

BOUND BY BONDAGE: SLAVERY AMONG ELITES IN COLONIAL MASSACHUSETTS
AND NEW YORK

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BOUND BY BONDAGE: SLAVERY AMONG ELITES IN COLONIAL MASSACHUSETTS AND NEW YORK

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This study compares the ways that slavery shaped the elite cultures of colonial Massachusetts and New York by examining the social and kinship networks that intertwined enslavers with those they enslaved. It is anchored around three main family groups: the Stuyvesants, Bayards, and Livingstons. Although most works concerning these families remain largely rooted in colonial New York, this study seeks to follow these families' wider diasporic networks, especially their connections to the elites of colonial Massachusetts.

As such, this dissertation is comparative as well as Atlantic in focus. The comparative aspect flows out of its central focus on elite families and thus necessitates the shedding of modern boundary lines between colonies, allowing the porous nature of elite slave contacts to emerge and resurrecting a very different early modern landscape. Instead of focusing on the small individual slaveholdings of most northern elites, it highlights slaveholding across family units, which offers a more comprehensive view of the cultural impact of slavery. Even as slavery disrupted the personal and family lives of enslaved Africans and Indians, it created a common slave culture and knit together Dutch merchant families with New England's ministerial elite, cementing Atlantic alliances that crossed contested colonial lines.

Although this project is racial and gendered at its heart, it seeks to question the "natural communities" that have been constructed in scholarly works. Thus, instead of solely excavating

the lives of the enslaved, it emphasizes the effects that their lives had on the worldview of those who held them in bondage. Rather than addressing the experiences of enslaved African and Indians separately, it analyzes them as overlapping experiences. It examines the development of a mistress culture among elite northern women and revises the prevailing scholarly image of the overwhelmed Northern goodwife, whose husband bequeathed her a large number of enslaved men and women. It explores the ways in which the religious experience of elite families was interconnected and profoundly shaped by the culture of slavery and the development of systems of reciprocity and gift exchange between elites based on slavery.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Nicole Saffold Maskiell, a native of Oak Park, Illinois, and a 1998 graduate of the University of Chicago Laboratory Schools, received her AB cum laude from Harvard College in 2002. She began her graduate studies under the principal advisement of Mary Beth Norton at Cornell University in 2007, receiving her MA in 2010 and her PhD in 2013.

To my family

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A myriad of friends and family joined forces to make sure this dissertation transitioned from idea to reality. To acknowledge everyone with the space that they deserve would require a second dissertation length project. What follows is but a paltry offering in the face of all of the support I have received.

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My Dutch language instructors Martijna Briggs and Chrissy Hosea spent countless hours teaching me a language that I had no knowledge of before beginning my graduate program. Chrissy patiently helped me also gain some knowledge of early Modern Dutch, introduced me to paleography, pointed me in the direction of the fabulous Colombia Reading Dutch 17th-Century Texts workshop, and painstakingly walked me through the documents that I brought back from my research trips.

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demarcate graduate life. Words can never express just how essential they were to making this project take form, and I will be forever in their debt.

I was humbled by the outpouring of financial support that I received throughout this dissertation project, without which none of the archival research trips would have been possible. Early in my research, Professor Michael Kammen offered me encouragement and the Farr Fellowship that helped me to travel to the Netherlands to do research. The Cornell University Mario Einaudi Center's International Studies Travel Grant allowed me to travel to Curaçao and research at the National Archives. The U.S. Department of Education Foreign Language and Area Studies Fellowship offered me the time to gain the language skills necessary to pursue a Dutch Atlantic topic. The financial support and research help that I received at the Gilder Lehrman collection on deposit at the New-York Historical Society was invaluable to my research. Reference librarian Alyson Barrett-Ryan helped me find numerous documents and make the most of the collection. Ted O'Reilly, reference librarian at the New-York Historical Society directed me to the John Tabor Kempe and Alexander Papers that were invaluable to my project.

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My parents, Monroe and Patricia Saffold, inspired my zeal for uncovering the past. They have supported every bend in the road, giving me a gift of love that can never be repaid. My brother, Brian, has always been there to listen to my ideas—no matter how bizarre—and dream alongside me. Finally, my husband Bill offered countless hours of reading and re-reading every conference paper and dissertation chapter. He was there on that windswept fall morning in Cambridge during my sophomore year of college when I stumbled upon the gravestone of Cicely, late servant of y^e Reverend William Brattle, and has been my champion every step of the way. He traveled across the world with me, hunting down the lives of elites and the more elusive lives of their slaves, and poured over reams of seventeenth and eighteenth century documents. Through triumph and shattering personal tragedy, he remained a boundless font of love and encouragement. Bill, my heart, this dissertation would never have been completed were it not for you.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
|---------------------------|--|
| <i>Baptisms 1639-1730</i> | Evans, Thomas G., ed. <i>Collections of the New York Genealogical and Biographical Society</i> . Vol. 2, <i>Baptisms from 1639-1730 in the Reformed Dutch Church, New York</i> . 1901. Reprint, New York: The Gregg Press, 1968. |
| <i>Boston Marriages</i> | Whitmore, William H., ed., <i>A Report of the Record Commissioners of the City of Boston Containing the Boston Marriages, 1700 to 1751</i> . Boston: Municipal Printing Office, 1898. |
| CHMANY | O'Callaghan, Edmund Bailey, ed. <i>Calendar of Historical Manuscripts in the Office of the Secretary of State Albany New York</i> . 2 vols. Albany, NY: Weed, Parsons and Company, 1865-66. |
| CJVR | van Laer, A.J.F., trans. and ed. <i>Correspondence of Jeremias van Rensselaer, 1651-1674</i> . Albany: University of the State of New York, 1932. |
| CLNY | Northrup, A. Judd et al., eds. <i>The Colonial Laws of New York: From the Year 1644 to the Revolution</i> . Vol. 1. Albany, NY: James B. Lyon, 1894. |
| CMVR | van Laer, A.J.F., ed. and trans. <i>Correspondence of Maria van Rensselaer, 1669-1689</i> . Albany: The University of the State of New York, 1935. |
| CP | Gehring, Charles T., trans. and ed. <i>Curaçao Papers, 1640-1664</i> . Albany, NY: New Netherland Institute, 2011. |
| DHSNY | O'Callaghan, E.B., ed. <i>The Documentary History of the State of New-York</i> . Vol. 2. Albany: Weed & Parsons, Col, 1850. |
| DIHSTA | Donnan, Elizabeth, ed. <i>Documents Illustrative of the History of the Slave Trade to America</i> . 4 vols. 1932. Reprint, New York: Octagon Books, 1969. |
| DRCHNJ | Hutchinson, Elmer T., ed. <i>Documents Relating to the Colonial History of the State of New Jersey</i> . Vol. 6. 1939. Reprint, Westminster, MD: Heritage Books, Inc., 2008. |
| DRCHNY | O'Callaghan, E.B. and Berthold Fernow, eds. <i>Documents Relative to the Colonial History of the State of New York</i> . 15 vols. Albany, NY: Weed, Parsons, 1853-87. |
| EAN | America's Historical Newspapers: Early American Newspapers. |
| ERNY | Hastings, Hugh, et al, eds. <i>Ecclesiastical Records of the State of New York</i> . 7 vols. Albany, NY: J.B. Lyon, 1901-16. |
| GL | Gilder Lehrman Collection on Deposit at the New-York Historical Society, New York, NY. |

| | |
|--------------------------|--|
| <i>Harvard Graduates</i> | Sibley, John Langdon. <i>Biographical Sketches of Graduates of Harvard University in Cambridge, Massachusetts</i> . 3 vols. Cambridge: Charles William Sever, 1873-1885. |
| HL | Huntington Library, San Marino, CA. |
| LFP-Trans | Livingston Family Papers in Dutch, translated by Adrian van de Linde, Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, NY. |
| LR-MSS | Livingston-Redmond Manuscripts, Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, NY. |
| <i>Marriages</i> | Purple, Samuel S., ed. <i>Records of the Reformed Dutch Church in New Amsterdam and New York: Marriages from 11 December 1639 to 26 August 1801</i> . 1890. Reprint, Baltimore, MD: Genealogical Publishing Co., 2007. |
| MCARS | van Laer, A.J.F., trans. and ed. <i>Minutes of the Court of Albany, Rensselaerswyck and Schenectady....</i> Vol. 2. Albany: University of the State of New York, 1928. |
| MCR | van Laer, A.J.F., trans. and ed. <i>Minutes of the Court of Rensselaerswyck: 1648-1652</i> . Albany: University of the State of New York, 1922. |
| MSA | Middlesex County Probate Records, Massachusetts State Archives, Boston, MA. |
| NYHS | New-York Historical Society, New York, NY. |
| NYHMRCB | van der Linde, A.P.G. Jos, trans. and ed. <i>New York Historical Manuscripts, Dutch: Old First Dutch Reformed Church of Brooklyn, New York First Book of Records, 1660-1752</i> . Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co., 1983. |
| RONA | Fernow, Berthold, ed. <i>The Records of New Amsterdam: From 1653 to 1674</i> . 7 vols. New York: The Knickerbocker Press, 1897. |
| RRDCA | Duermyer, Louis, ed. <i>Records of the Reformed Dutch Church of Albany, New York, 1689-1809: Marriages, Baptisms, Members, etc. Excerpted from Year Books of the Holland Society of New York</i> . Baltimore, MD: Genealogical Publishing Co., 1978. |
| SAA | Stadsarchief Amsterdam, (Municipal Archives of Amsterdam), Amsterdam, The Netherlands. |
| <i>Wills</i> | Pelletreau, William S., ed. <i>Abstracts of Wills on File in the Surrogate's Office: City of New York with Appendix and Miscellaneous Documents</i> . 17 vols. New York: Printed for the Society, 1893-1913. |
| WJP | Sullivan, James, et al., eds. <i>The Papers of Sir William Johnson</i> . 14 vols. Albany, NY: University of the State of New York, 1921-65. |

INTRODUCTION

“THEY CAN NEVER EMBODY WITH US”: THE CENTRALITY OF THE ENSLAVED TO THE NARRATIVE OF COLONIAL MASSACHUSETTS AND NEW YORK

And there is such a disparity in their Conditions, Colour & Hair, that they can never embody with us, and grow up into orderly Families, to the Peopling of the Land; but still remain in our Body Politick as a kind of extravasat Blood. As many Negro men as there are among us, so many empty places there are in our Train Bands and the Places taken up of Men that might make Husbands for our Daughters.

Samuel Sewall, *The Selling of Joseph* (1701)

More than three centuries after Samuel Sewall wrote that the enslaved could “never embody with us,” the scholarly narratives of elite northern slaveholders and those they held in bondage remain largely separate, a natural dichotomy in scholarly accounts, as readily accepted as black and white, woman and man. Even as the salience of race as a historical category has been questioned, gender historicized, and sexuality complicated, the master-slave divide has remained largely intact. Yet scholars have complicated ingrained notions of power. The recent trend in works on early American slavery has been to acknowledge its negotiated character. Masters were not always supreme, neither were slaves fully submissive. Space for negotiation existed between the two groups, even as oppression kept one group perennially “under” the other.¹

¹ Ira Berlin’s statement that slavery, “though imposed and maintained by violence, was a negotiated relationship,” has come to frame many scholarly works on early modern slavery, especially in the North. Richard Bailey argued that Africans slaves “resisted the slave owners’ seeking to control their lives and negotiated how they were going to live—even down to the seasoning of their meals.” The emphasis on slavery’s negotiated character in New Netherland predates Berlin’s categories. Morton Wagman and Peter Christoph argued that a highly flexible form of slavery existed under the Dutch, one that allowed the enslaved unprecedented latitude. Ira Berlin, *Many Thousands Gone: The First Two Centuries of Slavery in North America* (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1998), 1; Richard A. Bailey, *Race and Redemption in Puritan New England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 104; Morton Wagman, “Corporate Slavery in New Netherland,” *Journal of Negro History* 65, no. 1 (Winter 1980): 40, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3031546>; Peter R. Christoph, “The Freedmen of New Amsterdam,” in *A Beautiful and Fruitful Place: Selected Rensselaerswijck Seminar Papers*, ed. Nancy Anne McClure Zeller (Albany: New Netherland Publishing, 1991), 1: 157.

Nevertheless, the lives of early modern elites and the enslaved in the North have been treated with a kind of scholarly apartheid.² The larger narratives that govern the histories of elites only minimally acknowledge the effects enslaved people had on those elites.³ Yet as in other places in the Atlantic world, the majority of the slaves in colonial Massachusetts and New York were held by elite families. Focusing on elite familial networks admittedly omits the experiences of the majority of the free population, but simultaneously offers a unique opportunity to examine the lives of many enslaved people. Works devoted to the experience of the enslaved reflect the difficulties of rediscovering the lives of those often rendered invisible for generations.

The small clues left in early modern documents speak of lives lived and relationships broken. These documentary fragments expose not only how little we know of the enslaved, but also question how much we can know about the enslavers for whom they spent their lives in bondage. Defying Sewall's contention and scholarly convention, the two groups did live together, and the events of their lives profoundly affected the ways in which each group navigated and made sense of the world.

Re-establishing the links between master and slave along networks of patronage and kinship challenges existing scholarly narratives of both groups while illuminating the ways in

² By examining Dutch and English colonial elite families together, this study directly engages with Eliga Gould's conception of "entangled histories." Although I have taken a comparative approach to the slaveholding networks of colonial Massachusetts and New York elites, I have sought to treat the Dutch and English Atlantics as overlapping zones, which were "themselves entangled constructs with shifting histories and borders, literal as well as figurative." Eliga H. Gould, "Entangled Histories, Entangled Worlds: The English-Speaking Atlantic as a Spanish Periphery," *American Historical Review* 112, no. 3 (June 2007): 785, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40006670>.

³ James Lydon asserted that slave trading was a minimal feature of New York's economy before 1748, and James Rawley and Stephen Behrendt argued that "Van Cortlandt's slaving ventures were a minor part of his commercial activities, just as were his occasional sales of a slave in New York or in the coasting trade." The notion that slavery and slave trading was a minor portion of elites' overall business ventures obscures the centrality of slavery to elite family identity formation. James G. Lydon, "New York and the Slave Trade, 1700-1774," *William and Mary Quarterly* 35, no. 2 (April 1978): 384, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1921840>; James A. Rawley and Stephen D. Behrendt, *The Transatlantic Slave Trade, A History*, rev. ed. (1981; repr., Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2005), 339. For a view that challenges downplaying the importance of slave trading in New York, see Charles Foy, "Ports of Slavery, Ports of Freedom: How Slaves Used Northern Seaports' Maritime Industry to Escape and Create Trans-Atlantic Identities, 1713-1783" (PhD diss., Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, 2008), 36, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/304510961?accountid=10267>.

which the lives of slave and master were knit together.⁴ Such reconstruction will always remain incomplete due to the fragmentary nature of sources, yet like an elaborate puzzle, the scattered references to the enslaved reconstruct a very different colonial landscape. They reveal inter-colonial and Atlantic alliances that persisted through patterns of upheaval. Tracing familial ties allows for a multigenerational analysis of such networks.

This study is organized around three major elite New York families: the Stuyvesants, Bayards, and Livingstons. These three families were not the only slaveholders in colonial New York, nor were they the largest. They resided, however, at the center of elite culture in New Netherland and New York; tracing the ways they established and maintained the slaveholding networks they built over nearly two centuries offers insight into the ways that slavery became a vital part of northern elite culture. Although these networks were certainly contested—family struggles often pitted sibling against sibling—they were remarkably resilient, weathering such shocks to persist for generations. Instead of remaining rooted in colonial New York, I examine the families' wider connections, focusing specifically on their connections to the elites of colonial Massachusetts, in order to reveal a larger northern elite slaveholding culture. Although the family served as the organizing unit in such arrangements, slaves' proximity to their enslavers' family ties should not be read as intimacy. Close quarters demanded that master and slave live intertwined lives, yet the lives of slaves were most often rent apart by such proximity.

⁴ Julia Adams demonstrated how powerfully familial analysis can challenge an accepted historical narrative. She argued that the family, not the state, was the driver of Dutch continental politics, linking patrimonial families to the rise of Dutch influence in the "Golden Age" and also crediting them with its downfall. For the sake of familial prestige, according to Adams, Dutch ruling families sabotaged the success of the West India Company, which might have halted the state's decline. Such a focus on colonial elite families has proved particularly useful in reconstructing the lives of both enslaver and enslaved, as Annette Gordon-Reed's *The Hemingses of Monticello* has demonstrated. See Julia Adams, *The Familial State: Ruling Families and Merchant Capitalism in Early Modern Europe* (2005; repr., Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2007) and Annette Gordon-Reed, *The Hemingses of Monticello: An American Family* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 2008).

Before any analysis of elite slaveholders can begin, two questions must be answered: What defines the “elite”? And in what way was slavery a major component of elite status? As this is not a social history, I have not used statistical analysis to define “elite.” Many of the central families in this study moved through different stages of wealth. In most historical analyses of Northeastern colonial society, elites have been defined as merchants, politicians, and professionals, and I have allowed that definition to guide this study.⁵ Treatments of southern antebellum slave society have reckoned households with twenty slaves and more as elite, yet such a demographic marker fails to account for the type of slaveholding in Northern colonial societies. Certainly, even by this measure, several individuals in this work would be considered elite slaveholders—both Petrus Stuyvesant and Robert Livingston held slaveholding populations greater than twenty—yet as this study is centered around networks of slaveholding, I focus more on tracking the ways that slavery was defined and slaves passed down within family groups as enduring markers of elite slaveholding.

Elite standing in the colonies did not always transfer from Europe. Petrus Stuyvesant’s father struggled as a minister in Friesland and Robert Livingston’s father, Rev. John Livingstone, although a distinguished Reformed minister, was forced out of Scotland due to his religious beliefs, leaving his son little patrimony besides religious contacts in New England. This is not to say that no colonial families were deemed elites in Europe: the van Rensselaer family enjoyed both colonial and continental wealth, and even held royal connections.

Elite status for the central family groups in this study was created in the colonies at the same time that these families were shoring up slave networks. Although merchants could attain

⁵ Scholars such as Mary Beth Norton and David Hackett Fischer have noted that most of the colonists would have been considered middling in Europe, with individuals of higher rank carefully indicated in colonial records; those that occupied the merchant and professional ranks formed the highest echelon of colonial society. Mary Beth Norton, *Founding Mothers and Fathers: Gendered Power and the Forming of American Society* (1996; repr., New York: Vintage Books, 1997), 18-19; David Hackett Fischer, *Albion’s Seed: Four British Folkways in America* (1989; repr., Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 27.

wealth without owning slaves in colonial New York, if they wanted to pass such status down to the next generation, slavery was a key component of perpetuating elite status. Historians have analyzed the enslaved as part of the culture of commodities that arose during the long eighteenth century, yet the kind of generational commitment to slavery that existed among New York families went beyond symbols of conspicuous consumption. The presence of the enslaved began to define the ways such elites made sense of themselves and the world around them.

* * * * *

Peter Stuyvesant remains an enigmatic figure in colonial history, though his caricatured legend has persisted through the centuries. At once brash, unyielding, and dogmatically Calvinistic, Stuyvesant's popular image, complete with wooden leg, has appeared as the embodiment of failed autocracy. The man that emerges in recent histories, works steeped in Dutch primary source documents, is much more nuanced. His name changed from the Anglicized Peter to Petrus, the Latinized form that he himself used, Stuyvesant emerges as a minister's son and failed seminarian, whose West India Company posts in the New World offered him the full gamut of colonial experiences. Compared to his predecessor, Willem Kieft, whose draconian actions against the Esopus Indians earned him the scorn of both his contemporaries and later historians, Stuyvesant appears a prudent manager placed in the difficult position of managing a colony that included not only New Netherland, but also the Caribbean islands of Aruba, Bonaire, and Curaçao.⁶

⁶ Using Dutch archival records in Friesland, Amsterdam, New York and other locations, Jaap Jacobs transformed the image of Petrus Stuyvesant, offering a detailed portrait of his early life and Atlantic career with the Dutch West India Company. His biography of Petrus Stuyvesant is still only available in Dutch, but his article "Like Father, Like Son? The Early Years of Petrus Stuyvesant," written in English, gives a compelling look at Stuyvesant's early years.

New Netherland's place as a preeminent slave trading region and its connections to the wider slaveholding Atlantic under Stuyvesant's regime have also shaped analyses of his rule. Stuyvesant's position as the largest slaveholder in New Amsterdam, his management of flourishing corporate slavery, and his dogged commitment to increasing the slave trade to New Netherland have come to characterize works dealing with slavery in the colony.⁷ Although slavery had already existed for two decades in New Netherland by the time of Stuyvesant's 1647 appointment as director general—indeed it was not until 1660 that New Netherland was surpassed by Maryland and Virginia in terms of slave numbers—his life offers a useful chronology, mapping the emergence of elite familial networks of slavery.⁸ Many of the families that would go on to be deeply involved in slavery in colonial New York, such as the Bayards and the Beekmans, arrived in the colony with Petrus Stuyvesant. Others were grafted into his business and family networks. His marriage to Judith Bayard, and that of his sister Ann to Judith's brother Samuel, would firmly ally the Stuyvesant and Bayard families in the first generation, creating a family network that would go on to include many more prominent New York families. The women in the network—Judith and Ann—would have their own considerable connections to the burgeoning family slave culture. These families' persistence in the business of slavery would survive the fall of New Netherland to the English and would flourish throughout the English period.

See Jaap Jacobs, *Petrus Stuyvesant* (Amsterdam: Uitgeverij Bert Bakker, 2009); Jaap Jacobs, "Like Father, Like Son? The Early Years of Petrus Stuyvesant," in *Revisiting New Netherland: Perspectives on Early Dutch America*, ed. Joyce D. Goodfriend (Boston: Brill, 2005): 205-242.

⁷ Some scholars have argued that the rigid slave system of New York had its genesis during Stuyvesant's directorship. See Joyce D. Goodfriend, "Burghers and Blacks: The Evolution of a Slave Society at New Amsterdam," *New York History* 71, no. 2 (April 1978): 125-144, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23169655>; and Edwin Burrows and Michael Wallace, *Gotham: A History of New York City to 1898* (1999; repr., Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 48.

⁸ Vivienne Kruger, "Born to Run: The Slave Family in Early New York, 1626-1827" (PhD diss., Columbia University, 1985), 11-12.

Scottish-born Robert Livingston, though less famous in popular imagination than Petrus Stuyvesant, has also attracted considerable historiographical interest because of his prolific business and political career. Lawrence Leder's 1961 monograph *Robert Livingston 1654-1728 and the Politics of Colonial New York* chronicled Robert Livingston's arrival in the colonies with little more than his minister father's reputation, the chronic indebtedness that dogged his early years in Albany, and the meteoric rise that followed his strategic marriage to the widow of Nicholas van Rensselaer, Alida Schuyler. Leder's work utilized the voluminous Livingston family manuscripts, sparking an interest in the family papers that has persisted. Alida Livingston's position as business manager has attracted considerable recent scholarly interest, and she appears alongside her sister-in-law by marriage, Margaret van Cortlandt van Rensselaer, and Margaret Hardenbroeck Philipse in the burgeoning historiography of Dutch colonial female merchants. Linda Biemer examined the frequent absences of Robert Livingston that served to shape Alida's world, and from her work emerged an Alida who was an adept property manager, tasked with managing labor and making sure that the diverse workings on Livingston Manor went off smoothly.⁹ Yet the Alida of Biemer's analysis only briefly intersected with slavery. The Livingstons' slaveholding has not been completely ignored, however, and the Alida that appeared in Roberta Singer's analysis of the family's slaveholding activities had more involvement in slavery. Yet Singer's analysis was stripped of the evocative chronology offered by Biemer.¹⁰ Robert and Alida together constructed a familial slaveholding dynasty that built on

⁹ In Biemer's analyses, Alida Livingston held the most prominent role on Livingston Manor, exercising a trading autonomy present among some elite Dutch women. This autonomy was prevalent under Dutch rule, but gradually receded under the English. See Linda Biemer, ed. and trans., "Business Letters of Alida Schuyler Livingston, 1680-1726," *New York History* 63, no. 2 (April 1982): 182-207, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23173117>; and Linda Biemer, *Women and Property in Colonial New York: The Transition from Dutch to English Law, 1643-1727* (1979; repr., Ann Arbor, UMI Research Press, 1983).

¹⁰ Singer did not take a primarily chronological approach in her article, but she offered an excellent view into several generations of Livingston family slaveholdings. See Roberta Singer, "The Livingstons as Slaveholders: The

the foundation laid by the Stuyvesant-Bayards (Fig. 1). This expansive network spanned the borderlands, crossed colonial lines, and was fundamentally Atlantic. Their generational, familial, and social connections to New England's slaveholding elites offer an opportunity for the comparative analysis of New York and Massachusetts.

Historiography

Any integrated history must engage with multiple historical debates. As a result, several different historiographical themes collide in this dissertation: the development of slavery in New Netherland, New York, and Massachusetts; the emergence of racial categories and their relationship to Indian slavery; the importance of gender and the centrality of female slaveholders to the development of slaveholding culture; slavery's proximity to the religious cultures of colonial New York and Massachusetts; and the ways that slavery shaped notions of honor and was perpetuated through gifted reciprocities.

This study owes much to the literature that seeks to re-center the lives of the enslaved in historical narratives. William D. Piersen's groundbreaking work, *Black Yankees*, pioneered a wave of interest in the experience of enslaved blacks in the eighteenth-century northeast. His focus on "the process of cultural change and creation from the black bondsman's point of view" represented a correction in the historiography, righting an outlook that "for too long" had "encased in the passive voice" the experience of blacks.¹¹ After two decades of increased interest in the northern slave experience, the subject's sense of novelty has dulled and lent the scholarly

'Peculiar Institution' on Livingston Manor and Clermont," in *The Livingston Legacy: Three Centuries of American History*, ed. Richard T. Wiles (Annandale, NY: Bard College Office of Publications, 1987), 67-97.

¹¹ William D. Piersen, *Black Yankees: The Development of an Afro-American Subculture in Eighteenth-Century New England* (Amherst: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1988), ix, x.

discussion an air of completeness, as if most of what can be gleaned from scanty sources has already been gathered.¹² Yet despite Piersen's study and the subsequent proliferation of interest in eighteenth-century slavery in the North, enslaved black actors have only recently served as the subject of historical narratives.

In addition to the thorny problem of including the enslaved as active participants in historical narratives, slavery in northern societies has been segregated from other historiographical debates. There remains in New Netherland scholarship a divide between historians who term their projects "New Netherland scholarship," focused on Dutch continental culture's influence, the Reform church, and Dutch West India Company (WIC) trade currents, and those who center their scholarship on "slavery in New Netherland." The former scholars point to European Dutch cultural life as central to situating New Netherland's place in the larger Dutch world. Slavery is little discussed in such narratives and, when mentioned, relegated to a brief window of time between the height of Curaçao's slave exports in the 1660s and the fall of New Netherland to the British in 1664. This view excises the enormous influence of the Dutch African coast and the growing slave foothold in the Caribbean to New Netherland's development, as well as minimizing the impact of the enslaved.¹³

¹² Several studies of northern slavery and slave experience have appeared in recent years and there have been an increasing number of dissertations devoted to this topic. See also, Peter Benes, ed., *Slavery/Antislavery in New England, The Dublin Seminar for New England Folklife Annual Proceedings 2003* (Boston: Boston University, 2005); John Wood Sweet, *Bodies Politic: Negotiating Race in the American North, 1730-1830* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003); Thelma Wills Foote, *Black and White Manhattan: The History of Racial Formation in Colonial New York City* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004); Jill Lepore, *New York Burning: Liberty, Slavery, and Conspiracy in Eighteenth-Century Manhattan* (New York: Vintage Books, 2005); and Wendy Warren, "Enslaved Africans in New England, 1638-1700" (PhD. diss., Yale University, 2008), <http://search.proquest.com/docview/304423709?accountid=10267>.

¹³ The Dutch Atlantic itself has come under increasing scrutiny. Analyzing the "cultural impact, demographic impact, effects on trade and investments and impact on Dutch foreign policy in the period between 1600 and 1800," Pieter Emmer and Wim Klooster concluded that a Dutch Atlantic empire was at best confined to a short "period of fifteen years, between 1630 and 1645." The Dutch, they argued, made little money on their Atlantic ventures. Compared to the plantation colonies of Britain, the Dutch plantation zones were unprofitable. Yet Emmer and Klooster failed to incorporate diasporic communities and mixed race communities into their definition of a Dutch Atlantic. Had they done so, the question of whether there was a Dutch Atlantic might not have led them to so easily

In the scholarship on slavery, the social, legal, and religious constraints placed on black life as slavery developed in the English colonies loom over New Netherland's historiography. Private slave ownership's ascendancy in the English colonies caused historians to look at the pattern of corporate slave ownership in New Netherland as a stark contrast and a point of departure from which to examine the distinctiveness of slavery in New Netherland. Detailed studies of the colony's earliest slaves, the "company blacks," analyze their unique position. These works assert that such slaves' ownership by the Dutch West India Company, rather than by private individuals, opened fissures of opportunities to negotiate the system of slavery not available to slaves in the English colonies. The work arrangements, black rights in courts, legal petitions, and ultimate final state of freedom experienced by many of these slaves gave rise to narratives that stressed the negotiated quality of slavery in New Amsterdam. Although the company slaves are important to consider, other historians such as Joyce Goodfriend point out that the experience of these blacks did not encompass the whole story of the enslaved in New Netherland. Was slavery a negotiated institution in New Netherland or one confined by custom if not enshrined by law? Was New Netherland a society with slaves whose utter dependence on slave labor was unprecedented or was it something else? In order to fully answer these persistent historiographical questions, the modern geographical lines of New York that subconsciously shadow many analyses of New Netherland must be removed, and the porous colonial lines that knew nothing of the Empire State or its bustling future metropolis must be reclaimed.

Such a reimagining of colonial boundaries leads to unexpected connections. Since the early decades of settlement, New Netherland's slaveholding elite was strongly aligned by family and business ties to their counterparts in Massachusetts. Slaveholding in New England began

discount the idea of a lasting Dutch cultural impact in the absence of large numbers of white, Protestant Dutch migrants. Pieter C. Emmer and Wim Klooster, "The Dutch Atlantic, 1600-1800: Expansion without Empire," *Itinerario: European Journal of Overseas History* 23, no. 2 (July 1999): 48-69, doi: 10.1017/S0165115300024761.

with Massachusetts in the early decades of the seventeenth century, though the exact date is uncertain. In 1641, the colonial legislature adopted the “Body of Liberties,” which established the legality of slavery for those slaves “taken in just Wars, [and such strangers] as willingly sell themselves or are sold to us,” and made Massachusetts the first of the original colonies to legalize slavery.¹⁴ Although initially small and relatively static, the slave population grew rapidly during the last decades of the seventeenth century, causing a Huguenot refugee to note in 1687 that “There is not a house in Boston, however small may be its means, that has not one or two” black slaves, and “There are those that have five or six.”¹⁵ Such figures represent a gross overstatement for the total colony of Massachusetts, but the Huguenot, who was likely connected to a larger network of elite Bostonians committed to sheltering such refugees, was not just multiplying the number of enslaved Africans in his mind for literary flourish. During the first half of the eighteenth century, enslaved blacks made up nearly 10% of the population of Boston, with slaveholding concentrated among the families of the elite.¹⁶ Indeed, the elite Boston and Cambridge world was also multiracial. Cambridge and Boston’s scholars and divines were supported, to a larger degree than later denizens of Massachusetts Bay, by the forced labor of enslaved Africans and Indians.

Massachusetts’s multiethnic slave population has attracted recent scholarly interest, despite its relatively small size. The debates that developed among the colony’s intellectuals

¹⁴ Massachusetts Body of Liberties, 1641, in *Documents Illustrative of the History of the Slave Trade to America*, ed. Elizabeth Donnan (1932; repr., New York: Octagon Books, 1969), 3: 4 (hereafter cited as DIHSTA).

¹⁵ This quote is usually attributed to Antoine Court (because the report that included the quote was found among his papers), but predates the Huguenot minister’s birth by nine years. Boston experienced an influx of Huguenot refugees, who had formerly been sheltered in England, after the Edict of Nantes was revoked in 1685. *Report of a French Protestant Refugee, in Boston 1687*, trans. E.T. Fisher (Brooklyn: Munsell, Printer, 1868), 20. For more on the Huguenot refugees, see J.F. Bosher, “Huguenot Merchants and the Protestant International in the Seventeenth Century,” *William and Mary Quarterly* 52, no. 1 (January 1995): 77-102, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2946888>; and Owen Stanwood, “The Protestant Moment: Antippery, the Revolution of 1688-1689, and the Making of an Anglo-American Empire,” *Journal of British Studies* 43, no. 3 (July 2007): 481-508, doi: 1086/515441.

¹⁶ Piersen, *Black Yankees*, 15.

form the basis for much scholarly inquiry into the ways in which slavery was conceptualized in the North. And though a recent group of scholars have begun to explore the Atlantic slave connections of Massachusetts elite slaveholders, no comparative studies of slave culture, such as Philip Morgan's *Slave Counterpoint: Black Culture in the Eighteenth-Century Chesapeake and Lowcountry*, mark the historiographical landscape of Northern slavery. Through a comparative analysis of New York's and Massachusetts's interlocking slaveholding networks, I seek to address a deficit in the historiography as well as offer a new way of conceptualizing the social bounds of early Northeastern slavery.

The debate on the emergence of race haunts any systematic analysis of slaveholding in the Atlantic world, but it too suffers from the problem of historical segregation. The scholarly debate on racial difference—was skin color always the major determinant for defining difference, or was race primarily an emergent category based on multiple markers of difference—has been waged by scholars.¹⁷ Race can no longer be employed a-historically. Europeans did not immigrate to the American colonies with a fully formed conception of race based primarily on skin color; thus, other modes of reckoning difference must be taken into account in order to understand the kind of racial categorization that arose in the colonies of the Northeast. For the elite families in this study, race emerged out of a multitude of factors, not the

¹⁷ Scholars debate when physical difference became the defining characteristic of race. Roxann Wheeler argued for the late eighteenth century as the first point when race was based primarily on physical traits, although she allowed that there “was usually a mixed response to Africans” in the early decades of the eighteenth century. Susan Amussen placed the appearance of race in an earlier century than Wheeler, approaching it as an “emergent category in the seventeenth century.” Likewise, she asserted, “race based on skin color coexisted with other methods of defining difference: Europeans with dark hair and dark complexions were often referred to as ‘black.’” Nevertheless, she asserted that “the negative commentary was more likely to concern their religion or polygamy than their complexion.” Roxann Wheeler, *The Complexion of Race: Categories of Difference in Eighteenth-Century British Culture* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2000), 75, 97; Susan Dwyer Amussen, *Caribbean Exchanges: Slavery and the Transformation of English Society, 1640-1700* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2007), 11.

least of which was wrestling with how to categorize Native groups, who could represent powerful enemies, essential allies, or potential sources of enslaved manpower.

Here too, recourse to another segregated slave historiography—Native slavery—is required to fully explore the emergence of racial conception among elites in the Northeast. In *The Indian Slave Trade: The Rise of the English Empire in the American South*, Alan Galloway transcended the boundaries of the early modern era, writing that, “for much of the colonial period, the European colonies of the South were fragile beachheads of powerful empires.”¹⁸ Although works focused on the history of Native peoples in the North American continent have highlighted the ways in which Europeans came to rely on trade with Natives, the enslavement of Native peoples has not, for the most part, been included in this analysis. Galloway corrected the omission, asserting that trading Native slaves was part of the consumption patterns of the English, albeit one that was ultimately destructive to Native peoples. He argued that the slave trade “infected the South” and “set in motion a gruesome series of wars that engulfed the region,” leaving depopulation, death, and forced relocation in its wake.¹⁹ Indeed, he argued that “the trade in Indian slaves was the most important factor affecting the South in the period 1670 to 1715.”²⁰

Research on Indian slavery in the North has focused primarily on New England. Although early colonial laws promised freedom for local tribes, the status of Native people taken during wars, or imported from other colonies in the Atlantic diaspora, was much more akin to slavery. The historian Margaret Newell asserts that Native American involuntary servitude was more prevalent in New England than was African American slavery; she tries to offer a historical

¹⁸ Alan Galloway, *The Indian Slave Trade: The Rise of the English Empire in the American South, 1670-1717* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), 2.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 6.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 7.

corrective to literature that focuses on white captivity by natives and that positions slavery as synonymous with Africans.²¹ This population has been ignored in works that assume an African person even when colonial accounts clearly identify an Indian. The most famous of these is the Indian slave, Tituba, who was the first person named by afflicted girls in the Salem witch trials, and was most probably an enslaved Indian from Spanish Florida.²² Although Tituba was referred to as an Indian in colonial documents, later scholars erroneously ascribed some admixture of African heritage to her lineage because of her status as a slave. As Anne Plane has noted, such a blurring of status and heritage occurred in Massachusetts during the eighteenth century with the increased importation of both “Spanish Indians” and Africans into the colony, creating a group that made up the lowest rungs of society.²³

Most accounts that mention slavery in New Netherland focus on African slavery, including Indian slavery only as an aside because it was discouraged among the Dutch settlers. Usually the enslavement of Natives is mentioned as a passing reference to the results of Kieft’s War (1641-45) and the two Esopus Wars (1659-64). Donna Merwick referenced propaganda during the Pequot War, writing that tracts such as John Underhill’s *News from America* (1638) dramatized “the seizure of captives meant to be sold later to English families.”²⁴ Only in the footnote did she include “Emmanuel Downing’s calculation in 1645 that one captive Indian was worth twenty African slaves.”²⁵ Thelma Wills Foote argued that “In New Netherland anti-

²¹ Newell makes two important points in the study of Native slavery. First, that the lines between slavery and servitude were ill defined in the colonial northeast, and second, that this type of Indian servitude was widespread. See Margaret Ellen Newell, “Indian Slavery in Colonial New England” in *Indian Slavery in Colonial America*, ed. Alan Gallay (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2009), 33-67.

²² Mary Beth Norton, *In the Devil’s Snare: The Salem Witchcraft Crisis of 1692* (2002; repr., New York: Vintage Books, 2003), 21.

²³ Ann Marie Plane, *Colonial Intimacies: Indian Marriage in Early New England* (2000; repr., Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2002), 12, 100, 96-98, 147-48.

²⁴ Donna Merwick, *The Shame and the Sorrow: Dutch-Amerindian Encounters in New Netherland* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1998), 128.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 282.

Amerindian racism was far more pronounced than anti-black racism,” but that it was “losses to the settler population, due to the devastation of war and outmigration” that caused “black slavery” to become “more crucial than ever to the Dutch project of colony building in North America.”²⁶ Foote used the division between anti-Native racism and black racism as a way into arguing for the entrenchment of “black slavery.” Yet conquered and captured Native peoples entered Atlantic slave outflows and inflows along with enslaved Africans. In the disruptions of the circum-Caribbean slave trade, enslaved Africans’ and Native peoples’ experiences intertwined, and the resultant hybrid cultural expression and Creole beliefs and languages shaped and transformed the character of both the Dutch and English Atlantic.

Although my analysis is racial and gendered at its center, I question the “natural communities” that have been constructed in scholarly works. Thus I do not examine Native experiences of slavery and African experience separately, but instead I approach them as overlapping experiences. Likewise, the question of the ways in which gender and race affected the lives of the enslaved also engages the larger historiographical question of resistance. Emancipating the question of slave resistance from the dichotomy of rebellion versus negotiation, scholars such as Jennifer Morgan and Londa Schiebinger have deepened the debate and challenged historians to do so as well.²⁷ Such a gendered framework is crucial to analyzing the ways in which slavery shaped the lives of women in the colonial Northeast—both enslaved and enslaver. Although studies have examined the importance of gender to the development of

²⁶ Foote, *Black and White Manhattan*, 40.

²⁷ Morgan and Schiebinger have demonstrated that the enslaved body was not just a site of exploitation, but also of resistance. Morgan called for more scholarship on the idea that “enslaved women withheld reproductive capacities—engaging in a ‘gynecological revolt’—to damage the wealth and power of the slaveowner.” Women’s decisions to end their pregnancies employed both the knowledge they brought with them from Africa as well as the decision to deprive their owners of future workers. Indeed, the question of abortion was made a public issue in the colonies and wedded with slavery, a reality that Schiebinger noted was “part of the colonial struggle of victors against vanquished and a matter of economy and of state.” Jennifer L. Morgan, *Laboring Women: Reproduction and Gender in New World Slavery* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), 11; Londa Schiebinger, *Plants and Empire: Colonial Bioprospecting in the Atlantic World* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004), 128.

colonial slave culture, as well as white women's roles in shaping that culture, the slaveholding mistress remains wedded to the southern and Caribbean plantation zones.²⁸ At the same time, scholars have been recently drawn to Northeastern female managers—many of whom were Dutch—who served as deputy husbands.²⁹ Yet the slaveholding activities of these northern women and the inter-colonial connections that they maintained, although briefly mentioned in some accounts, have not been systematically analyzed.

Slavery, and its proximity to the religious culture of the Northeast, has attracted recent scholarly attention. Atlantic and inter-colonial networks of slavery have served to inspire recent works, as have the lives of notable ministers such as the Dutch domine Everardus Bogardus and the New England divine Cotton Mather.³⁰ Mather's agitation for the Christianization of slaves

²⁸ Scholars such as Catharine Clinton, Elizabeth Fox Genovese, and Marli Weiner have shaped the historical understanding of antebellum plantation mistresses, exploring their roles as household managers, their fractious relationships with female slaves, and the ways in which gender inscribed their place in both the household and in society. Kathleen Brown's study of Virginia and Cecily Jones's comparison of Barbados and North Carolina have offered compelling rubrics for centralizing the actions of female slaveholders as well as the development of gendered ideas of race in colonial slaveholding societies. Catherine Clinton, *The Plantation Mistress: Woman's World in the Old South* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1982); Elizabeth Fox-Genovese, *Within the Plantation Household: Black and White Women of the Old South* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1988), Kindle edition; Marli Frances Weiner, *Mistresses and Slaves: Plantation Women in South Carolina, 1830-80* (Champaign, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1998); Kathleen M. Brown, *Good Wives, Nasty Wenches and Anxious Patriarchs: Gender, Race, and Power in Colonial Virginia* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996); Cecily Jones, *Engendering Whiteness: White Women and Colonialism in Barbados and North Carolina, 1627-1865* (Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, 2007).

²⁹ In *Good Wives*, Laurel Thatcher Ulrich defined deputy husband as a wife who "shouldered male duties," and who was "not just a helper but at least potentially a surrogate." Cynthia Kierner argued that Alida's role surpassed such a designation but that "she and Robert expected their daughters to be involved in trade only as 'deputy husbands,'" highlighting the generational shift in women's autonomous business activities that scholars such as Linda Biemer have argued occurred during the transition from Dutch to English rule. Laurel Thatcher Ulrich, *Good Wives: Image and Reality in the Lives of Women in Northern New England, 1650-1750* (1980, repr., New York, Vintage Books, 1991), 9, chapter 2; Cynthia A. Kierner, *Traders and Gentlefolk: The Livingstons of New York, 1675-1790* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1992), 50. For recent works that focus on Northeastern female managers, see Jean Zimmerman, *The Women of the House: How a Colonial She-Merchant Built a Mansion, a Fortune, and a Dynasty* (2006; repr. New York: Harcourt, Inc., 2007); and Susan Elizabeth Shaw, "Building New Netherland: Gender and Family Ties in a Frontier Society" (PhD diss., Cornell University, 2000), 173-174, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/304597162?accountid=10267>.

³⁰ In 1997, Kenneth Minkema's "Notes and Documents: Jonathan Edwards on Slavery and the Slave Trade," demonstrated the depth of Edward's connection to slavery, a subject Minkema revisited again in his 2009 article, "Jonathan Edwards's Defense of Slavery." Kenneth P. Minkema, "Jonathan Edwards on Slavery and the Slave Trade," *William and Mary Quarterly* 54, no. 4 (October 1997): 823-834, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2953884>; and Kenneth P. Minkema, "Jonathan Edwards's Defense of Slavery," *Massachusetts Historical Review* 4 (2002), 23-59, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25081170>. Several recent books disentangle the proximity of Northeastern ministers to

has been re-read as an early radicalism, an acknowledgement of the belief among Puritan divines of the ultimate equality of man before God. In “Strangers in the House of God: Cotton Mather, Onesimus, and an Experiment in Christian Slaveholding,” Kathryn S. Koo argued that “by naming his own slave Onesimus, Mather implicitly invited a sense of equality between them, based on their mutual condition of debasement in the eyes of the Lord.”³¹ Although anti-slavery sentiment did circulate among Mather’s coterie of intellectuals—in 1701 Mather’s friend, Judge Samuel Sewall wrote what has been credited as the first antislavery tract in North America, *The Selling of Joseph*—far more of his elite circle (including Sewall) were slaveholders. Although works have begun to note the importance of slavery’s proximity to the clergy, they have been largely devoted to mapping it within one minister’s life or denominational affiliation. Thus the role that slaveholding played in connecting individuals of disparate religious associations remains unaddressed.

Insults and niceties, secret deals and veiled deceit flowed among members of New York and Massachusetts’s slaveholding elite, moments easily missed without a framework for understanding the coded world they inhabited. The historiographical questions raised by works focused on credit, credibility and honor in the market, gift giving, and the cultural meaning of commodities offer my study an ideological framework to discover these hidden pathways.³² The

Atlantic slavery. See Travis Glasson, *Mastering Christianity: Missionary Anglicanism and Slavery in the Atlantic World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012); Bailey, *Race and Redemption*; Willem Frijhoff, *Fulfilling God’s Mission: The Two Worlds of Dominie Everardus Bogardus, 1607-1647*, trans. Myra Heerspink Scholz (Boston: Brill, 2007), Adobe digital editions..

³¹ Kathryn S. Koo, “Strangers in the House of God: Cotton Mather, Onesimus, and an Experiment in Christian Slaveholding,” *Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society* 117, part 1 (2007): 157-158.

³² For Marcel Mauss, gift giving was the quintessential mark of archaic societies, a form which dissipated with the advent of commercial exchange. In the decades that followed the appearance of Mauss’s first article on the subject in 1925 and the publication of his book in 1950, scholars have continued to engage Mauss’s focus on gifted relationships, even as they have eschewed his rigid dichotomy between modern commercial societies and older ones based on gift exchange. More recently, Natalie Zemon Davis’s *The Gift in Sixteenth-Century France* explored gifted pathways that linked people in both positive and negative reciprocal arrangements. Although the literature on gift giving has grown, Irma Thoen recognized that the historiography of gift exchange in early modern Holland remains thin. In *Strategic Affection? Gift Exchange in Seventeenth-Century Holland*, she set up a seventeenth-century world

ways in which New York and Massachusetts elites conceptualized of honor and dishonor were deeply influenced by slavery. Slightings were understood as abuse akin to bondage, even as elites used slaves to advertise their status.³³ Ilana Ben Amos's *The Culture of Giving: Informal Support and Gift-Exchange in Early Modern England* offers a way into the debate over gift-giving, one that has particular salience for this study in terms of the ways that older forms of patronage and gift giving were exported to the colonies. She asserted that a "notion of *boundaries*" was "inherent to informal support systems," and was "also reinforced by market expansion and the increasing powers of the state."³⁴ Her focus on "boundaries," rather than the familiar narrative of the decline of older forms of reciprocity, offers a particularly useful tool in examining the enduring quality of informal networks. This contention inspires many questions when analyzed in the early American colonial setting: How was the conception of racial boundaries related to systems of reciprocity? In what cases were legal "alternatives to mediation" preferred to extra-legal violence?

In the preceding section, I have of course, recreated the walls between subjects that I set out to scale. But, by simply following the circuitous routes that marked the lives of the enslaved and those elite masters who held them in bondage, those artificial boundaries dissipate, leaving only the everyday experience of an intertwined existence that linked both master and slave in the early modern period.

with "cultural conventions, or rules of behavior, that surrounded gift exchange" that was quite different from contemporary expectations. Marcel Mauss, *The Gift: The Form and Reason for Exchange in Archaic Societies*, trans. W.D. Halls (1950; repr., New York: W.W. Norton, 2000); Natalie Zemon Davis, *The Gift in Sixteenth-Century France* (Madison, WI: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2000); Irma Thoen, *Strategic Affection? Gift Exchange in Seventeenth-Century Holland* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2007), 9.

³³ Kenneth Greenberg placed deciphering the language of honor as crucial to understanding the slave world of the antebellum South. Although his analysis arose out of the questions spawned by dueling culture, the language of honor and reciprocity was present as much among slaveholders in the colonial North as it was in the antebellum South, albeit with differing cultural inflections. Kenneth S. Greenberg, *Honor and Slavery* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996).

³⁴ Ilana Krausman Ben-Amos, *The Culture of Giving: Informal Support and Gift-Exchange in Early Modern England* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 9, 324.

Research

Due to the fragmentary nature of the source material, a systematic but often eclectic approach to the archive was necessary. Nevertheless this study relies heavily on family and business correspondence. As a seventeenth-century colony north of the Chesapeake with a sizable slave population, New Netherland has increasingly attracted study among historians of North American slavery. Though translation projects focused on Dutch language materials are ongoing, much remains to be analyzed. The translation of the *Curaçao Papers*, completed in 1987, offered a more detailed look into the correspondence between Director-General Petrus Stuyvesant and his vice director for the Dutch Caribbean islands, Matthias Beck, but the other merchant families who made up the social world of these figures remain obscure. Kees-Jan Waterman's recent translation of Evert Wendell's account book has offered more texture, but besides the modern offerings, most of the published translations—such as those done by Edmund Bailey O'Callaghan and Berthold Fernow—contain errors. Although some of the original documents remain at the State Archives in Albany, some of the records accessed by these two nineteenth-century scholars were lost by fire or time; thus such editions (however inadequately translated) remain an invaluable resource for any scholar of colonial New York.

Any examination of Dutch Atlantic connections, particularly accessing manuscripts on the Dutch Antilles, faces the problem of document survival. Many, though not all, of the seventeenth-century documents housed on the island of Curaçao were destroyed by pests. Duplicates of documents are scattered throughout archives in the United States and the Netherlands, though some of Curaçao's manuscripts survive in the municipal Archives in

Amsterdam. The Livingston family's correspondence was bilingual and spread among several different New York State collections, all with separate translations. Some documents are available in both the Dutch original and English translations; wherever possible, I have relied on the Dutch for the substance of the source, though I cite the translation for ease of access.

Wills, inventories and probate records, court cases, depositions and petitions, newspaper advertisements and articles, as well as diaries, baptismal and marriage records, pamphlets, sermons, and other primary source documents make up the rest of the source base for this study. Of these sources, I have used wills most heavily, relying on William S. Pelletreau's multivolume *Abstracts of Wills on File in the Surrogate's Office: City of New York*, published in 1893. David Narrett's groundbreaking study, *Inheritance and Family Life in Colonial New York City*, highlighted the usefulness of *Abstracts* as a source, but also cautioned that it, too, contains errors.³⁵ Complete originals reproduced in microfilm at the Livingston-Redmond collection and those wills and inventories on file at the New-York Historical Society were also consulted. Several online databases have proved invaluable to reconstructing the networked enslaved work of colonial New York and Massachusetts. The first, David Eltis's online slave trade database, was vital in reconstructing the slave ships that connected the elites to their Atlantic contacts. The second, the online database *America's Historical Newspapers: Early American Newspapers*, used in conjunction with Graham Russell Hodges's and Alan Edward Brown's compilation, *Pretends to Be Free*, offered a wealth of insight into the cultural context of slavery by reproducing the runaway slave advertisements in early American newspapers. Any analysis based on runaway slave advertisements must wrestle with selection bias. How "typical" were these cases, or are they just a record of the extraordinary? When used in conjunction with family

³⁵ David E. Narrett, *Inheritance and Family life in Colonial New York City* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1992), xiii.

correspondence, wills and other documents, such a bias can be tempered; and runaway slave advertisements offer an unprecedented window into not only the lives and networks of the enslaved, but also those of their masters.

Chapter Summary

Chapter one sets up the central slave networks in this study both by reconstructing the Atlantic slaveholding ties of elites and by exploring the ways that enslaved lives were maintained and disrupted by the social bonds of their enslavers. It diverges from many analyses of these elites by beginning not in New York or Europe, but on the Dutch Caribbean island of Curaçao, where many of the founders of the Stuyvesant-Bayard family networks experienced their first encounter with New World slavery. As these Dutch immigrants rose in colonial power and prestige, they maintained familial and business connections to the Caribbean and Dutch Brazil, vital slave links that affected the development of racial slavery during both the Dutch and English period.

Robert Livingston's family connections serve as a bridge between the slaveholding networks forged by the Stuyvesant-Bayard family and those of Massachusetts elites. The inter-colonial and Atlantic slaveholding network built by the Livingston family and other elites under English rule was an inheritance from older slaveholding networks that thrived under the Dutch. The stories of the Jackson family, owned by John Livingston, and Cicely, Cambridge minister William Brattle's slave, demonstrate both the interconnectivity of Northeastern slavery and the dissonance it created in the lives of the enslaved.

Chapter two explores the multiethnic nature of New York's enslaved community. Even as slavery was increasingly tied to skin color and African heritage, the presence of Native slaves in the holdings of elites, and Native confederacies both within and without, affected the development of racial categories. Beginning with the 1661 trial of a ten-year-old African servant girl named Lijsbet Antonissen charged with stealing sewant (wampum), the chapter focuses on the importance of Native culture to the development of slavery in New Netherland. The transition from Dutch to English rule did not witness a diminution of the importance of Native culture, despite the increased numbers of African slave imports. Native slaves remained a constant presence in the wills of New York elites and the ways that they were bequeathed sometimes diverged from the pattern observed for black slaves. The presence of enslaved Native peoples affected the treaty negotiations between New York and the Iroquois as well as the routes of escape available to the enslaved. New York runaway slave advertisements from the seventeenth through the eighteenth centuries reflected the conflict inherent in creating race: even as masters sought to define their runaways as "negro," the enslaved claimed for themselves their own ethnic identities. Such conflicting identities, and the expectations inherent in them, were used by the enslaved in their bids for freedom.

Chapter three traces the emergence of a Northern mistress culture developed, maintained, and passed down by elite women. Judith Bayard Stuyvesant's and Alida Schuyler Livingston's lives serve as a chronological framework for exploring a female slaveholding network that was both similar to and very different from that which emerged in other parts of the Atlantic world. Judith did not arrive in New York in 1647 a slaveholder, but by the first fall of New Netherland, she presided as mistress over the largest slaveholding in New Amsterdam. Judith's transformation, although dramatic, serves as an example of a larger cultural shift occurring

among her slaveholding peers. Such women learned to be mistresses over time as they engaged in a myriad of activities involving their bondpeople.

By the time Alida became mistress of Livingston Manor in 1699, a culture of slaveholding that was specifically gendered and uniquely shaped by the Dutch context had developed. These women were not overwhelmed goodwives who inherited their husband's slave property with no idea of how to manage an enslaved workforce.³⁶ Elite women, such as Alida, maintained ties with their children by bequeathing slaves. They not only arranged the strategic marriages of their children, but sometimes took a keen interest in managing the marriages of the enslaved. Some elite women manumitted their slaves and even bore mixed race children, although such examples were certainly exceptional. They used networks of female kin and associates to police slaveholding practices and pursue runaways. Elite mistresses' punishment and rule of their slaves often skirted the line of gender propriety and, in at least one instance, resulted in a wronged wife taking action against her husband that mimicked slave discipline. Enslaved resistance reflected an awareness of the gendered expectations of such mistresses. Tactics such as work slowdowns, vociferous protest, and running away were pointedly targeted against women slaveholders in unique ways. These networks of female mistresses, radiating from elites like Alida, crossed colonial boundaries and yet maintained patterns of slaveholding which belied regional difference.

Chapter four examines how elite religious experience in New York and Massachusetts was shaped by the culture of slavery. Ministers were not only tasked with deciphering the religious significance of the enslaved that they found in their own households and those of their elite flocks, but they were confronted with the conflict between spiritual needs and market

³⁶ Robert Livingston was granted the land patent for Livingston Manor in 1686, but it remained undeveloped until 1699. Lawrence H. Leder, *Robert Livingston 1654-1728 and the Politics of Colonial New York* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1961), 35.

demands. The religious networks that bound ministers in New York to those in Massachusetts were also slaveholding networks. The chapter is organized around several central questions: How did slavery affect the changing views of predestination and earthly reward? How did the enslaved navigate the complicated variegations of doctrine? Did the presence of the enslaved affect the evolution of Protestant belief in early New York and Massachusetts?

The denial of baptism to slaves in the waning years of New Netherland and the early decades of New York had as much to do with forging religious ties among slaveholding elites as it did with closing access to freedom. Although slaveholding among elites did not equal religious commonality, it did present questions about the proper Christianization of slaves that led religious groups of differing philosophies to offer similar solutions. Thus Cotton Mather's efforts on behalf of slave Christianization and those of Elias Neau are examined together; though the two men were separated by doctrine, their projects were part of a larger culture of elite slaveholding. Two New England ministers with New York ministries, William Vesey and Ebenezer Pemberton, embodied the reach of clerical slave networks that crossed colonial lines. The enslaved were sometimes able to use their proximity to a minister when claiming freedom, but more often than not the meetinghouse and the clergy that ministered in them offered no sanctuary.

Chapter five investigates the impact of slavery on elite familial and business reciprocal networks. Dutch family networks forged in New Netherland depended on an intricate system of commercial and gifted exchange relationships. Slavery shaped the way that elites conceptualized personal and family honor; it cemented alliances through commerce as well as gift exchange, and it was central to the ways that elites ordered their world. Elites such as the Stuyvesants and the van Rensselaers communicated with their family and with one another using a system of

reciprocity and gift-exchange that was deeply influenced by slavery. Slaves were loaned and given as gifts, but they also imparted meaning to other gift exchanges. Their presence in court disputes and colonial laws illuminated the shifting boundaries set for both the enslaved and elites in a culture based as much on reciprocity as on commerce.

Cotton Mather's receipt of the enslaved man Onesimus as a gift marked not only a personal pattern of gifted slaves, but was also part of a larger trend among elites who used the enslaved to demarcate the boundaries of their own social world. Elites imagined their own place in business, family and gifting relationships against the example of slavery. Slavery infused the rhetorical world of elites and was a central point of contention in debates over the boundaries between commerce and reciprocal relationships. No matter how much the enslaved were grafted into elite notions of reciprocity, their own participation in such relationships was constrained. Nevertheless, the enslaved did sometimes use their position within reciprocal arrangements between elites to their advantage, an advantage that often filled their owners with unease.

* * * * *

The multiracial enslaved community that served the elites of New York and Massachusetts affected the ways that they encountered their environment. What Mechal Sobel observed for Virginia is, upon examination of the primary source documents, true for elite Northeastern slaveholding networks: that "in spite of a significant interpenetration" in the daily lives of master and slave "the whites were usually unaware of their own change in the process."³⁷ This dissertation engages a historical group that has, for centuries, attracted the lion's share of

³⁷ Mechal Sobel, *The World They Made Together: Black and White Values in Eighteenth-Century Virginia* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987), 3.

scholarly attention, and seeks to consciously map the change that reintegrating the lives of the enslaved offers to the historical narrative of the Northeast.

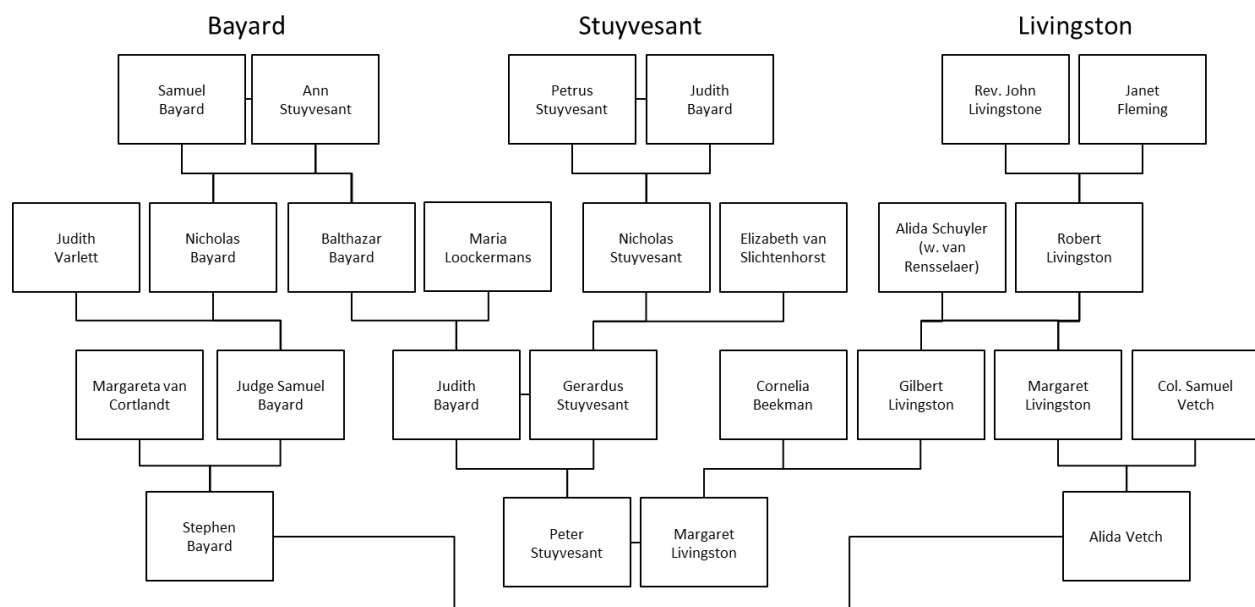


Fig. 1. The Bayard – Stuyvesant – Livingston Family Connections

CHAPTER 1

“TOGETHER IN THE HEAVENLY CITY:” ELITE TIES, ENSLAVED LIVES

Happy *Masters*, who are Instrumental to raise their *Servants* thus from the *Dust*, and make them objects for the *Nobles of Heaven* to take Notice of! But it will not be long before you and they come at length to be together in the *Heavenly City*. *Lazarus* there lies down at the same Feast, with his Master *Abraham*.

Cotton Mather, *The Negro Christianized* (1706)

Master and Slave. Cotton Mather imagined that the two would someday “be together in the heavenly city.” Although he used the term “servant,” his pamphlet concerned the Christianization of slaves. Following Mather’s analogy, converted slaves were, in their earthly lives, like the biblical Lazarus: beggars who were “covered with sores,” fed only “with the crumbs which fell from the rich man’s table.”¹ Yet the master who shunned Lazarus in life was not the same one who feted him in the afterlife: that rich man writhed “tormented” in the flames of hell, begging for the chance to warn his family, while Lazarus dined with Abraham. Although Mather admonished his peers to aspire to be masters in the mold of Abraham, the everyday lives of elites held more in common with the rich man. The enslaved lived and died among them, their earthly desires most often at cross-purposes. The family bonds and wider networks that drew elites together tightened around the lives of the enslaved like a vise.

New Netherland’s elite family networks were also slaveholding networks. Although such families’ slave activities have been termed ancillary projects when compared to their other trading focuses, slavery remained an ever-present facet of elite familial identity throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. These families did not arrive in America familiar with slavery. Their first experiences in America were central to the way such elites incorporated enslavement and the slave trade into their familial and social networks. Exploring the roots of these elite slave networks requires re-centering Dutch Caribbean and inter-colonial ties.

¹ Luke 16: 19-31. All biblical quotations are taken from the *Authorized King James Bible, Cambridge Edition*.

The Stuyvesant-Bayard clan laid the foundations for the ways that bondage was passed down through intermarriage, business partnership, and bequests, creating patterns that would come to define New York's slaveholding elite (Fig. 2 and Fig. 3). The Livingston family continued these actions, expanding their slaveholding network's inter-colonial reach into New England (Fig. 4). Through inheritance, slavery became an increasing part of family identity and had consequences for the ways each generation processed and experienced colonial and familial upheaval. Elites in Massachusetts were enmeshed in wider slaveholding networks that connected them to their New York counterparts. The intellectual culture that developed in Cambridge, Boston, and surrounding areas was influenced by the community of slaves that toiled for these elite masters. Two case studies explore the ways in which the lived proximity of the enslaved to their elite Northeastern slave masters changed the lives of both master and slave, questioning the terms by which scholars understand not only the lives of the elite but also the lives of the enslaved.

1.1 The First Sight of Land: Tracing the Stuyvesant-Bayard family slaveholding network

When the Stuyvesant-Bayard clan set off for America, their ship, *de Princes Amelia*, traced a well-traveled route. Departing from the Frisian island of Texel in December 1646, the passengers spent nearly two hundred days at sea before they first glimpsed American land. Yet it was not the harbor of Manhattan that loomed in the distance. The sight they saw would have been the same one that greeted hundreds of newly arrived slaves who had departed Africa bound for lifelong slavery: the deep blue harbor of Willemstad, Curaçao.² In the decades that followed,

² Instruction for Hendrick van Dyck, Fiscal of the General Incorporated West India Company in New Netherland and adjoining places, in *Documents Relative to the Colonial History of the State of New York*, ed. E.B. O'Callaghan

the Dutch slavers *Witte Paard*, *Speramundij*, the doomed *St. Jan*, and *den Gideon* would follow this route, departing from Texel; but unlike the *Princes Amelia*, these ships would first stop in the Dutch-controlled African ports of Elmina, Loanga, and São Tomé, load up their captured cargo, and set off for the island, destined to lose between 15 to 50% of their enslaved passengers.³ The island of Curaçao would have been a familiar sight to its former governor, Petrus Stuyvesant, who was on his way to his post as director over the newly joined colony of New Netherland, Curaçao, Aruba, and Bonaire. Yet it would have been the first image of America that met the eyes of Stuyvesant's wife, Judith Bayard, his newly widowed sister Ann Stuyvesant Bayard, and her four children, Balthazar, Petrus, Nicholas, and Catherine.

The group almost certainly would have encountered enslaved laborers. Although Curaçao did not become the preeminent slave trading depot until the 1650s, an army of company slaves worked at the fort on Willemstad, at the inland cattle fields on Curaçao and Aruba, and on the salt flats on Bonaire. Did the sight of these enslaved workers scandalize the new arrivals? The group was docked for more than three weeks, time enough to adjust to the presence of the enslaved.⁴ On his final return trip to Curaçao almost ten years later, Stuyvesant took pains to

(Albany: Weed, Parsons and Company, 1856), 1: 504 (hereafter cited as DRCHNY). O'Callaghan termed the stop at Curaçao an unwelcome "detour" because of "rough and stormy weather," as well as passenger sickness. E.B. O'Callaghan, *History of New Netherland, or, New York Under the Dutch*, 2nd ed. (New York: D. Appleton and Co., 1855), 2: 19-20. Burrows and Wallace mentioned the ship's Curaçao stop in passing, labeling it a "quick stop." Burrows and Wallace, *Gotham*, 42. Charles Gehring noted both the wealth of notarial information on the ship, due to widows' claims after its shipwreck, but also the difficulty of tracking down such sources. See Charles T. Gehring, "Wringing Information from a Drowned Princess: Using the Notarial Records of Amsterdam for Historical Research," in *A Beautiful and Fruitful Place: Selected Rensselaerwijck Papers*, eds. Elizabeth Paling Funk and Martha Dickinson Shattuck (Albany: Excelsior Editions/State University of New York Press, 2011), 2: 131-134, ebrary.

³ Voyages: The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database, <http://www.slavevoyages.org/tast/database/search.faces> (accessed October 1, 2012).

⁴ Complaining to the WIC fiscal, Hendrick van Dyck reported that Stuyvesant confined him to the ship for "some three weeks," while allowing "all the other officers, nay, even the soldiers" to leave "immediately on their arrival," because Stuyvesant did not recognize his authority to act as fiscal on the island of Curaçao. DRCHNY, 1: 504.

express to his vice director Matthias Beck that the men should not treat “the women or female blacks dishonestly, much less have unchristian-like intercourse with them.”⁵

Whatever the opinions of the others, Petrus Stuyvesant was certainly familiar with and committed to slavery. While governor, he championed Curaçao’s ascent as a slaving depot and, during his tenure as director-general, greatly increased slave imports into New Netherland. Yet those who joined him on the *Princes Amelia* did not have Petrus’s firsthand experience with American slavery. The ship also carried the Beekman family, who would go on to become prominent New York slaveholders connected by marriage to the Stuyvesant-Bayard family. But as both families disembarked in Curaçao, those experiences still lay in the future. No letters or diary entries remain recording their first experiences of Curaçao, but it would not be their last contact with the island or the larger slaveholding Atlantic.

Petrus Stuyvesant’s familial, administrative, and economic ties to the Caribbean continued throughout his tenure as director. Following these ties requires a revision of New Netherland’s boundaries, reincorporating the colony’s position as part of a larger Dutch Atlantic, where events transpiring along the shores of the Hudson and those in Willemstad’s slave markets shaped an Atlantic slave experience. The Spanish determined Curaçao, Aruba, and Bonaire were “islas inutiles” soon after their discovery in 1496 by Alonso de Ojeda, because the islands lacked gold.⁶ Despite this designation, Curaçao was far from useless, for its calm winds and deep harbors made it ideal for facilitating trade in Tierra Firme. Bonaire was replete with salt, which the Dutch coveted for their herring industry’s survival. Following the Dutch Revolt against Spain

⁵ Peter Stuyvesant to Matthias Beck, 8 June 1655, in Curaçao Papers, 1640-1664, trans. and ed. Charles T. Gehring (Albany, NY: New Netherland Institute, 2011), 76, <http://www.newnetherlandinstitute.org/files/4013/5543/9329/CuracaoPapers.pdf> (accessed 9 March 2013, hereafter cited as CP). There are two versions of the Curaçao Papers edited by Gehring, one published by the New Netherland Institute in 2011 and another by Heart of the Lakes Publishing in 1987. Unless otherwise stipulated, all references in this dissertation are from the 2011 New Netherland Institute version.

⁶ Robert J. Swan, “The Other Fort Amsterdam: New Light on Aspects of Slavery in New Netherland,” *Afro-Americans in New York Life and History* 22, no. 2 (1998): 20-21.

in 1598, all Spanish salt exports to the Netherlands halted and ports closed, subsequently crippling the large Dutch herring industry.⁷ After this measure, the Dutch smuggled salt into their ports from Spanish America and, with the acquisition of Bonaire, devoted slave labor to the task. While governor of Curaçao, Stuyvesant rerouted all of the enslaved company labor from Curaçao to Bonaire in order to man the salt flats, insisting that “for the present nothing more profitable and beneficial can be performed by them.”⁸ Dutch shipping interests targeted the poorly guarded Spanish islands, launching an extended naval assault against the Spanish.

The United Province’s States General formed the Dutch East India Company (VOC) in 1607, and fourteen years later founded its counterpart in the Americas and on Africa’s west coast, the Dutch West India Company (WIC). It was led by the *Heren XIX*, the governing council of the WIC, tasked with overseeing the Dutch slave trade. WIC leadership came to view slave labor as profitable, although it was first debated, and in 1628 the WIC turned its focus towards the slave trade.⁹ After defeating the Spanish, the company won control of Curaçao in 1634 and, over the next decade, wrested from the Portuguese the West African slaving ports of Elmina and Loanga, as well as São Tomé, and Recife, Brazil. Shortly after Curaçao’s conquest, the Spanish islands of St. Eustatius, Saba, and St. Maarten fell to the Dutch in 1636. Curaçao’s location made it an ideal slaving depot for the Dutch, even as its topography rendered it unsuitable for growing large amounts of sugar cane. It had ideal natural harbors and became the primary way station for slave imports, supplanting São Tomé. Its location, just forty miles north of Spanish Venezuela, made it a gateway to the plantations of Tierra Firme.¹⁰ Its position as a slave depot was not immediately apparent to the *Heren XIX*, who favored the Dutch colony in Recife, Brazil. But by

⁷ Ibid., 21.

⁸ Resolution drafted at Fort Amsterdam on Curaçao, 18 July 1644, in *CP*, 44.

⁹ Swan noted that one of the *Heren XIX*’s most prominent leaders, Willem Usselincx, “opposed black slavery on economic grounds.” Swan, “The Other Fort Amsterdam,” 23.

¹⁰ P.C. Emmer, “The Dutch and the making of the second Atlantic system,” in *Slavery and the Rise of the Atlantic System*, ed. Barbara L. Solow (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 85.

the time that Stuyvesant began his directorship over the joint colonies of New Netherland and Curaçao, its slaving position was being exploited by the company.¹¹ Curaçao's place as slaving depot was secured with the fall of Recife in January of 1654.

Trade fueled by the sale of human beings inexorably intertwined the Dutch Caribbean and New Netherland colonies from their inception.¹² New Netherland's first non-indigenous inhabitant was a waylaid black Dutch sailor named Jan Rodrigues. In 1624, a group of Walloons headed by director general Peter Minuit landed on Manhattan. Minuit is most remembered in history for the island's "purchase" from the Lenape Indians for sundry items amounting to roughly sixty guilders. Although producing timber, furs, and produce for the Dutch empire, New Netherland did not attract European settlers in large numbers. The first black enslaved people arrived in New Netherland in 1630. During Governor Willem Kieft's administration, from 1640-1647, New Netherland was continually at war with several Indian nations, a circumstance that persisted through Stuyvesant's term as director.¹³ In addition, the English claimed New Netherland as part of their sovereign territory in North America, a dispute that caused border tensions.

Although a connection between Curaçao and New Netherland pre-dated Stuyvesant's directorship, the links between the two Dutch colonies and the administration of slavery solidified during his rule. Petrus Stuyvesant was born in 1611 or 1612.¹⁴ A Dutch reform

¹¹ Johannes Postma argued that "it was therefore not until the late 1650s that Curaçao became a significant center for the Atlantic slave trade. In 1657 a contract was signed in Amsterdam providing for the delivery of 500 to 600 slaves at Curaçao. Ironically, this transition was initiated by the Swedish-African Company in competition with the WIC, to be financed by Dutch capital and carried by Dutch ships." Johannes Postma, *The Dutch in the Atlantic Slave Trade, 1600-1815* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 27. There is an extended analysis of the debate to make Curaçao a slaving depot in Linda M. Rupert, *Creolization and Contraband: Curaçao in the Early Modern Atlantic World* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 2012), 62-63.

¹² Swan, "The Other Fort Amsterdam," 21.

¹³ For more on this period of war see, Merwick, *The Shame and the Sorrow*, 133-79. See also Paul Andrew Otto, *The Dutch-Munsee Encounter in America: The Struggle for Sovereignty in the Hudson Valley* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2006).

¹⁴ Jacobs, "Like Father, Like Son," 206.

minister's son, Stuyvesant attended seminary, but for reasons unknown he left the seminary to join the WIC in the early 1630s.¹⁵ Stuyvesant's first American assignment was from 1635 until 1638, clerking on the Fernando de Noronha island chain in northeastern Brazil. After only a short time back in Amsterdam, he was sent to Curaçao, to serve as the island commissary from 1639 until he succeeded director Jan Claesz van Campen, who died suddenly in 1642.¹⁶ Under Stuyvesant's leadership, the colony continued raids against Spanish settlements in the Caribbean and on the mainland. During the siege of St. Martin in 1644, Stuyvesant's leg was crushed by a cannonball. It had to be amputated and was replaced, in Amsterdam, with a wooden leg. Recuperating in the United Provinces after the injury, he met and married Judith Bayard, who, like Petrus, was also the offspring of a Dutch Reform minister. They departed for America four months after their first wedding anniversary.¹⁷

After the stop in Curaçao, the *Princes Amelia* arrived in New Amsterdam carrying the extended Stuyvesant-Bayard clan. On May 11, 1647, Stuyvesant formally accepted his predecessor Willem Kieft's resignation and began his directorship over the North American and Caribbean colonies in Dutch America.¹⁸ The *Princes Amelia* took aboard another shipload, one that included Kieft and Everardus Bogardus, the Dutch Reform minister of the church in New Amsterdam, whose tenure had witnessed the highest number of enslaved black baptisms and marriages. The two men were at odds with one another and were travelling to *patria* to witness against each other in separate lawsuits: Bogardus charged Kieft with gross mismanagement of the colony and Kieft accused the minister of drunkenness and slander. But the *Princes Amelia*

¹⁵ The exact date of Stuyvesant's entry into the WIC is uncertain. Jacobs argues for "1632 or 1633," noting that "three and five year contracts were standard with the WIC and Stuyvesant was back in the Dutch Republic by late 1638." Ibid., 235.

¹⁶ Jacobs, *Petrus Stuyvesant*, 27.

¹⁷ Petrus and Judith were wed in Breda on 13 August 1645. Jacobs, *Petrus Stuyvesant*, 43.

¹⁸ Willie F. Page, *The Dutch Triangle: The Netherlands and the Atlantic Slave Trade, 1621-1664* (New York: Garland Publishing Inc., 1997), 193.

did not reach its destination. On September 27, 1647, the ship wrecked off the coast of Wales, killing eighty-six passengers, including Kieft and Bogardus.

Nearly twenty years later, Petrus Stuyvesant sent a letter to his vice director Matthias Beck in Curaçao. Although the letter dealt primarily with varied company business, it included a personal appeal for assistance in finding some of his wife Judith's slaves, who were "presented for baptism with good intentions" but were accidentally sold.¹⁹ Beck was remorseful, but his response stated the stark reality of the Atlantic slave market:

A great error has been committed which I fear is irreparable, because it happened so long ago that one will hardly be able to find out where they finally ended up.²⁰

Beck gave Stuyvesant ample evidence to convey the futility of the search: time and distance were terms that a man well versed in the slave market would understand. But despite Beck's pessimism, Judith's baptized slaves did not vanish without a trace. They left vital clues in the correspondence of the two men, providing a unique glimpse at the interconnected nature of personal relationships and slavery among Dutch elites.²¹

Stuyvesant had lobbied for Curaçao's place as a slaving depot and, while governor, pushed for an increase in the island's slave labor in order to boost Bonaire's salt exports and as an industry in itself. He held similar slave aspirations for New Netherland as a destination port for Curaçao's slaves. Installed by the WIC as the administrative head of New Netherland, Curaçao, Aruba, and Bonaire, Stuyvesant was poised to make his slave vision a reality. The WIC

¹⁹ Peter Stuyvesant to Vice-Director Beck, 30 January 1664, in *DIHSTA*, 2: 431.

²⁰ Matthias Beck to Peter Stuyvesant, 5 November 1664, in *Curaçao Papers, 1640-1664*, trans. and ed. Charles T. Gehring (Albany, NY: New Netherland Institute, 2011), 211, <http://www.newnetherlandinstitute.org/files/4013/5543/9329/CuracaoPapers.pdf> (accessed 9 March 2013, hereafter cited as CP). There are two versions of the *Curaçao Papers* edited by Gehring, one published by the New Netherland Institute in 2011 and another by Heart of the Lakes Publishing in 1987. Unless otherwise stipulated, all references in this dissertation are from the 2011 New Netherland Institute version.

²¹ Stuyvesant's original letter was sent on 29 July 1664. Beck's reply, dated 5 November 1664, responds to that letter and supplies the quote.

had a monopoly on the slave trade between New Netherland and Curaçao until 1650.²² Although the WIC leadership granted Stuyvesant directorship over New Netherland and the three Caribbean islands in 1647, he did not return to Curaçao for an extended stay until 1655, when in defiance of the *Heren XIX*, he led a mission to Barbados.²³ While there, he met Matthias Beck, who was in the English colony after fleeing Dutch Brazil's fall in 1654.²⁴ Stuyvesant chose Beck to replace Lucas van Rodenburgh, the acting provisional director of Curaçao since Stuyvesant's accident, and traveled to Curaçao with Beck.²⁵ Beck's experience with Brazilian slaveholding—he had owned a large sugar plantation in Recife—certainly helped his candidacy and affected the increasingly aggressive stance towards slave importation that he followed as vice director.²⁶

Perhaps the events that transpired in the days before Stuyvesant sent his letter to Beck in 1664 gave the Director-General reason to focus his appeal on the fates of his wife's baptized slaves. Henricus Selijns, who served for years as Domine of Stuyvesant's *bouwerij* (bowery farm), resigned his ministerial post on July 17, just twelve days before Stuyvesant wrote to Beck.²⁷ Stuyvesant's bowery consisted of six hundred acres, a manor house and a chapel.²⁸ Henricus Selijns resided there and, in addition to a resident minister, the bowery had its own schoolmaster—another minister named Ægidius Luyck. Its massive grounds, wrested from lots that were previously earmarked for freed blacks, were worked by the largest number of enslaved workers in the hands of a private citizen—forty—a number augmented by Stuyvesant's

²² Page, *The Dutch Triangle*, 107.

²³ Gehring, "Introduction," in *Curaçao Papers, 1640-1665*, ed. and trans. Charles T. Gehring and J.A. Schiltkamp (Interlaken, NY: Heart of the Lakes Publishing, 1987), xviii.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, xv.

²⁵ Page, *The Dutch Triangle*, 104.

²⁶ Marcus P. Meuwese, "'For the Peace and Well-Being of the Country': Intercultural mediators and Dutch-Indian relations in New Netherland and Dutch Brazil, 1600-1664" (PhD diss., University of Notre Dame, 2003), 297, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/305317321?accountid=10267>.

²⁷ "Petition of the Reverend Henry Selyns for his Dismissal from the Churches at Brooklyn and the Bouwery," 17 July 1664, in *DRCHNY*, 14: 550-551.

²⁸ Bayard Tuckerman, *Peter Stuyvesant, Director-General for the West India Company in New Netherland* (New York: Dodd, Mead and Co., 1893), 182.

unfettered access to the company blacks.²⁹ Selijns had initially continued to baptize blacks following the precedent of Everardus Bogardus. However, by the end of his tenure, he wrote the classis of Amsterdam that he refused to baptize the enslaved, noting that the slaves were abusing the practice solely to secure the freedom of their children.³⁰ Yet despite these reservations, Selijns did baptize at least one more group of enslaved children—the children presented by Judith Stuyvesant.

Why would Petrus Stuyvesant send his wife's baptized slaves on the dangerous journey to Curaçao? The most probable answer to this question lay within the full text of Beck's correspondence. Several paragraphs before he apologized, Beck wrote,

I therefore shall consider myself fortunate to have the honor, according to your honor's instructions, to give your honor's son, Mr. Balthasar Stuyvesant, the most preferable piece of land thereof; and in addition, not fail, and with your honor's approval, to help provide him therein with what is necessary for its maintenance and improvement.³¹

Balthazar Lazarus Stuyvesant, Petrus and Judith's eldest son, does not appear in much of the scholarly narrative, while his younger brother, Nicholas William Stuyvesant, survives only in brief descriptions. His disappearance has been partly a function of sources and partially a function of Balthazar's early death in the Caribbean. Born in New Amsterdam in 1647 and baptized there on October 13, Balthazar, although his paternal grandfather's namesake, followed in his father's footsteps and joined the West India Company, traveling to Curaçao sometime in

²⁹ P.C. Emmer, *The Dutch Slave Trade, 1500-1850* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2006), 27; Burrows and Wallace, *Gotham*, 56; Jaap Jacobs, *New Netherland: A Dutch Colony in Seventeenth-Century America* (Boston: Brill, 2005), 381-382. In 1660, Selijns wrote a letter to the Classis of Amsterdam in which he numbered the slaves on Stuyvesant's bowery at forty. When New Netherland fell to the English, there were 375 slaves in the population, and thus Stuyvesant's bowery consisted of 10% of the total enslaved population of the colony. For Selijns letter, see A.P.G. Jos van der Linde, trans. and ed., *New York Historical Manuscripts, Dutch: Old First Dutch Reformed Church of Brooklyn, New York First Book of Records, 1660-1752* (Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co., 1983), 229 (hereafter cited as NYHMRCB).

³⁰ "Two letters written by Domine Henricus Selijns during his ministry in Breuckelen, 1660-1664," Second letter, New Netherland, 9 June 1664, in NYHMRCB, 231.

³¹ Matthias Beck to the Council of the Dutch West India Company and Petrus Stuyvesant, 5 November 1664, in CP, 210.

the late 1650s or early 1660s.³² Though Beck promised to provide Balthazar “the most preferable piece of land thereof” and, in addition, to “help provide him therein with what is necessary for its maintenance and improvement,” he noted “the land at St. Joris and the other different places...is all good land and suitable for sugar cane” only “when we have good rainy years.” The Stuyvesants would not likely have sent Balthazar south to establish a sugar venture without enslaved help, since Beck complained earlier in the letter that he was left only with “some crippled slaves” who “are not suitable to use here, much less to send there to your honors.”³³

Whether Balthazar was sent with the baptized slaves is uncertain, but Matthias Beck did keep his word and gave Petrus Stuyvesant’s son land on Curaçao. Beck gave the younger Stuyvesant St. Joris, a former “Company’s garden,” where newly arrived Africans were “seasoned,” branded, and prepared for sale.³⁴ Throughout his letter, Beck bemoaned both the poor harvests and the disruptions of the slave trade caused by “privateers from Holland and Zeeland” off the “coast of Angola” and “everywhere else possible.”³⁵ A West African environment of privateer raids truncating Curaçao’s black population, coupled with an uncertain food supply, constituted perfect conditions for such an accidental sale. More than likely, the Stuyvesants were alerted to the sale by Balthazar, incensed at the loss of slaves who might well have been promised help to him on his newly acquired company garden of St. Joris. Certainly, Stuyvesant and Beck’s correspondence evidences a pattern of slave requests, and although the

³² The earliest reference to Petrus Stuyvesant’s son in the *Curaçao Papers* is in a letter written by Hendrick Martens in Aruba, dated 18 May 1660, where he mentions the arrival of a shipment of horses “for my honorable lord general’s son.” The first explicit mention of Balthazar Stuyvesant by name is in the letter written by Mathias Beck to Petrus Stuyvesant, where he also reports on the accidental sale of Stuyvesant’s slaves. *CP*, 182, 210.

³³ Matthias Beck to Petrus Stuyvesant, 5 November 1664, in *CP*, 208-209.

³⁴ Matthias Beck to Petrus Stuyvesant, 16 April 1665, in *CP*, 224. “Curaçao as the centre of the slave trade,” Kura Hulanda Museum, <http://www.kurahulanda.com/slavery/slave-trade> (accessed Dec 9, 2010). For information in Dutch on the branding of enslaved Africans when they arrived on Curaçao, see Johannes Hartog, *Curaçao: Van Kolonie Tot Autonomie: Deel 1 (Tot 1816)* (Aruba: D.J. de Witt, 1961), 440-441.

³⁵ Matthias Beck to Petrus Stuyvesant, 16 April 1665, in *CP*, 223.

letters do not survive, it is reasonable to assume that Balthazar made similar requests of his father.

Balthazar epitomized the Atlantic nature of kinship ties. He maintained his connection to the Dutch Reformed Church of New York, serving as a witness to his cousin, Samuel Bayard's baptism despite living on the Dutch island of St. Eustatius with his wife and two daughters. After receiving letters of assurance from Matthias Beck, the later English governor Francis Lovelace twice approved Balthazar Stuyvesant's petition to trade between Curaçao and New York, being persuaded by "due and mature consideration" of the "great utility and advantage" resulting from "mutuall Correspondence and Trade...betwixt the two ports."³⁶ That the "trade" facilitated between New York and Curaçao by Balthazar was the slave trade is likely, because when he was granted a second trade pass in 1670 to carry on commerce between the Caribbean and New York, his activities took place during a peak time in Dutch slave exports. Between 1670 and 1674, fifty-nine documented slave ships carrying 24,202 slaves departed from Africa for Dutch Atlantic colonies.³⁷ Balthazar moved to Nevis, but his stay was short lived. He died in 1675, just one year after New Netherland's final capitulation to England.³⁸

Examining the Stuyvesant kinship links, established during the New Netherland years, uncovers an intricate network of slaveholders knit together across colonial boundary lines by familial ties. Petrus Stuyvesant died in February, 1672. That same year, on May 5, 1672, his son Nicholas married Maria Beekman, daughter of Wilhelmus Beekman and Catalina de Boogh, who

³⁶ Peter R. Christoph and Florence A Christoph, eds., *New York Historical Manuscripts English: Books of General Entries of the Colony of New York* (Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co., 1982), 1: 104, 361-62.

³⁷ Postma, *Dutch in the Atlantic Slave Trade*, 110, table 5.1.

³⁸ Balthazar Stuyvesant's biographical data is originally from Cuyler Reynolds, *Annals of American Families* (New York: National Americana Society, 1916), 2: 103.

had arrived in New Netherland on the *Princes Amelia* along with the Stuyvesant-Bayard clan.³⁹

The newlyweds resided on his family bowery. Whether Maria followed her mother-in-law Judith's contact with the bowery blacks does not survive, but her family was no stranger to slavery. Wilhelmus Beekman served as lieutenant of the militia in 1673 and then was appointed deputy mayor of New York from 1681-1683.⁴⁰ While serving as deputy mayor he managed the shipment of "thirty-eight negro slaves" who were waylaid in New York en route to London after traveling from Angola to Nevis.⁴¹ A generation later, his grandson, Andries, was a casualty of the 1712 uprising when he was shot and killed by an enslaved African man named Tom (owned by Nicholas Roosevelt). Tom was slowly burned to death for the murder.⁴²

Judith Stuyvesant's search for her baptized slaves was not her last contact with African people. Two years after her husband's death in 1672, Judith conveyed land to a free black man named Frans Bastiaensz. He was the son of one of New Netherland's first free blacks, Sebastiane de Britto, who was also known as the "captain of the Negros."⁴³ In conveying this land, Judith sold back some of the property that had formerly been earmarked by the company for freed blacks but was seized by her husband, Petrus Stuyvesant, and incorporated into the bowery.

³⁹ Samuel S. Purple, ed., *Records of the Reformed Dutch Church in New Amsterdam and New York: Marriages from 11 December 1639 to 26 August 1801* (1890; repr., Baltimore, MD: Genealogical Publishing Co., 2007), 36 (hereafter cited as *Marriages*).

⁴⁰ William B. Aitken, *Distinguished Families in America, Descended from Wilhelmus Beekman and Jan Thomasse van Dyke* (New York: The Knickerbocker Press, 1912), 5.

⁴¹ William Beekman to John Collier, 4 May 1683, in *Abstracts of Wills on File in the Surrogate's Office: City of New York with Appendix and Miscellaneous Documents*, ed. William S. Pelletreau (New York: Printed for the Society, 1893), 2: 436 (hereafter cited as *Wills*).

⁴² Lepore, *New York Burning*, 53, 59, 60, 104.

⁴³ Conveyance of Judith Stuyvesant to Frans Bastiaensz, 24 September 1674, New York City Deeds, MS 1972, 23, New-York Historical Society, <http://www.nyhistory.org/community/library-blog?page=8> (accessed November 11, 2012). For an English translation of the record, see *Original Book of New York Deeds, January 1st 1672 to October 19th 1675* in *Collections of the New-York Historical Society for the Year 1913: The John Watts De Peyster Publication Fund* (New York: Printed for the Society, 1914) 46: 42-43.

A decade later, Judith Bayard Stuyvesant died in New York. In her will, Judith left a legacy to her Caribbean-born granddaughter (who was also her namesake) that was not just Atlantic but oceanic. She bequeathed “Wearing apparel of silk and Woolen belonging to my body Together with a Summe of One thousand Gilders Wampum.”⁴⁴ Thus she linked East and West, uniting the silk trade with the Native economy of New York. Nicholas Stuyvesant received a “black Cabbinett of Ebbon wood” from his mother, a furniture piece whose production spanned the entire circuit of the Atlantic, from western Africa to New Netherland.⁴⁵

Judith’s family continued to hold slaves after her death. Although her will did not mention enslaved people, her youngest son, Nicholas, inherited the bulk of her estate. Several years before Judith’s death, Nicholas’s first wife Maria died. Although the year of Maria Beekman’s death does not survive, by September 15, 1681, Nicholas was remarried, this time to Elizabeth van Slichtenhorst.⁴⁶ Her father, Gerrit, was the director of Rensselaerswijck, linking the Stuyvesants through marriage with a patroonship that relied heavily on slave labor.⁴⁷ At Nicholas’s death only eleven years later, he left “all [his] estate, both real and personal, lying in the Bowery in New York,” to his second wife, Elizabeth, but left to his “eldest son Petrus, one negro boy over and above his third.”⁴⁸ That he specifically bequeathed an enslaved African boy to the son that he named for his father, who once owned the largest number of slaves in New

⁴⁴ Supplemental will of Judith Stuyvesant, 1 December 1684, in *Old New York a Journal Relating to the History and Antiquities of New York City*, ed. W.W. Pasko (New York: W.W. Pasko, 1890), 1: 259 (hereafter cited as ONY).

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ *Marriages*, 49.

⁴⁷ Rensselaerswijck was intimately tied to the economy of slavery. Killian van Rensselaer conceived of exporting its grain harvests to Brazil in order to feed the company slaves. By 1714, the patroonship had a considerable number of slaves, and a very high sex ratio. Thomas Burke compares the slave populations of Schenectady and Rensselaerswijck, and contends that Rensselaerswijck’s high sex ratio was due to its reliance on agricultural labor and the financial resources of the van Rensselaer family, who could “supplement the labor supplied by their tenants with the addition of black slaves.” Oliver A. Rink, *Holland on the Hudson: An Economic and Social History of Dutch New York* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1986), 196; Thomas E. Burke Jr., *Mohawk Frontier: The Dutch Community of Schenectady, New York, 1661-1710.*, 2nd ed. (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1991), 138-139.

⁴⁸ Will of Nicholas Stuyvesant, 13 August 1698, in *Wills*, 1: 294.

Netherland, perhaps communicates his desires for his son to carry on the slaveholding tradition. It also highlights the ways that slavery was passed down in New York families.

In the first American generation of the clan, Petrus Stuyvesant's sister, Ann Stuyvesant Bayard, created an Atlantic slaveholding dynasty through a strategic marriage (Fig. 3). Although Ann arrived in the Americas a widow, she did not remain single. On October 14, 1656, Ann Stuyvesant married Nicholas Varlett, a man who, like her brother Petrus, had extensive ties to enslaved people.⁴⁹ The Varletts traded tobacco and slaves from New Netherland to the Chesapeake and Curaçao. Nicholas Varlett's father, Casper, created trading ties between New Netherland and the Chesapeake; Nicholas managed trade between the Chesapeake and Curaçao. Two of Nicholas's sisters married slaveholders and relocated to the Chesapeake, where they traded tobacco and slaves along with their husbands and maintained trade and slave ties to New Netherland.⁵⁰

Ann's children held slaves and also were married to prominent slaveholding families. Her son, Balthazar Bayard, married Maria Loockermans, whose father Govert Loockermans was one of the wealthiest merchants and Indian-traders in New Amsterdam, as well as a slaveholder.⁵¹ His spacious residence included an extension to the kitchen that has been posited to have been a residence for his slaves.⁵² In 1664 Govert Loockermans purchased the freedom of a slave woman named Christina, who had been held by the West India Company. Christiana was betrothed to

⁴⁹ *Marriages*, 21.

⁵⁰ Varlett is also spelled Varleth, Varlet, Varleet, Verlet and Verleth in colonial documents. April Lee Hatfield, "Dutch merchants and colonists in the English Chesapeake: trade, migration and nationality in 17th-century Maryland and Virginia," in *From Strangers to Citizens: The Integration of Immigrant Communities in Britain, Ireland, and Colonial America, 1550-1750*, ed. Randolph Vinge, et al. (London: Sussex Academic Press, 2001), 299-300, 304n. Hatfield noted that the Varlett daughters were particularly robust traders of tobacco and slaves. Anna Varlett Hack established a plantation in Virginia, and some of her slaves, Hatfield posited, were brought from New Netherland.

⁵¹ *Marriages*, 30. Balthazar married Maria on 19 October 1665.

⁵² John H. Innes, *New Amsterdam and its People: Studies, Social, and Topographical, of the Town under Dutch and Early English Rule* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1902), 241.

Loockermans former slave, a man named Swan.⁵³ In her 1677 will, Maria Sr., Govert's widow, bequeathed two slave boys, Francis and Manuel, specifically stipulating that they serve her children from her first marriage—son Cornelis Dirkse and daughter Elsie Leisler (wife of Jacob Leisler)—as well as her only biological child by Govert, Jacob. Because of an “agreement made with his father and mother,” she declared that Manuel should be set free at the age of twenty five, indicating that Francis could not be sold and would be free upon the death of her grandchildren.⁵⁴ Yet she omitted Balthazar Bayard's wife, her stepdaughter Maria Loockermans, from her will. That omission led to a bitter fifteen-year court battle between Jacob Leisler and Balthazar Bayard that had significant effects on the ultimate fates of Francis and Manuel.⁵⁵

Balthazar's own will, dated March 1699, did not specifically include slaves as a part of his estate.⁵⁶ Although upon first inspection the will seems to stymie any inquiry into Balthazar's slaveholding, when it is viewed in tandem with his mother-in-law's will and probate records, it becomes clear that by the time he wrote his will, Balthazar's estate might well have included his mother-in-law's slaves. Would Balthazar have honored his mother-in-law's wishes for Manuel and Francis even though she cut his wife out of her will? By the winter of 1691, the legal tide had turned against Leisler and Balthazar was appointed executor of Govert's estate.⁵⁷ The fates of Manuel and Francis are unknown, but at the time of the 1703 household census for the county

⁵³ Joyce D. Goodfriend, “Black Families in New Netherland,” in *A Beautiful and Fruitful Place: Selected Rensselaerswijck Seminar Papers*, ed. Nancy Anne McClure Zeller (Albany: New Netherland Publishing, 1991), 1: 151.

⁵⁴ Additions to Will of Mary Jansen Loockermans, 1 November 1677, in *ONY*, 182. See also Joyce D. Goodfriend, *Before the Melting Pot: Society and Culture in Colonial New York City, 1664-1730* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 116.

⁵⁵ In her master's thesis, Kathryn LaPrad discussed the family struggle between Bayard and Leisler. Kathryn S. LaPrad, “Thinking Locally, Acquiring Globally: The Loockerman Family of Delaware, 1630-1790” (master's thesis, University of Delaware, 2010), 31, <http://dspace.udel.edu:8080/dspace/handle/19716/5742>.

⁵⁶ Will of Balthazar Bayard, 4 March 1699, in *Wills*, 1: 416-417.

⁵⁷ Order to deliver papers belonging to the estate of Govert Loockermans to Balthazar Bayard, 20 January 1691, in *Wills*, 1: 194-195.

of New York, and one year before his death, Balthazar Bayard's household contained six slaves: two adults (a man and a woman), and four children.⁵⁸

Perhaps the unnamed man listed as a slave in 1703 was Francis, who, even under the terms of Maria Loockermans Sr.'s will, only received freedom upon the deaths of Maria's grandchildren. By 1703, Manuel might well have been twenty five and thus eligible for freedom under Maria Sr.'s will. Even if Balthazar honored the agreement, it is likely that Manuel continued serving Balthazar's household as part of his manumission.

Ann Bayard's remarriage to Nicholas Varlett proved particularly advantageous for her son, Nicholas Bayard, who on May 23, 1666 married Varlett's sister (Nicholas's aunt-by-marriage), Judith.⁵⁹ Nicholas and Judith Bayard's lives were not without controversy. Their age difference was considerable: Judith was ten years Nicholas's senior.⁶⁰ In 1655, eleven years before the marriage, she was accused along with her sister Sarah of committing "violence force and abuse" against a man named Wolfert Webber by "striking him, in his own house and flinging stones at him." Judith countered, claiming that "he berated her for a whore and strumpet, and threatened in his own house to strike her with the whip, as he daily does his wife; that he assaulted her, bruising and dragging her arm, and kicked her sister so that her hip is blue." Judith Varlett escaped judgment; the court found in her favor and ordered Webber to pay "12 stivers on account of fulminating lies etc in presence of the Court."⁶¹ She relocated to Connecticut and, seven years later, was imprisoned as a witch, having been charged with supernaturally inducing

⁵⁸ W.S. Rossiter, *A Century of Population Growth from the first Census of the United States to the Twelfth, 1780-1900* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1909), 3: 177.

⁵⁹ *Marriages*, 32.

⁶⁰ Doopregister van de Hervormde Oude Kerk, Stadsarchief Amsterdam, DTB 6, 256, NL-SAA-24655030; Doopregister van de Hervormde Nieuwe Kerk, Stadsarchief Amsterdam, DTB 42, 147, NL-SAA-24556748 (hereafter cited as SAA). Judith Varlett was baptized on 8 November 1629 at the Oude Kerk in Amsterdam and Nicolas Bayard was baptized 31 July 1639 at the Nieuwe Kerk in Amsterdam.

⁶¹ Wolfert Webber v. Judith Verleth, 28 June 1655, in *The Records of New Amsterdam: from 1653 to 1674*, ed. Berthold Fernow (New York: The Knickerbocker press, 1897), 1: 326-327 (hereafter cited as RONA).

an English neighbor to speak Dutch.⁶² After the intervention of Petrus Stuyvesant and her brother, Nicholas, she was released and moved back to New Amsterdam, where she thereafter married Bayard.

Nicholas Bayard had his own troubles. In the years following the second fall of New Netherland in 1672, Nicholas Bayard was thrown into solitary confinement for refusing to accept the English oath of allegiance. After his release, though, he embraced an English identity. He joined the Anglican Church, began to associate with New York's English merchant class, and was appointed to office by Governor Francis Nicholson. Due in large part to this ethnic distancing, he was a target during Leisler's rebellion, an uprising of primarily Dutch and German colonists led by Jacob Leisler who in June of 1689 wrested control of New York's government.⁶³

The Leislerians viewed their struggle as one with the Glorious Revolution in England and, revolting in the name of the new king, they deposed Nicholson and struggled against his appointees, such as Bayard, who did not recognize their right to rule. Despite Nicholas Bayard's descent from Petrus Stuyvesant and his previous standing in the Dutch merchant community, the Leislerians viewed him as part of the English establishment and antithetical to what they hoped would be a Dutch re-conquest of New Netherland with the ascent of the Dutch stadholder, Willem III van Oranje (William of Orange), the new joint regent of England. As a result of his opposition to Jacob Leisler, Bayard was sentenced to death, although an apology letter penned in prison moved Leisler to show clemency and to modify the sentence to imprisonment.⁶⁴

⁶² R.G. Tomlinson, *Witchcraft Trials of Connecticut* (Hartford, CT: The Bond Press, Inc., 1978), 32, 34.

⁶³ Adrian Howe argued that Bayard's transformation into an Englishman led to his estrangement from the Dutch faction that had supported Leisler and charged Bayard with treason. See Adrian Howe, "The Bayard Treason Trial: Dramatizing Anglo-Dutch Politics in Early Eighteenth-Century New York City," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 47, no. 1 (January 1990): 57-89, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2938041>.

⁶⁴ The Petition of Colonel Nicholas Bayard, 24 January 1689, in *The Documentary History of the State of New York*, ed. E.B. O'Callaghan (Albany: Weed, Parsons & Co, 1850) 2: 37-39 (hereafter cited as DHSNY).

When, in 1690, the king appointed a new governor, Colonel Henry Sloughter, Sloughter sided against the Leislerians, establishing a court to try the leaders of the revolt, and condemned Leisler to death. Nicholas was released when Leisler was overthrown, albeit after spending thirteen months in prison. He was evidently not ready to forgive his jailer, and was rumored to have been instrumental in having Leisler hanged by encouraging Sloughter to deny Leisler clemency.

Whatever the truth about Bayard's involvement in Leisler's demise, the Leislerians pinned the blame for Leisler's execution on him. Eleven years after Leisler's death, they exacted their revenge. In 1702, Nicholas Bayard was arrested and charged with treason. The chief prosecutor, Samuel Weaver, charged Bayard with heading "a Faction, a malignant Party, who had endeavour'd to introduce Popery and Slavery."⁶⁵ Weaver's use of the term "slavery" was more than mere flourish. Viewed in light of Leisler's previous family inheritance struggles with Nicholas's brother, Balthazar, it accurately described Balthazar's fight to control his wife's inheritance, which included the fates of two boys whose free status hung in the balance.

Nicholas himself owned a considerable amount of land that included a large portion of the north side of Wall Street, land that had formerly been set aside by the West India Company as "Negro lots." Nepotism might have played a role in his acquisition of this particular area, for, as one scholar noted, he obtained it along with his uncle Petrus Stuyvesant "either by purchase or fiat."⁶⁶ In 1711, this land became the site of New York City's slave market.⁶⁷ Nicholas ultimately

⁶⁵ The Trial of Col. Nicholas Bayard in the Province of New York for High-Treason, 19 February 1702, in *A Complete Collection of State-Trials, and Proceedings Upon High-Treason...*, ed. Tomas Bayly Howell, 2nd ed. (London: Printed by T.C. Hansard, 1816), 5: 427.

⁶⁶ In *Gotham*, Nicholas Bayard was referred to both as Petrus Stuyvesant's "nephew" and as his "son in law," but he was only Stuyvesant's nephew. The incorrect identification of Nicholas as Stuyvesant's son-in-law was repeated in Ralph J. Caliando's *New York City Mayors*, vol. 1, whose section on the slaves of New Amsterdam appears to be based, in part, on Burrows and Wallace's work. In a subsequent paragraph, Caliando described Nicholas Bayard as being "of English origin" and a "cousin of Judith Bayard, the wife of Peter Stuyvesant." Nicholas Bayard's adoption of an English identity after the takeover might be partially to blame for the confusion, but he was of mixed Dutch

became the mayor of New York City. In 1703, Nicholas's household inventory included three slaves: two men and one little girl. If they had not been previously sold, these slaves would have automatically reverted, along with his entire estate "both real and personal" to his son, Samuel Bayard, in 1711.⁶⁸

Peter Bayard, Ann Bayard Varlett's third son, and Nicholas and Balthazar's brother, married Blandina Kierstede. She grew up on a large estate run by her mother, Sara Roelofs, a widow who had worked as a Dutch-Algonquian translator for Petrus Stuyvesant in 1664 during peace talks.⁶⁹ In her 1693 will, Sara Roelofs bequeathed several enslaved men and women—both Indian and African—to her children. To Blandina, Peter Bayard's wife, she "will[ed] before anything else" a "negro boy, Hans."⁷⁰ By 1703, Hans had either died or been sold, as Peter Bayard's household inventory listed only one slave, a woman.

Catherine Bayard, Ann Bayard Varlett's only daughter, married the merchant, Colonel William de Meyer, on October 23, 1678; they settled on a large estate in Kingston, New York. William opened his 1705 will, written in Dutch, with a bequest of "horses, cattle, negroes, gold, silver, coined or uncoined." He continued his bequest with wedding gifts, stating that "when my son Nicholas de Meyer happens to marry, he shall take with him the negro Jan, which I have

and French Huguenot ancestry, the son of Judith Bayard Stuyvesant's brother Samuel and Petrus Stuyvesant's sister Ann. Burrows and Wallace, *Gotham*, 56; Ralph J. Caliendo, *New York City Mayors* (Bloomington, IN: Xibris Corporation, 2010), 1: 42.

⁶⁷ Mapping the African American Past, <http://maap.columbia.edu/place/22.html>; James Trager, *The New York Chronology: The Ultimate Compendium of Events, People, and Anecdotes from the Dutch to the Present*, (New York: Harper Resource, 2003), 20, 22.

⁶⁸ Nicholas Bayard's will does not enumerate any goods and names his wife Judith as executor. She was dead by the filing of the will, so his only surviving child, Samuel, inherited his property. Will of Nicholas Bayard, 9 May 1707, in *Wills*, 2: 68-69.

⁶⁹ *Marriages*, 39. Peter Bayard married Blandina Kierstede on 4 November 1674. Janny Venema offered Sara Roelofs's fluency with Algonquian as evidence for the close proximity of the Dutch and Indian communities during the first decades of Dutch rule. Children like Roelofs, Venema argued, picked up languages like Algonquian when they were very young because they heard it with the same frequency as they heard Dutch. Janny Venema, *Beverwijck: A Dutch Village on the American Frontier, 1652-1664* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2003), 166-67.

⁷⁰ Will of Sara Roeloffse, 29 July 1693, in John Oluf Evjen, *Scandinavian Immigrants in New York, 1630-1674: with appendices on...* (Minneapolis, MN: K.C. Holter Publishing Company, 1916), 107.

given to him.” Likewise he left other slaves as wedding gifts to remaining children: to his daughter Annecke he left a black slave named “Mary”; to another daughter, Catrine, “a negress by the name Angallo”; and to a third daughter, Deborah, a black woman named “Rosette.”⁷¹

Nicholas de Meyer not only inherited Jan from his father, but he also continued to trade in slaves. In 1717, one of Nicholas’s slave sales was recorded in the family correspondence of one of his elite slaveholding neighbors, the Livingstons. Like de Meyer, the slave owner and trader, Robert Livingston, was also linked by marriage to the Bayards and had an estate in Esopus, now Kingston, near the de Meyer’s land. Robert’s wife, Alida, told her husband in the fall of 1717 that a man named “Kornelis Martense” had “bought a black woman for £55 from Meyer in Esopus. She [the black woman] was born there.”⁷² The “Meyer” that Alida referred to was most likely Nicholas de Meyer, Catherine Bayard de Meyer’s son.

* * * * *

Although recent scholarship has noted that the avenues of freedom began to close in the final decade of Dutch rule, the dominant historical narrative has remained intact: a comparatively fluid system of slavery under the Dutch gave way to a rigid, racial English slave system. Such a reading, though, ignores the fact that the foundations of New York’s elite slaveholdings were established through Atlantic and interfamily networks forged during Dutch rule. An analysis of the surviving primary documents reveals that these elite families were knit together by bonds of kinship and slavery. These avenues of slavery established during the Dutch period thrived under

⁷¹ Will of Wilhelmus de Meyer, 10 January 1705, in *Ulster County, N.Y. Probate Records*, ed. and trans. Gustave Anjou (Ulster, NY: County Clerk’s Office, 1906), 2: 105. In-line English translations of the Dutch original are included with the probate records.

⁷² Alida to Robert Livingston, 3 August 1717, in Biemer, ed. and trans., “Business Letters of Alida Schuyler Livingston,” 202.

the English. By the end of the seventeenth century and during the beginning decades of the eighteenth, these family networks strengthened and expanded their inter-colonial slaveholding ties. Dynastic slaveholding became a distinctive feature of elite slaveholding networks. Even as slavery pulled apart African and Indian families, it knit such heterogeneous elite families together through bonds of marriage and descent.

1.2 A Tangled Web: The Livingston family's inter-colonial slaveholding ties

By the closing decades of the seventeenth century, Robert Livingston and his wife, Alida, benefited from a slaveholding pedigree: they had business and kinship connections to the Stuyvesant-Bayard family, the elite patroonship of Rensselaerswijck, and the English establishment (Fig. 1). They enjoyed access to an established network of slaveholding associates and expanded those ties through intermarriage, inheritance, and business ventures into New England (Fig. 4). The slaveholding world they inherited was vastly different from the one which the passengers of the *Princes Amelia* encountered: decades of bondage had embedded slaveholding into their everyday lives, coloring their experiences of familial and colonial upheavals.

On May 10, 1692, John Allyn, a Connecticut magistrate, took the time to send Robert Livingston a letter full of bad news. The tome was not high literature, reading more like book-keeping than a free flowing epistle. Although most of it was devoted to the losses Livingston's livestock had sustained, Allyn's opening concerned a loss of a different sort. In the first line of his letter he wrote, "I received Mrs. Schuyler's letter & have made the best inquiry I can for her

Negro but find him not.”⁷³ The “Negro” belonging to Robert Livingston’s wife, Alida, was missing. But neither the whims of the slave market nor the treachery of the sea had claimed him, as had happened to Judith Stuyvesant’s slaves three decades before. He had run away.

Much can be gleaned about Alida’s character and the nature of her slaveholding from a few lines in Allyn’s letter. Alida’s status as Robert’s wife was affirmed by the title “Mrs.,” but to John Allyn she was not Mrs. Livingston, but rather “Mrs. Schuyler.” Dutch women retained their surnames in New Netherland correspondence, in contrast to English women. This was not a meaningless cultural oddity, but a nod to their heightened presence in business when compared to their English counterparts, although scholars have debated the extent of Dutch women’s latitude in business affairs. Alida Schuyler Livingston chose to follow English custom in her copious correspondence with her husband Robert and her children, always signing her name “Alida Livingston.” But to Allyn, she was Mrs. Schuyler.

“Mrs. Schuyler” was on a mission. Allyn’s letter revealed that she had been doggedly searching for her “Negro” by proxy for at least a year. He indicated that he came close to catching a man he believed to be her runaway “last year” who “as soon as I heard of him I did take him to be a run away and sent a warrant to the constable to secure him.”⁷⁴ Alida’s persistence, often noted in scholarly literature as a focus on her particular business acumen, seeped through Allyn’s message, as did her familiarity with pursuing runaways. Instead of counting the man as a loss after one year, she exercised her social network to expand the search for the man from the Hudson Valley into Hartford.

Although slavery in the North was marked by small urban slaveholdings, by 1692 Alida was no stranger to plantation-style slavery. The firstborn daughter and second child of Philip

⁷³ John Allyn to Robert Livingston, 10 May 1692, GLC03107.00211/LP, The Gilder Lehrman Collection on Deposit at the New-York Historical Society (hereafter cited as GL).

⁷⁴ Ibid.

Pieterse Schuyler and Margarita van Slichtenhorst Schuyler, Alida was among the first generation of Schuylers born in America. In 1675 she married the Rev. Nicholas van Rensselaer, a man thirty years her senior, son of the founding patroon of Rensselaerswijck, Kiliaen van Rensselaer. Nicholas had inherited his older brother Jeremias's patroonship the year before, including vast landholdings and a sizable number of slaves. Rensselaerswijck was one of the only Dutch patroonships that embraced the large-scale importation of African slaves.

Nicholas van Rensselaer emigrated from Holland in 1675 and had never previously managed a large estate with slaves, but he was no stranger to the family's slave dealings. His older brothers Jan Baptist and Jeremias had served as patroon of Rensselaerswijck, with Jan Baptist returning to Holland after his patroonship and leaving the estate's management to Jeremias.⁷⁵ Jeremias argued with his brother, Jan Baptist, over the labor of an enslaved African named Andries. In April 1659, Jan Baptist requested that Jeremias send Andries from Rensselaerswijck to Holland, writing that "I need him very much at Carol to take care of my horse." Jan Baptist was so anxious to have Andries in Holland that he reiterated "do not forget to send the Negro" at the close of his letter.⁷⁶ However, Jeremias was loath to let his brother's slave go, so he stalled. First Jeremias sent a letter praising Andries's skill at tending his horses, noting that "the horses have never looked so fine," but ignoring his brother's request to send Andries to Holland.⁷⁷ By August, Jeremias wrote to Jan Baptist that "friends here have advised me against [sending Andries to Holland], saying that it would be nothing but foolishness to try to have him

⁷⁵ Jaap Jacobs, *New Netherland*, 118. Johannes, Kiliaen van Rensselaer's eldest son by his first wife, Hillegonda van Bylaer, was named the first patroon of Rensselaerswyck after his father's death, but he remained in Holland. Instead, his half-brother Jan Baptist traveled to New Netherland to manage the patroonship.

⁷⁶ Jan Baptist to Jeremias van Rensselaer, Amsterdam, 25 April 1659, in *Correspondence of Jeremias van Rensselaer, 1651-1674*, trans. and ed. A.J.F van Laer (Albany: The University of the State of New York, 1932), 152-153 (hereafter cited as CJVR).

⁷⁷ Jeremias to Jan Baptist van Rensselaer, 11 May 1696, in CJVR, 159.

serve you in a free country, as he would be too proud to do that.”⁷⁸ Though he tried to present his retention of Andries as a favor to Jan Baptist by bemoaning Andries’s behavior, he ultimately admitted, “to tell the truth, I could not spare him very well.”⁷⁹ He offered to pay for him with “the sum of 50 beavers.”

Jan Baptist was not amused. He opened his response to Jeremias with a report of his beavers sold in Amsterdam, pointedly excluding “the 50 for my Negro.” Jan Baptist did not go to market alone for these beavers, but was accompanied by his mother, a fact that he included as ammunition for his case against his brother. Although Jan Baptist’s letter in response has been badly damaged, his disappointment at not receiving Andries survived. He complained that “everything was ready for his arrival” and that he incurred debts in preparation for receiving Andries.⁸⁰ In failing to send Andries to Holland, Jeremias was not only cheating Jan Baptist, but the entire family in Holland. Jan Baptist noted that Nicholas mediated on behalf of a family servant in Holland, and although not involved directly in the dispute between his two brothers over Andries, Nicholas might have known about their row. The incident with Andries was not the last time that Jeremias would anger his brother, who accused him of letting the whole family in Holland down. Jan Baptist complained in 1664 about Jeremias’s tendency to ignore his family’s entreaties from Holland, indicating that he had written four times without response about “the small consignment of goods which brother Nicholaes sent to you six years ago, for the account of a poor servant girl.”⁸¹ Although he arrived in New York in 1675, Nicholas was already deeply enmeshed in his family’s Atlantic trade dealings.

⁷⁸ Jeremias to Jan Baptist van Rensselaer, 20 August 1659, in *CJVR*, 167.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

⁸⁰ Jan Baptist to Jeremias van Rensselaer, 20 December 1659, in *CJVR*, 196.

⁸¹ Jan Baptist to Jeremias van Rensselaer, 5 January 1664, in *CJVR*, 341.

When Alida married Nicholas in 1675 at the age of nineteen, she instantly become the mistress of one of the largest slaveholdings in colonial New Netherland. But Nicholas was more a mystic than a merchant or manager, a quality he acknowledged when he hired Scottish-born Robert Livingston to run his business affairs.⁸² Although ethnically Scottish, Livingston had spent his formative years in the United Provinces, to which his minister-father, John Livingstone, had been exiled due to his Presbyterian beliefs. Livingston's fluency with English and Dutch made him a prudent fit as Nicholas's ghost patroon, but he caught Alida's eye as well.⁸³ Just four years after inheriting the patroonship from his brother, Nicholas died. A mere eight months later, Nicholas's widow, Alida, married his much younger business manager, Robert Livingston.

Livingston's investments included the slave trade. In 1690, he bought into the slave ship *Margriet* with Jacobus van Cortlandt; the ship shared a name with van Cortlandt's daughter.⁸⁴ During the winter of 1690, Robert Livingston endured a temporary exile, evading Jacob Leisler's authorities, who were bent on arresting him if he returned to New York, by remaining in New England. After a few months of separation, Alida and the children joined Robert in exile, and they took refuge in Connecticut, sheltered by Fitz-John Winthrop. When it was safe for them to return to their New York estate, they left their eldest son, John, in the house of Fitz-John Winthrop to be educated in Connecticut.⁸⁵ Fitz-John, grandson of Massachusetts's first governor, John Winthrop, had enslaved the Indian combatants of King Phillip's war and traded them to

⁸² Kierner, *Traders and Gentlefolk*, 19-20.

⁸³ Lawrence Leder included an "apocryphal" family story, in which Nicholas van Rensselaer predicted on his deathbed that his young wife and his business manager, Robert Livingston, would someday be wed, then he followed the story up by asserting, "after allowing a decent interval to elapse, Alida Schuyler van Rensselaer and Robert Livingston were wed." Nicholas died on 12 November 1678. Robert and Alida were married on 9 July 1679. Cynthia Kierner went into significantly more detail about Robert Livingston's financial exploits and his relationship with Alida Livingston. Kierner, *Traders and Gentlefolk*, 10-11; Leder, *Robert Livingston*, 21. See also Biemer, ed. and trans., "Business Letters of Alida Schuyler Livingston, 1680-1726."

⁸⁴ Leder, *Robert Livingston*, 90n35.

⁸⁵ Edwin Brockholst Livingston, *The Livingstons of Livingston Manor: Being the history of that branch of the Scottish House...* (New York: The Knickerbocker Press, 1910), 67-68; Kierner, *Traders and Gentlefolk*, 51-52.

Barbados.⁸⁶ This slaveholding ally of the Livingstons had been entrusted by his friends to raise their son into a man who could rule the Livingston estate. The Livingstons unsurprisingly turned to their connections in Connecticut again in 1692, when searching for Alida's runaway slave.

Allyn's letter mentioning the fate of Alida Schuyler Livingston's "Negro" uncovers the power of a community forged not by proximity, but by slaveholding. Alida Schuyler Livingston's family was connected by marriage and business ties to other slaveholders who resided far outside of Albany County. John Allyn was the son of Matthew Allyn, one of Hartford's founders. He grew up in an elite community that included slaves. His father, Matthew, bought the estate of William Holmes of New Plymouth in 1638, including "all the lands, houses, servants, goods, and chattels of the Town of Windsor."⁸⁷ Holmes's "servants" likely included some Pequot Indian war captives.⁸⁸ Acting as secretary of the colony in 1650, John Allyn estimated that Connecticut's enslaved population consisted of thirty slaves who had been purchased from Barbados.⁸⁹ At the time of his death in 1696, Allyn's inventory included "Two Negroes: A Man and Woman," valued at £45.⁹⁰

But not just his slaveholding made John Allyn a particularly astute choice for slave tracker. In 1691, the Hampshire County Court record included a motion to start a ferry "over ye

⁸⁶ C.S. Manegold, *Ten Hills Farm: the Forgotten History of Slavery in the North* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2010), 97-98.

⁸⁷ Sale, William Holmes to Matthew Allyn, 3 May 1638, quoted in William C. Fowler, "The Historical Status of the Negro in Connecticut," in the *Year Book of City of Charleston for 1900 A.D.*, ed. Henry B. Dawson (Charleston, SC: Walker, Evans & Cogswell, Co., 1901), 3.

⁸⁸ For more on Pequot captives as servants, see Michael L. Fickes, "They Could Not Endure That Yolke": The Captivity of Pequot Women and Children after the War of 1637," *New England Quarterly* 73, no. 1 (March 2000): 58-81, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/366745>.

⁸⁹ Allyn relayed these figures in a report to the Board of Trade and Plantations. Samuel Hart, et al., *Connecticut as a Colony and as a State, or, One of the Original Thirteen* (Hartford, CT: The Publishing Society of Connecticut, 1904), 2: 504.

⁹⁰ Inventory of Col. John Allyn, 12 November 1696, in *A Digest of the Early Connecticut Probate Records*, ed. Charles William Manwaring (Hartford, CT: R.S. Peck and Co., Printers, 1904), 1: 395.

Great River at the House of John Alline of Suffield.”⁹¹ Not only was the ferry started on his land, but the court appointed “Jno Alline of Suffield for ye affair & he to require & be content with 4d ye horse & 2d ye man.” Livingston’s trade with Hartford would have required that he have intimate ties with the ferryman. Not only that, but had Alida’s slave man tried to smuggle his way across the river, it is likely that John Allyn would have been notified of it. Perhaps that was how Allyn received the information in 1691 that a black man fitting the description of Alida’s runaway was in Hartford. Regardless of whom he actually was, the man was able to elude Allyn’s grasp, perhaps fording the river on his own, and escape. Just one month after John Allyn reported his difficulties to Robert Livingston in securing Alida’s runaway slave, he was entangled in another sort of hunt. On June 22, 1692, he was summoned to sit on the court of Oyer and Terminer convened in Fairfield, Connecticut, to decide the fate of five women from Stamford who were accused of witchcraft.⁹²

New Netherland and colonial New York’s slave population has been acknowledged in scholarly works, but it has also, along with other northern colonies, been termed a “society with slaves,” or one with an economy not dependent on slavery, in contrast to a “slave society.”⁹³ Ira Berlin’s historical categories, though a useful tool for examining the impact of slavery on societies, have been used by scholars focused on slavery in the north to contrast northern slavery and its southern counterpart. The north did not see the type of large-scale plantation agriculture

⁹¹ Approval of Suffield ferry, 1691, in Charles Wilcoxson Whittlesey, *Crossing and re-crossing the Connecticut River: A description of the river from its mouth to its source, with a history of its ferries and bridges* (New Haven: The Tuttle, Morehouse and Taylor Company, 1938), 51.

⁹² Richard Godbeer, *Escaping Salem: The Other Witch Hunt of 1692* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 60.

⁹³ In bringing contingency to the fore, Berlin questioned many of the set categories used to examine the experience of North American slavery. Complicating the dichotomies of “African to creole, slave to free, sundown to sunup, and white over black,” Berlin introduced historical categories and types that have since reshaped the study of slavery. He divided his work into an analysis of societies with slaves, defined as societies that were not economically dependent on slave labor, vis-à-vis slave societies. Yet he did not chronicle the movement from societies with slaves to slave societies. Instead, he described it as an uneven process that was best subdivided into three generational experiences—charter, plantation, and revolutionary generations. Berlin, *Many Thousands Gone*, 1-5.

that developed during the eighteenth century in the south. The New York census of 1703 dramatically illustrates that, although slaveholding touched large numbers of New York families, they did not hold large numbers of bondspeople. Small slaveholding units were undeniably the norm in colonial New York. Yet when the social networks of such slaveholders are uncovered, a much larger slaveholding community emerges, one that connects to the large landed slaveowning elite families and challenges the current scholarly understanding of what constituted a “slave society.”

In 1728, Robert Livingston died in New York, leaving a legacy of slavery for his children. He gave his daughters, Margaret and Joanna, money, land and slaves.⁹⁴ To Margaret, he left a woman named Isabel and to Joanna, an enslaved man named Dego.⁹⁵ Although comprising just a few lines in Livingston’s will, these bequests reveal not only the slaveholding practices of the Livingstons, but also the interconnected lives of elite New York slaveholders.

Twelve years before his death, Robert Livingston was convinced that he might be murdered. That fear did not result from paranoia, but instead from the actions of a desperate enslaved man named Tom. The man did not belong to Livingston, but rather to Johannes Dyckman, a tenant who lived on Livingston Manor. And the man had not tried to kill Livingston, but his own master. Yet after Livingston had grilled Tom, he was convinced that his own life was in jeopardy. The court transcript recorded that “Mr. Livingston ask’d the Negro after he had confessed the fact whether his Negro Ben or any other of his Negroes were privy to this barbarous Murder.”⁹⁶ Tom’s answer revealed that Livingston had reason to worry. Although he assured Livingston that his “Negroes knew nothing of his design of killing his Master...he had

⁹⁴ Joanna Livingston, signed her name variously Johanna and, on at least one occasion, “Janna” but, by far, she most commonly spelled her name “Joanna.” This was also the variant used most frequently by her family members.

⁹⁵ Will of Robert Livingston, 10 Feb 1721, Livingston-Redmond Manuscripts, reel 4, Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, NY (hereafter cited as LR-MSS).

⁹⁶ Leendert Conyn and Kiliaen Winne’s oath about the Examination of Joh. Dykeman’s negro, 2 Feb. 1715, GLC03107.01103/LP, GL.

done it alone,” he communicated knowledge of Ben’s grievance against Livingston. He reported “that Ben had never said anything but that he was sorry his Master had sent his daughter to Mr. Vetch.”⁹⁷ By sending away Ben’s daughter, Robert rent a family apart.

Despite the frequency of sale and the uncertainty of the lives of the enslaved, the episode showed that the fragile family bonds of slaves were jealously guarded. Destroy them, and one could incur the wrath of a wronged family member. No matter how normalized frequent sale read in accounts of slavery in the North, Robert Livingston feared it had inspired vengeance in Ben’s heart. Livingston was intimately aware of a father’s concern for his daughter, for in sending Ben’s child to Mr. Vetch, he had sent her to his own daughter, Margaret.

Even as slavery destroyed the lives of Ben and his daughter, it knit together the elite New York slaveholding clans. Livingston did not hold slaves alone, but in concert with other members of his family. On December 20, 1700 Margaret Livingston married Col. Samuel Vetch in Boston. Although moments of Margaret’s life survive in the correspondence of her family members and in the diaries of elite acquaintances, no trace of Ben’s daughter remains. Was she put to work, cleaning house for Margaret or as servant to Margaret’s own daughter, Alida? Had her father worried what might befall his daughter living in close quarters with the Vetches? Did he worry that she would try to make her way back home? Other slaves given to Livingston family members did not fare very well. For example, Gilbert Livingston, Robert’s son, continually petitioned his father for slaves, writing in 1712, “I hope you will be pleased now to buy me a negro man,” and again, in 1713, that he “hope[d] you have agreed [to send] for a Negro man.”⁹⁸

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ Gilbert to Robert Livingston, 23 August 1712, GLC03107.00937/LP, GL; Gilbert Livingston to Robert Livingston, 8 April 1713, GLC03107.00974/LP, GL.

Yet in 1721 he beat an enslaved man to death for running away.⁹⁹ Ben's daughter might not have met so dire an end, but whatever the outcome, the enslaved family was torn asunder in order to serve the slaveowners.

Sometimes the ties of patronage and kinship were employed in disputes between New York slaveholders. Joanna's husband, Cornelius van Horne, informed his father Robert in the spring of 1723 that he was "credibly informed" that a man named Thomas Cardle "of Long Island whom lately arrived from London" after a "15 or 16 year" absence, claimed that he ha[d] good evidence to prove" that Livingston's slave man "Dego," later bequeathed by Robert to his wife, actually belonged to Cardle.¹⁰⁰

Dego's very name deepens the mystery of his origins. Dego could be a bastardized form of the Spanish name Diego, which pointed to a Spanish colony as his birthplace. He might well have been born on Curaçao, as elite New York merchants, like the Livingstons, maintained connections to the island. Yet he need not have been born abroad to carry a Spanish moniker. Some among the first generation of enslaved blacks who appeared in the baptismal record had creole names.¹⁰¹ Thus Dego's retention of a vaguely Spanish name might have been a heritage from his creole forbears. Cardle asserted he left Dego with a "Mr. Fauconer," who agreed to hold the slave until he returned. But Fauconer gave the boy to "Captain Congrove" with the understanding that Congrove would return him to Cardle. Perhaps Congrove did not know Cardle or had little allegiance to him. Or perhaps Fauconer had failed to explain the situation fully, because Congrove, "being in want of money sold said negro to" Robert Livingston.¹⁰²

⁹⁹ Alida to Robert Livingston, 22 April 1721, Livingston Family Papers in Dutch, translated by Adrian Van de Linde, Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, NY (hereafter cited as LFP-Trans).

¹⁰⁰ Cornelius van Horne to Robert Livingston, 10 March 1723, GLC03107.01553/LP, GL.

¹⁰¹ Shaw, "Building New Netherland," 173-174.

¹⁰² Cornelius van Horne to Robert Livingston, 10 March 1723, GLC03107.01553/LP, GL.

Cardle's own network of acquaintances failed him. Although Cardle threatened to "Decoy and Delude" Dego away from Livingston, nothing came of it, because, in 1725, Livingston wrote his wife, Alida, that he had reduced Dego to a diet of "butter and bread" because he'd bought "a leg of mutton for 3sh6d without order, instead of some ox-meat."¹⁰³ Cardle eventually committed suicide in prison and Cornelius van Horne, perhaps for alerting his father-in-law to the potential loss, received, through his wife's inheritance, the disputed slave Dego.

Slave business ties presaged the Livingston family marriage connection to the Bayards. In 1725, Stephen Bayard wrote his business partner, Robert Livingston, that he had lost enslaved Africans to the whims of the Atlantic crossing, informing him that "30 dyed in the passage."¹⁰⁴ Stephen Bayard was Nicholas Bayard and Judith Varlett's grandson, by their only child, Judge Samuel Bayard. Stephen Bayard and Livingston were not just business partners, they were also in-laws. The same year that Stephen settled slave accounts with Livingston, he married Livingston's granddaughter, Alida Vetch. Alida, who had inherited her grandmother's name, had grown up in the same household to which Livingston had sent Ben's daughter. Nearly twenty years later, Stephen would find that the questions Robert raised about his slave, Ben, would be leveled against his own slave, coincidentally also a man named Ben. Stephen's Ben was charged in connection with the 1741 New York slave conspiracy, although he was ultimately found not guilty.¹⁰⁵ Stephen continued the tradition of passing down slaves, and like his father-in-law, Robert, specifically provided slaves for his children. In his will dated January 31, 1753, he left to

¹⁰³ Robert to Alida Livingston, 20 May 1726, LFP-Trans.

¹⁰⁴ Stephen Bayard to Robert Livingston, 12 November 1725, GLC03107.01740/LP, GL.

¹⁰⁵ New York's 1741 slave conspiracy, or the "Negro Plot," has been examined extensively by historians. For a recent treatment with an excellent database detailing which elite families and slaves were involved in the plot, see Jill Lepore, *New York Burning*.

daughter Margaret “two negro or Indian slaves” and to his sons William and Robert “all the rest of my plate, slaves, and furniture.”¹⁰⁶

Robert Livingston’s slave bequests shaped not only the events of his life, but the inheritance patterns of his descendants. He and his wife, Alida, employed their inter-colonial slaveholding network to track down runaways and substantiate claims. Robert’s fear of Ben’s reaction to the loss of his daughter shows that the Livingstons were not as far removed from the consequences of their decisions as the lines of their will might suggest. Their lives were densely intertwined with those that they held in bondage.

* * * * *

On October 1, 1713, Increase Mather presided over the marriage of John Livingston, son of Robert and Alida, to Elizabeth Knight, daughter of the travel diarist Sarah Knight. The esteemed Puritan minister and former president of Harvard College was there to lend his considerable social weight to the hasty marriage, which was darkened by suspicion because, like his mother, Alida, John Livingston hastily remarried another person less than one year after his first spouse’s death. John appealed to his father to reach out to the ministers, writing:

I shall think it a feavour if you would write a few lines to both the Mathers, ministers of ye North Church in Boston, where she was brought up, from an Infant whom without a doubt, will informe you as men of wealth and Honor (ought to do, in conscience) concerning her Carechter and fortune, and ye Carechter and fortune of those she came from.¹⁰⁷

John wagered that the bonds of wealth and honor that bound his father’s world to that of the Mathers’ would be stronger than the tales of impropriety that streamed from Boston to Manor

¹⁰⁶ Will of Stephen Bayard, 1753, in *Wills*, 5: 155-156.

¹⁰⁷ John to Robert Livingston, 9 July 1713, reel 3, LR-MSS.

Livingston. Two years earlier, another John fought to have his marriage recognized. Arguing that *couverture* made his wife his property, John Jackson, a free black Connecticut man, challenged the claim of his wife's master, Samuel Beebe. John Livingston, Beebe's attorney, and John Jackson were on opposite sides of the dispute, yet the ways in which these two men's lives intersected demonstrates the importance of examining the ties of slavery that bound elites across colony lines.

John Livingston was groomed in both Connecticut and New York to take on the trading empire his father had created. In 1701 he married Mary Winthrop, Fitz-John Winthrop's daughter. John's marriage to Mary, despite the families' connections, was not a foregone conclusion. There were rumors that Mary was illegitimate and so the Livingstons proceeded cautiously with the marriage.¹⁰⁸ That same year, John bought into the trading ship *Mary*, which aptly shared the name of his new bride, with his brother-in-law Col. Samuel Vetch and the Boston merchant, John Saffin, in order to trade, illegally, in Quebec.¹⁰⁹ As perhaps a portent to his own marriage's future, the venture was discovered and John Livingston lost his entire investment, plunging him into crippling debt. Yet his business partner fared even worse. At the same time as the *Mary's* demise, Saffin was involved in a case against his enslaved man Adam, who had sued for his freedom. This action led to a lengthy court battle and embroiled Saffin in a public dispute with Samuel Sewall.¹¹⁰ Although John Livingston proved himself an inferior

¹⁰⁸ For more information regarding Mary's illegitimacy and the difficulty that it posed for making an elite marriage match, see Lisa Wilson, *Ye Heart of a Man: The Domestic Life of Men in Colonial New England* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999), 52. For the Livingstons' initial reluctance about the marriage, see Leder, *Robert Livingston*, 159.

¹⁰⁹ Kierner, *Traders and Gentlefolk*, 52.

¹¹⁰ In April of 1701, Livingston, Vetch and Saffin invested in the *Mary*. By September that same year, the *Mary* was discovered, shipwrecked, and her cargo lost. Leder, *Robert Livingston*, 175-176. Saffin's enslaved man sued for his freedom in March 1701, in a case which was heard several times, first before Samuel Sewall, then subsequently in a court that included Saffin as judge and a jury that Sewall intimated was stacked by Saffin. Saffin resisted Sewall's call to free Adam and, later that year, he published a detailed response to Sewall's *The Selling of Joseph*, arguing for the continuation of slavery and the slave trade. Despite Saffin's efforts, Adam won his freedom in 1703. Plane, *Colonial Intimacies*, 118-122. Lawrence W. Towner, "The Sewall-Saffin Dialogue on Slavery," *William and Mary*

merchant to his father and was ultimately overshadowed by his younger brother Philip, he had a close network of slaveholding associates.

In 1711, John Livingston presented Samuel Beebe's claim to a mixed-race enslaved woman named Joan and her children in New London's court. Her husband, a black man named John Jackson, had retrieved his family after Beebe successfully argued in court that Joan and her children belonged to him because they had been bequeathed to his wife, even though Beebe's wife's family had always treated Joan as if she were free.¹¹¹ Jackson attempted to rescue his family from Beebe, but was caught. Even after being captured, John fought hard for his family by suing Beebe and contending that Joan belonged to him under the law of *couverture*. Livingston likely sympathized with Beebe because the case resembled events that were unfolding within the Livingston family. Two slaves had run away from his father's estate earlier that year. That these slaves, aided by local Indians, escaped to French territory must have particularly peeved John Livingston, whose trading venture in Quebec had almost ruined him. John's own brother, Philip, went as far as to try to hire local Indians to kidnap the enslaved people. When that failed, he traveled to New France himself to try to convince the newly freed

Quarterly 21, no. 1 (January 1964): 49-52, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1923355>; Albert J. von Frank, "John Saffin: Slavery and Racism in Colonial Massachusetts," *Early American Literature* 29, no. 3 (1994): 254-272 <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25056983>. Von Frank detailed Saffin's connection to Virginia and his actions in the domestic and Atlantic slave trade. Ann Plane included a detailed account of Saffin's actions in the case, as well as in the 1701 case of an Indian woman who sued for her freedom on the basis that she was fraudulently held as a "slave for life."

¹¹¹ Although several historical works focus on the contested marriage of John Livingston and others consider the Jackson case, these incidents are always approached separately. The scandal John's marriage to Elizabeth caused is discussed in Sargent Bush Jr.'s introduction to Sarah Knight, *The Journal of Madam Knight*, in *Journeys in New Worlds: Early American Women's Narratives*, ed. William L. Andrews (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1990), 73. Leder also explored the fallout from Mary's death and John's quick remarriage in *Robert Livingston*, 228-229. The Jackson case was included in *The Rogerenes: Some Hitherto Unpublished Annals Belonging to the Colonial History of Connecticut*, eds. John Rogers Bolles and Anna Bolles Williams (Springfield, MA: Anna B. Williams, 1904), 7-8, 220-223, 225. The Jackson family's bid for freedom was covered in detail in chapter 5 of Catherine Adams and Elizabeth H. Pleck, *Love of Freedom: Black Women in Colonial and Revolutionary New England* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010). It was also briefly mentioned in James M. Rose and Alice Eichholz, eds., *Black Genesis* (Detroit: Gale Research Co., 1978), 1: 9. Allegra di Bonaventura's dissertation, *This Little World: Family and slavery in old New England, 1678—1764* examined the Jacksons and Livingstons together, but came to my attention too late to include in this analysis.

couple to voluntarily return to slavery. His letter to his mother revealed the fruitlessness of that argument; he was forced to admit, “I could not manage to get our Negroes to consent to go home.” Not only would the enslaved people not return, his letter indicated that they knew he no longer had power to compel their actions. He continued, “they say that there is no means to get them from there.”¹¹² Although Philip failed in returning those slaves to his family compound, he became a wealthy slave trader and secretary of Indian affairs for New York.¹¹³

These events likely ran through his mind as John Livingston represented Samuel Beebe. It did not hurt that he was arguing the case in front of a family friend, Reverend Gurdon Saltonstall. Saltonstall, a graduate of Harvard, was Fitz-John Winthrop’s friend and spiritual advisor. Saltonstall’s appointment as governor of the colony of Connecticut after Winthrop’s death was highly unusual, occasioning the magistrate to send his congregation a letter preparing them for his resignation as minister. By the time of the case, Saltonstall had been appointed chief judge of the superior court.¹¹⁴

Livingston not only won the case, but ended up owning the Jacksons. The sentence was harsh. Jackson was compelled to pay Beebe twice the value of his wife and his children, as well as to cover Beebe’s legal fees. John Jackson and his lawyer, John Rogers, reacted emotionally to the decision, and both men were held in contempt of court. John Rogers was thrown into prison, and Jackson was indentured to Beebe in order to repay the exorbitant fees he was ordered to pay by the court. Beebe sold Jackson’s indenture to Col. John Livingston.

¹¹² Philip to Alida Livingston, 28 October 1713, LFP-Trans.

¹¹³ Philip succeeded his father, Robert, as secretary of Indian Affairs and invested in the slave ship *Rhode Island* in 1748. For nearly two decades, Philip was one of the most prolific slave traders in New York. For more information, see Kierner, *Traders and Gentlefolk*, 53, 71-72; Singer, “The Livingstons as Slaveholders,” 70; See also the account book of the slave ship “*Rhode Island*,” misc. reel 5, New-York Historical Society: <http://cdm128401.cdmhost.com/cdm/landingpage/collection/p15052coll5>.

¹¹⁴ John Langdon Sibley, *Biographical Sketches of Graduates of Harvard University in Cambridge, Massachusetts* (Cambridge: Charles William Sever, 1885), 3: 278-281 (hereafter cited as *Harvard Graduates*).

As a result of the trial, John Livingston acquired the Jackson family. When the Jacksons were compelled to serve the Livingstons, they entered a domestic situation in crisis. Just a few months after John Jackson's daring attempt to rescue his wife and family, Mary Winthrop Livingston underwent a mastectomy in New York City. John Livingston's sister, Joanna, had seen Mary through the surgery and accompanied her home to Connecticut. Yet Mary's trial was far from over. While the Jacksons toiled in the Livingston household, and Joan Jackson gave birth to a little boy named Jeremiah, Mary underwent three more surgeries to fight her cancer. She died in January 1713.¹¹⁵

Just nine months later, John married again. John's sisters were not pleased with his new wife and dispatched a series of outraged letters to their parents in June 1713. Joanna, who had stayed by her sister-in-law's side during her multiple surgeries, wrote that John's intended wife, Elizabeth Knight, had a very "Stend Cerraceter."¹¹⁶ Margaret's letter echoed her sister's sentiment and she elaborated that Knight's reputation had been damaged in Boston. Many people believed that Elizabeth and John started their relationship together while his wife Mary was dying.¹¹⁷

At the same time the Livingston household gained Elizabeth Knight, the Jacksons' lives were thrown into chaos. John Livingston decided to liquidate his assets, which included the Jacksons, and to move to New London with his new wife. Like Beebe's lawyer years before, Livingston knew that the Jacksons hotly contested any man's claim to their bodies. It is likely that they also would not have received much sympathy from Livingston's new wife. While

¹¹⁵ Johanna Livingston to Robert Livingston, 19 Nov 1712, 18 Jan 1713, reel 3, LR-MSS; John to Robert Livingston, 19 January 1713, reel 3, LR-MSS. Sargent Bush Jr. mentions Mary Winthrop's death in *Journeys in New Worlds*, 73. Joanna's support of Mary during her cancer is included in Sara S. Gronim, *Everyday Nature: Knowledge of the Natural World in Colonial New York* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2007), 38. On those two occasions, Joanna signed her name "Johanna."

¹¹⁶ Joanna to Robert Livingston, 22 June 1713, 29 June 1713, reel 3, LR-MSS; Margaret Vetch to Robert Livingston, 29 June 1713, reel 3, LR-MSS.

¹¹⁷ Bush, introduction to *The Journal of Madam Knight*, 73.

traveling between Boston and New York in 1704, Madam Sarah Knight, Elizabeth's mother, derisively noted that Connecticut farmers were "too Indulgent to their slaves: suffering too great familiarity from them, permitting them to sit at Table and eat with them, (as they say to save time,) and into the dish goes the black hoof as freely as the white hand."¹¹⁸ Sarah Knight was no fan of black court action. She continued, writing that an enslaved man won a lawsuit against a white farmer, who was ordered "to pay 40s to black face, and acknowledge his fault."¹¹⁹ Raised by a mother who held such views, it is doubtful that Elizabeth Livingston would have championed the Jacksons' cause. John Livingston split up the Jackson family again, taking Joan and her young son Jeremiah to Boston and selling them to John Stone, a slaveholder from Framingham.¹²⁰

Yet this sale proved advantageous for the Jacksons. As John Jackson continued to serve the remainder of his indenture with Livingston, in 1716 Joan successfully sued for her freedom. Stone vigorously fought to keep Joan and her son, but, failing that, he sued the man who had brought them into his household: John Livingston, likely compounding Livingston's chronic indebtedness. Joan and John Jackson were reunited in New London, and John also sued Livingston for lands he had been promised at the end of his indenture. Although he won the case, he lost the war. John Livingston sold Jackson's son, John Jr., and when Jackson attempted to sue the new owner for his son's freedom, he lost.¹²¹ Livingston and his wife continued to hold other people in bondage. An Indian man and black woman were listed in Elizabeth's will.¹²²

¹¹⁸ Sarah Kemble Knight, *The Journal of Madam Knight*, in *Colonial American Travel Narratives*, ed. Wendy Martin (New York: Penguin Books, 1994), 64.

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

¹²⁰ William Richard Cutter, ed., *Historic Homes and Places and Genealogical and Personal Memories relating to the families of Middlesex County, Massachusetts* (New York: Lewis Historical Publishing Company, 1908), 3: 1159.

¹²¹ Adams and Pleck, *Love of Freedom*, 72.

¹²² Mary Beth Norton expands on the Knight family slaveholdings in *Separated by Their Sex: Women in Public and Private in the Colonial Atlantic World* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2011), 106-107, 216n9.

This episode gives insight into the tangled web of slaveholding and kinship ties and the ways that the enslaved were caught up in the lines of patronage and kinship that connected elite slaveholding families. John Livingston benefited from the networks forged by his father—from the court appointees in the Jackson case to Mather’s presence at his contested wedding. The events that permanently altered John Livingston’s life threw the Jackson family into chaos. New York’s ruling elite shared ties of family, patronage and slavery with their New England counterparts and these connections transformed the lives of those they held in bondage.

1.3 “Our poor slaves”: Slavery and Massachusetts’s elite intellectual culture

Despite the rosy picture painted by the inter-colonial ties of elites, Massachusetts and New York had a fractious relationship. During the seventeenth century, when they were ruled by rival polities, they vied for the same territory—New Netherland claimed land as far north as Cape Cod—trading claims and barbs in a struggle for ascendancy.¹²³ This pattern of friendly yet contentious relations placed an indelible mark on the two colonies. Even the Livingstons, who enjoyed relations with the Connecticut and Massachusetts elite that were cozy enough to call in favors for their son, John, had choice words for New England. A frustrated Alida wrote in 1692, “That is what you get from New England, you get cheated.”¹²⁴ Though she was referring to the suspicious loss of animals brought back from her contacts in New England, she might also have been frustrated by the unsuccessful search for her runaway, who had evaded her efforts for over a year. When witchcraft hysteria engulfed Essex County four years later, New Yorkers were

¹²³ Massachusetts’s border struggles with New York did not disappear after the fall of New Netherland. Jill Lepore expands on the continued friction New York’s and Massachusetts’s dueling claims to Maine had on the relationships of elite delegates appointed to adjudicate these disputes in *New York Burning*, 206.

¹²⁴ Alida to Robert Livingston, 7 April 1692, in Biemer, ed. and trans., “Business Letters of Alida Schuyler Livingston,” 190.

quick to judge.¹²⁵ But at least one New Englander saw in New York's slave conspiracy almost fifty years later a perfect moment to point out the other colony's hypocrisy. Plymouth Judge Josiah Cotton opened his anonymous letter to Cadwallader Colden innocently enough.¹²⁶ Affecting a neutral air, he noted the similarity of the New York slave conspiracy and the Salem trials, but his *schadenfreude* was unmistakable as he quipped about the trials, "Which if I don't mistake New York justly reproached us for, & mockt at our Credulity about; may it not now be justly retorted, *mutate nomine de te fabula narrator*," or "change the name, and the story is about you."¹²⁷

Josiah Cotton flaunted his learning as he reveled in irony, choosing the words of Horace's *Satires* for his punch line, which he delivered in Latin. After briefly comparing the two situations, he predicted "that Negro and Spectre evidence will turn out alike." But it was not enough for the author that the two colonies were the same. His true motive was to prove that New York was worse. At least Massachusetts had the humanity to hang (most) of their innocent victims, "For any body would chuse rather to be hanged than to be burnt." This grim choice given to slaves by the hysterical New Yorkers, he argued, led not to the truth but to coerced confessions. He continued, "I intreat you not to go on to Massacre & destroy your own Estates by making Bonfires of the Negroes, perhaps thereby loading yourselves with greater Guilt than

¹²⁵ Mary Beth Norton noted that New Yorkers were critical of the trials, but the ministerial leaders accepted the existence of witches as fact and believed that the devil might have been behind the accusers' torments. Norton, *In the Devil's Snare*, 287.

¹²⁶ Cadwallader Colden worked closely with Philip Livingston as a Commissioner of the Province of New York for Indian Affairs. A speech to the Five Nations on behalf of New York, which he and Philip Livingston gave in Albany on 19 August 1746 is included in his book, *The History of the Five Indian Nations of Canada: Which are Dependent on the Province of New York....* (New York: New Amsterdam Book Company, 1902), 2: 226-234. Jill Lepore noted that Colden was infuriated by the letter and suspected that it did not actually come from Boston, but from another New Yorker using Boston to disguise his identity. However, his friends did not agree with his assessment, and believed that the letter likely came from New England. Lepore included Douglas Winiarski's discovery that the letter was actually written by the Plymouth judge and slaveowner, Josiah Cotton. Lepore, *New York Burning*, 205-209.

¹²⁷ Daniel Horsmanden, *The New York Conspiracy Trials of 1741: Daniel Horsmanden's Journal...*, ed. Serena R. Zabin (Boston: Bedford St. Martin's, 2004), 172.

theirs.” Channeling the spirit of Massachusetts’s Puritan faith, he warned, “For we have too much reason to fear that the Divine Vengeances does & will pursue us for our ill treatment of the bodies & souls of our poor slaves.”¹²⁸ Yet “negro bonfires” was in fact something the two colonies had in common.

Cotton Mather included an account of a 1681 slave execution he had witnessed on Boston Common in his massive *Magnalia Christi Americana*. After refusing all calls for repentance, a rapist whom Mather referred to only as “W.C.” was persuaded to contrition by the death of a slave. Mather dramatically wrote that the man “saw death,” parenthetically expounding “and a picture of *hell*, too, in a negro then burnt to death at the stake, for burning her master’s house, with some that were in it.”¹²⁹ Although scholars have pointed to Josiah Cotton’s regret at the loss of his own runaway slave man, perhaps he also recalled his uncle Cotton Mather’s description as he warned Colden to fear “the Divine Vengeance.”¹³⁰ Heaven’s retribution for Mather was that the execution of the slave, a woman named Maria, lingered in his mind for eighteen years before he was compelled to put pen to paper, immortalizing the horrific moment for posterity.¹³¹ Perhaps Cotton offered Colden the advice to avoid “loading yourselves with greater Guilt than theirs” from experience. Perhaps he was arguing from a grim familial collective memory of over a half century that burning blacks heaped destruction on the “estates” of Massachusetts’s elites. Whatever his meaning, he wrote to Colden with the familiarity of a fellow slaveholder, referring to the enslaved as “our poor slaves” and reflecting a shared cultural ease with bondage that is

¹²⁸ Ibid., 172.

¹²⁹ Cotton Mather, *Magnalia Christi Americana*, ed. Thomas Robbins (1702; repr., Hartford, CT: S. Andrus and Son, 1853), 2: 409.

¹³⁰ Lepore termed Cotton a “somewhat ambivalent slave owner” who wrote that he regretted that his enslaved man Quominuk had run away, believing that his version of slavery offered enough opportunity for “liberty” to entice the man back. Lepore, *New York Burning*, 209.

¹³¹ Wendy Warren identified Maria and discussed both her execution and its lingering effects on the minds and actions of Massachusetts slaves and slaveholders in “Enslaved Africans in New England,” 204-215.

usually associated with the southern colonies.¹³² He entreated Colden to reason together, one master to another.

Massachusetts's influential intellectual culture was shaped by slaves. Cambridge and Boston's scholars, merchants and divines were supported, to a larger degree than most other eighteenth-century denizens of Massachusetts Bay, by the forced labor of enslaved Africans and Indians. In the summer of 1721, smallpox ravaged the Massachusetts Bay colony. Cotton Mather did not reach out solely to his elite network for assistance as the Livingstons had done when John required a well-respected minister to authenticate his second marriage. Instead, Mather also enlisted the help of his slave, Onesimus.¹³³ Several years earlier, Onesimus reported to Mather that he had "undergone an Operation, which had given him something of the Small-Pox & would forever praeserve him from it; adding that it was often used among the Guramantese."¹³⁴ Mather did reach out to elites, working closely with two fellow Harvard alums. Reverend Benjamin Coleman, who, like Mather, was an amateur scientist, interviewed the wider enslaved community about the inoculation, and Zabdiel Boylston submitted his son as well as his slaves as test subjects. Though Mather received vociferous and, in one case, violent censure, he was eager to

¹³² Colden was also a slaveholder. Charles Foy includes Colden's sale of a black woman to a Barbadian planter in order to separate her from her children. Foy, "Ports of Slavery, Ports of Freedom," 64.

¹³³ Margot Minardi detailed Onesimus's involvement with Mather, Mather's consultations with blacks, and the racial implications of the controversy that followed in "The Boston Inoculation Controversy of 1721-1722: An Incident in the History of Race," *William and Mary Quarterly* 61, no. 1 (January 2004): 47-76, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/362582>.

¹³⁴ Cotton Mather to Dr. John Woodward, July 12, 1716, in *Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical Society: October 1911- June 1912*, ed. Worthington Chauncey Ford (Boston, MA: Massachusetts Historical Society, 1912), 45: 422. Although Mather did indicate that he had also heard of the practice of inoculation in ancient Constantinople, he wrote in *Angel of Bethesda* that he "was first instructed in it [smallpox inoculation], by a *Guaramantee*-Servant of my own, long before I knew, that any *Europeans* or *Asiaticks* had the least Acquaintance with it." Tellingly, Mather omitted giving Onesimus credit in the *Angel of Bethesda*, unlike in his letter to Dr. John Woodward of the Royal Society, opting to refer to him as a servant. Cotton Mather, *The Angel of Bethesda*, ed. Gordon W. Jones (Boston: American Antiquarian Society and Barre Publishers, 1971), 107.

“hasten unto Holland” and give an “account of the astonishing Success, which we have here seen of the *Small –Pox inoculated*.”¹³⁵

Ideas were propagated across the Atlantic and throughout Europe along lines of honor and trade. Although distanced from the centers of learning in London and Leiden, New World scientists yearned to participate in the global exchange of scientific ideas.¹³⁶ African slaves had a crucial role in facilitating their masters’ scientific ambitions, forming a large portion of the “armies of people” that Harold Cook noted “worked to gather new and old information and to sort out the true from the false.”¹³⁷

Mather’s success was accordingly born out of an intellectual culture surrounded by and enmeshed in an enslaved community.¹³⁸ Over a half century earlier, Richard Ligon noted the potential for further application of the medical practices of enslaved Africans and natives of Barbados, writing that “some Simples grow there, that are more proper for the bodies of the Natives, than any we can bring from forraigne parts, and no doubt would be so for our bodies too, if wee knew the trues use of them.”¹³⁹ Mather completed what Ligon only observed by tapping into the resource of knowledge that existed around him in the community of enslaved Africans in Boston.

¹³⁵ Mather’s entry was dated 14 December 1721. Cotton Mather, *The Diary of Cotton Mather*, ed. Gordon W. Jones (Boston, MA: Massachusetts Historical Society, 1911), 2: 664.

¹³⁶ The seventeenth and eighteenth-century scientific revolution was connected to networks of reciprocity, slavery, and the world of Atlantic goods. Londa Schiebinger, *Plants and Empire: Colonial Bioprospecting in the Atlantic World* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004), 17, 73; Stephen Shapin, *A Social History of the Truth: Civility and Science in Seventeenth-Century England* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 410; Harold John Cook, *Matters of Exchange: Commerce, Medicine and Science in the Dutch Golden Age* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007), 225.

¹³⁷ Cook, *Matters of Exchange*, 225.

¹³⁸ William Pierson, although focused on recentralizing the black experience in the North, demurred tackling this question. Instead, he argued that, “unlike elsewhere in the Americas, where black populations considerably Africanized their surrounding societies, the black community of New England had relatively little influence on the development of mainstream Yankee culture.” Pierson, *Black Yankees*, 25. The “other” areas, although unspecified by Pierson, are most certainly the southern colonies. Yet such a contention ignores the daily interpenetration of the lived experience of master and slave in the Northern colonies.

¹³⁹ Richard Ligon, *A True and Exact History of the Island of Barbados....* (London, 1673), 118.

The knowledge that enslaved Africans shared with Mather, Colman, and Boylston reflected not only a moment of cross-cultural communication between whites and blacks, but also the degree of African cultural retention circulating within the enslaved community of Cambridge and Boston. Meeting the claims of detractors, who argued that enslaved testimony about the effectiveness of smallpox inoculations could not be trusted, Mather wrote, “I have since mett with a considerable Number of these *Africans* who all agree in One Story.”¹⁴⁰ It is unlikely that these Africans, enslaved by Mather’s intellectual and financial acquaintances, all retained identical individual recollections of the inoculation. Rather, they spoke together, sharing what they knew among themselves before being compelled to communicate that knowledge to their white owners. The enslaved labored to support an academy they could never engage as equals, facing short lives that promised degradation, sickness, and perpetual bondage, but through the trials of everyday survival, they maintained amongst themselves separate reservoirs of knowledge.

* * * * *

On a dark day, when rain pelted the dusty ground of Cambridge’s dirt cow paths and lightning and thunder followed one another with flash and cacophony, Cicely, the thirteen-year-old black servant of the Harvard tutor and Puritan clergyman William Brattle, died. It was April 8, 1714, and the weather details might have passed forgotten had not her master’s friend, Judge Samuel Sewall, recorded them in his diary, a practice he followed for fifty years. When Sewall, a man remembered not only for his part in the Salem witch trials of the 1690s but also for penning one of the first anti-slavery tracts in the English colonies, looked towards the inky

¹⁴⁰ Mather, *The Angel of Bethesda*, 107.

sky and remarked “I have hardly seen such Thick Darkness,” he had no knowledge of the passing of Cicely, nor do subsequent entries in his diary give indication that he noted her death at all.¹⁴¹ But her headstone, framed on its sides with carved fruit and vines, its letters formed in the delicate curlicue style of the famous Charlestown stonecutter John Lamson, indicated that Cicely’s life did not go unmourned.¹⁴² In the days that followed, her body was shuttled from the Brattle estate, down Watertown Path and towards the town burial ground. There, in the shadow of Harvard College, at which her master was minister and tutor, she was buried.

Three years later, on February 20, 1717, a long train of “the principal magistrates and ministers of Boston and the vicinity” made their way in a driving snowstorm down Watertown Path towards the Cambridge burial ground following the funeral procession of Cicely’s master, William Brattle.¹⁴³ Judge Sewall was among those in the long mourning train. Days before, upon hearing of Brattle’s decease, Sewall wrote in his diary that Brattle was “a Father to the Students of Harvard College, and a Physician, My Fast Friend.”¹⁴⁴ Among those assembled at the gravesite were former colleagues and students who reminisced about Brattle’s mentorship and piety. The only indication that Brattle had also once been a slave master to a little girl named Cicely lay engraved on a snow-covered tombstone, far from those who had gathered.

Here lyes ye body of Cicely Negro, late servant to Ye Reverend William Brattle.
She died April 8th 1714, being 13 years old.

¹⁴¹ Samuel Sewall, *The Diary of Samuel Sewall*, ed. M. Halsey Thomas (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1973), 2: 752.

¹⁴² The Lamsons of Charlestown were stonecutters who carved gravestones in Boston and its surrounding areas for three generations. Their distinctive style closely mirrored the medieval style of Europe and is identifiable by the detail on the death’s head and lettering on the stone. There are several examples of the Lamson family work in the Old Cambridge burial ground, though an early Lamson is very rare. Cicely’s stone holds the telltale marks of an early Lamson stone. For more information on the Lamson stonecutters of Boston, see Ralph L. Tucker, “The Lamson Family Gravestone Carvers of Charlestown and Malden, Massachusetts,” *Markers* 10 (1993): 150-217.

¹⁴³ “William Brattle” in *Harvard Graduates*, 3: 204-5.

¹⁴⁴ Sewall, *Diary*, 2: 846.

Lines of gray slate tombstones sit off winding footpaths, linking generations in family plots. The Latin-inscribed altar tomb of Cicely's master, the Reverend William Brattle, stands among the decorative memorials to other eminent divines and Harvard presidents. Its weathered stone face bears the names of Brattle's wife Elizabeth, his nephew James Oliver, and Oliver's wife Mercy. Cicely does not rest in close proximity to her master, but rather near a burial mound used for Cambridge residents who succumbed to smallpox.¹⁴⁵ No stones with the name of her grandparents, parents, brothers, or sisters encircle her memorial. Only the headstone of another enslaved African woman, Jane, who was the servant of Harvard steward Andrew Boardman and died over thirty years after Cicely, sits nearby. Thus racial identification fills the gaping hole where kinship should be, for Cicely's marker forever declares that she was a Negro, a girl of thirteen whose short life was spent in perpetual servitude, orphaned by the reality of New England slavery. But she did not pass quietly into the night of history, for the Brattles memorialized her place among them and, in so doing, left a story of salvation, slavery, and a little girl named Cicely.

What answers can the grave marker of a young slave girl really offer? Upon first inspection, the ornate memorial to a thirteen-year-old black slave girl seems to yield little. Its epitaph memorializes a short life lived in slavery. Yet when coupled with existing Brattle family wills, papers, and possessions, Cicely's grave marker discloses an enslaved life at the very heart of a large slave community surrounding Cambridge elites, a reality that is often overshadowed by a broader look at the relatively small proportion of enslaved Africans in the colony of Massachusetts Bay as a whole. It uncovers a world of multi-ethnic community ties and racial alienation, visible sainthood and slavery. Her tombstone, the only remaining documentation that attests to her existence, serves as a treasure map, its weathered façade containing clues which not

¹⁴⁵ *A Self-Guided Tour of The Old Burying Ground*, Collections of the Cambridge Historical Commission, 2.

only give insight into Cicely's life, but also attested to the centrality of the slave experience in the narrative of colonial Cambridge, Boston and its surrounding areas, a multi-cultural Atlantic community that existed concurrently with an emergent colonial intellectual culture.

From Brattle's parsonage overlooking a fledgling Harvard College, Cicely spent her life in unfree service as her master labored to shape the minds of his students, men who would become the political and ministerial elite of their time. She was one among a community of enslaved Africans who worked in fields, homes, and garden plots, maintaining the intellectual world of their masters.

Although her epitaph reads that Cicely was the "late servant to ye Reverend William Brattle," Cicely's days of service were probably spent with Brattle's wife, Elizabeth, and tending their young son, William. Most enslaved women in Boston worked as domestics, and Cicely's duties would have probably included cooking and cleaning.¹⁴⁶ Brattle's probate inventory offers glimpses into this domestic life, with lines for ordinary kitchen items, such as a "brass kettle" and "pewter quart pot" as well as the expensive pieces of domestic life, such as "China earthen, ware & glasses," and "Sowing & sticking silk." Listed also are "white sugar" and "chocolate," the products of slave production, which, along with the trade in human beings, linked Cambridge to Barbados, as well as "A child's whistle with coral in it," evidence of the small boy only three years younger than Cicely who was probably her young charge. Elizabeth Hayman Brattle, Cicely's mistress, only had two boys, one of whom died in childhood, and that fact, coupled with the presence of Cicely's ornate marker, suggests that Cicely meant more to the family than just

¹⁴⁶ Robert E. Desrochers Jr. briefly discussed the duties of female slaves in "Slave-For-Sale Advertisements and Slavery in Massachusetts, 1704-1781," *William and Mary Quarterly* 59, no. 3 (July 2002): 627, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3491467>. Lorenzo Johnston Greene also detailed slave women's tasks in *The Negro in Colonial New England* (1942; repr., New York: Atheneum, 1968), 110.

mere property.¹⁴⁷ She was intimately connected to household production, and might have served as a playmate to little William as well as a companion to Elizabeth, who had no girls of her own.

A monument to the paradoxes of household slavery as much as a memorial to a little girl, Cicely's grave marker points to the ways in which enslaved Africans, even some as young as Cicely, met the daily challenges of survival in a system where a failure to excel at the task assigned would have resulted in sale. The proximity of enslaved Africans to their masters and mistresses under "household slavery" did not necessarily equal intimacy, and if they did not complete tasks to their master's satisfaction these "household slaves" could easily be disposed of. Cecily's grave marker attests that though she lived only just past a decade, she remained with the Brattles. Whether it was the companionship that Elizabeth Brattle gained from the young girl, or Cicely's own skill at household duties that not only kept her from sale away from the Brattles, but also earned her a grave marker, will never be known. In some way, the young girl navigated the intricate codes of slavery in life, to warrant memorial in death.

Perhaps dying in her youth saved her from the perils that her developing body would have added to her survival. Fecundity was not prized among enslaved Africans in eighteenth-century New England. Piersen wrote of "one sixteen-year-old Connecticut girl" whose master sold her "'for no fault but because she is like to be a good breeder.'" ¹⁴⁸ Had Cicely lived, the possibility of children might have raised the chances that she would have been sold away from the Brattles. Or if she weathered that storm, she might have had to endure the separation from her children, who were sometimes not sold but rather "given away...like puppies." ¹⁴⁹ But death came to Cicely before the perils of puberty added its increased challenges to the survival that she had carved out among the Brattles.

¹⁴⁷ "William Brattle" in *Harvard Graduates*, 3: 208.

¹⁴⁸ Piersen, *Black Yankees*, 19.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 27.

Cicely remained a “Negro servant,” a slave for life, a status forever separating her not only from the family that she served but from her own family. This epigraph, engraved in slate, illuminates a life lived at the very center of household production but on the outskirts of true family. Among the varied items of William Brattle’s 1717 probate inventory is listed “One Feather bed and bolster, weight 70 lbs,” another “featherbed and bolster weight 58lbs” and “an old bedstead, cord and strawbed.”¹⁵⁰ These items at first glance seem to stand at odds with one another, one denoting refinement and wealth, the other plain necessity. Featherbeds were very expensive in the colonial period, a stark reflection of the Brattles’ affluence, which was considerable enough to be mentioned in William Brattle’s funeral sermon. When Benjamin Colman eulogized Brattle and Ebenezer Pemberton, a ministerial colleague who died a day before Brattle, Colman stated that, of the two men, Brattle was “favor’d with the greater temporal estate.”¹⁵¹ Although costly featherbeds seem to correspond with this description, straw beds seemingly do not, for they were inexpensive and commonly found in the probate inventories of the “middling” class and even the poor.

Although opulent featherbeds and bolsters reflected Brattle’s vaulted status, so too did the “old bedstead, cord and strawbed,” for, taken together, they pointed to his position as a slaveholder, another marker of his place among the elite. Scholars have observed that slaves were boarded in the upper floors of slaveowning households on straw beds. They shared space with storage items such as bedding, boxes, lumber and other furniture.¹⁵² Following the mention of the “straw bed” the probate inventory listed “7 old pillows,” “4 old Trunks,” and “an old chest & old lumber,” suggesting that these objects were meant for Brattle’s slaves, and possibly were

¹⁵⁰ Inventory of William Brattle, 1717, microform no. 2499, Middlesex County Probate Records, Massachusetts State Archives (hereafter cited as MSA).

¹⁵¹ Benjamin Coleman, *A Sermon At the Lecture in Boston, After the Funerals of Those Excellent & Learned Divines and Eminent Fellows of Harvard College The Reverend, Mr. William Brattle...* (Boston: Printed by B. Green, for Samuel Gerrish and Daniel Henchman, Sold at their Shops, 1717), 29.

¹⁵² Benes, “Slavery in Boston Households, 1647-1770,” in Benes, ed, *Slavery/Antislavery in New England*, 21.

used by Cicely in a Spartan attic bedchamber. Cicely served in a household of silk and featherbeds, her body a living symbol of Brattle's wealth, but slept in the attic on a bed of straw and old pillows.

But although Cicely would have remained separate from the Brattles' world, she was not isolated. The female networks that knit Elizabeth Brattle to other women in her community might also have knit Cicely to the larger community of enslaved Africans. The first reference to slavery at Harvard College came in 1639, just three years after its founding.¹⁵³ There were 192 adult males in a "list of persones and estates" taken for Cambridge in 1688. Just a cursory glance of the list reveals several households that likely held slaves.¹⁵⁴ Cambridge keenly experienced the slave boom that affected Massachusetts in the opening decades of the eighteenth century, sporting "a black population nearly three times greater than that of any other place with less than 2000 inhabitants in the whole province."¹⁵⁵ In his will, William Brattle mentioned over fifty friends, colleagues, and family members by name, and of that number many were slaveholders. Among them were men such as the Harvard steward Andrew Boardman, whose black slave Jane rests next to Cicely; Thomas Danforth, whose slaves were baptized by William Brattle; and Daniel Gookin, who owned a plantation in Maryland, held slaves in Massachusetts, advocated for the praying Indians during King Philip's war, and was involved in a lengthy civil case with another slaveholder regarding the proper claim to a slave named Sylvannus Warro.¹⁵⁶ The

¹⁵³ Black Cantabridgia Chronology, *Collections of the Cambridge Historical Commission*. Caldwell Titcomb wrote, "The earliest reference to a black at Harvard was the admission by the wife of the College's first head that a slave had lain on a student's bed in 1639." Werner Sollors, ed., *Blacks at Harvard: A Documentary History of African-American Experience at Harvard and Radcliffe* (New York: New York University Press 1993), 1.

¹⁵⁴ Lucius R. Paige, *History of Cambridge Massachusetts. 1630-1877: With a Genealogical Register* (Cambridge: The Riverside Press, 1877), 440-442. The list included the slaveholders Thomas Danforth, Samuel Gookin, and Andrew Boardman.

¹⁵⁵ Samuel Francis Batchelder, "Col. Henry Vassal and His Wife Penelope Vassall with Some Account of His Slaves," in *The Cambridge Historical Society: Publications Proceedings, January 26, 1915-October 26, 1915*, no. 10 (Cambridge, MA: Published by the Society, 1917), 63.

¹⁵⁶ Sylvannus Warro's ownership was contested between Daniel Gookin, his former master, and Jonathan Wade, his subsequent master. Wade won the case against Gookin for Warro. For more information on the legal case

community of enslaved people who served Cambridge and Boston's elite made acquaintances, mingled, and was separated from each other along extended kinship, friendship and business networks of white masters, mistresses and their children.

Along the avenues of white kinship among eighteenth century Cambridge elite lay the hidden pathways of slavery. Describing Elizabeth Brattle's burial on July 30, 1715, Judge Sewall wrote,

Mrs. Brattle Buried; Bearers, President, Mr. Angier; Gibbs, Wadsworth; Pemberton, Bradstreet. Fellows Flint, Holyoke, Robie had Scarvs. After the women followed L^t Gov Usher, Sewall; Jos. Lynde, E^m Hutchinson; Tho. Oliver, Francis Foxcroft esqr. Twas Six a-clock when came out of the Burying place; so I came Straight home upon my Gray Horse; Saw a Rainbow in Charlestown Market place.¹⁵⁷

Nestled within Sewall's list that included the Harvard president, college fellows and other eminent men are "the women," who followed Elizabeth Brattle's burial train. Although rendered nameless by Sewall, this group of women likely formed the core of Elizabeth's closest group in life. Family and friends, the wives of Harvard divines, intellectuals, and Boston financiers, many of these women, like Elizabeth Brattle, also counted enslaved Africans among their households.

It is certain that the Oliver and Brattle families maintained close contact, as Thomas Oliver was included in the list of men in Elizabeth's burial procession, and Brattle's nephew James Oliver, whose mother Elizabeth was Brattle's sister, is buried next to William and Elizabeth Brattle. In 1704, three years after Cicely's birth, William Brattle's sister Elizabeth Oliver was widowed. Her deceased husband, Nathaniel, left his family a large estate with property valued at £5250.7.10, including a "brick warehouse, brew-house, salt-house, one fourth of windmill on Fort Hill, goods in warehouses to the amount of £1260," his "house stable, etc. in

surrounding the ownership of Sylvannus Warro, see M. Michelle Jarrett Morris, "'Sold to Mayntence a Bastard': Sylvannus Warro's Story," in Benes, ed, *Slavery/Antislavery in New England*, 31-43.

¹⁵⁷ Sewall, *Diary*, 2: 795.

Boston” and “two negro ‘maides.’”¹⁵⁸ As in this case, many enslaved persons were part of sizable estates passed on by husbands to their wives.¹⁵⁹ Some new widows would hire their slaves out while others would give them to family members.¹⁶⁰ With the responsibility of overseeing her husband’s sizable property and her own large family, it is not unlikely that Elizabeth Oliver gave the youngest of her “negro maides,” who was, perhaps, the child of the other, to her brother William, to aid in the care of his own young family after the birth of his second child. If the bonds of family did not knit Cicely with these “negro maides” perhaps bonds of friendship were nurtured when the two close families visited one another.

Her gravestone’s inscription, forever confessing that the youth buried beneath it was a black slave, directs its onlooker to the debate that was beginning in Cicely’s lifetime among Brattle’s tight-knit circle of intellectuals, about the place of the enslaved in the colony of Massachusetts, their larger significance to the English colonies and the morality of bondage.

Six years before Cicely’s birth, the Reverend William Brattle was given a silver basin by his Harvard students that bore his family crest and the inscription “Ex dono Pupillorum.”¹⁶¹ The gift was no empty gesture, for several diary entries of former students attest that Brattle had earned their respect. In 1690, during a smallpox epidemic, he had refused to quit the college, choosing instead to stay behind to care for sick students, even to the detriment of his own health.¹⁶² Along with his best friend and former Harvard classmate John Leverett, he ran the school during the absentee presidency of Increase Mather, writing a Latin primer on logic that

¹⁵⁸ Inventory of Nathaniel Oliver, 1704, in *An Account of Some of the Descendants of Capt. Thomas Brattle*, ed. Edward-Doubleday Harris (Boston: Printed by D. Clapp and Son, 1867), 12.

¹⁵⁹ Benes, “Slavery in Boston Households,” 24.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid.

¹⁶¹ “The Dummer Bowl,” First Parish Cambridge Unitarian Universalist, <http://www.firstparishcambridge.org/?q=node/31> (Accessed September 15, 2008).

¹⁶² “William Brattle,” in *Harvard Graduates*, 3: 201.

would be translated and used in the college for over a century.¹⁶³ In his student Benjamin Colman's remembrance, Brattle was an "*Able, Faithful and tender Tutor*" but he also "search'd out Vice, and *browbeat* and punisht it with the Authority and just Anger of a *Master*."¹⁶⁴ That Brattle was in actuality Cicely's "master" makes this construction all the more illustrative. Slavery was just as much a part of Brattle's world as the intellectual and spiritual pursuits that filled his days and those of his coterie of friends and colleagues.

Cicely's presence in the Brattle household was but a part of a larger black community that surrounded the Brattles and their neighbors. The enslaved were traded directly off merchants' ships, out of private homes, in taverns as well as in warehouses, and one of these places might have been where Cicely was first bought by William Brattle.¹⁶⁵ It has been estimated that during the early eighteenth century nearly one out of every two enslaved blacks were "New Negro," and that fact, combined with the preference for young "New Negro" children that could be trained from childhood among wealthy New England slaveholders argues for Africa as Cicely's birthplace.¹⁶⁶ Brattle's family ties and business brought him regularly to the hub of Boston's slave market. The Brattles were one of the wealthiest families in Massachusetts.¹⁶⁷ William Brattle's father, Thomas Sr., was a successful merchant who held considerable property in Boston. Although William Brattle and his older brother, Thomas, chose to reside in Cambridge after graduating from Harvard College, the rest of his siblings remained in Boston, his sisters marrying wealthy businessmen and his youngest brother becoming a

¹⁶³ Brattle's published works were *An Ephemeris of Celestial Motions*...., published in 1682, *Almanack of the Coelestiall Motions*, published in 1693, and *Compendium Logicae Secundum principia*, published, posthumously, in 1735. Harvard College used Brattle's *Compendium Logicae Secundum principia* as a textbook until 1765. "William Brattle," in *Harvard Graduates*, 3: 206-207. For more on Brattle and Leverett's administration of Harvard College during the absentee presidency of Increase Mather, see Rick Alan Kennedy, "Thy Patriarch's Desire: Thomas and William Brattle in Puritan Massachusetts" (PhD. diss., University of California, Santa Barbara, 1987).

¹⁶⁴ Coleman, *A Sermon At the Lecture in Boston*, 32.

¹⁶⁵ Desrochers, "Slave-For-Sale Advertisements," 625.

¹⁶⁶ Piersen, *Black Yankees*, 5.

¹⁶⁷ Kennedy, "Thy Patriarch's Desire," 9-11.

merchant like his father. After the death of his father, William Brattle sold a portion of his Boston real estate inheritance, but his probate inventory lists among his assets “interest in wharves at Boston,” and he continued to utilize the services of the prominent Boston accounting firm Jacob, John, and Jacob Wendell to manage his property and investments.¹⁶⁸ Indeed, the Brattle family land in Boston was located at the very center of an area identified as lying in the heart of the slave trading district.¹⁶⁹ In addition to his connection to the Mathers, Brattle might have also been directly linked to the slaveholding elites of New York. A line in Brattle’s probate inventory listed that he had “some effects lying in New York.”

Baptismal records and occasional journal entries reveal what few other documents do. In 1698, William Brattle baptized “Philip [field], negro servant of Mr. Danforth” in First Church, indicating the first known presence of blacks in the First Church of Cambridge, which then lay within Harvard’s gates and served as the college chapel.¹⁷⁰ In the same year, Brattle’s colleague Cotton Mather, whose father Increase was then president of Harvard and was himself a Harvard graduate, wrote that he “baptized four Negroes; and the Lord helped mee, to make this Action a special Occasion of my glorifying Him; especially, with what I then spoke unto the rest of that Nation.”¹⁷¹ Those Mather baptized were an African man named Samuel and his two infant children, as well as a black enslaved woman named Katherine, whose husband Thomas was a chair-maker.¹⁷² Two years later, on June 19, 1700, Samuel Sewall noted that he comforted William Brattle’s sister Katherine as she stood at the burial of her husband John Eyre, who was laid alongside the graves of their nine children. He wrote,

¹⁶⁸ Jacob Wendell Account Book 1716-60, *Wendell Family Papers Part I, 1687-1835*, microfilm P-347, Box 1, vol. 3XT, Massachusetts Historical Society.

¹⁶⁹ Desrochers, “Slave-For-Sale Advertisements,” 624-25.

¹⁷⁰ Kennedy, “Thy Patriarch’s Desire,” 135.

¹⁷¹ Mather, *Diary*, 1: 278.

¹⁷² *Ibid.*

When I parted, I pray'd God to be favourably present with her, and comfort her in the absence of so near and dear a Relation. Having been long and much dissatisfied with the trade of fetching Negroes from Guinea; at last I had a strong Inclination to Write something about it; but it wore off.¹⁷³

It is possible that the diary entry reflects the happenstance confluence of two separate ideas occurring to Sewall at separate times on the same day, but it is also possible that the funeral within a slaveholding family guided his thoughts towards slavery. Was it the presence of enslaved Africans among the Brattles and those gathered that turned his mind to “the trade of fetching Negroes from Guinea”? Was it the sight of so many of those enslaved Africans who had been baptized by Brattle himself standing among their mourning owners that prompted in Sewall a “strong Inclination to Write something about” the slave trade? The answers to such questions will forever be hidden in history, but something motivated Sewall to set his dissatisfaction to paper.

Although Sewall indicated that the initial feeling of indignation “wore off,” shortly thereafter he authored *The Selling of Joseph*, one of the first antislavery tracts in the English colonies, the result of his increasing misgivings about the morality of the slave trade and the perpetual servitude of enslaved Africans, many of whom had converted to Christianity, as well as a degree of racist unease with the growing numbers of blacks in the colonies. In it, he compared the holding of African slaves to the immorality of the biblical Joseph’s enslavement at the hands of his brothers. After writing *The Selling of Joseph*, Sewall distributed it to several close friends, which most certainly would have included William Brattle, his “Fast Friend,” and ultimately entered a heated debate with John Saffin over the matter of the promised freedom of Saffin’s slave, Adam.¹⁷⁴

¹⁷³ Sewall, *Diary*, 1: 432-433.

¹⁷⁴ Saffin’s published response to Sewall, *A Brief and Candid Answer to a Late Printed sheet, Entitled, The Selling of Joseph*, opened with a poem declaring “Cowardly and Cruel are those Blacks Innate/ Prone to Revenge, Imp of

In *The Selling of Joseph*, Samuel Sewall described racial difference as primarily physical.

He wrote,

All things considered, it would conduce more to the Welfare of the Province, to have White Servants for a Term of Years, than to have Slaves for Life. Few can endure to hear of a Negro's being made free; and indeed they can seldom use their freedom well; yet their continual aspiring after their forbidden Liberty, renders them Unwilling Servants. And there is such a disparity in their Conditions, Colour & Hair, that they can never embody with us, and grow up into orderly Families, to the Peopling of the Land; but still remain in our Body Politick as a kind of extravasat Blood.¹⁷⁵

The Oxford English Dictionary (OED) defines “embody” as “to invest or clothe (a spirit) with a body” and includes John Healey’s 1610 translation of Augustine’s *City of God* describing “Devills beeing imbodyed in ayre;” an image that the former Salem witchcraft judge would have found familiar.¹⁷⁶ If Africans were incorporated to the general spirit of Massachusetts’s society, Sewall reasoned, the result would be a sick body. Indeed, the African part, according to Sewall would extravasate, or “force its way out,” like contaminated blood leaking from an infected body.

Sewall reasoned with his slaveholding audience in clearly racial terms. The “province” of Massachusetts would be buttressed by “White servants,” not “Negro,” and he did not need to explain whiteness to his audience. By 1700, “slaves for life” was a condition that was so common an association with enslaved Africans that even though blacks, like Cecily, were also described as “negro servants,” their lifetime enslaved status was little debated. Although Sewall’s description of African difference opened with a separation based on status, for Sewall, the true contagion to the “Body Politick,” was black bodies, “their Conditions, Color and their

inveterate hate.” Although Saffin opposed Sewall’s call for antislavery, he shared a similar degree of racial unease with blacks. John Saffin, *A Brief Candid Answer to a late Printed Sheet, Entiteld the Selling of Joseph* (1701) in *Against Slavery: An Abolitionist Reader*, ed. Mason L. Lowance (New York: Penguin Books, 2000), 17.

¹⁷⁵ Samuel Sewall, *The Selling of Joseph*, ed. Sidney Kaplan (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 1969), 10.

¹⁷⁶ “embody | imbody, v.,” OED Online, Oxford University Press, <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/60907?redirectedFrom=embody> (accessed April 29, 2013).

Hair.” The very physicality of African slaves was “a kind of extravasat Blood,” the reason why “they can never embody with us, and grow up into orderly Families, to the Peopling of the Land.”

The trade in enslaved Africans haunted Sewall so much so that he wrote in his diary that, after he had read a commentary written in 1618 by the English theologian Paul Baynes on the first chapter of Ephesians that “mentions Blackamoors,” he subsequently “began to be uneasy that I had so long neglected doing anything.”¹⁷⁷ After he wrote *The Selling of Joseph*, he was berated by some of the slaveholding elite and termed a friend of Negroes.¹⁷⁸ Yet in his argument against what he saw as the inhumanity of the slave trade, he spied a danger that was more formidable than even the wrath of God over the unjust “Selling of Joseph.” It was the disease of black bodies. In his estimation, the province was rife with a contagion the only cure for which was the importation of “White servants.” Race, in Sewall’s reasoning, was fixed, for “they can never embody with us” because they were fundamentally unlike “white servants.” He was not writing in the abstract, in his estimation the Africans he encountered daily were physically, essentially, racially different.

Yet even as Sewall questioned slavery’s place in the colony, life within the enslaved black community continued, brief joys coexisted with struggles and the indignity of bondage wore on even as the black experience continued to affect white life profoundly in colonial Cambridge and Boston. Four years after Samuel Sewall recording his “misgivings,” William Brattle baptized “Mingo and Charles the negro servants of Mr. [Peter] Town” and “Jeffry the

¹⁷⁷ Sewall, *Diary*, 1: 433.

¹⁷⁸ October 20, 1701, Sewall wrote in his diary that Cotton Mather, enraged that Sewall had sided with the faction determined to remove his father Increase from the Presidency of Harvard College, “talked very sharply against me as if I had used his father worse than a Neger....then [Mather] went and told Sam, that one pleaded much for Negroes, and he had used his father worse than a Negro.” *Ibid.*, 454.

negro servant of Mr. Goff, and Scipio,” the servant of the church record keeper.¹⁷⁹ In that same year, Peter Towne emancipated his slaves in his will.¹⁸⁰ In 1706, Mather’s congregation gave him the enslaved man who became instrumental to smallpox inoculation. In his diary Mather wrote that he had “wanted a *good Servant* at the expense of between forty and fifty Pounds.” This was a desire that “some gentleman of” Mather’s congregation fulfilled and “purchased for [Mather] a very likely *Slave*; a young man who is a *Negro* of a promising Aspect and Temper.” To Mather the gift was “a mighty smile of Heaven upon my family,” an emotion not likely shared by the young enslaved man exchanged between the churchgoers as Mather “putt upon him the Name of *Onesimus*.”¹⁸¹ Mather’s choice of the name Onesimus for his enslaved man placed Mather in the role of Philemon, the biblical master who was admonished by the apostle Paul to accept his runaway enslaved man, Onesimus, as a fellow Christian. It is important to note that Paul did not explicitly advise Philemon to free his newly Christianized enslaved man, a detail that could not have been lost on Mather when he received his enslaved man from his congregants.

Cicely, too, might have been offered as a shining ornament, presented to her master as a symbol of his friends’ and colleagues’ appreciation, though no written record or detailed diary entry of her sale survives. Yet Cicely’s grave marker and Christian burial attests to her baptism. Were Mingo and Charles, Jeffrey and Scipio tied to Cicely by bonds of kinship or to her parents in friendship, even as she was tied to the Brattles in bondage? In December 1711, Mather lamented that he “must keep a strict Eye on my Servant *Onesimus*; especially with regard unto

¹⁷⁹ Stephen P. Sharples, ed., *Records of the Church of Christ at Cambridge in New England, 1632-1830, Comprising the Ministerial Records of Baptisms, Marriages, Deaths, Admissions to Covenant and Communion, Dismissals and Church Proceedings*, (Boston: Eben Putnam, 1906), 59.

¹⁸⁰ Will of Peter Towne, 1704, microform reel no. 22675, Middlesex County Probate Records, MSA.

¹⁸¹ Mather, *Diary*, 1: 579.

his Company.”¹⁸² Was the “company”—so odious to Mather—that Onesimus kept that of other enslaved people? Did Cicely’s life among a clergyman’s household bring her in proximity with other enslaved Africans? Or were they strangers who shared a common fate of slavery? Was Cicely’s name chosen for her by Brattle to reflect his own penchant and passion for classical reason even as the choice of Onesimus reflected Mather’s resolve to “use the best Endeavours to make him a Servant of Christ”?¹⁸³ Caecilia, the name of the patroness of Roman matrons was also an early Christian martyr who, although married, took a vow of virginity. Perhaps Brattle intended that Cicely’s name would have one day been joined with one of the baptized blacks in wedding banns published in Cambridge had she lived past thirteen. Perhaps he also hoped that Cecily’s future marriage would be childless, like Caecilia’s.¹⁸⁴

The Brattle’s altar-style monument dwarfs the slate tombstone erected to Cicely’s memory. Inscribed in Latin, it attests to William Brattle’s place among the intellectual elite. But Cicely’s marker is also a monument to an intellectual culture of a different sort. Its short English inscription contrasts Brattle’s long Latin memorial, but it also attests to the process of language learning endured by New Africans. Although many enslaved Africans had a command of more than one European language in addition to several African languages, many others spoke little English.¹⁸⁵ Like Mather’s slaves, Cecily may have been made to learn and recite a catechism and gleaned knowledge of English along with a knowledge of Brattle’s particular form of Puritan Christianity.

Onesimus would not be ruled by Cotton Mather. Scholars point to his regular contact with other Africans and his marriage to a woman who lived outside of the Mather’s household as

¹⁸² Ibid., 2: 139.

¹⁸³ Ibid., 1: 579.

¹⁸⁴ Charlotte Mary Yonge, *History of Christian Names*, rev. ed. (London: Macmillan and Co, 1884), 143.

¹⁸⁵ Piersen, *Black Yankees*, 40-41.

actions that grieved Mather.¹⁸⁶ But none have allowed that Onesimus might have indeed experienced a religious conversion, but that the terms that he used to convey that conversion were unacceptable to Mather. Mather ultimately declared his mission to edify Onesimus a failure, deciding that his enslaved man's behavior was too disruptive. Yet instead of selling or sending him away, Mather granted Onesimus an attenuated freedom. Although Mather was unhappy with Onesimus, it is unlikely that the minister would have freed an enslaved man who showed no signs of conversion. Thomas Brattle's (William Brattle's brother) own brand of Puritanism drove a wedge in the Brattles' relationship with the Mathers when Thomas founded the Fourth Church of Boston.¹⁸⁷ This was the religious world into which Cicely gave confession. However genuine her religious experience might have been, she needed to communicate her salvation experience in terms deemed satisfactory by a man with highly specific religious expectations. Her grave marker evidences Cecily's success in navigating these fraught waters of communication.

In 1717, following the minister's death, the *Boston News Letter* ran nearly a half page obituary in honor of William Brattle. With the erection of Cicely's tombstone and its position far away from his own, Brattle offered a silent eulogy of a short life lived in slavery but also ensured that his "negro servant" would remain as separate from him in death as she was in life. Thus, although the stone shows the degree to which Cicely was more than mere property to the Brattles—it also evidences the dehumanizing separation of racial slavery.

The week that Cicely died, the *News Letter* ran an advertisement for a pamphlet by Cotton Mather, entitled "A Perfect Recovery, Being what was Exhibited at Boston – Lecture to

¹⁸⁶ Koo, "Strangers in the House of God," 148.

¹⁸⁷ Rick Kennedy argued that Thomas and William Brattle's sermons "tentatively embraced the modern mind of the late seventeenth century." Although the Brattles did not make an explicit move away from the "desires of the patriarchs of both Christianity and Massachusetts Congregationalism," Kennedy noted that their approach diverged from Cotton Mather's. See Kennedy, "Thy Patriarch's Desire," 5-6

the Inhabitants after they had passed thro' a very Sickly Winter. With some Remarks on the shining Patterns of Piety, left by some very Young Persons, who Dyed in the common calamity.”¹⁸⁸ Mather had lost his own wife, Maria, in the “Sickly Winter” and perhaps among his remembrance of those “Young Persons who dyed in the common calamity” was his colleague William Brattle’s thirteen-year-old black slave girl named Cicely, who lay dying as he penned his words. But below the announcement of Mather’s publication, the newspaper advertised another shipment of young blacks doomed to perpetual servitude. One notice read, “A very good Negro Woman aged about Nineteen years to be Sold by Capt. John Jenkins, and to be seen at his house in Ship-Street Boston”; and the other, “A Young Lusty Negro Man aged about 21 Years to be sold. Inquire at the Post Office in Boston.”¹⁸⁹

Years earlier, Cicely might well have been among the over five hundred slaves advertised in the *News Letter* between 1704 and 1720, displayed with her mother, but offered for sale either together or separately.¹⁹⁰ Cicely’s tombstone stands as a memorial to her piety. But, like the slave-for-sale advertisements that ran below Mather’s commemoration of the “patterns of piety left by some very Young Persons,” it is also a public announcement of her social degradation, for Cicely is represented in stone as a “negro,” the “late servant to ye reverend William Brattle,” who died “being 13 years old.”

¹⁸⁸ *Boston News Letter*, 5-12 April 1714.

¹⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁰ Desrochers argued that the newspaper and slavery sprouted and matured together in Boston, noting that the *News Letter* “had been in business barely a month when, on June 5, 1704, local merchant John Colman initiated the practice by offering up ‘two Negro men’ along with a ‘Negro Woman & Child.’” Desrochers, “Slave-For-Sale Advertisements,” 624. Benes noted one such listing in the *Boston Gazette*, 27 April 1721, writing “John Cowper, house painter living on King Street, advertised for sale in 1721 a twenty-three year old Negro woman and two children aged seven and four-and-a-half ‘together or separate.’” He added that, in Boston, masters gave away slave children in the first years of the eighteenth century. Benes, “Slavery in Boston Households, 1647-1770,” 28.

1.4 Conclusion

Cicely's world and that of Judith Stuyvesant's baptized slaves were separated by time and geography. Nearly fifty years had passed and, in the interim, New Netherland became New York, and first forays into bondage became ties of patronage and kinship that traversed colonial lines. Out of the kinship networks of the elite of colonial New York and Massachusetts emerged a larger slave community than a single look at numbers evidences. Following the development of slaveholding among these elites challenges the scholarly notion of a harsh break between a more fluid slave system under the Dutch and the one that emerged in British New York. It redraws colonial boundaries in such a way that incorporates the inter-colonial lives of these elites and those who spent their lives toiling in unfree labor to support their social networks.

Slavery colored such elite families' experiences of colonial upheavals from the fall of New Netherland to the British to the aftermath of Leisler's rebellion. Family inheritance struggles pitted the fates of the enslaved against the financial wills of elite beneficiaries. The expansive familial and social networks of the Stuyvesant-Bayard family established a pattern of slaveholding that defined the elite culture of New York slaveholders. The Livingstons' dynastic inter-colonial ambitions expanded the reach of this slaveholding network.

Although the enslaved owned by elite New York families often appear briefly in primary sources, their humanity resists a cursory glance. It speaks of lives lived and relationships broken. It demands a revision of the narrative of both elite master and enslaved. Thus John Livingston did not fight to have his marriage to Elizabeth Knight accepted in a vacuum; he did so while ensuring that the Jacksons' familial ties remained severed. It was not merely lyricism that motivated William Brattle's student to memorialize him as a master; he was a master to at least

one enslaved little girl. The social, economic, and intellectual culture that emerged in colonial New York and Massachusetts was affected by the daily presence of the enslaved.

When Mather paused from his day, allowed to reflect due to the work of the enslaved, one wonders about the “heavenly city” he imagined. Did he envision the wharves of Boston or the parlors of his fellow slaveholders? Did the nobles of heaven wear the faces of his larger network of elites, who were all “Happy *Masters*?” And what of Mather’s heavenly banquet where “*Lazarus* there lies down at the same Feast, with his Master Abraham?” Might the germ of its idea have come from the experience of multiracial earthly meals, instances that another of his slaveholding network, Sarah Kemble Knight, bemoaned in starkly racial terms as inappropriate, noting that “into the dish goes the black hoof as freely as the white hand?”¹⁹¹

¹⁹¹ Knight, *Journal*, ed. Wendy Martin, 64.

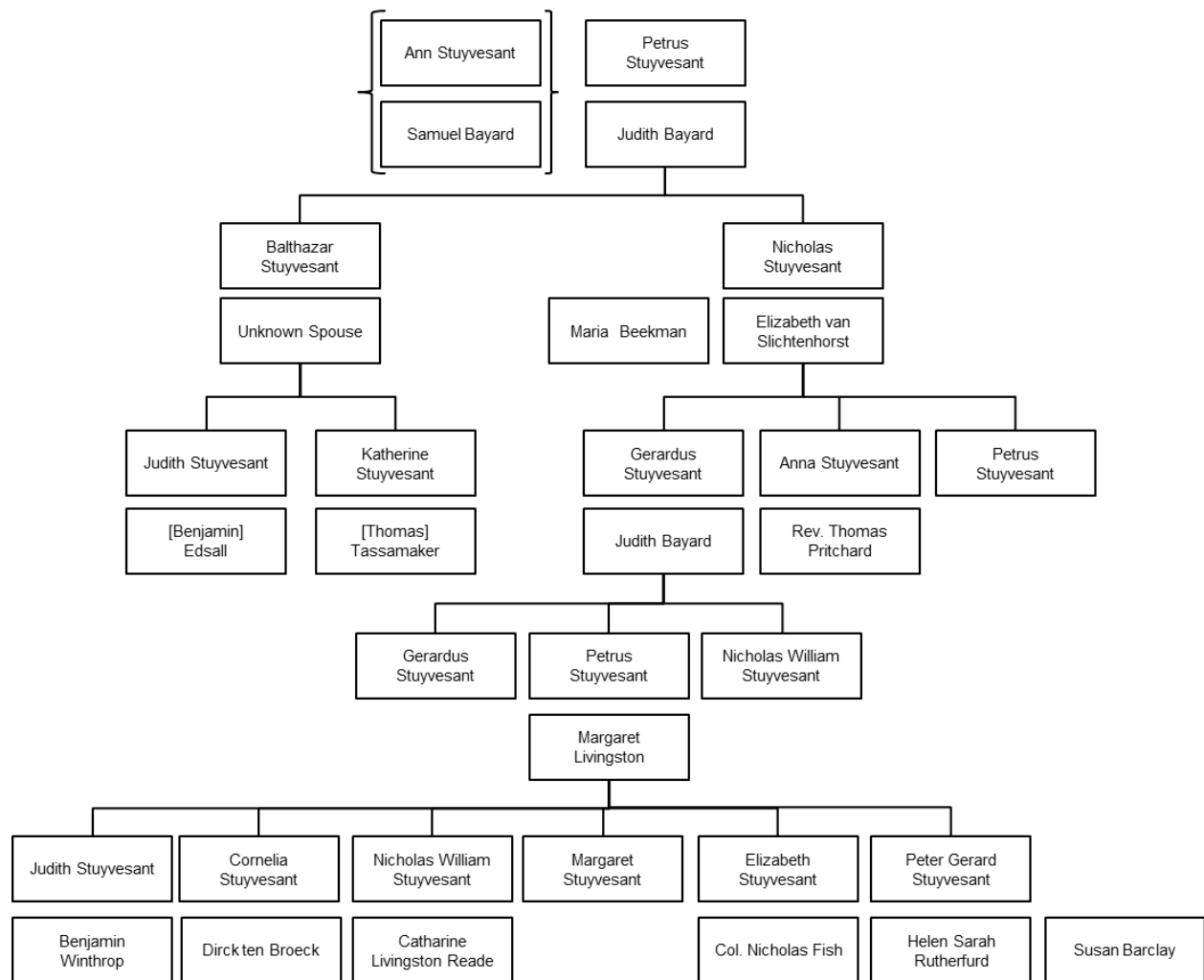


Fig. 2. Stuyvesant Family

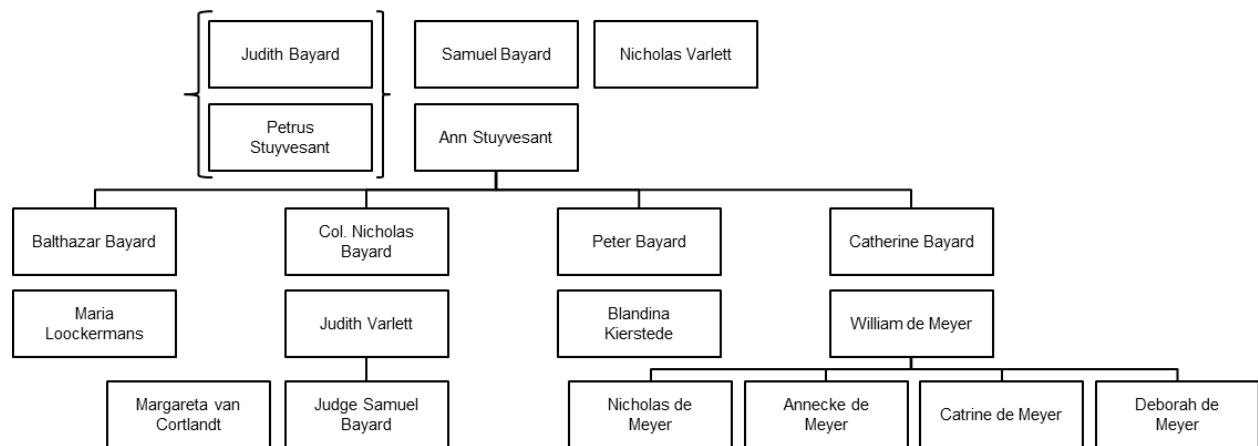


Fig. 3. Bayard Family

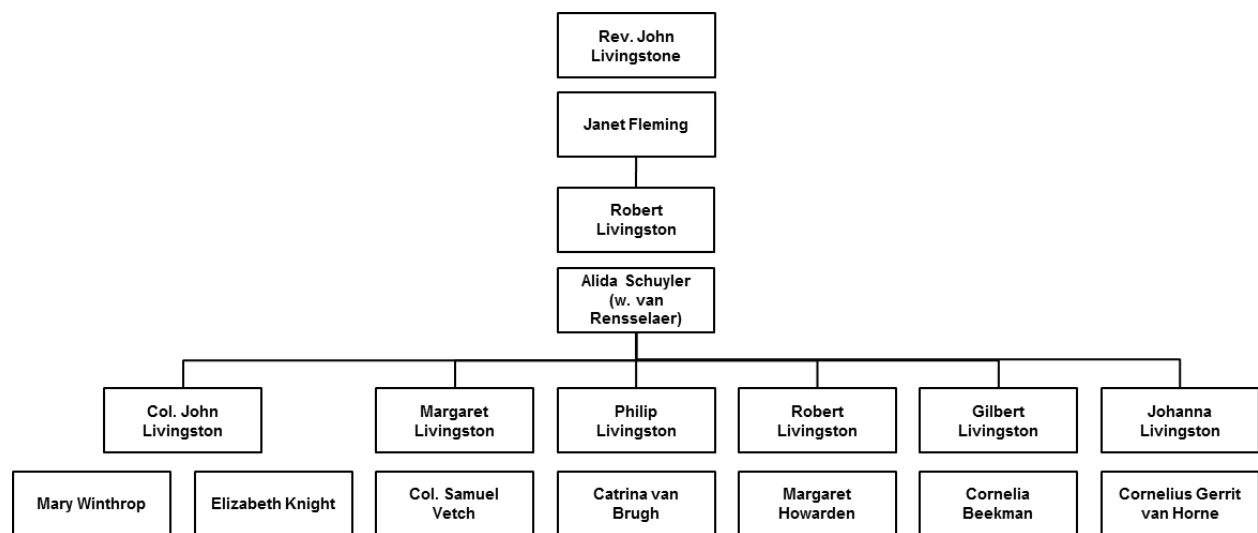


Fig. 4. Livingston Family

CHAPTER 2

WHIPPED FOR STEALING WAMPUM: ENSLAVED INDIANS AND AFRICANS

They are as thievish and treacherous as they are tall; and in cruelty they are altogether inhuman, more than barbarous, far exceeding the Africans.

Rev. Jonas Michaëlius to Rev. Adriaen Smout, August 11, 1628

When describing the Native inhabitants of New Amsterdam, the Reverend Jonas Michaëlius termed them “thievish and treacherous,” denouncing them as “more than barbarous, far exceeding the Africans.”¹ Yet just a few pages after his rancorous description of Indians, Michaëlius described Angolan women as “thievish, lazy, and useless trash.”² He used the same word “diefachtige” or “thievish” in both places to describe Indians and Africans. The minister’s parallel construction reveals much about the intertwined nature of Native and African relations. Although Michaëlius wrote only of having experience with Angolan female slaves, he no doubt came into contact with other denizens of New Netherland that held Indian servants. A multi-ethnic slave population, whose mixed Indian and African culture could be employed to aid escape, shaped the racial conception of such white enslavers as Michaëlius, and determined the development of slave culture in the Northeast.

This chapter will alter the traditional focus on African slavery in New York by including enslaved Native peoples in the analysis, as has been done more successfully in New England. Of course, Indians were not only held as slaves. Some were indentured, while others hired their labor out for a time. Yet the presence of Indian communities and Native slaves among elite slaveholders significantly affected the development of the category “Negro.”³

¹ Rev. Jonas Michaelius to Rev. Adrian Smoutius, 11 August 1628, in *Ecclesiastical Records State of New York*, ed. Hugh Hastings (Albany: J.B. Lyon Company, 1901), 1: 56-57 (hereafter cited as ERNY).

² Ibid., 1: 62.

³ In *Africans and Native Americans*, Jack Forbes offered a systematic framework for examining red/black peoples by parsing and historicizing the ever-changing use of the word “Negro.” He briefly mentioned New York’s mixed slave population in his analysis, yet acknowledged that his study was not intended to be “a comprehensive account of

2.1 Of Shells and Slavery: Native and black slaves in New Netherland

In New Netherland in 1661, a trial dealt with the theft of seawant (or wampum), the Native currency that served as legal tender in the Dutch colony. But the litigants were not a male trader and his Indian contact, the usual combatants in scholarly accounts, but rather a minister's wife, a joiner named Jan, and a ten year old African servant girl. Lijsbet Antonissen "confessed" to taking "black seawant from her mistress" and "a parcel of seawant from Jan Jurriannzen Becker," a man whom she formerly served.⁴ She pleaded coercion, naming another African slave woman as the mastermind who pushed her to steal. She was sentenced to be publicly whipped by her mother, Mary, who "was ordered to chastise her, or in case of refusal to let the same be done; Mary, undertaking it, has with the assistance of Long Anna, severely punished and whipped her daughter with rods in [the] presence of the W[orshipful] Magistrates."⁵ Her punishment was so harsh that one scholar has noted, "she seems to have been the only child the court ordered beaten in this way" and another highlighted the public shaming quality of the verdict.⁶

Nothing about this case could be called routine; perhaps unsurprisingly, it has been discussed in several works about African life in New Netherland. It was, according to Susanah Shaw Romney, only the first instance of the girl's brush with New Netherland's legal system.

Native American-African relations." Jack D. Forbes, *Africans and Native Americans: The Language of Race and the Evolution of Red-Black Peoples*, 2nd ed. (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1993), 5, 56, 86, 199, 221, 230, 260.

⁴ Lysbet Anthony theft case, 10 June 1661, in *RONA*, 3: 315.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Susanah Shaw Romney, "Intimate Networks and Children's Survival in New Netherland in the Seventeenth Century," *Early American Studies: An Interdisciplinary Journal* 7, no. 2 (Fall 2009): 276; Joyce Goodfriend, "The Souls of African American Children: New Amsterdam," *Common-Place* 3, no. 4 (July 2003): <http://www.common-place.org/vol-03/no-04/new-york> (accessed April 28, 2008).

Each of Lijsbet's subsequent legal troubles involved the theft of sewant, culminating in events that led to a sentence of death, although that verdict was commuted at the last minute.⁷

Lijsbet could have taken anything. Just a half a century later, colonial newspapers would be filled with notices detailing runaway slaves and the various items they filched. She might have stolen clothes, food, or valuable household keepsakes, but she chose to steal sewant. Perhaps because grabbing the closest legal tender seems so natural, the importance of the sewant has gone unmentioned. But its centrality to the story is crucial, for it illuminates the cross-cultural nature of life in New Netherland, an existence that necessitated the cultural contact of Africans, Europeans, and Indians.

Lijsbet testified that she did not know how much sewant she stole. No matter how much she took, the currency might not have gone very far. Although sewant had initially been used throughout the colonial Northeast, in 1652, Massachusetts Bay established a mint, and this sea change in trading led to a glut of sewant on the New Netherland market, the only market that continued to actively trade the beads.⁸ Petrus Stuyvesant chose to point to both the "half starving Negros and Negresses" that arrived with the slave ship *den Gideon* and the "want of credit or ready money" as reasons for the fall of the colony to the English in 1664.⁹

Sewant and enslaved Africans thus had a joined and storied history in New Netherland. Some slaves used the currency to secure their freedom, while slave traders complained that New

⁷ Lijsbet's first name is also spelled Lysbet, or Lysbeth in colonial documents and her last name is variously referred to as Anthony, Antonissen, and Anthonijsen. Although each incident of Lijsbet's brushes with the New Netherland legal system has attracted scholarly attention, Romney was the first to identify that every case was actually about the same person. After the abovementioned incident, Romney noted that Lijsbet stole sewant again, this time from "the wife of Marten Cregier." Her last brush with the New Netherland legal system was also occasioned by suspected theft. Lijsbet admitted that she burned down the Cregier's house accidentally because she was unjustly accused of stealing sewant by Mrs. Cregier. See Romney, "Intimate Networks," 275-279.

⁸ Several scholars have noted that the rise in sewant counterfeiting, coupled with the establishment of the mint in Boston and subsequent glut of sewant dumped on the New Netherland market, was one of the factors that led to the fall of New Netherland. See Burrows and Wallace, *Gotham*, 47-48; and Lynn Ceci, "The First Fiscal Crisis in New York," *Economic Development and Cultural Change* 28, no. 4 (July 1980): 846-847, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1153524>.

⁹ Peter Stuyvesant to States General, 1666, in *DRCHNY*, 2: 430.

Netherland's settlers wanted to pay for slaves using methods other than hard specie.¹⁰ Indeed, scholars have posited that some of the shells harvested by the Dutch for use in the sewant trade were imported from Curaçao, the slaving depot.¹¹

Central to historians' narratives of New Netherland's exceptional form of slavery remain three pillars of access available to slaves in the Dutch colony that were not open to the enslaved in other colonies: the ability to testify in courts, access to church ordinances such as baptism and marriage, and the existence of "half-freedom." Half-freedom grants manumitted select company blacks with the stipulation that they remit a portion of their annual labor and earnings to the West India Company. The children of such half-freed individuals, however, remained enslaved. Most scholars argue that New Netherland was unique in this regard because of the Dutch cultural context. Although this explanation certainly has some merit, it ignores the Native influence on the way slavery was practiced and conceptualized among the elite of New Netherland. As the Lijsbet Antonissen case illuminates, Native culture had a considerable impact on the lives of elite masters, free blacks, and the enslaved.

Manumission in New Netherland was shaped by not just local, but Atlantic forces. On September 4, 1664, on the eve of the English conquest, Petrus Stuyvesant granted the petition of eight men "praying to be manumitted and made entirely free."¹² The pursuit of full freedom had

¹⁰ Andrew Charles Lipman, "The Saltwater Frontier: Indians, Dutch, and English on Seventeenth-Century Long Island Sound" (PhD diss., University of Pennsylvania, 2010), 253. For Cowrie shells used as specie in the slave trade see Jan Hogendorn and Marion Johnson, *The Shell Money of the Slave Trade* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1986).

¹¹ Most references mention that the shell was harvested on Long Island, but Laurie Weinstein noted that "between 1659 and 1664 over ten barrels of conch" were "listed in various ships' manifests going from Curaçao to New Netherland." Thus, the Native currency which formed the bedrock of the seventeenth-century New Netherland economy also circulated within a Dutch Atlantic, further evidence for the existence of a Dutch Atlantic in the seventeenth century. William Engelbrecht, *Iroquoia: The Development of a Native World* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2003), 155; Laurie Lee Weinstein, *Enduring Traditions: The Native Peoples of New England* (Westport, CT: Bergin and Garvey, 1994), 43.

¹² Petition, 4 September 1664, in *Calendar of Historical Manuscripts in the Office of the Secretary of State Albany New York*, ed. E.B. O'Callaghan (Albany, NY: Weed, Parsons and Company, 1865), 1: 269 (hereafter cited as CHMANY).

been a long one for such half-free slaves. Twenty years earlier, eleven black men enslaved by the Dutch West India Company petitioned director Willem Kieft for their freedom and became the first group of slaves granted half-free status. The numbers of black slaves granted half freedom as a reward for service, such a war service, grew under the directorship of Petrus Stuyvesant.¹³ The half-free slaves continued to agitate for the full freedom of themselves and their children. Thus, the freedom that the eight petitioners received from Stuyvesant was hard won.

Yet it was a freedom that was intimately connected to Dutch Atlantic Native slavery. In 1629, the *Heren XIX* outlawed the enslavement of Indians in Brazil as a tactic to attract Native peoples to join the WIC's struggle against the Portuguese in Pernambuco.¹⁴ Despite the WIC's formal declaration of freedom for all Indians, only certain Native people benefited from the policy in Brazil. The Tupí Indians, who had supported the Dutch against the Portuguese, were freed, but other local Indians were still enslaved by Dutch colonists because the constant state of war between the Dutch and the Portuguese between 1620 and 1655 often disrupted African slave importation. When the Dutch were forced to leave Brazil in 1654, Matthias Beck noted that their Tupí allies were aghast, believing that the Dutch had abandoned them to be "eternal slaves in the hands of the Portuguese."¹⁵ Beck was no stranger to Native relations or slavery. He owned an estate in Recife with 200 African slaves, and had been appointed as an Indian commissioner in Brazil. So, when Petrus Stuyvesant was approached by a group of half-free slaves on the eve of the English invasion of New Netherland, arguing that he emancipate them fully, he might have weighed the experiences of his vice director with the Tupí Indians when he assented to their request.

¹³ Thelma Foote noted that "following the Indian war, the WIC granted half-freedom to another two dozen or so slaves as a reward for their allegiance during the conflict." Foote, *Black and White Manhattan*, 39.

¹⁴ Meuwese, "'For the Peace and Well-Being of the Country,'" 33n35.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 204.

Manumission was not the only aspect of New Netherland's slave system shaped by an intercultural context. Dutch religious culture, in particular the ways in which non-white access to church ordinances was conceptualized, reflected the multiethnic character of New Netherland. In 1654, Samuel Drisius and Johannes Megapolensis admitted defeat in their joint letter to the Classis of Amsterdam. They were forced to acknowledge that the only Native person who had expressed interest in "the Christian faith"—an unnamed sachem—had dashed their hopes that "in due time he might be the instrument of accomplishing considerable good among the Indians." Instead, according to Drisius and Megapolensis, that sachem "has only the bare knowledge of the truth, without the practice of godliness" and was "greatly inclined to drunkenness."¹⁶ The two ministers reported that the unnamed sachem had learned to "read and write," while he "sojourned for a length of time" among the Dutch settlers in Manhattan, gathering knowledge and information of his new neighbors and trading partners, but not adopting the "practice of godliness."

Although Drisius and Megapolensis authored the letter, the pair did not work alone. Henricus Selijns had arrived to replace Everardus Bogardus and was having considerably more success than his colleagues in the mission field. Yet his converts were not local Indians, but instead enslaved Africans. Nevertheless, just one decade later, Selijns' own letter to the Classis of Amsterdam sounded a familiar note of defeat. He wrote that enslaved Africans' motives for baptism were spurious, for they "sought nothing else by it than the freeing of their children from material slavery, without pursuing piety and Christian virtues."¹⁷ Enslaved Africans used baptism to forge fictive kinship links and make key alliances with influential whites who could be called upon to help in the emancipation of their children. Much has been made about the

¹⁶ Ibid., 376.

¹⁷ "Two letters written by Domine Henricus Selijns during his ministry in Breuckelen, 1660-1664," Second letter, New Netherland, 9 June 1664, in *NYHMRCB*, 231.

different social positions and circumstances of Indians and Africans, but these three ministers expressed their belief that both the Indian sachem's and enslaved Africans' conversions were inauthentic using strikingly similar language. In the minds of the Dutch ministerial hierarchy, the unconverted—whether Indian or African—reveled in similar modes of sin and debauchery. Yet the ministers' very notions of moral turpitude were subtly transformed by the intercultural environment in which they found themselves.

Despite the ministers' parallel constructions, a very real difference in political circumstance divided the Native sachems and African bondspeople. As scholars have noted, the existence of powerful New York Indian confederacies presented a constant threat to European settlers, making the establishment of heritable Indian slavery more difficult.¹⁸ Dutch settlers sometimes found themselves not masters, but captives at the hands of Indians. While he was minister on Stuyvesant's bowery, Selijns eloquently expressed the tension between Dutch captivity and slavery in a poem entitled "Bridal Torch," which was written to celebrate the marriage of Ægidius Luyck and Judith van Isendoorn.¹⁹ Although the poem was ostensibly about the couple's nuptials, the subtitle of the poem revealed Selijns's focus: "the Esopus murder committed at Wiltwyck, in New Netherland, by the Indians in the year 1663." Such a theme seems an odd choice for a wedding ode and Selijns never fully reconciled this disjointure in his tome. Instead, its utter strangeness illuminated Selijns's own cognitive dissonance: a fear of captivity whilst living among captives.

¹⁸ Wendy Warren discussed the differing power dynamics between Native peoples who had the potential to be ransomed and enslaved Africans who were captives in a strange land in "Enslaved Africans in New England," 45-47.

¹⁹ Jacobs, *New Netherland*, 432; and Christine van Boheemen, "Dutch-American Poets of the Seventeenth Century," *European Contributions to American Studies* 10 (January 1991): 116. Stuyvesant brought Luyck to his bowery as his sons' personal tutor, where Luyck likely met Selijns. Henry Cruse Murphy, trans. and ed., *Anthology of New Netherland, Or, Translations from the Early Dutch Poets of New York, With Memoirs of Their Lives* (1865; repr., Amsterdam: N. Israel, 1966), 171. Murphy included the Dutch originals along with an English translation. Though his translation has been called into question, it sufficiently conveys the sense of Selijns's poems. For more on Murphy's translation, see van Boheemen, "Dutch American Poets."

Selijns imagined the ordeal of forty-five Dutch settlers captured as a result of the battle of Wiltwijck by writing that the band had been captured “for Indian chiefs to serve, or Indian forts to work in.”²⁰ Yet Selijns’s model of bondage was not Native, but Dutch; his position as Stuyvesant’s bowery minister brought him into contact with the largest single slaveholding in the colony. When Selijns imagined his fellow settlers laboring for Native sachems, did they rule over their captives in much the same way as did the leader of New Netherland, Petrus Stuyvesant? At least some of the slaves that Selijns came into daily contact with labored to erect New Netherland’s fortifications.²¹ Selijns’ poem also obliquely referred to his knowledge of Native slavery. He described the defeat of the Esopus thus:

The savage monster’s slain; his wife and children vanish;
His maize is all destroyed; his fort burnt to the ground;
His guns for booty ta’en; his seewan fills our coffers.
They fly into the woods, wand’ring the land around.²²

Although the men were “slain,” Selijns noted that their families “vanish.” Such real-world attempts at erasure were not executed as smoothly as those immortalized in verse. On July 12, 1660, Petrus Stuyvesant transported captured Esopus Indians to Curaçao, specifying that they were to “work with negroes.”²³ Yet unlike the enslaved Africans and non-local Native slaves who worked for New Netherland masters, the Esopus held some political sway. On April 16, 1661, as part of the terms of truce between New Netherland and the Iroquois confederacy, the New Netherland assembly demanded the recall of Esopus Indians from Curaçao. Africans, displaced from their homelands, could not expect such support. In the same letter in which the Esopus Indians were recalled, the price of slaves was set and slaves of African descent were sent

²⁰ Ibid., 139; Alan Axelrod, *A Savage Empire: Trappers, Traders, Tribes and the Wars that Made America* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 2011), 77-78. Of the original forty five colonists captured, twenty three returned from captivity.

²¹ Foote, *Black and White Manhattan*, 39.

²² Murphy, *Anthology*, 143.

²³ Transport of Esopus Indians to Curaçao, 12 July 1660, in *CHMANY*, 1: 293.

“on account of the company” to seasoning camps to “have particular marks” branded into their flesh.²⁴

Despite the increasing numbers of slave imports from Africa after the fall of New Netherland to the British, Native communities continued to have a profound influence on the evolution of colonial New York’s slave culture. On September 2, 1679, Sweer Teunissen van Velsen made a “hue and cry after Jacob,” his “runaway Negro.” Van Velsen resided in Schenectady on the very cusp of Indian territory, a proximity that proved advantageous for Jacob, who was described as speaking “good English, Dutch, good Mohawk and Mohegan.”²⁵ Van Velsen offered a reward for anyone, “whither Christian or Indian,” who captured Jacob.²⁶ Jacob’s facility with language evidenced the cultural fluidity required by enslaved people in New York. Van Velsen, a Dutch colonist, had only recently purchased Jacob, and perhaps chose him because of his knowledge of Dutch. Jacob certainly had lived under both Dutch and English rule long enough to gain language aptitude. In 1672, the Dutch briefly recaptured New Netherland. If Jacob was a creole as young as eighteen at the time of the “hue and cry,” he would have been born three years before the first fall of New Netherland.

Several clues suggest a creole identity for Jacob. First, the name “Jacob” argued for a degree of acculturation common to creoles. Scholars have noted that some “New Negroes” have names that point to Africa as their birthplace—such as Mingo or Goree—a pattern observed among the first several generations of New Netherland’s enslaved Africans.²⁷ If Jacob had only

²⁴ Director and council to the Vice-director at Curaçao, 16 April 1661, in *CHMANY*, 2: 295.

²⁵ Hue and Cry after Jacob, runaway negro of Sweer Theunisse, 2 September 1679, in *CHMANY*, 2: 80.

²⁶ Hue and Cry after Jacob, Runaway Slave of Sweer Teunissen of Schenectady, 2 September 1679, in “*Pretends to Be Free*”: *Runaway Slave Advertisements from Colonial and Revolutionary New York and New Jersey*, eds. Graham Russell Hodges and Alan Edward Brown (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1994), 325.

²⁷ John C Inscoc argued that naming patterns could be used as a measure of acculturation in “Carolina Slave Names: An Index to Acculturation,” *Journal of Southern History* 49, no. 4 (November 1983): 527-554, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2208675>. Yet as Berlin has observed, European names might also denote a Creole origin. Such a pattern has been noted among the first generation of New Netherland Africans.

been a small child at the first fall of New Netherland, the bulk of his life would have been under English rule, which might account for his good “English.” But his facility with Native languages, specifically Mohawk and Mohegan, pointed to the importance of understanding the multi-ethnic character of slavery in colonial New York.

Jacob’s facility with Native languages evidenced a degree of ethnic diversity present in Northeastern slave communities with very real consequences for slave masters. Jacob could have learned the two Native languages while working side by side enslaved local Indians. Not until December of 1679 were Indians from local tribes declared “free and not slaves.”²⁸ No evidence remains for the size of Van Velsen’s slaveholding, but even if Jacob was his only slave, Jacob likely would have come into contact with Native people in the marketplace. His “good” grasp of Native languages indicated that his contact was frequent enough for him to gain a facility.

Although van Velsen described Jacob as a “Negro,” he could have also had kinship ties to either the Mohawk or Mohegan communities. By the time of van Velsen’s search for Jacob, the children of a black enslaved woman with any Native or white admixture were considered to be slaves. Although some of the enslaved population was classified as “mulatto,” still other individuals of mixed ethnic identity were subsumed under the category of “Negro.” Whether Jacob had natal connections with local Native communities, was married to an enslaved Native woman who labored with him for van Velsen, or made connections with Indians in the marketplace, is unknown. But Van Velsen understood the importance of Jacob’s Native connections, taking them into account during his search.

Scholars have emphasized that Native people’s familiarity with local geography made it difficult for colonists to capture and hold Native slaves. Scholars of slavery have long noted that the Africans who arrived in North America were often culled from disparate parts of Africa.

²⁸ Council Minutes, 5 December 1679, in *CHMANY*, 2: 81.

Those who came to New York found themselves not only in a strange country among strange people who enslaved them, but also often among fellow enslaved individuals who did not share a common language, culture, or religious heritage. Thus, linguistic dexterity in Native languages offered enslaved Africans crucial advantages. Slaves who mastered Native languages could converse with Native people who were both enslaved and free. They could also use Native languages as a lingua franca to bridge the linguistic gaps between themselves and other enslaved people of African heritage. Like Ira Berlin's Atlantic creole, who had a command of numerous European and African languages, New York's borderland creole was able to navigate what has been termed the "Red" Atlantic.²⁹

Van Velsen persistently pursued Jacob, but he was not alone. Albany authorities sought Jacob in conjunction with the theft of several silver items and a horse. They charged him with theft of a "silver thimble," "silver needle," a "silver coin, and some pieces of broken silver wrapped in a piece of cloth."³⁰ He admitted to taking the silver items to a local woman named Maritie Damen to be made into "silver breeches buttons." According to Jacob's testimony, he became frightened when he discovered that the silver was ill gotten. He then stole a horse from "Symon, the baker" and fled.

Two other slaves of elite Albany and Schenectady masters—Gerrit Bancker's slave, Claes, and Domine Gideon Schaets's slave, Black Barent—were accused of stealing the silver

²⁹ Although the notion that Indians were not suited for slavery has sustained considerable critique in recent years—Joyce Chaplin offers an excellent overview of the historiographical debate in "Enslavement of Indians in Early America: Captivity without the Narrative"—the difference in circumstance between local Indians and enslaved captives of African descent remains. Alan Gallay noted that some colonial officials in Virginia and Louisiana attempted to discourage a "frenzy of enslaving" Indians because such large scale enslavement promoted dangerous political instability with neighboring Native confederacies. Joyce Chaplin, "Enslavement of Indians in Early America: Captivity without the Narrative," in *The Creation of the British Atlantic World*, eds. Elizabeth Mancke and Carole Shammas (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2005), 55-58; Gallay, *Indian Slave Trade*, 308; Jace Weaver, "The Red Atlantic: Transoceanic Cultural Exchanges," *American Indian Quarterly* 35, no. 3 (Summer 2011): 418-477.

³⁰ For the full trial records, see Arnold van Laer, trans. and ed., *Minutes of the Court of Albany, Rensselaerswyck and Schenectady....* (Albany: University of the State of New York, 1928), 2: 429-444 (hereafter cited as MCARS).

and supplying it to Jacob. Black Barent, like Jacob, directly approached Maritie Daeme to have silver breeches buttons made. While the authorities searched for Jacob, both Claes and Black Barent were tried and sentenced. Thomas Burke has offered a detailed reading of the case, highlighting it as a rare glimpse into the lived reality of slavery in Schenectady. He contended that the presence of the silver buttons at the heart of the trial reflected “a desire” on the part of the slaves “to transform normally unobtainable objects from the world of their masters into symbols of status (silver buttons) within the slave community.”³¹

Although Burke mentioned that Jacob was able to make his way across the Hudson “with the help of a Mohawk Indian” he ultimately deemed the case “important for what it reveals of the behavior and motivation of the slaves, their Dutch masters, and other persons who became involved, both black and white.”³² Hodges included this case as an example of the “inviting frontiers” offered to runaways by Indians.³³ Yet the case has a larger resonance beyond the aid that Jacob received from the Mohawk: it reveals how Native culture affected the lives of the enslaved as well as their masters. The jury assembled to determine Claes and Black Barent’s guilt included the Indian trader Johannes Wendell, son of Evert Wendell. The Indian commissioner, slave owner, and trader, Robert Livingston, was the secretary of the court who heard the case. The woman who accepted Jacob’s ill-gotten silver coins and agreed to make them into silver buttons, Maritie Damen, was fined not in English coin but in Native currency. She was sentenced to pay one hundred guilders “in seawan for the benefit of the officers.”³⁴ That the case involved Africans, Indians, traders, and slave owners was not idiosyncratic, but rather it reflected the intertwined nature of life in colonial New York.

³¹ Burke, *Mohawk Frontier*, 132.

³² *Ibid.*, 132.

³³ Graham Russell Hodges, *Root and Branch: African Americans in New York and East Jersey 1613-1863* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999), 52.

³⁴ Mr. Rich. Pretty, sheriff, and Ludovicus Cobus, sheriff v. Maritie Daeme, 1679, in *MCARS*, 2:438.

The realities that faced Lijsbet Antonissen and those which determined Jacob's fate certainly struck similar chords. Both black defendants were accused of theft and both cases engaged with a larger Native context. Yet conditions had changed during the three decades that separated the two cases. New Netherland had become New York and the ranks of slaves who labored under the first generation of New Netherland's colonists swelled with shiploads of new arrivals from the Atlantic world. Although the numbers of African slaves increased with the onset of English rule, the Native influence on of the developing New York slave community did not lessen. This enduring influence held consequence for the ways in which slavery was passed down among elites.

2.2 An Unexpected Slave Named "Ande": Indians and Africans in the wills of New York elites

On July 29, 1693, the twice-widowed Sara Roelofs willed her considerable estate to her heirs. Like other elites, she bequeathed slaves to her children, yet her holdings included not only Africans, but also one Native slave. She stipulated:

Now I will before anything else to my daughter Blandina, of this city, a negro boy, Hans. To my son Lycas Kierstede, my Indian, named Ande. To my daughter Catharine Kierstede, a negress, named Susannah. To my son-in-law, Johannes Kip, husband of my said daughter Catharine, my negro, Sarah, in consideration of great trouble in settling the account s of my late husband, Cornelius van Borsum, in Esopus and elsewhere. To my son Jochem Kierstede, a little negro, called Maria, during his life, and then to Sarah, the eldest daughter of my son Roeloff Kierstede by Ytie Kiersted. To my son Johannes Kierstede, a negro boy Peter.³⁵

Roelofs's will was not anomalous. In the probate records of elite slaveholders, Indians appear along with Africans as slaves in both the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. If acknowledged at all, their presence remains puzzling to scholars, who wonder what these

³⁵ Will of Sara Roeloffse, 29 July 1693 in Evjen, *Scandinavian Immigrants*, 107.

unexpected slaves are doing in colonial documents. For example, when examining Roelofs's will, Mark Meuwese wrote, "it is remarkable that the woman who had interacted so closely with Indians kept a Native American as a slave." He continued, noting that "Ande's status as a slave was especially ambiguous since colonists in New Netherland and English New York did generally not keep Indians as slaves."³⁶ How would the narrative of colonial New York change if the Indian slaves and cultural artifacts that appeared alongside Africans in colonial documents were not treated as a strange coincidence but an integral part of the enslaved community that developed in the Northeast?

Roelofs's bequest of "an Indian, named Ande" to her son Luycas in 1693 constituted only a small portion of the story. In 1680, Gulian ver Planck sued Cornelius van Bursum, Sara's second husband. He demanded "payment for an Indian called Andrew."³⁷ Ver Planck explained that he sent Andrew to Sara Roelofs "to bolt a little flour" and "she still refuses to return said Indian." Not only did Roelofs hold Andrew but, if ver Planck's version of the events was correct, she captured him without payment. The court case did not detail whether Andrew's service in the ver Planck household was slavery per se or indentured servitude, although ver Planck's demand for £25 payment suggested that he felt it proper to "sell" Andrew. It is also unclear whether or not van Bursum ever paid Planck the money. But by the time of Sara's will, it was clear that she understood Andrew's position as heritable when she bequeathed him to her son Luycas. "Ande" was not the only slave mentioned in her will. Roelofs also left several African slaves to her remaining children. The work routines in that large household were onerous enough to inspire at

³⁶ Early scholars tried, like Meuwese, to reconcile the seeming disconnect in Sara Roelofs Kierstede's position as both Indian slave owner and Indian translator. In 1916 John Evjen wrestled with Sara's "ownership" of Ande, noting that holding Indian slaves was "never sanctioned in New Netherland by law, by custom, or by public opinion," but ultimately positing that she "may have proved a good mistress for Ande" because of her language skill. Meuwese, "'For the Peace and Well-Being of the Country,'" 435; Evjen, *Scandinavian Immigrants*, 357.

³⁷ *Wills*, 2: 463.

least several people to run away. On September 26, 1679, a warrant was issued for the arrest of “runaway Negroes of Cornelius van Borsum.”³⁸

The Roelofs-Kierstede family’s dealings with Indian slaves did not end with Andrew’s fate. On July 15, 1703, Sara Roelofs’s son, Jacobus Kierstede, petitioned Governor Edward Hyde, Viscount Cornbury, regarding an Indian slave that he bought in the West Indies and sold to Vincent Tillou.³⁹ Like his late father, Jacobus Kierstede spent a good portion of his life at sea. Another mariner, named Thomas Newton, deposed that Kierstede purchased the slave from Jamaica.⁴⁰ As in Andrew’s case nearly thirty years earlier, the sale of the Indian slave to Jacobus was contested. Since he was not a local Indian, the man could be legally enslaved: New York’s law of 1679 detailed that local Indians could not be held as slaves, but Indians bought from other regions and captured could be held.⁴¹ Whether the law strengthened the Roelofs-Kierstede family’s hold on Andrew is uncertain, but by 1703 it could be used to maintain their claim on another enslaved Native. Just three years later, in 1706, New York passed a hereditary slave law that stated “that all and every Negro, Indian, Mulatto and Mestee Bastard Child & Children who is, are, and shall be born of any Negro, Indian, Mulatto or Mestee, shall follow ye State and Condition of the Mother,” revealing that Native slaves were a significant enough portion of the population to occasion litigation.⁴² Although the fate of the unlucky imported man remains a

³⁸ Warrant of arrest of Runaway Negroes of Cornelius van Borsum, 26 September 1679, in *CHMANY*, 2: 80.

³⁹ Petition, Jacobus Kiersted of New York, mariner, in relation to an Indian brought by him from the West Indies, 15 July 1703, in *CHMANY*, 2: 314.

⁴⁰ Deposition. Thomas Newton, mariner, to Governor Cornbury, 20 July 1703, *Ibid.*

⁴¹ Almon Lauber argues that the passage of anti-privateering laws of 1692 and 1699 were intended to, in part, quell the illicit trade in Spanish Indian slaves. Almon Wheeler Lauber, *Indian Slavery in Colonial Times: Within the Present Limits of the United States* (New York: Columbia University, Longmans, Green and Co, 1913), 162-63; 598; Council Minutes, Indians declared free and not slaves, 5 December 1679, in *DRCHNY*, 13: 537.

⁴² “An Act to Incurage the Baptizing of Negro, Indian and Mulatto Slaves,” 21 October 1706, in *The Colonial Laws of New York: From the Year 1644 to the Revolution*, eds. A. Judd Northrup, et al. (Albany, NY: James B. Lyon, 1894), 1: 598 (hereafter cited as *CLNY*).

mystery, this example sheds light on the generational slave holding patterns of New York's elite families, practices that included multi-ethnic slave holding.

The major families of New York sometimes benefitted indirectly from Indian slavery. In early June 1685, while Robert Livingston was petitioning the New York courts over Nicholas van Rensselaer's estate and, in so doing, consolidating his own power in the process, a petition from a mariner named Richard Colaer was presented to the court concerning the illegal seizure of Indians from Cape Fear who were sold as slaves in New York by a man named Mr. Ashby. As punishment for the illegal sale, Ashby's entire estate was ordered auctioned off and its profits were "placed into the hands of Frederick Phillips [sic], in order to secure the charges necessary to transport said Ashby and the four Indians he had abducted back to Carolina."⁴³ Ashby's illicit seizure of Native slaves ultimately served to enlarge Philipse's control, supporting a man who would go on to become one of the largest slaveholders in colonial New York and a slave trader. Indeed, Ashby's case occurred the same year that Frederick Philipse first invested in the slave trade: Philipse's slave ship the *Charles*, brought forty five slaves to Philipsburg's mill from the Kongo in 1685.⁴⁴

Far from anomalous, Indian slaves were frequently bequeathed with blacks by elite testators throughout the eighteenth century. In 1707, the widow Hillegonda de Kay left an "Indian slave called Jeremy" to her son, Jacobus de Kay.⁴⁵ Alida and Robert Livingston's close friend, Fitz-John Winthrop, left his daughter Mary, John Livingston's first wife, "one negro girl and 2 Indian girls," slaves that she inherited upon her father's death in 1708 and brought into her marriage with John Livingston.⁴⁶ When Alida's younger brother Arent Schuyler completed his

⁴³ Petition, Indians stolen from Cape Fear, 15 June 1685, in *CHMANY*, 2: 117.

⁴⁴ Tom Lewis, *The Hudson: A History* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2007), 112.

⁴⁵ Will of Hellegonda De Kay, 1707, in *Wills*, 1: 458-459.

⁴⁶ Will of Fitz-John Winthrop, 1708, in *Wills*, 2: 10-11.

will in 1724, the document left “to [his] daughters Eva and Cornelia...each an Indian slave.” In 1731 Catherine Philipse stipulated that her “Indian or mulatto slaves, ‘Molly’ and ‘Sarah’” were “to be set free when of age.”⁴⁷ The fact that she indicated that her slaves were “Indian or mulatto” suggests their unclear status. If they were Indian, then their slavery was, strictly speaking, illegal. But if they were “mulatto” then they could have been held as slaves. Perhaps it was such ambiguity that led Catherine Philipse to will their freedom. In 1740, when Jacobus van Cortlandt’s will was completed, he included land situated “in the street called Broadway, which I purchased from the executors of Catherine Philipse,” his sister in-law. Like Catharine, his estate included both Indian and African slaves. Unlike Catharine, he did not set them free, willing his “Indian man slave, and my negroes” to his son, Frederick van Cortlandt.⁴⁸

Stephen Bayard’s will, dated January 31, 1753, connected the enduring legacy of Dutch elite networks with the heterogeneous character of slavery in colonial New York and New Jersey. He opened his will limiting the type of people—even from his family—that would be allowed at his funeral, indicating his “will and desire” that “none but my relatives be invited to my funeral, and of them none more remote than a Cousin German.”⁴⁹ By 1753, the Bayard family’s connections had expanded from its original French-Dutch origins during New Netherland to include Scandinavian, Scottish, and English members. Yet Stephen Bayard’s stipulation that no one more distant “than a Cousin German,” or first cousin, could attend his funeral, implied more than his desire to limit his funeral attendees to close family. Indeed, Bayard’s first cousins, a group which included the Livingston, van Cortlandt, van Horne, and van Rensselaer families, hailed from New Netherland’s founding elites. Dutch identity remained paramount to shaping Bayard’s sense of who was and was not family.

⁴⁷ Will of Catharine Philipse, 1730/31, in *Wills*, 3: 21-22.

⁴⁸ Will of Jacobus van Cortlandt, 1740, in *Wills*, 3: 307-310.

⁴⁹ Will of Stephen Bayard, 1753, in *Wills*, 5: 155-156.

After restricting the attendees at his funeral, he bequeathed “£25” to his son William “for his birthright,” but to his daughter, Margaret, “two negro or Indian slaves when she is of age or married.” In his final gift to his daughter, Bayard demonstrated not only the enduring tradition of family slaveholding among the elite, but also the cultural identity of the slave community. Unlike in other elite wills, Margaret was not bequeathed certain named slaves but, rather, had her pick among them. She could choose between “negro or Indian slaves,” implying not only that the enslaved men and women who worked on her father’s estate were a multi-ethnic group, but that the slavery that Margaret had been surrounded by her whole life looked much different than the prevailing historical image. The silences in wills leave many unanswered questions. Whom did she choose? Had she known them from childhood? Did she split up families or carefully pick out a couple to preserve the bonds of family among those she enslaved?

When she surveyed the enslaved men and women who would follow her during her most important life moments, whom she chose could make a difference. A “Negro” companion might carry a multitude of African ethnic identities. In the food that they cooked and the languages they knew, remnants of their heritage would touch Margaret’s daily life. Some of the black slaves on Bayard’s farm might have traced their heritage back to the first generations of enslaved people held by the Bayards, who toiled on Stuyvesant’s bowery. They could have been “New Negroes,” whose memory of Africa was fresh, or held under Spanish or Portuguese names, the remnants of an Atlantic identity. They might have very well been of mixed racial identity—European or Native. An Indian choice would bring a different cultural memory. They too might have been determined to be slaves regardless of their origins.

A multitude of cultural experiences combined to shape the variegated ethnic world of the Bayards’ slaves, disclosing a slave culture that was multi-ethnic and multi-racial. Although

Margaret had to choose just two, Stephen Bayard left his “sons, William and Robert, all the rest of my plate, slaves, and furniture,” as well as the farms of Hoboken and Wehawken. When Stephen Bayard willed his sons the farms, he passed down properties that had been in the family since 1663, when Petrus Stuyvesant granted the land to his own brother-in-law, Nicholas Varlett. The Varletts’ Atlantic slave ties to the Chesapeake and Curaçao no doubt populated the farms with a truly Atlantic enslaved work force. In 1700, Samuel Bayard was given the charter for the Wehawken ferry, which was the main thoroughfare for people traveling between northern New Jersey and New York City.⁵⁰ A community of enslaved persons would toil on the Bayard family farms of Hoboken and Wehawken for generations, but Stephen’s will was the last one to explicitly mention the multi-ethnic character of that group.

Nevertheless, Native slavery persisted. In the middle decades of the eighteenth century, an Indian man named Wan escaped from the mines. This story appears deceptively familiar upon first inspection. Almost reflexively, our minds place this story in Mexico, in Central or South America. If his name were spelled Juan in the records, that would have seemed likely. Thus situated, Wan’s back story readily comes into focus. An indigenous man, forced to labor in brutal mines until he seized the right moment to escape. Perhaps it was planting season. So many escapees disappeared at key moments in the growing cycle. Perhaps he feared his only other option was death. So he ran. But Wan did not escape from a mine that would be at home in the pages of the Black Legend. He escaped from a mine in New Jersey. The *New York Mercury* advertisement, run May 20, 1757, detailed:

Run-Away from Frind Lucas, at the Mines, near Second River, an Indian slave, named Wan, about 30 years of age, a little slim fellow, about 4 feet 4 or 5 inches

⁵⁰ “Patent of Hoboken, granted by Petrus Stuyvesant to Nicholas Varlett, Esqr.,” 5 February 1663, in Charles H. Winfield, *History of the Land Titles in Hudson Country, NJ., 1609-1871* (New York: Wynkoop and Hallenbeck, Printers, 1872), 39; William Nelson, *History of Bergen and Passaic Counties, New Jersey: with, Biographical Sketches* (Philadelphia, PN: Everts and Peck, 1882), 86.

high, thick short hair, which was cut off last fall: He was seen at Elizabeth Town with a bluish great coat, and a rusty beaver hat, and offer'd to list as a soldier and am informed, was since at Amboy. Whoever takes up and secures said Indian, so that his Master may have him again, shall have forty shillings reward, and reasonable charges paid by Frind Lucas.⁵¹

Although the advertisement explained that he was owned by Lucas, his work at the mines on Second River both broadens the scope and complicates the story of slavery among elites in New York, because those mines were owned by John Schuyler.⁵²

Wan was owned by a Quaker identified only as “Friend Lucas.” The Society of Friends’s involvement in slavery has only recently been studied. The Quakers were long portrayed as the quintessential abolitionists, largely due to their efforts in the British antislavery movement during the late eighteenth century, and that representation has only recently come into question. Quakers masters resisted slave baptism as vigorously as those of other denominations. In 1728, the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel (SPG) catechist Whetmore wrote that one adult Indian slave owned by a Quaker was baptized.⁵³ Although some meetings in New York, New Jersey, and Rhode Island had already begun outlawing slave-holding among their members, Lucas, like other Quaker slaveholders in the early eighteenth century, did not free Wan.

Though owned by Lucas, Wan spent his days of toil laboring at John Schuyler’s copper mines. John Schuyler was the son of Arent Schuyler. In 1730, when John’s sisters Eva and Cornelia were bequeathed “each an Indian slave,” John received the lion’s share of the estate, including claim to “all mines and minerals.”⁵⁴ In the over twenty years after the death of his father, John’s mines were operated by a combination of enslaved, indentured, and free workers. Wan’s escape shows that this labor force was multi-ethnic and included Native laborers.

⁵¹ Advertisement, *The New York Mercury*, 30 May 1757, in *Pretends to Be Free*, eds. Hodges and Brown, 68.

⁵² “Manuscript Group 1508, Stodinger–Alofsen–Fulton Drawings,” The New Jersey Historical Society, <http://www.jerseyhistory.org/findingaid.php?aid=1508>. The advertisement’s identification of the mines’ location as being “near second river” confirms that they were owned by Colonel John Schuyler.

⁵³ Lauber, *Indian Slavery in Colonial Times*, 272-73.

⁵⁴ Will of Arent Schuyler, 1730, in *Wills*, 3: 14-16.

Although it is impossible to determine whether Wan was indigenous to the area, or whether he had been imported from another region and held as a slave, Lucas's ad was not devoid of clues. Wan was "seen at Elizabeth Town" and "was since at Amboy." Perth Amboy had a community of mixed Native and African members, several of whom ran away. Wan might have inherited his name from the first generation of creoles that entered the enslaved population of Perth Amboy from Spanish colonies. Another man named Wan had escaped from Perth Amboy and was of mixed Native and African heritage in 1734.⁵⁵ Thus, when Lucas's Wan escaped from Schuyler's mines he did not set off directionless, madly trying to escape, but he followed a well-worn trail of runaways that orbited the multi-ethnic slave community in Amboy.

Wan's case illustrates the Native slaveholding patterns among elites while broadening the subset of slaveholders beyond the major families that form the backbone of this study. Widening the pool of elites beyond the Stuyvesants, Bayards, and the Livingstons reveals compelling clues into the nature of multi-racial slavery in the Northeast and the central place of Native identity to fully understanding the cultural complexity of enslaved groups. Some wills contain only enslaved Indians, raising the question of why, if the enslaved population was primarily African or some of African admixture, these elite colonists held Native peoples. In 1702, a childless New York merchant named Giles Shelley left to his friend Mary Peters his "Indian slaves, Symon, Betty and Jenny" adding that "all these bequests are to be free from the control of her husband." But between the date that he finished his first will in 1702 and the codicil in 1710, Mary Peters died. Shelly amended that "that part I annul and make void," leaving the fates of Symon, Betty and Jenny unknown.⁵⁶

⁵⁵ Advertisement, *American Weekly Mercury* (Philadelphia), 24 October 1734, in "*Pretends to Be Free*," eds. Hodges and Brown, 11.

⁵⁶ Will of Giles Shelley, 1710, in *Wills*, 2: 60-62.

In 1714, one Westchester landowner, a man named Thomas Baxter, bequeathed to his wife all his “movables, except my Indian man Jeffrey.”⁵⁷ While the rest of his will was devoted to land rights divided among his sons and legacies left to four daughters, this mention of his “Indian man Jeffrey” stands out. In fact, Jeffrey is the only non-family member mentioned in Baxter’s will. Why he excepted Jeffrey from his bequest to his wife is unknown, though peculiar. Other elite slave masters would specifically leave a named slave to their wives, who would serve them for the duration of her life. If Baxter planned to free Jeffrey, he left no indication in his will. Perhaps Jeffrey had worked out a plan separately with Baxter to buy his own freedom. Or maybe the exception points to the prevalence of Native work relationships that started as indentures but became de facto slavery.

In 1768, Oliver Baxter, Thomas’s grandson, willed that his “executors are to sell my Indian girl as soon as she will fetch £50.”⁵⁸ The girl’s brief mention stirs up a host of questions. Was the Indian girl a relative of the Indian man named Jeffrey mentioned in Thomas’s will? Or had the Baxter family become adept at scanning the market for enslaved “movables” and waiting to sell at the optimal time? Had the same fate awaited Jeffrey, and that was the reason Thomas did not bequeath the man to his wife?

Some masters who took pains to keep black families together did not extend the same courtesy to their Native slaves. Susannah Pierson’s 1716 will explicitly mentioned both black and Native slaves, but she dealt with each group separately. She left each of her three daughters an Indian girl, with one daughter, Mary, receiving two “Indian girls” along with “a new warming pan.”⁵⁹ The will gave no clues as to how these Indian slaves arrived in the Pierson household, but their work was obliquely referenced. They were bequeathed along with the tools of their labor to

⁵⁷ Will of Thomas Baxter, 1715, in *Wills*, 2: 149-150.

⁵⁸ Will of Oliver Baxter, 1768, in *Wills*, 7: 185-86.

⁵⁹ Will of Susanah Pierson, 1716, in *Wills*, 2: 175-176.

make sure that Mary was “maintained out of [her] estate, creditably, till she is married.” The estate that Pierson divided among her children was quite sizable; a quick examination of her will shows that she relied on what her late husband Henry willed to her sons. All of the enslaved blacks were included as part of her sons’ bequest, though not specifically mentioned as such. She closed her will with instructions concerning them: “The negroes are to be sold altogether, for I would not have them parted.”

Pierson’s statement is notable for several reasons. First, and perhaps most obviously, it is evidence of slave masters taking pains to keep families together, a pattern that scholars have mapped in the wills of New York slave owners. Yet the will also points to another pattern. In order to provide money for the estate, Pierson ordered enslaved blacks sold, but she kept the enslaved Indians in her family. Her instructions to keep the black slaves together in sale contrasted with the fates of the four Indian girls that she divided among her daughters. Were the girls sisters? Were they friends? When the daughters married and moved away, did the Indian girls she left to them suffer the same fate from which Pierson tried to protect her black slaves? Did they work closely with the black slaves who were sold away and suffer the loss of friends, or did Pierson segregate the two groups as starkly as she did in the will? One thing that was certain, the multiethnic enslaved population that served the Pierson family uniquely shaped the way that Susannah formulated her bequest.

New York’s famed heterogeneous mixture of European groups resulted in ethnically based elite enclaves. Joyce Goodfriend has compellingly argued for the emergence of a “pluralistic social order structured around Dutch, English and French ethnoreligious

communities.” Yet the ways in which Native/black slaveholding among elites shaped each subculture and afforded inter-networking ties remained unexplored.⁶⁰

The will of one elite French Huguenot, Lewis Bongrand, illuminates the ways that proximity to a large population of Natives and Africans affected European ethnic identity. When Lewis Bongrand Sr. completed his will in 1709, he had a clear vision for his son’s future. He left the younger Lewis “all my clothing, hats, periwigs and shoes, and my guns, swords, hanger and pistols,” as well as the rest of his estate minus his wife’s portion and “all my books of devotion,” which would be kept for him by Mr. Paul Droillet “on his return.”⁶¹ It is unclear where Lewis Bongrand Jr. had journeyed, only that he was “at sea,” but what is clear is that his father was wary of what he was doing. The Sr. Bongrand’s will was a tome of judgment against his son’s lifestyle, even going so far as stipulate that his intended bequest “might contribute to make him live more easily than he does at present at sea,” and that any “thought of quitting the sea” would be divinely inspired. Yet Bongrand Sr. did not have high hopes for his son. His inheritance income was ordered lessened “if he prove undutiful or dissipated,” and he was to be disinherited “if he lead not a life agreeable to God and man.” Such a life of dissipation included “if he shall marry an Indian or negro woman, or be now married without my consent.”

Bongrand’s worries about his son’s marriage partner have been read by one scholar as “perhaps the ultimate horror to a colonists concerned with his lineage.”⁶² Bongrand’s devotion to his French heritage was cited by Goodfriend as a reason why he petitioned to be dismissed from sitting on the city’s common council, because he was “Above Sixty Years of Age and Cannot

⁶⁰ In her introduction to *Before the Melting Pot*, Joyce Goodfriend offered a complete overview of the historiographical landscape of New York’s ethnic studies. She briefly mentioned that slaves in Elias Neau’s catechism class hailed from diverse households—French, Dutch and English. Goodfriend, *Before the Melting Pot*, 7, 127.

⁶¹ Will of Lewis Bongrand Sr., 1709, in *Wills*, 2: 32-33.

⁶² Narrett, *Inheritance and Family Life*, 167.

understand English.”⁶³ It must also be noted that Bongrand would not automatically accept any non-black or Indian marriage partner for his son. If he was “married without his consent,” Lewis Jr. would be disinherited. But the fact that the testator so explicitly stipulated the condition that he would never consent to his son marrying a woman of Indian or African descent might tell more about his specific fears—fears of the people his son might encounter in foreign lands and fears founded in the reality of multiracial New York City.

Bongrand Sr.’s will offered little access to his social group, but the people mentioned in it offer some insight into his life. He named Paul Droillet and Elias Neau executors of his will. Elias Neau, the SPG catechist, set up a school for New York’s blacks in 1704 that was attended by the slaves of several of the city’s most prominent families. Neau, like Bongrand Sr., was a native of France and a close friend of John Eliot, who had worked to convert Native people.⁶⁴ Lewis Bongrand’s name appeared with Neau’s, listed as “a founder and ancient benefactor” of Trinity Parish in New Rochelle.⁶⁵ Another New York merchant of French descent and congregant at Trinity Church, Elias Jamain, left both Paul Droillet and Elias Neau bequests. Like Bongrand, he mentioned Indians and Africans in his will, leaving “to his wife Dorothy...my negro and Indian slaves.”⁶⁶ Perhaps Bongrand Sr.’s association with Elias Neau brought him and his son in frequent contact with the enslaved, contact that made his fear that his son might someday marry an Indian or African a real possibility.

A close reading of Bongrand’s will reveals that he had already effectively cut off his son because of his choice of livelihood. He willed:

⁶³ Goodfriend, *Before the Melting Pot*, 104. For the petition, see *Minutes of the Common Council of the City of New York, 1675-1776*, eds. Herbert Levi Osgod, et al. (New York: Dodd, Mead and Company, 1905), 1: 424-425.

⁶⁴ James S.M. Anderson, *The History of the Church of England* (1856; repr., Whitefish, MT: Kessinger Publishing, 2006), 3: 327.

⁶⁵ John Henry Hobart, *The Correspondence of John Henry Hobart* (New York: Private Printer, 1912), 236-37.

⁶⁶ Will of Elias Jamain, 1711/12, in *Wills*, 2: 81.

If God should inspire him with thought of quitting the sea and going privateering, and he takes the advice which has been given him, to learn a trade by which he may get a decent livelihood, then the income is to be restored to him.

Lewis Jr. had already ignored the “advice” given to him by his father. He had not gotten a trade, but instead became a privateer which was, perhaps, the nicest way Lewis Sr. could put in his last will and testament that his only son, namesake, and heir was a pirate. Lewis Jr.’s life as a privateer might have likely brought him into daily working contact with African and Indians.⁶⁷ Privateers actively plundered trading vessels and even slave cargoes. Bongrand did not find his son’s livelihood “decent,” and his parenting style of shrewd bartering to ensure compliance from his son hints at why Lewis Jr. might have taken to the sea. Each line of his will read not as the thoughts of a man imagining the worst possible—although farfetched—outcome, but the careful deliberations of a father who knew exactly what he disapproved of in his son’s lifestyle.

The anxiety over African and Indian people reflected in Bongrand’s will was not relegated to marriage. The threat of both groups hung over the heads of colonists like a growing storm cloud.⁶⁸ As the eighteenth century progressed, elites appealed to an increasingly stringent definition of “negro,” even as they were forced to include the multi-ethnic details of absconded slaves in order to aid in pursuit. Yet this attempt at social branding was not hegemonic: competing notions of identity presented by Native, African, creole and those of mixed racial heritage challenged elite notions of racial difference.

⁶⁷ For the African presence in seafaring, consult Jeffrey Bolster, *Black Jacks: African American Seamen in the Age of Sail* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997). Peter Linebaugh and Marcus Rediker have argued for an equalizing multicultural seafaring culture in *The Many Headed Hydra: Sailors, Slaves, Commoners, and the Hidden History of the Revolutionary Atlantic* (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 2000).

⁶⁸ Jill Lepore noted that fear of slave rebellion and Native uprising coexisted in the minds of colonists in *New York Burning*, 11, 55.

2.3 The Runaway who Passed as a Slave Catcher: “Race” and Native slavery

In 1740, a man named Galloway ran away from his master, John Breese, in New York City. Breese ran the following advertisement in the *New York Weekly Journal*:

Run away the first of October, 1740, from *John Breese*, of the City of *New-York*, Leather Dresser, a Mulletto *Indian Slave* Named, *Galloway*. Aged 21 Years, about five foot four Inches high, a thin body, face markt with Small-Pox, he was born in the fort at *Albany*, can speak Dutch, and lived many Years with *Paul Richards*, Esq; some Years Mayor of this City; had on when he went away a dark gray homespun Jacket lin'd with the same, a pair of Linnen Breeches, and new Shoes; on the 3 Instant he was seen and challenged at Coll. *Phillipse's* Mill, and escaped by asserting he was sent in pursuit of a *Cuba* Man Run away, and took the Road towards *New-England*, He loves Rum and other strong liquors and when Tipsey, is a brave fellow and very abusive; Whoever Secures the said Slave so that his Master or his Attorney may dispose of him shall have *Forty Shillings*, Reward and Reasonable Charges paid by,

*John Breese.*⁶⁹

To Breese, Galloway was a “mulatto *Indian slave*.” Breese included the description to aid in Galloway’s capture, yet as the advertisement attests, Galloway’s liminal racial status had already made him difficult to apprehend. Although elite masters like Breese were solidifying categories of difference to serve their own interests, cases like Galloway’s flight illuminate the highly contested nature of such designations.

The very term “mulatto” carries with it the intertwined history of Indian and Africans in the New World. Its first use listed in the OED was in 1591, in John Horthops *Trauailles English Man*, who described a person as having “the complection of a Mulliato, or tawny Indian.”⁷⁰ By 1657, Richard Ligon was using the term in his *True History of Barbados* to describe a Barbadian man of mixed white and African heritage, writing “his face not so black as to be counted a

⁶⁹Advertisement, *The New-York Weekly Journal*, 27 October 1740, in “*Pretends to Be Free*,” eds. Hodges and Brown, 16-17.

⁷⁰ “mulatto, n. and adj.,” OED Online, Oxford University Press, <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/123402?redirectedFrom=mullatto> (accessed April 29, 2013).

Mollotto.” In the first edition of Ephram Chambers’s *Cyclopædia; or, an universal dictionary of arts and sciences*, 1728, a mulatto is defined as “a Name given, in the Indies, to those who are begotten by a Negro Man on an Indian Woman; or an Indian Man on a Negro Woman.”

If this definition accurately described Galloway’s identity, then he was of mixed African ancestry. Perhaps that is why he was referred to as a “slave” in the advertisement. The heritable slavery of African bondspeople has often been cited as a defining difference from Indian servants. Scholars have emphasized the laws passed during the Dutch era and continued under the English that made the holding of Indian slaves illegal. But, despite legal precedent, Indians continued to appear in colonial wills bequeathed as perpetual servants. Sometimes these people did not hold the moniker “servant,” but were rather referred to as slaves outright.

Despite being identified as a mulatto and a slave, which points to African ancestry, Galloway was not referred to by Breese as a Negro, or even as a mulatto, but rather as a “Mullatto *Indian*.” Galloway might not have had any African ancestry at all. After generations of holding Native servants, some masters made their servants’ perpetual servitude “official” by claiming that they had some degree of African ancestry. In fact, Breese did not refer to Galloway’s complexion at all. Yet in the runaway ads that included both Indian and African runaways, skin color was frequently used to describe black runaways. For example, when an African slave named Peter and an Indian man named Isaac Pummatick ran away from William Pepperill in Kittery, Maine in 1705, only the black man was described as “having a pretty brown complexion”; the Native man’s skin color was not mentioned.⁷¹ When a young mixed race man named Joe absconded from Caleb Ferris of East Chester, New York, just before Christmas 1757, Ferris described his appearance by writing, “he is of a yellow complexion being mixed Indian

⁷¹ Advertisement, *Boston News-Letter*, 10 December 1705, *America’s Historical Newspapers: Early American Newspapers* (hereafter cited as EAN).

and Negro, much of an Indian countenance.”⁷² The fact that Breese did not refer to Galloway’s complexion might point to the fact that he did not have any actual African ancestry but was being held unlawfully as a slave for life, his “mulatto” status tacked on to lend artificial credence to this slavery.⁷³

In any case, Galloway used his liminal status in his favor. Breese opened the advertisement with a detailed description of Galloway’s physical appearance, and then continued:

On the 3 Instant he was seen and challenged at Coll. *Phillipse’s* Mill, and escaped by asserting he was sent in pursuit of a *Cuba* Man Run away, and took the Road towards *New-England*.

How Galloway found his way to “Coll. *Phillipse’s* Mill” remains shrouded in mystery, but for a runaway slave it was not a safe way station. The Philipses were one of the largest slaveholding families in New York; after the success of the *Charles*, Frederick Philipse sent slaving vessels from New York to East Africa. Col. Philipse’s mill was most probably the “Upper Mills” of Phillipsburg manor in North Tarrytown (modern-day Sleepy Hollow), New York, but the Philipse family also had a manor house in New York City. In 1685, nearly eighty years before Galloway ran away, the first group of enslaved Africans arrived to work the mills. Perhaps Galloway thought that he might easily pass through a large estate with a sizable enslaved workforce unnoticed, but his presence was uncovered. The advertisement did not elaborate as to who challenged him at Philipse’s mill, only Galloway’s mode of escape. He pretended to be a slave catcher.

⁷² Advertisement, *The New York Gazette; or, The Weekly Post-Boy*, 31 January 1757, in “*Pretends to Be Free*,” eds. Hodges and Brown, 64.

⁷³ Margaret Newell noted that some Indian slaves sued to be recognized as Indian in order to have their perpetual servitude overturned. Newell, “Indian Slavery in Colonial New England,” 57.

Local Indian tribes could be both friend and foe to escaped slaves. Galloway convincingly played the part of a slave catcher. Perhaps he owed his success to his facility at language. John Breese noted that Galloway was “born in the fort at Albany” and could “speak Dutch.” Although he did not also say that the runaway spoke any Native languages, the fort’s robust trade with Native communities might have necessitated such an aptitude.

Even if he did not speak an Indian language, Galloway might have been able to pass as an Indian slave catcher because of other life experiences. Perhaps he had seen many runaway slaves while a youth in Albany. Members of his community might have told stories of their capture at the hands of Indian slave catchers. In 1722, just three years after Galloway was born, representatives of the Five Nations convened in Albany and approved the boundary terms proposed by Virginia Governor Alexander Spotswood. As part of the agreement, they promised to return any runaway slaves that crossed their path. Yet even as they asserted their willingness to return runaways, they demurred returning slaves who were already in their territory, asserting: “but as to those Negroes which you said we promised last year to send home, we hope you will excuse us, because they ly very much out of our way, and may be had more easily by other Indians. Yet if we can serve Virginia in any other thing we shall be glad of an opportunity of doing of it.”⁷⁴ Galloway might have personally known people who played both sides of the fence, leading enslaved people who enlisted their help out of Albany country and guiding interested slave masters along the route to French territory to catch their runaways.

When Robert Livingston’s slaves escaped, they used local Indian guides to arrive safely in French territory. When his son Philip, pursued them, he also enlisted the help of local Indians. Both father and son had served as commissioner of Indian affairs, and would have been intimately aware of the sanctuary some local Indian groups offered runaway slaves. Perhaps the

⁷⁴ The 5 Nations, Answer to the propositions of Governor Spotswood, 12 September 1722, GLC03107.02152, GL.

Livingston family slaves conceived of such an escape due to the unguarded conversations of their masters. Philip Livingston was the Commissioner of the Indian Affairs during the Five Nations border agreement that included the provision about slave catching and his signature appears on the document. Like Livingston's slaves, Galloway used the muddy position of Indian nations to his advantage. He convincingly "passed" as an Indian man, chasing an enslaved African, a "Cuba Man," on his way to New England.

Upon first inspection, Galloway appeared suspicious enough to have been questioned. His "dark gray homespun Jacket" must have contrasted jarringly with "new Shoes." His facility with Dutch might have allowed him to quickly talk his way out of his predicament on the Philipse Manor mill and his appearance, coupled with a cultural expectation that Indians were slave catchers, placed him enough in the Indian category to throw his questioner off.⁷⁵ But it was most probably the "Cuba Man" that allowed him to escape the mill. This "Cuba Man" might have been a figment of Galloway's imagination, but he successfully deflected the focus of his would-be capturer to a less ambivalent target. His choice of a Cuban might have come from experience. His very name "Galloway" was that of prominent Maryland slave owning family, and though he was born in Albany, his parents might have been traded from that large plantation.⁷⁶ He might have worked with enslaved people from Cuba, or have been of Cuban ancestry himself. But he quickly used his Indian ancestry to his advantage, pretending to be a slave catcher in order to deftly evade capture. Galloway's quick-thinking not only offers clues

⁷⁵ Indians served as slave catchers in South Carolina to stem the tide of runaways to Florida. See Sally E. Hadden, *Slave Patrols: Law and Violence in Virginia and the Carolinas* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001), 15.

⁷⁶ "Samuel Galloway III," Archives of Maryland (Biographical Series), <http://msa.maryland.gov/megafile/msa/speccol/sc3500/sc3520/015900/015910/html/15910bio.html> (accessed April 24, 2013); Hugh Thomas, *The Slave Trade: The Story of the Atlantic Slave Trade 1440-1870* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1997), 271.

into his own history but also into the way that Indian and African identities complicated the racial and cultural landscape of slavery in colonial New York.

The advertisement revealed that he “lived many Years with Paul Richards; some Years Mayor of this City.” Paul Richards sent his slaves to Elias Neau’s Anglican catechism class. While there, they would have mingled with the slaves of other elite New York slaveholders, including those of the Philipse.⁷⁷ That might have been where Galloway made the connections that landed him at the Philipse mill. Not all of the slaves who attended catechism class went with the knowledge of their masters and it might have been from within this very group of enslaved people that Galloway hatched the specifics of his escape and met the person who would serve as the inspiration for his “Cuba Man.” Galloway’s master’s elite friends and coworkers held numerous enslaved people, with whom he almost certainly came into daily contact.⁷⁸ But Galloway’s connections needed not only be with enslaved people to be fruitful. Paul Richards’s deputy mayor, Gerardus Stuyvesant, the grandson of Petrus Stuyvesant, served as an alderman during the Negro plot in 1741. His own father, Nicholas, bequeathed slaves to his children in his will. Before his term as a public servant, Gerardus Stuyvesant was accused in 1714 of supplying liquor to an enslaved man. Breese described Galloway as loving “Rum and other strong liquors and when Tipsey, is a brave fellow and very abusive.” Perhaps Breese cited Galloway’s frequent inebriation not only to aid in identifying his enslaved man, but also to identify the type of people who might offer him support—or at least liquor— along the way.

Although the reasons for escape are numerous, Galloway’s particular reasons might lie hidden in the text of his runaway slave advertisement. Unlike other advertisements that beckoned their reader to capture slaves “so that his Master may have him again,” Breese announced

⁷⁷ Foy, “Ports of Slavery, Ports of Freedom,” 112-113.

⁷⁸ Helene C. Phelan, *And Why Not Every Man?: An account of Slavery, the Underground Railroad, and the Road to freedom in New York’s Southern Tier* (Interlaken, NY: Heart of the Lakes, 1987), 21.

“Whoever Secures the said Slave so that his Master or Attorney may dispose of him shall have *Forty Shillings, Reward and Reasonable Charges paid by.*” Breese did not elaborate on how he planned to “dispose” of him—whether through formal sale or as an informal trade with an associate. Galloway had already survived several different masters—from his birth in Albany, to his service to New York mayor Paul Richards, and finally to Breese. Nevertheless, he had been a slave in New York City for some time. When he ran away, he ran away from a lifetime of connections. Yet as an Indian slave Galloway might have been running not only away from slavery but towards family. Whom had he been forced to leave behind “in the fort at *Albany*” before he “lived many Years” in New York City with Paul Richards? His life at the fort lingered in his knowledge of Dutch, a knowledge that he might have used to extricate himself from a precarious situation at Philipse’s mill. Breese might have planned to sell Galloway to another master in New York City, but a runaway with a reputation for drunkenness and “when Tipsey, is a brave fellow and very abusive” might have been hard to sell to a local buyer. It is very probable that Breese intended to sell Galloway out of New York. Problem slaves were sold to the West Indies, which was the lot that awaited many slaves implicated in the New York slave conspiracy. It is doubtful that Breese planned a pleasant fate for Galloway. By 1741, a year after he ran the advertisement for Galloway, Breese was called upon to sit on the jury for the trial of John Roosevelt’s slave, a man named Quack. Breese and his slave holding colleagues were less than merciful. Quack, who protested that he was not guilty, was convicted in the New York slave conspiracy and burned at the stake on May 30, 1741.⁷⁹

The full context of Galloway’s racial-bending bid for freedom lay in the shift towards flattening the cultural identity of the enslaved under the category of “negro” that began in the final decades of seventeenth century but gained considerable momentum during the eighteenth.

⁷⁹ For Quack’s fate, see Lepore, *New York Burning*, 256.

John Crocheron's 1696 Staten Island inventory included "a negro man, an Indian woman and her child" valued at "£80."⁸⁰ Without any other pieces of information with which to situate these individuals, their presence can be read in several different ways. The most tantalizing way to read Crocheron's inventory is to identify his enslaved people as a family. The numbers of people who appeared in runaway slave ads who are identified as "mulatto" lends strength to such a reading. In one generation, the mixed racial identity of the child might have been subsumed under the widening category of "negro." The limitations of source material must also be taken into account. Hodges contends that the runaway slave advertisements he included in his study revealed that "no single quality or group of characteristics encapsulated the cultures of the slaves of New York and New Jersey."⁸¹ Yet there was definitely a racial shift in runaway slave advertisements of people with Native admixture during the eighteenth century. Although masters described their runaways as having command of several different Native American languages and identifying certain physical characteristics as appearing "Native," such as hair and skin color, many of these advertisements classed runaways as "Negro."

This racial shift was not seamless. The fate of another Indian man named Wan pointed to the complications Indian identity posed to the development of a bifurcated racial slave system. In 1708 William Leath, a saddler from New York, left money and goods to his wife, ministers, and friends. Leath, like Jamain and Bongrand, was a member of the French congregation in New Rochelle. In addition to bequeathing goods to his family and friends, he also left a bequest for an Indian man named Wan. But what he left Wan was more substantial than anything he gave to his family. He bequeathed "To my servant, Wan, the Spanish Indian boy, now living with me, his

⁸⁰ Inventory of John Crocheron, 1696/97, in *Wills*, 1: 274.

⁸¹ Hodges, introduction to *"Pretends to Be Free,"* eds. Hodges and Brown, xiv.

freedom, provided he serves my wife seven years.”⁸² Leath’s Wan might have been born “Juan” and, though held as a slave in New York, his slave status might have been contested. Abducted Indians did not calmly accept their fate, and some challenged their status in court by claiming their rights to freedom as citizens of Spain. In 1712, Governor Robert Hunter included in his report to the Lords of Trade and Plantations in London, a case of a group of Spanish Indians who were convicted of participating in a slave rebellion along with black slaves. During the course of the trial, Hunter “received petitions from several of these Spanish Indians as they are called here, representing to me that they were free men subjects to the King of Spain, but sold here as slaves.”⁸³ In fact, the Indians were captured by a privateer and, according to Hunter, “by reason of their colour which is swarthy, they were said to be slaves and as such were sold.” Despite the fact that Hunter, “secretly pitied them,” he did not free the captured Indians. He wrote that he could not prove their claims to freedom because he had “no other evidence of w^t they asserted them their own words.”⁸⁴

By the mid-eighteenth century, the tendency of white enslavers to group Africans and Indians together angered at least one Indian group. In January of 1749/50, Colonel William Johnson wrote to Governor George Clinton that he was “very glad your Excellency has given orders to have the Indian children returned, who are kept by the raiders as pawns or pledges as they call it.”⁸⁵ Johnson complained that the French used the fate of the children to curry support among the Natives. He wrote that “the French told the six Natios (viz) that we looked upon them as our Slaves or Negroes which affair gave me a great deal of trouble at that time to reconcile.”⁸⁶

⁸² Will of William Leath, 1708, *Wills*, 2: 3.

⁸³ That Hunter used the term “Spanish Indians” to describe the captives, points to the Spanish Caribbean or southeast colonies such as Florida as their place of origin. Governor Hunter to the Lords of Trade, 23 June 1712, in *DRCHNY*, 5: 342; Plane, *Colonial Intimacies*, 117.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

⁸⁵ Colonel Johnson to Governor Clinton, 22 January 1749/50, in *DRCHNY*, 6: 546.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

The six Nations were not merely disturbed by the captured children's status as slaves. They were outraged that their children had been categorized as "Negros," effectively racialized in such a way as to render them slaves for life. Johnson's search for the enslaved children was compounded by the fact that a colonist named "Abeel" had "a Seneca Child" and another named "Vandrieson" had "got a Missiaegey."

The mere presence of Native slaves in the Abeel and Vandrieson households would not have seemed unusual to New York's slaveholders, whose runaway slave advertisements and wills attest to a number of mixed Indian and African slaveholdings. Johnson himself was married to a Native woman named Molly Brant and had a slave named Pontiac who was of mixed African and Indian heritage. The other slaves who lived on the Johnson estate spoke both Mohawk and English and dressed in an Indian manner.⁸⁷

John Abeel was a trader who did business in Iroquoia, had dealings with Robert Livingston, and maintained a decades-long business relationship with Sir William Johnson. During the time of the complaint, Abeel lived in Seneca territory and had just had a son with a Seneca woman named Aliquipiso. The son, named Gaiänt'wakê, would become known as Cornplanter and go on to be a major Iroquois leader during the American Revolution. Yet it was likely not John Abeel whom Johnson referred to as holding the "Seneca Child," but rather his mother.⁸⁸ In a letter to Johnson, George Clinton wrote "Mrs Abeel says she has one [captured Indian child] that her Son bough[t] but will do nothing in it till her Son comes home, he being

⁸⁷ Peter Meyler and David Meyler, *A Stolen Life: Searching for Richard Pierpont* (Toronto: National Heritage Books, 1999), 49-51.

⁸⁸ One key detail was transcribed differently in O'Callaghan's *Documents Relative* and the *William Johnson Papers*: Abeel was referred to as "Mr." in the former and "Mrs." in the latter. James Sullivan, ed., *The Papers of Sir William Johnson* (Albany: The University of the State of New York, 1921), 1:260 (hereafter cited as WJP).

now abroad.”⁸⁹ By the time that Johnson complained that the French were using their treatment of Native children to demonstrate British bad faith, the child had remained in Abeel’s household for at least one year. Whether Johnson recovered either child is lost to history, but that the French saw an opening to strike against the British by highlighting the multicultural black/Indian nature of their “Negro” population is telling. Not only could a mixed Native/black slave population prove trying for individual slave masters, but it also had ramifications for the ongoing battles with the French and Indian neighbors.

More easily than adults, children could have their identities stripped and be racially transformed by masters into heritable slaves. In 1744, the Albany merchant Stephanus Groesbeck bequeathed blacks and Indians in his will. To his son, John, he left “an Indian boy ‘Jeff’, and a negro wench for his daughter Elizabeth.” Although some wills stipulated that slave families were to be kept together, Groesbeck’s request laid bare the reality of children orphaned by slavery. “Jeff” and the unnamed “negro wench” might have been half-brother and sister, but there was no mention of any parents. Their parents might have worked together on the Groesbeck’s farm, but as slave-for-sale advertisements attest, young children were big business. They do underscore why the issue of enslaved Native children so angered the six Nations. Native children were pulled into the grip of heritable slavery. “Jeff” might have begun his life as an “Indian boy” but by the end of his life, due to his enslaved state, he could have very well ended up counted as a “Negro.”

The trend of capturing Native children was not just visible in Albany, on the borderland of contested Indian/French territory, but was also evident in the will of Matthias Burnet of East Hampton in Suffolk County on Long Island. In 1746, he left his wife an “Indian girl,” and his

⁸⁹ George Clinton to Colonel William Johnson, 6 January 1748/9, in *WJP*, 1:207. Thomas S. Abler also included this case and speculated that the child was returned, but no evidence remains attesting to the ultimate resolution. Thomas S. Abler, *Cornplanter: Chief Warrior of the Allegany Senecas* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2007), 14.

grandson, Burnet Miller, one “Indian boy” and a “negro boy.”⁹⁰ In 1750, Daniel Denton, of Goshen in Orange County, left his “wife Sara £100, and my Indian wench ‘Bet,’ and my negro girl.”⁹¹ In 1764, Charity Haviland of Westchester County left an “Indian girl Hannah” to her mother “Charlotte.”⁹² The presence of Indian slaves in the wills of elite slaveholders is important to note, because it points to several possibilities: either these Indian children were separated from their parents when they went to the named heirs, or they were separated when older masters and mistresses, anticipating their own demise, bought them, intending to leave them in a bequest to their survivors. In either case, it pointed to an ever-present trade in Native slaves. Far from being a practice that was rare and illicit as scholars have asserted, mixed slaveholdings that included Indian slaves along with African and creole slaves would have been familiar to elite New York slaveholders.

Following the paths of runaways can disclose the methods in which elite networks were employed to track down escapees and the competing notions of identity that existed between the enslaved and their pursuers. In November of 1748, two men ran away from their masters on Long Island.⁹³ They were nearly the same age—19 and 18 respectively—and both were clad in “speckled trowsers.” Each was enslaved in the same area. They might have even shared friendship or kinship bonds. But on December 5, 1748, when John Tuthill placed a runaway slave advertisement for two men, he included a significant marker of difference. The 19-year-old, Toney, was “a Mollatto man slave” and the 18-year-old was described as “an Indian man

⁹⁰ Will of Matthias Burnett, 1746, in *Wills*, 4: 74.

⁹¹ Will of Daniel Denton, 1750, in *Wills*, 4: 309-10.

⁹² Will of Charity Haviland, 1764, in *Wills*, 4: 328-29.

⁹³ Indian slavery was established early on in Long Island. The sale of an “Indian boy to Christofer Dene, butcher” was recorded in 1687 on Hempstead Long Island, and thus bi-racial slavery was established by several decades before the two men decided to run away. Sale of Indian boy to Christofer Dene, 13 July 1687, in *Records of the Towns of North and South Hempstead, Long Island, New York*, ed. Benjmain D. Hicks (Jamaica, NY: Long Island Farmer Print., 1876), 2: 60-61.

named Jack.”⁹⁴ Scholars have identified a hardening of racial lines that occurred under the English rule of New York, but Tuthill’s advertisement assumes a degree of sophistication from its reader. It presupposes that Toney’s mixed racial identity could be physically differentiated from Jack’s Indian one and privileges supposedly discernible physical characteristics as markers of racial difference.

Though Toney and Jack clearly knew each other well enough to run away together, the collaboration of their masters was also important. John Tuthill came from an influential family of landowners. The first John immigrated to Hingham, Massachusetts, in 1635 and was active in the community.⁹⁵ He moved to Southold, New York, while it was still under Dutch rule in 1650. His eldest son, John, enlarged the family holdings in New York. On February 14, 1658, the third John Tuthill was born in New Netherland. His life would span almost a century, and near the end of that time he would serve as justice of the peace and oversee the construction of Kings Highway. He would also take out at least one runaway slave advertisement. Tuthill not only sought the retrieval of his own slave, but also advertised on behalf of “John Petty.” John Petty’s land neighbored Tuthill’s. In 1688, Petty sold to John Paine “for the sum of twenty five pounds two shilling and sixpence,” some of his land bounded on the North by “the highway” over which Tuthill was commissioner. Tuthill himself sold to John Paine “fifteen acres of land, bounded east by John Paty[sic]” a year earlier.⁹⁶ Would-be slave catchers were directed by the advertisement to send the men back to their masters or to “Obadiah Wells in New-York,” thus introducing a third individual into the network of men who collaborated to find their enslaved men. Obadiah Wells was the brother of Tuthill’s wife Mehitable Wells, who had died six years before the slave

⁹⁴ Advertisement, *The New-York Gazette, Revived in The Weekly Post-Boy*, 5 December 1748, in “*Pretends to Be Free*,” eds. Hodges and Brown, 30.

⁹⁵ Tuthill was made a freedman in March 1638 and served as constable in 1640. Cuyler Reynolds, et al., *Genealogies of the State of New York* (New York: Lewis Historical Publishing Company, 1915), 1: 373.

⁹⁶ Land Sale, John Tuthill Sr. to John Paine, 17 November 1688, in *Southold Town Records*, ed. Joseph Wickham Case (New York: The Chas M. Green Printing Company, 1884), 2: 71–72.

advertisement. Toney and Jack's escape highlights not only enslaved networks of collaboration based on friendship or even, perhaps, kinship, but also the dense ties of enslavers—both kin and neighbors.

Though the three men worked in concert while searching for Toney and Jack, slave catchers had a larger cash incentive to capture Tuthill's slave, "Toney." He was offering "Forty Shillings as a Reward," twice as much as Petty was offering for Jack. Perhaps the reward discrepancy merely reflected that Tuthill had greater financial means than Petty. After all, it was Tuthill who had placed the advertisement on behalf of Petty. But this might also have been because, although the two escaped men were very much the same, even down to their "speckled trowsers," their racial differences might have made them valued in different ways. Hodges noted that "even if recaptured, the worth of slaves was reduced because they had been fugitives."⁹⁷ Toney's higher reward might evidence the fact that the devaluation could be tempered by the race of the runaway. Yet their degree of cultural affinity allowed the two men to work together towards a common goal: running away.

Although scholars have downplayed the importance of multiethnic cultures and connections to the enslaved community of the Northeast, slave masters themselves did not enjoy that luxury. The same year that Toney and Jack ran away, the *New-York Gazette* ran an advertisement for a "Negro" man servant called "Robbin" who was described as being "almost the complexion of an Indian."⁹⁸ This sophistication in racial classification was not just an oddity of this particular runaway slave advertisement but, rather, it was part of a longer development of racial categorization in the New World. As one scholar has argued, Europeans did not come to

⁹⁷ Hodges, introduction to *"Pretends to Be Free,"* eds. Hodges and Brown, xiv.

⁹⁸ Advertisement, *The New-York Gazette, Revived in the Weekly Post-Boy*, 11 July 1748, in *ibid.*, 27.

the New World knowing how to be chattel slave owners.⁹⁹ The racial caste system that emerged was culled from earlier fits and starts at enshrining difference. Yet the divining of skin color in order to determine the degree of racial difference was an early facet in the creation of hereditary racial slavery, which had to do as much about Indian communities as about Africans.

A decade following the escape of Galloway, and only a couple of years after the Senecas' complaint, another man used his mixed African/Native identity to aid his bid for freedom. In 1751, Nicolas Everson posted the following runaway slave advertisement:

Run-away in July last, from Nicholas Everson, living in East-New-Jersey, two miles from Perth Amboy ferry, A Mullatto Negroe named Tom, about 37 Years of age, short, well-set, thick lips, flat-nose, black curled hair and can play well on the fiddle; Had on when he went away, a red-coloured watch-coat, without a cape, a brown coloured leather Jacket, a hat, blue and white twisted yarn leggings; speaks good English and Dutch, and is a good Shoemaker; his said master has been informed that he intends to cut off his watch-coat, to make him Indian stockings, and to cut off his hair, and get a blanket, to pass for an Indian; that he enquired for one John and Thomas Nutus, Indians at Susquehanna, and about the Moravians, and the way there. Whoever secures him in the nearest goal or otherwise, so that his Master may have him again, shall have Forty Shillings reward and reasonable charges paid by Nicholas Everson.¹⁰⁰

Tom, a fiddle player, had run away from Everson's farm in Perth Amboy, New Jersey. The Eversons were large landowners with estates in Dutchess County, New York, and east New Jersey.¹⁰¹ Unlike Breese, Everson identified Tom primarily as a Negro, though he referred to him in the advertisement as "A Mullatto Negroe." He described him physically as having "thick lips, flat-nose, black curled hair." These characteristics, according to Everson, made Tom a Negro. But, Tom's own self-identity clashed with Everson's notion.

⁹⁹ Amussen, *Caribbean Exchanges*, 10.

¹⁰⁰ Advertisement, *The Pennsylvania Gazette* (Philadelphia), 9 May 1751, in "Pretends to Be Free," eds. Hodges and Brown, 39.

¹⁰¹ John Everson, Nicholas Everson's brother, was a merchant in New York, and left his wife land "within the Nine Partner's Patent" in Dutchess County in his 1771 will, stipulating that "if she does not sell it during her life, then it is to go to my brother, Nicholas Everson." When Nicholas Everson died in 1783, he ordered this land in Dutchess County sold. Will of John Everson, 9 September 1771, in *Wills*, 8: 29; Will of Nicholas Everson, 13 March 1783, in Elmer T. Hutchinson, *Documents Relating to the Colonial History of the State of New Jersey* (1939; repr., Westminster, MD: Heritage Books, Inc., 2008), 6: 140 (hereafter cited as DRCHNJ).

He “informed” his master that “he intends to cut off his watch-coat, to make him Indian stocking, and to cut off his hair, and get a blanket and pass for an Indian.”¹⁰² Through cultural knowledge and skill, he wrested claim to his Indian identity, and literally put on his bid for freedom by transforming his clothes. One scholar wrote that Tom used clothing “to aid his racial camouflage,” but this statement unduly privileges Everson’s notion of race.¹⁰³ Everson, it seems, would have agreed with Samuel Sewall’s assertion three decades earlier that, because of the “disparity in their Conditions, Colour & Hair,” those of African descent were too different to be incorporated into the body politick. Yet Tom was seeking incorporation into another ethnic group, one with different cultural requirements and one with which he might already be affiliated by birth.¹⁰⁴

Although Tom’s physicality seemed decided enough for Everson to claim his labor, the runaway slave advertisement attested to the fact that even Everson allowed it might not be so set for others. Although the racial mores of Native and European populations were not hermetically sealed off from one another, they were quite different. Individuals classified as “Mullato” to serve the slave interests of their New York masters might be counted full members of the Native tribe into which they were born.¹⁰⁵ That might have been the case for Tom. Everson noted that Tom “enquired for one John and Thomas Nutus, Indians at Susquehanna, and about the Moravians, and the way there.” The Moravian mission had established towns of converts in New

¹⁰² Advertisement, *The Pennsylvania Gazette* (Philadelphia), 9 May 1751, in “*Pretends to Be Free*,” eds. Hodges and Brown, 39.

¹⁰³ David Waldstreicher, *Runaway America: Benjamin Franklin, Slavery and the American Revolution* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2004), 7.

¹⁰⁴ Sewall, *The Selling of Joseph*, 10.

¹⁰⁵ Scholars have noted that Native conceptions of race were quite different than European notions. Many Indian nations would incorporate both asylum seekers and captives into the tribe as full members, with the same rights as all others. Yet Native racial mores, like European, were not static. Nancy Shoemaker historicized the category of “red” in her 1997 article “How Indians Got to be Red,” and identified the need for continued study into the ways non-whites conceptualized of race. No systematic examination of change over time in Native notions of white and black has yet been completed. Shoemaker, “How Indians Got to be Red,” *American Historical Review* 102, no. 3 (June 1997): 625-644. Shoemaker elaborated on this point in her book *A Strange Likeness: Becoming Red and White in Eighteenth-Century North America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004).

Jersey and made significant inroads on the Pennsylvania borderlands among the Susquehanna in the middle decades of the seventeenth century.¹⁰⁶ Considering that Everson offered the information in order to aid slave catchers, how might such an inclusion help? The most obvious way would be that the two men could be questioned to aid in locating Tom. The inclusion might also have offered would-be slave catchers a potential starting place in locating Tom. Yet Everson's inclusion might have served another purpose. Tom might have learned of John and Thomas Nutus from the enslaved community.

Tom followed in the footsteps of at least one previous escapee. In 1734, Samuel Leonard advertised in Philadelphia's *American Weekly Mercury* for his runaway slave, Wan.¹⁰⁷ Wan's similarities to Tom were striking. Wan escaped from Perth Amboy and was also of mixed ethnic heritage. Leonard, like Everson, described his slave in starkly racial terms, writing that Wan was "as black as most Negroes." Despite Leonard's racialized description, Wan could blend into Indian society, as the advertisement explained he "speaks good English and this country Indian." Like Tom, Wan was a fiddle player, a talent that could help him make a living while he escaped. The advertisements for Wan and Tom taken together might suggest a community of mixed Indian and African slaves in Perth Amboy with connections to Indian communities. Certainly Tom's confidence that he could "pass as Indian" suggests the possibility of familial ties. At the very least, Tom might have planned his escape by following Wan's escape route. Just as Tom

¹⁰⁶ James H. Merrell argued that Moravians had considerable success as cultural go-betweens because they employed Native missionaries. If so, Tom would have been an ideal addition due to his language skills and experience living among white settlers. Jane Merritt noted that Native female Moravian converts syncretized Indian and Christian notions, augmenting their own spiritual power. Certainly for Everson, the Moravian mission offered an opportunity for cultural reinvention that afforded Tom the opportunity to assert his own self-determinism by transforming his identity. James H. Merrell, *Into the American Woods: Negotiators on the Pennsylvania Frontier* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1999), 88; Jane T. Merritt, *At the Crossroads: Indians and Empires on a Mid-Atlantic Frontier, 1700-1763* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 2003), 103-121; Richard White, *The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires, and Republics in the Great Lakes Region* (1991; repr., New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 389-90. See also, Sherman Day, *Historical Collections of the State of Pennsylvania* (Philadelphia: George W. Gorton, 1843), 138.

¹⁰⁷ Advertisement, *American Weekly Mercury* (Philadelphia), 24 October 1734, in "Pretends to Be Free," eds. Hodges and Brown, 11.

might have known his Native relatives and former escapees, others in the community might have also known them.

Everson clearly did some detective work before he drafted the runaway ad. Although Tom possibly broadcast his plans, it is more likely that Everson discovered his goals only after he ran away. Even if Tom had familial ties to the Indians at Susquehanna, he still had to “enquire” about the way to get to their encampment. Tom was confident enough in his identity to approach Native groups and savvy enough to blend into the heterogeneous religious group that would support his bid for escape.

Tom’s location “two miles from Perth Amboy ferry” gave him easy access to a stream of people arriving from New York destined for Philadelphia. When Tom devised his plot, a stagecoach regularly ran between Perth Amboy and Bordentown, New Jersey. From there, Tom would have caught a ferry from Bordentown to Philadelphia. Perhaps it was along this busy transportation route that Everson was able to gather leads about his runaway slave. Yet once Tom made it to the city, it would have been harder to track him down especially if he had been living there for a year under his Indian identity.¹⁰⁸ The anonymity offered by the city might account for the nearly year-long gap between when Tom ran away in July 1750 and when Everson ran the ad in the *Pennsylvania Gazette* on May 9, 1751. Tom’s “passing” certainly widened the manhunt. Any man of African or Indian descent who met the physical description of the advertisement would not be safe. Twenty years later, Nicholas Everson put his plantation at Chesquakes up for sale. In his advertisement, he wrote that it was “very convenient to landing,

¹⁰⁸ Several different sources conflict on the years that the Perth Amboy route existed between Bordentown, NJ, and Philadelphia. One source asserted that the route was only newly established in October of 1750. If this was the case, then Tom would have had to walk the forty miles to Bordentown in order to catch the ferry to Philadelphia. Another source maintained that the ferry was up and running by the 1740s. For more on the ferry, see John P. Wall and Harold E. Pickersgill, *History of Middlesex County, New Jersey, 1664-1920* (New York: Lewis Historical Publishing Company, Inc., 1921), 2: 377; and “Bordentown City” <http://www.delrivgreenway.org/heritagetrail/Bordentown-City.html> (accessed November 11, 2012).

for transportation to *Amboy* or *New-York*,” a fact that worked in his runaway slave Tom’s favor.¹⁰⁹ By the time of his will in 1783, Nicholas Everson did not explicitly mention any enslaved people as part of his estate.¹¹⁰ One year earlier, Moravian Indians near Gnaddenhutten were accused of being enemy combatants and massacred by the Pennsylvania militia.¹¹¹ Tom’s fate is unknown.

Even as elite masters such as Breese, Tuthill and Everson increasingly sought to racially define their runaways, the details that they hoped would aid in their pursuit—language ability, ethnic distinctions, appearance, and clothing—were used by the enslaved to network across culture, evade capture and disappear into Native communities.

2.4 Conclusion

The importance of Native/black contact is essential to understanding the cultural world of elite slaveholders and their slaves. From the earliest years of European settlement, elite slaveholders possessed multi-ethnic populations whose distinct cultures shaped the development of slavery in the Northeast. The experience of Native slavery and manumission in Brazil affected the half freedom and ultimate manumission of company blacks in New Netherland under Stuyvesant’s tenure. The multigenerational Indian and African slaveholding within the major elite families shaped the wills of slaveholders in ways specific to the experience of slavery in New York and beyond. Enslaved people used the multiethnic character of the slave community to their advantage when running away, sometimes employing “passing” in unique ways to shift

¹⁰⁹ Advertisement, *The New York Gazette or Weekly Post Boy*, 27 March 1769, in *Extracts from American Newspapers, relating to New Jersey, 1704-1775*, eds. William Nelson and Abraham van Doren (Paterson, NJ: The Call Printing and Publishing, Co., 1904), 26: 406.

¹¹⁰ Will of Nicholas Everson, 13 March 1783, in *DRCHNJ*, 6: 140.

¹¹¹ White, *Middle Ground*, 389-90.

the circumstances to their advantage. Elite northeasterners employed their dense familial and social networks to track down runaways. The advertisements they placed in colonial newspapers evidence a high degree of attention to ethnic variation, one that, as the eighteenth century wore on, led to a culture that privileged physical characteristics as the main markers of difference.

The centrality of Native/black identity to the ways that slavery in the Northeast was experienced and understood by elites is perhaps best encapsulated in a runaway slave advertisement that ran in *Rivington's New York Gazetteer* on December 24, 1783:

ABSCONDED from his Master, since Sunday morning, an INDIAN BOY, of a yellow colour, about 13 years of age, had on a blue short jacket, and trowsers of the same cloth. It is imagined he was inticed away by a white boy, who went about the city offering some gold rings for sale, and said he run away from a ship of war. Whoever will apprehend said Negro Boy, and bring or send him to his Master, at Mr. Soutenberg's, shall have Four Dollars Reward. All masters of vessels are requested to search for him on board their vessels, and are also forbid carrying him off, under penalty of the law.¹¹²

Both the words “absconded” and “Indian boy” were capitalized in the advertisement. If a would-be slave catcher skimmed the section looking for a quick find, the typeset would have automatically imbued the two words with staying power. By the latter decades of an eighteenth century that witnessed frontier warfare and a war for independence, these two words evoked several centuries of struggle. It was a history that encompassed the captive elegies penned by Selijns almost two centuries before and the lost and redeemed Esopus captives sent to Curaçao. It evoked the memories of runaway African, Native, and mixed slaves who made it past English lines and allied with the French, and those whose allegiance was always suspect.

If the reader paused for a moment to read the details, the image shifted slightly. The advertisement did not relay the story of an Indian slave who, like the enslaved men named Wan before him, trod a well-worn runaway trail, making deliberate choices that supported his best

¹¹² Advertisement, *Rivington's New-York Gazetteer and Universal Advertiser*, 24 December 1783, in “*Pretends to Be Free*,” eds. Hodges and Brown, 303-304.

interests. Men like that could be dangerous. An “INDIAN BOY” who absconded like that could become a formidable enemy. As if weaving a reassuring fairy tale to the reader, the advertiser narrated a story in which “it is imagined he was enticed away by a white boy, who went about the city offering some gold rings for sale.” Although “the white boy” who lured him away evoked the memory of the French, who lured runaways with the promise of freedom; the Spanish, whose Indian citizens entered the New York population as slaves; and the British, whose generals offered freedom in exchange for service against rebel masters, the image was sapped of its punch. The “white boy” was a runaway himself; a deserter “from a ship of war.”

Gone was the potential enemy, lured away not by the promise of freedom but by “gold rings.” Yet even as the image of the runaway was softened, the shadow of the threat subsisted in the memory of the “ship of war,” for the ship that the white boy deserted could yet offer shelter for the advertised runaway. The runaway “INDIAN BOY” was nameless in the advertisement. He was quite unlike the Indian runaway “Wan” who fled from Schuyler’s mines, or the mixed race “Wan” who ran from Perth Amboy with his fiddle and know-how of the country, or even the Spanish Indian “Juan” who sued for his freedom. He was only identifiable by his color, “yellow” rather than “red”; his youth, “about 13 years of age”; and his clothing, “a blue short jacket, and trousers of the same cloth.” Thus, sufficiently stripped of his threat the “INDIAN BOY” who “ABSCONDED from his master” disappeared completely in the advertisement. What remained was a person who though still involved in an illicit action, had lost his menace. The advertiser promised that “Whoever will apprehend said Negro Boy, and bring or send him to his Master, at Mr. Soutenberg’s, shall have Four Dollars Reward.” Just as the British pound was replaced by the dollar in the new republic, so the runaway’s Indian identity was subsumed under the heading of “Negro.”

The advertisement ended noting that “all masters of vessels are requested to search for him on board their vessels, and are also forbid carrying him off, under penalty of the law.” At the historical moment when British ships retreated from New York and New Jersey’s shores, and elites like the Soutenbergs claimed their “absconded” property, masters of these departing ships were required to search for an “INDIAN BOY,” but apprehend a “Negro.” Although recent scholarship has covered the period of capitulation and included stories of the enslaved, some of whom managed to sail to freedom under the British rules of engagement after New York City was evacuated, most scholarly treatments have, like Soutenberg’s advertisement, neatly uncomplicated the identity of the population who flocked to freedom under the Union Jack. Some of those who were dragged off British men-of-war after fighting against (and running from) their waiting American masters held onto Indian identities, which long ago had been overwritten by “Negro” monikers that legitimized their hereditary slavery.¹¹³ The identities of these multiethnic individuals would have a more circumscribed place in the United States binary racial imagining, but they would persist in shaping not only the cultural identity of the community that descended from two centuries of slavery, but also the racial imaginations of the elite.

¹¹³ Mixed Native identity only managed to survive in six of the official descriptions of people classified as “Negro” who evacuated with the British. In these cases, “Indian” appeared as an undifferentiated category based primarily on physical appearance and, as such, the tribal identity of these refugees was not included. Graham Russell Hodges, ed., *The Black Loyalist Directory: African Americans in Exile After the American Revolution* (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1996), 10, 13, 17, 131.

CHAPTER 3

“SUBMIT THYSELF UNDER HER HANDS”: THE HIDDEN INTERCONNECTED WORLD OF FEMALE SLAVEHOLDERS AND SLAVES

I received Mrs. Schuyler's Letter and have made the best inquiry I can for her Negro but find him not. I can hear nothing of him. There was one last year. As soon as I heard of him I did take him to be a run away and sent a warrant to the constable to secure him but before the constable had my warrant he was gone from there and so I could not come at him.

John Allyn to Robert Livingston, May 10, 1692

And he said, Hagar, Sarai's maid, whence camest thou? And wither wilt thou go? And she said, I flee from the face of my mistress Sarai. And the Angel of the LORD said unto her, Return to thy mistress, and submit thyself under her hands.

Genesis 16:8-9

When Alida Livingston contacted John Allyn in 1692 in search of her runaway enslaved man, she was nearly delivered of her fifth son William and, from Allyn's reply, it is clear that she had been following up leads for the search throughout the duration of her pregnancy.¹ Neither her growing body nor the considerable trouble of tracking the man deterred her from her goal. Alida approached both challenges as natural elements of her life: expected duties of a proper wife and household manager.

On May 13, 1693, just a year later, another elite woman, the widow Martha de Hart, sold an enslaved mother named Elizabeth and her children—three year old Joanna and eleven month old Sinbad—for “nineteen pounds fifteen shillings.”² Intervals of childbearing demarcated the lives of both female slaveholders and their slaves in divergent ways: although Alida's pregnancy did not appear to impede her runaway pursuit, the fecundity of Martha's slave woman might have encouraged her sale. By 1693, Martha had been a widow for four years and, though she sold a family of slaves, she was not destitute; her husband, Daniel, willed that Martha have “all

¹ John Allyn to Robert Livingston, 10 May 1692, GLC03107.00211/LP, GL. William died in infancy.

² The bill of sale was for a “negro woman called and known by the name of Elizabeth also the negro girl about 3 years old of who is called and known by the name of Joanna and one negro boy about eleven months old called and known by the name of Sinbad both of which are her children borne of the body of the same Elizabeth.” Deed of sale, Martha De Hart to Paulus Linhard, 13 May 1693, New York City Misc. Mss. 1693, New-York Historical Society (hereafter cited as NYHS).

my estate” and made her “my sole executrix.”³ Some slaves, if they were named specifically in wills, were left by men to their wives to care for them during their life. However, de Hart determined that it was worth more to her to sell Elizabeth and her children than to keep them. Perhaps when Elizabeth’s first child was born, just one year after Martha’s husband’s decease, she could absorb the cost. As a girl, Joanna might eventually have been able to offer additional maidservant duties to Martha. But, once Elizabeth got pregnant again, two years later, Martha might have worried. Elizabeth’s normal fertility made her a poor slave for a widowed woman.⁴ Thus two female states—Martha’s widowhood and Elizabeth’s fertility—collided to create the conditions of sale.

Both Alida and Martha were part of the same elite network of female slaveholders and practiced slavery within the context of the gendered events that framed their lives: pregnancy, death, marriage, and household management. In the first generation of settlement in New Netherland, the women who arrived on the shores of the Hudson had no first-hand experience of slaveholding. However, that did not mean that they were entirely isolated from slavery. Elite family networks that spanned the Atlantic connected Dutch matriarchs in Amsterdam to their slaveholding children in North America and the Caribbean. This transatlantic knowledge of the institution shaped the cultural knowledge of women in important ways. When women like Judith Stuyvesant arrived in the colonies, they employed a large network of female friends and relatives to adapt quickly to managing households that included slaves.

When Alida Livingston shrewdly managed Livingston Manor, she did not do it alone. Her correspondence shows that she heavily relied on the enslaved for the smooth management of the business and family affairs for which she has become famous. At the same time that elite

³ Will of Daniel De Hart, 9 July 1689, in *Wills*, 1: 306.

⁴ Edwin Francis Hatfield, *History of Elizabeth, New Jersey: Including the Early History of Union County* (New York: Carlton & Lanahan, 1868), 255-256.

white women experienced their first major gendered event, marriage, the lives of the enslaved were also changed forever. The thorny events surrounding the marriage of famed travel diarist Sarah Kemble Knight's daughter to John Livingston coincided with the explosive disruption of several enslaved families owned by the Livingstons. These disruptions in slave lives did not go unnoticed among the elites of the Northeast, and had consequences for their own lives in important ways.

This chapter uses Alida Schuyler Livingston's actions as slave mistress as an organizational framework to explore the ways that slavery shaped the experience of "female events" such as marriage, childbearing, motherhood, the single life, and widowhood of the members of her wider slaveholding network. Several questions frame this chapter. How does a focus on these elite women's slaveholding practices affect the ways in which their gender-specific actions, such as household management and religious instruction, are understood? How did slavery shape and transform female-to-female white relationships such as those among mother-child, sisters, and friends? How did it affect relationships among husbands, sons, and fathers? Though there are several attributes that make the elite slaveholding women of the Northeast similar to other mistresses throughout the Atlantic World, other aspects of their slaveholding experience make them distinct. A focus on the generational actions of slaveholding women can uncover the ways that their practices changed over time, and the unique slaveholding culture that emerged among elite white women.

3.1. “Presented for Baptism with good intentions”: Shaping a mistress culture

Baptism, marriage, and death marked the life cycle of elite Northeastern woman and also shaped the slaveholding networks they created. The desires of the enslaved during these important life moments collided with the demands of their mistresses and, from these struggles, an elite slaveholding culture emerged. Baptism, not birth, marked the official beginning of community life for elite women; Dutch immigrant women used this sacrament to define their new roles as slaveholders.

By the time that Alida Schuyler was born on February 28, 1656, in Beverwijck, a distinct slaveholding culture that included an interconnected network of elite mistresses had already begun to coalesce in New Netherland.⁵ Several months earlier, Judith Bayard Stuyvesant’s cousin by marriage, Janneken Varlett, stood as witness to the baptism of Augustyn, the son of an enslaved man named Mattheus de Angola.⁶ Judith Stuyvesant’s baptized slaves lost in Curaçao were likely baptized during this same period, although their baptisms are not recorded in the register. It was a time when Henricus Selijns bemoaned the loss and enslavement of Dutch captives, hoping for their return, yet doubted the motives of black slaves who brought their children to be baptized, interpreting their actions solely as attempts to support emancipation claims. The uniqueness of these years has not escaped the view of scholars who examine the unprecedented access the enslaved had to church ordinances like marriage and baptism, the courts, and manumission. Yet the dominant influence of networks of elite women on the development of this distinct slave culture has been largely unexplored.

⁵ Biemer, *Women and Property*, 59. Alida Schuyler grew up on one of the largest slaveholding estates in Albany. See Oscar Williams, “Slavery in Albany, New York, 1624-1827,” *Afro-Americans in New York Life and History* 34, no. 2 (July 2010): 159.

⁶ Thomas G. Evans, ed., *Collections of the New York Genealogical and Biographical Society*, vol. 2, *Baptisms from 1639-1730 in the Reformed Dutch Church, New York* (1901; repr.; New York: The Gregg Press, 1968), 39 (hereafter cited as *Baptisms 1639-1730*).

The baptismal record for the Dutch Reformed Church has been a central source for reconstructing the lives of enslaved Africans in New Netherland and the ways in which the first generation of slaves used church ordinances to negotiate slavery and even achieve freedom. However, it can also illuminate the networks that connected early slaveholding women. Godparentage, as many scholars have noted, was a main area of strengthening familial ties and forging fictive kinship connections.⁷ In the many baptisms listed in the baptismal register of the Dutch Reformed Church of New Amsterdam, the names of several slaveholding elites appear alongside one another as witnesses for both white and black baptisms. Participating in baptisms was also a main avenue of religious activity for elite Dutch women.⁸ Of the twelve times that Judith Stuyvesant was listed as baptismal witness between 1648 and 1671 in the records of the Dutch Reformed congregation, she was listed as co-witness with her husband only twice. Petrus Stuyvesant himself was listed as standing as witness only three times. In the ten years before Petrus sent the letter bemoaning the loss of the slaves that Judith presented, Judith served as baptismal witness nine times, the bulk of her baptismal witnessing duties.

Judith Stuyvesant was not the only elite mistress to frequently appear as baptismal witness. Annetje Loockermans, who was Maria van Rensselaer's mother; Maria (Maartje) Loockermans; and Sara Roelofs also served as witnesses numerous times. Understanding these elite mistresses' activities as baptismal witnesses has ramifications for understanding their actions as slaveholders and the larger networks that knit them together. For example, when Maria

⁷ The examination of godparentage and its changing function over time represented a key component of David Sabeau's *Kinship in Neckarhausen*, and Joyce Goodfriend has highlighted the importance of godparent networks to the first generation of enslaved Africans in New Netherland. See David Sabeau, *Kinship in Neckarhausen, 1700-1870* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1998); and Goodfriend, "Souls of African American Children."

⁸ Standing as baptismal witness was, as Joyce Goodfriend argued, one central role that women played in the Dutch Reformed Church and some women even provided for godchildren in wills. Joyce Goodfriend, "Incorporating Women into the History of the Colonial Dutch Reformed Church: Problems and Proposals" in *Patterns and Portraits: Women in the History of the Reformed Church in America*, eds. Renée S. House and John W. Coakley (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1999), 27-28.

Loockermans conditionally emancipated “Francis and Manuel” in her will, she cited an “agreement made with his father and mother.” That this “agreement” might have been the outgrowth of a connection made between the boy’s parents and Maria at his baptism is not unlikely. Maria followed in the footsteps of her husband’s sister Annejke and stood as baptismal witness for numerous children—both kin and non-kin—at the Dutch Reformed church. Yet as scholars have noted, baptism as a method of emancipation became closed off by the end of Dutch rule, and even conditional emancipation in wills became scarce.

When Sara Roelofs’s mother, Anneke Jans, married Everardus Bogardus, she wed a man who had many dealings with both the enslaved African and the Indian communities. Bogardus himself had been stationed in West Africa, and the highest number of African baptisms occurred under his tenure as minister of the Dutch Reform Church.⁹ Bogardus was invested in education, and, in 1638, requested the Classis send a teacher to instruct Dutch and black children in the Reformed faith.¹⁰ He married Anneke Jans that same year, and thus Sara entered a household committed to bi-racial education with enduring ties to the slave community. Sara, like her mother, stood as baptismal witness many times, even serving as godparent on the same day that an enslaved child was baptized. Yet as Sara’s will makes clear, these ties did not preclude her actions as a slaveholder. Her sisters also married into the slaveholding elite, with one marrying Lucas Rodenburg, who would go on to be the vice director of the slaving depot on Curaçao.¹¹ The same year that Sara baptized her first son, 1644, her chosen godfather and step-father, Everardus Bogardus, also stood as godparent for an African child.¹² So when, on June 16, 1680, Cornelius van Bursum made sure that his “negro girl Elizabeth is not to be sold, but to remain in

⁹ Bogardus was not as successful in converting Native Americans as he was with enslaved Africans. Meuwese, “For the Peace and Well-Being of the Country,” 373-74.

¹⁰ Hodges, *Root and Branch*, 22; Jacobs, *New Netherland*, 313-314.

¹¹ Shaw detailed Sara Roelofs’s larger Atlantic family network in her dissertation. See Shaw, “Building New Netherland,” 309.

¹² *Baptisms 1639-1730*, 18.

the service of my daughter Anna,” he was leaving the girl primarily under the management of her stepmother Sara.

Anna had some sort of mental ailment. In Sara Roelofs’s will, dated July 29, 1693, she bequeathed:

I leave to my daughter Anna van Borsum, by my former husband, Cornelius van Borsum, on account of her simplicity, my small house and kitchen, and lot situate in this city, between the land of Jacob Mauritz and my bake house, with this express condition, that she shall not be permitted to dispose of the same by will or otherwise, but to be hers for life and then to the heirs mentioned in this will.¹³

She also named several guardians for Anna, including her “son-in-law Johannes Kip, and my son Luyas Kiersted, and my son-in-law Wm Teller.” Whether Elizabeth remained with Anna van Borsum is not detailed in Roelofs’s will, but as Sara specifically bequeathed an enslaved person to every other member of her family other than Anna, it is likely that Elizabeth remained with her. By the time of Sara Roelofs’s death, the importance of will and baptismal ties as a method of mitigating slavery for the enslaved had receded, but they remained central avenues of connection between elite slaveholding women.

Marriage was also a time of upheaval in the lives of the enslaved and their elite mistresses, one that defined the character of slaveholding within elite networks. Such conflicting gendered concerns were cited by both an enslaved black woman named Claesje and her mistress, Catalyn Leendertsen, during the events surrounding Claesje’s theft case. On March 2, 1652, Claesje, who was “the slave of Sander Leendersz [sic],” was charged with theft. Sander Leendertsen was one of the founding settlers of Schenectady and had trading connections to the van Rensselaer family.¹⁴ When Claesje described the items taken, she implicated two white

¹³ Will of Sarah Roelofs, 29 July 1692, in *Wills*, 1: 225.

¹⁴ Sander Leendertsen was born Alexander Lindesay “of the glen” in Inverness, Scotland, and appears in colony documents and in some scholarly works as Sanders or Sander Leendertsen Glen. Under Dutch rule, he was most frequently referred to as Leendertsen but, after the English takeover, he favored the surname Glen. Leendertsen

men—Jan Michielsz and Jacob Luyersz. Claesje testified that when she arrived to deliver candles that Jan Michielsz had induced her to steal, he “drew his knife and forced her to give him the lead and also asked for Mackerel and beef,” physically overpowering her. The items that she had planned to hand over to Michielsz—six candles—were a point of contention between Michielsz and Claesje’s mistress, Catalyn Leendertsen. He claimed that the candles were a loan, but Catalyn recounted a much different story. She testified “that he said that the negress stole them [the candles] from her,” a story to which she insisted Michielsz confessed “with tears in his eyes and folded hands,” begging her “two or three times saying: ‘My dear Catalyntje, forgive me the wrong I have done you.’”¹⁵ Claesje also accused Michielsz of bribing her with a cap in order to keep quiet. Although Jan Michielsz denied the charge, Claesje had the presence of mind to accuse him “in the presence of Jacob Jansz Stol and Philip Pietersz Scheuler[sic],” two elite men, the latter of whom was the brother of Alida Schuyler Livingston and the son-in-law of the director of Rensselaerswijck, Gerrit van Slichtenhorst. Perhaps this public shaming was too much for Michielsz, who offered “to go to prison in lieu of bail.”¹⁶

Although it is unclear what Jan Michielsz had promised Claesje if she stole the items, the enslaved woman elaborated on what she was promised from Jacob Luyersz. In return for delivering “3 yards of red cloth” and “8 bars of lead,” Luyersz “promised to take her to the Manhatans and that she would then get a husband.” Had the Leendertsens forbade Claesje a husband, because they did not want her to have any children, which would place strain on the household? Although she was tried for theft, it is certain that Claesje was trying to escape.

served as trader on one of the van Rensselaer trading sloops and, by 1677, his household was listed as having three slaves. Burke, *Mohawk Frontier*, 60, 126. For more on his shifting surname see Innes, *New Amsterdam and its People*, 303.

¹⁵ Extraordinary session, 2 March 1652, in *Minutes of the Court of Rensselaerswyck: 1648-1652*, trans. and ed. A.J.F. van Laer (Albany: University of the State of New York, 1922), 192 (hereafter cited as MCR). Catalyn’s testimony detailing her conversation with Sanders is in the margin.

¹⁶ Extraordinary session, 2 March 1652, in MCR, 193.

Claesje also delivered Luyersz “1 tub of butter,” but according to her testimony, she did not believe that this item was ill gotten. Claesje insisted that Luyersz had told her “he bought it for her master, adding: ‘Your mistress knows about it.’”¹⁷ Although the details of the crime are murky, one point is clear—Claesje’s mistress Catalyn was at the center of not only the case but also the household inventory management. When the commissary, Johannes Dyckman, came to the Leendertsens’ house searching for Claesje, claiming that “she has slandered [honest] people and the case is not [being prosecuted],” Catalyn did not hand her enslaved woman over. Instead she used gender to her advantage and stalled by replying, “Not without the consent of my husband.”¹⁸ Although Dyckman responded with a threat, saying “I shall make her come and have soldiers get her,” he was ultimately forced to wait until Sander Leendertsen “was asked to come home by his servant.”¹⁹

Upon arriving home, Sander followed his wife’s lead and continued to stall handing over Claesje, requesting that Dyckman return the next day and then “we shall then see what we can do.” This second delay enraged Dyckman enough that he threatened, “If you refuse me, I have the power to take you and your wife and your whole family and to ruin your house and to shoot it to pieces, for you dwell on the Company’s ground.”²⁰ That was no idle threat because, three months earlier, on New Year’s Eve, Dyckman had allowed Jan Baptist van Rensselaer and Gerrit van Slichtenhorst’s houses to be besieged and partially burned by soldiers under his command. The next day, he oversaw the public beating of van Slichtenhorst’s son and grandchildren, during which he threatened to shoot the children and cried “beat him now and may the devil take

¹⁷ Extraordinary session, 2 March 1652, in *MCR*, 192.

¹⁸ Extraordinary session, 22 March 1652, in *MCR*, 195-196.

¹⁹ Extraordinary session, 22 March 1652, in *MCR*, 196.

²⁰ *Ibid.*

him!”²¹ He flaunted this exploit to Catalyn Leendertsen when he came to arrest her enslaved woman—likely to intimidate her into handing over Claesje—bragging that he would have gallows erected for three people, “For Mr. Slichtenhorst, his son and J.B. van Rensselaer.”²²

Although Dyckman probably thought that threats leveled against their family would have some traction with the Leendertsens, he was sorely mistaken. Sander Leendertsen called Dyckman’s bluff and remained unmoved, responding to an additional threat of “wait until Mr. Stuyvesant comes up the river; then I will teach you differently” with “When Mr. Stuyvesant comes up the river, I may perhaps have as much right as you have.” This final defiant response moved Dyckman to stab Leendertsen after threatening him with a rapier. Three years later, Dyckman was deposed from his position as commissary due to insanity; he died in 1674. His son and namesake, Johannes Jr., born in 1662, would escape the 1690 Schenectady massacre, fleeing to Albany where he lived for several decades before relocating to Robert Livingston’s Manor in 1715. That same year, in February, Johannes Jr.’s enslaved man Tom, tried to murder him.²³

Elite Boston mistresses, like their New York counterparts, championed their own interests through their slaves’ marriages, which sometimes coincided with those of the enslaved. On Thursday, September 26, 1700, Samuel Sewall penned the following entry in his journal:

Mr. John Wait and Eunice his wife, and Mrs. Debora Thair come to Speak to me about the Marriage of Sebastian, Negro servt of said Wait, with Jane, Negro servnt of said Thair. Mr. Wait desired that they might be published in order to marriage. Mrs. Thair insisted that Sebastian might have one day in six allow’d him for the support of Jane, his intended wife and her children, if it should please God to give her any. Mr. Wait now wholly declin’d that, but freely offer’d to allow Bastian Five pounds, in Money p anum towards the support of his children p said Jane (besides Sebastians cloathing and Diet). I persuaded Jane and Mrs. Thair to agree to it, and so it was concluded; and Mrs. Thair gave up the Note of

²¹ Court Proceedings, 29 February 1652, in *MCR*, 190.

²² Court Proceedings 25 March 1652, in *MCR*, 197.

²³ James Riker, *Revised History of Harlem (City of New York): Its Origin and Early Annals....* (New York: New Harlem Publishing Company, 1904), 545. Tom’s deposition is covered in chapter one.

Publication to Mr. Wait for him to carry it to Wm Griggs, the Town Clerk, and to Williams in order to have them published according to Law.²⁴

This incident is noteworthy because of the presence of women at the negotiation over the details of the marriage of Jane and Sebastian. Both the Waits and the widow Thair were Samuel Sewall's neighbors.²⁵ On December 21, 1697, Deborah Thair was identified as a "widow" when she, along with her brothers and sisters, witnessed the sale of the Braintree lands of her brother, Zachariah Thayer to a cousin, Thomas Thayer.²⁶ The Thair family appears frequently in Samuel Sewall's diary. John and Eunice Wait were no strangers to marriage negotiations. Their daughter, Eunice, had on June 27, 1700, just married Captain Thomas Coram, a man with a controversial reputation.²⁷

It is clear from Sewall's account that the primary negotiators were Mr. Wait and Mrs. Thair, but the presence of the other two women must not be discounted. Mr. Wait could have come alone to the negotiation. A subsequent meeting with Mr. Wait, recorded by Sewall, did not include Eunice. Did Mr. Wait confer with his wife before he started the negotiation by insisting on marriage banns? Mrs. Thair cut to that point quickly, insisting that Sebastian be allowed to support Jane and any future children "one day in six." As they had for New York widow Eunice de Meyer, these potential children might have put severe strain on the widow Thair's resources. One day less of supporting both Jane and her children might have alleviated a considerable share of this burden. Although Mr. Thair refused this request, his counteroffer reflected his concern with practical family matters, pointing to Eunice's possible influence. He proposed that Bastian be given an annual salary "towards the support of his children p said Jane," though he cleverly

²⁴ Sewall, *Diary*, 1: 435.

²⁵ Barry Levy, *Town Born: The Political Economy of New England from its Founding to the Revolution* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009), 199.

²⁶ Land sale from Zechariah Thayer, et al. to Thomas Thayer, Braintree, 20 May 1695, in John William Linzee, *The History of Peter Parker and Sarah Ruggles of Roxbury, MA....* (Boston, MA: Samuel Usher, 1913), 532.

²⁷ Fitz-Henry Smith Jr., *The Story of Boston Light: With some Count of the Beacons in Boston Harbor* (Boston, MA: Privately Printed, 1911), 18-19n*.

included that Sebastian's "cloathing and Diet" would be included in that sum. Thus, the Waits understood the strain that additional children would put on a widow's resources and would remunerate Mrs. Thair for the additional mouths to feed.

That clearly was not a perfect bargain, as Sewall needed to persuade the other party. It is here that the third woman was revealed. Mrs. Thair did not come alone; Jane was also at the negotiation. That he "persuaded Jane and Mrs. Thair to agree to it," and then it was subsequently "concluded," pointed to the fact that the enslaved woman had some say in the agreement. It is not clear whether Sebastian was also at the negotiation, but it seems unlikely, as Sewall took pains to include everyone who was there. If Sebastian was there, his input at the bargaining table did not seem to have the same sway as Jane's did, as it went unmentioned. Thus, these three women—two white women slaveholders and one enslaved woman—hammered out marriage allowances based on female concerns.

Deborah Thair died suddenly and without securing Jane's marriage to Sebastian. Sewall wrote that on January 4, 1701, "Mrs. Thair is this morn taken with an Apoplexy after she had been up and employ'd a while; was at our pump for water. Dies about six in the evening." Three days later she was buried.²⁸ Sewall noted that three days after her burial, January 10, 1701, "Mr. John Wait came to me, and earnestly desired me to hasten consummating the Marriage between his Bastian and Jane, Mrs. Thair's Negro."²⁹ Perhaps Mr. John Wait did this out of nostalgia. At least one legitimate event might have slowed the publishing of their marriage banns. Samuel Sewall's own mother was sick and he received the news of her death on January 14, 1701.³⁰ But Wait's reasons for wanting the marriage completed after Mrs. Thair's death might have been shrewder. It is unclear what Jane's fate would be. Would she be purchased by the Waits and

²⁸ Sewall, *Diary*, 1: 443. On Friday, 7 January 1701, Samuel Sewall recorded that "Mrs. Thair is buried."

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Ibid.

allowed to live with her new husband? Or would she have ended up in another family and, though married to Bastian, left without the promised support?

Although much has been written about the impulse among New England divines, like Cotton Mather, to baptize and catechize slaves, the religious impetus among white female mistresses had as much to do with expressly female concerns, like childbearing and marriage, as it had to do with desire for religious conversion. The religious education of slaves was not mentioned in Alida Livingston's letters, but several Boston mistresses took pains to present their slaves in church. On December 16, 1711, Samuel Sewall recorded that "Four persons were taken into church. Mrs. Frances Bromfield and Marshal's Negro woman, two of them."³¹ Frances Bromfield might have inherited her willingness to allow the conversion of her slaves from her mother, Mary Danforth. Mary was the niece of Thomas Danforth, whose enslaved man, named Philip, was baptized in 1698 within the gates of Harvard College in First Church by William Brattle.³² For women like Deborah Thair and Frances Bromfield, the marriage and baptism of enslaved people was an extension of a slaveholding culture, shaped as much by the concerns of elite Northeastern mistresses as by Puritan sentiment.

As previously mentioned in chapter one, the Livingston family's inter-colonial ties introduced tumult into the lives of the enslaved. Although no letter exists between Alida and Robert concerning Robert's 1714 decision to send a slave girl named Isabel to his daughter Margaret in Boston, the implications of his decision illuminate the ways in which the life events of elite women, such as marriage and pregnancy, held wide ranging consequences for the families of master and slave. Although Isabel remained within the Livingston family, when

³¹ Sewall, *Diary*, 2: 673.

³² John Joseph May, ed., *Danforth Genealogy: Nicholas Danforth, of Framlingham, England, and....* (Boston, MA; Charles H. Pope, 1902), 26; and Kennedy, "Thy Patriarch's Desire: Thomas and William Brattle in Puritan Massachusetts," 135.

Robert Livingston sent her to Margaret in Boston, it was as if he had sold her far away. Isabel's father Ben could not stop by on a valet run to see his daughter, as did another slave valet on Livingston Manor. She was alone.

Her first moment with the Vetches might well have been quite perilous. On July 16, 1714, Samuel Sewall recorded the following:

“About 2 p.m. Is a great Flash of Lightening, and a terrible Clap of Thunder; hardly any preceded or succeeded it. It struck Col. Vetch's house that bought of Capt. Wyllys's Heir, the end of the Kitchen next Pollards. Split the principal Rafter next that end, to the purloin [*purlin*]. Ript off the Clap-boards, loosened many more; plough'd off the ceiling of that end wall here and there in a Line; lifted up the Sash window, broke one of the squares; Knocked down two boys that stood by the dresser. Tis the more Melancholick, because Madam Vetch is just removing thither; though the Work of Transformation be not finished.”³³

Madam Vetch was in the midst of moving out when the storm severely damaged the premises, having just sold the house to Captain Thomas Steel on March 22, 1714.³⁴ The lightning strike might have been directly where the enslaved people within the Vetches' household still slept and, if Isabel had already arrived in Boston, the experience of the storm must have been harrowing. Though Sewall does not elaborate on their identity, he mentions that “two boys” were “knocked down.” The Vetches' household was filled with young children, and Margaret had given birth only a year before. Her sister Joanna wrote on May 13, 1713, “Sister Vetch is arrived at Boston last week and Brother designs to bring me there within three or four days.”³⁵

Margaret Vetch's new baby not only brought the Livingston siblings together, but was also the likely reason that Robert Livingston sent Isabel to live with his eldest daughter. This event coincided with John Livingston's controversial relationship with Elizabeth Knight. Shortly after Margaret Vetch gave birth, Joanna Livingston arrived in Boston to help her sister recover.

³³ Sewall, *Diary*, 2: 762-763.

³⁴ Samuel Sewall, *The Diary of Samuel Sewall*, vol. 3, 1714-1729, in *Collections of the Massachusetts Historical Society*, eds. George E. Ellis et al. (Cambridge, MA: John Wilson and Son, 1882), 7:10n1.

³⁵ Joanna to Robert Livingston, 13 May 1713, reel 3, LR-MSS. She signed her name “Janna” in this letter.

Joanna was no stranger to traveling to aid female relatives. As previously mentioned in chapter one, when John Livingston's first wife, Mary, had numerous surgeries to treat her ultimately fatal cancer, Joanna Livingston remained with her. When in Boston, Joanna and Margaret commiserated over their mutual distaste for their brother John's new paramour, Elizabeth. The two women not only disliked the fact that John intended to remarry so hastily, but they also apparently believed that Elizabeth was not good enough for the family. In one letter addressed to her father, Joanna wrote that John "will marry this woman if you don't prevent it" and that the marriage "disparages our family and make[s] it equell with Mrs. Knight."³⁶

Margaret addressed her letter to her father, warning that John would marry Knight despite what he thought. It is notable that the two women did not direct their displeasure to their mother, who was the seemingly natural choice, given her own history of disapproving of John's choice of women. Alida had, in 1698, disparaged John's relationship with Jacob Rusten's daughter who was ten years older than John and who Alida described as "having a mouth as if she has followed the army all her life."³⁷ Nevertheless, the sisters directed their complaints about Knight to their father. The reason for the girls' closer relationship with their father appears in Alida's correspondence: in numerous letters she indicated that the girls were away in New York with their father or in New London with their brother, but not at the manor with her. Joanna left Boston to return home to Livingston Manor in the winter of 1714, but Robert made sure that Margaret was not without female help from home by sending Ben's daughter to Boston.

³⁶ Joanna to Robert Livingston Sr., 15 June 1713 and 29 June 1713, reel 3, LR-MSS.

³⁷ On June 13, 1698, Alida criticized the girl that John, was seeing, writing, "there is talk that our Johannes would be courting after Jacob Rusten's daughter who is 28 years old and has a mouth as if she has followed the army all her life." Even though John denied his relationship with the much older woman, Alida clearly did not believe him and exhorted Robert to "give him a reprimand." Although Alida disapproved of the age gap and the woman's foul mouth, she also disapproved of her family, exhorting Robert to "see to it that you now get those 20 [£] from Jacob Rusten for I hate to hear his name and don't care to have any dealings with him, our sister Ment will inform you of it." Perhaps John's paramour's biggest handicap was that her father was not held in high business esteem by Alida or her sister. Alida to Robert Livingston, June 6, 1698, LFP-Trans.

By contrast, Isabel was marooned in a foreign place among strangers. What expressions of longing might Isabel's letters have contained had she been able to write back home? Yet Ben did not need a letter to feel the distance between himself and his daughter. His discontent had been circulating enough among the enslaved on Livingston Manor that Tom knew the reason for his anger, although he did not betray the reasons for his knowledge to Livingston. On valet runs carrying letters between Livingston's family members, did Ben long to send his lost daughter a letter? Did he wonder, as Robert Livingston had in his letter to his youngest daughter, when Isabel would return home? Yet as Robert Livingston's will attested, Isabel never returned to Livingston Manor; she was fated to remain in Boston with the Vetches.

But was there something more at work in Robert's fear of Ben's rage at Isabel's loss? Roberta Singer included the episode of Ben being suspected as a possible accomplice to the murder to Johannes Dyckman to illustrate resistance on Livingston manor, speculating that "Ben must have been showing signs of open discontent" because of the sale of his daughter.³⁸ The seeds of another possible injustice, an old frustration, lay buried in Robert Livingston's 1722 will. In it he named Diana as Isabel's mother. Was Diana Ben's spouse? Although no corroborating evidence of their marriage or children's baptism exists, as in the earlier period, they definitely had some sort of physical relationship. Whether Ben was married to Diana is unknown, but it is definite that he was not the father of all of her children. In the lines above his bequest to Margaret, Robert willed to his namesake "a molatto Boy called Cesar about 17 or 18 years of age, son of Diana."³⁹ This inclusion offered another possible reason for Ben's growing fury. Could the "molatto Boy" who Robert took care to place in his eldest son's household have been a member of his family? Could he have, in fact, been Robert Livingston Sr.'s son?

³⁸ Singer, "The Livingstons as Slave Owners," 81.

³⁹ Will of Robert Livingston, 1722, reel 4, LR-MSS.

Although selling his daughter away to Boston was certainly enough motive for Ben's murderous rage, Robert Livingston might have had other reasons to suspect that this latest slight towards Ben's family would be the final straw for his valet. The specifics may be mere speculation, but it is clear that Ben's family had suffered several blows at the hands of slavery.

Though elite Northeastern mistresses shared many aspects of slave culture with their counterparts in other parts of the Atlantic world, the culture that developed among a network of elite women in colonial New York and Massachusetts was unique. The first generation of Dutch women adjusted to their new roles as mistresses out of their experiences serving as baptismal witnesses. Although the efforts of mistresses, such as Judith Stuyvesant, to baptize slaves did not come to shape the direction of the second generation of mistresses, the networking among slaveholding women persisted. Marriage and pregnancy brought the enslaved and their mistresses in conflict as much as they represented moments of commonality.

3.2. "Our Negroes need shoes": Alida Livingston and slave management

On May 14, 1700, Alida Livingston listed "buckshot, a red adze, three candles," as well as "Johannes's dress coat and camisole and pants" among the items that she planned to ferry to her husband in New York.⁴⁰ Yet she did not perform this task alone; she closed her letter, "when I go in 14 days then the negroes and myself will bring shirts and other clothing with this."⁴¹

Alida's correspondence, filled with the practical business of running Livingston manor and her

⁴⁰ Scholars have noted that, in the early modern world, clothes did make the woman. Class determined the lavishness of the wardrobe, and wearing clothes which outstripped one's class might result in fines and imprisonment. Kathleen Brown argued that fine clothes were an important marker of difference for slaveholding white women who used them to indicate their status above enslaved women. Brown, *Good Wives*, 300. For more on the broader meaning of clothing in early America see, Linda Baumgarten, *What Clothes Reveal: The Language of Clothing in Colonial and Federal America* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002).

⁴¹ Alida to Robert Livingston, 14 March 1700, LFP-Trans.

concern for her family's appearance, uncovers a world ordered by slavery. Her management of the family clothes easily fit with the duties that shaped eighteenth-century slave mistresses elsewhere in the Atlantic world, but her actions as deputy husband and manager of Livingston Manor, as well as the interplay of her family life with those of the enslaved, demonstrate the uniqueness of her slaveholding network.

Alida's letters between 1700 and 1711 do not survive, but by 1711 there was a marked increase in the presence of enslaved people in her correspondence. In the fall of 1711, Alida informed her absent husband, Robert, of the desperate state of affairs on Livingston Manor. She had received a shipment of wet goods, was forced to suffer a slight from the governor, run the farm and gristmill, and all without proper shoes for herself and her children. On top of everything, she had to manage a large workforce of the enslaved who were no strangers to resistance. Alida's annoyed letter to her husband on November 9, 1711, which complained that "it is too much for me to oversee so many Negroes," has been analyzed as evidence for her position as deputy husband.⁴² Yet a picture of Alida Livingston as slaveholder comes into view when examined in light of her other correspondence. In fact, this letter falls within a time when she not only wrote a lot about slaves, but slavery shaped the way in which she thought about herself. In these letters, her duties as elite matriarch, her fears about border warfare and dealings with the Indians combined with her daily duties as slave manager. The Alida that emerges is as much slave master as burgher mistress.

In October of 1711, slave management was a recurrent theme in Alida's letters to Robert. Before including a laundry list of business duties she fulfilled as "deputy husband," Alida

⁴² Alida to Robert Livingston, 9 November 1711, LFP-Trans. Linda Biemer included the letter to assert that "as a partner, she was doing more than her half." Biemer, *Women and Property*, 70.

reported that she still had “no news from our Negroes.”⁴³ Utterly isolated, she complained, “I could not get our Negro Ben to Tackanick, he is so afraid.” Alida shared her enslaved man’s fear, admitting, “I am also afraid when the night falls but I hope God will keep us and protect us.” Two days later, the situation had not improved, and she noted that she had to hire a “Palatine” to work alongside her recent “brewer” hire because “Jan the Negro still has not come here.”⁴⁴ She also alluded to the fear that infused her last letter: “it was here said that they had shot to death eight Indians before they got David Kittele’s house.” Such news of successful frontier raids by Native allies of the French could not have arrived at a worse time: the Palatine tenant men, who had initially been Livingston Manor’s first line of defense, had joined up with the local militia in August and left the Manor to fight in Queen Anne’s War. Even if they had remained, they would have offered little protection. A group had, in May, twice met governor Hunter armed, disgruntled about the slow supply of goods and angry that they had been settled on Livingston’s land and not the more fertile Schoharie land that they had been promised. In retaliation, Hunter confiscated their firearms.⁴⁵

The trouble among the governor, the Palatines, and the Livingstons filled Robert’s letters to Alida in 1711. He wrote, “I can see that the Governor is very flabbergasted; and now that the Palatines are so vicious and do not want to go voluntarily, he consequently dismisses them from this mind. ‘They are a vicious people,’ everyone says.”⁴⁶ Even as Robert complained to his wife that the Palatines were squatting on the land he had sold to the governor, he still recognized his own vulnerability: “All my fear is that they will beat the cattle to death and harm it; one has to be

⁴³ Alida to Robert Livingston, 26 October 1711, LFP-Trans.

⁴⁴ Alida to Robert Livingston, 29 October 1711, LFP-Trans.

⁴⁵ Philip Otterness, *Becoming German: The 1709 Palatine Migration to New York* (2004; repr., Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2006), 89, 91-92, 100, 102, 107-108.

⁴⁶ Robert to Alida Livingston, 21 July 1711, LFP-Trans.

very careful, however.”⁴⁷ Such malice was not without provocation. Instead of farming the rich Schoharie lands, the Palatines found themselves banished to the rocky landscape of Livingston Manor, scavenging for pine combs and branches and stripping pine trees, because such soil was best for growing trees whose pitch and tar could be used to supply the British navy. What little farming they could do was barely subsistence. Robert instructed Alida that their enslaved men, “Hendrick and Thomas and Dego” should “go on baking hard bread” for the Palatine families and told his wife to explain to the hungry tenants “that there’s no money and that without money no wheat is to be got.”⁴⁸ Hunter had not received payment from the British government for the naval stores project and Livingston refused to continue to provide food to the immigrants without payment.⁴⁹

Alida responded to Robert’s comments on the Palatine situation using slavery as a conceptual marker:

If we could pay the people for their grain I could still be a bit contented, but this was not the promise. When the governor bought the land from you [he] gave little for the land. But our gain would be a lot but [we] have not yet seen it but trouble and great expenses with the officers, and we are their slaves in the expectation that we would get it again from the Palatines.”⁵⁰

Her use of the term *slaves*, as with so many other colonial letter writers, was more than literary flourish. She knew exactly, viscerally, what slavery resembled. She watched as families were rent apart and adults were disciplined for alleged infractions. As a slave mistress, she oversaw the disruptions in the lives of the enslaved. In fact, her intimate knowledge of real slavery is evident in the letter. She opened by highlighting the fact that they had received the products of the German immigrants’ labor for free, noting the Palatines’ grain had gone “unpaid.” This

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Otterness, *Becoming German*, 107; Leder, *Robert Livingston*, 103-104, 218.

⁵⁰ Alida to Robert Livingston, 25 July 1711, LFP-Trans.

theme of work with no reward was repeated when she asserted that Hunter had received the camp land for a steal. Instead of gain from selling the land, they received “trouble and great expenses,” while still being required to meet their victualing contract for the Palatines.

That the Livingstons’ land was held hostage by the Palatines, who refused to tend their gardens in protest, coupled with Robert’s demand that she instruct her three slave men to continue to supply the disgruntled Palatines with inferior bread, struck a nerve in Alida. It was a world turned upside-down: the Palatines, whom Governor Hunter had legally reduced to the level of servants as a result of the May armed standoff, were holding the mistress of Livingston Manor hostage.⁵¹ That inversion painted an obvious picture for Alida: “we are their slaves.”

On September 2, 1711, Alida conceptualized of her troubles in terms of slavery, but this time it was in the domain of clothing. While fulfilling her duties as mistress in caring for the clothing of the household, she bemoaned her reliance on payment from a woman who had been thrown in prison. Alida wrote, “The bailiff holds Hilleghart. There are executions on her. How we will get our money from her, I don’t know and thus we slave for those here. If you cannot come yourself then give orders to get it out of her hands.”⁵² Unlike the previous example, this struggle was between Alida and another woman. Hilleghart’s potential default threatened not only the smooth workings of Livingston Manor, but Alida’s specific duties as mistress. Far from being merely an ancillary part of a larger business empire, slavery was central to the way Alida conceived of herself as mistress and manager.

Six weeks later, Robert directed Alida to “make the negroes or Palatines” insert a plank “at the bottom of our pump in case it will be freezing this winter.”⁵³ Robert’s directives demonstrated the centrality of the enslaved and the Palatines to the smooth working of the

⁵¹ Otterness, *Becoming German*, 105; Leder, *Robert Livingston*, 216.

⁵² Alida to Robert Livingston, 3 September 1711, LFP-Trans.

⁵³ Robert to Alida Livingston, 21 September 1711, LFP-Trans.

Manor, but also displayed his expectation that Alida could “make” both groups do such back-breaking work. That was no small task. As previous letters have shown, the Palatines resisted being forced to work without payment, and as Alida’s search for her runaway slave evidenced, slave resistance was also a fact of life on Livingston Manor. Robert’s blunt request raised several questions. What methods did Alida employ to compel workers at the manor? Did she meet any resistance? With her husband and several children away in New York, how might she have answered any resistance?

Perhaps the implications of such questions filled her mind as she responded to her husband. She answered on October 1, “This one goes with your son Gilbert. There are only two canoes with wood in. Our negroes have no time,” because “they have to thresh and fetch grain,” as well as “cut wood for the brewery.”⁵⁴ Her response offered some answers to the questions raised by Robert’s letter. That she sent her response via Gilbert showed that she was not without family when Robert requested that she compel the slaves and the Palatines to work. In fact, Gilbert’s ferocity in meting out punishment to slaves filled the pages of one of Alida’s letters ten years later, in which she noted that he beat a slave man who ran away so harshly that the man “died out of doggedness.”⁵⁵

She remained silent on whether the Palatines were successfully compelled to do the labor that Robert demanded, but her response showed that she had not been sitting around waiting for her husband’s directives on how to allocate her enslaved workforce. Palatine families had begun to leave the camps and to seek tenant arrangements on Henry Beekman’s land south of Livingston Manor, though some also approached Alida to become tenants on the Manor.⁵⁶ She

⁵⁴ Alida to Robert Livingston, 1 October 1711, LFP-Trans.

⁵⁵ Alida to Robert Livingston, 22 April 1722, LFP-Trans.

⁵⁶ Otterness, *Becoming German*, 109.

likely used slaves to thresh and fetch grain in order to supplement the lost labor caused by departing Palatine families.

Yet in the same letter in which she demonstrated her shrewdness as a slave manager, she exhibited her duties as household manager and mother. She wrote, “let Gilbert have a good garment and a blue rainfrock. I hope that Robert will advance well and he now will be able to achieve something. If he needs a garment please let him have it. Make sure he does dress well.” Alida’s concern for the clothing of her children and how they appeared to others was a refrain that persisted throughout her correspondence. Viewing her identity as household manager and slaveholder together is essential to fully reconstructing the forces that shaped Alida’s actions. Her letter demonstrated how slavery shaped her duties as “deputy husband,” and how the system affected the lives of the enslaved. In the postscript she noted, “A the end of the week, Ben will saw.” The brief mention once again introduced the slave man Ben, whose own family life was forever transformed by the marriage of Alida’s daughter.

Alida did not confine her concern to her own children. On May 3, 1717, she requested shoes from Robert: “please send your and Robbert’s [Robert Jr.] old shoes up for I can’t send anyone out. They are nearly all barefooted.”⁵⁷ Here the domestic chore of “clothing” coincided with the Livingstons’ reliance on slave valets. This was not a vain request. Alida’s impressive management of Livingston Manor depended on it. Whether or not Robert ever acquiesced to her request is unknown, but on November 16, Alida still needed shoes badly. Alida opened her letter to her husband noting that she was “sad that you will have to travel in the cold.”⁵⁸ She proposed to lessen his load by sending down their slave, Dego, a magnanimous gesture as Dego was previously employed in “being taken to the Soopes with the canoe.” The cold November rain that

⁵⁷ Alida to Robert Livingston, 3 May 1717, LFP-Trans.

⁵⁸ Alida to Robert Livingston, 16 November 1717, LFP-Trans.

characterized the transition from fall to winter in New York slowed Dego's travels, and she wrote that it "has rained so hard for twenty-four hours that he could not leave [a]gain. I hope he will find a yacht to come down." Perhaps the bad weather prompted her to write only a few lines later, "Our negroes need shoes and cannot get any made from Abieghel." Had the enslaved blacks on Livingston manor had to work at the hard labor without shoes from May until November? Had Alida been forced to "send out" enslaved people without the needed shoes or had the old shoes supplied by Robert merely stopped working under the difficult labor routines?

Alida's two requests for shoes have been read by one scholar as evidence that "There is every indication that the Livingstons endeavored to take good care of their slaves."⁵⁹ However, such gestures, read in light of Alida's position at Livingston Manor, suggest a much more complicated picture. Alida's management of the household clothing, part of her duties as mistress, also coincided with her actions as a slaveholder. A shod slave made a statement about Alida's own social position as clearly as a barefooted one did. It was not the sight of barefoot slaves working at hard labor around the manor that bothered Alida, but rather the fact that without shoes, the slaves could not go out to Esopus and New York. The concern might have been purely utilitarian. Walking along unpaved treacherous terrain in frightful weather might have proved quite difficult. Shoes might have made the Livingstons' slaves' journeys quicker. But they might have, just as easily, hampered slave mobility. For new Negroes recently brought into the colony of New York, going unshod might have been the norm and their feet could have felt cramped and calloused in second hand shoes. Thus, at least in the warmer months, the shoes might have served a purely decorative purpose.

Yet Alida's first request, read literally, was quite evocative. She asked that her husband and eldest son give their old shoes to the slaves. Even though the shoes might have been ill

⁵⁹ Singer, "The Livingstons as Slave Owners," 77.

fitting, Alida would have awoken each day to see the people that she enslaved walking around in her family's shoes. Scores of runaway slave ads attest to the potential radical implications of such a reversal. Many slaves were described as pilfering their masters' clothes during their escape to freedom. Clearly the presence of her absent husband's and son's shoes on the feet of her slaves, however potentially incendiary, was worth the risk for Alida. The shoes were for a very specific group of slaves: the Livingstons' valets who ferried trade goods and family correspondence. The way her enslaved porters appeared spoke volumes to the Livingstons' larger status in the community, and Alida was the arbiter of that status. Thus she took the risk.

The family lives of Ben and other slaves whose names frequently grace the pages of the Livingstons' correspondence appeared in postscripts or at the end of letters, squeezed between lines detailing the price of grain or the need for fine fabric. On October 18, 1710, Robert closed his letter to Alida, "The Negro Tom returned home last night. Had been to visit his folks."⁶⁰ The ending stirred more questions than it answered, but following such lines of inquiry opens up a new dimension of understanding the family lives of slaves and how they affected the personal lives of slaveholders. Tom, like Ben, later appeared frequently in the letters between Alida and Robert, though that was his first explicit mention. Tom's "folks" were most likely his parents, but they might have been cousins, brothers, sisters or other relations. The disjointedness of Tom's family contrasted the connectedness of the Livingstons. Tom's detour to visit his "folks" showed that they did not reside with him on Livingston manor. In fact, Tom's life as a messenger between Robert and Alida was rootless. The visit might have offered him a temporary anchor, a place that was "home." Yet such a home was fleeting: Tom's access to it, determined wholly by those who held him in bondage.

⁶⁰ Robert to Alida Livingston, 18 October 1710, LFP-Trans.

Years of visits to family being closely monitored, or ties of kinship outright severed by the Livingstons, clearly grated against Tom. By 1720, Tom openly resisted slavery. Alida informed Robert:

I am having trouble enough here with our people. Tom does not do anything and doesn't want to do anything and is fat and greasy. He wants to keep his letter himself, he said, or he will do wrong. I am afraid he will do something evil [like] setting something on fire, so I am sending him to be sold or to be sent away, for he is not working and refuses to look after anything. I had him....And the High-Dutch woman has had him for 4 days, and she said there is nothing wrong with him. She thinks he is doing it on purpose in order to get away. Have him sold or sent away.⁶¹

That Alida and Tom struggled over the rights to a letter highlighted both the ways in which her position as slave manager included surveillance and the implied fact of Tom's literacy. Decades of correspondence attested to the fact that Alida used letter writing as her way to keep a far-flung family tightly connected. Tom's insistence on keeping his own letter showed that correspondence also served to connect enslaved people. Although Alida did not elaborate on the source or content of the letter, it must have been highly personal to Tom to cause him to hold onto it. The letter was important enough that Tom took the significant risk of threatening Alida. If Alida's assessment of Tom's appearance can be trusted, his turn to resistance was not an overnight change. Perhaps Tom was not really "fat and greasy," perhaps his efforts to assert his humanity caused the uncharitable pronouncement from Alida, but if he had, in fact, slowed down his work and used his physicality to express his rage at enslavement, that certainly would have taken some time. Tom's position as ferryman, his access to his family, and his apparent literacy all conspired to foment an inner rebellion against his status as slave that became a constant and frightening reality for Alida.

⁶¹ Alida to Robert Livingston, 5 November 1720, LFP-Trans.

Despite Tom's resistance, Alida did not sell him immediately, but she did "send him away" to another slaveholding woman. The trip was not purely utilitarian—moving an unruly slave away from her house where he might "do something evil"—but was also a fact-finding mission. She sent Tom to a "High Dutch woman," likely a Palatine tenant who had been part of the group that had so vexed her ten years earlier. Perhaps during those years Alida had trained the woman to help her oversee the enslaved workforce at the Manor. In any case, Alida clearly valued her assessment. After four days, the woman declared that "there is nothing wrong with him." She deduced that he was resisting "on purpose in order to get away." Note that she did not say that he was trying to be sold away. The neutral "get away" lacks the force of "run away." Was Tom trying to exasperate Alida enough that she might send him to live with his family? His plan was risky and, despite Alida's threats to sell or send him away, Tom appeared to have not been successful in escaping from the Livingstons. On July 7, 1721, Alida wrote, "Tom has picked up the planks from Japick Vosburgh and will be ready to go away on Tuesday." Yet Tom's continued presence in among the Livingstons did not mean that he stopped resisting. Alida continued to complain about him: "I am grieved at our Tom: he doesn't want to do anything useful."⁶²

Tom's example offers insight not only into the ways his life was disrupted by slavery, but also into the specific ways that Alida's actions as slaveholder were gendered. That Tom chose to resist by becoming "fat and greasy" might have been specifically aimed at Alida's position as household manager. Her previous letters showed how carefully she looked after the physical appearance of her children and the decorousness of her home. In both letters in which she mentioned Tom's behavior, she included lists of items to beautify her home, sumptuous fabrics and other articles that publicly displayed the Livingstons' status. Tom's physical resistance

⁶² Alida to Robert Livingston, 7 July 1721, LFP-Trans.

directly challenged Alida's position as household manager. Though he was clearly too essential to sell, Alida might have been looking to safeguard her own image and the image of her family when she strategically sent him away.

In the final decade of her life, Alida offered definite opinions as to the slaveholding capabilities of her female relatives. On June 7, 1722, Alida commented,

Alida Veets is very distressed. I think there's something going on between her and Captain Waldron. I hope it may not be true but usually bad news is true. I hear what Naetye thinks cousin Veets has said about the negress. Bradis said that the negress said she was always ill and [he] asked Veets about that. And she sent for the negress and [he] said he wanted to buy her; and she praised her, but the negress said she did not want to be sold and said what illness she had.⁶³

Alida learned of the story through the lines of gossip that linked her to the other women in her family. In fact, Alida Veets was actually a mistranslation of Alida Vetch, Margaret and Samuel's Vetch's eldest daughter, and Alida Livingston's granddaughter.⁶⁴ Like her uncle, John, Alida Vetch had aroused the ire of her female relatives through a scandalous liaison—her indiscretion with Captain Waldron. Margaret followed her mother's example and sent Alida to live with relatives.⁶⁵ However, the letter gave no direct indication where Alida Vetch was at the time of the problem. "Naetye," or Margaret Vetch, did not appear in her mother's letter condemning her daughter. Rather she was included as a second-hand source to the way that Alida Vetch was challenged by her black slave woman.

Although the letter was intended to relay family news to Robert while he was in New York, it showed the way that slaveholding was passed down among generations of slaveholding women. Alida Vetch would have surely seen her grandmother in action, managing scores of slaves. She would have been a girl when Ben's daughter, Isabel, came to serve them in Boston,

⁶³ Alida to Robert Livingston, 7 June 1722, LFP-Trans.

⁶⁴ Biemer, ed. and trans., "Business Letters of Alida Schuyler Livingston," 205n39.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 192n13.

and likely spent her most formative years with her. Yet just as Alida's honor was damaged in her grandmother's estimation, so too was her management of enslaved African women. Following talk of a possible affair between Alida and Captain Waldron, Alida included the tale of the slave woman who represented herself as "always ill." The text is silent as to where the potential sale occurred. Was "the negress" displayed in the Vetch's home? Because Alida Livingston indicated that the younger Alida "sent for the negress," she most probably was working offsite. Perhaps the interested buyer, Bradis, had seen the black women working around the Vetch household and decided that he wanted to purchase her. Perhaps she had caused her share of "trouble" in the past and that was why she was being sold. The black woman did not passively accept the sale. Although Alida Livingston left "the negress" unnamed, she relayed the enslaved woman's command of the situation, a control that Alida Vetch lacked.

Alida's inclusion of both her granddaughter's indiscretion and her difficulty with selling the slave woman was not accidental; such placement demonstrated that Alida had specific ideas about what it meant to be both a proper mistress and a proper woman. While Alida Vetch "praised her" slave woman's attributes, the woman herself did not hide her motives and instead said "she did not want to be sold," and then presented herself as ill.⁶⁶ Although Alida Livingston did not elaborate on whether the enslaved woman was successful in stopping the sale, she did offer a clue by opening the section writing, "Alida Veets is very distressed." Alida Vetch, according to her grandmother, had failed both in love and in slave management.

The younger Alida was not the only family member whose actions disappointed Alida and Robert. In the same letter, Alida continued, "I hope Gysbert will come to an agreement with his creditors and make a fresh start in this world." Gilbert had, only two months before, beaten a

⁶⁶ Walter Johnson noted such slave use of self-advertisement as a means to affect the results of sale during the antebellum period in *Soul by Soul: Life Inside the Antebellum Slave Market* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999), 164.

slave man to death, and Alida made sure to intimate her displeasure in an earlier letter.⁶⁷ Both Gilbert and Alida Vetch had fallen short of the elite expectations of their families. When Alida Vetch trespassed the lines of elite female decency by her relationship with Captain Waldron, she also could not effectively function as a slaveholder.

Both of Alida's daughters received bequests of slaves whose names appeared in the extant family papers and correspondence of the Livingston family. In his 1722 will, Robert Livingston wrote, "I do give and bequeath to my Daughter Joanna, wife of Cornelius van Horn, a negro man named Dego." This bequest was different than the one that he gave to Margaret because it was clear from his correspondence that Dego did not reside with Joanna and Cornelius before the drafting of the 1722 will, as Isabel did with Margaret, but lived principally with Robert and Alida until at least 1726. However, that did not mean that Cornelius van Horne was not keeping an eye on his wife's promised slave man. As mentioned in chapter one, Cornelius informed his father-in-law that Thomas Cardle claimed Dego and planned to take the enslaved man from Robert. Perhaps Dego was serving in both the Livingston and Van Horne households at the same time. He certainly was splitting his time between New York and Livingston Manor. On August 20, 1722, Dego appeared in Alida's correspondence. She wrote, "Last night the Governor passed by and our Dego had been on board, he said. Had they woken me up, I would have sent him 6 ducks, but I didn't know anything about it until he [Dego] returned."⁶⁸ Their reliance, and apparent trust, in Dego was evident when Alida included in a memorandum that "Dego has the buccaneer-gun to have it repaired."⁶⁹

Although the lives of Alida Livingston's female relatives appeared in tantalizing detail in the pages of the family correspondence, those of enslaved women make only infrequent

⁶⁷ Alida to Robert Livingston, 22 April 1722, LFP-Trans.

⁶⁸ Alida to Robert Livingston, 20 August 1722, LFP-Trans.

⁶⁹ Alida Livingston, Memorandum for New York, 20 August 1722, LFP-Trans.

appearances. With the exception of her extended discussion of her granddaughter's enslaved woman, who used illness to stay sale, Alida made no direct reference to enslaved women. However, a letter from Robert dated September 7, 1725, showed that she did rely on enslaved female labor, for he wrote to her that he was unable to purchase "a negress who is able to do household work and who has command of the [Dutch] Language."⁷⁰ However brief, this mention sheds some light into the lives of enslaved women on the Livingston estate. Robert's response hinted at the specific request that Alida made for an enslaved person. She wanted a black woman who could speak Dutch. At least one girl, Isabel, who might have been able to speak Dutch, was likely living with the Vetches at the time of Robert's response. Had her mother Diana died in the interim? Was she sold away when Ben's motives against Robert were feared?

Alida was apparently unsatisfied with the enslaved black women who served her at the manor because, as Singer noted, "the unsuccessful maids were sold locally, and eventually Alida had to settle for indentured Palatine servant girls."⁷¹ Robert's 1722 will listed four enslaved women—Diana, Rose, Flora, and Isabel. Diana, who was likely Ben's partner, had to watch as her children were divided, with her daughter Isabel sent to Boston to live with the Vetches and her son, Cesar, bequeathed to Robert Jr. The existence of Diana's biracial son, Cesar, showed that she had likely suffered the indignity of coerced sexual relations with one of her masters. Robert kept together the children of another enslaved woman, Flora, when he bequeathed her daughter, Rose, and son, Callendar, to his son Robert Jr.

Alida's last surviving letter, dated April 30, 1726, did not mention enslaved people, but a letter that Robert sent his wife a month later showed that, even in her final year of life, Alida remained very involved in the slave management of the household. His statement that he placed

⁷⁰ Robert to Alida Livingston, 7 September 1725, LFP-Trans.

⁷¹ Singer, "The Livingstons as Slave Owners," 69n7.

Dego on a diet of bread and butter because he bought “a leg of mutton for 3sh6d without order, instead of some ox meat,” was only part of the story. Alida’s central place in it was revealed within the pages of his letter:

When Dego was here the other day he bought a leg of mutton for 3sh6d, without order, instead of some ox-meat. Had there been no ox-meat, I could have bought him a ham for the same amount of money. And now I have to buy him a ham again. Please, send some salt, bacon, or meat, and pease with him when he comes down.

In the left margin he clarified his feelings on buying the additional food:

I did not buy Dego a ham. But I don’t like to give 6d for just a pound of ham for a negro. He can eat butter and bread until he comes home.⁷²

The excerpt shows that, as late as 1726, Dego was still keeping up his rounds between New York and Livingston Manor. Robert commiserated with his wife on the proper diet of a slave when he recanted his intention to “buy him a ham again,” consigning Dego to “eat bread and butter” because he thought the ham too pricey a purchase “for a negro.” Robert’s instruction to Alida to send supplies through Dego down to New York evidenced a man confident that Alida could manage his enslaved man. One wonders what awaited Dego when he arrived “home.” Would Alida be satisfied with the punishment of bread and butter or would she require that he suffer more for the “leg of mutton.” Did Dego have to carry the package, laden with bacon, or another meat down to New York City and not consume a bite?

Slavery shaped Alida’s actions as household manager. She used clothing in pointed ways: to assert her position as household manager and to communicate an image of her status as mistress. Slavery was an important conceptual marker in her correspondence, and she reached out to other slaveholding women, both tenants on her property and women in her family. Although Robert Livingston willed slaves to their children, Alida bequeathed slaveholding

⁷² Robert to Alida Livingston, 20 May 1726, LFP-Trans.

techniques, and standards by which she judged the performance of her children and grandchildren. Alida's rule was not followed unquestioningly and slaves resisted in pointedly gendered ways.

3.3. "I flee from the face of my mistress": Runaways and the elite mistresses who pursued them

Elite Northeastern mistresses' pursuits of runaways and their implementing of punishment shaped their actions as slaveholders as much as religious considerations, marriage concerns and household management. On November 5, 1711, Alida fit in an update on the movements of several runaway slaves while she relayed the news of refugee friends, who had fled their home in the due to the hostilities of Queen Anne's War:

Mr. Dirk Wessels has arrived here and said that Schipper had fled with his whole family from 8 French Indians who had been seen there. Our negroes have been near the plain, writes Philip, and he sent Indians after them and did not get them but has [sent] Indians out again and there is a firewatch going on and there they may catch them if they wanted to go to Canada.⁷³

Her letter did not dwell on the fortunes of the Schipper family but was, instead, concerned with the enslaved group who saw an opportunity to flee in the melee of the border wars. Alida did not name the slaves who ran away, but instead generalized them under the term "our negroes." Yet Alida's technique in tracking down the slaves in the late fall of 1711 resembled the methods she employed to locate her runaway slave man in Hartford in the spring of 1692, except, instead of relying on information from a family friend, she turned to her son, Philip. Gender shaped Alida's management style in unique ways, and she used her position as family matriarch to police those she enslaved.

⁷³ Alida to Robert Livingston, 5 November 1711, LFP-Trans.

At the same time as the family argued over John's planned nuptials, Philip Livingston roamed French territory, scouring the countryside for the slaves that escaped Livingston Manor. On October 28, 1713, he sent the update to his mother, indicating that the formerly enslaved people refused to return to slavery.⁷⁴ Although Philip's letter indicated that his father was also involved in the search, the principal manager of the search was Alida. He informed his mother, "I received his [Robert Sr.'s] letter in Canada but could not manage to get our Negroes to consent to go home." Slavery complicated the expectations of family dynamic. Upon first glance, one would expect that Alida would be the natural parent at the center of the family dispute over Elizabeth Knight. Instead, Alida orchestrated the search for runaway slaves.

As in the case of pursuing runaways, gender colored Alida's application of slave punishment. On June 13, 1722, Alida reported to Robert that she was sick. As she had in previous letters, she offered evidence of several cures that she tried to resolve the sickness writing, "I am somewhat better now, thank God. The swelling is somewhat over now. You know, don't you, that I cannot take any pills?: I got it down with sour buttermilk, and every time it occurs I put my feet in milk and I get ease that way."⁷⁵ Although her focus was on sickness, she took the opportunity to relay her treatment of an enslaved man. She continued,

Our Syoo has been out of order so badly for 6 days that we had enough trouble with him. And he had been carried out of the forest purely made by Leendert Konijn. And I gave him a vomit drink and made him bleed and then sweat, so that he is now coming to his sense somewhat. I see how much we are at a loss now.

Alida's medicinal remedies have piqued scholarly interest. Singer offered it as proof that "Joe's bizarre behavior might have been due to high fever."⁷⁶ Another historian has analyzed the

⁷⁴ Robert to Alida Livingston, 23 May 1713, LFP-Trans.

⁷⁵ Alida to Robert Livingston, 13 June 1722, LFP-Trans.

⁷⁶ Singer, "The Livingstons As Slaveowners," 77.

family's frequent mention of illnesses and cures as evidence of colonial medicinal practices.⁷⁷

But when the chronology of these letters is reconstructed, the importance of medicine to the duties of elite slaveholding women comes into view. The way that Alida presents "Syoo" or Joe's condition, when analyzed alongside Alida's description of her granddaughter's ill slave women, offers a window into Alida's method of slaveholding.

She did not describe Joe as sick or suffering from a sickness, but instead observed that he was "out of order" for "6 days"; she interpreted that as having "enough trouble with him." Her wording betrayed the belief that she thought Joe might be feigning sickness, as she thought her granddaughter's slave woman did, to achieve his own ends. Robert's response to her letter supported such a reading. He wrote, "I am sorry to hear that Joe has been so bad. [I] have never found fault with him."⁷⁸ Despite this statement, just five years before Robert wrote, "Joe, Mink, and Wijnank are the most ungodly scoundrels on earth! All the latest corn has to be rebolted; it contains a lot of coarse bran; and it's merely slackness!"⁷⁹ Thus Joe had previously used work slowdown and other forms of resistance to protest the daily injustices of slavery.

If Joe's actions had merely been the result of a high fever, Alida's medicinal cures might have offered some succor. But if he was just trying to momentarily negotiate some aspects of his enslavement, her response might have had a more sinister intent. Viewed in light of Robert's response and Joe's history of resistance, Alida's actions might not have been so magnanimous, but, rather, a form of punishment.⁸⁰ The "vomit drink" would have racked Joe's whole body as unrelentingly as a flogging, and the bloodletting would have drained his strength. Such torture might have indeed made him come "to his sense somewhat" in Alida's mind. If this was an

⁷⁷ Gronim, *Everyday Nature*, 28.

⁷⁸ Robert to Alida Livingston, 19 June 1722, LFP-Trans.

⁷⁹ Robert to Alida Livingston, 13 May 1717, LFP-Trans.

⁸⁰ Kathleen Brown noted that Virginia slave masters William Byrd II and Landon Carter administered herbal punishments to their slaves. Brown, *Good Wives, Nasty Wenches*, 353.

example of slave discipline, then it showed that Alida's techniques were heavily influenced by her own medicinal remedies. After ten days, she had clearly decided that Joe was sick and not resisting, when she closed her letter, "Sjo is reasonably healthy."⁸¹

Other mistresses in Alida's network also pursued slaves. On June 24, 1734, a runaway slave advertisement appeared in the *New-York Gazette* that a mixed group of enslaved men ran away to New England from Monmouth County, New Jersey:

Runaway last Wednesday from Judith Vincent in Monmouth County in New Jersey an Indian Man, named Stoffels, speaks good English, about Forty years of age, he is a House Carpenter, a Cooper, a Wheelwright and is a good Butcher also. There is also two others gone along with him, one being half Indian and half Negro and the other a Mulatto about 30 years of age & plays upon the violin and has it with him. Whoever takes up & secures said Fellow so that he may be had again shall have forty shillings as a reward and all reasonable charges paid by the said Judith Vincent.

N.B. It is supposed'd they are all going together in a Canow towards Connecticut or Rhode Island.⁸²

Of the three men, the first, described as "an Indian Man, named Stoffels," who "speaks good English, about Forty years of age" and was a "House Carpenter, a Cooper, a Wheelwright and is a good Butcher also," received the most care in the advertisement. The other two were described only scantily as "being half Indian and half Negro" and "a Mulattoo about 30 years of age & plays upon the violin." In fact, they were only described to aid in the capture of the first. That they escaped together and "in a canow" makes this mixed group of runaways notable because they point to the culturally diverse nature of the enslaved population of New Jersey and New York; but that was only part of the story.⁸³

⁸¹ Alida to Robert Livingston, 23 June 1722, in Biemer, ed. and trans., "Business Letters of Alida Schuyler Livingston," 206.

⁸² Advertisement, *New-York Gazette*, 24 June 24, 1734, in "Pretends to Be Free," eds. Hodges and Brown, 10.

⁸³ Graham Russell Hodges offered this advertisement as an example that some runaways fled in groups in *Slavery and Freedom in the Rural North: African Americans in Monmouth County, New Jersey, 1665-1865* (Madison, WI: Madison House Publishers, Inc., 1997), 61.

The advertisement actually concerned Stoffels, explaining that he ran away, not from a white man, but from a female slaveholder, Judith Vincent. Although not specified in the advertisement, Judith Vincent was already a widow responsible for the care of a young daughter, named Phoebe. Stoffels's description indicated that Judith relied on him for skilled work. As the house carpenter he would have been indispensable, as he would have been in charge of keeping Judith Vincent's house together. That task alone probably required a great deal of time, as the winters in New Jersey took quite a toll on house maintenance. As a cooper he might have made the casks that carried goods down to the southern colonies or the Caribbean. As a wheelwright, Stoffels might have come into contact with a varied group of people, and his skills as butcher would have kept food on Judith's table. With such a diverse set of skills, Stoffels undoubtedly worked very hard. His considerable array of skills might have both aided his escape and been the reason for his departure. His loss must have been a considerable blow. Judith did not wait to post her advertisement, relying on her personal network of acquaintances to track down Stoffels, as Alida Livingston did. Instead, just one week later, she engaged the *New-York Gazette's* entire readership on a search for Stoffels.

Although Judith offered a reward only for the return of Stoffels, her inclusion of the other two was also noteworthy. Stoffels may have been connected to the other two by bonds of blood and kinship, and Judith certainly knew enough about their dealings to describe the entire group in detail and posit a potential destination. They did not run southward towards Pennsylvania and the Susquehanna, like other runaway bands of slaves with Indian ancestry. Judith reported that they ran "towards Connecticut or Rhode Island." Rhode Island certainly seemed an odd choice for freedom, as Providence was a slave trading center and the colony, like New Jersey, was home to slave plantations. Perhaps Judith hoped that if they stopped in Rhode Island it would make their

capture easier. Yet she also posited that could have been “going together in a Canow toards Connecticut.”

Such a mention of Connecticut complicated the story even more. Nearly fifty years earlier, Alida Livingston reported that her enslaved man ran away to Hartford. Perhaps Judith’s runaways were following a well-trod road, and did not expect to stay in Connecticut long. Alida’s man had not. Perhaps they were making their way northward through Massachusetts and New Hampshire to Fort Chambly in French territory. Traveling by canoe, they were comfortable on the water, and might well have had other skills that would have made them easy to adapt to the life of a seafarer, so they might have stopped at any of the major ports and attempted to get work on a ship. But just as these enslaved men might have followed a well-trod route to freedom, their mistress was pursuing them along that path as other slaveholding women had done before. In fact, this advertisement, for all its peculiarities, actually disclosed several patterns in the slaveholding practices of elite white women in the Northeast.

Judith, like Alida before her, persistently pursued her runaway slaves, positing Connecticut as a potential destination for the group. Like both Alida Livingston and Sara Roelofs, Judith had a mixed holding of slaves: Indian and of mixed black, Indian, and white descent. These few patterns of slaveholding reflected in Judith’s advertisement pointed to a mistress culture among elite white women that resembled the culture that arose in the southern slaveholding colonies and those in the Caribbean, but also developed its own distinct character. That character shaped not only the lives of the enslaved people who lived with these mistresses, but also the way in which white womanhood was experienced among elite communities in the Northeast.

Judith Vincent was well connected to a larger network of elite white women and her friendship ties intersected with those of Alida Livingston. On June 7, 1759, Anna Prichard, granddaughter of Petrus and Judith Stuyvesant by their son, Nicholas, left “Judith Vincent, of Monmouth County, East New Jersey, and her daughter Phoebe, £20.”⁸⁴ Judith Vincent and her daughter were not the only elite women named in Prichard’s will. She even opened her will requesting that “50£ to be equally divided among 12 poor widows of good character.” Although Anna Prichard did not specifically bequeath any slave, she left bequests to elite widows, including the slaveholder Cornelia Schuyler.⁸⁵ Cornelia was Alida Schuyler Livingston’s great niece by marriage, granddaughter-in-law of Arent Schuyler. Her father was named an heir in the bequest of her sister, another slaveholding elite woman, Catherine Schuyler Philipse.

Catherine Philipse’s 1731 will did not specifically single out widows as beneficiaries, like Prichard, but her will did name a number of slaveholding women, all of whom were her sisters or cousins. Also, unlike Prichard’s will, Philipse explicitly mentioned enslaved people. She stipulated that “My Indian or mulatto slaves ‘Molly’ and ‘Sara,’ were to be set free when of age.”⁸⁶ Philipse’s vague classification of the two women, as either Indian or mulatto, demonstrated the imprecise nature of racial classification among eighteenth-century slaveholders who held enslaved populations that were ethnically diverse. Her will diverged from other slaveholders in that she freed her slaves. Yet as at least one scholar has noted, the manumission

⁸⁴ Prichard named several Stuyvesant relatives in her will, bequeathing to her nephew, Peter Stuyvesant, “a gold ring, a pair of gloves and a mourning hat band,” and to another nephew, Nicholas William Stuyvesant, her “jewel bow, a Tortoise shell bos, a shell cup tipped with silver, and all my plate, 2 plain gold rings, 4 damask table cloths, and 2 dozen napkins.” Will of Anna Pritchard, 7 June 1759, in *Wills*, 5: 323-324.

⁸⁵ Cornelia Schuyler’s slave Ben was accused but acquitted in the New York Slave Revolt of 1712. Kenneth Scott, “The Slave Insurrection in New York in 1712,” *New York Historical Society Quarterly* 14, no. 1 (January 1961): 63.

⁸⁶ Catharine Philipse left “1/6” of her estate “to the children of Philip Schuyler, eldest son of my sister, Cornelia Schuyler, deceased. Will of Catharine Phillipse, 7 January 1731, in *Wills*, 3: 21-22.

was a dead letter because she did not provide the monetary surety for their maintenance required by the law.⁸⁷

Both Dutch and English networks were important to such elite mistresses. On November 16, 1747, the following advertisement ran in the *New York Gazette*:

Run away on the first of October last, from the Widow of Alderman van Gelder, a Negro Man named Frank, of a tawny complexion, speaks good English and Dutch; had on when he went away, a striped Flannel Jacket, Ozenbrig trousers, old shoes, but no stockings; he has since changed his Cloaths and has seen since his Elopement, to wear a red Duffels great Coat. Whoever takes up said Negro, and brings him to his Mistress, or to Victor Hyer, living near the English Church, shall have forty shillings reward, and all reasonable charges.⁸⁸

Widow van Gelder was Teuntje, whose late husband was Hermanus van Gelder, a man noteworthy for having held the most powerful position in New York City politics, but who had no merchant pedigree.⁸⁹ Like Alida Livingston, Teuntje prized bilingual slaves. Frank's ability to communicate in English and Dutch would have been very useful, as he would have been able to converse easily with Teuntje and also could have been hired out to her English neighbors. Also, like Alida, Teuntje van Gelder's position as mistress and Frank's status as slave was communicated through clothes. Frank's "striped Flannel Jacke" and "Ozenbrig trouser" identified him as enslaved and his "old shoes" were likely second hand, much like those of Alida Livingston's slaves, marking him as Teuntje's property.⁹⁰ Yet like Tom, Frank "changed his

⁸⁷ Zimmerman, *Women of the House*, 220-221.

⁸⁸ Advertisement, *New-York Gazette, Revived in the Weekly Post-Boy*, 16 November 1747, in "Pretends to Be Free," eds. Hodges and Brown, 24.

⁸⁹ Joyce Goodfriend noted that van Gelder was a "bricklayer" and "the one significant exception to" the rule of New York merchant aldermen. Yet she pointed out that, despite his origins, van Gelder had risen to become wealthy. She noted that "his property was assessed at £80 in 1730, which placed him in the top tenth of the city's wealth structure." Van Gelder's fellow aldermen, Goodfriend noted, were Philip van Cortlandt and Frederick Philipse. Goodfriend, *Before the Melting Pot*, 167.

⁹⁰ Charles Foy noted that "coarse striped ozenbrig cloth defined one as a bondsman" and argued that the act of putting aside such clothes for others, such as seaman's clothes, was a declaration of freedom. Foy, "Ports of Slavery, Ports of Freedom," 12, 198-99.

Cloaths,” pointedly resisting such branding. Actively pursuing runaways defined the lives of elite mistresses but their slaves devised gendered methods of resisting.

Evidence of slave punishment featured in the runaway slave advertisements posted on behalf of other slave mistresses. Although most runaway slave advertisements posted by elite mistresses were for enslaved men, as reflects the high male-to-female sex ratio of the general population of runaways, at least one Boston mistress searched for an enslaved woman who had run away. On July 9, 1744, Eleanor Pullen ran the following advertisement:

Ran-away again from Mrs. *Eleanor Pullen* of *Boston*, on Monday the 2d Instant, a Negro Woman named *Cuba*, about 36 Years of Age, a well-set Wench: She has a Scar over one of her Eye-brows has lost some of her fore Teeth, speaks good English: She had on when she went away, a new cotton and linen Shift, a quilted Coat, and a Calico Apron: Whosoever shall take up said Negro, and bring her to her said Mistress in Corn-Court, near *Fanueil-Hall*, shall have *Twenty Shillings* old Tenor, and all necessary Charges paid.

N.B. All Persons are hereby notified not to entertain or harbor said Wench, as they would avoid the Penalty of the Law in that Case.⁹¹

Eleanor Pullen was born in Casco, Maine to Captain Anthony and Elizabeth Brackett and her early life was quite eventful. While living in Casco, her whole family, including one enslaved African, was captured by Indians and thought dead (her uncle was killed); her family later escaped.⁹² As a widow, she adeptly secured property owed to her, as she claimed land from her father’s estate in Casco as inheritance on October 12, 1731.⁹³ Pullen’s description of Cuba offered a window into the specific ways that the two women might have interacted. Pullen identified Cuba as “a negro woman” and “well set,” clearly assuming that Cuba appeared “Negro” enough to not warrant any qualifying description. Cuba’s scarred eyebrows and missing teeth attest to the blows to the head that she endured, specifically marring her face. Whether

⁹¹ Advertisement, *Boston Weekly Post-Boy*, 9 July 1744, EAN.

⁹² Mary Beth Norton noted that the Bracketts’ interaction with the Wabanakis began after a group killed Captain Anthony Brackett’s cow. The situation escalated two days later, resulting in the family’s capture and captivity. Norton, *In the Devil’s Snare*, 49. William Hubbard, *The History of the Indian Wars in New England: From the First Settlement to....*, ed. Samuel G. Drake (1677; repr., Baltimore, MD: Genealogical Publishing Co., 2002), 1: 139-143.

⁹³ E.C. Bowler, ed., *York Deeds* (Bethel, ME: Maine Genealogical Society, 1906), 14: 644-645.

Pullen landed those blows herself is impossible to determine, but Pullen did use the scars as a branding of sorts, a means of identifying her lost property.

Although Pullen followed the convention of runaway advertisements by detailing her enslaved woman's clothes, Cuba's attire gave away her status in ways that were both gendered and racialized. Whether Cuba stole her mistress's "new cotton and linen Shift," or whether it was hers, was not specified. Yet the fact that her cotton and linen shift was paired with a calico Apron, rather than the stays worn by European women, betrayed her status as enslaved.⁹⁴ Perhaps that is why she grabbed the quilted Coat, which might have been unseasonably hot in Boston's summer.

The Haverhill mistress Sarah White also included signs of physical decrepitude as a marker to track down her enslaved man, Scipio. On November 3, 1743 the following advertisement ran in the *Boston Weekly News-Letter*:

Ran away on the 12th Instant, from the widow *Sarah White* of *Haverhill* a Negro man named *Scipio*, about 30 Years of Age, a well set Fellow, of middle Stature, had on when he went away, a new felt Hat, a dark woollen Coat with Pewter Buttons, light colour'd woollen Jacket, brown Breeches, and grey yarn Stockings: He limps a little as he goes.
Whoever shall take up the said Negro, and convey him to his said Mistress in *Haverhill* aforesaid, shall have *Five Pounds*, old Tenor, Reward, and necessary Charges paid.⁹⁵

Little evidence remains of Sarah White's life besides this runaway slave advertisement. Yet her status and her actions as a slave mistress can be intuited from its details. Although she was a widow, Sarah was not without means. Scipio may have been purchased when her husband was alive; the actions she took to reacquire him show that Sarah retained some wealth in widowhood.

⁹⁴ Edward Long assigned certain dress racial meaning in his *History of Jamaica*, describing white Jamaican women as having "the air of a Negroe-servant, lolling almost the whole day upon beds or settes, her head muffled up with two or three handkerchiefs, her dress loose, and without stays." Edward Long, *The History of Jamaica, or General survey of the....* (London: T. Lowndes, 1774), 279.

⁹⁵ Advertisement, *Boston Weekly News-Letter*, 3 November 1743, EAN.

She had the resources to purchase space to run an advertisement and to offer a reward. Five Pounds, old Tenor, was a considerable reward. Just three years later, the same sum was given as an annual salary in Plymouth, Massachusetts to a man for “Beatg ye Drum at seting ye Night Watches Ten Month In ye year 1746.”⁹⁶ When Scipio ran away, he was not arrayed in threadbare clothes. He left with a “new” hat and was swathed in enough clothing to steel him against the harsh New England winter.

Mistresses were also the target of slave violence. A news story filtered to Boston from Mendon concerning the murder of a mistress by one of her slaves. It detailed that,

We hear from *Mendon*, that on Friday last, a Negro Fellow belonging to Mr. Thomas Sandford of that Town, being offended with his Mistress, struck her on the Head with a Hatchet, and kill’d her on the Spot; he was afterwards seized by his Master, but got clear and made his Escape.⁹⁷

The “Hatchet.” A “blow” to the head. These images most likely conjured up memories of Indian attack rather than slave resistance. The manner of her death and the way the story was retold showed that stories of slave resistance and Indian attack were quite similar, and the gendered dynamic to the news story cannot be ignored. A reader versed in Massachusetts history could not have failed to see the similarity in the story to Rowlandson’s narrative a generation earlier, which included her sister being “knockt” on the head and killed by a raiding party. As Jill Lepore has argued, such stories of Indian attack conditioned the minds of colonial New Englanders in distinctively racial ways, hardening the line between white and red.⁹⁸ Yet even as the news story asserted that the nameless “Negro fellow” was Thomas Sandford’s slave, the dispute, the excerpt makes clear, was between the man and “his Mistress.” The attack dovetailed with the description of Eleanor Pullen’s enslaved women’s wounds in surprising ways, and presented a reversal

⁹⁶ William Thomas Davis, ed., *Records of the Town of Plymouth* (Plymouth, MA: Memorial Press, 1903), 3: 25.

⁹⁷ News, *Boston Evening-Post*, 16 September 1745.

⁹⁸ Jill Lepore, *The Name of War: King Philip’s War and the Origins of American Identity* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1998), xiv.

intended to highlight the brutality of the attack. It was the mistress who offended the man, and he retaliated by striking her on the head. A blow to the head could be meant to harm women in a specifically gendered way, by facial disfigurement. Conversely, Cuba was also attacked in the head, scarred and had her teeth knocked out. Thus Mendon's enslaved man not only attacked his mistress, but did so in a way laden with gendered and racial import.

Both Sarah White and Eleanor Pullen's enslaved people showed signs of potential abuse. Scipio may have received his limp at the hands of Sarah or another slaveholder, and that Cuba received the "scar over one of her Eye-brows" and "lost some of her fore Teeth" as a result of a beating seems likely. These women were certainly not novice slaveholders. Not only were they participating in the culture of slave recapture, but used the physical evidence of slave punishment to aid in the search.

Elite women's power over the lives of the enslaved was not without consequence to the gendered ordering of society. A slave man's mention in the varied details that Sewall included in his description of a sentence of whipping for "a woman that whip'd a man," might shed light on the effect that race had upon white womanhood in Boston. Sewall wrote:

Midweek, sentenced a woman that whip'd a Man, to be whip'd; said a woman that had lost her Modesty, was like Salt that had lost its savor; good for nothing but to be cast to the Dunghill: 7 or 8 join'd together, call'd the Man out of his Bed, guilefully praying him to shew them the way; then by the help of a negro Youth, tore off his Cloaths and whip'd him with Rods; to chastise him for carrying it harshly to his wife.⁹⁹

Such an inclusion of "a negro youth" in rough music is evocative. The black man's relation to the white woman was unclear. Was he a slave or a free black who had previously been a slave in the woman's household? What fealty did he owe the woman that he risked himself in such a way? Although she was whipped, his fate might have been much worse. But his presence

⁹⁹ Sewall, *Diary*, 10 September 1707, 1: 572.

and his action of “tearing off” her husband’s clothes to whip him must have been heavy with meaning. If he was her current or former enslaved man, then, in this way, the mistress was metaphorically whipping her husband as if he were an enslaved man. Even though the description did not detail that she was directly involved, Sewall blamed the actions on her and not the crowd. In fact, he was scandalized by them and asserted that that “a woman that had lost her Modesty, was like Salt that had lost its savor; good for nothing, but to be cast to the Dunghill.” What, exactly, was immodest to Sewall? Was it merely that a woman might dare to whip a man, or was it that a white women who had enough connections in the African community, could turn the tables on her husband and “whip” the man whom she called “master”?

This incident can shed light on the subtle tension between the ideals of goodwife and slave mistress that existed, at least in elite circles, in colonial Massachusetts. The violence required to enforce slave discipline—to remain a mistress over a slave—might throw the relationship between a mistress and her master disastrously out of balance. No wonder Sewall feared the continued importation of enslaved Africans, calling them an “extravasat blood” in the “body politic.” Extravasate, as an adjective, according to the OED, was defined in the 1663 version of Bulokar’s English Expositor to mean “not contained within any peculiar vessel.”¹⁰⁰ The effect of the blood might secretly seep out and encourage other portions of society. Even within their proper place in the household, and not “aspiring after their forbidden liberty” as Sewall noted in *The Selling of Joseph*, slaves might have had a deleterious effect on those around them. Mistresses, accustomed to disciplining adult male and female slaves, might extend that control to their husbands and adult sons, challenging the foundation of the family and the state.

¹⁰⁰ “ex'travassate, adj.,” OED Online, Oxford University Press, <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/67152> (accessed April 29, 2013).

At least one elite woman within Alida Livingston's larger network gave birth to a mixed-race child. In March 1748, James van Horne's housekeeper, Margaret Wiser, arrived at the home of Gabriel Furman, requesting that Furman's wife serve as a wet-nurse for an infant entrusted to Wiser by van Horne. Margaret Wiser lived at van Horne's Rocky-hill New Jersey plantation year round, and during the winter and spring, had full management of the property while van Horne resided in New York. On the night of March 1748, van Horne entrusted Wiser with more than just plantation management. Gabriel Furman testified that when his wife "opened the blanket in which the child was wrapped" she discovered that "it was a Black," an infant boy named Philip. Furman questioned Wiser about the child's parentage, surmising:

that the Mother of the Child might certainly be a white woman, or they would not take so much Pains to conceal it from the eyes of the world; her answer was that the mother of the child was a white woman, and further said that the Father and Mother of the young woman who was the mother of the Child, were people of almost the first rank in New-York; and that it was a free-born child and never could be made a slave; that she had received a letter from Mr. van Horne, then in New-York, desiring her that if she could not have it taken care of in his house, to apply to one of the neighbouring women to keep it till he came up.¹⁰¹

Wiser's request for Furman's wife's services as wet nurse to a mixed-race infant was certainly exceptional. While a black woman might serve as a wet nurse to her white mistress's children, the opposite was extremely rare.¹⁰² Some white women worried that the poor attributes of slavery might be passed on in the milk of slave women to their children; what might the opposite convey? Would the milk of a white woman confer freedom? Both Furman and his wife required assurances: first, that the child's mother was white; and second that she was an elite of "the first rank in New-York" and that the child was free seemed to be enough to mitigate the

¹⁰¹ The State of New Jersey v. Dierck Ten Broek, 17 May 1783, box 47, Alexander Court Papers, NYHS.

¹⁰² Margaret Washington noted that "the Dutch practice of reproductive exploitation had a profoundly debilitating effect on enslaved families. It involved using black mothers as nurses and giving weaned enslaved toddlers to white progeny—as gifts on special occasions, as childhood companions, when a couple set up independent housekeeping, or as bequests in wills." Margaret Washington, *Sojourner Truth's America* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2009), 22.

child's race, Furman's wife agreed not only to serve as wet nurse but also to keep the baby "till Mr. van Horne came."

Gabriel Furman certainly suspected that Mr. Van Horne's actions betrayed his close familial relation to the child. Van Horne arrived and requested that the Furmans keep the child for another year. Gabriel took the opportunity to press the issue further with van Horne, positing "that the Mother of the child must be Family, or so much Pains would not be taken to conceal the matter." His statement bluntly suggested the converse: if the child had been the son of one of James van Horne's male relations, no such propriety would have been needed. Although van Horne did not admit to the relation, he reiterated Philip's pedigree, his free born status, and the fact that he "could not be made a slave." Van Horne added that "he was determined to educate him genteelly."

Although Gabriel and his wife could no longer care for Philip, he kept his care in the family, sending him to nurse with his aunt, Jane Furman, and checking up with the boy's progress as he grew. Philip's mother did visit, coming from New York to Somerset County with James and his wife, Margaret. Although her identity remains shrouded in mystery, she was certainly a part of a larger slaveholding network that stretched back to the Stuyvesant-Bayard founders as well as the Livingstons. James van Horne (also referred to as Jacobus in the records), was Joanna Livingston van Horne's nephew, and the son of Johannes van Horn and Catharina de Meyer. "Mrs. Van Horne" was Margareta Bayard, whose father, Samuel Bayard, was the son of Col. Nicholas Bayard and Judith Varlett.

Thus the child Philip was born into a large slaveholding community of elites. James and Margareta were married in 1742, this incident took place just six years after their marriage. James van Horne's 1760 will indicated that his son and namesake, James, was "to be given the

best education the Province of Pennsylvania affords, either at the Academy of Mr. Dove's English school, then to study physic or law and complete his studies in Scotland."¹⁰³ That bequest was very similar to the instructions that he left for the Furmans in regards to Philip's education. If Gabriel Furman's suspicions were correct, the "Lady" who accompanied the two van Hornes might well have been James's sister, Catharine, but it could have also been a niece or cousin.¹⁰⁴

Thirty-five years after Philip was placed in the Furman's care, Philip relied on Gabriel's testimony to establish his free born status. At a time when numbers of formerly enslaved people flocked to New York harbor to flee with the retreating British, and American masters scrambled to claim their fleeing slaves, proving one's freedom status was essential. Despite his connections and longtime residency in Somerset County, Philip's hold on freedom was tenuous and the possibility of being caught by slave catchers and enslaved was an ever-present threat. Philip, whose last name appeared only as "the Negro" in court documents, relied on the narrative of his birth, one that prominently featured the actions of a diverse group of women: James van Horne's housekeeper, Margaret Wiser, his white wet nurse, his unknown but decidedly elite New York mother, the active engagement of Margareta Bayard and his later nurse Joan Furman. In stark contrast to the fortunes of slaves who like the Biblical Hagar sought to "flee from the face" of their pursuing mistresses, Philip relied on his relation to the elite network of female slaveholders to secure his continued freedom.

¹⁰³ William Nelson, ed., *Collections of the New Jersey Historical Society* (Newark, NJ: Published by the Society, 1916), 9: 207.

¹⁰⁴ Will of James van Horne, 29 October 1760, in *Wills*, 6: 123-24.

3.4 Conclusion

Alida Schuyler Livingston was, no doubt, an atypical woman, even among the elite of colonial New York and Massachusetts. But out of her unique narrative, the decades of correspondence she left behind, and the network of interconnected ties of family and bondage, a Northern elite mistress culture emerges. The peculiar slaveholding culture that emerged in New Netherland was as much a product of female concerns as it was Dutch burgher identity. The slaveholding style of the first generation of New Amsterdam's mistresses reflected the specific experiences of each new immigrant woman, more than any sort of unified culture. Yet by the mid eighteenth century, elite women in New York not only had a distinct mistress culture, but one that, through wide ranging family ties, traversed New York's boundaries. Such women used their husbands' connections as well as their own female networks to track down slaves. Their life events, such as birth, marriage, widowhood, and even death could knit enslaved families together or, more frequently break them apart. Yet the enslaved people who labored under these mistresses also used gendered expectations to resist.

Elite women were certainly not unprepared for the duties of managing enslaved people. The ways they clothed, worked, punished, pursued, and sold enslaved people were uniquely gendered, codified by generations of women who came before them, and policed by family, friends and neighbors. Their direct management of slaves shaped gendered relations within the white family, as interracial sexuality among elite women and those who resisted the rule of their husbands in racial terms attested. Newspaper articles detailed slave resistance specifically targeting white women and included runaway slave advertisements submitted by mistresses. Such evidence showed that elite white women in colonial New York and Massachusetts were not

unlikely mistresses. They were co-slaveholders with their own culture of slave management that shaped the distinct regional character of Northern slaveholding.

CHAPTER 4

“FOR WHAT IS A MINISTER, BUT A SERVANT?”: RELIGIOUS NETWORKS OF SLAVERY

For what is a Minister, but a Servant? And what is a servant, but he that is at his Master's command (for his efficient cause:) and for his Master's ends, as his final cause?

John Cotton, *The Bloody Tenent, Washed and Made White in the Blood of the Lamb* (1646)

And they that have believing masters, let them not despise them, because they are brethren; but rather do them service, because they are faithful and beloved, partakers of the benefit. These things teach and exhort.

1 Timothy 6: 2

In 1646, John Cotton, Cotton Mather's maternal grandfather after whom he was named, posed the question “For what is a minister, but a Servant?” He used the question rhetorically, knowing that his listeners could anticipate the proper answer. A true minister, according to Cotton, must serve. The trope drew its inspiration from the Bible: Jesus, after all, was the suffering servant. Yet the lived experiences of the ministers who served the elite of New York and Massachusetts called into question where ministers should properly fall in the social hierarchy. Many ministers counted servants and slaves in their households and thus were “servants” themselves only in the most metaphorically religious sense. Their duty to be “servant” to their flocks jarred against the material realities of their lives. How much should they associate with and encourage Christianity among the enslaved? Might their duty to the Great Commission be properly abrogated by the demands of colony building? What of the converted slaves? Would the inversion that calls the Minister to serve, compel the slave to freedom?

The relationship of New Netherland's ministerial hierarchy to the institution of slavery has attracted considerable scholarly interest. Everardus Bogardus's prolific baptismal record preserved a vital tool for reconstructing the lives of the first generations of the enslaved. Debates surrounding whether baptism manumitted a slave remained, not only among the ministerial hierarchy, but in the minds of enslaved parents. Such parents approached the sacrament for the

sake of their children and forged fictive kinship networks with the individuals who witnessed the event. Dutch reformed ministerial careers were truly Atlantic, an aspect that has begun to receive increased attention from scholars. In New Netherland, the Dutch Reformed Church was not alone—other Protestants, as well as Jews, Native groups, and slaves brought from Catholic territories, made up the religious landscape. After the English takeover, this religious multiplicity persisted. The variegated religious atmosphere shaped questions of freedom and the clerical role in the spiritual and material world.

The familial ties that connected elite networks were forged and formalized by ministers. Indeed, marital ties grafted many ministers into the web. In a very real sense, elite slaveholding networks were also religious networks. Although Dutch Reformed ministers enjoyed natural alliances with their pietistic counterparts in Massachusetts Bay, slavery linked disparate religious networks together in tangible ways, flouting denominational barriers.

4.1 Lords over God's Heritage: Ministers and Slaves in New Netherland

In August of 1659, Domine Machiel Zyperus and his wife, Anna Duurkoop, set off for New Amsterdam from Curaçao.¹ The ship that was chosen for their passage, the *Speramundij*, whose Latin name means hope of the world, doubled as a slave ship, carrying within its holds enslaved Africans. In a letter to Petrus Stuyvesant, Matthias Beck indicated that one girl and two boys were set aside by the slave trader, Franck Bryn, specifically for Stuyvesant; that two others were for “the commissary van Brugh”; and that Beck had “outfitted them as much as possible

¹ Machiel Zyperus had quite a few variant spellings in colonial records. The most common variation of his first name is Michael, and those of his last are Siperius and Ziperius. His wife's name appears in Riker, *Revised History of Harlem*, 177-178.

against the cold.”² On August 24, 1659, the ship’s skipper, Jan Pietersen van Dockum, wrote that he ferried the enslaved on behalf of Frans Bruyn. The human cargo, van Dockum reported, were “all dry and in good condition, and marked with this distinguishing mark.”³ Zyperus was not leaving Curaçao under ideal conditions; his tenure had been marked by scandal. In New Amsterdam, white criminal repeat offenders were sentenced to work the chain gang with the company Negroes.⁴ Beck might have specifically chosen to send Zyperus on a sloop with slaves as a subtle denunciation of his time in Curaçao.

Before the *Speramundij* took Zyperus, his wife, and its hold of branded enslaved passengers to New Netherland, it ferried another clergyman, Adriaen Beaumont, from the United Provinces to Curaçao. Because Zyperus’s own letters do not survive (or never existed in the first place), the best way of understanding Zyperus’s behavior problems in Curaçao is through the correspondence of his successor, Beaumont. Beck wrote that Beaumont was “a kind and edifying young man, extremely gifted and purely educated.” He followed up his glowing remarks of Beaumont with a measured assessment of Zyperus, writing, “Whereas Do. Machiel Zyperus and his wife are coming there on this occasion, with the hopes of Acquiring one or another position there, I therefore believe that it would be appropriate for him if he departed from here with a good recommendation which he has earned by his comportment.”⁵

² Matthias Beck to Petrus Stuyvesant, 23 August 1659, in *CP*, 131.

³ Jan Pietersen van Dockum, 24 August 1659, in *CP*, 150.

⁴ On November 22, 1641 Jan Hobbesson was found guilty of theft, sentenced “to be whipped with rods,” and banished from the colony. If he returned, he was “to be put in chains and set to work with the company’s negroes.” Three years later, Michael Christoffelson was found guilty of “stabbing some of the company’s negroes” and was sentenced to “twelve months’ hard labor in chains, with the company’s negroes.” In April of 1658, Peter Hendrickson and Nicholas Albertson were convicted of desertion, the latter of “his ship and betrothed bride after publication of the banns,” the former of his military post. They were sentenced to have their heads “shaved,” to be “flogged,” have their “ears bored,” and “to work two years with the company’s negroes.” Just three months later, Claes Michelson, a runaway sailor, was sentenced to the same fate as Albertson and Hendrickson, only his term of work with the company blacks was one year. In 1661, Gerrit Pelser’s sentence, after he was court martialed for “drunkenness and assault,” required that he “ride the Wooden horse for one hour a day for three days” and serve “two months’ hard labor with the company’s negroes.” *CHMANY*, 1: 78, 89, 194-195, 198, 228.

⁵ Matthias Beck to Petrus Stuyvesant, 23 August 1659, in *CP*, 133-134.

Although Beck did not outright condemn the departing Zyperus, his praise of Beaumont contrasted sharply with his lukewarm assessment of Zyperus—something that Stuyvesant could not have missed. Zyperus’s bad reputation had originated in the Netherlands. The Reverend C. Schulz wrote Beaumont from Amsterdam that, “Some bretheren of the Classis think that Michael Siperius is well known in this country as a very unworthy person. Further inquiries shall be made in reference to him and care shall be taken for the edification of God’s Church, in case the people of New Netherland have advanced him to any church office.”⁶ According to Beaumont, Zyperus had allowed all manner of licentiousness to flourish during his tenure in Curaçao.⁷ Schultz praised Beck’s and Beaumont’s steps to promote virtue and rectify the worrisome situation, indicating that, during the first year of Beaumont’s service, Matthias Beck posted “salutary placards” in taverns which were “issued against the enormous sins emanating from them.”⁸

Beaumont had arrived on Curaçao from *patria* with zeal to convert Indians and blacks, and had proceeded to baptize these converts without the Classis approval. When challenged about his conversions by the Classis, he blamed his indulgence on “Brazil.”⁹ Although one scholar has posited that his explanation of “Brazil” for the hasty baptisms was a nod to the Dutch Reformed Church’s success in converting the Tupí, past baptismal success was likely not the only element encouraging Beaumont’s zeal. Beaumont was likely approached by enough enslaved individuals to warrant the practice, as were the contemporary ministers in New Netherland. But Schulz condemned such baptisms, and stiffened access to the rite:

⁶ Reverend C. Schulz, Classis of Amsterdam to Beaumont, 8 July 1661, in *ERNY*, 1: 507.

⁷ Adriaen Beaumont to the Classis of Amsterdam, 17 April 1660, 5 Dec 1662, SAA, Archief van de Classis Amsterdam van de Nederlandse Hervormde Kerk, 379/224: 11-13, 17-21.

⁸ Adriaen Beaumont to the Classis of Amsterdam, 17 April 1660 SAA, Archief van de Classis Amsterdam van de Nederlandse Hervormde Kerk, 379/224:11; Reverend C. Schulz, Classis of Amsterdam to Beaumont, 8 July 1661, in *ERNY*, 1: 507.

⁹ Adriaen Beaumont to the Classis of Amsterdam, 5 Dec 1662, SAA, Archief van de Classis Amsterdam van de Nederlandse Hervormde Kerk, 379/224: 18.

As to your inquiry regarding the administration of Holy Baptism to the Negroes, Indians, and their young children:--The Classis deems it necessary that you observe the good rule of the church here in this land, where no one, who is an adult, is admitted to baptism without previous confession of his faith. According to the adult Negroes and Indians must also be previously instructed and make confession of their faith before Holy Baptism may be administered to them. As to their children, the Classis answers, that as long as the parents are actually heathen, although they were baptized in the gross, (by wholesale, by the Papists), the children may not be baptized unless the parents pass over to Christianity, and abandon heathenism.¹⁰

The danger posed by the baptism of “Negroes and Indians” was not merely the potential for their earthly freedom: their access to baptism, Schulz asserted, threatened the entire Reformed project. The proper exercise of Christianity was central to the Reformed movement, a purity that some in the Dutch ministerial hierarchy felt was threatened by both the Native peoples and the enslaved. Schulz emphasized instruction and offered as its antithesis the wholesale baptism of candidates who were “actually heathen.” Schulz needed not look far for evidence that such an uninstructed populous could create a syncretic faith that was markedly different than its parent. Curaçao’s enslaved population and those of Tierra Firme practiced a syncretic form of Catholicism, which developed in both the Americas and Africa.¹¹ Dutch traders who had forsaken European cultural mores and lived among Native peoples offered a chilling warning to the arbiters of the Reformed faith: purity was something that must be vigilantly guarded.

Beaumont shared the Classis’s concern for doctrinal purity, but he was fighting a two-front war—against poor Reformed instruction on the one hand and Roman Catholicism on the other. It was clear which front he found more pressing: the tide of Catholicism could only be

¹⁰ Reverend C. Schulz, Classis of Amsterdam to Beaumont, 8 July 1661, in *ERNY*, 1: 508.

¹¹ Saint Anthony veneration was present among Curaçao’s enslaved population, a pattern that John Thornton traced back to syncretic Catholic practices in the Kongo. John Thornton, *Africa and Africans in the Making of the Atlantic World, 1400-1800*, 2nd ed. (1998; repr., Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 255, 261; Rupert, *Creolization and Contraband*, 337.

pushed back by Reformed baptisms. On October 25, 1660, Beaumont presented his case for the need for Christianization to the Classis, noting that “The instruction of the...children stands entirely still. They live without God in the world, like beasts.” Beaumont recognized the threat that poor instruction could pose to the purity of religious instruction, noting, “There was there a negro, who gave them some instruction in the Spanish language; but his wicked life gave occasion rather to the blaspheming of God’s name than to its glorification.”¹² Yet baptism was Beaumont’s primary weapon to guard against such sacrilege, and he re-baptized the Spanish-speaking blacks, “causing the formula to be read to them in Spanish, for fear that otherwise they might have been baptized by Papists, who sometimes arrive there.”¹³ According to Beaumont, Zyperus’s lack of concern for black and Native Christian instruction opened the door for Catholic missionizing efforts.¹⁴

Zyperus’s experience in New Netherland, like Curaçao, ended badly. In 1661, just months after the still un-ordained Zyperus began holding services as *voorlezer*, or reader, in Haarlem, the Classis sent a letter to Domine Samuel Drisius in New Netherland, warning that they received “an evil report” from other Amsterdam ministers who “had been informed on good authority, that the same Michael Siperius has been from his youth up, a good for nothing person” because “in the school at Alckmaer” he was “publically chastised before all the scholars.” This public censure occurred due to “many wicked acts, such as obtaining articles from stores in the name of the rector, and taking them to pawn shops.”¹⁵ With a scathing rebuke from the Classis and a dismal record in Haarlem, Zyperus left New Netherland for Virginia. On August 5, 1664,

¹² Adriaen Beaumont to the Classis of Amsterdam, 5 Dec 1662, SAA, Archief van de Classis Amsterdam van de Nederlandse Hervormde Kerk, 379/224: 18. An English summary of Beaumont’s letter is reprinted as the Classis of Amsterdam, Acts of the Deputies, 25 October 1660, in *ERNY*, 1: 493.

¹³ *ERNY*, 1: 493.

¹⁴ Linda Rupert noted that Catholic missionary trips had the result that Beaumont tried to prevent: “virtually the entire black and mulatto population of the island was Catholic by the second half of the seventeenth century, a situation that continued in subsequent centuries.” Rupert, *Creolization and Contraband*, 87.

¹⁵ Classis of Amsterdam to Samuel Drisius, 16 December 1661, in *ERNY*, 1: 514.

Samuel Drisius noted Zyperus's departure in a letter to the Classis of Amsterdam, writing, "Zyperius left for Virginia long ago. He behaved most shamefully here, drinking, cheating and forging other people's writing, so that he was forbidden not only to preach, but even to keep school."¹⁶ Zyperus's failure to perform as a proper minister prevented his full ordination and required that his Haarlem congregation attend services given by Henricus Selijns on Petrus Stuyvesant's bowery.

Drisius's description of Zyperus's conduct closed the letter, but a much different assessment opened it. After a few perfunctory sentences of greeting, Drisius wrote:

We could have wished, that Domine Selyns had longer continued with us, both on account of his diligence and success in preaching and catechizing, and of his humble and deifying life. By this he has attracted a great many people, and even some of the negroes, so that many are sorry for his departure. But considering the fact that he owes filial obedience to his aged parents, it is God's will that he should leave us. We must be resigned, therefore, while we commit him to God and the word of his grace.¹⁷

Every Sunday evening, the refugees from Zyperus's congregation would have encountered an interracial crowd at Selijns's services on the bowery. In a letter to the Classis four years earlier, Selijns described Stuyvesant's bowery as "a place of relaxation and pleasure, whither people go from the Mannhattans, for the evening service." As if to note the reason for the leisurely life on the bowery, he continued, "there are forty negroes, from the region of the negro coast, besides the household families."¹⁸ That this retreat was frequented by all of the ministers stationed in New Amsterdam and Breuckelen is likely, as Selijns noted in the same letter that he was not alone: Drisius and Megapolensis also served the Dutch congregations in the city. The presence of blacks among Selijns's flock was notable enough to have received mention in Drisius's letter.

¹⁶ Rev. Samuel Drisius to the Classis of Amsterdam, 5 August 1664, in *ERNY*, 1: 555.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 554.

¹⁸ Henricus Selijns to the Classis of Amsterdam, 4 October 1660, in *ERNY*, 1: 488.

Though he left in disgrace, Zyperus was not banished to Virginia, as the Antinomians had been from Massachusetts Bay. He followed a well-trod route of emigration from New Netherland to the Chesapeake forged by the Varlett family. By the mid-1660s, he and his wife relocated to North River Precinct (present day Kingston Parish in Mathews County), just across the Chesapeake Bay from a prolific tobacco and slave district—the headright established in Accomack County by Anna Varlett Hack Boot, Petrus Stuyvesant’s sister-in-law through his sister Ann’s remarriage to Nicholas Varlett.¹⁹ Zyperus converted to the Church of England, was finally ordained, and, by the 1680s, was rector of the North River Precinct.

As it had with Machiel Zyperus, Atlantic Dutch slavery indelibly shaped the religious careers and theological trajectories of New Netherland’s ministerial elite. When Samuel Drisius and Johannes Megapolensis wrote to the burgemeesters of Amsterdam about the religious state of affairs in New Netherland, they described the colony as “a Babel of confusion.”²⁰ What activity inspired such a comparison to the infamous city of Babel, which brazenly erected a tower to the heavens? The religious toleration of Lutherans, which the domines feared was the first step in the “plan of Satan to smother this infant, rising congregation, almost in its birth, or at least to obstruct the march of truth in its progress.”²¹ While the two ministers penned their letter to the Classis, enslaved company blacks were being compelled to erect fortifications—not to reach to glory, but to defend against the Indians. That threat was one that the European colonists of New Netherland understood in biblical terms, and perhaps the image of Babel was coaxed into the ministers’ minds out of the building projects completed by the enslaved.

¹⁹ “Notes and Queries,” *The New York Genealogical and Biographical Record* 13, no. 1 (January 1882): 49; Hatfield, “Dutch merchants and colonists in the English Chesapeake,” 299, 301.

²⁰ John Megapolensis and Samuel Drisius to the Burgomasters, 6 July 1657, in *ERNY*, 1: 387-88.

²¹ *Ibid.*

Drisius's and Megapolensis's lives intersected with both black and Native inhabitants of New Netherland. In 1661, Drisius's servant girl, a free black child named Lijsbet Antonissen, was convicted of stealing seawant from Drisius's wife, Elizabeth Grevenraet, as detailed in chapter two. Megapolensis was employed by the van Rensselaers to be minister to the church in Rensselaerswijck, a patroonship with a sizeable number of slaves.²² Jonas Michaëlius's unflattering descriptions of Native peoples and enslaved Africans might have been among the first descriptions of the colony that Megapolensis received. This portrayal did not discourage Megapolensis from serving as a missionary to Indians during his tenure as domine in Rensselaerswijck.²³ While there, he married and buried the elite families who resided in Rensselaerswijck, and was also a fellow slaveholder.

In 1646, while serving as minister in Rensselaerswijck, Megapolensis freed a man named Jan Francisco, explaining the manumission as "in view of the long and faithful service rendered by him."²⁴ Although the van Rensselaer family correspondence demonstrates that sending the enslaved to Holland was not unheard of, it is doubtful that Megapolensis immigrated with Jan. Jan might have been offered to Megapolensis as part of his compensation, or could have been given to him as a gift by his slaveholding congregants, like Cotton Mather's slave Onesimus. In any case, Jan's service convinced the minister to manumit him, but not without the stipulation that Jan continue to render service by paying him 10 schepels of wheat annually. When Megapolensis was replaced as minister at Rensselaerswijck by Gideon Schaets, he relocated to New Amsterdam and became the minister of the Dutch Reformed church in 1652.

²² Oliver A. Rink, "Life in New Netherland," in *The Empire State: A History of New York*, ed. Milton M. Klein (2001; repr., Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2005), 80.

²³ In 1643, Megapolensis extended his ministry to the Mohawks, attempting to learn Mohawk and write a Mohawk/Dutch dictionary. Though he baptized some converts during his early years, his later ministry was marked by cynicism towards the missionary project among the Indians. *Ibid.*

²⁴ A.F. van Laer, *New York Colonial Manuscripts: Dutch, Council Minutes, 1638-1649* (Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co., 1974), 4: 365.

Johannes's youngest son, Samuel, followed him into the ministry.²⁵ Samuel Megapolensis had been only eight years old when his family immigrated to New Netherland and would have grown up with Jan Francisco serving in his household.²⁶ He attended Harvard from 1653 to 1656, entering a world not wholly unfamiliar to the one he had left.²⁷ Not only was the pietist faith preached by the school elders familiar, he attended school in the company of elite slaveholders. After graduating from Harvard, Samuel returned to the United Provinces, studying medicine at the University of Utrecht.²⁸

Although the Classis made arrangements to appoint Samuel in New Netherland as early as 1662, he remained in Europe until 1664, where he ministered in Flushing and Dort. It was Selijns's request to return to Holland that occasioned Samuel's return to New Netherland.²⁹ Upon his arrival, Samuel encountered a church in chaos. Selijns wrote, in the same letter in which he complained of slaves requesting baptism in the hopes that it would serve as a gateway to freedom, that:

Domine Samuel Megapolensis has safely arrived, but Domine Warnerus Hadson, whom you had sent as preacher to the South River, died on the passage over. It is very necessary to supply his place, partly on account of the children who have not been baptized since the death of Domine Wely, and partly on account of the

²⁵ Keith L. Sprunger, *Dutch Puritanism: A History of English and Scottish Churches of the Netherlands in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (Leiden: Brill, 1982), 438.

²⁶ Samuel Megapolensis was born in Holland in 1634. Franklin Jameson, ed., *Narratives of New Netherland: 1609-1664* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1909), 410 n1.

²⁷ *Harvard Graduates*, 1: 563-64; James W. van Hoeven, ed., *Piety and Patriotism: Bicentennial Studies of the Reformed Church in America* (Grand Rapids, MI: WM. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1976), 141.

²⁸ As early as 1658, while Samuel was completing his training in Utrecht, Johannes was lobbying for his son's appointment to a Dutch Reformed Church in New Netherland. Johannes wrote, "As he is my youngest son, and I have been at much expense for him, having kept him for three years in New England, and now he is in the third at Utrecht, supporting him solely at my own expense, I cherish a strong desire to see him again among us before I die; as I expect that New Netherland where I have now passed seventeen years of my ministry, will be the place of my burial. It will be a great joy to me to have my son return, qualified by God in doctrine and life, to build up the church in this land." Johannes Megapolensis to the Classis of Amsterdam, 25 September 1658, in Edward Tanjore Corwin, *A Manual of the Reformed Church in America*, 4th ed. (New York: Board of Publication of the Reformed Church in America, 1902), 615-616.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 616-17.

abominable sentiments of various persons there, who speak very disrespectfully of the Holy Scriptures.³⁰

Selijns's language echoed that of his fellow ministers, Johannes Megapolensis and Samuel Drisius, when they complained that New Amsterdam was becoming "a Babel of confusion." Because of Hadson and Wely's deaths, the ministers were swamped not only with requests for baptisms, but also with controlling the doctrinal sanctity of the Reformed faith. In such an environment, Samuel Megapolensis was likely approached by many slave and free families for baptism.

The decision to severely curtail black baptisms had been made by a group of ministers who had not only benefitted from the labor of the enslaved, but who also had deep connections to the Atlantic slave holding elite and who had first-hand experience with the challenges that Christianity leveled against enslavement. The ministers' decision to curtail black baptism occurred at a moment of upheaval: the numbers of enslaved Africans were increasing, as the colony pursued an aggressive slave importation policy, at the same time that the clerical scandal, coupled with several ministers' deaths, created a backlog of baptisms. As has been indicated, the Dutch Reformed ministerial elite feared that the character of the colony was changing as a result of toleration for Lutherans. Although scholars have noted that there were no recorded black baptisms between 1655 and 1665, and Selijns wrote that the ministerial hierarchy had curtailed slave baptism, the conflict between spiritual aims and material lives continued.³¹ Selijns likely baptized several of Judith Stuyvesant's slaves during this unrecorded period. Further, Petrus Stuyvesant followed Megapolensis's example and freed three enslaved black women who had

³⁰ Rev. Henry Selyns to the Classis of Amsterdam, 9 June 1664, in *ERNY*, 1: 549-550.

³¹ Between 1655 and 1665, there were no black baptisms recorded in the register. Although Jaap Jacobs noted that the absence of recorded baptisms did not mean that black baptisms did not occur, he argued that the trend "definitely can be an indication that a change had taken place." Goodfriend explicitly linked this dearth in slave baptism to the "decision of the clergy of New Netherland's Dutch Reformed churches to adopt a more restrictive policy regarding the admission of blacks to baptism." Jacobs, *New Netherland*, 315; Goodfriend, "Black Families in New Netherland," 151.

served him for many years. Stuyvesant could brook freedom in theory, but he relied on the labor that the enslaved provided, and thus his manumissions, like those of Megapolensis, contained the stipulation that “one of the three shall come weekly to do the director general’s housework” in order to maintain their free status.³²

Nearly fifteen years after Beaumont’s censure for performing black and Native baptisms in Curaçao, another Dutch minister was reproached for performing unauthorized baptisms. Yet the recipients of the rite were not the enslaved, but the elite; and the minister held not to the Reformed faith, but was a professed Anglican. The Reverend Nicholas van Rensselaer arrived in New Netherland in October of 1674 with the title of patroon and a royal recommendation for a congregation. Sixteen years earlier, he had been an eccentric mystic in Holland, unable to secure ordination in a Dutch church, although he was ordained an Anglican. Serendipitously, Nicholas had met the exiled heir to the English throne, Charles II, in Brussels, and assured the royal he would be restored to the throne of England.³³ In recognition of his uncanny prediction, the reinstated king gave van Rensselaer a snuff box bearing his image and a letter of recommendation to be installed in a church in the English-controlled colony of New York.³⁴ The van Rensselaer family in Holland, who had previously institutionalized Nicholas in Delft fearing

³² Petition, Three negro women, slaves, to be manumitted, 23 Dec 1662, in *CHMANY*, 1: 242.

³³ The rest of the family in Holland did not put much stock in Nicholas’s predictions and his cousin Richard wrote that “we fear that he is half crazy” because of the visions that he claimed to have. Richard to Jeremias van Rensselaer, 30 November 1658, in *CJVR*, 116-117. For his confinement in Delft, see Randall Balmer, *A Perfect Babel of Confusion: Dutch Religion and English Culture in the Middle Colonies* (New York, Oxford University Press, 1989), 16. For more on the full context and subsequent fame of Nicholas van Rensselaer’s prophecy, see Ernestine Gesine and Everdine van der Wall, “Prophecy and Profit: Nicholas van Rensselaer, Charles II and the conversion of the Jews,” in *Kerkhistorische Opstellen aangeboden aan Prof. Dr. J. van den Berg*, eds. Johannes van den Berg, C. Augustin, et al. (Kampen: J.H. Kok, 1987), 75-87, https://openaccess.leidenuniv.nl/bitstream/handle/1887/8258/3_908_016.pdf?sequence=1 (accessed March 9, 2013).

³⁴ Duke of York to Governor Andros in Favor of the Rev. Mr. Van Rensselaer, 28 July 1674, in *ERNY*, 1: 652; Gestine and van der Wall, “Prophecy and Profit,” 79, 82.

that he was crazy, took advantage of Nicholas's newfound favor and recommended that he succeed his recently deceased elder brother, Jeremias, as patroon of Rensselaerswijck.³⁵

Nicholas embodied the minister-merchant. By inheriting his brother's patroonship, he became the master of a large farm worked by slave and indentured labor. His pedigree should have allowed him unfettered access to the Atlantic networks built by New York's Dutch ruling families. Yet Nicholas was shunned as both minister and master. Jeremias's widow, Maria van Cortlandt, questioned his appointment as patroon, and the Dutch ministerial hierarchy chafed at allowing the heretical-leaning Nicholas to minister in their churches.³⁶ Governor Edmund Andros's plan to appoint Nicholas to serve alongside Domine Gideon Schaets at the Dutch Reformed Church in Albany met with resistance, though the aged Schaets did share his pulpit with the new patroon.³⁷ When Nicholas traveled to New York City in 1675, planning to baptize the children of some of New York's citizens, Wilhelmus van Nieuwenhuysen, minister of the Reformed Dutch Church in New York, refused him access.³⁸

Although van Nieuwenhuysen did not question the right of the baptismal candidates to approach the sacrament but instead raised the issue of whether or not an Anglican minister could perform the sacrament in a Dutch Reformed Church, the furor's similarity to the debate over slave baptism could not have been lost on the minister. Earlier that year, the New York City church had suffered the death of Domine Drisius and had requested that Henricus Selijns return

³⁵ Nicholas van Rensselaer presented in the court at Albany "a commission from Jan Baptist van Renselaer, from Holland, whereby he is provisionally appointed director of the colony of Rensselaerswyck." MCARS, 2: 87.

³⁶ Maria van Cortlandt van Rensselaer was very upset that the family in Holland named Nicholas as patroon and not her son Kiliaen, asserting that Jeremias's wish would have been that his son should succeed him. Maria van Cortlandt van Rensselaer to Jan van Weley and Jan Baptist van Rensselaer, November 1675, in *Correspondence of Maria van Rensselaer, 1669-1689*, ed. and trans. A.J.F. van Laer (Albany: The University of the State of New York, 1935), 13-14 (hereafter cited as CMVR).

³⁷ Lawrence H. Leder, "The Unorthodox Domine: Nicholas van Rensselaer," *New York History* 35, no. 2 (April 1954): 166, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23153043>. Van Nieuwenhuysen wrote to the classis that van Rensselaer had, "after a few months" of his arrival in October 1674, "invested with the ministry of the church of New Orange, not New Albany without the least consultation with any ecclesiastical persons outside of the said place." Rev. William van Nieuwenhuysen to the Classis of Amsterdam, 20 May 1676, in *ERNY*, 1: 684-85.

³⁸ *ERNY*, 1: 684-686.

from Holland to take up the newly vacated position and work along with van Nieuwenhuysen.³⁹ Just four years earlier, in Holland, Selijns had ordained van Nieuwenhuysen alongside the Rev. Oudewater, who was sent to be the minister in the Dutch West African slaving Fort at Elmina.⁴⁰ It is likely that before he sent the young van Nieuwenhuysen off to New York, Selijns shared his own experiences, including his baptismal policy that severely limited the sacrament's use as a route for freedom for enslaved children.

After the exchange of a flurry of official documents, van Nieuwenhuysen conceded Nicholas van Rensselaer's right to administer the sacraments in a Dutch Reformed Church.⁴¹ Yet Nicholas was not long free of controversy. In 1675, Gideon Schaets charged van Rensselaer with "disorderly preaching" in a letter to the Classis of Amsterdam.⁴² A year later, Schaets renewed his denunciation of Nicholas, and two elite congregants—Jacob Leisler and Jacob Milborne—were scandalized by one of van Rensselaer's services, subsequently pursuing legal charges of heresy against him. Leisler and Milborne's actions against Nicholas van Rensselaer presaged the roles both men would take in wresting control of the colonial government thirteen years later. Nicholas was placed under house arrest and compelled to defend himself in court.⁴³ Nicholas managed to evade punishment by agreeing to reconcile with Schaets, leaving Leisler and Milborne responsible for court charges, yet his ministerial career in New York lay in ruins.⁴⁴

³⁹ Selijns was offered the position after Johannes Megapolensis's death in 1670 because Drisius was infirm yet he did not accept the invitation until after van Nieuwenhuysen died in 1682. *ERNY*, 1: 607-908, 612-614; Goodfriend, *Before the Melting Pot*, 244n20.

⁴⁰ Rev. William Nieuwenhuysen is chosen Minister for New York, in America, 16 March 1671, in *ERNY*, 1: 616-617.

⁴¹ Difficulties in the Dutch Church at Albany, 25 September 1675; Defense of van Nieuwenhuysen; Conditions Under Which an Episcopal Minister May be Acknowledged in a Dutch Church, 1 October 1675; Promise of Rev. Nicholas van Rensselaer, to Conform to the Dutch Church, 2 October 1675, in *ERNY*, 1: 678-682.

⁴² Rev. Gideon Schaets to the Classis of Amsterdam, 7 September 1675, in *ERNY*, 1: 676-677.

⁴³ *ERNY*, 1: 689-691.

⁴⁴ In the words of one cleric, van Rensselaer was finally ousted by Governor Andros "on account of his bad and offensive life." Casparus van Zueren to the Classis of Amsterdam, 30 September 1677, in *ERNY*, 1: 702.

No records survive to indicate that Nicholas followed his brother Jeremias's aggressive slave purchases, but as mentioned in previous chapters, Nicholas did not inherit the patroonship ignorant of slave dealings. Not only was he tasked with managing a large farm worked in part by the enslaved—a job he largely delegated to Robert Livingston—his religious life had been spent among slaveholders. His co-minister in Albany, Gideon Schaets, was a slaveholder. On August 30, 1679, a year after Nicholas's death, Schaets used his considerable clout to change the sentence of his enslaved man, Black Barent. As mentioned in chapter two, Barent was convicted of theft. The Albany court condemned Barent to "receive 30 lashes on his bare back" and "to be branded on his right cheek as an example to other rogues," because the theft was a third offence.⁴⁵ Yet Schaets requested that Barent be "branded on the back, instead of on the cheek," a request that the court was "pleased" to honor. Perhaps Schaets reasoned with the court secretary, Robert Livingston, one master to another, pleading the indignity of the facial brand, which would be a daily reminder not only of Barent's crimes, but also of Schaets's inability to control his enslaved man. Schaets had officiated at Robert and Alida's wedding just one month earlier.⁴⁶

The Livingstons maintained their close relationship with the clergy of the Albany Dutch Church. Gideon Schaets baptized three Livingston children: Margaret in 1681, Joanna Philippina in 1684⁴⁷, and Philip in 1686. At Joanna and Philip's baptism, Schaets's co-minister, Godefridus Dellius, who would go on pastor the Albany Dutch Church after Schaets's death, read the formulary. On December 21, 1701, Jacobus Livingston, the infant son of Robert Livingston Jr.

⁴⁵ Sentence Claes Croes and Black Barent, 29 August 1679, in MCARS, 2: 437.

⁴⁶ Robert and Alida were married in the Reformed Church at Albany, 9 July 1679. Jeannie F.J. Robison and Henrietta C. Bartlett, eds., *Genealogical Records Manuscript Entries of Births, Deaths and Marriages, Taken from Family Bibles, 1581-1917* (New York: The Colonial Dames of the State of New York, 1917), 138.

⁴⁷ Joanna Philippina died in 1690.

and Margarita Schuyler, was baptized by Johannes Lydius, Dellius's successor.⁴⁸ His grandparents, Robert and Alida Livingston, and his great uncle, Johannes Schuyler, stood as baptismal witnesses for the event. Just one year later, Lydius baptized Jacobus's sister Jannet. In 1708, he witnessed the baptism of Philip Livingston and Catherina van Brugh Livingston's son, Robert, and again, in 1713, another son named Johannes.⁴⁹

The ministers who followed Schaets inherited a congregation of elite slaveholders. Petrus van Driessen's tenure at the Albany Dutch Reformed Church began in 1712, the same year as the New York City slave rebellion and following the tumult of the Leisler years. His predecessor, Johannes Lydius, arrived in Albany during the heart of the struggle, along with Domine Bernardus Freeman. Both men backed the anti-Leislerian faction.⁵⁰ Van Driessen embodied the model of strong ministerial authority: aggressively growing his ministry, expanding church landholdings and securing governmental ties. He followed in his predecessor's footsteps by baptizing and marrying several Livingstons.⁵¹ Van Driessen also petitioned to serve as a minister to the Mohawks in 1722, continuing the work started by Godfredius Dellius and Johannes Lydius. Van Driessen would have known about the other missionary work undertaken by Elias Neau among Native and African slaves in New York.

Not only did van Driessen cater to the slaveholding elite, he also performed religious rites for the enslaved. Significantly, these baptisms began only twenty years after van Driessen's appointment, perhaps as a reaction to the 1712 New York slave rebellion. Thirteen slave

⁴⁸ Louis Duermyer, ed., *Records of the Reformed Dutch Church of Albany, New York, 1689-1809: Marriages, Baptisms, Members, etc. Excerpted from Year Books of the Holland Society of New York* (Baltimore, MD: Genealogical Publishing Co., 1978), 2: 24 (hereafter cited as *RRDCA*).

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 8.

⁵⁰ Burke, *Mohawk Frontier*, 176.

⁵¹ On 16 January 1717, Petrus van Driessen baptized Philip and Catherina Livingston's son Philip; the next year, another son named Hendrick; in 1720, a daughter named Sarah; and in 1723, a son named William. On 7 July 1719, he officiated at the marriage of Joanna Livingston and Cornelius van Horne. Just three years later, van Driessen would officiate again, this time at the nuptials of Henry Beekman and Jennit Livingston. *RRDCA*, 2: 76, 83, 91, 101, 15.

baptisms took place during the latter years of van Driessen's time at the Albany Dutch church, a considerable number when viewed next to the previous two periods where the register listed no black baptisms. The first baptism, of "Maria" the daughter of "Thomas and Diana, negroes," occurred on November 25, 1733. Most subsequent baptisms were adult baptisms, a divergence from the pattern of slave baptisms during the decades of Dutch rule.⁵² Not until July 1737 was another black child baptized, a baby identified only as "child of a negress Mary, a slave." Although the baptism was listed as being witnessed by "Jephta, a negro," masters of adult slave baptismal candidates were also included in the baptismal entry under van Driessen's tenure.⁵³

In 1738, Petrus van Driessen died. As was common in the wills of Dutch colonists, he left his estate to his wife, Eva Cuyler. In addition to his estate, he explicitly bequeathed two tracts of land in northern Albany County to his sons, and his wife's clothing "and my Large Bible" to his daughters, which he gave to them on Eva's death.⁵⁴ One of the tracts of land (jointly owned with his wife) was "conveyed unto us by the heirs of Hendrick Cuyler and Anna Cuyler, deceased, October 10, 1721." Van Driessen's wife, Eva, was the daughter of Hendrick and Anna Cuyler. Her grandfather, Abraham had been commissioner of Indian affairs, serving alongside the Indian trader and slaveholder Evert Wendell.⁵⁵ Her brother, Hendrick Cuyler Jr., capitalized on his enduring family connections to the slaveholding elite when he paid Evert Wendell twice—once

⁵² On 6 March 1734, Jeptha was baptized "upon confession." Another occurred later that same year on 10 October 1734, when Abraham, slave of M. Hun, was listed as being baptized "after confession." A third baptism, of a woman named "Maria," occurred on 29 January 1735. On 11 April 1737, Jinny and Elizabeth, identified in the record as "negresses," were baptized "after a foregoing confession." *RRDCA*, 3: 52, 55-57.

⁵³ On 6 July 1735, Colbus, "a negro of Johannes van Buren," was baptized after confession. On 27 July 1737, Clara, "a negress of Joh. Lansing," was baptized "after a previous confession." On 31 March 1738, Jannetje, "negress of Issak Fonda," was baptized "after a foregoing confession." *RRDCA*, 3: 58, 71.

⁵⁴ Will of Petrus van Driessen, 28 January 1737/8, in *Wills*, 3: 237-38.

⁵⁵ Kees-Jan Waterman, ed. and trans., *"To Do Justice to Him and Myself": Evert Wendell's Account Book of the Fur Trade with Indians in Albany, New York, 1695-1726* (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 2008), 253n398.

in 1748 and again in 1750—to have his enslaved woman Brit clean his house.⁵⁶ The other tract of land that van Driessen described as lying in “Maquas Country in Albany County, on the north side of the Maquas river,” was “conveyed to us by Peter Quackenboss and his wife Neeltie as by deed.” Quackenboss family members’ links to slavery during this period are opaque, although they had close ties to the Livingstons.⁵⁷ The 1771 will of Peter Quackenboss’s son, Johannes, revealed that his estate included the family land in Rensselaerswijck, Albany County, Anquasanack, and White Creek, as well as “slaves, horse and goods,” of which his “children [were] to have first choice.”⁵⁸ Although van Driessen’s bequest of his “estate” to his wife Eva did not specifically name slaves, Eva’s offered more detail. Her will, dated April 18, 1750, left “to my son Henry, ‘my Negro young man,’ and my clock.” To her daughter, Annettie van Driessen, she left “my Negro wench and best bed and furniture.”⁵⁹

The record of black baptisms ceased under the tenure of Cornelis Van Schie, van Driessen’s successor, but reappeared during Theodorus Frelinghuysen Jr.’s ministry, albeit in fewer numbers. Frelinghuysen’s father, Theodorus Sr., was a prolific New Jersey minister during the First Great Awakening. Around the same time that Theodorus Sr.’s enslaved man, James—a man who would go on to write *A Narrative of the Most Remarkable Particulars in the Life of James Albert Ukawsaw Gronniosaw*—credited the senior Theodorus with his conversion, Theodorus Jr., baptized two slaves.⁶⁰ On July 7, 1745, a woman named Diana Malli, described in the register as the “negress of Elsje Roseboom,” was baptized. A servant, named Abraham, and

⁵⁶ Aileen B. Agnew, “‘Living in a Material World’: African Americans and Economic Identity in Colonial Albany” in *Mighty Change, Tall Within: Black Identity in the Hudson Valley*, ed. Myra Beth Young Armstead (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2003), 43.

⁵⁷ Anna Quackenboss stood as baptismal witness alongside Robert Livingston Jr. at the baptism of Johannes, son of Peiter and Alida Oudekerk, on 12 January 1707. In 1717, Robert Livingston stood as a baptismal witness for Anthoni Quackenboss, son of Adrien and Catryna Quackenboss, in *RRDCA*, 2: 42, 79

⁵⁸ Will of Johannes Quackenboss, 27 September 1771, in *Wills*, 8: 241.

⁵⁹ Will of Eva Cuyler van Driessen, 18 April 1750, in *Wills*, 6: 38.

⁶⁰ Thomas S. Kidd, *The Great Awakening: The Roots of Evangelical Christianity in Colonial America* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2007), 220.

Johannes Schuyler's enslaved woman, Marie, witnessed the event. That same day, Theodorus Jr., baptized a black child, named Saar, "of Diana, negress of Hesth van Schelluynen." Saar, like Diana, had one enslaved witness, a woman named Beth, who was the "negress of Isacc Kip," but Saar's other witness, "Isack Johannes Rozeboom" was the brother of Elsje Roseboom.⁶¹ The Kips and the Rosebooms continued their practice of baptizing at least some of their slaves. On August 22, 1767, John and Sara Spek, who were identified as John Roseboom's slaves, had their daughter, Catharina, baptized. On March 7, 1770, another child, a son named Abraham, was baptized. His witnesses were Abraham, the servant of S. Kip, and his mother's sister, Mary Spek.⁶²

Black baptismal peaks thus followed valleys of retrenchment, marking the religious landscape of Dutch slaveholding ministers and the elite congregants they served throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Although this pattern has been emphasized by scholars, variation in slave baptisms' connection to the beginnings of Dutch Atlantic slaveholding dynasties and the consolidation of elite slave networks during the beginning of the eighteenth century has not been examined. Controversy surrounding the sacrament persisted, despite the fluctuation in slave baptisms, and began to sharpen a ministerial consensus as to the proper bounds of slaveholding authority. Baptism did not confer earthly freedom; thus, ministers and their elite congregants could spiritually follow the biblical admonition to avoid "being lords over God's heritage" while reaping the "lucre" that resulted from the slavery of fellow Christians.⁶³ Even as baptism was increasingly denied to slaves, the accord among ministers to do so broke down religious barriers that divided elites.

⁶¹ *RRDCA*, 3: 110.

⁶² *RRDCA*, 5: 28, 48.

⁶³ "Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being examples of the flock." 1 Peter 5: 2-3.

4.2 Partakers of the Benefit: Massachusetts's and New York's ministerial slave networks

Elite slaveholders of different Protestant backgrounds were connected through slavery, and the shared challenge posed by the problem of slave Christianization created unexpected points of commonality between the Protestant worldviews. Elias Neau's and Cotton Mather's schools for blacks have been examined separately as instances of black religious education. Such a division, at first glance, seems appropriate because, on the surface, the two men appear to have had little in common: Cotton Mather's Puritanism jarred against the missionary Anglicanism of Elias Neau. Yet both men were embedded in a larger slaveholding network that crossed colonial boundaries. Viewed in such a way, their experiments in Christian education among blacks can be examined as overlapping projects.⁶⁴

Cotton Mather first remarked on participating in a slave prayer meeting in December 1693, when he was thirty years old. He included among the "other praying and pious Meetings" that he was responsible for overseeing "in our Neighbourhood," a prayer meeting specifically for blacks. Although it would not be the only meeting he had with the enslaved, it marked the only time that he detailed the events of such a meeting. Mather wrote in his diary:

A little after this Time, a company of poor *Negroes*, of their own Accord, addressed mee, for my Countenance, to a Design which they had, of erecting such a *Meeting* for the Welfare of their miserable Nation that were Servants among us. I allowed their Design and went one Evening and pray'd and preach'd (on ps. 68.31.) with them.⁶⁵

⁶⁴ Travis Glasson and Graham Russell Hodges both offer a detailed examination of Elias Neau's missionizing impulse among the enslaved. Kathryn Koo and Richard Bailly detail Cotton Mather's missionary zeal towards blacks and Indians, both servants and enslaved. See Glasson, *Mastering Christianity*, 30, 32, 76-85, 238-39; Hodges, *Root and Branch*, 55-68, 84, 97, 99; Koo, "Strangers in the House of God," 143-76; Bailey, *Race and Redemption*, 40-41, 76-79, 121-22, 128-29.

⁶⁵ Cotton Mather's text was Psalm 68:31: "Princes shall come out of Egypt, Ethiopia shall soon stretch out her hands unto God." Mather, *Diary*, 1: 176.

Mather meticulously detailed the “design” that the blacks devised, which included: meeting on Sundays after obtaining permission from their respective masters; avoiding wicked company, which could only be determined by the “consent of the *Minister* of God in this Place”; recruiting “some wise and good Man, of the *English* in the Neighborhood” to check in on the meetings; policing the group in order to guard against various “sins” such as fornication; edifying the non-member blacks; and not offering shelter to runaways. They would make sure that all their goals were met by ensuring attendance.

Mather conceptualized of a physical and spiritual world that was racially coded, though before 1700 his references were scanty. In 1681 and again in 1696, he mentioned Native servitude, and in 1683, he recorded his first direct reference to a black slave in his diary, writing that among the “thousands of people” that he blessed in secret while strolling along the street was “A Negro,” about whom he prayed, “Lord, *wash* that poor Soul white in the *Blood* of thy Son.”⁶⁶ He became more vociferous in his call for slave Christianization in the early years of the eighteenth century. In August 1703, Mather recorded in his diary the following: “I preached, on Prov. 15. 32. *Refusing Instruction*, and *Despising the Soul*: concluding, with Caution against Despising the *Souls*, of *black Servants*. (After which I admitted two aged Negroes into the Church.)”⁶⁷ In addition to his public exhortation for black conversion, he published *The Negro Christianized* in 1706, a book that he distributed both in New England and in the wider English Atlantic world. Its extensive distribution had been Mather’s plan since he began drafting it. He commented, June 1706:

I wrote as well contrived an Essay as I could, for the animating and facilitating of that Work, the Christianizing of the *Negroes*. It is entituled, THE NEGRO CHRISTIANIZED. *An Essay, to excite an assist that Good Work; the Information of the Negroes in Christianity*. And my Design is; not only to lodge one of the

⁶⁶ Ibid., 83.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 461-62.

Books, in every Family of *New England*, which has a *Negro* in it, but also to send Numbers of them into the *Indies*; and write such Letters to the principal Inhabitants to the Islands, as may be proper to accompany them.⁶⁸

Mather hoped that his efforts would have political as well as religious effects. In September 1706 he wrote to leading officials in the Caribbean to “to promote the Design of Christianizing the *Negroes*.” He sent letters “unto Sir *William Ashurt*, and by him unto the Parlaiment, to procure an *Act of Parliament* for that Intention,” to “the General Assembly at *Connecticut*, to awaken their Zeal, to Christianize their *Indians*,” and to Massachusetts’s “Commissioners for the Indian-affayrs.”⁶⁹ This increased involvement in agitating for black Christianization nearly coincided with acquisition of Onesimus six months later, in December 1706, and continued apace for twenty years, an effort which included a controversial use of slave knowledge in smallpox inoculation, hosting black prayer meetings in his house, and a call for the establishment of a school for blacks in 1716, which he successfully founded in 1717.⁷⁰ His public efforts on behalf of the enslaved corresponded with times of increased personal interest in the spiritual lives of his own slaves; in the spring of 1717, he worried that he was not doing enough to pray for Onesimus’s conversion and took the man’s recovery from an ailment as an opportunity to proselytize, but by October of the same year he had turned his zeal towards his new slave, a boy he named Obadiah.⁷¹

Elias Neau began his missionary work among blacks and Natives in New York in 1704 after emigrating from France to England and finally to New York, and converting from French

⁶⁸ Ibid., 564-65.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 570-71.

⁷⁰ On 6 August 1716, Cotton Mather wrote, “I would send for the *Negro*’s of the Flock, which form a religious Society; and entertain them at my House, with suitable Admonitions of Piety,” and later that year, on 19 October noted, “I would yet again see whether I cannot produce and support a *Charity-Schole*, for *Negroes*’s in Evening, to learn to read, and be instructed in the Catechism.” A year later, he had established the school, and in 1718, he set up a religious society for blacks. Mather, *Diary*, 2: 364, 379, 478, 532. Greene, *The Negro in Colonial New England*, 238.

⁷¹ Mather, *Diary*, 2: 446, 456, 477.

Protestantism to English. Unlike Mather, Neau was not ordained as a clergyman, but instead worked as an SPG catechist. Yet he was committed to employing religious hymns and catechisms to educate the enslaved blacks and Indians of New York. Neau maintained that baptism did not affect the earthly state of the enslaved and even worked to strengthen the slave laws in New York. Although his school attracted the slaves of many of New York's elite slaveholders in the early decades of the eighteenth century, it shouldered some of the blame for the slave revolt of 1712, and support from former allies, like Reverend William Vesey, evaporated. Two of the school's students—a man named Robin, owned by Adrian Hoghlant, and another unnamed enslaved man—were executed as conspirators.⁷² Nevertheless, Neau continued to missionize among the enslaved of New York until he died in 1722.

Despite their theological differences, the two men pursued similar strategies when approaching the Christianization of the enslaved. When Cotton Mather first envisioned writing a pamphlet detailing the proper conversion of slaves in March 1706, he planned one with broad applicability, writing, "I have Thoughts, to write an Essay, about, the Christianity of our *Negro* and other *Slaves*. I must wait the Issue of these Devotions."⁷³ Mather's notation evidenced his acknowledgement of the heterogeneous nature of the enslaved population of Massachusetts, although his work was ultimately directed towards "negroes." Neau's own work grew out of a request from the SPG that he serve as a catechist to the Iroquois and, though Neau declined that position, opting instead to serve the enslaved population of New York, his school eventually enrolled blacks, Indians and some poor whites. The same year that Mather penned *The Negro Christianized*, which included a detailed slave catechism, Neau distributed catechisms and religious works to the students who had been given permission to study them. Both Neau and

⁷² Glasson, *Mastering Christianity*, 83.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 554.

Mather faced racially charged controversies that had significant repercussions for their reputations and work among blacks. The 1712 slave revolt soured the slaveholding gentry, who feared that Neau's school had stoked rebellion in the hearts of their slaves and the 1721 inoculation controversy opened up Mather to strident criticism about his use of enslaved blacks.

Mather, like Neau earned social ridicule for his efforts to educate the enslaved, a fact that he noted in his diary with consternation. In the same entry where he mentioned his maintenance of "a *Charity-Schole* for the Instruction of the *Negro's* in Reading and Religion," he noted that "A Lieutenant of a Man of War, whom I am a Stranger to, designing to putt and Indignity upon me, has called his *Negro-Slave* by the Name of COTTON-MATHER."⁷⁴ Although the enslaved were his mission field and ostensibly his brethren in Christ, Mather wrote of the naming after him as a kind of personal blasphemy. The practice was sufficiently widespread, at least according to Mather, that he noted it a second time. On March 1724, he observed, "*What has a gracious Lord given me to do, for the Instruction, and Salvation and Comfort, of the poor Negro's? AND YETT, some, on purpose to affront me, call their Negro's, by the Name of Cotton Mather, that so they may with some Shadow of Truth, assert Crimes as committed by one of that Name, which the Hearers take to me.*"⁷⁵ What crimes were attested to the black Cotton Mathers remain unmentioned, but it is clear that the primary crime, according to Mather, was that a "Negro" bore his name at all.

Cotton Mather's and Elias Neau's religious worlds were not only connected by a similar religious project to convert blacks, but also bonded by elite ministers with slaveholding ties that spanned colonial lines. Trinity Church's rector, William Vesey, played a central role in Elias Neau's charge to baptize and catechize New York's enslaved population. Vesey initially resisted

⁷⁴ Ibid., 663.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 706.

Neau's appointment as catechist, citing his lack of English language skills and knowledge of Anglican doctrine. Yet he subsequently became a vital ally, performing the baptisms that an unordained Neau could not carry out. Vesey baptized his own slaves and sent them to Neau's school. Despite such actions, Vesey was deeply connected to the slaveholding community and sought to assure slave masters that baptism would not change the status of their slaves, even going so far as to push the New York legislator to pass a law that ensured masters would not lose the lifetime servitude of their slaves as a result of baptism.⁷⁶ In the wake of the 1712 slave rebellion, Vesey distanced himself from Neau and discontinued slave baptism.

Vesey was a transplant from Massachusetts Bay, his family elite enough to afford to send him to Harvard and maintain him there. Indeed, Lord Bellomont (Richard Coote, 1st Earl of Bellomont), the governor of New York, Massachusetts, and New Hampshire, referred to his father as "thee most impudent and avowed Jacobite...known in America."⁷⁷ The Veseys were staunch members of the Church of England. He attended Harvard College at the same time as Ebenezer Pemberton Jr., William Brattle, and John Leverett, entering in 1693, two years after Pemberton and one year after Brattle and Leverett. Yet unlike his classmates, he did not follow the path to Puritan churches; instead he was a protégé of the Reverend Samuel Myles at the Anglican Kings Chapel in Boston.⁷⁸ On July 26, 1696, Samuel Sewall recorded that Vesey preached a sermon at Kings Chapel as part of the completion of his degree, remarking that "he was spoken to preach for Mr. Willard; but am told this will procure him a discharge."⁷⁹ In order to complete a ministry degree at Harvard, students were required to preach a sermon at Willard's

⁷⁶ Glasson, *Mastering Christianity*, 80.

⁷⁷ Sewall, *Diary*, 1: 352n9.

⁷⁸ Myles noted his mentorship of Vesey in a letter to the SPG. Rev. Samuel Myles to the Society for Propagating the Gospel, 25 June 1714, in *ERNY*, 3: 2053-2054; Morgan Dix, ed. *A History of the Parish of Trinity New York* (New York: G.P. Putnam Sons, 1898), 1: 103-104.

⁷⁹ Sewall, *Diary*, 1: 354

Third (Old South) Church, but since Vesey was an Anglican, and was worried that preaching in a dissenting church might hurt his career as an Anglican priest, he was allowed a dispensation.

The Vesey family's commitment to the Church of England might have made them unpopular with their Puritan neighbors, but it united them religiously to much of New York's elite. The same year that William Vesey Jr. married Mary Reade, the sister of merchant and slaveholder John Reade, his father continued to oppose the religious ordinances and, in 1698, was ordered pilloried in the Boston market place for plowing on a public day of Thanksgiving. Vesey Jr. had been offered a position at Trinity Church in Manhattan but, in order to accept the position, he traveled with his wife to England to complete his ministerial training at Oxford. After graduating from Oxford in 1696, he was installed as the first rector of Trinity Church in Manhattan in 1697.⁸⁰

In the early years, Vesey shared Trinity's ministry with Henricus Selijns, a measure intended to smooth the transition from Dutch to English rule. Selijns continued to preach to his congregation in Dutch, while Vesey covered the English-language services. Although scholars have noted that though Selijns ceased slave baptism after his letter in 1664, citing the "material and wrong aim" of slaves seeking baptism for their children, and did not resume the practice during his second ministry, perhaps his earlier practice had some effect on the young Vesey. As with Selijns, the early years of Vesey's ministry were marked by a willingness to perform slave baptism, followed by later years with no such baptisms.

Indeed, the very land purchased by the Church of England to erect Trinity Church had ties to slave baptism. The church's land had been part of a farm owned by Everardus Bogardus, the Dutch minister whose commitment to slave baptism and education resulted in the most baptisms and marriages under his tenure. Upon the death of his widow, Anneke Jans, in 1670,

⁸⁰ Burrows and Wallace, *Gotham*, 104.

her heirs sold the land to Colonel Francis Lovelace, then governor of New York. Years later, claimants who traced descent to Everardus Bogardus would contest the sale and Trinity's claim to the land, arguing that the family of Jans's only biological child by Bogardus, Cornelis, was cut out of the sale, and thus the church's land was sold illegally.⁸¹

Vesey's willingness to perform slave baptisms might have been amplified by his Massachusetts network. In 1698, the same year that Vesey wed Mary Reade in New York, Vesey's classmate, William Brattle, performed the first recorded slave baptism at the First Church of Cambridge. Cotton Mather was also baptizing slaves and, the same year that his *The Negro Christianized* was published, Vesey reported to the SPG that he had baptized some slaves without their masters' consent, an action that won him the derision of several New York slaveholders.⁸² Although Vesey's purported friendship with the Mathers appears to have been apocryphal, they shared a mutual zeal for slave baptism.

The wills of Trinity's parishioners detail Vesey's enduring connections to the slaveholding elite.⁸³ On April 9, 1710, Thomas Codrington left to his wife, Martha Willet, "a negro girl." But, he stipulated, if his wife died, the child was to go to "her sister Margart Willet." His wife stood as chosen executor, flanked by the Reverend William Vesey, their family's minister. Vesey appeared again in the will of another elite slaveholder, his brother-in-law John Reade. Reade had served as his mother-in-law's executor, with Samuel Bayard acting as witness, and had already inherited a considerable amount of his wife's Mary's portion of the inheritance she received from her mother, Jane Tohill. On January 28, 1736, Reade named Vesey the

⁸¹ Frijhoff, *Fulfilling God's Mission*, 573.

⁸² The story that Vesey remained a dissenter circulated for a time. In the bicentennial history of Trinity Church, the story was labeled a "fable" and referred to as "the invention of enemies of Mr. Vesey and the English Church." Morgan Dix and W.S. Rainsford, eds., *Trinity Church Bicentennial Celebration: May 5, 1897* (New York: J. Pott and Co., 1897), 28.

⁸³ Of the eleven wills in Pelletreau's *Abstracts* that include mention of Vesey as either a witness or a recipient of a bequest, five specifically include bequests of enslaved people and all eleven name prominent slaveholders as witnesses or beneficiaries. *Wills*, 2: 56, 80-81, 254-255, 272-73, 313, 372, 42, 85-86; 3: 12-13, 188-189, 278, 279

executor of his will. In it, Reade stipulated that his wife Mary receive £500 and my negro man,” and also bequeathed goods to the slaveholder Rip van Dam, Samuel Bayard’s son-in-law.⁸⁴

Vesey’s efforts at slave baptism ceased in the wake of the 1712 revolt, and though Governor Hunter continued to support Neau’s mission and school, Vesey never renewed his commitment to either. Vesey’s turn against Neau has been examined by scholars, who have pointed to Vesey’s refusal to baptize “a Mulatress aged 18 years & named Jane, tho she had beforehand obtained a letter from her mistress directed to Mr. Vesey,” as evidence of his retrenchment.⁸⁵ Certainly, Vesey’s actions after Neau’s death stripped the post of much of its autonomy, resulting in the ultimate shift away from a focus on conversion among the city’s enslaved. Yet the influence of Vesey’s dense connections on the elite slaveholding communities of Cambridge, Boston, and New York has remained under-examined. Vesey’s initially aggressive stance towards slave baptism was in keeping with the actions of several of his ministerial contemporaries in New England. Although the Dutch Reformed Churches in Albany and New York had witnessed a dramatic drop in slave baptisms in the final decades of the seventeenth century, and baptisms of slaves rose at Trinity as a direct result of Neau’s efforts, Vesey’s Harvard contemporaries continued to perform both slave baptisms and marriages.

Perhaps Vesey backed away from his connection with Neau not only as a move away from slave baptism, but also because of the re-ignition of religious controversy centered on his family in Boston. Samuel Sewall recorded in 1713 that William Vesey Sr. was embroiled in a dispute with “Constable Owen” about “his distraining for a Rate of 26s toward Mr. Marshes”

⁸⁴ Will of John Reade, 28 January 1736, in *Wills*, 3: 279.

⁸⁵ Travis Glasson noted that Vesey turned against Neau and refused to baptize enslaved candidates following the 1712 revolt, while Graham Russell Hodges traced the shift to the weeks preceding the revolt. Glasson, *Mastering Christianity*, 83; Graham Russell Hodges, *Root and Branch*, 60.

(the Congregationalist minister's) "Salary."⁸⁶ Vesey refused to host the Reverend George Whitefield in 1739 when he toured New York, accusing him of doctrinal error. After his earlier experience with Neau, Vesey might have been wary of Whitefield's familiar call for slave baptism. Whitefield met the older man's charge, saying that Vesey spent too much time in the taverns.⁸⁷ Whitefield found an advocate in the Reverend Ebenezer Pemberton Jr., who, like Vesey, hailed from Massachusetts, and who was called to New York to fill the first rector position of the Presbyterian Church by an elite slaveholding family. By the time that William Vesey died in 1746, he had lived through the 1712 slave rebellion and the 1741 slave conspiracy. Despite his connections to the slaveholding elite, his will did not mention slaves.⁸⁸

Ebenezer Pemberton Jr.'s father, Ebenezer Sr., was born in Massachusetts in 1671, three years before William Vesey. He, like Vesey, had grown up in a household with slaves. Indeed, one of the enslaved men living in his father's household, a man called "Coffee" was named as an accomplice in a group of slaves led by a slave woman named Maria, who set several houses on fire in 1681 in Roxbury.⁸⁹ The memory of this crime, as one scholar has argued, served as a kind of collective trauma in the white populace's mind, and remained even to make an appearance in Cotton Mather's *Magnalia Christi Americana* in 1702.

Ebenezer Sr.'s father, James, had been among the group to found the Third Church. Ebenezer was ten years old, eight years Mather's junior, when Coffee was indicted with Maria. If the event lingered in Cotton Mather's mind, its proximity to Ebenezer must have made it an even

⁸⁶ Sewall, *Diary*, 2: 717, 171n28.

⁸⁷ Burrows and Wallace, eds., *Gotham*, 157.

⁸⁸ After his death, Vesey's widow, Mary, married Daniel Horsmanden, the prosecutor of the 1741 slave conspiracy. The Virginia planter, William Byrd, was Horsmanden's cousin, and the two men caroused together in London until Byrd returned to Virginia. Horsmanden lived briefly in Virginia before moving to New York. Kenneth Scott, ed., *Genealogical Data from Colonial New York Newspapers: A Consolidation of Articles from the New York Genealogical and Biographical Record* (1977; repr., Genealogical Publishing Co., Inc., 1982), 74; Jill Lepore, *New York Burning*, 18-20.

⁸⁹ Warren, "Enslaved Africans in New England, 1638-1700," 204-207.

more formative memory. He followed in the footsteps of his father and became a minister, serving at Third Church. Like his father, Ebenezer Jr. owned an enslaved man named Cophee, though his experience with this man was quite different from his experience with the first Coffee: Cophee supplemented Ebenezer's income by paying for his time away from Pemberton. Whether he named the man Cophee, or bought him pre-named, the memory of the first Coffee could not have been far from his mind.⁹⁰ If he chose to name him Cophee, did he do it consciously, echoing Mather's choice of the name *Onesimus* for his enslaved man? Might Pemberton have been trying to redeem the name with a second slave, blotting out the memory of the first with the financial utility of the second? Since Pemberton did not leave a diary, these notions will remain only suppositions. Yet Pemberton's ministerial world, like those of his colleagues, was a slaveholding one, and the proximity of the enslaved, as Mather's diary attests, influenced their religious sensibilities.

When Pemberton married Mary Clark on June 12, 1701, Samuel Sewall had already disseminated his antislavery tract, *The Selling of Joseph*, to a number of elite slaveholding contacts, a group that more than likely included Ebenezer Pemberton Sr., a man noted for amassing one of the most impressive libraries in colonial Boston.⁹¹ Indeed, a little over a decade later, Joseph Sewall would succeed Pemberton in the pulpit of the Third Church in Boston. Like his father, Ebenezer Sr.'s son and namesake grew up with an enslaved man named Cophee living in his household, attended Harvard, and became a minister. Yet unlike the two elder Pembertons, Ebenezer Jr. did not continue at Boston's Third Church. Instead, his installation as the first

⁹⁰ Mark A. Peterson, *The Price of Redemption: The Spiritual Economy of Puritan New England* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1997), 129.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 134.

minister of the Wall Street Presbyterian church in New York in 1727 was accomplished as a sort of religious coup engineered by William Smith and Gilbert Livingston.⁹²

Gilbert Livingston's repeated calls to his father for more slaves, his management under his mother's leadership of Livingston Manor, and his mortal punishment of a slave man were behind him as he lobbied for Pemberton's installation. Gilbert might have been alerted to Pemberton through his brother John, who had recently married Elizabeth Knight, or his sister Margaret Vetch, who lived in Boston. The family certainly had connections to New England's ministerial community, as John was able to secure Increase Mather as officiant of his controversial nuptials. Although he was estranged from his family, who had, as one scholar noted, virtually disinherited Gilbert, his network of elite slaveholders persisted. His wife, Cornelia Beekman, was the granddaughter of Wilhelmus Beekman, mayor of New York. Her family was part of the slaveholding elite and her brother Andries had been shot and killed by Nicholas Roosevelt's enslaved African man, named Tom, during the 1712 uprising. Both Pemberton and Gilbert had mutual connections to the slaveholding elite, ties that Gilbert might well have exercised to secure Pemberton's ministry.

Pemberton's tenure at the Presbyterian Church coincided with the First Great Awakening and his hosting of George Whitefield stoked the ire of some local Anglicans, who had not invited Whitefield to speak at the Dutch church.⁹³ Whitefield had wide appeal and his audience included enslaved people. His message stressed the kindness and Christianization of slaves.⁹⁴ Indeed, his influence in rousing the enslaved was blamed in part during the 1741 Negro plot, a conspiracy that touched the Pemberton household. Ebenezer Pemberton Sr.'s, slave, Coffee, was not the

⁹² Burrows and Wallace, eds., *Gotham*, 157.

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ Lepore noted that slaveowners found Whitefield's reflection on the harsh state of slaves, where he wondered why there were not more cases of rebellious actions, to be incendiary, and that, "throughout the colonies, men blamed Whitefield for their rebellious slaves." Lepore, *New York Burning*, 187-88.

only Pemberton slave to be convicted of participating in slave rebellion. Ebenezer Pemberton Jr.'s, slave, Quamino, despite his plea of not guilty, was convicted of participating in the 1741 slave rebellion and subsequently transported to the Caribbean on June 22, 1741.⁹⁵

Like Vesey, Ebenezer Pemberton's involvement in slaveholding emerges in the wills of his New York coreligionists.⁹⁶ On May 21, 1747, Augustus Jay, the slaveowner and grandfather of the revolutionary leader John Jay, willed land that had been previously "in tenure of Rev. Mr. Henry Barclay and Mr. Ebenezer Pemberton" to his daughters.⁹⁷ That was not the only time that Ebenezer Jr. was mentioned in the will of an elite New York slaveholding family. On August 29, 1734, the merchant John Harris left his wife Jane "two of my negro slaves, and 1/3 of the rest of my personal estate"; 1/6 of the remainder of his estate he left to both Jane and his "son-in-law, Rev. Ebenezer Pemberton."⁹⁸ On January 13, 1742, an elite New York woman named Mary Harris drew up her will. Her brothers-in-law, the Reverend Ebenezer Pemberton and the Reverend Silas Leonard, were executors. In it, she left "a negro girl" to her sister "Elizabeth."⁹⁹ In 1738, Ebenezer Pemberton preached an ordination sermon for his ministerial colleague, Walter Wilmot.¹⁰⁰ In his 1744 will, Wilmot did not merely tend to the spiritual, but ensured that his estate, which included slaves, was in proper order. Although Wilmot did manumit one enslaved black woman named Bett, he instructed that his executors "sell my other negroes and movable estate at vendue."¹⁰¹

⁹⁵ Ibid., 256.

⁹⁶ Of the four wills in Pelletreau's *Abstracts* that Pemberton is explicitly mentioned, three include bequest of slaves and all four include prominent slaveholders as witnesses or beneficiaries.. *Wills*: 2: 406-407; 3: 5-6, 153-54, 359-60.

⁹⁷ Will of Augustus Jay, 21 May 1747, in *Wills*, 5: 346.

⁹⁸ Will of John Harris, 29 August 1734, in *Wills*, 3: 153-154.

⁹⁹ Will of Mary Harris, 13 January 1742, in *Wills*, 3: 359-360.

¹⁰⁰ Ebenezer Pemberton, *A Sermon Preach'd at the Ordination of the Reverend Mr. Walter Wilmot....* (Boston: J. Draper, 1738), Early American Imprints.

¹⁰¹ Will of Walter Wilmot, 31 July 1744, *Wills*, 4: 17-18.

By 1753, Pemberton's tenure in New York was finished and he returned to Boston, accepting a position at the New Brick Church. Yet his admiration for Whitefield did not diminish. His later years as part of the elite slaveholding community in Boston have not escaped scholarly notice, as his 1771 sermon entitled *Heaven the Residence of Saints: A Sermon Occasioned by the Sudden and Much Lamented Death of the Rev. George Whitefield* included, at the end, Phillis Wheatley's poem honoring Whitefield. Wheatley's connections to the ministerial and slaveholding elite of Boston has attracted scholarly interest. Vincent Carretta has linked her to the clergymen Andrew Eliot, Samuel Cooper, Samuel Mather, and John Moorhead.¹⁰² Indeed by the late eighteenth century, the Third Church, founded in part by Ebenezer Pemberton's grandfather, James, and ministered by his father, Ebenezer Sr., had become a site for antislavery activity. Wheatley was baptized there by the minister Samuel Cooper.¹⁰³ One scholar described the revolutionary generation of ministers as men who "lived in Boston and spoke out against slavery and the contradictions of elite Bostonian revolutionaries"; they "cried out for liberty from the British but continued to hold African peoples in bondage."¹⁰⁴ As Ebenezer Pemberton Jr.'s family connections evidence, this paradox arose from a much older network of elite slaveholding ministers whose slaveholding ties were forged decades earlier and crossed colonial lines.

4.3 Sanctuary Interrupted: Ministers and Slaves in bondage and freedom

The proximity of the ministerial elite to slaveholding had consequences not only for the ways in which Christianity was understood, but also for the everyday lives for the enslaved.

¹⁰² Vincent Carretta, *Phillis Wheatley: Biography of a Genius in Bondage* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 2011), 104.

¹⁰³ Cedrick May, *Evangelism and Resistance in the Black Atlantic, 1760-1835* (Athens, GA: The University of Georgia Press, 2008), 61.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

Slaveholders posted runaway slave advertisements that shed some light on the lived reality of life among these clerics. Being a minister's slave certainly did not ensure an easy existence. George Pigot, an Anglican missionary and minister who lived in Marblehead, Massachusetts, ran the following advertisement in the *Boston Gazette* in 1733:

Ran-away from the Rev. Mr. *Pigot* of *Marblehead*, a Negro Man Servant, Named *Cuffy*, who had on a broadcloth Jacket lined with black, a pair of black Leather Breeches lined with shamy, and Ozenbrigs Shirt, a bouble [sic] worsted Cap, and a silk Handkerchief. He is distinguished by an oblong Wen over his left Eye. Whosoever shall secure said Negro shall receive *Forty Shillings* reward, with reasonable Charges.¹⁰⁵

In 1722, Pigot was placed as a missionary by the SPG in Stratford, Connecticut; a year later he was transferred to King's Church in Providence, Rhode Island, where he served until 1726. In 1727, he moved to Marblehead, where he remained for a decade, becoming rector of Saint Michael's Church.¹⁰⁶ Five years before he ran the advertisement for Cuffy, in 1728, Pigot wrote the *Society* and noted that he owned an enslaved woman named Mary Celia, whom he had baptized.¹⁰⁷ Pigot's missionary efforts were not limited to his parishioners in Marblehead, but also to his own slaves. He baptized four slaves during his tenure at St. Michael's Church, a small number compared to the 454 baptisms he performed as rector.¹⁰⁸ Two years before Cuffy ran away, on August 8, 1731, Pigot baptized Sextus, a man he referred to in the records as "my own slave."¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁵ Advertisement, *Boston Gazette*, 30 July 1733, EAN.

¹⁰⁶ John Checkley, *John Checkley; or the Evolution of Religious Tolerance in Massachusetts Bay*, ed. Edmund F. Slafter (Boston: John Wilson and Son, 1897), 1: 79n67.

¹⁰⁷ George Pigot to the Secretary, 29 April 1728, A21, 404-406, Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts Letter Books, American Material in the archives of the USPG, 1635-1812, British Online Archives, www.britishonlinearchives.co.uk/browse.php?cid=9781851171439.

¹⁰⁸ Joseph Warren Chapman, ed., *St. Michael's Church Marblehead Mass: Order of exercises commemorating is Restoration....* (Boston: Geo. F. Crook, 1888), 29.

¹⁰⁹ Joseph Warren Chapman, ed., *Vital Records of Marblehead Massachusetts: To the End of the Year 1849* (Salem, MA: The Essex Institute, 1903), 1: 564.

Pigot did not include the rather sumptuous clothes (save the Ozenbrigs shirt, which was ordinary for slaves) that Cuffy absconded in as his enslaved man's most distinguishing feature. Instead he pointed out the "oblong Wen over his left Eye," evidence perhaps of the harsh discipline that Cuffy received at Pigot's hands, abuse that might have encouraged his flight. Although the advertisement did not detail how Cuffy came to be owned by Pigot, the enslaved man might have served in the Pigot household along with Mary. Perhaps he lived through the Christmas uproar in 1729, caused by John Barnard's sermon denouncing the holiday's observance among Marblehead's Pigot-led Anglican congregation as "heathen" and a sign of popery. Pigot's slaves likely received the day off, like the slaves of Anglican slaveholders in the southern colonies, a respite that would not have been enjoyed by Barnard's slaves.¹¹⁰ On March 13, 1734, nearly a year after Pigot ran the advertisement searching for his runaway slave man Cuffy, he baptized another slave, a girl named Septima.¹¹¹

Samuel Sewall's ministerial colleague, William Welsted, was a slaveowning friend who appeared frequently in his correspondence and was mentioned in Sewall's diary. On April 13, 1747, Welsted ran the following advertisement in the *Boston Evening Post*:

A Negro Fellow named *Moses*, about 24 Years of Age, Servant to the Rev. Mr. *Welsted*, left his Master's house last Friday Evening, and is suppos'd to be conceal'd on board some Vessel. He had on a blue Coat and a Leather Jockey Cap, but is suspected to have furnish'd himself with Seamen's Cloaths. All Masters of Vessels and others are cautioned against carrying him off, and if any

¹¹⁰ Thomas S. Kidd, *The Protestant Interest: New England After Puritanism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004), 115. The wedding banns of John Barnard's enslaved man, named Boston, and Rose, identified as a "negro woman servant of Warwick Plafray of Salem," were published on 22 March 1760. Ezra Stiles noted that Barnard was eighty five in 1766, and thus Barnard continued to hold enslaved people throughout his life. Sidney Perley, "Salem in 1700. No. 26.," *The Essex Antiquarian*, 11, no. 1 (January 1907): 12; Franklin Bowdich Dexter, ed., *Extracts from the Itineraries and Other Miscellanies of Ezra Stiles, D.D., LL.D., 1755-1794....* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1916), 226.

¹¹¹ Septima was referred to as the "girl of Mr. Pigot." Since the record does not include the "Reverend" before his name, it is possible that Septima might not have been George Pigot's enslaved girl, but was rather owned by another family member, whose high status was clearly indicated by the inclusion of the prefix "Mr." Chapman, ed., *Vital Records of Marblehead*, 564. For a discussion of status in colonial America, see Norton, *Founding Mothers and Fathers*, 18-19.

Person will give Information where he may be found, they shall receive *Five Pounds*, Old Teno [sic] Reward.¹¹²

Welsted was the pastor who succeeded Ebenezer Pemberton Jr. at the New Brick Church in Boston, which was located near the wharf, an ideal place for an escape. Welsted's enslaved man, like Cotton Mather's, bore a religious moniker. Perhaps Welsted purchased the man from another master who had named him after the Biblical character, or perhaps Welsted chose the name for its Biblical resonance. If he did, his choice was the antithesis of Mather's selection. Although Mather selected the name of a Christianized slave compelled to continue to work for his master, Welsted's man bore the moniker of the man who demanded that Pharaoh "let my people go." Did the irony of the name run through Welsted's mind as he placed the advertisement and, like Pharaoh of old, pursued Moses to the water's edge? Yet it was not the hand of God that split the sea allowing this Moses to walk safely to the Promised Land, but was rather "some vessel" in Boston—many of which bore religious names—that would ferry Welsted's man away.

Although the advertisement was vague about how Welsted came upon the information that Moses was "suppos'd to be conceal'd on board some Vessel," it attested to the fact that, despite the irony of Moses's name, Welsted was not conflicted about pursuing his runaway man. Welsted, like Mather, officiated at black marriages that linked not only the enslaved couple, but also their elite masters. On January 13, 1731, he married "Prince Negro Servt. To Sam. Watts" and "Margaret Servt. To Wm. Maxwell."¹¹³ Samuel Watts was a wealthy businessman who

¹¹² Advertisement, *Boston Evening-Post*, 13 April 1747, EAN.

¹¹³ William H. Whitmore, ed., *A Report of the Record Commissioners of the City of Boston Containing the Boston Marriages, 1700 to 1751* (Boston: Municipal Printing Office, 1898), 174 (hereafter cited as *Boston Marriages*).

controlled the ferry between Boston and Winnisimet.¹¹⁴ On April 22, 1742, Welsted married “Jack Negro Servt. To Mr. Robert Rand & Nanny Negro Servt to Mr. Samuel Hatley.”¹¹⁵

Welsted’s search for his enslaved man was not unique; New York ministers tracked runaway slaves across colonial lines, a search that uncovered their own inter-colonial network of slaveholding connections. The Dutchess County minister, Chauncy Graham, had roots in Connecticut and with New York’s slaveowning elite. In 1754, Henry Livingston and Sarah Conklin sent their eight year old son, John Henry, to Fishkill to live with and be tutored by the Reverend Graham. John Henry would follow in his tutor’s footsteps and become a minister.¹¹⁶ Just a year earlier, Chauncy Graham ran the following advertisement in the *New York Gazette*:

Run away on Sabbath Day evening, Sept. 2, 1753, from his Master Chauncy Graham, of Rumbout, in Dutchess County, a likely Negroe Man named Cuff, about 30 years old, well set, has had the Small Pox, is very black, speaks English pretty well for a Guinea Negroe, and very flippant; he is a plausible smooth Tongue Fellow...He is a strong Smoker. ’Tis supposed he was seduced away by one Samuel Stanberry, alias Joseph Linley, a white fellow that run away with him, and ’tis very likely this white man has wrote the Negro a pass; for ’tis said he has been in Norwalk in Connecticut, and passed there for a free Negro, by the name of Joseph Jennings, and that he was making toward the Eastward.¹¹⁷

Graham’s own connections to bondage and knowledge of the slave trade are apparent in the advertisement. How Cuff came to be enslaved by Graham is unknown, but clearly Graham had enough knowledge of the enslaved community to make a judgment as to Cuff’s facility with English. By asserting that he “speaks English pretty well for a Guinea Negroe” Graham displayed an experiential sophistication that enabled him to differentiate groups of enslaved

¹¹⁴ William H. Whitmore, ed., *A Report of the Record Commissioners of the City of Boston Containing the Records of Boston Selectmen, 1736 to 1742* (Boston: Rockwell and Churchill, City Printers, 1886), 15: 69.

¹¹⁵ *Boston Marriages*, 255.

¹¹⁶ John Henry Livingston would also follow the family tradition of holding slaves. In the 1790 census, he was listed as having three slaves. United States Census, 1790, <http://www2.census.gov/prod2/decennial/documents/1790g.zip> (accessed January 6, 2013); Alexander Gunn, *Memoirs of the Rev. John Henry Livingston* (New York: Reformed Protestant Dutch Church, 1856), 16.

¹¹⁷ Advertisement, *New-York Gazette: or, The Weekly Post-Boy*, 15 October 1753, in “*Pretends to Be Free*,” eds. Hodges and Brown, 47.

Africans. Of course, the advertisement demanded that its reader take into account not only Graham's assessment of Cuff's origins, but also his close connections to the prominent slave trading and slave owning families in Dutchess County, which made it likely that he was at least minimally versed in different African groups. Unlike Mather's and Welsted's, Graham's enslaved man did not wear the moniker of a biblical character, but retained some connection to Africa in his name, although Graham or another master likely changed the name. (Cuff or Cuffee is an anglicized form of the West African name Kofi.)¹¹⁸

Even though Graham qualified Cuff's facility with language, noting that he spoke "pretty well" only in comparison to other "Guinea" Negroes, Cuff was certainly a communicator. Graham noted that Cuff was "very flippant" and was "a plausible smooth Tongue Fellow." Though these characteristics disturbed Graham, they likely aided in Cuff's escape. Cuff's shrewd networking skills seeped through Graham's description, even as Graham did not allow Cuff the initiative to hatch the runaway scheme on his own. Graham asserted that he ran away with a white man named "Samuel Stanberry, alias Joseph Linley" and that Stanberry wrote Cuff a pass. Chauncy did not detail how Cuff and Samuel met, but the two might have worked together, as Chauncy did label Samuel a "runaway" along with Cuff. That Cuff and Stanberry headed for Connecticut—Graham's birthplace—was likely not a coincidence. They might have built up connections with the Norwalk enslaved community using Graham's own familial and social networks. (Graham was born in Stratford, Connecticut.)

Cuff might have changed his name to "Joseph Jennings" in homage to Samuel Stanberry's alias of "Joseph Linley." Yet Cuff's choice of "Joseph" might have had other

¹¹⁸ Historian Robert Forbes noted that Cuff and Cuffe were both derivations of the West African name Kofi. Chandler B. Saint and George A. Krinsky, *Making Freedom: The Extraordinary Life of Venture Smith* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 2009), 170 n39. In "Carolina Slave Names," John Inscoe argued that names serve as a powerful tool for measuring the rate of acculturation within the slave community, and day names, such as Cuffee or Cuffe, had considerable staying power. Inscoe, "Carolina Slave Names," 529, 532-533.

connotations as well. The biblical Joseph, born free, was sold into slavery by his brothers—a story that inspired Samuel Sewall’s antislavery tract *The Selling of Joseph*. Through ingenuity and cunning, Joseph was able to talk his way out of an eventual jail sentence to become Pharaoh’s most trusted advisor. This connotation was likely not missed by Reverend Graham. The fact that Cuff decided to run away on “Sabbath Day evening” must have also been particularly vexing for the minister. Chauncey’s advertisement for Cuff displayed the importance of a coded religious world inhabited by slaveowning ministers and the enslaved.

Whether Cuff successfully remained free from Graham’s control does not survive, but ten years later, the minister placed another advertisement:

Fishkill, August 26, 1763.

RUN away from his Master, the Rev. Mr. Chauncy Graham of the Fishkill, in the County of Dutchess, and Province of New-York, a Negro Man named *Trace*, aged 25 Years [] spry well-built Fellow; bred in New-England; looks very brazen, prompt and likely; talks flippent; has a flat Forehead and the lower part of his Face something prominent; his Hair [] on the Top, with a Tupee Foretop; plays on the Violin: He took with him an old blue Great-Coat, a Pair Leather Breeches, ditto Trowsers, a white Shirt, ditto Check, ditto Ozenbrigs, a [] under Jacket, a new Castor Hat, a Pair Blue and white Stockings. Whoever takes up and secures said Negro, so that his [] Master may have him again, shall have Forty Shilings Reward and all reasonable Charges paid by

CHAUNCY GRAHAM.

N.B. All persons are hereby forbid to conceal, harbour, or carry off said Negro, as they shall answer it at their Peril.¹¹⁹

Trace’s origins, like those of Cuff were included prominently in Graham’s advertisement, but New England replaced Africa as an identifying feature. Graham described Trace like Cuff, asserting that he “talks very flippent.” Trace’s name was neither biblical nor African, but rather Anglo, and he ran away bedecked as a Englishman, absconding with a full complement of clothes as well as a “Tupee Foretop” wig. Trace might have come from Connecticut, Graham’s birthplace, or even from Massachusetts, and could have come into Graham’s household through

¹¹⁹ Advertisement, *The New-York Gazette* (Weyman’s), 6 September 1763, in “*Pretends to Be Free*,” eds. Hodges and Brown, 107-108.

his religious connections. If he had been owned by a New England minister, he might have known other enslaved people who had been granted their freedom or had been promised freedom himself.

Proximity to a minister strengthened the claims of freedom for some runaways. In the late summer and fall of 1742, the merchant Joseph Callender placed several advertisements searching for a runaway African man named Coffy:

Ran-away from his Master *Joseph Callender*, the 13th of *June* last, a Negro Man named *Coffy*, middle Stature: He had on when he went away, a check'd wollen Shirt; he changes his Name to *Sambo*; he formerly liv'd with the Rev. Mr. *Waldron* deceas'd: Whoever shall take up said Negro, and convey him to his Master, shall have *Forty Shillings* Reward, and all necessary Charges paid by *Joseph Callender*.¹²⁰

When Joseph Callender sent the advertisement to the *Boston Weekly Post-Boy* on August 16 (which was run again on September 27) he included the point that Coffy had “formerly liv'd with the Rev. Mr. Waldron.” Coffy’s runaway slave advertisement bore a striking resemblance to the previously discussed advertisements. Like the Reverend Chauncy Graham’s enslaved man Cuff, Coffy changed his name. But he did not choose a biblical moniker; rather, he claimed an African name. Perhaps the name had been his all along and he was merely discarding the name that had been forced on him. Yet Callender’s advertisement contained one important difference; Coffy did not run away from a minister.

On October 25 in the *Boston Evening-Post*, Callender elaborated on the importance of including Coffy’s time with Waldron:

Ran away from his Master, Mr. *Joseph Callender* of *Boston*, on the 13th of *June* past, a Negro Man named *Coffy*. He had on when he went away, a check'd woollen Shirt, a Cloth Jacket, the Sleeves pretty long. He pretends he was freed by the Rev. Mr. *Waldron* of *Boston*, with whom he formerly lived. He has changed his Name when he ran away before, to *Sambo*. Whoever shall take up the

¹²⁰ Advertisement, *Boston Weekly Post- Boy*, 16 August 1742, 27 September 1742, EAN.

said Negro, and bring him to his said Master, shall have *Three Pounds* (old Tenor) Reward, and all necessary Charges paid, by

Joseph Callender, Jun.¹²¹

How Coffy came to be in Joseph Callender's household does not survive, but Coffy laid claim to freedom when he was with Waldron. Waldron might have promised Coffy his freedom. Perhaps, upon Waldron's death, his estate was probated and Coffy was sold to pay back debts. Whatever the circumstances, Callender labeled Coffy's claim to freedom as mere pretense. Callender included the fact that Coffy had run away before. Whether the first time happened during Waldron's tenure or while Coffy was owned by Callender is not specified but during that period Coffy changed his name to "Sambo". Whatever the daily reality of Coffy's life with Waldron, he used the deceased clergyman as backing for his freedom claim.

Coffy was not the only runaway who used proximity to the clergy to claim freedom. In a runaway slave advertisement appearing in the *Pennsylvania Gazette* in 1744, the Maryland master Philip Key described a familiar connection of an enslaved man owned by an elite master in government, whose proximity to a minister aided his bid for freedom:

Run away about the 18th of September last, from the subscriber, then in Annapolis, a Negro Man, named Joseph Paterson, he is a square Fellow, pitted with the Small Pox: Had on when he went away, a grey Coat, with flat Pewter or white metal Buttons, he is a Cook by Trade, and formerly lived with Samuel Ogle, Esq; late Governor of Maryland, as such he has procured a Writing, from under the Hand of the Rev. Mr. Jacob Henderson, which has prevailed with one or two of the Justices of Ann Arundle County, to Subscribe a Pass for him.¹²²

According to the advertisement, Joseph was able to get a "Writing from under the Hand of the Rev. Mr. Jacob Henderson" to convince justices to sign off on a pass. Key did not elaborate on how Joseph was able to secure the letter from Henderson, but clearly the enslaved man knew

¹²¹ Advertisement, *Boston Evening-Post*, 25 October 1742, EAN.

¹²² Advertisement, *Pennsylvania Gazette*, 1 November 1744, EAN.

about the privileged position such a note from a minister would supply as he secured his freedom.

Although some enslaved people used their proximity to the ministerial elite to secure their freedom, haven was not always assured. In 1744, the following advertisement ran in the *Boston Weekly Post-Boy*:

Province of New-Hampshire, London-derry, May 2, 1744.

A Stray Negro Woman about 24 Years of Age, middle Stature cloathed with a striped Cotton and Linnen Gown, a Flesh colour'd Petticoat, born as she says at *Long-Island*, and free, served her Time in *Connecticut* government, and is now at the House of the Rev. Mr. *David MacGregory* in said Town, where she may be delivered to the right Owner paying all necessary Charges.¹²³

Although the woman claimed her birth status as free and was listed as being housed by “the Reverend Mr. David MacGregory,” the advertisement clearly did not support her claim to freedom. The posting was likely submitted by MacGregory, though not explicitly stated. If so, then clearly MacGregory had no wish to shelter the woman. She was described as “a stray Negro woman,” a slave free to be “delivered to the right Owner,” provided they “pay all necessary Charges.” Whoever ran the advertisement, one point is clear: the unnamed woman enjoyed no haven at the minister’s house.

The meetinghouse itself sometimes served as marker for slave sales and as the nearest landmark in descriptions of slave crimes. On June 6, 1715, the following slave-for-sale advertisement ran in the *Boston News-Letter*:

A very likely Negro Man about Twenty Years old, to be Sold by *Thomas Hutchinson* Esq; and to be seen at his House in Garden Court, near the North Meeting-House in Boston.¹²⁴

The location would have been particularly advantageous. A crowd was assured at the meetinghouse, one filled with people who had enough money to keep current with their pew

¹²³ Advertisement, *Boston Weekly Post-Boy*, 7 May 1744, EAN.

¹²⁴ Advertisement, *Boston News-Letter*, 6 June 1715, EAN.

taxes. As Cotton Mather's receipt of Onesimus from "some gentlemen in the congregation" evidences, the meetinghouse—and the North meetinghouse was, incidentally, Mather's church—served an exchange place for slaveowners and would-be-slaveowners.

Meetinghouses could also serve as landmarks in runaway slave advertisements. One advertisement that appeared in the *Boston Evening Post* on October 24, 1748, included one such meetinghouse:

Ran away from his Master, Mr. *John Wakefield of Boston*, a Negro Man Servant named *Bonney*, about 23 Years of Age...Whoever shall take him up, and bring him to his said Master, near the Rev. Mr. *Mather's Meetinghouse*, shall be satisfied for their Trouble, and have all necessary Charges paid, by *John Wakefield*.¹²⁵

Cotton Mather's meetinghouse—the site of the presentation of Onesimus—was such a well-known landmark that Wakefield included it as a reference marker in the advertisement. Such an inclusion served two purposes. First, the meetinghouse would have been a large famous landmark that would have made finding Wakefield's house easier. Second, and perhaps more importantly for Wakefield, it would have drawn the eye immediately to the advertisement. Many advertisements for runaways began with the same two words—"Run away"—and this advertisement was no different. A reader scanning the advertisement might have easily glossed over such an inclusion, and unless they knew Wakefield, they might have easily missed his name. But "the Rev. Mr. Mather's Meetinghouse" would have drawn the eye of his congregation as well as those whose religious ideologies clashed with Mather. Perhaps the readers would have remembered Mather's pamphlet on converting African slaves, entitled *The Negro Christianized*. More readers, certainly, would have recalled the furor surrounding Mather's use of enslaved knowledge of smallpox in his inoculation. Still others might have remembered Mather's charity school for blacks, and perhaps joined in mocking the minister for his troubles by naming their

¹²⁵ Advertisement, *Boston Evening-Post*, 24 October 1748, EAN.

own slaves “Cotton Mather.” “Mr. Mather’s Meetinghouse” practically shouted slavery and controversy and decisively set apart Wakefield’s advertisement.

Meetinghouses joined slavery together with popular notions of crime and divine intervention in other news pieces. On April 4, 1723, the following story ran in the *Boston News Letter* concerning arson by a slave:

And about the same time on Tuesday Morning, a House in Leverett’s Lane near the Quaker’s Meeting House, was set on Fire by a Negro Man Servant, of this Town, who, upon examination, own’d, that he had twice attempted to burn the said House in the Night; but by the good Providence of GOD, it was prevented from doing any other Damage than burning some part of the side of the House. The said Negro is now in Prison, and none are suffered to speak to him; so that ‘tis hoped, that if there were any Confederates with him in it, we will discover who they are.¹²⁶

The slave arsonist, the Quaker meetinghouse, and the “providence of God” were all images that would have resonated vividly with the *Boston News-Letter*’s readership. They did not need detail, but the tale would have enflamed the memories of the denizens of Boston who had lived through the attempted arson of Maria and her associates, one of whom was the Reverend Pemberton’s enslaved man. Such images took the place of specific details. The editor’s inclusion of possible confederates played into popular expectations. Another slightly transformed story covering the fire ran four days later in the *New-England Courant*:

On Tuesday Morning last, between 4 and 5 a Clock, a Fire broke out on the Outside of the House of Mr. Powel Merchant, near the Quakers Meetinghouse, A Negro Man suspected of setting it on fire, being taken up and examin’d, confess’d the Fact, and that he had attempted it once before; up on which he was committed to Prison in order to his Tryal in May next. He likewise put some Fire among the Hay in Mr. Powel’s Barn, which began to kindle before it was discover’d.¹²⁷

The shared details between the *Boston News-Letter* story and the *New-England Courant* are telling. The enslaved man’s double attempt at arson remained, but the detail that it was “by

¹²⁶ News, *Boston News-Letter*, 4 April 1723, EAN.

¹²⁷ News, *New-England Courant*, 8 April 1723, EAN.

the good Providence of GOD” that the fire was averted was abandoned for the more specific detail that the enslaved man “put some Fire among the Hay.” The house was transformed from “a house in Leverett’s lane” to that belonging to “Mr. Powel Merchant,” though its location “near the Quakers Meetinghouse” was retained. The Quaker Meetinghouse would have conjured up for most Boston newspaper readers the threat of a dangerous minority and the preferred solutions for dealing with such a menace: whipping, branding, exile and death.¹²⁸

On December 29, 1740, a newspaper story in the *Boston Evening-Post* contrasted two very different women. It read: “Tuesday Morning died here Mrs. Judith Cooper, the virtuous Consort of the Rev. Mr. William Cooper, and Daughter of the late Hon. Judge Sewall.” In the following paragraphs the *Post* continued:

A Negro Child lost its Life by the Carelessness of its Mother, who having some Business abroad, laid the Child by the Fire alone, and a Spark having set its Cloathing (which was *Callico*) on Fire, the Mother upon her Return found it partly burnt and partly suffocated. It is hard to say how many poor Children’s Lives have been sacrificed to the Pride, Folly and Obsinancy of their Mothers, who would doubles be thought *tender*, tho’ they cannot be prevailed upon to dress their Children in anything less susceptible of Fire, than this pernicious *Callico*, lest it should not appear quite so *gay*.¹²⁹

Whether juxtaposed consciously by the editor or not, Judith Sewall Cooper’s life shared space with that of a black woman. On the surface, she appeared the antithesis of the woman. Where Judith was a “virtuous Consort” of a minister, the unnamed mother was “careless.” Judith’s name was surrounded by the names the men who had ruled over her in life—the “Rev. Mr. William Cooper” and “Hon. Judge Sewall”—whereas the black woman had no natal ties that placed her in the social hierarchy. Further, the unsuccessful performance of her female chores and motherly

¹²⁸ At the height of Quaker persecution in Massachusetts, Quakers endured a variety of punishments which included a ruling that one Quaker couple’s children be sold to the Caribbean colonies as indentured servants. Although this punishment was not carried out, such actions taken against Quakers and those aimed at slaves were strikingly similar. Quakers remained a religious minority in Boston throughout the eighteenth century. Thomas D. Hamm, “The Origins of American Quakerism, 1640-1800,” in *The Quakers in America* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003), 23.

¹²⁹ News, *Boston Evening-Post*, 29 December 1740, EAN.

duties resulted in the death of her child. That is not to imply that there were no clues that point to the woman's possible status: the newspaper article implied that the woman had at least some choice as to the type of clothing in which she dressed her child, which allowed for the possibility that the woman was not a slave. She might not have even been of African descent, though that fact would usually have been notable enough to warrant mention. She was also not identified as the negro servant or slave of Massachusetts masters, another clue to her freed status.

Judith Cooper's proximity to the doomed "negro child" might not have appeared so distant to the *Evening-Post's* readers. Some of them might have recalled Judge Sewall's call for antislavery in *The Selling of Joseph*. A portion of the readership would have known about Sewall's son Sam's copious slave trading, or that his other son, Joseph Sewall, baptized and married numerous blacks—both slave and free—at Old South Church.¹³⁰ Judith's husband, William Cooper, was deeply connected to the ministerial hierarchy, an elite slaveholding group. He had served as a minister at Brattle Street Church, the church established in 1699 by William Brattle and his brother Thomas in opposition to the Mathers. Yet he was of one mind with Mather in the smallpox controversy and supported Mather's use of inoculation to treat the disease. Mather and Zabdiel Boylston had been publically ridiculed for using the knowledge of the enslaved in inoculation, and Mather's house had an attempted bomb lobbed through the window by a Bostonian furious at inoculation. In light of such incidents, Cooper must have known that even a purely religious support of Mather had racial overtones. In the decades that followed, Cooper's actions on behalf of his black congregants also benefited their elite masters. On January 1, 1738, he married "Scipio Negro, Servant to Mr. John Wheelwright & Zilpah

¹³⁰ Joseph Sewall performed fourteen recorded marriages of black couples between 1716 and 1742. *Boston Marriages*, 65, 115, 127, 128, 134, 153, 179, 187, 243, 251, 257.

Negro Servant to Mr. Thomas Lothrop,” joining not only two enslaved people, but also the fortunes of John Wheelwright and Thomas Lothrop.¹³¹

Indeed, William Cooper did have his own ideas about the enslaved. He enthusiastically proclaimed the possibility of conversion for slaves when he wrote in the preface to Jonathan Edwards’s *The Distinguishing Marks of a Work of the Spirit of God* that Edwards believed God’s spirit would move such diverse people as even “poor Negroes.”¹³² Cooper expanded on this theme in his sermon entitled “*One Shall be Taken and Another Left*,” which was preached three months after his wife’s death. Cooper’s belief in slave conversion did not stop his business associations with slaveholders. Cooper sold his tavern, the Green Dragon house, to the slaveholder, Dr. William Douglass.¹³³ Judith’s proximity to and juxtaposition against the mother whose black child was killed encapsulated the contradictions inherent in the slaveholding network. The Coopers’ slaveholding connections mixed antislavery activists and slaveholding proponents, illustrating the diversity and inherent contradiction within the elite slaveholding community.

This contradiction of antislavery sentiment coexisting with slaveholding ties within the Cooper family persisted into the next generation. William and Judith Coopers’ two sons, William Jr., and the Reverend Samuel Cooper, had very different trajectories. Although William was his father’s namesake, it was Samuel who followed him into the ministry. His public religious views criticizing slavery were considerably more explicit than his father’s. He put his

¹³¹ Ibid., 209.

¹³² Bailey, *Race and Redemption*, 127.

¹³³ On 28 June 1756, Boston mistress Kathrin Kerr ran a runaway slave advertisement for her enslaved man, Abboo. Kathrin lived at the Green Dragon house, a tavern located on “the west side of Union Street north of Hanover.” She must have moved there sometime after her brother, Dr. William Douglass, purchased the tavern in 1743 from the Reverend William Cooper. Although there is no way of knowing when Abboo entered the Douglass household, it is clear that he was there during Douglass’s lifetime. When Douglass died, he left the tavern, and likely Abboo, to his sister, who ran it until she donated it to the Saint Andrews’s Lodge of Free Masons in 1765. Advertisement, *Boston Gazette, or Weekly Journal*, 28 June 1756, EAN; Samuel Adams Drake, *Old Boston Taverns and Tavern Clubs* (Boston, MA: W.A. Butterfield, 1917), 110.

name to Phillis Wheatley's book of poetry, certifying along with a number of other ministers that he "verily" believed that they were "written by PHILLIS, a young Negro Girl, who was but a few Years since, brought an uncultivated Barbarian from *Africa*, and has ever since been, and now is, under the Disadvantage of serving as a Slave in a Family in this Town."¹³⁴ His support for Wheatley was not limited to putting his name to her poem book and decrying her slavery as a "disadvantage": he also baptized Wheatley at the Old South Church.

Though he was happy to point out the hardship that Wheatley endured having to continue as a slave, it did not prevent him from associating with a varied network of slaveholders. On March 28, 1777, Samuel Cooper sent two letters—one to Thomas Pownall and another to Benjamin Franklin—announcing the marriage of one of his daughters, Abigail, to Joseph Hixon, of Montserrat. In 1776, Hixon, while on his way to London on business, was captured by an American warship and diverted to Boston, where he met Cooper's daughter and remained until October. Although Cooper did not detail in his letters what this "business" was, it was likely connected to the appraisal of Hixon's father's estate. Joseph Hixon's estate in Montserrat was appraised July 31, 1776, and was worth £19, 011. The appraisal included a detailed list of human property: forty-four women, five young boys, and twenty-five men.¹³⁵

In his letter to Franklin, Cooper did not show any compunction about his new son-in-law's fortunes when he announced the marriage and wrote, "I need not mention the opinion I have entertain'd of his Probity and Worth, when I acquainted you that I have give[n] my Daughter and only child to him in marriage."¹³⁶ His description of Hixon to Pownall was slightly tempered, for he noted, "I should not have consented to this alliance" if he "found good reason"

¹³⁴ John Wheatley, "To the Publick," Early Americas Digital Archive, http://mith.umd.edu/eada/html/display.php?docs=wheatley_tothepublick.xml&action=show (accessed November 1, 2012).

¹³⁵ Appraisal, Estate of Christopher Hixon Sr., Montserrat, 31 July 1776, CO 34, Papers of Samuel Cooper, 1718-1798, Manuscript Division, Huntington Library, San Marino, CA (hereafter cited as HL).

¹³⁶ Samuel Cooper to Benjamin Franklin, 28 March 1777, CO 15, Papers of Samuel Cooper, 1718-1798, HL.

to doubt that Hixon was “a Gentlemen of Probity and worth.”¹³⁷ Hixon’s considerable slaveholding was not reason enough to disqualify him as a potential husband, as in the matter of marriage elite status trumped antislavery sentiment.

Indeed, despite Hixon’s considerable wealth, Cooper made sure to provide for his daughter in his will, proved in 1783, the same year that slavery was abolished in Massachusetts. He willed that if his grandson Samuel Cooper, died before he inherited his portion, it would be split between his wife and held in trust for his daughter, Abigail Hixon. If Abigail outlived her husband, she would have not only inherited some portion of his large plantation on Montserrat, but she would have received from her father “the whole of what I have herein given the above named Gentlemen in Trust for his, into her own Hands and at her own Disposal forever.”¹³⁸

Cooper’s death and the death of slavery in Massachusetts coincided in 1783.¹³⁹ A few months before Cooper’s death, the Reverend Robert Williams, Cooper’s ministerial colleague, wrote *Some Remarks on Slave Keeping*.¹⁴⁰ In it, he showed little patience for the contradictions that shaped the Coopers’ networks, writing:

The Devine[sic] law that enjoins us to do unto all men as we would they should do unto us, in its moral fitness outweighs any argument that can be advanced for keeping of slaves in bondage... Therefore let the subtil[sic] deceiving reasoner[sic] be cast out, and the love of Money be forsaken then the way of our duty be made plain to the willing & obedient, from one degree of faith to another...

¹³⁷ Samuel Cooper to Thomas Pownall, 28 March 1777, CO 15, Papers of Samuel Cooper, 1718-1798, HL.

¹³⁸ Samuel Cooper died December 29, 1783. Will of Samuel Cooper, 1783, CO 48, Papers of Samuel Cooper, 1718-1798, HL.

¹³⁹ Since the 1960s the scholarly debate over the official end of slavery in Massachusetts has centered around two dates: the 1781 Brom and Bett v. Ashley case, better known as the “Mum Bett” case; and the 1783 Commonwealth v. Jennison case, commonly referred to as the “Quok Walker” case. Regardless of which date is chosen, the final years of Cooper’s life also marked the last years of slavery in Massachusetts. Arthur Zilversmit, “Quok Walker, Mumbet, and the Abolition of Slavery in Massachusetts,” *William and Mary Quarterly* 25, no. 4 (October 1968): 614-624, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1916801>; William O’Brien, “Did the Jennison Case Outlaw Slavery in Massachusetts?” *William and Mary Quarterly* 17, no. 2 (April 1960): 219-241, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1943353>; Emily Blanck, “Seventeen Eighty-Three: The Turning Point in the Law of Slavery and Freedom in Massachusetts,” *The New England Quarterly* 75, no. 1 (March 2002): 24-51, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1559880>.

¹⁴⁰ Robert Williams, *Some Remarks on Slave Keeping*, 8 August 1783, Brock Collection Pleasants Family, I, BR Box 12 (36), HL.

In Williams's reasoning, the "Divine Law" trumped any concerns of status, and slavery was firmly an evil to be shunned. The "probity and worth" that so convinced Cooper of Hixon's merit was the mark of a "subtil deceiving reasoner" in William's contention and a sign of the "love of Money."

4.4 Conclusion

The religious and material worlds encountered by John Henry Livingston when he became the senior pastor of the Reformed Dutch Church in New York would have been foreign to his great-grandfather Robert Livingston. John Henry fully assumed the position in 1783, after beginning his tenure in 1770, only to be compelled to flee by the American Revolution. He resumed his function as senior pastor in a new country at the close of a long century. Like Nicholas van Rensselaer, he had chosen the spiritual life over that of the merchant. Yet some aspects of the world would have remained familiar: the relationship of the elite ruling families to the clergy had remained intact, and John Livingston's life and, by extension, ministry benefited from the labor of the enslaved.

The spiritual world that John Henry inherited had been shaped by the Atlantic flows of the slave economy. He had been inspired to the ministry during one of George Whitefield's revivals.¹⁴¹ Although Livingston did not specify the location, it likely was at a sermon hosted in Ebenezer Pemberton's church, a position his uncle Gilbert helped secure for the New England minister. The text that moved Livingston was Psalm 40: 1-3:

I waited patiently for the Lord; and he inclined unto me, and heard my cry. He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet

¹⁴¹ Gunn, *Memoirs of the Rev. John Henry Livingston*, 32.

upon a rock, and establish my goings. And he hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God: many shall see it, and fear, and shall trust in the lord.¹⁴²

Almost a century later, the enslaved man Henry Brown would sing the lines of that psalm during his escape to freedom from Virginia to Philadelphia in a box crate.¹⁴³ Did John Henry also hear Whitefield's admonition to masters that that Christianization and baptism should be extended to slaves? By the time that Livingston resumed his ministerial work in New York, the threat that baptism had once potentially posed to the worldly engine of empire would have remained in John Henry's world only as a distant echo. The flood of slave baptisms experienced under Everardus Bogardus had lessened to a trickle. Yet the world that John Henry inhabited had been constructed through struggle. The increasing avenues of commonality between Protestant groups experienced in the final decades of the eighteenth century were as much a result of the common questions slavery posed to an elite network drawn across religious lines as it was the emotional exuberance of the Great Awakening.

Slavery shaped the ways that ministers and the elites that they served conceptualized of fellowship, sanctuary, and judgment. Thus the ministerial projects of Elias Neau and Cotton Mather—though separated by religious philosophy—expressed a common wrestling with the questions slavery posed. Slavery profoundly affected the inter-colonial lives of such ministers as William Vesey and Ebenezer Pemberton Jr. Slaves interpreted and reinterpreted the meaning that proximity to ministers held for their lives, even utilizing the names given to them by clergy in their bid for freedom. Even as some ministers came to question slavery's morality religiously, they continued to maintain the slaveholding networks that shaped their social worlds.

¹⁴² Psalm 40: 1-3.

¹⁴³ "Henry Box Brown," in *African American Lives*, eds. Henry Louis Gates Jr. and Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 110.

CHAPTER 5

“A MIGHTY SMILE OF HEAVEN UPON MY FAMILY”: SLAVERY AND GIFT EXCHANGE

This Day, a surprising Thing befel me. Some Gentlemen of our Church, understanding (without any Application of mine to them for such a Thing,) that I wanted a *good Servant* at the expense of between forty and fifty Pounds, purchased for me, a very likely *Slave*; a young Man, who is a *Negro* of promising Aspect and Temper, and this Day they presented him unto me. It seems to be a mighty Smile of Heaven upon my Family.

Cotton Mather, *The Diary of Cotton Mather* (1706)

On Friday, December 13, 1706, Cotton Mather received an expensive gift from “Some Gentlemen” in his congregation. He took pains to record in his diary that the gift had come “without any Application of mine to them for such a Thing,” but that the receipt of it was “a mighty Smile of Heaven upon my Family.” He also noted that the gift “laies me under such Obligations” to be “more serviceable than ever” to his flock. Such gift-exchange among elites was not extraordinary: baptismal basins, rings, and venison were frequently given among scholars, divines, and merchants. Yet the present that Mather received from his congregants, though equally a part of the gift-economy of the colonial Northeast, has rarely been studied as such. For he received “a very likely Slave; a young Man, who is a Negro of a promising Aspect and Temper,” a man who Mather “put upon...the Name of *Onesimus*.”¹

The link between gift exchange and the burgeoning culture of commerce in bodies is crucial to understanding the nature of such transactions among elite Northeastern slaveholders. For the central dynastic slaveholding clans in this study, family identity was shaped by notions of honor that developed under the influence of slavery.² Elites understood their place in social and familial hierarchies in relation to position they assigned slaves. The presence of the enslaved and

¹ Mather, *Diary*, 1: 579.

² In *Slavery and Social Death*, Orlando Patterson linked the cultural weight of honor with the importance of slavery to a society noting “wherever slavery became structurally very important, the whole tone of the slaveholders’ culture tended to be highly honorific.” Orlando Patterson, *Slavery and Social Death: A Comparative Study* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1982), 79

the ways that they were discussed in the diaries, court cases, and pamphlets of the elite inspire two key questions: To what extent did the language of gift exchange coexist with the terms that defined market transaction over the issue of slavery? How were enslaved Africans integrated into the system of reciprocity and gift exchange?

5.1 “I humbly beg this favor”: Slavery and elite familial reciprocal networks

When Matthias Beck acknowledged the loss of the Stuyvesants’ baptized slaves in 1664, he promised to “make inquiries with the first ship that leaves here for Cartagena and Porto Bello, and if possible, try to get them back, even if I have to give two full grown slaves and more for them.”³ For the gross oversight, Beck essentially pledged to overpay. Although the specifics of the accidental sale were certainly unique, Beck’s opting for a show of reciprocity over the apparent demands of the market for slaves was not.

Four years earlier, on January 2, 1660, the delay of the slave ship *den Eyckenboom* had forced Beck into an awkward position. When “two Spanish ships with a yacht from Cadix” had arrived at Curaçao in order to take on the slaves that were scheduled to arrive on the *den Eyckenboom*, Beck had had to honor the contractual agreement. In order to do so, he reached out to the community and was “forced to request both from the freemen as well as from the Company’s servants that they loaned the Company as many Negroes as possible from their plantations with the promise that they shall be compensated with good Negroes in their place from the first Company Negroes who arrive.”⁴ Whatever the condition of the enslaved blacks provided by the colonists, Beck committed “good Negroes” as replacements in order to back the

³ Matthias Beck to Petrus Stuyvesant, 5 November 1664, in *CP*, 211.

⁴ Matthias Beck to the Directors of the Dutch West India Company, 4 February 1660, in *CP*, 172.

hasty loan. Beck was able to make good on the contract to the Spanish traders, amassing “62 head” of enslaved Africans from Cape Verde that he “gathered together with great difficulty from the Company as well as private parties.”

The relationship was not unidirectional. Beck received gifted foodstuffs from merchants and colonists, though not all such gifts were usable. On June 11, 1657, Beck noted that the “beans and peas which were left for use here by Outger Wallissen from *De Bontekoe*” were inedible, “more suitable to be fed to beasts than humans.” He continued, “I dared not give them to the Negroes for fear of causing a sickness among them. If these fruits of the soil had come from the Company’s farms and were traded by private parties, we would have considered ourselves cheated, except for the groats and bacon which have stood us good service.”⁵ The gift of food was meant for slaves, but Beck surmised its quality was inferior because it had not come from Company or private farms.

Beck’s extravagant gift of “two full grown slaves and more” in order to regain possession of the Stuyvesants’ baptized slaves was not the first of such reciprocal relationships that Beck enjoyed with the Stuyvesants. The Becks and Stuyvesants maintained an Atlantic friendship punctuated by gift exchange. On February 4, 1660, Beck wrote in an epigraph to Petrus Stuyvesant: “I and my wife and daughter recently arrived from Holland commend your honor together with Mrs. Stuyvesant and the entire family.”⁶ This could be dismissed as the flowery ending of a letter from a subordinate to his superior director. Yet the evidence of Beck’s wife’s friendship with Judith Stuyvesant exists in the margins of letters, its transatlantic character communicated in the gifts exchanged between the two women. Four years later, in a postscript, Beck wrote, “I have entrusted to the bearer of this, Skipper Simon Cornelissen Gild, a beautiful

⁵ Matthias Beck to WIC, 11 June 1657, in *CP*, 105.

⁶ Matthias Beck to Petrus Stuyvesant, 4 February 1660, in *CP*, 169.

parrot from the Spanish coast for Mrs. Stuyvesant from my wife.”⁷ In the same letter in which Beck expressed regret at the sale of Judith Stuyvesant’s slaves he remarked, “we have duly received, according to the accompanying inventory, the parcels of goods,” lamenting that, “I and my wife deeply regret that we have nothing to send at this time as an acknowledgement of them.”⁸ The following year, in 1665, a register of goods loaded at Curaçao for New Netherland included “A hammock for Juffrouw Stuyvesant,” possibly a gift from the Becks or Balthazar.⁹ Perhaps when the cold February wind off the Hudson made New Amsterdam winters miserable, the “hammock” and “beautiful parrot from the Spanish coast” brought Judith Stuyvesant closer to her friends and family scattered across the Dutch Atlantic.

Balthazar Stuyvesant was thoroughly embedded in a web of trade relationships woven together through gift reciprocity. On April 19, 1665, the Curaçao businessman Wilhelmus Volckering bemoaned his inability to reciprocate the gift he received from his business associate and cousin in New York, Gerardy van Tright, writing, “If only this place provided us with something that could be applied thereto. Though lack of the same I am compelled for the present to express my appreciation with these few letters, requesting that your honor will not rate the strength of friendship by material gifts but rather by sincere and faithful action.” Despite his assertion that he could not reciprocate the kind gesture through “material gifts,” Volckering was not without some assets. He continued, “Since then we have also taken receipt of your honor’s welcomed letter dated 22 October 1664, in which you strongly recommend the son of the honorable lord Pieter Stuyvesandt [sic]. I accept it most favorably and with complete partiality, and shall assist him in any way that I can with my knowledge, advice and service; and exert myself to the utmost to help promote his state of affairs, as I have written in more detail to his

⁷ Matthias Beck to Petrus Stuyvesant, 21 July 1664, in *CP*, 200.

⁸ Matthias Beck to Petrus Stuyvesant, 5 November 1664, in *CP*, 212.

⁹ “Register of goods loaded at Curaçao for New Netherland,” 1665, in *CP*, 232.

father concerning this.”¹⁰ Volckering’s efforts on Balthazar’s behalf helped him to solidify the trade route between New York and Curaçao, a route which, as mentioned in chapter one, certainly included the trade in human beings.

Gift exchanges also involved exchange of services and other favors. In his letter to Petrus Stuyvesant, Volckering expressed sadness at the loss of New Netherland to the English, but expressed faith that “the honor and reputation of the Netherlands, which faded considerably because of this war, will flourish once again.” He had reason to hope. He pointed out, “we already have a good example with the Coast of Guinea (of which your honor will have been informed in more detail by the honorable Director Beck), and which we trust we will also hear shortly about New Netherland.”¹¹ Yet Volckering’s true motive for writing was to inform Stuyvesant of Balthazar’s progress. Balthazar had already been on Curaçao for several years, had run the St. Joris seasoning camp, and had returned home to stand as baptismal witness for a cousin’s baptism. His father still desired that the *predikant* Volckering serve as his tutor in order to ensure “the promotion of his knowledge in the Latin language and the fundamentals of the Christian religion.” Yet Balthazar, unlike the grandfather for whom he was named, was not destined to become a minister, a reality that Volckering noted when he wrote that Balthazar was “more inclined towards writing, bookkeeping and things related thereto.” He was more at home managing the ledgers of St. Joris than the intricacies of Reformed doctrine.

Reciprocities were central to Petrus Stuyvesant’s business relationships, not only in the larger Atlantic world, but also in New Netherland. Stuyvesant forged relationships involving slaves with other elites in New Netherland that were, strictly speaking, commercial, yet they

¹⁰ Wilhelmus Volckering to Gerardy van Tright, 19 April 1665, in *CP*, 229.

¹¹ Wilhelmus Volckering to Petrus Stuyvesant, 29 April 1665, in *CP*, 235.

were accompanied by a host of coded signifiers that communicated the ways in which such exchanges were properly understood within the larger fabric of New Netherland society.

Stuyvesant's slaveholding connection to the patroonship of Rensselaerswijck was based on just such a relationship. Jeremias van Rensselaer selected an enslaved man from among Stuyvesant's slaves as payment for a debt owed to his brother, Jan Baptist. On June 2, 1661, Jeremias informed his brother of a visit from Petrus Stuyvesant:

When, late in the year, the honorable general came up the river and saw this aforementioned figure, with a blanket around his ears, standing on a piece of walnut wood to chop it up, he asked me what kind of a clumsy yokel of a Negro that was and to whom he belonged. I answered him that he was the Negro I had bought at the sale, he knowing very well why I had bought him. He said: "What do you do with such a dumb beast of a Negro? Send him down with me. I shall order another kind of Negro for you from Curaçao, or give you one of mine in his place." I immediately accepted the bargain, but so far I have heard nothing of another Negro. I shall try to have the amount deducted from the duties, for I do not need any Negro. What will come of it, time will show.¹²

Despite Stuyvesant's description of the man as a "yokel" and a "dumb beast," he gladly accepted the slave, extending the "credit" of ordering "another kind of Negro" for van Rensselaer "from Curaçao" or replacing the man from his own group of enslaved people. Jeremias reckoned the deal a "bargain," but Stuyvesant knew that the market for enslaved people in Curaçao was volatile, and so he would be receiving the work of the man without any reciprocation for quite some time. That, according to Jeremias, was the ultimate situation. Although he determined to "have the amount deducted" from his taxes, he had already lost the labor of the man to Stuyvesant.

Jeremias's slave dealings with Stuyvesant often involved credit. On October 22, 1664, three years after he returned the allegedly recalcitrant man to Stuyvesant, he wrote that had purchased another slave from Stuyvesant, but "the said Negro had to remain a few weeks more

¹² Jeremias to Jan Baptist van Rensselaer, 2 June 1661, in *CJVR*, 116-117, 255.

in the Company's service, so that I received him only a fortnight ago, together with the Negress whom the said general urged me to buy also, although he had given her to him later, after I had bought the Negro. She is a [good], sound wench."¹³ Jeremias did not stipulate whether the enslaved couple was officially married, but the words he used to describe the union shed light on his view of such couplings. He asserted that Stuyvesant "gave" the woman to the man during the remainder of his time working for the Company, but after the sale, showed that Jeremias conceived of some sort of gift exchange flowing from master to slave. Scholars have pointed to this moment as an example of Stuyvesant maintaining family ties. Yet it must be noted that, at least in van Rensselaer's letter, there is no hint of consent on the woman's part, and as in Wendy Warren's telling example of the enslaved black woman in Boston, who was raped by an enslaved man with whom she had been selected to "breed" by her master, such considerations did not enter the minds of slaveholders.¹⁴

Jeremias van Rensselaer's hybrid commercial and reciprocal relationship with Petrus Stuyvesant was not unusual. Gifts as well as commodities appeared in the van Rensselaer family correspondence. On August 4, 1664, Jeremias thanked his brother, Jan Baptist, for sending his new son a christening gift.¹⁵ The specifics of the gift—"two silver salt cellars"—appeared in Jeremias's letter of thanks to his mother, Anna van Rensselaer.¹⁶ His wife, Maria, wrote to her brother in law, Richard, about a "piece of gold of 28 gl. That was given to me as a christening gift (pillegift) and I should therefore like to keep it as a remembrance and also because my daughter is growing up."¹⁷ Maria also sent her mother-in-law Anna the gift of a parrot; a year later Beck's wife would send the same gift to Judith Stuyvesant. Jeremias van Rensselaer wrote

¹³ Jeremias to Jan Baptist van Rensselaer, 22 October 1664, in *CJVR*, 364-365.

¹⁴ Wendy Warren, "'The Cause of Her Grief': The Rape of a Slave in Early New England," *Journal of American History* 93, no. 4 (March 2007): 1031-1049, doi: 10.2307/25094595.

¹⁵ Jeremias van Rensselaer to Jan Baptist van Rensselaer, 4 August 1664, in *CJVR*, 358b.

¹⁶ Jeremias van Rensselaer to Anna van Rensselaer, 21 October 1664, in *CJVR*, 367.

¹⁷ Maria van Rensselaer to Richard van Rensselaer, June 1678, in *CMVR*, 23.

about “Jacob Meessen, who has been living with me a year or two and by whom my wife, your daughter, is sending you a parrot, which can talk very curiously. Its plumage is blue and it has a red tail. She presents it to you in the hope that you may graciously be pleased to accept this small gift.”¹⁸ Items for blacks were sometimes included in these exchanges. On October 27, 1684, Catrina Darvall sent her sister, Maria van Rensselaer, “6 oranges from your son [Hendrick]; also a paper with lace for the Negress.”¹⁹ Though some of these items might have been meant as gifts, Darvall noted that Maria’s daughter “expects to get back her money” for the “molasses cakes and the jars” that had been previously sent to her mother.

The van Rensselaers also showed some familiarity with a type of gift relationship flowing from master to slave, yet the language that they used was quite different from that used to express familial gift reciprocity. In November of 1664, just one month after Jeremias’s letter to his mother in Holland concerning his son’s christening gift, his wife, Maria, requested that she receive “two white blankets with blue stripes” from Oloff Stevensz van Cortlandt “in exchange for the blankets which you gave the Negro Claes on his journey.”²⁰ Two decades after his father furnished his enslaved man with blankets, Jacobus van Cortlandt used an enslaved man to ferry deerskins to Maria van Rensselaer, noting, “I gave to the Negro a package of deerskins which I found in a corner of my house. I do not know whether they belong to you.”²¹ The enslaved were also included in elite charity projects. Late in 1684, Maria van Rensselaer requested that her brother-in-law, Richard, sell her “the small grist-mill which stands next to Spitenberg’s mill, on appraisal by impartial persons.” She elaborated that she sought the mill for almsgiving, writing, “I only want it for a stiver on Sundays for the poor, for as you know I can do nothing and I am

¹⁸ Jeremias van Rensselaer to Anna van Rensselaer, 12 September 1663, in *CJVR*, 329.

¹⁹ Catrina Darvall to Maria van Rensselaer, 27 October 1684, in *CMVR*, 167.

²⁰ Maria van Rensselaer to Oloff Stevensz van Cortlandt, 12 November 1664, in *CJVR*, 368.

²¹ Jacobus van Cortlandt to Maria van Rensselaer, August 1684, in *CMVR*, 155-156.

daily getting weaker. I could manage it with a Negro if there was anything to grind.”²² In her weakened state, Maria’s largess to the poor was dependent on the labor of a black slave.

Yet as mentioned in chapter one, the van Rensselaer family did not always enjoy such cordial internal relations. Jan Baptist’s outrage over Jeremias’s unwillingness to send his enslaved man, Andries, to Holland exemplified the tension between bonds of familial reciprocity, on the one hand, and market considerations, on the other. When Jeremias offered compensation—50 beavers—instead of sending Andries to Holland, he positioned his decision as “much more profitable” to Jan Baptist than complying with his brother’s request, “for you would get no service from him.” He saw the beavers as a very good price for the enslaved man—in his mind, a family premium—because, he continued, if Andries were “appraised here, I do not think that he would have been rated so high, for Negroes who had been 12 or 13 years in the West Indies and who for a year or two had always lived here with Dutch people have been sold here at public sale for 300 or 350 guilders, and they were of a better sort of Negroes, so that I do not doubt but you will be satisfied with such good payment.”²³

Jan Baptist framed his disgust both commercially and reciprocally. Jan Baptist replied angrily to his brother’s terms: “But you must know that he has cost me as much and a great deal more. Think what trouble and arguments I have had with him before he got so far. Should I now as my reward for all this trouble lose money? Furthermore, you have now had him in your service for a year, at my risk.”²⁴ The year of service, which would have likely gone unmentioned had Jeremias complied and sent Andries to his brother in Holland, became the basis of Jan Baptist’s claim against his brother. The “trouble and arguments” that Jan Baptist mentioned were

²² Maria van Rensselaer to Richard van Rensselaer, 12 November 1684, in *CMVR*, 171.

²³ Jeremias to Jan Baptist van Rensselaer, 20 August 1659, in *CJVR*, 167.

²⁴ Jan Baptist to Jeremias, 20 December 1659, in *CJVR*, 197.

unquantifiable. His grievance was based on the abuse of the familial reciprocity enjoyed between the brothers, as well as the resultant monetary loss.

Robert Livingston's bitter land struggles with the van Rensselaers over what he claimed as Alida's portion of Rensselaerswijck did not sour all the avenues of familial reciprocity. In November of 1691, Livingston's brother-in-law, Stephanus van Cortlandt wrote:

If you can, let Rensselaer, too, provide the people with small beer. He got a negro-boy from me and thus it will be easy for him and me to settle with each other. I hope Leverits will supply you with pork or something else for what he owes me; and the brewer's widow at Schenectady as well, who owes me £27 for a negro. I never in all my life had as much difficulty in raising money as now.²⁵

Van Cortlandt's letter revealed that he extended slaves on credit in order to secure favors; he bluntly encouraged Livingston to approach Leverits and "the brewer's widow" at Schenectady because of the obligations both owed him. That van Cortlandt's ability to "settle with" his nephew, Kiliaen van Rensselaer, was facilitated by the exchange of an enslaved boy was no small feat. Just seven years earlier, Maria van Rensselaer had become disgusted with her brother, whom she viewed as taking Robert Livingston's side in the land dispute that threatened to break up Rensselaerswijck, leaving Kiliaen's inheritance in shambles. She wrote to Richard van Rensselaer in Holland that "it is here at present so sad, one does not know whether one deals with friend or foe. Yes, one dare not trust one's own brother."²⁶ In the intervening years, Livingston had managed to secure an adjoining land empire of his own, one that shared a northern border with Rensselaerswijck, although he had not successfully wrested control of Nicholas's portion of Rensselaerswijck.

Slaves comprised a part of reciprocity that was neither purely commercial nor wholly gifted. For example, Robert Livingston's dealings with Captain Kidd, which included slave

²⁵ Stephanus van Cortlandt to Robert Livingston, 15 November 1691, LFP-Trans.

²⁶ Maria to Richard van Rensselaer, November 1683, in *CMVR*, 135.

transactions, blurred the line between commerce and gifted reciprocities, causing a nearly disastrous outcome for Livingston in 1699. When, in Boston, he was summoned to give an account of his dealings with the accused pirate, Livingston testified that Kidd had given him and his business partner, Duncan Campbell, a black slave, along with other gifts.²⁷ These ledgerless transactions implied a distinct hint of complicity in piracy, at least to some governmental officials.

But the Kidd venture was not the only instance in which Livingston was threatened by the reciprocal relationships he forged at the expense of slaves. Fully understanding how slavery and gift exchange functioned requires an examination of the wider giving network that surrounded Isabel, the daughter of Livingston's valet, Ben. Robert Livingston's fear that Ben would murder him for giving Isabel as a wedding present to Livingston's daughter Margaret demonstrated that human gifts were never without agency and masters never ignorant of the potential repercussions of such actions.²⁸ Livingston's decision to give Isabel was part of a larger pattern of gifting behavior noted in New York slaveowners' wills, in which enslaved men, women, and children were offered as part of parents' gifts to children.²⁹ Such gifting was also not unusual within the Livingston family. Indeed, throughout the Livingston family correspondence, enslaved people are mentioned alongside gifts, forming an important aspect in the way in which reciprocal ties were understood and maintained.

²⁷ Robert Ritchie detailed that Kidd gifted the slaves to Livingston and Campbell in Boston, writing that "to Campbell he [Kidd] presented a slave plus some cloth and promised him £500 if he helped Kidd with an pardon" and to Livingston who had "put up the money for Kidd's £10,000 bond" Kidd gave "a slave and told him that he had a forty-pound bag of gold that he had kept secretly hidden until he knew how the wind blew." Robert C. Ritchie, *Captain Kidd and the War Against the Pirates* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1986), 180; Leder, *Robert Livingston*, 143.

²⁸ I include an extended discussion of the incident in chapters one and three. Leendert Conyn and Kiliaen Winne's oath about the Examination of Joh: Dykemans negro, 2 Feb 1715, GLC03107.01103/LP, GL.

²⁹ Narrett, *Inheritance and Family Life*, 188-189.

In the same letter in which Robert mentioned the visit of his enslaved valet, Tom, to his parents, he noted the receipt of a check from George Clarke for £72, writing that they “have to make sure he remains our friend as he controls so much.”³⁰ The reference to Livingston’s reciprocal designs for Clarke can shed light on Robert’s possible motivations for allowing Tom time with his family. Clarke, as secretary of New York and agent for the Palatines, was Livingston’s direct contact for victualing his new tenants. Livingston had begun courting key governmental connections before he officially secured the victualing contract.³¹ Was Tom’s visit to his relatives part of a concerted effort on the part of Livingston to increase local goodwill among elites with governmental pull? Such a visit did not equal pure leisure: Tom would have most likely been expected to work for his parents’ masters while he was visiting. Livingston’s instincts about Clarke were keen. Although Clarke’s efforts on behalf of Livingston for the Palatine contract came to naught, Clarke’s political control grew in the decades following Robert’s reference. During the 1741 slave conspiracy, a critical change in Clarke’s opinion about the burning of his mansion and Fort George—from accident to slave plot accomplished by nefarious Catholic agents—was crucial to shaping the official furor of white opinion towards the reputed conspiracy.³² Clarke’s shift was crucial in sealing the fate of another Livingston family slave named Tom—Robert Livingston Jr.’s porter, who was transported out of the colony as a result of the conspiracy trial.³³

Alida Livingston’s reminder to her husband in November of 1712 that their youngest son, Gilbert, had written “for the negro boy you have promised him” was part of a larger string of

³⁰ Robert to Alida Livingston, 18 October 1710, LFP-Trans.

³¹ Leder, *Robert Livingston*, 214.

³² Lieutenant-Governor George Clarke, Letter to the Lords of Trade, 20 June 1741 in *The New York Conspiracy Trials of 174: Daniel Horsmanden’s Journal of the Proceedings with Related Documents*, ed. Serena R. Zebin (Boston: Bedford/St. Martins, 2004), 168-170. For more on Clarke’s role in the slave conspiracy, see Lepore, *New York Burning*, 95-96, 121, 175, 191, 205-6.

³³ Lepore, *New York Burning*, 266.

reciprocities that bound the network of Livingston kin and associates. She opened that section of her letter by instructing her husband to give Governor Robert Hunter “a deer and a side [of beef]” as well as “3 barrels of good beer and 3 small ones for a taste.”³⁴ Though the beer might have functioned as a sample for future purchase, the meat had no overtly commercial benefit. Instead it was offered to curry favor with the governor, in order to secure Robert’s Palatine contract. Alida emphasized this intention by including another deer in the delivery to her husband, noting that the second was for their eldest son, Robert, whom she hoped would “honor” the governor with the venison. In the same letter, she used deer to solidify another relationship, this time with a contact named Simneson. She instructed Robert to give Simneson “a side of deer and a barrel of butter and a small bag with mints,” but only “if all goes well.” Alida had also contracted with Simneson’s wife for completing linen and silver work, so securing such a relationship did have a commercial benefit.³⁵ Likewise, Gilbert’s request for the promised slave, and Robert’s delay in acquiescing, had an important meaning for the relationship between father and son. Gilbert’s indebtedness continually vexed Robert Livingston, and he chose to communicate his displeasure by delaying the purchase of a slave for his son, requiring Gilbert to seek his mother’s intercession, and silently shaming him in the process.

Livingston’s sons’ letters to their father demonstrated the ways in which slavery and family honor interacted in familial reciprocal relationships. In the spring of 1713, a year after Alida’s intercession on his behalf, Gilbert requested that his father send him a slave and secure the indenture of a Palatine boy. Gilbert’s request reflected not only his recourse to the language of reciprocity, but also his expectation that certain favors could be affected by his father’s

³⁴ Alida to Robert Livingston, 10 November 1712, LFP-Trans.

³⁵ The merchant and his wife, referred to by Alida as “Simneson,” were likely Barnt Simonson, a cordwainer, and Appolonia Messeker. At the time of Alida’s letter, they lived in Staten Island on a property that included a mill. In 1713, Simneson is listed as being a “retailer of strong liquor” and a “Collector.” Elmer Garfield van Name, *The Simonson Families of Staten Island, New York....* (Haddonfield, NJ: Van Name, 1959), 2-3.

relationship with Governor Hunter. Even as he expressed his “hope” that his father had “agreed for a negro man yt M. Rallston may bring him up,” he was not without labor. In fact, he had secured the work of a young Palatine boy named Nicholas Keuth during the winter while he waited for his father to send up enslaved assistance. Such labor, according to Gilbert, was not easy to secure; he noted that he had spoken to an acquaintance about acquiring an official indenture for a Palatine boy, but Gilbert’s contact was unconvinced that he would receive it. Gilbert appealed to his father to “procure yet a favor” of his friend the governor, an entreaty he emphasized by writing, “I humbly beg this favor.”³⁶

Gilbert’s letter, suffused with the language of honor and reciprocity, was followed by one written by his brother Philip to his father just five days later. Although Philip, like Gilbert, asked his father for a favor from the governor, “to get a pass to go to Canada” in order to trade, the power dynamic differed significantly. Gilbert requested a slave and indentured servant, with no clear benefit to Robert Livingston besides saving the family name from the shame of his chronic indebtedness. Philip offered his father incentive: he promised that if allowed to go to Canada, “I would not doubt of getting your Negroes.”³⁷

When Philip admitted to his mother that he was not able to return the runaways, he said that he could not secure their “consent to go home.” Such a statement raised the question, what would constitute an enslaved person’s consent to be returned to a master? It also showed that Philip had a toolkit for determining such enslaved consent. That is not to say that what Philip deemed consent coincided with what enslaved people interpreted as consent. The rest of his letter disclosed that Philip would have gladly used force but was obliged into a type of barter because of the cost of acquiring Indian slave kidnappers, as well as the local Indians’ reluctance to

³⁶ Gilbert Livingston to Robert Livingston, Kingston, NY, 8 April 1713, GLC03107.00974/LP, GL.

³⁷ Philip Livingston to Robert Livingston, Albany, NY, 13 April 1713, GLC03107.00970/LP, GL

engage the French. Philip had nothing to offer the enslaved people that might convince them to willingly re-accept the yoke of slavery, and the enslaved people knew that the force of their lack of “consent” rested on the fact that Philip had “no means to get them from there.”³⁸

Livingston’s comment to Alida in April of 1714, that “No negroes are obtainable who are worth a skuiver; perhaps they will come,” could certainly be read as the market-based comment of a potential slave buyer sizing up the available inventory.³⁹ Yet such a reading misses the larger context of the Livingston network that was forged by gift reciprocities among elite slaveholders, his slaveholding tenants, and, in an uneven respect, slaves as well.

Two tenants had asked Livingston to secure slaves. When Livingston selected the slaves, his reckoning of their worth had as much to do with how valuable they were commercially as with what his tenants would accept from their landlord. He described one as being an English-speaking shepherd from Jamaica. Such skills would advertise the man as an asset not just for his knowledge of shepherding, but also for his ability to communicate easily. The second enslaved person was a new Negro who “knows nothing but [the] negro [language],” but that did not stop Livingston from commenting that both men were “such beautiful negroes as I have ever seen.”⁴⁰ Alida’s ability to secure the £50 price for each of them perhaps lay hidden in what obligations the tenants gained from Livingston. She wrote: “Jeremie has that negro boy who knows English for £50 he will pay us when you get here and the other one was too small for Japick Roelef [but he] has the small one for £50 to be paid in winter so for Japick you should send up a big one like Jeremie’s.”⁴¹ Japick secured the labor of the “new Negro” boy on credit through harvest.

³⁸ Philip to Alida Livingston, 28 October 1713, LFP-Trans.

³⁹ Robert Livingston to Alida Livingston, 21 April 1714, LFP-Trans.

⁴⁰ Robert Livingston to Alida Livingston, 28 April 1714, LFP-Trans.

⁴¹ Alida to Robert Livingston, 21 May 1714, LFP-Trans.

As discussed in chapter three, Alida and Tom, her enslaved valet, collided over the possession of a letter. Tom's insistence on keeping his letter—over and above Alida's wishes—demonstrated that slaves zealously guarded their own reciprocal connections. The Livingstons had certainly been involved in an uneven gift relationship with Tom—entrusting their valet with goods and letters. Tom clearly understood the power in such a relationship and used it to his own advantage when he refused to hand over the letter. Whether that letter had been given to Tom as a pass or was a letter from his family is unknown. But Tom not only claimed his right to it, he also protested its seizure through a work slow-down and other measures that caused Alida to fear that he would set fire to the Livingstons' home. Alida's decision to send him to a Palatine tenant slaveholding woman revealed the two women's reciprocal relationship.⁴²

As previously mentioned, the Livingstons' apportionment of old shoes to slaves not only met the utilitarian need for shod slaves in order to quicken work flow; it might well have reflected on how the Livingstons were perceived in the wider community. The shoes that Alida mentioned were not gifts in the strictest sense, but as demonstrated in chapter three, they were deeply connected to gendered notions of honor.⁴³ In 1722, Alida explicitly sanctioned such a master-slave gift exchange when she wrote to Robert, "Give Deko your old hat if you like."⁴⁴ Like the other slaves, Dego was shod in his master's old shoes, but unlike the previous instance, the hat was bestowed as a gift. What specific task Dego had performed to occasion the gift remained unmentioned. It might well have been a gift given to commemorate years of service as a valet. The gift also communicated Dego's place in the world, for the hat was not new, but old; not his own, but his master's; and so it attested to Livingston's hegemony over his world.

⁴² Alida to Robert Livingston, 5 November 1720, LFP-Trans.

⁴³ Alida to Robert Livingston, 16 November 1717, LFP-Trans.

⁴⁴ Alida to Robert Livingston, 25 May 1722, LFP-Trans.

In August of the same year, Alida mentioned Dego's proximity to a gifted relationship when she wrote, "Last night the Governor passed by and our Deko had been on board, he said. Had they woken me up, I would have sent him 6 ducks, but I didn't know anything about it until he returned."⁴⁵ Was Dego clad in Robert's "old hat" while on the transport with the governor? From Alida's text, it appears as if he ferried the politician. If Alida had known about the chance, she would have likely used Dego to present the ducks, and the enslaved man—himself a luxury item—presenting the gift would have heightened the a display of wealth and power. Alida's hope to capitalize on the presence of her enslaved valet to make contact with the governor is telling. It evidenced the overlapping networks of slavery, gift exchange, and political patronage.

Enslaved people occupied points of reciprocity between elites and sometimes facilitated such relationships. In the fall of 1722, Alida Livingston wrote that she sent her black valet Tom with goods to "Jan van Nes's yacht, and Tames [i.e. Tom] asked whether he was willing to take that keg of flour with him for Mr. Livingston. And he answered that he did not want to take it with him, but said we had to send it to Ryp van Dam so that he would take it down."⁴⁶ Jan van Ness was Alida's brother-in-law, though his fortunes were dwarfed by those of the Livingstons. He remained a tenant farmer on Rensselaerswijck. Alida tasked Tom with requesting that Jan transport the keg, an entreaty that did not read as out of the ordinary. Jan's refusal was likewise communicated through Tom who relayed to Alida the need to send the keg to Rip van Dam, another of Alida's slaveowning cousins.

The Livingstons enjoyed a political and business relationship with Governor William Burnet that was maintained by gifts and loans extended on goodwill, rather than by pure credit. The governor had assured Philip Livingston's place as deputy secretary for Indian Affairs in

⁴⁵ Alida to Robert Livingston, 20 August 1722, LFP-Trans.

⁴⁶ Tom's name is alternately spelled throughout the documents, sometimes appearing as "Tames." Alida Livingston to Robert Livingston, 20 October 1722, LFP-Trans.

1720 and stayed with Robert Livingston during the Albany conference convened to discuss Iroquois affairs in the fall of 1722.⁴⁷ In May of 1723, Robert Livingston borrowed a clock from the governor.⁴⁸ The next year, Burnet gave the following instructions to the New York Commissioners for Indian Affairs:

Herein you informed me some time ago, that you had redeemed a Negro Boy belonging to Captain Hicks of Virginia from Canada and that you were ready to deliver him on payment of four pounds being his charges. I have contacted Mr. Philip Livingston to pay me said sum pounds on my account and will pay for his further charges in New York in order to send him to Virginia.⁴⁹

Perhaps through the use of Native slave catchers or the cooperation of the Iroquois, Philip Livingston's associates succeeded where he had once failed: re-capturing an enslaved boy who had run away to French territory. Certainly Burnet took advantage of the reciprocal relationship that he enjoyed with the Livingstons. He had secured Philip's position as deputy secretary and thus made use of Livingston's wealth to offer surety for the transport of the captured man. This incident likely buoyed his official request two years later, that the Six Nations return a captured fugitive slave in their territory.⁵⁰

Elite slaveholding, familial identity, and notions of honor were shaped by a complicated web of reciprocities. The Atlantic networks that knit the Livingstons to their family were also deeply influenced by slavery. The exchange of slaves along the relational lines of their Northeastern elite masters offers a way to understand the importance that these slaveholders attributed to the intersecting goals of lessening dependence on overseas trade and enshrining gifts of slaves and sundries as forms of elite "patronage." The Van Rensselaers waged family

⁴⁷ Leder, *Robert Livingston*, 253, 268.

⁴⁸ Robert Livingston to Alida Livingston, 20 May 1723, LFP-Trans.

⁴⁹ William Burnet to the Commissioners for Indian Affairs, New York, NY, 20 June 1724, GLC03107.02156, GL.

⁵⁰ William Burnet asked that a slave boy captured by the Indians be returned, a request that the Iroquois deferred answering by placing the responsibility on another tribe. Conference between William Burnet and the Sachems of the Six Nations, 9 Sep 1726 and Answer of the Sachims of the Six Nations to William Burnet, 13 September 1726, in *DRCHNY*, 5: 793, 796.

battles based on slights caused by breaches in such reciprocal relationships. Robert and Alida Livingston understood their world in light of slavery, experienced the perils of gifting human beings who might challenge such an outrage, and managed their relationships with their children by using slavery as a key lever in a system which included both currying favor and shaming.

5.2 “Howe Ever I Can Make Sathisfaction”: Slavery and elite reciprocities

Cotton Mather’s receipt of Onesimus offers one of the most explicit examples of gift exchange involving human beings. Yet how representative was such an occurrence? Onesimus was, by no means, the first person to be received or given by Mather. Twenty-five years before Cotton Mather received Onesimus from his congregants, he gave another man to his father. In June 1681, Mather wrote the following memorandum in his diary, “About this Time I bought a *Spanish Indian*, and bestowed him for a *Servant*, on my Father. This Thing, I would not remember in this Place, but only because I would observe whether I do not hereafter see some special and signal Return of this Action in the Course of my Life. I am secretly persuaded *that I shall do so!*”⁵¹ There were significant differences between the circumstances of this *Spanish Indian* and Onesimus. Although Mather noted that he had “wanted a *good Servant*,” he described Onesimus as “a very likely *Slave*.” He explicitly described the Spanish Indian man as a *Servant*. This specificity was not just mere flourish. This key difference in station was central to the way that Mather understood the providential place of the Native man’s story.

Thirteen years after giving his father a Spanish Indian servant, Mather received another Native servant as a gift from Governor Sir William Phips. On August 12, 1696, Mather recorded the event as a memorandum, writing that he had allowed the servant to “go to Sea; and being an

⁵¹ Mather, *Diary*, 1: 22.

ingenuous Fellow, I gave him an Instrument for his Freedom, if hee serv'd mee til the End of the year 1697." The servant was subsequently captured by the French, and then that ship was recaptured by the English. But the captain, whom Mather described as "a Fellow, that had no Principles of Honour or Honesty in him," did not recognize Mather's claim to the man or the agreement that they had struck and "intended to make a perpetual *Slave* of him." The captain's outsider status did not bind him to any of the reciprocities that governed Mather's interconnected network. For Mather, such a situation was only rectified by the hand of God. He continued:

But then, a strange Conjunction of Circumstances fell out, that the churlish Captain was compelled without any Consideration, but what I should please, to *restore* Him. And my Servant being so strangely returned, I sett myself to make him a Servant of the Lord.⁵²

In Mather's conception, such a radical change of heart could mean only one thing: the "Churlish Captain" was "compelled without any Consideration" to return the servant. Godly force had persuaded even such a man. Because God had intervened so decisively in the arrangement, Mather was indebted to God, and so thus did not free the man but made him a "servant of the Lord."

Most reciprocal transactions of slaves were not as explicit as Cotton Mather's gifts of Indian servants and Onesimus. Robert Livingston served as a middleman to slaveowning tenants and, on at least one occasion, agreed to provide a tenant with "a strong Negro of 14-15 years."⁵³ His son, John Livingston, received the Jackson family from Samuel Beebe as payment for his legal fees. The same notice that confirmed John Henry Livingston's ecclesiastical call to Albany

⁵² Mather, *Diary*, 1: 203.

⁵³ Lease between Robert Livingston and Mattheus Abrahamse, 28 March 1687, Livingston -Redmond Manuscripts, Franklin D. Roosevelt Library (translated by Ruth Piwonka); cf. Singer, "The Livingston's as Slave Owners," 72.

included the Consistory's acceptance of "a young Negro, valued at £45" in lieu of payment for rental debts owed the religious council by the weaver, John van Zant.⁵⁴

Even if slaves were not explicitly offered as gifts, they were a vital part of the gift-exchange economy. For example, enslaved Africans sometimes ferried gifts between elites. In a passage replete with gift-exchange, Samuel Sewall recorded one such occurrence in his diary:

January 1. 17^{19/20} Gave Col. Dyer one of Mr. Foxcroft's books. Just before Prayer in the morning, Mr. Coopers sends my wife a Present of Oranges, and a Shattuck; and to my daughter Judith, a Stone-Ring, and a Fan, by his Mother's Negro Bristol, with a noble Letter to my daughter of this Date."⁵⁵

An elaborate and enduring network of elite ties was maintained by the exchange of gifts. The use of Cooper's "Mother's Negro Bristol" to ferry presents from Mr. Cooper to Sewall's daughter exemplified the centrality of slavery to this culture of gift exchange. Enslaved Africans were both a part of the complex web of reciprocity in early Massachusetts and also a powerful signifier of status among gift exchangers. The presence of "Bristol" lent more gravitas to Mr. Coopers "noble Letter" to Sewall's daughter, and advertised the wealth and status of Judith's would-be-suitors to her family.

Slaves were more than mute symbols of affluence in a culture in which commercial and reciprocal relationships coexisted; as messengers, they communicated the way in which such transactions should be understood. In November 1713, George Sydenham sent his slave to Robert Livingston's mill "with corn to grind." He expected that Livingston would send the slave back with various goods, including "pease," "gunpowder," and "pidgeon." Although it appeared on the surface to be a classic market request, Sydenham's slave's presence allowed for much more. Sending the slave instead of soliciting Livingston in person communicated his social

⁵⁴ Church of New York Dr. John H. Livingston accepts call, 10 May 1770, in *ERNY*, 6: 4184; Stefan Bielinski, "Johannes van Zandt, Jr., <http://www.nysm.nysed.gov/albany/bios/vz/jovzandt282.html> (accessed February 4, 2013).

⁵⁵ Sewall, *Diary*, 2: 937.

standing and the importance of his continued business. Sydenham included a veiled threat that Livingston would “comply with this...otherwise” he would be compelled to “go to Albany,” taking his business along with him.⁵⁶

And bondspeople could use avenues of reciprocity to their advantage. In 1769, John Stevenson, a wealthy Albany merchant and Philip Livingston’s neighbor, wrote to Philip’s son, Robert Livingston Jr., the following report of an enslaved man named Tom, whom Livingston had lent to Stevenson:

Your letter of the 25th ultimo I received by your Negro Tom. He returns home today, which exceeds the time you had given him by your Letter, but as he had very bad weather in comeing [sic] up he did not get here till the third day after the date of your letter. I have not [pushed] him very hard to go home till yesterday and as he has behaved very well since he has been here I dare say you will pass it over.⁵⁷

Stevenson and Livingston’s arrangement epitomized the blurred line between gifted reciprocity and commercial interests. Stevenson mentioned no remuneration beyond a vague hope that Robert Livingston Jr. would not be angry with the additional time spent by Tom, but would rather “pass it over.” Did Tom barter the extra time through good behavior? Perhaps he had family enslaved by Stevenson. Certainly, Stevenson placed the tardy return on Tom’s shoulders, entreating Livingston to overlook the extra time because Tom had “behaved very well” since he was with Stevenson. Enslaved participation in reciprocal relationships—or elite fears of such participation—shaped the tenor of some colonial laws and court cases.

According to the 1630 “Freedoms and Exemptions” of New Netherland, patroons were given “twelve black men and women out of the prizes in which Negroes shall be found, for the

⁵⁶ George Sydenham to Robert Livingston, Claverak, NY, 27 November 1714, GLC03107.01089/LP, GL.

⁵⁷ John Stevenson to Robert Jr., Albany, NY, 3 April 1769, GLC03107.03191/LP, GL; Peter Kinnear, ed., *Historical Sketch of St. Andrew’s Society of the City of Albany* (Albany, NY: Weed-Parsons Printing Company, 1903), 8-9.

advancement of the Colonies in New Netherland.”⁵⁸ Although the allotment was ostensibly designated for the “advancement” of New Netherland, such an ordinance which emphasized the giving of the enslaved as part of the definition of a New Netherland patroon, illuminated the early relationship between colony status and slavery.

Honor, slavery, and gift-giving appeared together in cases presented in New Amsterdam’s courts. On September 7, 1654, Jacob Stoffelsen testified that his sister, Ide van Vorst, laid “claim to half a negro, whom he received from Capt. Geurt Tysen and his company.” The odd half-claim arose not out of a work relationship but rather because Stoffelsen claimed the slave as payment for a wedding reception. Stoffelsen explained that he received the man “in return for a feast given to him at which two sheep were eaten” and that these sheep were consumed at Ide’s wedding. Ide understood the slave as a gift, albeit one bequeathed by her mother. Ide disputed her brother’s account, countering that “by deed of sale of their Mother’s property, the just half of all belongs to her and her sister. She therefore insists that half the negro belongs to her, and demands the same, acknowledging that the sheep were shared by both sides.” The court did not agree with Ide, siding instead with her brother and declaring that the slave was given neither as compensation for the wedding meal nor as a bequest from mother to daughter, but rather “inasmuch as the negro was given by Capt. Geurt Tysen and his Company to Jacob Stoffelsen, the same does not belong to the estate.” The ruling in favor of Stoffelsen rested entirely on his ability to prove that he received the enslaved man from Tysen and not his mother’s estate, a burden of proof that he had yet to meet. The court continued, asserting that Stoffelsen was required to “duly prove, that he gave some value to Capt. Geurt Tysen and his Company for the negro out of the estate, whenever further dispute arises thereon.”⁵⁹

⁵⁸ Patroons, 1630, Freedoms and Exemptions granted by the States-General, in *ERNY*, 1: 79.

⁵⁹ Jacob Stoffelsen vs. Ide van Vorst, 7 September 1654, in *RONA*, 1: 242-243.

Ide's defense rested on a refutation of her brother's claim that the wedding feast was a commercial transaction for which she compensated him with her half of the claim to an enslaved person, stressing that all at the wedding "shared" the meal. Stoffelsen's win rested on his ability to prove that he had received the enslaved person from a third party; barring that proof, the enslaved person would be reckoned as part of their mother's estate and he would hold no claim, wedding feast or no.

A year later, another enslaved person would be at the center of an argument about gifts in New Netherland's courts. On August 16, 1655, Joresy Rapalje sued Jan Cornelis, claiming that Cornelis had failed to pay her 160 guilders that she was due. Cornelis denied that he had any dealing with her at all, claiming "he has no question with the woman, but with her husband." Joresy was no stranger to the New Amsterdam legal system, and this gendered sleight of hand was rendered even more disingenuous by the details Cornelis offered as to why he withheld the funds.⁶⁰ He detailed the following:

His negro worked 16 months for Joresy, who had promised the negro, in addition to free board drink and maintenance, to furnish him with a first quality cloth suit, a hat, four shirts, stockings and shoes in proportion, and that, on the contrary, the negro was returned in worse supply than he was delivered in. Demands reparation therefore.⁶¹

As mentioned previously, the case dealt specifically with the expectations of Joresy as a slave mistress, and her response disclosed that she was particularly insulted by Cornelis's counterclaim. She communicated her disdain through pointed gift exchange. Not only did Joresy refuse to offer reparation to Cornelis, but she also asserted "that the negro had a proper outfit and had also given him a coat which cost 18 gl." She resolved to give "not to Jan Cornelisⁿ but to the

⁶⁰ Two years earlier, on 25 August 1653, Joresy Rapalje was sued by Adriaen Keyser and, less than one month after her case against Cornelis, was in court again, on 18 October 1655, suing Hend'k Hendricksen. Adriaen Keyser vs. Jorsey Rapalje, 25 August 1653, in *RONA*, 1: 106; Jorsey Rapalje vs. Hend'k Hendricksen, 18 October 1655, in *RONA*, 1: 377. Her name is variously spelled Joresy and Jorsey in the records.

⁶¹ Joresy Rapalje vs. Jan Cornelis, 16 August 1655, in *RONA*, 1: 338.

Negro cloth for breeches and 2 shirts, 1 pr. stockings and shoes, acknowledging to owe only 4 gl. to Jan Cornelissen.”⁶²

A week after Joresy Rapalje’s suit, on August 26, 1655, Gabriel de Haes accused Nicolaes de Meyer of arriving “about 14 days ago, to his house,” and “forcibly” assaulting him.⁶³ Although de Haes “requested justice,” he was required to wait because de Meyer, was “a Burgher.” De Meyer secured legal counsel in the form of his father-in-law, Hendrick van Dyck, who demanded that de Haes prove the altercation. He also countersued, claiming that de Haes “first attacked deft. with a naked hanger; scolded him as a coward, and afterwards struck him with a ‘Pagasy’ on the head and body” blows which knocked him to the ground.⁶⁴ De Haes did produce a witness, a man named Franciscus Dios, but de Meyer protested, asserting that de Haes “produce[d] a declaration only of a negro, or a young Indian, which in law is invalid. It is therefore not necessary to answer the same.”⁶⁵ A man without honor could not be trusted to tell the truth under oath, and De Meyer protested that Dios’ ethnicity disqualified his testimony.

Why did Gabriel de Haes rely on Dios’ testimony and what might this case uncover about race in systems of honor? De Haes struck a blow against de Meyer’s honor by using Franciscus as a witness. This must have conjured up a galling memory for de Meyer—de Haes had called him a coward and beat him in front of a man of color. The role reversal could not have been lost on either man. De Haes both dishonored him in the fight and publically shamed him with his choice of witness.

Gabriel de Haes was no stranger to court, or to the ways in which questioning a witness’s social standing could be beneficial. Just a month earlier, de Haes defended himself in a slander

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Gabriel de Haes vs. Nicolaes Meyer, 26 August 1655, in *RONA*, 1: 353.

⁶⁴ Gabriel de Haes vs. Nicolaes Meyer, 8 November 1655, in *RONA*, 1: 389-390.

⁶⁵ Gabriel de Haes vs. Nicolaes Meyer, 15 November 1655, in *RONA*, 1: 398.

case using similar tactics. Marretie Joris claimed that de Haes had slandered her and her husband, testifying that de Haes “abused her as a whore and her husband as a rogue.”⁶⁶ When she presented two witnesses to substantiate her version of events, de Haes argued that they were biased because they were her servants. His recourse to their status had little effect—the witnesses refuted his claim, and the court sided with Joris. De Haes was also not ignorant of slavery. He was a tobacco farmer and perhaps that was why he turned to Franciscus Dios, a man of mixed black and Native ancestry, as a witness.⁶⁷ His brother, who was implicated in the case, was also a merchant, a baker.⁶⁸ Nicholas de Meyer, who was originally from Hamburg, had only been in the colony for one year before de Haes presented the claim.⁶⁹ Although he hailed from Hamburg, de Meyer was no stranger to slavery and the ways in which racial identity was crucial to the case. He had previously lived in Dutch Brazil for twenty two years before immigrating to New Netherland.⁷⁰ Both de Haes and de Meyer understood the subtle meanings race held for honor and how to leverage that knowledge to buttress their claims.

Perhaps as a testament to the ubiquity and usefulness of gift giving in cementing elite ties, Anglo-American lawmakers took pains to stipulate that slaves were not to engage in such reciprocal arrangements. In 1650, a Connecticut law concerning “Masters, Servants & Labourers” detailed:

It is also ordered by the authority aforesaid, That no servant, either man or maid, shall either give, sell or truck, any commodity whatsoever, without license from

⁶⁶ Marretie Joris vs. Gabriel de Haes, 5 July 1655, in *RONA*, 1: 328-329.

⁶⁷ Elaine Forman Crane offered a thorough analysis of Gabriel de Haes’ slander court case with Marreite Joris, a woman who appeared in the record under a variety of names in *Witches, Wife Beaters, and Whores: Common Law and Common Folk in Early America* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2011), 32-33.

⁶⁸ Marks of the Bakers in New Amsterdam, 17 September 1661, in *RONA*, 1: 47, 370.

⁶⁹ Joyce D. Goodfriend, *Before the Melting Pot*, 17.

⁷⁰ His brother, Col. William de Meyer, went on to marry Petrus Stuyvesant’s niece, Catherine. Joseph R. Klett, ed., *Genealogies of New Jersey Families: From the Genealogical Magazine of New Jersey* (Baltimore, MD: Genealogical Publishing Co., 1996), 6.

thiere [sic] master, during the time of theire service, under paine of fyne or corprall punishment, at the discretion of the Courte, as the offence shall deserve.⁷¹

Eight years later, a Massachusetts statute would repeat the Connecticut law almost verbatim, a significant inversion to the norm of Connecticut copying Massachusetts's legal code.⁷²

Pennsylvania would follow suit in 1676 with a similar law, adding the penalty that trespassers “be compelled to restore the said Commodities to the Master of such Servants or Servant, and forfeit the double value thereof to the poor of the Parish where they shall Inhabit.”⁷³ New York's 1684 law mirrored Pennsylvania's with slight alterations to the monetary punishment of violators, but it added an additional clause detailing that “if any person whatsoever shall Creditt or Trust any servant or slave for Clothes Drinke or any other Comodity whatsoever ye said person shall loose his Debt & be forever Debarred from maintayning any suit att Law against ye said servant or slave for any matter or thing so Trusted aforesaid.”⁷⁴ The law thus specifically discouraged New York residents from establishing reciprocal relationships with slaves.

New York inherited New Netherland's dearth of specie, so many slave purchasers relied on extended relationships of credit to acquire slaves. The relationships that had flourished under Dutch rule were discouraged under English governance. The instructions that “due payment” was expected for “Negroes” either “in money or Commodities” was reaffirmed to Robert Hunter when he assumed the position of governor of New York in 1710. While the Royal Africa company promised to provide “a constant and sufficient supply of Merchantable Negroes at moderate prices,” it fell to Hunter to “take Especial care that Payment be duly made, and within

⁷¹ “Masters, Servants, Sojourners” in *The Code of 1650, Being a Compilation of the Earliest Laws and Order of the General Court of Connecticut...*, ed. Charles A. Ingersoll (Hartford, Silas Andrus, 1825), 65-66.

⁷² “‘Masters, Servant, Labourers,’ The General Laws of the Massachusetts Colony Revised and Published by Order of the General Court, October 1658” in *The Colonial Laws of Massachusetts*, ed. William H. Whitmore (1672; repr., Boston, Rockwell and Churchill, 1890), 86, 104.

⁷³ “‘Masters, Servants & Labourers,’ Duke of Yorke's Laws, September 22, 1676” in *Charter to William Penn and Laws of the Province of Pennsylvania*, eds. Staughton George, Benjamin M. Nead and Thomas McCamant (Harrisburg, PA: Lane S. Hart, 1879), 37.

⁷⁴ A Bill Concerning Masters, Servants, Slaves, Labourers and Apprentices, 24 October 1684, in *CLNY*, 1: 157.

a competent time according to their Agreements.”⁷⁵ Such an instruction was necessary because the lack of specie and the frequent default on slave purchases created a local market in which reciprocal arrangements might delay payment indefinitely. Such arrangements were not honored by outside traders or in other colonies.

In the summer of 1660, an enslaved man arrived at Rensselaerswijck carrying a note of vital importance. The note allowed the man to traverse the distance between the Esopus River and Rensselaerswijck without concern for slave catchers, which was a considerable asset as the countryside teemed with bounty hunters keen to capture runaways. Even after he arrived at the patroonship, the details of his journey crossed the Atlantic to Holland. In 1660, Jeremias van Rensselaer wrote to Jan Baptist, “There came the Negro of Mr. Lamontagne, bringing with him a note saying that in the Esopus there had been trouble between the Dutch and the Indians and that on both sides people had been killed.”⁷⁶ That Johannes de la Montagne, who was vice director of New Netherland, sent his “Negro” through the fighting, losing the man’s labor and possible defense to ferry the message to Jeremias, communicated more than just the mere content of the message. The enslaved man’s presence, in itself, was a testament to the strength of the connection between La Montagne and the patroonship.⁷⁷ As mentioned in chapter two, the ensuing war would inspire Henricus Selijns to elegize the return of Dutch captives “as from the grave” while celebrating Dutch slavery. Four years later, in 1664, Petrus Stuyvesant requested a

⁷⁵ Draft Instructions for Robert Hunter, Governor of New-York, 30 December 1709, in *DRCHNY*, 3: 136.

⁷⁶ Jeremias to Jan Baptist van Rensselaer, 6 June 1660, in *CJVR*, 220.

⁷⁷ Johannes de la Montagne was a Huguenot physician who had an Atlantic career. He was born in France and attended the University of Leyden. He traveled to Guiana in 1621 as a member of a scouting expedition, and settled in Tobago in 1629, only to return to Holland four years later due, in part, to his wife’s declining health. He immigrated to New Netherland on September 25, 1636, arriving on the ship *Rensselaerswyck*, which was partially owned by Killian van Rensselaer. La Montagne owned a tobacco plantation in Manhattan called *Vredendahl* (whose present-day location corresponds to the upper portion of Central Park), until was destroyed sometime between 1643 and 1645 during an Indian attack. In addition to serving as the official colony surgeon, La Montagne filled several government positions in New Amsterdam before being appointed vice director in 1656, charged with overseeing Fort Orange and Beverwijck. For an excellent overview, see “History,” Society of the Descendants of Johannes de la Montagne, <http://delamontagne.org/history.htm> (accessed March 1, 2013).

loan from La Montagne and Jeremias van Rensselaer, assuring them that “the obligation to be executed may assure you that this will be reimbursed satisfactorily either in good Negroes or other goods.”⁷⁸

Thirty years after the journey of La Montagne’s enslaved man, at least some Albany residents heard the news of the 1690 Schenectady massacre—and feared a possible design on Albany—due to the report of an enslaved woman. An entry dated February 13, 1690, detailed that “a negro woman of Shinnectady was told ye Same by a Spanyard yt was among ye French yt a Design was Laid against Albany.” Her report was enough to discourage Captain Jochim States from dispatching the troops at Fort Orange, leaving the city unprotected.”⁷⁹ Almost a century later, on October 19, 1763, Lieutenant Colonel David van der Heyden communicated intelligence of a threat from “one of the Indians who went with Samuel Pryun to New York.” He received the information from Captian Stephen Schuyler’s enslaved man.⁸⁰

Messages ferried by slaves, like slave testimony, were always suspect, because the integrity of such messages was linked to the honor of the messenger. Thus the threat that a slave messenger might purposely dissemble in a time of war as a means of resistance was never a distant fear. When, on September 20, 1767, the Native contact named Asueshan informed Norman Macleod, the commissary for Indian affairs, about a potential impending war between the “Sincecas and Messesages,” black messengers played a vital role. He noted that the two tribes “were going to send some Negroes they had amongst them to Sir William Johnson.” Macleod observed that Asueshan “seemed to be much afraid that the Negroes would tell S^r.

⁷⁸ Petrus Stuyvesant to Johannes de la Montagne and Jeremias van Rensselaer, 8 July 1664, in *DRCHNY*, 2: 371.

⁷⁹ Entries relating to the Burning of Schenectady, 13 February 1690, in *DHSNY*, 2: 158-189.

⁸⁰ Lieutenant Colonel David van der Heyden to William Johnson, 19 October 1763, in *WJP*, 4: 219. This letter was destroyed by fire and only a summary remains in the Johnson papers.

William maney lyes and that he would believe all the bad storeys they would tell Him.”⁸¹ That the “many lyes” and “bad storeys” were relayed in the mouth of “some Negroes” was no accident—a potential unreliable report could tip the balance of power in the region which included the infrastructure for policing slavery, a tactic that, three decades earlier, had caused Robert Livingston to post Palatine guards in order to police his own slaves. Yet William Johnson’s reliance on such messengers for intelligence was also evidenced in Asueshan concern that he would “believe all the bad stories they would tell him” and be ill informed on the real state of affairs.

William Johnson, like Robert Livingston, received enslaved people from elite contacts on behalf of other slaveholders. Such mediated transactions cemented not only commercial networks, but reciprocal ones as well. On two occasions, Johnson served as a middleman for William Darlington, a New York merchant. On December 3, 1763, Darlington instructed Johnson to deliver a black slave along with “two barrels of codfish” to Dr. Samuel Stringer, an Albany physician who had trained in Philadelphia.⁸² Stringer had bought the enslaved person from Francis Wade, a Philadelphia trader and brewer whose family was connected to the merchant elite in London and Jamaica.⁸³ Darlington also had Johnson hand off an enslaved man named Nick, whom he had sold to Joseph Conkling in Albany.⁸⁴ On another occasion, Johnson received a letter from Daniel Claus in Montreal, which mentioned not only Johnson’s function as middleman in his purchase of both “white servants or young negroes,” but also concerned gifts

⁸¹ Proceedings of a Congress held at Niagara, 20 September 1767, in *DHSNY*, 2: 879-880.

⁸² Stefan Bielinski, “Dr. Samuel Stringer,” <http://www.nysm.nysed.gov/albany/bios/s/sastringer5046.html> (accessed February 4, 2013).

⁸³ In his sister-in-law, Magdalen Devine’s 1782 will, Wade was listed as a “brewer”; his brothers, Thomas a “merchant”; Farret, “a London, Gentlemen”; and Matthew, a “Gentlemen” and “Merchant” in Jamaica. Will of Magdalen Devine, 21 December 1782, in Lothrop Withington, “Pennsylvania Gleanings in England,” *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 29, no. 1 (1905): 95.

⁸⁴ William Darlington to William Johnson, New York, 3 December 1763, in *WJP*, 4: 257-258. This letter was destroyed by fire and only a summary remains in the Johnson papers.

given to Native people.⁸⁵ Claus, who was the secretary for Indian affairs, likely had considerable cultural knowledge of such Native gifts, as he had lived among the Mohawk.⁸⁶

Captain John Butler's slave, Zanneo Pack, ferried goods under Johnson's explicit orders and using his account. On May 16, 1750, Johnson gave the following instructions: "Please to let the Bearer Captn. Butlers Negroe have 60lbs of Bacon, and I will pay you for it. Witness my Hand. Wm. Johnson." In a memorandum, he noted, "Zanneo Pack has received 60 pounds of bacon from Casper Leip on Colonel Johnson's account." John Butler had served under William Johnson as an Indian agent, and was a very wealthy landowner with a manor home. The transaction, though seemingly simple, revealed the layers of reciprocity embedded in such relationships and the central place of the enslaved in such transactions. On the surface, the exchange read as a basic interaction among the butcher, Casper Leip, and the enslaved man Zanneo. Elites appeared only as disembodied words on the page—their wishes communicated in written instruction. Yet the transaction was fundamentally reciprocal: Johnson's extension of credit for the bacon matched Captain Butler's extension of Zanneo's services as messenger.

Hans Hansen, a merchant and fur trader who had served as mayor of Albany and as representative to the colonial assembly, sent an enslaved black woman to deliver fifty lemons to Richard Miller, the sheriff of Albany County.⁸⁷ Miller detailed the transaction in a letter to

⁸⁵ Daniel Claus to William Johnson, 17 September 1764, in *WJP*, 4: 540. This letter was destroyed by fire and only a summary remains in the Johnson papers.

⁸⁶ Claus hailed from Germany. After being enticed by the prospect of being a middleman for the tobacco and silk trade from Virginia to Germany and the Netherlands in 1749, Claus's plans changed abruptly when he discovered that his American contact had scammed him. Unable to secure immediate passage back to Europe, Claus instead toured the Six Nations with Col. Conrad Weiser, and lived among the Mohawks, as well as on Sir William Johnson's estate, to learn the Iroquois language. Daniel Claus, *Daniel Claus' Narrative of His Relations with Sir William Johnson...*, ed. Louis Livingston Seaman (New York: Society of Colonial Wars, 1904), 3-7. For copies of his writings online, see "Colonial Daniel Claus Memoranda-1775," in *Historical Documents, Series 8* (Quebec: Literary and Historical Society of Quebec, 1905), <http://www.morrin.org/transactions/docsfromclient/books/45/45.html> (accessed February 4, 2013).

⁸⁷ Hansen served as mayor of Albany twice, in 1731 and 1754, and as Albany representative to the colonial Assembly with Philip Schuyler from 1750 to 1751. At the time of his mention in Miller's letter, Hansen had been nominated Commissioner of Indian affairs by Governor George Clinton. Like Hansen, Richard Miller was also a

Johnson, writing that the enslaved woman “told me they ware Sent from you to me but Since I understand they ware to be Sent to you so that the Negro wench made a mistake there is 23 Left which I send you by M^r Van Eps and shall send what I have used as soon as posiab^{le}.”⁸⁸

Although Miller saddled the enslaved woman with the error of delivering the lemons, the mistake did not prevent Miller from consuming over half of the delivery.

Such mediated slave transactions blurred the line between commerce and gift exchange. On May 24, 1751, John B. van Eps wrote the following to Johnson, “I feayried M^r Henry Phillips according to Act and Send also the in Closed bills and ye 2s wh: the Negro Boay brought Me for your honears farrey. I hop ye or Yours will never pay me a penny for the Same for I Cannot Shee howe Ever I Can Make Sathisfaction.”⁸⁹ Eps framed Johnson’s supply of a “Negro boy” in the language of reciprocity: he rejected payment because he could not reciprocate in kind. Yet hybrid commercial reciprocal slave networks relationships could be tenuous. Philip Livingston expressed frustration that his expectations of his elite slaveholding acquaintances did not match reality when he wrote to Dirk van Veghten Jr.:

“I send a negro boy which Jonathan Wheelor promist[sic] to take down to the Manor, and so did Swits, but they have both decived me in it. I suppose we shall not get a chapman for this boy being very Lean; he has been sick, and is on his recovery.”⁹⁰

Philip clearly interpreted Wheeler’s and Swits’s failure to make good on their promise to transport the sick boy from Albany to Livingston Manor as a deception. Although he did not

trader, and he was recommended to the sheriff’s post by William Johnson. Stefan Bielinski, “Hans Hansen,” <http://www.nysm.nysed.gov/albany/bios/h/hanshansen4954.html> and “Richard Miller,” <http://www.nysm.nysed.gov/albany/bios/m/rimiller.html> (accessed February 4, 2013); *WJP*, 5: 294, 418.

⁸⁸ Richard Miller to William Johnson, Albany, 15 August 1752, in *WJP*, 1: 373.

⁸⁹ John B. van Eps to William Johnson, Schenectady, 24 May 1751, in *WJP*, 1: 337.

⁹⁰ Philip Livingston to Dirk van Veghten Jr., Albany, NY, 14 July 1735, GLC03107.02468/LP, GL. Livingston was partnered with van Veghten in Atlantic trade and, earlier in the letter, had appraised him on the poor trade in Jamaica.

elaborate on what alternate arrangements he made to deliver the boy to van Veghten, it is likely that it cost more than the previous arrangements.

Gift-giving and slavery had consequences for court cases and the development of Northeastern legal culture. The black messengers who ferried messages for elites were integral parts of a system that was both commercial and reciprocal. They could either be used to advertise their masters' intentions towards the recipient or be loaned out—their labor an extravagant gift that demanded appropriate reciprocation. Elites crafted intricately woven mediated slave networks based on honor, gift giving, and hybrid modes of reciprocity.

5.3 “As if my Negro had Said it”: Honor, profit, and the rhetorical world of elite slaveholders

The presence of hereditary slaves among elites carried enormous rhetorical weight. When treated unfairly by another of their social group, many slaveholding elites would exclaim that they were being treated as a “Negro.” In a letter complaining about the political arguments in an 1664 colony council he attended, Jeremias van Rensselaer wrote that “they cared as much about it as if my Negro had said it, so that I had to submit to it for the term being and had to listen to many derogatory remarks from them as to what belonged to our colony or where our boundary line was.”⁹¹ Slavery and dishonor were synonymous in Jeremias's conception: the slight offered by his fellow representatives akin to racial slavery. Alida Livingston, likewise, termed the Palatines' treatment of her while tenanting on Livingston Manor “slavery.”⁹²

⁹¹ Jeremias to Jan Baptist van Rensselaer, 25 April 1664, in *CJVR*, 353.

⁹² Alida to Robert Livingston, 25 July 1711, LFP-Trans.

Slavery's connection to notions of elite honor also persisted among Massachusetts elite slaveholders. Following Harvard President Increase Mather's long stay in England, William Brattle and John Leverett sought the removal of the absent president.⁹³ Sewall sided with Brattle and Leverett. Cotton Mather was so enraged with Sewall's stance against his father that, as Sewall recounted in the margins of his diary:

Mr. Cotton Mather came to Mr. Wilkins's shop, and there talked very sharply against me as if I had used his father worse than a Neger; spake so loud that people in the street might hear him. Then went and told Sam, That one pleaded much for Negros, and he had used his father worse than a Negro.⁹⁴

The interchange among Cotton Mather, Judge Sewall, and Sewall's son Sam was telling. Though both men had written pamphlets arguing for a degree of humane treatment for blacks, Cotton Mather sharply rebuffed Judge Sewall for standing against his father, saying derisively, "That one pleaded much for Negros, and he had used... [my] father worse than a Negro." Embedded in his insult were the coded cultural lines that he charged Sewall with crossing, for he accused Sewall of prizing enslaved Africans over his elite intellectual peers

Sewall answered Mather's charge, not with heated dialogue but with a pointed gift exchange. That same day, he penned sarcastically in his diary, "I sent Mr. Increase Mather a Hatch of very good Venison; I hope in that I did not treat him as a Negro."⁹⁵ The gift of venison was a gift among gentlemen. As Ilana Krausman Ben-Amos noted, in England, venison was "exclusively owned by the Crown and the aristocracy" the "quintessential mark of the landed elite." Indeed, "offering it was a powerful indicator of privileged status."⁹⁶ Although venison's ubiquity in the Americas made it less of a luxury, Sewall made sure to indicate the cut was "good." As the Livingstons' correspondence in chapter three evidenced, masters harbored

⁹³ Kennedy, "Thy Patriarch's Desire," 3-6.

⁹⁴ Sewall, *Diary*, 20 October 1701, 1: 454.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 20 October 1701, 1: 455.

⁹⁶ Ben-Amos, *Culture of Giving*, 207.

specific notions about what type of meat was appropriate for slaves. Sewall sent the venison both to indicate that he understood the obligation of class and as a form of shaming Mather. The episode demonstrated that elites understood enslaved blacks to be associated with a pantheon of gifted signifiers. If the gift of venison implied Sewall's acknowledgement of a shared elite status between himself and Increase Mather, Sewall's comment implied that there existed a gift that would have been equivalent to treating "him as a Negro." Perhaps if he had wanted to treat Mather slavishly he would have sent him "bread and butter"—the diet to which Livingston reduced his slave Dego.⁹⁷

A canon of reciprocal expectations governed the actions of elites regarding slavery; that language was both developed and explored in Sewall and Mather's slave tracts. In 1706, Mather circulated *The Negro Christianized* anonymously. Although the author's name was not given, it was no secret among Mather's friends that the work had been penned by the minister, for he had been ruminating on the work for some time. Six years earlier, his friend Samuel Sewall wrote, "And Mr. C. Mather resolves to publish a sheet to exhort Masters to labour their Conversion." Indeed it was in some part due to Mather's project that Sewall felt "call'd of God to Write" his own "Apology" for enslaved blacks, which he did shortly after he made his diary entry.⁹⁸ The *Negro Christianized* borrowed from notions of reciprocity and market-based concepts to describe the relationship between master and God. Such a literary framework challenges the historiography that dates the eclipse of the age of reciprocity between humans and God with the onset of Protestantism.

If Mather's Puritanism prevented him from directly asserting any reciprocity between individual salvation and earthly works, he had no trouble asserting that good works on behalf of

⁹⁷ Robert to Alida Livingston, 20 May 1726, LFP-Trans.

⁹⁸ Sewall, *Diary*, 1: 433.

a slave might oblige God to reciprocate in kind. He argued that “many *Masters* whose Negroes have greatly vexed them, with miscarriages” might be receiving Heaven’s chastisement “for failing in their Duty about their *Negroes*.”⁹⁹ He continued, asserting that “Had they done more, to make their *Negroes* the knowing and willing *Servants* of God, it may be, God would have made their Negroes better *Servants* to them.”¹⁰⁰ A certain measure of earthly blessing among the slaveholding elite, according to Mather, was dependent on God’s satisfaction with their treatment of their slaves.

Mather rooted the central problem of masters preventing the Christianization of their slaves in “Money,” and framed it as potentially damning to slaveholders’ souls. Answering the charge that baptism might “entitle [blacks] to their *Freedom*; so our *Money* is thrown away,” Mather honed in on money as his true target. As Deborah Valenze has argued, the notion of slaves as money in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century was as evocative to early antislavery proponents as the later notion of slaves as property.¹⁰¹ Mather asserted that the salvation of an enslaved African’s soul was not lost money but rather “that Mans *Money* will perish with him, who had rather the *Souls* in his Family should *Perish*, than that he should lose a little *Money*.”¹⁰² Far from valorizing money in philanthropy or other charitable projects, Mather viewed it, rather than slavery, as leading to the death of slaveholders’ souls. Mather’s explicit unease with money gave weight to Valenze’s assertion that “‘disenchantment of the world’ and

⁹⁹ Mather, *Negro Christianized*, 14.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid. Max Weber’s assertion in *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* that Puritanism was centered on the belief that God’s blessings were meted out to His children in not only a spiritual but “a material sense, too,” seems to explain Mather’s words. Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the ‘Spirit’ of Capitalism and Other Writing*, ed. and trans. Peter Baehr and Gordon C. Wells (New York: Penguin Books, 2002), 111.

¹⁰¹ Deborah Valenze, *The Social Life of Money in the English Past* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 227.

¹⁰² Mather, *Negro Christianized*, 16.

money did not proceed in linear fashion, despite the banishment of popery, the rise of reason and scientific truth, and the production of a great deal of wealth.”¹⁰³

In an elite culture of slavery, the language of the market coexisted with notions of reciprocity even in the heart of New England Puritanism. Although Mather’s project inspired Sewall’s antislavery tract and Sewall showed a similar degree of unease with the connection between the corrosive influences of the market and the traffic in slaves, in *The Selling of Joseph*, he did not reject the market as a framework. Like Mather, he addressed his detractors in terms of market value, but, unlike Mather, he inveighed against slavery by weighing the problem as a type of double entry bookkeeping, rather than as a potential source of divine reciprocity or condemnation. Although the pamphlet opened with an assertion of mankind’s relation to God, Sewall presented the relationship using the language of the market, writing that Jesus’s sacrifice granted mankind “a most beneficial and inviolable Lease under the Broad Seal of Heaven, who were before only Tenants at Will.” This divine market equality ensured that “Originally, and Naturally, there is no such thing as Slavery.”¹⁰⁴ Grounding his argument in the debate over the enslavement of whites in North Africa, he observed, “it may be a question whether all the Benefit received by *Negro* Slaves, will balance the Accompt of Cash laid out upon them; and for the Redemption of our own enslaved Friends out of *Africa*.”¹⁰⁵ For Sewall, anti-slavery was a question of balancing earthly accounts, not currying divine favor.

Mather’s relationship with Onesimus and his use of the enslaved man’s knowledge of smallpox further illuminated the ways in which blacks were woven into the system of reciprocity. Perhaps because he had resolved to teach him to read and “from thence...go onto

¹⁰³ Valenze, *Social Life of Money*, 118.

¹⁰⁴ Samuel Sewall, *The Selling of Joseph: A Memorial*, ed. Paul Royster (1700; repr., Lincoln, NE: Libraries at University of Nebraska-Lincoln Electronic Texts in American Studies, 2007), <http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/etas/26> (accessed March 4, 2009), 1.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 2.

Writing,” and Onesimus had offered information to combat smallpox, Mather believed that he and Onesimus were bound in a system of reciprocity. Yet Mather’s relationship with Onesimus also illustrated the limitations of exchange relationships between enslaver and enslaved.

From Mather’s perspective, his relationship with Onesimus did not end well. In several instances in his diary, he accused Onesimus of thieving and indicated that that was why he ultimately granted Onesimus an attenuated freedom.¹⁰⁶ Mather no longer offered prayers and supplications on Onesimus’s behalf to God, but rather drew up a contract by which Onesimus would gain his freedom upon several “conditions.” Onesimus was obliged in writing to “Lend a helping Hand” when the Mathers “shall have any Domestic Business more than the Daily affairs.” Mather also demanded that Onesimus pay back “within six months the sum of Five Pounds” because of “the Liberties he took, while in [Mather’s] service.”¹⁰⁷

Kathryn Koo has written that Mather “had invested so much religious zeal” in Onesimus, but the enslaved African “had not experienced any Christian inspiration of his own,” and that caused Mather to believe that he had failed.¹⁰⁸ Some scholars have posited that Onesimus’s lack of conversion and increased belligerence against Mather was due to the contact that he had with other Africans while he maintained a marriage to a woman who lived outside of the Mathers’ household. Yet none have posited the possibility that Onesimus might have indeed experienced a religious conversion, but that the terms that he used to convey that conversion did not conform to Mather’s pantheon of signifiers. Certainly the tone that Mather used in his diary to refer to Onesimus had changed from one of reciprocity to one of contractual obligation.

Rules of decorum that emphasized the reciprocal ordering of society governed the pursuit of runaways as much as the desire to recapture an investment. While slave owners like the

¹⁰⁶ Mather, *Diary*, 2: 363.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ Koo, “Strangers in the House of God,” 148.

Livingstons reached out to their network to track down slaves, and while they were not above contracting with slave catchers to abduct their former slaves, they did operate within certain cultural expectations. Thus, as mentioned in chapter three, when the commissary, Johannes Dyckman, stormed into the Leendertsen house in the spring of 1652, demanding that Catalyn hand over her enslaved woman, Claesje, because, as Dyckman saw it, she had “slandered honest people,” he was compelled to wait for Catalyn’s husband, Sander, to return home to press his case. When, in the heat of argument about turning over the woman, Dyckman stabbed Leendertsen, he trespassed social custom, just as he had when he publicly whipped the entire family of the patroon, Gerrit van Slichtenhorst. Dyckman’s crimes threatened not just the Leendertsen household, but also the proper ordering of society: slaves could have their personal space searched, their families disrupted, their bodies abused, but masters must not. To the contrary, any such trespasses threatened turning master into slave.

The societal expectations that ordered the world of Johannes Dyckman were similar to those encountered by Michael Theyser and Joseph Northop, despite the intervening century. On April 12, 1764, Judge Robert Livingston heard a case that concerned a trespass of rules of decorum for pursuing runaways. Michael Theyser, a New York innkeeper, testified that he was assaulted by a group of “four of five” people headed by a man named Joseph Northrop, who claimed to be searching “for a Runaway.” Although the runaway was not explicitly identified as a slave—the person might have been a runaway wife or servant—the details offered by the plaintiff were stark. The men woke him up, demanding the runaway without producing a warrant or being accompanied by a police officer. When Theyser protested the hour and manner of treatment, the men turned violent, using a sword to deliver “four wounds about his [Theyser’s] head and neck.” They only ceased the assault when Theyser’s wife cried, “Murder.” The details

of the assault were enough to move Judge Robert Livingston to recommend that Northrop “be held to Bail in the sum of one hundred Pounds.”¹⁰⁹ Whether or not the Theysers were harboring the runaway was immaterial; Northup and his men had violated hospitality by searching at a late hour and compounded the intrusion by physically assaulting Theyser, treating him like the very runaway they pursued.

The language of honor, profit, and slavery that had defined the first Robert Livingston’s correspondence and business relationships recurred throughout later Livingston family correspondence. On April 20, 1770, Peter R. Livingston reported to his father, Robert Livingston Jr., that the DeLancy family was “striving their Utmost to make our family ridiculous and to keep them out of all posts of Honor Profit and are determined to oppose everything and every Body that they support which is too hard to bear.” The DeLancy family had sided against the Livingstons in the case of the Canajoharie Patent, joining with William Johnson to deny their claims to Mohawk land.¹¹⁰ A few lines later, Peter mentioned the sale of an enslaved girl named Jen. Even though he bluntly set her price at £75 and had made previous arrangements with Philip Spencer to sell her if the need arose, the language he used when speaking about the sale mirrored that used to express his anger at the DeLancys’ slight. Just like the DeLancys, Jen’s behavior, according to Peter, was “too hard to bear,” so much so that there was “no living with her.” Whether Jen’s behavior could bring shame on the Livingston family and tarnish their honor in the same way that the DeLancys’ machinations against their land grab had is doubtful, but such resistance could definitely affect Peter’s profit. However, unlike the DeLancys, Jen could be

¹⁰⁹ Deposition of Michael Theyser, New York, 12 April 1764, GLC02503.12/LP, GL.

¹¹⁰ Mary Lou Lustig, *Privilege and Prerogative: New York’s Provincial Elite, 1710-1776* (Cranbury, NJ: Associated University Presses, 1995), 94, 120-119, 202n45, 46.

disposed of by Peter, who needed only contact a friend committed to selling her for a considerable sum.¹¹¹

Within elite Northeastern networks, the language of honor and profit developed together with the language of slavery. Slaveholders zealously guarded their personal and family honor, judging slights using pointedly racialized language. Despite the market character of slave catching, rules of decorum guided the proper manner of tracking down escapees, so as to keep slave and master separate categories. The enslaved were integrated into a pantheon of gifted signifiers that encompassed emergent notions of money and man's reciprocal relationship with God. Although they filled a certain role within the system, and could wrest a degree of negotiation to claim some items for themselves, they remained perennially stripped of any ability to reciprocate.

5.4. Conclusion

Under Dutch rule, slaveholding elites, such as the Stuyvesants and the van Rensselaers, created rules that governed their social networks out of the demands of both commerce and reciprocity. Atlantic networks of gift exchange and patronage shaped the ways that slavery was practiced and policed. The first generations of Livingstons built on the framework laid by earlier generations, constructing an intricate network of familial and social slaveholding contacts through lines of reciprocity. The world they inhabited, though officially English, was never fully so: although ruled by English law, the older cultural reciprocities, such as the forms of payment

¹¹¹ Peter R. Livingston to Robert Livingston Jr., New York, NY, 20 April 1770, GLC03107.03238/LP, GL. The Connecticut farmer and former iron worker, Philip Spencer, agitated on behalf of iron workers to Robert Livingston Jr. six years before, in 1766. Although he and Livingston were on opposite sides of that issue, this contact likely laid the groundwork for the two men's connections with regard to selling Jen. Philip Spencer to Robert Livingston Jr., 11 August 1766, GLC03107.03068, GL.

for slaves, endured and shaped the ways that the Livingstons built social relationships. Yet their world was predicated on the fact that slaves were not allowed to reciprocate. Elite masters feared slave reciprocity in the form of dangerous “gifts,” such as running away, switching sides, and violent resistance.

Cotton Mather’s gift giving and receiving of slaves, when seen as part of a wider inter-colonial network of elite slaveholders, demonstrates that servants and slaves as gifts were a vital part of the ways that elites demarcated the boundaries of their own networks. Slaves offered as incentive for tenancy, payment for debts, and messenger-middlemen of other gift-exchanges reinforced and reified what it meant to be a master. Such definitions were not historically static, as the heated court debates that dealt with the reciprocities attested. Legal precedent fixed the place of slaves in colonial gift-exchange systems, although local experience was reflected in the subtle differences between the colonial codes. Even as the law increasingly defined slaves as unable to testify due to their lack of honor or standing, slaves carried the honor of their masters when serving as messengers and middlemen. Although officially barred from participation in such reciprocities, slaves were still a vital node in these relationships, and not completely devoid of the ability to effect change. What might happen if they decided to rebel? Or if they changed the messages they were tasked with delivering? It could be disastrous, especially in a time a war.

Such concerns shaped the rhetorical culture of elite slaveholders in New York and Massachusetts. When dishonored, they exclaimed that they were being mistreated—as if they were slaves. Their gift-exchanges were pointed: certain gifts communicated elite status, while others communicated dishonor and slavery. Simultaneously, the commercial aspect of slavery challenged notions of reciprocity, a rhetorical wrestling that appeared in religious literature about the obligations of masters to Christianize their slaves. Such dissonance between the requirements

of commerce and the rules of decorous behavior was evident not just in literature, but in the ways in which runaway slaves were pursued. Ultimately the larger debates about the lines between contractual obligation and reciprocal relationship that appear in colonial court cases and pamphlets relating to slavery were not just high level musings: they were created and transformed by the familial and social networks of slavery that birthed them and recurred as a trope throughout the correspondence of elite families.

CONCLUSION

“A KIND OF EXTRAVASAT BLOOD”: THE INTELLECTUAL AND CULTURAL LEGACY OF SLAVERY IN COLONIAL MASSACHUSETTS AND NEW YORK

I should also have been for a clause against the continuation of domestic slavery, and the support and encouragement of literature; as well as some other matters tho perhaps of less consequence.

John Jay to Robert R. Livingston and Gouverneur Morris, April 29, 1777

Seventy seven years passed between Samuel Sewall's *The Selling of Joseph*, in which he exclaimed that the enslaved existed as “a kind of extravasat blood,” and John Jay's proposal to abolish domestic slavery in the New York Constitution in a letter to Robert R. (Chancellor) Livingston and Gouverneur Morris.¹ Six years later, Jay, along with Chancellor Livingston and other elite slaveholders, would found the New York State Society for promoting the Manumission of Slaves; its vision for gradual emancipation became the eventual route for emancipation in New York.² In the aftermath of the American Revolution, antislavery furor erupted across the newly independent states, and many notable elites who put forward antislavery sentiments or founded antislavery societies hailed from slaveholding families. The dissonance between the material interests of these slaveholders and their abolitionist sentiment still jars, but even this seeming contradiction had its roots in the expansive slave network that flourished in the Northeast throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

For all the scholarship focused on the uniqueness of the period of Dutch rule, one important aspect has remained little examined: the foundation for New York's slave culture was laid under Dutch, not English rule. Elite New Netherland families, such as the Stuyvesant-Bayard clan, built a slave network whose characteristics presaged the stiffening laws and

¹ John Jay to Robert R. Livingston and Gouverneur Morris, April 29, 1777, Columbia University Library, Jay Papers, 2819, <http://wwwapp.cc.columbia.edu/ldpd/jay/image?key=columbia.jay.02819&p=1> (accessed January 2, 2013).

² Edgar J. McManus, *A History of Negro Slavery in New York* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1966), 168; Jake Sudderth, “Jay and Slavery,” The Papers of John Jay, Columbia University Libraries Digital Program, <http://www.columbia.edu/cu/lweb/digital/jay/JaySlavery.html> (accessed January 2, 2013).

increased slave imports that have come to define analyses of the English colonial period. Just as a slave depot was the first port of call for the families on *de Princess Amelia*, slavery's centrality to the elite culture of the Northeast offers a fertile starting point for understanding the cultural development of such colonies as New York and Massachusetts. Lived experience, rather than raw population numbers, must be stressed in order to explore the development of such a distinct culture. Elites such as Petrus Stuyvesant, Judith Bayard, Ann Stuyvesant Varlett, Henricus Selijns, and Sara Roelofs interacted with a new world suffused not only by the concept, but also by the reality of slavery, and the ways they understood baptism, captivity, trade, and manumission formed a slaveholding foundation for generations that followed.

All examinations of slavery in the North have to wrestle with the numbers of enslaved. The silent comparison to the Lowcountry and the Chesapeake remains, and their eventual status as the demographic powerhouses of slavery pulls the historian's gaze away from the seventeenth century. I have begun my inquiry firmly in the seventeenth century, to capture a moment before the South was established as the slave center. When Henricus Selijns immortalized Dutch captivity at the hands of the Esopus Indians in poetic verse, he did so using the slavery that he encountered at Petrus Stuyvesant's bowery as a base to imagine the unimaginable. New Netherland's unique slave culture arose as much or more from the Atlantic experiences of Dutch merchant families with Africans, Indians, and mixed communities as it did from a Dutch continental inheritance.

Slavery existed uncomfortably within religious cosmologies, and its contradictions inevitably challenged preexisting religious conceptions. The "Babel of confusion" that disgusted the sensibilities of Samuel Drisius and Johannes Megapolensis included not just Lutherans, but the enslaved who built the fortifications to protect the rebellious colony. Ministers, sinner and

saint alike, intersected with slavery; thus the benighted ministry of Machiel Syperus, who travelled from Curaçao to New Amsterdam along with slaves on the ship the *Speramundij*, coexisted alongside the hailed career of Henricus Selijns, whose sermons were preached to an interracial crowd, but whose official abandonment of slave baptism marked a retrenchment that would come to define a pattern of restricted access to the sacrament by the enslaved. The debates and solutions proffered by ministers and other divines as they sought to define the place of African and Native slaves in New Netherland reflected a daily, first-hand experience with the creation of racial slavery.

Elite Dutch women used their participation as godparents to demarcate their roles as slaveholders, an effort that marked the rise of an increasingly intertwined network of elite female mistresses. Judith Stuyvesant's actions as baptismal witness for some of her slaves exemplifies the ways in which European women, who had never before encountered New World slavery, created the rules that governed their own new roles as mistresses. Even as New Netherland's reformed ministers assured the Classis of Amsterdam that slave baptisms had ceased, elite women like Judith continued their roles as religious witnesses for the enslaved. Judith was not alone in her actions, for women such as Anneke Loockermans and Anneke Jans also served as baptismal witnesses and lived lives that intersected with slavery. Still others, such as the daughters of Casper Varlett, would establish slave trading empires in colonial Virginia. The nieces and daughters of such women, who, unlike their mothers, grew up in an environment with slaves, would inherit a very different set of expectations for slaveholding, one borne out of the experience of their foremothers.

The slave networks forged during the Dutch rule of New Netherland were at once commercial and reciprocal, woven together as much by the demands of the market as they were

by the obligations of the gift. Stuyvesant maintained his slave connections to his associates and family in Curaçao as well as to the patroonship of Rensselaerswijck by highly coded gestures of gift giving. Jeremias van Rensselaer's relationship with his family in the Netherlands was sustained by commercial links and gifted gestures, but was also tested by one perceived sleight to familial reciprocity over the fate of an enslaved man named Andries. Judith Bayard Stuyvesant and Maria van Rensselaer cemented ties with far flung female friends both by giving exotic Atlantic gifts and by grafting the enslaved into their reciprocal worlds. The cases presented in New Netherland's courts reflected the entwined culture of commerce and reciprocity, the network of enslaved ferries and messengers, and the limits to which the enslaved were allowed to be a part of reciprocal arrangements.

Although scholars have identified a definitive break in slave culture that occurred when New Netherland became New York for the final time in 1674, that historical moment in actuality marked the expansion of an already thriving set of elite slaveholding networks. The Stuyvesant family's position at the helm of such networks continued after the death of Petrus and Judith Stuyvesant, as descendants traced the Atlantic networks forged in the charter generation. Strategic marriages linked elite families together and, as these family ties grew ever more intricate, increasing numbers of slaves were drawn into such familial orbits. As the older generation expired, they left a legacy of slaveholding; the family struggles over inheritance that shaped the lives of elites, such as the struggle over the estate of Govert Loockermans, also concerned the fate of the enslaved. By the closing decades of the seventeenth century, elite slaveholders collaborated to buy slave ships and reached out to an established, cross-colonial network to track down runaways.

The narrative that emphasizes an increase in slave imports and the hardening of racial slavery that has come to shape scholarly descriptions of this period inadequately addresses the persistence of the multi-ethnic character of New Netherland's slave community and the continuing impact of Native confederacies on the development of slavery. All of the major families highlighted in this study benefited from both African and Indian slavery and, even though local Indians were officially declared free in 1679, enslaved Indians and Africans appeared in elites' wills, such as Sara Roloefs's in 1693, and inventories, such as John Crocheron's in 1696 in Staten Island. In colonial New York, the term "mulatto" had not universally assumed the binary black/white cast that appeared in Richard Ligon's 1657 *True History of Barbados*; in many cases, it retained its older definition, describing a person of mixed Native and African identity.

Death, marriage, business transactions, and bequests bounded the world of elite northeastern slaveholders and their slaves alike. But the conditions that shaped the reality of Petrus and Judith Stuyvesant were quite different from those which met the generations who inherited their slaveholding in the decades that followed. When Alida Schuyler married Nicholas van Rensselaer in 1675 and became the mistress of Rensselaerswijck, she followed a generation of slaveholding women, nieces, sisters, in-laws, and cousins who had begun to build a distinctive mistress culture. Unlike Judith Stuyvesant, Alida was born into a colony with slaves. Elite widows, like Martha de Hart, far from conforming to the traditional, scholarly image of overwhelmed northern goodwives unaccustomed to slaveholding, sold slaves and managed the bequests they received from their husbands. Yet not only elite women built on earlier experiences with slavery; enslaved women adapted new and specifically gendered ways of thwarting the designs of their elite mistresses. The priorities of elite and enslaved women often

clashed, as slave marriage and fecundity were not highly prized among northeastern slaveholders.

When Nicholas van Rensselaer arrived in New Netherland in 1674—as both patroon and royalty minted prophet—he joined a ministerial elite deeply committed to the success of slavery. Although van Rensselaer’s unorthodox religious views found him on the opposite side of ministers such as Gideon Schaets and Wilhelmus van Nieuwenhuysen, Schaets and van Rensselaer were united by a shared status as slaveholders. This clerical slaveholding network was not confined to the boundaries of colonial New York, for New England ministers—for instance, William Vesey and Ebenezer Pemberton—encountered slaves in their communities and households. They were also incorporated into a much larger elite network of slaveholders and were fully engaged in the questions that slave converts posed to the practice of Christianity during their ministries in New York. By the final decades of the seventeenth century, Cotton Mather was already committed to slave conversion, leading prayer meetings and performing slave baptisms. The thorny issue of black baptism, which had been discouraged by Selijns and others during New Netherland, persisted, but in the final decades of the seventeenth century, the consensus seemed to shift towards a softening of views on allowing black baptism, albeit stripped of any claim to actual freedom.

Older avenues of familial reciprocity were maintained even in the face of bitter infighting, as relatives extended slaves on credit in order to secure future favors from their kin. Yet reciprocity and slavery were never comfortable bedfellows, and the strain between the limits of such relationships and the proper exercise of commercial interests was no more evident than in 1691, when Robert Livingston was called to testify in Boston for the goods that he had received clandestinely from Captain Kidd, goods that included an enslaved boy. Cotton Mather

gave and received Indian servants as gifts, an activity that allowed him to reflect on his own reciprocal relationship with God, a relationship that obliged him to labor for his servants' and slaves' conversion.

With the dawn of the eighteenth century, elites such as the Livingstons consolidated their cross-colonial slave networks through strategic marriage, enlarging their control and shaping the character of northeastern slavery. The first few years of the decade witnessed the publication of both Samuel Sewall's *The Selling of Joseph* (1700) and Cotton Mather's *The Negro Christianized* (1706), works penned by New England elites who were part of the larger slaveholding network radiating from the manorial landowners of colonial New York. In the aftermath of Leisler's rebellion and the subsequent executions, pro-Leisler forces exacted their revenge on Nicholas Bayard, a man that they accused of plunging the colony into "popery and slavery." That they branded him in league with slave forces was no mere flourish; the Bayards, like other wealthy New York families, had expanded their slaveholding ties and solidified their network. Although non-elites owned slaves, slavery became an identifiable part of elite identity and marked the bequests of such families.

As elite families jockeyed for positions of power through business partnerships and strategic marriages, their efforts collided with those of the enslaved, who struggled to maintain their tenuous family bonds in terrible circumstances. At the same time that John Saffin penned his heated response to Samuel Sewall's antislavery arguments, articulating a pro-slavery opinion in the case of the enslaved man named Adam, he bought into a merchant trading ship, *the Mary*, with John Livingston—a venture to Quebec that would ultimately end in financial ruin. John Livingston's coterie of slaveowning friends was not limited to Saffin, but included the slaveholder Samuel Beebe, whose suit against the black litigant, John Jackson, resulted in the

entire Jackson family being paid to Livingston as legal fees. Although John Jackson's bid to maintain his family ties, by claiming ownership rights to his wife Joan under *couverture*, was unsuccessful in a court stacked with Beebe's pro-slavery friends, it was a struggle he and Joan continued to pursue. In the years that followed the ruling, even as they toiled for John and Mary Livingston, and the Livingstons' home life was upended by Mary's breast cancer and John Livingston's hasty remarriage to Elizabeth Knight, they successfully sued for their own freedom. The victory was pyrrhic: Livingston's liquidation of his estate after his second marriage, which resulted in the sale of Joan and her son John Jackson Jr., managed to doom the little boy to lifelong slavery, his parents unsuccessfully seeking his freedom through the courts.

Slave children, thus orphaned by the currents of enslavement that bound the families of their enslavers together, influenced the way that slavery was practiced among elite slave networks. Cicely's place in the Brattle household demonstrated the ways in which slaves were both part of the commercial world of elites and also symbols of their affluence. In her short life, Cicely was required to navigate variegated nuances of doctrine in order to successfully communicate her own conversion. Her ornate grave marker stands as a testament to a life lived intertwined with the Brattles, even as the epigraph denotes the distance of race and slavery.

The early eighteenth century was a time of increased activity for elite mistresses, who shored up their networks by reaching out to other female slaveholding friends and family in order to police the bounds of their authority. Slavery itself was an important conceptual marker: Alida referred to her duties overseeing the Palatine tenants on Livingston Manor as "slavery" and her letters to Robert evidenced a steely comfort with slave management. Her letters also revealed that enslaved resistance had a specifically gendered cast. A female slave purposefully sabotaged the sale that Alida's granddaughter had arranged, while another enslaved woman sat with her

mistress in negotiating the terms of her marriage. The veiled threat that lay under the surface of such women's authority over the lives and bodies of the enslaved came out in full force when Samuel Sewall recorded an instance of a white woman who employed a black man to strip her abusive husband and whip him publicly; white women's proximity to slave discipline might transform them into the masters of their husbands.

The wills of elite masters continued to count Africans, Indians, and people of mixed identity as part of their enslaved population, and so when New York courts moved in 1706 to link slave status legally to the "State and Condition of the Mother," the statute reflected the continued multi-ethnic identity of the enslaved population, naming "every Negro, Indian, Mulattoo and Mestee Bastard Child & Children" of an enslaved woman as hereditary slaves.³ That the law itself was championed by Elias Neau, hopeful that the legislation would placate masters' unease about baptizing their slaves, revealed the intertwined nature of religious and enslaved concerns. Neau's school for the enslaved counted the slaves of many elite New Yorkers as students, but his heady optimism was shattered by the New York slave revolt of 1712, an uprising that some masters linked to the school. Although the push for baptisms halted abruptly and support for Neau's school largely evaporated, nearly a decade later, while Ebenezer Pemberton Jr. was minister at Wall Street Presbyterian church, a controversy over George Whitefield's admonition of masters to baptize slaves still inflamed the ministerial hierarchy. William Vesey's decision to distance himself from his earlier baptismal efforts likely had much to do with his refusal to host Whitefield, an invitation taken up by a fellow New Englander, Pemberton.

At the close of the first two decades of the eighteenth century, reciprocal relationships between masters flourished. Requests for slaves from Gilbert and Philip Livingston to their

³ "An Act to Encourage the Baptizing of Negro, Indian and Mulatto Slaves," 21 October 1706, in *CLNY*, 1: 598.

father Robert were suffused with the language of deference, but reflected in a very specific way their contrasting positions as business managers. Slaves appeared in the diary entries and correspondence of elites as messengers, who either ferried sumptuous goods or served as the symbols that conveyed the worth of continued business and social connections. Yet the gifts given from master to slave held an unspoken but clear meaning: masters could be generous, but slaves not only could not, but also never should reciprocate. How slaves might reciprocate conjured very different images in the minds of slaveholders than the sedate exchanges between elites, for the specter of rebellion haunted the minds of slave owners.

Such fear of violent slave retaliation was never merely a phantom. Robert Livingston's real panic, that his own enslaved man Ben might seek revenge for the loss of his daughter Isabel, was occasioned by the attempted murder of a slaveholding tenant on his farm. Nearly thirty years later, his grandson-in-law, Stephen Bayard, the man who married Margaret's daughter Alida, would have an enslaved man named Ben implicated in the 1741 New York Slave conspiracy. Such incidents did not halt the practice of handing down slaves, as demonstrated by Stephen Bayard's 1753 will, which included both Indian and African slaves.

In the middle decades of the eighteenth century, colonial newspapers recorded the ways that the enslaved used their multi-ethnic ties to run away, forging routes that would be followed for generations, such as that from Perth Amboy, New Jersey, to Philadelphia, and to the Susquehanna. Some mixed race escapees exploited the expectation of racial identity, passing in unique ways that aided their escape, while others claimed the right to define their own identities through naming or the manipulation of clothing. Native confederacies demanded the return of their children from slavery, and European combatants used race to represent the goodwill of one side to another in such exchanges. Slaveowning men and women, compelled to pursue a diverse

population of slaves, showed a nuanced understanding of racial identity, even as they sought to collapse such identities under the moniker “Negro.”

The wills of elite women included the names of the friends who had supported them through life and serve as a compelling snapshot of the expansive female slaveholding networks of kin and friendship. Elite female slaveholders with Dutch backgrounds prized multilingual slaves, and the runaway slave advertisements they posted in colonial newspapers attest to their attention to this detail. Pursuing runaways, punishing slaves, and policing female slaveholding relatives were as much a part of mistresses’ duties as household management and, due to interfamilial ties, the mistress culture that arose in Massachusetts was strikingly similar to that which existed in New York.

Elite ministers’ bouts of black baptism were sporadic and hewed closely to the wishes of certain wealthy families. Such clerics maintained a commitment to slavery and were integrated into wider elite slave networks, as evidenced by their wills and those of their slaveholding congregants. The biblical monikers these men of God gave to their slaves, such as Moses and Joseph, graced runaway slave advertisements. But naming their slaves after such scriptural exemplars of freedom did not dampen ministers’ resolve to participate in the slave system. Meetinghouses were sites of sales and markers for those who would pursue runaways. Ministers handed over the runaways that fell within their orbit.

Although Native, African, and multi-ethnic slaves still graced the wills of elites and appeared in runaway slave advertisements in the 1750s and 1760s, the racial collapsing of Native identity into “Negro” was all but complete by the time that English ships pulled out of New York harbor in 1783. Among ministers, an uneasy detente with the questions slavery posed to the practice of Christianity seemed to be reached by midcentury and, although elite ministers

baptized the enslaved, most were equally committed to maintaining their own slaveholding as well as that of their elite congregants. Although antislavery sentiment arose more explicitly among New England ministers, such as Samuel Cooper, such men did not eschew their networks of slavery for their vaunted positions, and they remained firmly enmeshed in the same slave networks that included their less abolition-minded New York counterparts.

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Narratives sit at the heart of history. Any foray into the past, no matter how familiar it may seem on the surface, is actually an attempt to breach the veil between the living and the dead and explore the “undiscovered country from whose bourn no traveler returns” that Shakespeare so eloquently described. Historiographical boundaries between subjects can obscure the texture, the variety, the relentless march of days that demarcated the lives of elite families in the Northeast. Almost unknowingly, imperceptibly, historical narratives intended to shed light on an under-examined group segregate their subjects, and become in the historiography what Samuel Sewall conjectured: “a kind of extravasat blood,” seeping stubbornly through the edges of history but never pulsing alongside the dominant narrative current. This study has shown that, by contrast, historians must place the lives of the enslaved alongside their elite masters.

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