

Freedom Earned, Equality Denied: Evolving Race Relations in Exeter and Vicinity, 1776–1876

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In September 1798 Joseph Blanchard, foreman of the jury in Rockingham County Superior Court, announced the verdict on appeal by Mary Kimball in the case of *Scipio Duce v. Mary Kimball*. The jury found in favor of Duce and assessed damages of \$240. The wealthy and respected widow of Revolutionary War veteran Major Porter Kimball of Brentwood, a former parish of Exeter, must have been shocked at this outcome. She knew Scipio Duce as her deceased husband's illiterate slave, now free but living in poverty "down east"—in what later became Maine. Her neighbors had owned slaves for well over a century. How could anyone justify such a large award to a servant who, according to witnesses like Dudley Gilman, had told people that he did not expect to gain anything from the Kimball estate? The result of *Duce v. Kimball* suggests the presence in the Exeter area in the late eighteenth century of a surprisingly favorable environment for blacks.¹

The antebellum black population in New Hampshire has received little serious attention from historians, probably due to its small size—fewer than one thousand individuals in 1790, less than 1 percent of the state's population. Massachusetts and Connecticut each reported having over five thousand blacks in 1790, and blacks made up more than 6 percent of the population of Rhode Island that year. Most of New Hampshire's blacks at the advent of the Revolution lived in Rockingham County, the commercial and political center of the region. With a

population overwhelmingly supportive of the patriot cause, Exeter by 1775 was, for all practical purposes, "the capital of the state, the seat of government, and the center of all civil and military activity in New Hampshire." The town supported the families of more than two hundred war volunteers and passed tax exemptions in 1784 for those veterans who had not received a bounty for enlistment. By the end of the eighteenth century, Exeter had become the focus of free black society in the state, largely as a result of an influx of black Revolutionary War veterans.²

Archelaus White was a typical example of a black soldier who settled in Exeter. When the war broke out in 1775, Archelaus was a servant of James White of Plaistow, a rural town on the Massachusetts border. With the permission of his master, he enlisted under Captain Jeremiah Gilman of Plaistow and fought at Bunker Hill. After a year of service at Cambridge, White marched to Providence, New London, and then to New York, where he was stationed on Governor's Island until the army retreated to New Jersey. He was present at the capture of General Burgoyne and discharged at Bethlehem, New Jersey, at the close of the war. Like many black veterans, he was set free after his service. He moved to Exeter and, with the pay and pension he received from his service, he rented a small hut and land for a farm from local lawyer Oliver Peabody. When White died in 1826, he owned a pig worth ten dollars and a few household goods totaling another \$9.19. His widow received his pension of \$38.45.³

Black veterans are known to have settled in Exeter from as far away as Newburyport, Massachusetts, to the south, and Rindge, New Hampshire, to the west. The experience of fighting side by side with black men appears to have suggested, to some whites at least, that people of color had earned a place in soci-

ety and deserved the opportunities that hard work and education provided. Blacks faced an arduous transition, nevertheless, during the early years of the nineteenth century. The status of slavery after New Hampshire's Declaration of Rights in 1788 was by no means clear. The process of emancipation in New Hampshire was a gradual one and yet appears to have moved more rapidly in Exeter than in most other large towns.⁴

The black population in Exeter more than doubled between 1775 and 1790 from thirty-eight to eighty-three individuals; only two were still enslaved by the end of this period. At this time Exeter boasted the largest concentration of free blacks in New Hampshire, despite ranking thirteenth in total population. By contrast Portsmouth, the former seat of British authority and the largest town in the state with nearly three times the population of Exeter, had only 102 black inhabitants, twenty-six of whom remained enslaved. Almost three-quarters of Exeter's black residents were living in independent households by 1790, as compared with less than half in Portsmouth. At least eleven of the fourteen independent black households in Exeter in 1790 were headed by a Revolutionary War veteran or his widow.⁵

Until recently history has consigned the subject of racial relations in New England to the periphery. New studies, however, are beginning to form a more complete picture of the ongoing struggle of Americans to come to terms with the "race question." The story that is emerging from historians tells of confused Northern whites gradually constructing an ideology of racial difference to help them cope with the new reality of free blacks in their society. According to these scholars, the beginnings of modern-day racism may be found even in the same cities and towns where the abolition movement flourished.⁶

Fortunately the small black population in and around Exeter was concentrated enough to study in detail. New insight into the complex nature of racial relations in New England communities in the early-to-mid-nineteenth century promises to aid in our

understanding of the development of racism in the early republic. Unraveling the tangled roots of racism in early American communities such as Exeter is critical, moreover, to understanding the stubborn and vexing problems of race relations today.⁷

"As Good a Fellow as Ever Stood"

Once settled in Exeter, veterans who had formerly been slaves took advantage of the town's public school system to educate their children. The Pauls, one of the best-known black families in Exeter, provide an example of the success that publicly educated Exeter blacks enjoyed throughout the antebellum period. Caesar Paul, freed from slavery by Major John Gilman before 1771, married Love Rollins, a former slave and daughter of a well-known white Stratham lawyer. Caesar, who received his education in the household of his master while working as his body servant, sent three of his sons, Thomas, Nathaniel and Benjamin, to Exeter's common schools. They all became noted Baptist preachers and national black leaders.⁸

Perhaps the Pauls' accomplishments could be anticipated, considering Caesar's intimate bonds with an important local family. White support for blacks, however, went well beyond ties of kinship or paternalistic obligation. To fully understand the depth of white advocacy for blacks in and near Exeter during the late eighteenth century, one must return to the story of Scipio Duce.

Scipio had been a servant to Major Porter Kimball since childhood. He quickly established himself as an exceptional farm hand, able to do more work with a team of oxen than anyone in the area. He was also a man of exceptional character, trusted by his master to go to market with Kimball's money and make purchases on his behalf. He was well known and highly respected by both blacks and whites in Brentwood, Exeter, and the surrounding area. When independence was declared, Major Kimball believed that Congress had freed all slaves and was pleased by the news. He often spoke with great admiration and even

affection of his favorite servant. He promised Scipio that he would give him good wages, a team of oxen, and a house and land if he stayed on the farm. Major Kimball's first wife was dead, and there were no children to inherit his estate.⁹

When Samuel Cram attempted to hire Scipio from Kimball as a substitute in the army in 1777, the major declined. Kimball needed Scipio to manage his affairs as he was about to depart for war duty himself. Scipio ran the farm for several years while the major was away and conducted virtually all of his business, even purchasing and selling property on Kimball's behalf. Several of Kimball's neighbors testified that Scipio did a better job of managing business than Kimball did himself.¹⁰

After Major Kimball's return from the war, he remarried and had two children. His attitude toward Scipio began to change. He refused to pay Scipio for his services and did not give him the house and land he had promised him. When confronted by a neighbor about his promises of housing and lands, Kimball replied that he let Scipio go because "the blacks would come to his house and enquire after Scipio Kimball and he did not want so many of them about." Kimball also expressed a concern that if Scipio returned to his farm, the "parish would throw them on him, and that he would have to maintain them all." Kimball did provide Scipio with a team of oxen and a bed, items of considerable value in the eighteenth century.¹¹

By December of 1786 Scipio had had enough. He left the Kimball farm in Brentwood and went to live with family three miles away in Exeter. He was "warned out" of town on February 7, 1787. Scipio nevertheless went to work for Exeter resident James Leavitt in April. He changed his surname from Kimball to Duce; was married in Exeter to Phyllis Folsom, a woman of color; and moved to Newfields, York County, Massachusetts (now Maine), in November of 1787.¹²

Although Kimball missed his former slave and enquired often about his welfare, the major died in 1794 without providing for Scipio's well being.

Kimball left his entire estate to his wife and children. Many of his neighbors were so incensed by his failure to honor his commitments to Scipio that they decided to sponsor a lawsuit on behalf of the former slave.¹³

Six respected white residents of Scipio's former neighborhood, including Deacon Jonathan Veazey and Captain James Sinklair, met with William Plumer of nearby Epping, a noted lawyer and future governor of the state, who agreed to take the case on a contingency basis. Fifteen white men stood as witnesses for Scipio Duce, as opposed to only four for Mary Kimball. John Shaw called Scipio "the best black man I ever knew." John Tucke was even more emphatic, calling Scipio "as good a fellow as ever stood on the ground." It was a strong show of respect for their former slave neighbor. Clearly, this part of Rockingham County was a place where a black family could find freedom and opportunity and where white residents offered black residents a high degree of inclusion and support.¹⁴

They have "Suffered Sufficiently"

Even with strong support from some of their white neighbors, black families faced an extremely difficult transition from slavery to freedom. The generation of black men who had fought in the Revolution had been trained almost exclusively in just three occupations: farming, maritime work, and domestic service. Most had spent their meager resources purchasing their freedom, renting or buying tools and property, and reassembling families separated by bondage or economic necessity. Struggling to survive in the decades following the end of the war, blacks had little time to fully integrate themselves into the social, educational, and religious life of the community. As the children of this first generation of free black residents grew to adulthood, a clear division emerged between those who prospered and the increasing number who barely avoided starvation.

Although some prosperous black farmers like Jubal Martin lived in rural areas on the outskirts of town or in adjacent communities that had been set off from Exeter, a larger number of blacks settled in

an enclave near the west bank of the Swampscott River that became known as “New Guinea.” This area was close by the commercial wharves and shops along present-day Water Street. New Guinea served as the social hub of black Exeter.

Every year the Revolutionary veterans in the area joined in the celebration of Independence Day. Although their military participation had been welcomed during the war, blacks were not allowed to serve in the new state militia. Instead they had their own informal militia company, led by Zachariah Robinson, the former slave of Capt. Ephraim Robinson. Old Zack’s company was treated to cake and wine at the residences of Governor Gilman and other white leaders as they marched through the town in second-hand uniforms to the sounds of fife and drum. The pride that black veterans felt in their new country must have been tempered by the segregated status of their celebration and neighborhood.¹⁵

Early signs of social segregation in Exeter contrast with further evidence of white community support for blacks, as in the case of Prince Light, who lived in the New Guinea neighborhood with his wife and daughter. Prince was a slave of Robert Light and had lived in Exeter since about 1765 when he was twenty years old. He enlisted in 1776 and served with distinction. In 1800 he married Phyllis Currier, a single mother with one daughter. They lived in one of several small houses built and owned by black residents on town land.

One day in January 1812 life turned sour for Prince. He became involved in a dispute with his black neighbor, Bob “Bombaway” Duce, a seafaring man who was often away from home. Duce’s wife ran a small hotel and tavern. Whatever the cause of the rift between Light and Duce, it ended with Prince and Phyllis Light stealing Duce’s household possessions and setting fire to his house. The Lights were convicted of theft, sentenced to one year in prison, and obliged to pay a fine of one hundred dollars each. Unable to pay the fines, they languished in jail for several years until an extraordinary event took place.¹⁶

As in the case of Scipio Duce nearly twenty years earlier, white citizens rallied to the cause of their poor black neighbors. Twenty-nine white men petitioned the court to release Prince Light and his wife on the grounds that they had “suffered sufficiently” for their crime and should “once more enjoy the blessings of Liberty.” The court agreed, and the Lights were set free. In 1818 Prince was awarded a pension for his war service, but his mental faculties had deteriorated so much that he had to be committed to the poor farm in 1820. He died the following year.¹⁷

Economic conditions following the War of 1812 caused extreme hardship for families like the Lights. The poor farm was a new concept for Exeter, established in 1817 in response to the growing number of indigent families during the years following the war, which had seriously affected trade and the economy. Prior to this time, the poor typically received aide from individual citizens, who would bid to support them in return for a stipend from the town and whatever labor they could extract from their wards. Black Exeter residents took great pride in their independence, and some lived in desperate poverty rather than submit to support from the town. Until around 1830 the poor farm served only a few families for generally short periods.¹⁸

In addition to establishing a poor farm, white Exeter citizens were also instrumental around the same time in an effort to help blacks help themselves. In 1817 two of the town’s Baptist deacons, Samuel Hatch and John F. Moses, together with Jonathan Smith, formed a committee to promote an organization to benefit “people of *colour* throughout the State.” The blacks met at the home of their appointed leader, London Dailey. The day concluded with speeches at the courthouse in the afternoon. Little further is known about this society or its activities; more is known about the whites than about the blacks involved. Moses also established the first Sunday school at the Baptist Church and supervised it for fifty years. He was revered by many of his fellow townspeople for his charity to the poor and his frequent visits to the almshouse. Hatch later served both as state representative and senator.¹⁹

The Last Black Veteran

Most of the first generation of blacks managed to earn enough to support their families and held expectations that their children would truly prosper. Not all, however, enjoyed white respect and support. The pursuit of wealth was rapidly rising into the pantheon of American values, and poor whites found themselves competing with blacks for resources. Some black residents of Exeter, continuing to believe in the egalitarian rhetoric of the Revolution, were determined to take advantage of the opportunities of an emerging capitalist economy. One of these ambitious blacks was Tobias Cutler.

Cutler came to the Exeter area from Rindge in the southwestern part of the state, where he had been the slave of lawyer Enoch Hale. Colonel Hale agreed to free Tobias if he would serve in the Continental Army, so he enlisted in 1780 and served three years. After gaining his freedom, he married Dorothy Paul, daughter of Caesar Paul. In 1789 Cutler purchased a one-and-three-quarter-acre farm in Stratham from his wife's white grandfather, agreeing to pay for it by laboring there for three years. Cutler's contract stipulated that he keep half the produce and pay half the taxes. After this indenture expired, he owned his own small farm.²⁰

Cutler's connections with the Paul family enabled him to gain considerable access to white society and its economic opportunities. He was involved in a wide variety of activities, some of dubious legality. Having had a lawyer for a master, Cutler was educated and street-smart. He rapidly became the most litigious, freewheeling black man in the Exeter vicinity. Probably because of his reputation as a shrewd and successful trader, Cutler was not a favorite with some of the white farmers in the area. In July 1798 a mob of five men, including Jonathan Robinson Sr. and Jr., destroyed Cutler's house. It may not be a coincidence that the Robinsons were the only family in Exeter that still held slaves in 1790 and were also the only neighbors to defend Mrs. Kimball in her lawsuit with Scipio Duce. Cutler sued for \$160 in damages, but

the court decided that his house was only worth fifty-nine dollars. This was just the beginning of Cutler's troubles with his neighbors.²¹

Cutler began a three-year legal mission in 1806, as attorney on behalf of his sister-in-law, Harriet Paul, who brought suit against a black Bostonian named Frazer for breach of promise of marriage. Harriet won her suit, calling Tobias Cutler "the best friend she had in the world" and promising to pay him for his services even if she "had to go out washing to earn the money." Harriet's skills did not apparently include laundering, as Cutler brought suit against her to recover seventy dollars in expenses plus a fifty-two-dollar gold watch that she had promised to Cutler as part of his fee. Cutler lost the suit but recovered the entire \$122 on appeal. His success greatly strained relations with his wife's family.²²

Cutler then began a series of legal battles against the Paul family. He sued Jacob Paul for various small debts and for destroying some of his belongings. Thomas Paul of Newburyport then ejected Cutler from his house and property in Exeter. He was compelled to leave his family with relatives in Exeter and journey to Newburyport, where he invested in the privateer *Essex*. The venture yielded an impressive income for Cutler and his partners. He celebrated his good fortune in 1814 by purchasing nearly eight dollars worth of clothing, including a silk jacket and silk trousers. Kinsley Hall was forced to sue Cutler to obtain his quarter share in the *Essex* enterprise, adjudged at forty dollars by the court.²³

Cutler supplemented the income from his various legal enterprises by selling rum without a license. He was brought to court on state charges for this offense in 1817, but he later obtained a permit and began to sell spirits legally from his store on Water Street. In 1820 Cutler was among the first black veterans in the state to apply for a pension. He claimed in his application that "lameness in the fingers" kept him from pursuing his primary occupation as a laborer and that he was unable to support himself and his children. He listed his property at the time as "six old chairs and a few articles of household furniture of

very small value.” Cutler mastered the system in his own clever way and upon his death in 1834 left his wife more than fifty-five dollars in personal effects, most of which consisted of fine apparel. Cutler was the last black Revolutionary soldier in Exeter. His estate included considerable property and was not settled until his son’s death in 1864 when Cutler’s feigned indigence was long forgotten.²⁴

“Dark Complexion and Degraded *Caste*”

There was a considerable amount of grumbling among the parishioners leaving church services in Epsom one spring morning in 1824. The minister had just concluded a sermon mourning the deaths of two honored veterans of the Revolutionary War. The fact that he eulogized the poor black man Cato Fisk before he paid tribute to General Michael McCleary offended some members and caused a minor commotion. Offering support to poor people of color was a Christian obligation; but, treating blacks as equals, fifty years removed from the Declaration of Independence, was not a widely held principle among the white citizens of New Hampshire.²⁵

Cato Fisk was the former slave of Dr. Ebenezer Fisk of Epping. After using forty pounds in enlistment bounties and wartime pay to purchase his freedom, he was married to Else Huso in Brentwood by the abolitionist minister Nathaniel Trask in 1783. The couple began an odyssey of temporary lodgings in Exeter, Deerfield, Raymond, Poplin (now Fremont), and possibly other towns in the Exeter area. By the time Fisk died, he owned a small “hut” and barn in Epsom, a cow, a pig, and household items, valued at sixty-four dollars. He was poor by white standards, but strictly in the middle range of black estates at the time.²⁶

By 1835 all of Exeter’s black Revolutionary soldiers were dead. Gone, too, was that special bond that blacks and whites shared as co-combatants for liberty. Although Exeter still contained the largest concentration of free people of color in the state, their numbers were small compared to the rest of

New England. While Exeter’s overall population more than doubled to 2753 between 1790 and 1830, the town’s black population remained constant at about eighty individuals throughout these four decades. Few black Exeter residents amassed any significant estate, and those moderately successful lived primarily as small farmers. As blacks represented no serious threat during this time to white dominance of Exeter’s economic and social institutions, white benevolence towards them held few, if any, negative consequences.²⁷

Increasingly many of Exeter’s brightest and best-educated blacks, like the Pauls, were leaving New Hampshire to pursue their fortunes elsewhere. Black veteran London Dailey was still living in the state when he died in 1820 at the age of seventy-two. By 1855, when his widow, Nancy Dailey, then of Boston, submitted London’s original discharge, signed by George Washington, as part of her bounty claim for sixty acres out west on behalf of her children, another black family had left the area for good.²⁸

Remaining to deal with the tumultuous changes looming in the 1830s were the frayed remnants of a once vibrant black community. The fortunes of those still living in the area, like those of their white neighbors, would unfold in an increasingly individualistic environment in which the gap between the prosperous and the poor would widen considerably. The struggles of enlightened white leaders like Samuel Hatch and John F. Moses would continue to keep an increasing number of poor blacks from starving, primarily by insisting that the almshouse be supported adequately. Their efforts, however, could not halt the emigration of educated and promising young blacks, nor prevent increasingly racist undercurrents and deepening divisions from forming in Exeter society in the years leading up to the Civil War.

Race relations in New Hampshire, as elsewhere, were growing more complex by the early 1830s. An incendiary pamphlet entitled *Appeal to the Coloured Citizens of the World* by black Boston activist David

Walker, published in 1829, and a slave revolt in 1831 in Virginia led by Nat Turner, exacerbated tensions between the moderate majority in the North and the radical abolitionists. A mob pulled down the house of poor black Exeter resident Ben Jakes in 1830. Five years later a crowd of whites destroyed an integrated private school in the inland New Hampshire town of Canaan. The next year mobs in Exeter and Portsmouth disrupted abolitionist meetings sponsored by the Methodist Church in their respective communities.²⁹

Blacks in port towns, during this unsettled time, lived in constant fear of being abducted by bounty hunters and being sold into slavery. In 1834, on the other hand, more than 150 of Exeter's leading women signed a petition aimed at abolishing slavery in the nation's capital. In the face of growing political and religious divisions, Exeter's progressive white leaders struggled to maintain a favorable environment for blacks. That struggle would take center stage in 1831 in a sensational event involving Charles G. Tash, the most prosperous member of one of Exeter's leading black families.³⁰

Oxford Tash was a slave of Colonel Thomas Tash of Newmarket. He enlisted in 1775 at the age of twenty-one and agreed to serve for the duration of the war in exchange for his freedom. He contracted smallpox at Winter Hill, near Boston, and was later wounded, carrying the musket ball in his thigh for the rest of his life. Oxford married Esther Howe Freeman, a light-skinned woman of color, in the Presbyterian Church at Newburyport in 1781, and the couple settled in Exeter. He worked hard farming a small plot of land on the estate of Nathaniel Gilman Jr. and raised a large family with no assistance from the town. Oxford refused to apply for a pension until 1807 when his physical condition no longer allowed him to work. After his death in 1810 Oxford's widow supported herself and her children through odd jobs and by her ability to tell fortunes. In the evening, young people are said to have traveled from a distance to hear "Marm" Tash reveal the secrets of the future.³¹

The Tash children attended public school with their white neighbors and proved to be excellent stu-

dents. Evidence suggests that Exeter's public schools were integrated from an early date and remained so throughout the period examined. Oxford's eldest son, Robert G. Tash, became the first black man ordained by the General Conference of the Free Will Baptist Church in 1827. He served as a preacher in Berwick, Maine, but returned to Exeter late in the nineteenth century, where the town supported him in his infirmity with funds provided through his brother's estate.³²

Robert's brother, Charles G. Tash, became the body servant of the Hon. Nathaniel Gilman Jr. and thus gained exceptional access to the workings of the Exeter business community. He became a successful trader, involved in more than eighty real estate transactions. Charles loaned money and donated property to local schools and churches. He also served as a private aide to Commodore John C. Long, an Exeter resident who commanded the Pacific Squadron after 1857. When Charles Tash died in 1864, he was one of the most accomplished black residents of Exeter. The respect of the white community for Tash, only one generation removed from slavery, is especially remarkable when one considers the events of June 5, 1831.³³

Charles Tash had proposed marriage to Sally Moore, a white servant in the Gilman household. Sally refused, prompted by the opposition of family and friends. Tash became despondent, and, during a summer evening visit, he shot Sally twice in the abdomen before turning a second gun on himself. Each survived their grave wounds, but Tash was convicted of attempted murder. The shooting and trial, coming in the midst of increased racial tension, caused a sensation well beyond Exeter. Tash's chief counsel was Ichabod Bartlett, one of the state's top lawyers and a former member of Congress. During the trial Bartlett made an impassioned plea to the better impulses of the jury:

It might be reasonably supposed that an unfortunate being like the prisoner at the bar, with African blood in his veins, would be brought before a jury under sad disadvantage. Our country have done

injury enough to that race. But fortunately for the prisoner, in this section of our country no prejudices are entertained against them. All our citizens have equal rights, and are equally protected under the laws; and it is unnecessary to request the jury not to be influenced against him by his complexion or situation in life.

It is difficult to gauge the sincerity of Bartlett's statement, particularly since he ran unsuccessfully for governor later that year as an "anti-Democrat." Perhaps he believed that he and his neighbors harbored no racial prejudice; yet, in some of his other statements during the trial, he depicted Tash as a "humble individual, of a dark complexion, and degraded *caste*, who ought to know nothing of the tender passion [of love]."³⁴

The court, upon recommendation from the jury, failed to sentence Tash, claiming that he was driven temporarily insane by his heartbreak. Clearly, Tash's connections with the white community saved him from a long term in jail and remained strong enough to allow him to prosper in the very town where he had tried to murder a white woman.

"Forging Fresh Fetters"

By the middle of the nineteenth century, very few black families of moderate means remained in the area. The widow Tash was dead and her surviving sons had no children of their own. Many of the Pauls and other "respectable" black families had long since moved to large cities like Boston where they found opportunity and a vibrant black community. Jubal Martin, the area's most successful black farmer, was dead and his children scattered. The descendants of Tobias Cutler comprised a tiny black elite, isolated from their less prosperous black neighbors and possessing nearly three-quarters of the total black wealth in Exeter.³⁵

Rufus Emery Cutler inherited both the ambition and the business skills of his father. He and his son, John Gunison Cutler, managed to build up a sizable estate, despite frequent financial reversals and the fact

that Rufus was completely deaf. They owned two dry goods stores, two restaurants, a billiard parlor, and a gaming establishment. Rufus's brother, Nathaniel P. Cutler, operated the barbershop just down the street. Their sister Harriett, moreover, married George Harris, a successful black grocer from Pennsylvania. The Harrises ran a store and restaurant, amassing a fortune worth eighty-three thousand dollars by 1860, a time when the average household wealth in New Hampshire was \$1794. Their clientele was almost exclusively white, and the Cutler/Harris enterprises drew many "sporting types" from throughout the region.³⁶

The Cutler and Harris families were integrated into white Exeter society to a much greater extent than their less prosperous neighbors. They attended the Baptist Church faithfully for more than fifty years. Tobias Cutler, Rufus Cutler, and George Harris all began paying a poll tax for the first time in 1833. Rufus became a candidate for superintendent of the school committee in 1850 and 1851. Harriett Harris helped the women of the Baptist church raise funds for a new parsonage in 1857 and left five hundred dollars to the church upon her death in 1895.³⁷

Even for the Cutlers, however, periods of economic depression could bring hard times. Rufus Cutler mortgaged all his property and possessions to Harris in the late 1830s and placed his wife and children in the almshouse, where they would live for nearly five years. If life was this tenuous for successful black families like the Cutlers, how difficult must it have been for the vast majority who had almost nothing?³⁸

After about 1830 Exeter area blacks found their opportunities limited by the small size of their community and by a subtle, yet persistent, undercurrent of racist attitudes. Despite the best efforts of a loyal group of liberal white reformers and town leaders, most black families sank deeper into trans-generational poverty. A brief glimpse of two families living inside the walls of the almshouse on the town farm reveals subtle changes in white residents' support for their indigent black neighbors as the nineteenth century progressed.

Caesar Wallace, according to his son George, was brought “from beyond the seas at the age of five years.” In 1777 he enlisted in the army at Newbury and married Katy Duce of Exeter six years later. He owned just one cow and no property at the time of his death in Gilmanton in the late 1820s. His son George and his daughter Catherine married into the poor side of the Paul family and settled in Exeter. By 1831 George Wallace found that he was unable to support his family and was forced to place his wife and children on the town farm and look for work. George joined his family in the almshouse in 1835.³⁹

The annual cost of supporting the poor of Exeter had reached one thousand dollars by 1829, compared to \$866 spent on the schools. This provided for eighteen families living independently but needing firewood to survive the winter, as well as for the inmates at the almshouse. Residents of the town farm earned their keep by working in the fields and making their own clothing. Children were often bound out to what the Overseers of the Poor hoped were “good places, with the express condition that they should be suitably educated, and allowed and required to attend Sabbath schools and public worship as much as possible.”⁴⁰

Some of the townspeople began to question the worthiness of their poor neighbors and the liberal support that they received from the town. The town meeting of 1844 voted that, due to a recent depression, “no money be raised the present year for the support of the poor.” The budget for 1845 was set at just three hundred dollars. The report of the town farm manager in 1845 is laced with negative comments about the Wallace family and other inmates. The widow Dolly Paul Wallace is described as “a cripple unable to do much work” and her seven-year-old son Freeman as “a troublesome boy.” Fifteen-year-old Benjamin Swett is called “a very idle fellow” from whom it is “almost impossible” to extract much labor. Sophia Cogswell, “a coulered person” described in the report of 1844 as able to do “some work” and as “faithful,” is chided the next year because she “doesn’t know how to perform much

work and is not of much service to the family.”⁴¹

The town seemed to be growing impatient with its poor. This attitude was reflected in the school committee report of 1848, which describes district number three in stark terms:

It is, on the whole, rather a backward school. . . . This District, embracing as it does the Poor-farm, contains, perhaps, in proportion to its population, more children of degraded parents than any other District in town. This fact renders the duties of the teacher much more difficult and responsible—more difficult because she has oftentimes not only to work on inferior natures, but also to counteract the effects of parental example and precept—more responsible, because the town looks to her, and to her chiefly, to render these children of the unfortunate or the vicious, useful and intelligent members of society.⁴²

Since the only white inmates of the town farm at this time were elderly, the words “degraded” and “inferior natures” used here, referred exclusively to black children and their parents. Over time, white Exeter residents, like those elsewhere, developed what has been termed a “constructed amnesia” of their own heritage of slavery. They began to shift blame to the blacks themselves for their poor status in society.⁴³

White townspeople used discretion in their treatment of the “worthy poor” versus those who failed as a result of their own intellectual or moral defects. The Halls were one example of a “deserving” Exeter family. Jude Hall was probably the most famous New Hampshire black veteran of the Revolutionary War. His physical strength and heroism at battles like Bunker Hill earned him the nickname “Old Rock.” He married Rhoda Paul in 1786 and lived in a two-room cabin in the woods in Exeter near the Kensington line. This former slave was literate and served as a witness in at least two court cases. Jude and Rhoda Hall and their ten children lived in poverty. However, being poor was hardly a burden when compared to the grief the Halls endured.⁴⁴

One after another, three of Hall's sons were abducted and sold into slavery. Only William later escaped and ended up working in England as a ship captain. James was seized and sold by David Wedgwood, an Exeter resident who claimed that Jude owed him four dollars. Aaron was robbed in Roxbury, Massachusetts, after returning from a sea voyage, and was shipped away as a slave, never to be heard from again. When Jude Hall died in 1827, his son George inherited nothing and his widowed mother was forced to move to Maine, where some of the Pauls had relocated. George Hall stayed in Exeter with his wife and eight children. He tried to make ends meet but eventually failed. Town leaders must have taken into account the terrible fate of his family because the treatment they gave him was quite unlike that experienced by other town paupers.⁴⁵

After twenty-one years of self-support and most likely as a result of five successive years of general economic depression, George Hall reluctantly entered the almshouse in 1842. Later that same year the Overseers of the Poor found Hall a small house and a quarter acre for him to farm on the almshouse property. The town paid for his rent, food, and farming supplies, plus twelve dollars for his children's schooling in district number three. By 1846, although his wife had died, Hall was back on his feet and off Exeter's pauper list. The town then helped to support Hall from the Kate Holland Fund, an unusual charity created in 1836 and named after a respected black Revolutionary War widow who lived in the town for many years. Holland's daughter, Catherine Merrill, a black spinster, left her estate worth more than nine hundred dollars to the town to be used for "the relief of such colored persons having their settlement in said Exeter; but not paupers therein, as in consequence of sickness, youth or old age, may need occasional assistance." Clearly, the white residents of Exeter were not alone in distinguishing the worthy poor from the idle poor.⁴⁶

The Kate Holland Fund definitely made a difference to the Hall family. In 1858 twenty-three-year-old Moses Uriah Hall, one of George Hall's sons,

entered Phillips Exeter Academy, probably the first person of color to attend the private school. In winter, presumably to help support himself, he drove a sleigh borrowed from Dr. Henry French, carried his white classmates to the academy, returned the vehicle to its owner, and then walked back to the school. Hall and his brother Aaron later married white women and served in the Colored Infantry in the Civil War. Moses Hall lived for many years in the town as a skilled stonemason.⁴⁷

Other poor black residents also gained the respect of their white neighbors. On November 27, 1832, an obituary appeared in the *Exeter News-Letter*:

On Saturday morning, Mr. Joseph Whitfield, a coloured man, aged about 70 years.—He was found dead in the lane leading to his house, and is supposed to have fallen a victim of apoplexy.—Whitfield has borne through life the character of a worthy and industrious man, and perhaps more richly deserves to have a paragraph penned in his praise, than many whose riches have entitled them to a column of eulogy.⁴⁸

After making his way to Exeter, Whitfield, an escaped slave from Virginia, had married into the Paul family. His son, James Monroe Whitfield, was educated in Exeter public schools to the age of nine. James eventually settled as a barber in Buffalo, New York, and became a celebrated black poet and civil rights advocate. On January 16, 1854, the *Exeter News-Letter* proudly published an account of Whitfield's success as a "Son of Exeter and the Town Library," and a person "whose history is a sufficient refutation, of that . . . now obsolete idea, that a black man has no talent nor any capacity to excel."⁴⁹

Despite the account's optimism Exeter in 1854 was not quite the same nurturing and supportive environment for blacks as it had been in the first few decades following independence. With most black descendants of the Revolutionary veterans gone, tattered remnants and transient others comprised a dying community, employed in menial jobs and isolated from mainstream town society. Most black chil-

dren still attended school with their white neighbors. Their parents received financial assistance from the town when needed. The words used to justify the charity of white citizens, however, became less paternal and sympathetic and more judgmental and condescending. They may have had the *capacity* to excel, as the newspaper account noted, but nearly all blacks were pigeonholed into a limited array of menial occupations that offered little chance of escape from their new master, poverty. In the words of Frederick Douglass, “the malignant arrangement of society” had left even his friend Whitfield, the talented poet, “buried in the precincts of a barber’s shop.”⁵⁰

Whitfield, in excerpts from his epic 1853 poem titled “America,” expresses the dashed hopes of the post-Revolutionary generations of black Exeter area residents:

America, it is to thee
Thou boasted land of liberty,
It is to thee I raise my song,
Thou land of blood, and crime, and wrong.
Was it for this, that freedom’s fires
Were kindled by your patriot sires?
When black and white fought side by side,
Upon the well-contested field,—
Turned back the fierce opposing tide,
And made the proud invader yield—
The thought ne’er entered in their brains
That they endured these toils and pains,
To forge fresh fetters, heavier chains
For their own children, in whose veins
Should flow that patriotic blood,
So freely shed on field and flood.⁵¹

“The Gray of the Dim Past”

The signs of black community decline were all around by the close of the Civil War. The year 1864 saw the passing of three of the pillars of Exeter’s black community; Charles Tash, George Harris, and Rufus Cutler all died that year. Success stories like theirs were increasingly rare, and the position of common

laborer was the life sentence to which most blacks were condemned. By 1870, 375 foreign-born workers dwarfed the fifty-four blacks remaining in Exeter. Native-born, mostly literate blacks were routinely passed over for new factory jobs in favor of mostly illiterate white immigrants. Eleven of thirteen black Exeter heads of household in 1870—not counting the Cutler and Harris families—listed their occupation as “laborer,” “servant,” or “none.”⁵²

The irresistible forces of white racism, European immigration, and rapid urbanization combined to drive blacks from the Exeter area. Without support from the white community, even prosperous black families like the Cutlers and Harrises could not remain long. The dreams of equality and independence held by Exeter’s Revolutionary War veterans vanished during the lives of their grandchildren. The chains of bondage were gone but also absent was the rhetoric of equality and the atmosphere of mutual respect apparent in the early years of the republic. Exeter was clearly a less hospitable place for blacks to live in by 1876 than it had been in 1776.⁵³

Beginning in the 1880s white Exeter residents sensed the impending disappearance of the local black population and began to collect memories of their former neighbors. Reminiscences of the black community became an object of merely antiquarian interest—a curiosity column in the local newspaper or a tall tale told by an aging “townie,” replete with racial stereotyping. Judge Henry A. Shute, grandson of a well-known Exeter abolitionist, exhibits his confused feelings of genuine compassion mixed with an oddly condescending tone in his story, written in 1883, “The Mysterious Disappearance of Josh Zack.”⁵⁴

Zack was a black servant, marooned in Exeter upon the death of his master in 1843 and adopted by a troupe of local white boys, including Shute, as something akin to a mascot. This “genuine darkey, short, squat, bullet headed and bowlegged” and “astonishingly ignorant,” falls in love with “Minty Ann, a plump and pretty colored girl,” whose speech

Shute parodies relentlessly throughout the story. Zack ends up being kidnapped and sold into slavery, and Minty Ann dies broken-hearted. On her death bed Minty Ann thanks Shute for his kindness and has one last request:

I'se dream ob things dis yer night, ob Josh en de ol' cap'n, ob yo's faddy an mammy so good to Minty en Josh, ob yo' marse Jack, en de boys, an my ol' heart mos bruk fer watin' to see you onct befo' I went. . . . I'se a gret favor to ax yo' marse Jack. When I done dead kin I be buried in de ol' cemtry. Pears lak I' so gwain be nearer Josh dar, en kin I have a white coffin wid spangles on de side en gimcrack handles? En could I have a white stun wid Josh en Minty en gret big writin'?

Shute fulfills Minty Ann's final request and erects a stone for them in the burying yard. In death as in life Minty Ann is dependent on her white neighbors for any small happiness.⁴³

By 1910 only ten black residents remained in a town that had been the hub of black life in New Hampshire less than one hundred years before. In the fall of 1907 a picture of a lone, gray-bearded black man, dressed in a dark three-piece suit, black bow tie, and straw hat with silk ribbon, appeared in the pages of the *Exeter News-Letter*. The man, standing proudly for the photographer, was Freeman Wallace, one of at least seven black Civil War veterans from Exeter. In his left hand Wallace holds a large splint oak basket. In his right hand he holds his weapon: a long pole with a sharp iron tip that he uses to subdue the bits of paper and other litter that would otherwise mar Exeter's main business district. Freeman, who was the grandson of Caesar Wallace and spent his childhood at the almshouse, must have appeared as a sad but comical curiosity to some citizens of Exeter. To others Wallace's fate was the inevitable product of a degraded and inferior race.⁵⁶

The black population of Exeter was essentially extinct by the second quarter of the twentieth century. Only a few laborers and laundresses remained in

1920. Eighty-six year-old Sarah Elizabeth Cram, writing in the *Exeter News-Letter* in 1926 about her family's recollections of blacks, ends her article on a sober note: "But these old time tales fade into indistinctness, as do clouds at sunset when life's twilight closes in, and black and white mingle into the gray of the dim past." The final triumph of racism in Exeter was not only the physical effacement of its black community, but also a collective amnesia that has left little trace of its existence in white history.⁵⁷

Notes

1. *Scipio Duce v. Mary Kimball*, docket 17432, August 1797, Rockingham County, N.H., Court of Common Pleas, New Hampshire State Archives (hereafter State Archives). The original award was for \$166. *Scipio Duce v. Mary Kimball*, docket 17823, September 1798, Rockingham County Superior Court, State Archives. Porter Kimball was born in Exeter but spent most of his life as a weaver in Brentwood. See Leonard Allison Morrison and Stephen Paschall Sharples, *History of the Kimball Family in America* (Boston: Damrell and Upham, 1897), 125.
2. Charles H. Bell, *History of the Town of Exeter, New Hampshire* (Boston: J. E. Farwell and Co., 1888), 90–96; Lorenzo Johnston Greene, *The Negro in Colonial New England, 1620–1776* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1942), 74–79; U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Heads of Families at the First Census of the United States Taken in the Year 1790, New Hampshire* (Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Company, 1966), hereafter abbreviated as "U.S. Census, N.H., 1790."
3. Archelaus White, no. S43299, Revolutionary War Pension Records (hereafter Pension Records), Records of the Veterans Administration, Record Group, no. 15, National Archives, Waltham, Mass. For a comprehensive treatment of New

- Hampshire's black Revolutionary War veterans, see Glenn A. Knoblock, *"Strong and Brave Fellows": New Hampshire's Black Soldiers and Sailors of the American Revolution, 1775–1784* (Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland and Co., 2003).
4. Joanne Pope Melish, *Disowning Slavery: Gradual Emancipation and "Race" in New England, 1780–1860* (Ithaca, N.Y., Cornell University Press, 1998), 64, 66, 76.
 5. Bell, *History of the Town of Exeter*, 88; U.S. Census, N.H., 1790.
 6. The story of Exeter's blacks illustrates a pattern of growing racial division that historian James Brewer Stewart calls "the emergence of racial modernity." In Stewart's view an overwhelming number of Northern whites developed a consensus during the early nineteenth century that racial differences were "uniform, biologically determined, self-evident, naturalized, immutable 'truths.'" James Brewer Stewart, "The Emergence of Racial Modernity and the Rise of the White North, 1790–1840," *Journal of the Early Republic* 18 (summer 1998), 181–217; Lois Horton describes this pattern as a transition from a society stratified by class to a social order divided along racial lines. Lois E. Horton, "From Class to Race in Early America: Northern Post-Emancipation Racial Reconstruction," *Journal of the Early Republic* 19 (winter 1999): 629–49.
 7. The first serious attempt to study the black population of Exeter was a chapter in Erik R. Tuveson, " 'A People of Color': A Study of Race and Racial Identification in New Hampshire, 1750–1825" (master's thesis, University of New Hampshire, 1995), 42–96.
 8. Bell, *History of the Town of Exeter*, 285–314; Rockingham County Deeds, 110:260; 90:519; and 117:543. The Paul family of Baptist preachers, active in Boston, Albany, and New York City, is mentioned in numerous works. See, for example, James Oliver Horton and Lois E. Horton, *In Hope of Liberty: Culture, Community and Protest among Northern Free Blacks, 1700–1860* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 141, 310. See also *Liberator*, September 17, 1831, and *Exeter News-Letter*, September 10, 1839.
 9. Deposition from William Butler, January 2, 1798, *Duce v. Kimball*, 1798.
 10. *Ibid.*, esp. deposition from Samuel Cramer, February 1, 1798.
 11. *Ibid.*, esp. depositions from John Tucke Jr., February 1, 1798, and Zebulon Gordin, February 5, 1798.
 12. *Ibid.*; warning out, docket 9740, February 7, 1787, Rockingham County Superior Court. Duce's residence was somewhat transient, as he reappears in Brentwood, N.H., according to the 1790 federal census. By 1794 he had permanently settled in what is now Newfields, Maine, near another black family from New Hampshire named Seco. He removed from Newfields before 1810 and nothing more is known of him or his family.
 13. *Duce v Kimball*, 1798.
 14. *Ibid.*, esp. depositions from John Tucke Jr., February 1, 1798, and John Shaw, February 5, 1798.
 15. New Hampshire, *Act[s] for Forming and Regulating the Militia within this State*, passed June 24, 1786 and December 28, 1792. See also *Constitution and Laws of the State of New Hampshire* (Dover, N.H.: For the State, 1805), 503; "Negro Military Company," unidentified newspaper clipping, c. 1840, file box labeled "African Americans," Exeter Historical Society.
 16. *State v. Prince Light and Phyllis Light*, docket 35096, February 1812, Rockingham County Superior Court; "Writ of Habeas Corpus for Prince Light and Phyllis Light," docket 35097, September 1816, Rockingham County Superior Court; *Prince Light v. Loudon Dailey*, December

- 14, 1816, Rockingham County Court of Common Pleas; Rockingham County Deeds, 197: 62. Bob Duce was likely the brother of Scipio Duce. See Knoblock, “*Strong and Brave Fellows*,” 107–8, for evidence that suggests that Bob Duce was formerly Cato Duce, a Revolutionary War veteran.
17. Ibid.
 18. Bell, *History of the Town of Exeter*, 105–6. One of the well-known early wards of the town was Corydon, the former slave of John Phillips. Corydon outlived his master by many years and died in 1818 at the reputed age of one hundred. He was supported in his old age by the academy that his master had founded.
 19. *Exeter Watchman*, August 12, 1817; Bell, *History of the Town of Exeter*, 201–7, 395–96. For a comprehensive early history of the Baptist Society in Exeter, see Benjamin Franklin Swasey, *History of the Baptist Church, Exeter, New Hampshire, 1800–1900* (Exeter, N.H.: News-Letter Press, 1901).
 20. Tobias Cutler, S45710, Pension Records; Ezra S. Stearns, *History of the Town of Rindge, New Hampshire* (Boston: Press of G. H. Ellis, 1875), 169; Rockingham County Deeds, 128: 62.
 21. *Tobias Cutler v. Jonathan Robinson, Chase Stevens, Enoch Boyd, Joshua Page and Jonathan Robinson Jr.*, docket 17570, January 1799, Rockingham County Court of Common Pleas; U.S. Census, N.H., 1790, 67.
 22. *Tobias Cutler v. Harriet Paul*, docket 33671, September 1811, Rockingham County Court of Common Pleas.
 23. *Tobias Cutler v. Jacob Paul*, dockets 37263 and 37265, August 1814; *Thomas Paul v. Tobias Cutler*, docket 33715, September 1811; and *Kinsley Hall Jr. v. Tobias Cutler*, docket 41793, February 1817, Rockingham County Court of Common Pleas. Tobias Cutler was involved in at least twenty-seven lawsuits in New Hampshire.
 24. *State v. Tobias Cutler*, docket 44238, September 1817, Rockingham County Superior Court; Tobias Cutler, S45710, Pension Records; will, Tobias Cutler, no. 12804, 1834, and will, Rufus E. Cutler, no. 19481, 1864, Rockingham County Probate Records.
 25. Cato Fisk, W14719, Pension Record.
 26. Ibid.; Rockingham County Deeds, 108:515.
 27. U.S. Bureau of the Census, Federal Census of Rockingham County, New Hampshire, 1790, 1800, 1810, 1820, 1830, National Archives (hereafter cited as Federal Census, National Archives); John Farmer and Jacob B. Moore, *Gazetteer of the State of New Hampshire* (Concord, N.H.: Jacob B. Moore, 1823).
 28. London Dailey, W5260, Pension Records.
 29. For a brief description of the tensions caused by these two events and the backlash of white riots in New England, see Horton and Horton, *In Hope Of Liberty*, 212–16. About Jakes see William Gilman Perry, *Exeter in 1830* (Hampton, N.H.: Peter E. Randall, 1972), 82.
 30. For more on the abduction of free blacks, see Carol Wilson, *Freedom at Risk: The Kidnapping of Free Blacks in America, 1780–1865* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1994). Petition to the Congress of the United States of America, 1834, Exeter Historical Society; Bell, *History of the Town of Exeter*, 206. For a comprehensive discussion of the abolitionist movement in New Hampshire during the nineteenth century, see Stephen Lawrence Cox, “Power, Oppression and Liberation: New Hampshire Abolitionism and the Radical Critique of Slavery, 1825–1850” (Ph.D. diss., University of New Hampshire, 1980). To understand the depth of prejudice that developed against blacks in New Hampshire during the 1830s, see Donald B. Cole, *Jacksonian Democracy in New Hampshire, 1800–1851* (Cambridge: Harvard

- University Press, 1970), esp. 178–81. The election of Democratic Governor Isaac Hill in 1836 brought an avowed racist to the state house and may have increased pressure on the liberal citizens of Exeter to abandon their support for the black community.
31. Oxford Tash, W16155, Pension Records; *Exeter News-Letter*, December 11, 1891. The *Exeter News-Letter* reprinted a series of earlier articles describing the black population of Exeter during the course of the nineteenth century. Clippings from this newspaper, containing personal reminiscences of black personalities and businesses, are available in the file box labeled “African Americans,” Exeter Historical Society.
 32. *Exeter News-Letter*, December 18, 1891. The original author of this article, known only as “L”, traces his recollections back to 1802–3, when he and “Tilda” Tash attended the same school. For the support of Robert Tash, see Rockingham County Deeds, 418:314; the will of Charles G. Tash, no. 19541, Rockingham County Probate Records; and published town reports. Robert Tash’s appointment is mentioned on the web site of the United Free Will Baptist Church, accessed January 9, 2003 at http://uafwbc.org/church_history.htm.
 33. References to Charles G. Tash are overwhelmingly positive and respectful. See, for example, Arthur W. Dudley, “Old Time Exeter Story,” in *Exeter News-Letter*, August 18, 1922; Bell, *History of the Town of Exeter*, 398; and Perry, *Exeter in 1830*, 82–85.
 34. *State v. Charles G. Tash*, docket 13251, January 1832, Rockingham County Superior Court; Bell, *History of Exeter*, 398. Unfortunately, the records of the equity case (docket 13473, August 1832) brought subsequently against Tash by his victim, Sally Moore, are missing. For a comprehensive account of the Tash shooting and trial, see *Exeter News-Letter*, December 13, 1831.
 35. Federal Census, National Archives, 1840, 1850. The total black population of New Hampshire fell from a high of 970 in 1810 to only 538 by 1840, reflecting a trend of black migration to large cities in New England and westward.
 36. Dudley, “Old Time Exeter Story,” Federal Census, National Archives, 1860
 37. “Exeter Town Meeting Minutes,” 1828–51, Exeter Town Hall; Swasey, *History of the Baptist Church, Exeter*, esp. 65–66, 71, and 102. The fact that three black men paid the poll tax and that one received votes for a town office does not prove that they were allowed to vote.
 38. Rockingham County Deeds, 288:438; Returns of Town Paupers (hereafter Pauper Returns), docket 16931(1836), 18267 (1839), 18856 (1840), 19510 (1841), 20107 (1842), 22356 (1846), Rockingham County Superior Court.
 39. Caesar Wallace, S43250, Pension Records; Pauper Returns, docket 20629 (1843), 21216 (1844). Katy Duce was likely a sister of Scipio Duce.
 40. “Exeter Town Meeting Minutes”, 1829–33.
 41. *Ibid.*, 1844–45; Pauper Returns, docket 21216 (1844) and 21835 (1845). Benjamin Calvin Swett was the illegitimate son of Hannah Blossom. Hannah Blossom was a domestic known to be a person of color and the illegitimate daughter of Phyllis Hooper.
 42. *Report of the Superintending School Committee for the Town of Exeter for the Year 1848*, 12, Exeter Historical Society.
 43. Joanne Pope Melish, “The ‘Condition’ Debate and Racial Discourse in the Antebellum North,” *Journal of the Early Republic* 19 (winter 1999): 651–72.
 44. Jude Hall, W23238, Pension Records. Jude Hall was a witness for Tobias Cutler in the

- case of *Tobias Cutler v. Harriet Paul* noted above. He was also the principle witness for the state in the murder trial of John Blaisdell (see Bell, *History of the Town of Exeter*, 398).
45. "Affidavit of Robin Roberts of Boston," typescript, file box labeled "African Americans," Exeter Historical Society; Jude Hall, no. W23238, Pension Records.
 46. Pauper Returns, docket 20107 (1842), 20629 (1843), 21216 (1844), 22356 (1846); wills, Catherine Merrill, no. 16484, 1837 (probated 1852), Rockingham County Probate Records; *Exeter News-Letter*, February 8, 1908.
 47. Charles H. Bell, *Phillips Exeter Academy: A Historical Sketch* (Exeter, N.H.: W. B. Morrill, 1883); Franklin Abbot Damon, *Phillips Exeter Academy and the Civil War: A Roster of Alumni Who Served in the War and Biographical Sketches of Those Who Died* (Cambridge, Mass: Franklin Abbott Damon, 1995); *Exeter News-Letter*, April 2, 1926; Civil War Muster Rolls for Exeter, N.H., State Archives; Civil War Pension Application, Moses Hall, no. 1040451, typescript, Exeter Historical Society. Moses Uriah Hall entered Phillips Exeter Academy on September 1, 1858. In 1864, four students from Kentucky left the academy because they objected to a colored boy being in their class. Moses Hall served in Company C, 3rd U.S. Colored Infantry. His brothers, Aaron C. Hall and William D. Hall, served in Co B, 54th Massachusetts Colored Infantry.
 48. *Exeter News-Letter*, November 27, 1832.
 49. Ibid., January 16, 1854; December 18, 1891.
 50. Joan R. Sherman, "James Monroe Whitfield, Poet and Emigrationist: A Voice of Protest and Despair," *Journal of Negro History* 57 (April 1972), 169–76, quoting Douglass, *Anti-Slavery Bugle*, April 24, 1850.
 51. James M. Whitfield, *America and Other Poems* (Buffalo, N.Y.: James S. Leavitt, 1853), 9–16.
 52. Federal Census, National Archives, 1870.
 53. John G. Cutler's business burned in 1872, and he removed permanently to Hampton Beach, where he became a popular and successful businessman. In the *Exeter News-Letter* of August 18, 1922, Arthur Dudley wrote that Cutler was "without exception the best dressed man in Exeter, and sported a liberal display of diamonds."
 54. Henry A. Shute, "The Mysterious Disappearance of Josh Zack," 1883, typescript, file box labeled "African Americans", Exeter Historical Society.
 55. Ibid. Josh Zack is mentioned as a real person in Perry, *Exeter in 1830*, 83–84. Shute later admitted that although the key facts of the story were true, many details (including the gravestone) and some characters were invented to "embellish [the tale] suitably." See the chapter by Shute in Thomas L. Masson, *Our American Humorists* (New York: Moffat, Yard and Co., 1922), 287.
 56. *Exeter News-Letter*, October 4, 1907; Federal Census, National Archives, 1910.
 57. Federal Census, National Archives, 1920; *Exeter News-Letter*, April 2, 1926.