

Town of Greenburgh
**ASSISTANT
TOWN HISTORIANS**



— felicia barber + riley wentzler —

*Irvington in Chains and our Process
A History of Slavery in Irvington and
A look at how Slices of History are
made*

By: Riley Wentzler & Felicia Barber



Greenburgh's Village of Irvington (1860-1865):

When President Abraham Lincoln initiated a draft on July 11 1863, violence broke out in Irvington. The waves of violence eventually became a full-scale riot. One of the first buildings that these White rioters destroyed was an African American orphanage. After burning the orphanage, this mob joined with a similar-sized mob from the Village of Tarrytown and proceeded to kill as many African Americans as they could.(Greenburgh Town Archives) and for many years after the Civil War Irvington and other Villages of Greenburgh had active chapters of the Ku Klux Klan (Esannason, 2017p. 6). We already mentioned these details in our article Greenburgh at The Great American Crossroads: Greenburgh's Civil War Story (<http://www.greenburghny.com/Cit-e-Access/news/index.cfm?NID=47461&TID=10&jump2=0>) but have not stopped to analyze why resistance to the Union War Effort was so strong in Irvington. Let us do that now.

Why do you think resistance to the Union War Effort was so strong in Irvington? Do you think these Anti-Union forces were strong States' Rights advocates? We doubt that very much because if they were, why would they have made a special point of destroying an African American orphanage and killing as many African Americans as they could? A more likely explanation, given that by July of 1863, the Emancipation Proclamation had been passed making ending slavery a major war goal, is that residents of Irvington as a whole objected to the abolition of slavery. Why would they, you ask? The answer is that slavery was a proud tradition in Irvington. This article will tell the story of the history of slavery in Irvington.



Slavery in Greenburgh's Village of Irvington:

The State of New York was the capital of American Slavery from when it began in 1525 (New York Slavery Records Index p, 1) until 1827 when New York officially abolished slavery (Esannason, 2017p. 6). While New York City was the hub, Greenburgh's Village of Irvington still has a long history of slavery. Slavery in the area that is now Irvington began in 1525, but Fredrick Philipse, who began slave trading in 1680, was the first major slave trader in the area (Marchant 2019 p.16). As a Dutch citizen he was an iron and copper merchant, but when he became a British citizen he realized that the British didn't need as much copper and iron as the Dutch had, therefore, he switched to trading slaves.

It was easy for him to make the transition from selling raw materials to selling slaves because slavery was a very profitable business for those who could afford it; "paying a White free man cost 60 pounds a year whereas ,for 60-100 pounds sterling you could buy an African slave for life" (Cox & Sears 2019 p. 3). As an extremely wealthy merchant, Philipse could afford to buy and sell slaves

repeatedly. In contrast to Philipse and his family, most families in Irvington didn't own any slaves (Cox & Sears 2019 p. 3). Though not stated by Cox & Sears, we, Riley Wentzler and Felicia Barber, think that this was most likely because other families in Irvington were too poor to purchase any slaves. Most of the slaves were owned by one of five wealthy and politically influential families: the Odells', the Requas', the Buckhouts,' the Jewels, and the Van Tassels' (Cox & Sears 2019 p 1). Most of these families were still not as wealthy as the Philipse Family and therefore only owned an average of one or two slaves a piece (Cox & Sears 2019 p 2). These slaves were known by only their first names (Cox & Sears 2019 p 1). For reasons we can't explain, most of the time their ages weren't even recorded.

Here is a partial list of slaves by family-

Owned by Gload Requa & Family:

- Bill
- Jack
- Bete
- Hannah (Estate Inventory of Gload Requa 1809).

Owned by Peter Van Tassel & Family:

- Prince (agreement between Peter Van Tassel and Samuel Bouton 1781).

While there weren't that many slaves in Irvington those few that were in slavery toiled in bondage for centuries, as the State of New York did not abolish slavery within its borders until 1827 (Esannason, 2017 p 6).

Now for an inside look at how we write our articles:

We find a topic in one of three ways:

1. Greenburgh Town Supervisor, Paul Feiner suggests a topic
2. our readers suggest a topic
3. we bounce ideas off each other until we come up with one

In this particular case Greenburgh Town Supervisor, Paul Feiner suggested Slavery in Irvington and gave us a copy of Sarah Cox's and Kathy Sears' article, "Our Town and Slavery."

Once we have a topic we go through a long process of researching it:

First, we check Microsoft Encarta Reference Library, a major encyclopedia, for information on it. This doesn't usually help because although this is a highly accurate source, it doesn't often have what we need as most of our topics are too local to be included in this encyclopedia.

Second, we check the internet to see what's out there and fact check what we find based on Field Horne's *A History of Westchester County*.

If we find nothing at all, or nothing reliable, then we go to the Westchester County Archives or occasionally we interview people. This time we had the rare opportunity to interview some of the people who wrote our source material. We interviewed Robert Marchant who wrote the book *Westchester: History of an Iconic Suburb*. To hear this interview click here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4BpjJ6N9vnM&feature=youtu.be>

Mr. Marchant has a profound interest in Black History. In the course of the interview he covered:

- slavery in Greenburgh
- Greenburgh's Resistance to the Union War Effort during the Civil War which, resulted in the murder of numerous African Americans
- Greenburgh during the Jim Crow Era
- Madam C.J Walker and The Harlem Renaissance
- Ana Jones Bernard ,who was the first African American woman to pass the New York State Bar Exam

In addition to discussing these Black History related topics he also discussed organized crime in Greenburgh. Returning to our process, once the information is collected, we write up the article, and cite it using APA Citation Style Manual.

We hope you found these facts on slavery interesting and that you enjoyed the inside look at research-writing process



Previous Slices of History include:

There is no church here, but “the brave men, living and dead, who struggled here, have consecrated” this ground: The Story of The Little White Church Cemetery (4/27/19)

http://greenburghny.com/Documents/Memo%20Style_Redacted.pdf

From Fixing Cars to building Infrastructure: How Massaro Park Got its name (4/13/2019) **<http://greenburghny.com/Documents/History.pdf>**

From Chasing Rabbits to Setting Records: The Amazing Story of Larry James (4/7/2019)

<http://greenburghny.com/Documents/Mail%20-%20jlucasey@greenburghny.com5.pdf>

Greenburgh Under the Hollywood Lights: The TV shows and Movies Filmed in Greenburgh Part II (3/29/19)

http://greenburghny.com/Documents/Mail%20-%20jlucasey@greenburghny.com_Redacted2.pdf

From Insurance to Symphonies: The Home of Charles Ives

(3/16/19) **http://greenburghny.com/Documents/Mail%20-%20jlucasey@greenburghny.com_Redacted1.pdf**

Oh, The Places Your Mail has Gone: A History of The Hartsdale Post Office

(3/9/2019) **http://greenburghny.com/Documents/Mail%20-%20jlucasey@greenburghny.com_Redacted.pdf**

Greenburgh Under the Hollywood Lights: The TV shows and movies Filmed in Greenburgh Part I (2/23/19)

<http://www.greenburghny.com/Documents/Slice%20of%20History%202-23-19.pdf>

The Power of Wealth and Humility: A Reflection on Two Highly Influential African Americans (2/18/19)

www.greenburghny.com/Documents/Mail%20-%20jlucasey@greenburghny.com4.pdf

A Beautiful View for the Perfect Event: The Belvedere Estate (2/9/19)

<http://www.greenburghny.com/Documents/Mail%20-%20jlucasey@greenburghny.com3.pdf>

An Unspoken Promise of Redemption: How Hartsdale Got its Name (1/31/19)

<http://www.greenburghny.com/Documents/Greenburgh%20is%20one%20of%20the%20few%20communities%20anywhere%20that%20provides%20residents%20with%20frequent%20history%20bytes%20about%20their%20community.pdf>

Lost History: The Tragedy of Malkasten(1/26/19)

<http://www.greenburghny.com/Documents/Mail%20-%20jlucasey@greenburghny.com2.pdf>

The Intersection of Banking, Ballet, and School: Greenburgh's Warburg Estate (1/18/19)

<http://www.greenburghny.com/Documents/Memo%20Style2.pdf>

A Small House, an Important Meeting, a Huge Victory: The Story of the Odell House (1/12/2019)

<http://www.greenburghny.com/Documents/Mail%20-%20jlucasey@greenburghny.com1.pdf>

The Guardians of History: Greenburgh's Historical Societies (1/6/19)

<http://www.greenburghny.com/Documents/Mail%20-%20jlucasey@greenburghny.com.pdf>

How a Flat Tire led to a Happy Escape: The Story of Carvel in Greenburgh (12/11/18) <http://www.greenburghny.com/Documents/Carvel%20History.pdf>

A Thousand Words Which You Never Knew: The Forgotten Story of the Seal of Greenburgh. (11/17/18)

<http://www.greenburghny.com/Documents/Slice%20of%20History%20-%20A%20Thousand%20Words.pdf>

"The Disappearing Railroad Blues" in Greenburgh: The Fate of the Putnam Railroad Line and the old Putnam Trail ((11/6/18)

<http://www.greenburghny.com/Documents/Slice%20of%20History%20-%20%20Railroad%20Blues.pdf>

A Different Kind of Rebel: Greenburgh's Contributions to the Underground Railroad (10/27/18)

<http://www.greenburghny.com/Documents/GREENBURGH.pdf>

Greenburgh at The Great American Crossroads: Greenburgh's Civil War Story (10/19/18)

<http://www.greenburghny.com/Cit-e-Access/news/index.cfm?NID=47461&TID=10&jump2=0>

Greenburgh's Hall of Heroes: Ferncliff Cemetery Where Memories Live Forever (10/12/18)

<http://www.greenburghny.com/Cit-e-Access/news/index.cfm?NID=47403&TID=10&jump2=0>

A Final Resting Place for "Man's Best Friend": The Peaceable Kingdom (9/29/18)

<http://www.greenburghny.com/Cit-e-Access/news/index.cfm?NID=47331&TID=10&jump2=0>

Greenburgh and The Arts (9/22/18)

<http://www.greenburghny.com/Cit-e-Access/news/index.cfm?NID=47278&TID=10&jump2=0>

Greenburgh's BROTHERLY LOVE, RELIEF AND TRUTH: A History of

The Freemasons in Greenburgh (9/12/18) **<http://www.greenburghny.com/Cit-e-Access/news/archnews.cfm?NID=47212&TID=10&jump2=0>**

About the Authors:

We are both Assistant Town Historians at Greenburgh Town Hall and we are engaged to be married and are currently looking for permanent employment.

Riley Wentzler:

I was born and raised in a small rural town in central Pennsylvania. In high school, I took every honors course available including four years of Spanish. I received A's in all of them. I graduated third in my class of 146 students. This brought me to Edinboro University of Pennsylvania. Once there, I continued my trend of academic excellence. I graduated summa cum laude in Political Science with a minor in Spanish and a Master's in Communication Studies, with a G.P.A of 3.94. It was also there that I met my lovely fiancée, Felicia Barber. My Master's in Communication has promoted public speaking, teamwork, and customer service. My Political Science degree has developed my research skills using computer-based tools and provided me with experience using the Microsoft Office products. My minor in Spanish has facilitated my bilingual capabilities. During my internship at Greenburgh, I created the petition for the State Roads project using website tools. My diverse education and areas of interest have provided me with a wide range of skills. I look forward to finding a career opportunity in business or government. **To suggest a topic for next week's article, you can contact me at assistanthistorian@greenburghny.com, or to help me find employment, you can contact me at rjwentzler413@gmail.com**

Felicia Barber:

I was born in New York City and raised in Hartsdale, New York. I graduated from Ardsley High School. I recently earned a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in Graphic Design at Edinboro University of Pennsylvania. It was here that I met my fiancé, Riley Wentzler. As a result of my academic excellence, I won a scholarship every year. I learned and applied many graphic design skills to projects during my summer internships and at school. I am proficient in using Adobe graphic design applications including Photoshop, Illustrator and InDesign. For my Identity/branding course at Edinboro, I created logos to appear on the tee-shirts of Physical Education majors. For a veteran's upcoming event, I used a typeface to focus the reader to the soldier in the poster. For the State Roads Legislative Campaign project, I created the embedded graphic-photo that accompanied the petition I am looking for a job to utilize my skills as a Graphic Designer in an agency, print shop, company or government **To suggest a topic for next week's article, you can contact me at assistanthistorian@greenburghny.com. To learn more about my artwork or to help me find employment you can contact me at feliciadbarber@gmail.com.**

Two Interviews with the authors:

<https://riverjournalonline.com/around-town/a-love-of-history-and-each-other/13708/>

<https://wcbs880.radio.com/articles/news/stories-main-street-couple-cerebral-palsy-brings-manytalents-town-greenburgh>

References

Cox, S. & Sears, K (2019, Winter (NOT GIVEN)). Our Town and Slavery . *The Roost*, pp. 1-7.

Esannason, H. (2017). *Our Roots Run Deep*. Elmsford, New York: Esannason, Harold.

Estate Inventory Series 16(1809) Gload Requa retrieved from Westchester County Archives

Manuscript # 141 (1781) agreement between Peter Van Tassel and Samuel Bouton retrieved from Westchester County Historical Society

Marchant, R. (2018). *Westchester: History of an Iconic Suburb* . Jefferson, NC : McFarland&Company Inc.