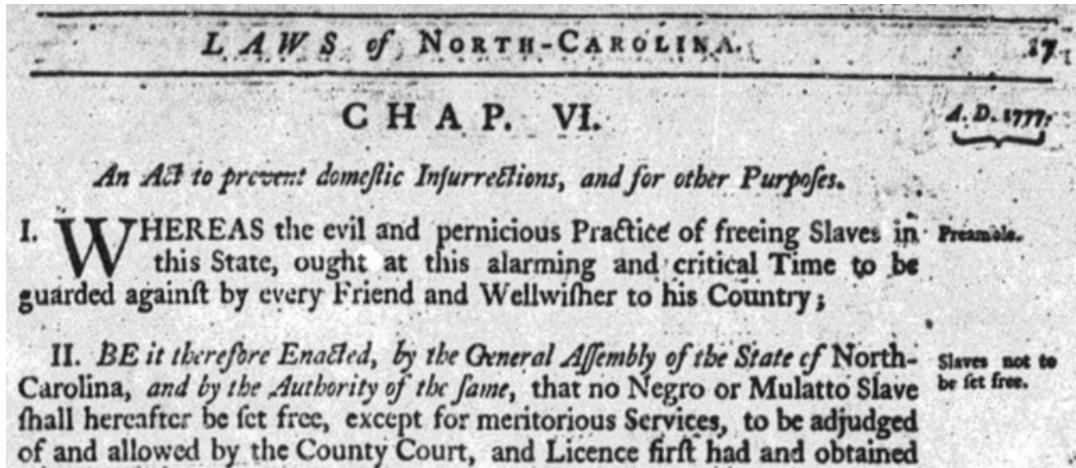


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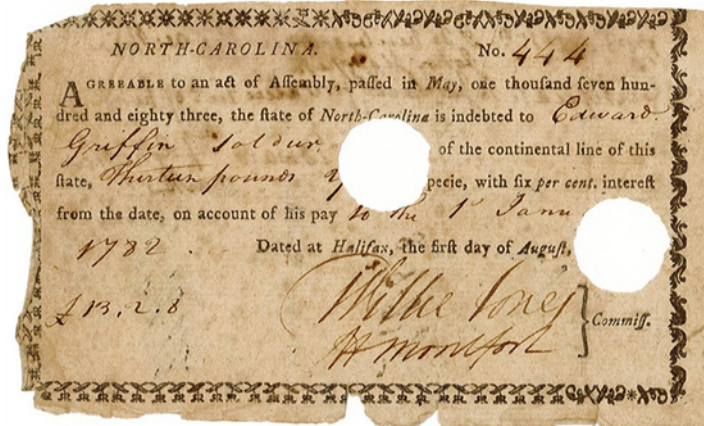
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BACKGROUND: Ned Griffin & John Jasper White



"An Act to prevent domestic Insurrections, and for other Purposes," *Acts of Assembly of the State of North Carolina*, April 1777, p. 17, State publications collection, State Library of N.C.

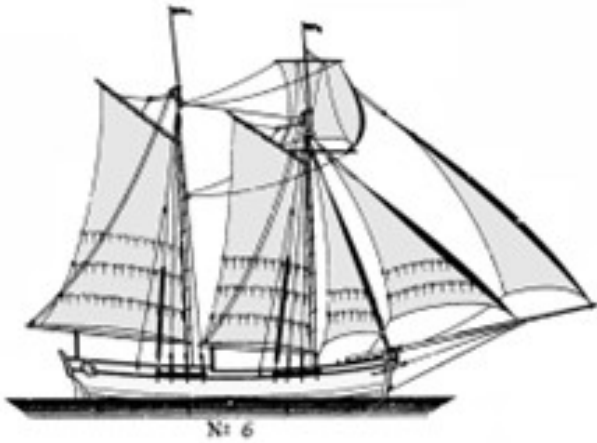


Edward "Ned" Griffin's pay voucher for Continental Line service (circular punches indicate payment collected) 1782, Treasurer's & Comptroller's papers, Revolutionary War Army Accounts, 13.30.22867, State Archives of N.C.

Patriot calls for liberty and freedom during the revolutionary period were at odds with the system of slavery upon which North Carolina's cash crop economy depended. An early act of the new state's General Assembly was to prevent emancipation of enslaved people. Exceptions needed to be approved by county courts. The cases of John Jasper White, later known as "Currituck Jack," and Edward "Ned" Griffin involved physical battles during the Revolutionary War and legal battles afterward to gain freedom.

Ned Griffin of Edgecombe County enlisted as a soldier in the Continental Line in 1781. His

enslaver, William Griffin, sold him to William Kitchen to take Kitchen's place in the draft. Part of his enlistment agreement was that if he completed his tour of duty, he would be free man. After the war, Ned returned to Tarboro but Kitchen betrayed their agreement and quickly sold him to another enslaver. In response, Griffin petitioned the courts for his freedom with help from his military officers, other witnesses to his enlistment agreement, and William Griffin, his former enslaver. Edward's petition reached the North Carolina General Assembly in 1784. In response, the Assembly passed "An Act for Enfranchising Ned Griffin, Late the Property of William Kitchen," concluding "Ned Griffin... shall forever hereafter be in every respect...a freeman;... and he is hereby enfranchised and forever delivered and discharged from the yoke of slavery."



Example of a 1768 schooner, Frederick Henry de Chapman, *A Treatise on Ship-Building* (Cambridge [Eng.]: Printed by J. Smith, 1820).

In 1780 a schooner (a ship with multiple masts) named Polly and owned by Henry White of Currituck headed out to break the British Blockade with a crew of three—Henry White’s son Caleb White, Caleb’s brother-in-law Samuel Jasper, and Jack—a man White enslaved. The Polly was soon captured by five British privateers, who chained the Polly’s crew. Jack convinced his captors that he was loyal to Great Britain and could help them. Once freed from chains, he assisted his crew mates in fighting to recapture the ship. Though wounded, the crew then sailed to Annapolis, MD, and turned the British sailors over to the Continental Congress.

After more than a decade of Samuel Jasper’s efforts to emancipate Jack, the North Carolina General Assembly granted the request in 1792 and added the story of his loyalty and heroism to the session records. Jack named himself John Jasper White, was a respected community member, and later owned his own ship, married, and had two children.

Quick Fact Check

1. Where did Ned Griffin live when he enlisted in the Continental Line?
2. Where did John Jasper White live?
3. In addition to his own tremendous effort, who helped Ned Griffin gain freedom?
4. In addition to his own tremendous effort, who helped John Jasper White gain freedom?