



# *Town of Brookline*

## *Massachusetts*

Patrick J. Ward, Town Clerk

Town Hall, 1<sup>st</sup> Floor  
333 Washington Street  
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(617) 730-2010 Fax (617) 730-2043

June 4, 2012

To Whom It May Concern:

I, Patrick J. Ward, Town Clerk of the Town of Brookline, duly qualified and acting as such and having custody of the records, hereby certify that the following actions were taken under Article #27 at the Annual Town Meeting called for Tuesday, May 22, 2012 at 7:00 P.M., adjourned to Thursday, May 24, 2012 and dissolved on Tuesday, May 29, 2012 at 10:38 P.M.

VOTED: That the Town adopt the following Resolution:

### **A Resolution Regarding Slavery in Brookline**

WHEREAS, slavery was officially legalized in the Massachusetts Colony in 1641, three years after the settling of Brookline; according to Town Meeting records, slavery existed in Brookline by 1675, if not before, and continued until roughly 1800.

WHEREAS, over 70 children, women and men in total (primarily African-Americans, but also Native-Americans) were enslaved here – bought, sold and inherited; dehumanized and stripped of their names and heritage.

WHEREAS, in 1717 the Town Meeting selected a slave owner as its first minister and paid his salary out of Town funds.

WHEREAS, in 1744 the Town received a substantial bequest for the building of a new school from Edward Devotion, a slave owner and citizen.

WHEREAS, in 1746, Town Meeting agreed to have Henry Sewall's enslaved man Felix clean Town Hall.

WHEREAS, in that same year over one-quarter of Brookline households owned people.

WHEREAS, the ownership and trade in enslaved persons and the exploitation of their labor increased the prosperity of many Brookline families, thus increasing the collective wealth of the Town.

WHEREAS, as noted in the large plaque at the entrance to Town Hall, on April 19, 1775, three enslaved Brookline men marched as Minutemen to the Battle of Lexington for freedom from foreign rule.

WHEREAS, ~~we recognize that even the most abject apology for past wrongs cannot right them; yet we~~ believe that acknowledgement of past wrongs can promote reconciliation and can prevent the repetition of these wrongs and their related injustices.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT

RESOLVED, that the Town Meeting of Brookline hereby acknowledges with profound regret the enslavement of Native-Americans and African-Americans and the exploitation of slave labor by this Town, within this Town, and amongst the citizens of this Town.

RESOLVED, that the Town Meeting call upon the people of Brookline to acknowledge and recognize contributions of Native-Americans and African-Americans to the Town and the achievement of equality, liberty, justice and democracy.

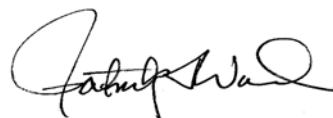
RESOLVED, that we pledge continued vigilance against all practices and institutions that dehumanize and discriminate against people.

RESOLVED, that the School Committee ~~consider including~~ **is encouraged to promote inclusion of** this history of Brookline slavery in appropriate places in its curriculum.

RESOLVED, that the Town Clerk shall distribute copies of this resolution to the public libraries and schools of this Town and shall post this resolution on the Town's website.

The above vote, taken under Article #27, on Thursday, May 24, 2012, was PASSED BY A COUNTED VOTE OF 180 IN FAVOR AND 5 OPPOSED, was so declared by the Moderator and is so recorded.

ATTEST:



Patrick J. Ward  
Town Clerk

(Seal)