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# Connecticut



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The **2025 NERGC CONFERENCE** is being held October 29 – November 1  
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• *Focus on Southwestern Connecticut* •

## The Fate of the Black Loyalists of Westchester and Dutchess Counties, New York, Part 2

Teresa Vega

The American revolution left a profound legacy not only for the birth of this nation but also for those who chose loyalty to the British Crown over rebellion. Among these Black Loyalists — individuals, both free and enslaved, who faced unimaginable challenges as they navigated the complexities of war and its aftermath. This article continues the exploration of their lives, focusing on those who originated from Westchester and Dutchess Counties, New York. Many lived on estates owned by prominent families, including the Philipse, Van Cortlandt, Schuyler, Livingston, and Beekman Manors.

Drawing from my own family’s deep roots in these counties, this series sheds light on the experiences of individuals whose choices and sacrifices shaped their futures in the face of war, displacement, and resettlement. By chronicling their journeys — be it evacuation to Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, or other parts of the British Empire — this article aims to honor their resilience and contribution to history. These stories remind us of the diverse threads of loyalty, survival, and identity that are woven into the fabric of the Revolutionary era.

### *8. William Francis, Rose Yates, and Billy Francis, Thomas Francis and Charles Francis, and Caesar Nicholls*

**WILLIAM FRANCIS**, described as “a fine stout fellow” was accompanied by his wife **ROSE YATES**, also noted as “fine and stout.” Both were 30 years old. In 1783, they boarded the ship *Elizabeth*, destined for Port Roseway, with their 3-year-old son **BILLY**. William had decided to escape from captivity in 1777 after Sir Henry Clinton issued the “Philipsburg Proclamation” which offered freedom to any “Negro” willing to take up arms against the Patriots and safety behind British Lines.<sup>1</sup>

At the time of his escape, **WILLIAM** had been in the service of General John B. Van Wyck (1762-1841), son of Dr. Theodorus Van Wyck. Van Wyck, who owned property in North Castle, New York, during the war, had also lost his enslaved man, **CAESAR NICHOLLS** (no. 2 in Part 1), to the same proclamation. Lt. Van Wyck served in Captain Israel Smith's Company of Artillery in the Militia Brigade of Dutchess County. **WILLIAM** and his family were in the possession of Captain Robert Merritt when they departed to Nova Scotia in 1783.

Captain Robert Merritt (1731-1802), a Loyalist from Rye, New York, was active in the Westchester Loyalists and commanded local militia groups in New York City during the Revolutionary War.<sup>2</sup> Following the war, he departed to Port Roseway (now Shelburne, Nova Scotia) with his brothers Thomas, Nathaniel, and Joseph Merritt, along with their families. In 1784, after

<sup>1</sup> See <https://www.philipsemanorhall.com/blog/the-philipsburg-proclamation>

<sup>2</sup> Lorenzo Sabine, *Biographical Sketches of Loyalists of the American Revolution*, vol. 2 (Baltimore, MD: Reprinted for Clearfield Company, Inc. by Genealogical Publishing Co., Inc., 1994), p. 556. See also <https://www.wikitree.com/wiki/Merritt-2419>.

receiving his land grant, Captain Merritt resettled in Hampstead, New Brunswick, where he lived until his death in 1802.

**WILLIAM** boarded the *Elizabeth* with not only his family, but also his two brothers, **THOMAS FRANCIS** and **CHARLES FRANCIS**, both described as “stout” and listed as “B,” indicating they were Black. WILLIAM, aged 27 and THOMAS, aged 36, also had certificates of freedom on them signed by General Birch. Samuel Myers formerly enslaved CHARLES while THOMAS had been enslaved by Isaac Vermilyea, both tenant farmers at Philipsburg Manor. It is possible that WILLIAM, CHARLES, and THOMAS were born-free but indentured to tenant farmers at Philipsburg Manor before seizing their chance for freedom during these turbulent times.

Captain Samuel Myers (1765-1859) enlisted as an express rider at the age of thirteen and served under Col. Udney Hay at Washington’s Headquarters in Fishkill. He frequently rode at night delivering critical dispatches to senior military officials such as Lafayette and Livingston. Myers routinely carried orders from commanding officers across state lines, often delivering them directly to General Washington. In recognition of his service, he was granted a pension increase in 1832, which included the rank of Captain.<sup>3</sup>

Isaac Vermilyea (1754-1815) was a Loyalist who belong to the Westchester Refugees group notorious for terrorizing “The Neutral Ground” during the American Revolution. In 1783, he and his family embarked for Nova Scotia, where they initially settled in Digby in 1784. However, by 1789, Vermilyea returned to New York possibly as a “rehabilitated Loyalist” and resettled with his family in Brooklyn where he lived until his death in 1815.<sup>4</sup>

Like most families living in The Neutral Ground during the American Revolution, the Francis family was divided in its loyalties. My lineage traces back to Bristol Budd Sampson, a Patriot, a brother of WILLIAM, THOMAS, and CHARLES FRANCIS.<sup>5</sup> According to our family’s oral history, these brothers were the sons of John Francis, who was either Afro-Indigenous or tri-racial. Their mother, Mary Frost, was reportedly of Indigenous descent.

As children born to a Native American woman, the Francis brothers were most likely born free but may have been indentured servants. Our oral and written history also recounts that we descend from Indigenous women who married men of African and European descent, including indentured servants of German, Scottish, and Irish origins who ran away with them.<sup>6</sup> Additional-

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<sup>3</sup> See New York, U.S., State Census, 1855, p. 340.

<sup>4</sup> See Sandra Vermilyea Todd’s “The Vermilyea Family Descendants of Johannes Vermilyea, Ny, 1662-2024, p. 60. (<https://freepages.rootsweb.com/~vermilyeareunion/family/Generations1-4.pdf>)

<sup>5</sup> For more information on Bristol Budd Sampson, see <https://allthingsliberty.com/2017/08/tireless-pension-pursuit-bristol-budd-sampson/>

<sup>6</sup> Examples of the diverse populations that inhabited colonial New York, please refer to George A. Thompson, "New-York Slavery Notes, 1732–1770," in *New York Slavery Records Index* (New York: Privately Compiled, 2018)], accessed January 5, 2025, [https://nyslavery.commons.gc.cuny.edu/wp-content/blogs.dir/3171/files/2019/06/Thompson\\_Notes\\_Combined.pdf](https://nyslavery.commons.gc.cuny.edu/wp-content/blogs.dir/3171/files/2019/06/Thompson_Notes_Combined.pdf).

ly, our ancestry included marriage alliances between Indigenous women and European sea captains.<sup>7</sup>

**ROSE YATES** is believed to have been born free to a free mother, who may have been of Indigenous descent or mixed Indigenous-European descent. Our autosomal DNA results support this with Native American admixture ranging from 1% to 11% across multiple New York family lines. Some of our mtDNA is also Indigenous.

As an aside, the story of my 5X great-grandfather, Anthony Piggott, further underscores the complexities of Black and Indigenous experiences during the American Revolution, particularly the coercion faced by Free Blacks on both sides. Anthony Piggott was born free in Massanacchus nigh Hackensack (today's Mahwah, home of the Ramapough Lenape Nation), as recorded in *The Book of Negroes*.<sup>8</sup> In 1774, Anthony, his 36-year-old wife SARAH, and sons JOHN and CAESAR were transported to Port Roseway by Loyalist John Stuart, (1766-1831) who later received a land grant in Ontario, Canada.<sup>9</sup> The fates of Anthony and Sarah and their children remain unknown.

THOMAS FRANCIS (1747-1834) emerged as a leader among Black Loyalists. Even before resettling there, THOMAS demonstrated his leadership by acting as an intermediary between the Black Loyalists and the British colonial authorities, navigating complex negotiations in various capacities. His leadership extended to military service when he joined the Jamaican Rangers, a military unit that was set to sail to Jamaica after the Revolutionary War and settle there. Despite a claim by Phillip Lott, who asserted ownership of THOMAS and sought his return, the American Loyalist Commissioners took the case to Sir Guy Carleton. They argued that Lott purchased THOMAS from Elihu Spencer of New Jersey. However, Carlton rejected their request stating that THOMAS enlistment in the Jamaican Rangers on 02 November 1782, put him under the protection of the Philipsburg Proclamation, securing his freedom and rights as a full British citizen.<sup>10</sup>

In Digby, THOMAS was responsible for registering Black Loyalists for land grants and documenting those eligible to receive them. The Francis brothers all received land grants of 50 acres, a lot less than had been promised but more than the average Black Loyalist.<sup>11</sup> Despite facing many hardships, these three were able to thrive and prosper. Thomas married **ALICE REDDICK**, a Black Loyalist from Crane Island, Portsmouth, Virginia at Trinity Church on 04 December 1792 and they became parents of thirteen children, though several died young.<sup>12</sup> Accord-

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<sup>7</sup> One of our ancestral line's traces back to Lucinda Sexias Sampson (1796-1901), the daughter of a Sephardic Portuguese sea captain named Peter Sexias, and a Narragansett woman named Mary Fowler, whose family originated on Block Island.

<sup>8</sup> Nova Scotia Archives; Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada, Page Number 36: Line Number: Line Number: 33 and *The Book of Negroes*, p. 34.

<sup>9</sup> See <https://www.wikitree.com/wiki/Stewart-52505>

<sup>10</sup> See Lindsey, Arnet "Diplomatic Relations between the United States and Great Britain hearing on the Return of Negro Slaves, 1788-1828," in *The Journal of Negro History*, Vol., No. 4, October 1920, p. 398.

<sup>11</sup> See Loyalists and Land Settlement in Nova Scotia, p. 27. Also, Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada; Nova Scotia Land Petitions (1765-1800); Volume Number: 20 (<https://archives.novascotia.ca/land-papers/archives/?ID=1197>)

<sup>12</sup> See <https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:XL5V-L6D>

ing to Trinity Church baptism records, their children were as follows (with actual birth dates possibly unrecorded).<sup>13</sup>

- i. THOMAS FRANCIS, JR., (03 AUG 1794)
- ii. JOB FRANCIS, (21 DEC 1794)
- iii. WILLIAM EDGAR FRANCIS, (05 SEP 1797)
- iv. MARTHA PATTY FRANCIS, (06 SEP 1795)
- v. PETER FRANCIS, (18 JUN 1799)
- vi. HENRY FRANCIS, (02 AUG 1801)
- vii. JOSEPH FRANCIS, (25 DEC 1803)
- viii. NANCY FRANCIS, (21 DEC 1806)
- ix. PATIENCE REDDICK FRANCIS, (02 SEP 1808)
- x. SALLY FRANCIS, (05 February 1815)
- xi. JANE FRANCIS, (1814-1815)
- xii. JAMES FRANCIS, (18 MAR 1816)
- xiii. ISRAEL FRANCIS, (14 JAN 1817)
- xiv. TRINITY FRANCIS

CHARLES FRANCIS (born 1756) went on to marry **ELEANOR** ( \_\_?\_\_ ) and together they had seven children. The records of Charles and his descendants are limited, but the known children of Charles and Eleanor include:

- i. CHARLES FRANCIS, JR. (11 Dec 1791)
- ii. KATHERINE FRANCIS, (11 Dec 1791)
- iii. MARIE CAROLINE FRANCIS, (11 Dec 1791)
- iv. JOSEPH FRANCIS, (20 APR 1794)

Other possible children, whose connections to Charles and Eleanor remain unconfirmed due to lack of records, include:

- v. ELLA MAE FRANCIS, (c. 1791)
- vi. WILLIAM FRANCIS, ( )
- vii. PHILLIP FRANCIS, (ca. 1793)
- viii. ROBERT FRANCIS, (1795-1867)

WILLIAM FRANCIS (born 1753) appears primarily in muster rolls and land grant documents, though his life is less well documented than that of Thomas and Charles. This may be due to many reasons. One is the widespread practice among siblings of naming their children after their parents and relatives which creates confusion when tracking individual family members. Additionally, the surname "Francis" is common among Scottish, Irish, and English families, all

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<sup>13</sup> See the following: <https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:6ZST-7G55>, <https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:XL5L-ZX3> ; <https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:XL5L-475>; <https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:6Z35-JJ9S> ; <https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:FLRD-SXM>; <https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:V5ML-KKY>; <https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:XL5K-5PL>; <https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:FLRX-YYG> ; <https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:V5ML-KKR>; <https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:6Z8K-HCHY>; <https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:6Z33-HFK9> .

of whom the descendants of Black Loyalists intermarried with for generations. This has led to people of predominantly European descent discovering ancestry linked to Black Loyalists.

On the 1791 baptism records of their CHARLES and ELEANOR's children, two women, HESTHER FRANCIS and NELLY FRANCIS, were also listed. Who are these adults and how were they related to Thomas, Charles, and William? Since Black Loyalists traveled the original thirteen colonies, could other Francis families from Virginia and the Carolinas be related to them, leading to further cases of misattributed parentage? Moreover, the prior baptism page also records some Reddick family members of Alice (Reddick) Francis, wife of Thomas. This raises the possibility that some of the Francis family, along with their Reddick in-laws, may have resettled in a different location.

In subsequent generations, many Francis descendants migrated back to the United States, especially to Massachusetts, New York City, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania. Others traveled to Ontario, Canada, via The Underground Railroad, and later moved to Upstate, New York, Michigan, and Ohio.<sup>14</sup>

**9. Lydia Purdy, Israel Merritt, Dinah Knapp, Alice Knapp, and Job Knapp, BELINDA ( \_ ? \_ ) and her 3-year-old son ( \_ ? \_ ), Sue ( \_ ? \_ ), Ned Moore, and Peter ( \_ ? \_ )**

In 1783, the ship *Nicholas and Jane* departed from New York City harbor bound for Fort Cumberland, Nova Scotia. John Allison (ca. 1725- after 1796) was the shipmaster, who hailed from the seafaring Allison family of Haverstraw, New York.<sup>15</sup> The Allison family were among those families whose war-time loyalties were divided.

What set this transport ship apart was that all the passengers were enslaved individuals, and unlike many other ships heading to Annapolis or St. John, this one was bound for Fort Cumberland. **LYDIA PURDY**, aged 15, and **ISRAEL MERRITT**, aged 25, both described as being Black and “stout” in *The Book of Negroes* were onboard as 29-year-old **DINAH KNAPP** and her two children **ALICE**, aged 6, and **JOB** aged 1.<sup>16</sup> All were enslaved by Sgt. Gabriel Purdy (1754-1841), a tenant farmer on Philipsburg Manor.

According to one of Purdy's descendants, “At the age of 21 he joined the British and fought in the Battle of White Plains on 28 October 1776. He was made a Sergeant at the end of

<sup>14</sup> Black Loyalist Rose Fortune's daughter Margaret married the grandson of Charles Francis, John Francis. In addition, genetic genealogy revealed direct autosomal and mtDNA ties to all of the known Rose Fortune descendants through FamilyTreeDNA's Malagasy Roots Project which I co-administer with PBS's *Finding Your Roots* genetic genealogist, CeCe Moore. We also identified another unknown daughter, Charlotte Fortune Grayson, whose descendants migrated to Upstate New York, Michigan and Ohio. See Margery Allen Perez's *Final Stop, Freedom! The Underground Railroad Experience in Wayne County, New York*, (Saline: Michigan: Herons Bend Productions, 2017). I am currently writing a book on Rose Fortune's Malagasy roots and descent line which traces back to Westchester County, New York.

<sup>15</sup> See Family of John Allison and Amy Wood (<http://www.pollymoth.com/genealogies/all89935.pdf>). See also Ancestry.com. *North America, Family Histories, 1500-2000* [database on-line]. Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2016, p. 253.

<sup>16</sup> Our Westchester and Dutchess Counties surnames include Purdy, Knapp, Storm, Budd, Sampson, Lyon, Sherwood, Halstead, Fowler, Goulet, Pugsley, Brundage, Nelson, and others.

the battle and served as a non-commissioned officer during the war. Gabriel served from 16 November 1779 to 04 February 1780 as a sergeant in the Corps of Westchester Refugees and Light Infantry commanded by Isaac Hatfield. On February 5, 1780, he continued as a sergeant in his brother's, Captain Henry Purdy's, Company of Light Infantry commanded by Colonel James Delancey."<sup>17</sup>

DINAH KNAPP and her children were enslaved by Captain Moses Knapp IV (1749-1833), a Loyalist from Yorktown, Westchester County. Captain Knapp served in Col. Delancey's Brigade throughout the American Revolution.<sup>18</sup>

Sgt. Purdy also transported more individuals on the ship *Caron*, another vessel carrying Loyalists from New York, Virginia, and Maryland. **BELINDA** (\_\_? \_\_), aged 43, **SUE** (\_\_? \_\_), aged 21, and **NED MOORE**, aged 45-, and 19-year-old **Peter** (\_\_? \_\_), were all described as being "stout," a term that suggested they were considered to be valuable laborers. The women may have been tasked with domestic work, such as cleaning, cooking, and childcare, and serving as wet nurses, while the men likely worked in maritime trades, carpentry, or agriculture. Gabriel Purdy eventually married five times and had 17 children! He later resettled with his family in Montreal, Quebec, where he died in 1841.<sup>19</sup>

It is quite possible that the enslaved individuals with surnames may have had familial connections to their enslavers, possibly coming from collateral family lines. Those without surnames may have been purchased or captured from other locations during the war. Life for these individuals was likely harsher than for other Black Loyalists who resettled in communities like St. John or Annapolis, where a sense of community could provide some sort of support. What we do know is that Sgt. Purdy's second wife, Esther Angevine (1759-1803), had two enslaved people buried at the foot of her tombstone in Rose Cemetery, Westchester, Cumberland County, Nova Scotia when she died in 1803.<sup>20</sup> We do not know the names of these two individuals, but perhaps they were among the enslaved women mentioned above.

### 10. Joseph Odell

**JOSEPH ODELL** was recorded as "Joe" in *The Book of Negroes* and described as a "fine boy." He was listed as the property of Daniel Odell (1733-1816), a Loyalist from Beekman, Dutchess County, New York. Daniel Odell, a tenant farmer and rent collector on the Livingston estate, lost everything during the Revolutionary War.<sup>21</sup> It is likely that JOSEPH was raised in the Odell household.

In 1783, when JOSEPH boarded the ship *Caron* bound for Annapolis Royal, Nova Scotia, he was among a group of Black Loyalists who were enslaved Westchester and Dutchess County Loyalists, including Gabriel Purdy and Moses Knapp. At the time, JOSEPH was consid-

<sup>17</sup> See <https://www.uelac.org/PDF/Gabriel-Purdy-UE-from-Bob-McBride.pdf>

<sup>18</sup> See [https://uelac.ca/loyalist-directory/detail/?wpda\\_search\\_column\\_id=4483](https://uelac.ca/loyalist-directory/detail/?wpda_search_column_id=4483) ; <https://www.royalprovincial.com/military/mems/ny/clmknapp.htm>

<sup>19</sup> See Ancestry.com. *U.S., Find a Grave® Index, 1600s-Current* [database on-line]. Lehi, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2012;

<sup>20</sup> See <https://uelac.ca/Loyalist-Info/extras/Purdy-Gabriel/Gabriel-Purdy-Family-Divided.pdf>

<sup>21</sup> See to <https://uelac.ca/loyalist-trails/loyalist-trails-2020-44/>; <https://uelac.ca/loyalist-trails/loyalist-trails-2018-07/>

ered to be valuable because he was young, healthy, and likely able to endure the harsh conditions awaiting him.

On 3 July 1792, a runaway advertisement appeared in the *Royal Gazette and the Nova Scotia Advertiser*, reporting the escape of JOSEPH ODELL and PETER LAWRENCE —the same Peter who sailed on the *Caron* with him almost a decade earlier.<sup>22</sup> This surname raises the question of whether Gabriel Purdy had previously sold Peter to a members of the Lawrence family, Loyalists who emigrated from New York and Monmouth County, New Jersey, to New Brunswick in 1783. Both JOSEPH and PETER fled from their enslavers, Daniel Odell, and Philip Earle. The advertisement described JOSEPH as 24 years old, five feet six inches tall, a “likely fellow “ with remarkable white teeth. PETER was described as five feet eight inches tall and “very black.” Their enslavers offered a ten-dollars reward for their capture and return.

The ultimate fates of JOSEPH ODELL and PETER LAWRENCE remain unknown. In taking a courageous second chance on freedom, they left behind a legacy of resistance. Whether or not they succeeded, their plight underscores the relentless pursuit of liberty by those who were enslaved.

### ***11. John Wilkins, Michael Wilkins, Ichabod Wilkins, and his wife Phillis Wilkins, Fleura Neura, Andrew West, and Phillis (\_\_\_?\_\_\_)***

**JOHN WILKINS, MICHAEL WILKINS, and ICHCABOD WILKINS** were brothers initially enslaved by Judge Isaac Wilkins, a Loyalist who fled Westchester for England in 1775 due to his support for The Crown. Upon his return to Long Island with other Loyalists in 1776, Patriots raided his Westchester farm. During the raid, the Wilkins brothers and other enslaved people were captured and taken as prisoners.<sup>23</sup>

In *The Book of Negroes*, the three brothers are recorded as having fled from John Thomas of White Plains, Westchester County.<sup>24</sup> Both JOHN, aged 25, and ICHABOD, aged 26, likely escaped during the skirmishes and battles that plagued the Neutral Ground at the time.<sup>25</sup> MICHAEL, aged 15, fled in 1778, probably after Judge Thomas died as a prisoner of war in 1777. All three brothers were described in *The Book of Negroes* as being “stout,” a term indicating they were valued as strong and capable workers.

The Wilkins brothers left on separate vessels. JOHN boarded the *Bridgewater* and was noted to have a scar on his chin. He was in the possession of “Peter Toner,” who was likely Loyalist Peter Stoner from Rensselaerswyck Manor in Albany County. Peter and his brother John

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<sup>22</sup> Refer to Harvey Amani Whitfield, *Biographical Dictionary of Enslaved People in the Maritimes*. (Toronto, Canada: University of Toronto Press, 2022) pp. 139-140.

<sup>23</sup> See Stephen Davidson’s biographical sketch of Isaac Wilkins at <https://uelac.ca/loyalist-trails/loyalist-trails-2008-30/>.

<sup>24</sup> An ardent Patriot, Judge Thomas read the Declaration of Independence on the steps of the courthouse in White Plains, New York on July 11, 1776. He was later arrested by Long Island Loyalists in March of 1777 and imprisoned in the Livingston Sugar House in Lower Manhattan where he died on May 2, 1777, a martyr for the American Revolution.

<sup>25</sup> These battles include Battle of Pell’s Point (October 18, 1776), Battle of White Plains (October 28, 1776), Bronx River Valley and Kings Bridge/Yonkers (September- November 1776), as well as other Neutral Ground skirmishes.



Stoner were wanted in Poughkeepsie, Dutchess County, for their involvement with Butler's Rangers.<sup>26</sup> While Stoner family eventually relocated to Ontario County, Ontario, JOHN WILKINS's fate remains unknown.

MICHAEL sailed on the ship *William*, captained by Edward Major, bound for St. John, Nova Scotia. The vessel was owned by William Wright, a New York tavern and grocery store owner who also operated as a Loyalist spy during the American Revolution.<sup>27</sup> MICHAEL was accompanied by two other Black Loyalists: **FLORA NEURA** and **ANDREW WEST**. FLORA, formerly enslaved by a Mr. Kingsland of Barbadoes Neck, Bergen County, New Jersey, left her owner in 1780.<sup>28</sup> ANDREW escaped from Joseph West of Shewsbury, Monmouth County, New Jersey, in 1779.<sup>29</sup> Unlike MICHAEL who had a General Birch Certificate granting him British citizenship, FLORA and ANDREW did not possess certificates of freedom. The fates of MICHAEL, FLORA, and ANDREW remain unknown following their arrival in St. John.

ICHABOD and his wife PHILLIS left on the ship *Nautilus* bound for Abaco Island in the Bahamas. ICHABOD married PHILLIS during their time in British-occupied New York City. PHILLIS, described as a "stout wench" and "M" (mulatto), was born free on Long Island. Her status as a free-born mulatto woman suggests that she may have been of Indigenous descent. Both ICHABOD and PHILLIS were in the possession of Captain Patrick Kennedy.<sup>30</sup> Their ultimate fate is unknown.

## 12. Elizabeth Black

**ELIZABETH BLACK** was described as a 24-years old mulatta born in Madagascar when she boarded the ship *Aurora* bound for St. Johns, Nova Scotia in 1783. At that time, she was in the possession of a Mr. Buskirk. The surname "Buskirk" refers to the Loyalist Van Buskirk family of Bergen County, New Jersey.<sup>31</sup> Lt. Col. Abraham Van Buskirk fled to Nova Scotia with sixteen other family members, eventually settling in Shelburne, Yarmouth, and New Brunswick.

<sup>26</sup> A descendant wrote these notes about Peter Stoner, see <https://www.everingham.com/family/data/stoner7.html> ; See also [https://uelac.ca/loyalist-directory/detail/?wpda\\_search\\_column\\_id=8142](https://uelac.ca/loyalist-directory/detail/?wpda_search_column_id=8142) ;and American Loyalist Claims, 1776–1835. AO 12–13. The National Archives of the United Kingdom, Kew, Surrey, England.

<sup>27</sup> See [https://uelac.ca/loyalist-directory/detail/?wpda\\_search\\_column\\_id=9360](https://uelac.ca/loyalist-directory/detail/?wpda_search_column_id=9360)

<sup>28</sup> The surname "Nerna" could possibly be connected to the family of Richard and Samuel Narn, Patriots who fought in the Albany County Militia and Second New York Regiment. See [http://dunhamwilcox.net/ny/ny\\_rev\\_bounty\\_lands\\_albany.htm](http://dunhamwilcox.net/ny/ny_rev_bounty_lands_albany.htm) . Mr. Kingsland is a descendant of Isaac Kingsland (1647-1698), one of the founders of New Barbadoes Neck, Bergen County along with the Sandford, Morris, Berry families — all of whom enslaved my ancestors.

<sup>29</sup> Joseph West of Shrewsbury, Monmouth County is most likely a descendant of Col. Robert West (1624-1697). See <https://www.wikitree.com/wiki/West-4047>

<sup>30</sup> See [https://uelac.ca/loyalist-directory/detail/?wpda\\_search\\_column\\_id=4415](https://uelac.ca/loyalist-directory/detail/?wpda_search_column_id=4415) . It should be noted that there were eight other Black Loyalists on that ship, including Joseph Paul and his wife Susannah Paul, Free Blacks who indentured themselves to Capt. Kenney. Joseph Paul went on to become one of the founders of Methodism in the Bahamas. See Whittington B. Johnson, *Race Relations in the Bahamas, 1784–1834: The Nonviolent Transformation from a Slave to a Free Society* (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 2000), p. 51.

<sup>31</sup> For the Van Buskirk family, refer to <https://www.bergencountyhistory.org/loyalists-in-bergen>

It remains unclear which Van Buskirk family member was ELIZABETH's employer when she disembarked in St. John. She eventually settled in Birchtown, one of the first free Black settlements in Nova Scotia.<sup>32</sup>

At the age of nine, ELIZABETH was indentured to Mrs. Francene Jay Cortlandt (1701-1780), who was married to Frederick Van Cortlandt (1699-1749), the architect of the Van Cortlandt House located at 246<sup>th</sup> Street and Broadway (now Van Cortlandt Park) in the Bronx.<sup>33</sup> As an indentured servant, she may have been tasked with cooking, cleaning, food production, agricultural work, and artisan crafts like spinning, weaving, sewing, dressmaking, and candle making, etc.

ELIZABETH's surname suggest that she may have been a *zana-mulata* — the mixed-race daughter of a European settler, trader, or soldier and a Malagasy woman who was brought to New York by her father.<sup>34</sup> While her father's identity remains uncertain, he might have been one of the sons of New York City merchant Captain Richard Black, a Loyalist whose family settled in Shelburne, Nova Scotia, after the American Revolution.<sup>35</sup> The Black family were prominent merchants who conducting trade in New York, Canada, Scotland, the West Indies, and the Indian Ocean. ELIZABETH could have been taken to British-occupied New York City by her father, fled there herself amid upheaval in the Neutral Zone, or, left with Loyalists who raided the Van Cortlandt estate.

ELIZABETH was one of 1,192 disaffected Black Loyalists who departed Nova Scotia aboard 15 ships on 15 January 1792 bound for Sierra Leone.<sup>36</sup> Her name appears on a ration list for eggs on Christmas Day 1792.<sup>37</sup> What became of her after this remains unknown.

### ***13. Pomp Willett, Nancy Willett, John Willett, and Lilly Willett***

**POMP WILLETT**, aged 36, **NANCY WILLET**, and **JOHN WILLETT**, aged 8, escaped captivity in 1776, following the death of their enslaver Sarah Willett, during the numerous

<sup>32</sup> Elizabeth Black was listed on the 1784 Muster Roll of Free Blacks who settled in Birchtown, one of the earliest Free Black settlements in Nova Scotia. See

[https://blackloyalist.com/cdc/documents/official/muster\\_book\\_free\\_blacks.htm](https://blackloyalist.com/cdc/documents/official/muster_book_free_blacks.htm)

<sup>33</sup> See <https://americanaristocracy.com/people/frances-jay>

<sup>34</sup> During the colonial era, European men often married the daughters of Malagasy chiefs to forge political and economic alliances. Similarly, sea captains in New Netherlands and British Colonial New York formed alliances by marrying the daughters of Indigenous chiefs.

<sup>35</sup> See Macbean, William M., *Biographical sketches of Saint Andrew's Society*, (New York: The Society, 1925), p. 82; *New York City during the American Revolution : being a collection of original papers (now first published) from the manuscripts in the possession of the Mercantile Library Association of New York City.* (New York: Priv. print. for the Association, 1861) p. 121 ; and Sabine, Vol II, p. 480.

<sup>36</sup> See Christopher Fyfe, *A History of Sierra Leone* (London: Oxford University Press, 1962), 125; James W. Walker, *The Black Loyalists: The Search for a Promised Land in Nova Scotia and Sierra Leone, 1783–1870* (New York: Africana Publishing Company, 1976), 42–45; Simon Schama, *Rough Crossings: Britain, the Slaves and the American Revolution* (London: BBC Books, 2005), 210–12; Cassandra Pybus, *Epic Journeys of Freedom: Runaway Slaves of the American Revolution and Their Global Quest for Liberty* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2006), 178; Robin W. Winks, *The Blacks in Canada: A History* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1997), 92 .

<sup>37</sup> See Richard Smith, "The Lives and Letters of the Black Loyalists, Part 4: Women's Lives," *Untold Lives* (blog), British Library, December 18, 2020, <https://blogs.bl.uk/untoldlives/2020/12/the-lives-and-letters-of-the-black-loyalists-part-4-womens-lives-.html>

skirmishes and battles in the Neutral Ground. In 1778, daughter **LILLY WILLETT** was born free behind British lines. By 1783, when the family embarked for St. Johns, Nova Scotia, aboard the ship *Peggy*, POMP was described as a “stout fellow” and NANCY a “stout wench,” and both children as “likely,” a term used to denote good looks and suitability for labor. Having worked for a prominent family they would likely have been viewed as valuable workers.

Sarah Willett was a member of the influential Willett family, whose reach extended to Flushing, Long Island, New York City, and Westchester County. The most prominent family member of this family was Col. Marinus Willett (1740-1830).<sup>38</sup> It is unclear if Sarah Willett was married or single.

The Willett family’s Black Loyalists were in the possession of Robert Hicks (1713-1792), a Loyalist also from Flushing, Long Island.<sup>39</sup> The Hicks family, like the Willett family, were prominent family in Flushing society. Whitehead Hicks (1728-1780), for example, was among the first Loyalist to declare allegiance to the British Crown in 1776. Both families likely knew each other through their shared social standing, political ties, and economic activities. Some members of these families also practiced the Quaker faith, suggesting additional connections.<sup>40</sup>

It is unknown how the Black Loyalist Willett family came into contact with Robert Hicks — whether on Long Island or New York City. Nonetheless, in 1783, they boarded the *Peggy*, bound for St. John, Nova Scotia. While Robert Hicks later returned to the United States, dying in Granville, North Carolina, in 1792, the ultimate fate of the Willett family remains unknown.

#### ***14. Abraham Thomas, Thomas Johnson, His wife Sarah Johnson, and their children Colin Johnson, Eisha Johnson, Patty Johnson, and Jemima Bull.***

**ABRAHAM THOMAS** was described as a 20-year-old, “stout fellow” when he fled Lemuel Willett’s estate in Fredericksburg, Dutchess County, New York. Recorded as Black, ABRAHAM stated he was born-free in the Town of Westchester. His surname suggests that he may have been born in one of the homes of the Thomas Family of Harrison, New York. The exact date of his escape is unknown, but it likely occurred during one of the many battles in the Neutral Ground. Since ABRAHAM claimed he was a free Black, it is possible he was an indentured servant rather than enslaved when he decided to align himself with the Loyalist cause. He carried a General Birch Certificate when he boarded the ship *Tree Briton* (also recorded as *Free Briton*) commandeered by Jacob Hays, the son of Jewish Loyalist merchant Jacob Hays.<sup>41</sup>

<sup>38</sup> See Bailey, Rosalie Fellow, “The Willett Family of Flushing, Long Island,” *New York Genealogical and Biographical Record*, July 1949, Vol. 80, Issue 3, pp. 156-164.

<sup>39</sup> See [https://uelac.ca/loyalist-directory/detail/?wpda\\_search\\_column\\_id=3816](https://uelac.ca/loyalist-directory/detail/?wpda_search_column_id=3816) and <https://www.wikitree.com/wiki/Hicks-2309> and Sabine, Vol II, p. 530.

<sup>40</sup> Quakers were pacifists during the Revolutionary War. See Sheila Jones, “The Other Side of the American Revolution: A Look at the Treatment of Philadelphia Quakers during the Revolutionary War,” (Philadelphia: Laurel Hill Mansion, 2004), accessed January 7, 2025, <https://laurelhillmansion.org/documents/history/2004Jones.pdf>.

<sup>41</sup> Stephen Davidson’s two-part series on the Hays Family. Can be found here: <https://uelac.ca/loyalist-trails/loyalist-trails-2019-48/> and <https://uelac.ca/loyalist-trails/loyalist-trails-2019-49/>.

ABRAHAM had previously worked for Lemuel Willett, a Patriot who served in the New York Militia in Dutchess County and contributed to local defense against Loyalists and raiders in the Neutral Ground. While there is no definitive proof, it is plausible that Lemuel Willett was related to General Marinus Willett in some capacity.

At one point, ABRAHAM was in the possession of Donald Ross, a Scottish Loyalist from Tryon County, New York.<sup>42</sup> Ross was known to have several Black Loyalists in his charge. These included THOMAS JOHNSON, aged 40, described as “stout,” Black, and a holder of a General Birch Certificate, his wife SARAH JOHNSON, aged 22, recorded as a “stout wench” and a “quadroon”, and their mulatto children, COLIN JOHNSON, aged 4, EISHA JOHNSON, aged 11, and PATTY JOHNSON, aged 9-months. THOMAS had escaped from Burgess Smith of Lancaster, Pennsylvania, and eventually made his way to New York City. It is possible that Ross had a prior connection to THOMAS, as he was a tenant farmer on the property of William Johnson of Johnstown in Tryon County, New York.

Another individual, JEMIMA BULL also fled her owner and came under Ross’s possession. She was described as being 26 years old, Black, and a “slender wench.” JEMIMA escaped from an unidentified Mr. Bull, in 1779. This Mr. Bull was likely a descendant of William Bull (ca.1689-1755), a master mason, a Wawayanda patentee with his wife Sarah Wells, and progenitor of the Bull Family of Orange County.<sup>43</sup> Like ABRAHAM and THOMAS, JEMIMA also carried a General Birch Certificate.

The circumstances of how ABRAHAM THOMAS, THOMAS JOHNSON, and JEMIMA BULL came into contact with Donald Ross remain unclear. Their paths may have crossed Long Island, New York City, or another location where Ross was active during the war.

***15. John Simonsbury, Henry McGrigger, his wife Dinah McGrigger, Moriah (\_\_\_), William Syruss, Ben Broughton and his wife Nancy Broughton, Moses Palmer, and his wife Hannah Palmer***

**JOHN SIMONSBURY**, aged 43, and recorded as “heathy,” escaped enslavement in 1779 after General Howe’s proclamation. He had been enslaved by Charles Collins, Jr. (1761-1803), a mason residing in Fredericksburg, Dutchess County, New York, during the Revolutionary War.<sup>44</sup> Charles Collin Jr.’s father, Charles Collins, (1727-1796), was a Patriot and a merchant who owned a general store selling dry goods in Litchfield, Connecticut. As an enslaved man in the Collins household, John likely trained as a mason under Charles Collins, Jr., and may have acquired skills associated with operating a dry goods store.

<sup>42</sup> Donald Ross’s Loyalist claim can be found at Ancestry.com. *UK American Loyalist Claims, 1776-1835* [database on-line], Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2013. In 1772, Tryon County was sectioned off from Albany and subsequently became Montgomery, Herkimer, and other Upstate and Western New York counties. See [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tryon\\_County,\\_New\\_York](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tryon_County,_New_York).

<sup>43</sup> See <https://www.bullstonehouse.org/william-bull--sarah-wells.html> and Ancestry.com. *U.S., Find a Grave® Index, 1600s-Current* [database on-line]. Lehi, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2012. Regarding Sarah Wells early life, see <https://www.chroniclenewspaper.com/news/local-news/a-family-takes-root-in-the-wilderness-LVCN20180222180229973>.

<sup>44</sup> Ancestry.com. *North America, Family Histories, 1500-2000* [database on-line]. Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2016, p. 83.

The surname “Simonsbury” could reference Symonds bury, a village in Dorset, England, which was the place of origin for many early settlers in Litchfield, Hartford, and Windsor, Connecticut. It is possible JOHN’s original owner, or their ancestors were from this village. It is unknown where JOHN was born.

In British-occupied New York City, JOHN encountered Alpheus Palmer (1759-1826), a Loyalist from Mamaroneck, Westchester County, New York. Alpheus was the son of Lewis Palmer and Rebecca Fowler. After the War, Lewis Palmer and several of his sons, including Alpheus and Benjamin, emigrated to Port Roseway (Shelburne), Nova Scotia aboard two different ships in 1783. Alpheus and Benjamin Palmer sailed on the frigate *London*, while their parents traveled on the ship *Apollo*.

The Palmer brothers were responsible for eleven individuals listed as “servants.” They and their father were members of the Port Roseway Association, which was tasked with settling Port Roseway.<sup>45</sup> Among Alpheus’s “servants” were JOHN SIMONSBURY, as well as HENRY MCGRIGGER, aged 24 and described as “stout, his wife DINAH MCGRIGGER, aged 24 and recorded as a mulatto and “stout wench,” and MORIAH, a 26-year-old “weakly wench.” Other servants included WILLIAM SYRUSS aged 30 and described as “stout,” BEN BROUGHTON, aged 38, recorded as “passable,” along his BEN’s wife, NANCY BROUGHTON, 24 and described as “remarkably stout and lusty, with scars on her right arm.

Benjamin Ross had three additional servants listed as his “servants.” MOSES PALMER, aged 18 and described as “stout, HANNAH PALMER, aged 15, and described as a “stout wench,” and NANCEY, aged 24 and a “stout wench.” HENRY, DINAH, WILLIAM, MORIAH, and NANCY were noted as originally from South Carolina, while BEN and NANCY were from Virginia. JOHN, MOSES, and HANNAH were from Westchester and Dutchess Counties, New York.

The exact status of these eleven individuals aboard the *London* is unclear.<sup>46</sup> None carried certificates of freedom, suggesting they were likely enslaved people who were held captive by members of the Palmer family. Their ultimate fates remain unknown.

#### *16. Henry Maxfield, Hannah Maxfield, and their two small children*

**HENRY MAXFIELD**, aged 33, and described as a “stout fellow” was recorded as “free-born” in Mr. Philipse’s House at Philipsburg Manor. It is unknown which Mr. Philipse was his employer. Alongside his wife **HANNAH MAXFIELD**, aged 23 and noted as a “stout wench,”

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<sup>45</sup> For more information on the Port Roseway Association, see <https://capebretongenealogy.com/port-roseway-minutes-1> ; Regarding the Palmer family, refer to <https://www.wikitree.com/wiki/Palmer-8009> .

<sup>46</sup> For a discussion of the controversy about the different statuses of Black Loyalists, see Harvey Amani Whitfield, “The African Diaspora in Atlantic Canada: History, Historians, and Historiography.” *Acadiensis* 46, no. 1 (2017): 213–32. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/44784961>.

and their small children, HENRY boarded the ship *Ann & Elizabeth*, commanded by Benjamin Fowler, bound for Port Roseway, Nova Scotia.<sup>47</sup>

Although HENRY's racial classification is not noted in *The Book of Negroes*, he may have been born to an indentured servant mother with free-status or descended from one of men in the Maxfield Family of Dutchess County, New York.<sup>48</sup> It remains unclear if his mother was of European, African, or Native descent. Similarly, HANNAH, also born free, might have descended from an indentured servant of similar diverse origins. At some point during the Revolutionary War, they found each other in British-occupied New York City.

HANNAH was employed by John Prudden (1751-1803) from Closter, Bergen County, New Jersey, during the war and may have chosen to join the Loyalist cause at some point. The Prudden family was from Morris County, New Jersey, and descend from Rev. John Prudden.<sup>49</sup> John, Rev. Prudden's great-grandson, was a Patriot who served in the Morris County Militia.<sup>50</sup>

HENRY, HANNAH, and their two small children, were in the custody of Scottish Loyalist Alexander Watson (1750-1784).<sup>51</sup> Alexander Watson and his wife Margaret also had two small children when they arrived in Shelburne in 1783. Like so many Loyalists, the Watsons made major sacrifices to support the Crown. They had lost much during the revolution and were looking to start a new life in Shelburne. Though the ages of the Maxfield children are not stated, HANNAH may have functioned as a wet nurse for the Watson children and a domestic servant to their mother. HENRY would have made a good laborer. Shortly after receiving a 100-acre land grant in the Fall of 1784, 34-year-old Alexander started to build a country estate on the Clyde River. However, he was discovered dead in his bed by his neighbors.<sup>52</sup> As a widow, Margaret may have relied on the support of his Watson relatives who also emigrated to Nova Scotia.

We do not know what became of HENRY, HANNAH, and their children after their first Winter in 1783.

### *17. Lydia Tompkins and Sam Tompkins*

**LYDIA TOMPKINS**, a 34-year-old woman, described as a "likely stout wench," fled with her 2-year-old son **SAM TOMPKINS**, from Elnathan Hunt, a tenant farmer on Philipse Manor. Hunt, a Patriot, may have abandoned his estate after one of the many battles in The Neutral Ground. He had leased land on Philipse Manor near present-day Scarsdale, which included a racing ground and tavern.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> This Captain Benjamin Fowler may be a Loyalist enslaver from South Carolina who was tasked with transporting Black Loyalists to Port Roseway, Nova Scotia. *The Book of Negroes* record two enslaved individuals, Lizzie, aged 50, and William Martin, aged 13, who escaped from his plantation in Horseshoe, South Carolina in 1780.

<sup>48</sup> See <http://maxfieldgenealogy.com/maxfield.html>

<sup>49</sup> See <https://ancestors.familysearch.org/en/LTPR-3CF/rev.-john-prudden-1645-1725>

<sup>50</sup> See [https://services.dar.org/Public/DAR\\_Research/search\\_adb/default.cfm](https://services.dar.org/Public/DAR_Research/search_adb/default.cfm)

<sup>51</sup> [https://uelac.ca/loyalist-directory/detail/?wpda\\_search\\_column\\_id=8855](https://uelac.ca/loyalist-directory/detail/?wpda_search_column_id=8855)

<sup>52</sup> Steven Kimble. *Loyalists and Layabouts: The Rapid Rise and Faster Fall of Shelburne, Nova Scotia, 1783-1792*. (Canada: Doubleday, 2008). pp. 188-189.

<sup>53</sup> See "Women in the Neutral Zone," *Philipse Manor Hall State Historic Site*, accessed January 2, 2025, <https://www.philipsemanorhall.com/explore2/women-in-the-neutral-zone>.

Both LYDIA and SAM were described as mulatto suggesting that LYDIA may have been of mixed-race descent. It is unclear whether LYDIA was a free Black indentured servant or enslaved, but in 1776, she decisively chose freedom by joining the Loyalists. SAM's father identity remains a mystery. When LYDIA boarded the ship *Grace* bound for St. John, Nova Scotia, she carried a General Birch Certificate.

By 1783, LYDIA and SAM were under the authority of Daniel Fowler (1746-1813), a Loyalist from Newburgh, New York, who emigrated to St. John, Nova Scotia, with several members of his family.<sup>54</sup> The circumstances under which LYDIA met Daniel Fowler are unknown; it could have occurred on Long Island or in New York City. In 1786, Fowler was granted 200 acres of land and settled in Westfield, Kings County, New Brunswick.<sup>55</sup> Neither LYDIA nor SAM was mentioned in his 1813 will.<sup>56</sup>

The ultimate fates of LYDIA TOMPKINS and SAM TOMPKINS after their arrival in St. John, Nova Scotia remains unknown.

### **18. Massey Austen**

MASSEY AUSTEN, described as a 30-year-old "stout wench" in *The Book of Negroes*, fled Joseph Tomkins (1764-1778) of Dutchess County in 1776. She boarded the ship *Cato* bound for Annapolis, Nova Scotia. MASSEY's surname was recorded as "Astin" in the document, though it is mostly likely "Austen." The Austen and Tompkins families were in-laws from Dutchess County, New York.<sup>57</sup> Similarly, there is no documented individual with the surname "Tankins," a likely clerical error or misreading. It remains unclear if MASSEY was a free Black indentured servant or an enslaved woman.

Joseph Tompkins, a Loyalist, enlisted in the Loyal American Regiment in Captain Randle's Company. He was killed in battle on 12 April 12, 1778, at the age of fourteen. Could MASSEY have been the wet-nurse and caretaker of Joseph Tomkins from infancy, only to flee before he enlisted in the Loyal American Regiment in 1777? Many of Joseph's relatives migrated to Nova Scotia and New Brunswick after the war, further complicating the web of relationships and circumstances surrounding MASSEY's story.

It is uncertain when MASSEY came in contact with Jacob Ross, a Loyalist from Tryon County, New York. Their paths may have crossed on Long Island or in British-occupied New York City. Ross and several members of his family emigrated to Canada after the war. He eventually settled in Cornwall, Ontario County, Canada.<sup>58</sup>

MASSEY AUSTEN's freedom journey concludes after her arrival in Annapolis, Nova Scotia, where her story vanishes from the historical record.

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<sup>54</sup> Lorenzo Sabine, *Biographical Sketches of Loyalists of the American Revolution*, (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1864), pp. 422-434; <https://www.wikitree.com/wiki/Fowler-10119>

<sup>55</sup> <https://archives.gnb.ca/Search/RS686/Details.aspx?culture=en-CA&Key=37806>

<sup>56</sup> See <https://archives.gnb.ca/Search/MC3706/Details.aspx?culture=en-CA&abstract=8027&section=NameIndex>

<sup>57</sup> Edith Austin Moore, *John Austin and His Family* (Cleveland, OH: Privately Printed, 1948), 10–11, <https://archive.org/details/johnaustinfamily00moor/page/n5/mode/2up>.

<sup>58</sup> <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/103272924/jacob-ross;>

### 19. *Eleanor Fleming, her son ( \_\_?\_\_ ), and Samuel Fleming*

**ELEANOR FLEMING** was a 21-year-old, “stout wench” when she boarded the ship *Clinton*, with her 4-year-old unnamed son bound for St. John, Nova Scotia. She was listed as formerly the property of William Pugsley (1758-1816), a Patriot from Philipse Manor, whom she fled in 1777 during the violent skirmishes in The Neutral Ground.<sup>59</sup> Pugsley, a tenant on Philipse Manor, served in the Dutchess County Militia.

The surname “Fleming” raises the possibility of a connection to the Fleming family of Westchester County, New York. Could ELEANOR have been born in the household of Captain Peter Fleming (1739-1823), a Patriot from Bedford, Westchester County who served in the 2<sup>nd</sup> New York Regiment?<sup>60</sup>

ELEANOR FLEMING was not the only person bearing the surname aboard the *Clinton* when it departed New York in 1783. SAMUEL FLEMING, a 20-year-old free-born “stout” man from Valley Forge, Pennsylvania, was also listed as a passenger. As a free-born individual, SAMUEL was likely employed by James Morgan (1702-1782), a Patriot and ironmaster, who owned the Durham Iron Furnace.<sup>61</sup> SAMUEL may have worked as either a personal servant or worked under grueling and hazardous conditions of the furnace, which was notorious for its reliance on brutal labor. In 1780, there were twelve Black laborers working at the Durham Iron Furnace, five of whom escaped that same year and joined the Loyalist cause in New York.<sup>62</sup> SAMUEL FLEMING may have fled the furnace as part of an earlier group in 1778.

The status of ELEANOR and SAMUEL FLEMING remains ambiguous. Were they free Black indentured servants or enslaved individuals? Could SAMUEL have been born in Westchester County, New York, and sent to Pennsylvania by another relative of the Morgan family, given their extensive involvement in trade between the two regions? Is he the mixed-race son of a Morgan descendant? Unlike other Black Loyalists, ELEANOR AND SAMUEL were not in the possession of a Loyalist escort, their racial classification was not documented, and they did not carry certificates of freedom. Their origins and connections remain a complete mystery.

### 20. *Tamer ( \_\_?\_\_ )*

**TAMAR** was a 13-year-old enslaved girl described as an “ordinary wench” when she boarded the ship *Jason* bound for St. John, Nova Scotia, in 1783. She traveled with her owner,

<sup>59</sup> See Ancestry.com. U.S. , Sons of the American Revolution Membership Applications, 1889-1970 [database on-line]. Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc. 2011; .

<sup>60</sup> See <https://www.americanwars.org/ny-american-revolution/westchester-county-militia-second-regiment.htm> ; Ancestry.com. *New York Historical Manuscripts: Revolutionary Papers* [database on-line]. Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations Inc, 2003.

<sup>61</sup> For more information on James Morgan and the Durham Furnace, refer to <https://www.wikitree.com/wiki/Morgan-373> ; <https://durhamhistoricalsociety.org/durham-iron-furnace-1727-1791/> .

<sup>62</sup> William Watts Hart Davis, *The History of Bucks County, Pennsylvania: From the Discovery of the Delaware to the Present Time* (New York: Lewis Publishing Company, 1905), p. 140, accessed January 4, 2025, [https://archive.org/details/Bucks\\_County\\_History\\_1903/page/n7/mode/1up](https://archive.org/details/Bucks_County_History_1903/page/n7/mode/1up).



Gilbert Pugsley, a Loyalist, and brother of Patriot William Pugsley of Philipse Manor.<sup>63</sup> The *Jason* was captured by Thomas Appleby, a Loyalist from Westchester County who emigrated to St. John, Nova Scotia, with many of his relatives.<sup>64</sup> Appleby likely secured employment transporting these final passengers departing New York City as the Revolutionary War drew to a close.

Among those aboard the *Jason* with TAMAR were Gilbert Pugsley, his second wife, his 10-year-old granddaughter Charlotte and her older brother, David.<sup>65</sup> Gilbert was one of several Pugsley brothers who emigrated in the Fall of 1783, enduring the region's harsh first winter. By 1785-6, Gilbert received a land grant of over 200 acres in the newly established province of New Brunswick.

As an enslaved pre-teen, TAMAR may have been raised to serve as a companion and age-mate to Charlotte while performing domestic duties for Mrs. Pugsley. Unlike TAMAR, however, Gilbert Pugsley was able to return to Westchester County with his family in the 1790s. He is buried alongside his brother William and other relatives, his tombstone only bearing his initials, with no dates of birth or death.<sup>66</sup>

The fate of TAMAR, like that of so many enslaved individuals, remains unknown after her arrival in St. John. Her life likely mirrored the immense struggle of Loyalists and enslaved people alike as they sought to survive the difficult early years of settlement in Nova Scotia.

**--To be concluded**

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<sup>63</sup> See Ancestry.com. *North America, Family Histories, 1500-2000* [database on-line]. Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2016. p. 95.; [https://uelac.ca/loyalist-directory/detail/?wpda\\_search\\_column\\_id=6810](https://uelac.ca/loyalist-directory/detail/?wpda_search_column_id=6810)

<sup>64</sup> See [https://uelac.ca/loyalist-directory/detail/?wpda\\_search\\_column\\_id=200](https://uelac.ca/loyalist-directory/detail/?wpda_search_column_id=200) and <https://uelac.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/Fleets-Loyalists-evacuated-NY-NB.pdf>

<sup>65</sup> See "Queries," Rose, Fran, "More About Charlotte Haine(s), subject of book *Charlotte*," by Janey Lunn at <https://uelac.ca/loyalist-trails/loyalist-trails-2007-47/#Charlotte>

<sup>66</sup> See Ancestry.com. *U.S., Find a Grave® Index, 1600s-Current* [database on-line]. Lehi, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2012. Our cousin, Nicondra Boyd-Hopkins, a direct descendant of the enslaved Bush family who resided at the Bush-Holley House in Cos Cob, Greenwich, CT. She is also a descendant of the Black Pugsley family of New Rochelle, Westchester County. Boyd-Hopkin's matriarch, Hannah Pugsley, was emancipated by Quaker Hannah Pugsley, daughter of James Pugsley and the he niece of both Gilbert and Capt. William Pugsley. For information on both Hannah Pugsleys, please refer to "New York, United States records," images, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3Q9M-CSSS-Q9MM-Z?view=fullText> : Feb 10, 2025), image 273 of 710 (Hannah Pugsley's will); "New York, United States records," images, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3Q9M-CSSS-Q9M4-K?view=fullText> : Feb 10, 2025), image 136 of 710 (James Pugsley's will); "The Tale of Hannah Pugsley is legendary by Barbara Davis, The Standard Star (New Rochelle, New York), Thu Feb 8, 1996, p4; and Historic graves remain unrecognized" by Barbara Davis, The Daily Item (Port Chester, New York,), Feb 15, 1996, p.4.