

# Slavery in Berlin – Forgotten No Longer

Including research by John Darrow

A slave is defined as a person or persons who are legally owned by another person and forced to work without pay. A colonial slave was considered part of the property or possessions of the owner. Slaves had no rights. Slaves could not own property or vote. Children of slaves could be sold at any time. A slave was just another piece of property, like a tool or a piece of furniture. Most slaves were known by only a first name or took the surname of their owner.

## Timeline

1639- A slave, Louis Berbice, owned by Gybert Opdyck lived at Dutch Point (Dutch trading post) in Hartford. <sup>1</sup>

1644- A slave is mentioned in New Haven<sup>2</sup>

1679 – The first Africans are shipped to Connecticut<sup>3</sup>

1680 – It is estimated that there are 30 slaves in Connecticut<sup>4</sup>

1709 - The Governor of Connecticut reported that there were 110 white and black servants in Connecticut. The total population in Connecticut was 38,000.

1730 - Connecticut estimated population includes 700 Indian and Negro slaves.

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<sup>1</sup> Found on the Internet: Slavery in the North by Douglas Harper

<sup>2</sup> Found on the Internet: Slavery in the North by Douglas Harper

<sup>3</sup> African American Connecticut Explored, edited by Elizabeth J. Norman, Wesleyan University Press, c2013, page 4

<sup>4</sup> Found on the Internet: Black History month tribute by Philip R. Devlin, This week in Connecticut History, February 16, 2012

1749 – The first Black Governor, a slave named London who was owned by Capt. Thomas Seymour, was elected in Connecticut. The practice of electing Black Governors continued until 1855-56. Black Governors were mediators for the black community.

1756 - Census records show 3,019 African Americans and 617 Native Americans living in Connecticut; but the count includes both free and enslaved. Farmington (including Berlin) had 112 slaves.

1774 - A law was passed that the importation of “Indian, Negro or Mulatto Slaves” to Connecticut was banned.

1776 – The Declaration of Independence states: We hold these truths to be self evident: that all men are created equal.

1784 - The “Gradual Emancipation Act” in Connecticut declares that the children of enslaved African Americans born after March 1, 1784 were to be granted freedom upon reaching the age of 25.

1790 –Connecticut’s first abolitionist society is formed in Waterbury: The Connecticut Society for the Promotion of Freedom and the Relief of Persons Unlawfully Held in Bondage.

1823 – The last newspaper ad about a runaway slave appeared in the Connecticut Courant (Hartford Courant) on August 5, 1823: Elijah Billings of Somers looked for the return of a mulatto named William Lewis, “Any person who will return said boy shall receive one cent reward and no charges paid.”<sup>5</sup>

1830-1865 – The **Underground Railroad** was active<sup>6</sup>

1831 - Nat Turner led a slave rebellion in Southampton County, VA

1832 – The first women’s antislavery group is formed in Salem, MA

1833 – Prudence Crandall admitted a black girl to her school in Canterbury, CT

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<sup>5</sup> Found on the Internet: Black History month tribute by Philip R. Devlin, This week in Connecticut History, February 16, 2012 – no charges paid meant that the owner would not pay any fees occurred during the slave’s runaway time.

<sup>6</sup> Found on the Internet: Black History month tribute by Philip R. Devlin, This week in Connecticut History, February 16, 2012

1839-1841 - The **Amistad** trial takes place. The Africans from the schooner were held prisoner in New Haven, Connecticut until the U.S. Supreme Court declared them to be free. After the trial, the Amistad people passed through Berlin on their way to Farmington, CT.

1842 –The New Britain Congregational Church passed several antislavery resolutions. As a result the South Church broke away.

1848 - Slavery is outlawed in Connecticut.

1852 – Harriet Beecher Stowe writes Uncle Tom's Cabin

## *In Connecticut*

The history books barely mention slavery in Connecticut. As Elizabeth J. Norman states: "*there is a notion that it was more benign here than in other areas of the country.*"<sup>7</sup> Excuses are made such as there were only a few slaves, or only a few ship owners who dealt in slaves, or that slavery was only on a few family farms. There is a denial that slavery was a matter of power over another person and that slaves were seen as an inferior kind of people. Anne Farrow, a researcher, noted that "*the story of our slavery is an uncomfortable history.*"<sup>8</sup>

From the earliest days of colonial settlement in Connecticut, there were slaves. As in the rest of New England, in Connecticut there were only a small number of slaves until about 1700. The slave population Connecticut peaked just before the Revolutionary War.

Most slaves in Connecticut were native peoples or Negroes. Native peoples were enslaved after the Pequot War of 1636-7. In the early days, Indian slavery was common. "*Slavery was an ancient custom and one the Indians practiced, the enslavement of captives in the Indian wars did not work out as well for the Puritans. Indians slaves resisted, there were too many places for Indians to run, too many Indians who were not slaves, and Indians were not trustworthy as workers. Furthermore, the native society had not prepared Indians to work as laborers on farms or as house servants. The growing West Indian and African*

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<sup>7</sup> African American Connecticut Explored, edited by Elizabeth J. Norman, Wesleyan University Press, c2013, page xv

<sup>8</sup> Farrow, Anne: The Logbooks: Connecticut's Slave Ships and Human Memory, Wesleyan University Press, c2014, page 97

*trade gave the colonists the opportunity to trade their Indian captives for more desirable Negro slaves. Indian slavery decreased as the Indian population of Connecticut was decimated in the wars of the late 1600s. Negroes were preferred for several reasons. They had no place to run to, no tribe to assist them, and they seemed more able to adapt to European ways. Also, as trade increased with Africa and the West Indies, it was easier to buy Negro slaves than to capture Indian ones.”*<sup>9 10</sup>

*As the Negro population grew, “servitude in Connecticut became slavery for life and it became hereditary. There was no opposition to hereditary slavery among Colonial settlers. It made economic sense and it kept Negroes under control. Another justification was the notion that slavery gave Negroes the opportunity to live Christian lives in America. To this end the state encouraged slave owners to educate the children of their slaves as Christians and teach them to read.”*<sup>11</sup>

*At first the attitude of the Colonial settlers was that “moral behavior, as befitted the servants of a God-fearing people, was encouraged. The responsibility for Christianizing them and for baptizing their infants and nurturing them in the fear of the Lord was seriously regarded. When asked to give advice on the subject of bringing up slaves as Christians, the General Court solemnly affirmed such to be the master’s duty. It seemed to pious masters an act of great virtue to take benighted heathen from the dark land of their birth, to transport them to a Christian land, and to convert them, thus ensuring their souls’ salvation. Amongst such masters were counted many of the clergy, who were accustomed to own 1 or 2 slaves as house servants.” During the first half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century the rightfulness of slavery was scarcely questioned.”*<sup>12</sup>

In 1774, Connecticut had the largest number of slaves (6,562) in New England.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Found on the Internet: Parsons, David: Slavery in Connecticut 1640-1848, Yale-New Haven Teacher’s Institute

<sup>10</sup> Slavery in Connecticut by Ralph Foster Weld, part of the Tercentenary Commission of the State of Connecticut series, 1935, page 3

<sup>11</sup> Found on the Internet: Parsons, David: Slavery in Connecticut 1640-1848, Yale-New Haven Teacher’s Institute

<sup>12</sup> Slavery in Connecticut by Ralph Foster Weld, part of the Tercentenary Commission of the State of Connecticut series, 1935, pages 5-6

<sup>13</sup> Found on the Internet: Black History month tribute by Philip R. Devlin, This week in Connecticut History, February 16, 2012

By 1774, half of all the ministers, lawyers, and public officials owned slaves, and a third of all the doctors.<sup>14</sup> In Berlin, Rev. William Burnham and church leaders Deacon Stephen Lee and Ebenezer Gilbert were slave owners.

*“On small subsistence farms, slaves often worked side by side with their owners to get the daily job done. They might normally work in comfort together, but there was a social line one seldom crossed.”*<sup>15</sup> One might think that as master and slave worked together in the North that there would be more tolerance and kindness than in the South. But as Ira Berlin noted *“just the opposite often proved true. Slaveholders could act with extraordinary brutality precisely because their slaves were extraneous to the main business. They desired to set themselves apart from their slaves.”*<sup>16</sup>

*“A vivid picture of slavery is found in the diary of Madam Sarah Kemble Knight who traveled through Connecticut in 1704-5. She says: Too indulgent, especially ye farmers to their Slaves, suffering too great familiarity from them, permitting ym to sit at Table and eat with them (as they say to save time) and into the dish goes the black hoof as freely as the white hand.”*<sup>17</sup> Slavery was not a relationship of equals. The relationship of master and slave was part of a caste system: the master was “better” than the slave. Ira Berlin notes that *“slave owners treated their slaves with extreme callousness and cruelty at times because that was the way they treated all subordinates, whether indentured servants, debtors, peasants, or simply poor folks.”*<sup>18</sup> A family’s slaves may have lived in the main house but were not allowed to use the front entrance. They entered and left through the ‘slave door’ which usually adjoined the kitchen. They also had separate outhouses far removed from the ones used by the family.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Found on the Internet: Slavery on Connecticut by Douglas Harper, 2003 and Black History month tribute by Philip R. Devlin, This Week in Connecticut History, February 16, 2012

<sup>15</sup> Making Freedom – the extraordinary life of Venture Smith by Chandler B. Smith and George A. Krinsky, Wesleyan University Press, c2009, page 34

<sup>16</sup> Making Freedom – the extraordinary life of Venture Smith by Chandler B. Smith and George A. Krinsky, Wesleyan University Press, c2009, page 34

<sup>17</sup> Slavery in Connecticut by Ralph Foster Weld, part of the Tercentenary Commission of the State of Connecticut series, 1935, pages 8-9

<sup>18</sup> Berlin, Ira: Many Thousands Gone: The First Two Centuries of Slavery in North America, Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, c1998, page 8

<sup>19</sup> Making Freedom – the extraordinary life of Venture Smith by Chandler B. Smith and George A. Krinsky, Wesleyan University Press, c2009, page 33

*“Furthermore, as Ira Berlin noted, the system of living in the North had a profound impact in slave family life and connectedness to their heritage. The absence of separate slave quarters not only broke up family units but hastened the dissolution of the African communal structure. As a result, northern slaves were less able than their Southern counterparts to practice their African religions or preserve ancient traditions and adapt them to their new conditions and environment. On the other hand, because their work ran the gamut of maintaining hearth to economy in the North, slaves there tended to develop skills that could serve them well in independence.”*<sup>20</sup>

The Revolutionary War impacted slavery in two ways.

First, the idea as stated in the Declaration of Independence was that ALL men were created equal. The writers of the Declaration wrestled with the idea of slavery and abolishing slavery but the desire to have all 13 colonies united against England led the group to postpone the discussion of slavery. But, the idea resonated among the colonial residents. *“The more sensitive and intelligent of the clergy could not insist on the right of man to freedom and at the same time condone slavery.”*<sup>21</sup>

The second change for slaves was that during the Revolutionary War, some black slaves had an opportunity to gain their freedom. To win the war, the Continental Congress needed a standing army and it imposed quotas on the thirteen colonies to raise that army. By 1777, Blacks, both free and slave, were joining the Continental Army. Military service was a way for Blacks to achieve freedom. Some slaves were freed by patriotic masters to serve. Some slaves served in place of their masters, with freedom as their reward at the end of their enlistment. Some slaves used their enlistment bounty to buy their freedom.<sup>22</sup> In Berlin, General Selah Hart allowed his slaves to join the colonial army and become freemen.

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<sup>20</sup> Making Freedom – the extraordinary life of Venture Smith by Chandler B. Smith and George A. Krinsky, Wesleyan University Press, c2009, page 34-5 quoting Ira Berlin, *Many Thousands Gone* page 8

<sup>21</sup> *Slavery in Connecticut* by Ralph Foster Weld, Tercentenary Commission of the State of Connecticut, 1935, page 11

<sup>22</sup> Found on the Internet: *Slavery in Connecticut 1640-1848* by David L. Parsons

## In Berlin

There were slaves in Berlin. As mentioned in the section about Connecticut slavery, it was the educated, wealthy, and church leaders who owned slaves in the colonial times.

A researcher noted that “*African New Englanders are hard to find... they did not leave their own written records. Most are discernable only through the chance bill of sale, advertisement about a runaway, or a brief remark in local records.*”<sup>23</sup>

Another researcher says that “*slaves are a shadowy presence, barely mentioned.*”<sup>24</sup> We learn about slaves in Berlin in several ways: public records, church records, tax records, cemetery records, genealogical research, wills, and census records. Each record is brief. Often times, the data is accumulated in a random jumble. It’s not enough to tell a story, but there are bits of information. Many times all that is known is a slave’s name, typically only the first name.

### Public records:

Rev. William Burnham was a slave owner. He was a member of the clergy and it was typical of Connecticut’s clergy to own slaves in the early 1700s. We know about Burnham’s slaves in two documents: a public document (below) and in his will (later in this chapter). A more complete biography of Rev. Burnham is in the 1700-1775 section of this book.

Rev. William Burnham freed a slave in 1738<sup>25</sup>

**THE FREEING OF HIS SERVANT** “Whereas, I the subscriber, William Burnham of Kensington, in the County of Hartford and Colony of Connecticut, did many years ago buy of Lieutenant Richard Bordman of Newington, **Peter Tusco**, a Spanish Indian Man, the bearer hereof, to serve me from the time of my purchase of him, to the end of his natural life, as by the bill of sale signed by the said William Burnham may more fully appear. Now know all men, by these presents, that I, the said William Burnham for divers good causes, me hereunto moving have now let free the said Peter Tusco, to be at his own disposal, from the day of the date of these presents, during his natural life. In witness thereof I have hereunto set my hand

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<sup>23</sup> Bonaventure, Allegra di: *For Adam’s Sake: A Family Saga in Colonial New England*, Liveright Publishing Company, c2013, page xvi

<sup>24</sup> Farrow, Anne: *The Logbooks: Connecticut’s Slave Ships and Human Memory*, Wesleyan University Press, c2014, page 78

<sup>25</sup> Found on the Internet at Ancestry.com

and my seal this 13th day of July, in the twelfth year of the Reign of our  
Sovereign Lord George the 2nd of Great Britain. 1738  
Signed, Sealed and Delivered - William Burnham. In Presence of – Thomas  
Hart, Ruth Hart



The Hale Collection shows that Peter Tusco, a  
Spanish-Indian and free man, died in  
Southington on March 17, 1767 and was buried  
at the Burial Ground Hill (Oak Hill Cemetery).

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### Church records

Kensington Congregational Church Records (formerly the Great Swamp  
Settlement). The Church Records do not differentiate between slaves and free  
Negroes.

P 95 Ashbil, Negro – list of 1718 members

P 103 Betty, Negro, April 13, 1760 – list of members

P 149 Aaron, son of Abedmelech – 1756, Negro – servant of **Eliza Hart**,  
baptized Oct 31, 1756

P 153 Sept 24, 1758 – Ginne, Negro to **Jacob Deming**, baptized

P 167 Zilpah, Negro –to **Jacob Deming**, baptized Feb 13, 1766

P 272 record of deaths – Cuff, Negro – Dec 18, 1782

P 294 Jan 1825 – black woman - transient person – record of deaths

P 297 Dec 17, 1826 – Mary Church, a girl at **Mr. Cooke's** – record of  
deaths

P 305 Aug 1840 – Negro infant at **Russell Peck's** - record of deaths

Manual of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Congregational Church (Worthington, later named Berlin  
Congregational Church)

Nov 26, 1775 #124 Ashbel colored - deceased

#124 ½ Betty colored - deceased

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<sup>26</sup> The Hale Collection is the Charles R. Hale Collection of Connecticut Cemetery  
Inscriptions which records the vital information from headstone inscriptions in over 2,000  
Connecticut cemeteries that were recorded in a W.P.A. project 1932-5. The actual  
gravestone is no longer readable. Oak Hill Cemetery entrance, Southington, CT – photo  
by Cathy Nelson



### **Tax records – Grand List of Kensington<sup>27</sup>**

1759: freeman, Negro

1773: Pharez, Negro

### **Slave Owners from church records:**

Eliza Hart – Elizabeth Lawrence Hart married Ebenezer Hart (1705-1773) on June 9, 1641. They had seven children: Ebenezer 1742, Major Jonathan Hart 1744- (Yale graduate 1768 Revolutionary War hero, and slain by Indians), Elizabeth 1746-1766, Elihu 1751- (died in debtor's prison), Dr. John 1753- (Yale graduate 1776), Thomas 1754, and Hannah 1758-1810. When Elizabeth married Ebenezer Hart she was known as the Widow Lawrence. Ebenezer was a Deacon at the Kensington Congregational Church. They lived at Motts Corner in Kensington. She died in 1814 at age 95 years.<sup>28</sup>

Jacob Deming - two possible - Jacob 1714-1791, or his son 1713-1791<sup>29</sup>. Jacob Senior was born in 1689, the son of Jonathan and Elizabeth Gilbert Deming. He married Dinah Churchill and had six children: Dinah, Lt. Joseph 1711, Jacob 1713, Anna 1716, Lucia 1718, and Moses 1720. He was a large landowner. In 1730 he joined the Kensington Congregational Church. He married second to Abigail Jerome. He died in 1771.

Jacob Junior was born in 1713, the son of Jacob and Dinah Churchill Deming. He married Lucy Hart. He belonged to the Kensington Congregational Church in 1761. He adopted Israel Deming as his heir. He died on July 9, 1791 at age 77 and was buried in Beckley Cemetery.

Mr. Cooke – The 1820 census does not list any Cooke in Berlin. The 1830 census has Moses Cook, but little information is available about him. Mary Church was probably a free nonwhite person in his employ.

Russell Upson Peck - Russell Upson, son of Polly Maria (Upson) and Deacon Samuel Peck, born April 18, 1804, married first, Lydia Bottsford of Kensington, who died Aug 22, 1837; married second Susan Curtiss who died November 21, 1865. He was an enterprising and successful farmer in Kensington, and held various positions of public trust. From 1825-36 he was a commercial traveler in

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<sup>27</sup> Research by John Darrow

<sup>28</sup> Berlin-Peck Memorial Library Local History Name Index and Andrews, Alfred: Memorial Genealogy, and Ecclesiastical History A.H.Andrews, c1867, page 375

<sup>29</sup> Berlin-Peck Memorial Library Local History Name Index

South Carolina, and from 1836-42 was a merchant at Bishopville, S.C., in partnership with the J.C. Williams of Colchester, Conn. He sold his farm in Kensington and removed to Southington in 1864, and later to Plainville in 1882. He married third, April 2, 1866, Eunice C. Woodruff of Southington. He died March 20, 1886.

### **Cemetery records**

The Hale Collection<sup>30</sup> lists the gravestones for the cemeteries in Berlin as of 1934. There are some additional records for Beckley and South Burying Grounds of burials without gravestones. It's not clear who were slaves and who were free Negroes.

Beckley Cemetery records – no graves stones

Ase – a black man died October 1821<sup>31</sup>

Ashley, Dot - black twins died May 19, 1766

Brooks, Zerviah, an Indian woman, Pequot, wife of James, a

Negro, died August 21, 1822, age 50 in **Daniel Steel's** barn

Casar, -- a Negro, died June 11, 1775

Boomer, Cynthia, colored, died July 22, 1832, age 67

Mitchell, Laura, daughter of Lewis, colored, died -- 27, 1836

Mitchell, Maria, wife of Lewis, colored, died February 2, 1837

**Wolcott**, -- Negro child of **Josiah**, died December 5, 1766

--, Harry, died December 24, 1852, age (probably) 90, colored

South Burying Ground (Blue Hills Cemetery) records – no grave stones

**Samuel Galpins'** Negro wench – 1763

Died Negro child of Peter - Feb 11, 1817

Died Negro - Nov. 24, 1817

### **Slave owners – from cemetery records.**

Captain Samuel Galpin: 1718-1763, the son of Samuel and Sarah Ann Knight. He married Abigail Newell and had 5 children: Mary 1749, Joseph 1754, Daniel

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<sup>30</sup> The Hale Collection is the Charles R. Hale Collection of Connecticut Cemetery Inscriptions which records the vital information from headstone inscriptions in over 2,000 Connecticut cemeteries that were recorded in a W.P.A. project 1932-5.

<sup>31</sup> Berlin-Peck Memorial Library Local History Name Index

1756, Samuel 1758, and Abigail 1761. He died in 1763 at age 47 and was buried in Maple Cemetery.<sup>32</sup>

Dr. Daniel Steel – 1759-1826, son of Samuel and Hannah Nott Steel, a twin brother to Dr. David Steel. He was born on January 3, 1759 and was baptized at the Kensington Congregational Church. He married Ammarilis Ford on October 31, 1792, had children, and died on September 11, 1826 where he was buried in Beckley Cemetery.<sup>33</sup>



Josiah Wolcott: The identity of Josiah Wolcott is unclear. There was a man named Josiah Wolcott who lived in Rocky Hill who was the son of Captain Samuel and Abigail Collins Wolcott. He may have lived in Berlin. Josiah graduated from Yale in 1742, married Lois Goodrich and had four children: Josiah 1755, Susanna 1757, Lois 1771, and Theodore 1763. Rev. Wolcott had feeble health and was unable to pursue his profession. He died in 1773 and was buried in the Center Cemetery in Rocky Hill.<sup>34</sup>

### Genealogical Research

During the Revolutionary War, many black slaves had opportunities to earn their freedom. In searching for information on **General Selah Hart**, the following account was found.

*“Hart took a very young colored child to bring up, named Jack, who was legally a slave, but Jack's living, clothing, and education were better than the average of the white lads in the vicinity enjoyed, and when the lad became twenty-one years of age, the master said to him: “The law would give me four years more of your service, but I think you have the right to be free, and you are at liberty to go away, or stay with me and receive wages.” Gen. Hart was singularly thoughtful and active for the public weal.”<sup>35</sup>*

In another account: Selah Hart “*allowed his slave Pharoah to enlist in the army for three years on the condition that if he paid Hart a portion of his wages, he*

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<sup>32</sup> Found on the Internet at Ancestry.com

<sup>33</sup> Found on the Internet at Ancestry.com. Photo found on the Internet at Find A Grave

<sup>34</sup> Found on the Internet at Ancestry.com

<sup>35</sup> Found on the Internet at: Rootsweb

*would be free at the end of his tour of duty. Pharoah fought in the Battle of Germantown in 1777 and Monmouth in 1778. At the end of his service, he went south to serve in the American army there. Hart claimed that the money that was due Pharoah should be paid to him and it was. Thirty-five years later, both Pharoah and Selah Hart both received Revolutionary War pensions. Pharoah was living in New Jersey in 1818.”*<sup>36</sup>

## **Wills**

Slaves were considered property and so were listed as items to be distributed upon the owner's death.

### **Samuel Bronson**

Samuel was born on December 30, 1692 in Hartford, the son of Samuel Bronson and Sarah Gibbs.<sup>37</sup> He married Abigail Ventris. In 1716 he had a grist mill. He joined the Kensington Congregational Church with his wife in February 1718/19. He furnished the sawed timber for the first Meeting House constructed on Christian Lane. As an honor the church gave him a seat in the 1st pew. In 1720 he furnished the materials to build galleries in meeting house. He sawed wood for the second church meetinghouse which was built from 1732-33. At his death on Oct 31, 1752, he left an estate of 6874 pounds, 8 shillings. In the Inventory of Samuel Bronson April 22, 1752<sup>38</sup>

One Negro man, Lot, £ 400

One Negro wench, Hannah, £ 500

Eldest son, Saul, £ 200

Youngest son, Pharoah, £ 130

Bequeathed to Sarah, his granddaughter, all his sheep, and an *unborn child* of Hannah, the wench.

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<sup>36</sup> White, David O.: Connecticut's Black Soldiers 1775-1783, Pequot Press, c1973, p21-22

<sup>37</sup> Berlin-Peck Memorial Library Name Index and Found on the Internet at Rootsweb.com

<sup>38</sup> Andrews, Alfred: Memorial Genealogy, and Ecclesiastical History, A.H.Andrews, c1867, page 35 and Berlin-Peck Memorial library Local History Name Index

### **Rev. William Burnham<sup>39</sup>**

In 1738, he emancipated his slave Peter Tusco. (See in the Public Documents section.) Rev. Burnham died on Sept 23, 1750. He was "a faithful preacher and a sound pastor", serving the church in Kensington until his death in the 38th year of his ministry.<sup>40</sup> The substance of the original Will of Rev Wm Burnham dated July 15, 1748 which was accepted by Probate Court first Tuesday, of April 1759 but never recorded — in which he gives his eldest son Wm 1/3% of his real Estate, to Josiah 1/3%, and to Appleton 1/3% — names his 4 daughters Hannah wife of Rev. Jeremiah Curtis of Southington, Lucy wife of Jacob Root of Hebron, Abigail wife of Lieut Robert Wells of Newington, & Mary wife of John Judd of Farmington. Gives all the remainder of his estate, Servants, Household stuff, money, plate, books, horned cattle, horses, sheep, swine, team tackling, & any instruments of husbandry whatsoever, corn upon the ground, or gathered, linen, wearing clothes of any sort, horse tackling, any other tools or instruments besides those of husbandry & all my movable, & personal estate, whatsoever, excepting that concerning **my Spanish Indian woman, Maria**, my Will is that after my decease she shall have liberty to dwell with any of my children, where she likes best, & if at any time she should not be able to earn a living, that she be comfortably provided for in sickness, and health during life at the cost of all my children, & such as represent them & concerning **my Mulatto Boy James**, my will is, that according to my deceased wife's desire, my daughter Abigail may have liberty to take him at the price he shall be valued at. Item I appoint my eldest son Wm to be my sole Executor. Signed & sealed by Wm Burnham in presence of John Root \ John Root jun proved by the witnesses October 1, 1750 Eunice Root<sup>41</sup>

### **Ebenezer Gilbert**

Ebenezer was born on August 11, 1666 the son of Jonathan and Mary Welles Gilbert.<sup>42</sup> Ebenezer was a member of the Kensington Church and sat in the first pew next to the pulpit. On November 17, 1717, Ebenezer was on the school committee. Besides the minister, he was the only man known as Mr. in the community. He married Esther Allyn and had seven children: Esther 1684, Lemuel 1698, Thomas 1699, Sarah 1702, Moses 1707, Jonathan 1709, and

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<sup>39</sup> Andrews, Alfred: Memorial Genealogy, and Ecclesiastical History, A.H.Andrews, c1867, page 23

<sup>40</sup> Berlin-Peck Memorial Library Local History Name Index

<sup>41</sup> Andrews, Alfred: Memorial Genealogy, and Ecclesiastical History, A.H.Andrews, c1867, p. 23

<sup>42</sup> Berlin-Peck Memorial Library Name Index & Found on the Internet at Ancestry.com

Ebenezer 1711. He died in 1726 at age 78, and his will dated July 17, 1726.<sup>43</sup>  
Included in the list of personal property for his dear wife Ester was:

A Negro £ 100  
A Negro woman £ 45  
Boy £ 100  
Child £ 30  
Total £ 275 <sup>44</sup>

### Captain Stephen Lee

Stephen was born on April 2, 1667. Stephen lived in the New Britain district on East Street. He was on a Committee to watch over youth and served as a Church Moderator. In 1689, he received a grant from the town of 5 rods of land west side of highway [Chamberlain], provided "it doth not hinder former grants and watering places". He was a Captain of the Militia. He married on October 1, 1690 to Elizabeth Royce of Wallingford and had ten children: Isaac 1691, Elizabeth 1694, Sarah 1696, Stephen 1700, Martha 1701, Mary 1704, Ebenezer 1706, Hannah 1708, and Josiah 1711. In 1712, Lee was one of the seven pillars of the Great Swamp Society (later the Kensington Congregational Church).<sup>45</sup>



Captain Stephen Lee died on November 26, 1747 and is buried at the Christian Lane cemetery. His tombstone inscription reads "One of ye first settlers of ye Society and Church of Kensington, who served his generation by ye will of God. Fell asleep June 7th, 1753 in ye 87th year of his age."<sup>46</sup>

In his will he gave wife Elizabeth **service of my negro** ... so long as she remain my widow and bears my name during her life, after which my

<sup>43</sup> North, Catharine Melinda: History of Berlin, Connecticut, Tuttle, Morehouse & Taylor, c1916, page p 12-13. New England Marriages Prior to 1700 by Clarence Almon Torrey, Genealogical Publishing, 1985, states the year as 1736.

<sup>44</sup> North, Catharine Melinda: History of Berlin, Connecticut, Tuttle, Morehouse & Taylor, c1916, page 12-13 and Andrews, Alfred: Memorial Genealogy, and Ecclesiastical History, A.H.Andrews, c1867 and Berlin-Peck Memorial Library Name Index

<sup>45</sup> North, Catharine Melinda: History of Berlin, Connecticut, Tuttle, Morehouse & Taylor, c1916, page 128

<sup>46</sup> Found on the Internet at Find A Grave

youngest son, Josiah, shall have liberty to **purchase said negro**, at his approved value.<sup>47</sup>

### **Major John Patterson**

John was born on February 14, 1707 in Wethersfield, the son of James and Mary Talcott Patterson. He married Ruth Bird on January 28, 1730 and had five children: Mary 1731, Sarah 1734, Anna 1736, Ruth 1739, and John 1743. He had a large farm and **employed some slaves**.<sup>48</sup> He was the First Deacon of the New Britain Church. He lived on East Street in the New Britain section of town. John participated in the French and Indian War under Admiral Pocock and led an expedition, including his faithful Negro servant London, to Havana, Cuba where he died of yellow fever on September 5, 1762. His will states: May 11<sup>th</sup>, 1759; being called of God to serve my country in the present intended expedition against our northern enemies, the French, calling to mind the danger of martial life, etc. Impremis to my dear wife, Ruth, I give my half-lot I bought of Sgt Ebenezer Smith, all my right in common and my undivided land in Farmington, and all of my personal estate, except **my negro girl Rose** and also the use of all I shall give to my son John in this will, until he arrive at twenty-one years, and half during her life, but she is to give to my son John Patterson a college education. Item to my daughter Anna, wife of Rev. Stephen Holmes, I give **my negro girl Rose**. His slaves, when they died, were buried on the high ground back of his house, where, 1849, at the construction of the railroad, two graves were opened and one skull disinterred.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> Andrews, Alfred: Memorial Genealogy, and Ecclesiastical History, A.H.Andrews, c1867, page 141

<sup>48</sup> Camp, David N.: History of New Britain, c1889, page 400

<sup>49</sup> Andrews, Alfred: Memorial Genealogy, and Ecclesiastical History, A.H.Andrews, c1867, p 133-134

### Captain Daniel Smith

Daniel was born in 1713. In 1750 he was elected to go to the General Assembly to set the parish boundaries as New Britain became a separate Church Society. He died on September 6, 1751 at age 39 years and was buried in the South Cemetery (now Maple Cemetery).<sup>50</sup> He owned **Caleb Jupiter, Negro man**.<sup>51</sup>



52

### Thomas Stanley

Thomas was born on October 31, 1696 in Farmington, the son of Thomas and Anna Peck Stanley. He married Esther Cowles on January 2, 1717 and they had eight children: Anna 1718, Thomas 1720, Deacon Noah 1723, Ruth 1726, Timothy 1727, Abigail 1729, Job 1732, and Colonial Gad 1734. He lived in the area known as the Stanley Quarter in New Britain. His house was the first in New Britain limits outside of the Great Swamp parish. He was a man of considerable wealth, having land in Farmington, New Britain and New Cambridge (Bristol). Thomas died on October 13, 1755 in New Britain at age 69. His will was dated in 1747.<sup>53</sup>

"Item. To my dearly beloved wife Esther, the use of one third of my real estate during her life, and one third of the personal, to be her own forever. And she is to take my **negro woman Priscilla** for part of said dowry. Also the service of my **negro girl Katherine**, during her life. Also the service of my **negro boy named Richard**, until my son shall be twenty-one, provided she lives my widow. And furthermore, I do give my dearly beloved wife my great Bible and one silver

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<sup>50</sup> Berlin-Peck Memorial Library Name Index

<sup>51</sup> John Darrow research

<sup>52</sup> Found on the Internet: Find A grave

<sup>53</sup> Andrews, Alfred: Memorial Genealogy, and Ecclesiastical History, A.H.Andrews, c1867, page 169



spoon during her life, and at her decease I give the Bible to my son Thomas and the spoon to my daughter Anna. "Item. I give to my son Thomas and his heirs the house he now lives in and the barn and six acres of land; they stand on the east side of the highway; and five acres on which they stand, in a square piece, the south bounds to be an ash tree about three rods south of said house.

"Item. I give Abigail a front chamber in my house, etc. "Item. I give my son Gad lands in New Cambridge (now Bristol), and my **negro Richard** when he, Gad, is of age, and ten sheep. "Item. I give to my children Thomas, Noah, Timothy, Abigail, and Gad, all my right in the reserved lands in Farmington, which were my grandfather's, John Stanley.

"Item. My will is that my three eldest sons, Thomas, Noah, and Timothy, shall build a house on the four-acre orchard at New Cambridge for my son Gad where he shall choose to set it, on the land given him in this instrument; all the great timber to be good white oak, and the house to be thirty-eight feet by twenty, covered and glazed like the house given to my son Thomas, and must be finished when Gad is twenty-two."--Prob. Rec., Hartford.

Ancient Burying Ground, Farmington<sup>54</sup>



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<sup>54</sup> Found on the Internet: Find A Grave

### **Census records**

The early census records list the name of the head of household and a count of residents. The first census does not identify the names, gender or ages of slaves.

**1790** - Census records show in Connecticut there were 2759 African Americans enslaved and 2,801 free nonwhites. In Berlin there were 2 slaves and 12 free nonwhites. The slave owners were **Jonathan Barns** and **Ephraim Hollister**.

**1800** - Census records show in Connecticut there were 951 African Americans enslaved and 5330 free nonwhites. In Berlin there were 2 slaves and 13 free nonwhites. The slave owners were **Jonathan Barnes** and **Ebenezer Barnes**.

**1810** – Census records show in Connecticut there were 310 African Americans enslaved and 6453 free blacks in Connecticut. In Berlin there was 1 slave and 26 free nonwhites. The slave owner was **Thomas Hart**. For the first time, there were 3 households that consisted entirely of free nonwhites (the families of Jock Mitchel, Harvey Mix, and Caesar Stocker)

**1820** – Census records show in Connecticut there were 97 African Americans enslaved and 8047 free nonwhites. In Berlin there were no slaves and 25 free nonwhites. There were 2 households of free nonwhites (the families of Asahel Andrews and Cesar Stocker), and 1 household that may have been a boarding house (Isaac Lee had 7 of 10 residents as free nonwhites).

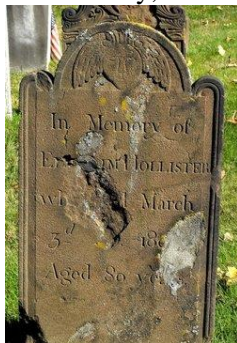
**1830** – Census records show in Connecticut there were 25 African Americans enslaved and 8047 free nonwhites. In Berlin there were no slaves and 21 free nonwhites.

**1840** – Census records show in Connecticut there were 17 African Americans enslaved and 8104 free nonwhites. In Berlin there were no slaves and 40 free nonwhites.

### **Slave owners listed in the census records**

**Jonathan Barns:** 1790 and 1800 census. He was born in 1731, married Elizabeth Woodruff and had nine children. He died on January 7, 1806 in Berlin. His wife died in March 1810 and was buried in Beckley Cemetery.<sup>55</sup>

**Captain Ephraim Hollister** 1790 census. Ephraim was born in 1724 in Glastonbury, the son of Ephraim Hollister and Elizabeth Green.<sup>56</sup> He married Rachel Porter on May 3, 1746 and had three children: Salmon 1746, Ephraim 1748, and Rachel. After Rachel's death he married Ann Beckley Hart in 1758 and had three more children: Candace 1759, Abel 1761, and Rhoda 1764. He joined the Berlin Congregational Church in 1775. He died on March 3, 1804 and was buried in Maple Cemetery.<sup>57</sup>



**Ebenezer Barnes** – Ebenezer was born in Vermont in 1788. He married Jershusa Shepard and had children Ebenezer, Permelia, Joseph, Benjamin, Benjamin, Jerusha. He died n January 1825 and is buried in the South Burying Ground.

**Thomas Hart** – The identity of Thomas Hart is unclear. There are at least two possible candidates.<sup>58</sup>  
Thomas Hart 1753-1832, buried in Bridge Cemetery. Son of Ebenezer and Elizabeth Lawrence Hart. Thomas never married. He gave his farm to his niece Lydia (who wed Theron Hart).  
Thomas Hart 1738-1830, buried in Fairview Cemetery in New Britain. Son of Elijah and Abigail Goodrich Hart. Thomas married Mehitabel Bird on February 2, 1758 in New Britain and had five children: Ruth 1758, Abigail 1761, Abijah 1764, Jemena 1768, and William 1772. He was a farmer and a shoemaker. He was “a man of great piety, industry, and economy, scrupulously honest, and remarkably inoffensive.

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<sup>55</sup> Found on the Internet at Ancestry.com

<sup>56</sup> Berlin-Peck Memorial Library Local History Name Index

<sup>57</sup> Found on the Internet at Find A Grave

<sup>58</sup> Found on the Internet at Ancestry.com

## Slavery today

Today, in the 21st century, we'd like to say that there are no slaves in Connecticut, and especially not in Berlin. However, that is not true.

Slavery may have been abolished over 150 years ago, but slavery still exists in Berlin and in Connecticut. A book: *The Berlin Turnpike: a true story of human trafficking* was written by Raymond Bechard in 2011 based on a federal trial in 2006. The book is described as "a compelling expose of the people who live with the realities of commercial sexual exploitation every day".<sup>59</sup> The slave trade today is not one of Indians or Negroes - it is indiscriminate to race. Today, it is secretive and illegal, very active and profitable business of sexual slavery.

## Free Non-whites

From the earliest days, there were some Indians and Africans who were not slaves. They may have been free from birth, or emancipated, or earned their freedom. After the Revolutionary War, the population of free nonwhites increased dramatically. However, free nonwhites were not full citizens. They could own property, but they could not vote. They were subject to many special laws including curfews, taverns were forbidden to sell liquor to them, and passes required to leave town.<sup>60</sup>

## In Berlin

In 1790 the census shows that in Berlin there were 12 free nonwhites. We do not know their names, gender, or age. Some of the households where free nonwhites resided include: Jonathan Barns, Moses Deming, Solomon Dunham, General Selah Hart, Isaac Lee (2), James Lewis, Collins Ludington, Roger Riley, John Root, Noah Stanley, Abraham Wright.

In 1800 the census shows that there were 13 free nonwhites. We do not know their names, gender, or age. They resided in these households: Eli Barns, Lordner Deming, Solomon Dunham, Elijah Francis Jr, Thomas Gilbert, Cyprian

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<sup>59</sup> Found on the Internet: Amazon.com

<sup>60</sup> Found on the Internet: Parsons, David: *Slavery in Connecticut 1640-1848*, Yale-New Haven Teacher's Institute

Hart, General Selah Hart, Thomas Hart, Isaac Lee, Roger Riley, Jedediah Sage, Ezra Scoville, and Roswell Woodruff.

A year later, in 1801 there were in Kensington: 7 Negroes - in Worthington: 11 Negroes and in New Britain: 4 Negroes for a total of 22 Negroes (both slaves and free) <sup>61</sup>

In 1810 the census shows that there were 26 free nonwhites. We do not know their names, gender, races, or age. They resided in these households: Elis Barns, David Clark, Lardner Deming (2), Seth Deming, Warner Dunham (2), Elijah Francis, Clarissa Hart, Rev. John Imally (Smally) (2), Isaac Lee, Jedediah Sage (2), and David Webster.

For the first time, there were 3 households that consisted entirely of free nonwhites. The families include: Jock Mitchel – 5 members, Harvey Mix – 2 members, and Cesar Stocker – 5 members.

Jock Mitchel – No additional information.

Harvey Mix married Wealthy Harrison on October 19, 1806 at the Kensington Congregational Church.<sup>62</sup> They lived in Berlin in 1810.

Caesar Stocker lived in Berlin for over 30 years. He lived on Caesar's Hill. He had a sister Lindey. He had a son Charles who was born about 1810. Catharine North says that Charles was the last man whipped at the Town whipping post for the crime of petty theft. William A. Riley remembered that "he did holler".<sup>63</sup> There is a legend that Charles Stocker's feet were so large that they hung outside of the wagon when he rode as there wasn't enough room for them within. Charles pumped the organ in the old meetinghouse (Worthington) for many years and received a pair of shoes each year for his efforts. Charles lived with the George Clark family in 1850 and later the Isaac Upson family in 1870. His daughter Charlotte married Elihu Colvin of Manchester in August 1831. Caesar Stocker died on February 20, 1834 and was buried in Beckley Cemetery.

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<sup>61</sup> Doris Meyers: Berlin: Other Times, other voices, c1976, page 5

<sup>62</sup> Berlin-Peck Memorial Library Local History Name Index

<sup>63</sup> North, Catharine Melinda: History of Berlin, Connecticut, Tuttle, Morehouse & Taylor, c1916, page 177

In 1820 the census shows that there were 25 free nonwhites. There are no names, but the gender and age ranges are counted. There were 20 males and 5 females.

They resided in these households:

- Lardner Deming – 1 male under age 14
- Seth Deming – 1 female age 14-25
- Benjamin Hart – 1 male age 14-25
- Norman Hart – 1 female under age 14
- General Selah Hart – 1 male under age 14
- Hezekiah Judd – 1 male age 14-25
- Roger Norton – 1 male under age 14
- Eleazer Roberts – 1 male age 26-44
- Seth Stanley – 1 male under age 14
- Abraham Wright – a male age 26-44

It appears that Isaac Lee had a boarding house with 7 males age 26-44. There were three families: Asahel Andrews (2 members), Richard Fortune (2 members), and Cesar Stocker (4 members).

In 1830 the census shows that there were 21 free nonwhites. There are no names, but the gender and age ranges are counted. There were 6 males and 15 females.

They resided in these households:

- Levi Barnes – 1 male age 55-99
- Samuel Durand – 1 male age 10-23
- Esmond Hart – 1 female age 36-54
- Sara Hooker – 1 female age 10-23
- Selden Peck – 1 female age 10-23
- Horatio Pratt – 1 male age 10-23
- Eleazer M. Roberts – 2 females ages 10-23
- Iva E. Smith – 1 female age 10-23
- William Smith – 1 female age 10-23
- Curtis Waples – 1 female age 10-23
- Walter Warner – 1 female age 10-23
- Frances Woodbridge – 2 females ages 10-23

It appears that there were 3 families: Joseph Beard (3 members), Jared Brown (2 members) and Cezar Stocker (2 members).

In 1840 the census shows that there were 40 free nonwhites. There are no names, but the gender and age ranges are counted. They resided in these households:

- Alfred Baliy/Baley – 1 female under 10
- Sally Deming – 1 male age 36-54

Henry S. Dumond – 1 female age 10-23

Selden Peck – 1 female age 55-99

William F. Raymond – 1 male under 10

In 1840 there were 11 families. Joseph Buel (1 member), Charles Goodrich (1 member), Jeremiah Cables (2 members), Jub Cambridge (2 members), John Brown (3 members), Henry Daniels (3 members), Calvin Swiers (3 members), Asahel Anderson (4 members), Lemuel Luniatay (4 members), Sharlott Colvin (6 members), and Andrew Mitchel (6 members).

## Abolitionists

There is a misconception that Connecticut was a stronghold of the abolitionist movement. While Connecticut was the birthplace of Harriet Beecher Stowe and host to the Amistad captives, yet, Prudence Crandall was driven out of town.<sup>64</sup> As Matt Warshauer noted: “the simple truth is that in the land of steady habits, one of the steadiest was a virulent racism.”<sup>65</sup> During the 1830-50s there was an active anti-slavery movement in Berlin, there was also a violent response by mobs who attacked abolitionist meetings and property.

The first female anti-slavery group was formed in 1832 in Salem, Massachusetts. A few years later, about 1837,<sup>66</sup> a women’s anti-slavery group was formed in Berlin. The Worthington Female Anti-Slavery Sewing Circle met at the home of Jedediah North on Worthington Ridge. Their mission was to aid the Connecticut Anti-Slavery movement.<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> African American Connecticut Explored, edited by Elizabeth J. Norman, Wesleyan University Press, c2013, page xvi

<sup>65</sup> Warshauer, Matt: Connecticut in the American Civil War: Slavery, Sacrifice and Survival, Wesleyan University Press, c2011

<sup>66</sup> The Circle was established sometime between 1837 when Sophia Booth joined the Berlin Congregational Church and 1842 when Mehitabel Fanning died.

<sup>67</sup> The Worthington Female Anti-Slavery Sewing Circle constitution consists of 2 ½ pages and can be found at the Connecticut State Historical Society

We the undersigned Ladies of Worthington penetrated  
 with a sense of the awful sin of slavehold-  
 ing, the most terrible wrongs of the Slaves & the deep guilt  
 of the Church & the nation respecting it, bearing in mind  
 also the injunction of the apostle to remember them  
 that are in bonds as bound with them, have conclu-  
 ded to form ourselves into a sewing circle for  
 the purpose of aiding the Conn. Anti Slavery Society in its  
 most praiseworthy efforts to destroy this giant evil,  
Constitution!

We the undersigned ladies of Worthington penetrated  
 with a sense of the awful sin of slaveholding,  
 the most terrible wrongs of the Slaves. In such guilt  
 of the church & the nation respecting it, bearing in mind  
 also the injunction of the apostle to remember them  
 that are in bonds as bound with them. Hence conclude  
 to form ourselves into a sewing circle for  
 the purpose of aiding the Conn. Anti Slavery Society in its  
 most praiseworthy efforts to destroy this giant evil.  
 Constitution<sup>68</sup>

Jedediah North was born in 1789, the son of Levi and Rachel White North. He  
 married Betsey Bulkley on March 10, 1813 and had 8 children: Clarissa, 1814;  
 Emily; 1816; Betsey, 1821; Adaline, 1824; Augusta, 1830; Fidelia, 1833;  
 Frederick, 1833; and Caroline, 1836. In 1812 he joined the Berlin  
 Congregational Church. Jedediah and his brother Edmund owned a tool shop  
 which became the J and E North Mfg Company. In 1823 he sold the shop to  
 William Bulkley. He died on January 30, 1855 at age 66 and is buried in the  
 Wilcox Cemetery.

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<sup>68</sup> Excerpt of the Constitution of the Worthington Female Anti Slavery Sewing Circle



Little is known about Betsey. She was born on August 3, 1793, the daughter of Justus and Mabel Boardman Bulkley. She died on March 29, 1867 and is buried in the Wilcox Cemetery. Betsey was the president of the Worthington Female Anti-Slavery Sewing Circle.



Betsey Bulkley North's gravestone <sup>69</sup>

Other officers of the Worthington Female Anti-Slavery Sewing Circle were:

Sophia Bullard Booth: born February 6, 1804, married Henry Booth on March 23, 1828 at the Kensington Congregational Church, joined the Berlin Congregational Church in 1837, and had several children: Henry, died 1836; Henry, died 1845; Anna 1830, Hiram, 1833, and John 1837. The family lived in Berlin for the 1840 and 1850 censuses. Sophia died on August 17, 1858 in Cheshire, CT. Sophia was Vice-President of the Circle.

Clarissa Savage: born in 1794, the daughter of Elisha and Olive North Cheney. She married Deacon Joseph Savage (1795-1857). She joined the Berlin Congregational Church in 1812. She died on November 11, 1874 at age 81 and is buried in the Wilcox Cemetery. Clarissa was a Director of the Circle.

Mehitable Gales Fanning was born about 1815, married to Benjamin Fanning, a blacksmith, in 1836 in New London, CT. By 1840 they lived in Berlin. She died on May 7, 1842 at age 27 and was buried in the Beckley Cemetery. Benjamin remarried to Charlotte in 1844. Mehitable was a Director of the Circle.

Miriam Savage Beckley was born on September 24, 1795, the daughter of Elijah and Miriam Jones Clapp. She married Allen Beckley (1788-1832) in 1817 and had two children: Henry, 1818; and Amelia 1825. She died on September 24, 1879 and is buried in the Beckley Cemetery. Miriam was a Director of the Circle.

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<sup>69</sup> Found on the Internet: Find-A-Grave

On February 28, 1838 The Connecticut Anti-Slavery Society held a meeting in Hartford. According to the Charter Oak newspaper of March 1838 Milo Hotchkiss of Kensington was a delegate. The meeting was held for individuals friendly to the immediate emancipation of slaves.

Milo Hotchkiss was born on October 10, 1802, in Homer, NY, the son of Charles Todd Hotchkiss and Leva Humiston. On January 22, 1826, Milo Hotchkiss married Rhoda Barrett in Windsor, NY. Rhoda was born in 1810, in Kensington, the daughter of Stephen Barrett and Tabitha Castle, and was a stepdaughter of Milo's Uncle Frederick Hotchkiss. Milo Hotchkiss and Rhoda Barrett had six children: Edwin 1827, Harriet, 1830, Eliza 1833, Mary 1836, Samuel 1839, and Fanny 1847.<sup>70</sup> In 1831, Milo Hotchkiss and his family moved to Kensington. In



1835, Milo and Rhoda joined the Kensington Congregational Church. Milo was an early member of the Kensington Library Society. In 1855, he built the family home on Main Street. It is known today as the wedding cake house as each floor is similar to a tier of cake. Others describe the house as resembling a 19<sup>th</sup> century riverboat: the projecting eaves of the porch

and main roof, along with a cupola flanked by two chimneys (smokestacks) give it a layered form. The house is in the Italianate style with overhanging eaves and a cupola.<sup>71 72</sup> *Milo Hotchkiss house, 289 Main St. Kensington*

Milo was a portrait painter, teacher, farmer, justice of the peace, school visitor, and member of the Board of Education for 40 years. He was an advocate for temperance. One of his artist students was Nelson Augustus Moore, Marjorie Moore's uncle, who became a renowned landscape artist. Nelson Augustus

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<sup>70</sup> Hotchkiss Family Association, *The Hotchkiss Family: Volume II the line from Joshua*, his 5<sup>th</sup> child, Gateway Press, c2003, page 359

<sup>71</sup> Connecticut Historical Commission, *Historic Resources Inventory*, Berlin, Connecticut, 1984

<sup>72</sup> Milo Hotchkiss house at 289 Main Street, Kensington

Moore remembers that each day he was required by Milo to read from the Bible book *Job* to learn about persistence and perseverance.<sup>73</sup> Milo was a strong supporter of the schools, even though he himself was self-educated. He was a modest man, charitable, with a strong sense of justice and moral courage.

He was a strong anti-slavery advocate. Twice, his home was attacked by mobs in a series of violent attacks. Another time while attending an antislavery meeting in Meriden he was assaulted by a mob and took the case to court. An ex-governor and an ex-Senator both testified in defense of the mob, but Milo won his case which helped end mob violence in Connecticut.<sup>74</sup> Records indicate that he was a part of the 'underground railroad.'<sup>75</sup>

Milo was remembered as an enterprising man, a public spirited citizen, and a moral reformer. In the obituary it was noted that just before his death, Milo said, "*The greatest delight of my life has been to watch and see the moral progress of the world.*" He lived long enough to see some of his early opponents change their views and he received them as a friend in the spirit of Christianity.<sup>76</sup> Milo Hotchkiss died on October 12, 1874, at age 72 years. His wife, Rhoda Barrett Hotchkiss died on December 15, 1895, at age 85 years. They are buried in the Ledge Cemetery.



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<sup>73</sup> Fletcher, Ellen, *Nelson Augustus Moore*, Moore Picture Trust, 1994

<sup>74</sup> *Hartford Courant*, November 17, 1874

<sup>75</sup> Hotchkiss Family Association, *The Hotchkiss Family: Volume II the line from Joshua, his 5<sup>th</sup> child*, Gateway Press, c2003 page 359

<sup>76</sup> *Hartford Courant*, November 17, 1874

Sometime between 1836-1844, Deacon Daniel Galpin put up a sign at his pump shop in Berlin: Anti-Slavery books for sale here. According to Catharine North, he was subjected to some persecution and the sign was torn up by some ruffians in the village.<sup>77</sup> Daniel Galpin was born in 1756, the son of Samuel and Abigail Galpin. He married Mehitable Dorr and had four children: Mary, Eliza, Daniel and Sally. He served in the Revolutionary War in General Selah Hart's Company in Col. Wolcott's Regiment. In 1801 he joined the Berlin Congregational Church and was made a Deacon in 1822. His house was 18<sup>th</sup> from the north end of Worthington Ridge. Two of his daughters ran a school in a front room of their home. He had a shop where he was a pump maker. Deacon Daniel Galpin died in 1844 at age 88 and was buried in the Bridge Cemetery.<sup>78</sup>



Gravestone of Deacon Daniel Galpin<sup>79</sup>

A Kensington resident who was active in the anti-slavery movement was Isaac Botsford. Isaac was born on October 7, 1786, the son of Isaac Botsford and Esther Frost. He lived on a 600 acre farm in the south part of Berlin and into Wallingford. He was primarily responsible for the building of Cat Hole mountain pass into Meriden. In 1821 he married Melissa Porter and had 7 children. Sadly 5 children died in infancy. They had 2 children who lived: Ellen, 1833 and Isaac, 1837. He was a farmer and a manufacturer and invented several important tools and machinery for working with metals. He was Lt-Col of the

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<sup>77</sup> North, Catharine Melinda: History of Berlin, Connecticut, Tuttle, Morehouse & Taylor, c1916, page p. 143

<sup>78</sup> Andrews, Alfred: Memorial Genealogy, and Ecclesiastical History, A.H.Andrews, c1867

<sup>79</sup> Found on the Internet: Find-A-Grave

14<sup>th</sup> Regiment in 1820. He was a deacon of the Kensington Congregational Church. He was a pioneer in the anti-slavery cause. He died on August 14, 1851 and was buried in the South Burying Ground.<sup>80</sup>



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## The Underground Railroad

From the beginning of slavery, there have been runaway slaves. The Hartford Courant had numerous ads seeking the return of runaway slaves.

The Underground Railroad was a loose network of meeting places, secret routes, safe houses and personal assistance for runaway slaves provided by abolitionist sympathizers. Under the original Fugitive Slave Law of 1793, slave-holding states were responsible for the recovery of runaway slaves, but citizens and governments of many free states ignored the law, and the Underground Railroad thrived. It was formed in the early 1800s, but was fully operational during the 1840-1850s. Participants generally organized in small, independent groups; this helped to maintain secrecy because individuals knew some connecting "stations" along the route but knew few details beyond their immediate area. Escaped slaves would move north along the route from one way station to the next with the goal of getting to any free state and especially Canada.

Details of how the Underground Railroad operated, who were the key leaders, and what was the route taken – all are mostly unknown. Many slaves would

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<sup>80</sup> Camp, David: History of New Britain, c1889, p.461-462

<sup>81</sup> Found on the Internet: Find-A-Grave

come first to New Haven by ship, rail or by road. Fugitive slaves who entered the state worked their way through Berlin and New Britain, to Farmington on their way to Canada. Of the 22 identified Underground Railroad agents in Hartford County at this time, 9 were residents of New Britain. In New Britain, as the two sides of the slavery issue continued sparring, The First Church in New Britain passed anti-slavery resolutions. Abolitionists and non-abolitionists clashed at local anti-slavery meetings and non-abolitionists set fire to barns belonging to New Britain abolitionists.<sup>82</sup> The result was that the South Church broke away to form an independent, pro-slavery church.

In an Internet article about the Underground Railroad on the role New Britain played it was noted that: “A minister in Meriden, Rev. George W. Perkins often hid fugitives in his barn or attic. He probably then took them to the Milo Hotchkiss way station in Kensington. From there they would get taken to the Stanley Quarter in New Britain and then on to Farmington”.<sup>83</sup> Milo Hotchkiss was a staunch abolitionist (his story is in the abolitionist section) and was a known participant of the Underground Railroad. In the Ohio Historical Society, Manuscript collection, Wilbur Siebert wrote that Milo Hotchkiss was the Underground Railroad agent in Kensington.

Horatio Strothers states: “A few miles beyond was Stanley Quarters in the northern part of New Britain. Here many active undergrounders were ready to succor the fleeing fugitive – **DeWitt C. Pond, Alfred Andrews, David Whittlesey, Henry North, Amon Stanley, Noah Stanley, and Horace Booth. Mrs. Minerva Hart** was an abolitionist before there was an antislavery society and when her husband and others were mobbed for their opinions, she saw the event as a proof that God was bringing one of His mighty human problems to solution. Many other citizens of the town joined the movement no matter what the difficulties of settling the question. Some of the Undergrounders suffered for their convictions. On a night in October 1857, Mrs. Henry North’s barn was set on fire. There were 20 tons of hay and several sleighs and wagons which were consumed by flames. George Hart, who was inside at the time, had to run for his life. At the same time, the barn of Horace Booth was destroyed by arsonists. But no threats

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<sup>82</sup> Found on the Internet: Connecticut History.org: New Britain plays part in the Underground Railroad

<sup>83</sup> Strother, Horatio T., The Underground Railroad in Connecticut, Wesleyan University Press, c1962, page 118

*or violence deterred the workers for human freedom.”*<sup>84</sup> Other New Britain residents who participated in the Underground Railroad include: **Dan Clark, and Norman Hart.**<sup>85</sup>

Pond, DeWitt C.: born in 1824 in East Poultney, VT, the son of Harvey and Marion Turpen DeWitt. He married in 1848 to Mary Tucker, and moved to New Britain in 1849. They had 2 children: DeWitt, 1862 and William, 1865. He was a jeweler. He joined the church in 1843.<sup>86</sup> He died in 1899 in Poultney, VT.

Andrews, Alfred: born October 16, 1797, the son of Ezekial and Roxanna Andrews. Taught school, ran a carriage and wagon business, church deacon, Sunday school teacher, He was an advocate for temperance reform, He married in 1818 Carolina Hart and had 2 children: Julie, 1819 and Caroline 1822. She died in 1823 and he married in 1824 Mary Lee Shipman and had 8 children: Margaret, 1826; Eliza, 1828; Edwin, 1832; Cornelius, 1834; Alfred, 1836; Jane 1842; Herbert, 1844; and Jane 1847. He was an abolitionist and active in the Underground Railroad. He researched and wrote the Memorial Genealogy, and Ecclesiastical History of New Britain in 1867.<sup>87</sup> He died on April 18, 1876.

Whittlesey, David: born in 1755, the son of Eliphalet and Comfort Whittlesey. A farmer and schoolteacher. He married in 1804 to Rebecca Smalley and had 11 children: William, 1805; Nancy, 1807; Sarah, 1808; Mary, 1809; John, 1811; John 1812; Rebecca 1814; David, 1816; Calista, 1818; Eiphalet, 1821; and Elizabeth, 1822. His wife, Rebecca was deranged for some years, but in passing a bridge on the Western Canal was hit on the head and restored to reason. He was a deacon, led the church singing, first Sunday school superintendent, magistrate, and school visitor. He was a man of stern integrity and a reformer. He was an advocate for temperance and antislavery societies. He died in 1851.<sup>88</sup>

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<sup>84</sup> Strother, Horatio T., *The Underground Railroad in Connecticut*, Wesleyan University Press, c1962, page 118

<sup>85</sup> Strother, Horatio T., *The Underground Railroad in Connecticut*, Wesleyan University Press, c1962

<sup>86</sup> Andrews, Alfred: *Memorial Genealogy, and Ecclesiastical History*, A.H.Andrews, c1867

<sup>87</sup> Andrews, Alfred: *Memorial Genealogy, and Ecclesiastical History*, A.H.Andrews, c1867

<sup>88</sup> Andrews, Alfred: *Memorial Genealogy, and Ecclesiastical History*, A.H.Andrews, c1867

Henry North: There were several men named Henry North in Berlin and New Britain.

Amon Stanley: born in 1778 to Lot and Rhoda Stanley. He married Abi North , daughter of James North in 1802 and had 11 children: Julia, 1803; Thomas 1805; Henry, 1807; James, 1809; James, 1812; Augustus, 1814; Timothy, 1817; Lot, 1820; Martha, 1822; Amelia, 1825; and Mary, 1828. He was a hatter and a farmer. For a time he distilled cider brandy. His wife had reservations about this, favored temperance movement so he sold the business. It kept operating and either she or he were bothered by that so he repurchased the business and destroyed it. He was a modest, retiring gentleman. He died in 1846 at age 68.<sup>89</sup>

Noah Stanley: born in 1794, son of Noah and Naomi Stanley. He married Laura Booth in 1824 and had 1 child: Helen, 1826. He was a farmer, teacher and school visitor. He was on the standing committee of the church. He was engaged in public business and reforms.<sup>90</sup> He died in 1868.

Horace Booth: was born on November 6, 1821, the son of James Booth and Olive Wilcox. He married on May 5, 1847 to Almira Beckley and had 4 children: Horace, 1849; Olive, 1856; Mattie, 1864, and Lyman, 1868.. He was a farmer. During the Civil War, he ran a manufacturing company in Winsted with his brother Ralph.<sup>91</sup>

Minerva and Norman Hart: Minerva Lee was born on April 22, 1813, the daughter of Thomas and Electa Lee. She taught Sunday School. She was known as an intellect, energetic and an ornament to her sex and the church. She married Norman Hart on September 8, 1818 and had 3 children: Burdette, 1821; Norman, 1826; and Ellen, 1828. She was known as the most ardent abolitionist in New Britain and at one time she and her husband were mugged for their views.

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<sup>89</sup> Andrews, Alfred: Memorial Genealogy, and Ecclesiastical History, A.H.Andrews, c1867 and Camp, David N.: History of New Britain, William B. Thomson & Company, 1889

<sup>90</sup> Andrews, Alfred: Memorial Genealogy, and Ecclesiastical History, A.H.Andrews, c1867

<sup>91</sup> Andrews, Alfred: Memorial Genealogy, and Ecclesiastical History, A.H.Andrews, c1867



Norman was born on August 5, 1794, the son of Elijah and Anna Hart. He was a woolen manufacturer and a deacon of the church.<sup>92</sup> Norman died in 1878.

Dan Clark: no further information.

Another station of the Underground Railroad:



379 Main Street, East Berlin was suppose to be another Underground Railroad station.

## *The Amistad*

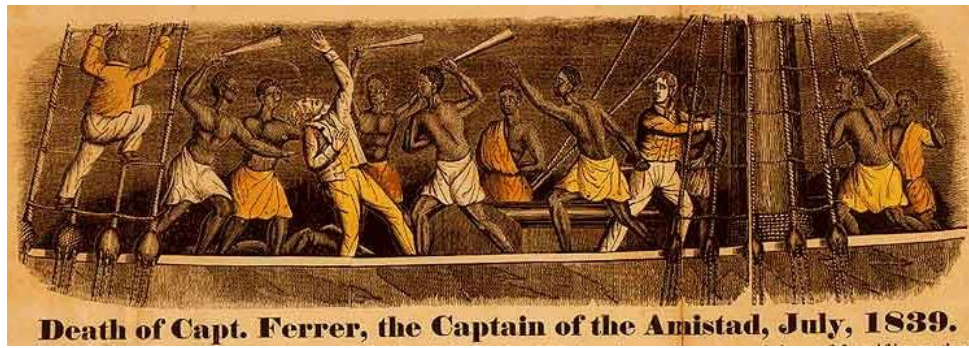
In February 1839, Portuguese slave hunters abducted a large group of Africans from Sierra Leone. The captives were then taken to the Caribbean, with up to 500 of them chained hand and foot, on board the Portuguese slave boat *Teçora*. After a nightmarish voyage in which approximately a third of the captives died, the journey ended with the clandestine, nighttime landing of the ship into Cuba – in violation of the Anglo-Spanish treaties that made the African slave trade a capital crime. Slavery itself was legal in Cuba, meaning that once smuggled ashore, the captives became slaves<sup>93</sup> In Havana, two Spaniards, José Ruiz and Pedro Montes, bought 53 of the Africans—including Cinqué and four children and chartered the ship *Amistad*. The ship, named after the Spanish word for friendship, was a small black schooner built in Baltimore for the coastal slave trade. They were to travel 300 miles to two plantations on another part of Cuba at

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<sup>92</sup> Andrews, Alfred: Memorial Genealogy, and Ecclesiastical History, A.H.Andrews, c1867

<sup>93</sup> Found on the Internet: Historynet.com: Slave mutiny on Amistad

Puerto Principe. The spark for the mutiny was provided by Celestino, the Amistad's mulatto cook. In a cruel jest, he drew his hand past his throat and pointed to barrels of beef, indicating to Cinqué that, on reaching Puerto Principe, the 53 black captives aboard would be killed and eaten. Stunned by this revelation, Cinqué found a nail to pick the locks on the captives' chains and made a strike for freedom.



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On July 1, 1839, their third night at sea, Cinqué and a fellow captive named Grabeau freed the group and searched the dark hold for weapons. They found them in boxes: sugar cane knives with machete-like blades, two feet in length, attached to inch-thick steel handles. Weapons in hand, Cinqué and his cohorts stormed the shadowy, pitching deck and, in a brief and bloody struggle that led to the death of one of their own, killed the cook and captain and severely wounded Ruiz and Montes. Two sailors who were aboard disappeared in the melee and probably drowned in a desperate attempt to swim the long distance to shore. Grabeau convinced Cinqué to spare the lives of the two Spaniards, since only they had the navigational skills necessary to sail the Amistad back to Africa.



Cinqué<sup>95</sup>

<sup>94</sup> Barber, John Warner: The History of the Amistad Captives, c1840

<sup>95</sup> New York Sun, August 31, 1839 – portrait by James Sheffield

Cinqué remembered that the slave ship had sailed away from the rising sun; therefore to return home, he ordered Montes, who had once been a sea captain, to sail the Amistad into the sun. The two Spaniards tricked the Africans by sailing back and forth in the Caribbean Sea, toward the sun during the day and, by the stars, back toward Havana at night, hoping for rescue by British anti-slave-trade patrol vessels. When that failed, Ruiz and Montes took the schooner on a long and erratic trek northward up the Atlantic coast.

On August 24, 1839, some 60 days after the mutiny, under a hot afternoon sun, Lieutenant Commander Thomas Gedney of the USS Washington sighted the vessel just off Long Island, where several of the schooner's inhabitants were on shore bartering for food. He immediately dispatched an armed party who captured the men ashore and then boarded the vessel. They found a shocking sight: cargo strewn all over the deck; perhaps 50 men nearly starved and destitute, their skeletal bodies barely clothed in rags; a black corpse lying in decay on the deck, and two wounded Spaniards in the hold who claimed to be the owners of the Africans who, as slaves, had mutinied and murdered the ship's captain.

The navy seized the vessel and cargo and reported the shocking episode to authorities in New London, Connecticut. Only 43 of the Africans were still alive, including the four children. In addition to the one killed during the mutiny, nine had died of disease and exposure. The Africans were transported to New Haven because it had the only jail in the state big enough to hold so many people. The first trial was in Hartford, the second in New Haven, and the third at the Supreme Court in Washington. The two Spaniards were freed while the Africans were imprisoned in New Haven, CT, on charges of murder. Although the murder charges were dismissed, the Africans continued to be held in confinement as the focus of the case turned to salvage claims and property rights. President Van Buren was in favor of extraditing the Africans to Cuba. However, abolitionists in the North opposed extradition and raised money to defend the Africans.

In 1840, a federal trial court found that the initial transport of the Africans across the Atlantic (which did not involve the Amistad) had been illegal, because the international slave trade had been abolished, and that they were thus not legally slaves but free people. The case went to the Supreme Court in January 1841, and former President John Quincy Adams argued the defendants' case. Adams defended the right of the Africans to fight to regain their freedom. The Supreme Court affirmed the lower court on March 9, 1841.<sup>96</sup>

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<sup>96</sup> Wikipedia: Amistad

“While In New Haven, the Africans were considered a great curiosity. The jailers allowed visitors to see the Africans for a few cents each. Several of the Mende would perform gymnastic tricks for pennies too. Colonel Buckley and his wife went from Berlin to see them and the Colonel give Cinque a silver quarter, who showed his gratitude by turning a double somersault backwards.”<sup>97</sup> The Mende greeted the news of the Supreme Court's decision with joy. Free at last, the survivors — 35 men and boys and three girls — were brought to Farmington, Connecticut, by abolitionist supporters. “On March 18, 1841, In a Currier and Ives moment: with snow blanketing the state, the Africans came by train from Westville in New Haven to the Berlin railroad station. Norris Wilcox had arranged for the train. A dozen sleighs brought 30 of them overland to Farmington. The remaining 8 came the next day with Lewis Tappan. Mr. William Bulkley remembers as a child going to the old depot to see the Africans.”<sup>98</sup>

Charles Ledyard Norton was a child in Farmington at the time. “When it was decided to quarter them in Farmington pending arrangements for their return to Africa” he later recalled, “there was consternation among the timid souls in the quiet village. Stories of cannibalism were plentifully circulated, and there were formal protests against forcing such a burden upon the community.”<sup>99</sup> “Barracks were erected and here the former captives made their home. Cinque was a born ruler. Ably seconded by his lieutenant, Grabeau, he maintained a very creditable degree of discipline among his followers. They were, for the most part, free to roam about, except for regular school hours, and townsfolk soon ceased to fear them. Anxious mamas at first trembled and kept their children behind bolted doors, but before long it was no uncommon sight to see the big grown-up blacks playing with little white children in village yards.”<sup>100</sup> The three little girls who survived the Amistad rebellion lived with local families during their stay in Farmington. It is known that Margru, the oldest one, stayed with the Rev. Noah Porter and family. His daughter, Sarah Porter, who would start Miss Porter’s School a few short years later, taught Margru to read and write in English and converted her to Christianity. Margru came back to the U.S., took the name Sara Kinson, and went to Oberlin College. Her son went to Yale. She eventually

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<sup>97</sup> North, Catharine Melinda: History of Berlin, Connecticut, Tuttle, Morehouse & Taylor, c1916, page 178

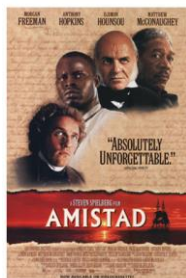
<sup>98</sup> North, Catharine Melinda: History of Berlin, Connecticut, Tuttle, Morehouse & Taylor, c1916, page 178

<sup>99</sup> Found on the Internet: Brecher, Jeffrey, The Real Amistad Story,

<sup>100</sup> Found on the Internet: Wikipedia: Amistad

became a missionary in Africa. Teme stayed with the Horace Cowles and family. Although her name is not recorded as such, the third girl, Kagne, is thus believed to have been sheltered by Timothy Cowles and family. The Amistad committee continued to instruct the Africans in English and Christianity and collected donations to pay for their return. The Amistad Committee turned its efforts to raising funds to pay for the return voyage, organizing a series of appeals in local churches where the Africans told their stories and demonstrated the results of their education and Christian conversions. It is likely that the Amistad members came to the Kensington, Berlin and New Britain churches in their fundraising endeavors. Fund raising was slow. Some of the African became discouraged. In August, one member, Foone drowned while bathing in the center basin in an apparent suicide. The Amistad Committee realized that they needed to send the Africans home. When the fund reached \$1,840, the Amistad Committee was able to charter the barque, Gentleman, to make the return voyage. On November 27, 1841: thirty five Mende left New York along with two Black Americans, Mr. and Mrs. Henry Wilson, and three whites, Rev. and Mrs. William Raymond and Rev. James Steele, to minister the “Mendi Mission.” In January 1842 the ship arrived in Sierra Leone. The mission experienced many problems and most of the Africans abandoned the missionaries.

In 1879: Cinque, old and emaciated, returned to the mission to die and is buried among the graves of American missionaries.



In 1998, Steven Spielberg directed the movie Amistad which was based on this historical event.



In March 2000, a replica ship called the Freedom Schooner Amistad was launched from Mystic Seaport in Mystic, Connecticut. Its mission is to educate the public on the history of slavery.