



Unidentified African American soldier in Union uniform  
with wife and two daughters [between 1863 and 1865]  
*Library of Congress*

# Slavery in New Jersey: A Troubled History

An Exhibit by  
the Durand-Hedden  
House & Garden Association Inc.  
in consultation with  
South Orange-Maplewood  
Community Coalition on Race

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# A Note on the Exhibit

It is difficult to think about people being claimed or sold as property. The use of the words “slave” or “enslaved” in this exhibit is intended only to describe the condition of those who were unwillingly forced into unpaid servitude and in no way is meant to suggest any diminishment of their dignity as human beings. Throughout this exhibit we have tried to provide an accurate picture of New Jersey and American society and government as they were in the 200 years between the colonization of New Jersey and the end of the Civil War. We hope that the information offered here will encourage further reading and understanding of a dark time in our history.

## Note About Ads About Enslaved People

It is difficult to read newspaper ads that regard some people as property. We believe that these ads for runaway slaves and enslaved people for sale, placed by NJ slaveholders, humanize the enslaved, reveal their names, physical features (often through the lens of their prejudiced masters), skills, and bravery. They also emphasize the fact that enslaved people were not just waiting to be freed but were taking heroic actions – always dangerous – to escape from bondage.



# Slavery in New Jersey: A Troubled History

People today might assume that New Jersey, being in the North, was a benevolent – or at least not hostile – place for Africans brought to this country by force and for enslaved people trying to escape from the South. Unfortunately, slavery in this state persisted from the earliest days of settlement right through the Civil War. New Jersey was the last Northern state to abolish slavery (1804) – and then only through “gradual abolition,” which freed no one for more than 20 years. It was also the last Northern state to ratify the Thirteenth Amendment, in 1866, after the Amendment already had become law.

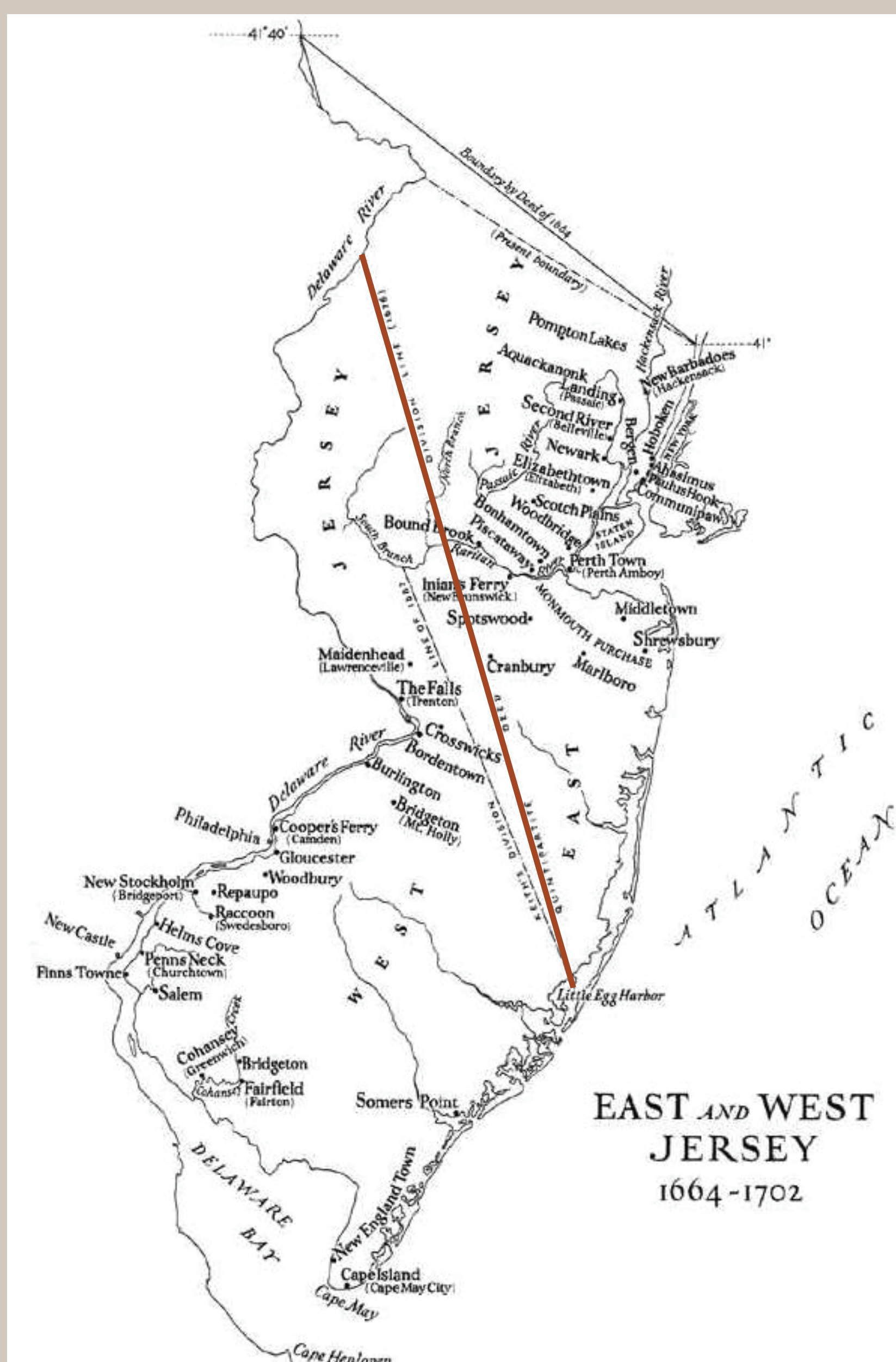
## How it all started

The mostly Dutch and English settlers in New Netherlands (later New York and northern New Jersey) brought the first African captives to the region in 1626. By 1664, one of every 8 white residents enslaved black people. In the 1660s-1670s planters from the Caribbean, primarily Barbados, established estates in what are now Bergen and Passaic Counties, bringing with them their slave-owning culture.



Dutch farmsteads like this one in Bergen County, some dating from as early as the 1620s, relied on enslaved labor. Bergen County continued to have the highest slave population of any New Jersey county until the Civil War.

Credit: Historic American Buildings Survey, Creator, Nicholas Haring House, Piermont Road, Rockleigh, Bergen County, NJ, Bergen County New Jersey Rockleigh, 1933.



From 1664 to 1702, the colony of New Jersey was split into East and West Jersey. Quakers predominated in West Jersey, which included most of the southern and western part of the present state. Quaker influence continued there until the Civil War. Credit: Descendants of Founders of New Jersey

Quakers controlled West Jersey, and in their Charter of 1676 Quaker leaders included a general provision: “*All and every person ...inhabiting the said Province, shall ....be free from oppression and slavery.*”

East Jersey leaders did not follow the Quakers’ example. Various East Jersey laws established penalties for harboring, transporting or helping fugitive enslaved people. Over the next decades, laws restricted such things as enslaved persons’ ability to carry guns, and how far from home they could travel.

# The Growth of Slavery in New Jersey



Although East and West Jersey were reunited in 1702, many philosophical differences remained. Slavery was considered an important source of commerce to the colony, although it was never as extensive as in the South. The wheat, barley and other crops raised in New Jersey were not as labor-intensive as the South's cotton and rice crops so most white slaveholders had only one or two enslaved people, using additional paid laborers during planting and harvesting times.

After a revolt in New York City in 1712, New Jersey expanded Slave Codes to create harsh penalties for crimes committed by enslaved people. Owners offered rewards for capturing those who escaped from other colonies and cities, but running away as a form of protest by slaves against their bondage continued -- as old as African enslavement itself on American soil.

**Two Thousand Dollars Reward.**  
**R**AN-AWAY from Hackett's-Town, Suffex county, on Saturday evening the 21<sup>st</sup> of April, two negro men and one woman, the wife of the eldest. One of the men named Frank, is about forty years old, the other about 25. The woman named Phoebe, is near forty, and has a child with her. They stole two horses, one a very large ferrel horse, eight or nine years old; the other a dark bay, four years old, and fifteen hands high. It is supposed they are gone towards New-York. The above reward will be paid to have them apprehended and secured, by the owner, Mrs. Wilson, at Hackett's-Town, Col. Thompson, at Trenton, Mr. Bray, at Raritan Landing, or Colonel Stewart, at Head-Quarters, New-Windfor. 3w†

New-Jersey Gazette, Trenton, NJ  
 May 2, 1781

**15 Dollars Reward.**  
**R**AN-AWAY from the subscriber on the 4<sup>th</sup> inst. a negro Man, (a slave) named NED, about 20 years old--had on when he went away, a black coat and pantaloons, blue cassimere vest--a fur hat nearly new--is a active fellow, and fond of reading. Any person who will apprehend said runaway and return him to the owner, or secure him in any jail in this State so that he may be had again, shall be entitled to the above reward and reasonable charges.  
 SARAH VAN DUYN, Admz.  
 of Jas. I. V. Duyn  
 Pine Brook, Morris Co. } 86-Step.  
 July 13, 1818. }

Centinel of Freedom, Newark, NJ  
 Aug 4, 1818

**One Guinea Reward.**  
**R**AN-away from the subscriber, living in Essex county, near Lyons Farms, between Elizabeth Town and Newark, the 29<sup>th</sup> of December, a negro boy, named OREB, he formerly was the property of Thomas Baldwin, he is a like-ly fellow, about 18 years old, of a middle stature, and pretty slim; had on when he went away, a blue sailor jacket, and old dun great coat, and London brown trowsers; he is supposed to be lurking about Newark or Elizabeth Town, or may have gone to Morris Town or New-York. — Whoever takes up said fellow, and secures him, or fetches him home, so that his master shall have him again, shall have the above reward, and all reasonable charges paid, by  
 BENJAMIN LYON.  
 January 3, 1786.

Political Intelligencer, Elizabethtown, NJ  
 Jan. 18, 1786

**FIVE DOLLARS REWARD.**  
**R**anaway from the subscriber, the 21<sup>st</sup> inst. a NEGRO BOY named BOB, aged 15 years, very black, had some dim letters printed on his arm, a little above the wrist, and had an iron strap round his neck;—he also had on when he went away, an old hat, tow trowsers, and a man's round jacket made of linsy woolsey. Whoever takes up said Negro boy, and secures him in any goal, or returns him to the subscriber, shall have the above reward, and all reasonable charges paid. All persons are forewarned harboring him at their peril.  
 JOHN WOOD, Junr.  
 Elizabeth-Town, Sept. 28, 1812.

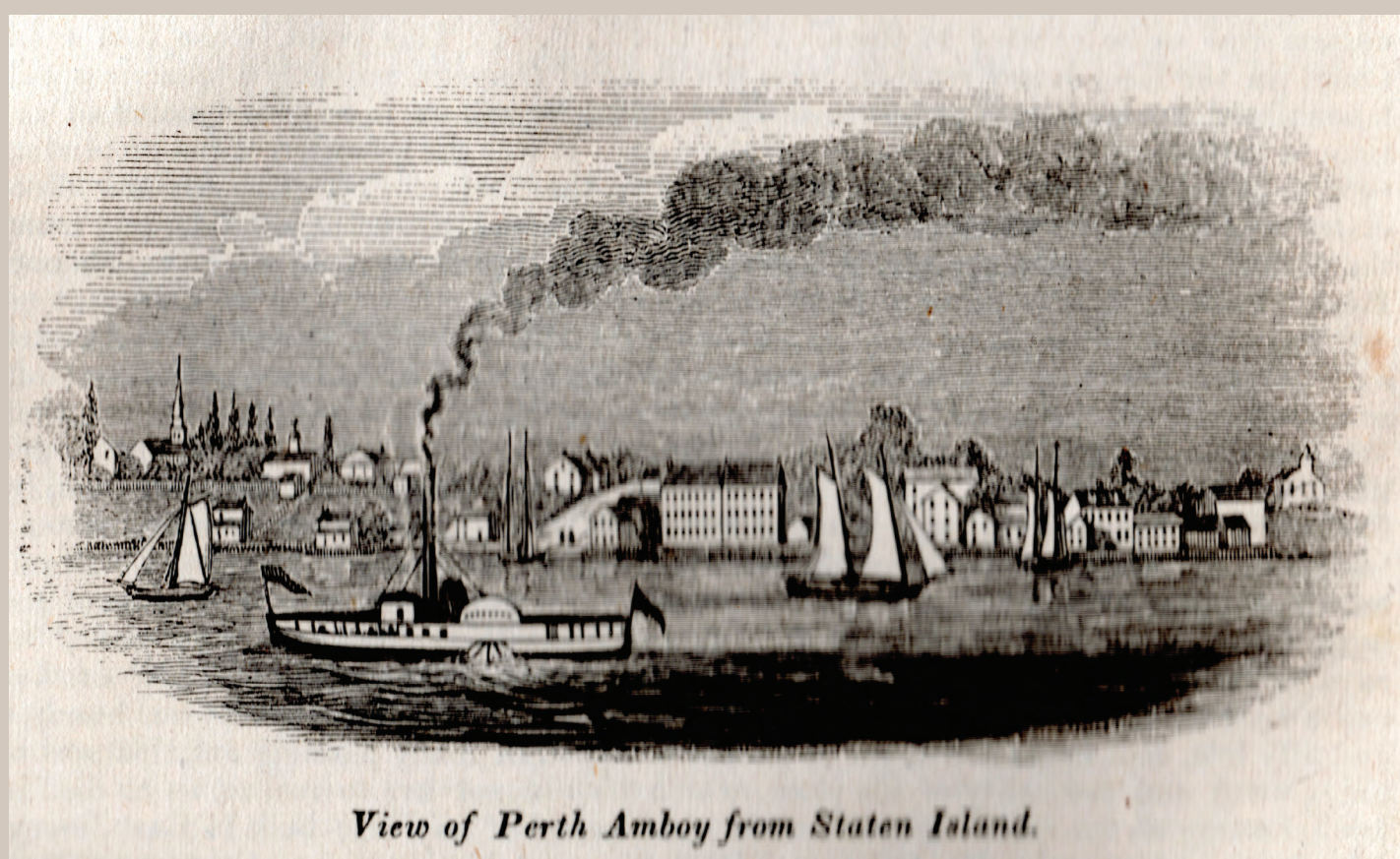
New-Jersey Journal, Elizabethtown, NJ  
 Oct 20, 1812

**Forty Shillings Reward.**  
**R**AN away on the 24<sup>th</sup> inst. from the subscriber, a negro man named SAM, aged 25 years; he is about 5 feet 6 inches high, square shouldered and well made, steps quick, and is an active fellow—over his right eye is a fresh scar from a cut he lately received. He plays on the fiddle, is talkative and fond of strong liquor: he had on when he went away a short blue livery coat, cuffs and collar white, much worn and dirty, an olive coloured jacket, homespun trowsers, good shoes, flowered copper buckles, and an old round hat bound with black ferret. He was late the property of John Lawrence, Esq. in Burlington, where he is well known. Whoever secures the said negro in any goal, shall have the above reward and reasonable expences.  
 ROBERT L. HOOPER.  
 N. B. His wife is a free black woman, and used to live near Mount-Holly, but has removed to Philadel.  
 Trenton, Nov. 4, 1786.

New Jersey-Gazette, Trenton, NJ  
 Nov 20, 1786

**Notice.**  
**W**HIEREAS a coloured Woman named BETTY, a slave owned by the subscriber, is absent without my consent; notice is therefore given forewarning all persons from harbouring said slave or employing her without my permission as they will be prosecuted to the rigour of the law.—Any person wishing to purchase said slave can have a bill of sale for ten dollars.  
 AMOS DAY.  
 Connecticut Farms, June 14, 1824. 5-3w

Centinel of Freedom, Newark, NJ  
 Jun 22, 1824

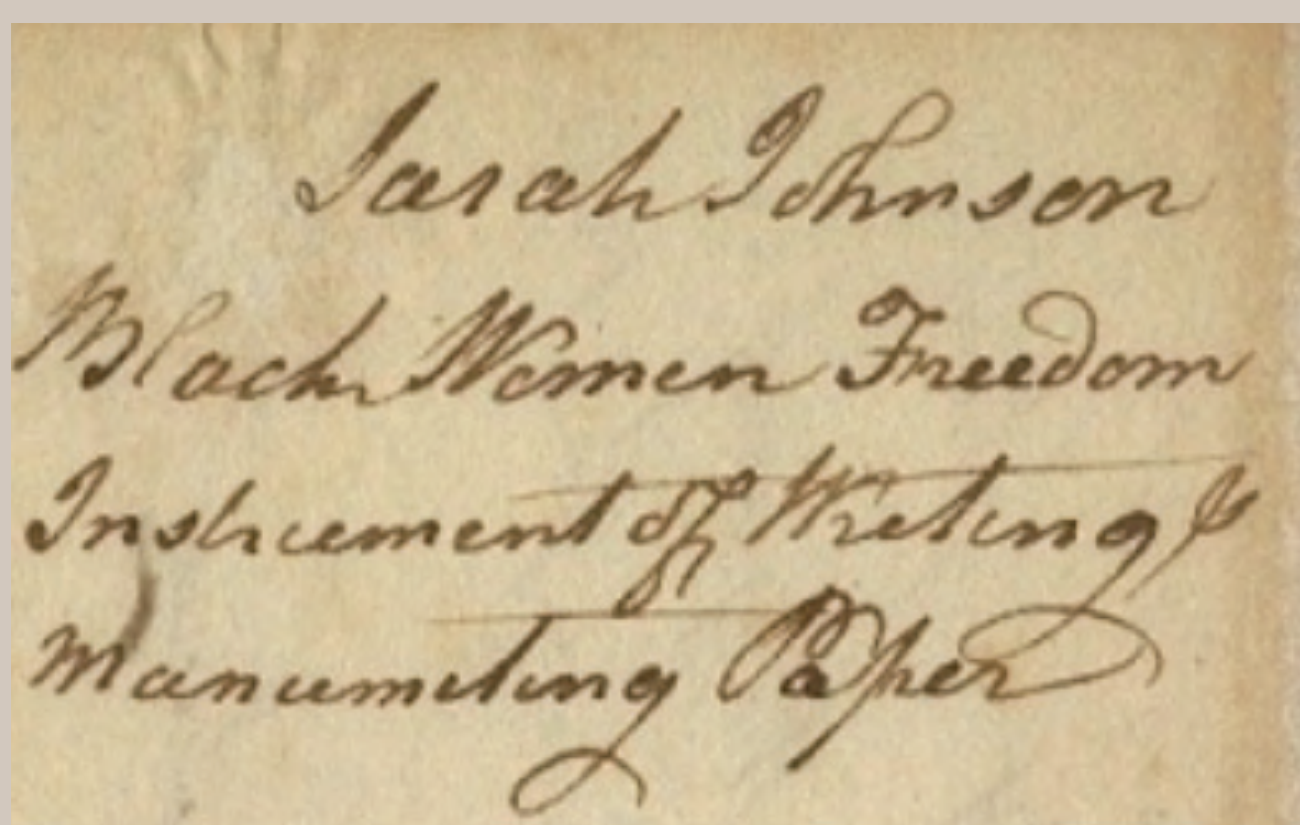


View of Perth Amboy from Staten Island.

Historical Collections of the State of N.J., John Barber & Henry Howe, 1844

Early on, the port city of Perth Amboy became the center of the slave trade in New Jersey. In the years before the Civil War, however, the city became a major Underground Railroad stop as well.

A 1745 census showed that 74% of the enslaved people in the colony of New Jersey – of a total of about 4,000 – lived in Bergen, Somerset, Middlesex and Essex counties. This trend continued throughout the first half of the 19th century (see 1834 map).



Manumission paper of Sarah Johnson  
 Credit: Monmouth County Archives

## Manumission - The freeing of an enslaved person by his or her owner

The 1713-14 Slave Codes included a provision for manumission, but the owner had to pay £200 (\$56,000 today) to the government, and a £20 (\$5,600) annual payment to the freed person. Eventually pressure from Quakers and other abolitionists over the rest of the century resulted in the removal of the payment to the government for manumission in 1786.

# The Revolutionary War and the start of the new Nation

The Revolutionary War enabled the freedom of many enslaved people in New Jersey. In the upheaval of war some slaves escaped. Some enslaved men earned their freedom by fighting for the Continental Army or the NJ Militia. The British Army also promised freedom to any slave who fought for the British.



This 1837 "Moral Map of the U.S." shows New Jersey as outside of the slavery region, although at the time, more than 2,300 enslaved people were in bondage there.  
Credit: Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, Manuscripts, Archives and Rare Books Division, The New York Public Library. (1843)

white population increased significantly, providing a pool of affordable laborers who did not have to be fed, housed and guarded in the same way as enslaved workers.

Nevertheless, slavery continued to exist in New Jersey, and slaveowners continued to be a vocal and powerful political force, resisting the efforts of abolitionists.

## New Jersey (slowly) eliminates slavery

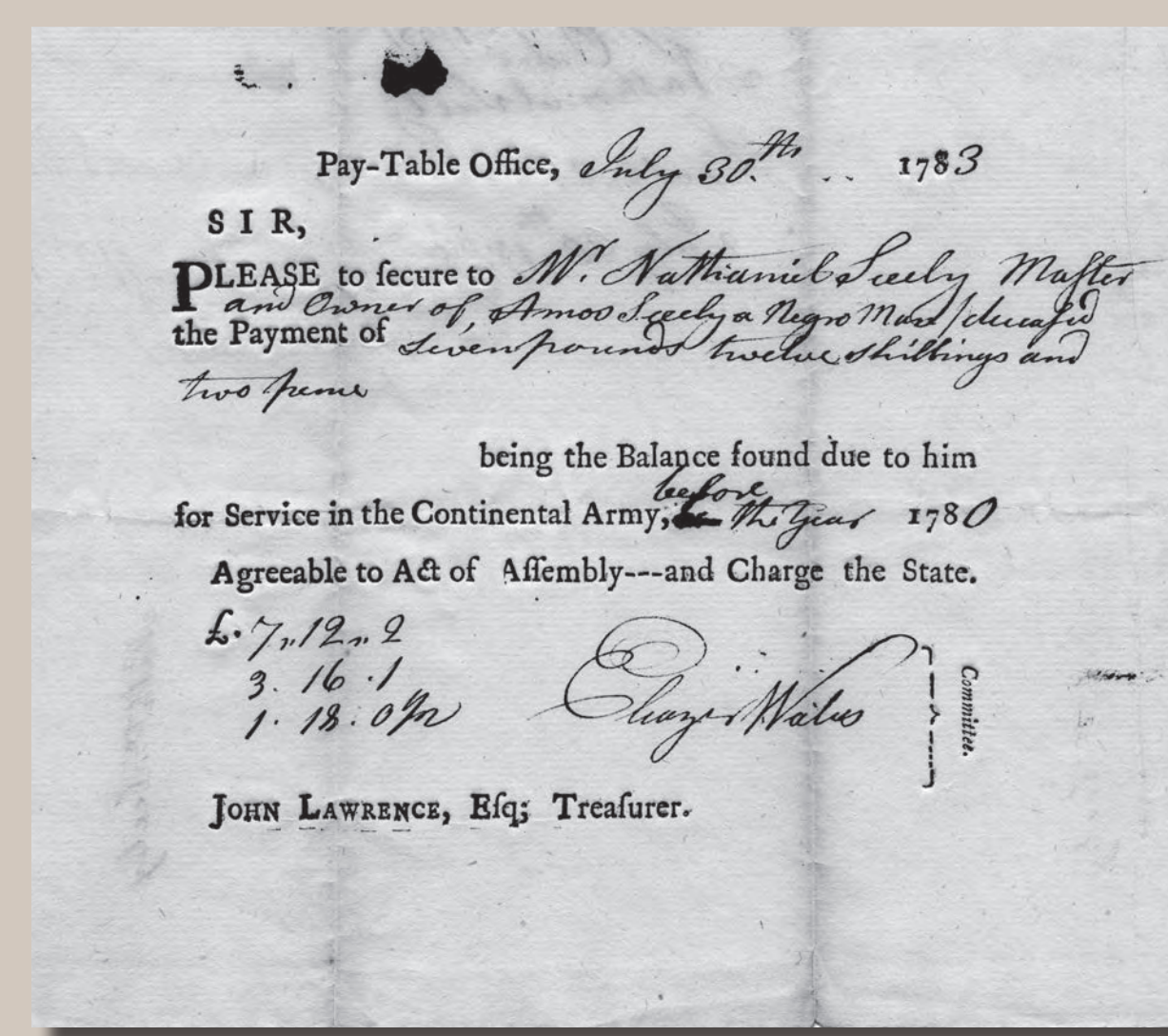
The new Northern states of the Union began to abolish slavery in the years following the Revolution, but New Jersey was the last. In 1804, the state passed the Gradual Abolition Law, which did not free any enslaved people immediately:

*"Every child born of a slave...after the fourth of July [1804] ... shall be free, but shall remain the servant of the owner of his or her mother..."* until age 21 (for females) or 25 (for males).

Thus was created the concept of "slaves for a term" – neither free nor technically enslaved. New Jersey laws in the 1790s and early 1800s showed an ambivalence toward slavery and enslaved people. Some statutes provided a degree of protection; other provisions restricted such things as slaves' ability to gather in groups or be out after 10:00 pm.

Many historians note the dissonant reasoning of the Founding Fathers in the wording of the Declaration of Independence. It states, "that all men are created equal", but this pointedly *excluded* women and people of color.

New Jersey outlawed importation of slaves from Africa in 1786, but free blacks were not allowed to move into the state. After the Revolution, the



Request for compensation to be paid to Nathaniel Seely for his slave, Amos Seely, who was killed in the Revolutionary War, 1783.  
Credit: Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, Manuscripts, Archives and Rare Books Division, The New York Public Library. (1783)



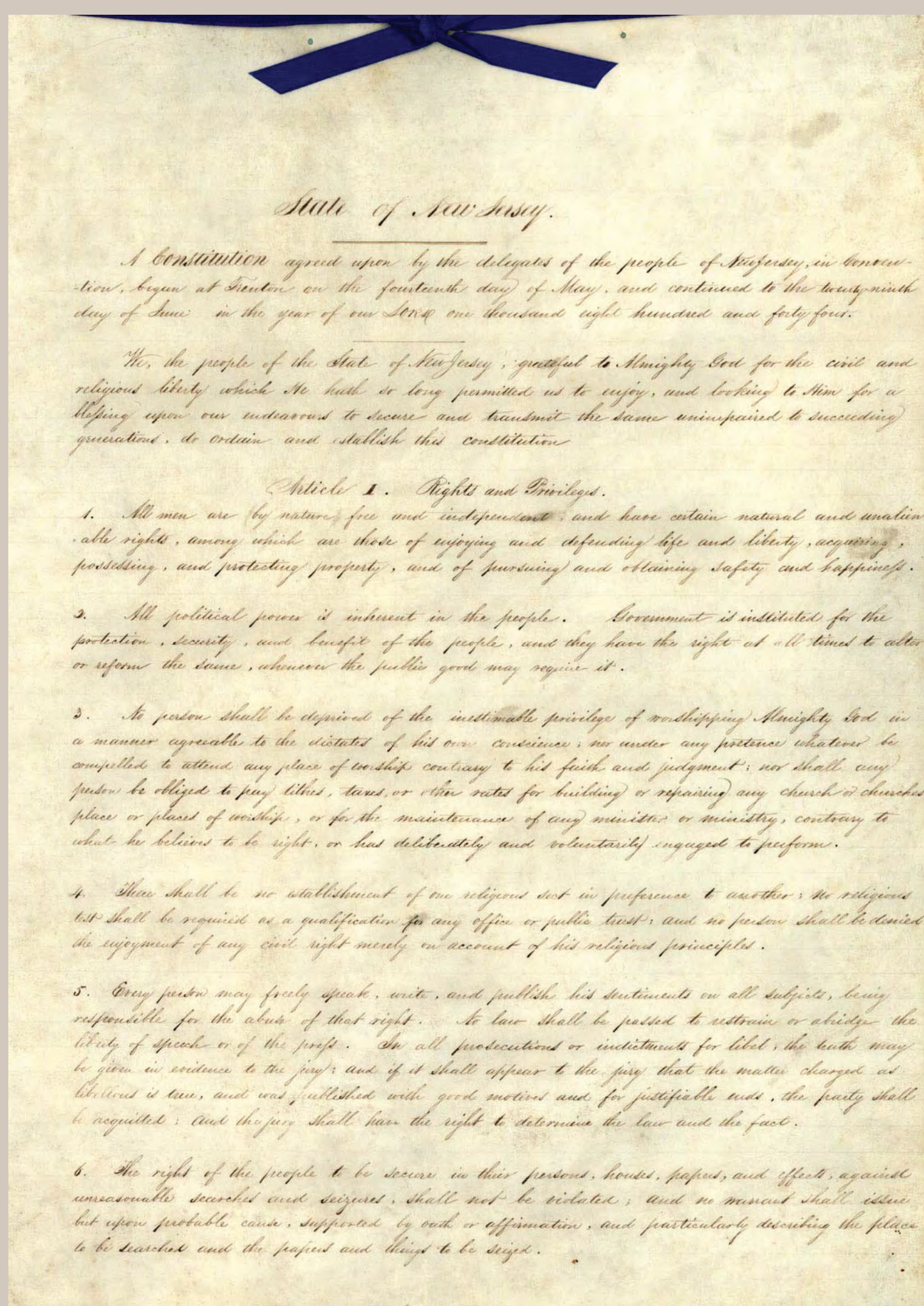
Charity Still, who twice escaped from slavery  
Credit: Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, Manuscripts, Archives and Rare Books Division, The New York Public Library. (1897)

# Slavery in New Jersey declined over time but did not end until after the Civil War.

- In 1800, there were 12,422 enslaved people in New Jersey.
- In 1830, 90% of black people in New Jersey were free.
- By 1840, there were about 3,500 enslaved people in all the Northern States. About 3,000 of them – enslaved or “slaves for a term” – lived in New Jersey, along with almost 18,400 free black people.

## Updating the State Constitution, but not freedom for black people

The New Jersey legislature updated its State Constitution in 1844. Despite aggressive efforts by abolitionists, the new State Constitution made no mention of slavery and thus left in place the 1798 slave law.



The first page of the 1844 NJ Constitution  
Credit: New Jersey State Archives

- In 1846, a New Jersey law claimed to “abolish” slavery. In reality, it merely reclassified enslaved people as “apprentices for life.” There was no way for “apprentices” to get out without buying their own freedom or hoping that the slaveholder would manumit them if they could be self-supporting.
- Children born to apprentices were officially free at birth, but from a practical standpoint, would likely stay with a parent until they were old enough to work.

Over time, the number of enslaved and “slaves for a term” decreased, but also became harder to track because of the many terms that defined them. Despite the growing population of free blacks and the declining population of slaves, the laws in New Jersey carefully protected existing

property owners’ rights – including ownership of people. No owner was forced to lose an enslaved or apprenticed worker. Sometimes owners would sell “slaves for a term” to buyers in the South – actions which enraged many abolitionists.

- In 1849, the legislature passed a joint resolution stating – apparently with no irony – that “the people of New Jersey, believing the institution of human slavery to be a great moral and political evil....” would resist its extension into new territories.

# The Civil War - and finally, an end to slavery



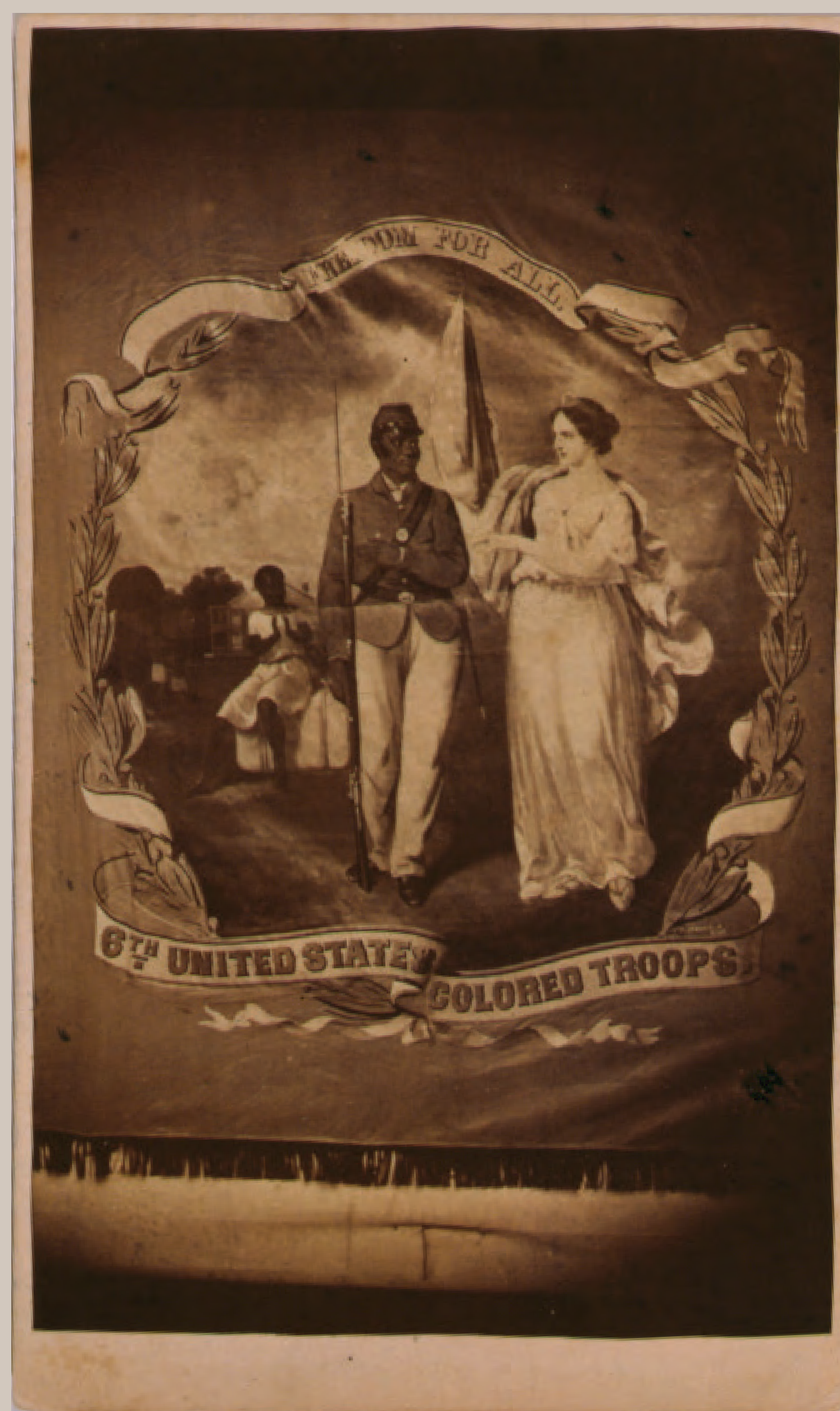
Arlington, Va. Band of 107th U.S. Colored Infantry at Fort Corcoran  
Credit: Library of Congress

On Jan. 1, 1863, President Abraham Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation. While it did not free any blacks in New Jersey, the Proclamation provided for the establishment of Colored Troops, and many apprenticed men used the opportunity to join the fight for the Union. Despite heavy casualties, many fought with distinction, and 15 soldiers of the Colored Troops receiving the Medal of Honor and numerous other honors.



Caption: Two brothers at arms, Union Army  
Credit: Library of Congress

As slavery waned in New Jersey in the 1850s, tensions in the country increased, and the Civil War started in April 1861. More than 88,000 white soldiers from New Jersey fought in Union Army infantry and cavalry regiments.

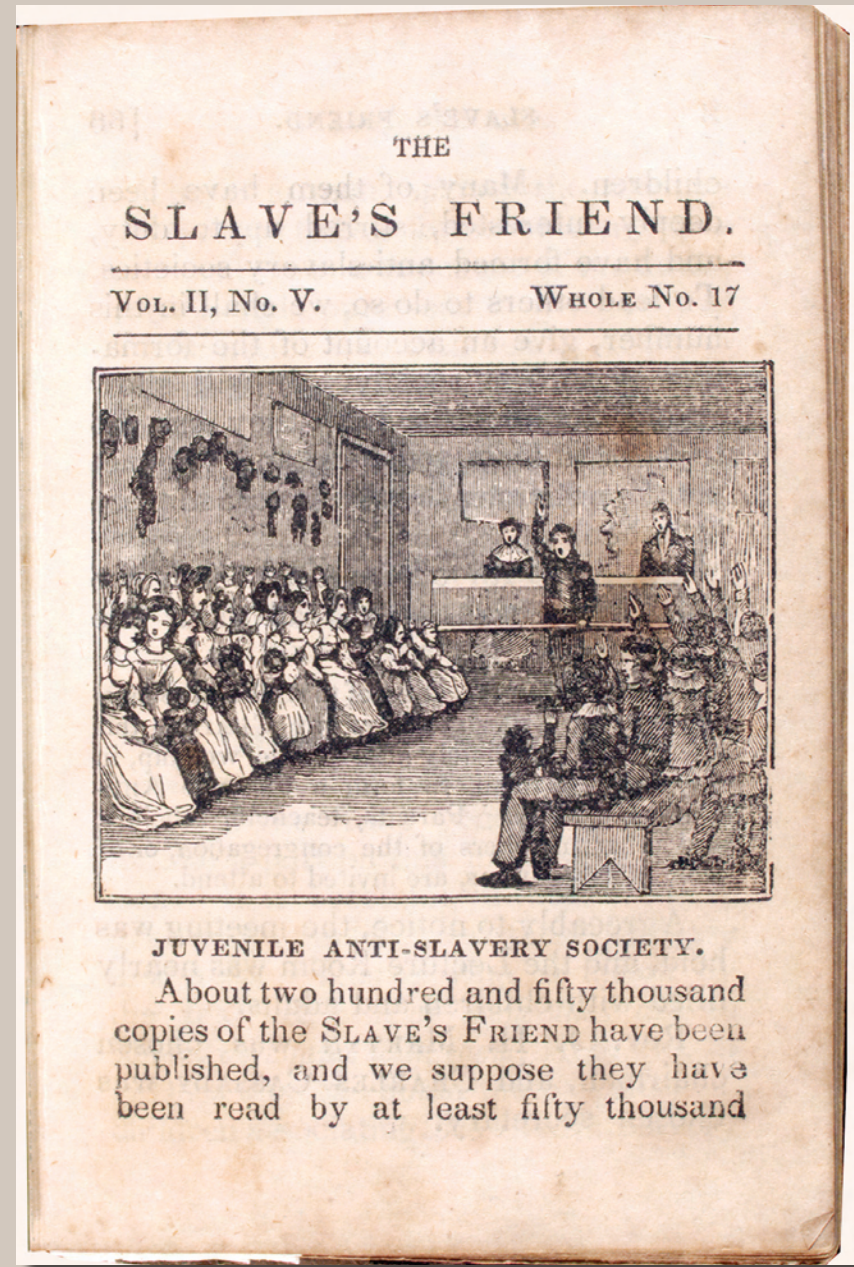


Caption: Freedom for All: 6th Regiment United States Colored Troops  
Credit: Library of Congress

This was a turning point in the war, changing its focus from preventing secession to ending slavery throughout the nation. Although the Thirteenth, Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments were still needed to make the rights of African Americans official in all states, the legal status of slavery was at an end.

# The Forces of Abolition in New Jersey

The many Quakers living in the southern and western counties of New Jersey had a strong abolitionist philosophy. As a result, the number of enslaved people in most of those counties was low and declined throughout the 1700s and early 1800s.



From the collection of the New York Public Library

Quaker arguments against slavery were often overshadowed as slaveholders in the northeastern counties continued to be a powerful and vocal group. After the Revolutionary War, slave ownership increased in those areas.

In 1786-88, Quaker pressure resulted in laws that helped their abolitionist cause, including:

- Banning the importation of enslaved people
- Fines against masters who abused their slaves
- Allowing owners to manumit (free) enslaved persons aged 21-35 without bond
- Requiring owners to support former slaves financially if they needed it.

In the early 1790s, Quakers formed the New Jersey Society for Promoting the Abolition of Slavery (SPAS), a chapter of the most prominent abolitionist group in the United States. The SPAS aggressively intervened in the courts to free black people unlawfully held in bondage and charged the state with failing to uphold the principles of equality, justice, and liberty put forth in the Declaration of Independence.

## Enslaved people motivated to take action

The growing efforts of abolitionists in the state inspired slaves and free black people to take action themselves to press for freedom through the courts. Abolitionist lawyers also filed suit to protect free blacks from being kidnapped and sold South – a growing problem in New Jersey.

New Jersey's enslaved people sometimes negotiated with owners for liberty – a situation made easier because slaveholders were worried about slaves revolting and burning down their property. African Americans published multiple petitions and wrote to Congressional leaders to plead their case. Many enslaved people took their lives into their own hands and ran away, helped by black and white abolitionists. The first railroad trains in the US in 1829 made the concept of an Underground Railroad possible as a means to get black people safely to New England and Canada.



Credit: From the collection of the New York Public Library

The SPAS lobbied legislators and participated in abolitionist conventions designed to push for an end to slavery on a national scale. In the 1790s, they presented petitions to show that whites wanted abolition as a realization of the ideals of the Revolutionary War. In the face of strong political opposition, SPAS advocated for gradual legal abolition.



# The Forces of Abolition in New Jersey

## Gradual abolition

New Jersey was the last Northern state to begin the process of dismantling its slave system. The 1804 Act for the Gradual Abolition of Slavery created a new category of “slaves for a term”:

*“Every child born of a slave...after the fourth of July [1804] ... shall be free; but shall remain the servant of the owner of his or her mother...” until age 21 (for females) or 25 (for males).*

Some abolitionists viewed this law as a triumph, but although it attempted appease them, in fact it was designed to reduce financial losses of slaveholders. Slaveholders soon realized that their “slaves for a term” were worth far more if they were sold to the South. New Jersey PAS members pushed for laws, enacted between 1818 and the 1830s, that limited slaveholders’ ability to transport or sell slaves out of state, and increased punishment for slave-catchers.



Running Away  
Credit: From the collection of the New York Public Library



Representative John Bingham of Ohio, principal author of the Equal Protection Clause

## The Underground Railroad

Beginning in 1830, the Underground Railroad, a secret network of people and places – sometimes well organized and other times loosely structured – connected runaway slaves trying to escape from the Upper South and even New Jersey. The British Empire abolished slavery in 1833, making Canada a safe haven. People in New England and upper Midwestern states provided shelter and information and guidance on the trip north, even though it was illegal to help fugitive slaves.

## The Underground Railroad in Perth Amboy

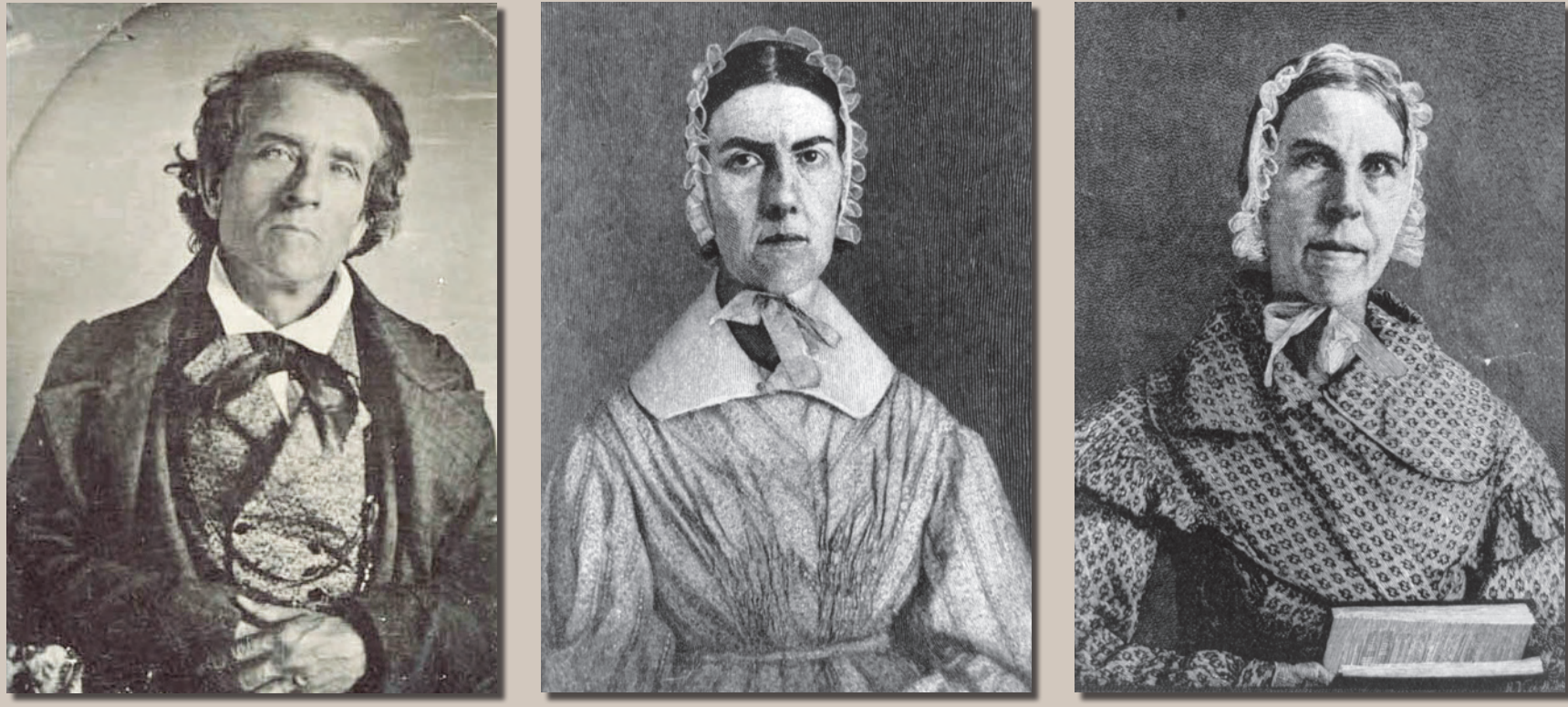
Although the Underground Railroad stops such as Lawnside in Southern New Jersey are most well-known, an important stop on the outskirts of Perth Amboy was the Phalanx at Eagleswood, a large, multiracial boarding school. The massive building’s many corridors and rooms made it ideal for hiding escaped black people on their way to freedom.



Eagleswood, in Perth Amboy, was a school led by Theodore Weld, Angelina Grimké Weld and Sarah Grimké, and served as a stop on the Underground Railroad.

Credit: From the Collections of the New Jersey Historical Society - All Rights Reserved

# The Forces of Abolition in New Jersey



Theodore Weld was a prominent abolitionist who led a school at Eagleswood, Perth Amboy.

Angelina Emily Grimké and Sarah Moore Grimké were noted abolitionists who fought for the end of slavery. Angelina was married to Theodore D. Weld.

Abolitionist Theodore Weld, his wife, Angelina Grimké Weld, and Angelina's sister Sarah Grimké led the school from 1854 to 1861. Sarah and Angelina Grimké, the daughters of a South Carolina rice plantation owner, became outspoken abolitionists in the 1830s, at the same

time that Weld joined the American Anti-Slavery Society and began an active speaking tour promoting the abolition of slavery. Many historians regard Weld as the most important figure in the abolitionist movement, although many of his writings were done anonymously.

Weld spoke several times at meetings of the Essex County Anti-Slavery Society in 1841 and 1842. The minutes of July 5, 1841 note the presence of "Theodore D. Weld, than whom the cause has no more able advocate".



Harriet Tubman, a leader of the anti-slavery movement, who operated in Delaware and New Jersey

One of the most notable anti-slavery activists in New Jersey and Delaware was Harriet Tubman, a fearless conductor of the Underground Railroad.

Recent scholarship suggests that between 30,000 and 50,000 runaway slaves were involved in the Underground Railroad. Although running away was a very common form of protest, the majority of enslaved people in the South who absconded in the years before the Civil War remained in the South, many going to the region's cities where they were sometimes able to pass as free black people.

The advent of the Civil War marked the end of the Underground Railroad, as runaway slaves ran to the shelter of the invading Union forces.

**NOTICE**—The Essex County Anti Slavery Society, will hold a meeting in the Free Church, Clinton street, next THURSDAY AFTERNOON and EVENING, at 3 and 7 1/2 o'clock P. M. Mr. J. D. Weld will address the meeting in the evening. The public are affectionately invited to attend. au9-2t

Newark Daily Advertiser, Wed. Aug 10, 1842 Page 3

Newark, July 5 1841  
Meeting at the Free Church, at 10 A. M.  
The President in the chair.  
Meeting opened with prayer, by Rev. Mr. Lee  
The meeting was first addressed by the Rev. Mr. Lee, as per advertisement, — followed by Lewis Chapman of New York, Joseph Sturge of England, & Theodore D. Weld, of Belville, than whom the cause has no more able advocate.  
The congregation about 50 held the house; collection, recommended by the President, \$7.06  
After the public exercises, the Society was called to order, when on motion, it was resolved — that our next meeting be at Springfield on Monday the second of Aug next; business meeting at 3 P. M. and public lecture in the evening at 7 1/2 past 7.  
Resolved — that the Rev. Mr. Lee, be a committee to procure speakers for the next meeting.  
Resolved — that we now adjourn.  
John Lee, President  
W. P. Gardner, Secy

From the Minutes Book of the Essex County Anti-Slavery Society, July 5, 1841, noting an address by "Theodore D. Weld of Belville, than whom the cause has no more able advocate."

# The American Colonization Society

## Was a new African colony of free blacks the answer?

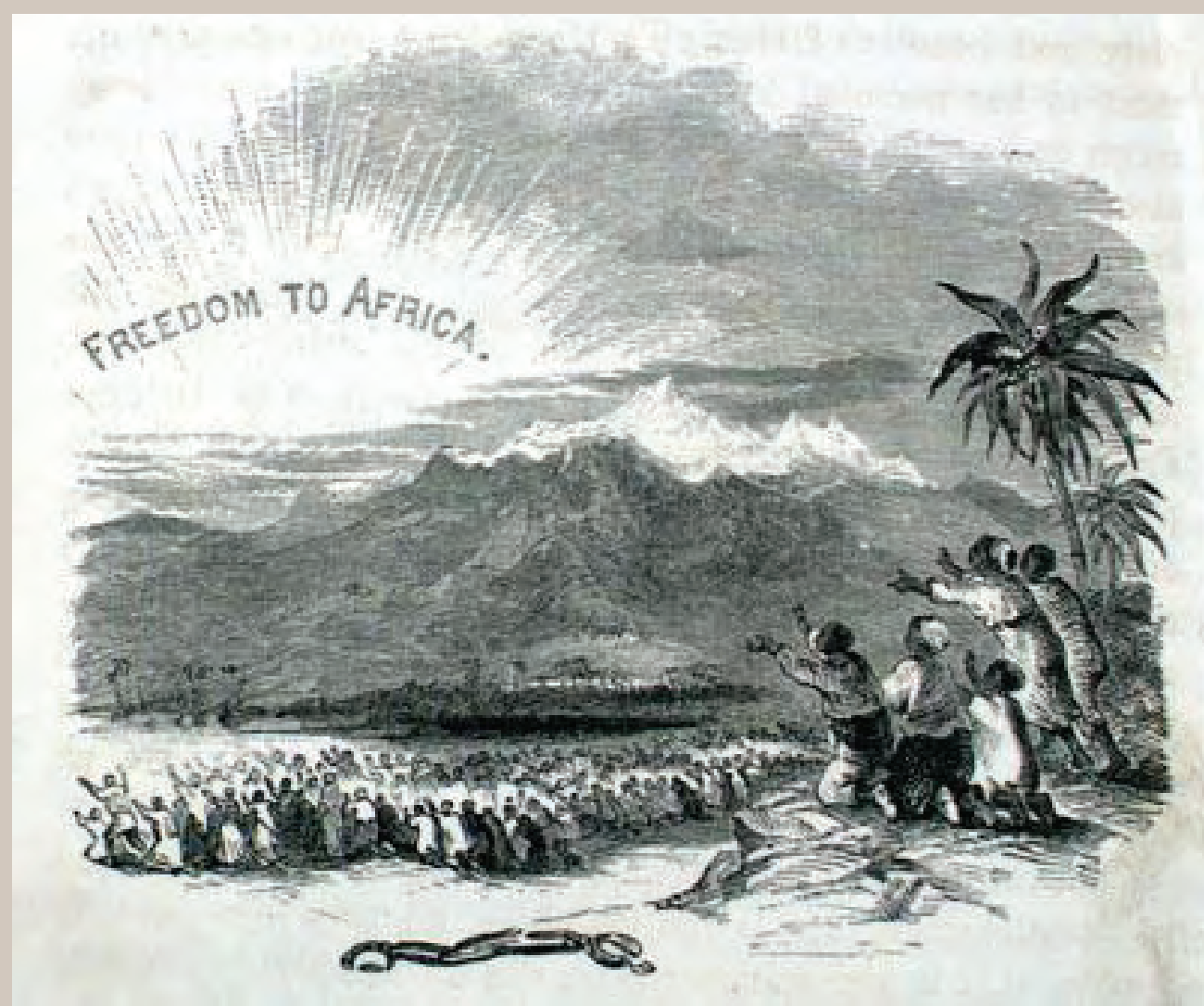


Illustration by Hammat Billings for the 1853 Edition of Uncle Tom's Cabin  
Credit: University of Virginia

The more than 18,000 free black people in 1820s New Jersey found themselves as essentially “slaves without masters” – legally free but without basic human and citizenship rights.

Presbyterian minister Robert Finley of Somerset County viewed free black people as “ignorant Africans” incapable of improving their own lives. Finley’s 1816 essay “Thoughts on the Colonization of Free Blacks” led to the founding of The American Colonization Society (ACS) in 1817. ACS proposed that sending free African Americans to

a new colony in Africa as an alternative to emancipation in the United States would essentially “end” slavery. In 1822, the society funded and established a colony on the west coast of Africa that in 1847 became the independent nation of Liberia.

In New Jersey, the state abolition society had lost momentum since the passage of the gradual abolition act of 1804, and some abolitionists viewed the ACS as a way of sustaining the movement, arguing that removal of freed slaves to Africa was the next step to full freedom. Many whites agreed with the prevailing view of the time that free blacks could not be integrated into white America.

Although membership in the ACS was almost completely white (including many slave owners), from 1821 to 1840, thousands of free black individuals, whose lives were legally restricted in much of the US, moved to Liberia.

Some saw colonization as a humanitarian effort and a means of ending slavery, but many antislavery advocates opposed the society, believing that its true intent was to preserve the institution of slavery and “solve the problem” of free blacks. Disparaged by people on both sides of the slavery debate and short on funding, the society declined after 1840.

Nevertheless, the idea persisted, and Harriet Beecher Stowe in her novel Uncle Tom’s Cabin (1853) sent most of the black characters to Africa at the end. It was one of the most controversial aspects of the novel for abolitionist and African American readers.



American Colonization Society membership certificate signed by James Madison, 1833.  
Credit: Gilder Lehrman Institute of America History

### References:

James Gigantino II, *The Ragged Road to Abolition*, 2015  
Encyclopedia Britannica, *The American Colonization Society*

# Juneteenth: A Celebration of Freedom



Juneteenth Celebration band, June 19, 1900  
Photo by Grace Murray Stephenson

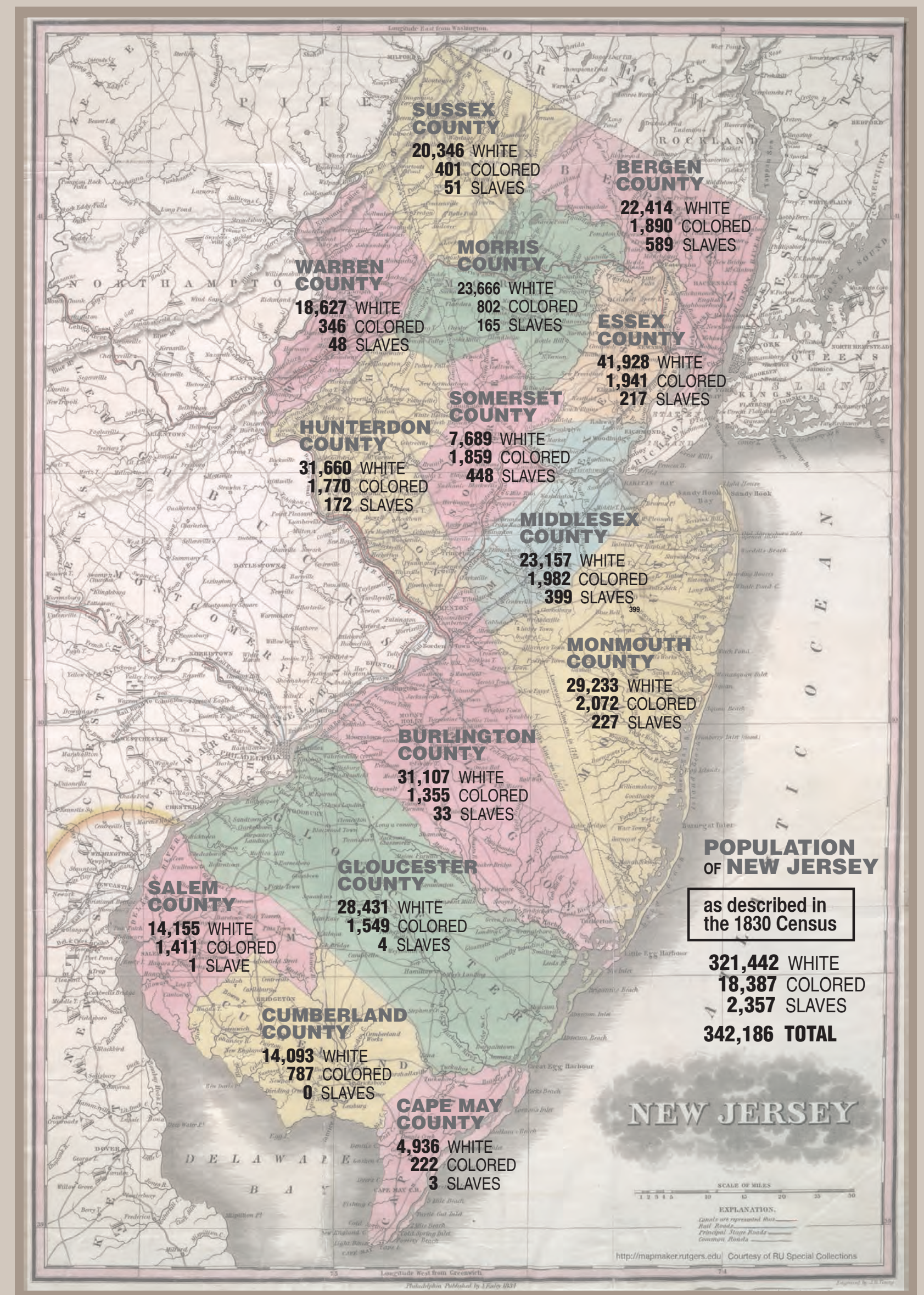
Sometimes known as “Freedom Day” or “Emancipation Day,”

Juneteenth is a contraction of the words “June Nineteenth.” Juneteenth commemorates the June 19, 1865, announcement of the abolition of slavery in the state of Texas, 18 months after the Emancipation Proclamation, and five months after the passage of the Thirteenth Amendment. The celebrations

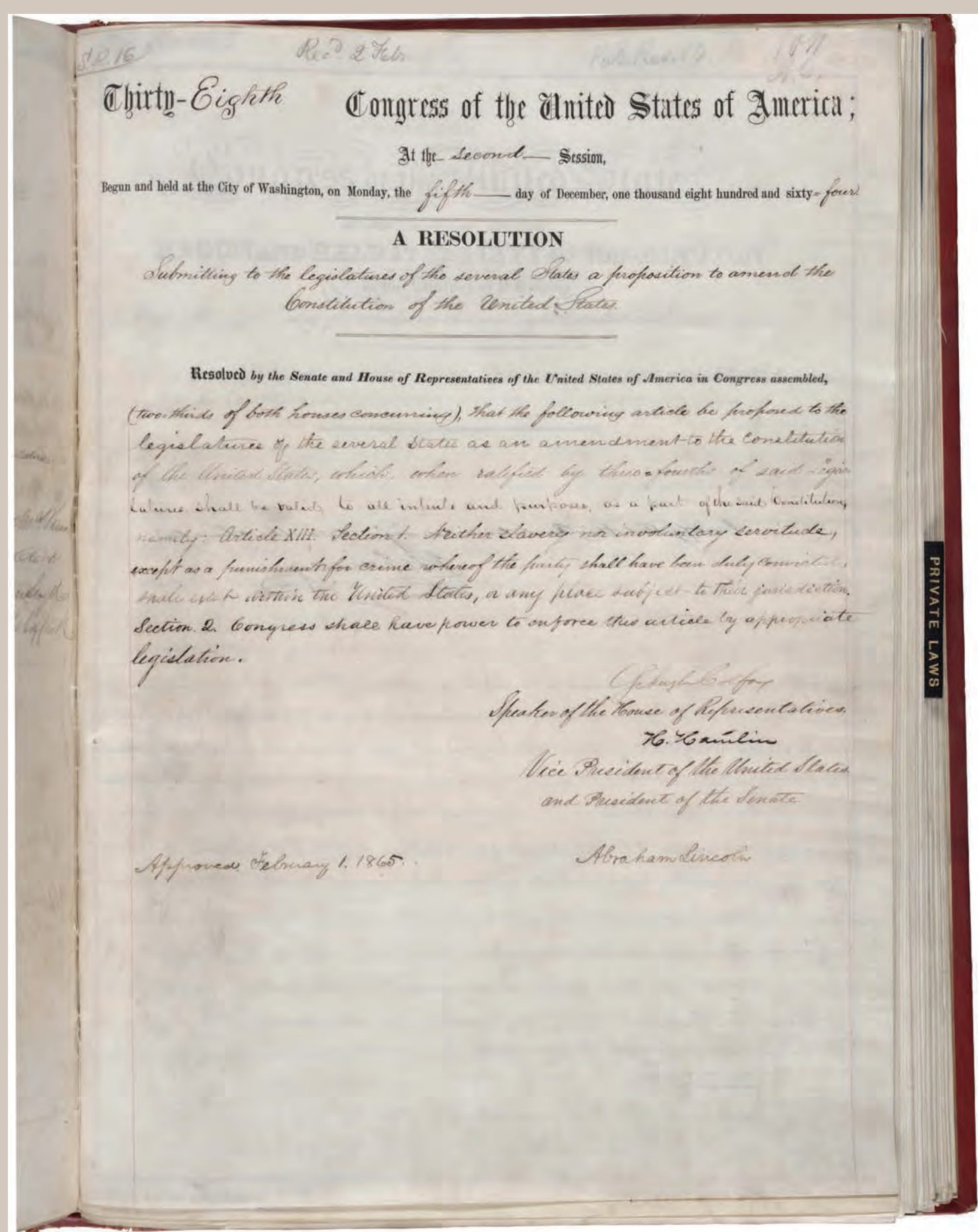
that followed the Union Army’s occupation of Texas began a tradition that has lasted for 154 years. Today, in cities and towns in 45 US states, Juneteenth commemorates African American freedom and emphasizes education and achievement.

## Why should this matter to me in New Jersey?

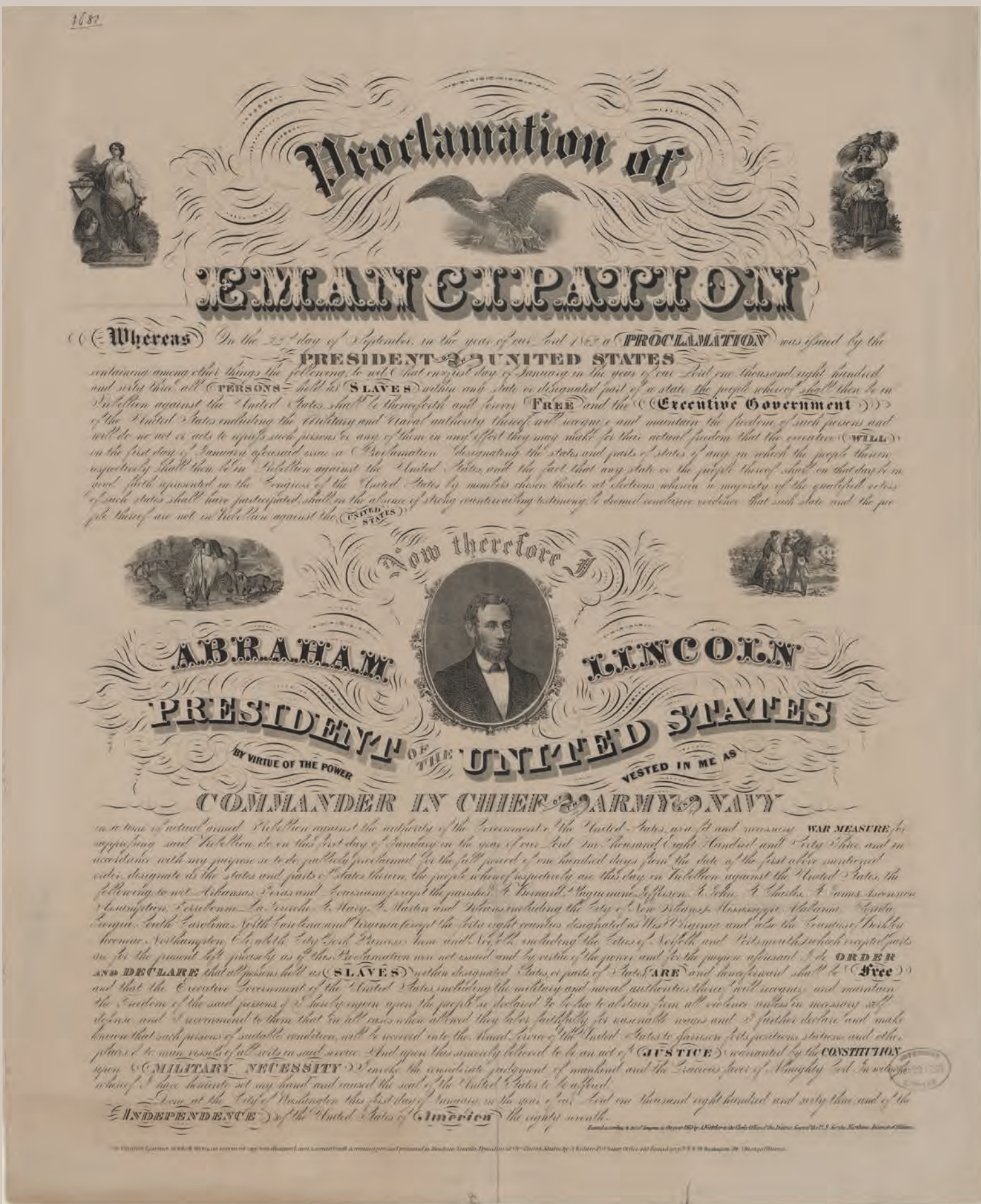
Although most people associate slavery in the United States with the South, slavery existed in the North. Enslaved people lived in New Jersey from the late 1600s through the Civil War. In 1830 there were about 2,300 enslaved people in New Jersey, more than 200 of them in Essex County.



In fact, some historians note that the last 16 enslaved people in New Jersey were not freed until the passage of the Thirteenth Amendment on Jan. 31, 1865, truly ended slavery in America. New Jersey, in 1866, was the last northern state to ratify that amendment.



# Juneteenth: A Celebration of Freedom



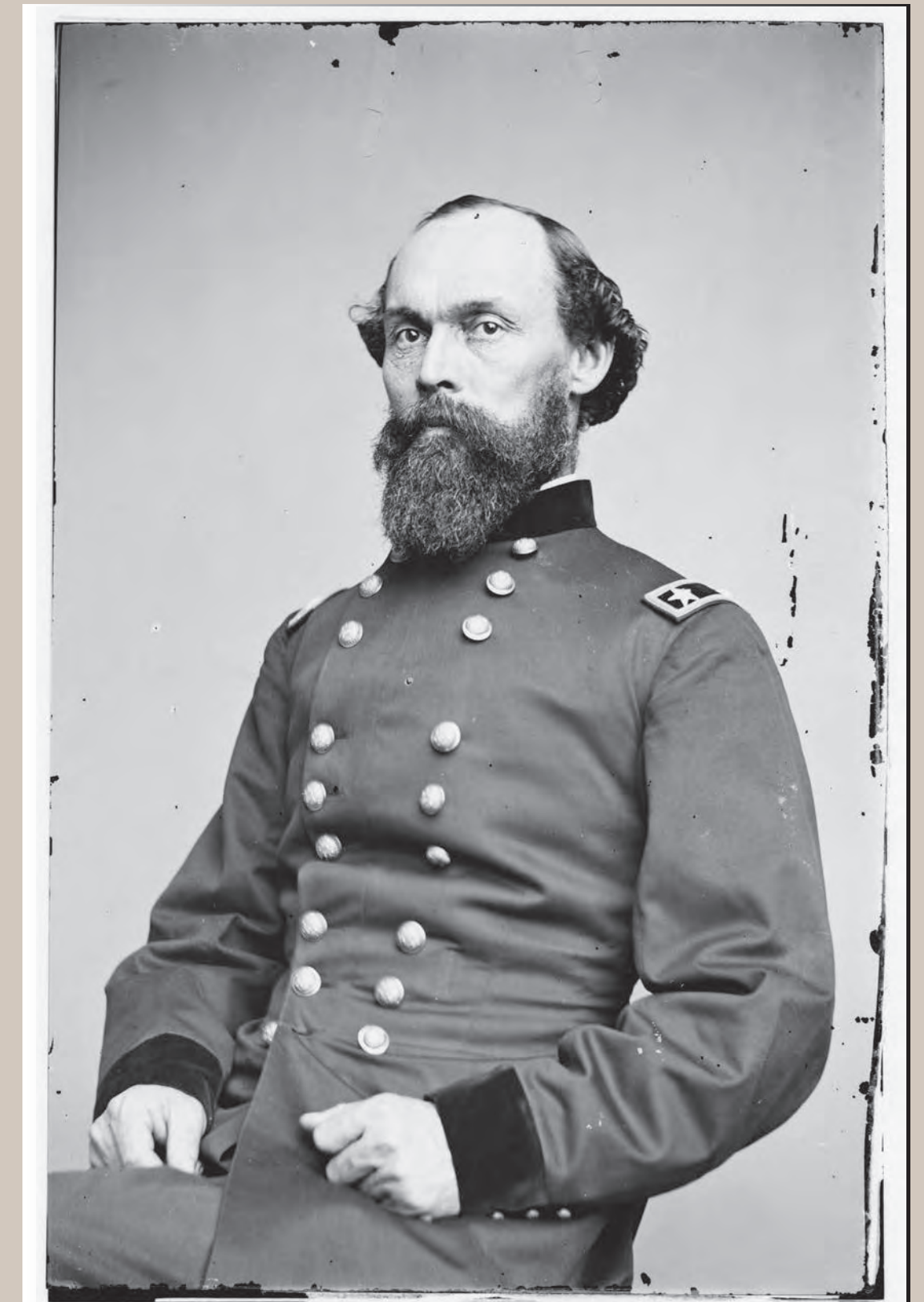
## What about the Emancipation Proclamation?

On January 1, 1863, Lincoln issued the final Emancipation Proclamation, which declared “that all persons held as slaves” within the rebel states “are, and henceforward shall be free.” The proclamation also allowed those formerly enslaved to join the armed forces of the United States. An estimated 180,000 African Americans went on to serve in the Army, while another 18,000 served in the Navy.

## Why did Juneteenth happen in Texas?

Texas was isolated geographically from the Civil War battlegrounds. By 1865 there were an estimated 250,000 enslaved people there. People enslaved there did not know about the Emancipation Proclamation – and slave owners did not tell them.

Union Army General Gordon Granger arrived at Galveston Island, Texas with 2,000 federal troops to occupy the state on behalf of the federal government, and on June 19th, 1865, standing on the balcony of Galveston’s Ashton Villa, Granger read aloud the contents of “General Order No. 3”, announcing the total emancipation of those held as slaves:



*The people of Texas are informed that, in accordance with a proclamation from the Executive of the United States, all slaves are free. This involves an absolute equality of personal rights and rights of property between former masters and slaves, and the connection heretofore existing between them becomes that between employer and hired labor.*



Juneteenth Emancipation Day, June 19, 1900  
Austin Public Library

# Why were Constitutional Amendments needed in addition to the Emancipation Proclamation?

**The Emancipation Proclamation** was an executive order issued by United States President Abraham Lincoln on January 1, 1863. The Proclamation declared that all slaves residing in territories in rebellion against the federal government were free.

- However, the Emancipation Proclamation did not apply to enslaved people living in border states fighting on the Union side, and it did not apply to enslaved people in the South in areas already under Union control.
- It also did not affect New Jersey, which had passed a gradual abolition law in 1804, but still had enslaved people, “slaves for a term,” and “apprentices for life”.
- The proclamation did show Americans-- and the world-- that the Civil War was now being fought to end slavery.



Harper's Weekly, 18 February 1865 - Public Domain

## The Push for an Amendment to End Slavery in the United States

An amendment to the U.S. Constitution was necessary for abolition of slavery to have the force of law in all states after the Civil War.

The Thirteenth Amendment was approved in the Senate in April 1864 and in the House of Representatives on January 31, 1865. President Lincoln was assassinated on April 14, 1865. His successor, President Andrew Johnson, had to manage putting the country back together while getting two-thirds of the states to ratify the Amendment.

On December 6, 1865, the Thirteenth Amendment became law, stating:

*“Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, except as a punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted, shall exist within the United States, or any place subject to their jurisdiction.”*

- > New Jersey rejected ratification in 1865 but ratified it on January 23, 1866, the last northern state to do so

Slavery was now outlawed all across the land, and the amendment freed nearly 4 million enslaved people.

## But it was not enough.

Though the Thirteenth Amendment formally abolished slavery in the United States, “Black Codes” – restrictive laws enacted in the Southern states to limit the freedom of African Americans and ensure their availability as a cheap labor force -- as well as white supremacist violence, and selective enforcement of laws continued to subject some black Americans to involuntary labor, particularly in the South.

It became clear that more legislation was needed to protect black citizens.

# The Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments – Equal Protection and the Right to Vote

**The Constitutional Amendment, as Finally Adopted and Submitted to the Legislatures of the States.**

**IN SENATE.**

1866, June 8—The Amendment in these words, as finally amended, was brought to a vote: Joint resolution proposing an amendment to the Constitution of the United States.

*Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, (two-thirds of both Houses concurring,) That the following article be proposed to the legislatures of the several States as an amendment to the Constitution of the United States, which, when ratified by three-fourths of said legislatures, shall be valid as part of the Constitution, namely:*

**ARTICLE 14.**

It passed—yeas 33, nays 11, as follow:

**YEAS**—Messrs. Anthony, Chandler, Clark, Conness, Cragin, Creswell, Edmunds, Fessenden, Foster, Grimes, Harris, Henderson, Howard, Howe, Kirkwood, Lane of Kansas, Lane of Indiana, Morgan, Morrill, Nye, Poland, Pomeroy, Ramsey, Sherman, Sprague, Stewart, Sumner, Trumbull, Wade, Wiley, Williams, Wilson, Yates—33.

**NAYS**—Messrs. Cowan, Davis, Doolittle, Guthrie, Hendricks, Johnson, McDougall, Norton, Riddle, Saulsbury, Van Winkle—11.

**ABSENT**—Messrs. Brown, Buckalew, Dixon, Nesmith, Wright—5.

**IN HOUSE.**

June 13—The Amendment passed—yeas 133, nays 36, as follow:

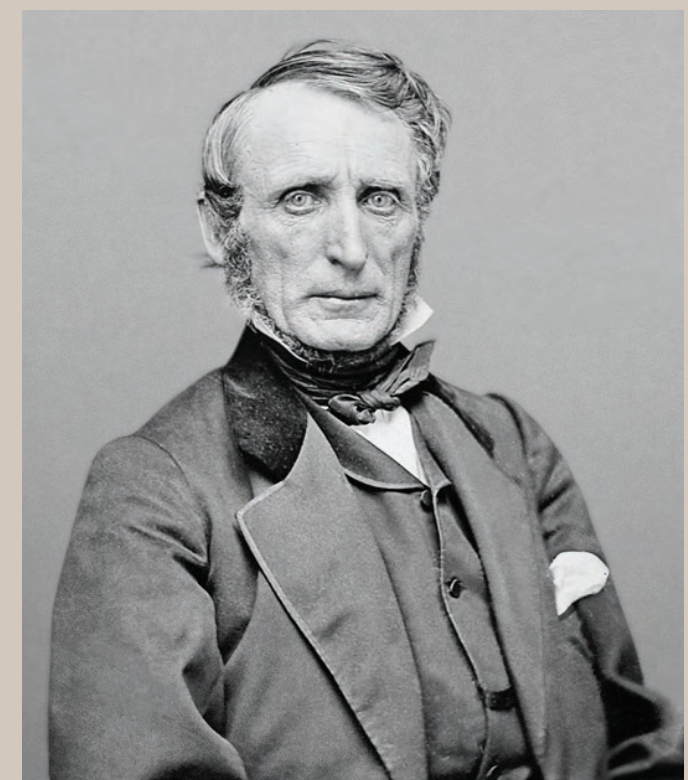
**YEAS**—Messrs. Alley, Allison, Ames, Anderson, Delos R. Ashley, James M. Ashley, Baker, Baldwin, Banks, Barker, Baxter, Beaman, Benjamin, Bidwell, Bingham, Blaine, Blow, Boutwell, Brandegee, Bronzwell, Broomall, Buckland, Bundy, Reader W. Clarke, Sidney Clarke, Cobb, Conkling, Cook, Cullom, Darling, Davis, Dawes, Defrees, Delano, Deming, Dixon, Dodge, Donnelly, Driggs, Dumont, Eckley, Eggleston, Eliot, Farnsworth, Farquhar, Ferry, Garfield, Grinnell, Griswold, Hale, Abner C. Harding, Hart, Hayes, Henderson, Higby, Holmes, Hooper, Hotchkiss, Asshel W. Hubbard, Chester B. Hubbard, Dennis Hubbard, Jr., John H. Hubbard, James R. Hubbell, Hulburd, Ingersoll, Jenckes, Julian, Kasson, Kelley, Kelso, Ketcham, Kuykendall, Laffin, Latham, George V. Lawrence, William Lawrence, Loan, Longyear, Lynch, Marston, Marvin, McClurg, McKee, McRuer, Mercier, Miller, Moorhead, Morrill, Morris, Moulton, Myers, Newell, O'Neill, Orth, Paine, Patterson, Perham, Phelps, Pike, Plants, Pomeroy, Price, William H. Randall, Raymond, Alexander H. Rice, John H. Rice, Rollins, Sawyer, Schenck, Scofield, Shellabarger, Sloan, Smith, Spalding, Stevens, Stillwell, Thayer, Francis Thomas, John L. Thomas, Trowbridge, Upson, Van Aernam, Burt Van Horn, Robert T. Van Horn, Ward, Warner, Ellihu B. Washburne, Henry D. Washburn, William B. Washburn, Wolker, Wentworth, Whaley, Wilhams, James E. Wilson, Stephen F. Wilson, Windom, Woodbridge, the Speaker—133.

**NAYS**—Messrs. Ancona, Bergen, Boyer, Chanler, Coffroth, Dawson, Denison, Eldridge, Finck, Glossbrenner, Grider, Aaron Harding, Hogan, Edwin N. Hubbell, James M. Humphrey, Johnson, Kerr, Le Blond, Marshall, McCullough, Niblack, Nicholson, Radford, Samuel J. Randall, Ritter, Rogers, Loss, Shanklin, Silgrees, Strouse, Taber, Taylor, Thornton, Trimble, Winfield, Wright—36.

**NOR VOTING**—Messrs. Culver, Goodyear, Harris, Hill, James Humphrey, Jones, McIndoe, Noel, Rousseau, Starr—10.

**The Fourteenth Amendment**, passed in 1868, established that:

- Anyone born or naturalized in the U.S. is a citizen of the U.S. and of the State in which they live
- States could not deprive anyone of life, liberty or property, without due process of law
- Every person in the U.S. had the equal protection of the laws.



Representative John Bingham of Ohio, principal author of the Equal Protection Clause

◦ The “equal protection clause” was intended to stop State governments from discriminating against black Americans. Over the years it would play a key role in many landmark civil rights cases.

> New Jersey ratified the amendment in 1866, rescinded ratification in 1868, and re-ratified in 2003.

**But it was still not enough.**

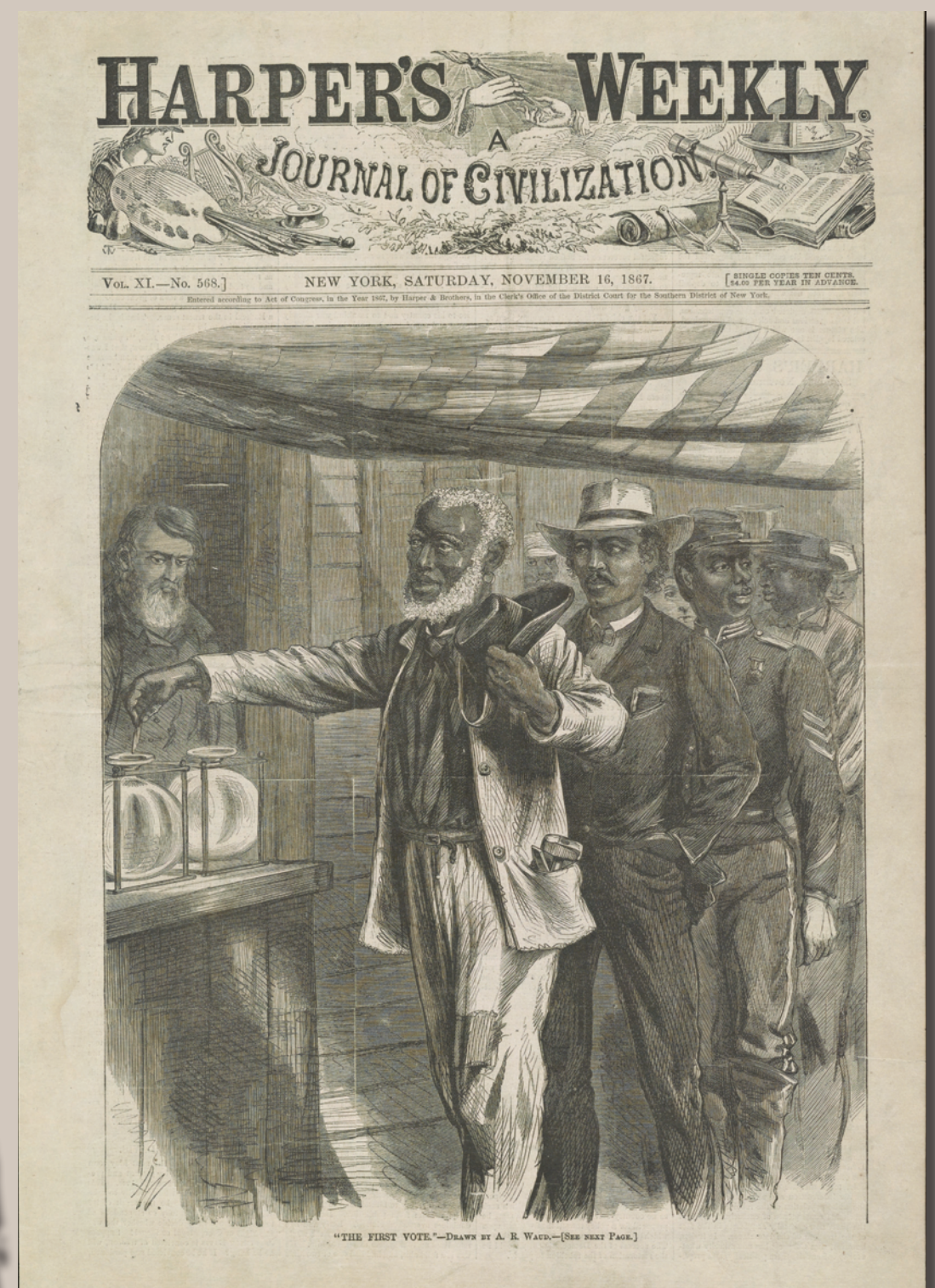


1870 print celebrating the passage of the Fifteenth Amendment in February 1870, and the post-Civil War political empowerment of African Americans.

It was ratified on February 3, 1870. It did not provide the right to vote to any women. Passage of that amendment (the Nineteenth) would take another 50 years.

Yet another amendment was needed to give black men the right to vote.

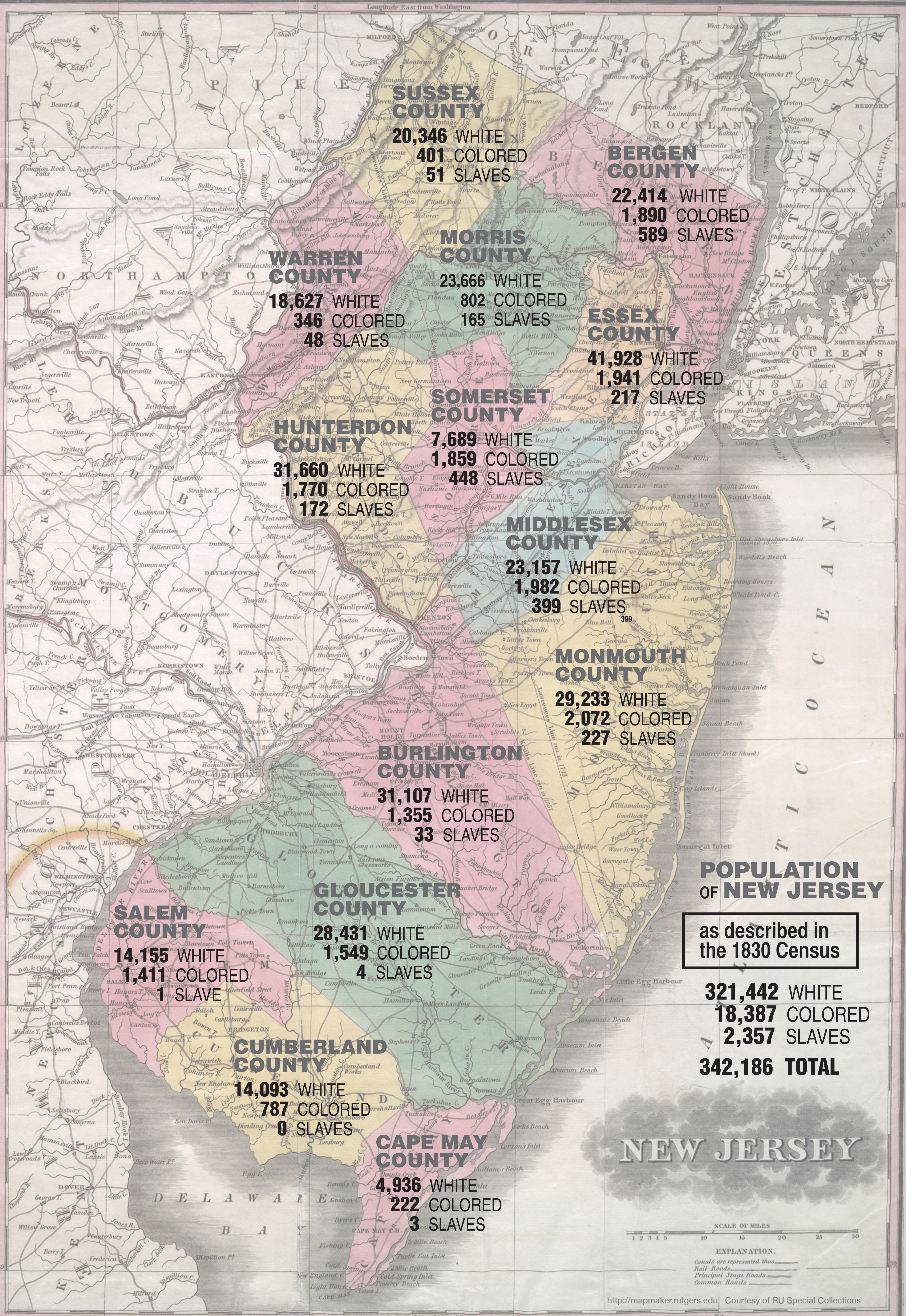
**The Fifteenth Amendment** prohibited the federal government and each state from denying a citizen the right to vote based on that citizen’s “race, color, or previous condition of servitude.”



^ An 1867 drawing depicting African Americans casting ballots

< Thomas Mundy Peterson (October 6, 1824 – February 4, 1904) of Perth Amboy, New Jersey was the first African American to vote in an election under the just-enacted provisions of the 15th Amendment to the United States Constitution. His vote was cast on March 31, 1870.

Collection of the Perth Amboy Public Library.





# New Jersey Laws Regulating Slavery, 1674 - 1870

Year	Name of Law	Provisions
1674		Colony of New Jersey split into East Jersey and West Jersey; West Jersey owned by Quakers
1675	Capital Laws of East Jersey	Penalizes transportation of fugitive enslaved persons
1676	Charter or Fundamental Laws of West Jersey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Includes general provision <b>against</b> enslaved persons <i>"All and every person ... inhabiting the said Province, shall, as far as in us lies, be free from oppression and slavery."</i></li> </ul>
1682	A Bill against Fugitive Servants and entertainers of them - East Jersey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Penalizes transport of enslaved persons and harboring or helping runaway enslaved persons.</li> </ul>
1682	An Act against Trading with Negro Slaves -- East Jersey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Penalizes buying from, selling to, bartering or trading with "any Negro slave, or Indian slave, or servant"</li> <li>Forbids "Negro or Indian slaves or servants" from selling, bartering, or trading without permission or licence of his master or mistress.</li> <li>"All Masters and Mistresses having Negro Slaves, or others, shall allow them sufficient Accommodation of Victuals and Cloathing."</li> </ul>
1693	Quaker protest against slavery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Philadelphia Quakers offered the first anti-slavery protest in America</li> </ul>
1694	Act Concerning Slaves -- East Jersey	<p>Passed by East Jersey legislature in response to "growing problem of theft by slaves".</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enslaved persons forbidden to carry guns except when accompanied by masters or other white men</li> <li>Enslaved persons forbidden to keep their own swine</li> <li>Made it legal for anyone to apprehend and punish an enslaved person who was 5 miles from his master's domicile</li> </ul>
1695	Slave Courts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Established special courts where "Negroes or other Slaves" accused of felony or murder were tried</li> <li><i>Abolished by NJ legislature in 1768</i></li> </ul>
1702		East and West Jersey reunited as a single Royal Colony
1704	Slave Code	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Restricted the harboring of fugitives</li> <li>Prohibited enslaved persons and free blacks from owning property</li> <li>Instituted harsher punishments for enslaved persons convicted of theft.</li> </ul>
1712		Enslaved persons revolt in New York City
1713-1714	Slave Code	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Harsh penalties for crimes and misdemeanors committed by enslaved people due to 1712 revolt</li> <li>Punishment of enslaved people escaping from other colonies and payment to anyone capturing them</li> <li>Prohibited enslaved persons from owning property</li> <li><b>Manumission fee: Established a fee of £200 bond (equivalent of \$56,000 today) to the government from any owner wanting to free a enslaved person and £20 payment per annum to the former enslaved person</b></li> </ul>
1776	First constitution of the State of New Jersey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Granted voting rights to "all inhabitants of this Colony, of full age, who are worth fifty pounds proclamation money", including non-whites, unmarried women and widows; married women could not own property under the common law.</li> </ul>
1786-88	Law banning slave importation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Importation of enslaved persons banned in New Jersey, although few enslaved persons had been imported since the 1760s</li> <li><b>Quaker pressure resulted in the law allowing owners to manumit (free) enslaved persons aged 21-35 without bond, and to require owners to support former enslaved persons financially if they needed it</b></li> <li>Provided for fines against masters who abused enslaved persons.</li> </ul>
1793	Federal Fugitive Slave Law	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enslaved person owners could bring fugitive enslaved persons before a local judge to gain permission to extradite them to another state</li> </ul>
1798	Slave Code	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enslaved persons to continue as such unless manumitted</li> <li>Bringing enslaved person into state for sale prohibited; N.J. citizens may bring in their own enslaved persons, if certified as being their property before passage of this act</li> <li>Abuse of enslaved persons indictable.</li> <li>Enslaved persons born since Nov.26,1788 to be taught to read</li> <li>Provisions against use of ships for enslaved person trade.</li> <li>Regulated enslaved persons' behavior, banned them from assembling in "a disorderly or tumultuous manner", established a 10 pm curfew; and prohibited them from testifying against free persons</li> </ul>
1801	Revised law of Slave Punishment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Allowed enslaved persons convicted of felonies to be sold outside of NJ (usually to the Deep South)</li> </ul>
1804	Gradual abolition law	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Did not free any enslaved people immediately.</i></li> <li>Created a new category of bound laborer or "slave for a term": <i>"Every child born of a slave...after the fourth of July [1804] ... shall be free; but shall remain the servant of the owner of his or her mother...." until age 21 (for females) or 25 (for males).</i></li> </ul>
1807	An act to regulate the election of members of the legislative council and general assembly, sheriffs and coroners in this state	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Restricted the right to vote to free, white males</li> </ul>

Year	Name of Law	Provisions
1812	Consent law	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reiterated 1788 law that an enslaved person had to consent to be sold or transported to another state. Minors had to have the consent of a parent for transfer</li> </ul>
1818	Revision of 1812 law	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Limited who could sell an enslaved person out of state.</li> <li>Prohibited the sale of enslaved persons to nonresident masters</li> </ul>
1820	Act affirming gradual abolition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reaffirmed gradual abolition law of 1804</li> </ul>
1821	Prima facie slave ruling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>"All black men were <i>prima facie</i> slaves" unless they could prove that they were free</li> </ul>
1826	Personal liberty law	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increased oversight of slave-catchers</li> <li>Allowed suspected fugitive slaves to defend themselves in court</li> </ul>
1836	Landmark NJ Supreme Court case	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>NJ Supreme Court mandated jury trials for suspected fugitive enslaved persons</li> </ul>
1836	Ruling ending prima facie slavery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Overturned the requirement of 1821 that blacks were presumed to be enslaved unless they could prove their free status</li> <li>Allowed certain due process rights</li> </ul>
1837	Personal liberty law	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Allowed a 3-judge panel to determine an alleged fugitive enslaved person's status with provisions for either side to request a jury trial</li> </ul>
1840		<p><b>There were about 3,500 enslaved people in all the Northern States. About 3,000 of them -- enslaved and "slaves for a term" -- lived in New Jersey, primarily in Bergen, Passaic and Hudson Counties.</b></p> <p><b>(Passaic County was created in 1837 from portions of Bergen and Essex Counties)</b></p>
1844	NJ Constitution <i>State v Post</i> , legal challenge to slavery's constitutionality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Despite aggressive efforts by abolitionists, the new State Constitution made no mention of slavery and thus left in place the 1798 slave law. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Article 1 of the Constitution provided that <i>"all men are free and possess certain unalienable rights, including the right to life, liberty, property, and the pursuit of happiness"</i>.</li> <li>Abolitionists filed a legal case, <b>State v Post</b>, claiming that this phrase abolished slavery, but the Justices ruled that since the Constitution did not specifically abolish slavery, the language provided <i>"general phrases of abstract natural right, no stronger than those in the declaration of independence"</i>.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
1846	An Act to abolish slavery	<p>Law abolishes slavery but reclassified enslaved persons as "apprentices for life"</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Apprentices could not be sold out of state</li> <li>Apprentices could file complaints for injurious service or working conditions</li> <li>Apprentices could be manumitted (released from service) if they could support themselves</li> <li>Children born to apprentices were free at birth</li> </ul>
1849	Joint resolution "Against the extension of slavery into free territory and the traffic in enslaved persons in the District of Columbia"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>"The legislature, representing the views and opinions of the people of New Jersey, <i>believing the institution of human slavery to be a great moral and political evil...."</i></li> <li>"Therefore, ...while we would refrain from ...<i>interference with the institution of slavery, in the states where it constitutionally exists, yet we would peaceably, but firmly resist, by all constitutional means, its further extension [into new territories [in this case, New Mexico and California]</i></li> <li>"The existence of the traffic in slaves in the District of Columbia is inconsistent with the theory of our national institutions, and a <i>reproach to us as a people, and ought, in the opinion of this legislature, to be speedily abolished."</i></li> </ul>
1852	An Act making appropriations to the <b>New Jersey Colonization Society</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Appropriations for transport and subsistence of free persons of color to western Africa. Supported the idea -- taken up by some free blacks -- to create the country of Liberia in Africa and encourage blacks to move there</li> </ul>
1865	Thirteenth Amendment to the US Constitution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Abolished slavery.</li> <li>New Jersey did not ratify this amendment until <b>1866</b></li> <li>16 enslaved persons remained in the state</li> <li>Apprentices for life -- probably fewer than 100 -- were freed at this time</li> <li>"Slaves for a term" were freed</li> </ul>
1870	Fifteenth Amendment to US Constitution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Right to vote cannot be denied based on that citizen's "race, color, or previous condition of servitude". <i>This right did not extend to women of any color.</i></li> <li>Thomas Mundy Peterson (1824-1904) of Perth Amboy became the first African American to vote in an election</li> </ul>
1920	Nineteenth Amendment to the US Constitution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>All women win the right to vote for the first time since (in NJ) 1807.</i></li> </ul>

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