

Enslaved people at First Parish Brewster UU Church



This webpage is updated as we learn more about our history:

The written record connects at least 19 enslaved people to First Parish Brewster Unitarian Universalist Church. These people attended services and some were baptized at First Parish. Their stolen lives and labor contributed to the generational wealth that helped build First Parish Brewster, the economy on Cape Cod, Massachusetts, and the United States. Many of these enslaved people were Black or mixed race of Black and Indigenous descent.

The information regarding the enslaved people that appears in the written record varies. In some cases, an enslaved person's name appears with a description of their actions, but many enslaved people are listed only once. Frequently they appear in the written record only with a first name and their monetary value to their White enslavers. Many enslaved people are recorded without a name at all. This gap in the historic record reflects the White supremacist attitudes that did not value recording the rich lives of enslaved people beyond their monetary value. Any detailed descriptions of the lives of enslaved people were written by their enslavers and are not likely to reflect the experience of the enslaved.

The Western archival tradition has prioritized the preservation of history from the perspective of White, rich, and powerful men. It is highly likely that other enslaved people are connected to First Parish Brewster but were unmentioned within the written history. First Parish Brewster acknowledges each of the known 19 enslaved individuals recorded within the church's history and remembers those who are unmentioned in written history.

These people lived and endured under the institution of chattel slavery. Their stolen lives and labor contributed to the wealth that created First Parish Brewster and the founding of the United States of America. We invite you to read the names of enslaved individuals connected to First Parish Brewster in the 1700s and honor their lives and humanity, and continue to pursue justice and equity for all people.

Ann Anna Hamsheir Hannah Jack
James James Oliver Jesse Caesar Jolly
Mary Millie Molley Oliver Sarah
and six persons whose names are unknown to us

The names of enslaved people that appear in recorded history may not have been chosen by

the individuals and their families, but assigned to them by White enslavers. At this time, these given names are what we have available to identify and acknowledge these people's existences.

References (Note: INCOMPLETE)

Last name, First name Middle initial. Title of Work. Format. City: Publishing Company, copyright date. Source, Collection. Medium, http://...(accessed date).

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