

Chapter 1 : Slavery Records – New York Slavery Records Index

Chattel slavery in the geographical area of the present-day U.S. state of New York began in , when 11 Africans were unloaded into New Amsterdam harbor from a ship of the Dutch West India Company. Before this time, the company had tried to encourage Dutch agricultural laborers to immigrate to and populate New Netherlands.

Slavery in New York: Uncovering the brutal truth December 2, Hosted by the New-York Historical Society, the exhibition is the most impressive display ever mounted on slavery in the Empire State and in New York City in particular. The exhibition features public programs, walking tours, educational materials and programs for school, college and adult learners. Hidden history For a phenomenon that should be common knowledge, the role of New York in the Atlantic slave trade is buried deep in the underground of U. Granted, slavery in America has traditionally been identified as a Southern phenomenon. During this period, 1 out of every 5 New Yorkers was enslaved. The huge, 18th-century burial ground uncovered during painstaking excavations – following the abortive construction of a skyscraper on the site – eventually revealed the skeletal remains of some Africans, a large proportion of them women and children. The burial ground extends from Broadway southward under City Hall, and almost to the site of the former World Trade Center, in close proximity to the Wall Street financial center. The African cemeteries in the Wall Street area were buried long ago when surrounding hills were flattened and the soil deposited there as foundation for buildings that now serve as a major nerve center of the world economy. It is believed that there are as many as 20, slavery-era Africans in graves under the constellation of buildings in lower Manhattan. Manhattan Island had a population of enslaved Africans almost from the very beginning of settlement in The findings of scientists examining the graves show that enslaved Africans lived agonizing lives. They were overworked and underfed. The average life expectancy of Africans of that era was 37 years. The astounding profits from this trade fueled the industrial revolution in England and later in Europe and the United States. The first slaves arrived in what was then known as New Amsterdam around Without slave labor New Amsterdam might not have survived. Many white New Yorkers owned one or two slaves. Cruel repression But Northern slavery was no less cruel than its Southern counterpart. Coercive measures were harsh. A litany of repressive and restrictive laws were passed from time to time by New York City Common Council, including laws that forbade Africans from owning significant property or bequeathing what they did own to their offspring, and laws banning gatherings of more than three people of African descent. Restrictions of movement included requiring them to carry lanterns after dark and to remain south of what is now Worth Street. Slave rebellions Yet enslaved Africans resisted at every point of the slave trade and in the New World. There was a tight clandestine network of the Underground Railroad operating in the city, with Brooklyn being an important hub. When whites came to put out the fires, they were ambushed. Nine whites were slain on the spot, and about a dozen others were wounded. The rebels fled, but most were soon captured. The rebellion led to further repression. Nineteen slaves were executed by burning at the stake or hanging. Two were targeted for special treatment. Seventeen slaves were hanged and 13 burned at the stake. From the beginning, virtually every New York business was involved with slavery in one way or another. The enslavement enterprise involved a myriad of activities, including direct trading in slaves; harvesting, processing, packing foodstuffs for the slave trade; and using slave labor in craft workshops. It included supplying slave plantations in the West Indies and North America with grains, tools and manufactured foods. It included advertising for the sale of slaves and the recapture of runaways. Advertisements of slaves for purchase were a major source of revenue for 18th-century newspapers in New York. On display are ledger books of slave voyages, ads for runaway slaves, and implements and household objects produced by the enslaved. Almost everything was grown or produced with enslaved labor – cheese, tobacco, rum, sugar, cloth, butter, clothes. These goods were carried here on ships owned by slave traders. With a system of an enormous unpaid labor force that kept stores well stocked and prices fairly low, the entire economy of the city was built on slavery. In a quite appropriate multimedia section of the display, a market ticker scrolls across the bottom of a video screen, as you might see on a CNN or MSNBC newscast, reflecting the trade of enslaved humans from the coast of Africa to South America, the Caribbean, North America and

specifically to colonial Wall Street. The slave trade was enormously profitable for the traders, shipbuilders, bankers, and insurers who made it possible. At its peak the margin of profit soared just above percent. At its ebb the profit margin was still a whopping 94 percent. Abolitionism and justice Slavery also bred a humanitarian response. The existence of slavery in New York gave rise to a vibrant abolitionist movement, which is also depicted in the exhibition. However, the end of slavery in New York did not come easily or quickly. Well-positioned New Yorkers who thrived on the slave economy fought to maintain the system to the very end. As a consequence, slavery ended, but not before the New York Legislature passed two pieces of legislation delaying its end until July 4, This action pointed the way, in turn, for other Northern states to adopt a system of gradual emancipation as well. We can only greet the first installment of this initiative and look forward to the next. Martin Frazier mfrazier at pww.

Chapter 2 : College compiles first-ever index of slaves and their owners in NY

Slavery was still not entirely repealed in the state, because the new law offered an exception, allowing nonresidents to enter New York with slaves for up to nine months, and allowing part-time residents to bring their slaves into the state temporarily.

The war proved particularly destructive in the case of New York, and the state was a battleground from one end to the other. Little was done during the war towards ending slavery, except that in the legislature voted to manumit slaves serving in the armed forces. But the war itself wrought havoc with the institution. Many slaves ran off to the British during the occupation of the state. The slave population of New York City was permanently reduced. When the British and the American Loyalists pulled out of New York at the end of the war, some 3, blacks left with them. In , when the fighting was over, New York got around to the slavery question. As before, most of the legislators were anti-slavery, but by now a split had developed between moderates, who favored gradual emancipation, and a minority of hard-liners behind Aaron Burr who sought an immediate end to slavery. The moderates won, and out of the Assembly in came a plan that children born to slave women after would be free from birth. But it was passed up to the state Senate with a number of riders attached, which reflected fears of potential power in an ex-slave population and racist concerns about social order. Blacks would be denied the right to vote or hold public office, or to intermarry with whites or give testimony against them in state courts. This combination of gradual emancipation with restrictions on black civil rights was the plan that had succeeded in Connecticut the previous year. They rejected the restrictive provisions, not only because they were undemocratic, but because they would perpetuate a caste system based on race, which could awaken dangerous civil strife. The Senate sent the bill back to the Assembly for revisions. The Assembly dutifully stripped off the other provisions, but it would not budge on withholding the right to vote. The Senate, recognizing a line had been drawn, agreed to this. The emancipation plan faced one more hurdle: Under leadership of Chancellor Livingston whose family had not long before been slave traders , the bill was indignantly rejected, with the suffrage clause called "shocking" to the "principal of equal liberty. The Council sent the bill back to the Senate. But the Senate had made up its mind for emancipation as soon as possible, and the Senators felt this was the price that had to be paid for it. They passed the bill back to the Assembly unchanged. Yet now the Assembly was having second thoughts on the matter. In , the slave trade in New York was banned outright but with important loopholes , and the special courts which had held power of life and death over slaves for 80 years were abolished. The loosening of restrictions filtered down to the municipal level, and Albany abolished the custom of flogging slaves for curfew violations. The New York Manumission Society, based in the Quaker population of Long Island and headed by the most prominent and wealthy men in the state, had formed in It kept up a relentless pressure of economic intimidation. It hectored newspaper editors against advertising slave sales, pressured auction houses and ship-owners, and gave free legal help to slaves suing their masters. This effort, along with a booming birth rate and a flood of white workers from other states who did not have to be maintained during periods of unemployment and were willing to work for low wages, made slavery economically obsolete. It provided for gradual manumission on the Pennsylvania model, which allowed masters to keep their younger slaves in bondage for their most productive years, to recoup their investment. The law freed all children born to slave women after July 4, , but not at once. The males became free at 28, the females at Slaves already in servitude before July 4, , remained slaves for life, though they were reclassified as "indentured servants. The activity of kidnappers and cheats in selling slaves out of the state in spite of the laws was said to have been the impetus for the statute that gave freedom to New York slaves who had been born before July 4, -- but not until July 4, Tompkins, in proposing the change in , also suggested an economic motive for slaveowners: Before the arrival of that period, most coloured persons born previous to the 4th of July, , and others are now free by the existing laws, will have become of very little value to their owners, indeed many of will, by that time, have become expensive burthen. Though few took advantage of it, the "nine-months law" remained on the books until its repeal in , when slavery had become the focus of sectional rivalry and the North was re-defining itself as the "free" region. And

part of their response was to sell their slaves south while they still could. Owners avoided the ban on the slave trade by disguising purchases as long-term leases or indentures one importer brought a "free" black over from New Jersey under a year "indenture". Free blacks were victimized, too, sold into slavery for debt or under terms of fraudulent contracts or apprenticeships. The New York Manumission Society rescued 33 blacks from such schemes in alone; uncounted others certainly slipped past their vigilance. Many blacks must have left the state, he writes, and few left voluntarily. Organized pressure from white workers drove them from the skilled and semi-skilled positions they had filled under slavery. Working class mobs harassed them in riots large and small, the largest of the period being the one in July in New York City that leveled hundreds of black homes. Blacks voted in New York, and though they were too few to be a political power on their own, they tended to remember the aristocrats who had been the chief backers of emancipation, and they backed the party of Jay and Hamilton. In certain close races, their block votes were credited with victories for the Federalists. This earned them the enmity of the Jeffersonian Democratic-Republican Party, which made a political issue of the black vote and attempted to discredit the Federalists by marrying them, in the public mind, to the most vicious racist stereotypes of blacks. As the Federalists faded in the War of , the Democratic-Republicans moved to shut out the black voters. In , they pushed a bill through the legislature that required blacks to get special passes to vote in state elections. The caste system foreseen with fear by the men of had come into effect, even without legal sanction. Tompkins, public message, Jan.

Chapter 3 : New-York Historical Society

"Slavery in New York" is not the last word on how the institution evolved-and how it helped New York develop into the most powerful port in the hemisphere in the decades after New York State.

For most of its history, New York has been the largest, most diverse, and most economically ambitious city in the nation. No place on earth has welcomed human enterprise more warmly. New York was also, paradoxically, the capital of American slavery for more than two centuries. Slavery in New York, the first of two exhibitions, spans the period from the s to , when slavery was legally abolished in New York State. With the display of treasures from The New-York Historical Society, as well as other great repositories, it focuses on the rediscovery of the collective and personal experiences of Africans and African-Americans in New York City. Educational programs will bring new curricular materials to hundreds of schools in the metropolitan area and welcome school visitors to specially designed tours of the exhibition. Public programs , lectures, debates, films, performances, and walking tours of the city will extend the reach of the exhibitions. Why an exhibition about slavery in New York? What Americans know about freedom we learned in the school of slavery. Those in our past who spoke the language of liberty always had in mind - and often in view - shackles on the legs and manacles on the wrists of the enslaved. At the height of the revolutionary conflict, George Washington, our greatest apostle of freedom but also the owner of hundreds of slaves, warned that if the Americans did not resist British tyranny they would become "as tame and abject slaves as the blacks we rule over with such arbitrary sway. New York has preeminently been the capital of American liberty, the freest city of the nation - its largest, most diverse, its most economically ambitious, and its most open to the world. It was also, paradoxically, for more than two centuries, the capital of American slavery. New York ship captains and merchants bought and sold slaves along the coast of Africa and in the taverns of their own city. Almost every businessman in 18th-century New York had a stake, at one time or another, in the traffic in human beings. Only Charleston, South Carolina, rivaled New York in the extent to which slavery penetrated everyday life. To be sure, each slaveholding New Yorker usually owned only one or two persons. In the urban landscape, there were no plantations. Slaves slept in the cellars and attics of town houses or above farmhouse kitchens in the countryside. They did virtually all of the work of many households - bringing in the firewood, the water, and the food; cleaning the house and the clothing; removing the wastes. They were vital to the work of early craftsmen and manufacturers, and many became skilled artisans themselves. Slaves constructed Fort Amsterdam and its successors along the Battery. They built the wall from which Wall Street gets its name. They built the roads, the docks, and most of the important buildings of the early city - the first city hall, the first Dutch and English churches, Fraunces Tavern, the city prison and the city hospital. Slavery was no milder in the urban North than in the Deep South. Instances of abusive treatment permeate public and personal records. White New Yorkers were sitting on a powder keg, and they knew it. Finally, slavery lasted a long time in New York, for fully years, until it was abolished in - more than four decades after its demise in Vermont, Massachusetts, and Pennsylvania. Even then, the abolition of slavery in New York was linked to severe political disfranchisement. Only the 15th Amendment to the Federal Constitution, effective in , guaranteed that black New Yorkers would have equal access to the ballot with their white fellow-citizens. Why do most New Yorkers know so little of this history? Reading backwards, many northerners came to believe that their communities had always been bastions of liberty. But slavery was an important feature of every one of the thirteen colonies. The New-York Historical Society will use the most sophisticated exhibition techniques to communicate this largely unknown story to the widest audiences possible. The entire first floor of the Society, almost 9, square feet, will be devoted to this exhibit, the largest thematic exhibition in the year-old history of this great cultural institution. Multi-media presentations, computer-interactive learning devices, and elegant graphic design will help visitors make sense of this powerful and dramatic story. The exhibition will bring together treasures from many great repositories: No exploration of American slavery could be mounted without these treasures: The exhibits will be uncompromising in their dedication to historical accuracy. But their messages will, we believe, be ultimately uplifting, even inspiring. As little as we

know about the material benefits brought to New York by the "peculiar institution," we know even less and can now profit more from the spiritual, moral, and political lessons derived from examining this part of our past. In confronting, resisting, and eventually defeating an institution as powerful as chattel slavery, black New Yorkers and their white allies forged the tools of freedom that all Americans treasure today. The records that document their oppression are, if one reads them carefully, evidences of just how creative and passionate they were in their quest for liberty. With every obstacle in their way, the enslaved were able to form and nurture families, to overcome frequent loss and separation, and to pass along cultural legacies to their children. First to arrive every market day to sell food and the products of their idle moments, they were the first New Yorkers to demonstrate that amazing combination of street smarts and entrepreneurial energy seen nowhere else on earth. Disparaged for their passivity, they were twice able to shake the eighteenth-century British Empire with their revolts against slavery in New York. Taken for granted by their Patriot slaveholding masters, they were acknowledged to be among the most valiant fighters on the British side during the Revolutionary War. Mocked for their crudeness during slave times, they were able to fashion the musical, dance, and theatrical traditions that have been at the core of American culture ever since. Without abandoning a treasured memory of African homelands, they came together to create a dynamic form of African American religion that continues to inspire today. Deprived of the right to vote in the s, they organized political pressure groups, created a lively press, and shaped a political rhetoric that has been at the heart of every civil rights movement in the United States and around the globe ever since. In sum, the black New Yorkers who survived enslavement left us legacies that shape life in this city and nation every day. Having persisted through our worst moments, they help us see the best in ourselves. The New-York Historical Society exhibits will uncover what has too long been hidden in our past and help us find the resources to continue our long national experiment with liberty.

Chapter 4 : Slavery and Emancipation in New York - Columbia University | History in Action

The population already was racially mixed, and slavery in New York at first was passed down not exactly by race, but by matrilineal inheritance: the child of a male slave and a free woman was free, the child of a female slave and a free man was a slave.

The company had been founded in 1614, and it "operated both as a commercial company and as a military institution with quasi-statelike powers. Most of the Dutch who came to America sought to pile up money in the lucrative fur trade and then hurry back to the comforts of Holland to enjoy their wealth. So the company increasingly turned to slaves, which it already was importing in vast numbers to its Caribbean colonies. From the 1620s to the 1670s, the WIC "was unquestionably the dominant European slave trader in Africa. It was company-owned slave labor that laid the foundations of modern New York, built its fortifications, and made agriculture flourish in the colony so that later white immigrants had an incentive to turn from fur trapping to farming. But private settlers still faced an acute shortage of agricultural labor that was retarding the colony. A company audit report noted that, "New Netherland would by slave labor be more extensively cultivated than it has hitherto been, because the agricultural laborers, who are conveyed thither at great expense to the colonists sooner or later apply themselves to trade, and neglect agriculture altogether. It even allowed private owners to exchange slaves they were dissatisfied with for company slaves. In addition to those they bought from the West Indies, Dutch settlers bought slaves seized by privateers from Spanish ships. The steady flow from various sources allowed the colony to stabilize and, by 1674, to expand its agricultural output. Slave labor was especially important in the agricultural development of the Hudson Valley, where an acute scarcity of free workers prevailed. By the time the British took over the colony in 1674, slaves sold in New Amsterdam for up to 100 guilders. This was still a discount of roughly 10 percent over what they would have brought in the plantation colonies, but the West India Company had been subsidizing slavery in New Netherland to promote its economic progress. The Hudson Valley, where the land was monopolized in huge patroon estates that discouraged free immigration, especially relied on slaves. The purely economic status of slaves in New Netherland contrasted with the malignant and sometimes bizarre racism of the religious British citizens who followed the Dutch into the north Atlantic colonies. Free blacks in New Netherland were trusted to serve in the militias, and slaves, given arms, helped to defend the settlement during the desperate Indian war of 1675. They were even used to put down the Rensselaerswyck revolt of white tenants. Blacks and whites had coequal standing in the colonial courts, and free blacks were allowed to own property. Jews, however, were not. They intermarried freely with whites and in some cases owned white indentured servants. Slaves who had worked diligently for the company for a certain length of time were granted a "half-freedom" that allowed them liberty in exchange for an annual tribute to the company and a promise to work at certain times on company projects such as fortifications or public works. Individual slaveowners, such as Director General Peter Stuyvesant, adopted this system as well, and it enabled them to be free of the cost and nuisance of owning slaves year-round that they could only use in certain seasons. For the slaves, half-freedom was better than none at all. The change of name from New Netherland to New York brought a crucial shift in policy. Whereas the Dutch had used slavery as part of their colonial policy, the British used the colony as a market for slaves. As it had under the Dutch, the colony continued to import relatively few slaves from Africa directly, except occasional cargoes of children under 12. The actual numbers were much higher, because smugglers made liberal use of the long, convoluted coast of Long Island. In some years illegal shipment of slaves on a single vessel outnumbered the official imports to the whole colony. As a result, New York soon had had the largest colonial slave population north of Maryland. Between 1674 and 1700, black slaves accounted for more than 35 percent of the total immigration through the port of New York. In 1700, slaves made up about 25 percent of the populations of Kings, Queens, Richmond, New York, and Westchester counties. Slaveholding concentrated in New York City, where by competition from slave labor had driven white porters out of the market houses and where by free coopers were complaining of "great numbers of Negroes" working in their trade. The slave trade became a cornerstone of the New York economy. As with Boston and Newport, profits of the great slave traders, or of smaller merchants who

specialized in small lots of skilled or seasoned slaves, radiated through a network of port agents, lawyers, clerks, scribes, dockworkers, sailmakers, and carpenters. The Dutch legacy left its mark on New York slavery, even after the British occupation. The British at first handled slaves in New York on the same relatively humane terms the Dutch had set. The population already was racially mixed, and slavery in New York at first was passed down not exactly by race, but by matrilineal inheritance: By the 18th century, through this policy, New York had numerous visibly white persons held as slaves. But after , as the number of slaves rose in many places more rapidly than the white population fears of insurrection mounted, restrictions were applied, and public controls began to be enacted. By that year, it had become illegal for more than four slaves to meet together on their own time; in the number was reduced to three, and to ensure enforcement each town was required to appoint a "Negro Whipper" to flog violators. In a place where slaves were dispersed in ones and twos among city households, this law, if enforced, would have effectively prohibited slaves from social or family life. Local ordinances restricted times or distance of travel. Slave runaways were tracked down rigorously, and ones bound for French Canada were especially feared, as they might carry information about the condition and defenses of the colony. The penalty for this was death. Slaves did run off, especially young men, but they tended to gravitate to New York city, rather than Canada. There many of them sought to escape the colony by taking passage on ships, whose captains often were not overly scrupulous about the backgrounds of their sailors. The most notorious gang was the Geneva Club, named after the Geneva gin its members were fond of imbibing. Slaves belonging to such gangs were extremely clannish and often engaged in murderous feuds. Only rarely, however, did they attack white persons. The very existence of such groups nevertheless caused the whites much anxiety. The authorities regarded them as a much greater threat to the public safety than the deadlier gangs of white hoodlums on the waterfront. As it was, it was among the most serious slave resistances in American history, and sparked a vicious backlash by the authorities. The revolt was led by African-born slaves, who decided death was preferable to life in bondage. They managed to collect a cache of muskets and other weapons and hide it in an orchard on the edge of town. On the night of April 6, twenty-four of the conspirators gathered, armed themselves, and set fire to a nearby building. They then hid among trees, and when white citizens rushed up to put out the blaze, the slaves opened fire on them, killing five and wounding six. The surviving citizens sounded the alarm. Every able-bodied man was pressed into service, and appeals were made to governors of surrounding colonies. The militia pinned down the rebels in the woods of northern Manhattan. The leaders of the uprising committed suicide, and the rest, starving, surrendered. In considering the psychological impact on the survivors, imagine some sort of attack on modern New York, with its 8 million people, that would leave casualties of 10, dead. A special court convened by the governor made short work of the rebels. Of the twenty-seven slaves brought to trial for complicity in the plot, twenty-one were convicted and put to death. Since the law authorized any degree of punishment in such cases, some unlucky slaves were executed with all the refinements of calculated barbarity. New Yorkers were treated to a round of grisly spectacles as Negroes were burned alive, racked and broken on the wheel, and gibbeted alive in chains. An example from Poughkeepsie illustrates one of them: A young slave, about twenty years of age, He was detected by the smoke issuing from his pocket, into which he had thrust some combustibles, imprisoned, tried, and on his confession, condemned to be burned to death. He was fastened to a stake, and when the pile was fired, the dense crowd excluded the air, so that the flames kindled but slowly, and the dreadful screams of the victim were heard at a distance of three miles. His master, who had been fond of him, wept aloud, and called to the Sheriff to put him out of his misery. The colonial courts ruled that if a white person claimed his black employee was a slave, the burden was on the black person to prove he was not. Blacks on the street who could give no plausible account of their movements or proof of their freedom often were picked up by the authorities and jailed on suspicion of being runaway slaves. Local authorities had all but unlimited power in such cases. A black man was arrested in New York City in simply "because he had curious marks on his back. If a claimant arrived, and reimbursed the sheriff for the cost of the detention and the ads, he took the black person away after a few legal formalities. There was little incentive for the sheriff to challenge the claim of ownership in such cases. Even if no claimant came forth, the authorities sometimes then sold the black person into slavery, to cover the cost of detaining and advertising him.

Chapter 5 : Slavery in the New York State census, | Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History

In October , the New-York Historical Society begins an unprecedented two-year exploration of this largely unknown chapter of the city's story. Slavery in New York, the first of two exhibitions, spans the period from the s to , when slavery was legally abolished in New York State.

Dutch rule[edit] The first slave auction in New Amsterdam in , painted by Howard Pyle , Chattel slavery in the geographical area of the present-day U. Before this time, the company had tried to encourage Dutch agricultural laborers to immigrate to and populate New Netherlands. This experiment was unsuccessful, as most immigrants wanted to accrue greater income in the lucrative fur trade and return to their home country in luxury. While the slaves laid the foundations of the future New York, they were described by the Dutch as "proud and treacherous", a stereotype for African-born slaves. They began to import more numerous "seasoned" African slaves from the sugar colonies of the Caribbean. By , some slaves had earned a half-freedom in New Amsterdam and were able to earn wages. They had other rights in the commercial economy, and intermarriage with whites was frequent. For more than two decades after the first shipment, the Dutch West India Company was dominant in the importation of slaves from the coasts of West and Central Africa. They were used to clear forests, lay roads, and provide other heavy work and public services to the colony. These first 11 slaves in New Netherland " owned by the Dutch East Indies Company called the VOC " were to experience a life different from other slaves in other colonies. By definition, they were owned by a master, could not leave their master, and could be bought and sold. This is different than an indentured servant who may have chosen to "indenture" themselves. This is usually when the indentured servant contracts themselves to a master for a specific length of time, after which they would be free to lead their own lives. Slaves do not have contracts, only their master determines when they will be freed. These first 11 slaves were "originally captured by the Portuguese along the West African coast and on the islands in the Gulf of Guinea Many of the original New Netherland slaves have Iberian Portuguese names. They were given living quarters 5 miles north of the town of New Amsterdam, after which they were moved to a large building at the southern end of William Street next to the fort. These basic rights are related to the freedoms and rights the Dutch people in both the Netherlands in Europe and New Netherland in America enjoyed. Slaves had the right to: They could own "moveable" property such as pots, pans, clothes, etc. They could raise their own crops and animals on VOC land. But most importantly they were trusted in ways other colonies did not trust slaves. For instance, Slaves could sue another person whether white or black. Also, "They could bring suit in court and their testimony would convict free whites. In the following year Pedro Negretto successfully sued an Englishman, John Seales, for wages due for tending hogs. Manuel de Reus, a servant of the Director General Willem Kieft, granted a power of attorney to the commas at Fort Orange to collect fifteen guilders in back wages for him from Hendrick Fredricksz. In this case he was suited, " These 11 slaves were granted partial and then full freedom. Enough so that it allowed a parent to move from slave status to half-slave or even freemen. Half-Slaves still worked for their masters when called upon, but could buy land and a home and they would now earn a wage for the work they did for their master, provided good behavior. However, there were no regulations associated with this idea. It was only practiced. Once these 11 received half-slave status, several more slaves did too. This is reflected in land grant records. Some became half-slave while others were granted freedom. After the English seized New Amsterdam in , in a rush right before the English officially took over, all former slaves that were granted half-slave status were freed, so to keep the promises given to them and that the English would not keep them enslaved. The new freemen also had their original land grants finalized and all grants were officially marked as being owned by the new freemen. Freedom and land grants were given to both freed male and female former slaves. Roughly 40 slaves received their freedom prior to the English take over. English rule[edit] In , the English took over New Amsterdam and the colony. They continued to import slaves to support the work needed. Enslaved Africans performed a wide variety of skilled and unskilled jobs, mostly in the burgeoning port city and surrounding agricultural areas. Incidents were misinterpreted under such conditions. In what was called the New York Conspiracy of , city officials believed a revolt had started.

Over weeks, they arrested more than slaves and 20 white men, trying and executing several, in the belief they had planned a revolt. Historian Jill Lepore believes whites unjustly accused and executed many blacks in this event. Construction was delayed so the site and some of the remains could be appropriately evaluated by archeologists and anthropologists. Scholars have estimated that 15, to 20, enslaved Africans and African Americans were buried during the 17th and 18th centuries in the cemetery in lower Manhattan, making it the largest colonial cemetery for Africans in North America. This discovery demonstrated the large-scale importance of slavery and African Americans to New York and national history and economy. A memorial and interpretive center for the African Burial Ground have been created to honor those buried and to explore the many contributions of African Americans and their descendants to New York and the nation.

American Revolution[edit] Runaway slave advertisement African Americans fought on both sides in the American Revolution. Many slaves chose to fight for the British, as they were promised freedom by General Carleton in exchange for their service. After the British occupied New York City in , slaves escaped to their lines for freedom. The black population in New York grew to 10, by , and the city became a center of free blacks in North America. In , black men made up one-quarter of the rebel militia in White Plains, who were to march to Yorktown, Virginia for the last engagements. When the British evacuated from New York, they took 3, freedmen with them for resettlement, mostly in Nova Scotia and other colonies. With British support, in a large group of these Black Britons moved on from Nova Scotia to create an independent colony in Sierra Leone to escape discrimination and other conditions in Canada. They were the ancestors of the Krios, Sierra Leone Creole people.

Abolition and moving forward as citizens[edit] In the aftermath of the Revolution, men assessed slavery against the revolutionary ideals and many, in the North especially, increased their support for abolitionism. In , the state legislature voted to free those slaves who had fought with the rebels during the Revolution. Abolition was not achieved for several years, but the legislature passed a law making the process of manumission easier, and numerous slaveholders individually freed their slaves. The New York Manumission Society was founded in , and worked to prohibit the international slave trade and to achieve abolition. It served both free blacks and the children of slaves. The school expanded to seven locations and produced some brilliant alumni, who advanced to higher education and prominent careers. These included James McCune Smith , who gained his medical degree with honors at the University of Glasgow after being denied admittance to two New York colleges. He returned to practice in New York and also published numerous articles in medical and other journals. Especially in areas of concentrated population, such as New York City, they organized as an independent community, with their own churches, benevolent and civic organizations, and businesses that catered to their interests. Slavery was important economically, both in New York City and in agricultural areas. In , the legislature passed a law for gradual abolition. It declared children of slaves born after July 4, , to be legally free, but the children had to serve an extended period of indentured servitude: Slaves born before that date were redefined as indentured servants but essentially continued as slaves for life. In , the state freed all slaves born before July 4, the date of the gradual abolition law , to be effective in It continued with the indenture of children born to slave mothers until their 20s, as noted above. New York residents were less willing to give blacks equal voting rights. By the constitution of , voting was restricted to free men who could satisfy certain property requirements for value of real estate. This property requirement disfranchised poor men among both blacks and whites. The reformed Constitution of conditioned suffrage for black men by maintaining the property requirement, which most could not meet, so effectively disfranchised them. The same constitution eliminated the property requirement for white men and expanded their franchise. African-American men did not obtain equal voting rights in New York until ratification of the Fifteenth Amendment in The emancipation of slavery in New York was a slow, complicated, and dramatic change of law that significantly affected lives of African Americans and their families. In New York, Black abolitionists began to fight for themselves and plead their cause. Although often overlooked, African-American abolitionists heavily contributed to the gradual abolition of slavery in New York. The fight for their own people helped make the fight for freedom and equality even stronger and more powerful, changing New York and its society. African Americans played a great role in the abolishment of slavery in New York, and once free from slavery, blacks worked through many hardships in order to establish their own

community. Through documentation of the abolitionists in the s, as well as laws passed in that period, one can see the fight and dedication put into the effort of emancipation as well as rebuilding the black community as its own. Many times, it is forgotten that there were blacks that contributed to the change during and after the gradual abolition of slavery. It is crucial to note that both white and black protagonists hated slavery and fought for emancipation, but that the struggle was much more personal for blacks. African Americans wanted freedom just as much as the next person, and fought long and hard in order to have it. In New York, after they finally succeeded in , many blacks from Brooklyn needed to start their own community, bringing a new vigilance to the community. Very often, the perspective of gradual abolition was very different for African Americans than whites. Nonetheless, the abolitionists all wanted the same thing: Often, Blacks are overlooked as abolitionists. It is true, however, that African-American protagonists heavily helped not only the emancipation of slavery, but the notion of being taken seriously by the community. Because of the gradual abolition laws, there were children still enslaved when their parents were free. The fight for freedom was a long and hard fight, and once free, there was still a long process ahead in order establish a community of their own for black citizens. The emergence of an African-American-authored journal in a white newspaper was a very important movement in New York. Many blacks were less educated than whites and it proved their capability of being educated. This was made in mockery of blacks, in that this was the way an uneducated colored person would pronounce abolition.

Chapter 6 : Slave states and free states - Wikipedia

Slavery in New York, the first of two exhibitions, spans the period from the s to , when slavery was legally abolished in New York State. With the display of treasures from The New-York Historical Society, as well as other great repositories, it focuses on the rediscovery of the collective and personal experiences of Africans and.

Stefan Bielinski Among the most often discussed yet least understood parts of the early Albany story concern the roles of those of African ancestry in the growth and development of the pre-industrial city. The Colonial Albany Social History Project is making a special effort to look for and not overlook Afro Albanians in the historical record. Our overall goal is to develop a biography for each person who lived in the pre-industrial city - Afro Albanians definitely included! Beginning during the New Netherland period, and becoming widespread during the latter part of the eighteenth century, slavery lasted until when it finally was eradicated by law in New York State. Colonial censuses provide some data on the African presence in Albany but little information on Afro Albanian lives. The provincial census of identified a total 23 Negroes although not by name in all of immense Albany County. How many of those individuals lived in the city of Albany and how many in the countryside is a question that remains unanswered. Such vagary was characteristic of subsequent enumerating. With only two exceptions , none of the population surveys taken during the eighteenth century differentiated between slaves living in the city and in the surrounding countryside. Nor did they provide any information on their lives. Most of the estimated 1, African ancestry people who lived in the city of Albany before were called slaves. They had no civil rights. They could be and were bought and sold, bequeathed in wills, and were required to perform a wide range of tasks and chores. Because of their dehumanized status, slaves were less frequently mentioned in the mainstream records of the community. However, for the eighteenth-century, substantial information on these Afro Albanians has been recovered from core community-based historical resources whose compilation, processing, and examination comprises the basic research design of the Colonial Albany Project. These historical resources have enabled us to open biographical files on more than a hundred African ancestry members of the early Albany community and to develop biographical profiles that we hope can become comparable to what we know about Dinnah Jackson, Benjamin Lattimore, Captain Samuel Schuyler, and many of their neighbors. Our records sweep has yielded important information on a number of enslaved people. The great fire of has enabled us to develop profiles for individuals called Pomp , " D inah," and Bet that otherwise might have been impossible. An Internet version of a published article further explains the emergence of an Afro-Albanian middle class in the decades following the American Revolution. At this point, we have been most successful in presenting some sources and summarizing current thought related to the general topic of Pinkster in early Albany history. Visitors to early Albany remarked on the "slave," "colored," or "negro" population of Albany and its environs. The observations of Anne Grant and others are truly fascinating but difficult to reconcile with the existing community record - meaning more study is needed! Because the project accepts new information on the people of colonial Albany on a daily basis, the 16, biographical profiles in our community data base continue to evolve as the more we learn, the more we might understand, and the more we can hope to know. That axiom rings particularly true for the Afro Albanians. This page provides basic access to their stories. Print in the collection of the New York State Museum.

Chapter 7 : Emancipation in New York

When Did Slavery End in New York State? In , New York passed a Gradual Emancipation act that freed slave children born after July 4, , but indentured them until they were young adults. In a new law passed that would free slaves born before but not until

Five years later, they purchased the island of Goree from local natives, built two forts on it, and established a trading center factory at Rio Fresco on the nearby mainland. When the Dutch West India Company was chartered in , it received a monopoly on all African trade and the right to develop Dutch possessions in the New World. Eustatius, and Tobago in the s. The great demand for slaves in their Brazilian and Caribbean possessions spurred the Dutch to expand their activities in the slave trade. Emboldened by the prospect of increasing trade and profits, the Dutch broke the Portuguese stranglehold on the West African coast between and Anthony and Shama near the mouth of the Pra River and temporarily occupied Angola in These conquests made the Dutch the dominant European power in the Gold Coast region. Most of the slaves brought between and were captured Spanish or Portuguese prizes or blacks carried under foreign flags rather than slaves supplied directly by the Dutch West India Company. Their names indicate that they may have been slaves on Portuguese or Spanish ships captured at sea. Three women were brought in from Angola in A French privateer, La Garce, arrived with slaves in , and Tamandare put into port from Brazil in with a cargo of slaves. A Spanish slaver, St. Some were sold to the Dutch West India Company while others were vended to private residents. In it also gave the inhabitants of New Amsterdam permission to sail to the coast of Angola and bring back slaves. They were forbidden, however, to trade anywhere along the entire west coast of Africa from Cape Verd to Cape Lopes de Gonsalve since these areas were the preserves of the Dutch West India Company. The four males and one female one died before arrival had only landed in Curacao from Africa in August. The slaves from both ships were sold at public auction to private buyers by the Dutch West India Company. Some of the blacks on Gideon had been brought directly from Africa, although most were seasoned slaves who had spent a period of time in Curacao. The African origins of New Amsterdam slaves are suggested by their last names listed at baptism or marriage in the records of the Dutch Reformed Church of New Amsterdam from to The majority of slaves who reached New Netherland during these years were probably from Angola. The first Angolan blacks to reach New Amsterdam were captured cargo taken from Portuguese and Spanish slavers. Although Portugal monopolized the Congo and Angola slave trade throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries,⁵ beginning in the s the Dutch West India Company sent its own ships to Angola and permitted New Amsterdam vessels to sail directly to Angola to obtain slaves. In Eyckenboom was chartered to sail from Holland to Cape Verd, then proceed all along the coast to the Dutch factory at Elmina on the Gold Coast, on to the Bight of Guinea, and deliver its slave cargo to the islands of Curacao, Bonaire, and Aruba; it was then to stop at New Netherland before returning home to Amsterdam. In the slaver St. In Gideon was chartered in Amsterdam to make a stop at Elmina and then to take on a full complement of slaves at Loango Congo and stations in Angola which was to be disposed of at Cayenne French Guiana , Curacao, and New Netherland. Wydah traders went as far as miles inland to capture or trade for slaves to sell to the Dutch. Blacks from the New Calabar region were Ibo or Ijo. Some Africans who were packed into the holds of Portuguese or Spanish slave ships destined for Iberian colonies in the New World arrived in New Netherland when such ships were seized en route by Dutch or French privateers and were diverted to New Amsterdam. Many other Africans, however, were "seasoned" to the labor routines of slavery on such island depots as Curacao, St. Seasoned Spanish slaves who were being transported from one Spanish Caribbean island to another often fell prey to piracy and were also sold in New Netherland. The pride of new slaves from Africa reduced their market value in comparison to "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" and were therefore deemed "a better sort of Negroes. In they faced the outside of the fort with flat sods, and in they worked on the construction of a wagon road from New Amsterdam to the outlying village of Harlem. They either did not intend to, or were not in power long enough to make slavery into a form of social organization or race control;

they developed no rigid slave system or formal slave code. The English colonies also did not pass legislation controlling blacks before the s. Freed negroes were not legally discriminated against--no racial legislation existed to restrict their freedom to own property, intermarry with whites, or own white indentured servants. While many of the slaves were able to marry and establish families, a high sex ratio excess of males over females among imported blacks prevented some men from finding wives. Males were preferred as laborers and were therefore overrepresented on each of the ships which deposited slave cargoes in New Amsterdam. The sex of adult blacks imported into New Amsterdam between and is known for slaves: This preponderance of males yields a sex ratio of males per females in the population. Black adult sex ratios in the colony probably improved in the early s as the generation of black children born in New Amsterdam in the s reached maturity. As the established church of the colony from to , the Dutch Reformed Church was dominant throughout the Dutch period and was the only religious body in New Netherland until Presbyterians formed a congregation in Dutch religious leaders in the Netherlands offered little criticism of the institution of slavery and called only for kind treatment and Christianization of the slaves. Ministers in New Amsterdam did not criticize slavery either--they were responsible to the Dutch West India Company and to officials such as Peter Stuyvesant¹⁸ who paid their salaries and profited greatly from slavery and the slave trade. The one couple identified as slaves were owned together and were married on October 4, . Seven names reflected the racial and color characteristic of the person--Neger, Negrinne, Crioell, or Criolyo. Both types of names were probably assigned to incoming blacks by the Dutch to describe the geographical and racial characteristics of their new labor force. Five of the spouses also had a reference to their place of origin recorded with their marriage: Sebastiaen de Britto, Van St. Domingo, or Christoffel Crioell, Van St. Christoffel Crioell, Van St. Thomas later became Christoffel Santomme To be sure, however, the first generation of slaves in New Amsterdam had family surnames, a fact recognized by the white community. The exact date of the birth of the first black child in New Amsterdam is unknown. It is also unknown what proportion of immigrant black women ever bore children, how many they delivered here during their lifetimes they ranged in age from puberty to age forty [and sometimes older] upon arrival , and how many of their offspring survived to adulthood. In this early period, only children of confessing members were allowed to be baptized, indicating that several adult negroes were full members of the Church. The Dutch Reformed Church, however, had little overall success in attracting blacks. In order to become full communicants, blacks had to demonstrate a good understanding of the basic beliefs of the Dutch Reformed Church. A difficult process of catechetical study was required which, coupled with sophisticated, unemotional sermons, discouraged black enthusiasm and participation. The parents wanted nothing else than to deliver their children from bodily slavery, without striving for Christian virtues. None of the baptized children or their listed parents had a specific recorded legal status, indicating that they were either already free or that their position as slaves was not the overwhelming, fixed badge that it would later become. Whether really slave or free, the primary identification of the child in the church records was to its parents rather than to owners. The Dutch accorded black fathers the primary parental role at baptism. The father alone was generally listed 46 fathers only, 3 mothers only ;³⁰ it was rare for mothers to be listed at all. All but one of the parents bore last names, a further indication of white recognition of the black family. Baptismal witnesses were usually black, revealing family, social, and community ties among black New Netherlanders. Another seventeen baptisms had black witnesses, but whites were also present. In four baptisms only whites possible owners, friends, or neighbors attended the ceremony as witnesses. Many of the slaves in early New Amsterdam married and raised families. The favorable response of the Dutch West India Company on February 25, , to a plea for emancipation made by several male slaves revealed that the blacks had formed nuclear families and were supporting their wives and children: They had presumably married women imported between and , including, perhaps the three Angola women or slaves from the La Garce shipment. By freeing older slaves, they received a tribute of food supplies and escaped the burden of supporting aging slaves. The blacks who were freed would be able "to earn their livelihood by Agriculture, on the land shewn and granted to them, on condition that they. They were also obligated to work for the Company for wages whenever their services were required. One further condition was set: In a "Remonstrance of the People of New Netherland" to the Lords States General of the United Netherlands on July 28, , the

white residents complained that the children of freed Christian slaves were still enslaved contrary to law that anyone born of a free Christian mother should be free. Although it reiterated that it had freed the adult blacks on the condition that their children should serve the company whenever it pleased, it moderated its claim on the service of these children from slavery to occasional labor. The original slaves in New Amsterdam were often able to create kinship and friendship networks in addition to families. The first generation of New York slaves displayed African cultural norms of familial obligation: The court session of March 15, 1656, heard the case of Anthony Matysen, a negro, v. Matysen requested that the child be declared free and that he and his wife would rear it at their own expense. The petition was granted. The court freed her upon furnishing the Company with another negro in her place or upon paying guilders. On April 19, 1656, Mayken, an old and sickly black woman, was granted her freedom outright by the Dutch West India Company, "she having served as a slave since the year 1648. Typical of these grants was the one given to Anthony Portuguese on September 5, 1656, of six morgens and rods of land on Manhattan island. The area became known as the "Negroes Land. In Judith Stuyvesant, widow of Peter Stuyvesant, gave a considerable amount of land to free black Francisco Bastiaenz on the condition that he keep its fences in repair. Some of the early freed negroes moved to Long Island and other neighboring areas where they joined whites in the founding of new towns. Before removing to Tappan, Emanuels and DeVries had been yeoman farmers in the outward of Manhattan and were close neighbors to several white members of the original patent group. After his arrival in New Amsterdam prior to he obtained a farm and married a white woman of colorful reputation named Grietse Reyniers. After a long series of court cases and disputes with his neighbors, Jansen and his wife were banished from New Netherland on April 7, 1656, for their quarrelsome and scandalous conduct. Jansen thereby became the first and one of the most prominent landowners in Gravesend, which was subsequently settled by the English in the 1680s. After achieving full freedom in 1656, Solomon Peters lived with his wife in a settled marriage for the next thirty years, fathered and raised eight children in all, and acquired a home, lands, and property. In his will written on November 30, 1686, at the Bowery, New York City,⁵⁵ he left his wife, Maria Antonis Portugues, all his lands, house, and household goods either during her widowhood or for life. He left to his four sons all the iron tools, implements of husbandry, guns, swords, and pistols. His eldest son was to receive four pounds while the other three sons were to receive eighteen shillings each. It left enough room for slave family life to persist: Many Dutch slaves were also able to achieve freedom, and with freedom often came the opportunity to own land and establish a considerable measure of economic independence. Much would change with the advent of British colonial rule in 1784. Carnegie Institution of Washington, Publication no.

Chapter 8 : Early Albany Timeline

Photo: Birth registration of a slave in abandoned to the overseers of the poor by the slave owner, provided by New York Slavery Records Index. This entry was posted in African American History, History and tagged John Jay College, Slavery on February 12, by Editorial Staff.

In The News Slavery Records The purpose of this project is to assemble a searchable index of records of slavery in New York identifying individual enslaved persons and their owners. New York State has many records and historical studies of slavery beginning in and ending in The project does not seek to take custody of or manage records, but rather to provide a comprehensive index of the records that exist. What are the records being indexed? The following is a list of records we are indexing and their sources. They are in roughly chronological order, starting with the oldest. These are maintained by the NY State Archive. We have indexed records that refer to slave holders and enslaved persons. The include censuses taken by Dutch and British officials. These include counts of the number of enslaved persons in a jurisdiction, as well as lists of slave owners and enslaved persons by name. United States Census This are the household-level census records for the U. Census for the years , , , and , where the household reports 1 or more slaves living on the premises. Our records include the name of the head of household, who is presumed to be the slave owner, along with the number of slaves, the county or borough, and the locality. These include summary counts of the number of enslaved persons in a jurisdiction Slave Trade Records These are records of sales of enslaved persons, including sales of enslaved persons outside of New York State who are recorded as being born in or residing within New York State. These come from a variety of sources because New York did not maintain registries of slave transactions. Based on Colonial records, we have coded all of the slave ships arriving in New York harbor from to Thus, we have identified instances of New Yorkers investing in slaveships to import slaves into New York. The records provide their names and the number of enslaved persons involved. Emancipations These include the records of the New York Manumission Society as well as governmental records from towns and cities where these exist. Runaway Slave Advertisements and Announcements These are ads seeking the return of enslaved persons who have escaped from their owners. The ads identify the owners and the enslaved persons. They largely come from two books: Pretends to be Free: New York, Garland, For each record, we identify the owner and enslaved person, and reference the book where the reader can find detailed information and copies of the actual advertisements. Emigration was a guarantee in the Treaty of Paris which officially ended the war. The NY Slavery Records Index includes the records that identify the slave owner as residing in New York at the time the enslaved person escaped to the British side. That such child shall be the servant of the legal proprietor of his or her mother until such servant, if a male, shall arrive at the age of twenty-eight years, and if a female, at the age of twenty-five years. It also provided for the abandonment of the newborn children: The registration, abandonment and emancipation records that are currently indexed in the dataset include the following sources: Comptroller Records The payment program described above resulted in invoices from towns and cities, for care of abandoned children, presented to the NY State Comptroller for almost two decades. These records have been maintained in the NY State Archive and our project has digitized them. Our protocol is to include persons interred in cemeteries that officially claim to include slaves, and to include the records of interred persons who might based on their birth and death years have been enslaved, or who might have been subject to servitude based on the Gradual Abolition law, indicating in the comment section that the status is not resolved. We include persons who are free at the time of death if during their lives they had been enslaved. Underground Railroad Records Leading up the the end of the Civil War, people enslaved in southern states sought freedom in northern states and Canada. The covert nature of the escape from slavery meant that there are few individualized records to be indexed, and because the New York Slavery Records Index focuses on records of slavery in New York, this might be a topic beyond the scope of our project. However, we are indexing records of the underground railroad in New York.

Chapter 9 : The Amistad Commission

Slavery in New York State did not come to a complete legal end until July 4, The intervening years between the first gradual emancipation law in and the abolition of slavery in New York in created an atmosphere of uncertainty surrounding slavery in the state.

The question of fugitive slaves also proved contentious within the new republic. During and after the War of Independence, several northern states launched the process of abolition. Vermont, at the time a self-proclaimed independent republic with few if any slaves, was first to act, in prohibiting slavery in its constitution. Massachusetts and New Hampshire, where slavery ended via court decisions, quickly followed, along with Pennsylvania, Connecticut, and Rhode Island, which enacted laws for gradual emancipation. These measures generally provided for the return of fugitive slaves, although Massachusetts offered them asylum. Pinckney of South Carolina proposed a similar provision. With little discussion, the delegates unanimously approved what became Article IV, Section 2: No person held to service or labour in one state, under the laws thereof, escaping into another, shall, in consequence of any law or regulation therein, be discharged from such service or labour, but shall be delivered up on claim of the party to whom such service may be due. Along with the clause counting three-fifths of the slave population in apportioning congressional representation among the states and the one delaying the abolition of the international slave trade to the United States for at least twenty years, the fugitive slave clause exemplified how the Constitution protected the institution of slavery. In the Somerset decision of , Lord Mansfield, the chief justice of England, had freed a slave who sued for his liberty after being brought by his owner from Boston to London. Constitution established as a national rule that slaves did not gain their liberty by escaping to free locales, and assumed that the states would cooperate in their return. Nonetheless, as the antebellum era would demonstrate, its ambiguous language left it open to multiple interpretations. On key questions the Constitution remained silent: A dispute over these questions soon ensued between Pennsylvania and Virginia, leading in to the passage of the first national law on the subject of fugitive slaves. It also recognized the right of out-of-state owners to recover fugitives. A Pennsylvania slave named John Davis gained his freedom because his owner, a Virginian, failed to register him. Nonetheless, the owner brought Davis from Pennsylvania to Virginia. Davis escaped, and the owner hired three Virginians to pursue him. They seized Davis in Pennsylvania and removed him from the state. The result was the Fugitive Slave Act of , which remained the only federal law on the subject until The brief enactment consisted of four sections, the first two of which dealt with fugitives from justice. Any person who interfered with the process became liable to a lawsuit by the owner. It put the onus on the owner to track down and apprehend the fugitive, frequently a difficult and expensive process. On the other hand, it offered no procedural protections allowing free blacks to avoid being seized as slaves—there was no mention of the accused fugitive having the right to a lawyer or a jury trial, or even to speak on his own behalf. Nothing in its language, however, barred states from establishing their own, more equitable procedures to deal with accused fugitives, and as time went on, more and more northern states would do so. A state could abolish slavery but not its obligation to respect the laws of other states establishing the institution. Meanwhile, as other northern states moved toward abolition, slavery in New York persisted. Should slavery be strengthened, given the disruptions that had occurred, or should it be abolished? The House passed a bill for gradual abolition, coupled with a prohibition on free blacks voting, holding office, or serving on juries. The Senate at first refused to agree to these restrictions, which had no counterpart in the abolition laws of other northern states, but eventually accepted the ban on black suffrage. Despite this impasse, antislavery sentiment had grown strong enough that the legislature in moved to loosen the laws regulating private manumission. In the colonial era, such measures had been meant to discourage the practice by demanding that the owner post a large monetary bond. The new law dropped this provision, simply requiring a certificate from the overseers of the poor that the slave was capable of supporting himself or herself thus prohibiting owners from relieving themselves of responsibility for slaves who could not perform labor, such as small children and elderly and infirm adults. By the time slavery ended in New York, the majority of slaves who became free had done so via manumission. At

the same time, the first organized efforts to abolish slavery in New York made their appearance. In 1785, a group of eighteen leading citizens founded the New York Manumission Society. Compared to later abolitionist organizations, the Manumission Society was genteel, conservative, and paternalistic. John Jay himself owned five slaves while he headed the organization. They lobbied the legislature, but also did much more. Over the course of its life it survived until 1827, the Manumission Society offered legal assistance to blacks seeking freedom, worked strenuously to oppose the kidnapping of free blacks and slave catching in the city, brought to court captains engaged illegally in the African slave trade, and sponsored antislavery lectures and literature. It encouraged individuals to manumit their slaves and monitored the fulfillment of promises to do so. And as one of its first actions, it established the African Free School, which became the backbone of black education in the city. Eventually, seven such schools were created, from which emerged leading nineteenth-century black abolitionists, including James McCune Smith and Henry Highland Garnet. The Manumission Society operated within the law. It did not countenance direct action against those seeking to retrieve fugitives in the city. Although it offered legal assistance to accused runaways, many members pledged to abide by the Fugitive Slave Act of 1793. For their part, blacks quickly realized that despite its elitism, the society was willing to listen to and act on their grievances. They did not hesitate to seek its help. In 1799, the Manumission Society persuaded the legislature to enact a law barring the importation of slaves into the state and their removal for sale elsewhere. However, the first federal census, in 1790, revealed that although the Revolution had led to an increase in the free black population, slavery remained well entrenched in New York. Slaves still far outnumbered free African Americans. The city recorded a black population of 3,000, two-thirds of them slaves. The buying and selling of slaves continued—“a majority of the slaveholders in had not owned a slave a decade earlier. Bills for abolition came before the legislature several times, but without result. Resistance was strongest among slaveholding Dutch farmers in Brooklyn and elsewhere. But most legislators did not wish to burden the government with this expense. Meanwhile, slaves took matters into their own hands. Now that Pennsylvania and the New England states had provided for abolition, the number of free blacks in those states was increasing, providing more places of refuge. The number of fugitive slave ads in New York newspapers had declined sharply in the 1790s, possibly because slaves expected action to abolish the institution. When this was not forthcoming, the number rose dramatically. The growing frequency of running away during the 1790s helped to propel a reluctant legislature down the road to abolition. So did the declining economic importance of slavery as the white population expanded and employers of all kinds relied increasingly on free labor. The law sought to make abolition as orderly as possible. It applied to no living slave. While the law guaranteed that slavery in New York would eventually come to an end, its death came slowly and not without efforts at evasion. Immediately after its passage, the Manumission Society noted an alarming rise in the illegal export of blacks from the state. But after 1800, because of manumissions, the number of slaves in New York City fell precipitously. Nonetheless, in 1800, slaves remained in the city in and as late as 1827. In 1827, the legislature decreed that all slaves who had been living at the time of the act would be emancipated on July 4, 1827. On that day, nearly 3,000 persons still held as slaves in the state gained their freedom, and slavery in New York finally came to an end. But the law also allowed southern owners to bring slaves into the state for up to nine months without their becoming free. In 1827, the legislature repealed this provision and made it illegal to introduce a slave into the state. As the cotton kingdom flourished, so did its economic connections with New York. New York printers produced stylized images of fugitives for use in notices circulated in the South by owners of runaway slaves. On the eve of the Civil War, J. M. Warehouses along its waterfront were filled with the products of slave labor—“cotton, tobacco, and especially sugar from Louisiana and Cuba. Southern businessmen and tourists became a ubiquitous presence in New York City. One journalist estimated that no fewer than 100,000 southerners, ranging from travelers seeking a cooler climate to planters and country merchants conducting business, visited New York City each summer. Local newspapers regularly praised southern society and carried advertisements by upscale shops directly addressed to southern visitors. Some companies, such as the investment bankers and merchants Brown Brothers and Co. Major hotels, such as the Astor, Fifth Avenue, and Metropolitan, made special efforts to cater to southerners. Many owners brought slaves along on their visits. Hotels provided them with quarters, although they refused accommodations to free black guests. Slave catchers from the South roamed the city; as late as a group of

armed law enforcement officers from Virginia boarded a ship in New York harbor, searched it without a warrant, and removed a fugitive slave.