

CitizensALL

African Americans in Connecticut 1700-1850

Living conditions of urban free blacks in early 19th-century Connecticut

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Largely impoverished and treated with mounting disdain by the mass of whites, urban free blacks sought increasingly to gather among themselves and find some space separated from that controlled by whites. In the decades after the Revolution, many blacks settled on the outskirts of towns like New Haven in makeshift dwellings and got by as best they could. Actually owning land and homes was beyond the reach of the vast majority of free blacks and made creating their own neighborhoods within town centers difficult. Those living and renting in large towns like New Haven often did so in squalid cellars, huts in the rear of backyards, or perhaps in slightly better quarters.