



**HARTWICK
COLLEGE**

est. 1797

USCTI
Office of Intercultural Affairs
Hartwick College
Oneonta, New York 13820
www.hartwick.edu

USCT Institute & ASFD Membership 2019-20~ Join Us.

ALABAMA – James C. Johnson

CALIFORNIA – Barbara Leone, Tammy Ball Williams

CONNECTICUT - Andrew S. Bowman

FLORIDA - John O. Lindell

GEORGIA - Audrey Quick Battiste, Linda Dorage, Gloria Matthews

ILLINOIS – Northwestern University Library

INDIANA - Allen County Public Library, Andrew Bowman

KENTUCKY – John Taylor, Jr.

MARYLAND – Yvonne Captain, Charles Hawley,
Sylvia Cooke Martin, Ruth V. Mitchell, Houston D.
Wedlock

NEW JERSEY – Keisha M. Clarke

NEW HAMPSHIRE – Angela Brizant

NEW YORK – Abyssinian Baptist Church,
AKWAABA: The Heritage Associates, Inc.,
Sylvia Barker, Fern E. Beavers, George Betts,
Regina Betts, Stanton F. Biddle, Willard G.
Brown, Jr., Stephanie Brunetta, Georgia M.
Burnette, Rev. Calvin O. Butts III, Desiree de
Freitas, Jacqueline R. Dorage; Sean Doyley, III,
Leigh C. Eckmair, Lorna R. Elmore, Edward
Fisher, Katherine Hawkins, David J. Hodges –
CUNY Hunter College, Darrell Howard, Sonya
Williams Howard, Randolph Johnson; Linda M.
Jones, Nancy Leftenant-Colón, Harry Bradshaw
Matthews, Justin Medina, MLK Library/Syracuse
University, NYPL – Schomburg Center, NYSHA
Research Library, New York State Library/Mary
Redmond, Linda K. Patterson, Cyndee Pattison,

NEW YORK (*continued*) Edythe Ann Quinn, Madeline O. Scott, Lambert C. Shell –
Roosevelt Public Library, Jesse E. Stevens, SUNY-Oneonta, Hon. Lucindo Suarez, Roxanne J.
Suarez, Spann Watson, Judith Wellman, Norma Williams, Shamar Yee

MICHIGAN – Donald S. Vest

NORTH CAROLINA - Melissa Swaby

PENNSYLVANIA – Gettysburg Black History Museum, Inc., Roland Barksdale-Hall, Charles
L. Blockson – Temple University, G. Craig Caba, Leon Clarke, Darlene Colón, Ruth Hodge,
Cynthia Lavender, Windy Mitchell, Gail Muhammad; Mary Ann Riley, Kelly Summerford

SOUTH CAROLINA – John R. Gourdin

TENNESSEE – Roverta Reliford Russaw

VIRGINIA – Thomas Balch Library, Jerome Bridges, Linda Carter, Maria Carter, Chauncey
Herring, Kimberly Jenkins-Snodgrass, Carol Mitchell, Linda S. Murr, Gen. Colin L. Powell
[2000], Prince Wm. Public Library, Rev. R. Benard Reaves, Loritta R. Watson

WEST VIRGINIA – Bob O'Connor

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Rev. William E. Calbert, Patsy M. Fletcher, Military Road School
Preservation Trust

WISCONSIN – Brigitte Fielder, Wisconsin Historical Society

THE BAHAMAS – D. Gail Saunders

STUDENT ASSISTANTS – 2019-20

Kiara Biroo – Harriet Tubman Mentor, Voices Magazine Student Editor
Naidalyn Fernandez – Tubman Mentor, Intercultural Affairs Assistant
Neiva Fortes – Harriet Tubman Mentor, Intercultural Affairs Assistant
Shanria Jolly – USCTI Intern/Harriet Tubman Mentor, PALS President

To become a member of the United States Colored Troops Institute for Local History and
Family Research at Hartwick College, please contact Harry Bradshaw Matthews, 410 Dewar
Union, Hartwick College, Oneonta, New York 13820.





Newsletter

USCT Civil War Digest

HARTWICK
COLLEGE

est. 1797

Hartwick College, Oneonta, NY 13820
Vol. 21 No. 2, December 2019

United States Colored Troops Institute for Local History and Family Research

Domestic and International Intersections

USCT Institute & ASFD Officers

Harry Bradshaw Matthews, President,
Senior Fellow, Oneonta, NY
Darlene Colón, Vice President,
Senior Fellow, Lancaster, PA
Stanton F. Biddle, President Emeritus
New York, NY

USCTI Senior Fellows, Emeritus

David A. Anderson, Rochester, NY
John R. Gourdin, Florence, SC
Hugh MacDougall, Cooperstown, NY

ASFD Fellows & Senior Fellows

Roland Barksdale-Hall, Sharon, PA
Charles L. Blockson, Norristown, PA
Ruth E. Hodge, Carlisle, PA
Sylvia Cooke Martin, Columbia, MD
D. Gail Saunders, Nassau, Bahamas
Madeline O. Scott, Amherst, NY

USCTI Alumni Advisory Council

Keisha M. Clarke, Jersey City, NJ
Desiree de Freitas, Bronx, NY
Sean Doyley, Yonkers, NY
Brigitte Fielder, Madison, WI
Darrell Howard, Yonkers, NY
Justin Medina, Bronx, NY
Sonya Williams Howard, Yonkers, NY
Roxanne J. Suarez, Tuckahoe, NY
Melissa Swaby, Raleigh, NC
Shamar Yee, New York, NY

Executive Director and Editor

Harry Bradshaw Matthews

USCT Civil War Digest

This newsletter is published with editing and graphics support of the Office of Communications at Hartwick College. This publication is produced twice a year, spring and fall, for the membership of the USCT Institute and for other select distribution.

Send your comments to:
Harry Bradshaw Matthews
Associate Dean/USCT Institute
Office of Intercultural Affairs
410 Dewar Hall
Hartwick College
Oneonta, New York 13820
607-431-4428



During the American Revolutionary War, England's representative in the Virginia colony, Lord Dunmore, issued a proclamation in 1775 that promised freedom to any slave that fought for the defense of the Virginia colony under British rule. The offer

soon was repeated to enslaved persons in other colonies. The provisional treaty of November 30, 1782, revealed that all of the enslaved who were with the British at the time of the treaty were to be considered free.

On November 30, 1783, there were 3,000 men, women, and children who departed with the British from New York; 4,000 left from Savannah, Georgia and 6,000 from Charleston, South Carolina. Many went to Nova Scotia, Canada, while others went to the British West Indies.

During the time period, the population of the Bahamas increased from 4,058 during 1783-84 to about 11,000 by 1789. The increase in population resulted from the relocation of 6,000 Loyalists and their slaves. The pre-war ratio increased with black to white inhabitants raising two to one.



According to *Ms. Rodgers' History BGCSE Students*, many Bahamians today descend from the 8,000 enslaved Americans brought to the land by Loyalists with some of their surnames being "Johnson, McKinney, Rahming, Dean, Forbes, Miller, Petty, Rolle, Adderley, Curry, Fox, Kelly, Ferguson, Bowe, Russell and Culmer."

During the 2019 USCTI's Student Mini-Conference at Hartwick College, a special guest presenter was Dr. Rita Hendsen Pratt, founder of the African Bahamian Museum and Research Centre.



She shared research about the famed slave revolt on the Brig Creole in 1841 that led to citizens of the Bahamas rescuing the enslaved Americans that were on the ship.

Dr. Pratt also made participants at the mini-conference aware of Bethel Baptist Church, the oldest baptist church in The Commonwealth of The Bahamas. It was built by black Loyalists, Prince William and Sambo Scriven. The ground-breaking ceremonies of the first Meeting House of Bethel Baptist took place at its current site in 1848.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

Intersections

Continued from page 1



Source: Bethel Baptist Church, N.P.
Courtesy: The Matthews Collection

The above claim is well documented at *roots and routes – cloudfront.net*. Although Prince William had a document identifying himself as a black Loyalist in the Bahamas, his former slave owner in Georgia still tried to regain him as a slave. An advertisement in the 1785 *Bahamas Gazette* described Williams as a “Negro Man Named Prince, to be found along with another escapee identified as Sambo Scriven.” The historic church grave site provides abundant evidence of the early freedom searchers.



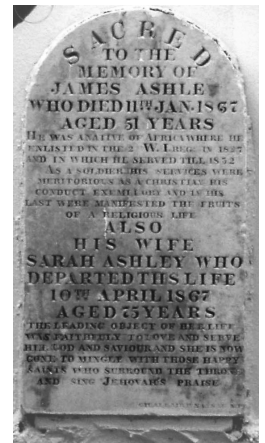
Picture: Pamela L. Matthews, USCTI Secretary, and first cousin Shauvanna Darville, rubbing the tombstone of James Ashley, B.W.I. Regiment, Summer 2008

On a warm August day in 2008, Harry Bradshaw Matthews and Pamela L. Matthews, respectively the founding president and secretary of the USCTI, were escorted to Bethel Baptist Church by Shauvanna Darville. It was there that Pamela and Shauvanna participated in the rubbings of the tombstone of James Ashley. While the inscription was difficult to read, the following was transcribed:

“SACRED TO THE MEMORY OF JAMES ASHLEY WHO DIED 11TH JAN.1867, AGED 51 YEARS. HE WAS A NATIVE OF AFRICA WHERE HE ENLISTED IN THE 2nd W.I. REGIMENT IN 1827 AND IN WHICH HE SERVED TILL 1852. AS A SOLDIER HIS SERVICES WERE MERITORIOUS, AS A CHRISTIAN HIS CONDUCT EXEMPLARY AND IN HIS LAST WERE MANIFESTED THE FRUITS OF A RELIGIOUS LIFE.

ALSO HIS WIFE SARAH ASHLEY WHO DEPARTED THIS LIFE 10TH APRIL 1867, AGED 25 YEARS.”

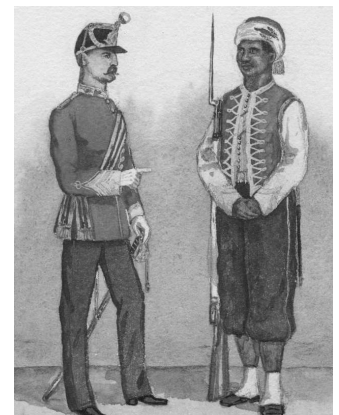
100 Years’ History of the 2nd West India Regiment: 1795-1892, by Col. J.E. Caulfield, explored the engagement of enslaved men who were purchased by the British Army to serve in the West India Regiments. There was a long history, starting with eight regiments between April to September 1795. Bance Island in Sierra Leone was used as a recruiting station for West Africans in 1812.



By the time of Ashley’s enlistment, the Second West India Regiment had fought in the Ashanti War during 1824. A year later, during March 1825, reinforcements were dispatched from Sierra Leone, but matters had calmed down. Thus, the 2nd W.I. Regiment departed for Nassau, Bahamas in April and arrived at its destination in July. In Nassau the headquarters and five companies provided detachments to Honduras, Jamaica, and Turks Islands. But in 1826, members of the 2nd W.I. Regiment were engaged in battle with slave traders at Sherbro and Macaaba in Sierra Leone, helping to free hundreds of Africans from chains.

During 1827, the year that Ashley’s tombstone recorded his enlistment in the 2nd W.I. Regiment, the Governor of the Bahamas reviewed the five companies and provided praise for the conduct of the soldiers and the officers. Before the time of Ashley’s retirement from arms in 1852, the regiment was connected to the historic Brig Creole uprising.

Harvard University professor, Walter Johnson, provided clarity to the historic episode of the Brig Creole in his 2008 article, “White Lies: Human Property and Domestic Slavery Aboard the Slave Ship Creole.” He shared that “the story of the Creole is a story of the revolutionary Black Atlantic. Of 19 African-American slaves from Virginia, 24 African soldiers of the Second West India Regiment and several hundred freed Africans and Afro-Caribbeans whose collected force determined the actions of the American and British whites there in the harbor.”



Source: West India Regiment in the Bahamas
Courtesy: Slideshare.net

One important aspect of the saga was the ship manifest that included the names Ben Blacksmith, Elijah Morris, Doe Ruffin and Madison Washington. While Johnson and Pratt similarly share the names on the ship manifest, Pratt located in her native Nassau the great-great-grandson of Elijah Morris for an intriguing interview in 2012, which she shared with participants at the USCTI student mini-conference. The descendant was Harold Morris, who later died in 2017. How fortunate it is that this link in the domestic and international freedom journey has been preserved for future generations.

Upper Susquehanna River and the Freedom Journey

The whole Susquehanna River is frequently identified as one of the major escape routes for freedom seekers. It extends from Havre de Grace, Maryland to Otsego County, New York, including Oneonta and Cooperstown. Hardly a mention of Oneonta and Cooperstown, however, can be found in publications about the abolitionist movement and the Underground Railroad. This began to change in 1998 with the African American History and Genealogy Conference at SUNY Oneonta’s Morris Hall and the founding of the United States Colored Troops Institute of Local History and Family Research at Hartwick College’s Bresee Hall.

Using the description provided by the interstate Susquehanna River Basin (SRB), three notable sections of the waterway are:

Lower Susquehanna – Harford County, MD; Lancaster County, PA (Columbia and Lancaster)

Middle Susquehanna – Lucerne County, PA (Wilkes-Barre); Lackawanna County (Waverly)

Upper Susquehanna – Susquehanna County, PA (Montrose); Binghamton, NY; Norwich, NY; Otsego County, NY (Sidney, Oneonta and Cooperstown).



Map Susquehanna River Basin Commission TwoMDNY.png
Source: Susquehanna River Basin

Jim Chrismer of the John Carroll School provided clarity as a participant at the 2006 National Endowment of the Humanities workshop on the Underground Railroad. He stated that “Harford County, Maryland (a slave state) lies on the Mason-Dixon Line due south of York County. The Susquehanna River and the Chesapeake Bay comprise a large part of the border. The Susquehanna and Tidewater Canal, running from Havre de Grace, MD., to Columbia, PA, paralleled the river, which was crossed by small ferries and several bridges.” Also, just a short distance from the Mason-Dixon Line was the connecting points between Frederick, MD. and Gettysburg, PA.

In Montrose, Pennsylvania, the Susquehanna County Historical Society and the Center for Anti-Slavery Studies joined efforts, with the latter established in 1996. One of the earliest documented actions was the 1836 founding of the Susquehanna County Anti-Slavery and Free Discussion Society. It was indicative of local community efforts joining with the National Anti-Slavery Society that was founded in 1833.

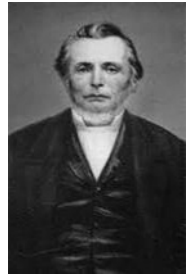
The network that was organized resulted in freedom seekers finding local support as they ventured northward. For example, John Stout and William Smith arrived in Montrose in 1842 after their freedom journey from Maryland to Gettysburg,



Source: St. Paul’s A.M.E. Zion Church, Gettysburg, PA; Courtesy: Gettysburg African American Museum

Harrisburg, and Wilkes-Barre. The two freedom seekers were aided along their journey by the Gettysburg Slave Suffrage Society that was organized by members of St. Paul’s AME Zion Church.

While supporters were more secretive in Harrisburg, activists in Wilke-Barre and Waverly were better known, such as the members of the A.M.E. Society and William C. Gildersleeve of Wilke-Barre.



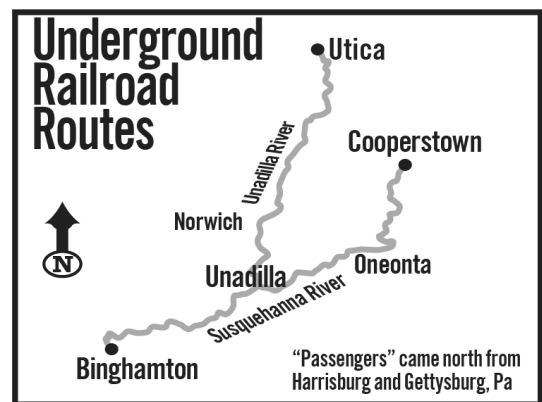
Farther north, in Binghamton, Broome County, New York, the A.M.E. Bethel Church and the First Colored Methodist Episcopal Church joined efforts in 1838 with Dr. Stephen Hand shepherding freedom seekers to their next stops. Frequently, the next stop was Elmira, which is well documented as a site in which John Jones assisted more than 100 freedom seekers with reaching Canada.

From Binghamton, however, there were other lesser known stations that stretched from Norwich, Unadilla, and into Otsego County that included Oneonta and Cooperstown.

Some of the more notable people and events that shed light on the Freedom Journey in Otsego County were:

1799, Cooperstown - “In Memory of Scipio, an aged Slave, a native of Africa who died March 27” and is buried in the cemetery at Christ Episcopal Church, Cooperstown.

1815, Cooperstown - Joseph “Joe Tom” Thomas Husbands, arrived from Barbadoes with his owner and family, only to be freed. He is buried in the cemetery at Christ Episcopal Church, Cooperstown.



Courtesy: Oneonta Daily Star

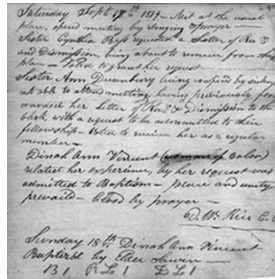
1816, Burlington - Cato Freedom, a Revolutionary War patriot and a man of African birth, relocated from Connecticut to Otsego County to establish a homestead in Burlington for his family. He is buried in Butternut Cemetery.

1819, Middlefield - Dinah Ann Vincent, a woman of color, was baptized at the First Baptist Society in Middlefield. The document of evidence was provided by the current clerk of the Society, Dorothy Rathbun.



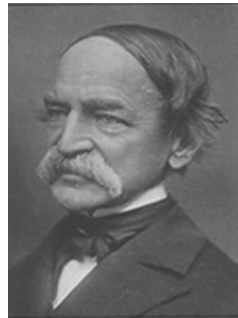
Intersections Continued from page 3

1827, Cooperstown - The Presbyterian Meeting House in Cooperstown was the Otsego County site for the celebration for the ending of slavery in New York State.



1829, Hartwick, Norwich - Rev. John Lawyer of Norwich was elected to the Board of Trustees of the Hartwick Seminary and Academy. He emerged as a furious abolitionist and founding president of the Franckean Synod.

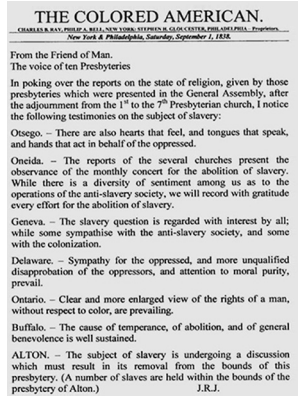
1832 - Isaac Newton Arnold, a member of the Philophronean Society at the Hartwick Seminary and Academy, debated the immediate ending of slavery. He later became a Congressman from Chicago and introduced resolutions that led to the ending of slavery in the United States.



1836, Otsego County - The Otsego County Anti-Slavery Society was established by men and women primarily from Butternuts and South New Berlin.

1837, Oneonta - (Rev.) Alexander Hemsley (aka Nathan Mead), after escaping from Queen Anne County, MD, settled in Evesham, NJ until 1836. A year later he fled for his life to Otsego County, NY. Here he reunited with his family before continuing his journey to St. Catharines, Canada West.

1838, Otsego County - An early mentioning of Otsego County and its role in the Freedom Journey was provided by the *Colored American* newspaper during 1838. In its September 1st edition, a reporter, JRJ, provided insights from an article that first appeared in the *Friend of Man*, an abolitionist newspaper. The voice of ten presbyteries were shared. In "Otsego County there are also hearts that feel, and tongues that speak, and hands that act in behalf of the oppressed."



Source: The Colored American, 1838
Courtesy: The Matthews Collection

Approximately 162 years after the article appeared, Harry Bradshaw Matthews of the United States Colored Troops Institute at Hartwick College located the article. He deciphered the script to mean:

- *There are also hearts that feel* = Anti-Slavery Sentiments;
- *And tongues that speak* = Abolitionist Actions;
- *And hands that act in behalf of the oppressed* = Underground Railroad

Matthews extended the descriptions to also reference

- *Self-Help proclamations and actions* = Leadership directives by African Americans;

- *Enlistment of the United States Colored Troops* = self liberation from slavery.

The five sub-categories became known collectively as the Freedom Journey, with each serving as the basis for research, compiling of supportive documents, and the collecting of authoritative writings. Together, these served as the basis for proclaiming the Upper Susquehanna Freedom Journey as a distinct section of the Underground Railroad.

1840, Cooperstown, Binghamton - Henry Granger was appointed the chair of the Otsego County Committee at the New York State Convention of Colored Inhabitants, which was held at Albany, New York. The body addressed issues of discrimination faced by darker brethren in the state. Joining with him was Charles Spruce of Binghamton, who was elected as Broome County's chairman.

1848, Oneonta, Cooperstown - Eliakim Reed Ford of Oneonta was an elector at the Free Soil Party Convention that was held in Utica, New York. Congressman George A Starkweather and United States Senator John A Dix from Cooperstown were the lead representatives from Otsego County at the historic convention.

1848, Cooperstown - Isaac Newton Arnold returned to New York to attend the famous meeting of the Liberty Party and National Free Soil Party Convention(s) in Buffalo, New York.

1849, Norwich, Hartwick - Rev. John Lawyer of Norwich and the Franckean Synod established the *Chenango Free Democrat* newspaper, operating out of Norwich and Bainbridge, and served as its editor. The motto of the anti-slavery publication was "Free-Soil-Free Labor-Free Speech-Free Men."



Courtesy, Chenango Free Democrat
Source: The Matthews Collection

1853, Oneonta - Robert S. Cook of West Oneonta was a financial contributor, e.g., stockholder of the Underground Railroad. Cook was identified in Frederick Douglass' Newspaper.

1860, - *The Oneonta Herald* reported that a family of eight fugitive slaves, a mother with six children and a half sister, were passed from this place, on the underground railroad toward Canada (where thank God, there is no slavery) on Thursday night last, by some of our philanthropist citizens. They arrived in this village, on the Saturday before, completely destitute and weary, having traveled from Virginia. We are glad we have in our vicinity persons who feel it their duty to be benevolent to all classes of humanity.

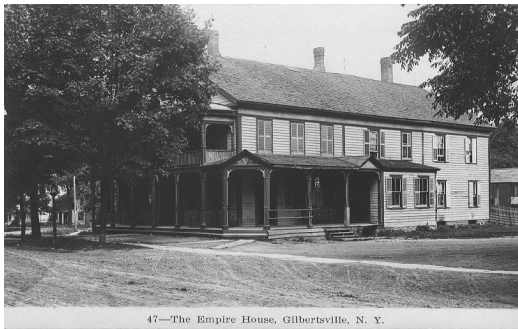


After stopping here for a few days, and being clothed up and the “needful” furnished, they went on their way rejoicing, and leaving their blessing on the good people of Oneonta.

What an idea! Persons escaping from a country, which boasts of freedom and free institutions, to a land ruled by a Monarch, in order that they may enjoy freedom. Shame to America!

An Historic Event Linking Communities of the Upper Susquehanna

1871, Morris – *Morris Chronicle*, December 20, **An Emancipation Dance** will be at the Empire House in Butternuts, Monday evening, Jan. 1st, 1872. Yourself and lady are respectively invited to attend. Honorary Committee – Owen Randall, Norwich, James Derrick, Hamilton, Samuel Jones, Unadilla, John Morrison, Bainbridge, Wm. Murphy, Otsego, Caesar Parish, Pittsfield, Thomas Husbands, Richfield Springs, Frank Clark, Cooperstown, Moses Hill, Cooperstown, Wm. Williams, Butternuts.



Courtesy: Empire House, Gilbertsville (Butternuts)
Source:Empirehousefinedining.com

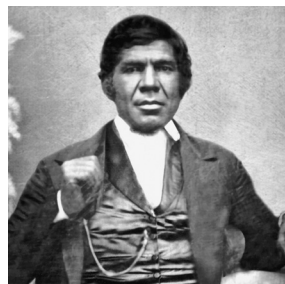
Reception Committee – Samuel Molson, Norwich, Harry A. Rogers, Butternuts. Floor Manager – Charles Robbins, Norwich. Music – Case’s full band of New Berlin, assisted by the renowned Lott Crosby.

Bill - \$2.50 WM. GARDNER, Pro.

Carriages will be in waiting at the Mt. Upton Depot, on the arrival of the afternoon train, to convey passengers coming by Railroad, free of charge.

Profile of Samuel Molson’s Family

Samuel Molson, as one of the members of the Reception Committee for the 1871 Emancipation Ball, was a member of an activist family. During August 2019, Harry Bradshaw Matthews, founding president of the USCTI, contacted Jeanette Molson, a California resident, who had previously conversed with him in November 2010 at the 150th anniversary of the USCT Grand Review at Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. She confirmed a family tie with Samuel D. Molson (1810-1875), who was her “2X great grandfather.” Further, she confirmed that she was a distant cousin of Madeline Scott, a founding member and Senior Fellow of the USCTI. Together, the two preserved a tintype of Samuel and were able to enlarge a photo from it. In addition, Jeannette had compiled numerous articles about the Molson family, some of which were entrusted to Matthews.



Samuel was born in York, Pennsylvania in 1810, the son of Samuel and Mary Ann (Anderson) Molson. He married Maria (Couper) Molson.

The couple had three children, Hannibal C. Molson, Edward Banks Molson and Ellen Molson. He was active in the A.M.E. Church of Lewiston and served as vice president and secretary of the Equal Rights League. *The Christian Recorder* of January 1865 reported that Samuel Molson and his son, Hannibal C. Molson, both spoke at the occasion of the organizing of a Union Equal Rights League in Lewiston. Samuel died in Lewiston in 1875.

Hannibal C. Molson was born in Lewiston. He was first married to Mary Caswell, then to Abigail Thompson of Oxford, New York. He relocated to Norwich in 1864. *The Chenango Semi-Weekly Telegram* reported in September 1879, that Hannibal was elected as the foreman of the newly organized Rescue Hook and Ladder Company of Norwich, which hosted a colored soldiers reunion in the village. The event drew participants from throughout the region including Delhi, Syracuse and Binghamton.



The Cleveland Gazette of December 1884, published a tribute to Hannibal, indicating that he became a “Mason in Lewiston in 1858 in the Fidelity Lodge No. 15. He served three years as W.M. of his lodge and five years as D.D.G.M. under the state of Pennsylvania.”

Hannibal was the only colored man in Co. F, 25th Pennsylvania Volunteers that was organized as a result of President Abraham Lincoln’s call for soldiers in 1861. He was later appointed by Governor Andrews of Massachusetts to recruit African American men to fill the 5th and 55th Regiments of Massachusetts Colored Volunteers. Once in Norwich, he organized African American men into a Masonic organization and also became a leader of the Colored Men State Conventions.

According to the obituary of 1899, Hannibal was identified as the most prominent colored man in Norwich and the region. He was buried at the Mount Hope Cemetery in Norwich.

This tribute to the Molson family is worthy of a father and son who helped to elevate African Americans of the Upper Susquehanna during their Freedom Journey.

Reviewing the Historical Mission of the USCT Civil War Digest

One of the more valuable contributions that one can make to American society is extending a helping hand to those searching for the truth about their heritage. Following the concept, “each one teach one,” the United States Colored Troops Institute for Local History and Family Research at Hartwick College has responded to the adage for 21 years. One vehicle used has been the *USCT Civil War Digest*, starting with its first issue during April 1999. Harry Bradshaw Matthews, the founding president of the USCTI and editor of the *Digest*, provided four themes in the first issue. They were historical studies, genealogical research, student mentoring, and the process of collecting for the preservation of heritage classics.

Twenty years later, the *USCT Civil War Digest* continues its mission, bringing to light to a broad audience notable aspects of the Freedom Journey.

Intersections Continued from page 5

Historical Studies

People of the African Diaspora has been the subject of white writers since the introduction of slavery in the Americas and the Caribbean. Much of the earlier writings were aimed at justifying the enslavement of people because of the Biblical "Curse of Canaan." But, history, being what it is, has a way of emerging as truth during the proper circumstances. Through historical sketches, slave narratives and biographical sketches, the world was introduced to the realities of the darker brethren and sisters in the new world. Some of the authors who should never be forgotten are:

Jupiter Hammon (1711-1806?) is considered by some authorities to be the first published black author in the United States. His poem, "An Evening Thought: Salvation by Christ with Penitential Cries," was published as a broadside in 1761. Also, in 1786, Hammon gave us "Address to the Negroes of the State of New York" that concerned the enslaved, of which he was one on Long Island.

Prince Saunders (1775-1839) was born in New England. He emerged as a leader among his peers. His education led him to establish schools for African Americans residing in Massachusetts. He became a member of the Masonic African Lodge in 1809. Also notable is that he was recruited by Haitian Emperor Henri Christophe to assist in a similar fashion with educational structures in Haiti. While there, Saunders wrote the *Haitian Papers* in 1816 that chronicled documents leading to the founding of the independent nation. Leaders of the Haitian Revolution, such as Toussaint L'Overture, Jean Jacque Dessaline and Christophe, set the stage for revolt by descendants of the Biblical Ham in the new world.



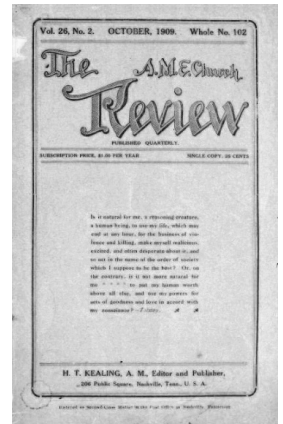
Rev. Daniel Coker (1780-1846) was one of the founders of the A.M.E. Church in 1816 and was involved with the scheme of the American Society for Colonizing the free people of colour of the United States.



(Rev.) Coker's journal of 1820 provided an intriguing tale of the controversial plot to remove free colored people from the United States, thus leaving their enslaved people without leadership. But, for Coker and others, it was worthwhile relocating from the segregation within America. He and his family settled in the locale of Sherbro, now a part of Sierra Leone, Africa.

Colored American (1837) and the *A.M.E. Church Magazine* (1841) both provided leadership in defining a new ethnic identity for those forcefully transported to the Americas and the Caribbean. The two publications were among not less than nine newspapers published by African Americans during the 1820s through the 1850s.

Eleanor Eldridge (1785-1865) was a free child born in Warwick, Rhode Island to a revolutionary war soldier. She emerged as an entrepreneur from lessons learned as a young girl. Her perseverance led to ownership of several houses. She cared for sick citizens during the 1832 cholera epidemic. In 1837, she successfully represented herself in court and regained property that had been illegally taken from her. She wrote *Memoirs of Eleanor Eldridge* in 1838.



James W.C. Pennington (1807-1870) was the author of the 1841 *Textbook of the Origin and History of the Colored People*. It represented scholarship regarding the heritage and power of African Americans. In the book he clearly disputed the misnomer that enslaved Americans were the Biblical result of the Curse of Canaan, noting that the land of Canaan was not in Africa.



Other writings emerged that contributed to a further understanding of the new ethnic group that was defined as "Colored Americans of the typical branch of the Ethiopia Race." The ethnic identity extended well beyond the Civil War, evidenced by the number of books that included the word "Colored" in their titles.

Many of the books were written by African American scholars, self-taught or otherwise, as contributions to the uplifting of the race. The following is a sampling of the roster of distinguished authors and their books that are included in the Matthews Collection for the Preservation of Freedom Journey Classics:

- William T. Alexander** - *History of the Colored Race*, 1887
- Benjamin Brawley** - *Negro Builders*, 1937
- William Wells Brown** - *Black Man*, 1863
- William Wells Brown** - *Rising Son*, 1882
- John W. Cromwell** - *Negro in American History*, 1914
- Frederick Douglass** - *My Bondage to Freedom*, 1855
- Frances E.W. Harper** - *Iola LeRoy*, 1892
- James Weldon Johnson** - *Black Manhattan*, 1930
- William J. Simmons** - *Men of Mark*, 1887

2019 Annual USCTI's Student Mini-Conference

The student members of the Harriet Tubman Mentoring Project at Hartwick College joined authors, professors, and USCTI members in presenting well researched projects focused on local history and family research. **Shanria Jolly** of Eleuthera and New Providence, Bahamas, provided the Opening Session: Introduction to the Underground Railroad and Its Significance to the USCTI Student Mini-Conference.



Kiara Biroo of St. Lucia presented research collaborating oral history with authentic sources that connect the Biroo, Baptiste and Joseph families with military service and the origin of the Biroo surname. She discovered that the elder Wilkinson Baptiste served in the British West Indies Regiment, WWI, and was a relative of her maternal grandmother, Natalia (Baptiste) Joseph. Wilkinson is Remembered with Honour at Port Said War Memorial Cemetery in Egypt. He died in 1917.



Naidalyn Fernandez, Honduran-American, was raised in Harlem, New York. She researched her ancestry to the Garifuna people of Honduras, who avoided being enslaved. Her research reached back six generations to the baptism of Tomas Bernandez in 1829 at San Juan Bautista, Trujillo. Tomas' parents were Jacobo Bernandez and Nicolasa Cabellero. Naidalyn also learned that her grandfather, Mateo B. Avila served as a Merchant Marine during the period of World War II.



Neiva Fortes, Afro-Portuguese, was born in the United States and raised primarily in Cape Verde. During her research she learned that her great-grandfather, Victorino Lopes Varela, was baptized February 16, 1887. His brother, Felipe Lopes Varela, was baptized December 26 1877. Their parents were Jose Varela and Maria Felipe Lopes Varela, who had to have lived during the slavery period in Cape Verde, which was abolished selectively in 1857, then totally in 1878. Neiva included her DNA search as a part of her documentation. It revealed that the majority of her genetic make-up was 60.9 percent Senegambian and Guinean (including Cape Verde) and 21 percent European Including Spanish and Portuguese).



Destiny John of Far Rockaway, New York returned to update her research findings from two years ago. Her presentation was, "Connecting the Freedom Journey of John S. Scott: From Grenada, West Indies to the United States. The presentation explored the recovery of family history that links Scott with World War I and later with the historic Pullman Porters.



The American Society of Freedmen Descendants (ASFD) Gold Medal was awarded to Biroo, Fernandez, and Fortes at the awards dinner that concluded this year's USCTI Student Mini-Conference. They joined John, who was a 2018 recipient of the Medal.

Other presentations were delivered by Harry Bradshaw Matthews, Professor E. Howard Ashford of SUNY Oneonta, Roland Barksdale-

Hall, Randolph Johnson, Darlene Colón and Dr. Rita Henderson Pratt. Other participants included Drusilla Barksdale-Hall, Sharee Brooks, Stephanie Pointer Brunetta, Kasmira J. Fudge, Solomon Henderson, Mya N. Huntley, Stella Igwe, Cynthia Lavender, Morial Mitchell, Dr. Linda Patterson, Kelly Summerford, Rev. Linda Thompson, Paul Williams, and Vandia Williams.



Coming Soon: A Tribute to the 92nd Buffalo Army Division of WWII

Kate Clements Curator, Second World War Galleries of the Imperial War Museum in London, U.K., contacted Harry Bradshaw Matthews on December 20, 2019. She informed Matthews:

"I am a Curator at the Imperial War Museum (IWM) London, working on new World War Two Galleries. I am keen to feature in the galleries the story of Frederick Douglas Killingsworth, and saw on the 92nd's website that you are his descendant (see the site) <http://92ndinfantry.org/?p=55270>."

Since December, communications have continued between Clements and Matthews. Look for future notices in the *USCT Civil War Digest* about the date for the opening of the exhibit. Listed below is the family roots that are shared by Frederick Douglas Killingsworth and Harry Bradshaw Matthews.



1870 Census, Denmark, Bamberg County, South Carolina – Isaac (aka Isham) and Emmerly (Darlington) Killingsworth

- Isaac, Jr. and Stephen are brothers.
- Isaac Killingsworth, Jr. is the great-grandfather of Harry Bradshaw Matthews.
- Stephen Killingsworth is the great-grandfather of Frederick Douglas Killingsworth

Also of interest is that Sgt. Marshall H. Bull of Oneonta (home of the USCTI) was pictured being congratulated by Maj. Gen. Edward M. Almond, commanding general of the 92nd "Buffalo" Division, after receiving the Bronze Star for heroic achievements in action while serving on the Fifth Army front in Italy. Bull is credited as one of the photographers whose pictures have preserved and documented the soldiers of the 92nd.