

Contextual Research on the Unnamed, Free, Black Woman and Other Laborers at Cedar Grove
A Continuation of Research Developed by 2021 Cole Fellow Adaeze Dikko

Beth Wynne
W/hole History (Full House)
Thomas Cole National Historic Site
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This report is broken up into the following sections:

1. Representational Research on Slavery in the Hudson Valley
2. Population Data
3. Laboring at Cedar Grove as a Free, Black Woman Between 55-99 Years of Age
4. Life and Community Outside of Cedar Grove
5. People Enslaved by the Thomsons (in Demerara and Catskill)
6. Additional People Who Labored for the Thomson/Cole Families

Representational Research on Slavery in the Hudson Valley

- I. Note that the information below contains historical examples of the lives of enslaved and free Black people in the 18th and 19th centuries. As cited in Adaeze Dikko's research, the experiences of slavery permeated emancipation in New York state. The Fugitive Slave Law fiercely affected Northern States. In her autobiography *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*, Harriet Jacobs called New York City, just 100 miles south of Catskill, the "city of kidnappers."¹
- II. TransAtlantic Slave Trade: 18th Century Surge of the Enslaved Population in New York
 - A. More than half of New York's enslaved population lived and worked in the Hudson Valley
 - B. "New York's black population doubled between 1723 and 1756 and tripled during the six decades between 1731 and 1790, jumping from 7,231 to 25,983 persons, making the province the largest slave society north of the Chesapeake."²
- III. Enslaved women could be involved in a wide range of domestic **and** agricultural work
 - A. "In a household, whether on a small farm or attached to one of the more prominent manors/ estates in the valley, female slaves were often found in the kitchen as cooks, cleaning house, washing, caring for their owners' children, and integrally involved in the production of linens and woolens for home consumption and the colonial markets."³
 - a. Edith Cole Silberstein described how involved laundry day was in the home: "On ironing day, usually Tuesdays, (Mon. was wash day) they used to put the flatirons on the stove to heat, and kept changing them for the chore. Amazing all the linens, tablecloths, sheets, hand towels done—and huge linen napkins."⁴
 - B. Women also labored in agricultural work, at times sharing the same jobs as men. Sojourner Truth, who lived and worked just 40 miles south of Catskill in Ulster County, carried grain bags on foot over Old King's Highway to the gristmill of Colonel Charles Hardenburgh's homestead where she was enslaved.⁵

Next Steps: Representative examples from William Lloyd Garrison's anti-slavery newspaper, *The Liberator* i.e. December 2, 1859 advertisement of a "Young woman from Demarara"

"ADVERTISEMENT – A young woman from Demarara, who has lived several years in this country, wishes to return to her native land; and, in order to support herself there and help her mother, she has a very earnest desire to learn the milliner's trade. Her brown complexion has hitherto frustrated all her efforts for that purpose. Is there any one, who has sufficient good sense and good feeling to rise above this absurd prejudice, and aid her in her laudable undertaking?If she cannot learn a trade, she would like a situation as parlor girl, or chamber maid. Please give an early reply to L. MARIA CHILD, Wayland, Mass (Liberator, Dec 2, 1859, pg 3)"⁶

*Thomas Thompson enslaved people in Demerara; consult digitized collections of pages relevant to Catskill on General Share drive

¹ Harriet Jacobs, *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* (New York: Barnes & Noble Classics, 2005), 210.

² Michael E. Groth, *Slavery and Freedom in the Mid-Hudson Valley* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2017), 4.

³ A.J. Williams-Myers, *A Portrait of Eve: Towards a Social History of Black Women in the Hudson River Valley* (New Paltz, NY: Center for the Study of the African Presence in the Hudson River Valley, 1987), 1.

⁴ Jean C. Dunbar, *Furnishings Plan* (Catskill, NY: Thomas Cole National Historic Site, 2011), 133.

⁵ *Ibid*, Williams-Myers, 5.

⁶ "Young Woman from Demerara," *The Liberator Files*, Boston African American National Historic Site, accessed April 28, 2022, <https://www.theliberatorfiles.com/young-woman-demarara/>

Population Data

In *Slavery and Freedom in the Mid-Hudson Valley*, Michael E. Groth discusses how population differences in New York affected the ability of enslaved individuals to connect with each other.

- I. “Low population density and dispersed settlement isolated many black residents from one another, and slaves in rural regions lacked those social and cultural supports available in urban centers.”⁷
- II. Represented below is population data of Catskill and Greene County, NY from 1840. The “1840 Compendium of the Enumeration of the Inhabitants and Statistics of the United States” includes data only specific to Greene County.*
 - A. It is worth noting the inconsistency of census records prior to 1840. There were rampant anti-Black policies existing at the time, and incorrect assessments were frequently made of the age, nationality, and intelligence of Black individuals.⁸
 - a. I.e. Phrenology, the study of the brain and its connection to intellect, became a popular subject in the United States during the 1830s and 1840s, and one Thomas Cole showed interest in himself. They were physicians who used phrenology to make a case for slavery, arguing that people of African descent were of an inferior intellect based on the shape of their skull.⁹
 - B. From 1800-1840, the individual permitted to speak to the census taker on behalf of the household was limited to a free person over 16 years of age. This meant an enslaved person could not provide that information.
 - C. The total population of Greene County, NY in 1840 was 30,446 persons
 - D. **In 1840, Black residents made up 2.9% of the population of Greene County**
 - E. In 1840, the total population in Catskill was 3,458 persons¹⁰
 - F. The 1840 Compendium lists 893 “Free Colored Persons” as residents of Greene County in New York’s Southern District. Of those, **34 free, Black women were listed as being between 55-99 years of age.**¹¹
 - G. The total number of free, Black residents in Greene County in 1840 was 893. Of those, 446 were free, Black men and 447 were free, Black women.
 - H. The total number of white residents in Greene County was 27,453. Of those, 12,972 were free, white men and 14,481 were free, white women.
 - I. Zero enslaved people were listed as living in Greene County in 1840.

***Next Steps:** The fully evaluated document, “1840 Census: Sixth Census or Enumeration of the Inhabitants of the United States” is not available digitally. This may include subdivisions/townships for each county, including Catskill, NY. Contact the United States Census Bureau to see if in-person viewing is available: <https://www.census.gov/library/publications/1841/dec/1840a.html>

⁷ Michael E. Groth, *Slavery and Freedom in the Mid-Hudson Valley* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2017), 1.

⁸ Claire Prechtel-Klusens, “Who Talked to the Census Taker?,” National Archives, NGS NewsMagazine, Vol. 31, No. 4 (Oct.-Dec. 2005): 32-35, <https://twelvekey.files.wordpress.com/2014/10/ngsmagazine2005-10.pdf>

⁹ K. Titowsky, “Phrenology and ‘Scientific Racism’ in the 19th Century,” Real Archeology, Vassar College, March 25, 2017, <https://pages.vassar.edu/realarchaeology/about/>.

¹⁰ “Greene County, New York Population 2022,” World Population Review, Accessed April 21, 2022, <https://worldpopulationreview.com/us-counties/ny/greene-county-population>.

¹¹ US Census Bureau, “1840 Census: Compendium of the Enumeration of the Inhabitants and Statistics of the United States,” Census.gov, March 31, 2022, <https://www.census.gov/library/publications/1841/dec/1840c.html>.

- I. It is possible the free, Black woman continued to reside in Greene County beyond 1840. Below contains the population data from the 1850 census:¹²
 - A. In 1850, the total population of Greene County measured 33,126 residents.
 - B. In 1850, the total population of Black residents in Greene County was 895.
 - C. The total number of Black women was 454. The total number of Black men was 441.
 - D. The population of Catskill in 1850 reached 5,454 people.
 - E. Total number of Black residents in Catskill, NY in 1850 measured 306. Of this, 167 were free, Black women and 139 were free, Black men.
 - F. Total number of white residents in Catskill, NY in 1850 measured 5,148. Of this, 2,549 were white men and 2,599 were white women.
 - G. Comparatively, **Black residents made up 5.6% of the population of Catskill, NY in 1850.**
- II. Agricultural data from the 1850 census could be useful in understanding the labor of farm workers at Cedar Grove: <https://www.census.gov/library/publications/1853/dec/1850a.html>
 - A. I.e. Greene County produced 1,236,777 lbs of butter ending June 1, 1850

Laboring at Cedar Grove as a Free, Black Woman Between 55-99 Years of Age

- I. Basement space
 - A. Initially, I considered that the free, Black woman may have labored as a household cook for the family based on reports in the *Furnishings Plan*. Due to the extensive nature of kitchen work, it is productive to consider the alternate work she may have carried out in the household as a 55-99 year old woman.
 - B. Because of her age, the free, Black woman at Cedar Grove may have engaged in lighter tasks that didn't involve the lifting of heavy cast iron pots and kitchen equipment. It is important to note that she still may have been tasked with laborious work. Households desired the hire of Black women who had an expansive knowledge of skills or years of experience in one area. Less intensive work may have been cleaning the home, laundering, caring for the children, or dairying.¹³
 - C. A recipe for griddle cakes does not contain particularly unique information, but it shows that the household carried 'Indian meal', flour, eggs, milk, and salt probably regularly.¹⁴ The frequent nature of patrons visiting Thomas Cole in the home suggests tea was frequently an accommodation and made at the ready. Preparing food for 11 people in the home, in addition to its laborers, may have required the hands of many. The 20-29 year old white woman listed in the 1840 census, who may have been a servant, or the Bartow women may have assisted.
 - D. A milk room in the home was in close proximity to the stairwell where the free, Black woman may have slept under the basement stairs. The Hudson Valley had a rich presence of dairying and many enslaved women were sought after for their knowledge in this.¹⁵ Alternatively, some women were also skilled in animal husbandry, a trade that was largely experienced by enslaved men. An article from December 6, 1803 "listed for sale a **forty year old black** woman who was

¹² US Census Bureau, "The Seventh Census of the United States: 1850 - New York," accessed April 21, 2022, <https://www2.census.gov/library/publications/decennial/1850/1850a/1850a-22.pdf>.

¹³ A.J. Williams-Myers, *A Portrait of Eve: Towards a Social History of Black Women in the Hudson River Valley* (New Paltz, NY: Center for the Study of the African Presence in the Hudson River Valley, 1987), 1.

¹⁴ Recipe for griddle cakes, n.d., c.1831, Box 1, Folder 82, Thomson Family and Cole Family Papers, TCNHS, Catskill, NY.

¹⁵ Jean C. Dunbar, *Furnishings Plan* (Catskill, NY: Thomas Cole National Historic Site, 2011), 111.

‘well acquainted with the management of cows’. With the activity on the farm, this may have been work she was engaged in.¹⁶

“Advertisements for female slaves enumerated skills in baking, cooking, ironing, knitting, needlework, scrubbing, sewing, spinning, starching, and washing. **Butter and cheese were important commodities in local trade, and ads routinely identified slaves’ skills in dairying, milking and butter making.**”¹⁷

- II. Caring for Theddy and Mary Cole, two years of age and one year of age respectively in 1840
 - A. “Family, as well as servants, moved constantly among the house’s upper floors and ground level. The two high chair that sat in the Basement Room must have accompanied the succession of Cole infants and toddlers.”¹⁸
 - B. Once escaped to the North, Harriet Jacobs found work as nurse while securing the freedom of her own children. Prior to her escape, Jacobs was proposed her freedom multiple times on the condition of continuing to work for a family who was otherwise vile to her: “Your labor shall be light, such as sewing for my family. Think what is offered you, Linda—a home and freedom!”¹⁹
- III. Working alongside or being managed by the Bartow sisters
 - A. **“The kitchen was a place where classes and ages mixed.”**²⁰
 - a. In TCNHS Furnishings Plan, Jean Dunbar assesses that the kitchen was occupied by many members of the household. Notably within this grouping was the Bartow sisters who assisted in various domestic responsibilities and inherited the home upon the death of their uncle, Alexander Thompson. Dunbar’s study of the household inventory and furniture items was deeply useful in understanding which individuals occupied what space.
 - b. “The five chairs the 1846 appraisers found [in the kitchen] accommodated more workers than the Thomson-Coles had domestic servants—suggesting that several were used by female family members.”²¹
 - c. There may have been social restraints for what kind of labor the Bartow women engaged in as the white women of the household, and assistance from the household’s hired laborers was likely an expected request:

Entry from Maria’s Diary, Tuesday, November 1, 1842: **Maria seeks help from a “man,” presumably a farm laborer:**
“I have scarcely done any thing to day. for I have been almost the whole day [waiting] for a man to help me set some [shrubbery]. I at last succeeded in getting a part done. **took up the Dalias & put them in the Cellar.** They have enormous roots and I hope we may succeed on keeping them through the winter.”

Life and Community Outside of Cedar Grove

Adaeze Dikko posed the question, what was life like for a free, Black woman living in Catskill? What sorts of things did she enjoy outside of her labor?

¹⁶ A.J. Williams-Myers, *A Portrait of Eve: Towards a Social History of Black Women in the Hudson River Valley* (New Paltz, NY: Center for the Study of the African Presence in the Hudson River Valley, 1987), 6.

¹⁷ Michael E. Groth, *Slavery and Freedom in the Mid-Hudson Valley* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2017), 8.

¹⁸ Ibid, Dunbar, 116.

¹⁹ Harriet Jacobs, *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* (New York: Barnes & Noble Classics, 2005), 95.

²⁰ Ibid, Dunbar, 129.

²¹ Ibid.

- I. Pinkster Festival: A spring celebration of Dutch origin adopted by African Americans as a reprieve from work that was celebrated with vibrant dress, games, and music of African and European origin.²²
 - A. “By the early 1800s Pinkster was considered an African American holiday, with big celebrations in New York City and on Albany’s Pinkster Hill, now occupied by the State Capitol. During the 1700s, slave owners grew more fearful of slave rebellion, and Pinkster was outlawed by the 1810s.”²³
 - B. Fear also grew out of instances of enslaved people taking leave for the festival and not returning to the plantation.²⁴
 - C. Reestablished in Albany in 2011, New York State Parks created programming inviting attendees to learn and participate in events that center on the historic Pinkster festival.
 - a. “Board games like Mancala and Nine-Men’s Morris, Draughts (checkers), other games like marbles, string games, cards, running games like tag, all the way to wrestling were just a few games children and adults enjoyed during Pinkster.”²⁵
 - b. Though Pinkster was outlawed in the 1810s, these games and traditions may have been enjoyed and continued to be played by Black communities into the 19th century.
 - c. Further reading: “Rediscovering a Hudson Valley Folkloric Tradition: Traces of the ‘Pinkster’ Feast in Forgotten Books,” by Jeroen Dewulf: <https://www.hudsonrivervalley.org/documents/401021/1608258/HRVR+34.2%2C+Spring+2018/e2bb1a78-5d04-4b06-846e-a86ecb764764>

Next Steps:

- I. Look through St. Luke’s Episcopal records at the Vedder Research Library; contacted St. Luke’s Episcopal Church to see if a free Black person could attend a service in the 1840s. Fr Martin Yost explained “there would have been no canonical obstacle to any person being baptised or being registered as a confirmed communicant in the Episcopal Church.”
- II. Dutch Reformed Church records, search for last name “Thomson”: https://sites.rootsweb.com/~nygreen2/catskill_dutch_reformed_church.htm
- III. Contact Lavada Nahon, a culinary historian and interpreter of African American history for advisement/future consultation. Nahon specializes in 17-19th century culinary traditions in the Mid-Atlantic region. She might have insight into whether or not a free, Black woman over 55 years of age would be involved in preparing food for the household, if not for the advisement on the sort of cooking happening in the household generally: <https://lavadanahon.com/contact/>
- IV. Arrange an introduction to Sylvia Hasenkopf, ask Heather for an introduction. See if she has any suggested avenues for researching Black history in Catskill. Sylvia wrote an intriguing article about African American soldiers from Catskill who fought in the Civil War and are buried in the Thomson St. cemetery: <https://www.porcupinesoup.com/greene-countys-african-american-civil-war-soldiers>²⁶

²² “What is Pinkster?,” Historic Hudson Valley, May 9, 2018, <https://hudsonvalley.org/article/what-is-pinkster/>.

²³ David Levine, “African American History: A Past Rooted in the Hudson Valley,” Hudson Valley Magazine, February 23, 2022, <https://hvmag.com/life-style/history/african-american-past-hudson-valley/>.

²⁴ Ibid

²⁵ Lavada Nahon, “Reviving a Dutch Holiday with African Flavor,” New York State Parks Blog, May 25, 2021, <https://nystateparks.blog/2020/06/01/reviving-a-dutch-holiday-with-african-flavor/>.

²⁶ Sylvia Hasenkopf, “Martin B. Cross: Catskill resident and soldier in the 54th Massachusetts Infantry Regiment,” *Tracing Your Roots in Greene County*, Porcupine Soup, August 11, 2021, <https://www.porcupinesoup.com/greene-countys-african-american-civil-war-soldiers>.

- V. Closer look at excerpts from the *Liberator*: a protest in Catskill occurred in 1833 on “the subject of colonizing the people of color on the coast of Africa” with Mr. Robert Jackson serving as chairman and Mr. Martin Cross as secretary (General Share > *Liberator* Articles Catskill > Protest to Colonization 1833)
- VI. Recommendations by Heather Paroubek: see if there’s a way to find Catskill’s subscribers of *The Liberator*: <https://www.digitalcommonwealth.org/collections/commonwealth:9w032b61n>
 - A. Jonathan Palmer’s recent article, “Jim Planck uncovers Catskill’s activist barber” has useful insight into Catskill’s abolitionist activity prior to the Civil War. He makes mention of residents like Martin Cross, a Black barber who had a storefront in Catskill, and a “Colored Temperance Rally held at Catskill in July of 1844 [that] allegedly attracted almost 3,000 Black reformists...”
 “It turns out that Black members of the community in Catskill were far more involved, outspoken, and politically active than any written account until now has grasped. Men like Martin Cross held influential social positions in the community - his barber shop was quite literally opposite the bank at the center of town and catered to all members of the community. Cross, Robert Jackson, and other Black Catskillians were organizing political meetings and publishing resolutions in the newspaper as responses to community debates and lectures on Abolition which refused to recognize their collective voice.”²⁷

People Enslaved by the Thomsons (in Demerara and Catskill)

- George, James, Linda, Cloe, and Pably are mentioned in a letter from Priscilla Mary Thomson in Demerara to Thomas Thomson²⁸
- Jack, Sam, Tegarro, Simon, Linda, and Toney; sold in South America for \$8,500 prior to the Thomson’s moving to Catskill²⁹
- Bill (William) Thomson
- Cloe*
- Pably*
- George*
- James*

*No known record of sale in South America

Noted in Maureen Hennesey’s *Life at Cedar Grove* report: "A hand-written, unsourced document in the Thomson Family Papers at Thomas Cole National Historic Site provides the names of Alexander’s six slaves **owned in 1820**: George, John, Josephus (Thomson), Robert, William, and James.”³⁰

Additional People Who Labored for the Thomson/Cole Families

- I. Cloe (Chloe)
 - A. Listed as enslaved in Demerara and likely imposed to work in the U.S. upon the building of the Catskill house September 4, 1810, “Certificate of the Court of S(?) respecting(?) a slave,” a court

²⁷ Jonathan Palmer, “Jim Planck uncovers Catskill’s activist barber,” *The Noon Mark*, Porcupine Soup, April 22, 2022, <https://porcupinesoup.com/jim-planck-uncovers-catskill-s-activist-barber>.

²⁸ Priscilla Mary Thomson to Thomas Theodore Thomson, May 1815, Box 6, Folder 1, Thomson Family Papers, NYSL, Albany, NY.

²⁹ Playter and Leach to Thomas Theodore Thomson, Nov. 6, 1815; Nov. 30, 1815, Box 6, Folder 2, Thomson Family Papers, SC10637, NYSL, Albany, NY.

³⁰ Names of six enslaved by Alexander Thomson in 1820, Box 7, Folder 15, Thomson Family Papers, TCNHS, Catskill, NY.

document exonerating John A. Thompson and Catherine T. Thompson of hiring Cloe³¹ (see Appendix)

- B. References “an act of the legislature of the state of New York paper the 8th of April 1801 entitles an act concerning slaves and servants” which may be reference to Virginia’s 1705 Act concerning Servants and Slaves if they had any involvement in Virginia: <http://explorehistory.ou.edu/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/An-act-concerning-Servants-and-Slaves.pdf>
 - a. It’s unclear what specific New York legislation is referred to here surrounding the date of April 1801. The following acts may be applicable:
 - “An act of Congress passed in 1800 made it illegal for Americans to engage in the slave trade between nations, and gave U.S. authorities the right to seize slave ships which were caught transporting slaves and confiscate their cargo. Then the "Act Prohibiting the Importation of Slaves" took effect in 1808.”³²
 - b. Find a consultant to explain the details of such court document
- C. Contesting evidence suggests she may have stayed in or returned to Demerara. According to unsourced notes by Raymond Beecher, Cloe may have died while Thomas Thomson was still alive.
 - a. “Death of one of my slaves Chloe at Dewary June 2, 1818” (“Dewary” here may mean Demerera (in Dutch: Demerary)³³

II. Bill (Thomson)

- A. Listed in 1805 inventory of Dr. Thomas Thompson (d. 1805) as “Bill, 21 years of age”³⁴ (see Appendix)
- B. 1806 account book of J.A. Thompson lists “1 pr shoes for Blk boy bill”³⁵
- C. Follow up with Jonathan Palmer on Manumission records (for enslaved people who were freed) at County building: “Bill Thompson” has a record – freed in 1816.

III. George C. Scovill

- A. Hired as a farm laborer for one year by John Alexander Thompson
- B. May 12, 1828, “Agreement between Thomson & Scovil for labor” in TCNHS Archives

IV. Clara Doner

- A. As referenced in the Furnishings Plan, she may have been a hired launderer. She “bills ‘Mr. Cololes (sic) for washing, asking that the money be sent to her via Gilbert Doner.”³⁶

³¹ Court Document Concerning Enslaved Woman Chloe, Box 7, Folder 3, Thomson Family and Cole Family Papers, TCNHS, Catskill, NY.

³² “Educator Resources: The Slave Trade,” National Archives, National Archives and Records Administration, reviewed January 7, 2022, <https://www.archives.gov/education/lessons/slave-trade.html>.

³³ Account book of Alexander Thompson, Florence Cole Vincent Collection, c. 1770-1915. Vedder Research Library, Greene County Historical Society, Coxsackie NY.

³⁴ Inventory of Dr. Thomas Thomson, 1805, Box 7, Folder 2, Thomson Family and Cole Family Papers, TCNHS, Catskill, NY.

³⁵ Ibid

³⁶ Invoice, Mr. Cololes (sic) from Clara Doner, n.d.; Box 1, Folder 54, Thomson Family and Cole Family Papers, TCNHS, Catskill, NY.

- V. Payments to individuals for their labor, **possibly involved in the building of the Main House** (from John Alexander Thompson's Account Book at the Vedder Research Library)³⁷
 - A. July 4, 1812 (see appendix)
 - "Paid Ham & Mr. Farlain for sawing"
 - "Paid Nixon Blk man for laborer"
 - "Paid Tyler for laborer"
 - Aaskin(?)
 - P. Dederick
 - Denis Wright
 - The names of Nixon and J. Girth are repeated throughout the ledgers

Next Steps:

- I. Bring 'Full House' content onto the main page of thomascole.org/. List biographical details about the laborers where we can. Even where information is scant, this could be a useful method to implement. Monticello poses a great example: <https://www.monticello.org/slavery/people-enslaved-at-monticello/>
- II. For future research, what was it like working for a gentleman farmer? This could be a unique blend of environmental and labor history in the Hudson Valley. This could be a good opportunity to showcase why the region continues to be sought after for its farmland. A good reference point would be Cole Fellow Marissa Hamm's 2019-2020 report, "Changing Hands, Changing Lands: The History of the Cedar Grove Property, 1848-1961."
- III. Further reading: *Farm, Shop, Landing: The Rise of a Market Society in the Hudson Valley, 1780–1860* by Martin Bruegel
- IV. *Larding the Lean Earth: Soil and Society in Nineteenth Century America* by Steven Soll
 - A. "True, some people had begun to question the meaning of progress. Henry Thoreau's aestheticism and Thomas Cole's dismal prophecy in the Course of Empire...resonated among those who believed that wildness formed in an invariable standard. Romantics invented 'Nature' as a refuge from 'Civilization.' Farmers, on the other hand, had no time and no mind for the stark dualities of these intellectuals."³⁸
- V. Investigate the name Thorp/Thorpe in census records; a 'Mrs. Thorp' appears in the following letter
 - A. Compared to the attending land lady of Maria and Thomas's trip to the Adirondacks: "Our Land Lady a real industrious woman – the head manager I imagine. — a good deal such a woman as Mr. [sic] Thorp only altogether neater."³⁹

Interpretation On Site:

- I. Secured high resolution reproductions of 1799 and 1817 Gradual Abolition and Fugitive Slave Law documents. A copy of the 1840 census is now included in our tour dialogue.

Next Steps:

- I. Include other topical publications by African-American writers from the 19th century i.e. Frederick Douglass's "What to the Slave is the Fourth of July?" and excerpts from *The Liberator* or "Colored Conventions" speeches in or around Catskill

³⁷ Account book of Alexander Thompson, Florence Cole Vincent Collection, c. 1770-1915. Vedder Research Library, Greene County Historical Society, Coxsackie NY.

³⁸ Steven Soll, *Larding the Lean Earth: Soil and Society in Nineteenth Century America* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2002), 65.

³⁹ Maria Bartow Cole to Emily C. Bartow, June 24, 1837, Box 4, Folder 1 [missing], Manuscripts and Special Collections, Thomas Cole Papers 1821-1863, SC10635, Cole Family Letters, New York State Library, Albany, NY.

- II. Further reading: *The Colored Conventions Movement: Black Organizing in the Nineteenth Century* edited by P. Gabrielle Foreman, Jim Casey, and Sarah Lynn Patterson

Useful Resources on Researching African-American Genealogy

- "Federal Records that Help Identify Former Enslaved People and Slave Holders": <https://www.archives.gov/files/calendar/genealogy-fair/2018/2-kluskens-handout.pdf>⁴⁰
- "Tracing Your African-American Genealogy": <https://www.familysearch.org/en/blog/african-american-genealogy>⁴¹

Suggested Reading:

- *Spaces of Enslavement* by Andrea C. Mosterman
- *Long Hammering* by A.J. Williams-Myers (reach out to the African Roots Center in Kingston, NY)
- *Slavery in Albany, New York, 1624-1827* by Oscar Williams

⁴⁰ Claire Kluskens, "Federal Records that Help Identify Former Enslaved People and Slave Holders," The National Archives, The National Archives and Records Administration, December 2021, <https://www.archives.gov/files/calendar/genealogy-fair/2018/2-kluskens-handout.pdf>.

⁴¹ Leslie Albrecht Huber, "Tracing Your African-American Genealogy," Family Search Blog, Intellectual Reserve Inc., July 26, 2019, <https://www.familysearch.org/en/blog/african-american-genealogy>

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Appendix

The free, Black woman listed in the 1840 census was recorded as being between 55-99 years of age. This would put her date of birth between 1741-1785. Names are compiled from the 1850 census accessed through Ancestry.com.

Black women born between 1741-1785 exclusively in Catskill, Greene County, NY *Born some years after 1785	Black women born between 1741-1785 with the last name "Thompson" in Greene County and surrounding parts
Dinah Von Loan b. 1780 Lived with two other black residents with the last name Von Loan	Dianna Thompson b. 1771 Home: Schodack, Rensselaer, NY Lived with three other Black residents, last names Jacobs and Rouse
Cathrin (Cottum) Lale b. 1784 Lived with eight other Black residents with the last name Cross	Scrislene Thompson b. 1770 Home: Clifton Park, Saratoga, NY Lived with two other Black residents, last names Rumpus, two white residents, last names Sanford
Jane Brown b. 1785 Lived with one other Black resident, Rans Brown	Hager Thompson b. 1770 Home: Wilton, Saratoga, NY Lived with three white residents, last names Friar and Emerson, one other Black resident, last name Anthony
Phebe Foote b. 1775 Lived with three other Black residents, last names Foote and Hicks	Mary Thompson b. 1775 Home: Athens, NY Lived with eight white residents, last names Deom
*Harriet Brown b. 1788 Lived with three other Black residents, last names Brown	*Dinah Thompson b. 1790 Home: Kinderhook, Columbia, NY Lived with five other Black residents, last names Vanalen
*Dinah Tenbrook b. 1790 Lived with three other Black residents, last names Tenbrook and Busley	*Dianna Thompson b. 1790 Home: Stillwater, Saratoga, NY Lived with six other Black residents, last names Tenbroek and Smith
*Hannah Ann Vichten b. 1795 Lived with five other Black residents, last names Vichten and Williams	

*Dinah Williams b. 1793 Lived with three other residents, last names Williams	
*Sarah Pearce b. 1798 Lived with five other Black residents, last names Smith and Post	

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Payments to individuals for their labor, possibly involved in the building of the Main House (from John Alexander Thompson's Account Book at the Vedder Research Library)

1812			
June 25 th	Bot. of Hawley & Austin 20 th nails, ten ^{ts}	2	50
26 th	Bot. of " " - do - 4 th feet plank	2	40
July 3 rd	" of - do - " - " 10 th nails	1	25
4 th	paid Ham & Mr. Farlain for sawing posts and boards	26	80
	paid Nixon blk man for labour	14	31
	paid Tyler for labour	4	12 ^{1/2}
	W. Harkin for do	1	4 ^{1/2}
	" - P. Dedouk - do	4	10
	" Denis Wright for do	3	24
	Bot. of Hawley - 2 ⁸ feet boards		34
	1 Hemlock Loin 12 feet		
	1 Hard wood do 11 do		29
11 th	paid Fish for labour	3	25
	" & Penfield by order on Dr & V ^o Woodin	4	30
	" F. Sages for labour - by Hawley & Austin	11	50
	" P. Dedouk " do " do " "	5	50
	" Saunders for do	2	50
	" Hills for build hut &c		
		7	..

⁴² National Archives and Records Administration, "1850 United States Federal Census," Ancestry®, accessed April 21, 2022, <https://www.ancestry.com/imageviewer/collections/8054/images/4197483-00292?ssrc=&backlabel=Return>.

Court Document Concerning Enslaved Woman Chloe

This may certify that the Court of general
 Sessions of the Peace in and for the County of Greene
 held at the Court House in the Town of Catskill
 in said County - Present his
 Honor Caleb Beaton Judge
 Frederick H. Roberts - Do -
 Levi Callender Do - that on
 the application of John A. Thomson and
 Catherine T. Thomson of the Estate of Thomas
 Thomson deceased for the purpose of exonerating
 themselves and the heirs of said Estate from
 all liability of supporting a certain Negro slave
 called Cloe belonging to said Estate in pur-
 suance of an Act of the Legislature of the State
 of New York passed the 8th of April 1801 entitled
 an Act concerning Slaves & Servants it
 satisfactorily appearing to us the said Court
 that the said Administrator & Administrat-
 rix have in all things complied with the
 said Act and we the said Court fully
 satisfied that the said Negro slave Cloe is
 under the age of fifty years and is of sufficient
 ability to provide for herself. So in pursuance
 of said Act grant this our Certificate as
 Our Honor this 4th day of Sept 1810 -
 Caleb Beaton
 Samuel Holcomb
 Frederick H. Roberts
 Levi Callender

Manus. No. 2, 1810, 2

Certificate of the Court
 of Sessions respecting
 a Slave

Certificate of the Court
 of Sessions respecting
 a Slave

Manus. No. 2, 1810, 2

Front: This may certify that the Court of general S(?) of the B(?) in and of the County of Greene held at the Court House in the Town of Catskill in seen(?) county-(?)
 —that on the application of John A. Thomson and Catherine T. Thomson of the Estate of Thomas Thomson Drucared? for the purpose of exonerating their felonies and the hire of said Estate from all liability of supporting a certain negro slave called Cloe belonging to said estate in pursuance of an act of the legislature of the state of New York paper the 8th of April 1801 entitles an act concerning slaves and servants, it satisfactorily appearing to us the said Court that the said administrator and administrat- have in all things complied with the said act and we the said court (?) fully satisfied that the said Negro slave is under the age of fifty years and is of sufficient ability to provide for herself. So in pursuance of said grant this our certificate as (?) Our honor this 4th day of Sept 1810.

Caleb Benton
 Samuel Hol-
 Mr. Robb(?)
 Levi Callinder

Back: Certificate of the Court of S(?) respecting(?) a slave

Source: Thomson Family and Cole Family Papers, Folder 3, Box 7, TCNHS, Catskill, NY