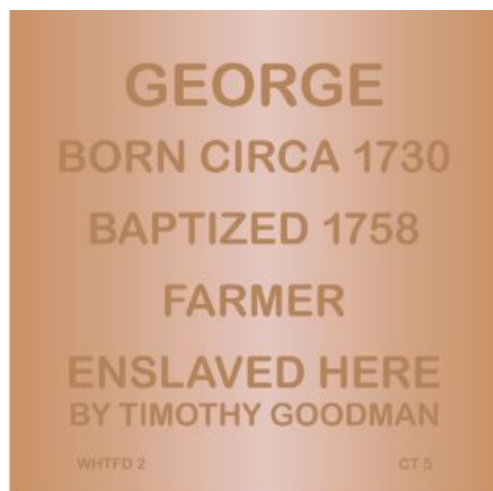


Acknowledging the Enslaved:  
Witness Stones Project West Hartford  
Installation Ceremony

September 26, 2018





Acknowledging the Enslaved:  
**Witness Stones West Hartford**  
Installation Ceremony  
First Church and Old Center Cemetery

Remembering George and Jude

Remembering the Goodmans and the Sedgwicks

September 26, 2018  
9:30-11:15

First Church West Hartford

Bella Celio, history student

Mayor Shari Cantor

Jennifer DeSimas, Director of John P. Webster Library

Jennifer DiCola Matos, Executive Director of NWH & WHHS

State Senator Beth Bye

Asjha Malcolm: presenting Jude

Superintendent Tom Moore

Xavier Blackwell-Lipkind: presenting George

Lorna Thomas-Farquharson, Board of Education

Old Center Cemetery

Installation of the stones

Visit stones of Bristol, Goodmans, Sedgwicks, Coltons, Collins and Hooker

# The Witness Stones Project at Conard

Sean O'Connor

Conard AP United States History Teacher

Introducing the Witness Stones Project to my AP United States History students at Conard turned the epilogue of the course into its highlight.

AP courses are considered college level courses. Like a college course, it has a final exam in May, but unlike a college course we ask students to continue the course for four more weeks. As a teacher, it is a challenge to inspire the students to find meaning in a course that is technically over.

The Witness Stones Project, developed by Dennis Culliton of Guilford, changed this. My students not only saw the institution of slavery in a new light and no longer as a “southern entity;” they had the opportunity to do something that no one had ever done before.

They were able to tell the stories of Jude and George, two men basically forgotten to history, but a significant part in the success of two of our town’s most prominent families, the Goodmans and the Sedgwicks.

My students probably thought I was asking the impossible when I told them we would be writing George’s biography, a man who is only referenced in two lines in the First Church records, and Jude who has slightly more documentation but whose life has many unanswered questions.

However, through research, contextualization and drawing conclusions, students have memorialized George and Jude in a way that makes their stories a significant part of West Hartford’s history. George and Jude’s stories are now a part of the lives of these students and this project has been an invaluable experience to all of us.

We hope that every man and woman who suffered through enslavement in the West Division of Hartford will have their stories told in the coming years and that residents as well as visitors to West Hartford will have the opportunity to better understand the role that individuals like George and Jude played in forming this community.

# The Witness Stones Project West Hartford

Liz Devine and Tracey Wilson, Project Directors

In the spring of 2018, 42 students at Conard High School addressed the compelling question **“Why bear witness to slavery in West Hartford?”** by researching two men: George, owned by Timothy Goodman, and Jude, owned by Stephen Sedgwick, Sr. and Stephen Sedgwick, Jr. Students learned about the broader context of 18th century Connecticut slavery and what is known about Bristow, the man who now has a school named after him in our town.

Their research brings us to our installation ceremony today as we commemorate these men with two brass plaques installed in the Old Center Cemetery. These stones remind us of the lives of George and Jude who were captives and owned by residents of the West Division of Hartford. They also remind us of the power of primary source research and public history to present this information to the public.

The Witness Stones Project, begun by 8th grade Guilford United States History teacher Dennis Culliton, asks students to engage in analyzing and interpreting primary sources about enslaved individuals and to present that information to the public. Its origins go back to the Stolpersteine Project in Germany. Begun in 1992, Gunter Demnig placed “stumbling stones” outside the last residences of choice of Jews killed in the Holocaust. In 2018 there are more than 60,000 of these stones in 22 European countries.

The presence of slavery in West Hartford’s history makes us face the complicated relationship of both owners and enslaved people, including the oppression, dehumanization, paternalism, and agency and resistance involved in this system.

These stones ask us to acknowledge and bear witness to this system. By addressing the historical record, acknowledging injustice, naming the perpetrators, and honoring those who suffered under and resisted its grip, we can understand how our community was built by restoring the history and honoring the humanity and contributions of the enslaved people who helped build the community.

On the following pages you will see a document, c. 1910, written by Town Clerk Henry Whitman, in which he transcribed the evidence about slavery in the West Division from the First Church records. This document is another acknowledgement that slavery existed here and that more people needed to know about it.

**In the retelling, and in the stones, help us to keep this story alive.**







Town Clerk,

West Hartford, Conn.

Dear Sir:-

Enclosed find a mortgage deed from Henry A. B. Day to this Company of certain property on Westland Avenue, which kindly record and return to us, together with your bill for recording.

Yours very truly,

Enclosure.

Secretary.

1-2 Page  
1-2 West  
1-2 Ten  
1-2 40.  
1-2-3 Chris  
1-2 Frank  
1-2 Ren  
1-2 Caesar  
1-2 Robin  
1-2 Peter

Wm. 1-2  
Wm. 1-2

The 50 entries about do not include all the  
negroes mentioned in the church records, but are  
supposed to include all actual slaves or freed slaves  
to be found, about 40 individuals.

about 25 slaves } in list of 40 inquir  
+ 15 freed. } (50 entries)  
40  
20 more in mar. = 150 Cal. individ  
4 of these prob. freed sl mentioned  
was

1801 Jan 1 Bunko a Negro man old age - 87  
" May 1 Bunko a Negro man old age - 87  
1808 July 20 Nelson a negro man - 15  
1810 Wm. a negro man old age of the  
" Dec. 10 a negro man old age of the  
1811 June 10 a negro man, old age - 15  
1814 May 20 Bunko a negro man old age - 15  
1820 May 20 Tenney a Negro man - 87  
1826 May 21 The wife of Moses Bunko, aged 67  
1827 Jan 1 Moses Bunko (a Negro man) - aged 113 -  
old age - 113

## The Life of George: A Forgotten Connecticut Man

Nandini Bhatt, Xavier Blackwell-Lipkind, Kate Bronson, Grace Cancian, Noah Case

Few Connecticut residents are aware of their state's slaveholding history. People prefer to point out the differences between North and South that emerged during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, but slavery in Northern states is a grim reality that must be acknowledged. The harsh hallmarks of slavery which we associate with the South existed throughout early America. The distinctions between North and South have been exaggerated. Though information is scarce, it is possible and important to piece together a narrative of the lives of Connecticut people who were enslaved. One person in particular, George, lived life enslaved by Timothy Goodman.

One must first, however, examine the era's historical context. West Hartford, in the 1700s, did not exist; rather, it was referred to simply as the West Division of Hartford. The town was centered around what is today the intersection of Sedgwick Road and South Main Street. To the west was Farmington and to the east Hartford. Much of the local culture can be connected to the Fourth Congregational Church, which served as the hub for social, religious, and political activity in the town.<sup>1</sup> Indeed, the congregational religion dominated in Connecticut during the colonial era. One of the foremost residents of the West Division at the time was Timothy Goodman.



Headstone of Joanna and Timothy Goodman, Old Center Cemetery

Goodman was born in 1706 as the son of Abigail Pantry Goodman and Richard Goodman. Timothy also had a brother named Thomas Goodman. At the age of 29, he married a woman named Joanna Wadsworth. The marriage lasted 33 years until she died in 1768. A year later, Timothy married his sister-in-law, Elizabeth Wadsworth. The Goodman family lived at 567 South Quaker Lane and owned a post office as well as a tavern located at what is now Bishop's Corner (roughly a 45-minute walk from Goodman's residence).<sup>2</sup> A cemetery, named "Moses Goodman North Cemetery," was dedicated to the Goodman family in 1790. In addition, Timothy Goodman donated a parcel of land to the Ecclesiastical Society to use as a parade ground in 1747, now called "Goodman Green." Such a donation is a testament to the power of the church in colonial society, and the prominence of this family.

<sup>1</sup> Elizabeth Hatheway C. "A LOOK AT WEST HARTFORD CENTER IN 1776." *Noah Webster Foundation and Historical Society of West Hartford*, June 1977.

<sup>2</sup> Elizabeth Hatheway, June 1977.



It would appear that enslaved people of the time attended the same church as the Caucasian residents; however, church records show a long history of segregation as well. The town's cemetery is not a good source for studying slavery. The only person of African descent with a headstone in the Old Center Cemetery is Bristow, another enslaved person of the time period who was able to purchase his freedom and buy land in Bristol.<sup>3</sup>

George may have been born in America, but it is also possible that he was born in Africa and was forcibly brought to colonial America. Unfortunately, the extant records do not say for certain. One possible answer to this question lies in a church record of a boy of African descent named George who was baptized in 1730 in Hartford.<sup>4</sup> This may have been the George who would later be owned by Timothy Goodman, but there is no way to know this. If George was brought to America, he would have been one of millions of captive Africans who were sold into slavery and taken on a treacherous transatlantic journey known as the middle passage.<sup>5</sup> The slave trade is one of history's glaring examples of racial injustice on a massive scale, perpetrated by whites at the expense of blacks.

George was likely purchased by Timothy Goodman. Although his exact monetary value is unknown, it can be estimated by looking at the values of other enslaved people during this time period. Bristow was valued at 60 pounds, and Jude, a captive who probably knew George, was valued at 45 pounds.<sup>6</sup> Therefore, George was probably purchased for around 50 pounds by Goodman. The assignment of a monetary value to a human being serves as one example of the institutionalized dehumanization of men like George that characterized race relations in Connecticut during the eighteenth century. It is also worth noting that none of the enslaved people referenced in existing records is known by a last name. This anonymity was a custom which degraded the identities of the enslaved.

After Goodman purchased George, he worked for the family for the rest of his life and was then passed down in his will to his son, Timothy. Timothy Jr. died in 1752, before the age of twenty, while his father died at age eighty in 1786, decades later.<sup>7</sup> This discrepancy would suggest that the aforementioned historical information is not updated to account for changes in Goodman's will or that more accurate information simply does not exist. Regardless, the example provides evidence of the tradition of passing down assets to the next generation in colonial America.

George's connection to the religious life of the Connecticut colony provides a few valuable clues regarding his life in colonial America. George was baptised December 10, 1758, and other historical documents also describe him as having "owned the covenant," implying that

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<sup>3</sup> Town of West Hartford. "Old Center Cemetery." West Hartford Connecticut. <https://www.westhartfordct.gov/gov/departments/fairviewcemetery/oldcenter.asp>.

<sup>4</sup> First Church of Hartford. "Church Records". Ancestryclassroom.com.

<sup>5</sup> U.S. Department of the Interior. "The Middle Passage." National Park Service. <https://www.nps.gov/articles/the-middle-passage.htm>.

<sup>6</sup> West Hartford Historical Society. "Noah Webster House: Bristow Putting the Pieces of African American Life Together." *Noah Webster House*. <https://noahwebsterhouse.org/past-exhibits/>; *Hartford Courant* (Hartford, CT). "Jude Runaway Advertisement." *Connecticut Courant*, August 9, 1774.

<sup>7</sup> "Timothy Goodman Bio." *ancestryclassroom.com*. Last modified November 29, 2011.

George himself accepted the ideals of the Christian faith.<sup>8</sup> Church records in Hartford contain information about the previous baptism of an individual identified only as “George,” which could suggest that George was born in Connecticut, baptised in Hartford as a child, and then re-baptised into the religious community of the West Division during adulthood.<sup>9</sup> However, the fact that George “owned the covenant” during the later baptism may suggest that this was his first encounter with religion and that the George baptised in Hartford decades earlier bears no relation to the enslaved person in question.

It is unclear whether or not George truly committed himself to the Christian faith. If he were born in Africa, he may have attempted to preserve certain elements of the culture of his homeland through subtle or outright resistance. However, it is also possible that George truly agreed with the principles of the Congregational church and genuinely “owned the covenant,” such a commitment would be more likely



Home of Timothy Goodman, 567 Quaker Lane South

were George born in the colonies. After all, being forced to endure the Middle Passage could foment hatred toward white colonists, rendering George less likely to embrace their philosophies.

George’s possessions were scarce, and what he did own was most likely provided to him by Goodman; probate records describe his clothing as including a “brown jacket,” “old breeches,” “boots,” and “gloves.”<sup>10</sup> Runaway ads paint a similar story; most classified advertisements contained descriptions of the possessions of the runaways, suggesting that such limited ownership was widespread.<sup>11</sup> While resistance during the colonial era was fairly common, using forged passes and attempting to escape from their masters, there is no evidence that George ran away. The fact that no classified advertisements including his name can be found, along with the fact that George spent decades living with and serving the Goodman family, would imply that he was not perceived to be disloyal or rebellious.

<sup>8</sup> "Church Records: First Church of West Hartford." *Ancestry.com*. Last modified 1923.

<sup>9</sup> First Church of Hartford. “Church Records”. *Ancestryclassroom.com*. Accessed June 4, 2018.

<sup>10</sup> "Will of Timothy Goodman," 1786, *Ancestry.com*..

<sup>11</sup> "Runaway Slave Advertisements, 1764-1800," *Connecticut Courant*.

However, George's life as an enslaved person was in no way easy. He would have worked on Goodman's 125 acres, worked with the cows, horses and sheep, the plow, and maybe have worked the loom. His jobs, like those of a landowner, would have changed with the seasons.<sup>12</sup>

Those who were enslaved during the eighteenth century were required to carry passes with them whenever they wished to travel without their owners; this system limited the autonomy of servants and confined them to a life of childlike entrapment, given that the enslaved constantly had to seek the approval of whites instead of making decisions for themselves. There was a widespread belief among white colonists that blacks could not survive on their own; in addition to financial and commercial incentives, this paternalistic viewpoint gave white colonists an excuse for their dictatorial control over the everyday lives of those they owned. It is therefore reasonable to assume that George was subject to a stringent level of control and had a limited ability to travel on his own.

It is not known how well George was treated, but simply by virtue of the fact that he was forced to live a life of labor and servitude, one can assume that the Goodman family treated George not as a human being, but rather as an object—even a machine. It is possible to examine the different levels of treatment of the enslaved, but on a fundamental level, all enslaved people were abused in that they were forced to forfeit their basic freedoms. There is little evidence that addresses the relationship between George and the Goodman family, so it is nearly impossible to discern how cruelly George was treated.

Of course, many accounts of the lives of enslaved people in Connecticut during the eighteenth century rely on speculation and educated guesswork. However, such an admission in no way diminishes the importance of thinking about the lives of past residents of towns that today are viewed as suburban enclaves with no historical interest. George serves as a perfect example of the rich history that exists even in simple documents. His life was difficult and regimented, but one must respect George's persistence and grit in the face of adversity. At the same time, George's experience demonstrates the prevalence of slavery across colonial America—even in educated Northern families. It is critical that modern citizens continue to investigate the role played by slavery in their communities and that they work to discount uninformed theories regarding the existence—or lack thereof—of this cruel practice.

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<sup>12</sup> "Timothy Goodman Inventory, 1786," [Ancestryclassroom.com](http://Ancestryclassroom.com).

# The Life and Times of Jude of the West Division

Jaza Amchok, Janelle Isaacs, Asjha Malcolm, Cameron Slocum, Thomas Wilson, Xiao Xin Xie

The northeast is often portrayed as free and progressive on the issue of slavery. Northerners are considered the “good guys.” Strolling through the Newington Green, along the Farmington Shoppes, and walking through West Hartford Center, it is easy to buy into this image of the north. It is altogether astounding that slavery should exist for almost two hundred years, and yet there is almost no mention of it in the history of northern states, especially since government reports suggest that New England merchants were exporting enslaved people from Barbados in the late 1600s.<sup>13</sup>

By 1709, it was recorded that 110 black and white servants resided in Connecticut; and by 1730, the Connecticut colony had a black population of 700 out of the 38,000 people. Between 1756 and 1774, the ratio of enslaved people to freedmen in Connecticut dramatically increased.<sup>14</sup>

As colonial leaders established their economic reasons for slavery in New England, many colonies began to pass laws institutionalizing this system. In parts of Connecticut, such as the West Division of Hartford, owning an enslaved person also denoted wealth and status. Many of these enslaved people were owned by merchants, shopkeepers, and ministers.

Unfortunately, research on local enslaved people is limited, but when historians can piece together information about a particular enslaved person, it can illuminate this oppressive system. Recent discoveries have reignited inquiries about enslaved people living in West Hartford, specifically about a man named Jude. Jude, born circa 1753, was passed down in his will from Stephen Sedgwick, Sr. to Stephen Sedgwick, Jr. after his death in 1768. By learning about his life and the time during which he lived, one more piece is located in the puzzle of colonial West Hartford.

## Slavery in Connecticut

Slavery in the northeast was a complicated issue. Although the North is touted for its progressivism and acceptance of people of African descent, underlying racism still allowed slavery to persist for over two hundred years in Connecticut. One well-documented case of slavery in the state stems from an enslaved person named Venture Smith, who published an autobiography in 1798 in New London, CT.<sup>15</sup> According to Smith’s autobiography, slavery in the North was by no means easy in comparison to the South. Enslaved people were mistreated, and often clubbed for mistakes they made. Furthermore, it was not uncommon for masters to take the savings of their enslaved people when they misbehaved. The Black Code, a series of laws passed

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<sup>13</sup> Anne Farrow, et al. *Complicity: How the North Promoted, Prolonged, and Profited from Slavery*. Ballantine Books, 2006, p. 46.

<sup>14</sup> Lorenzo J. Greene, *The Negro in Colonial New England, 1620-1776*. Columbia University Press, 1942.

<sup>15</sup> John Wood Sweet. "Venture Smith from Slavery to Freedom." Connecticut History.org. <https://connecticuthistory.org/venture-smith-from-slavery-to-freedom/>.



between 1690 and 1730, further restricted the rights of the enslaved. According to Connecticut colonial law, enslaved people were required to carry passes with them when they left town, they could not drink alcohol, they could not sell items without their master's permission, and they had a curfew of 9 p.m. The most common punishment for breaking these rules was whipping. Not only that, enslaved people were expected to follow Christian principles by attending the same church as their master, as indicated by church records.<sup>16</sup>

One positive aspect of the Black Code is that former masters had to provide support for their freed slaves, if necessary. Since freed enslaved people often were not capable of providing for themselves immediately after being freed, this law was beneficial to them. On top of that, if a master refused to help a freed person, the town would step in and provide for the enslaved person themselves.

By the time of the Revolutionary War, Connecticut had the largest number of enslaved people in New England.<sup>17</sup> The largest increase in this population occurred between 1749 and 1774. New London County became the largest slaveholding section in New England, as it was an port and center of trade that accounted for about one-third of the enslaved people in Connecticut.

Focusing more closely on West Hartford, historians are confident that there were between twenty and thirty enslaved people in the West Division of Hartford during the late 18th and 19th centuries. The West Division of Hartford was established in the 1670s by the oldest families in Hartford and their progeny. Most settlers were farmers interested in acquiring large plots of land. Some of the West Division of Hartford's most prominent families were the Perkins, the Goodmans, the Olmstedes, the Hookers, and the Sedgwicks.

The Sedgwicks, along with most of the other families in West Hartford at the time, derived their income primarily from agriculture, with corn, wheat, and flax being the largest crops at the time. Evidence unearthed when researching another West Hartford man, Bristow, suggests that West Hartford enslaved people most likely would have worked in the fields and the orchards or have performed tasks to ensure the household was in proper order, in addition to tending to any livestock that may be owned by their masters.<sup>18</sup> And, those who owned people of African descent also seemed to be the leaders of the church and the town. The inventories of many of the prominent families include the terms "negro servant," or "Negro boy."<sup>19</sup>

Church records also suggest that many of West Hartford's enslaved people were members of the church and attended with their masters. One interesting thing to note is that according to primary source documents, following the Revolutionary War, many of the enslaved people started to be referred to as "a Man" or "a Woman" which suggests that quite a few West Hartford enslaved people were freed after the Revolution.<sup>20</sup> For Jude, however, this does not appear to be the case.

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<sup>16</sup> "Church Records: First Church of West Hartford." *Ancestry.com*. Last modified 1920.

<sup>17</sup> Horatio T. Strother. *The Underground Railroad in Connecticut*. Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1962, p. 212, <https://archive.org/details/undergroundrailr1962stro>.

<sup>18</sup> West Hartford Historical Society. "Noah Webster House: Bristow Putting the Pieces of African American Life Together." *Noah Webster House*. <https://noahwebsterhouse.org/past-exhibits/>.

<sup>19</sup> "Will of Stephen Sedgwick, 1766." 1766. In *Ancestry.com/classroom*.

<sup>20</sup> Henry Whitman, "Slaves in West Hartford from Church Records," Whitman Collection, Noah Webster House & West Hartford Historical Society.

## The Sedgwick Family

The Sedgwick family is important to this narrative, because they owned Jude. The Sedgwicks were quite influential in the the West Division of Hartford, partially because Captain Samuel Sedgwick, most likely born in 1666, married Mary Hopkins.<sup>21</sup> She was the granddaughter of John Hopkins, one of Hartford's founders. Furthermore, the Sedgwicks' wealth contributed to their prominence in the community. Samuel Sedgwick inherited money from his grandmother, Elizabeth Allen. Elizabeth Allen's first husband, Rev. Samuel Stone, came to Hartford with Thomas Hooker and was the second minister of Hartford. After his death, Allen married George Garner in 1641, a merchant from Salem, Massachusetts, who owned the Stone Homestead. When he passed away in 1663, Elizabeth Stone inherited the Stone Homestead. When she died around 1681, Samuel Sedgwick inherited part of the Homestead with some money.<sup>22</sup>

Samuel Sedgwick was one of the first Sedgwick's to live in the West Division. Around 1685, Sedgwick moved to the West Division and purchased a large piece of land: approximately 273 acres in the West Division that stretched from the intersection of Main Street westward.<sup>23</sup> He divided this land with Stephen Hopkins. The street going through his land later was named Sedgwick Road. In his day, it was called the "Road past John Seymours." Samuel Sedgwick also owned more land in Farmington, a neighboring town.

Some of the land the Sedgwicks owned was sold over time, but they still controlled a lot of the land in the West Division. Additionally, the Sedgwicks are believed to have been involved in the production and sale of "cyder" and gin. According to Hathaway, in 1731, Samuel Sedgwick is thought to have been granted a license to sell "strong drink and keep a house of public entertainment of strangers," or, to operate a tavern.<sup>24</sup> Although it is not clear, his sons may have continued the business after his passing in 1735, and the street Gin Still Lane may have been named after the Sedgwick's business. The tavern may also have played a role in the Sedgwicks increasing their wealth.

In his will, Samuel Sedgwick gave half of his house to his wife, Mary Hopkins. He also granted land to his sons. One of them, Stephen Sedgwick Sr., inherited 55 acres of land, taken from wherever he wished.<sup>25</sup> Historians believe Stephen Sedgwick, Sr. chose a tract of land on the intersection of today's Sedgwick Road and Mountain Road, including Spicebush Swamp. Although today Sedgwick's house would be in West Hartford, during the 1700's, his land was located just over the town border in Farmington.

Stephen Sedgwick, Sr. was well-off, like his father, as can be seen in an inventory taken after his death in 1768. According to Stephen Sedgwick's inventory, they owned at least 110 acres of land, 20 cows, 45 sheep, 12 swine, 5 horses, 1 bull and 2 yoke of oxen. They owned a

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<sup>21</sup> Hubert Merrill Sedgwick, ed. "The Sedgwick Collection at the New Haven Colony Historical Society." Sedgwick.org.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> Elizabeth Hatheway C. "A LOOK AT WEST HARTFORD CENTER IN 1776." *Noah Webster Foundation and Historical Society of West Hartford*, June 1977, p. 3.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> Hubert Sedgwick, 2018.

“cyder mill” and materials that distilled gin. They owned a Dutch wheel and sheep shears to make textiles.<sup>26</sup>

In Sedgwick’s Probate Record, the enslaved man Jude is listed on a line which says “also my Negro boy Jude also all my cattle and all my Horses and all my sheep and all my swine.” This reinforced that he was property, not much more than the sheep that grazed their fields. Even as a boy, his owner would have been forced to work for the Sedgwick family.

After Stephen Sedgwick Sr.’s passing, it is believed that he willed Jude to his son, Stephen Sedgwick Jr., who later put out an ad for Jude after he ran away.<sup>27</sup> The area in which Stephen Sedgwick lived was not as populated with other citizens compared to other areas of the West Division. Therefore, when Jude escaped, it might have been easy for him to leave unnoticed.

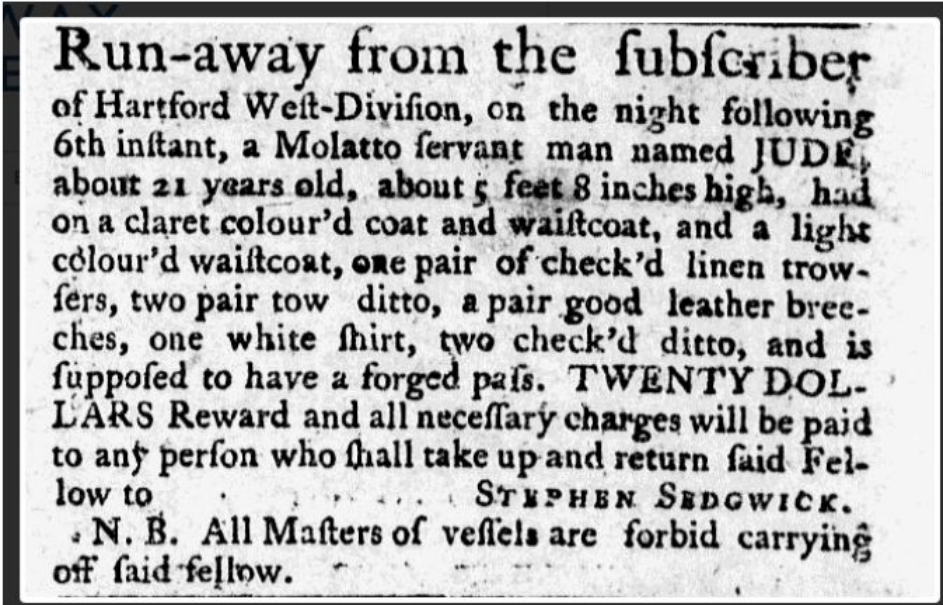
## The Life of Jude

It is not known where Jude was born. We know he was born circa 1753. In the runaway notice in the *Connecticut Courant* from 1774, Jude is described as a mulatto, meaning he is of mixed race. During this

time period it can be inferred that Jude had a white father and a mother of African descent. It is possible, as was often the case with enslaved people, that his white master had relations with his mother. In many cases, a master would force himself on his enslaved women, resulting in the birth of mixed-race children. Perhaps this was the case with Jude.

Stephen Sedgwick, Sr. could possibly be the father of Jude. Seeing as Jude was born in 1753. Stephen Sedgwick, Sr. would have been 22 years old. At this age Stephen Sedgwick, Sr. could have very well started a non-consensual relationship with one of the enslaved women, Jude’s mother. By law, slavery was passed down maternally, Jude’s mother would most likely be of African descent.

For the Sedgwicks, who not only owned a cider mill but also owned more than 100 acres of land, Jude could have been assigned to pick apples during the fall to make the cider. In the spring and summer, he might have sheared sheep, milked cows, cultivated corn, wheat and flax, and did other handy work.



**Run-away from the subscriber**  
of Hartford West-Division, on the night following  
6th instant, a Molatto servant man named JUDE,  
about 21 years old, about 5 feet 8 inches high, had  
on a claret colour'd coat and waistcoat, and a light  
colour'd waistcoat, one pair of check'd linen trow-  
sers, two pair tow ditto, a pair good leather bree-  
ches, one white shirt, two check'd ditto, and is  
supposed to have a forged pass. **TWENTY DOL-  
LARS** Reward and all necessary charges will be paid  
to any person who shall take up and return said Fel-  
low to **STEPHEN SEDGWICK.**  
N. B. All Masters of vessels are forbid carrying  
off said fellow.

<sup>26</sup> Probate Record of Stephen Sedgwick, 1768, in *Ancestry.com/classroom*.

<sup>27</sup> "Jude Runaway Advertisement," *Connecticut Courant* (Hartford, CT). August 9, 1774.

In August 1774, it was reported in the *Connecticut Courant* that Jude ran away at age 21. While the means by which he escaped remain unknown, it can be assumed that he ran because he did not want to be owned by anyone and felt he had the ability to live on his own.

There is not documentation of how Jude was treated by the Sedgwicks, but the fact that there was an advertisement documenting Jude's escape, we can infer that he was not treated well and his status did not allow him all the freedoms and respect he felt he deserved. Some say that slavery in the North was not as brutal as slavery in the South, yet they were still owned and needed a pass to go places that could make an enslaved person in the North long for freedom. It is also important to note that Jude ran away carrying what likely was everything he owned: a "claret colored coat and waistcoat, light colored waistcoat, linen trousers, a good pair of leather breeches, three shirts, and his forged pass." He ran away with what he could carry and what he felt was his, signifying his agency and his choice to leave. Stephen Sedgwick offered a \$20 reward for his return.<sup>28</sup>

What could Jude have done after he escaped? The area in which Stephen Sedgwick lived was not as populated compared to other areas of the West Division. Therefore, when Jude escaped, it might have been easier for him to leave unnoticed. There is no explicit answer, but based on the trends of other escapees from the time, Jude may have tried to gain his freedom by going further north to Canada or finding work in the ports on the Connecticut River.<sup>29</sup> Those who were able to escape or were set free, often worked on the boats; therefore Jude would have fit in. While on the more negative side, another outcome would have been that Jude was recaptured by the Sedgwicks.

Though historical evidence regarding this period in West Hartford's history is limited, historians are able to determine certain definite facts in order to piece together the life of the Sedgwick family's enslaved person, Jude. In the West Division of Hartford, to own an enslaved person denoted their wealth and their status. While his life is difficult to fully understand over two hundred forty years later, it is clear that the life of Jude was replete with hardship, and through his perseverance, he sets an example that we would do well to follow today.

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<sup>28</sup> "Jude Runaway Advertisement." August 9, 1774.

<sup>29</sup> Horatio T. Strother *The Underground Railroad in Connecticut*. Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 2011.



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The Stolpersteine Project, initiated by German artist Gunter Demnig in 1996, acknowledges those killed in the Holocaust with commemorative brass plaques in the pavement in front of their last chosen address. It is now the largest historical memorial in the world. This Witness Stones Project is firmly based on their principles.

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*“Slavery is the landscape you  
learn to see.”*

Anne Farrow, author of *Complicity: How the North  
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*“A person is only forgotten  
when his/her name is  
forgotten.”*

Gunter Demnig, Stolpersteine Project, Germany