

A PARTIAL HISTORICAL TIMELINE OF SLAVERY AND STRUCTURAL RACISM IN AMHERST

An appendix in support of

A RESOLUTION AFFIRMING THE TOWN OF AMHERST'S COMMITMENT TO END STRUCTURAL RACISM AND ACHIEVE RACIAL EQUITY

SLAVERY IN AMHERST

1641 – Massachusetts was the first colony to legalize slavery.¹

1645 – Emmanuel Downing wrote to his brother-in-law John Winthrop, governor of Massachusetts Bay Colony, “I doe not see how wee can thrive vntill wee gett into a stock of slaves sufficient to doe all our buisines.”²

1667 – In the East Hadley precinct known as Amherst, Robert Boltwood filed a lawsuit against Benjamin Wait in an attempt to recover from Wait twenty pounds he earned from selling Boltwood's slave without authority.³ Boltwood Avenue in modern-day Amherst was named for Lucius Manlius Boltwood; Robert Boltwood, slave owner, was Lucius Manlius Boltwood's forebearer—his 5th great-grandfather.⁴

1731-1758 – A local doctor, Dr. Richard Crouch of Hadley, kept a record of treatments, including medical treatments of slaves in East Hadley/Amherst, which note the following slave owners and slaves:

Ebenezer Kellogg, owner of “Negro Child,” medical treatments 1731-1746

Richard Chauncey, owner of “negro,” medical treatment 1735

John Ingram, owner of “Tully your negro,” medical treatments 1736-1742

Daniel Kellogg, owner of “negro,” medical treatments 1751-1756

Ebenezer Kellogg, owner of “negro,” medical treatments 1755

Ephraim Kellogg, owner of “negro,” medical treatments circa 1758⁵

1737 – The first person buried in Amherst's West Cemetery was John Scott of Palmer, and the first item listed in the November 1737 probate inventory of Scott's personal estate was “A Negro Man.”⁶

¹ Robert H. Romer, *Slavery in the Connecticut Valley of Massachusetts*, Levellers Press 2009, 6.

² Romer, 9.

³ Romer, 173.

⁴ Jones Library Special Collections.

⁵ Romer, 183.

⁶ Romer, 154.

1738 – Amherst resident Zechariah Field had a slave valued at one hundred and thirty pounds.⁷ According to the British National Archives currency conversion, one hundred and thirty pounds in 1738 was roughly the equivalent of three and a half years' wages for a skilled tradesman.

1754-1755 – A government survey shows a total of eighteen “Negro Slaves... Sixteen Years Old and Upward”-- “13 males” and “5 females”-- enslaved in Hadley/Amherst.⁸

1759 – Amherst was recognized as a district distinct from Hadley.

1760 – Amherst minister David Parsons owned a family of three slaves; one of them, named Pompey or Pomp, ran away and Parsons posted the following notice in the Boston Post-Boy:

Ran away from his Master David Parsons of Amherst Hadley, A Negro Man Servant named Pomp, about 26 Years of Age; a Fel- of the tallest Stature, judged six Feet and a half High, has been long of the Country, can Read and Write, speaks good English: Had on when he went away two Jackets, one of Leather, and under all a Flannel Jacket. Whoever takes up the said Runaway and will bring him to his said Master shall have THREE DOLLARS Reward, and all necessary Charges paid by me David Parsons N.B. All Masters of Vessels and others are hereby caution'd against harbouring, concealing, or carrying off said Servant as they would avoid the Penalty of the Law.⁹

1760s – The daily lives of Black people in Amherst “consisted of performing the hard labor tasks that whites wanted to avoid. Black men worked in the fields and the mills and on road repair crews. They filled mudholes in the highways, removed rocks, and dug ditches.”¹⁰

1766 – Amos Newport went to court to seek his freedom. Newport was born around 1710 on the western coast of Africa, where he was abducted by slave hunters around 1715. By 1729, he was a slave of David Ingersoll of Springfield, Massachusetts. Ingersoll then sold Newport to Joseph Billings of Hatfield.¹¹ Newport's 1766 lawsuit was unsuccessful; after losing in the lower court, he pursued an appeal, which was also unsuccessful. Slave owner Joseph Billings, the defendant in the case, was represented in court by the prominent Amherst lawyer Simeon Strong.¹² Strong Street in modern-day Amherst was named after John Strong, Simeon Strong's son.¹³

Circa 1790 – Wealthy Wheeler, a five-year-old girl who was born in the southern United States, was purchased by Oliver Cowsls, farmer in North Amherst. According to census records, Wealthy Wheeler remained in the household of Oliver's son Levi through 1870, when she was eighty-five years old. The purchase of Wealthy is the last mention of slavery in the historical records of

⁷ Carpenter & Morehouse, *The History of the Town of Amherst, Massachusetts*, 1896, 59.

⁸ Romer, 141.

⁹ Romer, 183-4.

¹⁰ James Avery Smith, *The History of the Black Population of Amherst, Massachusetts 1728-1870*, New England Historic Genealogical Society, 1999, 4.

¹¹ Smith, 6.

¹² Romer, 168.

¹³ Jones Library Special Collections: Dwight's History of the Strong Family, 1871.

Amherst. Oliver's son Dr. Rufus Cowls became a moderator at town meeting, a selectman, and a founder of Amherst College.¹⁴ Oliver's brother Jonathan was a farmer in North Amherst whose descendants operate businesses under the Cowls name in Amherst today.

Circa 1800 – The practice of slavery dwindled in Massachusetts. “No doubt some Massachusetts slave owners sold their slaves to buyers in states where slavery continued to be legal,” writes Robert Romer in *Slavery in the Connecticut Valley of Massachusetts*.¹⁵

FREE BLACKS IN AMHERST

1761 – The first free Black people of record, a married couple named Tom and Tab, arrived in Amherst in June of this year.¹⁶

1762 – On the first of January, the Selectmen ordered Tom and Tab to leave Amherst. In his history of the Black population of Amherst, genealogist James Avery Smith wrote that the Selectmen considered Tom and Tab to be “likely paupers if they were allowed to stay in Amherst as residents.”¹⁷

1788 – A state-wide law was enacted that forbade non-resident free blacks from entering Massachusetts, and was used as a means to force non-resident blacks and Indigenous people to leave the state; the law was reiterated in September of 1800. According to Smith, “The available information indicates a definite decline in Amherst’s black population in the decades before 1790. It is a chilling thought that the exclusion laws of 1788 and 1800 were enforced in Amherst and directed at freed slaves who may have tried to set up their own households.”¹⁸

1807 – In April of this year, two of the town’s poor, one of them “an aged negro who had served in the war of the Revolution,” were “struck off at auction” to local residents as paupers in need of boarding.¹⁹

1826 – A meeting-house for worship was built and owned by Oliver Dickinson. Dickinson received partial compensation for this expense by selling the pews inside the meeting-house. To each purchaser he gave a deed to confer the rights of perpetual ownership, subject to the condition that they were not to sell or lease their pew “to any negro or mulatto, or allow any such person to occupy them, under penalty of forfeiting their rights.”²⁰

¹⁴ Smith, 9-10, and Jones Library Special Collections.

¹⁵ Romer, 224-5.

¹⁶ Smith, 4.

¹⁷ Smith, 4.

¹⁸ Smith, 8-9.

¹⁹ Carpenter & Morehouse, 396-7.

²⁰ Carpenter & Morehouse, 228.

1835 – In direct contradiction of the historical record, historian Alden Bradford wrote, “The slave-trade was never permitted by the government of Massachusetts.”²¹

1840 – Three Black men of Amherst, Lewis B. Frazier, Henry Jackson, and William Jennings, were jailed for “kidnapping” eleven-year-old Black orphan Angeline Palmer. A ward of the state, Angeline had been placed under the care of the Shaw family in Belchertown; the Shaws then conspired to sell Angeline into slavery in the South. Frazier, who was Angeline’s half-brother, voiced concern about his sister’s safety to the Amherst Board of Selectmen in the spring of 1840, prior to the “kidnapping.” The five white Selectmen—Luther Nash, Eleazer Kellogg, Cotton Smith, Seth Nims, and Willard M. Kellogg—declined to intervene on Angeline’s behalf.²²

1845-1865 – A public record of vital statistics shows Black residents of Amherst concentrated in three primary occupational categories: laborer, domestic servant, and pauper. According to genealogist James Avery Smith, the increase in domestics from 1860 to 1865 “reflects how hard it was for an unskilled black person to secure a job above a subsistence level.”²³

1864 – A smallpox outbreak in March of this year led the town to remove occupants from a tenement on North Pleasant Street. The residents, all of whom were Black, were relocated to a “Pest House” in Hadley. While the Black residents were away, an unknown party tried to burn down their tenement.²⁴

1863 – Massachusetts Agricultural College, which became the University of Massachusetts Amherst, was founded.

1895 – An unsigned article in the Massachusetts Agricultural College student newspaper *Aggie Life* advocated for disenfranchising African Americans, claiming that Southern Blacks “are improvident, depraved, and strenuously resist any attempts at education,” and calling them a “body of people unprepared for freedom.” The article alleged that “the giving of the unqualified ballot to a people totally unfitted and unprepared for it was a direct blow against intelligent republican government.”²⁵

1897 – Massachusetts Agricultural College admitted its first Black student.²⁶

1898 – *The History of the Town of Amherst, Massachusetts* by Edward W. Carpenter and Charles F. Morehouse appears to deliberately erase a record of slavery in Amherst by omitting

²¹ Romer, 231.

²² Smith, 23-24.

²³ Smith, 36-7.

²⁴ Smith, 47.

²⁵ “African Americans at UMass,” Special Collections & University Archives, UMass Amherst Libraries <http://scua.library.umass.edu/youmass/doku.php?id=a:african_american_students>.

²⁶ “African Americans at UMass,” Special Collections & University Archives, UMass Amherst Libraries <http://scua.library.umass.edu/youmass/doku.php?id=a:african_american_students>.

the valuation of slaves from an historic tax document; the original tax record, with a column for human chattel, is still on file at the Jones Library.²⁷

AMHERST IN THE 20TH CENTURY

1940s – Black people in Amherst were excluded from hotels, some restaurants, barbershops, and the fraternities of UMass and Amherst College.²⁸

1948 – The University hired its first African American faculty member, Edwin D. Driver, in the sociology department. For several years Driver, who was also the first faculty of non-European descent, was one of the only Black people on campus. During his first year at UMass, Driver rented an apartment in Amherst from a fellow professor. But after he was married, he was unable to find housing in Amherst, ultimately finding a place in Northampton—after a landlady mistook him for being Polish.²⁹

1948 – Theodore Adams, a Black UMass student, was refused service at the private Quonset Club in Hadley which was owned by William F. Russell of Amherst. When Adams returned with an attorney, Russell claimed Adams was causing a disturbance, and police were subsequently posted at the door. Protestors with signs that read “Jim Crow Must Go” then picketed the package store in Amherst that was also owned by Russell.³⁰

1949 – The first Black teacher, Sylvia G. Hawley, began teaching in the Amherst school system, at Amherst Junior High School.³¹

1950 – A deed for the sale of a property on Blue Hills Road mandated that “said premises shall not be sold or rented to any colored person or persons.”³²

1964 – In a UMass freshmen class of nearly 2,500, only twelve students were of color. Of those twelve, eight would go on to graduate. Two years later, the entire Black student population at UMass was around fifty people, or about .001 percent of the student body.³³

1969 – Appearing before the Amherst Board of Selectmen, two Black UMass students, William Hasson and Stanley Kinard, described numerous incidents in which Black students were threatened by whites and sought help from the police to no avail. Such incidents included: a white youth pulling a knife on a Black student in a local pizza place, and when the Black student

²⁷ Romer, 234.

²⁸ Daniel Lombardo, “A Look Back,” Amherst Bulletin, 30 July 1986.

²⁹ “Driver, Edwin D.,” Special Collections & University Archives, UMass Amherst Libraries <<http://scua.library.umass.edu/youmass/doku.php?id=d:driver-edwin-d>>.

³⁰ Daniel Lombardo, “A Look Back,” Amherst Bulletin, 30 July 1986, 16.

³¹ Daniel Lombardo, “A Look Back,” Amherst Bulletin, 30 July 1986, 16.

³² Hampshire County Registry of Deeds Book 1083, Page 426 (deed pictured above).

³³ Cheryl L. Evans Papers, Special Collections & University Archives, UMass Amherst Libraries <http://findingaids.library.umass.edu/ead/murg050_6_e93>.

reported it to a police officer, the officer simply shrugged. In another incident, a group of white youth chased down a car of Black women and then invited Black men to come “settle” the matter, then greeted the Black men with chains and tire jacks—and when these Black students reported the incident to the police, officers again responded indifferently. In reply to Hasson and Kinnard’s testimony, Chairman of the Board of Selectmen Norman MacLeod said it was his impression that the police were not acting out of racial bias.³⁴

1973 – Graffiti with racial slurs was scrawled on the sidewalk in front of Amherst Regional High School and signed “KKK.”³⁵

1976 – The UMass Black student newspaper reported that Craemen Gethers, a young Black man, had been charged and convicted of armed robbery in Hadley in a case that rested on inconsistent eye-witness testimony by white onlookers and trial by a jury of eleven whites and one Black. Gethers was sentenced to eight to twelve years in jail.³⁶

1982 – A racial slur was written on a mural at Amherst Regional High School.³⁷

1986 – A violent incident at UMass led to seven Black students sustaining injuries. Witnesses said some of the attacks were racially motivated and that police failed to respond quickly to Blacks being beaten.³⁸

1990 – A white high school student violently assaulted a Black boy at a fair on the Amherst Town Common and used a racial slur. A headline in the Amherst Bulletin said the town was “shocked.” The fourteen-year-old victim was treated for torn ligaments in the Cooley Dickinson emergency room.³⁹ When asked what motivated the incident, a group of white Amherst Regional High School students said, “We were brought up that way.”⁴⁰

1990 – The NAACP filed a complaint against Amherst schools, citing an undercurrent of racism and harm to students of color, including an incident in which a white student “shoved a Confederate flag in the face of a black student and spoke about ‘the good old days.’”⁴¹

1990 – An article in the Amherst Bulletin covering Town Meeting referenced a sense of “discomfort” among Town Meeting members regarding “assertions that the white majority has allowed discrimination to go unchecked.”⁴²

³⁴ “Black students say police are hostile, unhelpful,” Amherst Record, 20 August 1969.

³⁵ “Racial slur painted on sidewalk,” Amherst Record, 16 May 1973.

³⁶ “The Case of Craemen Gethers and Earl Brown,” Nummo News, 27 September 1976.

³⁷ Phyllis Lehrer, “Racial incident at high school sparks student action,” Amherst Record, 24 March 1982, 1.

³⁸ Patrick J. Callahan, “Special investigator to look into recent UMass violence,” Amherst Bulletin, 19 November 1986, 37.

³⁹ Nancy Newcombe, “Racial incident at fair shocks Amherst,” Amherst Bulletin, 23 May 1990, 1.

⁴⁰ Nancy Newcombe, “Racism: ‘We were brought up that way,’” Amherst Bulletin, 23 May 1990, 1.

⁴¹ Bruce Watson, “NAACP files complaint against Amherst Schools,” Amherst Bulletin, 3 October 1990.

⁴² Nancy Newcombe, “Town Meeting’s civil rights action leaves bitter taste,” Amherst Bulletin, 14 November 1990.

1994 – The NAACP voiced concerns about Amherst schools lacking teachers who reflect the students' racial and ethnic makeup, and lacking sensitivity to those students' experiences. The NAACP noted that 27 percent of Amherst's school population consisted of Black, Latino and Asian students, while only 10 percent of teaching staff were non-white.⁴³

2002 – The front window of Amherst Typewriter and Computer, a local Black-owned business, was smashed, and someone wrote “KKK” with a typewriter that owner Robert Green had set up outside. This incident came just five years after a previous incident in which someone broke the store's front window at night, stole two computers, and smeared excrement in the store.⁴⁴

2004 – Nine white UMass students, all student government representatives, were photographed with hand-made images depicting themselves as members of the Ku Klux Klan. One image showed student senate speaker Patrick G. Higgins in a pointed KKK hat, holding a burning cross, captioned as “grand wizard,” with a speech bubble that said “I love ALANA.” ALANA is a campus group whose name stands for African Latino Asian/Pacific Islander Native American.⁴⁵

2006 – A man who yelled racial slurs and was verbally abusive toward his neighbors was issued a warning by police.⁴⁶

2014 – Racial slurs escalated into a Facebook post threatening violence at Amherst Regional High School, causing the school to temporarily close. Superintendent Maria Geryk said the school was conducting “a thorough investigation.”⁴⁷

2014 – Amherst Regional High School math teacher Carolyn Gardner left her job in the wake of anonymous racist messages and threats.⁴⁸

... many more racist incidents and evidence of structural racism not included here due to space constraints...

AMHERST TODAY

- According to the U.S. Census Bureau and reported by the Amherst League of Women Voters, there were 2,435 Black residents in Amherst in 2019, comprising 6.1% of the

⁴³ “Amherst Schools Called Racist: NAACP Forum Yields Much Harsh Criticism,” Daily Hampshire Gazette, 29 September 1994.

⁴⁴ “A page from the past, typewriter store is throwback to earlier era,” Amherst Bulletin, 11 January 2002, 1.

⁴⁵ “Student Apologizes for Acts at UMass Party,” Amherst Bulletin, 1 October 2004, 1.

⁴⁶ Police Report, Amherst Bulletin, 16 June 2006.

⁴⁷ Debra Scherban, “Amherst school officials mum on consequences resulting from Facebook threat, continue investigation of racism, bullying allegations,” Amherst Bulletin, 2014

⁴⁸ Debra Scherban, “‘Interim’ teacher hired to replace ARHS math teacher Carolyn Gardner as school year begins,” Amherst Bulletin, 28 August 2014.

town population. Fifty-one percent of Black residents were below the poverty line in 2019, compared with 30% of whites.⁴⁹

- In 2019 the Black median family income in Amherst was \$45,464; white median family income was 2.4 times greater, \$108,500.⁵⁰
- Only 1.8% percent of owner-occupied housing in Amherst belongs to Black folks. Whites make up 78.7% of town residents but hold 84.1% of owner-occupied housing.⁵¹
- Of around 1,100 students enrolled in Amherst's three elementary schools in 2019, 9% were Black, while 5.4% of school staff were Black. In the Amherst school system in the 2018-19 school year:
 - 2.3% of 12th grade white students dropped out;
 - 6.3% of 12th grade Black students dropped out;
 - 74.8% of graduates went on to attend a college or university;
 - 38.8% of white graduates went on to attend a private, 4-year college or university;
 - 0% of Black graduates went on to attend a private, 4-year college or university.⁵²
- According to data collected by Cooley Dickinson Hospital between 2012 and 2015, the mental-health hospitalization rate for Black people in Hampshire County was 1.7 times the rate for white people.⁵³

In her recent essay on the need for reparations for Black Americans in *The New York Times Magazine*, journalist and 1619 Project founder Nikole Hannah-Jones explains, "You do not have to have laws forcing segregated housing and schools if white Americans, using their generational wealth and higher incomes, can simply buy their way into expensive enclaves with exclusive public schools that are out of the price range of most black Americans."⁵⁴ She might have been writing specifically about Amherst, where the average price for a home in South Amherst is \$372,000 and in North Amherst, \$473,000. In central Amherst, average rentals are \$2,000 monthly.

Lack of intergenerational wealth prevents Black would-be entrepreneurs from opening businesses in Amherst. Of the 2,756 firms registered in Amherst in 2012 (most recent year available), just 8.5% were owned by non-white people.⁵⁵ There is no data specifically on Black business ownership in Amherst; suffice to say, Black-owned firms are a slender share of the total number of businesses in town.

⁴⁹ "Indicators of racial equity and justice for Amherst," League of Women Voters, 5 October 2020.

⁵⁰ "Indicators of racial equity and justice for Amherst," League of Women Voters, 5 October 2020.

⁵¹ U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey, 5-year data, 2014-2018. Table S2502: DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS FOR OCCUPIED HOUSING UNITS

⁵² Massachusetts Department of Education statistics supplied in a public information request to the Town of Amherst, 3 November 2020.

⁵³ "Indicators of racial equity and justice for Amherst," League of Women Voters, 5 October 2020.

⁵⁴ Nikole Hannah-Jones, "What Is Owed," *The New York Times Magazine*, 30 June 2020
<<https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/06/24/magazine/reparations-slavery.html>>.

⁵⁵ "Indicators of racial equity and justice for Amherst," League of Women Voters, 5 October 2020.

Whether in Amherst's schools, housing, or commerce, Black residents of Amherst have faced and continue to face deeply-rooted racism and structural barriers. White residents—especially those who are homeowners or business owners—are the modern-day beneficiaries of Amherst's standing as a wealthy white enclave, and, by extension, of the dire economic conditions of Black people who were enslaved here and have been subsequently excluded or made to feel unwelcome in the town's schools, housing, businesses, and public spaces.

This timeline represents only a small sampling of Amherst's history of white supremacy, anti-Black racism, and racial inequity. It was compiled by Reparations for Amherst, with research by Amherst resident Mattea Kramer. Cynthia Harbeson, Jones Library Special Collections, and Aaron Rubinstein, Special Collections and University Archives, University of Massachusetts, provided research assistance.

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KNOW ALL MEN BY THESE PRESENTS that we, Ernest J. Stachowicz and Stella V. Stachowicz, husband and wife, of Amherst, Hampshire County, Massachusetts, ~~have~~ ^{for consideration paid, grant to} Anthony E. Conklin and Mary G. Conklin, husband and wife, to hold jointly and to the survivor of them as tenants by the entirety, of said Amherst with warranty covenants

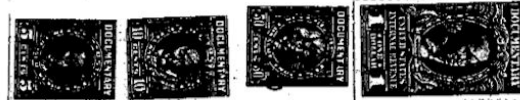
the land in said Amherst, situated on the east side of Blue Hills Road, shown as lot No. 24 on Plan of Lots on Blue Hills Road, dated Sept. 1933, T. L. Warner, Surveyor, recorded in Hampshire County Registry of Deeds Plan Book 18, Page 32, bounded and described as follows:

(Description and encumbrances, if any)
1933, T. L. Warner, Surveyor, recorded in Hampshire County Registry of Deeds Plan Book 18, Page 32, bounded and described as follows:

Beginning at a concrete post set in the easterly line of said Blue Hills Road, said concrete post marks the northwest corner of the land described; thence easterly, along land of the grantees, one hundred forty-seven and twenty-five hundredths (147.25) feet, more or less, to a concrete post; thence southerly eighty (80) feet to an iron pipe; thence westerly, along land of the grantors, one hundred forty-seven and seventy-seven hundredths (147.77) feet to an iron pipe set in the easterly line of Blue Hills Road; thence northerly, along the easterly line of Blue Hills Road, eighty (80) feet to the place of beginning.

It is mutually agreed between the parties hereto, their heirs, administrators, executors and assigns, that this conveyance is made subject to the following restrictions: (1) That no portion of any building constructed upon said property shall be nearer than 35 feet from the easterly side of said Blue Hills Road. (2) That said premises shall not be sold or rented to any colored person or persons. (3) That all service wires, including those for electricity and telephone running from the highway to any building or buildings erected or to be erected shall be installed underground. (4) That no house shall be constructed upon said property designed to accommodate more than one family.

Hereby conveying a portion of the land conveyed to us by deed of Horace O. Babb and Dorothy R. Babb, dated August 15, 1950, recorded in Hampshire County Registry of Deeds Book 1076, Page 332.



husband of said grantor
wife

~~release is said grantee all rights of~~ ~~grantee by the surveyor~~ ~~and better interest therein~~

Witness OUR hands and seal this first day of December 1950

Bruce G. Brown to both:

Ernest J. Stachowicz

Stella V. Stachowicz

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

Hampshire ss.

December 1, 1950

Then personally appeared the above named

Ernest J. Stachowicz

and acknowledged the foregoing instrument to be

his free act and deed before me,

Bruce G. Brown

My Commission expires 08-26-57 30 1953

Dec. 5, 1950 at 3 o'clock & 28 mins. P.M.
Rec'd. Ent'd. & Exam'd.

Bibliographic Notes