

Fairfield Sep. 8th 1828

In the name of the Lord -

I Primus Brew a free man of colour - being of sound disposing mind of the Town & county of Fairfield State of Connecticut do here by make & ordain this to be my last will & testament -

In the first place I will that my debts should be paid & my funeral charges & money enough reserved to buy a pair of head stones -

In the 2^d place I would have my Father my brothers & sisters & half brothers & sisters share equal in whatever may be left after my debts are paid - In the third place I give to Nancy Hauff my father's Bed - as a reward for her services in attending upon me in my sickness & in case she makes no other charges -

I do hereby nominate & appoint A G Jennings to be my true & lawful executor & Administrator & request that he will settle all my debts & Distribute the remainder to my relations as is above stated -

P. his
Primus Brew
Mark -

Silliman Brew
Sally Newman
Hegemial Brew

1. Primus Burr's Will, 1828

Shortly before Primus Burr's death in September of 1828, Abraham G. Jennings recorded the last will and testament of his long-time neighbor, a former slave.

It reads:

Fairfield Sept 8th, 1828

In the name of the Lord –

I Primus Burr a free man of colour—being of sound [disposing] mind of the Town and County of Fairfield, state of Connecticut do here by make and ordain this to be my last will and testament—

In the first place I will that my debt should be paid and my funeral charges **and money enough to buy a pair of head stones**

In the 2nd place I would have **my Father my brothers and sisters and half brothers and sisters have equal in whatever may be left** after my debts are paid. In their place I give to Nancy [Hays? Mays?] **my feather bed as a reward for her services** in attending upon my sickness and in case she makes no other charges

I do hereby nominate and appoint A.G. Jennings to be true lawful executor and administrator and request that he will settle all my debts and distribute the remainder to my relatives as is above stated.

Primus Burr

Primus Burr's Will, 1828, recorded by Abraham G. Jennings and signed "X" by Primus Burr.
From the Collections of the Fairfield Museum and History Center
A.E. Jennings Collection, MS B 17 Box XXI, Folder D

I know all men by these presents that I Saml Squier Jr
of the Town & County of Fairfield for & in Consideration of
the Sum of three hundred & eighty pound old tenor to me
in hand already paid by Gershom Bradley of S Fairfield
have sold bargained & Delivered unto S Bradley a Negro Girl
of about twelve years of age Called Nell to have & to hold
to y^e above S Gershom Bradley his heirs & assigns forever
where as I y^e S Saml Squier Jr do bind myself heirs &c
to warrant & defend y^e above S Negro Girl unto y^e above S
Bradley against aney Clames or Demands from aney person
or persons what so ever from y^e Beginning of y^e world to this
very day & Yete in witness here of I have here unto set
my hand & seal this ¹⁸ day of Dec. A 1752

Signed Sealed & Delivered

In presents of
Saml Smith
David Gould

Saml Squier Jr

2. Nell, 1759

Know all men by these presents that I Samuel Squier Jr. of the Town & County of Fairfield for
& In Consideration of the Sum of three hundred & eighty pound old { tenor } to me In hand
allredy paid by Gershom Bradley of said Fairfield have Sold Bargained & Deliver unto said
Bradley a Negro Girle of about twelve years of age Called Nell to have & to hold to ye above
said Gershom Bradley his heirs and assigns forever where as of ye Samuel Squier Jr do Bind
my Self Heirs Etc. to warrant & defend ye above said Negro Girle unto ye above said Bradley
against {aney} Claimes or Demand, from {aney} person or persons what So Ever from ye
Beginning of ye world to this very day & Date In witness here of I have here unto Set my
Hand & Seal this 18th day of December AD {1759}

Signed Sealed & Delivered

In presents of

Samuel Smith

Samuel Squier Jr

David Gould

Slave Sale Document, 1759

3. Runaway Slaves

Slave(s): Toney and Sampson

Toney was described as being 5'4 or 5" in height and a little lame in the right knee.

Sampson was describes as being about 5'6" and "roguish" in looks.

Slave owner: Ebenezer Banks (Toney and Sampson were the only slaves)

Date of Escape: May 6, 1809

Escape advertised in: the May 17, 1809 issue of *The Connecticut Courant*

Age(s) during escape: Toney was 22 and Sampson about 18

The records do not indicate the Ebenezer had any slaves after 1809, so it is very likely that Toney and Sampson successfully escaped.

4. Slave Sale Ad

T O B E S O L D,
A Negro GIRL, about 18 years
old. She is strong and very healthy.---understands
all sorts of business in a family. Enquire of the
Printers.

Connecticut Courant and Weekly Intelligencer (1778-1791); Oct 5, 1784;
ProQuest Historical Newspapers: Hartford Courant (1764-1986) pg. 2

to your Honours serious Consideration, whether it is consistent,
with the present Claims, of the united States, to hold so many
Thousands, of the Race of Adam, our common Fathers, in
perpetual Slavery; Can human Nature endure the shocking
Idea? can your Honours, any longer Suffer, this great Evil to
prevail, under your Government? we entreat your Honours,
let no Considerations of Publick Inconvenience, deter your
Honours, from interposing in Behalf, your Petitioners;
who ask for nothing, but what we are fully persuaded, is ours
to claim. we beseech your Honours, to weigh this matter,
in the scale of Justice, and in your great Wisdom and
Goodness, apply such Remedy, as the Evil does require;
and let your Petitioners, rejoice with your Honours, in the
Participation, with your Honours, of that inestimable Blessing,

Freedom and your Humble Petitioners, as in Duty
bound shall ever pray be.
dated in Fairfield the 11 Day
of May A.D 1779 —

signed in Presence of
Jonth Turges.

Prime a Negro Man
Servant to Mr. Wm^o Turges of Fairfield

his
Prime X a Negro man
Mark
Servant of Cap^t Stephen Jenings
of Fairfield
in Behalf of themselves and
the other Petitioners

5. Slave Petition

Prince and Prime were two Fairfield slaves who in 1779 **petitioned** the Connecticut General Assembly to **free all enslaved people** in Fairfield and Hartford Counties held in captivity simply based on the color of their skin. These men were the first to not only petition for their own freedom, but for everyone in a specific area. The petition was witnessed by attorney Jonathan Sturges. It was denied by both houses of the Assembly. In 2009 Connecticut's General Assembly formally apologized for the state's involvement in and support of slavery.

Excerpts from the Petition:

. . . the negroes in the towns of Stratford and Fairfield in the County of Fairfield who are held in a state of slavery humbly shewth [show] that many of your petitioners were . . . **most unjustly torn from the bosom of their dear parents and friends**, and, without any crime by them committed, doomed and bound down to perpetual slavery;

. . . We perceive by our own reflection that **we are endowed with the same faculties with our masters**, and there is nothing that leads us to a belief, or suspicion, that we are any more obliged to serve them than they us; and the more we consider this matter, **the more we are convinced of our right** (by the laws of Nature and by the whole tenor of the Christian religion, so far as we have been taught) **to be free. We have endeavored rightly to understand what is our right and what is our duty, and can never be convinced that we were made to be slaves.** Although God almighty may justly lay this and more upon us, yet we deserve it not from the hands of men.

. . .

We beg leave to submit your Honors' serious consideration whether it is consistent with the present claims of the United States to hold so many thousands of the race of Adam, our common father, in perpetual slavery. Can human nature endure the shocking idea? Can your Honors any longer suffer this great evil to prevail under your government. We entreat your Honors: let no consideration of public inconvenience deter your Honors from interposing in behalf of your petitioners, who ask for nothing but what **we are fully persuaded is ours to claim.** We beseech your Honors to weigh this matter in the **scale of justice**, and in your great wisdom and goodness apply such remedy as the evil does require. And let your petitioners rejoice with your Honors in the participation with your Honors of that inestimable blessing, freedom; and your humble petitioners, as in duty bound, shall every pray etc.

This petition of 1779 is found in the Revolutionary War papers in the State Archives collection of the Connecticut State Library, series 1, volume 37, document 232.





5. Illustrations

The large, bold woodcut image of a supplicant male slave in chains appears on the 1837 broadside publication of John Greenleaf Whittier's antislavery poem, "Our Countrymen in Chains." The design was originally adopted as the seal of the Society for the Abolition of Slavery in England in the 1780s, and appeared on several medallions for the society made by Josiah Wedgwood as early as 1787. Here, in addition to Whittier's poem, the appeal to conscience against slavery continues with two further quotes. The first is the scriptural warning, "He that stealeth a man and selleth him, or if he be found in his hand, he shall surely be put to death. "Exod[us] XXI, 16." Next the claim, "England has 800,000 Slaves, and she has made them free. America has 2,250,000! and she holds them fast!!!!"

The image of a supplicant female in chains appears in abolitionist George Bourne's book, *Slavery Illustrated in its Effects upon Women*, published in 1837. Bourne's book discussed the connection between the anti-slavery and the women's rights movements, because some female abolitionists, such as the Grimke sisters, used the anti-slavery movement to address women's rights. The female-focused design was adapted from the design popularized by Josiah Wedgwood decades earlier. Abolitionists and suffragists alike adopted this image and used it as an emblem for their respective movements. Most notably, this design appeared on tokens that were sold at annual anti-slavery fundraising fairs throughout the United States. These fairs provided one of the largest sources of funding for the abolitionist movement.

Sources:

Library of Congress

Anti-Slavery Images. *Colonial Williamsburg*. <http://www.history.org/history/teaching/enewsletter/volume2/february04/iotm.cfm>

"Am I not a Woman and a Sister?" *History Matters*. <http://historymatters.gmu.edu/d/6726/>