Negro, eloped. Court in Flatbush Taaft came back being Brot [sic] from Oyster Bay by Van Size[?]. I gave him 8 dollars.
May 3, 1797: Sold a Negro call Taaft to Jacobus Lott for 90 [pounds].
October 7, 1797: Old Mink went to his son Tones Wedding.
March 10, 1800: Old Mink, the Negro, died, aged 80 years.

Question: Write a paragraph describing the life of “Old Mink.”

2. Excerpts from the Journal of Dr. Samuel Thompson, a Long Island Slave Owner (March, 1800)


March 5, 1800: Robbin threshed, Jack + Cuff flax, dressed 47 pounds of flax of the Newtown Sort.
March 15, 1800: Franklin and Ben crackled flax in the forenoon and attended the funeral in the afternoon [of Daniel Smith’s wife]. Robbin crackled flax and Cuff dressed 27 pounds. Ginna hackled 32 pounds flax, made 18 pounds beside.
March 21, 1800: Robbin sowing clover seed, carried 16 pounds of seed + sowed it in the wheat ground by the locust tree: then carried 18 pounds and sowed one half and was beat off by the easternly storm of Rain Ben + Franklin crackled flax; Cuff dressed 22 pounds of flax.
March 26, 1800: Cuff swingleed, Jack crackled and Robbin threshed. Franklin not well, went to Major Hawkins + got one quart brandy + one quart gin. Franklin got 1 oz. of Senna + paid 4 shillings for it.
March 29, 1800: Sharper went in to the old field with a load of Post and Rails to set between Jonathan Satterly + me. Robbin + Cuff went to forty acre lot to mend fence. Came home to dinner + threshed out in the afternoon.

Questions
1. Who is doing the labor on these farms?
2. Who is benefiting from this labor?
3. What do you learn about the life of enslaved Africans on Long Island from this journal?
3. Long Island Manumission Papers and Bills of Sale and Lease


1800. Town of Hewlett (January 23, 1800): By Virtue of a Law of the State of New York passed the 29th March AD 1799 for the Total Abolition of Slavery I do in pursuance of the same Manumit a Certain Female by the Name of Rachel to be free to all intents & purpose Agreeable to the tenor of the Law.

1806. Town of Huntington (February 24, 1806): Whereas John Gardiner of the Town of Huntington in the County of Suffolk and the State of New York hath . . . made application to us the undersigned Overseers of the Poor of the Town of Huntington aforesaid for the emancipation of a Certain Negro man Slave named Cato. We have therefore examined into the state and Circumstances of Said Slave and finde him to be under fifty years of age and in our judgment and Opinion of sufficient ability to provide for and maintain himself. We’d therefore hereby Certify that we approve of and Consent to the Manumission of said slave.

1819. Town of Flatlands. Know all men by these presents that I Nicholas Schenck of the town of Flatlands in Kings County in the State of New York, do hereby promise . . ., that in case my Negro-man-slave named Harry Ferguson, shall faithfully serve me in his usual occupation as a farmer, and my Commands Obey, for the time in term of two years from the date hereof. And within the said term pay unto me, . . . the sum of fifty dollars that at the Expiration as aforesaid I will manumit the said Harry from slavery.

1809. Lease Agreement for Peter: I David Sherry of the Town of East Hampton in the County of Suffolk and State of New York for and in consideration of the sum of fifty seven Dollars and ninety cents to me in hand paid by John Smith Esquire of the Town of Brookhaven in the County of Suffolk aforesaid have bargain & sold and delivered . . . unto the said John Smith for the term one whole year a Servant man named Peter To have and to hold the said servant Peter unto him.

1814. Bill of Sale for Harry. Know all Men by these Presents that I Abraham Demarest of the Township of Herrington, County of Bergen, State of New Jersey, in consideration of the Sum of one Hundred [?] Dollars in hand paid do bargain and sell unto Obadiah Willits of the Township of Oysterbay, in Queens County and State of New York one Negroe Man named Harry aged about twenty five years. . . . And I will warrent and defend the said Obadiah Willits in the peacable possession of the said Negroe for me my Heirs and Executors for ever.

Questions
1. When did New York State pass a law to abolish slavery?
2. Why did the Town of Huntington approve the manumission of Cato?
3. How did harry from the town of Flatlands “earn” his freedom?
4. How did David Sherry of East Hampton try to avoid the gradual emancipation act?
5. What do this documents reveal about the attitudes of White Long Islanders toward slavery?
AIM: What was life like for African Americans in upstate New York in the decades between independence and emancipation?

BACKGROUND: As Americans moved west in the decades following independence, people of African ancestry became more of a presence in upstate and western New York. Joseph Hodge, also known as “Black Joe,” was one of the first permanent non-native settlers in the region near Buffalo. George W. Nicholas tells the story of enslaved Africans being brought to Geneva. Austin Stewart was born into slavery in Virginia in 1793. As a young man, he was brought to upstate New York where he escaped from bondage and eventually settled in the Rochester area. In excerpts from his memoirs, Solomon Northup describes his family’s experience in Minerva (Essex county) and Saratoga Springs (Saratoga county).

DO NOW: Locate Buffalo, Geneva, Rochester, Albany and Saratoga Springs on a map of New York State.

MOTIVATION: Why was upstate New York an attractive place for Blacks to settle in the early 19th century?

ACTIVITY: Student teams will read excerpts about Black life from different sections of upstate New York. They will answer questions and prepare to report back to the class on their findings.

KEY QUESTIONS:
What was the relationship between African Americans and native Americans?
What does it mean to be emancipated?
Does emancipation mean that someone has full and equal citizenship rights?

SUMMARY: What was life like for African Americans in upstate New York in the decades between independence and emancipation?

APPLICATION: Create a poem/rap/song/picture of what life would be like as a free Black in upstate New York.

Lesson developed by Monica Longo
A. The First “American” to Settle in the Buffalo Region (1784)

**Source:** [http://www.buffalonian.com/history/articles/1800/whitebjoe.html](http://www.buffalonian.com/history/articles/1800/whitebjoe.html)

Ontario County, in western New York State, was created by the state legislature in 1789. It was later divided into fourteen counties, including Genesee (1802), Allegany (1806), Chautauqua (1808), Cattaraugus (1808), Niagara (1808), Erie (1821) and Orleans (1824). The first federal census in 1790 listed 105 White families in Ontario County, but none in the area near Buffalo Creek that later became Erie County. While there was a Seneca Village and a British fort in Erie, there is a dispute over who was the first “American” to settle in the area. The leading candidates are Joseph Hodge and Cornelius Winney.

Joseph Hodge, also known as “Black Joe,” was taken prisoner by Seneca Indians during the Revolutionary War. He was released to United States authorities at Fort Stanwix in December, 1784. Hodge then returned to Seneca Nation where he married into the tribe and became a fur trader. His presence at Buffalo Creek was noted in a report on a counsel meeting of the Seneca tribe by the Rev. Kirkland in 1788. According to contemporary accounts, by 1792, Hodge was established as an Indian trader on Cattaraugus Creek. In 1796, Perry Smith wrote that Hodge was a “negro” who “had an Indian wife, who bore him children. He understood the Seneca language and was often employed as interpreter. He was supposed to be a runaway slave, and died at an advanced age, on the Cattaraugus Reservation.”

Cornelius Winney, also known as “Dutchman,” migrated to the region from the Hudson River Valley. He is referred to in written accounts from the era starting in 1791. Winney’s small log store was about four miles from the Seneca Village. Hinds Chamberlain, who visited Buffalo Creek in 1792, described the settlement. “We arrived at the mouth of Buffalo Creek the next morning. There was but one white man there. I think his name was Winney, an Indian trader. His building stood first as you descend from the high ground. He had rum, whiskey, Indian knives, trinkets, etc. His house was full of Indians. They looked at us with a good deal of curiosity. We had but a poor night’s rest. The Indians were in and out all night, getting liquor.” There is also a letter signed by Winney to General Chapin, the local Superintendent of Indian Affairs. It is dated August 3, 1792. “I inform Gen. Chapin that about seventy-nine of the Canadian Indians is gone to Detroit. They seem to be for war, and a number of Indians to go up. I further inform you that the Indians of this place are to go up in the first King’s vessel that comes down. Prince Edward is arrived at Fort Niagara. Should I hear anything worth while to write, I shall let you know.”

**Questions**
1. Who were Joseph Hodge and Cornelius Winney?
2. What is the dispute about the history of the settlement in the area that becomes Erie County?

B. Bringing Slaves to Geneva, New York (1803)


This is from 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. . . . 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.

**Questions:**
1. How did the groups travel from Virginia to New York?
2. In your opinion, why did Blacks and Whites they travel in different ways?
C. Austin Steward’s Journey from Slavery to Freedom (1817)

Austin Steward was born in 1793 in Prince William County, Virginia. As a youth, he was brought to upstate New York where he eventually secured his freedom and established himself as a merchant in Rochester. In his memoirs, Twenty-Two Years a Slave, and Forty Years a Freeman (Rochester, NY: William Alling, 1857), Steward wrote: “Everywhere that Slavery exists, it is nothing but slavery. I found it just as hard to be beaten over the head with a piece of iron in New York as it was in Virginia. Whips and chains are everywhere necessary to degrade and brutalize the slave, in order to reduce him to that abject and humble state which Slavery requires” (107-108). Read the excerpts from Steward’s memoirs and answer the questions that correspond to each reading.

1. We traveled northward, through Maryland, Pennsylvania, and a portion of New York, to Sodus Bay, where we halted for some time. We made about twenty miles per day, camping out every night, and reached that place after a march of twenty days. Every morning the overseer called the roll, when every slave must answer to his or her name, falling to the ground with his cowhide, any delinquent who failed to speak out in quick time. After the roll had been called, and our scanty breakfast eaten, we marched on again, our company presenting the appearance of some numerous caravan crossing the desert of Sahara. When we pitched our tents for the night, the slaves must immediately set about cooking not their supper only, but their breakfast, so as to be ready to start early the next morning, when the tents were struck; and we proceeded on our journey in this way to the end (52-53).

2. I managed to purchase a spelling book, and set about teaching myself to read. . . . Every spare moment I could find was devoted to that employment. At last, however, I was discovered. . . . I had been set to work in the sugar bush, and I took my spelling book with me. When a spare moment occurred I sat down to study, and so absorbed was I in the attempt to blunder through my lesson, that I did not hear the Captain’s son-in-law coming until he was fairly upon me. He sprang forward, caught my poor old spelling book, and threw it into the fire, where it was burned to ashes; and then came my turn. He gave me first a severe flogging, and then swore if he ever caught me with another book, he would “whip every inch of skin off my back” (82-83).

3. My master . . . hired me out to a man by the name of Joseph Robinson. . . . Robinson lived about three miles from the village of Bath, on a small farm, and was not only a poor man but a very mean one. He was . . . tyrannical and cruel to those in his employ; and having hired me as a “slave boy,” he appeared to feel at full liberty to wreak his brutal passion on me at any time, whether I deserved rebuke or not; . . . he would frequently draw from the cart-tongue a heavy iron pin, and beat me over the head with it, so unmercifully that he frequently sent the blood flowing over my scanty apparel, and from that to the ground, before he could feel satisfied (92-93).

4. In September, 1817, I commenced business in Rochester. . . . I established a meat market, which. . . . was liberally patronized by the citizens; but there were butchers in the village who appeared to be unwilling that I should have any share in public patronage. Sometimes they tore down my sign, at others painted it black, and so continued to annoy me until after I had one of their number arrested, which put a stop to their unmanly proceedings. . . . So strong was the prejudice then existing against the colored people, that very few of the negroes seemed to have any courage or ambition to rise from the abject degradation in which the estimation of the white man had placed him. . . . I purchased a lot of land, situated on Main street. Having secured my land, I began making preparations for building, and soon had a good two story dwelling and store, into which I moved my effects, and commenced a more extensive business (124, 131-132).

Questions
1. What were conditions like on the trip from Virginia to New York?
2. What happened when Austin was caught trying to teach himself to read? In your opinion, why did the Captain’s son-in-law react this way?
3. How was Austin Steward treated by Joseph Robinson? In your opinion, why was he treated this way?
4. What challenges did Austin Steward have to overcome after he became a free man?
D. Austin Steward describes the Desperation of a Fugitive Slave

Source: Steward, A. (1857). Twenty-Two Years a Slave, and Forty Years a Freeman, 247-251.

When we had passed a few miles out of Albany, the boat hove to, and there came on board four men - one of the number a colored man. The white men repaired to their state-rooms, leaving the colored man on deck, after the boat had returned to the channel. He attracted my attention, by his dejected appearance and apparent hopeless despair. He was, I judged, about forty years of age; his clothing coarse and very ragged; and the most friendless, sorrowful looking being I ever saw. He spake to no one, but silently paced the deck; his breast heaving with inaudible sighs; his brow contracted with a most terrible frown; his eyes dreamily fastened on the floor, and he appeared to be considering some hopeless undertaking. I watched him attentively, as I walked to and fro on the same deck, and could clearly discover that some fearful conflict was taking place in his mind; but as I afterwards repassed him he looked up with a happy, patient smile, that lighted up his whole countenance, which seemed to say plainly, I see a way of escape, and have decided on my course of action. His whole appearance was changed; his heart that before had beat so wildly was quiet now as the broad bosom of the Hudson, and he gazed after me with a look of calm deliberation, indicative of a settled, but desperate purpose. I walked hastily forward and turned around, when, Oh, my God! what a sight was there! Holding still the dripping knife, with which he had cut his throat! and while his life-blood oozed from the gaping wound and flowed over his tattered garments to the deck, the same exultant smile beamed on his ghastly features!

The history of the poor, dejected creature was now revealed: he had escaped from his cruel task-master in Maryland; but in the midst of his security and delightful enjoyment, he had been overtaken by the human blood-hound, and returned to his avaricious and tyrannical master, now conducting him back to a life of Slavery, to which he rightly thought death was far preferable.

The horrors of slave life, which he had so long endured, arose in all their hideous deformity in his mind, hence the convict of feeling which I had observed, - and hence the change in his whole appearance, when he had resolved to endure a momentary pain, and escape a life-long scene of unrequited toil and degradation.

There happened to be on the boat at the time, several companies of citizen soldiers, who, shocked by the awful spectacle, expressed their decided abhorrence of the institution of Slavery, declaring that it was not for such peculiar villainy, that their fathers fought and bled on the battle field. So determined were they in their indignation; so loudly demanded they a cessation of such occurrences on board our boats, and the soil of a free State, that the slaveholders became greatly alarmed, and with all possible dispatch they hurriedly dragged the poor bleeding slave into a closet, and securely locked the door; nor have I ever been able to learn his final doom. Whether the kindly messenger of death released him from the clutches of the man-stealer, or whether he recovered to serve his brutal master, I have never been informed.

On the following morning, I saw in the city papers, “A Card,” inserted by the owner of the poor slave on board the steamboat, informing the public that he was returning South with a fugitive slave, who, when arrested, evinced great willingness to return; who had confessed also, that he had done very wrong in leaving his master, for which he was sorry, - but he supposed that the abolitionists had been tampering with him. That was all! Not a word about his attempt to take his life! Oh no, he merely wished to allay the excitement, that the horrid deed had produced on the minds of those present.

I was indignant at the publication of such a deliberate falsehood, and immediately wrote and published that I too was on board the same boat with the fugitive; that I had witnessed an exhibition of his willingness to return to Slavery, by seeing him cut his throat, and lay on the deck wallowing in his blood; that the scene had so excited the sympathies of the soldiers present, that his owner had been obliged to hurry him out of their sight. When this statement appeared in the newspapers, it so exasperated the friends of the slaveholder, that I was advised to flee from the city, lest I might be visited with personal violence; but I assured my advisers that it was only the wicked who “flee when no man pursueth, but the righteous are bold as a lion.”

Questions
1. Why did the “colored” man try to take his own life?
2. Why did some of the passengers react in horror to this spectacle?
3. How did the slaveholders respond to what happened?
4. What would you have done if you were a passenger on the boat? Why?
E. Narrative Of Solomon Northup (1808-1841)


1. Family History

[M]y ancestors on the paternal side were slaves in Rhode Island. They belonged to a family by the name of Northup, one of whom, removing to the State of New York, settled at Hoosic, in Rensselaer county. He brought with him Mintus Northup, my father. On the death of this gentleman, which must have occurred some fifty years ago, my father became free, having been emancipated by a direction in his will.

Sometime after my father’s liberation, he removed to the town of Minerva, Essex county, N. Y., where I was born, in the month of July, 1808. . . . Though born a slave, and laboring under the disadvantages to which my unfortunate race is subjected, my father was a man respected for his industry and integrity, as many now living, who well remember him, are ready to testify. His whole life was passed in the peaceful pursuits of agriculture, never seeking employment in those more menial positions, which seem to be especially allotted to the children of Africa. Besides giving us an education surpassing that ordinarily bestowed upon children in our condition, he acquired, by his diligence and economy, a sufficient property qualification to entitle him to the right of suffrage. He was accustomed to speak to us of his early life; and although at all times cherishing the warmest emotions of kindness, and even of affection towards the family, in whose house he had been a bondsman, he nevertheless comprehended the system of Slavery, and dwelt with sorrow on the degradation of his race. He endeavored to imbue our minds with sentiments of morality, and to teach us to place our trust and confidence in Him who regards the humblest as well as the highest of his creatures. . . . Up to this period I had been principally engaged with my father in the labors of the farm. The leisure hours allowed me were generally either employed over my books, or playing on the violin - an amusement which was the ruling passion of my youth.

Questions
1. Why is Solomon Northup unsure of part of his family’s history?
2. How does Solomon describe his father?
3. How do Solomon Northup’s memories compare with what you know about the history of your own family?

2. Life and Work on the Champlain Canal

On Christmas day, 1829, I was married to Anne Hampton, a colored girl then living in the vicinity of our residence. . . . I had just now passed the period of my minority, having reached the age of twenty-one years in the month of July previous. Deprived of the advice and assistance of my father, with a wife dependent upon me for support, I resolved to enter upon a life of industry; and notwithstanding the obstacle of color, and the consciousness of my lowly state, indulged in pleasant dreams of a good time coming, when the possession of some humble habitation, with a few surrounding acres, should reward my labors, and bring me the means of happiness and comfort. . . .

During the winter I was employed with others repairing the Champlain Canal, on that section over which William Van Nortwick was superintendent. David McEachron had the immediate charge of the men in whose company I labored. By the time the canal opened in the spring, I was enabled, from the savings of my wages, to purchase a pair of horses, and other things necessarily required in the business of navigation. Having hired several efficient hands to assist me, I entered into contracts for the transportation of large rafts of timber from Lake Champlain to Troy. . . . Having completed my contracts on the canal satisfactorily to myself and to my employer, and not wishing to remain idle, now that the navigation of the canal was again suspended, I entered into another contract with Medad Gunn, to cut a large quantity of wood. In this business I was engaged during the winter of 1831-32.

With the return of spring, Anne and myself conceived the project of taking a farm in the neighborhood. I had been accustomed from earliest youth to agricultural labors, and it was an occupation congenial to my tastes. I accordingly entered into arrangements for a part of the old Alden farm, on which my father formerly resided. With one cow, one swine, a yoke of fine oxen I had lately purchased of Lewis Brown, in Hartford, and other personal property and effects, we proceeded to our new home in Kingsbury. That year I planted twenty-five acres of corn, sowed large fields of oats, and commenced farming upon as large a scale as my utmost means would permit. Anne was diligent about the house affairs, while I toiled laboriously in the field.
On this place we continued to reside until 1834. In the winter season I had numerous calls to play on the violin. Wherever the young people assembled to dance, I was almost invariably there. Throughout the surrounding villages my fiddle was notorious. Anne, also, during her long residence at the Eagle Tavern, had become somewhat famous as a cook. During court weeks, and on public occasions, she was employed at high wages in the kitchen at Sherrill’s Coffee House.

We always returned home from the performance of these services with money in our pockets; so that, with fiddling, cooking, and farming, we soon found ourselves in the possession of abundance, and, in fact, leading a happy and prosperous life. Well, indeed, would it have been for us had we remained on the farm at Kingsbury; but the time came when the next step was to be taken towards the cruel destiny that awaited me.

Questions
1. Why did Solomon Northup’s life change when he was twenty-one?
2. What kind of work did Solomon Northup do to earn a living?
3. In your opinion, was Solomon Northup able to successfully overcome the “obstacle of color”?

3. Raising a Family in Saratoga Springs

In March, 1834, we removed to Saratoga Springs. We occupied a house belonging to Daniel O’Brien, on the north side of Washington street. At that time Isaac Taylor kept a large boarding house, known as Washington Hall, at the north end of Broadway. He employed me to drive a hack, in which capacity I worked for him two years. After this time I was generally employed through the visiting season, as also was Anne, in the United States Hotel, and other public houses of the place. In winter seasons I relied upon my violin, though during the construction of the Troy and Saratoga railroad, I performed many hard days’ labor upon it. . . .

While living at the United States Hotel, I frequently met with slaves, who had accompanied their masters from the South. They were always well dressed and well provided for, leading apparently an easy life, with but few of its ordinary troubles to perplex them. Many times they entered into conversation with me on the subject of Slavery. Almost uniformly I found they cherished a secret desire for liberty. Some of them expressed the most ardent anxiety to escape, and consulted me on the best method of effecting it. The fear of punishment, however, which they knew was certain to attend their re-capture and return, in all cases proved sufficient to deter them from the experiment. Having all my life breathed the free air of the North, and conscious that I possessed the same feelings and affections that find a place in the white man’s breast; conscious, moreover, of an intelligence equal to that of some men, at least, with a fairer skin. I was too ignorant, perhaps too independent, to conceive how any one could be content to live in the abject condition of a slave. I could not comprehend the justice of that law, or that religion, which upholds or recognizes the principle of Slavery; and never once, I am proud to say, did I fail to counsel any one who came to me, to watch his opportunity, and strike for freedom.

I continued to reside at Saratoga until the spring of 1841. The flattering anticipations which, seven years before, had seduced us from the quiet farm house, on the east side of the Hudson, had not been realized. Though always in comfortable circumstances, we had not prospered. The society and associations at that world-renowned watering place, were not calculated to preserve the simple habits of industry and economy to which I had been accustomed, but, on the contrary, to substitute others in their stead, tending to shiftlessness and extravagance.

At this time we were the parents of three children - Elizabeth, Margaret, and Alonzo. Elizabeth, the eldest, was in her tenth year; Margaret was two years younger, and little Alonzo had just passed his fifth birth-day. They filled our house with gladness. Their young voices were music in our ears. Many an airy castle did their mother and myself build for the little innocents. When not at labor I was always walking with them, clad in their best attire, through the streets and groves of Saratoga. Their presence was my delight; and I clasped them to my bosom with as warm and tender love as if their clouded skins had been as white as snow.

Questions
1. How did Solomon Northup support his family during the winter?
2. What did he learn from enslaved Africans who were travelling with their owners?
3. In your opinion, how did Solomon Northup’s life most sharply differ from the life of an enslaved person?
**AIM:** History-Mystery: What were race relations like in Brooklyn (Kings County) in the early years of the new nation?

**BACKGROUND:** During the years immediately after the American Revolution, Kings County (now known as Brooklyn), largely consisted of farms and small towns. The county had the highest percentage of African Americans as part of its population in the state of New York. Documents included in the history-mystery are Francis Guy’s “Snow Scene of Brooklyn in 1820”; excerpts from Henry R. Stiles, *A History of the City of Brooklyn; Changing Population of Kings County; Indentured Servant Papers; Slavery in the Town of New Lots; Slave Owning Families Among the Founders of Kings County Banks; and Stephen L. Vanderveer’s New Lots Recollections. The Guy painting is more easily viewed on the internet at [www.dayhops.com/.../images/1_d_winter_scene.jpg](http://www.dayhops.com/.../images/1_d_winter_scene.jpg)

**DO NOW:** Review instructions for the History-Mystery.

**MOTIVATION:** How has the world changed in the past two years? In what ways has it remained the same? In this lesson we will go back in time to Kings County (Brooklyn), New York about two hundred years ago. Our goal will be to use primary source documents that survive from that period to understand race relations in the early years of the new nation.

**ACTIVITIES:** In this lesson, students examine and discuss a series of documents that illustrate the Black presence in Kings County during the first decades of the new nation. Their task in this “History-Mystery is to use these primary documents to reconstruct the history of race relations in Kings County and to write their own historical narrative of events and the time period.

**KEY QUESTIONS:**
What do these documents that you about life in Brooklyn (Kings County) in the early years of the new nation?

**SUMMARY QUESTION:** Based on your research, what were relations between Blacks and Whites like in Kings County (Brooklyn), in the early years of the new nation?

**HOMEWORK:** Using the information gathered from the history mystery, students create an encyclopedia entry on the African American Experience in the Kings County (Brooklyn).

**APPLICATION:** A number of streets and place names in Brooklyn are named after people who owned enslaved Africans. Should these people continue to be honored or should street and place names be changed? Explain. Do banks who are descended from banks started by slave owning families have any obligation to “make right” on the injustices of the past? Explain.
A. Francis Guy’s “Snow Scene of Brooklyn in 1820”

This painting by Francis Guy (www.dayhops.com/.../images/ 1_d_winter_scene.jpg) shows an interracial Brooklyn Heights street scene about 1820. African American men are shown in the foreground center. An African American man named Jeff is working as a chimney-sweep. In Brooklyn at this times, African Americans could be either free or enslaved. At least two local White men, Thomas W. Birdsall and Abiel Titus, are known to have owned slaves.

Questions
1. How is life in this scene different from life in Brooklyn today?
2. There are both Whites and African Americans in this painting. What does that tell you about life in Brooklyn during that period?
B. Characters from the Early History of Brooklyn


A. The north-east corner of Prospect street and Stewart’s alley, is most pleasantly associated, in the mind of early Brooklynites, with a famous restaurant kept there for many years, by John Joseph, otherwise better known as Johnny Joe. He was a native of Martinique, West Indies, from whence he was brought, about 1795, by a Frenchman, who left him in New York, to serve for a time as a waiter in several families. At the commencement of the war of 1812, he accompanied Captain Alexander Hamilton (son of the great statesman), to Governor’s Island, which was then occupied as a recruiting station. From there he went to Canada with Captain Jeremiah Hayden. He returned here in 1825, with a snug little fortune of some $1,600 in gold, the result of diligent industry and careful economy; married a West Indian mulatto woman, and taking a lease of the building on Prospect Street, opened a restaurant which he continued for some twenty years. He expended (spent) considerable money in the repairs of these buildings, and was not fortunate in his tenants. In the end, although his immediate business had been popular and successful, the expenses of his real estate swallowed up his earnings. He surrendered his lease and retired upon a small piece of land in Queens county, near Jericho, at a place called Bushy Plains, where he resides with his wife in a settlement of colored people, working very diligently for a living. . . .

B. Israel and Timothy Horsfield were men of mark [wealth] in their day. They were the sons of Timothy Horsfield, of Liverpool, England, where they were born. Israel came to this country in 1720, and became a freeman [citizen] of New York, on the 13th of December, of the same year. About three years after, his brother Timothy arrived and entered into business with him, as butchers. Long Island at that time furnished the New York market with most of its live stock. They built a wharf at the foot of the present Doughty Street, together with a slaughtering place and the necessary buildings for residence. The next year they leased the two best stands in the Old Slip Market in the city of New York; their dressed meats being brought over daily, in rowboats by their own slaves, to their stands in the market. Israel Horsfield, in 1738, had a family of ten persons, three of whom were colored men, and slaves. He and his brother afterwards had the misfortune to lose some of their “chattels” [slaves] who were put to death for complicity in the “Great Negro Plot” of 1741. The Horsfields accumulated a large property and owned a considerable amount of land on the Heights, near the ferry. Israel, Jr succeeded his father in the business of a butcher, but not with the same success. In 1755, he had one slave, Chalsey. John Carpenter was also a butcher. He and his brother Benjamin were sons of George and Elizabeth Carpenter, who came from Long Island, about 1718, to the city of New York, of which the father became a freeman [citizen], entering into business as a butcher, which he continued until his death, about 1730. His widow then carried on the business, with the help of her sons, and became a very successful butcheress. In the Negro Plot of 1741, she lost two of her most valuable butcher slaves, one of whom was burned at the stake, and another transported; while in 1756, she lost one by running away, and again in 1759.

Questions
1. Why did Johnny Joe close his business?
2. In your opinion, why did this real estate become so expensive?
3. Why were the Horsfield’s an important family in Brooklyn society?
4. What happened to enslaved Africans accused of participating in the “Great Negro Plot” of 1741?
5. What do we learn about African American life from these passages?
C. Changing Population of Kings County


1. Population of Kings County Towns (1791)

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Town</th>
<th>Enslaved</th>
<th>Free Black</th>
<th>White</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>Flatbush</td>
<td>378</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>551</td>
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<tr>
<td>New Utrecht</td>
<td>206</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>346</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gravesend</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>286</td>
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<tr>
<td>Flatlands</td>
<td>137</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>286</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bushwick</td>
<td>171</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>364</td>
</tr>
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<td>Total</td>
<td>1,432</td>
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2. Population of Kings County Towns (1801)

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<tbody>
<tr>
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<tr>
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<td>341</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>566</td>
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<tr>
<td>New Utrecht</td>
<td>213</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>526</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gravesend</td>
<td>162</td>
<td>11</td>
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<tr>
<td>Flatlands</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>352</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bushwick</td>
<td>188</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>434</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
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<td>3,931</td>
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3. Population of Kings County (1790-1860)

<table>
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<th>Year</th>
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<tr>
<td>1790</td>
<td>4,495</td>
<td>1,478</td>
<td>33.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>1800</td>
<td>5,740</td>
<td>1,811</td>
<td>32.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1810</td>
<td>8,303</td>
<td>1,853</td>
<td>22.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>1820</td>
<td>11,187</td>
<td>1,761</td>
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<tr>
<td>1830</td>
<td>20,535</td>
<td>2,007</td>
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<td>47,613</td>
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<tr>
<td>1850</td>
<td>138,882</td>
<td>4,065</td>
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<tr>
<td>1860</td>
<td>279,122</td>
<td>4,999</td>
<td>1.8</td>
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Questions
1. Which town in Brooklyn has the largest percentage of its population as enslaved Africans in 1791?
2. What happened to the ratio of slaves to free Blacks in Brooklyn from 1791 to 1801?
3. What happens to the Black population of Brooklyn from 1790 to 1860?
4. Draw a graph displaying date from each of these charts.
D. Brooklyn, New York Indentured Servant Papers (1811-1819)
Source: Schenck Family Papers, New York Historical Society

A. This indenture made the 15th day of May in the year of our Lord One Thousand Eight Hundred & Eleven Witnesth that Elias Hubbard Jun and Jeremiah Elsworth Overseers of the poor of the Town of Flatlands and the State of New York by and with the consent of two Justices of the Peace whose names are hereunto subscribed have put and placed and by these present do put and place a poor Black male child named Peter as a servant to Nicholas Schenck of Flatlands in Kings County & State aforesaid with him to dwell & serve from the day & date hereof until the said servant shall accomplish his full age of Twenty One years according to the Statute in such case made and provided.

The said male child was born the 27th day of January One Thousand Eight Hundred & One during all which term the said Servant his master faithfully shall serve in all lawful businesses according to his will, power, and ability, honestly, orderly, and obediently, and in all things demean himself to his said master and all his during his said Term.

And the said Nicholas Schenck doth for himself his Executors & administrators covenant & grant to & with the said Overseers of the Poor & their & every of their successors for the time being by these presents That the said Peter the said Servant shall & will Teach & Instruct or cause to be instructed in the duties of a servant in the best way & manner that he can & shall & will during all the term aforesaid find provide & allow the said servant competent & sufficient meat drink & apparel lodging & washing & all other things necessary & fit for such a servant that he may not be a charge to the Town of Flatlands or its Inhabitants but of & from all charges shall & will save the said Town & Inhabitants harmless of Indemnified (?) during the said Term & also that the said Nicholas Schenck shall cause the said servant to be taught & Instructed to read & write & shall also give unto said servant a new Bible at the expiration of his term of service. In witness whereof the parties abovesaid have hereunto set their hands & seals the day and year above written.

B. This indenture made the first day of January one thousand eight hundred and nineteen, witnesseth that Nicholas Schenck of the town of Flatlands and state of New York have put and placed by these do put and place a black child named Albert as a slave servant to Benjamin Bennit in the town of Flatlands County and state aforesaid with him to dwell and serve from the day and date hereof until the said servant shall accomplish the full age of twenty one years according to the statute in such case made and provided the said child was born August the twenty third one thousand eight hundred and eight, during all that term to serve his master, shall faithfully serve in all lawful business according to his will, power, and ability, honestly, orderly, and obediently, and in all things demean himself to his said master during his said term and the said Benjamin Bennit doth for himself, his Executors, Administrators, promise to teach and Instruct, or cause to be Instructed the said Albert in several duties of a servant in the best way and manner during all the aforesaid term, find, provide and allow the said servant competent and sufficient meat, drink, apparel, lodging, washing, and all other things necessary and fit for such a servant, and also that said Benjamin Bennit shall cause the said servant to be taught and Instructed to read and write and shall also give unto the said servant a new Bible at the expiration of his term of service, in witness whereof the parties aforesaid have hereunto set their hand, and seals, the day and year before written.

Questions
1. Who are Nicholas Schenck, Benjamin Bennit, Elias Hubbard and Jeremiah Elsworth?
2. Why are Peter and Albert being assigned as indentured servants?
3. According to these indenture agreements, what are the duties of Peter and Albert?
4. Rewrite these documents using current standard grammar, vocabulary and spelling.
E. Slavery in the Town of New Lots (1820)


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Household</th>
<th>No. in Household</th>
<th>Slaves</th>
<th>Free Slaves and Others</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hendrick Suydam</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charles Vanderveer</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jeromus Vanderveer</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs. Van Sinderen</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Williamson Rapalje</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Wyckoff</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Harper</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Van Sielen</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christian Duryea</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Blake</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs. Dinman</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peter Rump</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Samuel Miller</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs. Denton</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Johannis Eldred</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Drew</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Henry Eldred</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isaac Eldred</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thomas Betts</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs. Betts</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isaac Snediker</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jane Howard</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tunis Schenck</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Snediker</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>William Howard</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>William Furman</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Samuel Moyser</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>George Williamson</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Vanderveer</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Questions

1. Which household has the most enslaved persons?
2. What is the approximate average ratio of slaves to free members of these Brooklyn household?
### F. Slave Owning Families Among the Founders of Kings County Banks (1824-1873)


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Select Founders and Officers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Long Island Bank</td>
<td>1824</td>
<td>Leffert Lefferts, pres.; Jonh Vandeveer, Jacob Hicks, Nehemiah Denton, Silas Butler, David Baylis, John &amp; Samuel Gerritson, Barnet Johnson, Goerge Sampson, Gerrit Smith, and John Vanderbilt.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bank of Williamsburgh</td>
<td>1839</td>
<td>Bank charter never actually activated.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Brooklyn Savings</td>
<td>1850</td>
<td>Tunis Bergen, John Skillman, James Van Norstrand.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City Bank of Brooklyn</td>
<td>1850</td>
<td>John Skillman, pres.; James Van Norstrand, Henry Boerum, Garret Bergen.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Williamsburgh</td>
<td>1851</td>
<td>Richard Ten Eyck, Norman Van Norstrand, Nicholas Wyckoff.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Williamsburgh City Bank</td>
<td>1852</td>
<td>Richard Berry, William Covert, John Furman, William Pease, Abraham Vandervoort, Nicholas Wyckoff.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dime Savings Bank</td>
<td>1859</td>
<td>Abraham Beekman, George Bergen.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nassau National Bank</td>
<td>1859</td>
<td>A.M. White, and Moose Odell.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kings County Savings Institution</td>
<td>1860</td>
<td>John Furman, Jeremiah Johnson, Jr.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dime Savings of W’burg</td>
<td>1864</td>
<td>George Smith, Silas Brainard, George Nichols.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>German Savings Bank</td>
<td>1866</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germania Savings Bank</td>
<td>1867</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commercial Bank</td>
<td>1868</td>
<td>Alexander Underhill, William Bogert, Job Johnson.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fulton Bank of Brooklyn</td>
<td>1870</td>
<td>None.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bushwick Savings Bank</td>
<td>1873</td>
<td>Peter Wycoff, A.M. Suydam, John Nostrand.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Question:** Most of these banks opened after slavery ended in New York. What does this chart tell historians about the importance of slavery in the history and economy of Kings County?
G. An Old Farmer’s Talk: Stephen L. Vanderveer’s *New Lots Recollections*

**Source:** *Brooklyn Eagle*, September 19, 1886, p. 6

http://eagle.brooklynpubliclibrary.org/APA2.5.122/PrintArt.asp?Title=Id%3D696%20%3

When the flat lands nearest to the sea began to get overcrowded with farmers, the immediate descendants of the original settlers began moving eastward and located in what they called the New Lots, where I and my father were born. No well regulated community can get along without a place to deposit their dead. For a time the deceased members of a family were buried on the farms, but as the residents became connected by marriage and other ties and attended church in Flatlands, they concluded to have a burying ground of their own, and thus resolved they located it two miles from here, on the New Lots road and directly opposite the church we now worship in, and the cemetery we know as the new one. You may doubt me, but that old graveyard is nearly two hundred years old and many of my ancestors are resting therein: the last one I remember of was my great uncle, Johnnes Vanderveer, who died at the ripe old age of 87 years. In those days there were as many Negroes as whites in this neighborhood. The latter were buried in front by the roadside and the former away back near the swamp.

We worshiped in Flatlands, while we buried our dead up the New Lots road. In 1824 our people thought it best to have a place of worship near the last resting place of our forefathers, and at an extra meeting of the Classic, held on August 12 of that year, it was decided to build the new church. Abraham Van Siclen and his wife, Cornelia, deeded over to Tunis Schenck, Isaac Snedlker, John Blake, Christian Duryen, John Wckyoff, John Williamshon, Jr., Nicholas Linnington, and my granduncle, Johannes Vanderveer, one fourth of an acre for the sum of $35. The witnesses to the deed were Charity Rapalje and Phebe Vansicien, and the edifice was erected at a cost of about $3,500. My sister, Anne, was the first child christened in the new church, and she still lives on the New Lots road. The Rev. William Crookshank was our first pastor. We paid him semi annually the sum of $150, and as he received the same amount from the church in Flatlands he could very well keep the wolf away from the door.

In 1841 we saw the necessity of having a new burying ground, as the black people were overcrowding us in the old one. Therefore we purchased the ground alongside the church and removed a great many of the dead from across the road. I have not taken up all my people yet, but I expect to do so cro long. The first person buried in the new grounds was a young man named Jim Cozine. He took the measles down in Brooklyn and caught cold while his father was bringing him home and died.

**Questions**

1. Why was the original cemetery opened?
2. Why was a new cemetery started?
3. What do historians learn about race relations in Brooklyn from this article?
AIM: Why did New Yorkers debate voting rights for African Americans?

BACKGROUND: The year 1827 saw the emancipation of enslaved Africans in New York. The majority of Whites supported emancipation of blacks from slavery; however, many had reservations about former slaves participating fully in White society. Therefore, the debate over voting rights and qualifications for citizenship for free Blacks emerged. Two prominent figures who discussed these issues included Erastus Root of Delaware County and Robert Clarke. Erastus Root argued that although Blacks were free they were not considered citizens and could be denied voting rights and shut out of the political arena. He compared them to unnaturalized immigrants. Robert Clarke argued that freed Blacks should be entitled to voting rights. Clarke used the Declaration of Independence and the mechanisms of the U.S. Constitution to argue for equality and against disfranchisement. He believed that protecting Black civil rights was the least that Whites owed the victims of slavery. The debate ended without a formal decision. The issue continued to divide New Yorkers and remained a threat to the rights of the state’s African American population.

DO NOW: List what you consider to be the most important rights in a democratic society.

MOTIVATION: Which rights did you list? Why?

ACTIVITY: Student teams examine the arguments for and against suffrage for free Blacks. Groups must be prepared to defend either the affirmative or negative position.

SUMMARY QUESTION: Why did New Yorkers debate voting rights for African Americans?

HOMEWORK: Design a political cartoon or poster supporting one of the speakers.

APPLICATION: Discuss what it means to be a citizen.

DEBATING BLACK VOTING RIGHTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Opposition of Black Suffrage</th>
<th>Support for Black Suffrage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Lesson developed by Monica Longo
Debate Over Voting Rights for Black New Yorkers (1821)


1. Opposition to Black Suffrage: Erastus Root of Delaware County compared African Americans to foreign-born aliens, who paid taxes, were not required to serve the nation in war, and did not have the right to vote. He charged that in New York City, when Blacks had the right to vote, they did the bidding of their wealthy employers. He proposed that only people eligible for service in the militia (White males) be eligible for the franchise.

“[I]n the case of an alien, who may hold property and be protected by the laws of your country, . . . he is not allowed to vote. . . . The reasons are, that notwithstanding he may live among us and enjoy the benefit of our freedom, he may have a partiality for some foreign country. . . . The black population have a right to hold property, and are protected in the enjoyment of it by our laws: but, sir, in case of an invasion or insurrection, neither the alien nor black man is bound to defend your country. They are not called on, because it is supposed there is no reliance to be placed in them, they might desert the standard and join your enemy - they have not any anchorage in your country which the government is willing to trust. At present the number of blacks who are voters is so small, that if they were scattered all over the state, there would not be much danger to be apprehended; but if we may judge of the future by the past, I should suppose there was some cause of alarm - when a few hundred free negroes of the city of New York, following the train of those who ride in their coaches, and whose shoes and boots they had so often blacked, shall go to the polls of the election, and change the political condition of the whole state. . . .

2. Support for Black Suffrage: Robert Clarke was also from Delaware County. He believed that the idea of equality in the Declaration of Independence and the rules established by the U.S. Constitution prohibited the disfranchisement of African American men. Clarke argued that protecting Black civil rights was the least that Whites owed the victims of slavery.

“The constitution says, “representatives and direct taxes shall be apportioned among the different states, according to the inhabitants thereof, including all free persons.” All colours and complexions are here included. It is not free “white” persons. . . . [I]n connection with the Declaration of Independence, I think you cannot exclude them without being guilty of a . . . violation of every principle of justice. We are usurping to ourselves a power which we do not possess, and by so doing, deprive them of a privilege to which they are, and always have been, justly entitled - . . . the right of suffrage. Because we have done this people injustice, by enslaving them, and rendering them degraded and miserable, is it right that we should go on and continue to deprive them of their most invaluable rights. . . . My honourable colleague has told us “that these people are not liable to do military duty, and that as they are not required to contribute to the protection or defence of the state.” . . . But, sir, whose fault is this? Have they ever refused to do military duty when called upon? . . . [I]t is said these people are incapable of exercising the right of suffrage judiciously; that they will become the tools and engines of aristocracy, . . . on whom they depend for bread. This may be true to a certain extent; but, sir, they are not the only ones who abuse this privilege; and if this be a sufficient reason for depriving any of your citizens of their just rights, go on and exclude also the many thousands of white fawning, cringing sycophants, who look up to their more wealthy and more ambitious neighbours for direction at the polls, as they look to them for bread.

Questions
1. With whom does Erastus Root compare free Blacks? Why?
2. According to Root, why should free Blacks be denied voting rights?
3. According to Clarke, how do the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence support Black suffrage?
4. How does Clarke respond to Root’s arguments?
5. In your opinion, who makes the stronger case? Explain your view?
AIM: Should enslaved Africans rebel against their masters?

Sources: http://etext.lib.virginia.edu/readex/20400.html
http://www.aaregistry.com/african_american_history/405/Jupiter_Hammon_poet_pioneer

BACKGROUND: Two New Yorkers were leaders in the debate over whether enslaved Africans, as Christians, had the right to disobey and rebel against slave masters. Jupiter Hammon was the first black poet published in the United States. He was born a slave during the colonial era and remained enslaved his entire life. Hammon belonged to the Lloyd family of Lloyd’s Neck in Queen’s Village, Long Island. He wrote a statement on slavery addressed to the African population of New York in 1786. Both his poetry and his statement to fellow enslaved Africans reflect his deep religious beliefs. Reverend Henry Highland Garnet escaped to the north and freedom at age eleven. He graduated from Oneida Institute in Utica, New York in 1840. Three years later at a Black convention in Buffalo, New York, he issued a call for slaves to revolt against their masters. Garnet also based his ideas on deeply held religious beliefs.

DO NOW: Read biographies of Hammon and Garnet.

MOTIVATION: In recent history, Martin Luther King Jr. and Mohandes Gandhi have led movements that used non-violent protest to break and challenge unjust laws. Other leaders have called for armed revolution against oppression. In your opinion, do people have a right to disobey laws they consider to be unjust? Explain. Do people ever have the right to use violent means to challenge injustice? Explain.

ACTIVITIES: Jupiter Hammon and Reverend Henry Highland Garnet never met. Hammon died before Garnet was born. They have very different ideas about whether enslaved Africans have the right to rebel against slavery. They were both religious men and used their beliefs to support their arguments.
1. Read each set of quotes and rewrite them in your own words.
2. Whose position do you agree with and why?

For more extended discussion or with students who have stronger academic skills, use longer excerpts.

SUMMARY: In your opinion, why did two men who identify with the same religion and religious beliefs reach such radically different conclusions about rebellion against slavery?

HOMEWORK: Use the documents from class to create a short dialogue that you imagine might have taken place between Hammon and Garnet if they had met.

APPLICATION: Thomas Emmet and his brother Robert Emmet were leaders of the Irish independence movement. Thomas, a lawyer, was arrested, imprisoned and eventually forced into exile after and an unsuccessful revolt against British rule in 1798. Robert was executed by the British as a traitor in 1803. In language reminiscent of the leaders of the American Revolution, Thomas Emmet compared British rule in Ireland with slavery. Examine the activity sheet, An Irish Immigrant Denounces Slavery (1805). Does the American Revolution justify armed rebellion by enslaved Africans in the United States?

Lesson developed by Jason Sarofsky and Anne Marie Calitri
A. Jupiter Hammon and Reverend Henry H. Garnet

Jupiter Hammon was the first black poet published in the United States. He was born a slave during the colonial era, lived into the early 1800’s, and remained a slave his entire life. Hammon belonged to the Lloyd family of Lloyd’s Neck in Queen’s Village, Long Island. He wrote a statement on slavery addressed to the African population of New York in 1786. It was published by the African Society in 1806. Both his poetry and his statement to fellow enslaved Africans reflect his deep religious beliefs. Reverend Henry Highland Garnet escaped to the north and freedom at age eleven. He graduated from Oneida Institute in Utica, New York in 1840. Three years later, at age twenty-seven, he issued a call for slaves to revolt at a Black convention in Buffalo, New York.

Questions
1. Who was Jupiter Hammon?
2. Why is Jupiter Hammon still remembered today?
3. How did Henry Highland Garnet gain his freedom?
4. How did Henry Highland Garnet want to challenge slavery?

B. Jupiter Hammon and Reverend Henry H. Garnet debate Rebellion Against Slavery

Jupiter Hammon and Reverend Henry Highland Garnet never met. Hammon died before Garnet was born. They have very different ideas about whether enslaved Africans have the right to rebel against slavery. They were both religious men and used their beliefs to support their arguments.

1. Read each set of quotes and rewrite them in your own words.
2. Whose position do you agree with and why?

1786. Jupiter Hammon Argues Against Rebellion

A. “Now whether it is right and lawful, in the sight of God, for them to make slaves of us or not, I am certain that while we are slaves, it is our duty to obey our masters, in all their lawful commands, and mind them unless we are bid to do that which we know to be sin, or forbidden in God’s word. The apostle Paul says, ‘Servants be obedient to them that are your masters according to flesh, with fear and trembling in singleness in your heart as unto Christ.’”

B. “He has commanded us to obey, and we ought to do it cheerfully, and freely. This should be done by us, not only because God commands, but because our own peace and comfort depend upon it. As we depend upon our masters, for what we eat and drink and wear, and for all our comfortable things in this world, we cannot be happy, unless we please them. This we cannot do without obeying them freely, without muttering or finding fault. If a servant strives to please his master and studies and takes pains to do it, I believe there are but few masters who would use such a servant cruelly. Good servants frequently make good masters.”

1843. Garnet’s Call To Rebellion

A. “In every man’s mind the good seeds of liberty are planted, and he who brings his fellow down so low, as to make him contented with a condition of slavery, commits the highest crime against God and man. Brethren, your oppressors aim to do this. They endeavor to make you as much like brutes as possible. When they have blinded the eyes of your mind—when they have embittered the sweet waters of life—then, and not till then, has American slavery done its perfect work.

B. “God will not receive slavery, nor ignorance, nor any other state of mind, for love and obedience to him. Your condition does not absolve you from your moral obligation. The diabolical injustice by which your liberties are cloven down, neither God, nor angels, or just men, command you to suffer for a single moment. Therefore it is your solemn and imperative duty to use every means, both moral, intellectual, and physical that promises success.”
Jupiter Hammon Argues Against Rebellion (1786)

Jupiter Hammon and was the first Black poet published in the United States. He was born a slave during the Colonial era, lived into the early 1800s, and remained a slave his entire life. Hammon belonged to the Lloyd family of Lloyd’s Neck in Queen’s Village, Long Island. He wrote a statement on slavery addressed to the African population of New York in 1786. It was published by the African Society in 1806. Both his poetry and his statement to fellow enslaved Africans reflect his deep religious beliefs.

A. Respecting obedience to masters. Now whether it is right, and lawful, in the sight of God, for them to make slaves of us or not, I am certain that while we are slaves, it is our duty to obey our masters, in all their lawful commands, and mind them unless we are bid to do that which we know to be sin, or forbidden in God’s word. The apostle Paul says, “Servants be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling in singleness in your heart as unto Christ.” Here is a plain command of God for us to obey our masters. It may seem hard for us, if we think our masters wrong in holding us slaves, to obey in all things, but who of us dare dispute with God! He has commanded us to obey, and we ought to do it cheerfully, and freely.

B. Our own peace and comfort. This should be done by us, not only because God commands, but because our own peace and comfort depend upon it. As we depend upon our masters, for what we eat and drink and wear, and for all our comfortable things in this world, we cannot be happy, unless we please them. This we cannot do without obeying them freely, without muttering or finding fault. If a servant strives to please his master and studies and takes pains to do it, I believe there are but few masters who would use such a servant cruelly. If your master is really hard, unreasonable and cruel, there is no way so likely for you to convince him of it, as always to obey his commands, and try to serve him, and take care of his interest, and try to promote it all in your power.

C. Honesty and faithfulness. It is very wicked for you not to take care of your master’s goods, but how much worse is it to pilfer and steal from them, whenever you think you shall not be found out. This you must know is very wicked and provoking to God. I know that many of you endeavor to excuse yourselves, and say that you have nothing that you can call your own, and that you are under great temptations to be unfaithful and take from your masters. But this will not do, God will certainly punish you for stealing and for being unfaithful. All that we have to mind is our own duty. If God has put us in bad circumstances that is not our fault and he will not punish us for it. If any are wicked in keeping us so, we cannot help it, they must answer to God for it. Nothing will serve as an excuse to us for not doing our duty. The same God will judge both them and us. Pray then my dear friends, fear to offend in this way, but be faithful to God, to your masters, and to your own souls.

D. Liberty is a Great Thing. Now I acknowledge that liberty is a great thing, and worth seeking for, if we can get it honestly, and by our good conduct, prevail on our masters to set us free. That liberty is a great thing we may know from our own feelings, and we may likewise judge so from the conduct of the white people, in the late war. How much money has been spent, and how many lives have been lost, to defend their liberty. I must say that I have hoped that God would open their eyes, when they were so much engaged for liberty, to think of the state of the poor blacks, and to pity us. He has done it in some measure, and has raised us up many friends, for which we have reason to be thankful, and to hope in his mercy.

Heaven is a place made for those, who are born again, and who love God, and it is a place where they will be happy forever. We live so little time in this world that it is no matter how wretched and miserable we are, if it prepares us for heaven. What is forty, fifty, or sixty years, when compared to eternity. If we should ever get to Heaven, we shall find nobody to reproach us for being black, or for being slaves. Let me beg of you my dear African brethren, to think very little of your bondage in this life, for your thinking of it will do you no good. If God designs to set us free, he will do it, in his own time, and way.

Questions
1. According to Hammon, why should slaves be obedient to their masters?
2. How does Hammon believe he and other enslaved Africans will eventually achieve freedom?
3. How would you respond to Jupiter Hammon? Why?
Reverend Henry Garnet Calls For Rebellion (1843)

From August 21 through 24, 1843, a National Negro Convention was held in Buffalo, New York. Over seventy delegates from a dozen states were present, Frederick Douglass, William Wells Brown, and Henry Highland Garnet. Garnet escaped to the North when he was eleven and graduated from Oneida Institute in 1840. The pastor of a Presbyterian Church in Troy, New York, he issued a call for slaves to revolt against their masters. His ideas were considered radical at the time because most abolitionists preferred using moral and economic arguments to challenge slavery and opposed violence. **Source:** Aptheker, H. (1973). *A Documentary History of the Negro People in the United States.* Secaucus, NJ: Citadel Press, v. 1, 226-233.

A. How the African arrived in America: Two hundred and twenty-seven years ago, the first of our injured race were brought to the shores of America. They came not with glad spirits to select their homes in the New World. They came not with their own consent. The first dealings they had with men calling themselves Christians, exhibited to them the worst features of corrupt hearts, and convinced them that no cruelty is too great, no villainy and no robbery too abhorrent [horrible] for even enlightened men to perform, when influenced by avarice [greed] and lust. They came with broken hearts, from their beloved native land, and were doomed to unrequited [unending] toil and deep degradation [disgrace]. Nor did the evil of their bondage end at their emancipation by death. Succeeding generations inherited their chains, and millions have come and have returned again to the world of spirits, cursed and ruined by American slavery.

B. Slavery is Defiance of God: To such degradation it is sinful in the extreme for you to make voluntary submission. The divine commandments you are in duty bound to reverence and obey. If you do not obey them, you will surely meet with the displeasure of the Almighty. He requires you to love him supremely, and your neighbor as yourself , to keep the Sabbath day holy, to search the Scriptures, and bring up your children with respect for His laws, and to worship no other God but Him. But slavery sets all these at nought, and hurls defiance in the face of Jehovah.

C. Resistance to bondage is justified: Brethren [brothers], it is as wrong for your lordly oppressors to keep you in slavery, as it was for the man thief to steal our ancestors from the coast of Africa. You should therefore now use the same manner of resistance, as would have been just in our ancestors, when the bloody foot-prints of the first remorseless soul-thief was placed upon the shores of our fatherland. The humblest peasant is as free in the sight of God as the proudest monarch. Liberty is a spirit sent out from God and is no respecter of persons. Brethren, arise, arise! Strike for your lives and liberties. Now is the day and the hour. Let every slave throughout the land do this, and the days of slavery are numbered. You cannot be more oppressed than you have been, you cannot suffer greater cruelties than you have already. Rather die freemen than live to be slaves. Remember that you are four millions!

D. Let your motto be resistance! It is in your power so to torment the God-cursed slave-holders, that they will be glad to let you go free. If the scale was turned, and black men were the masters and white men the slaves, every destructive agent and element would be employed to lay the oppressor low. Danger and death would hang over their heads day and night. Yes, the tyrants would meet with plagues more terrible than those of Pharaoh. But you are a patient people. You act as though you were made for the special use of these devils. You act as though your daughters were born to pamper the lusts of your masters and overseers. And worse than all, you tamely submit while your lords tear your wives from your embraces and defile them before your eyes. In the name of God, we ask, are you men? Where is the blood of your fathers? Has it all run out of your veins? Awake, awake; millions of voices are calling you! Your dead fathers speak to you from their graves. Heaven, as with a voice of thunder, calls on you to arise from the dust. Let your motto be resistance! resistance! resistance! No oppressed people have ever secured their liberty without resistance. Trust in the living God. Labor for the peace of the human race, and remember that you are four millions.

Questions
1. Why does Garnet declare that slavery “hurls defiance in the face of Jehovah”?
2. What is his recommendation to enslaved Africans in the American South?
3. In your opinion, would enslaved Africans be justified in a violent rebellion against slavery? Explain.
An Irish Immigrant Denounces Slavery (1805)


A. Thomas Emmet and his brother Robert Emmet were leaders of the Irish independence movement. Thomas, a lawyer, was arrested, imprisoned and eventually forced into exile after an unsuccessful revolt against British rule in 1798. Robert was executed by the British as a traitor in 1803. In language reminiscent of the leaders of the American Revolution, Thomas Emmet compared British rule in Ireland with slavery.

“Slavery in every form which it can assume is destructive of the virtue, the genius and the spirit of man. The subjection of one people to another is of all species of slavery in comparatively the worst, and the history of human calamity has not yet exhibited such an instance of complicated and long continued wretchedness of forced and mortifying debasement as the subjection of Ireland to the English power has produced.”

B. When Thomas Emmet arrived in the New York City in November, 1804, he had to make a decision about how he would respond to the enslavement of African people in the United States. Many American revolutionary leaders, including George Washington and Thomas Jefferson, were slave owners. In a letter to a friend named Joseph McCormick, Emmet explained his views on American slavery.

“I am on the point of setting out on another journey which will show you that my lot, as to my future residence in America, is pretty nearly cast. You desire me not to decide on that subject, without further inquiry about the Southern States. You know the the insuperable objection I have always had to settling, where I could not dispense with the use of slaves, and that the more they abound, the stronger are my objections. . . .”

C. In New York City, Thomas Emmet resumed his law practice and he later became Attorney General of New York State. Charles G. Haines, in a biography of Emmet, writes that in one of his first cases, he was hired by the Society of Friends (also known as the Quakers) to defend several “runaway slaves” from a neighboring state who were captured in New York. Unfortunately, we have no other record of the case.

Questions
1. Who was Thomas Emmet?
2. Why did Emmet believe that slavery was destructive?
3. What role did Emmet play in the struggle to end slavery?
AIM: What steps did New York and the United States take to end slavery and slave trade at the beginning of the new nation?

BACKGROUND: The United States was divided over the institution of slavery and the slave trade from the beginning of the new nation. Thomas Jefferson, a slave holder, denounced the slave trade in a draft of the Declaration of Independence, however the passage was removed by other delegates before the Declaration was approved. George Washington, another slave owner, wrote that he wished to see a plan adopted for the abolition of slavery. Despite these views, neither slavery nor the slave trade were directly mentioned in the Constitution of the United States. Article I Section 9, however, did give Congress the power to outlaw the slave trade after 1808. Even though the slave trade was finally outlawed, it did not end. In 1810, President Madison charged that the trade was continuing “under the American flag.” Meanwhile, the New York State legislature took steps to end the domestic slave trade in the state and approved a plan for the gradual abolition of slavery. These measures precipitated a new movement to manumit enslaved Africans in the state.

DO NOW: Examine the symbol of the Quaker-led Society for the Effecting the Abolition of the Slave Trade and answer questions 1-3.

MOTIVATION: Think of a situation where you felt that a certain decision was the correct one, but you were unable to make that choice. Why? What was the problem? Where America’s founders hypocrites when they declared this a nation based on the equality of all men but continued to own slaves? Explain. What problems would face the nation if it tried to end slavery, particularly in the Southern states? How would you respond to someone who claimed that the magnitude of these problems justified the continuation of the institution of slavery?

ACTIVITIES:
Examine and discuss A. The National Debate Over Slavery and the Slave Trade.
Examine and discuss B. New York Debates Its Involvement in the Domestic the Slave Trade and Gradual Elimination of Slavery.

SUMMARY: In your opinion, why did New York State make progress in ending slavery and the domestic slave trade while the United States seems to have faltered?

Lesson developed by Michelle Vevante
1. The National Debate Over Slavery and the Slave Trade

1. This picture became the symbol of the Quaker-led Society for Effecting the Abolition of the Slave Trade. 

**Am I Not A Man and A Brother?**

**Source:** http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/aia/part2/2h67.html

**Questions**

1. How is the institution of slavery portrayed in this picture?
2. Why would this be used as a symbol to promote the abolition of the slave trade?
3. Do you think this was a good choice of a symbol to use? Why or why not?

2a. In the early years of the new nation, national leaders were divided over the issue of slavery. Thomas Jefferson, a slave holder, denounced the slave trade in a draft of the Declaration of Independence, however the passage was removed by other delegates before the Declaration was approved.

“He [King George] has waged cruel war against human nature itself, violating its most sacred rights of life & liberty in the persons of a distant people who never offended him, captivating & carrying them into slavery in another hemisphere, or to incur miserable death in their transportation thither.”

b. George Washington, another slave owner, wrote the following:

“I can only say that there is not a man living who wishes more sincerely than I do to see a plan adopted for the abolition of it [slavery]; but there is only one proper and effectual mode by which it can be accomplished, and that is by Legislative authority; and this, as far as my suffrage [vote and support] will go, shall never be wanting [lacking].”

c. Despite these views, neither slavery nor the slave trade were directly mentioned in the Constitution of the United States. Article I Section 9, however, did give Congress the power to outlaw the slave trade after 1808. “The Migration or Importation of such Persons as any of the States now existing shall think proper to admit, shall not be prohibited by the Congress prior to the Year one thousand eight hundred and eight, but a Tax or duty may be imposed on such Importation, not exceeding ten dollars for each Person.”

d. Even though the slave trade was finally outlawed, it did not end. In December, 1810, President Madison declared that “Among the commercial abuses still committed under the American flag...it appears that American citizens are instrumental in carrying on a traffic in enslaved African, equally in violation of the laws of humanity, and in defiance of those of their own country.” In December, 1822, President Monroe declared that “orders have been given to the commanders of all public ships to seize our own vessels, should they find any engaged in that [slave] trade, and to bring them in for adjudication (trial).”

**Questions**

1. What charges did Jefferson make against King George?
2. In your opinion, why was this passage removed from the Declaration of Independence?
3. Why did George Washington believe it was necessary to end slavery?
4. In your opinion, why does the Constitution empower Congress to end the slave trade, but make no direct mention of the institution?
5. In your opinion, why did Presidents Madison and Monroe find it difficult to end American participation in the trans-Atlantic Slave Trade?
B. New York Debates Its Involvement in the Domestic the Slave Trade and Gradual Elimination of Slavery

1. The Domestic the Slave Trade


a. In 1788, New York passed a law that prohibited the slave trade within New York State. “[I]f any person shall sell as a slave within this State any negro, or other person, who has been imported or brought into this State, after” June 1, 1785, “such seller, or his or her factor or agent, making such sale, shall be deemed guilty of a public offence, and shall for every such offence, forfeit the sum of one hundred pounds. . . . And further, That every person so imported . . . shall be free.”

b. In 1790, New York State permitted the sale of slaves to other states under specific conditions. “That where any slave shall hereafter be convicted of a crime under the degree of a capital offence, . . . it shall and may be lawful to and for the master or mistress to cause such slave to be transported out of this State.”

c. In 1801, New York State law declared, “That no slave shall hereafter be imported or brought into this State, unless the person importing or bringing such slave shall be coming into this State with intent to reside permanently therein and shall have resided without this State, and also have owned such slave at least during one year next preceding the importing or bringing in of such slave.”

Questions: How do these laws affect slavery in New York State? In the rest of the United States?

2. Gradual Abolition Act (1799)


Be it enacted. . . . That any child born of a slave within this state after the fourth day of July next shall be deemed and adjudged to be born free. Provided nevertheless, That such child shall be the servant of the legal proprietor of his or her mother until such servant, if a male, shall arrive at the age of twenty-eight years, and if a female, at the age of twenty-five years. And be it further enacted. That such proprietor, his, her or their heirs or assigns, shall be entitled to the service of such child until he or she shall arrive to the age aforesaid, in the same manner as if such child had been bound to service by the overseers of the poor. And be it further enacted. That it shall be lawful for the owner of any slave, immediately after the passing of this act, to manumit such slave by a certificate for that purpose under his hand and seal.

Question: In your opinion, why does New York State decide to end slavery gradually rather than immediately?

3. Long Island Manumission Papers (1800-1806)


a. By Virtue of a Law of the State of New York passed the 29th March AD 1799 for the Total Abolition of Slavery I do in pursuance of the same Manumit a Certain Female by the Name of Rachel to be free to all intents & purpose Agreeable to the tenor of the Law in the presents of Sarah Wickes, Rhoda Hewlett, Isaac Hewlett

b. Whereas John Gardiner of the Town of Huntington in the County of Suffolk and the State of New York hath (in pursuance of the provisions of the Statute of the State aforesaid in such cases made and provided) made application to us the undersigned Overseers of the Poor of the Town of Huntington aforesaid for the emancipation of a Certain Negro man Slave named Cato We have therefore examined into the state and Circumstances of Said Slave and finde him to be under fifty years of age and in our judgment and Opinion of sufficent ability to provide for and maintain himself We’d therefore hereby certify that we approve of and Consent to the Manumission of said slave

c. Know all men by these presents that I Nicholas Schenck of the town of Flatlands in Kings County in the State of New York, do hereby promise . . . that in case my Negro-man-slave named Harry Ferguson, shall faithfully serve me in his usual occupation as a farmer, and my Commands Obey, for the time in term of two years from the date hereof. And within the said term pay . . . the sum of fifty dollars . . . I will manumit the said Harry from slavery.

Questions:
1. How did the New York State gradual emancipation act affect “Rachel,” “Cato” and Harry Ferguson?
2. How does Nicholas Schenck explain his decision to grant freedom to Harry Ferguson?
AIM: History-Mystery: How did New York City’s African American population campaign to end slavery?

BACKGROUND: African American ministers and newspaper editors played a leading role in the campaign to abolish slavery and for civil rights in New York State in the early years of the new nation. Partly as a result of their struggle, slavery in New York State ended on July 4, 1827. This period also saw the emergence of important African American institutions in New York state. In 1796, Black congregants in New York City formed an independent Zion Church. The New York Manumission Society established African Free Schools and they were later supported by the municipal government and the state legislature. Graduates of African Free Schools, including Henry Highland Garnet, Alexander Crummell, and James McCune Smith, became prominent community leaders, especially in the struggle for Black civil rights and for the abolition of slavery in the United States. Seneca Village, in an area that is now part of Central Park in New York City, emerged as a largely Black community. Freedom’s Journal, the first African American newspaper published in the United States, started production in New York City in March 16, 1827.

DO NOW: Read, “A. Emancipation of Preter Williams (1796)” and answer accompanying questions.

MOTIVATION: How is the life of Preter Williams a symbol of the struggle of African Americans in New York to become free?

ACTIVITIES:
1. New York City’s African American population campaigned to end slavery in New York State and in the United States. Working either as an individual or in a team, examine documents B-H and answer the questions that accompany each section. Based on the readings, your answers to these questions, and what you know about slavery in New York, write an essay answering the question: How did New York City’s African American population campaign to end slavery?
2. Organize a panel discussion where Preter Williams, William Hamilton, George Lawrence, Samuel Cornish, John B. Russwurm, Nathaniel Paul and James McCune Smith discuss the struggle to end slavery in New York and the United States.
3. Newspaper stories and books in the 19th century often included etchings (line drawings) that illustrated the story. Select one of the passages and create a two or three-dimensional image that illustrates the story.

SUMMARY QUESTION: How was the abolition of slavery in New York City both an end and a beginning?

APPLICATION: Read about the free Black community of Seneca Village.
A. Emancipation of Preter (Peter) Williams (1796)

Peter Williams, a founder of the New York Anti-Slavery Society, was born a slave in a cow barn on Beekman Street in Manhattan. He was converted to Methodism by a British officer during Revolutionary war. He later convinced the trustees of the John Street Church, where he was employed as sexton, to buy him with the promise that he would pay them in exchange for his freedom. On October 20, 1796, the trustees gave Williams his emancipation papers. **Source**: Wilder, C. (2000). *In the Company of Black Men*, p. 42-43.

Whereas, by a bill of sale made by James Aymar, of the city of New-York, tobacconist, and duly executed by him on the tenth day of June, in the year of our lord one thousand seven hundred and eighty-three, he, the said James Aymar, did, for and in consideration of the sum of forty pounds current money of the province of New-York, to him in hand paid at and before the enrolling delivery of the said bill of sale, by the trustees of the Methodist meeting in the city of New-York, fully, clearly, and absolutely grant, bargain, sell, and release unto the said trustees his Negro man, named Peter, to have and to hold the said Negro man unto the said trustees and their assigns forever. Now know ye that we, . . . trustees of the said Methodist meeting, . . . have manumitted, liberated and set free, . . . said Negro man, named Peter.

**Questions**: 1. Who was Preter Williams? 2. How did he gain his freedom?


Oh, God! we thank thee, that thou didst condescend to listen to the cries of Africa’s wretched sons; and that thou didst intercede in their behalf. At thy call humanity sprung forth, and espoused the cause of the oppressed; one hand she employed in drawing from their vitals the deadly arrows of injustice; and the other in holding a shield, to defend them from fresh assaults; and at that illustrious moment, when the sons of 76 pronounced these United States free and independent; when the spirit of patriotism, erected a temple sacred to liberty; when the inspired voice of Americans first uttered those noble sentiments, “we hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights; among which are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness”; and when the bleeding African, lifting his fetters, exclaimed, “am I not a man and a brother”; then with redoubled efforts, the angel of humanity strove to restore to the African race, the inherent rights of man. . . . May the time speedily commence, when Ethiopia shall stretch forth her hands; when the sun of liberty shall beam resplendent on the whole African race; and its genial influences, promote the luxuriant growth of knowledge and virtue.

**Questions**
1. What document does Reverend Williams cite in his prayers? Why?
2. How does he describe slavery and the slave trade? What feelings are he trying to evoke in his audience?

C. William Hamilton’s Address to the New-York African Society (1809)


The proposition has been advanced by men who claim a pre-eminence in the learned world, that Africans are inferior to white men in the structure both of body and mind; . . . that we have not produced any poets, mathematicians, or any to excel in any science whatever; our being oppressed and held in slavery forms no excuse, because, say they among the Romans, their most excellent artists and greatest scientific characters were frequently their slaves, and that these on account of their ascendant abilities, arose to superior stations in the state; and they exultingly tell us that these slaves were white men. . . . Among the Roman’s it was only necessary for the slave to be manumitted, in order to be eligible to all the offices of state. . . ; no sooner was he free than there was open before him a wide field of employment for his ambition, and learning and abilities with merit, were as sure to meet with their reward in him, as in any other citizen. But what station above the common employment of craftsmen and laborers would we fill did we possess both learning and abilities.

**Questions**
1. How was slavery in Rome different from slavery in the America?
2. Why does Hamilton believe the comparison is faulty?
D. George Lawrence, An Oration on the Abolition of the Slave Trade (1813)


My brethren, the land in which we live gives us the opportunity rapidly to advance the prosperity of liberty. This government founded on the principles of liberty and equality, and declaring them to be the free gift of God, if not ignorant of their declaration, must enforce it; I am confident she wills it, and strong forbodings of it is discernable. The northern sections of the union is fast conceding, and the southern must comply, although so biased by interest, that they have become callous to the voice of reason and justice; yet as the continual droppings of water has a tendency to wear away the hardest and most flinty substance, so likewise shall we, abounding in good works, and causing our examples to shine forth as the sun at noon day, melt their callous hearts.

Question: According to Lawrence, how is the situation different in the north and south?

E. Freedom's Journal's Opening Editorial (1827)


We wish to plead our own cause. Too long have others spoken for us. Too long has the publick been deceived by misrepresentations, in things which concern us dearly, though in the estimation of some mere trifles; for though there are many in society who exercise towards us benevolent feelings; still (with sorrow we confess it) there are others who make it their business to enlarge upon the least trifle, which tends to the discredit of any person of colour; and pronounce anathemas and denounce our whole body for the misconduct of this guilty one. . . .

Education being an object of the highest importance to the welfare of society, we shall endeavour to present just and adequate views of it, and to urge upon our brethren the necessity and expediency of training their children, while young, to habits of industry, and thus forming them for becoming useful members of society. . . .

The civil rights of a people being of the greatest value, it shall ever be our duty to vindicate our brethren, when oppressed; and to lay the case before the publick. We shall also urge upon our brethren, (who are qualified by the laws of the different states) the expediency of using their elective franchise.

Questions
1. Who does Freedom Journal believe should speak for the African American community?
2. What is the “object of utmost importance?”

F. William Hamilton, Emancipation Day Address, July 4, 1827


“LIBERTY! kind goddess! brightest of the heavenly deities that guide the affairs or men. Oh Liberty! where thou art resisted and irritated, thou art terrible as the raging sea and dreadful as a tornado. But where thou art listened to and obeyed, thou art gentle as the purling stream that meanders through the mead; as soft and as cheerful as the zephyrs that dance upon the summers breeze, and as bounteous as autumn’s harvest. To thee, the sons of Afric, in this once dark, gloomy, hopeless, but now fairest, brightest, and most cheerful of thy domain, do owe a double obligation of gratitude. Thou hast entwined and bound fast the cruel hands of oppression - thou hast by the powerful charm of reason deprived the monster of his strength - he dies, he sinks to rise no more. Thou hast loosened the hard bound fetters by which we were held. And by a voice sweet as the music of heaven, yet strong and powerful, reaching to the extreme boundaries of the state of New-York, hath declared that we the people of colour, the sons of Afric, are FREE.”

Questions: According to William Hamilton, what is the difference between “liberty” and “slavery”?
G. Nathaniel Paul Emancipation Day Address (1827)

Through the long lapse of ages, it has been common for nations to record whatever was peculiar or interesting in the course of their history. . . And as the nations which have already passed away, have been careful to select the most important events, peculiar to themselves, and have recorded them for the good of the people that should succeed them so will we place it upon our history; and we will tell the good story to our children and to our children’s children, down to the latest posterity that on the fourth day of July, in the year of our Lord 1827, slavery was abolished in the state of New-York. . . . Among the many who have vindicated the cause of the oppressed, within the limits of this state, we are proud to mention the names of Eddy and Murray, of Jay and Tompkins, who, together with their fellow philanthropists embarked in the holy cause of emancipation, with a zeal which well expressed the sentiments of their hearts. They proved themselves to be inflexible against scorn, persecution and contempt; and although all did not live to see the conflict ended, yet their survivors never relaxed their exertions until the glorious year of 1817, when, by the wise and patriotic legislature of this state, a law was passed for its final extirpation. . . . There remains much to be done, and there is much to encourage us to action. The foundation for literary, moral and religious improvement, we trust, is already laid in the formation of the public and private schools, for the instruction of our children, together with the churches of different denominations already established. From these institutions we are encouraged to expect the happiest results. . . . Blessed be God, we live in a day that our fathers desired to see, but died without the sight. . . . The iron manacles of slavery shall give place to the still stronger bonds of brotherly love and affection, and justice and equity shall be the governing principles that shall regulate the conduct of men of every nation. Influenced by such motives, encouraged by such prospects, let us enter the field with a fixed determination to live and to die in the holy cause.

Questions
1. According to Paul, why will the events of fourth of July, 1827 be told in stories to future generations?
2. According to Paul, what still remains to be done?

H. Manumission Day Parade, July 4, 1827
Dr. James McCune Smith, an African American physician who studied medicine in Glasgow, describes a manumission day procession in New York that he attended as a youth. Source: Graham Russell Hodges, Root & Branch: African Americans in New York & East Jersey 1613-1863, p. 223.

A splendid looking black man, mounted on a milk-white steed, then his aids on horseback, dashing up and down the line; then the orator of the day, also mounted, with a handsome scroll, appearing like a baton in his right hand, then in due order, splendidly dressed in scarfs of silk with gold-edgings, and with colored bands of music and their banners appropriately lettered and painted, followed, the New York African Society for Mutual Relief, the Wilberforce Benevolent Society, and the Clarkson Benevolent Society; then the people five or six abreast from grown men to small boys. The sidewalks were crowded with wives, daughters, sisters, and mothers of the celebrants, representing every state in the Union, and not a few with gay bandanna handkerchiefs, betraying their West Indian birth. Nor was Africa underrepresented. Hundreds who survived the middle passage and a youth in slavery joined in the joyful procession.

Questions
1. Who celebrated at the Emancipation day parade?
2. What does this passage reveal about the emotions on emancipation day?
Seneca Village in New York City (1825-1857)

**Source:** [http://www.gothamgazette.com](http://www.gothamgazette.com); [http://www.nyhistory.org/seneca/toc.html](http://www.nyhistory.org/seneca/toc.html)

Seneca Village was Manhattan’s first prominent community of African American property owners. From 1825 to 1857, it was located between 82nd and 89th Streets at Seventh and Eighth Avenues in what is now a section of Central Park. The area had access to a natural spring near 82nd street that provided fresh drinking water. During the 1850s, local newspapers described Seneca Village as “Nigger Village.” In 1825, parcels of land were sold to members of the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, which was considered the “largest and wealthiest church of coloured people in this city, perhaps in this country.” They included a former boot black named Andrew Williams, who purchased six lots of land for $125 a laborer named Epiphany Davis who bought twelve lots for $578.

Buying land in Seneca Village was less expensive than in the main downtown areas of the city and, under the New York State Constitution of 1821, it permitted African-American males, who owned $250 in property, to vote. The New York State Census of 1855 reported that 264 people, largely African-Americans but also Irish and German immigrants, lived in Seneca Village. By the time it was destroyed to make way for construction of the park, the village included three churches, a school, and several cemeteries. The African Union Methodist and the AME Zion were near 85th Street. Colored School No. 3 was located in the basement of the African Union Methodist Church. All Angels’ Church was built in 1849. It had a racially integrated congregation of African Americans and Irish and German parishioners. In 1853, the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church laid a special cornerstone that contained a Bible, a hymn book, the rules of the church, copies of the *New York Tribune* and the *New York Sun*, and a letter with the names of the church’s five trustees.

In 1853, the state legislature set aside an area including Seneca Village for the construction of Central Park and authorized the use of “eminent domain,” the taking of private property for public purposes. The confiscation of the land began in 1856 and Seneca Villagers received final eviction notices during the summer. People who owned property were compensated, but many protested in the courts. On July 9, 1856, an article about Seneca villagers in *The New York Daily Times* reported that “The policemen find it difficult to persuade them out of the idea which has possessed their simple minds, that the sole object of the authorities in making the Park is to procure their expulsion from the homes which they occupy.” After the eviction, the community of Seneca Village was never reestablished.

**Questions:**

1. What do we learn about life for free Blacks in New York from the story of Seneca Village?
2. In your opinion, why was Seneca Village vulnerable to destruction?