

UNTOLD
STORIES
UNHEARD
VOICES

**Resources for
Educators**



SAINT ALBANS MUSEUM

Dear Educator,

Thank you for bringing our newest exhibit, *Untold Stories, Unheard Voices*, into your school. With this exhibit, we aim to highlight the often-overlooked perspectives, struggles, and contributions of Black Vermonters in St. Albans and Franklin County, as well as spark a broader discussion about Black history in St. Albans, Vermont, and nationwide. This documentation includes additional information to what is included on each of the panels, arranged for your ease of reference. Some general questions are provided at the end of each section to prompt discussion and deeper thought among your students, which may need to be altered for different age groups. A reading list with suggested materials for both children and adults is also attached.

We are grateful to share our work with you, and are always striving to improve our programming. We welcome your feedback! Please feel free to email us at museum@stamuseum.org with any comments, questions, and/or suggestions.

Sincerely,

Saint Albans Museum Equity & Inclusion Committee

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Contextual Truths

- **July 2nd, 1777:** Vermont's first constitution is also the first in the nation to declare slavery unconstitutional.
 - *"...no male person, born in this country, or brought from over sea, ought to be holden by law, to serve any person, as a servant, slave, or apprentice, after he arrives to the age of twenty-one years; nor female, in like manner, after she arrives to the age of eighteen years, unless they are bound by their own consent, after they arrive to such age, or bound by law for the payment of debts, damages, fines, costs, or the like."* (from Chapter I, Section I, of the 1777 Vermont Constitution, *A Declaration of the Rights of the Inhabitants of the State of Vermont*)
 - This declaration did not apply to boys and men under 21 or girls and women under 18, and enslaved children, some as young as eight or nine, continued to be kept as "servants" in Vermont households.
 - After the law went into effect, many Vermont slaveowners were unwilling to free their slaves, and the law was not always enforced.
 - Many slaveowners in Vermont were wealthy, but even some farm families had one or two slaves.
 - Even when slaves were freed, they were subject to laws that restricted free Black people's ability to find work, own property, or even reside in the state.
- **March 4th, 1791:** Vermont joins the United States as the 14th state. In joining, it becomes subject to the Fugitive Slave Clause of the Constitution of the United States.
 - *"No Person held to Service or Labour in one State, under the Laws thereof, escaping into another, shall, in Consequence of any Law or Regulation therein, be discharged from such Service or Labour, but shall be delivered up on Claim of the Party to whom such Service or Labour may be due."* (from Article IV, Section 2 of the Constitution of the United States)
- **February 4th, 1793:** The Fugitive Slave Act of 1793 is approved by the House of Representatives, requiring that fugitive slaves be returned to their owners, even if they escaped to a state that had outlawed slavery.
- **1834:** The Vermont Anti-Slavery Society is established.

- Anti-slavery did not mean anti-racism. Many Vermonters supported only gradual emancipation or sending all free Black people to the African colony of Liberia, while some were afraid that the state would be overrun by free Black people.
- While many white Vermonters believed slavery was morally wrong, the vast majority did not see former slaves as their equals.
- **September 18th, 1850:** The Fugitive Slave Act of 1850 is passed by Congress, penalizing officials who did not arrest suspected fugitive slaves, as well as anyone who provided food or shelter to fugitives.

Discussion Questions:

- What do you already know about the history of slavery in Vermont?
- Why is it important to learn about the history of slavery in Vermont and the United States?
- Why did people in this time period have slaves?
- Why was it significant that Vermont declared slavery unconstitutional in 1777?
- How was being a servant different to being a slave?
- The Declaration of Independence states that "all men are created equal" and that all are entitled to "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." How does the existence of slavery at the time it was written contradict these ideals?
- The Saint Albans Museum created this exhibit to recognize the lives of Black historical figures who are usually omitted from history books. What else do you think Vermont could do to honor these people and make sure their stories are told?

Jeffrey Brace

- **1742:** Boyrereau Brinch, later nicknamed Jeffrey Brace, is born in West Africa.
- **1758:** Brace is kidnapped by English slave traders and taken to Barbados. He is later sold to Captain Isaac Mills.
- **1756-1763:** The Seven Years' War takes place. Sometime during the war, Brace fights as an "enslaved sailor" aboard Mills' ship, although his exact years of service are unknown.
- **1761:** Brace is taken to Connecticut, where he is bought and sold by several different owners. He is eventually sold to Mary Styles (also spelled Stiles), a widow who teaches him to read, write, and speak proper English.
- **1775-1783:** Brace fights in the American Revolutionary War. After returning from the war, he is granted his freedom by Benjamin Styles, Mary's son.
- **1784:** Brace moves to Vermont, where he would later meet his wife, Susannah.
- **1795:** Brace, Susannah, and their five children establish a farm in Poultney, Vermont.
 - However, they faced harassment from neighbors, and would later leave Poultney, spending a brief time in Sheldon before settling in Georgia, Vermont.
- **1807:** Susannah passes away.
- **1810:** Brace, now legally blind, publishes *The Blind African Slave, or Memoirs of Boyrereau Brinch, Nicknamed Jeffrey Brace* with the help of Benjamin Prentiss, an anti-slavery lawyer, and Harry Whitney of St. Albans.
- **1827:** Brace passes away in Georgia, Vermont.

Discussion Questions:

- Were you aware that Black soldiers served in the Revolutionary Army? Why do you think the contributions of these soldiers are often ignored?
- Why is it significant that Brace was educated by his owner, Mary Styles? How do you think receiving an education impacted his life?
- Why is it significant that Brace was able to publish his memoirs?

Leroy “Roy” Elmer Satchell

- **1888:** Leroy “Roy” Elmer Satchell is born in Elizabethtown, New York, to William Satchell, a former slave, and Sophronia Davis, the daughter of William A. Davis, a Civil War veteran from the 54th Massachusetts Volunteer Regiment.
- **1908:** The St. Albans Messenger reports on Satchell boxing against Arthur “Babe” Brace, although Satchell’s boxing career appears to be short-lived.
- **1910:** The United States Census lists the Satchells as living at 11 Welden Street in St. Albans and Leroy as working as a “boot black” (someone that polishes shoes and boots).
 - Over the next few years, Satchell could be found listed as a chauffeur, laborer in a machine shop, a worker at Foundry Repair, and “the best car washer in the city.”
- **1920:** Satchell is a member of the Selected Symphony Orchestra, playing “drums and traps” for the St. Albans Glee Club.
- **Between 1928-1930:** Satchell joins Weed’s Imperial Orchestra, “one of the first integrated bands in America.”
- **1930:** Satchell is injured in a car accident and asks his student, Robert Williams, to fill in for him in Weed’s Orchestra.
 - Williams was another gifted Black drummer, and Satchell had boarded with Williams’ family in the past.
 - After recovering, the two often shared the position of drummer for Weed’s Orchestra.
- **1962:** Satchell passes away.

Discussion Questions:

- Why was it significant that both Black and white musicians were allowed to play in Weed’s Imperial Orchestra?
- How do you think his father being a former slave would have impacted Satchell as he grew up?
- How did each of Satchell’s jobs benefit the St. Albans community?

James McDurfee

- **Between 1804-1805:** James McDurfee (also spelled McDurphy) is born to Wooster McDurfee and an unknown mother, becoming the first recorded birth of a Black child in St. Albans. His parents were said to be escaped slaves, but Wooster is listed in 1790 in Newbury, Vermont as a free Black man.
 - During his life, James had at least eight children (Susan, James Jr., Betsy, Hiram, Fred, Sarah, Jane, and Fred H.) and at least one wife. All birth records for his children name the mother as Mary, but maiden names vary between Gereau, Smith, and Brace.
- **1850s:** McDurfee relocates to Ferrisburgh, Vermont.
- **July 5th, 1881:** McDurfee passes away. His death certificate describes him as a widowed laborer who died suddenly of heart disease at the age of 77.

Discussion Questions:

- Why is it important for us to acknowledge the first Black child born in St. Albans?
- Why is there so much confusion about the details of McDurfee's life?
 - Alternate question: Many of the details of McDurfee's life are unknown, because records at the time were not kept as carefully for Black people as they were for white people. Why do you think this was the case?

William Augustus Davis

- **July 1828:** William Augustus Davis is born in Castleton, Vermont.
- **1863:** Davis enlists in the Union Army with the 54th Massachusetts Volunteer Regiment and serves as a private in Company F.
- **December 17, 1863:** Davis is mustered in Brattleboro, Vermont.
- **June 8th, 1865:** Davis is discharged from the Army after an injury leaves him disabled.
- **1870:** By this time, Davis is working as a barber, living at the back side of the Tremont Hotel in St. Albans with his wife Elizabeth and their six children.
 - While living in St. Albans, Davis also served as an operative for the Underground Railroad. His grandson, Leroy Elmer Satchell, reported that he "often cared for fugitive slaves in his home."
- **1880:** Davis moves to Burlington, Vermont.
- **February 9, 1903:** Davis passes away in Burlington of septicaemia at the age of 74.

Discussion Questions:

- What do you already know about the Underground Railroad?
- What did it mean to be an operative for the Underground Railroad?

54th Massachusetts Volunteer Regiment

- **February 1863:** Black men are recruited to fight in the Union Army during the Civil War as part of what would be the Massachusetts 54th Volunteer Regiment.
 - The formation of the Massachusetts 54th was ordered by Governor John A. Andrew of Massachusetts, an abolitionist, following the Emancipation Proclamation.
 - A number of St. Albans residents were members of the Massachusetts 54th, most of whose markers can be found in Greenwood Cemetery. Among them are Charles Prince (age 21, served 1864-1865), Daniel Prince (age 21, served 1863-1865), Isaac Prince (age 18, served 1863-1865), Abel Prince (age 35, served 1863-1865), and Peter Brace (age and years of service unknown).
- **May 28th, 1863:** The Massachusetts 54th deploys under Captain Robert Shaw.
- **June 1863:** After arriving in Beaufort, South Carolina, the soldiers of the 54th are informed that they will only be receiving \$7 a month in pay (about \$150 in 2021), rather than the \$13 a month (about \$280 in 2021) that they were promised and that all white soldiers received. In protest, the entire regiment soon refuses any pay at all.
- **July 16th, 1863:** The Massachusetts 54th sees combat for the first time at the Battle of Grimball's Landing on James Island in South Carolina.
- **July 18th, 1863:** At the Battle of Fort Wagner, 270 out of 600 members of the Massachusetts 54th are killed, along with Captain Shaw.
 - Despite these devastating losses, the 54th was widely honored for its bravery during the battle, which ultimately led to greater enlistment of Black troops in the Union Army.
- **June 16, 1864:** A Congressional bill grants equal pay to all Black soldiers, so long as they were free men as of April 19th, 1861.
 - Later, to ensure that all members of the Massachusetts 54th received their fair pay, Colonel Edward Needles Hallowell, who had taken over leadership of the regiment after Captain Shaw's death, had the men take "the Quaker oath": *"You do solemnly swear that you owed no man unrequited labor on or before the 19th day of April 1861. So help you God."*
- **September 28th, 1864:** Back pay is administered to the members of the Massachusetts 54th.

Discussion Questions:

- Why do you think Black soldiers in the Union Army were paid less than white soldiers?
- How did St. Albans residents come to serve in a Massachusetts regiment?
- Why was it significant that there was an entirely Black regiment in the Union Army?

Lawrence Brainerd

- **March 16th, 1794:** Lawrence Brainerd is born in East Hartford, Connecticut, to Ezra and Mabel Brainerd.
- **1808:** Brainerd moves to St. Albans, Vermont.
- **1816:** Brainerd begins his long career as a businessman.
 - Over the course of his life, Brainerd owned and operated several steamboats and steamships that transported cargo across Lake Champlain, oversaw the construction and operation of railroads across Vermont and Canada that would later form the Central Vermont Railway, served as director of the St. Albans Steamboat Company, and owned a great deal of real estate in St. Albans, among other ventures.
 - It is now known that Brainerd was an important operative for the Underground Railroad, hiding escaped slaves on his properties and using his position at the railroad and steamship companies to help them travel into Canada.
- **1834:** Brainerd is elected to the Vermont House of Representatives as a Jacksonian.
 - Brainerd would later leave the Jacksonians for the Whig Party due to clashes with his strong opposition to slavery, and would later leave the Whig Party for the very same reason.
- **1846-1854:** Brainerd runs multiple unsuccessful campaigns for Governor of Vermont.
- **October 1864:** Brainerd is chosen by the Vermont General Assembly to fill the United States Senate vacancy left by the death of Senator William Upham.
- **1855:** Brainerd acts as one of the organizers of the Republican Party, which was founded as the nation's main anti-slavery organization.
 - He would also later serve as the first chairman of the Vermont Republican Party.
- **May 9th, 1870:** Brainerd passes away in St. Albans at the age of 76.

Discussion Questions:

- Lawrence Brainerd was a white man. Why is he included as part of this exhibit?
- Why was it important that escaped slaves traveled to Canada?
- What does it mean to be an abolitionist?
- What were the risks for escaped slaves and for the people who helped them?

Jeremiah C. Boggs

- **1843:** Jeremiah C. Boggs travels to St. Albans at the age of 30.
 - He had been previously sold six times before escaping from Richmond, Virginia and arriving in Albany, New York. As he had a brother in Montpelier, Boggs then chose to travel through Vermont instead of going directly to Canada.
 - Upon arrival in Vermont, Boggs was welcomed by Underground Railroad agent Lawrence Brainerd, who gave him a job and taught him to read and write.
 - In a letter written by Aldis Brainerd, Lawrence's son, Boggs was described as "a giant in strength and a most trustworthy and faithful laborer."
- **1844:** Boggs is recognized by A.G. Tarlton, a St. Albans resident who knows his former master. Soon afterwards, he leaves Vermont with an agent from the American Colonization Society for Liberia, West Africa.

Discussion Questions:

- Why did Boggs have to leave the country after being recognized by someone who knew his former master?
- Why did Boggs first try to escape to Canada before leaving for Liberia? What rights would he have had in these countries that he didn't have in the United States?

Recommended Reading & Materials List

Workbooks

- *The Racial Healing Handbook* by Anneliese A. Singh, PhD
- *Me and White Supremacy* by Layla F. Saad

Non-Fiction

- *So You Want to Talk About Race* by Ijeoma Oluo
- *How To Be An Antiracist* by Ibram X. Kendi
- *Stamped from the Beginning* by Ibram X. Kendi
- *We Do This 'til We Free Us: Abolitionist Organizing and Transforming Justice* by Mariame Kaba
- *White Fragility* by Robin Diangelo
- *The Blind African Slave: Memoirs of Boyrereau Brinch, Nicknamed Jeffrey Brace* by Jeffrey Brace as told to Benjamin F Prentiss, Esq.
- *Abolition and the Underground Railroad in Vermont* by Michelle A. Sherburne
- *Discovering Black Vermont* by Elise A. Guyette
- *Vermont Women, Native Americans, and African Americans: Out of the Shadows of History* by Cynthia D. Bittinger
- *Fearing the Black Body: The Racial Origins of Fat Phobia* by Sabrina Strings
- *Medical Apartheid* by Harriet A. Washington
- *Hidden Figures: The American Dream and the Untold Story of the Black Women Who Helped Win the Space Race* by Margot Lee Shetterly
- *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks* by Rebecca Skloot
- *What Does It Mean to Be White?: Developing White Racial Literacy* by Robin DiAngelo
- *Barracoon: The Story of the Last "Black Cargo"* by Zora Neale Hurston
- *Four Hundred Souls: A Community History of African America, 1619-2019* by Ibram X. Kendi
- *This Book is Antiracist* by Tiffany Jewell

Adult Fiction

- *Citizen* by Claudia Rankine
- *Just Us* by Claudia Rankine
- *Parable of the Sower: A Graphic Novel Adaptation* by Damian Duffy (adapter), Octavia E. Butler, John Jennings (illustrator)

Young Adult & Children's

- *One of the Good Ones* by Maika and Maritza Moulite
- *The Hate U Give* by Angie Thomas
- *Stamped* by Ibram X. Kendi
- *The Poet X* by Elizabeth Acevedo
- *Your Name is a Song* by Jamilah Thompkins-Bigelow, Luisa Uribe (illustrator)

- *IntersectionAllies: We Make Room For All* by Chelsea Johnson, LaToya Council, Carolyn Choi
- *All Are Welcome* by Alexandra Penfold, Suzanne Kaufman (illustrator)
- *Little Leaders: Bold Woman in Black History* by Vashti Harrison
- *Little Legends: Exceptional Men in Black History* by Vashti Harrison
- *Juneteenth for Maize* by Floyd Cooper
- *Just Mercy (Adapted for Young Adults): A True Story of the Fight for Justice* by Bryan Stephenson
- *New Kid* by Jerry Craft
- *March: Book One* by John Lewis, Andrew Aydin, Nate Powell (illustrator)
- *Run: Book One* by John Lewis, Andrew Aydin, Nate Powell (illustrator)
- *Copper Sun* by Sharon M. Draper
- *Buck: A Memoir* by M. K. Asante

Poems

- *African American Poetry: 250 Years of Struggle & Song* by Kevin Smith (editor)
- *Ghost Fishing: An Eco-Justice Poetry Anthology* by Melissa Tuckey (editor)
- *Nepantla: An Anthology Dedicated to Queer Poets of Color* by Christopher Soto (editor)

Podcasts

- *Nice White Parents*
- *Seeing White*
- *Still Processing*

Additional Sources

- Black History of St Albans, VT Vol. 1
- Tremont Hotel file
- Brainerd Family
- *The Underground Railroad Project* from the Vermont Historical Society
- Collections of the Rokeby Museum
- "Our Location" - Houghton House
- *Underground Railroad Project: Anti-Slavery* by the Vermont Humanities Council
- *The Underground Railroad: Vermont and the Fugitive Slave* by The Dennos Museum Center
- *Vermont 1777: Early Steps Against Slavery* (nmaahc.si.edu)
- *History Space: Radical Abolition in Vermont* from the Burlington Free Press (9/2017)
- The North Country Lantern
- *The Underground Railroad in Vermont before 1850* from the Joseph Poland House
- Friends of Freedom: The Vermont Underground Railroad Survey Report: State of VT and Vermont
- Division for Historic Preservation
- *Underground Railroad* from the Sharon Museum
- *Abolition and the Underground Railroad in Vermont* by Michelle A. Sherburne

- *Notes on Slavery in the US and the Underground Railroad in Vermont* by D. J. Miner
- *Men of Vermont: an illustrated biographical history of Vermonters and sons of Vermont* by Jacob G. Ullery
- *Rehearsal for Reconstruction: the Port Royal Experiment* by Willie Lee Rose
- The Poultney Historical Society

Saint Albans Museum Exhibition Committee Members

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