

Caesar Stevenson Strong School Witness Stones Project

Dedication Celebration-May 13th, 2022



This project is funded through a generous grant
from the Connecticut Valley Education Foundation

About the Project

Witness Stones Project

- ❖ Began by then history teacher, Mr. Dennis Culliton, in Guilford, Ct in 2017
- ❖ Inspired by the Stolpersteine Project in Germany
- ❖ To date almost 50 stones have been placed





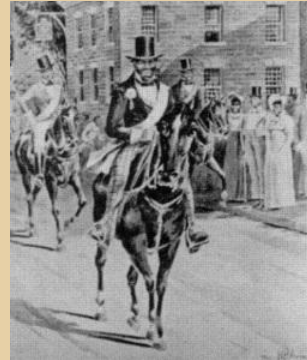
Here are several of the
Witness Stones in Connecticut

Our Process

Dennis Culliton introduced us to lenses through which historic documents may be viewed- ***Dehumanization, Paternalism, Treatment of Enslaved Persons, Economics, & Agency***

Our Process, Continued

The Witness Stones organization gathered documents for us about one enslaved person, we are focusing upon- ***Caesar***, whom we believe is also referred to as ***Caesar Stevenson*** in some later documents.



An image of Negro
Election Day
source

◆ Events in Caesar Stevenson's Life

- 1771 Marriage of Caesar and Candace with the permission of Thomas Camp, his enslaver, at the 1st Congregational Church, in records of Rev. Elizur Goodrich
- 1790 Durham Census, lists Caesar and 5 family members. They are the only free non-white people listed in this census
- 1790 Transfer of property (a house and some land) to Caesar and his 3 sons: Jubal, Jesse, and Jered
- 1793 Transfer of property from Caesar Stevenson to Henry Stevens of Wallingford
- Caesar Stevenson is listed as Slave Governor/Slave King in late 1700s early 1800s
- 1800 Census records show Caesar and his sons live in Saybrook

Slave Governors/Slave Kings

By Kate R

During yearly elections for governor in the 1750's, slaves who came along with their owners would elect a governor for their own community. The first slave governor was elected in Hartford in 1775. This tradition spread, and soon many towns in the area had an elected slave governor, including Durham. This position required a well-respected member male of the black community, and often serving an influential family. Slave governors could serve multiple terms, and the election was held a week after the governor's election. Celebration would often follow. Slave governors acted as mediators between black and white communities. They also would keep order in black communities by giving punishments to those who broke the law.

Against All Odds by Ariana Eddinger

Caesar was one of millions-
Strong willed, hard working, skilled.
Not deserving such a hard life-
Lack of sleep, too many burdens,
He could not keep.
Countless individuals
Suffered fates like these
Because there was always someone
They were forced to please.

Tirelessly they worked
Put in the hours,
Sweat, tears, and pain.
Caesar was one of the few
That would reign
As a respected slave king
A mediator between two
When different men
Could not see eye to eye.

Just because of skin
That's the world they lived in!
One day he was freed
Only because his master agreed.
If others had left,
They would have died.
Can you believe that's how they lived?
Sold as property, just like land
Punished, and starved at their master's hand

Luckily we will not return to this.
I just hope we decide
To love each other more
To trust each other more.
So we can be better than it was before.
Let's stand together, hand in hand,
And try to fix what there is to restore.
There is always more we can do.
It starts with me and you.

THANKS!



Do you have any questions?

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