

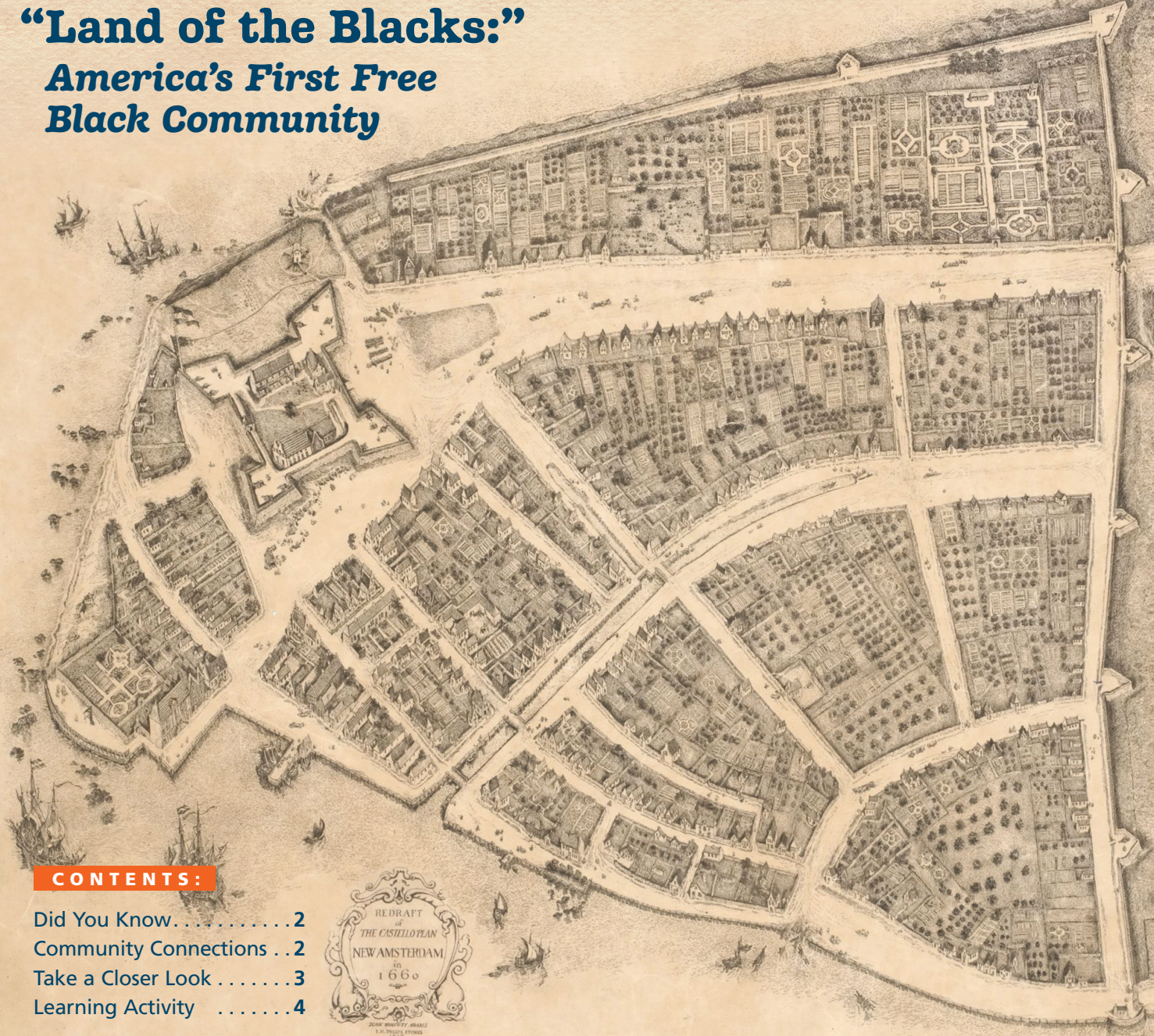
NEW

YORK

archives Jr!

SPRING 2023

“Land of the Blacks:” America’s First Free Black Community



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“Land of the Blacks:” America’s First Free Black Community

AT THE STATE ARCHIVES

Jasmine Bumpers and Jamie Brinkman



Some Black residents of New Netherland were enslaved, while others were “half-free.” The “half-free” Black residents could have some freedom if they followed certain rules. Several “half-free” residents were given land to own by the Dutch in New Amsterdam. They were given land to the northeast of the main settlement to serve as a barrier between New Amsterdam and the neighboring Native American communities.

The village was called the “Land of the Blacks.” It was one of the first free Black communities in the United States. Owners created farms, sold their crops, went to church, and became friends with their neighbors. The neighborhood did well.

On September 8, 1664, the British took over New Netherland from the Dutch. The British allowed the residents of the “Land of the Blacks” to keep their land, but in 1712, the British passed a law stating that Black land owners could not give their land to their children when they died. As a result of this law, the village eventually disappeared.

The New York State Archives has many documents written by the Dutch that show us that the “Land of the Blacks” existed. They also show us that some Black residents in New Netherland were given limited freedom. You can see some of the documents like the petitions for freedom here:

<https://considerthesourcenyc.org/new-york-archives-jr/spring-2023>

Did You Know



- The first enslaved Africans arrived in New Netherland on August 29, 1627.
- In November of 1711, a Common Council law established a market for the auctioning of enslaved individuals on Wall Street.
- In 1730, the British Colonial Government in New York passed a law known as the “New York Slave Code” to prevent enslaved individuals from rebelling.
- The Act for Gradual Abolition legally ended enslavement in New York State in 1827.
- Until 1841, non-residents were allowed to bring enslaved individuals into New York State and keep them here for up to 9 months.

Community Connections



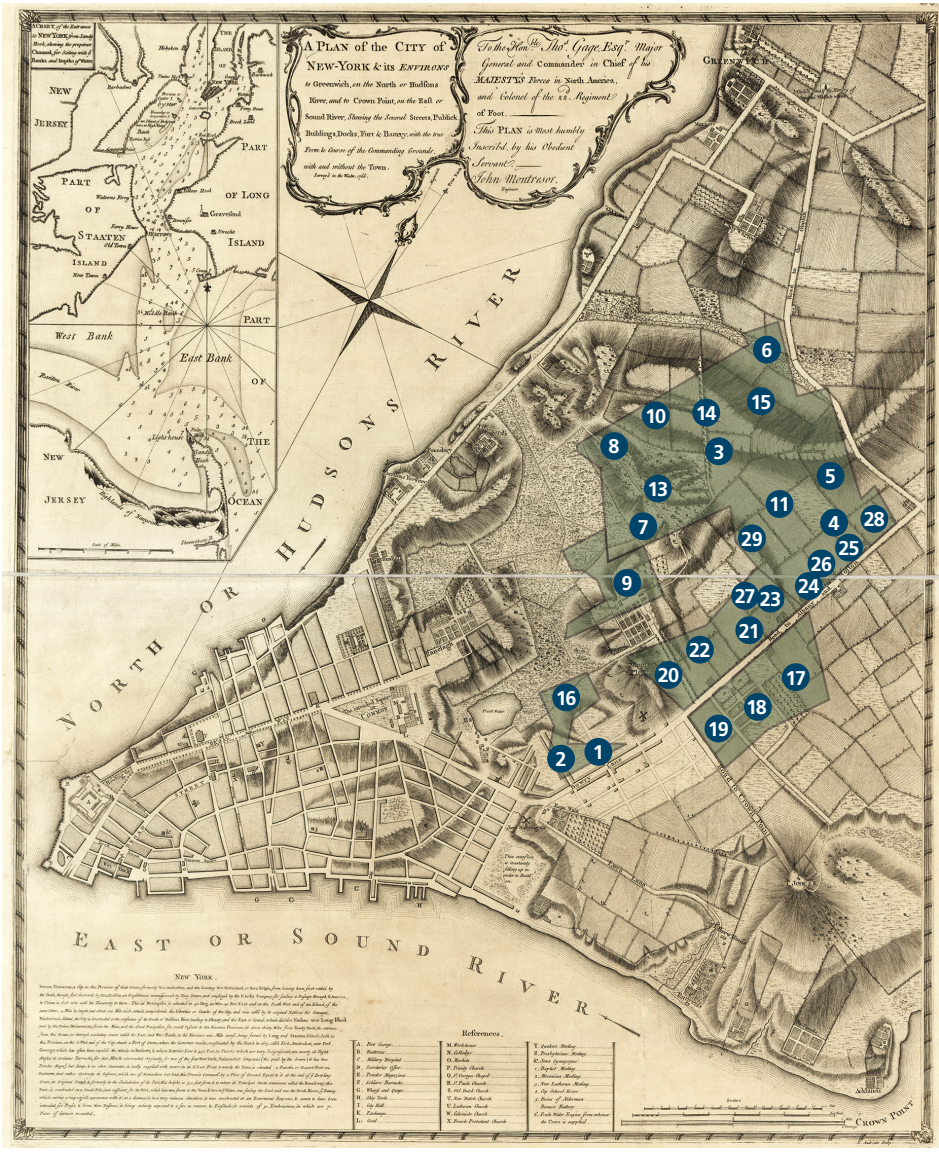
- Visit the [Weeksville Heritage Center](#) and learn about a free, 19th century African American Community.
- Find the [marker for Seneca Village](#), one of Manhattan’s earliest African American Communities, in Central Park West, east of West 85th Street.
- Learn about the [African Burial Ground National Monument](#), the location of the largest known burial ground for free and enslaved Africans.
- Find the [marker for New York City’s Municipal Slave Market](#), used to auction enslaved individuals, near 100 Wall Street.

Take a Closer Look



Student Name _____

A Plan of the City of New York, 1766, with numbers showing the location of lands owned by “half-free” and formerly enslaved Black residents of New Amsterdam.



Use a separate sheet of paper to answer the following questions:

1. Many of the last names below the map are also countries. Use an online map or a globe to locate these countries. On what continent are the countries of Congo and Angola located? Why do you think these individuals had these countries as their last names?
2. What is the title of this map?
3. Compare and contrast the “Land of the Blacks” (green highlighted area) with the other areas on the map. How are they different and similar?
4. Why do you think the “Land of the Blacks” was located in this area of Manhattan? Give two pieces of evidence from the map to support your answer.

- | | | | |
|----------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1 Catalina Antony | 8 Simon Congo | 17 Francisco d'Angola | 24 Claes Negro |
| 2 Domingo Antony | 9 Jan Francisco | 18 Anthony Congo | 25 Assento Angola |
| 3 Cleyn Manuel | 10 Pieter San Tome | 19 Bastiaen Negro | 26 Francisco Cartagena |
| 4 Manuel de Gerrit de Rues | 11 Manuel Groot | 20 Jan Negro | 27 Antony of the Bowery |
| 5 Manuel Trumpeter | 13 Cleyn Antony | 21 Manuel the Spaniard | 28 Antony of the Blind Negro |
| 6 Marycke | 14 Paulo d'Angola | 22 Mathias Antony | 29 Manuel Sanders |
| 7 Gracia d'Angola | 15 Anthony Portuguese | 23 Domingo Angola | |
| | 16 Anna d'Angola | | |

Learning Activity

Choose one role listed below and complete the task for your chosen role. To complete this activity, analyze the documents found at <https://considerthesourceny.org/new-york-archives-jr/spring-2023>. Create your historical document in the space below.

“Land of the Blacks,” America’s First Free Black Community

ROLE Choose <u>one</u> role	AUDIENCE	FORMAT	TOPIC
Domingo Antony “Half Free” Black Resident	Enslaved Blacks	Secret Letter	The freedoms that I wish you could have
Catalina Antony “Half Free” Black Resident	Other “Half Free” Black Residents	Speech from a Secret Meeting	How life changed for residents in the Land of the Blacks under British rule
Artist	Enslaved Blacks	A Sketch	Life in the “Land of the Blacks”
Child of a “Half-Free” Black Resident	British Colonial Courts	Petition	Request for freedom from enslavement

Created by M. Wright Jumpp, SLMS, NY 2023, RAFT Strategy developed by Santa, Havens, and Valdes.

