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The Totoket Historical Society, Inc.

Four Black Slaves in North Branford Named "Dick"

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by

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Introduction:

Several articles have been written by members of The Totoket Historical Society concerning slaves during the Revolutionary War period. In truth, slaves from New England, North Branford included, played a significant role in the War. Mr. Eugene C. MacMullan has written two such articles concerning Tull Dick, a slave owned by Solomon Rose and Timothy Russell of Branford. Of course, at that time North Branford was a part of Branford. A copy that document follows:

The following document is a digitized copy of an indenture agreement promising freedom to a negro slave, Tull Dick, if he would join the Continental army. Under the agreement he would legally be considered an indentured servant to Lieutenant Mark Mazuzen during the war and would receive his freedom when he reached 21 years of age on May 29, 1782. His original masters, Timothy Russell and Solomon Rose signed the Indenture as did Lieutenant Mazuzen and Tull Dick.

A search of Revolutionary War records shows that Tull Dick enlisted in Hazen's Regiment in New Haven on April 15, 1777, a month before the Indenture was signed. At the time, he was 16 years old. He was removed from the rolls of the regiment on September 11, 1777 with the note that he had probably been killed or captured at the Battle of Brandywine. Lieutenant Mazuzen served in the same regiment and resigned in December, 1777 but later rejoined and served until 1783.

Below is a copy of the original manumission document and following that is Mr. MacMullan's transcription of that document.

This Indenture made between Timothy Buffell, and Solomon Pape
of Branford in the County of New Haven and State of Connecticut
on the one part and Masha Magazun of Branford in the County
State of New York - Witness -

That we the said Timothy Buffell and Solomon Pape, Doe by these presents
put his said bond out. Sull Dick ^{negro} Man servant to the said Timothy Buffell, and Pape,
to Masha Magazun in the Continental Service, to serve with him
in the number of a bond servant untill he shall arrive to three days
of Twenty one years, which will be on the 29th Day of May A. 1782
And in this said Term of time he shall faithfully his said Masters Service
and Obedience and not absent himself from his said Masters Service without
his leave, and all his lawfull Commands he shall obey, he shall
not be engaged or waste his Masters goods or Estate, nor suffer any to
Doe the same without giving notice thereof to his said Masters

And I the said Masha Magazun doe bind myself to provide for the
said Sull Dick Negro servant to the said Timothy Buffell and Pape, all necessary meats, and
Drinks, Cloathing, washing in sickness and in health, and to keep him in service
where in the Army of the United States or in Camp there, except at some other
deligent estate of employing, untill the 29th Day of May A. 1782, untill
And then at the expiration of said Term of time to discharge him from
my Service, and give him decent wearing Apparel, to all parts of his Body
And also we the said Timothy Buffell, and Solomon Pape, jointly declare and by
this indenture cause to this bond servant of ours Sull Dick, after he
has faithfully served his said Masters, this Time here mentioned, his duty and
freedom from all bonds or obligations to us, and to let his own Master, and
do the Indenture is given of him for the Express purpose of his serving
in the Continental Army, It also causes to be still servant, at the close
of said War, or Dismission of said Army to be 100, Rees of Land granted a year
by the Continent to each private Soldier, in Case, if the said Sull Dick
should not live till he arrives to three days of Twenty one years, or the end
of the present War, his Master Sull Dick - Magazun shall have and be
entitled to the same and is hereby by us in said Pape entitled to the same
as his right and claim.

Turn over

Brought over

In witness whereof we the parties have hereunto set our hands
and seals this the 29th Day of May A.D. 1777. In the second year
of the Independence of the American States,

Signed sealed and delivered

In presence of the
Sam^l Ellis
Hannah Ellis

Amos Pfeiffer

Solomon Rose

Mark Marguer

And in consequence of the above freedom to me given in this
Indenture, by my S^d Masters Amos Pfeiffer & Solomon Rose,
And the said being that I do confirm his name in a certain
Bill of Freedom to me given, and will with this I do lay the
same to heart and consent, with the above Indenture and will
for myself carefully to observe & fulfill the same, by serving in
the Continental Army during the present War, and if that (Capitl
before I arrive to the Age of Twenty one to serve out in the
Moshu Marguer, as an indentured apprentice or servant, till I do arrive
to 21 Age which will be the 29th Day of May A.D. 1797

The fulfilling the Conditions of S^d Indenture to me as above
In witness whereof I set my hand and seal this day and Date
above mentioned

In presence of
Sam^l Ellis
Hannah Ellis

Full ^{the} Dish
Moshu

Mark Marguer
Amos Pfeiffer
Solomon Rose

2007-001-008

This Indenture made between Timothy Russell and Solomon Rose of Branford in the County of New Haven and the State of Connecticut on the one part and Mark Mazuzen of Branford in the county and state aforesaid, Witnesses:

That we the said Timothy Russell and Solomon Rose do by these presents put to and bind out Tull Dicks, Negro, man servant to us the said Russell and Rose to Mark Mazuzen, Lieut. in the Continental Service, to live with him in the manner of a bound servant until he shall arrive to the age of twenty-one years, which will be on the 29th day of May, AD 1782 and in the said term of time he shall faithfully his said master serve and obey and not absent himself from his said master's service without his leave and all his lawful commands he shall obey. He shall not imbezel or waste his master's goods or estate nor suffer any to doe the same without giving notice thereof to his said master.

And I the said Mark Mazuzen, Lieut. Doe bind myself to provide for the said Tull Dicks, negro servant to said Russell and Rose all necessary meats and drinks, clothing, washing in sickness and in health and to keep him in service either in the army of the States or in case the war ceaseth in some other diligent and strong employ until the 29th day of May 1782 as aforesaid. And then at the expiration of said term of time to dismiss him from my service and give him decent wearing apparel to all parts of his body.

And also we the said Timothy Russell and Soloman Rose by this instrument secure to this bond servant of ours, Tull Dicks, after he has faithfully served his said master the time here mentioned his liberty and freedom from all bond or obligation to us and to be his own man. And as this Indenture is given of him for the express purpose of him serving in the Continental Army, it also secures to the said Tull, servant, at the close of the war or dismissal of said Army the 100 acres of land promised and given by the Continent to each private soldier on serving but in case the said Tull Dicks should not live till he arrives to the age of twenty one years or the end of the present war, his master Lieut. Mazuzen shall have and be entitled to said lands and is hereby by us in the said case intituled to said lands as his right and claim.

In witness thereof we the parties have hereunto set our hands and seals this 29th day of May AD 1777 in the second year of the independence of the American States.

Signed, sealed and delivered
In presence of

Samuel Ells
Hannah Ells

Timothy Russell

Solomon Rose

Mark Mazuzen

And in conformance of the above freedom to me given in this indenture by my said masters Timothy Russell and Solomon Rose and the same being ratified and confirmed by them in a certain bill of freedom to me given and well attested I do by these presents consent and concur with the above indenture and promise for myself carefully to observe and fulfill the same by serving in the Continental Army during the present war and if that ceaseth before I arrive to the age of twenty one to serve Lieut Mark Mazuzen as an Indentured Apprentice Servant till I doe arrive at said age which will be the 29th of May AD 1782 the fulfilling of the conditions of said Indenture to me as above.

In witness whereof I set my hand and seal the day and date above mentioned.

In Presence of

Samuel Ells
Hannah Ells

his
Tull X Dick
mark

Further, in a second short article in the "Totoket Times" Mr. MacMullan wrote:

GLIMPSES OF NORTH BRANFORD HISTORY
from the Totoket Historical Society

Our Black Revolutionary War Hero

by
Eugene C. MacMullan

2008

The Totoket Historical Society has recently been given an old document that sheds light on a local legendary hero of the American Revolution. The document is an indenture promising freedom to a Negro slave, Tull Dick, if he would join the Continental army. Under the agreement he would legally be considered and indentured servant to Lieutenant Mark Mazuzen during the war and would receive his freedom when he reached 21 years of age on May 29, 1782. His original masters, Timothy Russell and Solomon Rose signed the Indenture as did Lieutenant Mazuzen and Tull Dick.

A search of Revolutionary War records shows that Tull Dick enlisted in Hazen's Regiment in New Haven on April 15, 1777, a month before the Indenture was signed. At the time, he was 16 years old. He was removed from the rolls of the regiment on September 11, 1777 with the note that he had probably been killed or captured at the Battle of Brandywine. Lieutenant Mazuzen served in the same regiment and resigned in December, 1777 but later rejoined and served until 1783.

The story doesn't end there. According to a local legend, when the British invaded New Haven in 1779 the men of the town went off to fight and left a slave named Dick to lead the women and children to the safety of his home on Totoket Mountain. The home site is still called Dick's lot.

Was this the same Tull Dick who had served earlier in the Army? How likely is it that there were two black men named Dick in North Branford at that time? If it was Tull Dick, he must have survived the Battle of Brandywine and hopefully received his freedom 1782.

Mr. MacMullan has raised a valid question. Having recently come across several pieces of information concerning North Branford slaves named "Dick" I think we can answer that question with finality.

According to Mr. MacMullan's research, Tull Dick was 16 years old in April of 1777 when he enlisted in the army. Records of The Northford Congregational Church show the following:

Marriages performed by the Rev. Mr. Warham Wiliams:

February 23, 1774 Dick Negro and Mary Lattomore Indian

If this "Dick Negro" was "Tull Dick" then he must have been 13 years old when he was married, a very unlikely situation. Further the records also show:

Deaths:

October 1782 Dick Negro age 60

This means that Dick Negro was married at the age of 52. The Dick Negro who died in 1782 could not have been Tull Dick as he would only have been 21 in May of 1782. There definitely were two black slaves in North Branford named "Dick." Further investigation of the records of The Northford Congregational Church reveal:

Deaths:

January 10, 1777 Dick Negro age 22

This "Dick Negro" could not have been "Tull Dick" because he was dead prior to "Tull Dick" joining the Continental Army. It is now apparent that during this time period there were actually three slaves in North Branford named "Dick!" Unfortunately most probably Tull Dick was killed or captured at The Battle of Brandywine on September 9, 1777. He never realized his dream of becoming a free man.

Supplementary investigation reveals that there was a third "Dick Negro" in Northford who died at age 100 in in 1755. The name "Dick" for a slave appears to have been quite common in these parts