

**Many Nassau Families Owned Slaves Late in 18th Century**  
**Record Compiled in 1775 Contains Names of Numerous Leading Residents**  
by Walter S. Funnell (*Nassau Democrat Review-Star*, February 17, 1937)

We smug Long Islanders are due for a come-uppance. We are in the habit of thinking we are of superior breed. Did not previous generations of Long Islanders take up arms that the slaves in this country might be free? True enough, so far as it goes. But how many of us look back a bit further and find that our own forefathers, uncles, aunts or what have you, were owners of slaves right here on Long Island? This is no lecture from a holier-than-thou writer. My own ancestors had slaves here. So that's that.

It is a forgotten fact, nevertheless, that the so-called fine people of Long Island about two centuries ago kept men and women of the negro race to do their work – outright slave holders. One need go no further than the original records of the Province of New York to find the names and addresses of slave holders, the number and sex, and in some instances, the ages of the slaves.

Turn back the pages to the year 1755. Let us confine our inquiry to the town of Hempstead. In response to the call of the assembly the captains in charge of the military districts reported the slave census. Here are the returns made in three districts for Hempstead town and you, daily reader of this newspaper, may be surprised to learn that one or more of your honored and revered forebears was on one of the official lists.

As in Hempstead, so throughout the rest of Long Island. It was lawful, customary, eminently respectable and quite the custom for those who could afford to buy one or more slaves to do so. The lists show that in many cases a male and a female slave were kept by the household, a means of promoting happiness among the slaves, beyond a doubt, and of heading off labor troubles in those very different times. Here are the Hempstead slave lists as of 1755, which you may find for yourself along with much similar information if you will delve into documentary history of New York:

“Hempstead in Queens County on Nissaw Island and in the Province of New York, accmpt of the slaves within his districts, brought in to George Everit, Captain.” April 28 – anno. 1775

Slave holders listed were: Georg Rierson, Cornelius Rierson, Benjamin Dusenbere, William Cornell, Hendrick Hendrickson, Thomas Hendrickson, John Hoster, John Montague, Jacob Vollentine, Benjamin Downing, William Lines, Thomas Seamons, Jonathan Valentine, Samuel Searing, Daniel Searing, Jacob Searing, Jeams Smith, Timothy Smith, Ellixander Davorson, John Cornell, David Allgoe, Sarah Seamons, Robbard Marvil, John Smith, Peter Titus, John Combs, Benjamin Smith, Jeams Smith, Richard Smith, Richard Titus, Uriah Plat, John Townsend, Phebe Not, John Petors, Epenetos Plat, Ambros Fish, Samuel Willis, Richard Williams, John Williams, William Titus, Mary Titus, Stephen Titus, Josiah Martin, George Holit, John Smith, John Searing, Samuel Rowland, John Hicks, Jacob Smith, Ephraim Vollingine, Elizabeth Titus, Charles Petors.

A list of the negro, Indian and Mullata slaves within the district whereof Benjamin Smith is captain at Hempstead in Queens county taken the first day of April, 1755 listed 20 the following holders: Jacob Hicks, Esquire, Jacob Hicks, Jr., Thomas Hicks, Phebe Hicks, James Mott, Daniel Hewlett, Jr., John Cornell, Joseph Scidmore, Thomas Cornell Esq., Captain Brown, Richard Cornell, Benja Lewes, Henry Mott, Vall Hewlett Peters, Elias Durlun, Eldard Lucas, Jacobus Lawrence, Elias Durlun ye 3rd, Abraham Bond.

A list of the slaves, male and female, above 14 years of age an account of which as been brot in to Captain John Birdsall, for his district in the township of Hempstead in Queens County, according to the late act of assembly. Owners' names were: The Rev. Mr. Seabury, Benjn. Lester, Jerm Bedell, Benjn Hewlett, Josh: Birdsall, Soln Seaman, James Pine, Benjn Smith, Leffurt Hangewout, Wid: Linington, Elias Durland, Jr., Richard Jackson, Joseph Petit, Jr., Thos. Tredwell, Jno. Carman, Saml. Jackson, John Rowland, Thos. Seaman, James Smith, Jacob Seaman Esq., Cornell Smith, Patrick Mott, Daniel Hewlett, Thos. Carman, Jno. Jackson, James Seaman, Jno. Jackson, James Seaman, Jno Hall, James Smith, Jr., Daniel Smith, Danl. Smith, John Grissman, Anthony Semans, Daniel Pine, Benj. Carman, Richard Suthard, Thos. Seaman, Junr.