Hartman Park in the Past

The 1800 census records 15 multi-racial households here. The community provided a home for freed African and American Indian slaves, and white homesteaders. Let’s meet a few of the past inhabitants.

Cuff Condol, American Indian, was born free in 1757 in Rhode Island. By 1787, he was a slave bonded to Stephen Smith in (Old) Lyme. After the Pequot war in 1637, it was legal to force free Indians into servitude as spoils of war, to pay off debts, for petty crimes, for political opposition, or if they were orphans. Slavery and trafficking of Africans and Indians flourished in Connecticut for about 200 years until it was banned in Connecticut in 1848.

In 1787, Cuff Condol was purchased from Smith by three friends: “mixed blood” Daniel Wright, and Indians Sarah Cyrus and Joseph Pumham. He joined them in the Hartman Park community, becoming a free man when he paid them back in 1790. He married, had ten children, and accumulated a large tract of land along the “highway from Lyme to Colchester” (Park Road) in Hartman Park. According to his descendant, Joseph Caples, Cuff and his son Daniel built some of the stone walls there. He farmed the land and was involved in the lumber trade.

Cuff’s neighbor, Euro-American Ebenezer Tiffany, is an ancestor of the Tiffany Farm family in Lyme. At the time, he farmed, and lived in what is now called the Lee Farmhouse. Ebenezer took care of Joseph Pumham and his wife when they fell on hard times. He paid for Joseph’s coffin and was reimbursed by the town.

Cuff’s son Daniel remained in Hartman Park after the death of his father. He was a subsistence farmer and according to Joseph Caples, “My grandfather burned charcoal, got out hoops (for barrels), and oak for tanning purposes, carted all to New London besides wood etc to Hamburg and carting ship timbers...”

Daniel married neighbor Lucy Crosley, daughter of Prentiss Crosley and Carolyn Miller. Prentiss Crosley, Indian/African American, was born into slavery in 1754, as part of the household of Governor Matthew Griswold in (Old) Lyme. He was granted freedom through a special pardon for slaves who fought in the Revolutionary War at least three years. Twenty years after his death in 1818, his widow appealed for a Revolution War Widow's Pension, which was granted. Several letters were written attesting to their marriage and his war service. He was memorable for always carrying a fiddle with him.

Daniel and Lucy Condol are buried in the Coulit Cemetery on Beaver Brook Road. It is unknown where Cuff Condol and Prentiss Crosley are buried.

Subsistence Farming

Livestock

Merino Sheep and Goats were well suited for the terrain, able to live on sparse vegetation in rocky, dry conditions. They provided meat and wool.

Pigs were easy to care for and could forage for their own food. One pig provided a lot of meat which could be smoked for long-term storage. The hide was used for leather.

Devon Cattle are good for both dairy and meat. Most families had at least one cow for milk and butter. The oxen (usually castrated males) made excellent draft animals for plowing and pulling heavy loads.

Crops

The farm families needed to grow enough to provide food for themselves and their livestock year round. Food had to be preserved, without refrigeration, to last through the winter.

Flax was grown and wool harvested to make cloth.

Cloth and Apparel

Leather was made from animal hides. Oak bark was used for tanning leather.

Stone walls were built by farmers to keep livestock in or out, and to mark property boundaries. Many of the stones were cleared from the rocky ground as farmers toiled to clear the garden plots.