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Slavery in Connecticut 1640-1848

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Teaching both Connecticut and Afro-American history to sixth-graders last year, I began to question the wisdom of teaching the two subjects separately. Students' questions in class often revealed their attempts to relate the two main parts of their social studies work. The student who asked if Jonathan Trumbull was Black and the student who wanted to know where Connecticut's plantations had been were both searching for a way to understand one subject in the context of the other. It was impossible for them to do it with any accuracy because they had learned so little about Blacks in Connecticut.

In this unit I explore ways to tie Afro-American history into our study of Connecticut. Even though this approach eliminates a study of plantation slavery and other topics in Black history which I've taught in previous years, it gives students a better grounding in their state's history. With their knowledge of Blacks in Connecticut as a basis for comparison, the different situations of Blacks in other parts of America should be clearer to them.

Also, the development of Connecticut's social, legal and political institutions is much easier for students to understand if they can study the relationships of real people to those institutions. Consequently, the emphasis of this unit is on personal studies from each of several critical periods in Connecticut's development.

This unit is the first part of a unit which will span the entire period of Connecticut's Black history. It begins with the colonial era and ends with the abolition of slavery in Connecticut in 1848. The period from 1848 to the present will be the subject of a later unit.

Since there is always the concern of giving students practice in a variety of language and reference skills, I have designed this unit around a student activity booklet. The activity booklet, which is available at the Institute library, provides students with a series of discrete units, each centering on an episode from a significant period in Connecticut and Black history. Accompanying the narrative are a number of assignments designed to develop students' skills in using maps, graphs and outlines and in understanding and generalizing what they read.

I chose this approach for another reason besides its emphasis on skill development. Students, at least sixth graders, don't really learn well by listening to lectures, and I don't enjoy lecturing. The different episodes in their activity booklets are excellent focal points for discussions. Students will raise their own questions in trying to understand how the lesson in their activity booklet relates to what they have been learning about Connecticut.

The study of Connecticut is a year-long endeavor in sixth-grade social studies, and the activity booklet is designed to be used periodically throughout much of the year. The main reason I would not recommend using it as one unit is that much of the immediate impact of the episodes is lost that way. When the activity booklet is used in conjunction with other lessons on Connecticut, it complements them rather than appearing as an afterthought.

Before teaching anything, it is important to know what you expect the students to learn. This unit touches on so many areas of historiographical controversy that that question is one of vital importance here. The following discussion of Connecticut Black history provides both a background for teachers to use in working with the activity booklet and reveals my own bias in selecting and writing the episodes contained in the booklet.

Slavery in Colonial Connecticut

Origins : The first Blacks came to Connecticut soon after the first settlements were founded. Colonial records note Black servants as early as 1660, and there is evidence that at least a few Blacks lived in Connecticut as early as 1640. Although no one is sure how they came to Connecticut originally, Connecticut's first Black residents were not held in life bondage, and their bondage was not hereditary. When their White owners deemed their purchase price repaid, the first Black slaves were released.

Slavery was also not an exclusively racial institution; it applied to Indians and Whites as well. Habitual White criminals were periodically sold into servitude in the West Indies. Whether this condition was hereditary slavery or "life at hard labor" is impossible to tell from Connecticut records. In any event it was infrequently applied as a punishment.

Indian slavery was far more common. An ancient custom and one the Indians practiced, the enslavement of captives in the Indian wars did not work out well for the Puritans. It introduced a dissident element into Puritan society that proved resistant to subjugation or conversion. There were too many places for Indians to run, too many Indians who were not slaves, and too many opportunities for them to revolt to make Indians trustworthy slaves. Furthermore, their society had little prepared Indians to work as laborers on farms or as domestic servants.

One colonial law of the period affected Black slaves, but it was aimed mainly at protecting the colony against its Indian captives. In 1660 the General Court of Connecticut ordered "that neither Indian nor negar servants shall be required to train, watch or ward in the Colony." Phrased as an exemption from service, the law was an effective way to keep from arming a part of the population colonists feared.

The growing West Indian and African trade gave the colonists the opportunity to trade their Indian captives for more desirable Black slaves. Indian slavery waned as the Indian population of Connecticut was decimated in the wars of the late 1600's. For a time Indian slaves were imported from other colonies, but the arrival of captive Tuscarora warriors from South Carolina led in 1715 to the banning of the Indian slave trade in Connecticut.

Colonists found the large group of Tuscarora warriors difficult to control. Blacks were preferred for several reasons. They had no place to run to, no tribe to assist them in a rebellion, 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 Black slaves than to capture Indian ones.

As the Black population grew, servitude in Connecticut became slavery for life and it became hereditary. There was no opposition to hereditary slavery among Whites. It made economic sense and it kept Blacks under control. Although slaves and free Blacks had legal rights and a part in the society, they were not accepted as equals and not fully trusted.

The growth of Black slavery in Connecticut prompted Puritan leaders to justify it. Puritan Connecticut held religious freedom as one of its guiding principles, but it was an intolerant and rigid society. There was a firmly hierarchical social order, based on a clear understanding of the importance or worth of each member of society. Little tolerance existed for any other religious viewpoint. Puritan leaders embraced those parts of Leviticus (25, 45, 46) which support slavery. A second justification was the notion that slavery gave Blacks 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.

The profits to be made in the slave trade prompted British merchants in the 1600's to increase their shipments of Blacks from Africa to the colonies. In 1680 there were only thirty slaves in Connecticut; by 1774 over 6,500 people, or 3.4% of the population, were Black slaves. There were very few free Blacks, probably fewer than ten by some accounts.

Activity Booklet

It is important to consider several points in discussing the origins of slavery in Connecticut. A general discussion of slavery in ancient times would serve as a good introduction to the topic. A study of documents concerning the enslavement of Indians, Whites and Blacks in colonial Connecticut leads to three major concepts of slavery: as a result of war, as a punishment and as an economic convenience.

The activity lessons for this part of the unit focus on these three concepts. Each of the accounts is fictional but it is based on a character mentioned in colonial documents and on general conditions that prevailed in Connecticut around 1700.

Abda : Abda is a mulatto servant who escapes from his master, Mr. Richards, and is sheltered by another White man, Captain Wadsworth. His master reclaims him and seeks damages from Captain Wadsworth. Abda sues for his freedom. Legally this case is significant because it establishes hereditary servitude, the notion that the children of a female slave are the master's property. There is also the idea that even as early as 1700 not all Connecticut Whites were in agreement about slavery. There is also the question of Abda having the right to sue his master in court, a right which Southern slaves did not have. It is significant that Abda's suit was largely based on his "White blood." That race and slavery were linked even by slaves at that time says a great deal about the nature of the institution.

The fictional account makes use of the basic situation and the names, but I take some liberties. The judge's legal language is simplified; Mr. Richards makes arguments that were not his but John Davenport's; and Captain Wadsworth becomes something of an early, religious abolitionist.

The lesson contains reading comprehension exercises and vocabulary words as well as some discussion questions.

Quinasset : Quinasset's narrative is not based on the account of a real slave as Abda's was but is a

combination of several characters. Her situation is similar to several situations encountered by early Connecticut Indians.

Quinasset is taken captive after King Phillip's war. Her father has been killed. Her brother is sent to Barbados and her mother and other sister are sent as servants to other parts of Connecticut.

The main points of the story are the colonists' treatment of captives, the confusion which arises over how to deal with warriors, women and children and the fear of Indians which the colonists show.

This again is a reading comprehension lesson.

Henry Wentwood : Henry is a White "slave" sent to the West Indies for his crimes. This is largely a vocabulary and map skill lesson centering around the relationships of England's early colonial settlements with one another. The central point is that Henry's crimes are serious, but that his sentence to slavery is limited to four years. This may seem like an extreme punishment by today's standards but it was considerably less harsh than Abda's or Quinasset's.

Skill Lesson : The fourth lesson is a combination chart and map lesson on the growth of Connecticut's Black population and its distribution around the state.

The Black Code

As the Black population increased, Connecticut's lawmakers enacted more and more laws to control it. The so-called Black Code was a series of laws passed between 1690 and 1730 which described the rights and responsibilities of slave and master.

The Black Code formalized slavery in Connecticut. There were no laws specifically forbidding slavery, and custom and the laws controlling it combined to give slavery legal standing in Connecticut. The early Capital Law of 1642 which prohibited stealing "man or mankind" was interpreted to mean only White mankind.

Black servants were required to carry passes outside the town or be treated as runaways. Sellers of liquor were not allowed to serve Blacks without permission from their master. It is not clear what was done to Blacks who drank without permission. Blacks were not allowed to sell items without proof of ownership or written permission from the owner. Blacks were liable to whippings for disturbing the peace or "offering to strike a white person." Blacks found outside after 9:00 p.m. without a pass could be whipped. Whipping was also the punishment for slaves who used unseemly language.

This group of laws applied equally to free and slave Blacks, but free Blacks who were well-known and responsible local citizens were exempted in some towns. The law concerning liquor is interesting in that it also applied to minors and apprentices. Some writers assert that this demonstrates the Black slaves' position to have been closer to that of life apprentice than that of chattel. This point also makes sense in light of a section of the Black Code enacted in 1730. Slaves were allowed to give evidence in court, to enter petitions and pleas and to make complaints.

Two other parts of the code which were not meant to harm Blacks effectively discouraged manumission. These were sections dealing with the responsibilities of masters and towns to freed slaves. To discourage the

wholesale freeing of old or infirm slaves, masters were required to provide for any Black whom they freed if ever he came to want. The second act specified that the town would provide for any needy ex-slave and sue the former master to recover expenses if the master refused support. Designed to save the town the expense of supporting former slaves, the laws served in numerous cases to prolong slavery.

Activity Booklet

The Black Code is interesting for the several ways in which it differs from Southern slave codes. Probably most significant are the rights of slaves in court. They were obviously considered members of the society with very specific rights despite their bondage. Crimes against slaves were treated no differently from crimes against Whites, although there were practical differences. The stories in the next two lessons attempt to bring out some of the differences between the rights of Blacks and Whites in Connecticut.

Hagar : Hagar is suing her master for her freedom on the grounds that her master's father had promised her her freedom just before he died. Her case is clear, but what is important is that she is given an opportunity to present it, and that the testimony of other Black servants is admissible.

Although this is a reading comprehension lesson, it leads easily to a discussion of a more general nature on slaves' rights and the concept of manumission.

Jason : The slave Jason runs afoul of the Black Code while on an errand for his master. With him are a free Black and a White apprentice. The differences in their punishments and in the treatment they receive in court are the central points this story makes.

This is also a reading lesson.

Skill Lesson : The students are given a chart of the basic elements of the Black Code and are required to interpret the chart in order to answer questions about the code.

Social Conditions

Although their rank was at the bottom of Puritan society, the Blacks of colonial Connecticut did have a place in the social order. They were expected to follow the Christian principles by which their masters lived. They attended the same Congregational churches as their masters, usually sitting in their own sections, and worshipped with the families they served.

Slavery was paternalistic in Connecticut, with slaves treated as irresponsible junior family members on some occasions and nearly as equals on others. There were farmers in Eastern Connecticut, particularly in New London and Norwich, who operated large farms with slave labor, but slaves and free Black servants were used primarily as domestic servants and hands on family farms. Many of Connecticut's early leaders, including John Davenport, Theophilus Eaton and a long list of ministers, owned slaves. Ministers often entrusted the complete management of a farm to their slaves while they tended to their religious duties.

There are cases of slaves who were freed or who purchased their freedom during the colonial period, but they were individual instances of generosity, conscience or industry. The movement to rid Connecticut of slavery began to take hold of the public imagination at a time when Connecticut citizens were chafing under

restrictions imposed by England on their own political freedom.

Activity Booklet

The two stories in this unit are not drawn from legal cases but from a composite of narratives and secondary sources. There is more imagination applied here than in other sections of the activity book, but the essential details are as authentic as I could make them.

In both stories I try to present a concise picture of what it was like to live as a slave in Connecticut around 1750. The two slaves Timon and Sarah have very different lives. Timon is a hired hand on a large farm in New London County. Sarah is a housekeeper for a minister's family in Hartford. Discussions of these two stories could center around how their lives differed from those of Southern slaves seen on *Roots* or described in other reading students may have done.

Slavery in Revolutionary Connecticut

Opposition to Slavery : There is considerable controversy surrounding the decision of Connecticut lawmakers in 1774 to halt the importation of slaves. Earlier in the year an article had appeared in the *Norwich Packet* which condemned slaveholders for their hypocrisy. In a time when there was increasing dissatisfaction with English control, how could Christians justify their own enslavement of Blacks? The Reverend Levi Hart of Preston condemned slavery from his pulpit for much the same reason in September of 1774.

Still, when the law to ban the importation of slaves was enacted, it included the phrase "whereas the increase of slaves in this Colony is injurious to the poor and inconvenient." Free White workers could not compete with slave labor and were pressuring their representatives to limit slavery. The spirit of enlightenment was not behind this law. Connecticut Whites had long shown a tendency to limit and control the Black population. There was no economic reason to allow its increase. Craftsmen often trained slaves in a trade, saving the higher cost of hiring journeymen or the inconvenience of using apprentices.

A final argument in favor of the law was the political one that to halt the slave trade into Connecticut deprived England of a source of profit; it was thus a blow for freedom. Connecticut merchants were not heavily involved in the slave trade like some in Boston and Newport; the state could afford to halt it. Any humanitarian impulses such an action may have indulged were secondary.

The spirit behind the Gradual Emancipation Acts of 1784 and 1797 was more clearly humanitarian. The gradual nature of the emancipation was the result of Puritan political conservatism and respect for property rights, even those of slaveholders. The agitation for emancipation which began in the 1770's grew during the Revolution and was strengthened by two factors. First, Blacks from Connecticut served loyally in the Continental Army. Second, as a direct result of this service many Blacks were freed.

The Act of 1784 provided that slaves born after 1784 would be free at the age of twenty-five. The Act of 1797 reduced that age to twenty-one, bringing slavery in line with apprenticeship. The comparison many contemporary writers made between this abbreviated slavery and apprenticeship has several flaws. Slavery was not voluntary it did not involve a contract; and slaves did not receive money, clothes and professional standing at the end of their servitude. The only basis for comparison is the similarity between a slave's and an apprentice's rights.

Activity Booklet

What strikes me as most important about Connecticut's Gradual Emancipation Law and the earlier ban on slave trading is the balance they achieved between revolution and practicality. The lessons for this section are vastly different from those I devised for earlier sections. The first is simply a historical narrative. The second is a graphing exercise on the slave/free Black population balance in Connecticut. The third is a biography of James Mars, one of the unfortunate slaves who was born a little too early to qualify for emancipation.

Black Soldiers

From the time of the Law of 1660 Blacks did not train in the Connecticut and town militias. They did, however, fight in the Revolutionary War. A few free Connecticut Blacks fought in the Lexington, Concord and Boston campaigns of 1775, but they were excluded once the colonies began to organize their military forces more formally in 1776. Both prejudice against an integrated army and fear of slave insurrection led to their exclusion.

What changed the situation was military necessity. 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.

Service in the army was often 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. Some slaves served with no promise of freedom, but accompanied their masters out of loyalty or for adventure. Adventure and the bounty moved many free Blacks as well as Whites to serve. Whites preferred militia units, however, because they could stay closer to home. Few Blacks were encouraged to join local militias.

Blacks served in integrated units as combat soldiers and sailors. They were not relegated to the largely service roles they filled in later American armies. In fact, except when soldiers had such surnames as Africa or Negro, there is no way to tell Black from White soldiers on Continental muster rolls.

Some Black Americans served in the British Army, but very few were Connecticut Blacks. The British offered freedom to Black slaves who would join their army, but no major British units were stationed in Connecticut. Blacks from Connecticut had to run away to New York to reach the British.

Activity Booklet

In this section I have used five fictionalized biographical sketches to show students the different conditions under which Black men fought in the Revolution. Each sketch is about a Black man who served honorably in the war. I have used real names and real conditions of enlistment, but the details are fiction.

Caesar Stewart : Caesar Stewart was one of the few Connecticut Blacks who fought with the Minutemen at Lexington and Concord, but he was not allowed to reenlist once the militia reformed in 1776. In 1777 he joined the Continental Army, in which he served until his death in battle in 1778. A free man, Stewart joined for adventure, to protect his home and for the bounty.

Gad Asher : A slave, Gad Asher was allowed by his master to enlist in 1777. Asher's master freed him in 1780

in gratitude for his service in the army. The master's motives were not wholly generous or patriotic, since Asher served in his master's place.

Jack Arabas : Arabas' case was a famous one in Connecticut. He served for six years in the Continental Army and was awarded several citations for bravery. His master reclaimed him as a slave after the war. Arabas sued for his freedom and won. There was considerable public support for Arabas due to his war service.

Jason Yawpon : Yawpon was enlisted by his master and served beside him for three years. He was never promised freedom and saw military service as one more duty assigned to him by his master. He died a slave.

James Cromwell : Cromwell belonged to a Tory who left Connecticut for Long Island in 1776. On Long Island his master enlisted Cromwell in the British Army. Very few Connecticut Blacks fought for the British Army and it was to Cromwell's credit that he deserted to the Continentals as soon as he was able.

The End of Slavery: 1797-1848

As Connecticut's slaves were subject only to limited servitude and hereditary slavery was abolished, the concerns of Connecticut's Blacks centered on improving their social position and working to free slaves in the south. These two issues are not really a part of this unit, but I do want to describe briefly the general conditions which Connecticut's Blacks faced in the early nineteenth century.

Social Conditions : By 1800 83% of Connecticut's 6,281 Blacks were free, and by the time general emancipation was enacted in 1848 there were only six slaves left in the state. The revolutionary ideas of the last century had released them from bondage, but Connecticut's Blacks were little better off free than they had been as slaves. They could testify in court and own property, but their place was still at the bottom of society. They could not vote; they were not welcome as social equals in the educational and social institutions of the state.

Simultaneous with the movement toward manhood suffrage was the disfranchisement of Connecticut's Blacks. Theoretically, free Blacks who amassed enough land could have voted, but in 1818 a state law specifically denied Blacks the vote. Connecticut was the only New England state to disfranchise Blacks. Blacks were voting regularly in Massachusetts before the Civil War. In 1847 and 1865 the Connecticut General Assembly convincingly voted down Black suffrage. Only with the passage of the Fifteenth Amendment in 1869 could Blacks vote in Connecticut.

With the beginnings of industrialization free Blacks in Connecticut began to move from the rural areas and small towns into the cities. Living in strictly defined neighborhoods Blacks formed a separate community within the cities. They lived in poor, shabby neighborhoods and held low-paying jobs. The only potential for advancement was through professional or commercial service to their own community. In this Blacks in cities had some benefits denied Blacks who remained in smaller towns. In these towns Blacks were firmly held at the lowest levels of society. Only a few Black farmers were able to prosper in rural areas; others lived much as they had as slaves, working as field hands.

Blacks were not the only people in Connecticut who moved to cities during this period. The high birth rate in Connecticut coupled with continuous immigration from Northern Europe meant that virtually all good farmland in Connecticut was claimed by 1800. Children of farmers either moved west to farm or abandoned farming

and moved into the cities. This population shift effectively prevented Blacks from working in the early water-powered factories in Connecticut. White workers were nearly always given preference.

The coming of steam-powered factories in the 1830's boosted Connecticut's industrial growth, but this coincided with the mass immigration in 1845-1846 of the Irish following the potato famine. The immigrants served to push the Blacks one notch lower on the social scale by competing directly for those few jobs above the menial level that Blacks had been able to hold. Blacks were squeezed out of municipal and construction jobs they had held earlier in the century.

Although some Blacks held skilled jobs in larger cities like New York and Philadelphia, they were largely within the Black community. Connecticut's cities rarely had Black populations exceeding five percent during the period and the small size of these cities (2,000-10,000) meant that Black populations were too small to support much independent economic activity.

Education : Blacks were admitted in small numbers to local schools in Connecticut as early as the 1780's, but these were exceptional cases. The state of public education in Connecticut improved markedly in 1795 when proceeds from western land sales were used by the state for schools. For the next twenty-five years grade schools in Connecticut were of good quality, and in most communities Blacks attended. Their life was not pleasant in these schools and there was no opportunity for them to go on to public secondary schools. Blacks in larger communities suffered because they were provided with separate—and inferior—schools.

When the state withdrew support from grade schools in 1820, the towns allowed them to decline in quality. In the public schools Whites received poor educations and Blacks, worse.

Henry Barnard as head of education for the state in 1839 and again in 1849 labored to improve public education, but his efforts were of little benefit to Blacks. By 1869 Black children in Connecticut were either unwelcome pupils in small town schools or pupils in inferior all-Black city schools.

Higher education was worse. Few Blacks were admitted to public high schools and few could afford private academies. The social ostracism suffered by Black students in private schools severely limited their numbers there. Much the same was true of Blacks in Connecticut's private colleges and universities. A few exceptionally determined Black men made it through Amherst, Yale and other White colleges, but most Black college graduates had gone to Abolitionist-dominated institutions like Oberlin, Oneida and New York Central College.

Two clear examples of the problems of Black education in Connecticut are the attempt to establish a Black manual arts school in New Haven and Prudence Crandall's efforts to run a private boarding school for Black girls in Canterbury. The townspeople of New Haven in 1831 vehemently objected to the idea of a Black school in town as "incompatible to the prosperity" of Yale and other area colleges and "destructive of the best interests of the city." Prudence Crandall, by operating a boarding school for Black girls, touched off a controversy which resulted in action by the General Assembly. In 1833 it became a crime in Connecticut for any person to open without permission of the town a school for Blacks from other states or countries.

Activity Booklet

The two episodes I have chosen for this final section of the unit are concerned largely with White feelings toward slavery and Blacks in Connecticut. Both are well-documented historical events which I have attempted to simplify without altering the basic facts or outcome.

Both occurred in the 1830's and both were the subject of a major controversy. The first is the *Amistad* Affair. The second is Prudence Crandall's case, which I present as a play.

The *Amistad* Affair concerned slaves captured in Sierra Leone who had seized control of their slave ship and sailed to Connecticut. The court battle over whether to try them for piracy, return them to their Cuban captors or free them lasted several months. Their story has heroic qualities and the brief account of it in the activity booklet places more emphasis on those qualities than on the legal maneuverings that freed them.

The activity booklet lessons are important to this unit but they really only get things started. In teaching the unit myself I find these activities a good way to get students thinking. Then we have something to discuss. The sample lesson plans in the next section are things you can do to follow up on the mental activity the booklet lessons have triggered.

Sample Lesson Plan I

After the three activity booklet lessons on the origins of slavery (Abda, Quinasset and Henry Wentwood), there are a number of class projects possible.

Reports: African, Roman and Greek slavery
Brazilian and Indian slavery
Pequot treatment of captives
Maps: slave routes in Africa
the triangular trade
Charts: the economics of the slave trade

My own preference is to have students write their personal feelings about the stories. They could write an essay on any of the following questions:

Do you think Wentwood should have been punished by being made a slave? Why or why not?
Who was treated most unfairly of these three persons: Abda, Quinasset or Wentwood? Why?
Do you have a better plan for dealing with Indian captives? Describe it.

As an alternative assignment some children enjoy making comic strip versions of the stories. If you can draw, do your own comic strip on ditto masters and leave the balloons empty for them to fill with dialog.

Sample Lesson Plan 2

A good exercise to follow up the activities on social conditions among pre-Revolutionary slaves is list-making. The lists and their justification can get a good class discussion going.

Station students at the board to write down the items or have each child make a complete list first. Some categories for the lists are:

- Things slaves must do
- Things slaves cannot do that free people can
- Things slaves can also do that free people can
- Things slaves don't have to do that free people do
- Good things about being a slave
- Bad things about being a slave
- Good things about owning slaves
- Bad things about owning slaves

Needless to say, this lesson needs careful controlling, but it can generate a good deal of student interest. Other projects are also possible.

- Reports: Southern slavery
 - slave narratives (oral reports on individual slaves)
- Map: slave population density in Connecticut
- Chart: slave jobs in Connecticut

Sample Lesson Plan 3

One way of using the sketches of the stories of Black soldiers is to have the students adlib skits on the following situations:

Caesar Stewart signs up in 1775

Gad Asher asks his master to let him join the army

Jason Yawpon is told to get ready to leave for the army

Jack Arabas argues his case in court

James Cromwell surrenders to the Continental Army after deserting the British

Some classes enjoy taping their skits. I don't really understand why, but some students seem more inventive with a microphone in their hand. Students can also work on the following projects:

Reports: soldiers' life in the Continental Army

Black soldiers in the British Army

Black war heroes

Map: battles in which Connecticut Blacks fought

Teachers' Bibliography

Bayliss, John F., ed. *Black Slave Narratives*. New York: Macmillan, 1970.

This is a nicely organized collection of representative slave narratives which provides a brief and lucid view of slavery from capture in Africa to escape. The narrative of J.W.C. Pennington on pp. 196-221 details his escape from slavery in Maryland and provides interesting background information on a man who later became one of the leaders of Blacks in Connecticut.

Blessingame, John W., ed. *Slave Testimony*. Baton Rouge, Louisiana: LSU Press, 1977.

A massive, scholarly collection of letters, speeches, interviews and autobiographies of slaves and former slaves, this work also deals mainly with the south. However, pp. 30-46 and 200-204 contain letters and

interviews concerning the Amistad affair in New Haven. Also, on p. 7 is a letter from one of his former slaves, now in Georgia, appealing to James Hillhouse of Montville, Connecticut.

Cable, Mary. *Black Odyssey* . New York: Viking, 1971. This is a nicely written, thorough and enjoyable account of the Amistad affair. Although it is probably too dry for most middle school students, excerpts could make good comprehension exercises in reading or social studies classes. Pages 50-55, which contain a synopsis of the prisoners' account, might be useful for this.

Catterall, Helen T., ed. *Judicial Cases Concerning American Slavery and the Negro* . Volume IV: *Cases from the Courts of New England , the Middle States and the District of Columbia* . Washington, D.C.: The Carnegie Institution, 1936.

This is a massive work, but easy to use. It is organized by state and then chronologically. The section on Connecticut (pp. 413-447) begins with a concise summary of slavery in Connecticut and includes a number of significant cases in the history of slavery in the state.

Donnan, Elizabeth, ed. *Documents Illustrative of the History of the Slave Trade to America* . Volume III: *New England and the Middle Colonies* . New York: Octagon, 1969.

There is little direct material on Connecticut, since the bulk of slave-trading in New England was conducted through Boston and Newport. The material is detailed, not conveniently organized and hard to work with.

Greene, Lorenzo J. *The Negro in Colonial New England* . New York: Columbia, 1942.

This is a well-documented, well-written book which gives the best general presentation of Blacks' role in Puritan society.

Litwack, Leon. *North of Slavery* . Chicago: University of Chicago, 1961.

Not centrally concerned with slavery but with free Blacks in the north, Litwack's work was only marginally useful to this unit. It is useful for understanding the abolition and suffrage movements among northern Blacks after slavery in the north was largely abolished.

Mars, James. *Life of James Mars , a Slave Born and Sold in Connecticut* . Hartford: Case, Lockwood and Co., 1865.

An original narrative, this account is interesting although its abolitionist editors have made it more of a propaganda tract than an autobiography.

Logan, Gwendolyn E. "The Slave in Connecticut During the American Revolution." *Connecticut Historical Society Bulletin* 30:3 (July, 1965), pp. 73-80.

She takes a revisionist tack toward an economic explanation for the gradual emancipation of slaves in Connecticut, but Ms. Logan gives a generally balanced summary of the forces affecting Blacks in Connecticut during the Revolution. White's work is more detailed and more general in scope, but Logan's article is really all one needs to read to get an introduction to the question of the Blacks' role in the war.

MacManus, Edgar J. *Black Bondage in the North* . Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 1973.

This book is less regional than Greene's and it takes a harsher position toward northern society. It is comprehensive, but material on Connecticut is not easy to separate from the essentially broad discussions this book contains. One needs to read the book cover to cover, or at least chapter by chapter. The first six chapters and Chapter Ten add to and give a viewpoint different from that of other accounts. Chapter Ten, on Black resistance, treats a topic that earlier writers gave little attention to.

Mitchell, Mary H. "Slavery in Connecticut and Especially in New Haven." *Papers of the New Haven Colony Historical Society* Volume X (1951), pp. 286-312.

There is an apologist tone to this article that makes it less than a balanced discussion of the subject. Its main usefulness is its wealth of information on prominent citizens of New Haven who held slaves, and how those slaves were treated.

Quarles, Benjamin. *Black Abolitionists* . New York: Oxford University Press, 1969.

Although this book covers the entire country and a later period than my unit, I recommend it for several reasons. It gives one a view of Blacks' efforts to secure their own freedom, of the problems emancipation did not solve, and of the development of Black leadership. If nothing else, read the introduction.

Steiner, Bernard C. "History of Slavery in Connecticut." Herbert B. Adams, Ed. *Johns Hopkins University Studies : History and Political Science* . Eleventh Series, Volumes IX-X. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1893.

This is considered one of the basic works of the history of slavery in the north, but it suffers from its bias. Steiner was inclined to view northern slavery as "better" than southern slavery and sought examples to support that opinion. It remains valuable as a legal history of slavery in Connecticut.

Warner, Robert A. "Amos Gerry Beman." *Journal of Negro History* XXII:2 (April, 1937), pp. 200-221.

Beman was one of the major leaders of Connecticut's Blacks during the mid-nineteenth century, and this is a good brief biography. Warner is inclined to overpraise Beman's moderation on the abolition question, but the account is well-balanced otherwise.

Warner, Robert A. *New Haven Negroes : A Social History* . New Haven: Yale University Press, 1940.

Warner is a sympathetic writer and his account is a fascinating and very human one. Every teacher in New Haven should read it, if only to improve his or her feeling for the city's problems. It is not directly applicable to this particular unit, but I find it a great help in teaching later units on Connecticut Black history. Where it is particularly valuable is in its detailed economic, geographic and social profiles of one Black community in a Connecticut city.

White, David O. *Connecticut 's Black Soldiers 1775 - 1783* . Chester, Connecticut: Pequot, 1973.

This is an interesting and readable discussion of the impact of the Revolution on Connecticut's Blacks. It is far more detailed than Logan's.

Students' Bibliography

Since there is little written for children about slavery in Connecticut, the emphasis of this reading list is on two related topics: slavery elsewhere in America, and society in colonial Connecticut. These books are intended as "outside" or "book report" reading for individual students.

Bacon, Martha. *Sophia Scooby Preserved* . Atlantic Monthly, 1965.

This is an action-packed story of a young African girl's capture, her slavery in New Haven, her escape and involvement with pirates. Students enjoy it although it is for better readers.

Beyer, Audrey. *Dark Venture* . 1968.

A twelve-year-old African boy is captured by an enemy tribe and sold into slavery. He ends up the house slave of a rural New England doctor.

Goodman, Walter. *Black Bondage : Life of Slaves in the South* . Farrar, Straus, Giroux, 1969.

This is a moving history of slave conditions. It is valuable for its many photographs and illustrations.

Henessy, Maurice and E. Sauter, Jr. *A Crown for Thomas Peters* . Ives Washburn, 1964.

Another adventurous account of a young African's capture, transportation to America and escape. The wrinkle here is his return to Sierra Leone to fight the slave trade.

Lester, Julius. *To Be a Slave* . Dial, 1968.

This is a skillfully edited collection of slave narratives. Based largely on abolitionist editions of the 1850's and 1860's and on WPA accounts from the 1930's, this book is more accessible to students than Blassingame's book (see teacher's bibliography).

Sterne, Emma Gelders. *The Long Black Schooner* , Follett, 1968.

Somewhat fictionalized in the beginning, this is nonetheless a well-told account of the Amistad Affair of 1883.

Underwood, Betty. *The Tamarack Tree* . Houghton-Mifflin, 1971.

Prudence Crandall's story is made exciting by judicious fictionalizing.

Yates, Elizabeth. *Amos Fortune , Free Man* . Dutton, 1950.

This is the account of a New Hampshire slave who worked for a tanner until he could purchase his freedom at the age of fifty-nine. As a free man he continued as a tanner and was treated as a respected local citizen.

Classroom Materials

The student activity workbook, which is discussed in the narrative portion of this unit, is available from the library of the Teacher's Institute. There are thirty copies. The narrative portion of this unit is designed to serve as a teacher's guide.

Although it is not directly related, the two-part 16mm sound film about the life of Frederick Douglass could be used to good effect as a complement to this unit. This film is available from the Audio-Visual Center at Winchester School.

Another film available at Winchester, and a more pertinent one, is the one on Prudence Crandall. This could easily be used as a reinforcement lesson for the exercises on Prudence Crandall in the activity booklet. Moreover, since the film is somewhat "Hollywoodized," a discussion about how movies and television present events could be worked in as a link between the activity lesson and the film.

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