#### THE LAW

In his book, The Free Negro in North Carolina, 1790-1860, University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill NC, 1991, John Hope Franklin gives a nice overview of slave law in North Carolina up to and including the law of 1796:

1715 – "prevented the master from setting free any Negroes that had been "Runaways for Refractory." Such freed negros had to depart the area within 6 months of achieving freedom 1723 – "made it compulsory for the newly freed Negro to abjure the State soon after manumission"

1741 – "No Negro or Mulatto slaves shall be set free ... except for meritorious Services, to be adjudged and allowed of by the County Court. The free Negro was still forced to leave within 6 months ..."
1777 – "this law was passed again, with slight revisions"
1796 – law was revised &

clarified

Laws continued to be passed in NC regarding the manumission of slaves until this became moot after the Civil War.

# THE STORY OF RACHEL

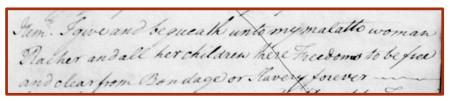
### BY DIANE L. RICHARD

One would think that if someone "freed" a slave via their will, their dying declaration, it would happen. If you assume this, you might be quite mistaken. We'll explore the odyssey of Rachel who was seemingly freed by her owner's will in 1782 and yet, it wasn't until about 1796, that her and her children were freed and assumed a new surname. Several jurisdictions, entities and parties were involved.

#### The Will (Bertie County, 1781)1

William Freeman wrote his will which clearly states ... "Item. I give and bequeath unto my mullatto woman Rachel and all her children there Freedoms to be free and clear from Bondage or slavery forever."

His intent is clear and unequivocal. As we'll discuss, his wishes were not implemented immediately.



Few papers survive for William's estate though there is an inventory submitted by his widow Tabitha which states 16 negros; no names are provided.<sup>2</sup>

#### The Challenges

The research commenced when the author stumbled across the February 1800 Orange County entry [later in the article]. This provided an initial glimpse into Rachel and her children seeking their freedom. More accurately, others were seeking their freedom to respect the bequest of the will.

Researching backwards from the found entry, William's will (already mentioned) was located. Next was trying to track through various court records, newspaper records (if extant), and eventually a legislative petition, to try to determine the sequence of events. There are many holes not yet filled.

The documents that follow are presented in what "might" be the chronological order, though does not reflect the order in which the documents were acquired. The first document is probably not until the 1790s, given the timing of the other found documents.

Why do we not find anything from 1782 (when the will was proven) until the probably mid-1790s? Did Rachel and children remain with Tabitha? Was it by choice? Based on other records, most not cited here, Tabitha clearly moved to Warren County where her son Robert lived with her daughters Frances and Mary

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> The will of William Freeman, Bertie County, NC, Willbook C Page 33, State Archives of North Carolina, Raleigh, NC. Written 30 September 1781 and Proven February Term 1782.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Bertie County, Record of Estates, 1775-1782, Part 1, page 226, State Archives of North Carolina, Raleigh, NC

#### MANUMISSION

Merriam-Webster defines
manumission as "the act or
process of manumitting;
especially: formal emancipation
from slavery," which root verb,
manumit is defined as "to release
from slavery."

#### <u>www.merriam-</u> webster.com/dictionary/manumission

Sometimes, the term
emancipation is used and it is a
broader term referring to a release
from bondage and related
constraints. Manumission is
particular to those released from
slavery. Manumissions will
sometimes be found under
emancipation records. Explore
records using both terms.

a couple of counties away in Orange County. Tabitha was clearly in Warren County after circa 1784 and possibly later as she is clearly listed (after William is listed earlier) in Bertie County tax records with many slaves and relatively large land holdings before that time period.<sup>3</sup> Son Robert is clearly in Warren by 1790 in a household of 1 male and 1 female and 22 slaves; the female could be his wife or Tabitha as she is NOT listed as a head of household in 1790.<sup>4</sup>

# An Act to amend, strengthen and confirm the several nets of Assembly of this state, against the emancipation of slaves. WHEREAS doubts have arisen in the construction of the said acts, as to the extent

WHEREAS doubts have arrien in the contruction of the laid acts, as to the extent of the liberation powers vefted in the county courts, by an act paffed in the year one thousand seven hundred and seventy-seven, chapter sixth, entitled "An act to pre"vent domestic insurrection," and another act passed in the year one thousand seven hundred and forty one, chapter twenty-nine:

I. Be it therefore enacted by the General Affembly of the flate of North-Carolina, and it is hereby enacted by the authority of the same. That no slave shall be set free in any case, or under any pretence whatever, except for meritorious services, to be a studged of and allowed by the county court, and sicence first had and obtained therefor and that such liberation when entered of record, shall vest in the said slave, so as aforesaid liberated, all the right and privilege of a free born negro, any thing in the said act to the contrary notwithstanding.

Manner of lla berating flaves.

1796 Law "An Act to amend, strengthen and confirm the several acts of Assembly of this State, against the emancipation of slaves"

Tabitha writes her will in 1794 and she dies early 1797 (see separate discussion). Is this coincidental or did her pending death signal the efforts that ultimately "freed" Rachel and children?

Worth noting -- Frances (Freeman) Childs and Mary (Freeman) (Burke) Doherty are the parties to these actions instead of their husbands, which would be atypical of the time. It was learned that Frances was widowed by August 1792 and Mary by August 1793, explaining why they were acting on their own behalf.

There are so many questions that we probably won't ever know the answer to and yet are important to ask. Let's explore the found documentation.

#### County Court of Pleas & Quarter Sessions [Orange County, ND]

Via In Full Force and Virtue, North Carolina Emancipation Records, 1713-1860 we discover a petition related to Rachel.<sup>5</sup>

"on the Petition of Frances Child and Mary Doherty Praying for the emancipation of Rachel Sukey and Billy Persons of Mixed blood and lately held as Slaves by Robt. Freeman of Warren County, Planter who it is alledged still claims the same persons as his Slaves ....."

As mentioned, Frances and Mary are two of the daughters of William as called out in his will; Robert is their brother. The sisters now both probably live in Orange County while Robert lives in Warren County, a couple of counties away.

We need to remember to be somewhat careful of language. Sometimes language in legal documents is just that, specific legally required language. We have no evidence to suggest that Frances, Mary and Robert were estranged or ever became estranged. Consider whether a suit had to ensue in order for the desired outcome/remedy to result? Clearly, though found in Orange County records, the target location is Warren County.

No loose court papers, typically called Civil Action Papers, were found regarding this suit.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Bertie County, NC, Taxables (1772-1784), CR.010.701, State Archives of NC, Raleigh, NC.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Year: 1790; Census Place: Warren, North Carolina; Series: M637; Roll: 7; Page: 66; Image: 50; Family History Library Film: 0568147 via Ancestry.com

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> William L. Byrd, III, Heritage Books, Maryland, 2007

#### Quakers & Freeing Enslaved

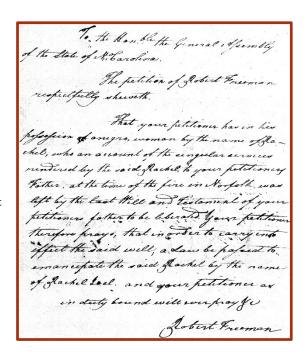
Wills explicitly requesting the freeing of the enslaved, as was the situation with Rachel and children, were not the only mechanism by which individuals sought manumission for those enslaved. You will sometimes find Free Persons of Color who purchased an enslaved spouse or enslaved children and would then seek to have those enslaved manumitted. Additionally, the condition of slavery was based on the mother's status as someone enslaved. If a free woman's children ended up enslaved, requests to declare those children Free Persons of Color would ensue. Although there were several ways to attempt to free an enslaved person, ultimately, the power to grant manumission was vested in the court system and legislature.

Abhorring slavery, Quakers would purchase slaves with the intent of freeing them, then run afoul of the courts. Reported in Remarks of the Slavery of the Black People; Addressed to the Citizens of the United States, Particularly to those Who Are in Legislative or Executive Stations in the General or State Governments; and also to Such Individuals as Hold them in Bondage, by John Parrish, Kimber, Conrad & Co, Philadelphia, 1806 ...

"From the Committee of the Yearly Meeting to the Committee of Congress, to the

## Petition to the Legislature [1796]

We are fortunate that there is an online digital project called Race & Slavery Petitions Project.6 Found here is a petition to the North Carolina General Assembly, filed 30 November 1796, by Robert Freeman.<sup>7</sup> Previously, Robert's sisters were seeking the freedom of Rachel & children from Robert. Maybe Robert recognized the handwriting on the wall?!?! Or, did the failure of the previous suit necessitate elevating this issue to a higher authority? We may never truly know and as abstracted, the petition is summarized as stating ...



Robert Freeman states that he has "in his possession a negro woman by the name of Rachel, who on account of the singular services rendered by the said Rachel, to your petitioners Father, at the time of the fire in Norfolk" was devised to be free in his father's last will and testament. He therefore prays "that in order to carry into effect the said will, a Law be passed to emancipate the said Rachel by the name of Rachel Joel."

The General Assembly took up several petitions at the same time and the back of the petition by Robert has the following notations ...

"Petition of Robert Freeman, The House of Common 20th Nove 1796 read & referred to the Committee on the subject of emancipation by Order ... In Senate 20 Novem 1796, read & referred by the House of Commons ..."

In 1796 the Committee on the Subject of Emancipation reported ...

"... as to the latter the County Courts, are competent to effect the purpose prayed for but in the opinion of your Committee, the said act, vesting the County Courts with that power, is defective, is not admitting the persons as liberated, to the same privileges as persons of colour enjoy who have been born free. Your Committee recommend, that a Bill accompanying this report, entitles "a Bill, to amend, strengthen an confirm the several acts of Assembly of this state against emancipating of slaves," be passed into law..."

Ultimately, in response to this and other similar petitions the General Assembly crafted the previously referenced 1796 law with the same title as the bill suggested above. This meant that the legislature did NOT take a specific action on the petition by Robert and that the question of the manumission of Rachel and children had reverted back to the local court. Effectively, the pursuit of manumission for Rachel and her children did help precipitate a clarification of the law which did eventually result in her and her children deemed "free persons of color."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> https://library.uncg.edu/slavery/petitions/

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> North Carolina, General Assembly, Session Records, Session of November 1796 – December 1796, Box 3, Petitions, Amendments, Miscellaneous Correspondence, Petitions and Committee Reports (Emancipation)

whom was referred the Memorial of the people called Quakers. In the latter part of the year 1776, several of the people called Quakers residing in the counties of Perguimans and Pasquotank, in the state of North Carolina, liberated their negroes, as it was then clear there was no existing law to prevent their so doing ... until a law passed in the spring of 1777 ... Under this law, the county courts of Perguimans and Pasquotank, in the year 1777, ordered a large number of persons to be sold who were free at the time the law was made. In the year 1778, several of those cases were by certiorari brought before the superior court for the District of Edenton, where the decisions of the county courts were reversed ... but the next General Assembly, early in 1779, passed a law wherein they mention that doubts have arisen..."

Though the Quakers came up with alternatives such as trusteeship arrangements that essentially freed slaves, these only prevailed until an 1829 North Carolina Supreme Court Case eliminated these workarounds. Ultimately, the constant challenges to Quaker's attempts to free slaves were a factor in the Quaker migration to midwestern states where there was no slavery.

#### Warren County Records – Death of Tabitha [early 1797]

Tabitha Freeman (widow of William Freeman) and her son Robert are extensively documented in Warren County. Her will was written 15 February 1794 and proven May court 1797.8 Mary (Freeman) (Burke) Doherty was one of the administrators while Frances (Freeman) Childs was a witness. Pointing to the close relationship that seemed to still exist within the family, across county lines and through the efforts to free Rachel and children. Tabitha's will refers to her husband's estate, though no mention of Rachel and children is included.

#### Orange County, County Court Minutes, [Feb 1800]

We find recorded in the Court of Pleas and Quarter Session minutes for Orange County NC  $\dots$ <sup>9</sup>

"... be free & liberated from all bondage & slavery ... licenses by the court to go at large as free persons with all the rights ... belonging to free persons of color and that they shall be known by the names of Rachel Joel, Billy Joel & Sukey Joel and that the Defendant Robert Freeman pay the full costs ..."

Finally, in February 1800, 18 years after the will of William Freeman was proved, Rachel, Billy and Sukey are officially manumitted and will start their new lives as free persons of color with the surname Joel.

#### Meritorious Services - The Fire at Norfolk

As noted in the law section, meritorious services are identified as the exception for when a slave could be manumitted. This is the clause under which Rachel and children were finally freed. The petition by Robert to the General Assembly (of North Carolina) mentions the fire at Norfolk, the location where William Freeman lived before moving down to Bertie County where he resided only a few years.

Since historical context is important to properly understanding and interpreting the written record, information regarding the "fire at Norfolk" was pursued. The Burning of Norfolk Wikipedia page states that "most of the town had been destroyed." The Journal and Reports of the Commissioners Appointed by the Act of 1777, to ascertain the Losses occasioned to individuals by the burning of Norfolk and Portsmouth in the year 1776 includes the following entry. 11

Borough of Norfolk, 25th September, 1777

The claims of .... Wm. Freeman ... received and entered on the roll

The extent of the fire possibly explains why William moved to Bertie County NC while retaining some land holdings in Norfolk. One assumes that Rachel probably was heavily involved in protecting William's assets and family members and as such, he "rewarded" her with her freedom in his will.

#### Afterwards

Rachel and children have not yet been tracked past their manumission in 1800; they have not been found in the 1800 census (or tax lists or court minutes or deeds) for Orange County (NC) and the law was ambiguous whether those freed had to leave the state within six months (required by earlier laws) or not.

Robert Freeman and Frances (Freeman) Childs and Mary (Freeman) (Burke) Doherty clearly continued to own slaves. We find evidence of that via the following

- "Ran away from the subscriber on the 30th December last, a bright mulatto man, named Sam ... He is so near being white, that he may easily impose himself for a white man ... Robert Freeman, Warren county" 12
- [October 1798] "On Motion of John Williams Esqr. Atto. For Robert Freeman ordered that a Rule be taken on Mrs. Francis Child & Mary Doherty that they appear at our Superior Court to be held for the District of Hillsborough on the

<sup>8</sup> Warren County, Will Book 9, pp 156-7, State Archives of North Carolina, Raleigh, NC and corroborated in the Warren County Minutes of the Court of Pleas and Quarter Sessions.

<sup>9</sup> Orange County, County Court Minutes, Feb 1798-Feb 1800, C.R.073.301.11, pp 666 & 667, State Archives of North Carolina, Raleigh, NC

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Burning\_of\_Norfolk

Accessed through the Sargeant Memorial Collection, Norfolk Public Library, http://www.norfolkpubliclibrary.org/home/showdocument?id=264

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup> North-Carolina Journal, Halifax, NC, 15 February 1796

#### Select Quaker Resources

(1) Germantown Quaker Petition Against Slavery,

https://www.nps.gov/articles/quakerpetition.htm

- (2) Quakers and Slavery: The Development of an AntiSlavery Society, Southeastern University Fire Scholars, <a href="https://firescholars.seu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1016&context=honors">https://firescholars.seu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1016&context=honors</a> [PDF]
- (3) Quakers and Abolition, Brycchan Carey & Geoffrey Plank, Published by: University of Illinois Press (2014) [Book]
  (4) Philadelphia Quakers and the Antislavery Movement, Brian Temple, McFarland & Company Inc. (2014) [Book]
- (5) Southern Quakers and Slavery: A Study in Institutional History, Stephen Beauregard Weeks,

https://books.google.com/books?id=Xi UwaaaayaaJ

Read more about Quakers & Slavery via this Bryn Mawr website, http://web.tricolib.brynmawr.edu/spec coll/quakersandslavery/ and do check out the included bibliography. The Smithsonian website has published The "Quaker Comet" Was the Greatest Abolitionist You've Never Heard Of, https://www.smithsonianmag.com/hist ory/quaker-comet-greatest-abolitionist never-heard-180964401/ with a similarly focused article published in the Washington Post, 'In the belly of hell': The Quaker abolitionist disowned by his faith for condemning slave owners, https://www.washingtonpost.com/new s/retropolis/wp/2018/05/14/in-the-bellyof-hell-the-quaker-abolitionistdisowned-by-his-faith-for-condemningslave-

owners/?noredirect=on&utm\_term=.d9 e974c007e6, which provides some more contextual information about Quakers as Abolitionists.

- 6th day of April next to shew cause why a Certiorari shall not be issue to bring up the proceedings & order of the County Court respecting the liberation of Molatto Sam"<sup>13</sup> [he ends up being another son of Rachel!!]
- "taken from the house of Robert Freeman, in Warren County, in February 1796 by a tall back fellow, by the name of Hardy Bell a likely negro Woman by the name of Nell, the property of the subscriber … Mary Doherty, Orange County, Nov. 3, 1799"<sup>14</sup>
- N.C. Runaway Slave Advertisements includes entries for Robert Freeman (Warren County) for slaves not already named here – Ned, Nell.<sup>15</sup>

More research could be undertaken into these private collections:

- (1) James Webb Papers, 1725-1918, mentions Mary (Freeman) (Burke) Doherty; the sister to Frances (Freeman) (McKerall) Childs and Robert Freeman<sup>16</sup>
- (2) Eliza Mary Bond Weissinger Papers, 1785-1868, mentions Robert Freeman of Warren County and George Doherty (husband of Mary (Freeman) (Burke) Doherty) of Hillsborough "Letters relate to real estate, slaves, and finances..." <sup>17</sup>

Additionally, other noted county records and private collections, also touch on the widow, Tabitha, children (Robert, Frances and Mary), their spouses, and grandchildren of William Freeman (and Tabitha Wilson). More of the story of Rachel might be learned via research in these collections.

#### Conclusion

As we have seen with Rachel and her children, the freeing of slaves, also known as manumission, was challenging and not automatically granted. The odyssey started in Norfolk, Virginia, with Rachel's meritorious service, then involved the North Carolina counties of Bertie (where William Freeman's will was filed and proved), Warren (where Robert and Tabitha Freeman lived), and Orange (where Robert's sisters Frances and Mary lived).

A snippet from the 1781 map, "A map of the seat of war in the southern part of Virginia, North Carolina, and the northern part of South Carolina," shows the geographic context of the journey of Rachel and her children from her meritorious service during the destruction of Norfolk, Virginia, to her final manumission in Orange County, North Carolina. <sup>18</sup>



1781 map showing the locales of Norfolk, VA; Bertie County, NC; Warren County (identified as Bute on the map), NC; and Orange County, NC.

Be familiar with the manumission laws in force in the locale where you are researching. In the 18th century, there were Federal Laws in place addressing the topic of manumission. Do not assume that slaves were manumitted via will, purchase, or any other means until you can find evidence that they were freed. Like Rachel, they may have remained "seemingly" enslaved for a couple of decades or in perpetuity. Their story is worth pursuing, and like Rachel, the quest for their freedom may have resulted in clarified laws facilitating those subsequently seeking manumission.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>13</sup> [book] Hillsborough District, North Carolina, Superior Court, 1794-1802, Book III, Weynette Parks Haun. NOTE: district courts were in place until 1806 and the Hillsborough District encompassed Caswell, Chatham, Granville, Orange, Randolph and Wake counties]

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>14</sup> The Geography of Slavery, <a href="http://www2.vcdh.virginia.edu/gos/">http://www2.vcdh.virginia.edu/gos/</a> — Norfolk Herald, November 14, 1799. The above notice was also published in the North Carolina Journal, Halifax, NC, June 12, 1797 a couple of years earlier.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>15</sup> http://libcdm1.uncg.edu/cdm/landingpage/collection/RAS

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>16</sup> UNC, Chapel Hill, NC, http://finding-aids.lib.unc.edu/00760/

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>17</sup> UNC, Chapel Hill, NC, <a href="http://finding-aids.lib.unc.edu/04443/">http://finding-aids.lib.unc.edu/04443/</a>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>18</sup> North Carolina Maps, "Gentleman's monthly intelligencer," <a href="http://dc.lib.uNorth Carolina.edu/cdm/singleitem/collection/North Carolinamaps/id/361/">http://dc.lib.uNorth Carolina.edu/cdm/singleitem/collection/North Carolinamaps/id/361/</a>: accessed 16 July 2019) North Carolina Maps, University of North Carolina University Libraries.

- NC Manumission Research Resources
- (1) A History of African Americans in North Carolina, by Jeffrey J. Crow et al, Division of Archives and History, NCDCR, 1997
- (2) African Americans in Early North Carolina, A Documentary History, Edited by Alan D. Watson, Office of Archives and History, NCDCR, 2005 (3) North Carolina General Assembly Sessions Records: Slaves and Free Persons of Color, 1709-1789, William I.
- Persons of Color, 1709-1789, William L. Byrd III, Heritage Books, 2001 [includes a summary of relevant laws] (4) Book Series – North Carolina Slaves
- (4) Book Series North Carolina Slaves and Free Persons of Color, William L. Byrd, III, Heritage Books – available for many counties
- (5) Manumission Society of North Carolina Records, 1773-1845, The Southern Historical Collection (UNC Chapel Hill),
- http://www2.lib.unc.edu/mss/inv/m/Manumission\_Society\_of\_North\_Carolina.html
- (6) Manumission Societies (NCpedia), <a href="http://www.ncpedia.org/manumission-societies">http://www.ncpedia.org/manumission-societies</a>
- (7) [Book] In Full Force and Virtue, North Carolina Emancipation Records, 1713-1860, William L. Byrd III
- GA Manumission Research Resources (1) Resources for Records of Enslaved People in Georgia [PDF], <a href="https://www.georgiaarchives.org/documents/research/Slavery Handout 2-3-">https://www.georgiaarchives.org/documents/research/Slavery Handout 2-3-</a>

2018.pdf & African American
Resources, Georgia Archives,
https://www.georgiaarchives.org/rese

<u>arch/african\_american\_resources</u> & Slave Laws of Georgia, 1755-1860, https://www.georgiaarchives.org/docu

ments/Slave Laws of Georgia 1755-1860.pdf & Examples of Primary Sources

that Document Enslaved and Free Persons of Color in Antebellum Georgia,

https://www.georgiaarchives.org/online\_exhibits/enslaved\_and\_free\_persons

- (2) Deconstructing a Manumission Document: Mary Stafford's Free Paper, Mary R. Bullard, The Georgia Historical Quarterly. Vol 89, No. 3 (2005), via Jstor, https://www.jstor.org/stable/40584841?seg=1
- (3) Manumission (freeing slaves) DS, 1792, Digital Library of Georgia, https://dlg.usg.edu/record/guan 0921 harg0921-019-033

#### Select Extant Manumission Records (Beyond NC & GA; see left)

- 1) Hunterdon County (NJ) Slave Manumissions, https://www.nj.gov/state/archives/chncl003.html
- (2) Manumission (DC via NARA), <a href="https://catalog.archives.gov/id/4314538">https://catalog.archives.gov/id/4314538</a> & Court Records of DC (via Fold3), <a href="https://www.fold3.com/title/64/court-slave-records-for-dc">https://www.fold3.com/title/64/court-slave-records-for-dc</a>
- (3) Slave Manumissions in Alexandria (VA) Land Records, 1790-1863, http://www.freedmenscemetery.org/resources/documents/manumissions.shtml
- (4) Monmouth County (NJ) Slave Manumissions, 1787-1844,
- https://oprs.co.monmouth.nj.us/Oprs/CustomSearch/SearchInput.aspx?iId=531
- (5) New York Manumission Society Records, 1785-1849,
- https://cdm16694.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/p15052coll5/id/31512
- (6) Virginia Untold: Deeds of Emancipation and Manumission, <a href="http://www.virginiamemory.com/blogs/out-of-the-box/2016/01/27/virginia-untold-deeds-of-emancipation-and-manumission/">http://www.virginiamemory.com/blogs/out-of-the-box/2016/01/27/virginia-untold-deeds-of-emancipation-and-manumission/</a>
- (7) Free at Last? Slavery in Pittsburgh in the 18th and 18th Centuries, <a href="http://exhibit.library.pitt.edu/freeatlast/freedom\_papers.html">http://exhibit.library.pitt.edu/freeatlast/freedom\_papers.html</a>
- (8) Manumissions, Indentures, Bills of Sale Howard County Historical Society, Digital Maryland,
- http://collections.digitalmaryland.org/cdm/landingpage/collection/hcbh
- (9) Book Of Deeds Of Manumissions Of Slaves, 1774-1792 (Kent, Pennsylvania), via Findmypast (\$), <a href="https://search.findmypast.com/search-world-records/book-of-deeds-of-manumissions-of-slaves-1774-1792-kent-pennsylvania">https://search.findmypast.com/search-world-records/book-of-deeds-of-manumissions-of-slaves-1774-1792-kent-pennsylvania</a>
- (10) check for international databases as relevant. For example -- Manumission Records of Slaves in Jamaica,

https://africanamericangenealogydna.com/2018/02/12/manumission-records-of-slaves-in-jamaica/ -- this article takes you to images on the British Library website. (11) "Registers of Slaves, Registers of Freedmen, and Manumission Papers. By the time of start of the Civil War in 1861 about ten percent of African Americans were free. Most free African Americans carried their own papers, but these could be stolen. In order to distinguish between slaves, runaways, and free African Americans, many counties or states in the upper South, and border states kept one or more sets of registers or papers. Some had registers of slaves. Some kept registers of freedmen, "free men of color," or "free negroes." Some kept copies of manumission papers of people freed from enslavement. To find these kinds of registers or papers look in county courthouse records. They are most likely found in the court papers, or among the land and property deeds, or occasionally in probate records, or even with taxation records. Sometimes these kinds of records are found at state libraries, archives, or historical societies."

https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/African American Court Records

#### **Abolitionists**

Abolitionists were proponents of ending slavery. This Wikipedia page provides some historical background on abolitionism around the world, <a href="https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abolitionism">https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abolitionism</a>. They engaged in many activities.

On a related note, many have heard of the Underground Railway which was a means to escort/guide individuals from enslavement to freedom. This didn't abolish the practice of slavery and it provide an option for those enslaved to achieve freedom. Read more via this National Park Service website, Network to Freedom, <a href="https://www.nps.gov/orgs/1205/index.htm">https://www.nps.gov/orgs/1205/index.htm</a>.

There were also limited efforts to relocate free blacks out of the country as a type of freedom. One example is the American Colonization Society "The American Colonization Society (ACS) was formed in 1817 to send free African-Americans to Africa as an alternative to emancipation in the United States. In 1822, the society established on the west coast of Africa a colony that in 1847 became the independent nation of Liberia. By 1867, the society had sent more than 13,000 emigrants. Beginning in the 1830s, the society was harshly attacked by abolitionists, who tried to discredit colonization as a slaveholder's scheme. And, after the Civil

War, when many blacks wanted to go to Liberia, financial support for colonization had waned." Though, such efforts were not universally popular, you may have ancestors amongst the more than 13,000 who did emigrate to Liberia. The society's archives are held by the Library of Congress,

https://www.loc.gov/exhibits/african/afam002.html. Some of those who emigrated to Liberia are named in: (1) Roll of Emigrants to Liberia, 1820-1843; and Liberian Census Data, 1843, <a href="https://www.disc.wisc.edu/archive/Liberia/index.html">https://www.disc.wisc.edu/archive/Liberia/index.html</a> and (2) Virginia Emigrants to Liberia,

http://www.vcdh.virginia.edu/liberia/index.php?page=Virginia%20Emigrants%20 To%20Liberia. Read also, Colonization Societies by Jeremy T. Canipe and Memory F. Mitchell, NCPedia, 2006, https://www.ncpedia.org/colonization-societies.

And, abolitionist activities were not just occurring in what is now the United States. The Abolition Project (UK), <a href="http://abolition.e2bn.org/index.php">http://abolition.e2bn.org/index.php</a>, takes an in-depth look into those seeking to abolish slavery. As the website says "What did a Quaker teacher, a Methodist preacher, a former slave, a former slaver, a ship's doctor, a businessman, an African composer, a Baron, a scholar, an outspoken widow, a lawyer and a wealthy politician have in common? They were just some of the people who campaigned to bring about the abolition of the Transatlantic Slave Trade."

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#### **REMINDER:**

URLs age and are constantly changing. Use Internet Archive's Wayback Machine, <a href="https://web.archive.org/">https://web.archive.org/</a> or the search engine of your choice to seek out seemingly displaced or disappeared websites. Odds are the information is still available and just been moved. Still can't find it. Drop me an email at mosaicrpm@gmail.com.