

# Welcome to the Community Witness Stones Project

- ☐ Who we are



- ☐ How to use Zoom - questions ?

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

*Anne Farrow, author, The Logbooks: Connecticut's Slave Ships and Human Memory*

## Session 1 :

- Begin to think about how we can remember slavery and freedom in West Hartford ? How can we shift our gaze ?
- Introduce you to slavery in West Hartford .
- Introduce you to the Whitman Family.
- Introduce you to the compelling questions that will guide our study of 2 enslaved people, Rubin and Ned.

# How do we remember?

## Community Witness Stones Project 2020



|   |  |
|---|--|
| <p><b>JUDE</b><br/>BORN 1753<br/>FARMER<br/>ENSLAVED HERE<br/>BY STEPHEN SEDGWICK<br/>RAN AWAY 1774</p> | <p><b>GEORGE</b><br/>BORN 1730<br/>BAPTIZED 1758<br/>FARMER<br/>ENSLAVED HERE<br/>BY TIMOTHY GOODMAN</p> |
|---|--|

Why do you want to study about the enslaved in West Hartford? -  
chat your comment



# What is a Witness Stone ?

- Each enslaved person has a Witness Stone installed at the Old Center Cemetery
- Twelve Witness Stones installed
- What does it mean to “**witness**?”





# Why is studying the institution of slavery **COMPLICATED HISTORY?**

- ❑ Difficult to research
- ❑ Complex relationships
- ❑ Wrestle with saying the wrong thing
- ❑ Addressing cruelty and injustice, topics that are difficult to talk about
- ❑ Makes people feel uncomfortable, anxious, angry, sad, overwhelmed, embarrassed

The purpose of the Witness Stones Project is to ..

Shift our gaze

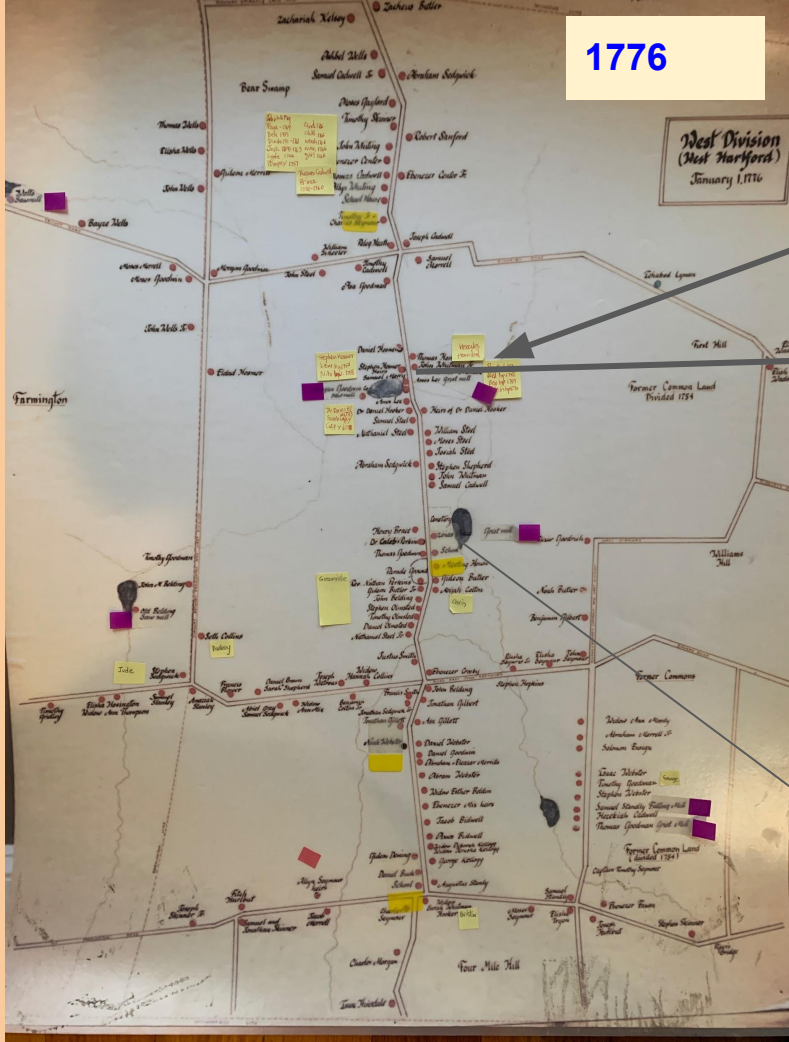
How does Kaphar  
want us to remember  
in a way that is  
different from  
before?

How does this help us  
tell a different story?





1776

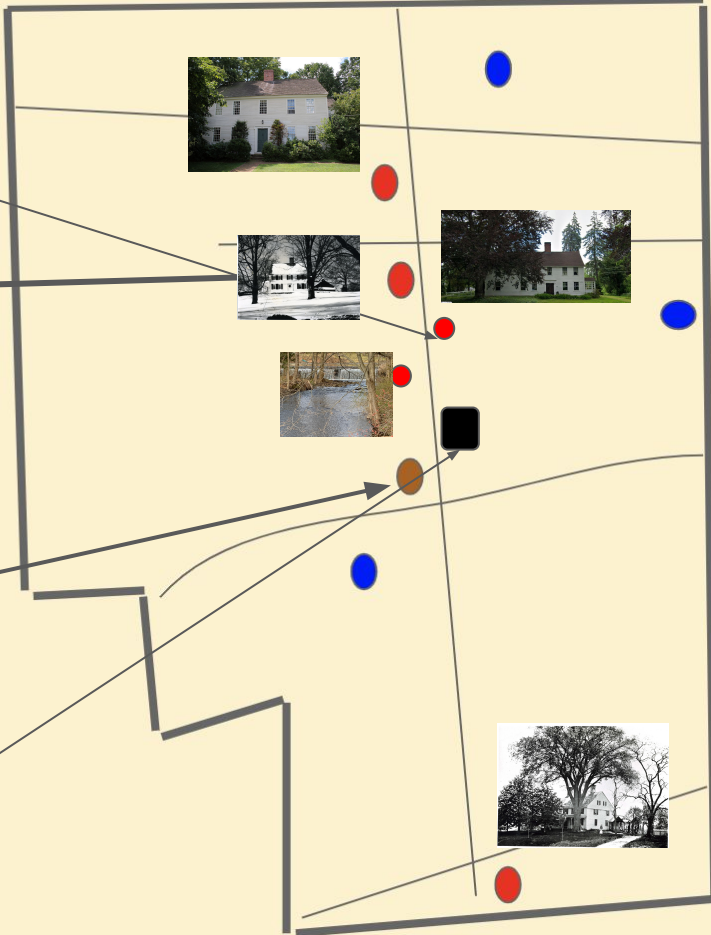


John Whitman

Hosmer House

Meeting House

Cemetery



## John Whitman's Account Book 1740

Hartford August 29<sup>th</sup> 1740 Received of John Horner a  
negro named Ned a Boy of nine y<sup>rs</sup> old w. 115 0 0  
y<sup>rs</sup>  
Received of R. J. [unclear] for an [unclear] or the [unclear] 1 3 0

What questions do you have after seeing this document?

How does this document help you to understand freedom in the 1740's?





## Whitman Household

208 North Main Street  
West Hartford



31916

# People enslaved by the Hosmer family

| 1700   | 1710   | 1720   | 1730   | 1740 | 1750 | 1760   | 1770 | 1780 | 1790 | 1800 |
|--|--|--|--|------|------|--|------|------|------|------|
|  |  |  | Bristow: 1731-1814, bought freedom in 1775 (Thomas Hart Hooker)        |      |      |  |      |      |      |      |
|  |  |  | Ned 1731- ? John Hosmer - John Whitman                                 |      |      |  |      |      |      |      |
| negro man 1693 Deacon Stephen Hosmer, Capt Thomas    |  |  |  |      |      |  |      |      |      |      |
| negro woman 1693 Deacon Stephen Hosmer, Capt. Thomas |  |  |  |      |      |  |      |      |      |      |
|  | Negro Boy c.1703 Capt. Thomas Hosmer                         |  |  |      |      |  |      |      |      |      |
|  | Simone c. 1695 Capt. Thomas Hosmer                           |  |  |      |      |  |      |      |      |      |
|  | York c. 1700- c. 1753, Capt. Thomas Hosmer, Stephen Hosmer 3 |  |  |      |      |  |      |      |      |      |
|  |  | Lew c. 1720 bp 1754 Stephen Hosmer 3 George Hosmer |  |      |      |  |      |      |      |      |
|  |  | Kate c. 1720-?, Stephen Hosmer 3 George Hosmer     |  |      |      |  |      |      |      |      |
|  |  |  |  |      |      | Caesar 2 child of Lew and Kate bp 1763 George Hosmer |      |      |      |      |
|  |  |  | Negro Woman 1732 will Thomas Hosmer                                    |      |      |  |      |      |      |      |
|  |  |  | Hercules: 1729-1761 Capt. Thomas Hosmer 2, Thomas Hosmer, Es           |      |      |  |      |      |      |      |
|  |  |  | Hannibal: ?-1780. Bap 1738 Capt. Thomas Hosmer 2, Thomas Hosmer, Esq 3 |      |      |  |      |      |      |      |
|  |  |  | Caesar 1 d. 1753 Cpt. T. Hosmer/Anne Prentiss                          |      |      |  |      |      |      |      |





# Hosmer Family Tree

Thomas Hosmer 1 (Kent, England) m. Frances Bushnell (c. 1641)  
1603 - 1687 1602 - 1675

## Children of Thomas Hosmer 1

|   |  |  |  |             |
|---|--|--|--|-------------|
| Clemence Hosmer (1642-?)<br>m. (1) Jonathan Hunt (2) John | <b>*Deacon Stephen Hosmer 1</b><br>1645-1693 m. Hannah Bushnell 1645-1689<br><b>Enslaved negro man and woman</b> | Hester Hosmer - m.<br>Rev. Thomas Buckingham | Hannah Hosmer - m.<br>(1) Josiah Willard (2)<br>William Maltby | Mary Hosmer |
|---|--|--|--|-------------|

## Children of Stephen Hosmer 1

|   |  |  |   |  |   |
|---|--|--|---|--|---|
| Hannah Post (b. 1670) m.<br>Stephen Post<br><br>1671-1684 | Dorothy (b. 1673)<br>m. Joseph Skinner | <b>* Capt Thomas Hosmer 2</b><br><b>1675-1732</b><br><b>m. (1700) Anne Prentiss</b><br><b>1679-1753</b><br><b>Enslaved : Hannibal,</b><br><b>negro boy (1703),</b><br><b>Caesar, Hercules, York</b><br><b>and Simone</b> | Stephen Hosmer 2<br>(b. 1676)<br>m. Sarah Long 1702<br>1680-1749<br>(East Haddam) | <b>Hester</b><br><b>(Stephen's twin)</b><br><b>b. 1676</b><br><br>Mary Hosmer b.<br>1684 | And Esther,<br>Sarah,<br>Deborah 1686<br><br>Clemence, 1690 |
|---|--|--|---|--|---|

## Children of Captain Thomas Hosmer 2

|   |        |   |   |                     |     |
|---|--------|---|---|---------------------|-----|
| <b>Thomas Hosmer 3, Esq.</b><br><b>1701-1777</b><br><b>m. 1734 Susanna Steele</b><br><b>Hercules and Hannibal</b> | Joseph | <b>*Stephen Hosmer 3</b><br><b>1703-1758</b><br><b>m. Deliverance Graves</b><br><b>1730</b><br><b>1713-1761</b><br><b>Lew, Kate, York</b> | <b>John Hosmer</b><br><b>1712 - 1759</b><br><b>Enslaved Ned 1740</b><br>(Daughter Anne m.<br>George Hosmer )<br>Son Stephen 1750? | <b>Sarah d.1755</b> | Ann |
|---|--------|---|---|---------------------|-----|

## Children of Stephen Hosmer 3 (17)

|  |   |   |  |   |   |
|--|---|---|--|---|---|
| Sarah 1731-1760<br>Stephen 1733-1758<br>Marianne 1734-1758<br>Miriam 1735-1758 | <b>Titus 1736-1780 m.</b><br>1761 Lydia Lord<br><b>1736-1798</b><br>1777 Speaker of<br>the House; Signed<br>Articles of<br>Confederation<br><b>Enslaved negro</b><br><b>man and woman</b> | <b>*George(1739-) m. Anne</b><br><b>Hosmer (1743- ?)</b><br>Enslaved Lew and<br><b>Caesar (son of Lew and</b><br><b>Kate)</b> | Anna 1740-1780<br>Deliverance<br>1743-1745 | <b>Dr. Timothy Hosmer</b><br><b>1745-1815</b><br>Surgeon Rev War<br>Camp (Albany<br>Avenue by the<br>reservoir) | Esther 1747<br>John 1748-1780<br>Prentiss<br>1751-1787<br>Mary 1754<br>Graves 1756-1838 |
|--|---|---|--|---|---|

Thomas Hosmer 1 (Kent, England) 1603 - 1687 m. Frances Bushnell (c. 1641)  
1602 - 1675

\*Deacon Stephen Hosmer 1 1645-1693 m. Hannah Bushnell 1645-1689  
Enslaved negro man and woman

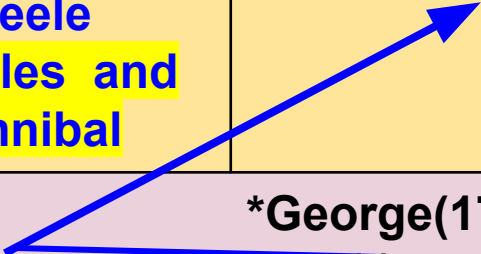
\* Capt Thomas Hosmer 2 1675-1732 m. (1700) Anne Prentis 1679-1753  
Enslaved : Hannibal, negro boy (1703),  
Caesar, Hercules, York and Simone

Thomas Hosmer  
3, Esq.  
1701-1777  
m. 1734 Susanna  
Steele  
Hercules and  
Hannibal

\*Stephen Hosmer 3 1703-1758  
m. Deliverance Graves 1730  
1713-1761  
Lew, Kate, York

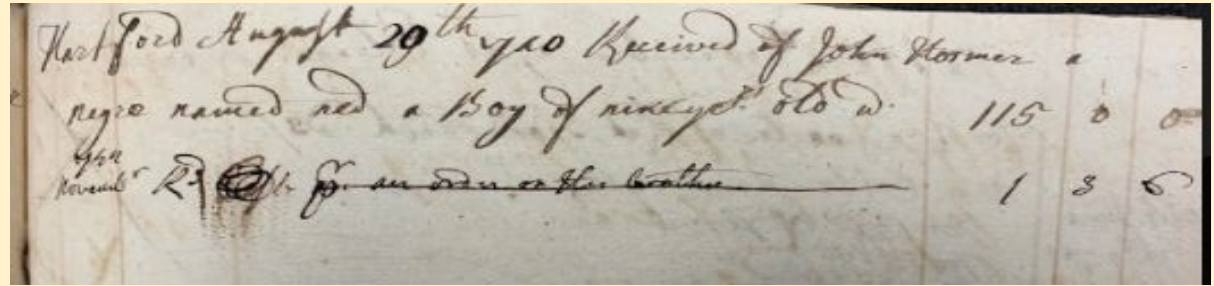
John Hosmer  
1712 - 1759  
Enslaved Ned 1731  
(Daughter Anne m. George  
Hosmer )  
Son Stephen 1750?

\*George(1739-) m. Anne Hosmer (1743- ?)  
Enslaved Lew and Caesar (son of Lew and Kate)





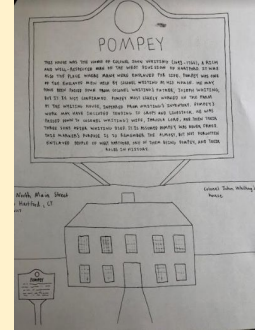
# Slavery as a power relationship based on ..



- dehumanization
- profitable to slaveholder
- **concept of racial inferiority**
- **physical violence and psychological violence**
- **resistance and agency, both physical and psychological**

# How our public history project will help us remember and shift our gaze.

1. Design a public history marker
2. Write a newspaper opinion piece
3. Write a narrative history
4. Write a poem
5. Help organize and publicize installation ceremony 2020
6. Write a history of the enslaved person for 5th graders
7. Write a driving tour of the Witness Stones houses
8. Other ideas .....



written, visual, artistic



## **The Untold Slave**

### **Refrain**

**And I want to show your story  
Cause you are part of our history  
too  
And I want to know your story  
Cause you must be heard too**

**An original song - performed by Kayla Resniski (KP student)**

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/18Z4XRyH5KwFhhmRVqxroKvcx8Z2r98l2/view>



# Etching Prut's name in the War Memorial

## May 23, 2019



PATRICK RAYCRAFT/HARTFORD COURANT

Marc Boucher engraves "Prut" into the granite Revolutionary War Monument on Thursday in West Hartford. Prut was a slave who served during the Revolutionary War and died at Fort Ticonderoga.

## PRESTIGE FOR 'PRUT'

West Hartford slave, Revolutionary War soldier honored on local war memorial

By PETER MARTEKA

WEST HARTFORD — As Marc Boucher carved the simple four-letter name into the Revolutionary War memorial in the West Hartford Town Center on Thursday morning, pieces of granite flew into the air. In a matter of seconds, a man simply known as "Prut" was added to a list of 26 West Hartford men who died during the war.

But this was no ordinary man. Prut was a slave owned by John Whit-

man, Jr., a North Main Street farmer who had an apple orchard along with cider and grist mills. After researching the town's history, fifth-grade students from the Renbrook School asked the town council to add Prut's name to the memorial alongside three other men — John Cowle, Cornelius Flowers and John Steele Jr. — who also died during the Battle of Fort Ticonderoga.

Prut is believed to be the first African American to be honored on the local war memorial.

The students, who spoke before the council last week, said "we are better people now" and "we can grow and learn from our past mistakes."

"It was so powerful to hear the students teach us about our own history," Mayor Shari Cantor said Thursday.

The fifth-graders worked with officials at the Witness Stones Project, which seeks to "restore the history and to honor the

Turn to Prut, Page B2

## Prut

Continued from Page B1

humanity and contributions of the enslaved individuals who helped build our communities."

"Their goal was to have the students research Prut with the goal of adding his name to the memorial," said Betsy Flynn, lower school learning specialist at Renbrook. "They made a case for why we should honor Prut in this way. ... The students were able to learn history through primary sources and that's the best way to learn history."

"Learning that people are complex and history is complex and you need to look at history with a critical eye,"

she added. "They were struck by the fact that these enslaved individuals didn't always have a last name ... yet this man went to Fort Ticonderoga and died there."

No one really knows how Prut died. Only two of the 26 men on the town's memorial died in battle. Some died from fever or other causes. Slave owners were allowed to send men like Prut to war to serve in their place. Church records only indicate that Prut died on Sept. 9, 1776, at the fort. Whitman ended up serving a year later.

"There are people in this town who had no idea we had enslaved people and slaveholders in this town," Flynn said. "People think of the north as anti-slavery

and the south as not. And they learned that's not the case ... it's hard history. This is a hard lesson. But it is something they will remember forever. They will remember this over reading a chapter in a book."

Fifth grade students from Renbrook and Town Historian Tracey Wilson will speak at the Memorial Day ceremony Monday and recognize Prut's contribution. The Witness Stones Project's West Hartford effort is co-directed by Wilson and Elizabeth Devine and managed by the Noah Webster House & West Hartford Historical Society.

Jennifer Matos, executive director of the Noah Webster House & West Hartford Historical Society, said the goal of the project is

to "bear witness to their lives in West Hartford." A stone in the nearby Old Center Cemetery honors "Bristol, a native of Africa," along with brass markers nearby honoring "Jude farmer enslaved here by Stephen Sedgwick" and "George farmer enslaved here by Timothy Goodman."

"It's kind of this empty piece of history we are trying to fill," Matos said of the more than 60 enslaved people they have discovered that lived in town. "Most slave stories they don't really have a voice or agency. This is a way to give them a voice and agency."

Peter Marteka can be reached at [pmarteka@courant.com](mailto:pmarteka@courant.com).

# Down the Road

## By Kaitlyn Czajkowski

— In the chill of the fall you stand in the cool breeze while picking apples  
Mindlessly repeating the motions, like in Church, where you move faithlessly while praying to a  
god you don't believe in, with a room filled with those who enslave you.

Suddenly, you are taken out of the daze by a sharp call from Captain Hosmer.

'Come here, boy!'

Reduced to your gender and the amount of melanin in your skin

And if you decided to run away, reduced to the amount of money you're worth  
Only people who dream of a better world think: Can a soul be converted to currency?

There's a seemingly endless amount of land to manage.

Hundreds of acres filled with other mindless slaves who share the same thoughts of love, freedom and escape until they are  
also taken back to reality by an oppressor.

Whether it be John Whitman, Stephen Sedgwick or John Whiting,

**An oppressor has always been right down the road.**

# Next Steps : [Witness Stones Community page](#)

westhartfordwitnessstones Home **Community Project** The Context ▾ Enslaved ▾ Research ▾ Teacher Resources ▾ Artistic Representation More ▾ 🔍

## Community Project 2020

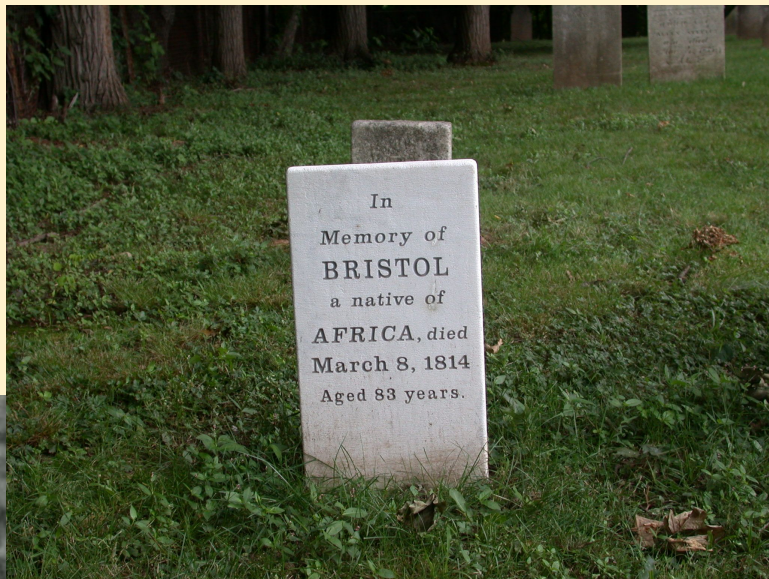
### How can we remember slavery and freedom in West Hartford?

- How did enslaved people retain their **humanity** and **resist** slavery?
- How did slaveholders **dehumanize** the people they enslaved?
- How did slaveholders **profit** from the people they enslaved?

What role did government/business/church play in **maintaining** and **dismantling** slavery?

We will email you a link after today's session with links with what we would like you to do .





## 2003-4 Old Center Cemetery



Thomas Hart and Sarah  
Whitman Hooker  
Historical Home



1237 New Britain  
Avenue  
West Hartford



**303 Thomas Hart Hooker** (Roger,<sup>4</sup> John,<sup>3</sup> Samuel,<sup>2</sup> Thomas<sup>1</sup>), son of Roger and Mercy (Hart) Hooker, of Farmington, Conn., b. Sept. 3, 1745, at Farmington; m. Feb. 1, 1769, Sarah Whitman, daughter of Deacon John and Abigail (Pantry) Whitman, of West Hartford, Conn., b. Feb. 27, 1747, baptized Mar. 1, 1747, at West Hartford. Sarah Whitman was a grand-daughter of Rev. Samuel Whitman, who succeeded Rev. Samuel Hooker as minister at Farmington. Rev. Samuel Whitman's mother, Anna Alcock, was a grand-daughter of Rev. Thomas Hooker's sister.

Mr. Hooker enlisted as a private soldier in the army at the first call in 1775, and before going to the seat of war he gave freedom to his negro servants, saying that he would not own property in a human being while he, himself, was fighting for freedom. He died in the army Nov. 26, 1775, and was buried among the other soldier dead at Roxbury, but the grave not being marked, his place of burial could not be identified when search was made for it at a later day, his body therefore remains with those of his compatriots who gave their lives for freedom's cause at the siege of Boston, and today the ashes



of those patriot dead rests peacefully beneath the wild turmoil of Boston's streets. After some years his widow married, Apr. 8, 1779, Capt. Seth Collins, son of Robert Collins, of West Hartford, Conn., b. Nov. 27, 1742, at West Hartford. (She was Capt. Collins second wife). She d. at West Hartford, Conn., June 5, 1837.

**CHILDREN, HOOKER.**

\*687 Abigail Pantry, b. Farmington, Conn., Jan. 23, 1770.

\*688 Thomas Hart, b. Farmington, Conn., Mar. 3, 1772.

Know all men by these presents that I Thomas Hart Hooker  
of Hartford in the County of Hartford for the Consideration  
of Sixty Pounds money Rec'd to my full satisfaction  
Do by these presents fully freely and absolutely Release  
Manumit and set at full Liberty a Certain Negro man  
Named Britton from my heirs & assigns forever  
and I Do Grant to him said Britton his full Liberty and  
Freedom You understand my Intention that he may go & Come  
when & where he pleases without any Hindrance or  
molestation from me or any one Claiming from by or  
under me In Witness whereof I have hereunto set  
my hand Seal the 9th day of May Anno Dom 1775  
in the 16th year of his Majesty's Reign  
Signed Seald & Deli'v  
In presence of  
Salomon Whitman  
Mary Root  
Thomas Hart Hooker

In the manuscript collection at the Connecticut Historical Society, approximately 18 cm in length and of paper yellowed with age:

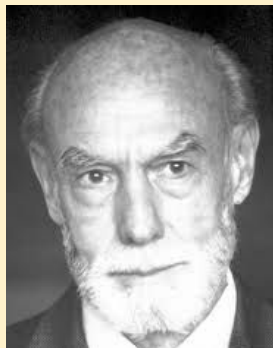
Know all men by these presents that I Thomas Hart Hooker of Hartford in the County of Hartford for the Consideration of Sixty Pounds money Rec'd to my full satisfaction—do by these presents fully freely and absolutely release manumit and set at full Liberty a Certain Negro man Named Britton from my heirs and assigns forever and I Do Grant to him said Britton his full Liberty and Freedom from me and my Service that he may go and come when and wherever he pleases without any Hindrance or molestation from me or any one claiming from by or under me. In Witnejs whereof I have hereunto set my hand seal the 9th day of May Anno Dom 1775 in the 16th year of his Majesty's Reign.

Signed, Seald & Deli'v  
In presence of  
Salomon Whitman  
Mary Root  
Thomas Hart Hooker



# BRISTOL MIDDLE SCHOOL

2005





# Shifting the Gaze



Teddy Roosevelt Equestrian Statue



[The Making of the Monument](#)

# Benefits of Inheritance - article

<https://www.africannativeburialsct.org/profile/the-benefits-of-inheritance-the-lord-family/>

Richard Lord is Jerusha Lord Whiting's father. She married Col. John Whiting in 1720 and lived in the West Division.

## The Benefits of Inheritance: The Lord Family

By Allison Golomb and Katherine Hermes



Richard Lord 1662  
inventory with enslaved  
children

The Lords were one of the original English families to settle in Hartford. The original Richard Lord, who died in 1662, was one of the wealthiest men in the colony, leaving goods and chattel, including human beings, worth over £1500. By the third generation, Richard Lord III (1669-1711) and his wife, Abigail Warren, had amassed an even greater fortune. Together they had ten children (Abigail, Richard, Abigail, Jerusha, Elisha, Mary, Richard, Elizabeth, Epaphras, and Ichabod), although only seven lived to adulthood. Richard III, a merchant, inherited part of a plantation in Antigua from his father Captain Richard Lord, who died at sea in 1685. Lord's dealings in plantation slavery in Antigua were far from solitary. Families in every major town in

Connecticut engaged in the trade in various capacities, profiting from sugar plantations in Barbados, Antigua and the Leeward Islands.[1]

