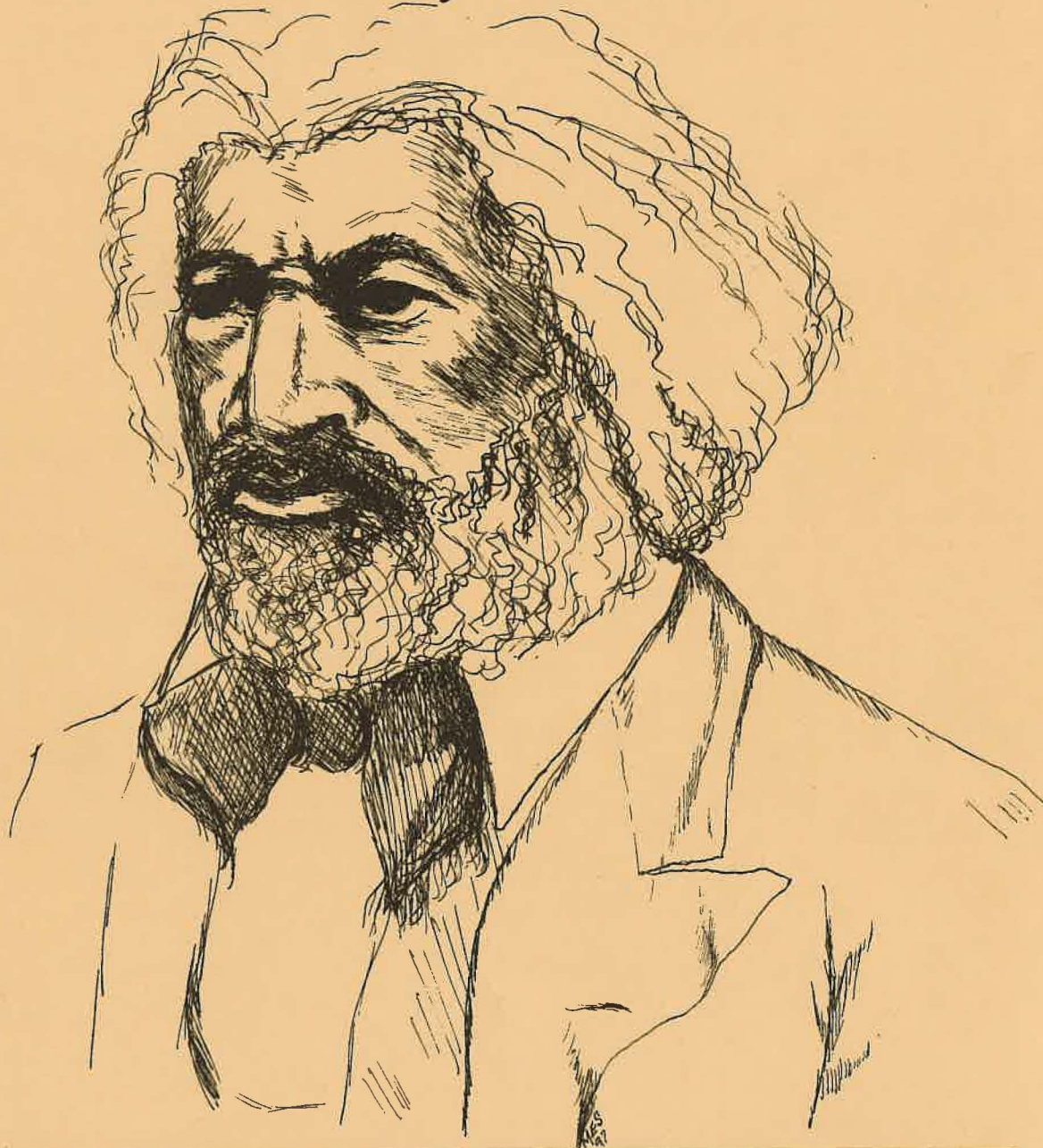


**AFRICAN-AMERICANS  
IN THE TOWN OF HUNTINGTON**  
*The Early Years*



**Produced by**  
**The Historian's Office, Stanley B. Klein, Ph.D., Historian**  
**and**  
**The Town Clerk's Archives, Jo-Ann Raia, Town Clerk/RMO**

## ***SLAVERY***

### ***Under the Dutch***

Even before the British arrived in this area, the Dutch West India Company had introduced slavery. As early as 1626 eleven male Africans were brought to Manhattan followed in 1628 by three female Africans. The Dutch West India Company's means of capturing the Africans was either in war or by removing them from Spanish or Portuguese privateers.

By the time the British captured New Netherlands from the Dutch in 1664, there was resistance to the use of slaves in New Netherlands. In fact, on February 25, 1664 the original slaves and their wives were granted conditional release but were required to return services or cash on demand for the rest of their lives.

### ***The English take New Netherlands***

As a result of the treaty of 1664 ownership rights of slaves were transferred to the English, thereby formalizing slavery for all but the original eleven. In the Laws of 1665 slaves were described as chattel property so that their servitude was involuntary, indefinite and capable of being transferred through the laws of heredity. This first code also reversed the Dutch system in which slaves could be and were legally married. Under the English, slave marriages and families were not legal entities.

Starting in 1672 the Royal African Company, an English company, secured a monopoly on supplying slaves to British North America. New York Colony tried to restrict the flow of slaves into the colony in the 1680's by taxing imported slaves. This was not very effective since there was a lively smuggling industry in slaves. Thus, all records of slave imports are subject to close scrutiny since they do not reveal the total number of slaves actually brought into the colony.

During the period from 1664 and 1776 most of the people in Huntington who were slave owners had only one slave. There is some evidence that the Lloyd family of Lloyd Harbor may have had as many as 14 slaves at any one time. That would make them the owners of the largest number of slaves.

The American Revolution created confusion in the slave ranks. Some slaves who were held by patriots escaped to New York City. Some slaves were abandoned by loyalists who escaped to Canada and these slaves also went to New York City. Some of these slaves in New York City joined together and called themselves the Royal African Regiment or the Ethiopian Regiment. In Huntington the British Army, which moved in August 1776, took 53 "Negroes" in the early stage of the occupation which lasted until 1783. In the militia lists for the period of the war there is a notation in one set of bills for a "negro's" labor a part of the charge. This would indicate that not all slaves had either left for New York City or been taken by the British.





In 1799 New York State passed a second law that actually provided for a method of manumission, although gradually. The act said that a child born to a slave after July 4, 1799 would be born free, but male children would remain in the employ of the master until age 28 and females until they were 25. However, the owner could "abandon" them at birth and they would then become the wards of the Overseer of the Poor until they reached maturity. All such children born after July 4, were to be registered with the Town Clerk and the owners' decision to abandon or not had to be made at that time. The records indicate that there were 79 slaves affected by the laws: 1 died at birth, 19 children were kept and 10 were abandoned; also 50 adults were manumitted. In all, the names of 75 slave owners are identified for the said slaves. This reinforces the 1 slave per family relationship mentioned earlier.

Agreeable to a Law of the State of New  
York This is to Certify that I John Velsor  
of the Town of Oysterbay had a male  
Black Child born of the Body of my black  
woman Sarah on the tenth of March  
1804 which said Child was born in  
the Town of Huntington as witness my  
hand this 25<sup>th</sup> November 1804.  
Child named William John Velsor

Birth record of black child belonging to John Velsor. 1804  
Historical Manuscripts - Town Clerk's Archives, Huntington

In 1822 the New York State Constitution went into effect and provided for the end of slavery in New York State as of 1827 although new residents of New York could retain slaves for 9 years. This provision was removed by the Constitution of 1846 and slavery ended 19 years before the 13th Amendment to the United States Constitution.

Suffolk County, New York  
 the Examination of Steven Ogden - a  
 Henry Coulter father on both before last  
 Smith & Apple Smith also the father  
 of the house in and for of County in the town  
 of Huntington on the 24<sup>th</sup> day of Nov<sup>r</sup> 1820  
 teaching his last slave & legal assistant  
 who says he was born in the town of Oyster Bay  
 in the County of Queens and that when he was  
 sent was a small boy he was bound by a white  
 man and that William Thompson his father in law had the  
 indenture to Charles Beckley & Quack in the town of  
 Oyster Bay and served him until he the defendant  
 was 21 years of age after that period he worked in Oyster  
 Bay until he was 27 years which was about twenty  
 of his years past since that period he went to man  
 by himself but never paid more than ten dollars  
 first in any one year and that about fourteen  
 years past he the defendant purchased one acre and a  
 half land in the town of Huntington for which  
 he paid fifteen dollars and about five years past he  
 purchased a horse and drove it on to the land which  
 he paid 25 dollars has a wife by the name of Olive  
 that they are now residing in the town of Huntington  
 that he will not  
 further submit to be sworn  
 the day in 2 year above state  
 Steven X Ogden  
 sworn

## Slaves Manumitted Between 1793 and 1824

Slave	Owner
Aaron(son of Susan)	Ruth Wood
Abigail(mother of Peter)	William Willis
Absolom	John Brush
Adam(son of Hagar)	Abraham Van Wyck
Belinda	Martha Williams
Benjamin	Melanethon B. Wood
Catherin	Sally Fleet
Cato	John Gardiner
Cesar	Gilbert Platt
Charity(daughter of Margaret)	Lemuel Carll
Charity(mother of David and Dick)	Samuel Strong
Charles	Scudder Lewis
Charles	Titus,Rebecah and
	Richard Conklin
Charles	Elizabeth Bryan
Charles	Elizabeth and Thomas
	Ketcham
Clarissa(daughter of Tamar)	Naomi Young
Darkis(mother of James)	John Gardiner
David	Jesse Rogers
David(son of Charity)	Samuel Strong
Dick(son of Charity)	Samuel Strong
Dinah	Alexander Matthews
Dorcus	John Gardiner
Elijah	Epenetus Sammis
Elishabe(Elisabe)	Christopher Meng
Elisha(daughter of Sarah)	Scudder Lewis
Elus	John Gardiner
Emilia(daughter of Rachel)	Jacob Townsend
Esther	Jonathan Gardiner
Experience	Titus,Rebeca,Richard
	and Henry Conklin
Female child daughter of Margaret	Richard Conkling
Freelove(mother of Sarah) may have	Phoebe Whitman
been sold to Isaiah Jarvis	
manumitted 6 April 1809 by	
Jarvis	
George	Alexander Campbell
Hagar(mother of Vilett, Adam	Abraham Vanwyck Jr.
and James)	
Hannah(mother of Rachel)	Epenetus Sammis
Harry(son of Nance)	Jarvis Whitman
Harry(son of Phebe who died in	Zophar Brush
childbirth)	
Harry(son of Nance)	Jarvis Whitman
Harry	Phebe Whitman
Harry	Joshua Hartt
Harry	Amy Youngs
Harry	Thomas Roe
Havens,Charles	Micah Vail

## **Slaves Manumitted Between 1793 and 1824**

Slave	Owner
Isaac	Moses Rolph
Jacob	Alexander Lewis
Jacob	James Oakley
James (born dead son of Betty)	Scudded Lewis
James	Jonah Wood
James (son of Darkish)	John Gardener
James (son of Jane)	David Fleet
James (son of Hangar)	Abraham Van Wick
James	Solomon Ketcham
Jane (mother of Mahala and James)	David Fleet
Jude (daughter of Rosanna)	Thomas Smith
Jupiter	Melancthon B. Wood
Ketturah	Nathaniel Buffet
Lenoir	John H. Gardener
London	Jonathan Gardener
Lorrey (daughter of Peg)	Selah Wood
Lydia (daughter of Margaret)	Lemuel Carll
Mahala (daughter of Jane)	David Fleet
Margaret or Peg	Timothy Carll
Margaret (mother of Lydia, Tamar and Charity)	Lemuel Carll
Margaret	Samuel Carll, Alexamder Lewis, Deborah Carll and Hannah N. Carll
Mary	Jonah Wood
Maryann (daughter of Tamar)	Naomi Young
Michael	Daniel W. Kissam
Nance (mother of Harry)	Jarvis Whitman
Nann (mother of Rachel)	Abraham VanDyck Jr.
Nancy	Abraham Van Wick
Nanne (mother of Rebeccah)	Abraham Van Wick
Oliver (son of Persilla)	Thomas Brush
Pat	Thomas Wicks
Peg (mother of Lorrey)	Selah Wood
Peleg	Scudded Carll
Persilla (mother of Oliver)	Thomas Brush
Peter (son of Abagail)	William Willis
Peter	John Brush
Phebe (died giving birth to Harry)	Zophar Brush
Plato	John H. Gardener
Pompy	James Oakley
Prince	Jonathan Gardener
Prince	Abraham VanWyck
Rachel (daughter of Hannah)	Epenetus Sammis
Rachel (mother of Emilia)	Jacob Townsend
Rachel (daughter of Nann)	Abraham Van Dyck Jr.
Rebecah (daughter of Nanny)	Abraham Van Wick
Richard	John Carll 2nd
Samuel	Jonah Wood

## ***Slaves Manumitted Between 1793 and 1824***

<i>Slave</i>	<i>Owner</i>
Sarah(mother of Elisha)	Scudded Lewis
Sarah(daughter of Freeloove)	Phoebe Whitman
Sarah(mother of William)	John Velsor
Siah Conkling	Deborah Conklin(g)
Sias	Joel Rogers
Stephen	Abraham Van Wick
Susan (mother of Aaron)	Ruth Wood
Susan	Deborah Valentine
Susan	John Wood
Synthey	Phineas Carll
Tamar(daughter of Margaret)	Lemuel Carll
Tamer(mother of Clarissa and Maryanne)	Naomi Young
Vilett(daughter of Hangar)	Abraham Vanwyck Jr.
William(son of Sarah)	John Velsor
William	John Carll
York	Ebenzer Platt



This Indenture, made the Eighth Day of December One thousand eight hundred and fifty three between Lopham Hetcham, and John Terry, Overseers of the Poor of the Town of Huntington in the County of Suffolk, and Gilbert Fleet of Huntington aforesaid Farmer, Witnesseth That the said Overseers of the Poor have bound and by these presents do bind George Titus (of color) who is now chargeable to said Town and who was aged Thirteen years on the fifteenth Day of May last. past, as an Apprentice to the said Gilbert Fleet, and to reside with and serve the said Gilbert Fleet, as such apprentice until he shall arrive at the full age of twenty one years and so to serve, in all respects, faithfully, obediently and honestly. And the said Gilbert Fleet, for himself, his Executors and Administrators, covenants and agrees to and with the said Overseers of the Poor, as such Overseers, and their Successors in office, and to and with the said George Titus, that he will instruct the said George in the art of Farming, which he now follows, - that he will, during said Term provide for him necessary boarding, lodging, apparel medicines & medical attendance that he cause him to be instructed in reading that he will provide & deliver to him, at the expiration of said Term, One good suit of Holy day clothes, and give to him all articles of his every Day apparel, then in wear and also, A new Bible, and that he will in such manner provide for and take care of said apprentice that he shall not during said term be in any manner of charge to said

(over)

Done, In witness whereof, we have hereunto  
 set our hands and seals the Day and year first  
 above written

deposited & delivered at  
 the presence of,

Deac & Bush

Witness my hand on

George H. Bush

John Henry  
 Thomas  
 Thomas

He, being, two of the Quakers of the town of Huntington, having fully informed ourselves of the age of the within named George Titus, and having conferred together touching the propriety of the binding of the said George Titus, as by the foregoing instrument, do hereby declare our assent thereto

Witness our hands

December 28th 1853

George Titus

### ***1824 -1860***

The records of the Town are somewhat sketchy for this time period. The lack of suitable records keeps us from making any determination of events affecting the former slaves or newly freed persons.

### ***Post 1860***

In the assessment rolls for 1860 we have several entries of land belonging to "Negroes" or "a man of colour" with the exception of Nicholas Miller who was referred as "a gentleman of colour". These are:

<i>Owner</i>	<i>Size</i>	<i>Value</i>	<i>Tax</i>
Clark, Henry	1 acre	100	.78
Miller, George	7	150	1.17
Miller, Nicholas	10	150	1.17
Payne, Hannibal	8	200	1.56
Payne, Henry	10	150	1.17
Squares, Isaac	25	150	1.17
Squares, Daniel	8	100	.78
Steel, Aaron	5	100	.78

Again, in the rolls of 1866 we find the same designation as follows:

<i>Owner</i>	<i>Size</i>	<i>Value</i>	<i>Tax</i>
Clark, Henry	1 acre	150	-
Carman, William	12	150	-
Green, George	15	150	-
Havens, Thomas	1/4	250	-
Mills, George	7	100	-
Miller, Nicholas	10	150	-
Miller, Samuel	15	150	-
Payne, Henry	10	150	-
Payne, Oliver	30	400	-
Russell, Henry	4	150	-
Squares, Isaac	25	150	-
Squares, Daniel	8	150	-
Steel, Aaron	5	150	-
Wilson, John	12	200	-

### ***Non-Resident***

Hunter, Jonah of New Town	4 acres	200
---------------------------	---------	-----

### ***The Civil War***

The Civil War was the first war in which the government used the draft to gather men for the armed forces. However, there was a twist to the draft in those days. One didn't have to go himself if could find someone to take one's place or paid a stipulated amount to "buy out of the draft". In 1864 the needs of the Union Army became extreme and an allotment of 200,000 men was placed on New York State. We have some documents relating to the draft and enlisting of Huntingtonians which specify Coloured Troops or the notice of enlistment of Negroes in the United States Army which are replicated below.

<i>Name</i>	<i>Rank</i>	<i>When enlisted</i>	<i>Where</i>	<i>Bounty paid by Town</i>
Brewster, Thomas, C.	Private	January 5, 1864	Jamaica	\$331.50
Jackson, Aaron	Private	January 5, 1864	Jamaica	\$331.50
Brewster, Governor	Private	January 5, 1864	Jamaica	\$331.50
Garniner, James E.	Private	January 5, 1864	Jamaica	\$331.50
Smith, Moses	Private	January 5, 1864	Jamaica	\$331.50
Jackson, Jeffrey	Private	January 5, 1864	Jamaica	\$331.50
Jackson, Richard	Private	January 5, 1864	Jamaica	\$331.50
Jackson, Henry D.	Private	January 5, 1864	Jamaica	\$331.50
Wood, William Henry	Private	January 5, 1864	Jamaica	\$331.50
Carl Charles Henry	Private	January 5, 1864	Jamaica	\$331.50

## Bibliography

Marcus, Grania Bolton. *Discovering the African-American Experience in Suffolk County, 1620-1860*. Mattituck, New York: Amereon House. 1988. Reprinted 1995.

Jackson, Kenneth T., ed. *The Encyclopedia of New York*. New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press.

Huntington Town Clerk's Archives, (HTCA). Town Hall, Huntington New York.

Martell, Anne. "Slavery on Long Island," *Nassau County Historical Journal* 6 (Fall 1943), 55-71.

Mulvihill, William. "Slavery on Long Island: An Overview," *Long Island Forum* (Winter 1995), 13-18.

Ross, Peter. "Slavery on Long Island," *A History of Long Island*. vol. 1. New York and Chicago: Lewis Publishing Company. 1903.

Wortis, Helen. "Blacks on Long Island: Population Growth in the Colonial Period," *The Journal of Long Island History* (Autumn 1974), 35-46.



### *Acknowledgements*

I would like to thank Antonia S. Mattheou, Archivist, for all her help in pointing me to the correct boxes in the Town Clerk's Archives and for her knowledge and diligence in aggregating data and source material for me to work with. Without her invaluable aid this brief overview would not have been produced. I would also like to thank Jo-Ann Raia, the Town Clerk, for making available the resources of the Archives, Antonia's expertise and the help of computer wiz Thomas A. Fordham, Jr., Records Management Assistant.

Stanley B. Klein, Ph.D.  
Town Historian