



New Guinea Community, Hyde Park, New York

The following includes portions of text from the successful application to the US Department of the Interior, National Register of Historic Places, 2018, for “New Guinea Community Site” in Hyde Park, Dutchess County, New York.

The New Guinea Community refers to a ca. 1790 to 1850 settlement of free blacks, a number of whom were formerly enslaved, and a few whites, who occupied an area within what has since 1821 been known as the Town of Hyde Park.

The appellation “Guinea” or “Guinea Town” is a reference to the Guinea Coast in West Africa, a presumed ancestral homeland of many slaves and their descendants. It was a fairly common name, often a thoughtless shorthand, for free black communities, including another Dutchess County settlement near Poughquag that was founded by a mulatto named Charles Freeman.

The New Guinea Community would have been well-known by locals when it was active in the 19th century. But presumably memories of it were fading by the late 19th century when Edward Braman decided to collect oral histories and early sources about the history of Hyde Park. His notebooks, which were written from 1873 to 1894, provide the principal source of information about the Guinea Community and its inhabitants. In addition, the 1820 US Federal Census is important as it is the last Federal Census before slavery ended in NY State in 1827. The records of St. James Episcopal Church, Hyde Park contain references to black residents of Guinea, including the long-time sexton Richard Jenkins (ca. 1783-1857), a former “Bard negro” who evidently moved from Bard’s Rock to the Community with Nancy, his wife. Some other Community families with connections to the Bard family also attended the church including Artemus Quackenbush, who is noted as a gardener to Judge Nathaniel Pendleton.



Quackenbush, Artemus (Gardener for Judge Pendleton.)
Lucy

Both images from
Historical Notes of Saint James Parish, 1913.

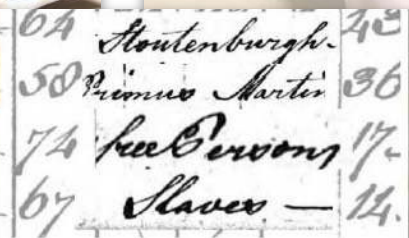
Henry Hackett, whose family eventually acquired and consolidated the land on which the Community had settled, wrote an article for the 1939 *Dutchess County Historical Society Yearbook* that relied in part on Braman’s work but also provided additional information regarding the boundaries and outline of the Community from deed research.

Braman’s notebooks state that: “the Bards sold off some small lots to negroes and to some white people” along the road to Delamater’s Mills. Henry Hackett described the neighborhood of “New Guinea” a district where “colored families” lived “around the first

bridge east of Hyde Park.” According to Hackett, the African Americans who lived in Hyde Park were free blacks and their descendants, who had formerly been enslaved by local large land owners, such as the Bards, Hosacks, McVickers and Pendletons. In addition to the Bards, Braman also mentioned the Stoutenburghs, Tellers, Uhls and Mulfords as slave holders. The members of the Community owned or rented small holdings, which they farmed, but were primarily employed by the owners of large estates along the Hudson River. While these historical sources indicate that the Community members engaged in farming, the land was clearly inferior for that purpose than land closer to the Hudson River to the west.

Braman mentioned that “some white people” bought lots on the road to Delamater’s Mills along with the “negroes.” In 1836, Willett Marshall, local landowner and member of a Dutchess County Quaker family, purchased property in the area of Lot #5 (“the Willett location”) in the Guinea Community. Given Marshall’s standing in Hyde Park and his land holdings elsewhere, it is unlikely that he actually inhabited the small holding and house on Lot #5. Presumably he rented the lot and house to a tenant as did other white landowners in the Community.

Hackett mentioned Freedonia Lane and said that there was a “colored burying ground” on the Martin lot. He also noted that, “At one time there were over sixty colored families living in and about Hyde Park.” Given these descriptions, one assumes that originally “New Guinea” Community incorporated a larger area than the remnant site at Hackett Hill Park.



The 1820 census

The 1820 census which only shows head of household name, is amended here for a quick visual reference to show concentration of persons of color in the New Guinea community as follows: *white with enslaved* (solid red), *white with free colored* (dotted red), free colored (solid blue), white with both free colored and enslaved (yellow).

White w Enslaved
 White w "Free colored"
 "Free colored"
 "Free colored" + Enslaved

1820 Federal Census (1790-1800) Hyde Park

Enslaved Free

Red indicates Persons of Color as part of a White Household

White w Enslaved
 White w "Free colored"
 "Free colored"
 "Free colored" + Enslaved

Henry Blake
 Robert Quackenbush

Jenny Cocks

1820 Federal Census (1790-1800) Hyde Park

Enslaved Free

White w Enslaved
 White w "Free colored"
 "Free colored"
 "Free colored" + Enslaved

Quack Quackenbush
 Primus Martin

Handwritten census table with color-coded rows. Red lines indicate households with enslaved persons, dotted red lines indicate households with free colored persons, blue lines indicate households with free colored persons, and yellow lines indicate households with both free colored and enslaved persons. The table lists numerous names and their corresponding counts in various columns.

The program from the 2019 erection of the Pomeroy sign
noting National Register designation.

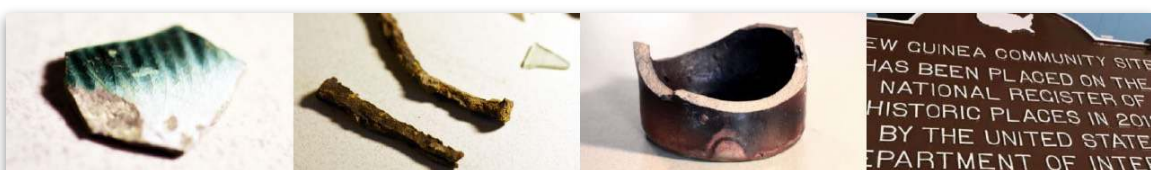


A ceremony to recall and honor the
men, women and children of
the "New Guinea" Community
*Through the National Register Listing
of the*
**New Guinea
Community Site**



59 East Market Street, Hyde Park
Saturday, May 18, 2019
2:00 pm

www.DCHSNY.org



2:00 PM OFFICIAL DEDICATION CEREMONY

Welcome and Greetings from the Town of Hyde Park, *Aileen Rohr, Hyde Park Town Supervisor*
The New Guinea Project, *Bill Jeffway, Executive Director, Dutchess County Historical Society*
The History of New Guinea, *Dr. Ann K. Wentworth*
Remarks, New York State Office of Parks, Recreation & Historic Preservation,
Michael Lynch, Director, Division of Historic Preservation
Recognition of The Pomeroy Foundation, *Shannon Butler, Hyde Park Town Historian*

FOLLOWED BY OPTIONAL WALKING TOUR OF THE SITE

