



Hasbrouck Family Association JOURNAL

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March 2022

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President's Report – Thad C. Hasbrouck

2022, the new year, is underway with much for which to look forward. An exciting discovery in early 2022 are the 1828 court records for Isabella Van Wagenen (better known as Sojourner Truth), an historic case that included the efforts of Abraham Bruyn Hasbrouck. Details are in this newsletter.



As readers of the *HFA Journal* know, 2021 marked the 300th Anniversary of both the Abe and Jean Houses on Huguenot Street. The ongoing pandemic dampened plans for an in-person celebration. However, HFA celebrated the year with a special life membership discount. It was very successful, as over thirty new life members took advantage, some choosing this over their annual membership, and over half of whom are new members of HFA. Welcome!

Plans for projects at both houses continue. These are described later in the newsletter. The Abe and Jean Houses will be pristine examples of Hudson Valley Dutch architecture.

Each year, HFA awards four one-year scholarships to college students of Huguenot Street descent. In 2021, we were able to increase the amount of the scholarships to \$3,500 each. In 2022, the scholarship awards will increase to \$5,000! Read about our 2021 scholarship awardees and their accomplishments later in this newsletter.

Historic Huguenot Street, while closed for the winter, is busy planning a schedule of events for 2022. Have a look at the interesting HHS calendar of events that are listed on our website (www.hasbrouckfamily.org) – attend if you are able. Liselle LaFrance, HHS President, in her article on the next page, identifies some exciting research activities undertaken on the Street.

HFA's store, hosted by Zazzle, provided many holiday gifts for family members. A portion of your purchases goes to the HFA General Fund, supporting our work. The items in our store are of high quality and Zazzle fully guarantees satisfaction with purchases.

https://www.zazzle.com/store/hfa_hasbrouck_store

It can also be accessed from our HFA website. On the store page of our website is a description of how to save money on Zazzle shipping costs. Your continued support of the HFA store is appreciated.

Thank you for being a member of the Hasbrouck Family Association and supporting the wonderful work of the organization. We are so fortunate to be able to trace our roots to Huguenot Street and the 1721 Abe and Jean Houses – it's an ever so special legacy that together we are sustaining.

HFA Membership

The strength of HFA is its membership. Encourage family members and friends of history to join, whether as a Life Member or with an Annual Membership. Consider gifting a membership. Details are available on our HFA website.

Huguenot Street Happenings – Lisselle LaFrance



Though house tours are not done in the winter, the staff at HHS is very busy with exciting projects.

In news related to the digitization project funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH), Historic Huguenot Street has been awarded \$25,000 from the Dutch Consulate for the translation of Dutch-language documents to English. The documents slated for translation are held in the HHS archives. Dr. Jaap Jacobs, a member of the HHS Scholarly Advisors, will serve as the lead on the translation team. These translations will be included in online records for the documents conserved and digitized as part of the NEH-funded project.

The second batch of documents slated for conservation and digitization, with the NEH grant funds, were delivered on schedule to the Conservation Center in Philadelphia in December.

This past fall, Historic Huguenot Street accepted numerous artifacts from the estate of Richard Relyea Hasbrouck, a direct descendant of Jean Hasbrouck, one of New Paltz's original patentees. Included was a kast attributed to the Beekman – Elting Workshop that was located in Kingston, New York. This kast remained in the 18th-century family home of its original owner, believed to be Jacob J Hasbrouck (1767-1850). Since kasten were frequently part of a women's dowry, it is likely that this kast came into the family on the occasion of Jacob's marriage to either Margaret Hardenbergh (1776-1796) in 1793 or Ann DuBois (1777-1854) in 1799. In the 2018 exhibition "Kasten from Mid-Hudson Valley Collections", HHS Director of Curatorial and Preservation Affairs noted that "Kasten were central to domestic life in colonial New York. While serving a utilitarian function as the primary storage for linens, these impressive pieces were quintessential to the



Attributed to the Beekman-Elting workshops, Kingston, NY, 1780-1800
Red gum, sycamore, and pine.
Bequest of Richard R. Hasbrouck.

furnishings of Dutch-American homes, signifying the heritage of the owners, as well as their wealth and social status." The Richard Hasbrouck piece is now on display in the Jean Hasbrouck House.

Historic Huguenot Street will be among sites featured in the new season of "Travels with Darley", to be broadcast on PBS stations across the nation soon. As episodes broadcast at different times in different markets, viewers can check their local PBS TV listings for dates and times in their areas. You can locate your local station with the [PBS station finder](#).

In other promotional news, Huguenot Street was featured on a site called TheTravel.com in a January 13 release: (<https://www.thetravel.com/huguenot-oldest-street-new-paltz-ny/>)

Visit the HHS website for details on upcoming events through winter and spring, including nature walks with ethnoecology expert Justin Wexler, a presentation entitled "Faces of the Global Refuge: Huguenot Stories from the American Northeast" by Dr. Owen Stanwood, "Suffrage and its Limits: The Unfinished Business of Women's Rights in New York" with Meg Devlin and Susan Ingalls Lewis, and more. The web address: (<https://www.huguenotstreet.org/calendar-of-events>).

Announced in the November 2021 *HFA Journal* was the awarding of a \$500,000 *Save America's Treasures* grant from the National Park Service to HHS. These funds will be used to restore the Bevier-Elting House (circa 1700) on Huguenot Street. As the fund requires a 1:1 match, HHS is fundraising – welcoming contributions from all Huguenot-descendant families.

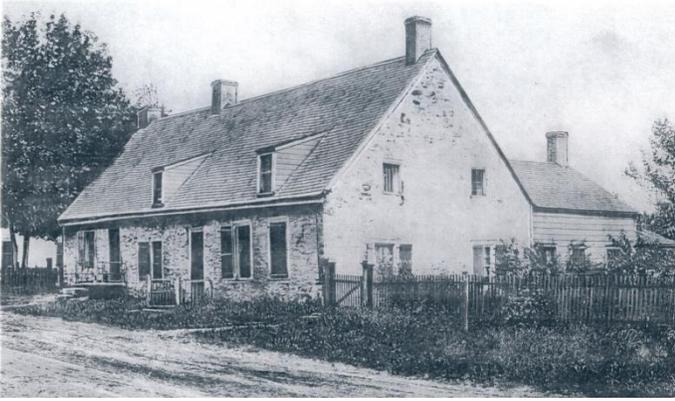


Bevier-Elting House – to be restored

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Historic Huguenot Street

Abraham Hasbrouck House



Abraham Hasbrouck House – photo taken circa 1900

As reported in recent *HFA Journal* articles, the west wall of the Abe House has been restored to its 1750 appearance. The last features of the façade are the addition of Dutch style door stoops, as were in front of both the opkamer (upper room) and center room doors. We know stoops were in place at the house originally from evidence on the wall, descriptions, and old photos from the late 1800s when they were still in place. Above is a circa 1900 photo that shows the two stoops at the doorways.

In the next month, a limited archeology dig will take place in front of each of the doors for the purpose of determining the location of the original stoop footings and the possibility of buried stoop artifacts. This will provide us with the early dimensions of the stoops. Following will be the shop drawings and specs for the fabrication of the stoops. Stay tuned!



Abraham Hasbrouck House – east (back) wall

Restoration of the back of the house, the east wall, is another project in its design phase. Simpler and plainer in appearance, doors and windows will be period appropriate, with mortar repointing to match the other three sides of the house. This will bring the house exterior in its entirety to its 1750 appearance.

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Jean Hasbrouck House



Jean Hasbrouck House – north and west walls

With the new Alaskan cedar shingle roof in place on the house for slightly over a year, the house is an impressive sight. And restoration work continues.

On the south end of the west (rear) wall is the cellar entrance, a stone stepped access covered by a shingled roof. Though it isn't 1721 original, it is an important access to the cellar for mechanical and restoration work. The current cellar stairway roof is badly deteriorated. Drawings for its replacement frame are completed. At the same time as the rebuilding of the cover, cleaning and mortar repointing of the wall, and wood roof gutter installation will take place. Upon approvals of the final design and specs, the project will go out for bid.



1830 Barn behind the Jean Hasbrouck House

Another project is the renovation / stabilization of the 1830 barn behind the Jean House property. The barn framework needs to be stabilized, roof framing repaired, with new Alaskan Cedar shingles applied to the roof. Having the barn work completed will provide an improved storage area for HHS materials.

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2021 Scholarship Awards

Each year, the Hasbrouck Family Association recognizes the academic excellence of four college students who can trace their ancestral roots to the original patentees of New Paltz. The Gertrude E. Hasbrouck Memorial Scholarships are awarded by an HFA Scholarship Committee. This year, the scholarship value was increased to \$3,500. Also, awardees receive a one-year membership to HFA. Two of our 2021 scholars were recipients in 2020. Interestingly, two are twins! The Gertrude E. Hasbrouck 2021 scholarship winners:

Kate Bellman is a descendant of Abraham Hasbrouck and Maria Deyo. Home is in Pompton Plains, New Jersey. As a Dean's List student at State University of New York – Oneonta, Kate is a junior, majoring in Early Childhood Education. With a diversity of interests, Kate is a scholar-athlete, participating on the university's track and field team, as well as being a member of numerous clubs. Music is an important part of her life, playing several instruments and working as an assistant teacher in summer camps. Kate's university preparation is leading toward a career as a kindergarten teacher. This important year of learning for students benefits greatly from an excellent teacher. We wish Kate much success. This is Kate's second Gertrude Hasbrouck Scholarship award.



Mason Freer is a sophomore at Syracuse University, majoring in Computer Science, with a minor in Information Management and Technology. From Wappingers Falls, New York, Mason excelled in high school, earning 21 college credits through Advanced Placement courses and an additional 15 credits from his local community college. A member of the National Honor Society and Math Honors society, Mason was a runner, participating in both Cross Country and Track while carrying a rigorous academic course load. A musician, Mason played clarinet in the school band, earning himself the spot of first chair by



junior year. In the summer, he worked as a camp counselor for the community summer camp and worked in retail. At Syracuse University, Mason has immersed himself in his Computer Science Program. Additionally, he is a Resident Advisor, aiming to help his fellow students on their journey through college. He plans to have a 2022 summer internship in his field of study. Mason's long-term goal is to become a software developer, working in a big-tech company on the newest technology. His family lineage can be traced to Hugo Freer, patentee.

Spencer Freer, from Wappingers Falls, NY, and a descendent of patentee Hugo Freer, is a sophomore at State University of New York – Binghamton, pursuing a three plus one program with a BA in Philosophy, Politics, and Law (completed in three years), followed by a Master's Degree in Public Administration. Establishing a strong record in high school, Spencer was president of the Music Honor Society, captained his track and field team in which he excelled, and maintained a high-grade average in academics, including numerous AP and college level courses. At SUNY–Binghamton, Spencer continues his academic excellence. He serves as a Resident Assistant (RA) and coordinates transportation for COVID isolation students as well as coaches the Residence Hall's Co-ed football team. His interest in politics and public administration led to a summer internship at the Dutchess County Executive Offices. Career plans include work in government, including the option of running for elected political positions.



Josiah J. Hasbrouck, a descendent of Jean Hasbrouck and Anna Deyo, and resident of Gorham, Maine, is receiving the Gertrude E. Hasbrouck Scholarship for the second time. As a junior Politics major at Cairn University in Langhorne, Pennsylvania, Josiah is a University Honors Program participant with a perfect transcript. This year, he was elected the Vice President of the Student Government



Association, and later became President to fill a vacancy. In this role, Josiah oversees student clubs and organizations, as well as serving as a spokesperson for the student body with the university administration, faculty, and staff. Other past college activities include leadership roles in the History Club and singing bass in university choral ensembles. This talented young man has held numerous student worker positions at the university. These include working in the library at the front desk, video editor/course developer for the Office of Distance Learning, and as a teacher's assistant in the School of Liberal Arts and Sciences. Planning his Honors Program thesis project, Josiah will analyze the applicability of natural law theories in United States jurisprudence. His professors speak highly of him. As one wrote, "Without a doubt, Josiah is among those in quest of a life of significance, not just a life of accomplishments."

The Charles J. Hasbrouck Memorial Scholarship is administered jointly by Historic Huguenot Street and HFA. Applicants must be undergraduate students studying historic preservation, architecture, the conservation of artifacts and manuscripts, and/or the education of the public about local history in accordance with HHS' mission. Created by Kenneth and Alice Hasbrouck upon the death of their son, the memorial scholarship honors Charles' work in the areas described above. The \$1,000 scholarship was awarded in 2021 to this deserving young woman:

Kendy Mejia Oyuela is a sophomore at the University of San Francisco, majoring in Architecture, with a minor in Design. From San Francisco, Kendy sees her home city as a lab to immerse herself in her community-design



architecture studies. Professors describe Kendy as a young woman determined to succeed, extremely well organized, a natural leader who works well with others, intelligent, creative, and possessing the tools to be a life-changing leader. Last

summer, she participated in a fellowship in architectural endeavors with Opportunities for All in San Francisco. Ultimately, it is of great interest to Kendy to use architecture to improve the lives of low-income communities, emphasizing the beauty of architecture and enhancing the larger neighborhood.

These qualities embody the criteria of the Charles J. Hasbrouck Memorial Scholarship.

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The Ancestry of Texas Honey

A yellow lily of Texas comes to New Paltz – read how this happened:

Helen Hasbrouck, G-1234, was the last of her branch named Hasbrouck. She was born 28 December 1856 to Abraham Hasbrouck and Louisa G. Smith, in White Pigeon, Michigan. In 1860 the family settled in Mattoon, Illinois where Abraham operated a hardware and farm implement business. He would go on to be elected Mayor of the town in 1878 as well as having success in business.

Helen was clearly intelligent and gifted as she was accepted to the Freshman Class of 1878 at Vassar College in Poughkeepsie, NY. As is often the case, a handsome young man got into the way of her education, and she married Isaac Bloyer Craig on 22 October 1879. Her younger sister, Bertha, also attended Vassar, but passed away while at college. Isaac was a young attorney who would become an Illinois State Senator, Representative, and Judge. They spent their whole lives in Mattoon where Helen became interested in gardening, choosing the colorful and hearty daylily as a center piece of her garden.

Helen and Isaac would have four children: Helen L. Craig, 8-261, born 30 Nov 1891, Gertrude Florence Craig 8-262, born 3 Aug 1893, Kathryn Craig 8-263, born 7 Aug 1895 and Elizabeth Craig 8-264, born 7 Aug 1898. Gertrude would inherit her mother's love for daylilies.

Gertrude studied music at Milliken College in Illinois and was a member of Pi Beta Phi. A fellow sorority member, Helen Westervelt is thought to have introduced Gertrude to her brother Barton H. Westervelt, who was studying to become a chemical engineer at Milliken. It must have been a great introduction as they were married on 27 September 1915 at her parent's home. It would turn out that both were descendants of Hans Hansen Bergen and Sarah De Rapalje, who is thought to be the first European child born in New Amsterdam July 9, 1625. Sarah's parents are the only confirmed couple to have arrived on the first Dutch Colony ship in what is now Manhattan in 1624.

The next 20 years for the Westervelt couple were filled with career building and family raising activities. In 1935 Barton, who worked for Southern Alkali

Company, was transferred to Corpus Christi, Texas to build a chemical plant. The family put down roots and for the most part stayed in Texas.

Barton designed and built a home for them on a large one-acre lot. Gertrude began organizing flower beds and filling them with day lilies. Along the way, she became interested in hybridizing (breeding two different colored day lilies and getting a third colored one). She became associated with the American Hemerocallis Society and was president of the local chapter. Between 1955 and 1960 she developed and registered five flowers with the Society: Texas Honey, Becky Lou, Diane Nichols, Quilt Patch, and Yellow Witch.

Daylily offspring, like human children, are never identical. The same parents produce offspring that do not look alike. The only way to reproduce the same flower is for the flower to reproduce itself, and most day lilies do this naturally, many doubling the number of fans (plants) each year. Usually, but not always, a fan will have a stem, called a scape, with four to five flowers per scape. When the flower matures and opens it only lasts 24 hours and then closes. Sadly, both Becky Lou and Diane Nichols lilies (named after granddaughters) appear to have died off. Yellow Witch may have been renamed



Texas Honey Lily

Barton Westervelt, as the descriptions are identical. Quilt Patch is available commercially. Texas Honey was saved by the children and grandchildren of Gertrude, who are making efforts to ensure its survival, because, once it is gone it can never be reproduced. A

gift of at least 6 fans of Texas Honey has been made to the Olive Hasbrouck Whittier Garden on Huguenot Street in New Paltz to help with the lily's survival and to share this beautiful and one-of-a-kind flower with others. Planted in 2020, the yellow blossoms of the Texas Honey lilies brightly shined in the Olive Whittier Hasbrouck Memorial Garden in 2021.

The grandchildren of Gertrude are united in the belief that there could have never been a better inheritance than to see a flower, Gertrude hybridized, each spring.

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Financial Highlights 2021

Rebecca Hasbrouck, Treasurer

The year 2021 continued to present many challenges for everyone. Hasbrouck Family Association fared very well with strategic planning, with purpose, and adhering to the strong investment strategy put in place! Dividends and short-term gains remained strong, and we had a tremendous uplift in life memberships with the discount provided in connection with the 300th Anniversary of the Hasbrouck Houses.

2021 YEAR-END BALANCES (\$ in Thousands)

<u>Cash Accounts:</u>	
HFA Accounts	\$ 370
HHA Money Market	<u>281</u>
Total Cash	\$ 651
<u>Investment Accounts:</u>	
HFA Endowment Fund	\$ 3,014
HHA Endowment Fund	<u>2,420</u>
Total Investments	\$ 5,434
TOTAL ASSETS	<u>\$ 6,085</u>

All income earned by HFA is mission-driven. Income from the Helene Hasbrouck Anderson (HHA) Fund is designated to the restoration and maintenance of the Abraham House. Income from the Hasbrouck Family Association (HFA) Endowment Fund feeds into the General Fund, allowing us to pay for expenses and programs not directly related to the Abraham home.

HFA and HHA PERFORMANCE (\$ in Thousands)

<u>HFA Funds</u>	
Dividends and Interest	\$ 109
<u>HHA Funds</u>	
Dividends and Interest	\$ 24
Short-Term Capital Gains	132

Again, this year we owe a great deal of thanks to HFA Vice President Derek HasBrouck, who continued to serve as the managing Director of Investments for all Association funds for HFA. Securities America continues HHA portfolio management (with oversight by Derek and the Board).

HFA and HHA EXPENDITURES (\$ in Thousands)

<u>HFA Expenditures</u>	
Jean Hasbrouck House Support	\$ 21
Scholarships	14
Locust Lawn House Support	14
Operating Expenses	18
Taxes, Estimated Payments	8
European Genealogy	3

In 2021, Hasbrouck Family Association was able to support Locust Lawn in an extensive gutter replacement project. We increased to the amount of \$14K the Gertrude E. Hasbrouck Memorial

Scholarship program, awarded to four hard-working college students. Operating expenses include office and storage rental, utilities, insurance, administrative assistance, tax accounting, printing, and supplies. We were also able to embark on a new journey into the European Genealogy of the Hasbrouck family before their arrival to New Paltz.

HHA Expenses

Abraham Hasbrouck Restoration	\$ 31
Abraham Hasbrouck Maintenance	15
Abraham Hasbrouck Collections	5
Investment Management fees	24

HHA support of the Abraham Hasbrouck House in 2021 included: finalization of the west façade; a custom-made plate stock lock; and a deposit on paint analysis. Unfortunately, we had some moths take up residence in some of the fabrics in the home during construction and incurred some remediation costs. Collections expenses in 2021 totaled \$5K for the fabrication and installation of two reproduction kapstocks. The HHA investments are in an options-trading format, providing for excellent performance, incurring management fees of \$24K.

FORWARD LOOKING

HFA continues to be very strategic in its investment mix and strategic, mission-driven spending, and we look to continue using options with a diversified mix of stocks and bonds. We are excited as we plan for 2022 and beyond!

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2021 General Fund Contributors

- Brian Lee Hasbrouck
- Michael Hasbrouck
- Edward Hassenkamp
- Margaret Link
- Christopher Morrow
- Winona Quinn
- Barbara Schwartz

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Welcome 25 New Members to HFA!

- Cantu, Tricia, Troutman, NC
- Delamater, Erica, New York, NY
- Dell'Isola, Amy, Manorville, NY
- Dell'Isola, Colin James, Manorville, NY
- Dell'Isola, Delaney Rose, Manorville, NY
- Dell'Isola, Jayden Robert, Manorville, NY
- Di Noto, Janis, Cassadaga, NY
- Erway, Benjamin, Horseheads, NY
- Erway, John, Dundee, NY
- Essex, Amanda Nicole, Windsor, CT
- Essex, Christopher, Windsor, CT
- Essex, Katherine Elizabeth, Windsor, CT

- Freer, Mason, Wappingers Falls, NY
- Freer, Spencer, Wappingers Falls, NY
- Gianneschi, Sharon, New Paltz, NY
- Hasbrouck, Helen D., Media, PA
- Hasbrouck, Michael, Sauk Rapids, MN
- Hopper, Joseph, Newburgh, NY
- Maurer, Brady Ryan, Northampton, MA
- Maurer, Kieran Reilly, Northampton, MA
- Maurer, Ronan, Northampton, MA
- Maurer, Rory Robert, Northampton, MA
- Nichols, Kathleen, Kenedy, TX
- Nichols, Neil, Falls City, TX
- Parker, Gloria, Roswell, GA

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Members Who Have Left Us

- Clara Hasbrouck
- Karin Hasbrouck
- Wesley Masten

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Sojourner Truth 1828 Court Documents Found!

An exciting find, indeed! Recently, the original New York State court documents for Sojourner Truth's case that obtained freedom for her son were uncovered in the State Archives. While researching another project, New York State Archives Head of Researcher Services, Dr. Jim Folt, discovered the 1828 case records among 5000 cubic feet of court records. Read on to understand the significance of this case and its relationship to the Hasbrouck name.

About Sojourner Truth

Born around 1797 in Rifton, NY (7 miles north of New Paltz), the youngest of enslaved parents James and Betsy, her given name was Isabella. Owned by



Isabella Van Wageningen - Sojourner Truth

Colonel Johannes Hardenburgh, Revolutionary War veteran and wealthy landowner, he sold most of her 11 siblings. Hardenburgh spoke Dutch, as did his family and seven slaves. After Hardenburgh's death, his son Charles assumed ownership. When Charles died in 1806, Isabella was auctioned for

\$100 along with a flock of sheep to John Neely, a store owner on Roundout Creek, near Kingston. A cruel owner, Neely beat Isabella severely because she didn't understand commands due to her fluency in Dutch and limited understanding of the English language. She bore the scars of whipping for her lifetime. Her father, who had been freed, arranged to

have her sold to a more benevolent, but crude owner, tavern keeper Martinus Schryver in what is now Port Ewen. In 1810, at the age of 12, Schryver sold Isabella for \$175 to John Dumont, a farmer in Esopus, NY (midway between Kingston and Poughkeepsie). Through her hard work, she earned the respect of Dumont. However, he 'wedded' her to an older slave, Tom (there were no legal marriages of slaves), with whom she bore 5 children.

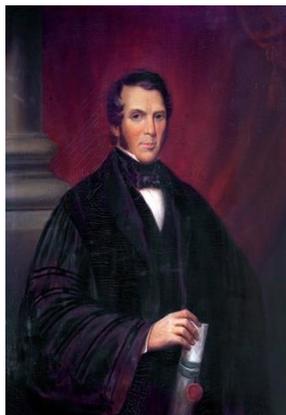
In 1799, the State of New York began the process of manumission, and in 1826 declared that all remaining slaves would be freed on 4 July 1827. However, children and young adults were bound servants of their owners until age 27 – effectively remaining as slaves. John Dumont had agreed to free Isabella a year earlier. However, as the date approached, he reneged, claiming a hand injury made her less productive. Having spun 100 pounds of wool for him, she considered her obligations fulfilled. In the fall of 1826, she ran away with her infant daughter. Traveling about seven miles, Isabella went to the house of a Quaker family, eventually ending up at the home of Isaac and Maria Van Wagenen in New Paltz. When Dumont demanded her return, they paid him \$20 for her and \$5 for the child so she could stay with them.

Why a Court Case?

Several months after the 4 July 1827 New York emancipation, Isabella Van Wagenen (her legal name) discovered that her seven-year-old son, Peter, had been sold off by Solomon Gedney, who had bought him from Dumont, to a slave owner in Alabama. This was illegal, as New York prohibited the sale of slaves out of state. Isabella sought advice of a Quaker family who connected her with Abraham Bruyn Hasbrouck and his law partner Charles Ruggles, who handled Isabella's court case pro bono.

About Abraham Bruyn Hasbrouck

Born in 1791 in Kingston, NY, a fifth generation descendent of New Paltz patentee Abraham, A. Bruyn Hasbrouck (as he signed his name) attended Yale College, graduating in 1810. Following, he attended the Litchfield (Connecticut) Law School under the tutelage of Judge Tapping Reeve. Returning to Kingston, in 1814 he started a law



A. Bruyn Hasbrouck

practice with Charles Ruggles, a law school classmate. A. Bruyn served one term as a Representative in the 19th US Congress (serving one term was the custom of that period), was president of two banks and served ten years as president of Rutgers College, the first layman to hold the position. He retired to Kingston where he founded and was the first president of the Ulster County Historical Society. A. Bruyn died in 1879.

A. Bruyn's relationship with slavery was conflicted. The 1820 Kingston Census showed him owning two

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "A. Bruyn Hasbrouck". The ink is dark and the paper is aged and yellowed.

slaves – one male (age 14-25) and one

female (age 25-44). As of this writing, we know nothing else about his slaves, or if they were emancipated prior to 1827. Nor do we know what influences may have changed his views during the 1820s - we'll continue to pursue this. Yet, there was a change of heart, as Sojourner Truth's 1828 case advocated for freedom for slaves.

The Case Outcome

After filing the court papers and arguing the case, the court's ruling was an historic first – in favor of Isabella, a Black woman and ex-slave, ordering Solomon Gedney to find her son Peter in Alabama and return him to her, via her attorney A. Bruyn Hasbrouck.

After the Court Case

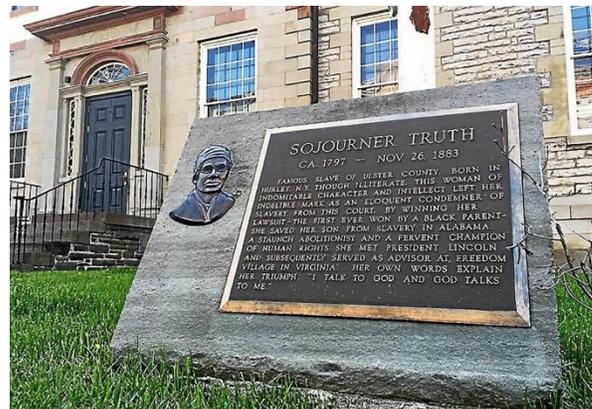
During the court proceedings Isabella wanted to be near the courthouse, so she stayed in Kingston, working as a domestic in A. Bruyn's house. During her time in Kingston, Isabella had a religious conversion, being no longer bitter toward whites, embracing love for all. When 'de lobe [love] come in me...I said, "Yea, God I'll lobe ev'ybuddy an de w'ite pepul too."

In 1828, Solomon Gedney returned Isabella's son Peter to the Kingston Court House. Isabella discovered that Peter was covered with scars from brutal beatings by the Alabama owner. With the return of her son, Isabella moved to New York City, never to return to Ulster County.

Later she became involved in several religious sects. An extension of her religious conversion was her belief that she was an instrument of God, charged to perfect herself and the world, not to be limited by her race, gender, economic status, or lack of education (she was illiterate). In 1843, with all of her belongings in a pillowcase, she began life as a traveling evangelist throughout the eastern United

States. Being six feet tall, with a deep voice, Isabella made an impressive presence. At this time, she changed her name to Sojourner Truth. Her 1853 *Narrative* was one of the earliest published accounts of a first-person New York slave. Sojourner Truth is remembered for her advocacy of women's rights, abolition of slavery, and the treatment of freed slaves. She died in 1883 at age 86 in Battle Creek, Michigan.

In New York, son Peter worked in several jobs, but began to steal, served several prison sentences, ultimately going to sea on a whaling boat in 1839, never to see his mother again. Isabella's other children stayed with the Dumont's in Esopus.



Kingston Court House plaque recognizing the case. Photo courtesy of the Kingston Daily Freeman.

The Case's Importance

The *People v Solomon Gedney* (1828) was an historical case – the first time in the U.S. that a Black woman won a lawsuit – successfully suing a white man to free her son from slavery. Records in the New York Archives include the Writ of Habeas Corpus, Isabella Van Wagenen's (Sojourner Truth) and Solomon Gedney's depositions, the court order to Gedney to bring back from Alabama and return Isabella's son, and the case's disposition. The documents can be viewed in their entirety:

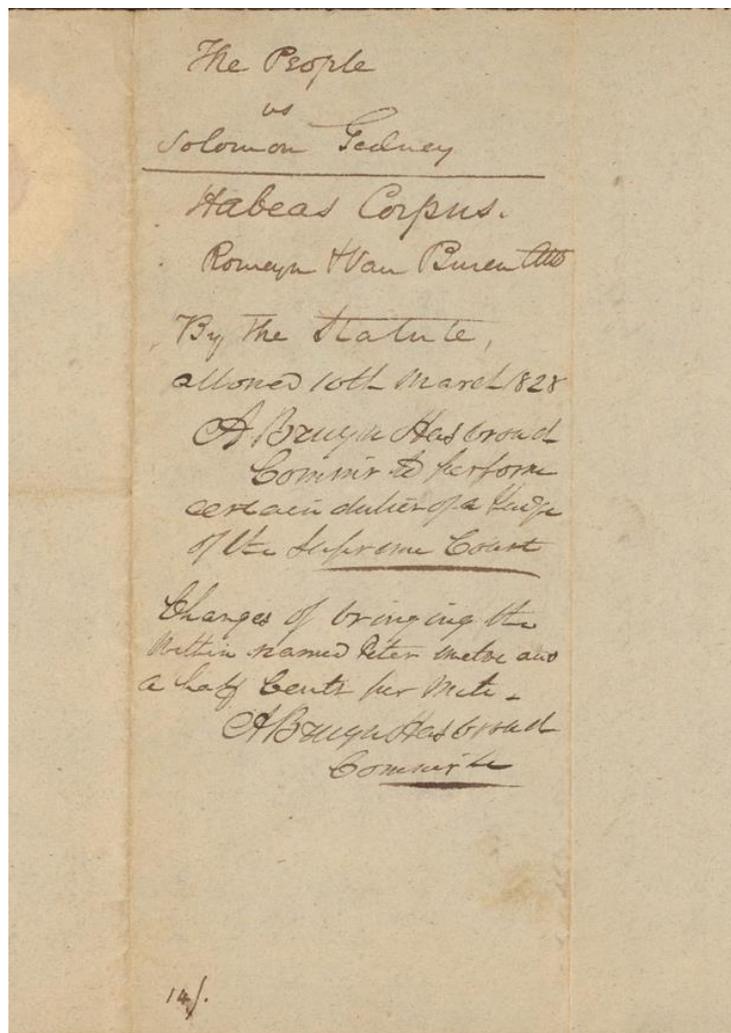
<https://digitalcollections.archives.nysed.gov/index.php/Detail/objects/88246>

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Original cover for the court case

The People v Solomon Gedney filed in 1828 in Kingston, NY.

Isabella Van Wagenen, later known as Sojourner Truth, filed for the return of her son from slavery in Alabama. Her victory in this case marked the first time in US history that a Black woman successfully sued a white person in court.





1910 photo of the Ulster County Courthouse in Kingston, NY – 1818 – site of the Sojourner Truth court case.
Photo from the New York Heritage Digital Collections.



1880 photo of the Col. Abraham Hasbrouck House, Green Street, Kingston, NY – 1735, rebuilt twice, after a 1776 fire and again after the 1777 British burning of Kingston. Abraham Bruyn Hasbrouck lived in this house. Now it is an Airbnb.
Photo from the New York Heritage Digital Collections.