

Yes, there was slavery in New York & It was common

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What most learned in school

13 colonies - North & South

The first slaves arrived in 1619

Southern colonies had slaves - Northern colonies, especially New York were safe havens - abolition

Slaves lived on Plantations in cabins behind the 'Big' house - and were owned by rich planters

They picked cotton or worked sugar, and worked as 'House' slaves, especially if they were 'light' skinned.

If New York and slavery were mentioned -

- There are very few people here/nothing about the economy.
- It was a 'kinder' slavery than in the South and did not last long.
- It was part of the Underground Railroad making it a 'safe' place for freedom seekers to run through or live in. Abolitionist were mostly Quakers.



Three Sections not Two:

North (British)

Middle (Dutch)

South (British)

Without the Dutch period, which is recently researched history, we miss...

1624 - The founding of New Netherland

1626 - The purchase of the first enslaved and the rapid importation of Africans

The establishment of enslaved Africans as labor throughout the entire economy

The establishment of laws for a new level of society that did not exist in the Netherlands

The codification of laws applied only to a single ethnic group

The economic links from New Netherland/New York to the "Institution of Slavery" worldwide



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The Institution of Slavery – People & Economy

➤ People:

➤ **The enslaved Africans and the people of African descent**

The physical populace that is the 'labor force' throughout all levels of society.

➤ **Enslavers:** Those who owned, bequeath, gifted, purchased for others - their actions created pathways to more enslavers and generational servitude



➤ Economy: Wealth (direct & indirect) - People and Goods Bought and Sold

➤ **The Merchant Traders, Slave Traders, and Enslavers**

The portion of the populace directly involved in the buying and selling of people
Dutch and Anglo-Dutch Ship Owners, Investors, and Merchant Traders, the resulting wealth coming into the colony where they lived.

➤ **Commodities** – The goods merchant traders sold, and people used produced with slave labor or to support slave labor - sugar, mahogany, chocolate, and more

➤ **New Netherland/NY Farmers** – NY Wheat – sold to the Caribbean and West Indies to feed enslaved on the sugar plantations.

➤ **Sugar Plantation Owners** – Barbados, Curacao, Jamaica, and Brazil



Who were the enslaved?

Where did they come from?

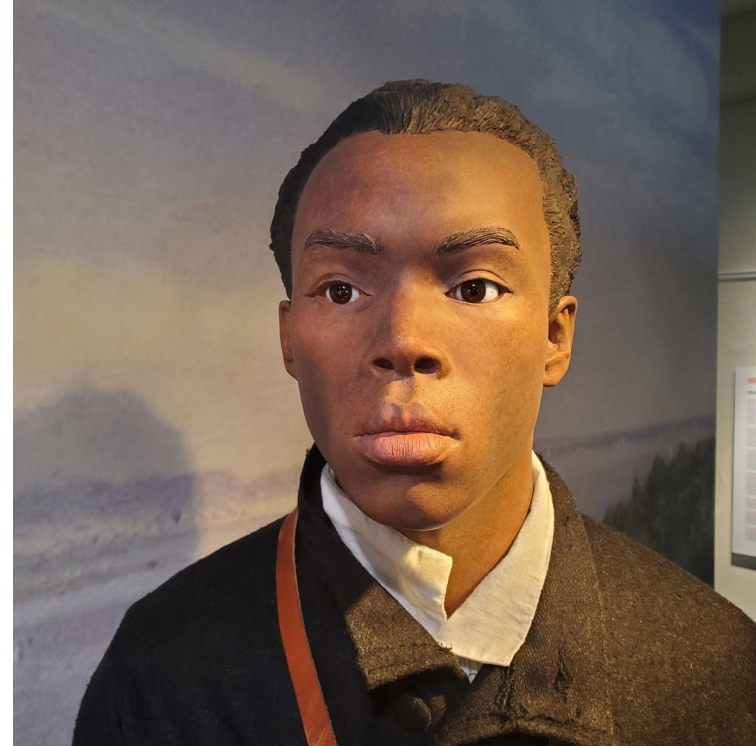
The first eleven men were 'sailors' from a Portuguese ship. Their names speak to the long relationship the Kingdom of Kongo had with Portugal, Spain, and Rome. (15th century forward)

The Dutch imported from the Kingdom of Kongo, Anglo and Madagascar. British brought in West Africans.

Importing "seasoned" enslaved from the Caribbean and West Indies lasted for a very short time.

Breeding programs were not part of NY enslavement.

1785 – NY banned importation of enslaved African people, both foreign and domestic



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So...why don't we see the enslaved?

Where are the Plantations?

Where are the cabins?

Where's the Cotton?



Our 'Plantations' are called Patroons, Manors & Patens, Farms

Our crop is 'Wheat' not cotton

And...the enslaved work everywhere –
not just on farms in the fields!

Mills & Urban spaces - homes and shops

Water spaces - boatmen, sailors, privateers, fisherman

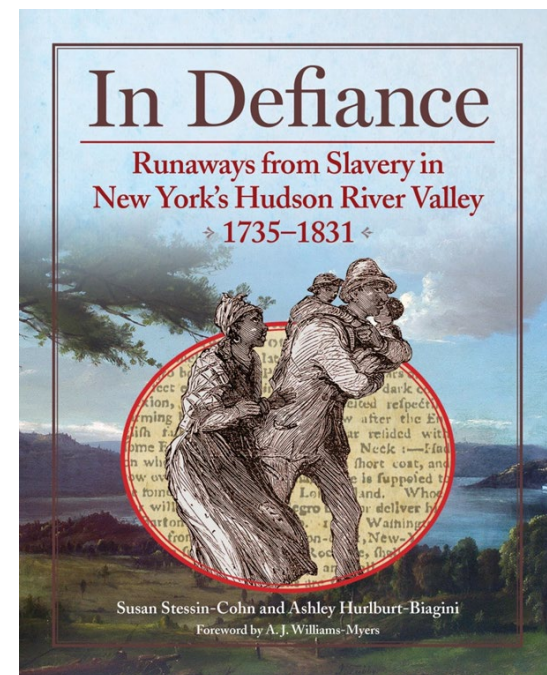
Shops - places of manufacturing and trade



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Bakers
Blacksmiths
Brewers
Brush makers
Butcher
Business (country)
Carpenters
Chimney sweep
Cook
Dancer
Driver
Farmer
Horse and Oxen caretaker
House Servants
Ladies Maids, Valets, Childcare,
Maids of all work
Knitter
Millers
Musicians – Fiddlers, etc
Preachers

Privateers
Reader and Writer
Sailor
Scythe maker
Shoemaker/Cordwainer
Solider
Tanners
Waiter
Weaver



Adapted from Susan Stessin-Cohn & Ashley Hurlburt-Biagini "In Defiance: Runaway Slave Ads in the Hudson River Valley 1735-1831"



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How do you free an enslaved person?

- Manumission – Manumit: To free an enslaved person you own when slavery is still the law of the land.

Enslaved people had to be physically inspected and deemed ‘fit’ – they are still profitable, and self supporting, if need be, and will not become a burden on the communities' resources. – done by the Overseers of the Poor or Poor Masters

Deemed ‘unfit’ they cannot be freed and must be taken care of until death by their owner or someone they pay to do so.

A 200£ sterling bond had to be paid for every enslaved person to be freed.

- Emancipation: To free someone else's enslaved person by law.

Two pieces of legislation:

The Gradual Manumission Act 1799

The Gradual Emancipation Law 1817

Ends the law of slavery, July 4, 1827.

But does not free all enslaved -

Reclassifies people whose birthdates fall outside of legislation and abandoned infants who were reclassified as “indentured servants” but remain bound to their mother's enslavers until they are 21. The laws are crafted so the last people would not be freed until 1848.



In 1841, Caesar became the last known person to be manumitted (released from enslavement) in New York State. He had been enslaved by multiple generations of the Nicoli family in Bethlehem.

In reality – New York had a long and complicated relationship with the Institution of Slavery

More Africans or people of African descent were held in New York than any other “Northern” colony

New York had the second largest slave market in the 13 colonies

New York had a large population of women as enslavers

Slavery was not kinder or gentler in any shape in New York

Without their presence in the colonial/new nation periods there is no ‘Whole History’



Moving forward when we speak of ‘Our Whole History’ what do we mean?



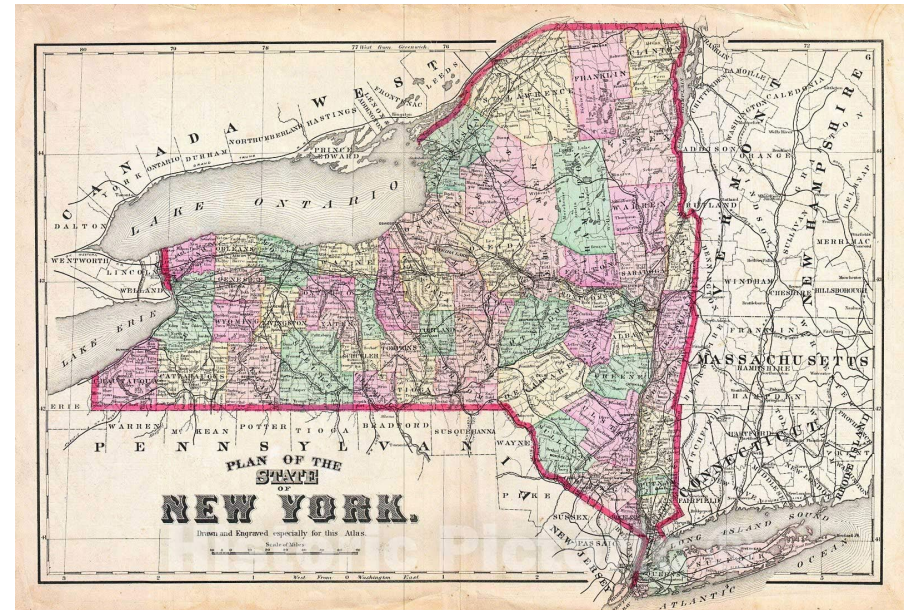
What is the purpose of

“Our Whole History”

To enrich the historic narratives of all parks and historic sites by putting the people who were there back in place. No matter their race, ethnic group, gender, age, social class or status

The under-told stories will change based on the time and location being discussed, but everyone needs to/should be included.

Why? Because they were there. They had an impact on the location, and they deserve to be remembered, because they were there.



From 1624 until today
New Netherland/New York
was/is
Multicultural – Multiethnic – Multilingual



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Thank you!



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