

CitizensALL

African Americans in Connecticut 1700-1850

During the 1820s New Haven's population grew dramatically, as Irish immigrants and young people from the surrounding rural communities moved to the city in search of newly-created economic activities. But New Haven's burgeoning commercial and industrial enterprises offered no employment to blacks, and even the few occupations traditionally open to African-American workers were soon taken up by new arrivals hungry for work. "Aristides," writing in the *New Haven Chronicle*, gives voice to a new sense of white economic nationalism, arguing that even efforts "calculated to elevate the character of our coloured people" were an injury to white working men.

Statement from "Aristides" in the *New Haven Chronicle* (April 21, 1827)

"There is not a considerate person in this city, who does not view the residence of coloured people here a calamity.... Let us encourage and protect our own citizens--our free white citizens to the exclusion of all others--then, and not until then, shall we emancipate ourselves from the evils which all seem to deprecate. Then will the members of our coloured population leave us.... The white natives of New Haven have a right to be employed as labourers in every department of business to the exclusion of those who are black. And if the business of the city increases so as to afford employment for more labourers, white men have a right to come from abroad, and black men have no right. Therefore if we take any measures that are calculated to elevate the character of our coloured people, and to make them more industrious and virtuous and enterprising, we are guilty of injustice towards white men, who have an exclusive right to be employed."