VERMONT HISTORY

"For colored people [they] had a great many friends"[1]: The Phillips-Lynde Family of Windham, Connecticut, and Brookfield, Vermont

Recent scholarship has uncovered the lives of black soldiers, farmers, landowners, voters, and taxpayers who were as much a part of the early history of this country and this state as the founders. John and Judith Lynde are not unique, and similar stories are waiting to be remembered.

By Susan Nevins

African and Native American Judith Phillips and her husband, African American John Lynde,[2] began their life together while he was a soldier in the Revolutionary War. In 1793 they headed north to Vermont, leaving their family, their home, and the community they had known in Connecticut. Who were these people and how did they navigate turn-of-the-nineteenth-century New England as African Americans?

Mainstream history has largely ignored the everyday lives and contributions of Africans and African Americans to colonial and post-Revolu-

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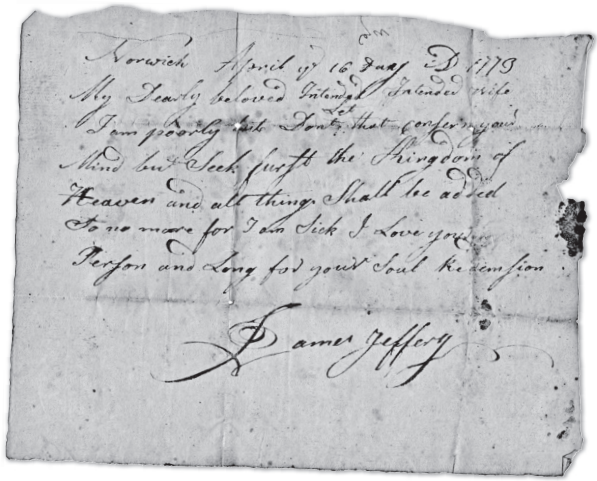
tionary America. The July 4th narrative that we have been told is one of privileged white men, an "assembly of demi-gods," as Thomas Jefferson called his group, [3] who overthrew an oppressive colonial power and succeeded in creating a new country with rules put forth in an original and historic document. This tells only part of the story, and when the Africans and African Americans have been included, their narrative has been mostly a one-dimensional account highlighting a few unique individuals among a faceless population of plantation slaves. The complex chapter of African American participation in the dawning days of this nation has been missing, but not because it does not exist. Many of these stories have survived and are waiting to be retold, and can been pieced together by tapping into local, state, and national government records, and colonial black history. In some cases, first-person narratives by African Americans have been preserved over hundreds of years in these government documents, and they add an important voice to our history.

Stories of a few free black Vermonters have been recovered through the more recent work of determined scholars. Some of these records indicate a conflicted existence in Vermont for African Americans, whose lives as farmers and laborers were complicated by racism. Abijah Prince and Lucy Terry Prince were born in Africa and lived for years as slaves in northern Massachusetts. As free people they bought land in Guilford, Vermont, but quickly became the victims of a neighbor who physically attacked the family and destroyed their crops on multiple occasions, threatening their ability to survive. In June 1785, Lucy Prince took their case to Governor Chittenden and the executive council to petition the state for protection. The council ruled in the Princes' favor and ordered the Guilford selectmen to resolve the conflict and see to the safety of the family. Months after this, the family was attacked yet again by hired thugs who were subsequently arrested, prosecuted, and found guilty by the state. This finally put an end to the harassment. Prince scholar Gretchen Holbrook Gerzina notes that the racist neighbor and his hired men did not reflect the community where Mr. and Mrs. Prince lived and that they were generally accepted as citizens of the town.[4] Jeffrey Brace, a Revolutionary War veteran from Connecticut, faced a similar situation after he moved with his family to Poultney, Vermont. His story was written down in 1810 and forgotten until 1997, when an old copy was found at the University of Vermont.[5] Nearby, in Addison County, Charlotte, and Hinesburgh, town records from 1790 to 1860 hold the history of a community of black farmers and laborers who lived for generations in this area.[6] Similarly, additional research on the Lincoln Hill area of Hinesburgh, where two African American families lived and farmed, has added to the growing body of early black history that has been retold and preserved. [7]

The story of John Lynde and Judith Phillips provides another valuable voice to Vermont and New England history, and it is vividly told through documents that have been archived over the past two centuries. The family's search for home in a post- Revolutionary War America led them from the place and reality they knew to another that offered different, and hopefully better, opportunities. Their moving story is representative of the narrative of many African American families whose history waits to be rediscovered and shared with a nation in need of an honest and inclusive review of its history.

Judith Phillips was born on January 14, 1756, in Windham, Connecticut, to Mary and Samuell Phillips. While official birth records that would have listed race have not been found, later documents refer to Judith as "mulatto," and reference Native American heritage.[8] Judith was raised with at least four siblings: Mary (1754), Samuell (1758), Martha (1761), and Silence (1764).[9] Judith attended school with neighborhood children, including a white student who would write an affidavit in support of her friend some sixty years later.[10]


Norwich April ye 16 Day D 1773
My Dearly beloved Intended Salander wife
I am poorly late Don't let that consume your
Mind but Seek furst the Kingdom of
Heaven and all things Shall be added
So no more for I am Sick I Love your
Person and Long for your Soul Redemption
James Jeffery

Letter from James Jeffery (also known by the surname "Jeffords") to his fiancée Judith Phillips, from Norwich, CT, on April 16, 1773. (Courtesy of the National Archives and Records Administration)

In April 1773, as a young woman of seventeen, Judith married a "colored" man[11] named James Jeffrey, whom Judith many years later remembered as James Jeffords.[12] Shortly before their marriage, James sent his fiancé a letter:

> Norwich, April of 16th day AD 1773. My dearly beloved intended wife I am poorly late. Don't let that consume your Mind. But Seek furst the kingdom of Heaven and all things shall be added. So no more for I am sick. I love your Person and long for your Soul Redemption. James Jeffrey

Judith and James were married for three years and eleven months, during which time she gave birth to two children. According to Judith, James died around March 1777, after which she gave birth to their third child.[13] Subsequently, Judith returned to live with her parents, and remained a widow for more than four years.

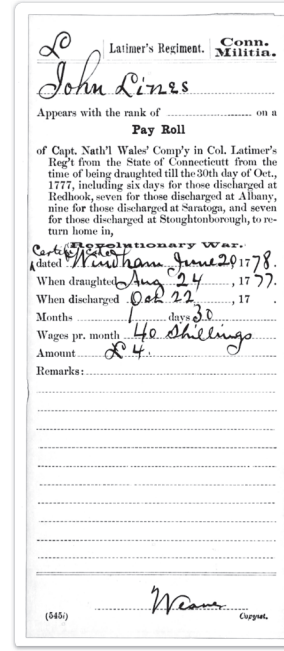
John Lynde was born in 1754, probably in Connecticut. Though little else is known of his life before the Revolutionary War, evidence from this period suggests he was a free man. While many enslaved African Americans joined the fight (on both sides) either in exchange for their freedom, as substitutes for white men, or as runaways, there were also free black men who enlisted. Although muster and payrolls do not list race, black Revolutionary War soldiers can often be distinguished by particular surnames like "Negro," "Freedom," or "Liberty," along with first names that were exclusively given to or used by African American men including Prince, Pomp, Cato, Cuff, and Cudjo. Historian Richard Bailey noted that whites chose names for their slaves that reflected childishness or inferiority, such as diminutives and animal names, as well as using classical or mythological nomenclature, such as Jupiter and Caesar, which may have reflected the owner's education or might have just been "a cosmic joke."[14] In some situations, these individuals were recently manumitted and would later adopt a permanent last name, often that of someone whom they respected.[15] John was literate and talked of both of his parents and multiple siblings in a letter to his wife, suggesting a closely knit nuclear family that was uncharacteristic for the time.[16]

During this period, the white record keeper decided to note race or transcribe a name as he saw fit. That John's race was not referenced in his recorded land transactions in Windham, Connecticut, shortly after the war suggests a higher status in the community, perhaps that of a free man. In other records from Windham, race was noted in transactions involving land purchases by former slaves.[17] Similarly, Abijah Prince, who was freed after many years of enslavement in his Massachusetts community, had to insist that people use his legal surname "Prince." Depending on the record keeper, Abijah was listed with the generic surname "Negro" or "Freeman," reflecting and reinforcing the memory of him as a slave and overruling his personal autonomy.[18]

Revolutionary War Service

The earliest detailed records show that John enlisted in the state militia in the fall of 1777 at Windham, Connecticut. From August 24 to October 22, 1777, John was among the Connecticut forces that participated

in the Battle of Saratoga, in Captain Nathanial Wales's company of Colonel Jonathan Latimer's regiment. John served with thirty-two men from Windham and others from the nearby towns of Mansfield and Coventry. Among the men from Windham was Samuel Phillips, Judith's brother. The company remained at Saratoga until the end of the battle, and John's term of enlistment was recorded as one month and thirty days, for which he was paid forty shillings per month.[19] After his discharge, John returned on foot to Windham, where upon arrival he was compensated fifteen shillings, at one penny a mile for the 180 miles he traveled.[20]



Latimer's Regiment. Conn. Militia.

John Lines

Appears with the rank of ..... on a

Pay Roll

of Capt. Nath'l Wales' Comp'y in Col. Latimer's Reg't from the State of Connecticutt from the time of being draughted till the 30th day of Oct., 1777, including six days for those discharged at Redhook, seven for those discharged at Albany, nine for those discharged at Saratoga, and seven for those discharged at Stoughtonborough, to return home in,

Certificate dated Revolutionary War. Windham June 20 1778.

When draughted Aug 24, 17 77.

When discharged Oct 22, 17 .

Months 1 days 30

Wages pr. month 40 Shillings

Amount £4.

Remarks:

(5455) Clerk.

A mileage payroll slip given to John Lines after the Battle of Saratoga in 1777. (Courtesy of the National Archives and Records Administration, digital image Fold3.com)

Based on the names found on pay and muster rolls, it appears that John and Samuel may have been the only men of color in Captain Wales's company.[21] Serving as one of the few black men in this company would have been complicated, although evidence suggests that Connecticut had many integrated units.[22] The men from Windham would have known Samuel Phillips, as his father was a property owner there, and they may have known John, as well, since he enlisted at Windham and may have had family there. Still, slavery was a part of New England life, and among colonial government and military leaders such as John Adams and General Phillip Schuyler, blacks were seen as "unsuitable for service" and a "disgrace."[23] This attitude would have been shared by at least some of the white soldiers. Ironically, two years into the war white men demonstrated waning interest in joining the fight, and both free and enslaved African Americans were actively recruited in spite of their perceived inferiority.

Shortly after his discharge, John enlisted in Captain Elijah Humphreys's Connecticut Regiment of Foot, which was an integrated unit with more African American soldiers than other companies. He served with African Americans such as Cuff Liberty, Peter Freeman, Benjamin Black, and Nero Cross, who like John, would later make his home in

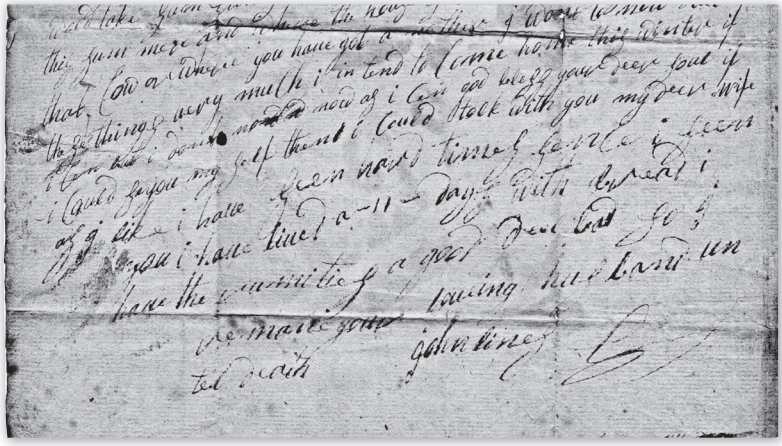
Brookfield, Vermont. For much of 1778 and most of 1779, John continued in Captain Humphreys's company, with additional numbers of African Americans serving alongside him.[24]

Whether or not John had ever been enslaved, he certainly would have served in the Revolution with many men who had been slaves. John would have met Pomp Edore in 1779, when they fought in Captain Elisha Ely's company of the 6th battalion of the Connecticut forces. Pomp had been enslaved but was freed so he could go to war. He remained in the military for most of the war, but ended up in the Invalid Corps for his last two years of service. He died shortly after being discharged.[25] Jack Arabas was a fellow soldier in this company in 1779. He served in various units for most of the war, having been enlisted by his Stratford, Connecticut, owner, Thomas Ivers. At the end of the war, Ivers sought to reenslave Arabas, and the veteran was arrested after fleeing this fate. Arabas then took Ivers to court to argue that he had earned his freedom with his years in the war, and the court agreed.[26] Lebbeus Quy of Norwich, Connecticut, served with John in the 2nd company, First Connecticut regiment commanded by Colonel Zebulon Butler in 1782 and 1783. Lebbeus was given his freedom in 1777 by Daniel Brewster in exchange for going to war.[27] Backus Fox, who also served with John under Colonel Butler, was an enslaved man who was hired by two white men to take their place in the military.[28] In the years that John Lynde spent living and fighting alongside these men, he would have heard many stories about their lives and the treatment they had received as property of other men. Some of these individuals may have spent time in the harsh conditions of the Caribbean plantation or beside their owners during various wars and travels. John may have served with fellow Connecticut and Vermont citizen Jeffrey Brace, whose life as a slave owned by many men took him from the Caribbean to England to a tour at sea before his time as a colonial soldier.[29]

During breaks between his enlistments in the Revolutionary War, John probably spent time courting Judith Phillips Jeffords, who was widowed in 1777. If he did not already know her, his fellow soldier in the Battle of Saratoga, Samuel Phillips, may have introduced John to his sister. In July of 1781, Judith Phillips Jeffords married John Lynde, in front of Esq. John Watrous in Colchester, Connecticut.[30] Shortly after, John went back to war and wrote letters home, one of which has survived and provides significant information about their lives.

John was very ill, possibly suffering from dysentery, when he wrote the one-page letter from Continental Army camp at Peekskill, New York, dated November 11, 1781, to "Mrs. John Lines of Colchester." His correspondence was both an update on his life and a love letter. He

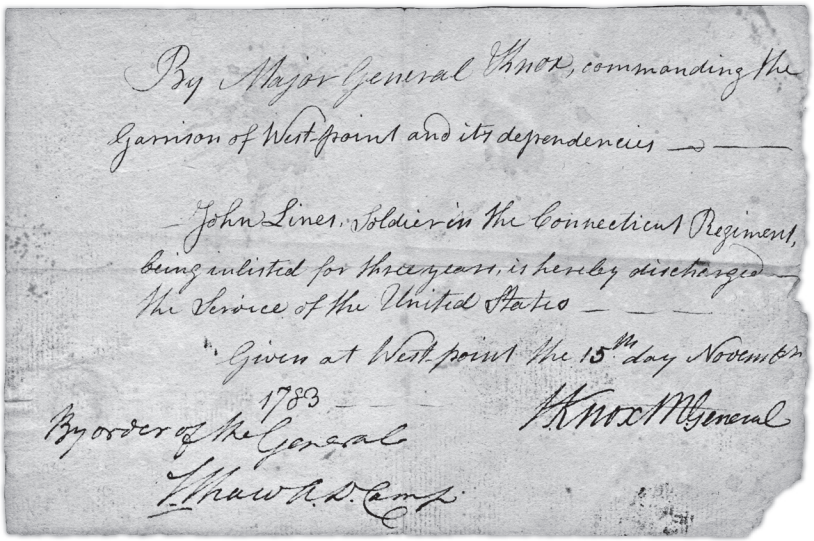
wrote about his family, including information that shows he had not seen them in several years. John shared the news that his mother and a brother had died three and two years before, respectively, but also told Judith about seeing his sisters and his brothers who were still living, and sent her their "kind complyments." He informed Judith that his father had plans to visit her in the fall. John also mentioned that he had seen Reuben Phillips, possibly an uncle of Judith's,[31] and his wife. John inquired about things at home, asking Judith about the children, which would have been hers from the marriage to James Jeffords. "Send me a letter how you have lived this summer," he wrote, "and where the house is dun and where you keep that cow or where you have got a nother I want to now all these things very much I intend to come home this winter if I can I don't know now as I can." And he lamented the fact that he had not heard from her. "[I] hasn't had one letter since I leave from home and this is the fif letter I sent." His life-threatening illness and the distance between them were taking their toll, and it showed in his letter. "If I could see you myself then I could talk to you my deer wife as I like. I have seen hard times since I seen you." He closed his letter, "I Remain your loving husband un til death. John Lines."[32]



John's letter to his wife Judith from camp at Peekskill, NY, November 1781. (Courtesy of the National Archives and Records Administration)

Perhaps John's desperate situation and passionate letters struck an emotional chord with Judith, as she later joined her husband in camp. According to Judith, the summer after they were married, "he sent for me to come to him. I think the place was called the Highlands at that time my said husband was a waiter for Col. Sherman & while at the

camp I had the small Pox. I think I stayed about 3 or 4 months."[33] She would have been like other wives who followed the troops, serving as a nurse, laundress, or cook, and perhaps even getting compensated for her work.[34] The story that was remembered was of Judith contracting smallpox while in camp, and years after the war, this became one of the anecdotes that was told about the couple.[35] This often fatal and frequently disfiguring disease had instilled fear in Americans from the first years of the colonies,[36] and Judith would have earned respect in the community as a woman who had served the new country alongside her husband and risked death to do so.[37]


By Major General Knox, commanding the
Garrison of West point and its dependencies —

John Lines, Soldier in the Connecticut Regiment,
being inlisted for three years, is hereby discharged
the Service of the United States —

Given at West point the 15th day November
1783 —

By order of the General
L. Shaw A. D. Camp.

H. Knox M. General

John Lines discharge at Westpoint, NY, from the Connecticut Regiment on November 15, 1783. (Courtesy of the National Archives and Records Administration)

Private John Lynde remained in the army until he was discharged at West Point, New York, on November 15, 1783. He served in the Revolutionary War for at least five years, although his final discharge paper states that he was in the service of the Continental Army for three years.[38] John spent most of the time between 1777 and 1783 in various companies of the Connecticut Militia and the Continental Army, seeing combat, death, disease, and destruction. He did not leave behind a narrative of his experiences other than the letter to Judith that has survived over 200 years, but the impact of his war years on his beliefs and later decisions would have been significant.

After the war, John returned to Windham, Connecticut, where he and Judith joined her family. By February 1786, John had put aside twenty pounds for the purchase of twenty acres of land from Judith's father.[39] Four years later, in 1790, the first federal census counted John "Lynes" and his household of five "other free people," which would have included Judith, their children Susanna and Ebenezer, and possibly two of Judith's children from her first marriage. Her parents, Samuel and Mary Phillips, lived next to them, and adjacent to the Phillipses was a non-white family of eight headed by Edward Gauson. The community in which the Lynde and Phillips families lived was multiracial, with thirty-five individuals in eight non-white families being counted as "All other Free Persons," twenty-five white families, and no slaves.[40]

However, between 1786 and 1793 something changed for the Lynde family that caused them to rethink home. In February 1793, John Lynde sold most of his Windham land—seventeen acres and sixty-five rods—to John Flint for twenty pounds.[41] The following September John Lynde purchased forty-four acres of land in Brookfield, Vermont, for forty pounds, from Asa Huntington of Roxbury, Vermont.[42] Shortly thereafter, John and Judith left their home and Judith's family in Windham, Connecticut, for the fourteenth state to the north where they would start another life. This new beginning would be no small task, as the forty-four Vermont acres would need to be readied for living and farming, and made fit to support a family with four young children.[43] The fact that they were also African American would always be an additional factor in their struggle. Historian Edward Countryman notes that during this period, blacks "knew that they were excluded, surrounded, outnumbered and if it came to it, outgunned."[44]

Why did their search for home take the Lyndes to a sparsely populated town in rural Vermont? Many blacks migrated to cities in search of employment opportunities after the war, and found comfort and support in African American communities where churches and other institutions were developing. Others went in search of cheap land in more rural areas, which took them away from black population centers. Many black veterans moved to islands off the mainland or to less populated pockets in New Hampshire and Vermont, hoping that "the local whites might be less prejudiced or at least leave them alone."[45] The consequence of this choice was that African Americans living in rural New England often had little contact with other members of their race.[46] In rural Vermont, the black community did not increase sufficiently to provide enough partners for marriage, and some individuals looked outside their towns for spouses of their own race.[47] Others married white

partners, and although interracial marriage was not illegal in Vermont as it was in other states, it was still socially taboo among much of society, and would not have gone unnoticed.[48] Nonetheless, Vermont's black children attended local schools with neighboring white children, and, Jane Williamson observes, "perhaps some of the interracial marriages . . . had their beginnings in these integrated classrooms."[49] The many shared moments among black and white children in the one-room schoolhouse would have helped some of the next generation of white citizens see their African American neighbors as fellow Vermonters.

While small multifamily communities sprang up in some parts of Vermont, the Brookfield African American community seems to have included only the Lynde and Cross families. Nero Cross, another African American veteran from Connecticut, started out with his family in Thetford, Vermont, and then moved to Brookfield around 1813, where in November he and his family became among the many people who were warned out between 1787 and 1817.[50] By September 6, 1814, he was back in the town's good graces and took the Freeman's Oath.[51] During the Revolution, Nero served in the battles of Long Island, Provincetown, and Valley Forge,[52] as well as with John Lynde in Captain Humphreys's company, and probably knew white veterans who had settled in Brookfield. Other African Americans lived in neighboring towns like Braintree, Chelsea, and Thetford, and perhaps this extended group functioned as the black community for this area. Without such connections, it would have been a challenge to be an African American family and be unable to look to others with a shared history and reality for moral and spiritual support. As with black Vermonters in other towns, two of John and Judith's children found partners from outside their community and settled with them in Brookfield. Most of the third generation of Lyndes moved to larger towns in New York, and following the trend of the mid-1800s, eventually to the western territories.

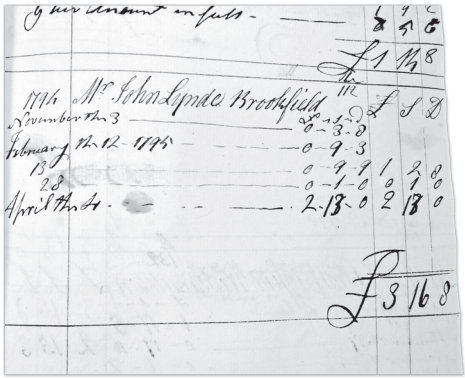
Regardless of their reasons for moving north, for John and Judith in 1793, leaving an area that offered them the security of family, friends, and other African Americans, as well as an established farmstead, would have been risky. But post-Revolution Connecticut was struggling with economic and social instability, with more free African Americans vying for jobs and racism on the rise. Andrew Harris, an African American abolitionist and minister, spoke of the double standard used by white society to judge blacks, in spite of the conditions that slavery and relentless racism toward free blacks had pressed upon the race. "Yet, with all this," he stated, "if the colored man is vicious, or if he is not elevated, it is set down to his natural stupidity and depravity, and the argument is raised that he belongs to an inferior race."[53]

It was a time of great disappointment for New England blacks, who had hoped their fellow white countrymen, who spoke so eloquently about the rights of men, would include them as equals in the new nation. Although many blacks had fought on the side of the colonists, they gained little for their effort; some won their freedom, but not the equality they were hoping for. While the U.S. Constitution did not mention race or sex, and had no property requirements for voting, state constitutions or local custom usually limited suffrage to white male property owners.[54] These free blacks also watched as the colonial leaders chose not to eliminate slavery for the nation, instead allowing states to rule on the issue, voting to "compromise" at the expense of African Americans.[55] In Connecticut, a gradual emancipation law established an indenture for those born into slave families after March 1, 1784, until age twenty-five, and maintained lifelong slavery for those born before that date. In addition, a fugitive slave clause was included in the U.S. Constitution (Art IV, sec. 2, para. 2), which allowed for the capture of escaped slaves in non-slave states. This provision made it possible for free blacks to be seized under the pretext that they had escaped legal bondage in a slave state.[56] Living close to Hartford, New York City, and Boston, John and Judith would have heard stories through word of mouth and various periodicals that published news of runaways. However, despite the increasing challenges of life in Connecticut, John and Judith would not have taken lightly the decision to leave their family, their farm, and an established black community.

There may have been several reasons why John and Judith took a chance on Vermont. The life experience of this free, literate, land-owning Revolutionary War couple may have given them the courage to make this move, and more importantly, the knowledge that they had the right to choose their future could have been compelling. Vermont's history as an independent state that officially outlawed adult slavery in 1777, and as the first state to do so, would have been of interest to African Americans like the Lyndes who lived in places where blacks were still enslaved.[57] In addition, the price of land in Vermont and the possibility of acquiring a larger tract might have influenced the couple in their decision to move to Brookfield. But perhaps the deciding factor was their Connecticut neighbors and associates who also chose this town. The Tracys and the Hebards were among the Brookfield residents who had known the Lyndes in Windham, and some of these new Vermonters were also John's comrades during the Revolutionary War. A group of these acquaintances and friends would be given, and would accept, the opportunity to advocate for John and Judith some thirty years after they settled in Vermont.

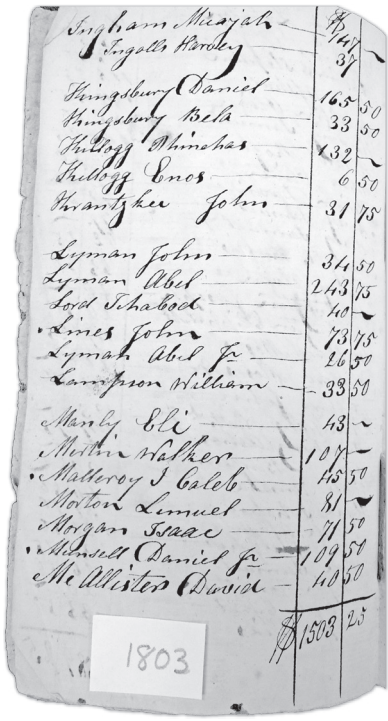
Life in Brookfield

The Lyndes moved to Brookfield in 1793 and evidence of this new life in Vermont is apparent throughout early records. "Mr. John Lynde/Lines," as he was referred to in a ledger, had an account at Barna Bigelow's store in East Brookfield in 1794, with debts and credits recorded through 1796.[58] In 1800 the U.S. Census listed John as head of family with seven other people living with him, which would have included Judith and children Susanna, Ebenezer, Samuel, Benjamin, and possibly Judith's widowed mother.[59] As a landowner, John Lynde was also a taxpayer. The earliest existing grand list records show that John paid taxes on his property in 1803, 1805, 1806, and 1808.[60]



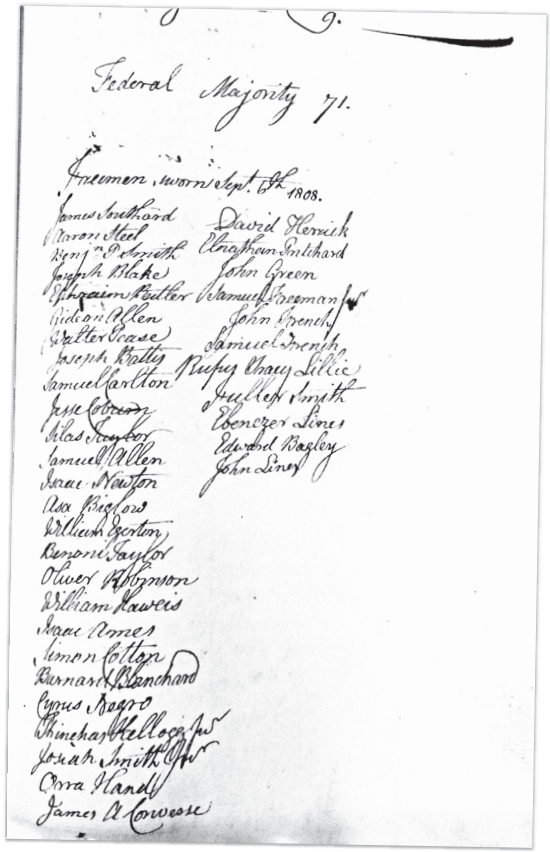
Ledger from Barna Bigelow's store in East Brookfield showing John's account in 1794. (Brookfield Historical Society, photo by author)

A defining moment for the Lynde family occurred on September 6, 1808, when John Lynde, age fifty-four, took the Freeman's Oath along with a group of thirty-six other men, giving them the right to vote.[61] In Vermont, the right to vote at town meeting was an important part of civic duty, a privilege that was not taken for granted. This



John Lines's name appears on the Grand List for 1803 (in the middle of the list), indicating he was taxed on his property and income. (Brookfield Town Office, photo by author)

must have been a momentous occasion for the elder Lynde, a war veteran who could not vote in his birth state. In spite of the situation in Connecticut, he would have witnessed a changing world for his children who had grown up in Brookfield. In fact, joining him to take the Freeman's Oath was his eldest son Ebenezer, age twenty-three, who had been born in Connecticut. Also among this group was Cyrus Negro, another black resident.[62]


Federal Majority 71.

Freemen, sworn Sept. 6th 1808.

James Smithard — David Herrick
Aaron Steel — Jonathan Smithard
Benj.a D. Smith — John Green
Joseph Blake — Samuel Freeman
Ephraim Potter — John French
Gideon Allen — Samuel French
Walter Cease — Rufus Chaney Likie
Joseph Potter — Fuller Smith
Samuel Carlton — Ebenezer Lines
Jesse Cobern — Edward Bagley
Silas Taylor — John Lines
Samuel Allen
Isaac Newton
Asa Bigelow
William Egerton
Benoni Taylor
Oliver Thomson
William Lawels
Isaac Ames
Simon Cotton
Barnard Blanchard
Cyrus Negro
Phinehas Kellogg Jun.r
Jonah Smith Jun.r
Orra Hand
James A. Lowesse

Brookfield Freemen's List, September 6, 1808. John Lines is the last name on this list, and his African/Native American son, Ebenezer, is third from the bottom. Cyrus Negro's name is fifth from the bottom in the first column (Brookfield Town Office, photo by author.)

Although this would have been a reason for celebration, it is not clear why it took fifteen years for John to become a voter, since he had been a resident of Brookfield, as well as a landowner and taxpayer, since 1793. There is evidence from other areas of Vermont that black male suffrage was practiced, but proving this is dependent upon the survival of town records. Williamson found freemen's lists from the 1830s to the 1850s with the names of several African American men, but she noted that such records are not common.[63] John and Judith's son, Samuel, who moved to Roxbury, Vermont, in the 1830s, is on multiple freemen's lists for specific elections, though no record has been found to show when he actually took the Freeman's Oath required for voting.[64] In John's case, how-

ever, the list of "Freemen, sworn September 6, 1808" indicates the date he became a voter, and it is clear in its meaning: John did not cast a ballot before then. Although the question of why may never be answered, the Vermont experiences of Abijah and Lucy Prince and Jeffrey Brace suggest the possibility of racist resistance as a factor. In addition, the freemen's list itself may speak to racist practices of the time (or of the scribe), with John's name last and Ebenezer's third to last on the list of thirty-six men. Interestingly, Cyrus Negro landed in twenty-second place on the same list, so John's placement may have been a more personal slight against the Lyndes. However, when fellow veteran and neighbor Nero Cross took the oath in 1816, he was also put at the bottom of the list.

In these early days of the Lyndes in Brookfield, other members of the extended family lived with John and Judith on different occasions. Judith's mother spent some time with them, as noted by a neighbor, Sarah Herrick.[65] John's brother, Robert, and his family, lived with John and Judith for a time but they did not put down roots. Records show that Robert and his daughter, along with seven other families, were warned out of town on September 16, 1809, which suggests they had moved to Brookfield during that year.[66] By 1811, the family was still (or perhaps back) in town, and on January 5, Robert's daughter Lucy died at the age of twenty, the first recorded death of a member of the Lynde family in Brookfield.[67] The cause of death was not noted. Lucy was buried in the back corner of the Brookfield Center Cemetery, in keeping with the early American tradition of segregating blacks, even in death.[68]

By 1812, John and Judith's two younger sons, Samuel and Benjamin, were old enough to go to war. The possibility of a land warrant for enlisting, and their father's stories of his years in the War of the Revolution, could have inspired the young men to join. Enlistment records state that Samuel was 5'11" and twenty years old, with "black eyes," "black hair," and "b colored complexion." His occupation was "husband" (probably "husbandry"), and he enlisted on March 1, 1813. Brother Benjamin was recorded as being a six-foot-tall, twenty-one-year-old farmer with "grey eyes," "brown hair," and "dark complexion," who enlisted on April 3 or 4, 1813.[69] Despite following in their father's footsteps, the Lynde sons did not have the luck John had experienced during his five years of service in the Revolution. Benjamin died on August 15, 1814, of wounds sustained during the Battle of Niagara. On November 6, 1813, Samuel received extensive injuries to his right arm and shoulder that left him "not only incapacitated for military duty. . . but totally disabled from obtaining his subsistence by manual labor."[70] He

was discharged from the military on September 13, 1815, and returned home to Brookfield. On December 4, 1817, he was awarded 160 acres of land "to be located agreeably to the said act on any unlocated parts of the six millions of acres appropriated by law for the original grantees of such military warrants." It is unknown where this land was actually located or what Samuel did with it, although the certificate stated, "this warrant is not assignable or transferable in any manner whatever."[71] Three years later, Samuel was counted on the 1820 census in Brookfield as a head of household with a wife and a child.[72]

Veteran and Pensioner

After the War of 1812, a change in public sentiment recognizing the sacrifices of soldiers and a large federal surplus led to a national law in 1818 creating a pension system for needy veterans.[73] Many former soldiers who had fought in the Revolutionary War were now elderly and could no longer support themselves, and in some cases, they depended on towns to provide for them. By that point, John Lynde was a sixty-four-year-old farmer with a sixty-two-year-old wife and a disabled son, and he must have struggled to make a living. He submitted his application for a pension and included documentation of his military service. Fortunately, he had a handwritten military discharge from November 1783, signed by Major General Knox, commanding officer of the garrison of West Point, New York.[74] In the case of African American Revolutionary War soldiers, these and other military papers were frequently lost or stolen and may have never been given to some individuals.[75] There was no precedent and little sympathy for the idea of military pensions in the years after the war, so John had no reason to think he would need the official paper to access a pension.[76] Instead, the fact that he carefully guarded the discharge document suggests how much he valued it as proof of his honorable service during the Revolutionary War. Historian Judith Van Buskirk noted from her study of black Revolutionary War veterans, that "such was the pride and emotional connection to the Revolutionary days that some veterans put up a fight handing over their discharges to get their pensions."[77] Veteran Primus Babcock, after proudly presenting his discharge written by George Washington as proof of his service in order to obtain a pension, was distraught to learn that the War Department would not return it. He preferred to request its return and forfeit the pension.[78]

In addition to the discharge, John submitted a written statement

sworn in front of the chief judge of the Vermont Supreme Court, in which he outlined his military service.

> That he the said John Lines at Windham, Connecticutt about the middle of October of 1780 enlisted for three years into the Army of the United States. That he faithfully served his country against the common enemy in the War of the Revolution, on the Continental Establishment, as a private soldier and was honourably discharged (after having served out his said term of enlistment and about one month more) on the 15th day of November AD 1783, which said discharge he intends shall accompany this declaration; That as near as he can recollect when he first joined the Army under the afore said enlistment he served in the company of Capt Rice in the 5th Regt Col. Sherman Connecticutt Line; that he then next served in Col Butler's Regt same line, in Capt Hart's company, being 4th if he rightly remembers; that he then next served in Col Huntington's Reg same line as waiter to the Col & just before his discharge he was waiter to Col Wylly's same Line; that prior to his said enlistment he had served his country as a private soldier in said War by various enlistments, about two years; That he is a resident ___ of the United States; That he is in reduced circumstances & stands in need of the assistance of his country for support; That he has no other evidence of his said services.[79]

Unlike other pensioners, John did not include details of battles in his affidavit of military service, but he did provide valuable information about his history, including his various company commanders and his service as a waiter to Colonels Huntington and Wyllys toward the end of his enlistment.

Other African Americans found themselves in similar situations during the war, after proving their worth as soldiers and gaining the attention of an officer. John Harris was a black private who, after fighting in the campaigns at Valley Forge and Philadelphia, was pulled from the ranks to serve Major James Monroe, the future president. John Harris's ability to survive the Valley Forge encampment and the march into New Jersey showed a high level of dedication and loyalty to the cause, which apparently impressed an officer enough to employ him in a position of trust.[80] John Lynde had been in various regiments during most of the Revolutionary War and his personal service to colonels in his later enlistments reflected the trust and respect he had earned.

After submitting the requisite paperwork, John was approved for a pension of $8 a month, or $96 a year, which was the amount allotted to privates.[81] However, after an unexpected number of applications was received and fraud became an issue, [82] Congress added a means test to reinforce the poverty requirement. By May 1, 1820, John was among

many pensioners who did not qualify for support, thus ending, at least temporarily, payments for their service.[83] In July, John reapplied for a pension, submitting an official document printed specifically for applicants for the Act of 1818, and sworn before the Orange County, Vermont, court. Handwritten under the official language is an itemization of John's real estate and possessions: Real Estate, $630.00, 2 Oxen, 2 Cows, 8 Sheep, 2 Calves, 1 Horse, 2 Hogs, 3 Pigs, Household Furniture $18, in all worth $784.50. His debts owed to others amounted to $560.05. The sixty-six-year-old veteran continued,

> My occupation has been that of a Farmer. [I'm] unable to do much labor. My wife Judith Lines is 64 years of age is sick with a disorder from the liver as the doctor says. My son Samuel Lines aged 28 years has Convulsion fits not able to do much labour and depends on me for his support. [84]

This narrative provides important insight into the family's financial and social status. John painted a self-portrait of an aging farmer and landowner who had some debt, possibly in the form of a mortgage or an account at the local store. He had more in assets than he owed, including real estate and farm animals, and he had gained a status in Brookfield that allowed him to borrow money from others. He wrote of Judith's diagnosed medical condition, showing that they had the means to have her treated by a physician. John ended his testimony by describing his adult son who had a chronic and debilitating condition, amounting to another mouth to feed in his family. While he was "in reduced circumstances," a requirement to qualify for the pension, he was making a living, which was not always the case for African Americans in New England in the early 1800s. Historian William Piersen noted that the economic struggle that blacks faced, made worse by racism, often excluded them from opportunities needed to attain comfort, success, and upward mobility.[85]

It appears that John's pension was reinstated at some point, but it is not clear for what period of time payments were issued. In a subsequent application, he stated that he had received no pension since March 1826. In early July 1828, John again submitted a sworn document attesting to his service in the War of the Revolution in hopes of receiving a pension under new legislation entitled "An act for the relief of certain surviving Officers & Soldiers of the Army of the Revolution." Accompanying John's affidavit was a letter from Brookfield Justice of the Peace Thomas Kingsbury to the secretary of the U.S. Treasury, noting that John's military discharge had already been forwarded to the War Office by Vermont Senator Dudley Chase. Kingsbury concluded, "He

[John] is now quite aged & infirm and really needs the assistance of his Country."[86] John Lynde died in Brookfield on July 13, 1828, before receiving a response to his last pension request, and records show that he was placed on the pension roll on August 13, 1828, to be given $80 a year.[87]

Judith's Story

Unfortunately for the wives of these pensioners, the law did not extend benefits to them, and it was not until 1836, eight years after John's death, that Judith had access to a widow's pension.[88] But a crucial part of this new federal law was the requirement of proof that marriage had occurred before the husband left the military, and Judith could no longer locate their marriage document. John had used his discharge as proof of his service and did not require any additional documents or testimony from others to support his case. However, as John's wife, and in the absence of legal documentation, Judith had to prove her marriage to John was legitimate and that they were married during his service in the Army. Included with her petition for a widow's pension were personal letters as well as detailed affidavits from six associates and friends of the couple who testified to the legality of their marriage and John's military service. It is this section of the pension file that has provided detailed and surprising information about John and Judith.

While the documents John had submitted in support of his pension claims contained details of his war service and his family's current economic state, affidavits and letters sent on Judith's behalf told a more personal story. John had first applied for a pension when he was sixty-four years old, and Judith was now eighty. One of the documents that Judith submitted was the letter from her first husband, James Jeffords, written shortly before they were married. There were people in her Brookfield community who had known her in Windham, Connecticut, and knew of James and their children, so this relationship would have required an explanation. Judith may have also included this letter from James to show that, as a woman of color, she followed societal expectations of the time including legal marriage and Christian beliefs.[89] To this end, the letter is also evidence that James was a literate man with a strong Christian background.

In her deposition, Judith further explained her situation, noting that she and James were married for about four years, and that following his death, she had remained a widow for four years and three months before marrying John. She presented her case, stating that, "My husband had a certificate of his marriage from Esquire Watrous but it is probably

lost. I have not seen it for several years." In lieu of this proof of her legal unions, Judith's lawyer J. K. Parrish requested her marriage documents from the Colchester, Connecticut, town clerk. The October 12, 1836, response from Windham stated that "the records have been examined. . . and the result of the investigation is that no record of either marriage can be found."[90] Since it was practice in this era to transcribe births, marriages, and deaths in a book by date in the town office, it would seem that the marriages were never actually recorded.[91]

Parrish tried to ascertain the reason these formal transactions did not exist, speaking to community elders regarding earlier legal practices. He wrote in his cover letter, "I apprehend from inquiry of aged persons they were not in those days very particular in the records of marriages of persons of colour. Lines was black & his wife a mulatto."[92] Parrish's statement sheds light on legal practices of the time regarding African American marriages. European Americans from colonial times to the Civil War had conflicting and contradictory feelings about black marriage, which were formed by Christian beliefs, the economic importance of slavery, and the perceived inferiority of people of color. While Northern free blacks had easier access to legal marriage than Southern blacks, it appears that town clerks and other record keepers did not give equal treatment to black residents when recording vital statistics. Gretchen Gerzina noted in her extensive research about the Princes that records of black marriages were uncommon.[93] In 1797, Ona Judge, the escaped slave of Martha Washington, was able to apply for a marriage certificate with her free husband in Portsmouth, New Hampshire, understanding the importance of a state-recognized union. When the clerk was informed of her status as Washington's fugitive slave, he halted the process, but the couple subsequently went to a neighboring town where the clerk issued the certificate.[94] With this legal process as with others of the time, it was up to the record keeper to decide what documents to issue, which transactions to record, and how to record them.

J. K. Parrish's statement, "Lines was black & his wife a mulatto," provides valuable information about John and Judith, race, and the era. This is the only known official reference to Judith's biracial background. Other Brookfield town records suggest that Judith had a Native American parent[95] —probably her mother. The use of the term "black" to describe John's race along with the term "mulatto" to refer to Judith's race may suggest that John was at least perceived as being of exclusively African descent. With the muster and payroll documents from his Revolutionary War service as an exception, most documents that refer to John Lynde state his race, and it is always "black."

If Judith could not prove her marriage to John with a formal certificate, she had another document that perhaps could help her cause. She stated in her affidavit, "My said husband used to write to me when he was in the Army & I have one of these letters now . . . [it] is in the hand writing of the said John Lines my husband." The letter, dated November 1781 and written shortly after they were married, is a rare example of correspondence between African Americans of this era.[96] The fact that John and James, Judith's first husband, were quite literate, as evidenced by their moving letters, put them in an exclusive group. Piersen observed that public education was rarely open to enslaved blacks or freedmen, and most African Americans were denied "more than the rudiments of literacy."[97] Knowing they would never be returned, Judith submitted the two love letters that she had guarded and obviously treasured throughout her life, in the hopes of gaining the pension owed to her.

But her testimony and the poignant letters from her two husbands would not be enough to support her case, especially since proof of her marriage to John was unobtainable and application requirements had tightened due to pension fraud. Because of this, Judith also obtained affidavits regarding her marriage to John and his service during the War of the Revolution. The testimonies, which were sworn in front of a justice of the peace or a court judge, came from six individuals, three of whom lived in Brookfield and three in Randolph, Vermont. Four of the six had lived in Windham, Connecticut, and had known John and/or Judith as neighbors there. While none of the deponents had witnessed the marriage of John and Judith, they provided secondary evidence such as "It was said that they were married at Colchester," and "They have lived together reputably as man & wife ever since they moved to this town."[98] As for John's service in the war, several reported hearing him tell his own stories about his service, as well as quoting veterans who had served with him and had related his anecdotes. There were many similar cases of veterans who had to depend on testimonies from acquaintances and neighbors because documentary evidence was lacking.[99] In a study of black pensioner cases from the Revolutionary War, former soldiers and widows found themselves in the same situation, having to prove their service. Like John and Judith, these pensioners were helped by "countless neighbors in supporting affidavits [who] testified that they had been listening to the veterans' stories for decades." Historian Margot Minardi found this to be a widespread trend in the cases of Revolutionary War pensioners and observed that, in spite of their informality and perhaps unreliability in

what is a formal, legal process, the significance of "reputation and hearsay" to the success or failure of community relationships must be recognized.[100]

One witness provided a detailed account of her knowledge of Judith's family and reputation based on her childhood spent as Judith's neighbor. Zerviah Hebard lived with her father near Judith and her family in Windham. Judith was two years older than Zerviah, and she recalled, "when girls we attended the same school and was quite intimate."[101] She remembered Judith's first marriage to James, "a colored man," and that Judith "returned to her father with one or two children" after her husband's death. Zerviah had heard that the Lines were married in Colchester, "some 14 miles from Windham." She had also heard the Phillips family mention that Judith had gone to the army to be with her husband. She remained "acquainted with Lines and his wife after the war both in Connecticut and Vermont and knows they were considered very reputable people and for colored people [emphasis in original] had a great many friends." This comment, after a seamless testimony of support for her friend, shows the attitude that African Americans faced. Encountering this in her own research, Van Buskirk observed that, "Even if imbued with racist beliefs, white associates would enthusiastically support an individual black man who had regaled them for years with war stories."[102]

Diah Hebard, the husband of Zerviah and another Windham, Connecticut, neighbor, also submitted an affidavit on Judith's behalf. He stated that he was "acquainted with Judith when they were both children being near of an age and residing in the same vicinity." He also knew John Lines, "a black man," before John's marriage to Judith.[103]

Perez Tracy's family lived close to the Lynde family in Windham, and in his deposition he stated that his father had served in the army with John. Tracy testified that his elderly father visited him in Randolph thirty years ago and "inquired after Lines & related many anecdotes of the war," showing interest in his fellow veteran. Perez Tracy had a similar, working relationship with John, noting that, "I often labored with him and heard him relate his exploits while in the war." From this deposition we see two families with a long history. The patriarchs served together in the Revolutionary War and were neighbors in Connecticut. The older white man made a point of asking about his black comrade and retold their stories. The white son worked *with* the older black man and listened with interest while he spoke of the past. From Tracy's statement, we also learn that his family and the Lyndes both moved to Vermont in 1793, information that has not been found elsewhere. Given the

history between John and the Perez Tracy family, it is not unreasonable to think that John saw Brookfield, Vermont, as a good place to start a new life, perhaps at the suggestion of his fellow veteran.[104]

Reuben Peck did not know the Lynde family in Connecticut, but could relate his dealings with John in Brookfield where they both lived. John worked for Peck's father as a "wall layer," and his testimony suggests that they worked together, as Peck had heard John's stories of the war on various occasions. Regarding the Lynde marriage, Peck noted that, "They have lived together reputably as man & wife ever since their residence in this town."[105]

As with the other affidavits, Peck's provided more valuable information in his testimony. He mentioned Nero Cross, the African American pensioner who served in the army with John and told stories of their service together. Peck stated that Nero died in Brookfield and had lived for several years in a house on his property.[106] The fact that Nero lived on the Peck property suggests that the elderly veteran was employed by the younger white man in some capacity.[107]

In addition, Peck included surprising information about John and Judith that provides additional depth to their story: "This deponent often heard him [John] relate about his services and exploits in the War of the Revolution . . . & that General Washington tried to prevail with him to go to Virginia with his wife & work for him & he should have gone if his wife had been willing." Had Judith agreed to this offer, she would have retained a position of authority, perhaps over the enslaved household staff at Mount Vernon or one of the other plantations owned by George or Martha Washington. John was an experienced personal waiter for Colonels Huntington and Wyllys before his discharge in 1783,[108] and Washington would have seen him as the perfect candidate to fill the position of personal butler or waiter, for which the image-conscious future president required a trustworthy, well-groomed, and dignified black man.[109] Regarding the decision not to follow General Washington to Virginia and then perhaps to New York City and Philadelphia, Judith was wise to reject the offer; as a member of a free, literate, and land-owning New England family and a Native and African American herself, she would have known that George Washington was a plantation slaveholder in Virginia, in spite of his lofty words about slavery being "the foul stain of manhood."[110] Judith may even have learned later as a Vermonter that Washington had relentlessly pursued his wife's escaped slave, Ona Judge, who fled the president's home in Philadelphia in 1796 and sought refuge as a fugitive in New Hampshire.[111] The fact that Judith rejected the job offer of General Washington shows the in-

fluence she had on important decisions that affected the family, and she probably had a voice in the decision to move to Vermont as well.

John and Judith's closest neighbor in Brookfield, Sarah Herrick, wrote an affidavit in which she stated that she had been "well-acquainted" with Judith since 1799. Sarah reported having known Judith's mother, who used to live with her daughter, and had related stories about Judith being in the army with her husband and having smallpox. Sarah also knew John's brother Robert, who "used to be at Mr. Lines frequently some 25 years ago," and related that "the first time he ever saw his brother's wife was in the Camp as she had gone to the Army to him and that she had the small pox there."[112]

These affidavits from neighbors and longtime associates of the Lyndes submitted on Judith's behalf for a widow's pension proved successful. Records indicate that a certificate of pension was issued to Judith on May 15, 1837.[113]

Judith Phillips Lynde died on July 27, 1838, at the age of eighty-two. She had received a widow's pension for just over one year. At the end of her life, she was a landowner with enough possessions of value to leave to various family members. She had already sold land she owned in Roxbury to her son Samuel, and she lived there with Samuel and his wife, Polly, for a short time before her death. While in Roxbury, Judith wrote a detailed will, filed in that town and in Brookfield, in which she gave various possessions to her children, their spouses, and her grandchild. Judith left her "last calico gown" to her granddaughter, Mary Ann Southard, and she gave her daughters-in-law, Polly and Sarah (Ebenezer's wife), all of her "household furniture, beds, bedding & cloathing." The remainder of the estate, including property and personal items, was to be divided among Ebenezer, Samuel, and Mary Ann. [114]

Judith was buried next to her husband in the Center Cemetery in Brookfield. In her will she stated, "I commit my soul into the hands of my Creator who gave it and my body to the dust to be intered, if convenient in the burying ground in Brookfield by the side of my beloved husband."

The Next Generations

John and Judith had four children who grew up in Brookfield. Susanna married, and though her history has not been found, school records of three of her daughters exist.[115] Benjamin was killed in the War of 1812. Ebenezer and Samuel, a veteran of the War of 1812, lived out their lives in Brookfield and Roxbury, respectively, where they were landowners, farmers, and voters, like their father. Because of the status

of their father and the fact that John and Judith were both literate, the Lynde children likely attended school in Brookfield, though documents have not been found to confirm this. Existing school records from 1826 to 1847 prove that the following generation did receive an education in Brookfield; John and Judith lived to see their African/Native American grandchildren enrolled in the district sixteen school. In fact, three of the grandchildren attended thirteen to fourteen years of school there.[116]

The affidavits from Revolutionary War pension records show that the story of the John and Judith Lynde was known by their community in Brookfield. Van Buskirk's studies of black Revolutionary War veterans echo John's experience, noting that these soldiers "became celebrities in their own communities, particularly when they aged."[117] But in the years that followed, this African American family was forgotten. Of John and Judith's grandchildren, only Ebenezer's line has been rediscovered. Susan, the eldest daughter of Ebenezer Lynde and Sarah Mills (Miles), moved to Glens Falls, New York, and eventually married Henry Van Vranken, a biracial man who fought in the Civil War and later became a boatman on the canals in that area. After Susan died, her sister, Lucy, became Henry's wife, and in 1855 the Lynde-Van Vrankens were among four African American families living next to each other in a neighborhood of Queensbury, New York, which included Solomon Northup, of *Twelve Years a Slave* fame.[118] The African American Lynde-Van Vranken descendants of the twentieth century followed the lead of John Lynde. Great-great-great-grandson Royal Van Vranken served in Company G, 63rd Pioneer Infantry in the First World War, and his son, Royal II, served as a staff sergeant in Europe during World War II. After his service in the war Royal Van Van Vranken II coached little league baseball in Glens Falls, and made his mark by taking the team to the Little League World Series playoffs in 1955.[119] This is the only African American strand of the family that has been located.

Ebenezer and Sarah's son John T. (and the only grandson of John Lynde) moved west in the 1860s, where his family was able to "pass." Historian Elise Guyette noted that some of the descendants of the "hill farmers" of Hinesburgh, tired of the endless fight against racism, "retreated into whiteness to protect themselves."[120] John T.'s son, John C., born in Brookfield and who also carried the name of his African American great grandfather, had seven sons who spread the name Lynde throughout Montana. This family probably does not know of its African and Native American roots through John and Judith Lynde. An early twentieth-century book on the history of Montana "whitewashed" the Brookfield, Vermont, birth of John C. Lynde on November 17, 1865, list-

ing grandfather Ebenezer Lynde as a white patriarch with a different background:

> His grandfather, of English ancestry, was among the pioneers of Vermont and at one time served as county judge. He also participated in some Indian wars. He was a Whig in politics and a Methodist. He had one son and three daughters, all of whom married and had children. . . .The only son was John T. Lyndes, who was born in the same house as his son, John C. This house stood at Brookfield, Vermont, and John C. Lyndes first saw the light of day there Nov 17, 1865. Five years later in 1870, the family left the Green Mountain state.[121]

In addition, the obituary of Mary Mercer, John C. Lynde's wife, noted that she had given birth to "the first white child in Rosebud County," further evidence that the African and Native American heritage of the Lynde family was left behind in Vermont.[122]

Sophronia, another daughter of Ebenezer and Sarah, made a life in Brookfield with her husband, Moses Collins. Born in 1823, Sophronia was the only grandchild who stayed in Brookfield, and her husband Moses, possibly biracial, fought in the Civil War and farmed in Brookfield both before and after the war.[123] Sophronia died at the age of eighty-nine in 1911 and was listed as white on her death certificate, as she had been on the U.S. censuses of 1900 and 1910. Descendants of Sophronia and Moses still live in Vermont, but they probably have no knowledge of their African and Native American heritage. In addition, modern histories of Brookfield do not mention the Lyndes or other black residents, though the stories of the friends and neighbors who advocated for John and Judith so many years ago have been recorded. Thus, it appears that the history of this turn-of-the-nineteenth-century African American family was forgotten.

John and Judith's story has awaited rediscovery for almost 200 years. The Lyndes are an example of post-Revolution-era African Americans who made a life for themselves in a white community during a time when social and political mores were against them from the start. Life was a struggle for most people in early America and freedom did not guarantee anything for blacks. However, existing records at the local, state, and national levels provide proof that these African American Vermonters achieved success in the face of daunting conditions. John Lynde was a man who fought for his country, worked the land to support himself and his family, exercised his right to vote as an American citizen, expressed love for his family, and, with his African/Native American wife Judith, raised literate, hard-working children who also fought for their country, farmed their own land, voted, and educated

Mr. John Lynde gravestone in the Brookfield Center Cemetery. Buried next to him is his wife, Judith, and his oldest son, Ebenezer. (photo by author)

their children. While life was not simple for these black Vermonters, we know that John and Judith were respected members of their community, as evidenced by the numerous affidavits of support from neighbors and acquaintances. At the same time, the location of John Lynde's 1828 grave in the back of the Brookfield Center Cemetery is a reminder that the family dealt with some of the same entrenched racism as all blacks of that era.[124]

John's story tells the shared story of his peers; as Van Buskirk observed, "African American veterans were involved in a forward momentum because the struggle of '76 was an ongoing one that they passed along to the next generation, bequeathing the example of their lives to inspire bolder action and greater risk."[125] Countryman echoes this observation: "During and after the Revolution free black Americans joined in a huge burst of creativity . . . .[T]he whole country seemed to be a runaway success, and despite all odds against them, some black people seemed to be part of that success, as the new republican America took shape."[126]

Much of the early history of blacks in New England has been forgotten. Indeed, as the country approached the Civil War and all enslaved New England blacks were finally freed by the slow policy of gradual emancipation, northern society conveniently forgot about its own slavery. No slavery came to mean that there had been no blacks (except for the occasional passenger on the Underground Railroad), and in places with a small black population, like Vermont, the real stories disappeared. However, recent scholarship has uncovered the lives of black soldiers, farmers, landowners, voters, and taxpayers who were as much a part of the early history of this country and this state as the founders. John and Judith Lynde are not unique, and similar stories are waiting to

be remembered. With continued research, more of these early African and African American individuals and families will be rediscovered. Also required is the will of leaders and educators to elevate this history to the equal position it should occupy in mainstream American discourse.

Notes

[1] This quote, with the underlined emphasis in the original document, is from an affidavit by Zerviah Hebard, who grew up with Judith. Zerviah Hebard affidavit, March 9, 1837, John Lines pension file, W26775, "Revolutionary War Pension and Bounty-Land Warrant Application Files," National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, DC (hereafter, NARA), digital image s.v. "John Lines," Fold3.com.

[2] As with many family names of the era, various spellings of John's last name appeared in records throughout his life. The earliest Revolutionary War rolls list him as "John Lines." Others used the surname "Loins," which may be a phonetic spelling that reflected the pronunciation of the day. Additional spellings of the family name include Lynds, Linds, Lyndes, and Lynde. By the time John died in 1828, the family seemed to have settled on Lynde, so this is the spelling I used.

[3] Letter from Thomas Jefferson to John Adams in Paris, August 30, 1787, in *Thomas Jefferson: Writings* (New York: Library of America, 1984), 909, quoted in Andrew Delbanco, *The War Before the War: Fugitive Slaves and the Struggle for America's Soul from the Revolution to the Civil War* (New York: Penguin Press, 2018), 72.

[4] Gretchen Holbrook Gerzina, *Mr. and Mrs. Prince: How an Eighteenth-Century Family Moved Out of Slavery and Into Legend* (New York: Harper Collins, 2008), 158.

[5] Jeffrey Brace, *The Blind African Slave, or Memoirs of Boyrereau Brinch Nicknamed Jeffrey Brace,* as told to Benjamin F. Prentiss, Esq. (St. Albans, VT, 1810), ed. Kari J. Winter (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2004).

[6] Jane Williamson, "African Americans in Addison County, Charlotte, and Hinesburgh, Vermont, 1790-1860," *Vermont History* 78 (Winter/Spring 2010): 15-42.

[7] Elise Guyette, *Discovering Black Vermont: African American Farmers in Hinesburgh, Vermont, 1790-1890* (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 2010). For more information on African American Vermonters, see also accounts of Alexander Twilight in Tracy N. Martin, "Alexander Twilight and the Old Stone House," *Historic Roots* v. 2, n. 1, (1997): 26-33; Daisy Turner in Jane C. Beck, *Daisy Turner's Kin: An African American Family Saga* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2015); Andrew Harris, in Kevin P. Thornton, "Andrew Harris, Vermont's Forgotten Abolitionist," *Vermont History* 83 (Summer/Fall 2015):119-156, Rokeby Museum (http://rokeby.org/).

[8] In a later document, Judith is listed as "mulatto," (Letter from J. K. Parish to J. L. Edwards, Commissioner of Pensions, November 29, 1836, John Lines pension file, W26775). There is also at least one reference to the "Indian" part of the family in a Brookfield, Vermont, death register dated October 22, 1862, for Judith's great grandson, John Reed. Emily Lyndes Reed, his mother (Judith's granddaughter), is listed as, "¼ Indian & negro." This suggests that one or more of Emily's grandparents was Native American. John Reed, death certificate, 22 Oct. 1862, microfilm 27, 666, Vermont Vital Records, 1760-1954, Family History Library, digital image s.v. "John Reed," Familysearch.org.

[9] Carole Magnuson, *Barbour Collection of Connecticut Town Vital Records*, vol. 54, Windham 1692-1850 (Baltimore, MD: Genealogical Publishing), 280-281. Found at the Vermont Historical Society, Barre.

[10] "A near neighbor of my Father was a Mr. Phillips who had a daughter by the name of Judith & who was two years older than myself as I well recollect & when girls we attended the same school and was quite intimate after the said Judith was 17 or 18 years old she did not reside so constantly at Windham." Zerviah Hebard affidavit, March 9, 1837, John Lines pension file, W26775.

[11] Zerviah Hebard affidavit, November 24, 1836, John Lines pension file, W26775. This is the only known reference to Jeffords/Jeffrey's race. Interestingly, Hebard never refers to Judith's race in either of her affidavits. However, in the same document Hebard later uses the term "black" to describe John Lines (who has this label in every source I've found that references race). The use of the term "colored" in the same document highlights this as a different category than "black" for Hebard. Jeffords could have been either of European or Native American ancestry as well as African.

[12] As with the name Lynde, there are variations of the last name of Judith's first husband. In her affidavit for a widow's pension, she refers to her first husband as James Jeffords. In the letter she

submitted from James, he signed his last name "Jeffery." I used "Jeffords" in this article because Judith's spelling from her affidavit is what is referred to in other sources such as Barbara Brown and James Rose, *Black Roots in Southeastern Connecticut, 1650-1900* (Detroit: Gale Research Company, 1980), 233. "Jeffords" is also the surname that can be searched to find the Lynde pension file. Judith Lynde affidavit, March 14, 1837, John Lines pension file, W26775.

[13] There is no other information about Jeffords in Judith's testimony, and additional documents with name variations make researching this individual a challenge. No documents have been located to specify her first husband's date of death, but based on Judith's testimony, it would have been in 1777, almost four years after they were married. More research needs to be done on this individual, as there are multiple references to men with variations of this name in Revolutionary War records. In addition, there is one event, also in Norwich, Connecticut, involving a young black woman named Lettice Jeffery, possibly a sister. Around the same time James married Judith, Lettice Jeffery brought a lawsuit against a white man who was keeping her as a slave. Lettice insisted to the court that she was a free woman who had hired herself out to Thomas Truman:

In an Action on the case wherein the Plaintiff Declares & Says that the Day of June AD 1763 She was and ever since a Free Woman, & more than Eighteen Years of Age & on or abouts the said 24th of June She went to Labour for the Defendant Expecting to Receive Reasonable Wages & Pay for her Service as a Free Woman, & Continued to Labour for the Defendant in that Situation & with Expectation of Receiving Wages as aforesaid, until on or about the 24th Day of July there Next at which Time the Defendant did, to the great Astonishment & Surprise of the Plaintiff, Inform her that he, the Defendant had bought and Purchased her, the Plaintiff, & that he had a Bill of Sale of her as a Slave for Life & from that time forward the Defendant Did ** and Strong hand & without Law or Rights, & against the mind & will of the Plaintiff, hold & detain her of her Liberty & kept her to hard Labour and under pretence that She was a Slave for Life to him the Defendant.

The case involved several witnesses and affidavits, including one from Clark Truman in which he said that Lettice was the daughter of "a negro man and woman who lived with and served my father as slaves and were disposed of as such, and that the said Lettice was by my father also sold and disposed of to Captain Thomas Truman for a servant for life for the sum of forty five pounds." The case was decided by a jury in Truman's favor. Original documents in the case of Lettice Jeffrey *v* Thomas Truman, New London County Court in Norwich November term 1773, New London County Court African Americans and People of Color Collection, box 3, folder 15, Connecticut State Archives, Connecticut State Library, Hartford.

[14] Richard Bailey, *Race and Redemption in Puritan New England* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 94.

[15] In many cases, former slaves took on last names of a family they were bonded to, and if there were multiple owners, it was common for individuals to assume the last name of a preferred owner. William D. Piersen, "Afro-American Culture in Eighteenth-Century New England: A Comparative Examination" (PhD. Diss., Indiana University, 1975), 94, cited in William D. Piersen, *Black Yankees: The Development of Afro-American Subculture in Eighteenth-Century New England* (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 1988), 35. James, an enslaved man from Virginia who enlisted under the Marquis de Lafayette and served as a spy, was given a letter by the general attesting to his loyal and brave service. He referred to himself as James Lafayette after the war, and was freed by Virginia's General Assembly in 1786. Sidney Kaplan and Emma N. Kaplan, *The Black Presence in the Era of the American Revolution* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1989), 37-40.

[16] For enslaved people, such families were rare due to the realities of the institution of slavery in New England. Piersen notes that because most New England slaveholders had only one or two enslaved individuals, couples lived in separate households. Owners often could not afford to purchase a spouse for the slave in their household, nor could they afford to increase their household size by having enslaved women procreate. Piersen, *Black Yankees,* 3.

[17] In the transaction on February 15, 1786, in which John bought 20 acres of land from his father-in-law Samuel Phillips, who was black or biracial, neither man's race was listed. (Windham, Connecticut, Town Office, Land Records, v. R, 292). When John sold 17 acres to John Flint on February 16, 1793, again his race was not stated (vol. U, 306). In contrast, in August 1780, Shubael Abbe freed "my Negro man named Prince" (v. P, 556). Five years later, Prince "a free Negro man of Windham," purchased four acres (v. U, 62). On September 14, 1780, Job, "a Negro man of Canterbury," paid 30 pounds to David Riply for "one Molatto girl named Silvia" (v. P, 556). Quigre Quife (alias Cudgo), "a free Negro of Windham," bought a piece of land on February 13, 1785, from Nathanial Hebard (v. R 158, 218). In 1791 and 1792, Cudjo Quagiry Querey (presumably the same individual), made another purchase but his race was not mentioned (v. U, 160, 269). The decision to list race could be following conventions of the time or be at the whim of the white person officiating the transaction.

[18] Gerzina, *Mr. and Mrs. Prince,* 54.

[19] "Compiled Service Records of Soldiers Who Served in the American Army During the Revolutionary War," group 93, roll 370, NARA, digital image s.v. "John Lines," Fold3.com.

[20] Ibid.

[21] Payroll for Captain Nathanial Wales, October 1777, microfilm 830, 307, "United States Revolutionary War Rolls, 1775-1783," Family History Library, digital image s.v. "John Lines," FamilySearch.org.

[22] David O. White, *Connecticut's Black Soldiers, 1775-1783* (Chester, Connecticut: Pequot Press, 1973), 31-32.

[23] Ibid., 18. Collections of the Massachusetts Historical Society, Seventh Series, vol.4 (Boston: The Society, 1904), 3-4, and Alexander Graydon, *Memoirs of a Life* (Harrisburg, PA: John Wyeth, 1811), 131.

[24] "United States Revolutionary War Rolls, 1775-1783," microfilm M246, NARA, digital image s.v. "John Lines," Captain Elijah Humphreys company, 1778-1779, Fold3.com.

[25] Connecticut Archives, Connecticut State Library, Revolutionary War, series 2, vol. 5, 163-168, National Archives Revolutionary War Service of Pomp Edore, cited in White, *Connecticut's Black Soldiers*, 24.

[26] "Lists and Returns of Connecticut Men in the Revolution, 1775-1783," 207, 339, Connecticut Historical Society Collections, vol. 12, 58 (Hartford: Connecticut Historical Society, 1909); Jesse Root, *Reports of Cases Adjudged in the Superior Court and Supreme Court of Errors from July A.D. 1789 to January A.D. 1798* (Hartford, CT, 1798), 1: 92, cited in White, *Connecticut's Black Soldiers*, 21.

[27] "Rolls and Lists of Connecticut Men in the Revolution 1775-1783," Collections at the Connecticut Historical Society, vol. 8 (Hartford: Connecticut Historical Society, 1901), 231. "Lists and Returns of Connecticut Men in the Revolution," 1775-1783, 38, 173, 231, 268, Frances M. Caulkins, *History of Norwich Connecticut from Its Settlement in 1660, to January 1845* (Norwich, 1845), 331, cited in White, *Connecticut's Black Soldiers*, 19.

[28] Bachus Fox Certificate, Slavery Documents, Connecticut Historical Society, Hartford, cited in White, *Connecticut's Black Soldiers*, 24-25.

[29] Brace, *The Blind African Slave.*

[30] Judith Lynde affidavit, November 14, 1836, John Lines pension file, W26775. There is a court record from 1781 that created a mystery for the present study. Connecticut records show that four months before John and Judith were married, on March 29, 1781, an individual named "John Lines" was labeled a "transient" and convicted of theft in Colchester, Connecticut, a relatively short distance from Windham. He pleaded not guilty, but the court, under Justice John Watrous, decided otherwise and fined him fifteen shillings. In the case that John Lines refused or was unable to pay the cost, he would be "publically whipt on the Naked Body eight strips." The records do not indicate what the final outcome was. (John Watrous, Justice Records, Colchester, 1767-1790, Connecticut Archives, Connecticut State Library, records unnumbered). Researchers Barbara Brown and James M. Rose (*Black Roots in Southeastern Connecticut* [Detroit: Gale Research Company, 1980], 233-234) cite this information, along with other facts about the John Lynde of the present article. However, missing court information and other factors are sufficient to question the incident and the identity of the accused. While the proximity of Colchester to Windham, could have placed John in the vicinity, in the original court document the defendant is only referred to as "a transient person," and his race is not stated. During the same time, there was a white man named "John Lines" from New Haven, Connecticut (also a soldier in the Revolutionary War and who is listed as John Lines 2nd in war records), and the existence of another man by the same name introduces some doubt as to who the accused really was. Regarding his potential presence in Colchester on that date, Brown and Rose cite the African American John's enlistment at Windham from October 1780 until November 15, 1783, dates found in muster and payrolls as well as pension documents, which would suggest that if he were the same man as in the Colchester case, he was actually a soldier at the time of the arrest. According to one Revolutionary War record, John enlisted in the Fifth Connecticut Regiment of Foot commanded by Lt. Colonel Isaac Sherman, Captain Nehemiah Rice's company, on March 30, 1781, a day after the conviction, United States Revolutionary War Roles, 1775-1783. NARA, digital image s.v. "John Lines," Captain Nehemiah Rice's company, 1781-1782. Fold3.com. The existing documentation of the story and its many possible explanations are worth further investigation, but the missing information in the court document precludes the use of this case as part of John Lynde's present story.

[31] Reuben Phillips is listed in records as being in the 7th company. *Record of Service of Connecticut Men in I. War of the Revolution,* compiled by the authority of the General assembly under direction of the Adjutants General (Hartford, CT, 1889), 82.

[32] Letter written by John Lines to wife Judith, November 11, 1781, submitted by Judith in support of her pension application, March 14, 1837, John Lines pension file, W26775.

[33] Judith Lynde affidavit, March 14, 1837, John Lines pension file, W26775.

[34] Holly A. Mayer, "Wives, Concubines, and Community: Following the Army," In John Resch and Walter Sargent, eds., *War and Society in the American Revolution: Mobilization and Home Fronts* (DeKalb, IL: Northern Illinois University Press, 2007), 235-262. Wives that were certified as washerwomen were able to draw provisions, in addition to earning money. The army used many women in this capacity and recorded information around their hiring, provisioning, and regulation.

[35] Reuben Peck, Nathan Parrish, Zerviah Hebard, and Perez Tracy all stated that they had heard stories of Judith being in war camp with John. Sarah Herrick wrote in her affidavit that she had heard Judith's mother and brother-in-law comment on various occasions about Judith contracting smallpox while in camp with her husband. Sarah Herrick affidavit, March 14, 1837, John Lines pension file, W26775.

[36] Mayer, "Wives, Concubines, and Community: Following the Army," 239. Women were also commonly used as nurses so healthy men could be freed for the battlefield. Sometimes they also became patients. "They suffered and survived along with their soldiers."

[37] Small pox was a rampant problem in the early days of the colonies and an epidemic in 1775-1776 that hampered the war effort. General George Washington favored inoculating the troops, which infected the recipient with a milder form of the disease and then provided lifelong immunity. Those receiving the inoculation had to be quarantined, as they could and did spread the disease. In the quest to defeat smallpox, many additional people were accidentally infected. But Washington's plan paid off, and by May 1781, army doctors rarely noted illness due to smallpox. Camp women and children were also among those inoculated. Ann Becker, "Smallpox in Washington's Army: Strategic Implications of the Disease during the American Revolutionary War," *Journal of Military History*, 68, (April 2004): 381-430. There is no mention of John contracting smallpox, and since he was in the army as early as 1777, perhaps he had been inoculated or had been infected early on. Judith would have had the disease sometime in 1782, since records indicate she joined him sometime after November 1781. John Lines pension file, W26775.

[38] Army discharge, John Lines pension file, W26775.

[39] Land Records, Windham, Connecticut, Town Office, v. R, 292.

[40] 1790 US Census, Windham Township, Windham County, Connecticut, series M637, roll 1, page 229, image 513, Family History Library, digital image s.v. "John Lynes," Ancestryheritagequest.com. The numbers, which include the Lines and Phillips families, come from a single page that suggests evidence of a community. The eight non-white families are not all grouped together, but are instead in two groups of two families, one group of three families and one family separate from the others. These smaller groups are found between white families. This was the first US census, and Windham County, Connecticut, had 524 blacks, including 184 slaves.

[41] Land Records, Windham, Connecticut, Town Office, v. U, 306.

[42] Land Records, Brookfield, Vermont, Town Office, v. 3, 53.

[43] The land transaction as recorded in the Brookfield Town Office does not list the existence of any structure on the land that John purchased from Asa Huntington, and notes the boundaries from the original plot in Brookfield. This may suggest that the land had not been cleared or occupied.

[44] Edward Countryman, *Enjoy the Same Liberty: Black Americans and the Revolutionary Era* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2002), 114.

[45] Catherine Adams and Elizabeth H. Pleck, *Love of Freedom: Black Women in Colonial and Revolutionary New England* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 153-154.

[46] Williamson, "African Americans in Addison County, Charlotte, and Hinesburgh, Vermont," 30-31.

[47] Ibid., 15-42.

[48] Ibid., 28.

[49] Ibid., 31.

[50] "Nero Cross, his wife and family" were on a list of families warned out in November 1813, Brookfield Town Records, Book 2, 170. In 1787, the Vermont legislature passed "An Act for Ordering and Disposing of Transient Persons under the Discretion of the Selectboard of Each Town." Under this law, which was more strictly enforced in the parts of Vermont that experienced increased immigration after the Revolutionary War, only recently arrived individuals could be warned out. Few of those warned out actually left town, and by 1817 a new law was passed that ended this practice. The records that were maintained of the numerous warnings out are valuable for indicating when a family moved to town. Josiah H. Benton, *Warning Out in New England, 1656-1817* (Boston: W.B. Clark, 1911), 106-113.

[51] Nero appears to have settled in Thetford first, 1790 US Census, Thetford, Orange County, Vermont, microfilm M637, no.12, NARA, digital image s.v. "Nero Cross," Familysearch.org. The document lists Nero's family as five under "All other Free Persons." By 1818, when he was able to apply for a pension, he was living in Brookfield with his wife. Nero Cross pension file S39370, "Revolutionary War Pension and Bounty-Land Warrant Application Files," NARA, digital image s.v. "Nero

Cross," Fold3.com. Nero took the freemen's oath on September 6, 1814. Brookfield Town Records Book 2, 185.

[52] Nero Cross affidavit, Mary 4, 1818, pension file S39370. Nero Cross's affidavit taken by Elijah Paine, lists multiple battles. Cross served for eight months in Captain Richards's company, enlisting on April 28, 1777 and being discharged on January 12, 1778. Under remarks, "Valley Forge" is noted. *Record of Service of Connecticut in the War of the Revolution*, 150.

[53] Antislavery sentiment was at a high point in the late colonial period, as was "environmentalism," which argued that the "degraded condition" of slaves (and blacks generally) was due to their environmental circumstances and not inherent traits. After the Revolution, the tide started to turn and both of these movements lost supporters. Gary B. Nash, *Race and Revolution* (Madison, WI: Madison House, 1990), 6-7. By 1839, northern free blacks were subjected to debilitating racism. Thornton, "Andrew Harris, Vermont's Forgotten Abolitionist," 136-137.

[54] Countryman, *Enjoy the Same Liberty,* 113.

[55] Delbanco, *The War Before the War,* 13.

[56] Ibid., 77-81, 104-105.

[57] See discussion of situations in Vermont where the state constitution was ignored and adult blacks were enslaved in Harvey Amani Whitfield, *The Problem of Slavery in Early Vermont, 1777-1810* (Barre and Montpelier: Vermont Historical Society, 2014).

[58] Barna Bigelow ledger book 1, multiple unnumbered pages, Brookfield (Vermont) Historical Society, archived in Brookfield Town Office.

[59] 1800 US Census Brookfield, Orange County, Vermont, series M32, roll 51, page 503, image 283, Family History Library, digital image s.v. "John Phinney," (John Lyndes is directly after Phinney and not found by searching his name), Ancestryheritagequest.com.

[60] Grand lists for 1803, 1805, 1806, and 1808, Brookfield, Vermont, Town Office.

[61] Brookfield Town Records, v. 1, 77, Brookfield Town Office.

[62] Ibid. James Southard, Susanna Lynde's husband, took the Freeman's Oath that day also, and it is possible that he was black or biracial.

[63] Williamson, "African Americans in Addison County, Charlotte, and Hinesburgh, Vermont," 31.

[64] Freemen's Lists, 1855, 1861. Roxbury, Vermont Historical Society.

[65] Sarah Herrick affidavit, March 14, 1837, John Lines pension file, W26775.

[66] Brookfield Town Records, v.2, 113. Between the years of 1804 and 1816, a few hundred Brookfield residents were warned out of the town. The people who were named were heads of households, including men, widows, single women, and divorcees. A document labeled "State of Vermont" was issued by the selectboard and ordered the town constable to "summons" the individuals "now residing in Brookfield to depart said Town hereof fail not but of this precept & your doings herein due return make according to law." See also Benton, *Warning Out in New England, 1656-1817*.

[67] Lucy Lynde, death certificate, 5 Jan 1811, microfilm 27, 619, "Vermont Vital Records, 1760-1954," Family History Library, digital image s.v. "Lucy Lynde," FamilySearch.org.

[68] Historian Glen Knoblock discusses the common practice of relegating both free and enslaved blacks to the back or far edges of a cemetery, "away from the graves of even the lesser white members of society, an indicator of the lowest position they occupied on both the economic and social ladders of society." He goes on to explain how this custom was practiced into the twentieth century but has been, in a sense, hidden. As cemeteries had more burials over the years they expanded, so plots at the back of the original boundary may in modern times appear more centered, with more graves behind them. This is true of the Lynde family plot in the Brookfield Center Cemetery, which appears to be more prominently located until one examines the surrounding gravestones and their dates. Glen A. Knoblock, *African American Historic Burial Grounds and Gravesites of New England* (Jefferson, NC: McFarlane and Co., 2016), 85.

[69] "Registers of Enlistments in the United States Army, 1798-1914," roll MIUSA1798_102866, 7, NARA, digital image s.v. "Benjamin Lynds," Fold3.com. NARA discusses the service of African American men in the War of 1812, but says that they primarily served in the 26th Infantry. NARA also states that soldiers listed as "dark" in complexion are not indicated as "black" since they were probably dark Caucasians. Samuel Lynde was referred to as "b complexion" which clearly labels him as black, but he was not in a specific regiment for African Americans. His brother Benjamin apparently was able to pass as a "dark"-complexioned Caucasian. Military Records, "War of 1812 Discharge Certificates, Notes on Men Who Served, African Americans," NARA, archives.gov.

[70] "War of 1812 Pension and Bounty Land Application Files, roll RG15-1812PB-Bx2216, NARA, digital image s.v. "Samuel Lynds," Fold3.com.

[71] "War of 1812 Military Bounty Land Warrants, 1815-1858," no. M848, roll 0007, NARA, digital image s.v. "Samuel Lynds," Fold3.com.

[72] 1820 US Census, Brookfield, Orange County, Vermont, microfilm M33, roll 142, NARA, digital image s.v. "Samuel Lynde," Ancestryheritagequest.com. This is the only census during the time the Lyndes lived in Brookfield where a census taker listed the three black families (and that of Nero Cross) at the bottom of the list.

[73] John Resch, "Federal Welfare for Revolutionary War Veterans," *Social Service Review* 56 (June 1982): 171-172.

[74] John Lines pension file, W26775, 8.

[75] Margot Minardi, "Freedom in the Archives: The Pension Case of Primus Hall," *Slavery/ Anti-slavery in New England,* Annual Proceedings of the Dublin Seminar for New England Folklife, ed. Peter Benes, (Boston: Boston University, 2003), 130.

[76] Lawmakers resisted creating a military pension system, believing that it went against the values of the republic to subsidize a "rank of society." This sentiment began to change after the War of 1812. Resch, "Federal Welfare for Revolutionary War Veterans," 172.

[77] Judith Van Buskirk, "Claiming Their Due: African Americans in the Revolutionary War and its Aftermath," *War and Society in the American Revolution: Mobilization and Home Fronts*, eds. John Resch and Walter Sargent (DeKalb, IL: Northern Illinois University Press, 2007), 155.

[78] William Nell, *The Colored Patriots of the American Revolution, with Sketches of Several Distinguished Colored Persons* (1855; Salem, NH: Ayer, 1986), 78.

[79] John Lines affidavit, April 18, 1818, pension file, W26775.

[80] Van Buskirk, "Claiming Their Due," 132.

[81] Resch, "Federal Welfare for Revolutionary War Veterans," 171. The Act of 1818 provided $96/ year for privates, which worked out to $8/month. In John's specific case, see *Pension Roll of 1835*, vol. 1, U.S. War Department (Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Company, 1968), 514/890, Book Collection, Vermont Historical Society.

[82] Fraudulent applications for pensions filed by Vermonters became a problem in 1818. Van Buskirk, "Claiming their Due," 154.

[83] Vermont Pensioners of the Revolutionary War Struck off the Roll, February 25, 1836, http://wwwnewhorizonsgenealogicalservices.com.

[84] John Lines affidavit, July 3, 1820, pension file, W26775.

[85] Piersen, *Black Yankees*, 148.

[86] Letter from Thomas Kingsbury to Richard Rush, Secretary of the US Treasury, undated, John Lines pension file, W26775.

[87] *Pension Roll of 1835,* 514/890.

[88] Congress passed a law in 1836 that allowed widows of Revolutionary War pensioners to apply for benefits. Mayer, "Wives, Concubines and Community," 257.

[89] Historian Tera W. Hunter explains how marriage among African Americans in the 18th and 19th centuries was complicated. Many states did not allow slaves to marry or could only do so with permission of the masters, some of whom would create a frivolous or pseudo-Christian ceremony for the couple. Tera W. Hunter, *Bound in Wedlock* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2017), 9, 46, 66. Many enslaved people did not seek out a Christian marriage, preferring to carry on African traditions, but also because the rules of monogamy could not work in cases of forced separation that resulted from the sale of a spouse. Ibid., 33, 67. However, some blacks fought for the right to legally marry because it was an institution recognized by society. Ibid., 47-48, 66-67. Judith and John followed conventions of the day, and Judith's attempt to prove the legality of her marriages is more evidence of how the family saw themselves as citizens and participants who followed the rules of society.

[90] Judith Lines affidavit, March 14, 1837; Letter from Colchester Town Clerk Thomas Gray to J. K. Parish, October 12, 1836, John Lines pension file, W26775.

[91] A modern search has also yielded no records for either of Judith's marriages.

[92] This is the only mention of the couple's race together and the differentiation between black and mulatto.

[93] Gerzina, *Mr. and Mrs. Prince,* 15.

[94] Erica A. Dunbar, *Never Caught: The Washingtons' Relentless Pursuit of Their Runaway Slave, Ona Judge* (New York: Atria Books, 2017), 159-160.

[95] No birth records have been found for John and Judith's children. Vital records for three of Ebenezer's daughters, Susan, Emily, and Sophronia, list them as "¼ Indian." This supports the theory that Judith was part native American, but it also suggests that Ebenezer's wife, Sarah Mills/ Miles, had indigenous heritage. Brookfield Town Records, vol. 1, 602, 606, 614. On the 1840 census for Brookfield, Ebenezer's family is counted under "Free Colored Persons." 1840 US Census, Brookfield, Orange County, Vermont, digital image s.v. "Ebenezer Lyndes," Ancestryheritagequest.org. No additional mention of native heritage has been found.

[96] See previous discussion of this letter, in conjunction with note 32.

[97] Piersen, *Black Yankees,* 148.

[98] Affidavits by Perez Tracy, November 15, 1836, Nathan Parish, November 25, 1836, Zerviah Hebard, November 24, 1836 and March 9, 1837, Diah Hebard, November 24, 1836, Sarah and David Herrick, March 14, 1837, and Reuben Peck, March 14, 1837, John Lines pension file, W26775.

[99] Van Buskirk, "Claiming their Due," 156.

[100] Ibid., 157. Minardi, "Freedom in the Archives," 130.

[101] David L. Parsons noted that as early as the 1780s, some Connecticut blacks were allowed to attend school, "but these were exceptional cases." "Slavery in Connecticut, 1640-1848," Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute, www.yale.edu/ynhti/curriculum/units/1980/6/80.06.09.x.html.

[102] Zerviah Hebard affidavit, March 9, 1837, John Lines pension file, W26775; Van Buskirk, "Claiming their Due," 156.

[103] Diah Hebard affidavit, November 24, 1836, John Lines pension file, W26775.

[104] Perez Tracy affidavit, November 15, 1836, ibid.

[105] Reuben Peck affidavit, March 14, 1837, ibid.

[106] Ibid. This is relevant information for further research into Nero Cross, as there has been no evidence up until this testimony that he died in Brookfield. A document listing Revolutionary War pensioners recorded that Nero received payments from 1818 to September of 1830 and notes that by March 1831, he was dead. "United States Revolutionary War Pension Payment Ledgers, 1818-1872," microfilm T718, NARA, digital image s.v. "Nero Cross," FamilySearch.org.

[107] Dunbar, *Never Caught*, 177. It was customary in the North for free blacks to rent a home from their employer. As Nero aged, he may not have been able to support himself and his wife, as he stated on his pension request, so Reuben Peck may have given him a place to live in exchange for work. The fact that Peck wrote an affidavit of support for Judith suggests concern for his African American neighbors. Reuben Peck affidavit, March 14, 1837, John Lines pension file, W26755.

[108] John Lines affidavit, April 18, 1818, pension file, W26775. According to John's affidavit, he served as a waiter to Colonel Huntington and then to Colonel Wyllys before being discharged.

[109] Dunbar, *Never Caught*, 28-29. Dunbar notes that when Washington assumed the presidency and moved to New York City and then Philadelphia, he was "conscious of the appearance of his slaves," as they were "symbols of urban wealth." He made sure that his carriage drivers had new and "handsome" clothing. Since the Washingtons entertained frequently, their slaves had to be "presentable to a new Northern social circle."

[110] Gary B. Nash, *The Forgotten Fifth: African Americans in the Age of Revolution* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006), 98. Apparently Washington had been increasingly bothered by slavery since witnessing blacks fight against the British. Nash continued, "rather than blaming his own change of heart about whether to free his own slaves, Washington blamed 'the minds of the people of this country.'" Ibid., 103. His discomfort with slavery wasn't enough to provide for the manumission of his slaves until after his death.

[111] For the entire story, see Dunbar, *Never Caught*. In spite of the fact that the president had signed the Fugitive Slave Act of 1793 and would have understood the law, he instructed officials to apprehend Judge in Portsmouth, New Hampshire, and immediately put her on a ship for Philadelphia or Alexandria. The law required that proof of ownership be presented before a judge who would give a ruling on the case. Ibid.,139-149. Before this incident, Washington was informed that by law in Pennsylvania, he could not keep a person enslaved for more than six months. To circumvent this state law, he and Martha arranged for their slaves to go out of state to New Jersey or return to Mt. Vernon every six months. They did this for five years, from 1791 to 1796. Ibid.,73

[112] Sarah Herrick affidavit, March 14, 1837, John Lines pension file, W26775.

[113] John Lines pension file, W267754.

[114] Land Records, Roxbury, Vermont, Roxbury Town Office, vol. 6, 289-290.

[115] School records listing Susanna B. and husband James Southard's children show that they were living with other family members. In records from 1826-1829, Mary Ann Southard was living with one or both of her grandparents, John and Judith (John died in 1828). One record exists for Marsha Southard; in 1829 she was living with Judith. In addition, records show that Caroline Southard was living with the Nero Cross family in 1826. School records, Brookfield Historical Society, archived in the Brookfield Town Office. Probate records for Judith's estate list eight children of Susanna B. Southard, who predeceased her mother: Caroline W. Billings, Mary Ann Southard, Sattina Phelps, Julia Ann Wood, Elizabeth M. Southard, Judith Emiline Southard, Sara Lucia Southard, and Francis Marcia Southard. John Lynde probate records, "Vermont, Orange County, Randolph District probate records, 1790-1935," folder 12, Hall, Samuel–Lynde, John, 1800-1840, digital images 454-458, Familysearch.org

[116] Ibid.; records dating from 1826 to 1847 list school attendance by district with individual student names. Further research is needed on why three of the Lynde grandchildren were in school for this unusual amount of time.

[117] Van Buskirk, "Claiming their Due," 157.

[118] 1855 New York Census, Town of Queensbury, Warren County, microfilm, Albany: New York State Archives, digital image s.v. "Henry Van Vranklin," AncestryInstitution.com.

[119] Royal L. Van Vranken's service in WWI from September to December 1918, "US Headstone Applications for Military Veterans," digital image s.v. "Royal Van Vranken," Fold3.com. Royal L. Van Vranken II was also a star athlete in high school and college, www.saratogian.com, obituaries, June 25, 2000.

[120] Guyette, *Discovering Black Vermont,* 155.

[121] Tom Stout, ed., *Montana and Its Story and Biography: A History of Aboriginal and Territorial Montana and Three Decades of Statehood,* vol. 1 (Chicago and New York: The American Historical Society, 1921), 1392-1393. This is the same John C. Lynde who was born in Brookfield and is listed as "1/16 Negro" on his birth record. His grandfather was the African/Native American Ebenezer J. Lynde, and his great-grandfather was John Lynde of the present research. The Lyndes of Williamstown, Vermont, were a white family who were contemporaries of the Brookfield Lyndes, and part of their story may have found its way into the Montana history book.

[122] *Billings* (Montana) *Gazette*, 27 October, 1937. In Bill Horder, "Lyndes Family Tree Montana," unpublished. Thanks to Bill Horder for sharing his research on the Montana branch of the family.

[123] The 1860 US Census for Brookfield lists a 36-year-old Sophronia living with her 34-year-old brother John T. Lyndes. Additional members of this household include Moses Collins, 24, and his apparent sister, Sophia Collins, 17. The two sets of siblings married shortly thereafter. 1860 US Census, Brookfield, Orange County, Vermont, roll M653_1323, page 100, Family History Library, digital image s.v. "John T. Lyndes," FamilySearch.org.

[124] Although the Lyndes were able to enjoy some equality in life, in death racist traditions were the rule. The previously mentioned grave of John's niece Lucy Lynde in the back corner of the Brookfield Cemetery now seems to be in a row by itself and would have obviously been an outlier when she was buried in 1809. John's burial in 1828 was more in the horizontal center of the burial grounds but slightly farther to the back than Lucy's. It is not known why the rest of the family was not buried with Lucy, as there is room. Perhaps Judith and oldest son Ebenezer wanted to give John a slightly more prominent resting place. The death of friend Nero Cross in Brookfield was not even recorded, although it is mentioned in Reuben Peck's affidavit in support of Judith Lynde. While there is a record of the death of "negress" Polly Lynde in the Roxbury Town Office, her husband Samuel's death was not recorded. Polly Lynde death, 28 Aug 1862, Birth, Marriages and Deaths, Roxbury Town Office, Vermont. There is no record of the burial of Samuel or Polly Lynde, either in that town or back with their family in Brookfield, and as "paupers" they may have been buried in unmarked graves in a town cemetery or on private property (1860 US Census, Roxbury, Washington County, Vermont, roll M653_1324, page 937, Family History Library, digital image s.v. "Saml Lynds," Ancestryheritagequest.com). Joanne P. Melish noted that even free blacks were rarely interred among the white deceased and were often relegated to completely different burial grounds (Joanne P. Melish, Disowning Slavery: Gradual Emancipation and "Race" in New England, 1780-1860 [Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1998], 185-186). Elise Guyette's "Hill people" of Hinesburgh, Vermont, had their own family cemetery. Abijah Prince was buried on his own property. In Thetford, Vermont, George Knox, who died in 1825, and his wife Catherine were buried "in a little yard in mow field," which in modern times has been preserved as a town cemetery with two plots (Thetford Burial Records book, 60, Thetford, Vermont, Town Office). An exception to this would appear to be teacher, minister, and Vermont legislator Alexander Twilight, the first African American to graduate from college in the United States, who was buried in a prominent place in Brownington, Vermont. However, there is no evidence that he identified as or was known as a black man during his lifetime (https://www.mychamplainvalley.com/news/hidden-history-alexander-twilight/653942251). Dunbar notes that free blacks often couldn't afford burial costs, and in urban areas mutual aid societies helped with expenses. These groups didn't exist outside of places like New York and Philadelphia, and poor blacks had to depend on private citizens for aid (Dunbar, Never Caught, 181). In the case of the Lynde family in the Brookfield Center Cemetery, it appears that they could afford both the burials and respectable gravestones for their loved ones.

[125] Van Buskirk, "Claiming their Due," 157.

[126] Countryman, *Enjoy the Same Liberty*, 95.