Informants and Artifacts: Local Histories' Representations of Bondage and the Precarious States of Freedom in Northeastern Vermont

Vermont's popular historical memory has long clung to the Green Mountain State's pioneering 1777 abolition of slavery, but in doing so avoiding, if not evading, the practice of de facto *slavery and nuanced forms of bondage, the presence and contributions of people and communities of color, ambivalence toward emancipation, and systemic and overt racism that persisted well into the nineteenth century and beyond.*

By Richard M. Balzano

New England managed to avoid confronting its historical legacy of slavery for too many years, but diligent scholarship brought and continues to bring the region's slaving practices to the fore.[1] So too is Vermont's relationship with the institution of slavery being unearthed, although popular historical memory has created an uphill battle.[2] The vague and uncertain terms by which Vermont's 1777

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Constitution abolished slavery created a space in which the roles of former slaves and people of color went undefined, wherein the sovereign freedoms of Vermont's elite continued to impose, overtly and systemically, upon the individual freedoms of former *and future* slaves. This was accompanied by a procession of poverty legislation in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries that restricted destitute individuals across racial lines from civic participation and submitted them to legitimized bondage and coerced labor.[3] Vermont's popular historical memory, however, has long clung to the Green Mountain State's pioneering 1777 abolition of slavery, redirecting focus toward a rich history of abolitionist voices and Underground Railroad conductors, but in doing so avoiding, if not evading, the practice of slavery, *de facto* slavery and nuanced forms of bondage, the presence and contributions of people and communities of color, contrary ambivalence toward emancipation, and the systemic and overt racism that persisted well into the nineteenth century and beyond.[4] Elise Guyette summarizes the challenges faced by Vermont historians as "struggling to dig ourselves out from . . . a mountain of half-truths and hidden histories of slavery and racism in the state."[5]

The historical genre of town, county, and area histories from the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries both shaped Vermont's historical memory and were in turn shaped by it. Characterized by local pride and the details of proprietors and prosperous men, this historical genre is often evasive about poverty, diversity, blemishing historical details, and accurate citations. Glenn A. Knoblock contends that "[m]any supposedly exhaustive town histories . . . fail to mention persons of color or the existence of the institution of slavery at all, even when it was known to have been present."[6] When people of color are mentioned in these works, they are often objectified, depicted in anecdotal mockery, or portrayed as willful participants in and recipients of generous paternalistic relationships of servitude. Within the genre, slavery is rarely presented with somber reflection and dignity.[7] This article examines this historical genre in northeastern Vermont as both informants and artifacts; as informants these works offer obscured examples of human trafficking, slavery, *de facto* slavery, and questionable terms of bondage in northeastern Vermont both prior to and following emancipatory legislation, while examining these works as artifacts provides insights into racial objectification and racism within the genre and its local sources, and exposes inconsistencies with the aforementioned tendencies in the evasion of slavery and exploitation.

Regarding the geographic scope of this study, on the eve of the American Revolution the New Hampshire Grant settlements that began

in the early 1760s at Newbury, Vermont, and Haverhill, New Hampshire, marked the northern periphery of *substantial* British settlement along the Connecticut River, isolated sixty miles north of the closest notable settlement at Charlestown, New Hampshire, then referred to as Number Four.[8] While Newbury sits just south of Vermont's present-day Northeast Kingdom counties of Caledonia, Essex, and Orleans, it was once the northern extent of the Crown's manageable reach along the Connecticut River *in what became Vermont*, and, as such, it is included in the geographic scope of this study, along with surrounding towns that developed within its sphere. Newbury and Haverhill have been dubbed "twin sisters," chartered on the same day to the same individuals, settled in unison "by the same class of people," sharing a meeting house for a quarter-century and many cultural and cooperative elements of a unified community at the onset, and developing in near synchronicity into the nineteenth century.[9] Given the interconnectedness of these communities, it would be remiss to exclude Haverhill and the communities that developed within its orbit east of the Connecticut River from the scope of this study. As Vermont's northern border with what is now Canada was reaffirmed with the Revolution's conclusion, the space of "northeastern" Vermont shifts into the Kingdom, as does the scope of this research and the residences of several individuals discussed herein.

Slavery and the Indigenous Population

Before considering slavery in northeastern Vermont, or Vermont on the whole, as practiced by White settlers of European origin, a comprehensive examination must include the institution in relation to Vermont's American Indian population, both prior to and after European settlement. Precontact bondage in the Americas varied among the hemisphere's many cultures but often took the form of adoptive kinship, wherein captives were introduced to a new tribe by way of "social death" and rebirth, but European contact transformed these institutions and absorbed American Indians into the slave trade as both slavers and slaves. Prisoners of war remained the primary original source for captives, but the motivations for conflict were enhanced by European contact; diseases introduced by Europeans depleted tribal populations and increased demand for new adoptees to fill the ranks of the deceased, while the introduction of European firearms created a tribal arms race, prompting demand for captives to trade for firearms, culminating in a destructive cycle of violence and displacement. Enslaved American Indian captives throughout North America were taken aboard British ships and relocated to New England, Latin America, and the Carib-

bean.[10] Although American Indians comprised the majority of New England's enslaved population until the eighteenth century,[11] many native to New England were relocated to the Caribbean when taken in conflicts with the region's settlers; northern New England's Abenakis were often transported to Barbados, and the threat of enslavement hovered over and hindered Abenaki-settler relations in the seventeenth century.[12]

The Western Abenaki were the primary, but not exclusive occupants of what would become Vermont prior to European arrival, and they did practice adoptive kinship, but the institution transformed when adapting to the pressures of European settlement. The once-thriving series of Western Abenaki settlements along the Connecticut River Valley became part of a highway for Abenaki raids transporting New England captives northbound to Montreal and the surrounding communities, and while some captives were adopted and integrated into an Abenaki society itself in transition, other captives were exchanged with French, and later English, authorities for material goods and political advantage in a contested northeastern landscape.[13] These and other raids produced a literary genre unto itself in which early accounts favored "Puritan pens" and "cruel and bloodthirsty" stereotypes, but by the middle of the eighteenth century captive New Englanders produced sympathetic and humanizing narratives, precursors to New England readers' sympathetic disposition toward Indian dislocation and expansionism in the coming century.[14] Many of the remaining Western Abenaki population in and around Vermont continued to lead a migratory lifestyle in the northern woods, but the practice of captive adoption kinship in Vermont ended with the American Revolution and the state's formation and settlement.[15] The Abenakis that remained did so on the periphery of both Vermont society and the historical record, appearing in town warnings out and early censuses by way of omission.[16] Local reflections in town, county, and area histories often recall Abenakis like ranger Indian Joe fondly, but in a manner consistent with orthodox accounts of New England colonialism that depict Indian-settler relations as cross-cultural collaborations.[17]

EARLY SETTLEMENT TO 1850

Vermont's colonial-era settlements preceded both the American Revolution and constitutional emancipation by over fifty years, during which time slavery was legally sanctioned and practiced by White settlers in every occupied corner of what would become Vermont, including the New Hampshire Grants settlements along the Connecticut River. Despite the 1777 abolition of slavery, the institution continued in many forms on

both sides of the law and remained legal in New Hampshire. Vermont's 1777 abolition failed to convert childhood enslavement to indenture, leaving children and young adults legally enslaved until reaching the majority age of manumission, which was eighteen for females and twenty-one for males. Due to insufficient record keeping, the accuracy of one's age was at the discretion and integrity of one's master. Enslaved individuals were sold and transported across state lines prior to manumission, reducing the 1777 emancipation to a logistical obstacle to the enslavement of young people of color in Vermont. The Sale and Transportation Act of 1786 sought to rein in this practice, and its passage demonstrates "*prima facie* evidence of the existence of slavery in Vermont"; but the act lacked mechanisms for enforcement and intrastate trafficking was not curtailed until the passage of the 1806 Act to Prevent Kidnapping.[18] Numerous members of Vermont elite society overtly continued to keep Black slaves outside the law, while an untold number of Vermont's Black population was subjected to *de facto* slavery. Whether these individuals were enslaved was often indiscernible to members of the community, and many community members expressed ambivalence. The documented list of elite slaveholders beyond 1777 includes, but is by no means limited to, Marshall Lewis Morris, overseer of the controversial 1790 census, Capt. Moses Sage of North Bennington, and members of the Allen family as late as 1841. In northeastern Vermont, evidence suggests Col. John Barrett of Topsham held slaves,[19] while one Ruth Farrow appears to have been in questionable service to the esteemed Arnold family of St. Johnsbury as late as 1851.[20] Early local histories generally took evasive measures when faced with documenting the presence of slavery, but, seemingly unaware or dismissive of the commonalities between slavery and servitude, several local histories presented in this study offer accounts of *de facto* slavery in northeastern Vermont.

With the conclusion of the French and Indian War, a small number of individuals began preparing lands for settlement at Newbury in 1761 prior to the arrival of the first families in the winter of 1762–1763. Among these early arrivals was Abraham Webb, slave to one of Newbury's most prominent settlers, Jacob Bailey. Frederic P. Wells's *History of Newbury, Vermont, from the Discovery of the Coös Country to the Present Time* introduces Webb briefly among the earliest arrivals. Without mentioning the terms of Webb's relationship to Bailey, Wells describes Webb as "partly mulatto and partly Indian," noting that he drowned in the Connecticut River and was the first person buried at the Ox-bow cemetery.[21] His death is mentioned again several pages later in a chapter devoted to the town's "Early Years" with no additional context.[22] Hundreds of pages later, Wells's chapter 37 revisits Webb in the context

of cemeteries, and here his bondage is brought to light: "The third [to die] was Abraham Webb, who was a half-breed Indian, and had been a slave of Jacob Bailey."[23] A subtle omission, perhaps, but Wells's failure to mention Webb's enslavement at the onset of settlement raises the question as to whether Wells sought to avoid tarnishing Newbury's first steps with bondage. As is evidenced throughout this study, however, histories of this era were printed in stages and had limited capacity for revision. It is plausible, therefore, that Wells learned of Webb's enslavement after the initial printing of earlier chapters. Aside from Webb, Wells makes no additional mention of slavery at Newbury and offers nothing to distinguish Newbury's Black inhabitants.

The long-held belief that slavery in New England was comparatively benevolent has been dismantled by scholars in recent decades, as have the caricatures of the region as a monolithically puritan society, and Puritans as particularly pious. Historian Wendy Warren identifies diversity among early New England's European population, and she observes puritan theology as having "no existential distaste for slavery," adding that "the famed devotion of [puritan] colonists coexisted with their very real pecuniary desires," and that "piety and profit went hand in hand."[24] To these ends, the region's puritanical extremes produced inhumane methods of punishment, especially for individuals in bondage.[25] William F. Whitcher's *History of the Town of Haverhill, New Hampshire* offers examples of such extremes and does not shy away from mentioning slavery, although he is selective in his admissions so as not to tarnish town prominents. Among Haverhill's earlier settlers was Colonel and Judge Asa Porter, an extensively landed and influential member of the community, and Whitcher does not shrink from acknowledging that slaves were present in Haverhill and the surrounding towns, or that three of Haverhill's four slaves counted in the 1790 census were claimed by Porter. Whitcher also acknowledges Grafton County's "severe code of law"; indeed, he details at length the hanging spectacles, executions on the courthouse floor, brandings, amputations, and disfigurements, and the propensity to sell criminals into bondage for nominal crimes.[26] Whitcher does not, however, tarnish the reputation of the Hon. Asa Porter. Absent from Whitcher's descriptions of crime and punishment, and his work on the whole, is an episode in which Porter administered the flogging of his own female slave that was apparently severe, as "she was so terrified that she attempted to jump into the nearby Connecticut River."[27] Whitcher does make note of the execution of Thomas Powers, a Black man from a neighboring town accused of rape and hanged. Powers reportedly had sold his body upon death to two doctors, who in turn

flayed his corpse and had his skin tanned and made into boots.[28] Whitcher's work is generally void of Black members of the community outside of slave counts in local census tallies; although he makes mention of Abraham Webb's early arrival at Newbury, there is no mention of Webb's bondage.[29] Whitcher's history is unique to the genre in that he does not dwell on local abolitionism, nor does he evade slavery or the barbarous elements of early punishment; but he does choose to prioritize the prestige of a particular town prominent by omitting the abuse of his slaves.

As settlement trickled north of Newbury prior to the outbreak of the Revolution, it appears slavery may have as well. Among the early grantees of Ryegate was Rev. John Witherspoon, the slave-owning president of the College of New Jersey (Princeton University) and later signatory of the Declaration of Independence. The reverend's eldest son, James Witherspoon, took up residence in Ryegate in 1774, and it is suggested in Edward Miller and Frederic P. Wells's 1913 town history that James brought slaves with him.[30] James abandoned his lands to join the Revolution in the summer of 1776, and he died at the Battle of Germantown the following year. His property reverted to his father upon his death, who disposed of the family's Ryegate holdings in the following decades. According to Miller and Wells,

> James and Abraham Whitehill . . . purchased in 1798 six lots in the northwest corner of this town which are called the "Witherspoon tract" on which James, son of President Witherspoon had begun a settlement in 1774, where he expected to found an estate. He came there with a number of men, *some of whom are said to have been colored slaves*, who cleared about 25 acres and erected a house and other buildings.[31] [emphasis added]

James Witherspoon's activity in Ryegate is mentioned several times in the authors' account of the town's early years, each progressing with increased detail. This particular entry is the only one to observe James in possession of slaves, and the only indication of slavery occurring in Ryegate at all, but it is absent from the scope of the town narrative, instead obscured within the fine print of the genealogical section of the town's early inhabitants. The placement of the authors' claim that Witherspoon brought slaves to Ryegate warrants consideration as to whether the disclosure was an act of exclusivity in which a known fact or probability was intentionally tucked away out of sight, or an act of inclusivity in which the logistics of the publication process prevented revision and forced the authors to repeatedly expand the Witherspoon-Ryegate narrative as new information was discovered.[32] Had informa-

tion that James Witherspoon held slaves at Ryegate come to light in the final stages of publication, it would be diligence on the part of Miller and Wells to include it in the later pages of the book. The authors' contention that "some of" James' workmen "are said to have been colored slaves" suggests that the evidence is anecdotal,[33] but had James Witherspoon brought slaves to Ryegate as the authors suggest, it would mark a very rare example of chattel slavery transpiring in Vermont's Northeast Kingdom prior to emancipatory legislation of 1777. If James had not brought slaves to Ryegate, but instead had people of color in his employ, the anecdotal accounts provided offer insights into the local interpretations of Black labor and caste in northeastern Vermont.

Well-published New England historian Georgia Drew Merrill's *History of Coös County, New Hampshire* describes Stratford's formation at the end of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, and herein Merrill includes journal entries from esteemed and oft-intoxicated Vermonter Eben Judd's surveys of the town in 1788. Rather out of context, Merrill chooses to include Judd's observations of a sermon by the Rev. George Whitefield in the barn of one Col. Bailey of Vermont, where Judd reports that "Mr. Whitefield . . . was very extraordinary for Thundering out with a loud voice so as to make those of a Week mind become a pray to his lamentations, etc., particularly one 'Pomp,' a Negro, who always used to fall down."[34] Pomp's status as a free or enslaved person is not addressed by the author. If residing in Vermont, one might be inclined to assume Pomp was a free individual given the date of the sermon, although Pomp could just as likely have been bound by some form of *de facto* slavery; if residing in New Hampshire, Pomp and his family may very well have been enslaved through the conclusion of the American Civil War.[35] While Judd's attendance at Whitefield's sermon is irrelevant to the development of Stratford, Pomp and any disability he may have endured are especially so, and Merrill's choice to include Pomp in such a context demonstrates an uglier trait within the historical genre to cast people of color in humorous despair.

A resident of Guildhall depicted in similar fashion is "Old Bacchus," whose unfortunate descent into hermitage and possible lynching are depicted with anecdotal humor in several historical accounts of the origin for the name of Guildhall's Cow Mountain, with minor but illuminating deviations.[36] Milton Cutler presents an account of the origins of Cow Mountain's name in Abby Maria Hemenway's

1867 *Vermont Historical Gazetteer*:

> In the earlier days of the town there lived in that part of . . . the "North Road," a sable African called Bacchus, or "Old Bacchus," who resided in that neighborhood for a considerable number of years. He was physically powerful and fond of sport, usually good natured but of sufficient amount of temper when offended. At last he broke up housekeeping and retired to the forest upon this mountain, taking with him another man's cow without leave, and for sometime sustained himself in the woods, baffling his seekers. But at last, having, like greater mortals, reached the end of his chain, was captured and imprisoned and did not long survive his misfortune.[37]

Twenty years after the publication of Cutler's piece in the *Gazetteer*, the episode of Bacchus and Cow Mountain are recounted nearly verbatim in Everett C. Benton's 1886 *History of Guildhall*.[38] The following year Hamilton Child's *Gazetteer of Caledonia and Essex Counties* offered a slight variation of the preceding accounts, that "Cow mountain . . . received its name from the fact that a hermit negro, called 'Old Bacchus,' who lived in this vicinity, appropriated to his own use another man's cow, for which he suffered the dire consequences"[39] (See Appendix A). Although outside the scope of the historical genre examined in this study, the Federal Writers' Project's 1937 *Vermont: A Guide to the Green Mountain State* says the following about Bacchus and the origins of Cow Mountain's name:

> [A]n early Negro inhabitant of Guildhall who decided to break up housekeeping and retire to the fastnesses of this mountain stole a neighbor's cow and took it with him. He was finally caught by an armed posse and died in prison soon afterward. The name of the man who gave up his freedom for an assured supply of fresh milk was—Bacchus. [40]

No source is given for Cutler's original anecdote; Cutler, twice appointed assistant judge of Essex County (1860 and 1862), was privy to the intricacies of Guildhall's history and perhaps this particular narrative. The Cutlers were among the earlier families in town when Benoni Cutler arrived in 1784, eventually purchasing the land and mill belonging to Abner Osgood and Col. Ward Bailey in the North Road neighborhood where Bacchus once reportedly resided, and very likely the place where Eben Judd observed Pomp and Rev. Whitefield's sermon.[41] Cow Mountain appears on maps by the 1850s, but no death record appears in Guildhall for anyone named Bacchus, nor does a Bacchus appear in the census on either side of the Connecticut River.[42] As slaves were sometimes given Greek and Roman names,[43] one might be inclined to assume that Bacchus had been born or spent some years in bondage, and records throughout the US and Canada from this time abound with individuals of that name. Bacchus the deity, however, was

also frequently invoked in the context of drink during this time,[44] and while Bacchus of Guildhall's flight to the hills may have been prompted by socioeconomic circumstances, it may also have come about in a state of co-occurring mental and substance-based deterioration, earning him the pseudonym among members of a community prone to condescending characterizations of people of color. The Federal Writers' Project's assertion that Bacchus was apprehended by an armed posse and the subtle suggestion that he died of injuries sustained in the process is a seductive plausibility, but whether the authors were privy to additional sources, embellishing, or reading between the lines of prior accounts is not known. While Bacchus could very well have been aggressively apprehended and died in custody, ostensibly lynched, it is also possible that he became ill when exposed to the elements of Vermont's northern forests and died shortly thereafter. The story of his unfortunate death was one of objectification and humorous misfortune to earlier historians and Guildhall's inhabitants when naming Cow Mountain. Bacchus and Pomp were both present on the North Road in the vicinity of Col. Ward Bailey's property, yet no people of color are mentioned in the descriptions of the town's early settlement; their absence is an example of the exclusion of Black individuals from Vermont's historical narrative.

In 1805 Gen. Roswell Olcott of Norwich, Vermont, son of esteemed Vermont politician Peter Olcott, settled just north of the Canadian border and west of Lake Memphremagog in Brome County, Québec. Ernest M. Taylor's county history contends that Olcott "brought into Brome with him three black slaves, two boys and one girl."[45] Although this claim is supported by local accounts provided in the immediate content of Taylor's work, he presents a contrasting account of Olcott's arrival in a later passage, claiming the general "brought into the County two black servants or slaves—a boy and a girl."[46] That their status as slaves or servants was indiscernible to Taylor in the latter passage is telling of the overlapping characteristics of slavery, *de facto* enslavement, and servitude. Moreover, Olcott's decision to transport three Black individuals bound in some fashion across state lines raises questions about Olcott's intentions to indefinitely extend their terms of bondage. Gen. Olcott was not, however, in violation of existing laws. As noted above (see p. 5), Vermont's 1777 constitutional ban of adult slavery allowed for the continued enslavement of females up to age eighteen and males to age twenty-one; and unlike other Northern states' emancipatory transitions, Vermont failed to commute child enslavement to indenture, which in turn enabled slaveowners to sell and transport slaves across state lines. In response to nearly thirty years of hu-

man trafficking, the legislature enacted the 1806 Act to Prevent Kidnapping, under which violators faced incarceration and lashings for trafficking in slaves.[47] Gen. Olcott's northbound transition, however, preceded this legislation. Two of the three individuals in Olcott's company died before reaching majority age, but according to local accounts, Frank, the surviving male, ran away upon reaching the age of twenty-one, which would have been the majority age of either his indenture or enslavement.[48] Indentured servants who reach majority age do not *run away* unless the terms of their manumission are not honored. Perhaps an argument regarding the accuracy of Frank's known age transpired; perhaps the general intended to sustain Frank's enslavement indefinitely, and chose to disregard the terms of his manumission at twenty-one years of age once in Canada, prompting Frank to run; perhaps the accounts of Frank's departure were local misunderstandings of a mutually amenable exit in accordance with Vermont manumission at twenty-one years of age. While Olcott's motives and intentions may forever remain unknown, given the tendency of Vermont's elites to disregard emancipatory legislation, reports of Frank having run away, and that Olcott transported three bound minors out of Vermont to a space in which their servitude became indefinite, it is likely but not conclusive that Olcott intended to sustain the terms of their bondage. Whether or not the three individuals of color who accompanied Olcott from Vermont to Canada were servants or slaves prior to their departure, they were very much slaves upon arrival, if Olcott wished it so.

Edward T. Fairbanks's *Town of St. Johnsbury VT, A Review of One Hundred Twenty-Five Years to the Anniversary Pageant 1912* suggests that slavery persisted in town through 1851. The seemingly well-intentioned Fairbanks describes the life and service of Ruth Farrow, one of St. Johnsbury's eighteenth-century settlers who lived in town until her death in 1851. Fairbanks objectifies Farrow and makes inconsistent assumptions about the state of her servitude on three occasions throughout his work. His initial description reads:

> Ruth Farrow was a negress who had been given to the Arnold family as a slave in Rhode Island prior to the abolition of slavery there. Dr. Arnold had given her freedom, but she said she would rather be a servant of the family for all her life. She had her wish, living fifty-three years in this town and serving three generations of the Arnold family. She had all the good qualities of her race, was trusty and faithful in her place, and always friendly to the village children.[49]

Fairbanks conflates Farrow's subservience with virtue, and demonstrates limited recognition of the prevalence and varied manifestations of bondage when he makes the bold assertion that Farrow's choice to

remain in service to the Arnold family was sincere and enthusiastic, disregarding the likelihood of Farrow's limited alternative prospects and mobility. Farrow's service to the Arnolds was as likely a form of *de facto* slavery, if not coerced then systemic, and the overlapping nature of slavery and servitude is supported by the account of an unnamed local individual describing Farrow as "the slave who belonged to the Arnold family."[50] Fairbanks again mentions Farrow as "Old Aunt Ruth . . . the negress who had been given as a slave to the Arnold family in Rhode Island; she was set free, but chose to remain a servant for life," adding that Farrow was "a fine specimen of her race."[51] In contrast, however, Fairbanks makes the concession that Ruth Farrow was "the only person who might in a sense be called a slave in the State of Vermont."[52] His final mention of Ruth Farrow occurs in his description of St. Johnsbury's 125th-anniversary pageant, in which several historic town prominents were portrayed with their families, including "Aunt Ruth the negress who was given to the family as a slave in Rhode Island."[53] Ruth Farrow never married nor had children, and we might presume that her life was characterized by labor, loneliness, and isolation, perceived "with curiosity not unmingled with fear" by members of the community.[54] If the creators of the St. Johnsbury pageant envisioned Farrow a free woman, not bound or coerced to her service of the Arnold family, but in fact part of the communal foundation, it speaks not only to the pride Vermonters took in their antislavery heritage, but also to Vermonters' failure to recognize nuanced forms of bondage. It should be noted that Edward T. Fairbanks was the son of Vermont legislator and American Colonization Society member Joseph P. Fairbanks, who was the business partner and brother of Gov. Erastus Fairbanks.[55] That Erastus guided Vermont into the Civil War should not overshadow his gradual abolitionism, nor Joseph's Colonization Society desires to export liberated slaves from the continent through the African Colonization project.[56] Edward T. Fairbanks would not be the first son to stray from the values of his father, but issues of Southern slavery were moot during his lifetime. While Fairbanks's work embraces Vermont's pioneering emancipatory efforts and abolitionist spirit, his objectifying accounts of Ruth Farrow are par for the historical genre, demonstrating the imperceptible differences between slavery and servitude, offering at the very least an example of *de facto* slavery well beyond the emancipatory legislation of 1777.

Poor Laws and Coerced Labor

Poor laws became a mechanism through which destitute individuals were frequently displaced or placed in bondage, and while Vermont

towns navigated these laws to avoid responsibility to care for the poor, individuals of means found ways to profit from their misfortunes. Vermont's poor laws were rooted in English and early New England legislation under which the liability to provide care for destitute individuals was carried out locally, creating an environment in which the mobility of the individuals was regulated at the discretion of local authorities based on assumptions of character and potential for economic stability so as not to become a burden on the town.[57] Early Vermont settlements were rather exclusive toward newcomers, and in 1779 Vermont passed both the Act for the Ordering and Disposing of Transient Persons and the Act for Maintaining and Supporting the Poor; the former empowered local municipalities to warn and remove nonresidents from town at their discretion, while the latter defined residency as having held occupancy in the township for one year without warning. The 1787 Act Providing for and Ordering Transient, Idle, Impotent, and Poor Persons redefined residency as having been born in or owning property valued at no less than two hundred pounds in the given township, denying resident status to all incoming persons of nominal means and thus voiding responsibility for their care, making warnings unnecessary for the next several years.[58]

In the 1790s Vermont took several steps to legitimize coercive labor, and a procession of legislation enabled municipal authorities and members of the community to profit at the expense of the poor. While the 1777 Constitution had allowed for the continued enslavement of young people of color, in 1791 Vermont's legislators tried but failed to pass the Negro and Mulatto Act, a vagrancy law that would have allowed the forceful indenture of adults of color deemed "idle," employing similar vague verbiage that had afforded municipalities the arbitrary judgmental discretion to remove wandering poor in the previous decades.[59] Although the bill failed to pass, Vermont lawmakers enabled similar measures across racial lines by the century's end. New England states abandoned town warning models by the mid-1790s, but Vermont changed course in 1797 when the General Assembly modified the 1787 law, expanding the means by which one established legal settlement within a town, prompting local authorities to discourage their destitute from leaving, reaffirming and enhancing local responsibilities in caring for the poor, and empowering towns to commit those in their care to indenture.[60] Local approaches to the 1797 revisions varied, but most Vermont towns indentured children and auctioned their adult poor to the lowest bidders into situations generally characterized by abuse, hunger, exploitation, and hardship, persisting throughout the nineteenth century.[61]

The inclusive expansion of residency requirements in the 1797 revisions were revoked in 1801, and the State modified the shape and mechanisms of its poor laws again by empowering local authorities to both define legal residency and warn individuals out of town at their discretion. In response, towns adopted extensive and aggressive measures to avoid any potential financial liabilities by warning out most, if not all, incoming persons, from vagrants to doctors, and the practice of issuing and delivering warnings became a lucrative enterprise for clerks, constables, and selectmen. Municipal authorities rarely enforced removal of warned parties after 1801, and the destitute were referred to their prior town of legal settlement for services, resulting in numerous disputes over liability. This excessive practice of issuing warnings to avoid fiscal responsibility for the poor was not repealed until 1817.[62]

Free Blacks "overwhelmingly chose urban life" for vocational opportunities and the comfort of community,[63] and while some families remained in rural areas or made the choice to take up rural living, many struggled and returned to urban centers.[64] Town warnings deterred settlement and disrupted the lives of several Black households in early northeastern Vermont. In the geographic scope of this study, four of the six free Black households recorded in the 1790 census received town warnings at some point during their time in Vermont—specifically the households of George Knox and Nero Cross of Thetford, and Worcester McDuffee and Jeremiah Virginia of Newbury—while an additional household not recorded in the census was warned prior to 1790.[65] In the earlier wave of town warnings, in which individuals were expected to relocate, the household of Stephen Pelham—a Black and Indian household not present in the 1790 census—was warned out of Thetford on May 24, 1786,[66] and again on April 5, 1787[67] (See Appendix B). The Pelham family relocated frequently over three generations until settling in Guildhall, where Stephen Pelham, grandson of Stephen Pelham warned out of Thetford over sixty years prior, became the first individual convicted of manslaughter in Essex County in 1851.[68] The Knox household was warned from Thetford along with the Pelhams in April 1787,[69] and Knox himself was warned again in the town of Berkshire in 1813,[70] while Cross was warned from Thetford in 1811.[71] The households of Worcester McDuffee and Jeremiah Virginia appear to have migrated to the growing Black communities in northwestern Vermont, where the household of Jeremiah Virginia was warned from Swanton in 1813,[72] and McDuffee warned from St. Albans in 1817.[73]

Confronted with the growing cost for supporting the poor, in the 1820s Vermont towns started purchasing undesirable lands for poor farms as alternatives to the auction block, but this endeavor offered the

destitute appalling conditions, limited mobility, and arrangements that very much resembled bondage across racial lines. Housing not only the poor, but also the elderly, mentally ill, and physically disabled, these facilities were characterized by remoteness, unsanitary housing conditions, labor requirements, and harsh punishment that included withholding meals, whipping, and solitary confinement in small structures "primarily used to quarantine smallpox patients on the farm." Indeed, being sent to Vermont's poor farms has been compared to a death sentence.[74]

The most recent local history included in this study, Ernest L. Bogart's 1948 *Peacham: The Story of a Vermont Hill Town*, demonstrates forms of coerced labor and bondage that crossed racial barriers, targeted the poor, and persisted throughout the nineteenth century. In the absence of public institutions to support Peacham's poor, destitute individuals were auctioned to the lowest bidder among the community, and Bogart observes that "[t]his method of disposing of the town poor savored of the slave auction block."[75] The auctioned individual provided the winning bidder with her or his labor in exchange for shelter and basic necessities, and the town provided the bidder with a stipend and reimbursements, thus offering the bidder a potentially lucrative enterprise.[76] Bogart does not shy from verbiage that places this system in the realm of enslavement, contending that Nancy, noted only as the daughter of Lemuel Durrell, was "sold to David Brown," while Eunice Thayer, whose final eleven years were spent in the cycle of poverty and bondage, was "shunted from farm to farm, having ten different masters, and regularly changing her domicile," until her death in 1827 "released her from a servitude which was ignominious and unrewarded."[77] In response to rising stipends and reimbursement costs, the town abandoned the auction-bondage model and established a poor farm on 600 acres in 1832, but the costs of this endeavor exceeded the prior model. In 1845 the town sought enterprising parties to lease not only the farm, but "all the Poor belonging to the town of Peacham" residing on it;[78] the wording here is telling of the degree of bondage to which these impoverished individuals were held and the overlapping characteristics of slavery and servitude. The town oscillated between leasing, sustaining, or selling the farm between 1845 and 1847, but it remained in operation until the town sold the farm to Edmund M. Taft in 1891, at which time its inhabitants were again auctioned off to the lowest bidders.[79]

CONCLUSIONS

While residents of Peacham might wish to forget the aforementioned chapters of their history, they can take some degree of pride in Bogart's

progressive and insightful assessments of bondage within the town, which stands out comparatively among town histories in the region. The subject of town warnings is mentioned ever so slightly in Edward T. Fairbanks's account of St. Johnsbury.[80] Frederic P. Wells, who authored the town histories of Newbury and Barnet and co-authored Ryegate's town history with Edward Miller, provides concise but reasonably insightful accounts of town warnings and forced removals, the profitability in the practice of issuing warnings and executing warrants, and the prevalence of corruption in auctioned bondage, yet offers no overt examples that might otherwise blemish his subjects.[81] Wells does, however, implicate Col. Jacob Bailey of Newbury in maintaining an apprentice, observing that "[a] 'bound out' boy . . . is often alluded to, in the literature of the present day, as hardly more than a slave"; but Wells then goes on to defend the practice and its prevalence, redirecting negativity from the town's elite.[82] The business of the poor is absent from Everett C. Benton's 1886 history of Guildhall, although town records certainly demonstrate that Benton's men of praise were appointed as overseers of the poor.[83]

Slavery is directly mentioned by Taylor (Brome County, QC), Whitcher (Haverhill), Wells (Newbury), Miller and Wells (Ryegate), and Fairbanks (St. Johnsbury), and in each instance slaves were held by prominent families. Fairbanks and Taylor both place slaves in their communities, but question the terms of their subjects' bondage, which attests to the nuanced differences between slavery, servitude, and *de facto* slavery. While Taylor presents differing accounts of an individual of nominal importance to the community, Fairbanks's subject is of greater communal significance and, as such, he goes to great lengths to soften the terms of bondage and protect the prestige of the elite and town itself. Wells provides only one example of slavery at Newbury, as does Miller and Wells's work for Ryegate; that these examples are absent from the town's narrative and obscured in later pages prompts suspicion of evasiveness, although the physical stages of the printing process are at play in revising earlier content, and as such the only concrete conclusion is that the act of obscuring slavery in later pages is at the very least systemic. Whitcher does not shy from slavery whatsoever, but omits information that would tarnish the town's slaveowning elite. Slavery is not mentioned by Somers (Lancaster),[84] Merrill (Coös County), Cutting (Essex County), Cutler (Guildhall), Benton (Guildhall), Bogart (Peacham), Child (Caledonia and Essex County), and Wells's work on Barnet, but it is possible that slavery was not practiced in the northern towns where significant settlement occurred after the emancipatory legislation of 1777, or was practiced so nominally that it

escaped the historical record. Somers, Merrill, Cutting, Cutler, Benton, and Child all present Black individuals in unfortunate circumstances that can be described at present as racist and insensitive, while Fairbanks, Somers, Merrill, Cutting, Cutler, Benton, and Child offer objectifying descriptions of their Black subjects. No mention of communities of color appear in the local histories presented in this study. The surveyed histories in this study offer varied examples of slavery, bondage, and racism in northeastern Vermont through the nineteenth century, and while demonstrating general consistencies with the historical genre's avoidance of slavery and people of color, the common theme of evasion in the town histories included in this study was localized in the preservation of town and elite prestige. It is tempting to quantify the number of persons in bondage in northeastern Vermont, but it would be presumptuous to assume that slaves were servants or servants were slaves when conflicting narratives are observed; that their roles were indistinguishable is precisely the point.

APPENDIX A
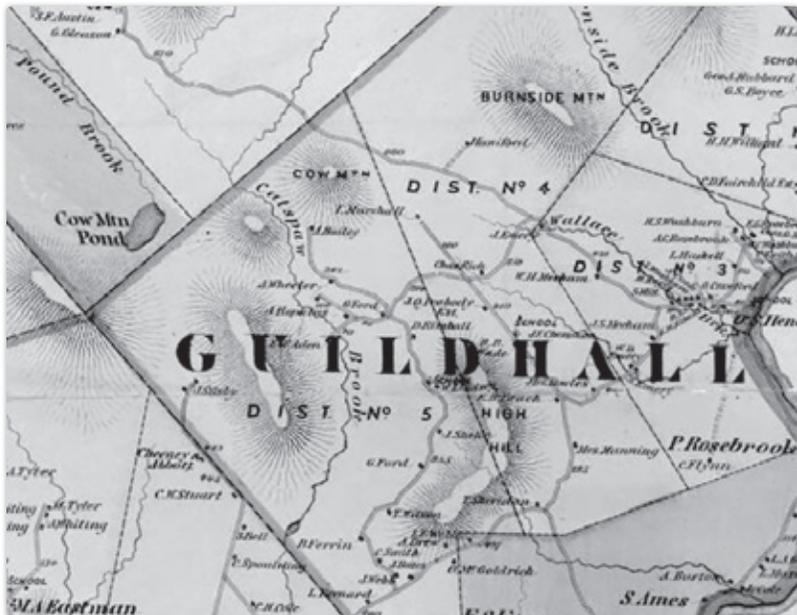
F. W. Beers & Co. *Map of the County of Essex, Vermont*. New York: F. W. Beers & Co, 1878. Library of Congress, Geography and Map Division. https://www.loc.gov/resource/g3753e.la001186/. Accessed September 6, 2021.

APPENDIX B

Town warning for George Knox and his wife, and the Pelham family. Courtesy of the Thetford Historical Society. "To the Constable of Thetford . . . April 19, 1787," Thetford Town Documents, Manuscripts 31, Box 9 — Care for the Poor, 1784–1869 (not bound).

NOTES

[1] For recent works on slavery in New England, see Lorenzo J. Greene, *The Negro in Colonial New England, 1620–1776* (Eastford, CT: Martino Fine Books, 2017); Jared Hardesty, *Black Lives, Native Lands, White Worlds: A History of Slavery in New England* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts, Bright Leaf, 2019); Joanne Pope Melish, *Disowning Slavery: Gradual Emancipation and "Race" in New England, 1780–1860* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1998); Wendy Warren, *New England Bound: Slavery and Colonization in Early America* (New York: Liveright, 2016).

[2] A number of authors cited in this work have contributed to exposing communities of color, and examples of slavery and intolerance in Vermont, including Kevin J. Graffagnino, Elise A. Guyette, John M. Lovejoy, Harvey Amani Whitfield, Jane Williamson, and Robert M. Vanderbeck.

[3] Orlando Patterson has outlined three dimensions of "freedom," namely the personal freedom of individuals void of imposition, the sovereign freedom of individuals and their ability to impose their will upon others, and the civic freedom of individuals to participate in public and communal mechanisms. See Frederick Cooper, Thomas C. Holt, and Rebecca J. Scott, eds., *Beyond Slavery: Explorations of Race, Labor, and Citizenship in Postemancipation Societies* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000), 8–9; Orlando Patterson, *Freedom in the Making of Western Culture* (New York: Basic Books, 1991), 3–4.

⁴ J. Kevin Graffagnino, "Vermont Attitudes towards Slavery: A Need for a Closer Look," *Vermont History* 45 (Winter 1977): 31–32; Elise A. Guyette, "The Power of Erasure: Reflections on Civil War, Race, and Growing Up White in Vermont," *Vermont History* 84 (Summer/Fall 2016): 156–60; Robert M. Vanderbeck, "Vermont and the Imaginative Geographies of American Whiteness," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 96, no. 3 (September 2006): 649–50; Harvey Amani Whitfield, *The Problem of Slavery in Early Vermont, 1777–1810* (Barre: Vermont Historical Society, 2014), x, 3–4, 6–9, 40–41. Whitfield concisely frames slavery "as the legal, violent, or permanent exploitation of another person's life, labor, and offspring," while defining *de facto* slavery as "a form of bondage not sanctioned by law that involved the forceful exploitation of an individual."

⁵ Guyette, "The Power of Erasure," 159.

⁶ Glenn A. Knoblock, *African American Historic Burial Grounds and Gravesites of New England* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Co., 2016), 60.

⁷ Ibid., 60–63.

⁸ Small numbers of settlers and squatters trickled north of Newbury prior to the American Revolution. Sporadic northern settlements that did not disperse entirely during the conflict are observed in Ryegate, Peacham, and along both sides of the Connecticut River in the vicinity of Guildhall, Vermont, and Lancaster, New Hampshire, but these remained nominally populated by settlers and Abenaki bands wishing to remain neutral until the conflict's end. Everett Chamberlin Benton, *A History of Guildhall, VT* (Waverly, MA: Everett C. Benton, 1886), 65–69, 77–78; Ernest L. Bogart, *Peacham: The Story of a Vermont Hill Town* (Montpelier: Vermont Historical Society, 1948), 2, 39–43.

⁹ William F. Whitcher, *History of the Town of Haverhill, New Hampshire* (Concord, NH: Rumford Press, 1919), 2, 14, 15–16, 32–34. Quoted material located on 2. See also Frederic P. Wells, *History of Newbury, Vermont, from the Discovery of the Coös Country to the Present Time* (St. Johnsbury, VT: Caledonian Company, 1902), 15–17.

¹⁰ By the nineteenth century, tribes in the South began practicing chattel enslavement of Africans, engaging in plantation agriculture, and adopting race laws and formal differentiations of racial otherness. Margaret Newell, "The Changing Nature of Indian Slavery in New England, 1670-1720", in *Reinterpreting New England Indians and the Colonial Experience*, ed. Colin Calloway and Neil Salisbury (Boston: Colonial Society of Massachusetts, 2003), accessed August 2, 2021, https://www.colonialsociety.org/node/1397; Orlando Patterson, *Slavery and Social Death: A Comparative Study* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1982), 5, 63; Christina Snyder, "Conquered Enemies, Adopted Kin, and Owned People: The Creek Indians and Their Captives," *The Journal of Southern History* 73, no. 2 (May 2007): 255–56, 258–59, 276–79, 280–85; Thomas Thurston, "Indigenous Slavery in the American South—Indigenous Enslavement and Incarceration in North American History: The Gilder Lehrman Center's 15th Annual International Conference, November 15–16, 2013," *Vimeo*, accessed August 2, 2021, https://vimeo.com/79901976. Referenced material from the Lehrman Center Conference include presentations by Robbie Ethridge (1:45–24:25) and Fay Yarborough (25:30–45:11). For comprehensive works on Indian slavery, see Christina Snyder, *Slavery in Indian Country: The Changing Face of Captivity in Early America* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010).

¹¹ Hardesty, *Black Lives, Native Lands, White Worlds*, 12; Warren, *New England Bound*, 3–8.

¹² Barbados was a primary destination during King Philip's War. See Linford D. Fischer, "'Why shall wee have peace to bee made slaves': Indian Surrenderers during and after King Phillip's War," *Ethnohistory* 64 (January 2017): 91–114; Newell, "The Changing Nature of Indian Slavery in New England." While King Philip's War was primarily an Eastern Abenaki conflict well outside Vermont, historian Colin Calloway notes that "some western Abenaki warriors took an active part in the conflict, and western Abenakis continued to feel the effects of the war long after it was over." See Colin G. Calloway, *The Western Abenakis of Vermont, 1600–1800: War, Migration, and the Survival of an Indian People* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1994), 76.

¹³ Colin G. Calloway, *Dawnland Encounters: Indians and Europeans in Northern New England* (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 1991), 213–51; Colin G. Calloway, *North Country Captives: Selected Narratives of Indian Captivity from Vermont and New Hampshire* (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 1992); Neil Goodwin, *We Go As Captives: The Royalton Raid and the Shadow War on the Revolutionary Frontier* (Montpelier: Vermont Historical Society, 2010). For an archaeological evaluation of precontact Abenaki settlement in the region, see R. Duncan Mathewson III, "Western Abenaki of the Upper Connecticut River Basin: Preliminary

Notes on Native American Pre-Contact Culture in Northern New England," *Journal of Vermont Archaeology* 12 (2011): 1–45.

[14] Calloway, *North Country Captives*, vii–xiii; Calloway, *The Western Abenakis of Vermont*, 224–51.

[15] Calloway, *North Country Captives*, vii–xiii; Goodwin, *We Go As Captives*, 207–9.

[16] Article I, Section 2 of the US Constitution proclaims that untaxed American Indians were not to be counted. Native Americans were not counted until the 1850 census, and those tallies included only assimilated persons. Early census records list a household composition and tally without the name of the uncounted persons. See also Jacob Wallace, "Census hasn't always counted Native Americans. Now it tries," *The Journal*, 11 August 2020, https://www.the-journal.com/articles/census-hasnt-always-counted-native-americans-now-it-tries/, accessed August 2, 2021.

[17] For a concise account on "Indian Joe's" popularity, see Jill Mudgett, "Indian Joe," *Vermont Magazine* (September/October 2017): 82–85.

[18] Whitfield, *The Problem of Slavery in Early Vermont*, x, 3–4, 13, 16–18, 30–33. Quoted material on 30.

[19] Ibid., x, 12, 2–23, 26–28, 39, 68–69. Whitfield presents a bill of sale for a fourteen-year-old girl named Rose to John Barrett dated April 3, 1783, in which Barrett paid a sum that exceeded the market value of an individual bound for only seven or so more years, suggesting that Barrett's likely intention was to sustain Rose's bondage beyond her majority age.

[20] Edward T. Fairbanks, *The Town of St. Johnsbury VT, A Review of One Hundred Twenty-Five Years to the Anniversary Pageant 1912* (St. Johnsbury, VT: The Cowles Press, 1914), 61–62, 79, 554; Beth Kanell, "Abolitionists of St. Johnsbury," *Northstar Monthly*, June 28, 2018, http://www.northstarmonthly.com/features/abolitionists-of-st-johnsbury/article_33cf86da-7adc-11e8-9bff-879a7faf6f43.html.

[21] Wells, *History of Newbury, Vermont*, 15–17. Quoted material located on p. 17.

[22] Ibid., 32.

[23] Ibid., 280.

[24] Warren, *New England Bound*, quoted material on 31 and 2, respectively.

[25] Knoblock, *African American Historic Burial Grounds*, 26–27.

[26] Whitcher, *History of the Town of Haverhill, New Hampshire*, 55–56, 64–65, 272, 360–66, 435, 629–630.

[27] Knoblock, *African American Historic Burial Grounds*, 26.

[28] Whitcher, *History of the Town of Haverhill, New Hampshire*, 361–62. See also Knoblock, *African American Historic Burial Grounds*, 94.

[29] Whitcher, *History of the Town of Haverhill, New Hampshire*, 33.

[30] Edward Miller and Frederic P. Wells, *History of Ryegate, Vermont, from Its Settlement by the Scotch-American Company of Farmers to Present Time* (St. Johnsbury, VT: Caledonian Company, 1913), 12, 34, 39–41, 79, 115, 239, 266, 557, 587.

[31] Ibid., 557.

[32] Several works examined in this survey provide amendments to commentary in earlier pages, weaving corrections, modifications, and elaborations about individuals and events into later chapters. These amendments suggest that authors were limited in their ability to modify earlier chapters, and perhaps that they were researching and writing in stages.

[33] See previous note. The lack of citations keeps the original sourcing a mystery. The Ryegate Historical Society houses Miller and Wells's original notes for the *History of Ryegate*. A review of these notes yielded no further insights. While several additional sources easily place James in the West Indies, particularly Barbados, and then Savannah, Georgia, in the two years prior to arriving at Ryegate, this offers only suggestive and circumstantial commentary, and outside the scope of James's early years at Princeton, his military service, and the correspondence of his family, he is otherwise fairly elusive in the historical record. Hamilton Child, *Gazetteer of Caledonia and Essex Counties, VT. 1764–1887* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse Journal Company, 1887), 289–90; Ashbel Green, *The Christian Advocate* 2 (1824): 396–98; Richard A. Harrison, *Princetonians, 1769–1775: A Bibliographical Dictionary* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1981), 125–27.

[34] Georgia Drew Merrill, *History of Coös County, New Hampshire* (Syracuse, NY: W. A. Ferguson & Co., 1888), 760–61. Although there were several Col. Baileys in eastern Vermont, from Newbury to Guildhall, it can be assumed with reasonable certainty that the sermon was held at the residence of Col. Ward Bailey of Guildhall, where Judd had surveyed lands and journaled his antics. For further reading and commentary on Judd's time at Guildhall, see Gregory Sanford, "Eben Judd, Frontier Entrepreneur," *Vermont History* 81, no. 2 (Summer/Fall 2013): 181–213.

[35] Knoblock, *African American Historic Burial Grounds*, 13–14. The 1840 census is the last to show slaves in New Hampshire, however there is evidence of slavery being practiced in the smaller rural communities of Mont Vernon in 1841 and Boscowen in 1843.

[36] The Cow Mountain referred to here in Guildhall is called Stone Mountain at present, while a mountain situated near the convergence of the town borders of Guildhall, Lunenburg, Victory, and Granby now holds the name Cow Mountain, although the summit lies in Granby. Rather confusingly, a map of Essex County from 1859 shows two Cow Mountains, one in Guildhall and the other inaccurately placed almost entirely in Victory; but an 1878 map of Essex County shows only one Cow Mountain in Guildhall, while the mountain at the convergence is unnamed. The Cow Mountain labeled as such is closer to the North Road and is presumably the mountain where Bacchus resided. Sometime thereafter cartographers began referring to the mountain at the convergence as Cow Mountain, and the former Cow Mountain of Guildhall became Stone Mountain. F. W. Beers & Co., *Map of the County of Essex, Vermont* (New York: F. W. Beers & Co, 1878), Library of Congress, Geography and Map Division, https://www.loc.gov/item/2012586230/, accessed November 5, 2019; Henry Francis Walling, *Map of the Counties of Orleans, Lamoille, and Essex, Vermont* (New York: Loomis & Way, 1859), Library of Congress, Geography and Map Division, https://www.loc.gov/item/2012586229, accessed November 5, 2019. See Appendix A.

[37] Milton Cutler, "History of Guildhall," in *The Vermont Historical Gazetteer: A Magazine Embracing a History of Each Town, Civil, Ecclesiastical, Biographical and Military,* ed. Abby Maria Hemenway, vol. 1 (Burlington, VT: A. M. Hemenway, 1867), 996. This account was published verbatim in "History of County," *Essex County Herald*, 24 September 1915, Library of Congress—Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers, https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn84023416/1915-09-24/ed-1/seq-4/.

[38] Benton, *A History of Guildhall*, 40–41. Benton openly quotes Milton Cutler on several occasions throughout his work, and admittedly draws from Cutler's piece in Hemenway's *Gazetteer*, but no direct citation or reference to Cutler is made for the quoted passage.

[39] Child, *Gazetteer of Caledonia and Essex Counties*, 450.

[40] WPA Federal Writers' Project, *Vermont: A Guide to the Green Mountain State* (Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin, 1937), 210.

[41] Benton, *A History of Guildhall*, 80, 121, 217–19; Cutler, "History of Guildhall," 1000, 1002.

[42] A review of town burial records does not show a Bacchus having died in the town, so the assertion that Bacchus was among the town's earlier occupants in the twenty or so years prior to any town recordkeeping is plausible, and is further supported by Benton's observations that burials had taken place at the site of Guildhall's first cemetery prior to its development in 1797. Benton, *A History of Guildhall*, 170–71.

[43] Knoblock, *African American Historic Burial Grounds*, 17.

[44] While reference to Bacchus in the context of intoxication appears throughout publications of this time, it is referenced locally during opium-toting Eben Judd's surveys of Guildhall, in which Judd describes a night of drinking Hot Toddy (scalded rum) as having "[w]orshipped Bacchus." Sanford, "Eben Judd, Frontier Entrepreneur,"182, 200, 202–03. Quoted material located on 203.

[45] Ernest M. Taylor, *History of Brome County, Quebec: From the Date of the Grants of Land Therein to the Present Time* (Montreal: John Lovell & Sons, 1908), 67.

[46] Ibid., 185.

[47] Whitfield, *The Problem of Slavery in Early Vermont*, 3, 6–9, 11–12, 15–16, 19–23, 26–27, 30–33, 39. Whitfield contends that the 1806 Act to Prevent Kidnapping and 1786 Sale and Transportation Act offer *prima facie* evidence that the institution of slavery and trafficking of slaves had persisted throughout the state.

[48] Taylor, *History of Brome County, Quebec*, 67.

[49] Fairbanks, *The Town of St. Johnsbury VT*, 61–62.

[50] Ibid., 2.

[51] Ibid. 79.

[52] Ibid., 62.

[53] Ibid., 554.

[54] Ibid., 62.

[55] Kanell, "Abolitionists of St. Johnsbury"; Vermont Historical Society, *Introduction to the Fairbanks Family Papers, 1798–1953*, MSC 134–140, 1–4, https://vermonthistory.org/documents/findaid/fairbanksfam.pdf.

[56] Kanell, "Abolitionists of St. Johnsbury." For additional comments on Vermont's American Colonization Society, see John M. Lovejoy, "Racism in Antebellum Vermont," *Vermont History* 69 (Winter 2011): 51–54.

[57] Alden M. Rollins, Jr., *Vermont Warnings Out, Vol. 1: Northern Vermont* (Rockport, ME: Rockport Press, 1995), 1–2, 12–20. Rollins traces the early development of Anglo-American poor laws, from British statutes from the late fifteenth century affording municipalities the right to remove unwanted individuals, followed by the Poor Law of 1530, which created the framework under which the legal settlement of destitute individuals was defined, and the 1597 and 1601 Poor Law Acts and the Settlement Act of 1662, which "provided the legal framework for all subsequent action in the English-speaking world regarding migration control at the local level and the responsibility of local authorities to care for those poor who were legal members of the community." See also, Jacqueline B. Carr, "Local History and the Vermont Borderlands, 1790–1820," *Vermont History* 84 (Winter/Spring 2016): 77–78; Steven R. Hoffbeck, "'Remember the Poor' (*Galatians* 2:10): Poor Farms in Vermont," *Vermont History* 57 (Fall 1989): 226–28; Knoblock, *African American Historic Burial Grounds*, 53–54.

[58] Rollins, *Vermont Warnings Out, Vol. 1: Northern Vermont*, 1–4.

[59] Whitfield, *The Problem of Slavery in Early Vermont*, 35–37.

[60] Hoffbeck, "Remember the Poor," 227; Rollins, *Vermont Warnings Out, Vol. 1: Northern Vermont*, 4–5; Mary L. Eysenbach, "Caring for the Poor: Thetford and the Baker Family, 1792–1817," *Vermont History* 72 (Winter/Spring 2004): 55–56.

[61] Bogart, *Peacham: The Story of a Vermont Hill Town*, 291–93; Hoffbeck, "'Remember the Poor'" 227–28; Miller and Wells, *History of Ryegate, Vermont*, 169–171; Frederic P. Wells, *History of Barnet,Vermont, from the Outbreak of the French and Indian War to Present Time, with Genealogical Records of Many Families* (Burlington, VT: Free Press Printing Co, 1923), 249–50; Wells, *History of Newbury, Vermont*, 285–287.

[62] Carr, "Local History and the Vermont Borderlands, 1790–1820," 77–78; Hoffbeck, "'Remember the Poor,'" 226–28; Knoblock, *African American Historic Burial*, 53–54; Miller and Wells, *History of Ryegate, Vermont*, 170; Rollins, *Vermont Warnings Out, Vol. 1: Northern Vermont*, 4–9, 12–19; Wells, *History of Newbury, Vermont*, 286; Jane Williamson, "African Americans in Addison County, Charlotte, and Hinesburgh, Vermont, 1790–1860," *Vermont History* 78 (Winter/Spring 2010): 20.

[63] Williamson, "African Americans in Addison County," 16, 34.

[64] Jody R. Fernald, "Profitable Godliness to Racial Consciousness," Master's thesis, University of New Hampshire, 2017, 55, https://scholars.unh.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1067&context=thesis.

[65] United States Census, 1790. Database with images. *FamilySearch*. http://FamilySearch.org: 14 June 2016. Citing NARA microfilm publication M637 (Washington, DC: National Archives and Records Administration, n.d.).

[66] "Town Clerks in Thetford, May 30, 1786," Thetford Town Documents, Manuscripts 31, Box 9 — Care for the Poor 1784–1869 (not bound). This particular warning was issued to the family of Jemima Pelham, Stephen's wife. The Pelhams appear in records as "Pelham," Pellom," and "Pellam." Warnings for the Pelhams are surprisingly not listed in Rollins's *Vermont Warnings Out*.

[67] "To the Constable of Thetford . . . April 19, 1787," Thetford Town Documents, Manuscripts 31, Box 9 —Care for the Poor 1784-1869 (not bound).

[68] H. A. Cutting, "Essex County Chapter," in Hemenway, ed., *The Vermont Historical Gazetteer*, vol. 1, 947; Benton, *A History of Guildhall*, 197. Stephen Pelham was convicted of manslaughter for inadvertently killing his brother Martin during a scuffle.

[69] See note 67. See also Appendix B.

[70] Rollins, *Vermont Warnings Out, Vol. 1: Northern Vermont*, 160.

[71] Ibid., 249.

[72] Ibid., 179. Jeremiah Virginia was warned along with "Judith, Sylvia, Stephen, Luther and Calvin."

[73] Ibid., 177. Warned under the name "McDurfee, Worcester."

[74] Hoffbeck, "'Remember the Poor,'" 226–37.

[75] Bogart, *Peacham: The Story of a Vermont Hill Town*, 291.

[76] Ibid., 291. In cases where sick, elderly, or otherwise incapable individuals were auctioned off, the bidder's nursing services were provided and the stipend offered by the town increased. Schooling was stipulated for younger individuals in bondage.

[77] Ibid., 292.

[78] Ibid., 292–93. Quoted material located on 293.

[79] Ibid., 292–93, 441–42. In what seems a state of dark irony, the town of Peacham realized once again that the cost of stipends and reimbursements on auctioned individuals exceeded the cost of maintaining the poor farm.

[80] Fairbanks, *The Town of St. Johnsbury VT*, 152–53.

[81] Miller and Wells, *History of Ryegate, Vermont*, 169–71; Wells, *History of Barnet,Vermont*, 249–50; Wells, *History of Newbury, Vermont*, 143–44, 285–87.

[82] Wells, *History of Newbury, Vermont*, 143–44. Wells's account of Bailey's indenturing are relatively obscured, located in the context of Newbury's local textiles manufacturing, where Bailey purchased a "freedom suit" for John Beard upon reaching majority age.

[83] "Committee to Settle, Overseers of the Poor," *Guildhall Town Records, Vol. I, 1785 –1831*, March 9, 1803, 85–86.

[84] A. N. Somers, *History of Lancaster, New Hampshire* (Concord, NH: Rumford Press, 1899). Somers's work was utilized during preliminary research for this project; although Somers was not directly referenced prior, his work is included here so as to be historiographically comprehensive.