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SLAVERY IN NEW HAMPSHIRE:  
PROFITABLE GODLINESS TO RACIAL CONSCIOUSNESS

BY

JODY R. FERNALD

B.A., College for Lifelong Learning, University System of New Hampshire, 2004

THESIS

Submitted to the University of New Hampshire

In Partial Fulfillment of

the Requirements for the Degree of

Master of Arts

in

Liberal Studies

December, 2007

UMI Number: 1449583

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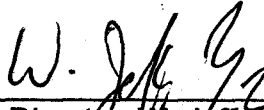
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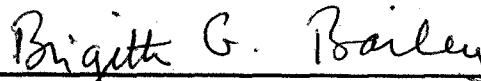
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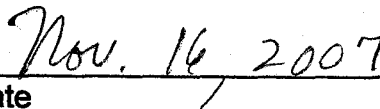
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## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This work was constructed on a foundation of intellectual curiosity and personal interest. Many scholars have influenced and advised me, but some of them deserve special mention.

I owe a great debt to Prof. W. Jeffrey Bolster—first for taking me on as a student and second for guiding me through what has been a process of self-examination as well as a historical and cultural one. I am also greatly indebted to Karen Alexander for her mentoring and encouragement. My mid-life completion of an education begun decades earlier took the form it did because of her dedicated teaching, superb writing, and valued friendship. The members of my thesis committee have commanded my respect for a number of years: Prof. Brigitte Bailey for her patience, encouragement, and exceptional teaching; Prof. David Watters for his indefatigable support of scholarly work in New England culture. My thanks also go to Prof. Lisa MacFarlane, Prof. J. William Harris, and Prof. David Frankfurter for providing an intensive and creative learning experience. Special thanks go to Prof. Louise Buckley for her editorial assistance. Many others deserve my thanks: Frank Meevers and the staff of the New Hampshire State Archives, Bill Leavenworth, the staff of the Dimond Library at the University of New Hampshire, the Dover Public Library, the Portsmouth Athenaeum, and the New Hampshire Historical Society.

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ABSTRACT

SLAVERY IN NEW HAMPSHIRE:

PROFITABLE GODLINESS TO RACIAL CONSCIOUSNESS

By

Jody R. Fernald

University of New Hampshire, December, 2007

The goal of this thesis is to restore complexity, normalcy, and the later development of racism to the history and culture of slavery in New Hampshire. In addition to its role as a normal aspect of life in a hierarchical Atlantic world, slavery in New Hampshire gave birth to both racism and racial consciousness after its gradual demise in the state. The roots of slavery, the acculturation of different populations, changing interpretations of the state's history of slavery, and contemporary examples of its influence are presented here in an effort to correct the perception that slavery was inconsequential in the area.



## INTRODUCTION

The history of slavery in New Hampshire is not untold, but it has not been told from the perspective of its normalcy in its heyday and its continuing influence on perceptions of race in New Hampshire. This thesis embraces those challenges. It is not a recovery of individual lives. It is a look at how racism evolved from a culture that accepted slavery and then denied economic, political, and social freedom to those freed from slavery.

The players, the play, and the stage all have changed over time in New Hampshire's history of slavery. One of the aims of this study is to restore the complex history of slavery and racism to a state that has erased, simplified, and segmented its own history of social relationships and cultural differences. New Hampshire's culture is both unique and a part of the United States and the greater Atlantic world. If this essay brings recognition of the interdependence of all people who have lived and now live in New Hampshire, then it will be successful. Both historical and cultural elements meet here. The roots of slavery, the acculturation of different populations, changing interpretations of the state's history of slavery, and contemporary examples of its influence are necessary components to understanding where the state is now and why.

A slave is defined as someone who is the property of and subject to another person. He or she may be captured or born into the position, and he or

she has no personal rights or freedoms.<sup>1</sup> Used as early as the thirteenth century, this definition specifies neither race nor ethnicity. Consistent with that definition, slavery in colonial New Hampshire eludes classification by race. The terms “slave” and “servant” were used interchangeably for Native Americans, Africans, or Europeans in seventeenth and eighteenth-century New Hampshire, even as laws prescribed lifetime service for some and limited service for others. Slaves and servants populated the lowest class of laborers who were subservient to more educated, wealthier, and “higher born” European settlers. Colonial New Hampshire, like virtually every other place in the western hemisphere before the nineteenth century, embraced slavery as part of its hierarchical social structure. Anything different would have been an aberration. The practice in New Hampshire grew from a global history of slavery, Puritan epistemology, the normalcy of hierarchy, and the state’s participation in the Atlantic maritime system of trade.

To be enslaved is to be the victim of the political and cultural power of another group. Paul Gilroy used the term “cultural insiderism” to describe the conditions in which one people distinguishes itself from others with an absolute sense of difference.<sup>2</sup> This overarching construction of identity was not unique to European settlers in New Hampshire, and Gilroy describes it as the “continuing lure of ethnic absolutism.”<sup>3</sup> In New Hampshire, those dominated by European insiders and their descendants later would be tempted by that absolutism as well. Both

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<sup>1</sup> *Oxford English Dictionary Online* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989, 2<sup>d</sup> edition). <http://dictionary.oed.com.libproxy.unh.edu/entrance.dtl> (accessed June, 2007).

<sup>2</sup> Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993), p.3.

<sup>3</sup> Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic*, p.3.

African-Americans and Native Americans have excluded each other and whites in an attempt to claim their heritages. Whites have long excluded others from their analyses of history. Human beings find reassurance in group identification, even though it is commonly known to lead to oppression of outsiders.<sup>4</sup>

Hierarchically organized and oppressive societies were a worldwide norm when English colonists arrived on the shores of New Hampshire. Long before the scientific concept of race originated in the eighteenth century, various people were held in bondage by Muslims, Christians and Jews. James Sweet traced the European predilection for slavery to fifteenth-century Iberia using Columbus's statement that Native Americans would make "good servants" as but one example of the hierarchical mindset that existed long before slavery was practiced in New England.<sup>5</sup> Throughout history, Europeans animalized and demonized peasants as the necessity arose.<sup>6</sup> Muslims enslaved Africans as early as the eighth century AD.<sup>7</sup> Free black men owned black slaves in nineteenth-century America. Africans enslaved other Africans in pre-colonial Africa. And slavery is by no means only a historical phenomenon. In the Sudan and Mauritania, Africans are currently enslaving other Africans. Three Mexican

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<sup>4</sup> For example, on March 3, 2007, members of the Cherokee Nation voted to exclude descendants of intermarried whites and Africans from their official rolls. Mike Graham, "Cherokee Nation Vote: No Such Thing as a Black or White Indian" in *American Chronicle.com*. <<http://www.americanchronicle.com/articles/viewArticle.asp?articleID=22354>> Late twentieth-century black history often excluded whites in an attempt to recover a singular cultural history.

<sup>5</sup> James H. Sweet, "The Iberian Roots of American Racist Thought," in *The William and Mary Quarterly*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ser., 54-1 (1997): 143-166.

<sup>6</sup> See the work of David Brion Davis, including "Looking at Slavery from Broader Perspectives," in *American Historical Review* 105 (2000): 452-466, and his summary entitled "Constructing Race: A Reflection", in *The William and Mary Quarterly*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ser. 54-1 (1997): 7-18.

<sup>7</sup> J. Alexander, "Islam, Archaeology and Slavery in Africa," *World Archaeology*, 33-1: 44-60.

men were convicted of bringing enslaved Mexican women intended for prostitution to Queens, New York, between 1991 and 2004 in the United States. Chinese masters are currently enslaving Chinese children and young men as laborers, and are accused of trafficking in slaves both internally and throughout Asia. Race is not and has not been a qualification for slavery. Ubiquitous in human history, slavery has by no means disappeared.<sup>8</sup>

In all its complex manifestations, slavery played a continuing role in America's definition of liberty.<sup>9</sup> Puritan epistemology in New Hampshire channeled earlier beliefs that freedom sprang from absolute service to God.<sup>10</sup> Christian theology was connected to slavery. As Orlando Patterson has shown, Augustine, borrowing from Paul, interpreted freedom as only true in the context of man's relationship to God. Individual freedom or self-determination equaled at best an empty vessel, at worst an enemy of society. New Hampshire's transition

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<sup>8</sup> See Bernard E. Powers, Jr, *Black Charlestonians, a Social History, 1822-1885* (Fayetteville, Ark: University of Arkansas Press, 1994), p.160-188, for the hierarchy among black residents of Charleston, SC; also Larry Koger, *Black Slaveowners: Free Black Slave Masters in South Carolina, 1790-1860* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina, 1995,1985, reprint of MacFarland edition). Slavery in Pre-colonial Africa has proved difficult but not impossible to investigate because of the oral culture of the area. See also Chapurukha M. Kusimba, "Archaeology of Slavery in East Africa," *African Archaeological Review*, 21-2 (2004): 59-88. For documentation of slavery in the modern world, see, among others, "Africa's New Slave Trade" in *Wilson Quarterly* 24-2 (2000); U.S. Customs and Immigration Service, "Slave Labour on the Increase in China," news release dated August 31, 2001, <http://www.antislavery.org/homepage/news/china130801.html>; "95 Officials Punished for Kiln Slavery", *People's Daily Online*, (July 17, 2007) <http://english.people.com.cn/90001/90776/6217113.html>; U.S. Customs and Immigration Service, "Three defendants sentenced for forcing young Mexican women into sexual slavery in New York", news release dated April 27, 2006, <http://www.ice.gov/pi/news/newsreleases/articles/060427ny.htm>.

<sup>9</sup> Orlando Patterson, *Freedom*, vol. 1 of *Freedom in the Making of Western Culture* (New York: Basic Books, 1991).

<sup>10</sup> The term Puritan is used here to describe some Massachusetts clergymen through the Mathers. Scholars of Puritanism may disagree with the end date of true Puritanism.

from a religious-based government to a secular one posed particular challenges to its conceptions of liberty and its practice of slavery. The Christian concept of slavery as appropriate and necessary to the greater good lost its fire in the face of an increasing national emphasis on secular rights and freedom for all men, but racial assumptions persisted long after theologians separated orthodox Christianity and slavery.

While pockets of slavery existed across the province and state of New Hampshire, this study focuses on the seacoast communities of Portsmouth, Dover, Exeter, Durham, Newington, New Castle and Hampton. Population was concentrated on the seacoast. The oldest, wealthiest and most educated population in the province was located there; hence, there was also more slavery there. Seacoast probate records and other court records provide plenty of evidence of the forced service of Native Americans, Africans, and some Europeans in the earliest years of settlement on the coast of New Hampshire. Conditions varied and assumptions that indenture of Europeans always involved better treatment than enslavement are inaccurate. Lorenzo Greene noted that white indentured servants were often treated more brutally than slaves.<sup>11</sup>

Enslaved people contributed to successful mercantile operations in the community, whether indirectly by freeing householders from domestic work, including farm chores, or directly by working in the warehouses and shops of fishermen, mariners, and storekeepers. Understanding the Puritan foundation of New Hampshire society is important to contemporary understanding of the ways

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<sup>11</sup> Lorenzo J. Greene, *The Negro in Colonial New England* (NY: Atheneum, 1969), p.231. Original edition (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1942).

in which slavery did not conflict with the community values of early New Hampshire. Slavery reached its peak in New Hampshire with the encouragement of Puritan authority figures who viewed it as a providential gift to the chosen people and necessary to the preservation of an ordered society.

Once the enslaved and their descendants had adapted to European culture, the concept of race took the place of enslavement in marking distinct social valuations. Not only did a man have to be free in order to be empowered politically in many parts of the United States until 1870, he had to be white as well.<sup>12</sup> When all men were declared free in the newly-formed nation, race, gender, and pauperism became the factors that excluded those deemed unqualified for full participation in the new government. The demise of slavery inspired a redefinition of American freedom that restricted the privileges of citizenship to only those who were considered worthy—white men.<sup>13</sup> Men of color deemed inferior by Enlightenment science continued to be restricted to the periphery of society, as were women of any color. Just as only free Protestant men formed the ruling body of early life in New Hampshire, free white men dominated the nineteenth century and beyond.

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<sup>12</sup> The fifteenth amendment to the United States Constitution guaranteed the right to vote without discrimination based on race, color, or previous condition of servitude. Women of any color were not granted the right to vote until the nineteenth amendment was ratified in 1920. In Massachusetts, Vermont, New Hampshire, Maine, and Rhode Island, free black men could vote in the Early Republic. However, New Hampshire required a taxpaying qualification for voting in its constitution of 1782. The legal right to vote did not always guarantee the practice. See Alexander Keyssar, *The Right to Vote: The Contested History of Democracy in the United States* (New York: Basic Books, 2000).

<sup>13</sup> See Winthrop Jordan, *White Over Black: American Attitudes Toward the Negro 1550-1812* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1968); James Campbell and James Oakes, "The Invention of Race: Rereading White Over Black," in *Reviews in American History*, 21-1 (1993): 172-183.

As the practice of slavery in New Hampshire faded, interpretations of its importance and even its existence mutated with changing contexts of historians in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. From nineteenth-century sentimental and paternalist histories through the work of black scholars in the early twentieth century to the intensification of Black history and Native American history during the 1970s and 1980s, New England has reinterpreted its history of slavery within changing cultural contexts. The history of those interpretations tracks important changes over time, as slavery was eventually seen as directly related to contemporary racial problems.

Culture includes the belief systems of a community that are manifested in tangible expressions. Racial differences arising from the practice of slavery continue to influence contemporary culture in New Hampshire. Reminding his readers of the difference between history and memory, historian Ira Berlin called for the necessary integration of both the complex history of slavery and the painful cultural reminders and memory of it.<sup>14</sup> No one, of any skin color, was unaffected by the practice of slavery. The psychological consequences of one culture dominating others in the first centuries of colonization contributed to contemporary racial problems in America. African-American family therapist Dr. Kenneth Hardy of Syracuse University recognized the presence of a “contemporary ghost” that affects the self-image of African-Americans.<sup>15</sup> White

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<sup>14</sup> Ira Berlin, “American Slavery in History and Memory and the Search for Social Justice,” in *Journal of American History*, 90-4 (2004).

<sup>15</sup> Kenneth V. Hardy, *The Psychological Residuals of Slavery* [videorecording] (San Francisco: 2006). Psychotherapy.net.

Americans, often ignorant of this legacy, fail to understand the problem. While inner conflicts over race plague African-Americans, the fear of becoming dominated by the subordinated still simmers in the white consciousness. No one escapes the influence of slavery on race in contemporary imagery, language, and racial perceptions, although the subordinated live with the problem that is often invisible to the dominant.

Understanding the cultural resonance of slavery requires both a historical understanding of the practice and a learned sensitivity to its contemporary reach. In order to demonstrate the normalcy of slavery in early New Hampshire, chapters one and two of this thesis trace the changing aspects of New Hampshire society that supported slavery as normal practice over the first two centuries of settlement.<sup>16</sup> Chapter three examines the historiography of slavery in northern New England and chapter four explores some cultural reverberations of slavery in the area. Knowledge of both the complex roots of domination of one people over another and an understanding of the painful stirrings of memory still present in language and imagery must accompany each other in an examination of the extent and impact of slavery in New Hampshire.<sup>17</sup> New Hampshire's history of slavery

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<sup>16</sup> Morton H. Wiggin, *A History of Barrington, N.H.* (South Berwick, ME: Barrington Historical Society, printed by the Chronicle Print Shop, 1983), p.42. According to this history, the last person enslaved in New Hampshire was Aggie, who was brought from the West Indies by Capt. Mark Hunking in 1750. Aggie died in 1840 at 100 years old and is now buried in the Pine Grove Cemetery in Barrington. A young woman enslaved in the household of farmer B.G. Searle in Hollis was the last enslaved person recorded in the 1840 census of New Hampshire according to David Watters' forward to "Too Long in the Shadows: The Black Presence in New Hampshire," in *Historical New Hampshire*, 61-1 (2007): 2-3. Aggie may not technically have still been enslaved, since she was a ward of the town as an elderly woman with no means of support.

<sup>17</sup> Prof. W. Jeffrey Bolster brought the subject of place names to my attention. The discovery of "Nigger Point" in Durham has alerted me to look for street names like Guinea Road, etc., in New Hampshire towns.



may have been less brutal than plantation slavery in the West Indies, but it left its mark on the culture nonetheless.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Sweet, *Iberian Roots*, p.145.

## CHAPTER I

### THE ROOTS OF SLAVERY IN NEW HAMPSHIRE

As a young boy in the early eighteenth century, Quash (Kwasi) was enslaved in the home of Portsmouth, New Hampshire mariner Augustine Bullard. Bullard likely purchased Quash through family connections, since his brothers Benjamin and Jasper Bullard owned property and traded in the West Indies. On at least one occasion, Benjamin Bullard brought enslaved people from Barbados to the powerful merchant William Pepperrell of Kittery, Maine.<sup>19</sup> Although Quash probably came to Portsmouth via the West Indies, his name indicates his family origins were Ghana, West Africa.<sup>20</sup> Augustine Bullard willed “the Negroe Boy Quash” to his wife Hannah in his will of 1709. Along with Quash, Hannah inherited the other accoutrements of a relatively comfortable life: Bullard’s silver-tipped cane, looking glasses, a map of Barbados, a “pretty large feather bed,”

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<sup>19</sup> Byron Fairchild, *Messrs. William Pepperrell: Merchants at Piscataqua* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1954), p.118. Benjamin Bullard shipped rum and five “Negroe slaves” consigned by Pepperrell in 1719. Four of the five slaves Bullard brought for Pepperrell died at sea. Bullard was also involved in trading ventures with Pepperrell’s son-in-law, Capt. Benjamin Clarke formerly of Kingston and later of Barbados.

<sup>20</sup> Donnan, Elizabeth, *Documents Illustrative of the History of the Slave Trade to America* (Washington, DC: Carnegie Institution of Washington, 1930), vol. 3, p. 28; Keith W. Stokes and Theresa G. Stokes, “African Names: Living Beyond Enslavement,” *African Slave Markers in Colonial Newport*, <http://www.colonialcemetery.com/names.htm>; “Names from Ghana,” *TLC Africa*, [http://www.tlcafrica.com/african\\_names\\_ghana.htm](http://www.tlcafrica.com/african_names_ghana.htm); “The Official Website of the Parting Ways New Guinea Settlement,” *Museum of Afro-American Ethnohistory, Plymouth, Massachusetts*, <http://www.partingwaysplymouth.org/quash.htm>.

chairs, tables and other property. To the men who inventoried Bullard's estate, Quash was as valuable as ten acres of salt marsh.<sup>21</sup>

Quash and his peers were worth far more to the community than they were to their masters. Their enslavement, both accepted and expected, brought honor and stature to the community. The mere presence of slaves in a community marked its prosperity and its victory in war.<sup>22</sup> Slavery in New Hampshire signified the presence of a hierarchical and orderly society modeled after English precedent and mimicked Boston, the larger and more powerful community to the south. Men accustomed to the trappings of English society found slave ownership a visible means of creating social stature for themselves. A tour of the seacoast of New Hampshire during the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries would have revealed slavery as a normal social relationship in upper-class families. The ownership of people symbolized a position of respect and authority in addition to its practical attributes. And slaveholding was reinforced by the dominant church.

Augustine Bullard was a member of the Puritan church in Portsmouth, where on the Lord's Day one could find many of Portsmouth's prosperous slave-owning businessmen, or at least their wives and families.<sup>23</sup> Failure to show at meeting was a legal offense punished by fines. Absentees avoided punishment

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<sup>21</sup> Provincial Probate Records of New Hampshire, New Hampshire Division of Archives and Records Management, Concord, New Hampshire, [hereafter PPR] vol.1, p.6, inventory of the estate of Augustine Bullard of Portsmouth; PPR, vol.31, p.568 will of Augustine Bullard.

<sup>22</sup> Patterson, *Freedom*, p. 9-13.

<sup>23</sup> Jay Mack Holbrook, *New Hampshire Residents, 1633-1699* (Oxford, MA: Holbrook Research Institute, 1979), p.14.

only by documenting their absences as service to the community, although a few people used providential interference as an excuse for their absence.<sup>24</sup> Men often at sea were represented at meeting by their families. Some slaves also attended Puritan worship services and were seated at the back according to the hierarchy. Puritan culture in the seacoast communities of New Hampshire embraced the practice of slavery within a redeeming religious context. The rhetoric of area clergymen reinforced a culture of European superiority in a historically-based hierarchical context.

Slaves in New Hampshire included Native Americans as well as others who occupied precarious social positions. In early New England, the enslaved were poor or they had been captured in warfare. Native Americans were enslaved either perpetually or for defined terms supposedly over debt, insolence, or their acts of sheltering enemies of the province. Although the English and the Native Americans lived in relative peace in the first fifty years of New Hampshire settlement, southern Massachusetts colonists warred with the Pequots as early as 1636, and natives captured in the early conflicts were often sold elsewhere in New England or abroad.<sup>25</sup> Once war commenced, natives captured Europeans in retaliation. Numbers of natives in the Piscataqua region had been reduced by disease by the 1630s, but those surviving were allied with other tribes and loosely allied with the English in a group defense against the French. By the

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<sup>24</sup> Otis G Hammond., ed. *New Hampshire Court Records. 1640-1692. Court papers, 1652-1668. State Papers series* ([Concord]: State of New Hampshire, 1943), vol. 40. p.185.

<sup>25</sup> Colin G. Calloway, *New Worlds for All: Indians, Europeans, and the Remaking of Early America* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997), p. xix, 1-7.

1650s, natives appeared more frequently before English courts, especially when tribal organizations weakened and were less able to support their members.<sup>26</sup> In time, mistrust developed between the English and the natives. Cultural differences and disputes over land rights dictated the deterioration of the relationship. Natives began attacking English colonists during the 1670s near Oyster River, and full-blown warfare broke out in Dover by 1689.

European trickery exacerbated bad relations with the natives, and Indians captured in Dover were sold on the slave market. By the 1680s, Indians considered to be a threat to New Hampshire could be enslaved as enemies captured in war.<sup>27</sup> Massachusetts law endorsed the enslavement of captives taken lawfully in war. Native women and children were frequent victims of enslavement as native men were killed in warfare. Not long after the first African person was known to be enslaved in New Hampshire circa 1645, William Hilton of Oyster River sold a Native American he called James to George Carr in 1649.<sup>28</sup> Undoubtedly, James had no roots in the West Indies; nor did the native servants of Reverend Hugh Adams of Durham: Simon Teko, his wife Marie, and

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<sup>26</sup> Margaret Ellen Newell, "The Changing Nature of Indian Slavery in New England, 1670-1720," *Reinterpreting New England Indians and the Colonial Experience* (Boston, MA: The Colonial Society of Massachusetts, 2003), p.110-111. David Stewart-Smith, "The Penacook Indians and the New England Frontier, circa 1604-1733" (Montpelier, VT: Ph.D. diss., Graduate School of the Union Institute, 1998), p.88-103.

<sup>27</sup> Great Britain Public Record Office, *Calendar of State Papers, Colonial Series* (Vaduz: Kraus Reprint, 1964), vol.11, p. 633. Governor Cranfield to Lords of Trade and Plantations, May 14, 1684, New Hampshire, describes the serious threat of Indians to the east in Maine and fears of another Indian war.

<sup>28</sup> Everett S. Stackpole and Lucien Thompson, *History of the Town of Durham, New Hampshire [Oyster River Plantation]* (Concord, NH: Rumford Press, [1913]), vol.1, p. 249.

their children Scipio and Phillis.<sup>29</sup> Capt. Robert Munday of Portsmouth purchased four Indians from a Capt. Reikes in 1669. Thomas Loughton of Dover left his “Indian slave John” to his wife in 1671.<sup>30</sup> Native Americans fulfilled the definition of the enslaveable other as well as Africans did—they were heathen, comparatively barbaric, and vulnerable.

Besides enslaving natives, New Hampshire colonists had immediate access to Africans in Antigua and Barbados in the West Indies and in ports like Charleston, South Carolina. Although Elizabeth Donnan cited instances of vessels clearing Portsmouth, New Hampshire for Africa from 1728 to 1732, seventeenth-century New Hampshire mariners participated more often in the coasting trade along the mainland and as far south as the West Indies. Most New Hampshire trade direct with Africa occurred in the first half of the eighteenth century. New Hampshire was also implicated in the African trade indirectly because some slaves were brought from Africa to the province by British ships manufactured in New Hampshire. Enslaved people from the West Indies were preferred since they were more likely to have been at least slightly initiated into European culture than were those arriving directly from Africa. Wherever they

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<sup>29</sup> Stackpole and Thompson, *History of Durham*, p. 250. Rev. Hugh Adams spent several years in South Carolina and may have brought native slaves back to New England with him ca. 1706. In his memoir, he boasted of traveling to distant parts of the world including Africa and the islands off America. For more information on the Indian slave trade in the South, see Alan Galloway, *The Indian Slave Trade: The Rise of the English Empire in the American South, 1670-1717* (New London: Yale University Press, 2002). Many of the natives enslaved in New Hampshire probably came from the Carolinas.

<sup>30</sup> Hammond, *New Hampshire Court Records*, vol. 40, p. 250; PPR, vol. 1, p. 144, inventory of Thomas Loughton of Dover.

originated, Africans proved more vulnerable than any other enslaved people in New Hampshire because they had no local support system.<sup>31</sup>

By the mid-seventeenth century, English planters in the West Indies had built an enormously successful sugar industry primarily on the backs of African laborers.<sup>32</sup> West Indian planters invested in the production of sugar at the expense of producing essential foodstuffs for themselves and their labor force. New Englanders answered that need with food including livestock and salt fish in exchange for molasses, sugar, rum, and a few Africans who had already been sold several times from African villages to European traders to West Indian planters. Proximity, novelty, and a hierarchical social system prompted New Hampshire mariners to purchase human beings of African origins to work in their households and businesses.

Although New Hampshire played a relatively minor role in the slave trade in America, New Hampshire's dominance by Massachusetts in the early years of settlement provided the province with an immediate connection to the Atlantic slave trade and various slave-based economies. As early as 1634, English settlers on Tortuga and Providence Island knew they could offload any excess

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<sup>31</sup> Donnan, *Documents*, vol. 3, p. 1. Also see vol.4, p.176-180 for the lists of New England ships trading slaves between 1710 and 1718 in Virginia. New Englanders brought enslaved people for sale both from the West Indies to Virginia and from New England to Virginia. It was not uncommon for New Englanders to trade a man or two for a quantity of tobacco. The quantity of New England traffic in human beings increased in the second quarter of the eighteenth century reflecting the growth in the slave trade overall.

<sup>32</sup> Richard S. Dunn, *Sugar & Slaves: the Rise of the Planter Class in the English West Indies, 1624-1713* (Chapel Hill, NC: University Press of North Carolina, 2000; reprinted from 1972 edition with new forward by Gary B. Nash).

captured people in New England or Virginia.<sup>33</sup> Francis Williams of Portsmouth, the earliest identified slave owner in New Hampshire, purchased a man from a Massachusetts slave trader circa 1645.<sup>34</sup> Shortly thereafter, Massachusetts' governance of New Hampshire brought the Puritan culture of communal striving to a province founded by disordered adventurers, investors, and fishermen.<sup>35</sup> Puritans convinced of their superior calling settled in the seacoast of New Hampshire with a tenuous political hold on the area and a fear that their culture would be diluted by interaction with native peoples. Dominance and Christianization of Natives helped to maintain Puritan control and culture.<sup>36</sup>

Massachusetts clergymen set the religious context for slavery in New Hampshire. For Puritan Cotton Mather in seventeenth-century Massachusetts, God's plan was clear: every man is a servant and every man has a master. "We are the Bought servants of God; and wo [sic] to us if our Behaviors be not agreeable to our Obligations."<sup>37</sup> For every good Puritan in the "New-English Israel," God was the master whom he served.<sup>38</sup> Mather, like most seventeenth-

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<sup>33</sup> Donnan, *Documents*, vol.1, p.74, note 3.

<sup>34</sup> Greene, *The Negro*, p.18.

<sup>35</sup> Donnan, *Documents*, vol. 3, p.1-3. In the introduction to the New England colonies, Donnan stated that although the documentation of slave trading in NH is scarce, the transport and sale of enslaved peoples across province lines brought the province into a less direct but still active participation in the trade.

<sup>36</sup> Calloway, *New Worlds for All*, p.7.

<sup>37</sup> Cotton Mather, *Small Offers Towards the Service of the Tabernacle in the Wilderness* (Boston, Mass.: R. Pierce Printer, 1689), p.19.

<sup>38</sup> Cotton Mather, *Four Discourses, Accomodated Unto the Designs of Practical Godliness...* (Boston, Mass.: Printed by R. Pierce, 1689), and *A Good Master Well Served...* (Boston, Mass.: Printed by B. Green and J. Allen, 1696).



century people in New Hampshire, also assumed that good Puritans were masters of their own servants. He wrote behavioral manuals about serving God by managing servants in a practical and profitable manner. Cotton Mather and his contemporaries in New Hampshire chose to serve and be served by enslaving and Christianizing captive people. In his service to God, Mather believed that all souls needed Christianization in order to save the population from God's wrath.<sup>39</sup> Appropriate enslavement of others partially fulfilled the obligations of a Puritan in the divine scheme. Slave labor was incorporated early into the social structure of New Hampshire as an unquestioned part of its providential success. New Hampshire slave owners had assigned their agency to God.<sup>40</sup>

Massachusetts laws affected the slave trade in New Hampshire as well. Slave traders are believed to have entered the port of Portsmouth in greater numbers in the first half of the eighteenth century to avoid the temporary taxes on sales of slaves levied by both Massachusetts in 1705-6 (£4 per slave) and Rhode Island in 1711 (£3 per slave).<sup>41</sup> Both colonies levied additional penalties on those who failed to register their imported slaves.<sup>42</sup> Neither New Hampshire nor

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<sup>39</sup> For his discussion of Mather's sermon at the execution of Joseph Hanno, former slave and Christian see Mark S. Weiner, "This 'Miserable African'" in *Commonplace*, 4-3 (2004) [www.common-place.org](http://www.common-place.org). <http://common-place.dreamhost.com/vol-04/no-03/weiner/index.shtml>. Weiner found that Mather viewed a smallpox epidemic in Boston as God's punishment to men for Hanno's slide from grace. The actions of a black man could have the same reverberations through the community as those of a white man even though both were due different places in the social hierarchy.

<sup>40</sup> Christine Leigh Heyrman, *Commerce and Culture: the Maritime Communities of Colonial Massachusetts, 1690-1750* (N.Y.: W.W. Norton, 1984), p. 190-203.

<sup>41</sup> Greene, *The Negro*, p. 56-57.

<sup>42</sup> Greene, *The Negro*, p. 50.

Connecticut taxed the importation of slaves, but Portsmouth's proximity to Boston may have increased the likelihood that mariners brought human cargoes to Portsmouth for Massachusetts' buyers. The avoidance of taxes may have increased the traffic in enslaved people in New Hampshire for a short time, but the practice of purchasing and enslaving human beings had already been well established by the beginning of the eighteenth century in New Hampshire. Governor Dudley estimated the number of "negro servants" (excluding native slaves) in New Hampshire to be 70 in 1708, making the enslaved about 2-3 percent of the total population of 5,681 in 1710.<sup>43</sup> Regardless of the accuracy of Dudley's estimate, evidence does prove the existence of a number of people bound in permanent servitude to white masters in New Hampshire in the seventeenth century.

One of the reasons slavery existed in New Hampshire was the need for expansion of the labor force beyond the limited numbers of European settlers. Although New Englanders preferred a family system of labor, the combined need for workers to clear extensive land for production and to build maritime industries created a shortage in the European labor supply.<sup>44</sup> Most Puritan immigrants to the new world were from families prosperous enough to have engaged servants. They were not wealthy, but their land holdings were usually large enough to

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<sup>43</sup> Donnan, *Documents*, vol.3, p.1.; VanDeventer, David E., *The Emergence of Provincial New Hampshire* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976), p.64.

<sup>44</sup> Daniel Vickers, "Working the Fields in a Developing Economy: Essex County, Massachusetts, 1630-1675," in *Labor and Work in Early America*, Stephen Innes, ed., (Chapel Hill: Published for the Institute of Early American History and Culture by the University of North Carolina Press, 1988), p. 49-54.

require labor from outside the family unit.<sup>45</sup> English colonists in New Hampshire had three choices of laborers to supplement the family unit: wage labor, indentured servants, or slaves. Wage labor was too expensive, so indentured servants provided the early answer to a compelling problem. As New Hampshire residents made increasing contact with slave-based economies in the Atlantic world, slavery seemed a viable option. Unlike indentured servants, who could be treated as badly or worse than slaves, slaves provided a permanent and hereditary labor force. The purchase cost, lifelong maintenance, and initial susceptibility to disease of slaves exceeded the cost of indentured servants, but slaves provided status, evidence of international connections, and dependability.<sup>46</sup> For early New Hampshire colonists, slaves and servants provided the workforce required to build a prosperous community. The province's prowess at shipbuilding and consequent access to the Atlantic system of trade provided both goods and labor for the fledgling colony. Especially in times of war when few indentured people immigrated, Africans and Native Americans were commonly sold and purchased on the labor market along the Atlantic coast and in the West Indies.

From 1658 through 1740, Massachusetts Puritanism set and supported community values in coastal New Hampshire. And it was during this period that the fastest increase of black people in New Hampshire's population took place.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> Vickers, "Working the Fields," p. 54.

<sup>46</sup> For insight into the workings and meaning of slavery in a northern city, see Alan Tully, "Patterns of Slaveholding in Colonial Pennsylvania: Chester and Lancaster Counties 1729-1758," in *Journal of Social History* 6-3 (1973): 284-305.

<sup>47</sup> Greene, *The Negro*, p.78.

Puritans reshaped Portsmouth, an unstable frontier settlement with capitalist leanings, into a commercially successful community. Four clergymen originally from Massachusetts, Rev. Joshua Moody, Rev. Nathaniel Rogers, Rev. John Emerson and Rev. Jabez Fitch, manned the pulpits of Portsmouth's Puritan churches during that period. Rogers, Emerson and Fitch were slave owners.

It would be an overstatement to attribute a causal relationship between the Puritan domination of Portsmouth and the town's embrace of slave labor, but the culture of Puritanism that Stephen Innes described as "striving" contributed to the growth of chattel slavery in a community already predisposed to the achievement of material prosperity.<sup>48</sup> More capital made the purchase of more slaves possible, and slave labor contributed to the increasing wealth and status of white masters. Patriarchs left their slaves to their wives and children perpetuating the practice over time. The establishment of a slave-owning oligarchy made the growth of slavery in eighteenth-century Portsmouth both possible and inevitable.

Puritan rule extended throughout the seacoast of New Hampshire where clergymen commanded respect and deference. Rev. Hugh Adams of Oyster River, Rev. Seaborne Cotton of Hampton, Rev. Nicholas Gilman of Exeter, Rev. John Adams of Durham, Rev. Joseph Adams, Jr. of Newington, Rev. Samuel Allis of Somersworth, Rev. Ward Clark of Kingston, and Rev. Timothy Walker of Londonderry all numbered among the slave-owning clergymen of coastal New Hampshire. The role models and respected authority figures in New Hampshire were expected to be slave holders.

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<sup>48</sup> Stephen Innes, *Creating the Commonwealth: The Economic Culture of Puritan New England* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1995).

New Hampshire men and women of the seventeenth century drank, fought, stole, slandered, fornicated, and cheated. Puritan authority figures were men of their time--a lusty, violent, and hierarchical time. Hampton's first Puritan minister, Stephen Bacheller, moved to the area from Lynn and Ipswich, Massachusetts bringing hints of sexual and doctrinal scandal with him. The elderly founder of Hampton's religious institution was charged with "immorality" and excommunicated in Hampton from 1641-1643. Although married to a "lusty comely woman," Bachiller reportedly pursued his neighbor's wife.<sup>49</sup> Stephen Bacheller initiated a long tenure of Puritan rule in Hampton. After his house in Hampton burned, Bacheller moved to Strawberry Banke by 1647 and was replaced by a succession of Massachusetts men.

By 1657, Rev. Seaborne Cotton, cousin of Cotton Mather of Boston and son-in-law of Gov. Simon Bradstreet, manned the pulpit in Hampton until the conflict between Anglicans and Puritans in Portsmouth. Puritans tried to maintain their hold on Portsmouth despite the appointment of Anglican government officials by the crown. At the height of that conflict, Cotton fled to Boston for his own safety when, in 1683, Anglicans attacked Rev. Joshua Moodey of Portsmouth for refusing to practice Anglican rites. Cotton's connections to the Cotton and Mather families of the Boston Puritan establishment assured a solid Puritan leadership in Hampton. A

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<sup>49</sup> Frederick Newberry, "A Red-hot 'A' and a Lusting Divine: Sources for *The Scarlet Letter*", *New England Quarterly*, 60-2 (1987): 256-264. Newberry's essay looks for historical sources for Hawthorne's story and finds probability in the story of Stephen Batcheller and his wife Mary. The description of Batcheller's time in New Hampshire comes from John Winthrop's *History of New England from 1630-1649*, James Savage, ed., (New York: Arno Press, 1972, reprint of the 1825 edition), vol. 2, p. 157-159.

solid Puritan leadership in Hampton supported and encouraged the existence of slavery in the community.

Exeter also fell under the divine guidance of Puritans. Puritan ministry took shape under the leadership of Samuel Dudley circa 1650. Dudley succeeded Rev. John Wheelright, the man often credited as the founder of Exeter. Wheelright, related by marriage to Anne Hutchinson, the Antinomian outcast of Puritan Boston, moved to the Exeter area following his official banishment from Boston in 1637. Wheelright soon moved on to Maine and Dudley, son of Gov. Thomas Dudley and son-in-law of Gov. John Winthrop, further consolidated influence from Massachusetts in coastal New Hampshire. Dudley served Exeter until his death shortly before the Cranfield-Moodey conflict that scared off Seaborne Cotton. Dudley was succeeded by a series of temporary appointments that included the son of Seaborne Cotton of Hampton and later by Elder William Wentworth of Dover. Eventually John Clark, another Harvard graduate from Massachusetts, took over the Exeter pulpit. Clark repeated the pattern of religious leaders related by blood or marriage to previous Puritan leadership.<sup>50</sup>

Ironically, the decline in Puritan influence can be traced to the success of its mission. Within a generation, New England Puritans had helped impose stability, education, economic prosperity, and an enslaved labor force on the region.<sup>51</sup> Within a generation, Puritans had passed the practice of slavery on to their heirs. As their population increased, New Hampshire residents voted to

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<sup>50</sup> Charles H. Bell, *History of the Town of Exeter, New Hampshire* (Boston: J.E. Farwell & Co., 1888), p. 155-170.

<sup>51</sup> Innes, *Creating the Commonwealth*, p. 6.

erect additional Puritan churches. Ministerial and tax disputes followed. The changing demography of the area brought churches of other faiths, including Anglicans, and a slightly more diverse population of European settlers including Scotch-Irish. Combined with a move to separate the government of New Hampshire from Massachusetts and the resolution of a boundary dispute between New Hampshire and Massachusetts in New Hampshire's favor circa 1741, the changing culture of New Hampshire diluted the power of the Puritan church/state alliance.<sup>52</sup> The Puritan Church had become a target for Anglicans and a victim of its own expansion. By 1740, Portsmouth already had a history of slavery that expanded with each successive generation. But New Hampshire was no longer dominated by Puritans and its practice of slavery was no longer couched primarily in religious terms.

### **The Puritan Foundation in Portsmouth**

Portsmouth provides a useful example of the depth of Puritan influence in the community. Just twenty-five and a Harvard graduate when he was appointed Puritan clergyman for Portsmouth in 1658, Joshua Moodey emerged from Boston Puritan circles that included Increase Mather and Samuel Sewell, and was well prepared to awaken Portsmouth to a profitable godliness.<sup>53</sup> Moodey's reception

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<sup>52</sup> David E. Van Deventer, *The Emergence of Provincial New Hampshire, 1623-1741* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976), p. 15, 221-225.

<sup>53</sup> Joshua Moodey, *A Practical Discourse Concerning the Benefit of Communion with God...* (Boston: Printed for D. Henchman, in Cornhill, 1746), preface written by Joseph Sewall, Thomas Prince, and John Webb, p.6. See Samuel Sewall, *The Diary of Samuel Sewall, 1674-1729* (NY: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1973) for Sewall's numerous references to Moodey praying over sick family members or his travels with Moodey to Ipswich and Portsmouth. Samuel Sewall argued against the slavery of "Negroes" because their presence disrupted family morality; they were aliens

in formerly Anglican and non-believing Portsmouth may have been mixed, but he labored relentlessly throughout his pastorate to sustain Puritan culture in Portsmouth. Puritan culture both accepted and encouraged the enslavement of people who were non-Christian, "savage", and vulnerable.

Portsmouth of the mid-seventeenth century would need a man of substance to integrate its myriad interests into a dedicated community. The hundred or more settled originally at Great Island and Strawberry Banke came to harvest resources, own property, and get rich. Religion had little influence on the early settlement except as another point for contention. The settlement was initiated and supplied by Capt. John Mason, an English investor who died in 1635 never having visited his project. Mason's death left the settlement on its own with no central organization or outside means of support. Unable to maintain her husband's affairs, Mason's widow told the residents they would have to "shift for themselves" and they did by dividing up Mason's property amongst themselves.<sup>54</sup> The fact that Mason's grants were in dispute and that he left the rights to them to his heirs did not matter at the time. Suddenly Portsmouth residents were substantial and independent landowners. They would soon become slave owners in order to take full advantage of their landfall.

In an effort to stabilize the society and provide some form of organized government, Portsmouth residents agreed, however reluctantly, to operate under

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who couldn't help defend the province; and slavery was economically unsound. Sewall's arguments came far too late to make any difference in New England. Partially contradicting his position, Sewall employed a slave named Scipio to whom he paid a wage. See Lorenzo J. Greene, "Slave-Holding New England and Its Awakening," *Journal of Negro History* 13-4 (1928), p. 523.

<sup>54</sup> Charles E. Clark, *The Eastern Frontier* (Hanover, New Hampshire: University Press of New England, 1970; reprinted 1983), p. 52-55.



the aegis of Puritan Massachusetts around 1642.<sup>55</sup> In an area facing the physical and economic risks of maritime commerce, a shortage of labor, and the violence of seventeenth-century society, the stability of an organized government associated with the Church was welcomed by many. The stable offerings of Puritan government were irrevocably joined with commitment to the Puritan religion. For those who objected to Puritanism in the area, Massachusetts made the deal more appealing by allowing each settlement considerable leeway in managing its own affairs. The Church had compromised in order to gain a foothold in the area.<sup>56</sup>

During his first years in Portsmouth, Rev. Moodey, in his somber garb, preached from the parsonage, a simple wooden structure not far from Portsmouth's waterfront.<sup>57</sup> Unregulated by outsiders, Portsmouth's residents fished, harvested timber, and built small vessels in their shipyards. By 1652, the Royal Navy came to Portsmouth to purchase masts for its fleet.<sup>58</sup> The former servants of John Mason had built themselves a center of what William B. Leavenworth called "communitarian capitalism."<sup>59</sup> Merchants, tradesmen, and mariners depended on one another for survival. Every seagoing mercantile

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<sup>55</sup> Charles B. Kinney, Jr., *Church and State: the Struggle for Separation in New Hampshire 1630-1900* (New York: Teachers College, Columbia University, 1955), p. 13.

<sup>56</sup> Kinney, *Church and State*, p.14.

<sup>57</sup> "North Church of Portsmouth, New Hampshire," online at <http://www.northchurchportsmouth.org/History.shtml>.

<sup>58</sup> Clark, *The Eastern Frontier*, p.52-62.

<sup>59</sup> Leavenworth, William Burgess, "The Ship in the Forest: New England Maritime Industries and Coastal Environment, 1630-1850" (PH.D. Dissertation, University of New Hampshire, 1999).

venture would affect tradesmen who built the vessels, small investors who financed the vessels, the men who manned the vessels and merchants who bought and sold the commodities transported. Profits were shared proportionally among all who participated. There was good reason for inhabitants to want a civilized and cohesive community.

Joshua Moodey, aware of the power of the church to produce a “public spirit in every man,” plied his message for a community-based hierarchy of family, church, and state in the context of an import trade in its infancy.<sup>60</sup> Not only did Moodey set moral standards from the pulpit, he also invested in the economy by partnering with Portsmouth’s merchants and lumber suppliers.<sup>61</sup> Rev. Joshua Moodey’s name echoes throughout the early New Hampshire provincial records as a trusted friend and advisor to Portsmouth’s most prosperous merchants and slave owners. People who were already supporting the Puritan ministry through mandated taxation (although begrudgingly in some cases) made additional gifts on a voluntary basis.<sup>62</sup> (There were a few drunkards who used “aprobrus and scandalous words” against Moodey and one who offered to cut Moodey’s throat.<sup>63</sup>) Nevertheless, named as trusted or beloved friend by many, Moodey stabilized, strengthened, and offered spiritual redemption to Portsmouth’s burgeoning

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<sup>60</sup> Cotton Mather, *The Present State of New England Considered in a Discourse on the Necessities and Advantages of a Public Spirit In Every Man; Especially at Such a Time As This* (Boston: Printed by Samuel Green, 1690).

<sup>61</sup> Van Deventer, *Emergence of Provincial New Hampshire*, p. 108.

<sup>62</sup> See petitions regarding the settling of the issue of taxation of citizens to support two churches in Portsmouth in I. W. Hammond, ed., *New Hampshire State Papers* (Concord NH: [s.n.], [1890]) vol. 17, p. 726.

<sup>63</sup> Hammond, *New Hampshire Court Records*, vol. 40, p. 188, 483, 506.

capitalist culture. Joshua Moodey was Puritan Portsmouth incarnate.<sup>64</sup> Cotton Mather said Moodey saved Portsmouth's life.<sup>65</sup>

If Puritanism continued to serve as a stabilizing force through episodes of interference by the English crown and various wars, then it may well have served the same function Christine Heyrman attributed to the established church on coastal Massachusetts: one of preserving the old order of local society in the face of war, economic risk, and changing demographics.<sup>66</sup> That old order was based on English precedent and it included the containment of the lower classes in formal systems like indenture and slavery in order to maintain a "civilized" community. From the beginnings of white settlement in New Hampshire, family alliances were important. Some of the earliest commercially active and slave-owning families, the Cutts, Vaughns, and Waldrons, continued to dominate Portsmouth culture through succeeding generations. The founders of the old order, both from England and the earliest years of colonial settlement, passed their values and their possessions, including their slaves, on to future generations.

When Portsmouth and its neighbors became suburbs of the city on the hill, its citizens embraced the authority of the Puritan church in several ways. The Puritan influence in Portsmouth extended socially through networks of friendship, economically through commerce that supported the church, morally in its value

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<sup>64</sup> For example, John Fletcher, physician of Portsmouth, left a piece of Spanish gold to Joshua Moodey in 1694 as a token of his love. PPR vol.14, p.148. New Hampshire Division of Archives and Records Management, Concord, New Hampshire.

<sup>65</sup> Cotton Mather, *The Way to Excel, Meditations Awakened by the Death of the Reverend Mr. Joshua Moodey* (Boston: Printed by B. Green and J. Allen, 1697).

<sup>66</sup> Heyrman, *Commerce and Culture*.

system, and politically in creating a community identity strong enough to later fight the royal appointment of Governor Edward Cranfield. Puritans controlled the written records both in scholarly imprints and in the creation of a print culture in newspapers; not until 1756 did Portsmouth have its own press, freeing it from dependence on the printed word from Massachusetts. Not until 1736 did Portsmouth have a consecrated Anglican church, an alternative to the Puritan church.<sup>67</sup>

Massachusetts law placed some restrictions on slavery, although the statute was worded ambiguously. Governor Francis Williams violated Massachusetts law in 1645 when he purchased a slave who had been kidnapped in Guinea on the West African coast.<sup>68</sup> Massachusetts "Body of Liberties, 1641" included the well-known passage regarding the presence of slavery in Massachusetts:

It is Ordered by this Court and the Authority thereof; That there shall never be any Bond-slavery, Villenage, or Captivity amongst us unless it be lawful Captives taken in just Wars, [and such strangers] as willingly sell themselves or are sold to us, and shall have the Liberties and Christian usage which the Law of God established in Israel concerning such persons doth morally require; Provided this exempts none from servitude who shall be judged thereto by Authority.<sup>69</sup>

Because of its ambiguity, this law has been used alternately to defend Puritans as antislavery or to indict them as proslavery. Anyone judged by the

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<sup>67</sup> Robert E. Desrochers, "Every Picture Tells a Story: Slavery in Print in Eighteenth Century New England" (Baltimore, MD: PHD. Diss., Johns Hopkins University, 2001); and Clark, *The Eastern Frontier*, p. 106; see also Charles E. Clark, *The Public Prints: the Newspaper in Anglo-American Culture, 1665-1740* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994).

<sup>68</sup> Robert B. Dishman, "Breaking the Bonds: the Role of New Hampshire's Courts in Freeing Those Wrongly Enslaved, 1640s-1740s", *Historical New Hampshire*, 59-2 (2005): 79-91.

<sup>69</sup> Donnan, *Documents*, vol.3, p.4.

authorities to be enslaveable could be legally enslaved. Black strangers from the West Indies or Africa qualified as natural candidates for slavery. Their otherness and their vulnerability guaranteed their outcast position in society. As long as slave owners complied with the authority of the church in their treatment of their slaves, most slavery was perfectly lawful. New Hampshire probate records reveal at least forty other enslaved people in the area before 1700, making it clear that slavery was legally established during Portsmouth's seventeenth-century Puritan years.<sup>70</sup>

Most of Portsmouth's founders were not gentry; they were tradesmen in debt to the English investors who financed their ventures. Their initial plans to build self-sustaining settlements based on profits from the fur trade were unsuccessful. Fishing was fairly successful in the early years, but the fishing community on the Isles of Shoals off Portsmouth declined substantially over time, and that decline is evident in the records of slave ownership there. By the 1650s and 1660s, many of the fishermen on the Isles moved to Portsmouth, although some of them continued to maintain their old fisheries, possibly with the help of slave labor. Among Portsmouth's prominent merchant families who originated on the Isles of Shoals were the Cutts, Hunkings, Odiornes, and Langdons. All of those families owned slaves. Their Portsmouth estate inventories may lead to the assumption that the enslaved worked primarily in more urban Portsmouth,

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<sup>70</sup> Greene, *The Negro*, p.18; PPR, vol.1.

while, in truth, many of their slaves may have labored in the fisheries.<sup>71</sup> By 1726, only a few slaves were listed in probate inventories as living on Star Island.<sup>72</sup>

The first generation of New Hampshire settlers were under pressure to pay off debts to their connections in England while simultaneously raising food and securing products they needed to survive. Many of them still had family and property in England.<sup>73</sup> New Hampshire traders could harvest timber for masts and export locally produced goods in exchange for English goods, rum, tobacco, and other commodities they could not produce themselves, and in the process pay off debts. Former tradesmen started to make money in shipping. The import trade supplanted fishing, farming, and fur trading as the most lucrative occupation. Men who engaged early in the business of buying and selling goods built substantial fortunes for themselves and their heirs. Men of fortune in Portsmouth often purchased slaves. The Reverend Joshua Moodey, the son of a saddler from England, helped to mold that new social hierarchy in Portsmouth, as did his peers in surrounding towns.

The earliest New Hampshire residents relied on white indentured servants for labor, and, as Winthrop Jordan pointed out, it is not a significant leap from indentured servitude to slavery.<sup>74</sup> In 1654, Mark Hands of Boston testified in court that he sold and delivered an Irish servant man to John Pickering of

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<sup>71</sup> Van Deventer, *Emergence of Provincial New Hampshire*, p.89.

<sup>72</sup> See Carter, Hull, Dimond inventories, PPR, vol. 7, p. 591, #709; vol. 1, p. 342; vol. 6, p. 381, # 338.

<sup>73</sup> Bernard Bailyn, *The New England Merchants in the Seventeenth Century* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1955), p. 16-44.

<sup>74</sup> Winthrop Jordan, *White Over Black: American Attitudes Toward the Negro 1550-1812* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1968), p. 48-50.

Portsmouth. Hands had been ordered to sell the captured Irishman for a term of five years.<sup>75</sup> Indentured servants in New Hampshire often faced uncertain futures on the death of their masters. While the widow Anne Batcheler of Portsmouth willed her servant Richard Peirce his remaining time, some money and hand tools, those less fortunate became the property of relatives of the deceased, their time inventoried along with other household goods. Some, including a servant of the Cutt family, were sent to sea for their indenture.<sup>76</sup> Going to sea offered an uncertain fate and the promise of a small monetary reward, provided the servant lived to collect it. Some servants attempted to run away, as did slaves. Henry Salter, servant to Roger Plaisted, was whipped 20 times for running away and then returned to his master.<sup>77</sup> Christopher Snell, servant to Edward West, was whipped 15 times and had 12 months added to his indenture for attempting to run away and suspicion of stealing. Mary Nott, servant to Richard Cutt, was whipped 20 stripes and ordered to repay three-fold the amount she stole from her master in addition to paying court costs.<sup>78</sup> John Davis petitioned the court to free him from his master, George Walton, who refused to release him from service at the completion of his indenture.<sup>79</sup> The seventeenth-century English immigrants of Portsmouth were familiar and comfortable with the concept of buying and selling labor, and treating that labor as inferior. As Jordan said, contact with

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<sup>75</sup> Hammond, *New Hampshire Court Records*, vol. 40, p.132, July 1, 1654.

<sup>76</sup> PPR, vol.1, no.6, June 26, 1661.

<sup>77</sup> Hammond, *New Hampshire Court Records*, vol. 40, p. 221.

<sup>78</sup> Hammond, *New Hampshire Court Records*, vol. 40, p. 261.

<sup>79</sup> Hammond, *New Hampshire Court Records*, vol. 40, p. 284.

the West Indies alone would not have led to the establishment of slavery in the area. The community had to accept the idea as compatible with its values.<sup>80</sup>

A closer look at Richard Cutt illuminates some of the characteristics of slave holders in early Portsmouth. When sixty-year-old Richard Cutt of Portsmouth wrote his will in 1675, he left most of his estate including “five neger servants” to his beloved wife Eleanor. Apprenticed to a merchant in Britain before arriving in Boston carrying a letter of credit, Richard Cutt was described in Maine records as a fisherman and major landowner of the Isles of Shoals in 1646.<sup>81</sup> Cutt was an entrepreneur; his estate included a new house with bake house, brew house, barn, assorted other housing, warehouses, and wharves. He owned fields and meadows, tan yards, a stone warehouse, woodlots, river frontage, land on Great Island, and houses on Star Island, the Isles of Shoals. Merchant/mariner Richard Cutt and his brother John traded in land and ships early on, and began importing English goods at Strawberry Banke.<sup>82</sup> His slaves were most likely employed in his import business, as well as helping his wife in the household. He undoubtedly never questioned the acquisition of slaves as part of his business growth.

Just as important as his financial achievements was Cutt’s commitment of his soul into the hands of God through Jesus Christ. Richard Cutt hoped for his spiritual redemption and that his earthly burial would be followed by a “joyful

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<sup>80</sup> Jordan, *White Over Black*, p. 67.

<sup>81</sup> Sybil Noyes, Charles Thornton Libby, and Walter Goodwin Davis, *Genealogical Dictionary of Maine and New Hampshire* (Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co., 1979), p. 178; PPR, vol. 1, p. 163.

<sup>82</sup> Noyes, Libby and Davis, *Genealogical Dictionary*, p.178.



resurrection,” a desire shared by many of his peers in their wills. Cutt’s commitment to the church and his entrepreneurial success followed him through successive generations. He left money to “the college” (Harvard was struggling at the time), thirty pounds to the Reverend Joshua Moodey, additional money to Moodey’s five children, and ten pounds to buy a piece of plate for the Church of Portsmouth. The Puritan church in Portsmouth, Harvard College, and Joshua Moodey himself benefited from the profits of Cutt’s business ventures that were supported by slavery. Cutt left his widow well-provided for in addition to ensuring the passing of the family values to his sons-in-law William Vaughn and Thomas Daniel. Richard Cutt would not only enjoy prosperity in his life and a continuation of his ventures through the lives of his heirs, but he would be promised a joyful afterlife as well.<sup>83</sup>

The widow Cutt, a self-described helpless woman in early court records, would follow her husband in the business of slave trading. The Cutt family, including Mrs. Cutt, has been linked with slave trading in Virginia in exchange for tobacco, a commodity that appears in many early Portsmouth estate inventories.<sup>84</sup> Perpetuating the family values, Richard Cutt’s widow Eleanor disposed of her property including her “two Negroes, Harry, & his Wife” between her daughters Margaret Vaughn and Bridget Daniel at her death. Mrs. Cutt left her indentured servants each a cow and a sheep but left nothing to her black

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<sup>83</sup> PPR, vol.1, p.163.

<sup>84</sup> Donnan, *Documents*, vol. 4, p.57, note 58, details correspondence of 1682/3 between William Fitzhugh and the owners of Mr. Jackson’s vessel of Piscataqua, among whom was Mrs. Cutt. Fitzhugh proposed to Jackson that he would give 3000 lbs. of tobacco for every Negro boy or girl.

slaves. As the most different and vulnerable of the social “other,” “Negro” servants placed lowest on the social hierarchy. To oversee the distribution of her property including Harry and his wife, Mrs. Cutt named Rev. Joshua Moodey as one of the overseers of her estate, maintaining a religious connection with the family property. The example set by the Cutts resonated among their Puritan relatives and acquaintances in the growing seaport of Portsmouth.<sup>85</sup>

Although some of Portsmouth’s early slaveholders were shopkeepers or blockmakers, most of them fell within the upper reaches of wealth distribution in the community.<sup>86</sup> In measuring according to Karen Andresen’s analysis of wealth in Portsmouth probate records, most of Portsmouth’s inventoried slave owners had pre-administration estates in the “elite” range of incomes (500.1-2000£). In spite of the fact that not all estates were probated, probate records remain one of the few sources for information on Portsmouth’s enslaved people.

While most of New Hampshire’s seventeenth-century masters owned only one slave or an interest in a slave, some did own multiple slaves. Richard Cutt, with his five slaves, was among the wealthiest early slave owners. Edward West,

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<sup>85</sup> Letter to Mrs. Cutt from William Fitzhugh of Virginia regarding trading slaves for tobacco, as referenced in Mark Sammons and Valerie Cunningham, *Black Portsmouth: Three Centuries of African-American Heritage*. (Durham, New Hampshire: University of New Hampshire Press/University Press of New England, 2004), p. 16; Dagenias, *The Black in Portsmouth, New Hampshire, 1700-1861* (Durham, New Hampshire: M.A. Thesis, University of New Hampshire, 1970), p.9-10; both accounts are based on Donnan, vol. 3, p. 56-58n.

<sup>86</sup> Karen E. Andresen, *The Layered Society: Material Life in Portsmouth, NH, 1680-1740*. (Durham, New Hampshire: PhD Diss., University of New Hampshire, 1982), p. 134. Blockmaking was a maritime profession of creating blocks for pulley systems on the rigging of ships. See *Oxford English Dictionary Online*. [http://dictionary.oed.com.libproxy.unh.edu/cgi/entry/50023732/50023732se35?single=1&query\\_type=word&queryword=blockmaker&first=1&max\\_to\\_show=10&hilite=50023732se35](http://dictionary.oed.com.libproxy.unh.edu/cgi/entry/50023732/50023732se35?single=1&query_type=word&queryword=blockmaker&first=1&max_to_show=10&hilite=50023732se35).

vintner, left two enslaved people to his wife Martha in 1677.<sup>87</sup> In the inventory of Martha's estate in 1678, her one "Negro woman" valued at 20 £ was worth more than any of her possessions except her buildings and land.<sup>88</sup> Jethro Furber, a mariner, owned two slaves at his death in 1686, both of whom were inventoried as part of his warehouse facility. Although his land holdings were less valuable than Martha West's, Furber owned divinity and history books, pewter, brass, and chairs which Karen Andresen found more often in the inventories of the middle to the elite layers of society during the seventeenth century.<sup>89</sup> Reuben Hull, mariner/merchant and Cutt's cousin, left one "negro man," "one negro old woman," and an indentured servant in 1689.<sup>90</sup> Hull was heavily invested in various vessels, fishing equipment on the Isles of Shoals, and an inventory of mercantile goods. Capt. Bryan Pendleton owned slaves as well since court records reveal that two of his "Negroes" met untimely deaths in 1663.<sup>91</sup> Cutt, the Wests, Hull, and Furber all had slightly different values as evidenced by their investment in different material possessions, but they all invested in the labor of

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<sup>87</sup> PPR, vol.1, p.178, #109. Inventory of the estate of Edward West.

<sup>88</sup> PPR, vol.1, p.221. Inventory of the estate of Martha West.

<sup>89</sup> PPR, vol.1, p.297. Inventory of the estate of Jethro Furber. Andresen's study of the complexities of determining wealth in Portsmouth is particularly useful in searching out the relationship between wealth and slavery in New Hampshire.

<sup>90</sup> PPR, vol.1, p.342. Inventory of the estate of Reuben Hull.

<sup>91</sup> Hammond, *New Hampshire Court Records*, vol. 40, p. 183. The Jury of Inquest verdict was filed. No mention was made of the specifics of the inquest. Pendleton was a powerful military man and constable in the seacoast.

servants and slaves. Furber, Hull, and Cutt shared interests in local vessels with other slave-owning families including the Waldrons, Martins, and Wentworths.<sup>92</sup>

Although the greater number of slaves lived in wealthy households, middling men employed slaves as well. Richard Watts, blacksmith of Portsmouth; James Randal, carpenter of New Castle; Thomas Dimond, fisherman of Starr Island; Capt. John Tuttle, mill owner of Dover; John Drew, cooper of Dover, all had modest estates but owned slaves as part of their businesses. The enslaved people represented in Portsmouth's early probate inventories were men, women, and children who "belonged" to merchants, mariners, fishermen, widows, shopkeepers, and a blacksmith.<sup>93</sup> They contributed in various ways to the building of Puritan New Hampshire.

Royal challenges initiated the first stages of a weakening of Puritan influence in New Hampshire. The English first tested the cohesion of Rev. Joshua Moody's Portsmouth when they took a renewed interest in their rights to Massachusetts and New Hampshire. In 1679, King Charles II, angered over the Puritan takeover of New Hampshire and the Mason family heirs' continued claims to the area, declared New Hampshire a royal province and appointed merchant John Cutt of Portsmouth president with a ruling council to govern the province.<sup>94</sup> Cutt and his assembly met in Portsmouth and crafted a series of laws that would prove no threat to the Puritan establishment in Portsmouth. John Cutt, in his will

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<sup>92</sup> I. W. Hammond, ed., *State of New Hampshire. Miscellaneous provincial and state papers* (Concord NH: [s.n.], [1890]) vol. 18, p. 922-933, account of shipping at Portsmouth and Great Island.

<sup>93</sup> PPR, vol. 1, p. 59, 178, 279, 428, 474, 540, 582, 762, 921.

<sup>94</sup> Van Deventer, *Emergence of Provincial New Hampshire*, p. 133.

dated 1680, left fifteen pounds to the church of Portsmouth to which he belonged, 100£ toward the construction of a free school to be built by the town within seven years, and 30£ to the poor of the town to be distributed by his overseers. Ever mindful of his public obligations, he left a continuing investment in the future of the community. The overseers of Cutt's estate, the men responsible for executing his wishes, were his "good friends" Joshua Moodey, Richard Martin, and Reuben Hull of Portsmouth, and Capt. Thomas Brattle of Boston. Martin and Hull were slave-owning church-goers and all four were prominent men. Cutt instructed his overseers to resolve any disputes among his heirs and entrusted them with protecting the interests of his children. Appointment to the presidency of New Hampshire had not dulled his cultural and social affiliation with Puritanism.<sup>95</sup>

Under Cutt's rule, the New Hampshire laws created circa 1680 reveal another side to slave ownership in Portsmouth. The concept of individual freedom was virtually nonexistent at the time; survival of order in the community took precedence over the concerns of any individual. As the population of New Hampshire gradually increased, legal measures were taken to control unruly residents and visitors. Casting ballast into the river, defacing landmarks, lying, burning down fences or houses, committing adultery, swearing, and showing contempt for God's messengers were all crimes controlled by law in the province. Whipping was one of the more common punishments, but there were worse punishments including branding on the forehead and cutting off an ear.

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<sup>95</sup> PPR, vol. 1, p. 258, #122, will of John Cutt dated May 6, 1680.

Once the enslaved population started to increase, laws specifically addressed to controlling slaves were created. Selling drink to children or servants was illegal, implying that lawmakers credited servants with the self-control of children. However, court records reveal that free men were just as likely to share a pint with a servant as they were to sell it to him. William Furbush admitted to the court that he shared his half a pint with "Richard the Indian" and "Harry the Indian" in 1675. Furbush built a reputation for abusing authority figures and breaking the law in Maine and New Hampshire. He, however, was allowed out at night unlike servants and slaves. Since "great disorders, insolencies and burglaries, are oft times Raised and Committed in the Night time, by Indian, Negro, and Molatto Servants and Slaves, to the Disquiet and Hurt of his Majesties good Subjects," a law was created to prevent the lowest classes from leaving their homes after nine at night whether they were servant or slave.<sup>96</sup> The early court records are peppered with cases confirming that servants and slaves were discontent and sometimes violent. However, court records also reveal that many men of the period were capable of violent, drunken, and lascivious behavior regardless of their status.

In an attempt to protect the slaves of New Hampshire, a law was created to prevent "Inhumane Severities, which by Evil Masters or Overseers may be used toward their Christian Servants." Anyone convicted of willfully killing his Christianized Indian, Negro, or European servant or servants would be punished

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<sup>96</sup> Hammond, *New Hampshire Court Records*, vol. 40, p. 322; Noyes, Libby and Davis, *Genealogical Dictionary*, p. 251.

with death.<sup>97</sup> From these laws, we can deduce that early Portsmouth residents, both free and enslaved, could be a rowdy, violent lot and they were, but the personal liberty to move at will was restricted to free residents. There were individual exceptions to the laws: men of status could petition for exemption from the law. Capt. Waldren, John and Richard Cutt, and Nathaniel Fryer were granted the “liberty” of selling “strong waters” to their fishermen and servants in 1664.<sup>98</sup> Sagamore Wahanamanet, of Piscataqua, was protected by the courts in 1664 from the interference of “some Englishmen” in his fishing rights. He’d been harassed and his canoes were stolen. When he complained to the courts, his rights and the rights of his people were protected according to the “Lawes & liberties allowed to every Inhabitant...(title Libertis Como’ pa:50)”.<sup>99</sup>

Wahanamanet was perceived to be a native leader and not a servant, but his race did not prohibit his exercise of his rights as a free man. Had he been enslaved, his rights would have been restricted. His freedom, however, did not preclude harassment from Englishmen. Using European methods when necessary, Wahanamanet engaged the local English court system in his own defense.

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<sup>97</sup> *Acts and laws, passed by the General Court or Assembly of His Majesties Province of New-Hampshire in New-England* (Boston: Printed by B. Green: sold by Eleazer Russel at his shop in Portsmouth, 1716). Nathaniel Bouton, [et al.], eds. *Provincial Papers of New Hampshire, Documents and records relating to the province of New-Hampshire* (Concord NH: George Jenks, Printer, 1867), vol. 1, p. 382-408.

<sup>98</sup> Hammond, *New Hampshire Court Records*, vol. 40, p.200.

<sup>99</sup> Hammond, *New Hampshire Court Records*, vol. 40, p. 202-203. Englishmen viewed sagamores as leaders, although in truth they were sometimes only family leaders. Family alliances were as important to Native Americans as they were to other enslaved people.

Slaves and servants did have some protection under the law, but they did not have a voice in making the laws. The laws were created by:

Englishmen, being Protestants... settled Inhabitants and freeholders in any towne of this Province, of ye age of 24 years, not vicious in life but of honest and good conversation, and such as have 20£. Rateable estate without heads of persons having also taken the oath of allegiance to his Majs.<sup>100</sup>

Englishmen (not women or the enslaved) adhering to the values of the Puritan church, property owners and gentlemen, were considered most qualified to elect the local government, thereby cementing the governmental and social connections of Puritanism in New Hampshire.<sup>101</sup> The Puritan church was still the only church in town. Selectmen of each town were delegated the authority to collect taxes in support of the church, although some earlier restrictions on orthodoxy were relaxed. The first meeting of Cutt's general assembly took place in March, 1680, with the Reverend Joshua Moodey delivering a prayer and sermon.<sup>102</sup>

Later conflicts over leadership and religion did not loosen New Hampshire's embrace of slavery. The practice was by then fully embedded in the social fabric. President John Cutt died in 1681 and the King responded by appointing Edward Cranfield as lieutenant governor and commander-in-chief of New Hampshire. Cranfield and his companion Robert Mason, heir to his family's claims in New Hampshire, posed unwelcome threats to the existing order in

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<sup>100</sup> Bouton, *Provincial Papers of New Hampshire*, vol.1, p. 396.

<sup>101</sup> Kinney, *Church and State*, p. 22.

<sup>102</sup> Kinney, *Church and State*, p. 24.



Portsmouth, both in terms of property rights and the authority of the Puritan status quo. Cranfield eventually parted ways with Mason but still found his authority severely challenged in New Hampshire.<sup>103</sup> Cranfield's short term of service (1681-1685) is best remembered for his confrontation with Rev. Joshua Moodey and the Puritan settlers over religious practices.

Puritan preachers, invested in the community economically and morally, maintained an authoritative position in New Hampshire and were not about to allow Anglican compromise of their cultural dominance. After his failed attempt to reintroduce Anglican worship in New Hampshire, Cranfield took Joshua Moodey into custody for refusing to administer the sacrament of the Lord's Supper according to Anglican liturgy. Moodey was jailed for six months without bail in February 1684. The community closed in; Moodey's friends intervened; and he was released providing he didn't preach in New Hampshire again. The threat to Puritanism in the area would eventually change the configuration of government to secular leadership, but it would not supplant the culture of slave ownership long established in the seacoast of New Hampshire. Justifications for hierarchy would evolve from religious superiority to racial superiority in the eighteenth century.

New Hampshire residents were aware of their rights, although those rights were selectively assigned by hierarchy and they were group, not individual rights. Joshua Moodey's slave-owning friends stood by him during his crisis, including Richard Cutt's son-in-law, William Vaughn, who was imprisoned for his part in

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<sup>103</sup> Van Deventer, *Emergence of Provincial New Hampshire*, p. 48-49.

sending a group grievance to the King. Despite and possibly due to the attack on Puritanism in New Hampshire, the Congregational Church not only survived but expanded with a new church established in Nashua. The legacy of Puritan culture persevered for the time being.<sup>104</sup>

Shortly after Cranfield's departure, in March 1692, King William and Queen Mary appointed Samuel Allen Governor of New Hampshire. He arrived with instructions to admit freedom of religion except in the case of "Papists."<sup>105</sup> Puritanism would survive, and Portsmouth would not see an Anglican church consecrated within its limits for forty-two more years.<sup>106</sup> But the door had been cracked open to admit the influence of others besides Puritans.

Numbers of slaves in Portsmouth increased steadily during the Puritan years, although the numbers remained small compared to areas to the south. Probate inventories of Portsmouth and its environs reveal increasing numbers of households listing more than one "negro servant" between 1720 and 1730. Between 1663 and 1710, twenty-two households listed only one "negro," five households listed two "negro" servants each, and five households listed three to five black servants each. In just the ten years between 1720 and 1730, eighteen households listed one black servant, nine households listed two black servants, and nine households listed three or more (up to twelve) black servants. In a relatively short time, the acquisition of multiple slaves had become more common.<sup>107</sup>

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<sup>104</sup> Kinney, *Church and State*, p. 31.

<sup>105</sup> Kinney, *Church and State*, p. 33-34.

<sup>106</sup> Kinney, *Church and State*, p.49.

<sup>107</sup> PPR, Books 1-11.

### **Cotton Mather, Resurging Puritans, and Slavery**

As time passed, Puritans' domination of cultural values, including their religious justification for enslaving people, weakened. New Hampshire's population was growing amid expanding commerce and increased contact with other parts of the Atlantic world. More churches in New Hampshire, built to accommodate the expanding population, increased the likelihood of internal dissent. By 1714, Portsmouth selectmen petitioned Governor Joseph Dudley for permission to build a second Meeting House in Portsmouth. John Emerson of New Castle was chosen clergyman for the new church.<sup>108</sup> Emerson and Nathaniel Rogers, minister of the existing church, did not like one another.<sup>109</sup> Two differing clergymen took on the interpretation of matters of conscience and action. The solitary authority that had been Joshua Moodey's was slowly eroding with two ministers and a slightly more diverse population. The spiritual culture of Portsmouth experienced internal as well as external threats to its uniformity.

In the early eighteenth century, the Puritan church in Massachusetts remained involved in the religious affairs of Portsmouth through clergyman Cotton Mather. Mather's ideal Puritan man knew the success of the community depended upon each man having his "house in order" and Mather did his best to make that happen. Prosperous Puritans considered temporal success as providential reward for piety. William Cotton of Portsmouth in his will of 1736

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<sup>108</sup> Petitions. Portsmouth, New Hampshire, #ND26, Petitions. New Hampshire Division of Archives and Records Management, Concord, NH.

<sup>109</sup> Andresen, p.59.

expressed his thanks for the “temporal estate which it hath pleas’d God to bestow upon me” as had Augustine Bullard thirty years earlier.<sup>110</sup> New Hampshire merchants considered their worldly goods, including their slaves, a reward for their spiritual commitment.

Cotton Mather owned slaves. Although he believed his black servant had a capacity for salvation, Mather still mistrusted Onesimus, especially as a prospective thief. As long as slaves knew their place, Mather believed in their humane treatment.<sup>111</sup> He allowed Onesimus some independence; he allowed him to read and write, and to marry. Servants were considered resources sent from God to ensure the fulfillment of the divine plan and should be treated well. In 1706, Cotton Mather preached that:

It is come to pass by the Providence of God, without which there comes nothing to pass, that Poor Negroes are cast under your Government and Protection. You take them into your Families; you look on them as part of your Possessions; and you Expect from their Service, a Support, and perhaps an Increase, of your other Possessions.<sup>112</sup>

Mather saw “Poor Negroes” as tossed like fish upon the shore waiting for good Puritans to rise to God’s call and fulfill their obligations. To him, everything that happened had been ordained by God including the arrival of slaves on the shores of New England. Slave labor was a providential gift and a responsibility

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<sup>110</sup> PPR, vol.31, p.568, will of Augustine Bullard. PPR, vol.14, p.212, will of William Cotton.

<sup>111</sup> Cotton Mather, Kenneth Silverman, comp. with commentary. *Selected Letters of Cotton Mather* (Louisiana State University Press, 1971), p. 198.

<sup>112</sup> Cotton Mather, *The Negro Christianized. An Essay to Excite and Assist that Good Work, The Instruction of Negro-Servants in Christianity* (1706) reprinted in Paul Lauter, Richard Yarborough, Jackson R. Bryer [et al.], eds., *The Heath Anthology of American Literature* (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin Co., 2006), p. 527.

to be maintained. He looked upon slaves as investments and believed Puritans had a right to expect some return on their investment in the form of service to their families. Mather promised earthly rewards for following this divine command to Christianize the enslaved:

Yea, the pious Masters, that have instituted their Servants in Christian Piety, will even in this Life have a sensible Recompense. The more Serviceable, and Obedient and obliging Behaviour of their Servants unto them; will be a sensible & a notable Recompence. Be assured, Syrs; Your Servants will be the Better Servants, for being made Christian Servants.....it would render them exceeding Dutiful unto their Masters, exceeding Patient under their Masters, exceeding faithful in their Business, and afraid of speaking or doing any thing that may justly displease you.<sup>113</sup>

Contrary to Mather's promise of obedience in Christianized slaves, Mather's black servant Onesimus became rebellious and in the eyes of his master "wicked" in 1716.<sup>114</sup> Mather allowed him to purchase his release and used the money to buy a young black boy named Obadiah, who would hopefully prove more compliant. Onesimus never was totally freed from his obligations to Mather's family as a condition of his manumission. Mather required that Onesimus visit the family every evening; prepare and bring in the fuel for the next day until his replacement could do it; shovel the snow during "great snows"; help out on occasions when he was needed to carry corn to the mill, fetch water

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<sup>113</sup> Mather, "The Negro Christianized", p. 528.

<sup>114</sup> Onesimus was given to Mather by some of his parishioners. See Kenneth Silverman, *Life and Times of Cotton Mather* (New York: Welcome Rain Publishers, 2002), p. 264, 290.

for washing, and pile the wood. Mather also required that he repay 5£ debt within six months. Onesimus' freedom was limited to say the least.<sup>115</sup>

As the Puritan hold on New Hampshire weakened, secular men from slave-owning backgrounds took over the administration of the government. Puritan clergymen, however, pressed for influence with those powerful men. Governor John Wentworth's mother, Mrs. Mary Martyn, requested that Rev. Jabez Fitch preach her funeral sermon in the North Church of Portsmouth to which she belonged. Fitch did eulogize Mrs. Martyn and the sermon was published in Boston in 1725 as *A Discourse on Serious Piety* with an added sermon on *The Golden Rule of Justice*.<sup>116</sup> In an astute political move, Fitch dedicated the publication to John Wentworth with the hope that "the Serious Piety which was so Conspicuous in your deceas'd Mother may live and remain in all that have descended from her." The Puritan authority figure reminded a politically powerful man of his family ties to the church and the existing cultural order.

Wentworth's family was an impressive one. Although it did not remain entirely Puritan, the Wentworth family upheld its tradition of slave ownership. Wentworth's mother, Mary Benning Wentworth Martyn, married Richard Martyn,

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<sup>115</sup> Mather, *Selected Letters*, p.198. See copy of Mather's memorandum from the American Antiquarian Society in *The Diary of Cotton Mather, Vol.2: 1709-1724* (NY: Frederick Ungar Publishing Co., [1957]), p. 363n.

<sup>116</sup> Jabez Fitch, *A Discourse On Serious Piety, being a Funeral Sermon Preach'd upon the Death of Mrs. Mary Martyn, Who Departed this Life at Portsmouth in the Province of New-Hampshire, January 26<sup>th</sup>. Anno Dom.1724-5* (Boston: Printed in the Year 1725).

part owner of the enslaved man Thomas Hall.<sup>117</sup> The Governor's wife was a member of the Hunking family of slave-owning mariners. The Governor's son, Governor Benning Wentworth, owned slaves. The extended Wentworth family built a long history of slave ownership including Col. Paul Wentworth of Somersworth's four slaves: Sampson, Tom, Dinah, and the child Tom. At Paul Wentworth's death in 1748, the four were divided among various family members across the seacoast and John Wentworth of Portsmouth inherited Tom and Dinah from his uncle. John owned other slaves, but left only Esther to his wife for her lifetime, making no mention of the disposition of Tom and Dinah and another "very old "Negro" before his death.<sup>118</sup> Spencer Wentworth of Dover left his "Negro man Peter" to his wife in 1773.<sup>119</sup> Joshua Wentworth of Portsmouth held at least three slaves including Samuel, who signed the petition for freedom submitted to the New Hampshire General Assembly by twenty enslaved men in 1779.<sup>120</sup> The inventory of the estate of the Honorable John Wentworth of Somersworth in 1795 included five enslaved people: Prince, Scipio, Chance, Caesar, and Candace. Candace married Pomp Spring of Portsmouth in 1793 and they acquired a house and became leaders in Portsmouth's black community.<sup>121</sup> The people enslaved by the

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<sup>117</sup> Bouton, *Provincial Papers of New Hampshire*, vol. 1 p. 59 #217, will of Richard Martyn, spv. 31 p. 376, 1692.

<sup>118</sup> Sammons and Cunningham, *Black Portsmouth*, p. 85.

<sup>119</sup> New Hampshire Probate Records, Strafford County. New Hampshire Division of Archives and Records Management, Concord, New Hampshire, vol.1, p.5-8, will of Spencer Wentworth.

<sup>120</sup> Robert B. Dishman, "'Natives of Africa, Now Forcibly Detained': the Slave Petitioners of Revolutionary Portsmouth", *Historical New Hampshire*, 61-1 (2007): p. 6-27.

<sup>121</sup> Sammons and Cunningham, *Black Portsmouth*, p. 98.

extended Wentworth family were scattered across the seacoast of New Hampshire as they labored for wealthy and powerful men.<sup>122</sup>

The founder of the Wentworth political dynasty, Lieutenant Governor John Wentworth was appointed in 1717 and served until his death in 1730. For five years (1723-1728), he ran New Hampshire on his own in the absence of a royal governor and made full use of his power to grant land and opportunities to members of the elite Wentworth family. Under Wentworth, a movement grew to release New Hampshire from affiliation with Massachusetts, a move that would be the death of Puritan strength in New Hampshire. The royal governor in Massachusetts played the Wentworths off against other merchant families in Portsmouth dividing the community further.<sup>123</sup> It was during Wentworth's five powerful years that Cotton Mather wrote to him addressing the Lieutenant Governor as "Brethren" and warning that,

Divisions and Contentions among your Good people, and Especially if they proceed so far as to threaten any Interruption of the pure and undefiled Religion, in which you have hitherto flourished, will not at all Mend your Circumstances, but give an opportunity for the Devices of our Great Adversary to do unknown and Endless Mischiefs among you.<sup>124</sup>

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<sup>122</sup> A. S. Batchellor, ed., *Provincial Papers of New Hampshire, Probate records of the Province of New Hampshire* (Concord NH: Rumford Printing Co, 1907-1941), will of Paul Wentworth of Somersworth, vol. 33, p. 529. Probate Records, Strafford County, inventory of Hon. John Wentworth, bk. 4, p. 279-283; Mark Sammons and Valerie Cunningham, *Portsmouth Black Heritage Trail Resource Book* (Portsmouth, NH: Portsmouth Black Heritage Trail, 1996,1998), p. 121.

<sup>123</sup> Paul W. Wilderson, *Governor John Wentworth & the American Revolution* (Hanover, New Hampshire: University Press of New England, 1994), p. 17.

<sup>124</sup> Mather, *Selected Letters*, p.795.



Mather's letter to John Wentworth demonstrates that Puritans continued striving to maintain Portsmouth's elite residents among their numbers by threatening diminished prosperity if they strayed from the "pure" Puritan religion. Rather than improve their lives, their abandonment of Puritan culture would invite the Devil to wreak havoc on their orderly society. The resulting diminished prosperity could mean the end of life at the top of the social hierarchy and all sorts of unimaginable troubles in the community.

While Puritanism lost its political hold on New Hampshire beginning with Wentworth's appointment, its legacy of slave ownership lived on. Not only did New Hampshire residents continue to purchase and own slaves, they also made money in the slave trade. Captain George Walker of Portsmouth, whose will mandated that some of his twelve "negroes" be sold to settle his estate, could be considered a professional slave trader. Walker imported 32 "negroes" on the ship *Anne* in 1740 from St. Christopher in the West Indies. Archibald MacPhaedris of Portsmouth purchased two enslaved men, Prince and Quamino, from Capt. Samuel Moore in 1726. Moore was still trading in slaves six years later when documents of 1732 place Moore as outward bound for Africa.<sup>125</sup>

The practice of slavery continued to affect New Hampshire economically as well as socially throughout the eighteenth century. Aside from the agricultural labor and merchant support on the coast, slavery's influences in New Hampshire extended far beyond the presence of a social underclass of non-European peoples. Trade with slave-based economies fueled the economic health of New

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<sup>125</sup> Sammons and Cunningham, *Black Portsmouth*, p. 44.

England. Although slaving voyages to Africa originated in Portsmouth, New Englanders in the eighteenth century continued to trade heavily with the West Indies and along the coast of the southern colonies. Portsmouth Customs House records for 1760 track ships inbound throughout the year from Barbados, Halifax, London, Philadelphia, Quebec, Rhode Island, Guadaloupe, Maryland, St. Kitts, the Azores, Jamaica, St. Croix, Louisbourg, and St. Martins. Ships left Portsmouth during that year headed for Louisbourg, Halifax, North Carolina, Jamaica, Barbados, Philadelphia, St. Kitts, Liverpool, and Antigua.<sup>126</sup> Numbers of enslaved people in New Hampshire may not have been large, but the local economy relied heavily on supplying the slave-based economies of the West Indies along with building the ships that British traders used to transport slaves, sugar, and other commodities to and from the West Indies. The numbers and identities of those enslaved in eighteenth-century New Hampshire represent only one facet of the influence of slavery in the area. New Hampshire's carrying trade with British and French slave-based colonies promoted a less obvious but more pervasive influence of slavery in the area.<sup>127</sup>

New Hampshire's continuing trade with Africa and the West Indies through the eighteenth century inserted foreign-born slaves into an expanding population of native-born slaves of mixed ethnicity. The world of the enslaved changed over time

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<sup>126</sup> *New Hampshire Gazette* [Portsmouth, New Hampshire] 170 (January 4, 1760); 184 (April 11, 1760); 209 (October 3, 1760); 217 (November 28, 1760).

<sup>127</sup> David Richardson, "Slavery, Trade, and Economic Growth in Eighteenth-Century New England" in *Slavery and the Rise of the Atlantic System* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991), ch. 10, p. 237-264.

as did the world of their masters. The next chapter traces the blending of cultures in New Hampshire and the resulting expectations for liberty on the part of the enslaved.

## CHAPTER II

### ACCULTURATION OF THE ENSLAVED COMMUNITY AND EXPECTATIONS OF LIBERTY

People enslaved in eighteenth-century New Hampshire and their descendants simultaneously became acculturated to English society and created a genetic mix no longer purely African or Native American. Their grasp of the court system and their creation of their own schools and societies in the English tradition gave them increasing reason to expect liberties accorded free men. The enslaved also adapted to American culture by demanding the kind of freedom that was an American concept, not an African or Native American one.<sup>128</sup>

Although most historians believe the enslaved retained some of their respective cultures, enslaved people in New Hampshire adapted fully to European culture and in return expected to be received into that culture with the rights and freedoms accorded free men. Although New Hampshire formally abolished slavery in 1857, seventeen years after the last enslaved person was recorded in the census, years of de facto segregation that followed would prevent full freedom for people of color in the state despite their adaptation to the dominant

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<sup>128</sup> Nathan I. Huggins, "Integrating Afro-American History into American History," in Darlene Clark Hine, ed., *The State of Afro-American History* (Baton Rouge, Louisiana State University Press, 1986.), p. 157-168.

culture. Geography, economics, science, and social practices would all prohibit the flourishing of New Hampshire's newly freed people.

When first bound to service, people enslaved in earliest New Hampshire clearly met the criteria for outsider status: they were heathen, non-English, vulnerable, and "savage." They may have formed loose social bonds among themselves, but they brought different languages and ethnicities that made a shared sense of identity nearly impossible. But the passing of time started to blur boundaries. With each passing generation, enslaved people in New Hampshire navigated English culture more adeptly. Unlike some of their parents, they spoke the language and often attended the churches of their masters. They made use of the court system that guaranteed "the same justice and law" to every "Inhabitant or forreiner."<sup>129</sup> They had opportunities to meet other free and enslaved people of peripheral status as they were hired out to work for others and as they were segregated together in the church. They intermarried and bore children who were acculturated in New Hampshire's population. Their social status remained low, but their cognizance of English culture increased.<sup>130</sup> While in some ways enslaved people's awareness of English culture proved profitable for them, it also reinforced their feeling of powerlessness to maintain families and to move at will as the English could.

Both enslaved people and their descendants lived lives parallel to those of European descent, but separated by racial distinction in the eighteenth and

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<sup>129</sup> Massachusetts Body of Liberties (1641), article 2. <http://history.hanover.edu/texts/masslib.htm>.

<sup>130</sup> Orlando Patterson, *Slavery and Social Death: a Comparative Study* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1982), p. 6-7.

nineteenth centuries. Many historians agree that European culture was transformed by its interactions with Natives and Africans in early New England, although not as profoundly as it was in the middle states.<sup>131</sup> Incorporation of foreigners into the New Hampshire-born enslaved community took place in the churches, markets, and workplaces. African traditions would mix with European and Native American to create a blended culture in the people of New Hampshire.<sup>132</sup> Despite the fact that races influenced each other, enslaved people and their descendants continued to find mixing with free whites a less-than-satisfactory experience. Africans, Native Americans, and Europeans mixed in holiday celebrations, with each group assigning different meaning to the festivities. In addition to experiencing the same events differently, many enslaved and freed people held separate celebrations in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. "Negro Election Day" in New England reflected traditions from both Africa and Europe. Such celebrations allowed African-Americans the opportunity to enact their own governance and their own hierarchies. Men who were elected governors in those celebrations held higher positions in the black community both because they claimed higher lineage from Africa and because they were employed by white men of higher station.<sup>133</sup>

Not only did cultural practices overlap, but ethnicities mixed biologically as well. Within a generation, Native Americans, Africans, and Europeans engaged in

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<sup>131</sup> Calloway, *New Worlds for All*, p. 5-6.

<sup>132</sup> Donnan, *Documents*, vol. 4, p. 205; vol. 3, p. 39.

<sup>133</sup> Horton and Horton, *In Hope of Liberty: Culture, Community, and Protest Among Northern Free Blacks, 1700-1860* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), p. 30-33. Berlin, *Many Thousands Gone*, p. 191-192.

sexual encounters, resulting in a native-born enslaved people of mixed ethnicity. The infant Mary, baptized by the Reverend Hugh Adams of Durham in 1719, was the child of a Negro father and an Indian mother.<sup>134</sup> Mary Agawam, Indian servant to George Walton of Portsmouth circa 1660, admitted in court that she was five months pregnant by Richard Sheafe, a seaman.<sup>135</sup> Richard Sheafe may have been either black or white since the Sheafe family owned slaves. Housewright Hopestill Cheswell's father Richard was, as far as we know, a manumitted black man from Exeter and his mother was probably white. Although Cheswell was not enslaved, his father was.<sup>136</sup> The descendants of ethnic mixes created a more complex genetic base than mere black and white can describe in New Hampshire's enslaved population and its descendants.

Geographic expansion in eighteenth-century New Hampshire relegated many of the enslaved to frontier settlements and agricultural holdings. By 1790, enslaved people were living in Cheshire County (18), Grafton County (21), Rockingham County (97), and Strafford County (21).<sup>137</sup> People enslaved by owners of large land grants in less settled areas were more socially isolated than enslaved people in the coastal townships. Under Lieutenant Governor John

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<sup>134</sup> Stackpole and Thompson, *History of Durham*, vol. 1, p. 249-250.

<sup>135</sup> New Hampshire Court Papers, 1652-1668, vol.1, p.75; New Hampshire State Papers, vol. 40, p. 477-478. Mary was probably from the natives of Ipswich, Massachusetts. Agawam was the Indian name for Ipswich.

<sup>136</sup> Sammons and Cunningham, *Black Portsmouth*, p. 32-33; Erik R. Tuveson, "A People of Color: A Study of Race and Racial Identification in New Hampshire, 1750-1825" (Durham, NH: M.A. Thesis, University of New Hampshire, 1992).

<sup>137</sup> Department of Commerce and Labor, Bureau of the Census, *Heads of Families at the First Census of the United States Taken in the Year 1790, New Hampshire* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1907), p. 9-10.

Wentworth, a number of inland towns were chartered in the province. Benning Wentworth used his governorship to grant town charters reaching as far as New York. In the process, some of New Hampshire's enslaved people found themselves living in rural areas with little social support from peers.<sup>138</sup>

Many enslaved men freed after the Revolutionary War moved to those remote locations in search of land and opportunity. For many that search proved a failure, and they returned to New Hampshire's urban centers where both more employment opportunities and a supportive community of like background existed. Former slaves Oxford Tash, Jude Hall, and Tobias Cutler all returned to Exeter after sojourns in smaller inland towns.<sup>139</sup> Corydon Chesley, a Revolutionary War veteran who purchased his freedom in Dover in 1778, dabbled in land acquisition in Wakefield, New Hampshire in 1782 and 1785, but he had returned to Dover by 1790.<sup>140</sup>

The percentage of New Hampshire's population that was black peaked in the first half of the eighteenth century. The importation of slaves directly from Africa also peaked in New Hampshire during that period, unlike in some of the larger northern states where direct trade with Africa increased over the eighteenth century. In those larger states, newly-arrived Africans influenced the culture of native-born blacks and people of mixed races as heavily as whites did. In New Hampshire, the reverse was probably true. New Hampshire's black

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<sup>138</sup> Kinney, *Church & State*, p. 48-68.

<sup>139</sup> Tuveson, "A People of Color," p. 47.

<sup>140</sup> Registry of Deeds, Strafford County, Bk. 4, p. 240.



population was small and its proportional share of the population never increased after the second quarter of the eighteenth century. As the state expanded geographically, its proportion of enslaved people did not expand, but dispersed across a larger area instead. White residents so far outnumbered black throughout the state's history of slavery, that the retention of African culture as time passed became increasingly unlikely. Africans had less influence on English culture in New Hampshire as well because of their much smaller numbers.<sup>141</sup> British scholar David Richardson found that New England trade in the West Indies increased particularly after 1750 when the British slave trade expanded, and likely overshadowed New England's trade with Africa and southern Europe.<sup>142</sup> So later in the eighteenth century, New Hampshire's slaves came primarily from the West Indies. This history differs from New York State where more slaves were imported from Africa than the Caribbean after 1741.<sup>143</sup>

Concurrently, probate records reveal evidence of an increased appetite for amenities on the part of New Englanders throughout the eighteenth century. Greater material prosperity in the community changed the lives of enslaved people as well as their masters. That prosperity served as a visible sign of the benefits New Hampshire reaped from a slave-based Atlantic economy and a constant reminder of hierarchical divisions of the population. The eighteenth century brought the accumulation and display of extravagant wealth most people

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<sup>141</sup> Berlin, *Many Thousands Gone*, p. 187-189.

<sup>142</sup> Richardson, "Slavery, Trade, and Economic Growth."

<sup>143</sup> Berlin, *Many Thousands Gone*, p. 182-183.

associate with slavery in New Hampshire. In Portsmouth and Exeter, the architectural evidence of eighteenth-century prosperity remains most noticeable: in Portsmouth the Moffat-Ladd house built ca.1763; the MacPhaedris-Warner house,1716-23; Wentworth-Gardner House,1760; Jacob Wendell House, 1789; Richard Tibbetts House, 1765; Gov. John Langdon Mansion, 1784; the Purcell/John Paul Jones House, 1758; in Exeter the Odiorne-Tuxbury House, ca.1750; Judge Jeremiah Smith House, ca.1750; Ladd-Gilman House, 1747, and many others.<sup>144</sup> One of the men who built some of those elegant houses was Hopestill Cheswell, housewright and descendant of slaves. Cheswell worked on the Bell Tavern owned by Paul March, the Samuel Langdon House, and the Purcell House. All were fine mid-eighteenth century Portsmouth mansion houses.<sup>145</sup>

The birth of Hopestill Cheswell in the early eighteenth century (1726 according to Glenn Knoblock) was probably the result of illicit and interracial sex, a common occurrence in eighteenth-century life.<sup>146</sup> Hopestill Cheswell was related in some way to the white March family of Greenland who were accused of illicit sexual unions and violent behavior. The March family also left a record of slave ownership. Both the wealthy and powerful Dr. Israel March and his son Dr. Clement March appeared in multiple court case records during their lives in

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<sup>144</sup> Richardson, "Slavery, Trade, and Economic Growth," p. 237-264; Bryant and Carolyn K. Tolles, *New Hampshire Architecture: an Illustrated Guide* (Hanover, New Hampshire: University Press of New England, 1979).

<sup>145</sup> Sammons and Cunningham, *Black Portsmouth*, p. 32-33.

<sup>146</sup> Glenn A. Knoblock, *Strong and Brave Fellows* (Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland & Company, 2003).

Greenland in the first half of the eighteenth century.<sup>147</sup> Accused of failure to pay debts incurred at Richard Ward's inn in Portsmouth where he and "his man" drank rum, wine, and milk punch, Dr. Israel March sued and was sued by the prominent and the middling. He reportedly stiffed a widow, a yeoman farmer, and several Portsmouth merchants. He in turn sued a shoemaker for half a day of the work of "his man" and an Exeter husbandman who admitted his guilt. Joseph Maloon sued Israel March for making a "great disturbance" when March entertained another doctor. Richard Gerrish claimed he was "openly insulted" by Israel March. Israel's son, Dr. Clement March, reportedly confronted the "thievish dog" Moses Keniston violently and profanely in a nighttime meeting. Jane Cate accused Clement March of fathering her "bastard" child, a charge he denied.<sup>148</sup> In 1717/18, Christopher Amazeen of New Castle and James March of Greenland were prosecuted for "living with and entertaining those women by whom they have had bastard children." The people enslaved by the March family must have encountered the worst of this behavior on a regular basis.

The March family record of sexual and violent escapades demonstrates the nature of much of eighteenth-century life in New Hampshire. Punishment for giving birth to a child too soon after marriage never deterred people's lust. Women were usually the first participant in an illicit union to be brought before the court. When Ester Horneybrook appeared in court in 1717 to face the charge

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<sup>147</sup> Provincial Court Records, case numbers 21313, 013293, 22567, 20866, 21021, 15855, 15721, 21456, 15417, 16888, 21014, 15465, 15985, 17679, 21316, 21455, 15986, 21015, 21221, 18163, 20104, 013294. New Hampshire Division of Archives and Records Management, Concord, New Hampshire. Israel March's estate was administrated in 1728. His children were first baptized in the Greenland Church in 1716.

<sup>148</sup> Knoblock, *Strong and Brave Fellows*, p. 92.

of having a bastard child, she refused to name the father except to say his first name was Richard, and that he was a stranger who had gone to sea. Ester Horneybrook was whipped ten stripes on her back for the offense. A fairly commonplace occurrence, illicit sex produced many of New Hampshire's children of the eighteenth century. In one year (1717-18), Mercy Seavey, Ester Horneybrook, Rebecca Cook, George Blagdon's sister-in-law, Elizabeth Bird, Anne Paine, Martha More, Sobriety Thomas, and Abigail Hobbs all stood accused of giving birth to "bastard" children.

Illicit sex resulting in pregnancy makes the parentage of many of New Hampshire's eighteenth-century children difficult to trace. For example, no proof of Hopedstill Cheswell's parentage has yet been found.<sup>149</sup> Glenn Knoblock made an excellent circumstantial case for Hopedstill's parentage, but it hinges on the inaccuracy of the surviving legend that Hopedstill was the half brother of Paul March of Greenland. Knoblock dismissed the possibility that Dr. Israel March, Paul March's father, could have been Hopedstill's father. That dismissal avoids the possibility that Israel March could have fathered a child with one of the March family slaves. Although it is only a possibility, the possibility of a white slave owner in New Hampshire fathering a child with an enslaved woman can't be totally dismissed. Whether Hopedstill's mother was Jane Cate, as Glenn Knoblock has suggested, or whether she was a woman enslaved by the March family of

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<sup>149</sup> There is no proof that Richard Cheswell was Hopedstill Cheswell's biological father. Hopedstill Cheswell was said to be the half brother of Paul March of Greenland and Portsmouth (Charles W. Brewster, *Rambles About Portsmouth* (Somersworth, New Hampshire: New Hampshire Publishing Co., 1972, facsimile of 1869 ed.), v.2, p.339). Glenn Knoblock has provided a decent theory supported by circumstantial evidence that Hopedstill Cheswell was the child of Jane Cate and Richard Cheswell, making him the half brother of a child Cate probably had illicitly with Clement March, son of Dr. Israel March of Greenland.

Greenland will probably never be determined for certain. A talented carpenter and a nurturing father, Hopestill Cheswell straddled the line between Europeans and the other in New Hampshire society. Race was rarely mentioned in reference to Hopestill's son Wentworth Cheswell during his lifetime, possibly because he was a successful member of the community who owned property and participated in local government functions.<sup>150</sup> The taint of slavery faded quickly from the Cheswell name, but the connection would be resurrected in the twentieth century as a matter of pride in his race by New Hampshire's black residents. The Cheswell family presents a good example of the fluidity of racial identification.

As some of the enslaved bought their freedom, were willed their freedom by their masters, or earned their freedom through military service, the population of color in New Hampshire tried to navigate the still hierarchical world of free men with the disadvantage of their backgrounds in slavery. The exclusion of people of color from white society pushed them to form their own exclusive organizations. The racial divide would be reinforced from both sides throughout the nineteenth century. In efforts to improve their situation, people of color created their own fraternal organizations and schools like Dinah Whipple's under the auspices of the Ladies' African Charitable Society in Portsmouth in the early nineteenth century.<sup>151</sup> Although few records survive of the earliest organizations, a men's organization was founded in Portsmouth and a black charitable society

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<sup>150</sup> Tuveson, "People of Color", p. 59.

<sup>151</sup> Sammons and Cunningham, *Black Portsmouth*, p. 75-106.

was organized in Exeter in 1817.<sup>152</sup> One notice posted in the *Exeter Watchman* by Lon[d]on Dailey and Rufus Cutler is all the evidence found to date of the black organization in Exeter.<sup>153</sup> The effort was a formal one with Cutler as secretary and invited “people of colour” throughout the state to Dailey’s home in Exeter. Whether the organization succeeded or failed is not known, but organizers were attempting to get people to help themselves by identifying as a group. Had people from all over the state responded, they may have formed a substantial organization of some power, but there is no record that such a group ever came together. As they did in Boston and elsewhere in the North, former slaves in New Hampshire attempted to create multiple institutions of their own in the few locations where their population was sufficient to support them. Those groups provided aid to their poor, communal society and support. Paralleling similar European organizations, the community organizations of people of color demonstrated further their embrace of European social customs despite their lack of welcome to the dominant culture.<sup>154</sup>

In areas of New Hampshire where the native free black population dwindled to next-to-nothing in the first half of the nineteenth century, people descended from slaves continued to participate in the traditional churches of the community as they struggled to survive. The population of color in most towns in New Hampshire was insufficient to establish separate churches in contrast to

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<sup>152</sup> Sammons and Cunningham, *Black Portsmouth*, p. 92-93.

<sup>153</sup> Tuveson, “A People of Color”, p. 81. Advertisement from the *Exeter Watchman*, August 12, 1817.

<sup>154</sup> Horton and Horton, *In Hope of Liberty*, p. 125-130.

larger cities to the south. After serving in the Revolutionary War and purchasing his freedom in 1778, Corydon Chesley of Dover married a white woman and had children. Both he and his wife maintained membership in the Congregational Church of Portsmouth where their funerals were held in the early nineteenth century. His daughter Lydia married a black man from Jamaica (her third husband) and settled in Dover where she joined the Dover Ladies Antislavery Society (an initiative of the First Church) in 1835. Along with a group of forty others, Lydia later left the First Church of Dover to found the Belknap Church as a result of dissatisfaction with the culture of the First Church. The unhappy members were, like Lydia, from the artisan class of a Dover that was increasingly dominated by the industrialist middle class. If they were known locally, people of color were often accepted as lower members in the community hierarchy. Lydia Chesley Dixon of Dover was accepted into the First Church of Dover with no mention of her race, but her foreign-born black husband was noted in the church records as “a colored man.” Lydia Dixon’s husband was technically a free man, but he was identified as the “other” in a community where he was an unknown and foreign. James Dixon was a professional man, a barber, but his race determined his status.<sup>155</sup>

Why did race replace slavery as the determinant of social status in New Hampshire? As New Hampshire’s enslaved people were building lives for themselves, New Hampshire residents were reading in the 1753 newspapers of armed groups of “Indians” killing and taking prisoners in Kentucky and of the

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<sup>155</sup> Jody R. Fernald, “Radical Reform in Public Sentiment” in Peter Benes, ed., *Slavery/Antislavery in New England, The Dublin Seminar for New England Folklife, Proceedings, 2003* (Boston: Boston University Scholarly Publications, 2005), p.92; Knoblock, *Strong and Brave Fellows*, p.89-90.

discovery of a plot of armed “Negroes” to rob and murder gentlemen in Somerset County, Maryland.<sup>156</sup> Mariners arrived in Portsmouth carrying tales of war, piracy, and rebellion in the Atlantic world and news published in the *New Hampshire Gazette* reinforced those stories. Accomplishments of New Hampshire’s people of color were overshadowed by the tensions of war and slavery. The white gentlemen of New Hampshire received regular reminders that the lower classes could be dangerous and that enslaved people as a group harbored a potential threat to the community even if such rebellions were not happening in New Hampshire. At the same time white men worried about retaining their control, the descendants of New Hampshire’s enslaved people recalled memories of slavery while they struggled to find a place in the community as free men. Since slavery had not been officially outlawed in New Hampshire, it hovered in the consciousness of residents tainting black and white alike with fear and anger. Reminders of their otherness maintained the distinctions between whites and people of color even as the two lived increasingly similar lives.

Slavery in New Hampshire remained bound to religion in several ways not the least of which involved manumission. Some churches embraced the enslaved and formerly enslaved while others did not. The Congregational Church’s loss of political power placed it in a reactionary rather than proactive position in regard to slavery. Some members of the clergy continued to support Puritan tenets of slavery, while the rise of more populist churches like the

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<sup>156</sup> *The Boston Post Boy* [Boston, Massachusetts] 959 (May 21, 1753).



Baptists, who first organized in New Hampshire in 1750, influenced some clergymen to oppose slavery.<sup>157</sup> Clergymen in New Hampshire threw their support in both directions. Rev. Jeremy Belknap in his Dover pastorate (1769-1786) promoted the manumission of enslaved people at the same time many enslaved men headed off to fight in the Revolutionary War.<sup>158</sup> In the First Church of Dover, Belknap married and baptized many of the people enslaved in New Hampshire and encouraged masters to manumit their slaves. On the other hand in Newington, Reverend Joseph Adams Jr., uncle to future President John Adams, merely baptized the people he enslaved. Rev. Joseph Adams Jr. owned four slaves and baptized many of Newington's other enslaved people including: Harry Hood and Phebe (Pattison) in 1742, Jarha (Libby) in 1745, his own slaves Phillis and Coridon in 1750, Dinah (Ring) in 1750, and Archibald (March) in 1774. Adams sold slaves including 16-year-old Coridon who was sold through William Shackford to James Chesley of Dover in 1756. When future President of the United States, John Adams, visited Newington in 1770, he wrote in his diary of his "vain" and "learned" uncle's admiration for Doctor Mather. Joseph Adams Jr. continued the old-order Puritan tradition in the pulpit and as a slave owner.<sup>159</sup>

New Hampshire's enslaved people did not rely solely on clergymen or their masters to promote manumission. A petition for freedom addressed by

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<sup>157</sup> Kinney, *Church and State*, p.191.

<sup>158</sup> Dover First Parish Church, *The First Parish in Dover, New Hampshire* (Dover, New Hampshire: Printed for the Parish, 1884), p. 98.

<sup>159</sup> John Frink Rowe, *Newington, New Hampshire: A Heritage of Independence Since 1630* (Canaan, New Hampshire: Phoenix Publishing, 1987), p. 96-97. Knoblock, *Strong and Brave Fellows*, p. 89-90.

Portsmouth's enslaved men to the New Hampshire General Assembly in 1779 met with silence. The petition, alternating between angry and moderated prose, was signed by twenty men who requested to be "ranked in the class of free agents."<sup>160</sup> In the throes of a nation declaring equality for all, this petition was a logical move. Unfortunately, New Hampshire's white government could not make the leap to find all men equal. Five years after the failed petition was filed, the state taxed its slaves as property despite a Bill of Rights granting freedom to all men. By 1789, the enslaved ceased to be known as property under the legal code, but no official stance was taken by the state against slavery until 1857.<sup>161</sup> Although individuals had had some success proving their freedom in the courts, a widespread end to slavery in New Hampshire never happened until slavery had already disappeared in practice.

Situations did arise in which slaves could be manumitted, but their lives as free men would be difficult, and their social position rarely improved. In the eighteenth century, many free blacks had relationships with slaves, making their status ambiguous. Race generally overshadowed legal status. For example, John Jack, who was enslaved by Jonathan Warner of Portsmouth, chose Fillis, a black woman of Greenland, as his life partner. Fillis had been granted her freedom in fifteen years by her master Enoch Clark in his will of 1759. Three of their children were born in the 1760s in Greenland where Fillis lived, but Jack

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<sup>160</sup> Valerie Cunningham, "That the Name of the Slave Not More Be Heard" in Peter Benes, ed., *Slavery/Antislavery in New England, The Dublin Seminar for New England Folklife, Proceedings, 2003* (Boston: Boston University Scholarly Publications, 2005), p.72.

<sup>161</sup> Sammons and Cunningham, *Black Portsmouth*, p. 76-77.

was obligated to work in the slave quarters of the lavish Portsmouth estate with other enslaved people (including Peter and Cato Warner who signed the 1779 petition for freedom).<sup>162</sup> In 1796, Jack and Fillis sheltered Ona Judge, a woman fleeing enslavement by George Washington. Even as a free woman, Fillis never really left the realm of slavery. Her husband and her acquaintances continued to struggle for freedom.<sup>163</sup> Fillis' life would be determined more by her race than it would be by her freedom. The servility of slavery became synonymous with race. The influence of race on social status began to take the place of slavery in determining future hierarchies in New Hampshire society.

The descendants of New Hampshire's enslaved people struggled economically as well as socially. In contrast to the prosperity of most slave owners, the enslaved and their descendants struggled to survive in slavery and in freedom in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Most trades and factory jobs were closed to blacks. Service jobs and common labor were the most available occupations for blacks throughout the nineteenth century. Shipping out to sea was one of the few lucrative means of employment available, but it damaged the black community by removing the most ambitious of its men and leaving women to support families by taking in laundry or sewing. Seafaring was

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<sup>162</sup> Priscilla Hammond, *Vital records of Greenland, NH* (Concord, NH: [s.n.] 1938; reprinted by Higginson Book Co.), p. 21 described Jack as the "Colored Servant belonging to Jonathan Warner esq. of Portsmouth"; Robert B. Dishman, "Natives of Africa Now Forcibly Detained" in *Historical New Hampshire*, 61-1 (2007): 7-27. PPR vol.21, p.173, will of Enoch Clark.

<sup>163</sup> Gerson, Evelyn B., "Ona Judge Staines: Escape From George Washington" (Seacoast NH.com, 2000), <http://seacoastnh.com/blackhistory/ona.html#7>. Also see Gerson's "A Thirst for Complete Freedom: Why Fugitive Slave Ona Judge Staines Never Returned to Her Master, George Washington", (Boston, MA: M.A. Thesis, Harvard University, 2000); Sammons and Cunningham, *Portsmouth Black Heritage Trail Resource Book*, p. 42; Hammond, *Vital Records of Greenland*, p.1.

also considered an immoral way of life and not as honorable an occupation as the few professional trades like barbering and blacksmithing that were open to blacks. By the mid-nineteenth century, few maritime jobs were available to blacks.<sup>164</sup> From the beginning of their freedom, former slaves found few ways to support themselves and their families except as laborers. Along with many poor whites, enslaved and formerly enslaved people numbered among the paupers who were warned out of area towns. Lists of paupers warned out of Rockingham County in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, include names of "mulattoes", "Negroes", and "Indians." Other than being characterized by race, most were treated the same as European paupers, excepting those still enslaved. Titus, an enslaved man, was removed from Portsmouth and returned to his master, John Gee Pickering, in Newington in 1790, whereas most paupers were merely escorted out of town.<sup>165</sup> Communities feared having to support someone else's dependents and kept vigilant for runaway slaves from neighboring towns.

In Dover, where the enslaved population numbered eight in 1790, the early nineteenth-century population of color was small enough to be nearly invisible. The history of the descendants of New Hampshire's enslaved people remains unrecorded largely because of its small scale and a scarcity of sources. However, it is useful to look at some individual examples of life after slavery in the state in order to understand the lives of people for whom freedom was just a

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<sup>164</sup> W. Jeffrey Bolster, *Black Jacks: African American Seamen in the Age of Sail* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998, 1997), p. 158-163, 215.

<sup>165</sup> Rockingham County Paupers, box# 430123, document #11310. New Hampshire Division of Archives and Records Management, Concord, New Hampshire.

word. For example, Plato Waldron grew up in slavery with his mother and sister Chloe on the estate of Thomas Westbrook Waldron in Dover. Waldron left the three of them “forever” to his wife and heirs in his will of 1779.<sup>166</sup> Plato Waldron’s mother Dinah committed suicide by drowning in April 1785, just days after the death of her master. Dinah Waldron may have preferred death to the prospect of being passed on as property to the Waldron heirs with the expected separation from her young children.<sup>167</sup> The extensive inventory of Thomas Waldron’s estate, including his large library, in July 1785 made no mention of the enslaved Plato and Chloe Waldron. As a free man, Plato Waldron served as undertaker and sexton for the First Parish Church in Dover in the early nineteenth century until his death by drowning in the Cocheco River in 1835 at age 56.<sup>168</sup> The local newspaper reported his body was found near Dover landing where he either drowned accidentally while bathing in the river or intentionally drowned himself.<sup>169</sup> Plato Waldron had married Elizabeth Cole of Somersworth in 1810 and Elizabeth Kelly in 1834.<sup>170</sup> His second marriage must have been an unhappy one as he advertised his refusal to be responsible for her debts in April,

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<sup>166</sup> Probate Records, Strafford County, 1779, p. 246.

<sup>167</sup> Anon, *A Bill of Mortality for the Society of Friends in Dover, NH from 1708, to 1791 Also A General Bill of Mortality for Dover, NH (from Dr. Belknap's History of New Hampshire)*. ([Dover, NH]: Printed by James K. Remich, 1803.], p. 11, for the date April 9, 1785.

<sup>168</sup> Anon, *The Dover Directory... 1830*. ([Dover, NH]: Published by Samuel C. Stevens. Printed by the Dover Enquirer Office, 1830), p. 60. See William D. Pierson, “White Cannibals, Black Martyrs: Fear, Depression, and Religious Faith as Causes of Suicide Among New Slaves”, *Journal of Negro History*, 62-2 (1977): 147-159, for slave suicides as a release from the depression of confinement.

<sup>169</sup> *Dover Gazette and Strafford Advertiser* [Dover], July 28, 1835, death notices.

<sup>170</sup> William Edgar Wentworth, comp., *Vital Records 1790-1829 from Dover's First Newspaper* (Camden, Maine: Picton Press, 1994, reprint), p.124.

1835 several months before his death.<sup>171</sup> Probated records of his estate in 1835 indicate he was heavily in debt when he died, a problem not uncommon to people of color in New Hampshire. Plato Waldron's life began and ended in unfortunate circumstances. Like many slaves, he may have been dogged by depression. Even though he is but one case, his life exemplified the difficulties, both physical and psychological, of living through and after slavery in New Hampshire.

Plato Waldron and Lydia Chesley Dixon found some independence, however limited it may have been. Other former slaves such as Caesar Leathers of Nottingham and Kate Robinson of Exeter remained with the families with whom they had grown up. Caesar was one of the six children of Belmont and Venus Barhew, enslaved by Jeremiah Burnham of Durham circa 1760. Caesar, sold to Vowel Leathers of Nottingham, was known for his beautiful singing voice at prayer meetings. Caesar Leathers ended up living in Newmarket as a "free" man in the home of Leathers' daughter, undoubtedly working for his keep.<sup>172</sup> Kate was one of two people enslaved by Captain Josiah Robinson of Exeter in the late eighteenth century.<sup>173</sup> When Robinson died, Kate was passed on to Robinson's son Jeremiah. Kate Robinson was recorded as a free person from 1800 onward, but she continued to live and work in the Robinson household until

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<sup>171</sup> *Dover Gazette and Strafford Advertiser*, April 14, 1835.

<sup>172</sup> Stackpole and Thompson, *History of Durham*, p. 250-251; Mary P. Thompson, *Landmarks in Ancient Dover, New Hampshire*. (Durham, NH: Durham Historic Association, 1965; reprint of the 1892 edition), p. 163. Note that Caesar was known by his master's last name not the last name of his parents. Since the enslaved lost their original names over time, current practice dictates the use of naming conventions assigned by masters.

<sup>173</sup> Tuveson, "People of Color," p.52.

her death in 1821. Unfortunately, we will likely never know how Caesar and Kate felt about their lives in freedom.

With scarce economic resources and little education beyond literacy, the descendants of New Hampshire's enslaved people had few options. The context in which they struggled had also changed from the eighteenth century. The first decades of the nineteenth century saw the establishment of New Hampshire's first industrial mills and the creation of a new laboring underclass. The culturally dominant in New Hampshire easily forgot the state's history of slavery as the few descendants of the enslaved faded into an enlarging immigrant population.

New Hampshire in the eighteenth century was a world at odds with itself. The law prohibited sex before or outside of marriage, but fornication and "bastard" children proliferated; masters bound "inferior" people in slavery who increasingly resembled them both genetically and culturally; the beginnings of personal liberty collided with the bonds of slavery; churches supported slavery and churches opposed slavery; the traditional religion of the "chosen people" competed with the evangelical call to everyman; the mysteries of God met the facts of Enlightenment science; the gulf between the prosperous and the poor widened as never before. The descendants of New Hampshire's enslaved people were thrust into an industrializing world of class consciousness and scientific theories of racial difference. As they died out or were forgotten, those descendants were overshadowed by the later nineteenth-century arrival of freed slaves from the South and European immigrants in search of employment, all qualifying as culturally disadvantaged in nineteenth-century New Hampshire. In the next

chapter, a historiography of slavery in northern New England tracks the area's changing views of its own history of slavery within changing cultural contexts.



## CHAPTER III

### INTERPRETATIONS OF SLAVERY IN NORTHERN NEW ENGLAND

Just as the character of slavery in New Hampshire changed over time, so did the interpretation of the history of slavery in northern New England change. From Catharine Sedgwick's tale of an enslaved woman living in an atmosphere of "parental kindness" in 1853 to Valerie Cunningham's current recovery of the lives of New Hampshire slaves living in bondage "just as painful as bondage elsewhere," writers have continued to assuage, alter, or cure the amnesia of northern New Englanders regarding their history of slavery.<sup>174</sup> A close examination of the extant scholarship reveals current attitudes on the subject and the history from which they evolved. Some major shifts in professional history have been omitted here because the history of slavery in New Hampshire has not always responded to those shifts. Largely the province of amateurs, northern New England's history of slavery rarely makes an appearance in the major works on the subject of American slavery.

Until Lorenzo Greene published *The Negro in Colonial New England* in 1942, the discussion of slavery in the region belonged primarily to white observers of local anecdotes that either ridiculed or patronized blacks as

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<sup>174</sup> Catharine Sedgwick, "Slavery in New England" in *Bentley's Miscellany* 34 (1853): 417, transcribed at <http://www.salemstate.edu/imc/sedgwick/slavery.html>; Valerie Cunningham, "The First Blacks of Portsmouth" in *Historical New Hampshire* 4 (1989): 180-201.

curiosities. Nineteenth-century writers lived in the perspective of an emerging nation still defining itself as a morally superior defender of freedom. Lorenzo Greene, an African-American academic, elevated the standard for scholarship on the subject with his well-documented history written in the context of a rising group of black academics. The introduction of history as an idea-driven profession led to specialist studies like Marcus Jernegan's labor study that compartmentalized the issue of slavery, neglecting its overall influence and residual effects. Early twentieth-century scholars, black and white, engaged in the study of slavery primarily from the perspective of labor issues. The civil rights era and the beginnings of the new social history inspired the next significant change in interpretation of the region's history of slavery. Increasing interest in women's history, folklore, and in origins of racism has also influenced scholarship on slavery. Until recently and still for some, the assumption persists that slavery in New England was benign and insignificant. For others, slavery is simply equated with racism in a presentist look at early values. The total picture proves far more complex.

Historians of the nineteenth century initiated the amnesia of slavery that afflicted many New Englanders. A white man, Robert Rantoul, lectured on "Negro Slavery in New England" before the Beverly, Massachusetts Lyceum in April, 1833.<sup>175</sup> Slavery in New England had disappeared on paper and or in public notice by 1833, despite the fact that an enslaved person was documented

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<sup>175</sup> Robert Rantoul, Sr., "Negro Slavery in Massachusetts" in *Historical Collections of the Essex Institute* 24-4,5,6 (1887): 81-108. The article is a reprint of "portions of a paper read before the Beverly Lyceum, April, 1833." Rantoul was a druggist with a lifelong interest in various reform issues.

in the 1840 census of New Hampshire. The evils of slavery, thought to have been confined to the South, occupied antislavery activists in the North who were often ignorant of their own regional history of the practice. In his rare early discussion of the subject, Rantoul felt pressured by the politics of colonization and abolition. Caught up in the reform activities of the 1830s, he missed the ethnic complexities of slavery, and the diversity of both the enslaved and their life experiences, but he was one of the few people at the time who admitted to New England's history of slavery. He recognized the human history of slavery by placing New England within a history of slavery dating from the time of Abraham. However, he neglected the slaves and descendants of slaves in his lifetime.

Rantoul could not have considered the psychological aspects of bondage; the subject did not exist in his lifetime. The "science" of phrenology, new to Americans in the early nineteenth century but eventually abandoned as spurious, preceded the profession of psychology, now recognized as a valid interpretation of human experience. Phrenology attributed the origin of human capabilities and emotions to physical areas in the brain and the shape of a person's head. In attributing characteristics of human beings to a purely physical determination, phrenology formed part of the "science" of race that predetermined a person's worth by his or her physical characteristics. *The Illustrated Self-Instructor in Phrenology and Physiology* of 1855 analyzed the heads of Africans and Indians separately from whites. Africans were determined to be "full perceptives" with "large Tune and Language" but "deficient in reasoning capacity, yet have excellent memories and lingual and musical powers." "Indians" were believed

lacking in “great moral or inventive power.” The Caucasian race was deemed superior in reasoning and morality to all the other races.<sup>176</sup> Robert Rantoul wrote at the very beginnings of the popularity of these theories. They don’t seem to have overtly affected his short-sighted analysis of slavery in New England, which served to fit slavery comfortably into the national story.

Using the words of an African-American, Rantoul ended his paper with Prince Hall, grand master of the black lodge of Free Masons. He quoted Hall’s statement that harmony between the races prevailed even though some citizens were “the weeds of pride, envy, tyranny, and scorn, in this garden of peace, liberty and equality.” Not questioning the candor of the “dark statement” by Hall, Rantoul spoke from his own religious beliefs when he admitted that “everywhere there are a few who forget that God made all nations of one blood.”<sup>177</sup> Rantoul’s cursory treatment of Prince Hall contrasts with the contemporary view of Hall’s struggle for equality. The Public Broadcasting Service “Africans in America” program website quotes Hall on mob violence against blacks during the late eighteenth century, an important time for definitions of liberty. Hall noted that blacks were at risk on a daily basis in the streets of Boston because whites confronted them not as individuals but in groups:

Patience, I say; for were we not possessed of a great measure of it, we could not bear up under the daily insults we meet with in the streets of Boston, much more on public days of recreation. How, at such times, are we shamefully abused, and that to such a degree, that we may truly be said to carry our lives in our hands, and the

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<sup>176</sup> O.S. and L.N. Fowler, *The Illustrated Self-Instructor in Phrenology and Physiology* (New York: Fowlers and Wells Publishers, 1855), p. 41.

<sup>177</sup> Rantoul, “Negro Slavery in Massachusetts,” p.107-8.

arrows of death are flying about our heads...tis not for want of courage in you, for they know that they dare not face you man for man, but in a mob, which we despise...<sup>178</sup>

Rantoul wrote in the context of a northern New England still harboring some enslaved people although the greater public was probably ignorant of the fact. New England colonizationists and abolitionists concerned themselves with slavery in the South, their competitor for political power in the new nation. Later nineteenth-century interpretations of slavery in northern New England added sentimentality to Rantoul's edited facts.

In the antebellum period, disenfranchised New England women extended their role of domestic moral authority to the political sphere by creating fiction aimed at unifying and improving the new nation. Wider distribution of printed materials at lower cost, due to new technology, made popular periodicals an influential form of communication and an outlet for women's writing.<sup>179</sup> At mid-century, two white New England women published accounts of northern New England and slavery--Catharine Maria Sedgwick and Sarah Josepha Hale. Both women set out to differentiate American writing from English. Sedgwick said Americans were "at a different stage in civilization" and had "different prospects" than the English.<sup>180</sup>

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<sup>178</sup> "Africans in America", Public Broadcasting Service accessed at <http://www.pbs.org/wgbn/aia/part2/2p37.html>. Some materials are from the Massachusetts State Archives.

<sup>179</sup> See Richard D. Brown, *Knowledge is Power: The Diffusion of Information in Early America, 1700-1865* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989).

<sup>180</sup> Sarah Robbins, *Managing Literacy, Mothering America: Women's Narratives on Reading and Writing in the Nineteenth Century* (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2004), p. 27. Sedgwick was quoted from her introduction to *Women and Work* published in 1859.

One of the most pervasive influences on American women in the nineteenth century, Sarah Josepha Hale “educated” American women as the editor of *Godey’s Ladies Book* from 1837 until 1877. The magazine folded when the women’s rights movement eventually made it irrelevant to many of its subscribers. Hale intentionally took what was a magazine of English culture and “Americanized” it by giving it a national slant.<sup>181</sup> First published in 1827 but reprinted for many years, Hale’s novel *Northwood* borrowed heavily from English expressions and English writers including the following quote from Lord Byron on its title page, “He who loves not his country can love nothing.”<sup>182</sup> Besides quoting from the English as she criticized them in the text, Hale blamed slavery on the southern states and Britain with no mention of slavery in New Hampshire, the locale of the novel. Hale created the mythic Yankee in a didactic anti-Catholic and anti-Southern diatribe. The narrator repeatedly assaulted her readers with the modesty, morality, and Godliness of Yankee Protestants, besides promoting Hale’s idea for a Thanksgiving holiday. The protagonist, Sidney Romilly, was named after an Englishman and then given up to a Charleston couple (his aunt and uncle) who owned slaves. The Charleston slaves reportedly loved Sidney because he was so much kinder a master than the southerners. Sidney returned home to Northwood, New Hampshire where he and the reader were reintroduced

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<sup>181</sup> Robbins, *Managing Literacy, Mothering America*, p.25.

<sup>182</sup> Mrs. Sarah Joseph Hale, *Northwood: or Life North and South: Showing the True Character of Both* (New York: H. Long and Brother, 1852, 1827.). Quote from George Gordon, Lord Byron, *The Two Foscari*.

to the superior character of northerners. While Hale targeted southern slavery, she suppressed any discussion of slavery in New Hampshire.

Writing as a self-appointed spokeswoman for her class, Catharine Sedgwick added to the sentimental literature on slavery in New England in 1853 with her essay "Slavery in New England."<sup>183</sup> Sedgwick's drama of the life of Elizabeth Freeman (known as Mumbet), an illiterate woman enslaved for thirty years in Massachusetts, emphasized the slave woman's power over her cruel mistress and her allegiance to her benevolent magistrate protector, Theodore Sedgwick (Catharine's father). Sedgwick described Freeman's life as a "noble river, that which makes rich and glad the dwellers on its borders." Cloysingly sentimental as was the fashion, Sedgwick called this story an exception to the normally "parental" governing of slaves because of the cruel mistress involved. But with a happy ending to the life of a noble and courageous woman, her story reinforced the overall complacency of middle class Americans to the story of slavery in New England and the place of the descendants of slavery in nineteenth-century New England. In describing Mumbet's noble character, Sedgwick shifted the emphasis away from her enslavement in New England. Speaking from the influence of Puritan antecedents, Sedgwick began her story with:

The slaves in Massachusetts were treated with almost parental kindness. They were incorporated into the family, and each puritan

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<sup>183</sup> Sedgwick, "Slavery in New England," p. 427-24. See Sarah Robbins on Sedgwick and the Republic in "The Future Good and Great of Our Land': Republican Mothers, Female Authors, and Domesticated Literacy in Antebellum New England" in *The New England Quarterly*, 75-4 (2002): 562-591; also her "Periodizing Authorship, Characterizing Genre: Catharine Maria Sedgwick's Benevolent Literacy Narratives" in *American Literature*, 76-1 (2004): 1-29.

household being a sort of religious structure, the relative duties of master and servant were clearly defined. No doubt the severest and longest task fell to the slave, but in the household of the farmer or artisan, the master and the mistress shared it, and when it was finished, the white and the black, like the feudal chief and his household servant, sat down to the same table, and shared the same viands. No doubt there were hard masters and cruel mistresses, and so there are cruel fathers and exacting mothers: unrestrained power is not a fit human trust....<sup>184</sup>

Just as slavery was more complex than it is remembered, Sedgwick's essay on slavery gives the mistaken impression that her relationship with Mumbet was a purely parental one. Scholars now believe that Mumbet influenced Sedgwick, and that influence surfaced in her other writings. From a family of antislavery activists, Sedgwick believed in racial equality and gradual manumission, but her concerns for the survival of the nation took precedence over the immediate abolition of slavery. The issue of slavery possessed the power to divide the nation, so Sedgwick avoided it in deference to what she believed to be the greater threat.<sup>185</sup>

In a nation increasingly divided by sectional issues and facing the changes of industrialization, women crafted a comfortable, glowing, superior national image based in part on the past. Antebellum women writers used their innate power of persuasion to influence wide audiences and reinforce the popular belief that New England slavery was benevolent and relatively harmless. Writers were casting history in terms that painted the culture of the North as virtuous and committed to freedom as opposed to southern culture that was built on slavery.

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<sup>184</sup> Sedgwick, "Slavery in New England," p.427-24.

<sup>185</sup> Lucinda L. Damon-Bach and Victoria Clements, eds., Mary Kelley, forward, *Catharine Maria Sedgwick: Critical Perspectives* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 2003), p. xvi.



Sedgwick's tale fulfilled the needs of nineteenth-century New England readers to define their nation based on principles of freedom in a history aligned with those principles. They imagined a settled nation in an unsettling time.

Following in the genre of women's fiction, but upsetting the image of a settled nation was Mrs. Harriet E. Wilson, a free black servant who lived in Milford, New Hampshire.<sup>186</sup> Wilson's combination of fiction and autobiography titled with a racial epithet, *Our Nig*, lay hidden in the plethora of nineteenth-century women's writing until, in 1980, an antiquarian bookman cataloged the first edition of 1859 as written by a black woman. Subsequent researchers, Henry Louis Gates in particular, have identified the work as the first of its kind by an African-American woman. Somewhat familiar with the popular literature of her time, Wilson used the conventions of her white counterparts to not only expose the travails of being "mulatto" in nineteenth-century New Hampshire, but to criticize Northerners as prejudiced. She knew the "shadows of slavery" fell even in the North.<sup>187</sup> Gates's careful analysis of her work in the introduction showed both Wilson's reinforcement of the idea that southerners were the most brutal of masters in slavery, and her recognition that despite their prejudices she placed some value on the work of northern abolitionists. Her priority, however, was to expose racism in the North. Had Wilson's work received recognition in the nineteenth century, early conceptions of race and slavery in New Hampshire

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<sup>186</sup> Harriet E. Wilson, *Our Nig: or, Sketches From the Life of a Free Black* (NY: Vintage Books, 1983, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Orig. published in 1859, the second edition contains an introduction and notes by Henry Louis Gates, Jr. Also see the 2005 Penguin Books edition, edited and introduced by P. Gabrielle Foreman and Reginald H. Pitts, which includes extensive notes on Wilson's life.

<sup>187</sup> Wilson, *Our Nig*, title page.

might have taken a different path, but her work was not commercially viable because it found no audience in nineteenth-century New England. Ellen Prato Fiorito placed *Our Nig* in a body of work by African-Americans in the nineteenth century who wrote about northern racism and consequently were relegated to obscurity. The polarity of North-South relations precluded the viability of novels written about prejudice against free blacks in the North. Harriet Wilson refused to be “contained” within the constraints of her time and thus was relegated to obscurity until the culture changed.<sup>188</sup>

In the years following the Civil War, Joseph Williamson continued the nationalist view of New England’s history of slavery by writing a brief history of slavery in Maine shortly after the “momentous crisis through which our country is passing.”<sup>189</sup> Unlike Rantoul, Williamson placed New England slavery in the context of Britain’s preeminence in the slave trade. He discussed various attempts to eliminate slavery in Maine and Massachusetts (which governed Maine from 1677 until 1820), but quoted Chief Justice Shaw saying that slavery just seems to have crept in somehow, perhaps because of European precedent. Williamson quoted Jeremy Belknap (as did Rantoul without attribution) on the slave trade in Massachusetts:

I cannot find more than three ships in a year belonging to Boston, were ever employed in the African trade. The rum distilled here was the mainspring of the traffic. Very few whole cargoes ever came to this port. One gentleman says he remembers “two or

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<sup>188</sup> Ellen Prato Fiorito, “‘To Demand Your Sympathy and Aid’: *Our Nig* and the Problem of No Audience”, in *Journal of American and Comparative Culture* 24-1,2 (2001): 31-48.

<sup>189</sup> Joseph Williamson, “Slavery in Maine” in *Collections of the Maine Historical Society* (Bath, ME: Maine Historical Society, 1876), vol. 7, p. 209-216.

three.” Dr. Belknap mentions one cargo which he recollected between 1755 and 1765, consisting almost wholly of children.<sup>190</sup>

In assessing the treatment of slaves in Maine, Williamson broke no new ground. He suggested, “At first their treatment was harsh, but during the last years the institution existed, they suffered no greater hardships than hired servants.” He added that slaves were admitted as members of churches, could own property, could testify in court, and their families were seldom disturbed, a point that he quickly contradicted. His contradictions included the fact that, since the children of a female slave were the property of the master, families were easily separated. Slave mothers were sometimes sold separately from their children, and slave children were given away “like puppies, as an incumbrance.” He further noted that the slave was the absolute property of his master and could be transferred by gift or sale. Although the enslaved could demand redress in the courts for cruel treatment, that action generally resulted in his or her sale to another master. In short, Williamson gave more evidence to contradict than to support his claim that “families were seldom disturbed.” He finished by stating that slavery ended in Massachusetts/Maine in 1774, but Great Britain continued to “resist every colonial limitation of the slave trade, with the same firmness with which she opposed our efforts at independence.” Writing at the centennial of the American Revolution, Williamson couched his history of slavery in national terms focusing on the Revolution instead of the more recent Civil War. Although he talked Revolution, Williamson took a post-Civil War unifying view of America’s history by placing blame for the practice of slavery largely on Britain, once the

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<sup>190</sup> Williamson, “Slavery in Maine”, p. 209-216.

enemy of the entire nation. Williamson ignored emancipation as an issue and overlooked the contemporary relevance of slavery in his view.<sup>191</sup> His work provides a good example of New Englanders who ignored the racial divide in their midst because crossing the national divide took precedence.<sup>192</sup>

The descendants of New Hampshire's enslaved people had virtually disappeared by the time George Wadleigh wrote in 1883 of "Slavery in New Hampshire—When and How Abolished." With no visual evidence to contradict him and plenty of textual evidence to support him, he also cast local slavery in an aura of benevolence. He quoted Dr. Belknap from 1792:

Slavery was not at that time prohibited by express law. ...negroes were never very numerous in New Hampshire. Some of them purchased their freedom during the late war [of the Revolution] by serving three years in the army. Others have been made free by the justice and humanity of their masters...in the late census, the blacks in New Hampshire are distinguished into free and slave. It is not in my power to apologize for this inconsistency. However, the condition of most of those who are called slaves is preferable to that of many who are free in the neighboring State. They are better provided with necessaries; their labor is not more severe than that of the white people in general; and they are equally under the protection of the law.<sup>193</sup>

In many of the years between Belknap and Wadleigh, slavery continued to be legal in New Hampshire, but Wadleigh made no attempt to assess the circumstances of freedom for the enslaved in New Hampshire. To him slavery existed only in the past and he rationalized away all the problematic issues in the

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<sup>191</sup> David W. Blight, *Race and Reunion: The Civil War in American Memory* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University, 2001).

<sup>192</sup> Blight, *Race and Reunion*, p. 355.

<sup>193</sup> George, "Slavery in New Hampshire," *The Granite Monthly* 7 (1883): 377-379.

state's involvement with slavery. He also provided a comforting version of history for New Hampshire residents.

The first half of the twentieth century saw the development of history into a profession with the resulting emergence of specialist intellectual viewpoints.

Early in the twentieth century the Depression, labor problems, and class consciousness moved the focus on slavery to its role as a labor system alongside apprenticeship, indenture, and wage labor. Writing at the beginning of the Great Depression and influenced by Marxism, historian Marcus Jernegan looked at all laboring and dependent classes in colonial America, slaves included.<sup>194</sup> Jernegan took a new approach by placing servitude in the context of the labor history of the lower classes, making differentiations between apprenticeship and indenture. Although his book focused on slavery in the South, he examined servitude in New England briefly. A series of essays and not a conclusive book, Jernegan's work is important as an early intellectual look at slavery in New England. He said early diversification of the economy and later industrialization brought diverse roles to slaves who were not employed solely in agricultural operations. Because of his focus on social class and labor issues, his partial look at slavery in New England ignored both the skills that enslaved people possessed before enslavement, the context in which they worked, and the psychological implications of slavery.<sup>195</sup>

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<sup>194</sup> Marcus Wilson Jernegan, *Laboring and Dependent Classes in Colonial America, 1607-1783* (New York: Frederick Ungar Publishing Co., 1931).

<sup>195</sup> Jernegan, *Laboring and Dependent Classes*, p. 8-9.

Jernegan also looked at reasons why slaves were not freed, primarily by emphasizing the economic problem of public relief for the poor, and made a convincing case that freeing slaves would have been an unpopular process for that reason alone. Jernegan also mentioned African slaves' values were different from Christian values. He did not call them primitive heathens, but he argued that they had conceptions of morality, truthfulness, and property rights that were "quite out of harmony with the teachings of Christianity."<sup>196</sup> He implied that Africans compared unfavorably to Europeans in moral as well as in social practices. As for their economic importance, slaves were less important to the economy than white indentured servants according to Jernegan. Focusing on social ills in education and labor, Jernegan was not a radical Marxist, but argued somewhat for the benefits of indentured labor.

Ten years after Jernegan's partial look at the economics of slavery, the most significant change in the historiography of slavery in northern New England took place with the release of Lorenzo Greene's book *The Negro in Colonial New England* in 1942.<sup>197</sup> African-American historian Greene was a native of Connecticut who had been researching black labor and the black church since the 1890s.<sup>198</sup> One of a generation of important black labor historians, Lorenzo Greene was associated with a group of black activist social scientists that included

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<sup>196</sup> Jernegan, *Laboring and Dependent Classes*, p. 37.

<sup>197</sup> Greene, *The Negro*.

<sup>198</sup> See review by Claudine L. Ferrell, "Working with Carter G. Woodson, the Father of Black History: a Diary, 1928-1930," in *The Journal of Southern History* 57-2 (1991): 350-351. Lorenzo Greene's papers are held by the Library of Congress. See <http://www.loc.gov/rr/mss/text/greene.html>.

Carter Woodson (founder of the *Journal of Negro History*), W.E.B. Du Bois, Charles S. Johnson, Ida B. Wells, and others. Writing at the height of segregation in America, they researched the work and contexts of black workers with the intention of improving social conditions. Greene attended integrated schools and was not really interested in black history until he became an assistant to Carter Woodson, who supported Greene and several others through their doctorates in history.<sup>199</sup> Greene's earlier book on black employment after emancipation, *The Negro Wage Earner*, was coauthored with Woodson. In *The Negro in Colonial New England*, he set out to correct previous omissions in history and made extensive use of newly available information on the slave trade like Elizabeth Donnan's multiple volume set of the documents of the slave trade published in 1932.<sup>200</sup> He also consulted government records, hundreds of primary sources, and many older and contemporary secondary sources to create a book that is still considered an important source on the subject over sixty years later.

Greene made a number of findings that contradicted earlier interpretations of slavery in northern New England, including the fact that Portsmouth, New Hampshire was a major center for the slave trade to the West Indies and the southern colonies. Moreover, he found that the slave trade played an important economic role in Boston and northward since some of the most successful merchants like the Pepperells in Kittery, Maine and Gen. William Whipple of Portsmouth, New Hampshire were slave traders. In fact Greene said: "As a

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<sup>199</sup> Francille Rusan Wilson, *The Segregated Scholars: Black Social Scientists and the Creation of Black Labor Studies, 1890-1950* (Charlottesville, Virginia: University of Virginia Press, 2006).

<sup>200</sup> Donnan, *Documents*, vol. 3 covers New England and the Middle Colonies.

result of these factors the New England colonies in the 18th century became the greatest slave-trading section of America.”<sup>201</sup> Greene’s agenda may have gotten the better of him in that statement.

Although Massachusetts and Rhode Island were the major centers for the slave trade in New England, Greene noted that maritime communities north of Boston such as Newburyport, Charlestown, Salem, Kittery, and Portsmouth played an active role as well. In line with his interest in the black church, he also described a New England government based on the Old Testament that believed slavery was a normal part of life and was sanctioned by the Bible.

The importance of the slave trade to the economy of New England, Greene said, was that most of the region’s industries were dependent on it: the rum and molasses trade, shipbuilding, distilleries, fisheries, the work of seamen and artisans, and agriculture. In a region with a recurring labor shortage and a diversified economy, slaves were skilled workers acquired at a relatively low cost. In emphasizing the labor aspect of slavery, he noted that the black population in northern New England was quite small, peaking in the mid-eighteenth century, but it played a significant role in the region’s success. Greene’s was a well-documented assessment of the region’s dependency on the slave trade and on slave labor with a black activist slant.

In analyzing cultural retention among the enslaved, Greene described slave families in New England as similar in structure to those of their masters and noted that slaves were forced to replace the practices they brought from Africa with those

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<sup>201</sup> Greene, *The Negro*, p. 24.



of their Puritan masters. Taking “Negroes” out of context led him to see slavery in terms of black and white while ignoring cultural shades of gray. Because of the small number of “Negro” women in the population, Greene did say that “Negroes” often married Native Americans or whites, although he did not push that point to find resulting cultural integration. He said slaves in the North were more likely to marry across racial lines than those in the South, but neglected to make the comparisons of cultural transference that would appear in later studies.

Greene provided evidence that slave families in New England were often subject to separation through their sale or transfer to another owner. He repeated the analogy offered by earlier writers that slave children were given away like puppies or kittens. He also provided evidence of infanticide committed by mothers of illegitimate children, both black and white. He found slave breeding to be far less common in New England than in the South. Unlike in the South, Greene found no advertisements for good breeders in New England newspapers. Although slave families were different in New England from elsewhere in the country, they were adversely affected by slavery according to Greene.

Greene did repeat the earlier assertion that “slavery in New England was comparatively humane.”<sup>202</sup> He implied that benign conditions were possible in New England because the small numbers of slaves in northern New England never presented the kind of threat to whites that they did in the South. Sounding like Catharine Sedgwick for a minute, Greene described the punishment of

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<sup>202</sup> Greene, *The Negro*, p. 218.

slaves as being in line with the Puritan inclination to punish anyone severely when necessary, even their own children. There he agreed with Sedgwick's description of "parental" attitudes of slave owners resembling their attitudes toward their own children.

So Greene defined the slave trade in New England, particularly Massachusetts and northern maritime communities, as more active, more lucrative, and more deliberate than previous writers on slavery had done. He concluded that "Negro" slaves in New England lived in conditions somewhere between those of plantation slaves and indentured servants. He said they became familiar members of families; they were often skilled artisans; they were fairly well treated; they had some protection under the law; and they were expected to live according to the moral codes of their Puritan owners. Greene concluded by claiming that the natural rights theories of the Revolution provided the final blow to an already weakened institution of slavery in New England.

Lorenzo Greene's well-documented overview of the "Negro" experience in New England touched on the subject of race only briefly. Although he admitted that a few "Negroes" in New England owned slaves, that Native Americans were enslaved, and that some whites (Irish immigrants for instance) were also treated like slaves in New England, these facts ran counter to the theme of his book. He described the inferior status of free "Negroes" in New England due to racial prejudice, although he noted that some did make remarkable accomplishments in spite of those conditions. His chapter on race predicted the next wave of writing on slavery in New England. One of the unfortunate, unintentional influences

Greene's work had was to create the public perception that slavery affected only "Negroes." Following Greene, examinations of slavery focused primarily on slavery of Africans while New England's history of servitude in Native American and European populations fell into neglect.

Twenty-six years after the publication of Greene's work, historian Winthrop Jordan tackled the subject of race relations between whites and blacks in America in his impressive volume *White Over Black*, a book written from a Jungian perspective primarily about the attitudes of white settlers in America toward slavery.<sup>203</sup> Surveying the period from the sixteenth century through to 1812, Jordan connected the influence of slavery to the twentieth century through the civil rights era in which he wrote.<sup>204</sup> He explored psycho-sexual issues like Englishmen's long-standing association of the color black with the Devil or the opposite of goodness and enlightenment. When Englishmen first encountered black Africans, their associations of black with something bad or inferior created a permanent foundation for racism, according to Jordan. He argued that the 'black other' became a temptation for superficially moral colonists.

When Jordan investigated the subject of "Negro" slavery in New England, his findings did not appear much different from earlier interpretations: slavery existed on a smaller scale; treatment of slaves was milder; and Christians sanctioned and felt blessed by slavery. Jordan emphasized the use of the word "stranger" in Massachusetts' Puritan law of 1641 regarding the acceptance of

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<sup>203</sup> Jordan, *White Over Black*.

<sup>204</sup> Jordan, *White Over Black*, p. ix.

slavery only when it involved captives in war or “strangers” willingly selling themselves or sold by others. Africans fully qualified as strangers in many ways. Jordan introduced the “dark other” to the complex relationships negotiated within slavery, a subject previously unexplored. He found that in every circumstance except where economic necessity required otherwise, “Negroes” were treated differently from whites in New England society.<sup>205</sup> Jordan’s significant argument was his introduction of racism into an analysis of slavery. Previous writers acknowledged that Africans brought morals and values different from those of Christians, but they did not connect slavery in New England with the racist heritage of its English founders. Winthrop Jordan saw both Englishmen’s predisposition to devalue people different from themselves, and a social impetus to expansion hampered by a limited supply of labor. He created a major shift in the historiographical treatment of slavery by examining the historical roots of slavery and concluding that racism replaced slavery once the nation dedicated itself to freedom.<sup>206</sup>

A few years later, Robert Twombly and Robert Moore, writing on the “Negro” in seventeenth-century Massachusetts, referred to Jordan’s work when it was still an unpublished dissertation at Brown University from 1960.<sup>207</sup> The pair approached black life in seventeenth-century New England from the perspective

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<sup>205</sup> Jordan, *White Over Black*, p. 71.

<sup>206</sup> For a later assessment of Jordan’s work see: Laurence Shore, “The Enduring Power of Racism: A Reconsideration of Winthrop Jordan’s *White Over Black*, in *History and Theory* 44 (2005): 195-226.

<sup>207</sup> Robert C. Twombly and Robert H. Moore, “Black Puritan: The Negro in Seventeenth-Century Massachusetts,” in *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd ser., 24-2 (1967): 224-242.

of white behavior. Twombly and Moore concentrated on the ways in which blacks were treated on a par with whites despite admitted social prejudices. They tested race relations first through the courts and found that enslaved "Negroes" were accorded "police protection, legal counsel, trial by jury, fair and considered hearings, and impartial justice."<sup>208</sup> They believed that Massachusetts Puritans were more concerned with universal justice than informal social interactions might suggest. Puritans in Massachusetts gave both legal protection and religious participation to slaves in their midst. Later restrictions placed on slaves served to preserve a sense of stability in a community with a larger slave population according to the authors. They may have looked at slavery in the context of white behaviors, but that was the only influence they seemed to have absorbed from Winthrop Jordan.

In addition to legal recognition and religious acceptance, the authors claimed that slaves had access to economic opportunities, including ownership of property. Here they were less than convincing, since many of their examples were "Negroes" who had been given property. Although a few were fortunate enough to receive land as a gift, this does not signify generally that "Negroes" in Massachusetts could earn enough money to purchase property. Melinde Lutz Sanborn researched in greater detail the lives of two slaves mentioned by Twombly and Moore in their discussion of property ownership. According to Sanborn, Twombly and Moore missed some significant facts about Angola and Elizabeth, including that Angola died intestate, and that the colonial government

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<sup>208</sup> Twombly and Moore, *Black Puritan*, p. 226-227.

ruled that his property belonged to his wife, setting an important precedent.<sup>209</sup>

Sanborn raised issues that complicated Twombly and Moore's perspective, such as the place of women in slavery, and the end result of property ownership by slaves.

Although they admitted that whites discriminated against blacks in laws meant to maintain community stability, Twombly and Moore stated that blacks were never totally without legal protection or social interaction with whites in New England. Future historians would take issue with some of those claims, particularly with the reasons for white suppression of slaves. Twombly and Moore's arguments appeared narrow when compared to Jordan's more complex analysis of slavery.

In the history of slavery in Massachusetts, law has received considerable analysis. The Quock Walker cases have often been used to illustrate the relationship of freedom and legal protection for the enslaved in New England. Professor of Law Robert M. Spector researched Quock Walker in an essay published in *The Journal of Negro History* in 1968.<sup>210</sup> Quock Walker, born to an enslaved couple in Massachusetts, was willed to several different masters, but in 1781 he claimed that his previous master had promised him freedom by age 25. He fled his current master to work on another farm, but Nathaniel Jennison, his owner, retrieved him and beat him severely. Quock's owner sued the man to

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<sup>209</sup> Melinde Lutz Sanborn, "Angola and Elizabeth: An African Family in the Massachusetts Bay Colony," in *The New England Quarterly*, 72-1, (1999): 119-129.

<sup>210</sup> Robert M. Spector, "The Quock Walker Cases (1781-83)—Slavery, Its Abolition, and Negro Citizenship in Early Massachusetts" in *The Journal of Negro History* 53-1 (1968): 12-32.

whom Quock had fled, and Quock then countersued for assault and battery. Jennison won the first round of his suit, but Quock Walker's lawyers won his case before a jury by pleading that, according to Massachusetts law and higher moral powers, slavery was neither legal nor just.<sup>211</sup> Spector indicated that Massachusetts citizens enslaved men not because it was legally sanctioned by Puritans (interpreting the 1641 law as prohibiting slavery), but because the practice was allowed to exist outside the law. He stated that as white laborers increasingly opposed the competition of cheaper slave labor, and the courts interpreted slavery as illegal, the practice simply died a natural death in Massachusetts. He agreed that the abolition of slavery in Massachusetts did not happen for altruistic reasons, and he omitted racial prejudice as a reason for the existence of slavery in Massachusetts. Spector's was one of many specialist looks at singular aspects of slavery in New England.

In another Civil Rights era look in 1968 at legal issues surrounding the abolition of slavery, historian Arthur Zilversmit compared the stories of Quock Walker and "Mumbet."<sup>212</sup> Zilversmit carefully analyzed the Walker cases (two civil suits and a criminal case) and deduced that there was no evidence that the courts found slavery in Massachusetts illegal in the decisions resulting from those cases. He offered as example another "freedom suit" by Zach Mullen, "Negro man and laborer," against Colonel John Ashley, his owner and a

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<sup>211</sup> Spector quotes John Adams to Jeremy Belknap, Mar. 21, 1795, saying that juries in Massachusetts always found men free, not enslaved, "The Quock Walker Cases." p. 13.

<sup>212</sup> Arthur Zilversmit, "Quok Walker, Mumbet, and the Abolition of Slavery in Massachusetts," in *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd ser., 25-4, (1968): 614-624.

legislator and prominent merchant. Again the suit was for assault, but the case was negotiated outside the courts. At that same time, Colonel Ashley was sued for freedom by his servants Elizabeth Freeman (Mumbet) and Brom, a Negro man. Freeman's lawyers were Theodore Sedgwick and Tapping Reeve, one of the most influential legal minds of his day according to Zilversmit.<sup>213</sup> The court decided that Bett and Brom were free and Ashley was required to pay damages. Zilversmit argued that although the decision found the two free, there is still no evidence that the Walker and Brom cases declared slavery unconstitutional in Massachusetts because the court did not explain its verdict in the Walker cases. Quock Walker may have won based solely on his previous owner's promise. After several complications, Colonel Ashley eventually accepted the verdict in his case and compromised in his other case with Zach Mullen, probably because of the Walker victory around the same time. Zilversmit argued that Ashley's decision to accept the verdict marked recognition of the formal end of slavery in Massachusetts because that slave owner accepted the court's decision as final. Zilversmit, by approaching the issue of slavery in Massachusetts from the perspective of two Negro servants and their treatment in the legal system, showed that despite the existing practice of slavery in the state, challenges to slavery could prove successful (with the right lawyers, of course). Zilversmit's very specific argument focused solely on the analysis of points of law rather than on social or cultural aspects of the institution of slavery.

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<sup>213</sup> Zilversmit, "Quock Walker," p. 618-619.



In his book *The First Emancipation* on the gradual abolition of slavery in the North, Zilversmit first mentioned in his preface the amnesia of northerners of their history of slavery.<sup>214</sup> As usual, Zilversmit focused on the states with the largest slave populations in the North, although he did mention that New Hampshire and Vermont had negligible numbers of slaves.<sup>215</sup> He also noted New Hampshire's history of legal abolition of slavery was as ambiguous as that of Massachusetts, while Vermont explicitly prohibited slavery in its constitution. As in his shorter essay, he reminded readers that despite legal sanctions against slavery in parts of New England, the practice continued.

Arthur Zilversmit reviewed African-American Edgar McManus's book *Black Bondage in the North* as a contribution to the comparative approach to slavery that often neglected New England. Zilversmit noted the minor faults of the book including its under-emphasis on the changes in slave owners' lives that affected their slaves.<sup>216</sup> McManus made the common mistake of historians working in the era of black power by removing African-Americans from the greater context of slavery, and in the process distorted the history of both the enslaved and the enslavers.<sup>217</sup> However, this book, written from the perspective of the enslaved African, was one of the few in which slavery north of Massachusetts was

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<sup>214</sup> Arthur Zilversmit, *The First Emancipation: The Abolition of Slavery in the North* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1967).

<sup>215</sup> Zilversmit used Lorenzo Greene's estimates of numbers of slaves in New England.

<sup>216</sup> Arthur Zilversmit's review of *Black Bondage in the North* can be found in *The Journal of American History*, 61-1 (1974), p. 173-174.

<sup>217</sup> Edgar J. McManus, *Black Bondage in the North*; Paul Cuffe: Black America and the African Return (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1973).

mentioned at some length. The slavery of Native Americans and the mixture of races were missing in McManus's book, a consistent omission in African-American analyses of slavery following Lorenzo Greene's work.

McManus's book was labeled "derivative," "too small for its subject" and not interpretive enough by Floyd Miller, another African-American historian, in his assessment of black studies of that decade.<sup>218</sup> Although McManus's book did rely heavily on other sources, its recognition of northern New England as unique in the mechanics of life in slavery is important to the historiography of slavery in New England.

Various authors have included brief mentions of slavery in northern New England in individual state histories.<sup>219</sup> David Van Deventer's book on the first century of settlement in New Hampshire focused on the merchants who contributed to the economic maturation of New Hampshire. His was a political and economic look at slavery in the region placing it as one aspect of the overall history of the State. In the process of tracking the colony's developing society, he did find evidence of men importing enough slaves to suggest a trade in

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<sup>218</sup> Floyd J. Miller, reviews of "*Black Bondage in the North*," Paul Cuffe: Black America and the African Return," and "Segregated Sabbaths: Richard Allen and the Rise of Independent Black Churches, 1760-1840," in *New England Quarterly*, 47-1 (1974): 168-173. Also see Stanley Engerman's similar review in *Reviews in American History*, 1-4 (1973): 509-514.

<sup>219</sup> Of the few histories of New Hampshire, most mentioned slavery only in regard to local abolitionists protesting southern slavery in the nineteenth century. See: Frank B. Sanborn, *New Hampshire: An Epitome of Popular Government* (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin, and Company, 1904); Hobart Pillsbury, *New Hampshire: Resources, Attractions, and Its People, A History* (New York: Lewis Historical Publishing Co., Inc., 1927); Elizabeth Forbes Morison and Elting E. Morison, *New Hampshire: A Bicentennial History* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., Inc and the American Association for State and Local History, 1976); and continuing revised editions of Nancy Coffey Heffernan and Ann Page Stecker, *New Hampshire: Crosscurrents in Its Development* (Hanover, New Hampshire: University Press of New England, 1986, 1996, 2004). Van Deventer is the only one that treats slavery as an important part of New Hampshire's history.

them.<sup>220</sup> Van Deventer's history was not a black history nor was it a social history, but it gave detailed information about the kind of people likely to own slaves/servants and the development of conditions that would make slavery viable in the state.

The decades following the publication of Van Deventer's book brought William Pierson's book *Black Yankees* and a host of local publications on slavery and individual African-Americans in New England.<sup>221</sup> The history of slavery had reached another crossroads, turning toward studies of culture and community. Pierson's book stands out as an interdisciplinary look at the lives of blacks in New England. Pierson, a folklorist and historian, extracted African-American cultural information from eclectic New England sources and compared it with cultural evidence from other regional African-American subcultures in America. The book followed the work of historian Lawrence Levine who wrote *Black Culture and Black Consciousness* in 1977.<sup>222</sup> Levine's use of folk tales, oral narratives, and songs to

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<sup>220</sup>Van Deventer, *Emergence*, p. 100, 256, n.35.

<sup>221</sup> William D. Pierson, *Black Yankees: The Development of an Afro-American Subculture in 18th-Century New England* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1988). Besides those mentioned here see: Barbara A. White, "Our Nig and the She-Devil: New Information About Harriet Wilson and the 'Bellmont Family,'" in *American Literature* 65 (1993): 19-52; Lois Levine, "Dwelling in the House of Oppression: The Spatial, Racial, and Textual Dynamics of Harriet Wilson's *Our Nig*," in *African American Review*, 35 (2001): 561-580; Michael L. Fickes, "'They Could Not Endure That Yoke': The Captivity of Pequot Women and Children After the War of 1637," in *New England Quarterly* 73 (2000): 58-81; Joanne Pope Melish, "The 'Condition' Debate and Racial Discourse in the Antebellum North," in *Journal of the Early Republic* 19 (1999): 651-672; Erik R. Seeman, "'Justice Must take Place': Three African Americans Speak of Religion in Eighteenth-Century New England," in *William and Mary Quarterly* 56 (1999): 393-414; Jeannine Marie DeLombard, "Representing the Slave: White Advocacy and Black Testimony in Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Dred*," in *New England Quarterly* 75 (2002): 80-106; Lois Brown, "Out of the Mouths of Babes: The Abolitionist Campaign of Susan Paul and the Juvenile Choir of Boston," in *New England Quarterly* 20 (2003): 39-61.

<sup>222</sup> Lawrence W. Levine, *Black Culture and Black Consciousness: Afro-American Folk Thought From Slavery To Freedom* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977, 1978).

construct a picture of “Afro-American culture” influenced Pierson’s methodology in interpreting the blended Afro-Anglo culture he believed was created in New England. Following the academic trends of his era, Pierson discovered more agency and more cultural retention in the enslaved than did Lorenzo Greene. He looked at nineteenth-century derogatory anecdotes about black speech and activities and reinterpreted them in terms of the black amalgamation of Yankee and African culture. The information was not new; his interpretation was. The methodology of folklore added another dimension to the study of slavery in New England, one that tried to honor historic black people on their own terms.

During the late 1970s and 1980s, local historians became more actively involved in investigating northern New England’s history of slavery. Three essays appeared in *Vermont History* urging Vermonters to take a closer look at the existence of slavery in their state.<sup>223</sup> John Page examined the economic structure of a state with a strong impetus toward land acquisition. Settlers from southern New England states moved to Vermont for economic opportunity, some bringing slaves with them. Despite an explicit prohibition in the state’s constitution of 1777, slavery continued in practice at least through the 1780s according to Page. Marshall True expanded on that with a glimpse of slave ownership by Lucy Hitchcock, the daughter of Ethan Allen. She brought her slaves with her to Vermont in the 1830s, and manumitted her slave Lavinia Parker in her will of 1841 in exchange for the five dollars paid her by Lavinia’s

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<sup>223</sup> J. Kevin Graffagnino, “Vermont Attitudes Toward Slavery: The Need for a Closer Look” in *Vermont History* 65 (1977): 31-34; John Page, “The Economic Structure of Society in Revolutionary Bennington” in *Vermont History* 49 (1981): 69-78; Marshall True, “Slavery in Burlington? An Historical Note” in *Vermont History* 50 (1982): 227-230.

husband. True noted that slavery was unnoticed and inconspicuous in Vermont, making it easily forgotten. J. Kevin Graffagnino wrote an essay on the history of proslavery Vermonters; and John M. Lovejoy later investigated Vermont's heritage of racism.<sup>224</sup> In a state with an inconspicuous history of slavery, Graffagnino says it was easy to prohibit bondage in the constitution and continue life as usual. These short essays add the distinction of isolation to the history of slavery in northern New England, and the unregulated enslavement of people in a state credited with an early end to slavery.

Randolph Stakeman brought Maine's history of slavery into the light with an essay published in 1987.<sup>225</sup> Stakeman confirmed that slavery was concentrated in the coastal towns of Maine, and that Maine slaves did have some protection under the law. He departed from some previous accounts when he declared that in practice the laws did not value slaves very highly, and that the threat of physical abuse along with the instability of family life made slavery in Maine no more benign than slavery elsewhere. His conclusion also raised the issue of slavery's legacy of discrimination against blacks. Criticizing the dismissal of slavery as negligible in the state, he established the importance of slavery to race by finding its most compelling feature to be a foundation for future relationships between blacks and whites in the state. His interpretation was consistent with the greater awareness of blackness and whiteness in 1980s history.

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<sup>224</sup> John M. Lovejoy, "Racism in Antebellum Vermont," in *Vermont History* 69 (Symposium Supplement, 2001): 48-65.

<sup>225</sup> Randolph Stakeman, "Slavery in Colonial Maine," in *Maine Historical Society Quarterly* 27 (1987): 58-81.

Charles Hill was also concerned with slavery's aftermath when he wrote about a specific slave woman, Juno Larcom, in Beverly, Massachusetts.<sup>226</sup> Juno Larcom was illiterate and enslaved for most of her life. In a micro-social history, Hill recreated as much as possible of her life through court records and legal documents, finding a woman who protected her family even when it meant confronting her owners, people with whom she reportedly had an otherwise affectionate relationship. Juno Larcom's father was black and her mother was a North Carolina Indian purchased by Juno's owner in Portsmouth, New Hampshire before 1724, the year in which Juno was born. Capt. Henry Herrick brought Juno Larcom's mother from Portsmouth to his farm in Beverly where he had enslaved several other people.<sup>227</sup> Larcom eventually sued for her freedom in the courts when her owners threatened to break up the family she had with a man who was enslaved by a neighbor. She was free by 1771. Hill concluded that as the human attachments of slavery died off in the region, and freed blacks were left to an atmosphere of economic and social discrimination, Beverly's black population moved away for better lives elsewhere.

Until Valerie Cunningham uncovered a latent history of African-Americans in Portsmouth, New Hampshire, the most recent published history of slavery in

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<sup>226</sup> Charles L. Hill, "Slavery and Its Aftermath in Beverly, Massachusetts: Juno Larcom and Her Family," in *Essex Institute Historical Collections* 116 (1980):111-130.

<sup>227</sup> Capt. Herrick owned up to nine slaves and left Juno to his daughter at his death in 1755. Beverly's slave population had ballooned in the eighteenth century when the town became increasingly successful at maritime industry.

Portsmouth was written in 1966 by Howard Oedel.<sup>228</sup> Writing in a time period when national historians were viewing history from “the bottom up” in the new social history, Oedel reiterated dated historical attitudes toward the state’s record of slavery. His essay brimmed with nineteenth-century anecdotes loaded with racist overtones. Oedel said, “Many stories about New Hampshire’s “Negro” slaves are worth retelling. They were a superstitious lot, moody, and often found themselves in trouble.”<sup>229</sup> He absolved Portsmouth merchants from participation in the slave trade, but blamed their Boston associates for the practice. He indicated that slavery in New Hampshire died out as the slaves themselves passed away. Oedel ended his essay with an example of the confusion regarding slavery in Portsmouth with the following passage taken from the estate inventory of Captain William Fernald dated 1791: “1 Negro woman and two boys...if slaves.”<sup>230</sup> That simple phrase revealed the ambiguous status of the enslaved in New Hampshire at the time. Oedel’s essay demonstrated the persistence and power of nineteenth-century views of slavery in much of New England. Although major interpretive changes in professional history affect the culture at large, they don’t erase all traces of historical influences.

When black historian Darlene Clark Hine described the 1970s need for “a fundamental reconceptualization of all of American history with the experience of black Americans at center stage,” she could have been describing Valerie

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<sup>228</sup> Howard T. Oedel, “Slavery in Colonial Portsmouth,” *Historical New Hampshire* 21 (1966): 3-11. Various theses and dissertations have been written on slavery and blacks in the area, but they were not published.

<sup>229</sup> Oedel, “Slavery in Colonial Portsmouth.”

<sup>230</sup> Oedel, “Slavery in Colonial Portsmouth,” p.11.

Cunningham who collected research on local black history in Portsmouth, New Hampshire for decades.<sup>231</sup> Writing in response to earlier histories written by whites and from the pain of personal experiences, African-American Valerie Cunningham began the recovery of the lives of Portsmouth, New Hampshire's early blacks in 1989.<sup>232</sup> A black activist and preservationist, Cunningham was strongly influenced by Lorenzo Greene and William Pierson. Her goal was the recovery and empowerment of the history of African-Americans in the state. Cunningham researched the lives of individuals and placed them within the context of Pierson's *Black Yankees*, African-Americans adapting to a foreign culture only as a means of survival. Influenced by Laurel Ulrich's work on New England women, Cunningham also sought recovery of enslaved women's lives in northern New England. In the process, she found particularly compelling the life of a black woman, Ester Mullenoux.<sup>233</sup> While Cunningham single-handedly brought awareness of black history to New Hampshire residents through the Portsmouth Black Heritage Trail, the missing piece in her work was the integration of those recovered black lives into the overall fabric of New Hampshire history. That challenge has still not been met.

In their 1994 essay, Tom and Brenda Malloy agreed with Arthur Zilversmit that most people would be amazed to learn the extent of African slavery that

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<sup>231</sup> Darlene Clark Hine, *The State of Afro-American History: Past, Present, and Future* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1986), p. x.

<sup>232</sup> In her introduction to the special issue of *Historical New Hampshire* 61-1 (2007): 4-5, Cunningham discusses her own life experiences in Portsmouth that have influenced her work in recovering the history of black people in the state.

<sup>233</sup> Cunningham, "The First Blacks of Portsmouth."



occurred in Massachusetts.<sup>234</sup> The couple took a unique approach to Massachusetts' history of slavery through the interpretation of burial stones in the state. Material evidence, more noticeable than textual evidence, inspired the couple's recognition of slavery in northern New England. One of the slaves about whom the Malloys wrote was Amos Fortune who was immortalized in the award-winning children's book, *Amos Fortune, Free Man*, written by Elizabeth Yates in 1950. Yates' book although important in its time was written for children and was very much a product of a whitewashed and oppressive period in American life—the 1950s. Relying on existing sources, the Malloys described the lives of Fortune and his wife Violate as a fairly straightforward “success story,” from his enslavement in Woburn, Massachusetts to his burial in Jaffrey, New Hampshire.

Following the Malloys's publication, a forum was held in Jaffrey, New Hampshire to explore the life of Amos Fortune the man, not the mythical figure of previous biographies. The forum publication, written by Peter Lambert, was intended to correct “misinformation and myths” of previous works.<sup>235</sup> Presenting evidence derived only from primary sources, the publication did not provide a new interpretation of Fortune's life, but was meant to provide a factual picture of the man. Details, such as his treatment as a slave, the fact that Fortune was “warned out” of Jaffrey, and that he came to Jaffrey before the Rev. Ainsworth,

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<sup>234</sup> Tom and Brenda Malloy, “Slavery in Colonial Massachusetts as Seen Through Selected Gravestones,” in *Markers* 11 (1994): 112-141.

<sup>235</sup> Peter Lambert, *Amos Fortune: The Man and His Legacy* (Jaffrey, NH: Amos Fortune Forum, 2000).

who supposedly befriended Fortune upon his arrival there, underscore the way in which fictive accounts are absorbed into regional identity. The forum publication was supported by a bequest made in Amos Fortune's own will. Ironically, his money has supported the changing interpretations of his own life. Created in 1946, the Amos Fortune Forum meets every summer and awards its speakers with a jug of maple syrup and a copy of Elizabeth Yates's book.

In contrast to the minutiae of the Amos Fortune story, historian John Saillant returned to the relationship between religion and slavery in his discussion of New England Calvinism in 1995.<sup>236</sup> Saillant examined the challenge of Lemuel Haynes, a black minister, to the theory that God brought slavery to the New World as a means of Christianizing "Ethiopia" through the return of converted American slaves to Africa. Unlike most whites, Haynes believed that blacks and whites would be united in a divine plan, and that Africa would be Christianized by other means. Saillant used Haynes to demonstrate that race became the subject of public discussion, and the man's ability to write his own sermons was questioned because of his race. Saillant regarded Haynes's dismissal from his pulpit in Rutland, Vermont, in 1818 as purely racial. He interpreted the sentimental obituary memorializing Haynes after his death as a means by which Northerners remade a black man in the image of a heroic, "self-made man." His interpretation placed the obituary of Haynes in the same genre as Catharine Sedgwick's heroization of Mumbet.

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<sup>236</sup> John Saillant, "Slavery and Divine Providence in New England Calvinism: The New Divinity and a Black Protest, 1775-1805," in *The New England Quarterly* 68-4 (1995): 584-608.

Historian Ira Berlin also addressed the subject of recasting images in history to control social destinies in his book *Many Thousands Gone*.<sup>237</sup> Berlin emphasized relationships between black and white in comparative situations. He introduced his book with the idea that race is both a historically and socially constructed concept. According to Berlin, race is a series of changing and negotiated relationships with the emphasis on change over time. He emphasized that slavery was not the same thing in the seventeenth century that it was in the nineteenth century because of the agency of both slave owners and slaves in adapting to changing conditions. In his chapters on slavery in the North, he emphasized the Euro-American urban influence on the lives of slaves in the region. One third of all slaves in New Hampshire and Massachusetts lived in Portsmouth and Boston. Indentured whites and "Negro" servants interacted daily with the white Anglo-American world and with each other. He believed their world differed markedly from isolated plantation slaves, and their linguistic abilities and social gatherings reflected both that interaction and the cultures they brought with them. Berlin advised historians that northern slavery could not be frozen in time; both the nature of slavery and the interpretation of it change continually.

He also noted that slavery in the North increased through part of the eighteenth century as urban centers experienced prosperity. In New England, however, he said the expansion of slavery had little effect since the region "remained wedded to family and wage labor."<sup>238</sup> That statement ignored the

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<sup>237</sup> Berlin, *Many Thousands Gone*.

<sup>238</sup> Berlin, *Many Thousands Gone*, p.179.

increasing labor needs of maritime industry in New England, the inconspicuousness of slavery in the area, and the economic reliance on a slave-based economy. In comparison to other sources, Berlin underestimated the importance of slavery in New England during the mid-eighteenth century. His emphasis was on recovering the agency of the enslaved in spite of the conditions in which they lived.

The inconspicuousness or “discrete history” of slavery in New England intrigued Joanne Pope Melish when she wrote her cultural study *Disowning Slavery: Gradual Emancipation and “Race” in New England, 1780-1860*.<sup>239</sup> Melish both explored the discrete narrative of history in New England and continued previous exploration of the relationship of slavery to contemporary racism in New England. Since her work begins with 1780, she was more concerned with the legacy of slavery than with the characteristics of its existence, although she did create a general picture of slavery in the region. Assigning agency to slaves, she also described their navigation of the culture by positioning themselves in an important place in white households at the same time they maintained cultural connections with other slaves in the area. Her example of slaves holding celebratory elections of black leaders is a commonly used example of the continuance of African traditions in New England.

Melish theorized that New Englanders lost their history of slavery in a purposeful post-Revolutionary remaking of their past, and that the loss of that history made the presence of people of color in the region an awkward problem. She argued that the loss of historical experience for blacks in the region made a mystery

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<sup>239</sup> Joanne Pope Melish, *Disowning Slavery: Gradual Emancipation and “Race” in New England, 1780-1860* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1998).

of their difficulties in advancing socially and economically. The varied state processes of gradual emancipation left the region with no clear statement against slavery. Her work agreed with that of Ira Berlin and John Saillant in their discussion of the continual remaking of both the slavery experience and the lives of slaves by white New Englanders. This book, like so many others, focused on the New England states with greater numbers of slaves: Rhode Island, Connecticut, and Massachusetts. As historians have placed lesser emphasis on slavery in New England than in other areas, so have they largely ignored the northern reaches of New England in favor of the more populated southern New England states.

The rise of American studies as a discipline in the 1980s expanded the methodology used by scholars in the interpretation of race and slavery. In 2003, Lois Brown, African-American professor of literature, indicted early nineteenth-century writers of obituaries of African-American women as erasing any trace of enslavement or race from the public record.<sup>240</sup> Brown, like Valerie Cunningham, had a personal investment in recovering the African-American experience in New England. She used the obituaries of Lucy Terry Prince (d.1821), enslaved in Deerfield, Massachusetts, (died in Vermont); Flora (d.1828), a woman whose obituary was the first published in William Lloyd Garrison's *Liberator*; and Chloe Spear (d.1815), who died in Boston. According to Brown, Prince's standard obituary in the *Vermont Gazette* could have been written about any woman who died in Vermont at the time except for the phrase "woman of colour" which Brown pointed out separates her from the majority with one short phrase. She argued

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<sup>240</sup> Lois Brown, "Memorial Narratives of African Women in Antebellum New England," in *Legacy* 20-1,2 (2003): 39-61.

that Prince's accomplishments were slighted because no mention was made of her African origins or her poetry. The obituary was accompanied by an anonymous and "defiant" poem Brown suggested was written by black minister the Reverend Lemuel Haynes, who delivered Prince's eulogy. In the *Vermont Gazette* memorial, Brown saw the "white-washing of black history"; in the poem, the active defiance on the part of African-Americans. Her analysis created the image of conscious and harsh polarity of the races. Brown's examples dovetail nicely with John Saillant's comments on the sentimental memorializing of Haynes after his death. Brown, Saillant, and Ira Berlin all raised the issue of identities in history created, whether consciously or not, to seize the power in racialized situations. Brown also quoted from the work of Joanne Pope Melish in support of her examples of the slave experience being edited out of New England history.

Scholars continue to recover the lives of individual African-Americans in New England. Such work was highlighted in 2003 at the *Dublin Seminar for New England Folklife*, an annual interdisciplinary conference on New England history and culture. By then, much study of African-Americans in New England took the form of micro-histories of a social and cultural nature. Peter Benes, in his essay on "Slavery in Boston Households, 1647-1770" tracked both the affluent Bostonians who owned slaves and the specific slaves found in their wills and inventories.<sup>241</sup> Although much of what Benes found was not new information, he did find contradictions including a shopkeeper/tailor who owned five slaves;

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<sup>241</sup> Peter Benes, "Slavery in Boston Households, 1647-1770," in Peter Benes, ed., *Slavery/ Antislavery in New England: Proceedings of the Dublin Seminar for New England Folklife*, 2003, (Boston: Boston University Scholarly Publications, 2005).

slaves who lived in cellars or separate quarters and not in the garret of the owner's residence, as is usually assumed; and some evidence in newspapers indicating that good breeding was a characteristic valued by some Boston slave owners. Benes found slave owners were both wealthy and ordinary, including butchers, tailors, tanners (one with three slaves), and a widow who inherited thirteen slaves from her deceased husband. Benes added to the compilation of detailed information that can challenge assumptions about slavery in northern New England and provide a foundation for future scholarship on slavery in the area.

Continuing the search for textual evidence in history and supporting Ira Berlin's theory of the changing nature of slavery, Robert Desrochers explored the nature of slavery in New England through newspaper advertisements in the eighteenth century. Desrochers disagreed that slavery in New England was of negligible importance. He found that the informal everyday nature of slave trading in New England was the reason that:

Too great a focus on slavery's negligibility in Massachusetts has perpetuated the New England studies tradition of exceptionalism by masking ways in which developments and trends in New England dovetailed with broader currents of slavery and political economy in the non-plantation societies of the mid-Atlantic and the North and in the larger Atlantic world.<sup>242</sup>

Countering a purely local approach, Desrochers tracked the changes in slavery in Massachusetts as conditions changed in the West Indies, placing slavery in New England in the greater Atlantic context. He emphasized its

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<sup>242</sup> Robert E. Desrochers, Jr., "Slave-For-Sale Advertisements and Slavery in Massachusetts, 1704-1781," in *The William and Mary Quarterly* 59-3 (2002): 623-664.

significance and deemphasized its unique qualities traced through localized studies. His work was part of a large new body of Atlantic basin scholarship on interdependent economies and interacting cultures of the maritime world.

Desrochers found earlier advertisements for slaves revealed the identity of slave sellers, while later in the century selling was done anonymously, often arranged through the newspaper printer, making printers participants in the slave trade. Desrochers also claimed that Massachusetts did not receive the refuse of slaves from other areas; although with smaller cargoes, Massachusetts maritime merchants trafficked regularly in slaves from Barbados in particular. Through his research he discovered more about the flexible qualities required of slaves in Massachusetts who served both the wealthy and the artisan class. Much of what he found agrees with earlier assessments—young males were preferred, for instance. His work exposed both the changing nature of slavery in Massachusetts and the myriad ways in which New Englanders relied on the labor of enslaved people. Hidden in everyday practices and conducted in homes and businesses, slavery in New England was very much a part of the larger picture of the British colonial world, according to Desrochers.

Continuing the theme of slavery as a series of negotiations and adaptations, John Wood Sweet made ample use of New England's rich store of primary sources in investigating the role of race in the American North.<sup>243</sup> Sweet used individual lives of enslaved people like Juno Larcom, Samson Occum, Phyllis Wheatley, and Adam, servant of John Saffin, to illustrate the ways in

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<sup>243</sup> John Wood Sweet, *Bodies Politic: Negotiating Race in the American North, 1730-1830* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003).



which slaves used their intellect, their access to the legal system, and their cultural amalgamations to negotiate life in a society dominated by whites of English descent. Sweet attempted to track the different permutations of race through the eighteenth-century heights of New England slavery to the Revolutionary period and into the Early National period. Like many historians of the past few decades, Sweet saw New England as a part of the greater Atlantic world, a region of diverse cultures, not the mythical, unicultural Yankee creation Joanne Pope Melish also deconstructed.

Sweet argued that white masters deliberately kept the image of slavery within households, so that its adverse impacts would evaporate in a familial picture. In response to that social manufacture, Sweet also argued for the agency of the enslaved as they continually tried to make public their real conditions of life. Court actions, petitions for freedom, and social networks allowed enslaved people in New England to create means of resistance and their own history of slavery. Sweet traced the source of racial conflict to freed people who pushed previous boundaries in an effort to prosper themselves. Race, like slavery, was not a static condition according to Sweet. Identities, as other historians have found, were created and recreated as circumstances required.

Influenced by Sweet's interpretation of the changing nature of slavery, J. Douglas Peters recovered the subject of enslaving Native Americans in New Hampshire in his essay "'Removing the Heathen': Changing Motives for Indian Slavery in New Hampshire" in *Historical New Hampshire*.<sup>244</sup> Peters provided

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<sup>244</sup> J. Douglas Peters, "Removing the Heathen": Changing Motives for Indian Slavery in New Hampshire", in *Historical New Hampshire* 58 (2003): 66-78.

important information ignored in decades of emphasis on African slavery in the state, while benefiting from Alan Gallay's exposé of the unpredictable nature of Native American slavery in the South published two years earlier. Peters reminded readers that many of the Native Americans enslaved in New Hampshire were imported from the Carolinas, where thousands were sold into slavery. He also emphasized the vulnerability of local natives since they had been severely reduced in numbers by disease. Not a historian, Peters classed the slavery of natives in New Hampshire as "ethnic cleansing," a term coined in the 1990s Balkan conflicts. Carrying a presentist political message, this term overlooks some of the complexities of early slavery, the fact that enslaved natives integrated into the population, and the facts of warfare. Although he reiterated some of the reasons for enslaving natives, Peters touched only briefly on the social context in which the enslavement occurred.

Twentieth and twenty-first century historians with interests in psychology, identity, racism, and individual stories of marginalized people changed the way in which the facts of New England slavery have been interpreted. The emphasis has shifted to the cultural lives of the enslaved in the context of the Atlantic world, although local accounts don't always reflect those changes. New England's history of slavery primarily has been written from a white perspective until recently when social and cultural historians took on the cause of resurrecting the lives of the enslaved from their own vantage points. In prying open the Pandora's Box of New England's history of slavery, historians have released parts of the region's economic, theological, and racist involvements in slavery,

but the whole of the context of slavery in northern New England is yet to be explored. Nathan Huggins, Professor of History and Afro-American Studies at Harvard, recognized in 1986 that increased interest in black history came about within the context of multiple changes in historiography.<sup>245</sup> The new social history, the ease of computers in calculating quantifiable information, women's demands for inclusion in history, and other forces combined to remake the study of American colonial history. He argued that the diverse fragments of our history that have been recovered need to be incorporated into the basic fabric of American history in order to realize their value.

Twenty years later, the need still exists for the recovered lives of all enslaved people, not just African-Americans, to be inserted back into the context in which they lived. The normalcy of slavery to the early colonists of northern New England has been ignored recently in the rush to correct the omissions of previous histories. Also under-explored, the racism that developed out of the system of slavery grew in complex ways. It appears in both whites and blacks in contemporary culture. Blacks developed racist attitudes toward racist whites as a result of their anger, and the mutual antagonism escalated over time.<sup>246</sup> Few of New Hampshire's residents have escaped the trap of racism. Both black and

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<sup>245</sup> Nathan I. Huggins, "Integrating Afro-American History into American History", in Darlene Clark Hine, ed., *The State of Afro-American History: Past, Present, and Future* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1986), p. 157-168.

<sup>246</sup> Mia Bay, *The White Image in the Black Mind: African-American Ideas About White People, 1830-1925* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 14-15.

white historians fashion history in their own images even as they pursue a rational and insightful analysis of the facts.<sup>247</sup>

The complex fabric of New England was woven of many separate threads into one cloth. All of the information that has been gathered over recent years recovering the omissions of history should be integrated into a measured analysis of New England's history. To this end, the next chapter will analyze examples of American cultural expressions of both racial ignorance and preoccupation with race on the part of whites and blacks in New Hampshire.

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<sup>247</sup> Huggins, *Integrating Afro-American History*, p. 166.



Figure 1. Front of advertising fan, circa 1894. Seacoast African-American Collection. Milne Special Collections and Archives, Dimond Library, University of New Hampshire. Durham, NH.

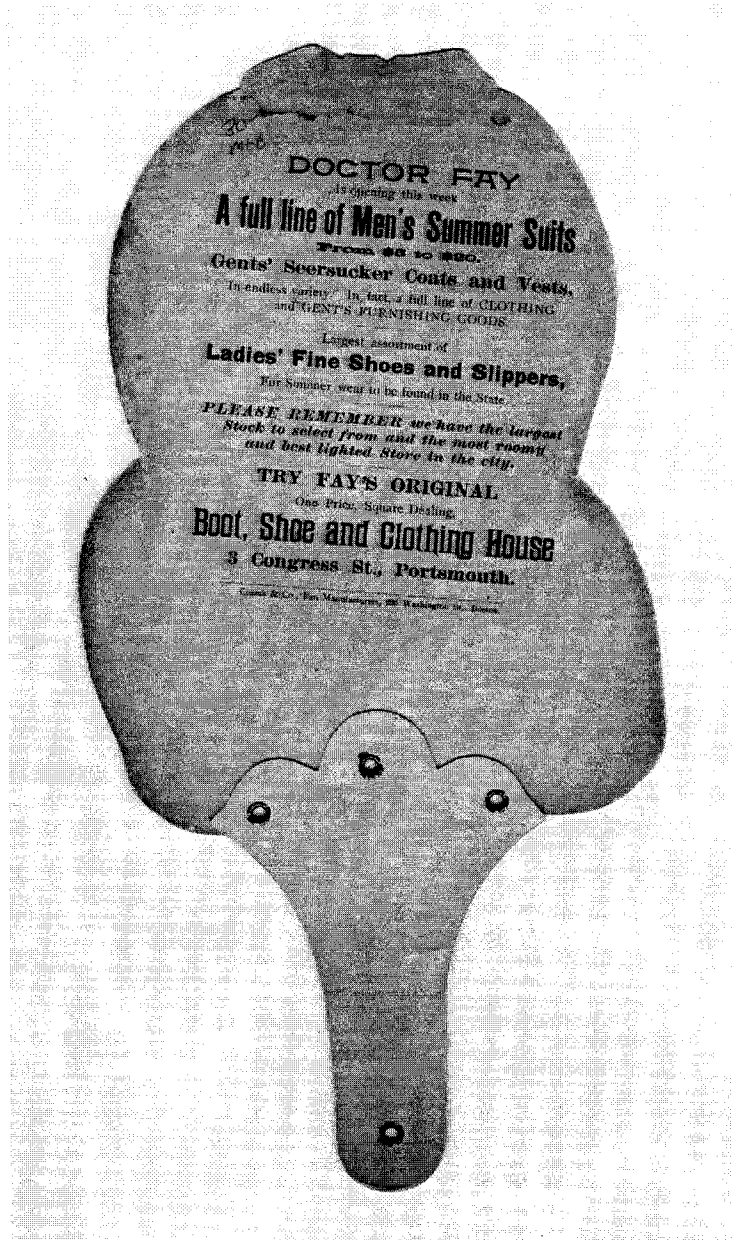


Figure 2. Back of advertising fan, circa 1894. Seacoast African-American Collection. Milne Special Collections and Archives, Dimond Library, University of New Hampshire, Durham, NH.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE RACIAL LEGACY OF SLAVERY IN NEW HAMPSHIRE

Although slavery ended in New Hampshire in the nineteenth century, slavery's institutionalizing of individuals as a lower order in society was replaced by racial categorization. Race is a hypothetical construction with real consequences, not a scientific fact, and its definition changes over time. Racism is the use of race to determine supremacy or hierarchy.<sup>248</sup> Both race and racism are remnants of the history of slavery in New Hampshire. However, race is a moving target. Perceptions of whiteness and blackness in New Hampshire change with fluid political and economic conditions.

For example, late eighteenth- and nineteenth-century industrialization required cheap labor, a condition that assigned "color" to many poor European immigrants who might otherwise have been considered white. Political disputes transferred from Europe made Irishmen black until they were played off against African-Americans. Descendants of New Hampshire's slaves, most of them poor, joined immigrating Irishmen and eastern, northern, and southern Europeans as members of the lowest social class of laborers. As more immigrants arrived and former slaves joined the rest of the free population in the nineteenth century, race became the tool for constructing social differences even

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<sup>248</sup> *Oxford English Dictionary Online.*

as those differences changed over time.<sup>249</sup> Members of the laboring class in competition for jobs differentiated themselves by race, and were encouraged to do so by management as a means of dividing their numbers and strength.

Class, politics, and labor all figure in creating the privilege of whiteness at any one time, but an identity of servitude associated with slavery and confused with race clings to African-Americans. Although African-Americans are rarely as privileged as whites, social status differs widely depending on context. Not at all a static condition, race creates differences specific to particular situations. For instance, if the captain of your boat is black, he will command the respect denied to a poor black laborer. While “blackness” has faded for some (for Irishmen, for instance), people descended from the enslaved and their enslavers remain haunted and divided by the past.

Four cultural expressions of race in New Hampshire form the bulk of this chapter: an example of racism in popular culture in 1890s Portsmouth; a film and book, both by white men, about racism in the state in 1949; a memoir by a young woman from Philadelphia about her experiences as a student of color at the elite white St. Paul’s School in Concord in 1972; and a current self-guided cultural tour called the Portsmouth Black Heritage Trail. New Hampshire’s history is filled with racism and preoccupation with race.<sup>250</sup> Although these four examples spanning

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<sup>249</sup> Matthew Frye Jacobson, *Whiteness of a Different Color: European Immigrants and the Alchemy of Race* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998). Also see: David R. Roediger, *The Wages of Whiteness: Race and the Making of the American Working Class* (New York, NY: Verso, 1991); and Alexander Saxton, *The Rise and Fall of the White Republic: Class Politics and Mass Culture in Nineteenth-Century America* (New York, NY: Verso, 1990).

<sup>250</sup> There are too many examples to include them all here. Notable are the state’s hesitancy to declare a Martin Luther King holiday, and literature like *Caucasia* by Danzy Senna (New York:



the twentieth century are but a small sampling of race-related expressions of culture in New Hampshire, they document the continuing preoccupation of New Hampshire residents with constructed racial boundaries, whether visible or not. Cultural artifacts of racial consciousness must be read and analyzed with the knowledge that both the context in which they were created and the context in which they are analyzed are unique. Both contexts affect perceptions of race.

Common examples of popular culture, including advertising, often provide a window into racial thought. Residents of Portsmouth in 1894 strolling down Congress Street might have stopped in at Doctor Fay's Boot, Shoe, and Clothing House to shop. Like many storekeepers, Dr. Fay provided advertising souvenirs in exchange for patronage. Shortly after his store opened, he offered paper fans (see fig.1 & 2) to his customers to cool themselves in the summer heat while reminding themselves of where to shop in the city. William "Dr." Fay, a 33-year-old white man born in Vermont, lived on Islington Street in a largely white Portsmouth. Of Portsmouth's total population of 10,637 in 1900, only 101 residents were described as "Negroes."

Portsmouth residents categorized in the census of 1900 as "black" (none were marked mulatto or Indian) were mostly new to the area, not the descendants of a native population.<sup>251</sup> Born in Virginia, Alabama, Maryland, North Carolina, Maine, the West Indies, New Jersey, Tennessee, Spain, and

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Riverhead Books, 1998). Also see David Watters essay on *Peyton Place* at the New Hampshire Public Radio website (Granite State Stories), <http://www.nhpr.org/node/13023>.

<sup>251</sup> United States Department of Commerce and Labor, Bureau of the Census. *Census Reports: Population, 12<sup>th</sup> Census, 1900*. Washington, DC: United States Census Office.

Georgia, Portsmouth's black population in 1900 boarded and lodged while they were employed as servants, cooks, or laborers. The slavery from which many of them descended differed from slavery in New England. The new comers to Portsmouth had to adjust to the meaning of blackness in relation to whiteness in New Hampshire. Being black in the West Indies or in Georgia meant something very different from being black in overwhelmingly white New Hampshire. The majority of blacks in Portsmouth lived clustered near the center of town on Marcy Street, Washington Street, Commercial Alley, and Market Street. Those who lived in more residential areas on South Street, Richards Avenue, and Austin Street were employed as cooks or servants in the homes of lawyers and bank presidents. There was a small black population in ward one where William Fay and his wife lived, but the only black households close to him were the Kellys on McDonough Street and the Goings on Sudbury Street. They were laborers and shoe shop workers who probably had little contact with a store owner.

William Fay's advertising fan speaks of his separation and distance from the experiences of people of color in Portsmouth. It was probably meant as generic humor for Fay's white customers, and its recipients undoubtedly thought little about the pain it might inflict on individuals. The front of Dr. Fay's fan boasts a caricature of the face of a black infant crying. The picture conjures an image of a white customer laughing while he is fanned by a stereotypical "Negro" in the heat of the summer. With tears streaming down its face, the infant raises a protective barrier with its clenched hands. The intended recipient of this gift would have been white and middle class, familiar with the derogatory humor of

blackface minstrel shows, and comfortable with the racial stereotypes that grew out of racist theories that physiognomy determines character and intelligence. Cultural remnants as simple as this fan speak volumes about attitudes toward class and race in New Hampshire less than 100 years after the last slave was recorded in the state. Black people were curiosities in New Hampshire, but African-Americans were not the only victims of America's rude ethnic humor—Jews, Native Americans, and other minorities also bore the brunt of it. But the nation's history of slavery armed Dr. Fay's racist imagery with a particularly painful sting. Consciously or not, middle class Americans striving to differentiate themselves from the lower classes found humor an acceptable and powerful expression of superiority. Stereotypes of lazy, unintelligent blacks played to the nineteenth-century belief that anyone could succeed if he really tried.

Portsmouth's people of color probably all had some experience with slavery and were all stuck in the racial aftermath that classified them not as slaves but as lazy and unintelligent with no future. The last person in Portsmouth who is believed to have directly experienced slavery was Mrs. Martha Countee who had moved to Portsmouth from the South and was active in black organizations in Portsmouth as late as the 1920s. Portsmouth's people of color lived separate social lives from whites, as in the "colored citizens" celebration of Lincoln's signing of the Emancipation Proclamation, begun in 1882. The celebration was financed by a bequest from a Unitarian minister and was specified to be for the "colored population." The white population evidently found nothing about emancipation to celebrate on the occasion.<sup>252</sup>

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<sup>252</sup> Karen Halttunen, *Confidence Men and Painted Women: A Study of Middle-Class Culture in*

Dr. Fay's fan was manufactured before white people in New Hampshire recognized that racism was a local problem. In time, cultural examples appeared in which white people recognized the problem of race in New Hampshire. Twenty years after Dr. Fay's fan appeared in Portsmouth, a physician with slaves in his family background found a job in the state only by concealing his black ancestry. Somehow his story attracted attention. Two decades later, that physician formed the subject of a book on racial identity and the necessity for "passing" for white in order to succeed in American society. By then, theories of race determining intellectual ability had been disproved, and blacks were no longer inclined to work at proving their equality with whites. Instead, black intellectuals found black people superior because they had known all along that they were not inferior because of their race.<sup>253</sup> Disgusted and wearied of trying to prove themselves, blacks began to embrace new ideologies about themselves and their concept of race began to take on new meaning. The first half of the twentieth century provided a testing ground for those new identities. However, when men returned from the Second World War, employment issues fed the flames of racism once again.

William L. White of Emporia, Kansas wrote the slim volume called *Lost Boundaries: a True Story of an Actual Family in a Real America* in 1947. White told the story of the New Hampshire doctor who "passed for white." Dr. Johnston was dismissed from a job at a black hospital in the South because he was a

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*America, 1830-1870* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982), p. 187, 197; Sammons and Cunningham, *Black Portsmouth*, p. 140,156.

<sup>253</sup> Bay, *The White Image in the Black Mind*, p. 189-191.

northerner who looked white. Unable to find a job in a white hospital when he claimed “Negro” ancestry on his applications, the doctor was eventually convinced to try passing for white. He did so reluctantly and succeeded in New Hampshire until his story became public. Although the book details the fluid and situational nature of prejudice, its overriding theme was that in New Hampshire race didn’t matter as long as people knew and liked you as an individual. Had White lived in Portsmouth while writing his book, he might have known that federally financed housing that excluded “persons of color” had just been completed in the city.<sup>254</sup> Perhaps New Hampshire residents were not so eager to know and like black strangers. White’s book about the Johnston family of Gorham and Keene, New Hampshire, who “passed” for white even though they had African ancestry raised important issues and garnered praise from Walter White, secretary of the NAACP at the time.<sup>255</sup> At least the issue had been raised in public discussion and blacks were presented as accomplished professionals.

White’s story attracted attention when it was published in the *Reader’s Digest*, but a film adaptation of the book produced shortly afterward gained greater notoriety. Filmmaker Louis de Rochemont had recently moved to Newington, New Hampshire when the book *Lost Boundaries* was released. De Rochemont returned to the pull of family connections in Newington where his ancestor Maria, a native of British Guinea, had brought several slaves with her as the wife of

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<sup>254</sup> Richard M. Candee, *Building Portsmouth: the Neighborhoods & Architecture of New Hampshire’s Oldest City* (Portsmouth, New Hampshire: Portsmouth Advocates, Inc., 1992), p. 190.

<sup>255</sup> W. L. White, *Lost Boundaries* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1947, 1948). The jacket quotes Walter White as saying the book was a “deeply moving story of how the lives and emotions of human beings can be twisted by meaningless prejudices.”

Frederick William de Rochemont in the nineteenth century.<sup>256</sup> Innovative and controversial, Louis de Rochemont adapted White's *Lost Boundaries* to film, shooting locally and employing local black residents as extras. He broke through the color barrier at the Rockingham Hotel in Portsmouth when he insisted blacks be allowed in with his film company.<sup>257</sup> The film made *The New York Times* Ten Best Film List for 1949 and won best script award at the Cannes Film Festival in the same year, even as it was banned in Memphis and Atlanta. It was both influential and threatening. The film has been criticized by African-Americans for featuring white actors in the lead roles, but if one wants to split hairs over race, Mel Ferrer, who played Dr. Scott Carter, was part Hispanic, the son of a Cuban physician. In the dichotomy of black versus white, the partly Hispanic actor playing the role of a black doctor became white.

De Rochemont's version of *Lost Boundaries* spoke eloquently to the paralyzing vagaries of racial identification in the United States, but it differed significantly from White's book. While White believed stereotypes of the Yankee independent personality, de Rochemont's film placed a clergyman at the heart of the resolution of racial difficulties in the state. In the film, when the doctor's family revealed their "Negro" ancestry to residents of New Hampshire, they were snubbed until the local clergyman centered his Sunday message on racial prejudice. The film also included the recent acceptance of people of color in the United States military as a significant theme that was missing from the book. De

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<sup>256</sup> Rowe, *Newington, NH*, p.97, 250-251.

<sup>257</sup> *Lost Boundaries*, produced by Louis de Rochemont, (RD-DR Corporation, Mantle Pictures, 1949; Warner Home Video, 1976). videocassette.

Rochemont raised the discussion of race in New Hampshire to an international audience, a feat that had been a long time coming.

The book and the film marked a milestone of public discussion of the effects of racism on both blacks and whites. Finally, a white person acknowledged before an international audience that race was an inauthentic, yet very real barrier in New Hampshire and American society. Blacks had known all along that racist categorization seriously hampered their accomplishments, but whites were new to the discussion. In finding housing, jobs, and social acceptance in New Hampshire, blacks encountered roadblocks all along the way. White and de Rochemont challenged the white population to examine its beliefs and attitudes by presenting blacks as normal people. Caricatures of blacks had been replaced with real people in a "real America."

The film confronted New Hampshire residents with their tendency to value people based on race, a practice that created both external and internal barriers for blacks and whites. White patients and neighbors who respected and valued Dr. Johnston and his family viewed them differently once they were discovered to be black. Yet, the change in perception presented difficulties for some whites. Dr. Johnston had treated their illnesses and played an important role in the community. His children had dated their children. Suddenly, prejudices became more difficult to sustain. In addition, members of the Johnston family felt differently about themselves once they learned about their origins. Their skin color did not change. Nothing about them had changed except a perception of individual worth measured against irrational standards. More powerfully

portrayed in the book than in the film, the doctor felt white in the presence of blacks and black in the presence of whites. Racism hampered his professional advancement, and it paralyzed him internally as well.

The decision of this doctor and his wife to identify themselves as black when they were of mixed race was rooted in historical precedent. A single black ancestor, however remote, made one black in most parts of America in the nineteenth century. To ignore that heritage would be considered traitorous to blacks. To embrace the other side of their ethnicity would be considered masquerading to whites. Another facet of race, the externally assigned hierarchy of skin color among blacks, appeared briefly in the film when the darkest men complained that they were the least likely to get a job.

As important as this film was for its subject matter, filming on location, use of local blacks as extras, and its technical innovations, Louis de Rochement left another perhaps more lasting legacy as mentor to a young black filmmaker. William Greaves, a young actor in the film, remembered de Rochemont as an Orson Wellesian figure—stern, imposing, with a deep voice. Greaves recalled being rejected later for a Hollywood part, not because of his race, but because he had played in a de Rochemont film. De Rochemont had antagonized the major studios by shooting on location and making films more cheaply than the studios had done. He allowed Greaves, an aspiring young black filmmaker, to “hang out” and apprentice in his editing rooms, the only white-run film studio in the 1950s where a black man could be mentored and “treated with respect.” Consistently over the years, de Rochemont wrote letters of recommendation on Greaves’s



behalf, and Greaves credited his success to “de Rochemont’s warm encouragement.”<sup>258</sup>

Twenty years later in the title of her memoir *Black Ice*, Lorene Cary chose a metaphor to signify the smooth, clear, unbroken stretch of grace she found after navigating the confusion of race. As she learned in New Hampshire, black ice formed a transparent and smooth surface with dark waters visible underneath. The book, published in 1992, recalled her experiences as one of a few black scholarship students at the elite St. Paul’s School in Concord, New Hampshire in 1972, a period of intense racial and social unrest in America. Unlike the black power studies and the angry racist treatises published during and after her school years, Cary’s book recalled her inner preoccupation with blackness, a subject that never left her consciousness.<sup>259</sup>

Cary arrived in New Hampshire with a secure racial identity as a black person from a black neighborhood of Philadelphia. Although she may have been divided from her peers through other criteria, racial identification held no conscious problems for her. When she stepped into the world of elite and privileged whites, Cary found herself taking on overlapping and conflicting identities. Vernon Jordan told her she was the hope for the future for African-Americans, while Archibald Cox told her she was one of the intelligentsia of the Northeast. Throughout her experience she was plagued by the question of what had she accomplished for her race, a pressure inconceivable to her white

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<sup>258</sup> William Greaves, “A Black Filmmaker Remembers Louis de Rochemont”, in *Film Library Quarterly* 12-4 (1979): 13-15.

<sup>259</sup> Lorene Cary, *Black Ice* (NY: Vintage, 1992, 1991).

classmates. As a black person among whites, she viewed awards from the school as both an honor and an empty gesture. Raised in the black A.M.E. church, Cary felt guilty about embracing the ceremonies and exalted visions of the Episcopalians at St. Paul's. Her shared contemplation of what it meant to be black demonstrated that racism is an inner construction as well as an external one. By admitting to initially stereotyping an Asian friend, she acknowledged that those who are discriminated against are fully capable of discriminating against others.

Cary demonstrated that racism works on many levels in both blacks and whites. With few friends who could understand her dilemma, Cary's narrow racial identity began to blur and boundaries shifted. As a student government officer, she began to feel part of the St. Paul's establishment. However, militant activists expected her to take an adversarial role with the administration. Bridging the racial gap was complicated because blacks were viewed as deserting their race when they tried. Blackness and whiteness confront each other ideologically, but in reality both identities are difficult to maintain outside a segregated situation. In comparison, slavery seems rather straightforward.

The memoir finished when Cary returned to St. Paul's to teach briefly. Eventually she married a white man from Iowa, developing a personal identity that embraced her background and passed on to her children a black oral tradition altered with personal experiences. As a mature woman, Cary created an individual identity in lieu of a collective one. Raised to trust no man in a bitter racist world, Cary chose to step out and embrace life.

While Lorene Cary was writing her memoir, Valerie Cunningham had been researching the black community of Portsmouth. Cunningham chose to express her personal experiences with racism by recovering with pride the lives of black people omitted from the history of New Hampshire. The Portsmouth Black Heritage Trail she founded provides cultural evidence of the need to recover suppressed parts of New Hampshire's history. There are stories to be told.

The trail's permanent bronze markers identify important locations of black history in Portsmouth and respond to the proliferation of war memorials and tourism signage that honor only white men. The accompanying guide, *The Portsmouth Black Heritage Trail Resource Book* by Cunningham and Mark Sammons, states its intent to restore agency to the enslaved and other people of color and provide evidence of cultural retention on the part of African-Americans in Portsmouth.<sup>260</sup> The resource book provides evidence of a black community from early slavery through the Civil Rights Movement. Cunningham has since expanded the scope of her efforts to the entire state of New Hampshire, where research on local slavery has just gained momentum in recent decades.

The landscape of New Hampshire has also been changed by the erection of a public sculpture of Harriet Wilson in Milford. A state marker has been erected at the Wentworth Cheswell gravesite in Newmarket. Countering all of those place names in the state like Nigger Point and Guinea Road, public monuments now honor black residents instead of denigrating them. The recovery of black lives in New Hampshire has altered the landscape. Yet those

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<sup>260</sup> Sammons and Cunningham, *Portsmouth Black Heritage Trail Resource Book*.

alterations to the countryside signify the continued presence of racial consciousness in the state, and are still tainted with blackness and whiteness. Race still defines identity, but the tone has changed. Blackness now marks an affirmation for people of color. Whiteness still defines lives although whites are less conscious of the fact that they still benefit from their whiteness.

The practice of slavery brought people of different backgrounds together in New Hampshire and initiated social differentiation according to race. Slavery assigned meanings of servility to some races and domination and superiority to others. Those identities have left the context of slavery but persist in other forms. The concept of race still plays an integral part in the framework of American society. As long as Americans continue to position themselves in relation to each other, race will likely remain one criterion for identity formation. Meanings change over time, but historical differences continue to shape present identities.

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